

B. Presentation of Voter Survey Findings from April 2024 Poll by Tulchin Research

**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

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<b>DATE</b>	July 16, 2024
<b>TITLE</b>	Presentation on Voter Survey Findings from April 2024 Poll by Tulchin Research
<b>DIVISION</b>	General Manager's Office
<b>FROM</b>	Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs Dr. Ana M. Alvarez, Deputy General Manager
<b>APPROVED</b>	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

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**RECOMMENDATION**

This is an informational item only.

**BACKGROUND**

Tulchin Research, based in San Francisco, is a survey research firm with over four decades of experience in public opinion research and strategic consulting. Tulchin Research has experience in successfully conducting focus group and survey research projects over the last four decades. In 2022, Tulchin Research received the Pollster of the Year award from the American Association of Political Consultants. Tulchin Research has worked with a variety of environmental agencies and organizations including San Francisco Recreation and Parks, Yosemite Restoration Trust, and the Environmental Defense Fund. As an outcome of this experience, Tulchin Research has extensive knowledge in conducting research on open space, conservation, and environmental issues.

In February 2023, the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) worked with Tulchin Research on a quantitative voter survey that found strong support for the Park District, but more tepid support for contributing additional funding for services through a local tax measure. The Park District has a strong history of annually surveying the East Bay public and voters to maintain longitudinal records. These surveys are a part of the effort to maintain an on-going understanding of the issues in which East Bay voters are interested in as it relates to the Park District's service delivery.

**ANALYSIS**

A report will be presented on the results of a quantitative voter survey to measure familiarity with the Park District's work, as well as what would make voters more likely to support a future revenue measure. The results are part of a two-step research approach which included focus groups. The report will be used to better understand what issues, interests and external events are impacting voter perception of additional investments in the Park District's service delivery.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

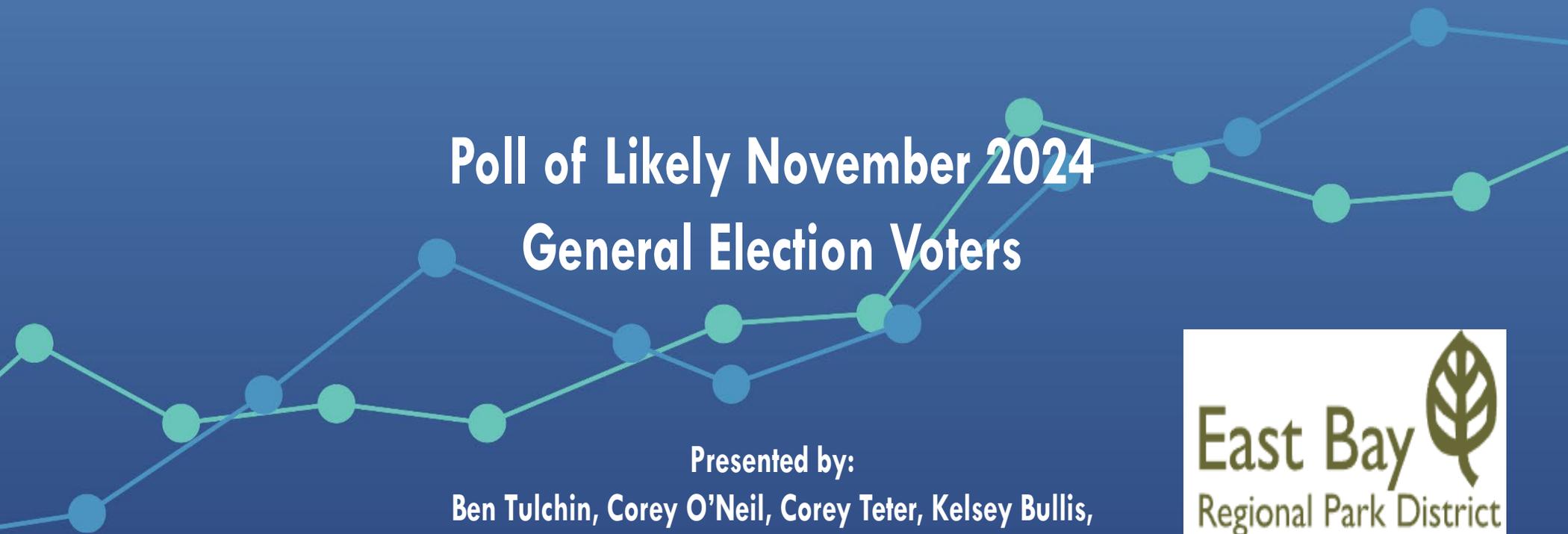
## **ATTACHMENTS**

PowerPoint Presentation.



# East Bay Regional Park District: Parcel Tax Research

Poll of Likely November 2024  
General Election Voters



Presented by:

Ben Tulchin, Corey O'Neil, Corey Teter, Kelsey Bullis,  
Asha Gupta, & Caroline Joseph



Tulchin Research  
April 2024



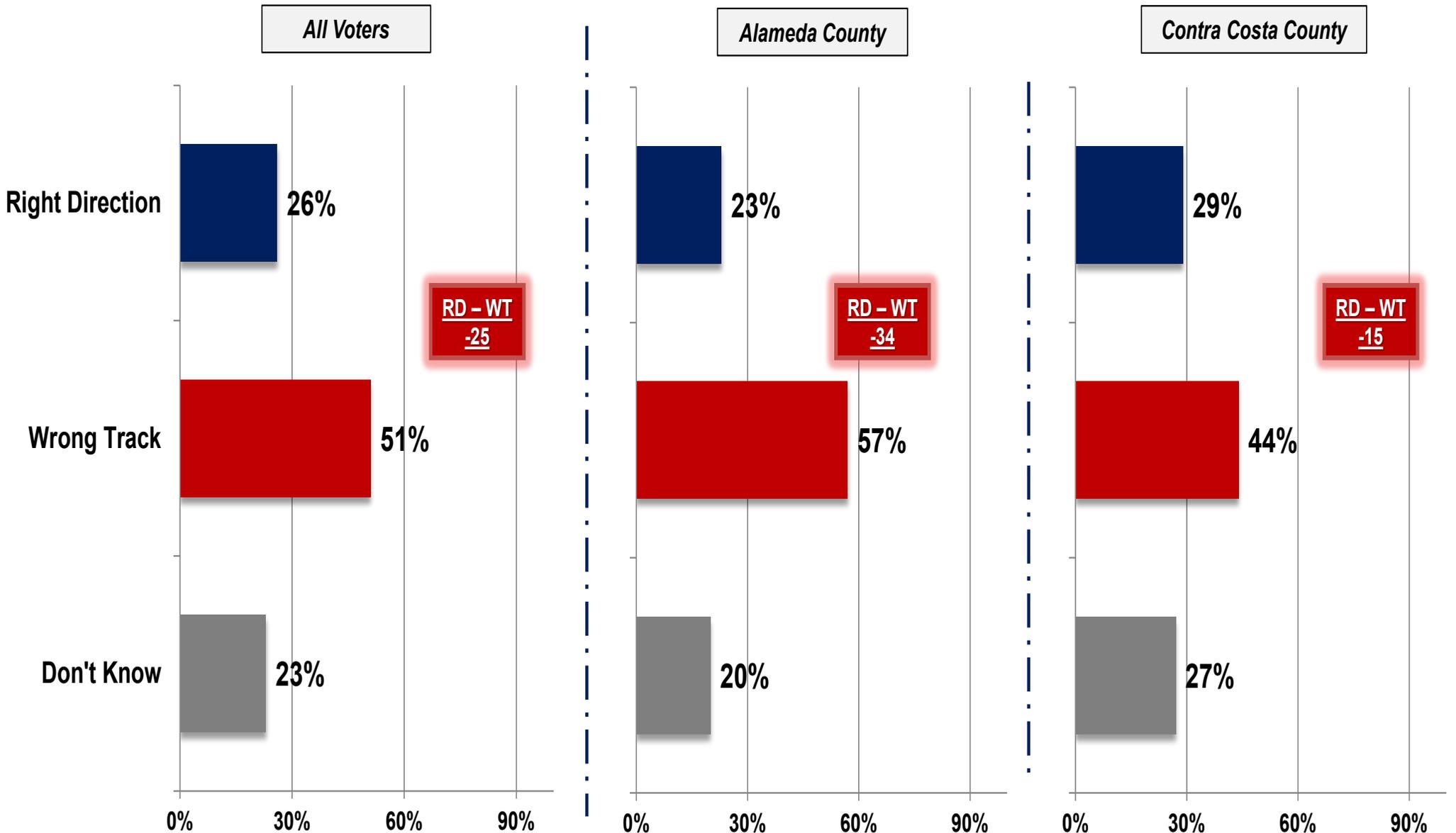
# Methodology

- **Multi-modal survey in the East Bay Regional Park District (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties).**
- **Survey conducted among 800 likely November 2024 voters.**
  - **February 2023 Benchmark Poll: Survey conducted among 500 likely November 2024 voters.**
- **Fielding conducted April 9-16, 2024.**
  - **February 2023 Poll: Fielding conducted February 1-6, 2023.**
- **Live phone interviews conducted by professional callers in English, Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) and dialing both landlines and cell phones as well as interviewing a portion of respondents online through e-mails and text messages from the voter file.**
- **The margin of error is  $\pm 3.46\%$  for the full 800 sample.**
  - **February 2023 Benchmark Poll: The margin of error is  $\pm 4.38\%$  for the full 500 sample.**

# General Mood & Sentiments

# General Mood of EBRPD Voters By County

Do you feel things in [ALAMEDA/CONTRA COSTA] County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



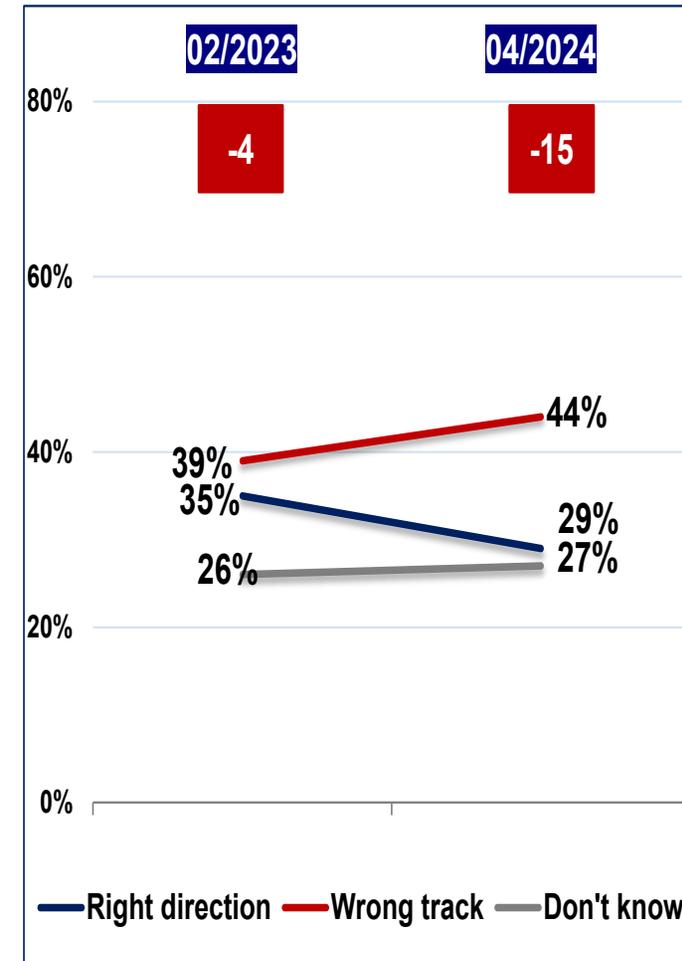
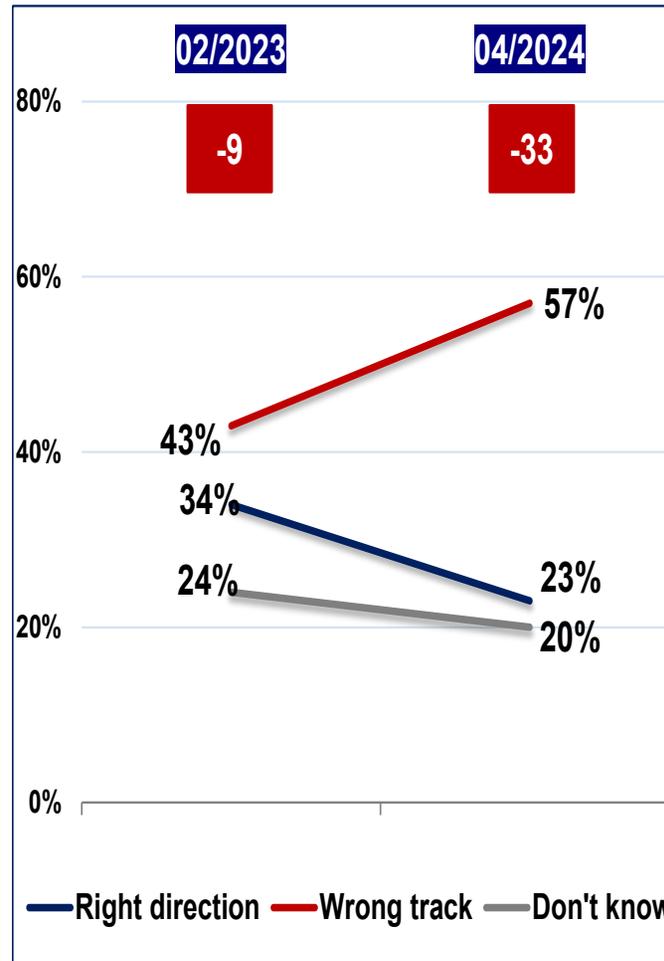
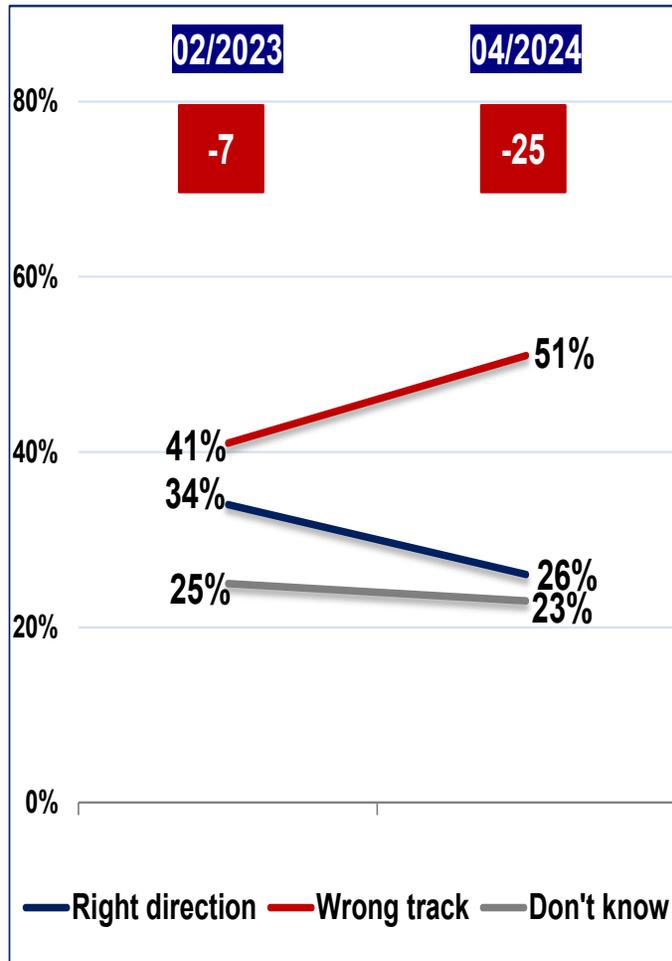
## EBRPD Voters Are More Pessimistic Now Than in 2023

Do you feel things in [ALAMEDA/CONTRA COSTA] County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

All Voters

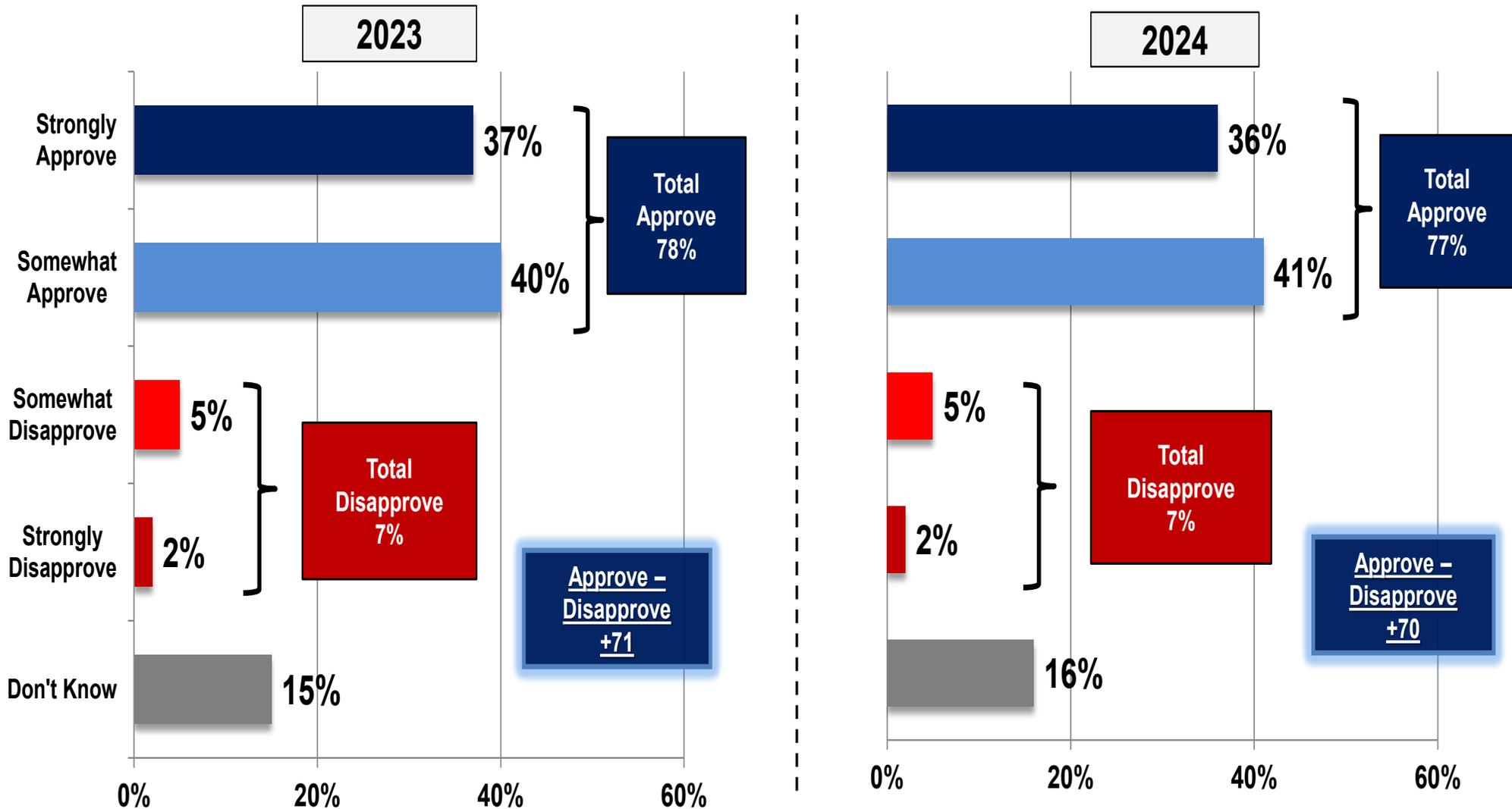
Alameda County

Contra Costa County



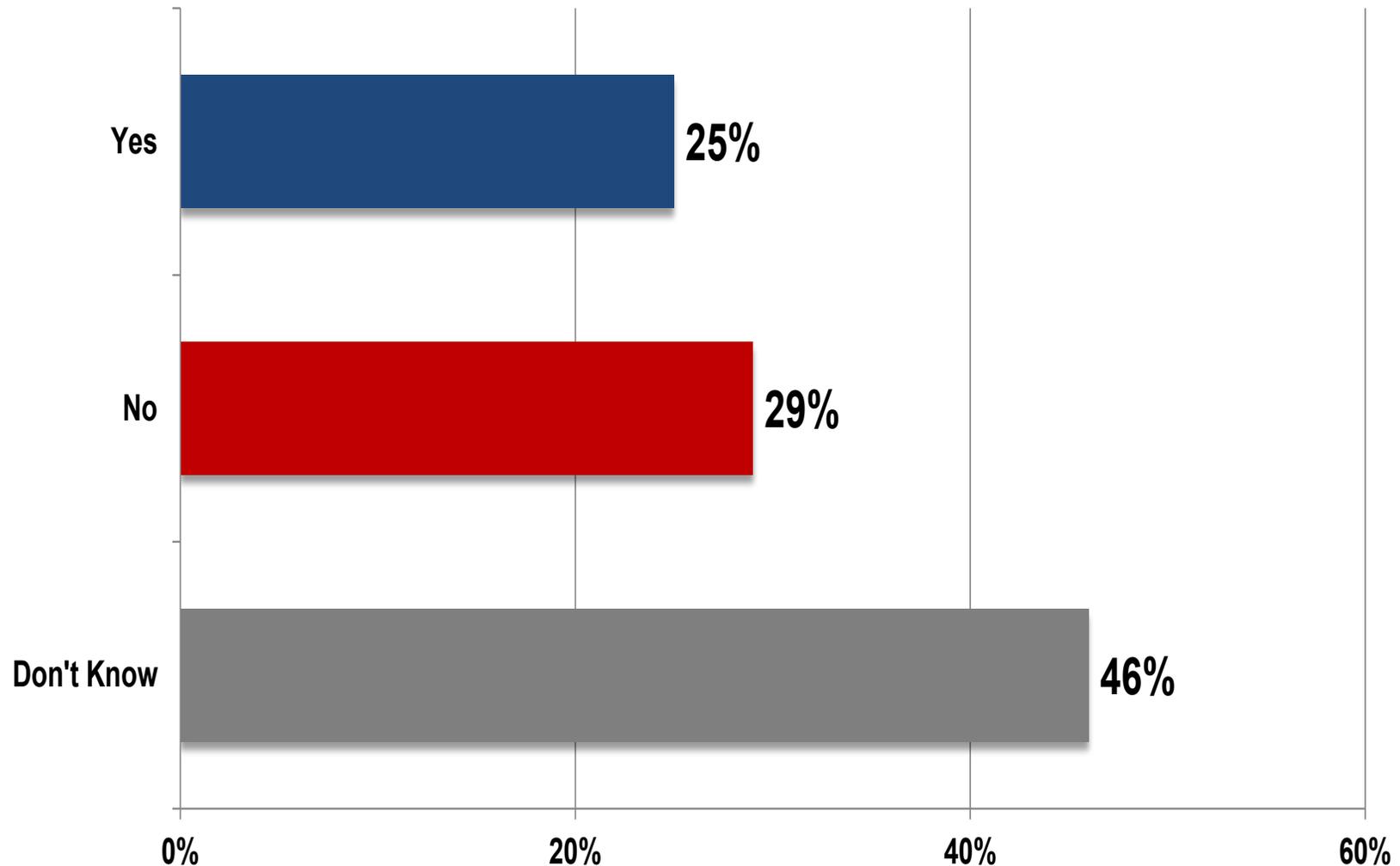
# EBRPD Approval Ratings Remain Positive and Largely Unchanged

As you may know, the East Bay Regional Park District operates a system of regional parks and trails in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of how East Bay Regional Park District operates and maintains these regional parks and trails?



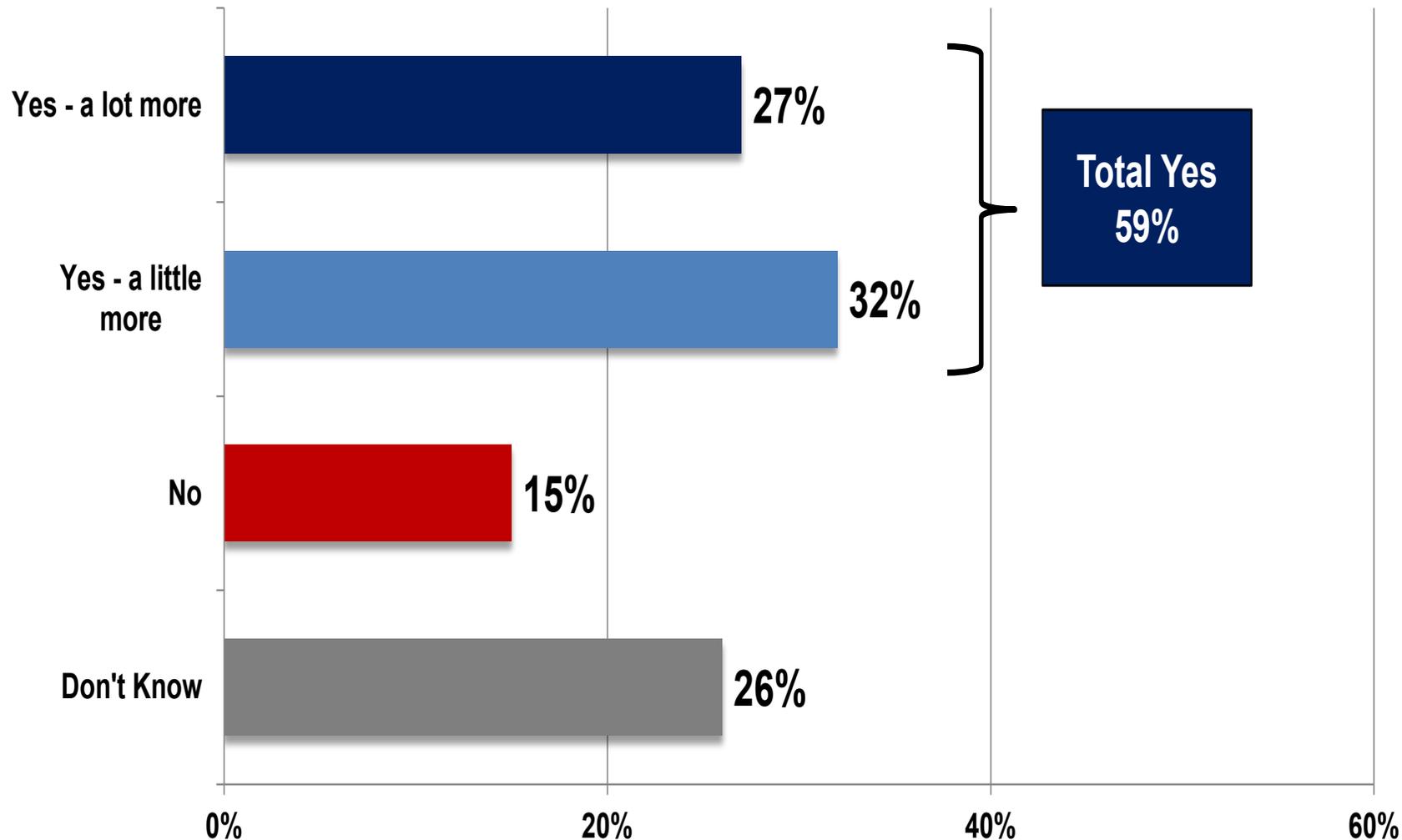
## Voters Largely Unaware of EBRPD Funding for Maintenance, Just a Quarter Believe the District has Enough Funding

*Do you feel that the East Bay Regional Park District currently has enough funding to maintain the parks, trails and facilities they manage across both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, or not?*



# A Solid Majority of Voters Believes EBRPD Could Benefit from Additional Funding

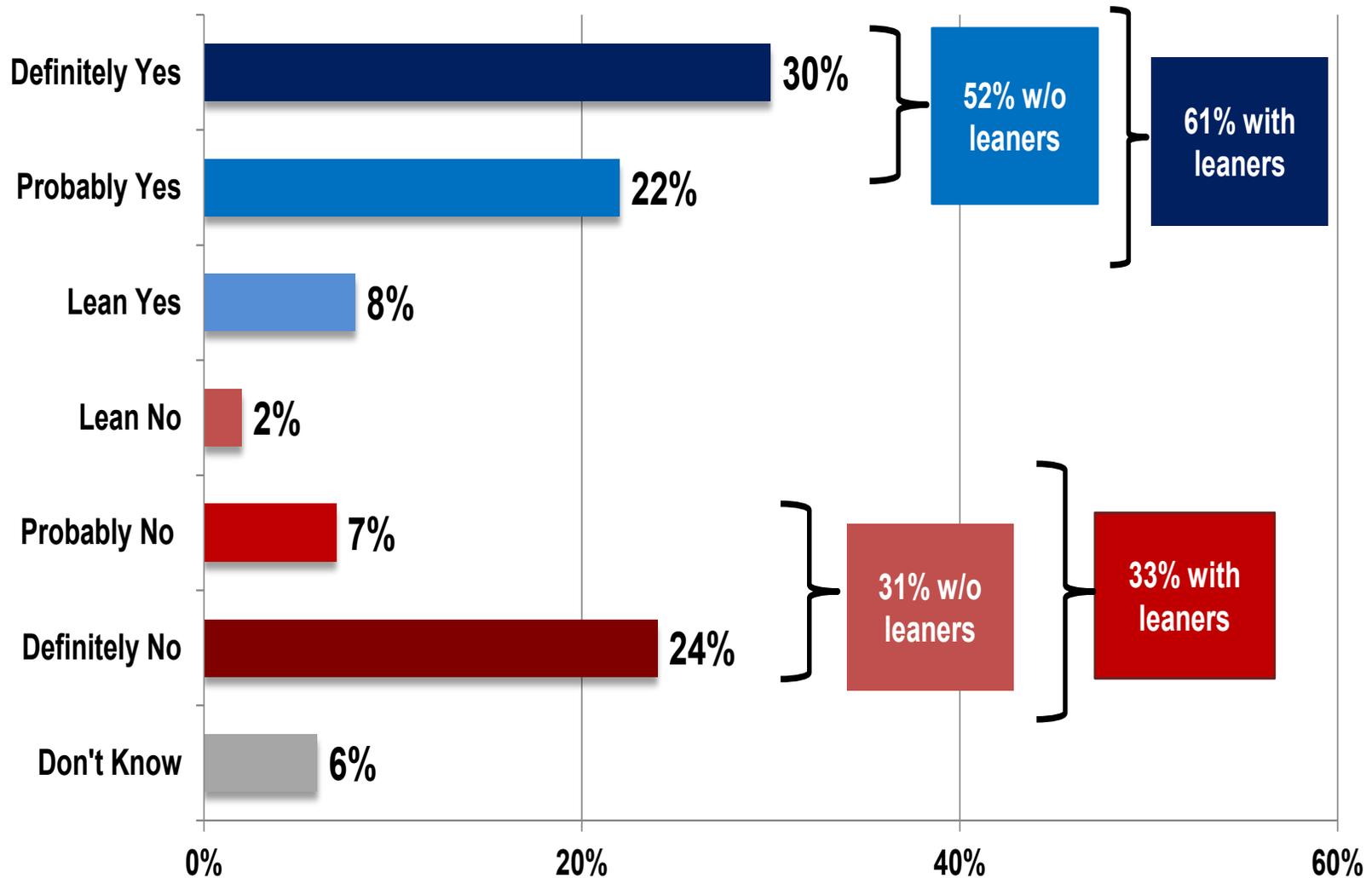
Do you feel that the East Bay Regional Park District could benefit from additional funding to improve operations and maintenance of parks, trails and facilities? **[IF YES]:** Is that a lot more funding or a little bit more funding?



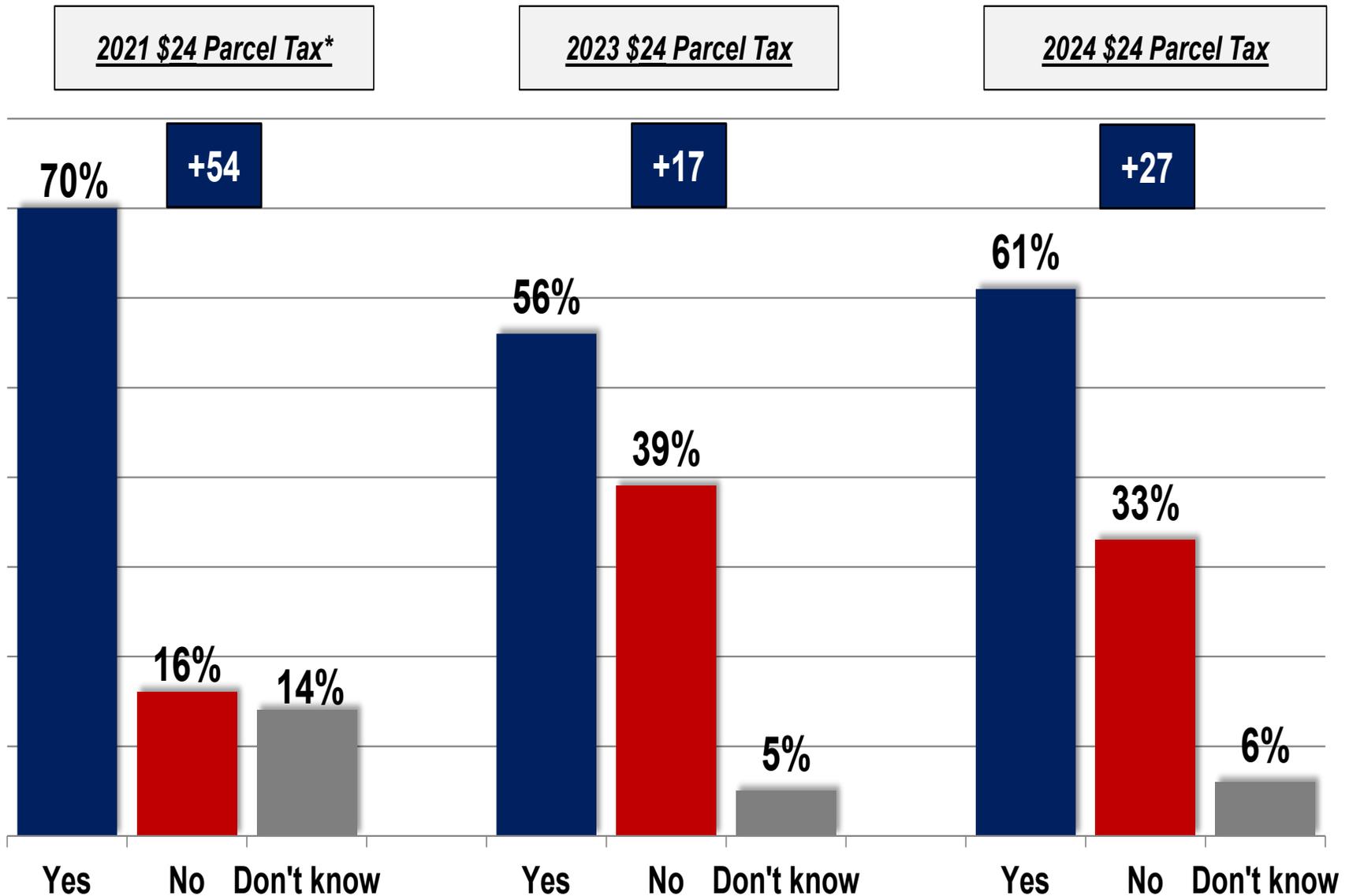
# EBRPD Funding Measure Support

## Majority Support for a \$24 Parcel Tax

*To preserve and maintain parks and regional trails for future generations; reduce catastrophic wildfire risk with proactive vegetation management; repair damage from flooding, landslides and erosion and prevent future extreme weather damage; and restore wildlife habitats and improve access to parks and trails; shall East Bay Regional Park District levy a parcel tax of \$24 per parcel per year, generating twenty-one million dollars annually and sunsets after 18 years with mandatory annual independent financial audits and citizen oversight?*



# Higher Levels of Support for Parcel Tax Now than in 2023, But Still Below 2/3 Threshold Needed to Pass

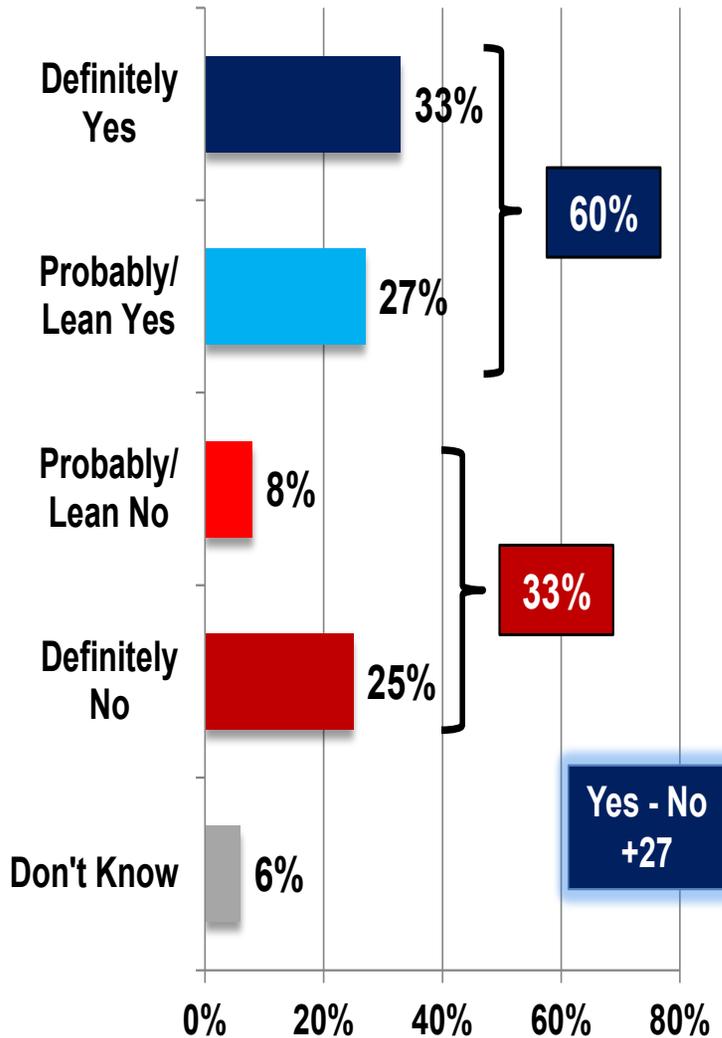


\*Data from Lake Research Poll conducted 11/21 \*\*Totals include leaners

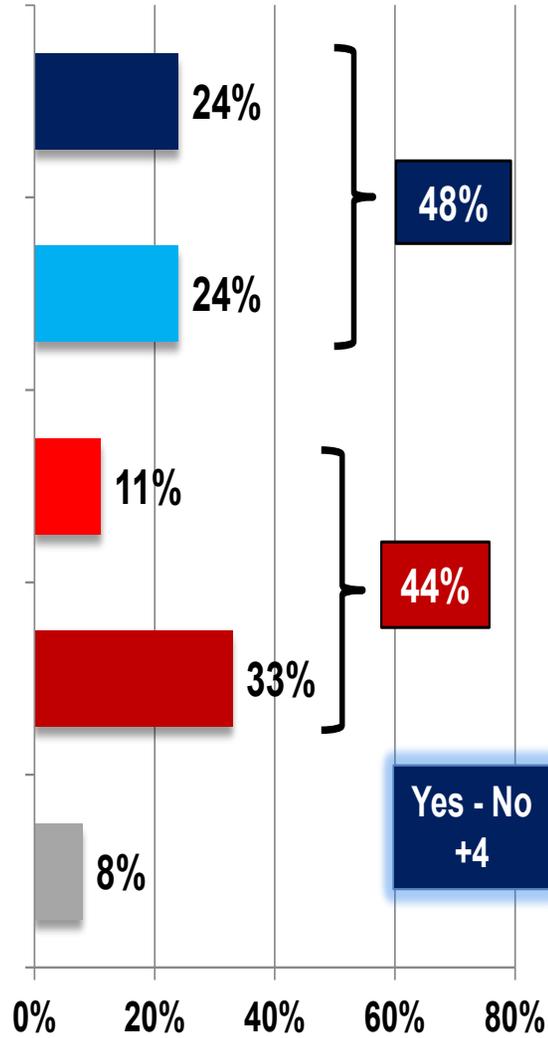
# Voters Are Cost Sensitive; Lower Dollar Amount Preferred

What if the parcel tax you just heard about was for (amount)? Would you vote yes in favor of it, or no to oppose it?

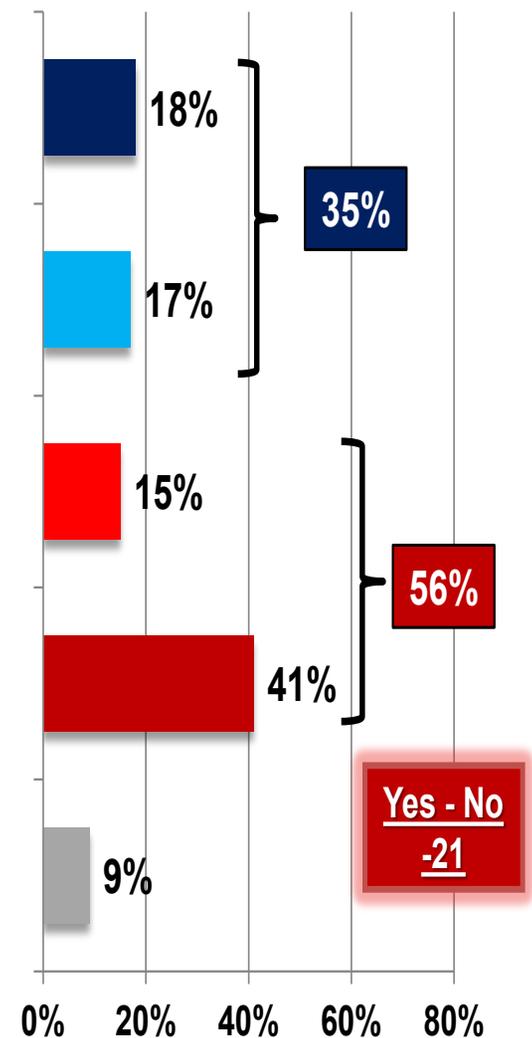
**\$24 Per Parcel, Per Year**



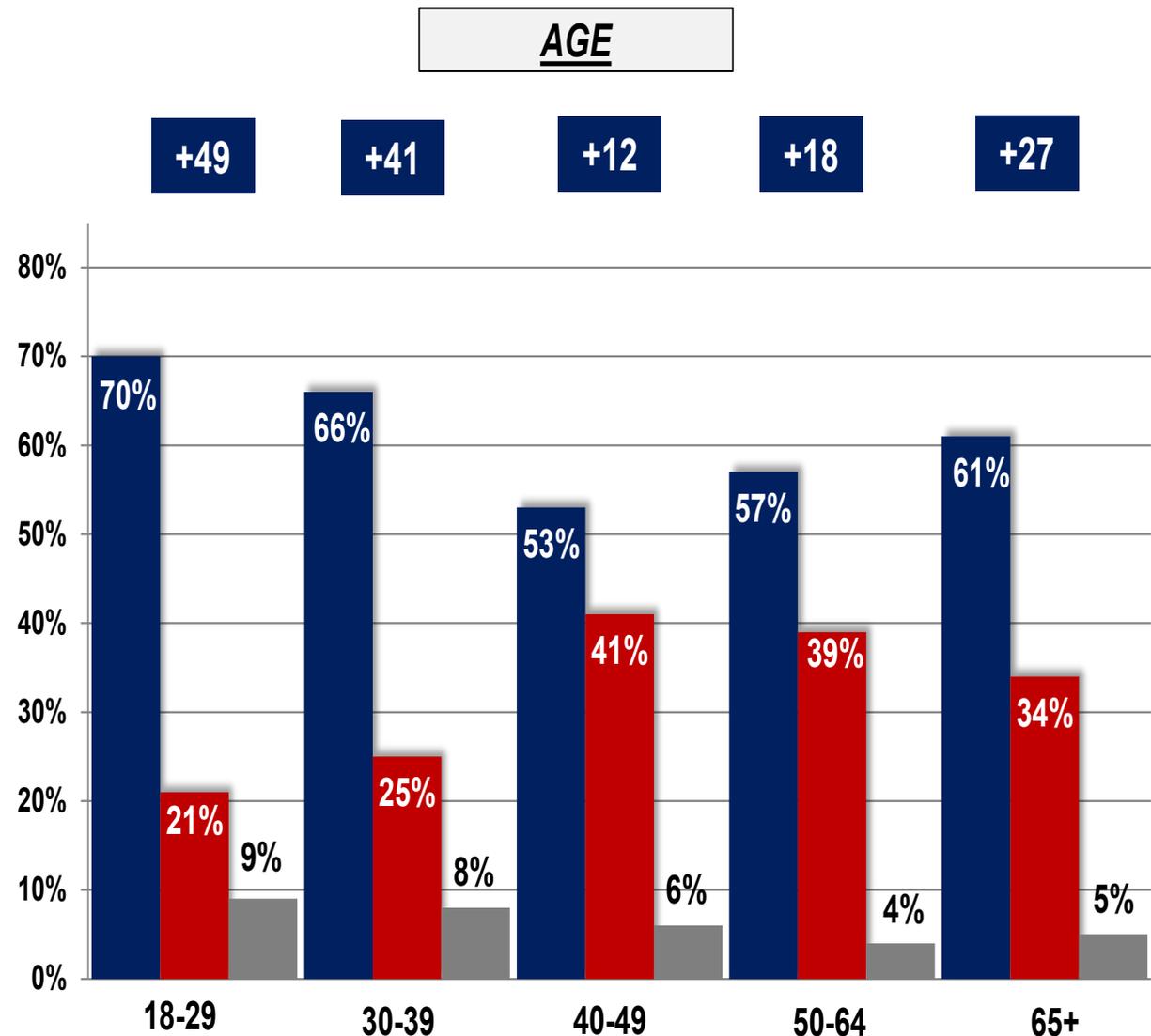
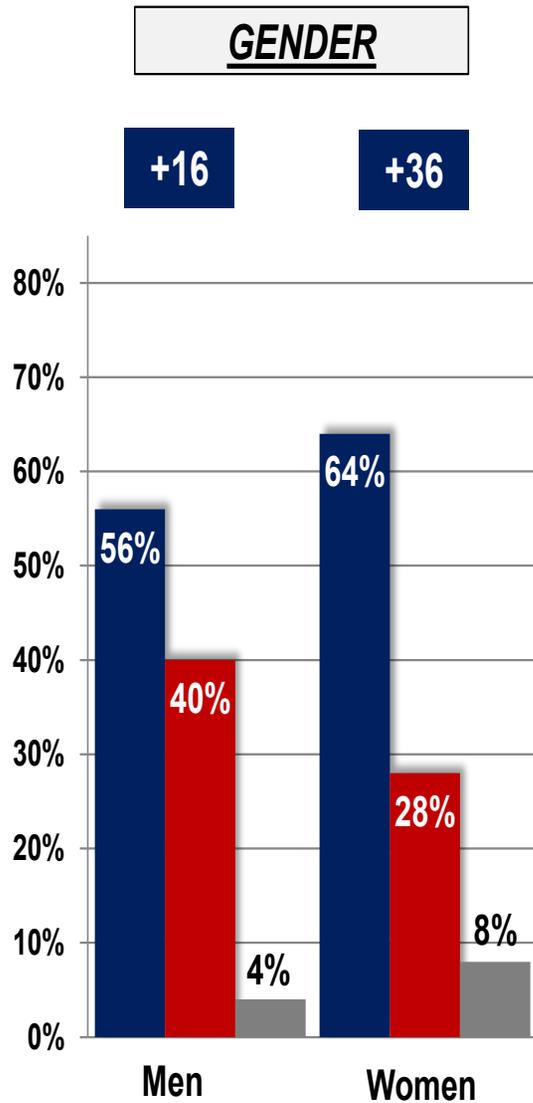
**\$30 Per Parcel, Per Year**



**\$36 Per Parcel, Per Year**

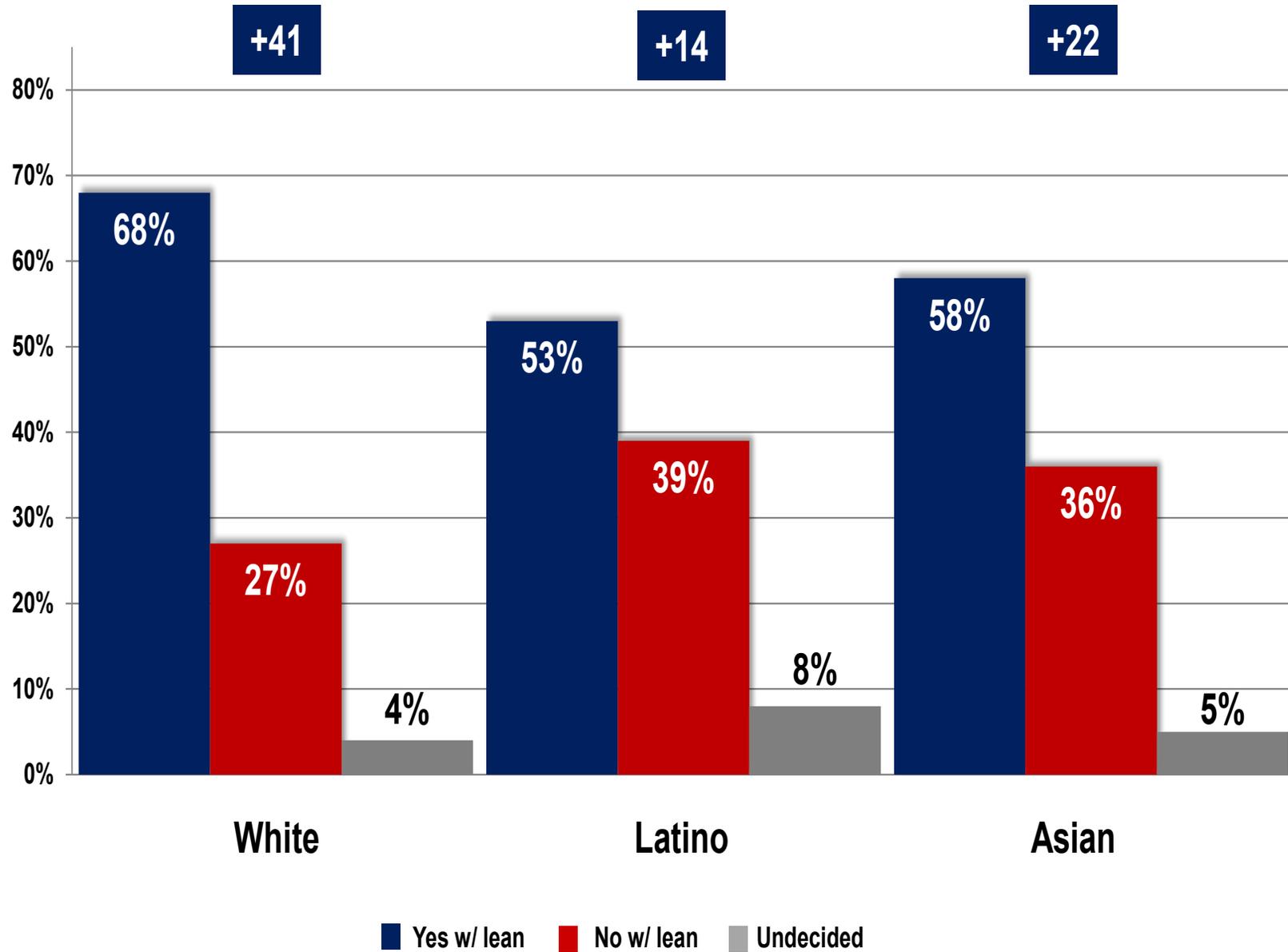


# Initial Vote by Gender and Age

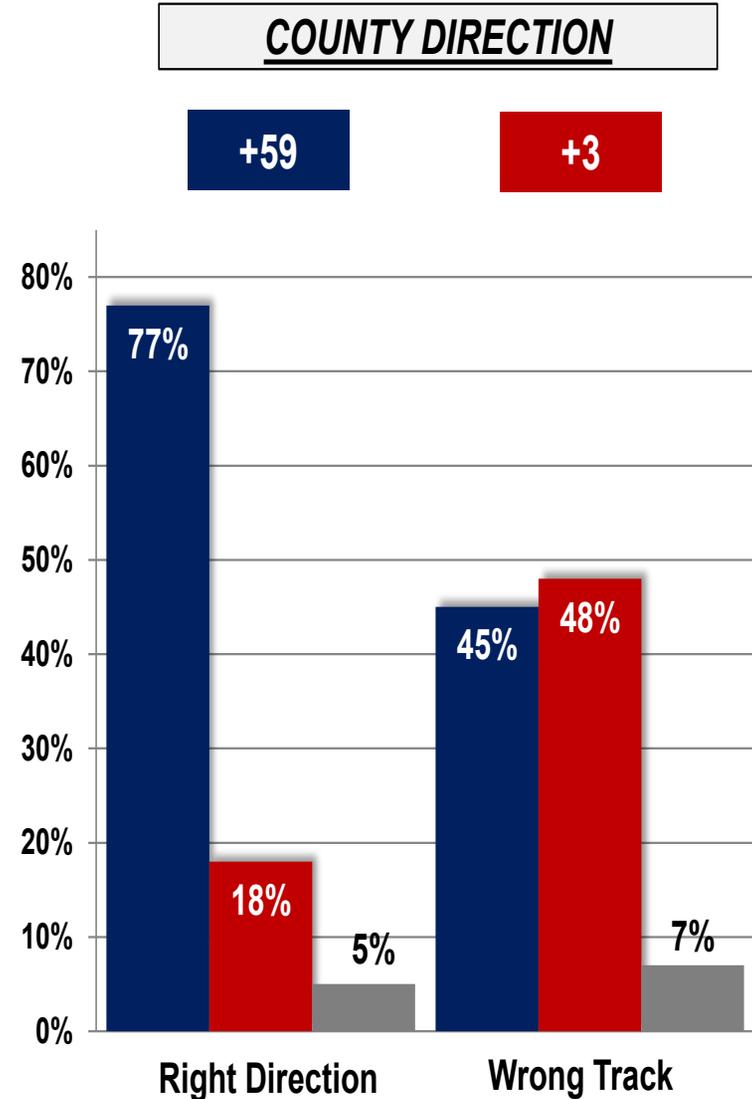
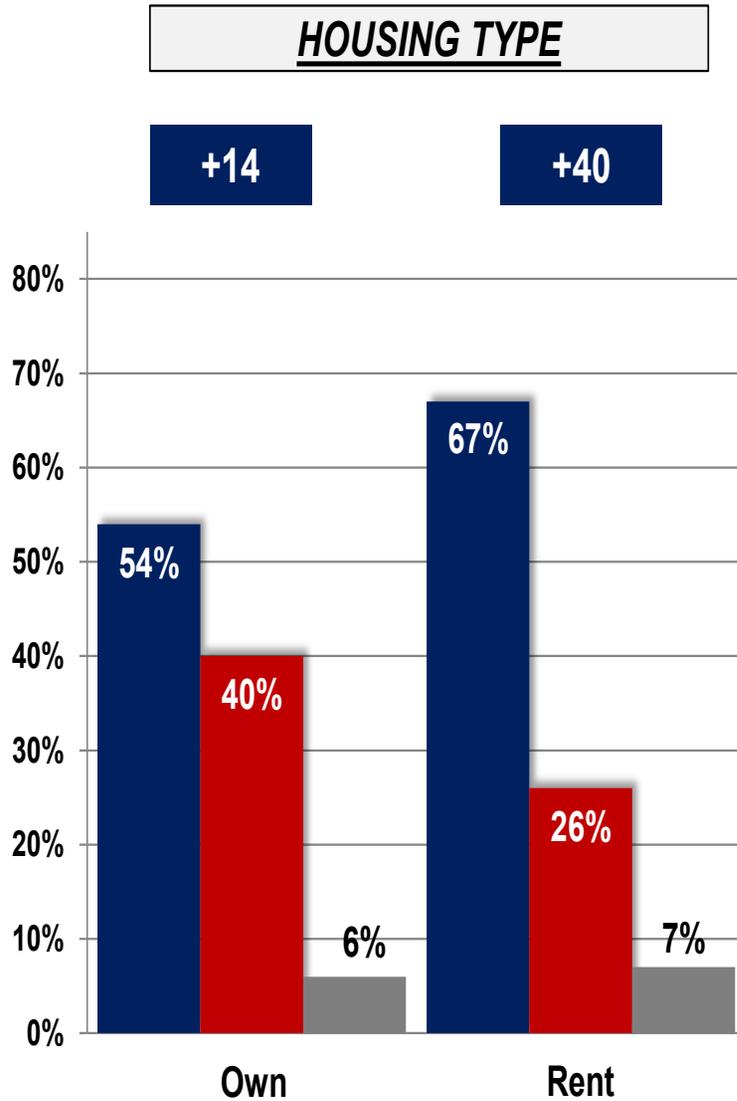


■ Yes w/ lean    ■ No w/ lean    ■ Undecided

# Initial Vote by Ethnicity

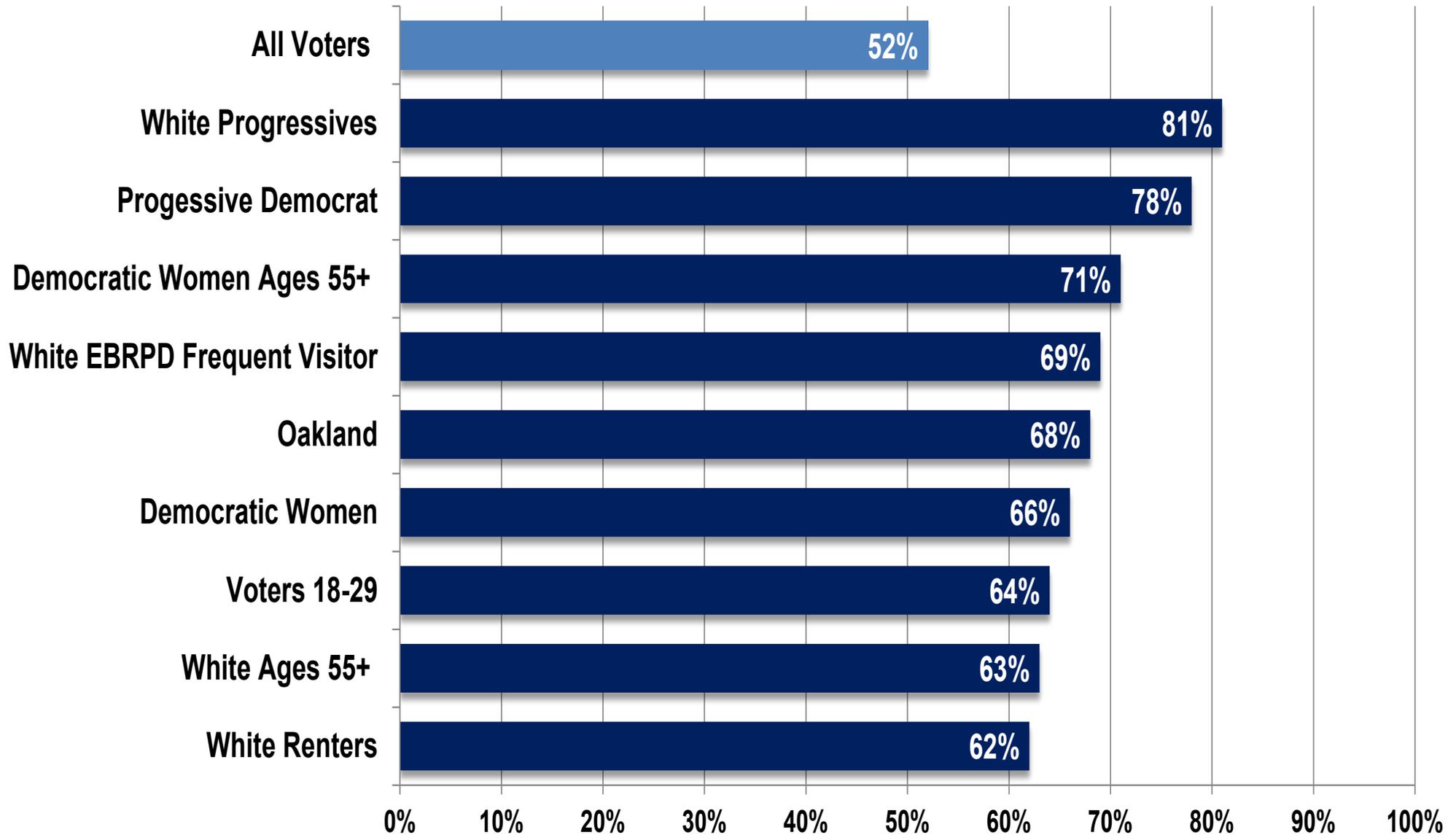


# Initial Vote by Homeowner/Renter and County Direction

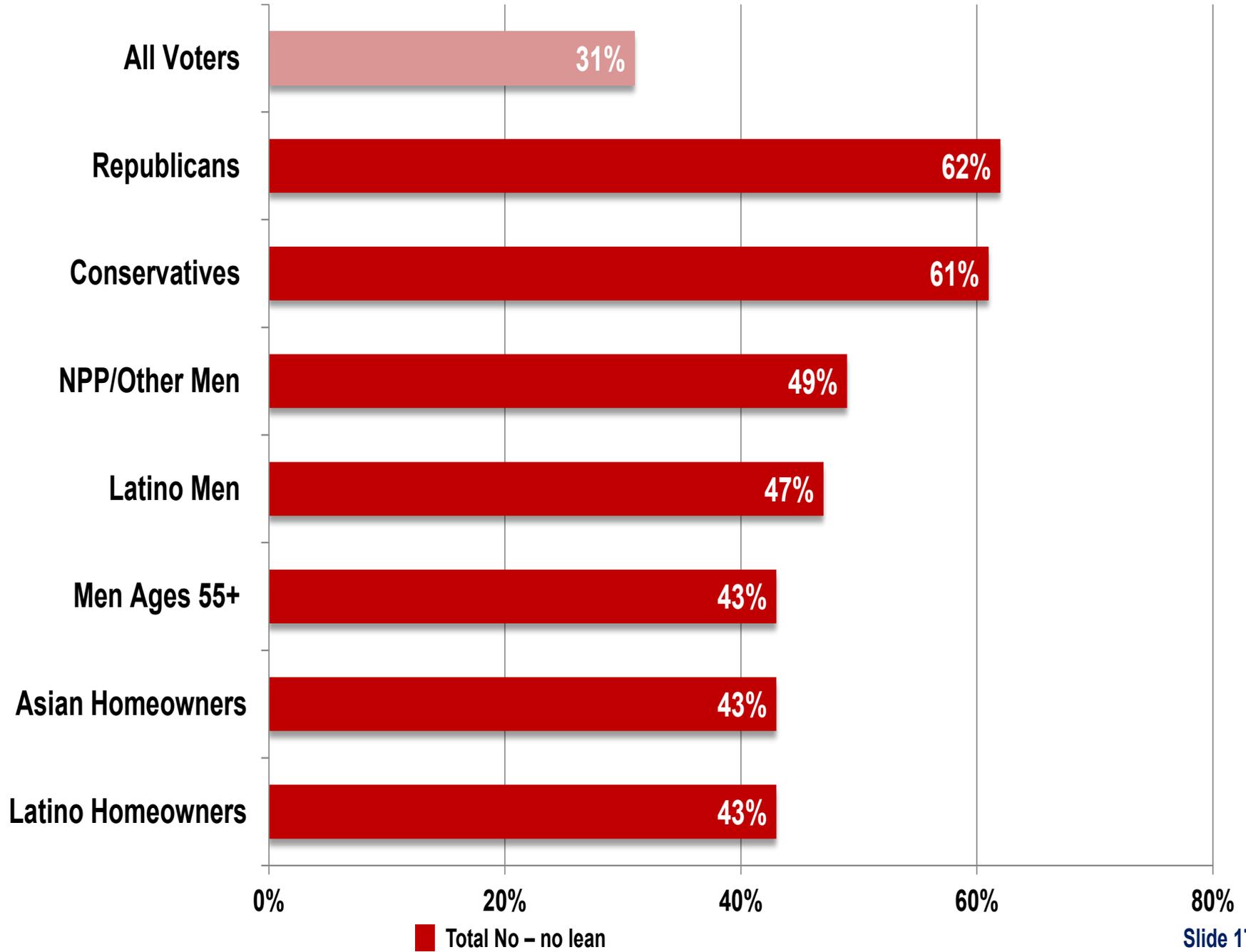


■ Yes w/ lean ■ No w/ lean ■ Undecided

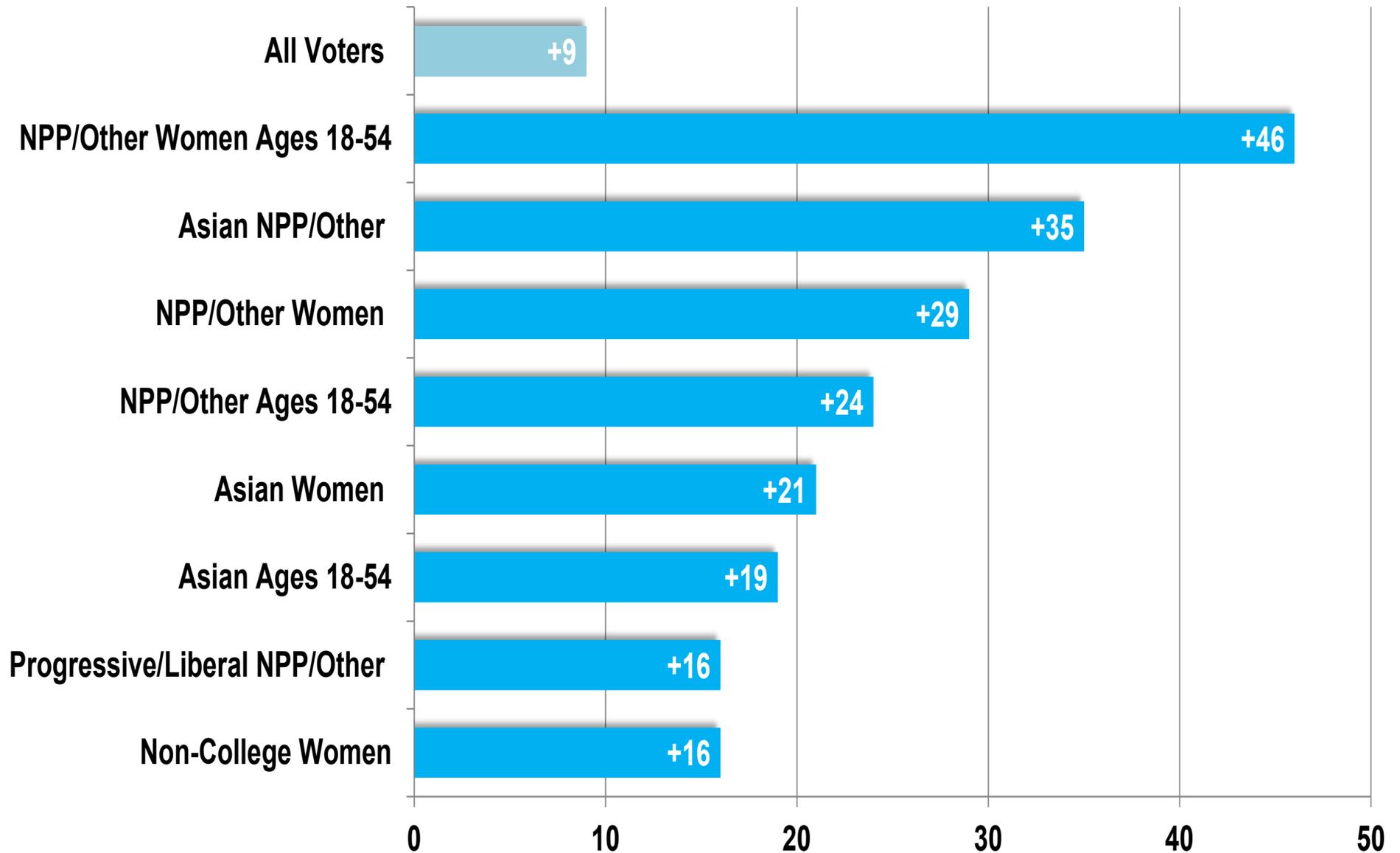
## Base Supporters



## Base Opponents

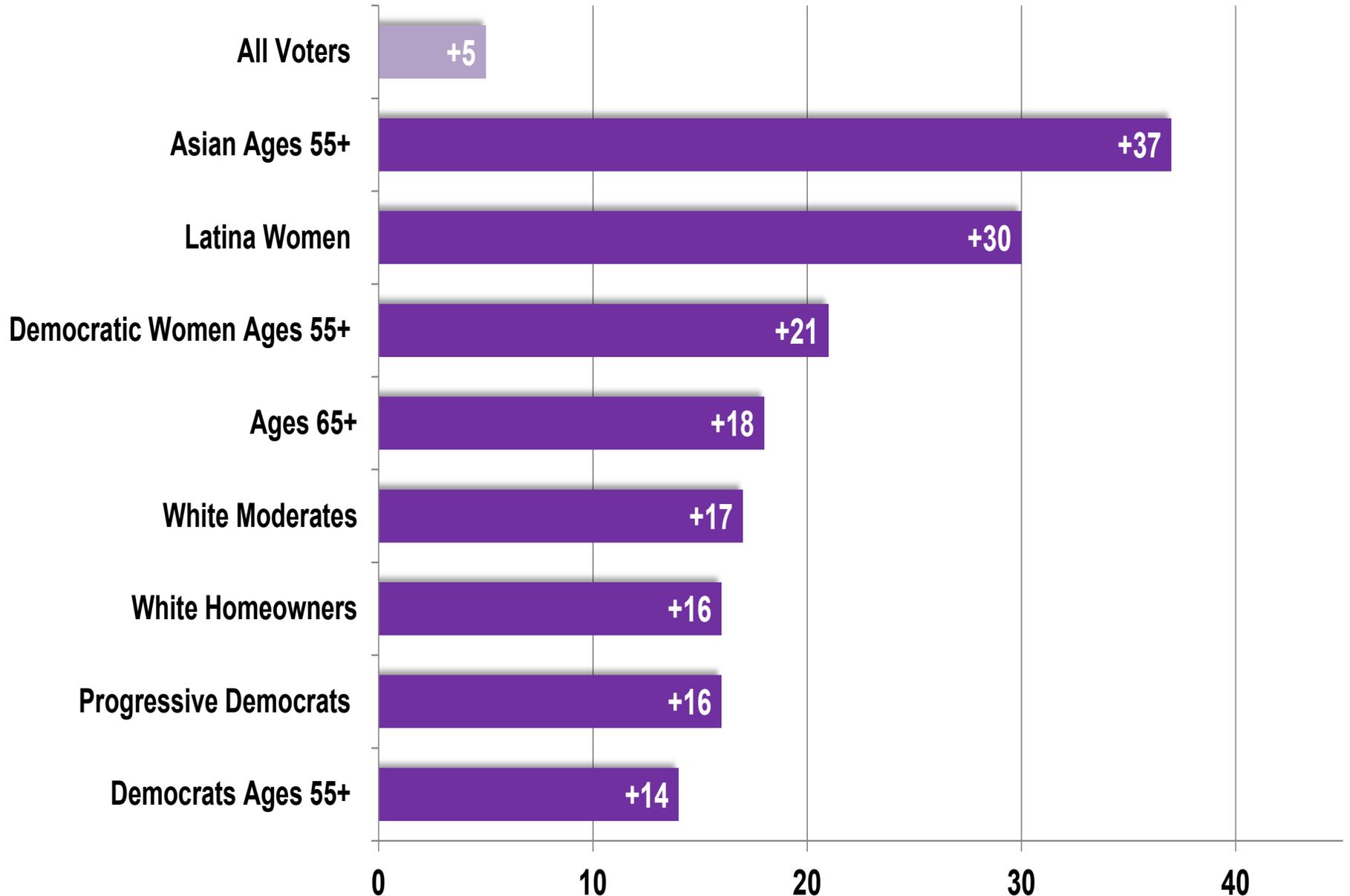


## Yes Shifters: Groups That Move Towards Yes After Positive Messages



\*Data reflects net vote shift from Initial Vote (Q8) to Re-Vote (Q14)

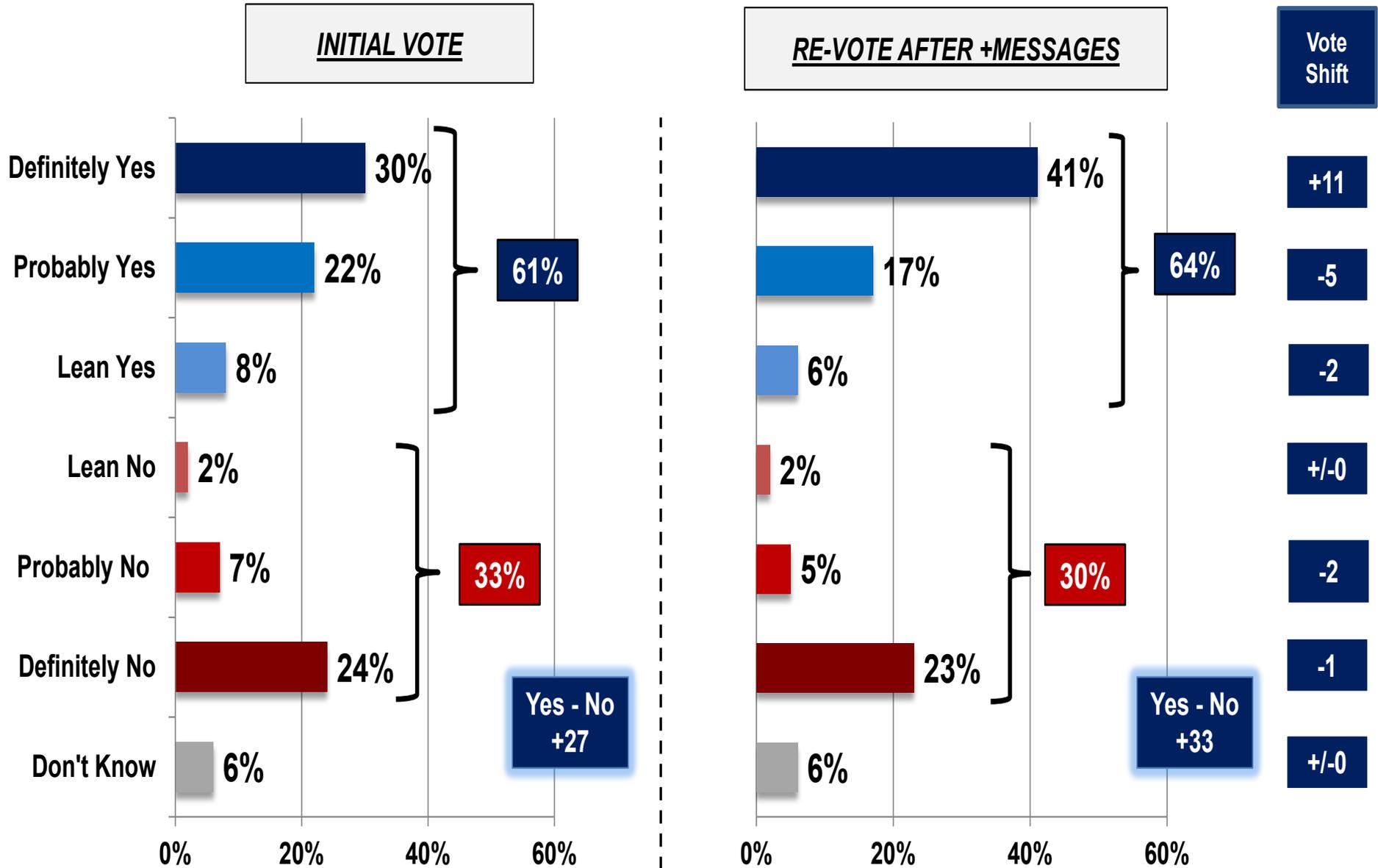
## Groups That Moved Towards Yes From 2023 to 2024



\*Data reflects net vote shift from 2023 to 2024

# Messaging

# Modest Increases in Support After Positive Messaging with Significant Boost to *Definite Yes*



# East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 1

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. (RANDOMIZE)

%10  
Rating

**(CLEAN UP DUMPING)** Clean up the illegal dumping of mattresses, appliances, old cars and toxic chemicals that occurs in and around park land

8.57

56%

**(WILDFIRE RISK)** Minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the East Bay by using proactive vegetation management

8.35

51%

**(FUTURE GENERATIONS)** Preserve parklands and trails for future generations

7.98

44%

**(OVERSIGHT)** Require community oversight to ensure transparency and accountability

7.95

45%

**(AUDITS)** Require annual independent financial audits

7.84

40%

**(EXTREME WEATHER)** Ensure the District has the resources it needs to deal with the impact from extreme weather including damage from more severe storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and toxic algae blooms

7.78

39%

■ Means rating on 1-10 scale

5.00 5.50 6.00 6.50 7.00 7.50 8.00 8.50

# East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 2

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. (RANDOMIZE)

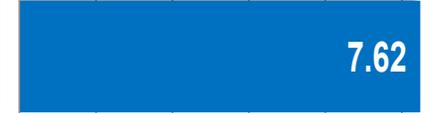
%10  
Rating

**(PRIORITIZE RESTORATION)** Prioritize restoration of watersheds, lakes and urban creeks



35%

**(EXISTING TRAILS)** Maintain existing regional trails, including the Bay, Ridge and Iron Horse Trails



33%

**(RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS)** Restore ecosystems impacted by drought and other extreme weather with natural, fire-resistant vegetation



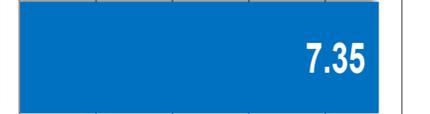
41%

**(MAINTAIN PARKS)** Provide funding to ensure the Park District can effectively maintain its 73 parks, 126 thousand acres of parkland and over 1,250 miles of trails across Alameda and Contra Costa Counties



36%

**(STEWARDSHIP/EXTREME WEATHER)** Restore natural habitats with on-going stewardship in response to drought and other extreme weather patterns



31%

**(STEWARDSHIP)** Provide funding for ongoing stewardship of natural areas and wildlife habitat



32%

■ Means rating on 1-10 scale

5.00 5.50 6.00 6.50 7.00 7.50 8.00 8.50

Slide 23

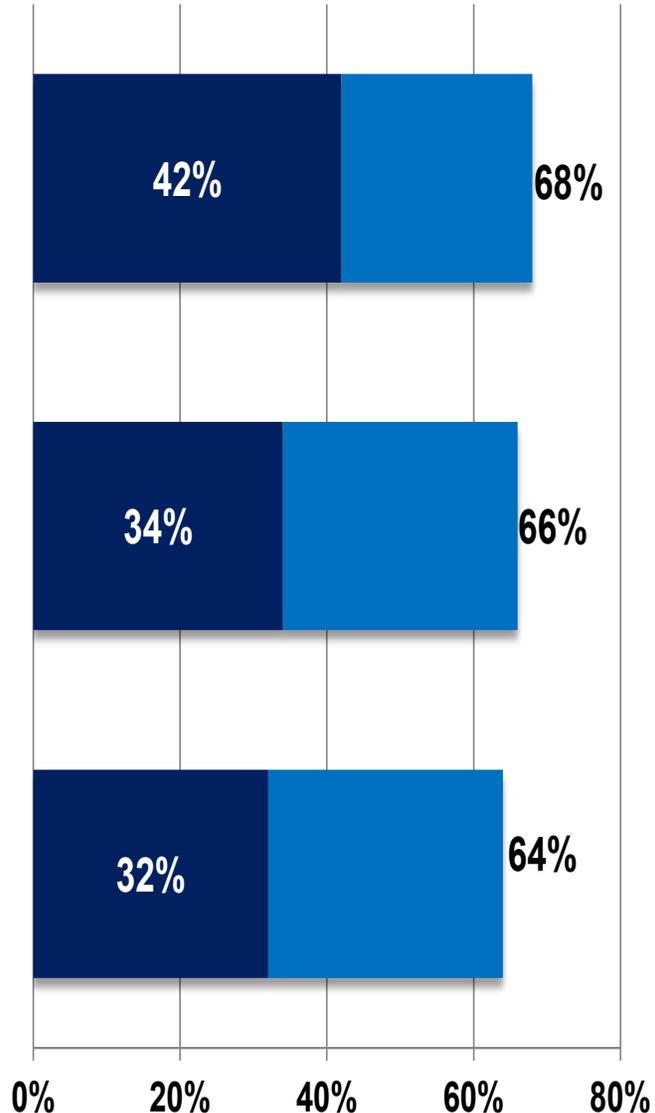
# Positive Messages: Tier 1

Here are statements *SUPPORTERS* have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. **(RANDOMIZE)**

**(FIRE)** In the last five years, the state of California experienced the worst wildfires in recorded history. Drought conditions, dry and dying vegetation, and increased tree mortality across the East Bay require additional resources to manage fire-resilient, safe, and healthy forests. We need to increase funding for vegetation management, fire safety equipment and additional firefighters to protect our community from catastrophic wildfire.

**(ASSET/FUTURE GENERATIONS)** Our East Bay parks are a tremendous asset that contribute to our quality of life. Between Tilden, Briones, Reinhardt Redwood, Lake Chabot, Ardenwood, Crown Beach, Lake Temescal, Black Diamond Mines, Del Valle and the dozens of other regional parks in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. These parks provide important access for open space, recreation, hiking, walking, picnicking, family time and so much more. We should invest in them and help preserve them for future generations.

**(MAINTAIN)** The East Bay Regional Park District is the largest and most extensive regional park system in the country. It has 73 parks, covers more than 126 thousand acres, and is home to over 1,125 miles of trails. It requires significant resources to maintain in the face of rising use, increasing weather impacts and higher maintenance costs. The district needs funding to keep up with these costs so it can continue to provide the quality parks and trails for our communities.



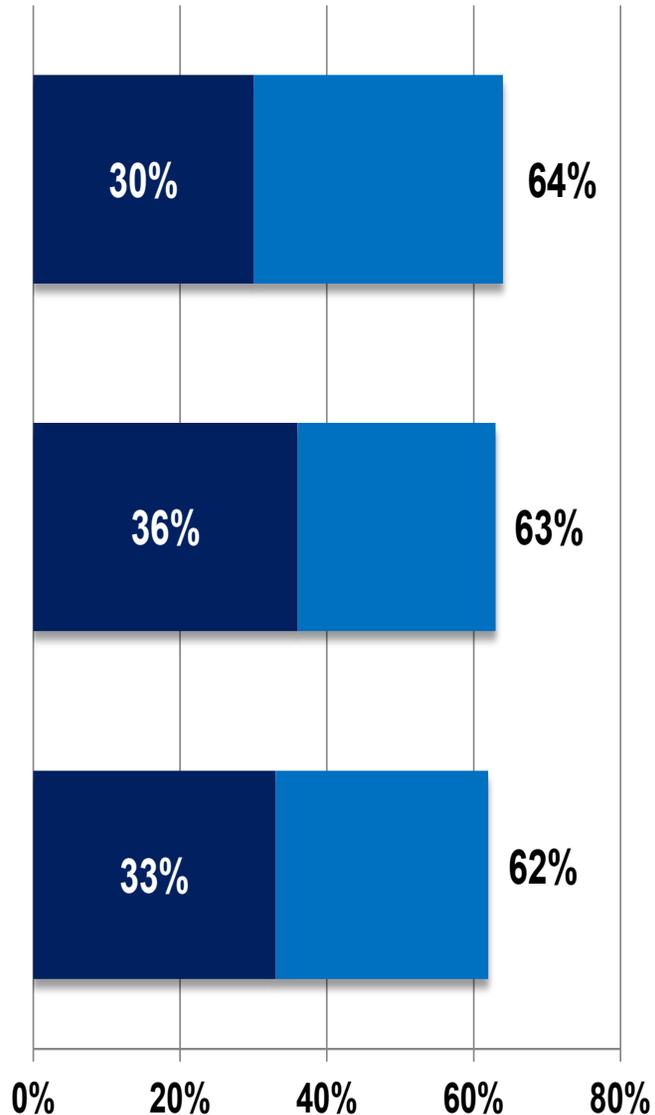
## Positive Messages: Tier 2

Here are statements *SUPPORTERS* have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. **(RANDOMIZE)**

**(EXTREME WEATHER)** The East Bay Regional Park District has seen a rapid increase in damage caused by extreme weather. With more frequent and severe storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and toxic algae blooms causing millions of dollars of damage to our parks and trails every year. The Park District needs additional funding to repair the damage and maintain access to our parks and trails.

**(\$2/MONTH)** This measure will provide value to our community. For less than a cup of coffee—just \$2 a month for homeowners— and a fraction of the cost of a single admission to a national park like Yosemite, the East Bay Regional Park District can better maintain dozens of parks with existing trails. It will reduce wildfire risk, repair damage from storms, protect natural habitat and increase access to public park lands in the East Bay.

**(CLIMATE)** The East Bay Regional Park District has seen a rapid increase in damage caused by climate change. With more frequent and severe storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and toxic algae blooms causing millions of dollars of damage to our parks and trails every year. The Park District needs additional funding to address this new ongoing challenge, repair damage and maintain access to our parks and trails.



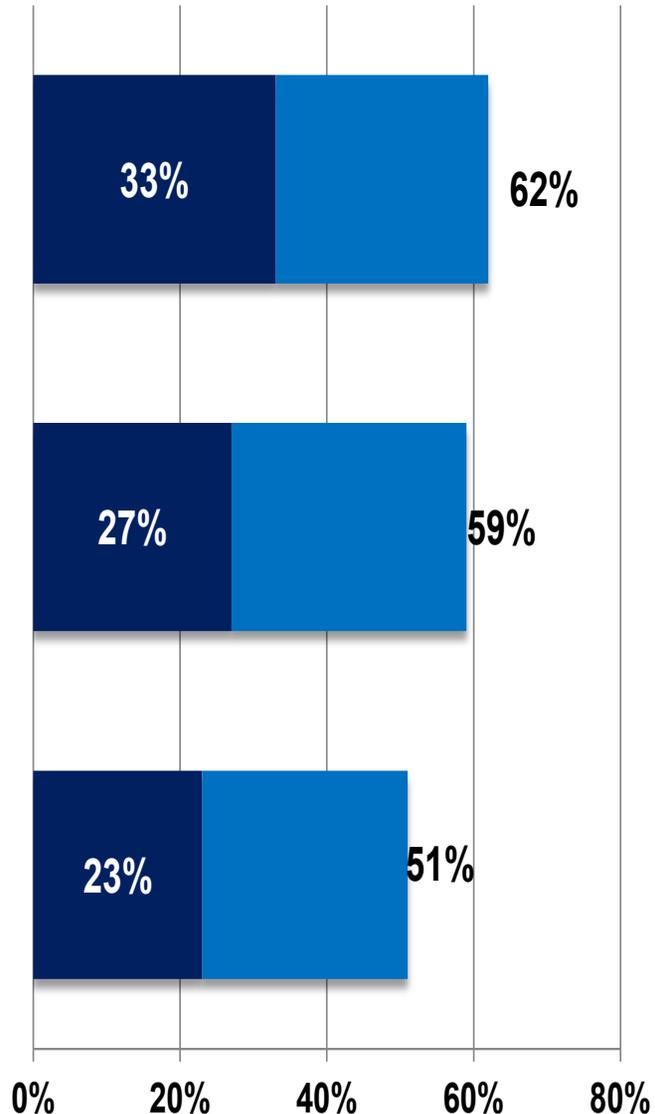
## Positive Messages: Tier 3

Here are statements *SUPPORTERS* have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. **(RANDOMIZE)**

**(90/FUTURE)** The East Bay Regional Park District is a valuable community resource, but it is 90 years old and needs more care and investment. It has over 90 million dollars of deferred maintenance for trails and facilities, as many of its original facilities were depression era buildings built nearly 100 years ago. We must invest in these facilities and services, such as restrooms, trails and park maintenance to ensure we can continue to safely access and feel welcomed in our parks.

**(NEW PARKS)** The East Bay Regional Park District has experienced a significant increase in park use and population growth in recent years, placing increased demand on our regional parks. To accommodate this growth, the Park District could benefit from additional funds to meet increasing demand by allowing the agency to open additional park areas already owned by the Park District, but it requires funding to operate and maintain the sites safely.

**(EQUITABLE ACCESS)** This measure will support the goals of the Park District's updated Strategic Plan including expanding equitable access to parks and trails for all East Bay community members, not just those who happen to live near a park. Welcoming visitor use facilities, well maintained trails and restrooms, and expanded staff presence will also ensure everyone can safely experience the benefits of nature.



# Executive Summary

- Voter pessimism has increased since previous research.
- Voters continue to hold the EBRPD in high regard. They overwhelmingly approve of the job the District is doing to “*operate a system of regional parks and trails in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties*” (77% approve, 36% strongly approve) compared to just seven percent of voters who disapprove and 16% who are undecided or unsure about the job the district is doing, which is statistically unchanged from a year ago.
- A solid majority of voters supports a revenue measure to increase funding for parks and open space in the East Bay, with increased support since last year.
- While support has increased for a parcel tax funding measure, it continues to fall short of the needed two-thirds threshold to pass such a measure indicating a public education and communication effort is needed to increase support. Despite a more pessimistic electorate, it is encouraging to see notable increases in support over time for a funding measure.

# For More Information, Contact:

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