

M E E T N G
S R E E T



KEY FINDINGS FROM A STATEWIDE SURVEY IN NORTH CAROLINA



KEY FINDINGS FROM AN FEBRUARY 22–25, 2021,
SURVEY OF 500 REGISTERED VOTERS

METHODOLOGY

Meeting Street Insights is pleased to present the key findings from a survey of registered voters in North Carolina.

Interviews were completed February 22–25, 2021, among N=500 registered voters with a mix of cell phone and landline interviewing.

The margin of error for a sample size of N=500 is $\pm 4.38\%$.

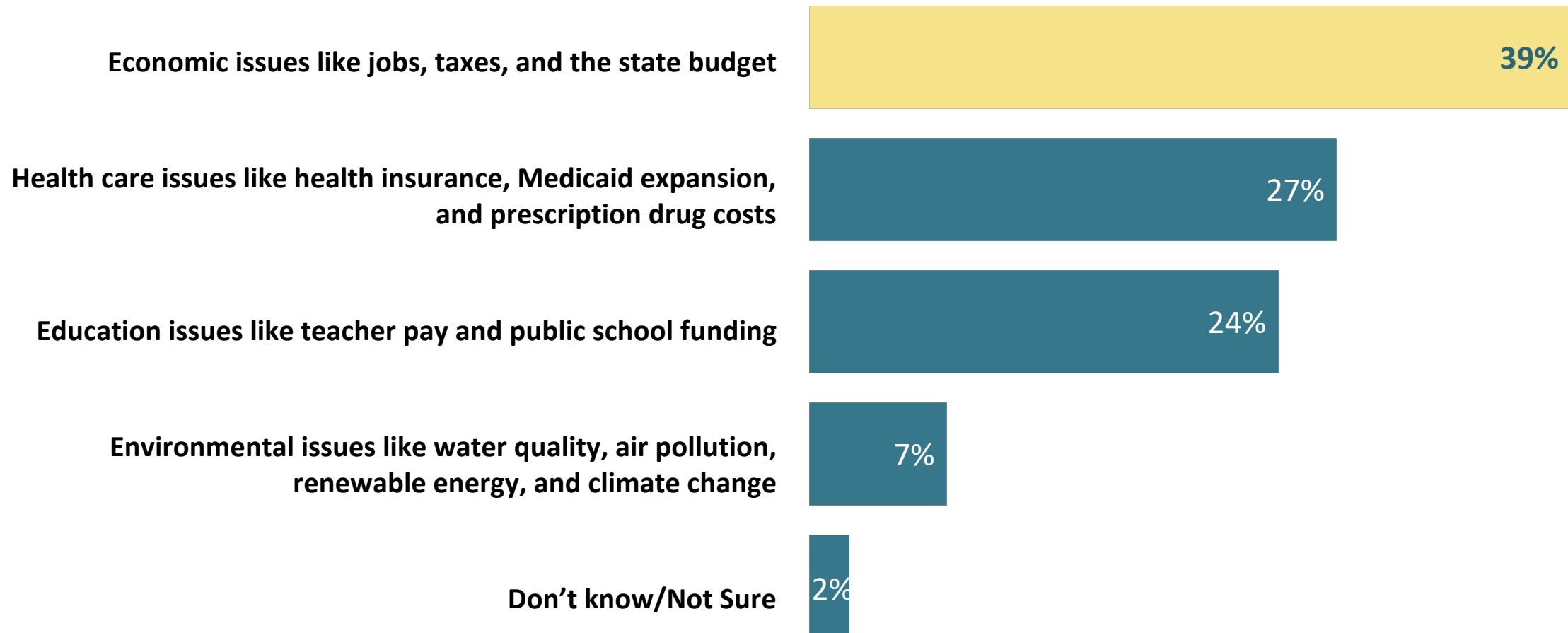


THE ISSUE AGENDA



Other than the pandemic, voters want the General Assembly to be focused on economic issues.

“Now, thinking about the upcoming session of the State Legislature in Raleigh that starts this month, with the exception of the COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following four issues do you think Legislators should focus the most attention on?”



Republicans, Unaffiliateds, and white voters want the Legislature to focus on the economy. Democrats want health care, and African Americans focus on education.

Issue Agenda By Key Subgroups

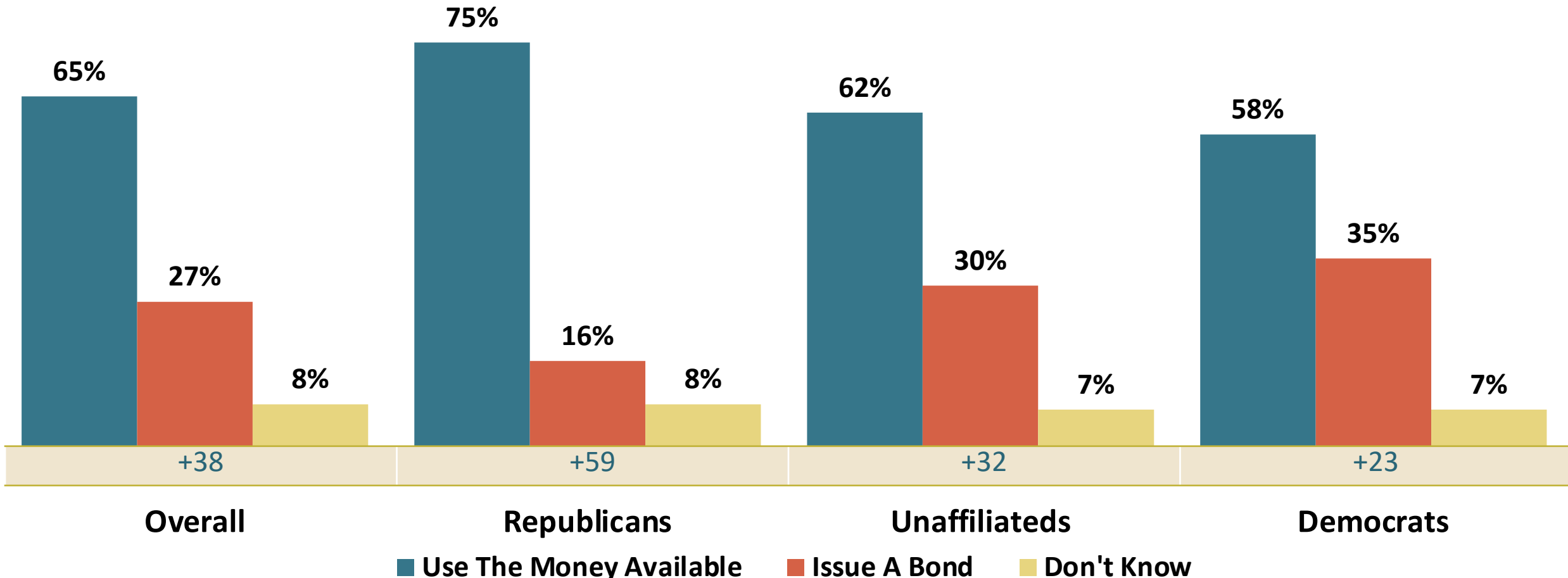
	Republicans	Unaffiliateds	Democrats	White Men	White Women	African Americans
Economic Issues	64%	37%	17%	49%	43%	8%
Health Care Issues	16%	23%	42%	24%	27%	36%
Education Issues	19%	25%	29%	18%	19%	48%
Environmental Issues	1%	11%	8%	7%	9%	4%
Don't Know	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%



BUDGET

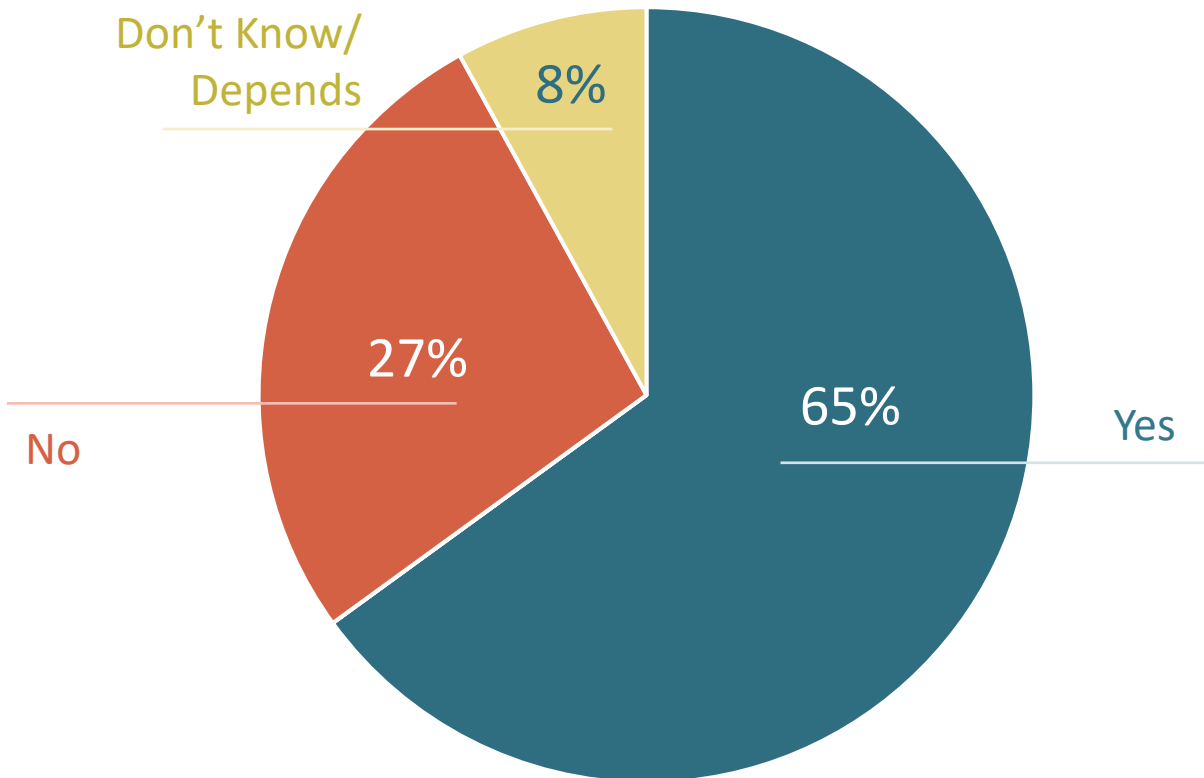
Voters would prefer a pay-as-you-go method of infrastructure funding over issuing a bond.

“When it comes to paying for the state's needs, which approach do you support more when it comes to paying for roads, schools, and water and sewer infrastructure?”



About two-thirds of voters and majorities of every major subgroup say lowering taxes on families and businesses helps create jobs and grow the economy.

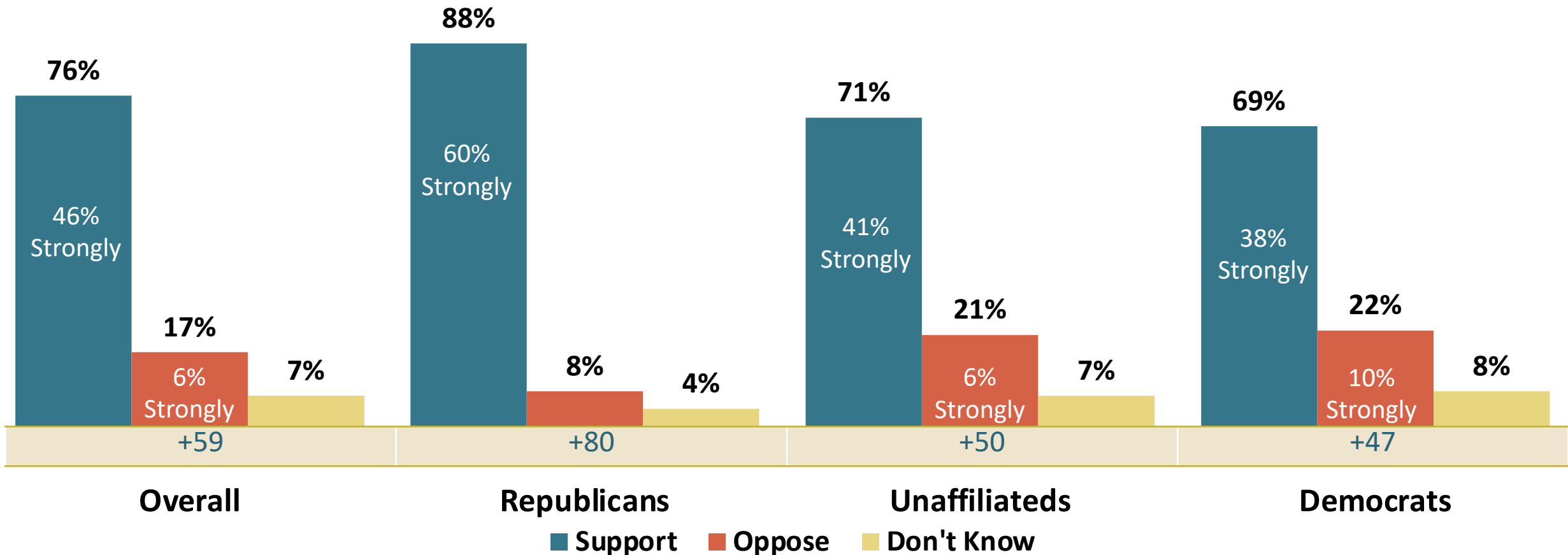
“Do you believe that lowering income taxes on families and businesses helps to create jobs and grow the economy, or not?”



	Yes	No
Republicans	85%	13%
Unaffiliateds	60%	29%
Democrats	51%	39%
White Men Ages 18-54	71%	24%
White Men Ages 55+	70%	24%
White Women Ages 18-54	54%	32%
White Women Ages 55+	70%	23%
African Americans	59%	33%
Small Eastern Markets	70%	20%
Raleigh Market	62%	31%
Triad Market	71%	20%
Charlotte Market	66%	28%
Small Western Markets	55%	35%

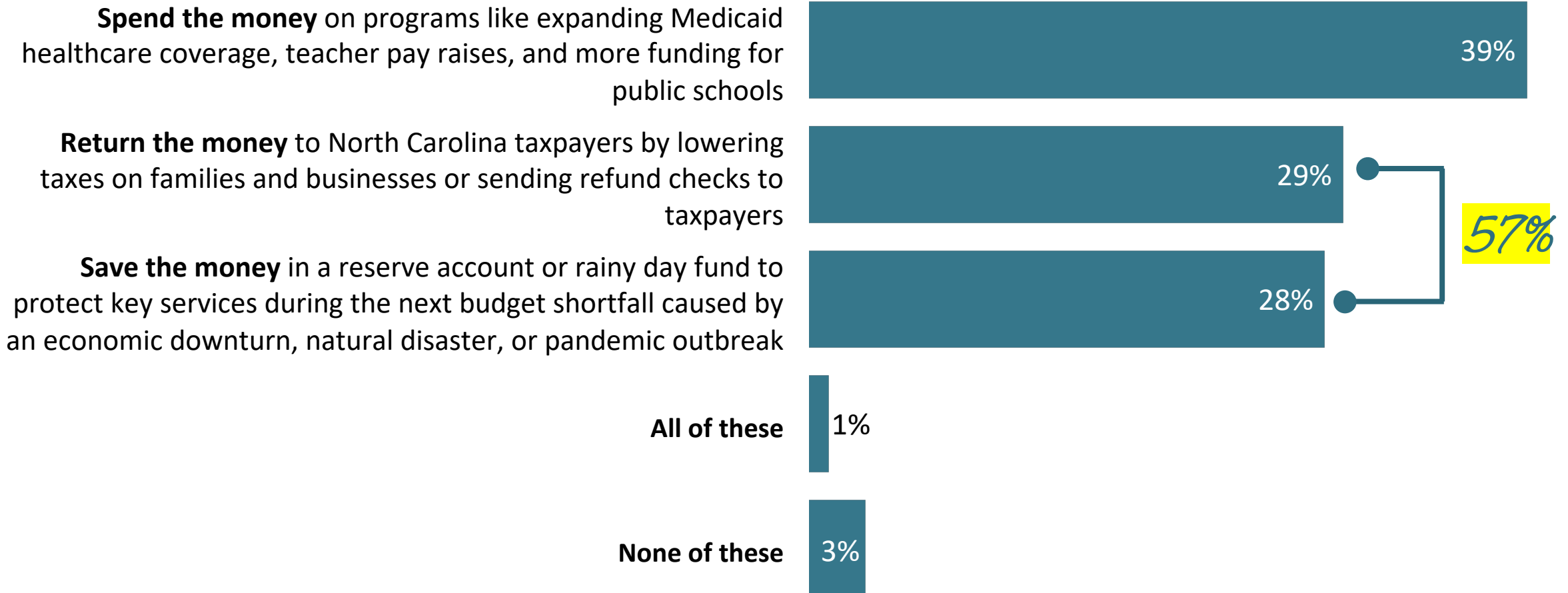
Three-quarters of voters would support making the first \$25k of a family’s income tax-free and reducing the income tax rate to 4.9%.

“Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE a proposal to cut taxes on North Carolina families and small businesses by making the first \$25,000 of a family's income tax-free and reducing the income tax rate from 5.25% to 4.9%?”



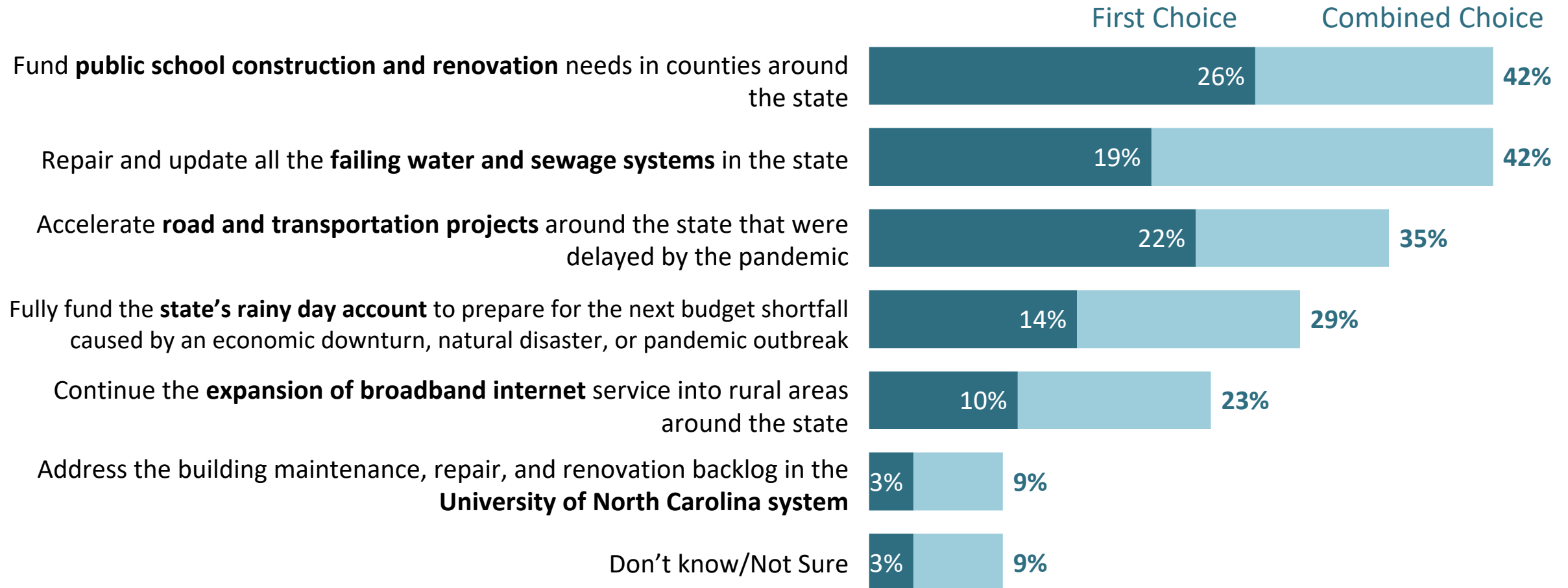
A plurality would want the surplus to be spent, but a majority would prefer either lowering taxes or sending refund checks or saving it in a rainy day fund.

“As you may know, the state may have a budget surplus of over \$4 billion. Which of the following approaches for handling the surplus comes closest to what you think state legislators should do?”



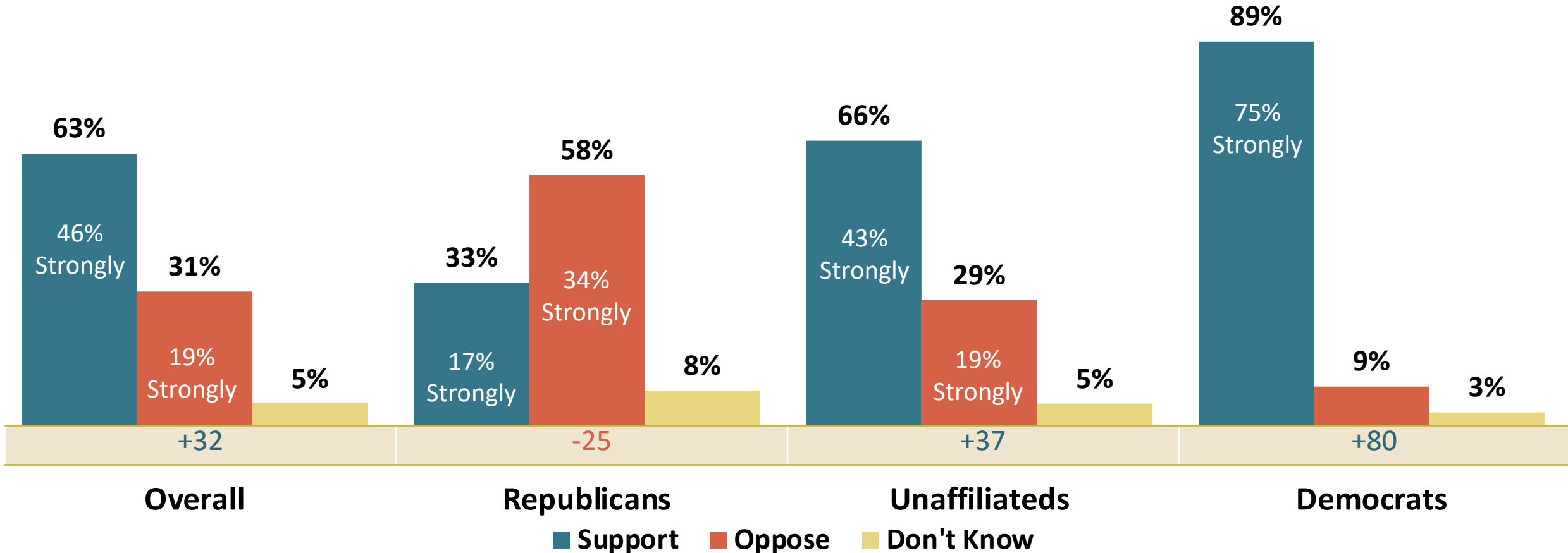
When it comes to spending priorities, school construction and repairing failing water and sewer systems top the priority list.

“Please tell me which of the following six priorities you think is the most important one for the Legislature in Raleigh to focus on.”



Medicaid expansion remains very popular. *Strong* support for expansion is higher than overall opposition.

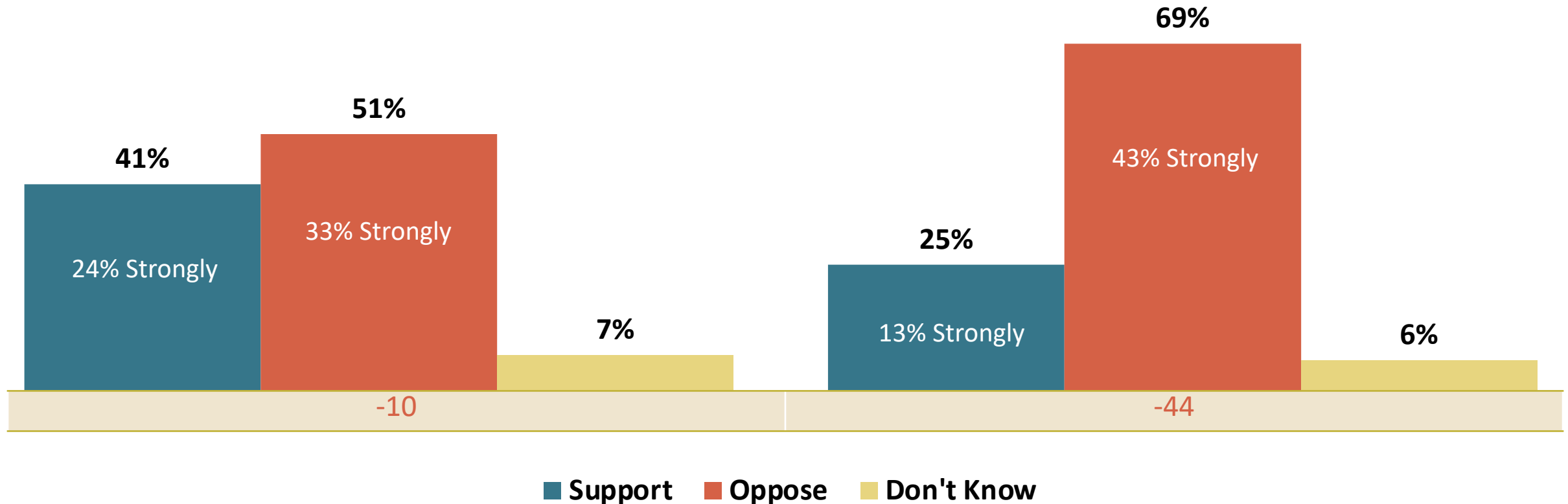
“Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE a proposal to expand the state's Medicaid program by making three hundred thousand new people eligible to participate?”



Despite Medicaid expansion being so popular, voters oppose Governor Cooper vetoing the state budget because it doesn't include it.

“As you may know, in recent years, Governor Cooper has vetoed any state budget that did not include Medicaid expansion. Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE Governor Cooper vetoing this year's state budget if it does not include Medicaid expansion?”

“As you may know, in recent years, Governor Cooper has vetoed any state budget that did not include Medicaid expansion—even if it meant **blocking teacher raises and tax cuts for families, too**. Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE Governor Cooper vetoing this year's state budget if it does not include Medicaid expansion?”



*Each question asked of half the sample.

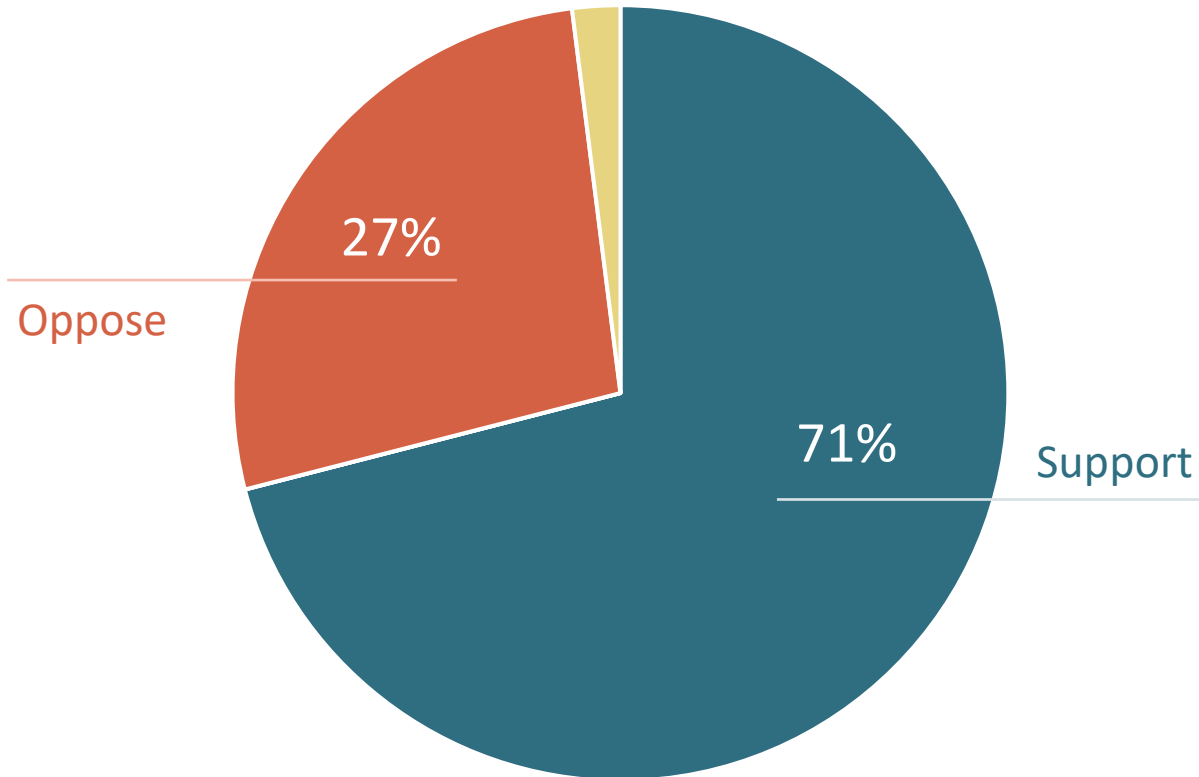


EDUCATION



Voters would overwhelmingly support new lottery games to generate \$250 million per year for school construction.

“Would you support or oppose a proposal that would authorize the state lottery to offer new lottery games that would generate over \$250 million every year to build and update North Carolina's public school buildings?”



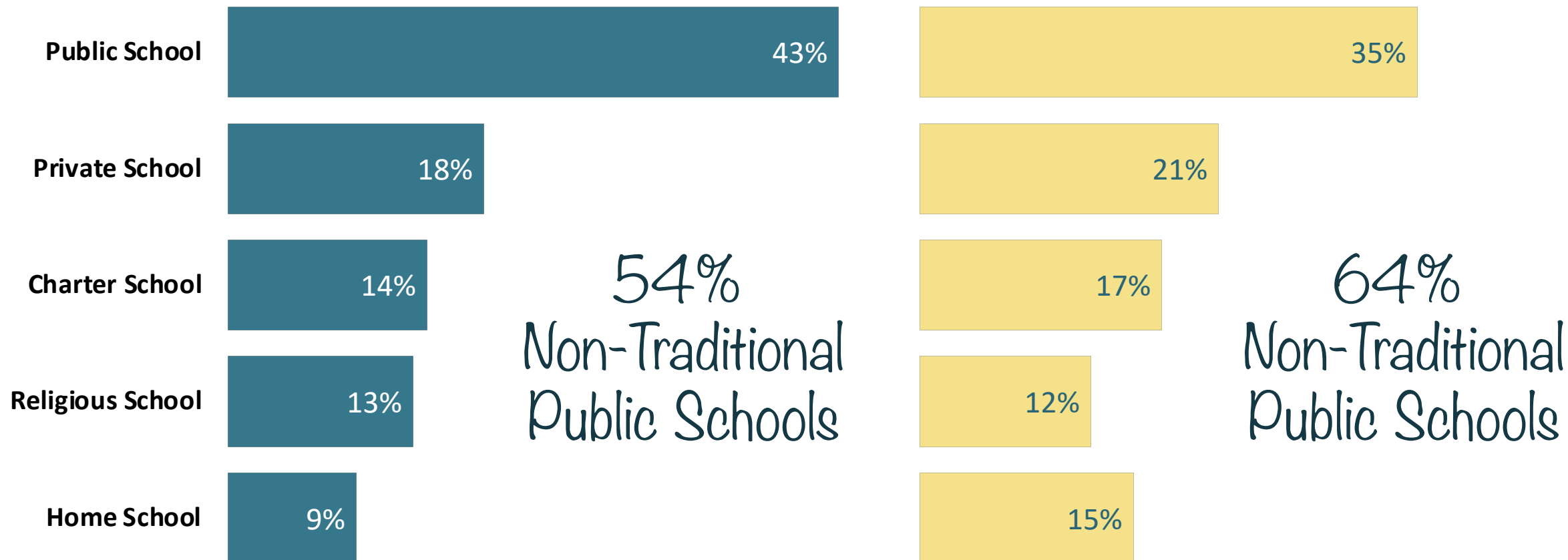
	Support	Oppose
Base Republicans	57%	42%
Soft Republicans	69%	28%
Unaffiliateds	73%	26%
Soft Democrats	83%	17%
Base Democrats	77%	19%
Conservatives	64%	34%
Moderates	76%	24%
Liberals	76%	20%
Evangelicals	67%	30%
Republican Evangelicals	59%	40%
Trump Voters	65%	32%
Biden Voters	77%	21%

Just over four-in-ten voters—and about a third of parents—would choose public schools for their children if cost, distance, and transportation were not factors.

“If cost, distance, and transportation were not factors and you could send your child or grandchild to any kind of school in North Carolina, would you choose to send them to a...”

Overall

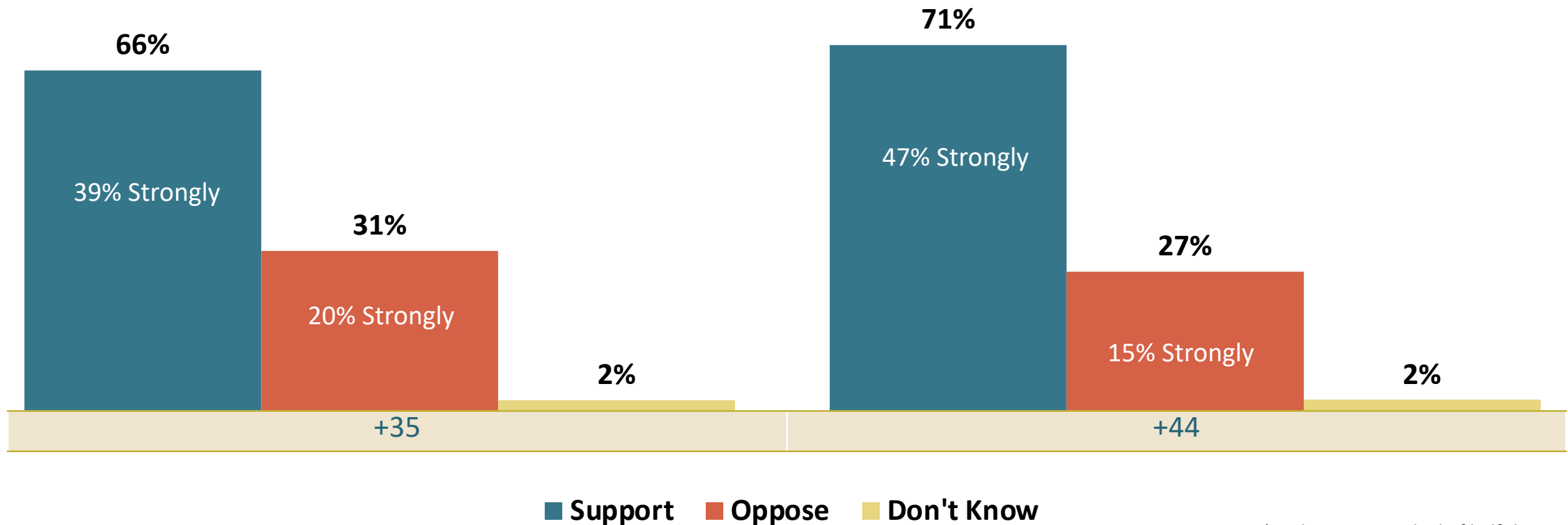
Parents



The Opportunity Scholarship program is very popular among voters.

“Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship program that provides \$4,200 scholarships to a family of four making under \$75,000 a year so they can choose to send their child to a private school if they believe their local public school doesn't meet their child's needs?”

“Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship program that provides \$4,200 scholarships to single mothers with one child making less than \$50,000 a year so they can choose to send their child to a private school if they believe their local public school doesn't meet their child's needs?”

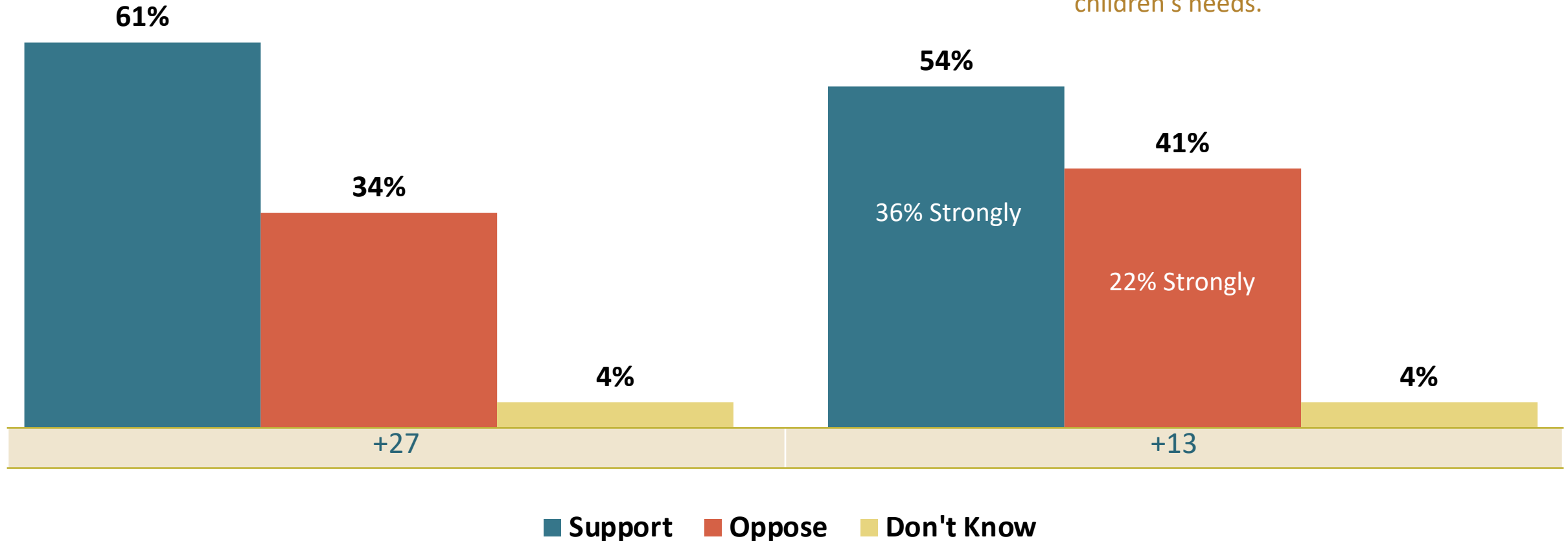


*Each question asked of half the sample.

And, voters would support expanding the program.

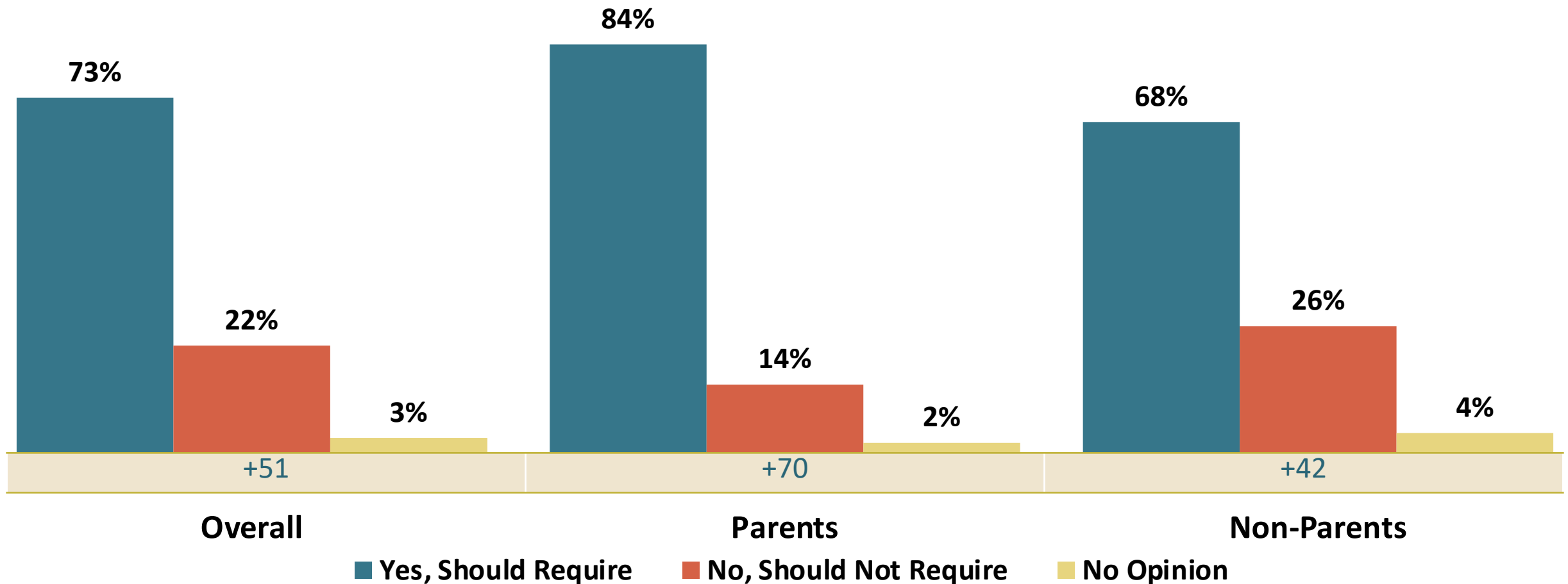
“Would you support or oppose increasing the dollar amount of Opportunity Scholarship grants from \$4,200 per year to \$6,500 per year?”

“Would you support or oppose expanding the Opportunity Scholarship program to all families making less than \$100,000 per year to provide more parents the opportunity to choose private schools if their local public schools aren't meeting their children's needs.”



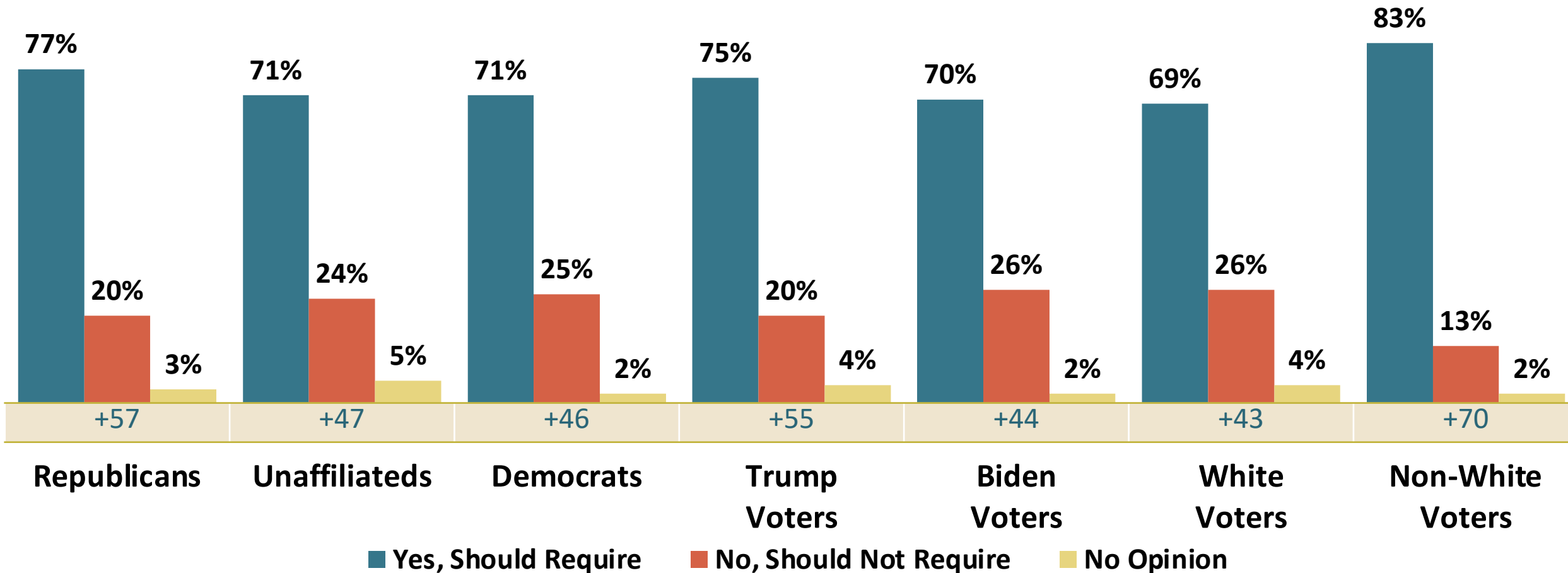
About three-fourths of NC voters overall—and 84% of parents—say the state should require all school systems to offer an in-person option.

“Do you believe the state should require all school systems to offer parents an option for in-person instruction in addition to the choice of virtual instruction, or not?”



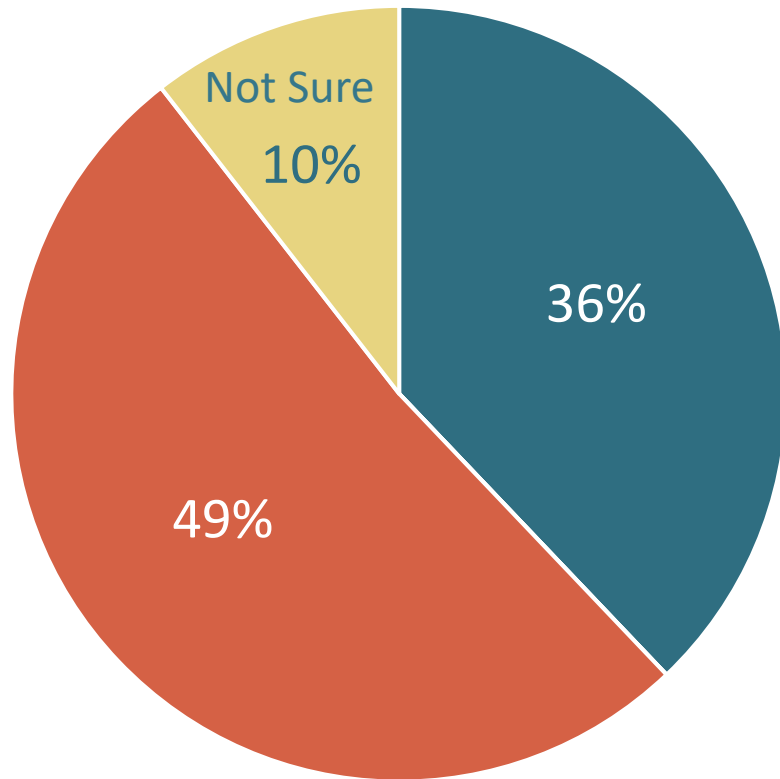
Requiring in-person instruction is extremely popular across political party and race.

In-Person Instruction By Party And 2020 Vote and Race



Voters are likelier to say parents rather than teachers have had the hardest time during the pandemic and should be compensated.

“And which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion about the challenges the pandemic has created with education?”



Teachers have had the hardest time during the pandemic and should get a \$2,500 payment from the state to compensate them.

Parents and students have had the hardest time during the pandemic, and families with school-age children should get a \$250 grant payment from the state to help cover the costs of virtual learning

	Parents	Teachers
Republicans	61%	24%
Unaffiliateds	45%	39%
Democrats	42%	46%
White Men	54%	33%
White Women	46%	35%
African Americans	41%	48%
Moms	58%	35%
Dads	57%	33%
Non-Parents	46%	37%
Small Eastern Markets	63%	30%
Raleigh Market	38%	47%
Triad Market	50%	33%
Charlotte Market	48%	33%
Small Western Markets	61%	28%



CORONAVIRUS

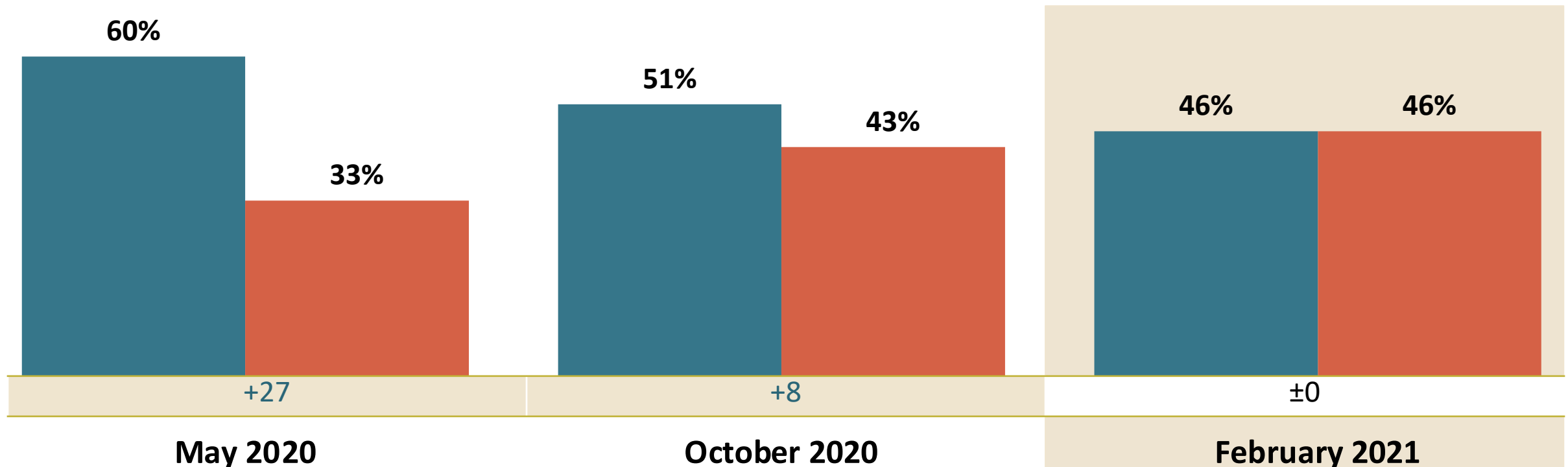


In a large shift since last May, voters are now just as likely to see shutdown orders as an overall negative as they are to see them as positive.

“Based on what you know, when you think about the shutdown orders that are in place for North Carolina's businesses and schools, which of the following statements do you tend to agree with more?”

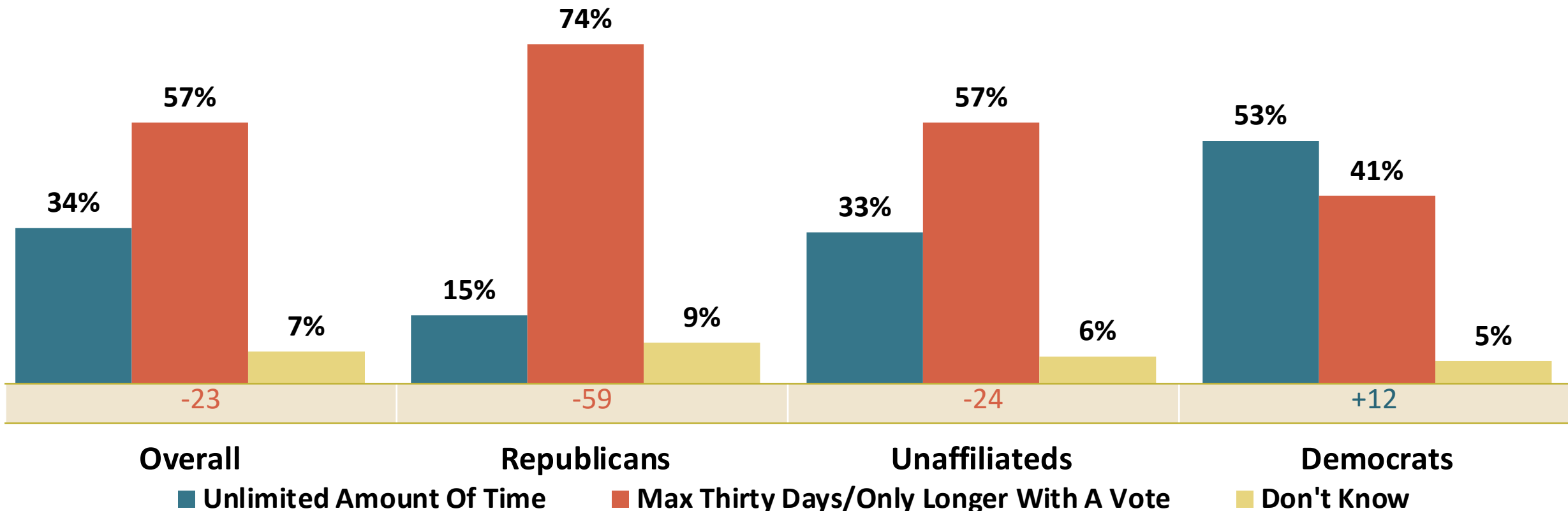
Overall the shutdown orders are a positive with the public health benefits outweighing the cost of missed school, job losses, and economic damage

Overall the shutdown orders are a negative with the cost of missed school, job losses, and economic damage outweighing the public health benefits



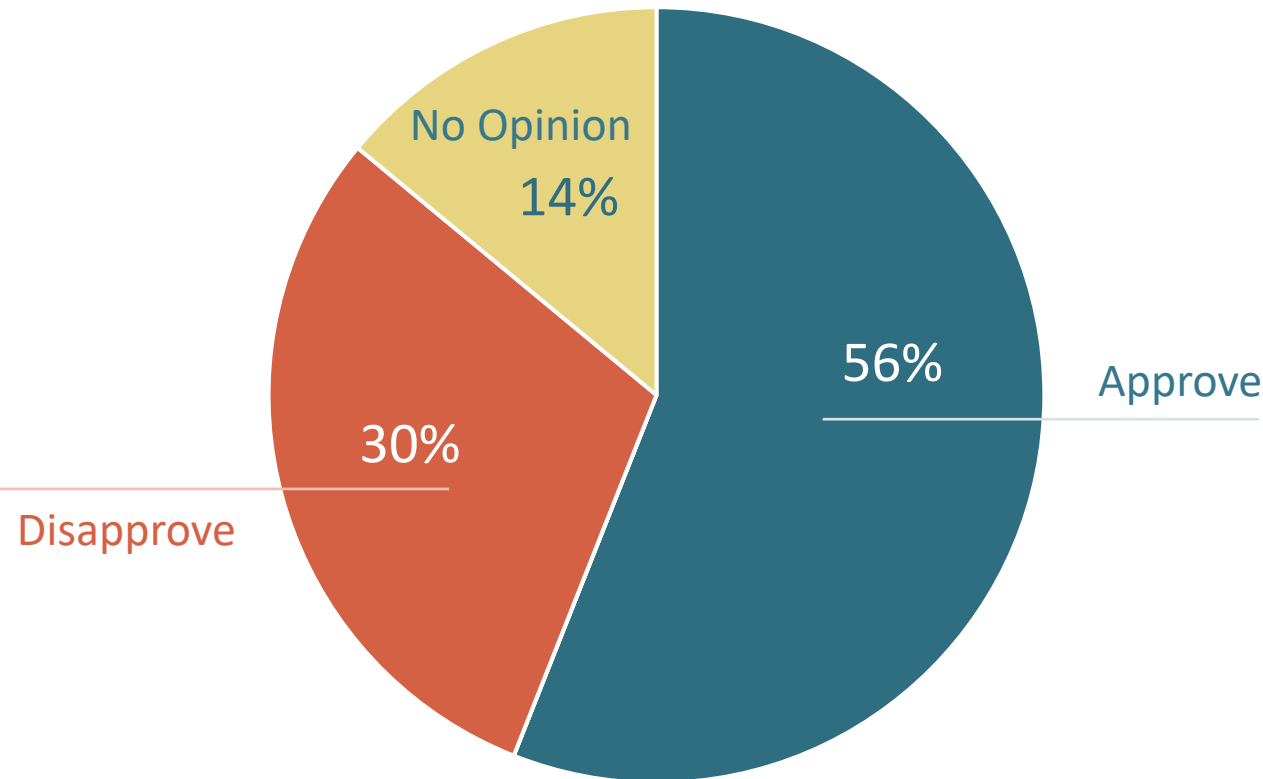
Only a third of voters say Governor Cooper should have emergency powers for an unlimited amount of time. A majority would prefer it be capped at 30 days without a vote of the State Legislature.

“Do you think Governor Cooper should have the authority to issue shutdown orders for COVID-19 and other emergencies for an unlimited amount of time, or a maximum of thirty days and only longer with a vote of the State Legislature?”



Voters mostly approve of the way the Cooper Administration has handled the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Cooper's administration has handled the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine here in North Carolina?”



	Approve	Disapprove
Republicans	39%	44%
Unaffiliateds	53%	29%
Democrats	75%	17%
White Men Ages 18-54	53%	28%
White Men Ages 55+	52%	45%
White Women Ages 18-54	53%	26%
White Women Ages 55+	53%	37%
African Americans	73%	15%
Small Eastern Markets	45%	45%
Raleigh Market	65%	26%
Triad Market	65%	22%
Charlotte Market	53%	26%
Small Western Markets	37%	43%



ELECTIONS

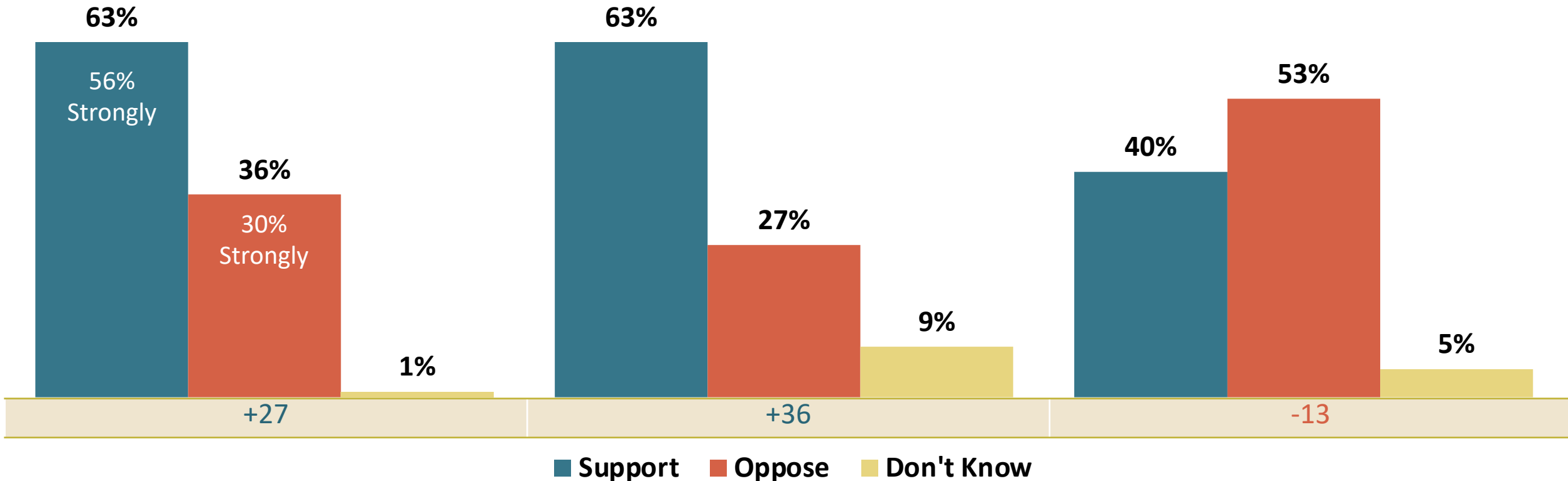


Voter ID and a non-partisan redistricting commission are popular reforms, but limiting mail-in ballots is opposed by a majority of voters.

“Do you support or oppose a new voter ID law that requires individuals to show a form of government-issued photo identification when they attempt to vote?”

“Would you support or oppose the state of North Carolina developing a non-partisan redistricting commission to draw local city council, school board, and county commission districts?”

“Thinking about future elections, would you support or oppose new limitations on when and who can request mail-in ballots?”



Voter ID is supported by Unaffiliateds, soft Democrats, and white voters across gender and age.

Key Election Reforms

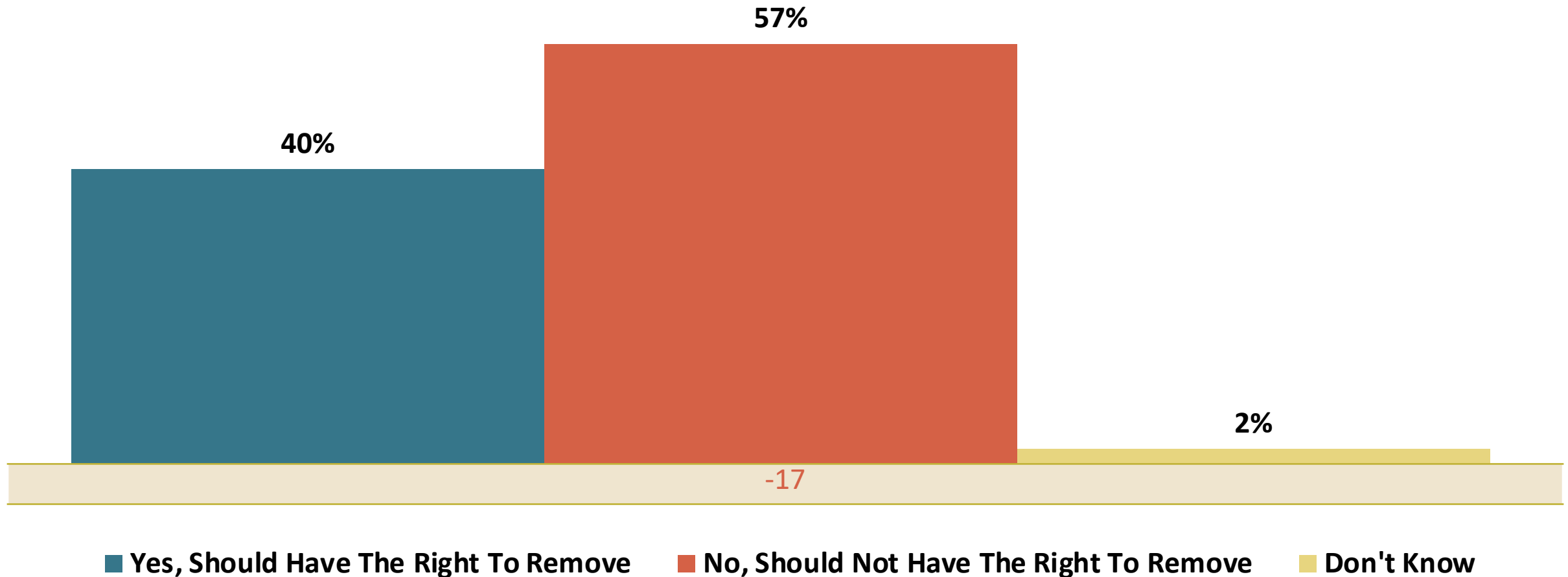
	Voter ID		Non-Partisan Redistricting Commission		Limitations On Mail-In Ballots	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Base Republicans	99%	1%	51%	34%	59%	34%
Soft Republicans	85%	14%	55%	33%	58%	40%
Unaffiliateds	63%	35%	64%	26%	41%	55%
Soft Democrats	55%	45%	70%	22%	37%	52%
Base Democrats	22%	78%	75%	18%	14%	78%
White Men Ages 18-54	71%	29%	72%	23%	52%	43%
White Men Ages 55+	83%	17%	60%	34%	40%	50%
White Women Ages 18-54	60%	40%	68%	21%	49%	49%
White Women Ages 55+	70%	28%	46%	36%	38%	54%
African Americans	35%	65%	74%	20%	25%	67%



IN THE NEWS

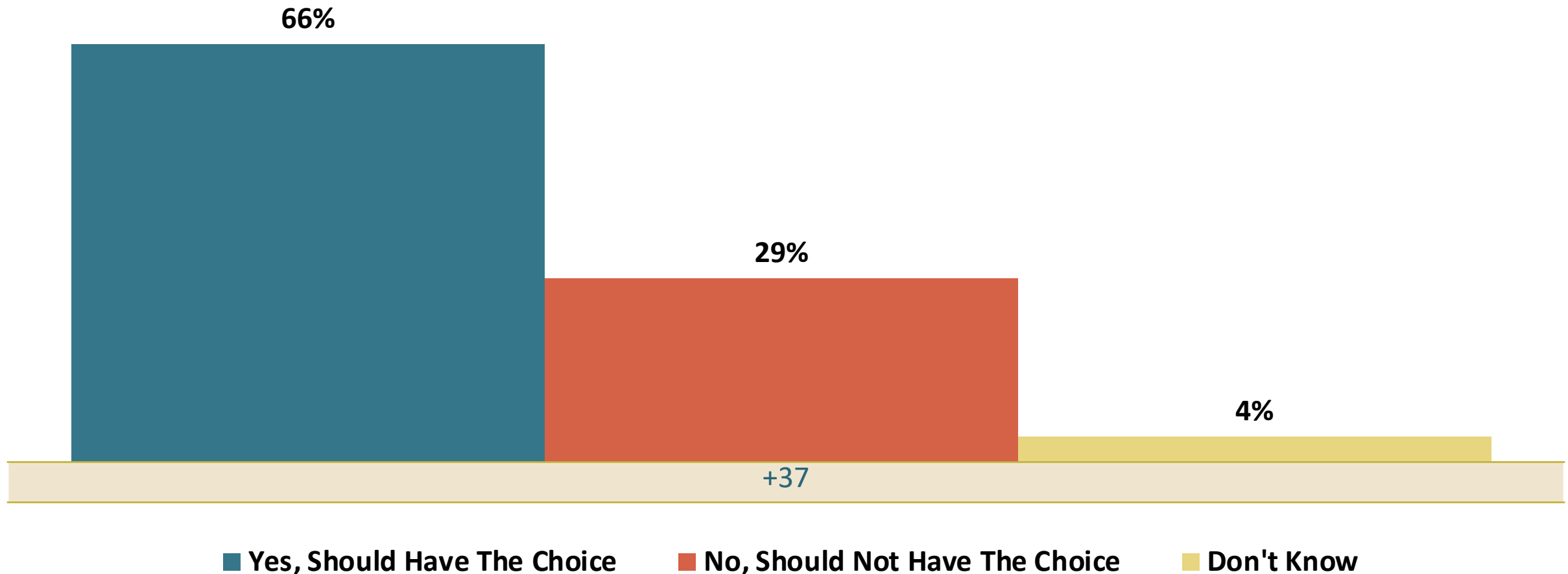
Most North Carolina voters believe big tech companies should not have the right to remove conservative politicians from their platforms.

“Do you believe big tech and social media companies such as Facebook, Amazon, Twitter, and Google should have the right to remove conservative politicians from their platforms, or not?”



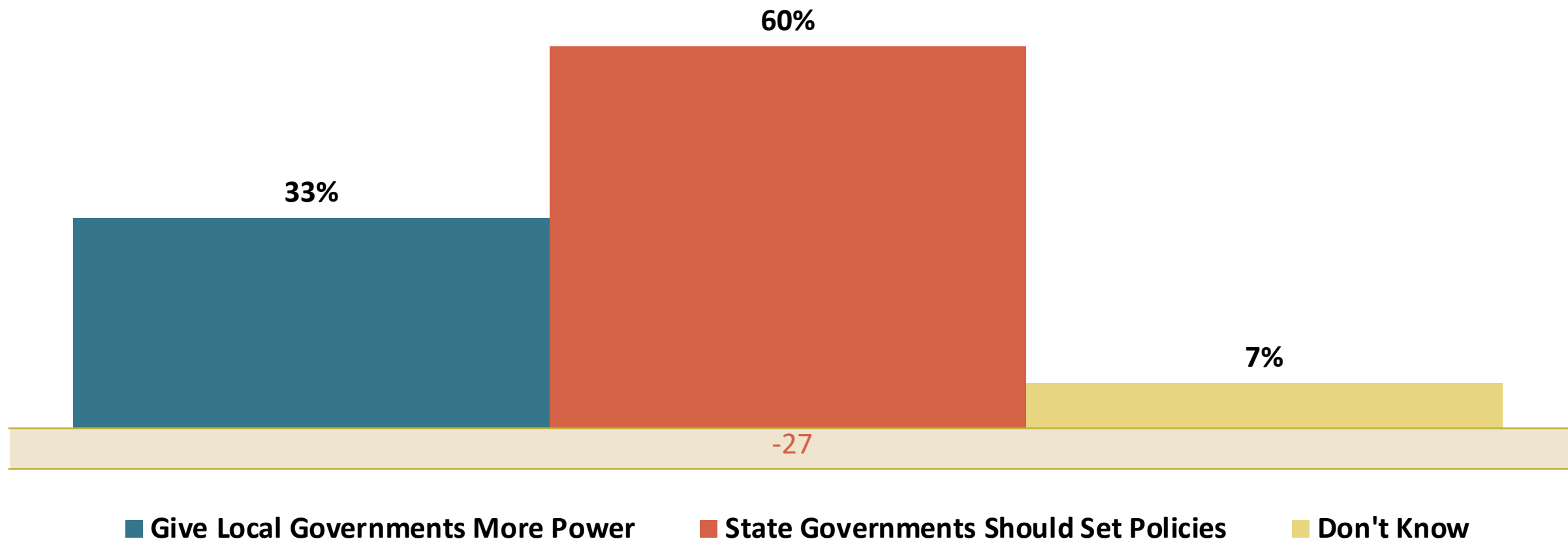
Two-thirds of voters say churches should be able to choose whether members with concealed carry permits can bring their guns with them to church.

“Should churches have the choice to allow their members who have their concealed carry permits to bring their guns with them to church, or should they not have that choice?”



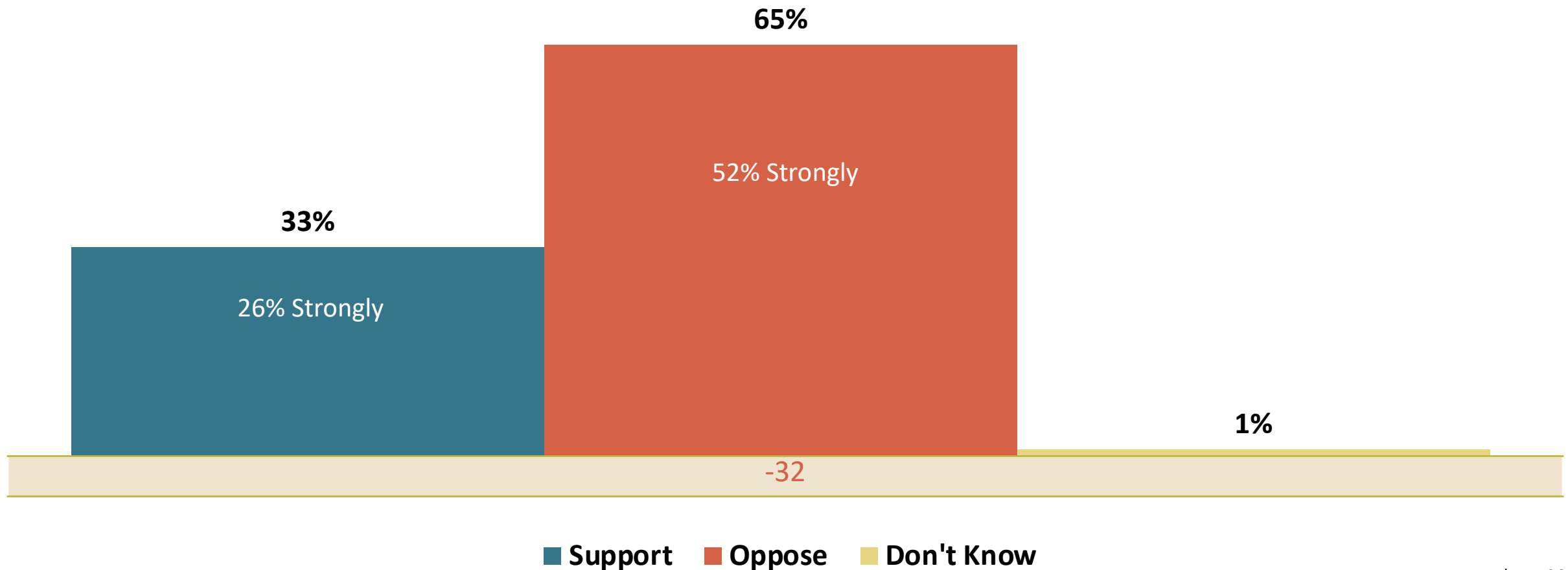
Voters are almost twice as likely to believe the state government should set policy for large counties rather than letting those counties set their own policies.

“Thinking about local and state government, should local governments in North Carolina's larger counties like Mecklenburg, Wake, Guilford, and Durham be given more power to set their own policies and sales tax rates, or should these counties continue to have state government set policies for them?”



Defunding the police is very unpopular, with a majority *strongly* opposed.

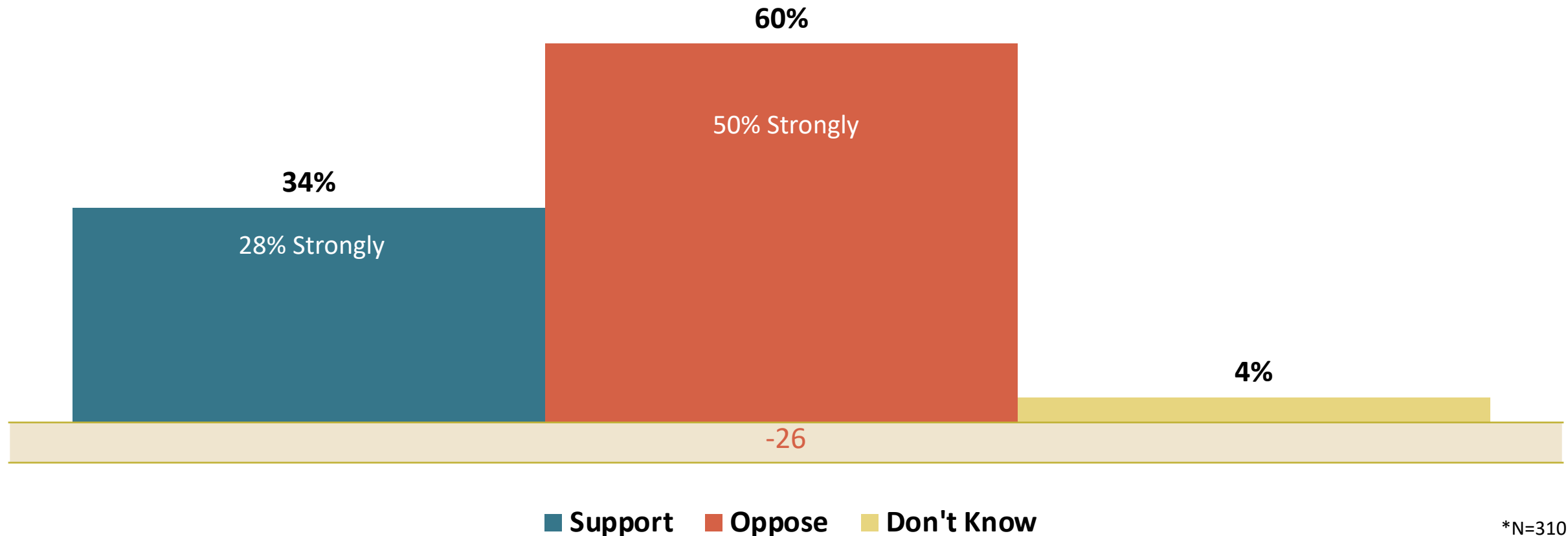
“Thinking about your local police department, do you support or oppose defunding your local police department?”



But, voters are also strongly opposed to the state cutting funding to cities that defund their police.

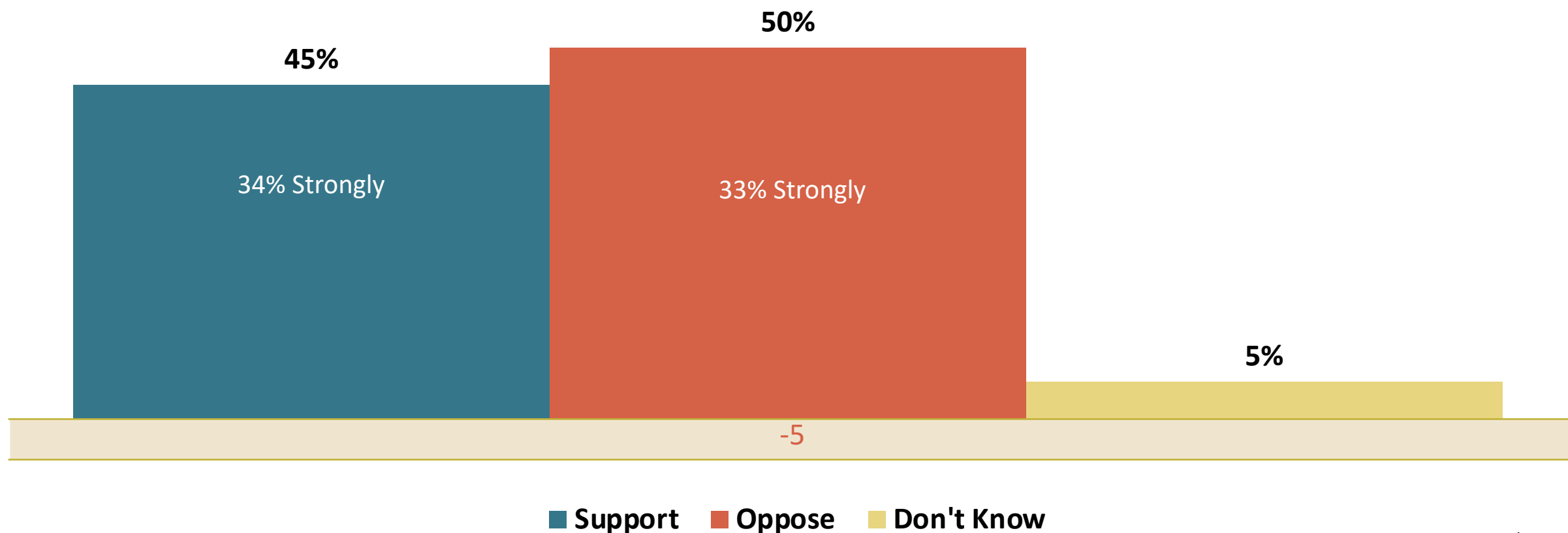
(They might think defunding those cities = defunding *the police* in those cities.)

“In response to the Black Lives Matter organization, city leaders in Durham and Greensboro have considered defunding the police. And the Asheville City Council voted to cut police department funding in the city budget last year. Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the North Carolina Legislature cutting state funding to cities that choose to defund their police departments?”



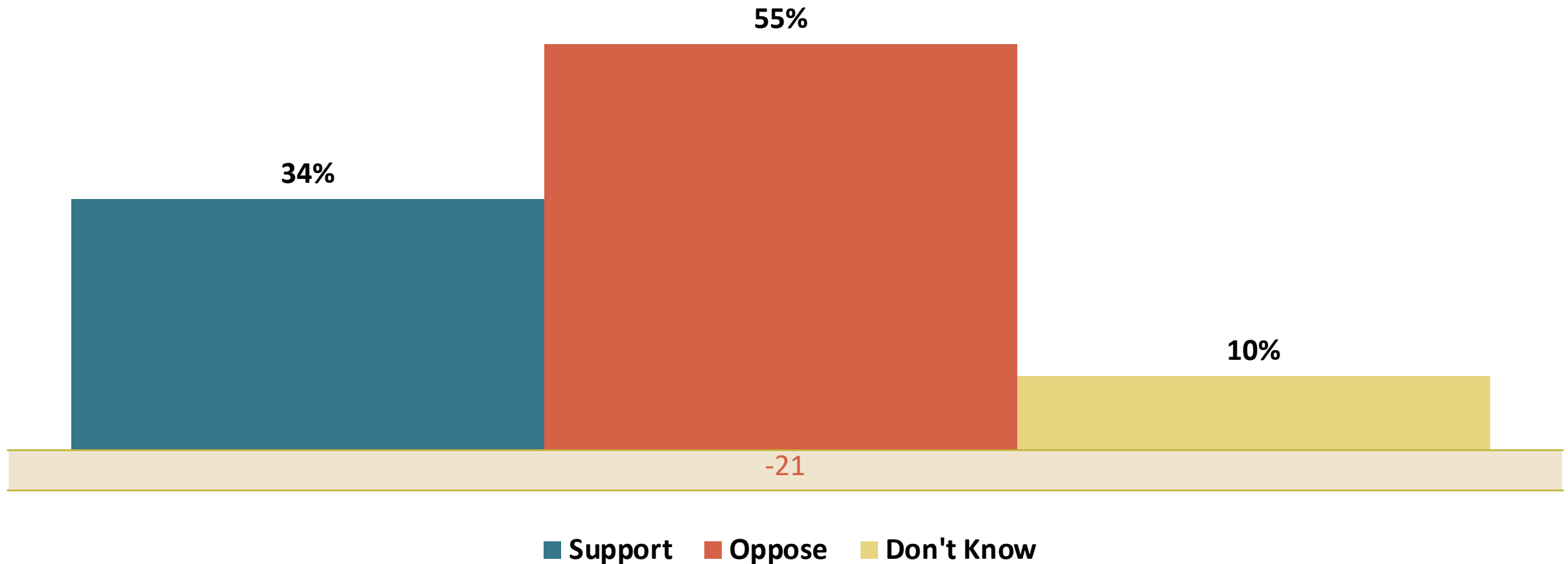
Even with our question language re-worded to try to clarify, voters are opposed to limiting funding to cities that defund their own police departments.

“And, would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the North Carolina Legislature LIMITING state funding to cities that defund their own police departments?”



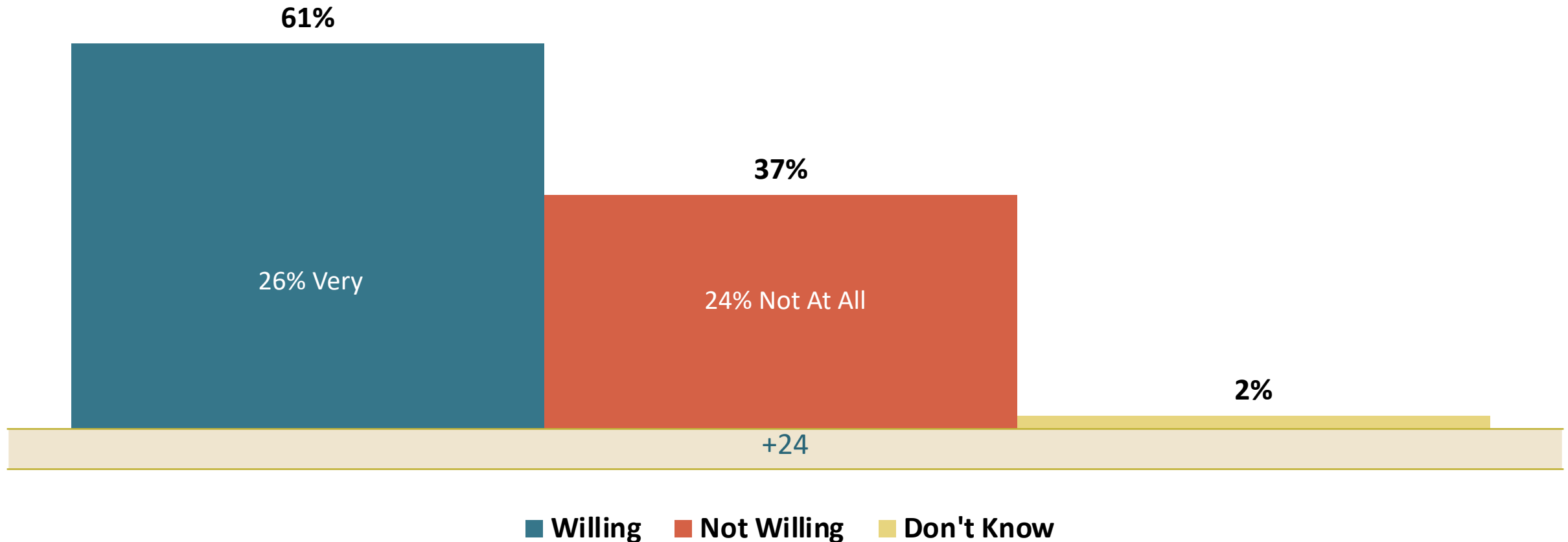
Voters would oppose banning the sale of menthol cigarettes.

“Would you support or oppose banning the sale of menthol cigarettes in North Carolina?”



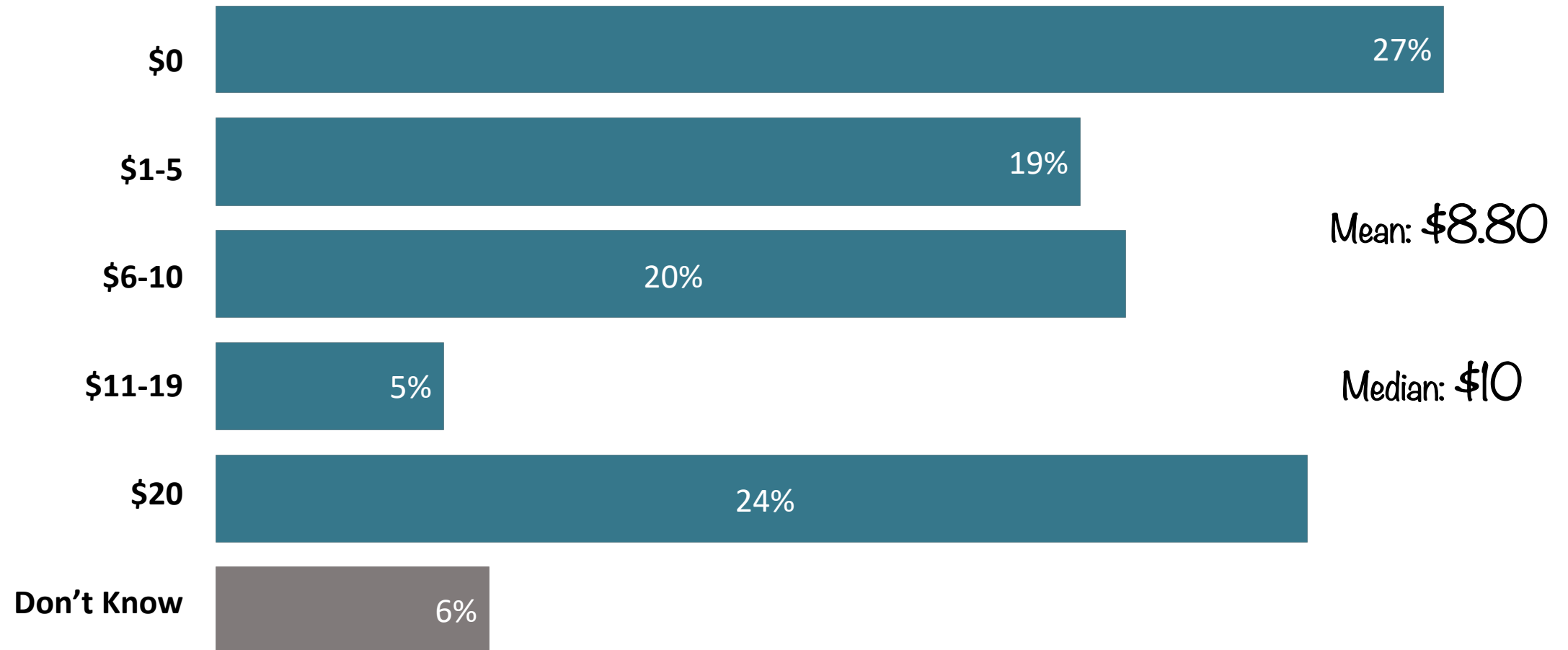
A majority say they would be willing to pay more in utility bills to phase out coal-fired power plants and switch to cleaner energy sources.

“Thinking now about energy costs, how willing would you be to pay a little more in utility bills in order to phase out the use of coal-fired power plants in North Carolina and replace coal with cleaner energy sources like solar, wind, nuclear, and natural gas?”



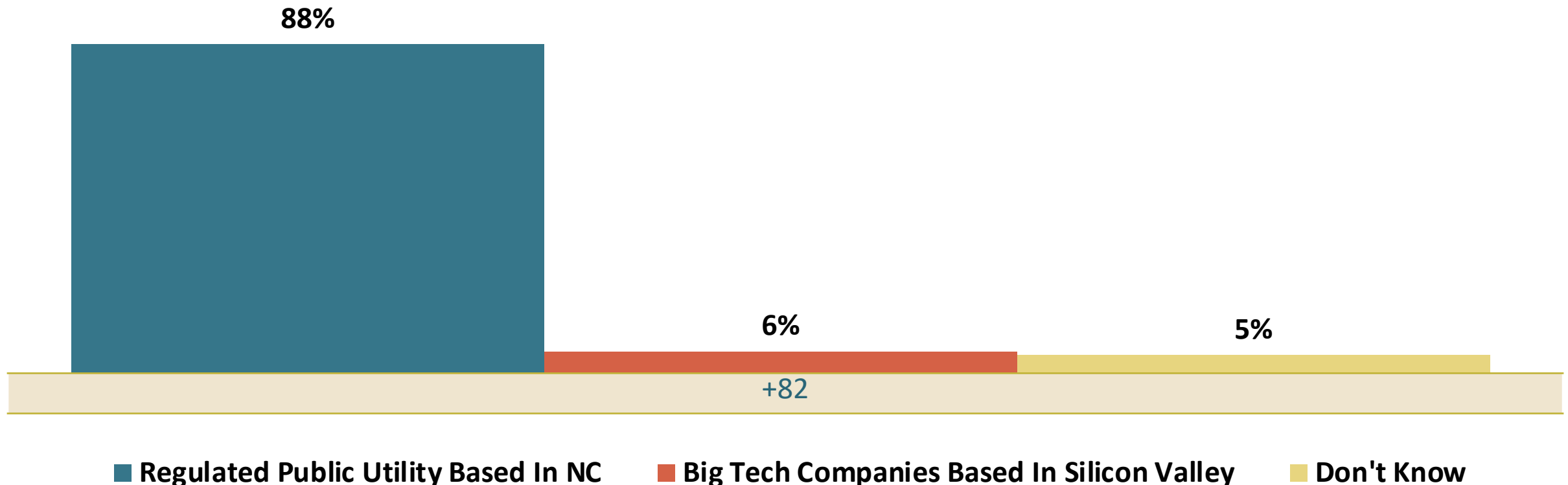
On average, voters would be willing to pay about ten dollars more per month to switch to cleaner energy.

“And thinking specifically about an amount between ZERO dollars and TWENTY dollars, how much more would you be willing to pay on your monthly power bill to replace the last few remaining coal-fired power plants in North Carolina with modern facilities that generate electricity using a combination of cleaner, renewable energy sources including solar, wind, nuclear, natural gas, and battery storage?”



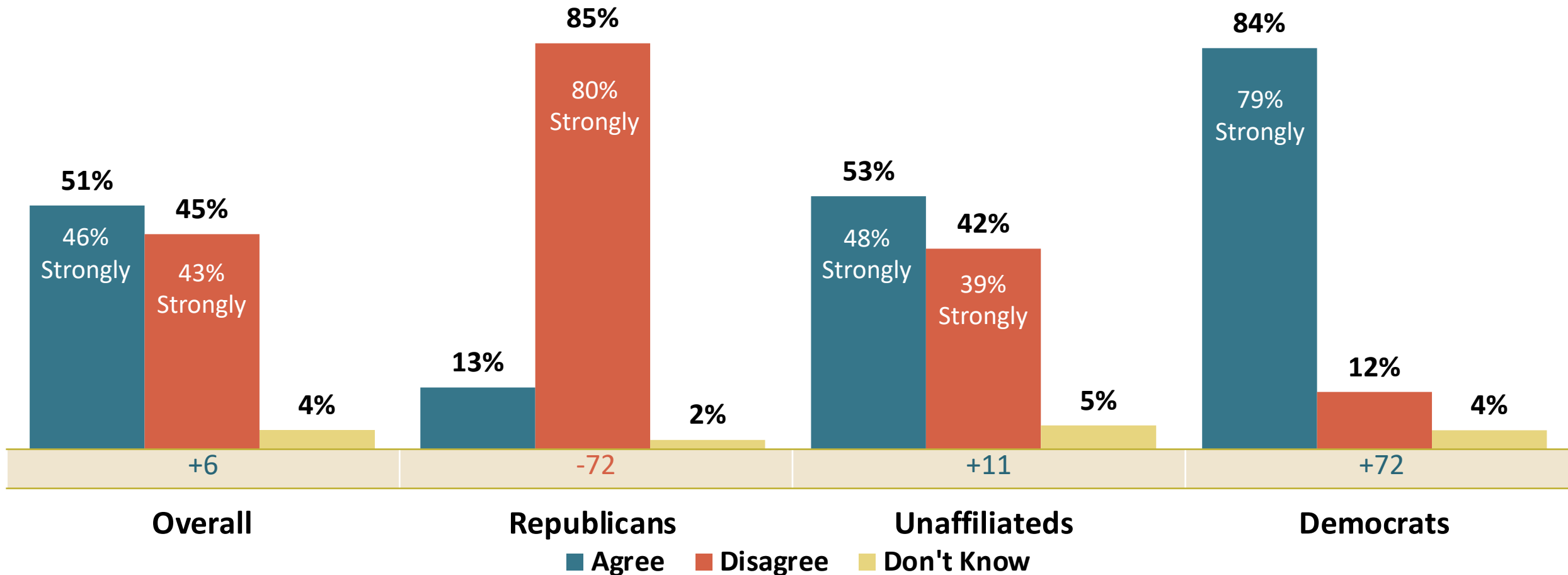
Voters are almost unanimous that they would prefer electricity be provided by regulated public utilities rather than big tech companies.

“As you may know, electricity in North Carolina is provided by state-regulated public utility companies based in the North Carolina. Some people say it would be better if this model of power companies set up as state-regulated public utilities was replaced by a system where Big Tech companies like Facebook, Google, and Twitter based in Silicon Valley could supply power in North Carolina. Which would you prefer to provide your electricity and power service in North Carolina—regulated public utilities headquartered in North Carolina, or Big Tech companies headquartered in Silicon Valley, California?”



A slight majority of voters agree with Senator Burr's vote to convict Trump, and feelings are strong both ways.

“Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with Senator Richard Burr's vote to convict Donald Trump in his impeachment trial?”

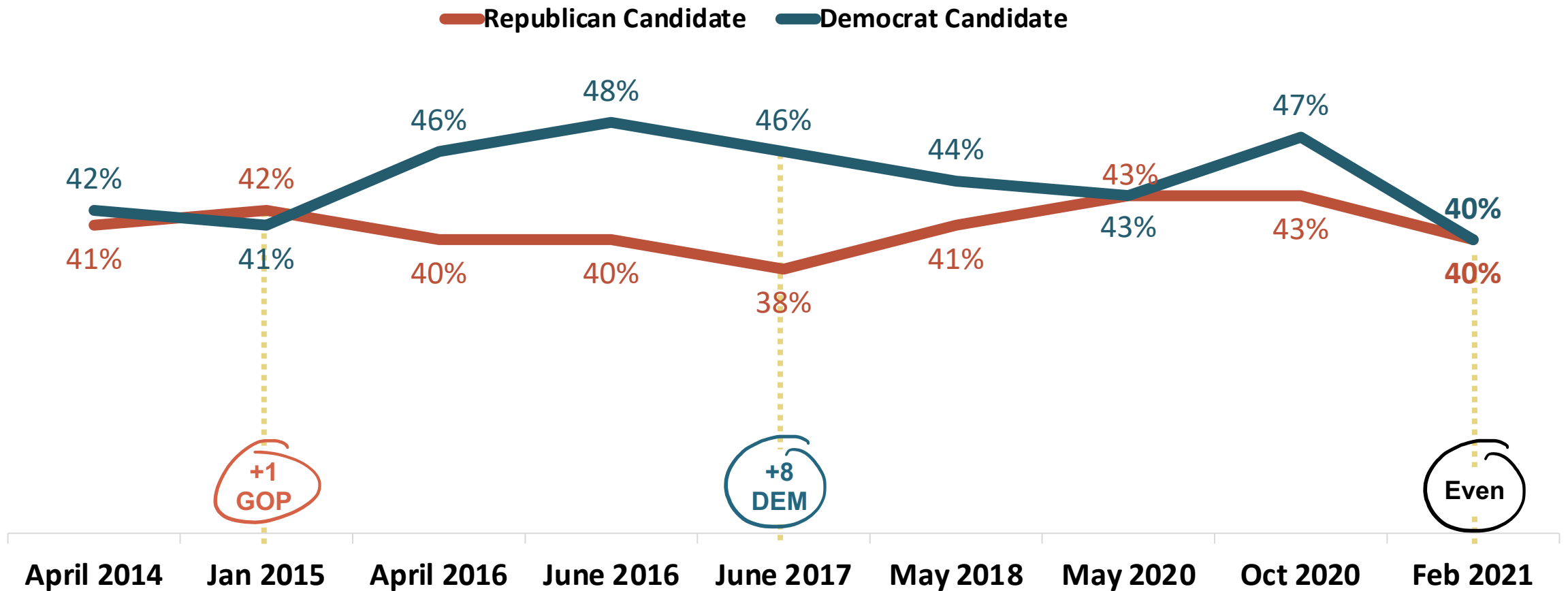




THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

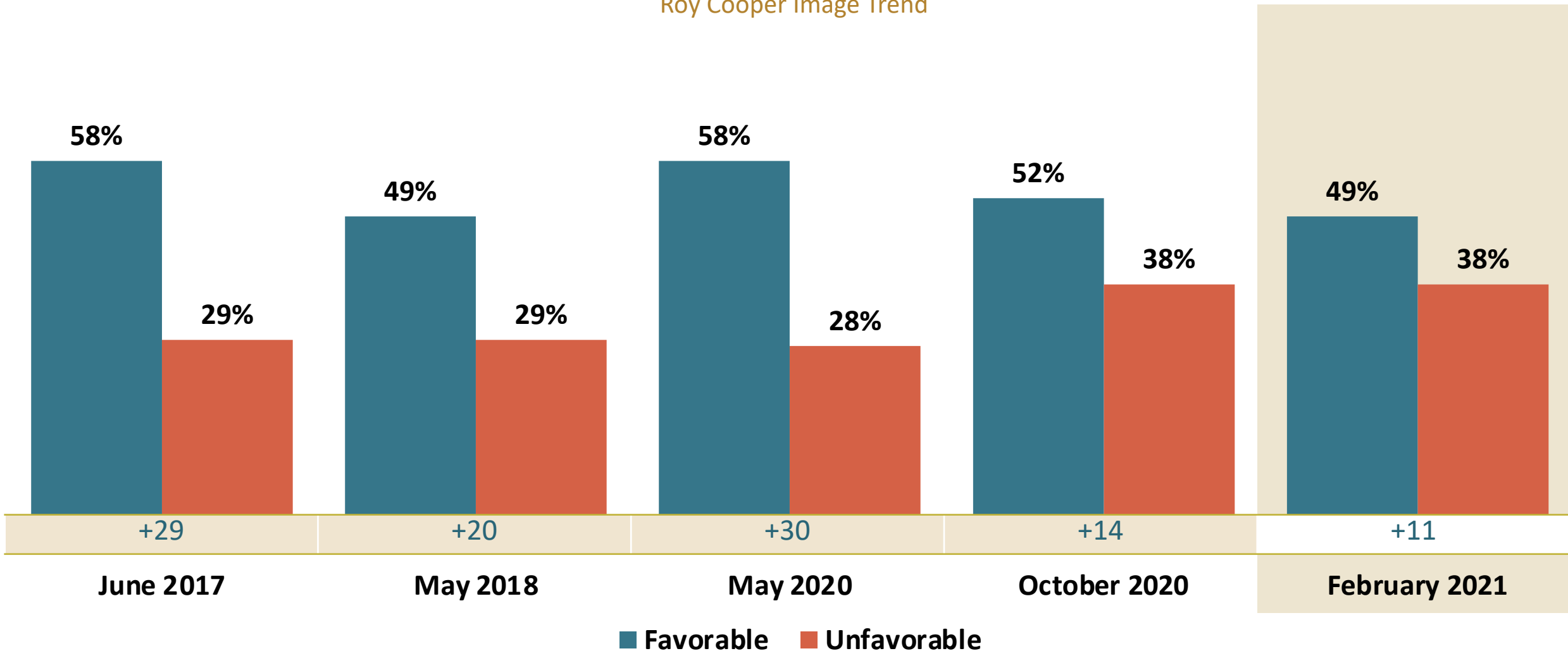
Though Democrats have traditionally held an advantage on the generic State Legislature ballot, it is currently at parity.

Generic State Legislature Ballot

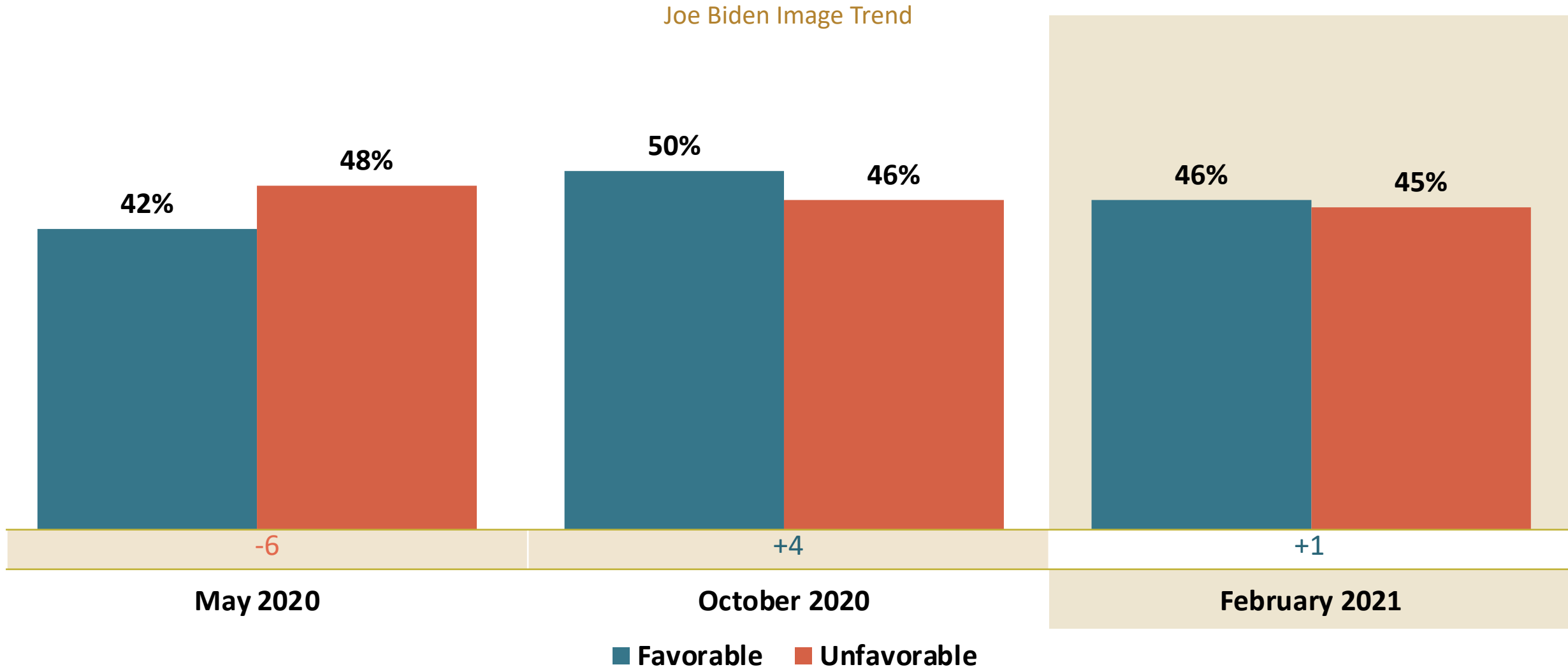


Roy Cooper remains popular, but his favorable ratings have dipped below 50%.

Roy Cooper Image Trend

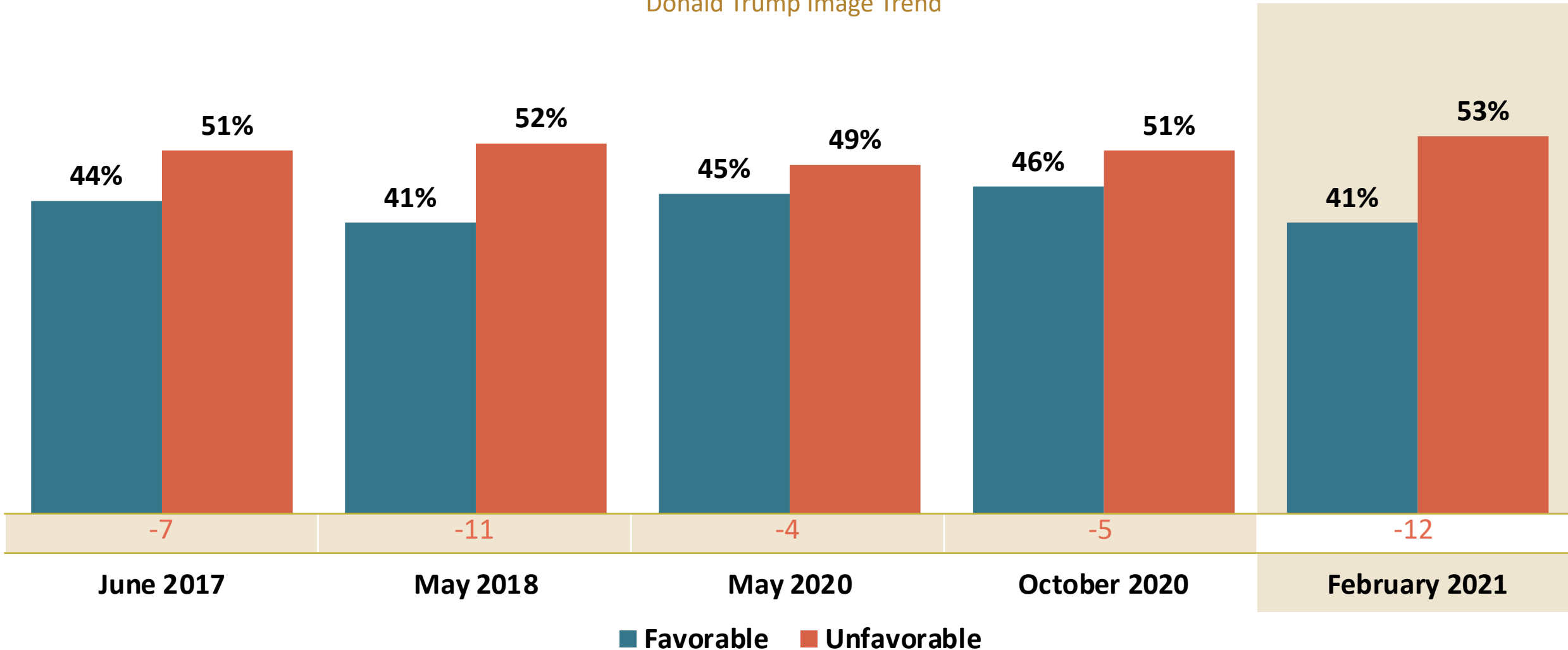


Biden's image is close to breakeven.



Donald Trump's image is 12 points underwater, with 53% of NC voters feeling unfavorable toward him.

Donald Trump Image Trend



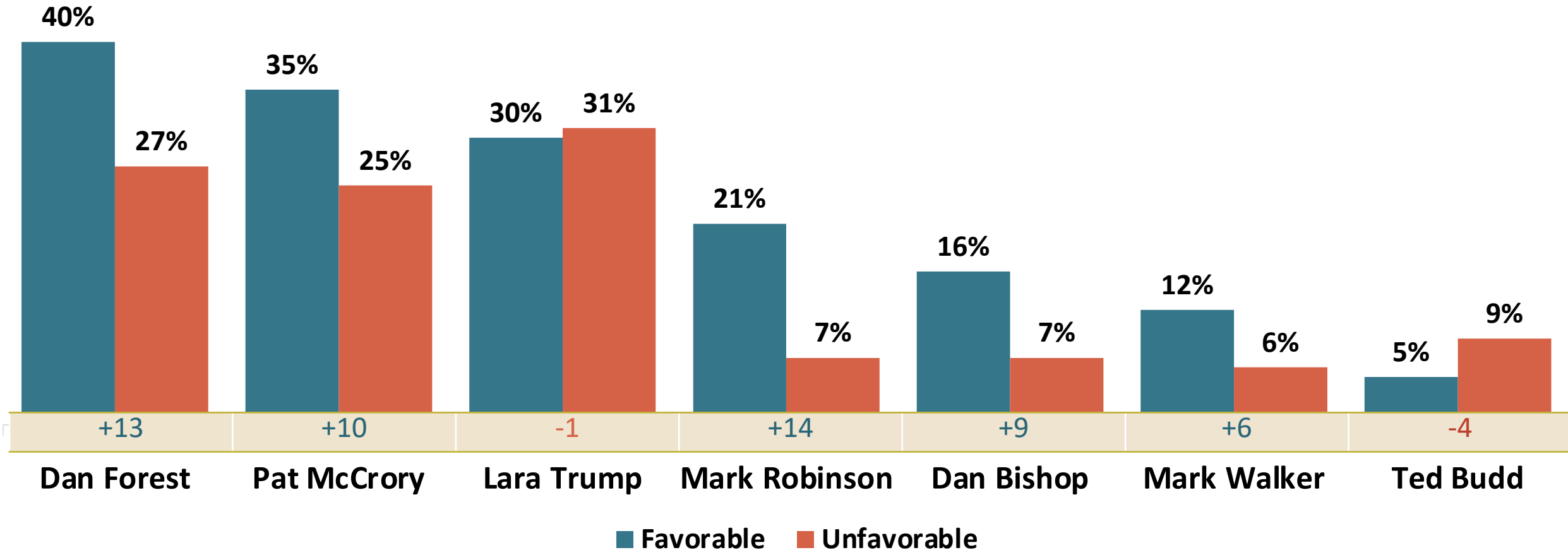
Governor Cooper has a net favorable image rating among Unaffiliated voters, while Biden breaks even and Trump is underwater.

Key Image Ratings

	Roy Cooper		Joe Biden		Donald Trump	
	Fav	Unfav	Fav	Unfav	Fav	Unfav
Base Republicans	15%	75%	7%	87%	90%	6%
Soft Republicans	25%	50%	16%	79%	59%	34%
Unaffiliateds	49%	40%	45%	44%	39%	56%
Soft Democrats	65%	20%	58%	25%	23%	66%
Base Democrats	86%	5%	94%	1%	0%	97%
White Men Ages 18-54	33%	56%	33%	63%	50%	46%
White Men Ages 55+	37%	55%	24%	69%	65%	33%
White Women Ages 18-54	47%	36%	48%	43%	41%	53%
White Women Ages 55+	56%	37%	41%	53%	54%	44%
African Americans	76%	9%	77%	9%	6%	84%

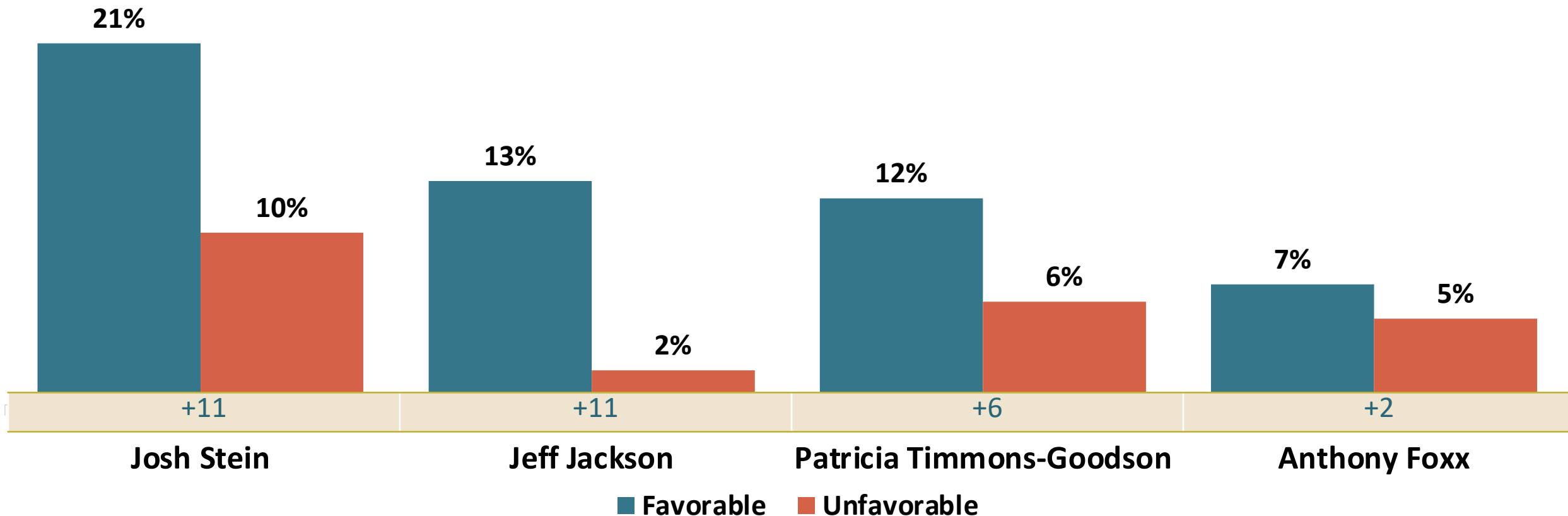
Among Republican candidates rumored to be considering a U.S. Senate run, Dan Forest and Pat McCrory have the highest favorable ratings.

Key Image Ratings



Among potential Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate, Josh Stein has the highest favorable ratings.

Key Image Ratings





THE BOTTOM LINE



THE BOTTOM LINE

1

Voters in North Carolina tell us that—aside from the pandemic—economic issues are their top concern. Two-thirds of voters are inclined to believe tax cuts help create jobs and grow the economy, and tax cuts are very popular across party. Medicaid expansion remains popular, but voters oppose Governor Cooper vetoing budgets without it.

2

On education, the Opportunity Scholarship program is supported by over two-thirds of voters and there is majority support for extending the program. Three-quarters of voters overall and 84% of parents say the state should require all school systems to offer an in-person option.

3

Voters are now split about whether the COVID shutdowns have been an overall positive or negative for the state and there is support for limiting the Governor's emergency powers. Governor Cooper has a majority of voters supporting his administration's vaccine distribution.

4

The political climate remains polarized. Republicans and Democrats are even on the generic General Assembly ballot. A slim majority support Senator Burr's vote to convict President Trump. Governor Cooper remains fairly popular, while President Biden's image is even.



M E E T N G
S R E E T