



PINAL • COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Support for Enhanced Conservation Funding in Pinal County

Survey Conducted May 15-18, 2014

220-3872

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3
Public Opinion Research & Strategy

SANTA MONICA • OAKLAND • MADISON • MEXICO CITY



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Methodology

- Telephone survey of 301 randomly-selected Pinal County voters likely to cast ballots in November 2014
 - *Interviews were conducted via landline and cell phones*
 - *Survey was conducted May 15-18, 2014*
- The margin of sampling error is +/-5.7 % at the 95 % confidence level
 - *Margins of error for population subgroups will be higher*
 - *Some percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding*
- Bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R)

Bipartisan Research Team



Dave Metz – FM3

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) – a national Democratic opinion research firm with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin – has specialized in public policy oriented opinion research since 1981. The firm has assisted hundreds of political campaigns at every level of the ballot – from President to City Council – with opinion research and strategic guidance. FM3 also provides research and strategic consulting to public agencies, businesses and public interest organizations nationwide.

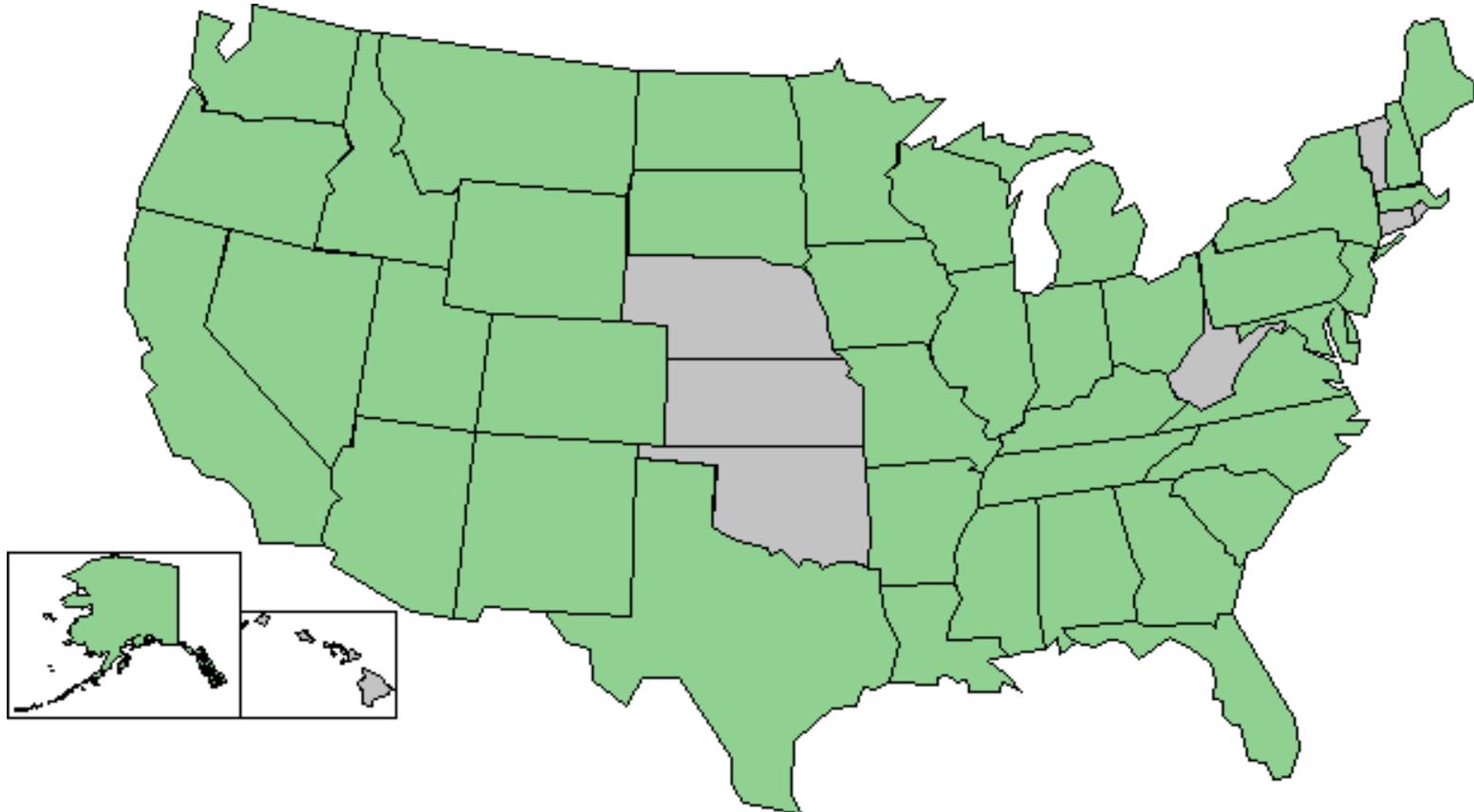


Lori Weigel - POS

Public Opinion Strategies (POS) is the largest Republican polling firm in the country. Since the firm's founding in 1991, they have completed more than 10,000 research projects, interviewing more than five million Americans across the United States. Media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC News, CNBC, and National Public Radio rely on Public Opinion Strategies to conduct their polling. The firm conducts polling on behalf of hundreds of political campaigns, as well as trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

As a bipartisan team, FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies have researched a wide range of issues for nearly a decade, in particular on conservation-related initiatives and policies. Together, the two firms have jointly conducted research on behalf of political campaigns, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies in 42 states and nationally.

FM3 and POS have partnered to complete environmental research in 42 states.





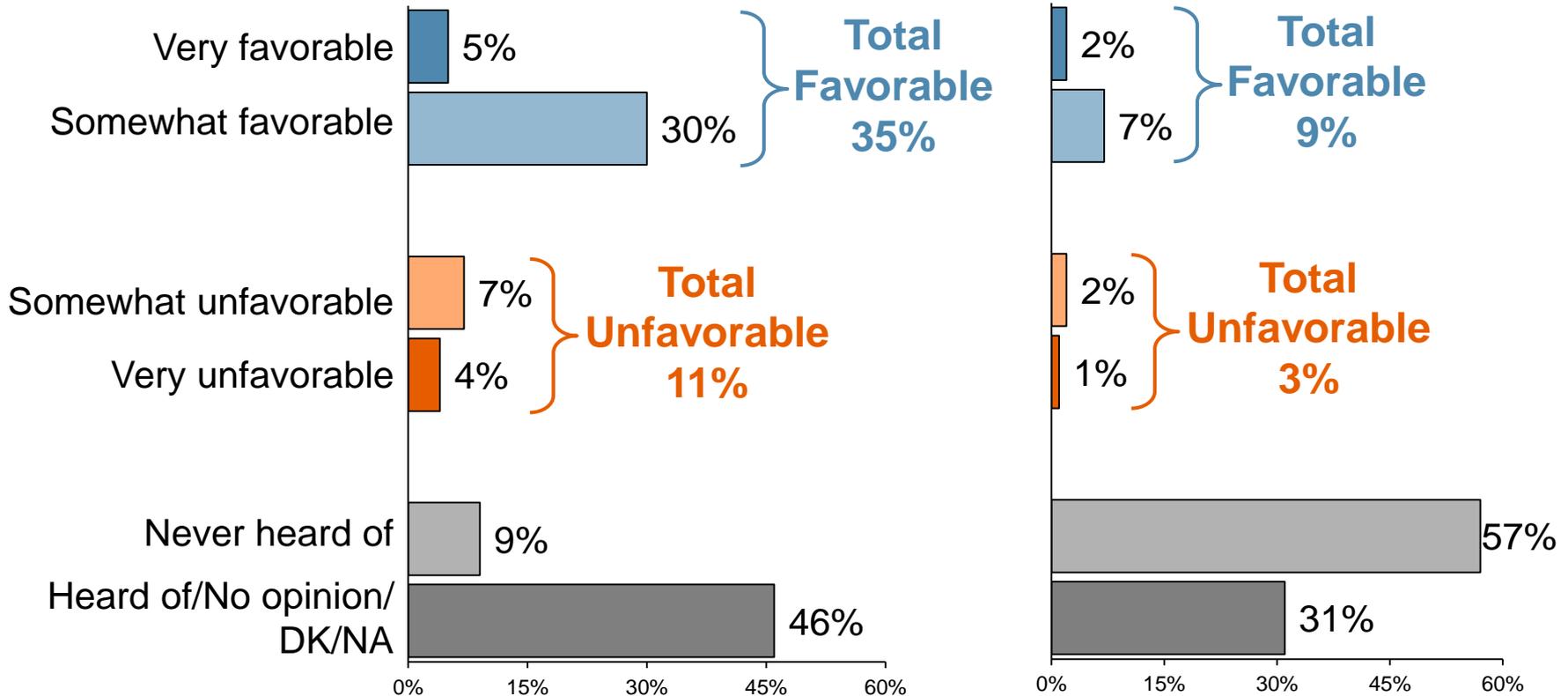
PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Issue Context

Few voters have strong feelings about local government in Pinal County.

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors

The Pinal County Open Space and Trails Department



1. I am going to read you a list of some organizations that are active in public life. After you hear the name of each one, please tell me whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of that organization. If you have never heard of it, or if do not have enough information to have an opinion, you can tell me that too.



PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

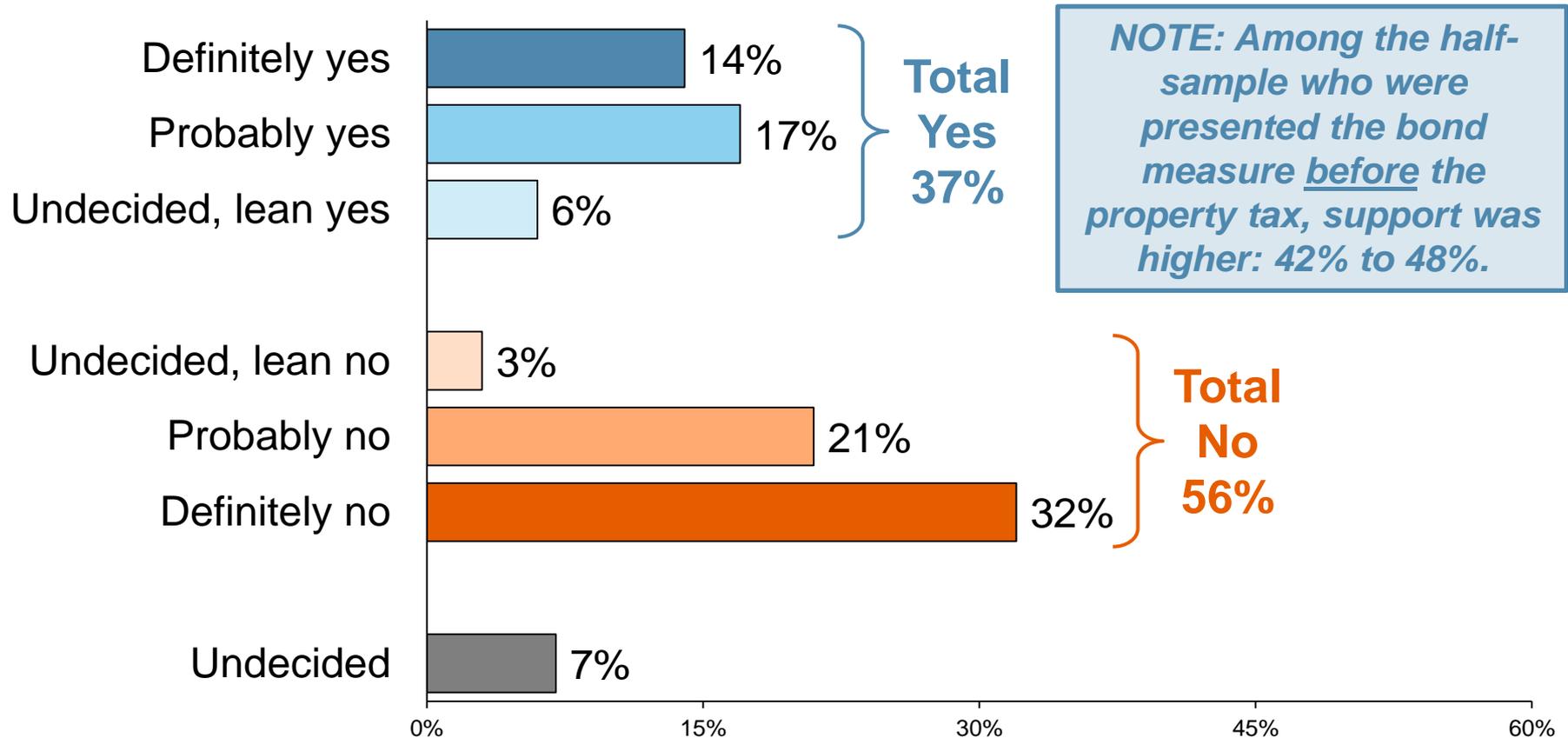
Bond Measure Vote Patterns

Bond Language Tested

For the purpose of protecting open space, including Sonoran Desert lands; protecting land around rivers and washes to ensure high water quality and quantity; protecting wildlife habitat; and improving and connecting regional parks and trails; shall Pinal County, Arizona be authorized to issue and sell general obligation bonds solely for the above purposes in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding \$20 million, payable from a property tax increase, and subject to annual audits and citizen oversight?

A majority initially opposes the proposed bond measure.

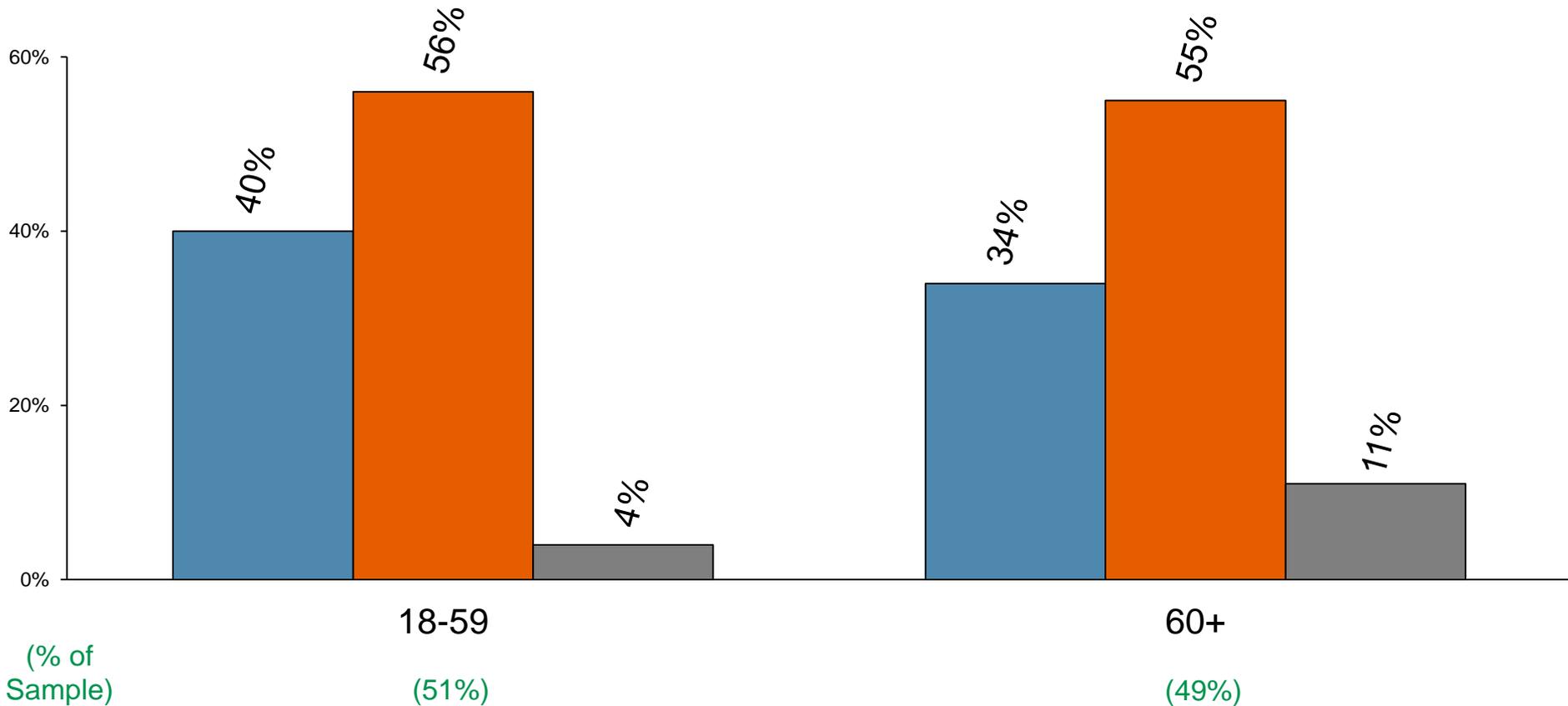
If the election were held today, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this measure?



Opposition is consistent between younger and older voters.

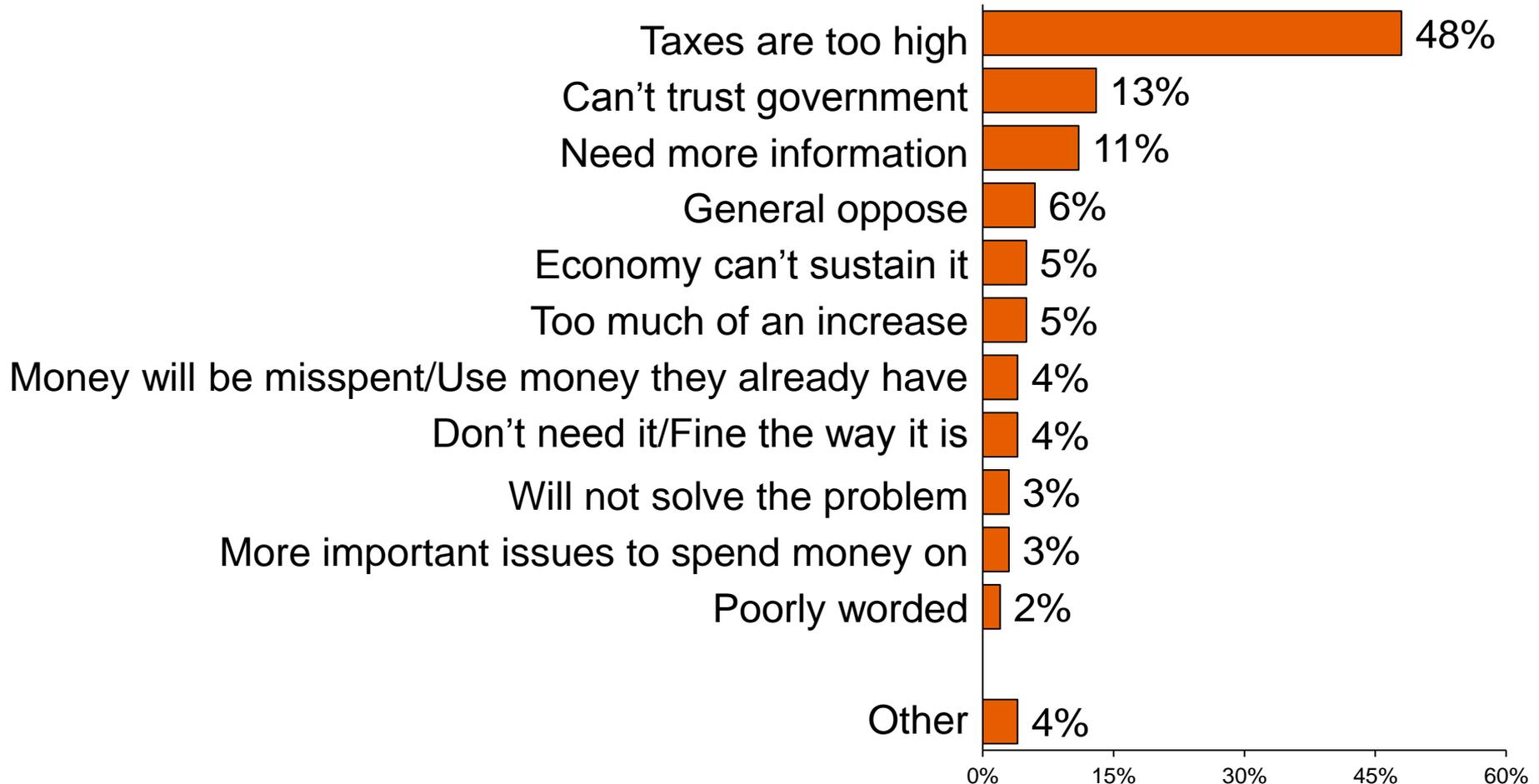
Initial Bond Vote by Age

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



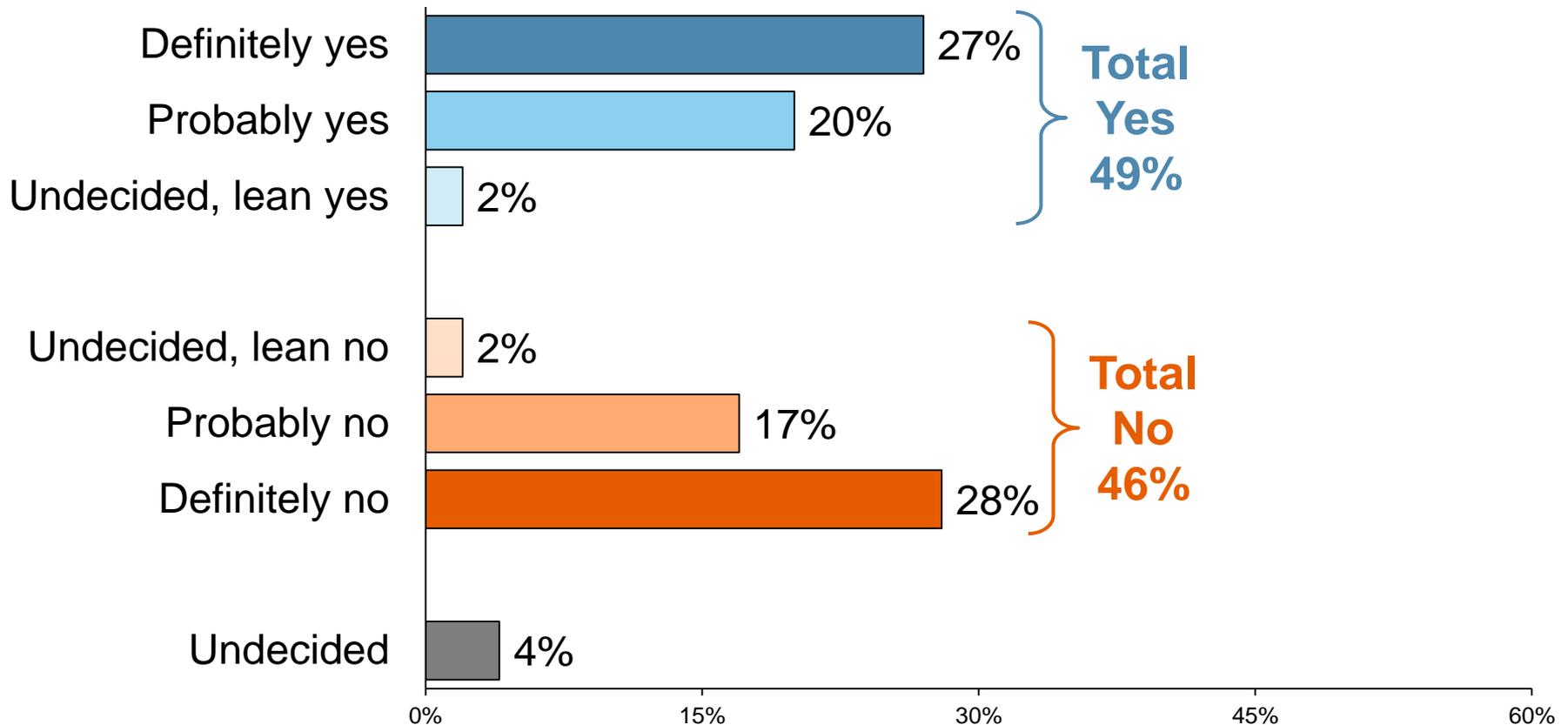
Concern about taxes is the standout reason for voters to oppose the bond.

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on this measure?*



Providing cost information significantly increases the bond's margin of support.

Suppose you knew that this measure would cost the average household in Pinal County \$13 per year. In that case, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this measure?





PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Property Tax Vote Patterns

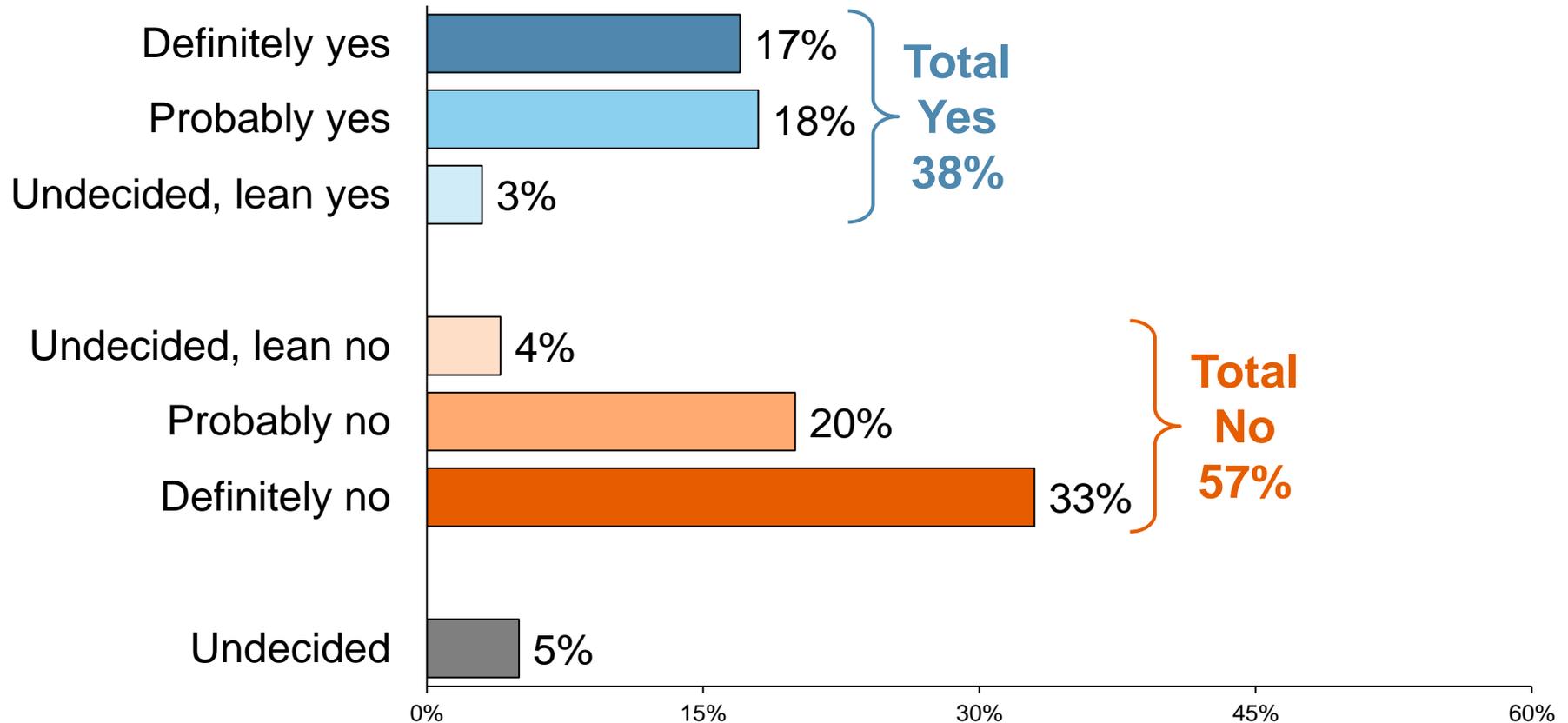
Property Tax Language Tested

PINAL COUNTY OPEN SPACE, WATER QUALITY, AND TRAILS LEVY.

“For the purpose of protecting open space, including Sonoran Desert lands; protecting land around rivers and washes to ensure high water quality and quantity; protecting wildlife habitat; and improving and connecting regional parks and trails; shall Pinal County, Arizona be authorized to levy secondary property taxes solely for the above purposes in the amount of ten cents per one hundred dollars of assessed value for seven fiscal years commencing in fiscal year 2015-16 in excess of the county primary property tax limits otherwise prescribed by Arizona law, and subject to annual audits and citizen oversight?”

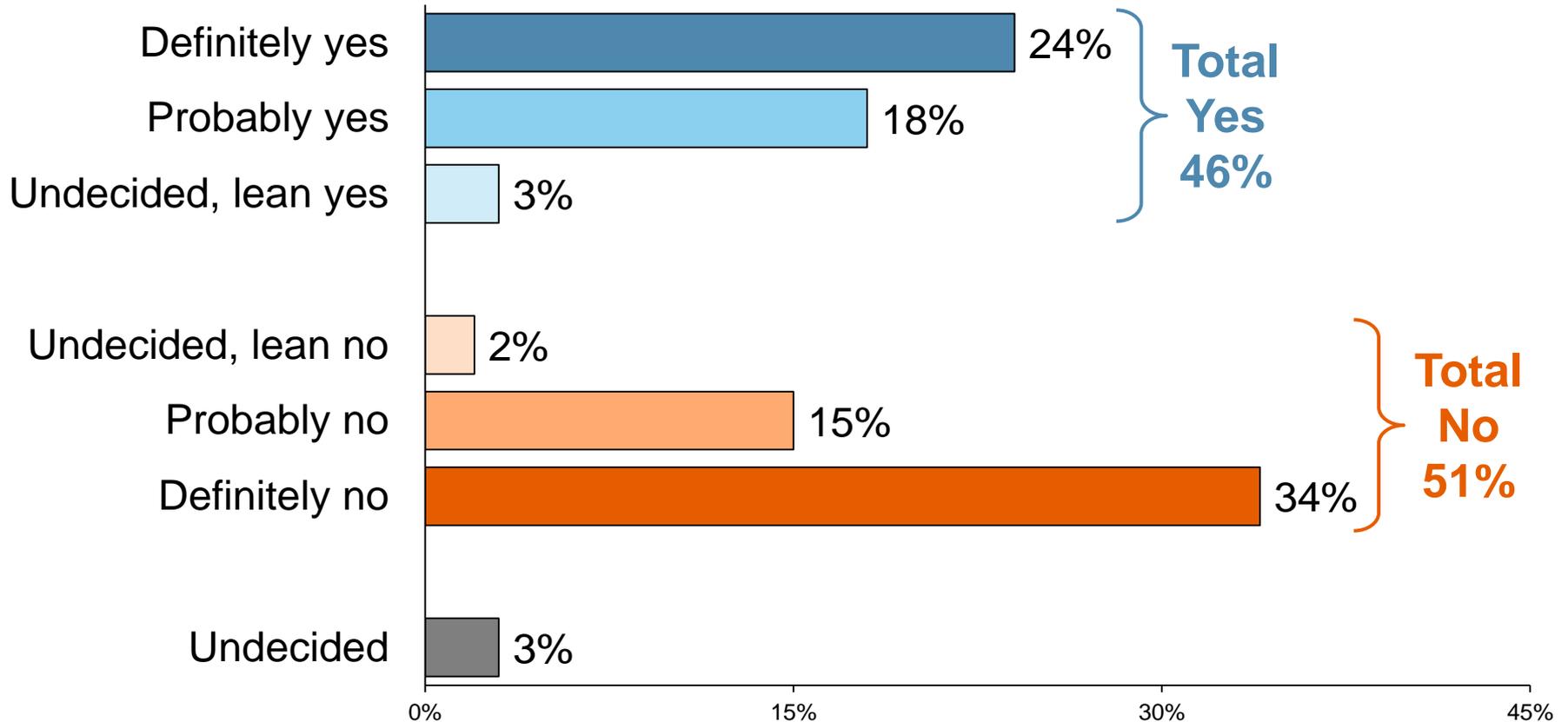
A majority also initially rejects a property tax.

If the election were held today, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this measure?



Only a slightly smaller majority opposes the measure after hearing what it will cost.

Suppose you knew that this measure would cost the average household in Pinal County \$17 per year. In that case, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this measure?



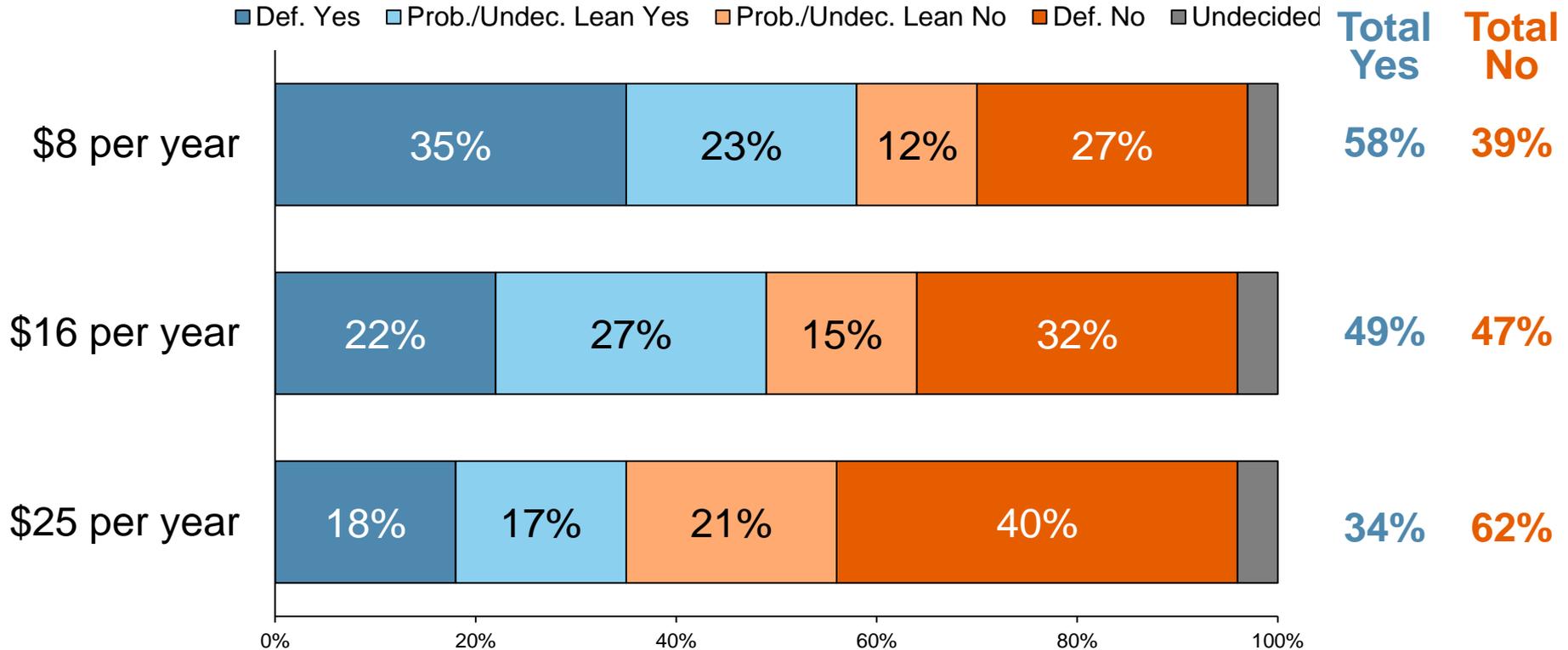


PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Important Elements of a Measure

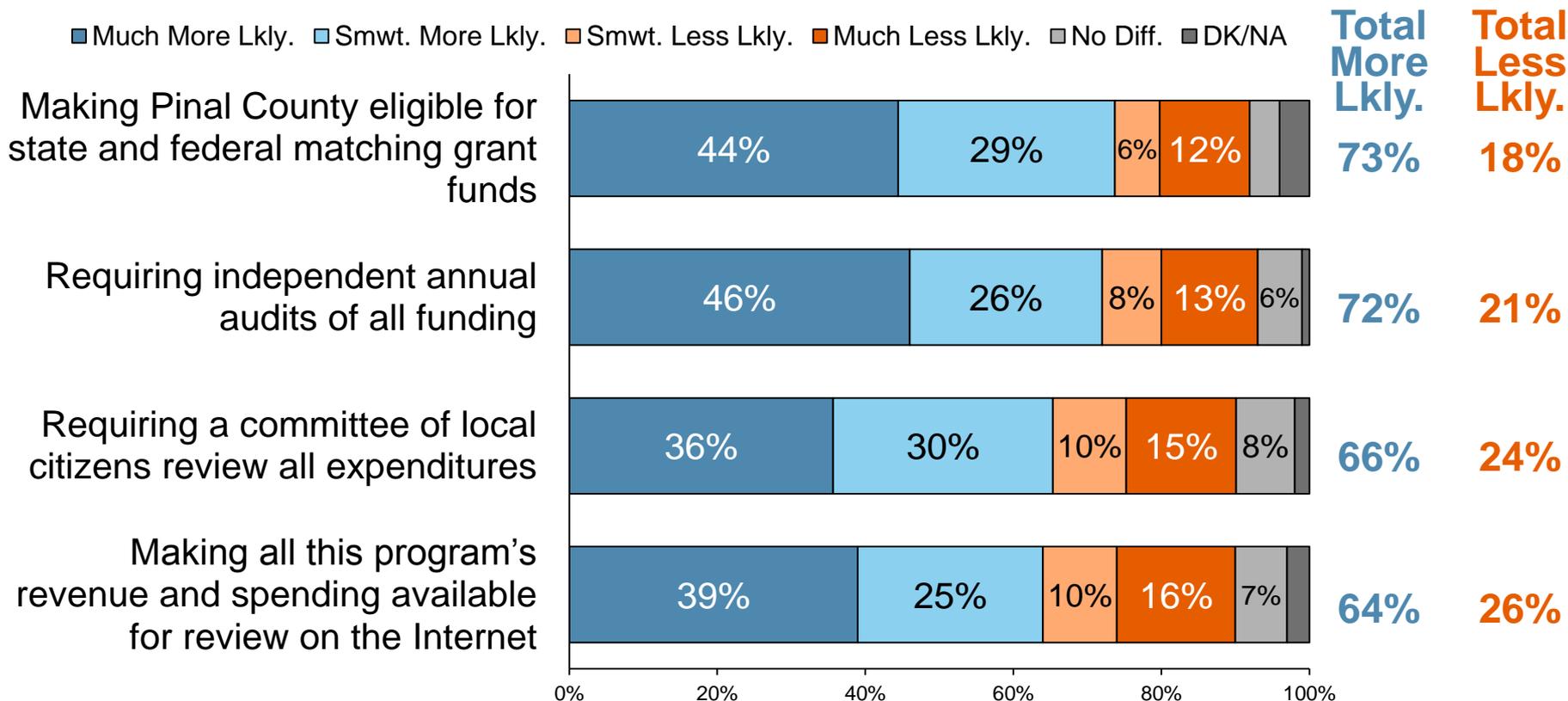
Voters express an unwillingness to pay more than eight dollars per year in additional taxes.

Regardless of how it is structured, suppose this measure to protect open space, water quality and regional trails in Pinal County would cost the average homeowner an additional _____. If that were the case, would you vote yes or no on the measure?

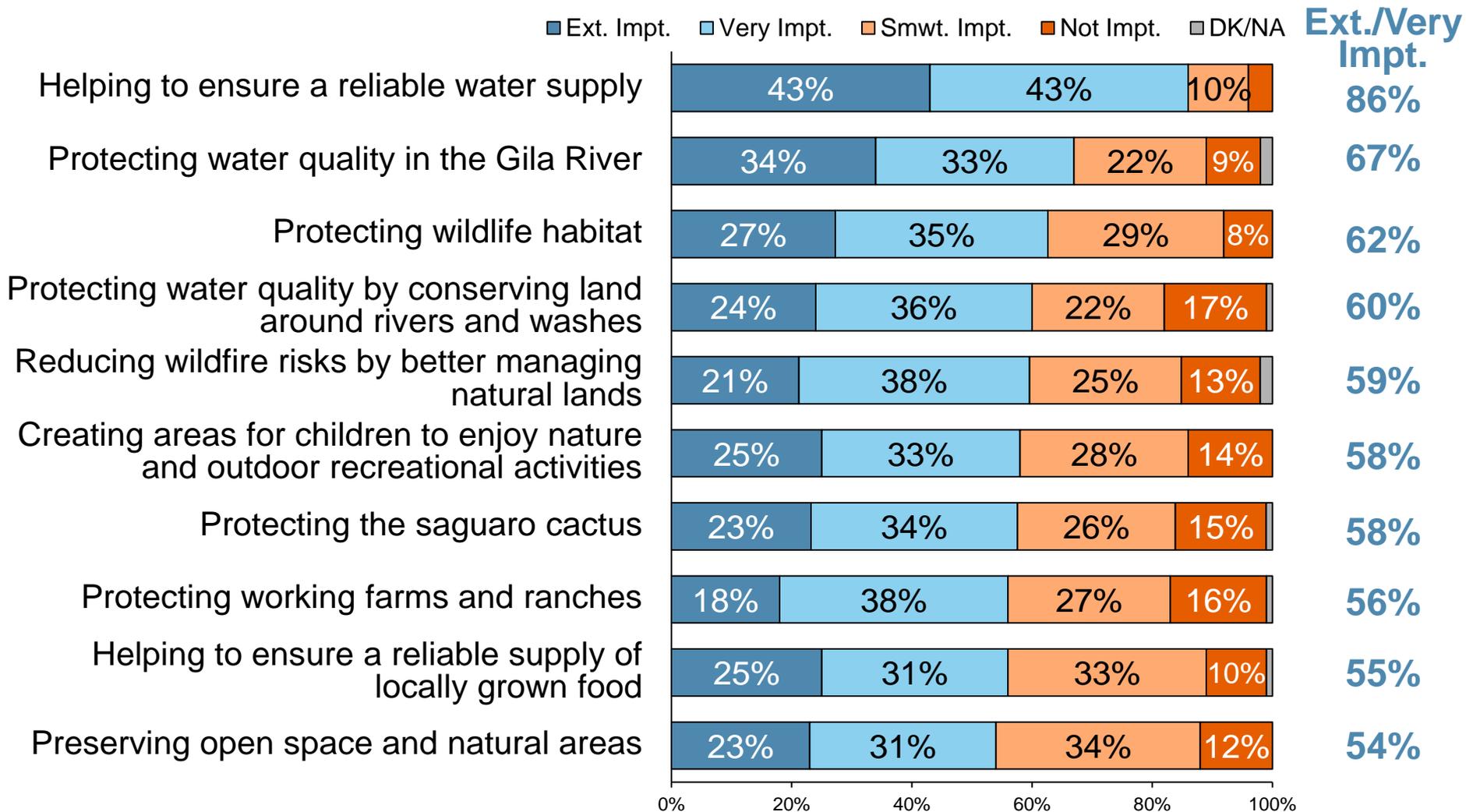


Voters are particularly eager to see a measure include with independent audits and access to State and Federal matching funds.

I am going to read a list of provisions that could be included in this measure. Please tell me whether you would be more likely or less likely to support the proposition if that feature were included.

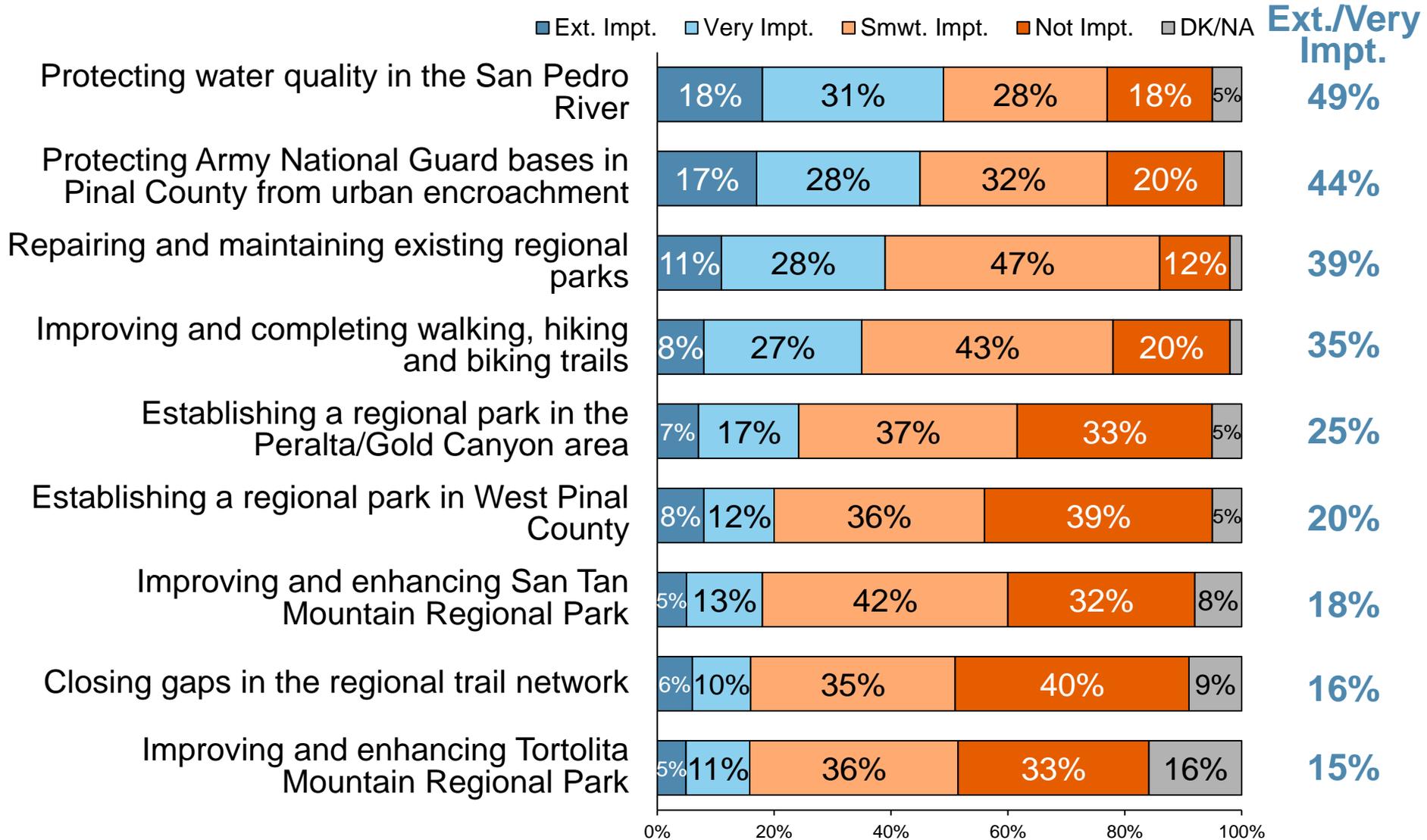


Protecting water quality stands out as a top funding priority.



11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be enough funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that that project be funded: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important. Split Sample

Improvements to trails and specific parks are lower priorities.



11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be enough funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that that project be funded: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important. Split Sample



PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Impact of Messaging

A strong middle-tier message focuses on future generations.

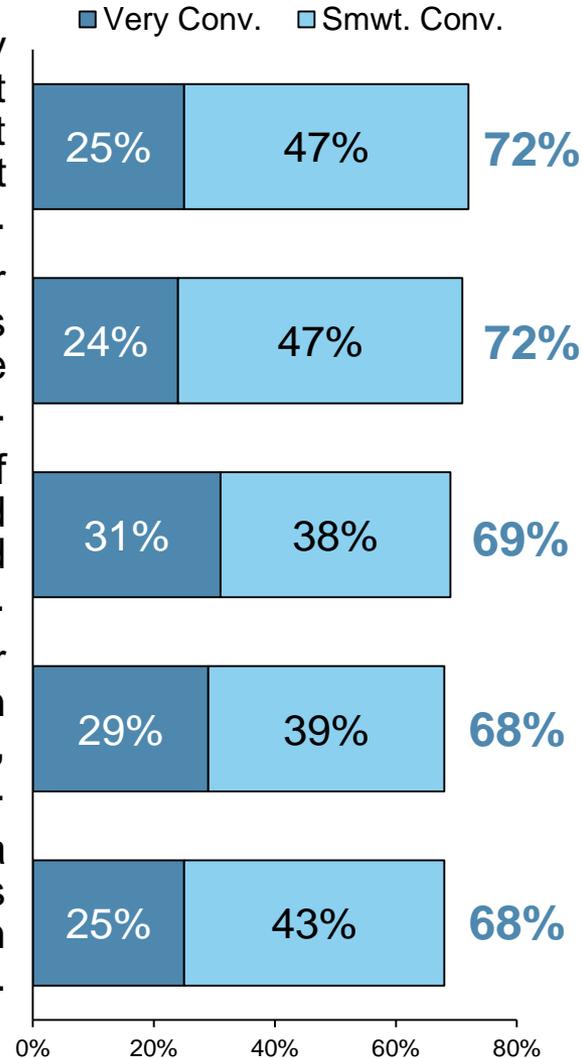
(ECONOMY) This measure will help strengthen the Pinal County economy. By maintaining the natural areas and water quality that are so essential to our quality of life, it will keep our region a magnet for high-quality employers – and help preserve the \$37 million that tourists spend here every year.

(FIRE) This measure will help to protect against the risk of major wildfires in Pinal County, by improving management of natural lands and providing vital buffers between our communities and fire-prone areas.

(FUTURE) This measure will preserve Pinal County’s legacy of natural beauty by protecting rivers, washes, natural areas and wildlife habitat. This will ensure that our children, grandchildren and all future generations will enjoy the same quality of life we do.

(ACCOUNTABLE) This measure sets firm standards for accountability and taxpayer protection. It requires audits and citizen oversight, and requires money to be spent according to a specific, binding plan that voters can read before the election.

(RECREATION) Pinal County’s spectacular natural areas provide a beautiful and affordable place for recreation close to home. In this economy, it is more important than ever to invest in keeping them available.



Messages about property taxes and local control are less compelling.

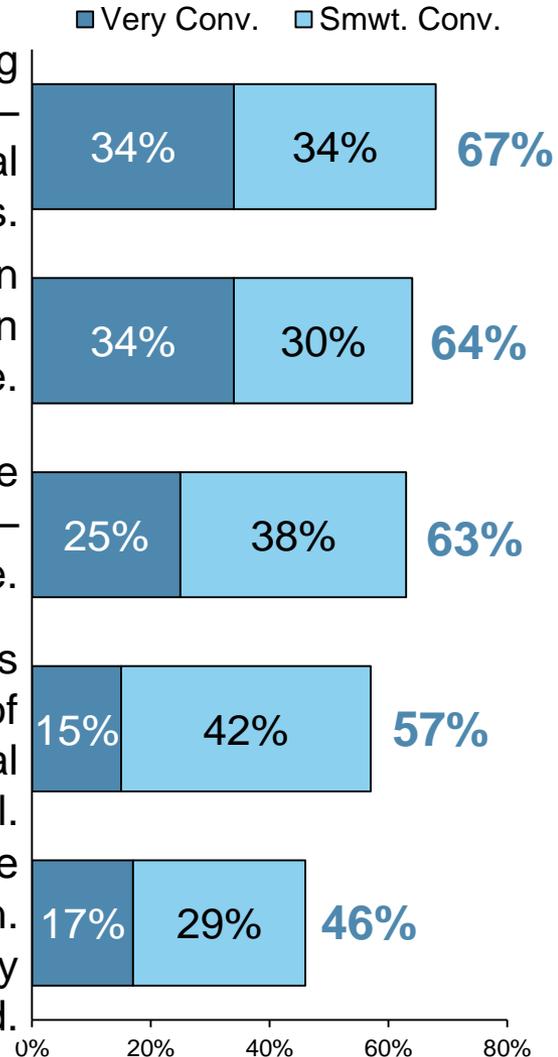
(KIDS - EDUCATION) This measure will help our kids by providing opportunities for hands-on, outdoor science and nature education – important programs that have been cut recently from many local schools.

(LOW COST) This measure will cost the average resident less than two dollars per month. That’s not much to pay to help ensure clean water, open space and trails, and our quality of life.

(KIDS - HEALTH) This measure will help our kids by giving them more opportunities to eat locally-grown food and to be active outdoors – helping to fight obesity, improve health and let kids experience nature.

(LOCAL CONTROL) By protecting tortoise habitat in Pinal County, this measure will prevent the federal government from limiting local use of land under the federal Endangered Species Act, preserving local control.

(PROPERTY VALUES) Studies show that Pinal County’s open space and trails have increased local property values by \$190 million. Investing in large regional parks and open lands is critical to our quality of life, and will help property values rebound.



Strong negative messages focus on the economy and the need to spend money on other priorities.

(ECONOMY) With our economy in the worst recession since the Great Depression, and with Pinal County the lowest-income county in the state, we simply cannot afford to raise taxes on families that are having a hard time making ends meet.

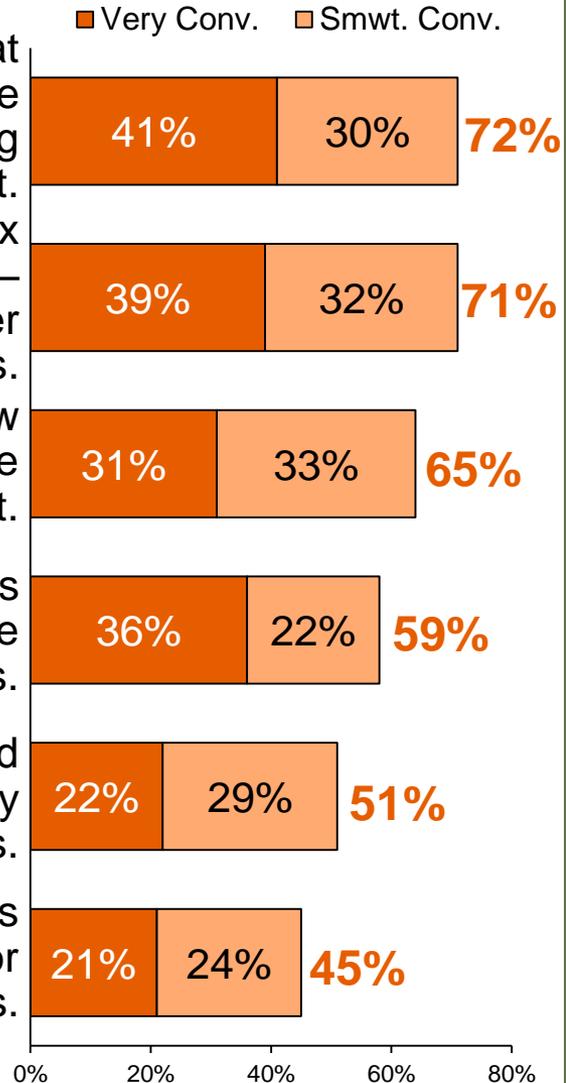
(OTHER PRIORITIES) We cannot afford to spend more of our tax dollars on the environment when there are so many other issues – such as jobs, schools, public safety and roads – that are much higher priorities.

(FEES) Pinal County has been growing rapidly over the last few decades. If we need new parks and trails, we should simply make the developers pay for them through new fees on real estate development.

(TAXES) Taxes are too high already – in fact, Pinal County taxpayers pay among the highest rates in the state. We simply should not vote for anything that will increase property taxes.

(UNNECESSARY) Pinal County’s parks and trails are excellent and well-maintained. We do not need to raise taxes to spend more money improving existing or building new parks and trails.

***(DEBT)** This measure will put Pinal County into debt by selling bonds for the first time in its history; it has never before borrowed money for these kinds of programs.





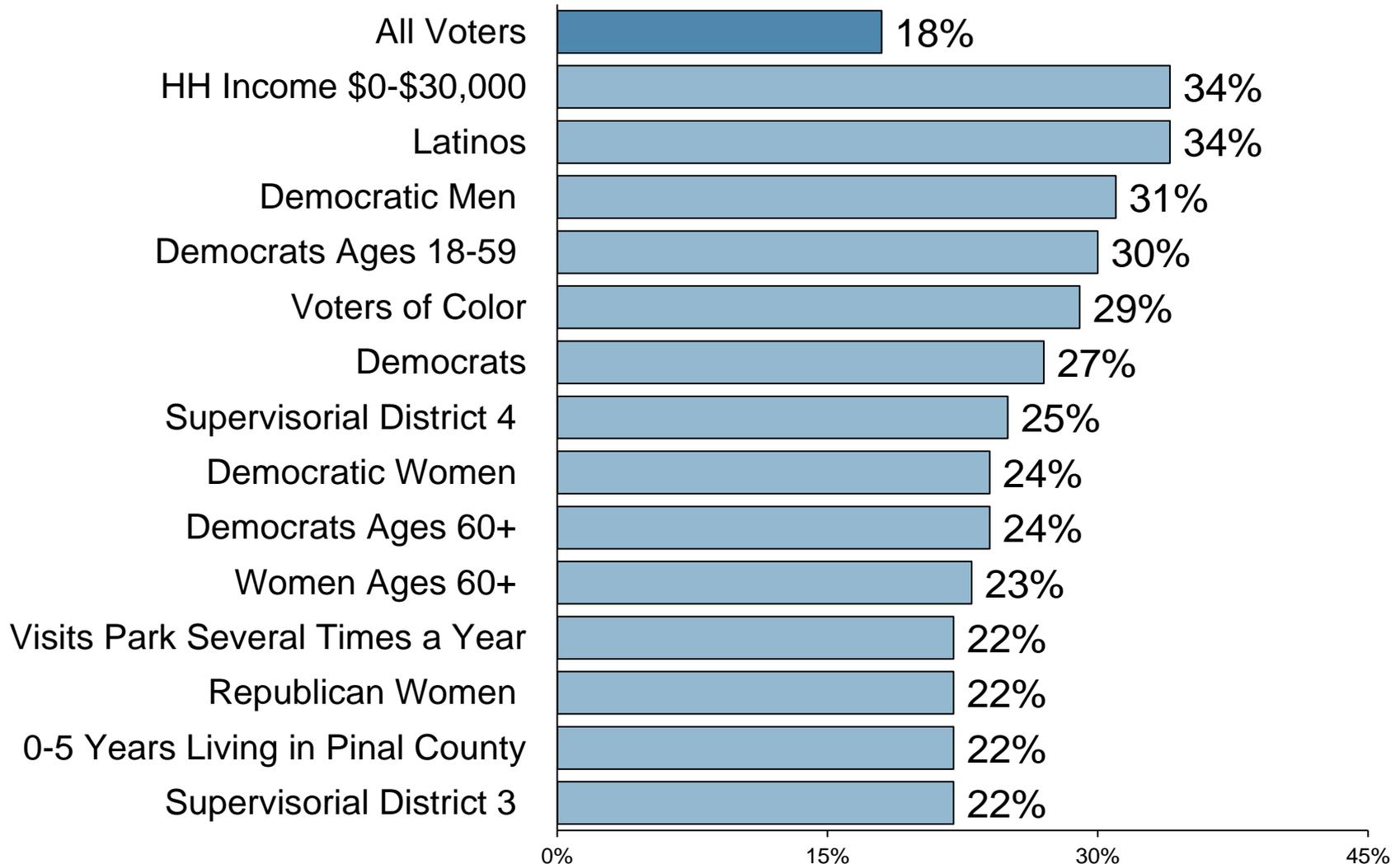
PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Identifying Persuadable Voters

Demographic Profiles of the Segments

Consistent Yes	Swing	Consistent No
34% of the Electorate	33% of the Electorate	33% of the Electorate
Visit Park Monthly	HH Income Under \$30,000	Republican Men
Maricopa City	Ages 75+	Republicans Ages 18-59
Ages 18-29	Democratic Men	Republicans
Democratic Women	Ages 65+	Supervisorial District 1
Voters of Color	Women Ages 60+	Republicans Ages 60+
Democrats Ages 18-59	Visit Park Less Often	Men Ages 18-59
Latinos	Democrats Ages 60+	Men
Democrats	Democrats	Ages 50-64
HH Income \$60,000-\$90,000	Independents Ages 60+	Apache Junction City
0-5 Years Living in Pinal County	Independent Women	Men Ages 60+
Ages 30-39	Ages 60+	Republican Women
Use Both Cell/Landline Equally	Independents	21+ Years Living in Pinal County
Democrats Ages 60+	Latinos	Supervisorial District 2
Casa Grande City	Use All/Mostly Landline	Visit Park Less Often
Independent Women	Supervisorial District 3	Supervisorial District 5
Other City	Democrats Ages 18-59	Ages 65-74
Women Ages 18-59	Independent Men	Independent Men
HH Income \$90,000+	Independents Ages 18-59	Ages 40-49
Democratic Men	Unincorporated Areas	Unincorporated Areas
Independents Ages 18-59	6-10 Years Living in Pinal County	Interviewed on Cell Phone

The following groups are disproportionately likely to switch to a “yes” vote.





PINAL ♦ COUNTY
Wide open opportunity

Conclusions

Conclusions

- At this point, neither a bond measure nor a property tax increase are viable for the November 2014 ballot in Pinal County.
- However, a bond measure does show promise for the future – information about its modest costs and strong messaging are capable of lifting support to a majority of those polled.
- Ideally, the cost impact of a measure should be held to the neighborhood of ten dollars per year.
- Voters see protection of water quality, wildlife habitat, and management of fire risks as essential benefits of the measure.
- Inclusion of fiscal accountability mechanisms will be critically important.
- Compelling messages focus on water quality, addressing the impact of growth, and protecting the County's military bases from encroachment.
- Major opposition messages focus on the weak condition of the economy and the need to spend money on competing priorities.

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3

Public Opinion Research & Strategy

SANTA MONICA • OAKLAND • MADISON • MEXICO CITY

DAVID METZ

**1999 Harrison St., Suite 1290
Oakland, CA 94612**

Phone (510) 451-9521

Fax (510) 451-0384

Dave@FM3research.com



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

LORI WEIGEL

**17145 West 62nd Circle
Golden, CO 80403**

Phone (303) 324-7655

Fax (303) 433-4253

lori@pos.org