







California Voter Priorities for Action on Climate Change

*Key Findings from a Statewide Survey of Likely Voters
Conducted May 15-21, 2021*



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

Dates	May 15-21, 2021
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2022 voters in California, inclusive of Central Coast (n=112), African American (n=116) and Native American (n=13) voters
Total Interviews	900
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Central Coast Subsample) $\pm 9.3\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (African American Subsample) $\pm 9.3\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Native American Subsample) $\pm 27.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

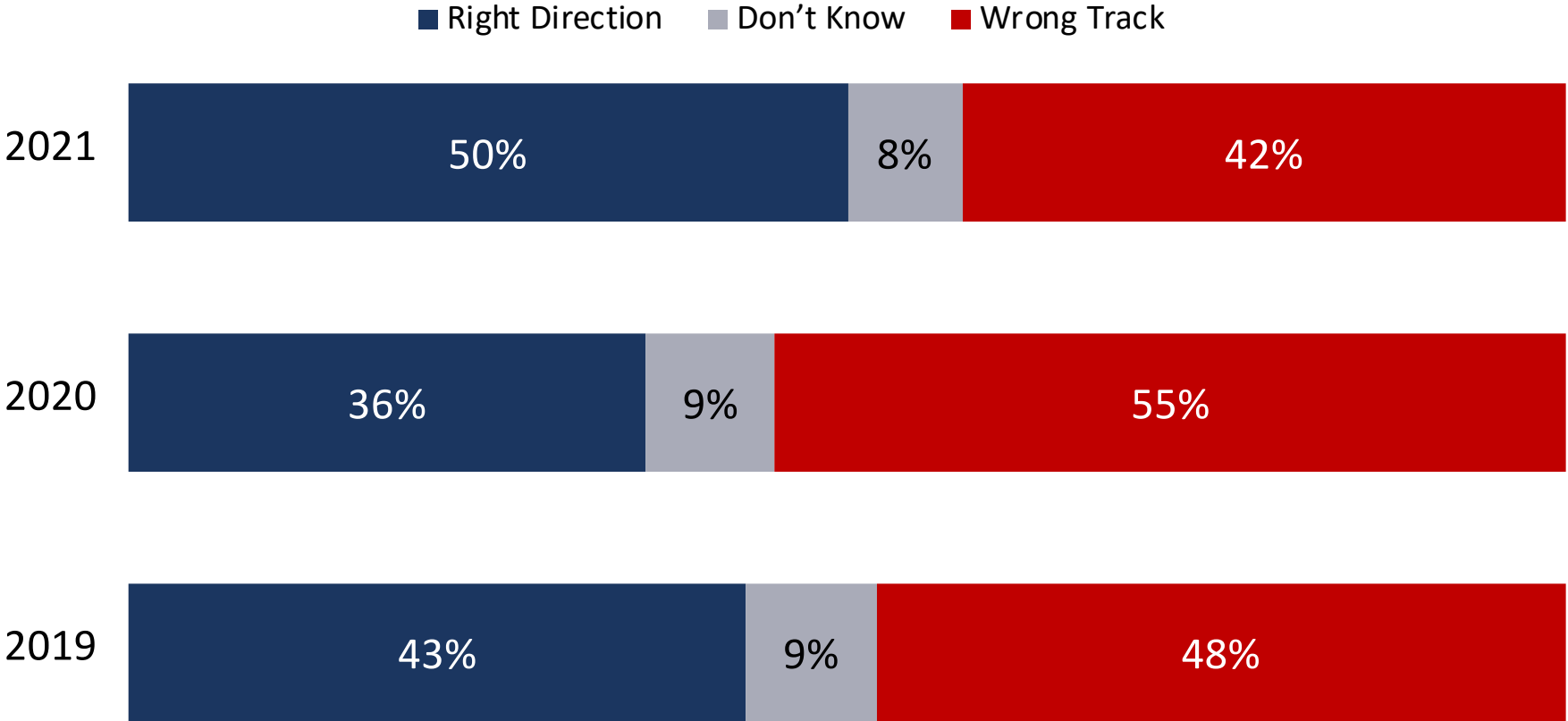
(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)



Issue Context

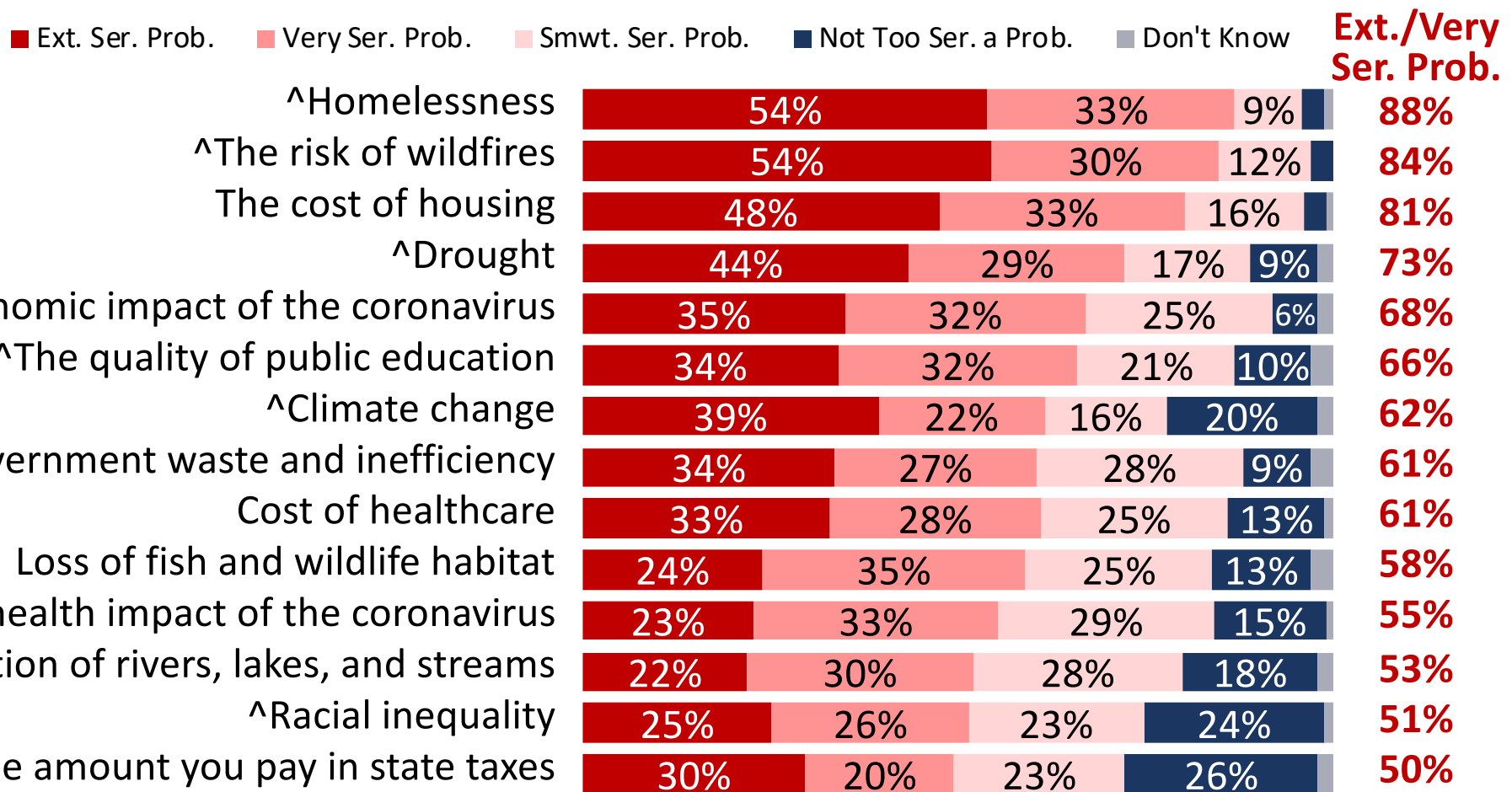
A slim majority of voters feels the state is headed in the right direction.

Would you say that things in California are generally headed in the right direction or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



California voters are nearly universally concerned with homelessness, wildfires, and housing costs.

Here is a list of some specific problems facing California that people have mentioned. Please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for the state.



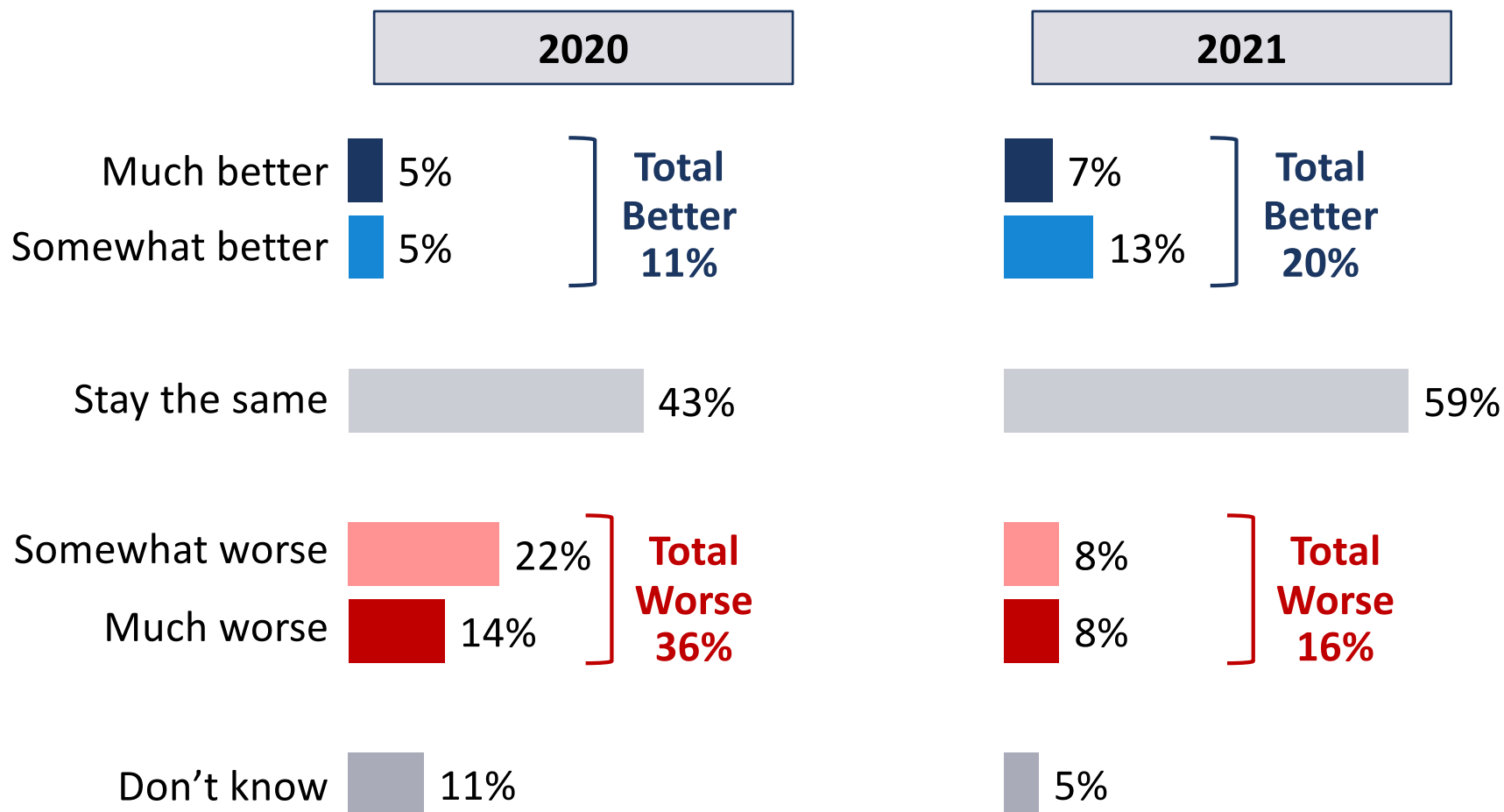
The impacts of the coronavirus have become less urgent; worry about climate change is consistent.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	2012	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Diff.
^The quality of public education	--	--	--	73%	--		49%	66%	+17%
^Drought	--	--	--	--	--	59%	--	73%	+14%
^The risk of wildfires	--	--	--	69%	--	81%	75%	84%	+9%
The cost of housing	--	--	--	--	--	77%	75%	81%	+6%
Loss of fish and wildlife habitat	--	--	--	51%	--	57%	--	58%	+1%
^Climate change	48%	42%	51%	61%	56%	60%	62%	62%	0%
^Homelessness	--	--	--	--	82%	88%	--	88%	0%
The amount you pay in state taxes	--	46%	43%	--	51%	52%	52%	50%	-2%
Pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams	--	--	--	59%	--	63%	63%	53%	-10%
Government waste and inefficiency	--	70%	67%	--	72%	71%	75%	61%	-14%
Cost of healthcare	--	69%	66%	--	78%	73%	80%	61%	-19%
The economic impact of the coronavirus	--	--	--	--	--	--	89%	68%	-21%
The public health impact of the coronavirus	--	--	--	--	--	--	76%	55%	-21%

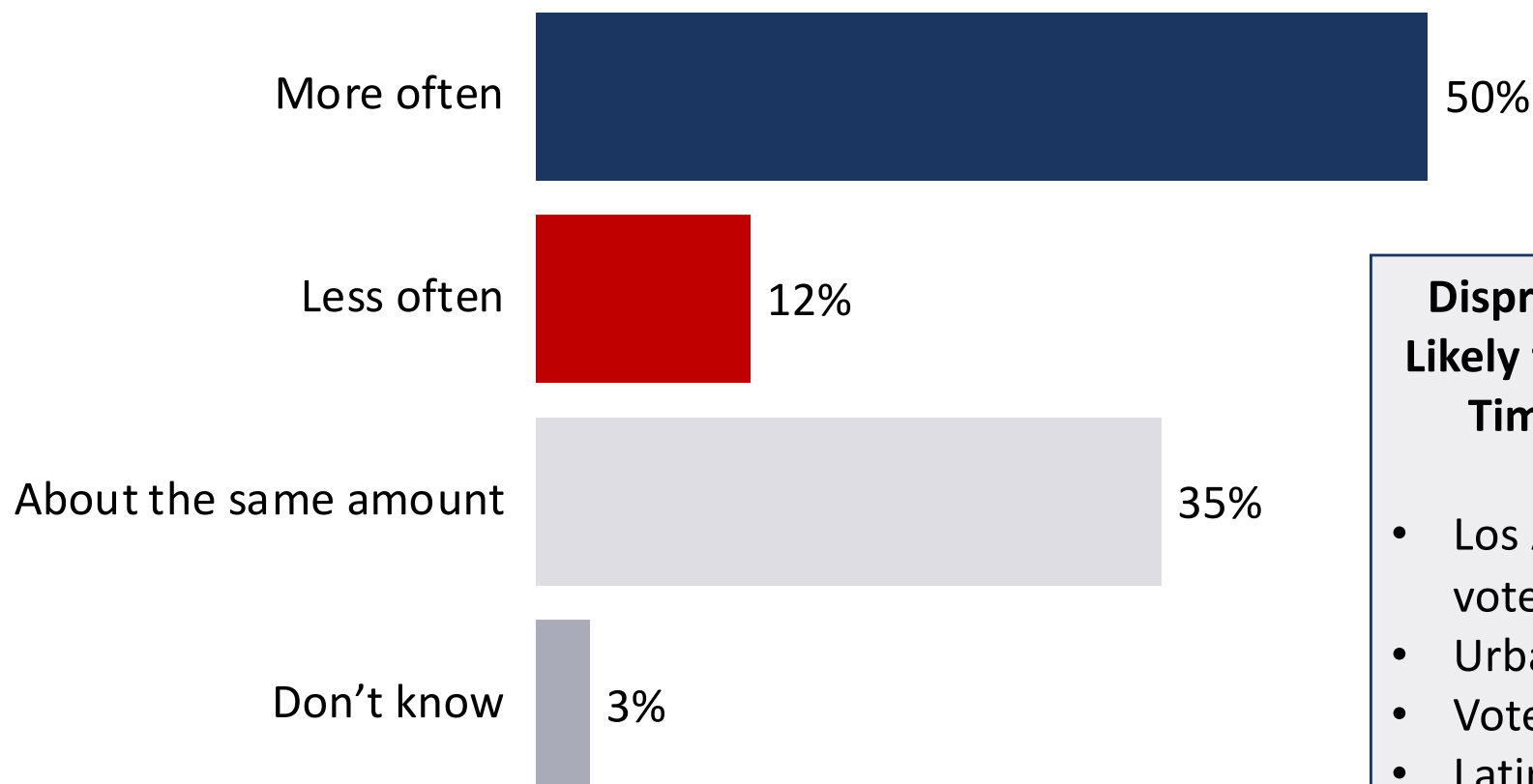
Compared with 2020, more Californians predict their household finances will be stable.

And over the next few months, do you expect that your household's financial circumstances will generally: get better, get worse, or stay the same?



Half of California voters say they will visit parks and open spaces more in 2021 than 2020.

2020 was an unusual year, so: assuming that the pandemic is under control this year, do you plan to visit parks and open spaces more often, less often, or about the same amount in the year ahead?

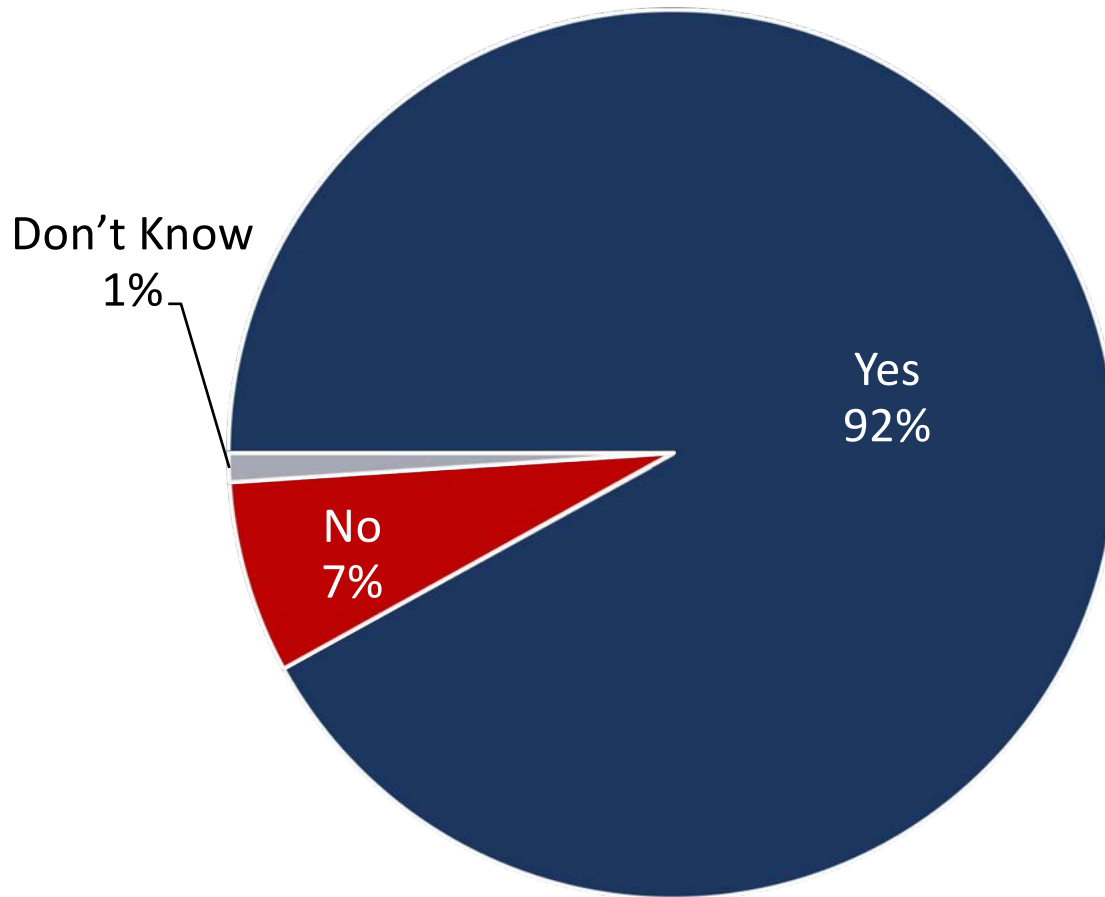


Disproportionately Likely to Spend More Time Outdoors

- Los Angeles County voters
- Urban voters
- Voters under 30
- Latino voters

More than nine in ten voters say they have a park, trail or open space within 10 minutes.

Is there a park, trail or open space within 10 minutes of your home?

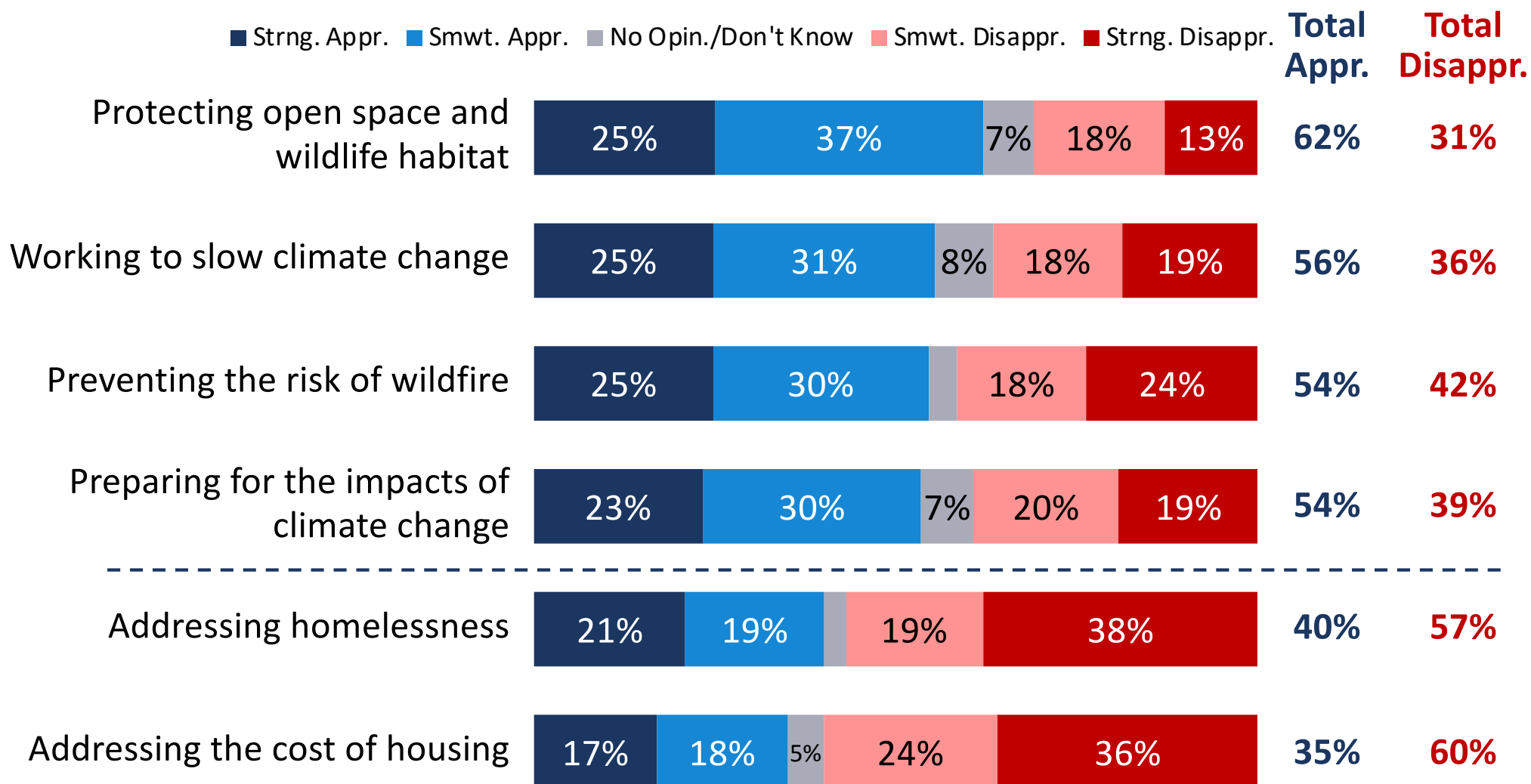


Central Valley voters were more likely to say they live more than 10 minutes from park, trail or open space, as were African American voters, and those with less formal education and lower incomes.



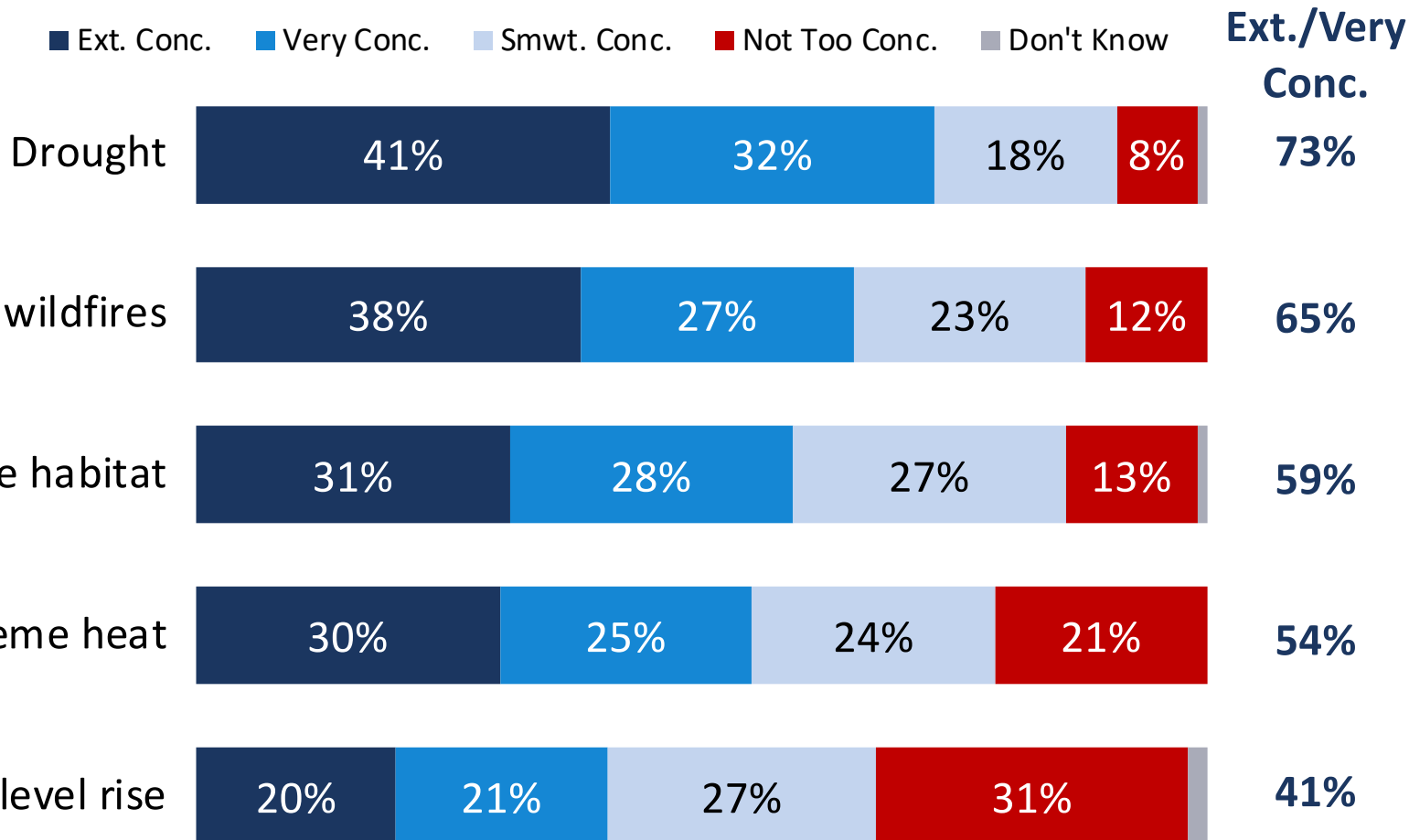
Views of Climate Change

Majorities of voters disapprove of the state's handling of homelessness and housing.



Their top climate concerns are drought, wildfire impacts on air quality, and loss of habitat.

Here is a list of some challenges that California is facing from climate change. Please tell me whether you are extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not too concerned about that challenge.



Rural Northern California voters are slightly more concerned with loss of habitat.

(Extremely/Very Concerned)

Challenge	All Voters	Region						
		Los Angeles County	Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	Bay Area	San Diego	Sacramento/Rural North	Central Valley	Central Coast
Drought	73%	69%	71%	79%	68%	79%	70%	77%
Poor air quality from wildfires	65%	67%	61%	69%	53%	72%	67%	60%
Loss of wildlife habitat	59%	56%	57%	63%	61%	67%	53%	57%
Extreme heat	54%	57%	57%	52%	49%	55%	52%	51%
Sea-level rise	41%	43%	40%	46%	36%	44%	30%	39%

Voters of color are more concerned about poor air quality from wildfires than are white voters.

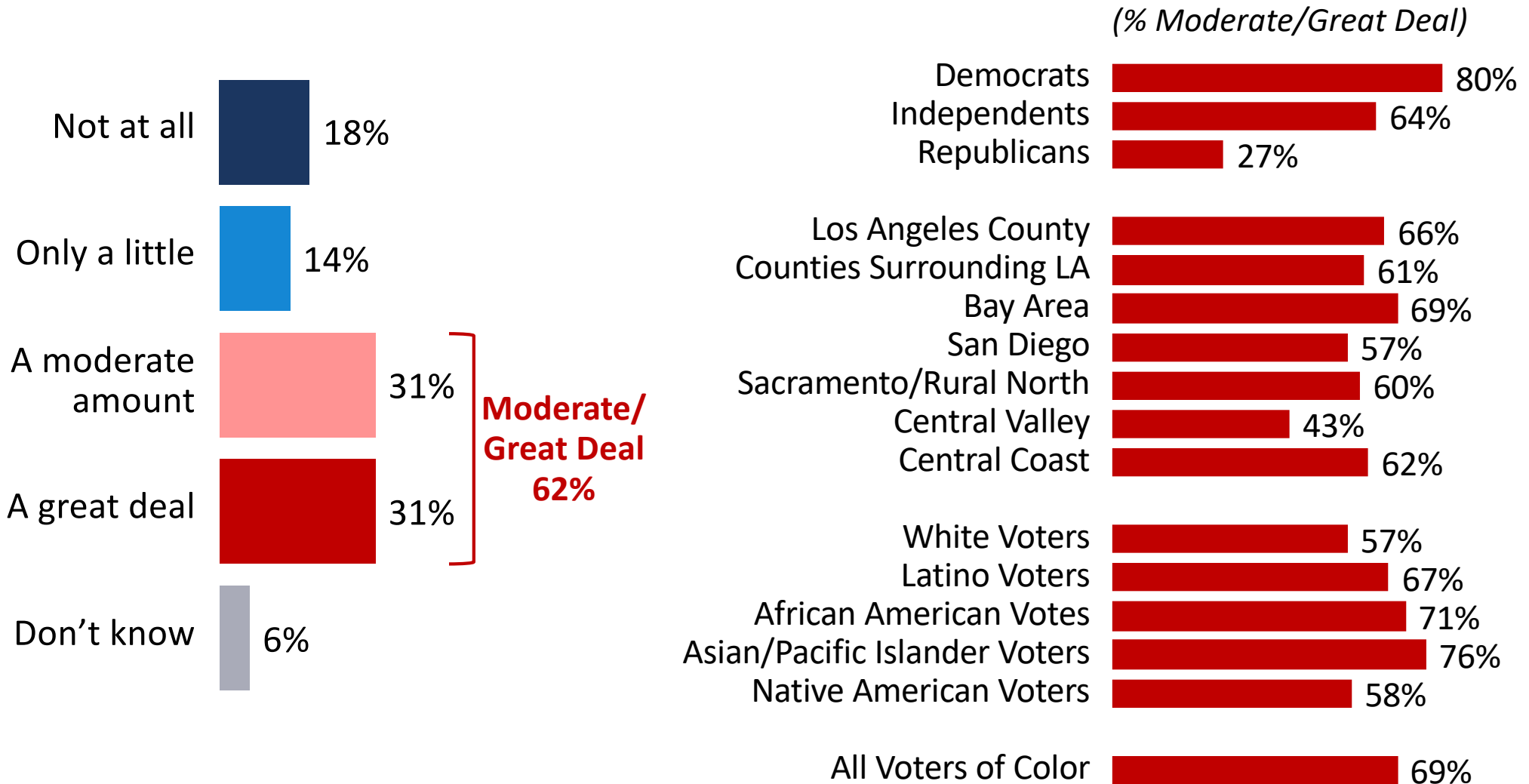
(Extremely/Very Concerned)

Challenge	All Voters	Race/Ethnicity					
		White Voters	Latino Voters	African American Votes	Asian/Pacific Islander Voters	Native American Voters	All Voters of Color
Drought	73%	73%	71%	66%	80%	69%	73%
Poor air quality from wildfires	65%	58%	75%	76%	71%	58%	74%
Loss of wildlife habitat	59%	60%	62%	49%	58%	75%	60%
Extreme heat	54%	51%	63%	52%	66%	44%	60%
Sea-level rise	41%	36%	49%	42%	54%	35%	48%

Q6. Here is a list of some challenges that California is facing from climate change. Please tell me whether you are extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not too concerned about that challenge.

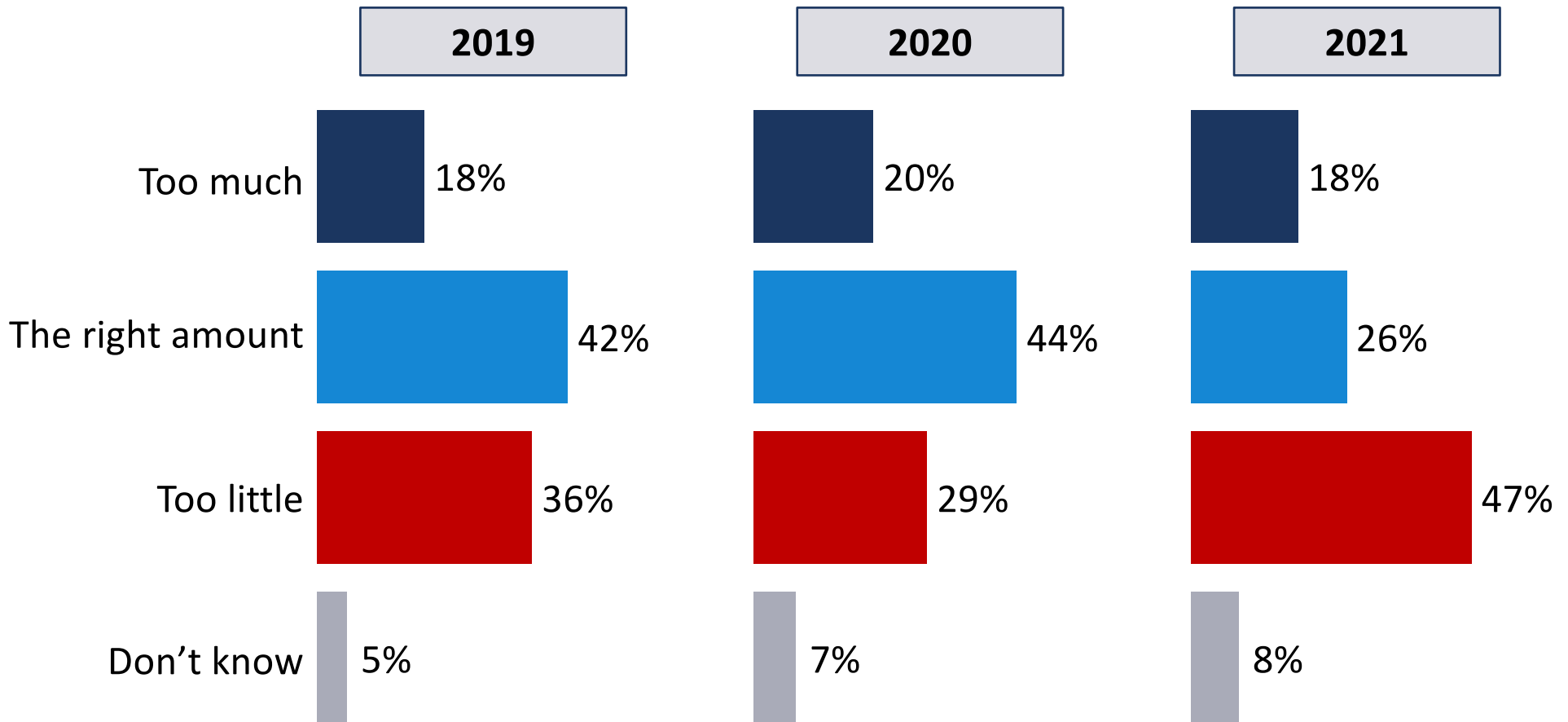
Three in five believe climate change will harm them personally; Republicans and Central Valley voters are the only groups where less than half hold this view.

How much do you think climate change will harm you personally?



Nearly half believe the state is doing “too little” to slow and adapt to climate change – an 18-point increase from last year.

And when it comes to actions to slow and adapt to climate change, do you believe that California is doing:



Renewable energy, fewer carbon emissions, and improved transportation are key priorities.

*In a few words of your own, what is the most important thing the state of California can do to (HALF SAMPLE: reduce) (HALF SAMPLE: prepare for) climate change?
(Open-ended; 4% and Above Shown)*

Reduce Climate Change		Prepare for Climate Change	
Move to renewable energy sources	14%	Move to renewable energy sources	18%
Control/regulate carbon emissions	13%	Control/regulate carbon emissions	10%
Make electric cars more affordable/accessible	10%	Make people aware/increase public information	10%
Climate changes naturally/not a concern	8%	Reduce the use of fossil fuel/gas	9%
Improve public transportation	6%	Building more water storage	8%
Make people aware/increase public information	6%	Reduce waste/recycling	7%
Prevent/control wildfires	6%	Stop wasting taxpayers' money/government inefficiency	7%
Reduce the use of fossil fuel/gas	6%	Make electric cars more affordable/accessible	6%
Reduce waste/recycling	6%	Climate changes naturally/not a concern	6%
Better forest management/protect wildlife	4%	Prevent/control wildfires	5%
Control the population growth	4%	Control the population growth	5%
Fewer cars on the road	4%	Impose stricter regulations/taxes on polluting companies	5%
Focus on eliminating pollution	4%	Better forest management/protect wildlife	4%

Verbatim Responses from Voters

They can probably reduce the carbon emission from vehicle usage.

We should probably manage the forest and clear out some other bushes to prevent forest fires.

Hold corporations accountable for their carbon footprints.

Increase public transportation, provide more incentives to purchase non-diesel vehicles, educate people on climate change and impact to individuals.

Reduce fossil fuel consumption, outlaw fracking, encourage alternative energy such as solar and wind power.

It shouldn't take three times as long to go somewhere on mass transit.

Store more water in reservoirs for dry years. Better forest management to prepare for fires.

Put solar on every roof.

They should just make sure that the animals, like polar bears, are taken care of and the lakes are taken care of.

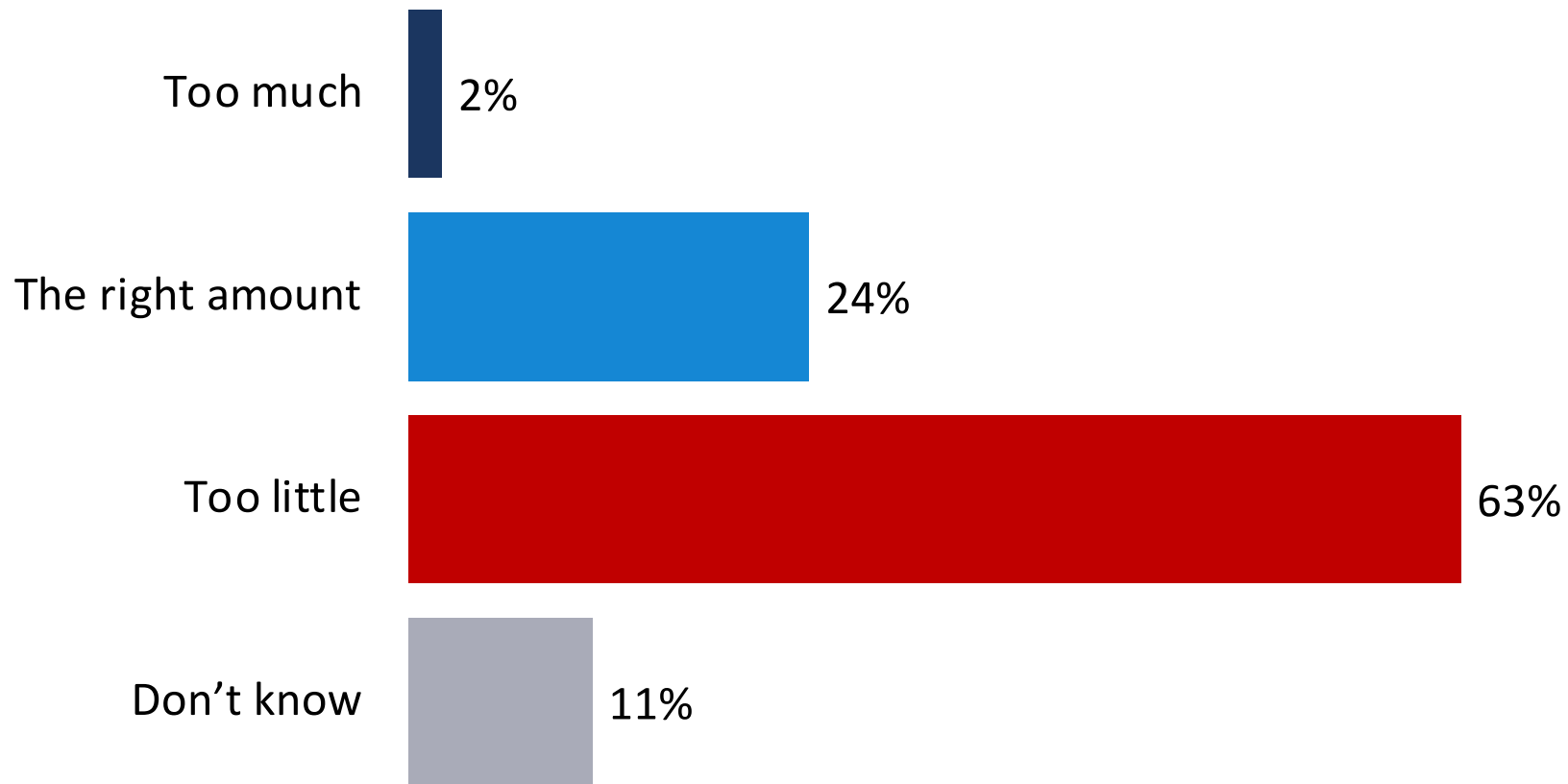
Clean air and water.

Listen to the experts and follow the science.

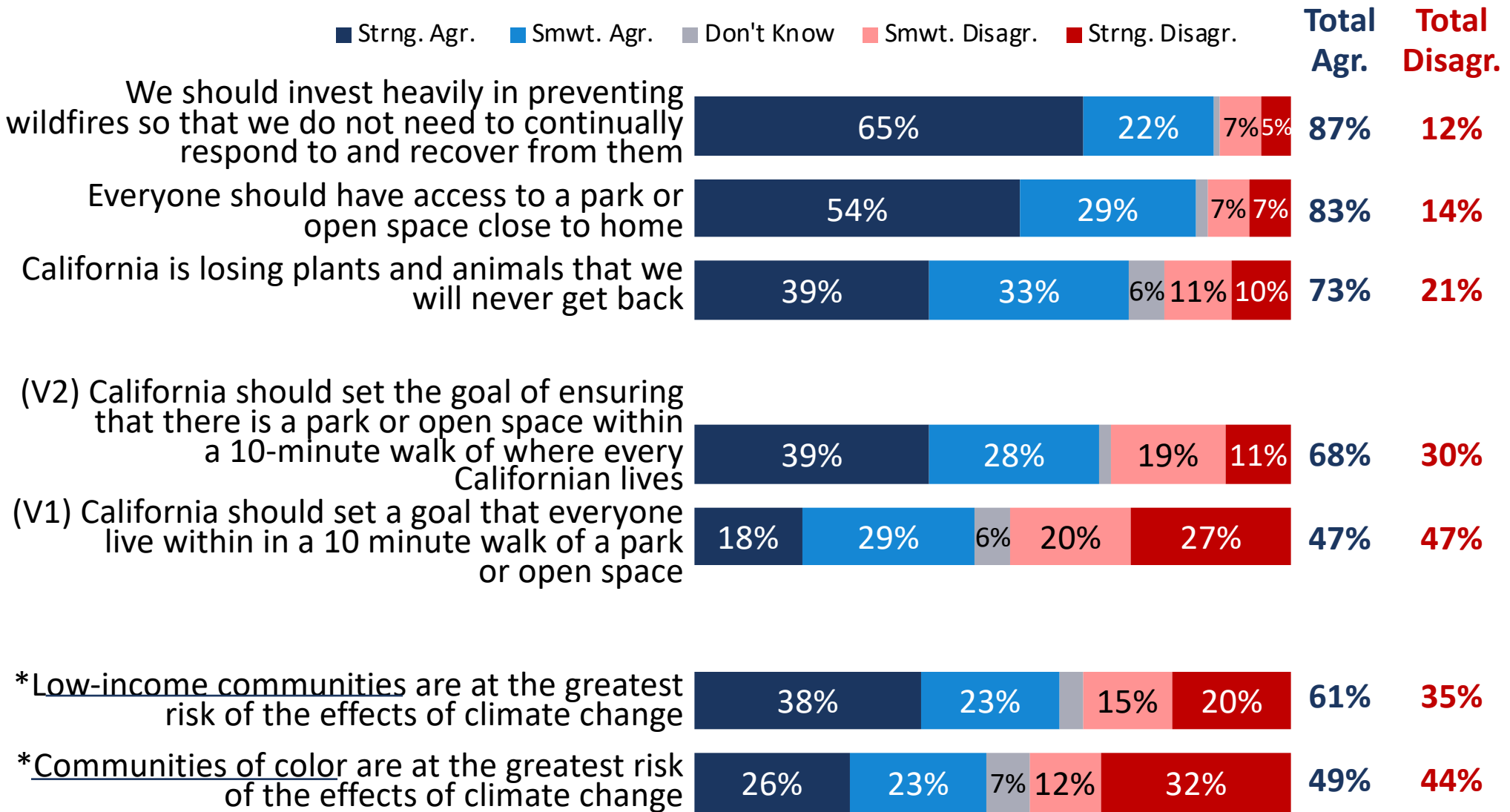
Q9. In a few words of your own, what is the most important thing the state of California can do to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: reduce) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: prepare for) climate change?

Nearly two-thirds of California voters say that the state is doing too little to address the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

What do you think of what the state of California is doing to address the risk of catastrophic wildfires? Do you think the state is doing:



Voters are more likely to agree that low-income communities are at greater risk of climate change impacts than that communities of color are.



Voters across party lines agree that everyone should have access to park or open space near home.

(Total Agree)

Statement	All Voters	Party		
		Dems.	Inds.	Reps.
We should invest heavily in preventing wildfires so that we do not need to continually respond to and recover from them	87%	92%	83%	80%
Everyone should have access to a park or open space close to home	83%	89%	85%	71%
California is losing plants and animals that we will never get back	73%	87%	76%	43%
California should set the goal of ensuring that there is a park or open space within a 10-minute walk of where every Californian lives	68%	77%	75%	33%
*Low-income communities are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	61%	82%	56%	26%
*Communities of color are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	49%	70%	49%	9%

With the exception of the Central Valley, voters broadly agree low-income communities are at risk.

(Total Agree)

Statement	All Voters	Region						
		Los Angeles County	Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	Bay Area	San Diego	Sacto./ Rural North	Central Valley	Central Coast
We should invest heavily in preventing wildfires so that we do not need to continually respond to and recover from them	87%	83%	83%	90%	88%	96%	84%	84%
Everyone should have access to a park or open space close to home	83%	87%	83%	81%	87%	81%	78%	86%
California is losing plants and animals that we will never get back	73%	76%	73%	77%	73%	73%	45%	76%
California should set the goal of ensuring that there is a park or open space within a 10-minute walk of where every Californian lives	68%	66%	81%	68%	79%	39%	54%	73%
*Low-income communities are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	61%	68%	61%	75%	53%	50%	29%	61%
*Communities of color are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	49%	51%	48%	55%	59%	45%	27%	43%

Voters of color are more likely to agree that their communities are more at risk from climate.

(Total Agree)

Statement	All Voters	Race/Ethnicity					
		White Voters	Latino Voters	African American Votes	Asian/Pacific Islander Voters	Native American Voters	All Voters of Color
We should invest heavily in preventing wildfires so that we do not need to continually respond to and recover from them	87%	86%	90%	82%	90%	87%	89%
Everyone should have access to a park or open space close to home	83%	82%	92%	82%	81%	68%	87%
California is losing plants and animals that we will never get back	73%	70%	73%	74%	83%	66%	76%
California should set the goal of ensuring that there is a park or open space within a 10-minute walk of where every Californian lives	68%	59%	78%	63%	68%	51%	74%
*Low-income communities are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	61%	57%	68%	69%	82%	30%	68%
*Communities of color are at the greatest risk of the effects of climate change	49%	43%	58%	57%	56%	54%	58%

By a seven-point margin, California voters say that we should invest in addressing climate change rather than waiting to deal with other issues first.

I am going to read you a pair of statements. Please tell me which comes closer to your opinion.

We should invest in addressing climate change now because doing so will help us recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic

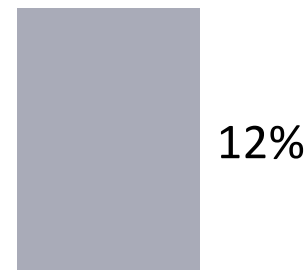


OR

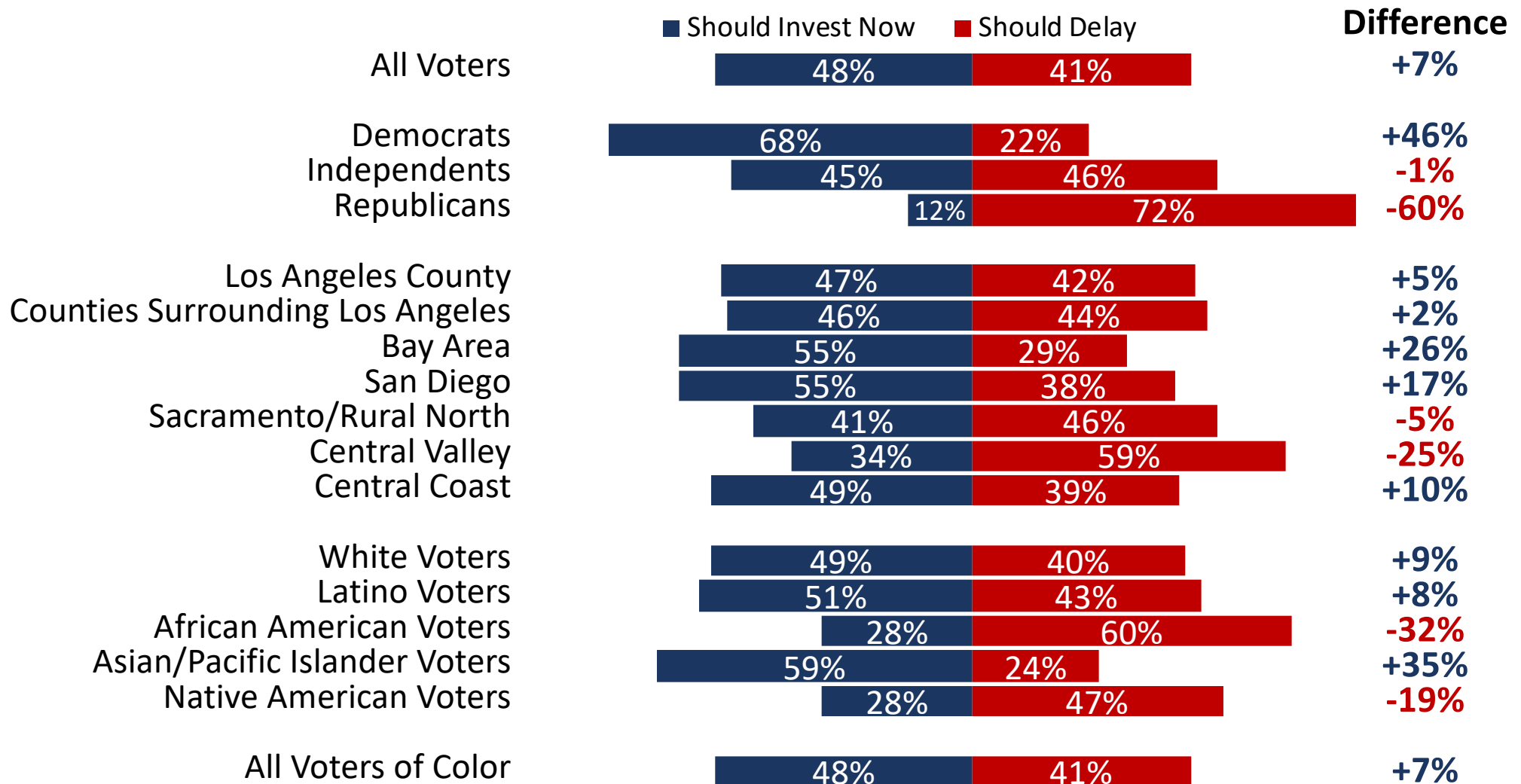
We should delay addressing climate change in order to deal with more immediate issues like pandemic recovery, homelessness, and public safety



Both/Neither/Don't know



A desire for delay is driven by GOP voters – though many Black voters share that perspective.

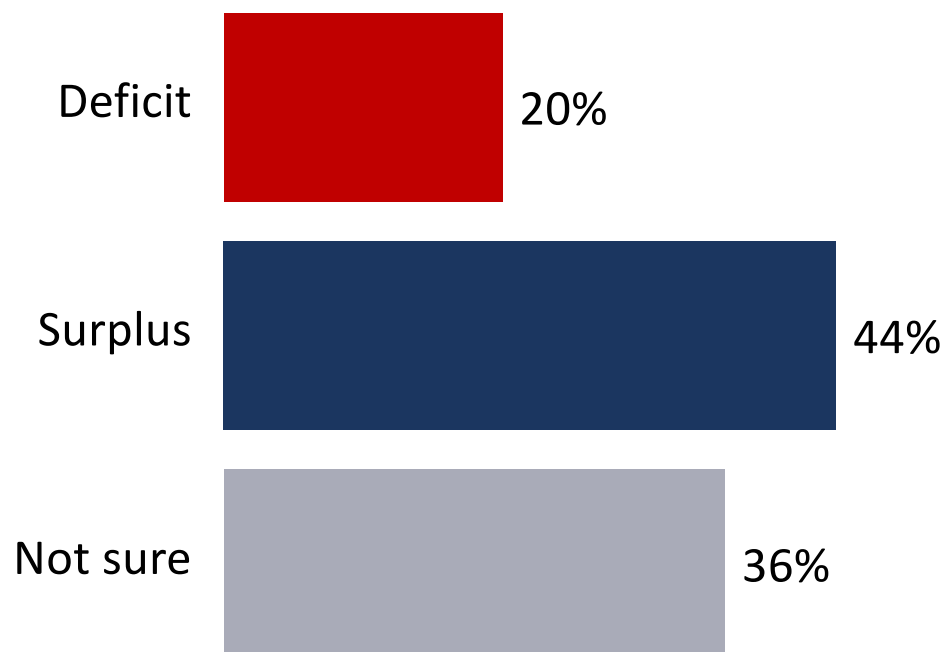




Views of the Surplus and How to Invest It

Just over two in five voters understand that California has a budget surplus.

The state creates a budget based on the tax revenues they expect and the amount of money they expect to spend on programs and services. Sometimes, costs and revenue are different from what they expect, leading to either a surplus (when they have more money than they budgeted for) or a deficit (when they have less than what they budgeted for). From what you know, does the state of California have a budget deficit or a surplus for the coming year?



Most Likely to Say "Surplus"

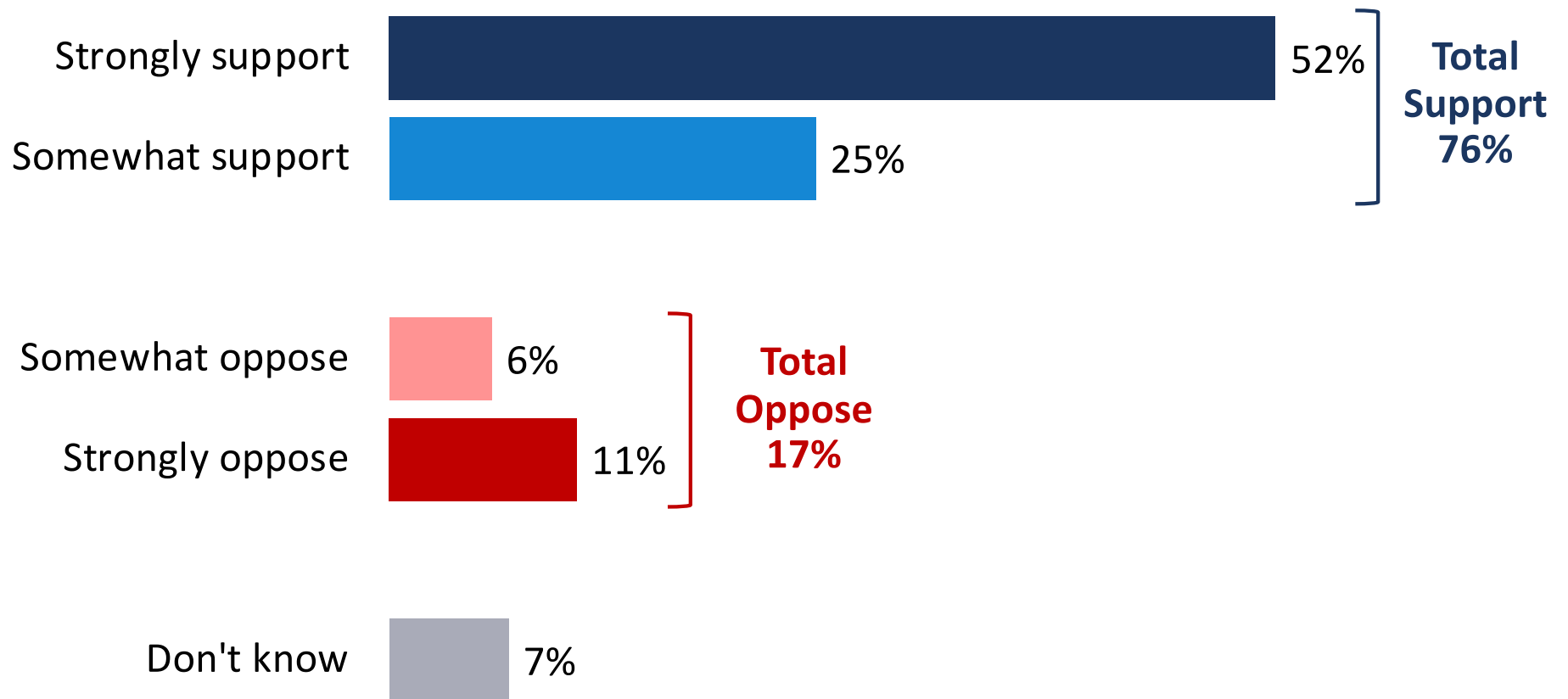
- San Diego voters
- African Americans
- Democrats under 50
- Independents
- Voters under 50
- HH income <\$60K

Voters then heard more context about the surplus and the proposal to dedicate \$10 billion to climate preparation and nature.

The state of California has seen increased tax revenues, due especially to higher-than expected revenues from upper-income households. Estimates of the total amount range, but it is at least \$75 billion. In addition, the federal government is sending the state \$26 billion as part of the recent coronavirus relief package.

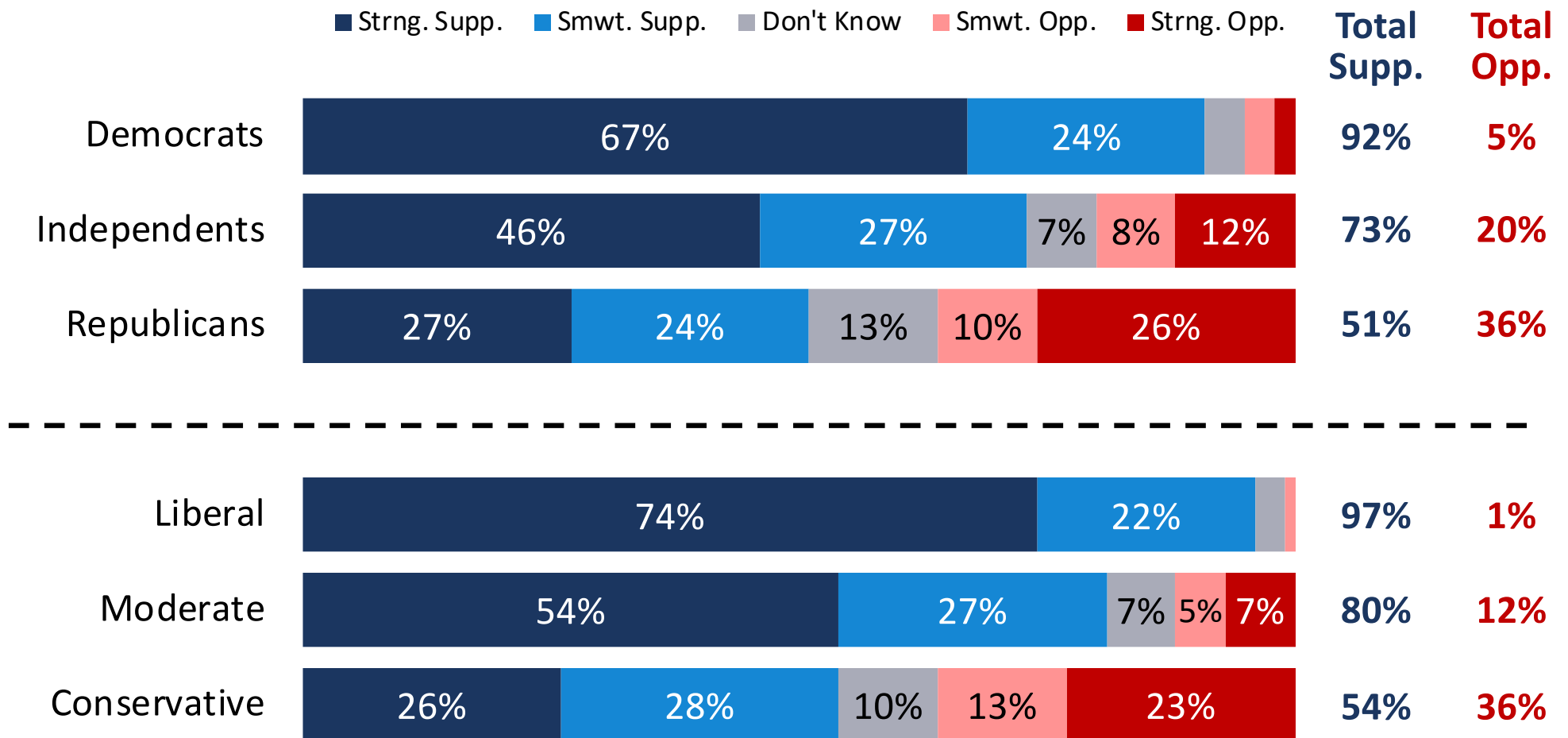
Some people have proposed that California should dedicate \$10 billion of the \$101 billion in State surplus and federal relief funding on programs to prepare for wildfire and drought, conserve land, protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and reduce the pollution that causes climate change.

Three-quarters of California voters support this proposal – more than half “strongly.”



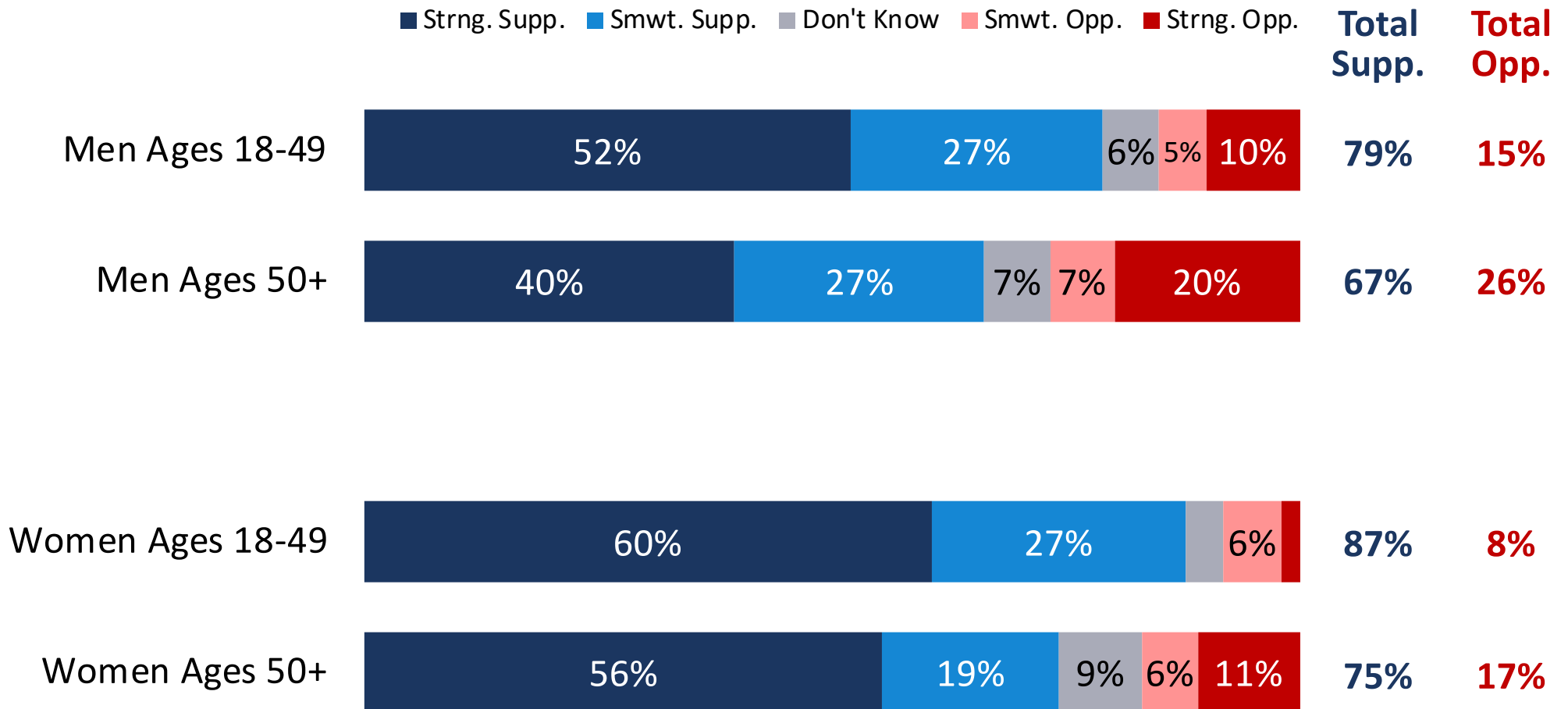
Nine in ten Democrats and seven in ten independents support the proposal – as does even a slim majority of GOP voters.

Opinion of Surplus Investment by Party & Ideology



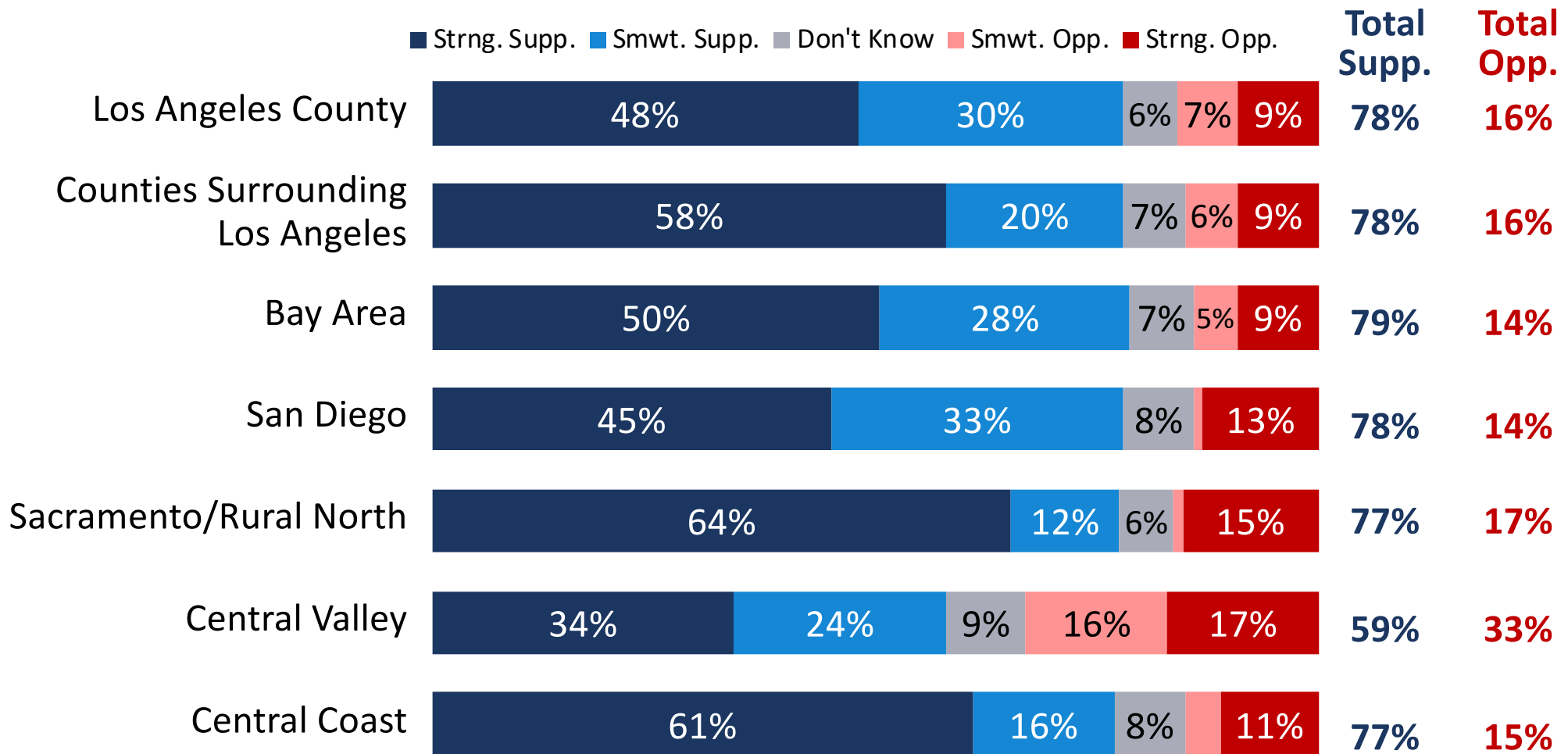
Support is especially broad and strong among women and men under 50.

Opinion of Surplus Investment by Gender by Age



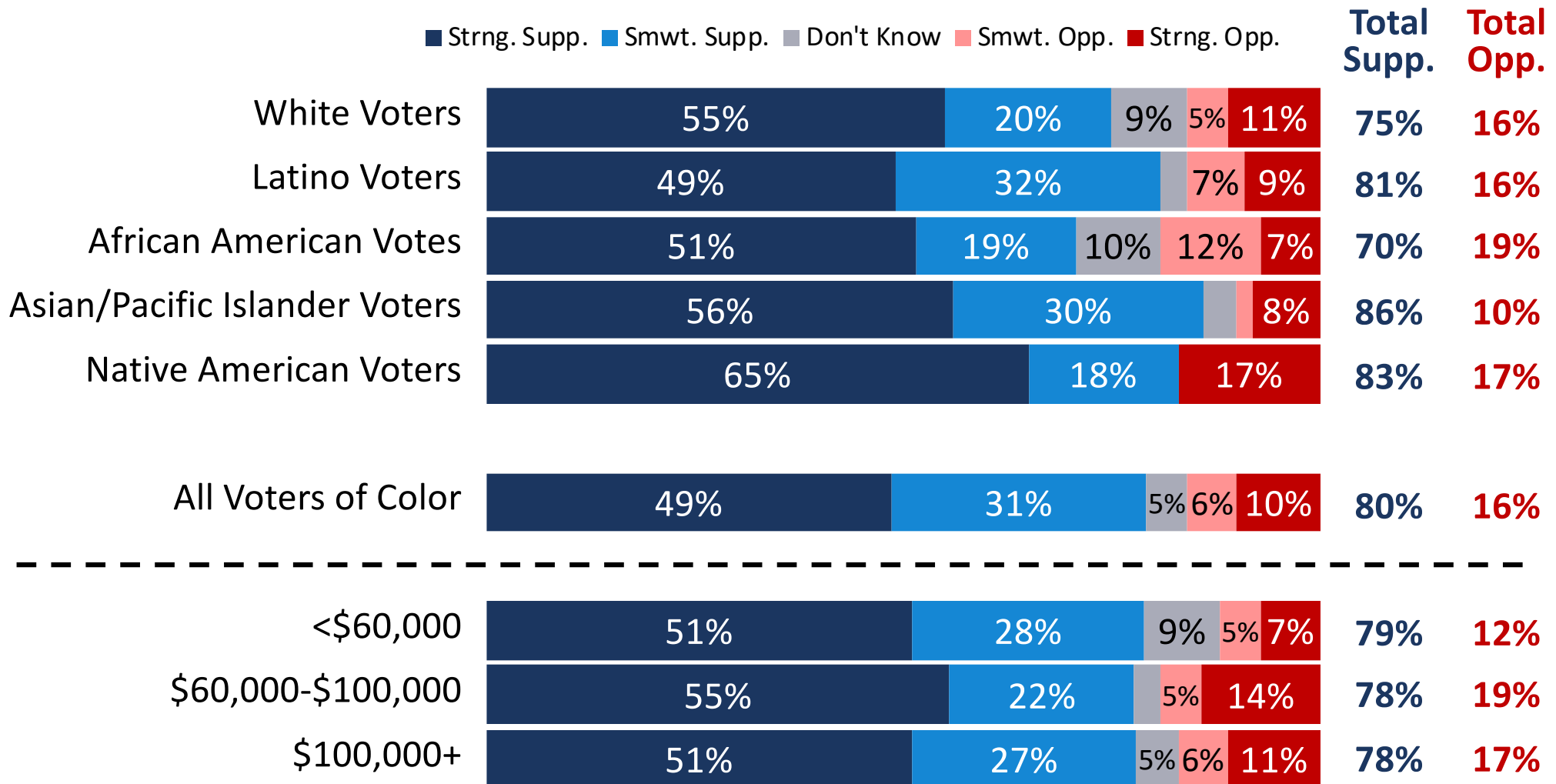
Three-quarters or more voters back the proposal in every region except the Central Valley.

Opinion of Surplus Investment by Region



Voters of color support the proposal by a 64-point margin.

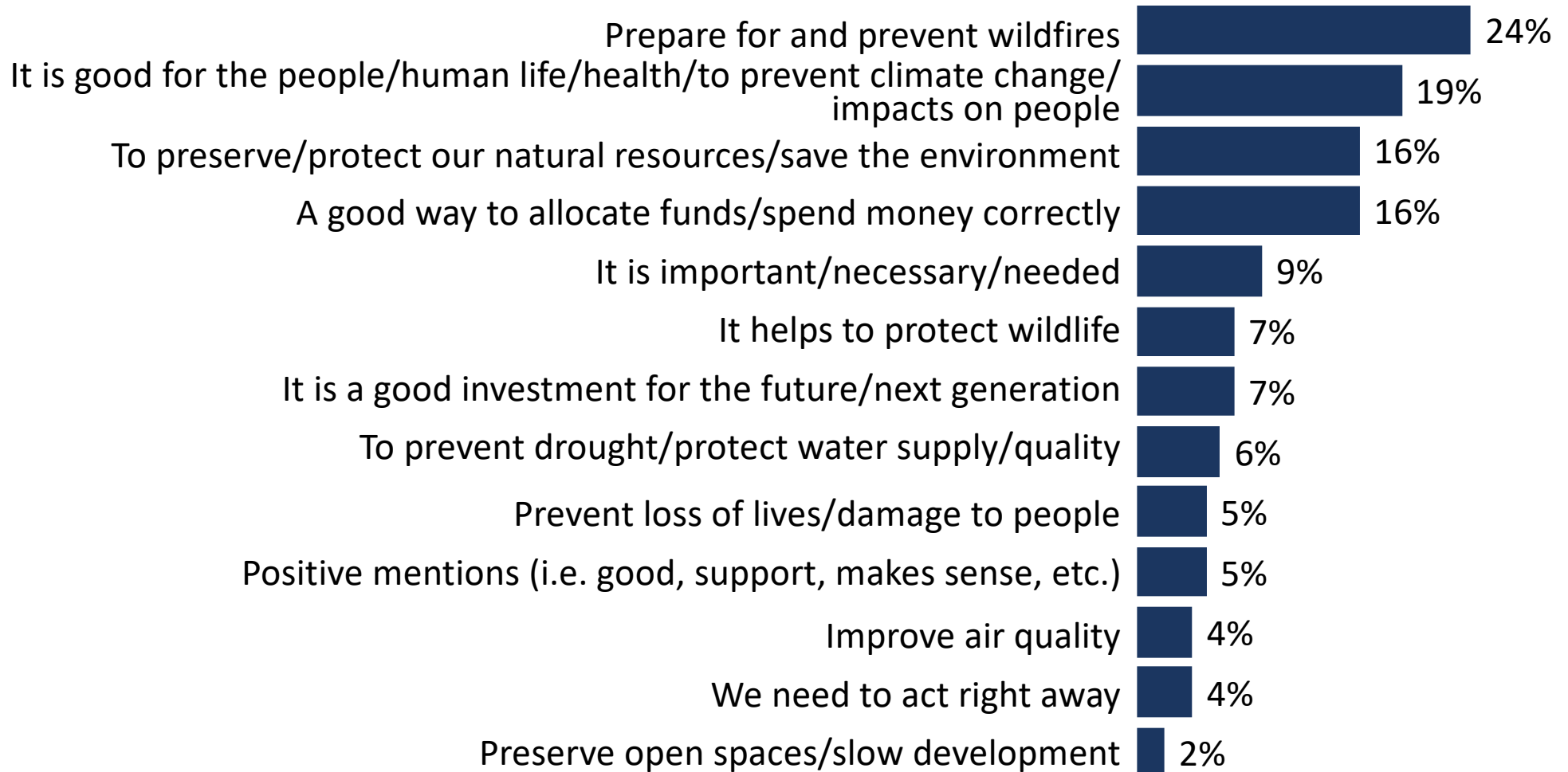
Opinion of Surplus Investment by Race/Ethnicity & Household Income



Supporters cite the proposal's benefits for wildfire prevention and human health.

*In a few words of your own, why do you **SUPPORT** this proposal?*

(Open-ended; Asked of Supporters Only, Responses 2% and Above Shown; n=688)



Verbatim Responses from Supporters

It is to reduce pollution. The people will have less problems with burning houses and losing many lives.

Without a stable environment, we have nothing. Our economy doesn't matter if our basic needs aren't met.

It's the end of the world for Christ's sake, my grandchildren are already screwed, it's just a matter of much and how quickly at this point.

The wildfires are devastating every year. We need to stop them.

We live in California because of our beautiful nature. We have seen so many devastating fires over the years. They have impacted humans, animals, air quality and everything.

We have to save this planet and share it with next generation.

Pollution in my area is serious.

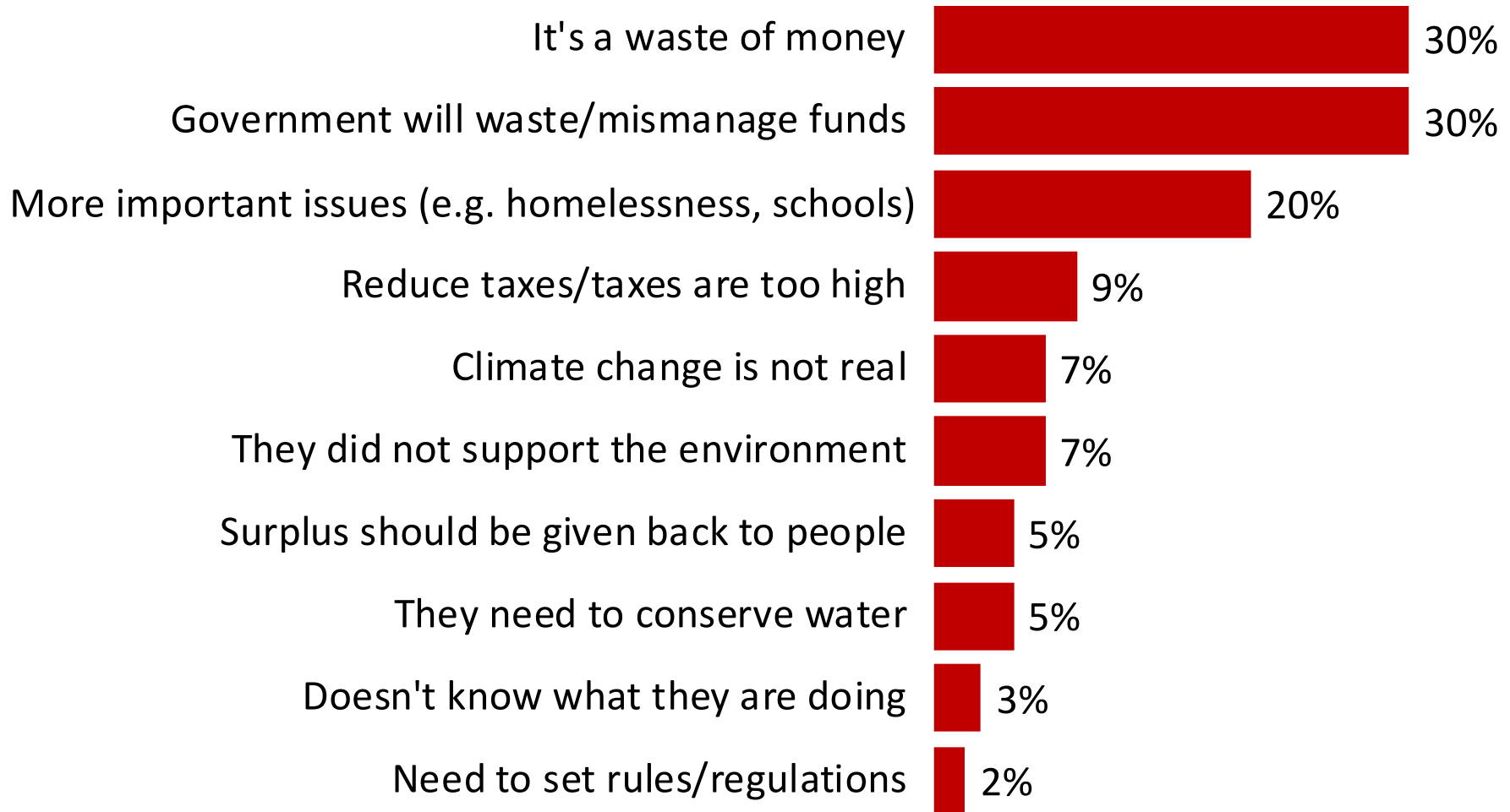
It's important to get ahead of the problems, not react after the fact, when it's too late, and wastes money.

A healthy forest provides a habitat for wildlife and assists in managing air quality.

The cost of wildfire damages are going to be greater than the cost we invest in right now.

Opponents believe government will waste the funds.

*In a few words of your own, why do you **OPPOSE** this proposal?
(Open-ended, Asked of Opponents Only, Responses 2% and Above Shown; n=149)*



Verbatim Responses from Opponents

We should concentrate on the problem with homelessness.

You are raising taxes. I don't think that these projects are covered like what they say.

State government is broken.

The state of California has shown terrible leadership in spending federal money, especially in managing wildfires or wildlands.

Surplus funds should go directly back to taxpayers of all income levels.

There are too many large-scale issues wrapped into one general proposal. These issues need to be addressed individually and appropriately.

HIGH SPEED RAIL anybody?? Not 1 piece of track laid down, 10 BILLION dollars gone!

I trust God!!!! This is His planet and He knows how our human growth in knowledge would save us.

It has nothing to do with the coronavirus. The coronavirus relief funding has nothing to do with climate change. The money shouldn't go to climate change. It should go to the people who are impacted by the coronavirus.

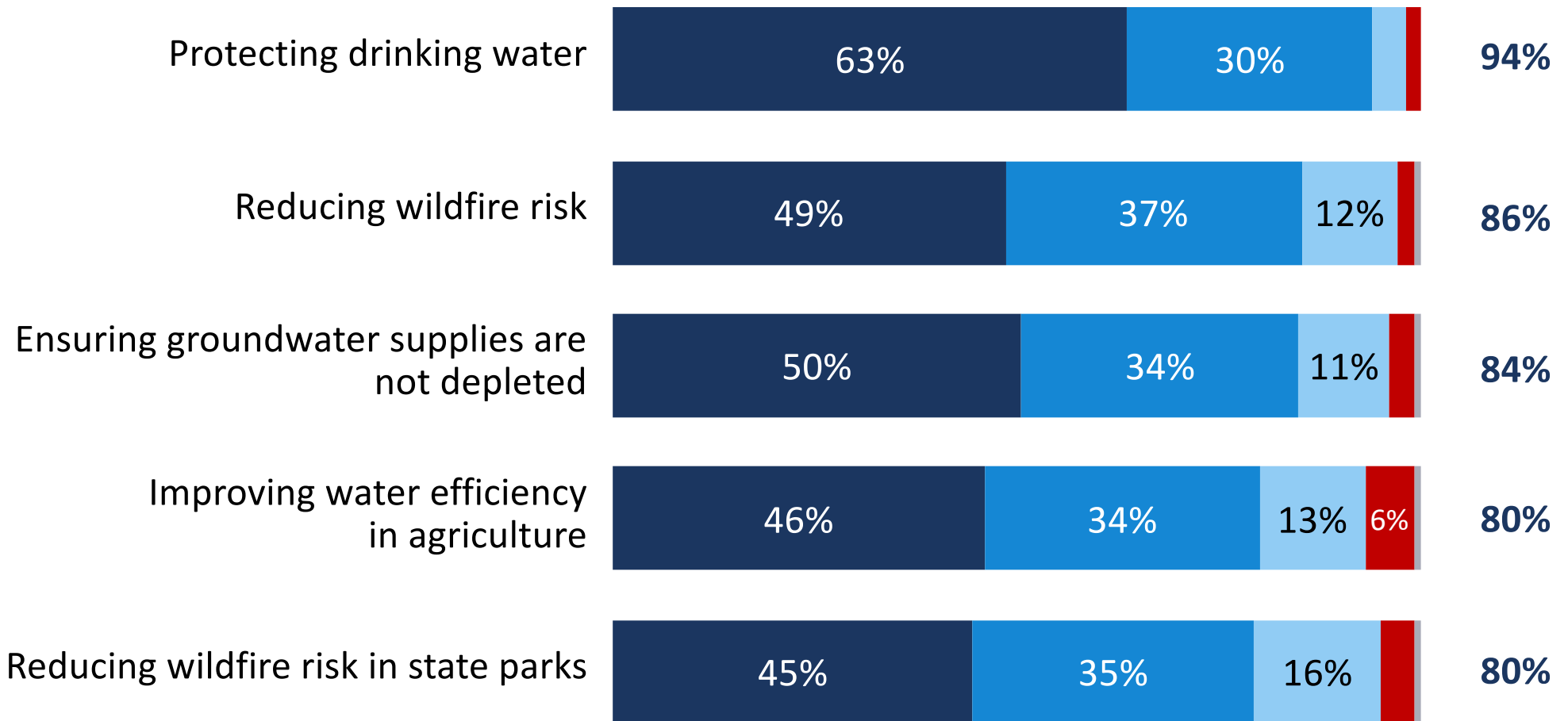
They won't spend the money in actually preventing forest fires just on climate control stuff that won't actually help.



Voter Priorities for Climate Investment

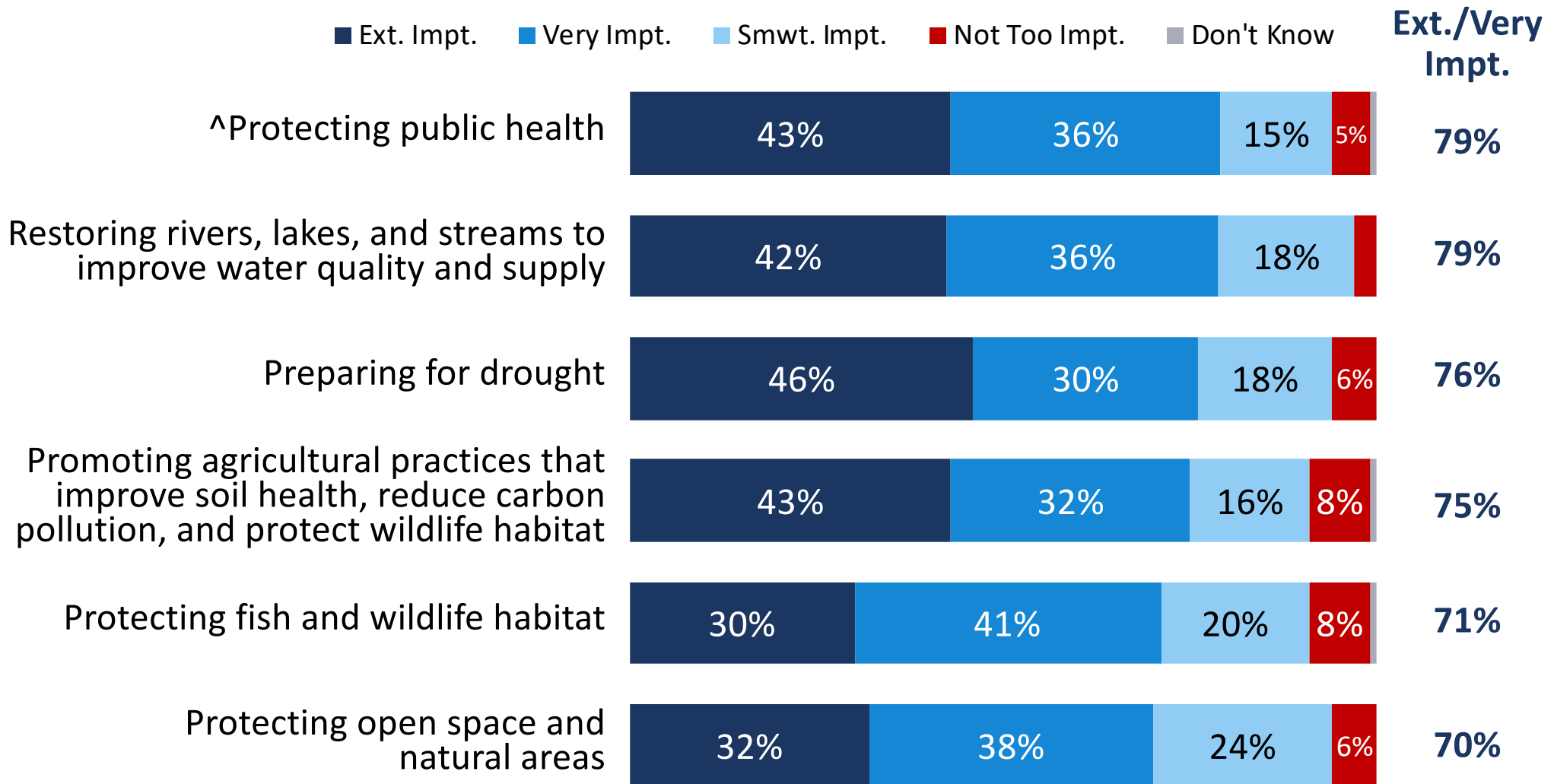
Voters' highest priorities have to do with drinking water and wildfire risk.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**



Q16. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that could be funded through a portion of the State's surplus under the proposal I mentioned earlier. Please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?
Split Sample

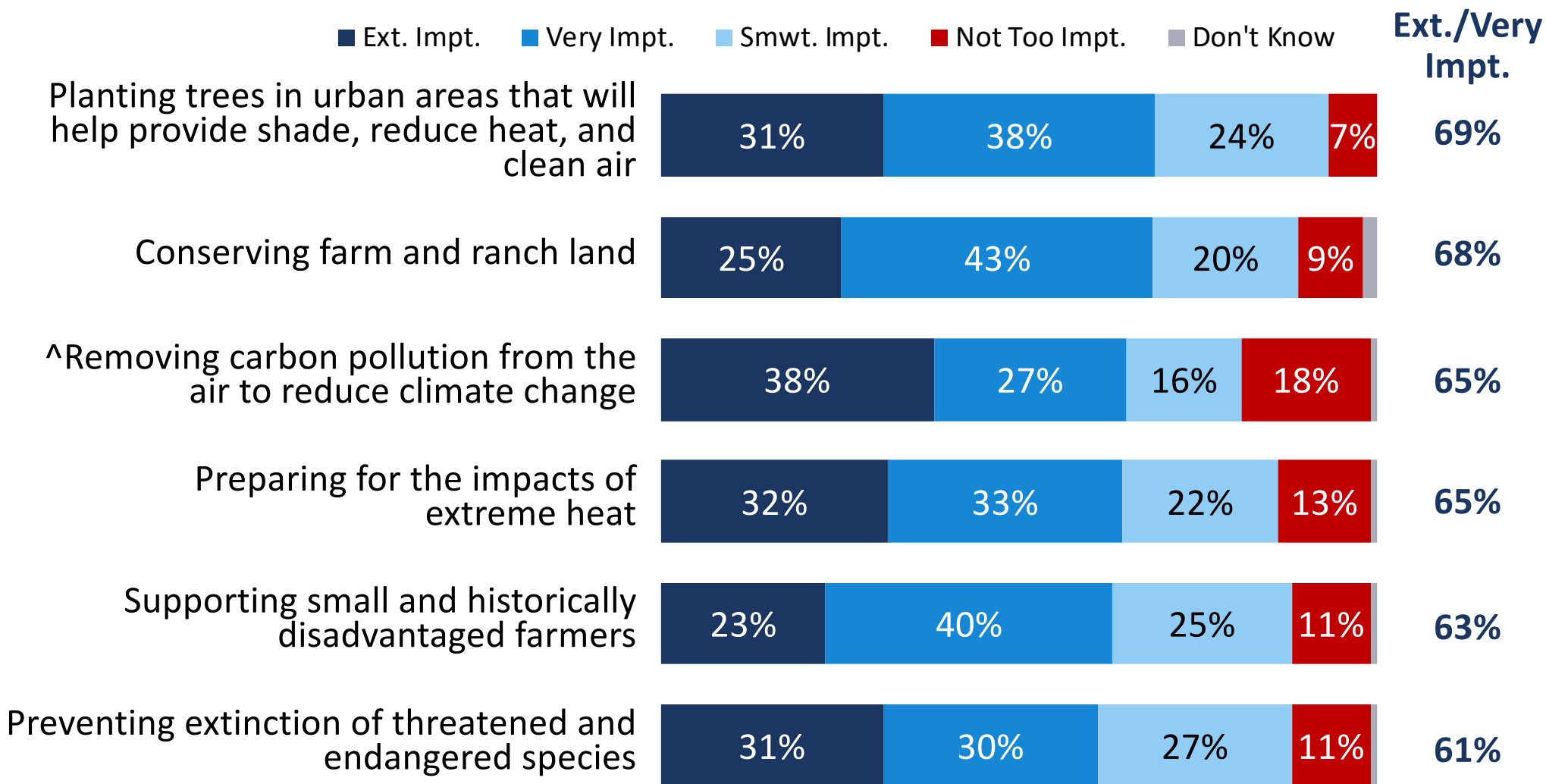
Seven in ten or more value protecting public health and habitat, and preparing for drought.



Q16. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that could be funded through a portion of the State's surplus under the proposal I mentioned earlier. Please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

^Not Part of Split Sample

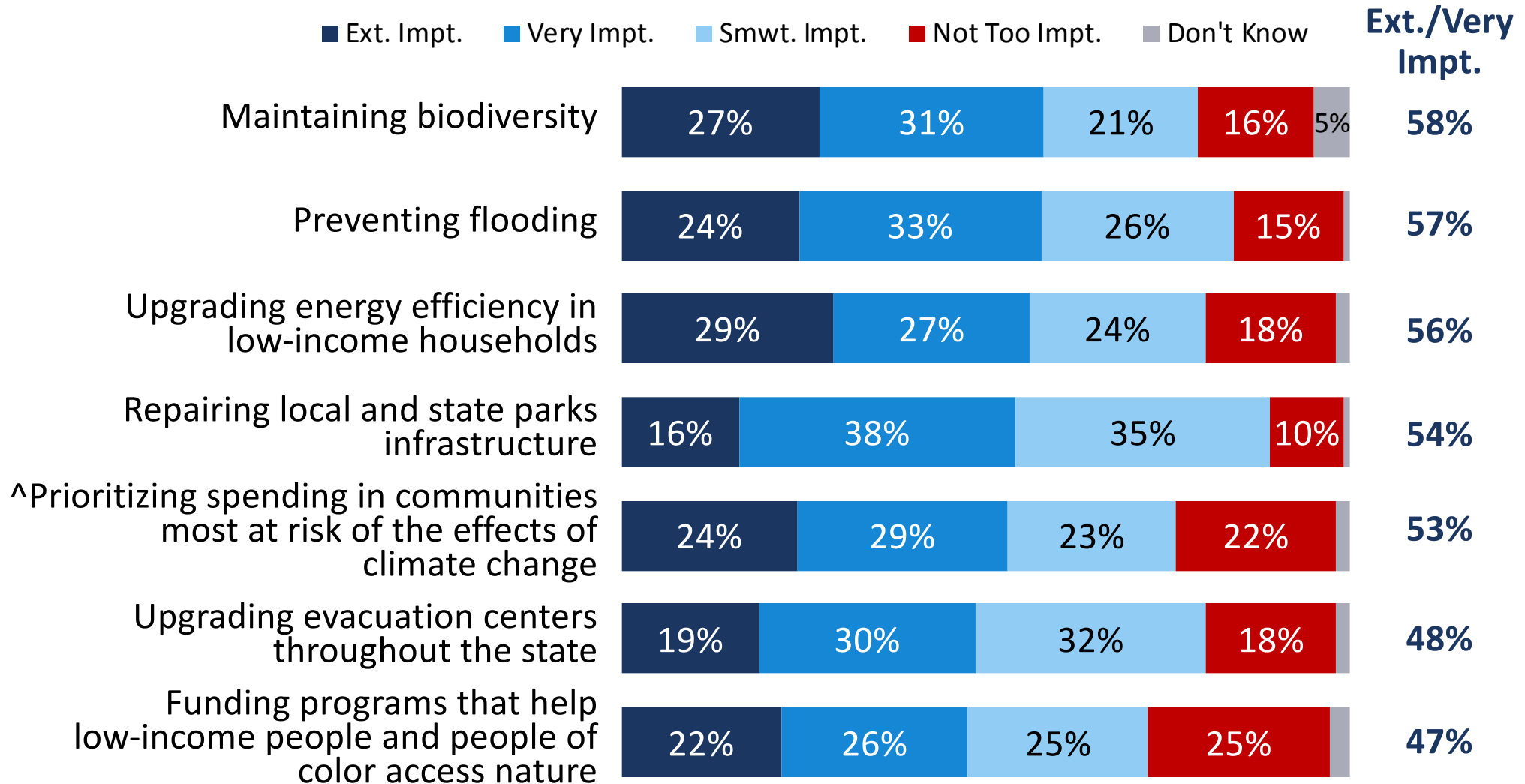
Three in five or more value conserving farm and ranch land and supporting farmers.



Q16. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that could be funded through a portion of the State's surplus under the proposal I mentioned earlier. Please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

^Not Part of Split Sample

Less-broadly shared priorities include biodiversity, evacuation centers, and equity.



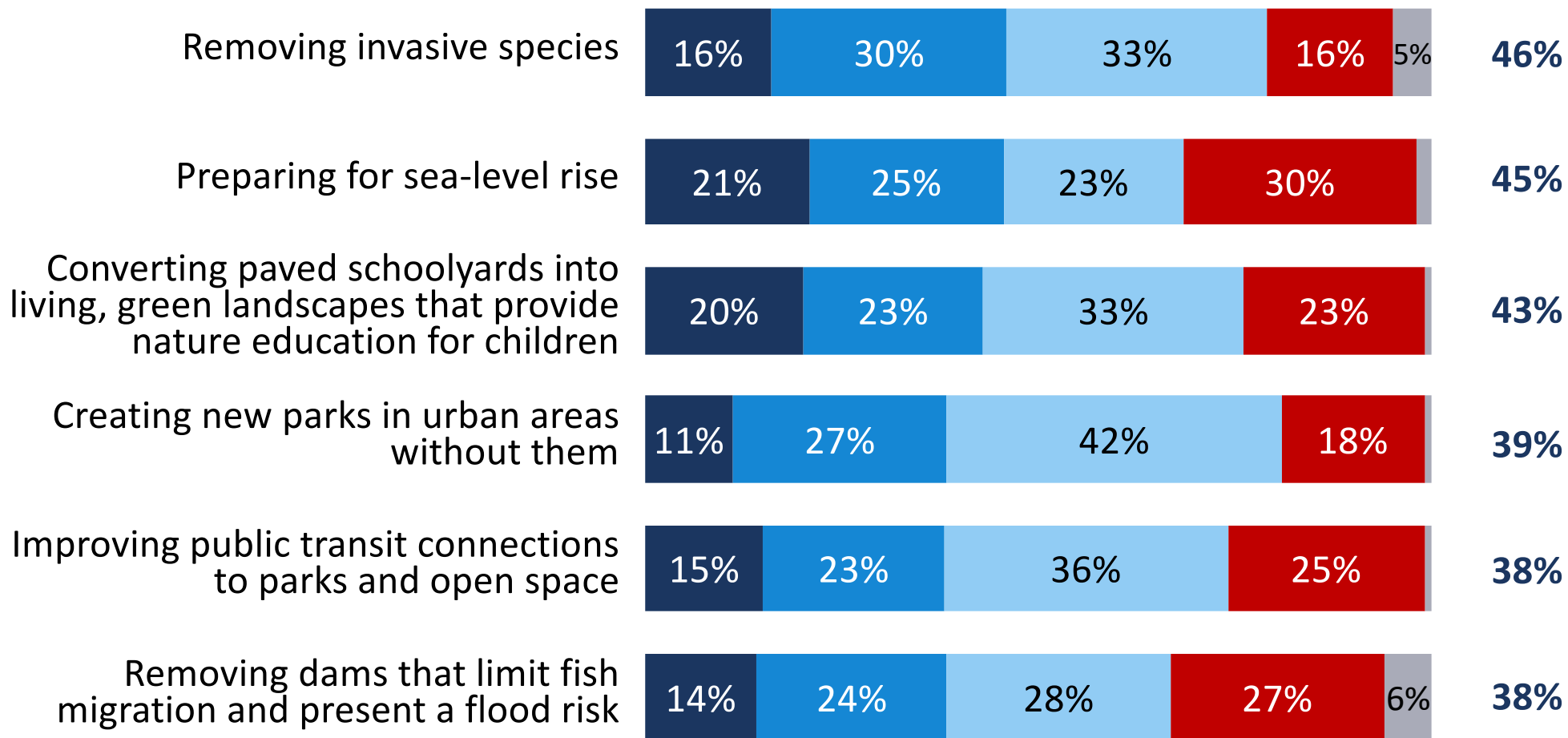
Q16. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that could be funded through a portion of the State's surplus under the proposal I mentioned earlier. Please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

^Not Part of Split Sample

New parks, transit connections, and dam removal are lower priorities.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

Ext./Very Impt.



Q16. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that could be funded through a portion of the State's surplus under the proposal I mentioned earlier. Please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?
Split Sample



Messaging and Movement

Voters heard an exchange of pros and cons.

After Support

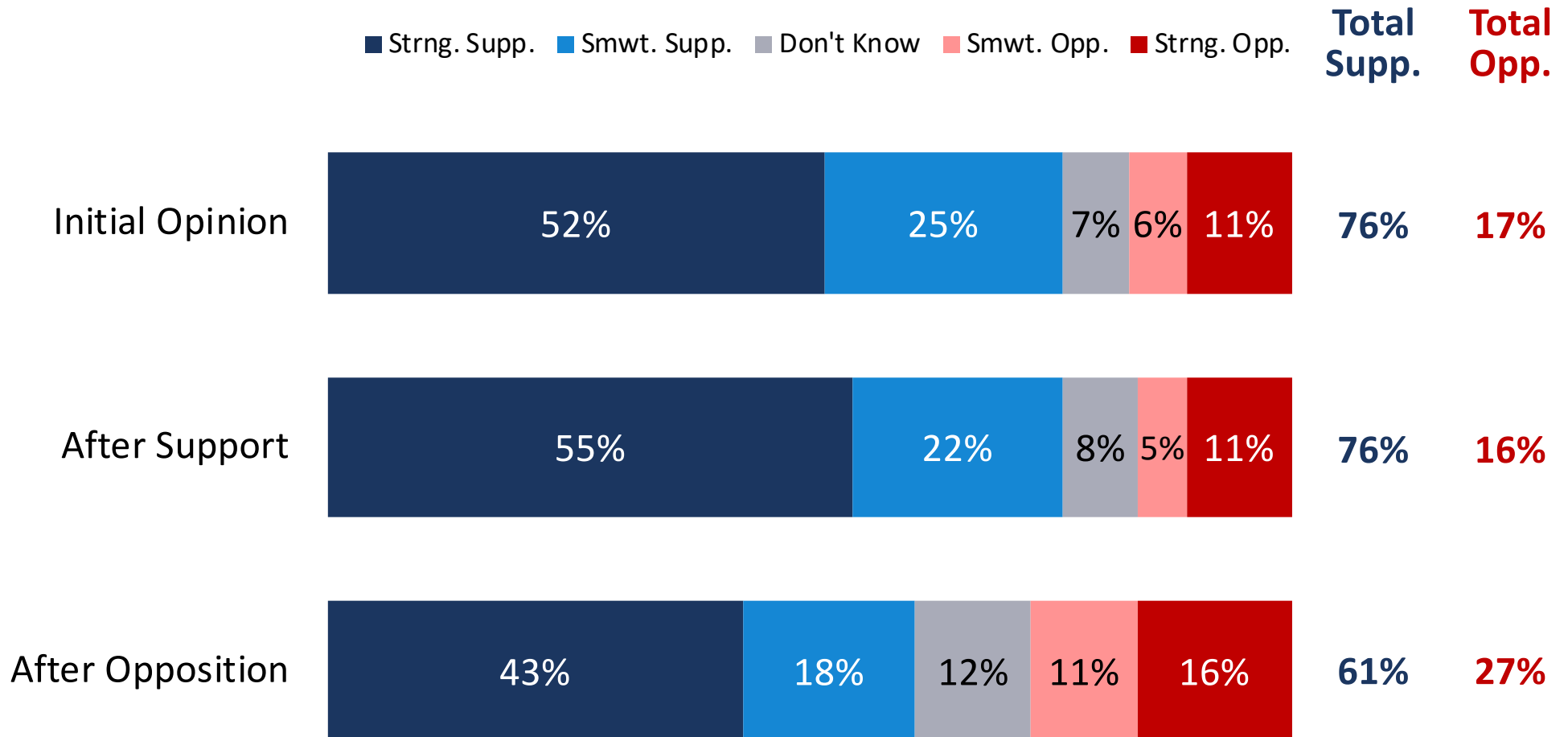
Supporters of these investments say that California's changing climate has put so much of what we love at risk: our forests, rivers, oceans, drinking water, and iconic fish and wildlife are all under threat. Now is the time to invest in protecting our water, natural areas, forests, and parks in communities throughout the state – from the coasts to the mountains – before it's too late. This is one-time money, which we should spend on emergency investments. By not issuing bonds for these purposes, spending this surplus now will save taxpayers millions of dollars in interest payments.

After Opposition

Opponents of these investments say that we need to focus every dollar on re-opening schools and businesses – not a very long laundry list of environmental projects that we can't trust Sacramento politicians to spend wisely. Anyway, Californians have approved hundreds of billions of dollars in bond measures over the last few decades for these same kinds of projects. We don't need to add more.

Q17 & Q18. Now that you've heard more about it, I'd like to ask you again about the proposal we've been discussing to dedicate \$10 billion of the \$101 billion in state surplus and federal relief funding to preparing for wildfire and drought, conserving land, protecting water quality and wildlife habitat, and reducing the pollution that causes climate change. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?

After a short opposition message, support declines slightly to three in five – still a margin greater than two to one.

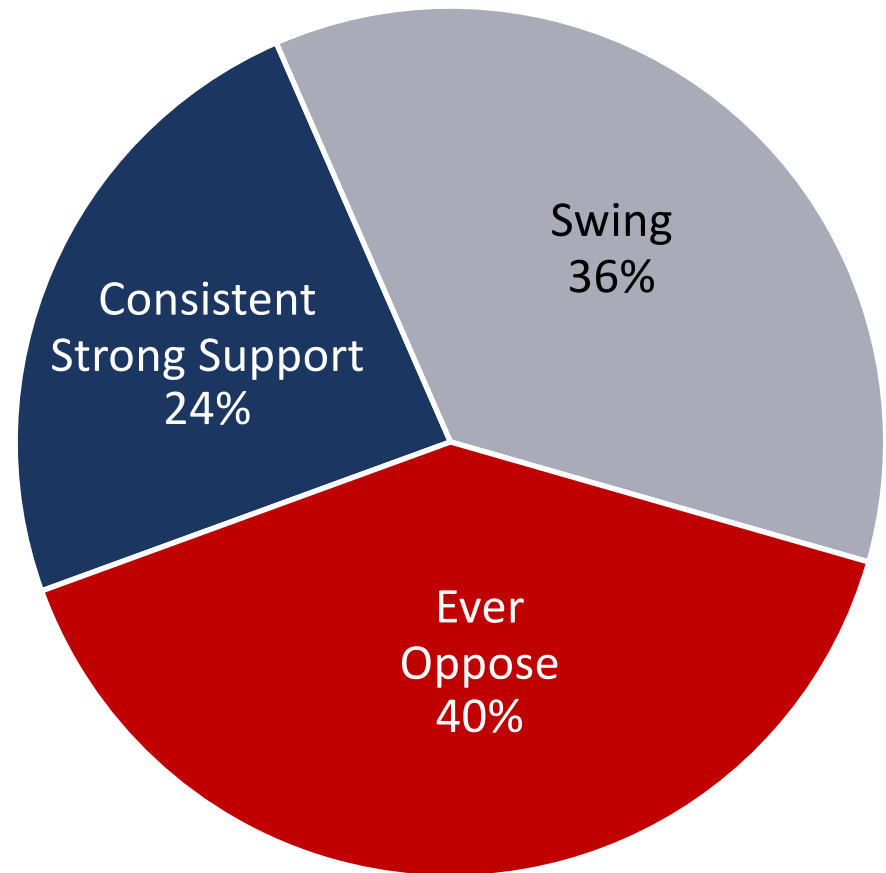


Q17 & Q18. Now that you've heard more about it, I'd like to ask you again about the proposal we've been discussing to dedicate \$10 billion of the \$101 billion in state surplus and federal relief funding to preparing for wildfire and drought, conserving land, protecting water quality and wildlife habitat, and reducing the pollution that causes climate change. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?

Segmenting the Electorate by Intensity of Support

- ❖ **Consistent Strong Support:** Voters who consistently indicated they strongly support the proposal to invest a portion of the surplus.
- ❖ **Ever Oppose:** Voters who at any point in the survey indicated that they would oppose the proposal.
- ❖ **Swing:** Voters who do not fall into any of the other categories – remaining consistently undecided, consistently softly supportive, or switching between degrees of support and indecision.

The following slide shows demographic groups that disproportionately fall into one category or the other.



Demographic Profile of the Segments

Consistent Strong Support	Swing	Ever Oppose
24% of the Electorate	36% of the Electorate	40% of the Electorate
Democrats	High School Educated	Republicans
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters	Democrats of Color	Independents Ages 50+
Ages 18-29	Liberal/Moderate Republicans	Men Ages 50+
Women Ages 18-49	Non-College Educated Women	Central Valley
College-Educated Women	Latino Voters	College-Educated Men
Counties Surrounding Los Angeles	Independent Women	Post-Graduate Educated
	Moderate/Conservative Democrats	White Voters
	Democratic Men	Ages 65+
	All Voters of Color	
	Some College or Less	
	HH Income <\$60,000	
	Democrats Ages 18-49	
	City Area	
	Moderate	



Conclusions

Conclusions

- California voters overwhelmingly support investing \$10 billion of the state’s surplus on programs to prepare for wildfire and drought, conserve land, protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and reduce the pollution that causes climate change.
 - Broad majorities across lines of party, ethnicity and geography support this proposal.
 - Support remains above three in five even after an exchange of pros and cons.
- Their top priorities for climate-related investments include water quality, addressing wildfire risk, protecting natural areas and wildlife habitat, and promoting agricultural practices with broad co-benefits (particularly for small and disadvantaged farmers).
- Equity-focused investments rank lower; voters are more likely to recognize the disparate impacts of climate change on low-income communities than on communities of color.
- Californians’ concern about climate change has held steady, even as coronavirus has receded from the list of top worries. And nearly half say the state is doing “too little” to respond to it; three in five say the same on addressing wildfire risk.
 - Voters are particularly concerned with the impacts of climate change on drought and on poor air quality from wildfires.
- While most voters see their personal financial situation as stable, the cost of housing and homelessness are intense concerns. The desire to address those urgent concerns presents a potential hurdle for the climate investment proposal.

**For more information,
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OPINION
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