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# Contra Costa County

## Survey of Likely November 2014 Voters

*Presentation to Board of Supervisors*  
June 24, 2014

# EMC Research, Inc.

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- ▶ Polling, public opinion research, and strategic consulting.
- ▶ Conducting research in Contra Costa County and the San Francisco Bay Area since our founding in 1989.
- ▶ Recent Contra Costa County research projects/clients include:
  - Contra Costa Transportation Authority
  - Contra Costa Community College District
  - 2012 and 2013 Contra Costa Poll
  - Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
  - East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
  - Contra Costa Water District
- ▶ Dozens of research projects for various entities within Contra Costa County – municipalities, regions, legislative districts, school districts, transit districts, etc.
- ▶ Dozens of other similar research projects in the Bay Area and throughout California, including many different types of ballot measures.

# Methodology

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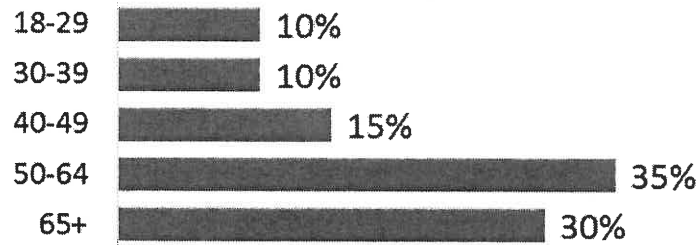
- ▶ Telephone survey of Likely November 2014 Voters in Contra Costa County.
- ▶ Interviews conducted on both landlines and cell phones.
- ▶ Survey conducted June 10-18, 2014.
- ▶ 806 total completes, with split sample methodology:
  - Sample A: n=403, asked about ¼-cent measure.
  - Sample B: n=403, asked about ½-cent measure.
- ▶ Margin of error +/- 3.5% overall; +/- 4.9 within each sample.

*Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.*

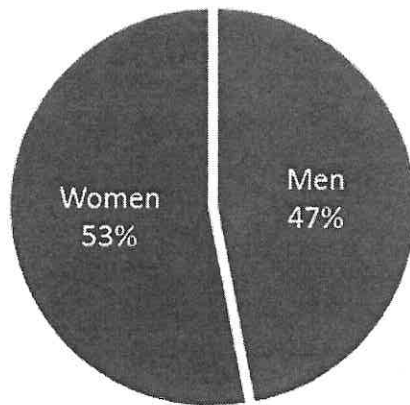
# Voter Demographics

*Polling demographics are representative of Likely November 2014 voters.*

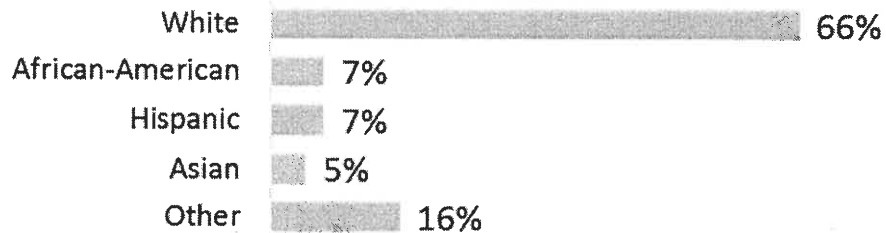
**Age**



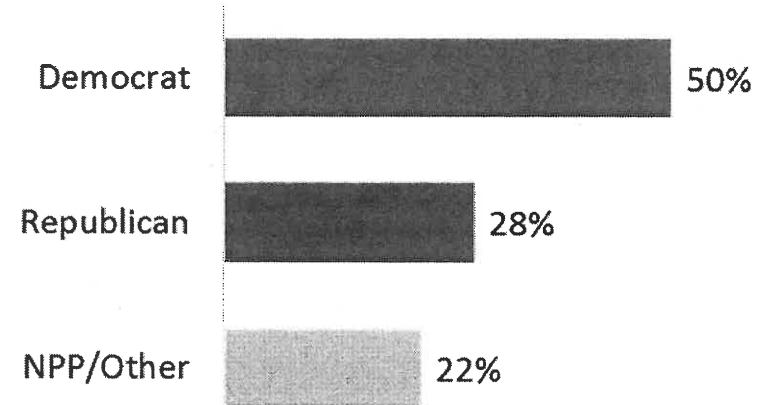
**Gender**



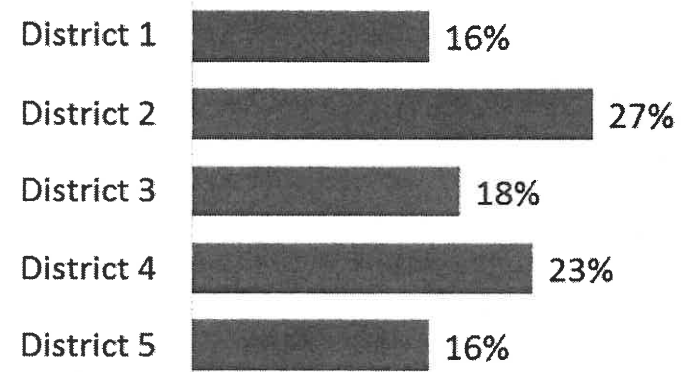
**Ethnicity**



**Party**



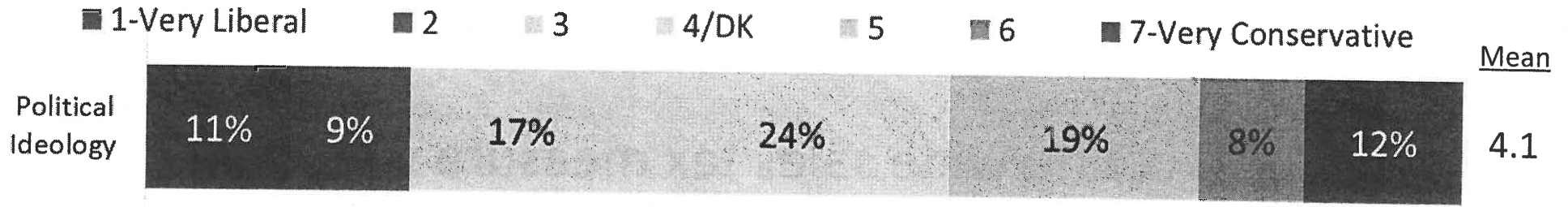
**County Sup District**



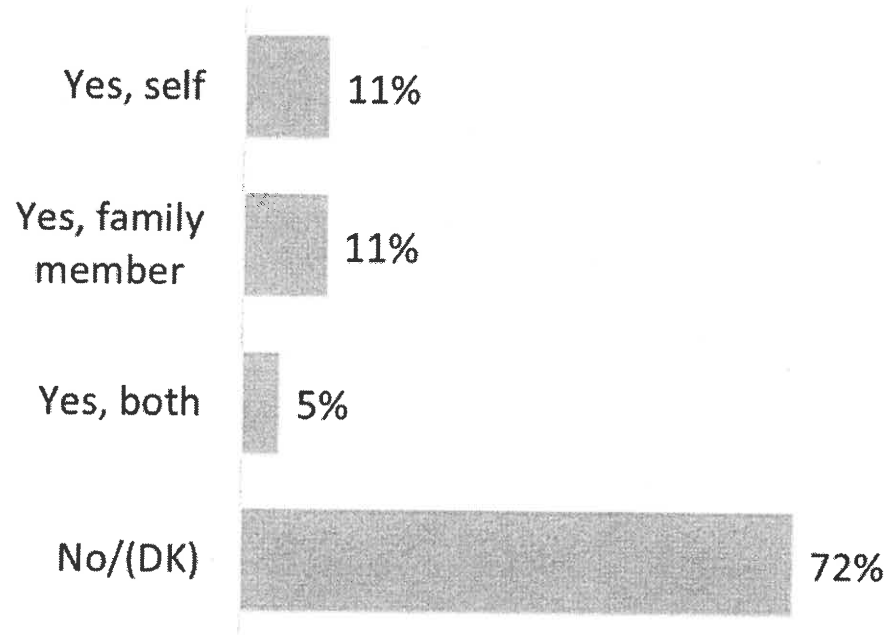


# Voter Demographics

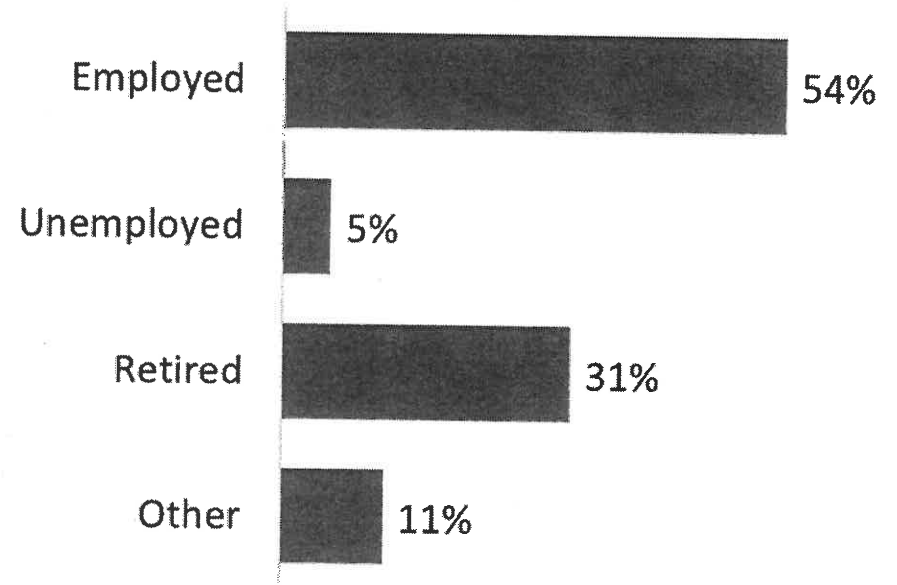
*Most voters self-identify as moderates.*



## Union Membership



## Employment Status



# Key Findings

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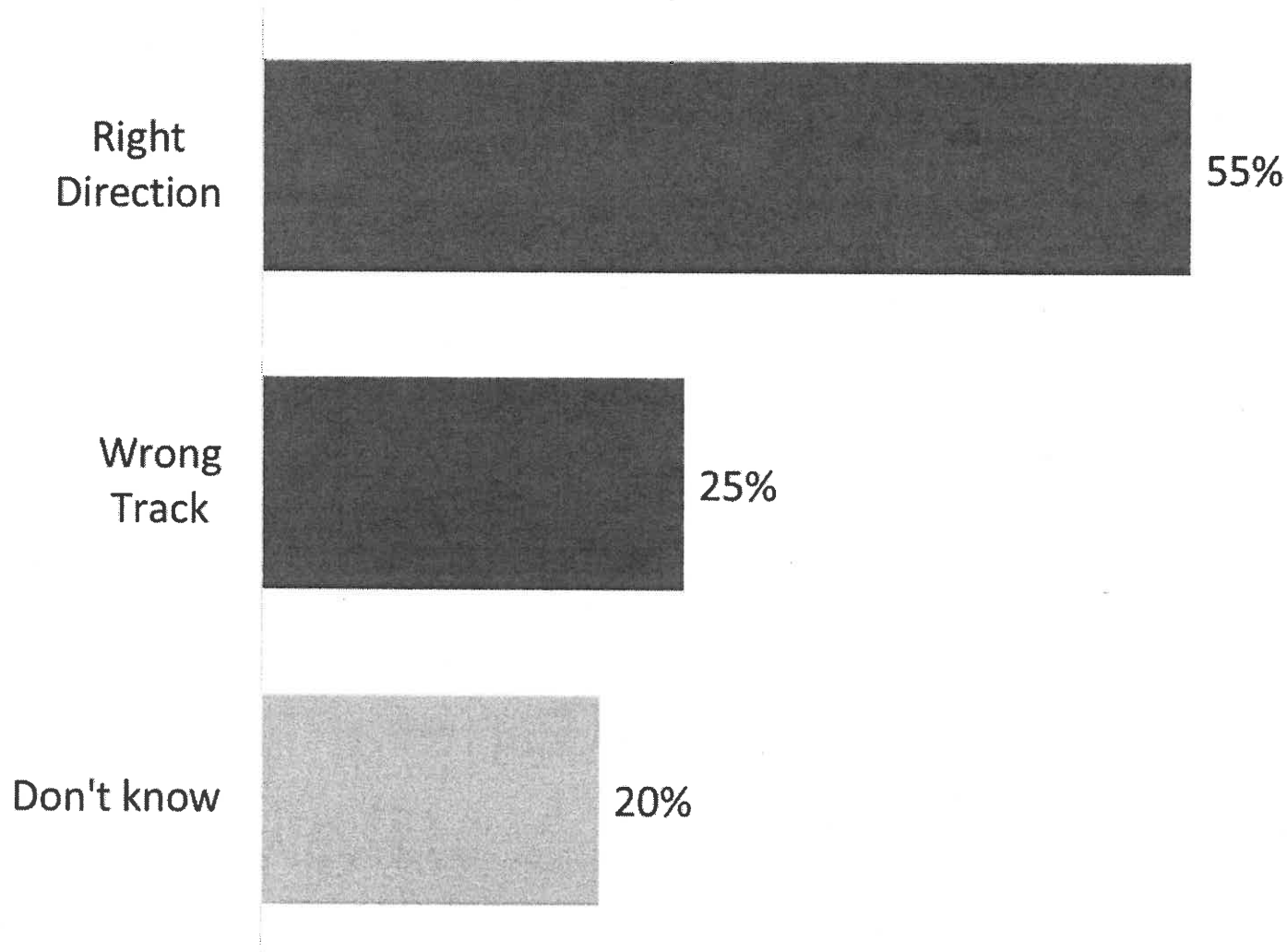
- ▶ Voters are optimistic over the direction of Contra Costa County.
- ▶ Passing a countywide sales tax measure would be challenging.
- ▶ A slim majority of voters (54%) support a ¼-cent sales tax measure, while just under half (49%) support a ½-cent measure.
- ▶ Funding for fire-fighting, emergency medical, emergency response, public safety, and road repairs had the highest support.



# General Mood of Likely Voters

# Direction of the County

*A majority of voters feel optimistic about the direction Contra Costa County is headed.*

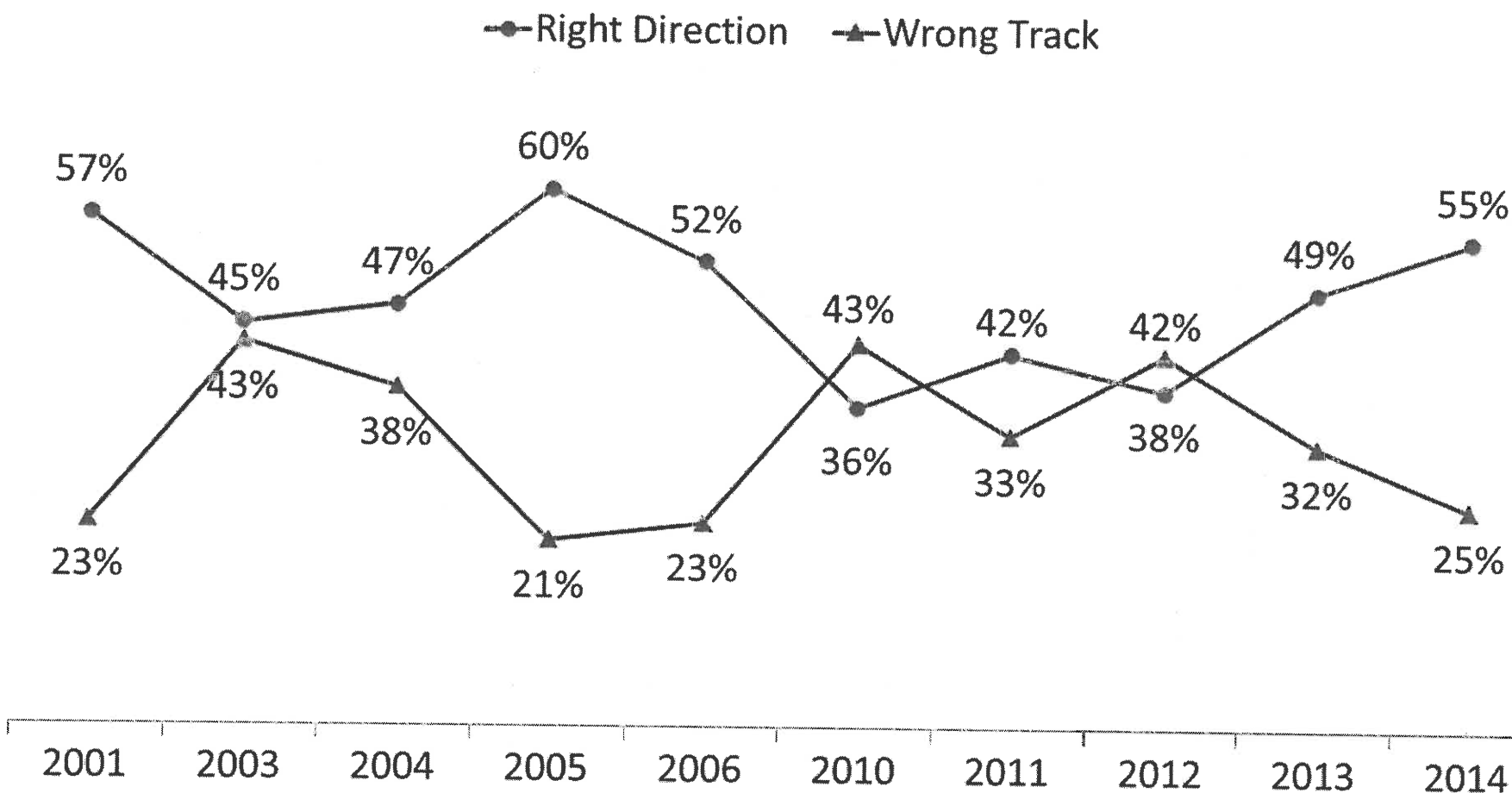


Q4. Do you feel that things in Contra Costa County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



# Direction of the County Over Time

*Voter optimism is as high as it's been since 2005.*



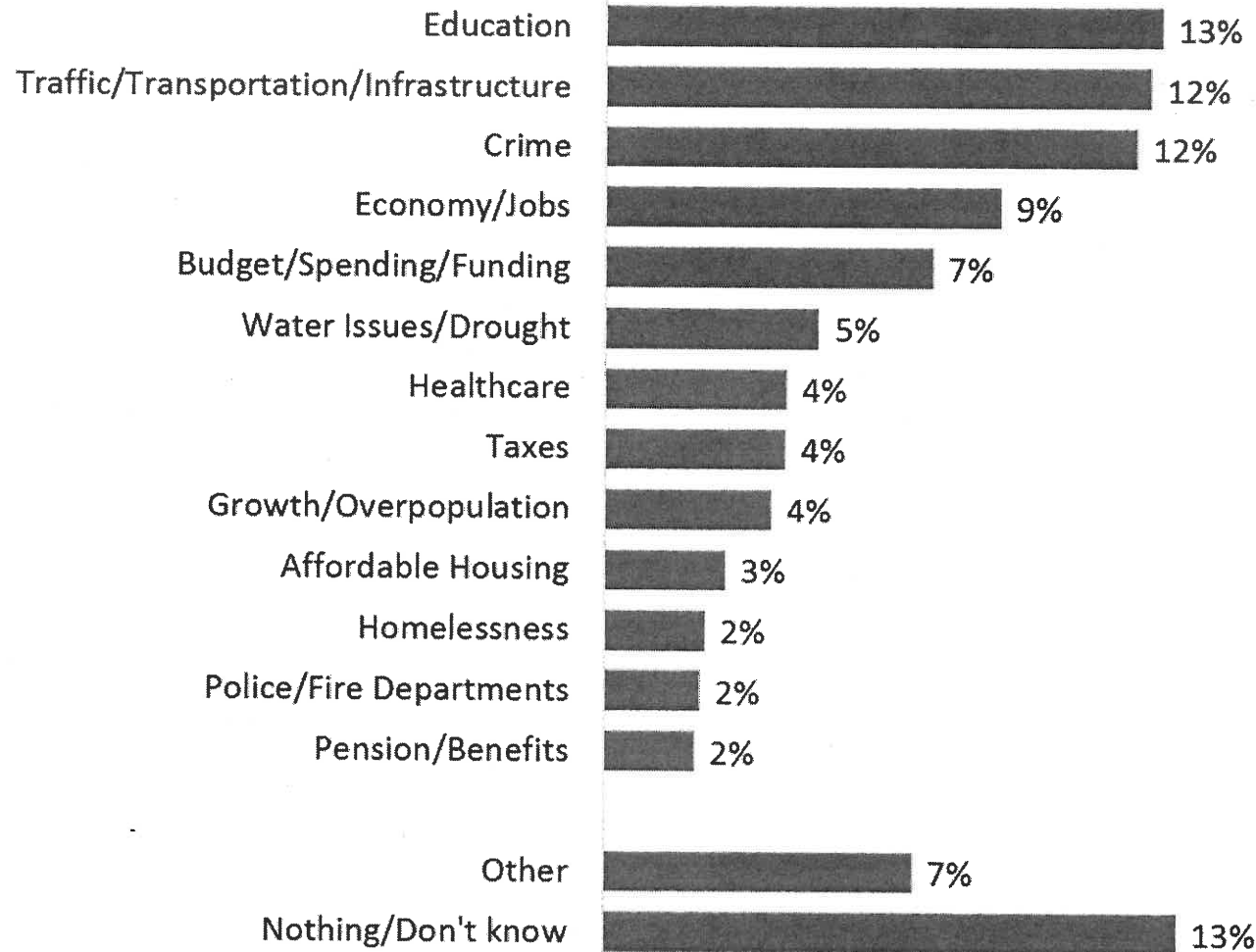
Results from previous countywide polling conducted by EMC Research.

Q4. Do you feel that things in Contra Costa County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



# Most Important Problem

*Voters find education, transportation, and crime to be the most important problems facing Contra Costa County.*



Q5. What do you think is the most important problem facing Contra Costa County today?  
(Open Ended question, 1 response accepted)

# Most Important Problem Over Time

*Concern over the economy and jobs has continued to fall since August 2011.*

	August 2011	May 2012	February 2013	June 2014
Education	16%	23%	18%	13%
Traffic/Transportation/Infrastructure	8	6	8	12
Crime	12	5	13	12
Economy/Jobs	25	19	16	9
Budget/Spending/Funding	4	13	8	7
Water Issues/Drought	-	-	-	5
Healthcare	-	-	-	4
Taxes	3	3	4	4
Growth/Overpopulation	-	-	-	4
Affordable Housing	6	5	3	3
Homelessness	-	-	-	2
Police/Fire Departments	-	-	-	2
Pension/Benefits	2	3	4	2
Other	16	13	13	7
Nothing/Don't know	10	9	14	13

*Results from previous countywide polling conducted by EMC Research.*

Q5. What do you think is the most important problem facing Contra Costa County today?





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# Proposed Ballot Measure



# Survey Ballot Language

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*Now I'd like to ask you about a measure that may appear on a future ballot in Contra Costa County. The measure could read as follows:*

*To ensure local quality of life in Contra Costa County, shall the County enact a*

***(SAMPLE A: ¼ cent) (SAMPLE B: ½ cent)***

*sales tax, for a limited period of 10 years, that cannot be taken by the state, for local priorities and services such as police, fire, emergency response, criminal prosecution, emergency medical, libraries, and local street and road improvements, with annual public audits and citizens oversight to ensure fiscal accountability?*

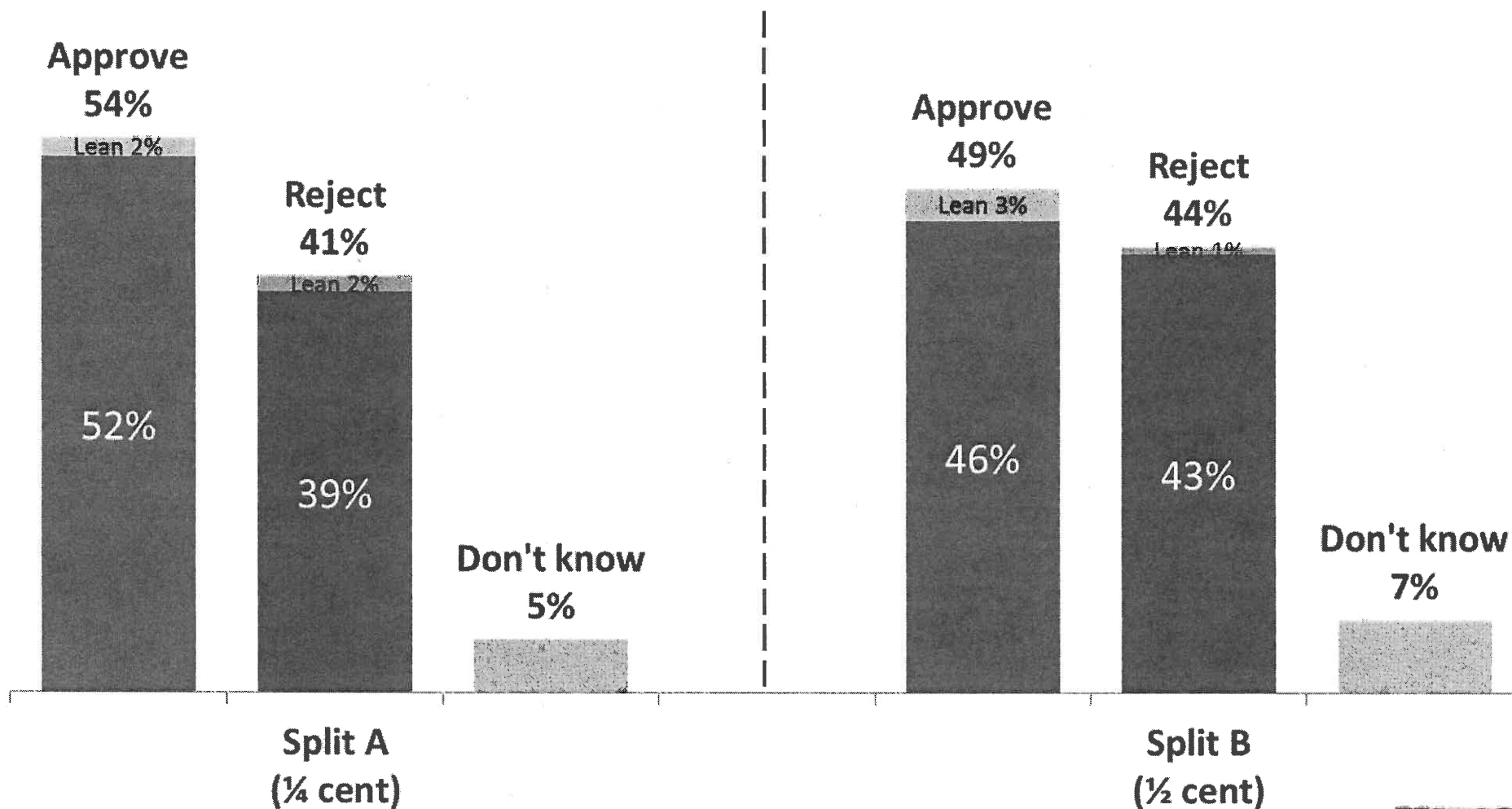
*If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure?*





# Initial Support for Proposed Measure

*Just over a majority of voters support a ¼-cent sales tax measure;  
Slightly less than a majority support a ½-cent sales tax measure.*



Q6. If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure?

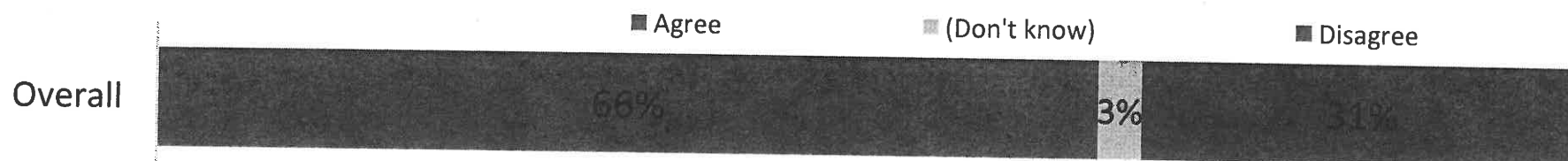
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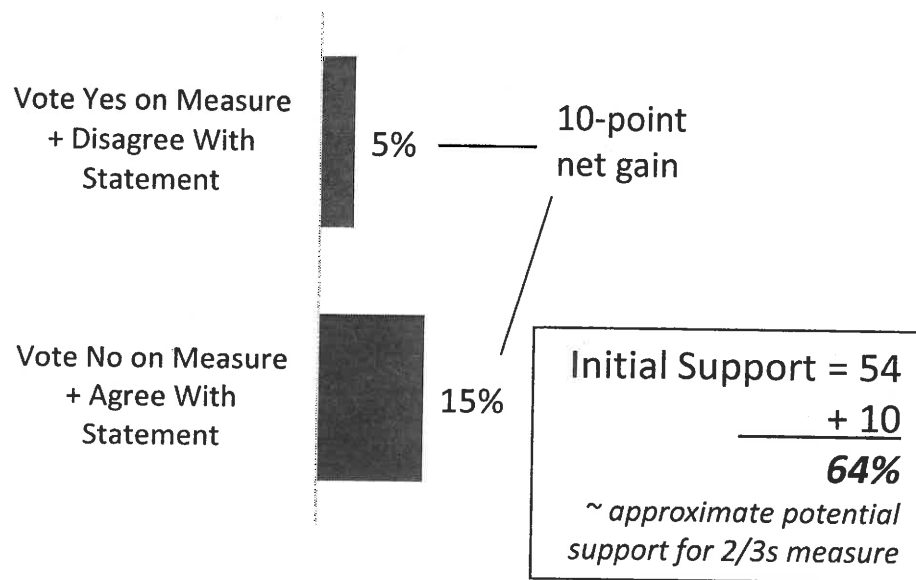
# Dedicated-Funding Measure

*Preliminary analysis suggests a dedicated-funding, 2/3rds measure would not perform much, if any, better than the general revenue measure.*

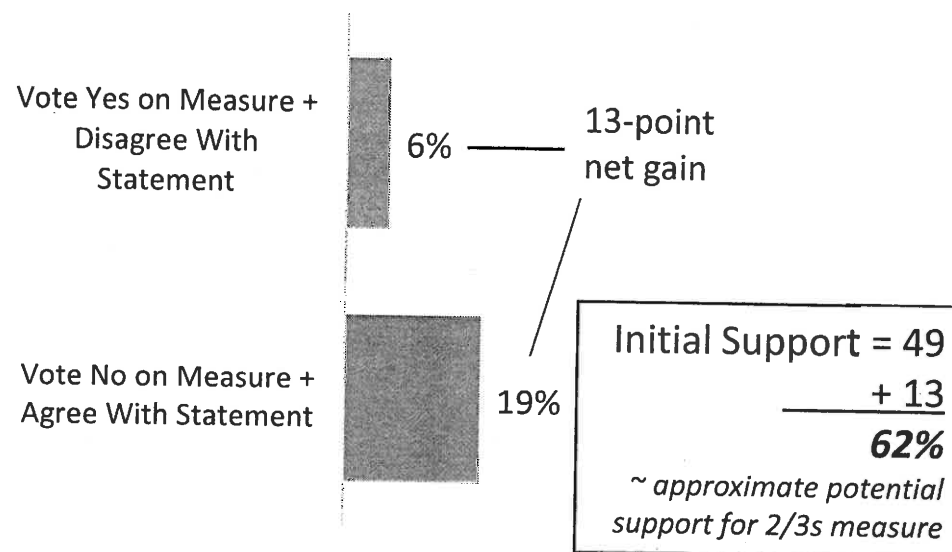
Q18. I would support the proposed measure if the funds were specifically dedicated to fund public safety, including police, fire, emergency response, criminal prosecution, and emergency medical services only, rather than going into the County general fund.



Split A ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cent)

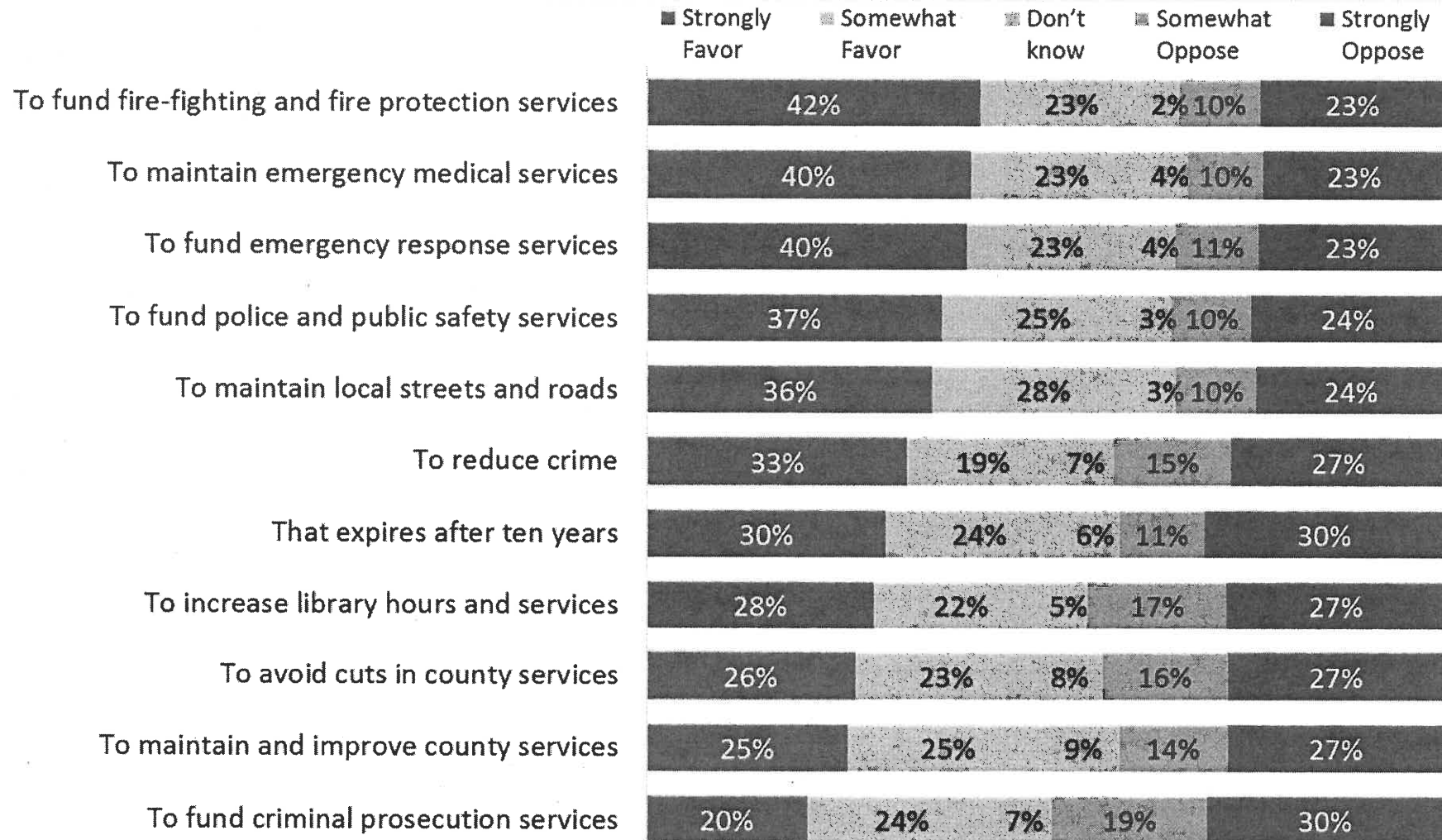


Split B ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cent)



# Potential Measure Components

*Voters are most in favor of a sales tax that would fund fire-fighting, emergency medical, emergency response, public safety, and road repairs.*

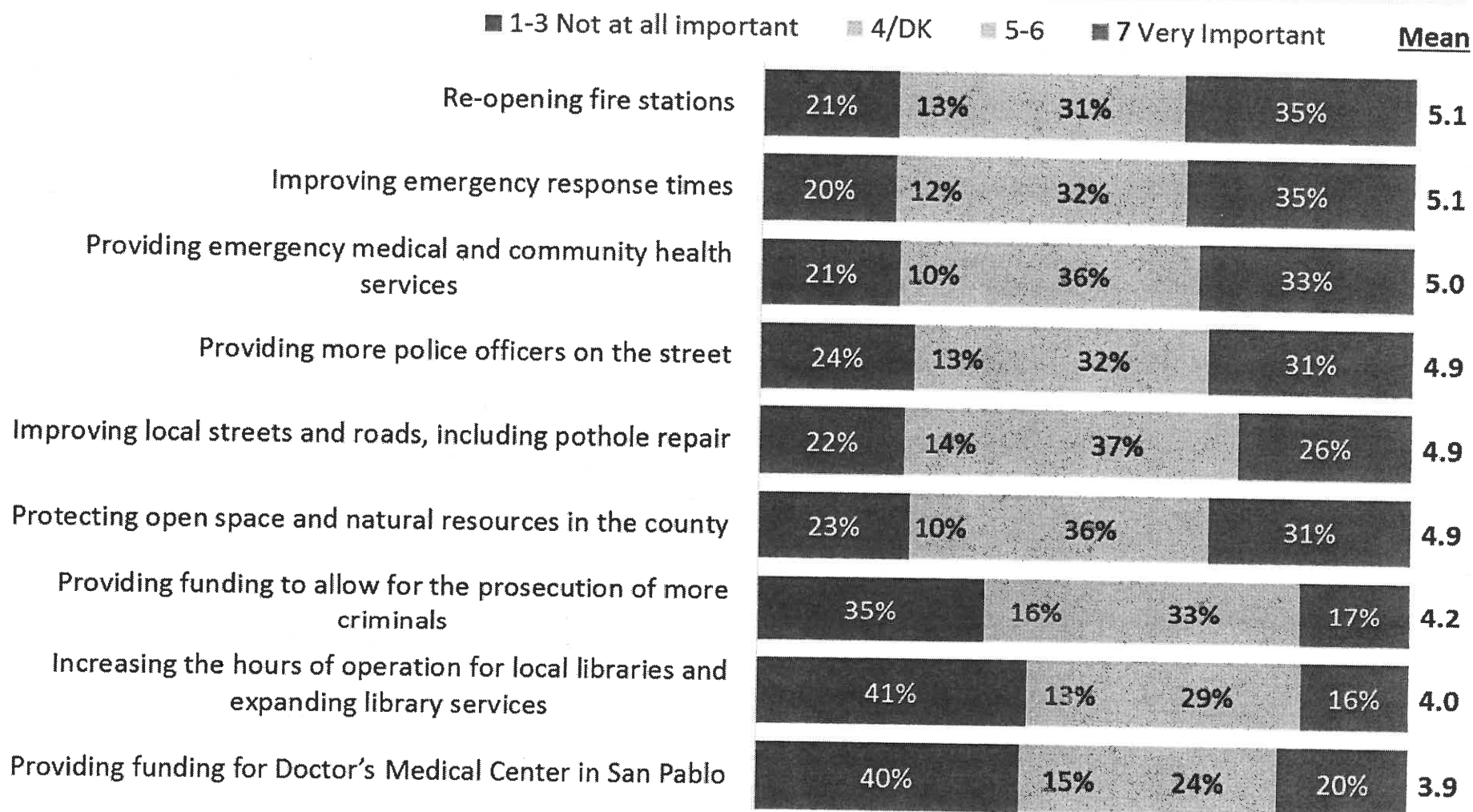


Q7-Q17. Would you favor or oppose a measure that would implement a sales tax...?



# Project Importance Ratings

*Re-opening fire stations, improving emergency response times, and providing emergency medical and community health services were the highest rated potential projects.*

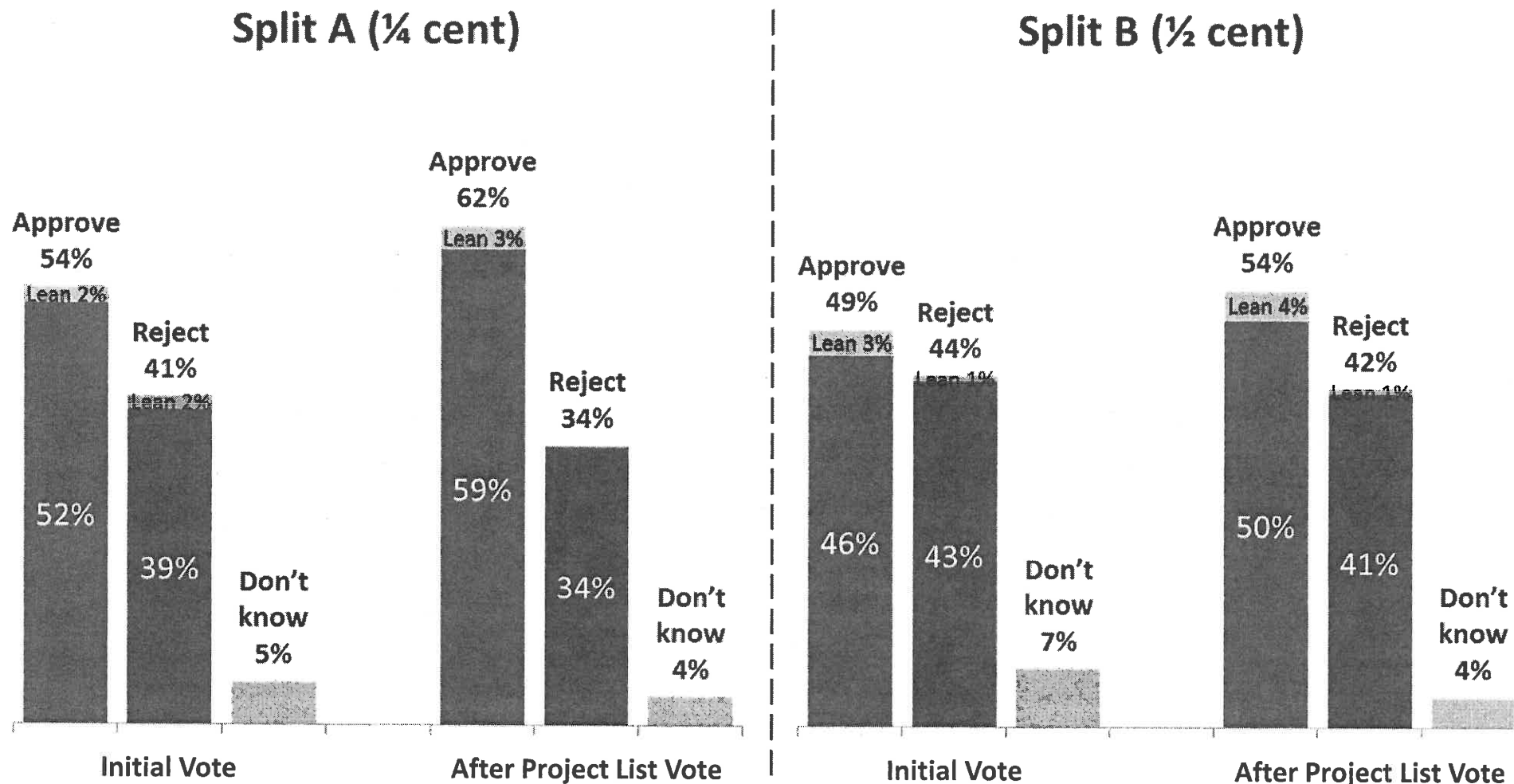


Q19-Q27. Now I'm going to read you a list of projects and programs that are being considered if the County has revenue from a sales tax. Please rate each on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not important at all and 7 is very important.



# Support After Project Details

*Support for both measures improves after voters learn more about potential projects and programs that could be funded.*



Q6/Q28. If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure?





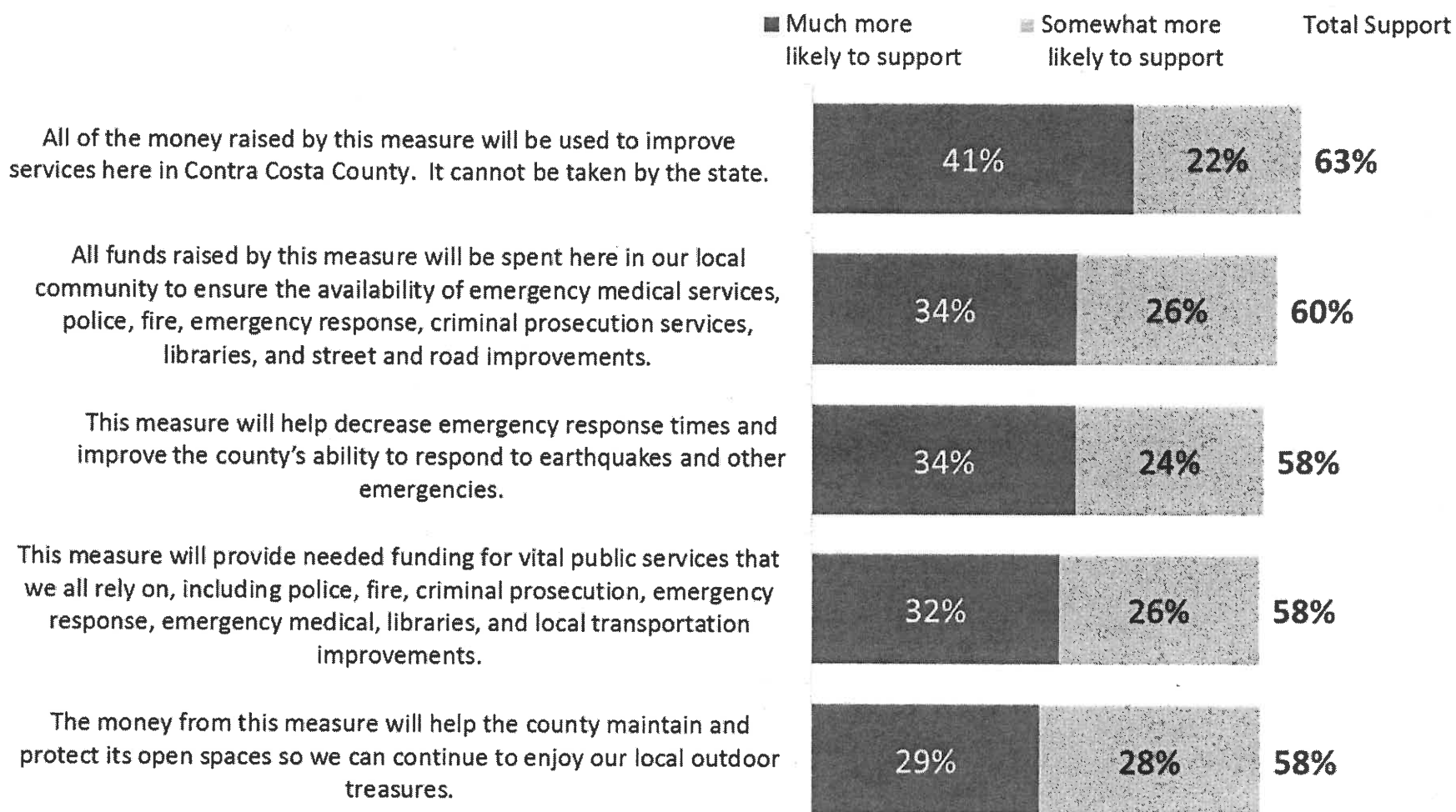


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# Informational Messaging

# Positive Information

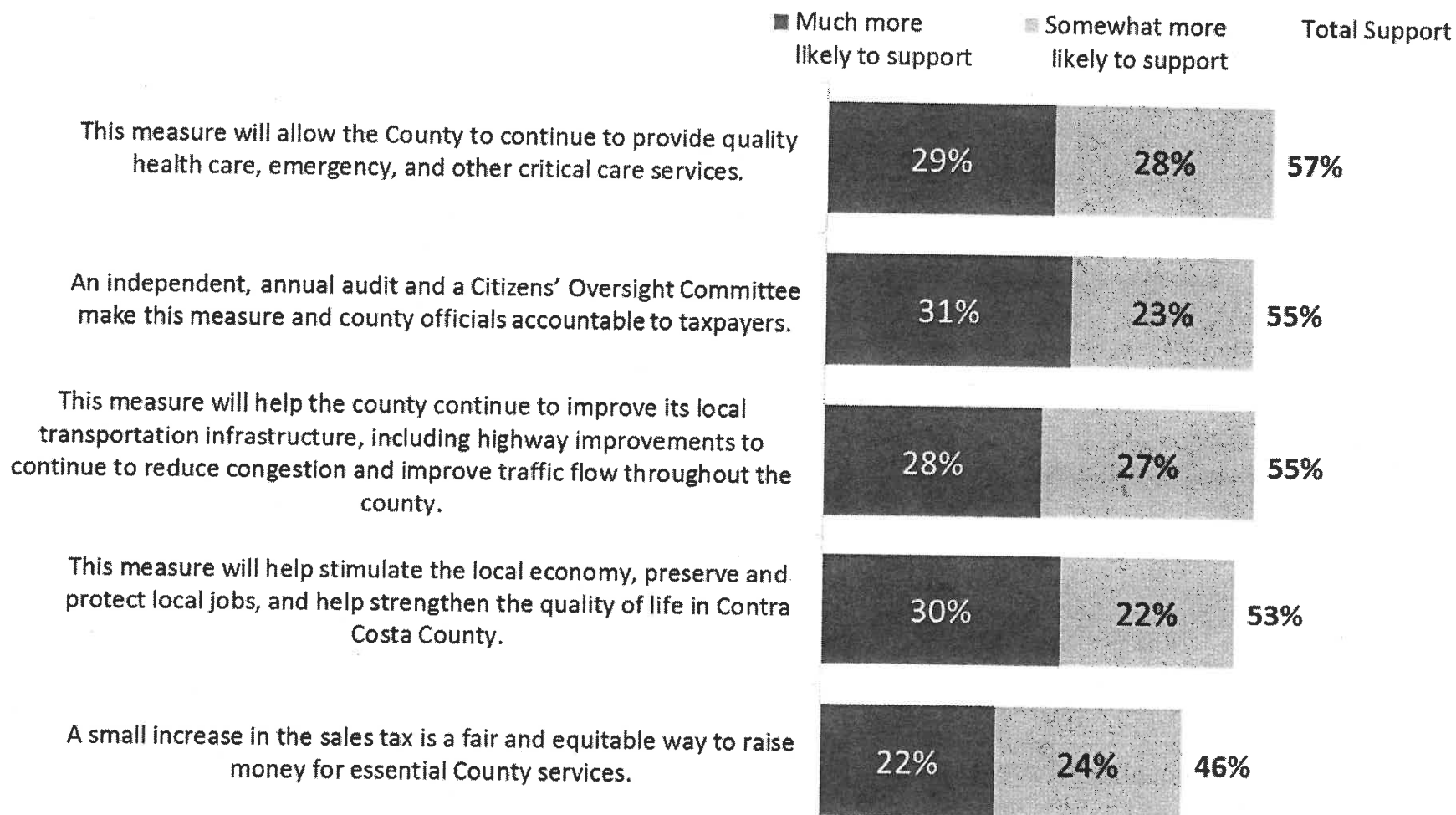
*That the funding will stay local and cannot be taken by the state was important information about the measure for voters.*



Q29-Q38. For each statement, please tell me if that would make you much more likely to support the measure, somewhat more likely to support, or would it make no difference to you.

# Positive Information, continued

*Other information was important to some, but less compelling overall.*

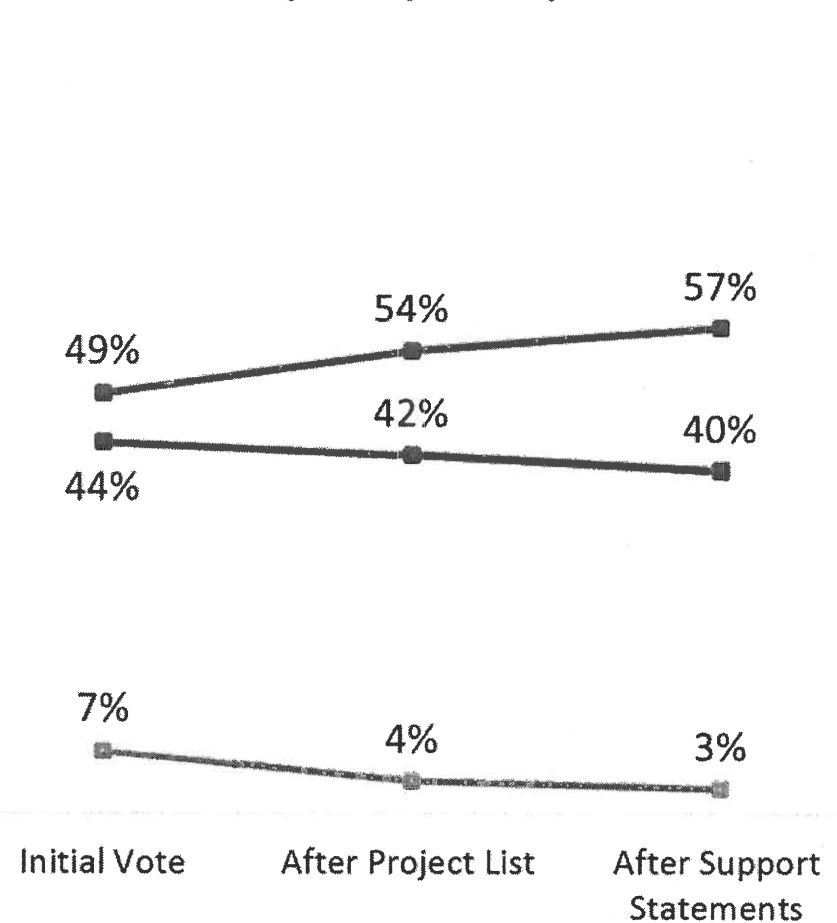
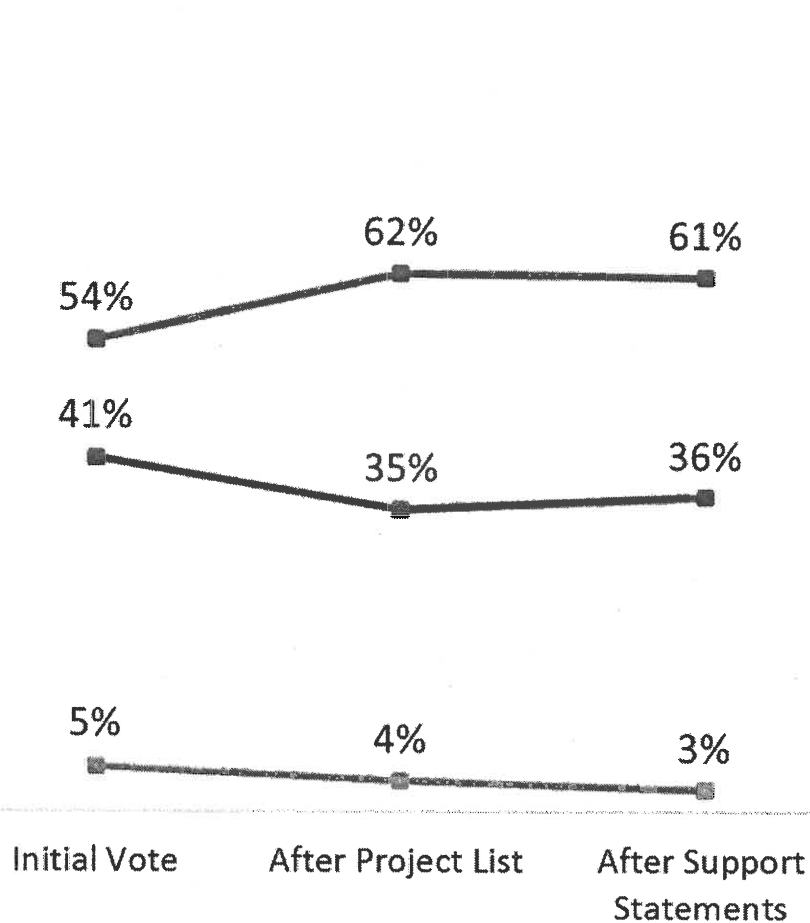


Q29-Q38. For each statement, please tell me if that would make you much more likely to support the measure, somewhat more likely to support, or would it make no difference to you.

# Measure Support After Positive Statements

*Additional information had little impact on support for either measure, beyond the impact already seen by the projects and components information.*

**Split A (¼ cent)**    ■ Approve    ■ Undecided    ■ Reject    **Split B (½ cent)**



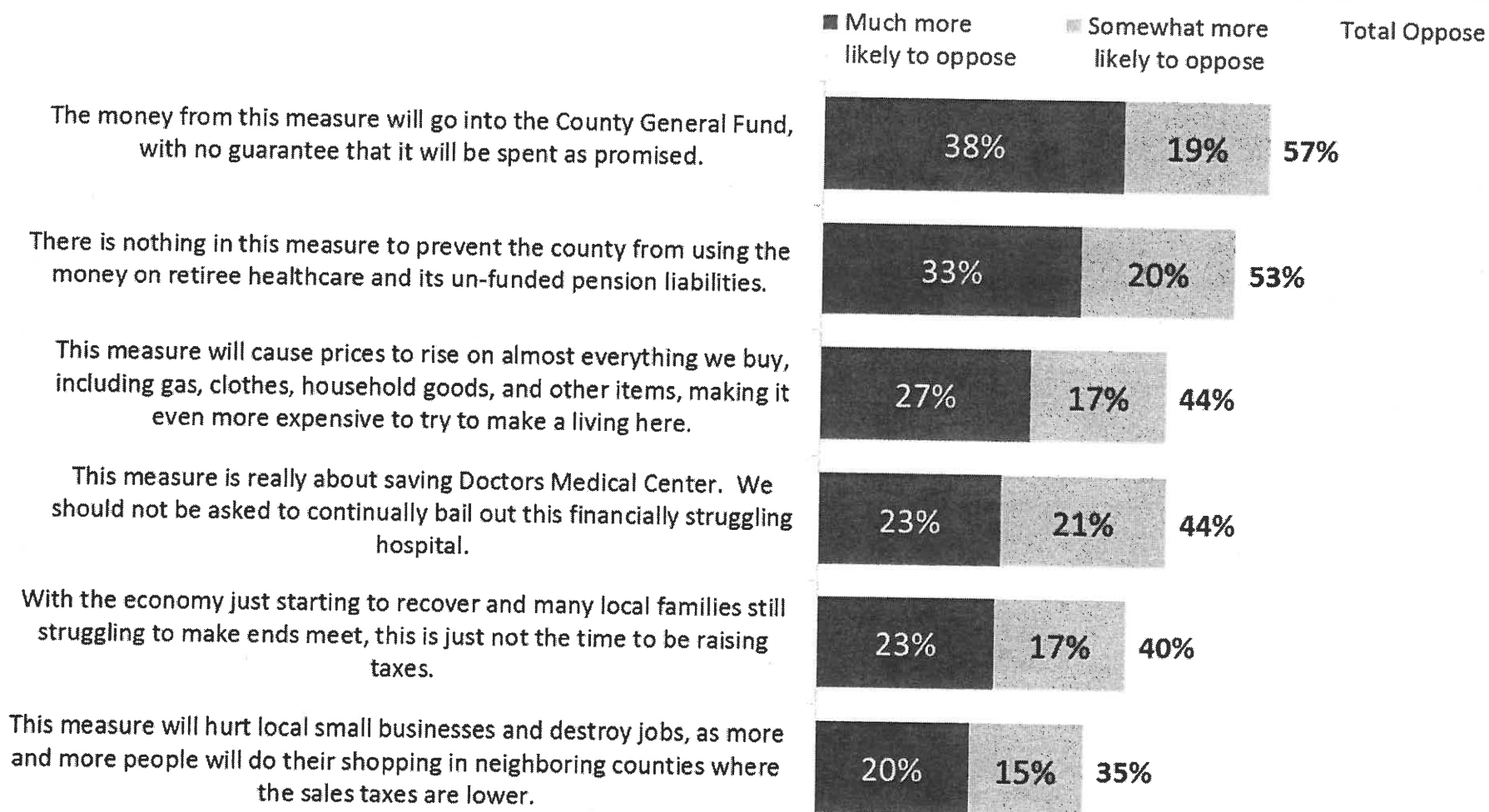
Q6/28/39. If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure?





# Negative Information

*Lack of guarantees on how the money would be spent was important information about the measure for many voters.*



Q29-Q38. For each statement, please tell me if that would make you much more likely to support the measure, somewhat more likely to support, or would it make no difference to you.



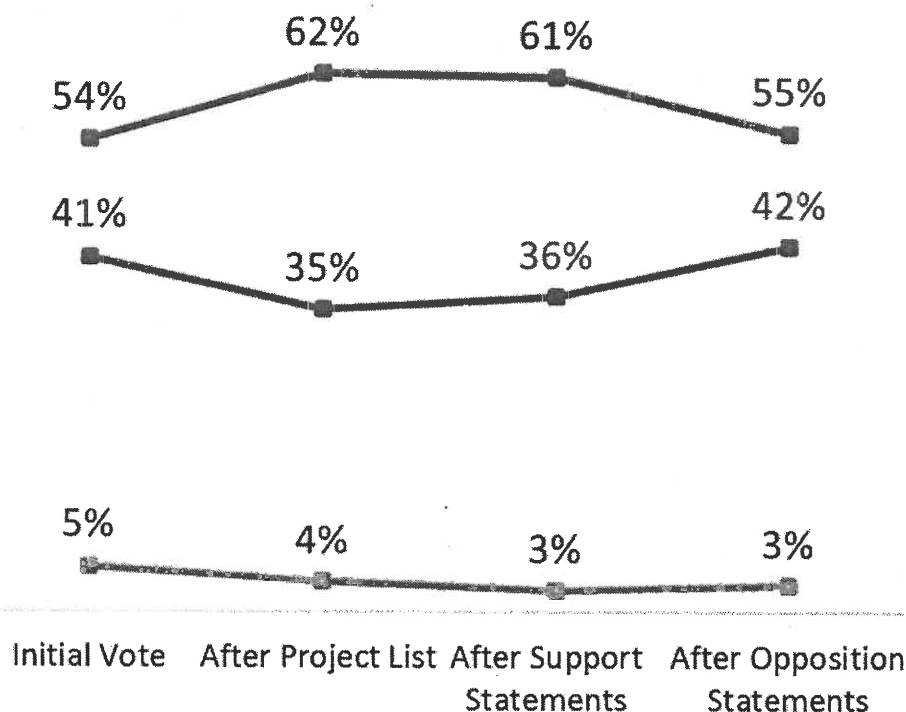


# Measure Support After Negative Statements

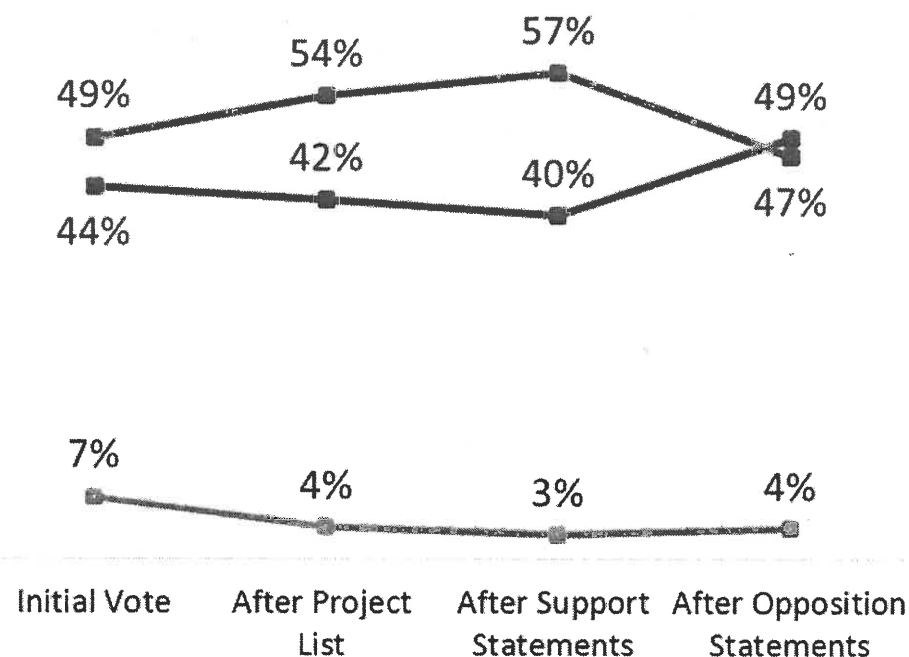
*Negative information returns support to near its original levels.*

■ Approve    ■ Undecided    ■ Reject

**Split A (¼ cent)**



**Split B (½ cent)**

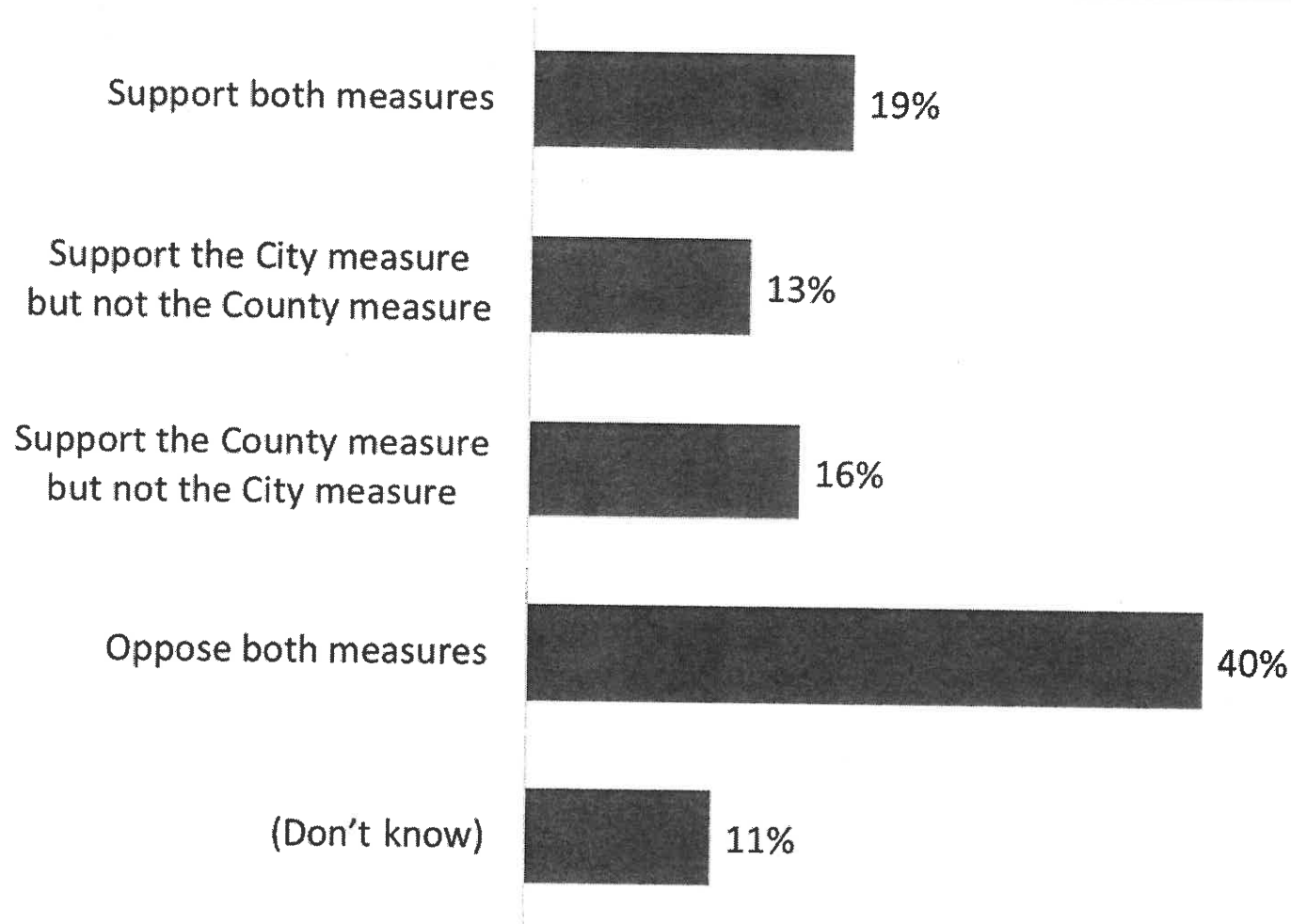


Q6/28/39/46. If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure?



# Impact of Additional Measures

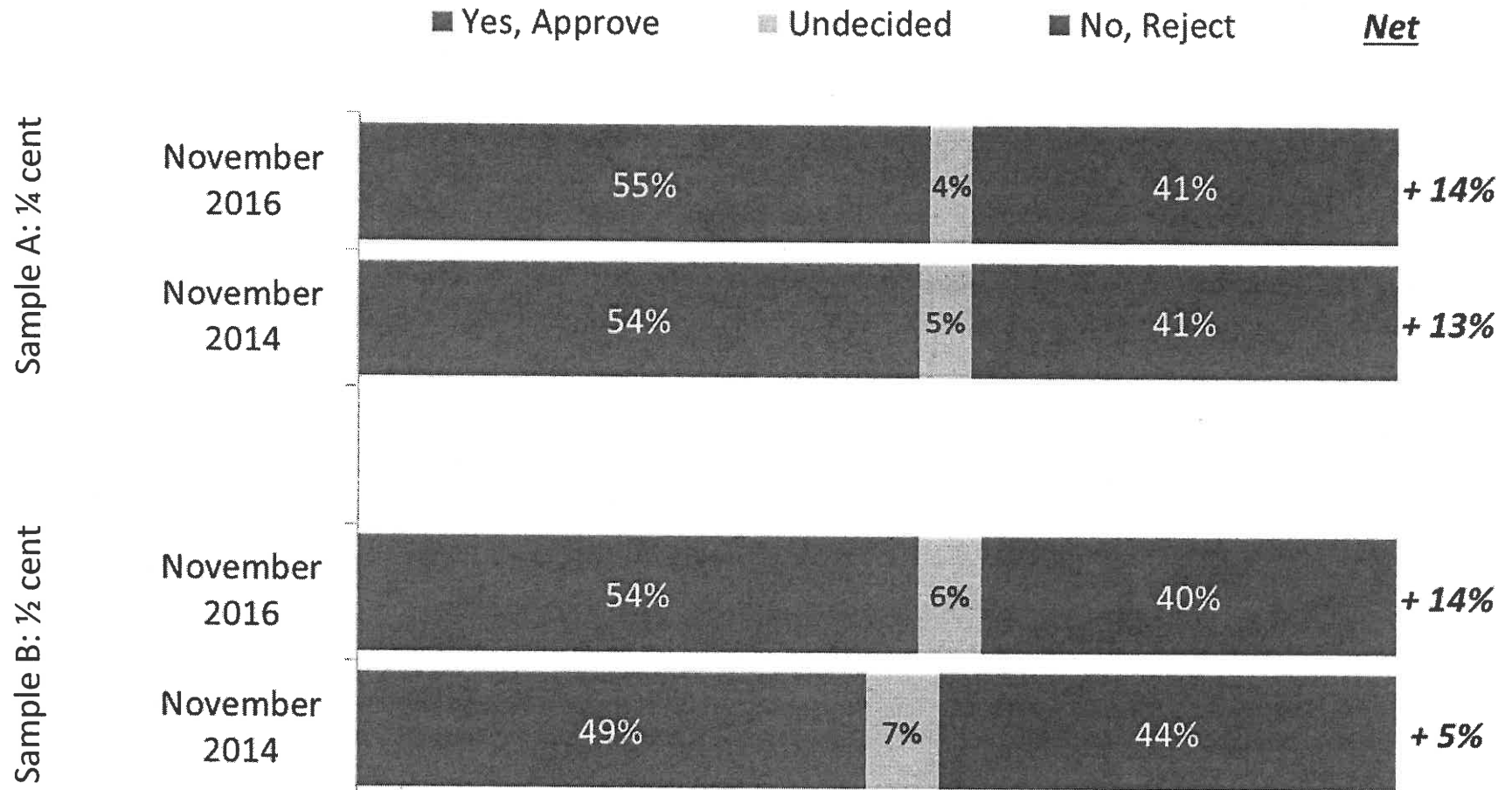
*Forty-percent of voters indicate that they would oppose both a local and county measure if they appeared on the same ballot.*



*Q47. In addition to a possible countywide sales tax measure, certain cities within Contra Costa County may also have a sales tax on the ballot in November. If the county and your city both had sales tax increase measures on the November ballot, would you likely...*

# 2016 & 2014 Election Models

*A 2016 election model shows a similar result for ¼-cent; slightly better for ½-cent.*



	Low propensity	Medium propensity	High propensity
Nov. 2016	46%	29%	25%
Nov. 2014	30%	37%	33%





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## Conclusions

# Conclusion

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- ▶ Approval of a countywide sales tax measure on the November 2014 ballot would be very challenging.



# Contact Information

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