

Contra Costa County Voter Attitudes Toward a Finance Measure

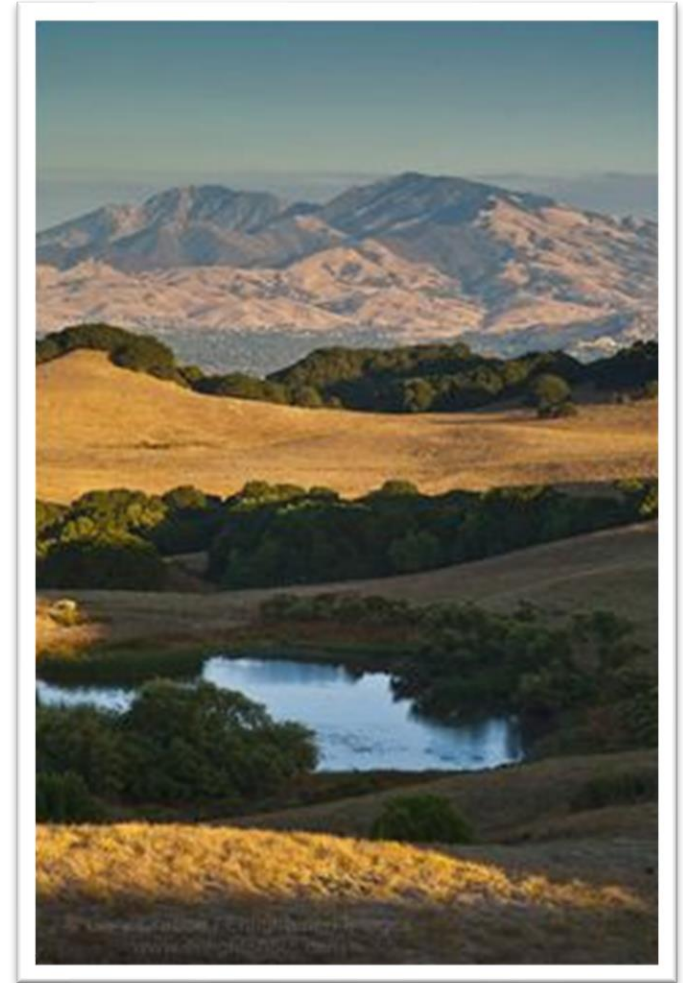
*Key Findings of a Countywide Survey Conducted
June 22-29, 2020*



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RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Methodology

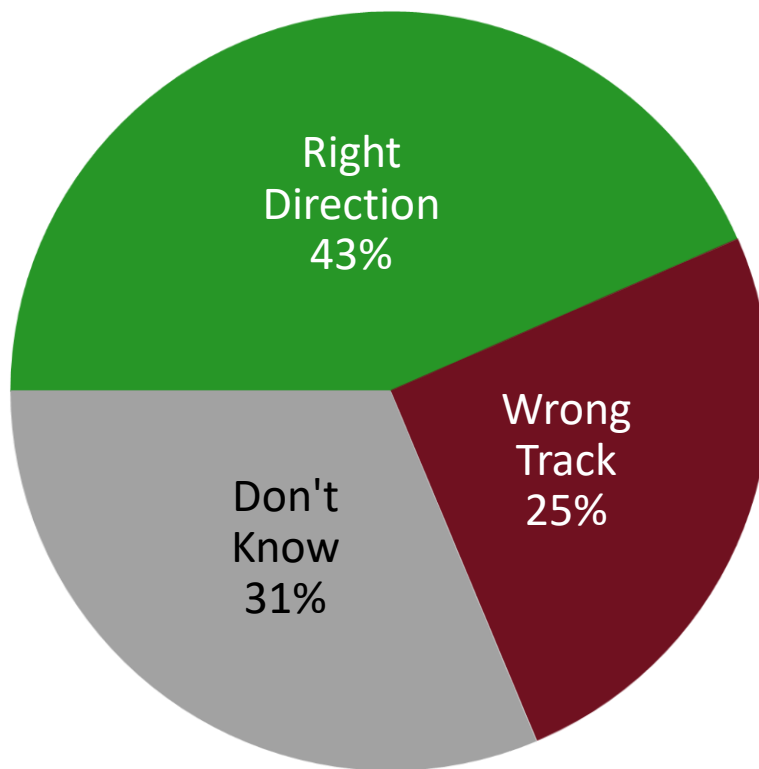
- ✓ Telephone and online survey of 666 Contra Costa County voters likely to cast a ballot in November 2020
- ✓ Survey was conducted June 22-29, 2020
- ✓ Interviews were conducted online and via landline and cell phones
- ✓ The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0% at the 95% confidence level
- ✓ Margins of error for population subgroups will be higher
- ✓ Some percentages do not sum to 100% because of rounding



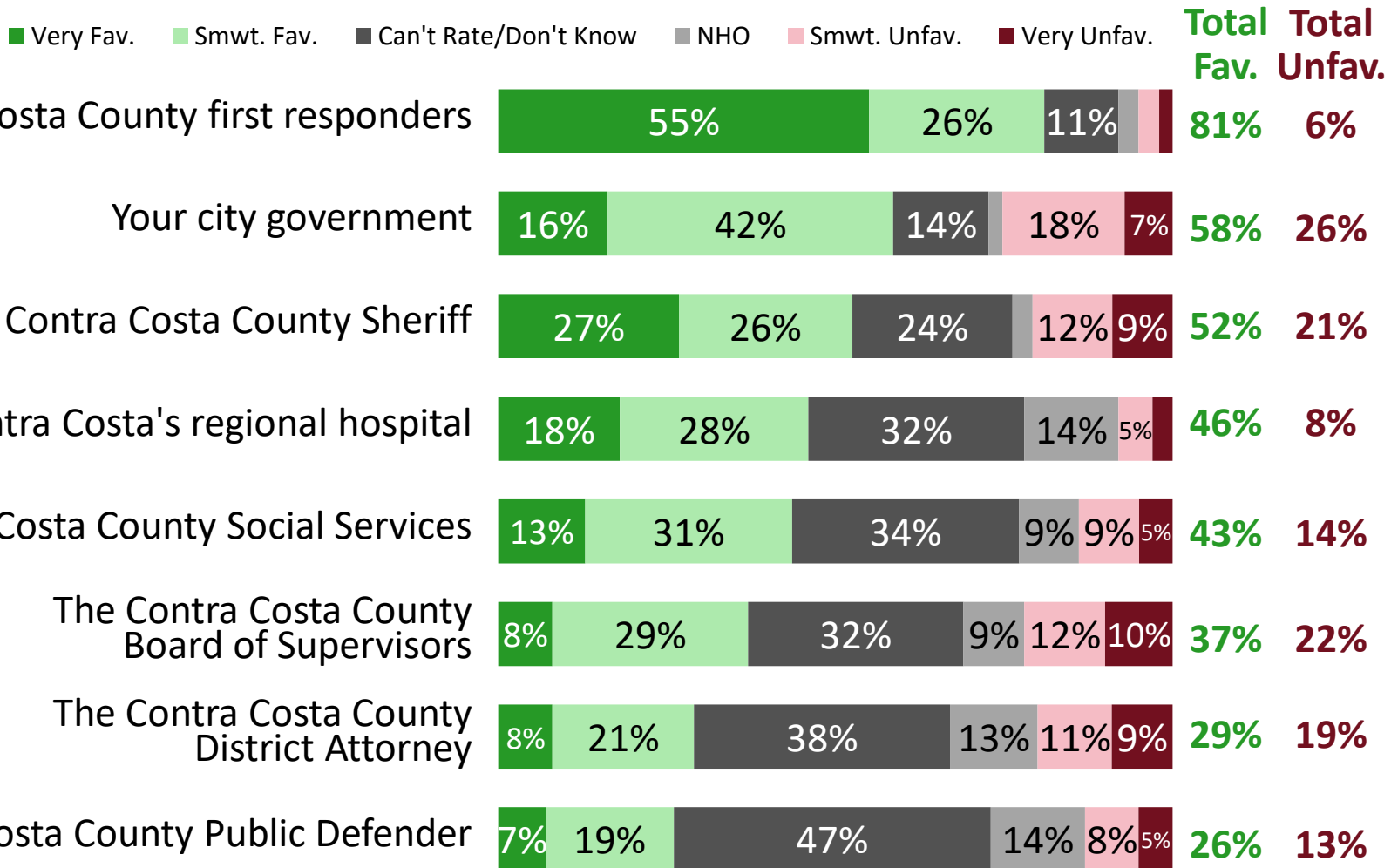
Issue Context

Two in five voters say the County is headed in the right direction.

Do you think things in Contra Costa County are headed in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?

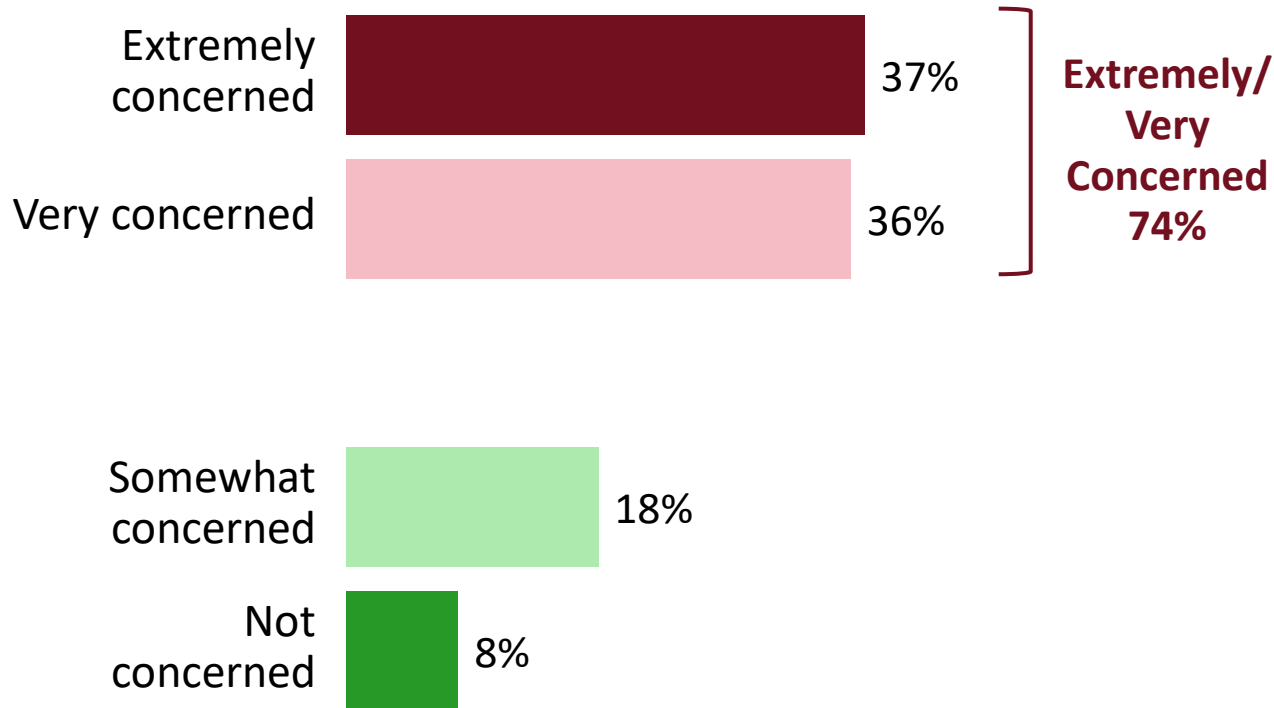


The County's first responders are viewed very favorably.



Three quarters are concerned about the pandemic's impact on the economy.

How concerned are you personally about the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the economy in your area? Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not too concerned?



Attitudes Toward the Proposed Measure

Draft Ballot Language Tested

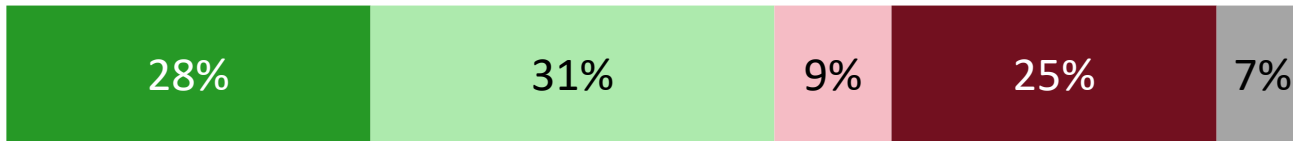
“To keep Contra Costa's regional hospital open and staffed; fund community health centers; provide timely fire and emergency response; support crucial safety-net services; invest in early childhood services; protect vulnerable populations; and for other essential County services, shall the Contra Costa County measure levying a ½ cent sales tax, exempting food sales, providing an estimated \$81,000,000 annually for **(HALF SAMPLE: 35)** **(HALF SAMPLE: 20)** years that the State cannot take, requiring fiscal accountability, with funds benefiting County residents, be adopted?”

A majority support the measure, but support for the 20-year sunset version is greater.

Would you vote yes in favor of this measure, or no to oppose it?

■ Def. Yes
 ■ Prob./Undec., Lean Yes
 ■ Prob./Undec., Lean No
 ■ Def. No
 ■ Undecided
Total Yes
Total No

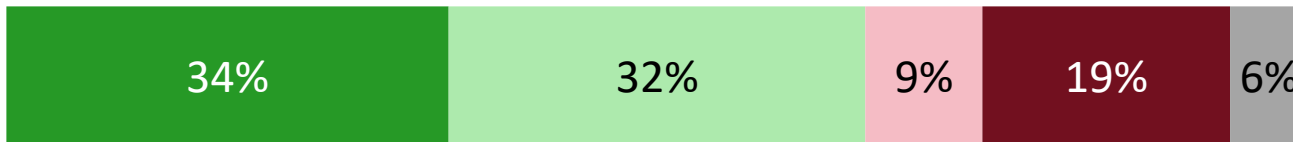
35 Years



59%

34%

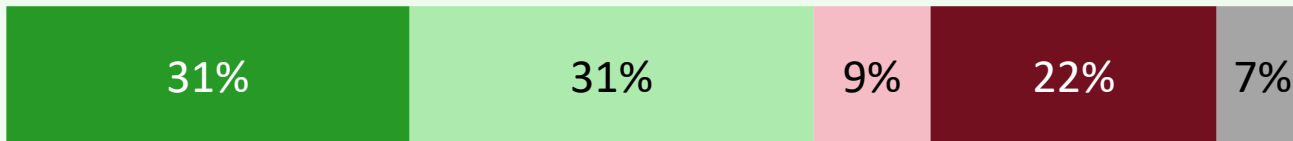
20 Years



66%

28%

Total



62%

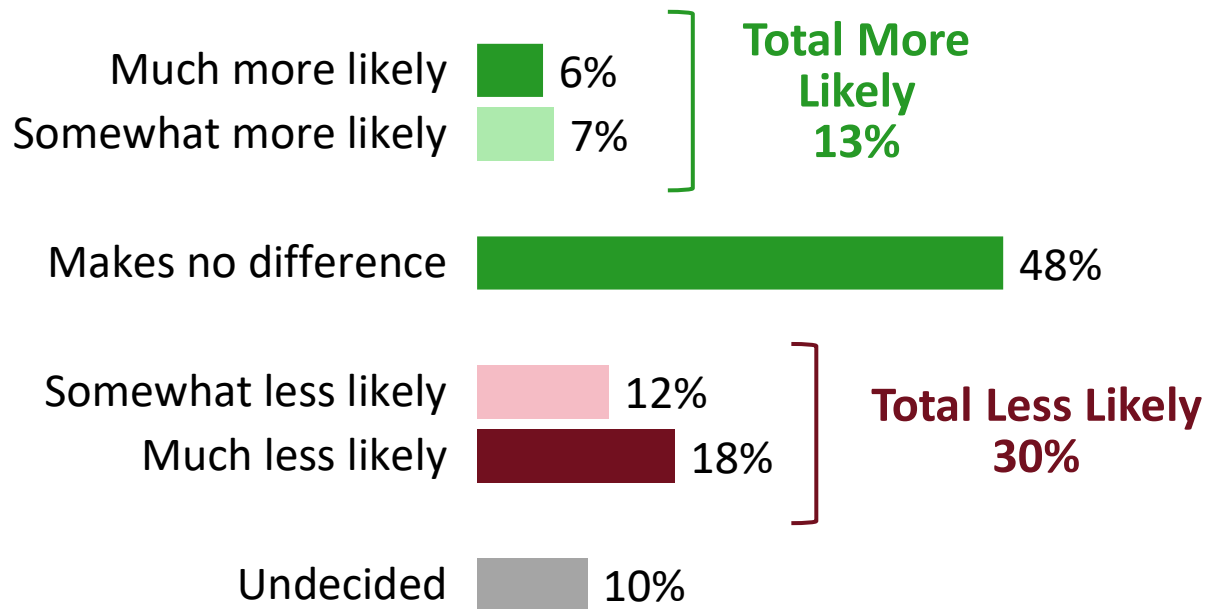
31%

Support for the measure is strongest among Democrats, African American voters, and District 1 voters.

Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No
All Voters	62%	31%
Party		
Democrats	72%	20%
Independents	65%	30%
Republicans	36%	59%
Race/Ethnicity		
Whites	65%	30%
Latinos	69%	20%
African Americans	75%	23%
Asians/Pacific Islanders	64%	30%
All Voters of Color	65%	27%
Supervisorial District		
District 1 – Gioia	71%	24%
District 2 – Andersen	59%	35%
District 3 – Burgis	60%	38%
District 4 – Mitchoff	64%	31%
District 5 – Glover	61%	24%

Approximately half say the presence of other measures does not make a difference, while one in three are less likely to vote "yes."

Next, suppose that multiple tax measures, including a (IF NOT IN UNINCORPORATED AREA: city) (IF IN UNINCORPORATED AREA: local) tax measure also appeared on the same ballot alongside the Contra Costa one-half cent sales tax measure that we have been discussing. In that case, would you be more or less likely to support the Contra Costa County sales tax measure? If it would make no difference, you can indicate that as well.



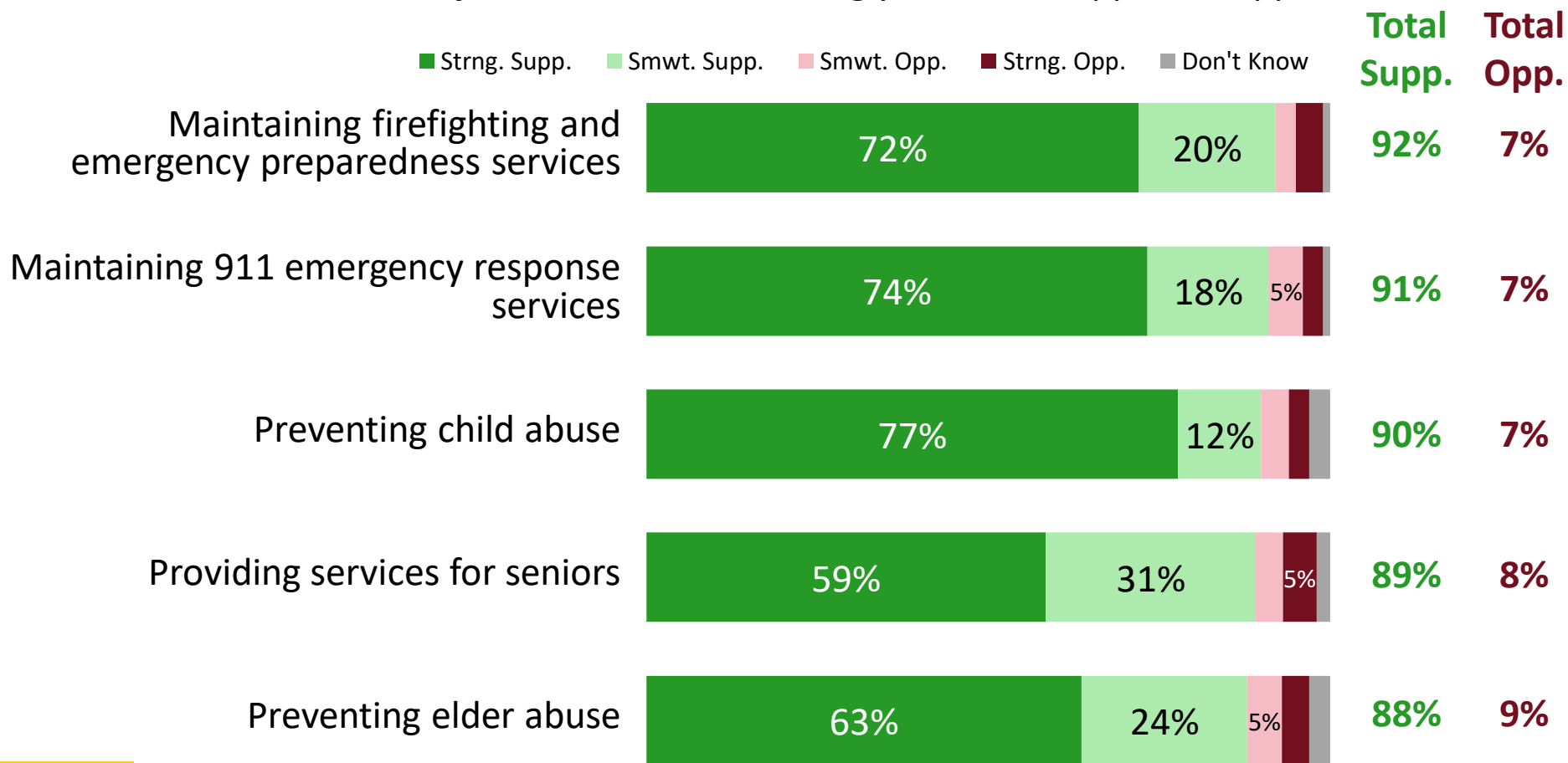
Half of supporters say that the presence of other measures will make no difference in their vote; one-quarter say it could make them less likely to vote “yes.”

Likelihood of Supporting Sales Tax if Other Measures on the Ballot	Among Yes Voters	Among No Voters	Among Undecideds
More Likely	16%	5%	14%
No Difference	51%	48%	22%
Less Likely	23%	44%	25%

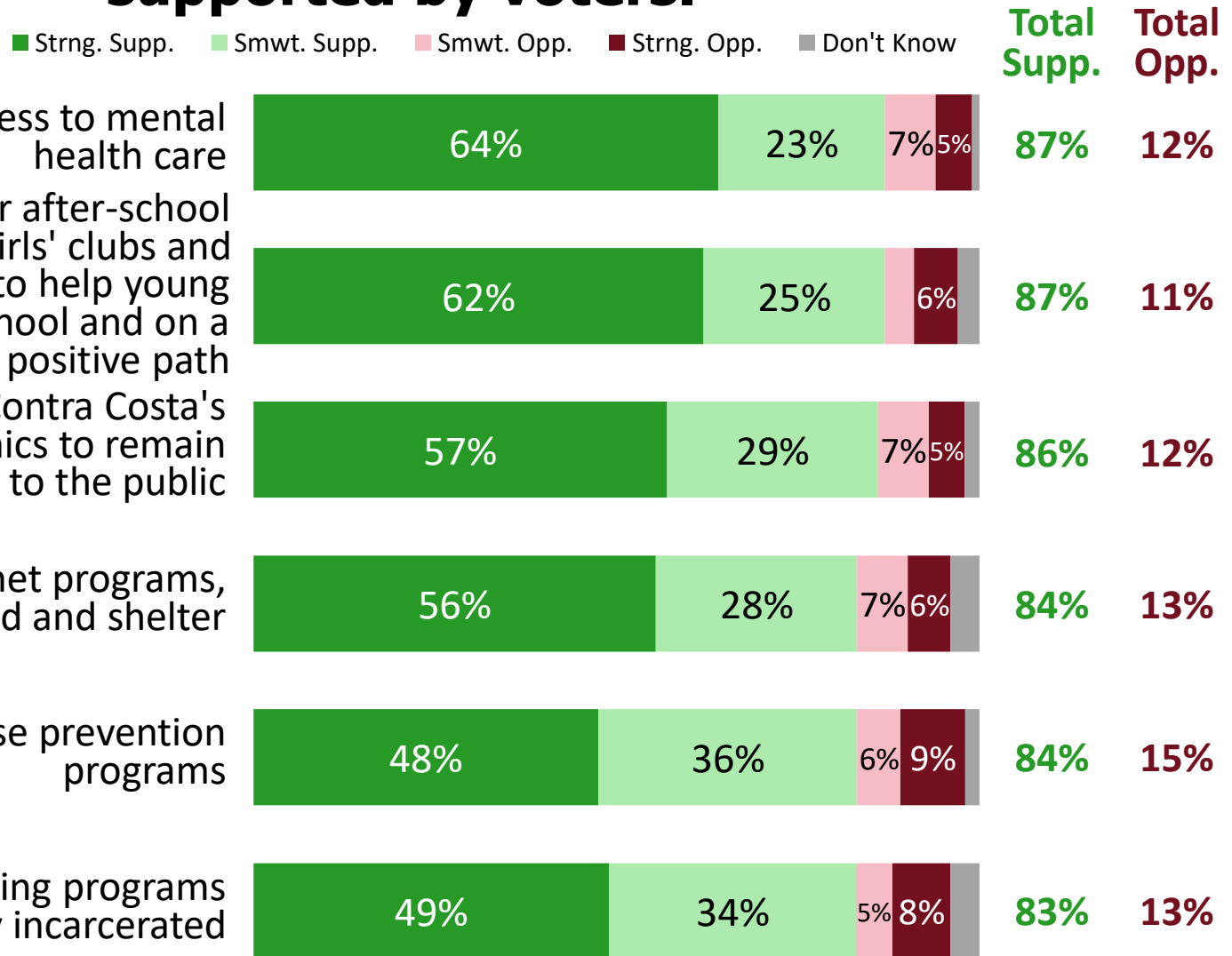
Elements of the Measure

Maintaining emergency preparedness and response, preventing abuse and providing senior services are top priorities.

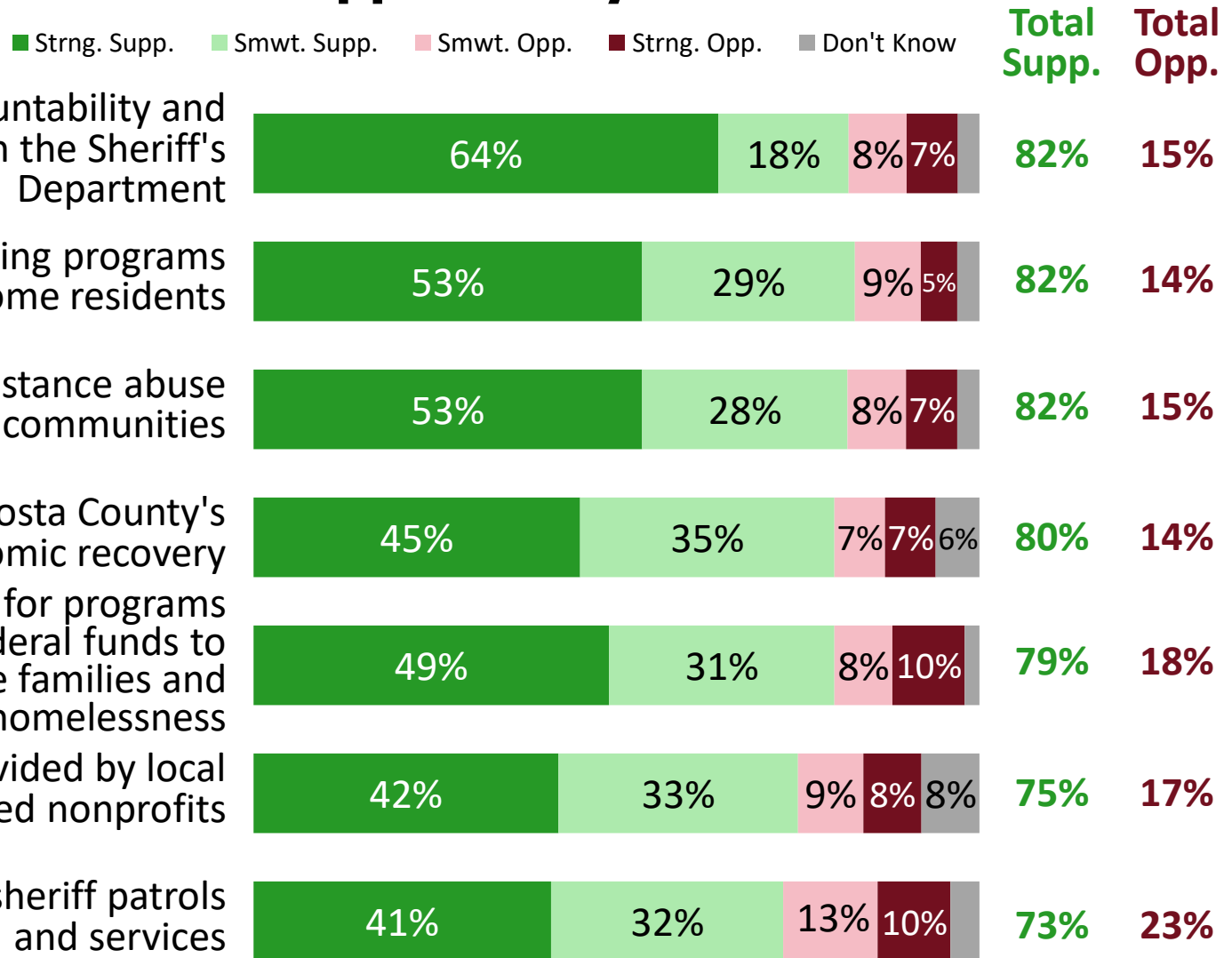
*I'm going to read you a series of more specific priorities this measure could fund.
Please tell me if it sounds like something you would support or oppose*



Expanding access to mental health care, increasing after school programs and funding the hospital are strongly supported by voters.

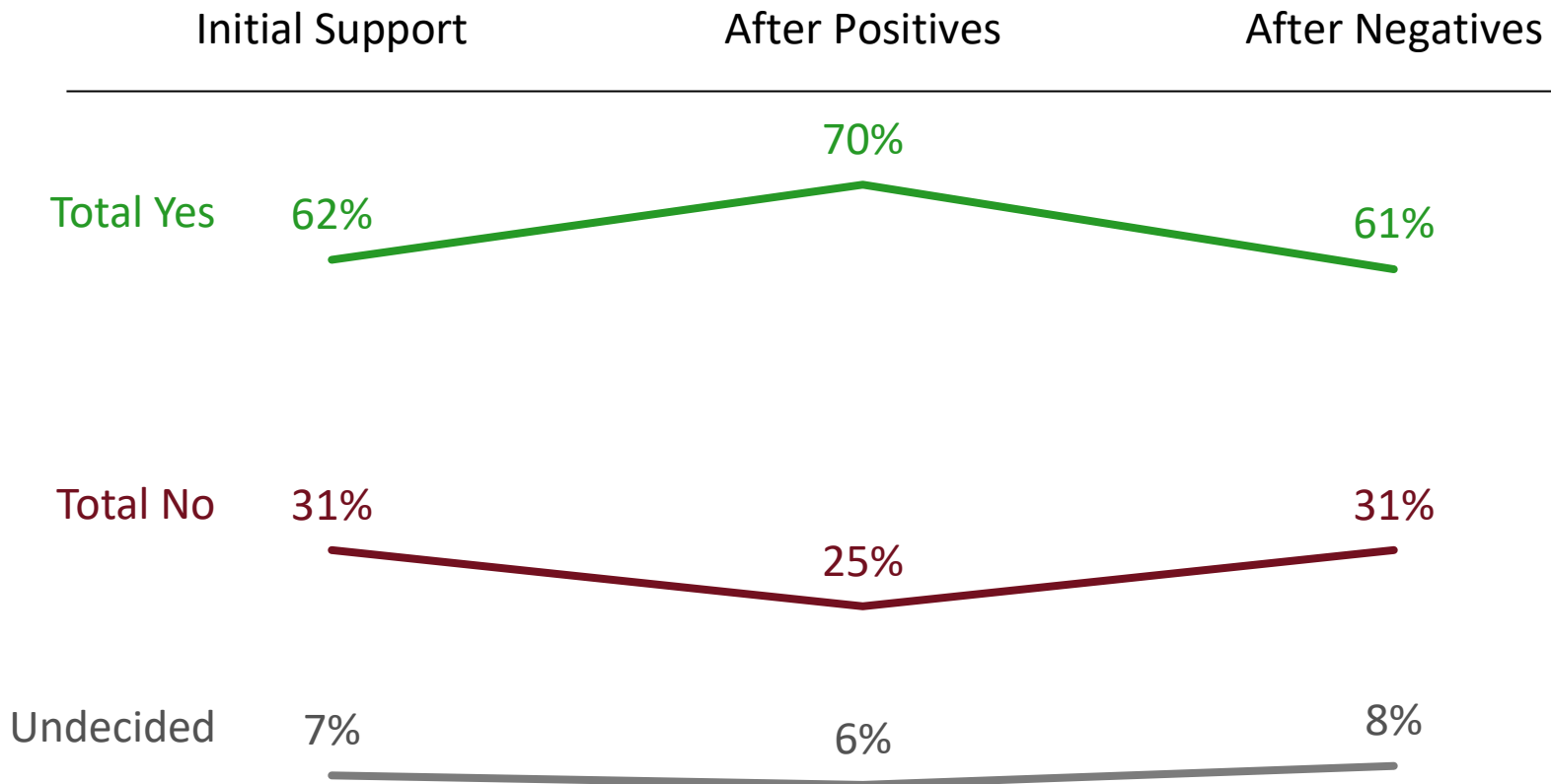


A number of other services – ranging from Sheriff’s accountability to job training and substance abuse programs – are all supported by voters as well.

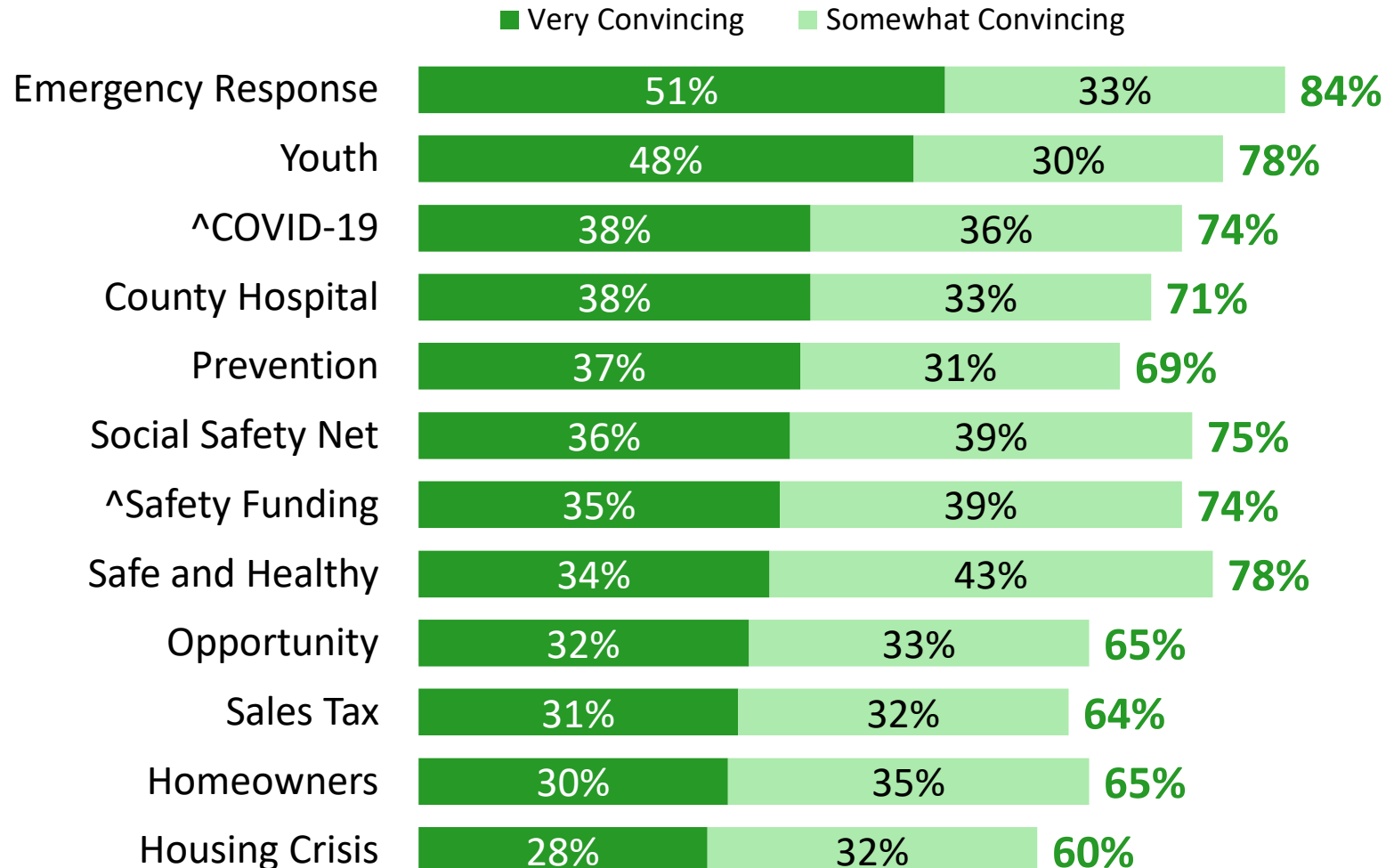


Messaging

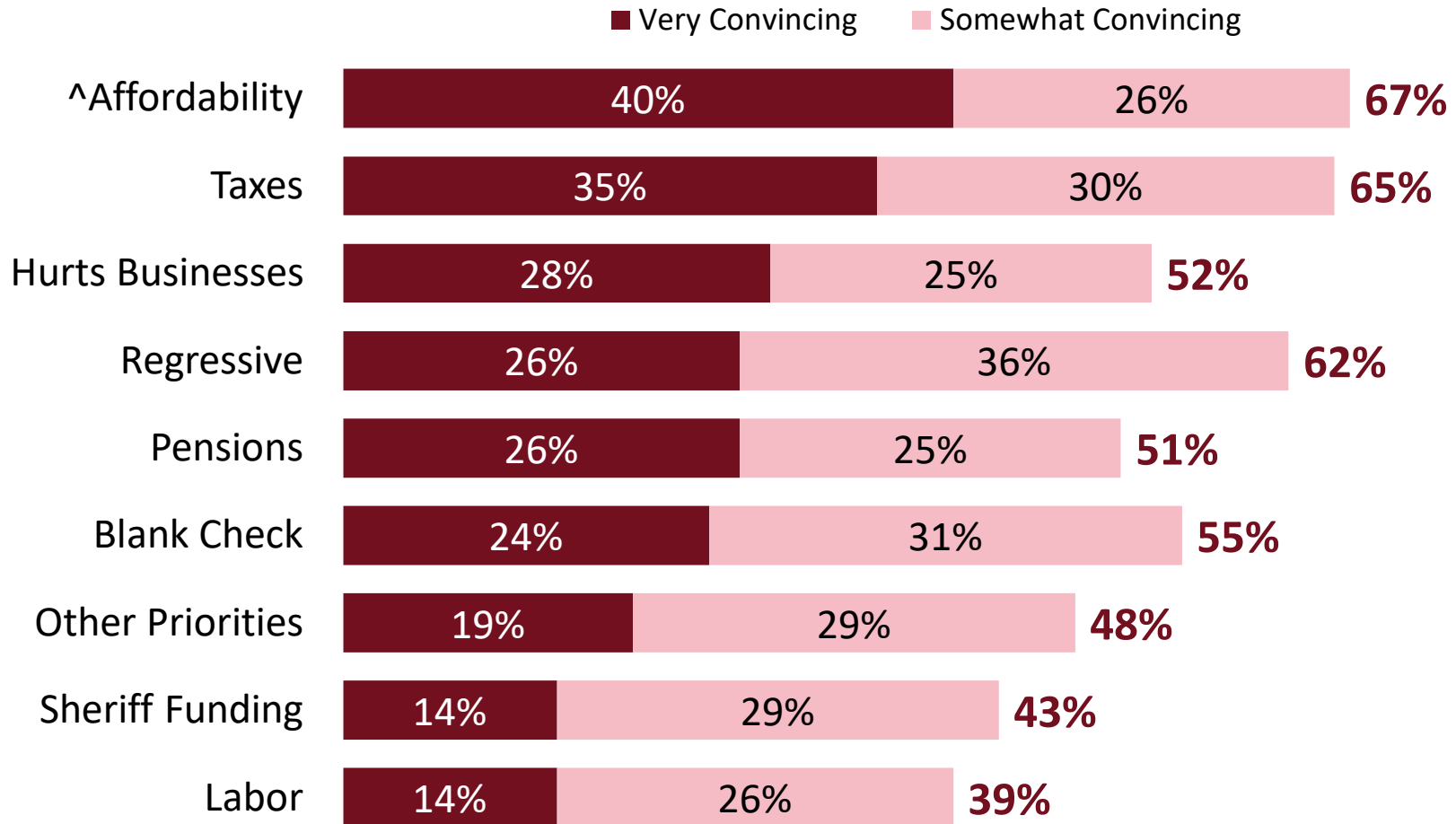
As voters learn more about the measure, their support fluctuates but remains above a majority.



Messages describing emergency response services and youth investments are very compelling.



Messages describing the rising affordability crisis and high level of taxation offer the strongest reasons to vote “no.”



Conclusions

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- ✓ The proposed Contra Costa County general purpose sales tax is well-positioned for the November ballot at this point in time.
 - Support for the measure cuts across many major demographic groups, including every Supervisorial District.
 - Voters offer slightly more support for a 20-year sunset than for a 35-year sunset.
- ✓ The most strongly-supported elements of the measure are preventing child abuse, maintaining 911 emergency response services, firefighting and emergency response preparedness, expanding access to mental health care and increasing accountability in the Sheriff's Department.
 - At the same time, every spending area tested received widespread support.
- ✓ Support for the measure is responsive to messaging, peaking at 70% for the 20-year sunset after positive messages and 69% for the 35-year sunset.
 - Messages focused on emergency response and youth are extremely compelling.
 - Criticisms over affordability and high taxes are less convincing individually, but bring overall support down to 61%.
- ✓ As strong as initial support for the measure is, it is a snapshot of this moment in time; it will still require robust public education and engagement given the changing economic, political, and public health context.

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