



Aspect  
Strategic

**Survey Analysis**  
**SIX 2024 Colorado Pre-Session**

## Methodology

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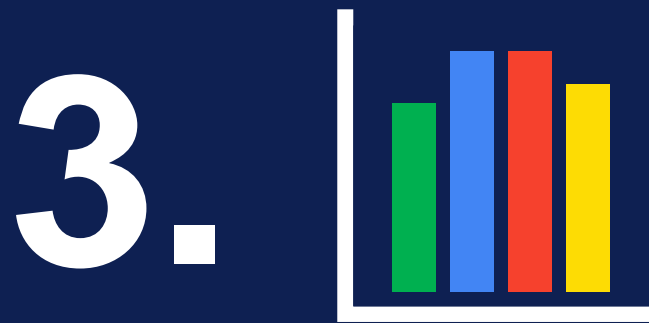
This analysis is based on an online survey of **500 registered voters in Colorado** conducted by Aspect Strategic on behalf of State Innovation Exchange.

Interviews were conducted **January 2-7, 2024**. The sample includes a combination of respondents sourced via SMS-to-web and web panel.

The **margin of error is  $\pm 4.4\%$**  at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

1. Q

2. A



### Key topics covered by this analysis:

- Perspectives on state leaders' job performance
- Preferences for assertive vs. smaller government
- Issues causing the greatest worry for Coloradans
- Support for stronger renter protections
- Attitudes towards flat TABOR rebates
- Messaging on public safety topics
- Support for a state elected official pay commission
- Messaging for a state elected official pay commission



# Q.

How do voters feel about the job the governor and legislature are doing? Would they prefer a more assertive state government or a smaller state government?

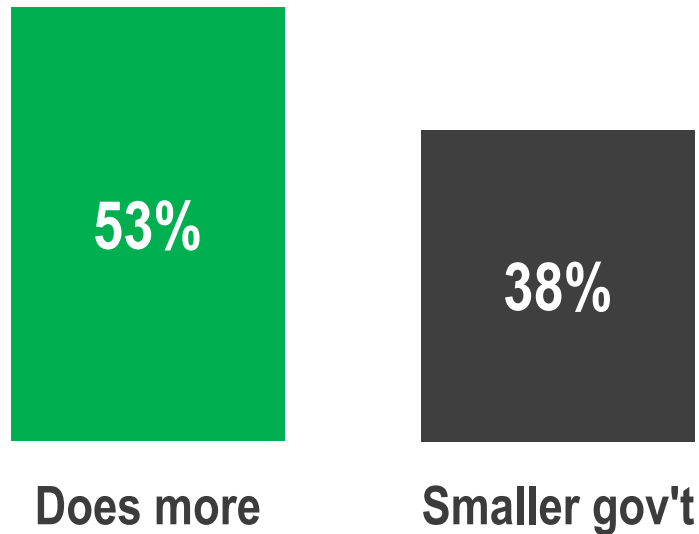
# A.

By a wide margin, voters prefer the state to be active in solving problems and helping Coloradans. And while fewer than four-in-ten say state leaders are doing a “bad” job, only a quarter say they are doing a “good” job and many only give a rating of “fair.”

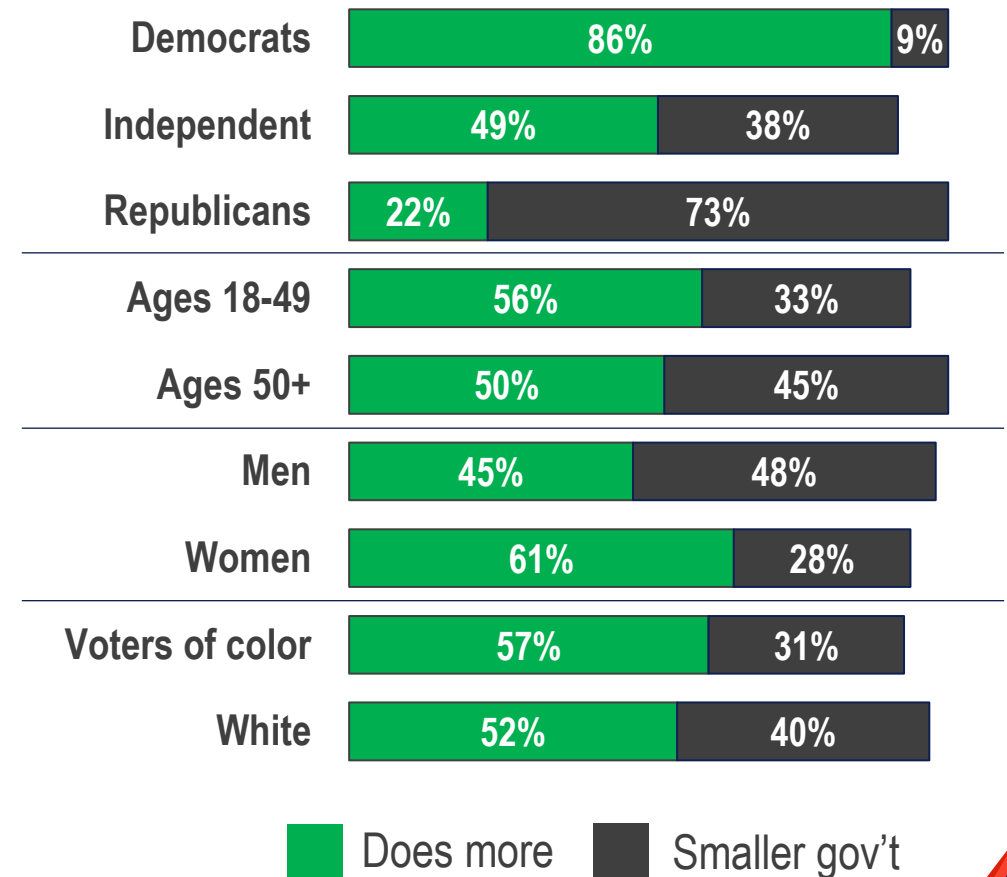
# Most Prefer the State Do More to Address Problems, Including Independents

If given the choice, would you prefer...

- A state government that does more to help people and address problems facing CO
- A smaller state government with lower taxes, less regulation, and less spending

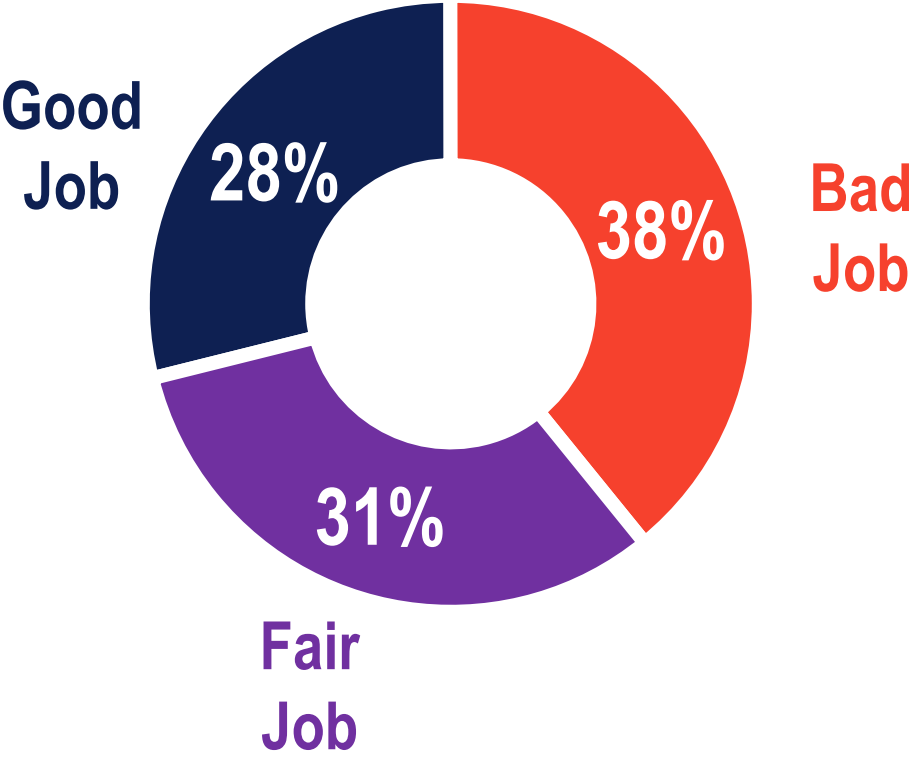


Preference by Key Demos



# Many Give State Leaders a Rating of Fair and Want the State Gov't to do More

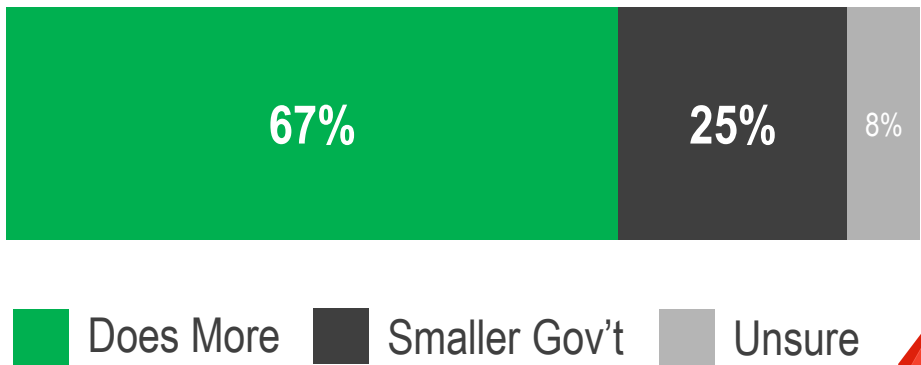
Governor and Legislature Doing a \_\_\_\_\_ Job  
Addressing the Issues You Care About Most



## Most Likely to Say “Fair Job”



## Government Preference Among “Fair Job”



# Q.

What are voters biggest worries?  
What issues do they want to see  
the state take urgent action to  
address?

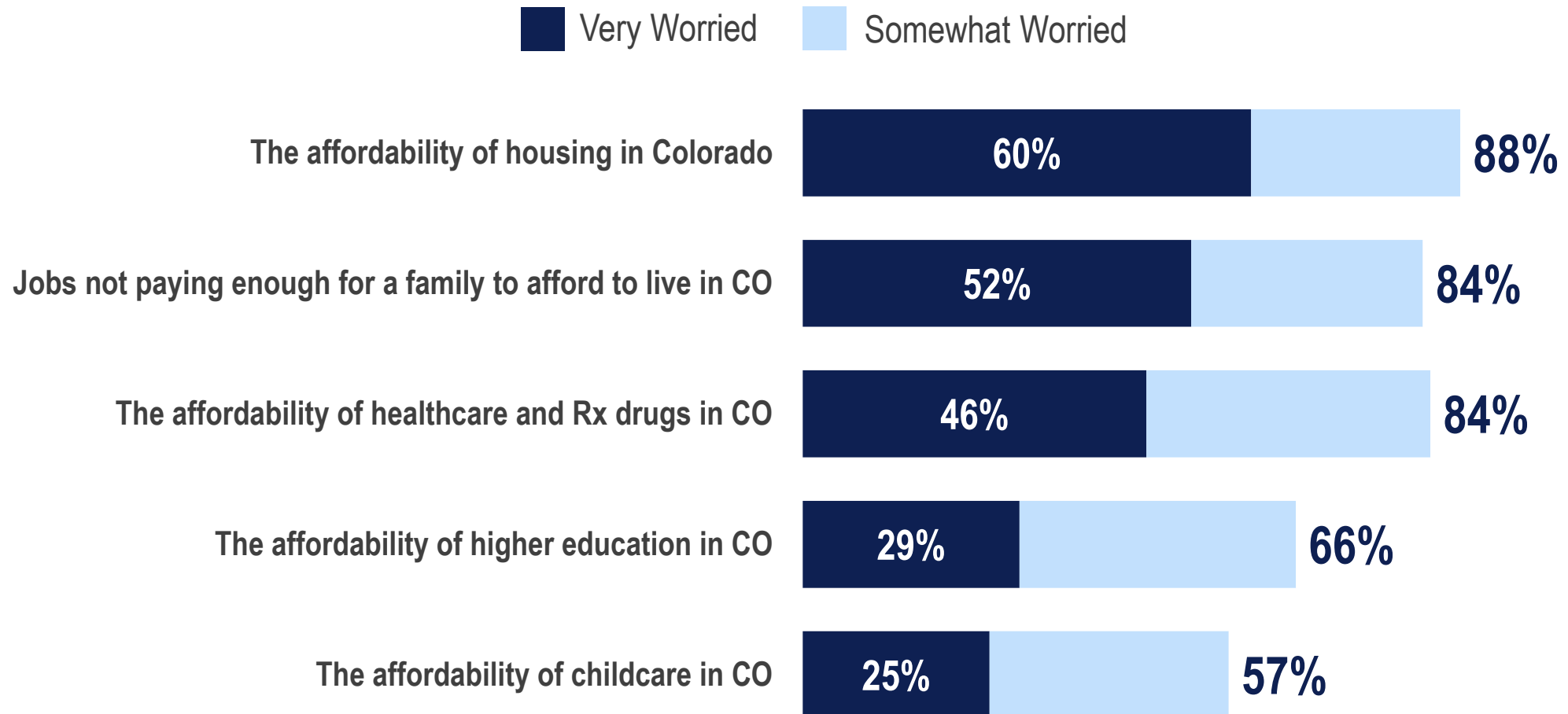
# A.

Affordability top voters' list of worries, especially housing, low worker pay, and healthcare. Voters also express some worry about school funding and gun violence. Voters largely point to these same issues as “urgent priorities” for the governor and legislature to address.

# Housing, Pay, and Healthcare are Major Worries; Higher Ed and Childcare Less Concerning

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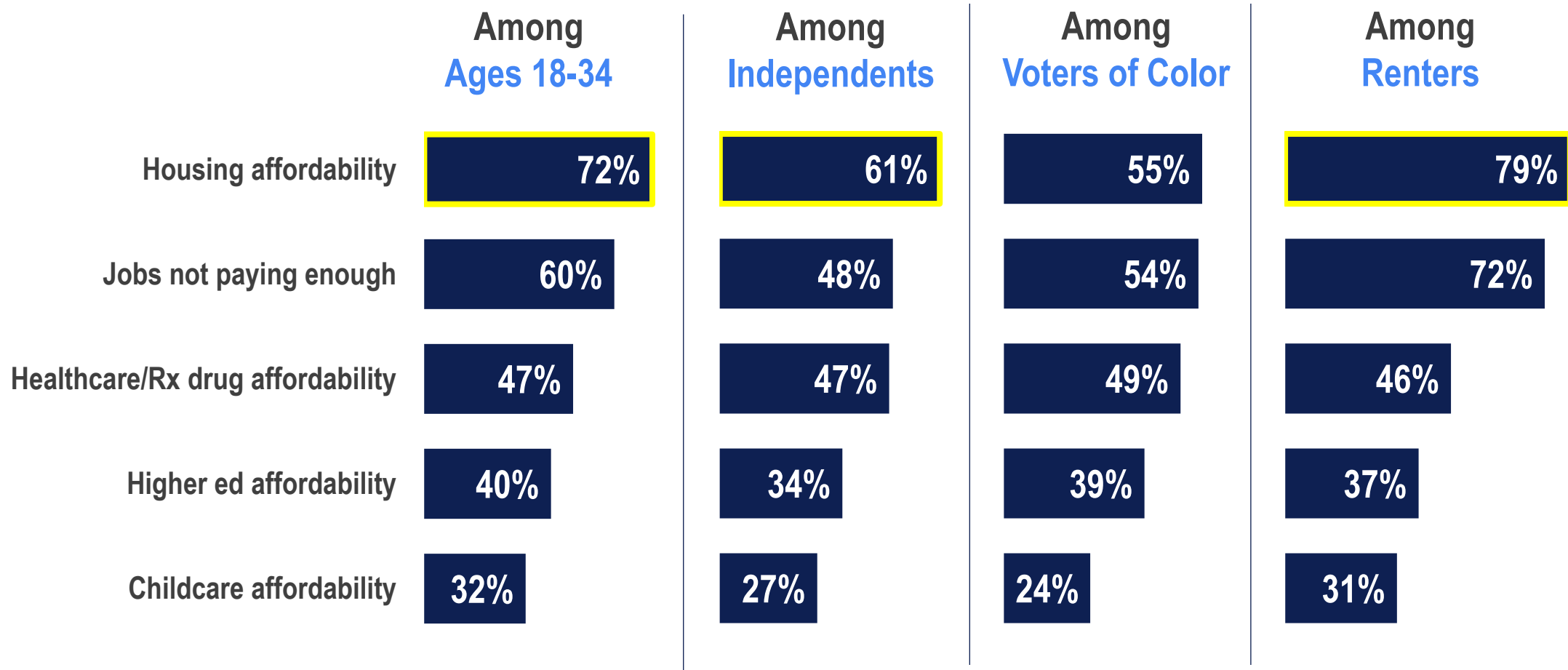
## Worry About Affordability and Financial Issues





# Housing Stands Out With Key Groups, Especially Young, Independents and Renters

## “Very Worried” by Key Demos



# School Funding and Gun Violence are Elevated Concerns; Fewer Worried about Climate

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## Worry About Gun Violence, Schools, and Climate

Very Worried    Somewhat Worried

Schools being underfunded and teachers being underpaid

42%

75%

The amount of gun violence and shootings in CO

39%

75%

The impact of climate change on CO

34%

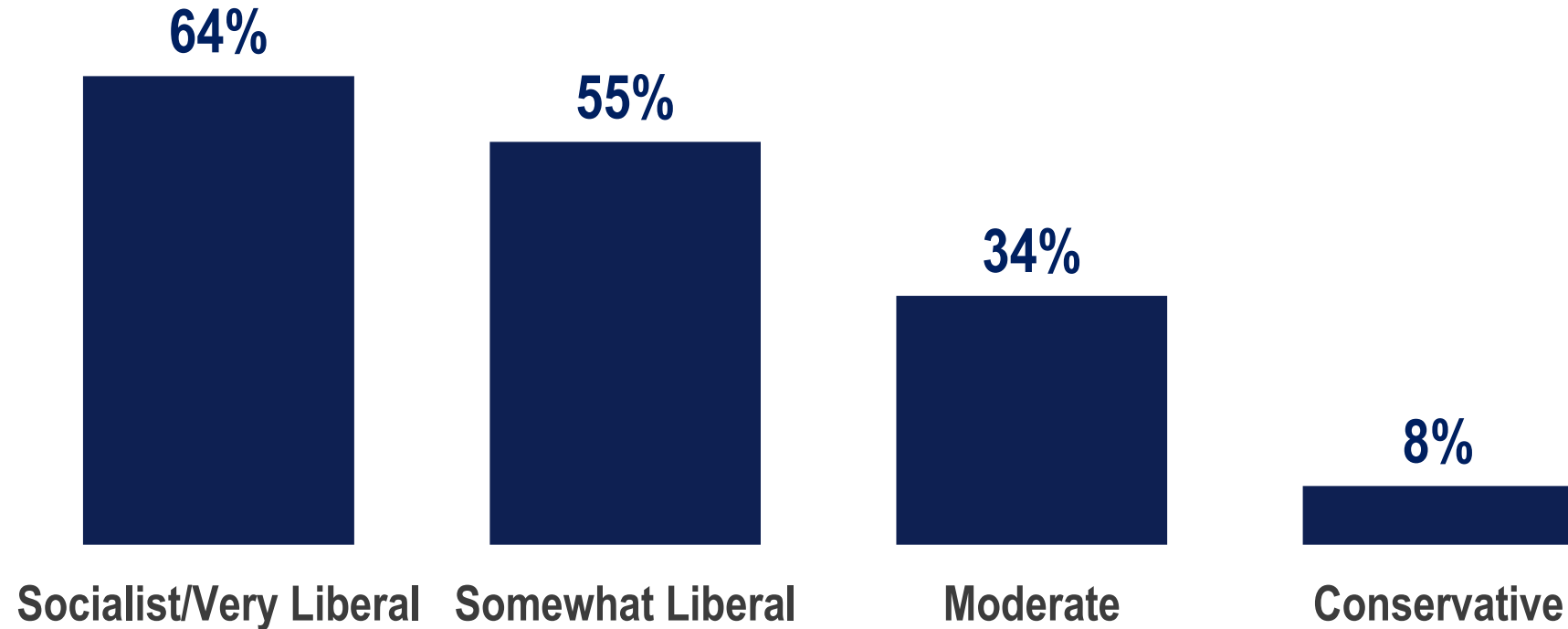
59%



# Climate Change is a Concern for Voters on the Left, Less for Moderates and Conservatives

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“Very Worried” About **The Impact of Climate Change** by Ideology

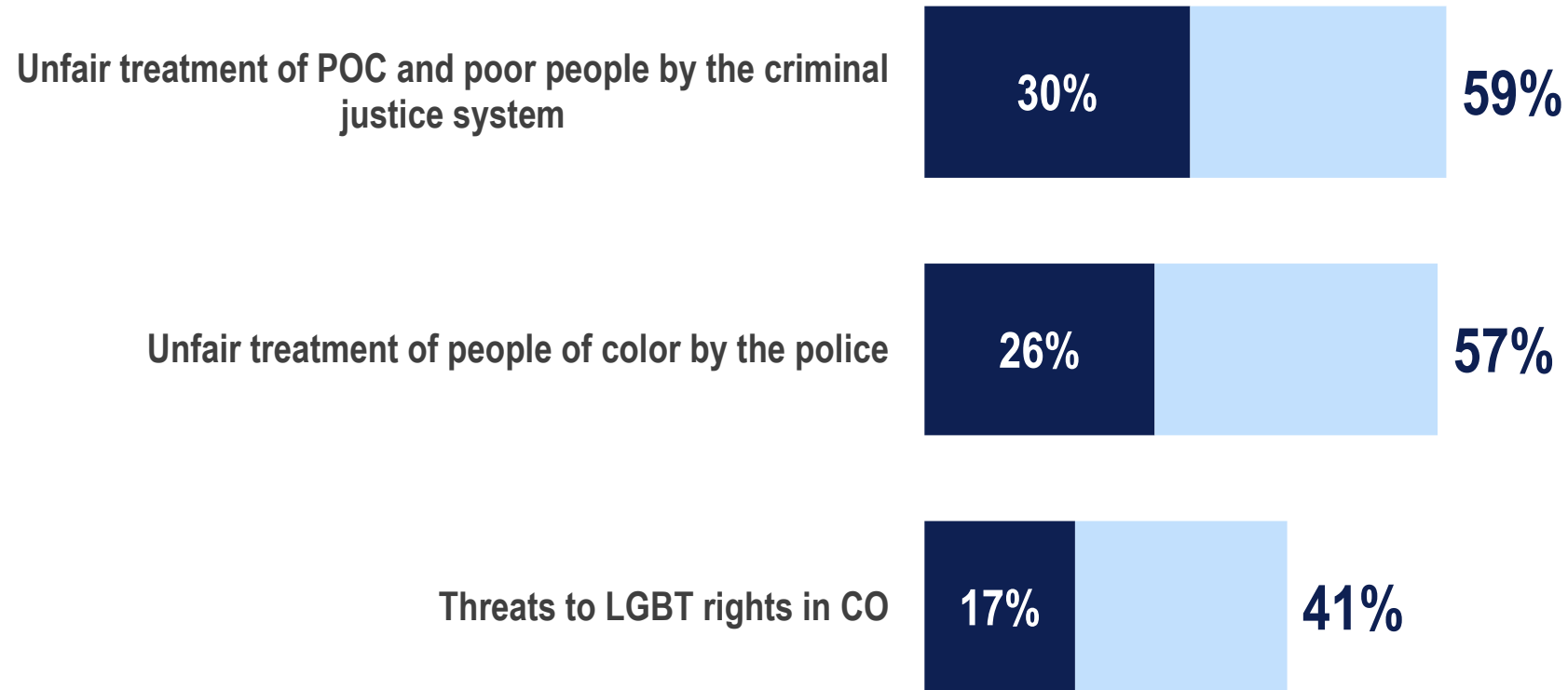


# Priorities Related to Marginalized Communities are Lower Concerns Overall

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## Worry About Criminal Justice Reform, Police, and LGBT Rights

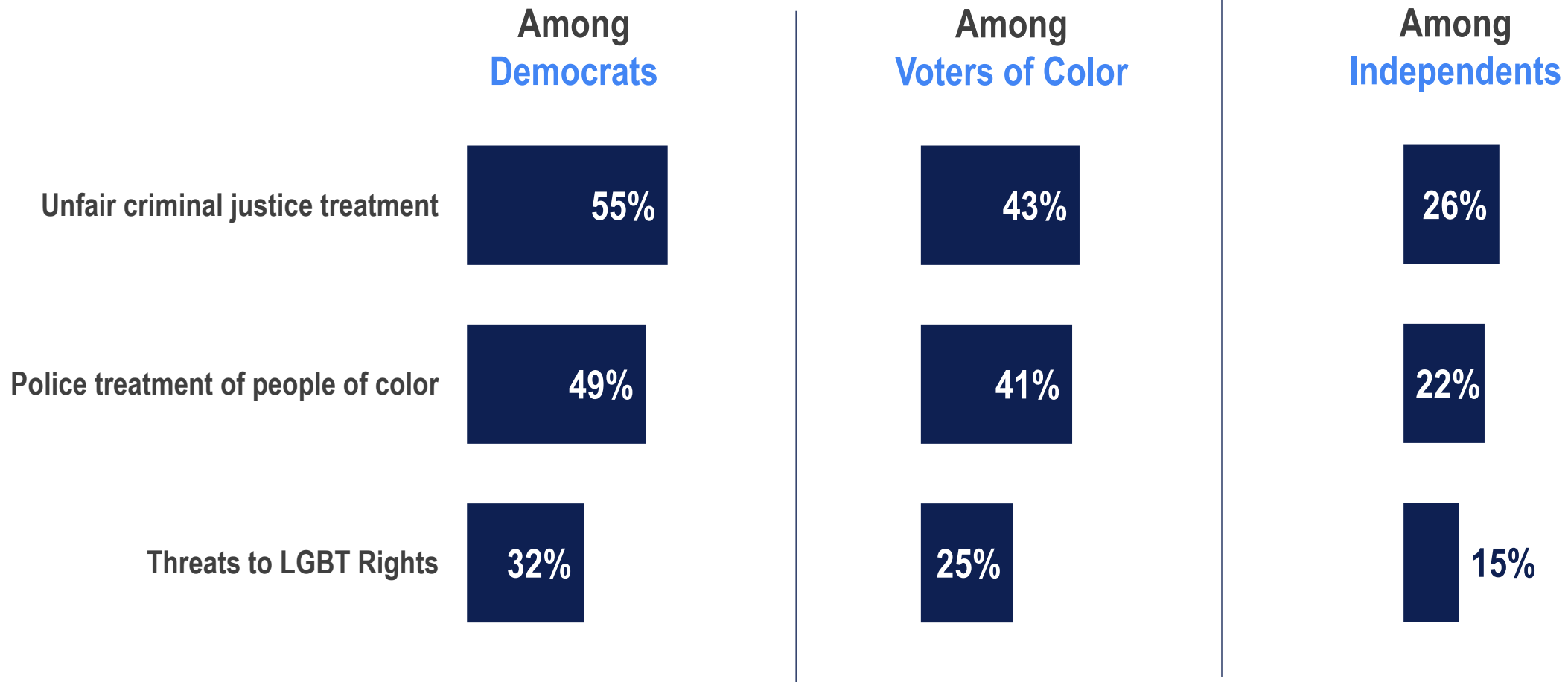
Very Worried    Somewhat Worried



# Treatment of POC and Poor a Higher Concern for Dems and VOC, Less for Independents

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## “Very Worried” by Key Demos





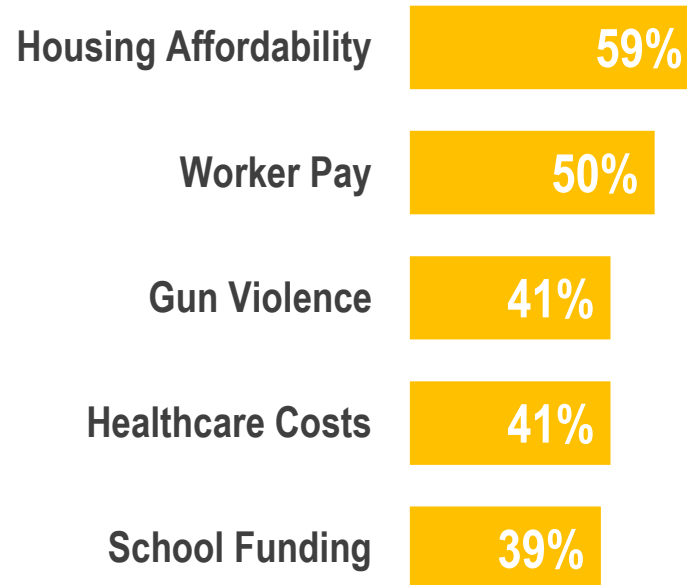
# Housing and Pay Top List of Urgent Priorities; Those Lukewarm to State Leaders Agree

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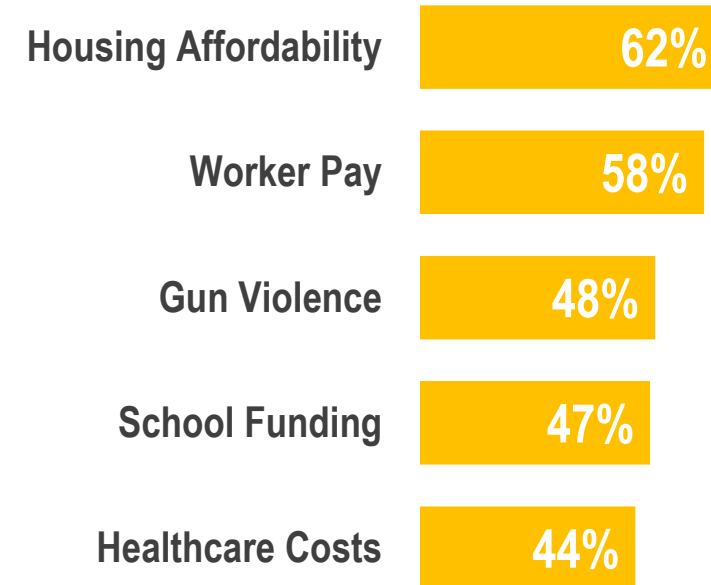
## Top 5 Most Urgent Priorities

■ “Urgent” Priority for Gov. and Leg. to Address

### Among All Voters



### Among Those Saying Gov & Leg Doing a “Fair” Job



# Housing and Pay Also Urgent Priorities for Key Political Groups and Impacted Voters

## “Urgent Priority” by Key Demos

■ “Urgent” Priority for Gov. and Leg. to Address

### Ages 18-34



### Independents



### Voters of Color



### Incomes <\$50k



# Q.

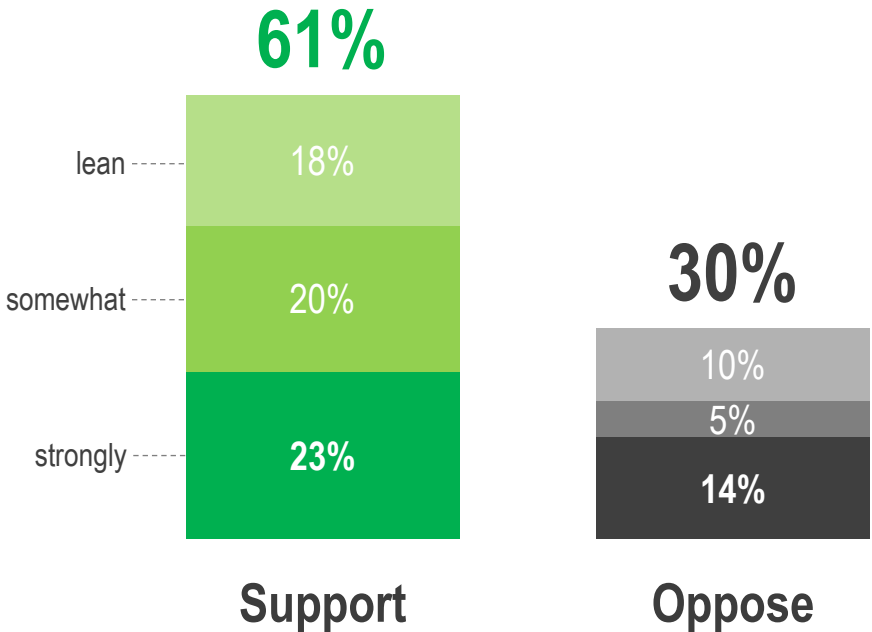
Would voters support a “Just Cause” law to protect renters?

# A.

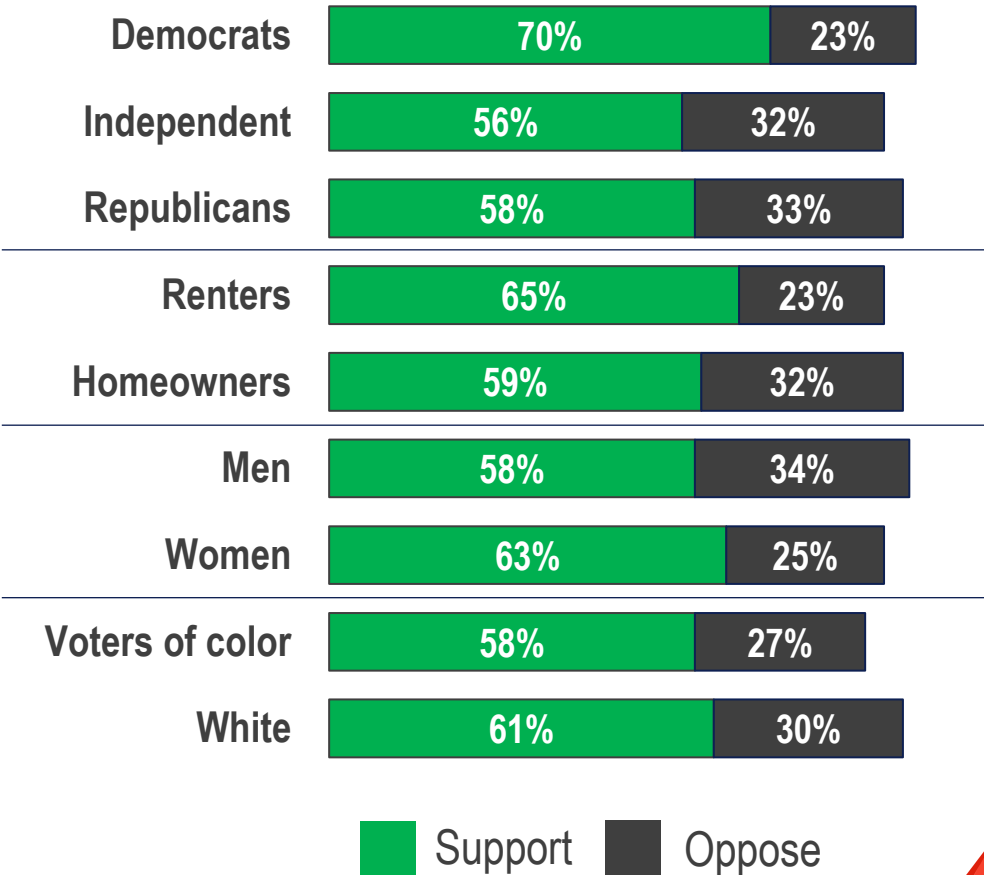
Voters overwhelmingly support a “Just Cause” law. Support is broad, with majorities of every major demographic and political group in favor. Though support is soft, renters are more likely to believe a legislator’s support for Just Cause is an indication they are doing a good job representing them.

# Voters Favor “Just Cause” by a 2-to-1 Margin; Support High Across All Voter Groups

Would you support or oppose requiring that landlords can only evict a tenant or not renew their lease for certain reasons, such as lease violations, nonpayment of rent, or when the landlord takes the unit off the rental market?



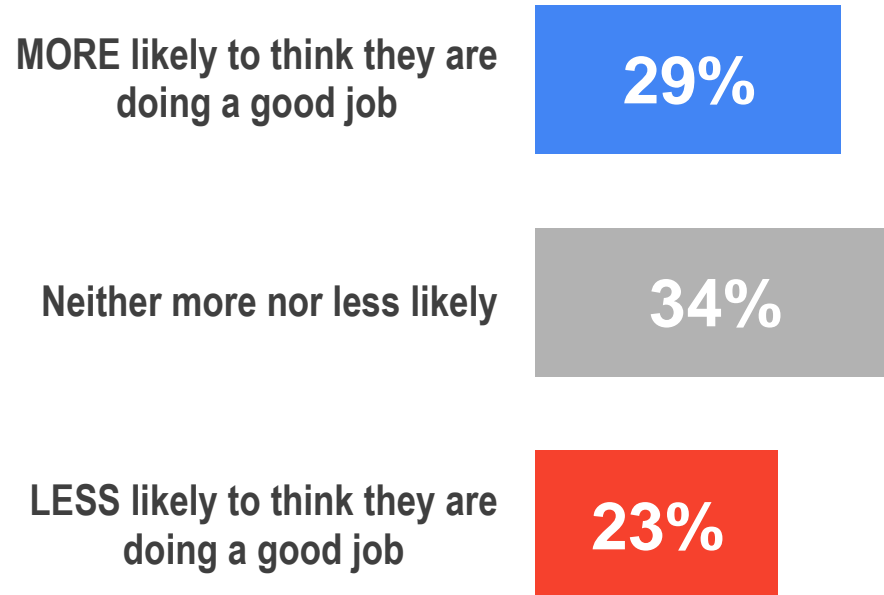
## Just Cause by Key Demos



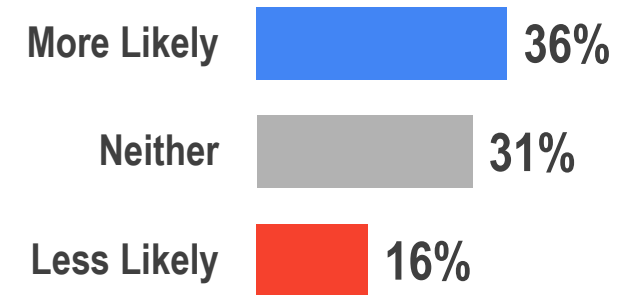
## While “Just Cause” Generates Little Enthusiasm, Renters Show More Interest

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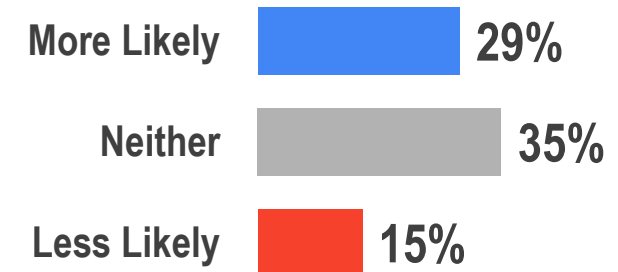
If your state representative supported a law requiring that landlords could only evict tenants or not renew a lease for certain reasons, would you be...



### Renters



### Gov/Leg Doing a “Fair” Job





# Q.

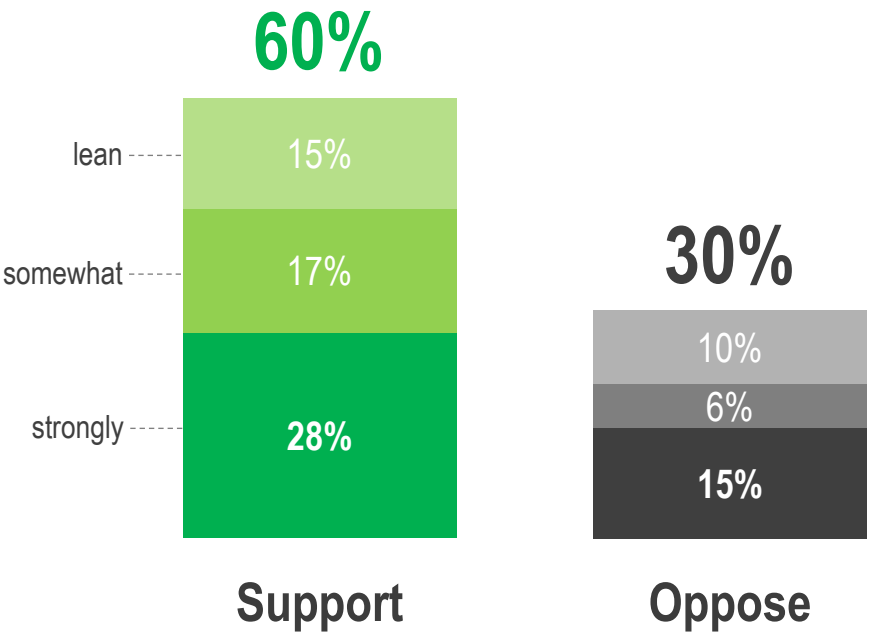
Would voters favor flat TABOR rebates, even if it meant lower rebates for people with higher incomes?

# A.

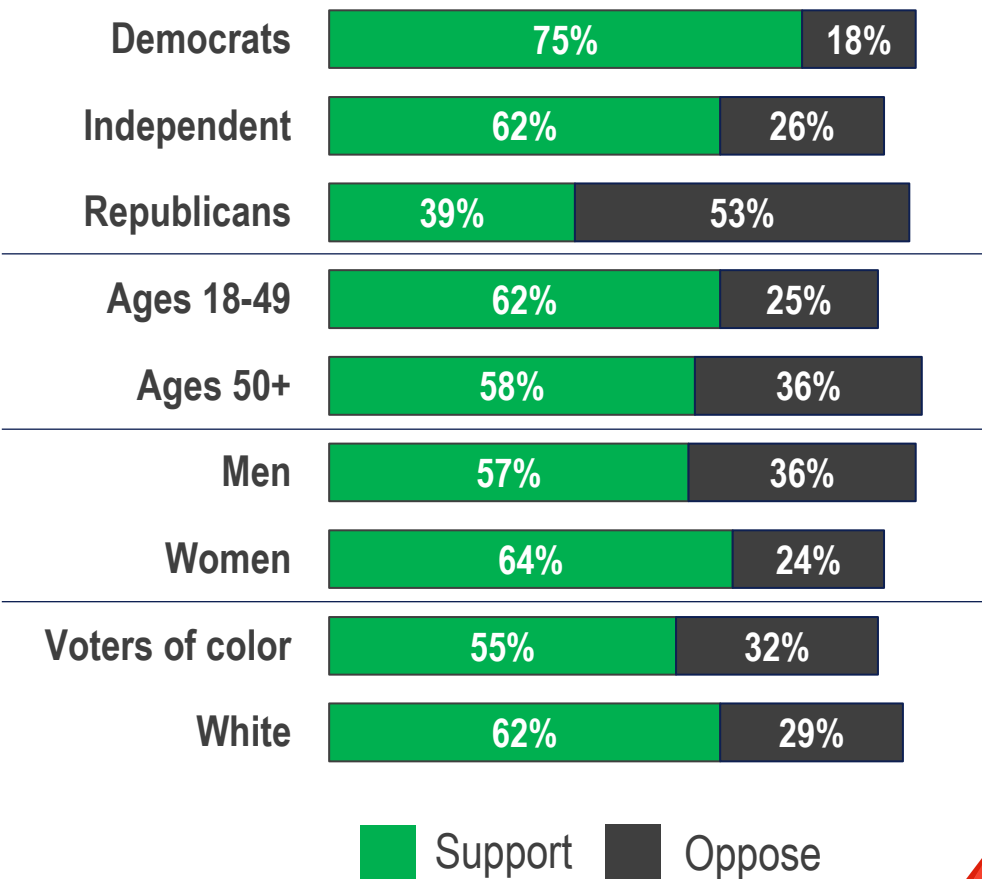
By a 30pt margin, voters favor flat TABOR rebates. Support is particularly strong among Democrats, Independents, women, and low- and middle-income households. Even a plurality of higher-income households express willingness to support flat rebates.

# Flat Tabor Rebates are Popular, Including Among Independents and Women

Would you support or oppose increasing the amount of money low- and middle-income families get in their TABOR rebates, even if that means reducing the amount higher income people get in their TABOR rebates?



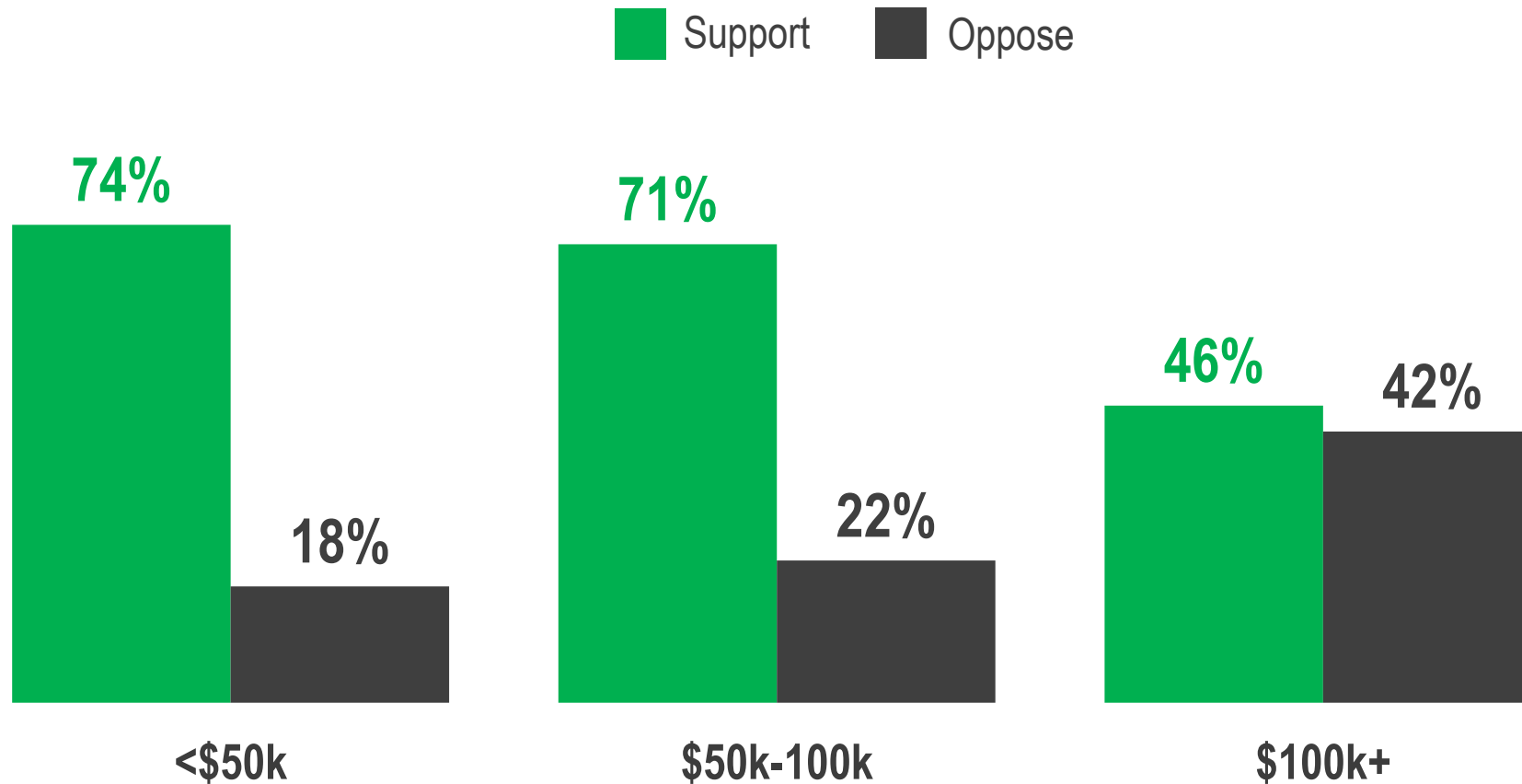
## Flat TABOR Rebates by Key Demos



## Flat Rebates are Very Popular with Low- and Middle-Incomes; Higher Incomes Split

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Flat TABOR Rebates by Household Income



# Q.

What kind of approach would voters prefer when it comes to the topics of public safety and the opioid crisis?

# A.

On public safety, voters prefer an approach which centers crime prevention programs with a focus on addressing the root causes of crime. When it comes to the opioid crisis, voters prefer an approach which centers treatment and reducing overdoses, while focusing policing on dealers rather than users.

# Voters Prefer a Focus on Root Causes and Prevention Over Enforcement and Incarceration

## ROOT CAUSES AND PREVENTION

Our focus should be addressing the root causes of crime like poverty and lack of opportunity while investing in programs that prevent crime like education, at-risk youth programs, and addiction and mental health treatment.

vs.

## ENFORCEMENT AND INCARCERATION

Our focus should be increasing punishments, hiring more police, arresting criminals, and getting them off the streets so they can't continue to be a threat to people or property.

59%

38%

39%

19%

11%

27%

Agree MUCH more

Agree MUCH more





# To Address the Opioid Crisis, Voters Support Treatment and Focusing on Dealers

## TREATMENT AND DEALERS

Our focus should be treating people addicted to opioids and reducing deaths caused by overdoses, while cracking down on the dealers who are responsible for flooding our streets with fentanyl.

vs.

## POSSESSION AND PUBLIC USE

Our focus should be making any use or possession of fentanyl a felony and cracking down on people who are openly using illegal drugs on our streets.

61%

35%

42%

19%

10%

25%

Agree MUCH more

Agree MUCH more



# Q.

Would voters support an independent commission to recommend the amount state elected officials should be paid?

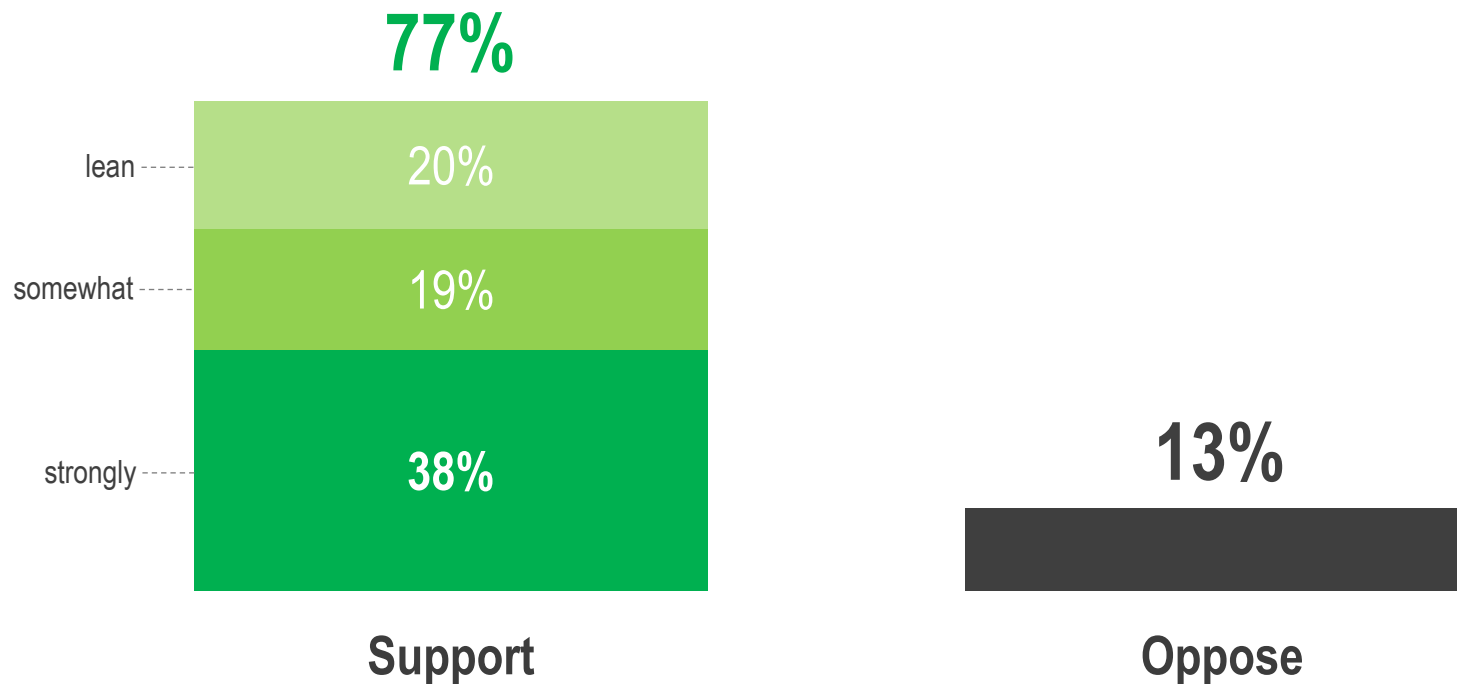
# A.

More than three-quarters of Colorado voters support such a commission, including nearly four-in-ten who feel strongly about their position. Supermajorities of every demographic and political group are in favor while only 13% are opposed.

# Voters Overwhelmingly Support a Pay Commission for State Elected Officials

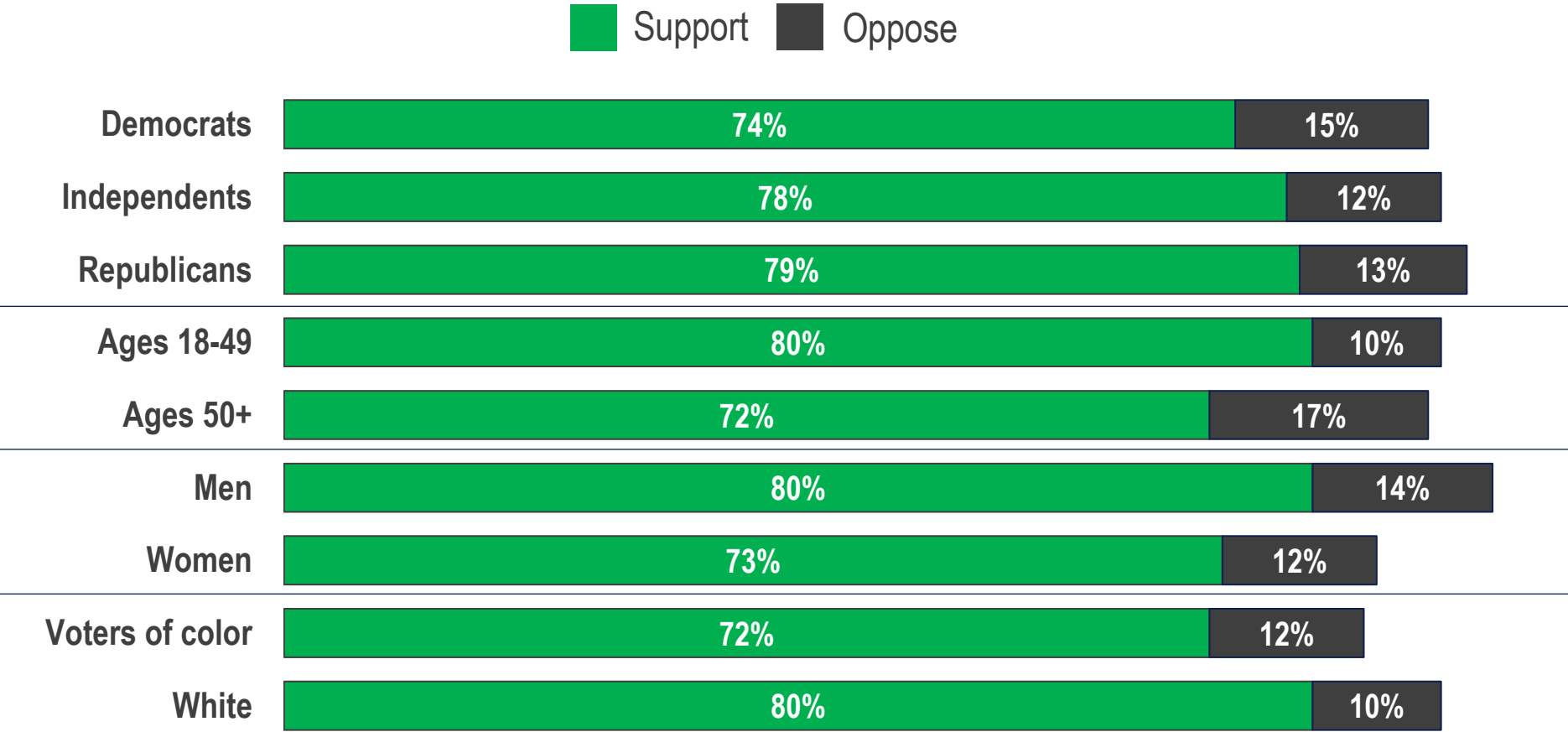
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Would you support or oppose establishing a citizens-only commission to review and recommend the salaries of state elected officials, including state legislators and officials like the governor?



# Support is High Across All Major Political and Demographic Categories

Support for Pay Commission by Key Demos



# Q.

Does messaging in favor of a pay commission resonate with voters? Which messages are strongest, and which are weakest?

# A.

Voters resonate strongly with messages that center on removing conflicts of interest. Some also support messages focused on getting more regular people into office. However, messages focused on equity, good governance, or low legislator salaries are less effective.



# Top Messages Focus on Removing Conflicts of Interest, More Regular Citizens in Office

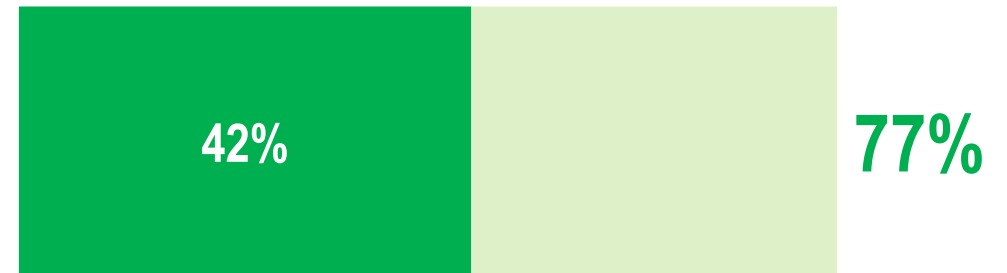
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 Very Convincing    Somewhat Convincing

**[CONFLICT]** Putting lawmakers in charge of **recommending their own salaries is a conflict of interest**. We need a third-party commission made up of regular citizens who can make recommendations about salaries based on facts and data without any conflicts of interest.



**[REGULAR]** Too often, the people who run for office are already wealthy and out of touch with what it's like to work for a living. **We need more regular citizens representing us, not more rich elites**. A third-party commission can recommend a reasonable salary so that regular people can afford to hold public office, not just the wealthy and well-connected.



## “Conflict” Message is Especially Persuasive to Independents; “Regular” also Resonates

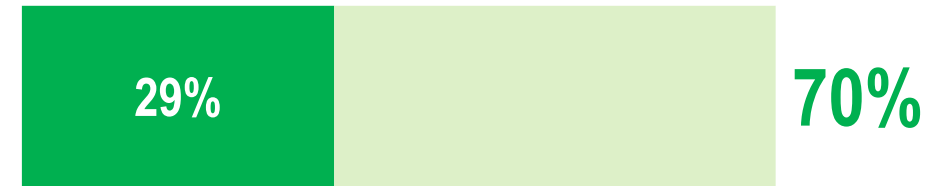
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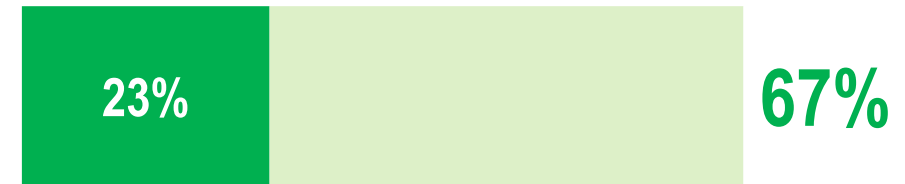
# Voters Less Persuaded by Themes of Equity, Good Governance, or Low Legislator Salaries

Very Convincing      Somewhat Convincing

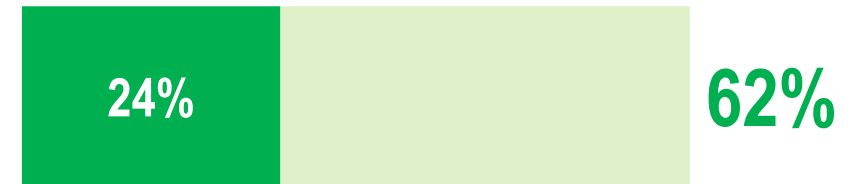
**[EQUITY]** Nationally, less than 3% of state lawmakers hold working-class jobs, even though a majority of their constituents hold these jobs. In CO, we have a similar gap. A third-party commission can recommend reasonable salaries a family can live on so that **more working people can run for office and ensure a voice for the working class.**



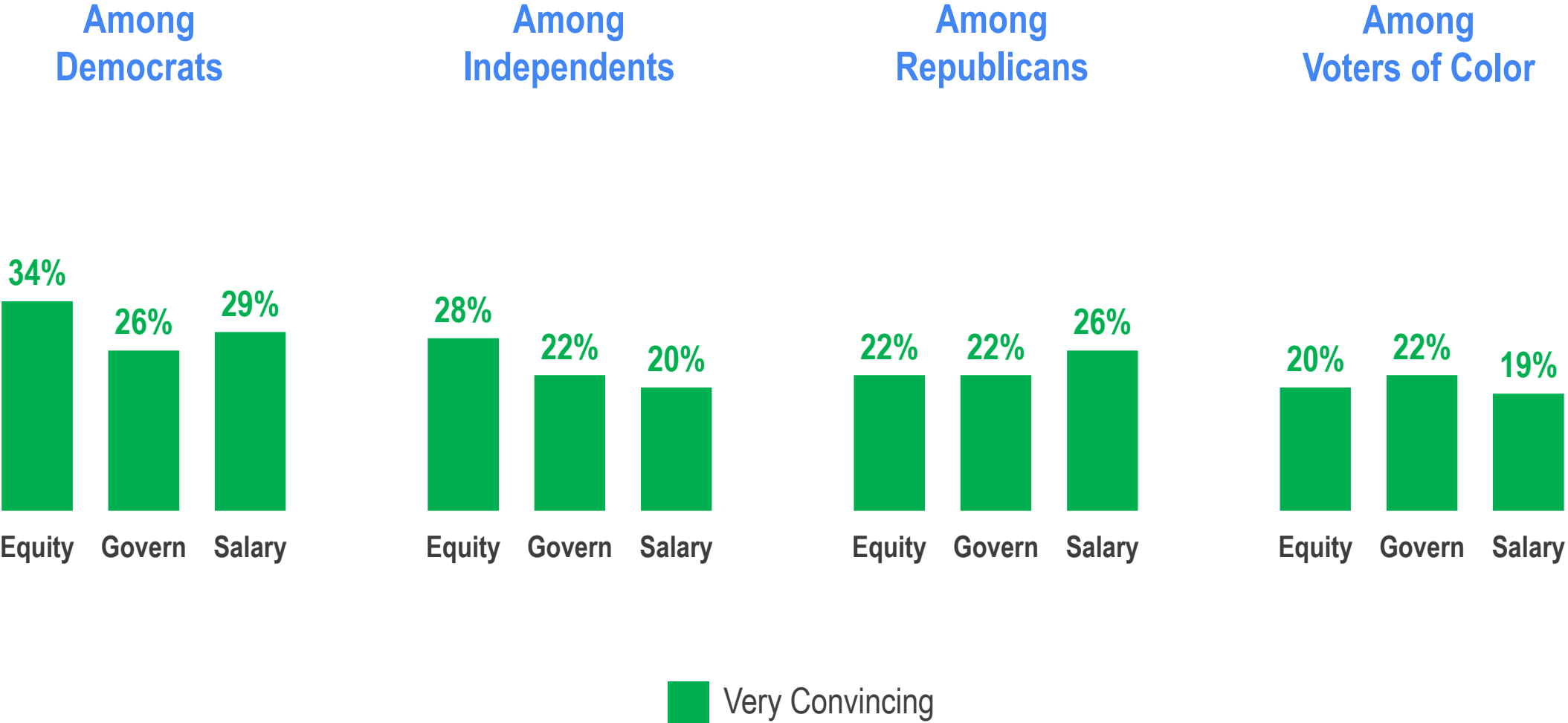
**[GOVERN]** We all want good governance in CO. **Good governance requires committed people representing us and you can only get those people if we pay them what they are worth.** A third-party commission can recommend salaries that can attract dedicated public servants like teachers and nurses, or leaders in the civic and business communities, not just people who view politics as a hobby or a career.



**[SALARY]** The base salary for most state senators in Colorado is \$41,449 per year. **In a state like Colorado, with high costs of living and expensive housing, that's not enough for most families to live on.** We need a third-party commission to recommend reasonable salaries.



# Equity, Good Governance, and Low Legislator Salaries are Less Effective Across Groups



# Q.

How does messaging impact voters' attitudes towards a pay commission? Do voters feel that a supporting a pay commission is an indication that a legislator is doing a good job representing them?

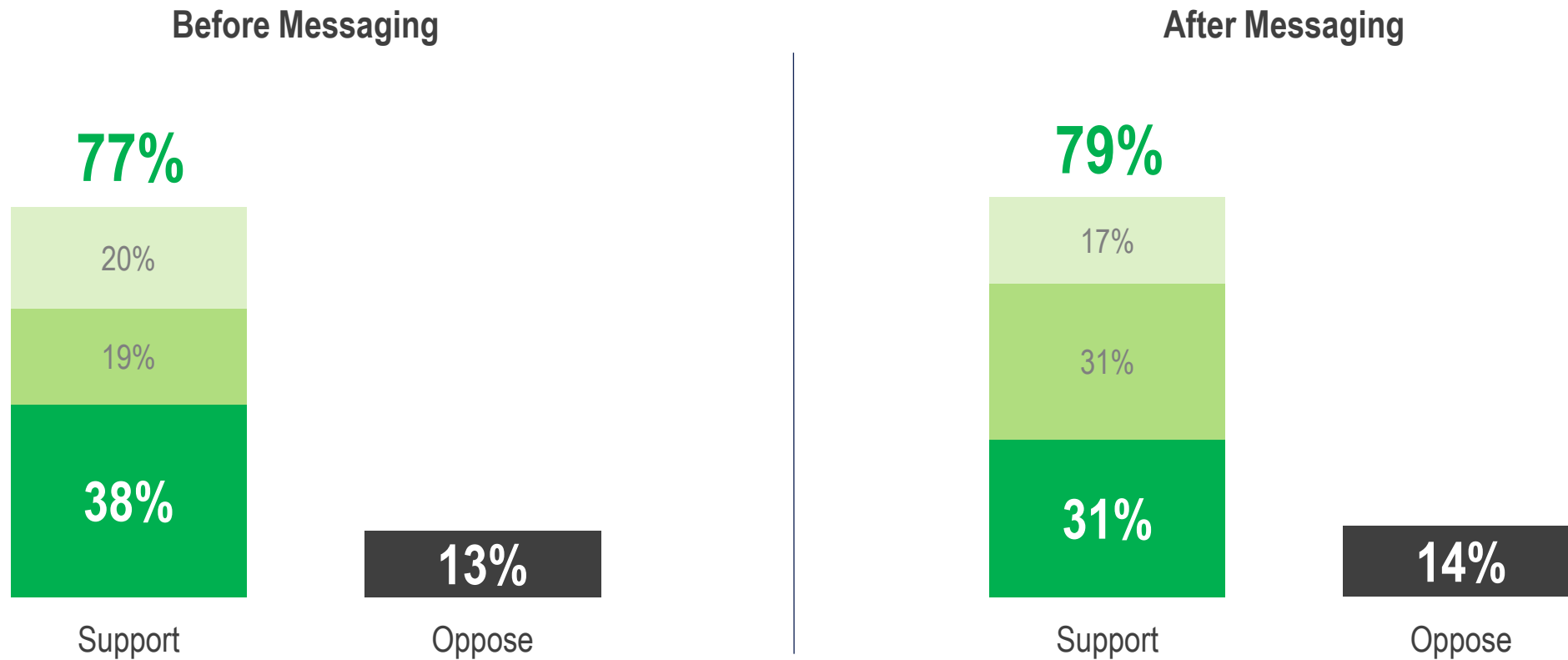
# A.

Overall support holds steady but intensity of support slightly wanes, driven by voters who are skeptical of the commission's potential to increase officials' salaries. Yet, nearly half say supporting a pay commission would make them more likely to believe their legislator is doing a good job.

## Overall Support Largely Unchanged After Messages...

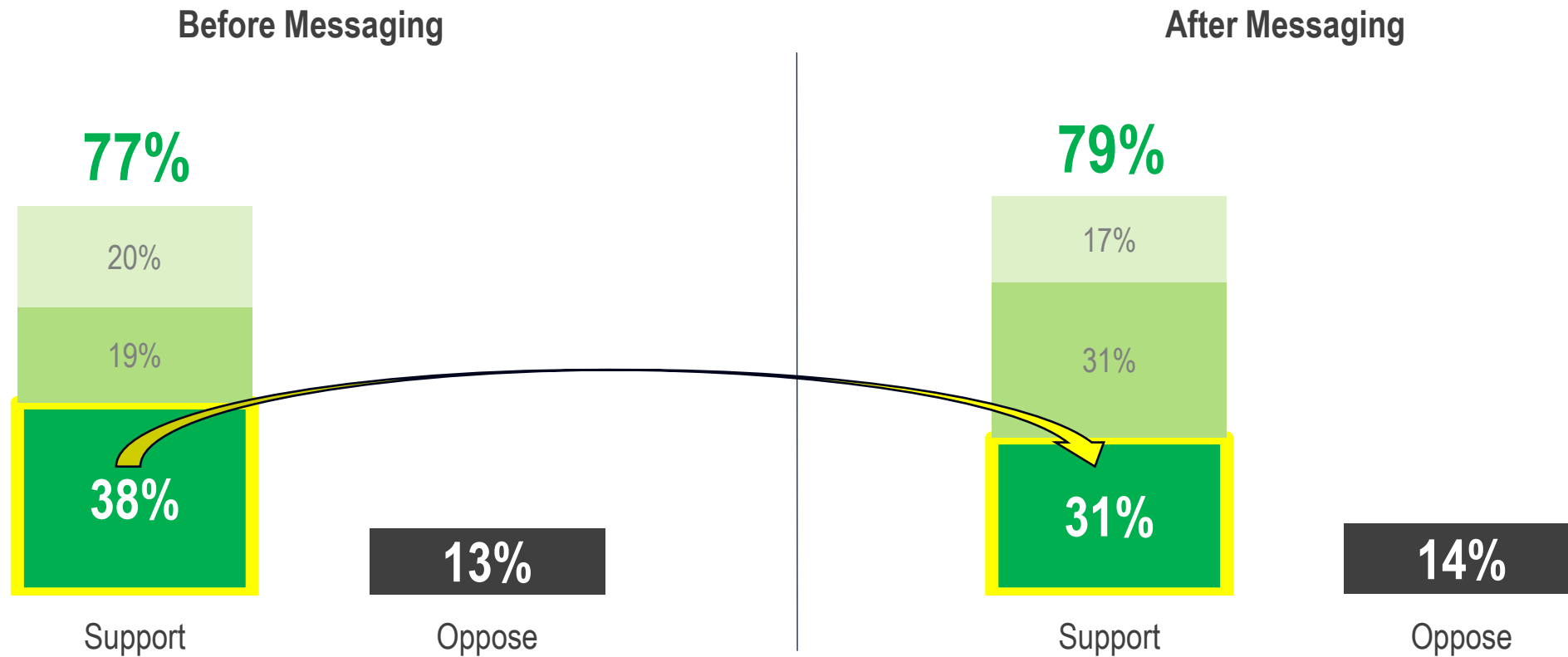
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### Pre- and Post-Messaging Support for Pay Commission



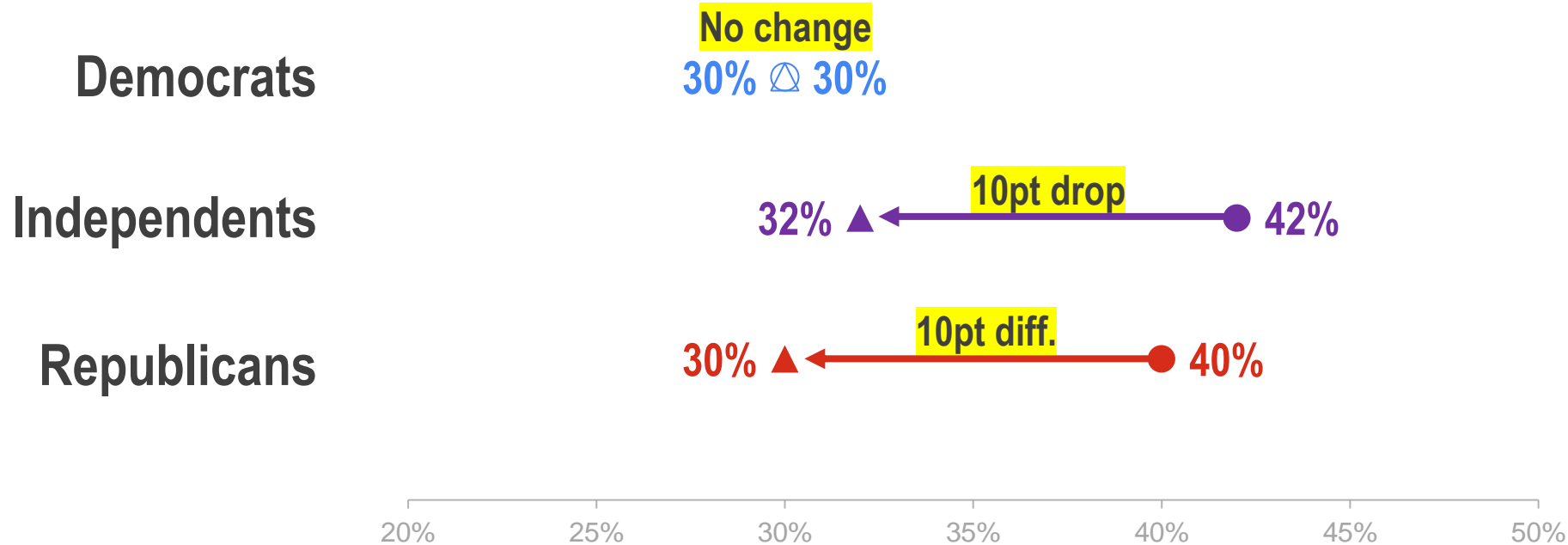
## ...But Intensity of Support Recedes Slightly

### Pre- and Post-Messaging Support for Pay Commission



# Drop in Intensity of Support Driven by Independents and Republicans

○ Pre-Messaging: % Strongly Supporting a Pay Commission  
△ Post-Messaging: % Strongly Supporting a Pay Commission





# “Intensity Shifters” Respond to Conflict Message, Extremely Skeptical of Salary Message

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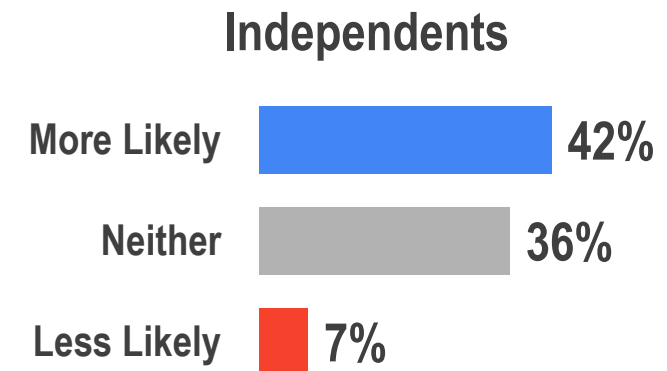
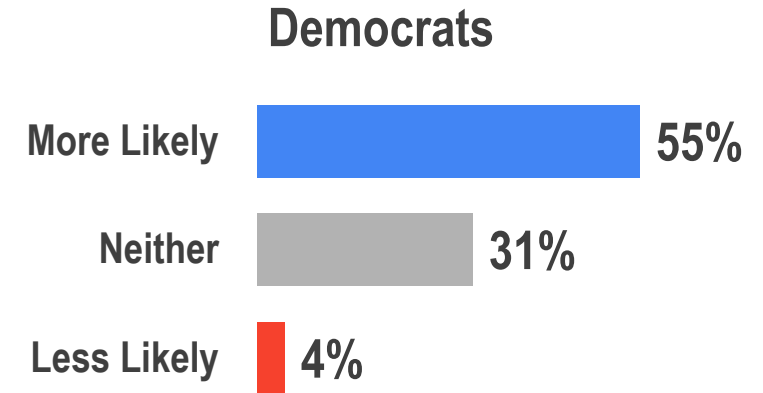
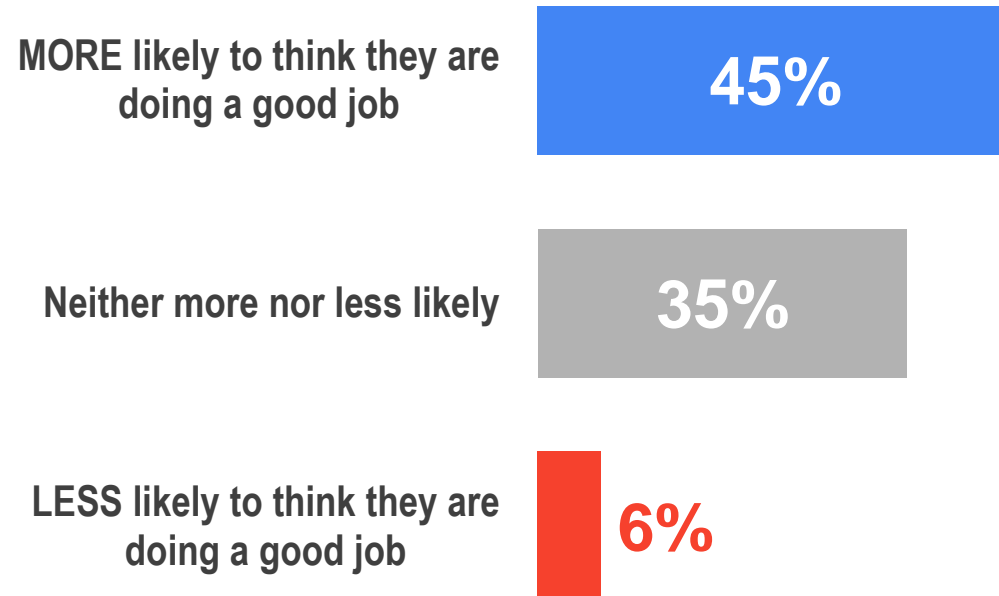
## Message Performance Among “Intensity Shifters”

 Very Convincing



# Many Say Supporting a Pay Commission Shows a Legislator is Doing a Good Job

If your state representative supported a law establishing a citizens-only commission to review and recommend the salaries of state elected officials, would you be...





# Recap



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# Demand for Bold Action

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Findings	Implications
<p>Few believe state leaders are doing a bad job, but there are many who believe the governor and legislature could be doing better on issues they care about most.</p> <p>By a wide margin, voters prefer that the state plays a more active role in addressing problems and helping Coloradans.</p> <p>Voters who believe there is room for the governor and legislature to improve strongly favor the state playing a more active role in addressing problems.</p>	<p><b>Voters want state leaders to take bold action to address the state's pressing challenges. This includes strong demand for bold action among those who are currently lukewarm towards state leaders.</b></p>

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# A Mandate for Action on Affordability

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Findings	Implications
Affordability issues are the top concerns for voters across the demographic and political spectrum.	
Housing affordability and low worker pay are singled out as the most urgent problems for state leaders to address.	<b>There is an urgent mandate for action on affordability, and Just Cause and flat TABOR rebates offer broadly popular options for addressing these concerns.</b>
Large majorities favor Just Cause and flat TABOR rebates, especially among impacted communities.	

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# Messaging on Public Safety

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Findings	Implications
<p>On public safety, voters prefer an approach which centers crime prevention programs with a focus on addressing the root causes of crime.</p> <p>When it comes to the opioid crisis, voters prefer an approach which centers treatment and reducing overdoses, while focusing policing on dealers rather than users.</p>	<p><b>Public safety is always a messaging challenge for progressives. But voters are receptive to messages which concede a need for action while centering crime prevention, addiction treatment, root causes, and cracking down on dealers rather than users.</b></p>



# Maintaining Support for an Independent Pay Commission

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Findings	Implications
Voters of all political stripes are overwhelmingly supportive of establishing an independent commission to recommend salaries for state officials.	<b>While the truth is low salaries are a barrier for the kind of representation voters want, advocates should be careful about foregrounding this message. The primary reasons voters favor such a commission are concerns about conflicts of interest and (to at least some degree) anti-politician populism.</b>
The best messaging centers on removing conflicts of interest.	<b>Suggesting a need for higher pay is a difficult line to walk given these realities.</b>
While some resonate with replacing wealthy elites with more regular citizens in office, suggesting officials aren't paid enough may reduce support.	

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