

# San Diego County Charter Reform Measure Issues Survey

*Summary of Key Findings from a Survey of San Diego County Likely November 2026 Voters  
Conducted November 14-20, 2025*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Methodology

Dates	November 14-20, 2025
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	San Diego County Likely November 2026 Voters
Total Interviews	737
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 3.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.2\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Languages	English & Spanish

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



# **Views of San Diego County**

# Majorities have a pessimistic view of California and San Diego County.

*Please indicate whether you would say things in \_\_\_\_\_ are headed in the right direction, or feel they are off on the wrong track.*

■ Right Direction ■ Wrong Track ■ Don't Know



# Voters rate the County's Fire Department highly and most approve of the County's Public Health Services, but half disapprove of County government's job performance.

*Here are some names of people and organizations active in public life. Please indicate whether you approve or disapprove of the job that person or organization is doing.*

■ Strongly Approve 
 ■ Somewhat Approve 
 ■ Somewhat Disapprove 
 ■ Strongly Disapprove 
 ■ Never Heard of

**Total Approve** **Total Disapprove**

\*San Diego County Fire Department



**93%**

**2%**

\*San Diego County Public Health Services



**58%**

**34%**

The San Diego County government

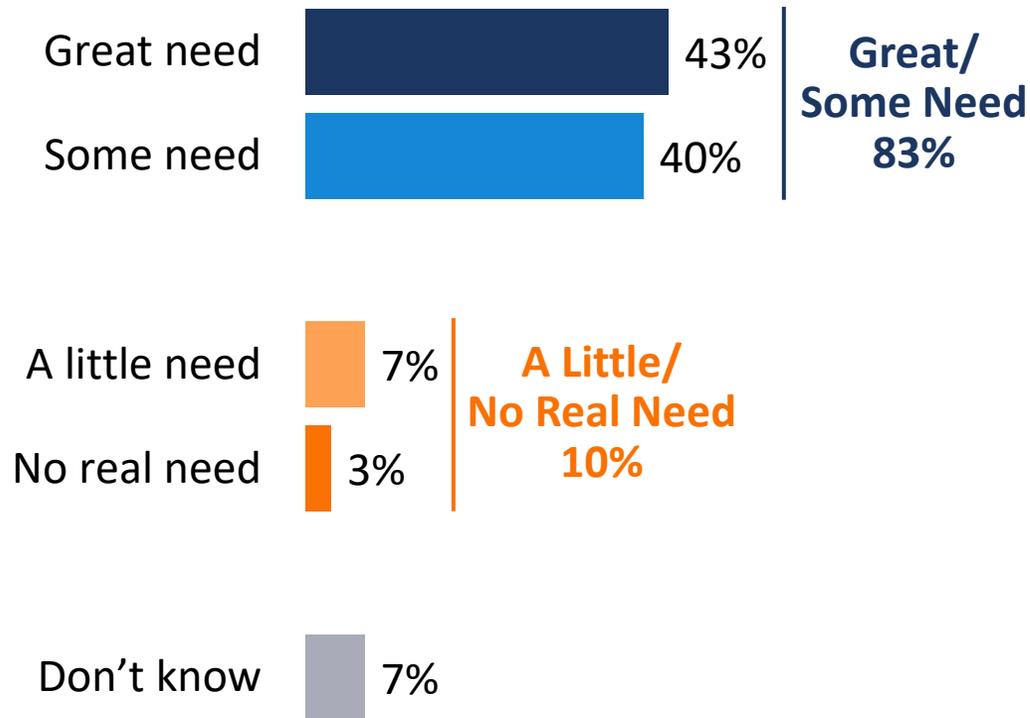


**44%**

**51%**

# The vast majority believes County government has a significant need for reform and this view is shared across all major demographic groups.

Would you say that San Diego County government has a great need for reforms, some need, a little need, or no real need for reforms?



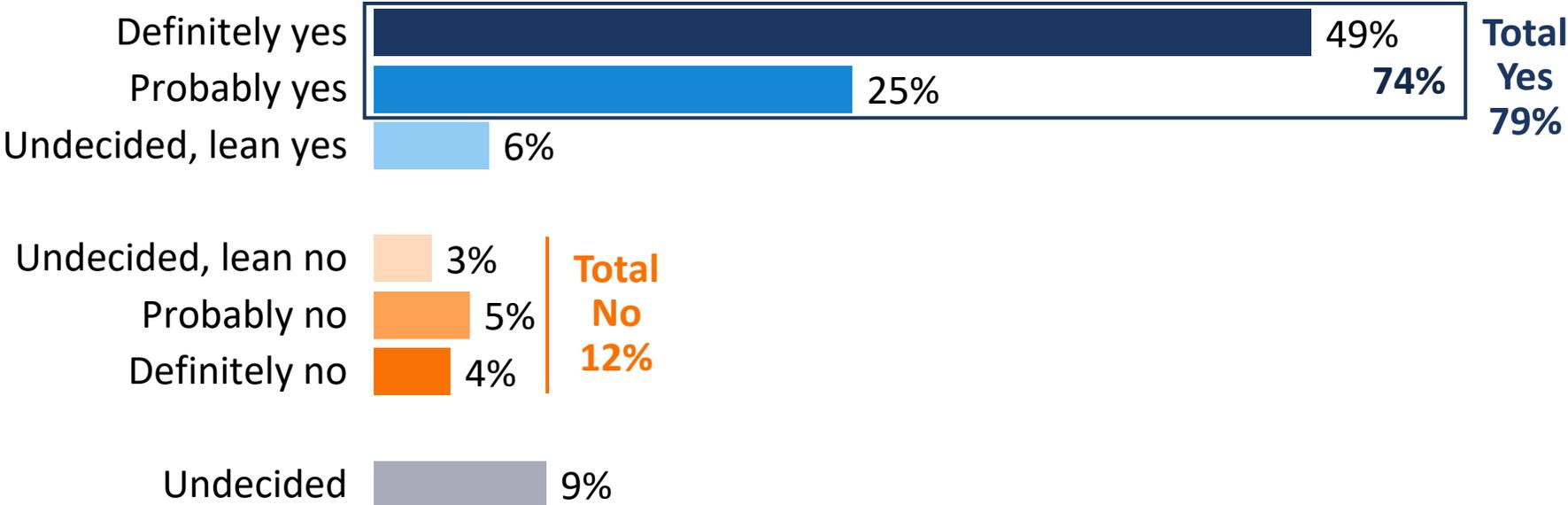
Demographic Group	Great/Some Need	A Little/No Real Need	Don't Know
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	82%	12%	6%
Women	83%	9%	8%
<b>Party</b>			
Democrats	76%	13%	11%
Independents	84%	10%	6%
Republicans	91%	6%	3%
<b>Age</b>			
18-39	81%	10%	9%
40-59	83%	9%	8%
60+	83%	11%	6%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	80%	11%	9%
Latinos	84%	12%	4%
All Voters of Color	86%	9%	5%
<b>Supervisory District</b>			
District 1	82%	10%	8%
District 2	78%	12%	10%
District 3	88%	7%	5%
District 4	80%	15%	5%
District 5	85%	7%	8%



# **Initial Reaction to a San Diego County Charter Reform Measure**

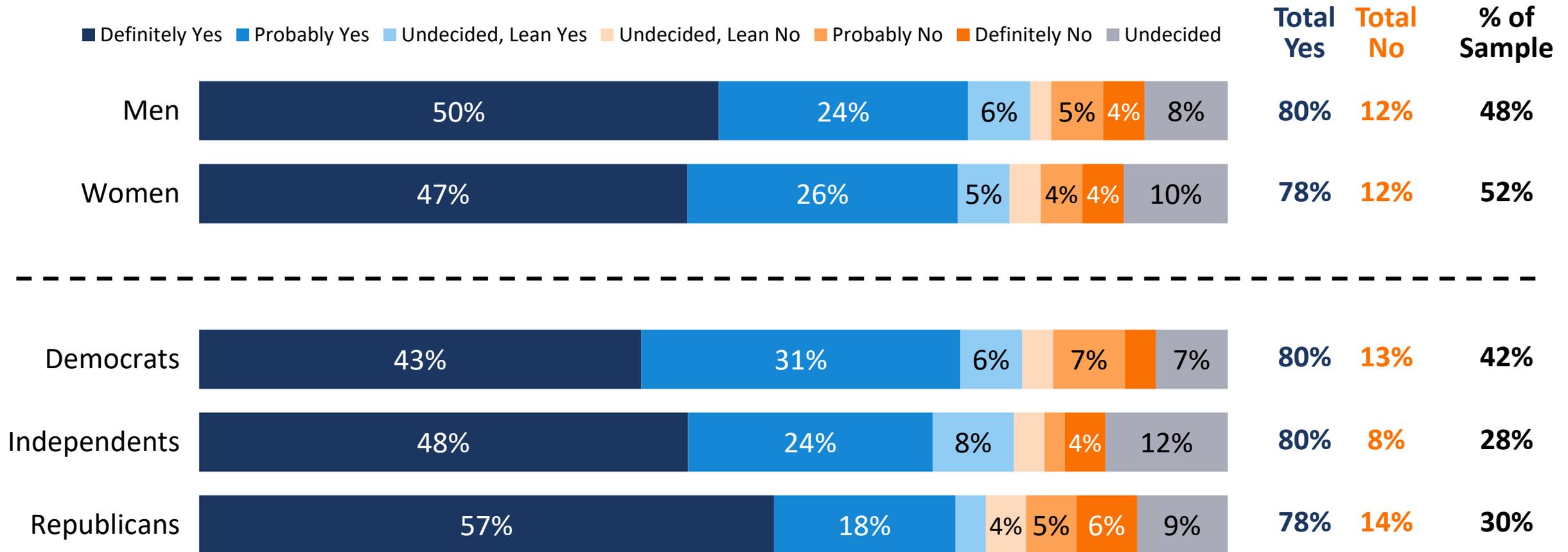
# Eight in ten vote in favor of a Charter Amendment measure to make significant changes to County government, including half who say they would vote “definitely yes” if the election were held today.

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY CHARTER AMENDMENT MEASURE.** Shall the San Diego County Charter be amended to increase public disclosure/government transparency; create an independent Ethics Commission to investigate misconduct; require an elected County Executive; require an independent budget office and auditor; require that a nonpartisan legislative analyst review proposed County policies; require Board approval for County department heads; limit the County Executive and Board of Supervisor members to three, four-year terms; and require no new cost to taxpayers to implement?



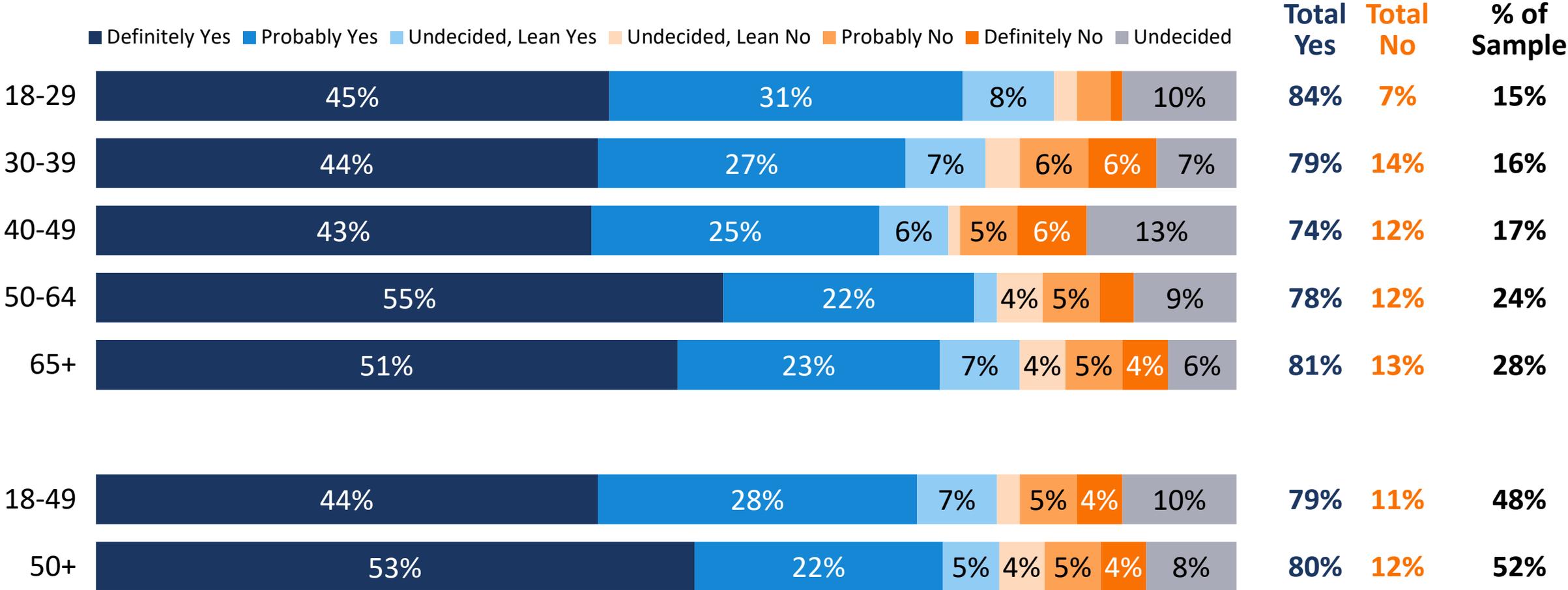
# Support is robust and consistent by gender and party affiliation.

Initial Vote by Gender & Party



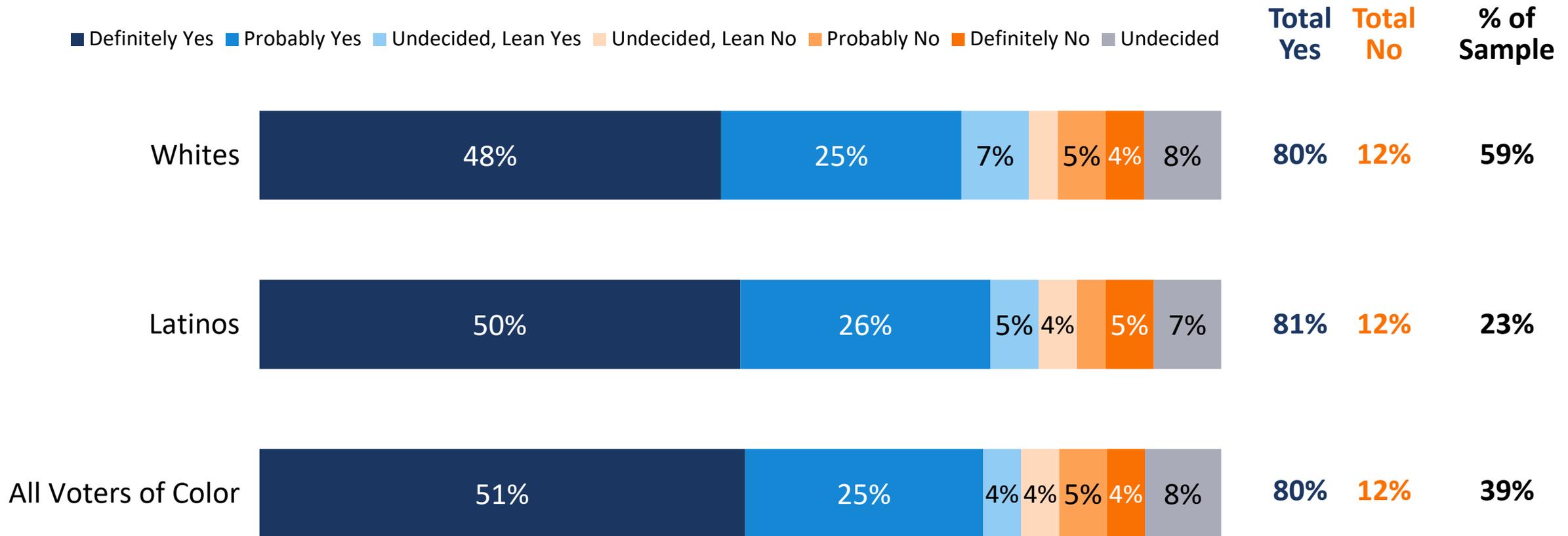
# Voters of all ages back the measure at very high levels.

Initial Vote by Age



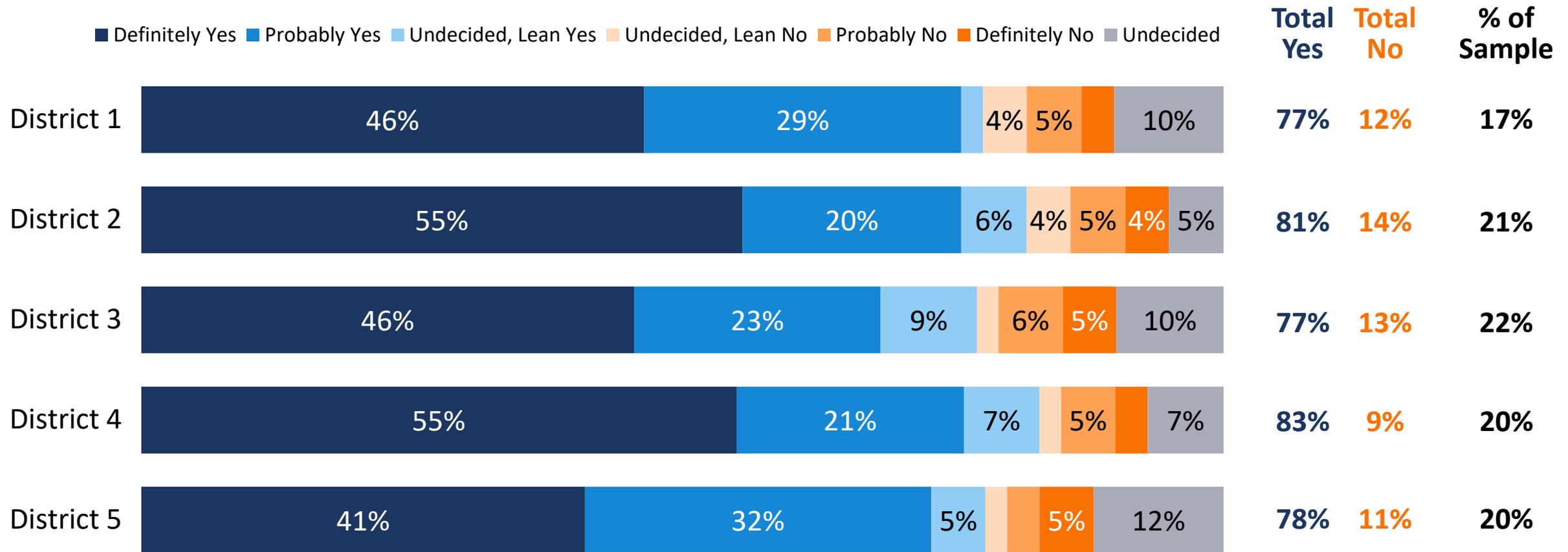
# Regardless of race or ethnicity, eight in ten San Diego County voters would vote in favor of the Charter Amendment measure.

Initial Vote by Race/Ethnicity



# Voters in all five County Supervisorial Districts strongly back this measure to reform San Diego County government.

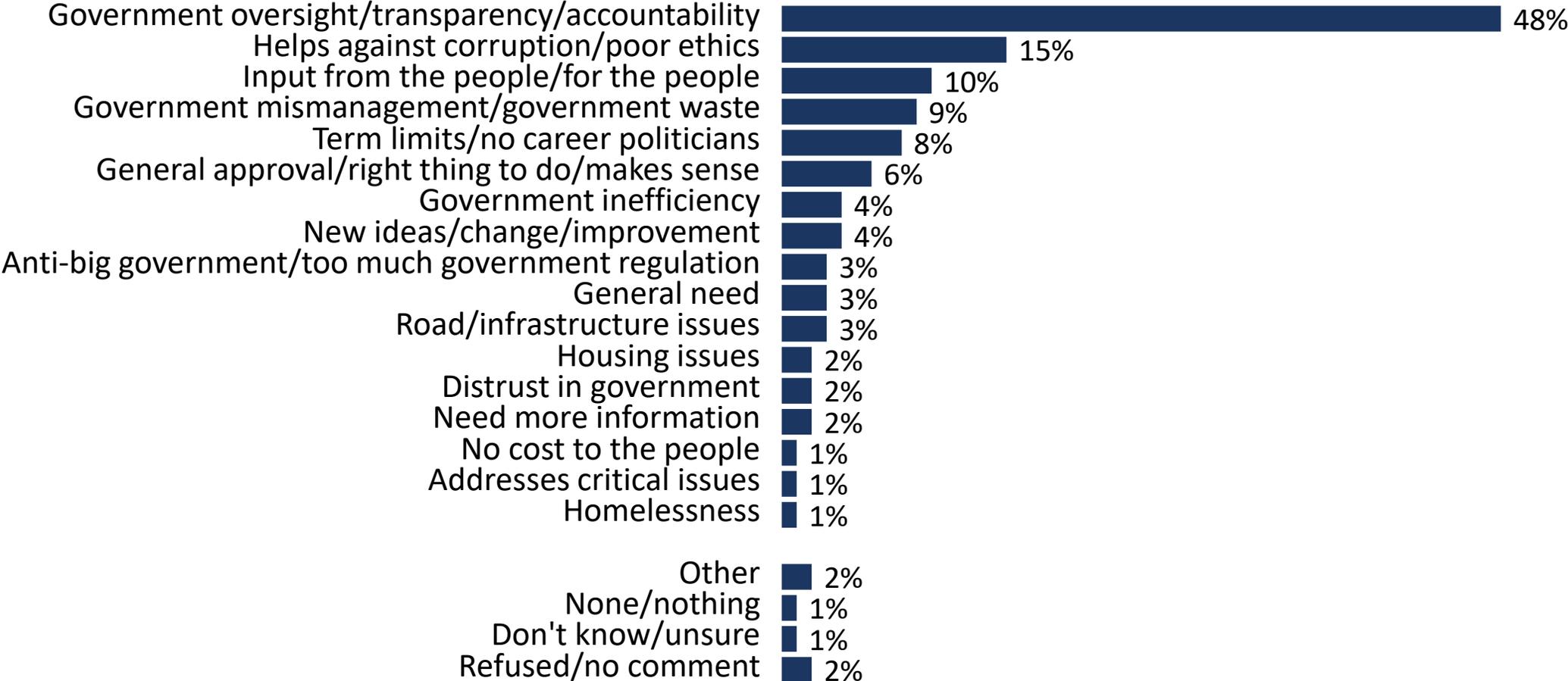
*Initial Vote by Supervisorial District*



# Half of yes voters cite the need to increase accountability, and many others want to address concerns related to corruption and government mismanagement.

*Please describe why would you vote YES on this measure?*

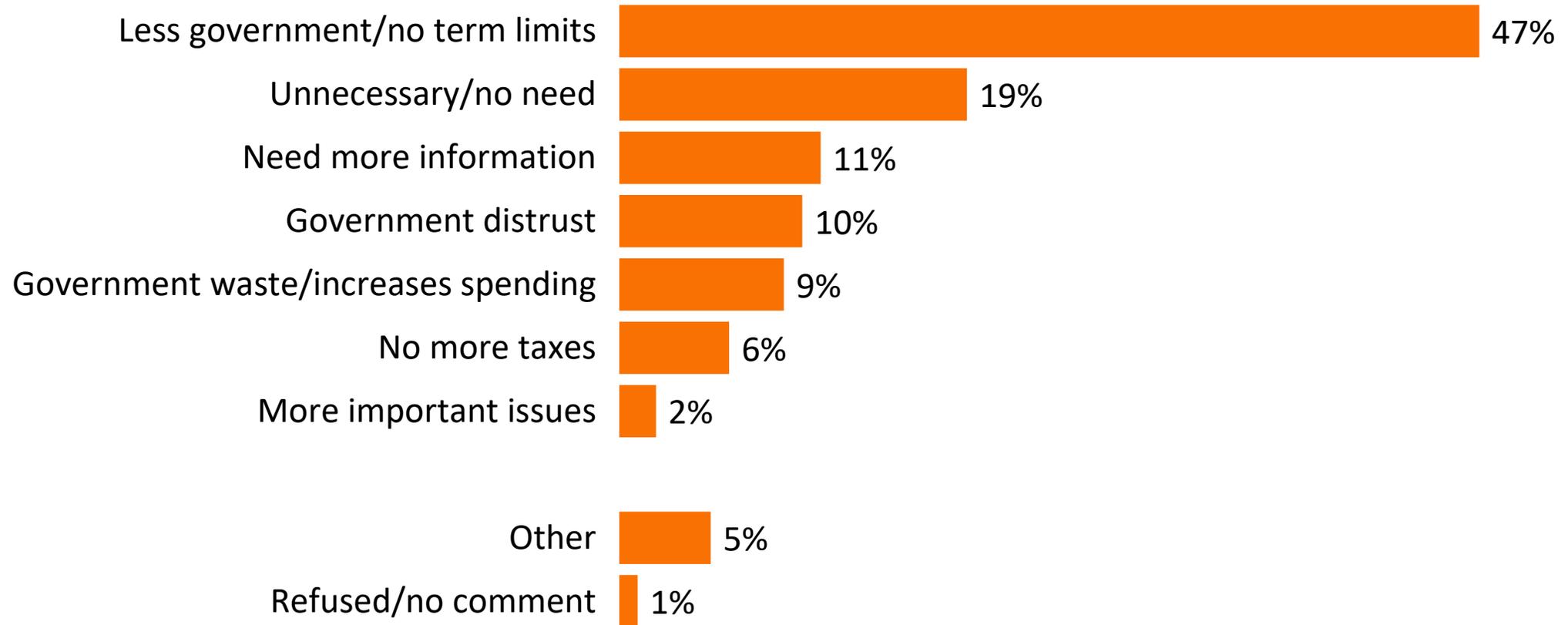
*(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only, n=293)*



# The few voters who oppose the measure see it as a way to increase County government power.

*Please describe why would you vote NO on this measure?*

*(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only, n=45)*

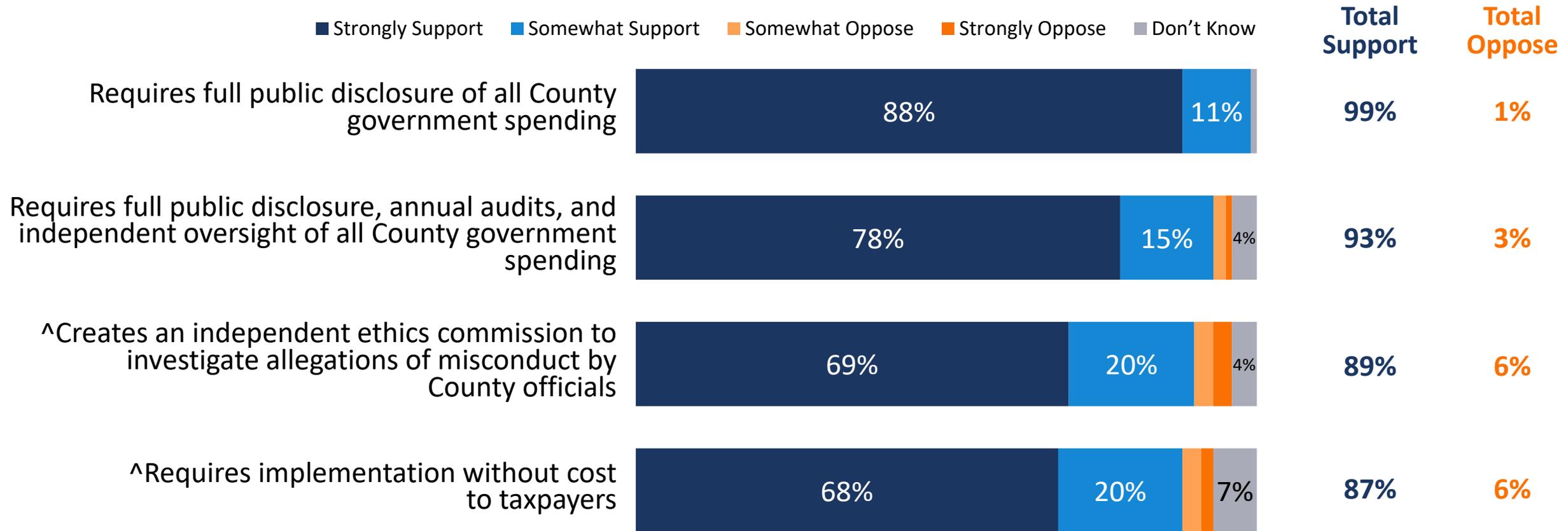




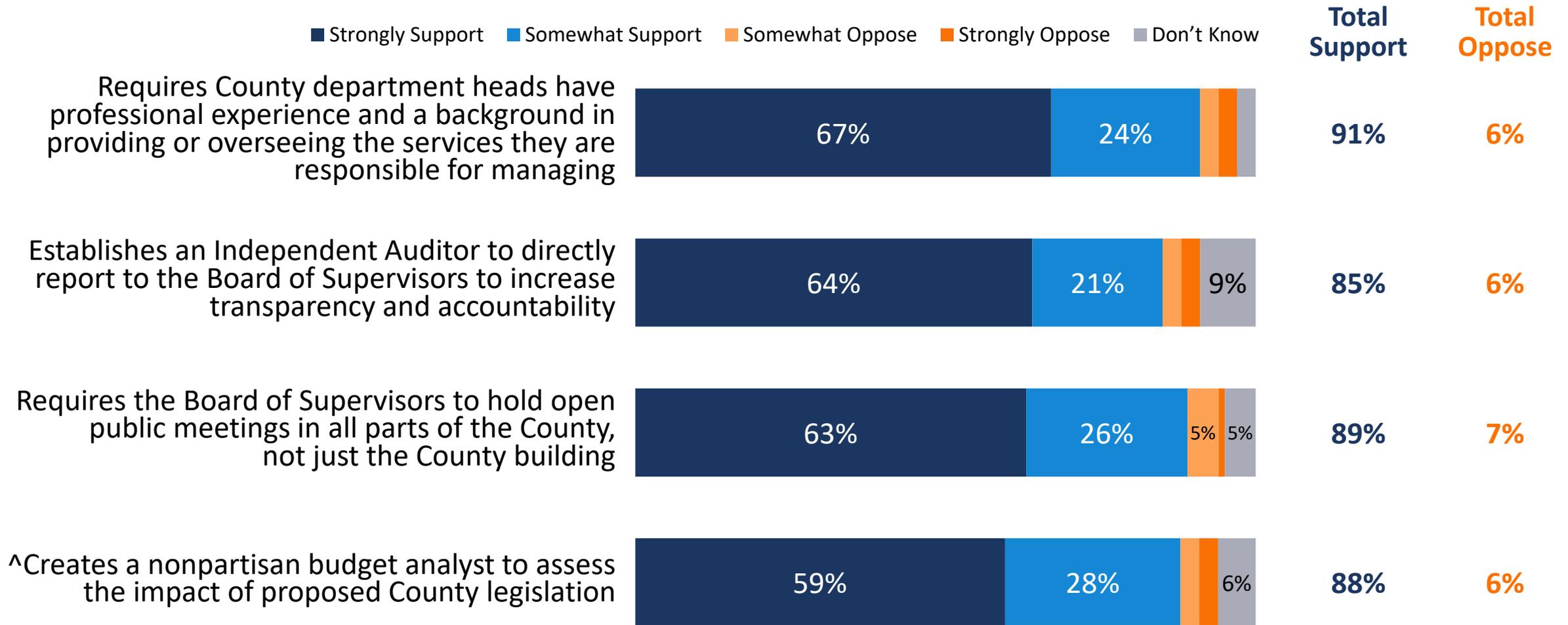
# **Charter Reform Provisions & Impact of Information About County Government**

# Voters strongly embrace requiring more public disclosure and creating an independent ethics commission.

Here are different features, elements and provisions of this San Diego County Charter Amendment measure. Please indicate if you support or oppose it.



# Charter Amendment Ballot Measure Provisions, continued

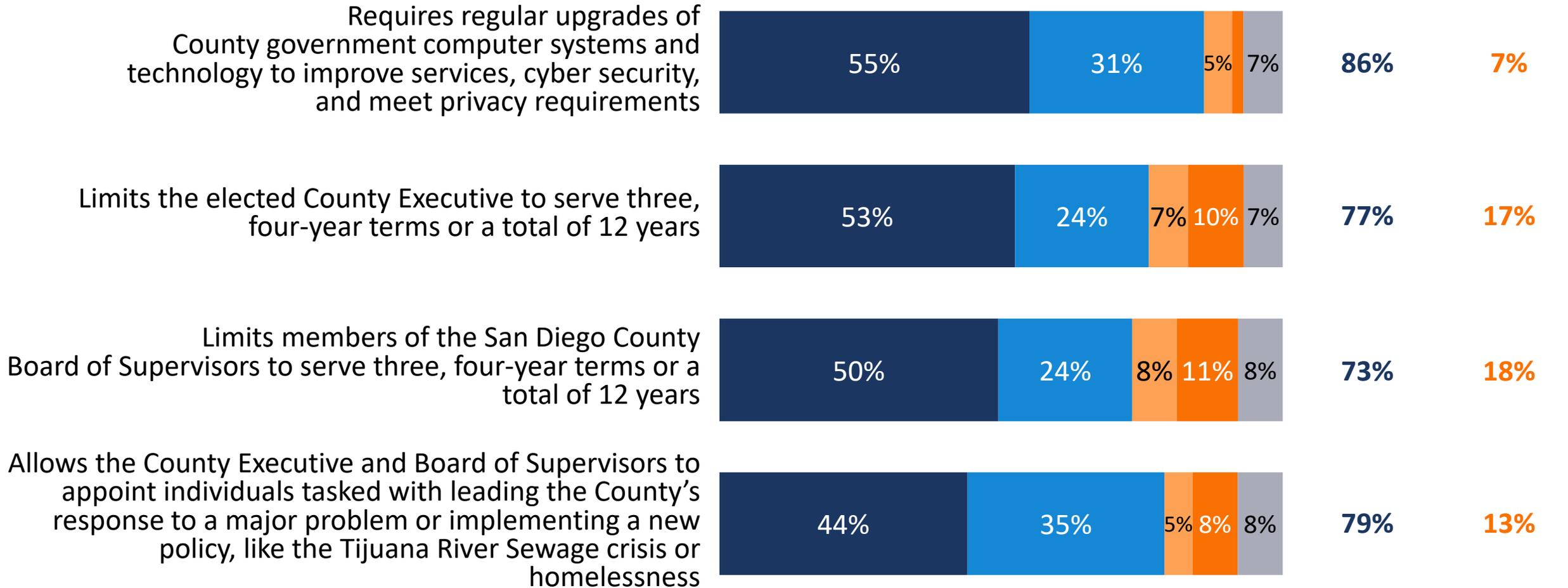


# Charter Amendment Ballot Measure Provisions, continued

■ Strongly Support
■ Somewhat Support
■ Somewhat Oppose
■ Strongly Oppose
■ Don't Know

**Total Support**

**Total Oppose**



# Voters are more inclined to support the measure when told the County lacks an independent ethics commission and nonpartisan review of finances, and has no way to hold bureaucrats accountable.

Here are a series of statements about San Diego County government. Please indicate whether it makes you more likely or less likely to support a ballot measure to amend and reform the County Charter.

■ Much More Likely ■ Somewhat More Likely ■ Somewhat Less Likely ■ Much Less Likely ■ Makes No Diff ■ Don't Know

**Total More Likely** **Total Less Likely**

^Unlike most of the nation's largest counties, San Diego County does not have an independent ethics commission to investigate allegations of misconduct and corruption by County officials



**77%**

**9%**

San Diego County government lacks a nonpartisan budget office and independent auditor



**77%**

**8%**

San Diego County's outdated charter does not allow your elected officials to ensure the policies they pass are actually implemented or hold non-elected bureaucrats accountable for addressing community problems



**75%**

**10%**

The elected San Diego County Board of Supervisors has no power to select or remove department heads



**56%**

**18%**



# **Educational Statements**

# Educational Statements

## Ranked by Percentage Saying Statement is a VERY Convincing Reason to Vote Yes

59%

**(OUTDATED)** The San Diego County Charter is outdated, having not been updated in decades even as the county's population has grown to 3.3 million residents, compared to less than one million in 1980. Long-overdue changes are necessary to deliver better services, make county officials more accountable and responsive to voters, and impose stricter ethics laws to expose corruption, fraud and wasteful spending.

58%

**^(ELECTED CEX)** Voters, not politicians, should have the authority to select the County's top official who is responsible for managing our \$8 billion budget. Under the current system, an unelected bureaucrat holds the highest position in County government. This Charter Amendment will empower voters by requiring an elected County Executive who is directly accountable to voters, who have the power to vote them out of office.

57%

**^(SPECIAL INTERESTS)** There is too much corruption in County government with special interests and lobbyists using their power and money to rig the system. This Charter Amendment increases public disclosure and transparency so County politicians can't make secret deals behind closed doors, and it restricts lobbying and imposes tougher penalties on politicians and officials charged with corruption.

52%

**^(ETHICS)** San Diego County government lacks accountability as there is no independent oversight of County officials. This Charter Amendment creates an independent Ethics Commission to investigate allegations of misconduct, hold County officials accountable for corruption and expose public officials who abuse their power.

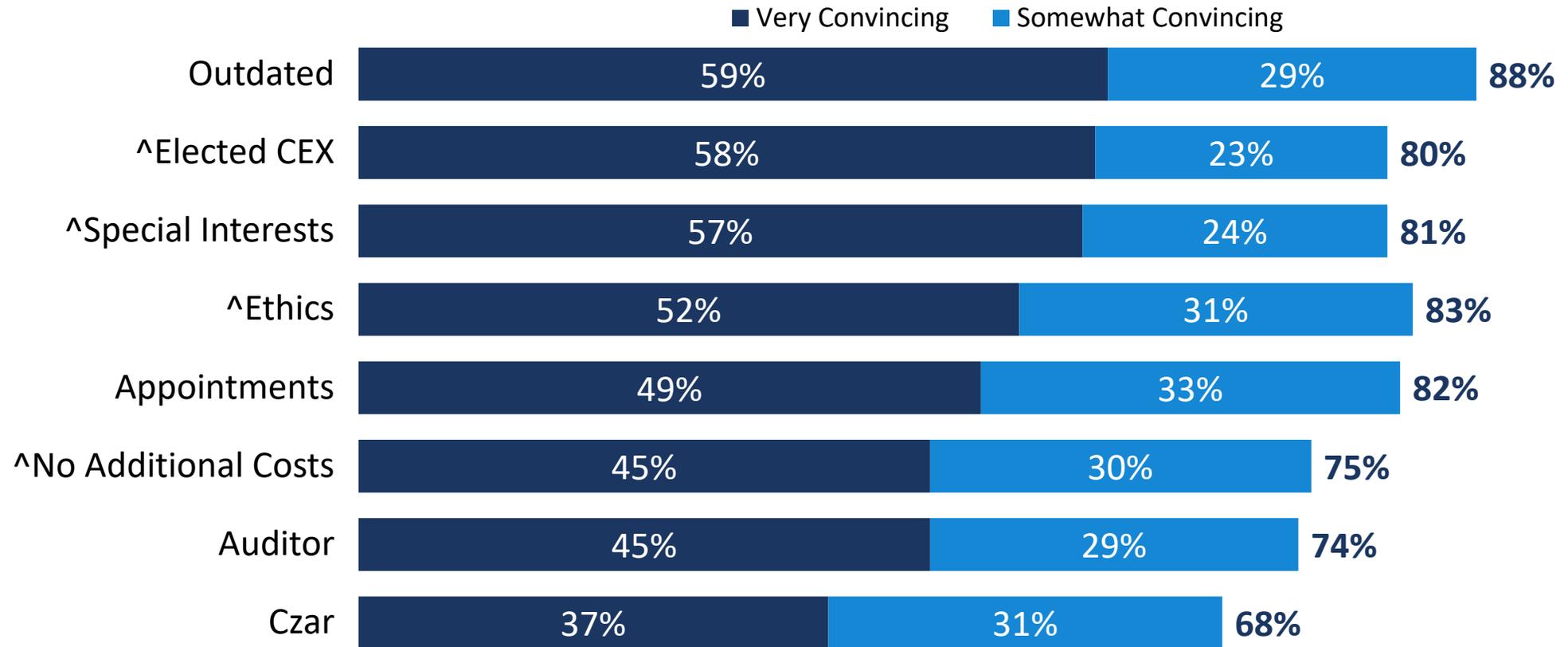
# Educational Statements, continued

## Ranked by Percentage Saying Statement is a VERY Convincing Reason to Vote Yes

49%	<b>(APPOINTMENTS)</b> This Charter Amendment requires County department heads to be nominated by the County Executive and approved by the Board of Supervisors, and mandates these executive-level appointees have experience and expertise. For example, the head of the County Health Department must have a background in medicine and healthcare, and the independent auditor must have experience in accounting.
45%	^( <b>NO ADDITIONAL COSTS</b> ) County officials are required to use existing funds to implement the reforms and changes mandated by this Charter Amendment. By law, County politicians and bureaucrats are prohibited from raising taxes or additional taxpayer money to make these changes.
45%	<b>(AUDITOR)</b> Under current County law, the Independent Auditor reports to an unelected bureaucrat rather than elected representatives. Requiring this position to report directly to the Board of Supervisors will increase accountability by promoting public disclosure and public access to audits of County spending, and investigations into fraud and misconduct
37%	<b>(CZAR)</b> From reducing homelessness to protecting local water resources from Tijuana River sewage, San Diego County has not been able to address major problems. This Charter Amendment reform measure will allow the Board of Supervisors to make special appointments – empowering a single individual to develop coherent strategies, coordinate resources, and implement solutions – and who can be held directly accountable.

# Voters identify a variety of themes and information as compelling reasons to support a County Charter Amendment measure.

(Ranked by Percentage Saying Statement is a VERY Convincing Reason to Vote Yes)



Q9. Please consider the following statements from supporters of the **SAN DIEGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY CHARTER AMENDMENT MEASURE**. Please indicate whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to vote yes in favor of this measure. ^Not Part of Split Sample

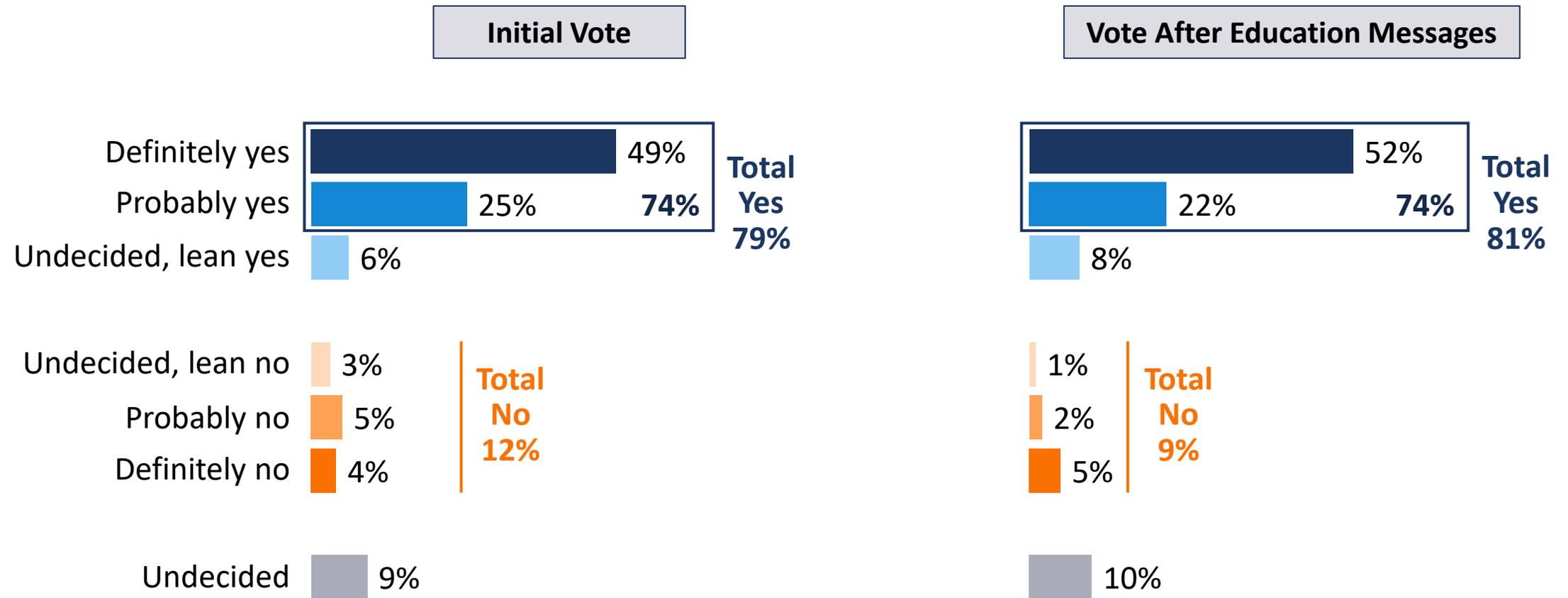
# Educational Statements by Supervisory District & Gender

Statement	Very Convincing							
	All Voters	Supervisory District					Gender	
		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Men	Women
Outdated	59%	60%	57%	61%	57%	60%	51%	66%
^Elected CEX	58%	59%	63%	57%	58%	54%	56%	60%
^Special Interests	57%	51%	62%	63%	56%	54%	57%	58%
^Ethics	52%	45%	53%	54%	56%	52%	52%	52%
Appointments	49%	42%	43%	55%	47%	56%	47%	51%
^No Additional Costs	45%	41%	49%	45%	44%	43%	49%	41%
Auditor	45%	42%	53%	39%	50%	41%	43%	47%
Czar	37%	44%	36%	33%	36%	38%	38%	36%

# Educational Statements by Party, Age & Race/Ethnicity

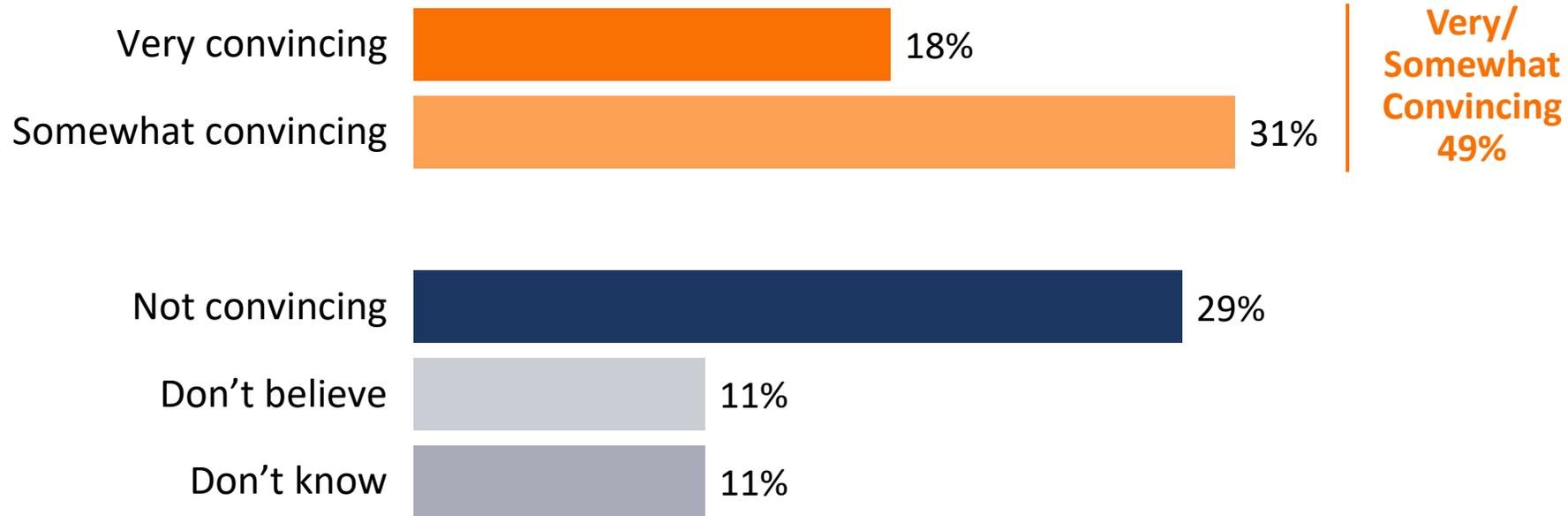
Statement	Very Convincing									
	All Voters	Party			Age			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dems	Inds	Reps	18-39	40-59	60+	Whites	Latinos	All Voters of Color
Outdated	59%	60%	55%	61%	62%	53%	62%	58%	55%	61%
^Elected CEX	58%	57%	55%	62%	57%	55%	62%	55%	61%	62%
^Special Interests	57%	53%	55%	66%	54%	53%	64%	55%	60%	62%
^Ethics	52%	50%	51%	56%	52%	45%	59%	53%	50%	52%
Appointments	49%	51%	48%	47%	50%	46%	51%	48%	48%	53%
^No Additional Costs	45%	38%	47%	51%	37%	44%	51%	44%	44%	47%
Auditor	45%	53%	43%	36%	42%	38%	53%	41%	56%	50%
Czar	37%	40%	38%	33%	39%	34%	39%	34%	47%	43%

# Eight in ten continue to vote in favor of the proposed County Charter Amendment after the educational statements.

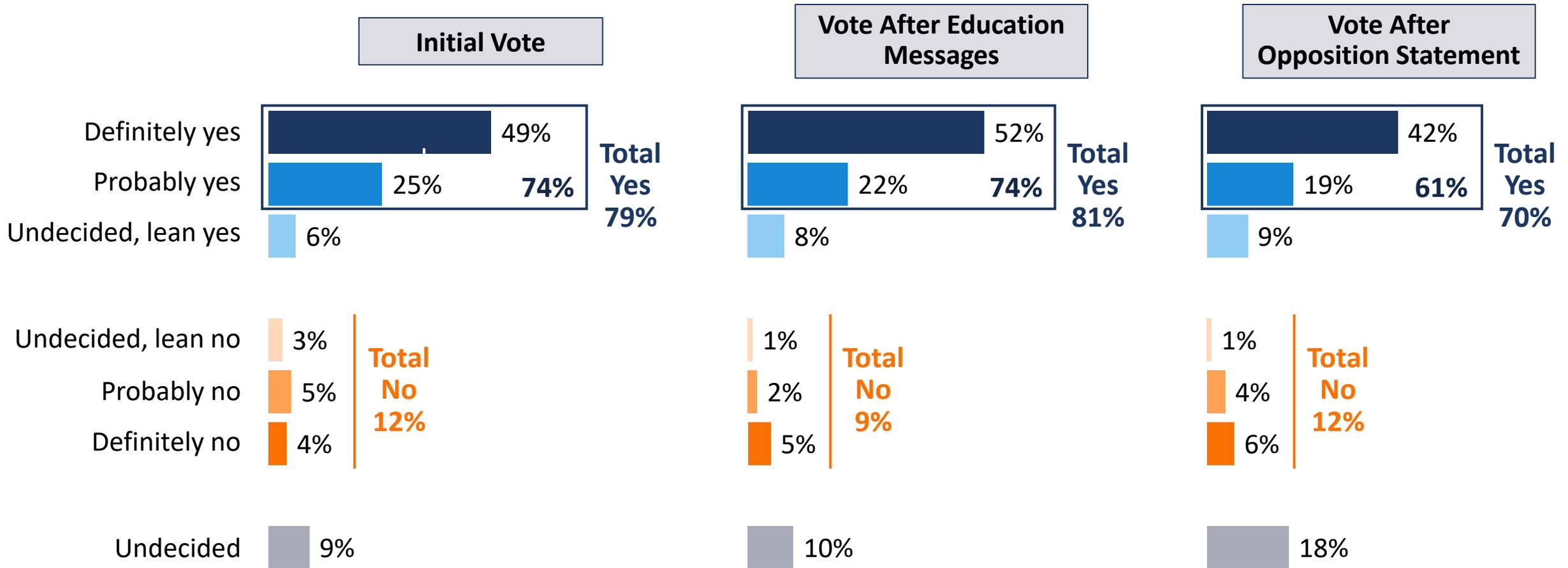


# Half regard an argument against the Charter Amendment as a convincing reason to vote no...

Please consider the following statement from **opponents** of this Charter Amendment measure: The politicians who wrote this measure are trying to trick voters into believing it will reform County government and increase transparency. In fact, it gives them more power to control department heads, appoint their allies to a toothless ethics commission and weakens term limit laws. Passing this measure will do nothing to address the issues that matter most: the rising cost of living, a lack of affordable housing and homelessness; toxic sewage contaminating local water resources; politicians wasting money; and too much crime and gun violence in our communities.



# ...and seven in ten continue to support the Charter Amendment after being presented this statement from opponents.





# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- Eight in ten San Diego County voters think County government needs “major” or “some” reforms, and a similar proportion vote in favor of a proposed County Charter Amendment.
- Notably, there is a great deal of support for reforming County government, and it is consistent across all major demographic groups – in fact, regardless of party affiliation, eight in ten would vote yes to approve the proposed County Charter Amendment.
- There is widespread support for a number of potential changes to County government, in particular voters have very positive reactions to requiring greater public disclosure of County spending, limiting lobbying by former County officials, creating an independent ethics commission, and requiring the measure be implemented with no cost to taxpayers.
- The survey also shows that information about the County Charter resonates strongly with voters – this includes how long it has been since it was updated, the inability of elected officials and voters to hold county employees accountable, and the lack of a nonpartisan budget office or auditor.
- In sum, these results suggest San Diego County voters embrace the idea of implementing major reforms to County government and would be likely to vote in favor of a Charter Amendment measure if one were to be placed on the ballot in an upcoming election.

# San Diego County Charter Reform Measure Issues Survey

*Summary of Key Findings from a Survey of San Diego County Likely November 2026 Voters  
Conducted November 14-20, 2025*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY