

# Opinions on Government Reform in the City of Los Angeles

*Highlights of a Survey of Likely Voters*



FAIRBANK, MASLIN,  
MAULLIN, METZ  
& ASSOCIATES

# Survey Specifics and Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	July 15-23, 2023
<b>Research Population</b>	Likely November 2024 Voters in the City of Los Angeles
<b>Total Interviews</b>	826, including small oversamples of African American and API voters weighted back to expected proportions
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 3.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.2\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Contact Methods</b>	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
<b>Languages</b>	English and Spanish

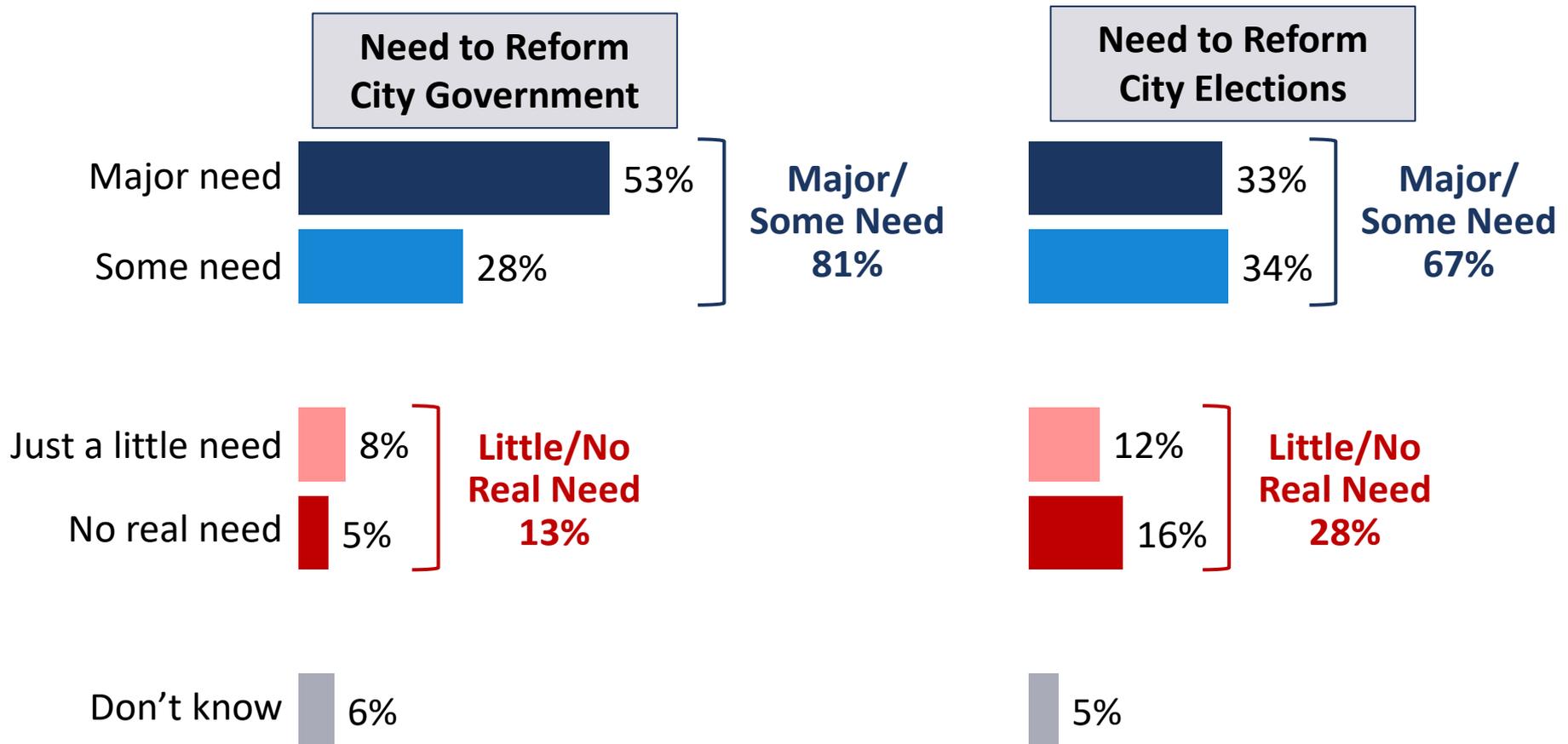
*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*



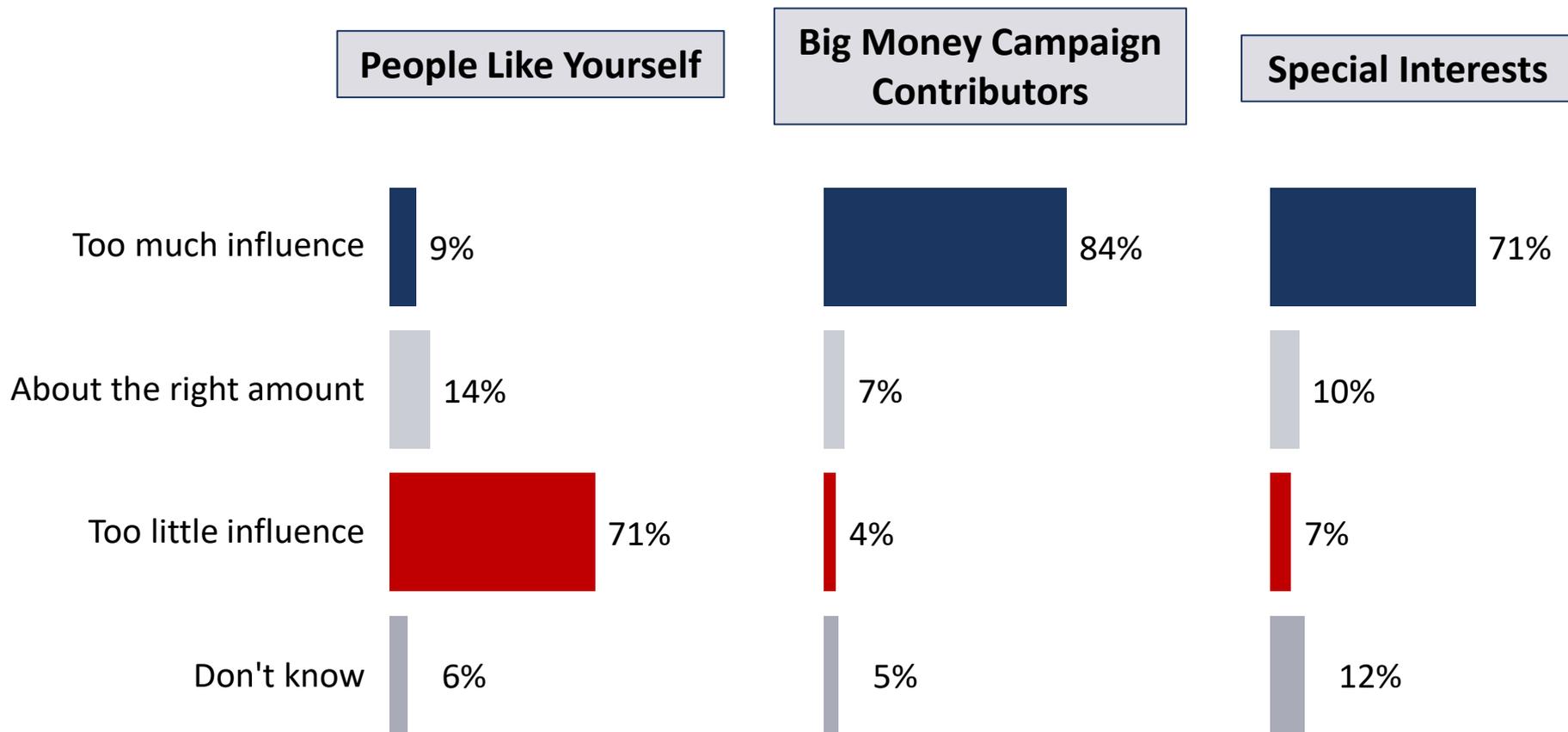
# **Interest in Reform**

# There is broad agreement in the need to reform City government and elections.

*Do you think there is a major need, some need, just a little need, or no real need for reforms to the \_\_\_\_\_?*



# Vast majorities think they do not have enough influence over City elected officials, but “big money campaign contributors” and “special interests” have too much.



Q. Do you think people like yourself in the City of Los Angeles, have too much influence, too little influence or the right amount of influence over elected officials in the City of LA?

Q. Do you think (SPLIT SAMPLE A: “big money campaign contributors”)(SPLIT SAMPLE B: “special interests”) have too much influence, too little influence or the right amount of influence over elected officials in the City of Los Angeles?



# **Attitudes on Reform Ballot Measure**

# Hypothetical Ballot Measure Tested in Survey With Ranked Choice Voting

## CITY OF LOS ANGELES ETHICS, ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT REFORM MEASURE.

Shall the City Charter be amended to establish a ranked choice voting system to elect Los Angeles officials, increase disclosure on political advertising in City elections, lower the amount of allowable campaign contributions to City campaigns, create a voluntary program for public campaign financing through \$100 in vouchers issued to City residents to give to qualified City candidates, provide additional resources to the Los Angeles Ethics Commission for implementation and increased enforcement of ethics rules/laws? **Supporters may include** the League of Women Voters of LA, California Nurses Association, California Clean Money, Common Cause. **Opponents may include** the California Senior Advocates League, California Small Business Action Committee, Los Angeles Police Protective League.

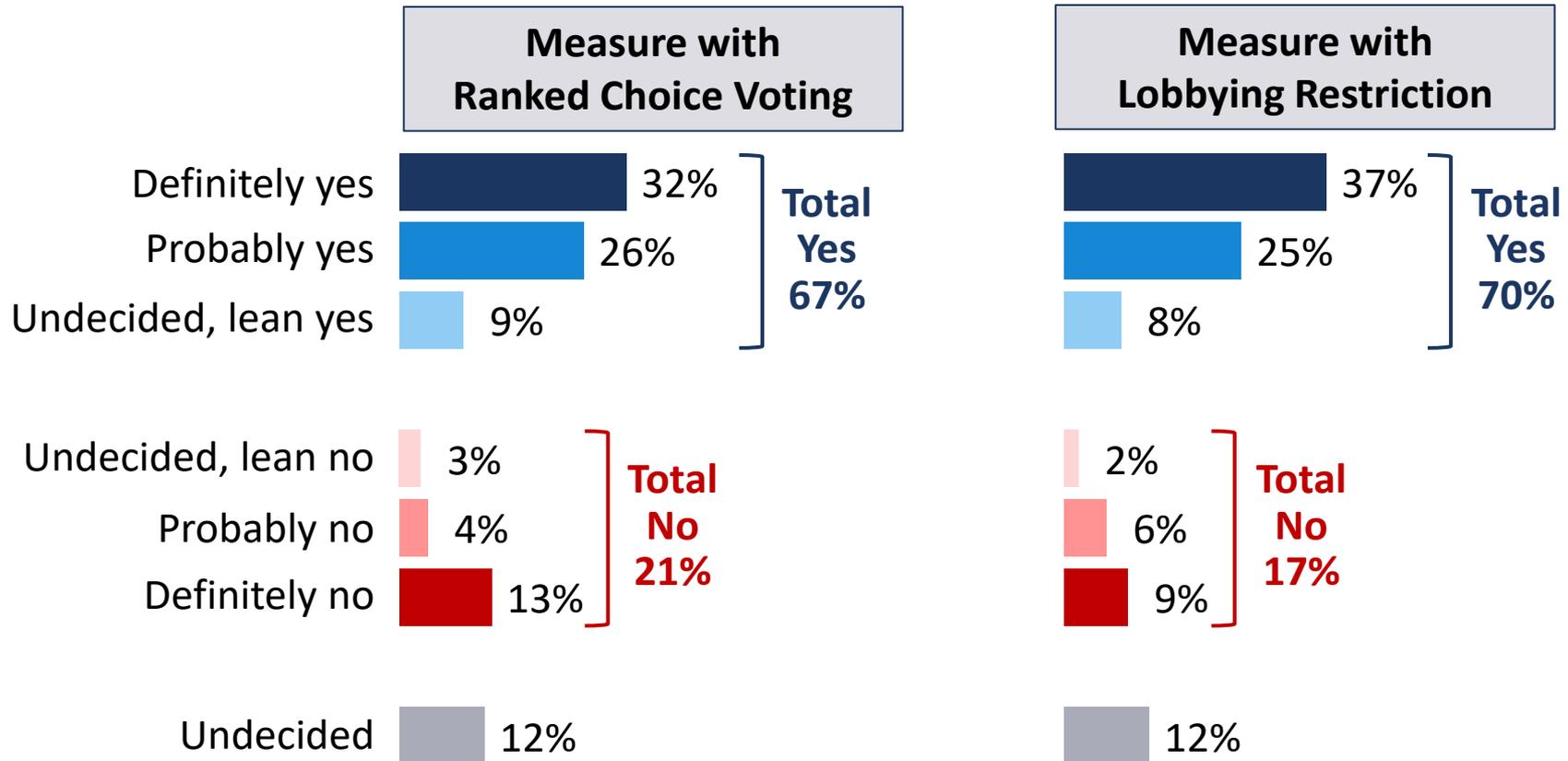
# Hypothetical Ballot Measure Tested in Survey Without Ranked Choice Voting

## CITY OF LOS ANGELES ETHICS, ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT REFORM MEASURE.

Shall the City Charter be amended to increase disclosure on political advertising in City elections, lower the amount of allowable campaign contributions to City campaigns, further restrict former City officials from acting as lobbyists, create a voluntary program for public campaign financing through \$100 in vouchers issued to adult City residents, provide additional resources to the Los Angeles Ethics Commission for implementation and increased enforcement of ethics rules/laws? **Supporters may include** the League of Women Voters of LA, California Nurses Association, California Clean Money, Common Cause. **Opponents may include** the California Senior Advocates League, California Small Business Action Committee, Los Angeles Police Protective League.

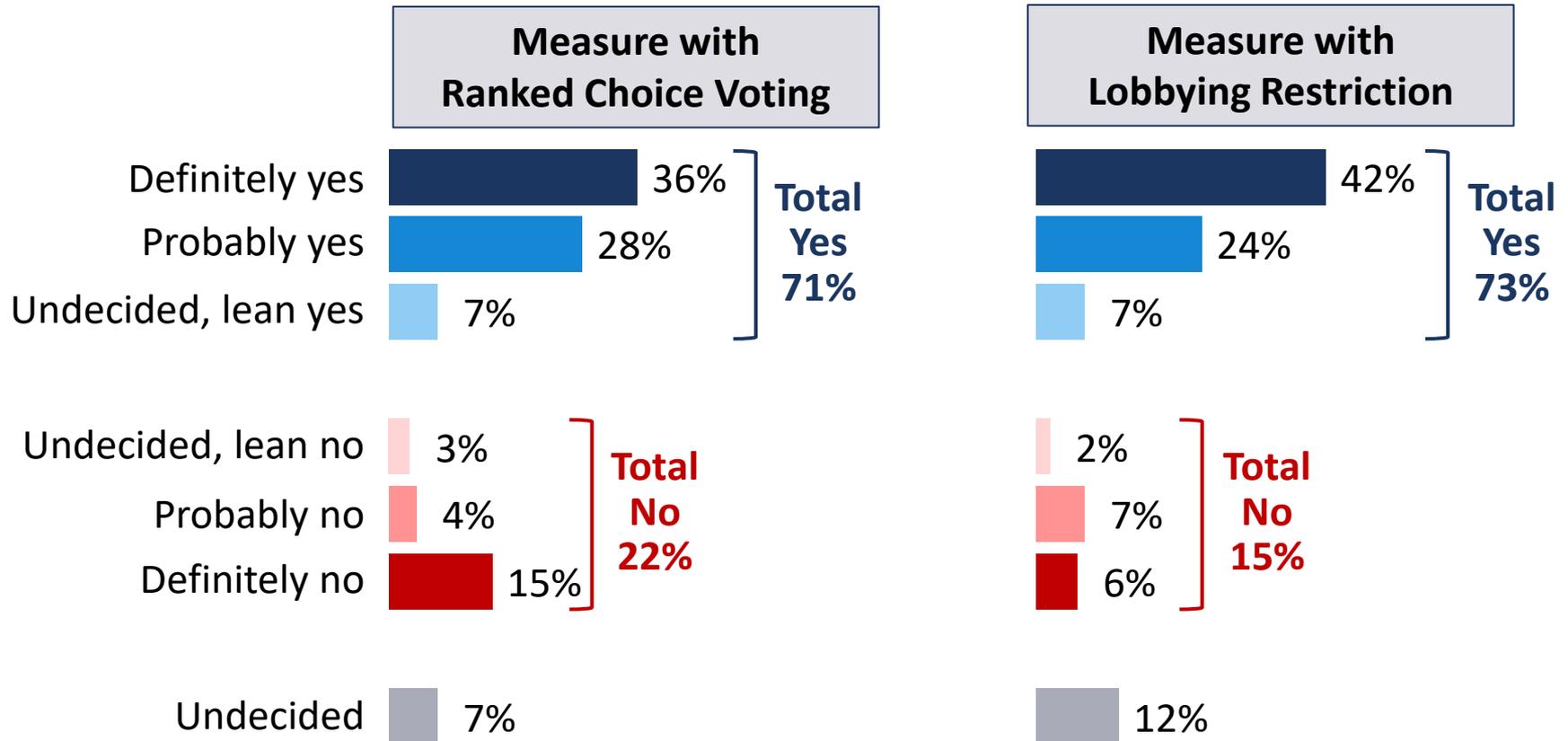
# Both versions of the measure start with at least two-thirds support among likely November 2024 voters.

Likely November 2024



# Likely March 2024 voters are even more supportive of the potential measure.

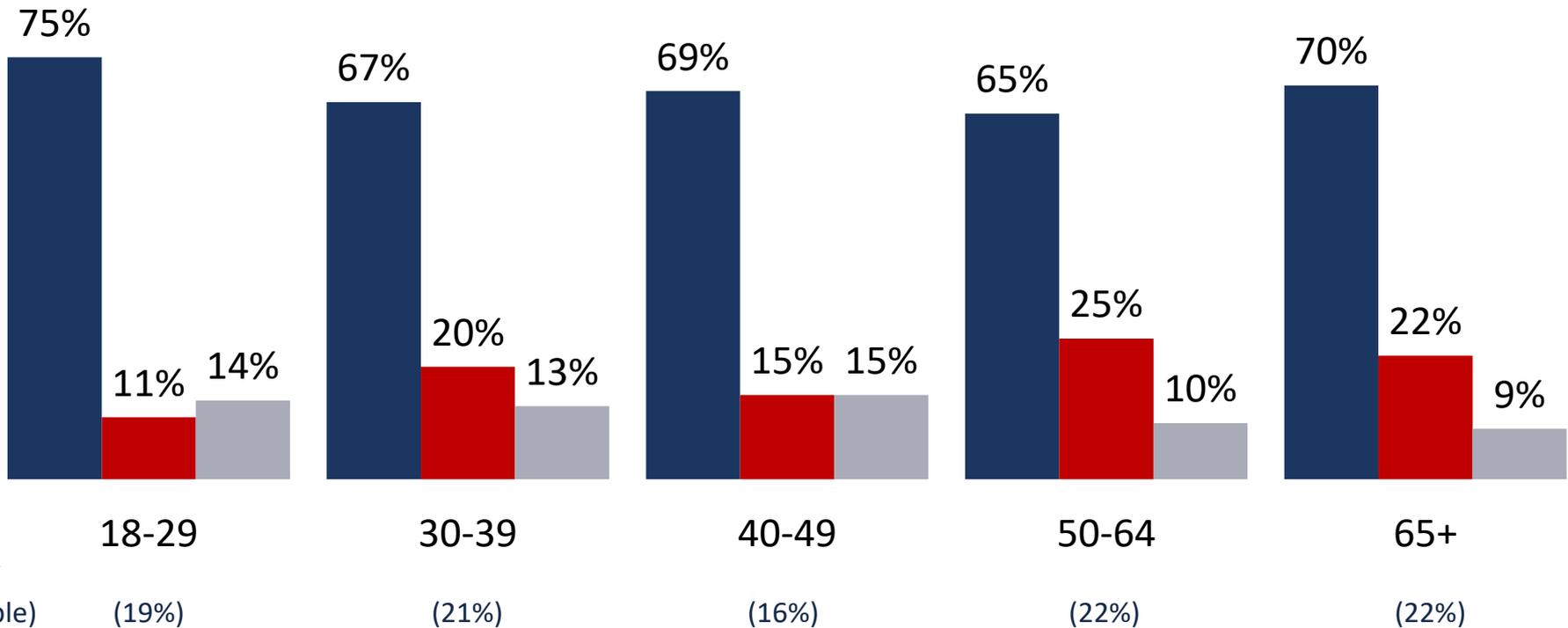
Likely March 2024; n=516



# There is strong support for a reform measure across age groups.

*Combined Vote by Age*

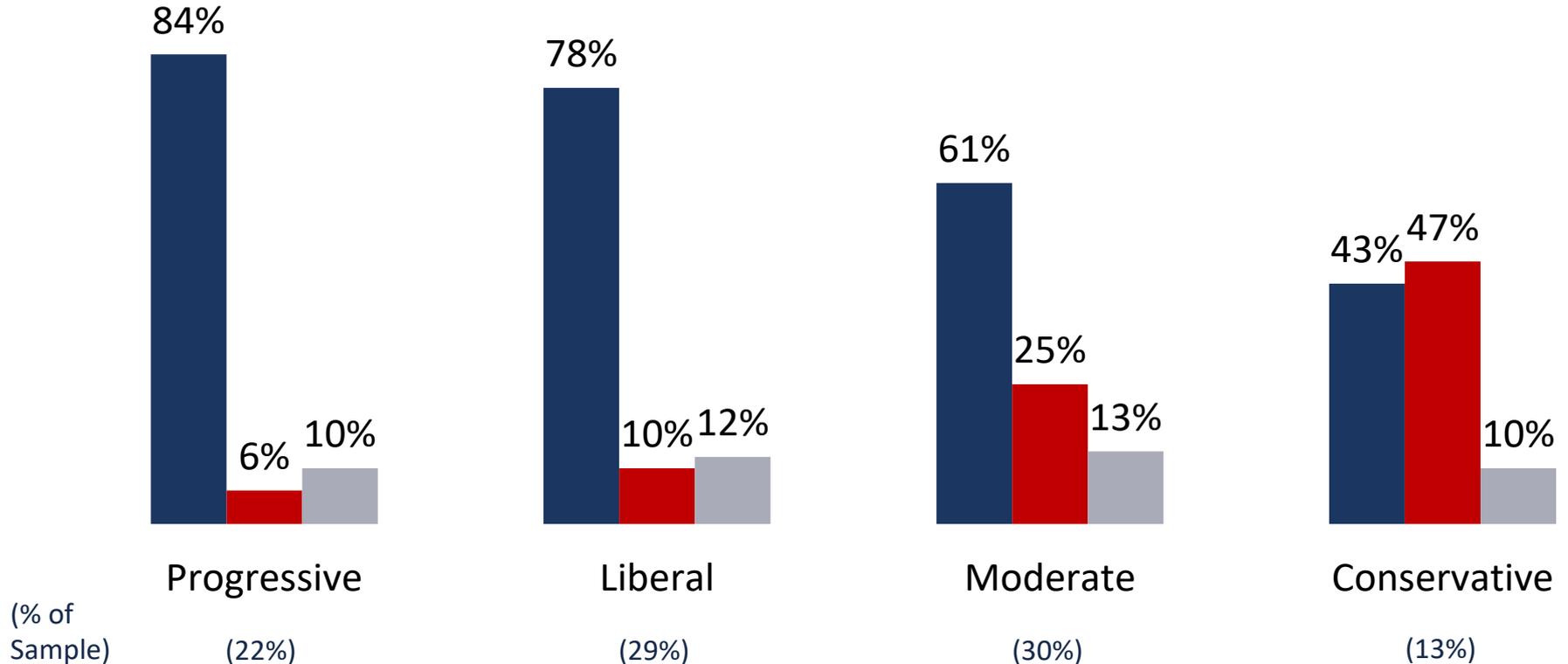
■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



# Self-described progressive and liberal voters overwhelmingly favor the measure.

Combined Vote by Ideology

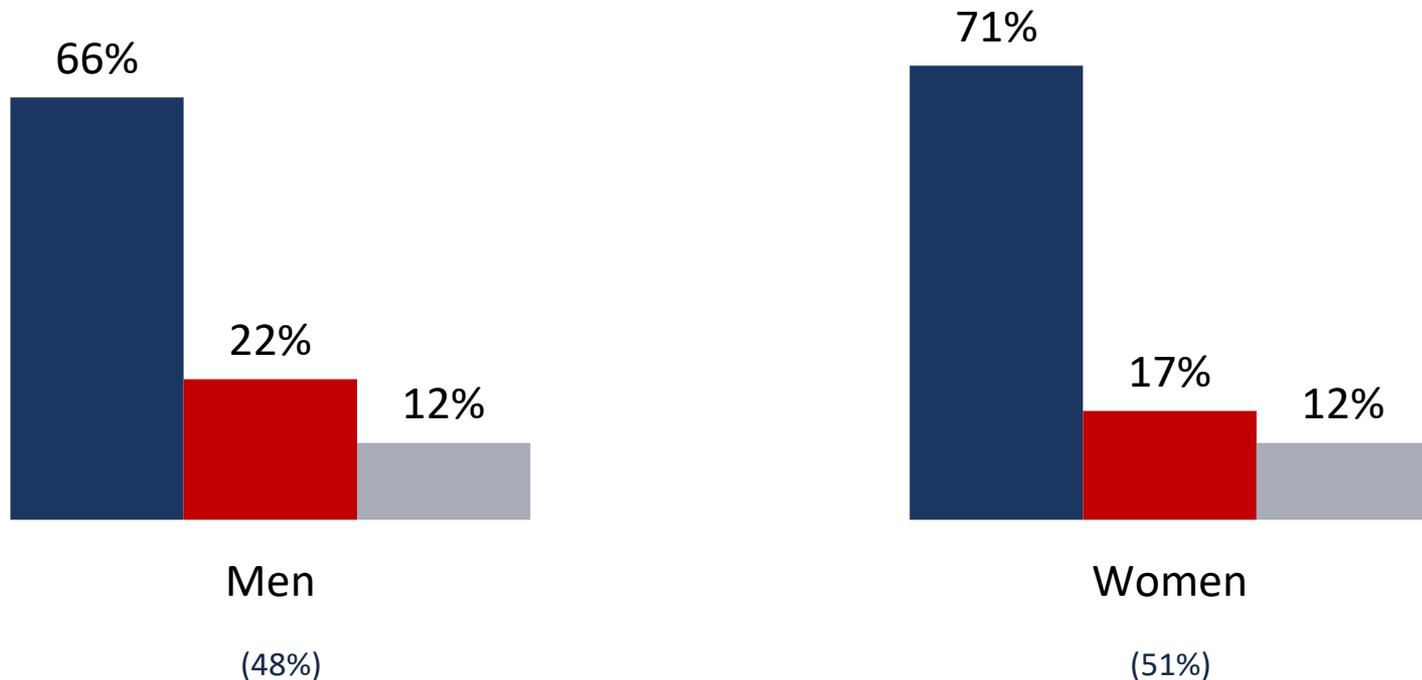
■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



# Both men and women strongly support the measure with a small gender gap.

*Combined Initial Vote by Gender*

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

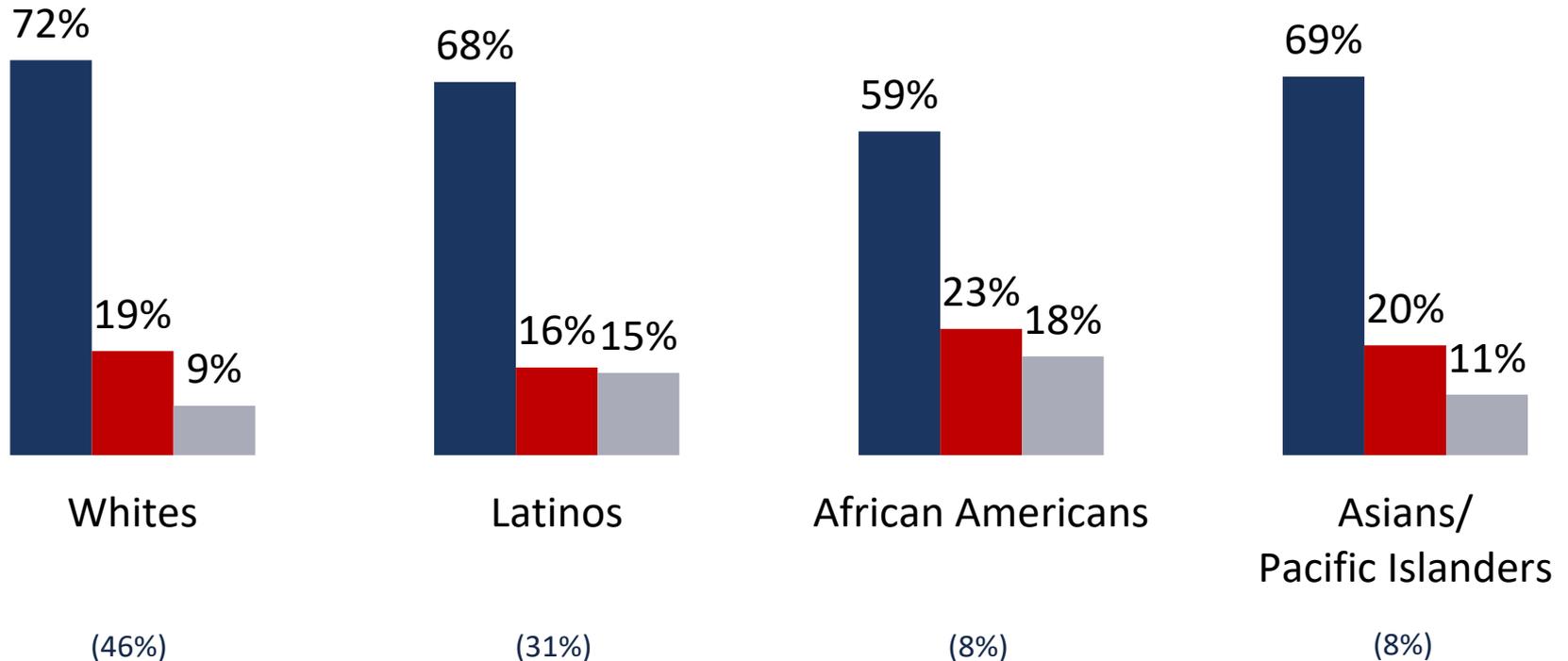


(% of Sample)

# Strong majorities of voters support the measure across racial and ethnic groups.

Combined Vote by Race/Ethnicity

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

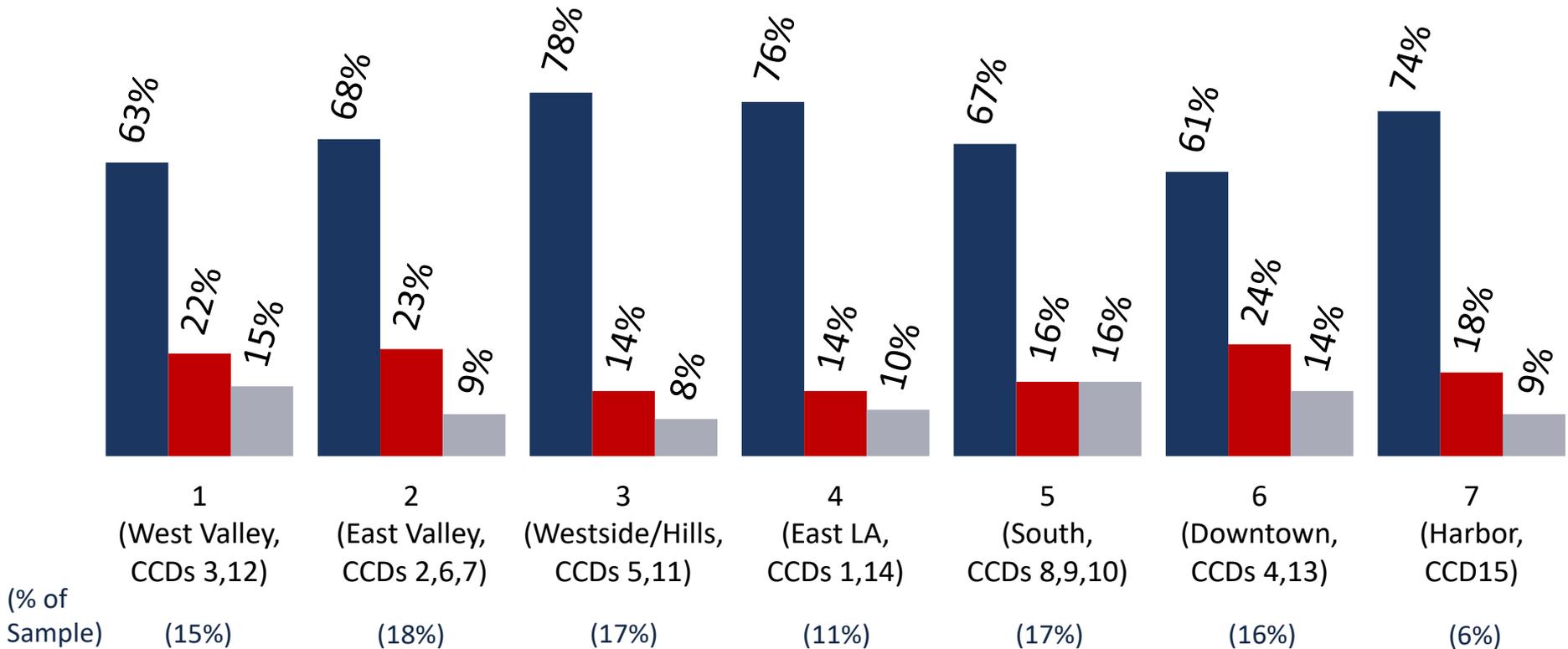


(% of Sample)

# The measure has support throughout the City, especially in the Westside, East LA and Harbor areas.

Combined Vote by LA City Zone

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



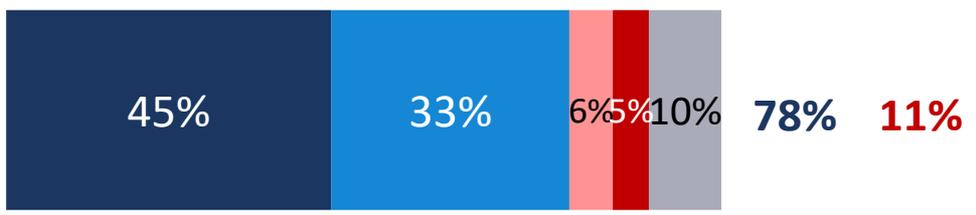


# **Support for Individual Reform Proposals**

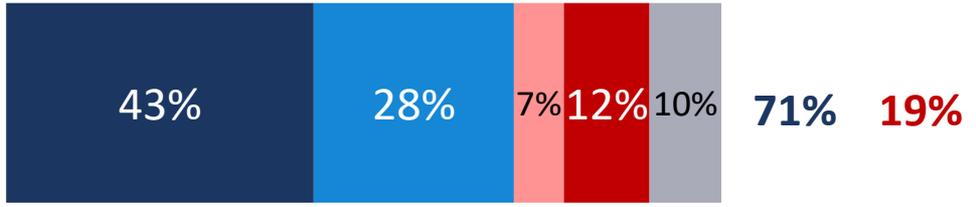
# Over seven-in-ten voters support independent redistricting and ranked choice voting, with and without a detailed description.

■ Strng. Supp.  
 ■ Smwt. Supp.  
 ■ Smwt. Opp.  
 ■ Strng. Opp.  
 ■ Don't Know  
 **Total Supp.**   **Total Opp.**

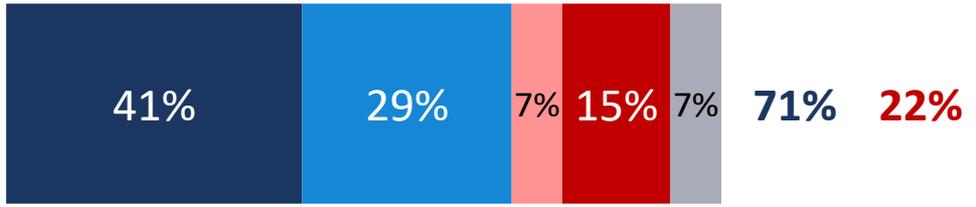
^Requiring an independent panel of LA residents be responsible for drawing and finalizing City Council district boundaries and free from the interference of elected officials, candidates and their staffs



Using ranked choice voting to elect Los Angeles officials which means you would have the option to rank candidates on the ballot in order of preference



Using ranked choice voting to elect Los Angeles officials which means you would have the option to rank candidates on the ballot in order of preference: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on. If your top choice does not have enough votes to win, your vote would move to your next choice until a candidate with a majority of the votes is chosen



Q. Leaving aside the ballot measure you considered earlier, there are several proposals that could be considered to change LA City government or the way elections are conducted in Los Angeles for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and City Controller and City ballot measures. Please tell me if you would support or oppose that proposal. Please know that there is no limit to the number of proposals you could support or oppose. Split Sample

# Majorities favor Council expansion (with greater support for 23 members than 29) and Democracy Dollars.

■ Strng. Supp. ■ Smwt. Supp. ■ Smwt. Opp. ■ Strng. Opp. ■ Don't Know

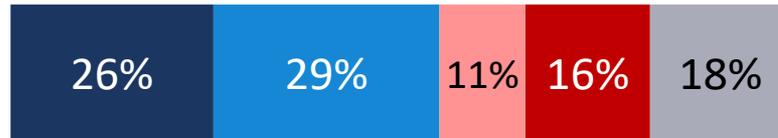
**Total Supp.** **Total Opp.**

Expanding the City Council from 15 members to 23 members



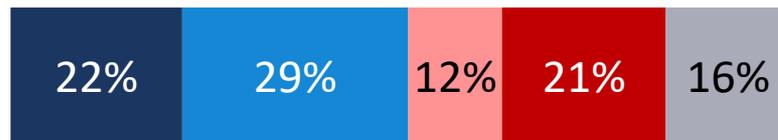
**62%** **23%**

Expanding the City Council from 15 members to 29 members



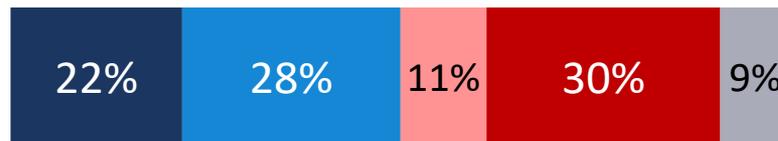
**55%** **27%**

Providing each adult resident with 4 certificates for \$25 each which they can use to support the campaign of candidates for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney or City Controller



**50%** **34%**

Providing each adult resident with 4 vouchers for \$25 each which they can use to support the campaign of candidates for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney or City Controller



**50%** **41%**

Q9. Leaving aside the ballot measure you considered earlier, there are several proposals that could be considered to change LA City government or the way elections are conducted in Los Angeles for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and City Controller and City ballot measures. Please tell me if you would support or oppose that proposal. Please know that there is no limit to the number of proposals you could support or oppose. Split Sample

# Demographic Differences on Key Proposals

*% Support*

Demographic Group	Independent Redistricting	Council Expansion	Ranked Choice Voting
<b>All Voters</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Age</b>			
18-39	79%	63%	75%
40-64	77%	58%	69%
65+	80%	51%	65%
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	78%	57%	68%
Women	79%	60%	73%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	78%	53%	70%
Latinos	77%	66%	74%
African Americans	81%	59%	68%
Asians/Pacific Islanders	85%	64%	73%

*Q. Leaving aside the ballot measure you considered earlier, there are several proposals that could be considered to change LA City government or the way elections are conducted in Los Angeles for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and City Controller and City ballot measures. Please tell me if you would support or oppose that proposal. Please know that there is no limit to the number of proposals you could support or oppose. Split Sample*

# Demographic Differences on Key Proposals

*% Support*

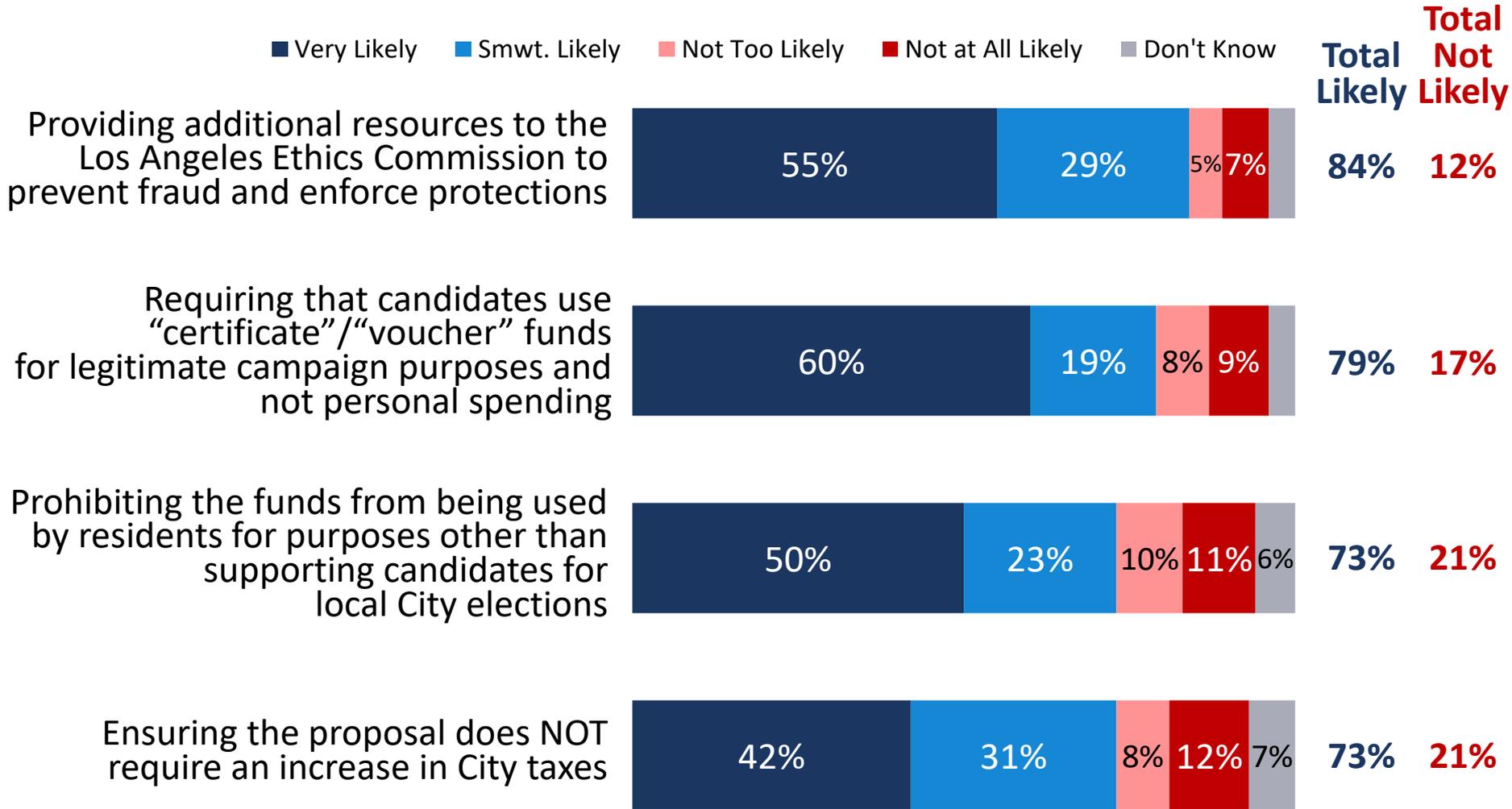
Demographic Group	Independent Redistricting	Council Expansion	Ranked Choice Voting
<b>All Voters</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>LA City Zone</b>			
West Valley, CCDs 3,12	84%	49%	69%
East Valley, CCDs 2,6,7	77%	67%	72%
Westside/Hills, CCDs 5,11	77%	54%	74%
East LA, CCDs 1,14	77%	60%	78%
South, CCDs 8,9,10	76%	64%	73%
Downtown, CCDs 4,13	79%	59%	63%
Harbor, CCD15	83%	57%	66%
<b>Likely March 2024</b>			
Yes	81%	58%	70%

*Q. Leaving aside the ballot measure you considered earlier, there are several proposals that could be considered to change LA City government or the way elections are conducted in Los Angeles for Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and City Controller and City ballot measures. Please tell me if you would support or oppose that proposal. Please know that there is no limit to the number of proposals you could support or oppose. Split Sample*



# **Details on Democracy Dollars**

# Voters would be more likely to support Democracy Dollars with greater enforcement and strict rules about misuse/fraud.



Q. I'd like to tell you more about the proposal you considered earlier to provide voters with (SPLIT SAMPLE C: "certificates")(SPLIT SAMPLE D: "vouchers") they can choose to donate to candidates for City offices or city ballot measure campaigns. I am going to read some different elements and aspects of the proposal. Please tell me if it would make you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to support providing voters with (SPLIT SAMPLE C: "certificates")(SPLIT SAMPLE D: "vouchers") they can choose to donate to candidates for City offices or city ballot measure campaigns.

# Continued

■ Very Likely  
 ■ Somewhat Likely  
 ■ Not Too Likely  
 ■ Not at All Likely  
 ■ Don't Know

**Total**  
**Likely**   **Total**  
**Not**  
**Likely**

Requiring that candidates agree to limits on campaign donations and spending in order to qualify for “certificate”/“voucher” donations



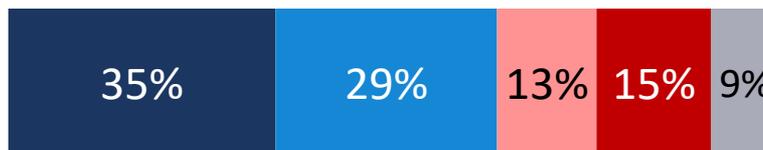
**72%**   **21%**

Requiring that candidates collect a sufficient number of signatures and \$5 donations from voters to show they are serious candidates before qualifying to receive “certificates”/“vouchers”



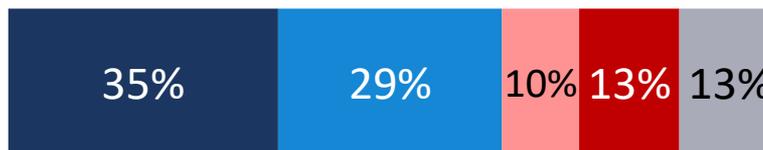
**64%**   **28%**

Allowing residents to use their “certificates”/“vouchers” for either City ballot measures or candidate campaigns.



**64%**   **27%**

Requiring that qualified candidates would have to receive a set number of “certificates”/“vouchers” and be prohibited from raising any private donations after qualifying in order to receive limited public campaign grants large enough to run competitive campaigns



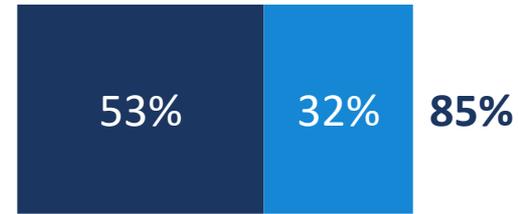
**64%**   **23%**

Q. I'd like to tell you more about the proposal you considered earlier to provide voters with (SPLIT SAMPLE C: “certificates”)(SPLIT SAMPLE D: “vouchers”) they can choose to donate to candidates for City offices or city ballot measure campaigns. I am going to read some different elements and aspects of the proposal. Please tell me if it would make you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to support providing voters with (SPLIT SAMPLE C: “certificates”)(SPLIT SAMPLE D: “vouchers”) they can choose to donate to candidates for City offices or city ballot measure campaigns.

# Messages about the need for change, returning power to regular people and overemphasis on fundraising resonate very strongly as messages in favor of Democracy Dollars.

■ Very Conv. ■ Smwt. Conv.

**(NEED CHANGE)** We need major reforms to elections in the City of LA. Within the last few years, three former members of the City Council have either pled guilty or were convicted for public corruption and the Council President had to resign after her backroom dealing was made public. It's time to bring real change to our city.



**(TOO MUCH INFLUENCE – REAL PEOPLE)** Wealthy special interests and individuals have way too much influence on City government in LA. This proposal limits their power and puts it in the hands of regular voters so candidates can run competitive campaigns with the support of real people, not just the most powerful interests in our City.

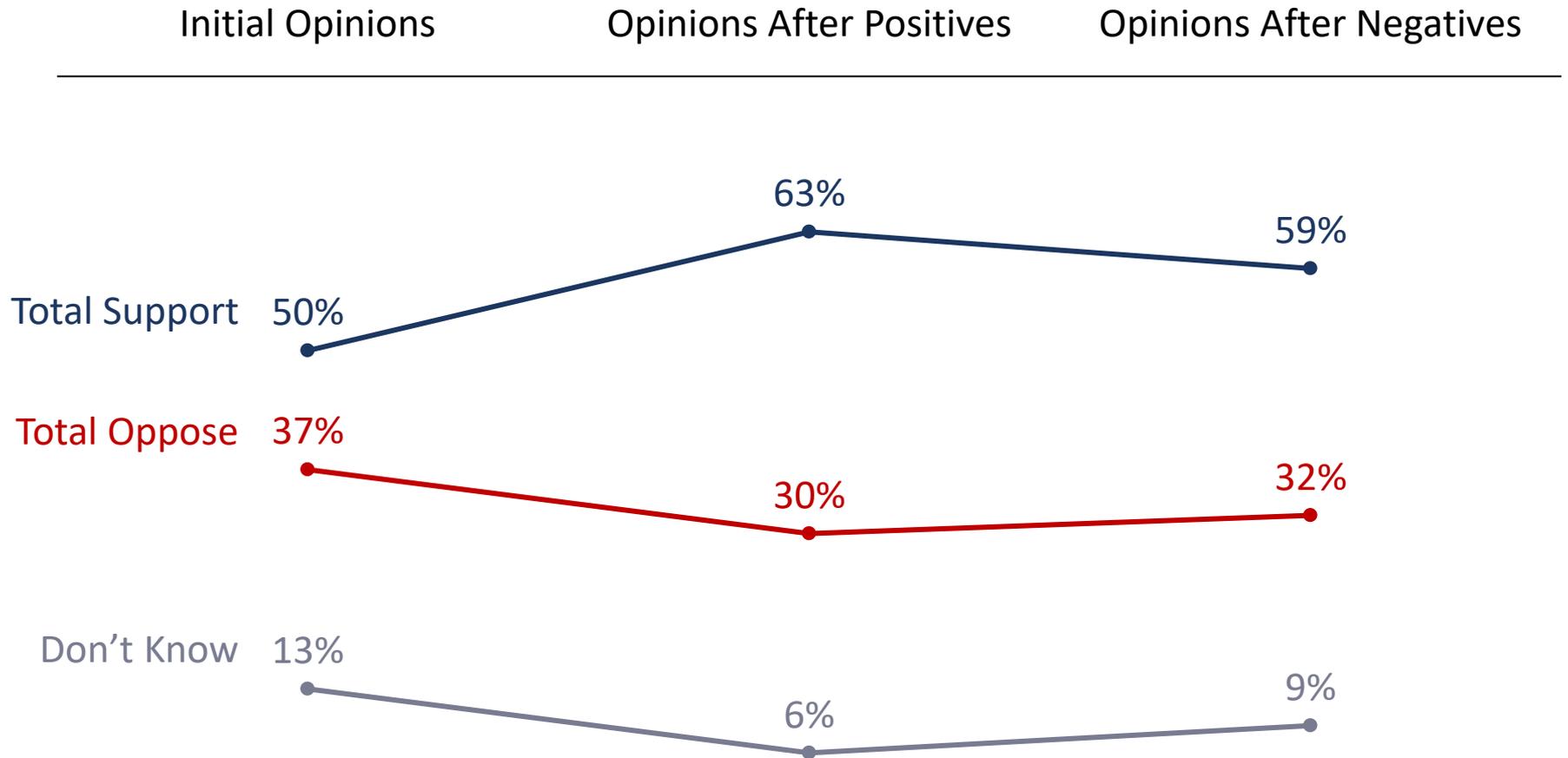


**(TOO MUCH FUNDRAISING)** There are serious problems facing Los Angeles and politicians spend far too much time fundraising and not enough time dealing with the real priorities of their jobs. We have to force them out of the fundraising game and back to serving the people.



*Q. I am going to read you some statements from supporters of the proposal to provide voters with (SPLIT SAMPLE C: "certificates that are sometimes referred to as "democracy dollars"") (SPLIT SAMPLE D: "vouchers that are sometimes referred to as "democracy vouchers"") they can choose to donate to candidates for City offices or ballot measures. Please tell me if you find that statement to be a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not a convincing reason to support this proposal. \*Split Sample*

# Support for Democracy Dollars jumps substantially after positive messages and remains strong after negatives.





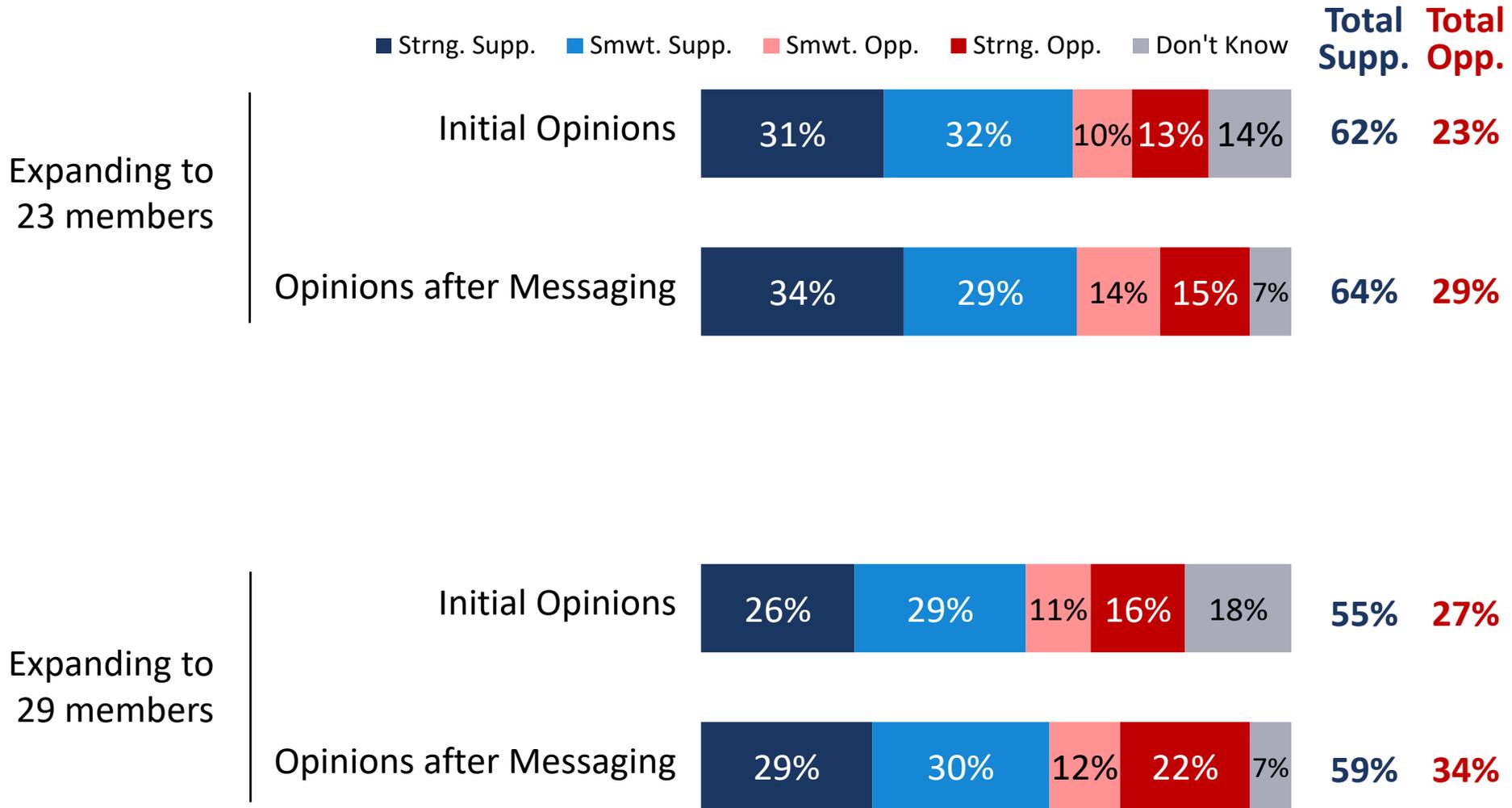
# **Council Expansion**

# Pro/Con Statements on Council Expansion

**Supporters** of expanding the City Council say LA residents have the least representation of any US City with each Council member representing a quarter of a million people. 15 City Council districts cannot represent the diversity of 4 million LA residents, so some neighborhoods will always get overlooked by their councilmember and left out of crucial decision-making. **(SPLIT SAMPLE A:** New York City and Chicago each have 50 members of their city governments while the LA City Council has the same number of members it did 100 years ago even though each Council member now represents 4 times as many people.)**(SPLIT SAMPLE B:** “Our large districts concentrate power and reinforce a culture of corruption. With smaller districts it would be easier for grassroots candidates to run for City Council without having the backing of big money interests.”)

**Opponents** of expanding the City Council say the last thing we need is to increase the number of politicians in our city, especially since it will cost us more in salaries, staff and bureaucracy. It is hard enough for the current Council to get anything done with 15 members, if we expand the Council, it will just make our problems worse.

# Solid majorities support Council expansion after pro and con messaging.





# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- There's a very clear appetite for reform in the City of LA: Over 80% see a need to reform City government and about two-thirds see a need to reform City elections.
- A hypothetical government reform ballot measure has initial support of around 2/3rds, although the survey did not explore pro and con messaging on the measure.
- The measure has broad support across age, geographic, gender and racial/ethnic subgroups and has even stronger support among higher propensity voters.

# Conclusions, continued

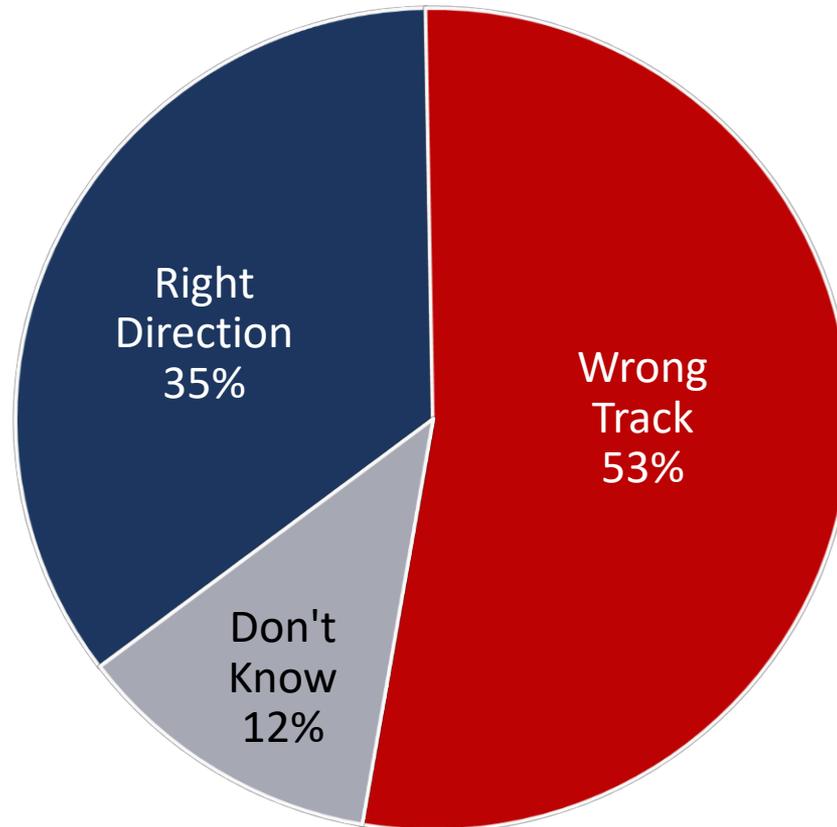
- Voters like the concept of Democracy Dollars as they hear more about it. After positive messages, 63% support the concept, and support only drops a few points with a negative message.
- Nearly 80% of City voters support independent redistricting.
- Over 70% support Ranked Choice Voting with either a simple or detailed description.
- Council expansion also has majority support which is maintained with pro and con messaging. The proposal to expand to 23 members has somewhat more support than 29 members both before and after messages.

**\*\*\* Additional responses not covered in the 8/24  
Fair Rep LA / FM3 presentation of results\*\*\***

## **Issue Context**

# A majority of voters think things in the City of LA are off on the wrong track.

*Generally speaking, do you think things in the City of Los Angeles are headed in the right direction, or do you feel that they are off on the wrong track?*



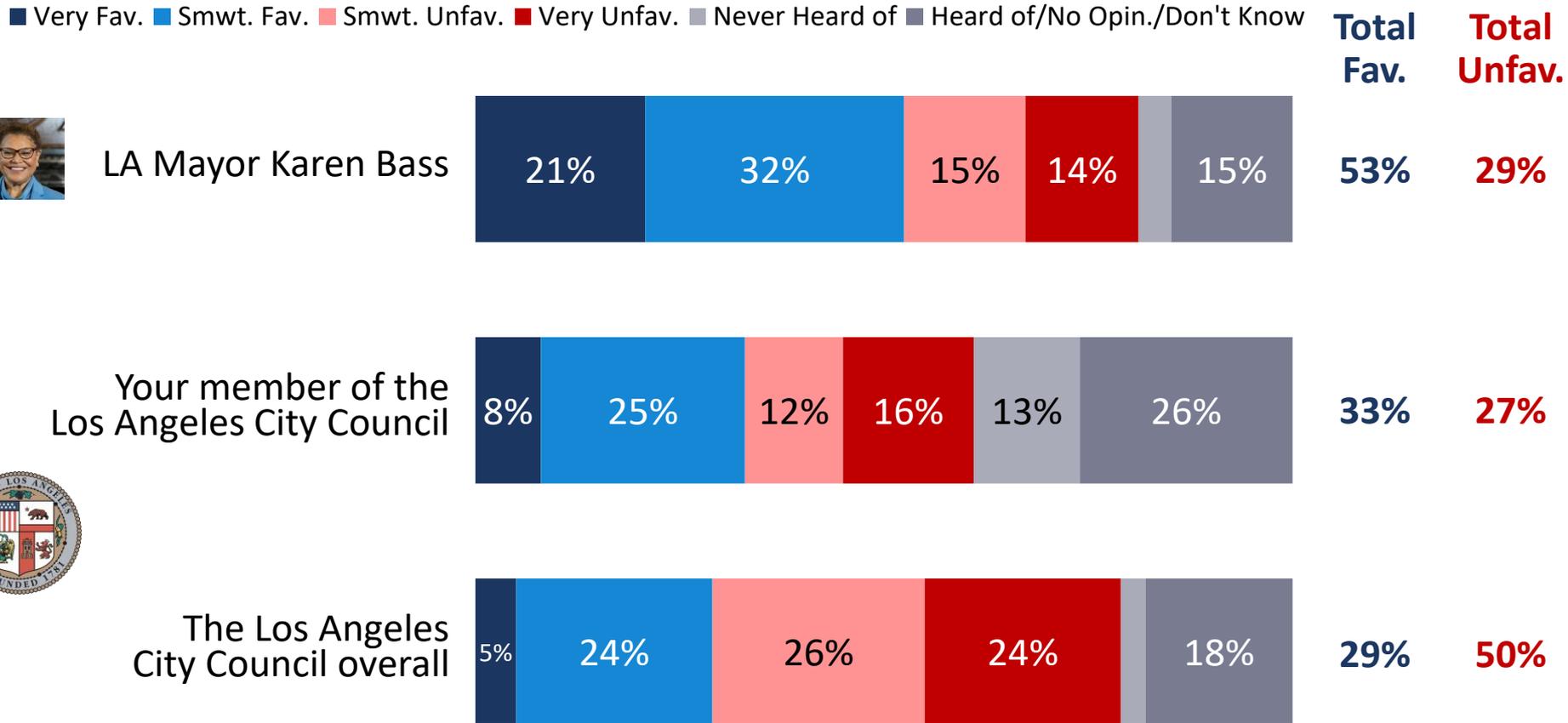
# There are extreme partisan divisions on the direction of the City.

Demographic Group	Right Direction	Wrong Track	Don't Know
<b>All Voters</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	34%	53%	13%
Women	36%	52%	12%
<b>Age</b>			
18-39	38%	49%	13%
40-64	32%	56%	12%
65+	36%	53%	11%
<b>Party</b>			
Democrats	43%	43%	14%
Independents	30%	56%	14%
Republicans	10%	89%	1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	32%	55%	13%
Latinos	44%	47%	9%
African Americans	33%	46%	21%
Asians/Pacific Islanders	36%	52%	12%

# Continued

Demographic Group	Right Direction	Wrong Track	Don't Know
<b>LA City Zone</b>			
West Valley, CCDs 3,12	30%	59%	10%
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South, CCDs 8,9,10	46%	41%	13%
Downtown, CCDs 4,13	24%	66%	10%
Harbor, CCD15	50%	38%	12%

# Mayor Bass is viewed much more favorably than Councilmembers or the Council as a whole.



# About two-thirds of voters pay at least some attention to LA City government, but just two-in-ten pay “very close attention.”

*Sometimes people are busy and unable to follow everything that goes on in government and politics. How much attention do you pay to the issues, decisions, and activities of the LA City government? Would you say that you pay very close attention, some attention, a little attention or not much attention at all?*

