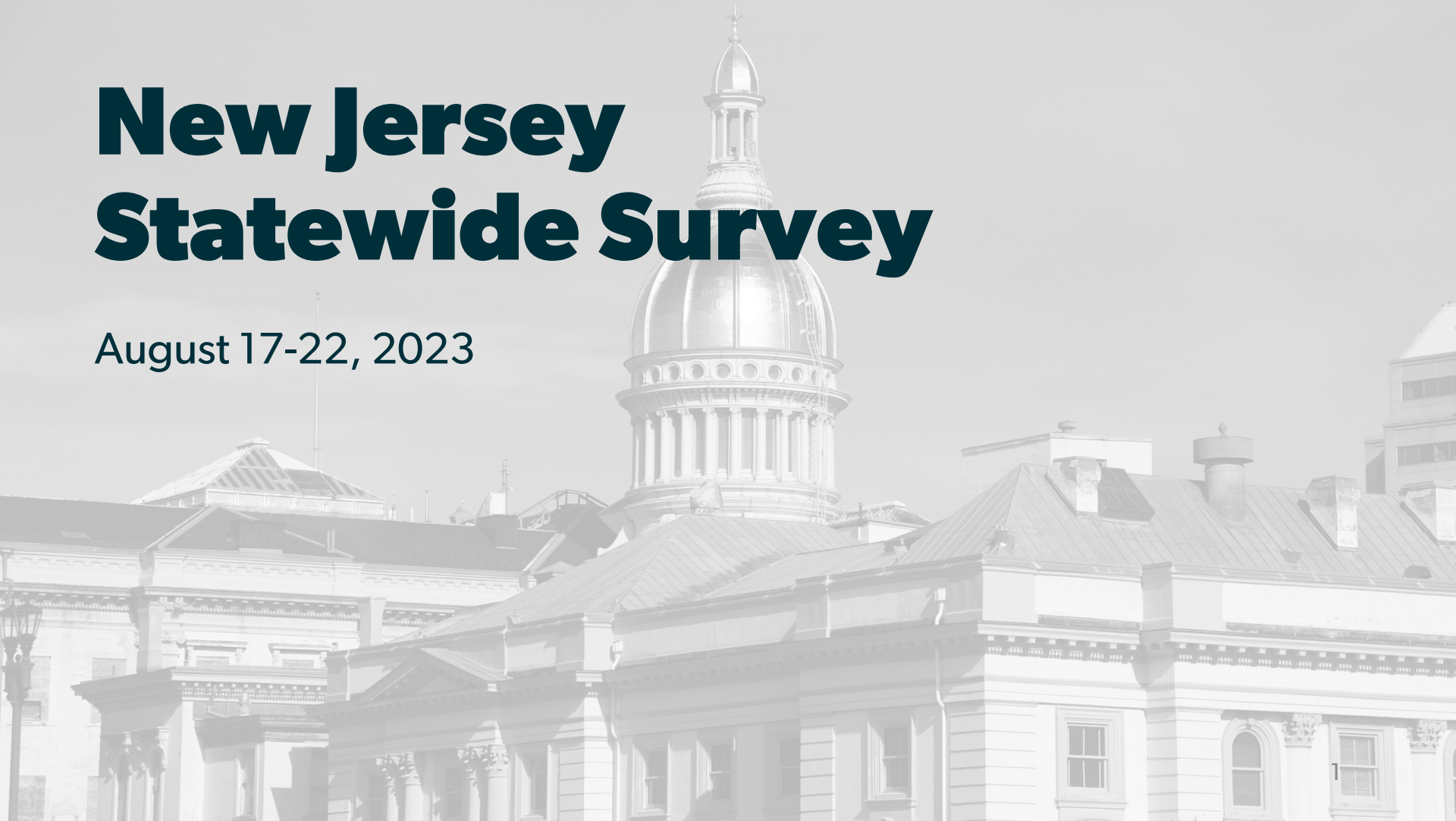


**POWER  THE FUTURE**

# **New Jersey Statewide Survey**

August 17-22, 2023



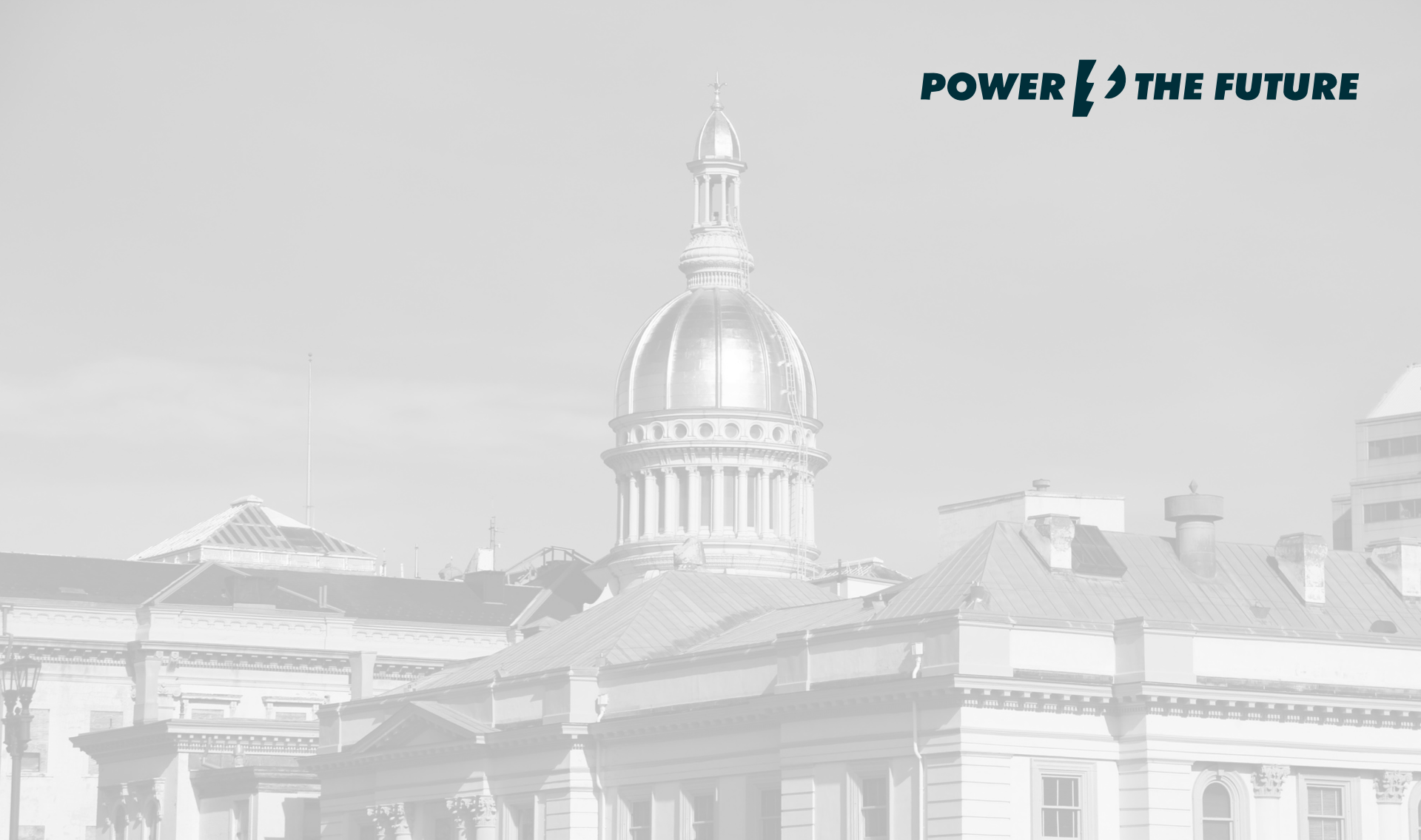
# METHODOLOGY

On behalf of Power the Future, Public Opinion Strategies completed a survey of 600 registered voters in New Jersey.

The survey was conducted August 17-22, 2023 and has a credibility interval of  $\pm 4.56\%$ .

Neil Newhouse was the principal researcher on this project. Jamie Wadovick Gentle was the project director and Zachary Cooper and Jackson Ellis provided analytical support.





# **Take Away Points**

# Take-Away Points

- 1. Despite New Jersey voters' high regard for Governor Murphy, they strongly oppose his regulations to require all new car, SUV, and truck sales in the state to be zero emission by 2035.**

Even though the Governor has a positive 58%-42% job approval in the state, his proposal to require all new car, SUV and light trucks sales in the state to be zero emission by 2035 falls flat with voters (33% favor-58% oppose). The proposal fails to win majority support even among Democrats (46%), young voters (46%) and Murphy's own approvers (48%).



# Take-Away Points

## 2. **New Jersey voters argue that these regulations will cost them money, the state's infrastructure won't be able to handle it, and that the plan hasn't been fully thought-out.**

Voters are deeply “worried about cost,” recognizing “not all people can afford electric cars. They're very expensive.” Almost seven-in-ten voters (69%) believe this proposal will cost them money. Remember: half of New Jersey voters (51%) commute to work by car each day.

“The affordability of the vehicles [is] out of reach of many people in the state of New Jersey and down payments are very high for someone who makes less than 75,000 dollars.”

“I can't afford an electric car.”

“Because 90 percent of the state can barely afford to pay to have a roof over their heads and food in their mouths. They will never be able to afford electric cars and charging stations at their homes.”

“Because it's not feasible or affordable. Especially for kids just starting out and needing cars to get to and from work or college.”



# Take-Away Points

Further, voters bring up how the state's infrastructure can't support this change to zero emission vehicles.

*"There is no thought to how the outdated electric infrastructure will support the significant increase in electricity usage."*

*"In an emergency situation, would still need gasoline powered cars, if there's a problem with the power grid. The power grid can't handle this many electrical cars now and may be overworked. It's too premature."*

*"I do not believe that there will be enough charging stations throughout the state, and it will be problematic for people who do not own private homes with a dedicated place to charge the vehicle."*

*"I'm concerned with availability of public charging stations, as well as the affordability of having the right charging equipment in residences."*

*"I live in a rural part [of New Jersey] and even on the main roads and larger townships there is no infrastructure to support electric cars."*



# Take-Away Points

Other voters are simply “skeptical” about how well-thought out this plan is. A majority (59%) call this plan unrealistic and over half (55%) call it extreme.

*“Too fast making it difficult for car manufacturers and too expensive for consumers.”*

*“I don't think we will be ready for that type of commitment to electric.”*

*“I just feel it is a childish pipedream and cannot be implemented in this state by that time. I feel it is a typical play at politics by Murphy to earn green points.”*

*“It's simply not practical. It's an empty promise. Electric cars aren't that much better anyway. No charging stations anywhere.”*



# Take-Away Points

3. After hearing arguments on either side of the issue, opposition hits 62%.

Voters read comments from the Governor regarding how this proposal is a commitment to the health of New Jersey families and the expectation that this could lead to an influx of green jobs to the state. Paired with the Governor's comments were statements from those opposed to the proposed regs that had to do with affordability and feasibility.

Voters continued to side with the opponents of this proposal (38% favor-62% oppose), with key audiences failing to rally behind it like young voters (54% oppose), voters of color (53%), college educated voters (59%), and women (65%).





# Take-Away Points

4. Fully 50% of New Jersey voters say they would be less likely to vote for a state legislator who voted to support these regulations (28% more likely-50% less likely).

Here's a few of the messages that voters said they wanted to send to their legislators about this issue.

*"I don't mind the shift toward EVs, but I don't like being forced to buy things that are not wanted. It should be a choice to buy an EV, since it will be purchased with my hard earned money."*

*"It is unfair to create regulations that would create financial stress for thousands and thousands of people. People spend four hundred dollars on cars that barely work just to get their children to school. This would really impact thousands of people negatively."*

*"Please don't treat NJ residents as infants who can't make their own good choices on their own. This proposal is wrong in so many ways."*

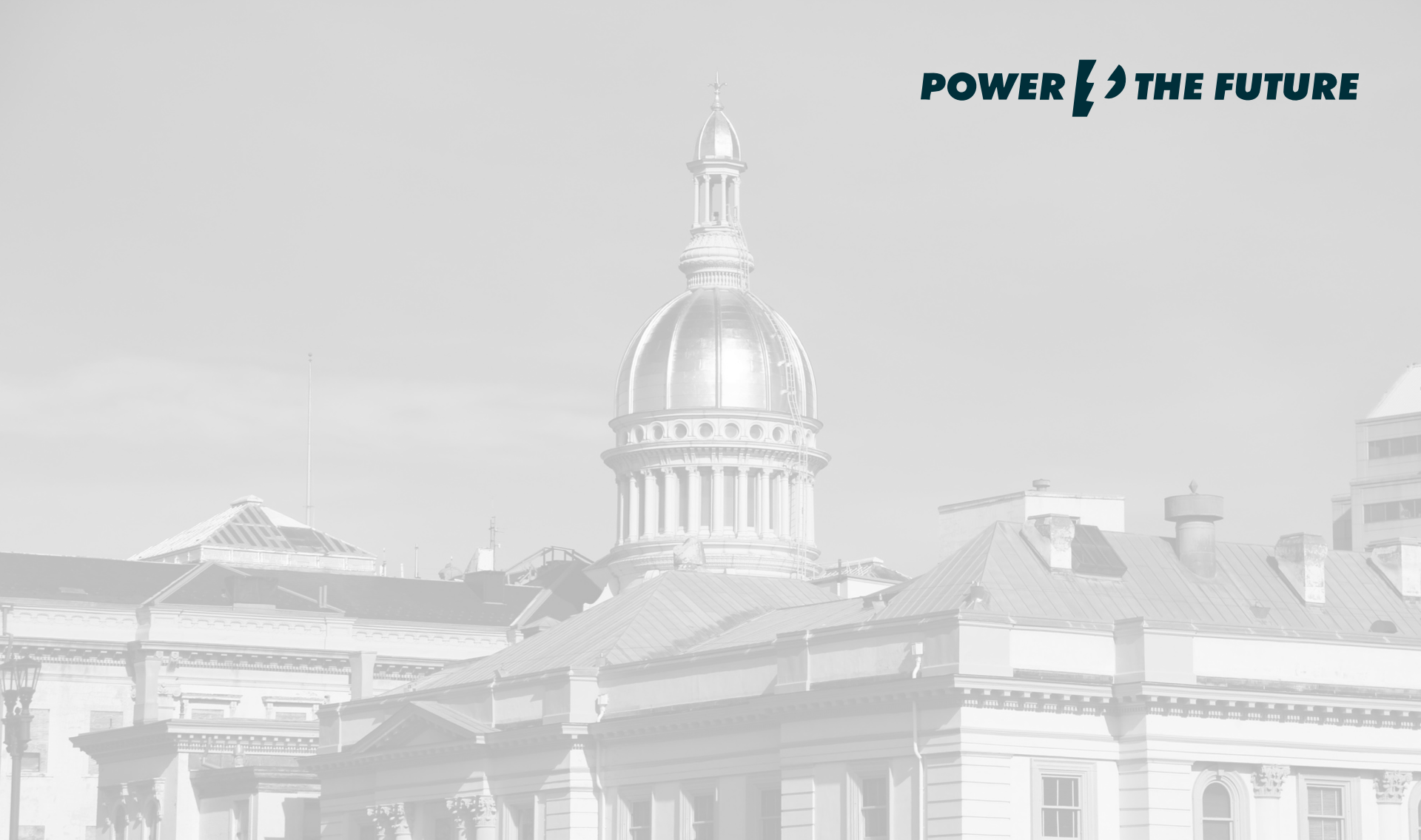


## **BOTTOM LINE**

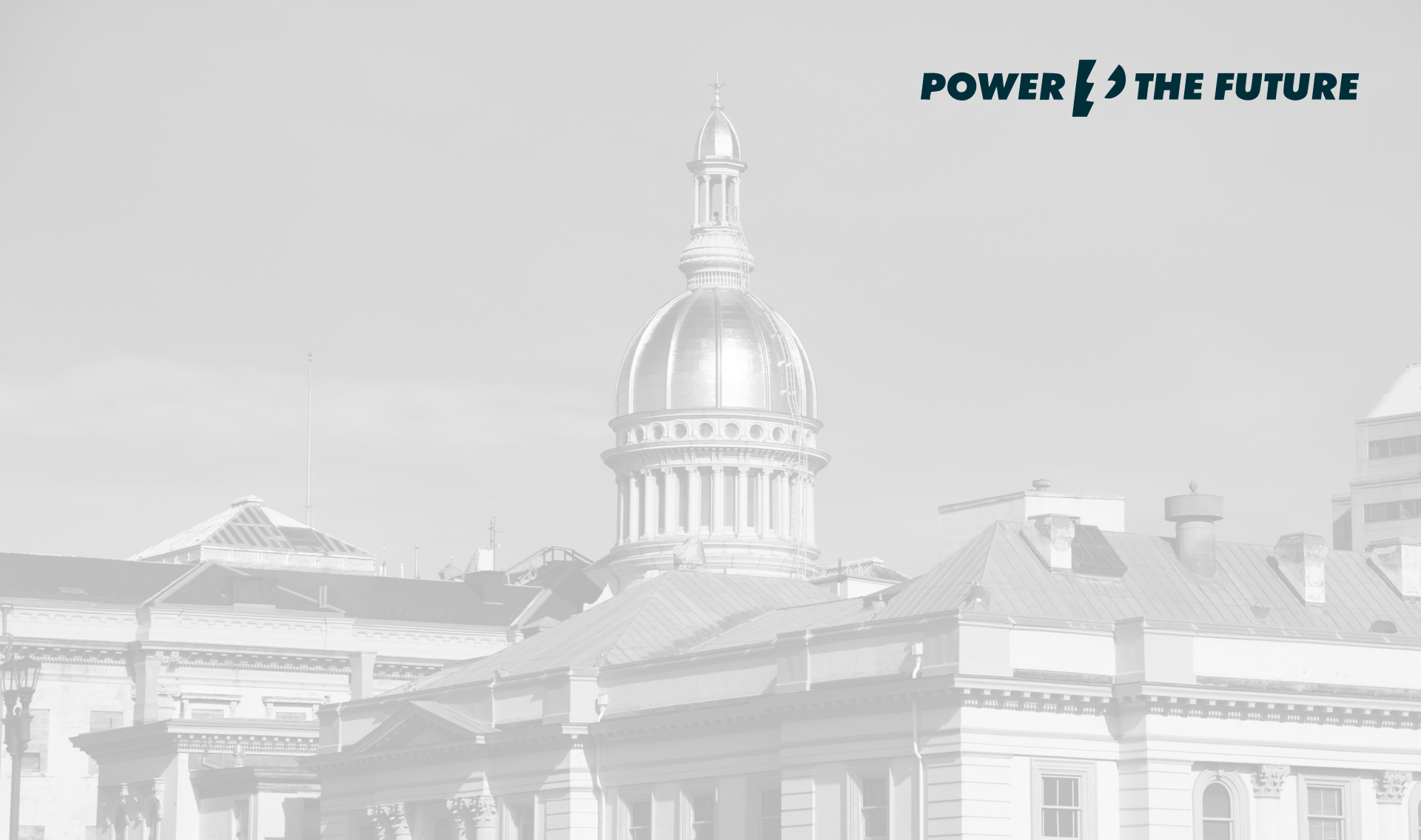
Despite the Governor's strong approval rating in the state, New Jersey voters do not support his proposed new car sales emissions mandate for 2035. They clearly view it as unrealistic, costing them money, a government overreach, and as not feasible for the state to achieve. It's not only Republicans and Independents who question the Governor's actions on this issue, even his own supporters are not fully behind him.

The data points to how this might play out in the voting booth, as fully half of New Jersey voters interviewed say they would be less likely to vote for a legislator if that person supported these regulations.



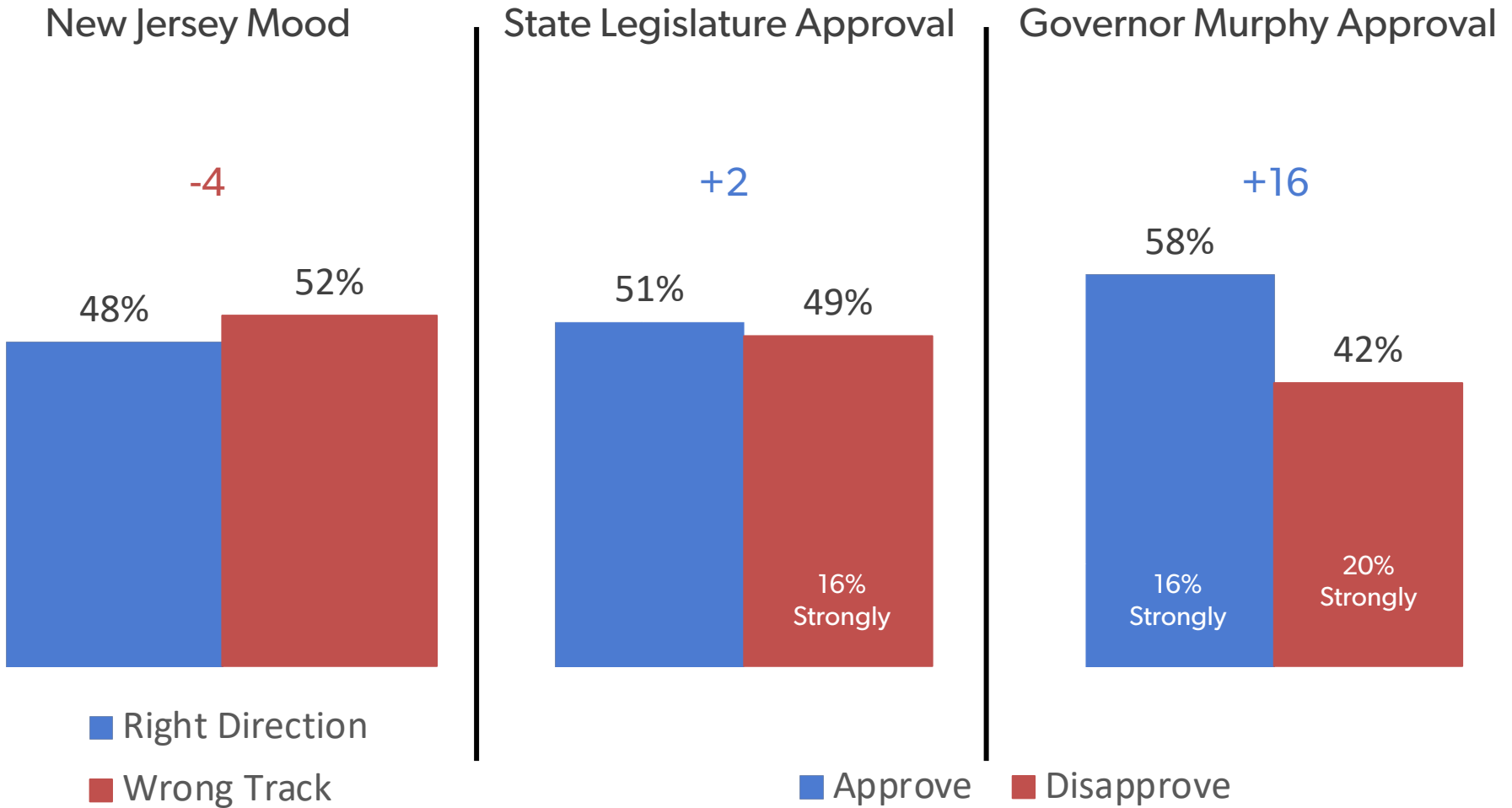


# Key Poll Data

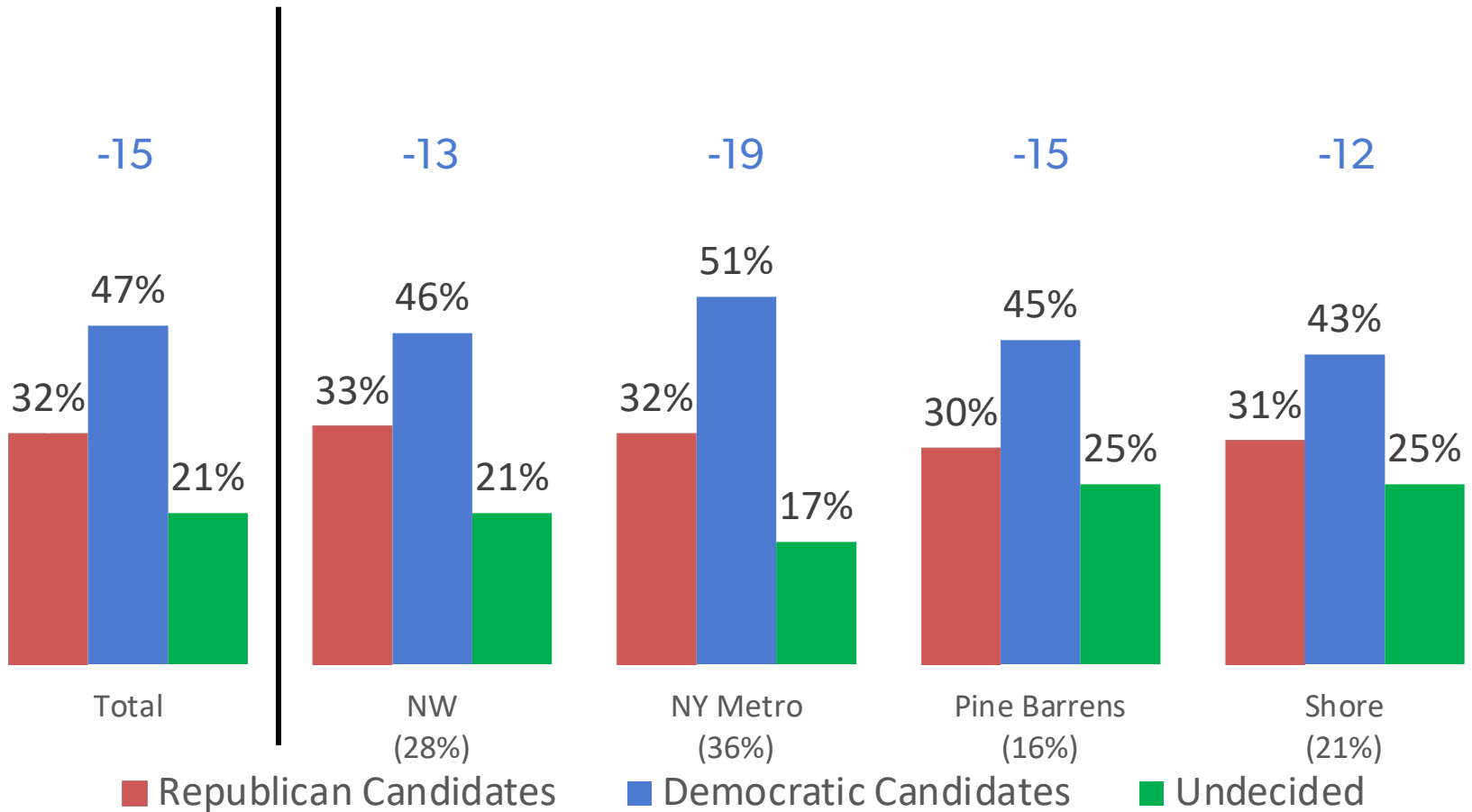


# **The Political Environment**

# While NJ voters are divided on the direction of the state and the state legislature, they give Governor Murphy positive marks.



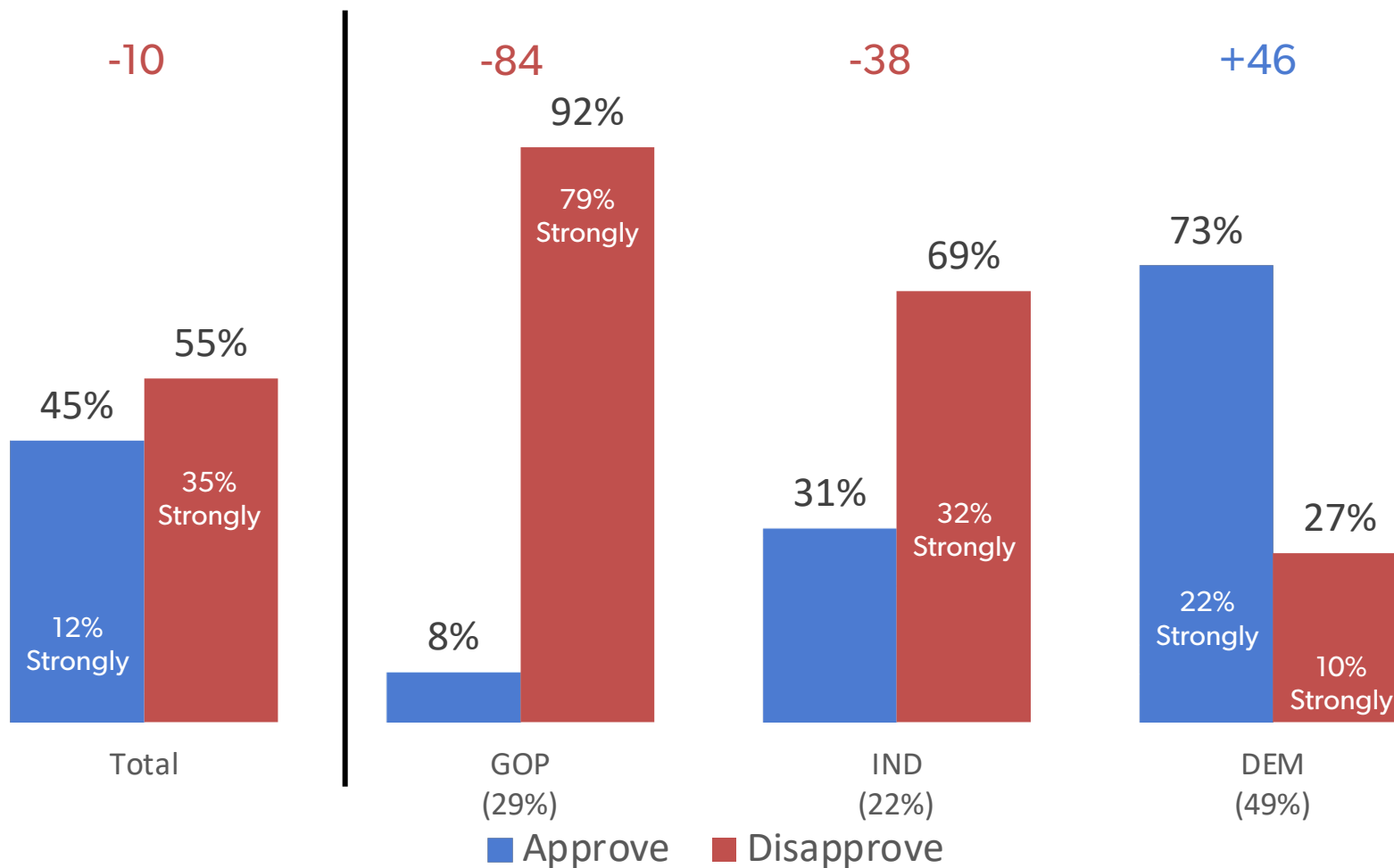
**Reflective of the DEM partisan advantage in the state, D's have a sizeable edge on the generic ballot.**



If the election for State Assembly were being held today, would you generally be more likely to vote for the Republican candidates OR the Democratic candidates?

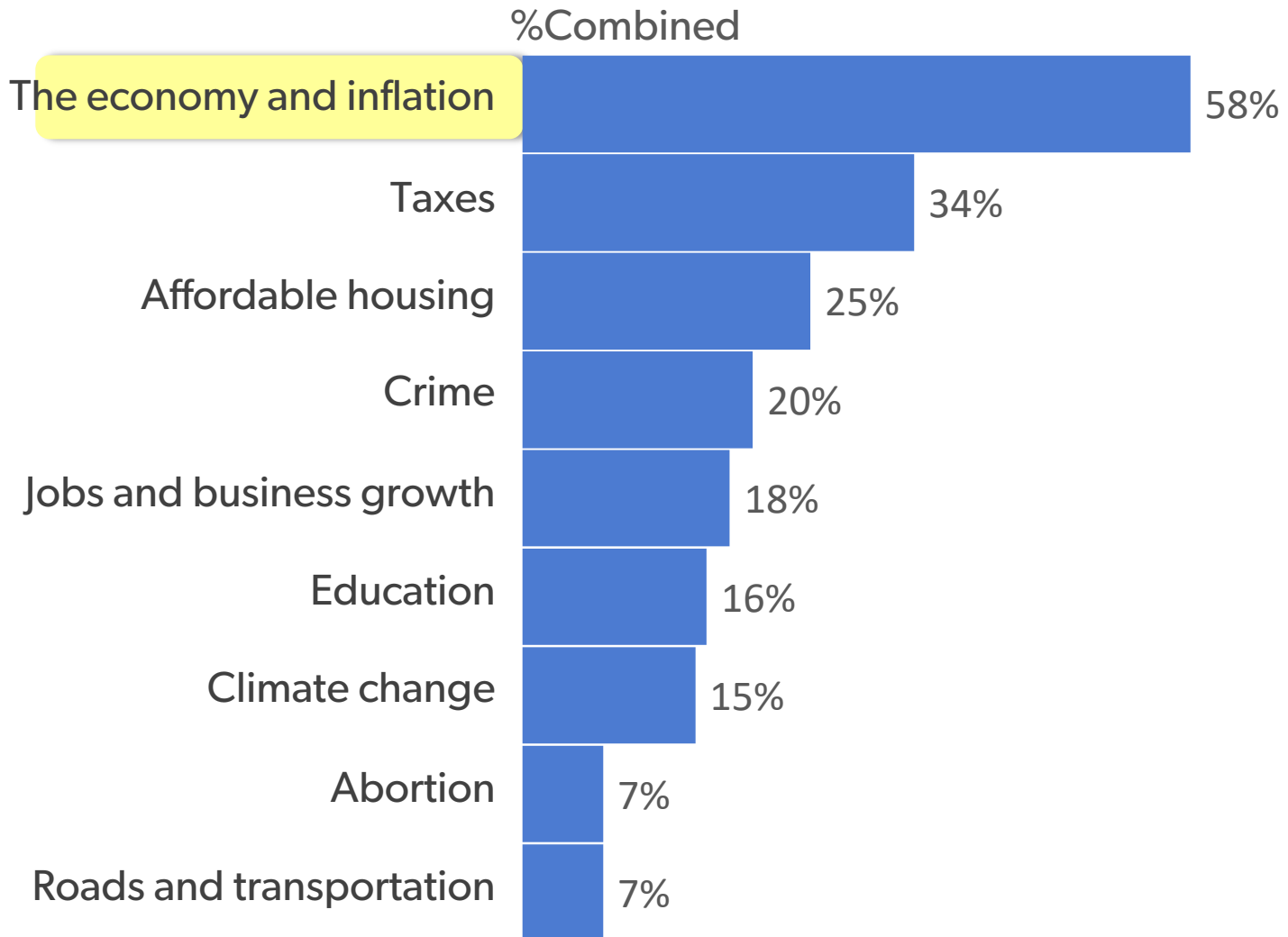


## President Biden's approval is underwater in the state.



Turning to national politics, do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as President?

## Voters' priorities for the Governor and the legislature are headlined by economic issues.



And, which TWO of the following do you believe should be the top priorities for the Governor and state legislature?



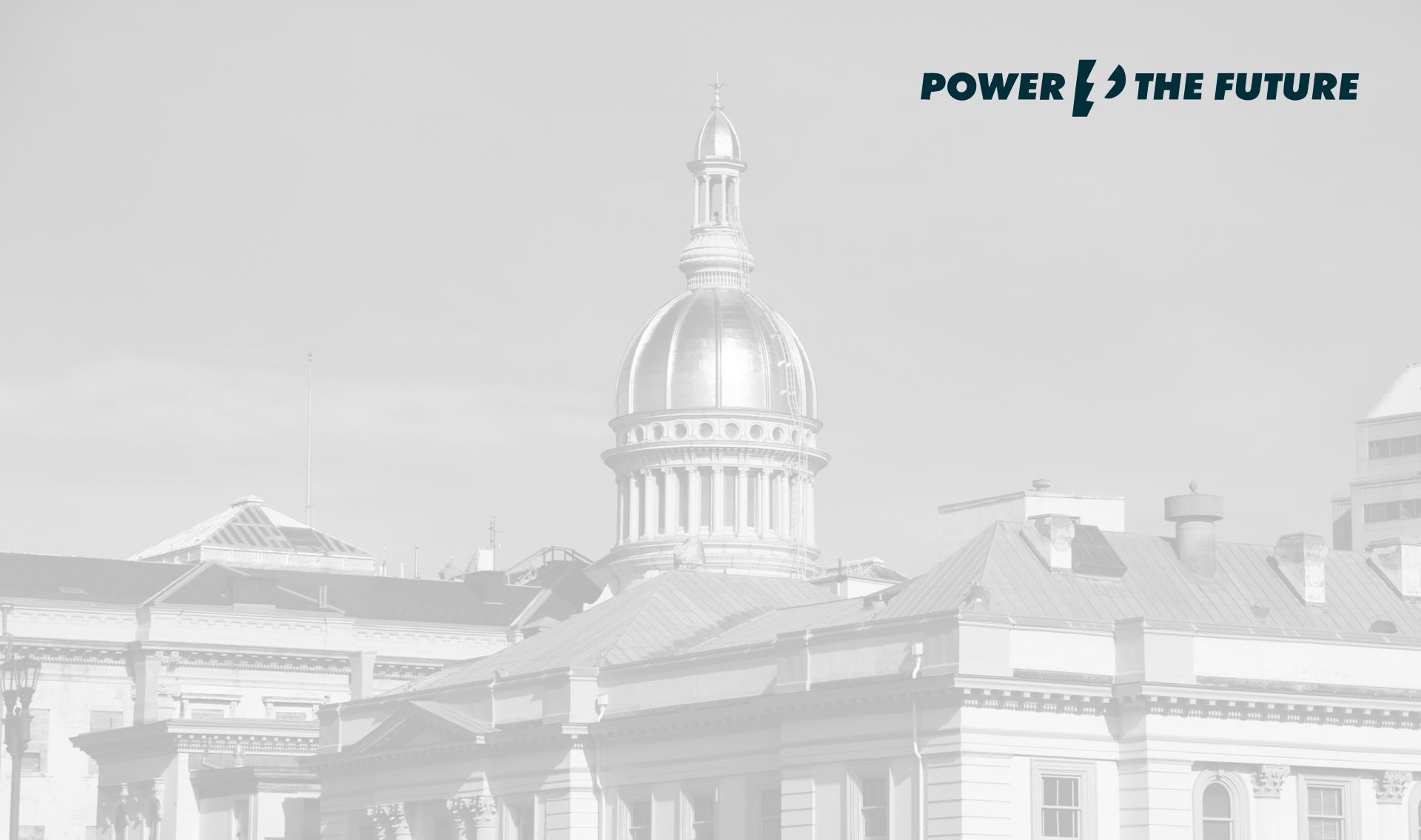


# Climate change isn't even a top issue among Democrats.

%Combined	Total	GOP (29%)	IND (22%)	DEM (49%)
The economy and inflation	58%	66%	59%	52%
Taxes	34%	47%	31%	27%
Affordable housing	25%	17%	25%	31%
Crime	20%	24%	23%	15%
Jobs and business growth	18%	21%	22%	14%
Education	16%	14%	13%	18%
Climate change	15%	2%	12%	25%
Abortion	7%	2%	7%	11%
Roads and transportation	7%	5%	8%	7%

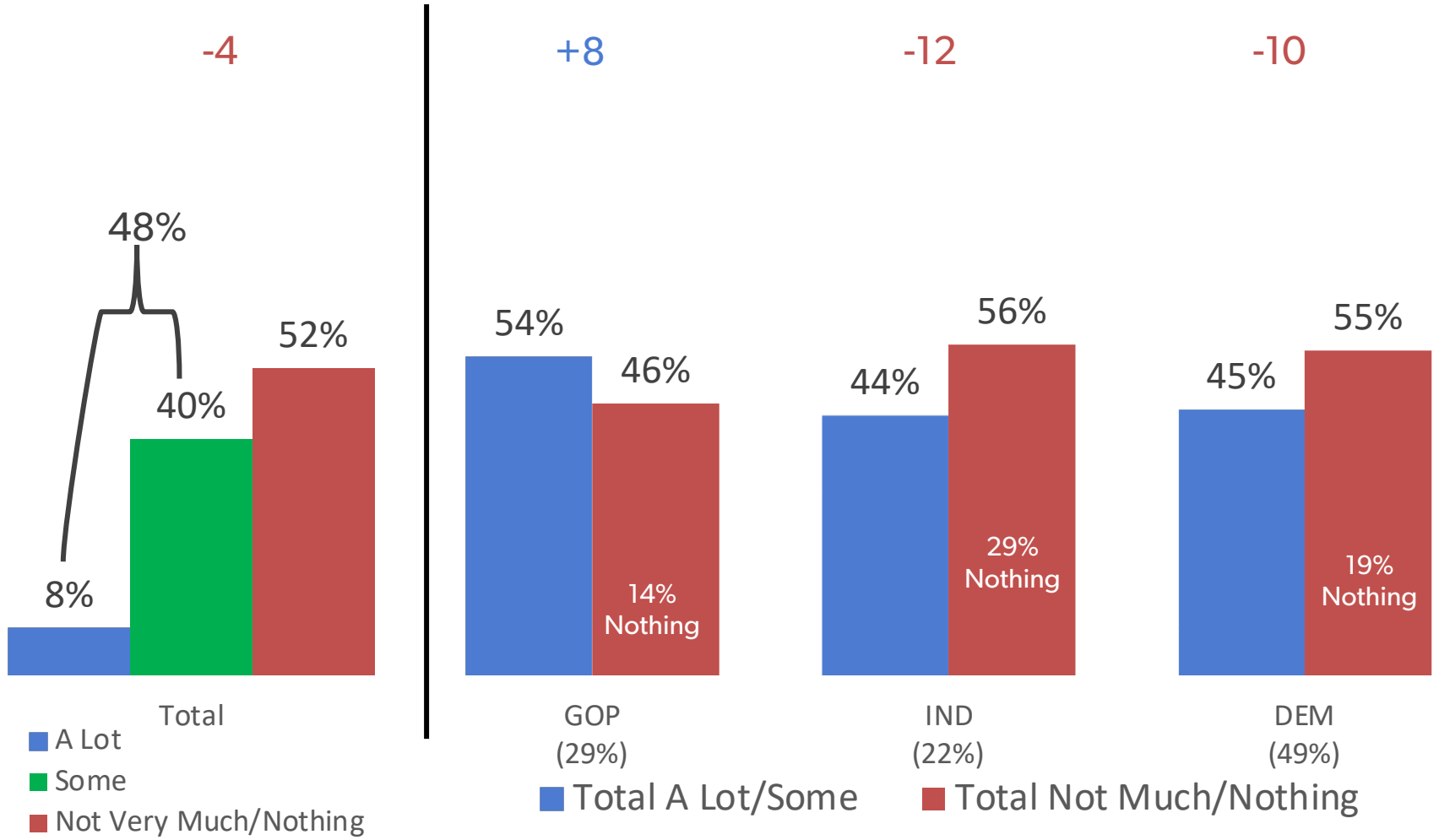


And, which TWO of the following do you believe should be the top priorities for the Governor and state legislature?



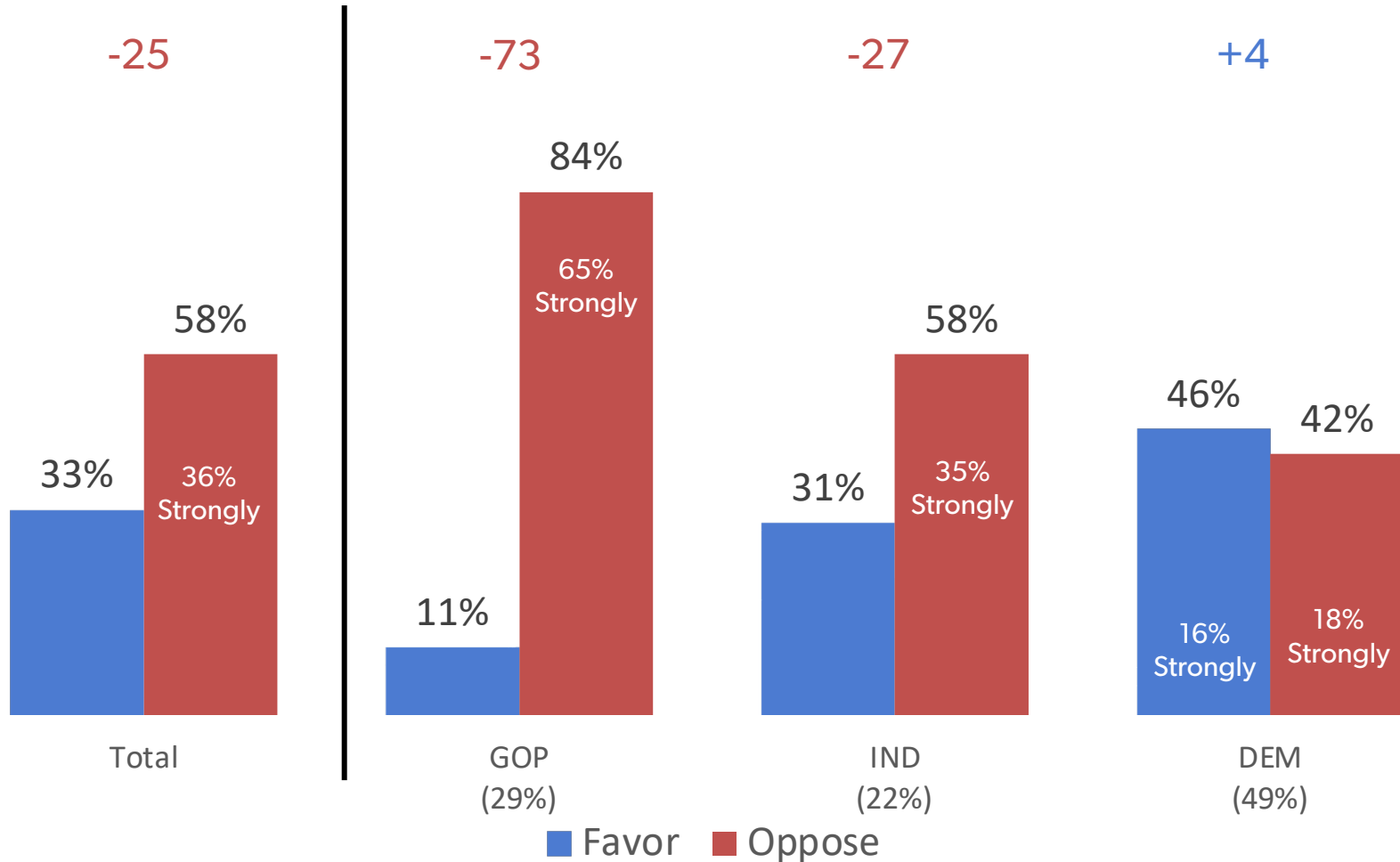
# **The Governor's Proposed Regulations on New Car Emissions**

# Voters haven't heard all that much about the Governor's proposal to require all new car, SUV and light truck sales to be zero-emission by 2035.



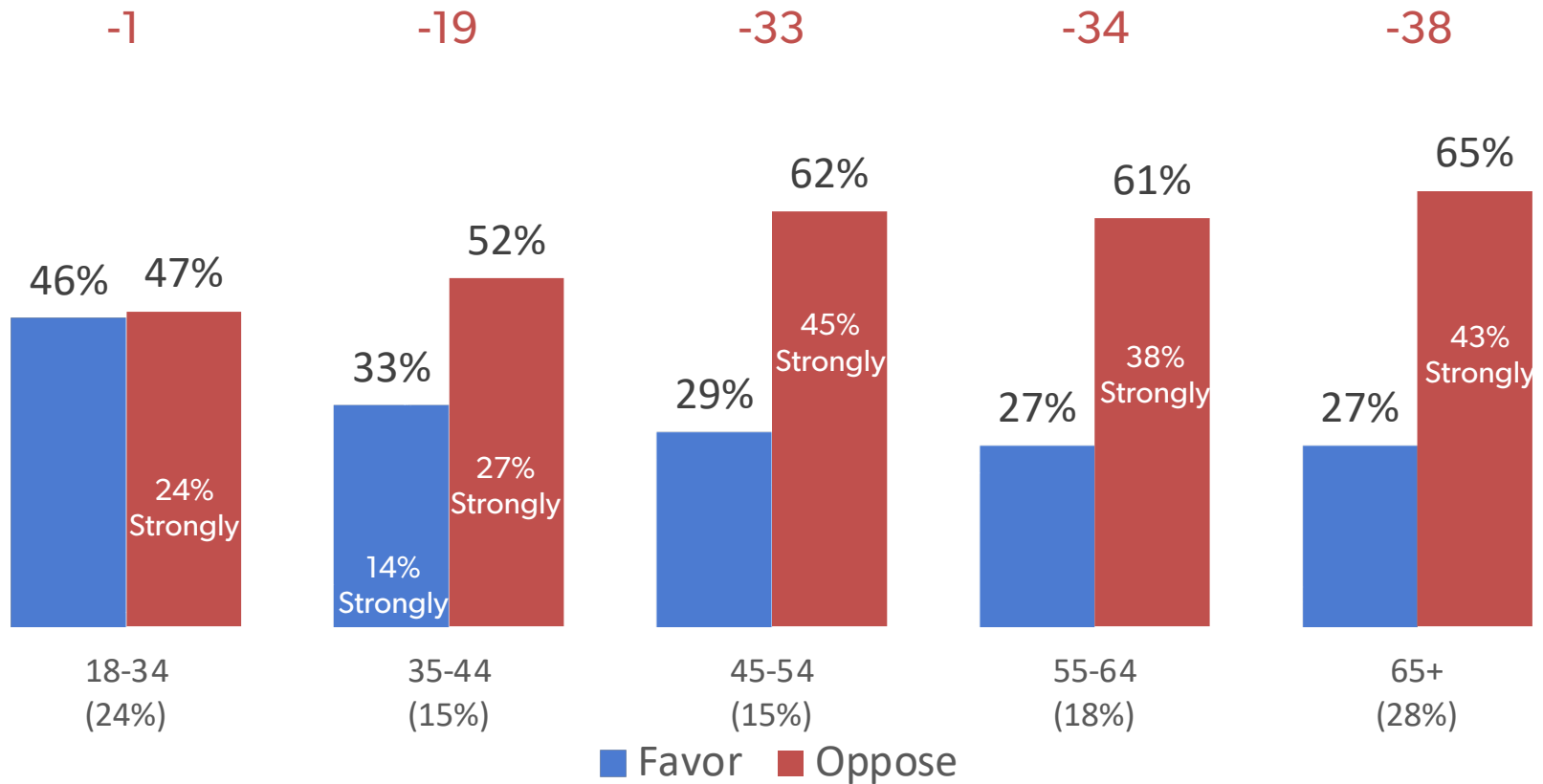
On a state issue, how much have you seen, read or heard about regulations put forward by Governor Murphy to require all new car, SUV and light truck sales to be zero emission vehicles by 2035?

# A wide majority of voters oppose the Governor's proposed new car sales regulations.



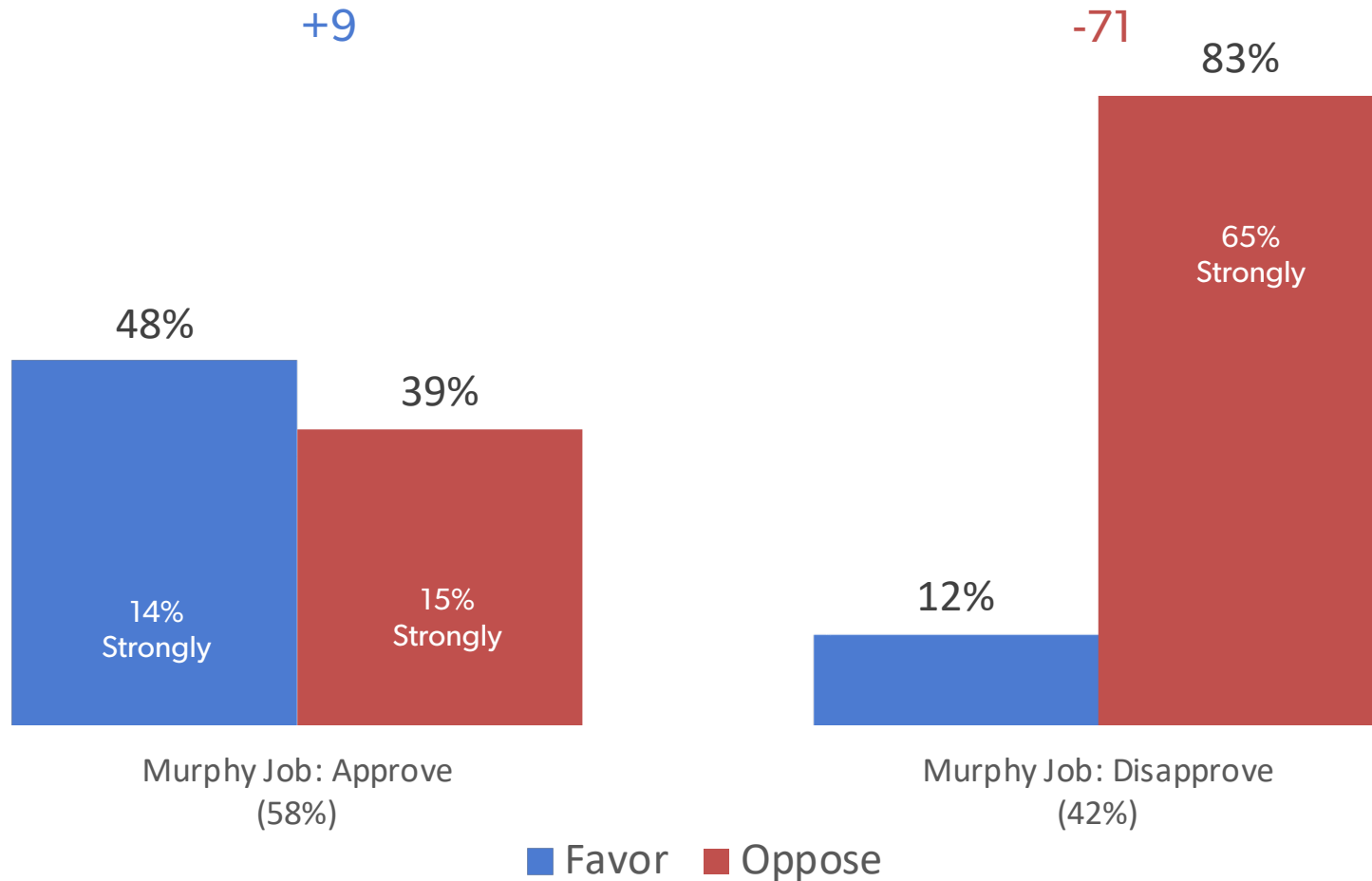
This proposal would essentially ban all new gasoline powered cars from being sold in the state by 2035. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal by Governor Murphy?

# Support for the regs fails to hit the majority mark across age groups in the state.



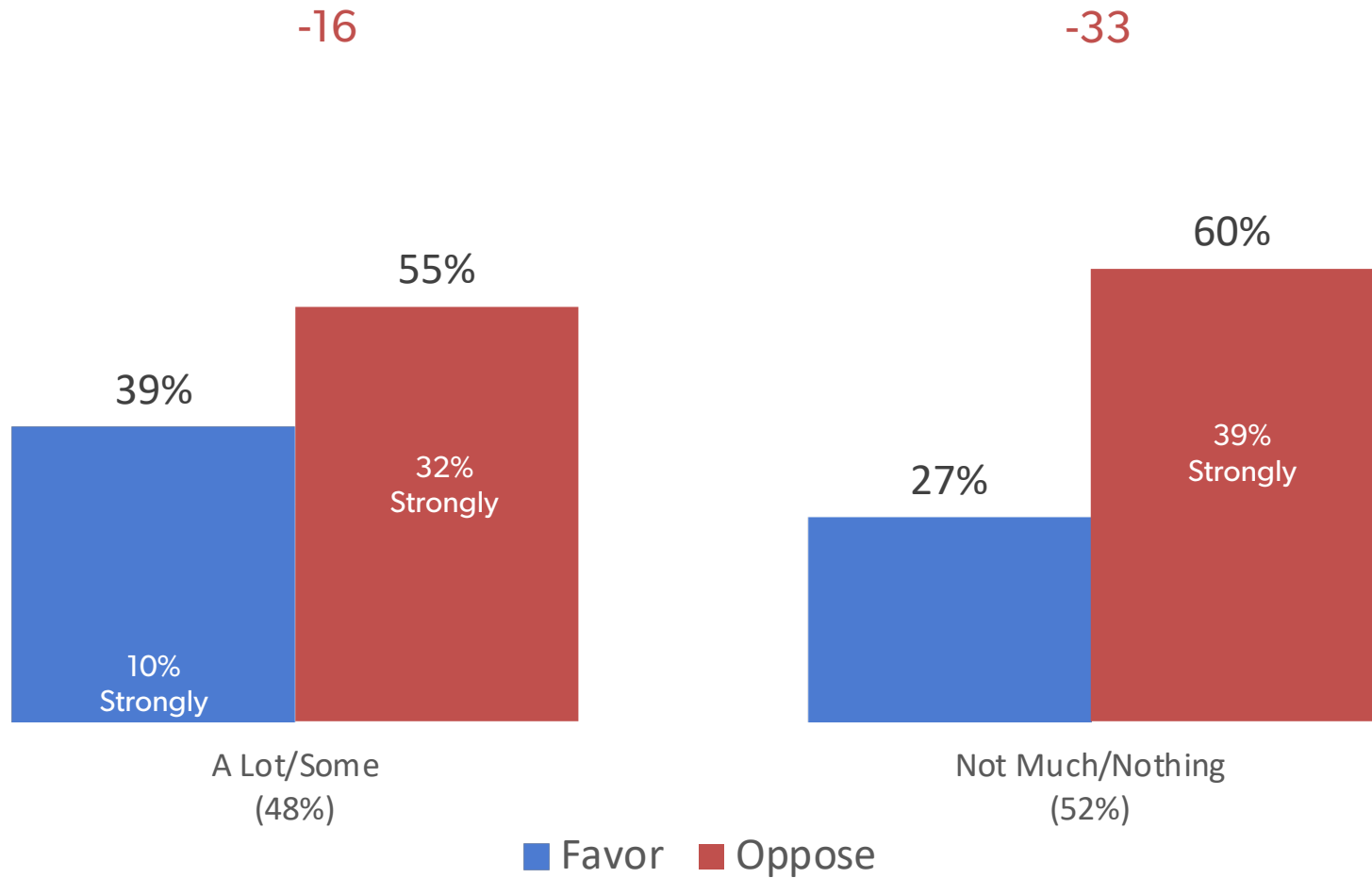
This proposal would essentially ban all new gasoline powered cars from being sold in the state by 2035. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal by Governor Murphy?

## And even Murphy's own "approvers" are on the bubble about the new regs.



This proposal would essentially ban all new gasoline powered cars from being sold in the state by 2035. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal by Governor Murphy?

# Those voters who have heard more about this proposal are less inclined to oppose it than those who have heard little about it.



This proposal would essentially ban all new gasoline powered cars from being sold in the state by 2035. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal by Governor Murphy?

## Q9 Support

Need Renewable Energy  
Stop Global Warming  
**Get off Fossil Fuels**  
Less Expensive Smarter Option  
Reduce Emissions  
**Combat Climate Change**  
Blame Big Business Future  
Needs to happen  
**Protect Environment**  
Safer Gas Supports Terrorism  
Go towards Green Solutions  
EVs are Reliable



And, what are the most important reasons why you (favor/oppose) this proposal?



## Q9 Oppose



And, what are the most important reasons why you (favor/oppose) this proposal?

## Verbatim Summary

When New Jersey voters are asked about the most important reasons why they favor or oppose the proposal to require all new car, SUV, and light truck sales to be zero emission vehicles by 2035, those in favor of the measure cite its importance to mitigate climate change. Those who oppose the proposal believe it is too expensive and unrealistic to accomplish.



And, what are the most important reasons why you (favor/oppose) this proposal?

## Verbatim Summary

Voters in New Jersey who support the proposal to require EV sales believe it is imperative in the fight against climate change. These voters, who are primarily Democrats, believe gas vehicles contribute to climate change and the “need to get off fossil fuels.” One Democratic man from Middlesex County believes “gas powered vehicles will continue to destroy the ozone layer” and “the new policy would essentially save everyone’s skin.” Another voter, a Democratic woman from Bergen County, cites the state’s “high cancer rate” being “due to the excessive use of chemicals and environmental pollution from vehicles.” And, a Democratic woman from Ocean County thinks “we need to reduce [gas emissions] before 2035.”



## Verbatim Summary

However, New Jersey voters who oppose this measure believe it will create financial issues, citing the “lack of affordability” of EVs. One Independent woman from Monmouth County thinks passing the measure creates “a difficult situation for those who cannot easily [or] financially switch cars.” And, a Democratic woman from Hudson County believes it is “ridiculous to assume that all car drivers in the state could afford to switch.”



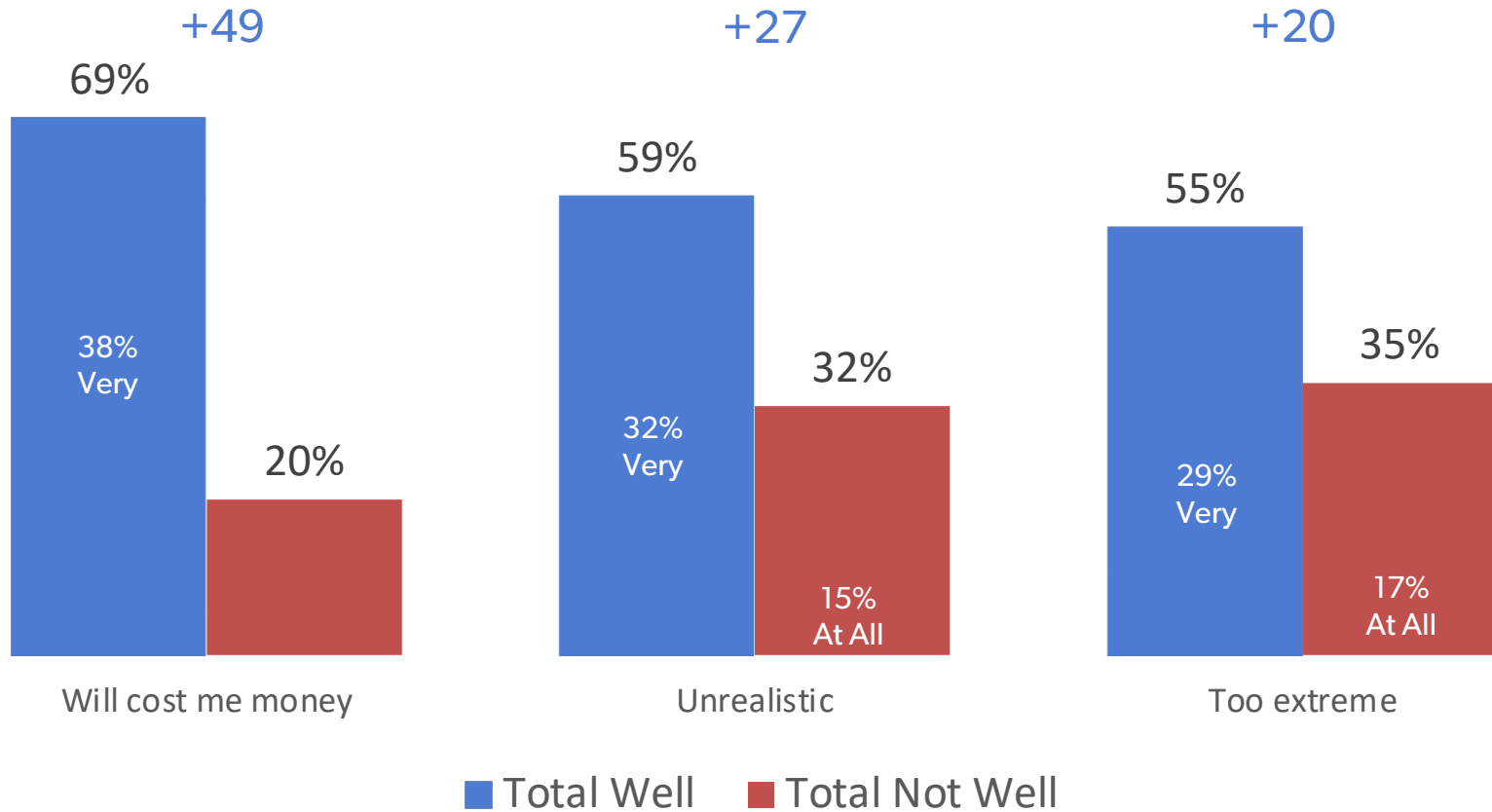
## Verbatim Summary

Additionally, voters in New Jersey who oppose the proposal simply believe it is unrealistic to accomplish. Citing the lack of infrastructure and the short timeframe, these voters have concerns. One Republican woman from Burlington County doesn't think the state "is prepared to sustain all electric vehicles within 10 years," citing the "few charging areas" in her region. Also, a Republican man from Union County believes "the [electric] grid cannot handle all necessary charging," and the new car's mileage limits would create "travel restrictions." And, a Democratic woman from Camden County mentions the lack of "thought to how the outdated electric infrastructure will support the dramatic increase in electricity usage."



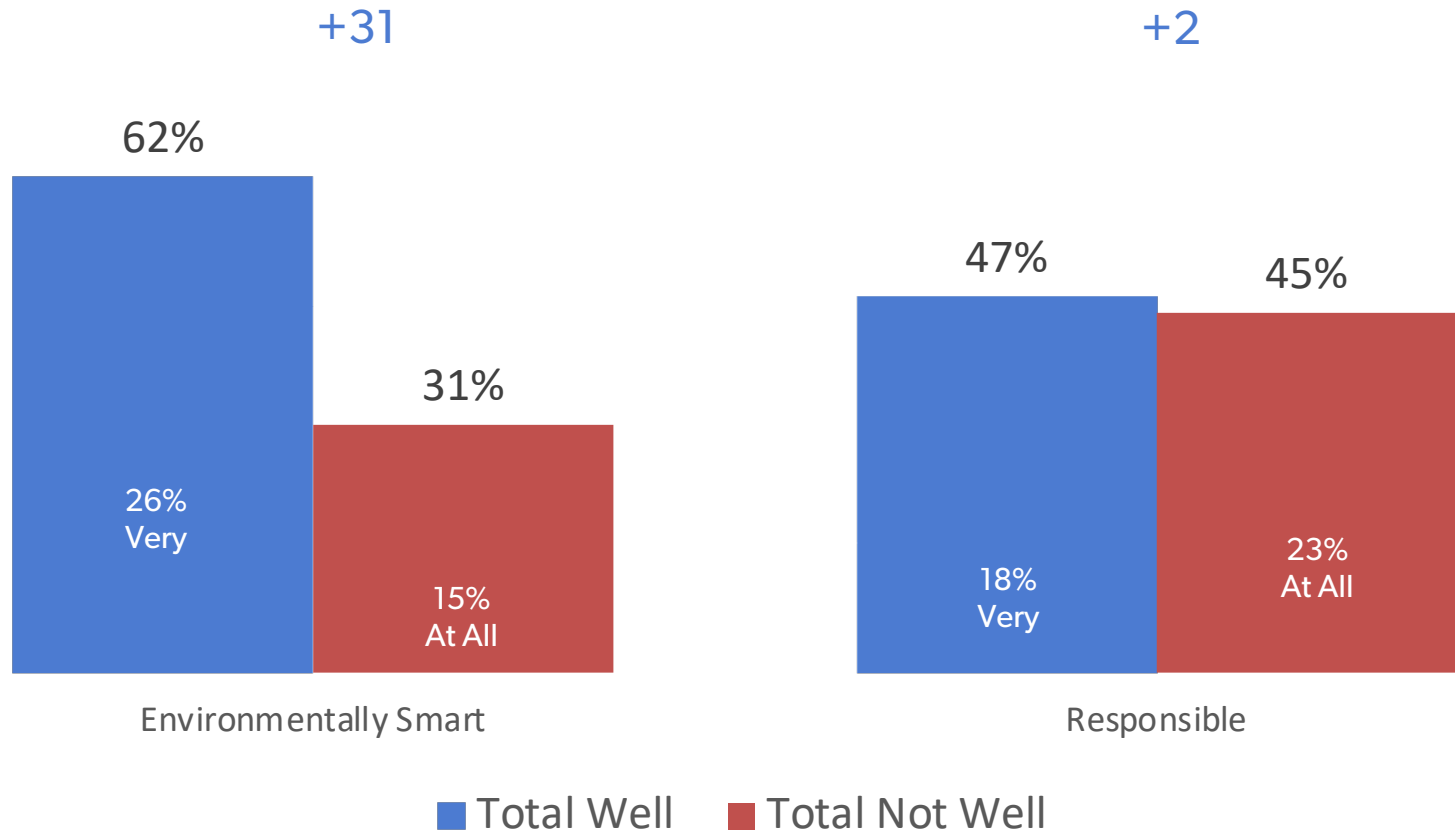
And, what are the most important reasons why you (favor/oppose) this proposal?

# While a majority of voters agree that this proposal “will cost me money,” is “unrealistic” and “too extreme”...



Now, please indicate how well you believe each of the following phrases describe Governor Murphy's proposal...

## They also say it is “environmentally smart” and are divided on whether it is “responsible.”



Now, please indicate how well you believe each of the following phrases describe Governor Murphy’s proposal...

## When voters read arguments on either side of the proposed regulations...

Now, please read what both supporters and opponents to these regulations say about this proposal...

Governor Murphy says that this is a commitment to every New Jersey family and the air they breathe and that New Jersey is just one crucial piece of our global response to climate change. Further, supporters say that with the adoption of these regulations, New Jersey can reduce its greatest source of climate damaging emissions, improve air quality and public health, and support a growing cleantech market place that will create even more green jobs in the state.

Critics of this proposal say that this will force the state's consumers to buy expensive electric cars that they may not be able to afford, and it will dramatically raise prices for used gas-powered cars. They argue that during natural disasters like Superstorm Sandy, with long power outages, drivers of electric cars may not be able to evacuate. Further, they say that just 7% of all new cars sold in the state right now are electric and that increasing that to 100% by 2035 is extreme and unrealistic.

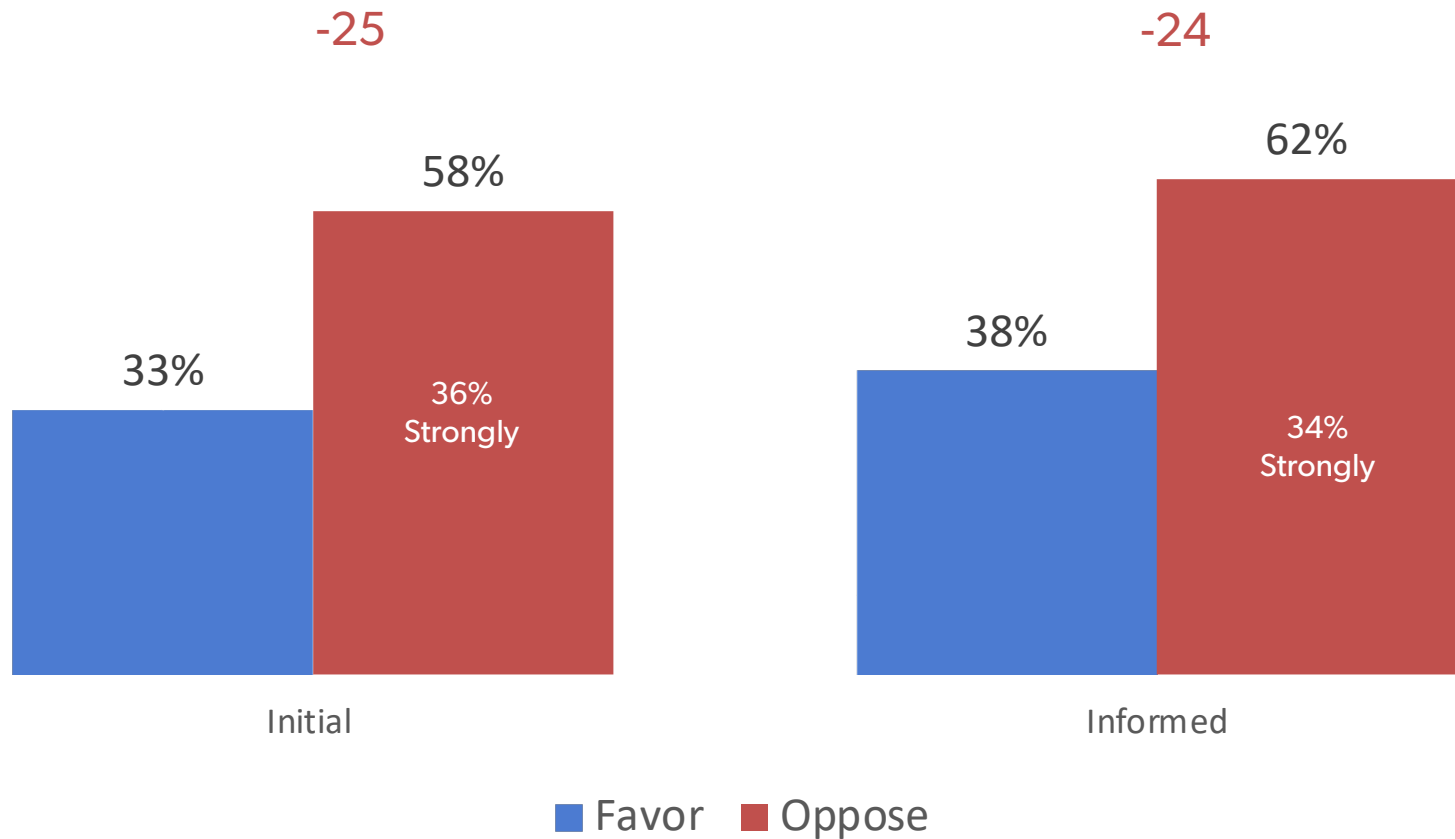
Now, having heard both sides of these proposed regulations, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose them?



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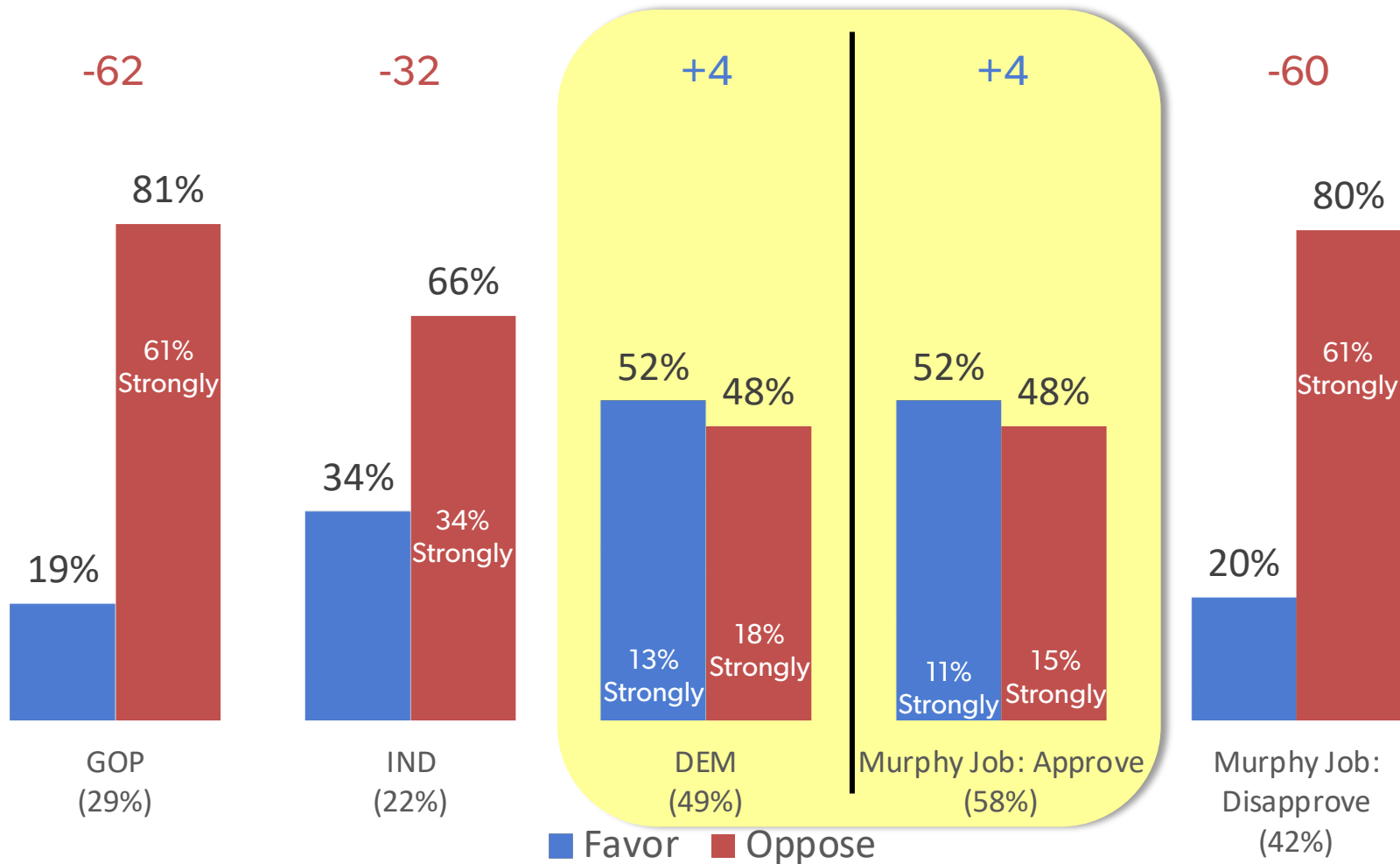


## Little changes, as a clear majority of voters oppose the regs.



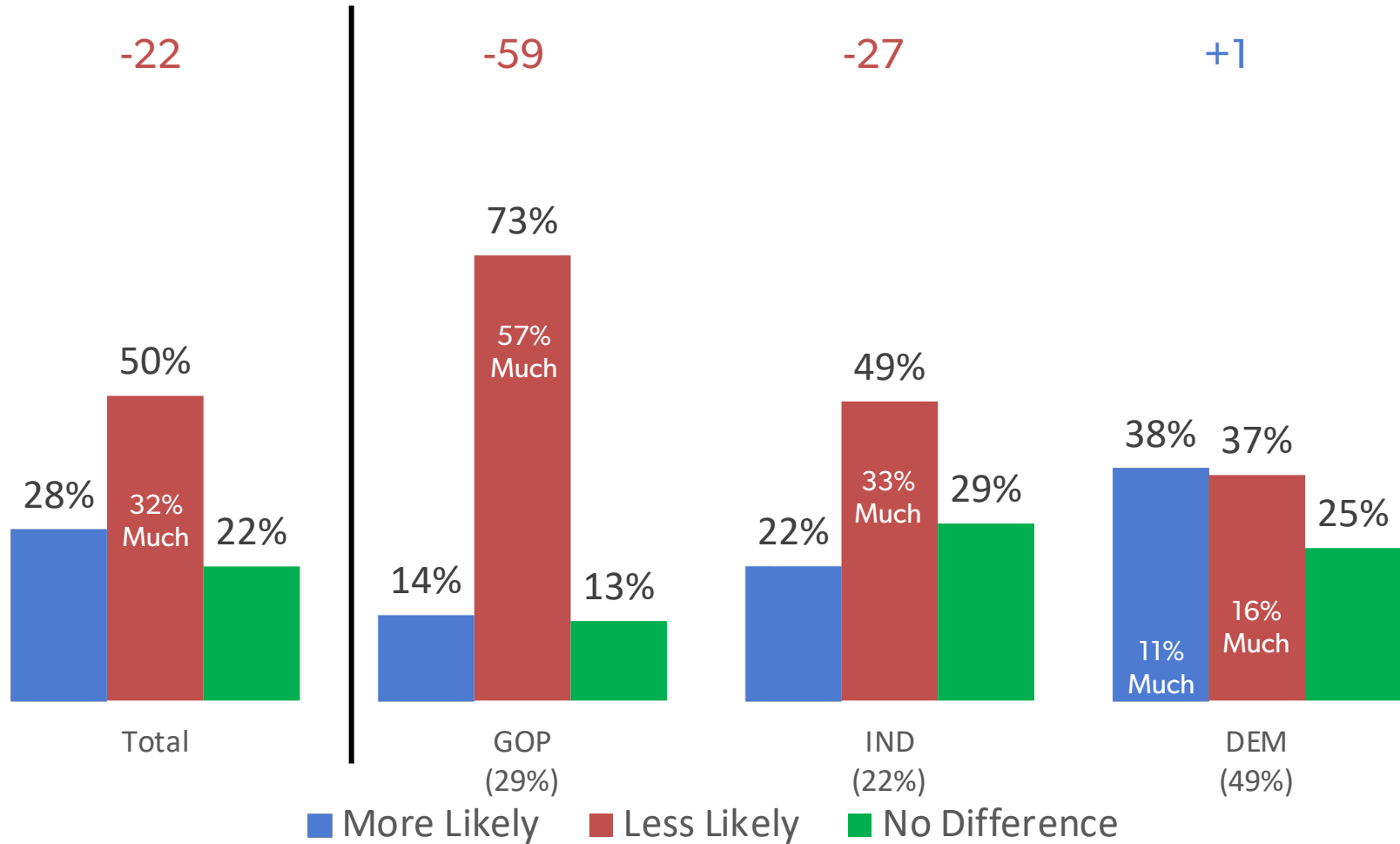
Now, having heard both sides of these proposed regulations, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose them?

# Even after hearing Gov. Murphy's argument in support of the regs, D's and Murphy's own "approvers" are barely convinced.



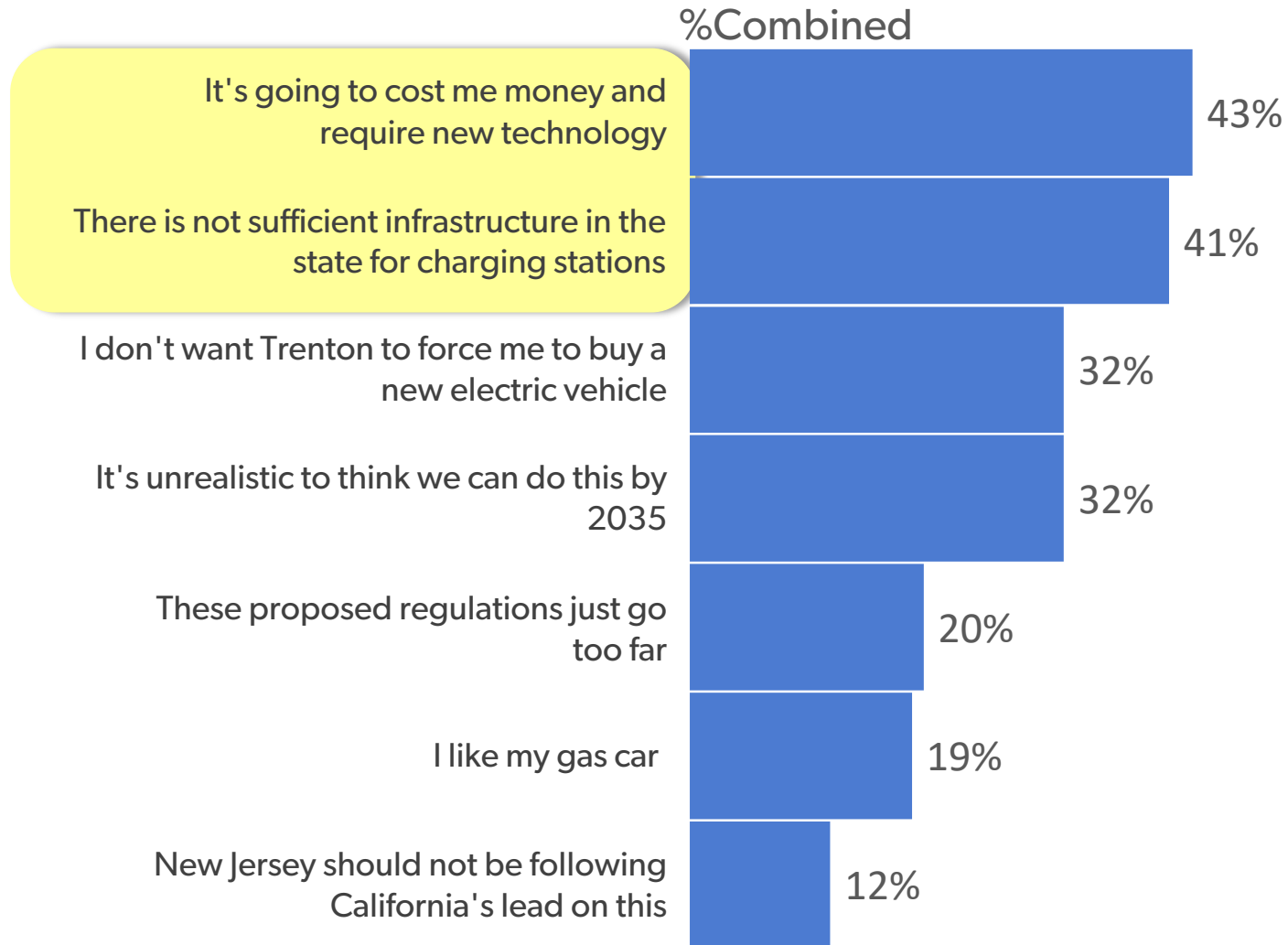
This proposal would essentially ban all new gasoline powered cars from being sold in the state by 2035. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this proposal by Governor Murphy?

# A majority of voters say they would be less likely to support a state legislator if that person voted in support of these car regulations.



And, if your state legislator voted to support these regulations, would that make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that person in the next election, or wouldn't it make any difference to you?

# Voters' main hesitations about these proposed regs center around their cost and voter concern about insufficient infrastructure in the state to support EVs.



And, which TWO of the following do you believe should be the top priorities for the Governor and state legislature?



# Messaging Word Clouds



And, if you could send a message to your state legislator regarding how you feel about these proposed regulations, what would you tell them?

# Verbatim Summary

When voters in New Jersey are asked what message they would send to their state legislator regarding how they feel about these regulations, they address the price of these regulations, the environmental impacts, and concerns over infrastructure.

New Jersey voters concerned with the price of these regulations focus on the affordability of electric vehicles. One Democratic woman from Hudson County believes, “it’s unrealistic to assume that everyone can eventually afford electric vehicles.” And a Republican man from Middlesex County claims the extra EV expenses “would be detrimental” to his livelihood. Also, an Independent man from Mercer County thinks it’s “too unrealistic to achieve” because of “how expensive everything is now.” Lastly, an Independent male voter from Ocean County points out that financial “incentives are needed for [these regulations] to happen.”



And, if you could send a message to your state legislator regarding how you feel about these proposed regulations, what would you tell them?

# Verbatim Summary

And other voters in New Jersey would send a message about how this legislation would impact the infrastructure of this state. They address the need for “significant investment” in EVs and charging infrastructure and a need for “more research.” As one Republican man from Warren County puts it, “the electric infrastructure is simply not there,” and thinks New Jersey is “susceptible to long term power outages” further increasing the problem. One Democratic woman from Camden County mentions “stories about battery issues in these cars.” And a Republican woman from the Middlesex County expresses concerns over “how far an electric only vehicle can travel on its own.



And, if you could send a message to your state legislator regarding how you feel about these proposed regulations, what would you tell them?

# Verbatim Summary

Other New Jersey voters would share a message to legislators about the potential environmental benefits. They believe the regulations should be implemented since they could have positive implications for New Jersey's environment. One Democratic man from Middlesex County thinks "there is no option," and "this must be done to save the planet." Additionally, a Republican man from Bergen County explains "even if it hurts me economically today, I want to breathe clean air, raise family and do all."



And, if you could send a message to your state legislator regarding how you feel about these proposed regulations, what would you tell them?



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