



Boulder County Survey Key Findings

May 2023

Methodology

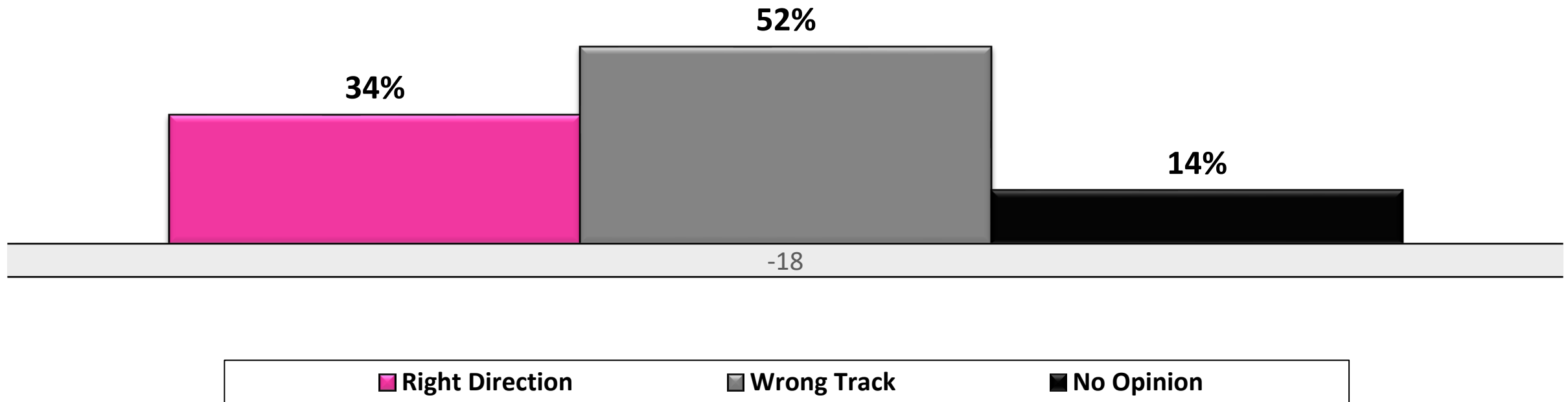
New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=500 voters throughout Boulder County from May 19-24, 2023. Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews (both cell phones and landlines) and online. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the county. Quotas were set for key demographic sub-groups, such as gender and age.

The margin of error is $\pm 4.38\%$ for the overall sample. The margin of error will vary for sub-groups.



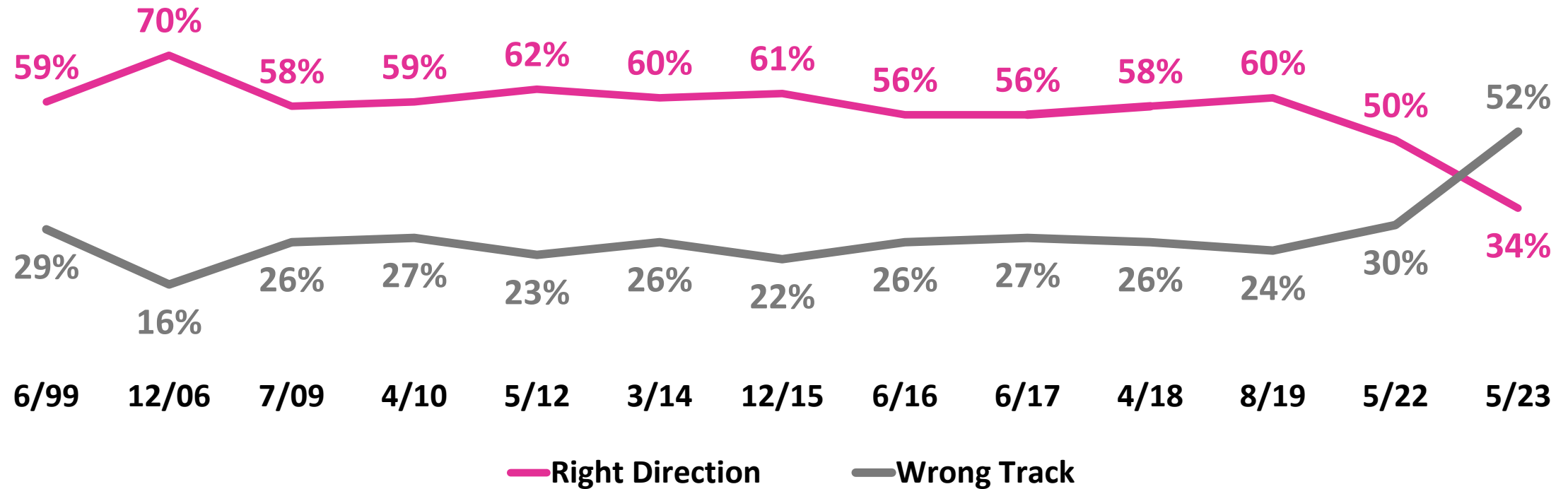
Views of the County

A majority of voters say things in Boulder County have gotten off on the wrong track in the past few years.



Generally speaking, would you say things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things here have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track in the past few years?

In the last few years, there has been a decline in voters saying that the county is going in the right direction.



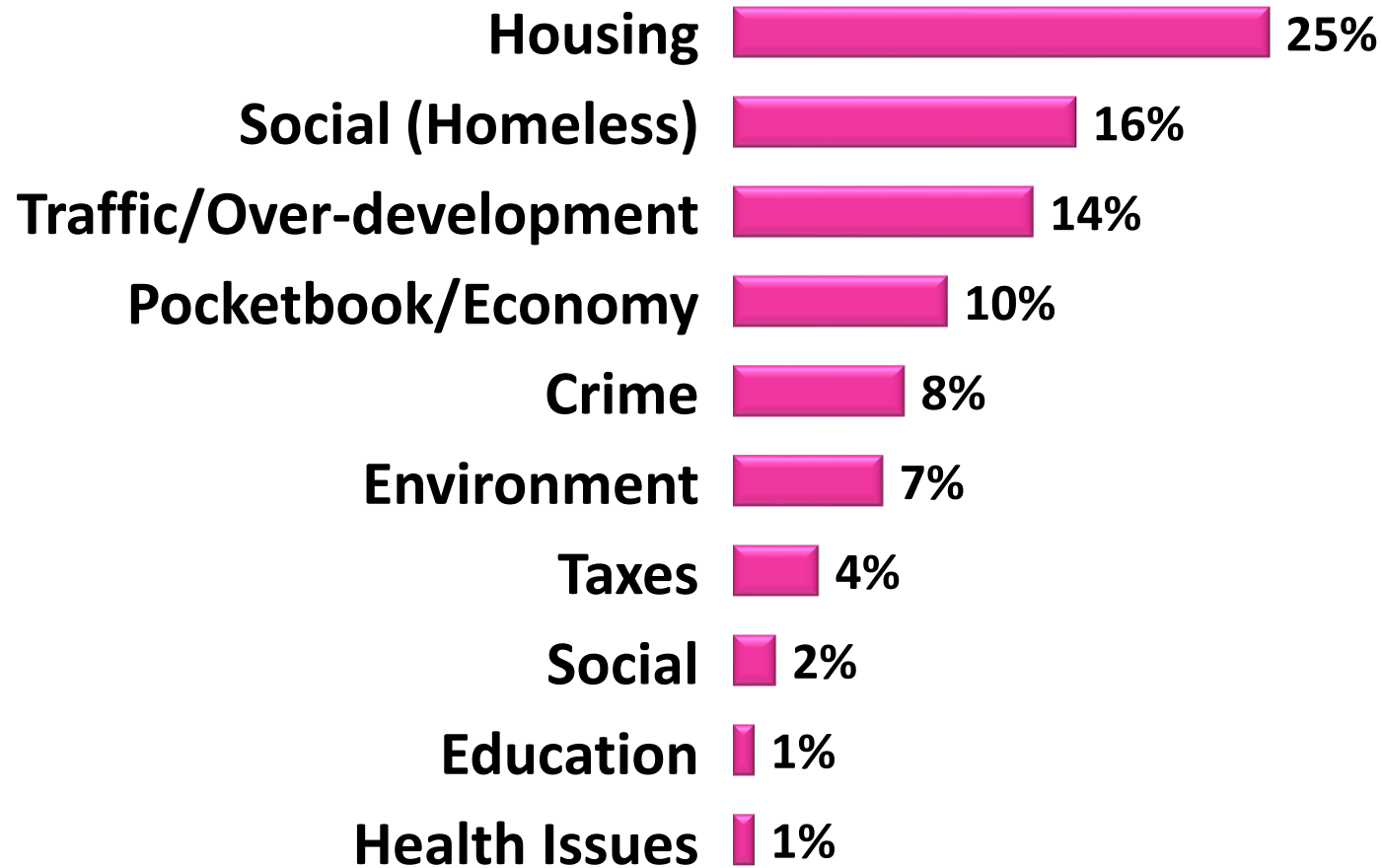
Generally speaking, would you say things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things here have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track in the past few years?

Various key subgroups, including Democrats and women, are less likely to say the county is going in the right direction than last year.

<i>% Right Direction</i>	2022	2023	Difference
Democrats	67%	41%	-26%
Follow Politics All of the Time	50%	24%	-26%
City of Boulder	57%	32%	-25%
\$75K+ Income	57%	32%	-25%
Women	53%	28%	-25%
Ages 55-64	52%	27%	-25%
Unincorporated/Small cities	50%	27%	-23%
Own Home	54%	32%	-22%
White	52%	32%	-20%

Generally speaking, would you say things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things here have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track in the past few years?

One-quarter of voters say the most important problem facing Boulder County is housing, followed by homelessness.



What would you say is the single MOST important problem facing Boulder County?

There is no single issue that dominates concerns among those who say the County is headed in the wrong direction.

	Wrong Track
Housing	17%
Homeless	16%
Traffic/Over-development	16%
Crime	11%
Pocketbook/Economy	10%
Taxes	6%
Environment	4%
Social	2%
Education	0%
Health Issues	0%

What would you say is the single MOST important problem facing Boulder County?

**Most voters say taxes are about right or high, but acceptable.
However, two-fifths now say they are way too high.**



Way too high

40%

High, but acceptable

35%

About right

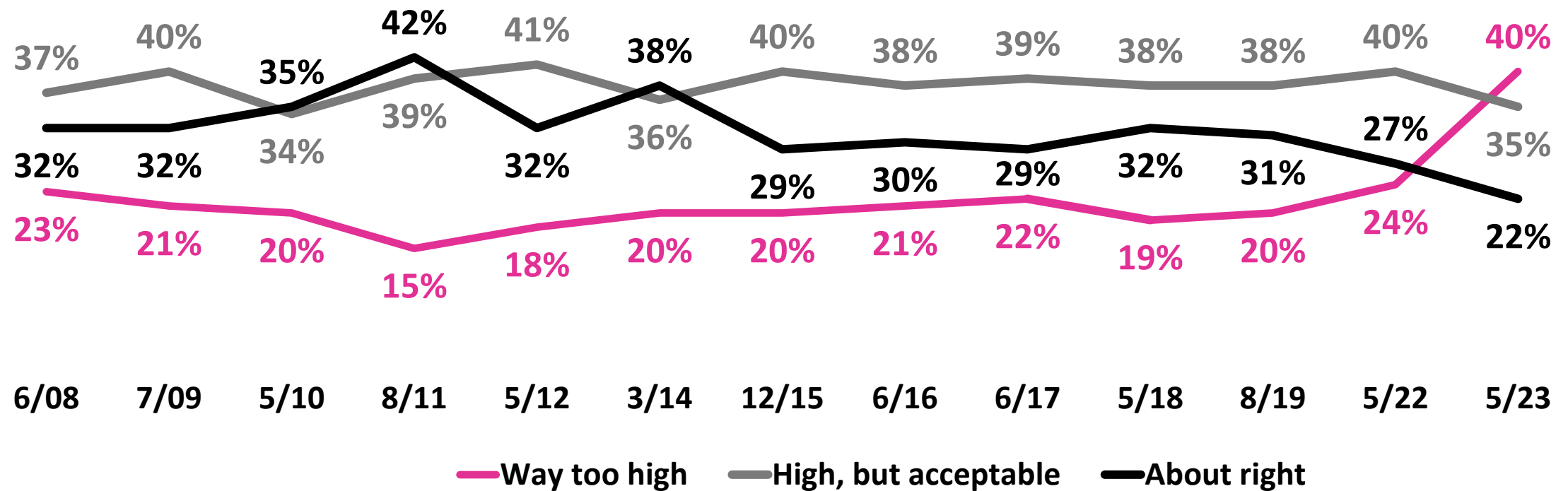
22%

Lower than expected

2%

Now thinking about just the taxes you pay to Boulder County today, would you say that the taxes you pay to the County government are way too high, high but acceptable, about right, or lower than you would expect for the services the County government provides?

There is an increasing number of voters who say taxes in the county are way too high.



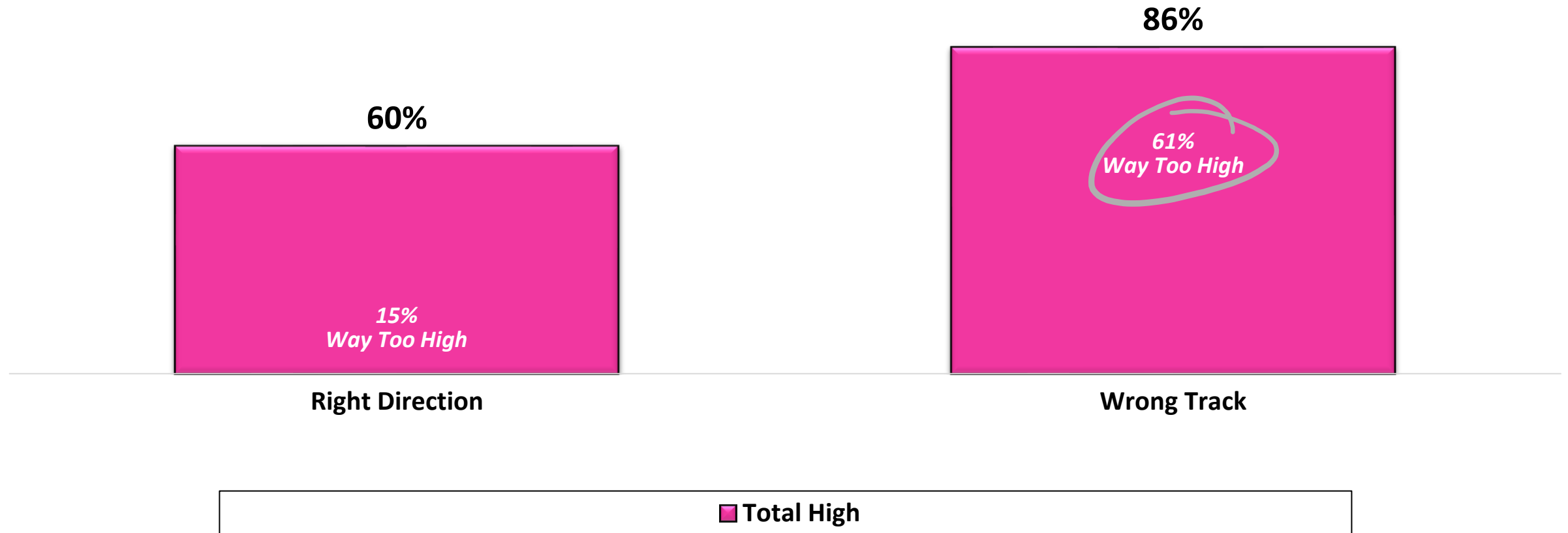
Now thinking about just the taxes you pay to Boulder County today, would you say that the taxes you pay to the County government are way too high, high but acceptable, about right, or lower than you would expect for the services the County government provides?

The increase in voters saying taxes are way too high is driven by those who follow politics all the time and have a higher income, among several others.

<i>% Way too high</i>	2022	2023	Difference
Follow Politics All of the Time	31%	60%	+29%
\$75K+ Income	20%	41%	+21%
Unincorporated/Small cities	24%	44%	+20%
White	21%	40%	+19%
Ages 55-64	28%	46%	+18%
Ages 65+	27%	45%	+18%
City of Boulder	16%	34%	+18%
Own Home	27%	44%	+17%
Men	26%	43%	+17%

Now thinking about just the taxes you pay to Boulder County today, would you say that the taxes you pay to the County government are way too high, high but acceptable, about right, or lower than you would expect for the services the County government provides?

Voters who think the county is on the wrong track are much more likely to say taxes are way too high.



Now thinking about just the taxes you pay to Boulder County today, would you say that the taxes you pay to the County government are way too high, high but acceptable, about right, or lower than you would expect for the services the County government provides?



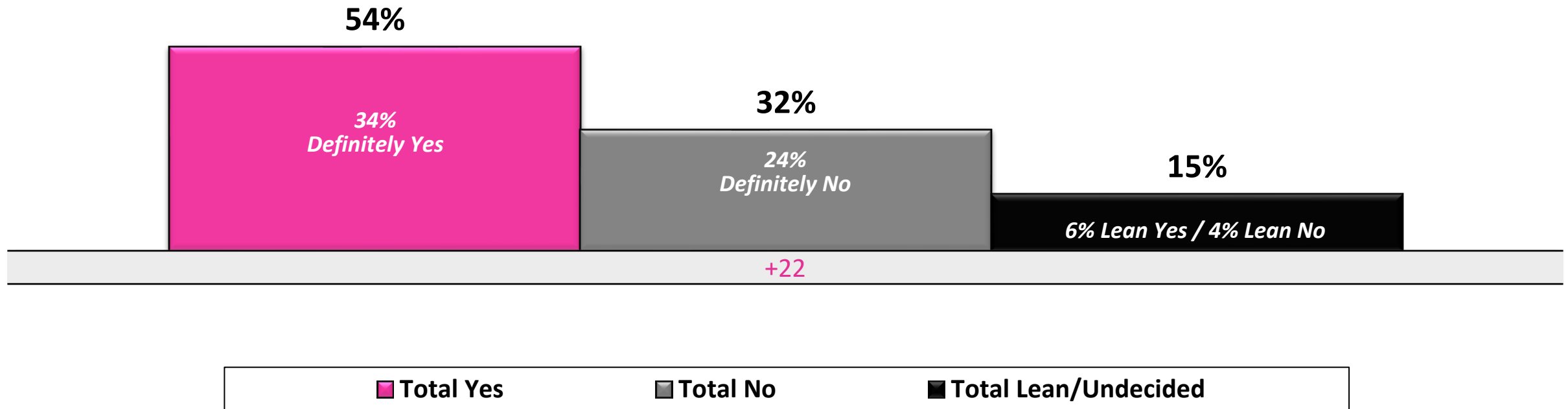
Potential Ballot Question to Fund Mental Health Services

We provided the following language for a potential ballot proposal:

Shall Boulder County taxes be increased by \$8 million commencing in 2025, and by such amounts as may be generated annually thereafter, from a sales tax increase of 0.08 percent, that is an additional eight cents on a one hundred dollar purchase, for the purpose of increasing the availability and affordability of mental health and substance abuse services in the county, including

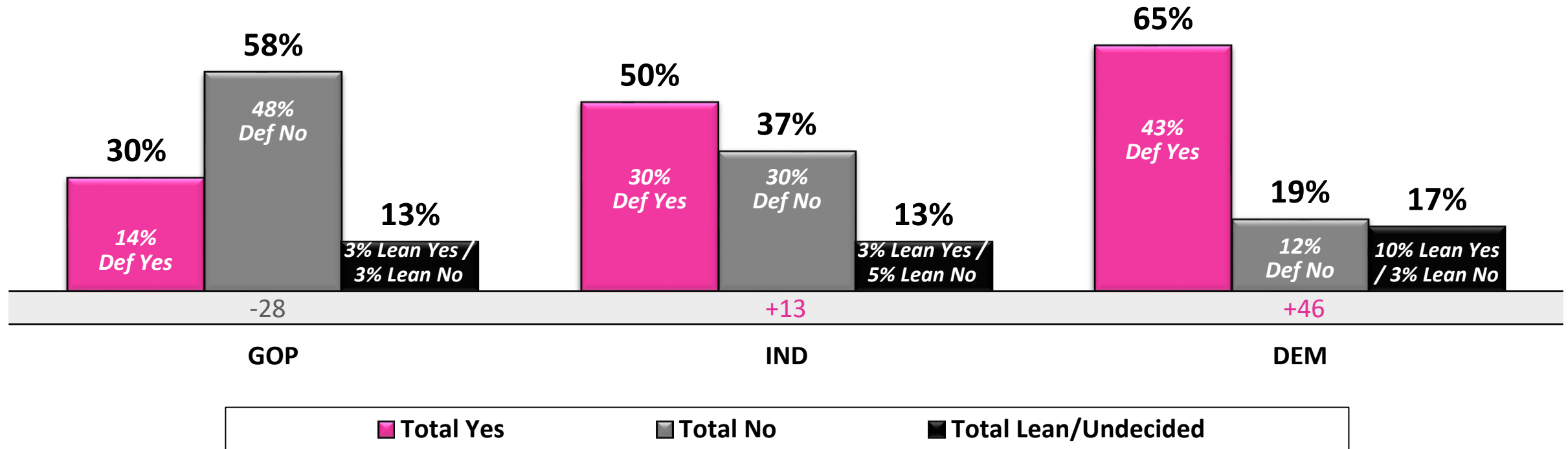
- Providing additional services, including preventative, early identification, intervention, support, and treatment for youth, families, and adults who are struggling to obtain care;
- Providing more services and facilities to help stabilize residents when they are in crisis in an effort to reduce the harm they may cause themselves or others; and
- Providing navigation support for youth, parents and residents on how to access affordable mental health care.

The proposal receives majority support, with around one-third saying they would “definitely” vote yes.



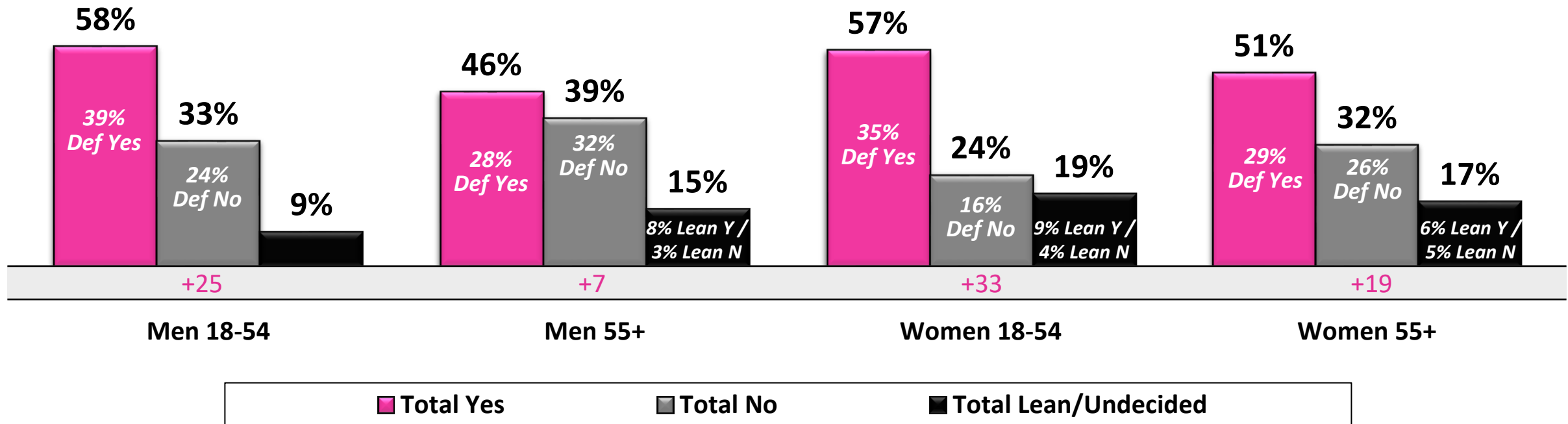
There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Democrats and Independents are very likely to support the proposal.



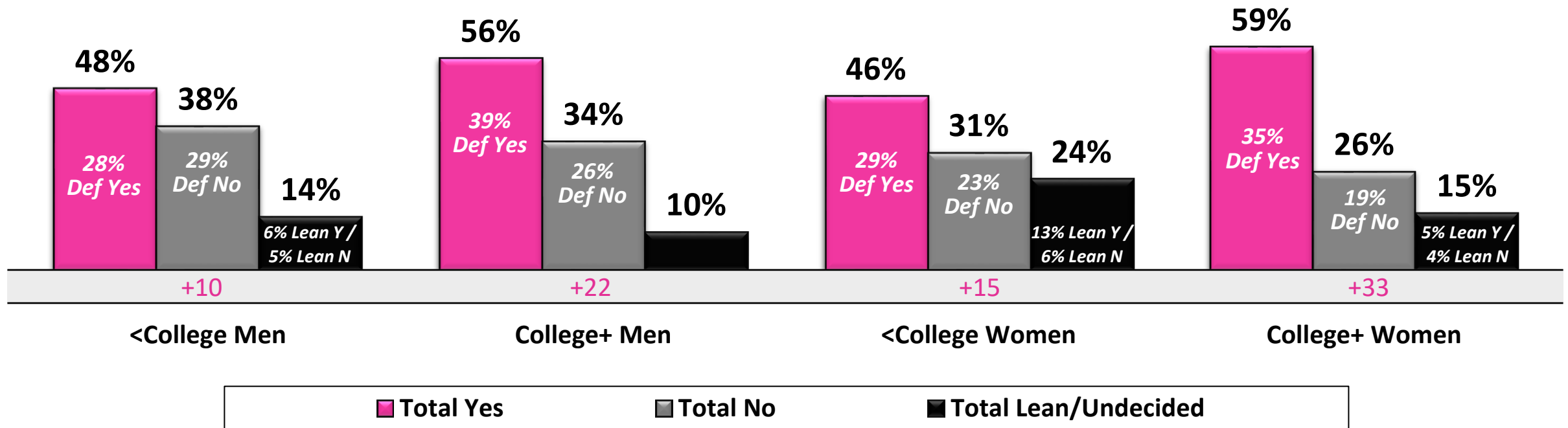
There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Younger voters are more likely to support the proposal; older men are least supportive.



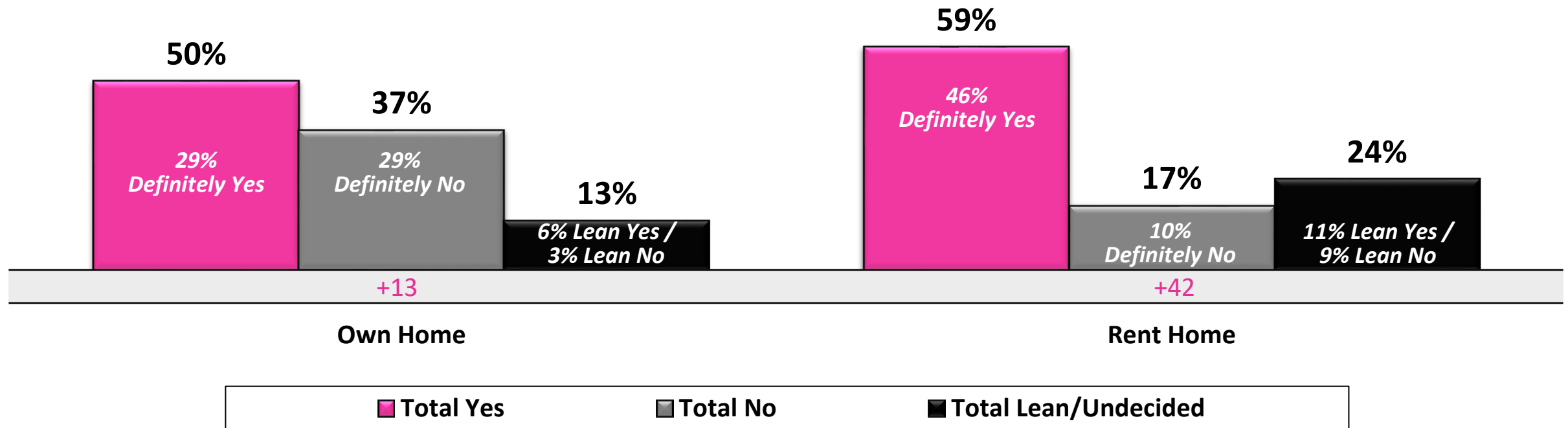
There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Most college-educated voters support the proposal.



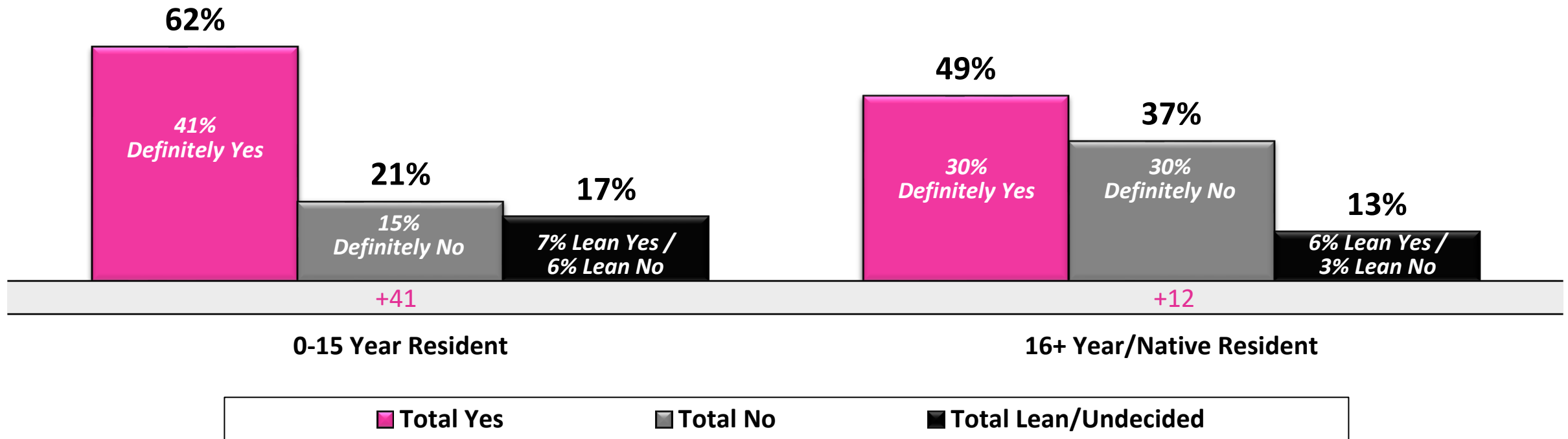
There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Renters are more likely to support the proposal, including nearly half who would definitely vote for it.



There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Newer residents are much more supportive of the proposal.



There may be a proposal on the ballot here in Boulder County in the future – please consider it carefully as some of the language is technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...

Many who support the proposal say they do so because they see a need to help with mental health; many connect it to homeless.

	# of mentions
Helps with mental health	87
Addresses homelessness	29
Helps with substance abuse	25
Needed/necessary	23
Helps the community/its people	18
Public safety	11
Needs more funding/resources	9
Important/serious problem	9
Small tax increase	8
Good/ethical/kind	8
Preventative	7
Good use of funds	4

“Mental healthcare should be encouraged and accessible to everyone.” **Female, Age 18-34, Independent**

“Mental health is a national crisis that needs to be addressed and will have many downstream benefits.” **Male, Age 35-44, Democrat**

“It relates to the homelessness problem. There are currently not enough mental health services available.” **Male, Age 65+, Democrat**

What are the one or two main reasons why you would vote Yes on this proposal?

Opposition to increased or new taxes is the top reason to those voting against the proposal.

	# of mentions
Oppose tax increase or new taxes/taxes are too high	71
Need to control spending/already have enough funds	32
Government waste	14
Attracts or doesn't help with homelessness/substance abuse	10
Don't trust government/money will not be used in this way	9
High cost of living	8
Spend funds elsewhere	8
Have not seen positive changes	7
Will not work	6
Need more information	5
Does not benefit many people	3
Cannot afford it	3

“Quit raising taxes. Find the money elsewhere. Tax rates in the city of Boulder and Boulder County are ridiculously high and very little seems to happen as it currently stands. Raising taxes isn't the answer.” **Male, Age 18-34, Independent**

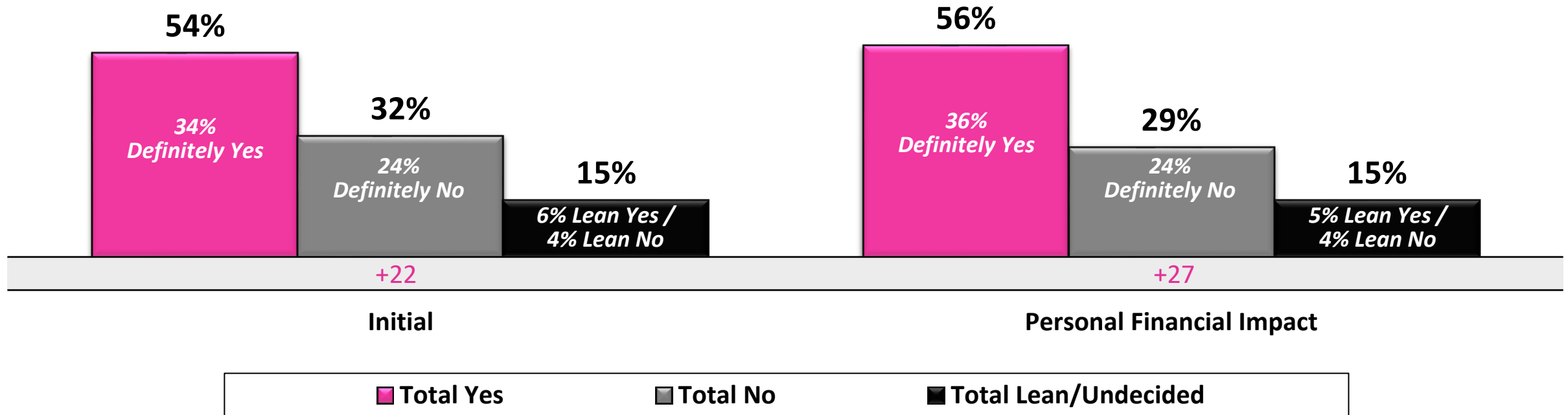
“There is not a need to increase taxes for something that is generally inexpensive enough to trim from other budget areas.” **Male, Age 35-44, Independent**

“No more taxes! People need to work. Stop depending on others.” **Female, Age 65+, Republican**

What are the one or two main reasons why you would vote No on this proposal?

When voters hear the amount that sales taxes would increase, support for the proposal remains steady.

If voters approve this measure, it would raise sales taxes by approximately \$1.86 per month, or \$22.28 per year for the average County household.

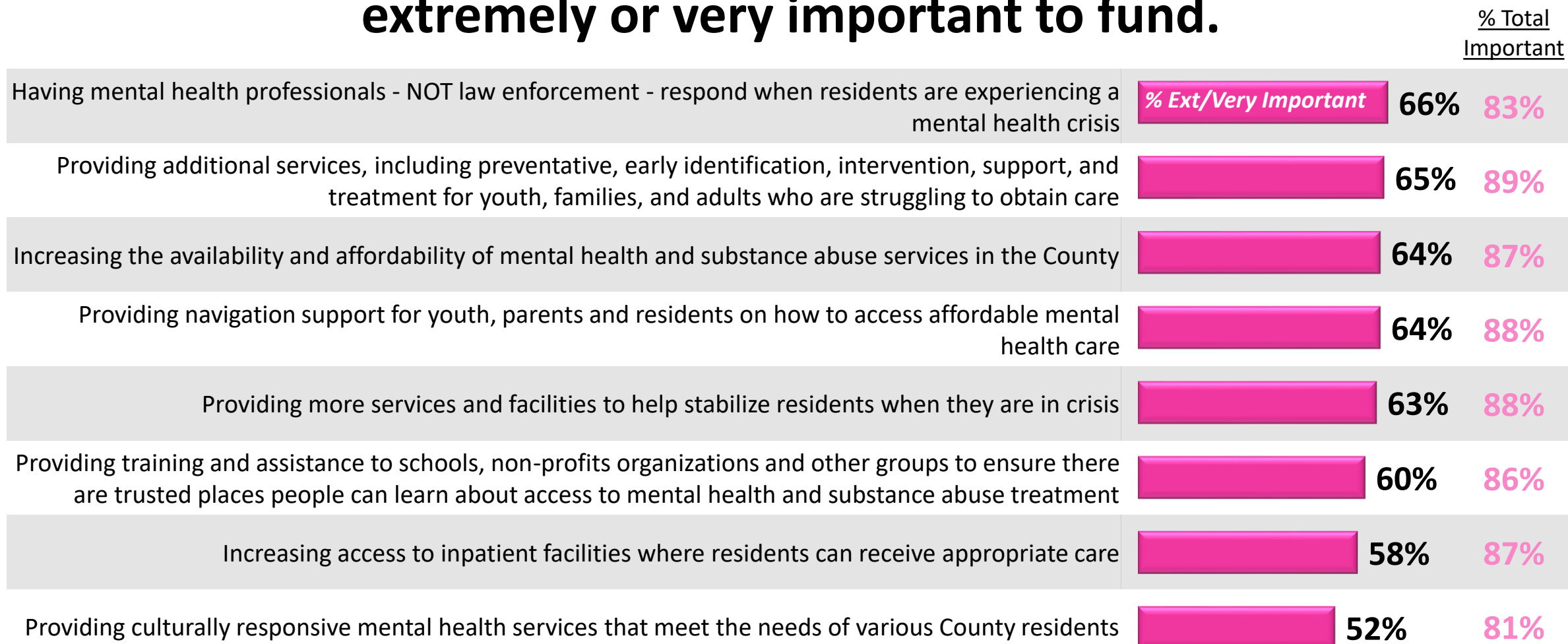


Knowing that, would you then vote Yes in support of the proposal or vote No against it?



Communicating More about Funding Mental Health

A majority of County voters say all of these potential elements are extremely or very important to fund.



There are a number of different things which could be funded by the County in the future. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important it is to you that this particular item be funded by the County. Is it...extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important... to you that that particular item be funded?

Mental health professionals responding to mental health crises is extremely/very important to strong majorities of Independents and Democrats.

GOP
Providing more services to help stabilize residents in crisis 44%
Providing additional mental health services 44%
Providing navigation support 43%
Increase access to inpatient facilities 43%
Providing training/assistance 42%

IND
Having mental health professionals respond 61%
Providing navigation support 59%
Providing more services to help stabilize residents in crisis 57%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 57%
Increase access to inpatient facilities 54%

Showing % Extremely/Very Important

DEM
Providing additional mental health services 81%
Having mental health professionals respond 80%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 79%
Providing more services to help stabilize residents in crisis 75%
Providing navigation support 74%

There are a number of different things which could be funded by the County in the future. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important it is to you that this particular item be funded by the County. Is it...extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important... to you that that particular item be funded?

Among voters under 55, at least seven-in-ten say it is extremely or very important to fund mental health professionals responding to crises.

18-44
Having mental health professionals respond 72%
Providing additional mental health services 71%
Providing more services 69%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 68%
Providing navigation support 67%

45-54
Having mental health professionals respond 71%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 67%
Providing more services 64%
Providing training/assistance 63%
Providing additional mental health services 62%

55-64
Providing navigation support 67%
Providing additional mental health services 63%
Providing training/assistance 63%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 61%
Providing more services 59%

65+
Having mental health professionals respond 60%
Increasing availability/affordability of mental health/substance abuse services 59%
Increase access to inpatient facilities 58%
Providing navigation support 56%
Providing training/assistance 56%

Showing % Extremely/Very Important

There are a number of different things which could be funded by the County in the future. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important it is to you that this particular item be funded by the County. Is it...extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important... to you that that particular item be funded?

Nearly half of voters say a very convincing reason to support the proposal is that it will help address mental health among young people.

% Total Convincing

<p>According to a 2021 survey of middle and high school students, nearly 40 percent of Boulder County youth reported feeling so sad and hopeless they stopped usual activities, and nearly one-in-six said they had seriously contemplated suicide in the past year. This proposal will help our schools and community organizations better address this mental health crisis among our young people.</p>	<p>% Very Convincing 46% 73%</p>
<p>In 2022, Mental Health America ranked Colorado 51st for Adult Mental Health behind all other states and the District of Columbia. Too many people are suffering and going without care, with cost being a primary barrier. We can help more people obtain the affordable care they need through this proposal.</p>	<p>35% 67%</p>
<p>By investing in substance use services, we can help reduce people’s suffering while also reducing the burden on our criminal justice system and homeless services.</p>	<p>23% 63%</p>
<p>Our community has experienced extreme levels of stress due to COVID, disasters, gun violence, inflation, and other factors, which have increased the need for mental health services.</p>	<p>23% 59%</p>
<p>There is currently a shortage of mental health providers in our community, leading to long waits for mental health services. Investments in recruiting and retaining mental health professionals will increase the availability of mental health care in the County.</p>	<p>22% 63%</p>

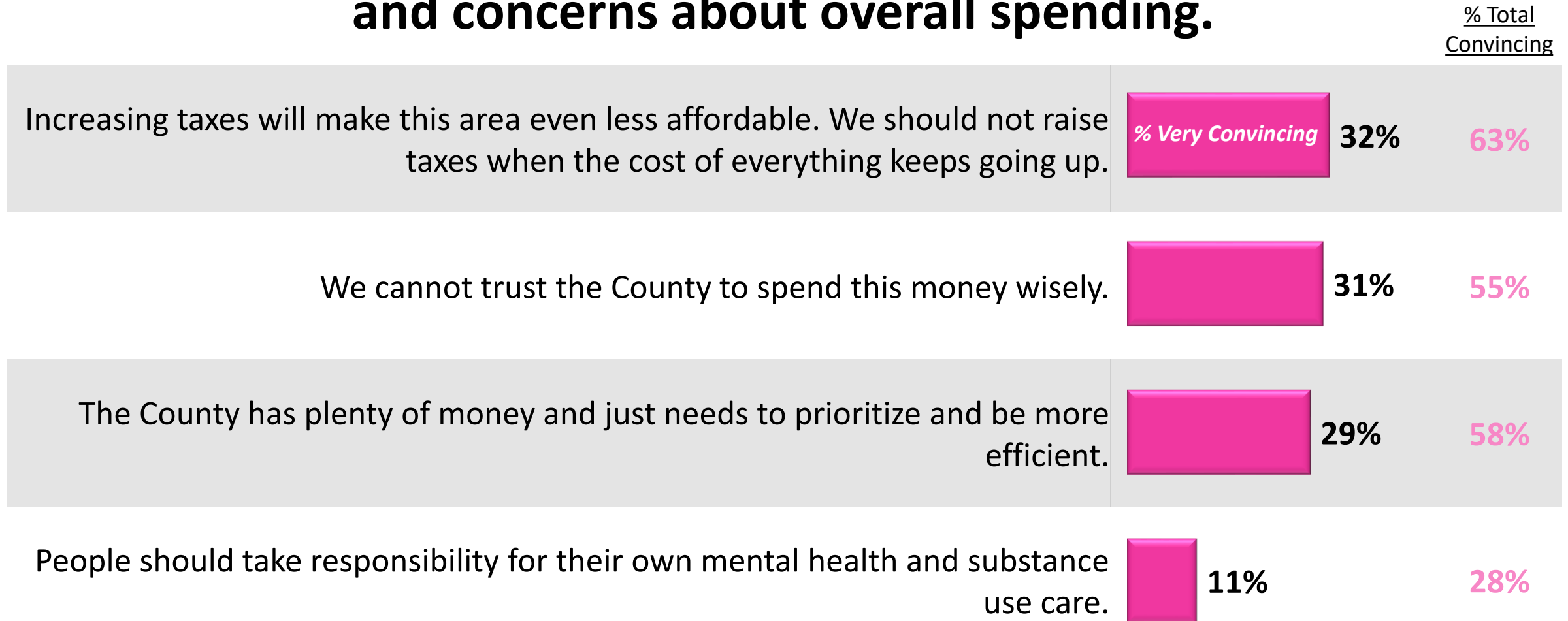
I am going to read you some reasons some people say we should vote YES in favor of a potential ballot proposal to fund mental health care in Boulder County. After I read each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF that proposal...

Most younger women and nearly half of younger men say addressing mental health among the youth is a very convincing reason to support the proposal.

<i>% Very Convincing</i>	Men 18-54	Men 55+	Women 18-54	Women 55+
40% of Boulder youth reported feeling sad/hopeless	47%	31%	58%	40%
Mental Health America ranked CO 51 st for mental health	36%	26%	38%	37%
Investing in substance use services	24%	16%	28%	23%
Extreme levels of stress	13%	20%	29%	29%
Shortage of mental health providers	16%	16%	27%	28%

I am going to read you some reasons some people say we should vote YES in favor of a potential ballot proposal to fund mental health care in Boulder County. After I read each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF that proposal...

The most compelling concern about making the area less affordable and concerns about overall spending.



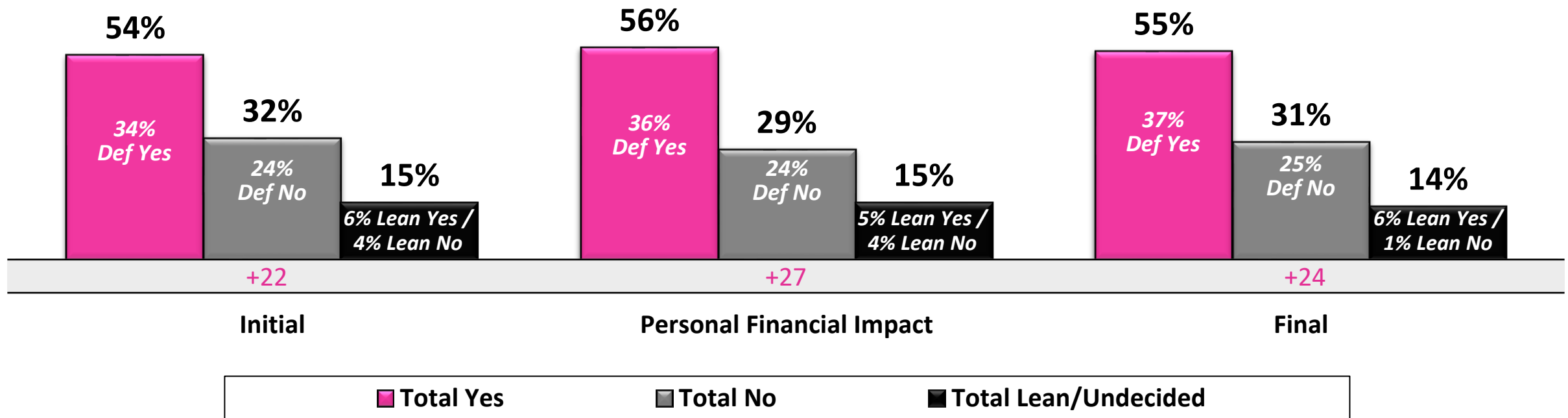
I am going to read you some reasons some people say we should vote NO against a potential ballot proposal to fund mental health care in Boulder County. After I read each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote No against that proposal...

Over a third of younger men say not trusting the county to spend the money wisely and the county already having money are very convincing messages against the proposal.

<i>% Very Convincing</i>	GOP	IND	DEM	Men 18-54	Men 55+	Women 18-54	Women 55+
Cost of everything going up	58%	34%	22%	29%	34%	31%	36%
Cannot trust County to spend money wisely	55%	35%	19%	36%	35%	22%	32%
Plenty of money	48%	33%	19%	37%	34%	16%	26%
People should take responsibility	24%	12%	6%	12%	17%	4%	12%

I am going to read you some reasons some people say we should vote NO against a potential ballot proposal to fund mental health care in Boulder County. After I read each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote No against that proposal...

After the messaging, a majority of voters are still supportive of the proposal.

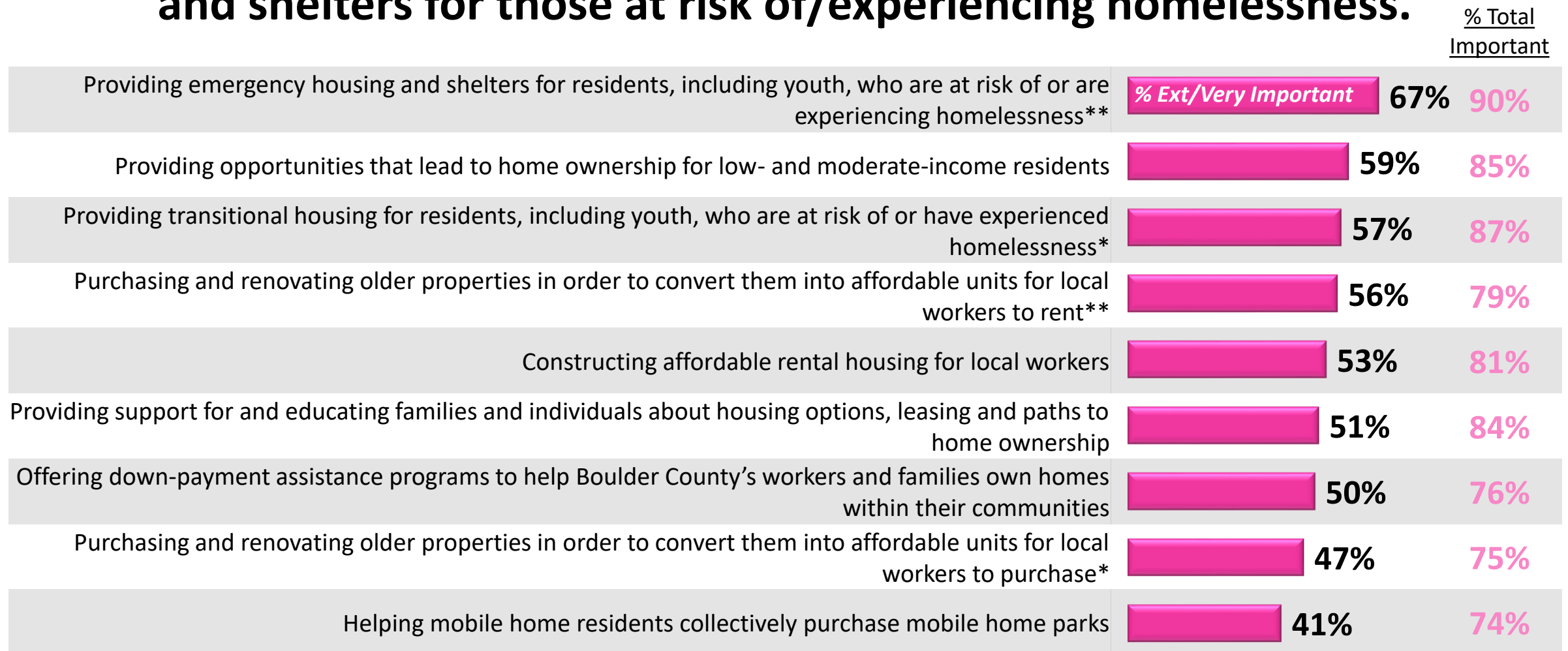


Having heard more about this please consider this proposal again. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...



Housing in Boulder County

Two-thirds say it is extremely or very important to fund emergency housing and shelters for those at risk of/experiencing homelessness.



Please indicate again how important it is to you that this particular item related to affordable housing be funded by the County.

*Sample A, N=250 **Sample B, N=250

Providing transitional and emergency housing are the top priorities among Independents and Democrats.

GOP
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 42%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 39%
Providing emergency housing** 37%
Providing support for/educating families about housing options 34%
Offering down-payment assistance 33%

IND
Providing emergency housing** 66%
Providing transitional housing* 56%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 52%
Constructing affordable rental housing 47%
Providing support for/educating families about housing options 47%

DEM
Providing transitional housing* 75%
Providing emergency housing** 75%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 73%
Constructing affordable rental housing 67%
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 67%

Showing % Extremely/Very Important

Please indicate again how important it is to you that this particular item related to affordable housing be funded by the County.

*Sample A, N=250 **Sample B, N=250

While providing emergency housing is most important to homeowners and renters alike, renters are more likely to say it is extremely or very important.

Own Home
Providing emergency housing** 60%
Providing transitional housing* 51%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 51%
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 48%
Constructing affordable rental housing 47%

Rent Home
Providing emergency housing** 90%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 86%
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 85%
Offering down-payment assistance 79%
Constructing affordable rental housing 78%

Showing % Extremely/Very Important

Please indicate again how important it is to you that this particular item related to affordable housing be funded by the County.

*Sample A, N=250 **Sample B, N=250

Younger voters are more likely to say the housing funding items are extremely or very important.

18-44
Providing emergency housing** 80%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 74%
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 69%
Providing transitional housing* 67%
Offering down-payment assistance 62%

45-54
Providing emergency housing** 66%
Providing transitional housing* 61%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 59%
Constructing affordable rental housing 56%
Providing support for/educating families about housing options 50%

55-64
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 53%
Providing emergency housing** 51%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 47%
Providing transitional housing* 46%
Constructing affordable rental housing 46%

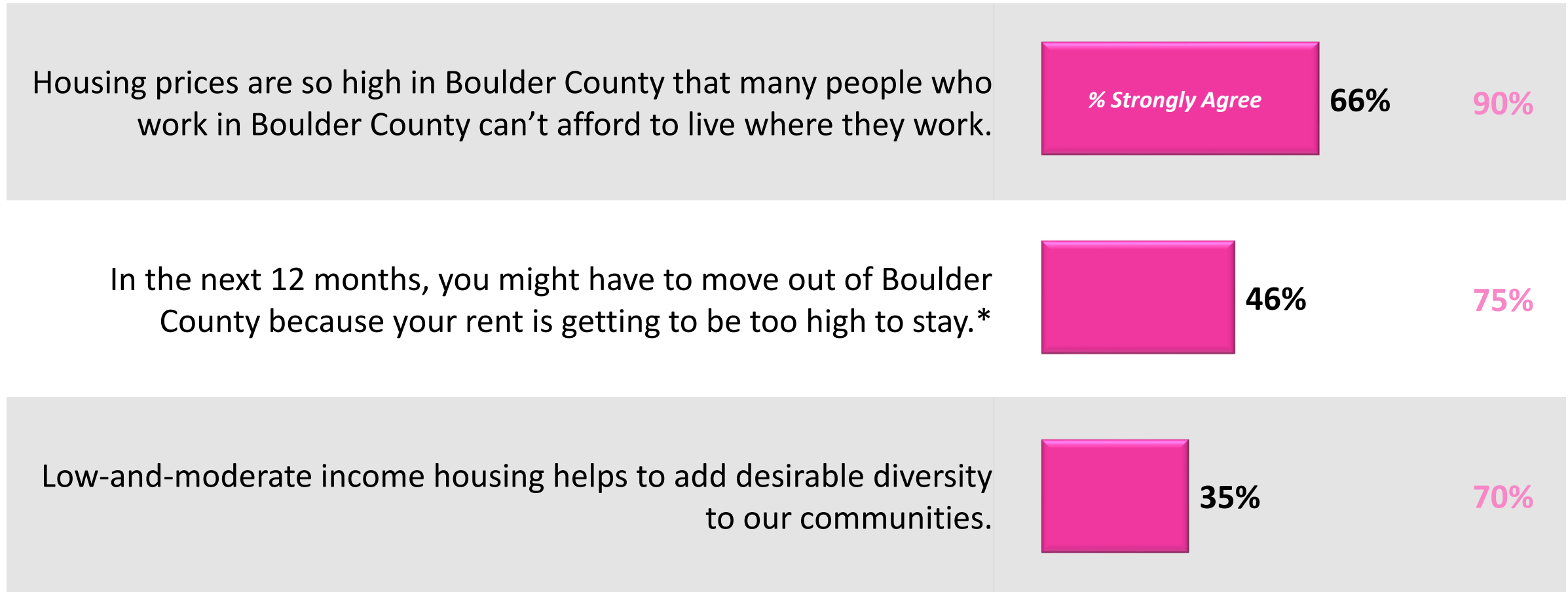
65+
Providing emergency housing** 63%
Providing support for/educating families about housing options 48%
Constructing affordable rental housing 47%
Providing opportunities that lead to home ownership 44%
Purchasing/renovating older properties for rent** 44%

Showing % Extremely/Very Important

Please indicate again how important it is to you that this particular item related to affordable housing be funded by the County.

*Sample A, N=250 **Sample B, N=250

Most voters strongly agree that housing prices are so high in Boulder County that many workers cannot afford to live here.



Thinking about a few statements regarding housing – For each one please tell me if you agree or disagree with that idea.

*Asked among renters only

Voters do not feel that people can find an affordable home in the county.

% Total Disagree

The housing problem for those living in Boulder County is not as bad as people say it is. Most people looking for a home to buy in Boulder County can find one they can afford somewhere in Boulder County.



55% 82%

Most people looking for a place to rent in Boulder County can find a place they can afford.



40% 75%

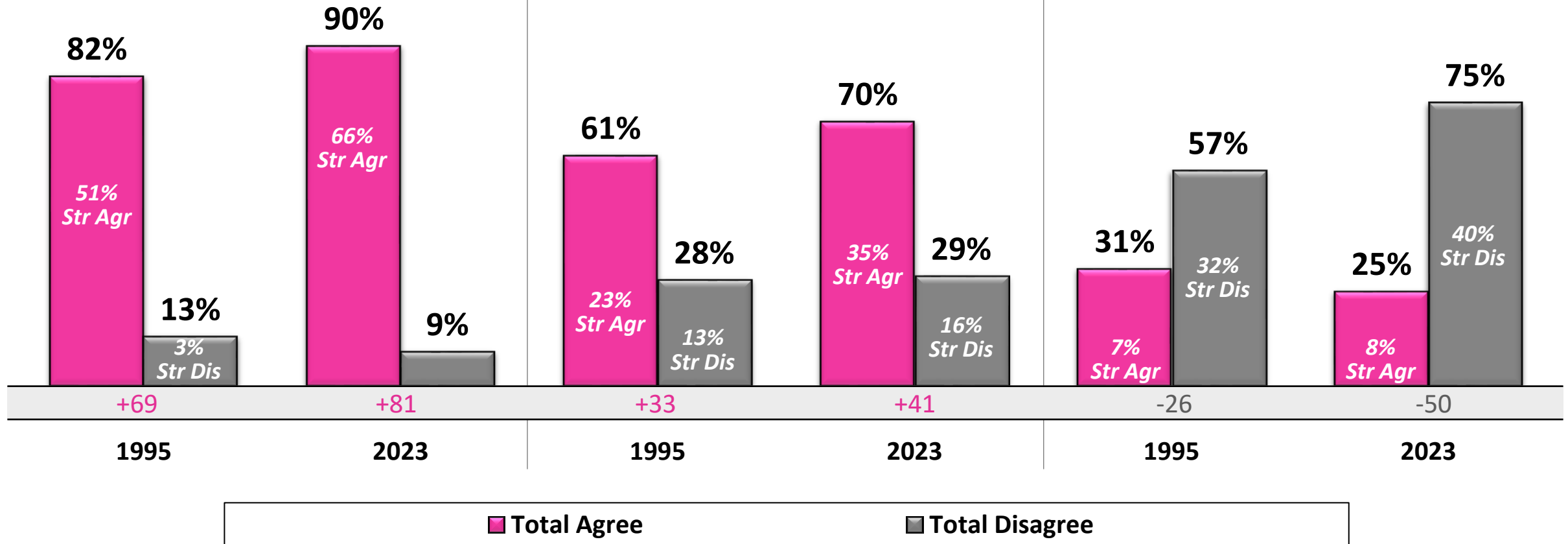
Thinking about a few statements regarding housing – For each one please tell me if you agree or disagree with that idea.

In the past decades, sentiments about housing in the county have gotten worse.

Housing prices are so high in Boulder County that many people who work in Boulder County can't afford to live where they work.

Low-and-moderate income housing helps to add desirable diversity to our communities.

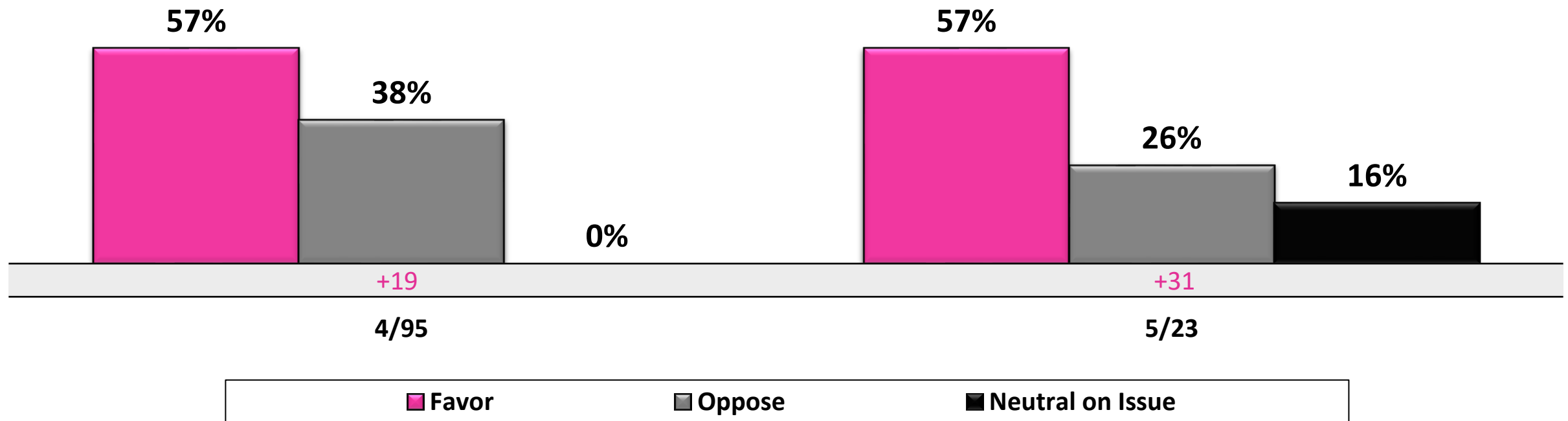
Most people looking for a place to rent in Boulder County can find a place they can afford.



Thinking about a few statements regarding housing – For each one please tell me if you agree or disagree with that idea.

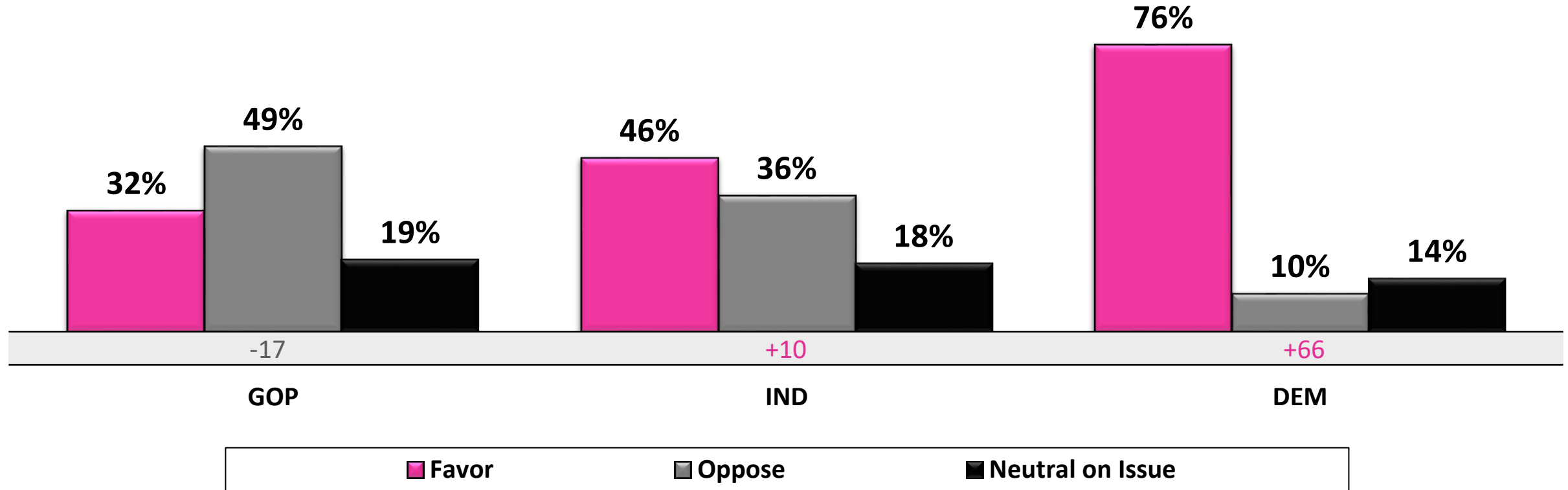
Most voters still favor local governments increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing for people with a lower income who live or work in Boulder County.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



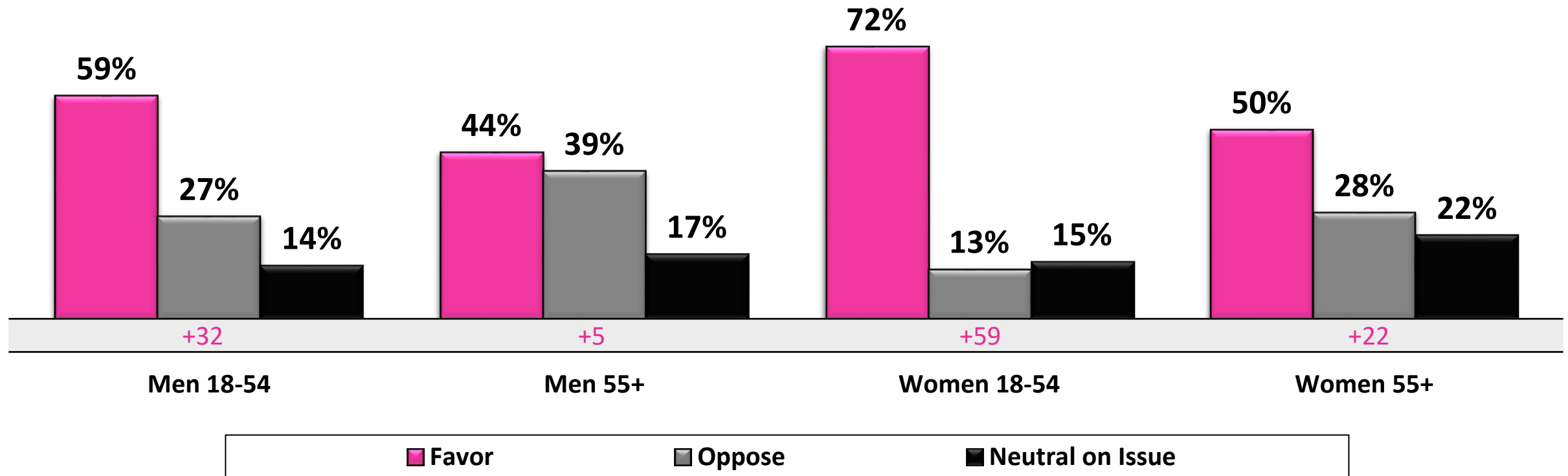
Most Democrats and a plurality of Independents favor increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



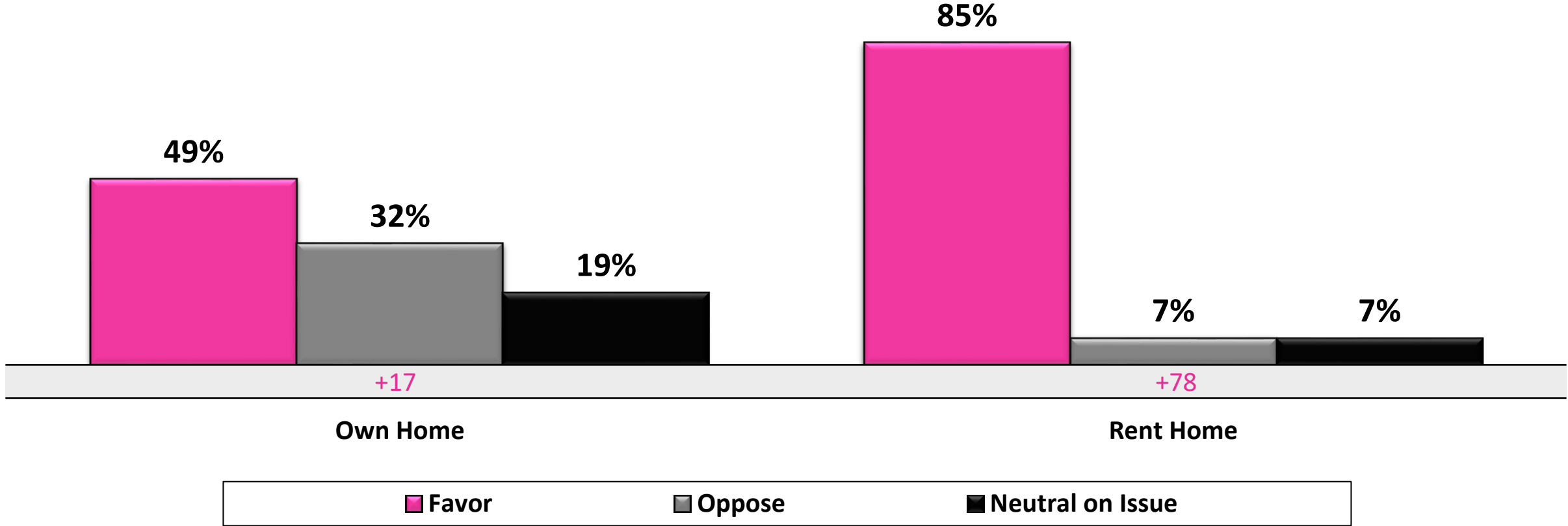
Younger voters, especially women, are more likely to favor increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



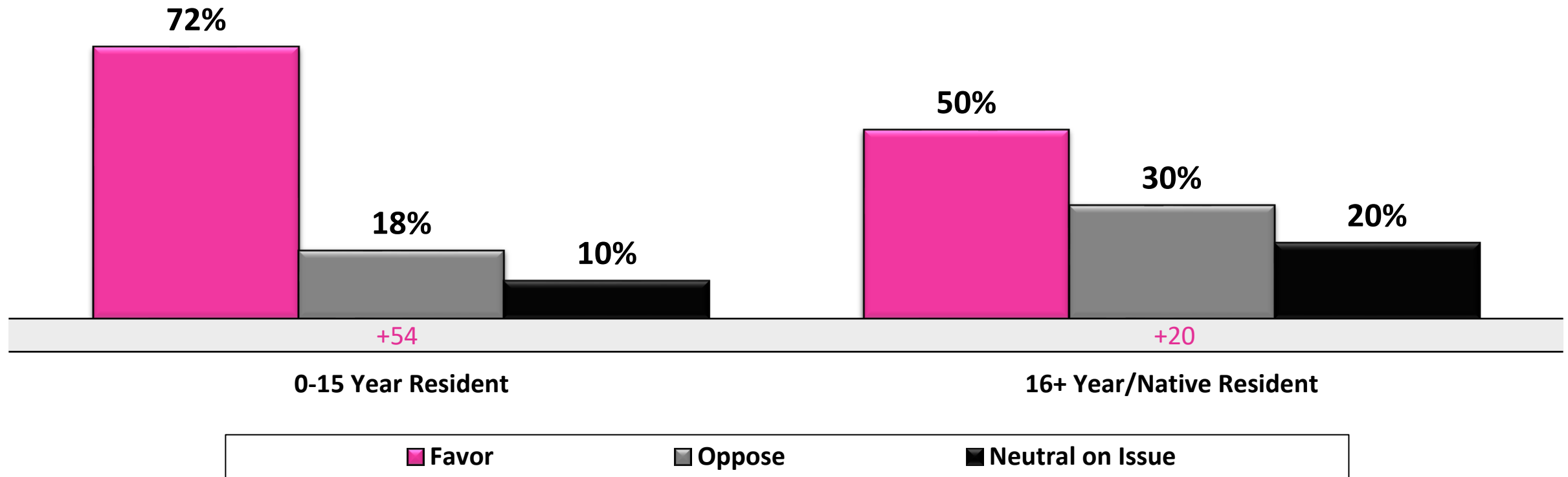
Renters are much more likely to favor increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



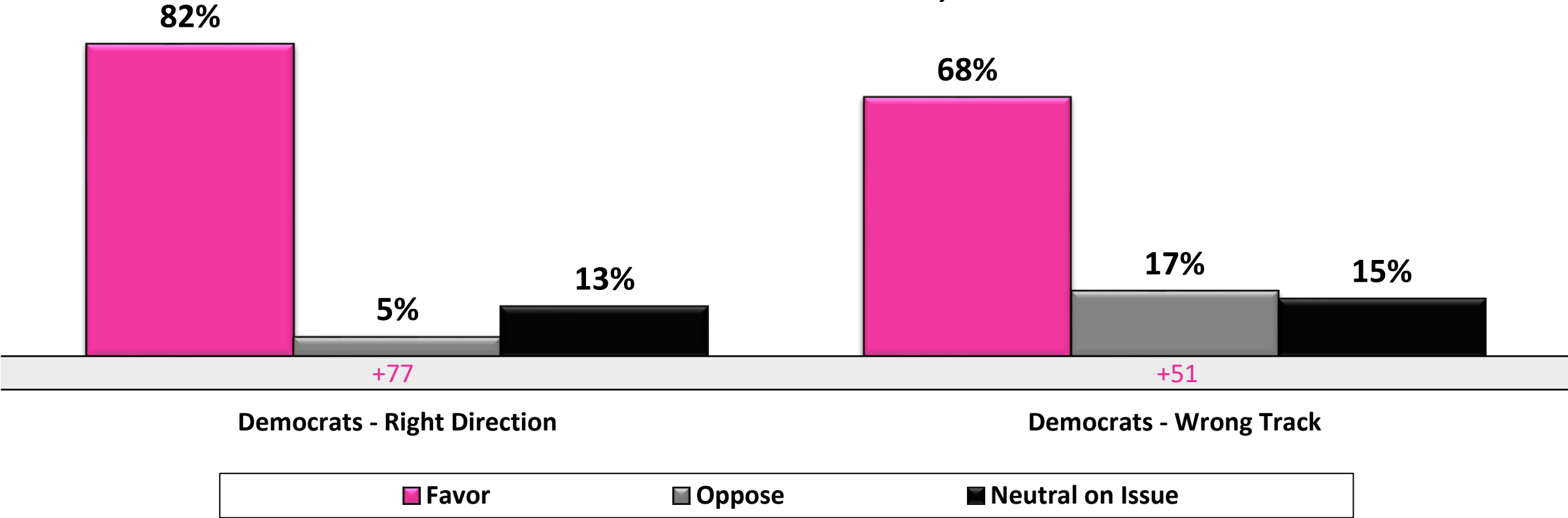
Nearly three-in-four newer residents favor increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



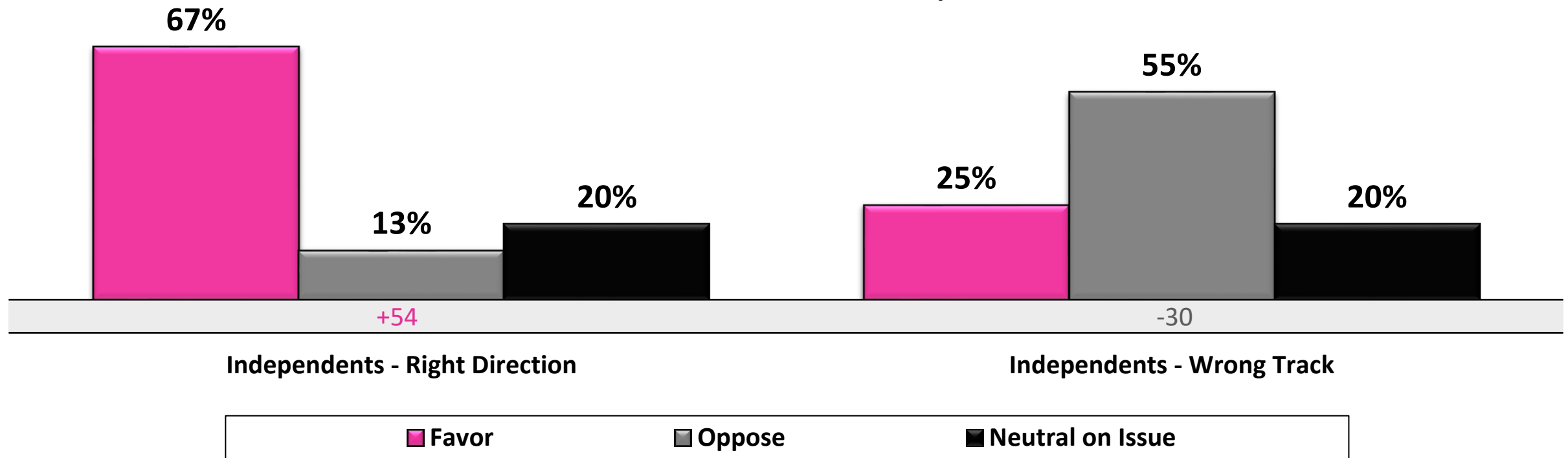
Regardless of how Democrats feel about the direction of the county, most are in favor of increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?



Most Independents who say the county is going in the right direction favor increasing the availability of reasonably priced housing. Those who say it is off on the wrong track are more likely to oppose this.

Some people feel that local governments should help increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for people at the lower end of the income scales who live or work in Boulder County. Others feel that this is not a proper role for local governments. Do you favor or oppose local governments helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County?





The Bottom Line

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- In the last few years, there has been a decline in voters saying that the county is going in the right direction. This sentiment is not unique to Boulder County. In all of our work over the past two years, we have seen a decline across the country in perceptions of local governments. There are also more voters this year compared to last year who say taxes in the County are way too high. This is also not surprising given inflation and the rising cost of living in the County and across the country. Again, this is typical of what we have seen in other counties and districts across the Country and in Colorado.
- Housing, homelessness, and traffic/overdevelopment are seen as the most important problems facing Boulder County.
- A majority support a potential ballot proposal to increase sales tax in the County to provide additional mental health and substance abuse services in the County. Support is driven by Independent and Democratic voters as well as renters and newer residents to Boulder. Supporters view the proposal as a way to help with mental health and address homelessness in the County. Opponents are against tax increases or a new tax, generally.
- Hearing the average personal financial impact of the sales tax does not bolster support in a significant way. Support increases by only two percentage points, within margin of error.
- County voters believe it is important to fund the mental health items we tested, specifically, having mental health professionals respond to mental health crises, providing additional services, increasing the availability and affordability of services as well as providing navigation support for residents on how to access affordable mental health care and providing services to help stabilize residents when they are in crisis.

The Bottom Line

- Messages that emphasize helping Boulder schools and community organizations address the mental health crisis among young people as well as helping more people obtain affordable care rise to the top. However, after hearing more about the proposal, “yes” voters for the proposal remain consistent with the initial ballot.
- Funding affordable housing elements are also deemed as important by Boulder residents. They are most likely to say it is extremely or very important to provide emergency housing for residents, including youth, who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. Almost all voters (nine-in-ten) say that housing prices are so high that many people can’t afford to live where they work. And three-in-four renters say they might have to move out of Boulder because rent is getting too high to stay. Compared to 1995, perceptions of Boulder’s housing situation have only gotten worse.
- A majority favor local government helping to increase the availability of reasonably priced housing for low-and-moderate income persons who live or work in Boulder County.



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Key Demographics



Gender

<i>Male</i>	50%
<i>Female</i>	48%



Homeowner

<i>Own</i>	73%
<i>Rent</i>	18%



Age

<i>18-34</i>	27%
<i>35-44</i>	16%
<i>45-54</i>	14%
<i>55-64</i>	19%
<i>65+</i>	24%



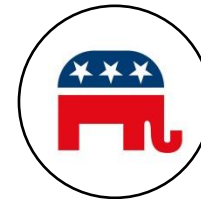
Education

<i>High school or less</i>	10%
<i>Some college</i>	30%
<i>College grad</i>	36%
<i>Post grad</i>	24%



Ethnicity

<i>White</i>	81%
<i>Voters of Color</i>	18%



Party

<i>Republican</i>	14%
<i>Independent</i>	41%
<i>Democrat</i>	45%