

# CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## Policy Session Worksheet

**Presentation Date:** 07/28/20 **Approx. Start Time:** 3:00 p.m. **Approx. Length:** 30 mins.

**Presentation Title:** Children's Safety Levy: Survey Results

**Department:** Public and Government Affairs (PGA)

**Presenters:** Dylan Blaylock, PGA Senior Community Relations Specialist; Lindsey Mears, Strategies 360; Dave Hunt, Strategies 360; Amy Ruiz, Strategies 360

**Other Invitees:** Sue Hildick, PGA Director; Chris Lyons, PGA Government Affairs Manager

### **WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?**

This is a summary presentation of the Children's Safety Levy survey results. Late last year, the Board of County Commissioners approved the commission of a public poll to test whether voters would support a Children's Levy on the November 2020 ballot.

No decision or action is being requested of the BCC at this meeting, which is informative.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Strategies 360 conducted a survey of 400 likely Clackamas County voters via a combination of landline, mobile phones, and online interviews. Survey findings include:

- Children's safety issues are personal for voters. More than half (53%) report that they personally know a survivor of domestic or child abuse.
- Preventing child abuse and providing support for survivors of child abuse is a high priority for most. Nearly 9-in-10 agree that the county should make it a top or high priority to help children suffering from abuse or neglect, teens and children exploited in sex trafficking, and children experiencing domestic violence.
- The Children's Safety Levy enjoys majority support from the start, with room to improve size and intensity. More than half of likely voters (57%) say they would vote yes on this proposal, including 26% who would definitely vote yes.
- After hearing more about the proposal, including an estimate of what the levy would cost the average homeowner per year, support rises to more than 7-in-10 voting yes, including 37% who report they would definitely vote yes.
- In a final vote after hearing reasons to support, the number of voters supporting the measure rises to 73%, with more than a third (36%) who say they will definitely vote yes.
- Seniors over the age of 65 are more supportive of the levy than are Baby Boomers age 50-64.

- While more democratic overall, college educated voters tend to be less supportive than their peers throughout, likely due to higher rates of homeownership.

Known or potential November ballot measures that the County is currently tracking include:

- LOCAL: Tri-City Service District outfall (Oregon City)
- LOCAL: Canby Fire local option levy renewal
- LOCAL/TENTATIVE: Hoodland Park Special District
- LOCAL/TENTATIVE: Riverdale School District local option levy renewal
- REGIONAL: Metro’s **Get Moving** regional transportation investment measure
- STATEWIDE: Tobacco and e-cigarette tax increase legislative referral
- STATEWIDE: Campaign finance amendment legislative referral

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):**

N/A

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item aligns with the following Performance Clackamas priorities and policy perspectives:

**Build public trust through good government:** As codified in this priority, the county must listen to its residents/stakeholders and be accountable for services and deliver them successfully. This survey allows a scientific way to measure resident opinion.

**Ensure Safe, Healthy and Secure Communities:** The BCC has repeatedly made a public commitment to focusing on the well-being of county families and communities.

**LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:**

N/A

**PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:**

Clackamas County prioritizes transparency as a means of building public trust through good government. This information is being presented at a public meeting, and the work described has the potential to impact future public and governmental engagement.

**OPTIONS:**

N/A – No action is being requested.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Children’s Safety Levy Analysis

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Division Director/Head Approval \_\_\_\_\_

Department Director/Head Approval s/Sue Hildick

County Administrator Approval \_\_\_\_\_

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Sue Hildick @ 503-742-5900



# Assessment of Attitudes Toward a Levy for Children's Safety Services in Clackamas County

JULY 2020





# Today's Agenda

- 1. Voter Landscape & Priorities**
- 2. Children's Safety Levy Support**
- 3. Scale of Investment**
- 4. Messaging**
- 5. Target Profiles**
- 6. Q&A**



# Survey Methodology

Strategies 360 conducted a multi-modal survey of **400 likely voters in Clackamas County, Oregon.**

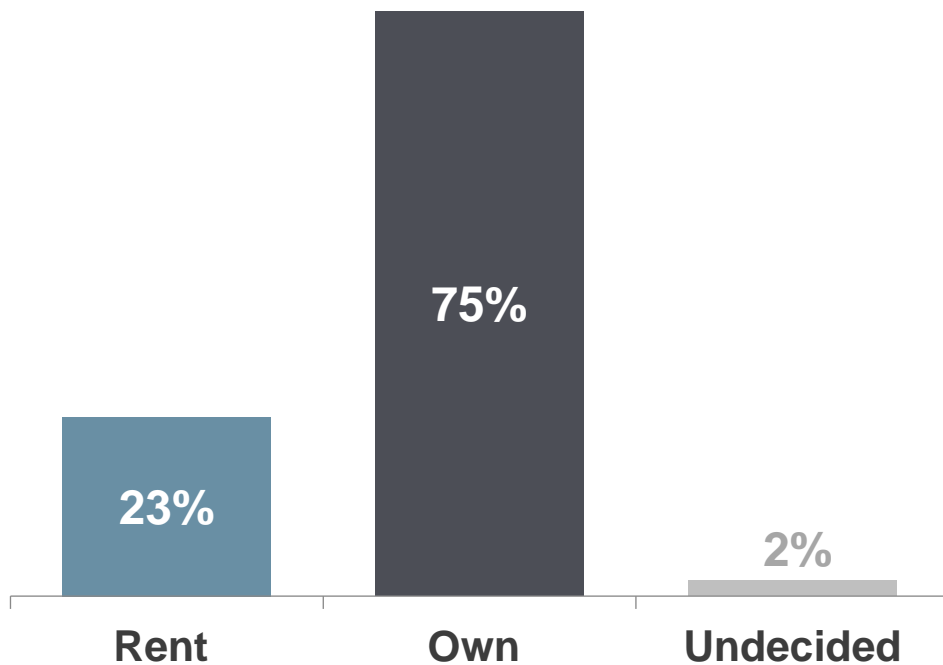
Interviews were **conducted June 26-30, 2020.** A combination of landline, mobile phones, and online interviews via web panel were used to ensure greater coverage of the population sampled.

The **margin of error for a survey of 400 interviews is  $\pm 4.9\%$**  at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

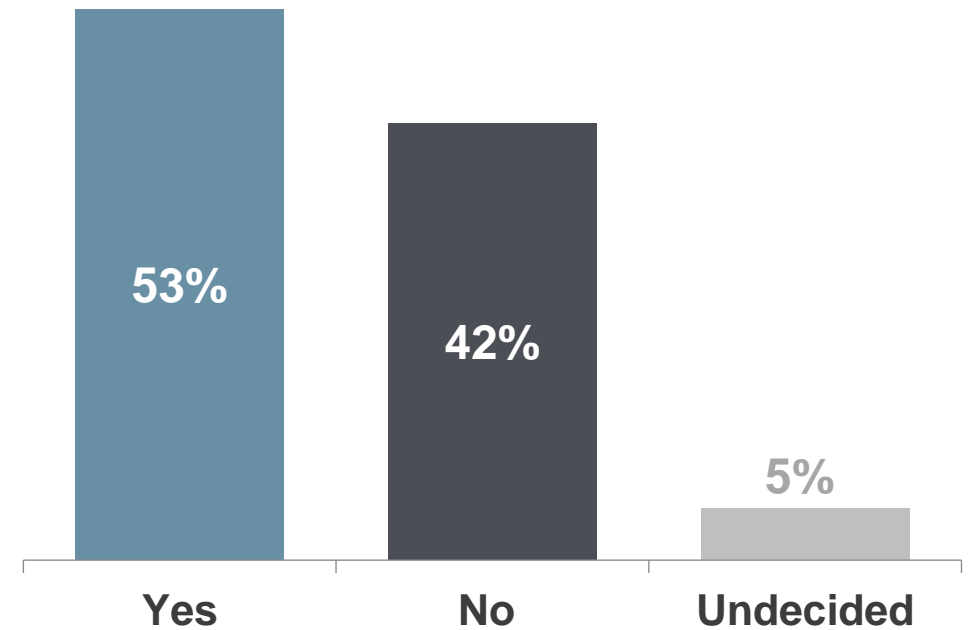
# VOTER LANDSCAPE & PRIORITIES

Landscape: 3-in-4 are homeowners and thus impacted by any changes in property taxes. More than half report knowing an abuse survivor, making this a highly personal subject for most.

Homeownership\*



Know an abuse survivor\*\*

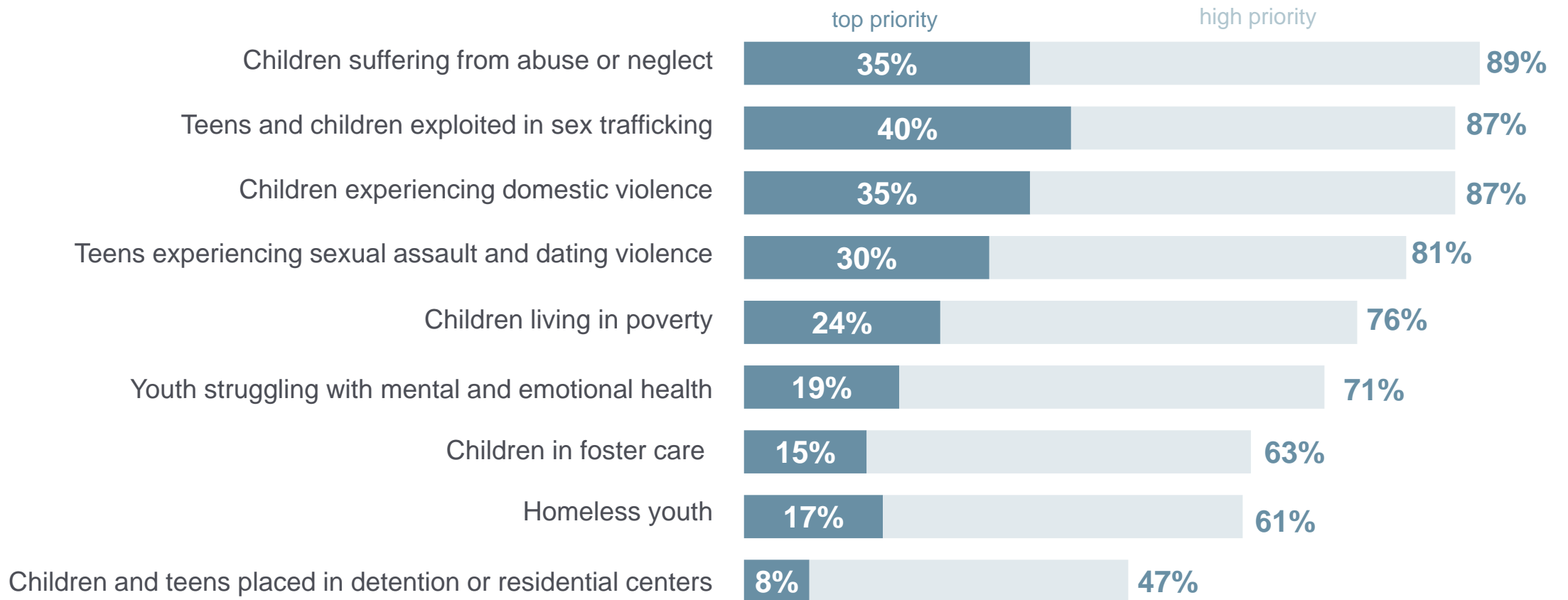


\*Do you rent or own your home?

\*\*To the best of your knowledge, do you personally know a victim of domestic or child abuse?

Top priorities include children suffering from abuse, children and teens exploited in sex trafficking, and victims of domestic violence.

### County Child Safety Funding Priorities\*



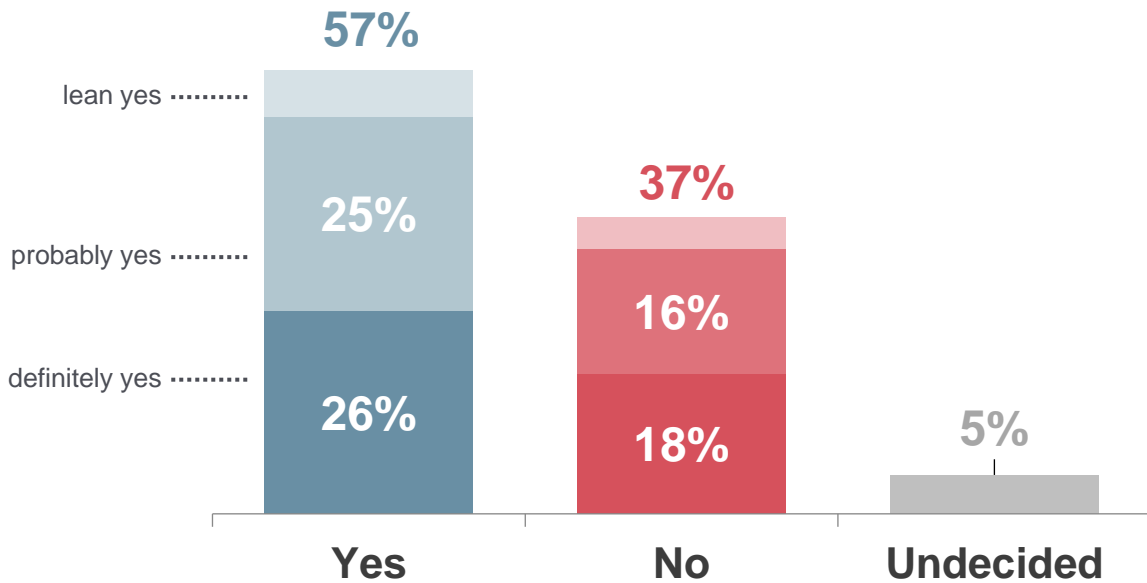
\*Clackamas County provides funding for programs serving a variety of people and groups. I'd like to read you a list of groups that benefit from programs funded by the County and, for each, please tell me whether you think that group should be an absolute top priority for the county, a high but not top priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority at all. Please remember that not every group can be the top priority.



# SUPPORT FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY LEVY

Initial support for the measure is high – more than half would vote yes – including 1-in-4 who would definitely vote yes. However, voters are divided across party lines. More than three-quarters of Democrats and a majority of independents initially support the measure, while a majority of Republicans initially oppose.

### Initial support\*

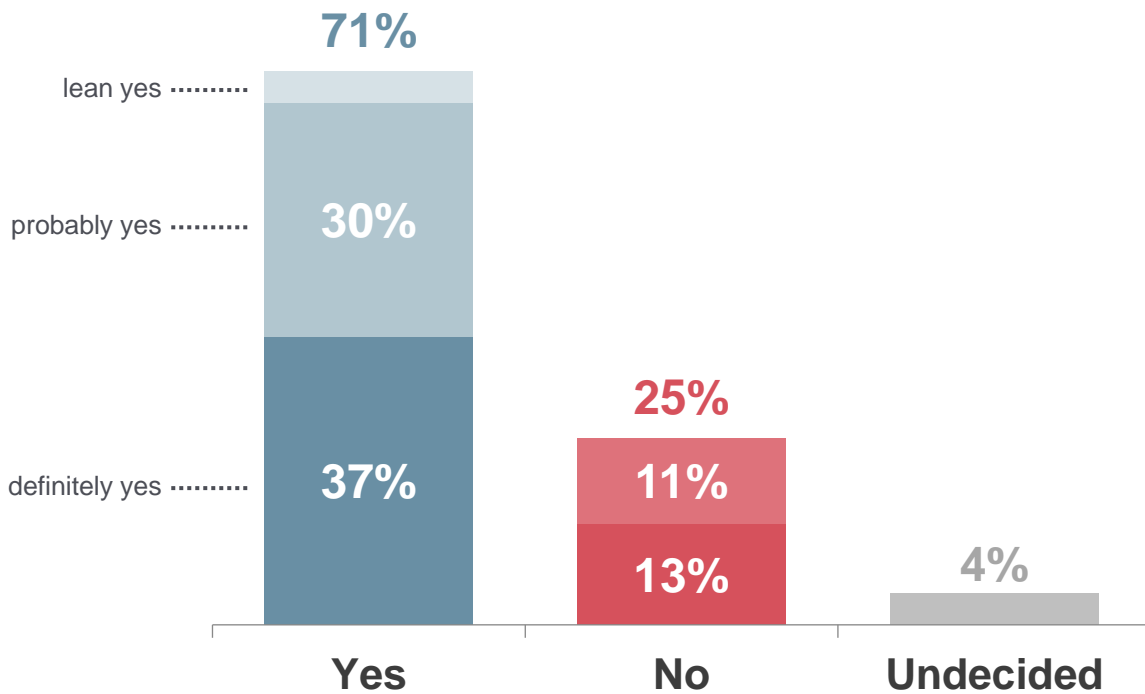


	Yes-No	Net support
Men	55-41	+14
Women	59-34	+26
Democrats	77-18	+59
Independents	56-43	+13
Republicans	42-53	-11
<4-year degree	61-33	+28
4-year degree+	52-43	+9
Age 18-49	57-38	+20
Age 50+	57-37	+21
White	58-37	+22
Voters of color	52-39	+13
<\$50K	68-26	+42
\$50K-\$100K	58-37	+21
\$100K+	55-42	+14
Rural	51-48	+4
Urban	65-30	+35
West	55-35	+20

\*I'd like to read you a proposal that might be on the ballot for you to vote on in November. This measure reads as follows: Give-year levy for children's safety services. Shall Clackamas County support children's safety services; five-year levy [\$0.10 / \$0.20] per \$1,000 assessed value beginning 2021? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

After learning more about the proposal, there is a substantial increase (+14 points) in overall support and intensity of support. Republicans abandon their earlier opposition to the measure.

### Informed support\*

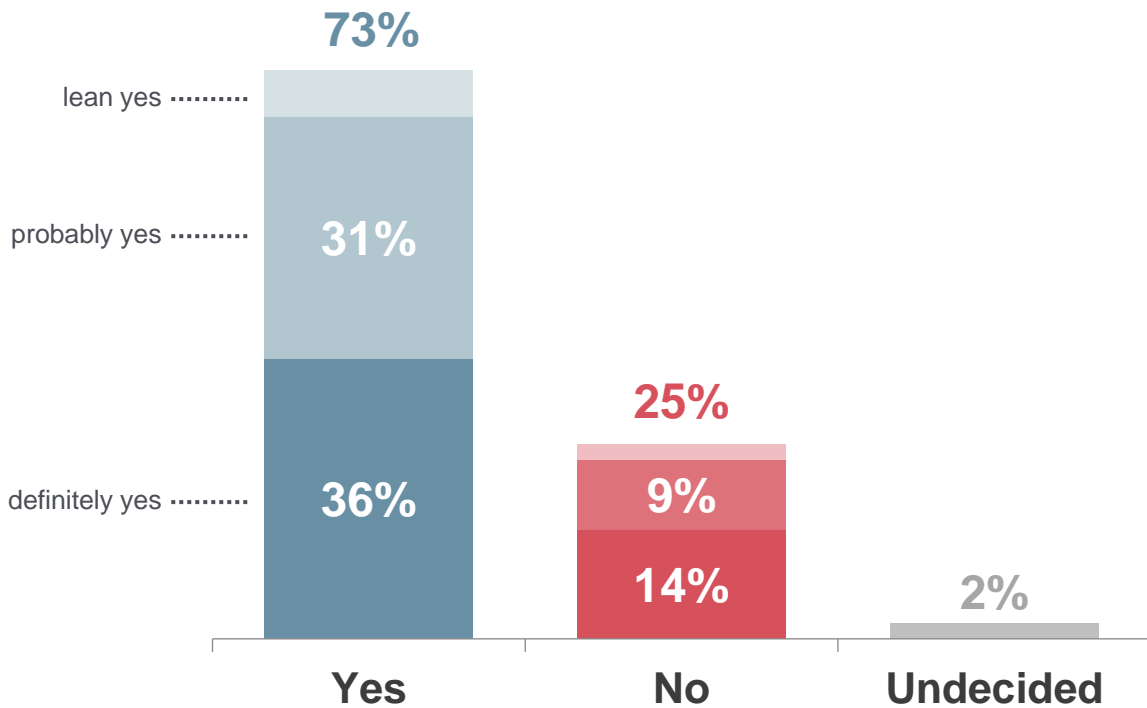


	Yes-No	Net support
Men	70-28	+42
Women	73-22	+51
Democrats	84-11	+72
Independents	65-29	+36
Republicans	63-34	+29
<4-year degree	72-23	+48
4-year degree+	70-27	+43
Age 18-49	75-22	+53
Age 50+	68-27	+41
White	73-23	+50
Voters of color	62-30	+32
<\$50K	78-18	+60
\$50K-\$100K	71-25	+46
\$100K+	75-25	+50
Rural	67-31	+36
Urban	74-19	+55
West	72-24	+48

\*Here is a little more information on the ballot measure to fund children’s safety services in Clackamas County, known as the Children’s Safety Levy. This measure would fund proven programs and services that protect children and youth from abuse and neglect, and help them heal and reach their full potential. Clackamas County-based non-profits would be able to meet more of the need in our community by doubling the number of children served. The measure would cost the average homeowner [(SSA) \$30 / (SSB) \$60] per year. Based on this information, would you vote yes to support this proposal or no to oppose it?

Exposure to positive messages leads to an uptick in support, particularly among previously undecided voters.

### Final support\*

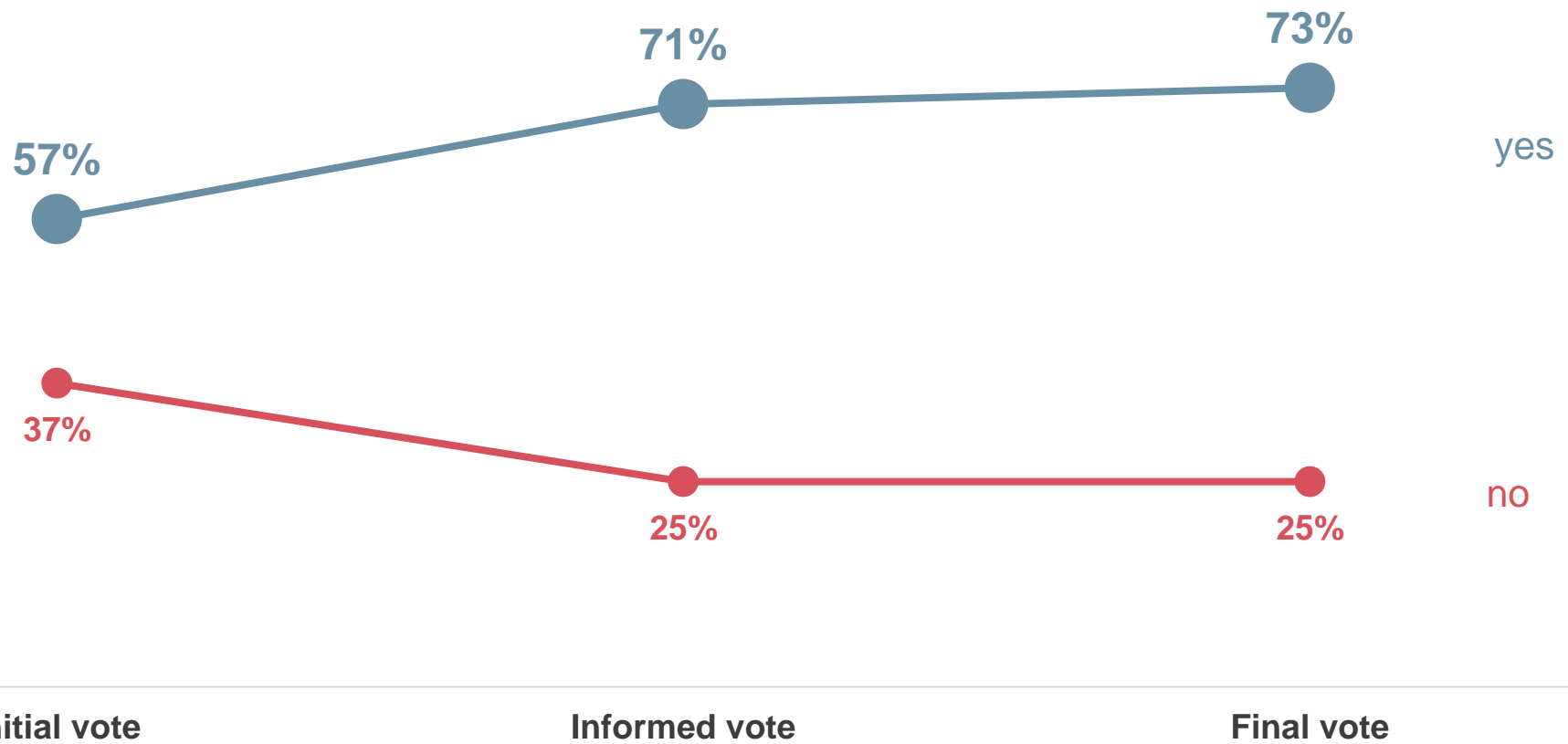


	Yes-No	Net support
Men	72-27	+45
Women	75-23	+53
Democrats	88-9	+79
Independents	70-29	+41
Republicans	62-37	+25
<4-year degree	77-22	+55
4-year degree+	68-30	+39
Age 18-49	80-18	+63
Age 50+	68-31	+37
White	76-23	+53
Voters of color	63-32	+31
<\$50K	86-14	+72
\$50K-\$100K	72-27	+45
\$100K+	73-26	+47
Rural	69-29	+40
Urban	79-20	+59
West	72-26	+46

\*Now that you have heard more, would you vote yes to support or no to oppose the Children's Safety Levy?

The Children's Safety Levy enjoys majority support from the beginning. As voters are exposed to more information on the measure, support increases.

### Progression of support



Support improves across demographic lines, but the increase in overall support is driven primarily by gains made among voters under 50, voters in rural areas, Republicans, low- and high-income voters, white voters, and men.

	Initial Supp – Opp	Informed Supp – Opp	Final Supp – Opp	Change in Net Support
Total	57-37	71-25	73-25	+29
Men	55-41	70-28	72-27	+31
Women	59-34	73-22	75-23	+27
Democrats	77-18	84-11	88-9	+20
Independents	56-43	65-29	70-29	+29
Republicans	42-53	63-34	62-37	+36
<4-year degree	61-33	72-23	77-22	+27
4-year degree+	52-43	70-27	68-30	+30
Age 18-49	57-38	75-22	80-18	+43
Age 50+	57-37	68-27	68-31	+16
White	58-37	73-23	76-23	+31
Voters of color	52-39	62-30	63-32	+18
<\$50K	68-26	78-18	86-14	+30
\$50K-\$100K	58-37	71-25	72-27	+24
\$100K+	55-42	75-25	73-26	+33
Rural	51-48	67-31	69-29	+36
Urban	65-30	74-19	79-20	+24
West	55-35	72-24	72-26	+26

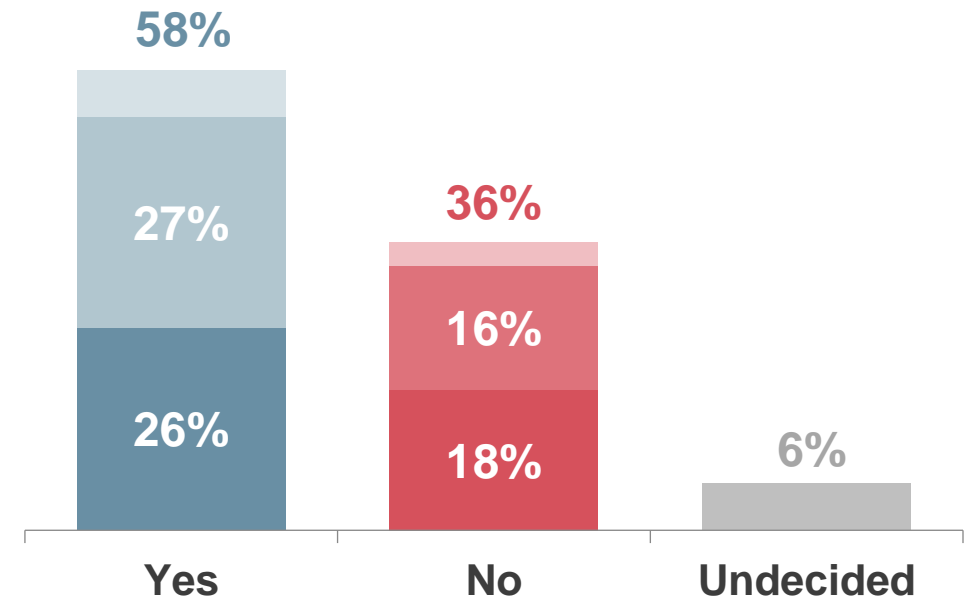
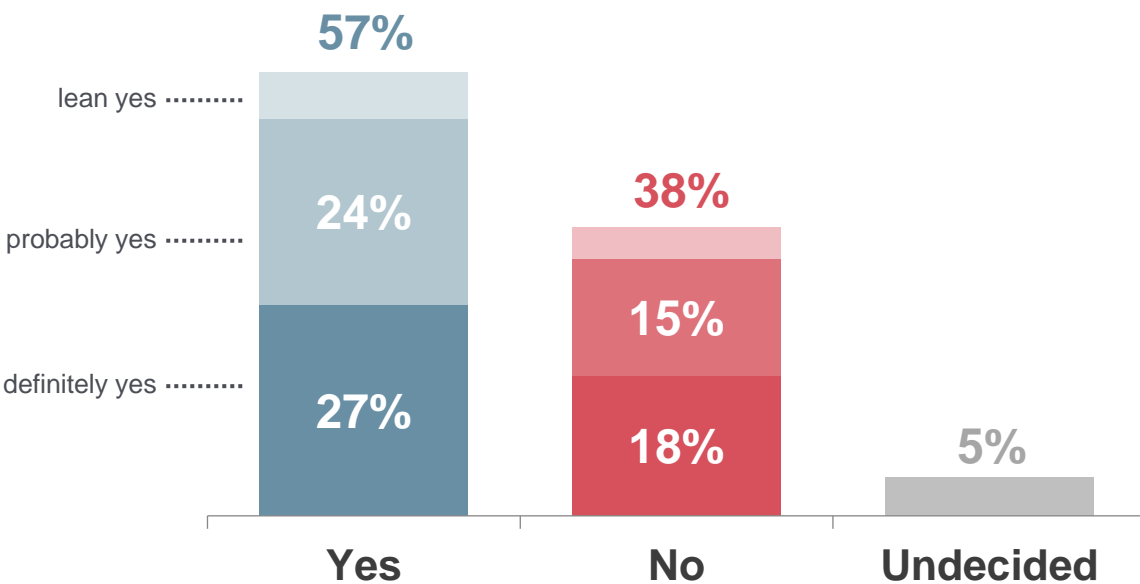
# SCALE OF INVESTMENT

Without more context on the impact of the levy on the average homeowner's costs, voters display no noticeable drop-off between a 10-cent and 20-cent levy.

### Initial levy support Split-sampled by levy amount\*\*

\$0.10 per \$1,000 assessed value\*

\$0.20 per \$1,000 assessed value\*



\*Asked of 1/2 the sample.

\*\*Shall Clackamas County support children's safety services; five-year levy [(SSA) \$0.10 (SSB) \$.020] per \$1,000 assessed value beginning 2021? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

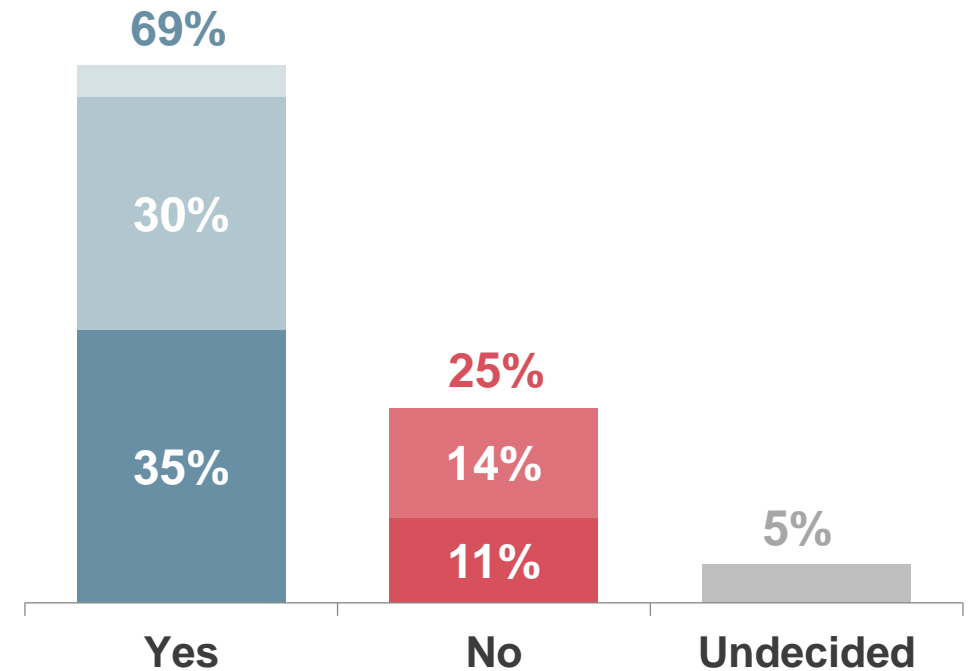
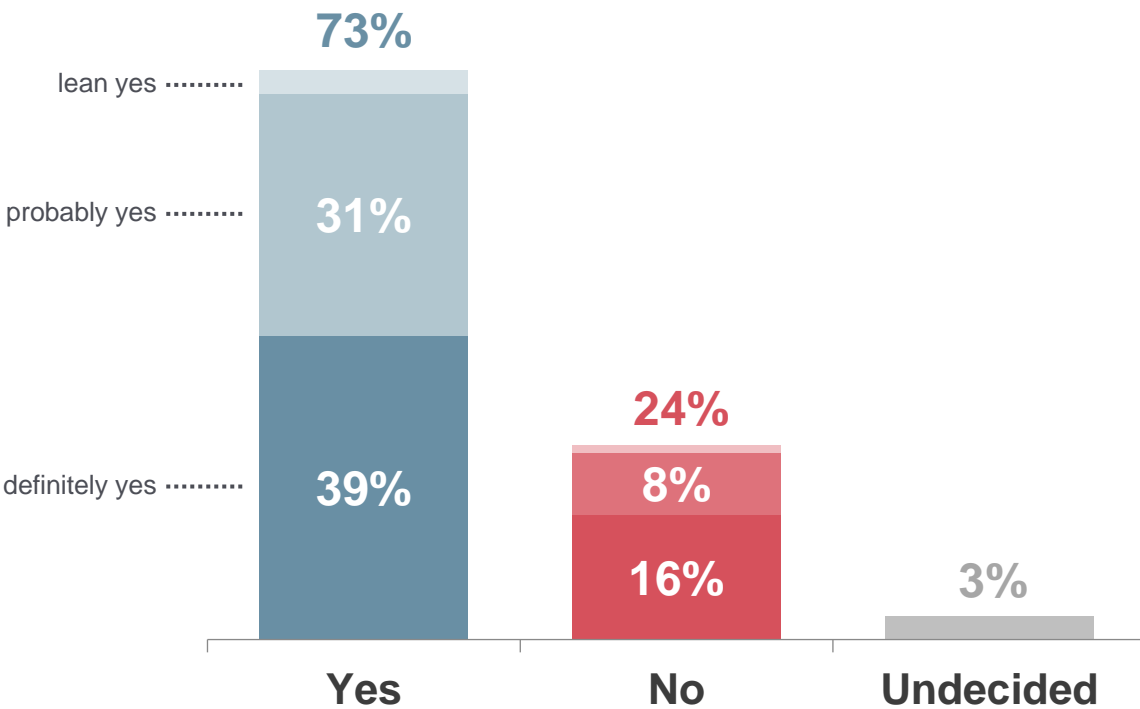


Placing the 10 or 20 cents into context for voters by specifying the cost per year for the average homeowner causes some divergence – the lower cost option is more popular. However, support for the measure remains high regardless.

**Informed levy support**  
Based on estimated per year costs\*\*

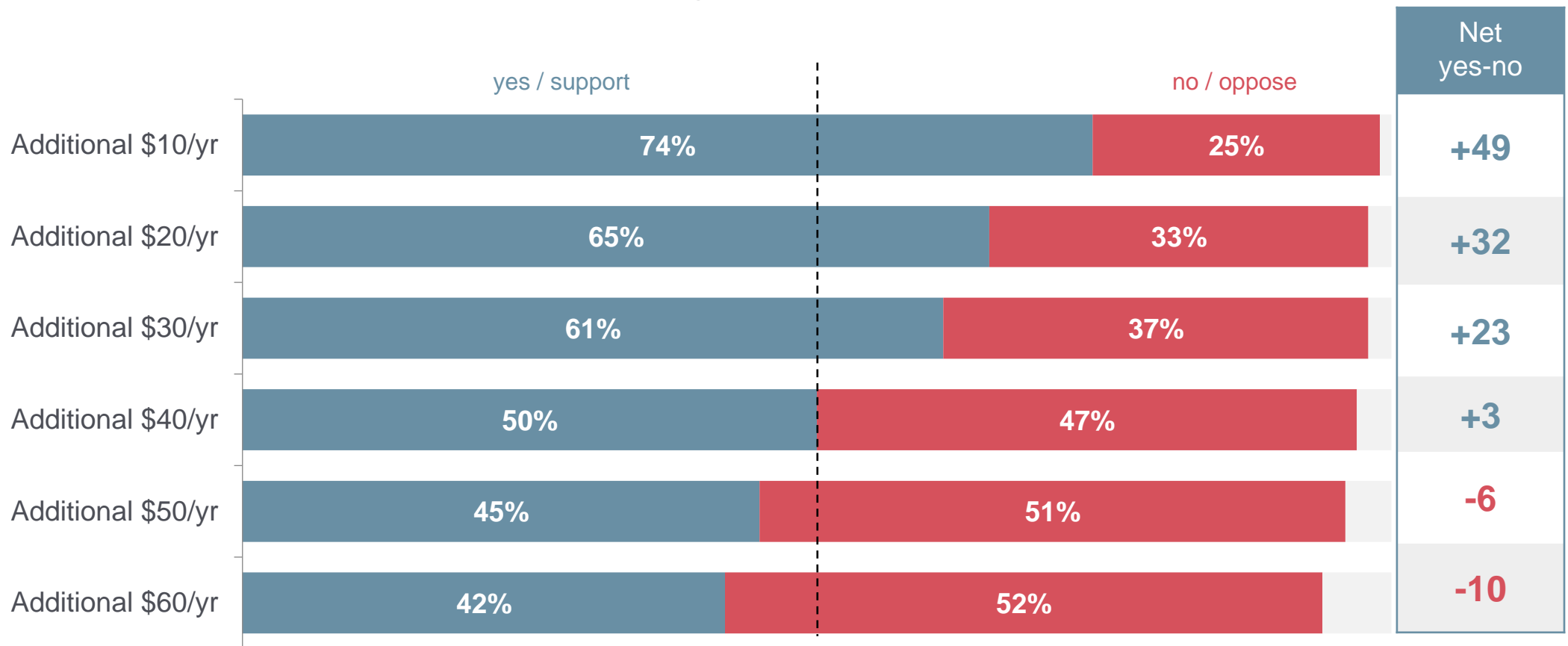
\$30 per year\*

\$60 per year\*



After learning about the potential annual cost, homeowners were asked how much they were willing to pay in additional property taxes each year. Support reverses once voters are asked for \$50 per year or more.

### Scale of investment\* among homeowners



\*Assuming that the Children's Safety Levy in Clackamas County is funded through a property tax, how much, if anything, are you willing to pay in additional property taxes each year to fund this levy? For each, please indicate if you would support or would not support the Children's Safety Levy if it cost you that much more in property taxes per year.

# Cost sensitivity is highest among Republicans and those consistently opposed.

Net support for property tax increases among homeowners (\*Denotes sample size smaller than n75)

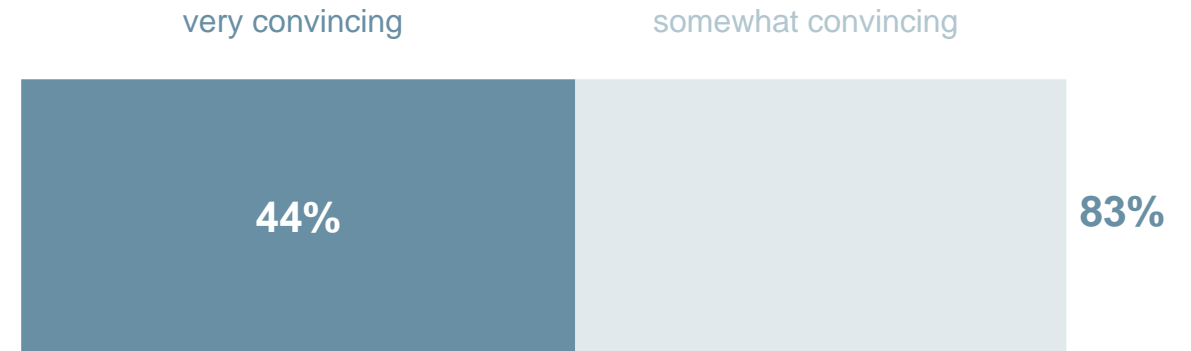
	\$10	\$20	\$30	\$40	\$50	\$60
Total homeowners	+49	+32	+23	+3	-6	-10
Men	+44	+26	+23	+1	-4	-9
Women	+53	+38	+24	+5	-8	-11
Democrats	+82	+71	+63	+48	+39	+30
Independents	+38	+17	+12	+6	+1	-8
Republicans	+26	+7	-3	-31	-38	-39
<4-year degree	+51	+31	+23	0	-11	-11
4-year degree+	+47	+37	+24	+7	+1	-7
Age 18-34	+32	+18	+11	-8	-15	-24
Age 35-49	+60	+36	+32	+12	+7	-3
Age 50-64	+31	+21	+13	-6	-19	-23
Age 65+	+64	+44	+30	+10	+0	+0
White	+51	+35	+24	+5	-4	-9
Voters of color*	+41	+20	+22	-8	-18	-22
<\$50K	+57	+37	+30	+3	-9	-17
\$50K-\$100K	+49	+38	+25	+2	-9	-12
\$100K+	+60	+46	+35	+18	+11	+3
Rural	+37	+21	+5	-23	-28	-29
Urban	+57	+39	+35	+20	+11	+1
West	+56	+40	+35	+20	+5	+2
Base	+94	+88	+82	+56	+49	+41
Persuadables	+55	+21	+10	-9	-28	-29
Non-priority*	-58	-77	-89	-96	-100	-100
Know a survivor	+50	+38	+32	+23	+14	+6

# MESSAGING

Voters are receptive to both messages overall, but a message emphasizing the measure's local impact performs best.

### Positive messages in support of the levy\*

**Local**  
Every dollar raised by this levy will stay in Clackamas County to support child abuse survivors and prevent further abuse in our community. The measure requires that no funds go to Salem or [the City of] Portland and only go to community-based non-profits in Clackamas County with a proven track record of effectiveness in providing children's safety services.



**Crisis**  
Due to the coronavirus pandemic and economic downturn, the need for children's safety services has never been greater. As we recover, we need to ensure we are taking care of the most vulnerable children and families in our community.



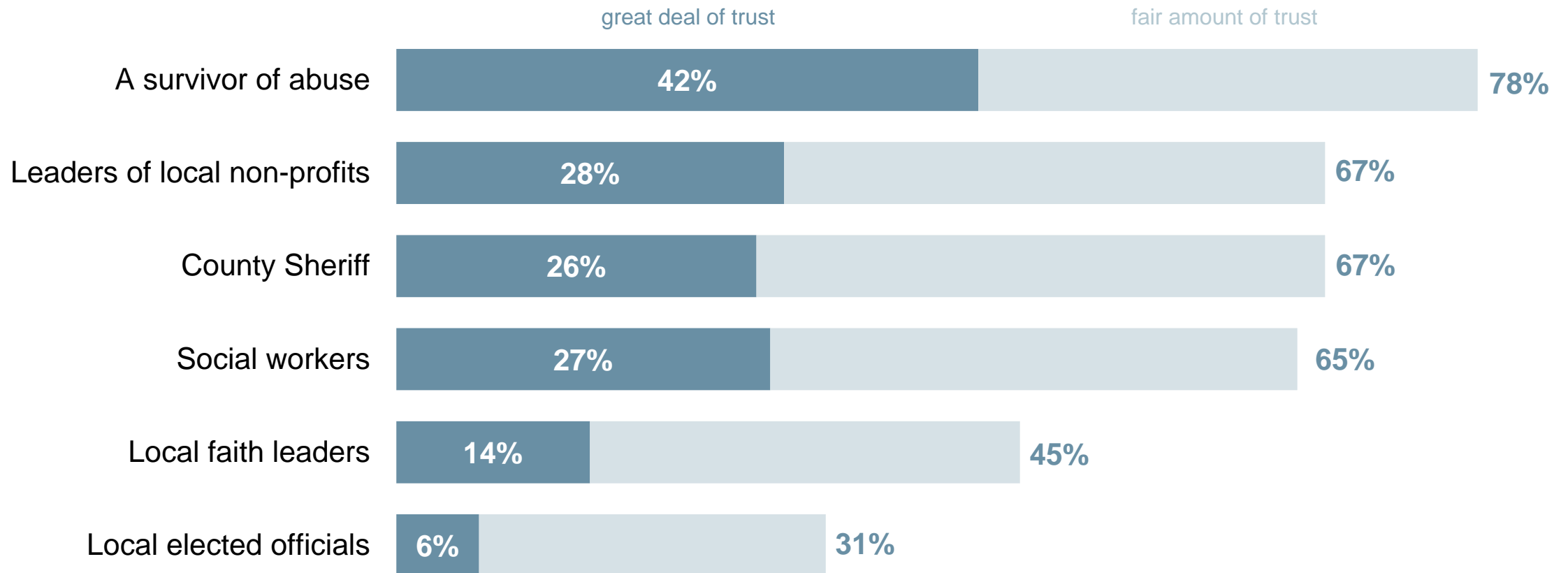
With the exception of independents, “Local” is the preferred message across demographic lines.

% Total convincing	Local	Crisis
Total	83	74
Men	78	73
Women	87	76
Democrats	92	91
Independents	76	80
Republicans	78	58
<4-year degree	86	75
4-year degree+	78	72
Age 18-49	85	78
Age 50+	81	71
White	84	75
Voters of color	79	71
<\$50K	93	86
\$50K-\$100K	78	74
\$100K+	84	73
Rural	78	71
Urban	85	78
West	85	74
Base	96	89
Persuadable	86	78
Non-priority	43	30
Know a survivor	83	74

Voters trust those with the most direct experience with survivors of abuse—including survivors themselves and leaders of non-profits providing children’s safety services.

### Trusted advocates

to provide information about the Children’s Safety Levy\*



\*Different people and groups will take different positions on the Children’s Safety Levy. I will now read you a list of some of these people and groups, and after each one I want you to tell me: in making up your own mind, how much would you trust information provided by that person or organization about the Children’s Safety Levy: a great deal, a fair amount, only some, or no trust at all?

Social workers are also highly trusted among Democrats, non-white voters, low-income voters, and those in urban areas. Elected officials are the least trusted across demographic groups.

% Total trustworthy	Survivors	Non-profits	Sheriff	Social workers	Faith leaders	Elected officials
Total	78	67	67	65	45	31
Men	74	63	65	63	48	27
Women	81	71	68	68	43	34
Democrats	83	77	60	80	46	41
Independents	78	60	63	53	39	25
Republicans	74	57	77	53	47	23
<4-year degree	78	64	71	63	42	27
4-year degree+	79	73	63	71	50	35
Age 18-49	83	75	66	72	44	34
Age 50+	73	61	67	60	46	28
White	78	67	67	65	45	33
Voters of color	79	67	63	72	43	19
<\$50K	85	71	74	81	43	36
\$50K-\$100K	83	72	71	67	50	32
\$100K+	77	66	70	62	43	26
Rural	77	60	73	57	48	30
Urban	76	70	58	70	44	28
West	81	72	70	69	44	35
Base	86	82	69	81	51	42
Persuadable	81	68	67	58	51	26
Non-priority	50	26	62	33	22	6



# TARGET PROFILES

## Who are your base?



The base are those who consistently support the Children's Safety Levy. These voters make up 53% of the electorate and they are largely:

- ❖ Women (61%)
- ❖ Non-college educated (62%)
- ❖ Make less than \$100,000 per year (60%)
- ❖ Democrat (64%)
- ❖ White (86%)
- ❖ Slightly less likely to be homeowners (70%)
- ❖ Consider children suffering from abuse a top or high priority (96%)
- ❖ Support the levy at any cost between \$10-\$60/year in property taxes
- ❖ Prefer "Local" message (96% convincing)
- ❖ Most trust a survivor of abuse (86%) or a non-profit leader (82%)



## Who are your persuadables?



Persuadables are those who are inconsistent throughout the survey, moving between support and opposition. These voters make up 27% of the electorate and they are largely:

- ❖ More Republican than voters overall (50%)
- ❖ Slightly more diverse (82% white)
- ❖ Slightly younger (50% under the age of 50)
- ❖ Consider children suffering from abuse a top or high priority (93%)
- ❖ Support the levy at a cost between \$10-\$30/year in property taxes
- ❖ Prefer “Local” message (86% convincing)
- ❖ Most trust a survivor of abuse (81%) or a non-profit leader (68%)

## Who are the non-priority voters?



Non-priority voters are those who are consistently opposed to the Children's Safety Levy. These voters make up 19% of the electorate and they are largely:

- ❖ Men (63%)
- ❖ Republican (62%)
- ❖ Slightly more diverse (80% white)
- ❖ More likely to be parents (33%)
- ❖ Slightly more college educated (45%)
- ❖ Older (65% over 50 years old), falling largely into the Baby Boomers group (39% 50-64 years old)
- ❖ Homeowners (88%)
- ❖ Unwilling to support the levy at any cost
- ❖ Prefer, but less aligned than voters overall, with "Local" message (43% convincing)
- ❖ Most trust the county sheriff (62%)

# SUMMARY



## RECAP

- **Three-quarters of Clackamas County likely voters are homeowners**, underscoring the potential sensitivity of area voters to proposed property taxes.
- **Children's safety issues are personal for area voters** – 53% know a survivor and most consider abused children a top or high priority.
- The Children's Safety Levy enjoys **majority support from the start**.
- After hearing more about the proposal, **support rises to more than 7-in-10 voting yes**. Opposition declines by 12 points, indicating a substantial number of voters are persuadable.
- **8-in-10 voters are either consistently supportive of the levy or persuadable**. **Base supporters (53%)** tend to be women, non-college educated, lower income, and Democrats. **Persuadable voters (27%)** tend to be more Republican, slightly more diverse, and slightly younger than voters overall.



## RECAP

- Without further context, there is no noticeable drop-off between a 10- and a 20-cent levy.
- Support for the measure declines when moving up the scale of average yearly cost to the homeowner, particularly **between \$40 and \$50 dollars per year**.
- The strongest tested message to both shore up support among the base and move persuadable voters is “**Local**,” which emphasizes that every dollar raised will stay in Clackamas County.
- Potential advocates perceived to have the highest direct experience with survivors of abuse – **survivors themselves and non-profit leaders** providing safety services – are the most trusted voices on the Children’s Safety Levy.



# DISCUSSION





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