



San Ramon Valley  
Unified School District

## Survey of San Ramon Valley Unified School District Voters



*Summary Report  
Presented to SRVUSD Board of Trustees  
January 21, 2020*

# Methodology

- ▶ Survey of San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD) Likely November 2020 Voters
- ▶ Mixed-mode (telephone, email-to-web) methodology
  - Phone interviews conducted by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included
  - Voters were sent an invitation via email to complete the survey online
- ▶ Survey conducted December 9-15, 2019
- ▶ 600 interviews; overall margin of error  $\pm 4.0$  percentage points
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with the following:

Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Phone	July 7-13, 2014	Likely 2015 Special Election Voters	600	$\pm 4.0$ percentage points	14-5267
Phone	September 18-20, 2012	Likely November 2012 Voters	404	$\pm 4.9$ percentage points	12-4748
Phone	January 11-15, 2012	Likely June 2012 Voters	600	$\pm 4.0$ percentage points	12-4574
Phone	December 1-7, 2008	Likely 2009 Special Election Voters	603	$\pm 4.0$ percentage points	08-4008
Phone	May 18-20, 2003	Likely November 2003 Voters	429	$\pm 4.7$ percentage points	03 -2828
Phone	May 26-30, 2002	Likely November 2002 Voters	400	+4.9 Percentage Points	02-2643

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

# Split Sample Methodology

- ▶ Survey respondents were randomly assigned to one of four samples, and heard only one combination of the following for the ballot measure questions:
  - Total bond authorization of **\$630 million** or **\$320 million**
  - Bond language that **did not include affordable housing for teachers and staff** or one **that did include housing**
- ▶ Respondents were also randomly assigned to hear one of two average annual household costs: **\$120** or **\$240**

# Key Findings

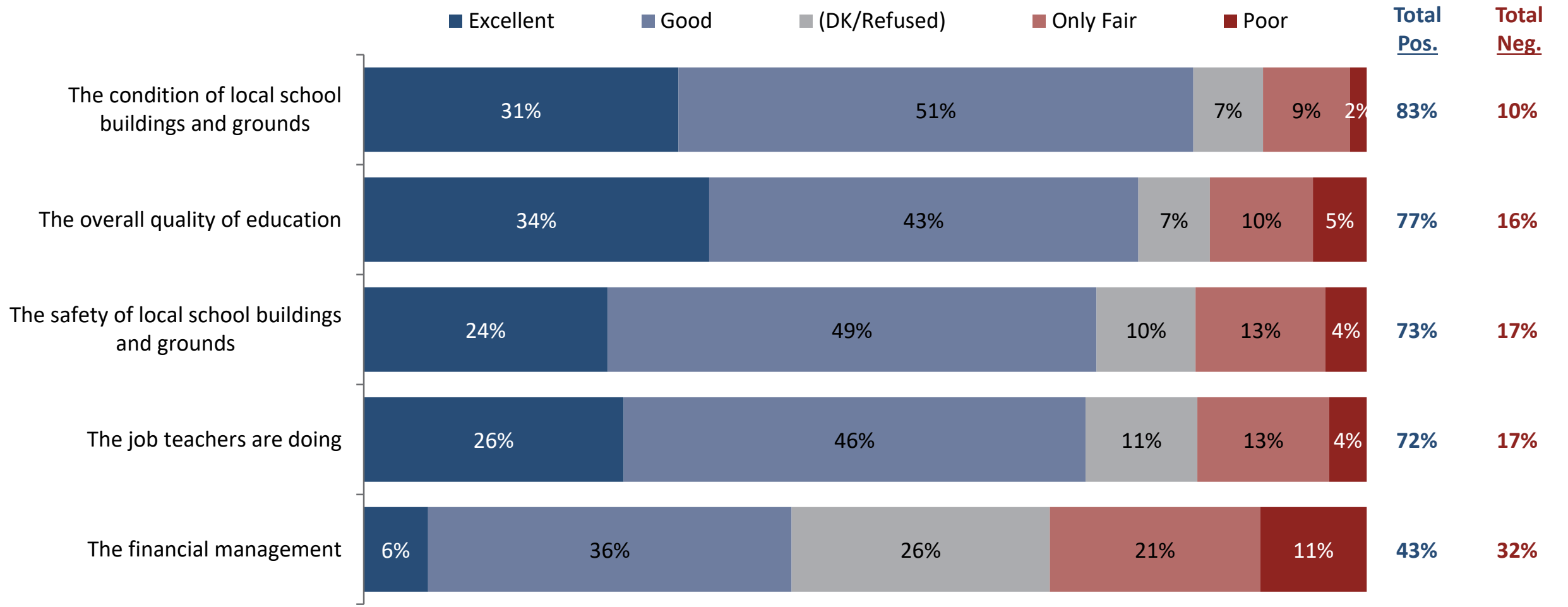
- ▶ Voters rate SRVUSD highly, and believe schools and grounds are in good shape.
- ▶ While there is some willingness to increase taxes to fund high quality schools, there is more sensitivity to tax increases than has been measured in the past.
- ▶ A bond measure for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District begins with support below the 55% threshold.
- ▶ While all bond formulations tested are statistically even initially, a more modest-sized measure may have an easier time gaining the support needed, and be more resistant to opposition.
- ▶ Traditionally-strong elements centered around maintaining schools and students' experience in the classroom tend to resonate most with voters.



**Issue Environment**

# District Ratings

*The District receives overwhelmingly positive ratings on physical conditions, safety, education, and teacher quality. Financial management ratings are lower but still stronger than many other California school districts.*



Q6-10. Regardless of whether or not you have children in school, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the following areas relating to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

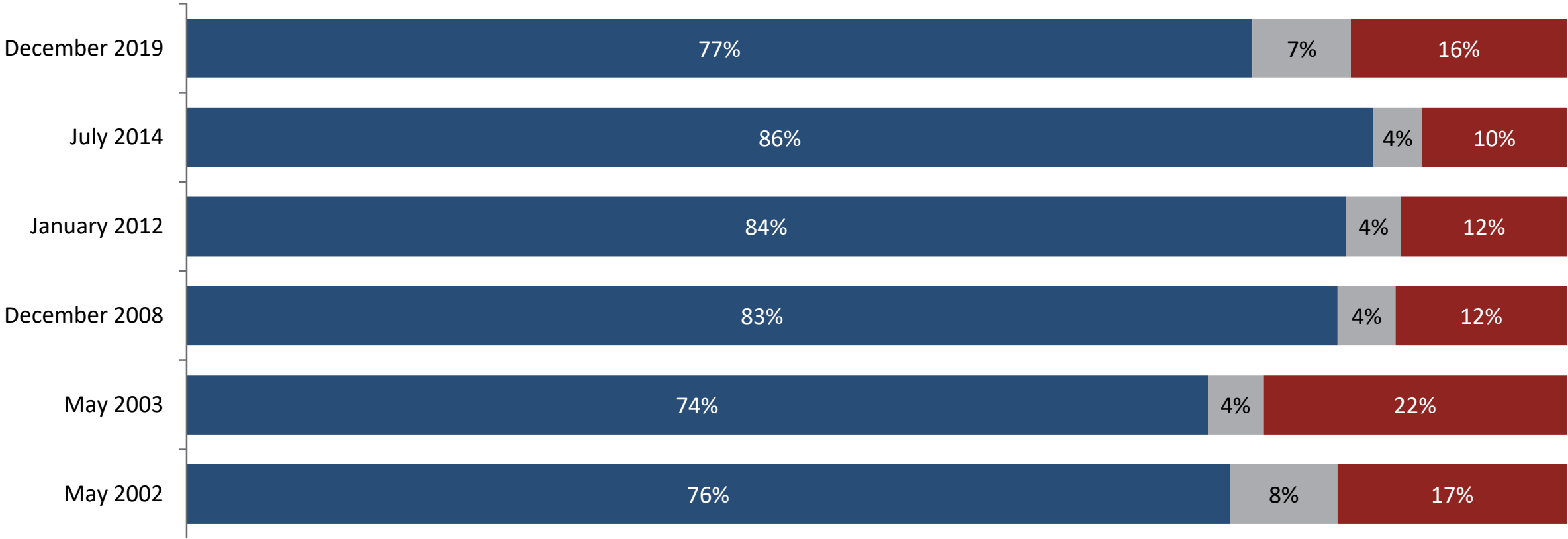
# Quality of Education Over Time



*Voters continue to give the District high marks on quality of education.*

## Overall quality of education

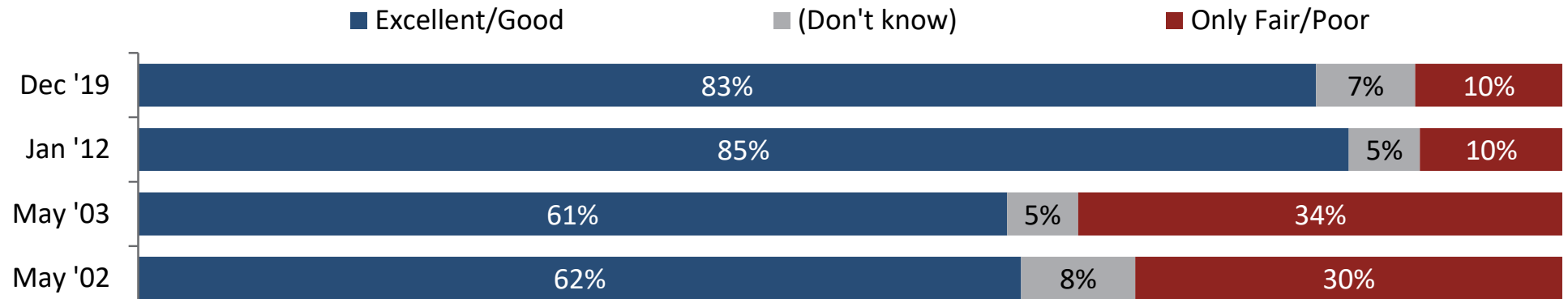
■ Excellent/Good      ■ (Don't know)      ■ Only Fair/Poor



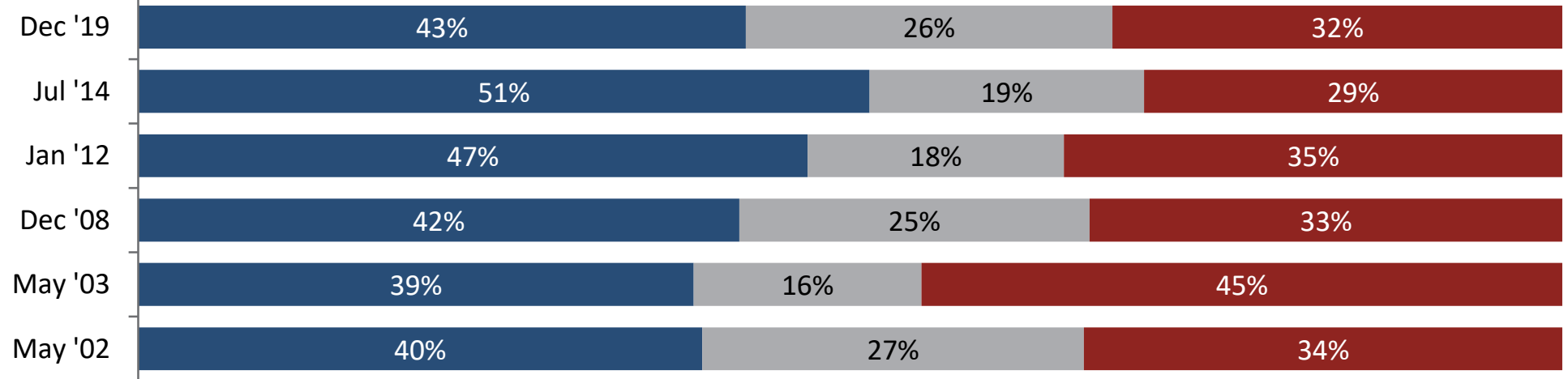
# Other District Ratings Over Time

*Voters believed local buildings and grounds were in good shape before your 2012 bond measure as well.*

## The condition of local school buildings and grounds



## The financial management

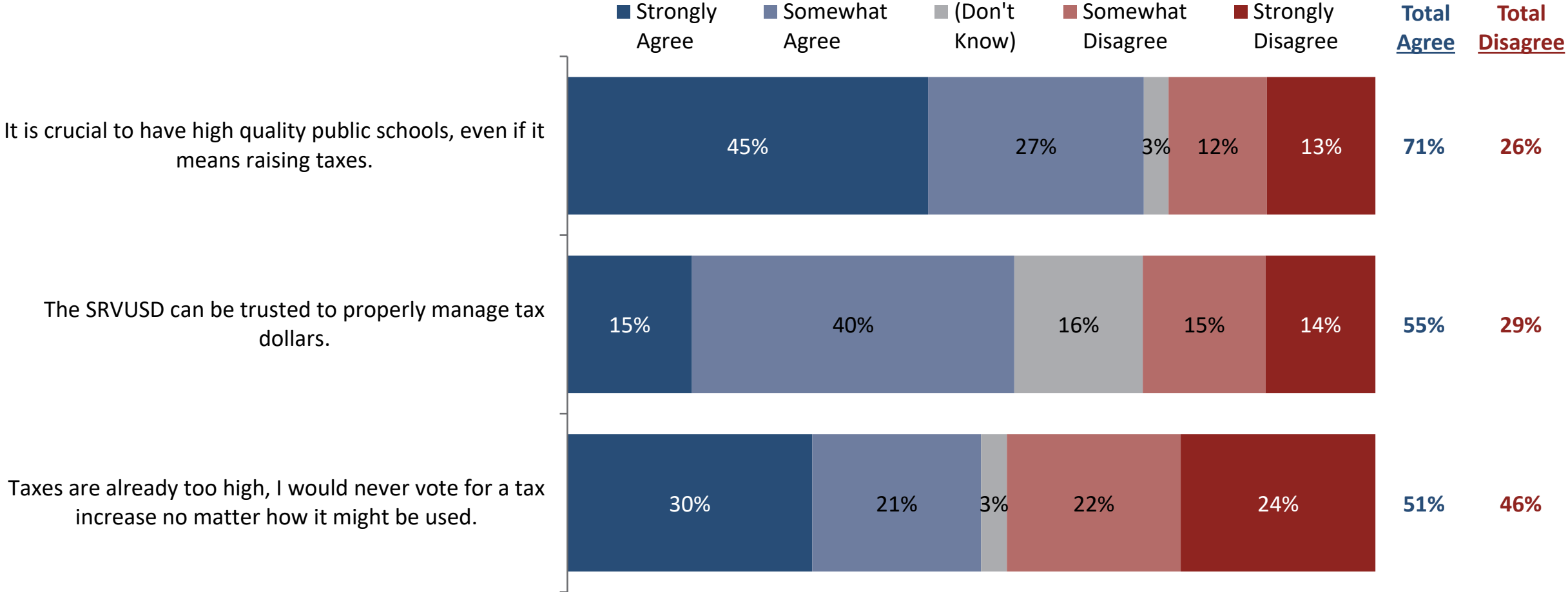


Q6-10. Regardless of whether or not you have children in school, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the following areas relating to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.



# Tax Attitudes

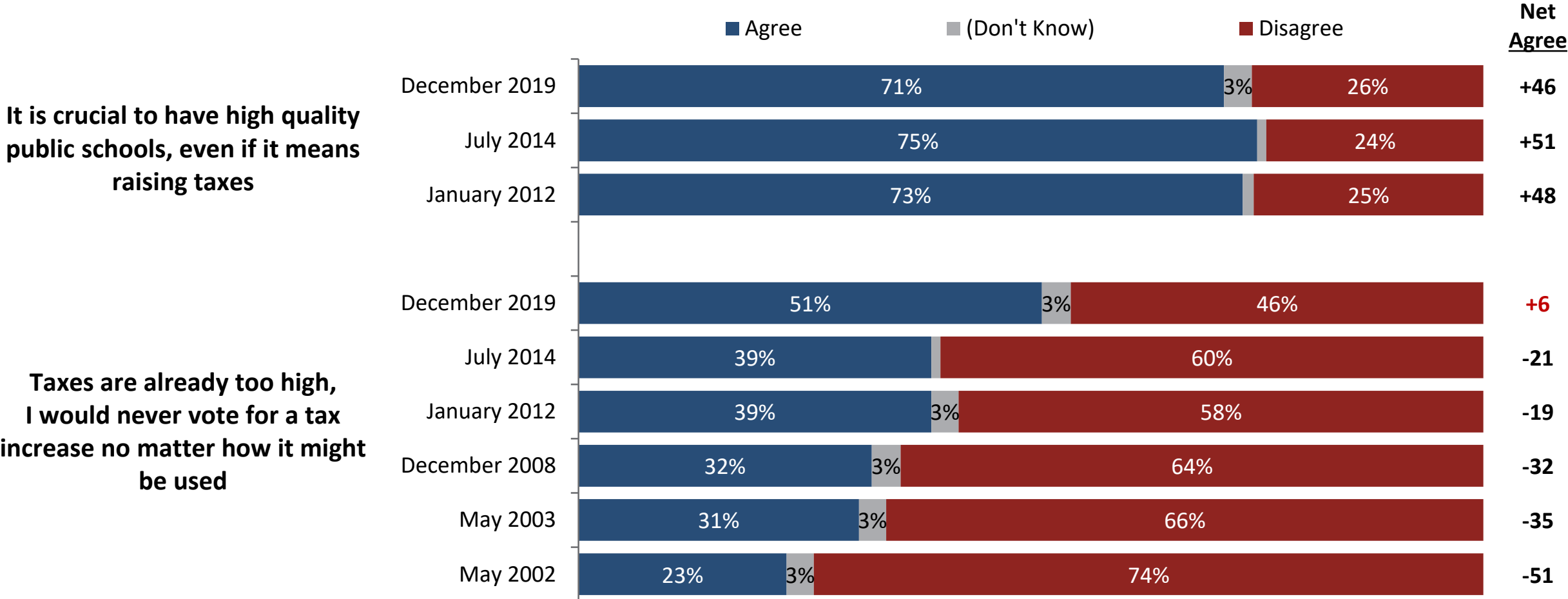
*Most voters agree that it is crucial to have high quality public schools even if it means raising taxes, but many are concerned about additional tax increases.*



Q13-17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

# Tax Attitudes Tracked

*Tax fatigue has increased in the District, with a majority agreeing taxes are too high for the first time.*



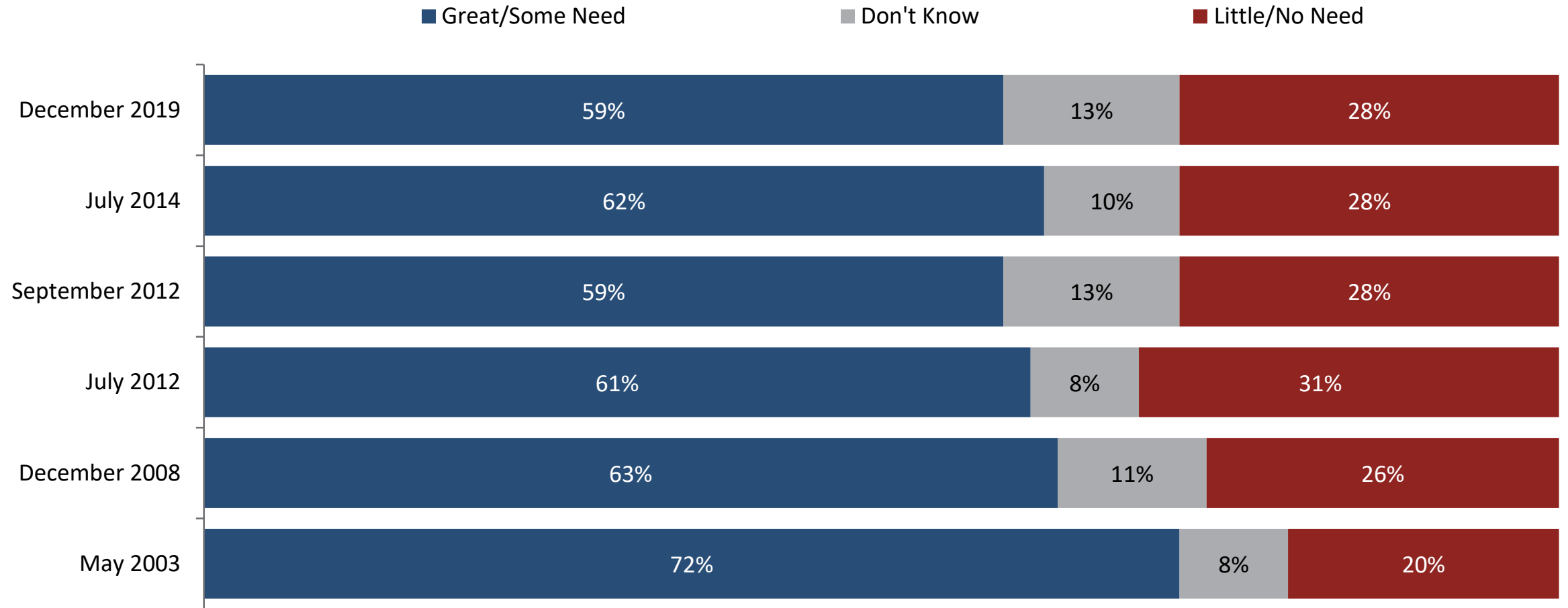
Q13-17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.



**Measure Support**

# Perception of Need

*Perception of need for funding is identical to what was measured prior to the last bond measure.*



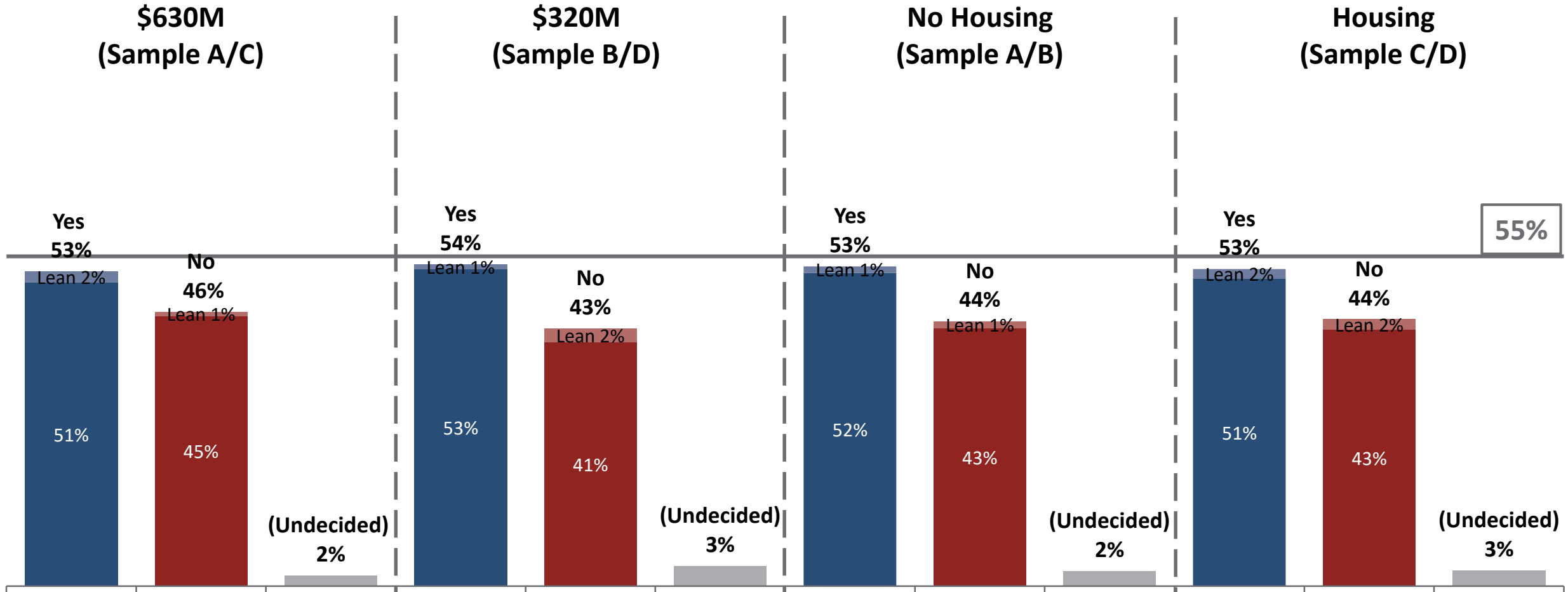
Q5. As you may know, you live in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Would you say that public schools in San Ramon Valley Unified School District have a great need for money, some need for money, only a little need or no real need for money?

# Ballot Language Tested

- ▶ **(\$630M, SAMPLE A: NO WORKFORCE HOUSING) (n=150)** To modernize, repair, and maintain local elementary, middle, and high schools to support hands-on science, math, engineering, technology and college/career training; improve school security /student safety; **and improve access for students with disabilities**; shall San Ramon Valley Unified School District adopt a measure authorizing **\$630 million** in bonds at legal rates, with rates averaging \$24/ \$100,000 of assessed valuation, raising approximately \$40 million annually while bonds are outstanding, with oversight, audits, no money for administrators, and all funds benefitting local schools?
- ▶ **(\$320M, SAMPLE B: NO WORKFORCE HOUSING) (n=150)** To modernize, repair, and maintain local elementary, middle, and high schools to support hands-on science, math, engineering, technology and college/career training; improve school security /student safety; **and improve access for students with disabilities**; shall San Ramon Valley Unified School District adopt a measure authorizing **\$320 million** in bonds at legal rates, with rates averaging \$24/ \$100,000 of assessed valuation, raising approximately \$40 million annually while bonds are outstanding, with oversight, audits, no money for administrators, and all funds benefitting local schools?
- ▶ **(\$630M, SAMPLE C: WITH WORKFORCE HOUSING) (n=150)** To modernize, repair, and maintain local elementary, middle, and high schools to support hands-on science, math, engineering, technology and college/career training; improve security /student safety; **and provide affordable housing for teachers /staff**; shall San Ramon Valley Unified School District adopt a measure authorizing **\$630 million** in bonds at legal rates, with rates averaging \$24/ \$100,000 of assessed valuation, raising approximately \$40 million annually while bonds are outstanding, with oversight, audits, no money for administrators, and all funds benefitting local schools?
- ▶ **(\$320M, SAMPLE D: WITH WORKFORCE HOUSING) (n=150)** To modernize, repair, and maintain local elementary, middle, and high schools to support hands-on science, math, engineering, technology and college/career training; improve security /student safety; **and provide affordable housing for teachers /staff**; shall San Ramon Valley Unified School District adopt a measure authorizing **\$320 million** in bonds at legal rates, with rates averaging \$24/ \$100,000 of assessed valuation, raising approximately \$40 million annually while bonds are outstanding, with oversight, audits, no money for administrators, and all funds benefitting local schools?

# Initial Vote

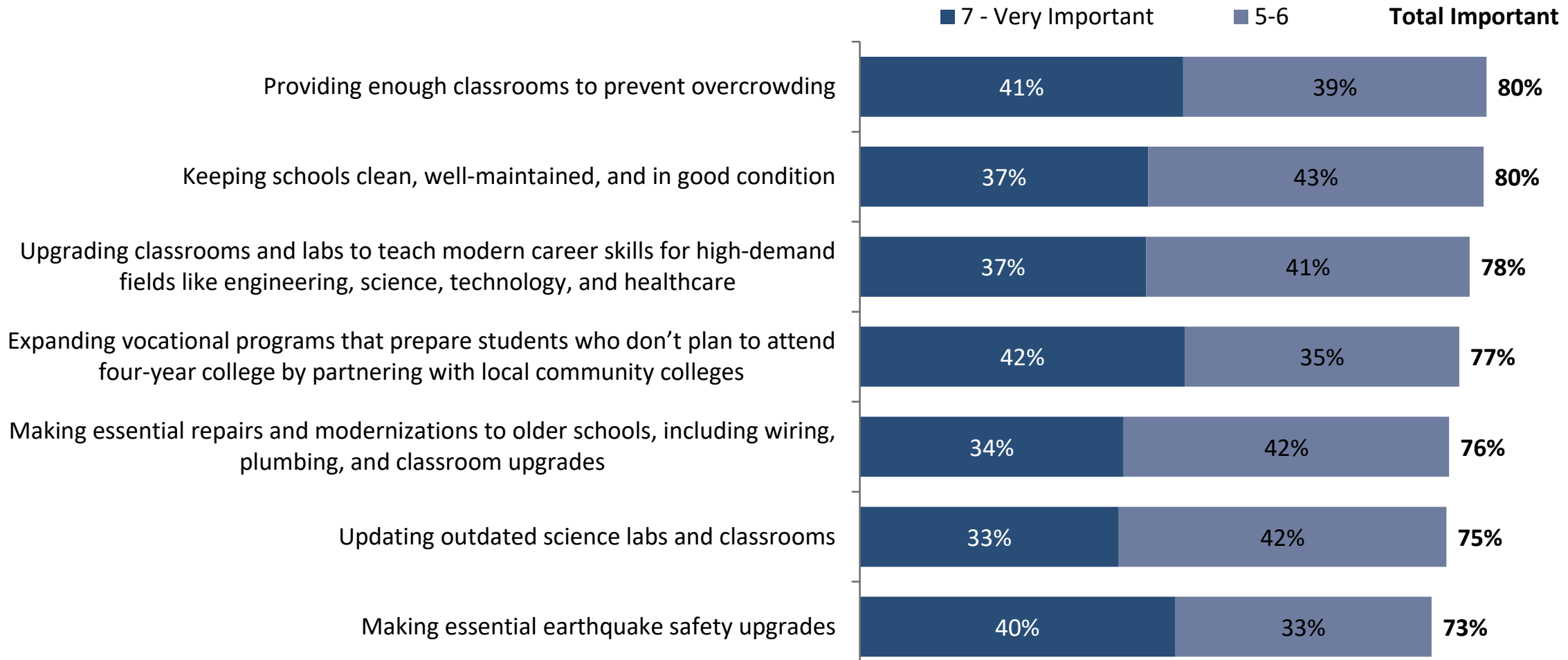
Initially, there is no statistical difference between the different bond amounts tested or with or without workforce housing.



55%

# Top Components

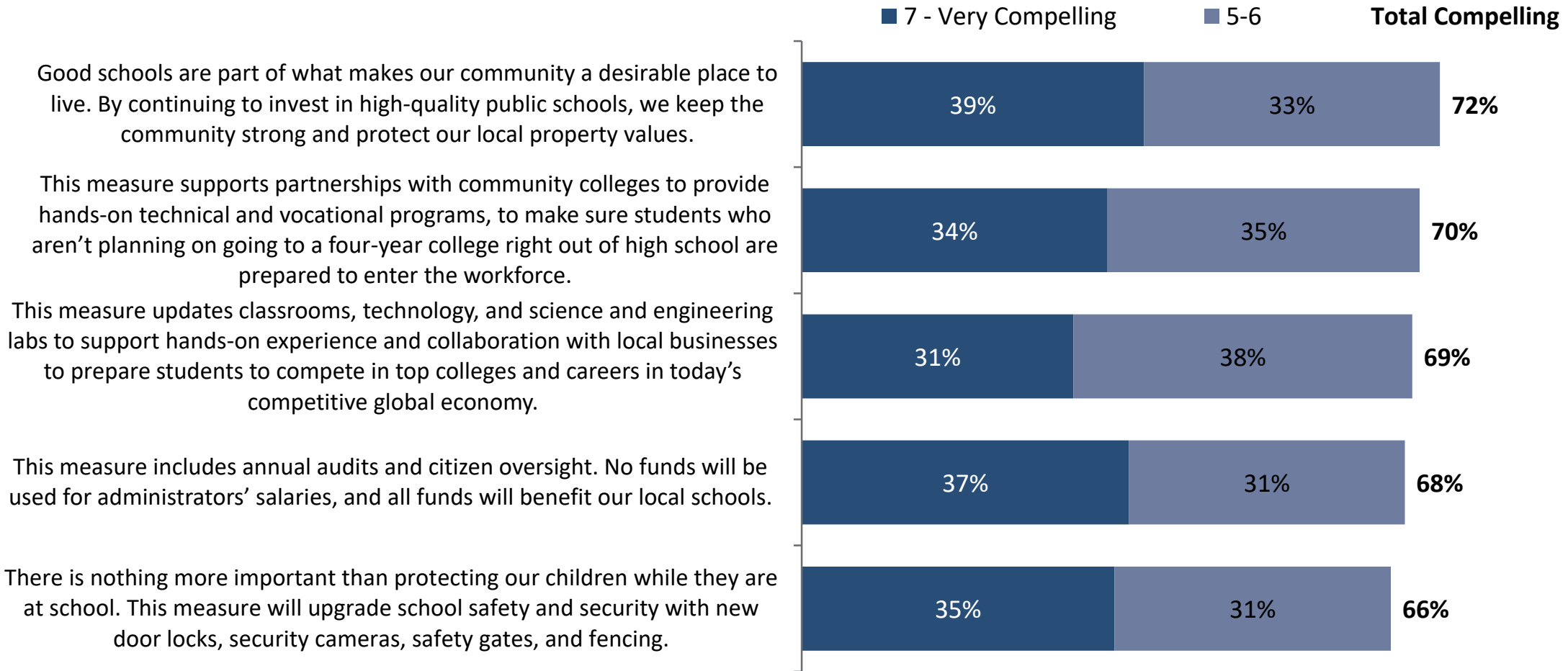
*Elements centered around maintaining schools and students' experience in the classroom resonate the most.*



Q18-35. I'm going to read you a list of items that could be included in a bond measure for the San Ramon Valley School District. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you, using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important.

# Top Information Themes

*Equating strong schools with a strong community, preparing students for colleges and careers, safety, and fiscal accountability are strong themes.*

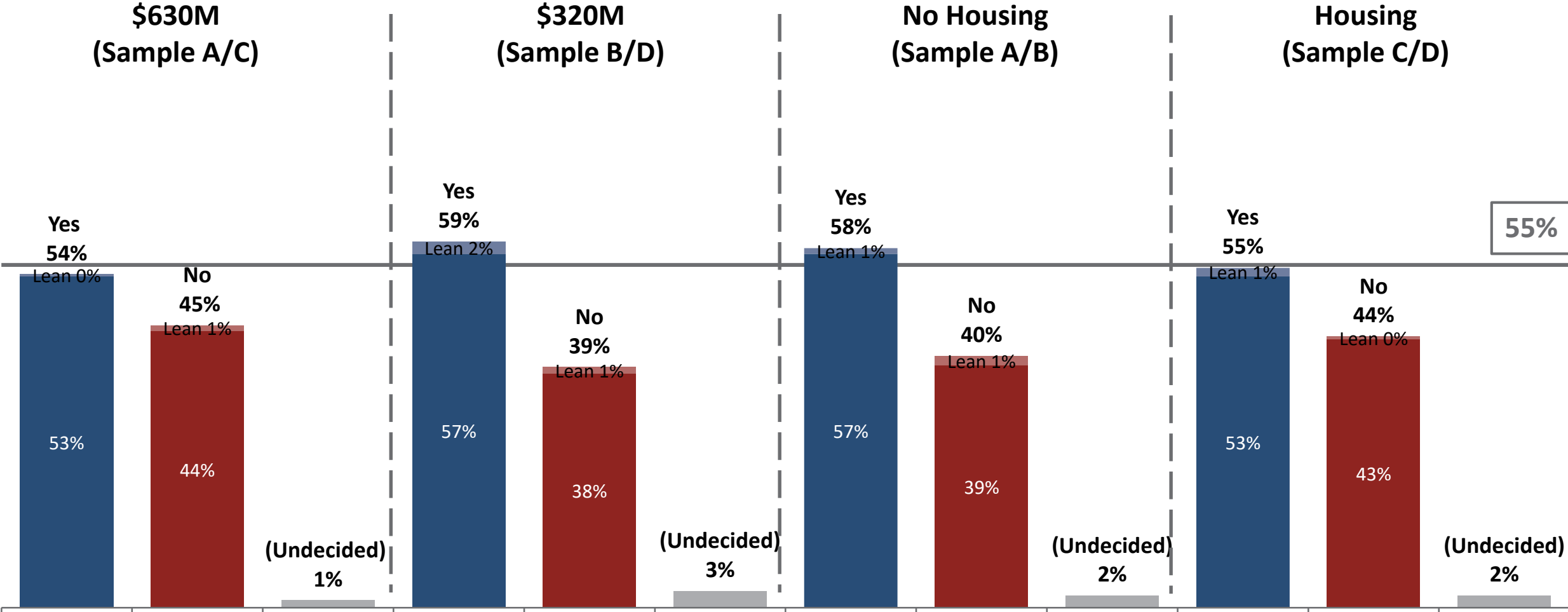


Q36-48. Next I'd like to read you some additional information about the proposed bond measure for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. After you hear each statement, please tell me how compelling it is as a reason to support a school bond measure.



# Support After Information Themes

*A more modest-sized bond measure may have an easier time gaining additional support with more information.*

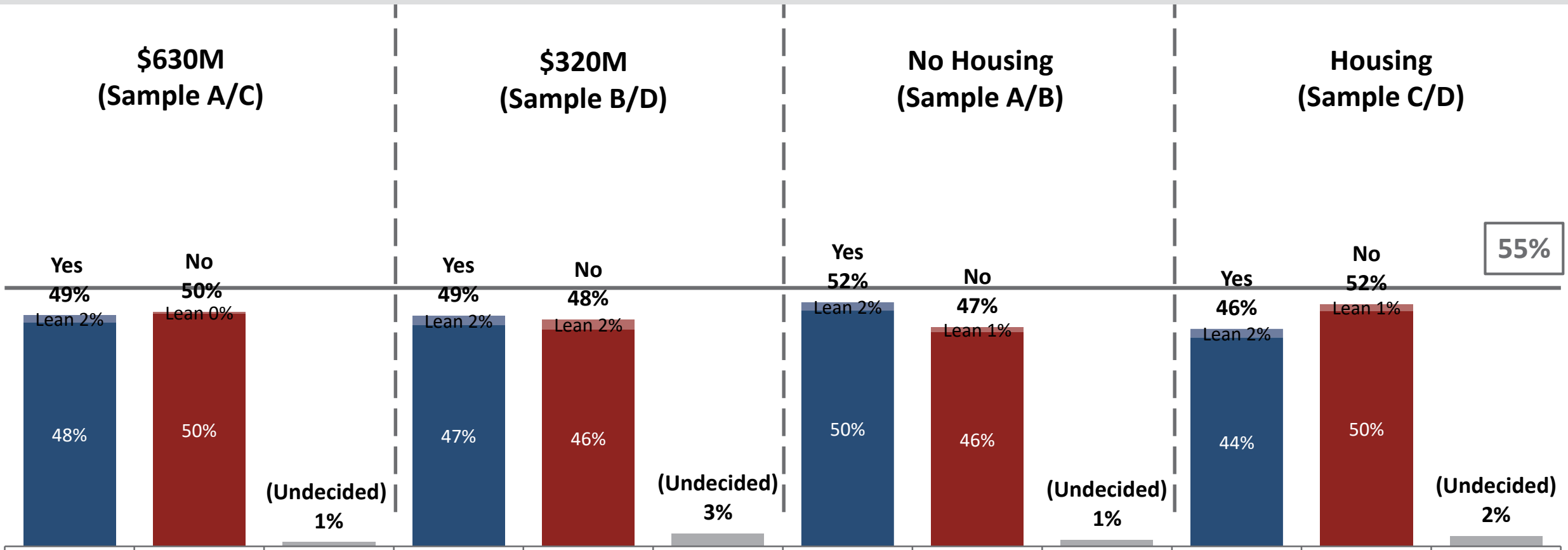


55%

# Support After General Negative

*Any bond measure is vulnerable to potential opposition focused on the cost.*

*Some people say we pay too much in taxes here, and we need to reject this bond measure. The average homeowner already pays over \$800 in taxes per year to our schools, and if this measure passes that will go up to over \$1,000 per year. In addition, next year we will be asked to vote on a \$15 billion bond measure for California's schools, which will hit our tax bills too. Enough is enough.*

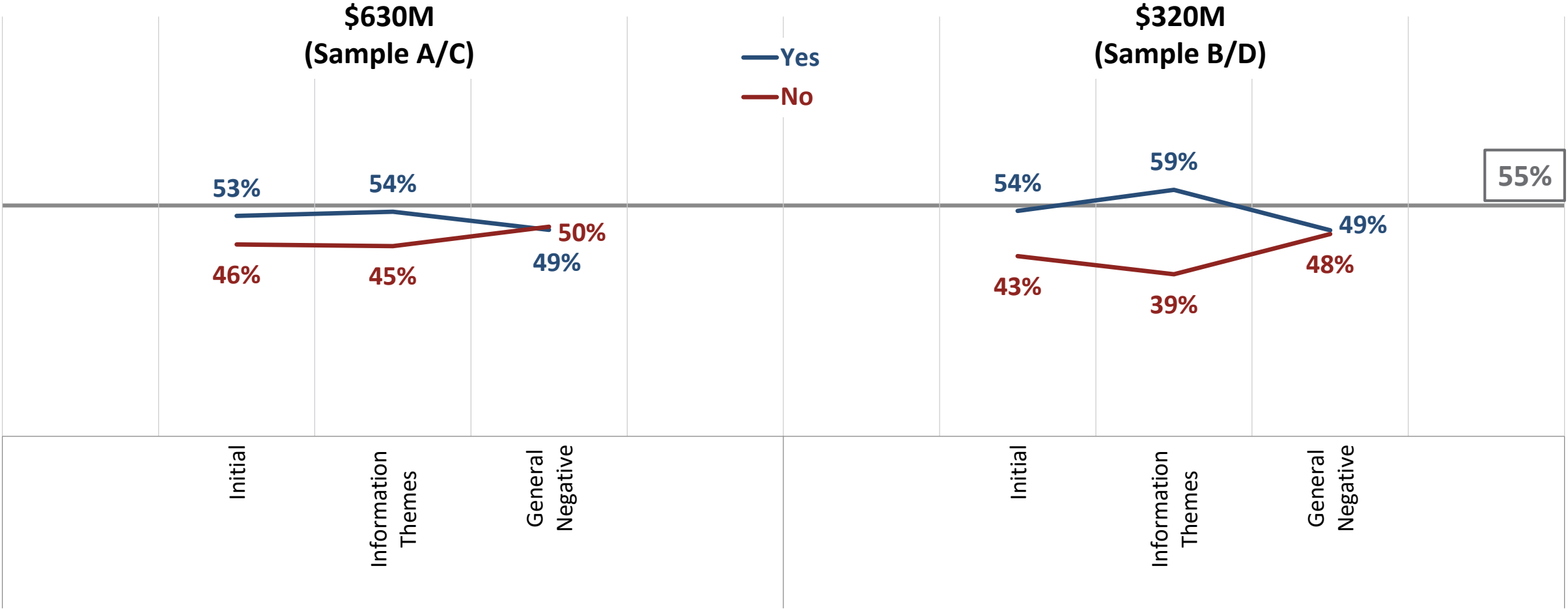


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# Support Progression by Bond Amount

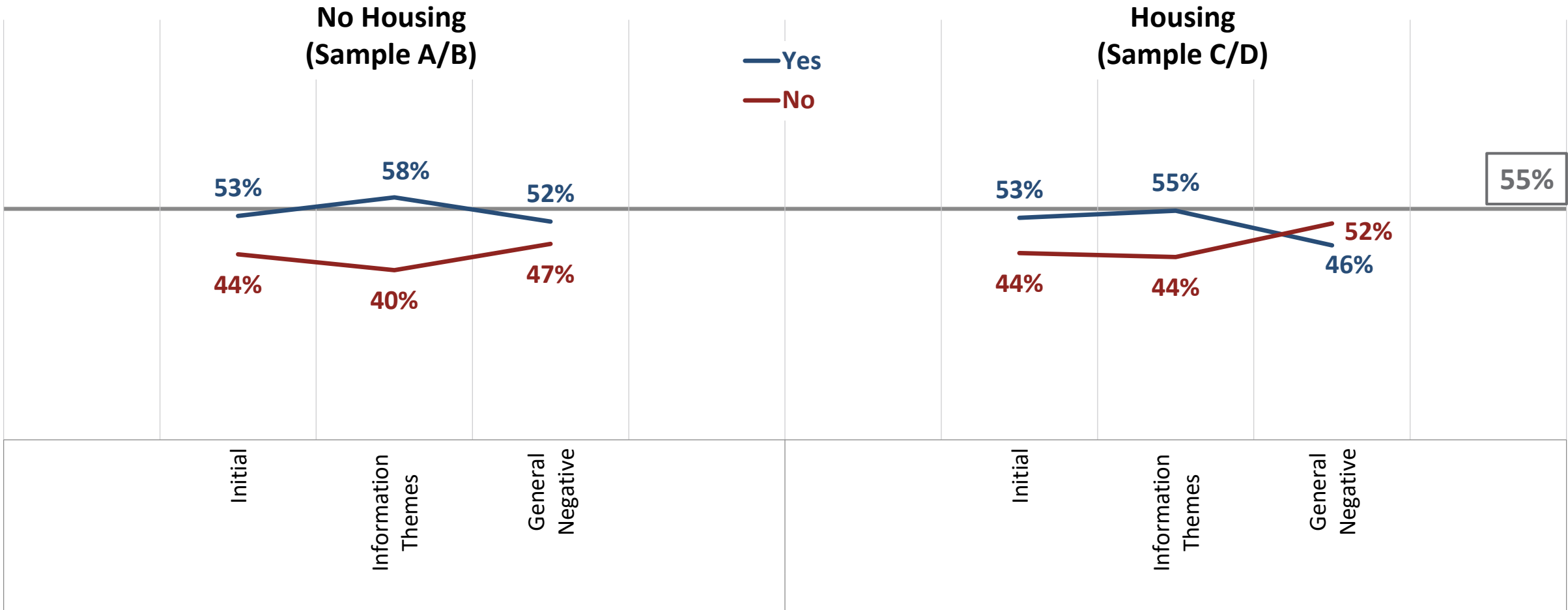


*The smaller bond amount sees a larger gain in support after information themes, but support ends in the same place for both amounts after hearing pushback on the cost.*



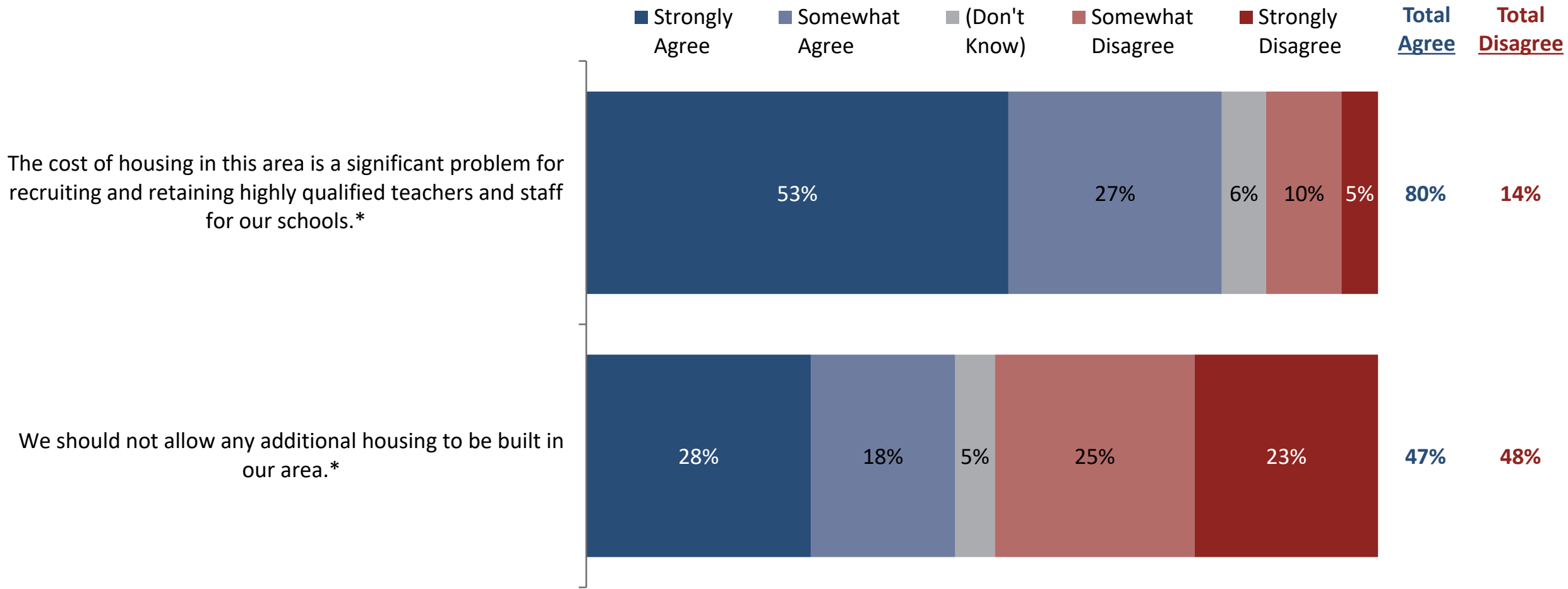
# Support Progression by Housing Inclusion

*Including housing in the measure may limit potential for growing the vote.*



# Housing Attitudes

*Although a strong majority agree that housing costs are a significant problem for attracting and retaining teachers, many are concerned about local housing growth.*

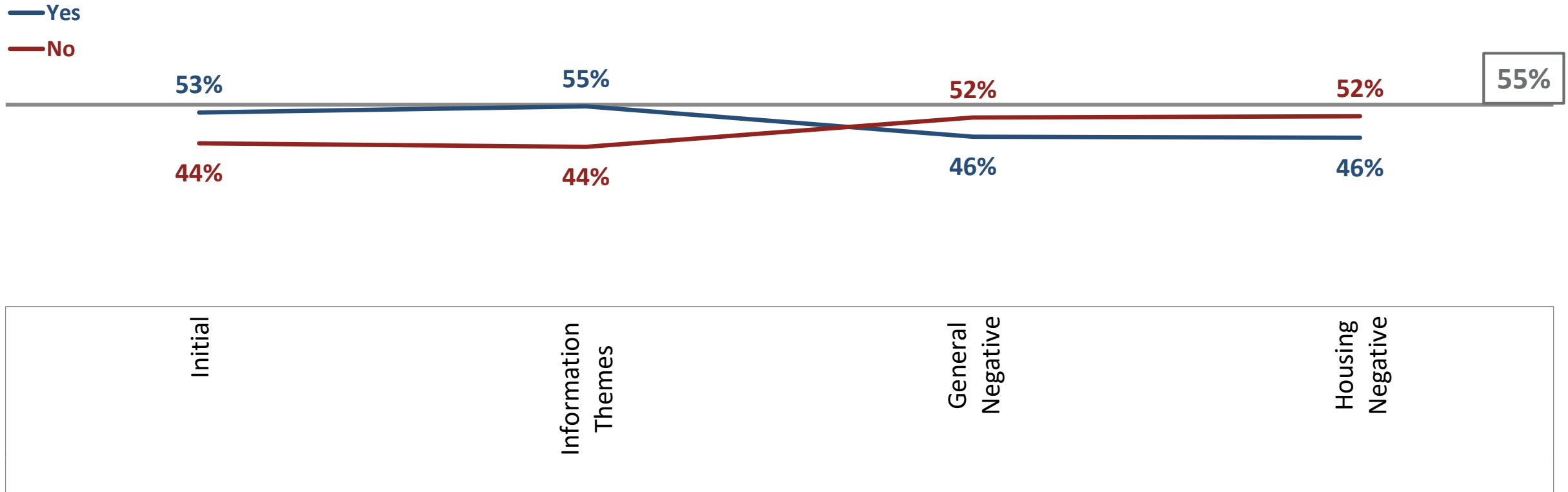


\*Samples C and D only (n=300)  
 Q13-17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

# Support After Housing Negative

*A housing-focused opposition message does little to further depress support for a measure.*

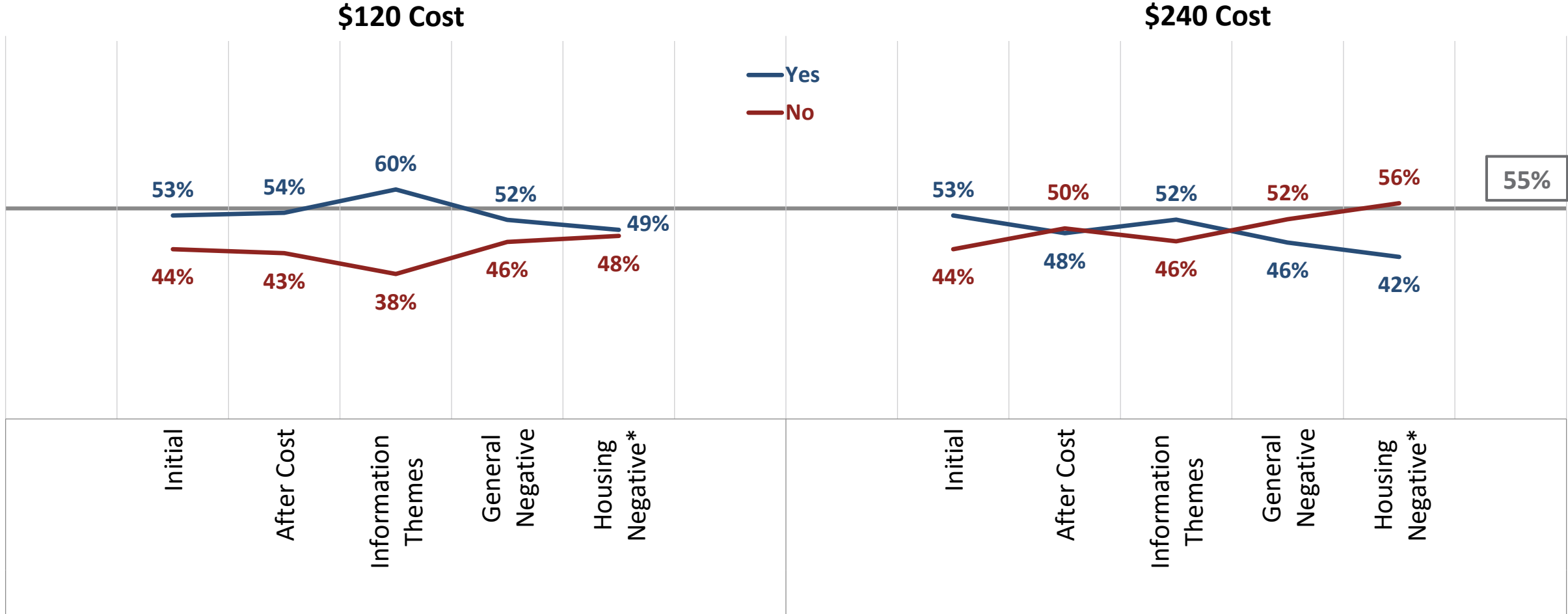
**(SAMPLE C & D ONLY, n=300)** *Some people say building even more housing in this area just doesn't make sense, no matter who would get to live in it. More housing will bring more people, making our traffic problems even worse. Also, having the school District charging rent for housing just doesn't make any sense – their job is to educate our kids, not to be landlords. The solution to helping our teachers live in our community is to increase their pay so they can afford to live here, not provide subsidized housing for them.*



# Support Progression by Annual Cost



Those who heard the lower annual cost amount were more supportive of the measure throughout the poll.



\*Samples C and D only (n=300)

If this bond measure passes, it would cost the average property owner in the District about \$120/\$240 annually.

# Conclusions

- ▶ Voters know the District and value the work you do, giving the District high ratings.
- ▶ However, there is skepticism that there is additional need for funding for facilities improvements.
- ▶ A large bond measure with a long project list and high annual rate may raise more concerns about costs and whether the bond is really needed.
- ▶ It will be important to make a strong case for why a bond measure is needed, and this case will be stronger with a smaller measure that focuses on essentials, like basic school safety and maintenance upkeep, as well as college & career readiness.
- ▶ The inclusion of a limited amount of housing on existing District land may be possible, as it does reflect voter interest in attracting and retaining quality teachers and staff.





**Sara LaBatt**

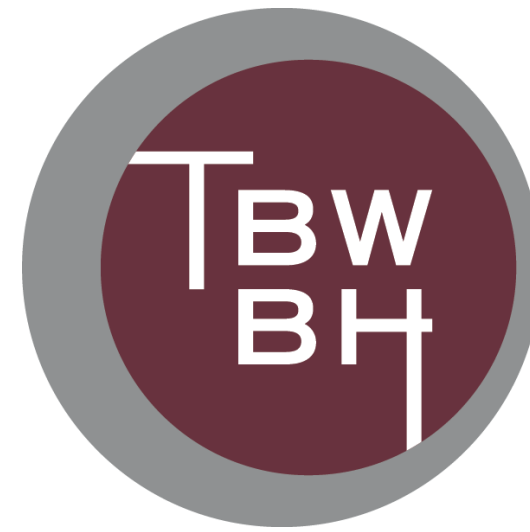
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