



COUNTY of
SANTA BARBARA






Santa Barbara County Ballot Measures Assessment Issues Survey

*Summary of Findings from a Survey of Santa Barbara County
Likely November 2024 Voters Conducted November 13-19, 2023*



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Specifics and Methodology

Dates	November 13-19, 2023
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Santa Barbara County Likely November 2024 Voters
Total Interviews	844; Voters in Unincorporated Santa Barbara County were Oversampled
Margin of Sampling Error	Countywide: $\pm 3.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level Unincorporated Area: $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

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



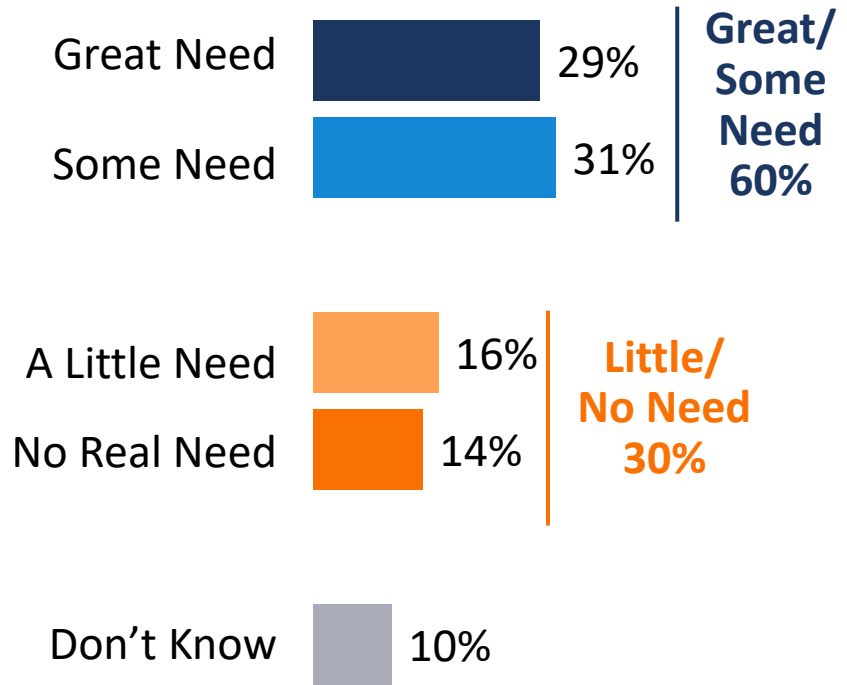
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The Need for Funding & Initial Reaction to Santa Barbara County Ballot Measures

Six in ten voters think Santa Barbara County needs additional revenue to provide quality local services.

Do you think Santa Barbara County government has a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funds to provide the level of services that residents in your area need and want?



Demographic Group	Great/Some Need	Little/No Real Need	Don't Know
Area			
Incorporated	60%	30%	9%
Unincorporated	60%	29%	10%
Gender			
Men	55%	36%	9%
Women	67%	23%	10%
Party			
Democrats	71%	17%	12%
Independents	48%	42%	10%
Republicans	52%	42%	6%
Age			
18-49	61%	30%	9%
50-64	66%	28%	6%
65+	55%	32%	13%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites	59%	30%	11%
Latinos	67%	29%	4%
All Voters of Color	64%	30%	6%
Supervisorial District			
1	63%	28%	9%
2	55%	30%	15%
3	57%	32%	11%
4	68%	28%	5%
5	55%	35%	10%

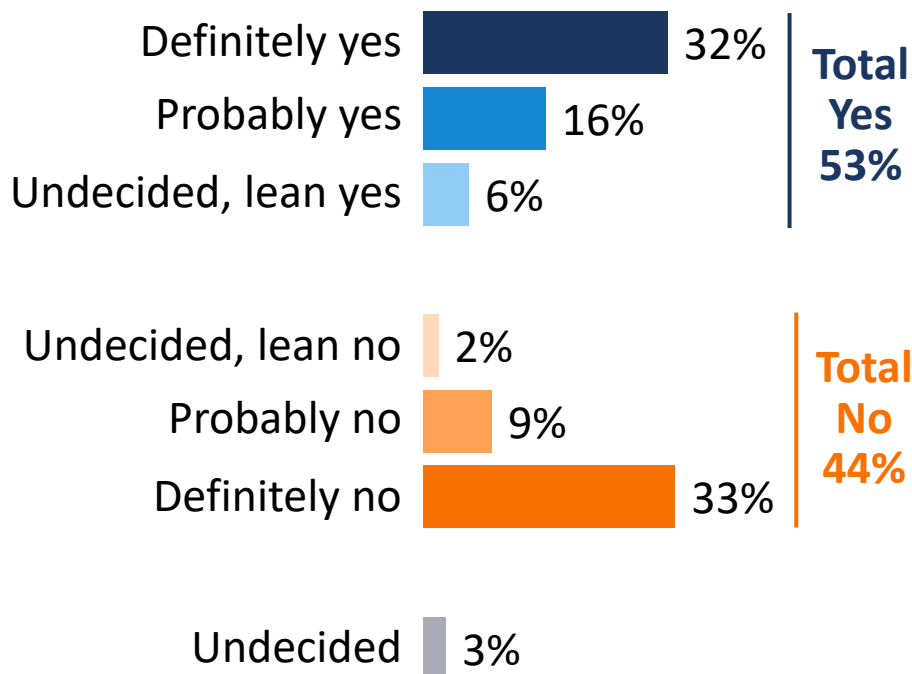
Unincorporated Santa Barbara County 1-Cent Sales Tax Measure Mock Title & Summary

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES MEASURE.

To fund local services, including law enforcement programs; improve wildfire/natural disaster response/preparedness; upgrade roads/flood control; address local housing needs/homelessness; maintain mental health services; improve parks; protect groundwater resources; invest in local housing for workers, and other government uses, shall Santa Barbara County's sales tax be increased 1¢, generating approximately \$15 million annually until ended by voters, with audits, public disclosure, funds locally controlled, be adopted?

A “soft” and narrow majority of unincorporated voters supports the measure, but equal numbers say they would “definitely” vote yes or no.

If there were an election today, would you vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Und.
Gender			
Men	54%	43%	3%
Women	53%	44%	3%
Party			
Democrats	74%	23%	4%
Independents	47%	49%	4%
Republicans	31%	67%	2%
Age			
18-49	60%	39%	2%
50-64	48%	44%	8%
65+	49%	49%	2%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites	52%	44%	4%
Latinos	57%	41%	2%
All Voters of Color	59%	39%	1%
Supervisorial District			
1	59%	38%	3%
2	60%	39%	2%
3	47%	47%	6%
4	48%	48%	4%

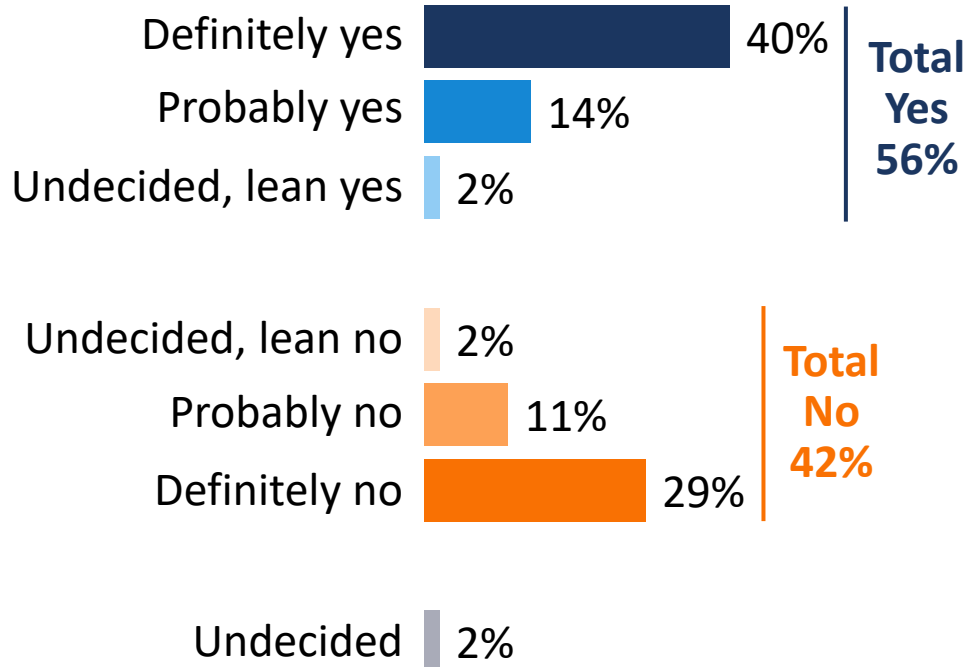
Santa Barbara County Library Services ¼-Cent Sales Tax Measure Mock Title & Summary

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY AND EDUCATION SERVICES MEASURE.

To increase access to libraries/educational services by improving book/digital materials collections, computer access/technology; hire/retain/train librarians; expand library hours/programs, including youth reading/homework/bookmobile/adult literacy/job training/online learning/senior services; repair outdated buildings; ensure earthquake safety/handicapped accessibility; shall Santa Barbara County's sales tax be increased ¼¢, generating approximately \$15 million annually, until ended by voters; requiring audits, funds locally controlled, be adopted?

While a majority votes in favor, support for this library sales tax falls short of the two-thirds threshold required.

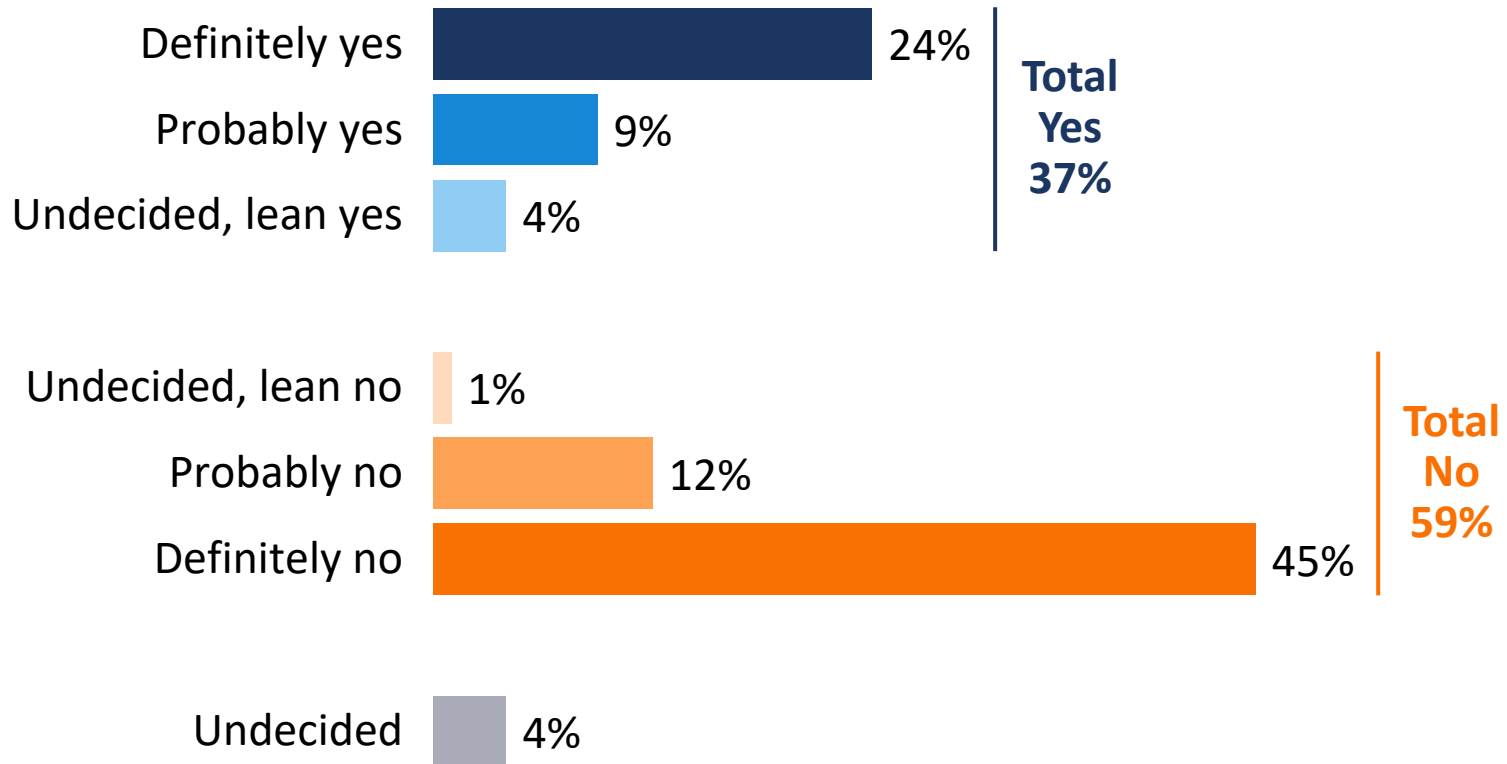
If there were an election today, would you vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Und.
Area			
Incorporated	58%	41%	1%
Unincorporated	53%	44%	3%
Gender			
Men	49%	49%	2%
Women	64%	35%	2%
Party			
Democrats	76%	22%	2%
Independents	43%	55%	2%
Republicans	32%	67%	1%
Age			
18-49	58%	41%	1%
50-64	47%	51%	2%
65+	60%	37%	3%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites	57%	41%	2%
Latinos	60%	39%	0%
All Voters of Color	58%	41%	0%
Supervisorial District			
1	60%	38%	1%
2	58%	39%	2%
3	56%	42%	2%
4	52%	46%	2%
5	49%	51%	0%

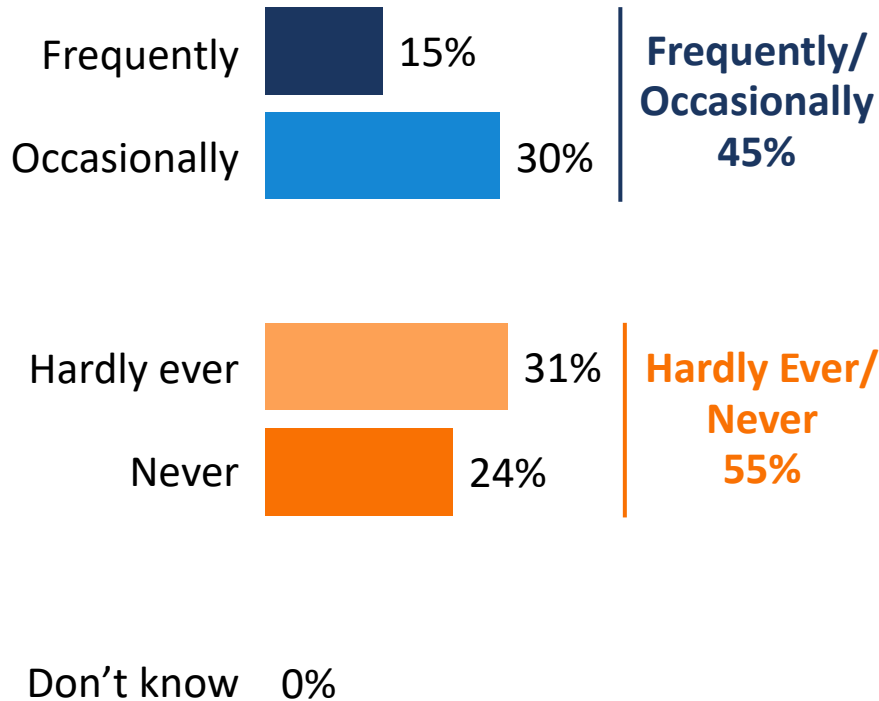
Six in ten Santa Barbara County voters oppose raising funds for local libraries by establishing an annual \$60 parcel tax.

If instead of raising the County's sales tax ¼¢, this measure to improve local libraries and library services required all County property owners to pay an annual \$60 parcel tax, would you vote "yes" in favor of it or "no" to oppose?



Women, seniors and residents of the 2nd Supervisorial District are more regular users of local public libraries.

How often would you say you visit local public libraries and/or use their services? Would you say you visit frequently, occasionally, hardly ever, or never?



Demographic Group	Freq.	Occ.	Hardly Ever/ Never
Area			
Incorporated	14%	31%	56%
Unincorporated	16%	30%	53%
Gender			
Men	10%	25%	65%
Women	19%	36%	45%
Party			
Democrats	19%	33%	48%
Independents	11%	30%	58%
Republicans	11%	25%	64%
Age			
18-49	13%	32%	55%
50-64	14%	23%	63%
65+	18%	33%	48%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites	17%	30%	54%
Latinos	12%	33%	55%
All Voters of Color	11%	32%	57%
Supervisorial District			
1	16%	25%	59%
2	14%	42%	44%
3	14%	35%	51%
4	15%	29%	56%
5	11%	20%	69%



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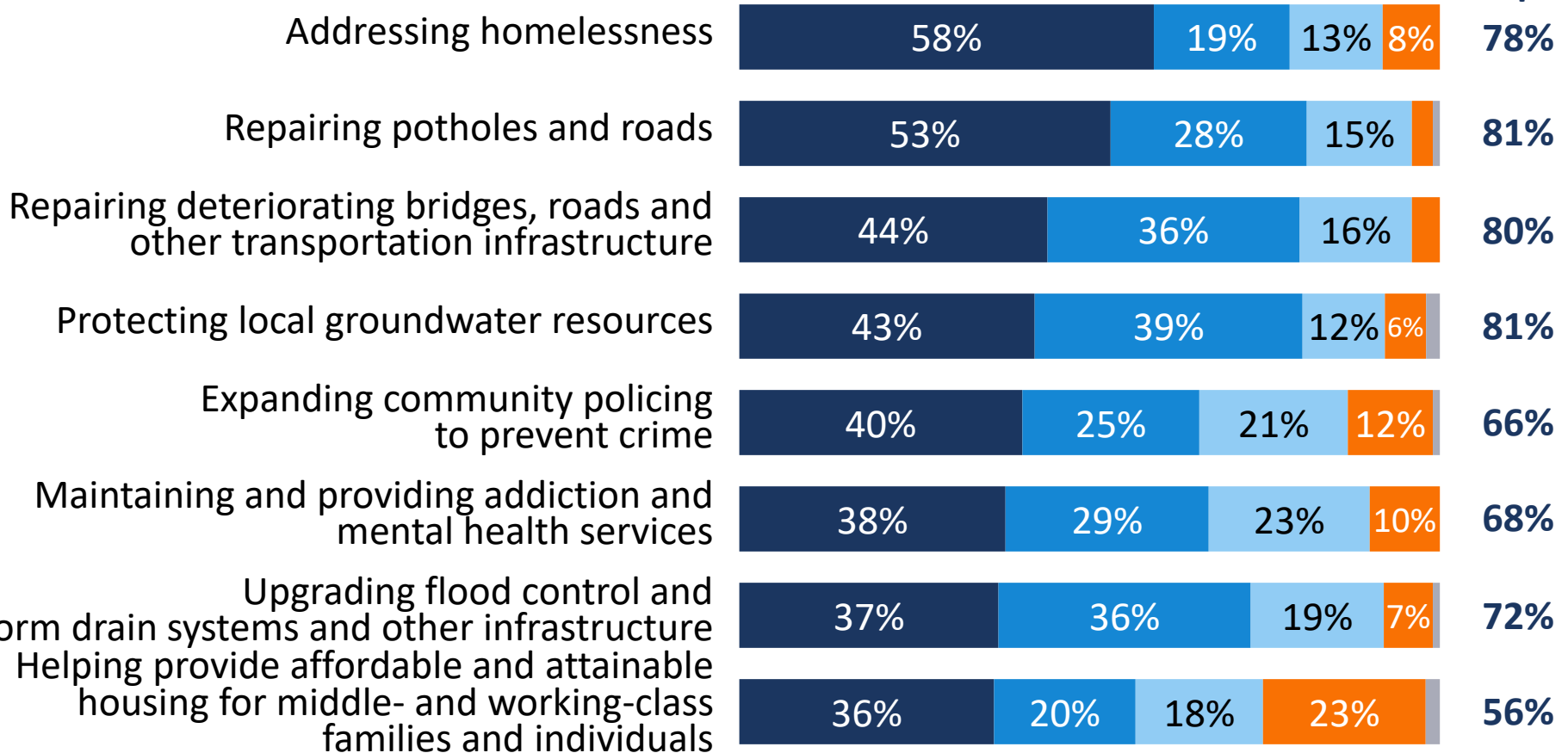
Santa Barbara County Voters' Funding Priorities

Unincorporated voters' top priorities are addressing homelessness, improving roads and infrastructure, protecting groundwater and public safety.

(Asked of Unincorporated County Voters Only)

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

Ext./Very Impt.

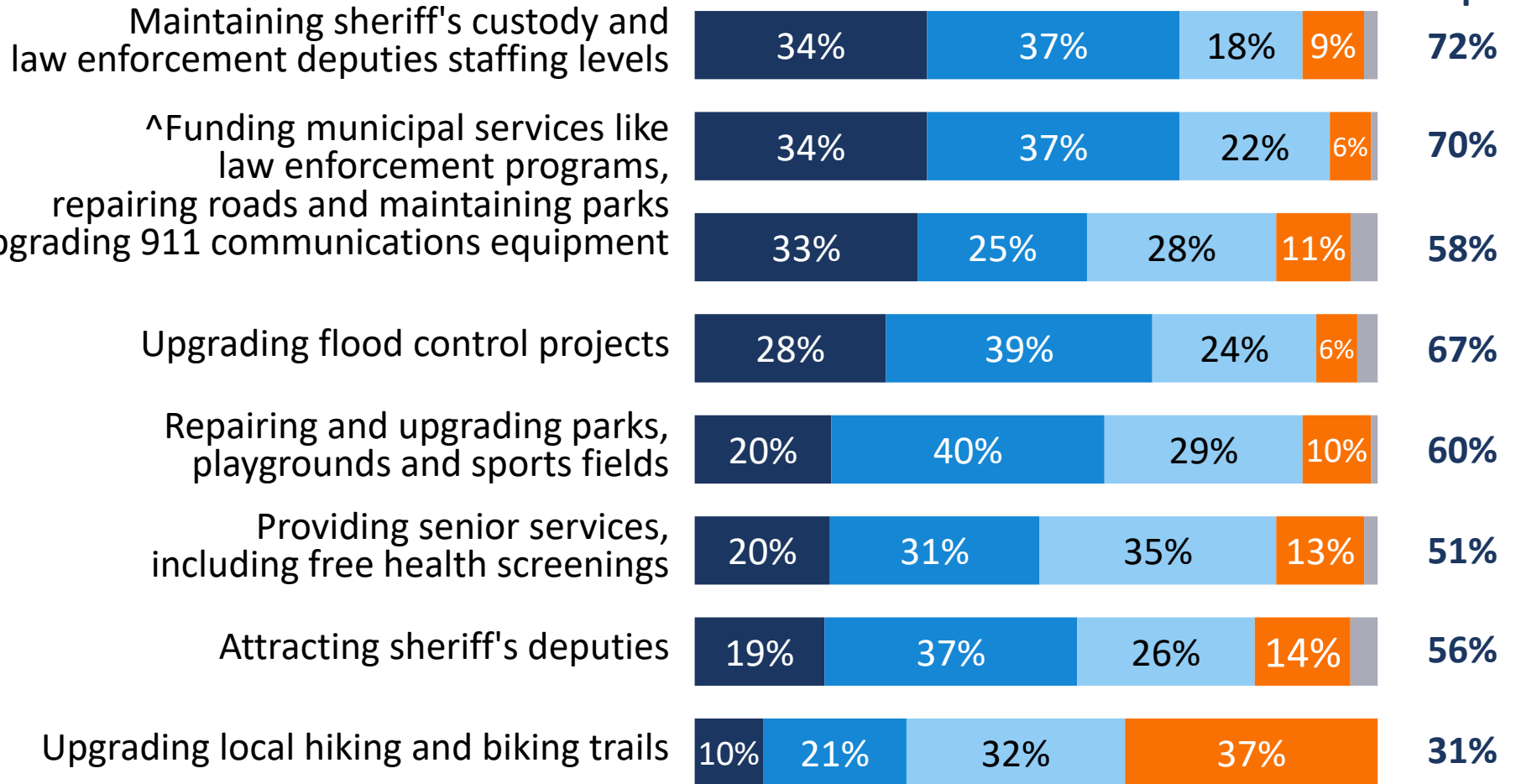


Q8a-p (Unincorporated Voters). I am now going to read you different ways ballot measure funds may be used and possible provisions that may be included. Please tell me how important it is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

More than seven in ten unincorporated voters also identify investing in local law enforcement as highly important.

(Asked of Unincorporated County Voters Only)

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**



Q8a-p (Unincorporated Voters). I am now going to read you different ways ballot measure funds may be used and possible provisions that may be included. Please tell me how important it is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

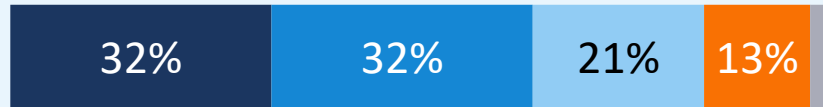
^Not Part of Split Sample

Among the library-related funding priorities, youth education and preventing library closures are rated as the most important uses of ballot measure funds.

(Asked of ALL Santa Barbara County Voters)

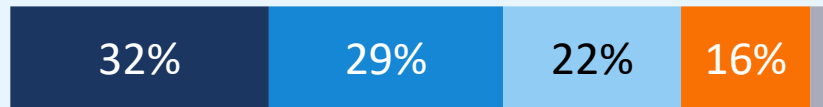
■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**

Expanding youth reading and homework programs



64%

Preventing local library closures



61%

Improving computer technology and internet access at local libraries



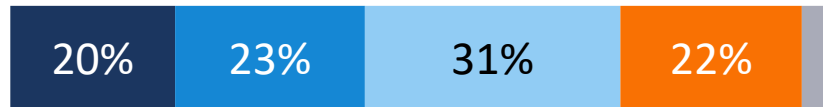
49%

Retaining, hiring and training library staff



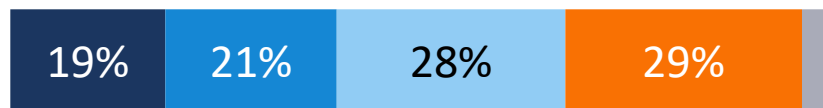
46%

Creating library space for family programs, activities, and classes



43%

Expanding library adult education programs



40%



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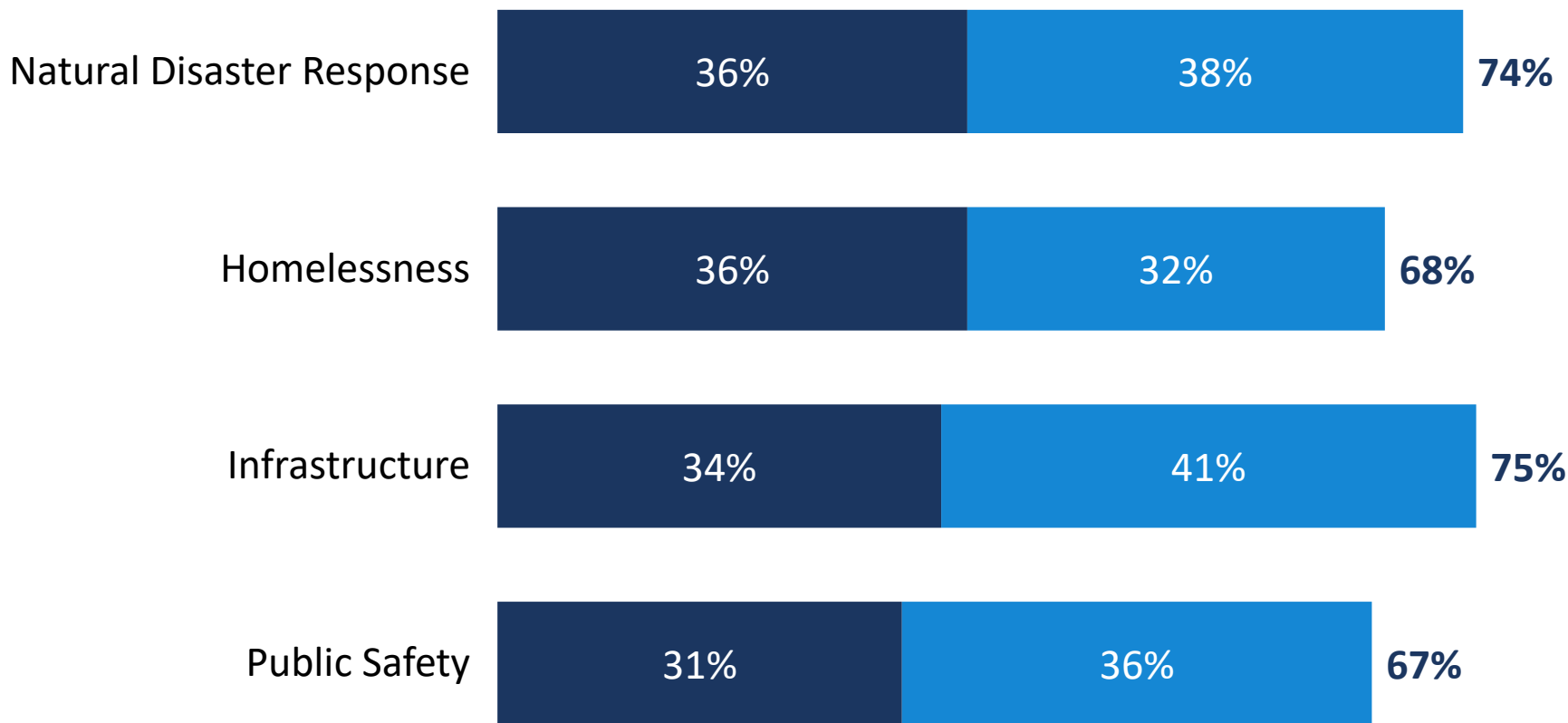
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The Impact of Educational Statements

Most Unincorporated voters regard these statements as convincing reasons to consider supporting a sales tax measure to fund County services.

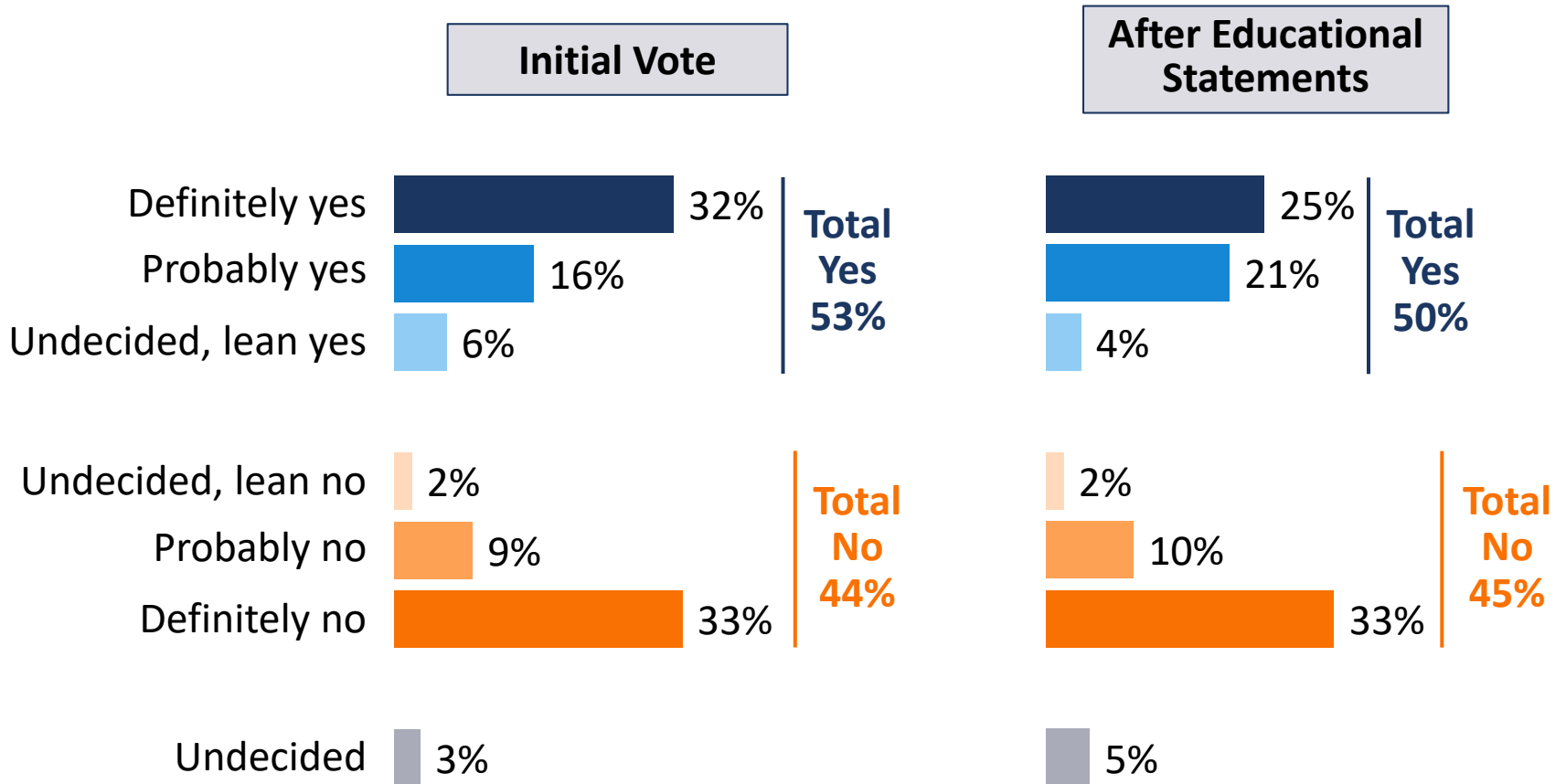
(Unincorporated Voters; Ranked by Very Convincing)

■ Very Convincing ■ Somewhat Convincing



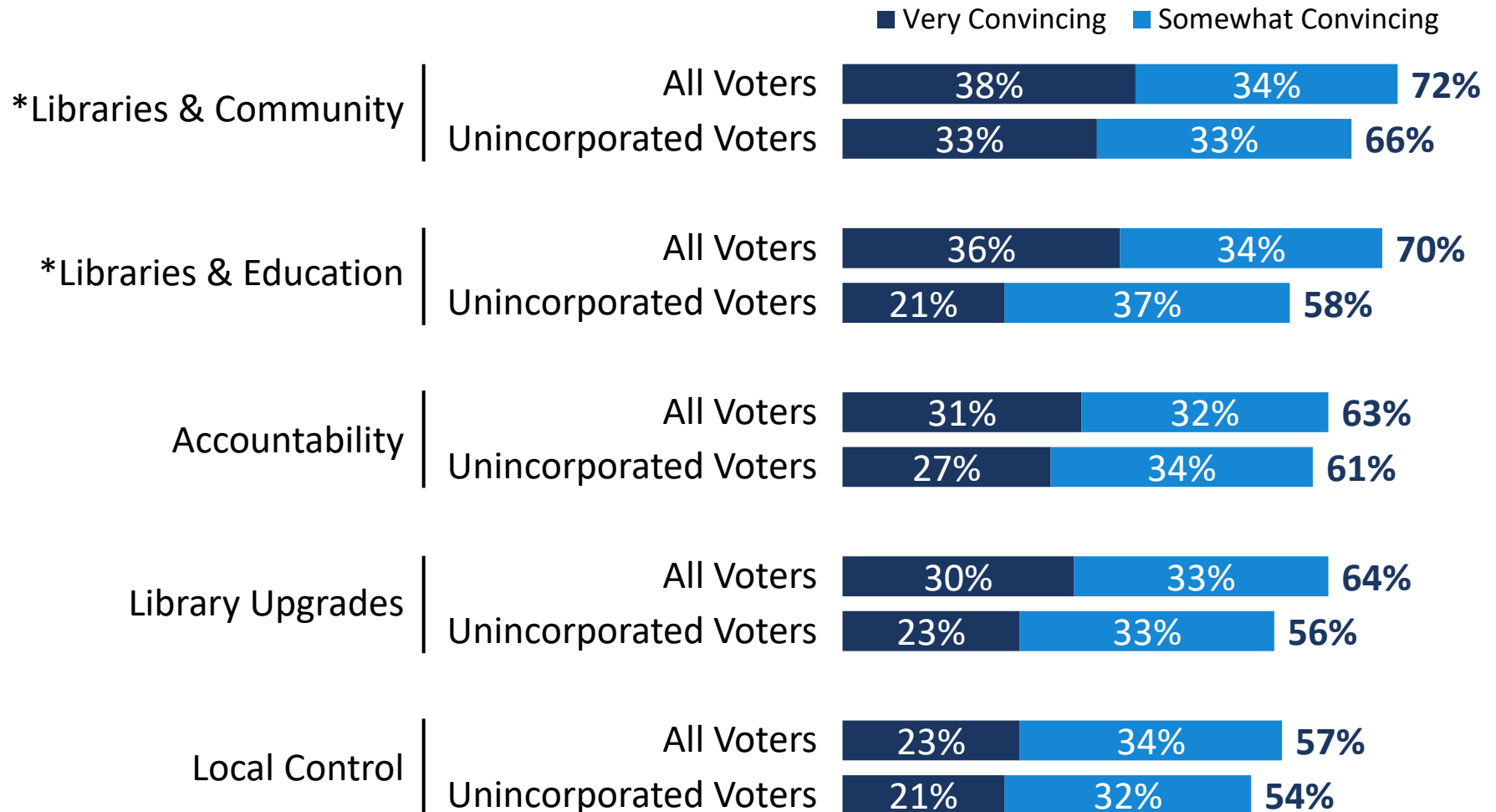
However, total support for the proposed one-cent sales tax ballot measure decreases and fewer say they would “definitely” vote yes in favor.

Unincorporated Area 1-Cent Sales Tax Measure



Identifying the benefits of local libraries resonated more with all Santa Barbara County voters than residents of unincorporated communities.

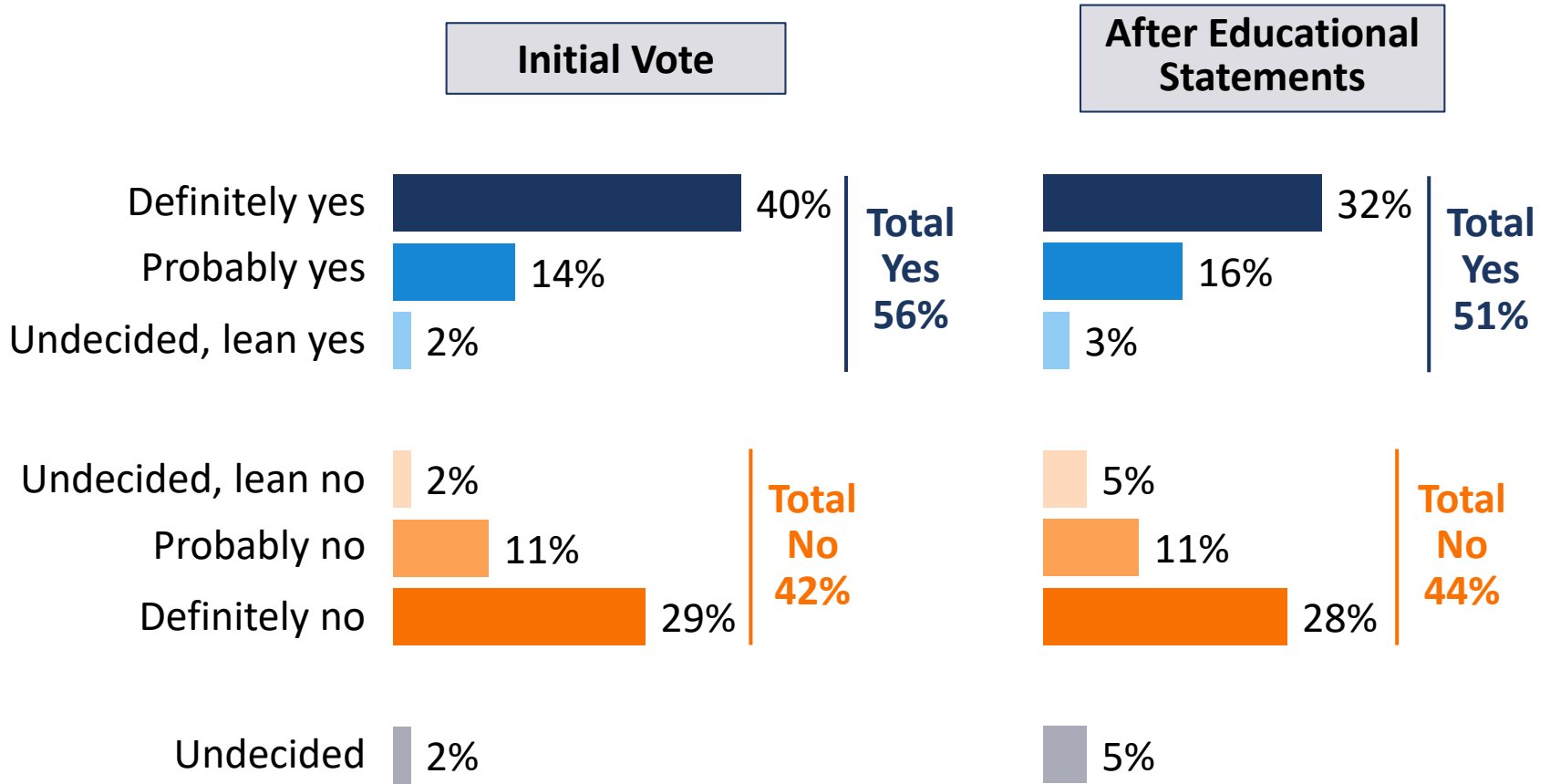
(Ranked by Very Convincing)



Q9a-e. I'm going to read some statements made by supporters. Please tell me whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to vote yes. *Split Sample

Half of County voters support a proposed sales tax to provide additional funding to local libraries, which is well below the two-thirds threshold needed for passage.

Countywide Quarter-Cent Library Sales Tax Measure





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Conclusions

Conclusions

- In total, six in ten voters believe the County has a “great” or “some” need for additional funds to provide local services, but there are demographic differences as women, Democrats, voters of color and voters ages 18-64 are more likely to see a need for additional funding for local services.
- After a mock ballot summary, just over half of unincorporated County voters vote in favor of a one-cent sales tax to fund local services – notably, three in four Democrats support it, two-thirds of Republicans oppose, and nonpartisans are almost evenly divided.
- Among all County voters, a majority votes in favor of a quarter cent Library sales tax, but this is well short of the two-thirds vote needed to pass a special purpose measure.
- Unincorporated County voters’ top funding priorities for potential ballot measure revenue are addressing homelessness, improving roads and local infrastructure, and investing public safety services to reduce crime.

Conclusions (*continued*)

- Simulating community engagement and public education did not alter voter opinion towards either measure – following a series of educational statements only half of unincorporated voters support a sales tax increase to fund a range of local services.
- In contrast, a statement from hypothetical opponents of these measures that focused on the high cost of living and rising prices for food, gas, and housing elicits a strong reaction and reduces support for both measures to less than 50%.
- Voters in unincorporated communities identify a number of County services as highly important and worthy of funding, but these survey results suggest it would be challenging to secure their support for a one-cent sales tax measure.
- This survey also finds that reaching the two-thirds threshold to pass a Countywide Library sales tax measure is unlikely.
- Voters value County services but likely due to concerns about the cost of living and their own financial security, they are sensitive to the tax increases associated with these measures.

**For more information,
contact:**



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