Telephone Survey of West Valley-Mission Community College District Voters

Presentation of Results

Prepared for

West Valley-Mission Community College District

EMC
RESEARCH

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Methodology

- Telephone Survey of likely voters in the West Valley-Mission Community College District
- 502 completed interviews
- Margin of error ±4.4 percentage points
- Split sample to test messaging
  - Sample A: n=250; ±6.2
  - Sample B: n=252; ±6.2
- Conducted January 13-17, 2010
- Interviews conducted by trained, professional interviewers
- Where applicable, results compared to previous surveys:
  - **Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2001**
    n=600; ±4.0
    EMC 01-2503
  - **May 19-23, 2004**
    n=500; ±4.4
    FMMA

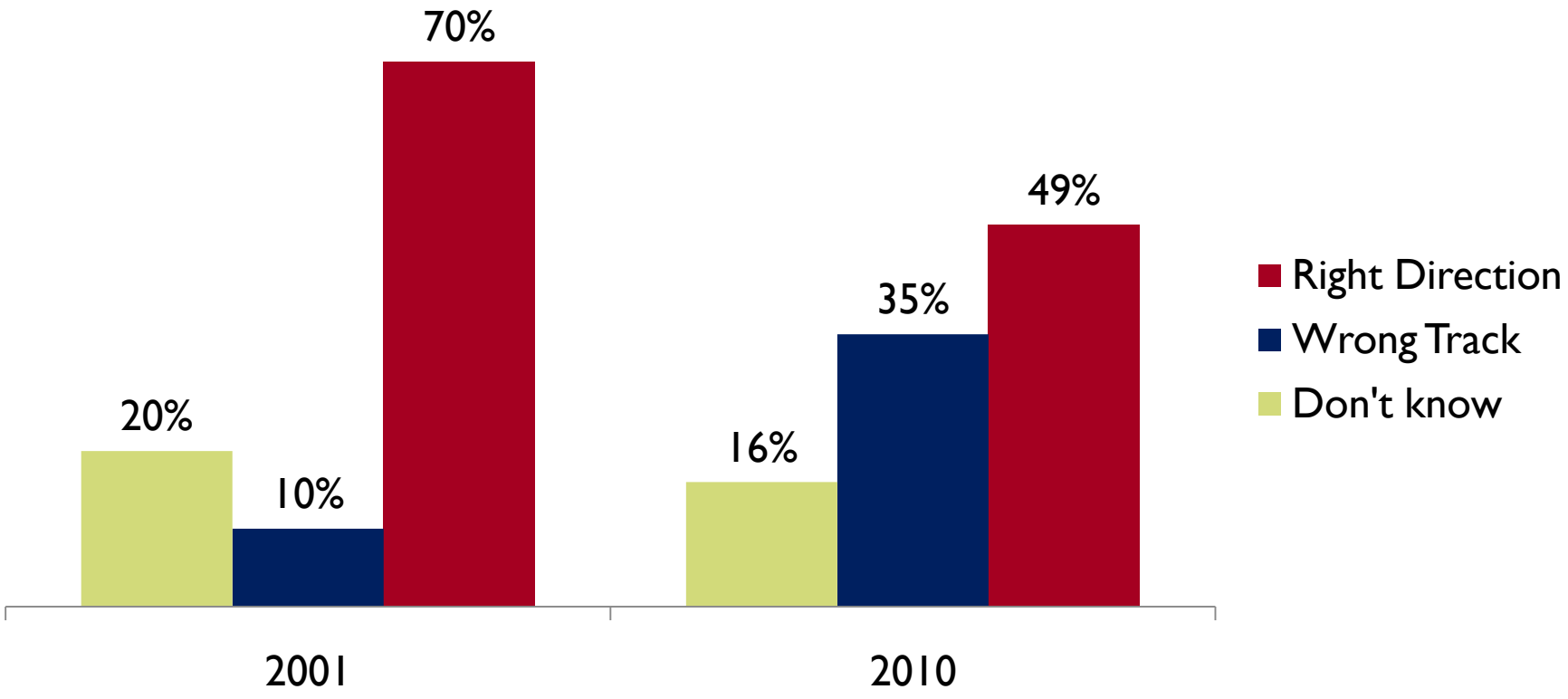
As with any opinion research, the release of selected figures from this report without the analysis that explains their meaning would be damaging to EMC. Therefore, EMC reserves the right to correct any misleading release of this data in any medium through the release of correct data or analysis.

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

Issue environment

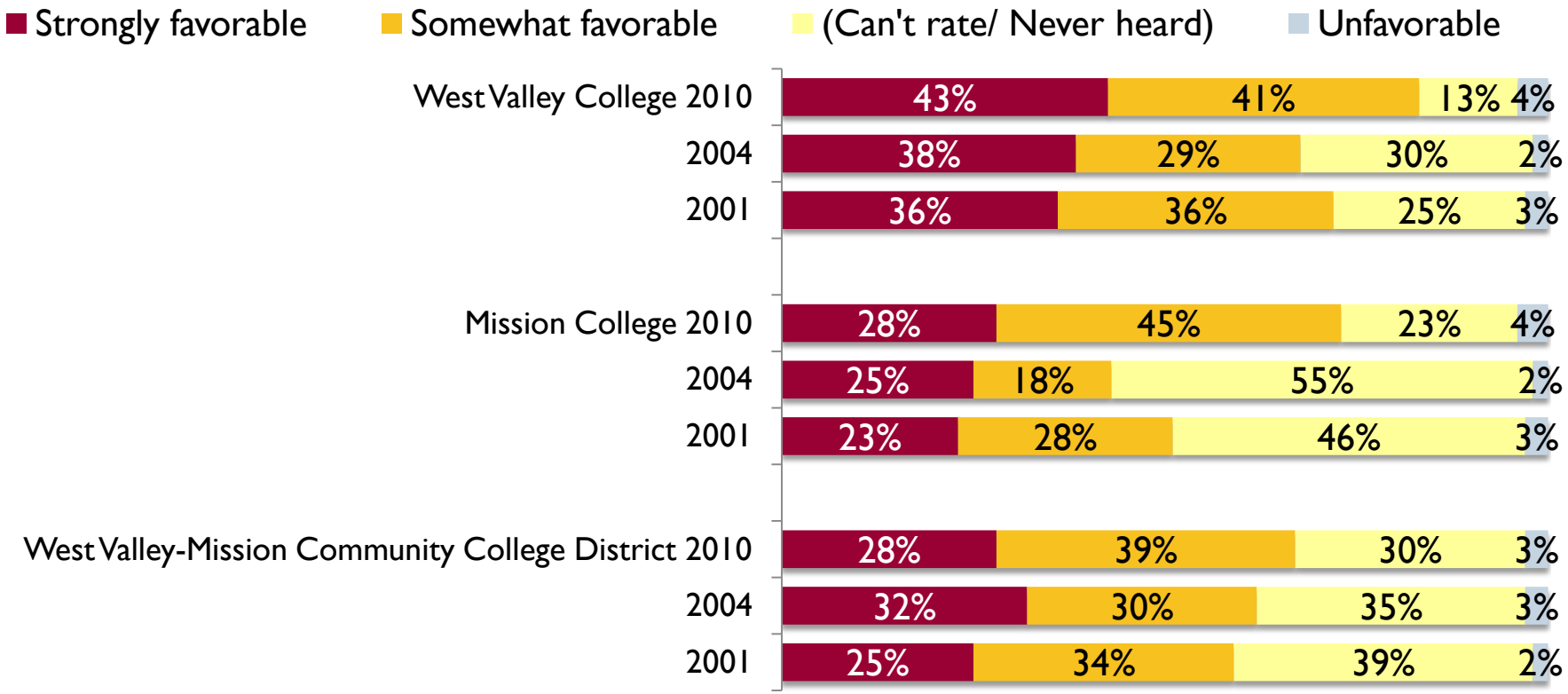
District voters were much more optimistic nine years ago – immediately following 9-11

… Do you feel that things in Santa Clara County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track? (Q5)



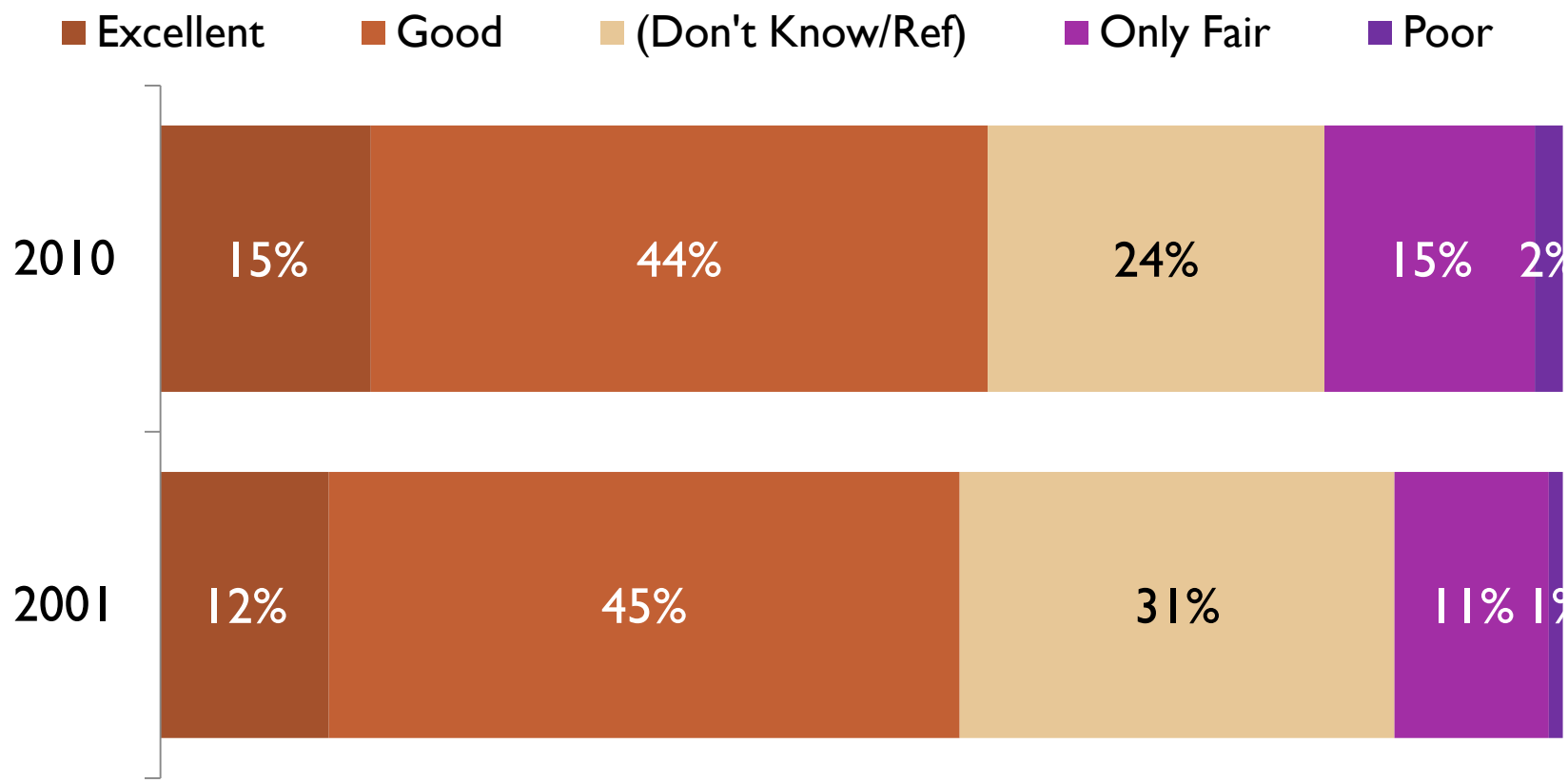
Awareness and ratings of the colleges and the District are high and have improved

I'm going to read you a list of organizations. For each one, please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or strongly unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have never heard of one, please just say so. (Q6-8)



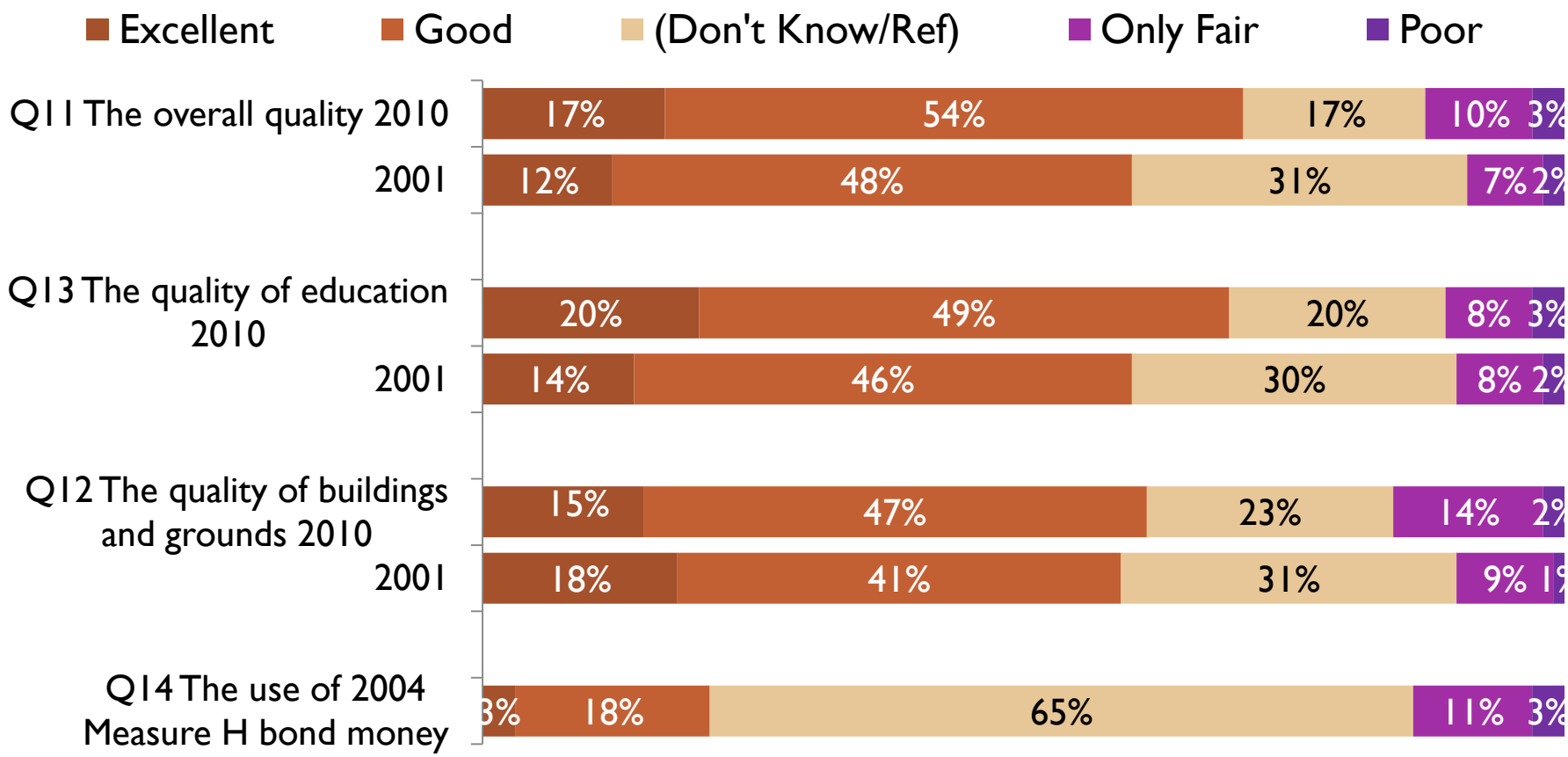
Voters give the District a strong performance job rating

As you may know, you live in the West Valley-Mission Community College District which oversees two community colleges: West Valley College and Mission College. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the overall job the West Valley-Mission Community College District is doing? (Q9)



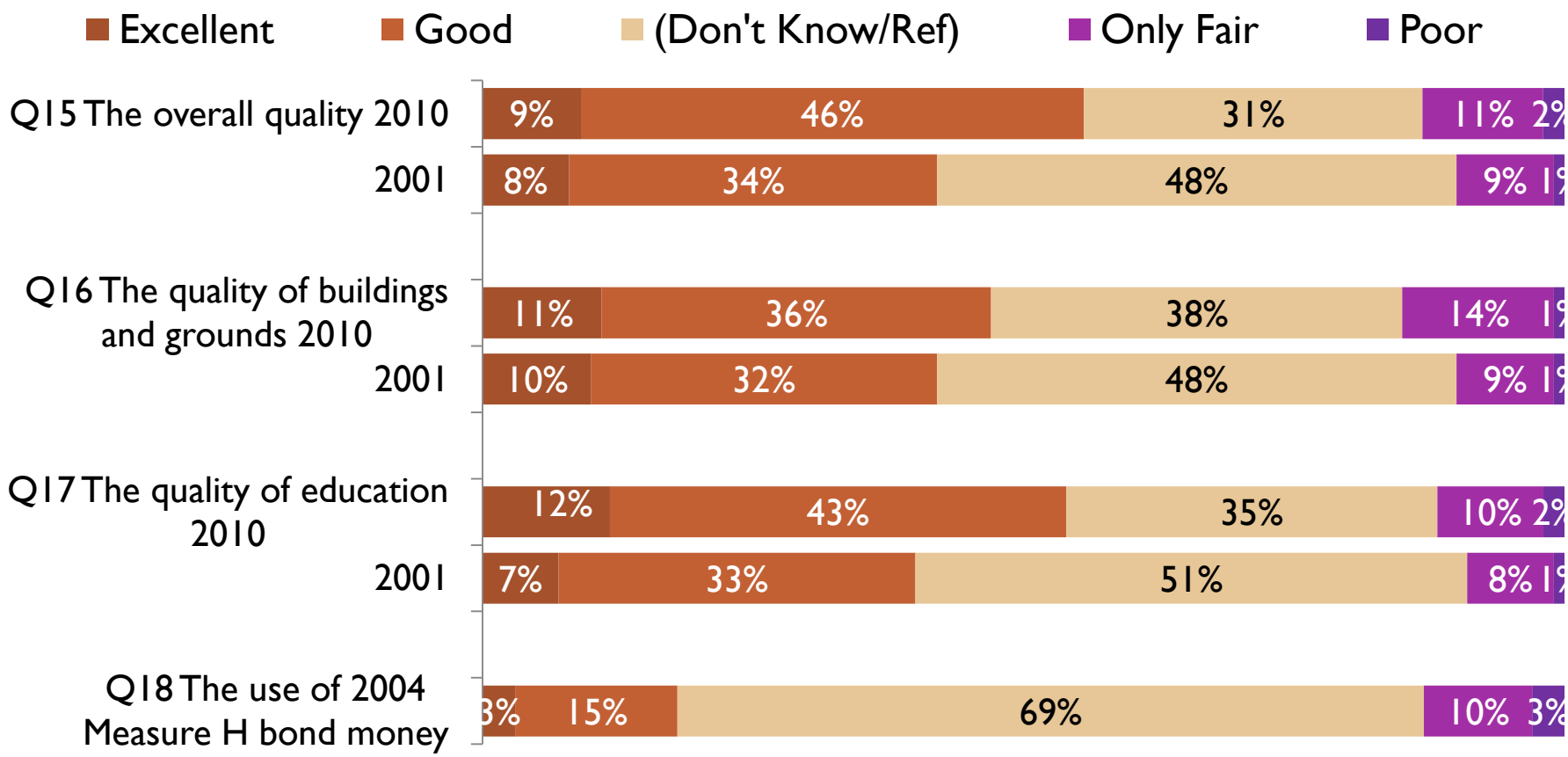
West Valley College is rated highly. There is little awareness of Measure H spending

Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair or poor, please rate the following areas relating to West Valley College: (Q11-14)



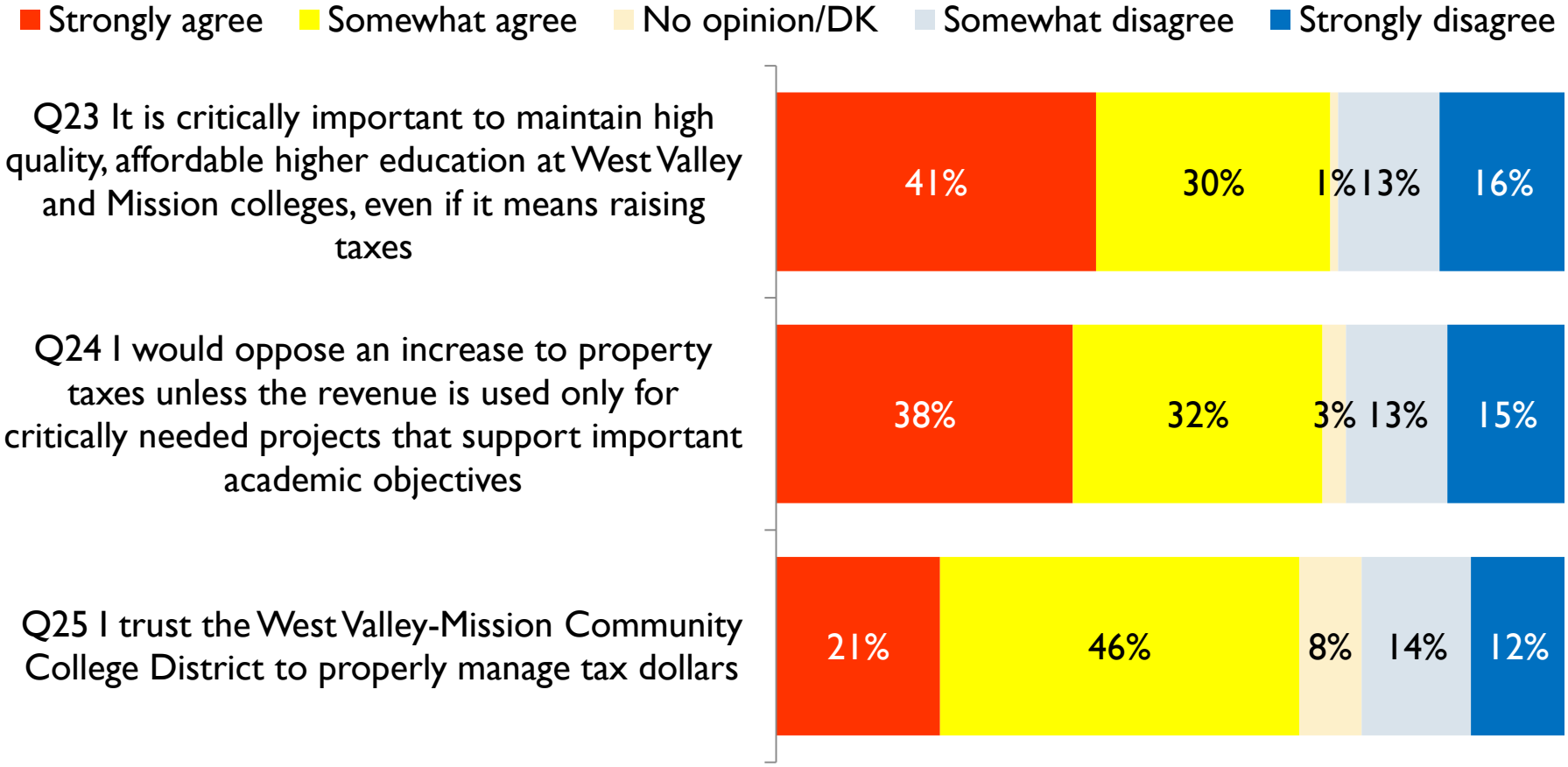
Awareness is lower for Mission College than for West Valley, but the ratio of positive-to-negative ratings is still high

Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair or poor, please rate the following areas relating to Mission College: (Q15-18)



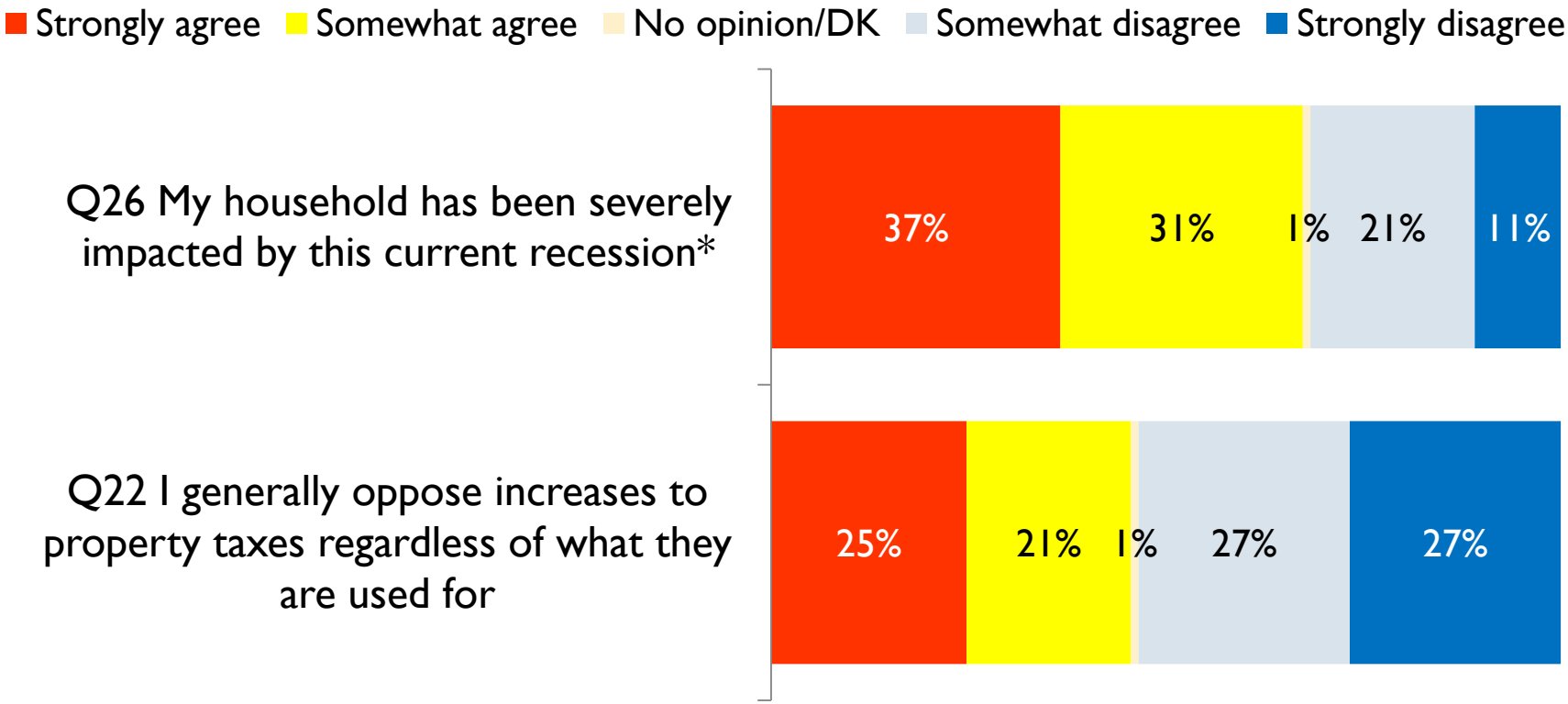
Trust in the District is high, as is support for taxes that support higher education…

For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. (Q22-26)



… but 46% are inclined to oppose any property tax increase, and two-thirds feel they've been severely impacted by the recession

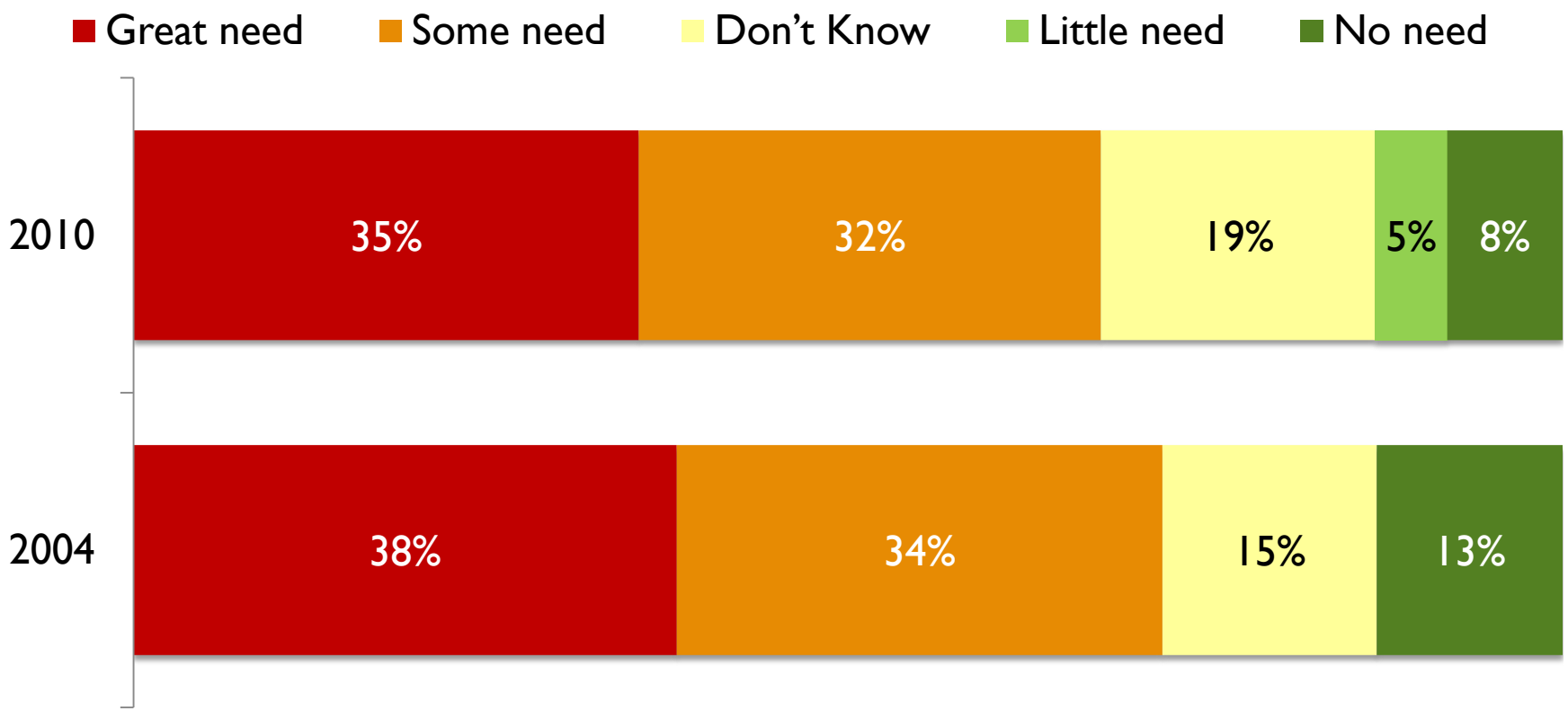
For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. (Q22-26)



*Note: 15% of respondents indicate that they are unemployed

Two-thirds of voters say the District has at least some need for more money

Would you say that the West Valley-Mission Community College District has a great need for more money, some need for more money, only a little need or no real need for more money? (Q10)



Initial support

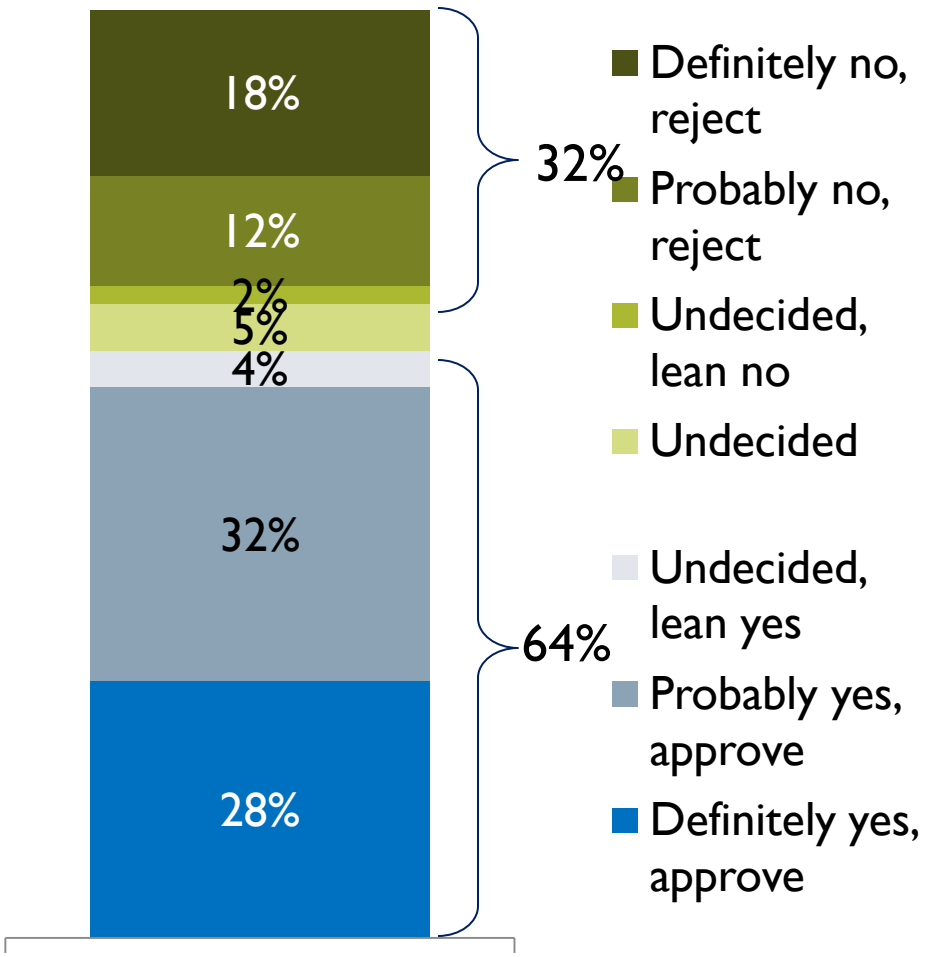
Hearing only the ballot question, nearly two-thirds of voters say they would support a bond measure

Local College Renovate and Repair Measure:
To continue quality education at West Valley and Mission Colleges by:

- Improving academic facilities to help students prepare for careers and transfer to 4-year universities;
- Renovating aging and unsafe buildings, sites, facilities and equipment;
- Upgrading career training facilities for nursing, firefighting, police and other programs;

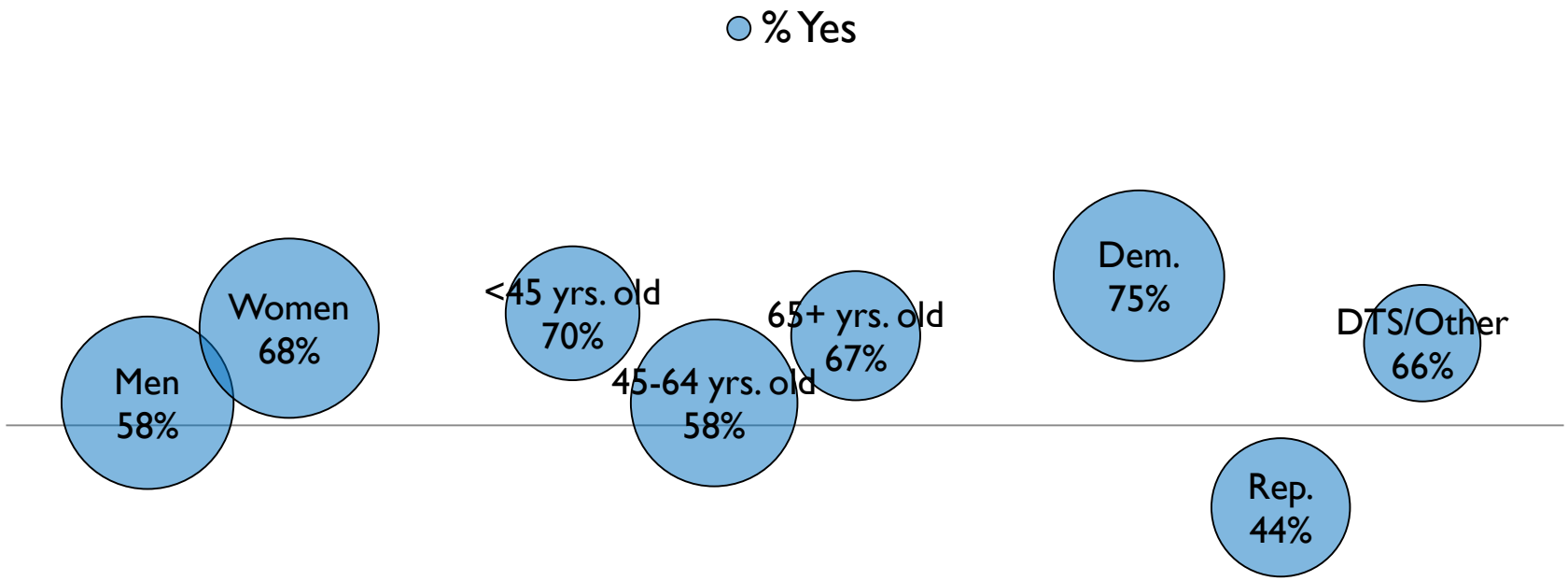
And by acquiring equipment; constructing, repairing and equipping buildings, classrooms and facilities; shall the West Valley-Mission Community College District issue 400 million dollars in bonds, at legal rates, with citizen oversight, annual audits and no money for administrators' salaries?

If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q19)



Support is lower among men and Baby Boomers, but it is still above the 55% threshold among these groups

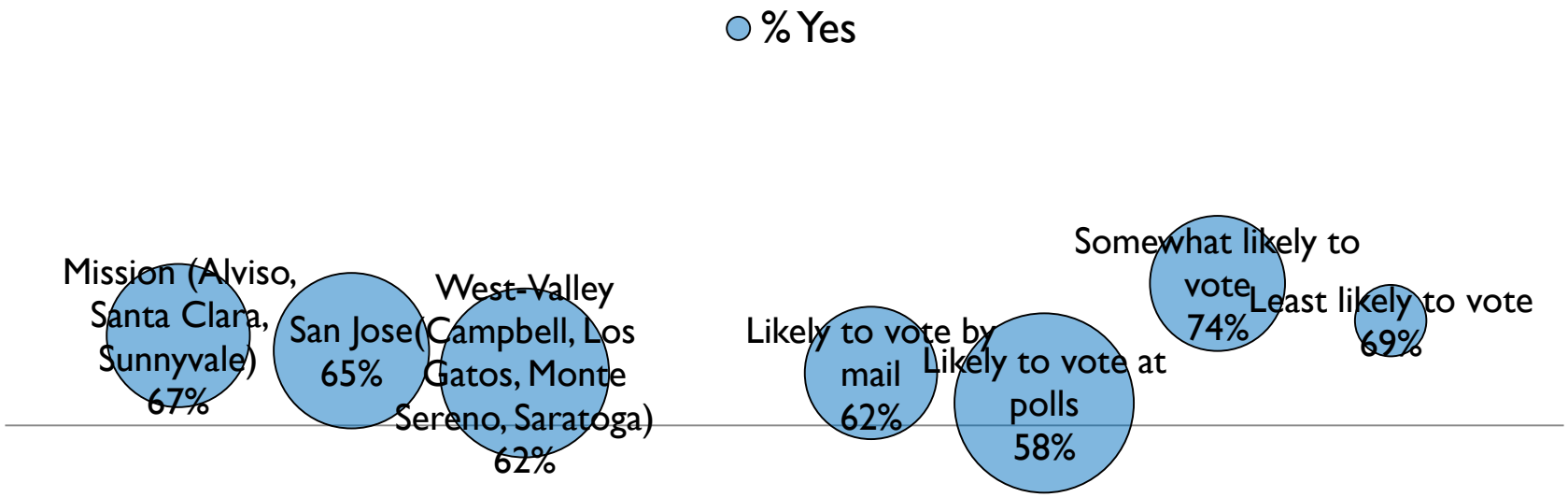
If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q19)



Bubble size represents proportion of demographic group

Support is slightly higher in the north; there is some indication that a higher turnout election could help

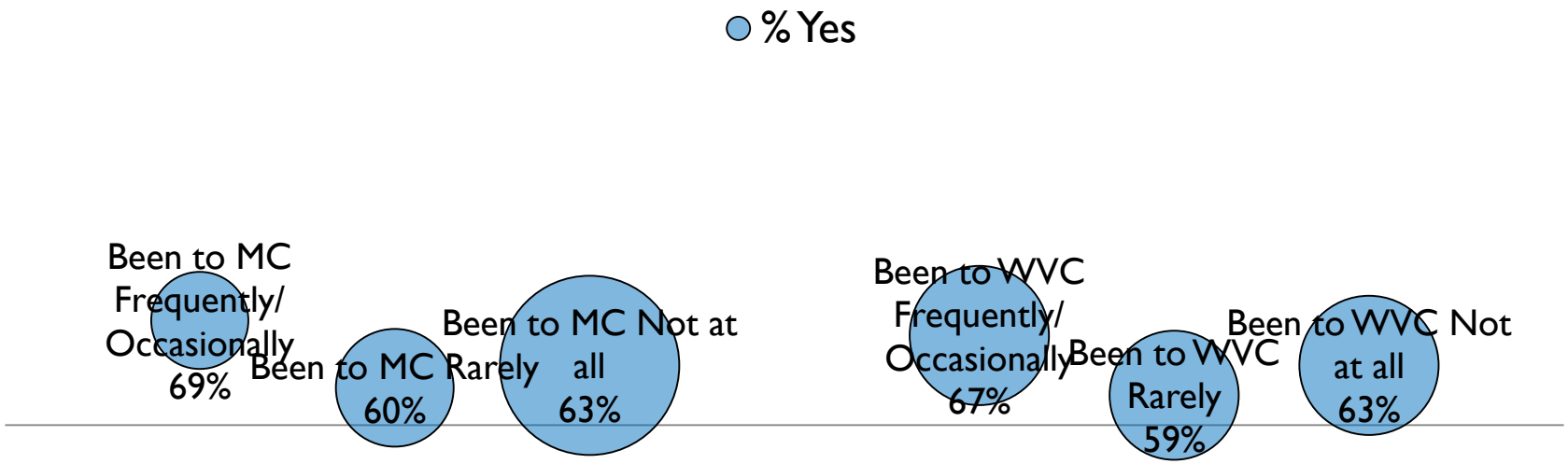
If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q19)



Bubble size represents proportion of demographic group

Support is not strongly correlated with voters' having been to either campus

If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q19)

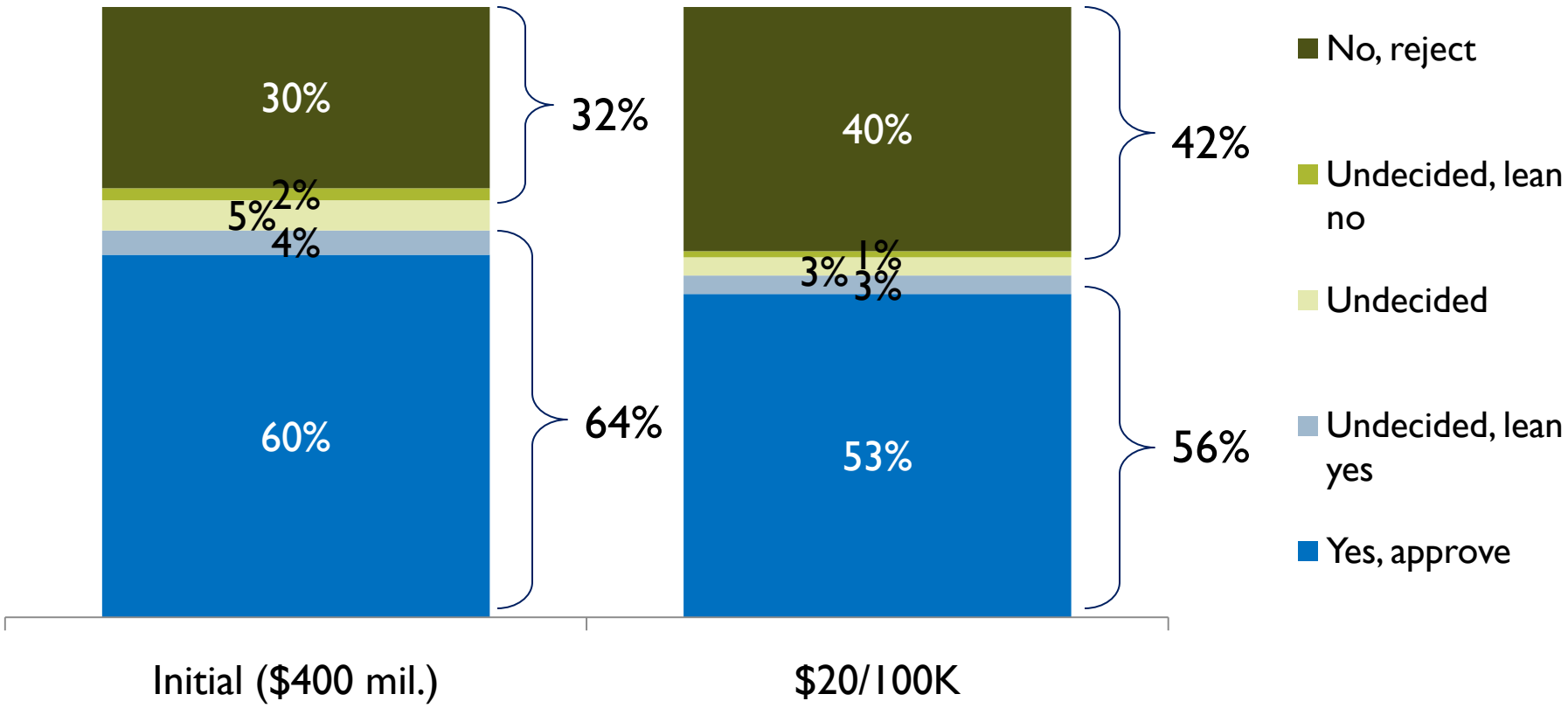


Bubble size represents proportion of demographic group

Price sensitivity

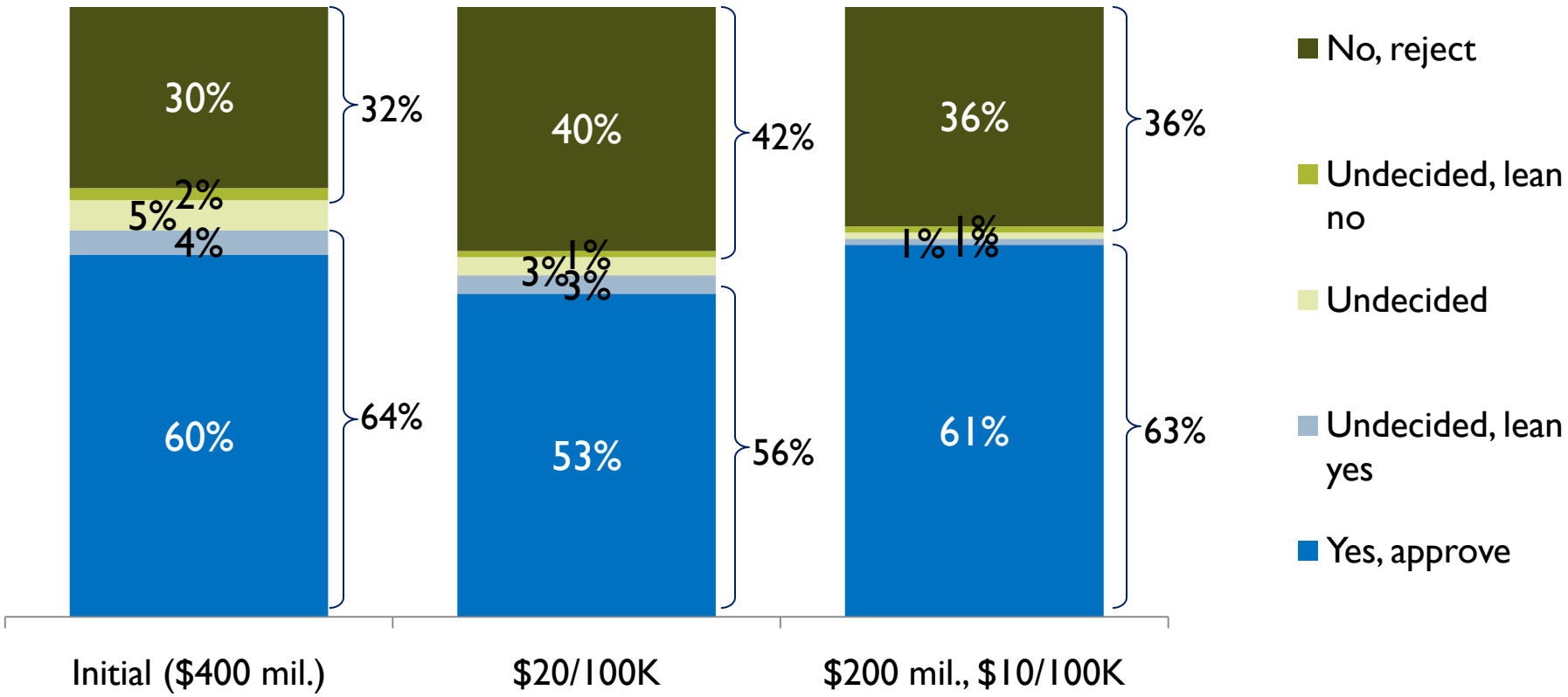
When voters are told how much a $400m bond would cost, support drops but remains a majority

If this bond measure would cost homeowners approximately $20 per one-hundred thousand dollars of assessed property value per year, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q20)



Some voters appear to be sensitive to the amount of the measure

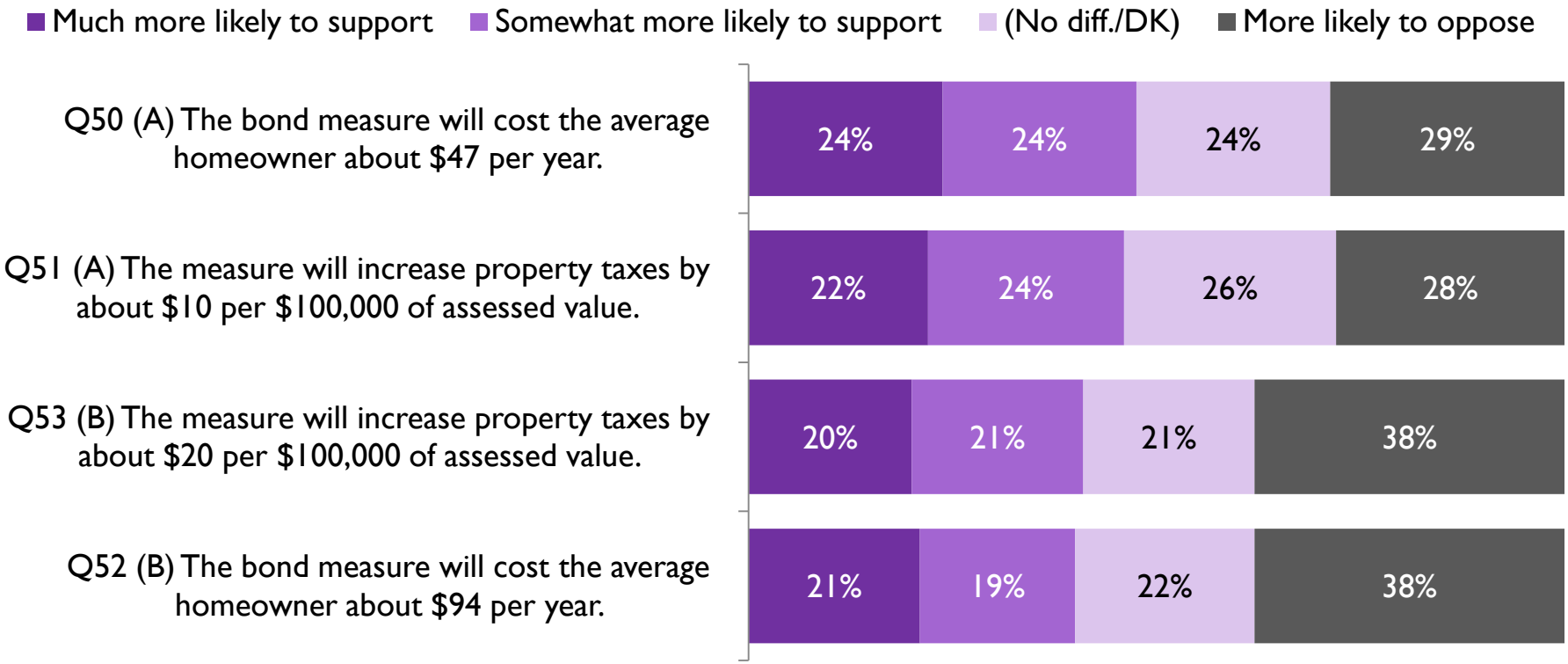
And if this was a $200 million bond measure that would cost homeowners approximately $10 per one-hundred thousand dollars of assessed property value per year, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q21)



When tested separately, a lower tax receives slightly more support but neither gets opposition above 45%

Now I am going to read you some more information about the West Valley-Mission Community College bond measure. After each piece of information, please tell me if it makes you more likely to support or more likely to oppose the measure, or if it makes no difference. (Q41-53)

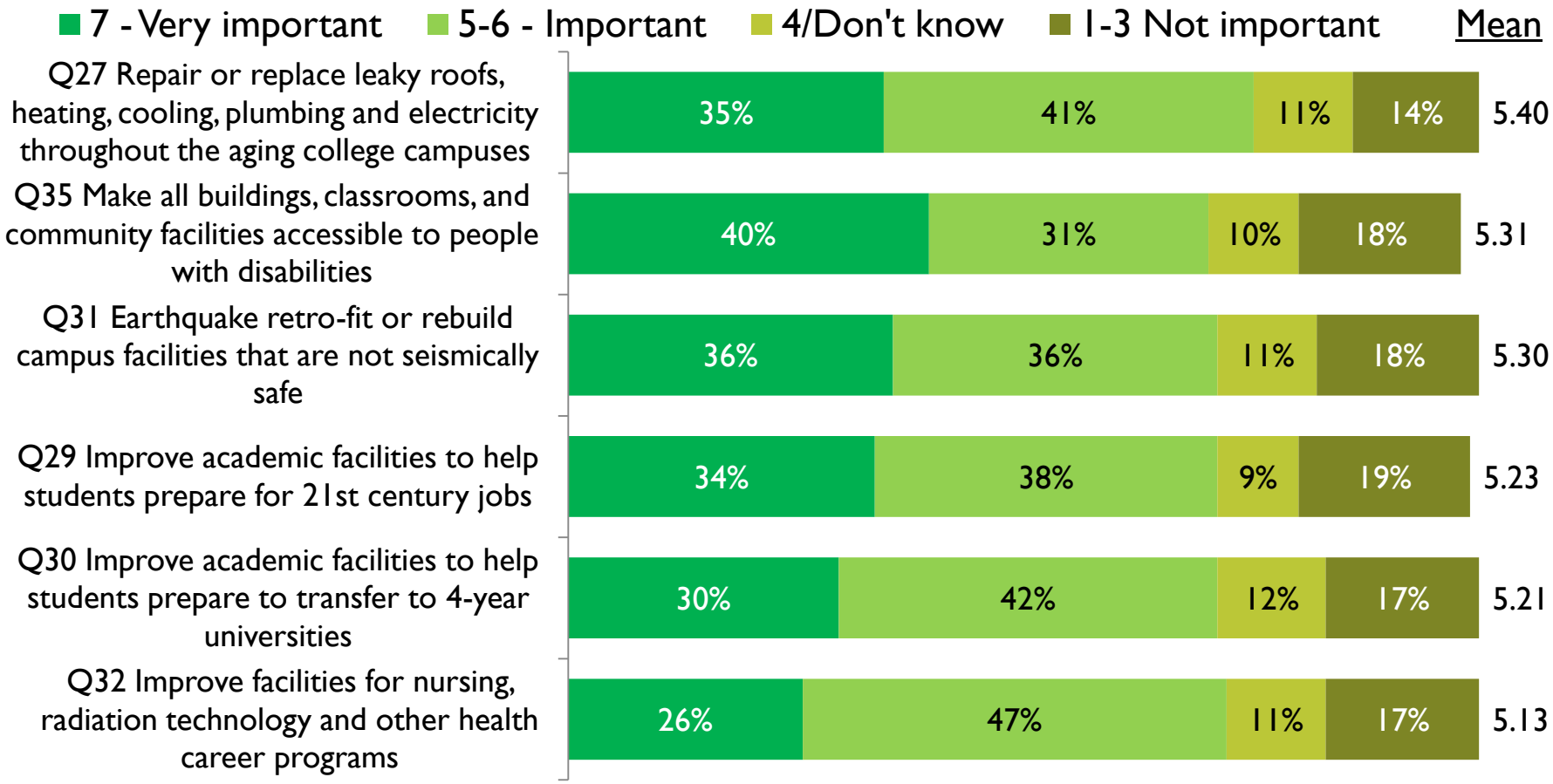
Questions 50 and 51 were asked of half the sample; questions 52 and 53 of the other half



Spending priorities

Voters say repairing aging facilities and making buildings accessible and seismically safe are important projects

Now I'm going to read you some projects that could be funded if the West Valley-Mission Community College bond measure was approved. For each one, please tell me how important this project is to you. Once again, we'll use a scale of one to seven, with one meaning "not important at all" and seven meaning "very important." (Q27-39)



Saving money is somewhat more important right now than "being green"

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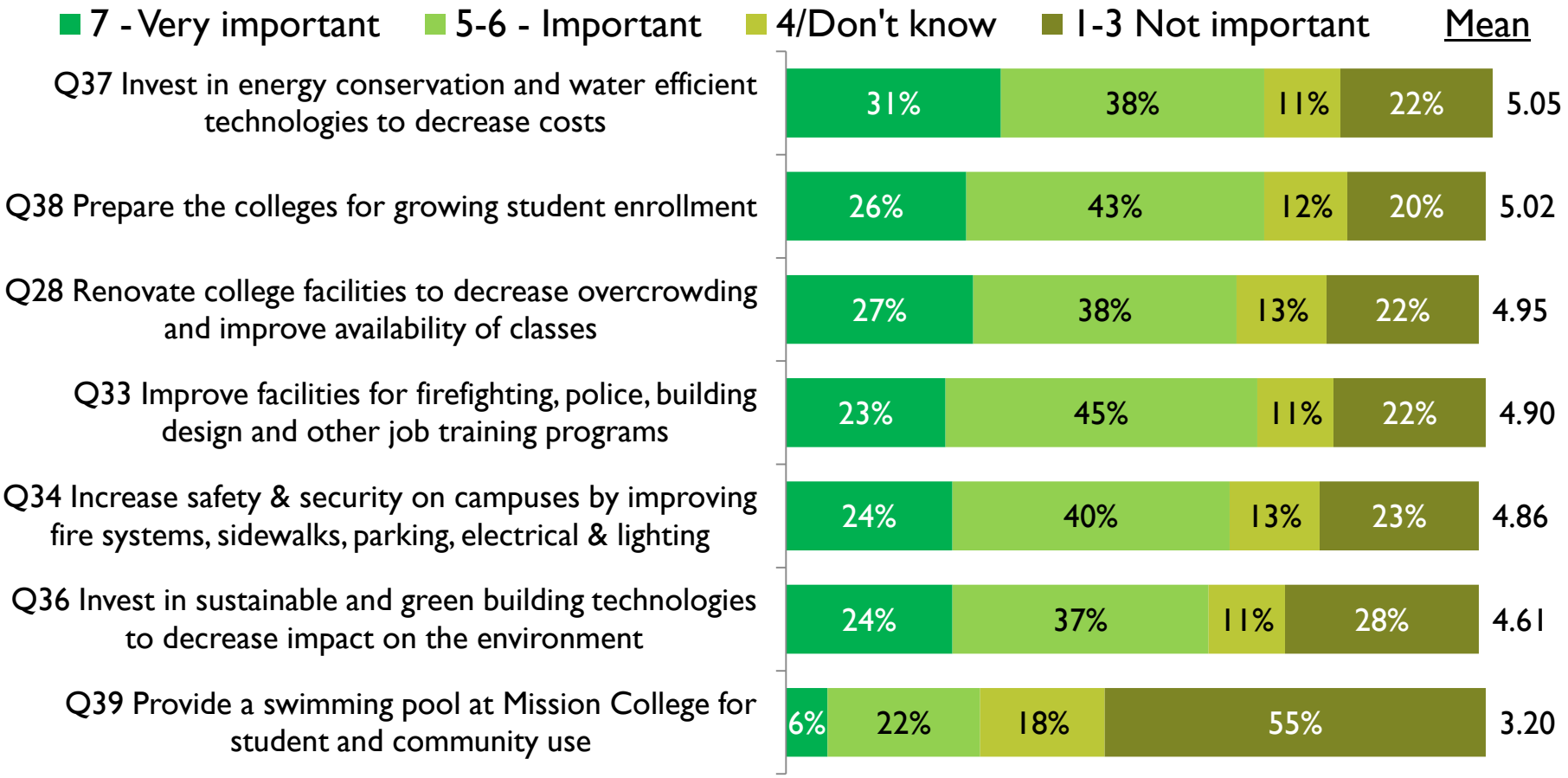
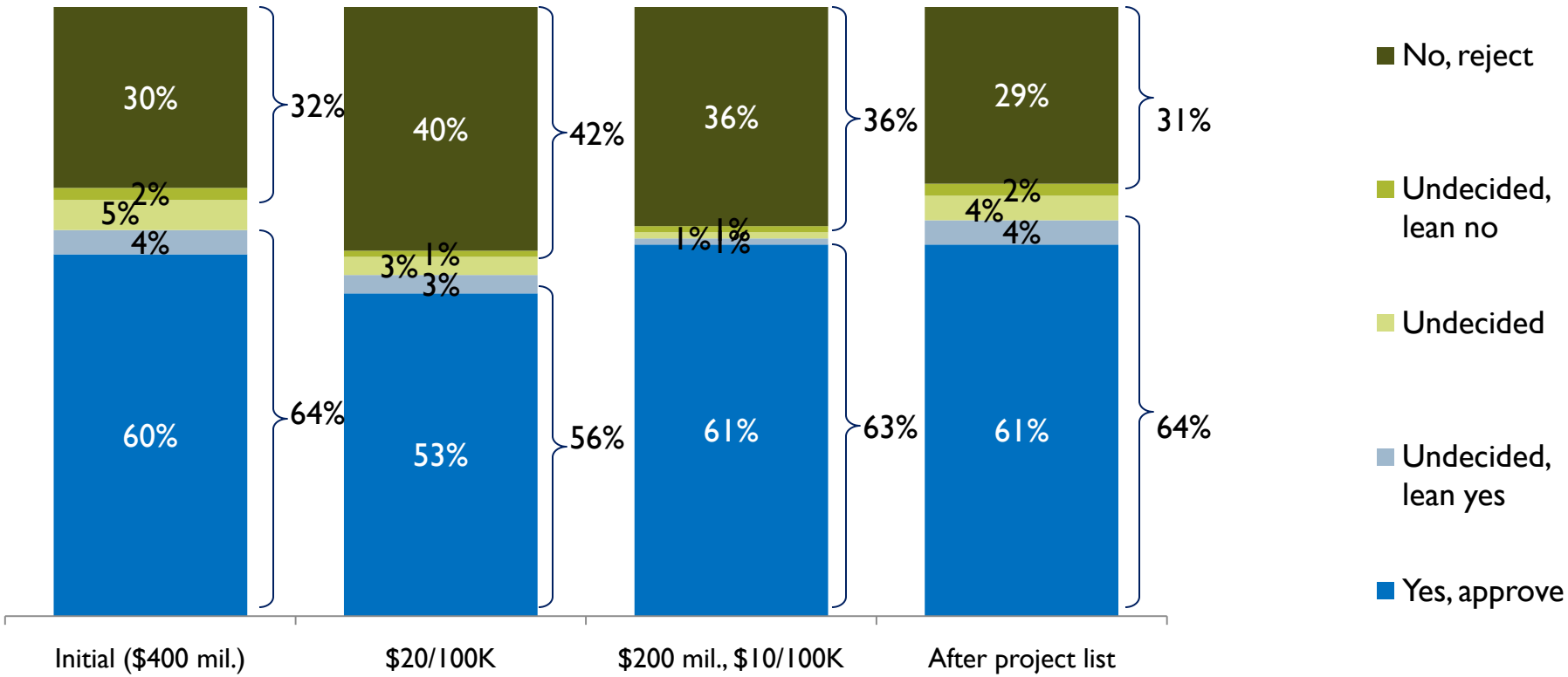


Learning what the measure could pay for has little effect on voter support

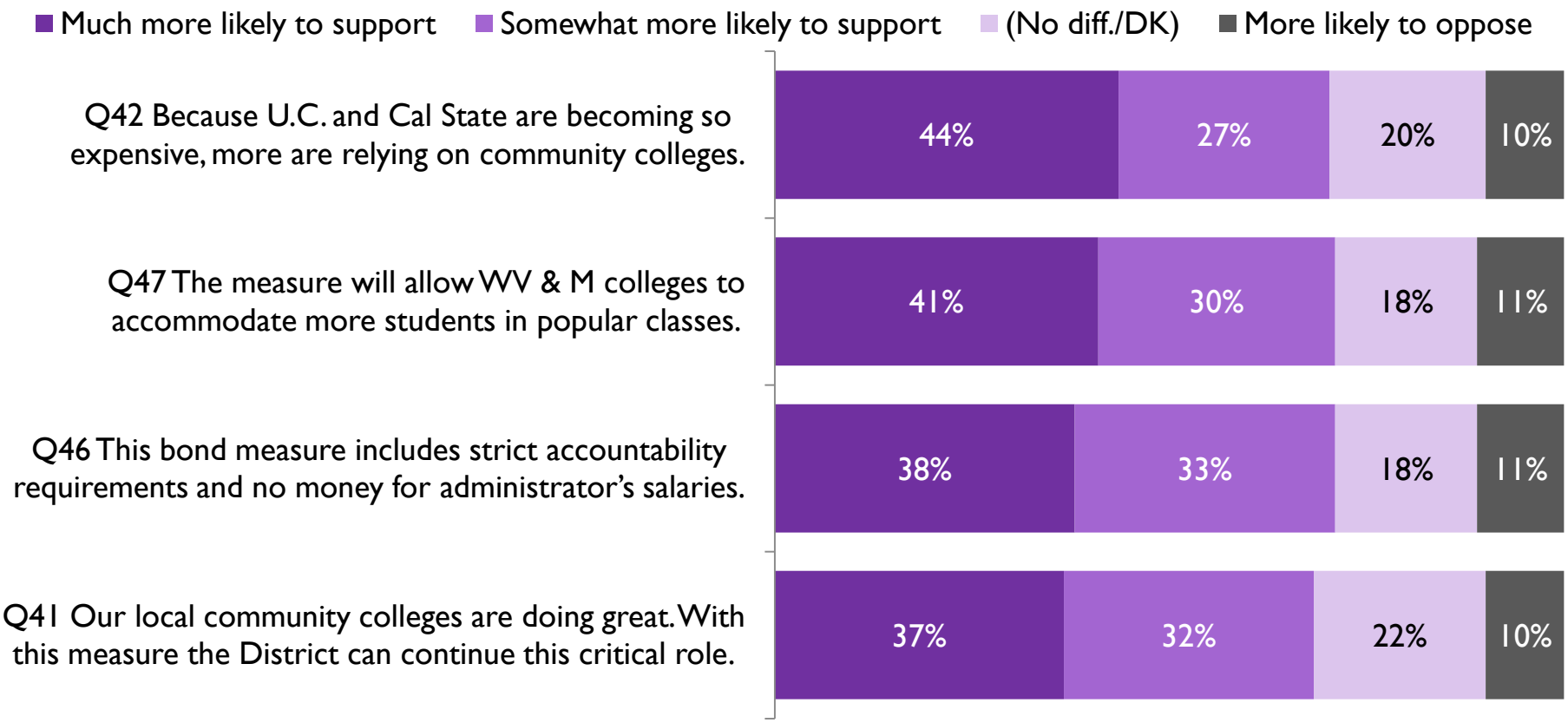
Given what you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject the West Valley-Mission Community College District Bond Measure? (Q40)



Information

There are a number of messages that are persuasive to voters

Now I am going to read you some more information about the West Valley-Mission Community College bond measure. After each piece of information, please tell me if it makes you more likely to support or more likely to oppose the measure, or if it makes no difference. (Q41-53)



Over 55% of voters say messages about affordability, matching funds, and Measure H make them more supportive

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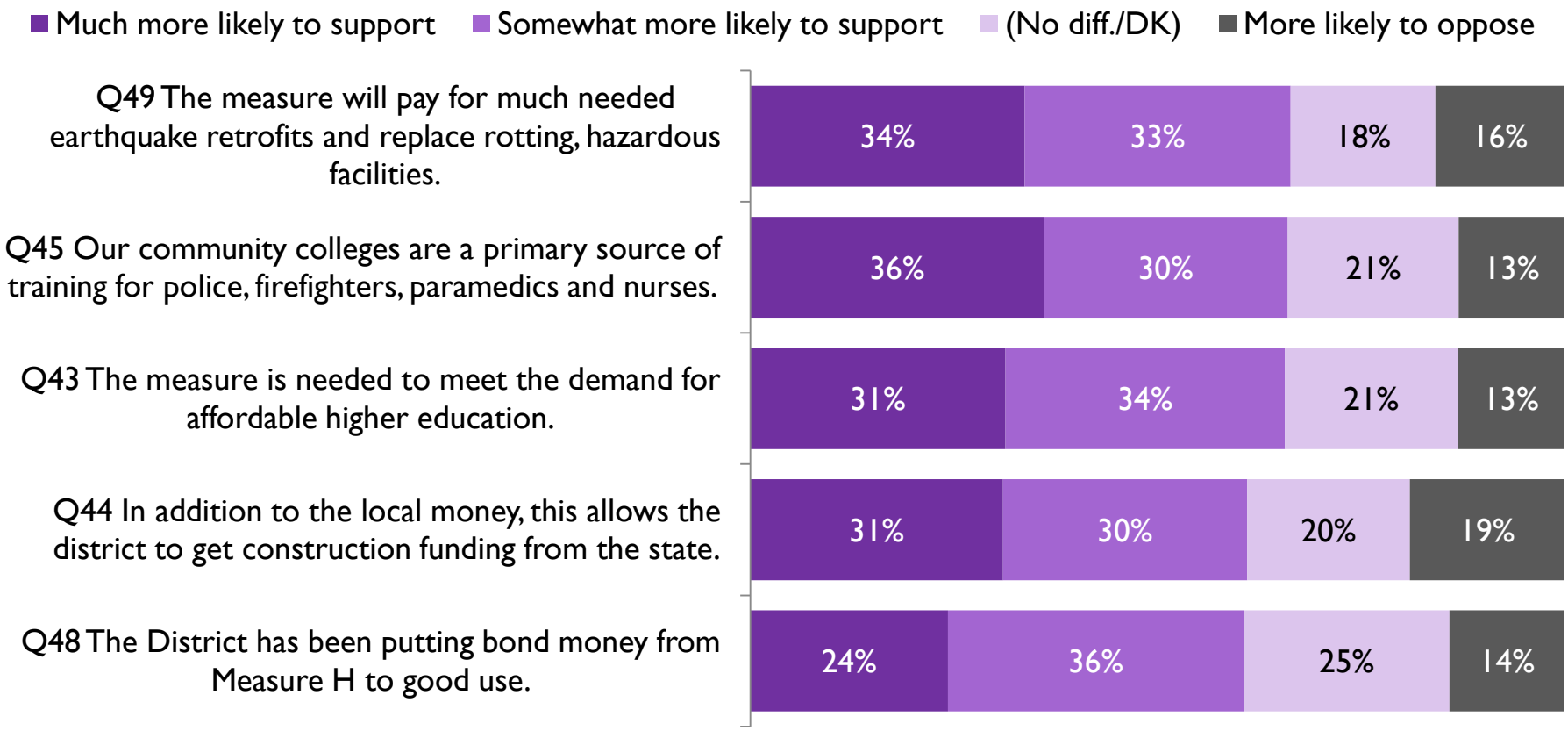
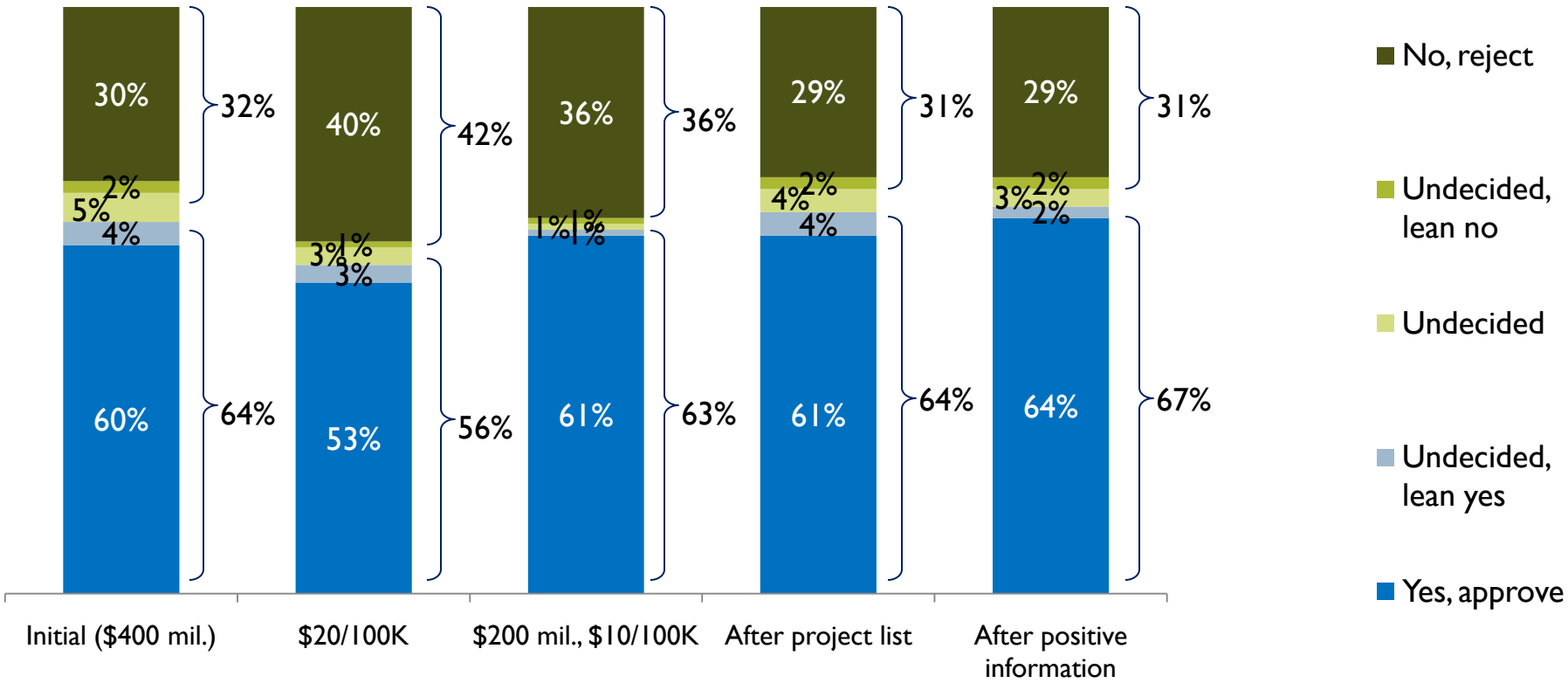


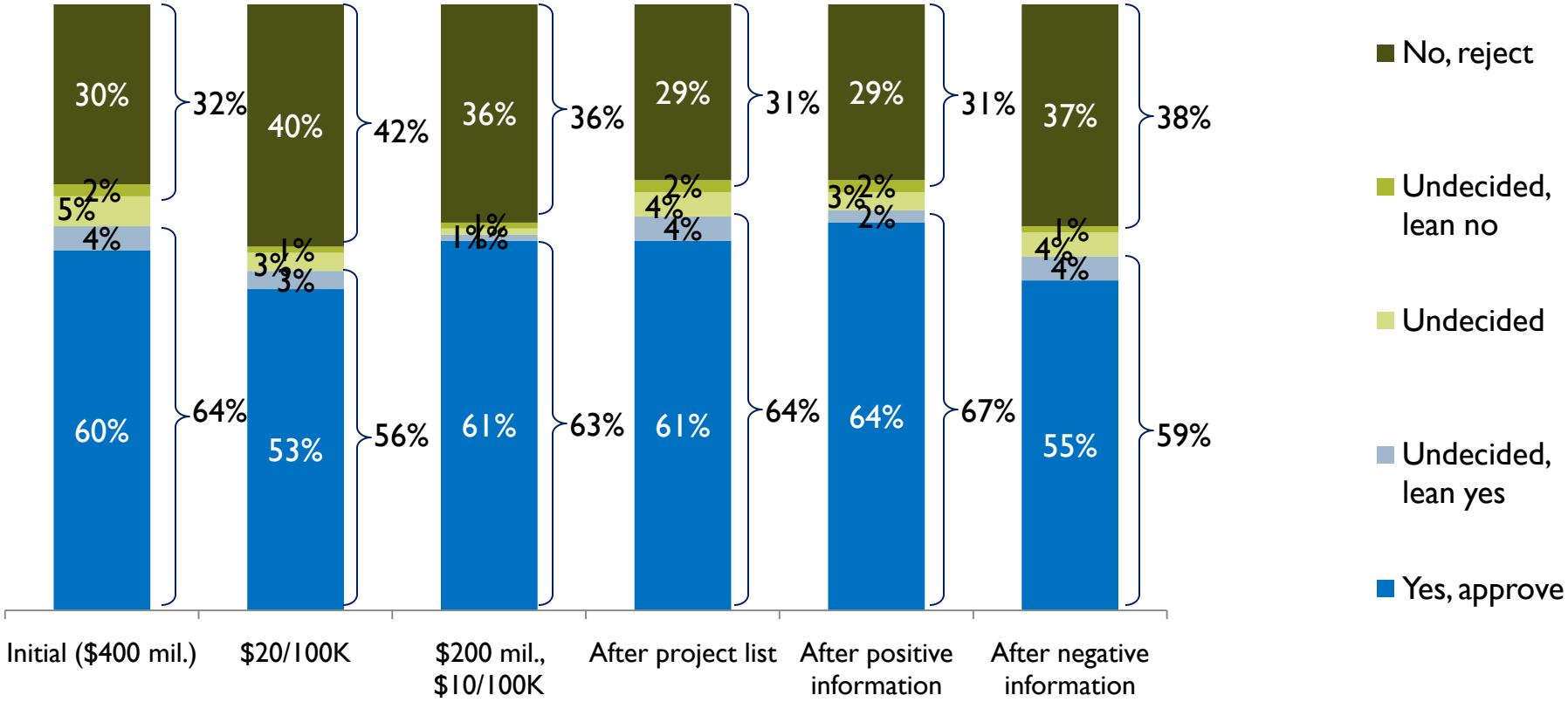
Additional information, including the cost to homeowners, has little impact with two-thirds still indicating support

Given what you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject the West Valley-Mission Community College District Bond Measure? (Q54)



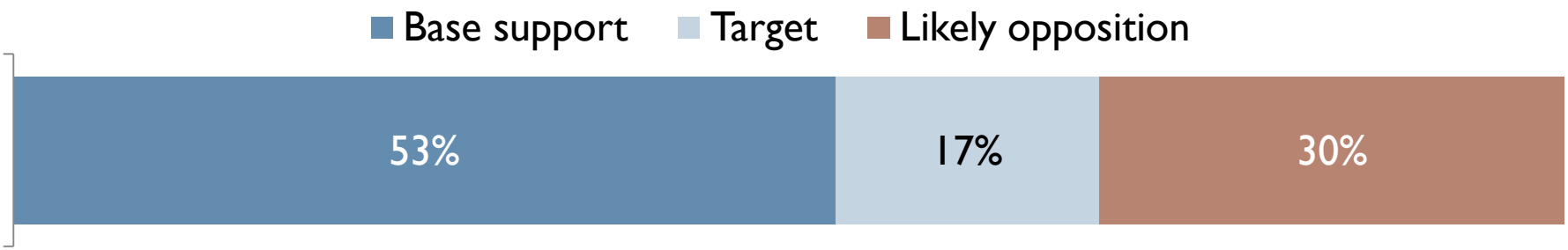
Some voters are persuaded when hearing messages in opposition to a bond, but support remains over 55%

Some people may say that in these difficult economic times when many people are losing their jobs and their homes we shouldn't be raising taxes, even if it means putting off improvements to the colleges. The District has already wasted money upgrading a building that now has to be torn down, and many of the students in our colleges don't even live in the district. The District shouldn't be asking for another bond, they should just make better decisions about how to spend the money they have. (Q55)

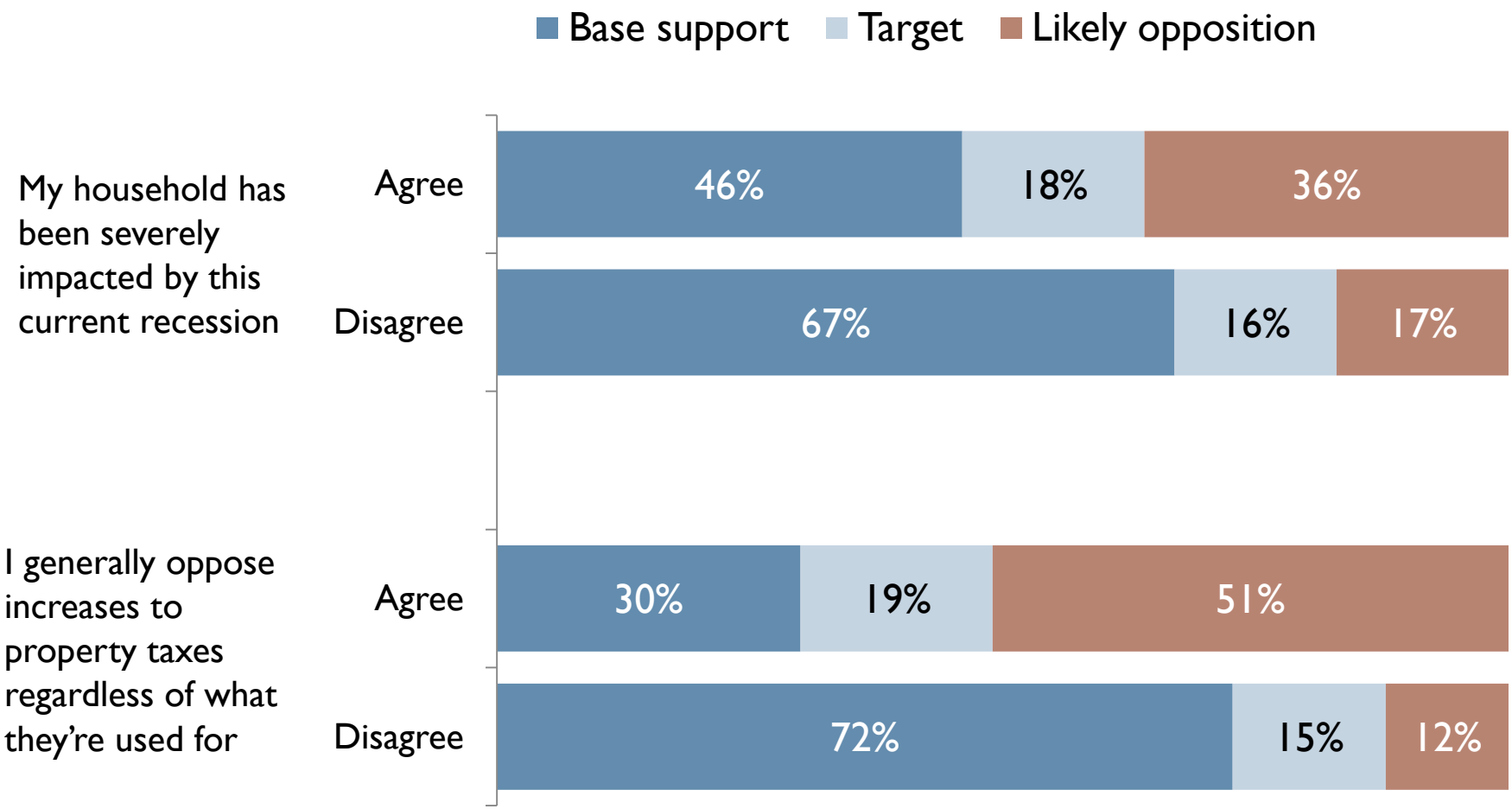


Voter segmentation

Based on responses throughout the survey, 53% of voters appear to be solidly supportive of a bond measure while 30% appeared to be solidly opposed.



For some, opposition may be related to economic factors



Nearly two-thirds of target voters are women and many are Republicans

	Overall	Base support (53%)	Target (17%)	Likely opposition (30%)
Men <50 yrs. old	19%	19%	14%	21%
Men 50+ yrs. old	29%	29%	22%	33%
Women <50 yrs. old	23%	24%	34%	14%
Women 50+ yrs. old	29%	27%	30%	32%
Dem.	47%	59%	40%	31%
Rep.	31%	18%	40%	48%
DTS/Other	22%	23%	21%	21%
Mission (Alviso, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale)	28%	30%	25%	26%
San Jose	33%	33%	35%	33%
West-Valley (Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga)	39%	37%	39%	41%

Conclusions

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- Voters know the District, think it is doing a good job, and they trust it to manage their tax dollars
- Voters recognize the colleges need for money and are supportive of the outlined bond priorities
- Many voters have been significantly impacted by the economy and are price-sensitive
- Messages that focus on the educational role of community colleges and the need for critical facilities repairs are effective
- Current support for a bond measure is above the required 55% threshold and it remains strong as voters learn more