



**SIERRA
CLUB**



west virginia
Center on
Budget & Policy

RECLAIM Act Regional Survey

*Key findings from a survey of 1,050 registered voters
(150 each) in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia*

September 2016

Lori Weigel



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Methodology

- ❑ Regional survey of N=1050 registered voters, 150 each in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia
- ❑ Statistically valid sample with margin of sampling error $\pm 3.02\%$ at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample
- ❑ Overall data presented is aggregate data, weighted proportionally relative to the registered voter population in each state.
- ❑ Survey conducted September 8-15, 2016
 - N = 441 Landline
 - N = 420 Online
 - N = 189 Cell Phone



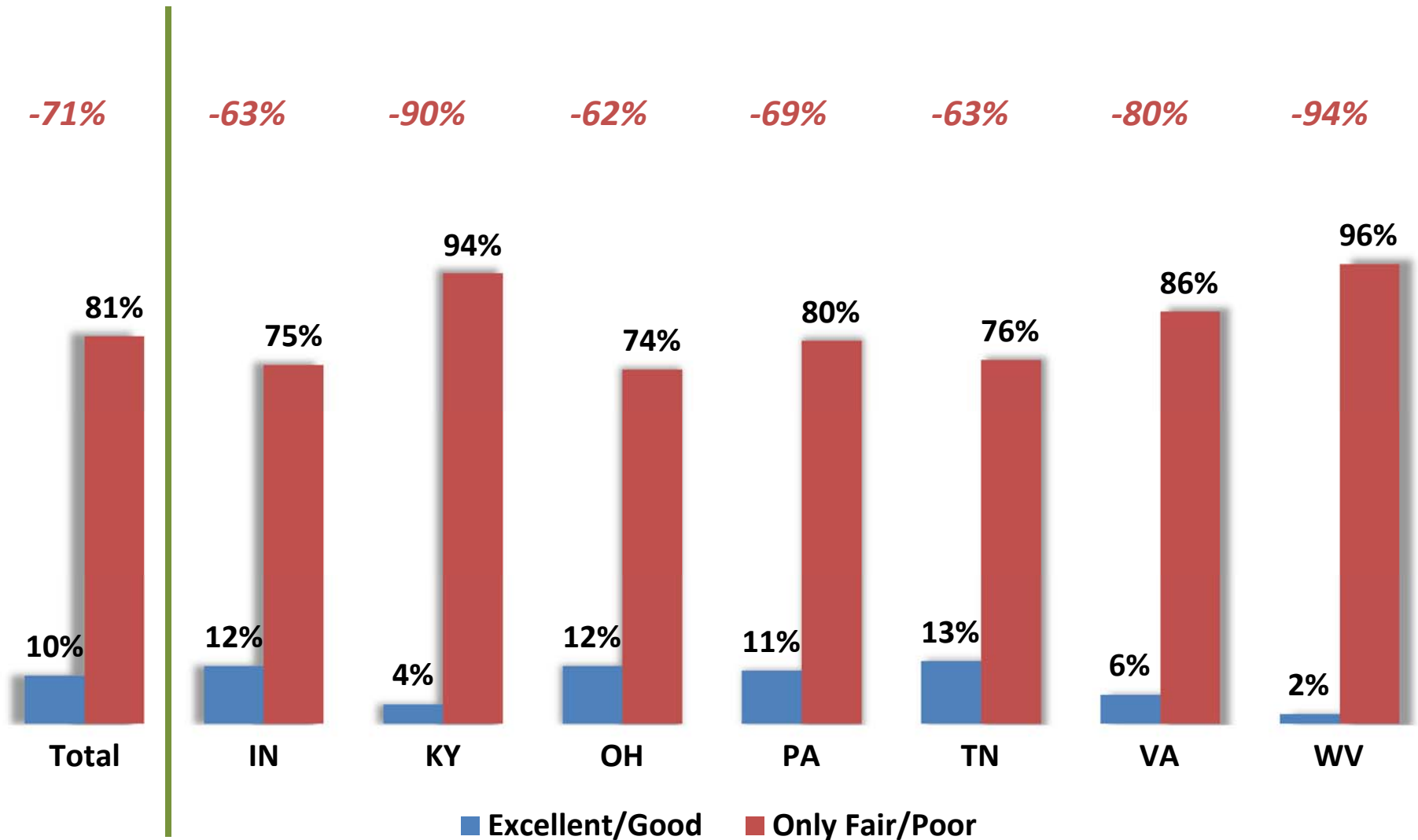
Core Economic Perceptions

Voters in this region perceive rural economies as more likely to be struggling than the state as a whole.

<u>State of Economy</u>	State	Rural Areas
Excellent/Good	38%	10%
Total Fair/Poor	61%	81%

How would you rate the current state of the economy in your state? More specifically, how would you rate the current state of the economy in more rural, coal-mining areas of your state? Would you say it is...

About three-quarters or more in each state say that the economy in rural areas is only fair or poor.



More specifically, how would you rate the current state of the economy in more rural, coal-mining areas of your state? Would you say it is...

Voters in nearly all of these states are far more pessimistic about the economy in rural, coal-mining areas than overall.

<i>% Only Fair/Poor Ranked By Net Difference</i>	State	Rural Areas	Net Diff.
Virginia	44%	86%	-42%
Kentucky	72%	94%	-22%
Pennsylvania	63%	80%	-17%
Indiana	58%	75%	-17%
Tennessee	65%	76%	-11%
Ohio	64%	74%	-10%
West Virginia	91%	96%	-5%

How would you rate the current state of the economy in your state? More specifically, how would you rate the current state of the economy in more rural, coal-mining areas of your state? Would you say it is...

A majority perceive that relatively few coal miners are prepared to transition to different types of jobs.

Knowledge/Skills to Transition Away from Coal

All/Most Miners

12%

Half of All Miners

20%

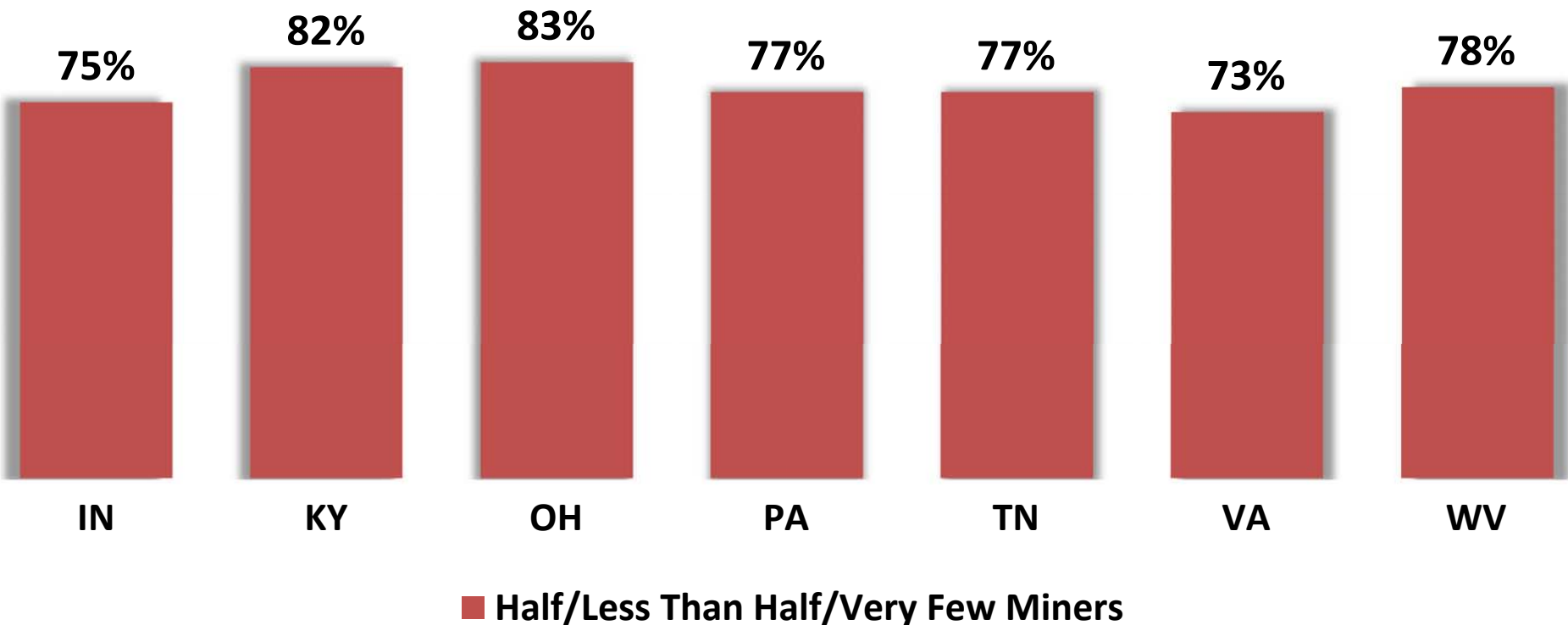
**Less Than Half/
Very Few Miners**

58%

And, what proportion of the workers who are currently or used to be coal miners do you think have the knowledge and skills they need to transition into different types of jobs--nearly all miners, most miners, about half of all miners, fewer than half of all miners, or very few miners?

More than seven-in-ten perceive that half or fewer are prepared for a transition at this time.

Knowledge to Transition Away from Coal By State



And, what proportion of the workers who are currently or used to be coal miners do you think have the knowledge and skills they need to transition into different types of jobs--nearly all miners, most miners, about half of all miners, fewer than half of all miners, or very few miners?

By nearly a two-to-one margin voters say elected officials should prioritize a transition away from coal.

Assisting rural, coal-mining areas to attract new employers, diversify the economy, and ensure workers get new jobs in growing industries

62%

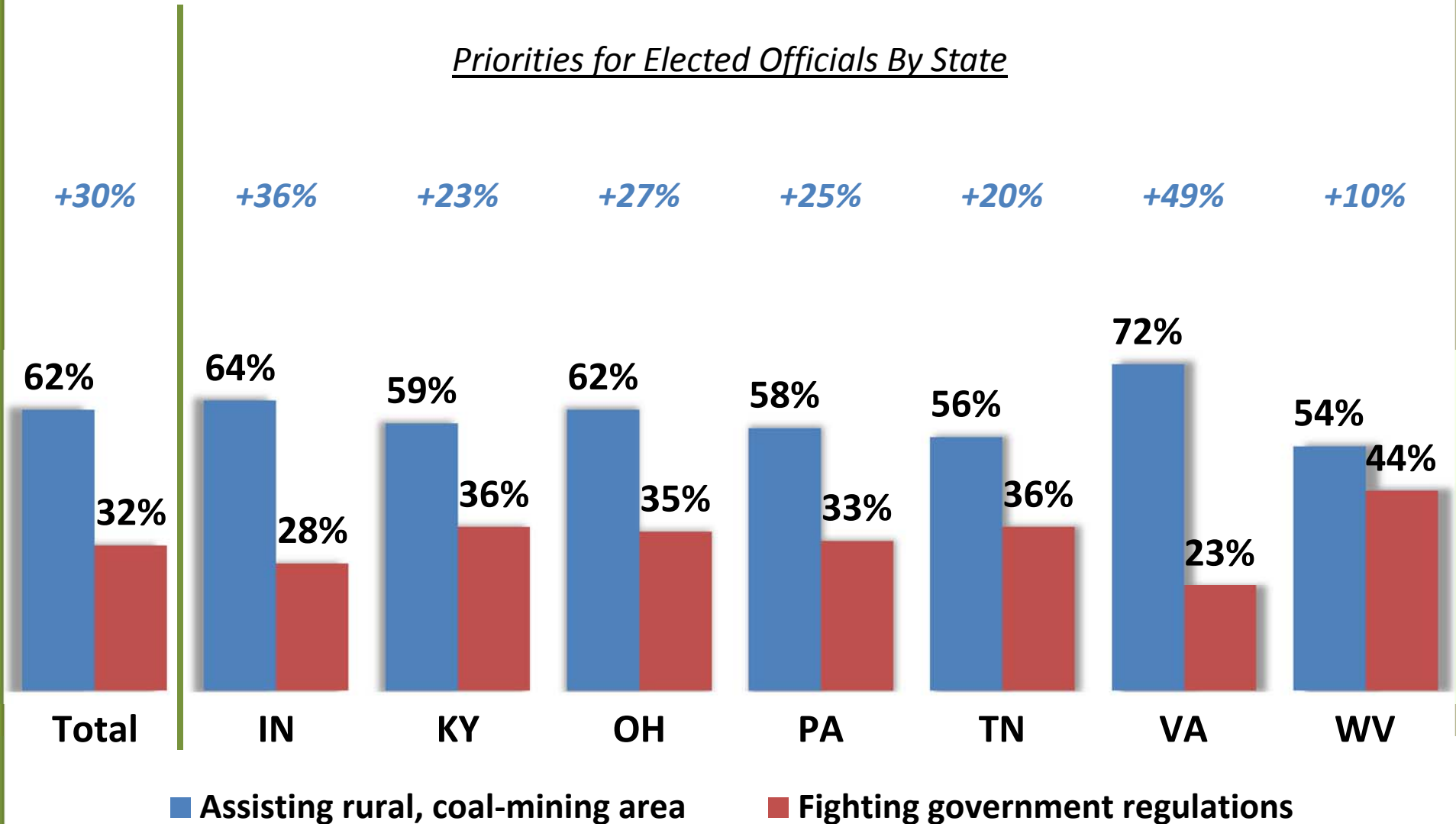
Fighting government regulations that have made it harder to produce coal, to ensure the good-paying jobs in mining come back

32%

Do you think elected officials and decision-makers in your state should prioritize ...

A majority in each state prioritize transitioning the economy, rather than fighting regulations that affected the industry.

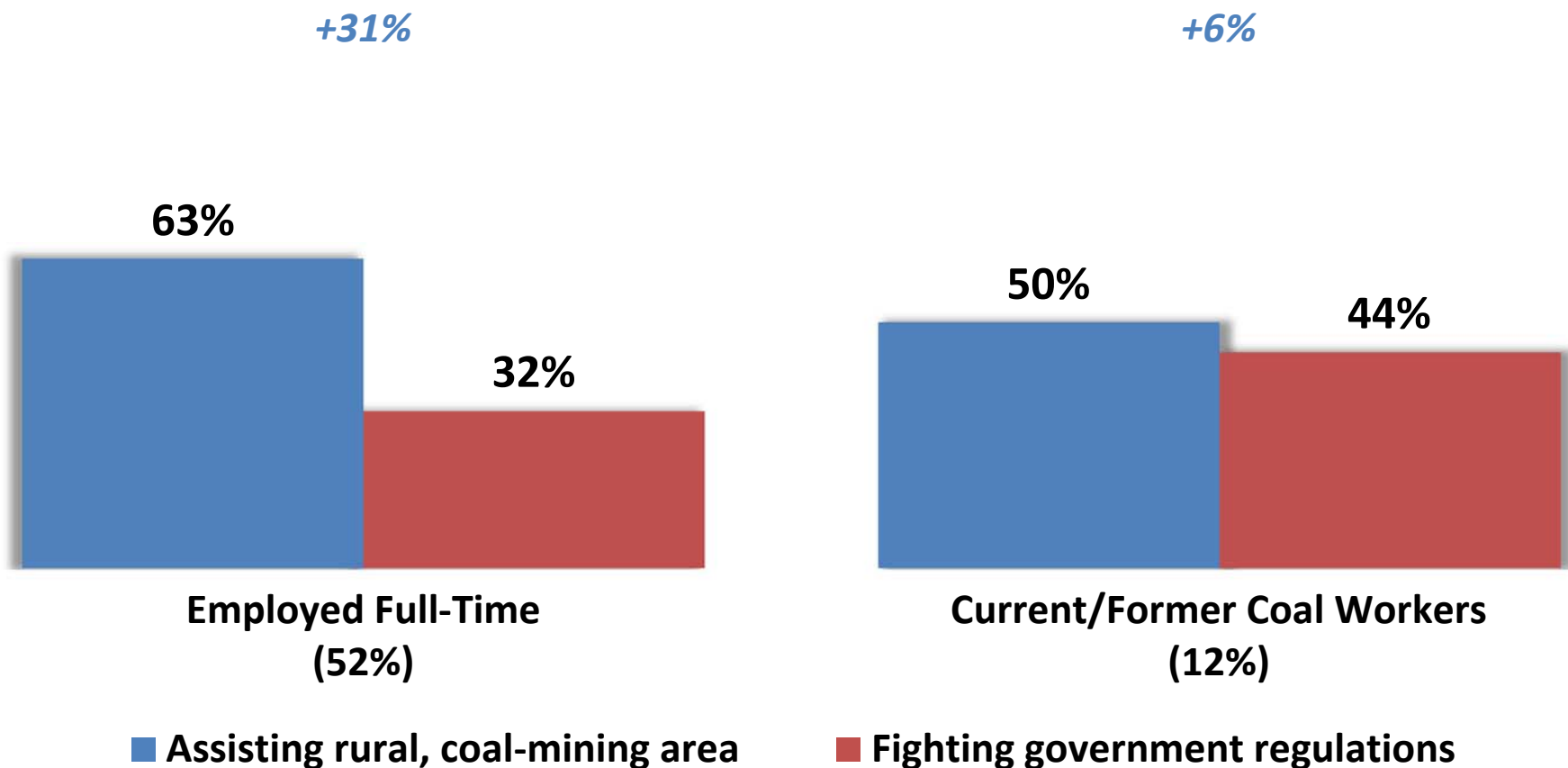
Priorities for Elected Officials By State



Do you think elected officials and decision-makers in your state should prioritize ...

Even those who are currently or have ever worked in this industry tend to prefer a transition.

Priorities for Elected Officials among Current/Former Coal Workers



Do you think elected officials and decision-makers in your state should prioritize ...



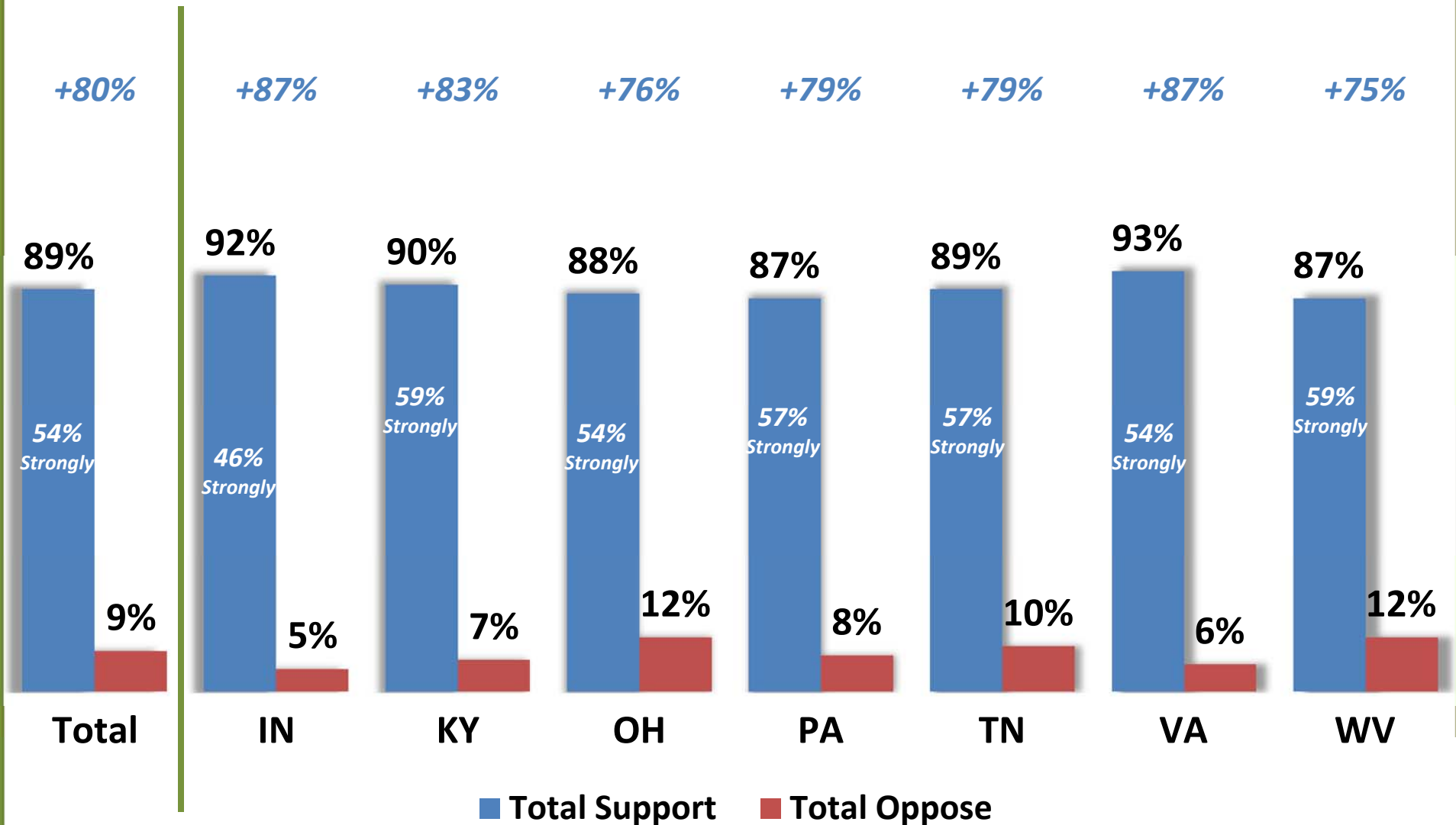
RECLAIM Act

RECLAIM Act Language

“A proposal in Congress would release one billion dollars in existing money from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund which was collected from coal producers over the last forty years. The proposal, known as the RECLAIM Act, would release this money to affected states to help revitalize coal communities hit hardest by the downturn in the coal industry. Communities could apply for grants to restore abandoned mine lands, invest in economic development projects to put people to work, and tackle infrastructure needs such as ensuring clean drinking water.”

Does this proposal sound like something you would support or oppose?

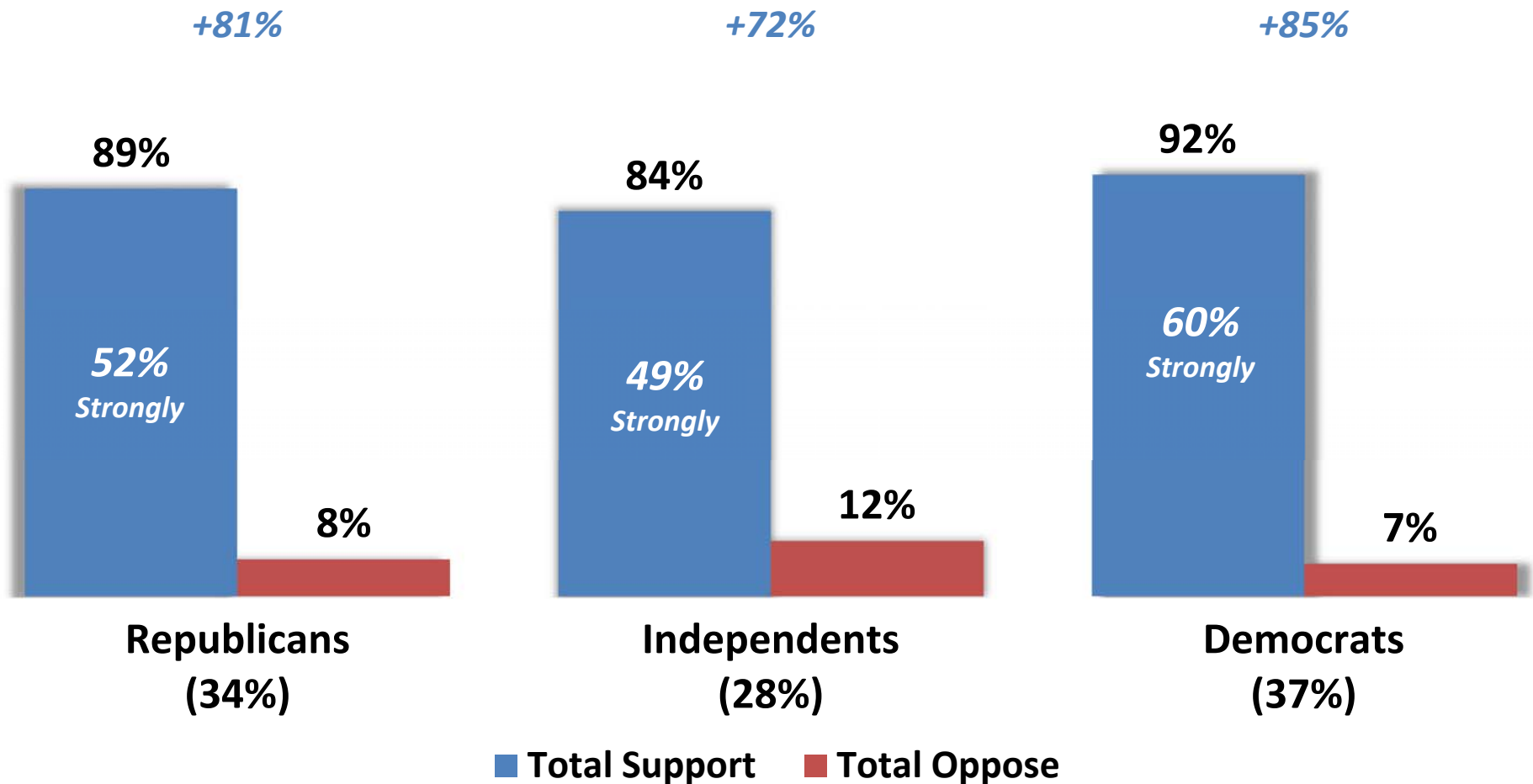
Support for the RECLAIM Act is significant and intense in every state.



Does this proposal sound like something you would support or oppose?

Support is evident across the partisan spectrum.

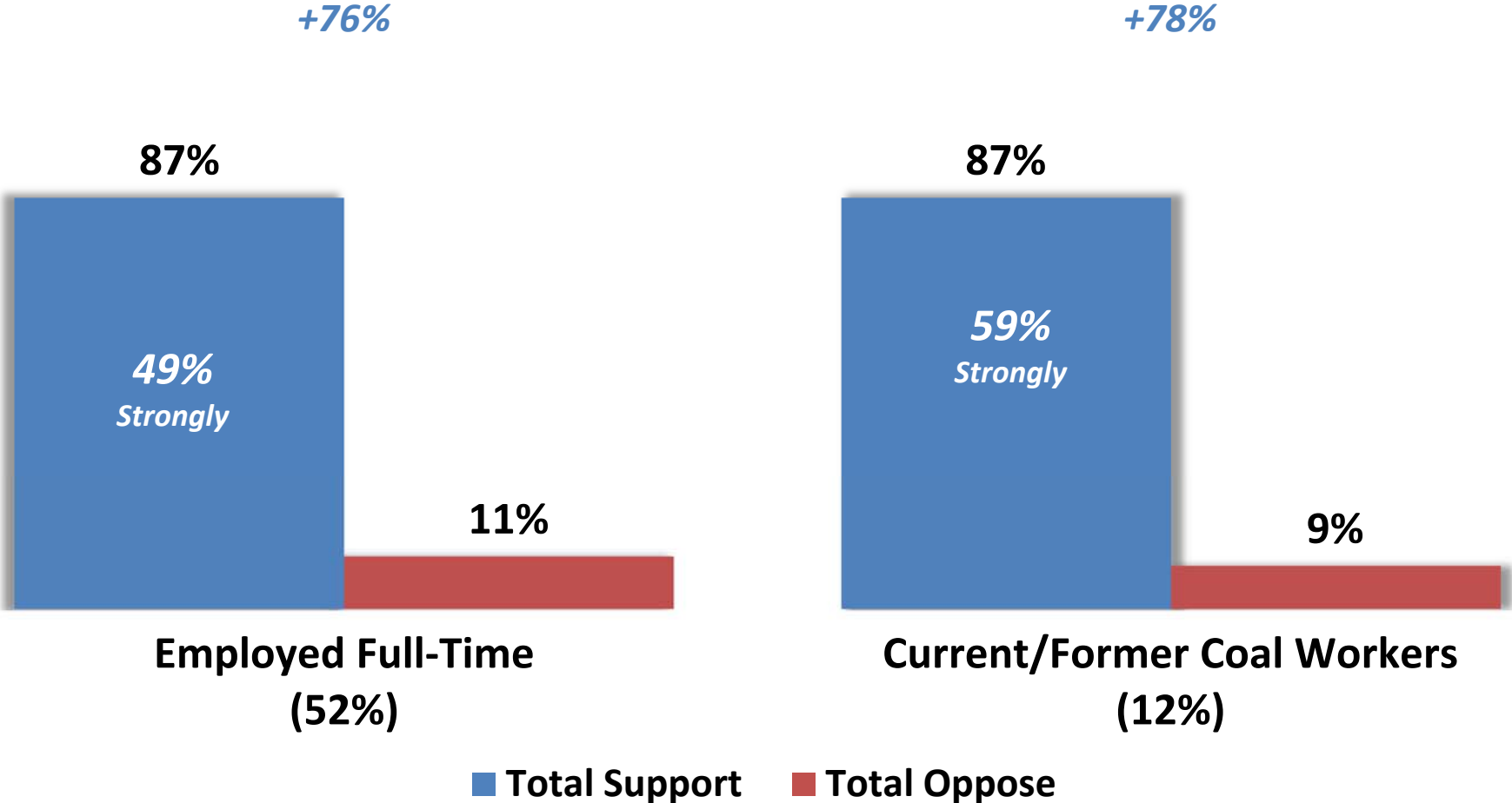
RECLAIM Act Ballot By Party



Does this proposal sound like something you would support or oppose?

Support is quite intense among those who worked in the industry.

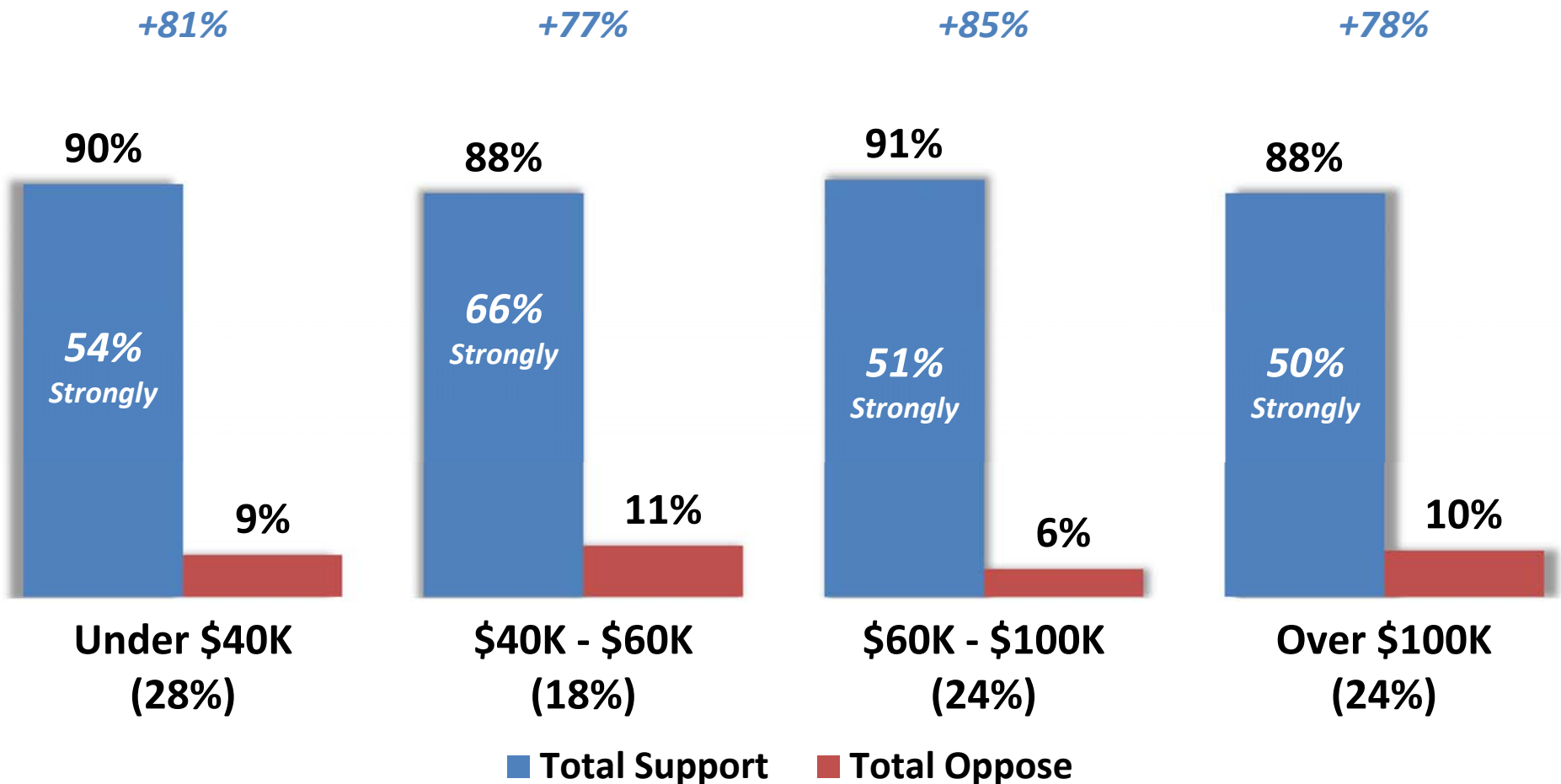
RECLAIM Act Ballot By Working People and Current/Former Coal Workers



Does this proposal sound like something you would support or oppose?

Voters across income categories also support the legislation.

RECLAIM Act Ballot By Income



Does this proposal sound like something you would support or oppose?

Voters empathize with the struggles of coal communities and feel it is appropriate to help.

“These people have no other industry in their area and we can't just leave them out to dry. They don't have anything else to fall back on.”

- Independent Male, Age 25-34, VA

“I feel these towns have been forgotten about. They need support and money to get them back where they need to be.”

- Republican Female, Age 45-54, PA

“My husband makes parts for the coal mining industry, it would not only help us, but other families that are seriously struggling to make it because of mine closures.”

- Republican Female, Age 45-54, TN

“Fighting to restore the mining jobs may not be successful, so available funding for revitalization and diversification seems to make sense.”

- Republican Male, Age 65+, KY

What are the one or two main reasons why you would SUPPORT this proposal?

Among the small nine percent opposed, most still support cleaning up abandoned mine lands.

“The money should be used for the purpose it was collected for. If some of the other items meshed with that, it could be used for that, but not for infrastructure, training, et cetera.”

- Republican Male, Age 65+, OH

“Because it says they would revitalize abandoned mines. These mines should not be revitalized. They should not ever be usable again. Other energy sources need to be developed and the former mine workers should be trained in these new industries that support clean energy sources.”

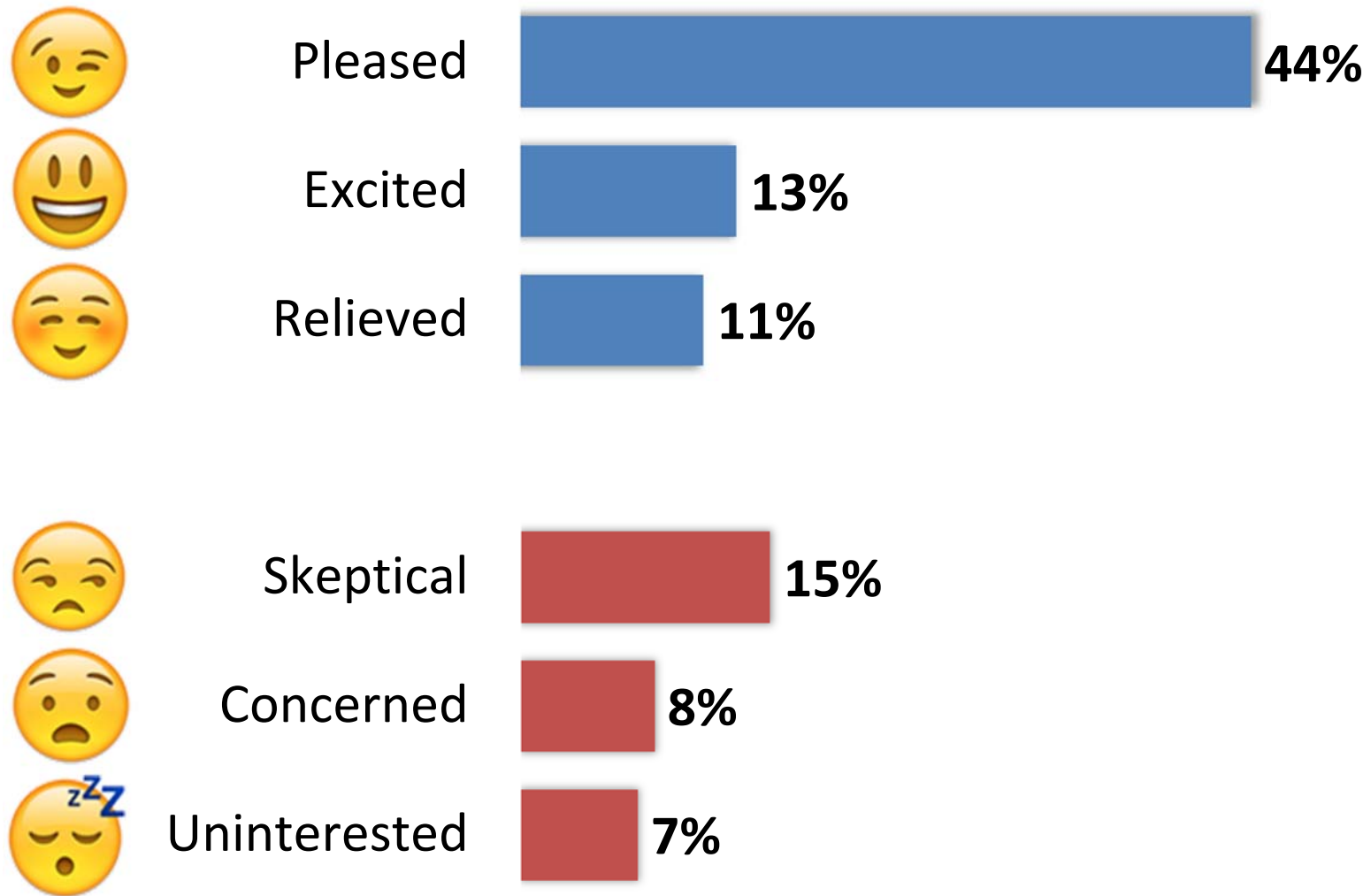
- Democratic Female, Age 55-64, IN

“This is yet another government program that takes money from other state activities which are already funded along with federal programs which are already funded and redirects them to programs which in one way or another already have funding. Just stop spending government money and industries will move into areas where employees can be found.”

- Republican Male, Age 45-54, TN







What are the one or two main reasons why you would OPPOSE this proposal?

Positive emotions dominate how voters would feel if coal communities in their state received some of this funding.



And if coal communities in your state receive funding to revitalize their communities, which one of the following best describes how you would feel?

Voters everywhere generally feel positively if communities accessed funds made available by this proposal.

<i>Feelings By State</i>		Total	IN	KY	OH	PA	TN	VA	WV
	Pleased	44%	46%	38%	37%	47%	52%	54%	35%
	Excited	13%	12%	16%	15%	13%	10%	12%	20%
	Relieved	11%	8%	15%	12%	13%	6%	9%	13%
	Skeptical	15%	14%	20%	18%	12%	16%	9%	21%
	Concerned	8%	12%	6%	11%	6%	7%	9%	8%
	Uninterested	7%	8%	4%	6%	9%	7%	5%	3%

And if coal communities in your state receive funding to revitalize their communities, which one of the following best describes how you would feel?

By nearly a three-to-one margin, voters side with proponents' views of the RECLAIM Act over critics.

Supporters say that using existing funds from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to help revitalize coal communities is a bipartisan idea that provides a step in the right direction with no effect on the federal budget. It will provide new, good jobs in industries that the community feels are best for their area, and put people back to work getting skills that provide long-term benefits. At the same time, it will clean up pollution in our rivers, streams, and drinking water.

73%

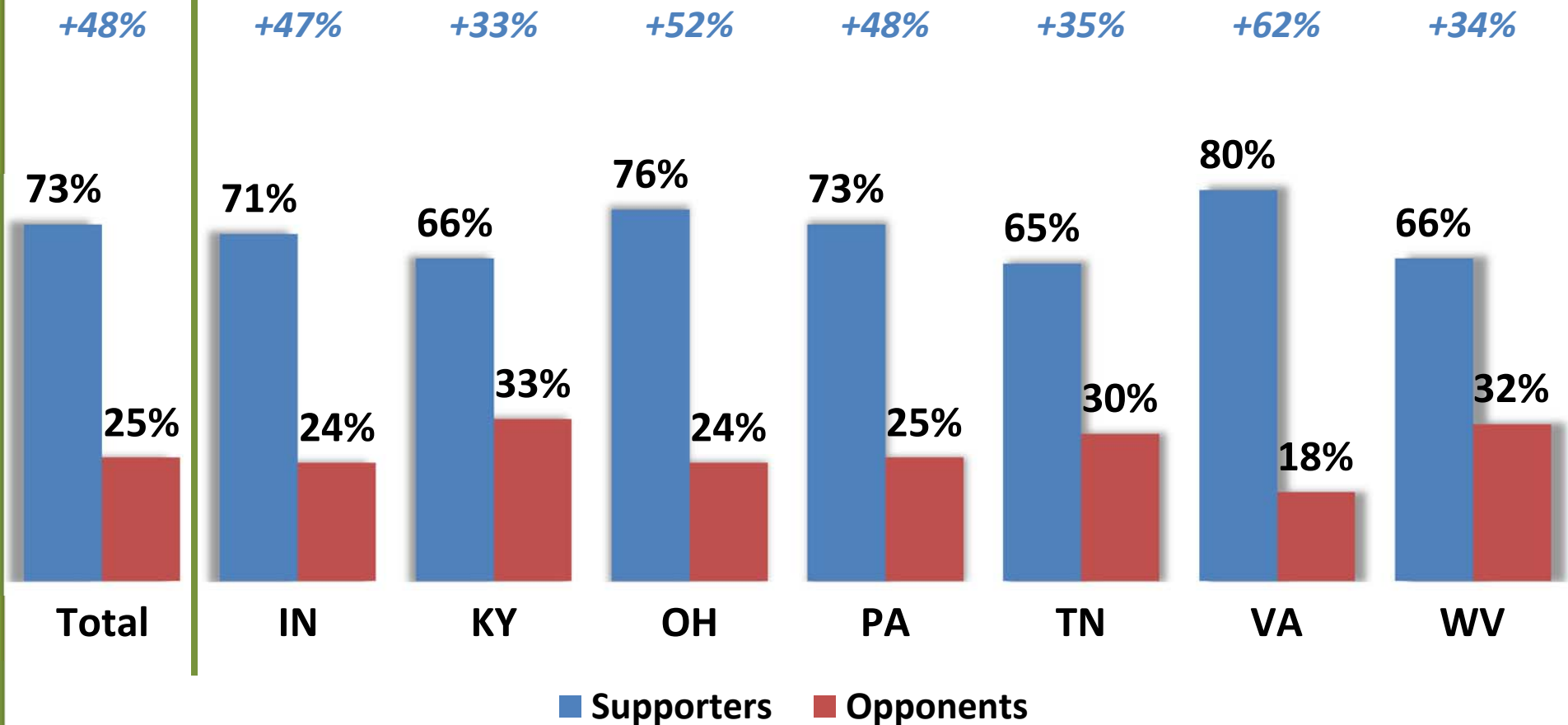
Opponents say that using existing funds from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund will end up wasting more money on bureaucracy than helping coal communities. Coal communities do not need a big federal bail-out. Instead, we should get rid of federal regulations that are killing thousands of good-paying jobs that allowed people to support their families with dignity.

25%

Thinking some more about releasing funding from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to help revitalize coal communities

In each state, voters side with supporters of the legislation.

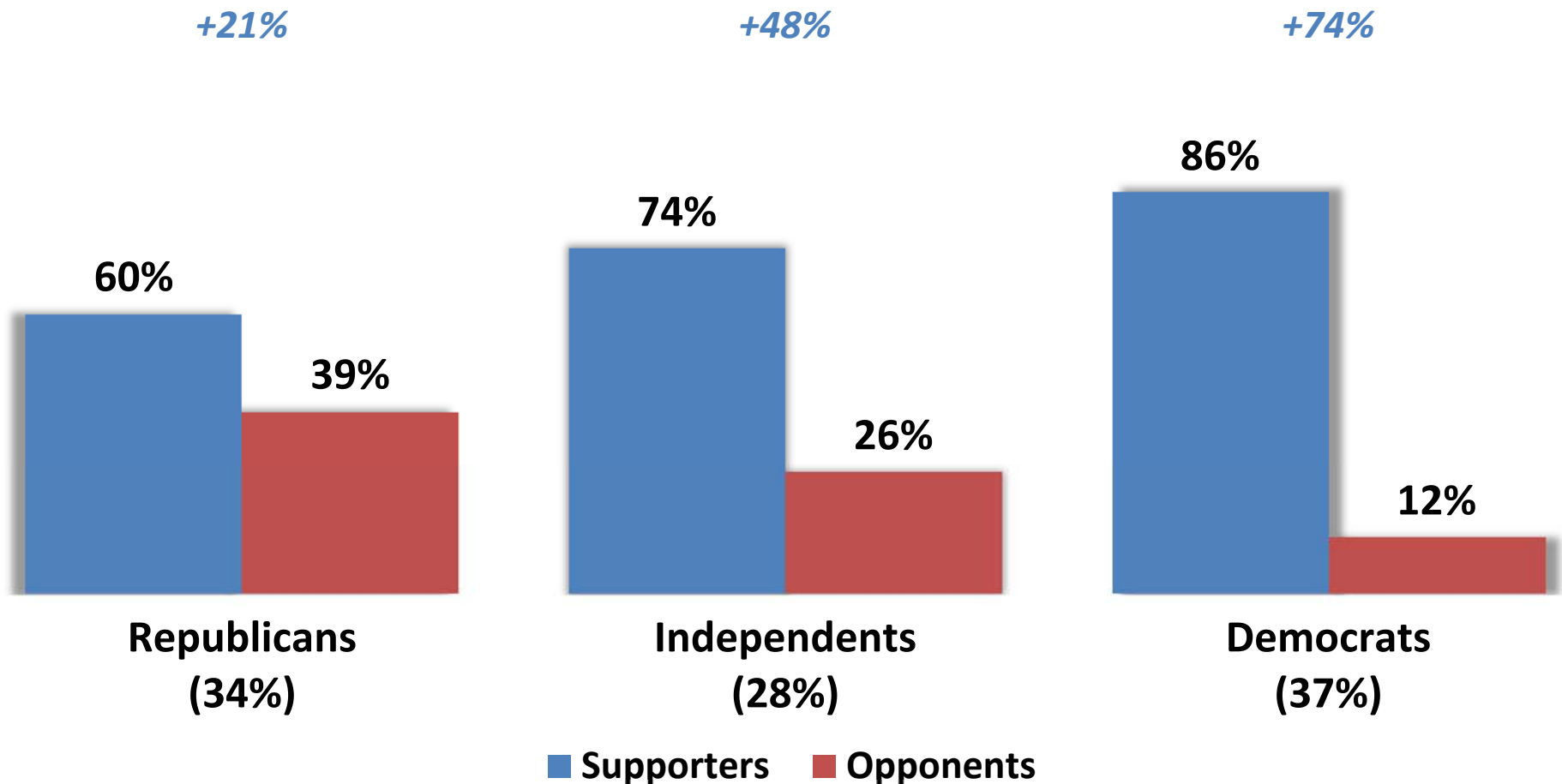
RECLAIM Act Viewpoints By State



Here are two viewpoints about this proposal and please tell me which one comes closer to what you think, even if neither perfectly matches your viewpoint.

Voters across party lines find rationales in support of the RECLAIM Act more compelling.

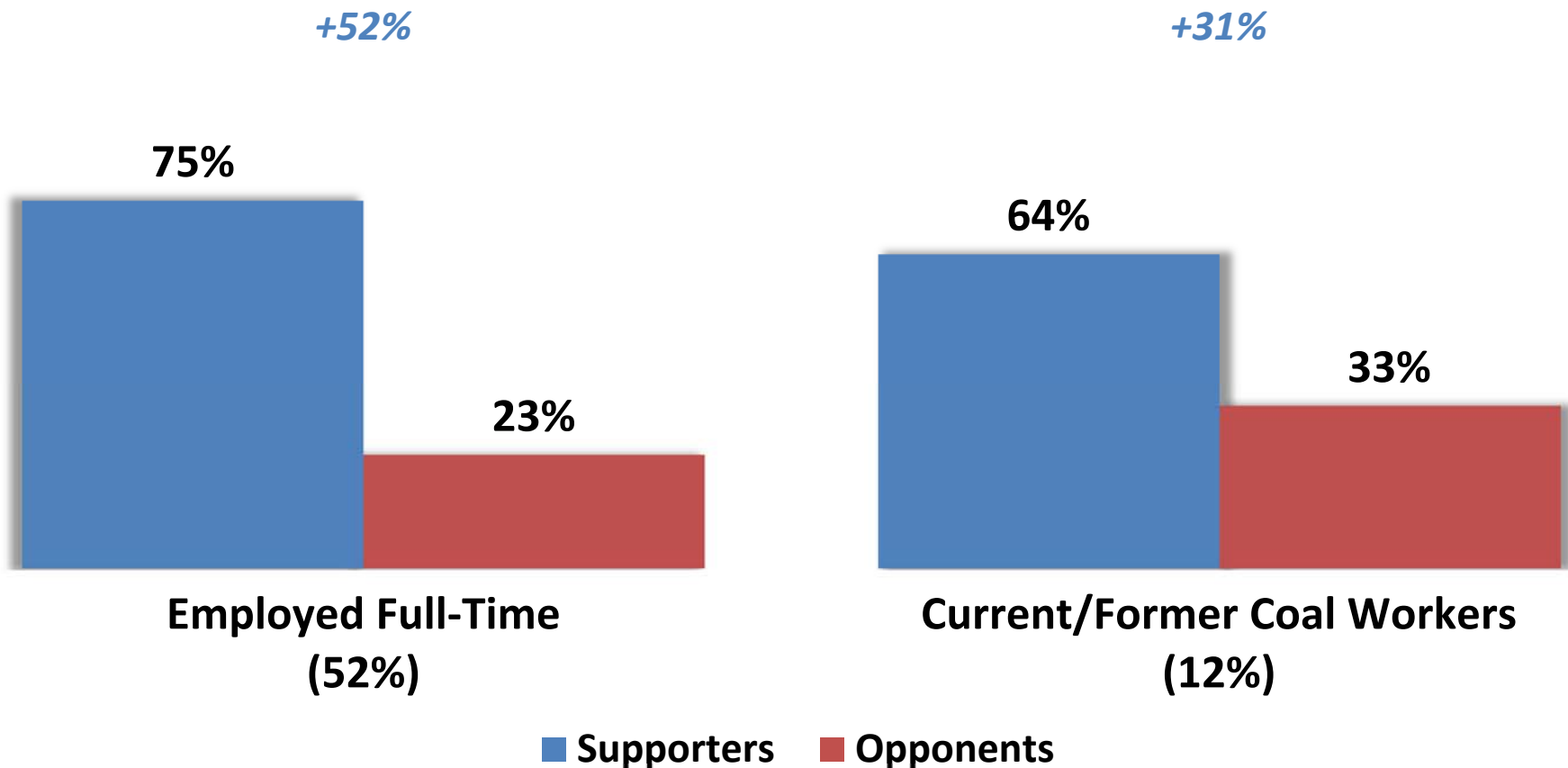
RECLAIM Act Viewpoints By Party



Here are two viewpoints about this proposal and please tell me which one comes closer to what you think, even if neither perfectly matches your viewpoint.

Working people and those who worked in the industry also side with supporters.

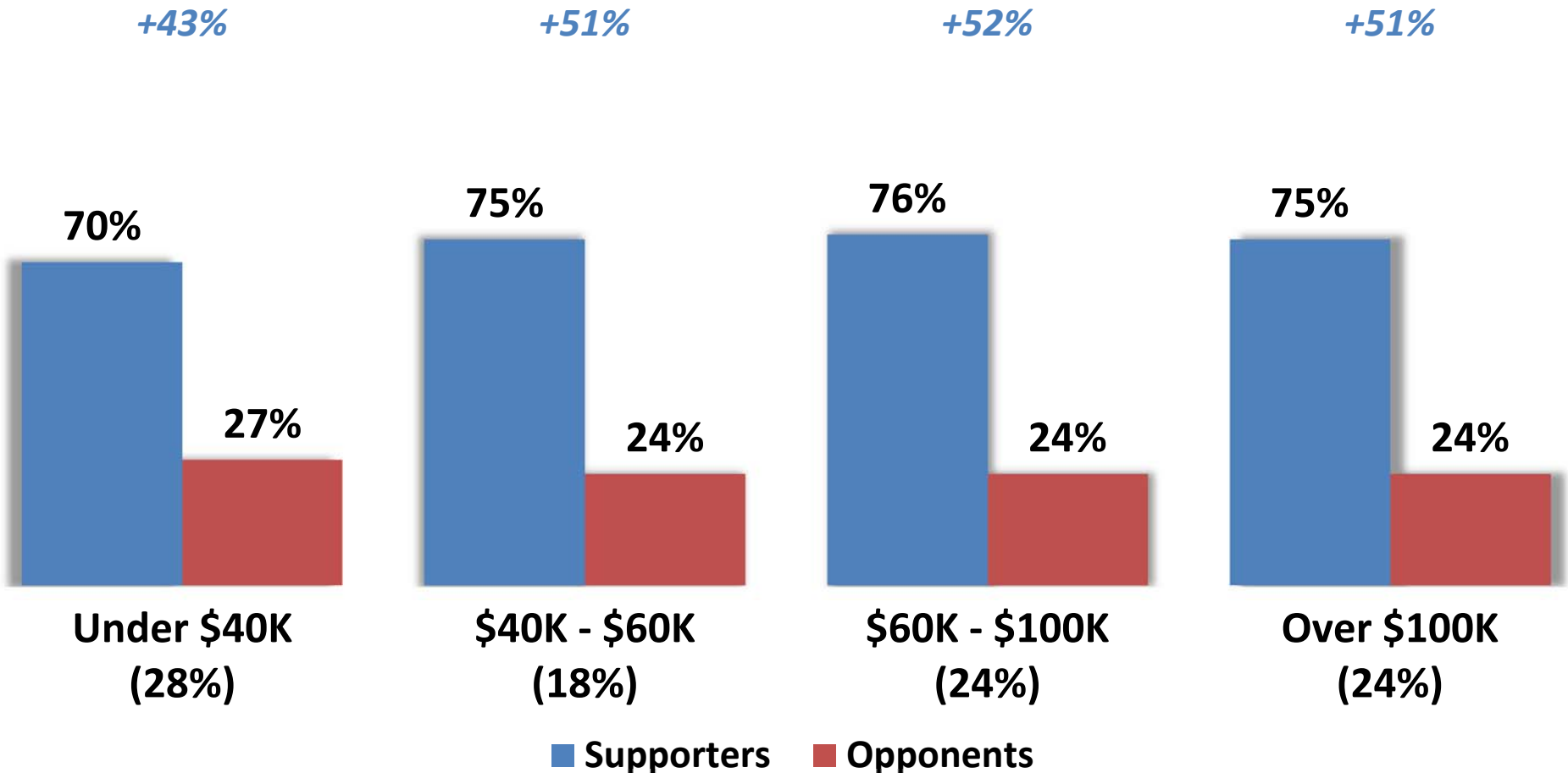
RECLAIM Act Viewpoints By Current/Former Coal Workers



Here are two viewpoints about this proposal and please tell me which one comes closer to what you think, even if neither perfectly matches your viewpoint.

There is no difference based on income.

RECLAIM Act Viewpoints By Income



Here are two viewpoints about this proposal and please tell me which one comes closer to what you think, even if neither perfectly matches your viewpoint.

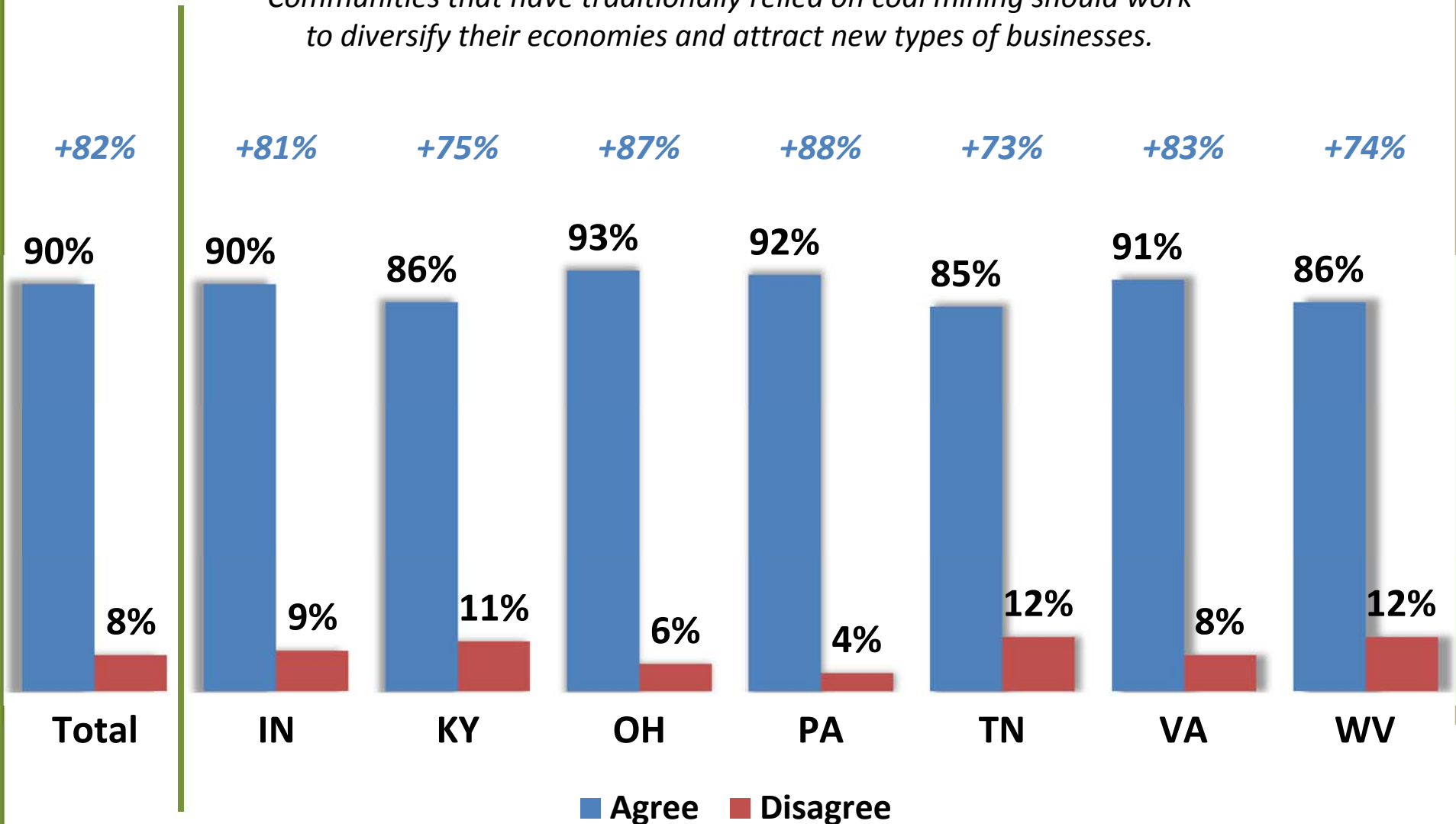
This strong support is likely grounded in the sense that nearly all aspects of the legislation are very important.

<u>Potential Benefit Ranked By Extremely/Very Important</u>	% Extremely/Very Important	% Extremely Important
Restore streams and rivers polluted by toxic drainage from old mines.	86%	52%
Provide job opportunities to former coal-miners and workers.	86%	47%
Create economic opportunities for local small businesses so they can create more jobs.	81%	39%
Clean-up hazardous abandoned mines.	77%	44%
Diversify the economy so there are many new and different types of employers, rather than relying on coal mining.	72%	36%
Allow communities to voluntarily apply for grants for economic redevelopment projects that best meet their needs.	69%	29%
Provide areas for outdoor recreation for those who come to hike, camp, hunt, ride off-road vehicles and enjoy natural areas near mountains.	43%	17%

Here are a number of specific possible benefits of releasing funding from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to help revitalize coal communities. Please tell me how important you think each one of these is: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

In fact, nine-in-ten say it is time for coal communities to diversify their economies.

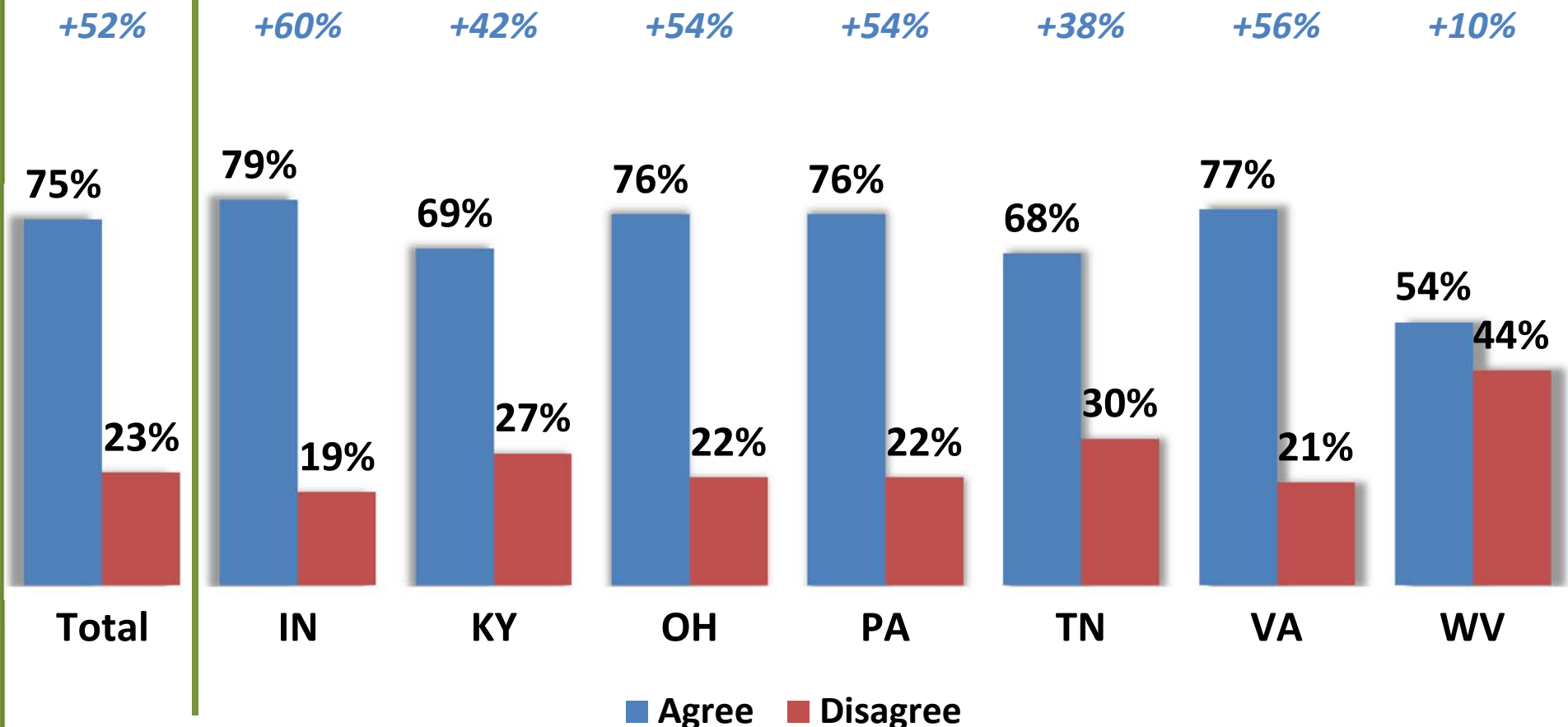
Communities that have traditionally relied on coal mining should work to diversify their economies and attract new types of businesses.



And do you agree or disagree that...

And a majority – even in West Virginia – agree it is time to emphasize efficiency and clean energy over coal.

Rather than using more coal, we should become more energy efficient and move toward cleaner sources of energy, like wind and solar.



And do you agree or disagree that...

The Bottom Line

- ❑ Voters in this region demonstrate overwhelming support for the RECLAIM Act that extends across demographic sub-groups, state lines, and partisan affiliations.
- ❑ This support is grounded in a strong sense that the economy is not doing well in rural areas of the state, and coal communities need to diversify their economies. In fact, voters are twice as likely to prioritize focusing on diversification efforts than fighting regulations which have affected the coal industry.
- ❑ Most say they would feel positively if coal communities in their states accessed these funds for economic development purposes.
- ❑ Moreover, voters rate all of the potential benefits of the legislation as being very important to them personally.
- ❑ Finally, voters are three times as likely to say that rationales in support of the RECLAIM Act come closer to their own views than do criticisms of the legislation.



Questions?





**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

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Regional Demographics



Gender

<i>Male</i>	48%
<i>Female</i>	52%



Employment

<i>Full-Time</i>	52%
<i>Part-Time</i>	9%
<i>Student</i>	2%
<i>Stay-At-Home Parent</i>	6%
<i>Retired</i>	24%
<i>Unemployed, but Looking</i>	3%
<i>Disabled</i>	4%



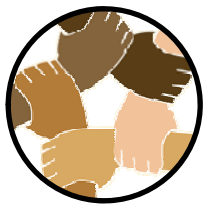
Age

<i>18-34</i>	19%
<i>35-44</i>	23%
<i>45-54</i>	15%
<i>55-64</i>	23%
<i>65+</i>	20%



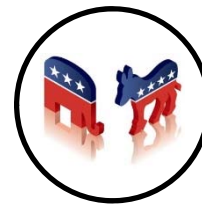
Community

<i>Urban</i>	21%
<i>Suburban</i>	30%
<i>Rural</i>	49%



Ethnicity

<i>White</i>	79%
<i>Total Non-White</i>	20%



Party

<i>Republican</i>	34%
<i>Independent</i>	28%
<i>Democrat</i>	37%