



Louisiana Statewide Survey

Key findings from a statewide telephone survey of 500 registered voters in Louisiana, including 200 cell phone respondents, conducted January 28-31, 2016.

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Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a statewide telephone survey conducted in Louisiana. The survey was completed January 28-31, 2016, among 500 registered voters, with 200 cell phone interviews, and has a margin of error of +4.38%.

Glen Bolger was the principal researcher on this project. Trevor Spranger was the project director, and Ryan Garikes provided analytical support.

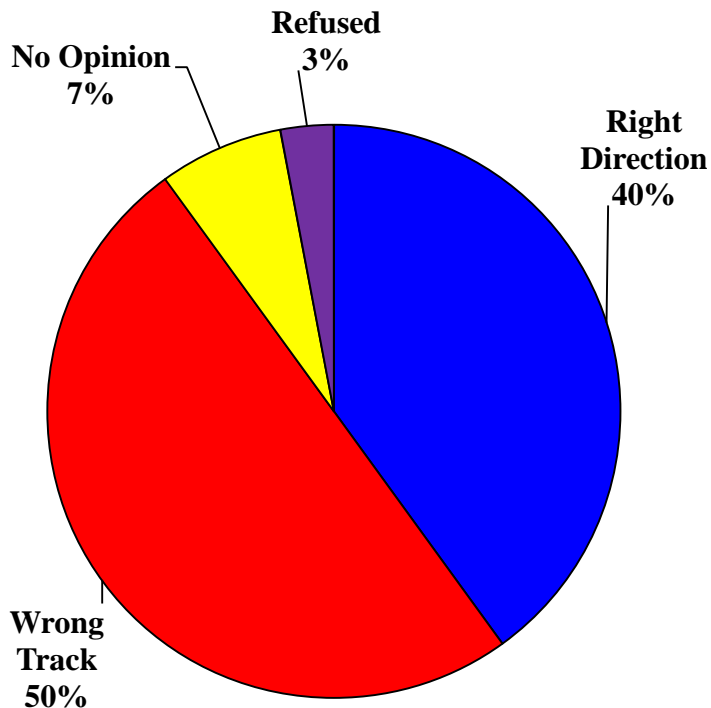


Political Environment

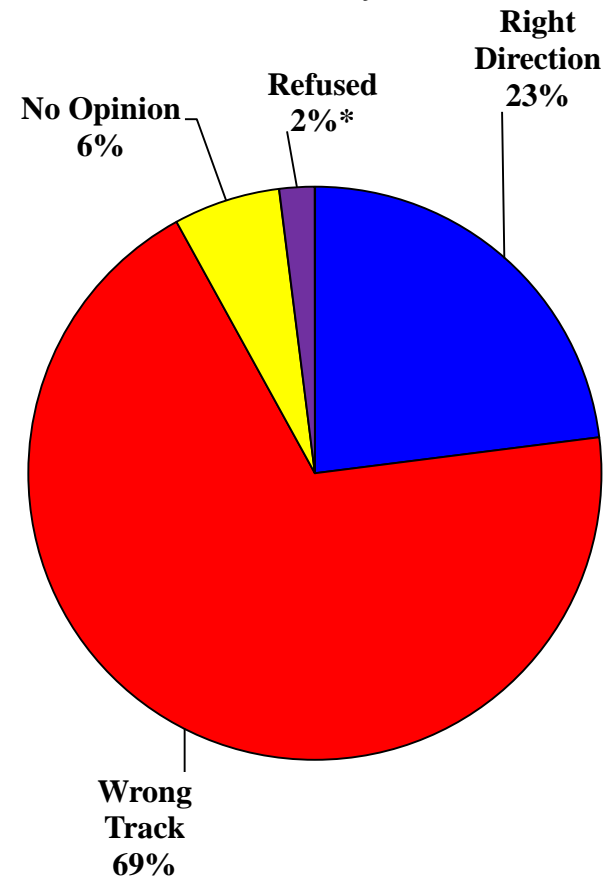
Louisianans' concern about the direction of the state has increased in the last year.

“Would you say that things in Louisiana are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?”

December 2014



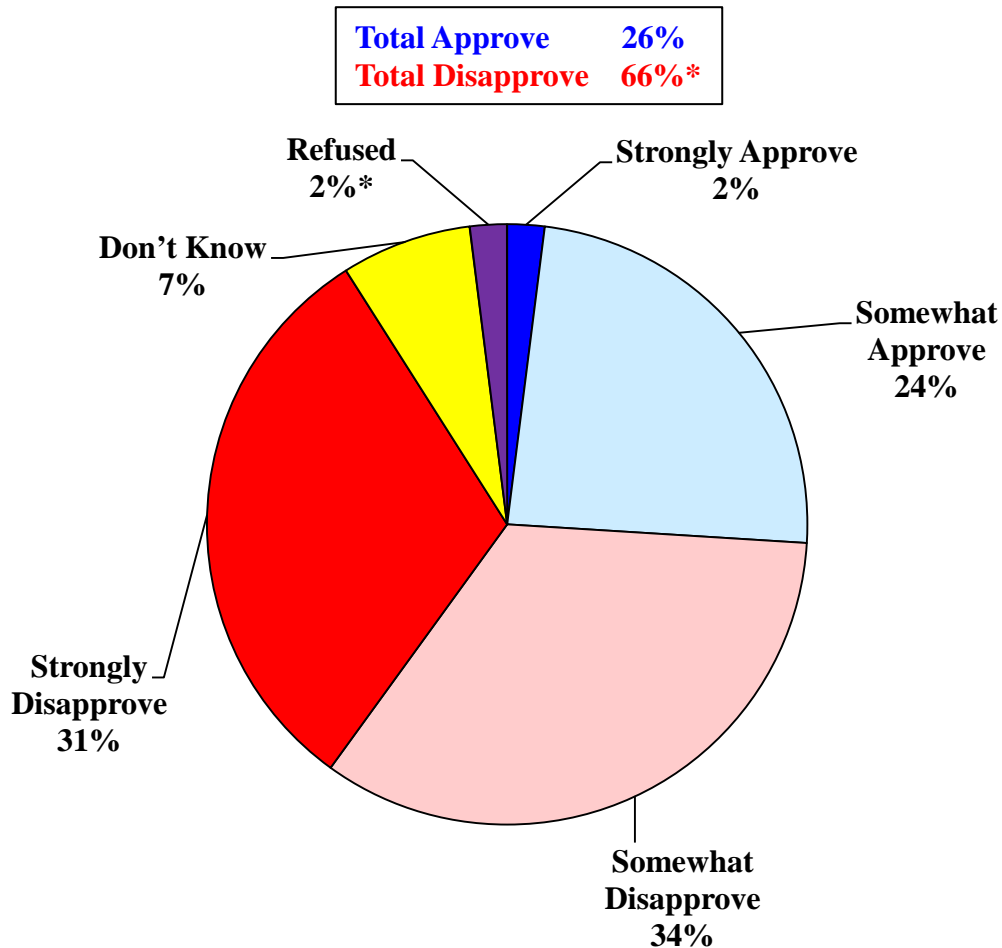
January 2016



**Denotes Rounding*

Two-thirds of voters disapprove of the state legislature.

“Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Louisiana State Legislature is doing?”



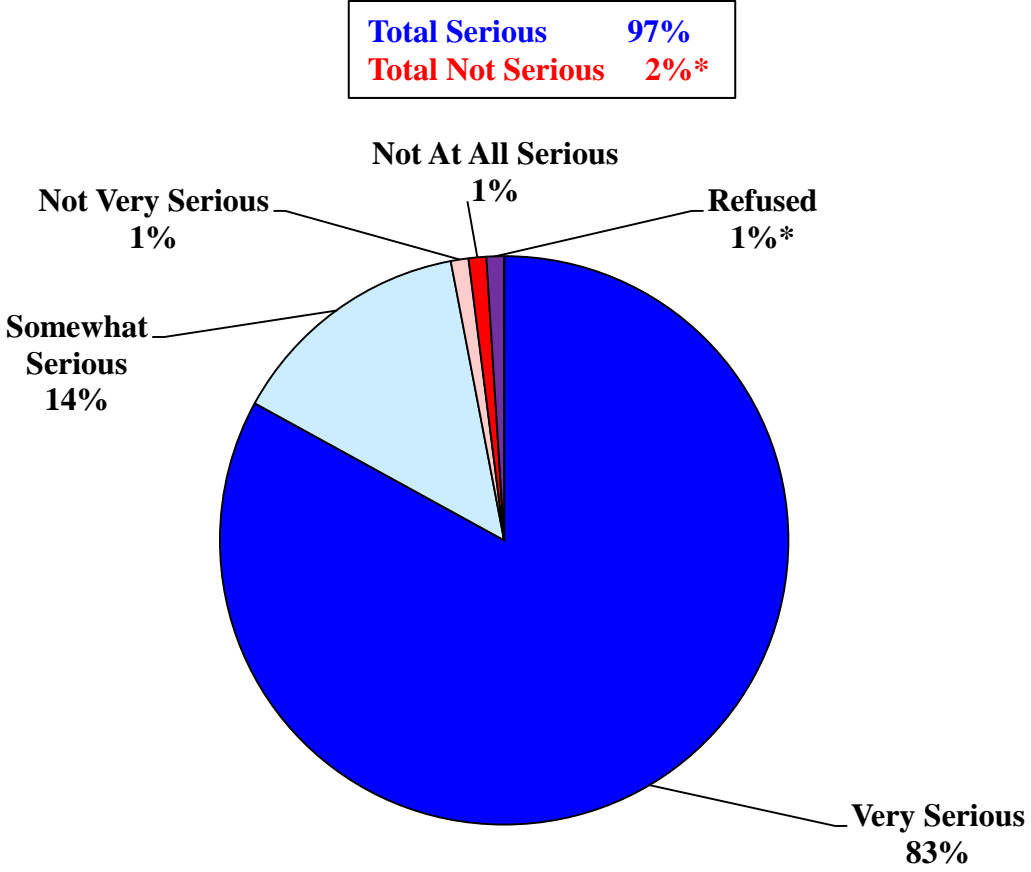
**Denotes Rounding*



Issues

The state budget is a very serious issue to Louisiana voters.

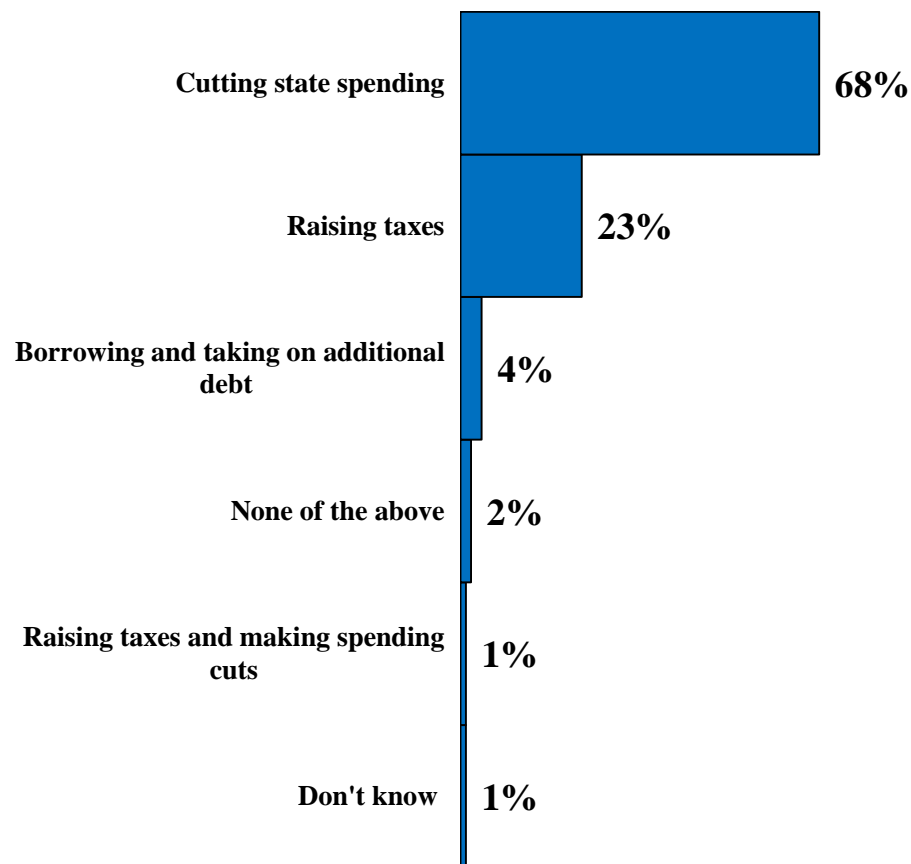
“As you may know, Louisiana is trying to fund essential programs and services while facing a seven hundred and fifty million dollar revenue shortfall this next budget year, and a one point nine billion dollar revenue shortfall the budget year after this one. Would you say the state budget shortfall issue is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?”



**Denotes Rounding*

A majority of voters would like to see the state cut spending to address the revenue shortage.

“Louisiana currently has a number of competing legislative priorities that lack sufficient revenue. Which one of the following options to address the state’s revenue shortage would you prefer?”



**Denotes Rounding*

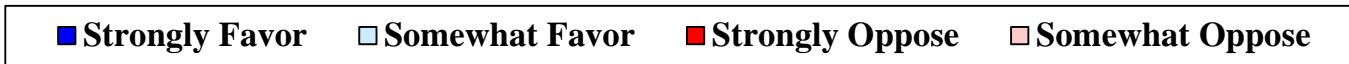
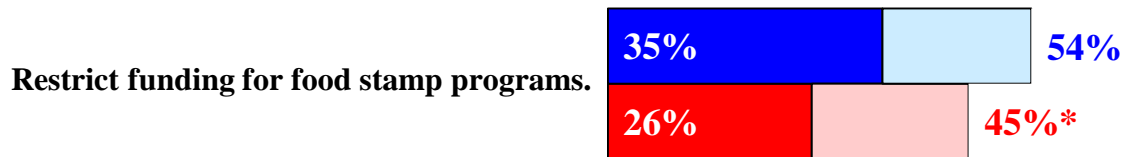
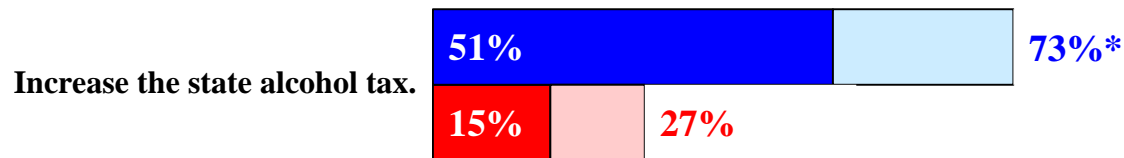
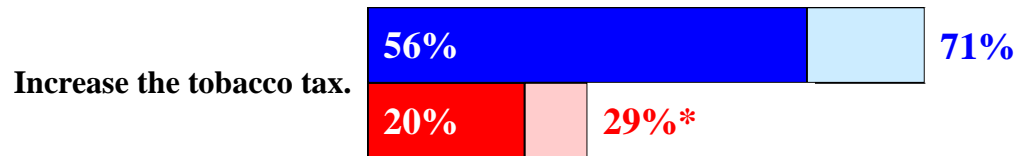


Budget Proposals

Most voters would strongly support tax increases on tobacco and alcohol.

“Now as you may know, the state legislature is facing budget challenges. As a result, legislators are considering certain proposals to make sure important state priorities have adequate funding. I am going to read you a list of proposals that have been suggested to make sure the state balances the budget while still funding these priorities. After I read each one, please tell me if you FAVOR or OPPOSE that proposal...”

Ranked by % Strongly Favor

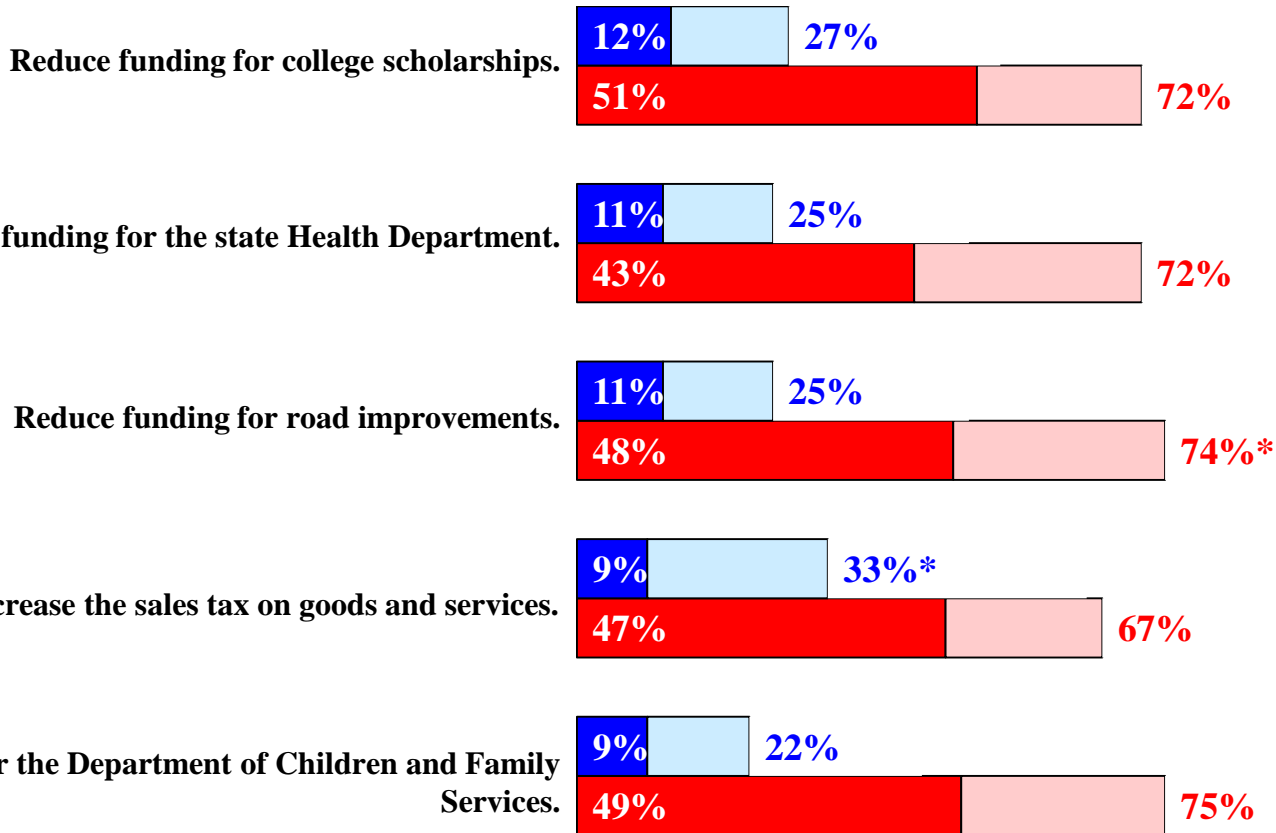


*Denotes Rounding

Louisianans do not support specific spending cuts or a sales tax increase.

“Now as you may know, the state legislature is facing budget challenges. As a result, legislators are considering certain proposals to make sure important state priorities have adequate funding. I am going to read you a list of proposals that have been suggested to make sure the state balances the budget while still funding these priorities. After I read each one, please tell me if you FAVOR or OPPOSE that proposal...”

Ranked by % Strongly Favor



■ Strongly Favor
 ■ Somewhat Favor
 ■ Strongly Oppose
 ■ Somewhat Oppose

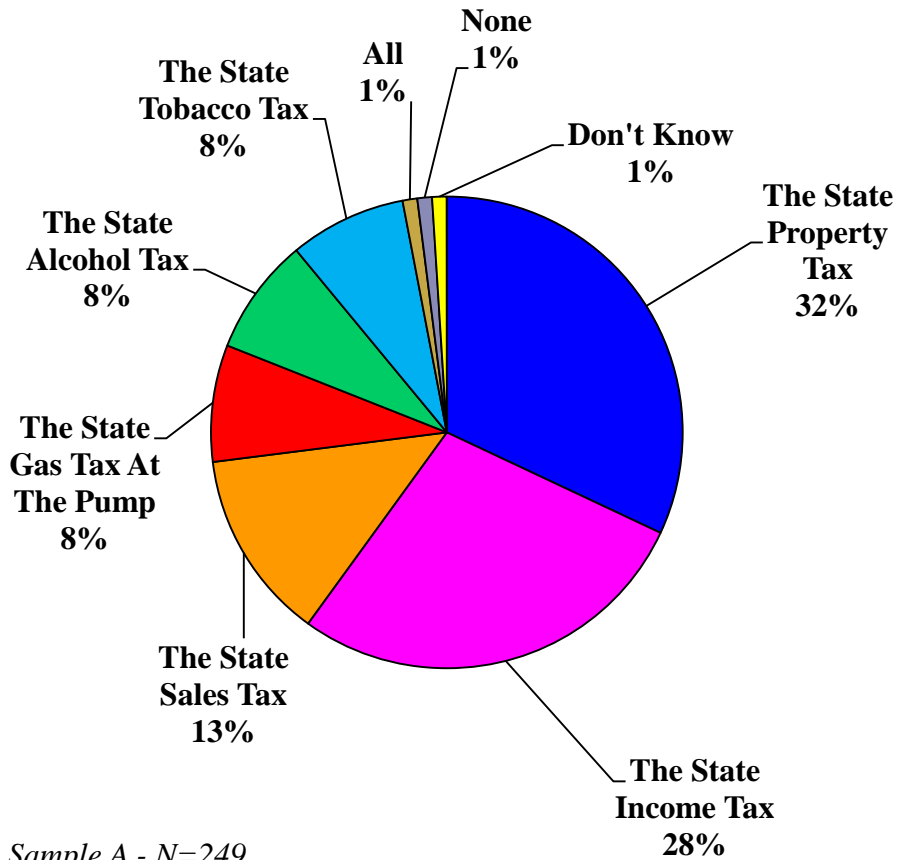
*Denotes Rounding



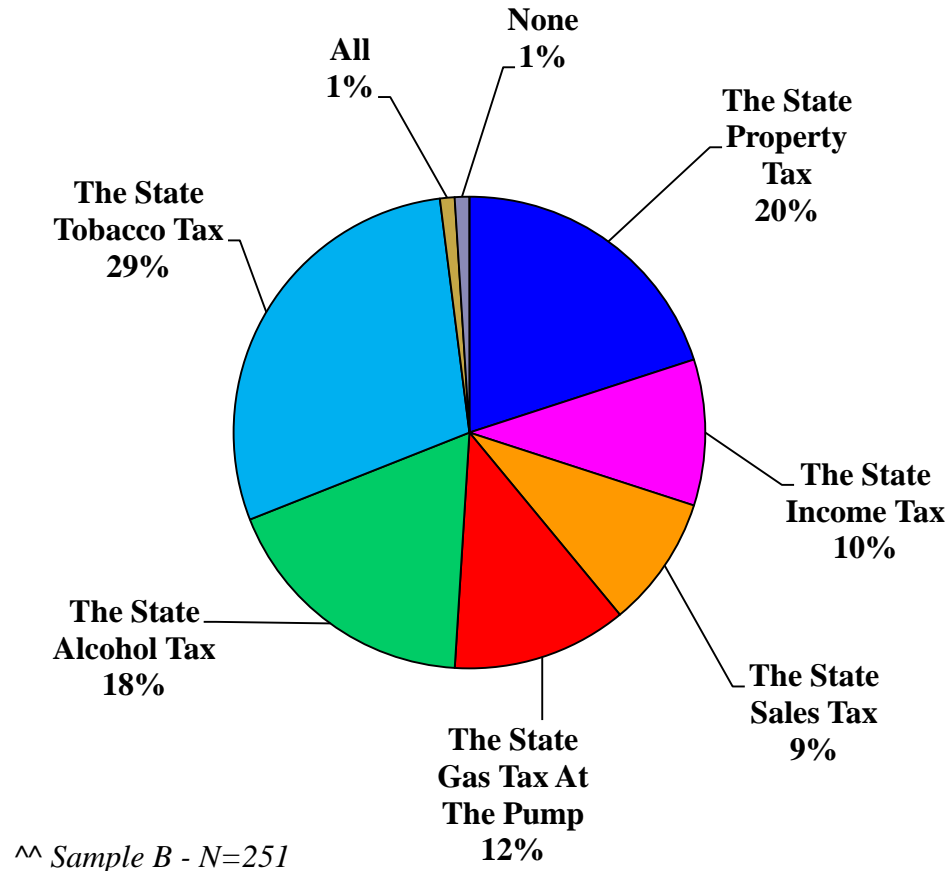
Tobacco Tax Increases

Voters are least opposed to increasing the tobacco tax.

“Which one of the following state taxes would you be MOST opposed to increasing in Louisiana?”^



“Which one of the following state taxes would you be LEAST opposed to increasing in Louisiana?”^^



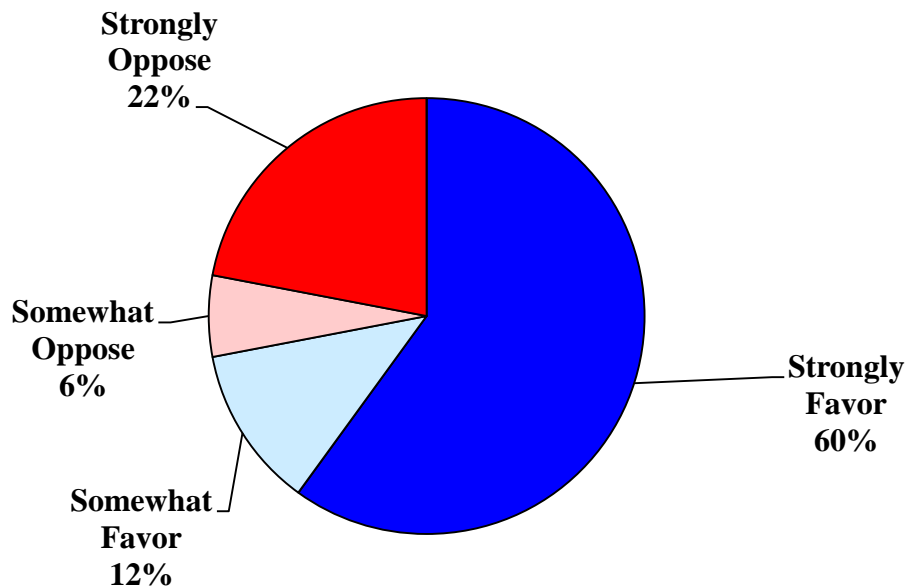
^ Sample A - N=249

^^ Sample B - N=251

Voter opinions do not change significantly between a \$1.50 and \$1.25 tax increase on cigarettes.

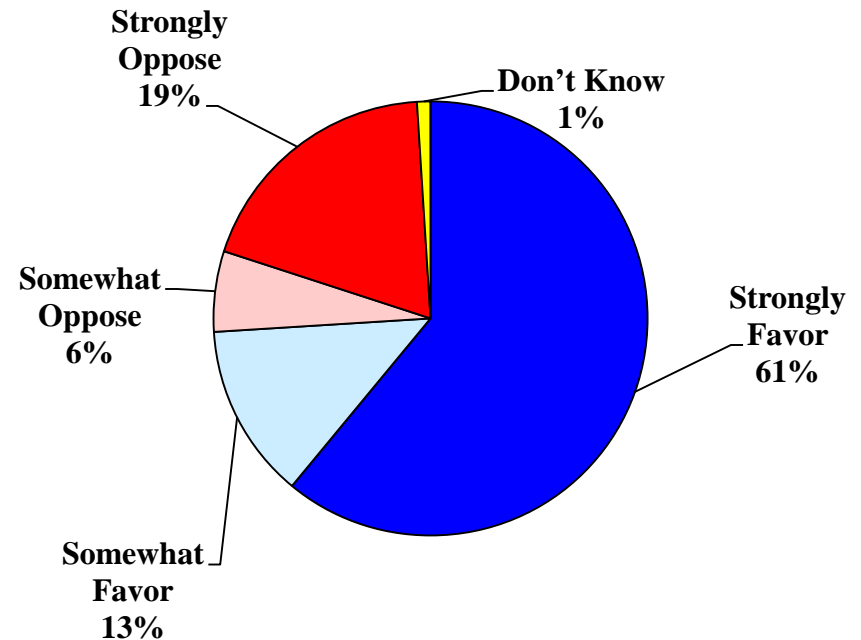
“Would you favor or oppose a one dollar and fifty cent per pack increase in the state cigarette tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”

Total Favor	72%
Total Oppose	28%



“And, would you favor or oppose a one dollar and twenty-five cent per pack increase in the state cigarette tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”

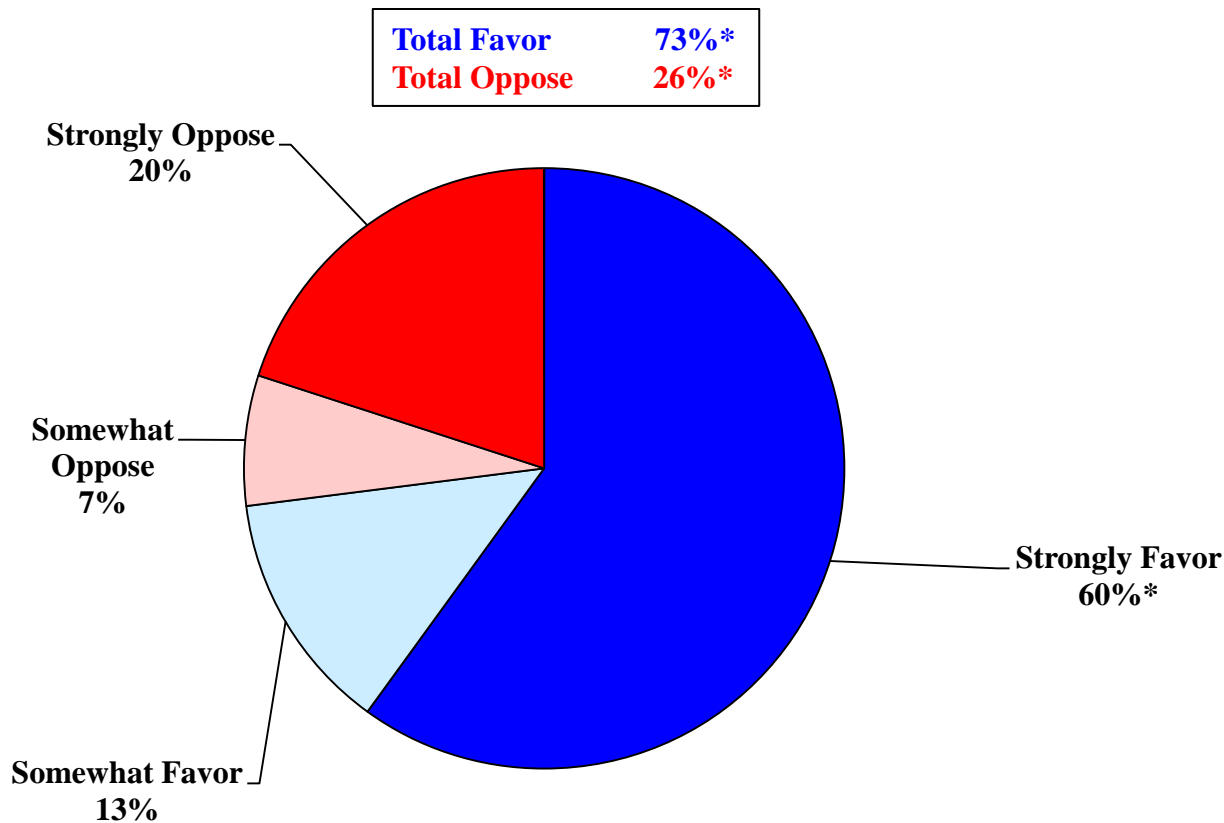
Total Favor	73%*
Total Oppose	26%*



**Denotes Rounding*

Voter opinions do not change if the tax increase is \$1.00 instead of \$1.25 or \$1.50.

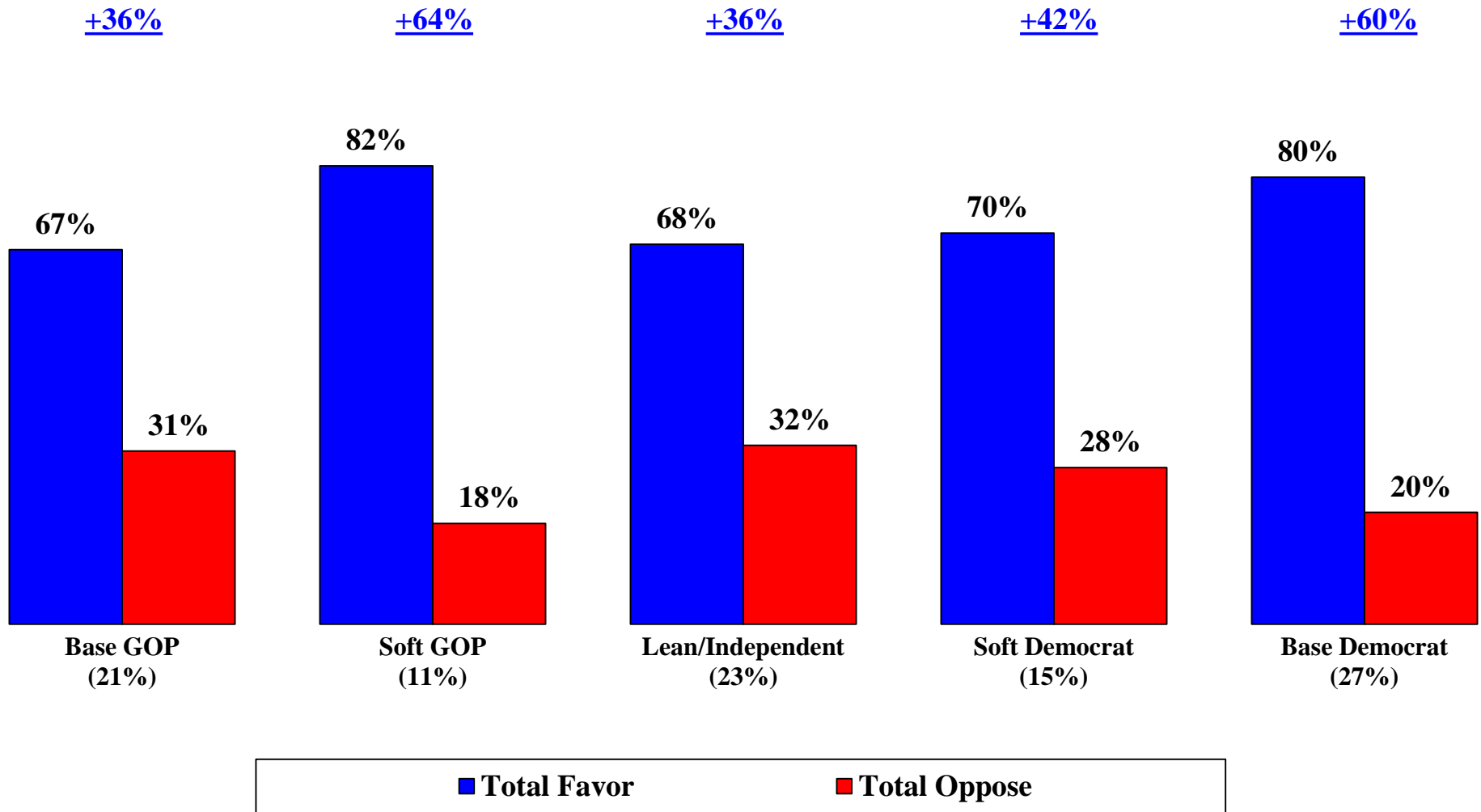
“And, would you favor or oppose a one dollar per pack increase in the state cigarette tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”



**Denotes Rounding*

Overwhelming majorities in both parties favor an increased tax on cigarettes.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Party



Across the state, Louisianans favor increasing the cigarette tax.

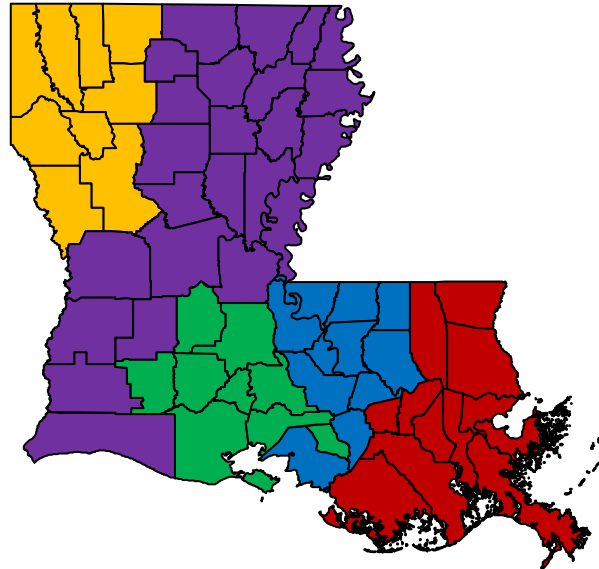
Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax by DMA

Baton Rouge (19%)

Favor	74%
Oppose	25%

Shreveport (12%)

Favor	88%
Oppose	12%



Lafayette (14%)

Favor	68%
Oppose	32%

New Orleans (35%)

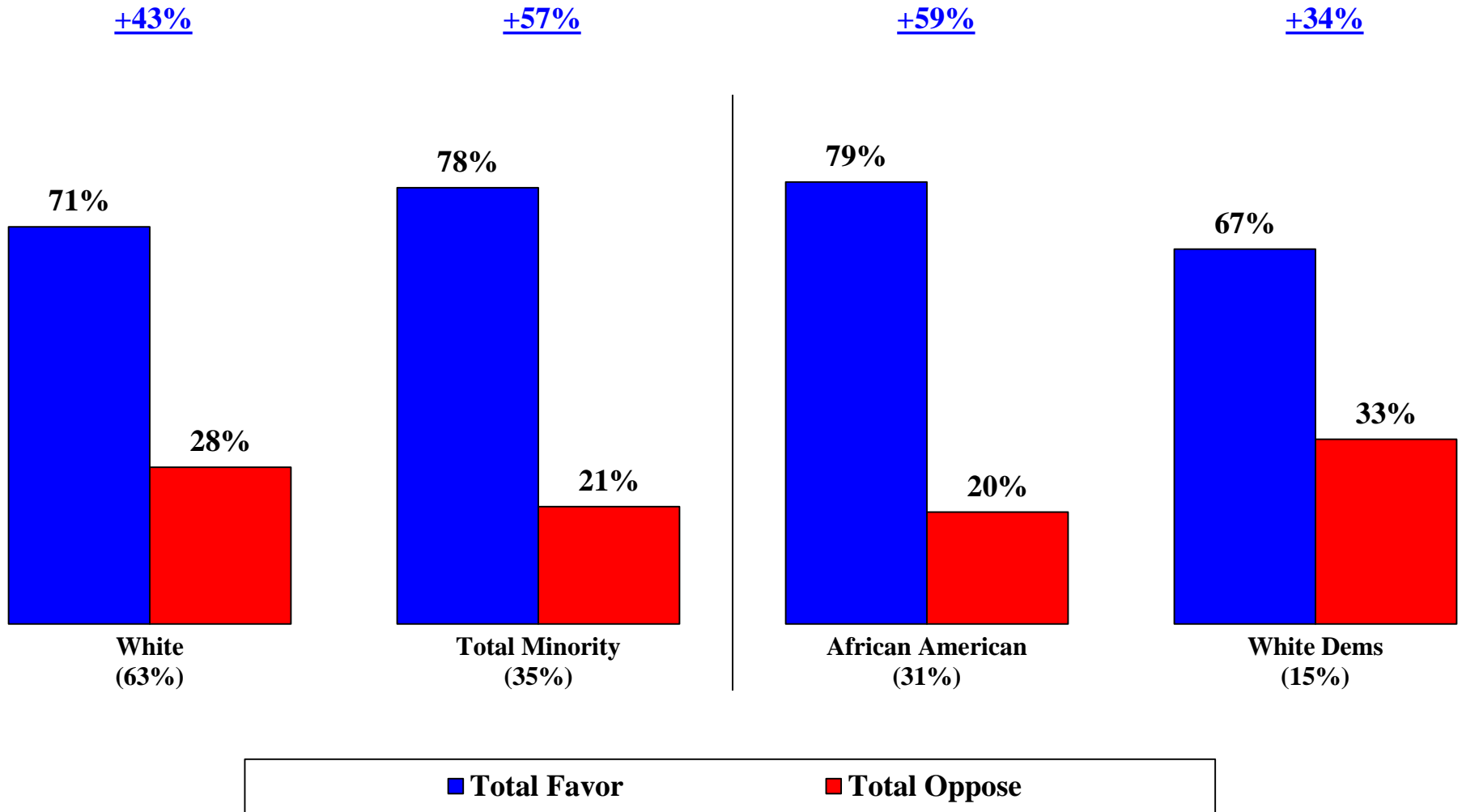
Favor	71%
Oppose	29%

Balance (20%)

Favor	73%
Oppose	26%

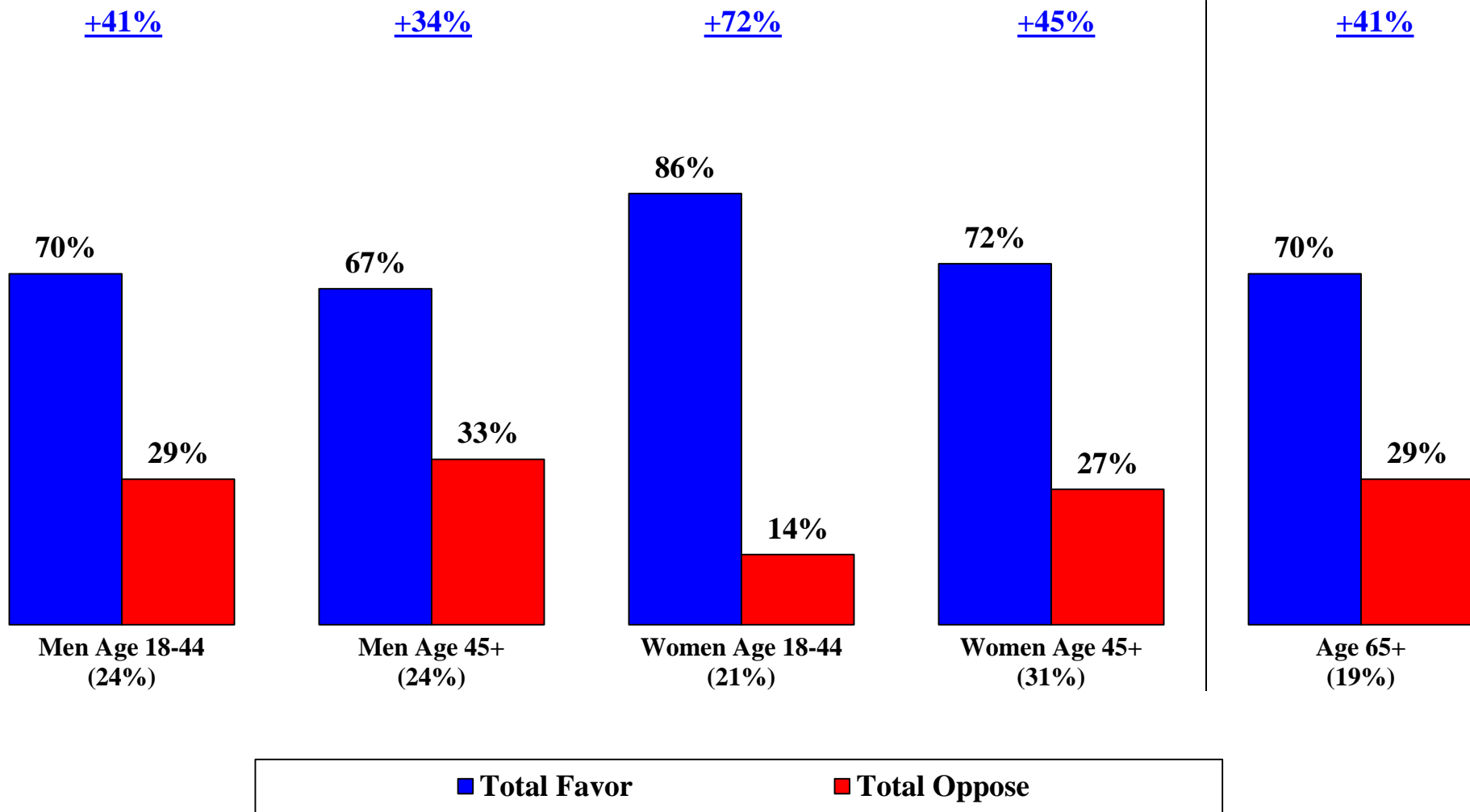
Whites and minorities favor increasing the sales tax.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Ethnicity



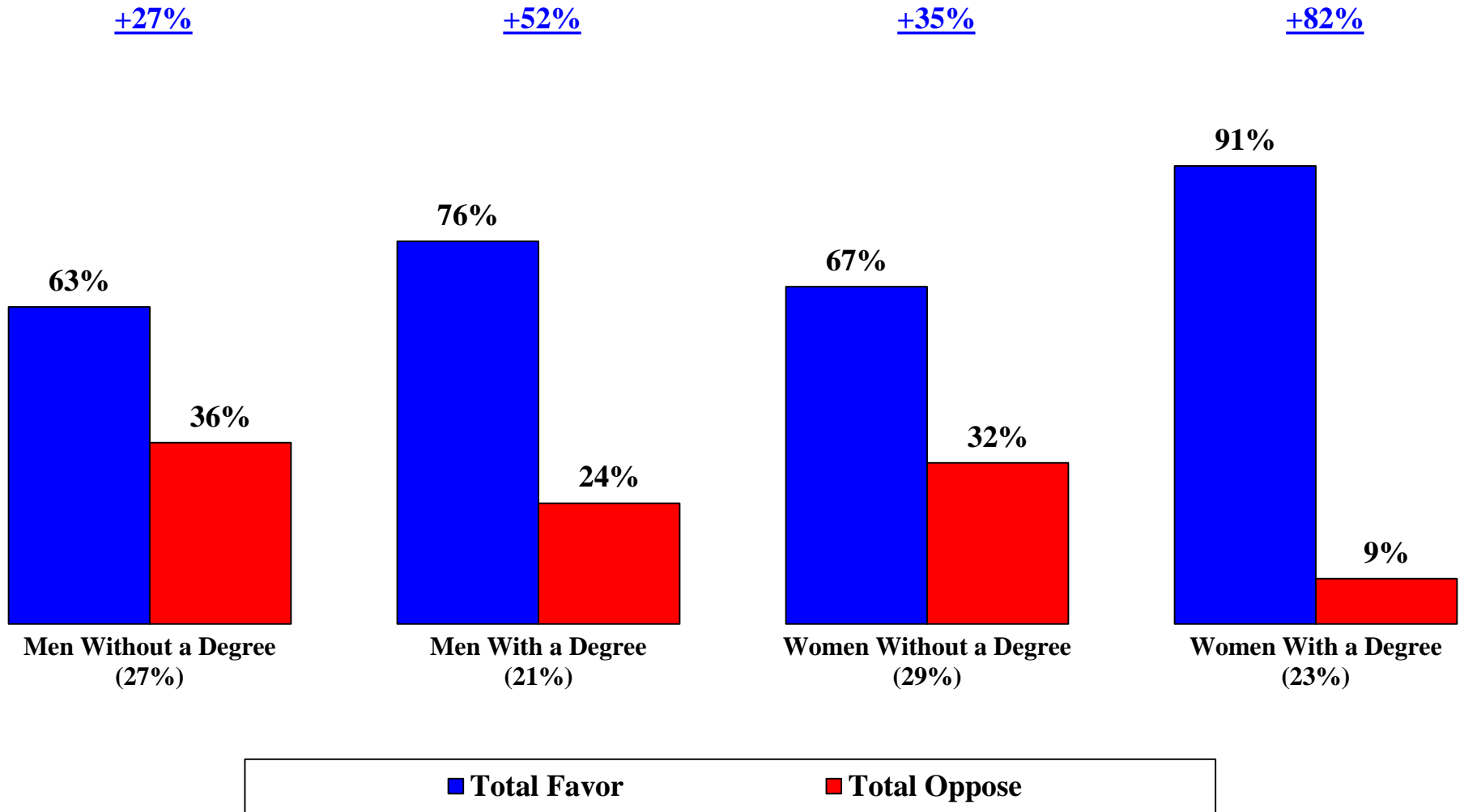
Men and women both support the increased cigarette tax, especially younger women.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Gender/Age & Seniors



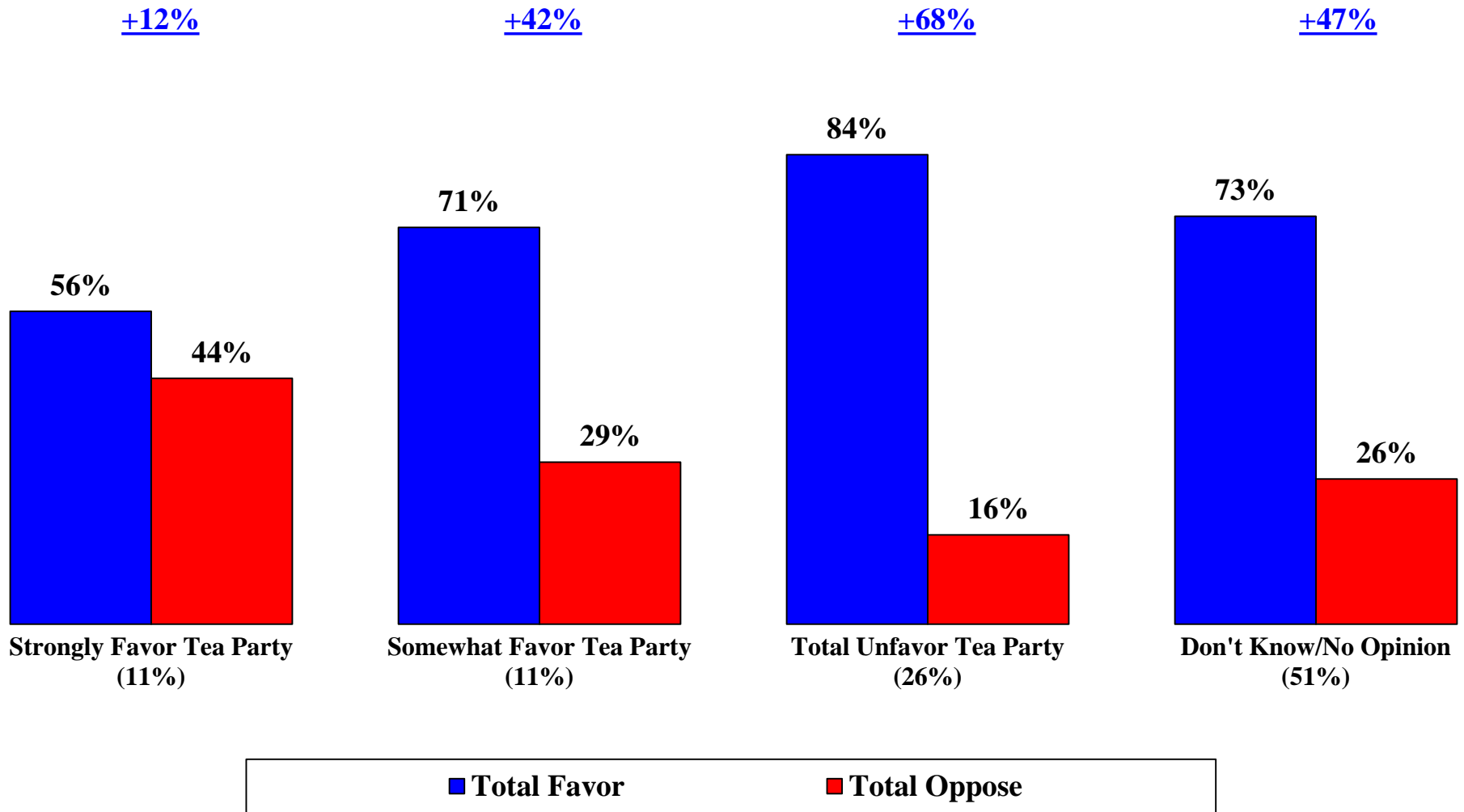
Men and women with college degrees overwhelmingly support the increase to the cigarette tax.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Education/Gender



Strong Tea Party supporters are relatively split on the tax increase to cigarettes.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Tea Party Image

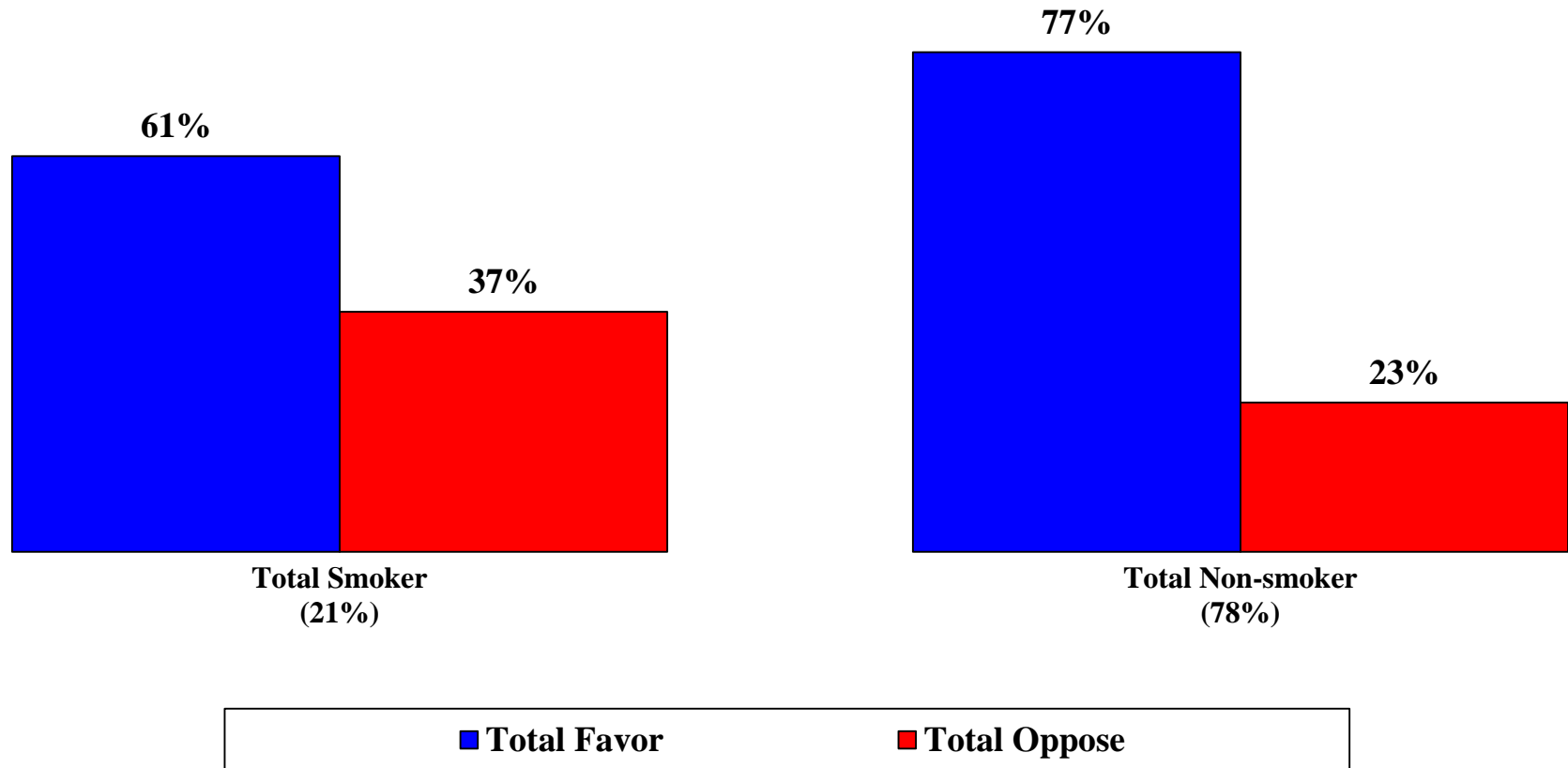


Even most smokers favor a higher tax on cigarettes.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Smoker/Non-smoker

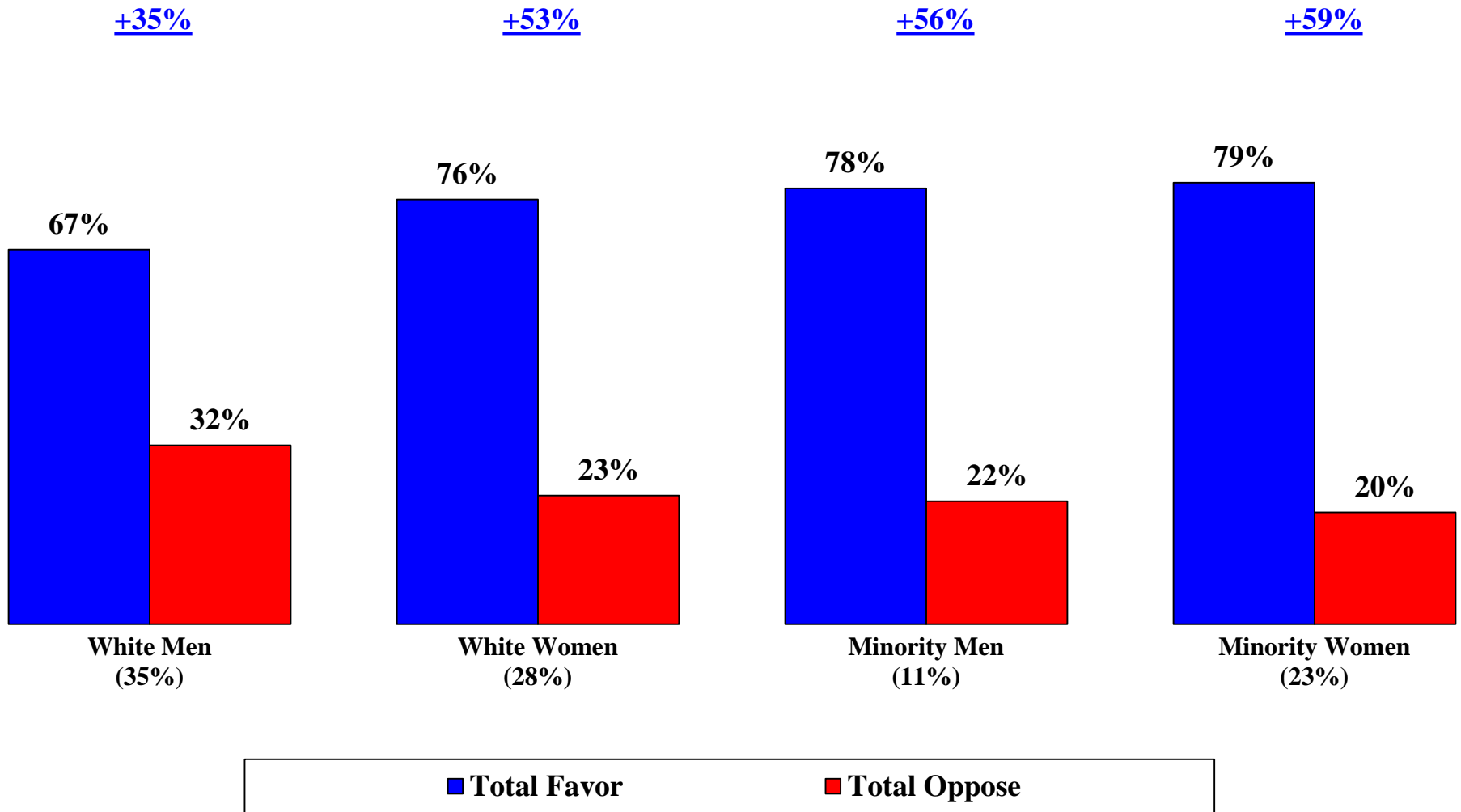
+24%

+54%



Whites and minorities of both genders overwhelmingly support the increased tax.

Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By Ethnicity/Gender



Moderate whites are the most likely to favor the tax increase. Significant numbers of both conservative and liberal whites also support the hike.

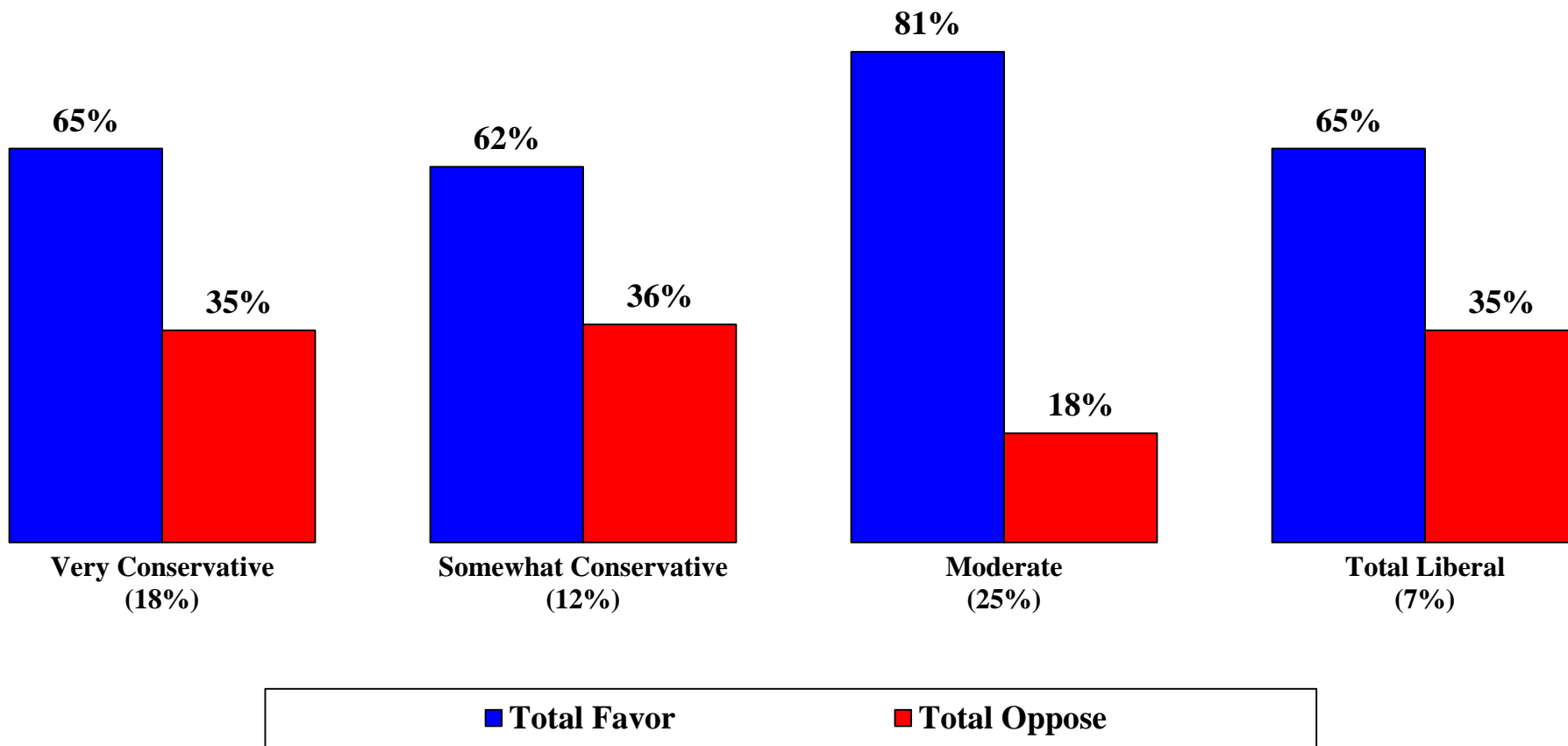
Increase \$1.25 Per Pack Tax By White Ideology

+30%

+26%

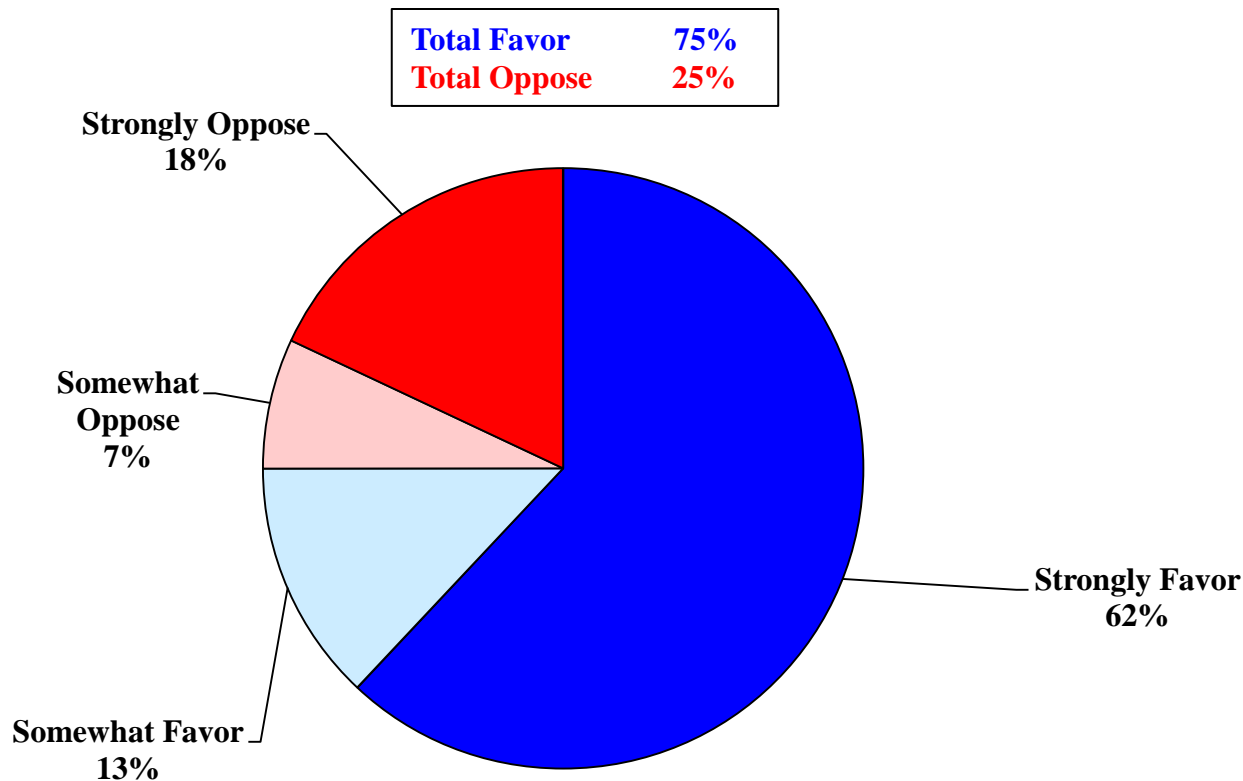
+63%

+30%



Louisianans also strongly favor the increased tax on non-cigarette tobacco products.

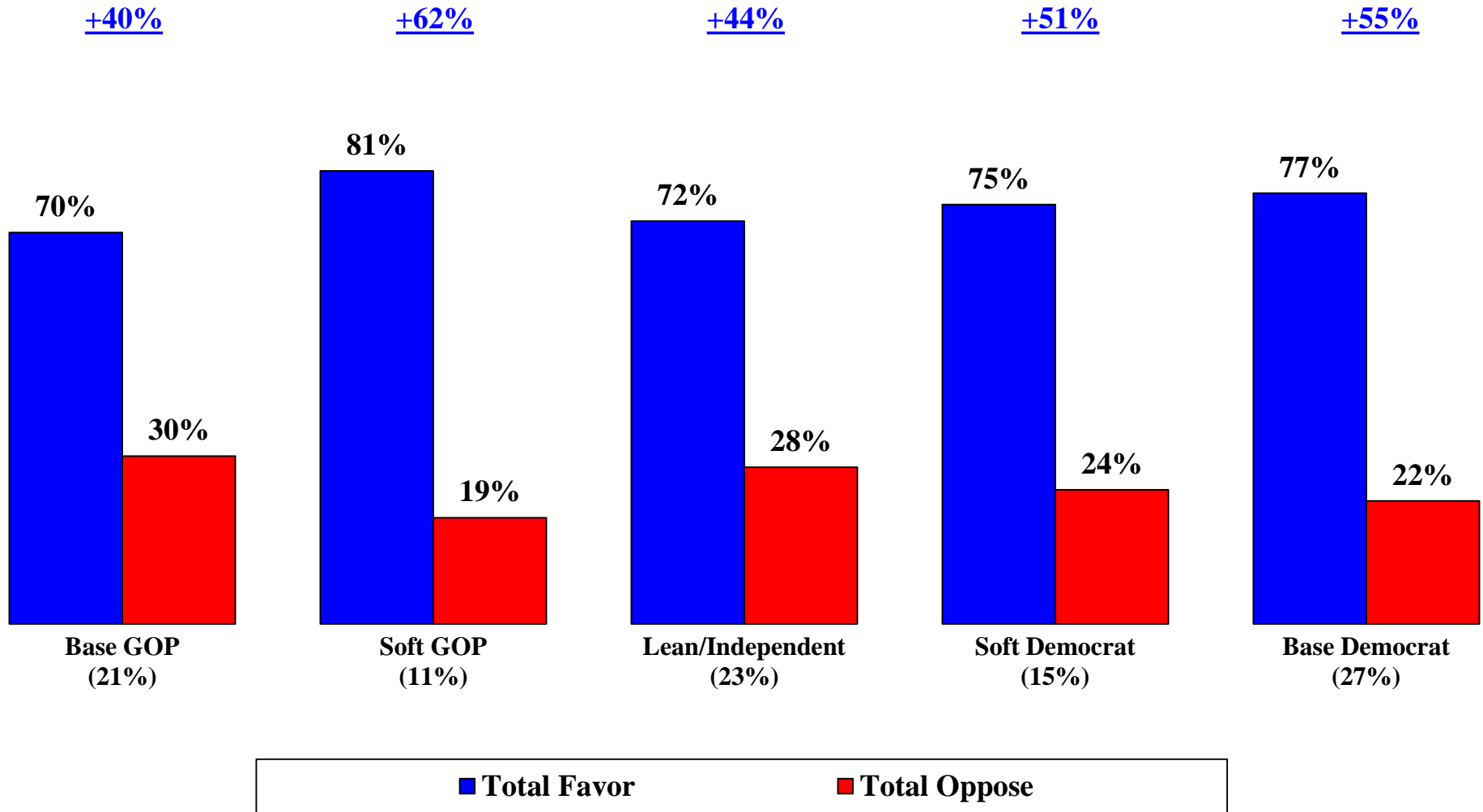
“Would you favor or oppose increasing the tax on non-cigarette tobacco products, including cigars, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco, at the same rate as the increase in the cigarette tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”



**Denotes Rounding*

Both GOPers and Dems support an increased tax on non-cigarette tobacco products.

Tax on Non-cigarette Tobacco By Party



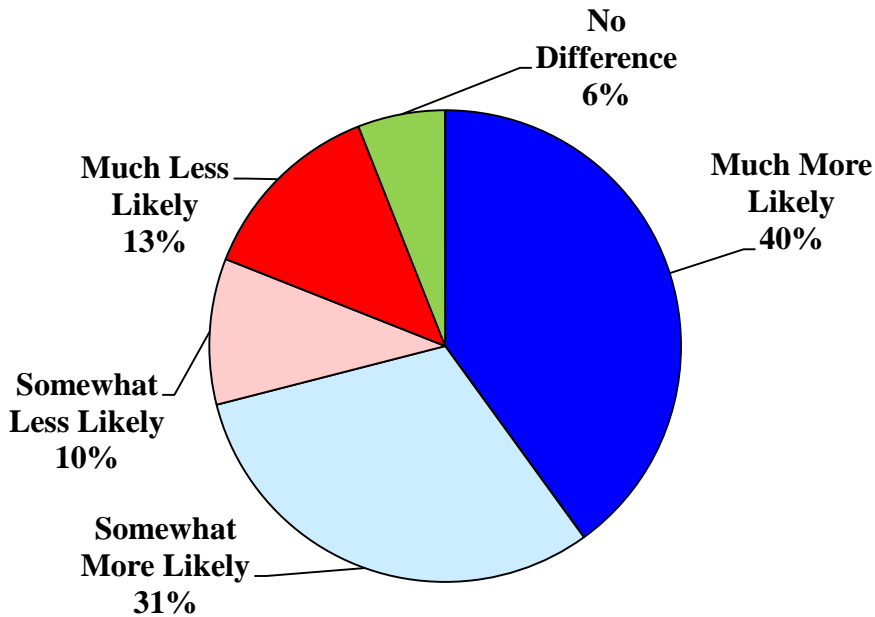


Vote Impact

Supporting a \$1.25 tobacco tax increase is also good politics.

“Would you be more likely or less likely to support a candidate for political office here in Louisiana if they SUPPORTED a one dollar and twenty-five cent per pack increase in the state tobacco tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”[^]

Total More Likely	71%
Total Less Likely	23%

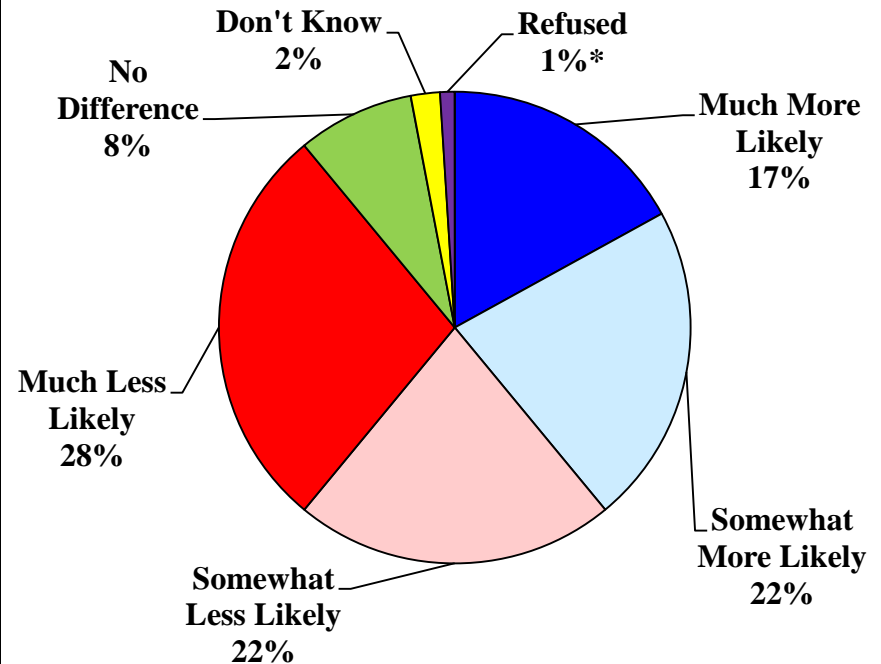


**Denotes Rounding*

[^] Sample A - N=249

“Would you be more likely or less likely to support a candidate for political office here in Louisiana if they OPPOSED one dollar and twenty-five cent per pack in the state tobacco tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”^{^^}

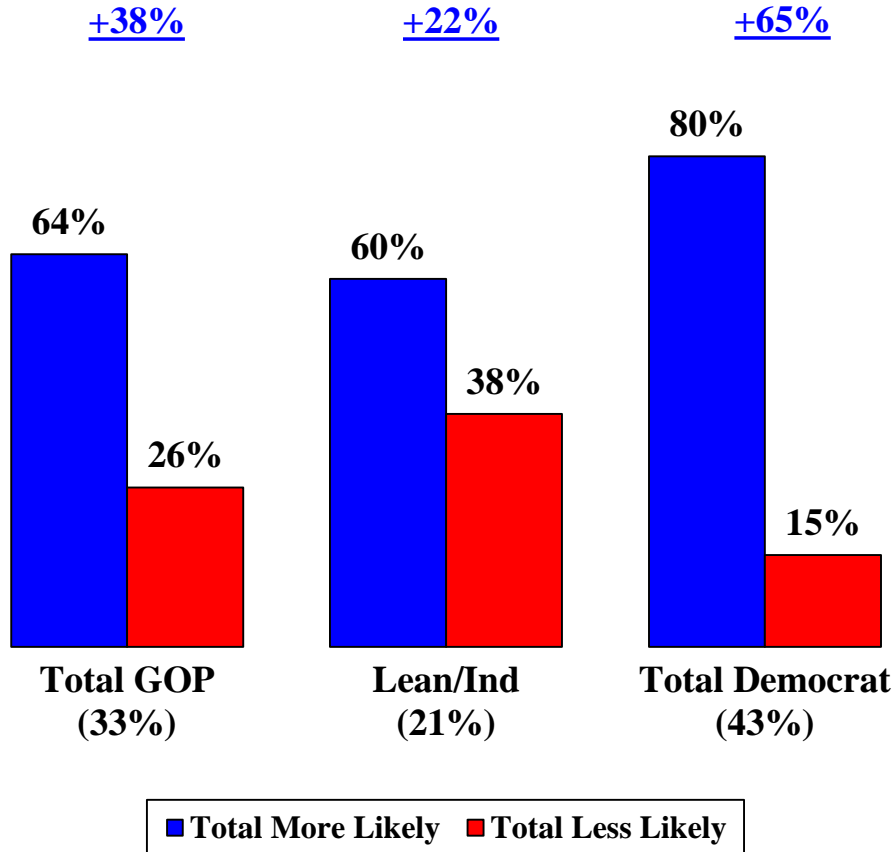
Total More Likely	39%
Total Less Likely	50%



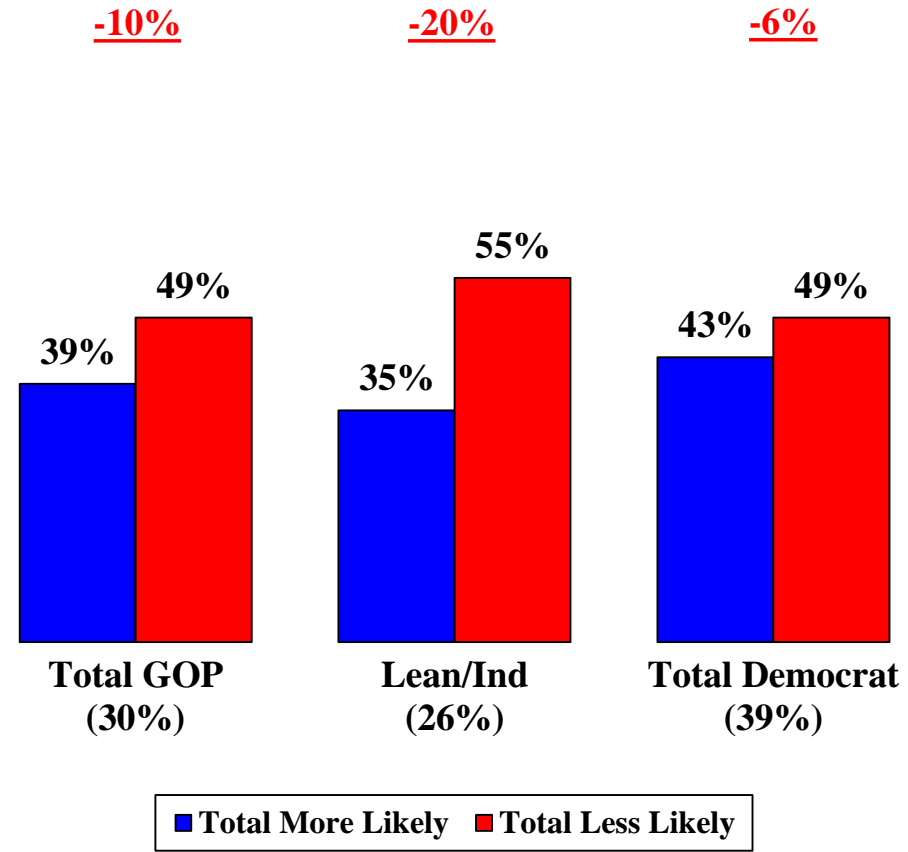
^{^^} Sample B - N=251

Voters across party lines are much more likely to support a candidate who favors the tax increase.

“Would you be more likely or less likely to support a candidate for political office here in Louisiana if they SUPPORTED a one dollar and twenty-five cent per pack increase in the state tobacco tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”



“Would you be more likely or less likely to support a candidate for political office here in Louisiana if they OPPOSED one dollar and twenty-five cent per pack in the state tobacco tax, with the revenue dedicated to closing the state budget shortfall and increasing funding for health programs and education programs?”





Bottom Line

THE BOTTOM LINE

Louisianans unreservedly support increasing the state tobacco tax. There is no statistical difference in backing for a \$1.00 per pack increase, a \$1.25 increase, or a \$1.50 increase.

Just as importantly, support crosses all political and demographic lines. Two-thirds of base Republicans back a \$1.25 per pack increase, as do 80% of base Democrats. Support is higher than two-thirds in all regions of the state. Support is in the 70%+ range for both whites and African Americans. Even 61% of smokers and 56% of strong supporters of the Tea Party back a \$1.25 increase.

Support is also high for increasing the tax on non-cigarette tobacco products, including cigars, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco.

Voters in Louisiana have become quite pessimistic about the direction of the state, and they are quite concerned with the revenue shortfall for the state budget. While voters say they prefer spending cuts to deal with the shortfall, when we test different potential cuts, there is limited support for cuts in only one area (food stamp programs), and strong opposition to other specific cuts to health care, college scholarships, road improvements, and the Department of Children and Family Services.

There is strong support for both increasing the tobacco tax and increasing the alcohol tax. Supporting a \$1.25 tobacco tax increase is also good politics, as 71% of voters say they are more likely to back a candidate who supports it.

These data on the support for increasing the tobacco tax and on the positive political impact on supporting an increase are consistent to what we have measured in many other states. Increasing the tobacco tax is supported across partisan lines everywhere we test it.

**For more information about this presentation or about
Public Opinion Strategies, please give us a call.**

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Turning Questions Into Answers



**PUBLIC OPINION
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