

July 2024

# Transgender Freedom Alliance Transgender Youth Issues Survey

Findings and Recommendations from an Online Survey of 2024  
Likely General Election Voters Nationwide

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# Methodology



Impact Research conducted an online and text-to-web survey of likely 2024 General Election voters nationwide.



The sample includes a total of N=1000 responses nationwide with N=200 oversamples each of Black and Latino voters. 50% of interviews were conducted by text-to-web, and 50% were via an online panel.



Interviews were conducted between June 20<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024.



The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

# Target Group Definitions

41% of voters shift away from supporting at least one of these issue throughout this survey.

## Generic Ballot Persuadable

19% of voters

Likely voters who are not supporting a Democrat or a Republican in a **generic legislative ballot.**

## Forced Outings Support Loss

20% of voters

Likely voters who **are initially supportive** of forced outings by teachers but **move after messaging.**

## Healthcare Ban Support Loss

15% of voters

Likely voters who **are initially supportive** of banning doctors from providing healthcare but **move after messaging.**

## Bathroom Ban Support Loss

13% of voters

Likely voters who **are initially supportive** of banning transgender people from using bathrooms that matches their identity but **move after messaging.**

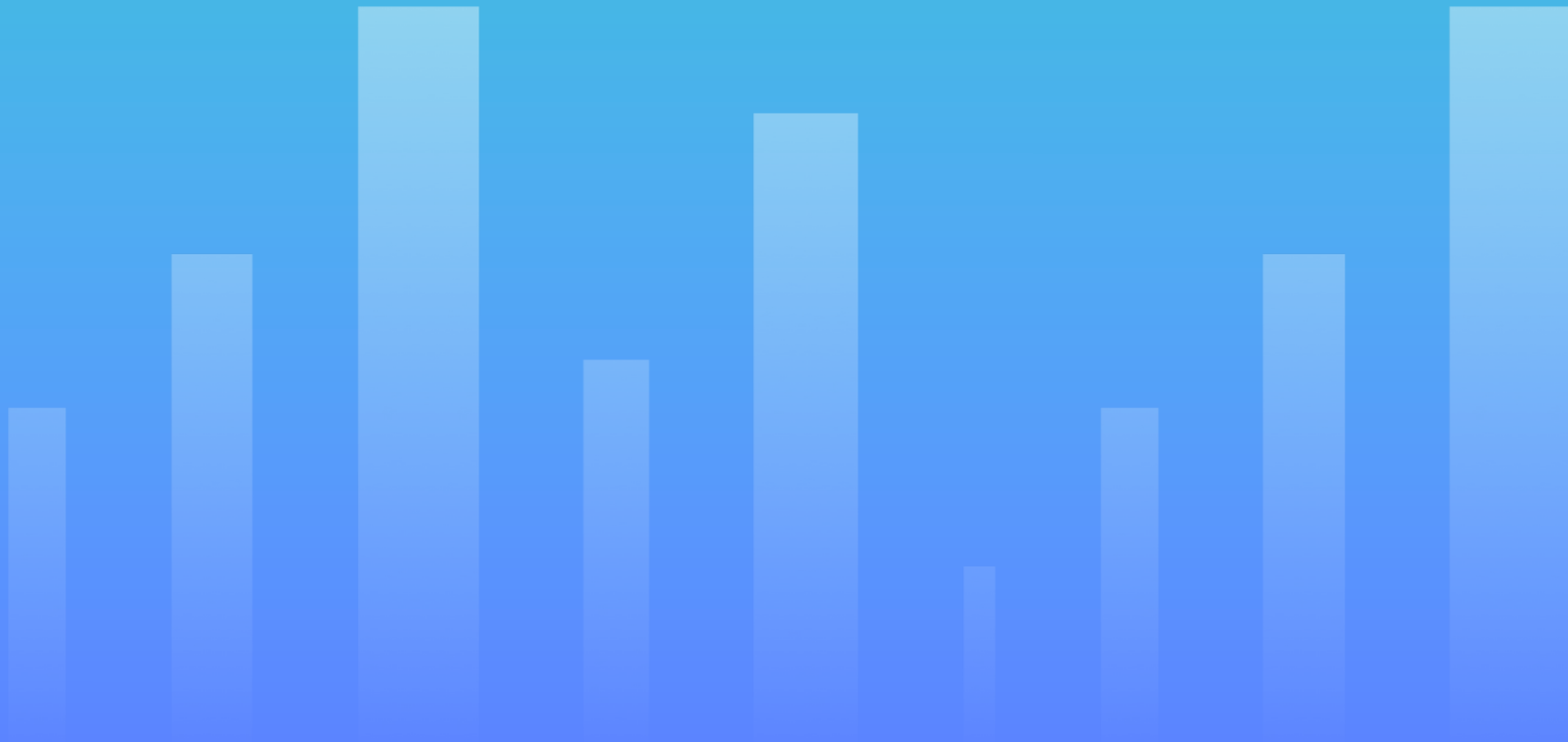
## Sports Ban Support Loss

15% of voters

Likely voters who **are initially supportive** of banning transgender people from playing on sports teams that matches their identity but **move after messaging.**



# ISSUE ENVIRONMENT

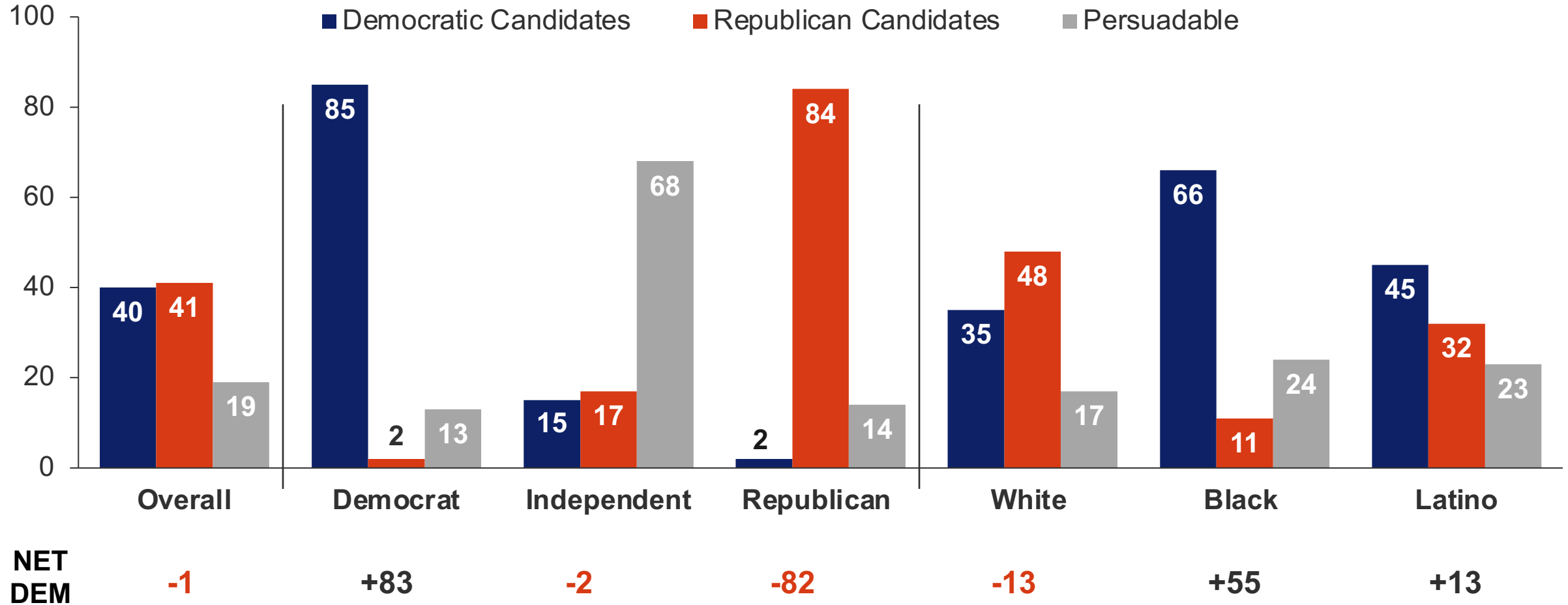


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# The political environment is competitive.

Support for a generic Democrat is stronger among voters of color.

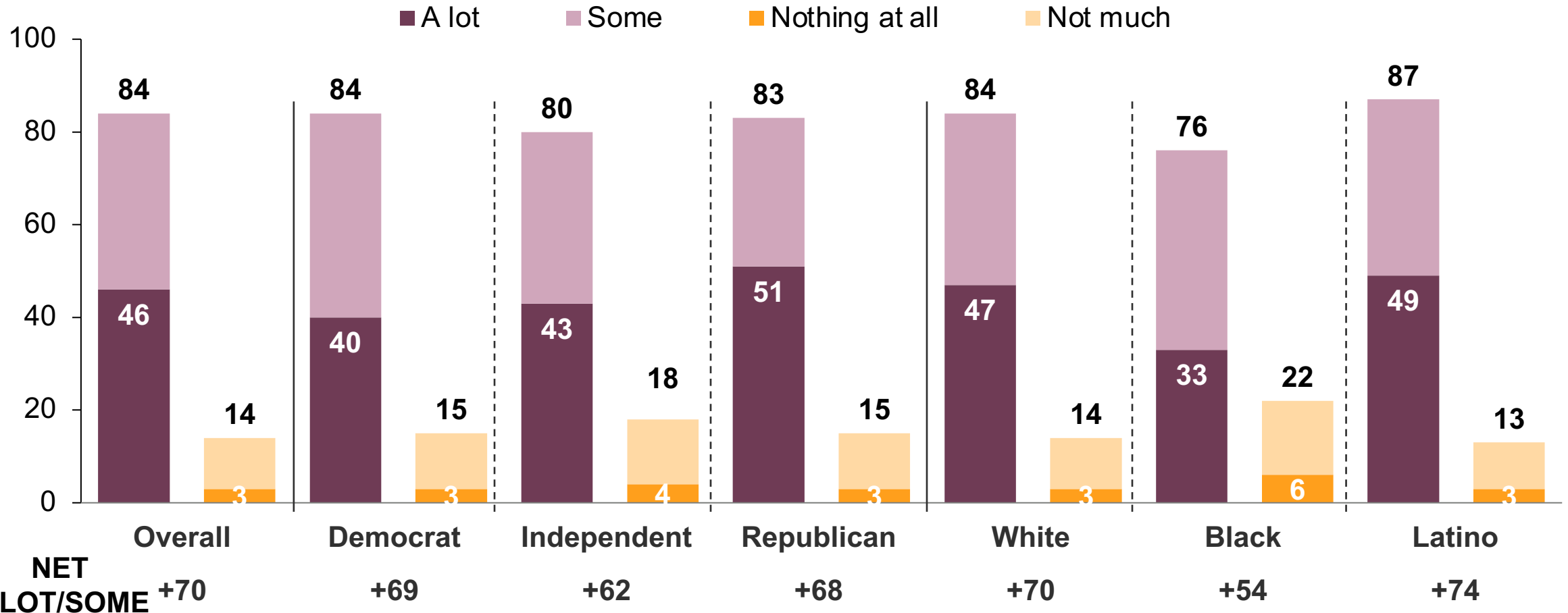
## GENERIC CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT



# A vast majority of voters have seen, read or heard about transgender issues, and nearly half say they've heard "a lot."

Black voters are a little less tuned in, but still over three quarters have heard a lot or some.

*How much have you seen, read or heard about transgender issues recently?*



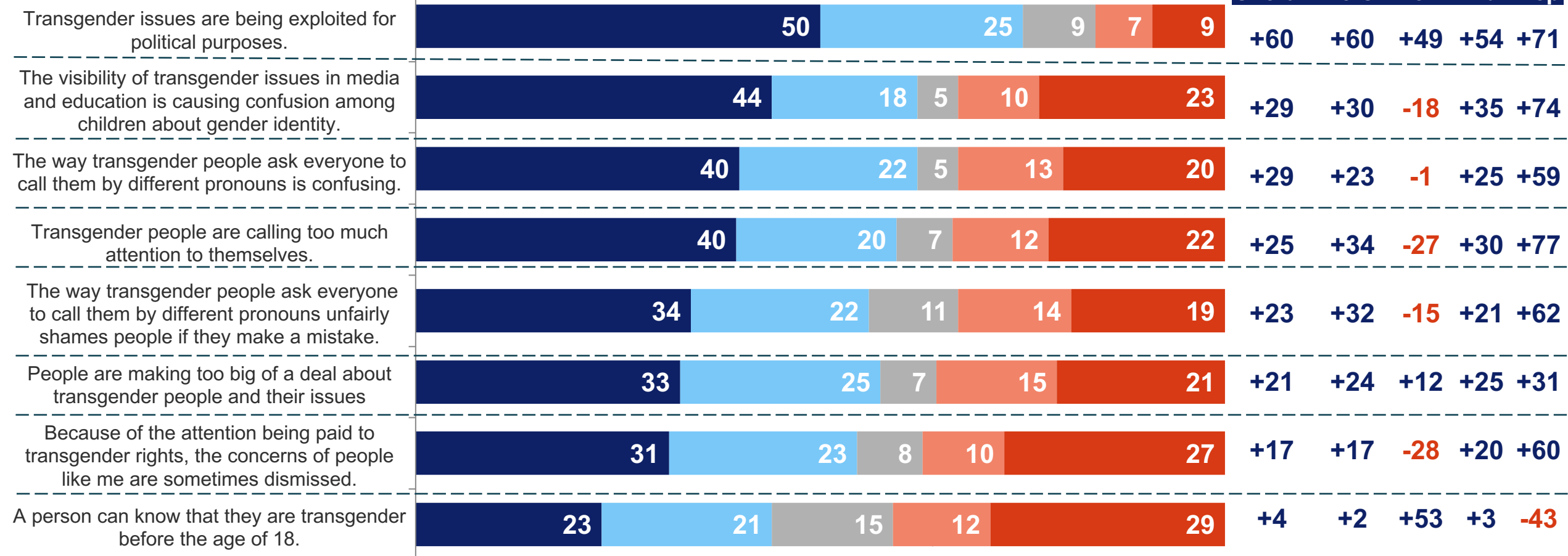
# Voters across party lines overwhelmingly believe that transgender issues are being exploited for political purposes, and that people are making too big a deal of these issues.

By only a 4-point margin voters believe that a person can know they are transgender before the age of 18.

## STATEMENTS ON TRANSGENDER ISSUES

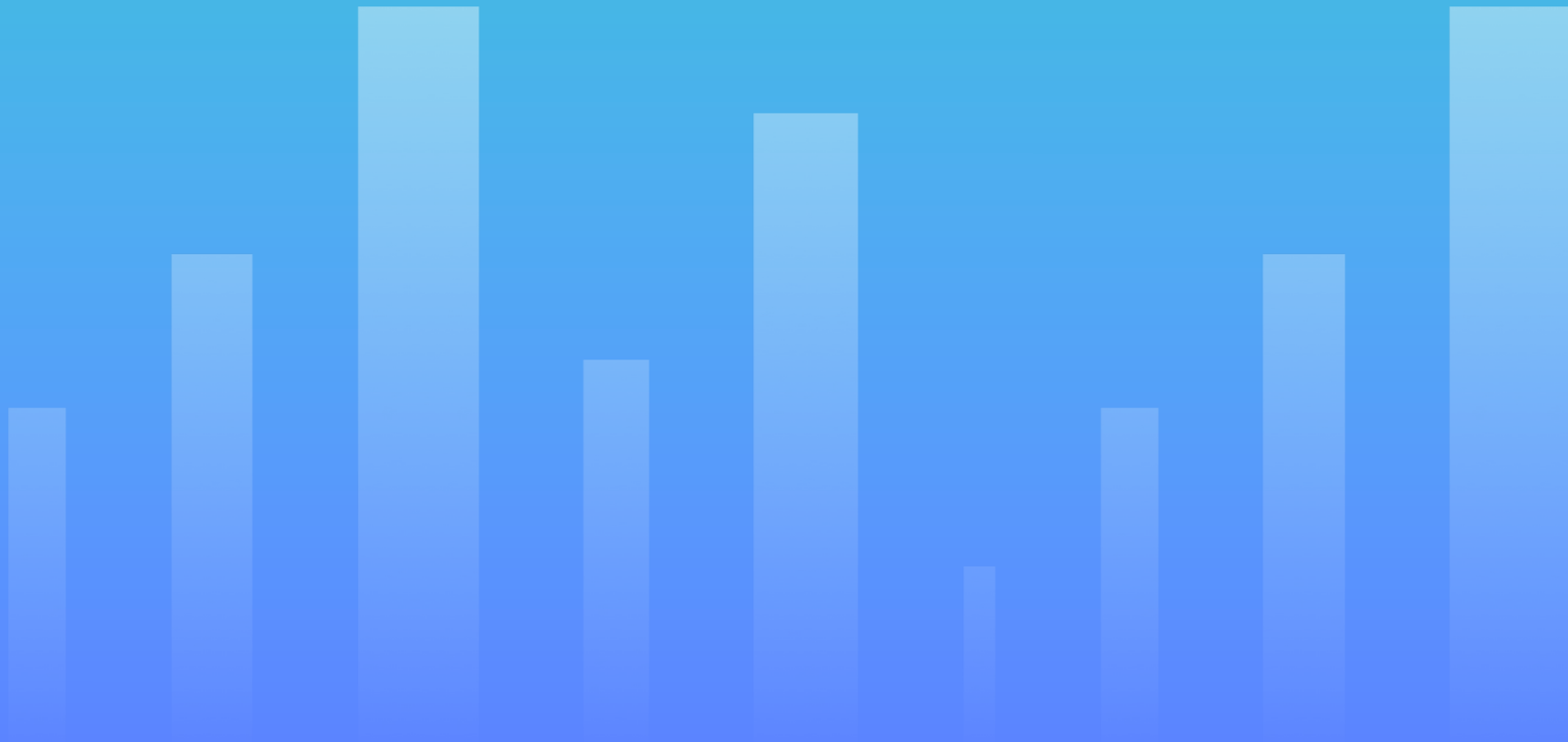
■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Not sure ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

NET AGREE  
GB  
Overall Pers. Dem Ind Rep





# VIEWS ON TRANSGENDER ISSUES



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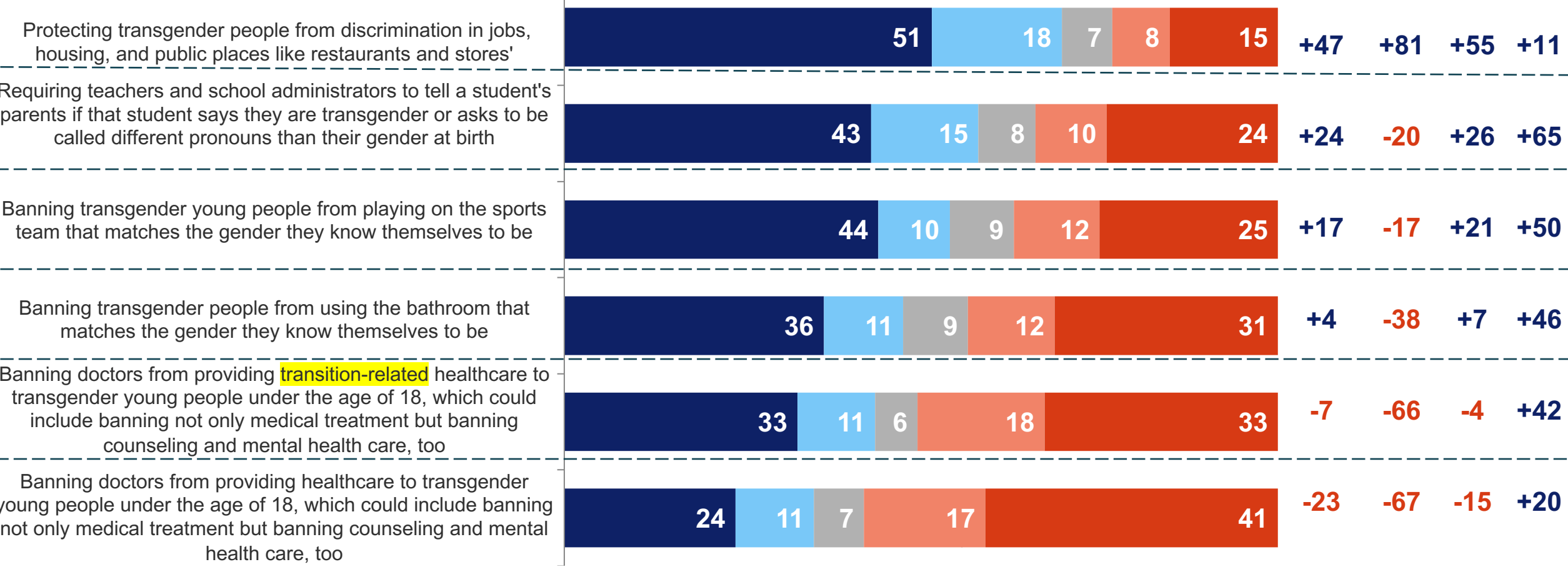
# Voters think transgender people should be protected from discrimination, but a majority also support forced outings and banning transgender young people from sports and bathrooms.

Voters nationwide – including Independents – oppose banning doctors from providing healthcare to transgender minors including transition care.

## TRANSGENDER ISSUES POLICY SUPPORT

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Not sure ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose

NET SUPPORT			
Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep



# Clarifying the ban would be on transition-related healthcare garners less opposition than a ban on healthcare more generally.

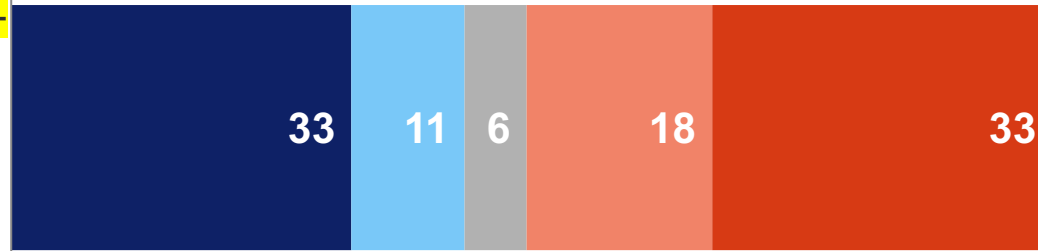
Republicans and women are particularly less likely to oppose the ban when it's addressing transition-related healthcare.

## TRANSGENDER ISSUES POLICY SUPPORT - HEALTHCARE

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Not sure ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose

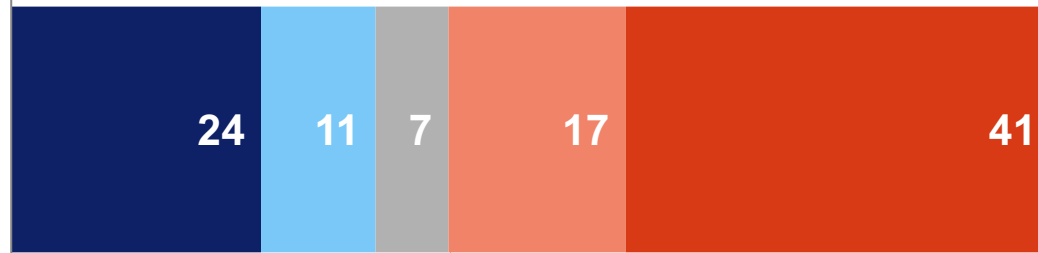
NET SUPPORT				
Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	Women

Banning doctors from providing **transition-related** healthcare to transgender young people under the age of 18, which could include banning not only medical treatment but banning counseling and mental health care, too



**-7**   **-66**   **-4**   **+42**   **-10**

Banning doctors from providing healthcare to transgender young people under the age of 18, which could include banning not only medical treatment but banning counseling and mental health care, too



**-23**   **-67**   **-15**   **+20**   **-37**

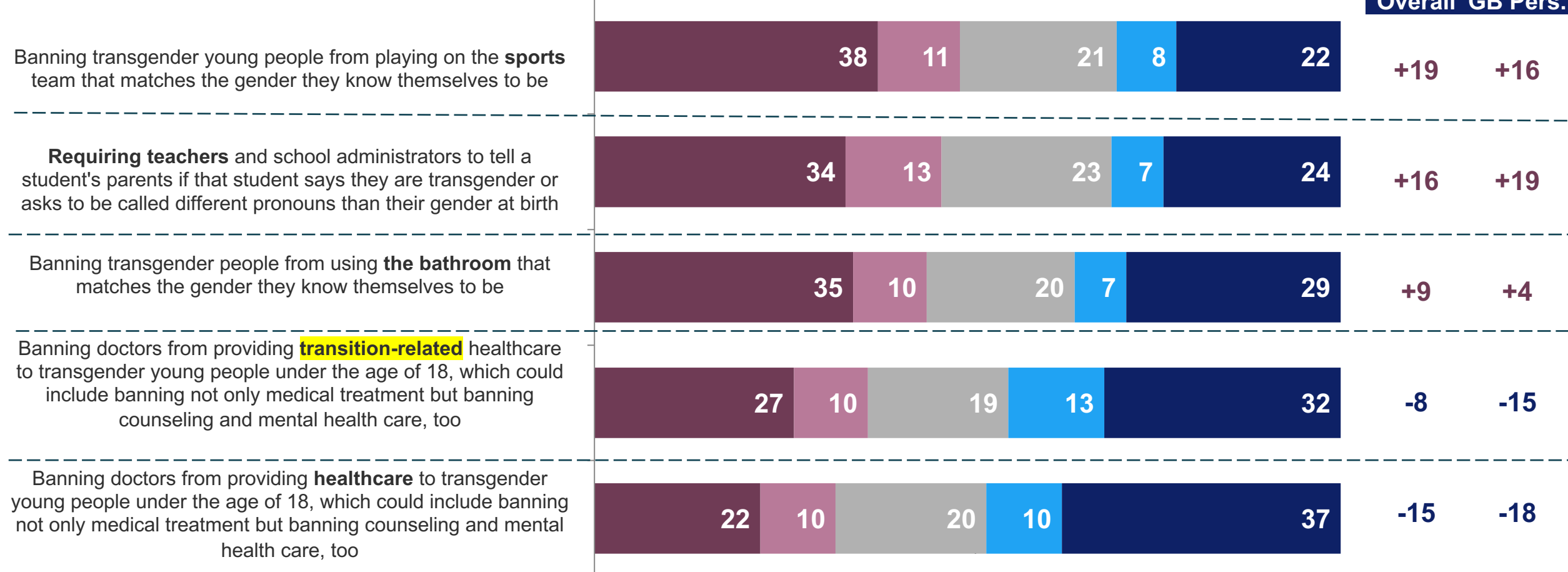
# Voters are also more inclined to support candidates if they are in favor of forced outings and sports or bathroom bans.

They're less supportive of candidates getting involved in healthcare decisions.

## CANDIDATE SUPPORT LIKELIHOOD

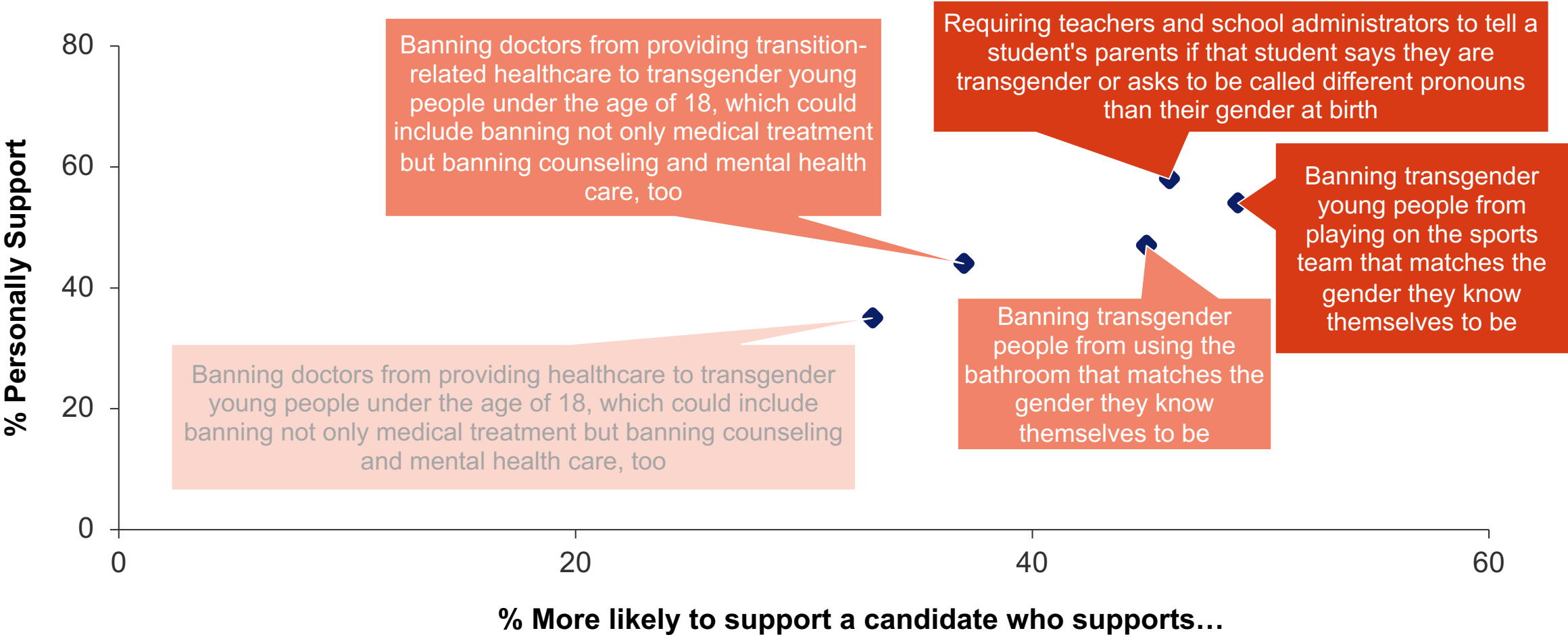
NET MORE  
Overall GB Pers.

■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ Much less likely ■ Somewhat less likely ■ No difference/Don't know



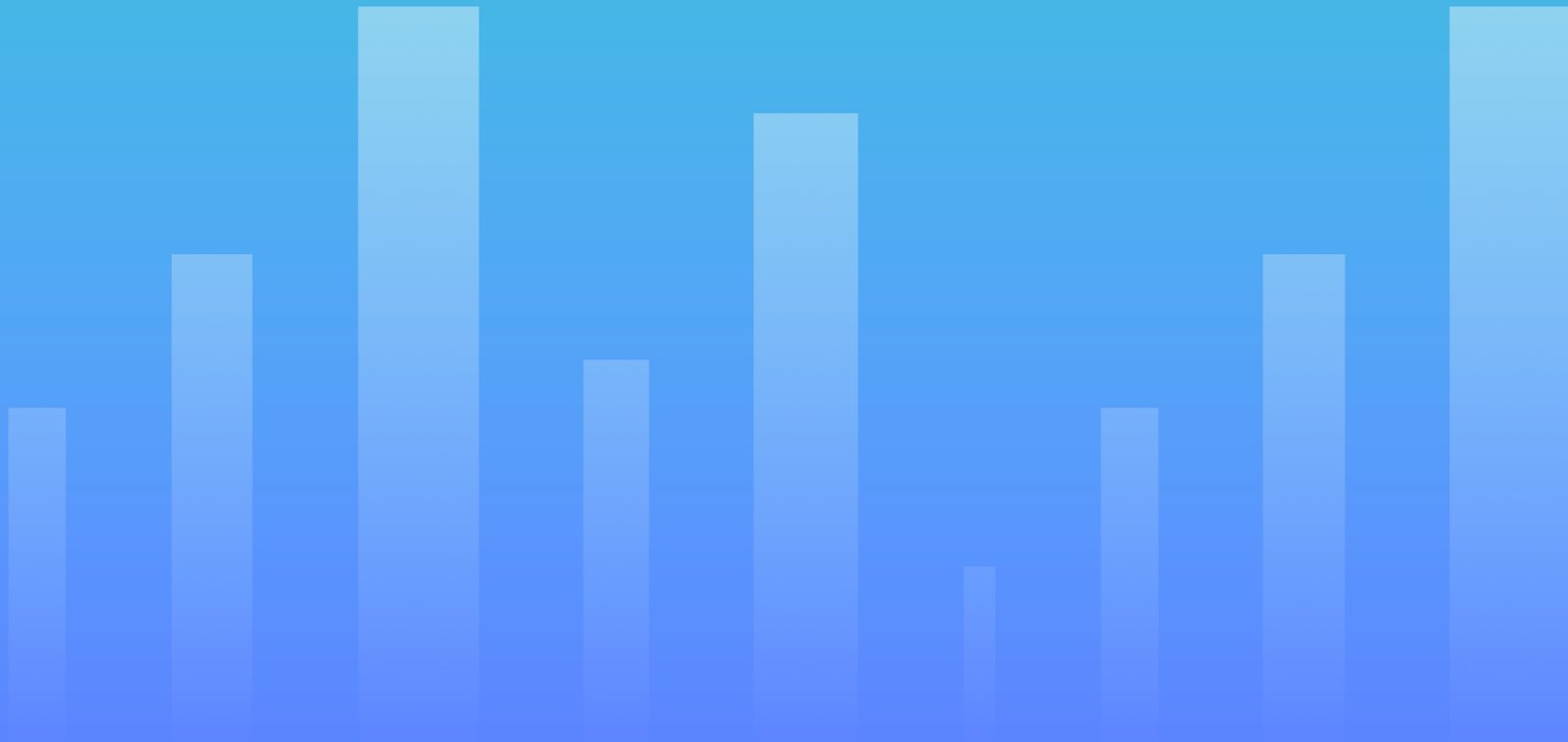
# Sports bans and forced outings are issues that voters both personally support and would be more supportive of a candidate for backing.

## TRANSGENDER YOUTH POLICIES





# MESSAGING ON FORCED OUTINGS



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# Consistent with our focus groups, messaging on forced outings that illustrates the danger transgender youth could face is most effective.

Secondarily, noting the burden this puts on teachers to risk outing a student in an unsupportive home environment is also strong.

Forced Outings Opposition Messaging <i>% Very Convincing</i>	Overall	GB Pers.	Forced Outing Support Loss	Ind	White	Black	Latin o
Not all kids live in homes where healthy communication happens, and some transgender teens are afraid of getting kicked out of their homes, beaten, or worse. We should not force teachers to knowingly put those kids in danger, and violate that trust they build with their students.	31	29	36	23	29	38	37
Most parents want to be informed and involved in their child's life, and parental involvement is what teachers and schools hope for too. But not all kids are safe at home, and this kind of blanket law that makes teachers and schools reveal personal information about students could put those kids in danger.	28	25	32	19	27	32	34
If this law passes, it opens the door to lawsuits against teachers and makes them legally responsible for sharing information about students' personal lives, regardless of the specifics of the situation.	24	25	31	23	23	31	28
Teachers and school administrators have a lot on their plates already. It's not right to put the responsibility of talking to parents about their kid's gender identity on them too.	22	20	23	19	20	33	35
Schools have already had rules in place for decades about what teachers should and should not share with parents. It's not helpful or necessary to add new laws making teachers talk to parents about their kid's gender identity.	17	17	23	13	18	24	19

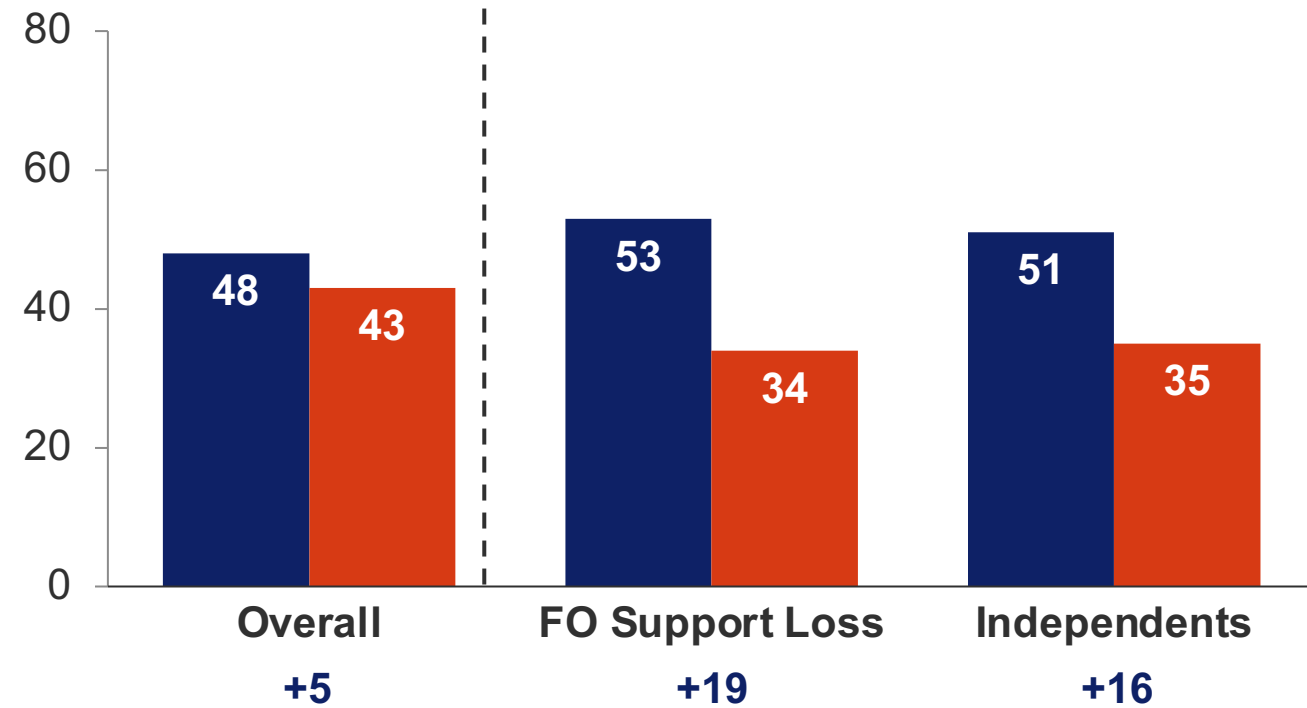
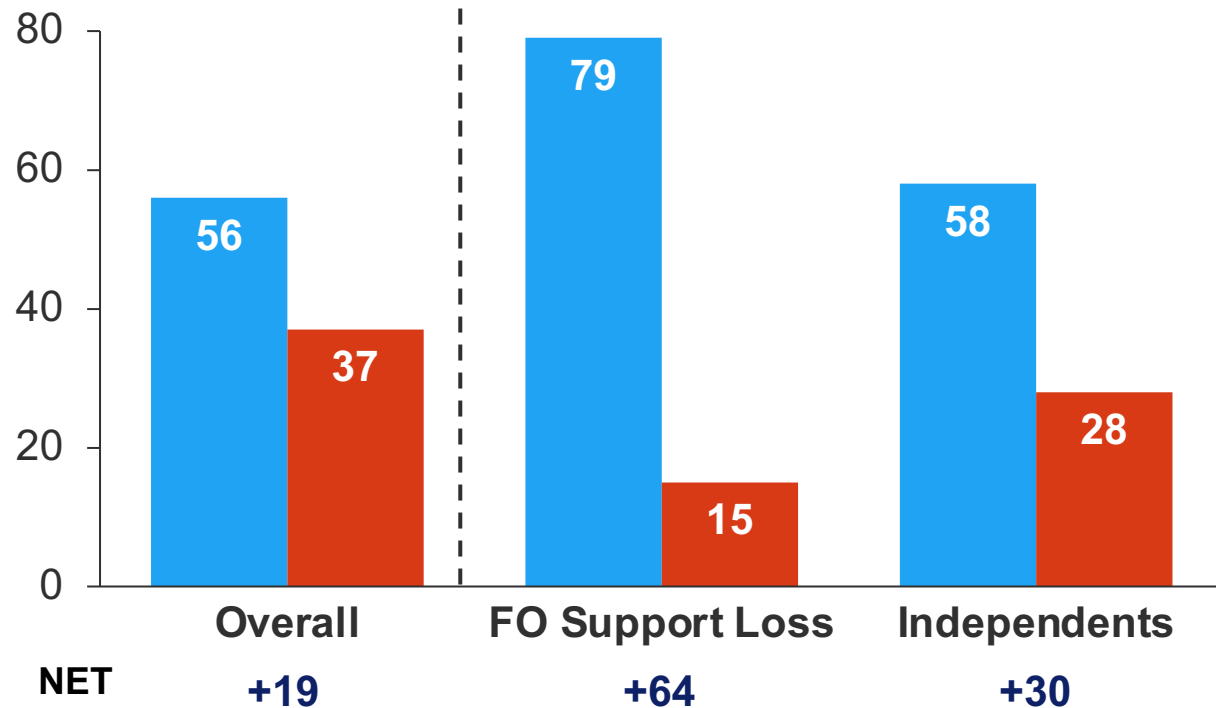
# However, pivoting to school funding and mental health resources is more persuasive than taking the question head on overall and among targets.

A candidate who says when it comes to schools, we need to make sure our schools are funded and every child has access to high quality education and the mental health resources they need - not pass more laws about transgender kids.

A candidate who says we need to pass laws in [STATE] that require teachers and school staff to notify parents if their child wants to be called by a different name or pronoun so that parents can help their child get the support they need.

A candidate who says not all children are safe at home, and instead of passing blanket laws, we need to trust teachers and school staff to prioritize making sure each child feels safe and supported at school.

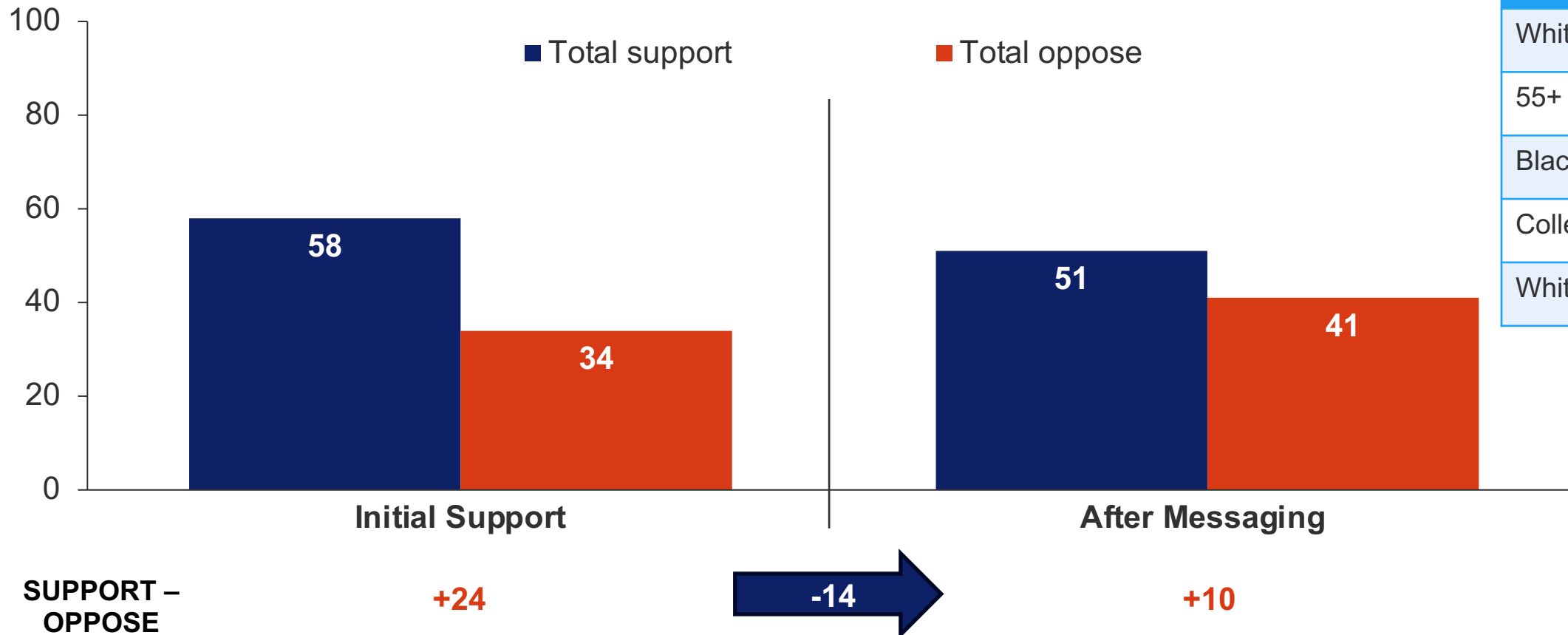
A candidate who says we need to pass laws in [STATE] that require teachers and school staff to notify parents if their child wants to be called by a different name or pronoun so that parents can help their child get the support they need.



# Although a majority of voters still support forced outings, messaging helps erode support by a net 14 points.

The most significant gains in opposition come from Democrats who consolidate after learning more.

## POLICY SUPPORT MOVEMENT: FORCED OUTINGS



### Biggest Gains in Opposition to Bans

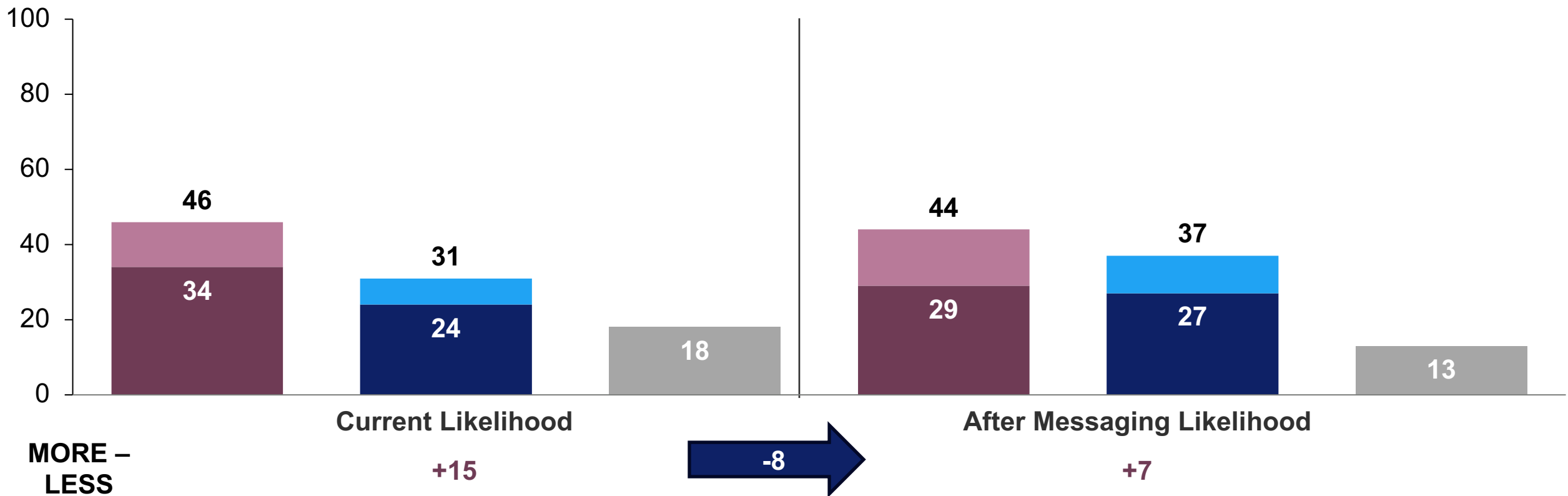
White Dem women	+18
55+ Dem	+17
Black Dem men	+17
College grad women	+16
White Liberal	+15



# We also see a 6-point increase in voters who would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports forced outings.

## CANDIDATE SUPPORT MOVEMENT: FORCED OUTINGS

■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ Much less likely ■ Somewhat less likely ■ No difference





# MESSAGING ON HEALTHCARE FOR TRANSGENDER YOUTH



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# The top message against healthcare bans focuses on unintended consequences like banning young people from accessing mental health care.

Among those who move towards us, a message on politicians getting in the way of doctors has some strength as well.

Healthcare Ban Messaging Frames <i>% Very Convincing</i>	Overall	GB Pers.	HC Ban Support Loss	Ind	White	Black	Latin o
Banning doctors from providing healthcare to transgender youth would have serious unintended consequences - including banning young people from accessing mental health and counseling to help them with what they're going through and help them understand who they are.	30	24	21	23	29	36	36
The decision to seek medical transition care or gender affirming care is not something that anyone - whether young OR a legal adult - is able to rush into. The expert medical standards require months of screening, doctor's visits and counseling sessions before any sort of medical care begins and there are opportunities to stop and reverse treatments at any point. It would be impossible for a person to decide they want to transition one day and make an irreversible decision the next.	29	29	20	28	29	29	31
With these blanket bans, some politicians are getting in the way of doctors, who have years of training and experience and are trying to practice according to professional standards of care and what they know is best for their patients. This is their area of expertise, not politicians.	29	25	25	19	29	33	33
The number of people who transition their gender and then change back or stop is very, very small, but it has happened. That's why the expert medical standards were updated two years ago, to ensure every patient has a thorough mental health care assessment to make sure whether transition is the right path for them.	24	25	19	21	22	31	29

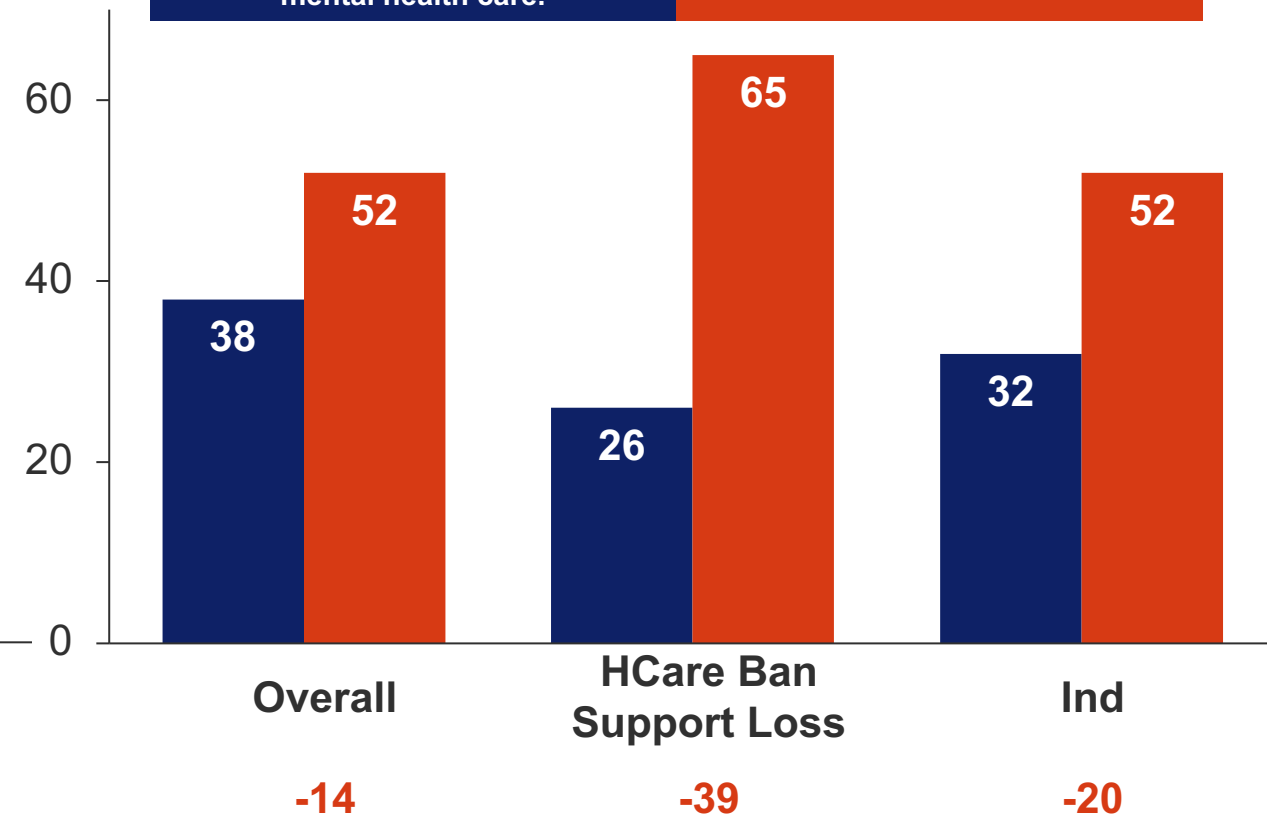
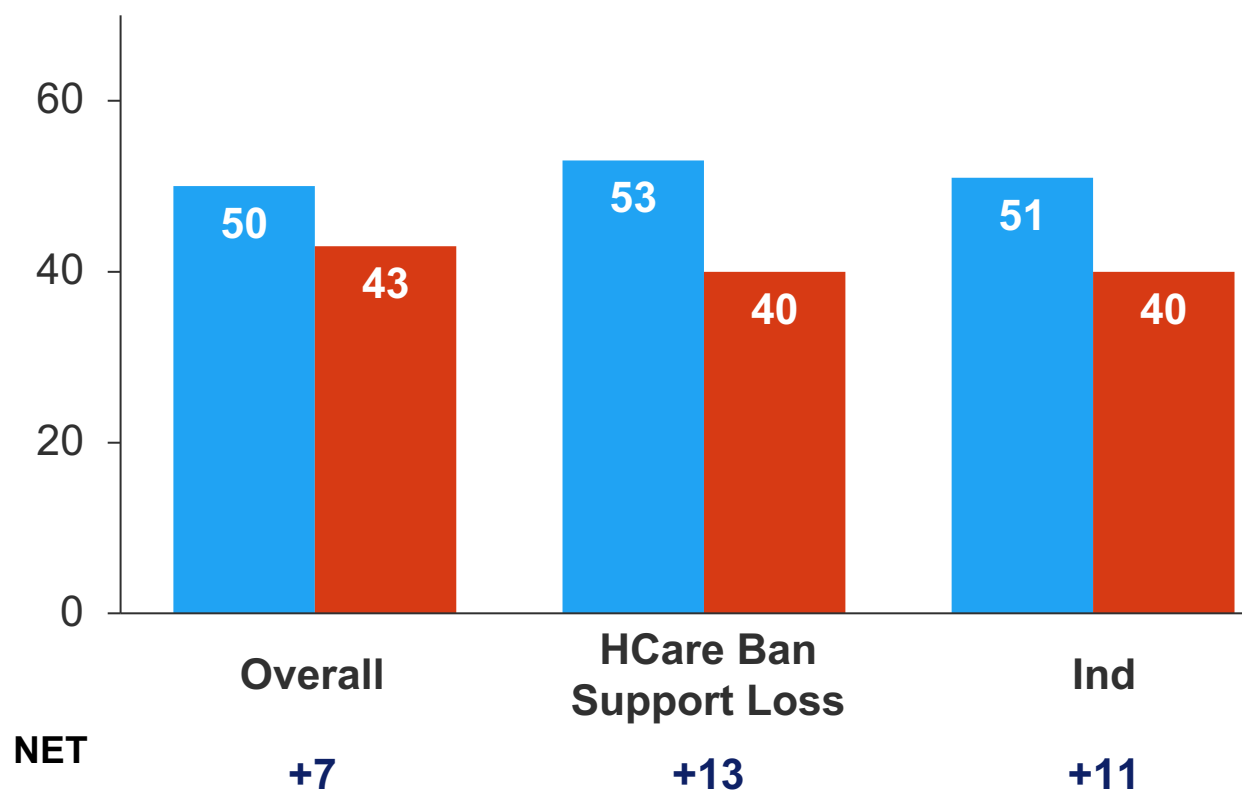
# Framing a candidate statement around parents and doctors knowing best, not politicians, does better than framing this debate around access to important care transgender youth need.

**A candidate who says that healthcare decisions for a young person who is transgender should be made by parents and doctors who know the situation best - not politicians.**

**A candidate who says that we need to pass laws in [STATE] to protect the safety of children and prevent kids from making life-altering decisions they may one day regret.**

**A candidate who says that these blanket bans on healthcare for transgender youth prevent transgender youth from accessing the important care they need - including safe and age-appropriate mental health care.**

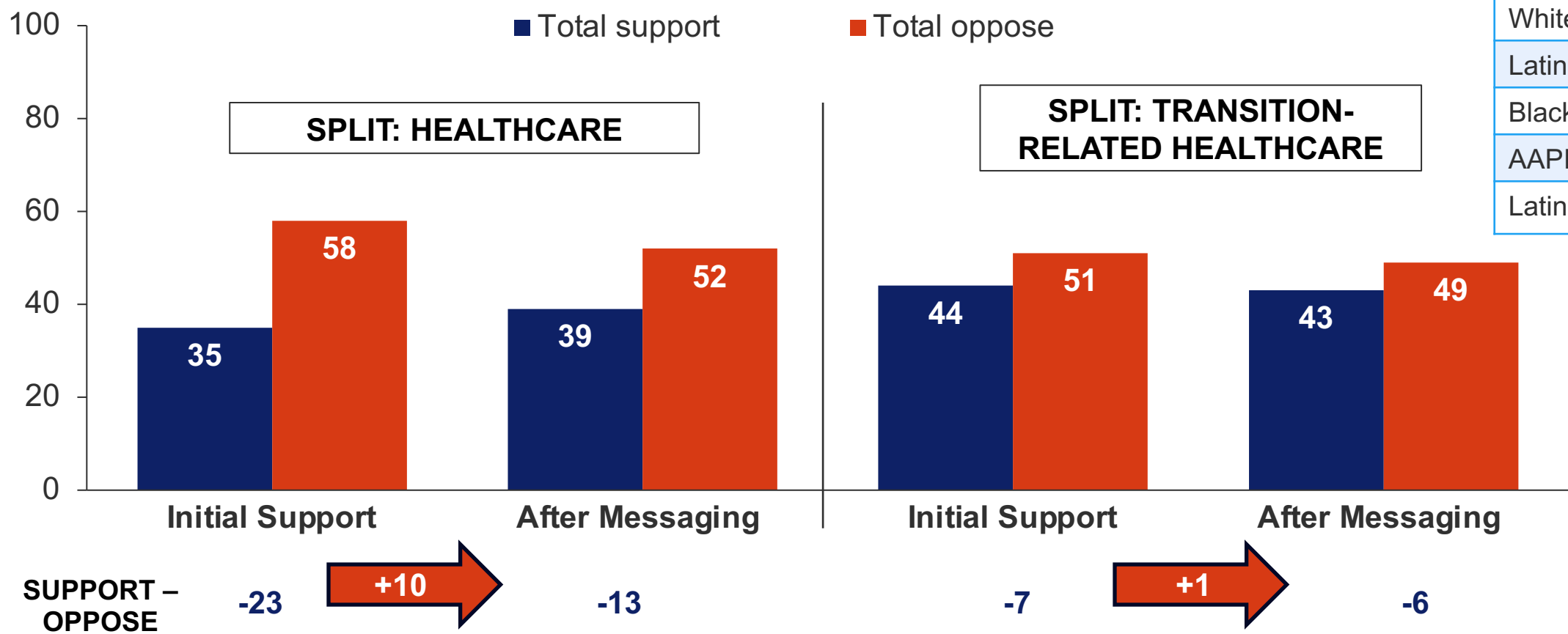
**A candidate who says that we need to pass laws in [STATE] to protect the safety of children and prevent kids from making life-altering decisions they may one day regret.**



# Those who did not hear the clarification on "transition-related healthcare" become more supportive of bans after messaging, suggesting confusion may have played a role in initial support.

Under the surface, we see gains in opposition among younger voters and voters of color.

## POLICY SUPPORT MOVEMENT: HEALTHCARE

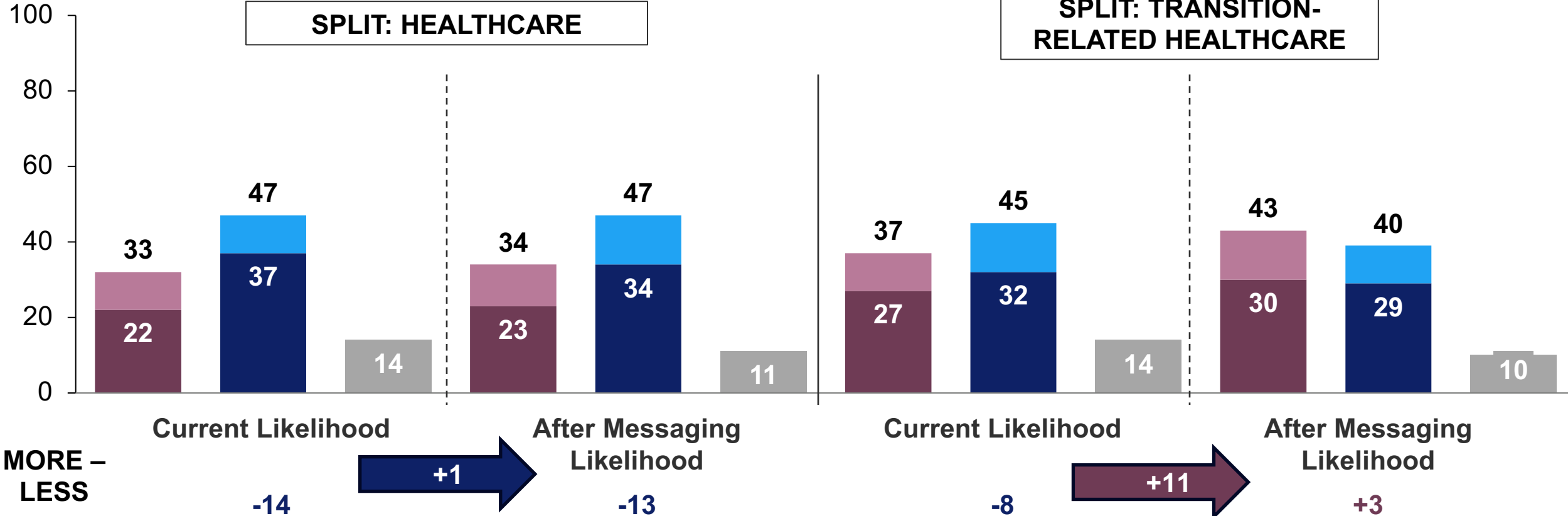


Biggest Gains in Opposition to Bans	
Black 35-49	+22
White 18-34	+16
Latino 50-64	+16
Black College Grad	+14
AAPI	+13
Latino College Grad	+13

# When we clarify that we're talking about transition-related healthcare, voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports bans, after messaging.

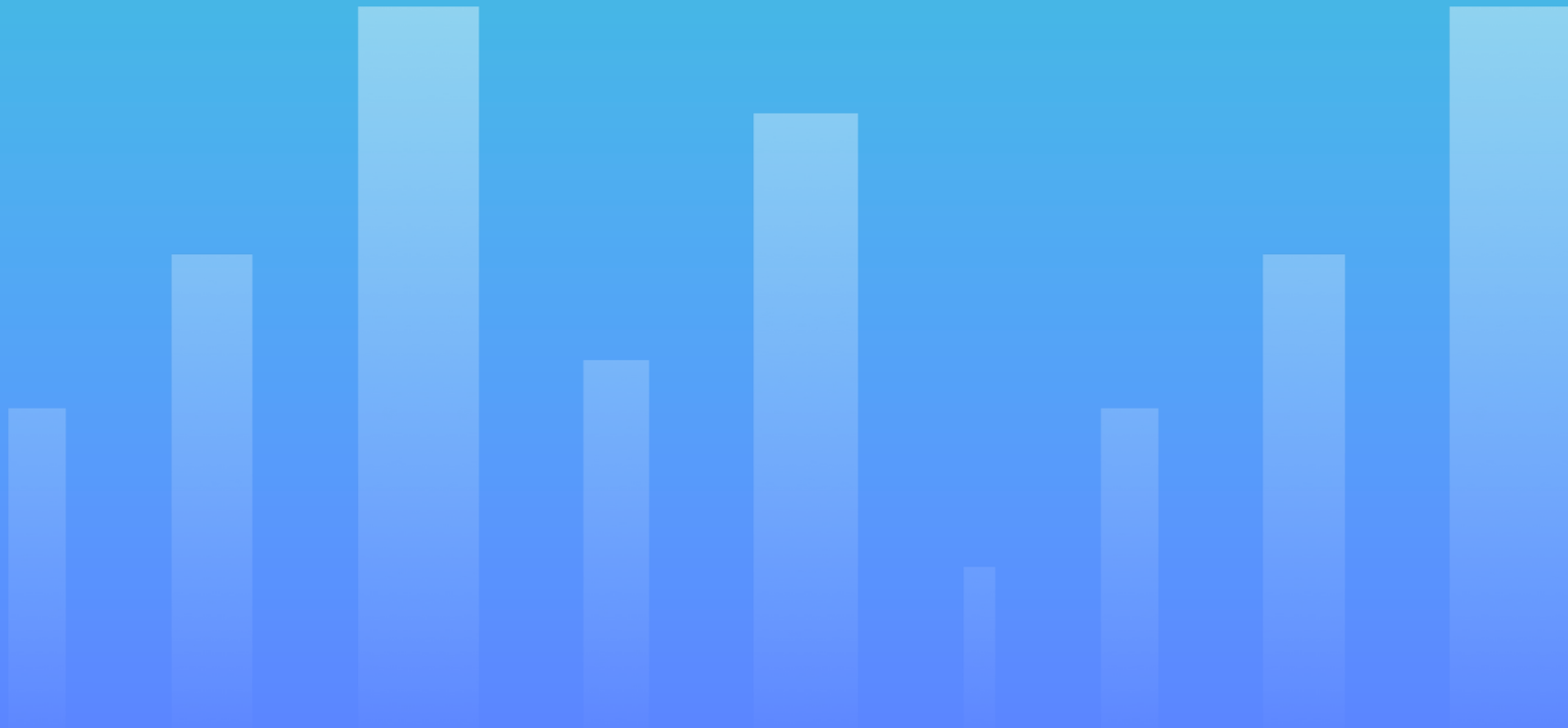
## CANDIDATE SUPPORT MOVEMENT: HEALTHCARE

■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ Much less likely ■ Somewhat less likely ■ No difference





# MESSAGING ON BATHROOM BANS



**IMPACT**  
RESEARCH

# The difficulty of enforcing bathroom bans is most compelling as a reason to oppose bans – but none of our messages stand out as particularly strong.

Bathroom Ban Messaging Frames <i>% Very Convincing</i>	Overall	GB Pers.	Bathroom Ban Support Loss	Ind	White	Black	Latin o
These bans will just create more confusion and are impossible to enforce. They would force transgender people who have already transitioned and look like the gender they transitioned to, to use the restroom of their birth gender - this will just cause more confusion and discomfort for everyone.	20	27	17	20	21	22	22
These bans won't solve problems, they'll just make new ones. Strangers would police who's using the restroom based on their hunch about whether someone is transgender, even if it's just someone who looks less stereotypically male or female. Unless we want to start having to show ID to go to the bathroom, this will just cause more confusion and discomfort for everyone.	20	16	15	13	20	22	22
Harassment and assault are illegal for anyone, in any setting. We don't need a new law trying to stop harassment when harassment is already illegal. Banning transgender people from using bathrooms that match their identity doesn't solve anything.	19	21	22	7	18	21	23



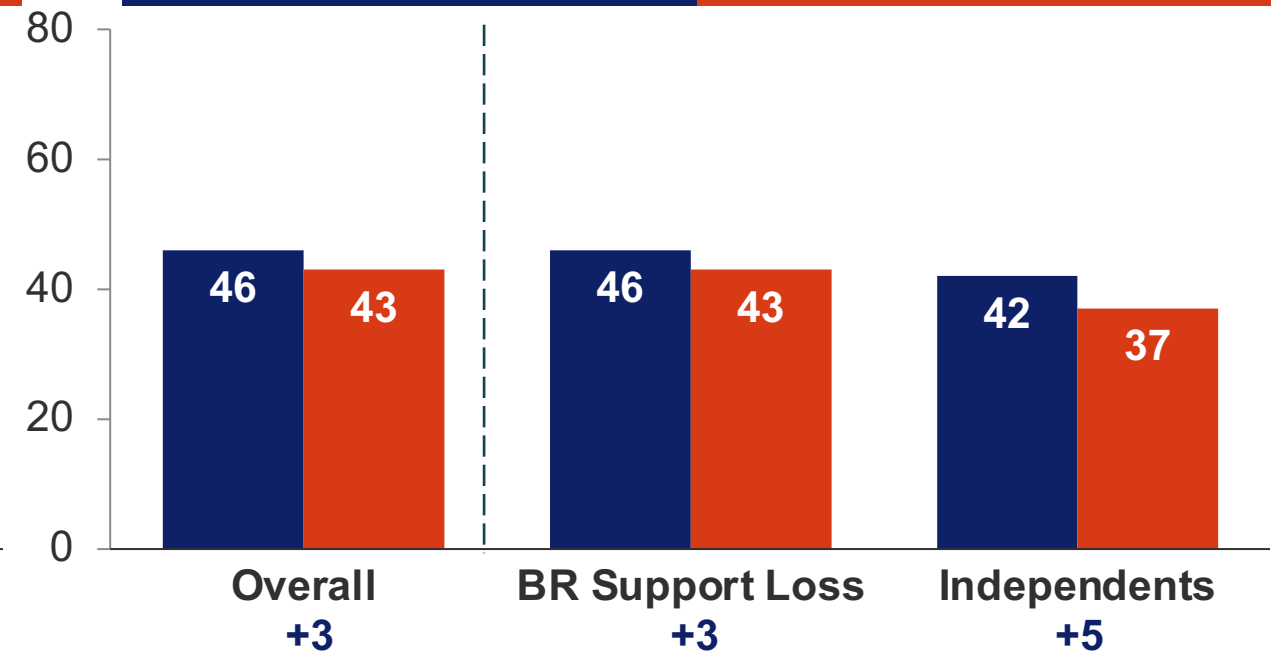
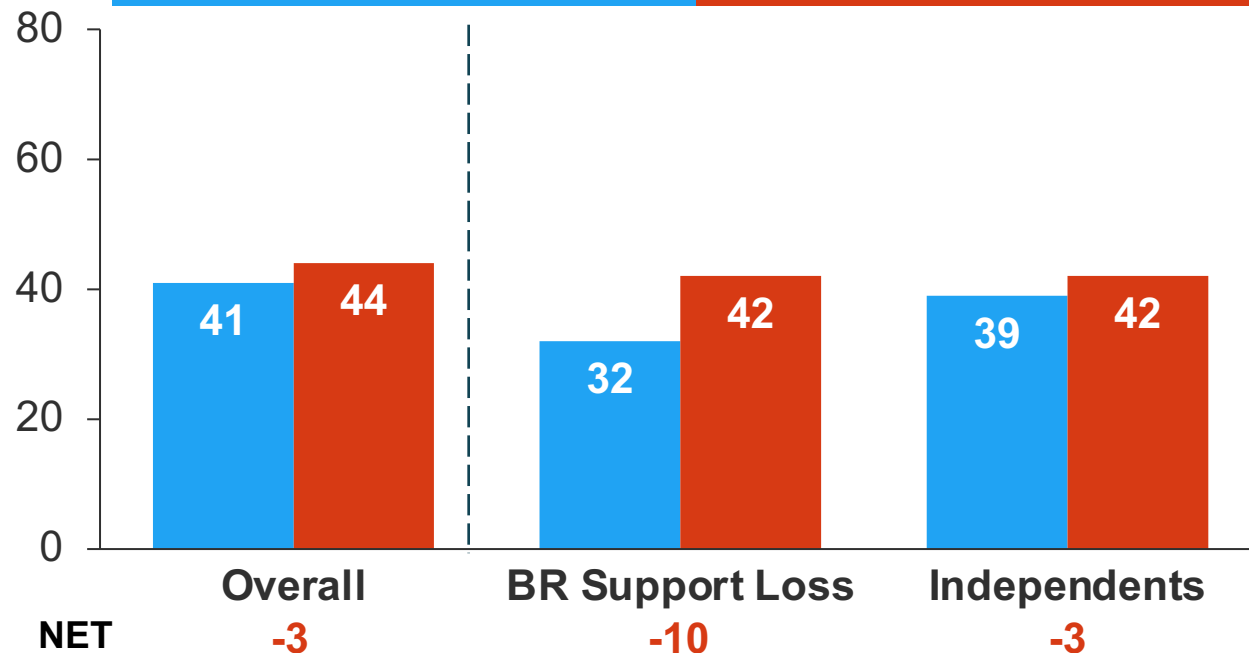
# A pivot to other issues does better than talking about enforcement issues with bathroom bans, overall and among persuasion targets.

A candidate who says that everyone deserves safety and privacy in bathrooms, but these one-size-fits all laws would force transgender people who have transitioned already to use the bathroom of their sex at birth, meaning transgender men would be required to use women's bathrooms.

A candidate who says we need to pass laws in [STATE] that require transgender people to use public bathrooms that match with their sex assigned at birth in order to keep people safe and prevent people with bad intentions from harassing people in bathrooms.

A candidate who says politicians are trying to make an issue out of transgender people using a bathroom to score political points and scare people. While they are focused on who is in what bathroom, we should be focused on lowering costs, addressing crime, and getting the economy back on track.

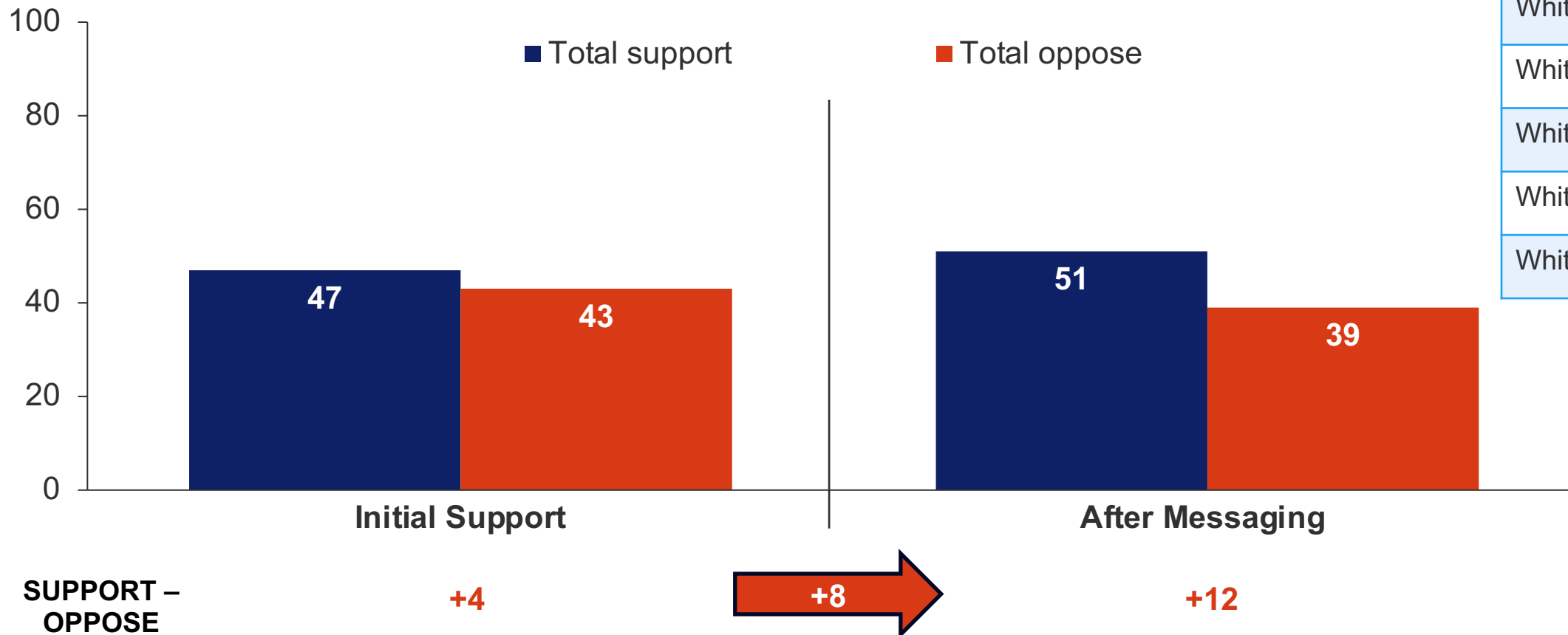
A candidate who says we need to pass laws in [STATE] that require transgender people to use public bathrooms that match with their sex assigned at birth in order to keep people safe and prevent people with bad intentions from harassing people in bathrooms.



# After messaging, support for bathroom bans increases. We do not want a prolonged debate on this issue.

Those who move towards us are primarily more moderate, college-educated, and male Democrats.

## POLICY SUPPORT MOVEMENT: BATHROOM BANS



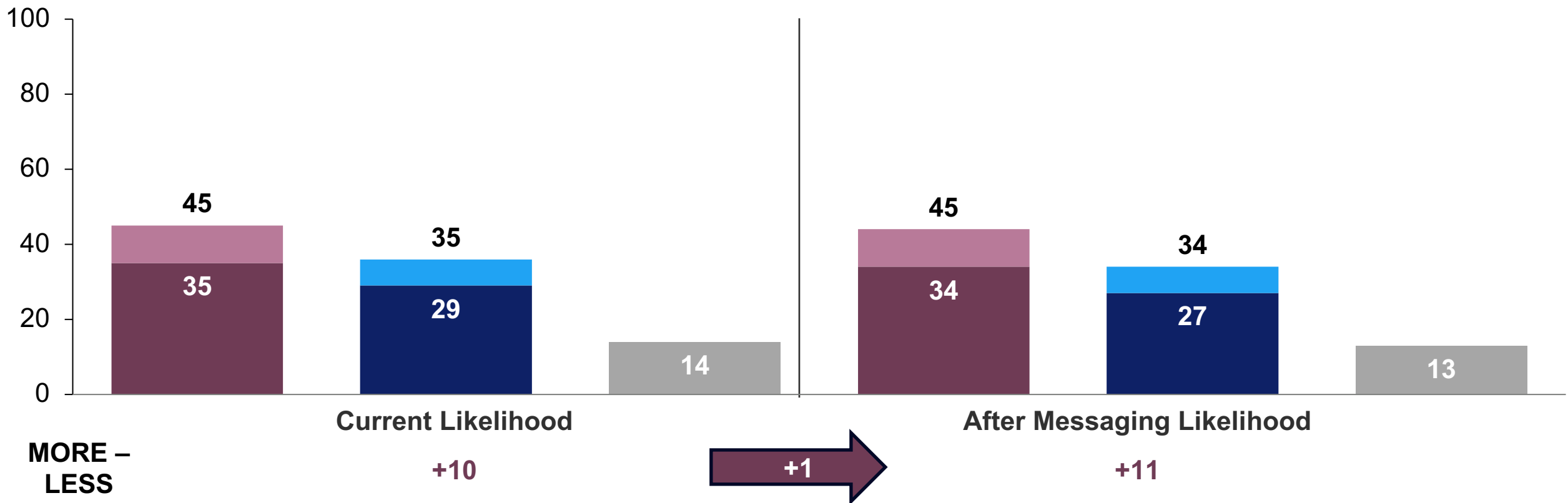
### Biggest Gains in Opposition to Bans

White College Dem	+8
White Dem <55	+7
White Mod/Cons Dem	+6
White Dem	+6
White Male Dem	+6

# Candidate support remains constant – with voters more likely to support a candidate who favors bathroom bans.

## CANDIDATE SUPPORT MOVEMENT: BATHROOM BANS

■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ Much less likely ■ Somewhat less likely ■ No difference





# MESSAGING ON TRANSGENDER YOUTH IN SPORTS



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# On sports, our most compelling messaging focuses on how parents, local schools, and sports associations should make these decisions – not politicians.

However, messaging against sports bans generally falls flat.

Sports Ban Messaging Frames <i>% Very Convincing</i>	Overall	GB Pers.	Sport Ban Support Loss	Ind	White	Black	Latin o
Most kids play sports to have fun with their friends, and to learn a lot of important life lessons - like leadership, confidence, self-respect, and teamwork. That's why we should trust parents, local schools, and sports associations who know what's best to set and update rules for eligibility - not blanket bans by politicians who don't know our circumstances or communities.	18	16	14	20	19	24	15
We all know that there are physical differences between boys and girls, especially when they get older. That's why local schools and sports associations across the nation are already updating rules about sports participation to ensure a level playing field while also protecting transgender kids. But politicians are trying to make blanket rules on these complicated issues to divide us and score points.	17	15	18	14	16	22	20
Different ages and different sports require different rules - some sports leagues are more serious, and some are more about having fun and learning teamwork. That's why we should trust local schools and athletic associations to make decisions about these rules, not politicians making a blanket law.	15	10	22	10	13	15	20
Some transgender athletes have already transitioned to the other gender - like someone born female who is already taking testosterone. A blanket ban that requires every transgender athlete to play with the gender of their birth is not fair to anyone - that's why these situations need to be judged on a case-by-case basis, rather than by a blanket law.	15	12	20	11	14	22	20

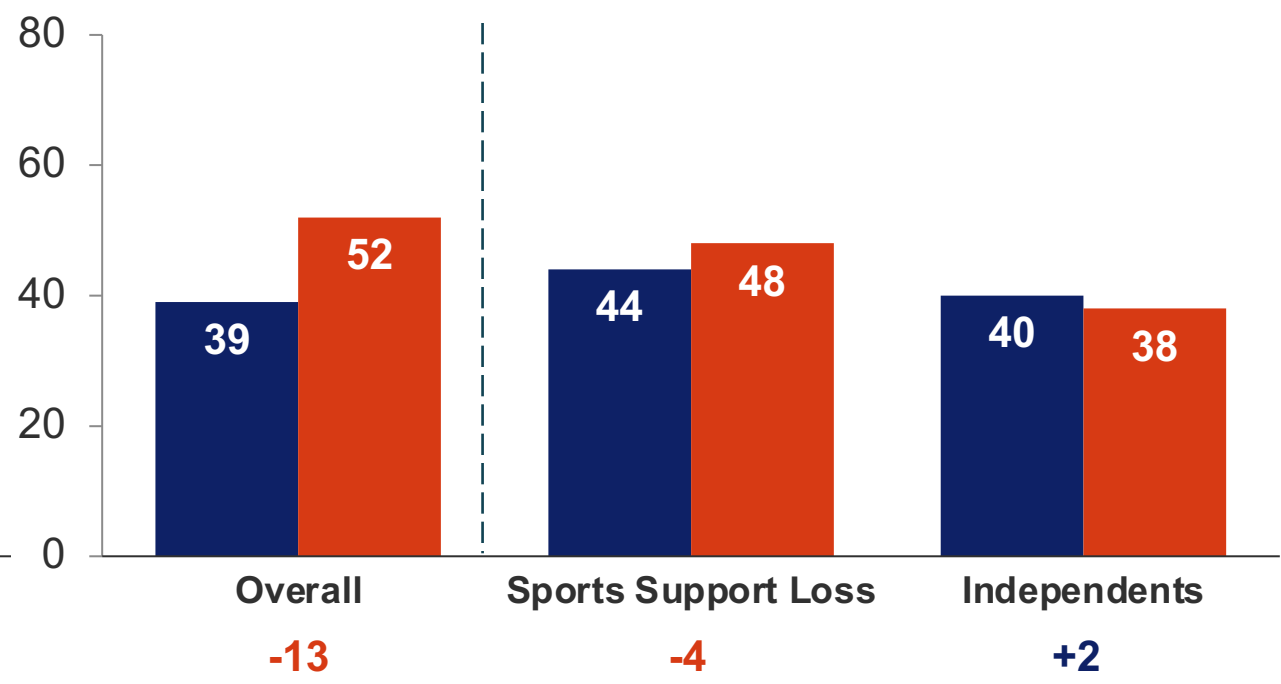
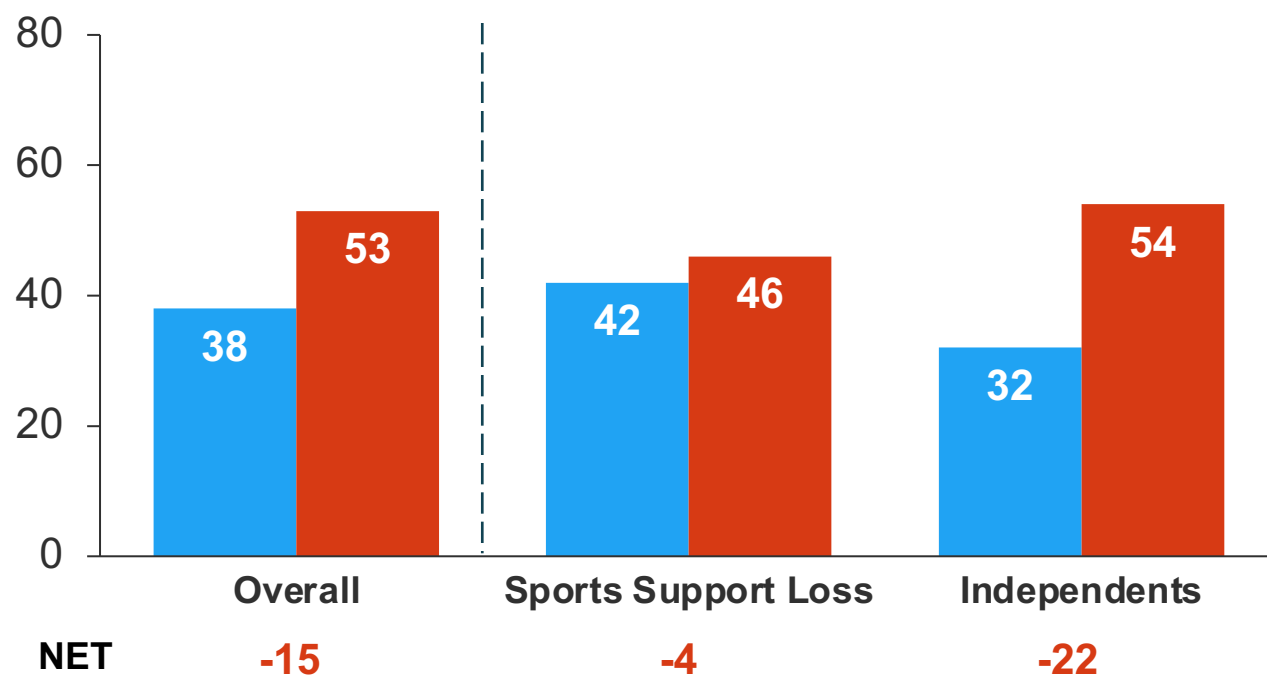
# On sports, we trail in both back-and forth framings. However, we do better with Independents by pivoting to economic issues.

A candidate who says these issues are complicated which is why sports associations are consistently updating rules about who can participate in different sports at different levels. They know their sports best and should be the ones making decisions to ensure a level playing field - not politicians.

A candidate who says we need to pass new laws in [STATE] that protect the fairness of women's athletics by requiring student-athletes to play on the sports teams that match their sex at birth.

A candidate who says local schools and sports associations should be handling this issue, not politicians. We need elected officials focused on solutions to real problems like lowering everyday costs for working families.

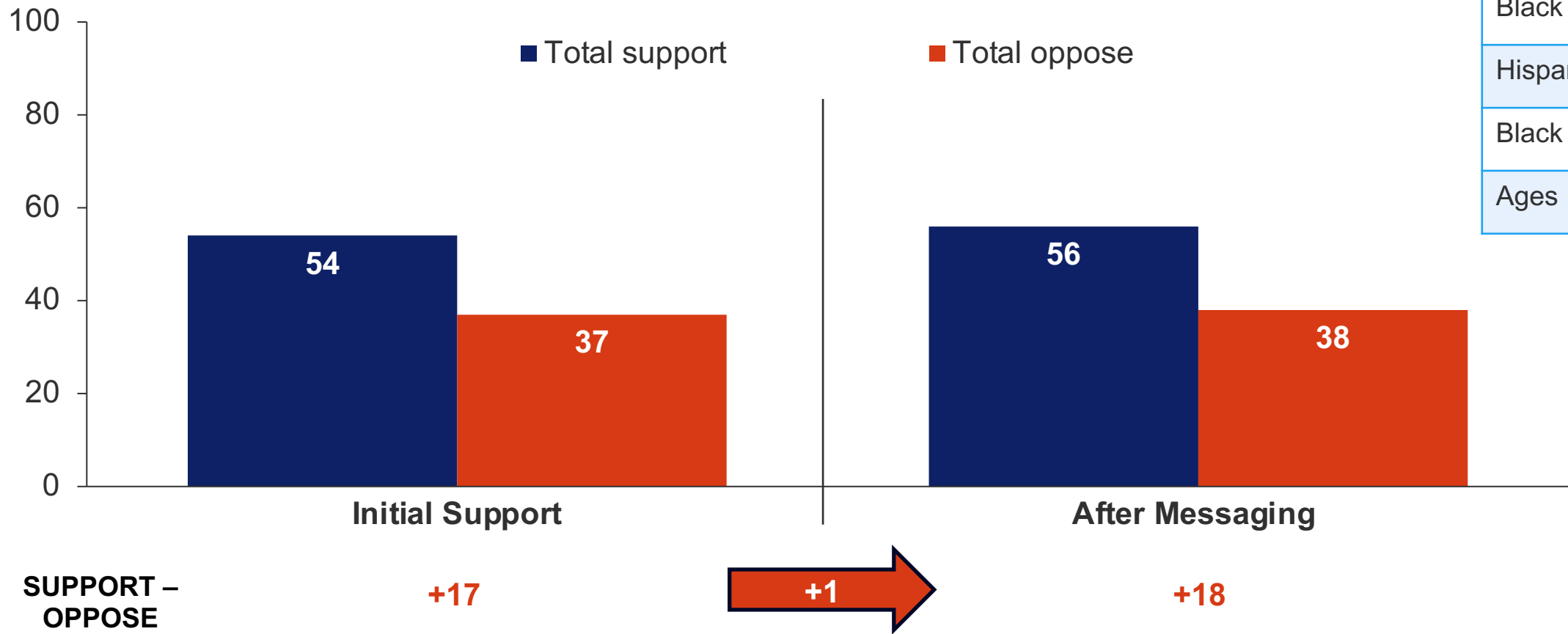
A candidate who says we need to pass new laws in [STATE] that protect the fairness of women's athletics by requiring student-athletes to play on the sports teams that match their sex at birth.



# After messaging, support for sports bans is largely unchanged.

Voters who move towards us are primarily more culturally moderate Democratic base groups.

## POLICY SUPPORT MOVEMENT: SPORTS BANS

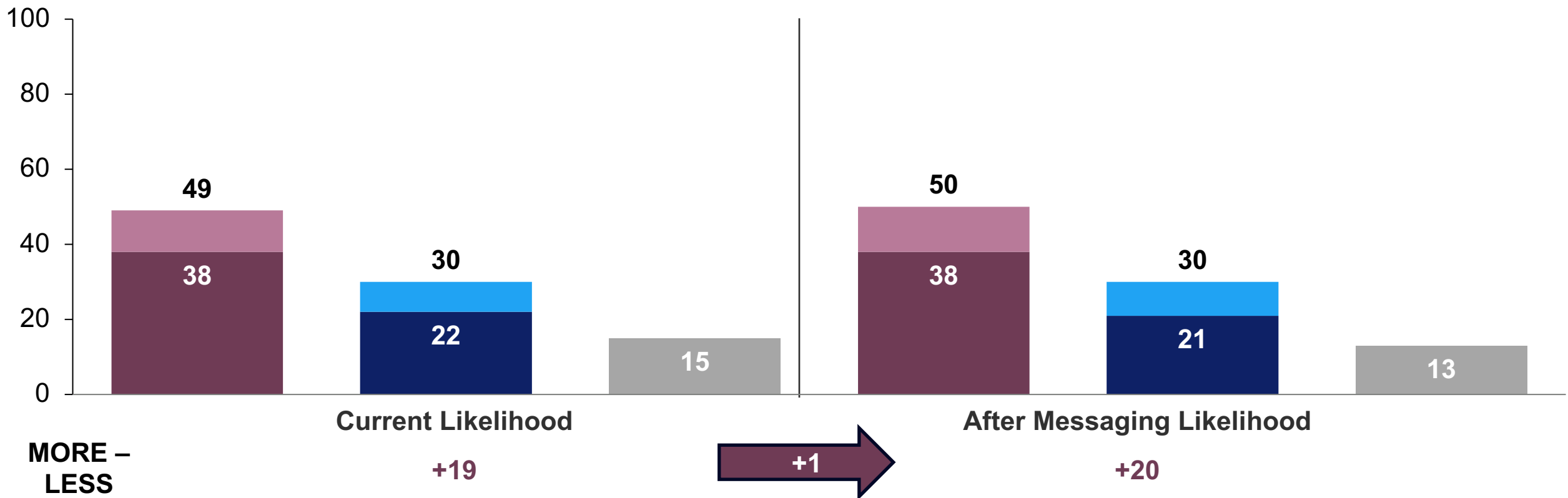


Biggest Gains in Opposition to Bans	
White Non-College Dem	+18
Black <55	+15
Hispanic Men	+14
Black Non-College	+10
Ages 18-34	+9

# We also hold constant on candidate support on sports – half of voters continue to be more likely to support a candidate who favors a sports ban.

## CANDIDATE SUPPORT MOVEMENT: SPORTS BANS

■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ Much less likely ■ Somewhat less likely ■ No difference







# QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS



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# Top Qual Message: Responding on transgender issues broadly.

- **Our best testing video shown in our qualitative phase of research quickly pivots from transgender issues to the economic issues that participants felt are much more important.** Qualitative research found that transgender issues are not a top priority for voters, and they would prefer elected officials focus on economic issues and tackling inflation. A video that quickly pivoted from transgender issues to economic issues was well-received, and a strong majority (78%) of participants said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate that spoke about transgender issues this way. This message was particularly strong with women in our ReMesh.

**[SOLUTIONS/PANIC VIDEO TEXT]** Now more than ever, Americans are working hard to make ends meet. We need real solutions to real problems, not divisions stirred up by politicians for their own political gain. So while certain politicians are focused on creating a big panic around transgender kids, I'm focused on raising incomes and lowering everyday costs for working families.

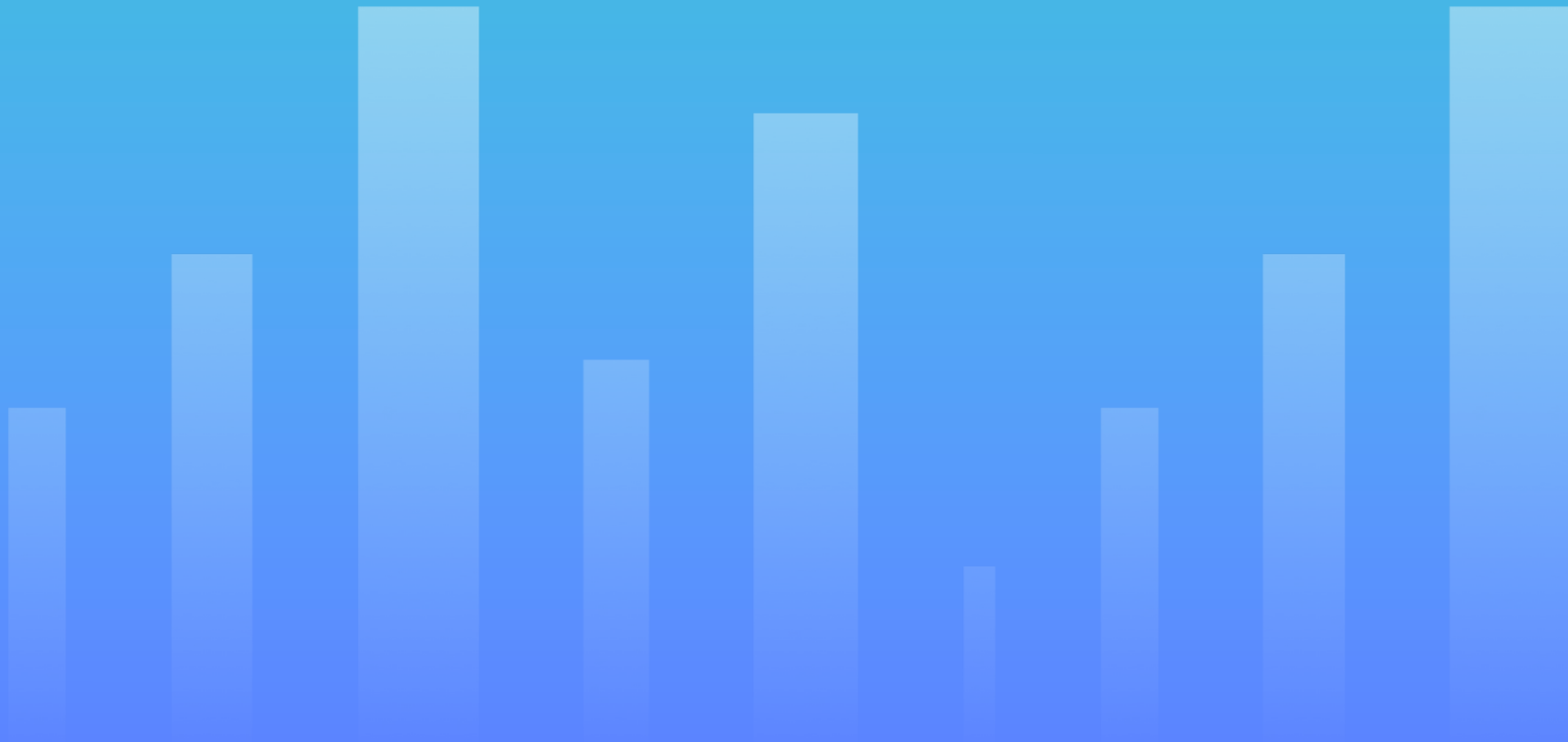
# Top Qual Message: Responding when asked about the number of genders.

- **A message on gender aligned with focus group participants' values that all Americans should be treated with respect.** When phrased as saying “the vast majority of people are born as either male or female,” participants pushed back, feeling that *all* people are either born male or female. Tweaking the language to clarify that the vast majority *identify* as either male or female better meets voters where they are at and helps us move past initial discomfort.

**[NUMBER OF GENDERS MESSAGE TEXT]** As we all know, the vast majority of people identify as either male or female. For a few people, their situation is more complicated. I'm not a scientist, but I do know that for a small number of people, their experience of gender is different. The important thing is that every American, no matter their gender, is respected and protected the same as every other American.



# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# Key Findings

- **Voters are coming into these issues with a sense of confusion and trepidation.** Virtually all voters have been hearing about transgender issues recently, and there are strong feelings across partisanship that transgender issues are being exploited for political purposes. Many express confusion about pronouns, and concern for what this conversation means for children.
- **There are also concerns that this focus on transgender issues is coming at their expense.** A majority of voters nationwide – including Independents – believe that because of the attention being paid to transgender rights, their concerns are sometimes dismissed. These sentiments also transcend race, age, gender, and educational attainment.
- **On balance, we have better standing on issues where we can get voters to empathize with the transgender young person and there is no perceived zero-sum outcome for them.** While a majority of voters are initially supportive of forced outings, messaging that highlights that these policies could put transgender youth in danger move the needle. On healthcare, messaging on shared values (doctors and patients should be making healthcare decisions – not politicians) resonate.
- **Navigating bathroom bans and bans on transgender youth playing sports continues to be difficult terrain and creates a clash of who should be prioritized in the policy.** Voters are already concerned about transgender rights happening at their expense, and on these issues their sympathies lie with the cisgender people on sports teams / in bathrooms – not the transgender youth. These are also the issues that voters are most familiar with, and their opinions are more solidified.

# Messaging: Forced Outings

- While a majority of voters are initially supportive of a policy that would force teachers to out transgender students to their parents, this is one of the issues where voters' opinions are most malleable, and we move voters with the below messaging:
  1. **Keep it short.** Remember that voters feel their own issues get swallowed by discussions of transgender issues.
  2. **Leaning on shared values of keeping kids safe.** Consistent with what we saw in the focus groups, people want to keep kids safe, and they oppose blanket laws that could put transgender youth in danger if their parents aren't supportive.
  3. **Include the emotional burden this places on teachers.** Participants have empathy for teachers, particularly envisioning a teacher who has to report on a student who they know lives in an unsupportive environment.
  4. **Pivoting to larger education issues.** We do better against a candidate in favor of forced outings when we talk about education and mental health in broad strokes – overall and among persuasion targets.

# Messaging: Bans on Healthcare

We will not move the needle on this issue, but can muddy the waters in our favor when engaging on this topic, and the specific words and language in simply how we DEFINE the issue matters a great deal:

- **Frame these as bans on healthcare, including mental health care.** While voters oppose bans on “gender transition care” they are even more opposed when we talk about “banning doctors from providing healthcare to transgender young people under the age of 18, which could include banning not only medical treatment but banning counseling and mental health care, too.”
- **Focus on WHO should get to make these decisions – doctors, parents, and patients.** Voters agree that healthcare decisions for a young person who is transgender should be made by parents and doctors who know the situation best - not politicians.
- Reinforce the importance of doctors being allowed to provide the best medical care. People fundamentally believe doctors should not be infringed upon when giving the best possible medical or healthcare to patients.
- **If detransitioning or regret comes up, highlight that these decisions take time.** While we would not get into a prolonged debate, we’ve seen in qualitative and quantitative research that messaging that talks about how the expert medical standards require months of screening, doctor’s visits and counseling sessions before any sort of medical care begins, and that there are opportunities to stop and reverse treatments at any point is generally well-received.

# Messaging: Bathroom Bans

- This is our most perilous issue in that longer engagement moves support BACKWARDS. We would not advise a prolonged debate and risk losing more ground. Instead, candidates should:
  - **Call out the opposition and pivot.** We do better on this issue when we highlight that politicians pushing bathroom bans are using this issue to score political points, and we should instead be focused on improving the economy and addressing rising costs.
  - **If pushed or in a situation where pivot absolutely will not suffice, highlight the confusing and difficult nature of enforcing these bans.** Again, we would not draw out a debate about this issue, but we don't see significant backlash when making a slippery slope argument that these bans would require people who have transitioned already to use the bathroom of their sex at birth, meaning transgender men would be required to use women's bathrooms.



# Messaging: Transgender Youth in Sports

- When it comes to sports, we need to limit engagement as much as possible. While we do not LOSE ground, we continue to be on the wrong side of the issue by 18 points. As we have seen in all our research on this issue, voters are zero-sum on this topic and prioritize protecting cis-athletes over transgender ones.
  - **Emphasize that local schools and leagues should make these decisions.** While voters are generally on the side of having rules on transgender youth in sports, we've seen in the qualitative and other research that they also agree with schools, leagues, and parents making these decisions – not politicians.
  - **Pivot to economic issues.** While we lose both arguments against a candidate who supports passing laws on transgender youth in sports, this pivot is especially effective among Independents.
- Because this is the issue voters are most familiar with and they've already made up their minds on it, we don't see movement after messaging – for or against us. That being said, we would not litigate this issue anymore than we have to.