

Missouri Foundation for Health

Views of Missouri Voters on Issues
Relating to Health Care Reform

October 2010



Views of Missouri Voters

The Missouri Foundation for Health commissioned Lake Research Partners, a survey research company specializing in public policy, to assess the attitudes of the state's residents on the health care issues related to the Patient Protection and Affordability Act. The survey reached a total of 800 likely General Election voters in Missouri. The survey was conducted August 24 through August 29, 2010. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 4.0%.



Key Findings

- Missouri voters continue to show strong and broad public concern about the affordability of health care. At the same time, voters express more concern about changing the system too much, as opposed to keeping things the way they are.
- A majority opposes the health care reform law just passed, and that opposition exceeds support throughout the survey, even after voters hear reasons to support reform.
- Most of the specific elements of the law are well regarded. The most popular reforms include allowing people to keep their current insurance, requiring coverage of pre-existing conditions, and providing tax credits for small businesses.
- The strongest reasons to support the reform law focus on the issues of coverage for pre-existing conditions for children and disparities in costs for women.
- Voters respond most strongly to the criticism that Medicare will be cut and seniors will suffer, and to the economic argument that the law constitutes unsustainable new spending and mandates from the federal government.



Missouri voters continue to show strong and broad public concern about the affordability of health care. At the same time, voters express more concern about changing the system too much, as opposed to keeping things the way they are.

- Nearly three out of five voters (59%) view the issue of health insurance affordability with a great deal of concern, up from 2008 when the figure was only about half.
 - Public anxiety over affordability traverse partisan divides, with majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans expressing concerns.
- When it comes to reform, nearly half of voters (48%) say they are more concerned about changing the system too much, while only 29% say they are more concerned about keeping things as they are.
 - Worries about changing the system too much have slightly increased in the past two years (up to 48%, from 43%).
 - By a margin of two-to-one, independents are more worried about change than they are about the *status quo*.
 - Among women, 31% are more worried about keeping things as they are, while 46% are more concerned about too much change. Among seniors, 32% worry more about not changing, while 51% worry more about too much change.



Most voters oppose the recently passed reform law, even after hearing arguments from both sides. Nevertheless, many specific elements of the law have support.

- At the outset of the survey, a majority (54%) opposes the national health care reform law, while only three in ten (30%) support it.
 - The main supporters of health care reform are almost exclusively Democrats.
 - Republicans are united in their opposition, and as are many independents – especially independent men and older independents.
 - The most undecided voters tend to be weak Democrats, younger voters in the North and Southeast, older voters in Kansas City, and unmarried men.
- After voters hear a summary of arguments from each side, most voters still oppose the measure, though there is some movement toward support (52% oppose, 38% support).
- Neither the economic line of argument nor the moral approach proves effective in generating majority—or even plurality—support, but both do improve the numbers.
- When voters hear additional specifics about the reform the gap narrows to 41% in favor and 49% opposed. Republican men, non-college women, and women under 55 shift the most.
- At the end of the survey, after voters hear a series of other specific arguments for and against the reform measure, most still oppose the new law (52%), while support increases to 39%.
- The most popular elements of the law are the fact that people can keep their current insurance, the requirement of coverage for pre-existing conditions, and the tax credits for small businesses.



The most powerful reasons to support the measure focus on making the system more fair, especially for women and children. All of the opposition arguments raise doubts, especially the supposed cuts to Medicare benefits.

- Among the top arguments for the reform law overall and among persuadable voters—revolve around covering pre-existing conditions and reducing cost disparities for women.
- Women are more likely to be persuadable than are men.
- Voters respond more strongly to the improvements in primary care and prevention than they do to other arguments.
- Attacks on insurance companies are less effective than prior to the passage of reform.



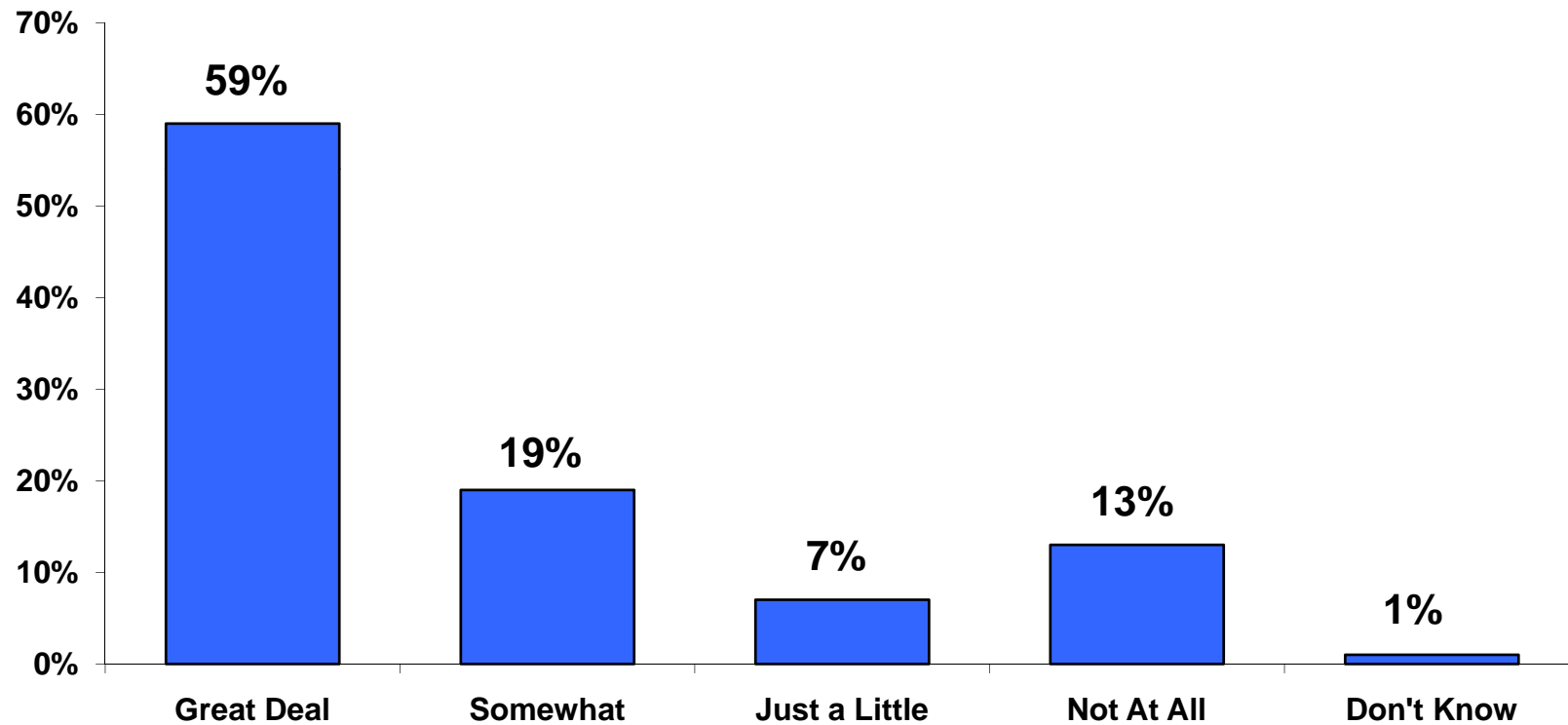
The Political Context for Health Care Reform in Missouri

Most voters express a great deal of concern about the affordability of health insurance. When it comes to reform, however, voters worry more about changing things too much rather than keeping the system as it is.



By a nearly four-to-one margin, Missourians are concerned about finding affordable health insurance for their families.

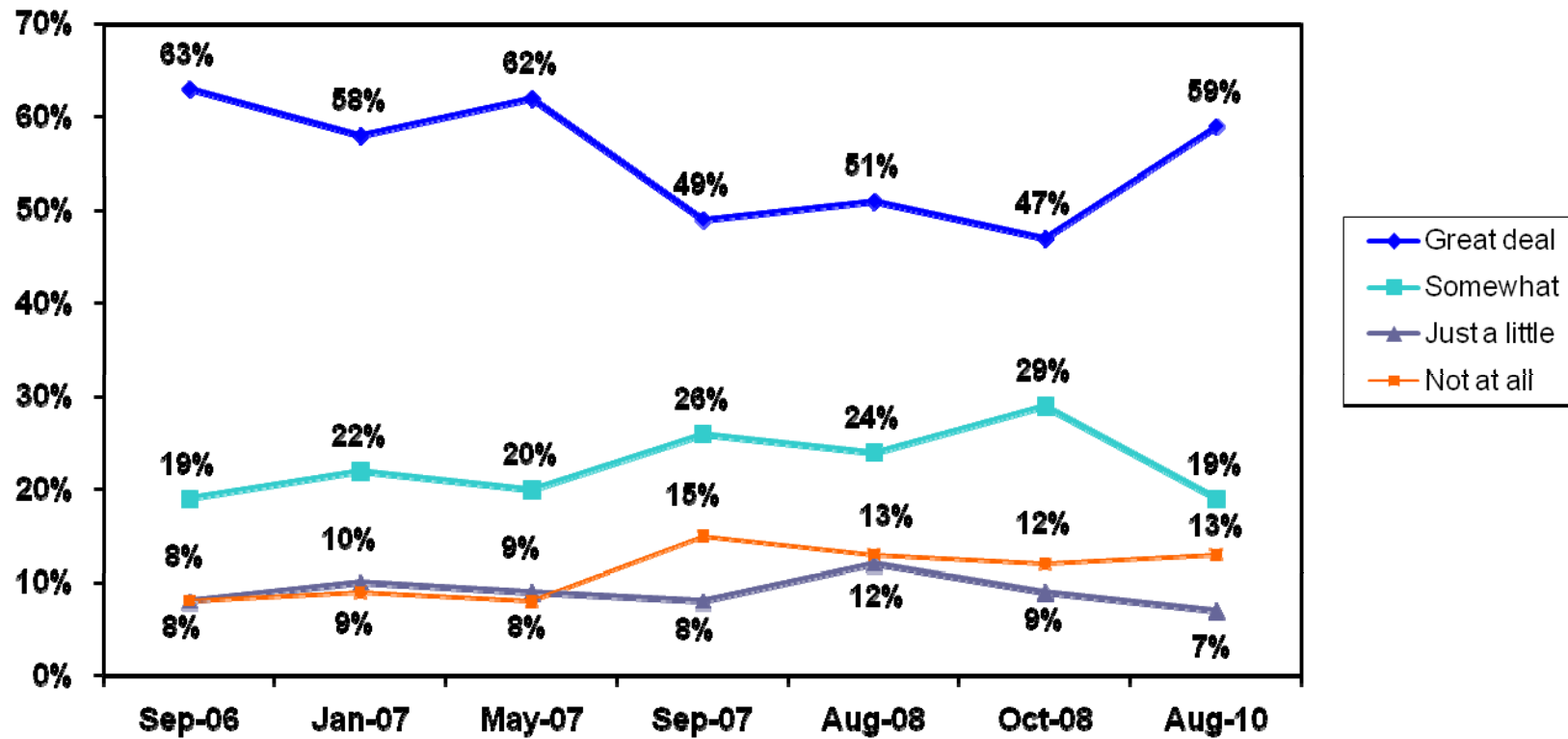
Concern About Affordable Health Insurance



How concerned would you say you are about affordable health insurance for you and your family? Would you say you are concerned a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?

After having receded for a couple years, likely voters' concerns about affordable health care have spiked again.

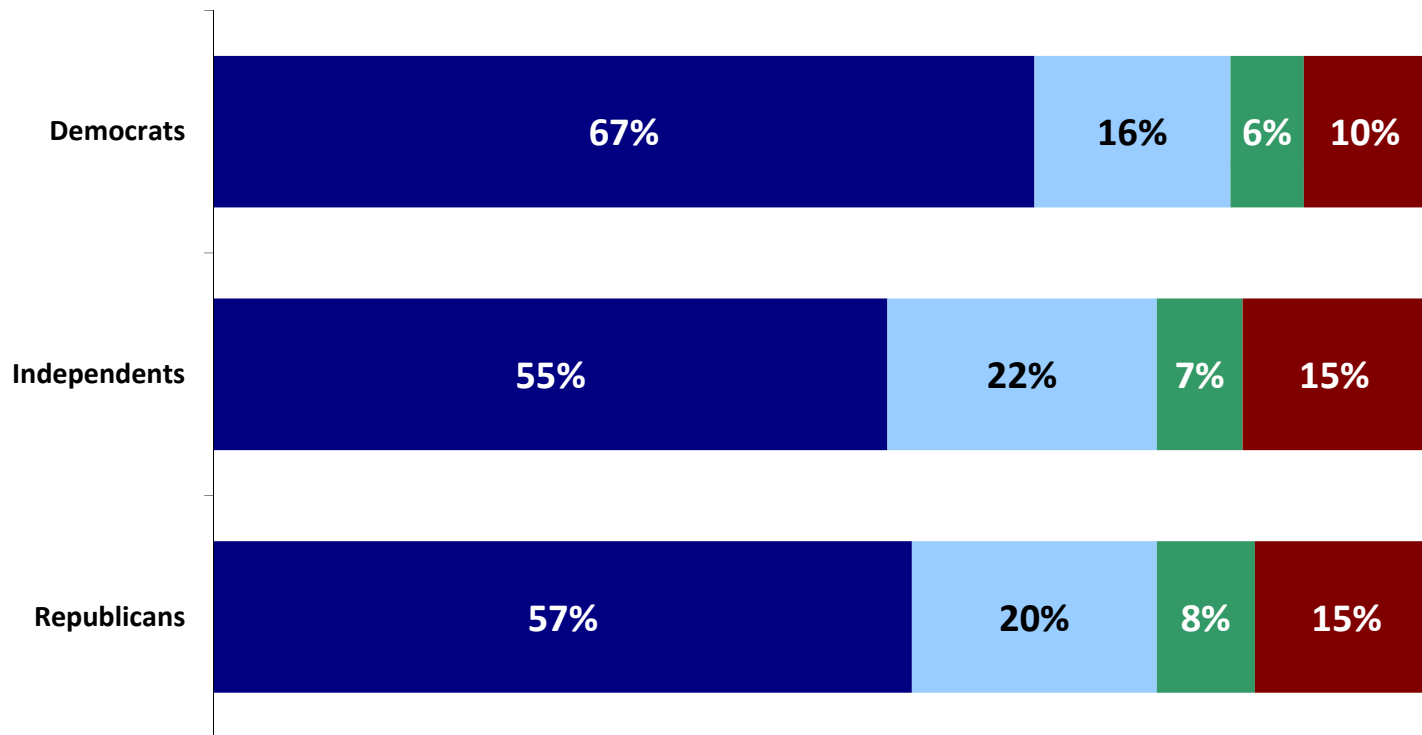
Concern About Affordable Health Insurance



How concerned would you say you are about affordable health insurance for you and your family? Would you say you are concerned a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?

Voters' concerns about health care affordability cross partisan lines. Among Democrats, 82% are worried about the issue "a great deal" or "somewhat", compared to over three quarters of independents and Republicans.

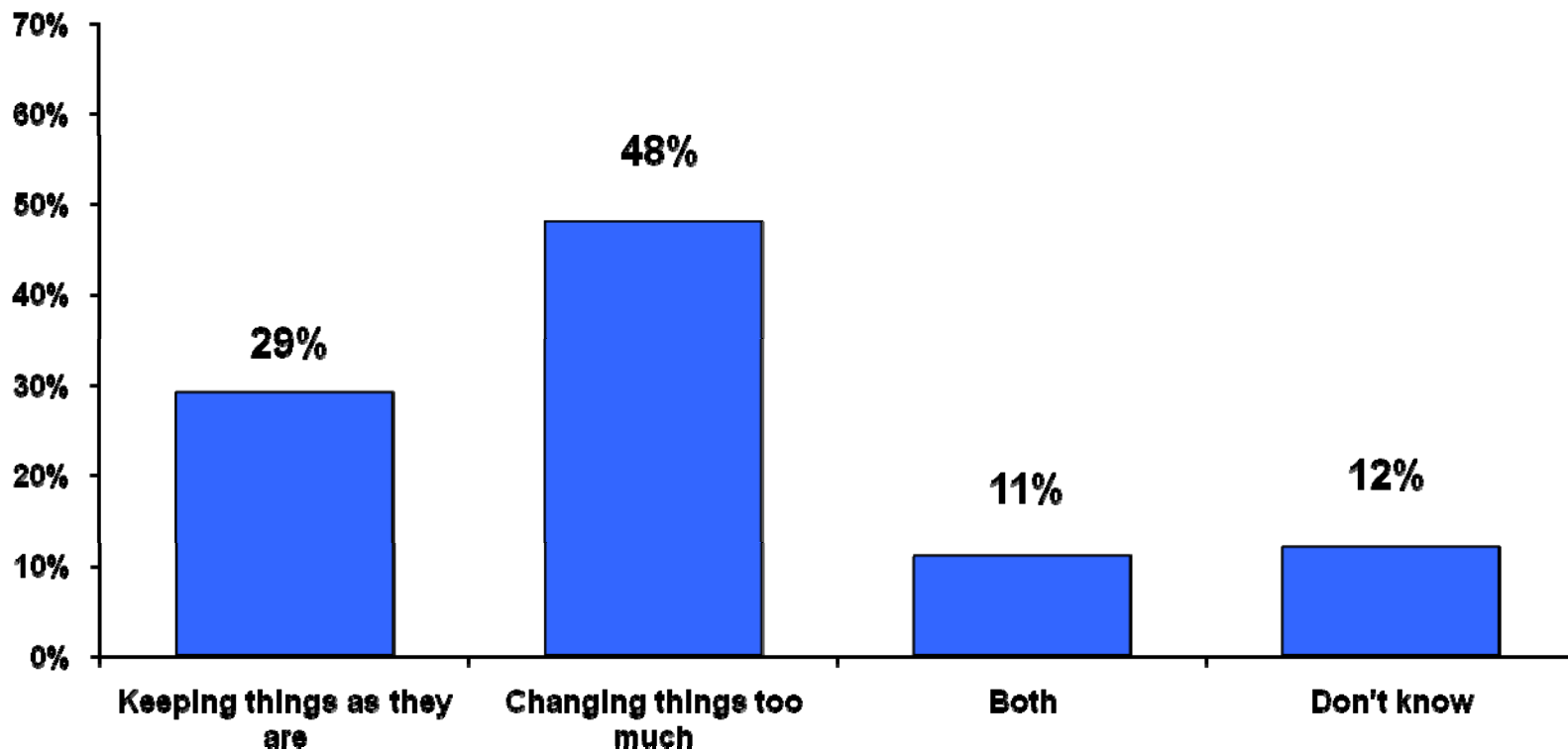
Concern About Health Care Affordability: Party Identification



How concerned would you say you are about affordable health insurance for you and your family? Would you say you are concerned a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?

Voters are nervous about reform. Despite significant discontent about the overall cost of health care, voters are more worried about changing the system too much than keeping it as is.

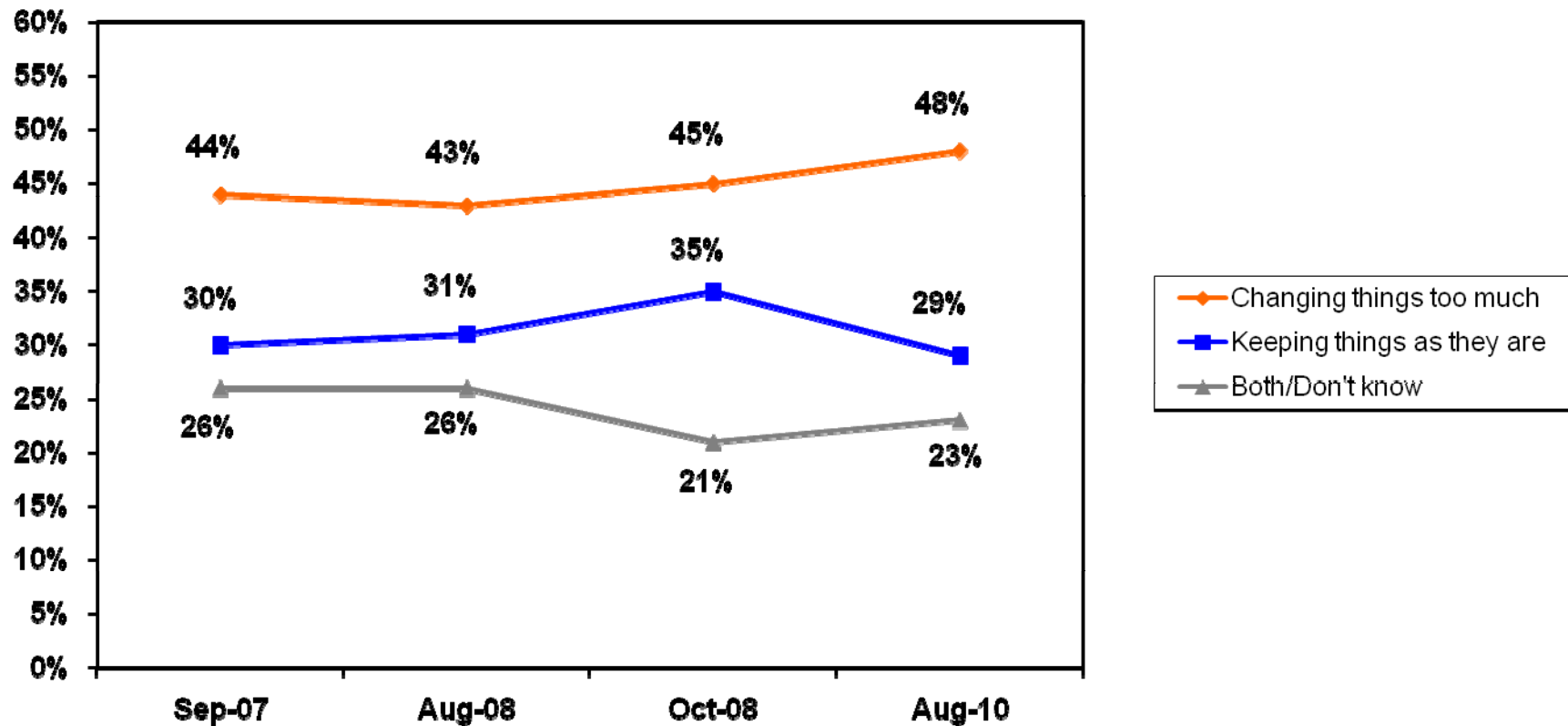
Greater Health Care Concern: Change or *Status Quo*



Overall, when you think about health they are in Missouri today, which are you more worried about, keeping things as are or changing things too much?

Passing the national health insurance reform appears to have piqued voters' fears of change. However, these fears have remained relatively constant since 2007.

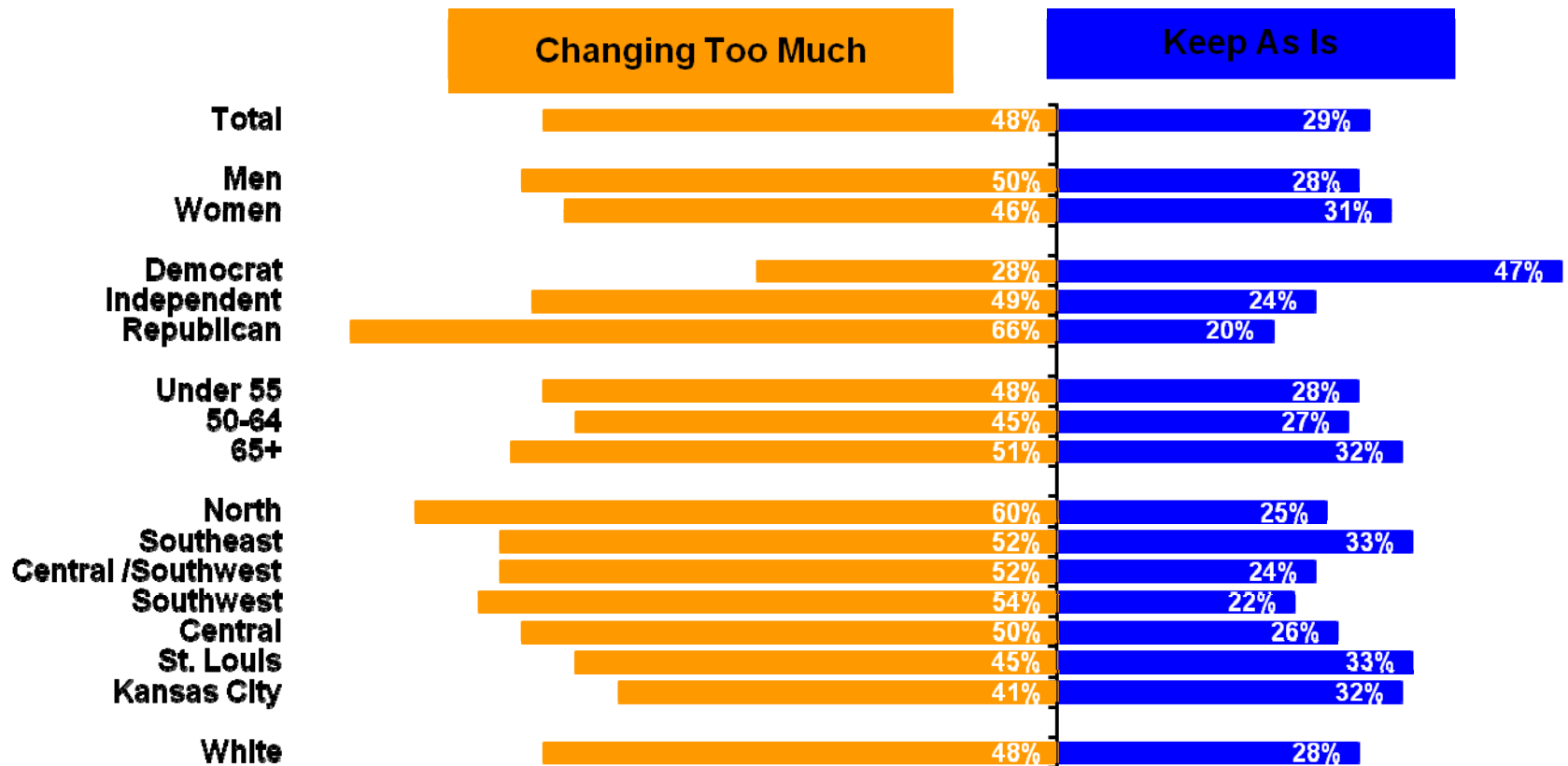
Greater Health Care Concern: Change or *Status Quo*



Overall, when you think about health they are in Missouri today, which are you more worried about, keeping things as are or changing things too much?

Democrats are the only voters see keeping things as they are to be worse than changing them too much.

Greater Health Care Concern: Change or *Status Quo*



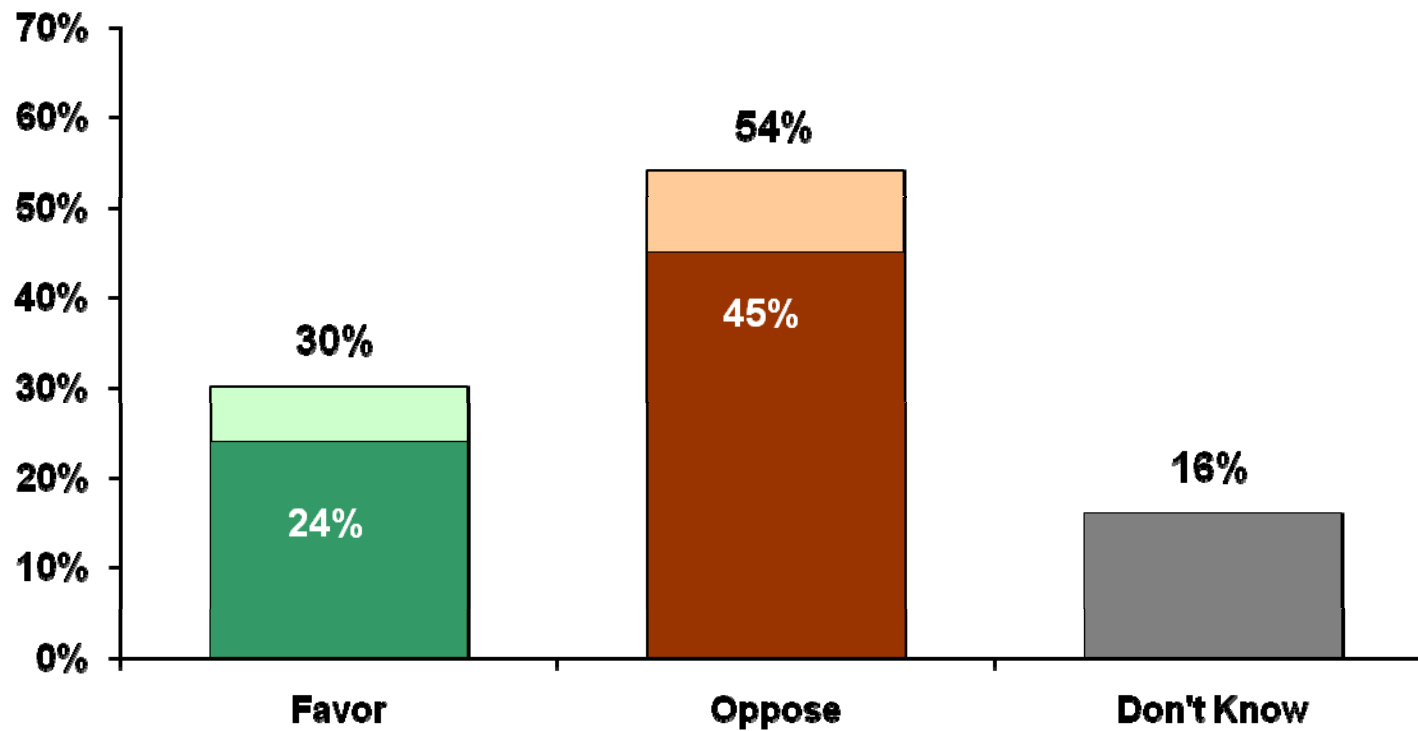
Contours of Support for Health Care Reform

A majority of the Missouri electorate opposes the national health care reform law, while less than one-third supports it. Even after voters hear arguments in favor of the measure, opposition exceeds support.



Opposition to the reform law outpaces support among Missourians by nearly two-to-one. Intensity is piqued in both camps, but strong opposition to the law is greater than overall support.

Initial Ballot: Support for Health Care Reform Law



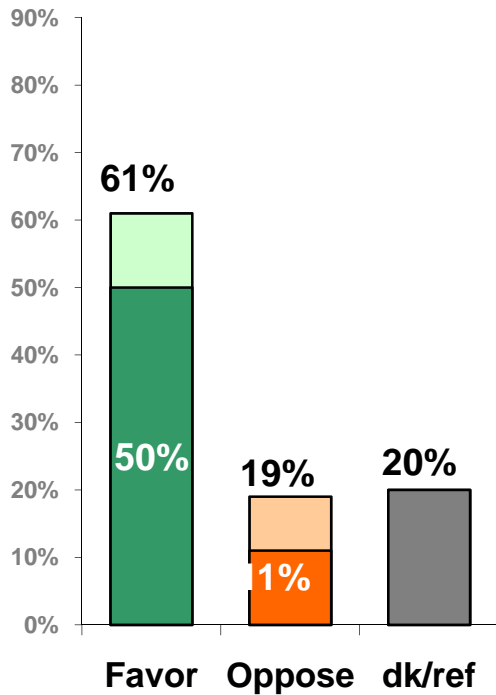
Darker colors indicate intensity

And do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law passed by Congress, or aren't you sure?
[IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not-so-strongly?]

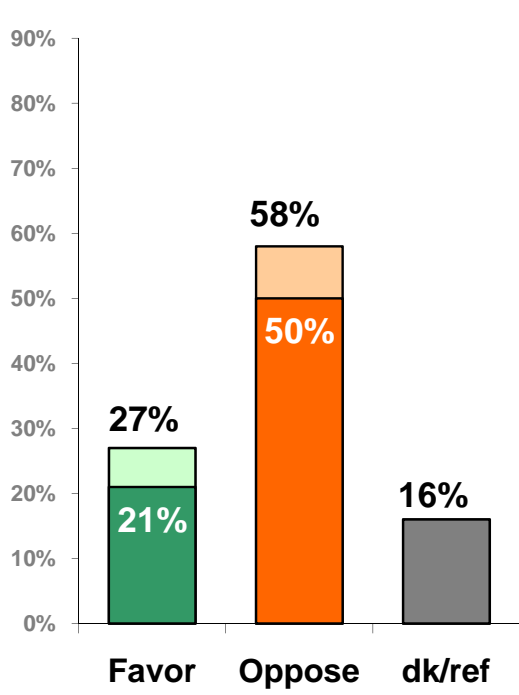
Republicans are united in opposition to the reform law, while only three out of five Democrats support it, and most independents oppose it.

Initial Ballot: Support for Health Care Reform Law

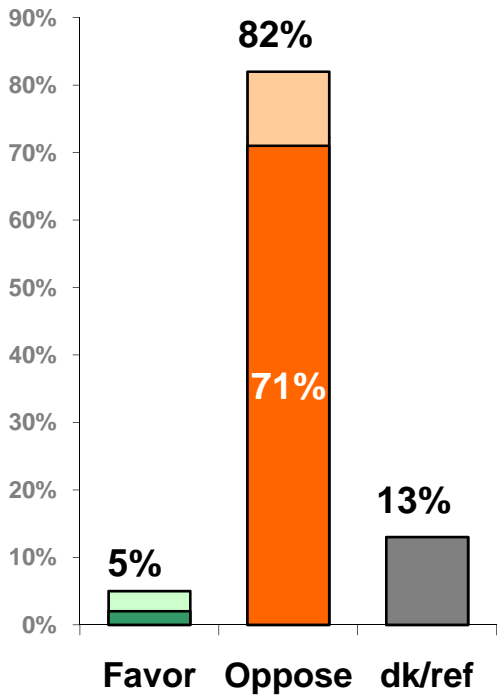
Democrats



Independents



Republicans

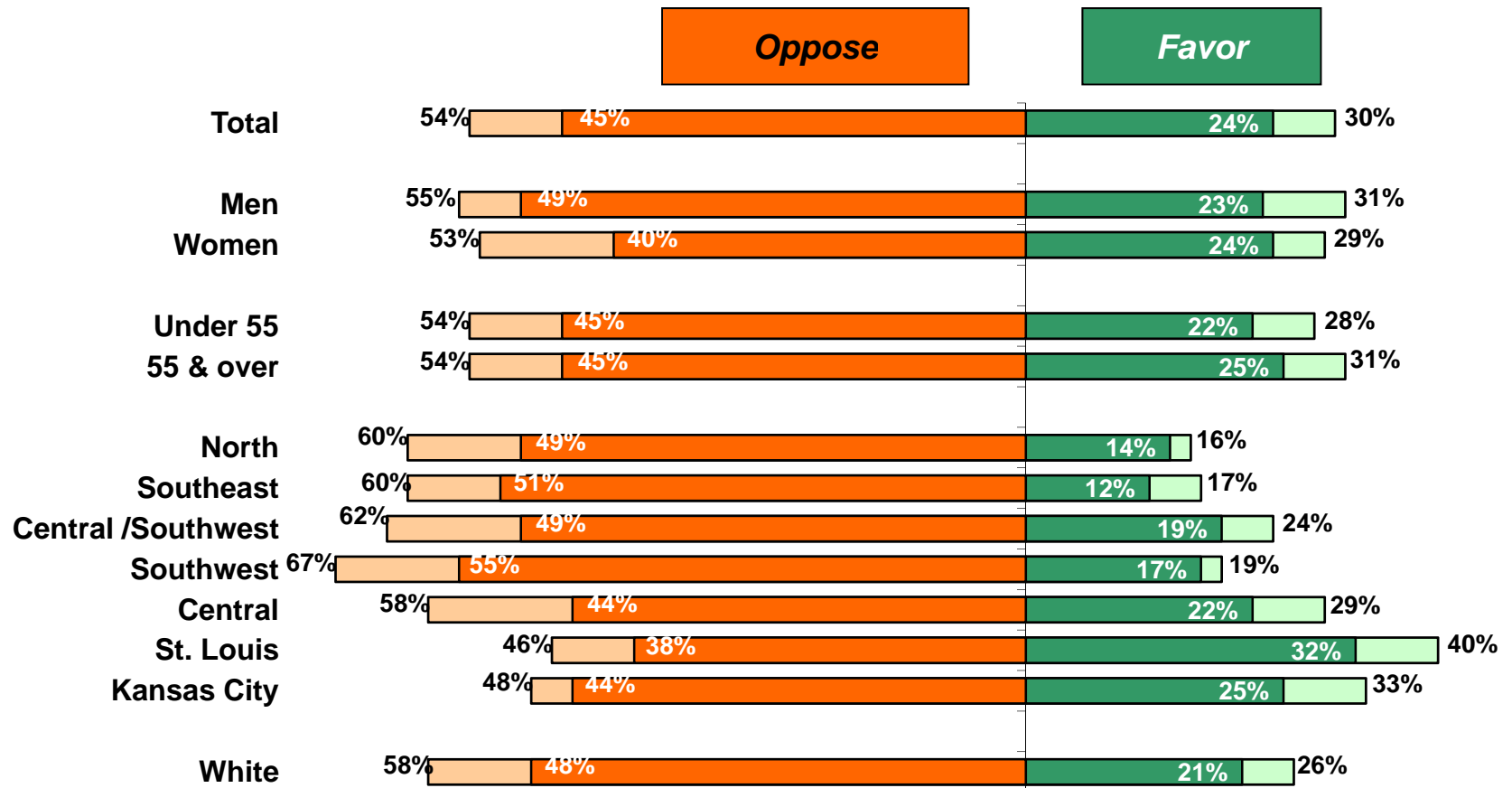


Darker colors indicate intensity



Opposition is both broad and intense. In every region of the state, more voters oppose health care reform than support it.

Initial Ballot: Support for Health Care Reform Law



The main supporters of health care reform are almost exclusively Democrats. Republicans are united in their opposition, as are many independents – especially independent men and older independents.

FAVOR: 30% Total Favor

Strong Democrat	69%
Democratic men	72%
Democrat 55+	61%
Voted Obama	61%
Democrat	61%
Democrat <55	60%
Democratic women	52%
Weak Democrat	48%
Post-graduate	45%
College 55+	41%
Keeping things as they are	46%
St. Louis Under 55	41%
St. Louis women	40%

OPPOSE: 54% Total Oppose

Strong Republican	84%
Voted McCain	85%
Republican <55	83%
Republican men	81%
Republican	82%
Republican 55+	81%
Republican women	82%
Springfield, MO Men	75%
Weak Republican	77%
Changing things too much	68%
Central /Southwest men	66%
Southeast 55 & over	60%
Indep. men	62%
Southeast men	64%
Indep. 55+	63%
Southwest	67%



The main supporters of health care reform are almost exclusively Democrats. Republicans are united in their opposition, and as are many independents – especially independent men and older independents.

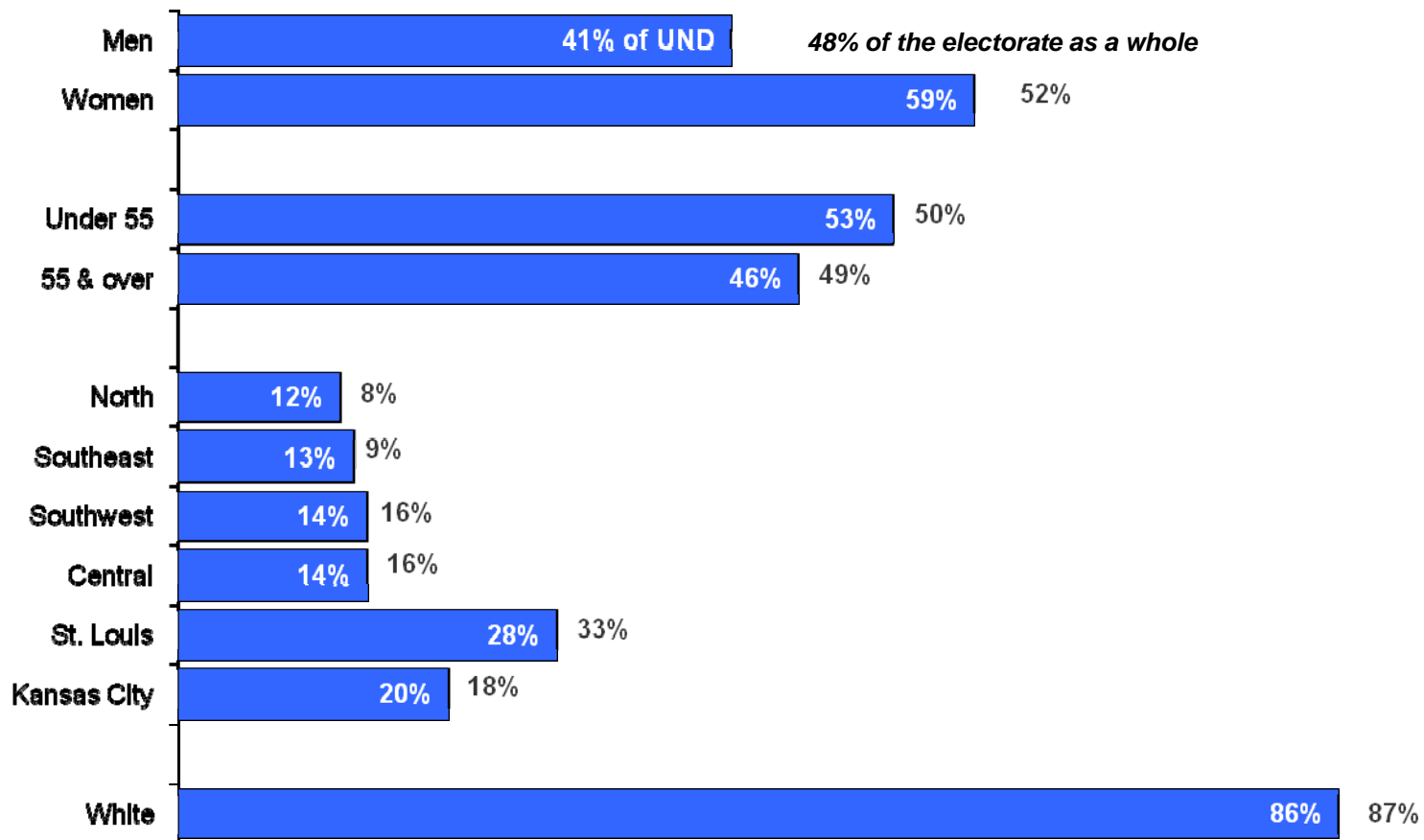
The Undecided Vote: 16% of the Electorate

Weak Democrat	28%	Southeast	23%
North Under 55	28%	Unmarried men	23%
Widowed	28%	Southeast Women	23%
Southeast Under 55	26%	Democrat <55	22%
North Men	24%	Kansas City 55 & over	22%
Paducah/ Cape Girardeau/Harrisburg	24%	North Women	22%
North	23%	Non college women	22%
Voted Obama	23%	Democratic women	22%
Southeast Men	23%	Unmarried	22%



As compared with the overall electorate, undecided voters are much more likely to be women, and are somewhat more prevalent in the North region.

The Undecided Vote: 16% of the Electorate



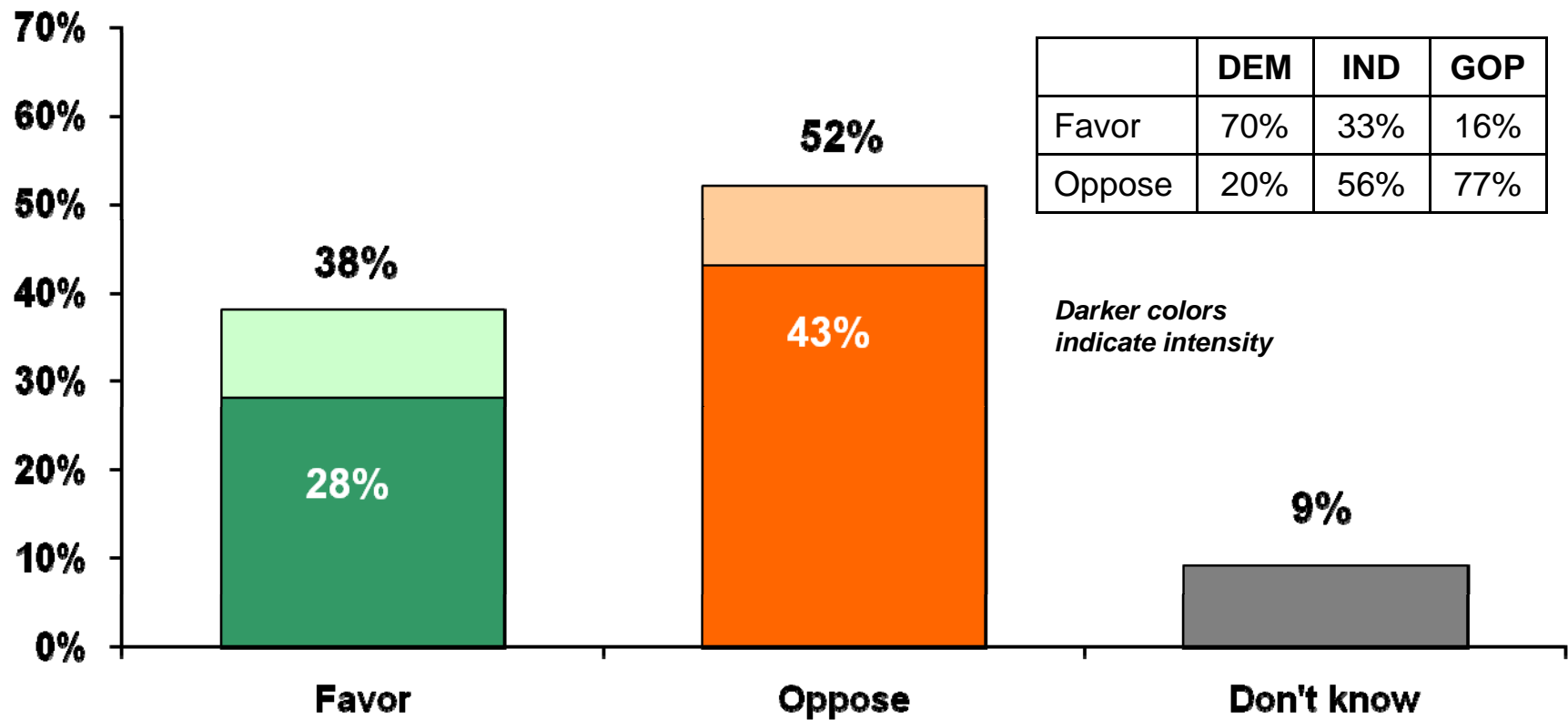
The Engaged Debate

An engaged discussion of health care reform boosts support by a full 8 points, while opposition dips slightly to 52% from 54%. An economic framing of the debate works best among Democrats, whereas a moral framing proves especially effective among independents.



After hearing arguments on both sides of the issue, support grows and opposition dips, though most voters still oppose reform.

Informed: Support for National Health Care Reform (combined)

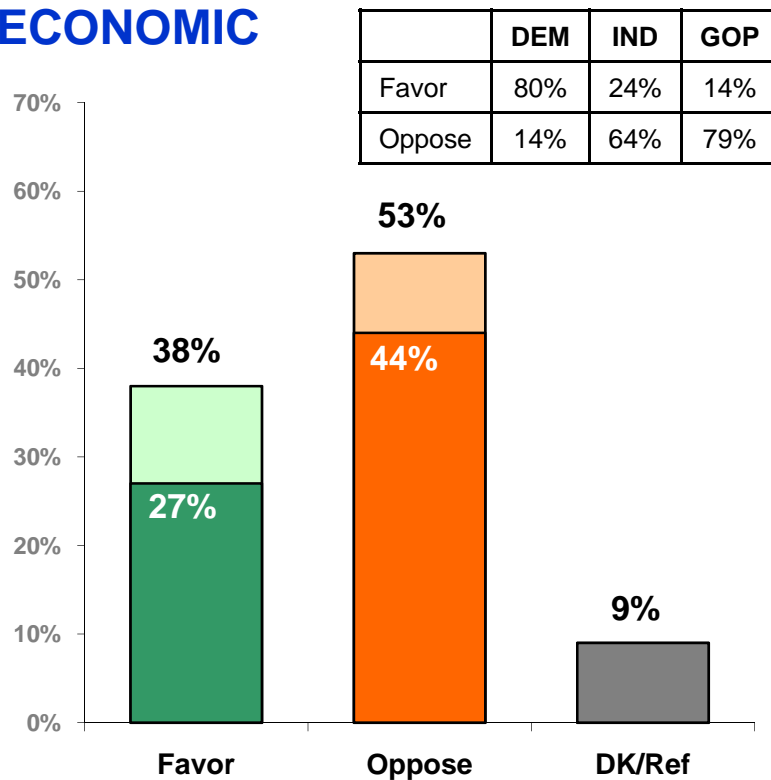


Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law passed by Congress, or aren't you sure? [IF FAVOR / OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not-so-strongly?]

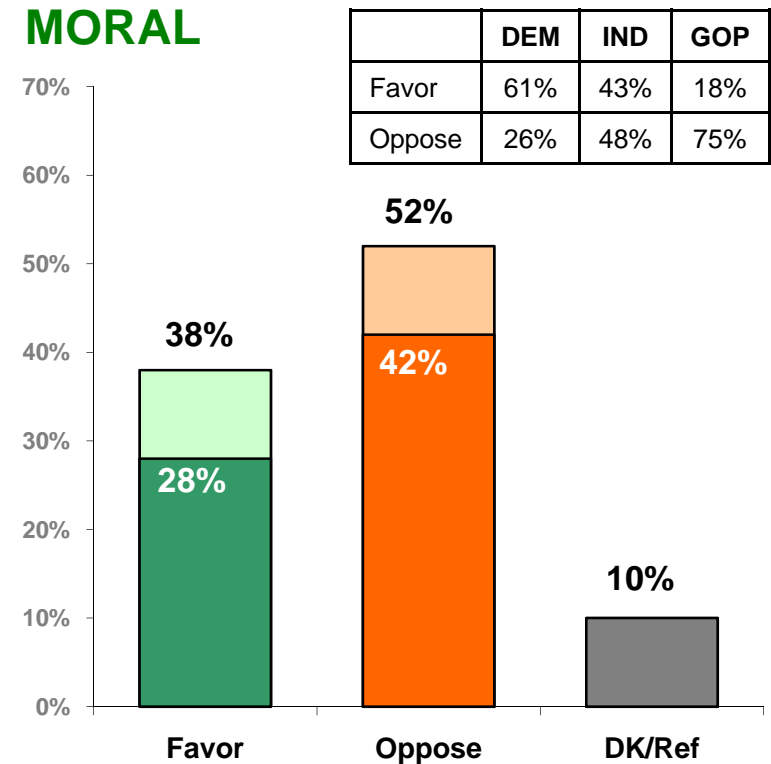
Overall, Missourians respond almost identically to the economic and moral arguments for reform. Democrats respond more strongly to the economic framing, but independents respond more to the moral framing.

Informed: Support for National Health Care Reform

ECONOMIC



MORAL

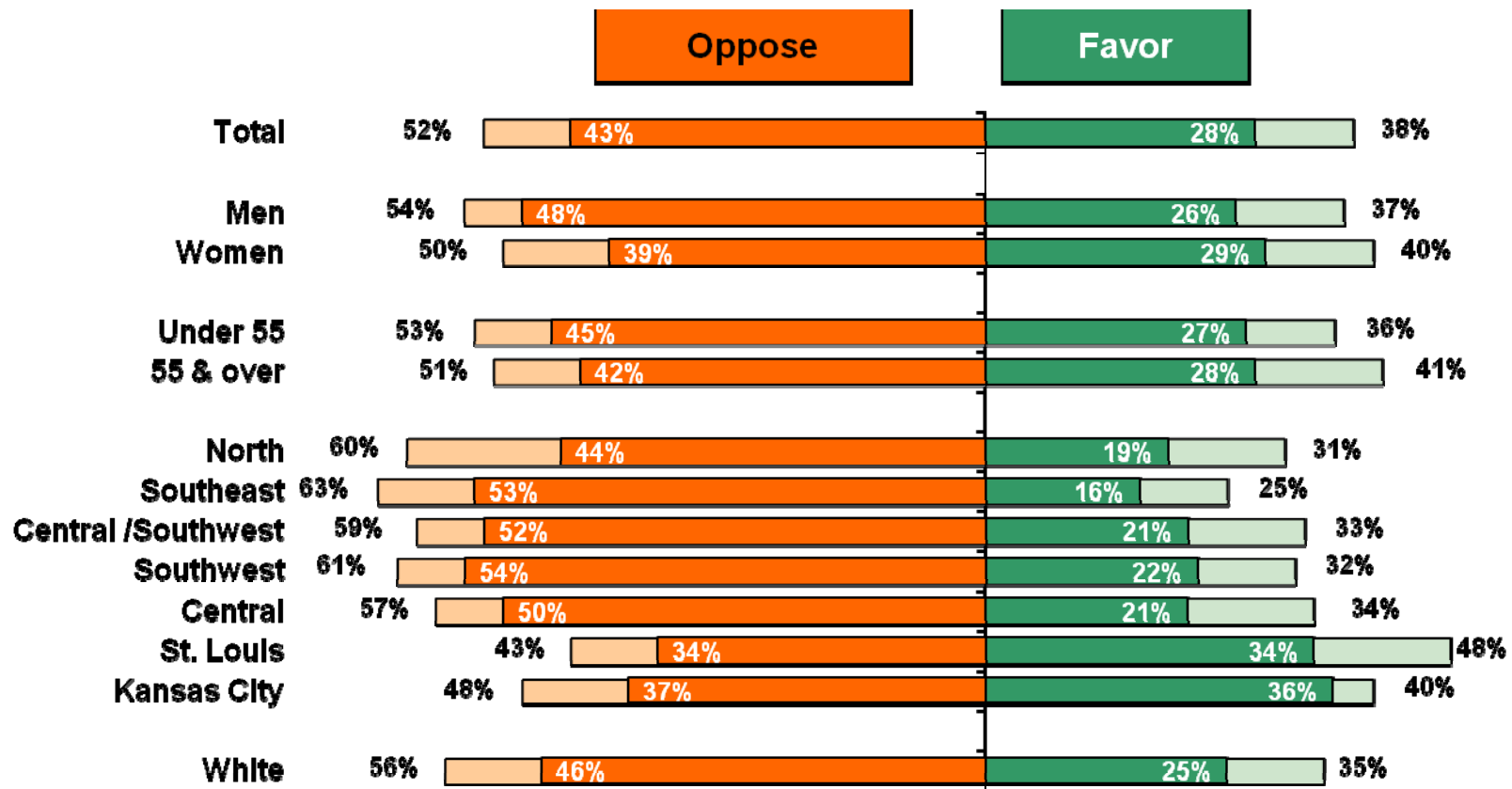


Darker colors indicate intensity



Overall, Missourians respond almost identically to the economic and moral arguments for reform. Democrats respond more strongly to the economic framing, but independents respond more to the moral framing.

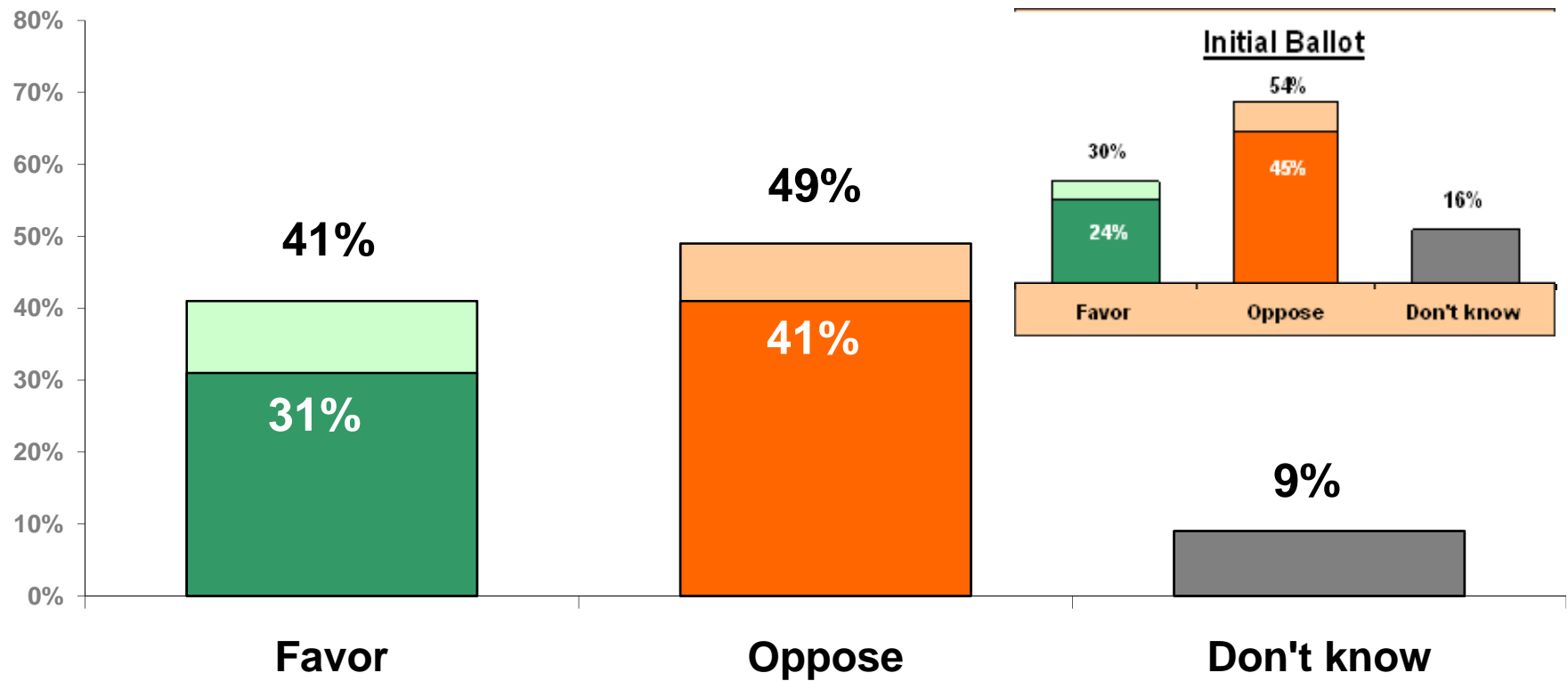
Combined Profile Ballot: Support for Health Care Reform Law



Darker colors indicate intensity

After voters hear a number of additional arguments in support of the health care reform law, support increases 11 points to 41%. Opposition falls 5 points to 49%.

Post-positive Ballot: Support for Health Care Reform Law

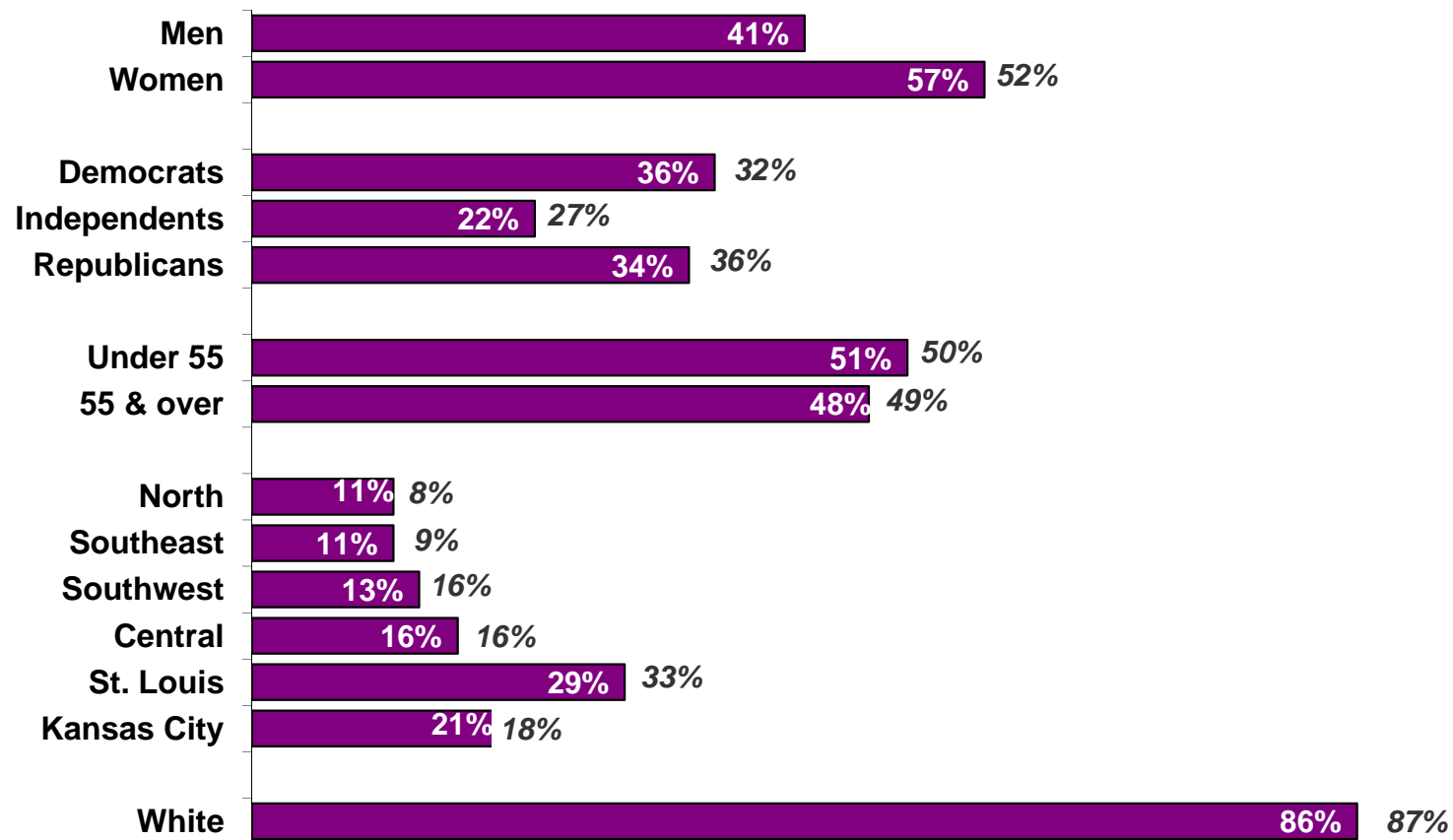


Darker colors indicate intensity

Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law passed by Congress, or aren't you sure? [IF FAVOR / OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not-so-strongly?]

The persuadable vote is disproportionately concentrated among women and Democrats. Nearly half of these voters are in St. Louis and Kansas City, and another quarter are in the southern part of the state.

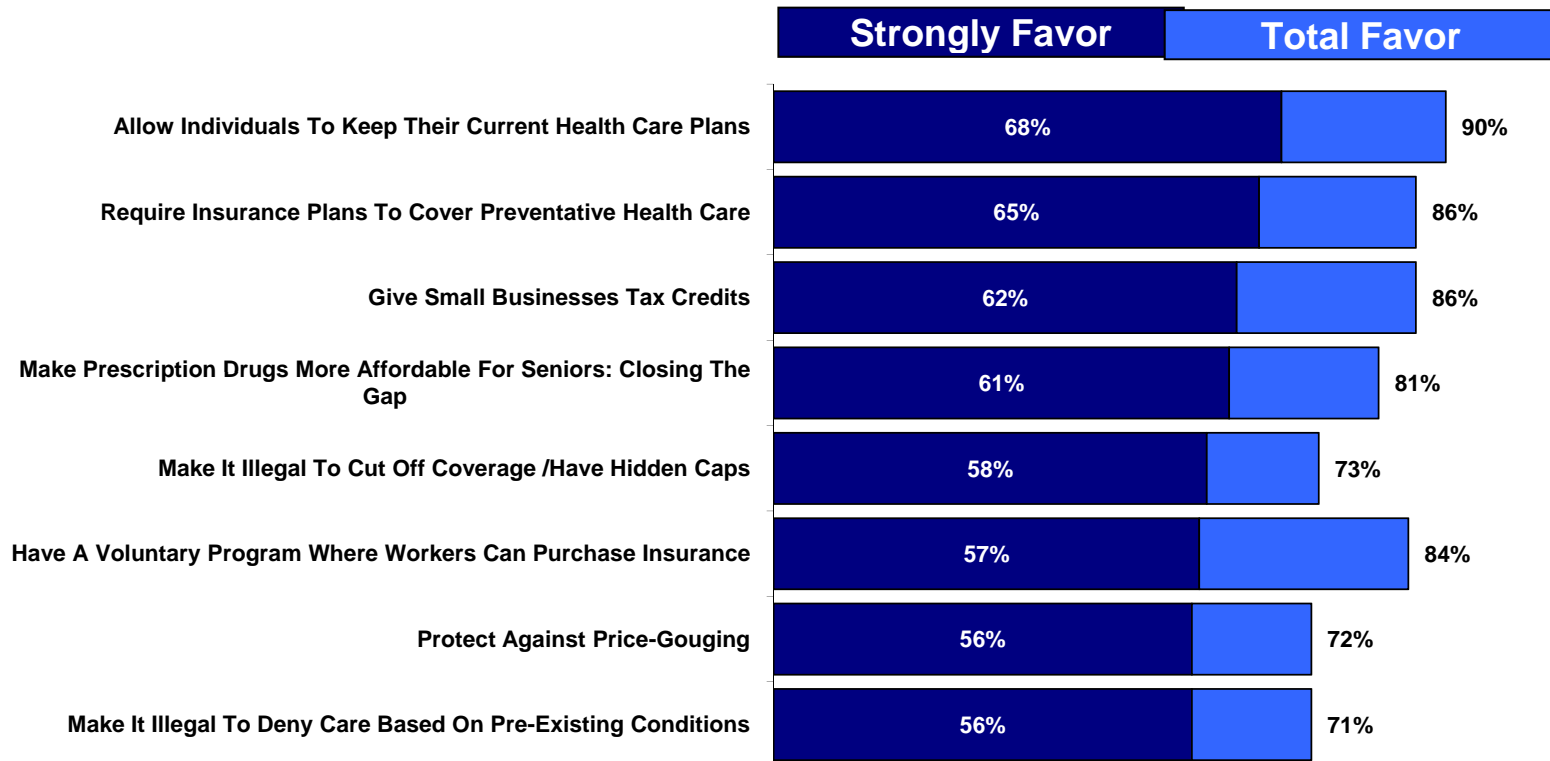
Profile of the Persuadable* Vote: 25% of the Electorate



* Respondents who either are undecided on the initial ballot and support the proposal on the final ballot, or oppose the proposal on the initial ballot and are undecided or support the proposal on the final ballot plus those who are undecided on both the initial and final ballots.

Despite Missourians' resistance to the national health care reform law, they support elements of the legislation, including allowing people to keep their current insurance, requiring insurance companies to cover preventative care, reducing Rx drug prices, and giving small businesses tax credits to afford coverage for employees.

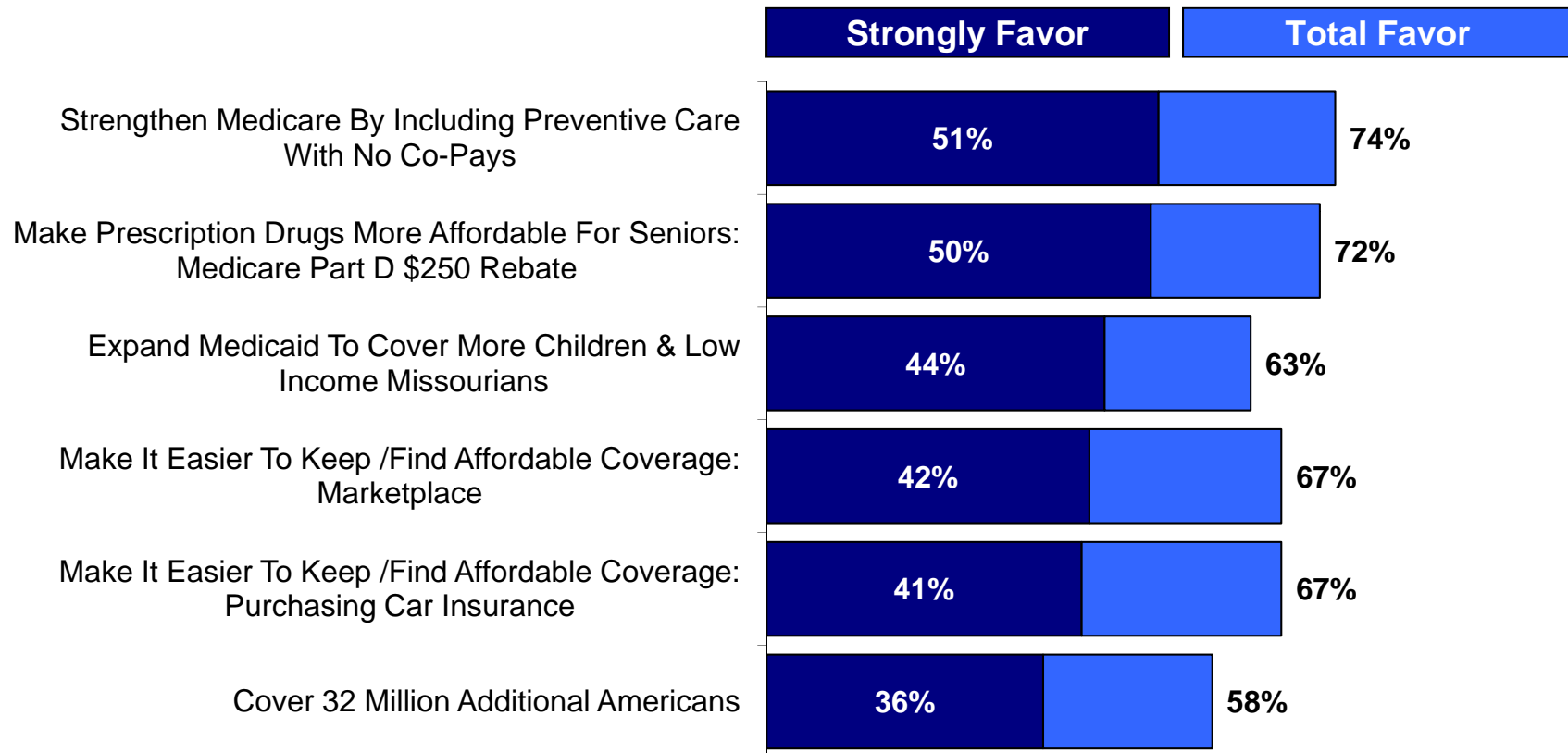
Top Tier Specific Reforms



Now, I'm going to read you some reforms that have been proposed surrounding health care. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care reform bill that was signed into law, please tell me whether you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following suggested reforms. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose, a reform that will.

The least popular reform is covering 32 million uninsured Americans. Marketplace analogies are also weaker.

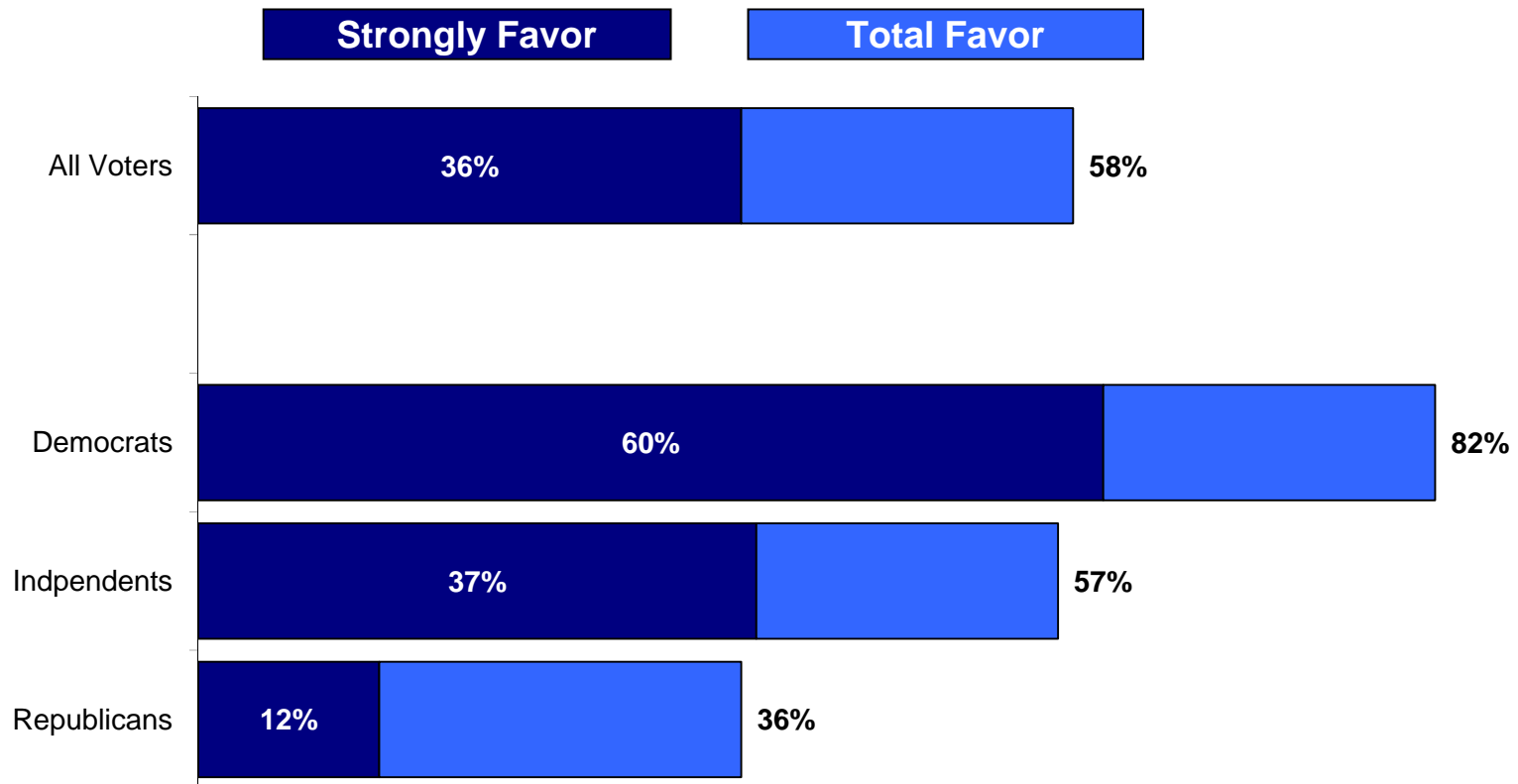
Second Tier Specific Reforms: All Voters



Now, I'm going to read you some reforms that have been proposed surrounding health care. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care reform bill that was signed into law, please tell me whether you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following suggested reforms. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose, a reform that will.

Democrats strongly favor covering 32 million Americans, but only just over half of independents favor it at all, and only a little more than one-third of Republicans agree.

Covering 32 Million Americans, by Party Identification



Across the board, voters find especially compelling that reform will allow them to keep their current plan and that it will require insurance plans to cover preventative care.

Proposed Reforms and Key Groups	Men (48%)	Women (52%)	< 55 (50%)	50-64 (31%)	65+ (27%)	Dem (32%)	Ind (27%)	Rep (36%)
Allow Individuals To Keep Their Current Health Care Plans	71%	64%	62%	66%	82%	65%	67%	69%
Require Insurance Plans To Cover Preventative Health Care	62%	68%	67%	67%	69%	76%	68%	56%
Give Small Businesses Tax Credits	65%	59%	63%	58%	65%	76%	57%	53%
Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable For Seniors: Closing The Gap	63%	59%	56%	67%	70%	74%	55%	53%
Make It Illegal To Cut Off Coverage /Have Hidden Caps	61%	55%	59%	59%	63%	70%	58%	48%
Have A Voluntary Program Where Workers Can Purchase Insurance	58%	56%	52%	63%	64%	66%	57%	50%
Protect Against Price-Gouging	57%	55%	57%	59%	59%	66%	56%	46%
Make It Illegal To Deny Care Based On Pre-Existing Conditions	50%	61%	56%	54%	55%	70%	62%	36%
Strengthen Medicare By Including Preventive Care With No Co-Pays	46%	57%	48%	56%	50%	67%	54%	37%
Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable For Seniors: \$250	49%	51%	50%	54%	45%	67%	47%	37%

****All percentages are for voters who say "strongly favor."***

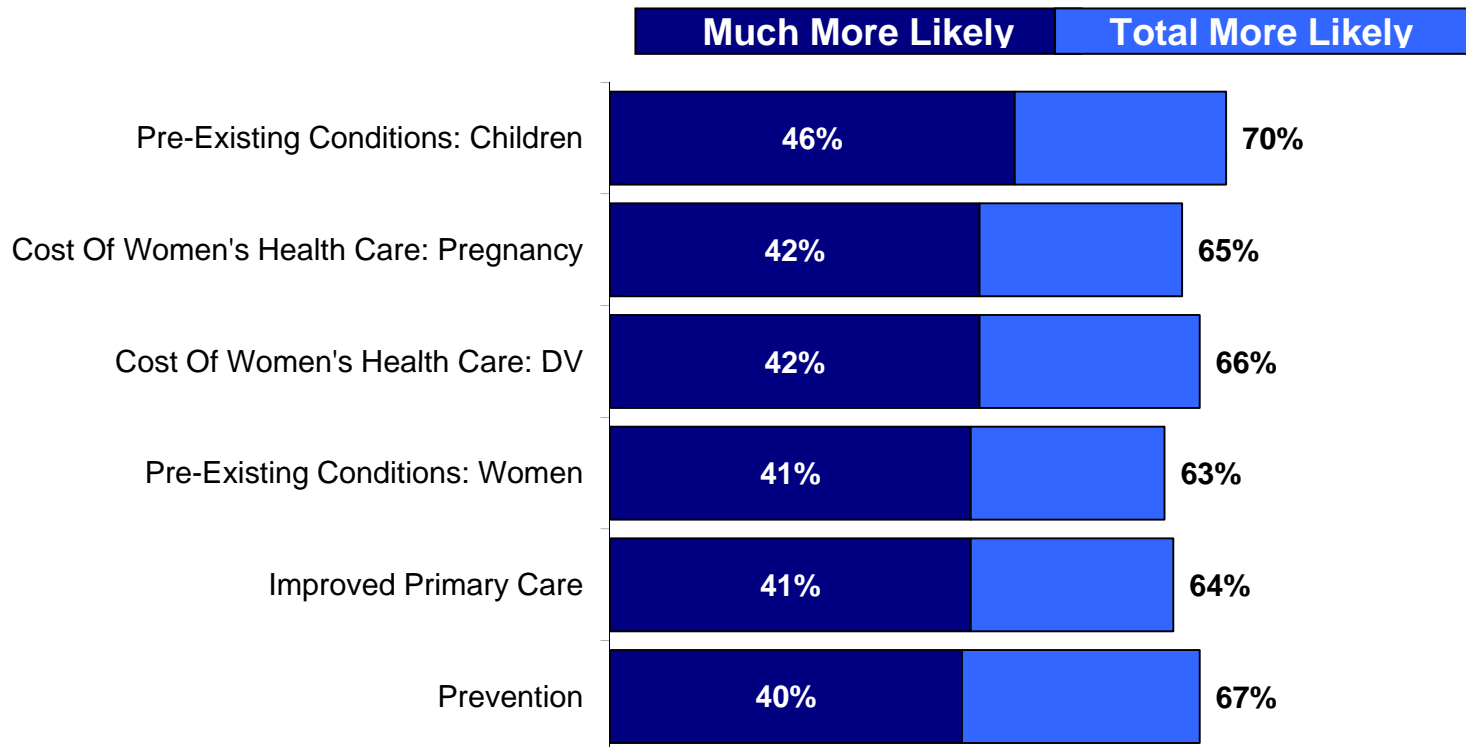
Requiring coverage of preventative care, providing tax credits for small businesses, and making prescription drugs more affordable for seniors are reforms that attract majority support in every part of the state.

Proposed Reforms and Key Groups	North (8%)	SE (9%)	SW (16%)	Cntrl (16%)	STL (33%)	KC (18%)
Allow Individuals To Keep Their Current Health Care Plans	56%	78%	74%	73%	67%	58%
Require Insurance Plans To Cover Preventative Health Care	66%	69%	62%	56%	64%	77%
Give Small Businesses Tax Credits	50%	74%	68%	54%	66%	55%
Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable For Seniors: Closing The Gap	62%	69%	59%	60%	54%	71%
Make It Illegal To Cut Off Coverage /Have Hidden Caps	55%	64%	48%	47%	62%	67%
Have A Voluntary Program Where Workers Can Purchase Insurance	63%	64%	46%	50%	55%	67%
Protect Against Price-Gouging	60%	51%	49%	40%	63%	65%
Make It Illegal To Deny Care Based On Pre-Existing Conditions	39%	44%	61%	54%	62%	53%
Strengthen Medicare By Including Preventive Care With No Co-Pays	41%	54%	50%	46%	54%	55%
Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable For Seniors: \$250	43%	58%	54%	46%	47%	54%

**All percentages are for voters who say "strongly favor."*

The most powerful reasons to support reform revolve around the moral need to cover pre-existing conditions for children and women and the economic disparities in cost of coverage for women.

Top Tier Positive Messages: All Voters



Now, I'm going to read you some statements people have made in favor of health insurance reform. Later, you will hear some statements against health insurance reform. Please tell me whether each statement I read makes you **MUCH** more likely, **SOMEWHAT** more likely, somewhat **LESS** likely, or **MUCH** less likely to support health insurance reform. If it doesn't make a difference in your opinion either way, please say so.

Likely voters respond to arguments around requiring coverage of pre-existing conditions for children and ending the practice of charging women higher rates and denying coverage for pregnancy by calling it a pre-existing condition.

Positive Messages and Key Groups	Men (48%)	Women (52%)	< 55 (50%)	50-64 (31%)	65+ (27%)	Dem (32%)	Ind (27%)	Rep (36%)
Pre-Existing Conditions: Children	44%	48%	44%	52%	52%	67%	41%	33%
Cost Of Women's Health Care: Pregnancy	37%	47%	40%	44%	44%	71%	45%	15%
Cost Of Women's Health Care: DV	40%	43%	43%	49%	39%	61%	36%	28%
Pre-Existing Conditions: Women	37%	45%	44%	38%	39%	68%	37%	20%
Improved Primary Care	38%	44%	39%	41%	49%	66%	33%	24%
Prevention	39%	41%	40%	50%	39%	65%	38%	21%
Lifetime Caps	36%	41%	41%	37%	38%	62%	40%	17%
Healthy Generation	34%	42%	37%	40%	44%	64%	25%	23%
Medicare: Reimbursements	35%	39%	33%	44%	39%	63%	33%	19%
Small Business	36%	37%	32%	40%	41%	57%	32%	20%
Increased Competition In Small Towns	35%	37%	35%	36%	36%	58%	35%	16%
Insurance Companies	33%	35%	37%	39%	31%	54%	34%	17%
Medicaid Expansion	31%	35%	31%	40%	33%	55%	30%	15%
Rural Access	27%	29%	25%	33%	30%	49%	22%	15%

*All percentages are for voters who say "much more likely."

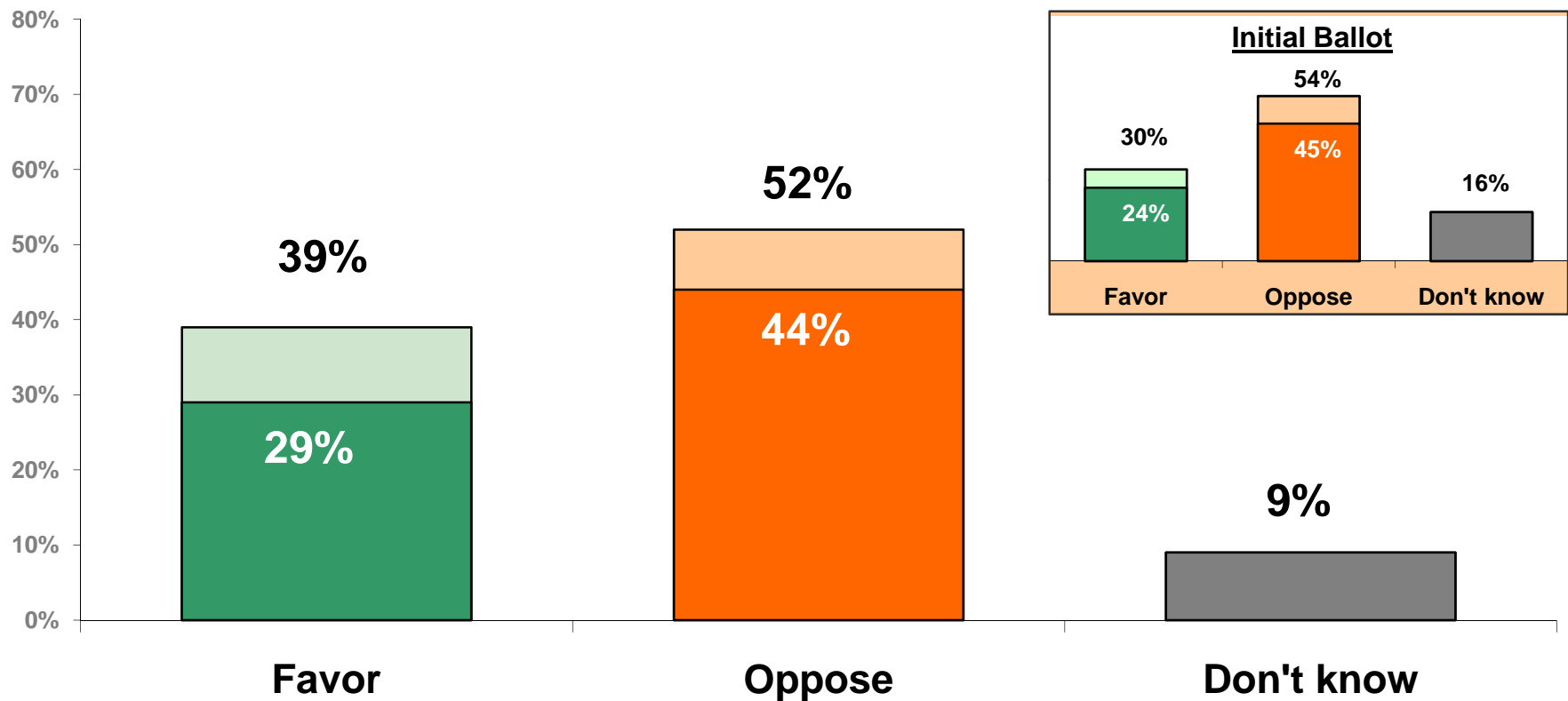
Across nearly every region, likely voters respond most to messages around covering pre-existing conditions and ending costly discrimination against women.

Positive Messages and Key Groups	North (8%)	SE (9%)	SW (16%)	Cntrl (16%)	STL (33%)	KC (18%)
Pre-Existing Conditions: Children	38%	44%	41%	35%	54%	54%
Cost Of Women's Health Care: Pregnancy	35%	31%	39%	45%	44%	48%
Cost Of Women's Health Care: DV	41%	38%	29%	30%	52%	46%
Pre-Existing Conditions: Women	35%	34%	36%	46%	45%	40%
Improved Primary Care	40%	46%	33%	28%	48%	45%
Prevention	37%	42%	36%	33%	50%	31%
Lifetime Caps	40%	35%	24%	51%	40%	40%
Healthy Generation	34%	42%	28%	30%	40%	49%
Medicare: Reimbursements	30%	33%	31%	45%	39%	36%
Small Business	28%	31%	40%	42%	37%	35%
Increased Competition In Small Towns	25%	30%	37%	42%	36%	38%
Insurance Companies	34%	37%	22%	25%	41%	38%
Medicaid Expansion	22%	24%	31%	49%	30%	34%
Rural Access	21%	27%	18%	22%	38%	29%

*All percentages are for voters who say "much more likely."

After voters hear positive and negative information about the reform law, opposition goes back above fifty percent, while support is elevated from the initial ballot.

Final Ballot – Support for Health Care Reform Law



Darker colors indicate intensity

Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law passed by Congress, or aren't you sure? [IF FAVOR / OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not-so-strongly?]

Survey Methods

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. The survey polled a total of 800 likely General Election voters in Missouri, including oversamples of 100 voters in North Missouri and 100 voters in Southeast Missouri. The survey was conducted August 24 through August 29, 2010.
- Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a file of registered voters. The sample was stratified geographically to reflect the expected turnout of voters in the 2010 General Election. The data were weighted slightly by age, education, gender, race, and party identification.
- The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 4.0%.

