

# Survey of Los Altos School District Voters

## Presentation Of Bond Measure Survey Findings

Prepared for  
Los Altos School District  
July 2012



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# Methodology

- ▶ Telephone Survey of likely November 2012 Voters in Los Altos School District
- ▶ 402 completed interviews
- ▶ Margin of error  $\pm 4.89\%$  points
- ▶ Conducted July 5-9, 2012
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with:
  - ▶ Survey of Los Altos School District Voters Presentation Of Bond Measure Survey Findings
    - ▶ **April 23-28, 2012**
    - ▶ **n=500; Margin of Error= $\pm 4.38\%$  pts**
  - ▶ EMC Research Telephone Survey of Likely 2010 Special Election Voters
    - ▶ **December 1-6, 2010**
    - ▶ **n=400; Margin of Error= $\pm 4.9\%$  pts**

*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%*

# Key Findings

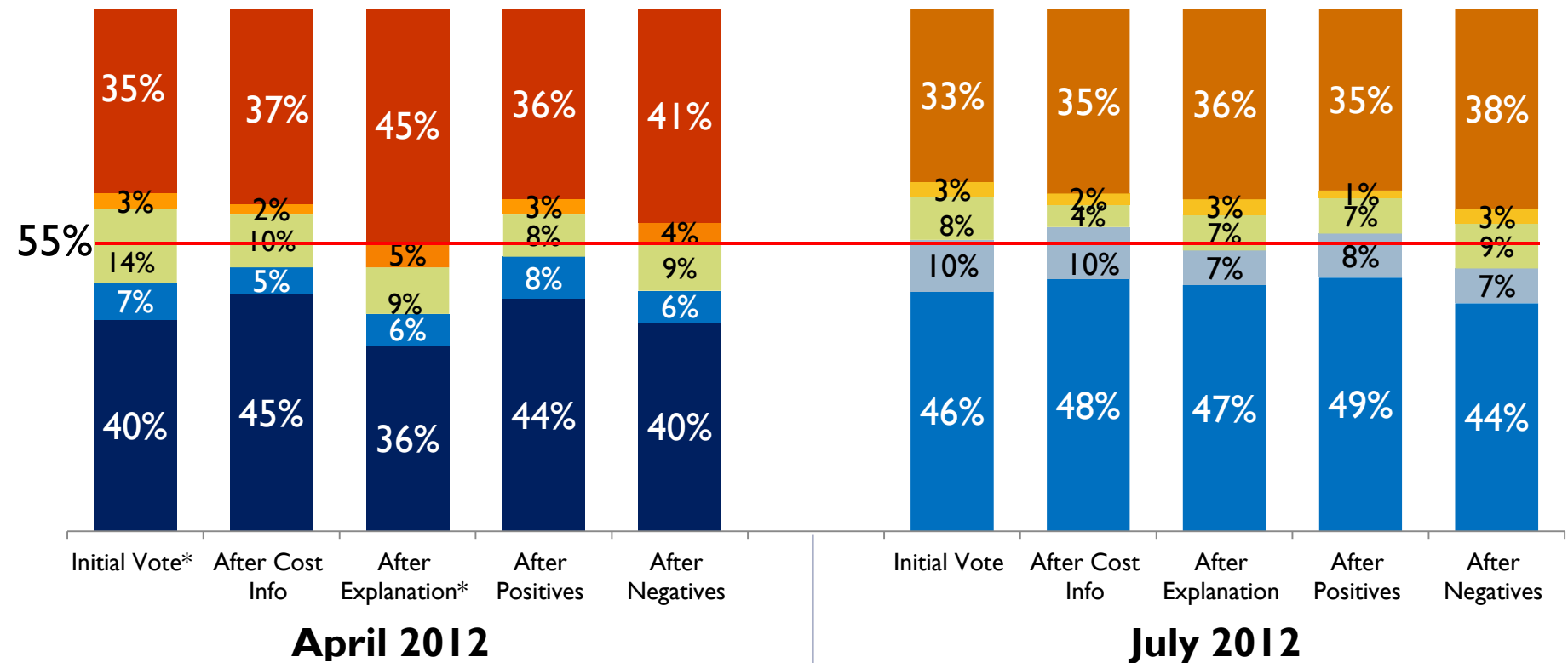
- Awareness of the need for space is higher than in the April Poll.
- Support for the bond, with stronger ballot language, is higher than in April. But, still starts at only 46% yes + 10% lean yes.
- After additional messaging support reaches only 57% including those that “lean yes”.
- Support among LASD parents is higher than in the baseline, but is not high enough to counter low support from non parents.

# Vote Summaries From Both Polls

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*If the election were held today would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a bond measure for Los Altos school district?*

■ Yes, approve    ■ Lean Yes    ■ (Undecided)    ■ Lean No    ■ No, reject



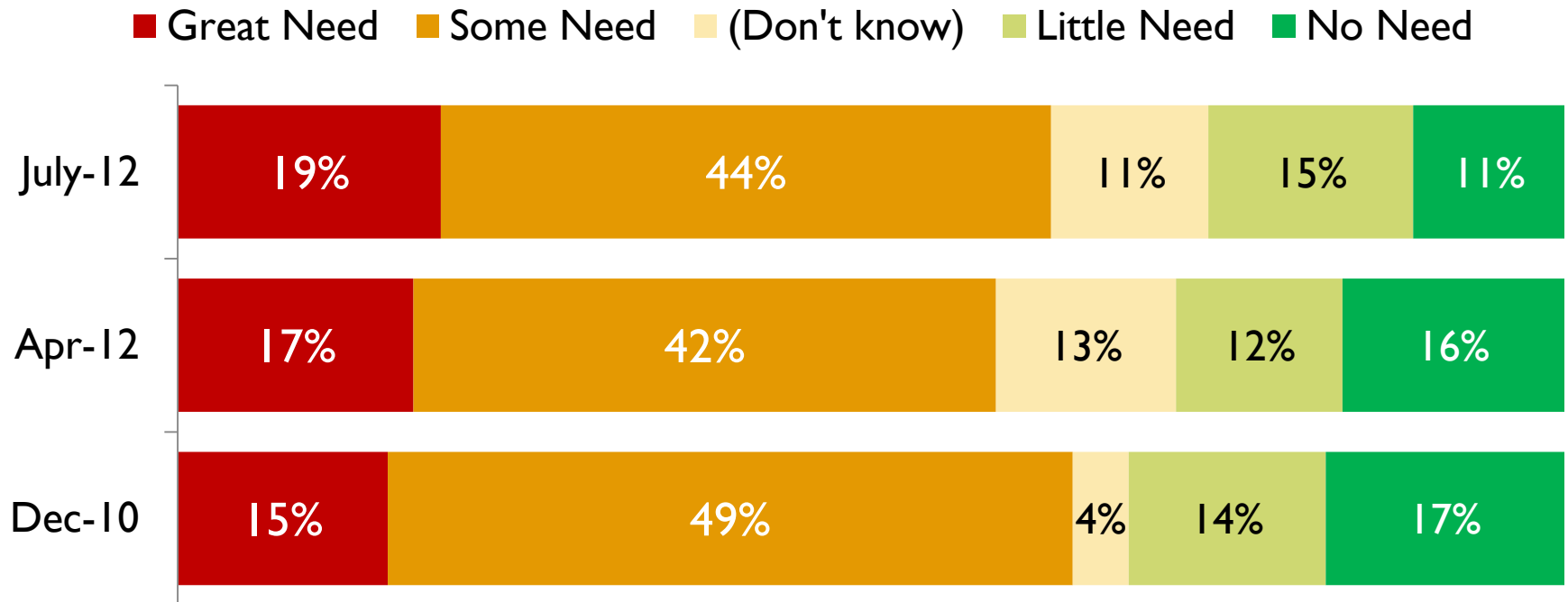
*\*The ballot question and provided explanations varied in the April and July polls*

# Issue Environment

# Awareness of the District's need for more money has not changed significantly

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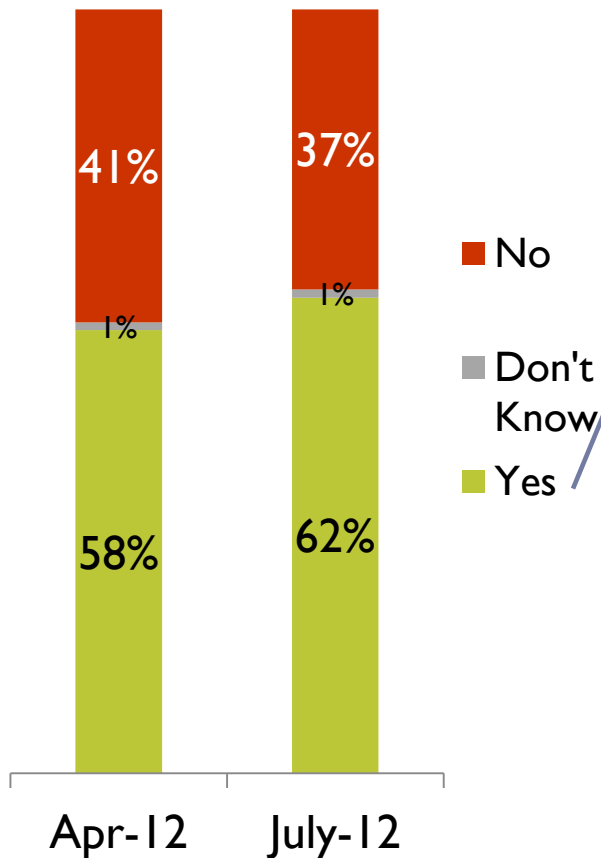
*Would you say that the elementary and junior high schools in the Los Altos School District have a great need for more money, some need, a little need or no real need for more money? (Q4)*



# More voters mention the need for a new school

7

*Have you heard or seen anything recently about the Los Altos School District? (Q5)*



If Yes, What have you heard?	Apr-2012 (n=289) %	July-2012 (n=253) %
Issues/Problems/Disputes with (Bullis) Charter School (unspecific)	26	16
Need more space/funding for new Charter School site/a 10 <sup>th</sup> campus	23	38
Budget/Financial issues/Funding is needed	15	8
Bond/Ballot measure/Parcel tax	10	6
Lawsuit/Legal problems with Charter School	7	11
General/Local information (i.e. from my kids)	3	3
Good schools/academics/programs/Top performing District	3	6
Increased class sizes	2	0
Other	10	12

# 41% of all voters have top-of-mind awareness about Bullis or the space issue when thinking of LASD

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*Awareness Segmentation based on responses to Q5 and Q6*

- Aware: Mentioned Bullis Charter School/ Need for New School/Lawsuits
- Not Aware: Did Not Mention Bullis or Did Not Hear Anything about LASD Recently

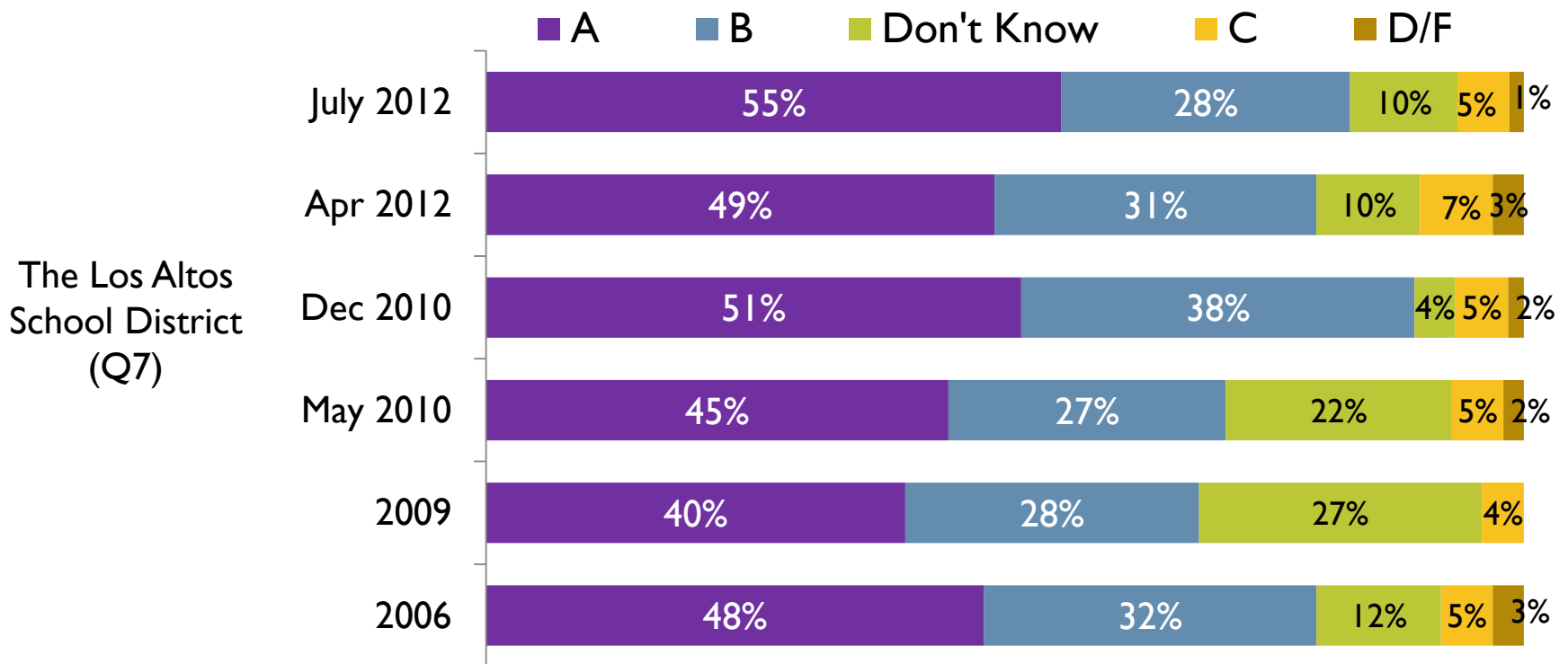
41%

59%

# Voters continue to give LASD high ratings

9

*Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools in your community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the Los Altos School District? (Q7)*



*Note: There were fewer “Don’t Know” responses in the 2010 survey due to slightly different surveying protocol.*

Voters' attitudes toward the bond  
measure

# Comparison of April and July Ballot Language

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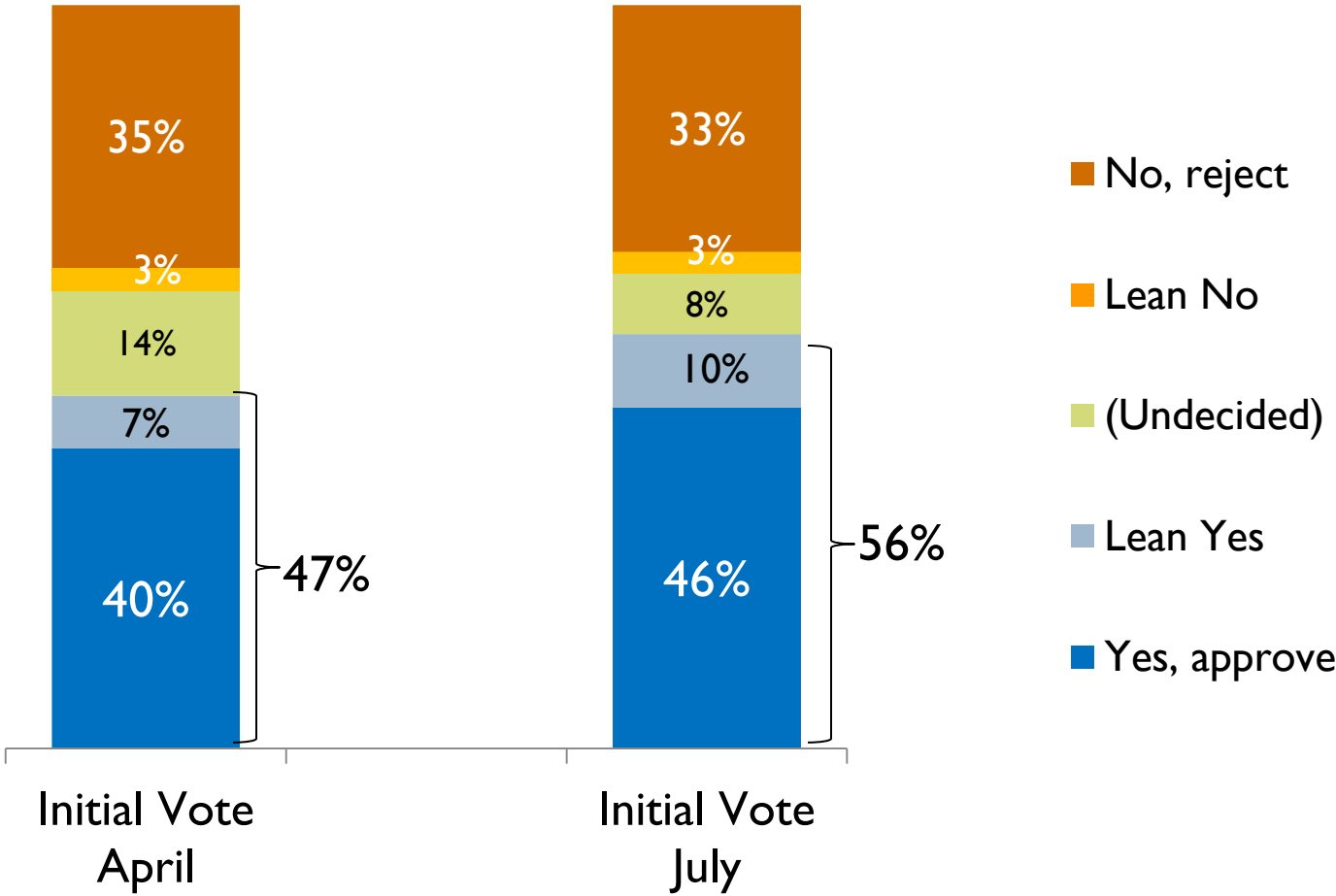
## April 2012

*To support academic programs for local students **by providing up to date educational facilities, ensuring student access to updated classrooms, technology, computer labs and school libraries, repairing existing classrooms and acquiring, constructing or equipping additional facilities and sites,** shall the Los Altos School District issue \$120 million in bonds at legal rates with citizens oversight, annual audits and no money for administrator salaries.*

## July 2012

*To support academic programs for local students, **avoid overcrowding at schools, keep schools clean, safe and well-maintained, provide updated learning technology, provide updated classrooms and labs, support small neighborhood schools, and acquire, construct or equip additional facilities and sites,** shall the Los Altos School District issue \$120 million in bonds at legal rates with citizens oversight, audits and no money for administrator salaries.*

Initial support for the measure is higher than it was in April, but still not significantly over the 55% minimum threshold

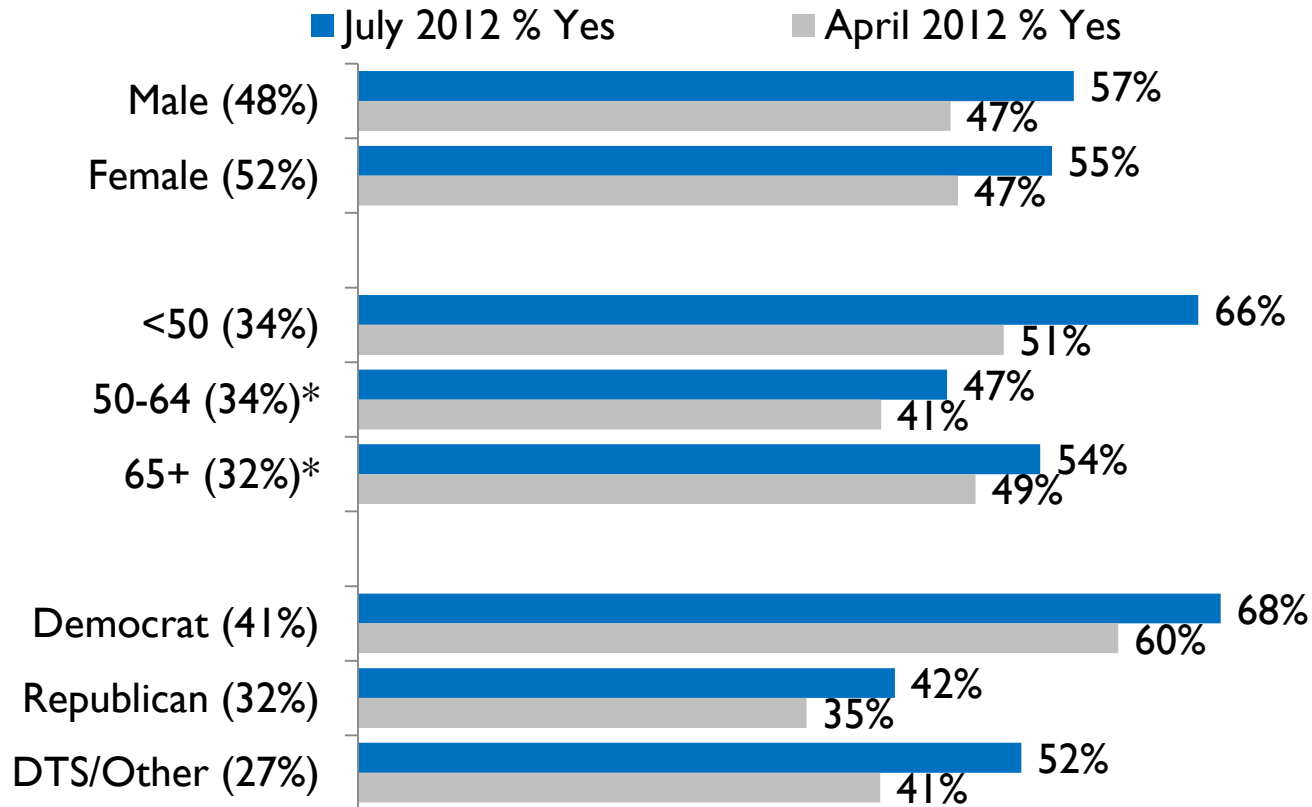


*Note: The ballot language in the July survey was different than the ballot language tested in April and incorporated voters' top priorities as identified in April polling.*

# Support for the measure is higher among all demographic groups, possibly as a result of stronger ballot language

13

*Comparison of July Initial Vote (Q8) to April Initial Vote among Demographic groups. The ballot language in the July survey was different than the ballot language tested in April and incorporated voters' top priorities as identified in April polling.*



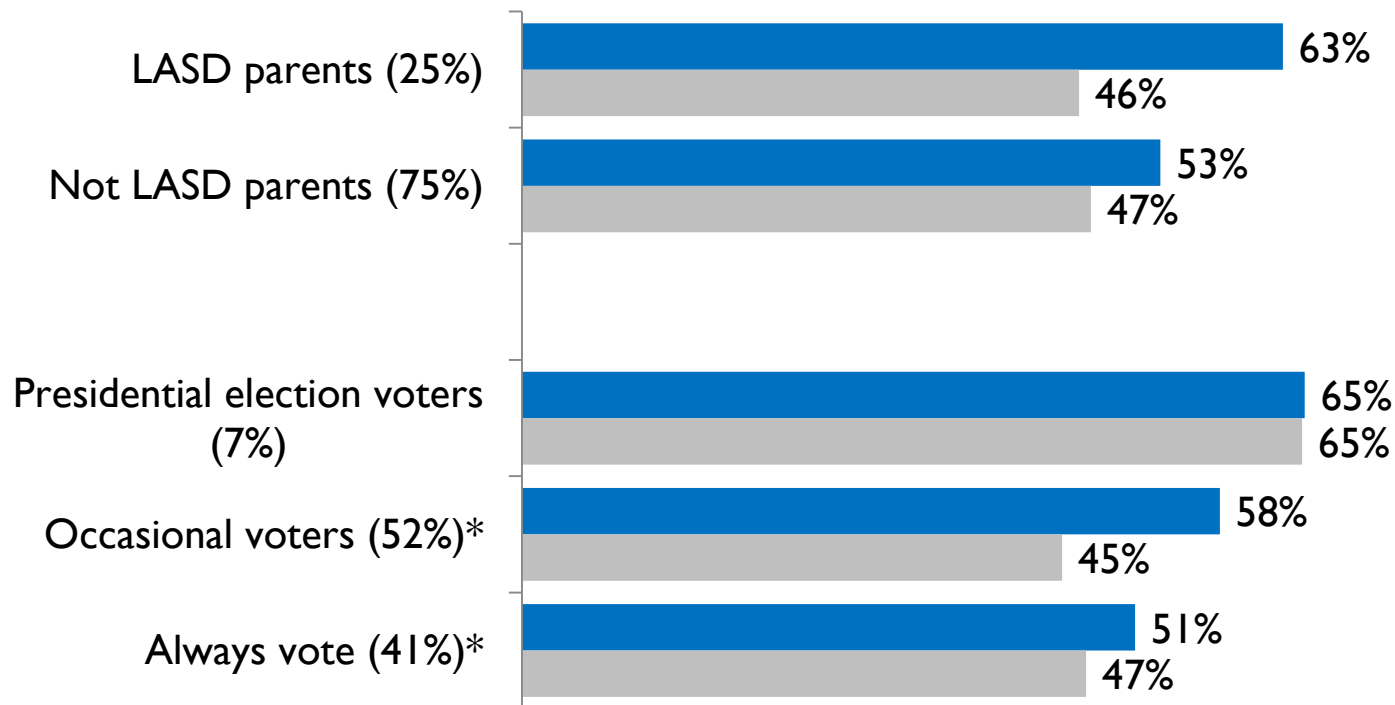
*\*In April, 50-64 year-olds were 33% and 65+ were 33%*

# Support for the measure is especially higher among LASD parents

14

*Comparison of July Initial Vote (Q8) to April Initial Vote among Demographic groups. The ballot language in the July survey was different than the ballot language tested in April and incorporated voters' top priorities as identified in April polling.*

■ July 2012 % Yes      ■ April 2012 % Yes

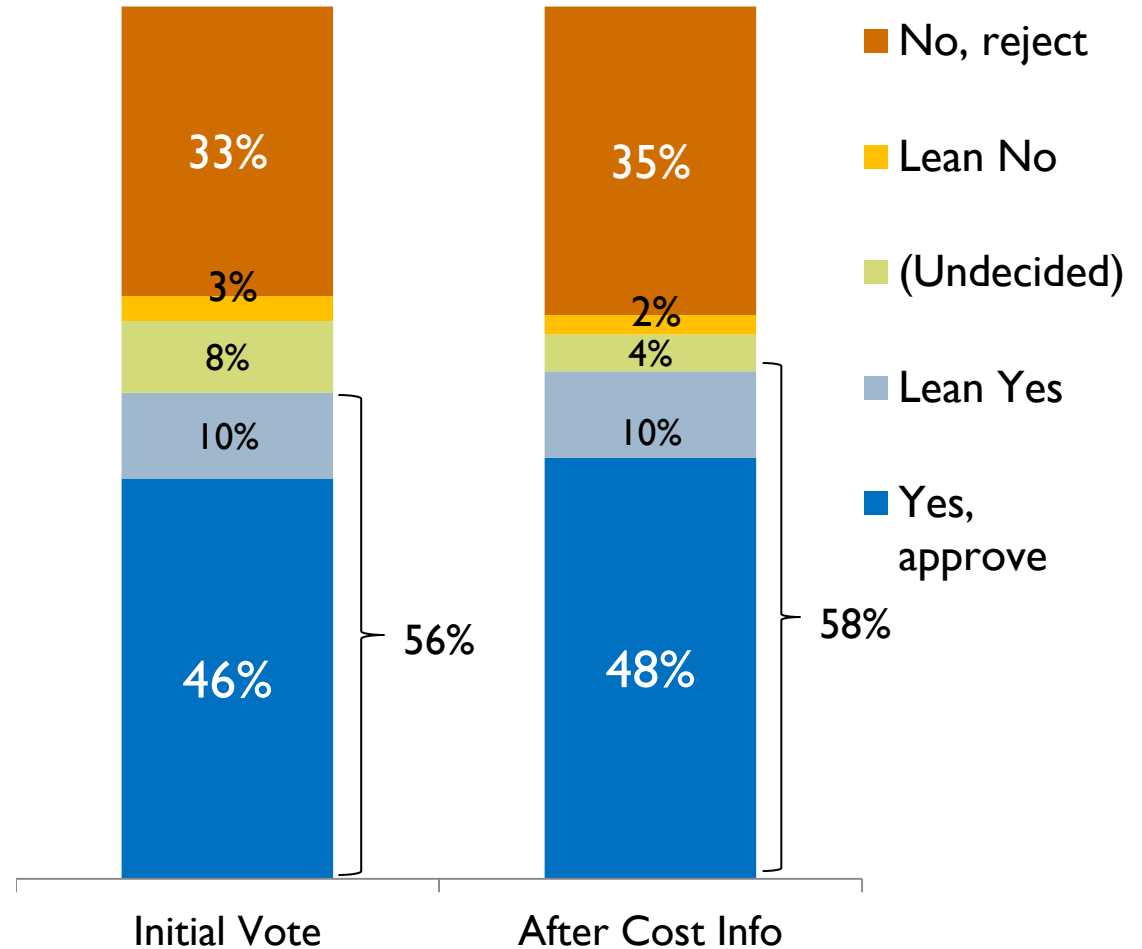


*\*In April, Occasional Voters were 57% and Always Vote were 37%*

# The cost has very little impact

15

*And knowing that the measure will cost property owners a rate not-to-exceed \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed property value annually, NOT market value, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q9: **vote 2**)*

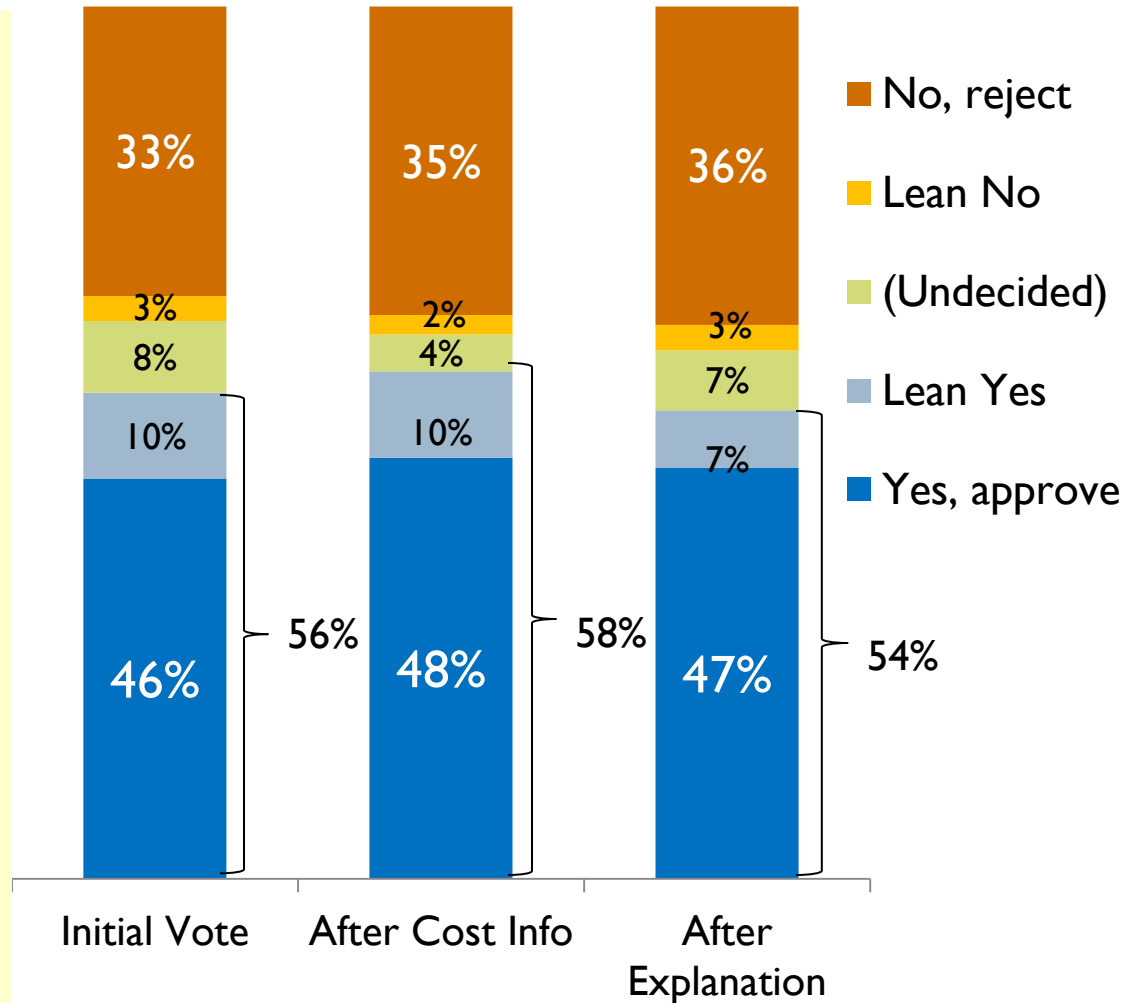


# Support drops slightly after voters hear the reason for the measure

16

*As you may know, there are nine neighborhood schools and one charter school within the Los Altos School District. These ten schools are currently housed on nine school sites, with Bullis Charter School sharing a location with Egan Junior High School. This bond measure would provide each school with its own site. And, it would update computer labs, learning technology and school libraries at existing school sites.*

*Given what you've heard, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject the proposed bond measure for Los Altos School District? (Q10: **vote 3**)*

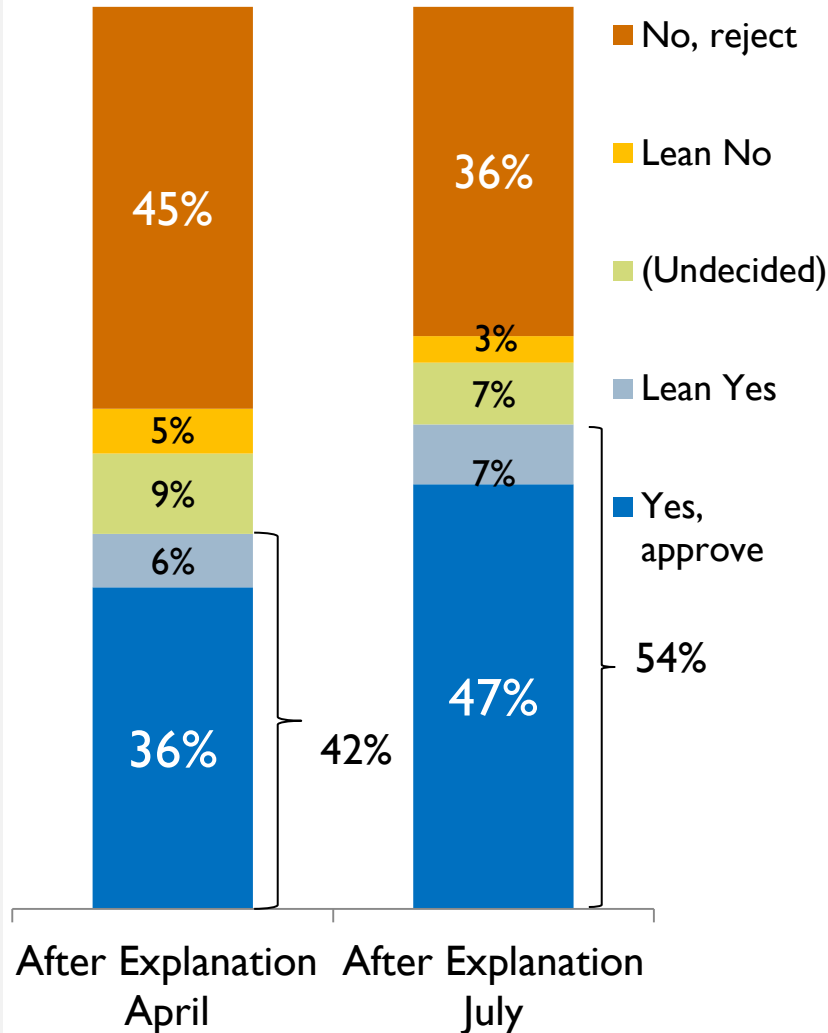


# The April explanation mentioned building a new school – possibly why opposition was higher in that poll

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## APRIL

As you may know, there are nine neighborhood schools and one charter school within the Los Altos School District. These ten schools are currently housed on nine school sites, with Bullis Charter School sharing a location with Egan Junior High School. This bond measure **would allow the District to build a new school in order to continue fulfilling the requirement of providing reasonably equivalent school facilities for all schools.** It would also update computer labs, learning technology and school libraries at existing school sites.



## JULY

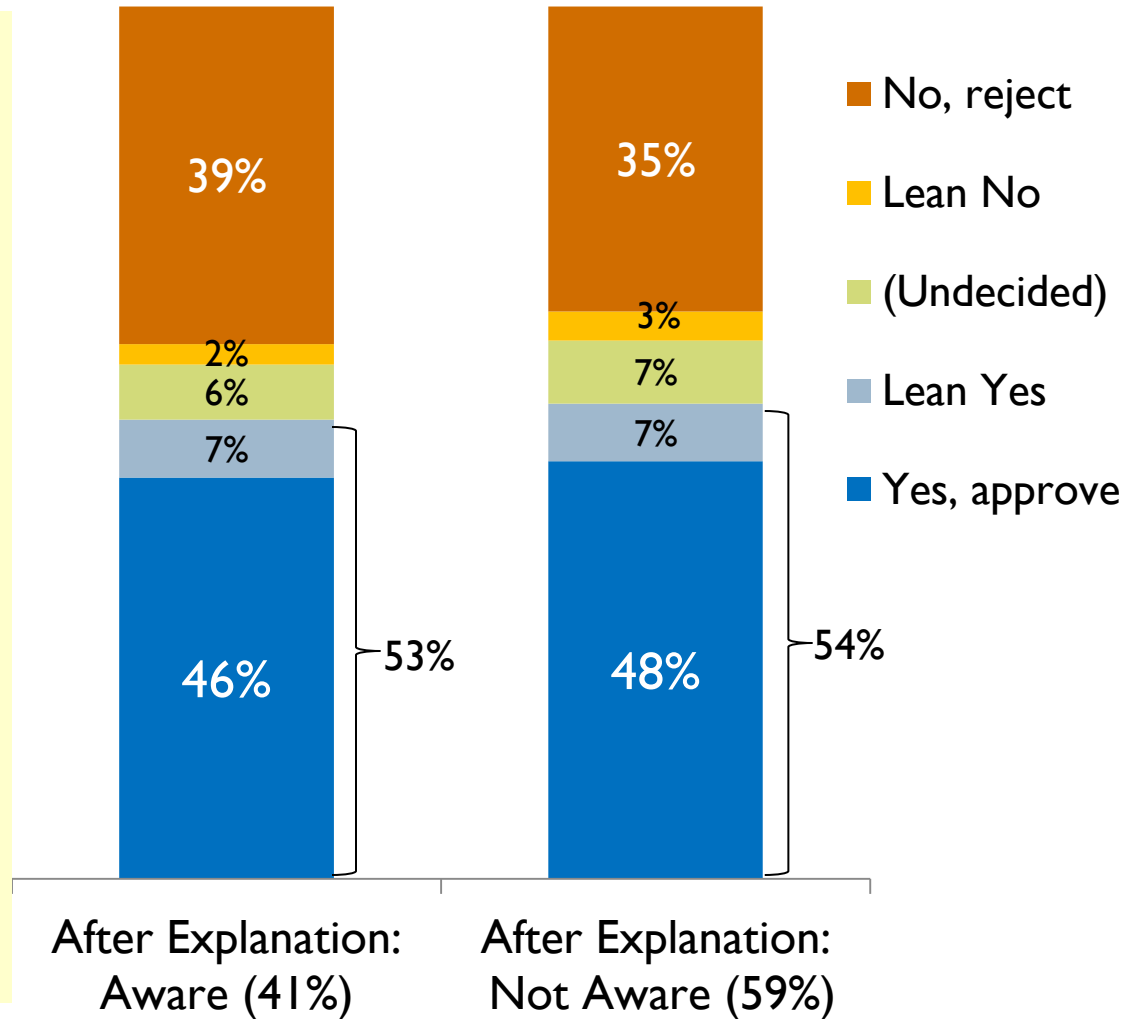
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# After hearing the explanation, there is no significant difference between voters that were already aware of the situation and voters that did not indicate prior awareness

18

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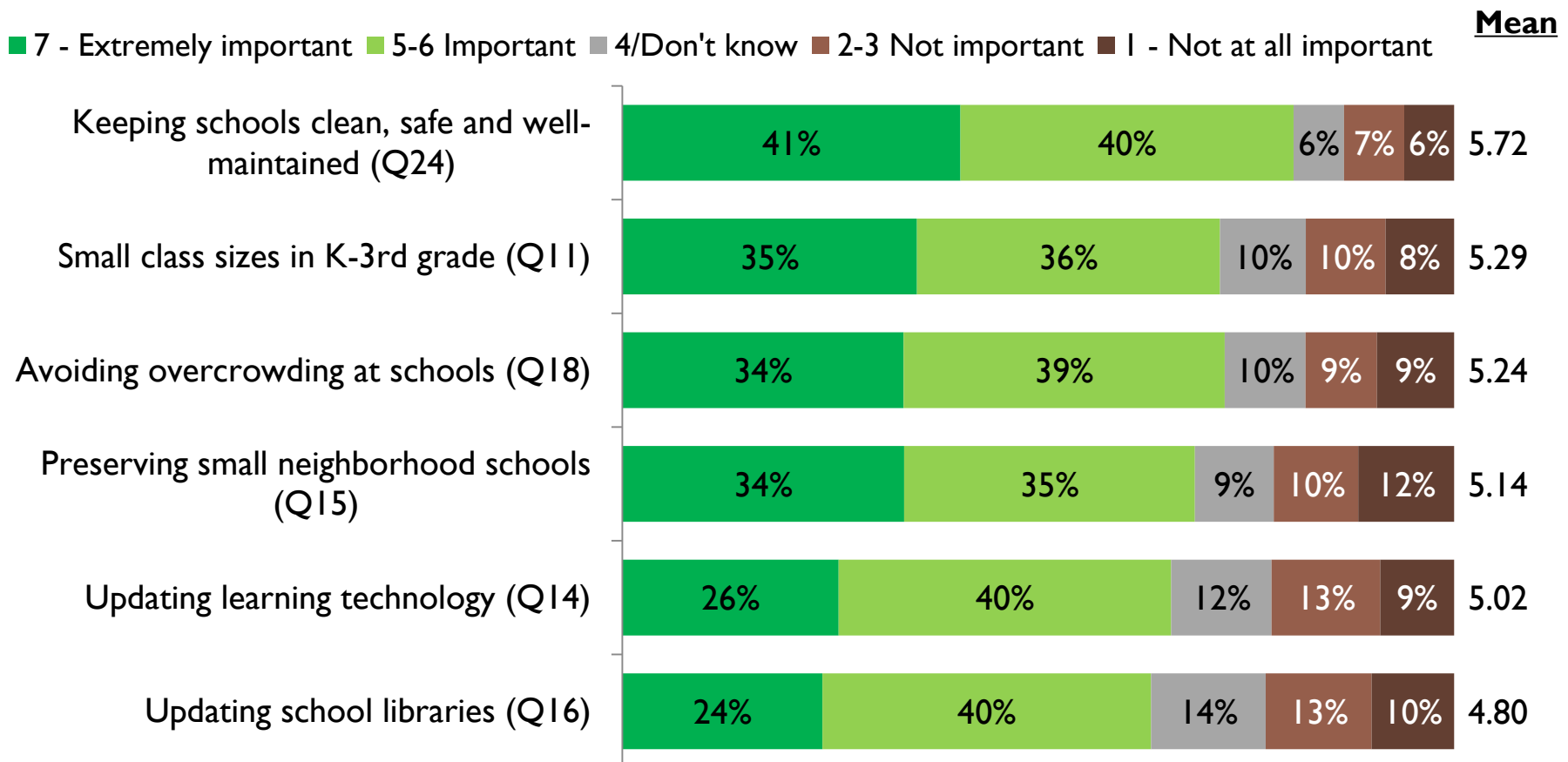
*Given what you've heard, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject the proposed bond measure for Los Altos School District? (Q10: **vote 3**)*



# Many bond projects are important to voters but with low intensity

19

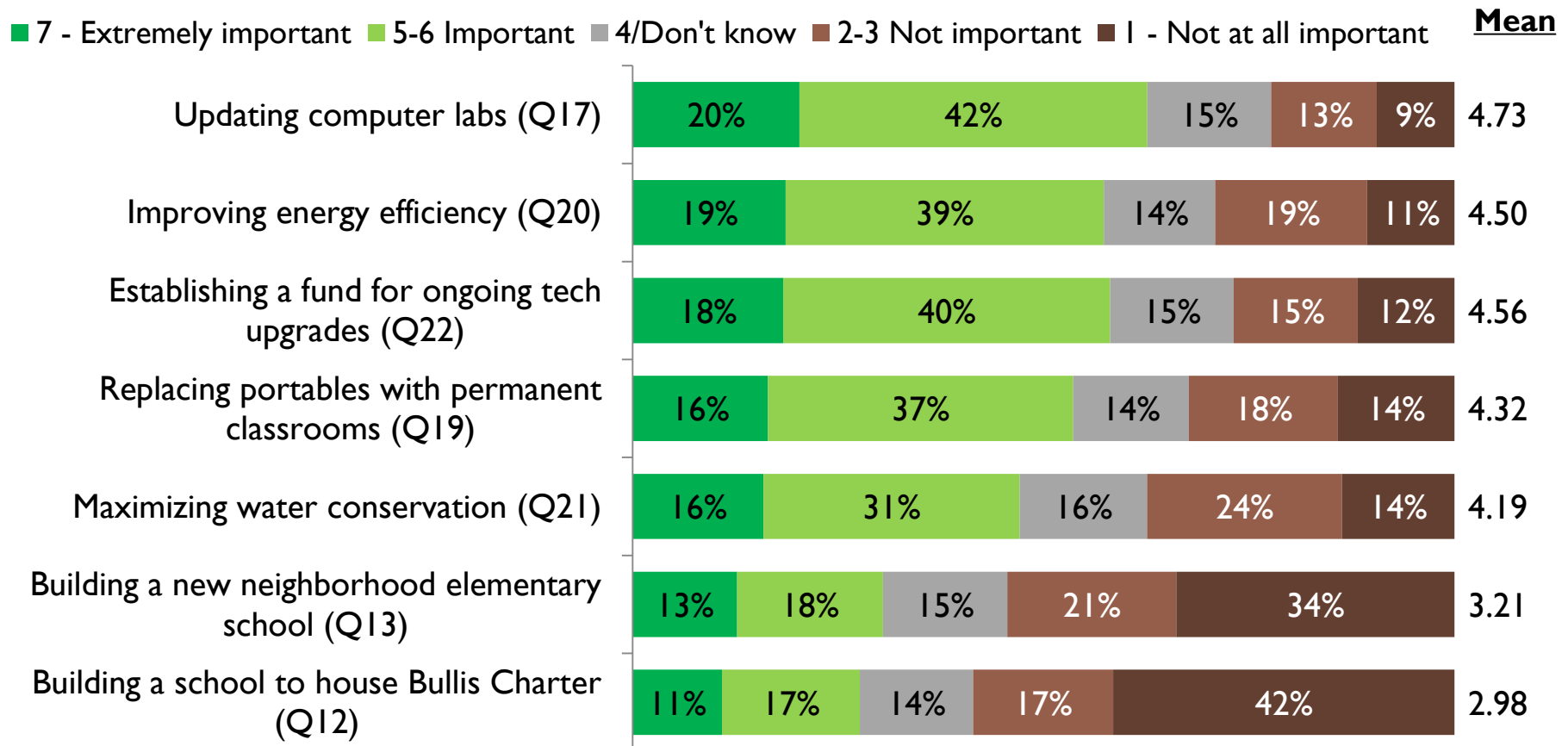
*I'm going to read you some specific programs that could be supported by the Los Altos School District bond measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not at all important and seven is extremely important, please tell me your opinion of each. (Q11-Q24)*



# However, more than 45% think building a new school is not important

20

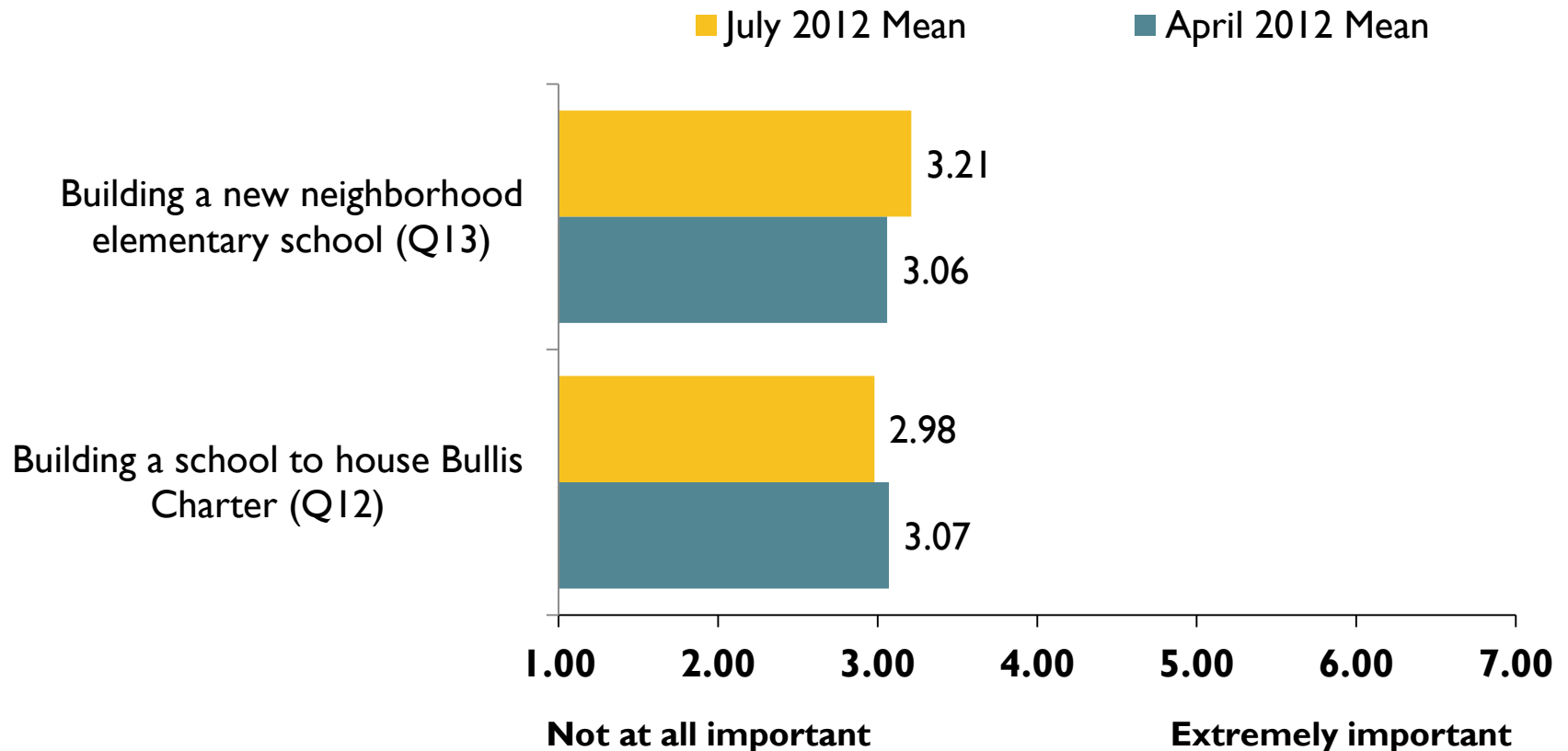
*I'm going to read you some specific programs that could be supported by the Los Altos School District bond measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not at all important and seven is extremely important, please tell me your opinion of each. (Q11-Q24)*



# Attitudes about building a new school are unchanged compared to the April poll

21

*I'm going to read you some specific programs that could be supported by the Los Altos School District bond measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not at all important and seven is extremely important, please tell me your opinion of each. (Q11-Q24)*

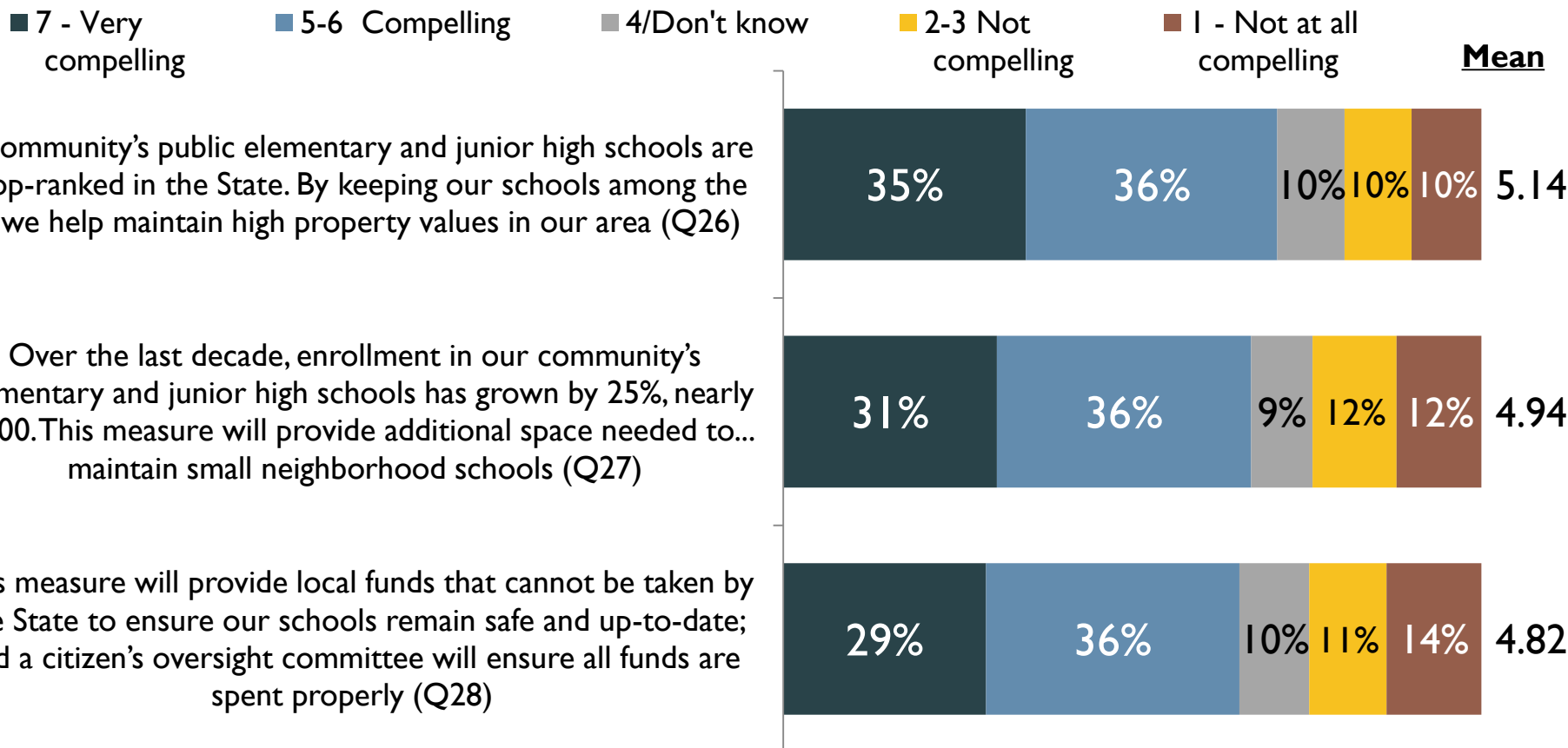


# Messaging

# Messages about school quality and maintaining high property values are at least somewhat compelling

23

Now, I'm going to read you some things people have said in support of the proposed bond measure for the Los Altos School District. For each statement please tell me how compelling this is as a reason to support a school bond measure. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to support the measure. (Q25-Q30)



# Finding a solution and ending the dispute is not compelling for many

24

Now, I'm going to read you some things people have said in support of the proposed bond measure for the Los Altos School District. For each statement please tell me how compelling this is as a reason to support a school bond measure. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to support the measure. (Q25-Q30)

■ 7 - Very compelling

■ 5-6 Compelling

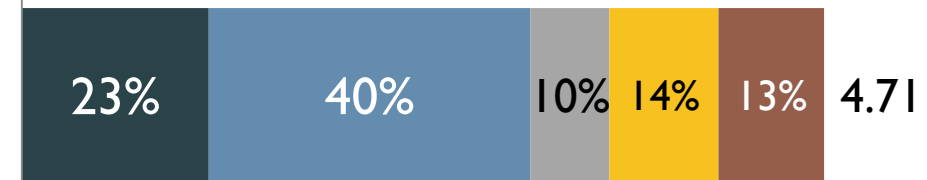
■ 4/Don't know

■ 2-3 Not compelling

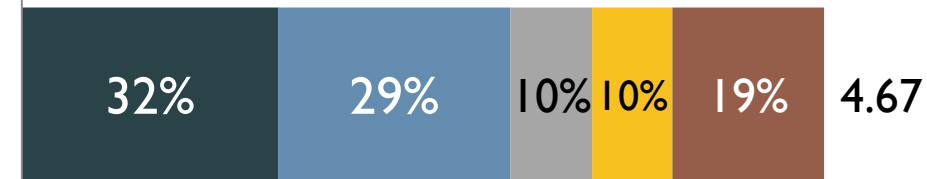
■ 1 - Not at all compelling

**Mean**

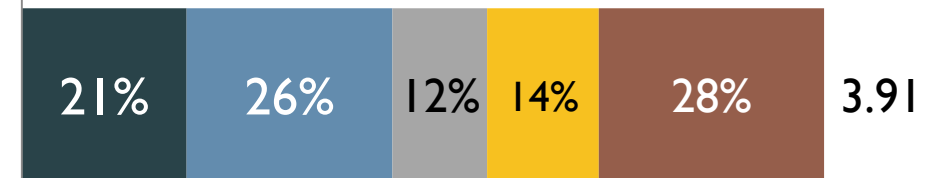
This measure will allow the district to upgrade school libraries, computers and learning technology so that our students are prepared to excel in the twenty-first century (Q29)



This bond will allow the District to avoid closing a neighborhood school (Q30)

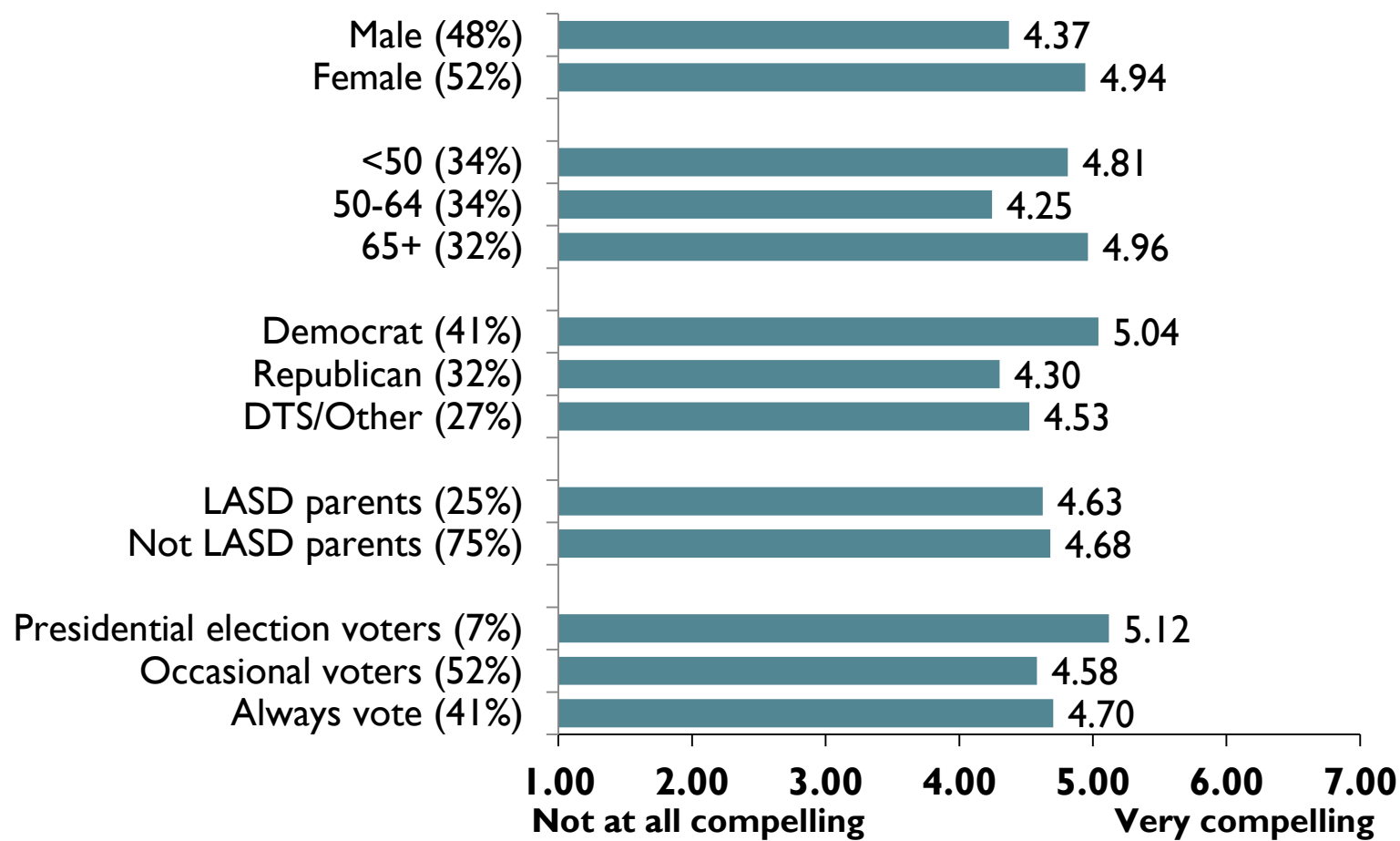


The Los Altos District and Bullis Charter School have been in a legal dispute about space for the charter school. This measure will provide a long term solution for all students and end the dispute that has cost the schools time, resources and money (Q25)



# LASD parents are not necessarily compelled by avoiding the closure of a neighborhood school

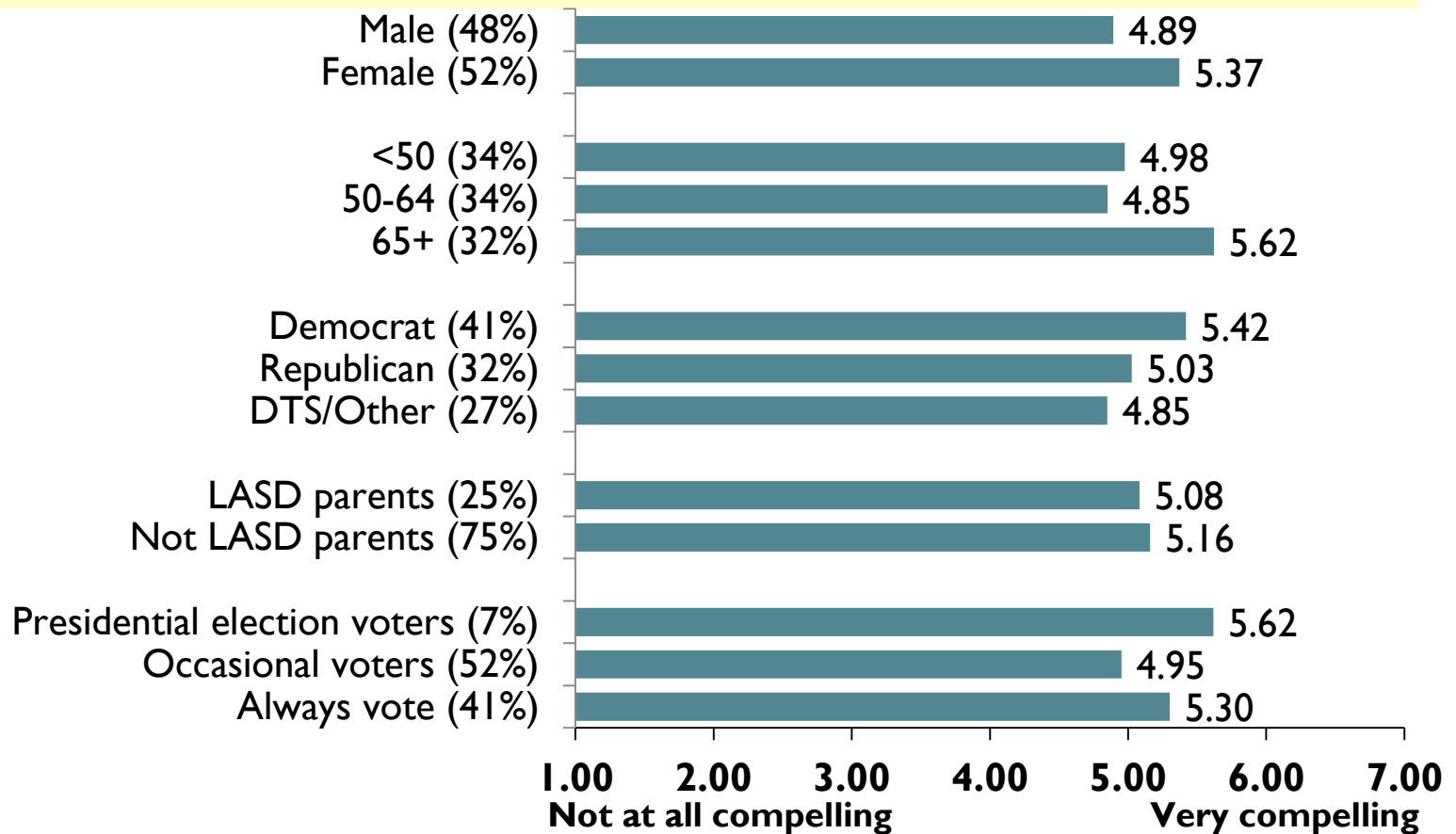
....This bond will allow the District to avoid closing a neighborhood school (Q30)



# Older voters are very compelled by messages about maintaining high property values

26

**....Our community's public elementary and junior high schools are the top-ranked in the State. By keeping our schools among the best, we help maintain high property values in our area (Q26)**

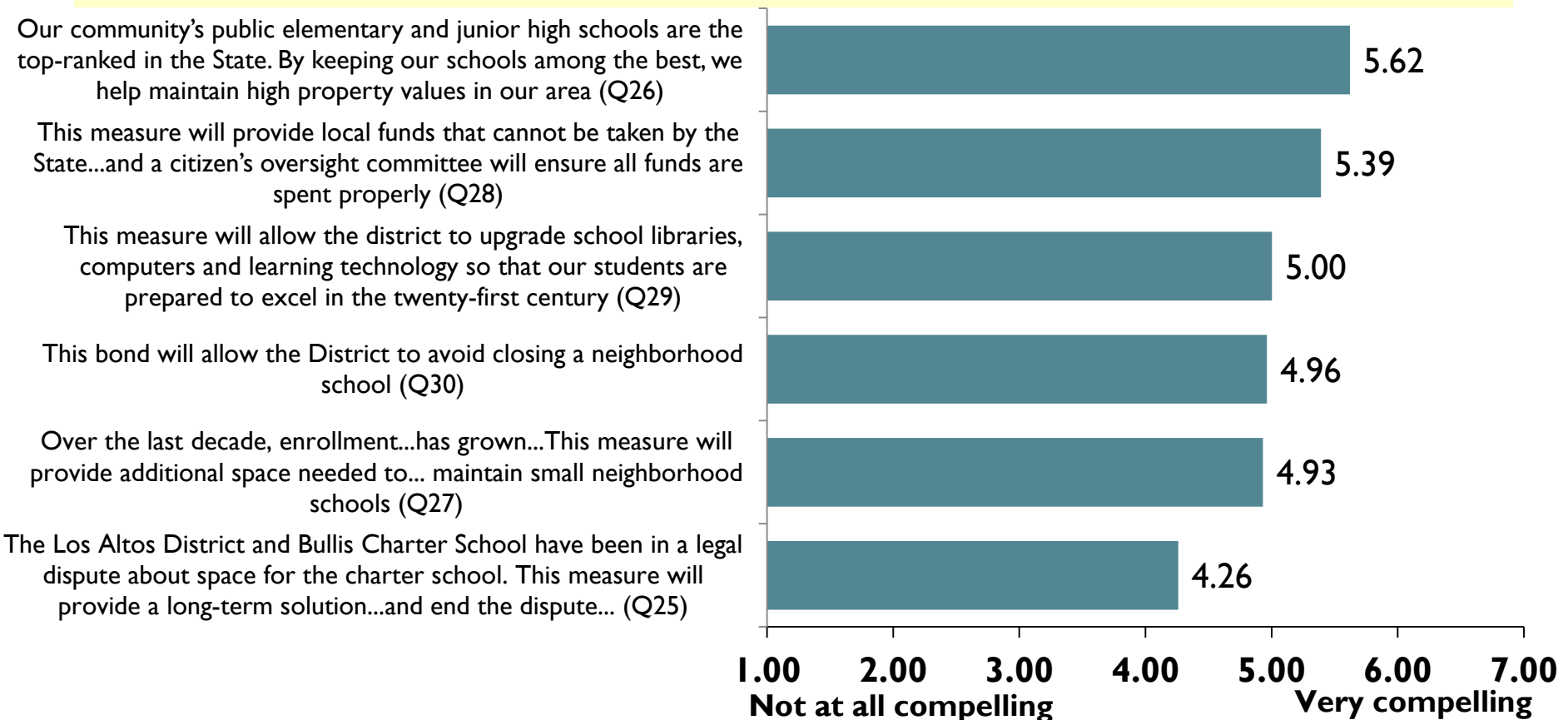


# While messages about property values are most compelling to older voters, other messages are also compelling

27

*For each statement please tell me how compelling this is as a reason to support a school bond measure. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to support the measure. (Q25-Q30)*

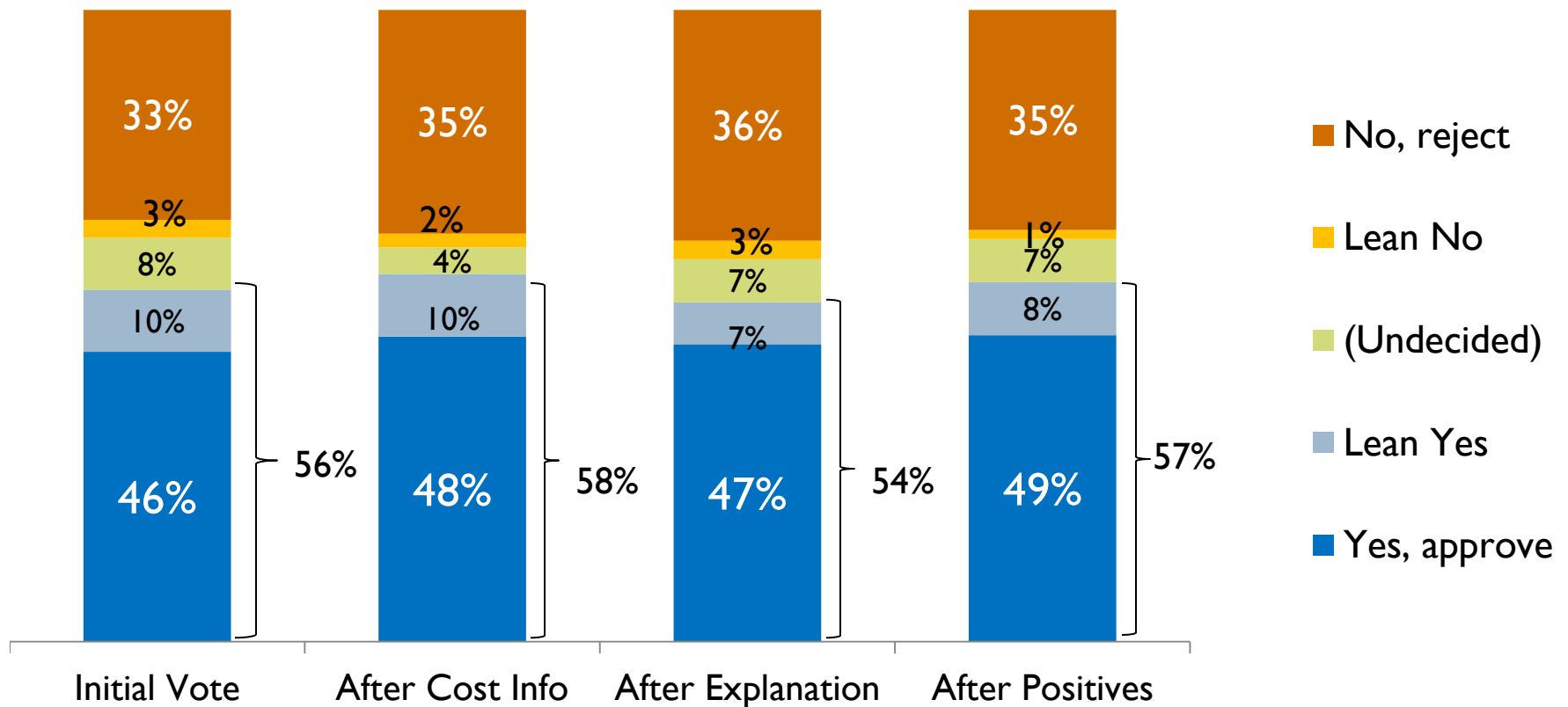
**65+ (n=142)**



# Hearing potential projects and positive messages does not significantly increase support

28

*Given what you've heard, if the election were held today would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads... (Q31)*

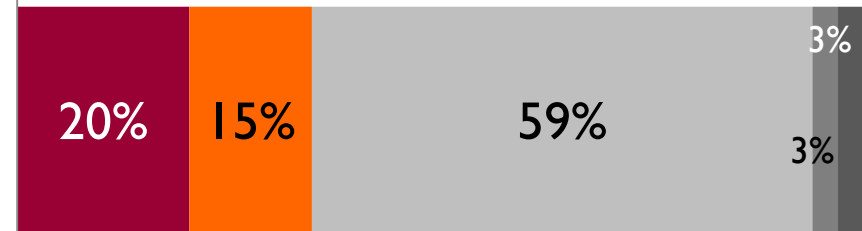


# Over a third find potential opponent messages about the charter school to be persuasive

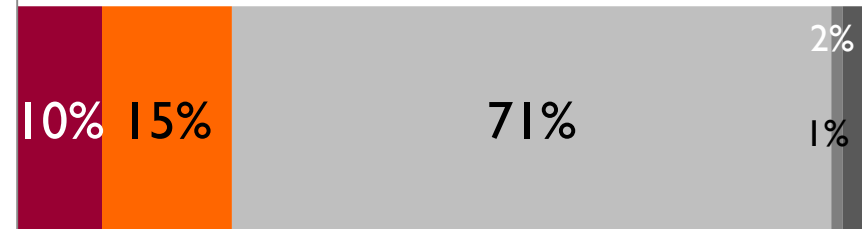
29

■ Much less likely    ■ Somewhat less likely    ■ No difference    ■ (More likely to vote for measure)    ■ (Don't Know/Refused)

Some people say it is fiscally irresponsible for LASD to spend \$120M to build another school...Besides, Bullis Charter School has been...divisive...The charter school should pay for its own facility, not taxpayers. (Q32)



Some people say that now is just not the right time...With the bad economy and so many people out of work, we just can't afford it. Plus there are already 2 other tax increase measures for education on the ballot...(Q33)

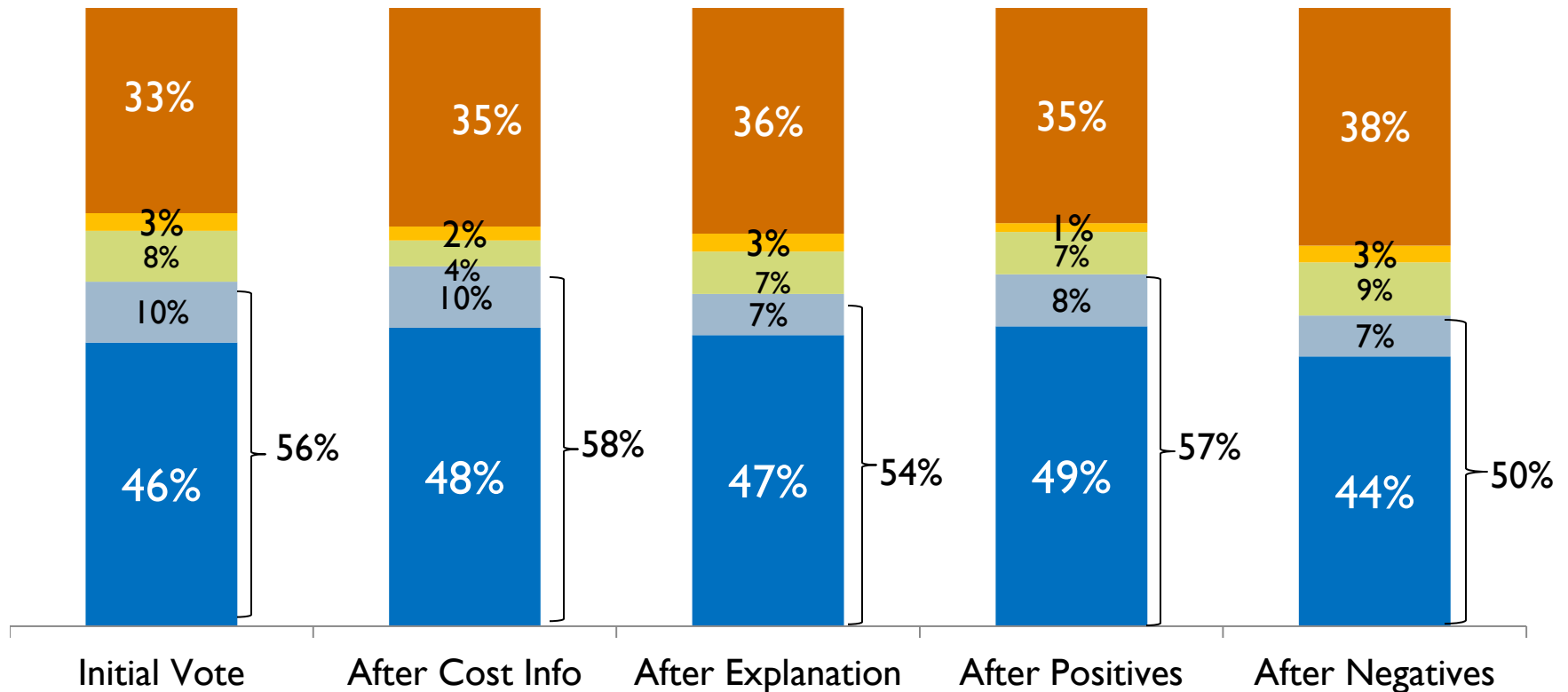


# Only half of voters vote Yes or lean Yes after hearing potential opponent messages

30

*Now, given all that you've heard, if the election were held today would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a bond measure for Los Altos school district (Q34)*

■ Yes, approve ■ Lean Yes ■ (Undecided) ■ Lean No ■ No, reject

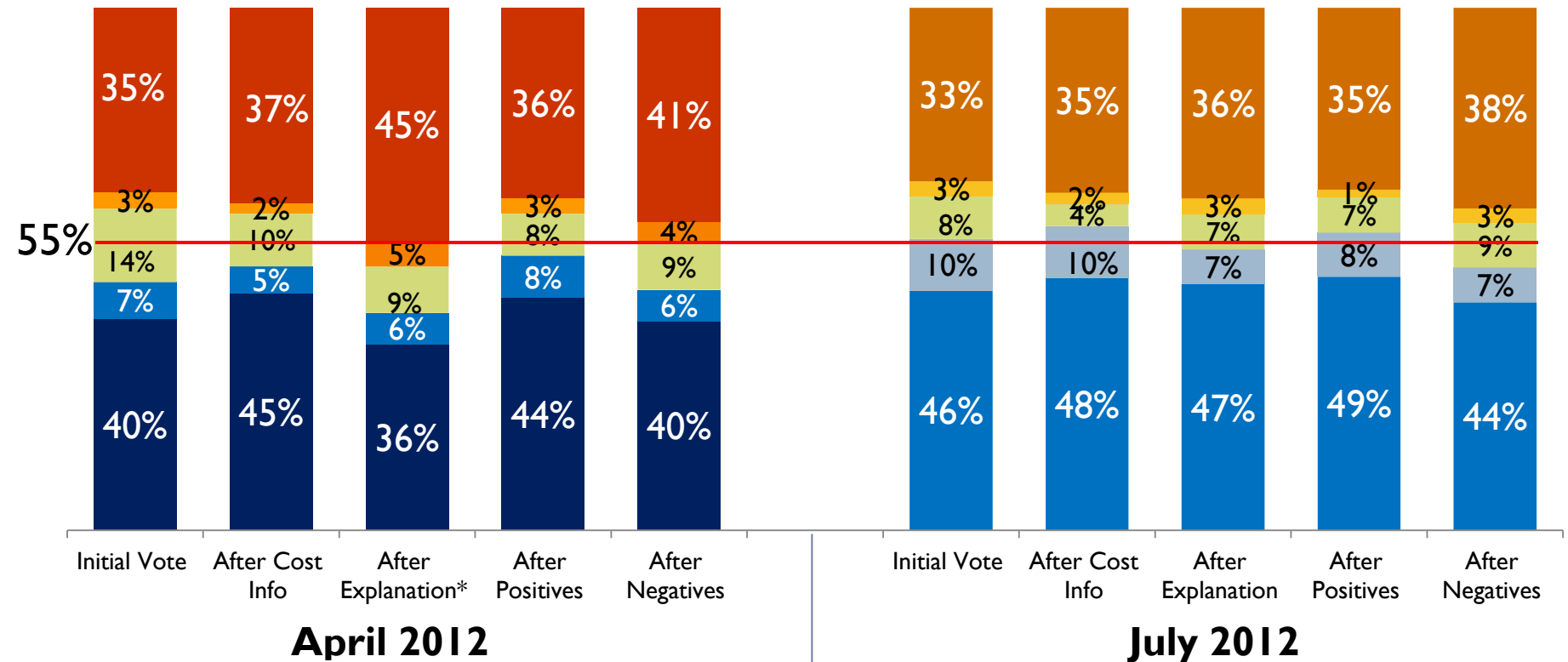


# Vote Summaries From Both Polls

31

*Now, given all that you've heard, if the election were held today would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a bond measure for Los Altos school district (Q34)*

■ Yes, approve    ■ Lean Yes    ■ (Undecided)    ■ Lean No    ■ No, reject

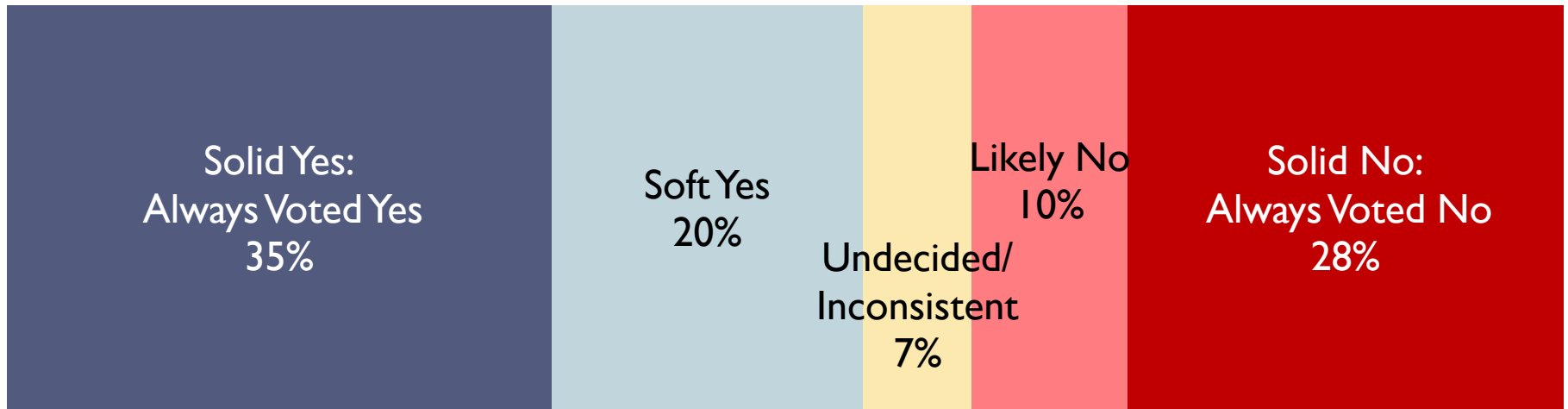


*\*The ballot question and provided explanations varied in the April and July polls*

# Voter Segmentation

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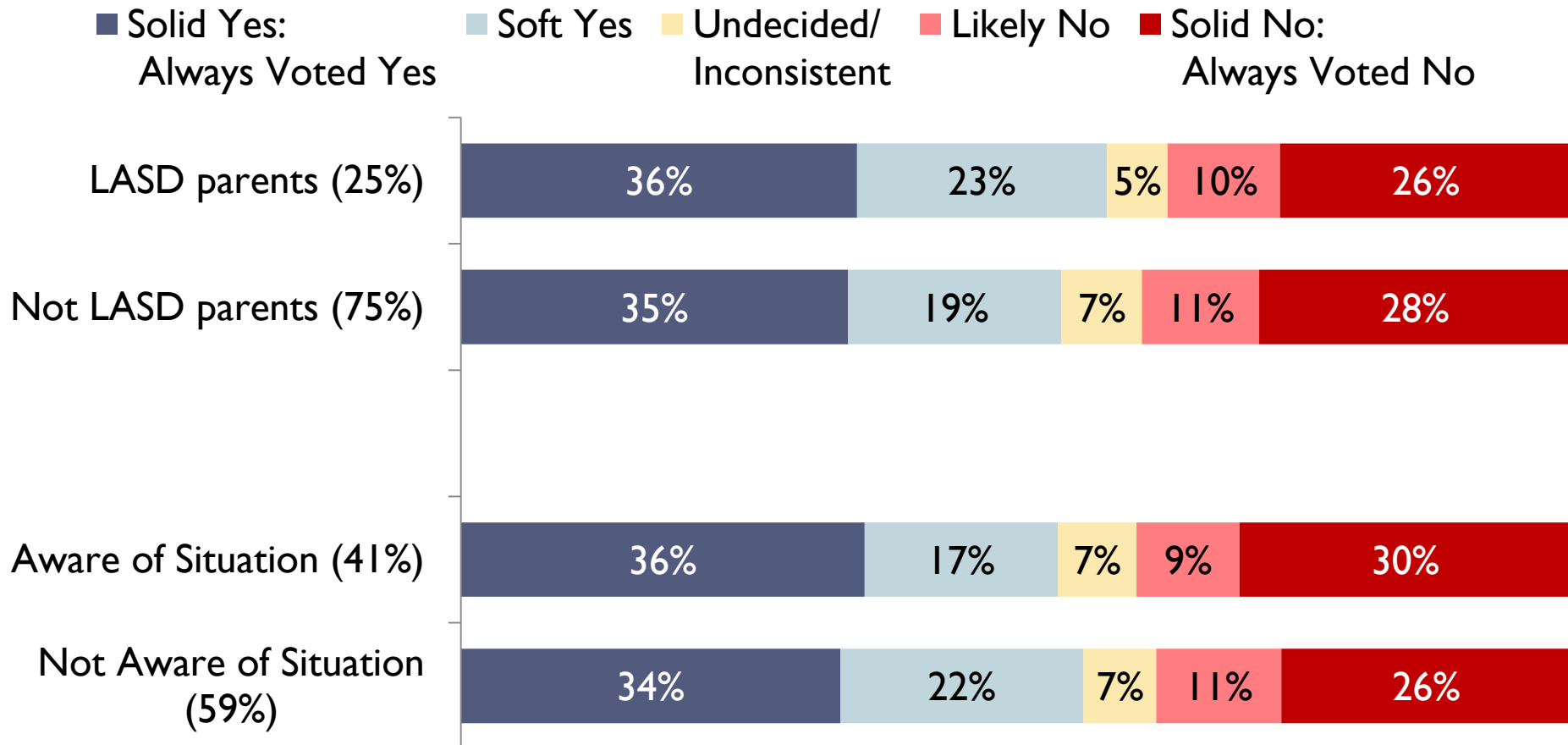
*Segmentation based on responses to the initial vote (Q8), vote after positive messages (Q31), and vote after potential negative messages (Q34).*



Support levels are similar among both parents and non-parents and among both voters who indicated prior awareness of the Bullis Charter School situation and voters who did not

33

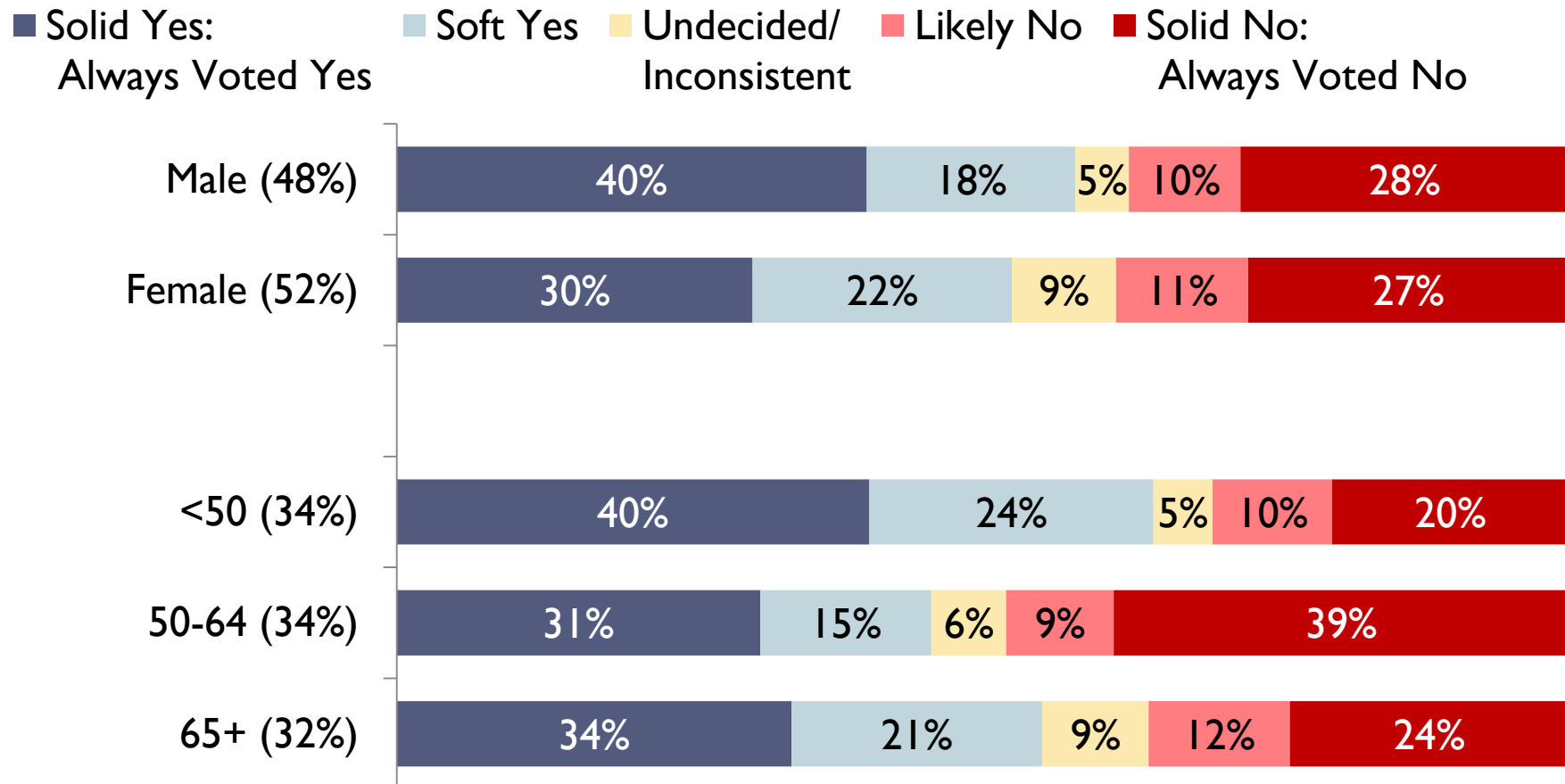
*Segmentation based on responses to the initial vote (Q8), vote after positive messages (Q31), and vote after potential negative messages (Q34).*



# Baby-boomers are the least supportive

34

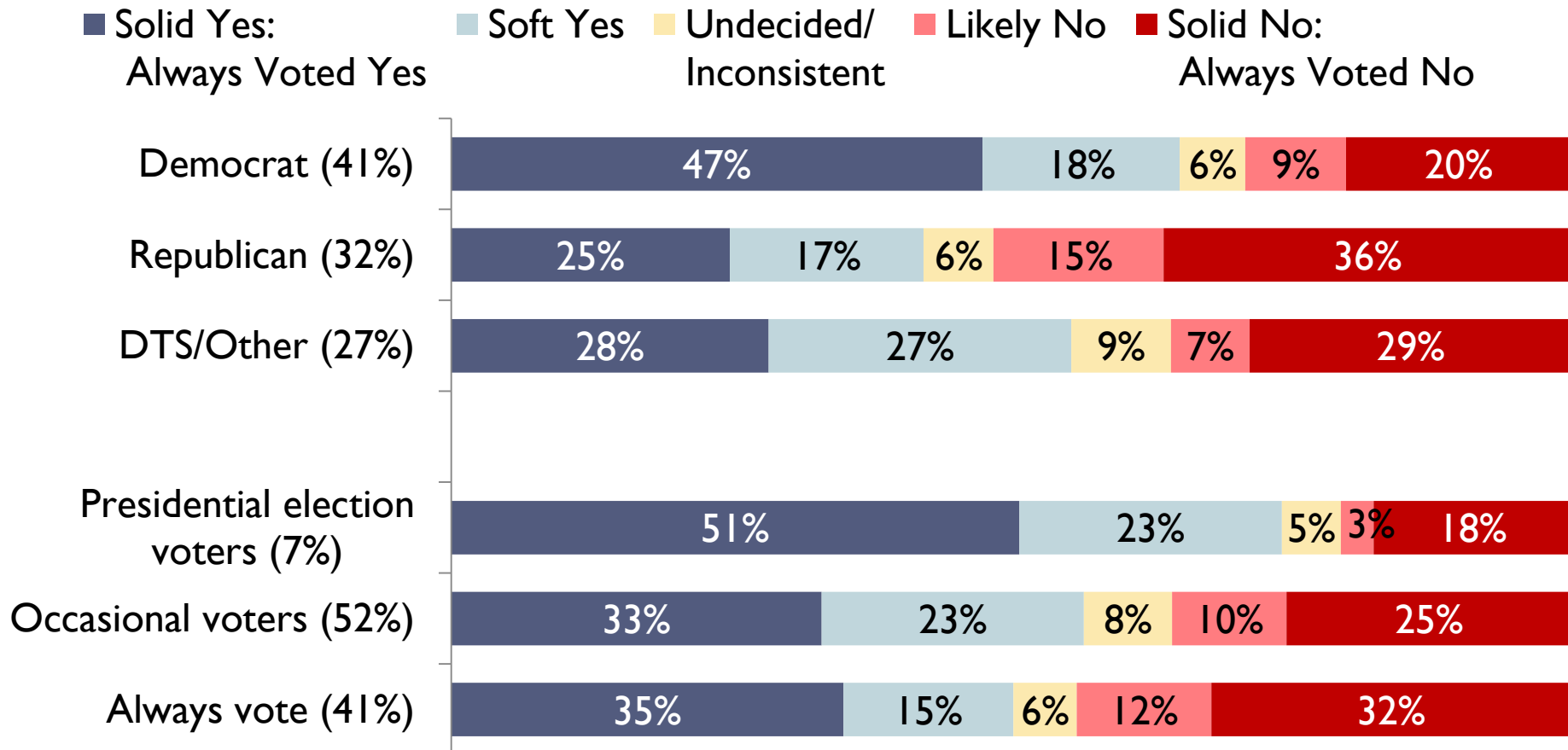
*Segmentation based on responses to the initial vote (Q8), vote after positive messages (Q31), and vote after potential negative messages (Q34).*



# Support among Democrats is not high enough to counter opposition among Republicans

35

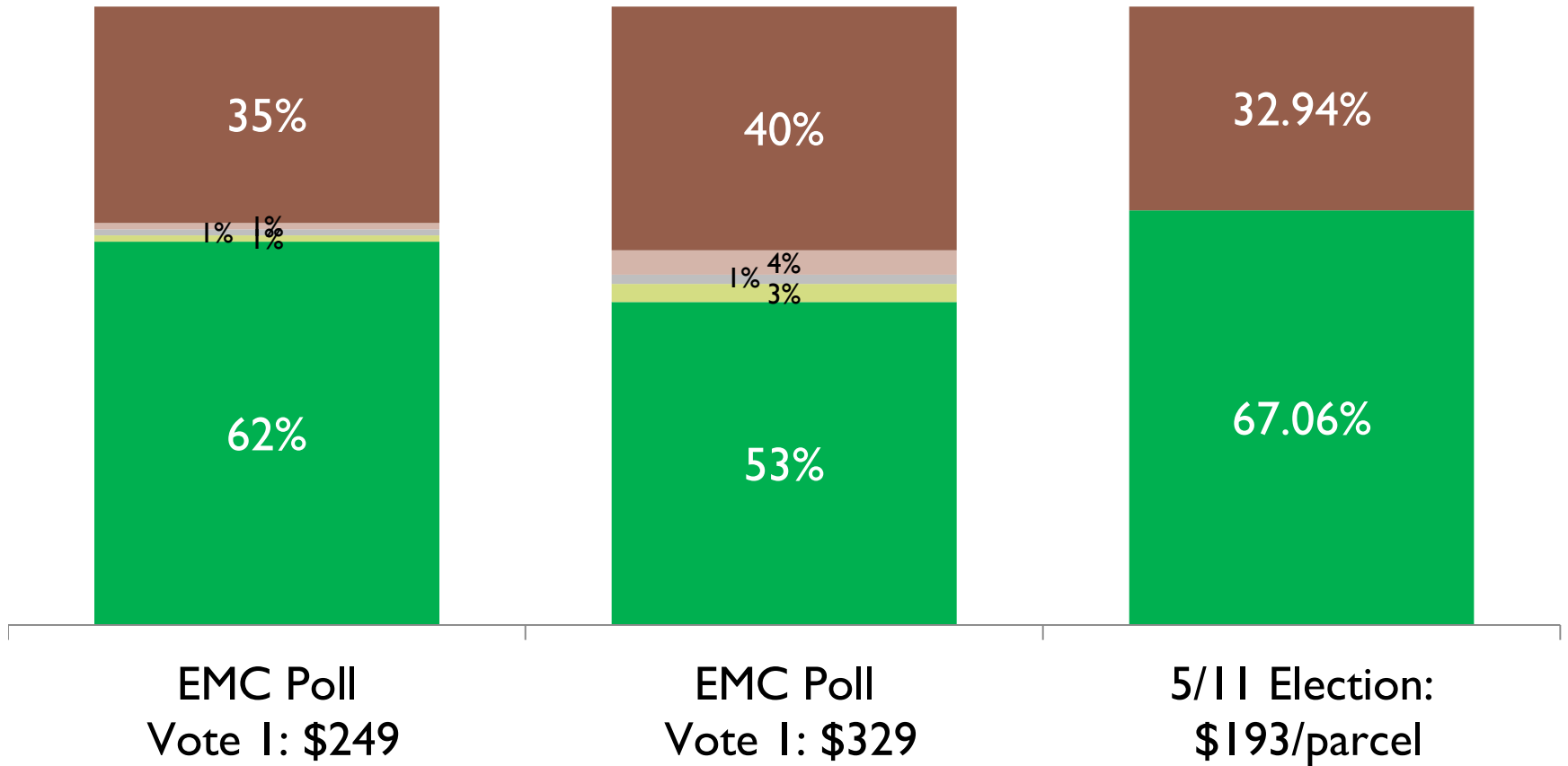
*Segmentation based on responses to the initial vote (Q8), vote after positive messages (Q31), and vote after potential negative messages (Q34).*



# The parcel tax poll...

36

■ Yes ■ Lean Yes ■ (Undecided) ■ Lean No ■ No



# Comparison between the 2011 parcel tax and the bond today

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Parcel Tax 2011	Bond today
Polling and the economic news signaled that price sensitivity was a factor. The district pursued a lower tax amount.	Price sensitivity does not appear to be a significant factor.
The district had a clear plan for use of the additional revenue.	The overall goal is clear, but the specifics of the plan have not been finalized.
The special, single-issue election was conducive to engagement with the community.	The environment of a presidential election makes it difficult to communicate about our issue.
72% of LASD parents surveyed indicated support for a measure.	63% of LASD parents surveyed indicate support for a measure.
There was widespread support for the district's priorities (core academics, teacher retention, instructional days, etc.).	There is low support for the highest priority (providing space for a school).

# Recommendations/Next steps

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- ▶ Do not place a measure on the November 2012 ballot.
- ▶ Work towards reaching the following milestones by the Fall of 2013 in time to make a decision about a bond for June 2014:
  - A completed plan for addressing the space needs for the community's schools
  - A facilities plan that addresses the structural, safety and educational capital expenses for the community's schools
  - Strong identified support from stakeholders, the parent community and voters