



GSG FOR CLIMATE POWER, SEPTEMBER 2026

Data Center Messaging & Tracking Survey Analysis

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Methodology

1

Benchmark Survey

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **2070 registered voters nationwide** between April 9 and April 19, 2026. This survey assessed attitudes around data centers and measured views around building with clean energy.

2

Discussion Board & Survey II

Global Strategy Group conducted an **online journal** among 33 soft partisans nationwide between May 19 and May 22 and a **survey of 2205 registered voters** nationwide between June 22 and June 29, 2026. Both measured Americans' receptivity to expanding clean energy and upgrading the electric grid.

3

Focus Groups

Global Strategy Group conducted **6 focus groups among 2026 likely voters** with soft views on data centers between August 11 and August 12, 2026. The groups each represented different demographic and partisan groups that are associated with varying positions on data centers.

4

Survey III

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **2145 likely 2026 voters nationwide** between August 25 and August 31, 2026. This survey was designed to:

- Track how attitudes around data centers have changed since April
- Gauge whether growing concerns about data centers are translating into support for permanent bans, temporary pauses, or stronger regulations
- Understand expectations around moratoriums and what criteria would need to be met to lift them
- Identify which guardrails are most important

This survey included a base sample of 1000 voters and oversamples to reach the following sample sizes:

- 372 Black, 247 Hispanic, and 147 AAPI voters
- 297 self-identified independent voters
- 457 urban voters in states with Democratic governors
- 336 urban voters in states with Republican governors
- 315 rural voters in counties with contested data center activity
 - *Contested data center activity: canceled data centers, observed opposition, stopped by local government, or restrictive ordinances, defined by Heatmap county list.*
- 687 voters in counties with a current or recently expired data center moratorium
- 788 voters in zip codes where data-center-related ads have aired in a 2026 race

Key Findings

1

Despite plummeting support and overwhelmingly negative coverage of data centers, voters who dislike data centers remain more neutral toward AI. They believe data centers will be built, but must be built better. There is also currently a vacuum of leadership on the issue, with neither party having a trust or communications advantage.

2

Voters reject unchecked development of data centers and are angry about the status quo. They are just as concerned about secrecy and speed as they are costs, and they want transparency and guardrails that protect utility bills, the grid, and water.

3

Opposition does not automatically mean support for a ban. Most voters prefer stronger rules or a temporary moratorium – not a backdoor ban, but a genuine pause to learn more and put protections in place.

4

The most important protections for voters are concrete: data centers must pay their electricity and grid costs, keep those costs off household bills, and meet enforceable water and air-quality standards.

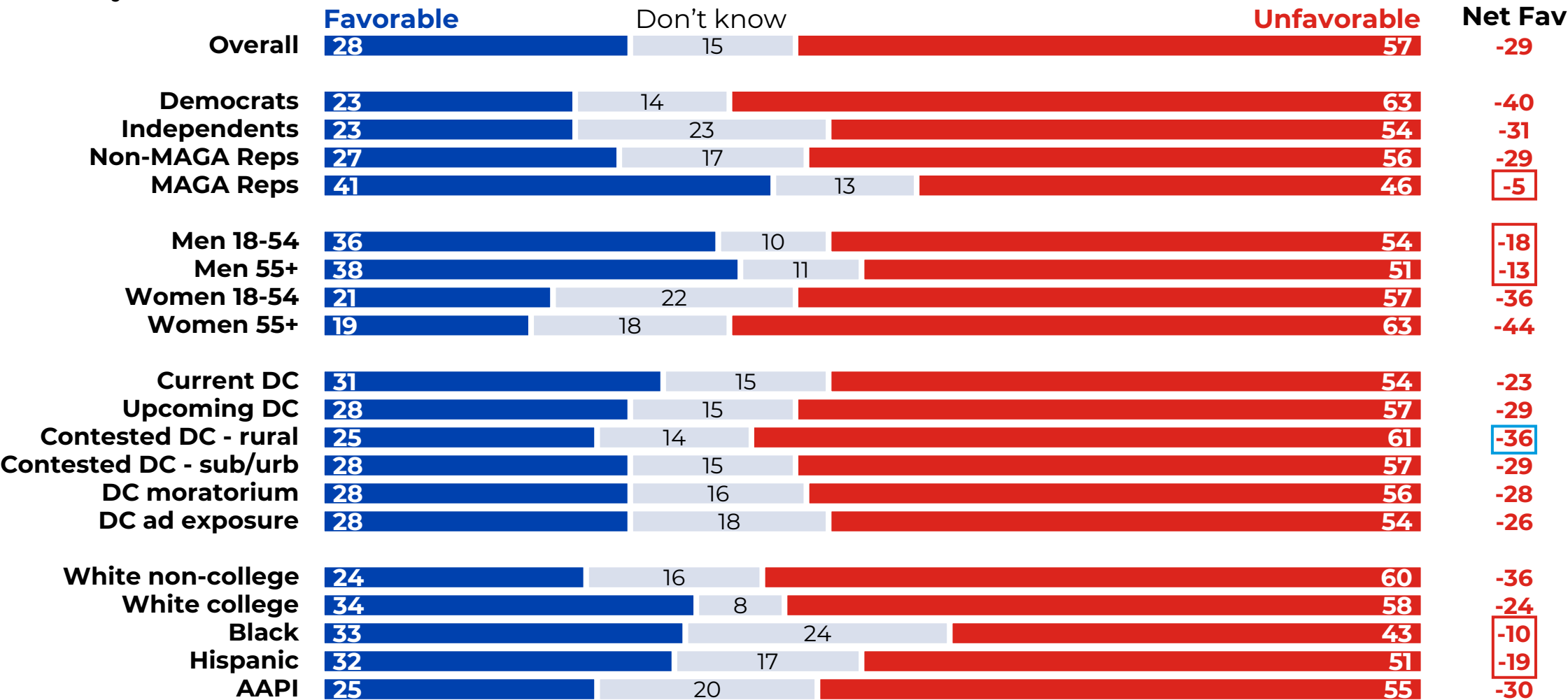
5

Voters are more receptive to data centers when they are powered by clean energy, especially when tech companies pay for the new energy and infrastructure they require.

Landscape

The precipitous decline in views of data centers continues, with even the strongholds (men, Black voters, Hispanic voters) from our previous research going negative

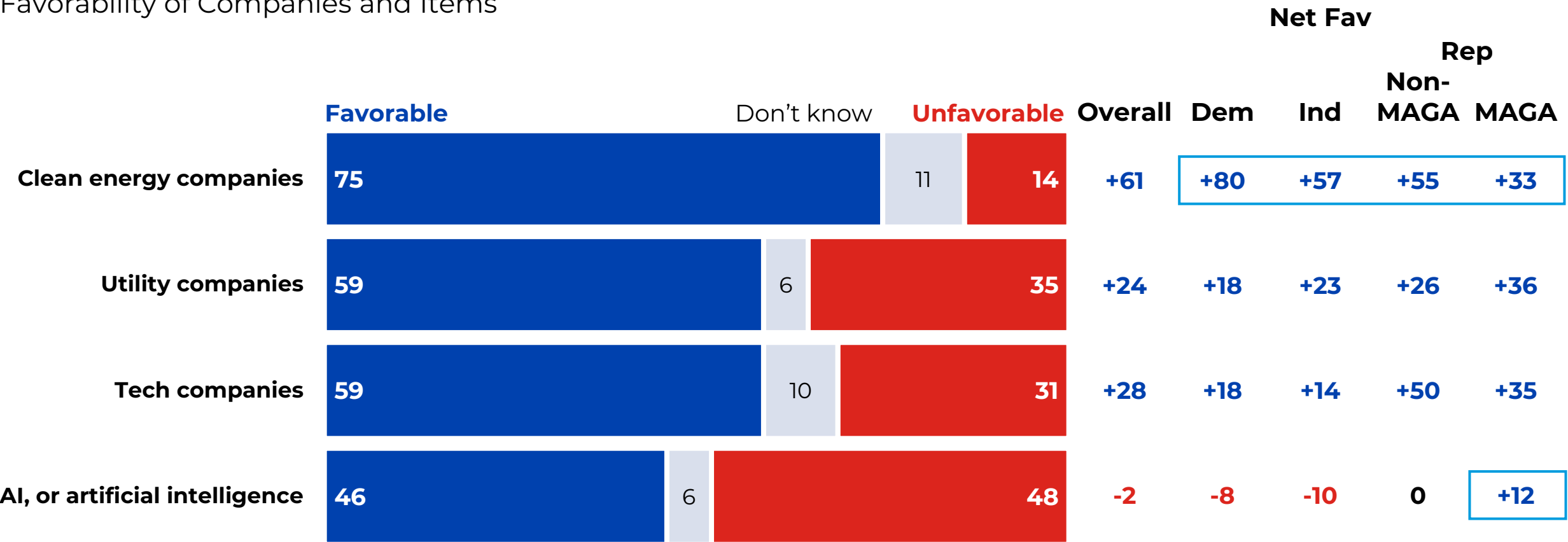
Favorability of Data Centers



While a slightly different audience, in April among nationwide registered voters, data centers were at **net +4 favorable**; in June, they were at **net -17**; now, they're at **net -29**.

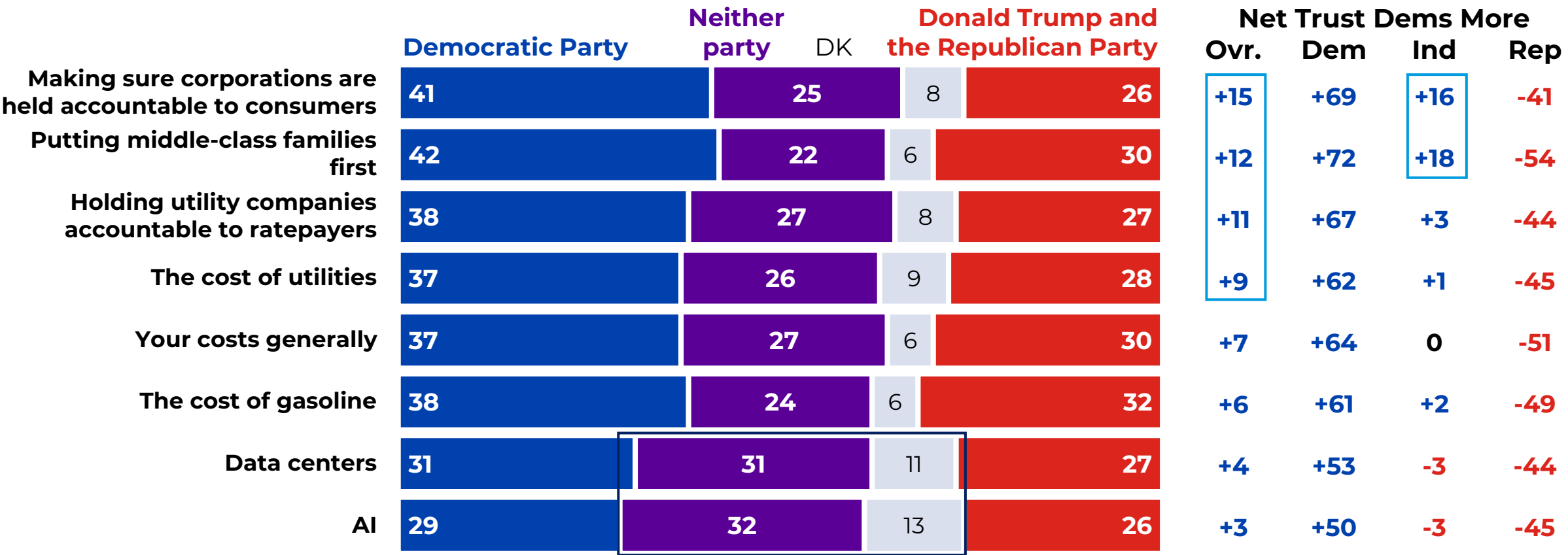
But, voters' opposition to data centers is not a 1:1 opposition to AI yet

Favorability of Companies and Items



Democrats have some economic trust advantages currently, but there is no clear leader on data centers or AI

Party Trust



Data Center Environment

A quarter of the national electorate has soft views of data centers, with a majority in a critical posture and only one in five enthusiastic

Data Center Segmentation



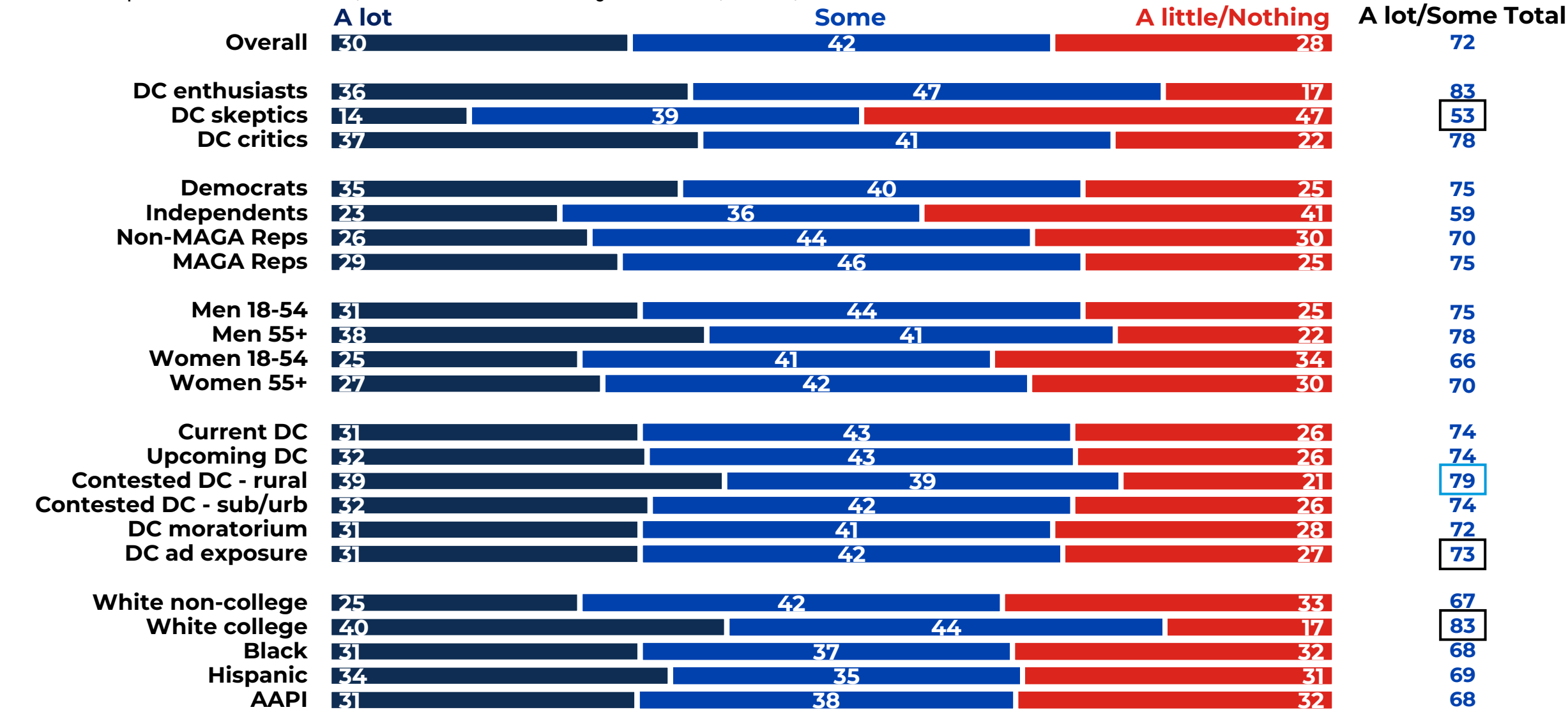
Men, GOP, and frequent AI users remain more enthusiastic about data centers.
Skeptics include more women, Black voters, and voters across the political spectrum

	Total	Enthu- siasts	Skeptics	Critics
Overall electorate	100	21	27	52
Gender & Age				
Men 18-54	20	28	16	19
Men 55+	26	36	23	24
Women 18-54	24	18	28	24
Women 55+	30	18	33	33
Ethnicity				
White	74	76	66	77
White non-college	46	40	47	47
White college	28	36	19	30
Black	11	12	16	8
Hispanic	8	9	10	8
AAPI	6	5	6	6
Density				
Rural	32	31	33	33
Suburban	37	38	35	38
Urban	31	32	33	30

	Total	Enthu- siasts	Skeptics	Critics
Party				
Democrats	45	34	42	51
Independents	12	10	14	13
Republicans	43	56	44	37
Non-MAGA Republicans	20	18	23	19
MAGA Republicans	23	38	21	18
Ideology				
Liberal	28	23	21	34
Moderate	36	32	39	37
Conservative	36	45	40	30
Political Engagement				
Very important	32	46	22	31
Somewhat important	35	31	36	36
Not important	33	23	41	33
News				
Seek out news	63	74	52	63
News comes to me	37	26	48	37
AI Use				
Monthly or more often	60	83	57	52
Rare/non-users	40	17	43	48

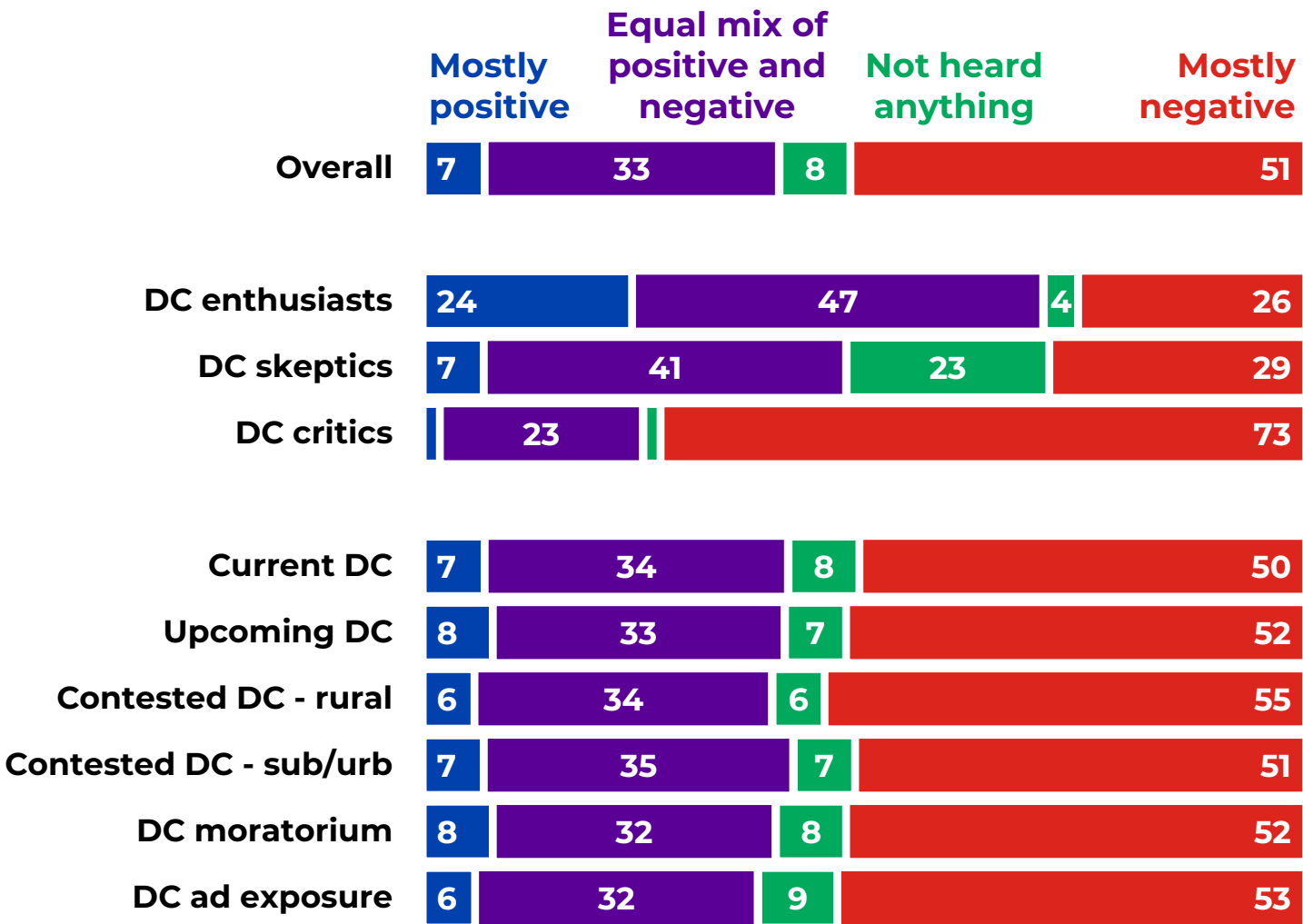
Data centers are breaking through – DC skeptics are hearing less, those in rural counties with contentious DCs hearing more. Those in regions with documented data center campaign ads are not hearing any more than other groups

Over the past few months, how much have you seen, read, or heard about data centers?



The information environment on data centers is deeply negative/mixed – even for data center enthusiasts. Jobs command the positives, water and electricity use the negative

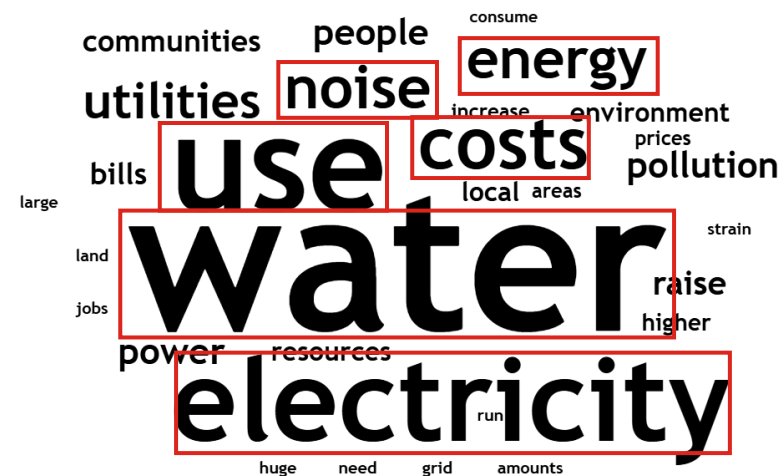
Has what you have seen, read, or heard about data centers been:



What positive things have you seen, read, or heard about data centers?



What negative things have you seen, read, or heard about data centers?



Now, a plurality of voters don't even want data centers in the country, with feelings about one in their community incredibly negative across the board

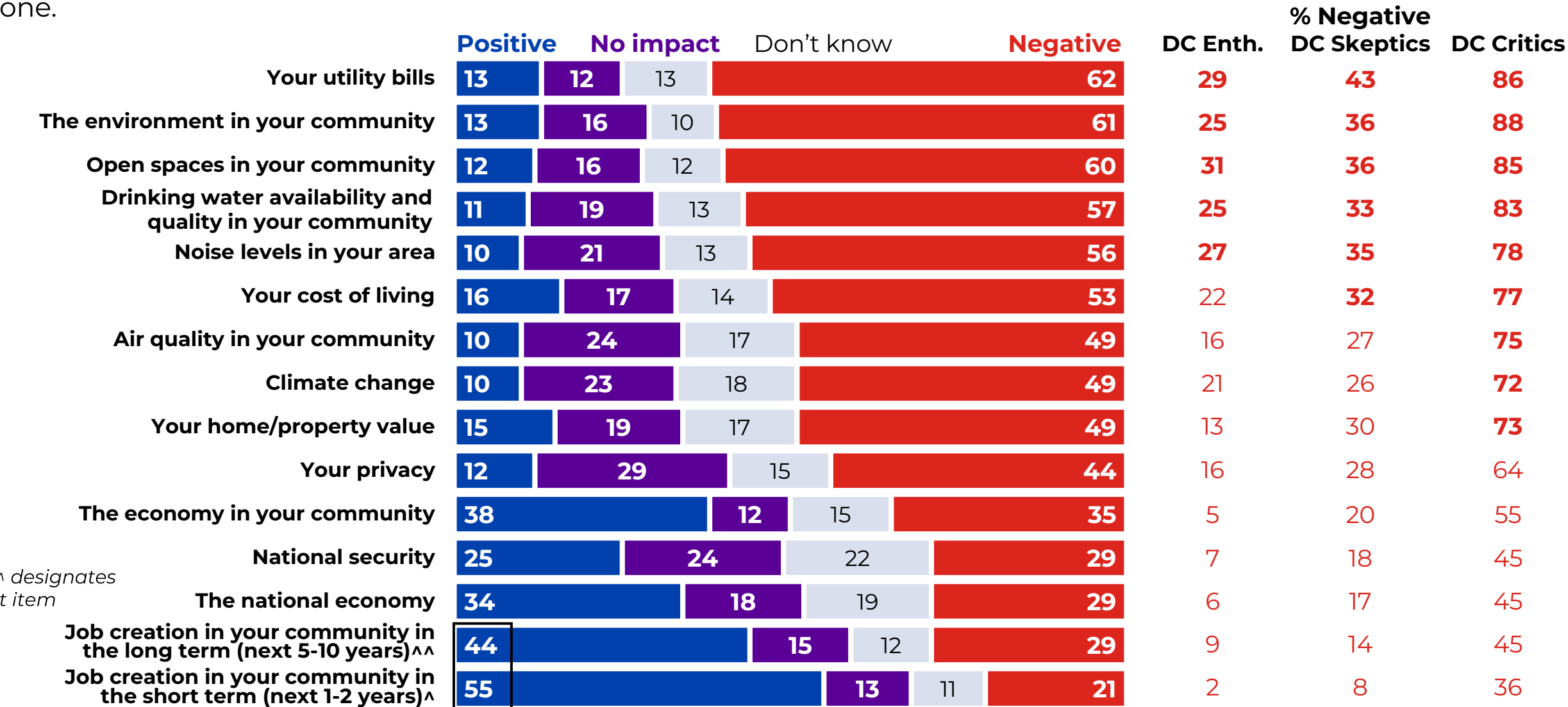
Do you support or oppose data centers being built...

	In the U.S.				In your community				Diff in Net Support
	Support	Oppose	Not sure	Net Support	Support	Oppose	Not sure	Net Support	
Overall	38	47	15	-9	28	61	12	-33	-24
Democrat	32	54	14	-22	21	68	11	-47	-25
Independent	25	49	26	-24	19	63	18	-44	-20
Non-MAGA Rep	43	42	15	+1	32	56	12	-24	-25
MAGA Rep	55	36	10	+19	44	48	8	-4	-23
White non-college	34	50	16	-16	27	63	10	-36	-20
White college	48	44	8	+4	30	61	9	-31	-35
Black	37	36	27	+1	30	50	20	-20	-21
Hispanic	39	47	15	-8	28	56	16	-28	-20
AAPI	36	43	21	-7	25	62	13	-37	-30
Men	50	41	9	+9	37	55	8	-18	-27
Women	29	51	20	-22	20	65	14	-45	-23
18-44	37	51	13	-14	31	59	10	-28	-14
45-64	34	49	17	-15	28	59	13	-31	-16
65+	44	42	15	+2	25	64	11	-39	-41
Current DC	40	45	15	-5	29	58	12	-29	-24
Upcoming DC	38	47	15	-9	27	60	13	-33	-24
Contested DC-rur	33	52	15	-19	27	64	9	-37	-18
Contested DC-sub/urb	39	47	14	-8	29	59	12	-30	-22
DC moratorium	38	47	15	-9	27	61	12	-34	-25
DC ad exposure	37	45	17	-8	28	58	13	-30	-22

In our April survey, support for data centers in the U.S. was net +9, and in local community was net -9.

Data centers are seen as harmful to utility bills, the environment, open spaces, and local water supplies. Job benefits are now seen as a short-term gain, not a long-term one, for impacted communities

Indicate whether you think a local data center would positively impact, negatively impact, or not impact each one.



^{^/^^} designates split item

FROM FOCUS GROUPS: Voters feel that data centers are being built too fast, with too much secrecy, while taking advantage of local communities

*"I live in Texas. **We are number two in the most data centers being built in our state, and it's been putting more and more of a strain on our energy grid.** And we have absorbed a lot of the infrastructure that has had to be built.*

– MAGA Republican, unfav to data centers, 47, not very strong Rep

*"There's not enough evidence that it is going to produce anything, but **it's too opaque. We are not told anything. They're just being forced upon us.** They might have locals working on the construction of the project. But in the long term, after that, what happens?"*

– Hispanic, unfav to data centers, 60, ind lean D

*"**They never say in the news what they do, what it's for, who's doing it, or anything like that. It's very secretive.**"*

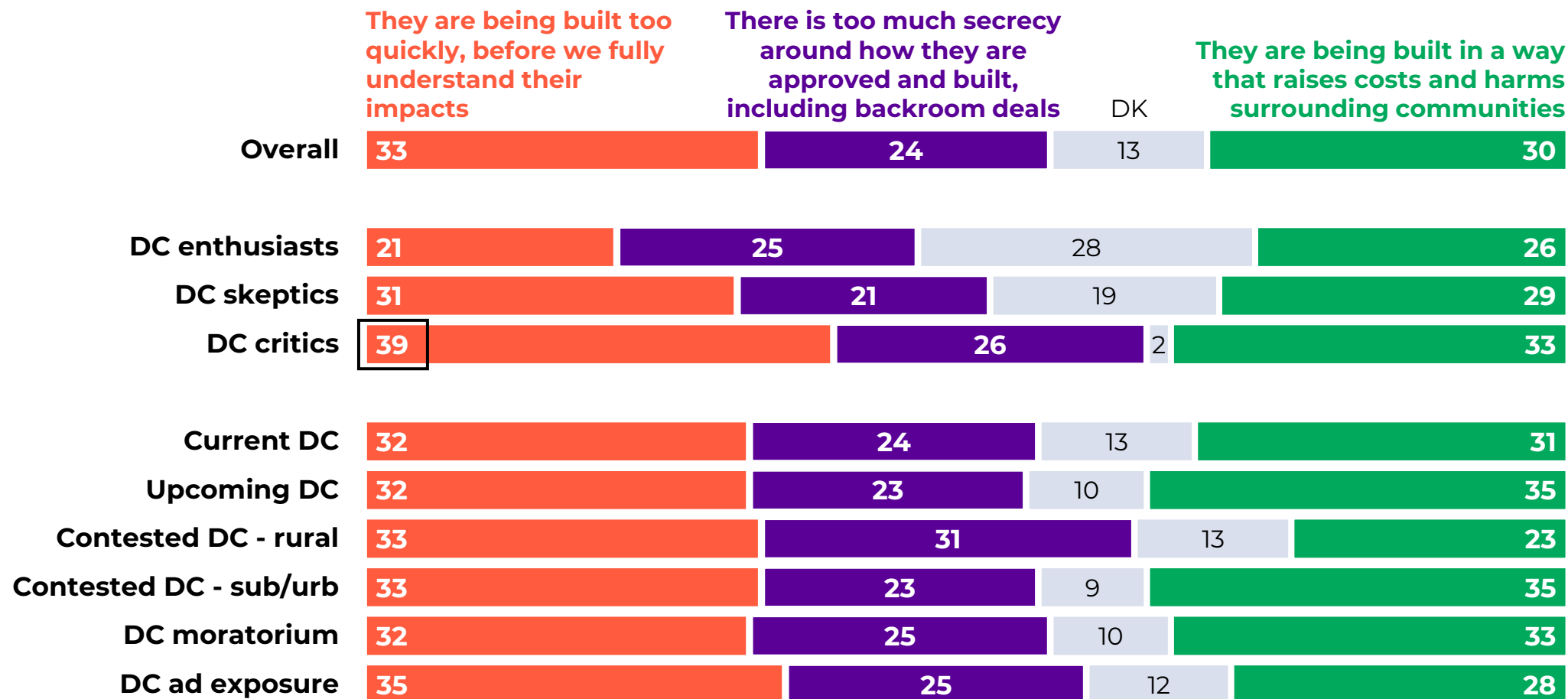
– White non-college swing, unfav to data centers, 60, not very strong Rep

*"They tried to bring a data center into my hometown, and they got it voted out. **But how they tried to bring it in was underhanded. They went to the town council and basically tried to pay them off and say, you're going to sign this, this, and this and not say anything.**"*

– White non-college swing, fav to data centers, 50, not very strong Rep

Voters are concerned about the speed and secrecy of data centers, just as much as costs

Which of the following concerns you the most about data centers?



Data Center Policy Views

FROM FOCUS GROUPS: voters who were unfavorable to data centers and wanted stronger regulations still believed development is necessary and opposed a ban

“

I know this is the future. So rather than being built somewhere else in other countries, **if this is going to support American jobs at some point, I'd rather keep them here.** – *Hispanic, fav to data centers, 48, not very strong Republican*

“

We do need them. We have to keep up with China and everyone else, **but still build standards that can make the majority of people happy.** – *MAGA Republican, fav to data centers, 44, ind lean R*

“

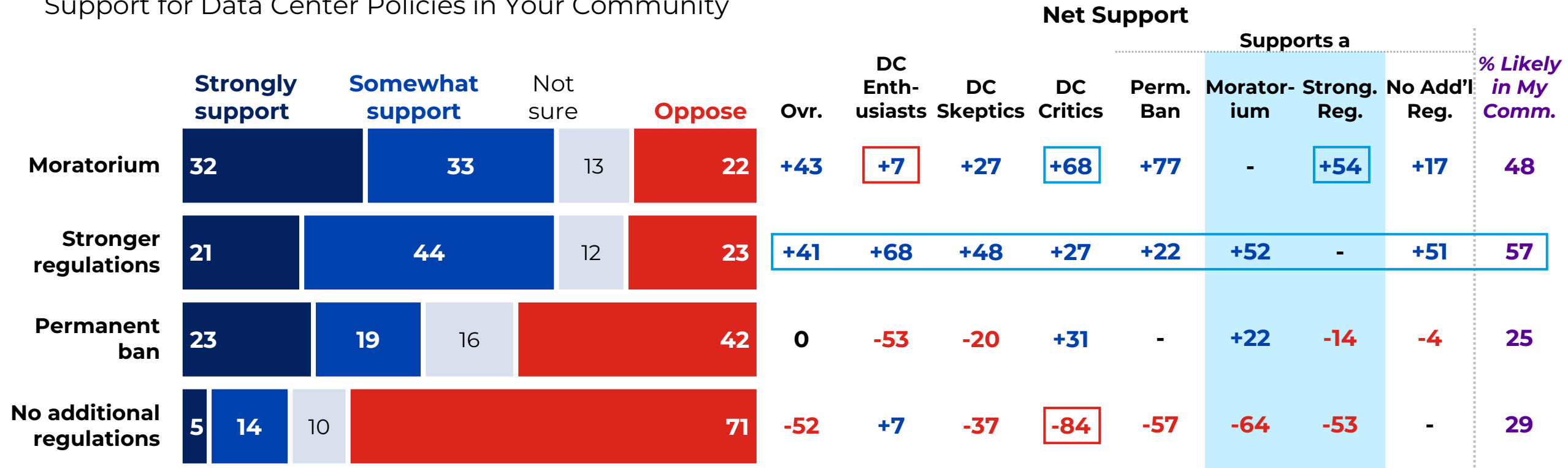
I think that [building data centers] **can be done if there's oversight**, which there hasn't even been any.”
– *Hispanic, unfav to data centers, 60, ind lean D*

“

I think that it is needed, unfortunately. **I use AI all the time and I think at some point it is necessary. But I feel like we can do something better than just taking all the electricity from cities**, and the water thing.”
– *White Democratic base, unfav to data centers, 23, strong Dem*

There is overlap in support for the two most popular approaches: moratorium and building with stronger regulations. Stronger regulations seen as most likely. Continuing without regulations is the *least* popular approach by far

Support for Data Center Policies in Your Community

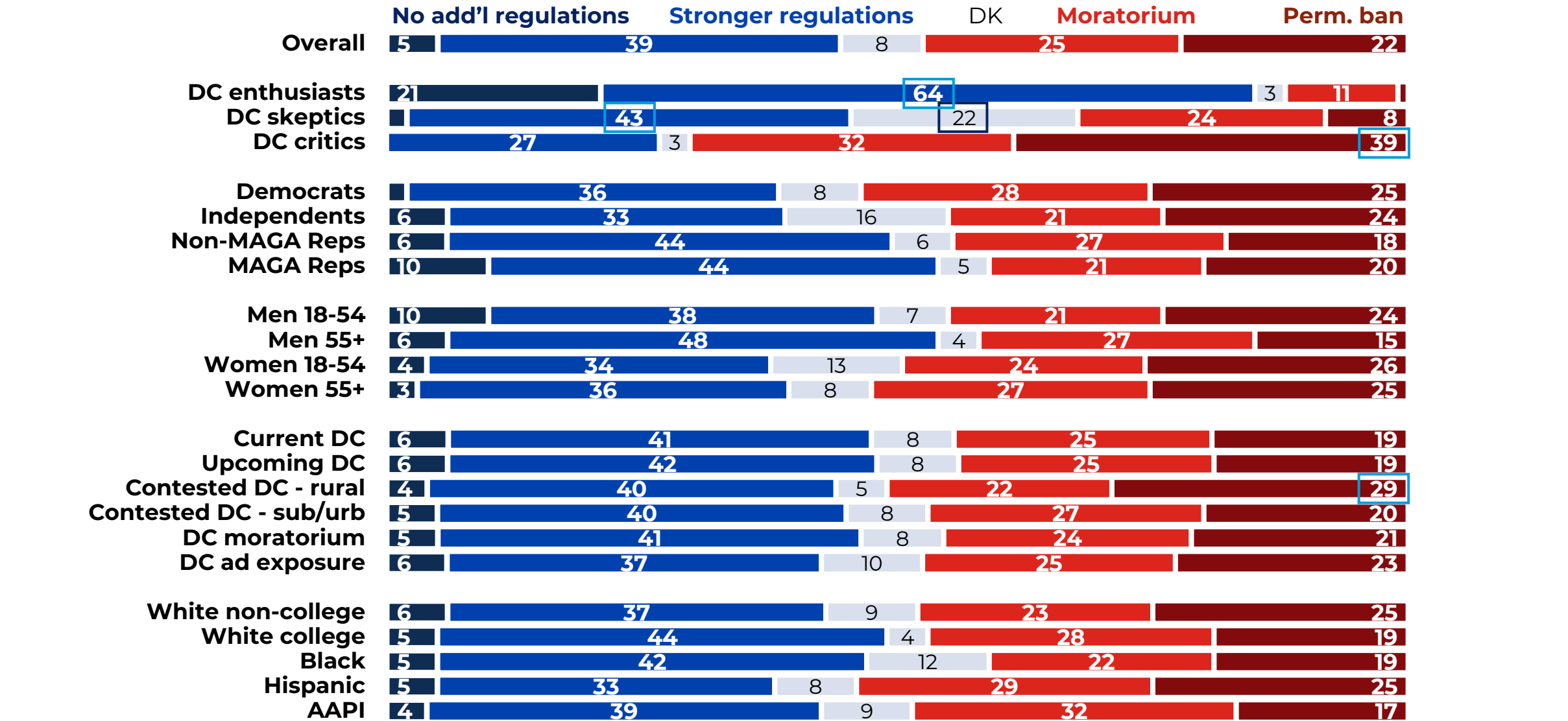


Full Proposal Text Read Each Time:

- Permanent ban:** stop the approval of new data centers permanently.
- Moratorium, or temporary pause:** temporarily pause the approval of new data centers while research is done to understand their **environmental and economic** impacts.
- Allow data centers, with stronger regulations:** allow the approval of new data centers, but put stronger **environmental and economic** rules and guardrails in place.
- Allow data centers, with no additional regulations:** continue to allow the approval of new data centers with no additional regulations or restrictions.

Voters most of all skew toward stronger regulations, though a quarter pick a moratorium. Critics drive support for a ban

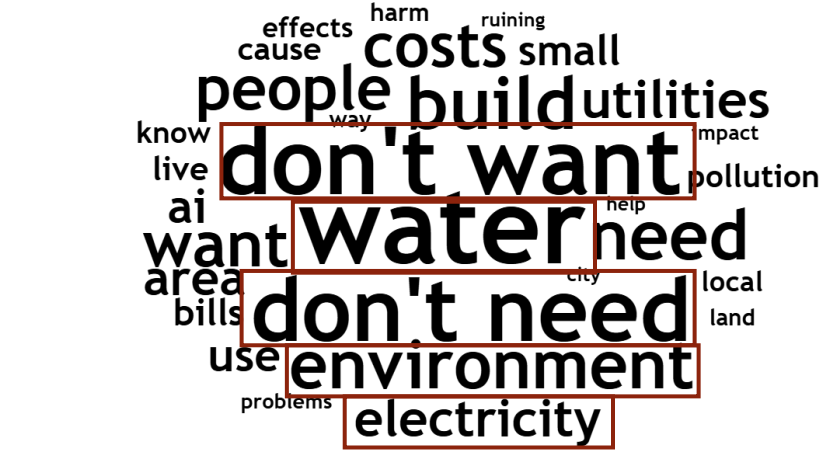
If you had to choose, which approach would you prefer **your community** take toward new data centers?



While supporters of stronger regulations mention the need to build responsibly, many moratorium supporters are seeking more info/research

You indicated you would prefer [POLICY]. What makes you say that?

Permanent Ban



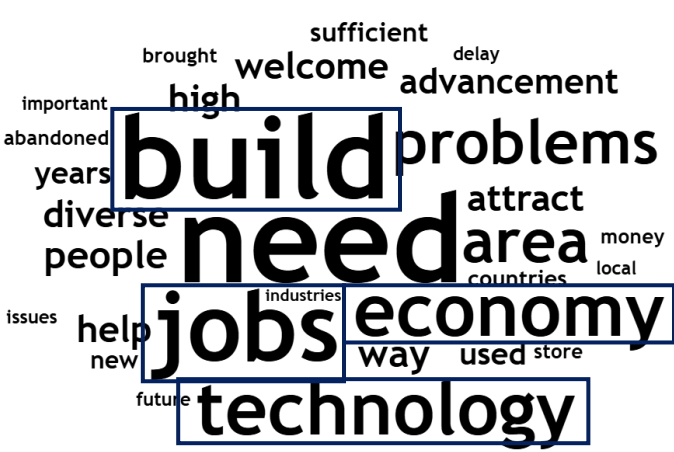
Stronger Regulations



Moratorium

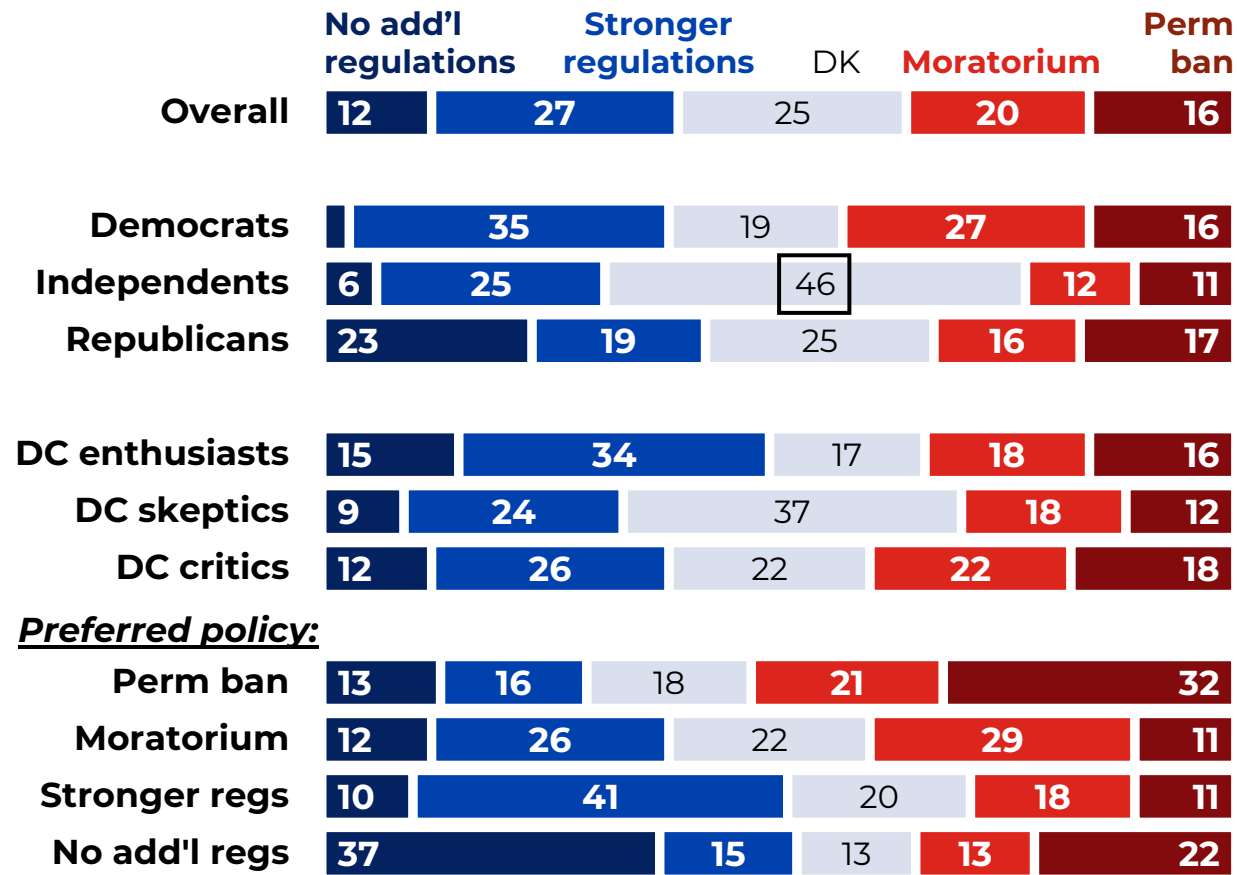


No Additional Regulations

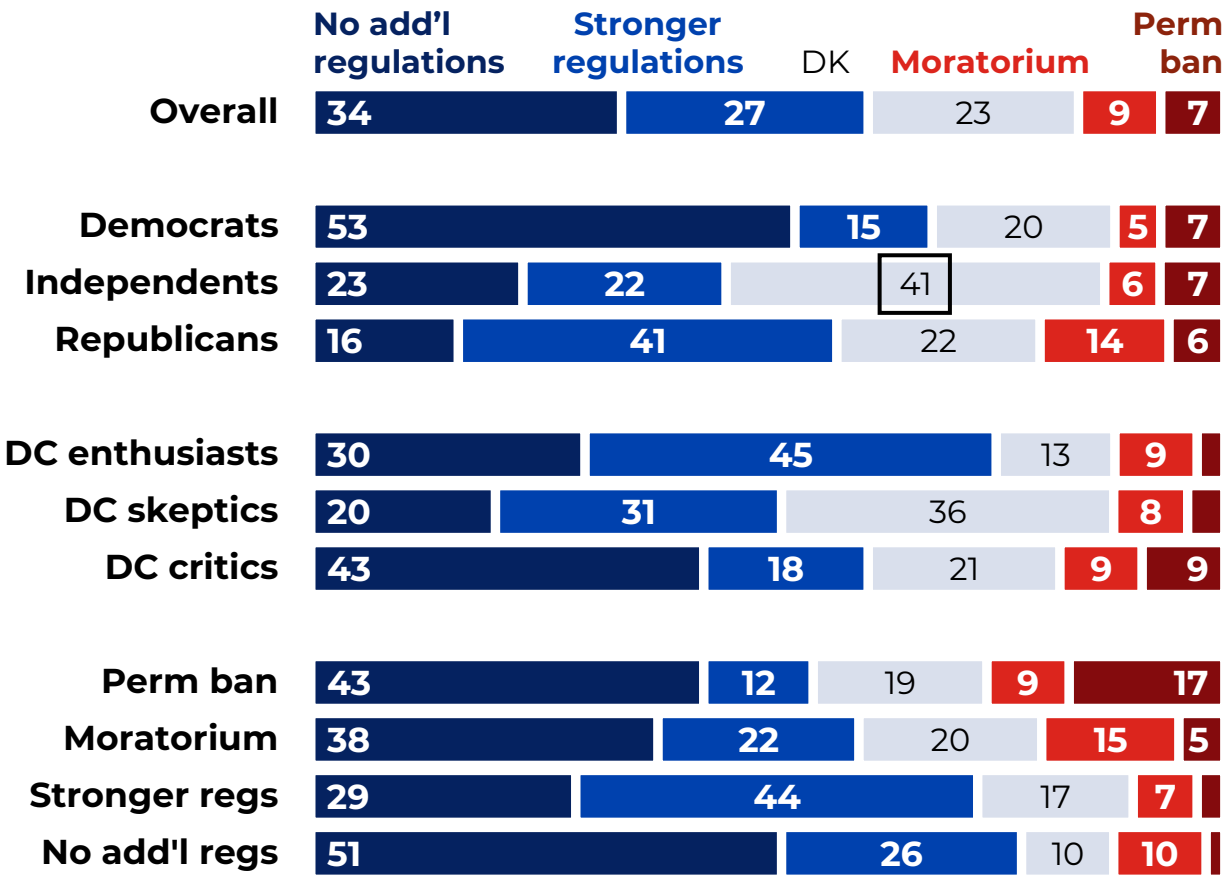


While many voters are unsure, there is a serious perception that Republicans want to build without additional regulations

As far as you know... which position do you think most Democratic elected officials hold on new data centers?



As far as you know... which position do you think most Republican elected officials hold on new data centers?

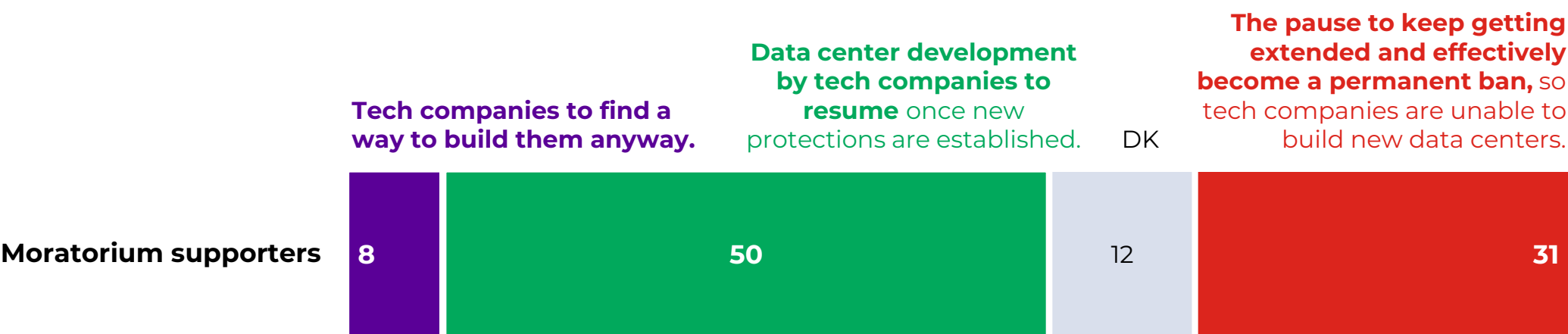


Most think that moratoriums either mean a true pause with intent to resume, or tech companies continuing unabated – few say they’re backdoor bans

When you hear that a temporary moratorium, or pause, has been placed on new data center development, what do you **expect** to happen?



[IF SUPPORT A MORATORIUM] And when you think more about a data center moratorium, which comes closer to what you would ultimately **prefer** to see happen?



FROM FOCUS GROUPS: The most important guardrails for voters are data centers paying their way, upgrading the grid, and protecting water and air

Data centers paying their fair share

“We’re already paying so much for everything else that if they want this so badly, they should be the ones forking the money out, and ultimately nobody else should be subsidizing these things.”

— White non-college swing, fav to data centers, 44, not very strong Democrat

“If they’re building this, they should be the ones funding [grid upgrades] because they’re the ones that make the most money from it.”

— Black, unfav to data centers, 57, not very strong Democrat

Protections for water

“From what I’ve read, there is technology in place to where they can reuse water over and over again. I think that there needs to be legislation put in place to where these data centers have to use this technology where they reuse the same water instead of putting the strain on our groundwater systems.”

— MAGA Republican, unfav to data centers, 47, not very strong Republican

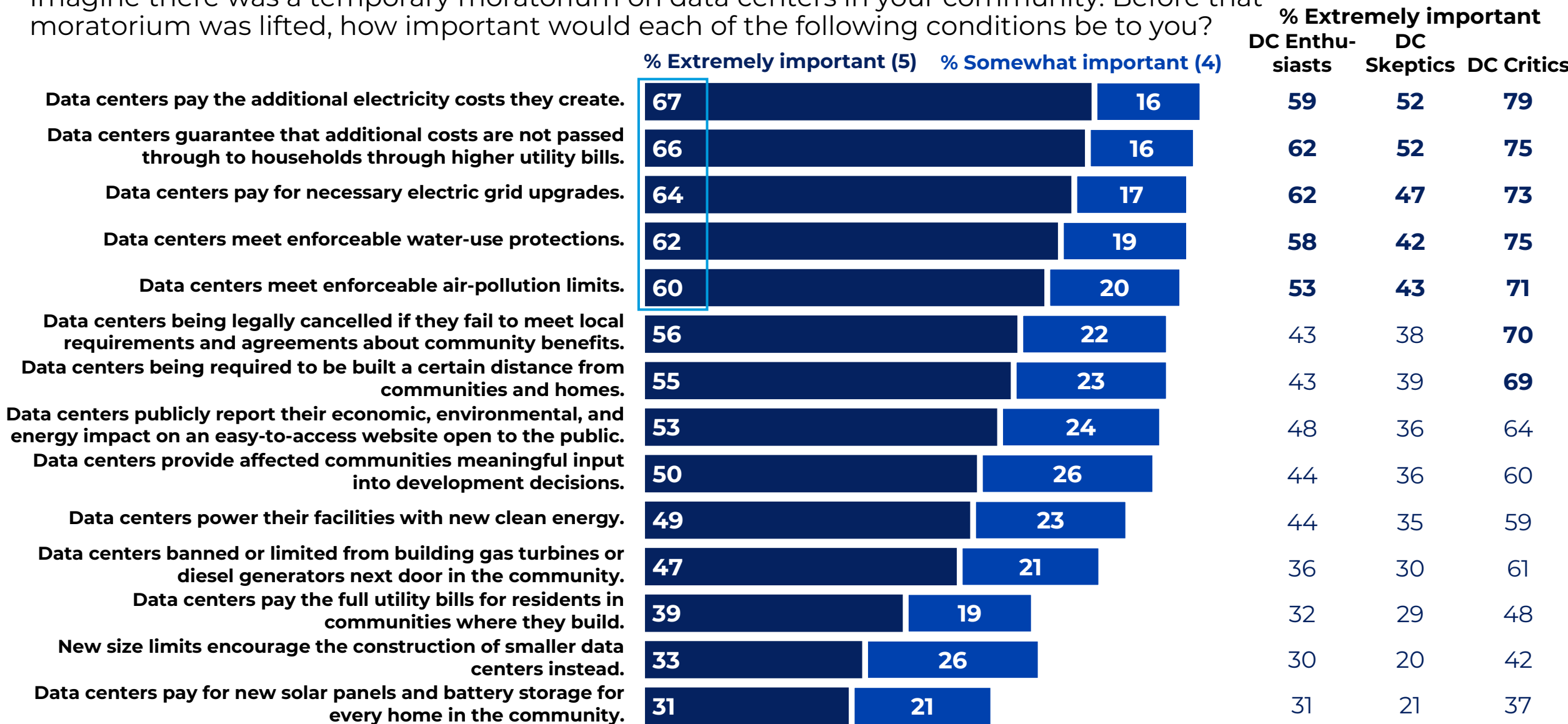
Protections for air

“I want something that is clean. It won’t pollute the air that I live in and breathe, especially for my kids.”

— White Democratic base, unfav to data centers, 66, not very strong Democrat

Key conditions for a local data center are to protect consumers' utility bills, upgrade the grid, and protect water supplies and air quality

Imagine there was a temporary moratorium on data centers in your community. Before that moratorium was lifted, how important would each of the following conditions be to you?



From Focus Groups: Data center solutions need to include more transparency – because right now, voters feel like the process is a black box

“I want full transparency in their impacts. I listen to so-called experts who can’t clearly answer a whole lot of questions about what their impact will be.”

– White Democratic base, unfav to data centers, 53, strong Dem

“I don’t know that [a moratorium] is needed. I think accountability and standards can be fought for and implemented without having to have a moratorium to stop all work.”

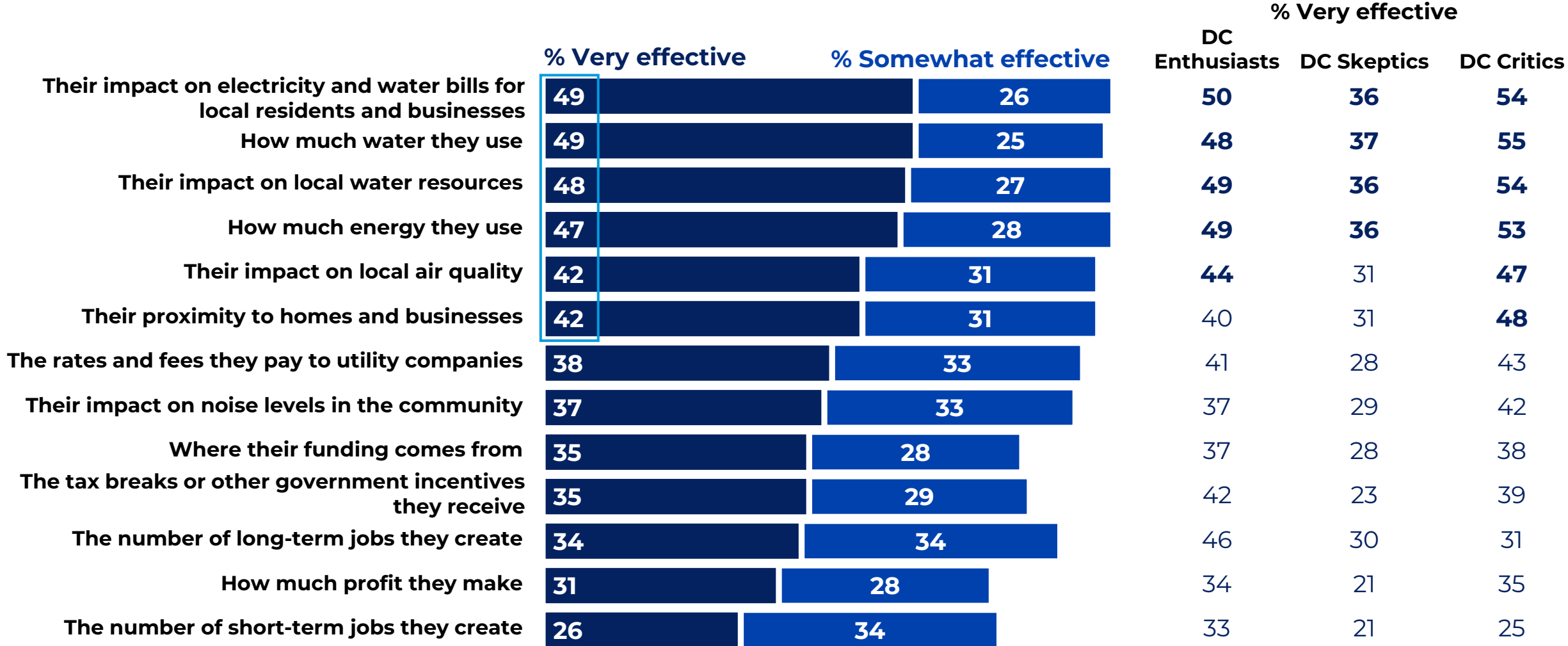
– MAGA Republican, unsure on data centers, 66, strong Rep

“It would be nice if we could have two, three years to see what the repercussions really are to having a data center in a residential area. What happens to the water? What happens to the electric? What costs go up for the people living nearby the data center? How loud is it?”

– Near contentious data center, unfav to data centers, 24, not very strong Dem

On transparency measures, voters want clarity on the impact of data centers locally on water, energy, and utility bills

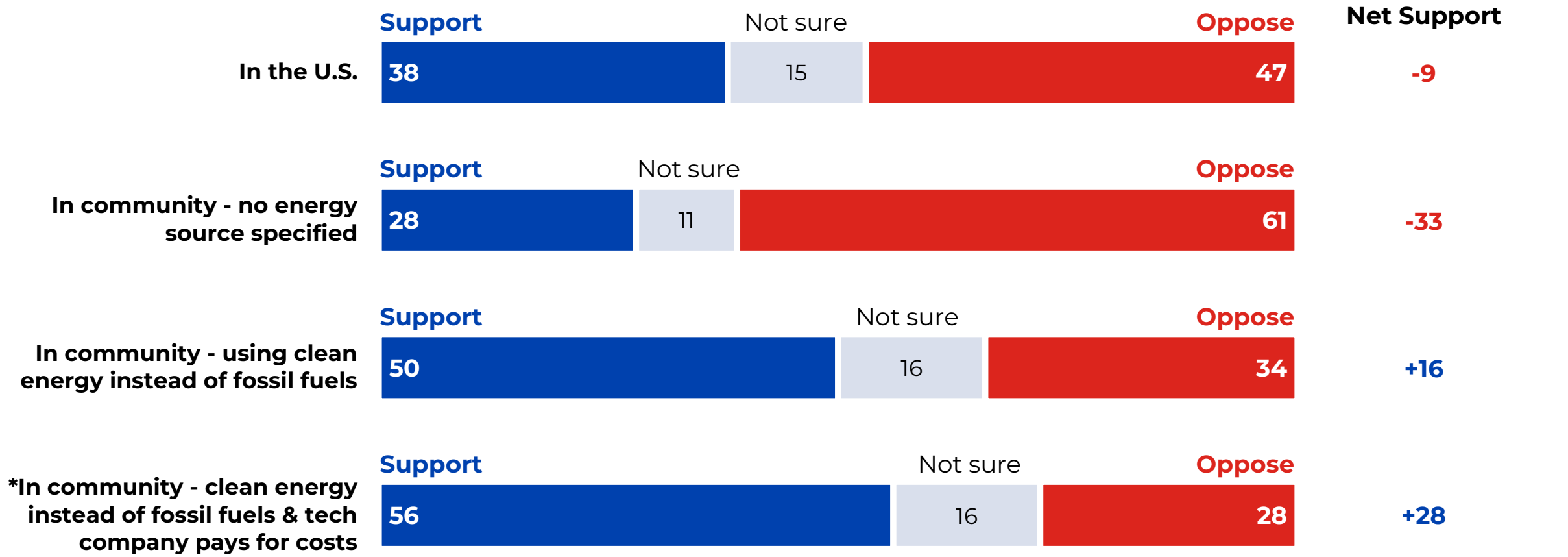
Below are some types of information that data centers and the companies that build them could be required to publicly disclose. Please indicate how effective you think each requirement would be in making sure data centers are built responsibly.



Clean Energy in the Debate

Data centers are least popular in voters' communities. Clean energy and tech company pay-fors increase local support

Support for Building Data Centers



**Full text: Would you support or oppose a data center being built in your community if:*

- It was powered by clean energy like wind and solar instead of fossil fuels, and,*
- The tech company behind the data center was required to pay for the additional electricity and grid costs created by the facility, with those costs prohibited from being passed on to households*

Clean energy is a major and essential first step to acceptable data centers; skeptics will still have questions on noise levels and impact on open spaces

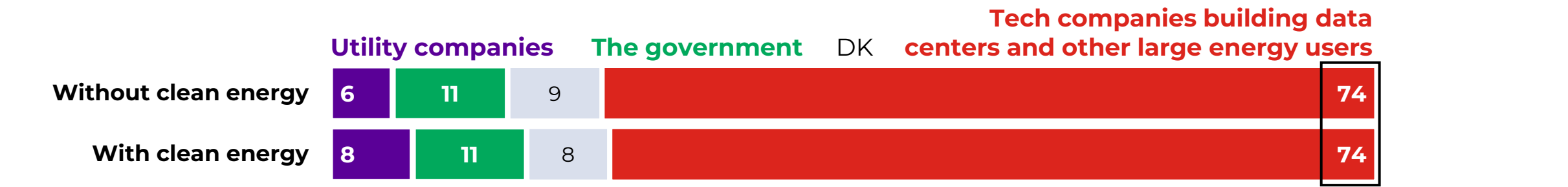
Indicate whether you think a local data center that would be powered by clean energy would positively impact, negatively impact, or not impact each one.

<i>Net positive</i>	Overall			Data center skeptics		
	General	Clean Energy	Shift	General	Clean Energy	Shift
The environment in your community	-48	-12	+36	-22	+4	+26
Your utility bills	-49	-19	+30	-29	-5	+24
Air quality in your community	-39	-9	+30	-17	+4	+21
Climate change	-39	-11	+28	-15	+3	+18
Drinking water availability and quality in your community	-46	-19	+27	-21	+2	+23
Open spaces in your community	-48	-28	+20	-21	-17	+4
Your cost of living	-37	-17	+20	-18	0	+18
Noise levels in your area	-46	-28	+18	-25	-15	+10
Your home/property value	-34	-19	+15	-15	-5	+10
Your privacy	-32	-17	+15	-14	-6	+8
The economy in your community	+3	+15	+12	+17	+24	+7
National security	-4	+8	+12	+8	+11	+3
The national economy	+5	+17	+12	+16	+24	+8
Job creation in your community in the long term (next 5-10 years)^	+15	+26	+11	+32	+33	+1
Job creation in your community in the short term (next 1-2 years)^	+34	+36	+2	+47	+46	-1

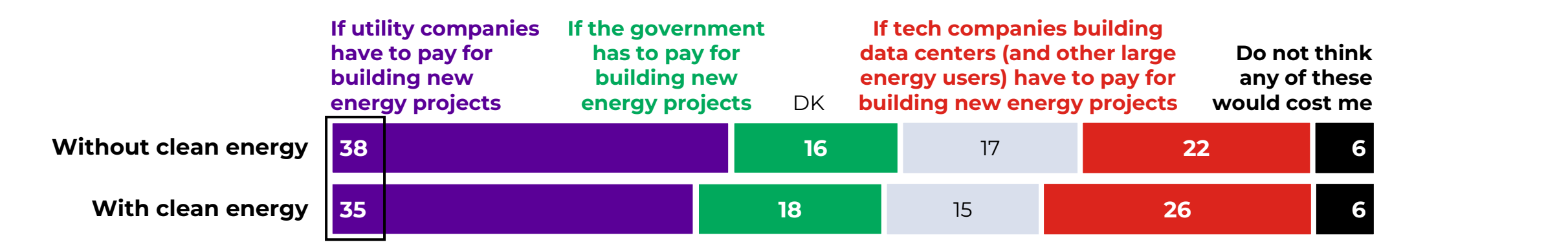
^/^^ designates split item

Tech companies remain the preferred payer for these upgrades – clean or not – because of the inevitability of utility companies passing along the costs

Regardless of whether or not you support a data center being built in your community [READ TO HALF: if it was powered by clean energy like wind and solar instead of fossil fuels]... Who do you think should end up paying the most for new [energy projects/clean energy] to power a local data center?



Regardless of whether or not you support a data center being built in your community [READ TO HALF: if it was powered by clean energy like wind and solar instead of fossil fuels], which do you think would end up costing you the most for new [energy projects/clean energy] to power a local data center?



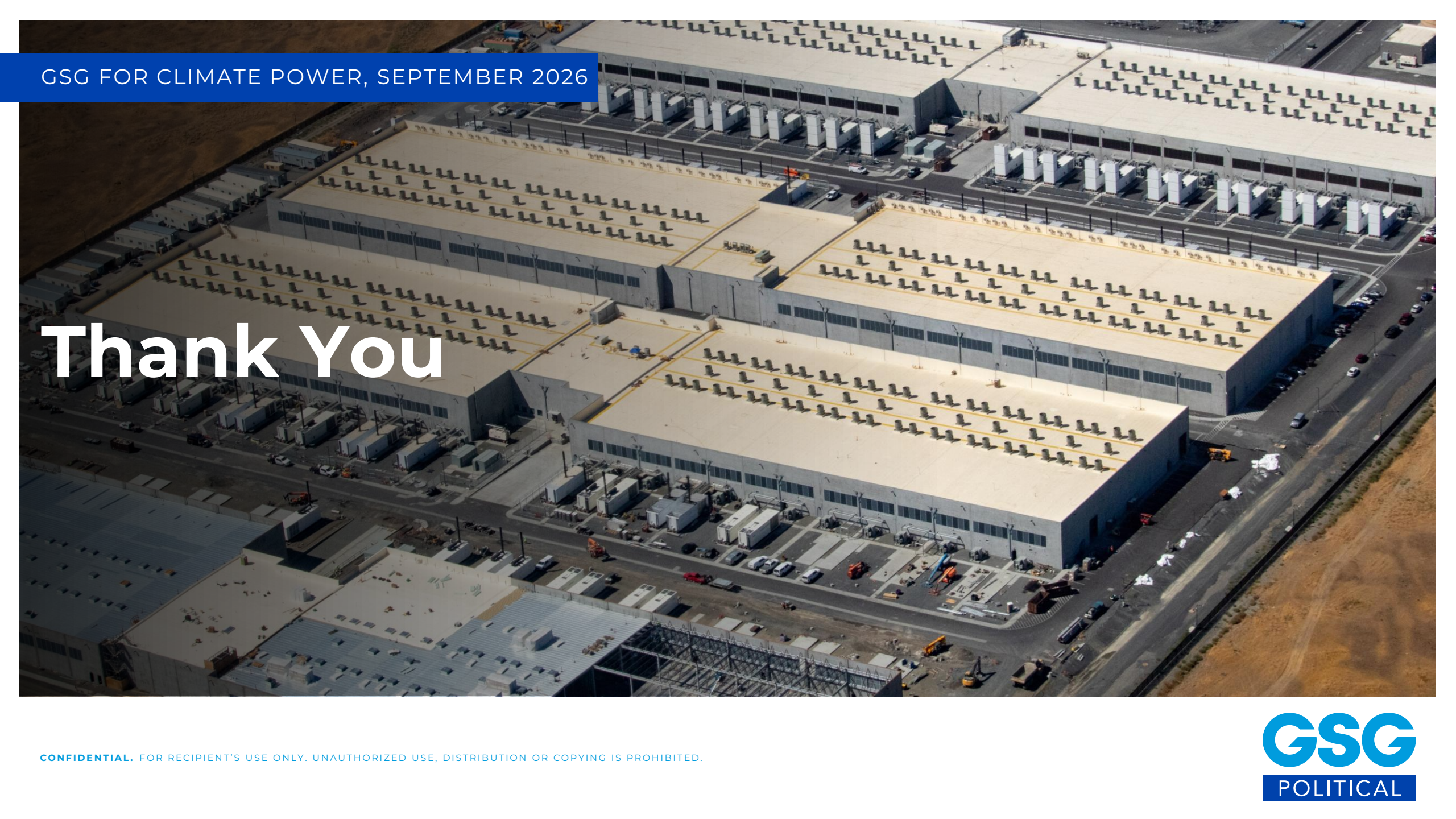
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Voters oppose the status quo: unchecked development with no new regulations – but are not necessarily against building data centers altogether. Voters expect more data centers to be built, but they reject allowing development to continue unchecked. The alternative is an approach that does more: either allowing development with stronger regulations or pausing until the right protections are established. In either case, voters only want data centers to move forward if it is on communities' terms, with clear transparency, accountability, and enforceable guardrails.

Moratorium or not, the guardrails going forward are the same. Voters don't think moratoriums are backdoor bans, and those who want moratoriums in their community generally don't want to permanently ban data centers from being built. They want more information, more transparency, and more guardrails. Regardless of policy mechanism – moratorium or building with new regulations – **the core guardrails that voters want to see are:**

- 1. Families will NOT foot the bill.** If data centers create new demand for electricity, water, and grid infrastructure, tech companies should pay the additional costs, not families.
- 2. Communities will know what is happening, and companies will be held accountable.** Voters are seriously skeptical not only of data centers, but of the local leaders, companies, and institutions responsible for keeping them in check. Voters want to see enforcement mechanisms built in in order to have real teeth: public reporting, measurable requirements, consequences for failing to meet them, and the ability to stop or cancel projects that violate the rules.
- 3. Data centers must meet clear environmental standards – including being powered with clean energy like wind and solar instead of fossil fuels.** Some of these environmental standards include protections for local water and air. Clean energy will not resolve every concern, but it remains one of the most important protections voters want in place before development moves forward.



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Thank You

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