

Messaging the Clean Energy Plan in Michigan

Key findings from a survey among registered voters in Michigan in April/May 2023

Terrance Woodbury

FOUNDING PARTNER

Roshni Nedungadi

FOUNDING PARTNER

Ross Miletich

SR. ANALYST

Courtney Couillard

RESEARCH MANAGER

Maya Kapur

ANALYST

HIT STRATEGIES
WASHINGTON, DC

www.hitstrat.com



Objectives

- 1 Understand Attitudes:**
 Directly connect with Michigan registered voters as representatives of engaged citizens to understand their values, priorities, experiences and sentiments surrounding the new Clean Energy Plan*.
- 2 Segment Our Audience:**
 In understanding where Michiganders stand, we will determine who among registered Michiganders are our base of supporters, opposition, and persuadable audiences.
- 3 Test the Message:**
 Conduct message testing to identify the best messaging elements that effectively introduces legislation like the IRA and improves confidence in progress made to expand clean energy.

Methodology

Conducted April 27 to May 3, 2023

Voter Universe

Total=Registered voters
 Oversample=Voters ages 18-35
 Oversample=Black voters

Total sample Size

N = 1,051
 N = 372
 N = 244

Methodology

All survey interviews were collected through a mixed methodology of cell/landline live calls and TTW online completes

Overall Margin of Error

±3.85

Regional Breakdown of Sample

49%	Detroit DMA	11%	Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo DMA
20%	Flint-Saginaw-Bay City DMA	19%	Rest of State

* In this poll, we use the term "Clean Energy Plan" to refer to the Inflation Reduction Act. We do this for three reasons: (1) No one has heard of the IRA (2) using a broader term allows us to combine the IRA, with the Infrastructure Bill, and other executive actions that have climate/clean energy implications, and (3) our previous research shows that people don't feel like there is a real "plan" to transition the economy to clean energy, so using that term emphasizes that this is all part of a plan for the economy.

Key Takeaways



1

Michiganders are relatively unaware of the Clean Energy Plan and have yet to form strong opinions on it.



- 31% of Michiganders say that they approve of the plan while 27% say that they disapprove of this plan (disapproval is largely driven by conservative voters.)
- 42% of Michiganders say that they have no opinion about the plan or that they have never heard of it.
- With Michiganders not adequately informed about this progress under the Clean Energy Plan, low marks extend to President Biden, Congressional democrats, and Michigan Democratic officials on this issues of climate change and clean energy.

2

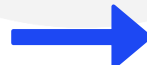
Michiganders feel favorable towards clean energy investments when they receive more information about them.



- When thinking about policies recently signed into law, Michiganders are most favorable toward policies in the plan that [upgrade the U.S. electrical grid](#) (67% fav) and [create new good-paying jobs and expand job training in the clean energy industry](#) (65% fav).
- The impacts of these policies that resonate most with Michiganders are those that can [save consumers tens of thousands of dollars](#) for making their homes more energy efficient (52% rank this as a top benefit) and [could save them up to \\$1,000 a year in energy costs](#) (48% rank this as a top benefit).

3

Approval for the Clean Energy Plan improves by 24 points when Michiganders receive information and messaging on the plan's accomplishments and progress.



- Information moves Michiganders away from indifference into approval for the plan; the disapproval numbers remain generally the same from the start-to-end of the poll. [Michiganders who move towards supporting the plan tend to be soft Democrats, women, and Gen Z voters.](#)
- Half of Michiganders (52%) say they have more confidence in the Clean Energy Plan after hearing about the Biden administration's leadership on this plan and future investments.



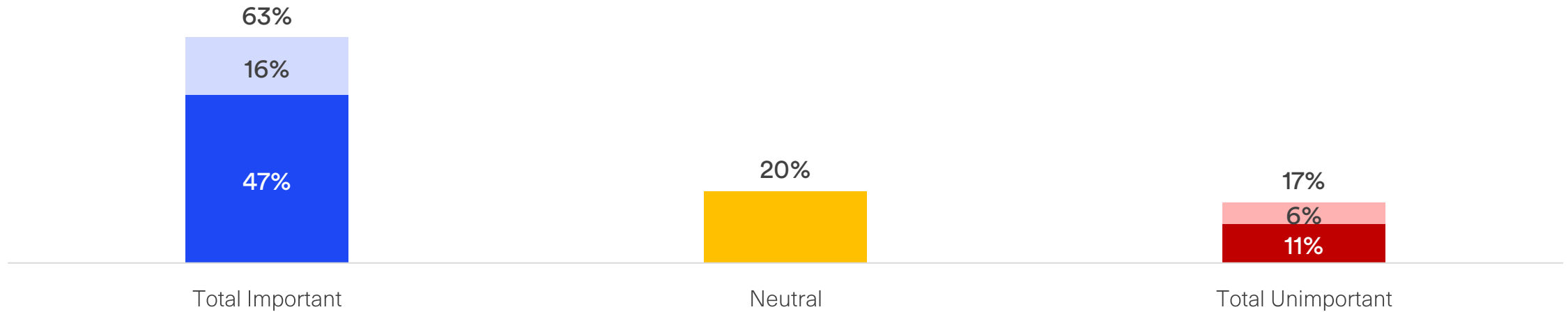
Opinions on Climate Change

Two-in-three Michiganders say climate change is an important issue, especially among voters of color, younger generations, and self-ID Democrats.



Q22. Regarding the issue of climate change, please rank the issue on a scale from zero to ten, where “10” means that you feel that climate change is VERY IMPORTANT, “5” means that you feel that climate change is not particularly important or unimportant, and “0” means that you climate change is VERY UNIMPORTANT.

■ Very important (8-10)
 ■ Somewhat important (6-7)
 ■ Neutral (5)
 ■ Not very important (3-4)
 ■ Not important at all (0-2)



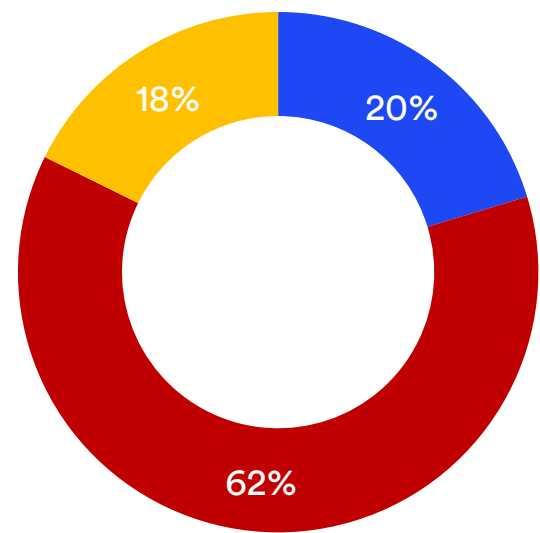
	Men	Women	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Millennial	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
Total Important	59%	67%	62%	67%	69%	69%	65%	56%	65%	85%	60%	39%	65%	68%	60%	57%
Total Neutral	22%	18%	19%	22%	22%	19%	20%	26%	15%	8%	24%	27%	22%	17%	21%	22%
Total Unimportant	19%	15%	19%	11%	9%	12%	15%	17%	20%	7%	17%	34%	13%	16%	19%	21%

Michiganders have cost concerns about increasing the use of clean energy, especially in the short term, and need to be informed about the actual impact of using clean energy on their wallet



Q36. Do you think that increasing the use of clean energy in the United States will save you money, cost you more money, or not have an effect on you either way **over the next year or two?**

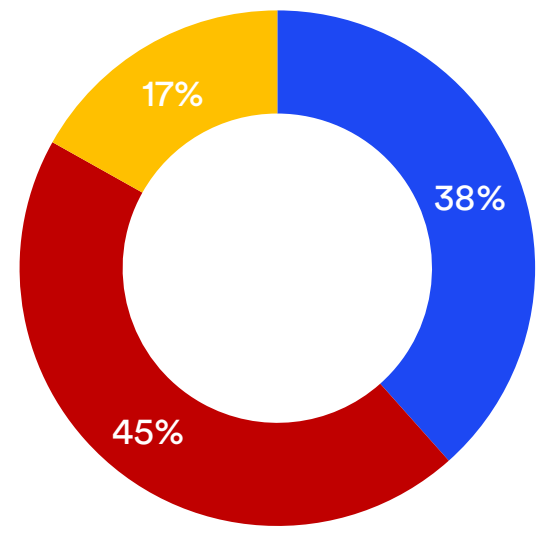
- Save you more money in the short term
- Cost you more money in the short term
- Not affect you either way in the short term



	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Save Money	18%	32%	29%	29%	26%	20%	13%	29%	18%	11%
Cost Money	65%	47%	48%	51%	54%	63%	71%	51%	64%	74%
No Impact	17%	21%	23%	20%	20%	17%	16%	19%	18%	14%

Q37. Do you think that increasing the use of clean energy in the United States will save you money, cost you more money, or not have an effect on you either way **over the next 10 or more years?**

- Save you more money in the long term
- Cost you more money in the long term
- Not affect you either way in the long term



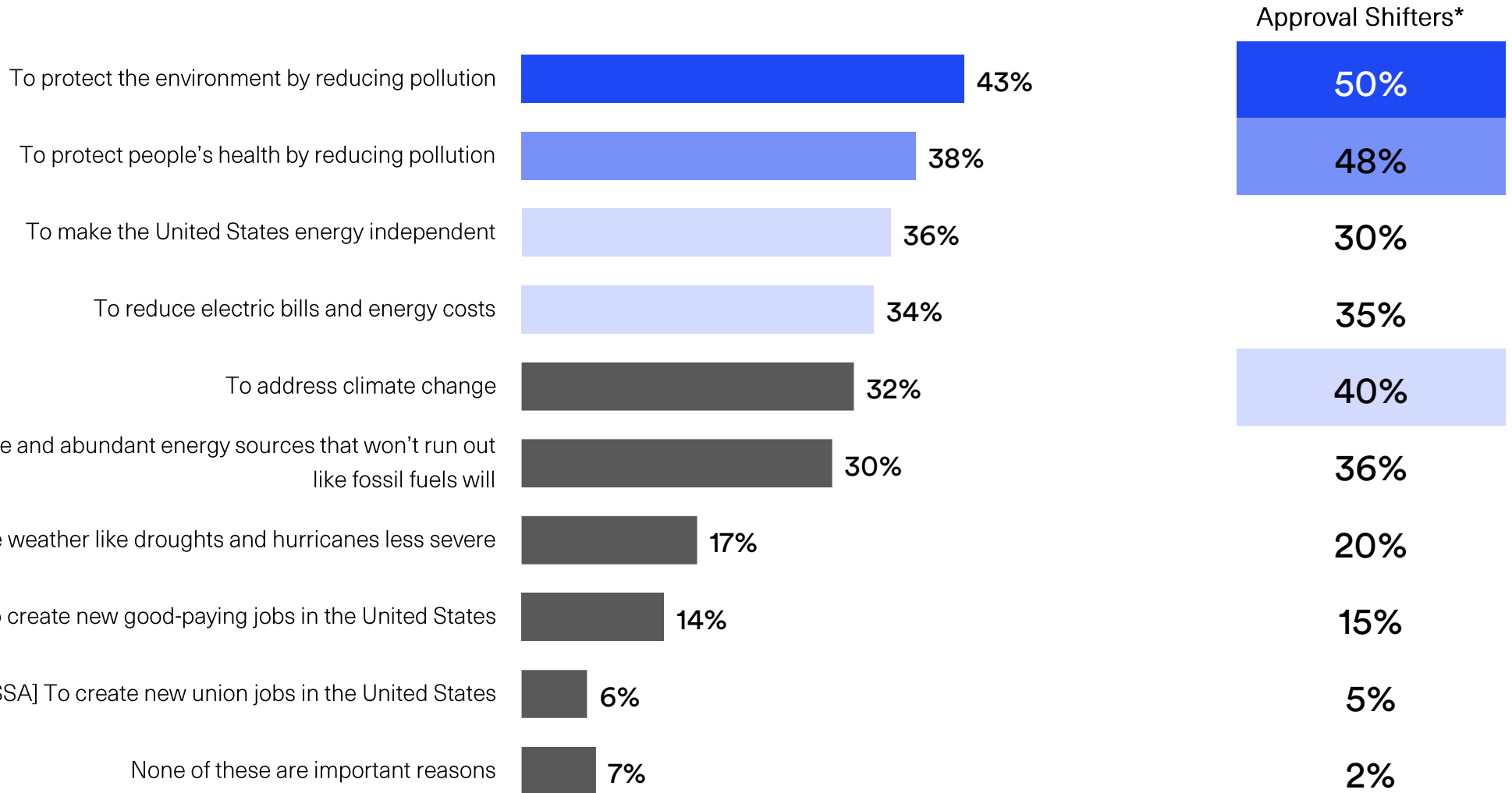
	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Save Money	37%	46%	43%	47%	42%	32%	37%	59%	31%	25%
Cost Money	47%	34%	37%	32%	38%	50%	50%	26%	50%	60%
No Impact	16%	20%	21%	20%	20%	17%	13%	15%	19%	15%

Michiganders prioritize **reducing pollution, energy independence, and cutting energy costs** as important reasons to increase clean energy use.



Q33. Which three of the following, if any, do you think are the most important reasons to increase our use of clean energy sources?

Voters of color in MI are more likely to cite reducing pollution to protect people's health (43%) compared to white voters in MI (37%), while white MI voters are more concerned with reducing pollution to protect the environment (44% white, 39% POC)



*Approval Shifters are defined as voters who do not approve of the Clean Energy Plan at the beginning of the survey but move towards approval by the end of the survey after learning information about the plan



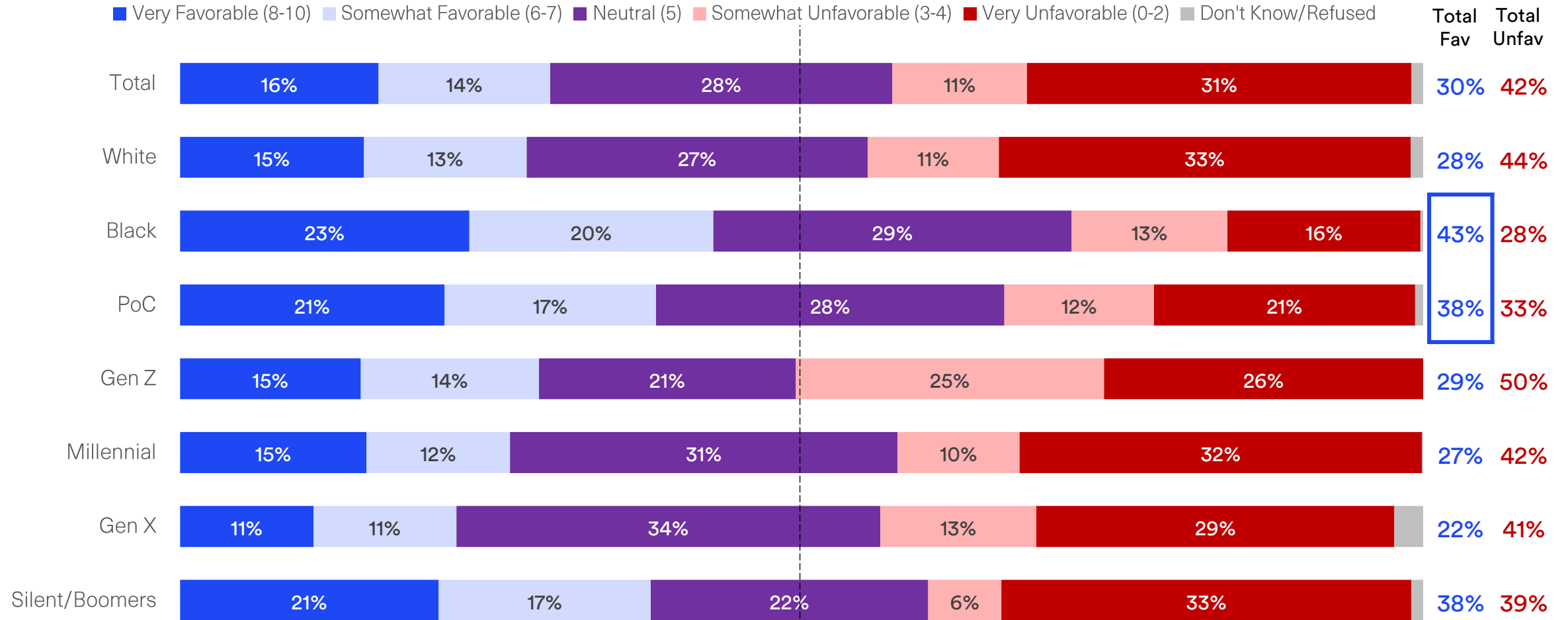
Baseline Perspective

About a third of Michiganders feel favorable toward President Biden and Congressional Democrats on climate change and clean energy.



Q15. Now, please rate how you feel President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress are doing on each of the following issue areas. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where "10" means that you feel VERY WARM and FAVORABLE towards them, "5" means that you feel neither warm or cold (neutral), and "0" means that you feel VERY COLD and UNFAVORABLE towards them.

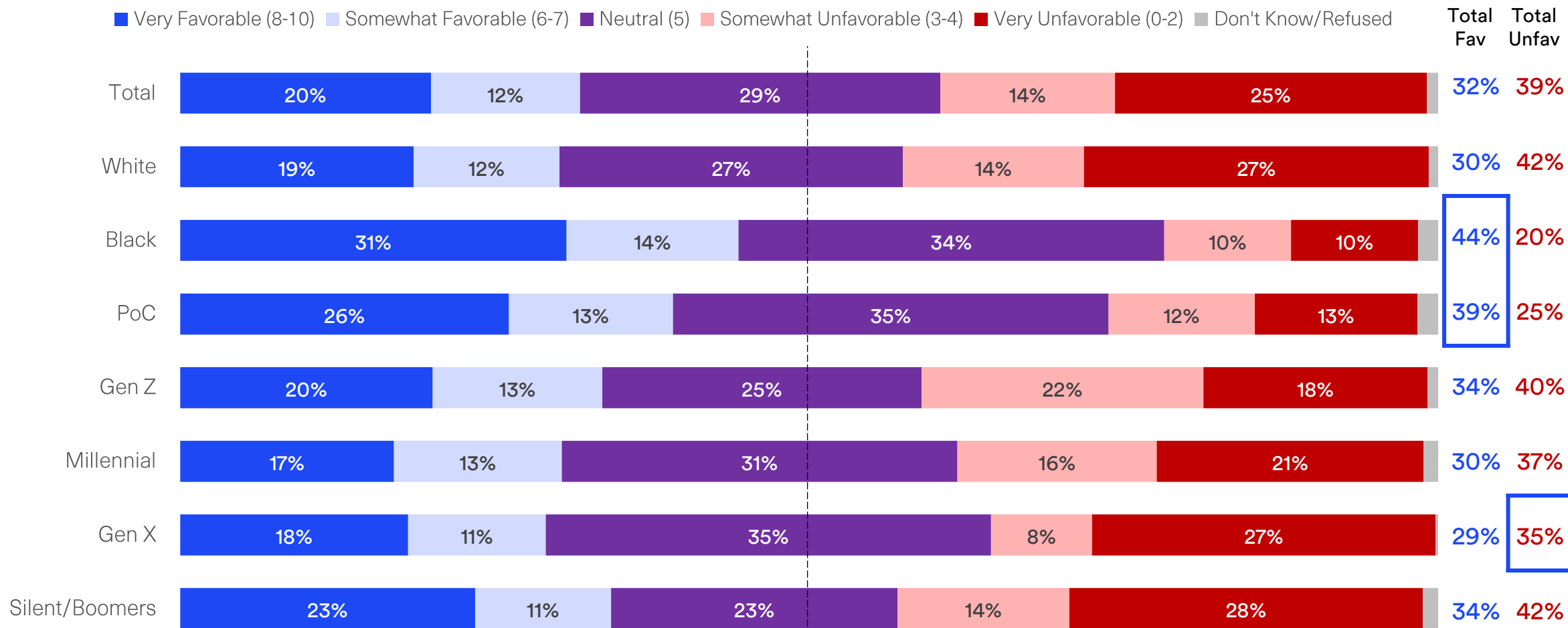
CLIMATE CHANGE & CLEAN ENERGY



Governor Gretchen Whitmer inherits the national Congressional Democratic reputation with a similar favorability rating on the issue.

Q16. Now, please rate how you feel Governor Gretchen Whitmer is doing on each of the following issue areas. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where "10" means that you feel VERY WARM and FAVORABLE towards them, "5" means that you feel neither warm or cold (neutral), and "0" means that you feel VERY COLD and UNFAVORABLE towards them.

CLIMATE CHANGE & CLEAN ENERGY

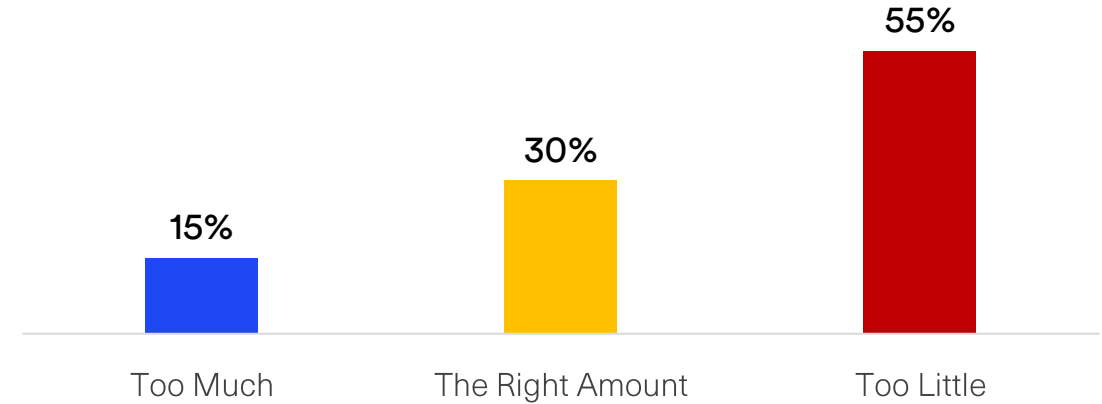
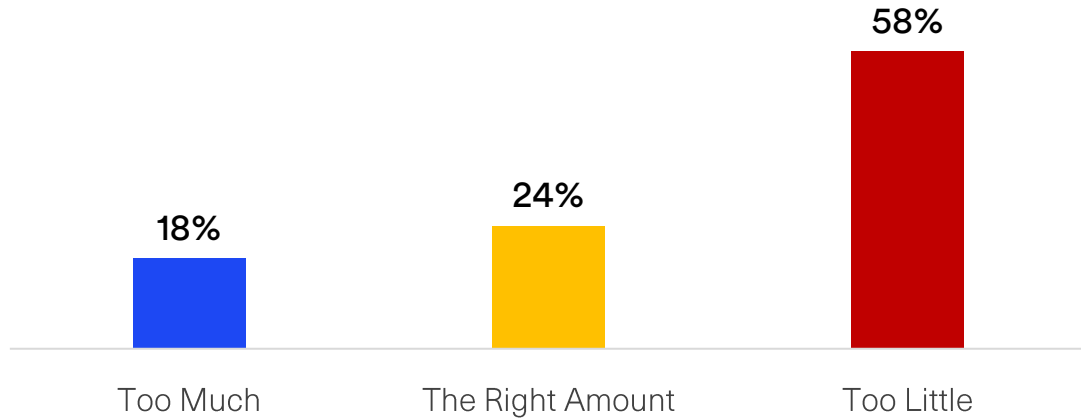


Michiganders generally say both Biden and MI Democratic Officials **do too little to address climate change**, with younger generations and Independents the most likely to say not enough is being done.



Q17. Do you think Joe Biden is doing too much, too little, or the right amount to address climate change?

Q18. Do you think Democrats in Michigan's government are doing too much, too little, or the right amount to address climate change?



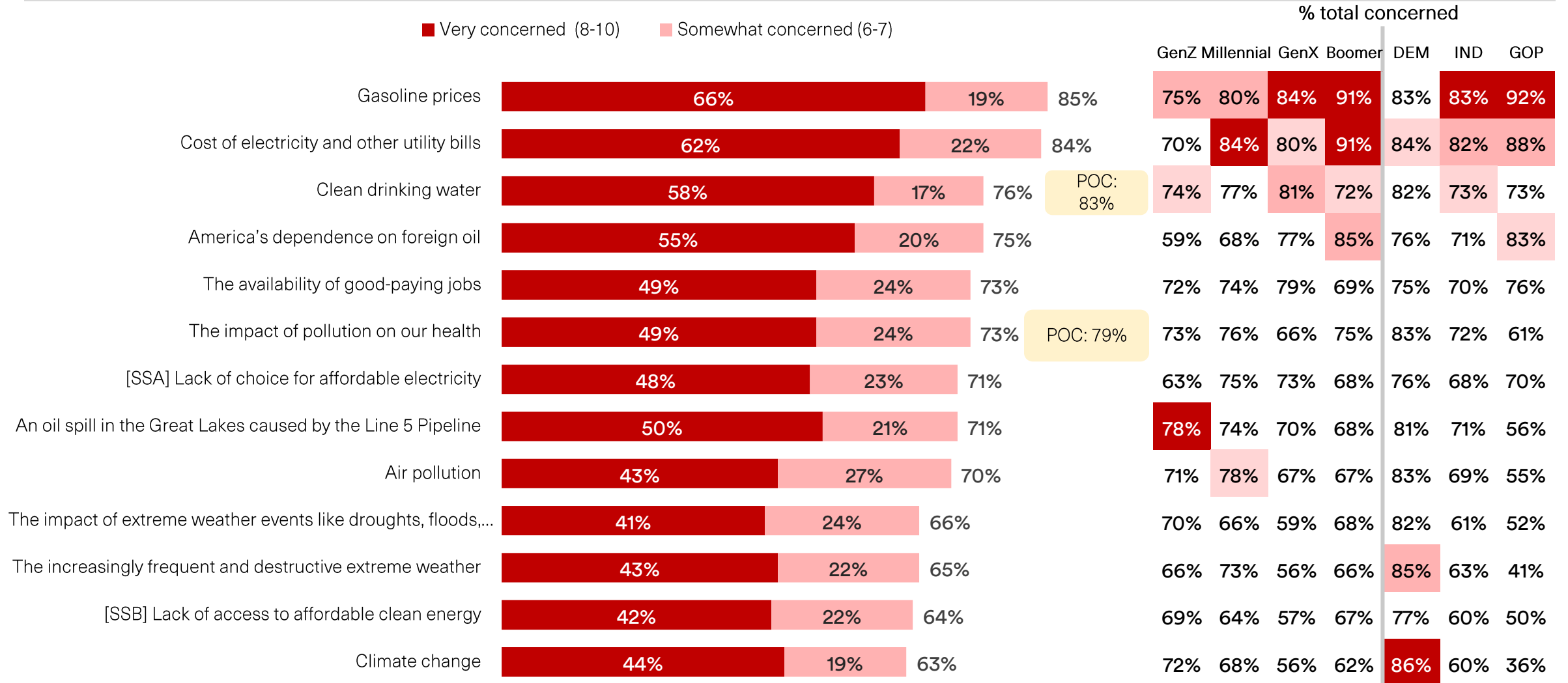
	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Too Much	20%	7%	9%	10%	10%	16%	27%	5%	15%	44%
Right Amount	22%	37%	34%	14%	19%	28%	29%	47%	14%	13%
Too Little	59%	56%	57%	76%	71%	57%	43%	48%	71%	43%

	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Too Much	16%	7%	8%	10%	6%	13%	24%	4%	11%	43%
Right Amount	28%	40%	39%	24%	32%	32%	29%	45%	26%	15%
Too Little	56%	52%	53%	66%	62%	55%	47%	51%	63%	42%



Michiganders are most concerned about **gasoline prices and utilities costs** when it comes to climate-related challenges.

Q21. Now, please rate how concerned you are about each one of the following issues. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where “10” means that you feel very concerned, “5” means that you feel neither concerned or unconcerned, and “0” means that you are not concerned at all. You may use any number from 0 to 10, depending on how you feel





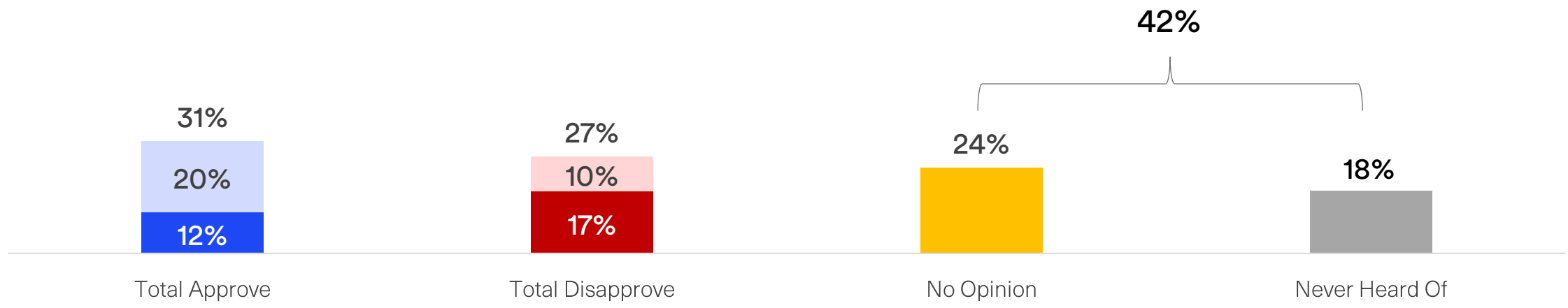
Initial opinion on Biden and Congressional Democrats' Clean Energy Plan

Michiganders are generally divided on approval for the federal Clean Energy Plan; 42% of Michiganders do not have an opinion on the plan or have never heard of it.



Q31. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan?

- Strongly Approve
- Somewhat Approve
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disapprove
- Strongly Disapprove
- Never Heard Of



	Men	Women	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Millennial	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
Total Approve	34%	29%	29%	47%	41%	30%	31%	28%	34%	65%	18%	11%	35%	31%	26%	32%
Total Disapprove	32%	23%	30%	13%	15%	16%	23%	29%	32%	7%	29%	55%	18%	27%	23%	36%
No Opinion/ Never Heard	34%	48%	41%	40%	44%	54%	46%	43%	34%	29%	53%	34%	47%	42%	51%	32%
Net Approve	+2	+7	-1	+34	+27	+14	+8	-1	+2	+58	-10	-44	+17	+4	+4	-3

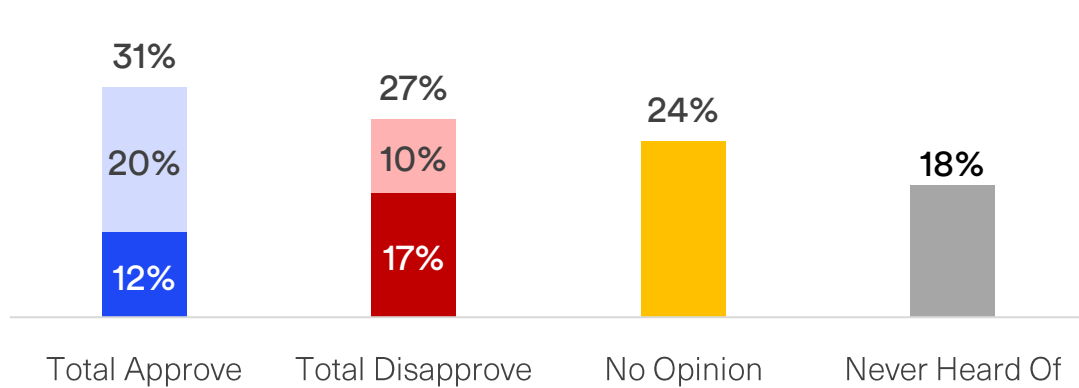
Michigan approval for the Clean Energy Plan stacks up with ratings across six key states, though Michiganders are less aware of the Clean Energy Plan.



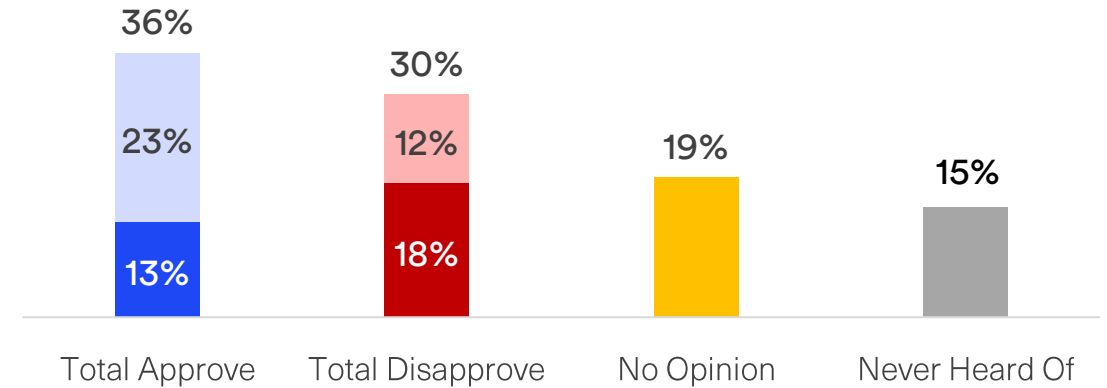
Q31. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan? / Based on what you have seen and read in this survey, from what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of the Clean Energy Plan that President Biden and Congress recently passed?

Strongly Approve Somewhat Approve No Opinion Somewhat Disapprove Strongly Disapprove Never Heard Of

Michigan



COMBINED STATES*



* Based on aggregated data from MI, WI, PA, GA, AZ, and NV registered voters.

All four proof points on the Clean Energy Plan are popular with Michiganders. Creating new good-paying jobs is especially popular approval shifters.



Q32. Below are four policies recently passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden. Please rate how you feel toward each one.

■ Very Favorable (8-10) ■ Somewhat Favorable (6-7)

Approval Shifters*

Showing % Total Favorable

Upgrading the U.S. electrical grid so it is able to handle much greater use, save money, able to deliver more electricity from clean energy sources, and is more reliable during extreme weather



80%

Creating new good-paying jobs and expanding job training in clean energy industries for a range of workers, from scientists and engineers to electricians and carpenters



84%

Providing incentives to businesses and consumers that significantly reduce the cost of clean energy technologies that save them money and reduce pollution



73%

Expanding and speeding up the transition to clean energy sources and ensuring that clean energy technologies will be developed and manufactured in the United States



71%



*Approval Shifters are defined as voters who do not approve of the Clean Energy Plan at the beginning of the survey but move towards approval by the end of the survey after learning information about the plan



Talking about the Clean Energy Plan



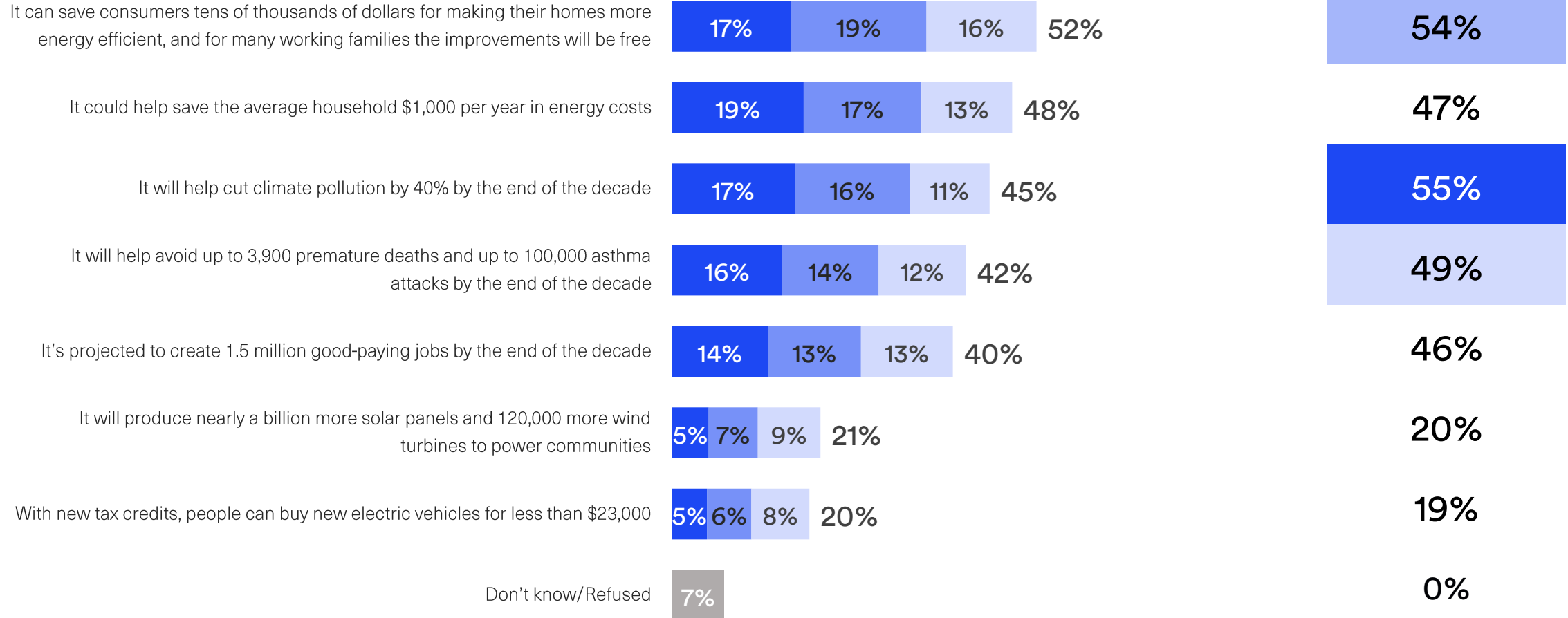
Thinking about the impacts of the Clean Energy Plan generally, **Michiganders prioritize monetary savings that will impact their households**; cutting pollution and health benefits are important benefits for approval shifters.

Q39. Here are some specific impacts of these policies. Please rank the two or three that are the most important to you personally.

■ Ranked First Choice ■ Ranked Second Choice ■ Ranked Third Choice

Approval Shifters

Showing % Total Ranked

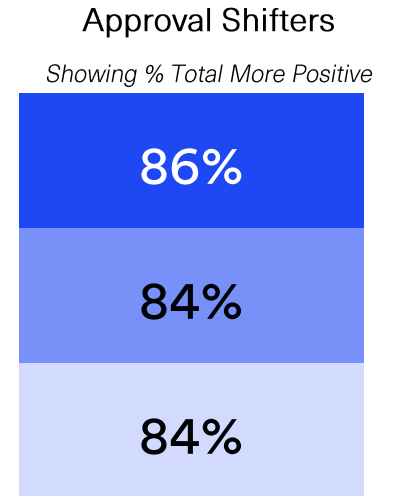
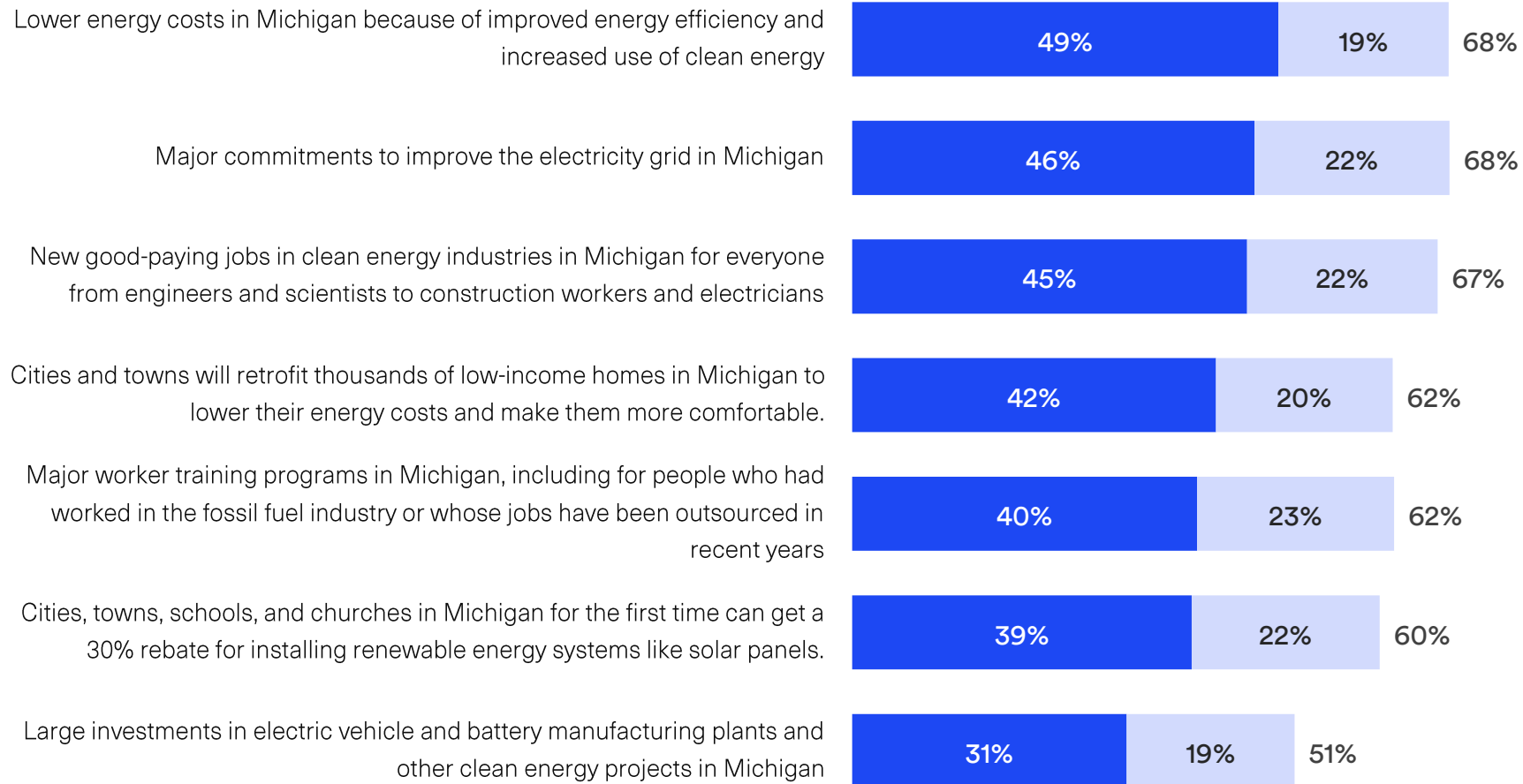


All the tested potential Clean Energy Plan outcomes in Michigan make most Michiganders feel more positive toward clean energy, especially **lower energy costs as well as improvements to the grid and creating jobs in-state.**



Q40. In the next two years, states and the Biden administration will be implementing the policies that we've been discussing. Some things that you could see happen in MI as part of this are listed below. Please rate how each one would affect your thinking about expanded use of clean energy.

- Much more positive about expanded clean energy
- Somewhat more positive about expanded clean energy



Proof of progress and delivery on the Clean Energy Plan at the national and state-level inspires hope for Michiganders.

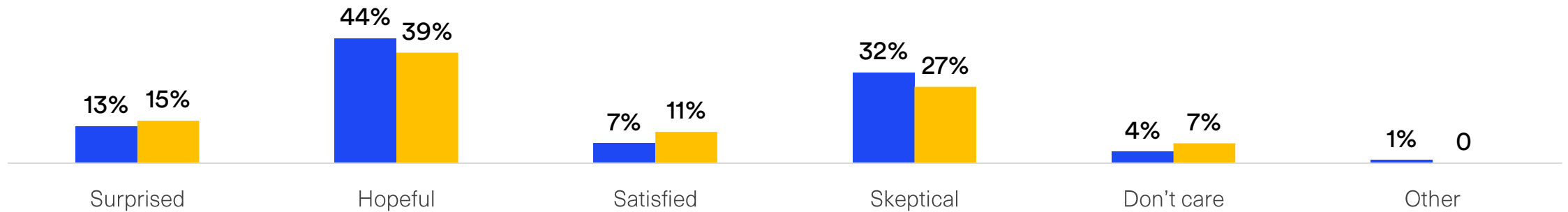


41. Here is some more information about the economic and job benefits of the Clean Energy Plan. Which of the following words or phrases best describes how you feel about this?

[SSA--National] "In just the last eight months since the passage of this Clean Energy Plan, companies from across the country have already announced over **191 new clean energy projects** that will **deliver over \$242 billion** into local economies and **create over 142,000 new jobs.**"

[SSB—State] "In just the last eight months since the passage of this Clean Energy Plan, companies in Michigan have already announced over **\$20 billion in clean energy investment** and **created over 13,700 good-paying clean energy jobs.**"

■ National ■ State



National	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Approv. Shifters
Hopeful	43%	46%	48%	31%	50%	48%	41%	65%	39%	26%	55%
Skeptical	35%	18%	19%	15%	27%	35%	42%	13%	34%	54%	21%

State	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Approv. Shifters
Hopeful	39%	45%	40%	36%	35%	32%	47%	57%	31%	28%	44%
Skeptical	29%	14%	18%	14%	29%	30%	26%	9%	34%	41%	16%



Public Opinion Shift

Isolated proof points and positive messaging increase approval for the Clean Energy Plan 24 points (a big shift that is rare to see in public opinion research.)

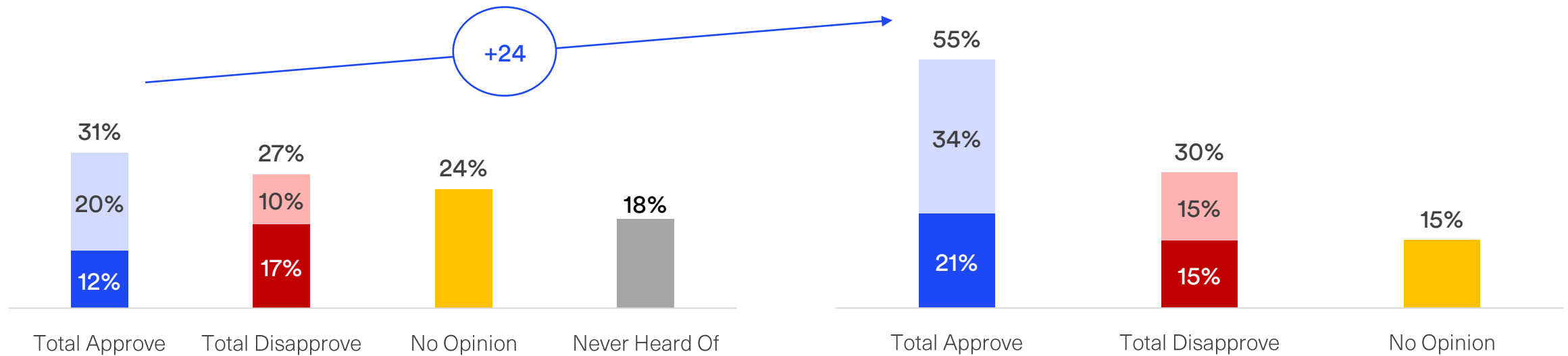


Q31/43. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan? / Based on what you have seen and read in this survey, from what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of the Clean Energy Plan that President Biden and Congress recently passed?

Strongly Approve Somewhat Approve No Opinion Somewhat Disapprove Strongly Disapprove Never Heard Of

INITIAL ASK

INFORMED ASK



27% of Michiganders move towards approving of the Clean Energy Plan by the end of the poll after learning more about the plan and its impacts.



Q31/43. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan? / Based on what you have seen and read in this survey, from what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of the Clean Energy Plan that President Biden and Congress recently passed?

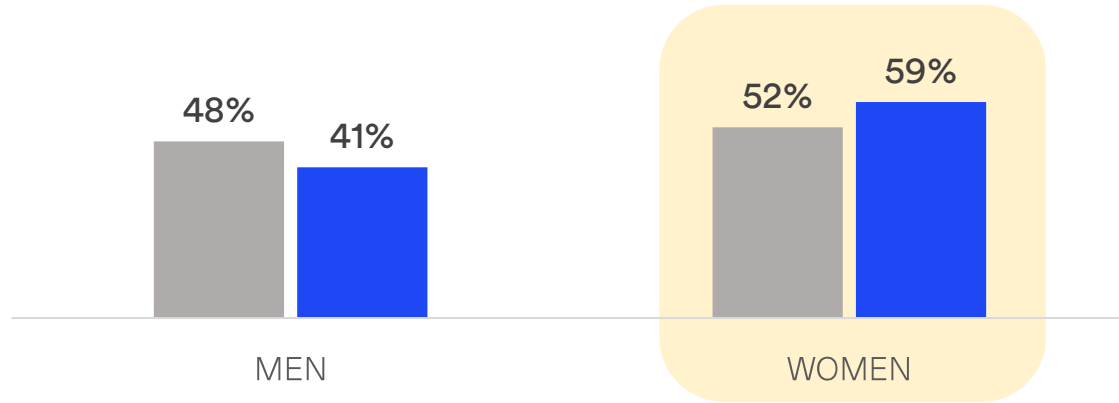
Groups that were MORE LIKELY than Michiganders overall to move towards approving of the plan	
40%	of GenZ voters move towards approval
38%	of Non-2020 Voters move towards approval
36%	of Moms move towards approval
35%	of Independent Women move towards approval
35%	of Women 18-49 move towards approval
35%	of Voters Ages 18-35 move towards approval
33%	of Soft Democrats move towards approval

Demographic Profile of Michiganders who Moved Towards Approving of Clean Energy Plan

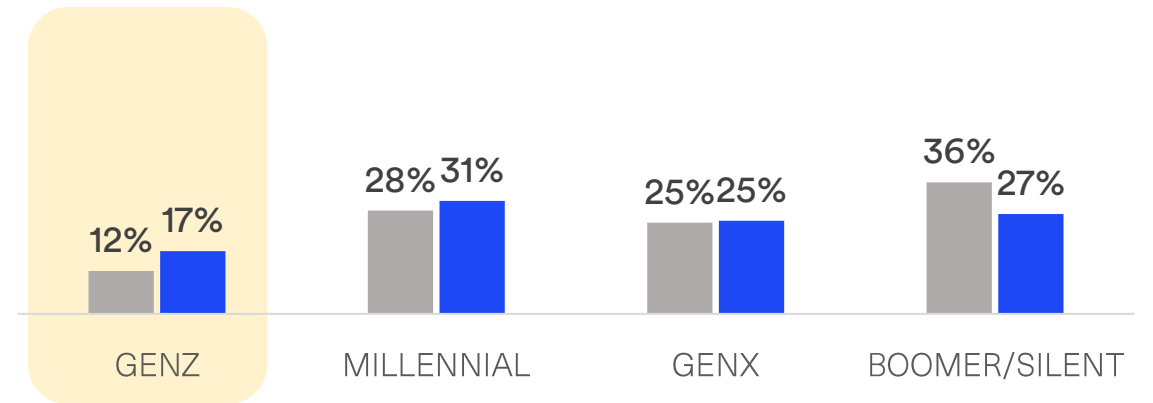


■ All Michigan Voters ■ Approval Shifters

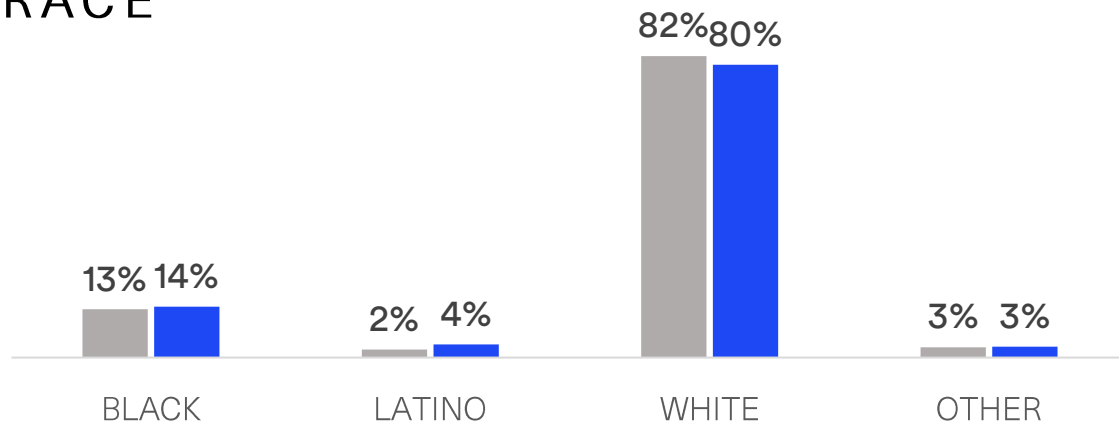
GENDER



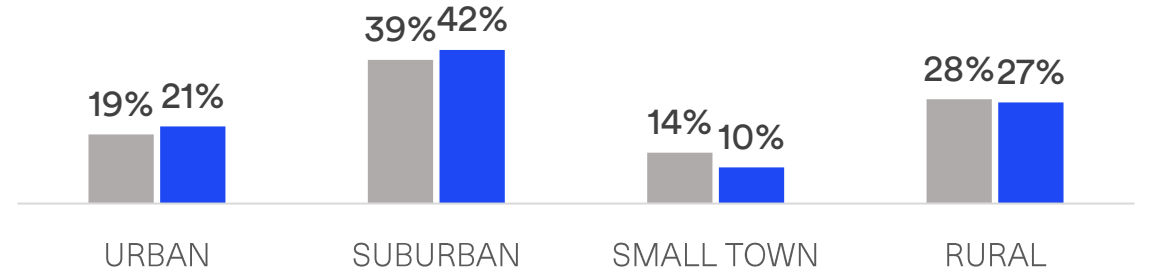
GENERATIONS



RACE



URBANICITY

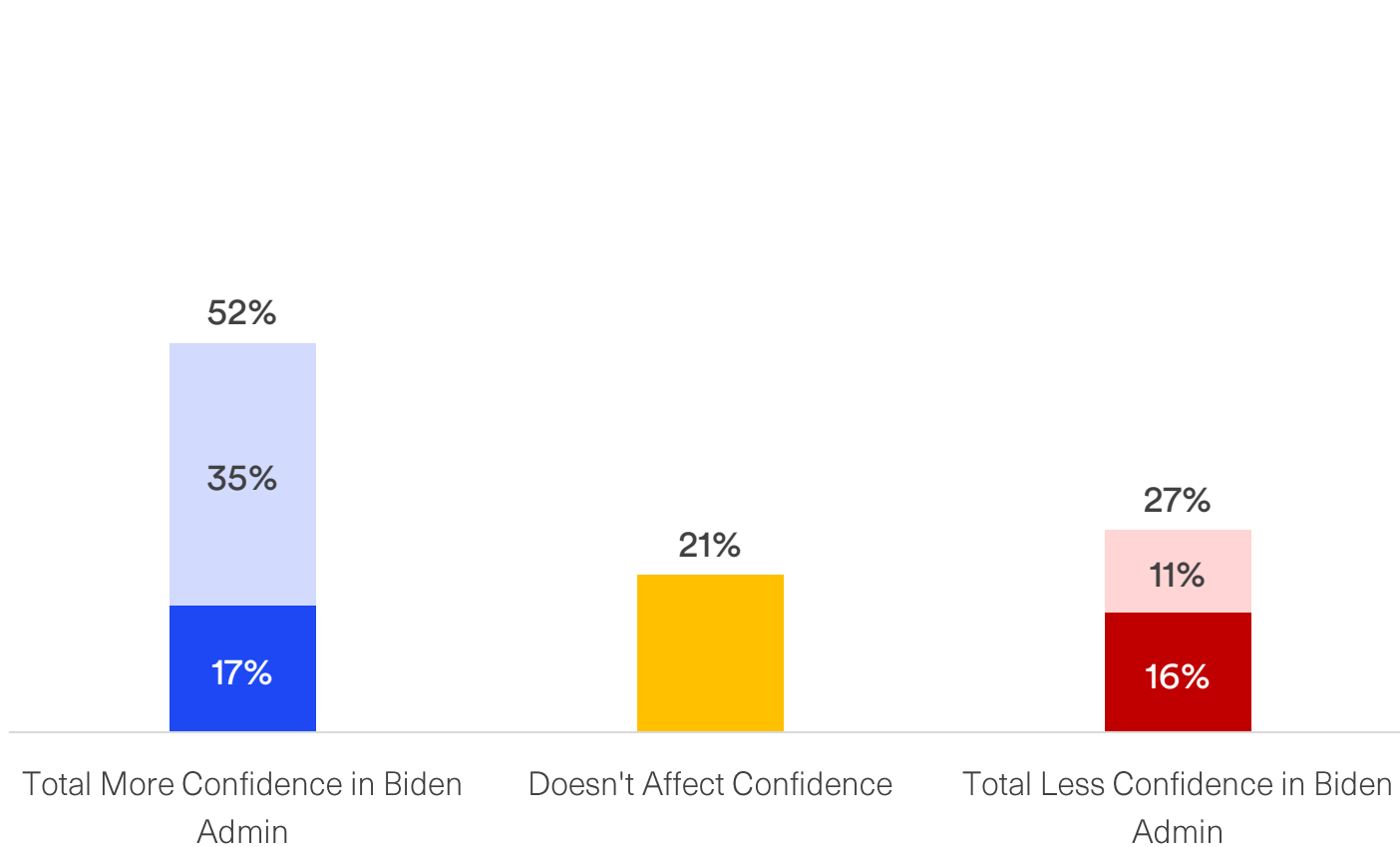


Educating Michiganders on the policies and progress in the Clean Energy Plan increases confidence in the Biden administration, especially with self-ID Democrats, GenZers, and voters of color.



Q43. President Biden and his administration have led the passage of the clean energy and climate policies we have been discussing, and he is leading the effort to promote investments in clean energy manufacturing and good-paying jobs. Does this give you...?

■ Much More Confident
 ■ Somewhat More Confident
 ■ Doesn't Affect Opinion
■ Somewhat Less Confident
 ■ Much Less Confident



Total More Confident (52%) *Overindex on Being More Confident*

81%	of Self-ID Democrats feel more confident
76%	of Black Citizens who voted for Biden in 2020 feel more confident
75%	of Black women feel more confident
71%	of Black non-college edu. Voters feel more confident
64%	of Gen Z women feel more confident
60%	of Urban voters feel more confident
56%	of Millennial women feel more confident



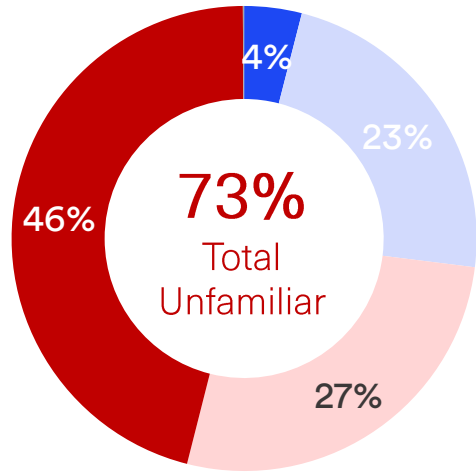
Other Issues

Michiganders are not familiar with Project Willow and do not have strong opinions either in favor or against it.



Q46. How familiar are you with the oil drilling project called "Project Willow" in Alaska?

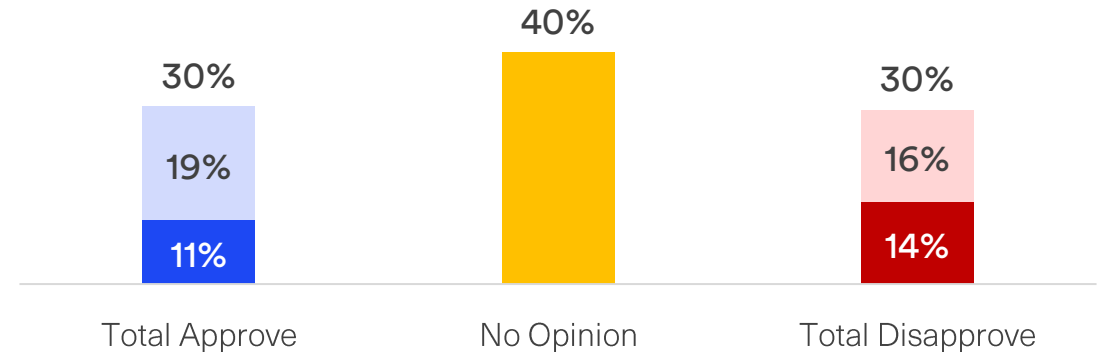
■ Very Familiar ■ Somewhat Familiar
■ Not that familiar ■ Not at all familiar



	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Total Familiar	26%	32%	32%	40%	25%	25%	25%	32%	23%	29%
Total Unfamiliar	74%	68%	68%	60%	75%	75%	75%	68%	77%	71%

47. Do you approve or disapprove of President Biden approving one of the largest oil developments on federal land in Alaska, also known as Project Willow?

■ Strongly Approve ■ Somewhat Approve ■ No Opinion
■ Somewhat Disapprove ■ Strongly Disapprove



	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Total Approve	30%	36%	34%	20%	24%	31%	38%	33%	24%	43%
Total Disapprove	30%	28%	29%	52%	34%	27%	22%	34%	31%	20%

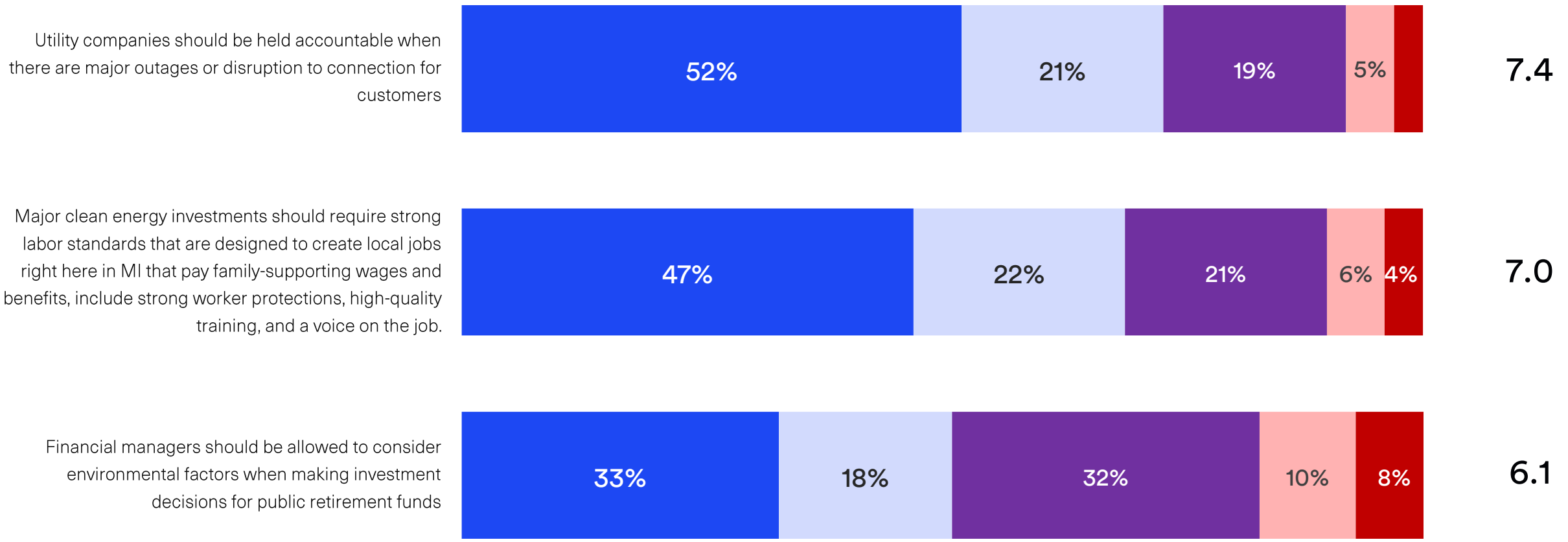
A majority of Michiganders agree that utility companies should be held accountable, clean energy investments should include labor standards, and ESG factors should be allowed in investment decisions.



49. Please rate how important you consider each of the following potential measures to be. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where “10” means that it is very important, “5” means that it is neither important or unimportant, and “0” means that it is not important at all. You may use any number from 0 to 10, depending on how you feel.

■ Very Important (8-10) ■ Somewhat Important (6-7) ■ Neutral (5) ■ Somewhat Unimportant (3-4) ■ Not Important At All (0-2)

Mean importance
Showing Mean importance on 0-10 Scale





Summary of Findings

1

Michiganders who shift to approving of the Clean Energy Plan are already largely supportive of Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration – they just need more information.



The groups most likely to move toward approval for the Clean Energy Plan once given information are those who lack information at the beginning, including young Michiganders. We move many of those uninformed Michiganders to approval in our poll by simply educating them on progress. Michiganders overall feel favorable toward clean energy, the policies in the Clean Energy Plan, and the potential impacts of the Plan in Michigan after we give them information.

2

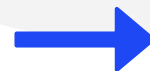
Michiganders feel most favorable toward elements of the Clean Energy Plan centered on economics. People of color and young voters are also especially concerned with air pollution.



Connect the progress of the Clean Energy Plan with creating new, good-paying jobs in the energy sector. Localize the progress with wins in their own communities/state and define the clear relationship between clean energy and economic opportunity. Connect pollution and public health as the problem and the Clean Energy Plan as the solution.

3

Educating Michiganders on the Clean Energy Plan increases confidence in the Biden Administration to promote investments in clean energy.



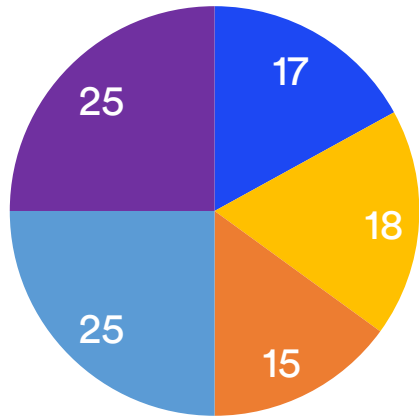
Michiganders are generally unaware of the Clean Energy Plan and the progress already made. We can build trust between Michiganders and Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration by pointing to wins both nationally and in their own communities (i.e., more jobs, clean energy projects, and investments.) Highlight what we have already accomplished as proof that we can do more to make these goals a reality.



Appendix

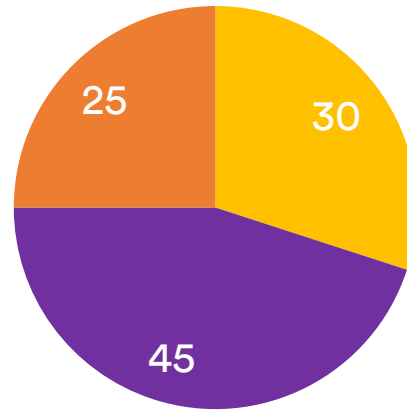


AGE



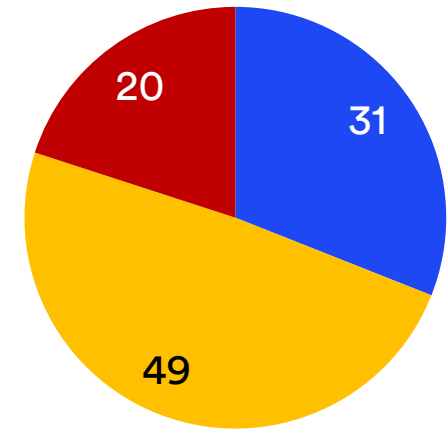
- 18 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 64
- 65+

EDUCATION



- High School or Less
- Some College
- College or Grad School

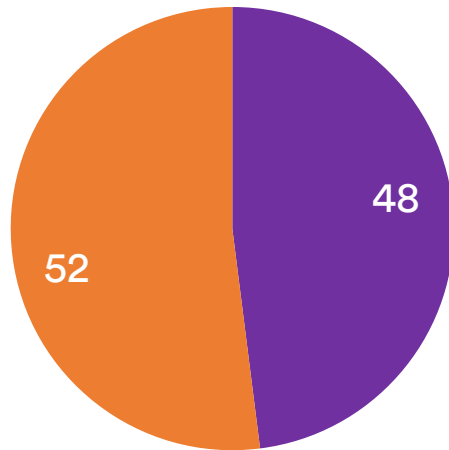
PARTY ID



- Democrat
- Independent
- Republican

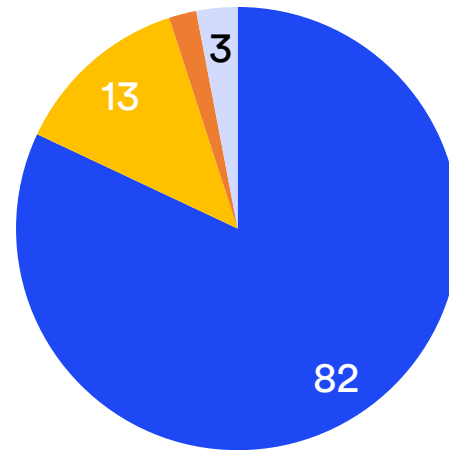


GENDER



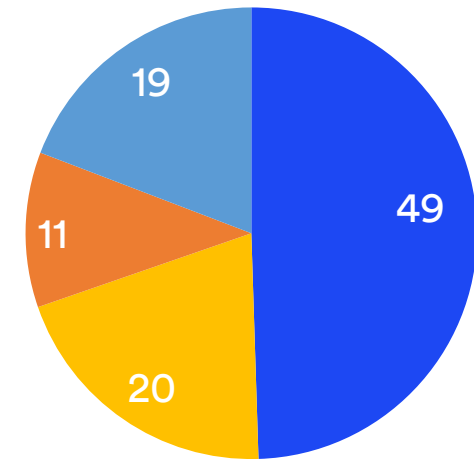
- Men
- Women
- Gender Non-Conforming/Other

RACE



- White
- Black
- Latino
- Other

DMA



- Detroit
- Flint-Saginaw-Bay City
- Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo
- Rest of State