

Messaging the Clean Energy Plan in Wisconsin

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

Terrance Woodbury

FOUNDING PARTNER

Ross Miletich

SR. ANALYST

Maya Kapur

ANALYST

Roshni Nedungadi

FOUNDING PARTNER

Courtney Couillard

RESEARCH MANAGER

HIT STRATEGIES
WASHINGTON, DC

www.hitstrat.com



Objectives

- 1 Understand Attitudes:**
 Directly connect with Wisconsin 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 Wisconsinites stand, we will determine who among registered Wisconsin voters 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 28 to May 3, 2023

Voter Universe

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

Total sample Size

N = 1,051
 N = 445
 N = 189

Methodology

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

Overall Margin of Error

±4.92

Regional Breakdown of Sample

19% Green Bay-Appleton DMA
 39% Milwaukee DMA
 19% Madison DMA
 23% 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

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



- 34% of Wisconsinites say that they approve of the plan while 28% say that they disapprove of this plan (disapproval is largely driven by conservatives.)
- 38% of Wisconsinites say that they have no opinion about the plan or that they have never heard of it.
- With Wisconsinites not adequately informed about this progress under the Clean Energy Plan, low marks extend to President Biden, Congressional Democrats, and Wisconsin Democratic officials on the issues of climate change and clean energy.

2

Wisconsinites feel favorable toward clean energy investments when they receive more information about them.



- When thinking about policies recently signed into law, Wisconsinites are most favorable towards those that [upgrade the U.S. electrical grid](#) (70% 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 Wisconsinites are those that [save consumers tens of thousands of dollars](#) for making their homes more energy efficient (54% rank this as a top benefit) and [would help cut climate pollution by 40% by the end of the decade](#) (51% rank this as a top benefit).
- [Voters of color are generally most concerned about pollution and public health](#) and feel more favorable toward policies that address this problem.

3

Approval for the Clean Energy Plan improves by nearly 20 points when Wisconsinites receive information and messaging on the plan's accomplishments and progress.



- Information moves Wisconsinites away from indifference into approval for the plan; the disapproval numbers remain generally the same from the start-to-end of the poll. [Wisconsinites who move towards supporting the plan tend to be Black voters and younger voters, particularly younger Black voters, Millennial women, and non-voters from 2020.](#)
- Half of Wisconsinites (51%) say they have more confidence in the Biden Administration after learning about their leadership on the Clean Energy Plan and future investments.



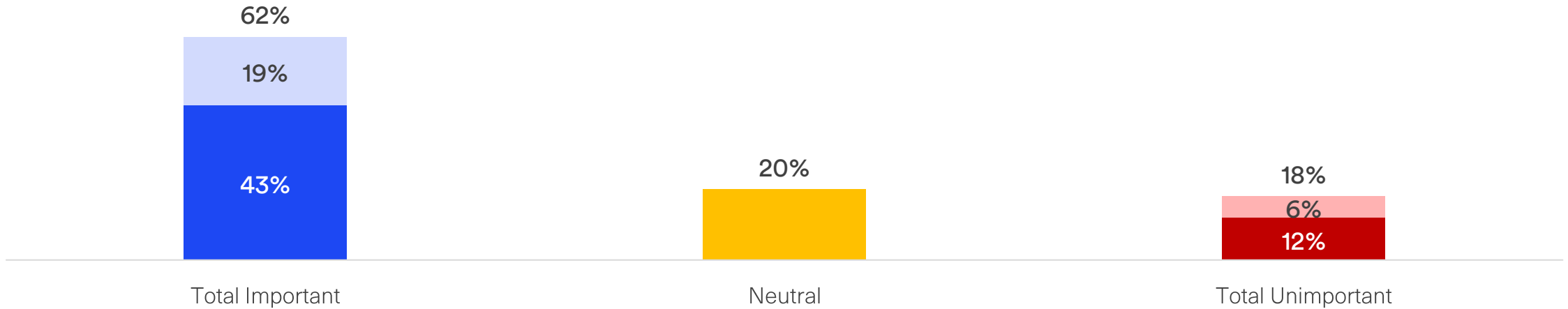
Opinions on Climate Change

Nearly two-in-three Wisconsinites say climate change is an important issue, especially suburban voters 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)



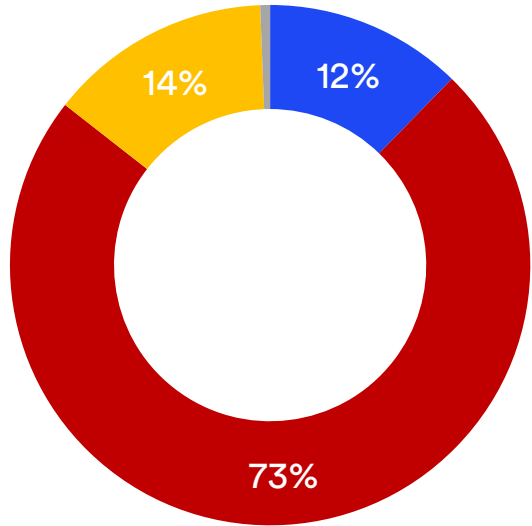
	Men	Women	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Millennial	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
Total Important	60%	65%	63%	57%	60%	64%	62%	62%	63%	86%	61%	40%	64%	70%	57%	57%
Total Neutral	16%	23%	19%	24%	22%	20%	26%	17%	18%	8%	25%	22%	16%	17%	13%	27%
Total Unimportant	24%	12%	18%	19%	19%	16%	12%	21%	20%	6%	14%	38%	20%	13%	30%	16%

Wisconsinites have cost concerns about increasing the use of clean energy, especially for the short term, but are more optimistic about the long-term future of clean energy to save consumers money.



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?**

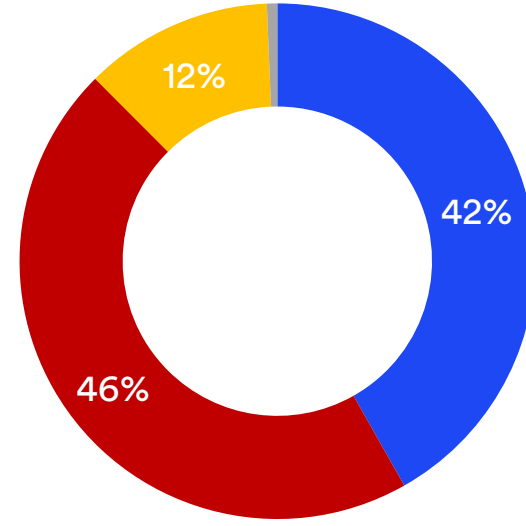
- Save you more money in the short term
- Cost you more money in the short term
- Not affect you either way in the short term
- Don't know/Refused



	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Save Money	10%	38%	27%	26%	20%	9%	6%	20%	9%	11%
Cost Money	76%	45%	57%	56%	62%	79%	81%	61%	78%	78%
No Impact	13%	18%	16%	17%	19%	11%	12%	20%	12%	11%

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
- Don't know/Refused



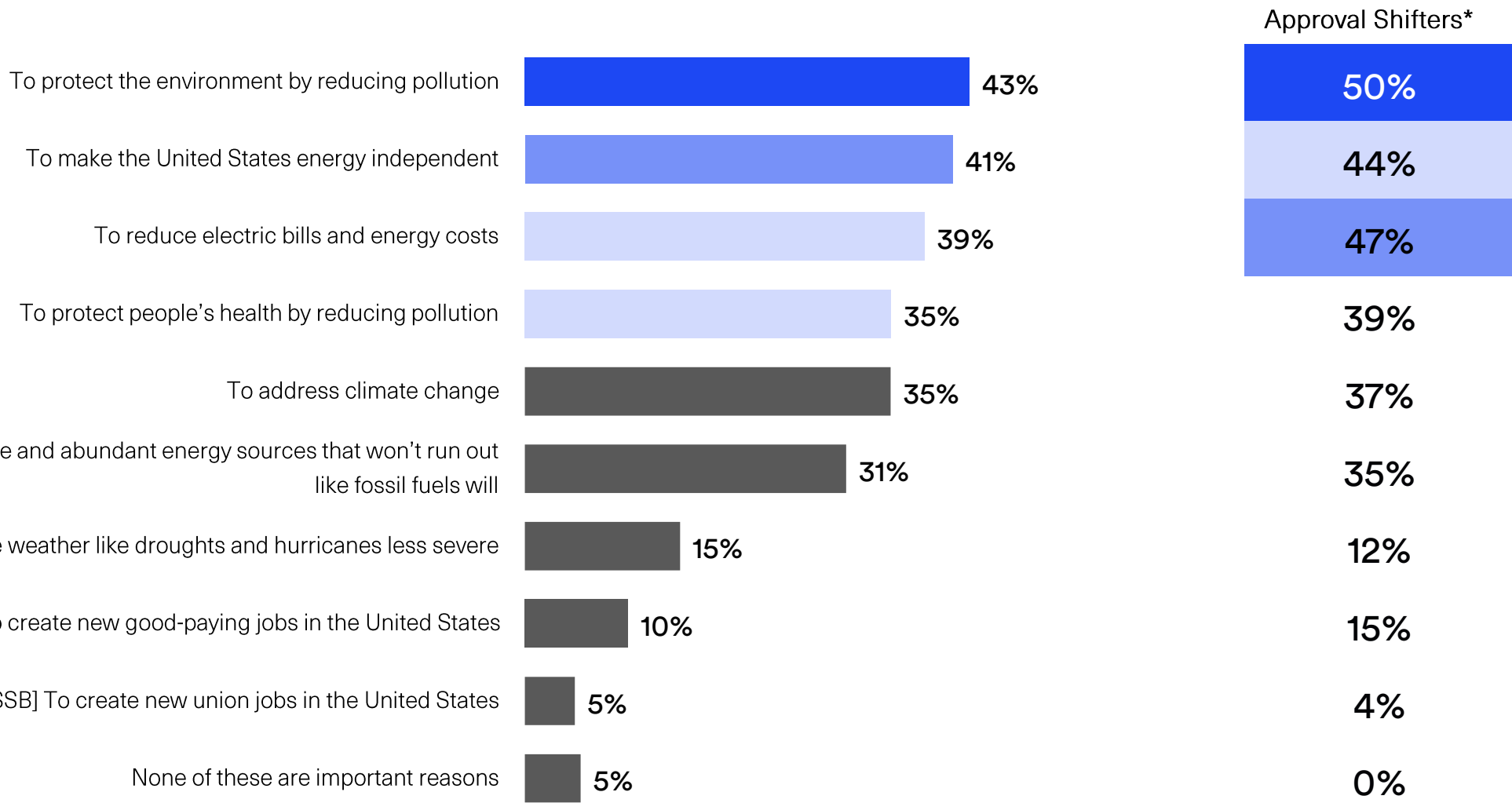
	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Save Money	42%	52%	44%	56%	50%	39%	35%	62%	41%	23%
Cost Money	45%	37%	47%	26%	37%	51%	53%	26%	46%	65%
No Impact	12%	10%	9%	18%	13%	11%	11%	12%	12%	11%

Wisconsinites 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?

Black voters in WI are more likely to prioritize reducing pollution to protect people's health (43%) than white Wisconsinites are (35%)



*Approval Shifters are defined as voters who do not approve of the Clean Energy Plan at the beginning of the survey (either disapprove, are neutral, or have no opinion) and move towards approval by the end of the survey after learning information about the plan



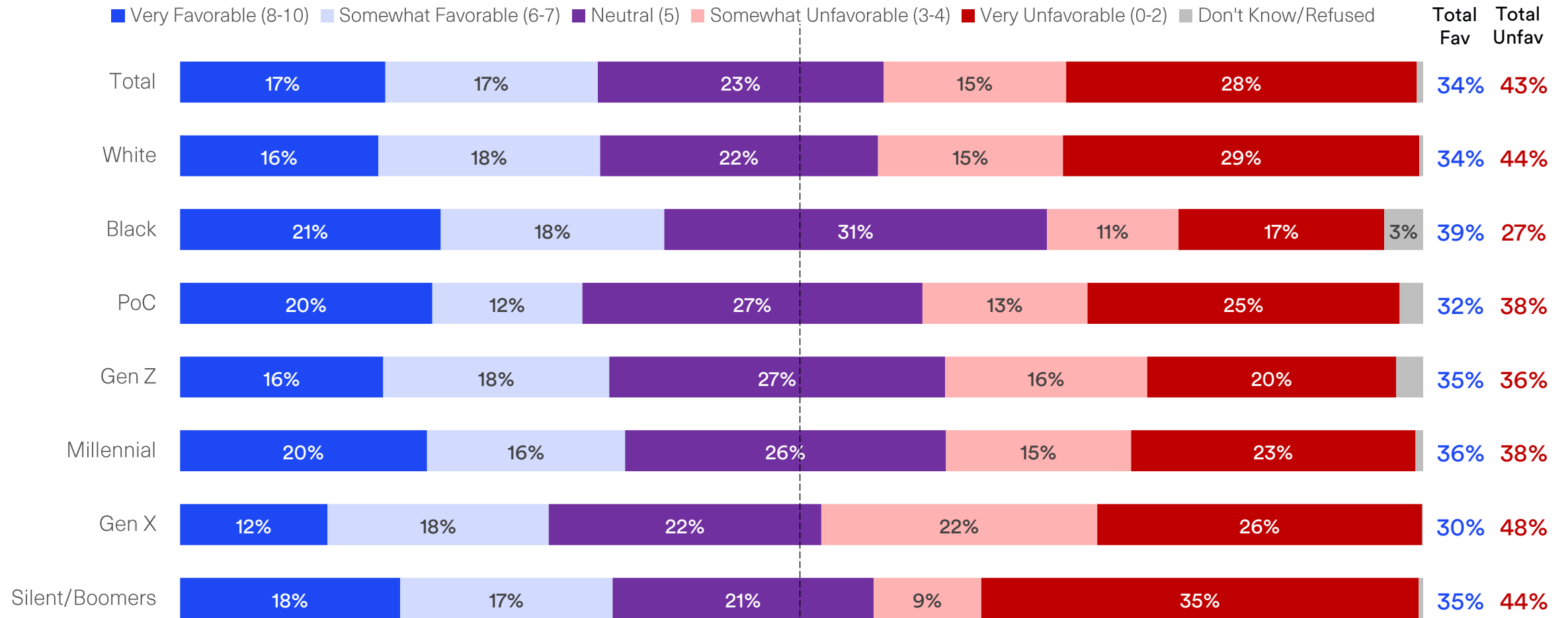
Baseline Perspective

Only about a third of Wisconsinites feel favorable toward President Biden and Congressional Democrats on climate change and clean energy, with Gen X voters least likely to feel favorable.



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

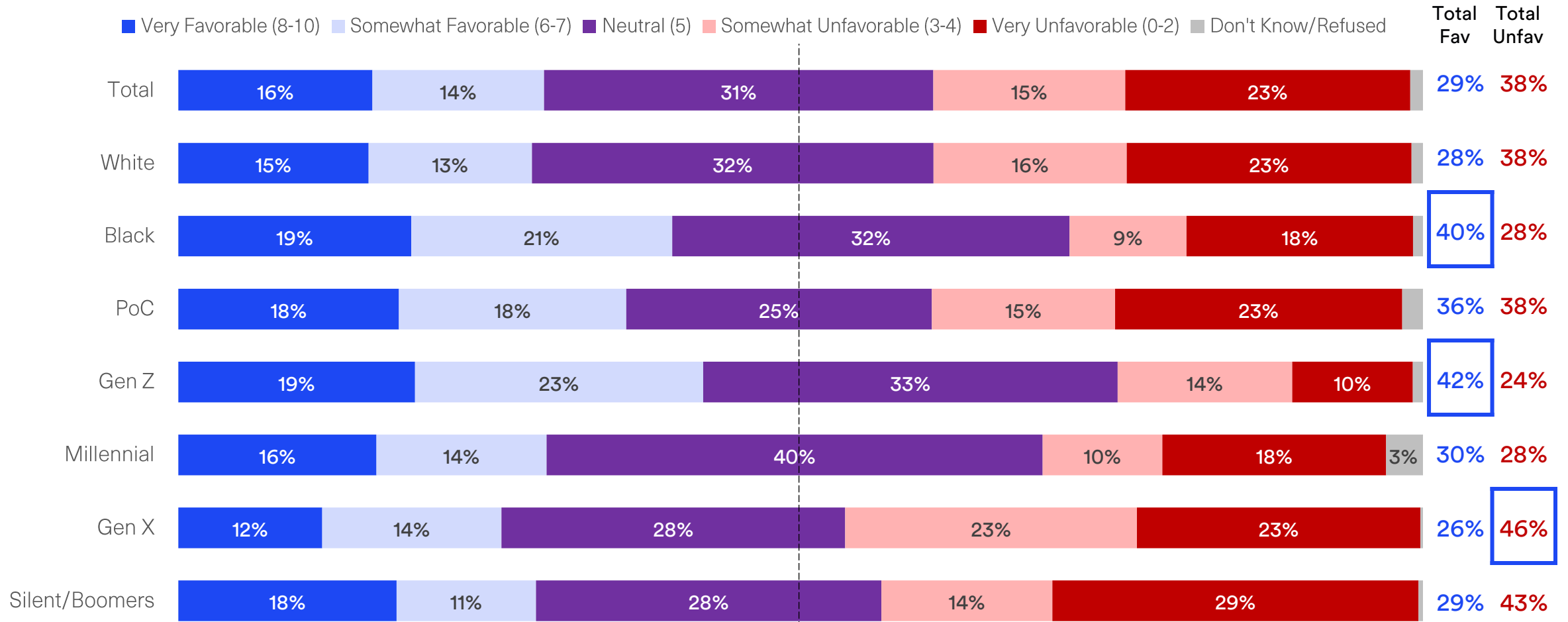


Governor Tony Evers inherits the national Congressional Democratic reputation with a similar favorability rating on the issue, but with higher approvals among Black voters and Gen Z voters.



Q16. Now, please rate how you feel Governor Tony Evers 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



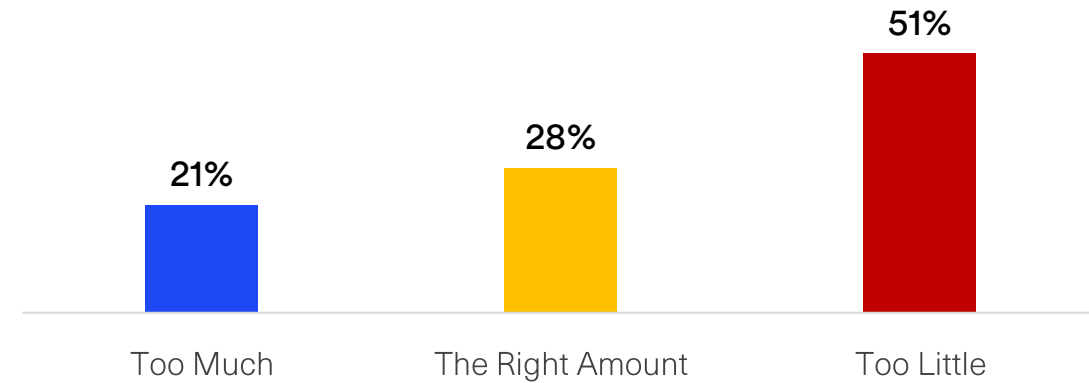
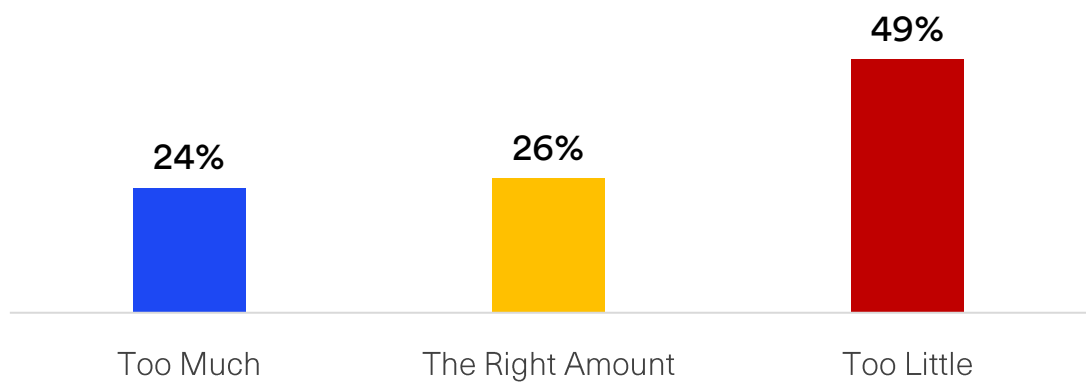
50%



Wisconsinites generally say both Biden and WI Democratic Officials **do too little to address climate change**, with younger generations 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 Wisconsin'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	25%	17%	22%	13%	10%	29%	33%	6%	23%	47%
Right Amount	27%	26%	23%	19%	27%	20%	32%	42%	24%	14%
Too Little	49%	57%	55%	68%	63%	51%	35%	52%	53%	39%

	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Too Much	22%	14%	14%	10%	10%	25%	29%	4%	21%	39%
Right Amount	28%	31%	30%	26%	30%	21%	33%	36%	28%	22%
Too Little	50%	55%	56%	64%	60%	54%	38%	61%	51%	38%

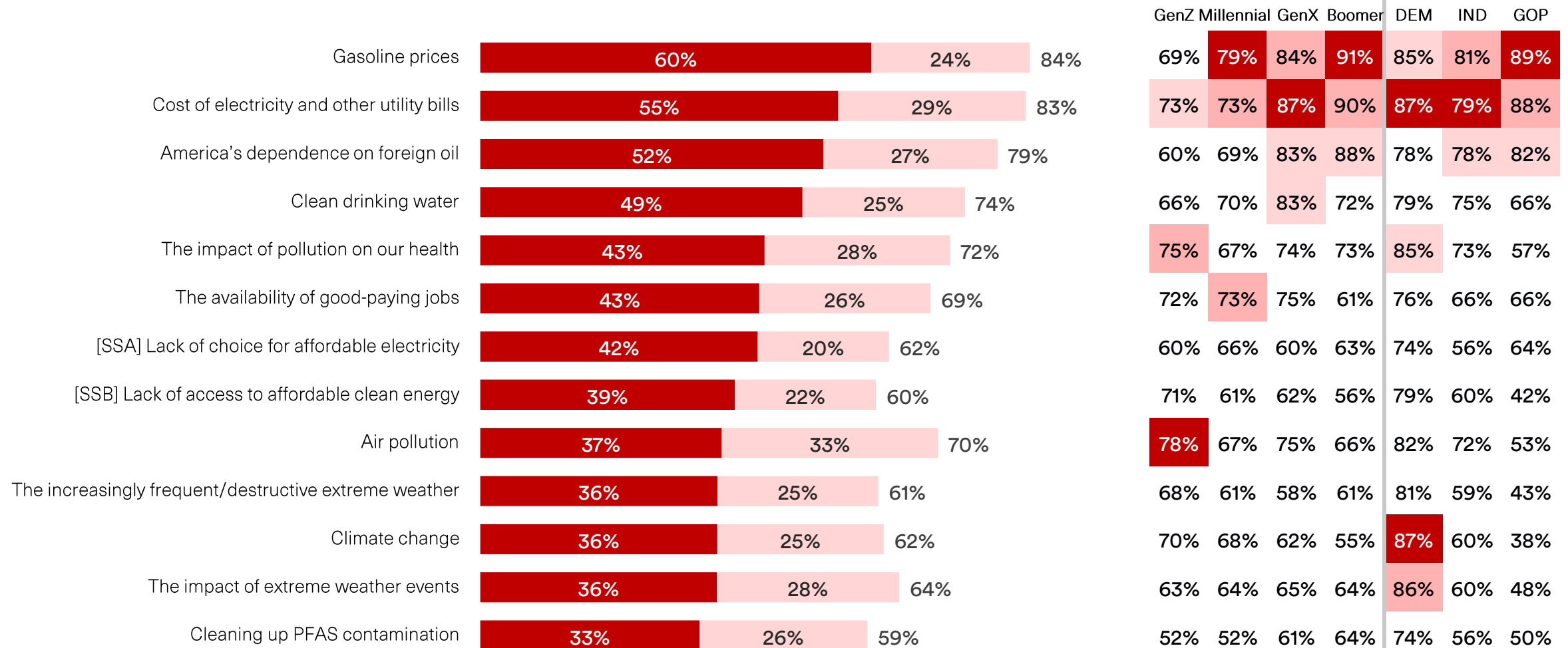
Wisconsinites are most concerned about **gasoline prices and utilities costs** when it comes to climate-and energy-related challenges; Gen Z voters are concerned about pollution and public health.



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

Very concerned (8-10) Somewhat concerned (6-7)

% Total Concerned
Top 3 For Each Demo Highlighted in Red



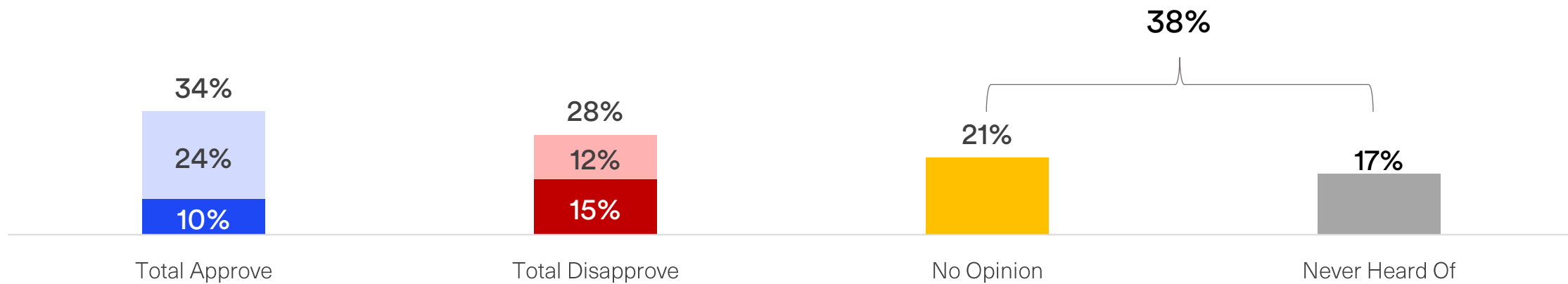
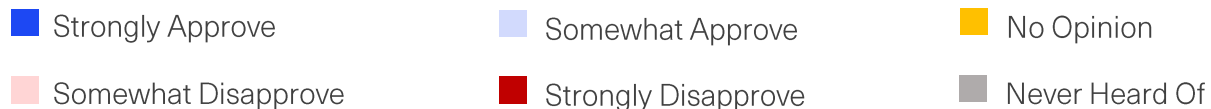


Initial opinion on Biden and Congressional Democrats Clean Energy Plan



Wisconsinites are generally divided on approval for the federal Clean Energy Plan; **more than a third of Wisconsinites 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?



	Men	Women	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Millennial	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
Total Approve	37%	32%	32%	50%	48%	43%	35%	34%	32%	73%	24%	15%	40%	43%	34%	24%
Total Disapprove	32%	23%	28%	18%	27%	17%	19%	31%	33%	7%	25%	55%	33%	21%	29%	32%
No Opinion/ Never Heard	31%	45%	40%	32%	25%	40%	46%	35%	35%	21%	51%	30%	27%	36%	38%	44%
Net Approve	+4	+9	+4	+33	+21	+26	+16	+3	-2	+66	-1	-41	+7	+23	+5	-9

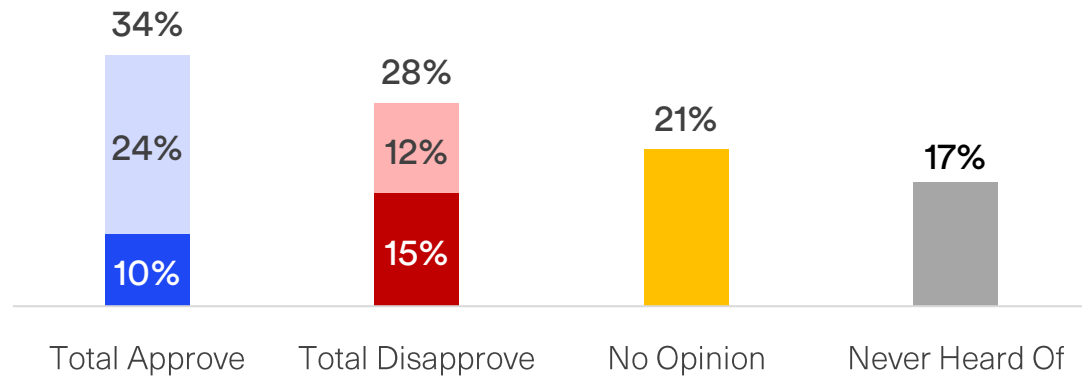
Wisconsin approval for the Clean Energy Plan stacks up with ratings across six key states.



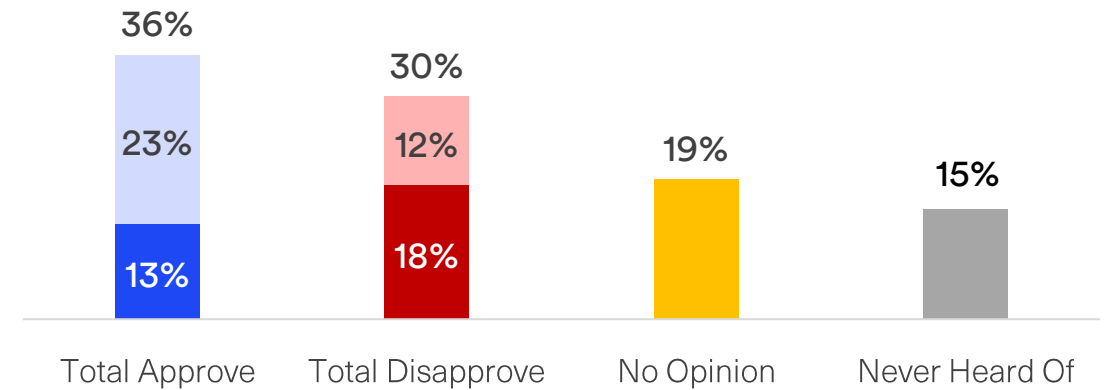
Q31. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan? / Based on what you have seen and read in this survey, from what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of the Clean Energy Plan that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

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

WISCONSIN



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 Wisconsinites. **Creating new good-paying jobs is especially popular with 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.



79%

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.



81%

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



76%

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.



73%



Talking about the Clean Energy Plan

Thinking about the impacts of the Clean Energy Plan generally, Wisconsinites prioritize monetary savings that will impact their households followed by cutting pollution.

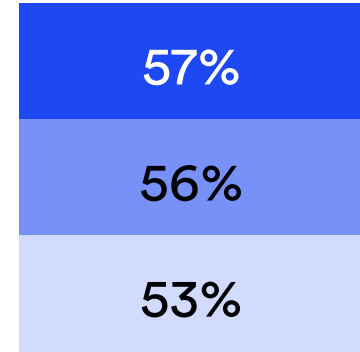
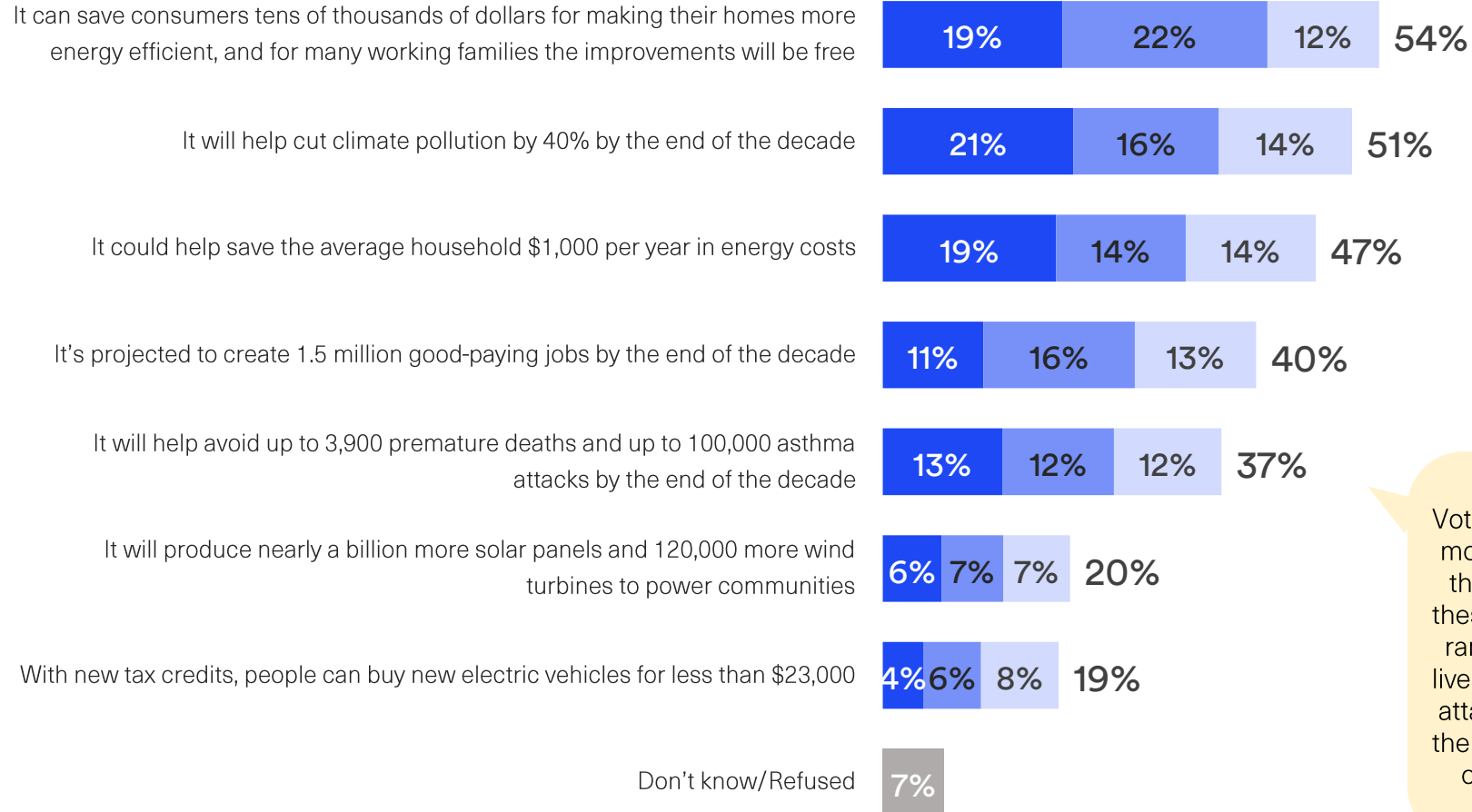


Q39. Here are some specific impacts of these policies. Please rank the two or three that are the most important to you personally.

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

Approval Shifters

Showing % Total Ranked



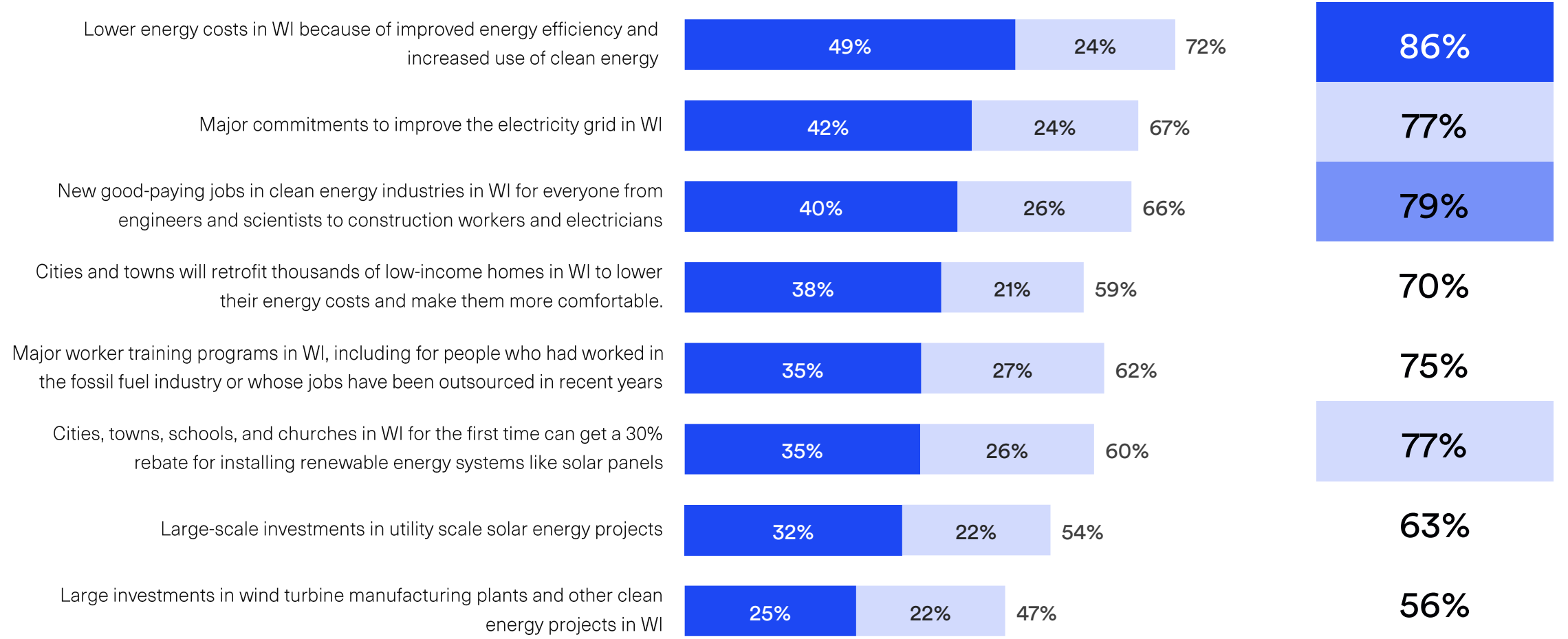
Voters of color in WI are more likely to prioritize the health impacts of these policies, with 44% ranking the impact on lives saved from asthma attacks as important to them, compared to 37% of WI voters overall

When thinking specifically about the policy impacts in their state, Wisconsinites are most moved by proof points around **lower costs** as well as **improvements to the electricity 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 WI 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

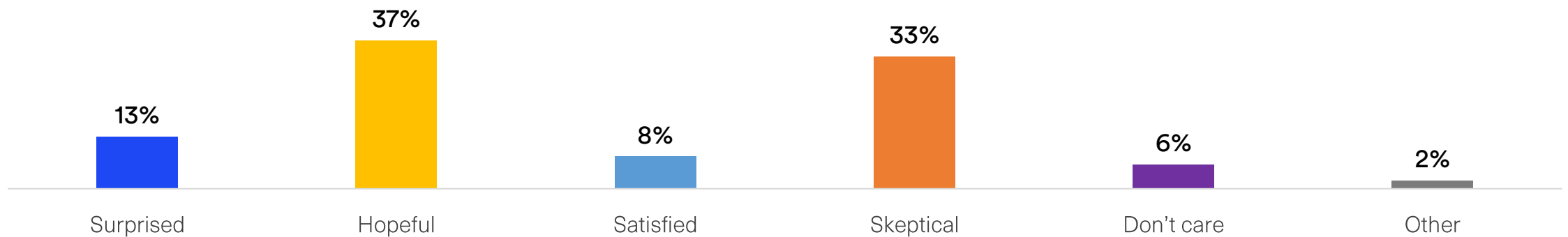




Proof of progress and delivery on the Clean Energy Plan at the national level inspires hope with Wisconsinites, especially with Black voters and suburban voters. Skepticism is driven by conservative and older voters.

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?

“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.”



	Men	Women	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Millennial	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural	Approval Shifters
Hopeful	31%	43%	38%	37%	35%	32%	42%	35%	37%	59%	32%	25%	33%	41%	42%	32%	50%
Skeptical	38%	29%	35%	15%	22%	24%	21%	37%	41%	15%	36%	47%	31%	29%	36%	37%	23%



Public Opinion Shift

Isolated proof points and positive messaging increase approval for the Clean Energy Plan 25 points (a big shift that is rare to see in public opinion research).

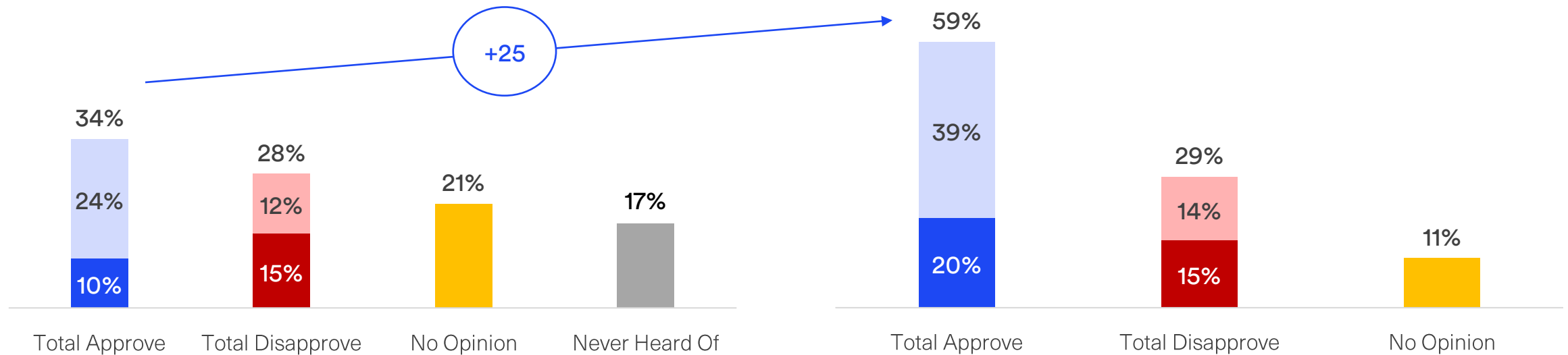


Q31/43. President Biden and Democrats in Congress recently passed a new Clean Energy Plan. From what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of this plan? / Based on what you have seen and read in this survey, from what you know about it, do you approve or disapprove of the Clean Energy Plan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

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

INITIAL ASK

INFORMED ASK



28% of Wisconsinites 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 Wisconsinites overall to move towards approving of the plan

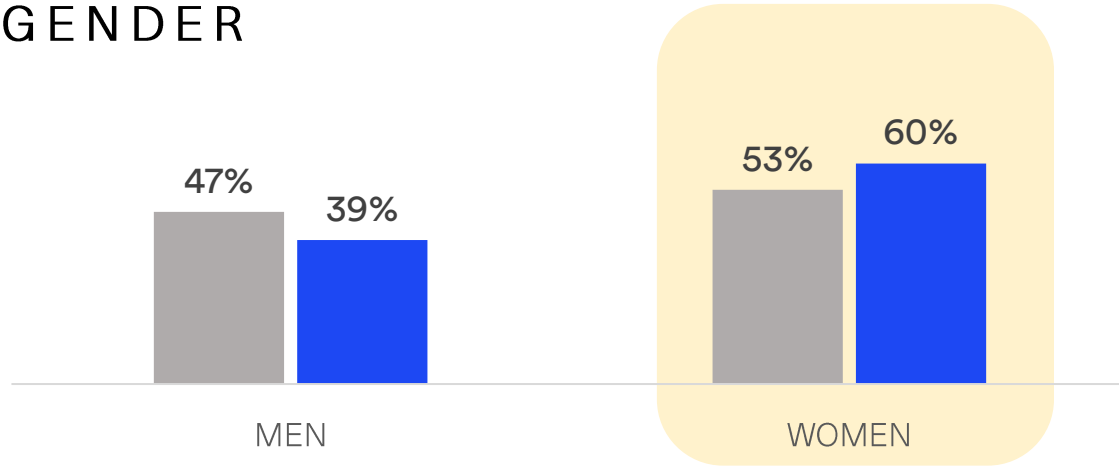
43%	of Black Millennials move towards approval
39%	of Black Men move towards approval
38%	of White Millennial Women move towards approval
35%	of Millennials move towards approval
35%	of Moderates move towards approval
34%	of Non-Voters in 2020 move towards approval
32%	of Non-College Women move towards approval

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

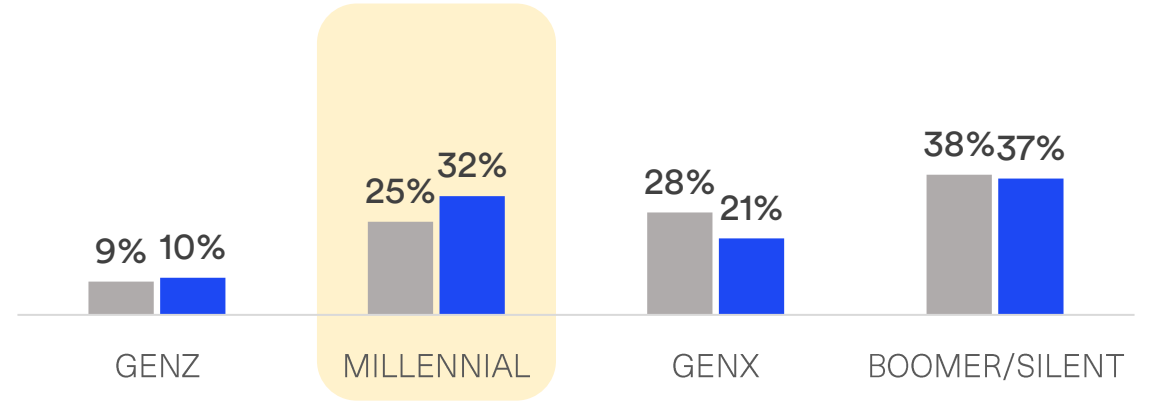


■ All Wisconsin Voters ■ Approval Shifters

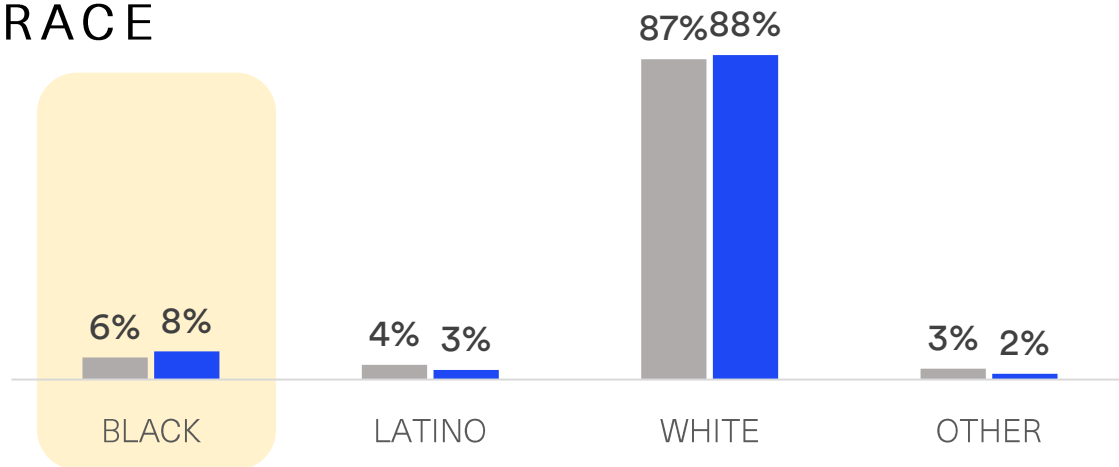
GENDER



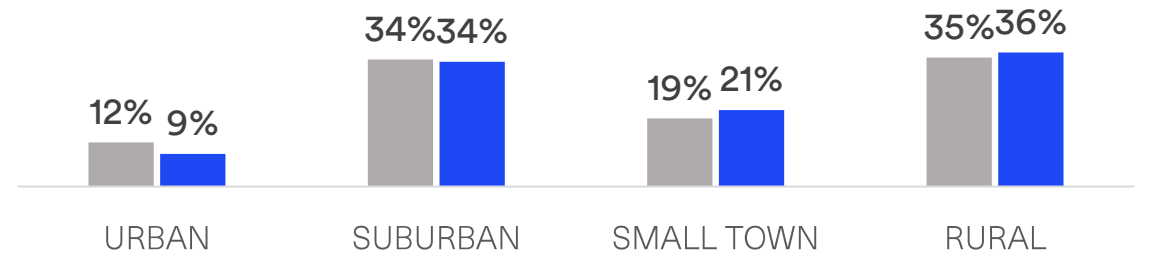
GENERATIONS



RACE



URBANICITY

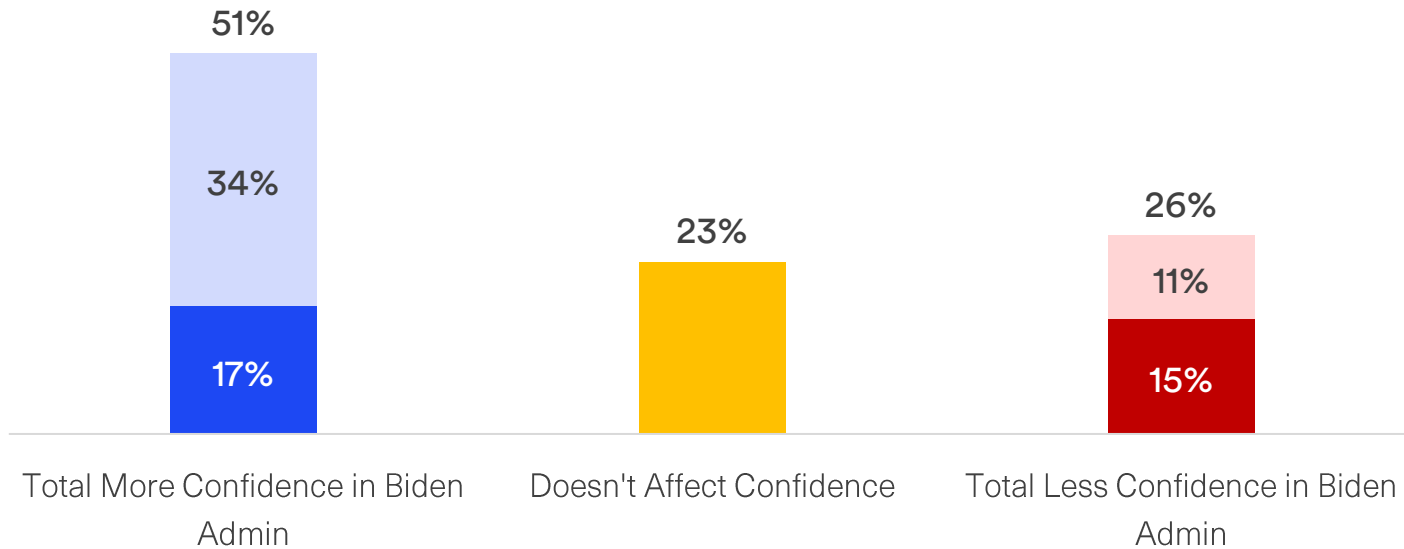


Educating Wisconsinites on the policies and progress in the Clean Energy Plan increases confidences in the Biden administration, especially with self-ID Democrats, GenZers, and voters of color.



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 (51%)

Overindex on Being More Confident

75%	of Citizens who voted for Biden in 2020 feel more confident
75%	of Post-Graduate educated voters feel more confident
72%	of Black Men feel more confident
71%	of Millennial Voters of Color feel more confident
70%	of Black voters feel more confident
65%	of GenZ voters feel more confident
59%	of Suburban voters feel more confident



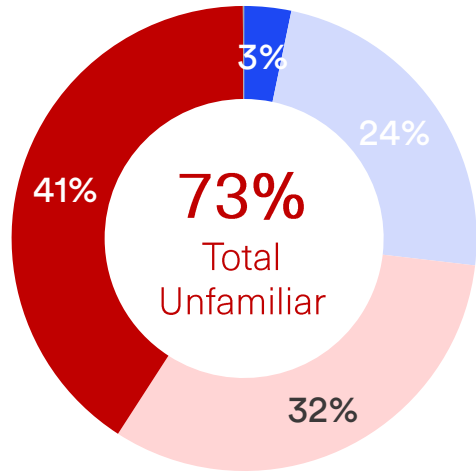
Other Issues

Wisconsinites 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?

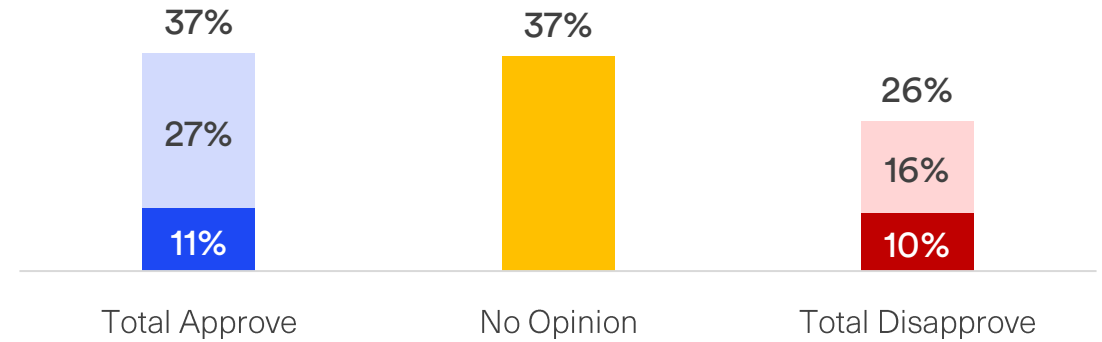
■ Very Familiar ■ Somewhat Familiar
■ Not that familiar ■ Not at all familiar



	White	Black	POC	GenZ	Mill.	GenX	Silent/Boomer	DEM	IND	GOP
Total Familiar	27%	36%	25%	36%	28%	22%	27%	34%	22%	29%
Total Unfamiliar	73%	64%	75%	64%	72%	78%	73%	66%	78%	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	38%	38%	33%	19%	27%	37%	49%	35%	32%	50%
Total Disapprove	24%	25%	35%	50%	32%	25%	17%	36%	23%	20%

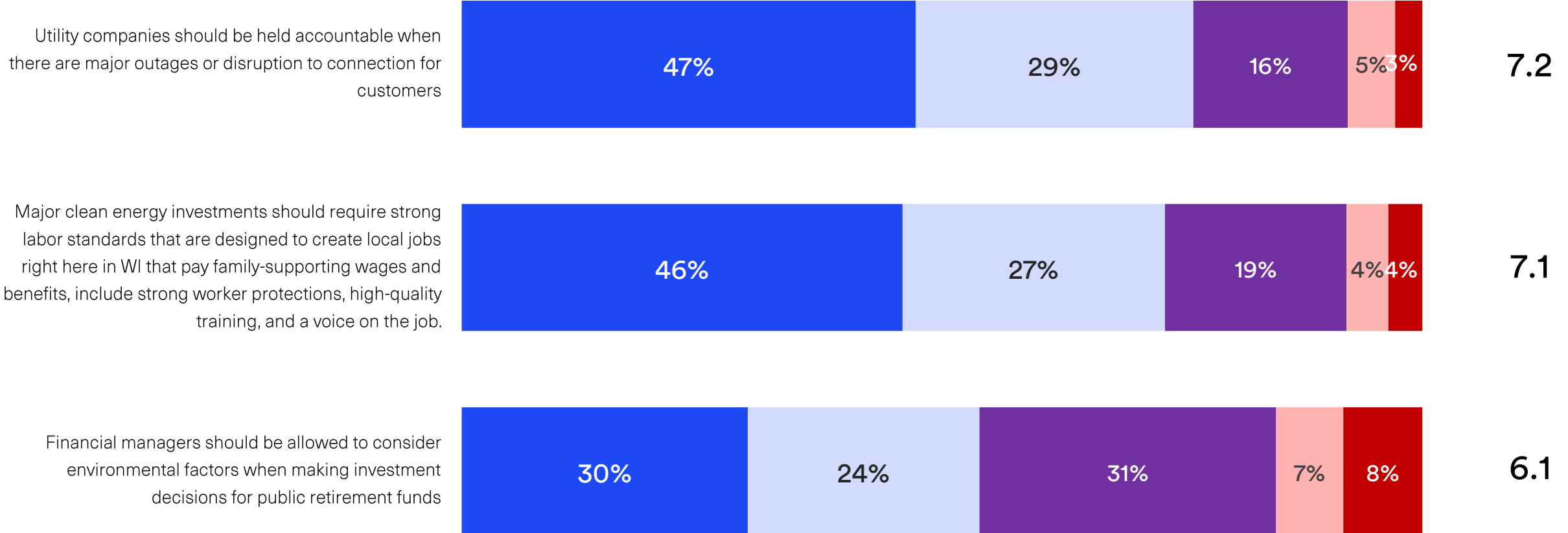
A majority of Wisconsinites agree that utility companies should be held accountable, clean energy investments should include labor standards, and ESG factors should be allowed in investment decisions.



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 Wisconsinites 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 Wisconsinites, Black voters, and women. We move many of those uninformed voters to approval in our poll by simply educating them on progress. Wisconsinites overall feel favorable toward clean energy, the policies in the Clean Energy Plan, and the potential impacts of the Plan in Wisconsin after we give them information.

2 Wisconsinites feel most favorable toward elements of the Clean Energy Plan centered on economic and pocketbook issues. 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 Wisconsinites on the Clean Energy Plan increases confidence in the Biden Administration to promote investments in clean energy.



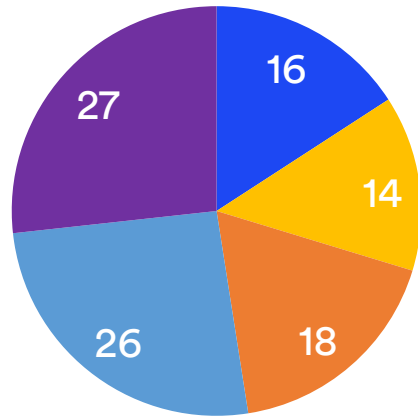
Wisconsinites are generally unaware of the Clean Energy Plan and the progress already made. We can build trust between Wisconsinites and Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration by pointing to wins both nationally and in their own communities (i.e., more jobs, clean energy projects, and investments.)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



Appendix

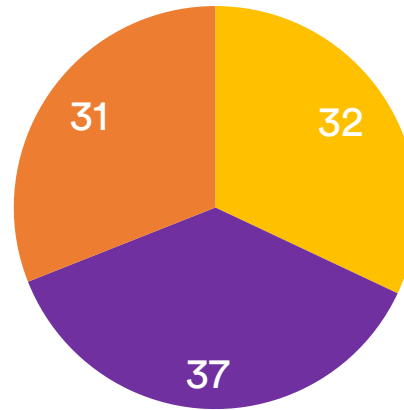


AGE



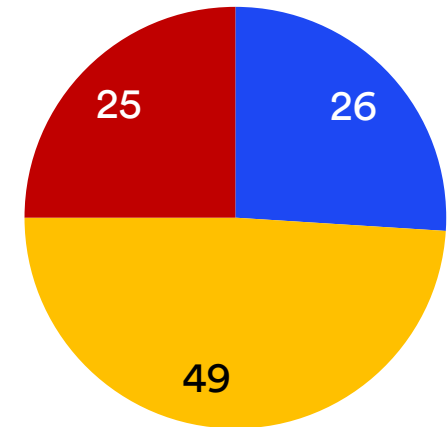
- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-64
- 65+
- 70+

EDUCATION



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

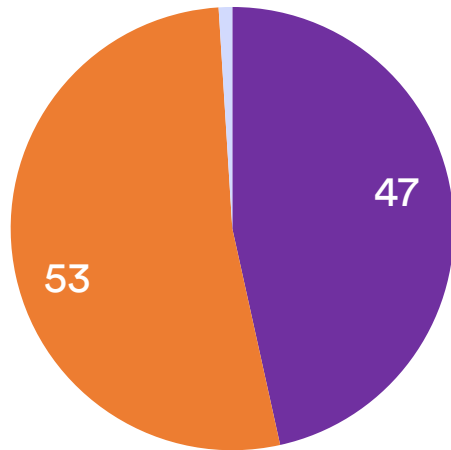
PARTY ID



- Democrat
- Independent
- Republican

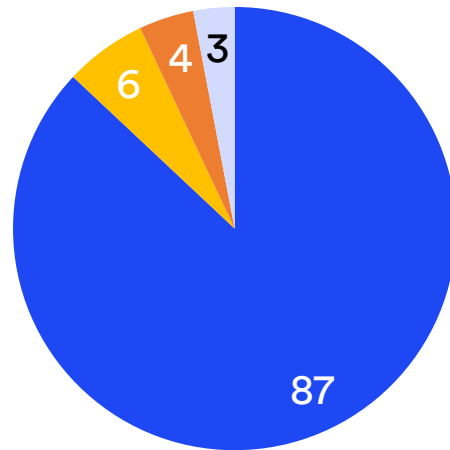


GENDER



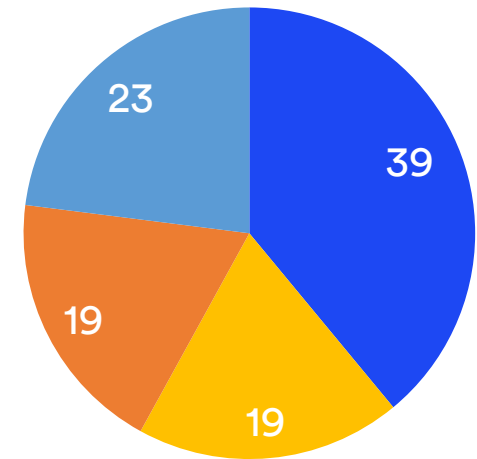
- Men
- Women
- Gender Non-Conforming/Other

RACE



- White
- Black
- Latino
- Other

DMA



- Milwaukee
- Madison
- Green Bay-Appleton
- Rest of State