



# Virginia I-81 Survey

Key findings from a survey of 500 registered voters in the I-81 Corridor in Virginia, including 200 cell phone respondents, conducted December 1-4, 2018.

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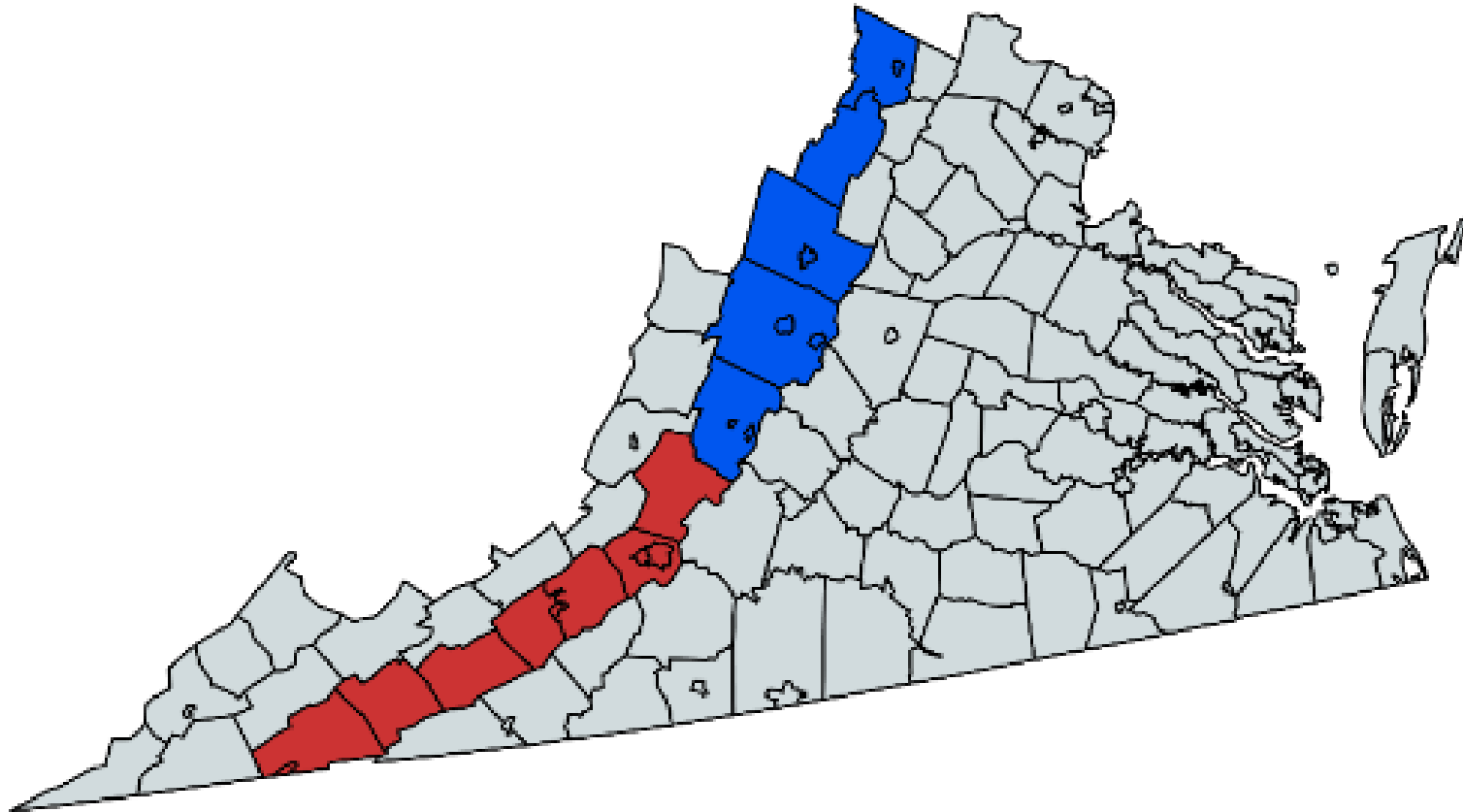
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# Methodology

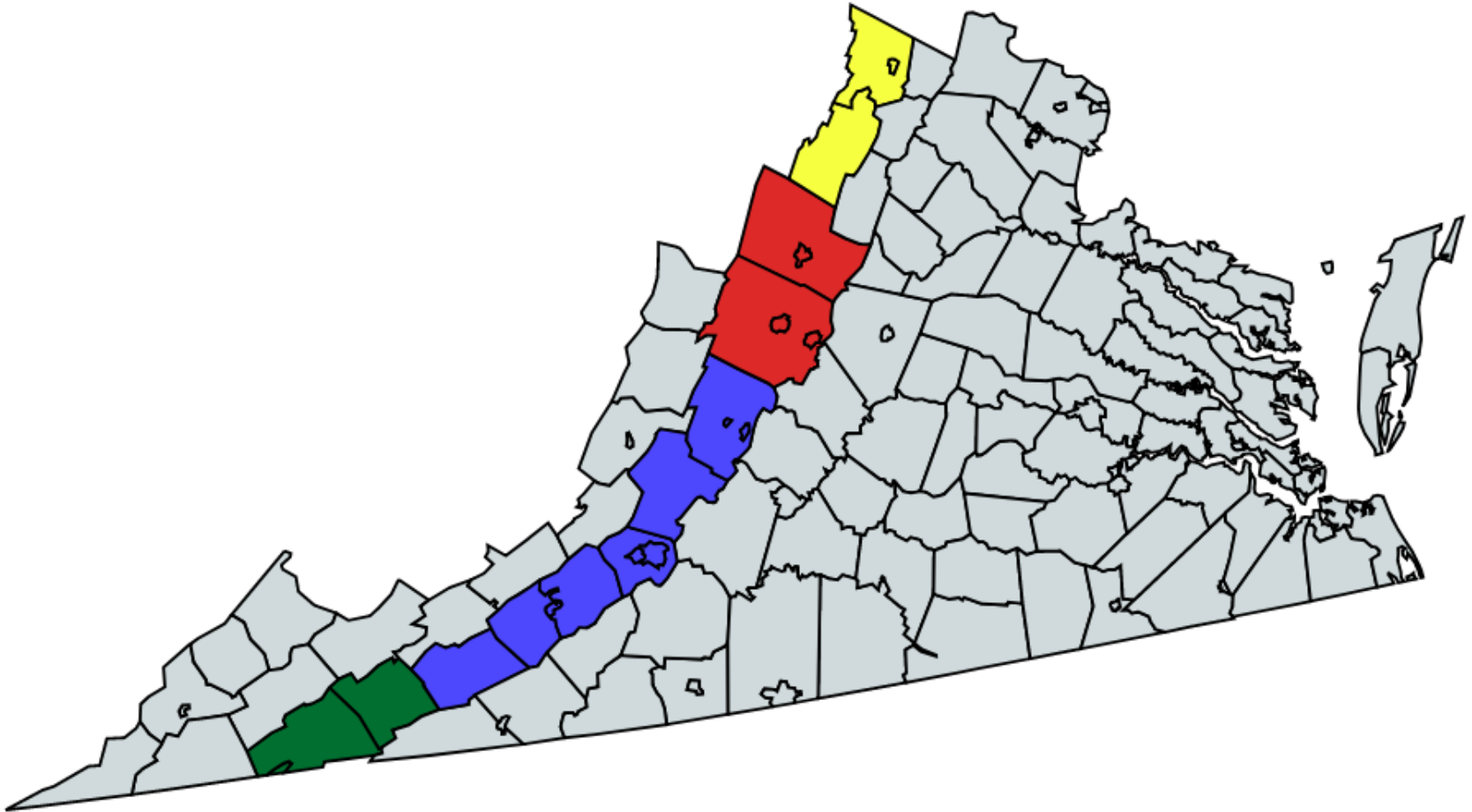
Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a telephone survey conducted in the I-81 Corridor in Virginia. The survey was completed December 1-4, 2018, among 500 registered voters, including 200 cell phone respondents, and has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.38\%$ .

Glen Bolger was the principal researcher on this project. Kyle Clark was the project director, and Gabe Imber provided analytical support.

# Where We Interviewed: VA Region Map



# VA DMA Map



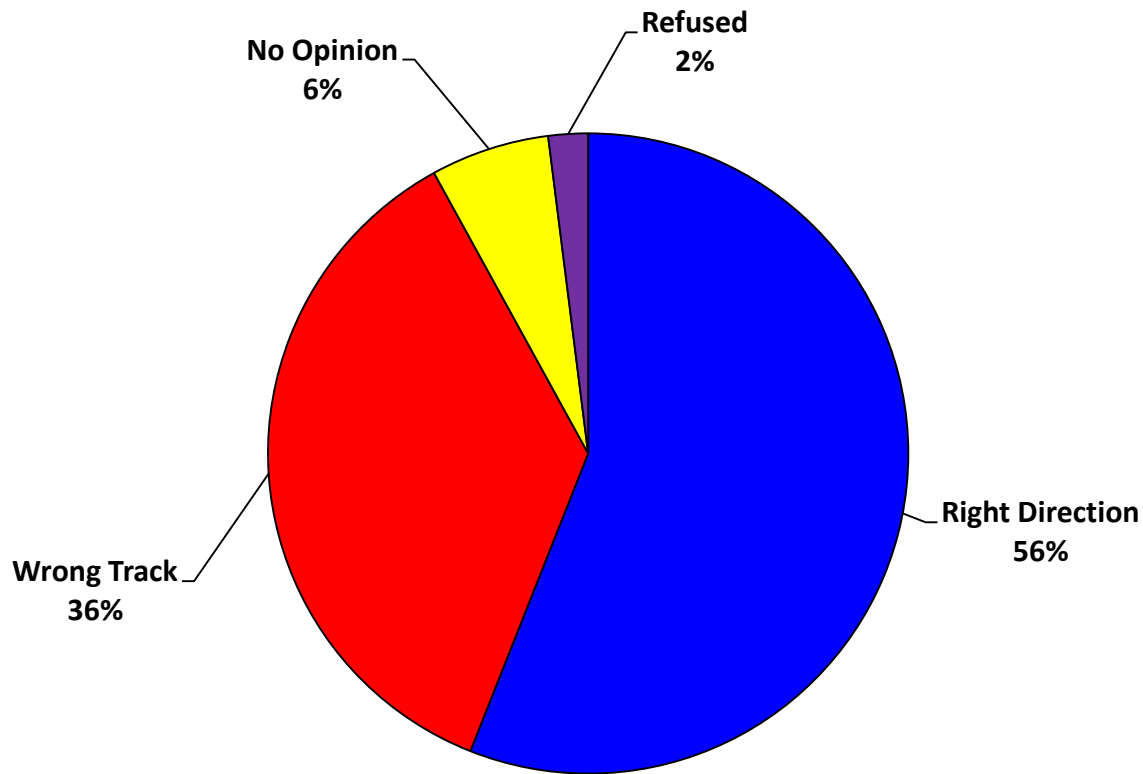
■ Roanoke-Lynchburg ■ Harrisonburg ■ Tri-Cities ■ Washington, D.C.



# Political Environment

# The majority of voters say that things in Virginia are going in the right direction.

*“Would you say that things in Virginia are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?”*





# Issues

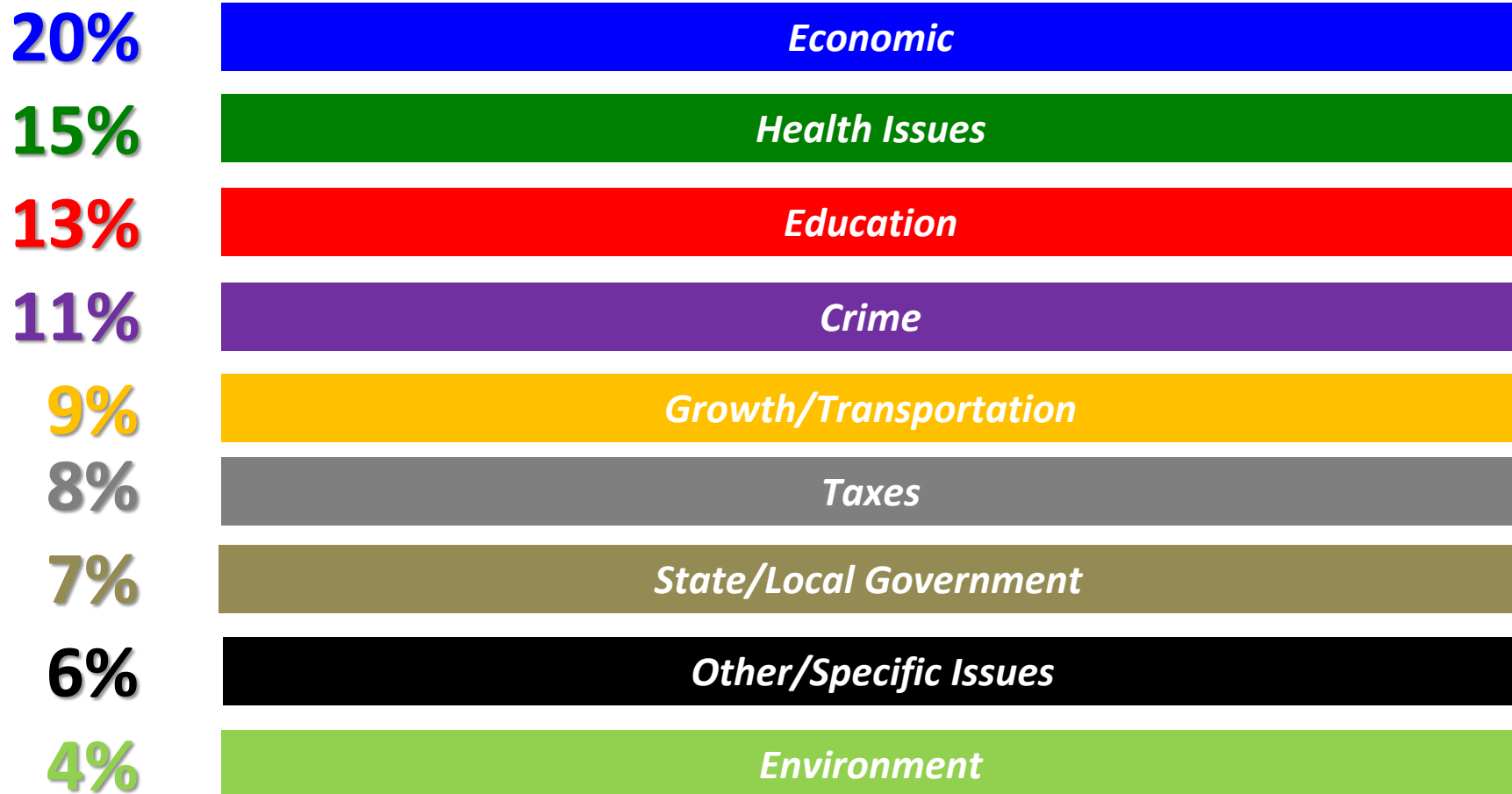


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# Economic issues are at the front of voters' concerns.

*“And, what would you say is the most important problem facing Virginia today, that is, the one that you, yourself, are most concerned about?”*

*By Typography*



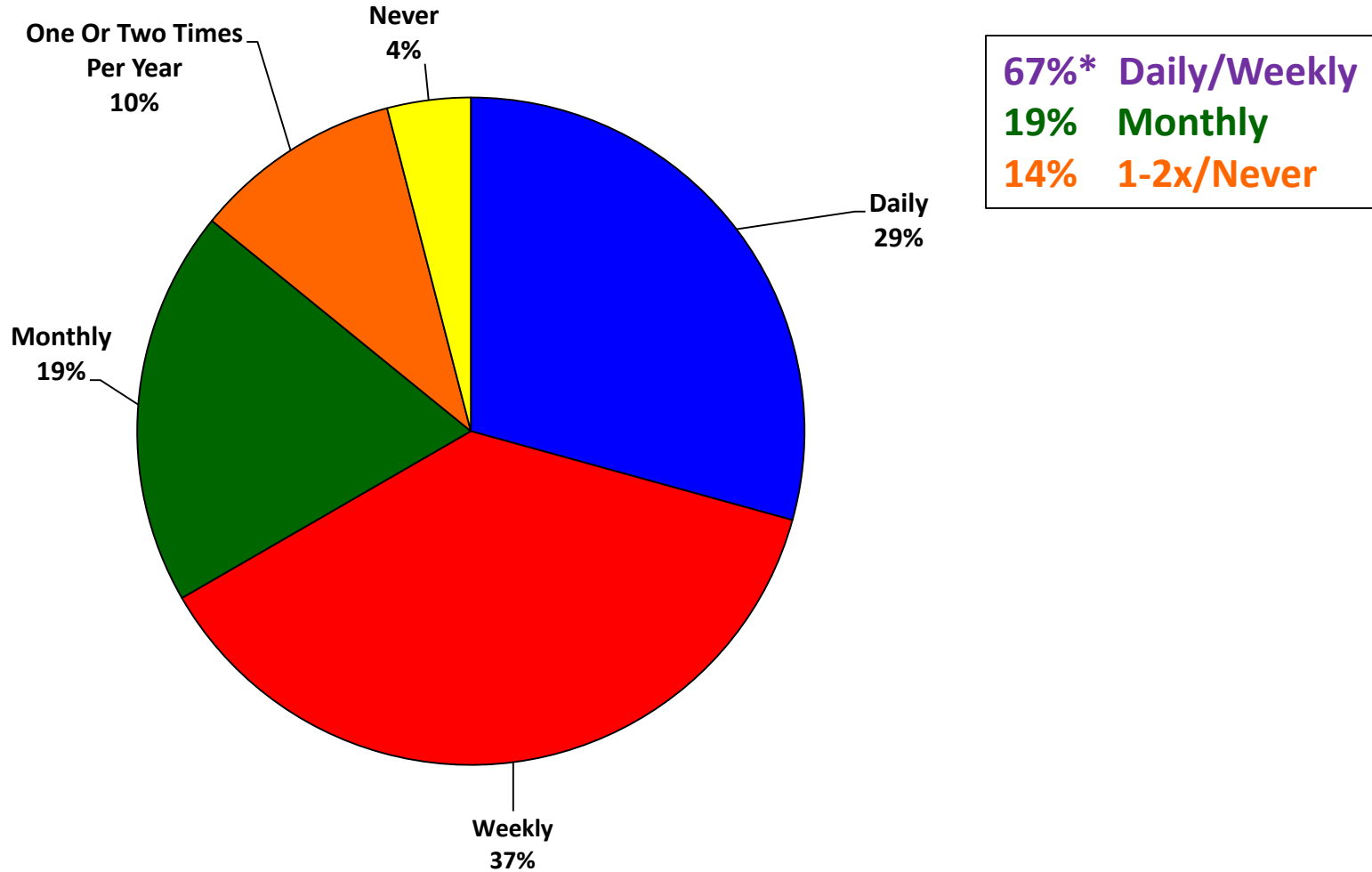




# VA I-81 Usage/Grade

# Two-thirds of corridor voters use I-81 daily/weekly.

*“Changing topics, how often would you say you travel on Virginia Interstate Eighty-One?”*



\*Denotes Rounding

# Younger voters are the top group to use I-81 daily. Seniors and 35-44 year olds are the most likely to use the highway weekly.

## Top Groups – Daily (29%)

Age 18-34	59%
DC DMA	46%
Men 18-54	46%
Ind Men	43%
Ind	39%
Tri-Cities DMA	39%
Men w/o Degrees	37%
Men	36%
Age 35-44	36%
GOP Men	35%
Men w/ Degrees	35%
Ind Women	33%
College Graduate	33%

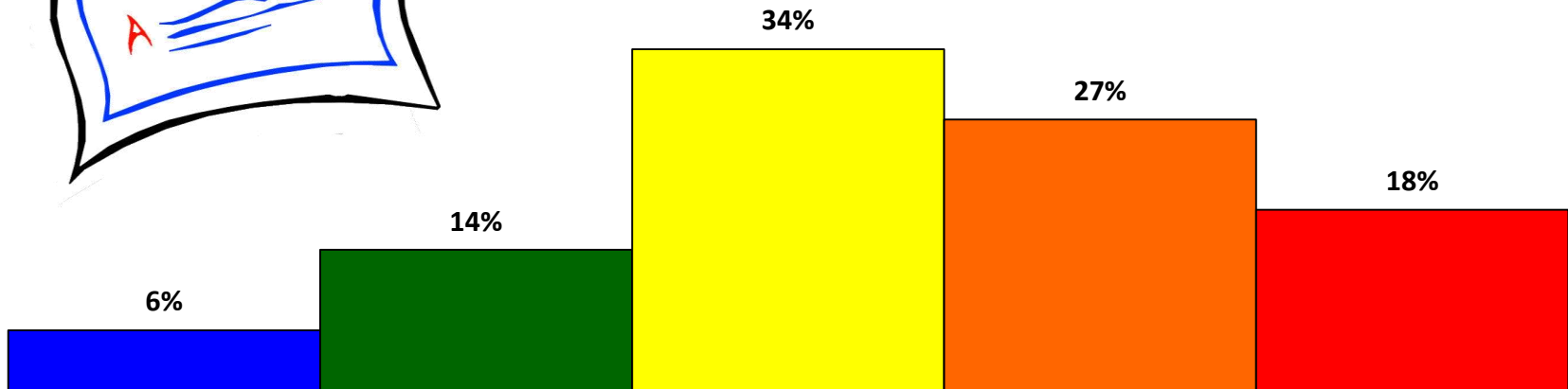
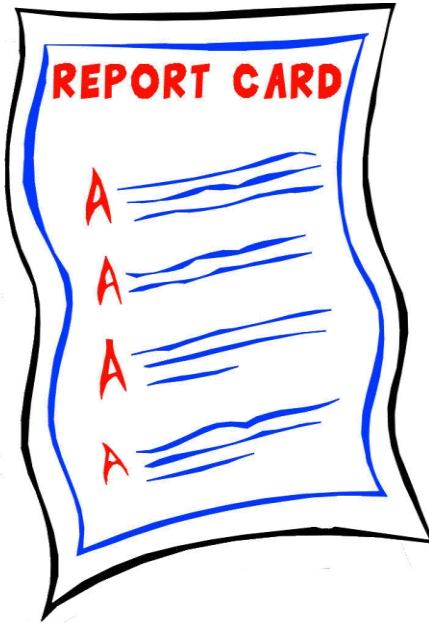
## Top Groups – Weekly (37%)

Age 35-44	45%
Age 65+	44%
Soft Lean/GOP	43%
Soft Lean/Dem	43%
Women w/ Degrees	43%
Harrisonburg DMA	42%
Tri-Cities DMA	42%
Women 18-54	42%
College Graduate	42%
Graduate/Professional Degree	42%
GOP Men	41%
Men w/ Degrees	41%

# Virginians give I-81 a D+ grade.

*“Suppose you had the chance to grade Interstate Eighty-One. What grade would you give it...”*

GPA: 1.6

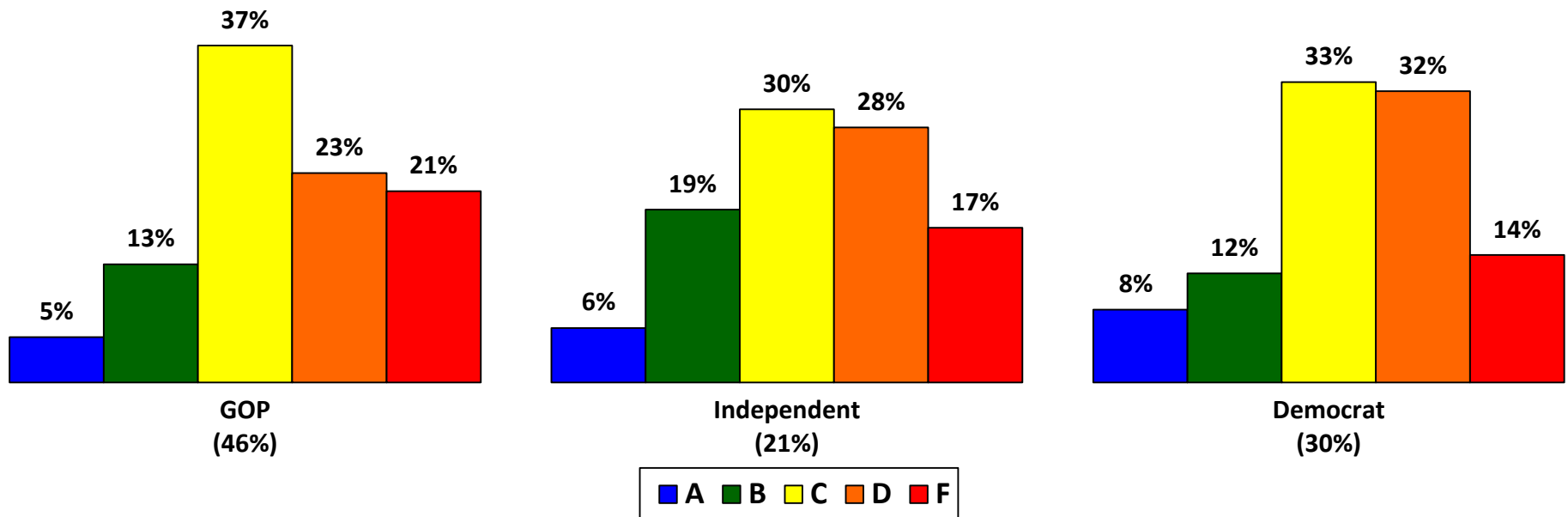


■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F

# The average grade is a D+ across all party subgroups.

*I-81 GPA by Party*

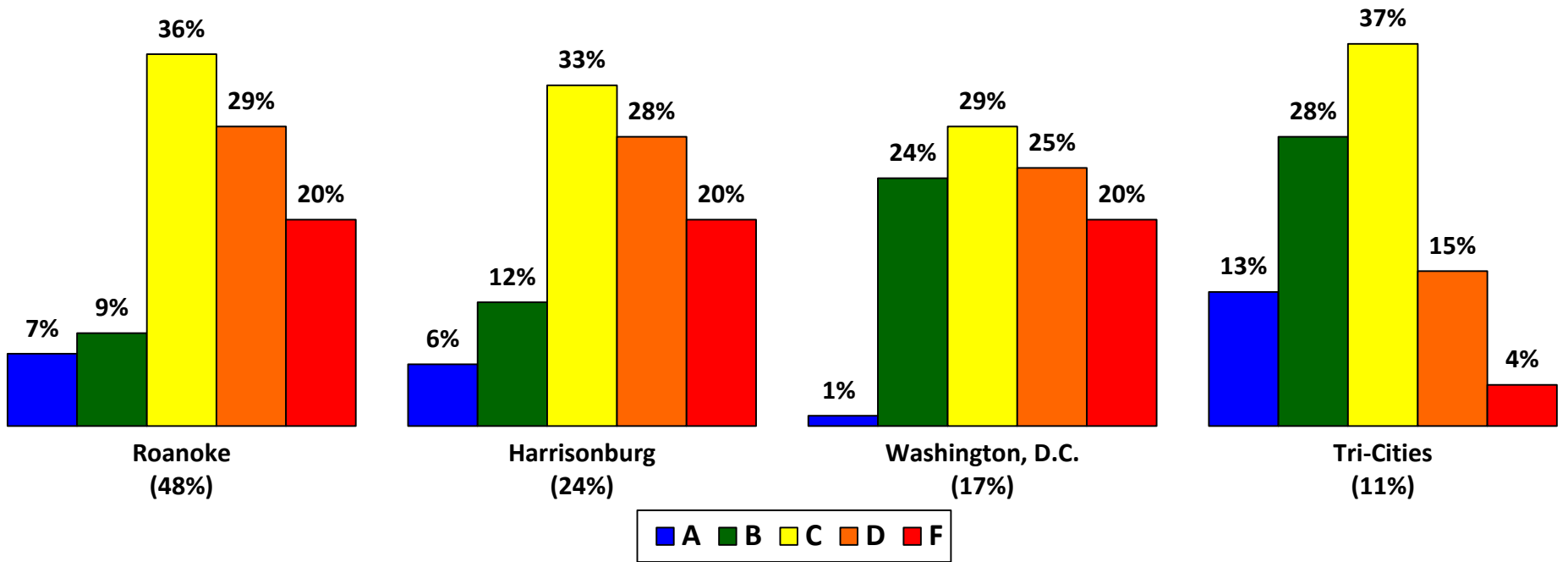
<b>GPA:</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>
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# Apart from voters in the Tri-Cities DMA, every media market gives I-81 a D+ grade.

*I-81 GPA by Media Market*

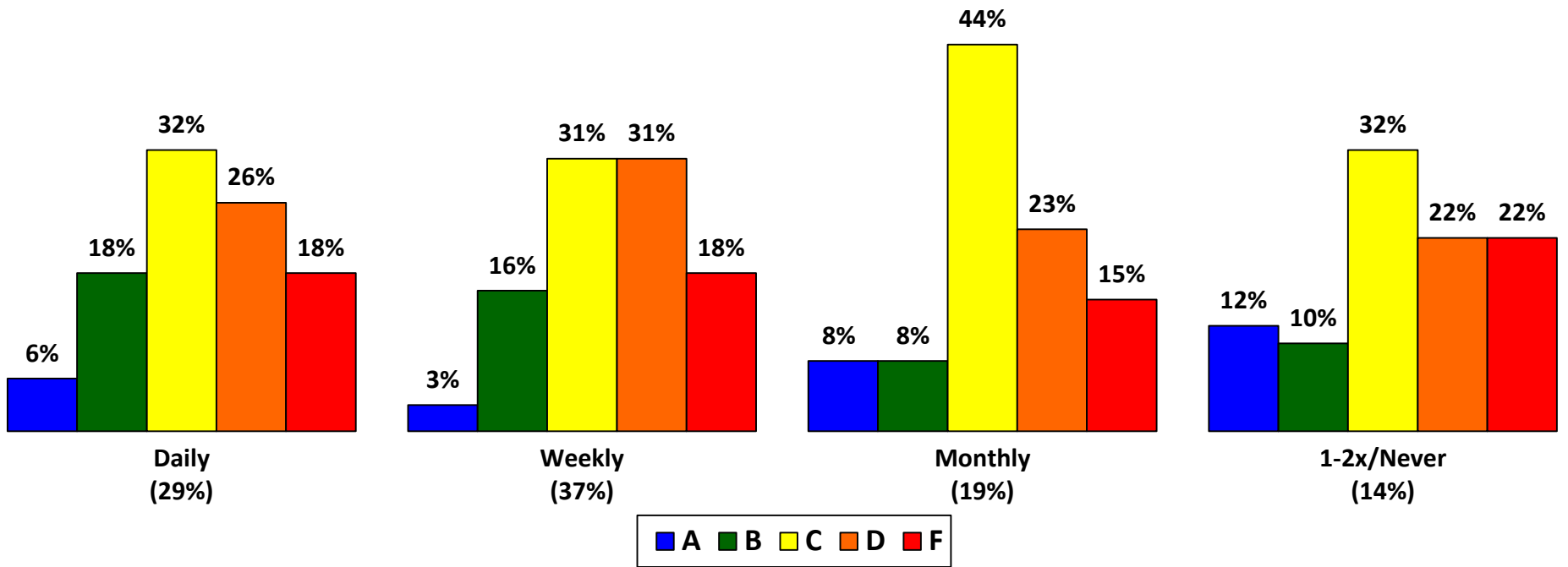
<b>GPA:</b> 1.5	1.5	1.6	2.3
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# Frequency of use doesn't impact voters' opinion of I-81.

*I-81 GPA by I-81 Frequency of Use*

<b>GPA: 1.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>
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# The majority of voters say they feel unsafe when traveling on I-81.

*“And, would you say you feel safe when traveling on Interstate Eighty-One?”*



*...or...*



## Top Groups – No (56%)

Women 55+	68%
Dem Women	68%
Soft/Lean Dem	66%
Moderate	64%
Age 55-64	63%
Women w/ Degrees	63%
Roanoke DMA	62%
Age 65+	62%
DC DMA	61%
Independent Women	61%
Women	60%
Age 45-54	60%
Some College	60%





# Improvements To I-81

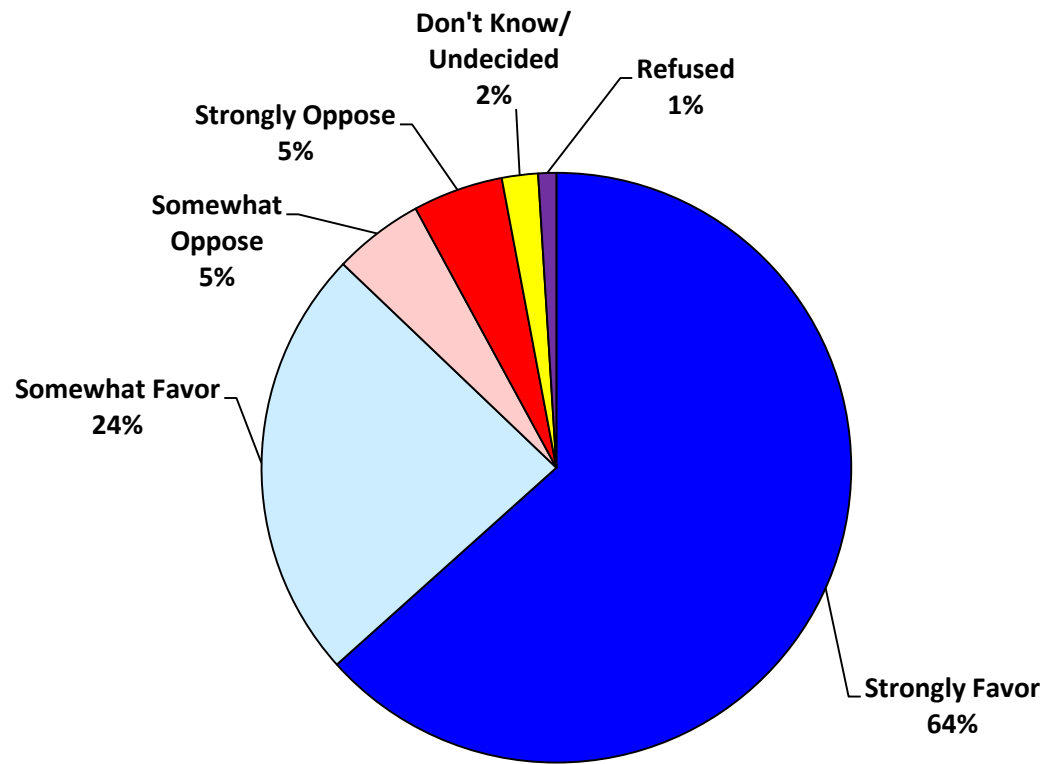


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# Fully 88% of voters favor a two billion dollar investment in I-81 to make needed improvements.

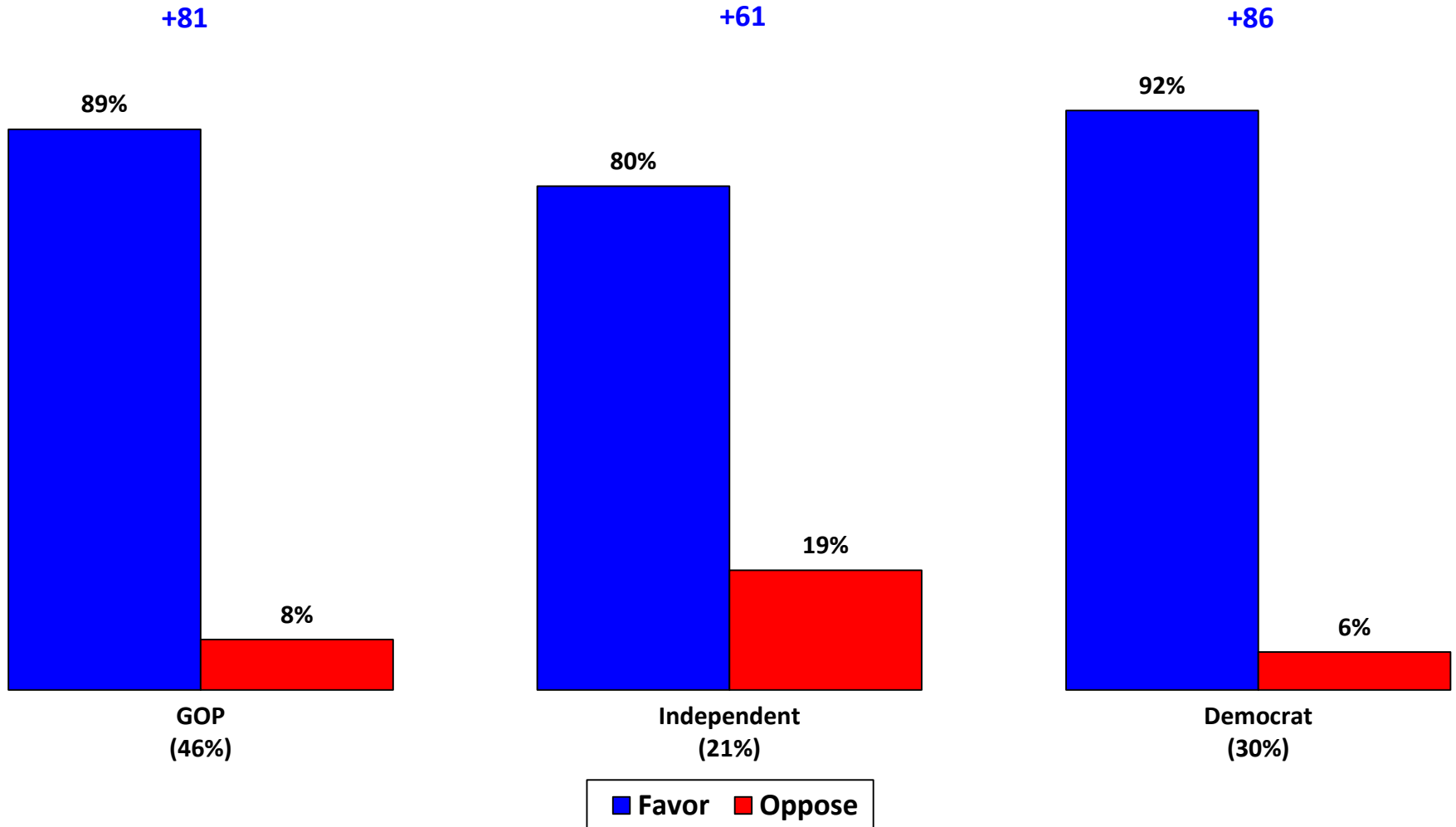
*“As you may know, the Virginia Department of Transportation has identified needed improvements to Interstate Eighty-One, as well as potential funding sources for those improvements. Would you favor or oppose a two billion dollar investment in Interstate Eighty-One that would include adding new lanes, widening existing lanes, upgrading interchanges, better rest areas, better signage, more safety service patrols, improved reliability, improving side roads that parallel Interstate Eighty-One, and adding safety improvements?”*

Total Favor	88%
Total Oppose	10%



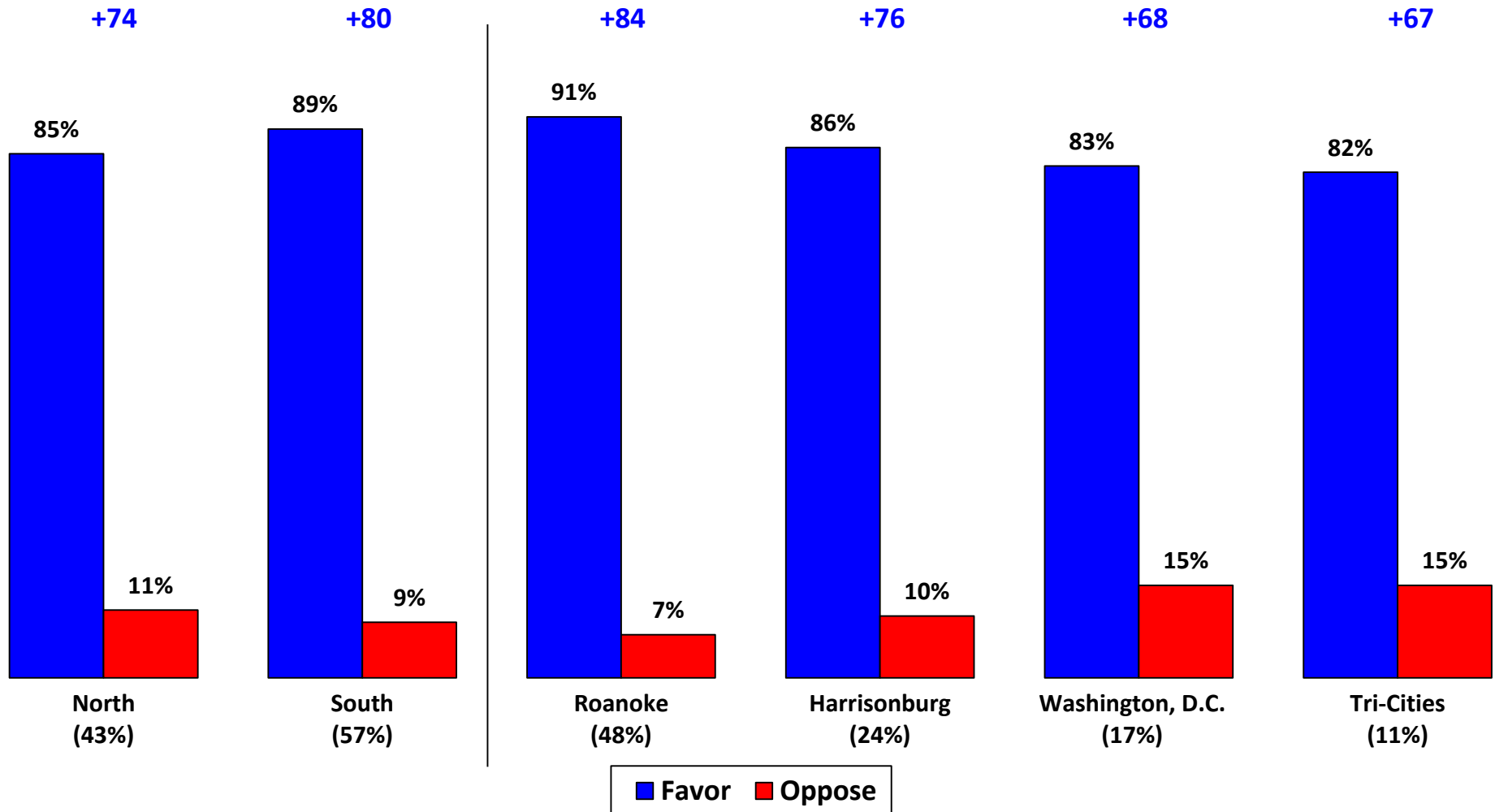
# Democrats and GOPers are equally in favor of the initial funding proposal.

*Initial Funding Proposal by Party*



# Over 80% of voters across all media markets support the funding proposal.

*Initial Funding Proposal by Region & Media Market*





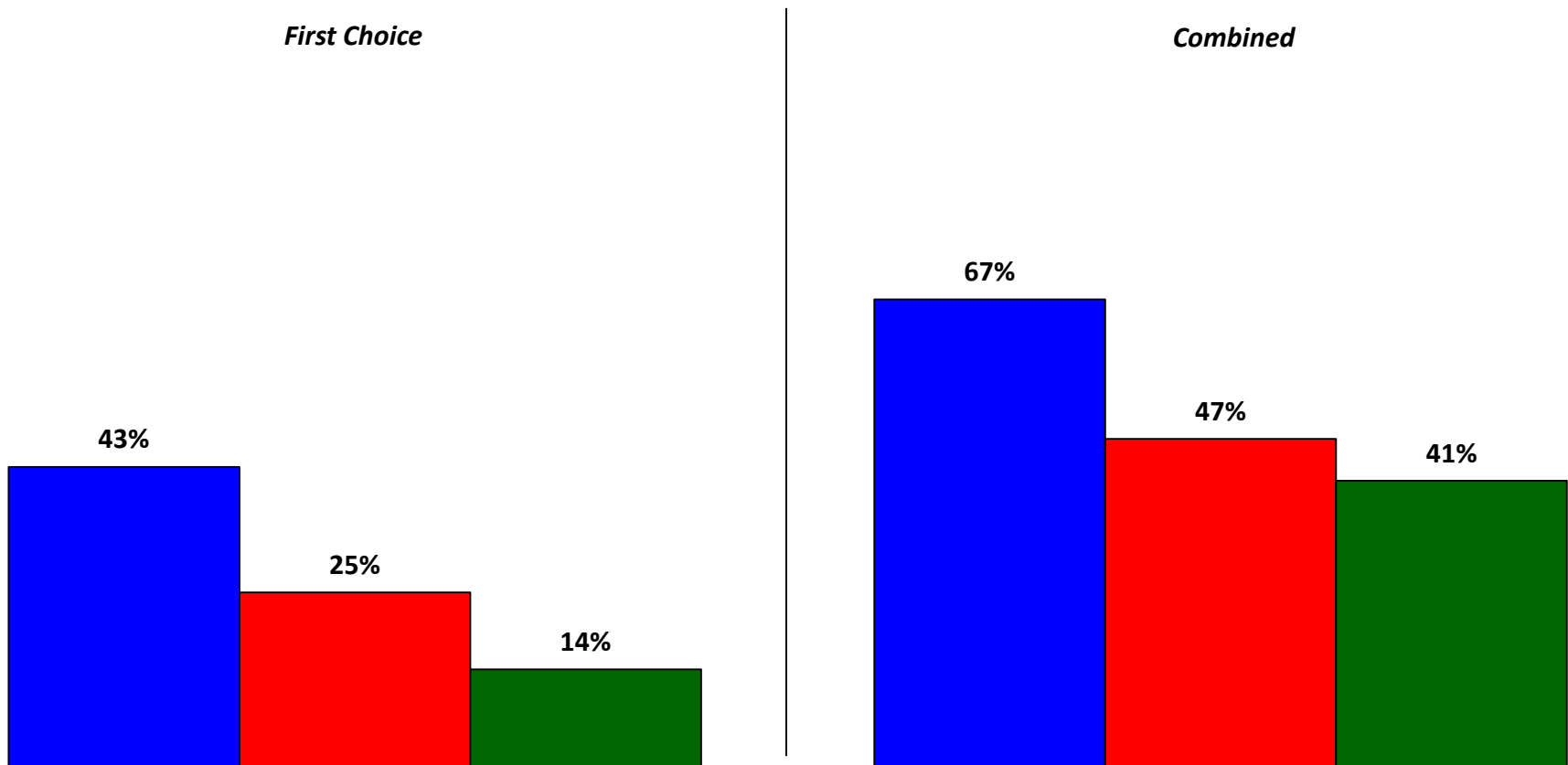
# VA I-81 Funding Options



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# A toll on freight trucks is the most popular funding solution to improve I-81.

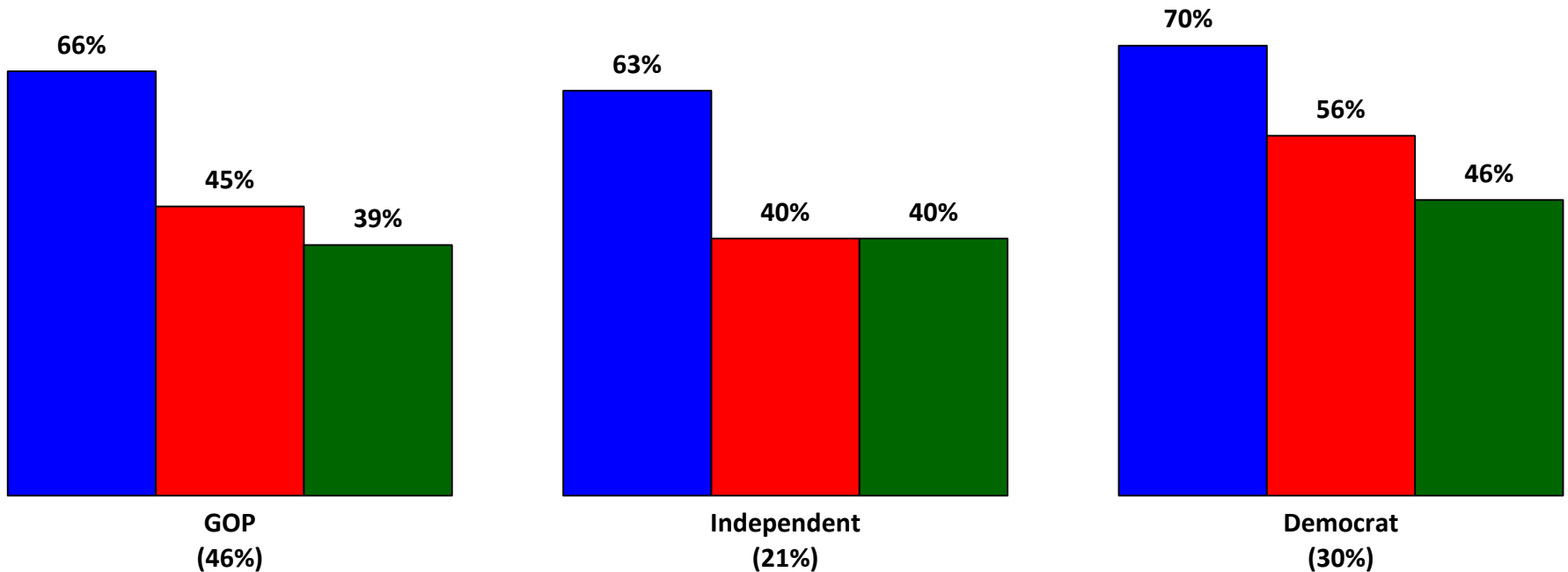
*“Which one of the following proposals would you MOST support for funding needed improvements to Interstate Eighty-One?”*



- Tolls on freight trucks
- Both a gas tax increase and a sales tax increase in the Interstate Eighty-One Corridor
- Tolls on every vehicle with a reduced annual pass option

# Voters across all party subgroups prefer a toll on freight trucks.

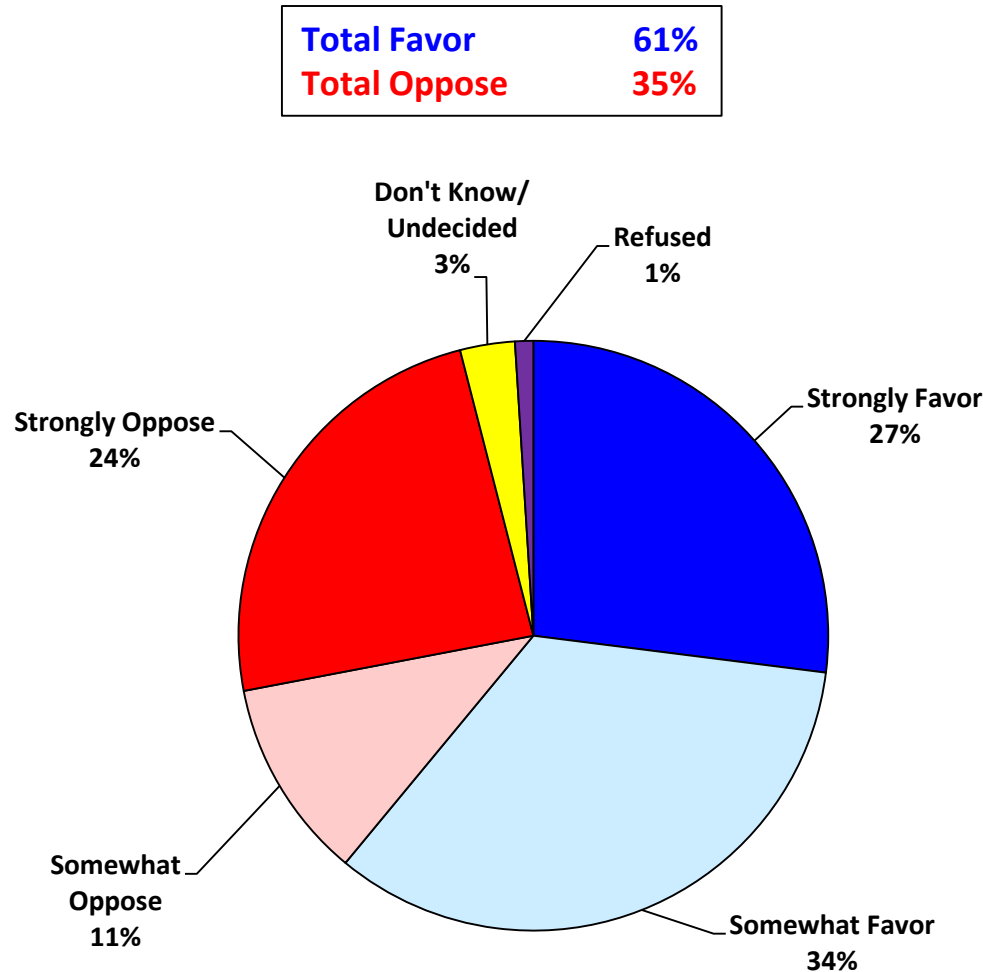
*I-81 Funding Solutions Combined by Party*



- Tolls on freight trucks
- Both a gas tax increase and a sales tax increase in the Interstate Eighty-One Corridor
- Tolls on every vehicle with a reduced annual pass option

# A majority of voters surveyed still support improving I-81 even if it requires a tax increase.

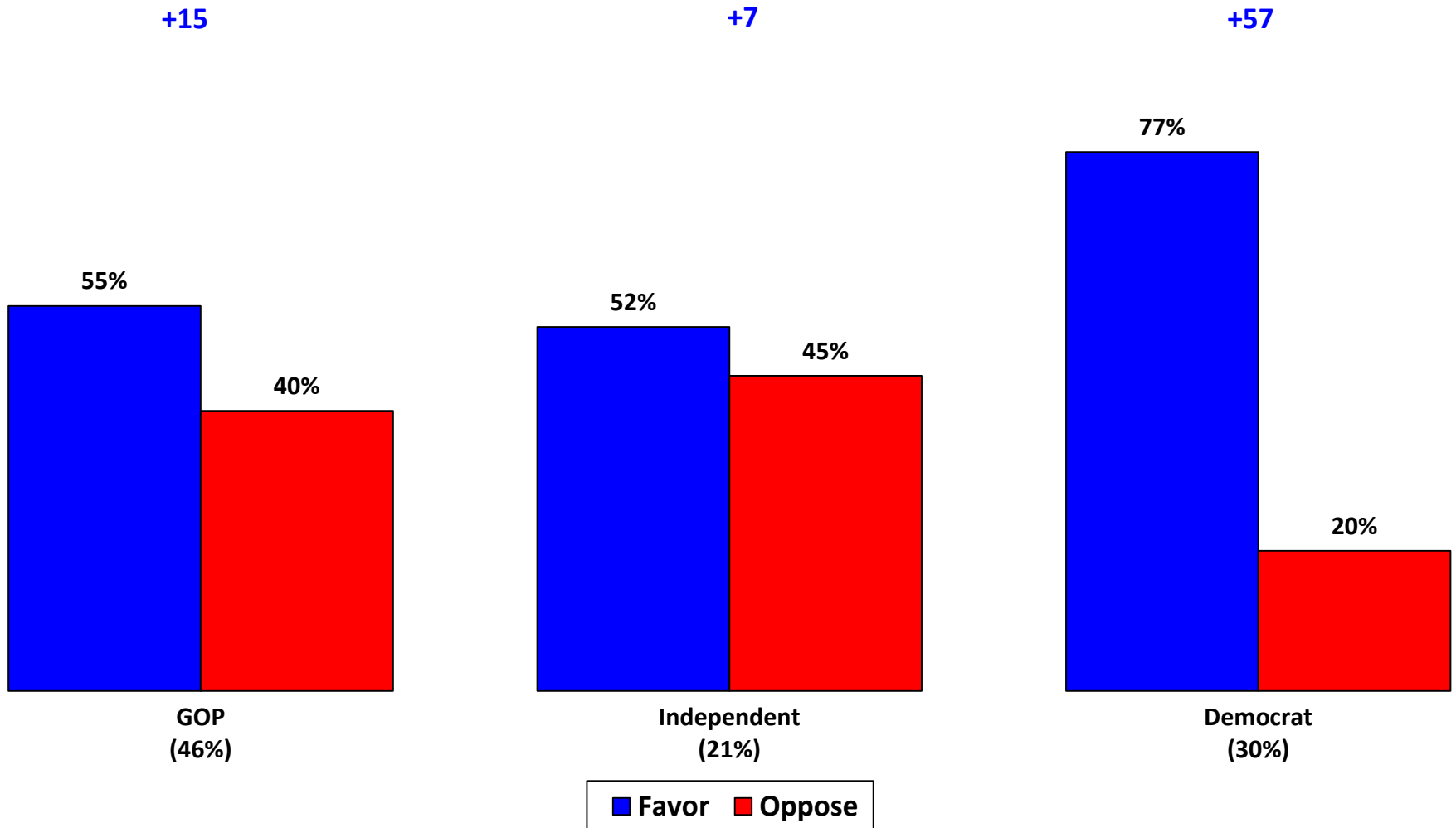
*"If your taxes had to increase to pay for it, would you favor or oppose a two billion dollar investment in Interstate Eighty-One that would include adding new lanes, widening existing lanes, upgrading interchanges, better rest areas, better signage, more safety service patrols, improved reliability, improving side roads that parallel Interstate Eighty-One, and adding safety improvements?"*





# The majority of voters across party lines support the funding proposal even if it includes a tax increase.

*Initial Funding Proposal w/ Tax Caveat by Party*



# Two-thirds of voters say the plan to improve I-81 should be approved in 2019.

*“Before the plan to improve Interstate Eighty-One can be implemented, it has to be approved by the state legislature. Do you think that improvements to Interstate Eighty-One should be approved in 2019 ...or... do you think the legislature should study Interstate Eighty-One improvements for a few more years?”*

**69%**

*Approve in 2019*

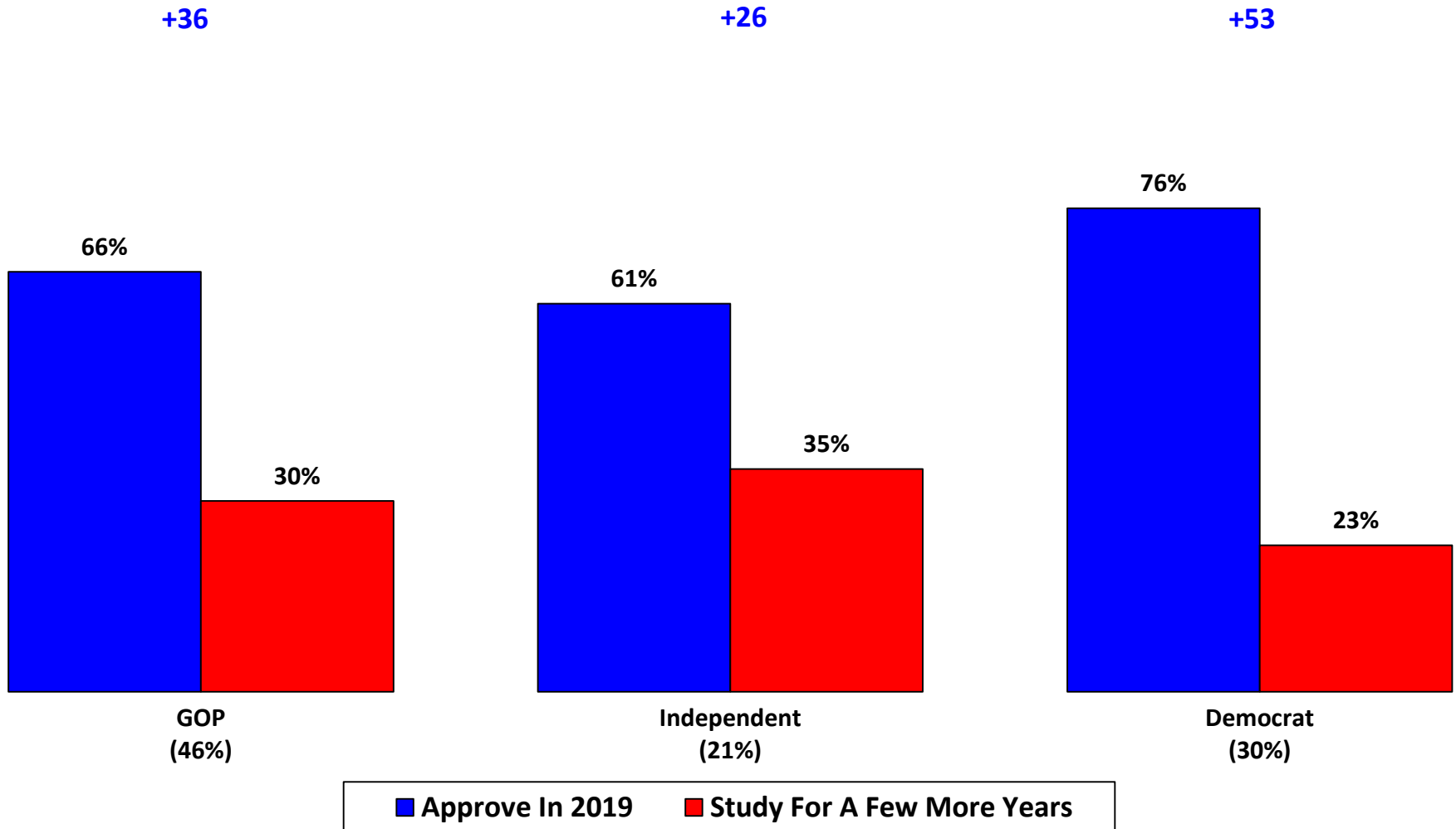
*...or...*

**29%**

*Study for a few more years*

# Voters across party lines say the plan to improve I-81 should be approved in 2019.

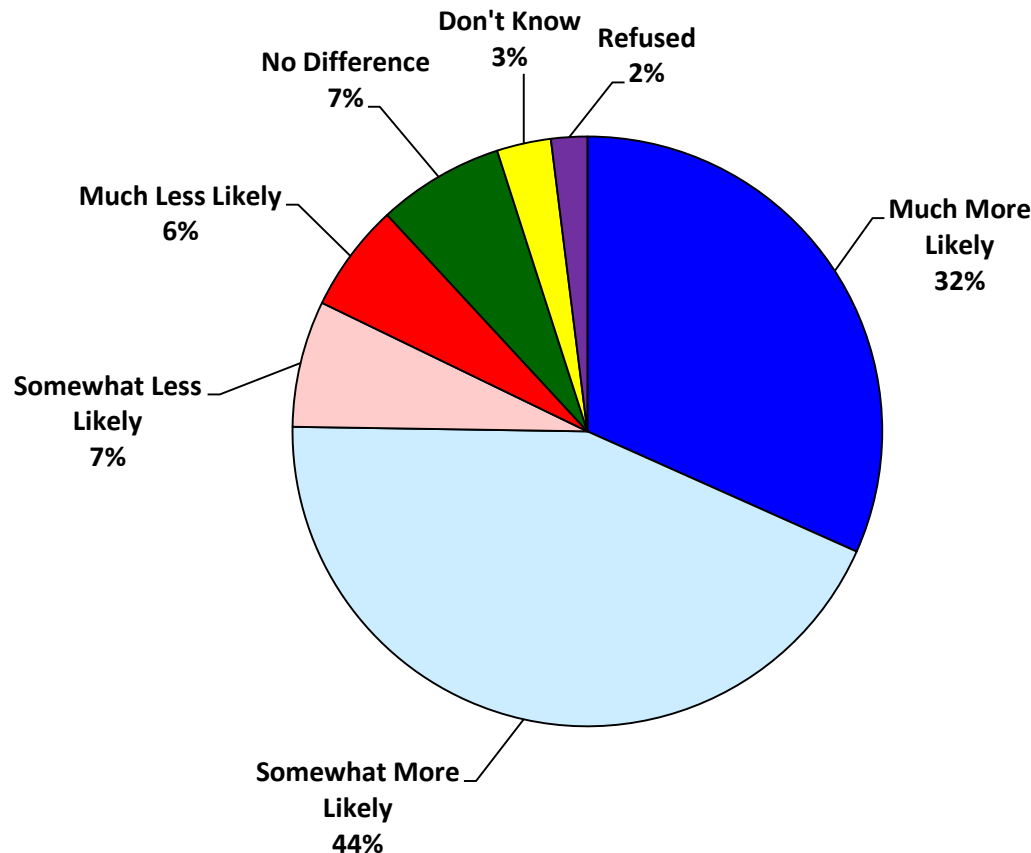
*I-81 & Legislature by Party*



# Three-quarters of voters would be more likely to back a state legislator who supports funding for I-81 improvements.

*“Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a state legislator who supports funding Interstate Eighty-One improvements?”*

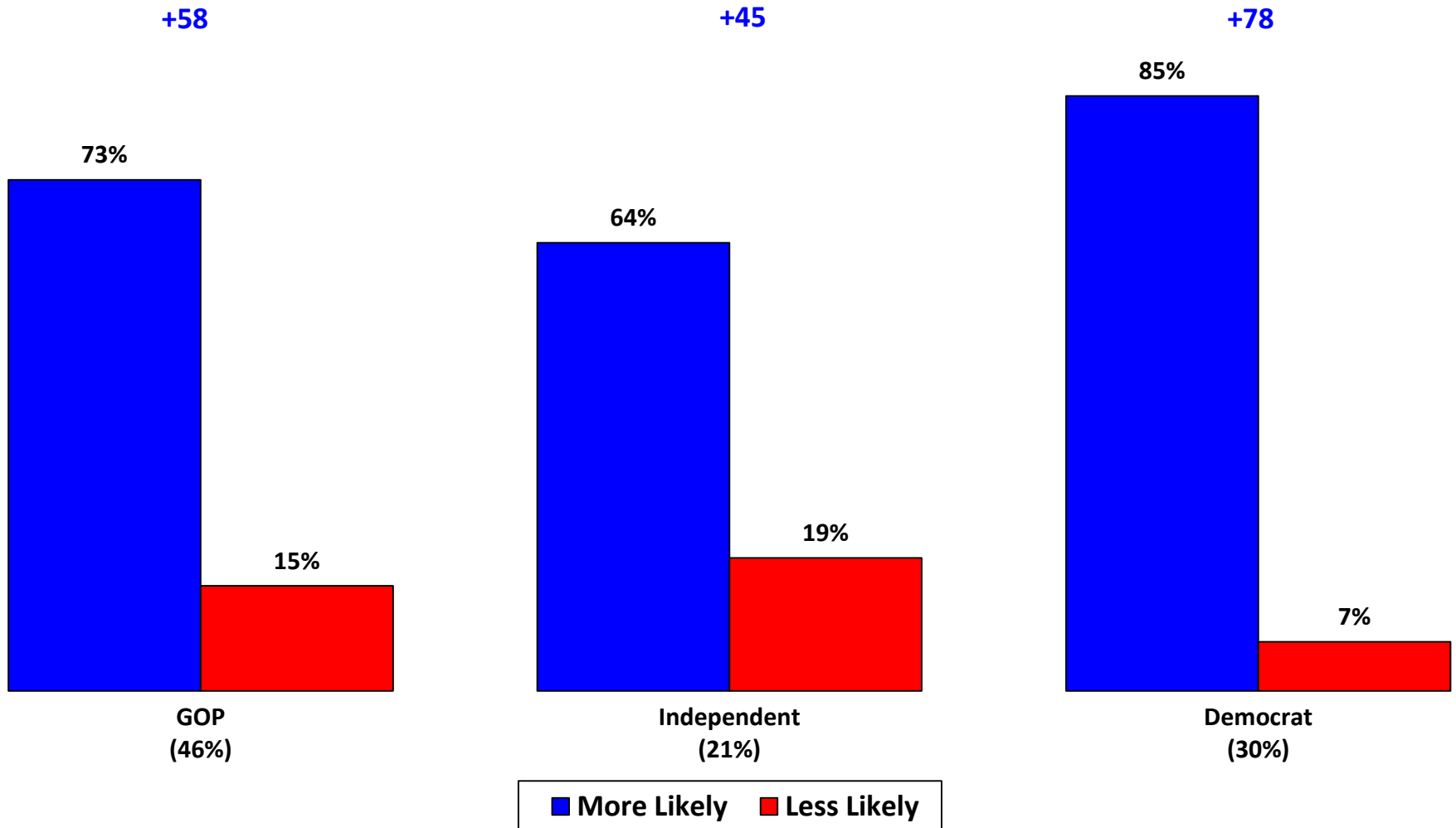
<b>Total More Likely</b>	<b>75%*</b>
<b>Total Less Likely</b>	<b>13%</b>



*\*Denotes Rounding*

# Voters across party lines are more likely to vote for a state legislator who supports funding for I-81.

*Support For Legislator Message by Party*





# Key Findings



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## KEY FINDINGS

The need to improve Interstate 81 is clear to the voters who live in the I-81 Corridor. Here are some of the key findings about voter attitudes toward I-81:

- Two-thirds of corridor voters say they travel on I-81 at least weekly or more often.
- Asked to give I-81 a grade, fully 79% give the highway a grade of C or worse. In fact, the mean score, or GPA in a manner of speaking, is just 1.6, which in school is a troublesome D+.
- A majority of voters, 56%, say they do not feel safe when traveling on I-81, while 43% say they do feel safe.

An overwhelming 88% of voters favor a \$2 billion investment in I-81. Support for the proposal is strong across all subgroups, including political, demographic and geographic lines.

Offered three funding options to pay for the improvements, voters prefer tolls on freight trucks first, both a gas tax and a sales tax increase in the I-81 Corridor second, and tolls on every vehicle with a reduced annual pass option third. Tolls on freight trucks finishes first across all political, demographic, and geographic lines.

## KEY FINDINGS (continued)

When we added the wording that “if your taxes had to increase to pay for it,” the two billion dollar investment in I-81 improvements still receives strong majority support, as 61% favor and 35% oppose it even with the specific mention of “if your taxes had to increase.” This includes a majority of Republicans and Independents.

Fully 69% of voters want to see the legislature approve a funding plan for I-81 in 2019 rather continuing studies.

Across party lines, voters overwhelmingly say they are more likely to vote for a state legislator who supports funding for I-81.





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**For more information about this presentation or about  
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