



# OHIO PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY & FUNDING SURVEY

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# SCHOOL FUNDING SURVEY

State of Ohio

Telephone Interviews

812 Registered Voters

**+/- 3.43% Overall Estimated Margin of Error, with a Confidence Interval of 6.8% Within Which the Results Could Vary**

October 1 – October 5, 2008



# THE OPINION ENVIRONMENT

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# What do you think should be the top priority for state government officials to work on right now?

**46%**     **Attracting more businesses and jobs to the state**

12%     Improving the quality of public education

12%     Changing the way schools are funded

11%     Reducing taxes for seniors and homeowners

10%     Providing healthcare for children and the poor

2%     Revitalizing the major cities

3%     Other

4%     Unsure

***Forced Choice Battery***

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11%     Reducing taxes for seniors and homeowners

10%     Providing healthcare for children and the poor

2%     Revitalizing the major cities

3%     Other

4%     Unsure

**26% in May, 2007**

**29% in May, 2007**

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RESEARCH  
& COMMUNICATIONS, INC.**

# Which of the following education issues do you think should be the top priority for the governor and state legislature to work on during the next two years?

**24%** Making sure students are prepared for college or the workplace

**23%** Changing the system of school funding

17% Improving basics, like science and math education

12% Improving the performance of struggling schools

12% Improving teacher performance

4% Developing and improving technology and computer skills

3% Other

4% Unsure

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# Which of the following education issues do you think should be the top priority for the governor and state legislature to work on during the next two years?

**24%**     **Making sure students are prepared for college or the workplace**

**30%**     African-Americans

**29%**     Toledo area

**28%**     Cincinnati area

**23%**     **Changing the system of school funding**

**34%**     Incomes of \$76k to \$100k

**32%**     Columbus area

**32%**     Households with children in private schools

**30%**     Incomes of greater than \$100k

**28%**     High propensity voters

**27%**     30 to 44 year-olds

**27%**     45 to 59 year-olds

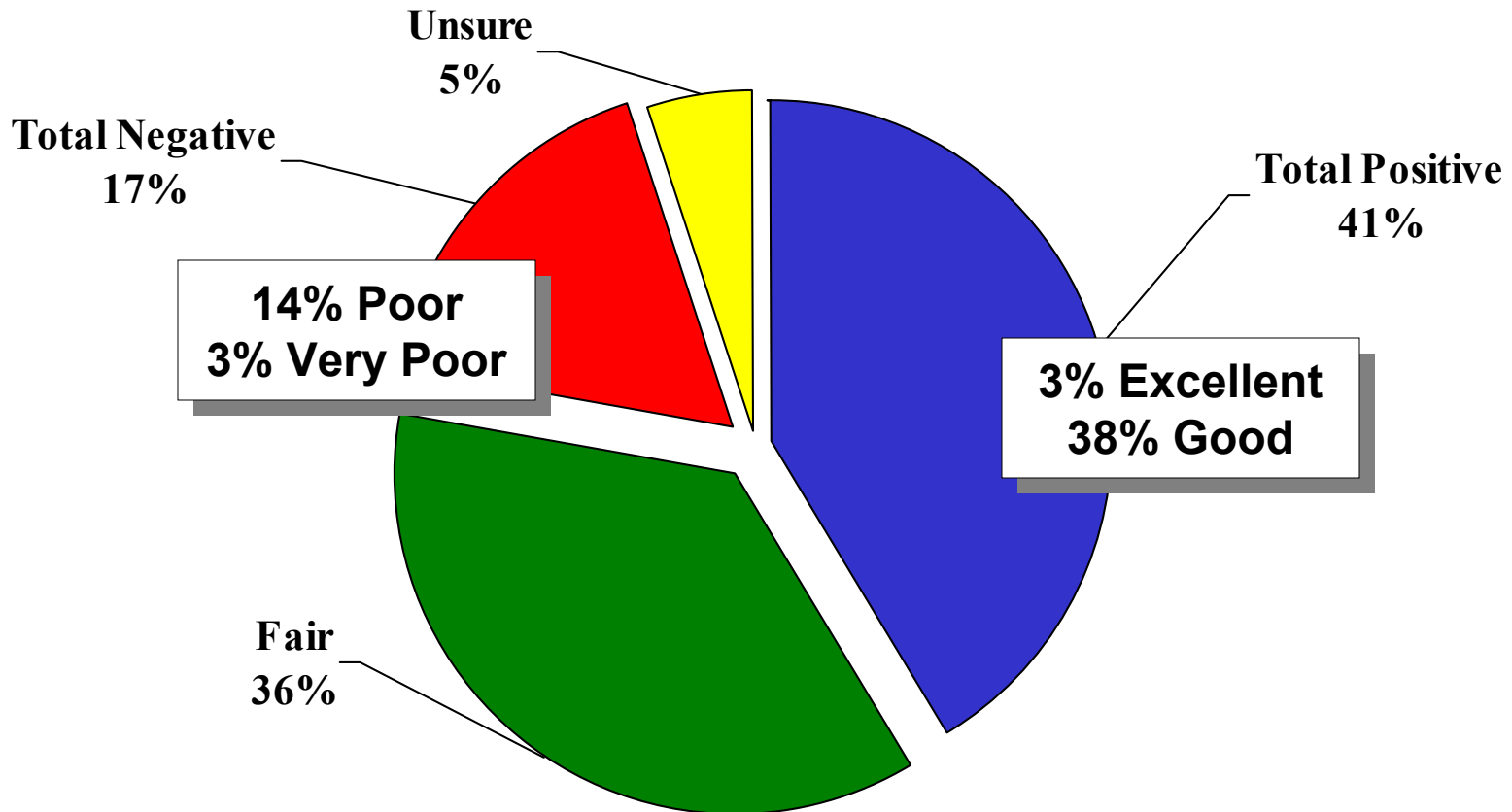
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# Overall, how would you rate the quality of public education in Ohio?



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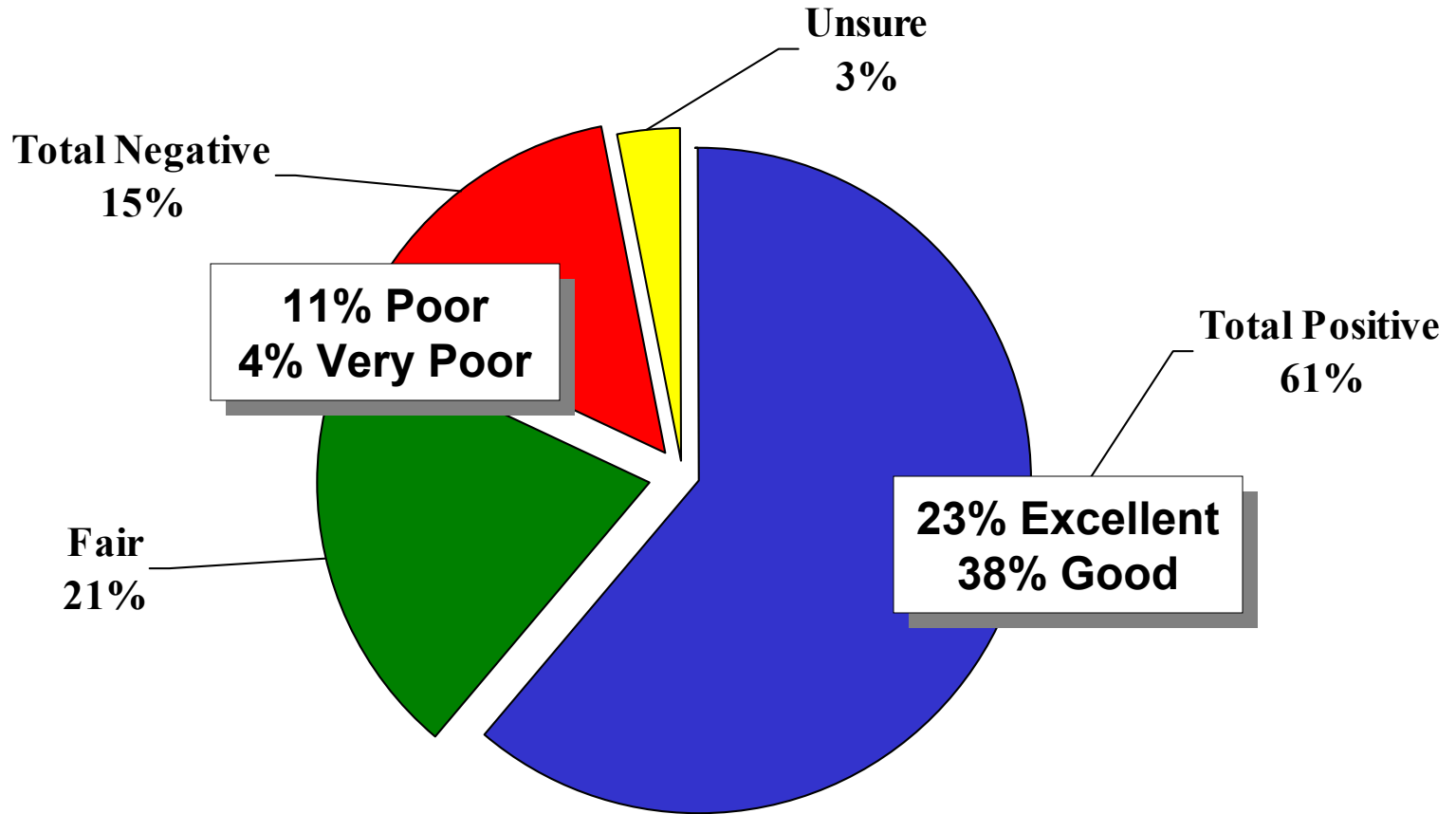
		5. Overall, how would you rate the quality of public education in Ohio?				Table Total
		Excellent/ good	Fair	Very poor/poor	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
RACE: (consolidated)	White	42.6%	36.6%	15.1%	5.8%	100.0%
	African-American	29.2%	37.2%	30.4%	3.3%	100.0%
	Something else	57.6%	25.4%	14.5%	2.5%	100.0%
TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Urban	33.4%	33.3%	28.5%	4.8%	100.0%
	Suburban	40.5%	37.8%	15.4%	6.4%	100.0%
	Rural	48.2%	36.4%	12.2%	3.2%	100.0%
Table Total		41.1%	36.1%	17.5%	5.4%	100.0%

**24% Net Positive Assessment**

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# Overall, how would you rate the quality of education being provided by the local school district that serves your community?



**46% Net Positive Assessment**

# Overall, how would you rate the quality of education being provided by the local school district that serves your community?

		Q. 7. Overall, how would you rate the quality of education being provided by the local school district that serves your community?				Table Total
		Excellent/ good	Fair	Very poor/poor	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
HOUSEHOLD WITH CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL:	Yes	67.2%	17.4%	14.5%	.9%	100.0%
	No	58.7%	22.6%	14.8%	3.9%	100.0%
TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Urban	37.5%	31.0%	30.0%	1.4%	100.0%
	Suburban	70.0%	17.1%	9.8%	3.1%	100.0%
	Rural	64.0%	20.5%	11.0%	4.5%	100.0%
Table Total		61.1%	21.2%	14.6%	3.0%	100.0%

**46% Net Positive Assessment**

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# GOVERNANCE & FUNDING POLICIES

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# Who do you think should primarily be making decisions about how much of the annual state budget is allocated for public education and schools?

**38%** Voters through an annual referendum

**27%** The State Board of Education

16% The State Legislature

9% The Governor

3% The State Supreme Court

1% Other

6% Unsure

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# Who do you think should primarily be making decisions about how much of the annual state budget is allocated for public education and schools?

## **38%** Voters through an annual referendum

45% Households with children in private schools

44% Republicans

47% Dayton area

## **27%** The State Board of Education

37% African-Americans

33% Low propensity voters

33% 30 to 44 year-olds

32% Urban school district residents

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Thinking about the way the state should determine how much money is spent on each student, do you think it should be based on...

**35%** A flat rate that is identical for every student in the state

19% Research data and best practices that predict higher student achievement

14% An average based on what is being spent in successful school districts

11% Letting educators and state education officials use their judgment to decide

8% The past year's spending, with adjustments for this year's inflation

3% Other

9% Unsure

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**Thinking about the way the state should determine how much money is spent on each student, do you think it should be based on...**

**35% A flat rate that is identical for every student in the state**

41% Urban school district residents

41% Columbus area

41% Other media markets in rural areas

**19% Research data and best practices that predict higher student achievement**

35% Incomes of greater than \$100k

33% Households with children in private school

28% 30 to 44 year-olds

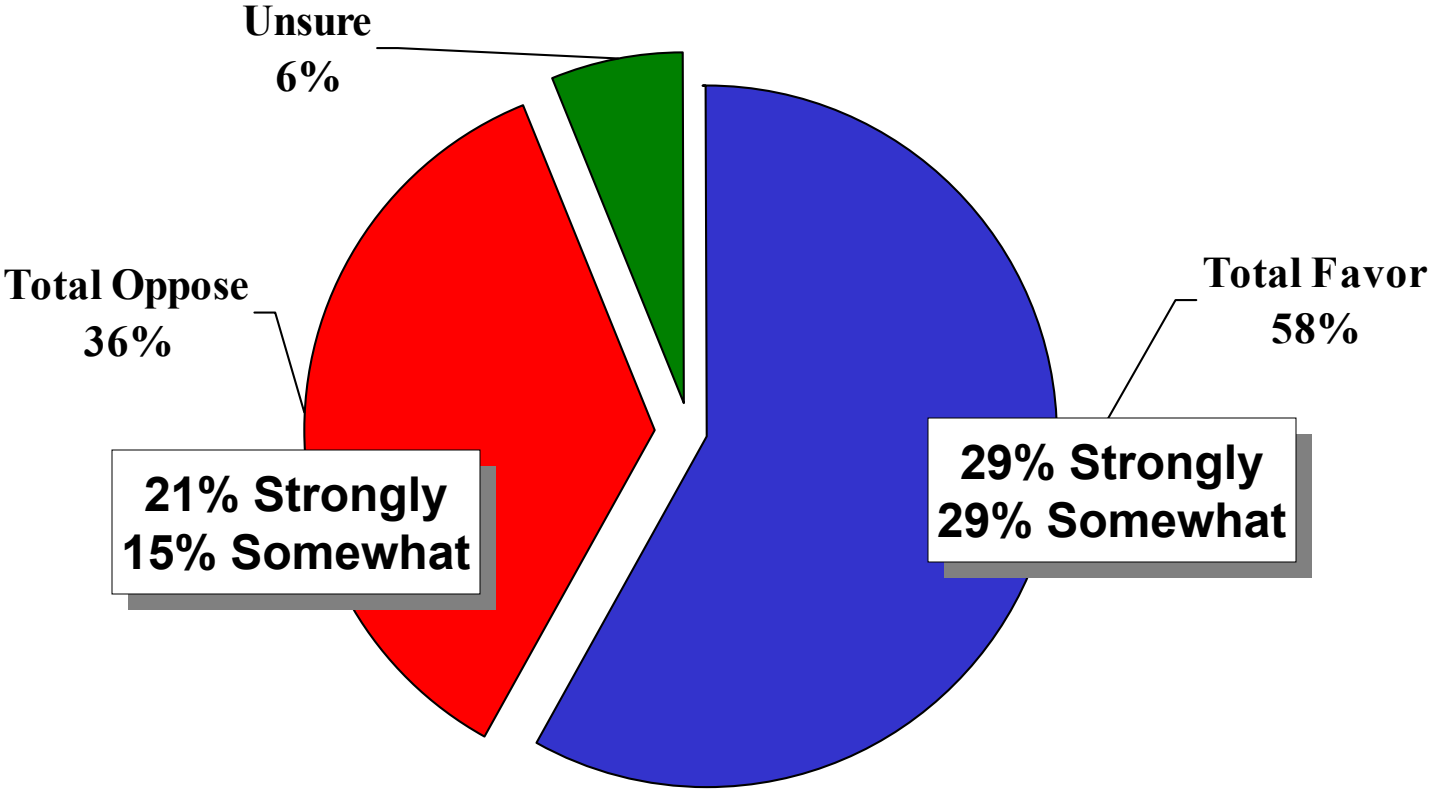
27% Incomes of \$76k to \$100k

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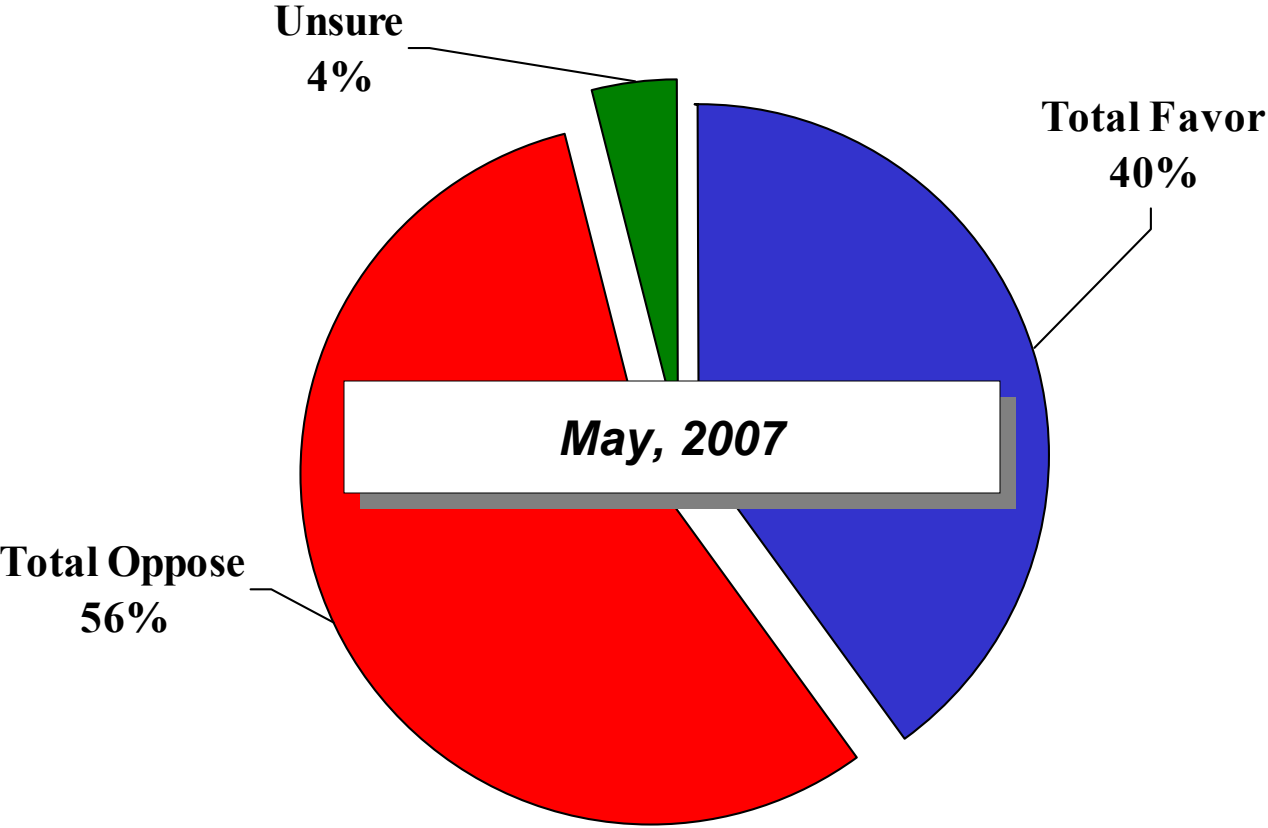
# Would you favor or oppose changing state law so that as local property values increase or decrease, the amount of money that school districts receive from property owners is automatically adjusted accordingly?



**22% Net Favor**



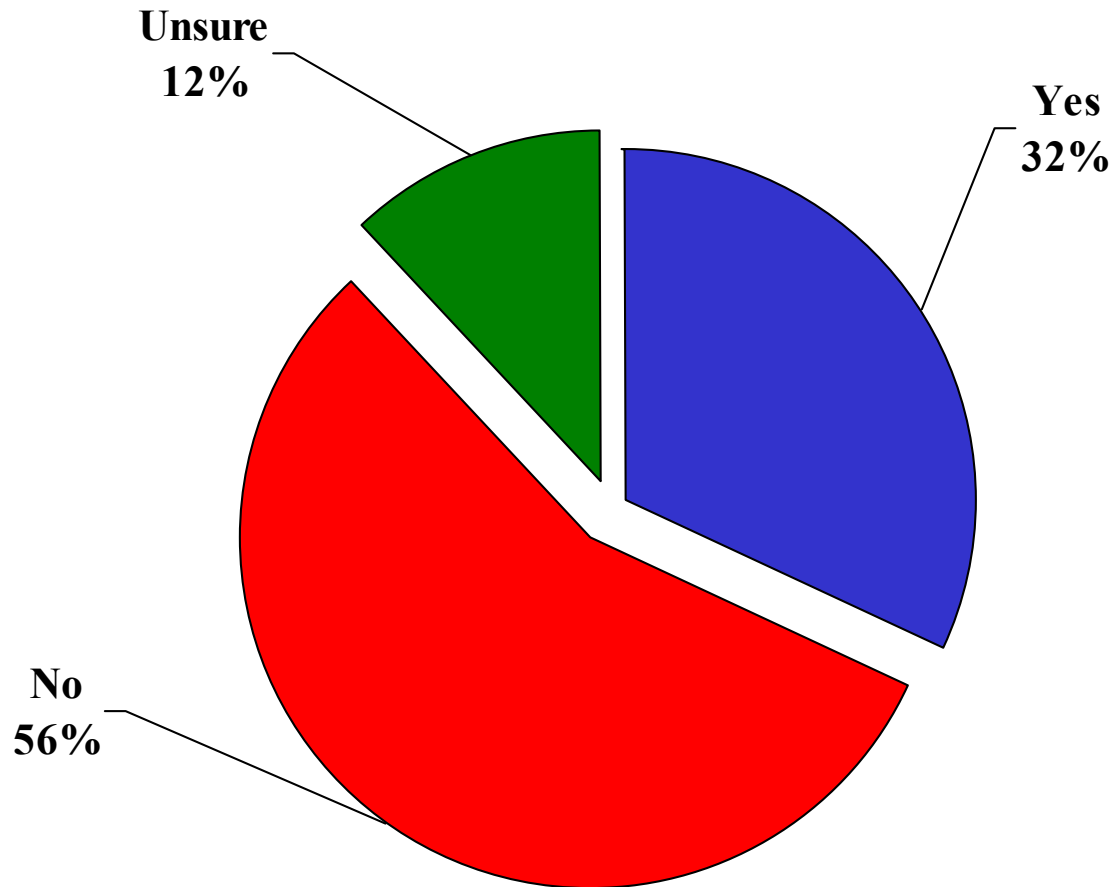
**Would you favor or oppose changing state law so that as local property values increase, school districts receive equal increases in the amount of money they collect from homeowners?**



**- 16% Net Favor**



# Generally speaking, do you think that the state spends enough of the state budget on schools and public education?



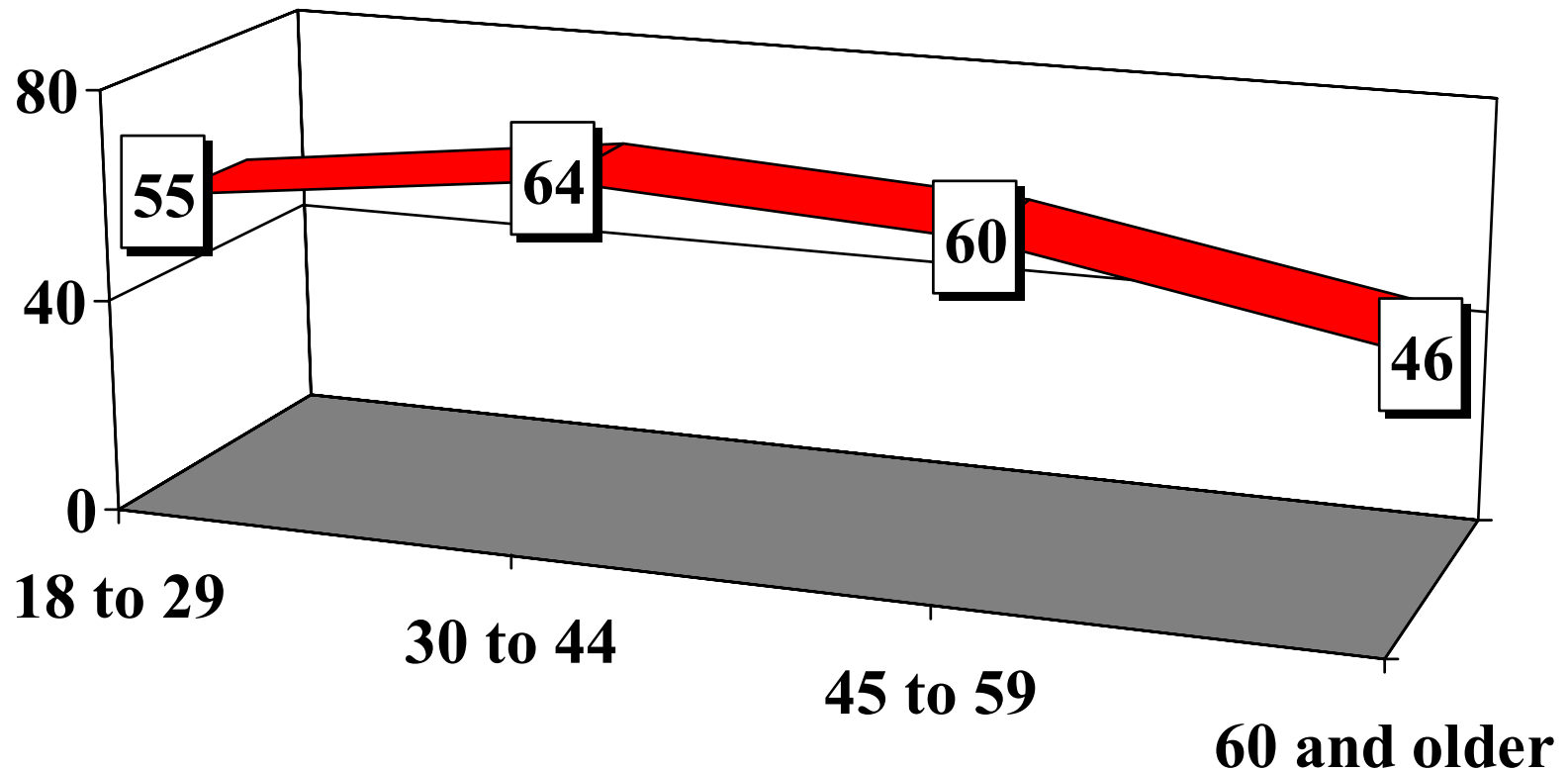
***56% Say Not Enough***

# Generally speaking, do you think that the state spends enough of the state budget on schools and public education?

		Q. 11. Generally speaking, do you think that the state spends enough of the state budget on schools and public education?			Table Total
		Yes	No	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
HOUSEHOLD WITH CHILD IN PRIVATE SCHOOL:	Yes	40.8%	46.5%	12.6%	100.0%
	No	31.1%	57.2%	11.8%	100.0%
PARTY IDENTIFICATION:	Republican	42.6%	48.2%	9.2%	100.0%
	Independent/Something else	32.4%	52.9%	14.7%	100.0%
	Democrat	20.9%	68.2%	11.0%	100.0%
Table Total		31.9%	56.2%	11.9%	100.0%

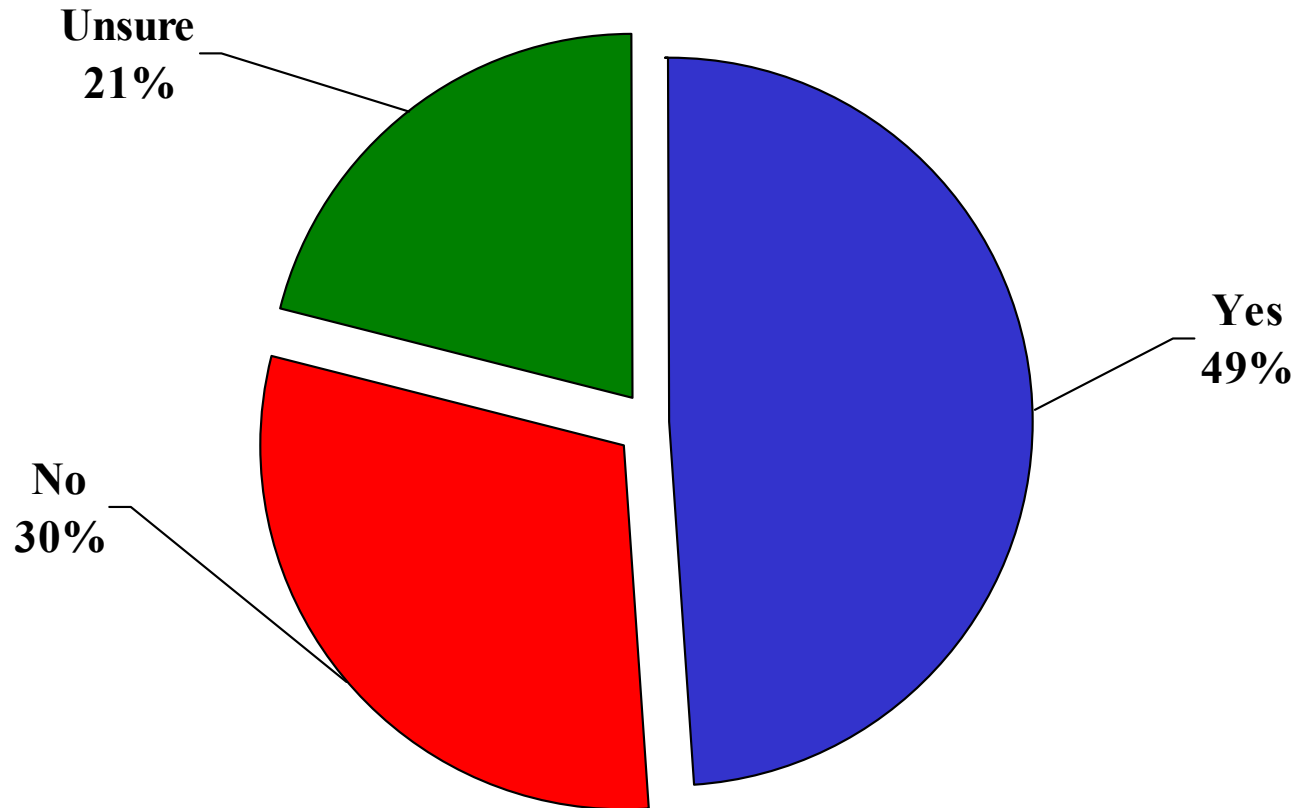
**56% Say Not Enough**

# Generally speaking, do you think that the state spends enough of the state budget on schools and public education?



**56% Say Not Enough**

# Do you think that the public school district that serves your community has received a fair portion of state education funds?



**49% Say Fair Portion**

# Do you think that the public school district that serves your community has received a fair portion of state education funds?

		Q. 12. Do you think that the public school district that serves your community has received a fair portion of state education funds?			Table Total
		Yes	No	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
RACE: (consolidated)	White	51.2%	26.9%	21.9%	100.0%
	African-American	24.8%	52.7%	22.5%	100.0%
	Something else	69.4%	30.6%	.0%	100.0%
TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Urban	36.7%	38.5%	24.8%	100.0%
	Suburban	54.6%	25.1%	20.3%	100.0%
	Rural	49.0%	30.5%	20.5%	100.0%
Table Total		48.5%	30.1%	21.4%	100.0%

**49% Say Fair Portion**



**Which of the following would you say best describes your preference regarding how much money the state should spend for public education?**

**45% Spend more, but only as much as can be redirected from other parts of the budget**

21% Continue to spend the same amount that it has over the last few years

19% Spend more, even if it means raising taxes

8% Spend less than the amount that it has over the last few years

7% Unsure

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**Which of the following would you say best describes your preference regarding how much money the state should spend for public education?**

**45% Spend more, but only as much as can be redirected from other parts of the budget**

21% Continue to spend the same amount that it has over the last few years

19% Spend more, even if it means raising taxes

38% Members of other racial and ethnic groups

37% African-Americans

27% Democrats

27% Incomes of greater than \$100k

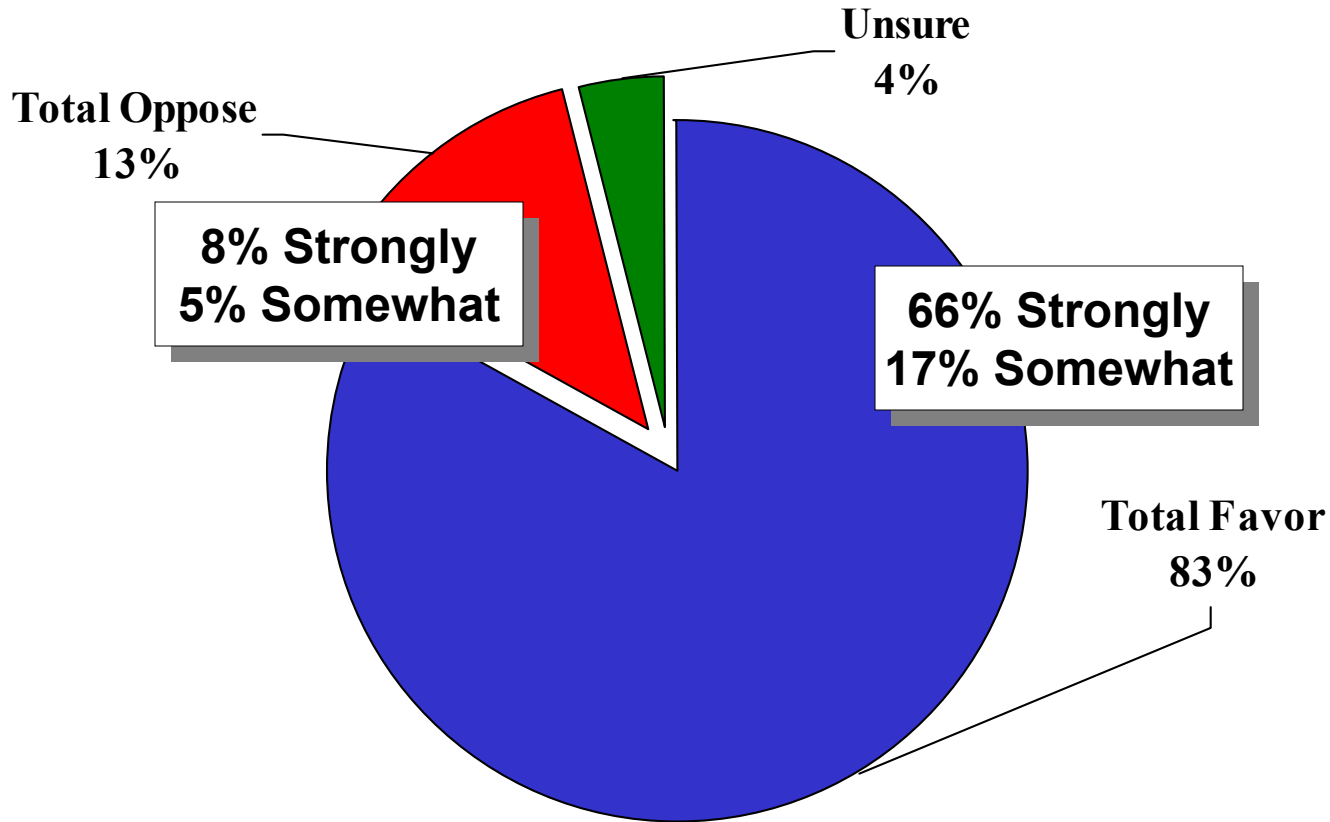
8% Spend less than the amount that it has over the last few years

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**Would you favor or oppose a state law that requires the state to give a certain percentage of its budget to education each year, in order to prevent politicians from moving money around in the budget, like they did with the lottery proceeds?**



**70% Net Favor**

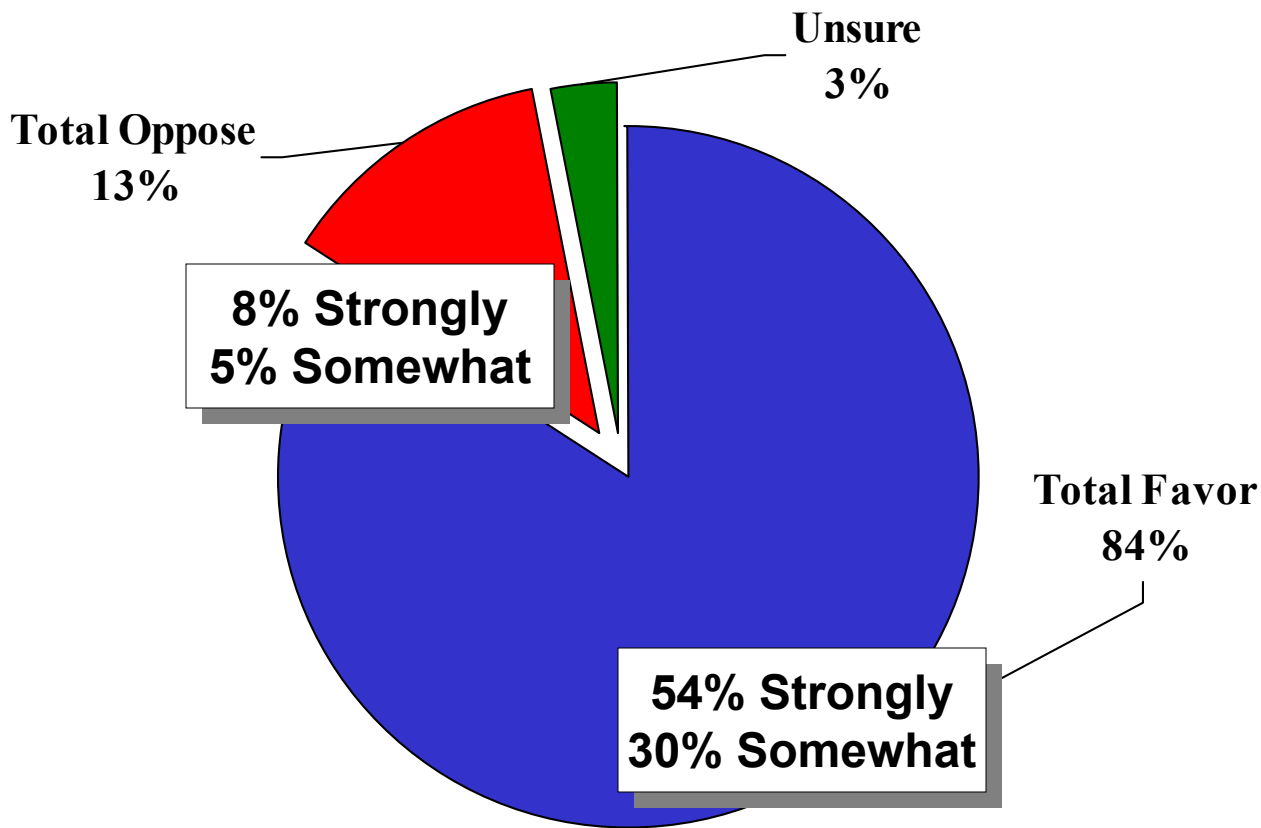


# FUNDING OPTIONS

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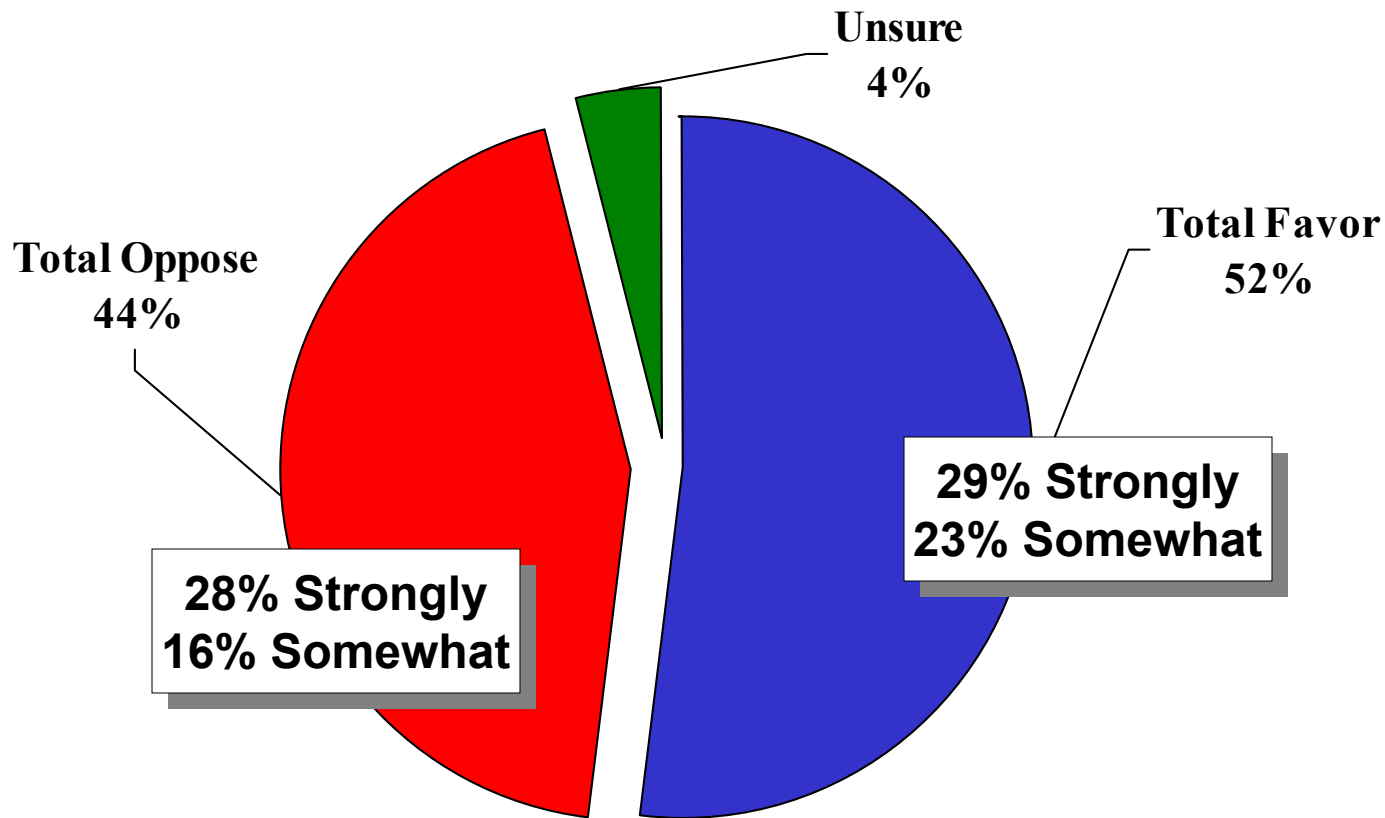


# Would you favor or oppose requiring small adjacent school districts to work together to consolidate services, like busing, fuel purchasing and employee health benefits, in order to save money?



**71% Net Favor**

# Would you favor or oppose requiring small adjacent school districts of less than 1,000 students to merge their schools systems, in order to save money?



**8% Net Favor**

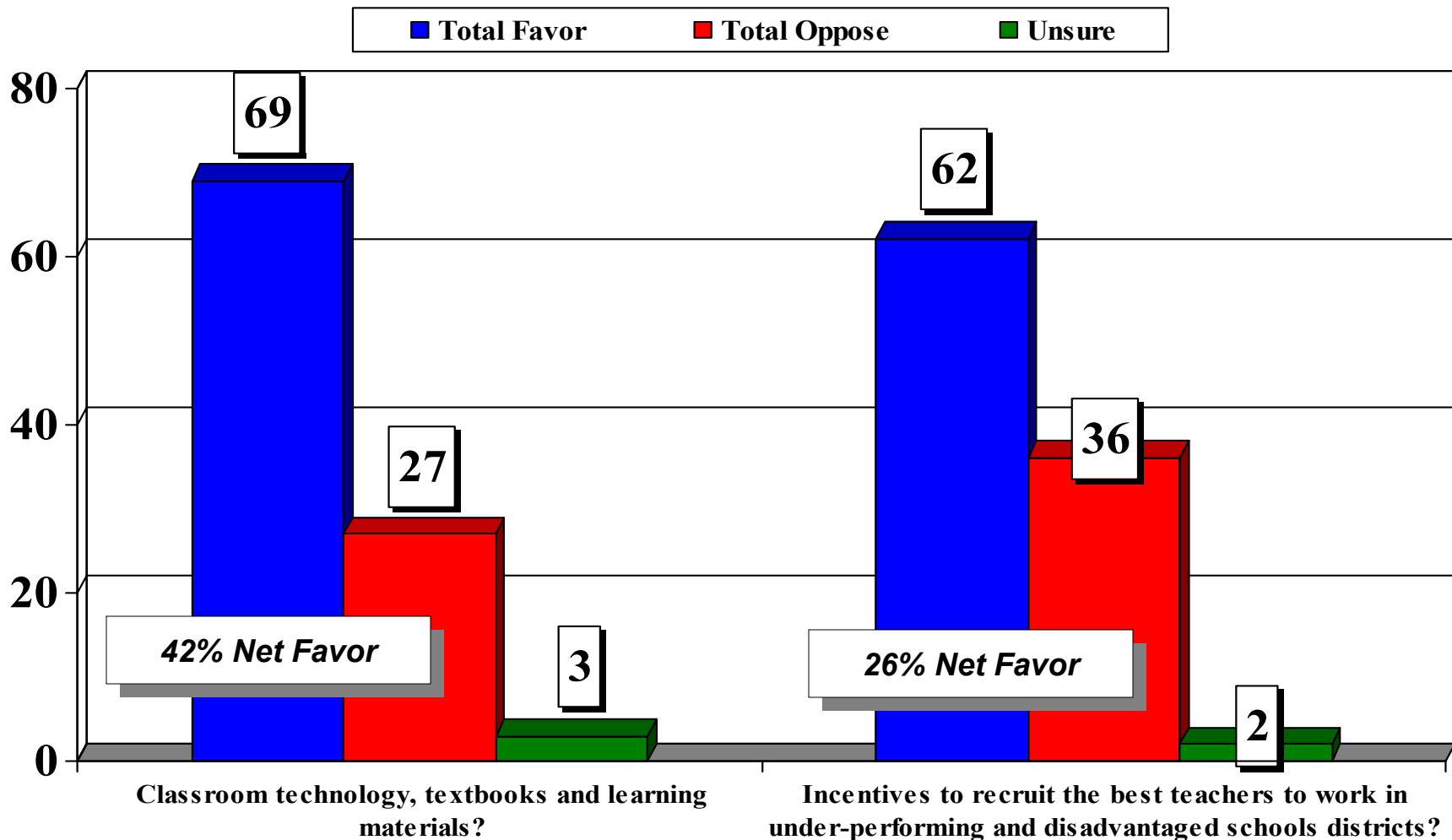


# Would you favor or oppose requiring small adjacent school districts of less than 1,000 students to merge their schools systems, in order to save money?

		Q. 24. Would you favor or oppose requiring small adjacent school districts of less than 1,000 students to merge their schools systems, in order to save money?			Table Total
		Total favor	Total oppose	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
		TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Urban	56.6%	37.4%
	Suburban	55.2%	41.8%	3.0%	100.0%
	Rural	40.7%	54.9%	4.4%	100.0%
Table Total		51.7%	44.3%	4.0%	100.0%

**8% Net Favor**

# Would you favor or oppose a small statewide sales tax of approximately one-tenth of a percent for...

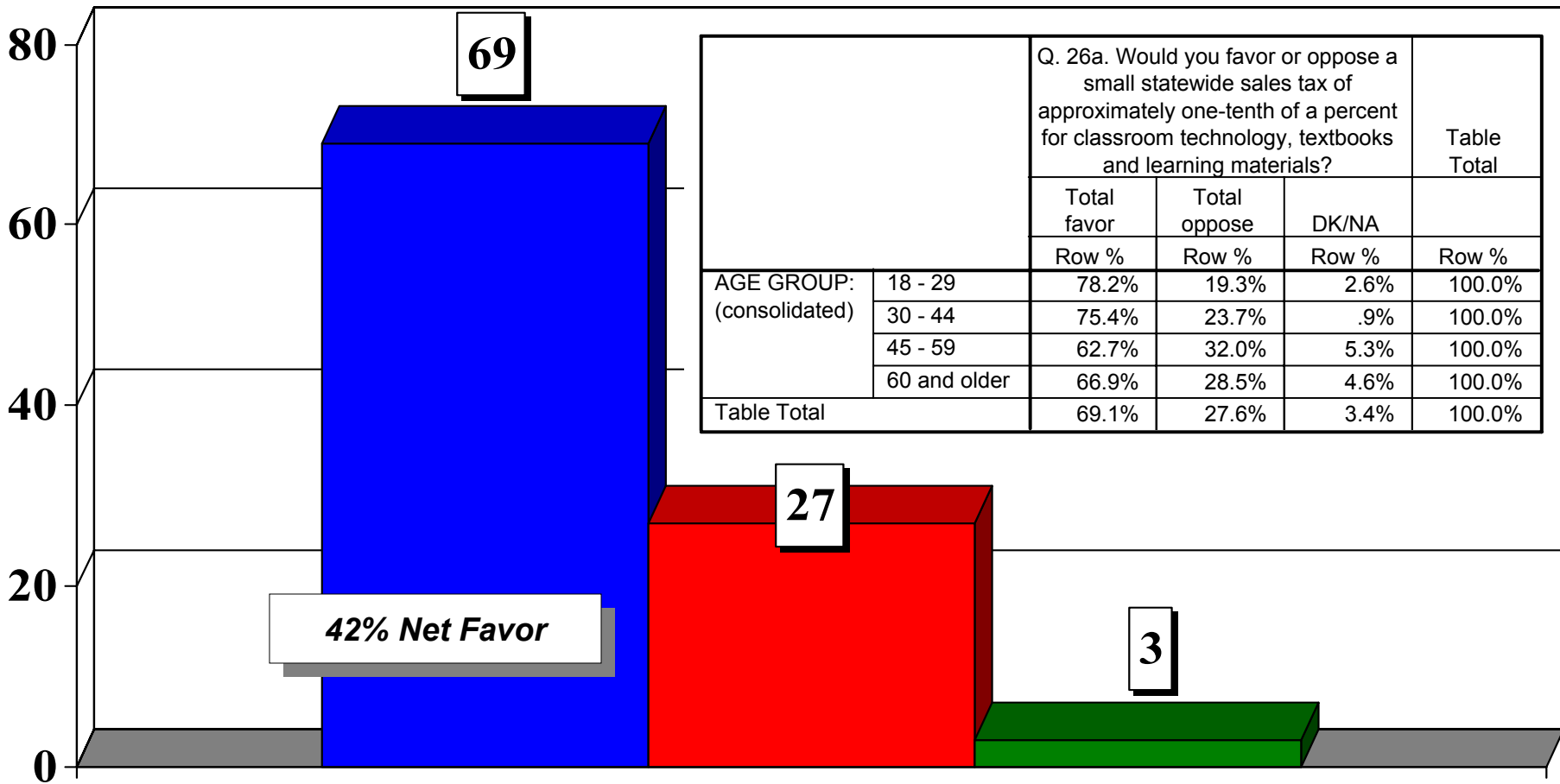


*Split Sample Methodology*



# Would you favor or oppose a small statewide sales tax of approximately one-tenth of a percent for...

■ Total Favor ■ Total Oppose ■ Unsure

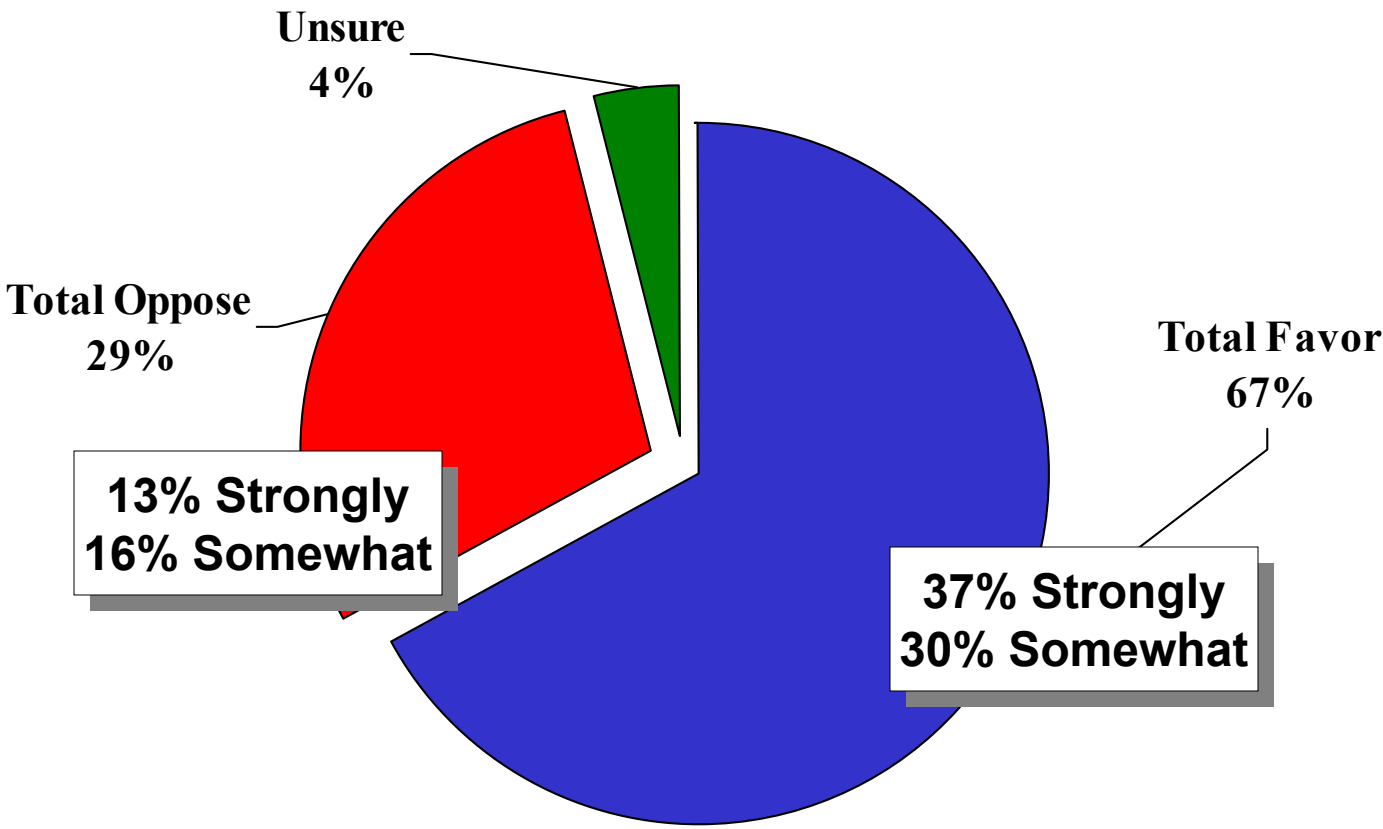


Classroom technology, textbooks and learning materials?

*Split Sample Methodology*



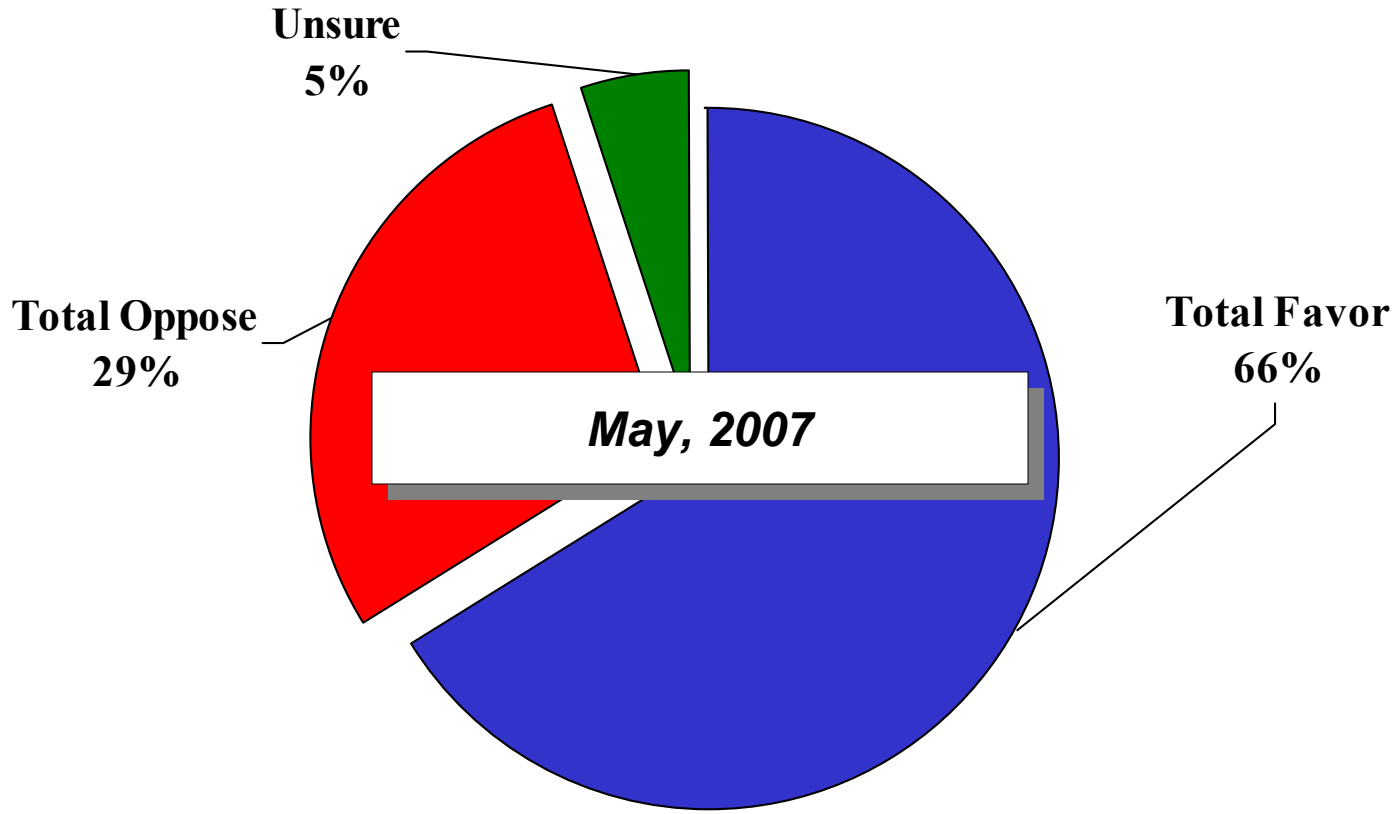
# Would you favor or oppose distributing public education dollars based on a system that gives more money to districts that have larger numbers of students with special needs, such as poverty, learning disabilities or language barriers?



**38% Net Favor**



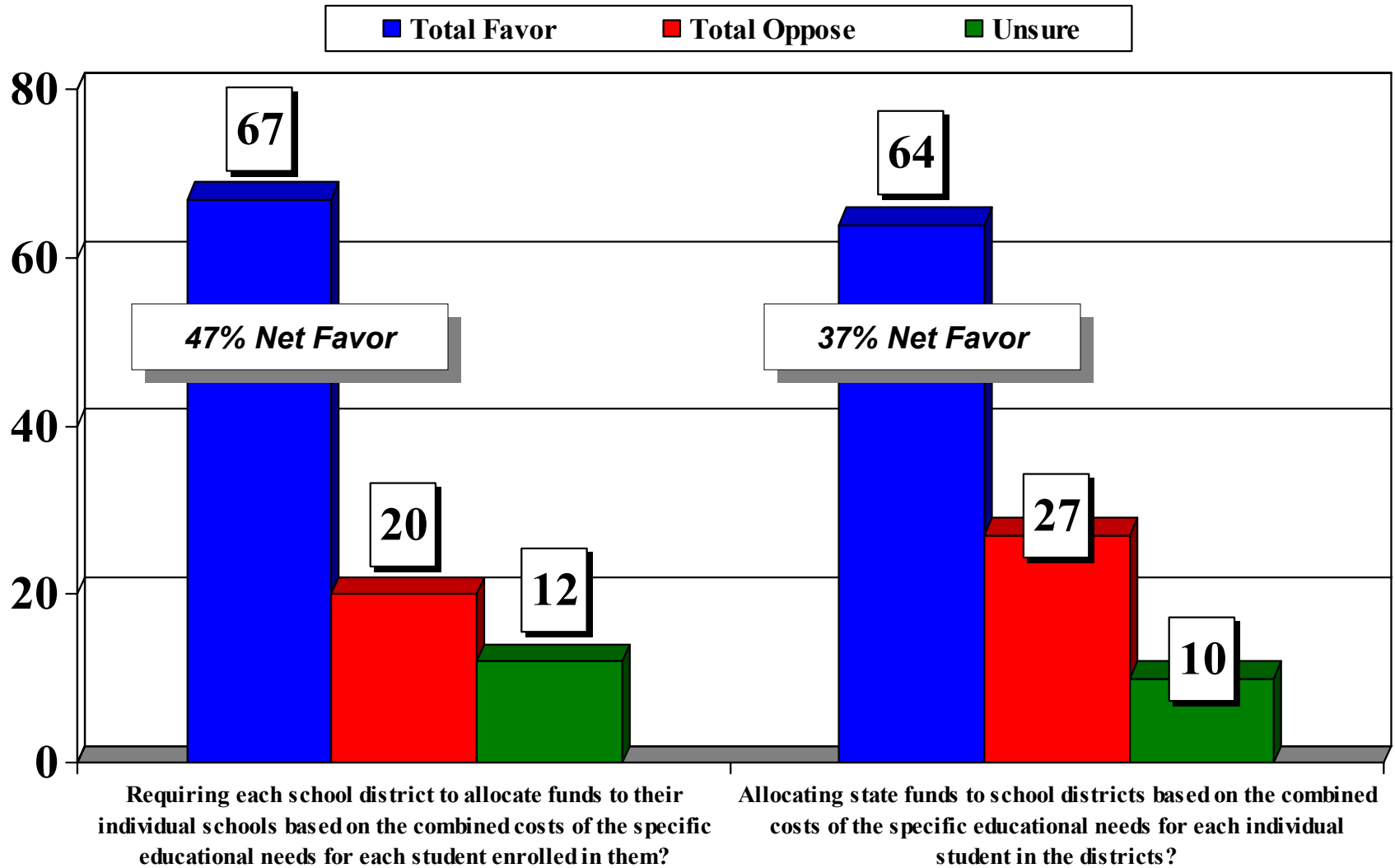
# Would you favor or oppose distributing public education dollars based on a system that gives more money to districts that have larger numbers of students with special needs, such as poverty, learning disabilities or language barriers?



**37% Net Favor**

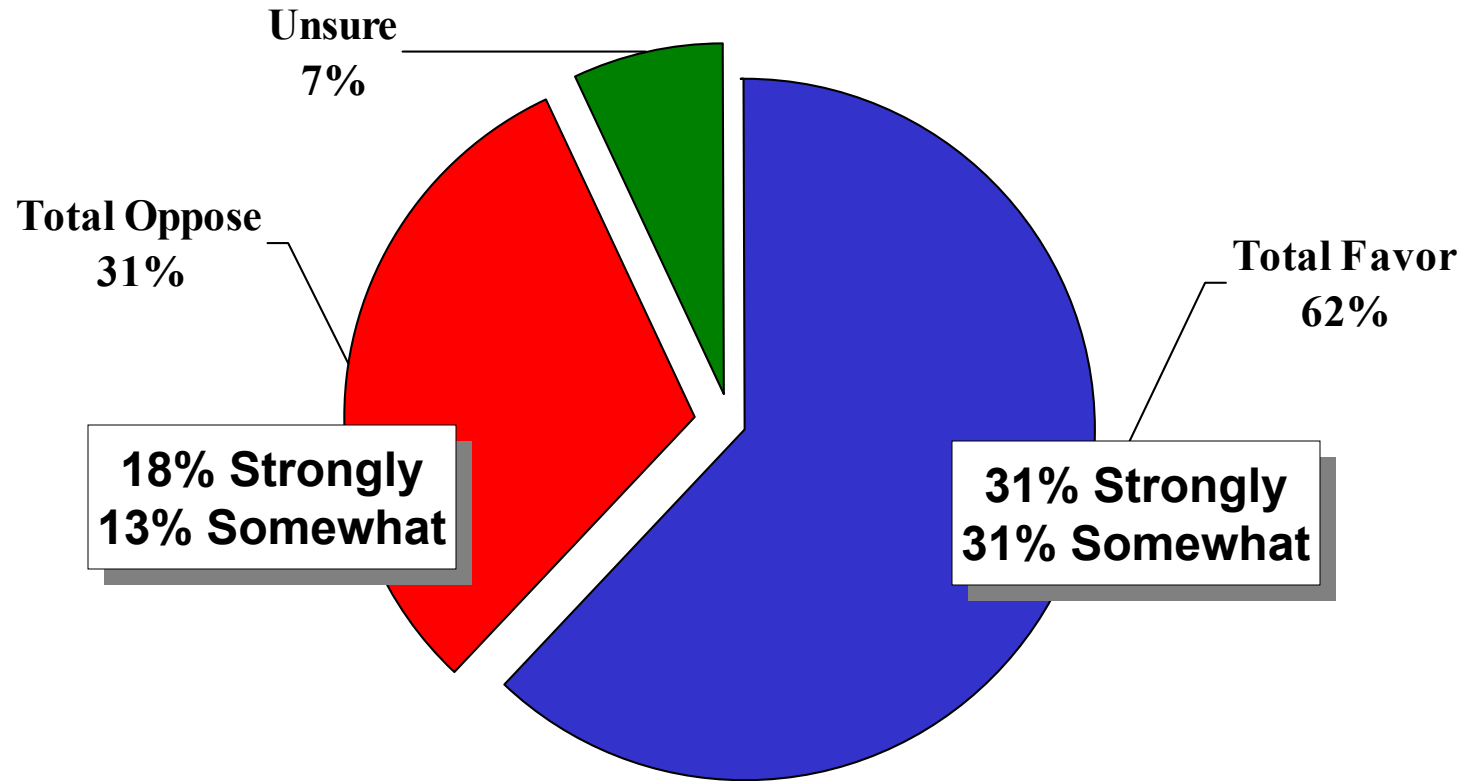


# Would you favor or oppose a system of...



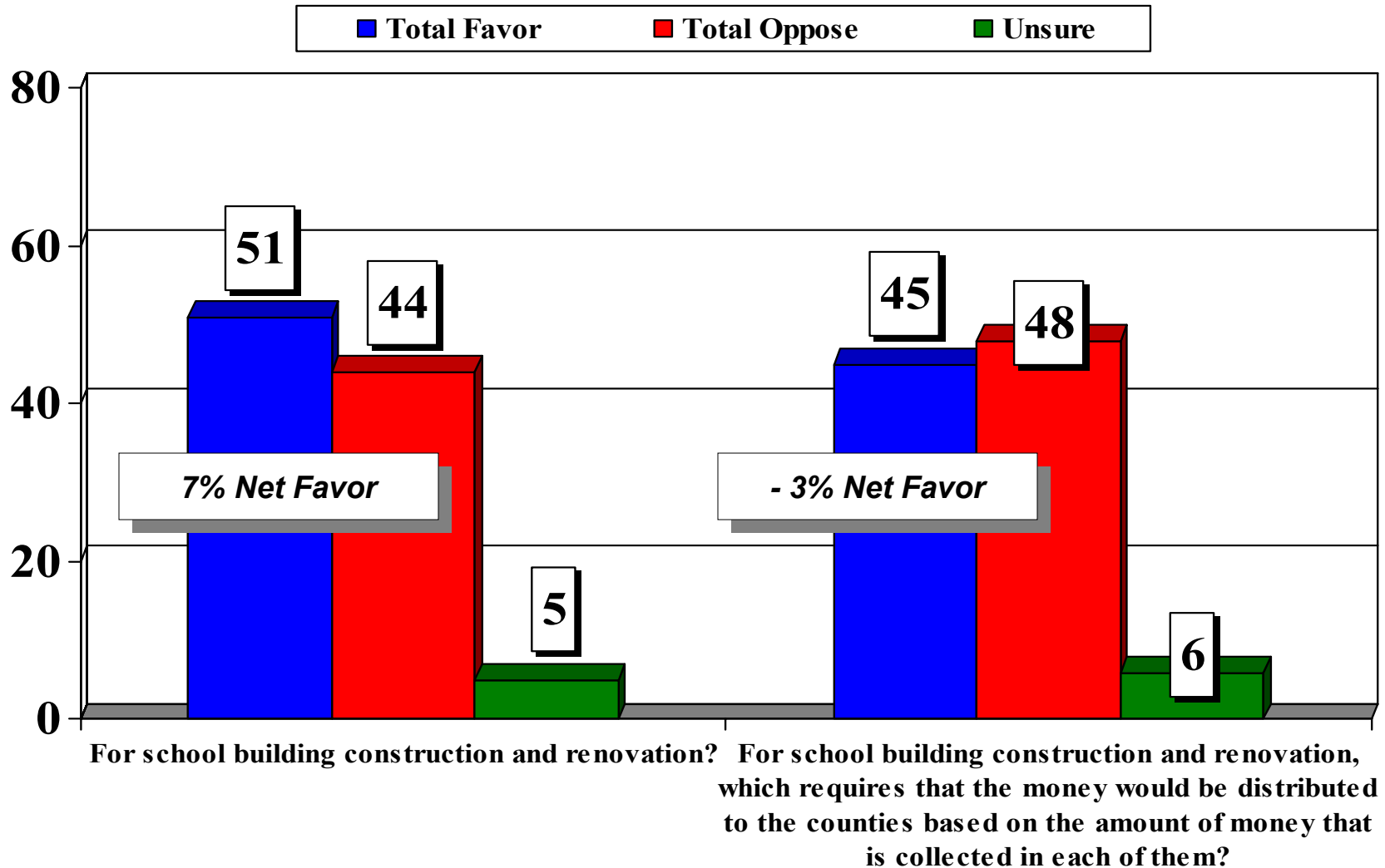
*Split Sample Methodology*

# Would you favor or oppose creating a state income tax on earnings that would be collected for the purpose of school funding, in exchange for a reduction in property taxes?



**31% Net Favor**

# Would you favor or oppose a statewide sales tax...



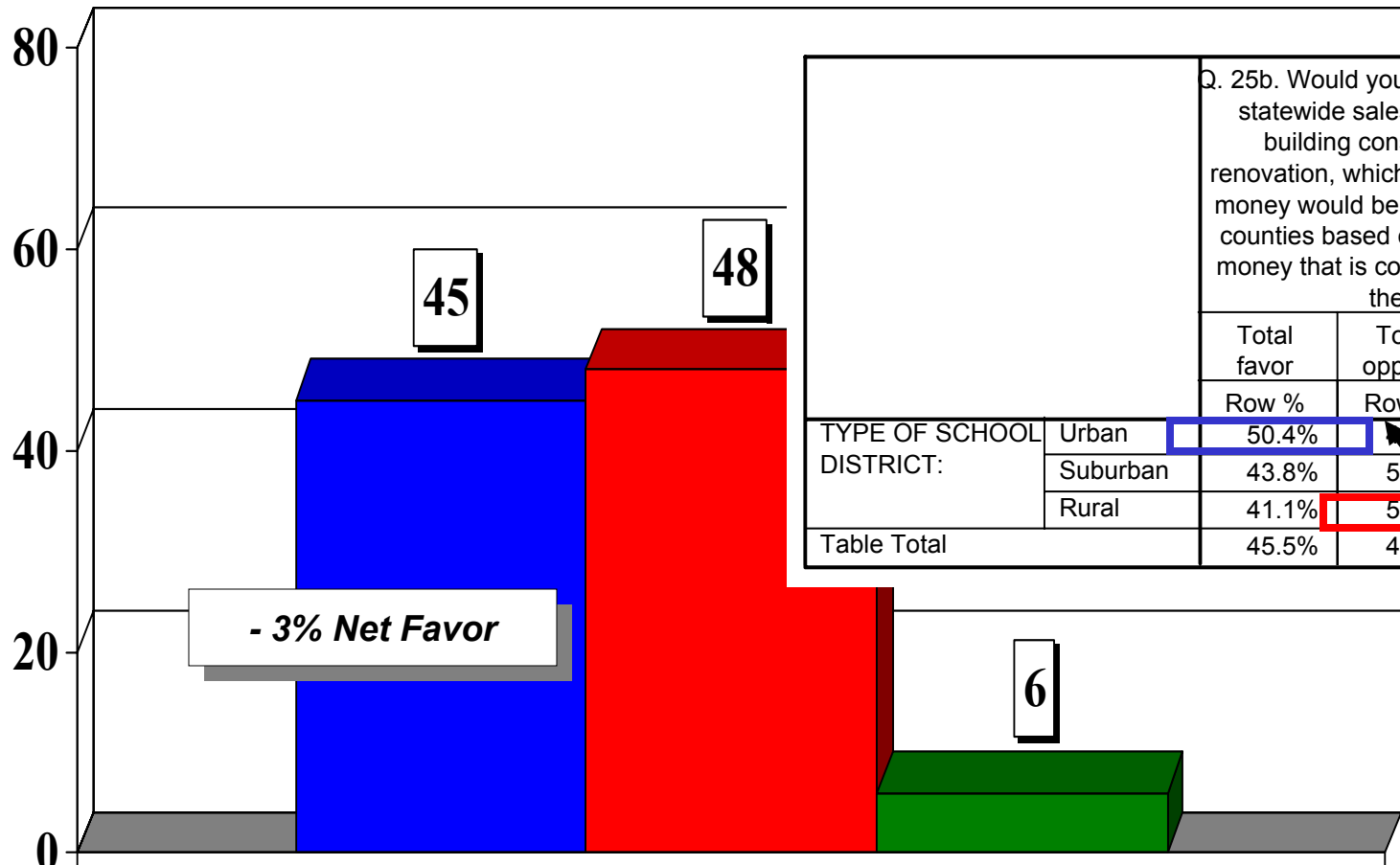
*Split Sample Methodology*

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# Would you favor or oppose a statewide sales tax...

■ Total Favor    ■ Total Oppose    ■ Unsure



Q. 25b. Would you favor or oppose a statewide sales tax for school building construction and renovation, which requires that the money would be distributed to the counties based on the amount of money that is collected in each of them?

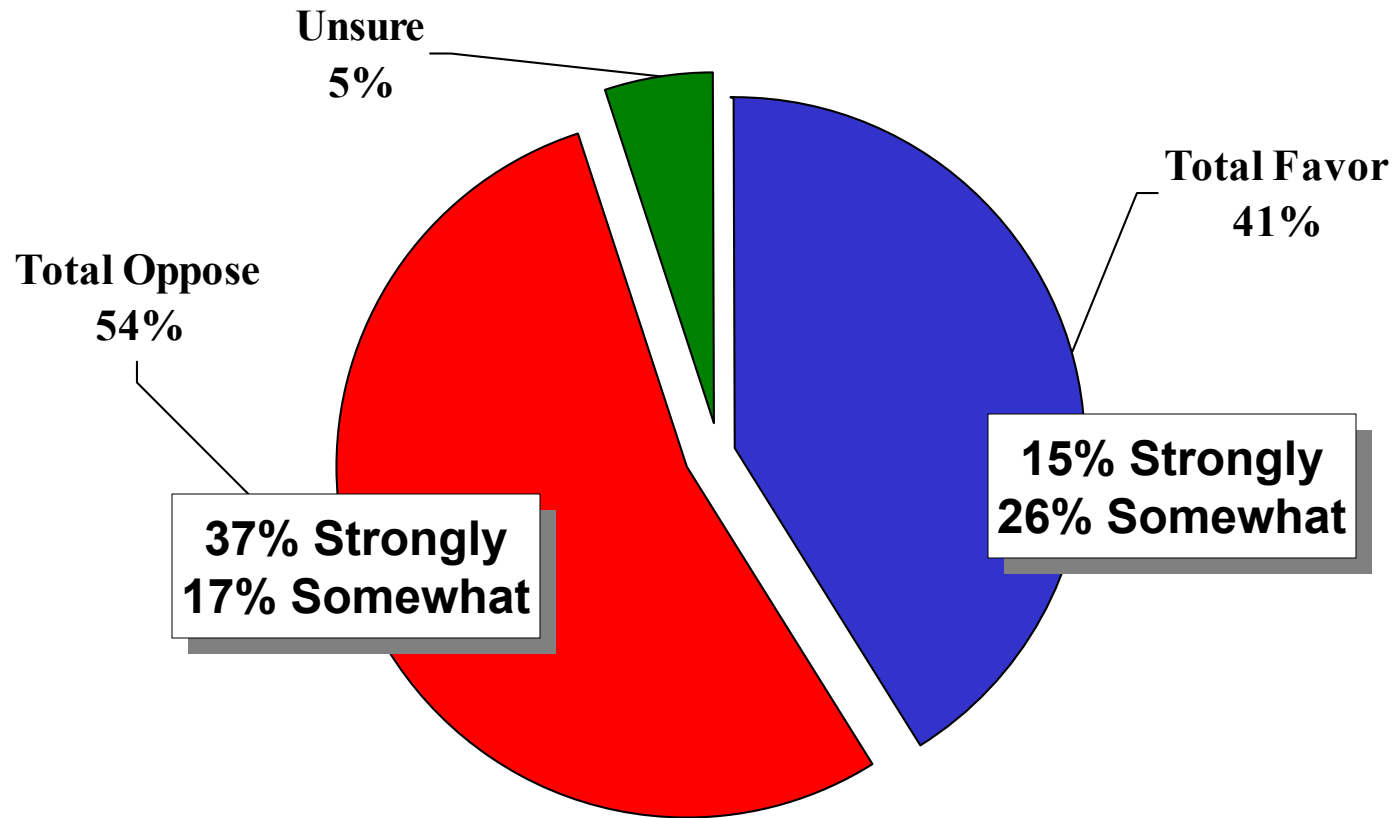
		Total favor	Total oppose	DK/NA	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Urban	50.4%	48.7%	5.9%	100.0%
	Suburban	43.8%	50.0%	6.2%	100.0%
	Rural	41.1%	53.4%	5.5%	100.0%
Table Total		45.5%	48.5%	6.0%	100.0%

For school building construction and renovation, which requires that the money would be distributed to the counties based on the amount of money that is collected in each of them?

**Split Sample Methodology**



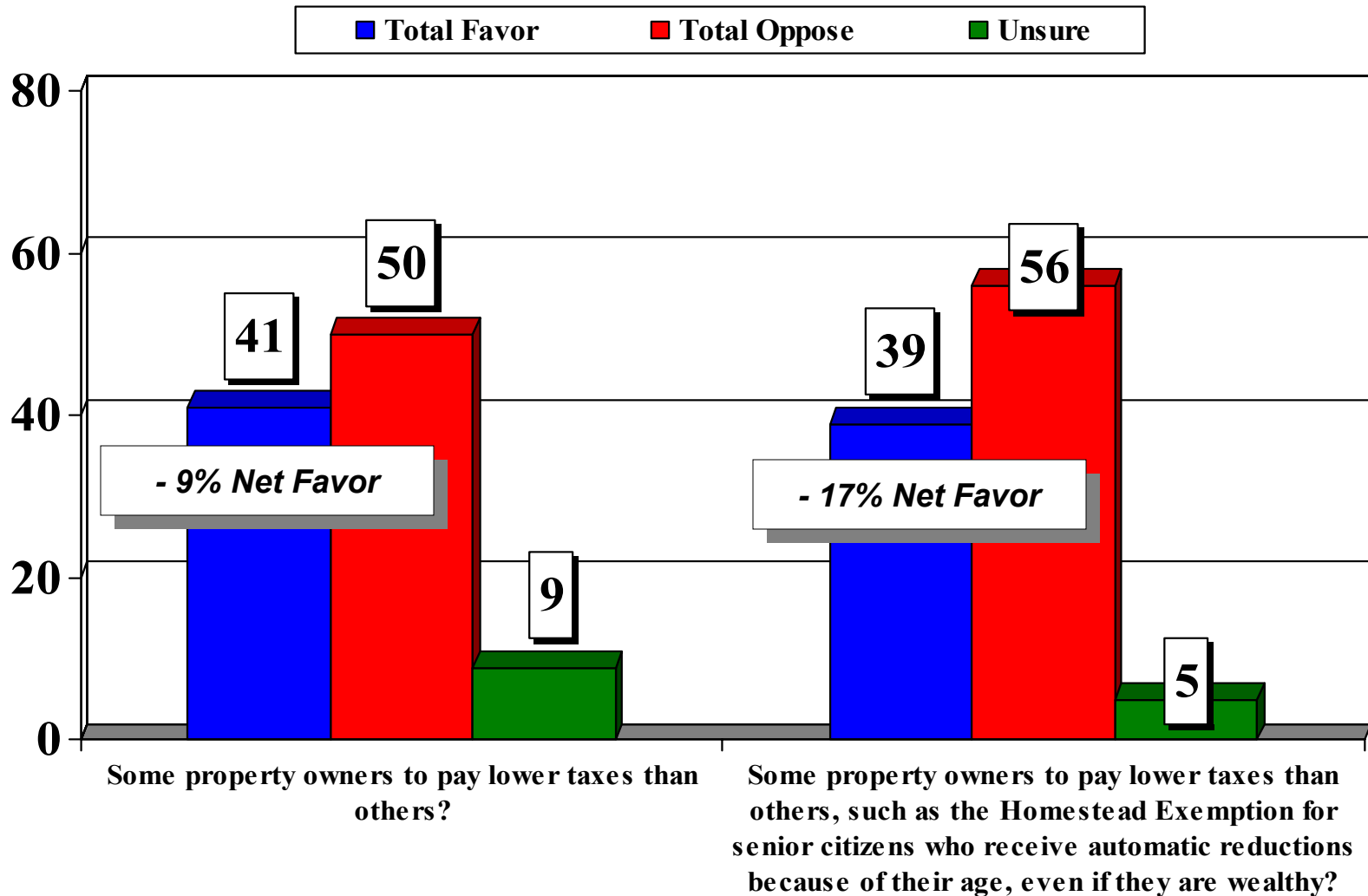
# Would you favor or oppose a statewide property tax for education to increase the amount of money for schools and reduce the amount of local levy elections?



**- 13% Net Favor**



# Would you favor or oppose eliminating the exemptions that allow...

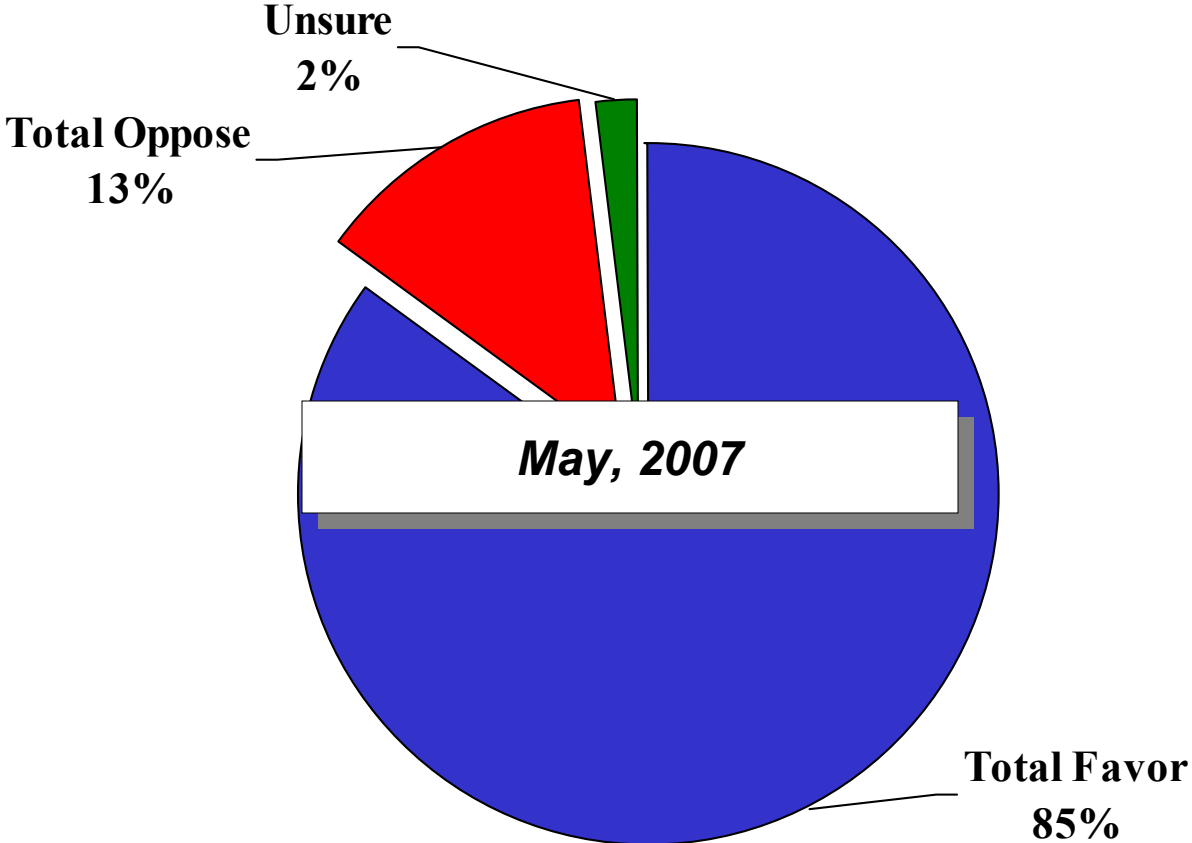


*Split Sample Methodology*

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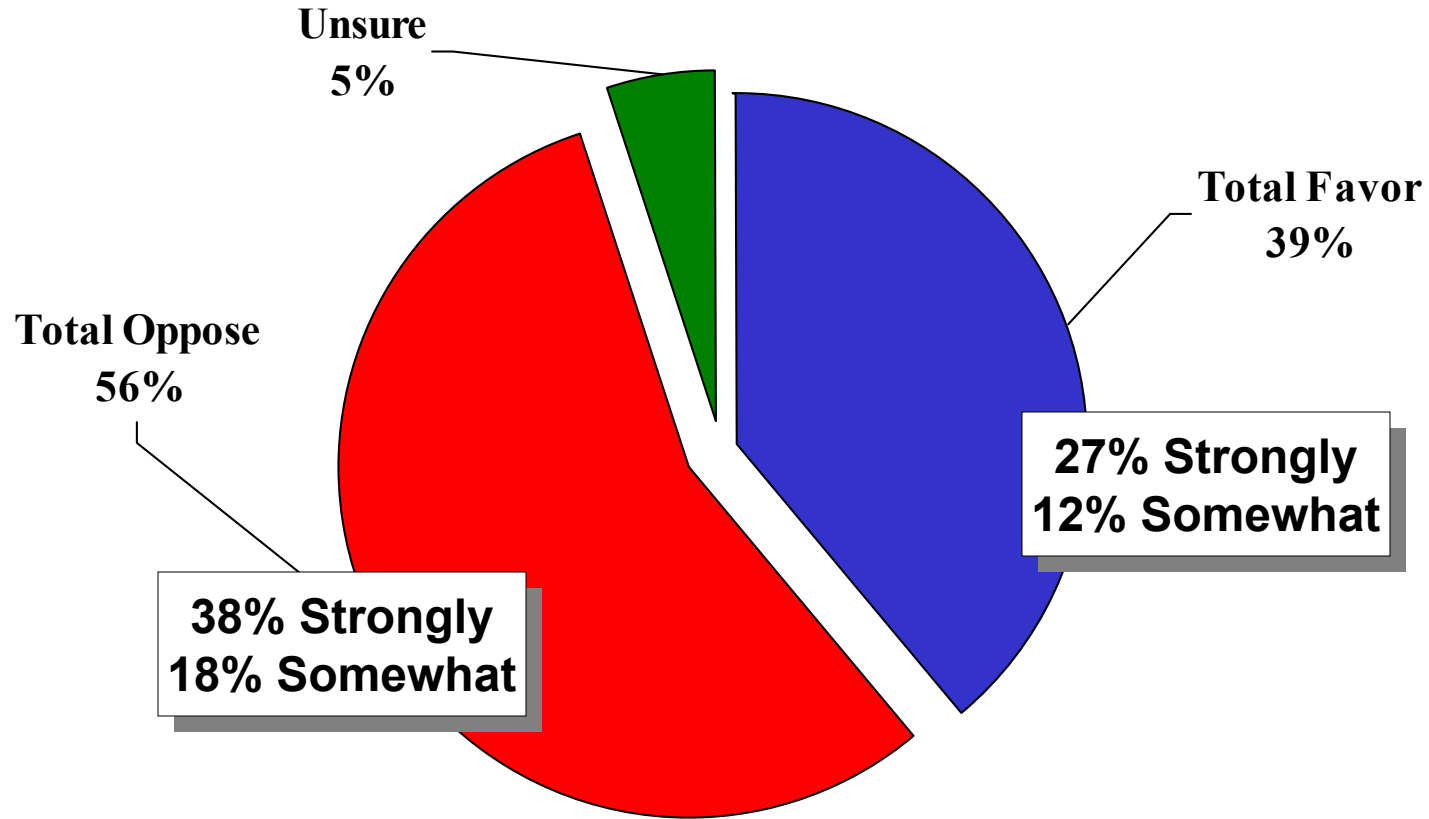
**Would you favor or oppose expanding the state's Homestead Exemption and eliminating the income requirements to qualify, so that all senior citizens who own homes would receive reduced assessments on property taxes, saving them an average of \$400 dollars per year?**



**72% Net Favor**



# Would you favor or oppose eliminating the exemptions that allow some businesses to avoid paying property taxes?



**- 17% Net Favor**



# CONCLUSION

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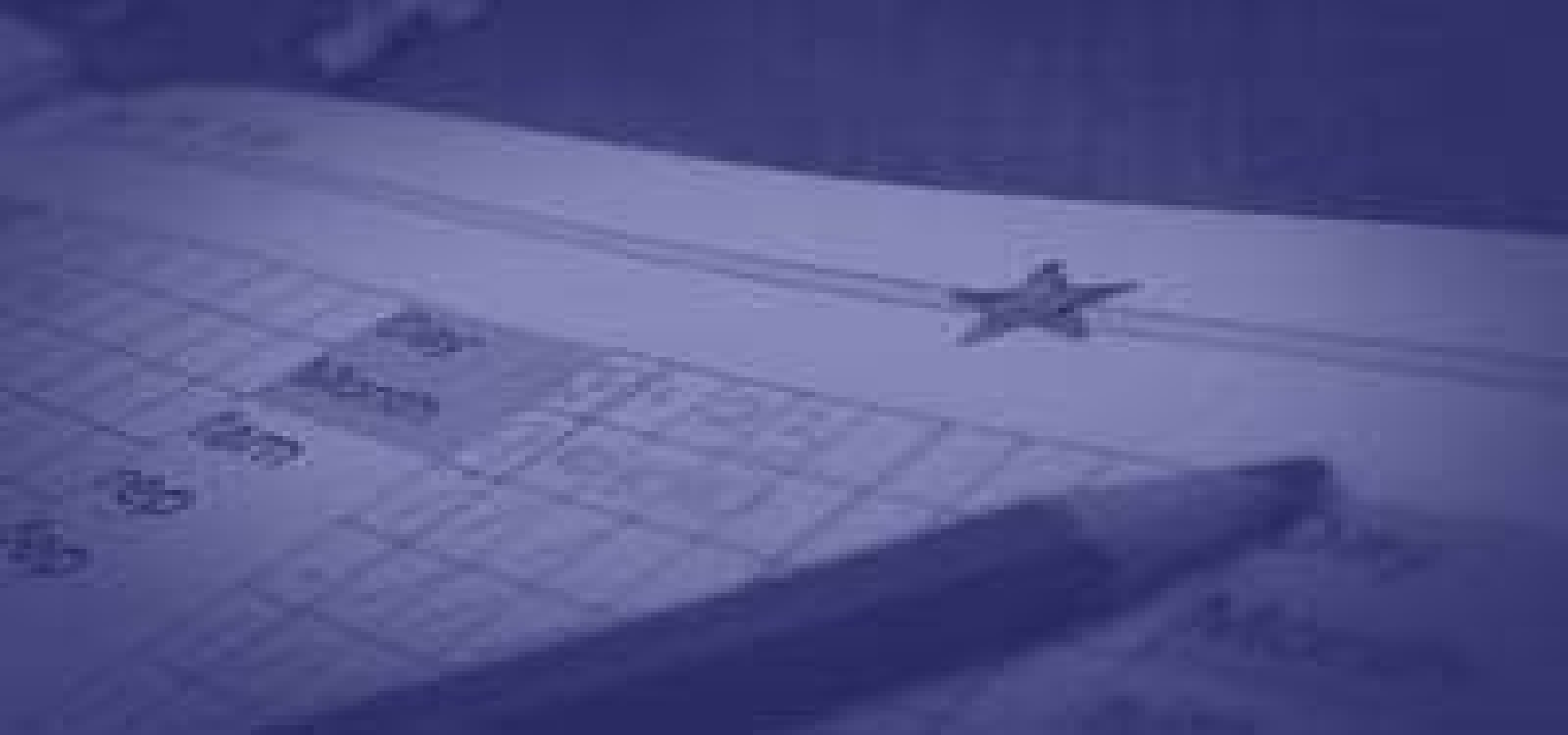


## Other Survey Findings

- **Just 27% of survey respondents feel that Ohio is moving in the right direction, while 53% believe that it has gotten off onto the wrong track**
- **A plurality of respondents (48%) and majority of public school parents (53%) say they believe that the quality of public education has remained the same over the last two years**
- **44% agree that the system of public education makes school districts generally inefficient structures for using and managing tax dollars**
- **Only 20% said that, compared to other issues in Ohio, changing the system of school funding should be the highest priority for state officials to work on, although it reached 25% for voters 60 years of age and older**

# Key Findings Recap

- Although still important, education funding appears to be currently eclipsed by economic issues as the top matter of concern that voters have at this time
- While there is a great deal of ambivalence about the quality of education in Ohio on a statewide basis, there is also a high level of satisfaction with local school districts
- Right now, voters seem to strongly favor increased funding for education and believe that schools have gotten the short shrift in the budgetary process. The question of how funds should be allocated for public education is a much more murky issue that may have difficulty finding consensus
- Interestingly, the survey results suggests that voters are wary about ceding more discretion about funding to some of the institutions that are constitutionally-empowered to make such decisions
- At a conceptual level, voters seem willing to consider innovative new ideas for revenue enhancement, which indicates that further -- and careful -- consideration of some them is warranted, even in this current period of economic turmoil



# QUESTIONS?

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