

# PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

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*December 2011*



# Outline

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- **PPIC Statewide Surveys**
- **State Issues**
- **National Issues**
- **Conclusions**



# PPIC Statewide Survey Mission

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- Provide timely, relevant, nonpartisan data on political, social, and economic opinions
- Inform and improve state policymaking, raise awareness, encourage discussion
- Provide a voice for all Californians in important state policy debates
  - 258,000+ Californians since 1998
  - 120+ general, issue, and regional surveys



# Californians and Their Government

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- General series funded by The Irvine Foundation
- State issues
  - Personal finances, state budget
  - State and local relationship, public pensions
- National issues
  - 2012 presidential election, party perceptions
  - Income inequality, federal budget deficit
- Telephone interviews, Nov. 29–Dec. 5
  - 2,003 adults / 901 likely voters
    - *± 3.6% margin of error for adults*
    - *± 4.5% for likely voters*



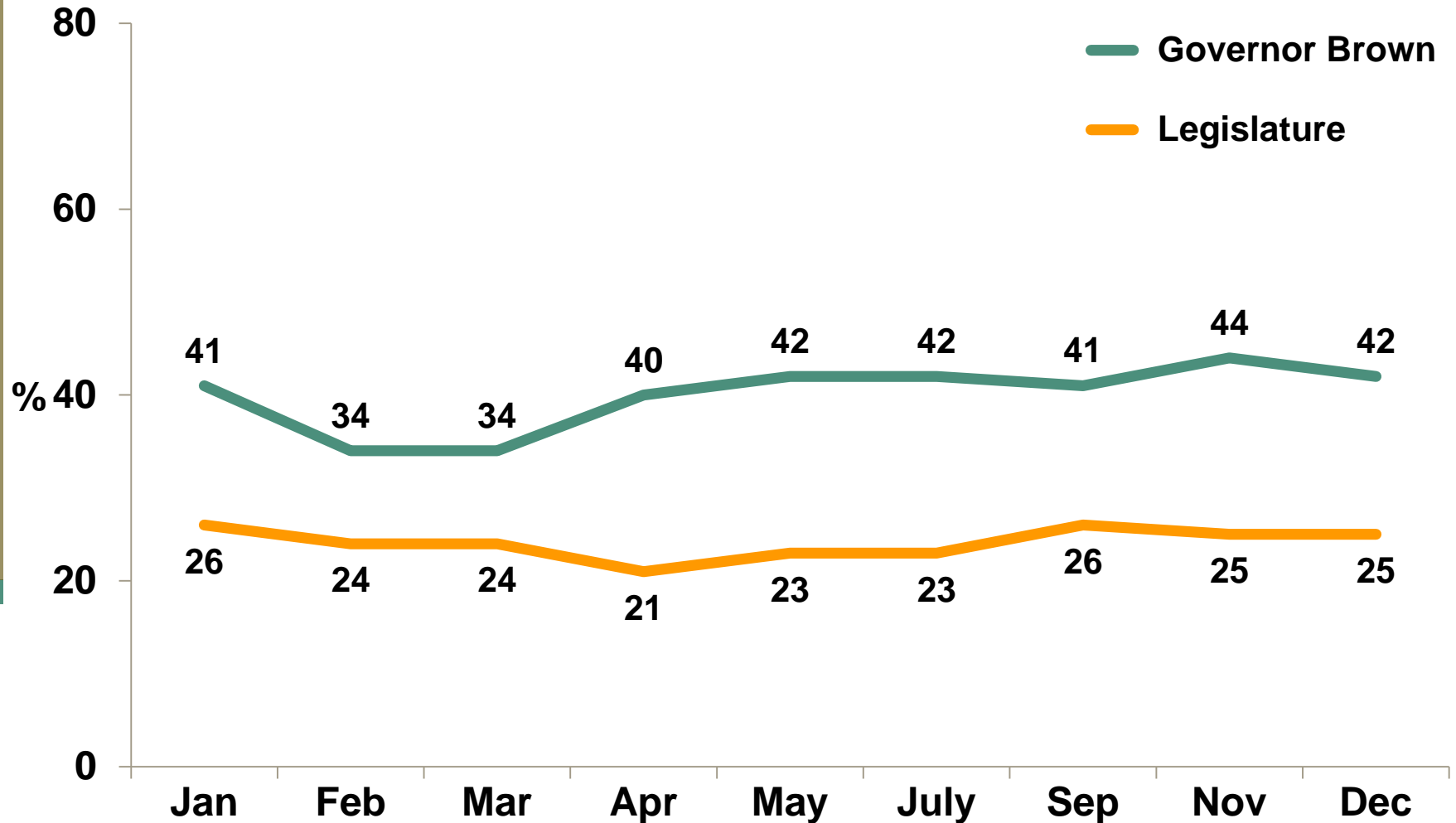
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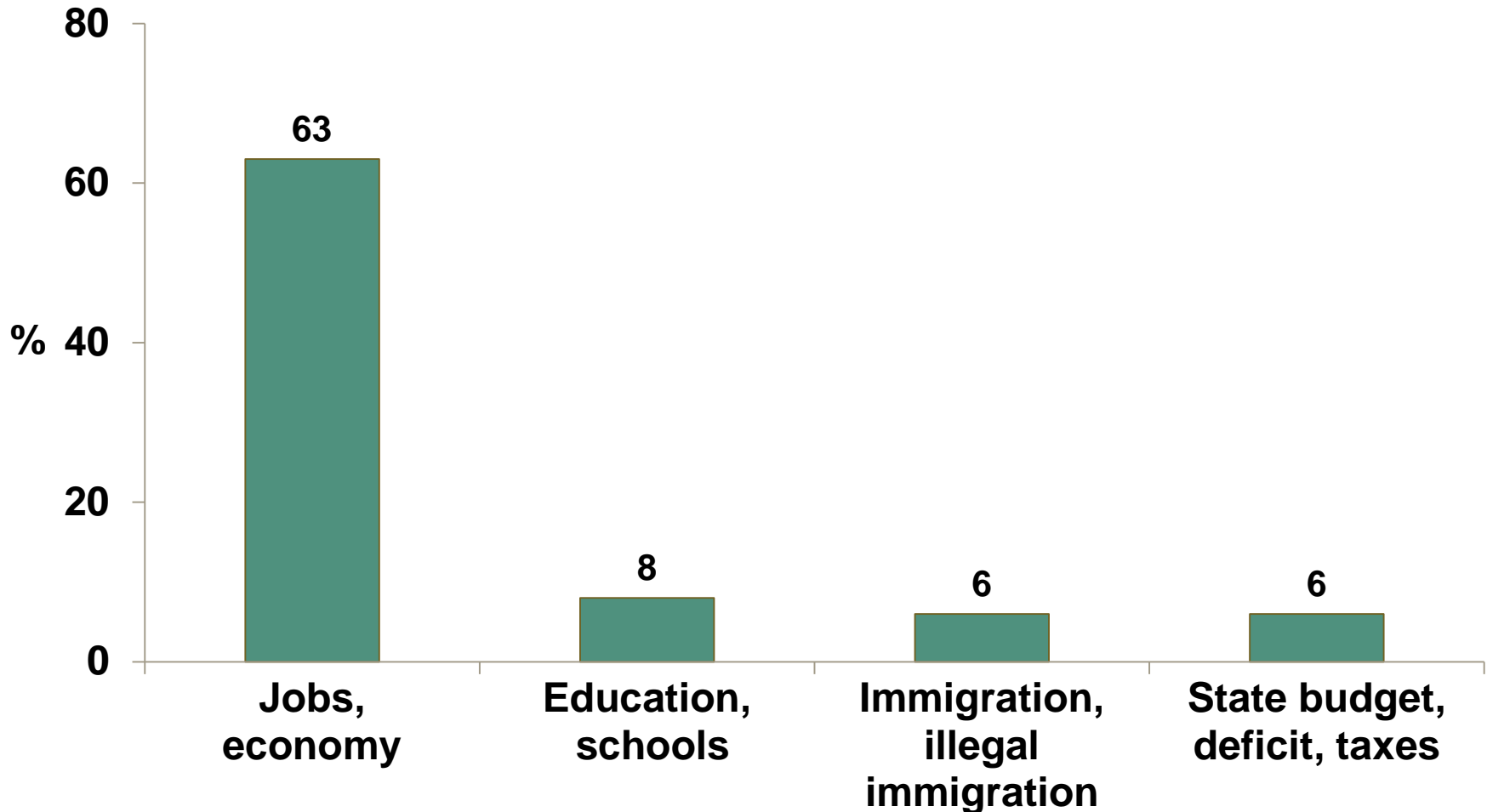


# 2011 Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



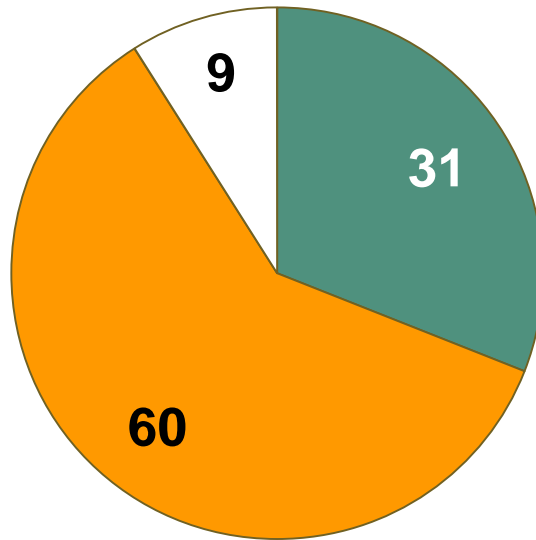
# Most Important Issue

Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?



# Economic Conditions

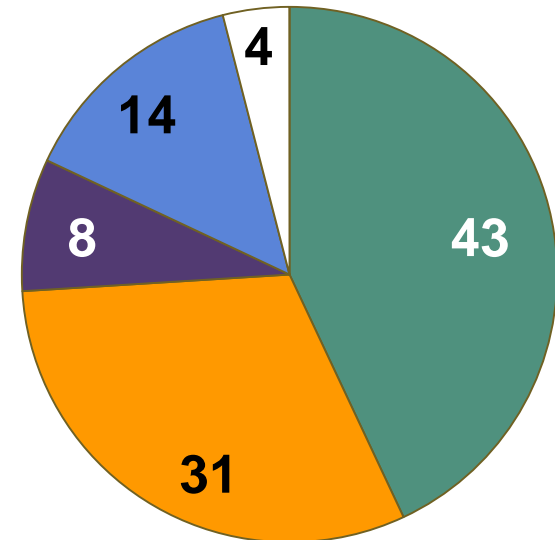
Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?



- Good times
- Bad times
- Don't know

Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, moderate, or a mild recession?)

All adults



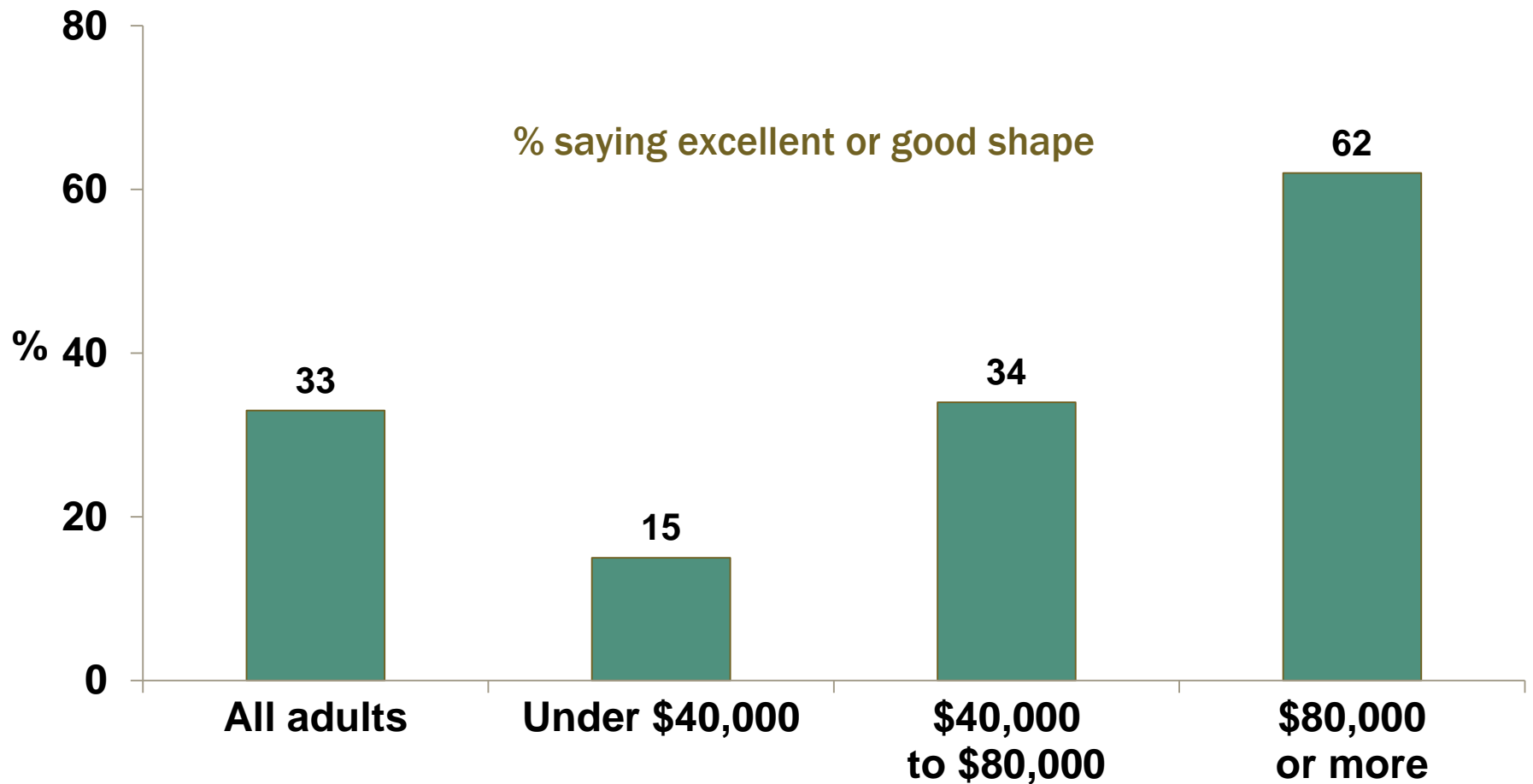
- Serious recession
- Moderate recession
- Mild recession
- Not in a recession
- Don't know





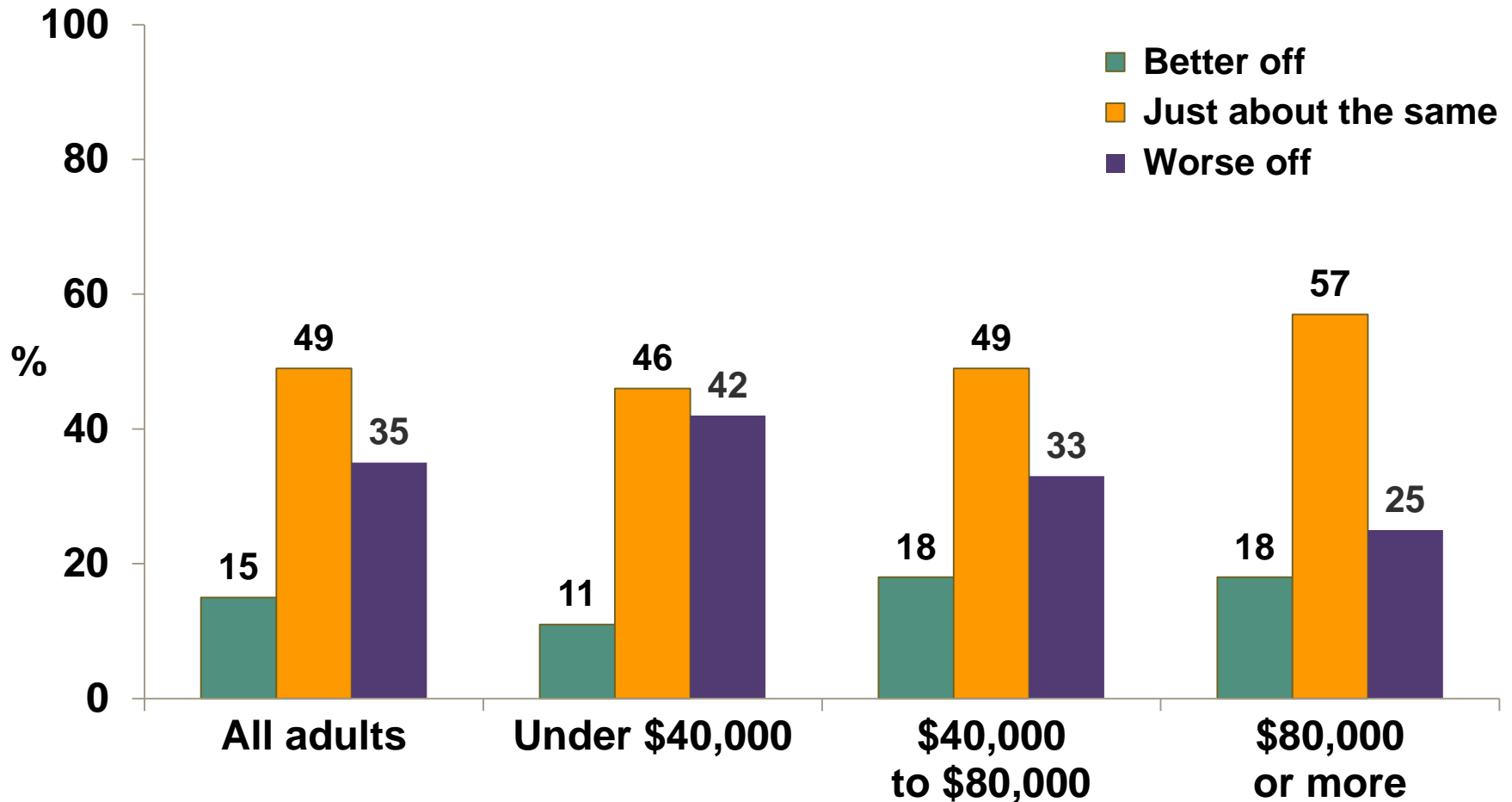
# Personal Financial Situation

How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?



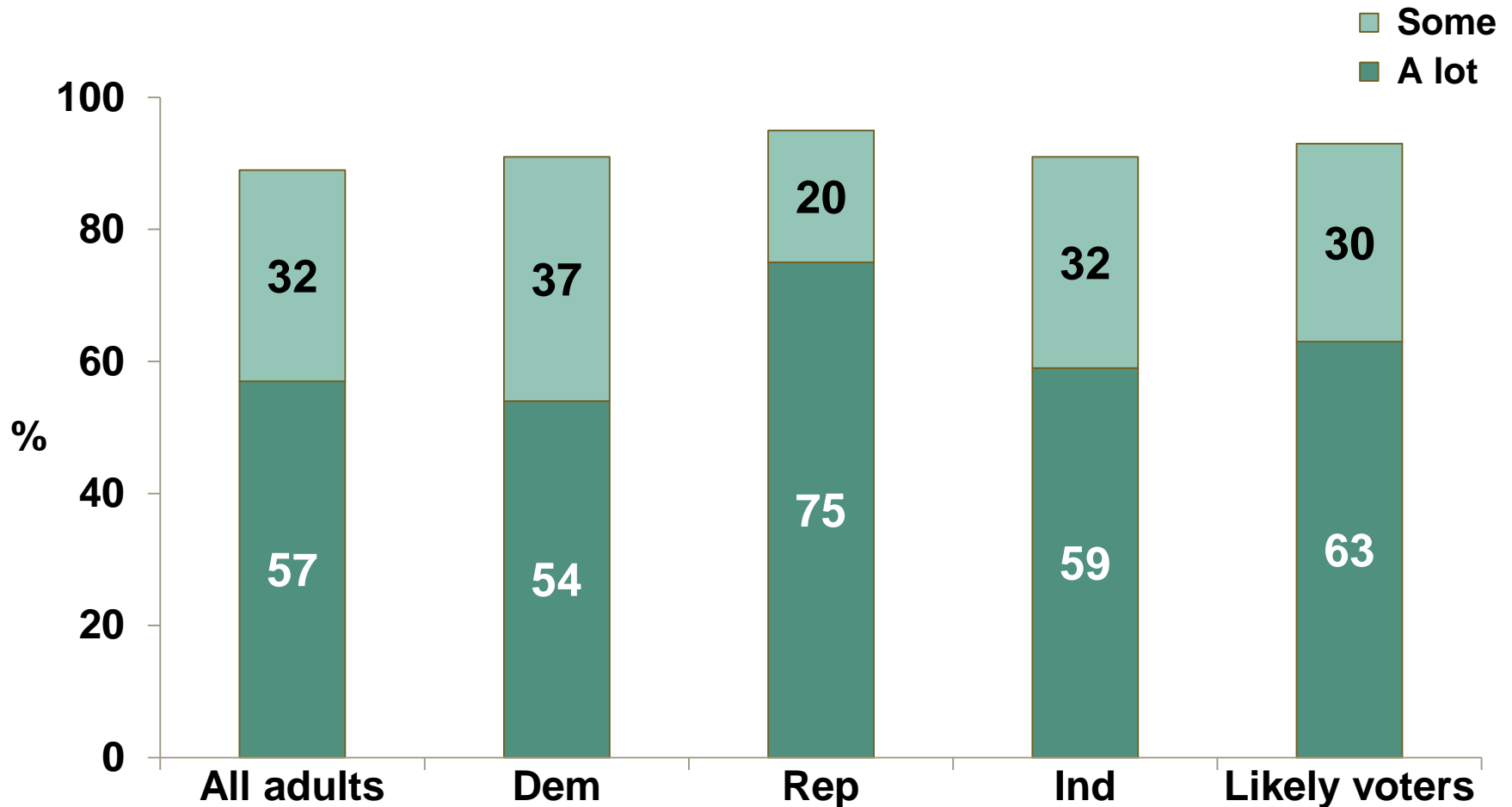
# Personal Financial Situation

Would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as you were a year ago?



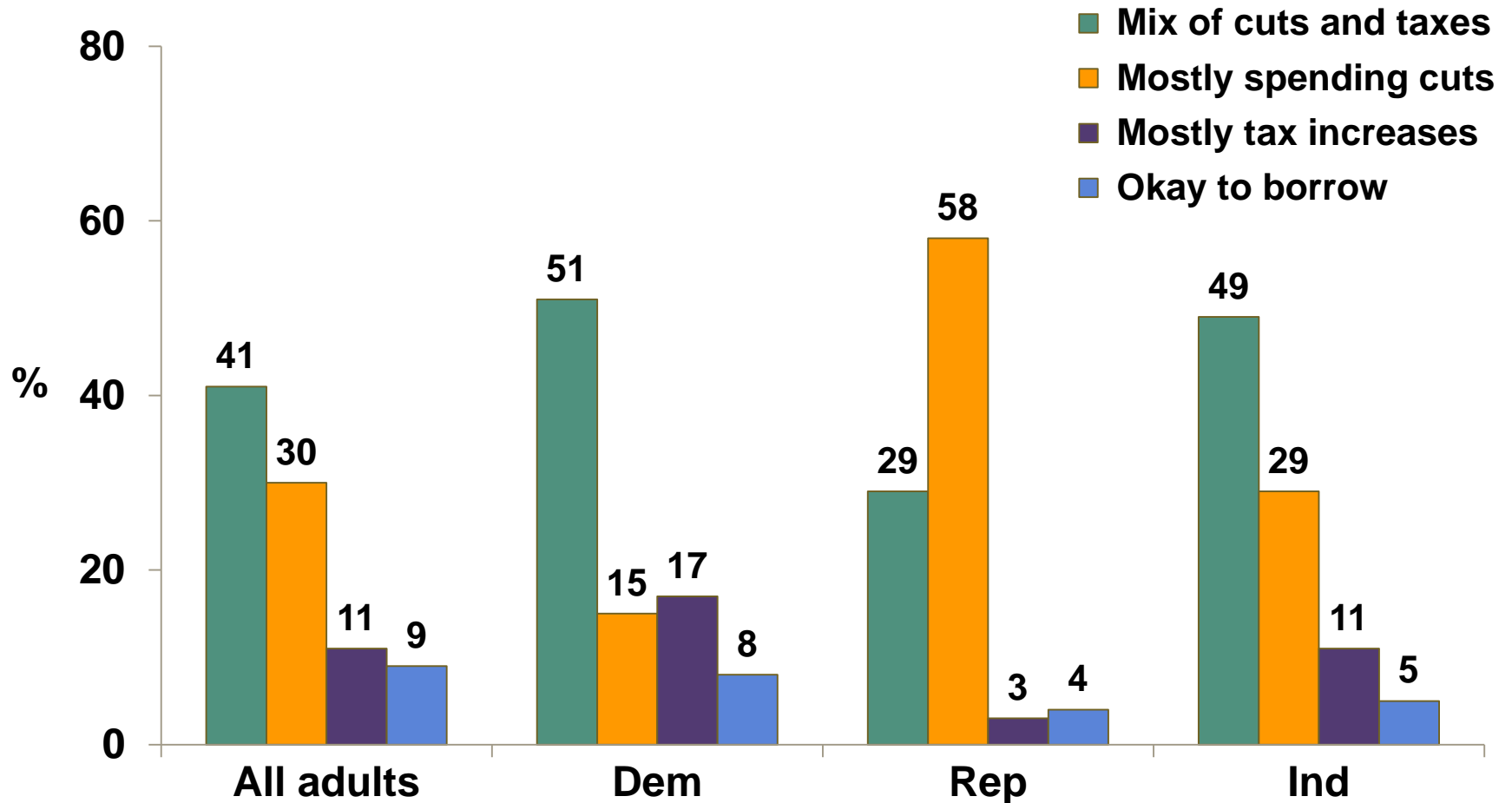
# State Government Waste

Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?



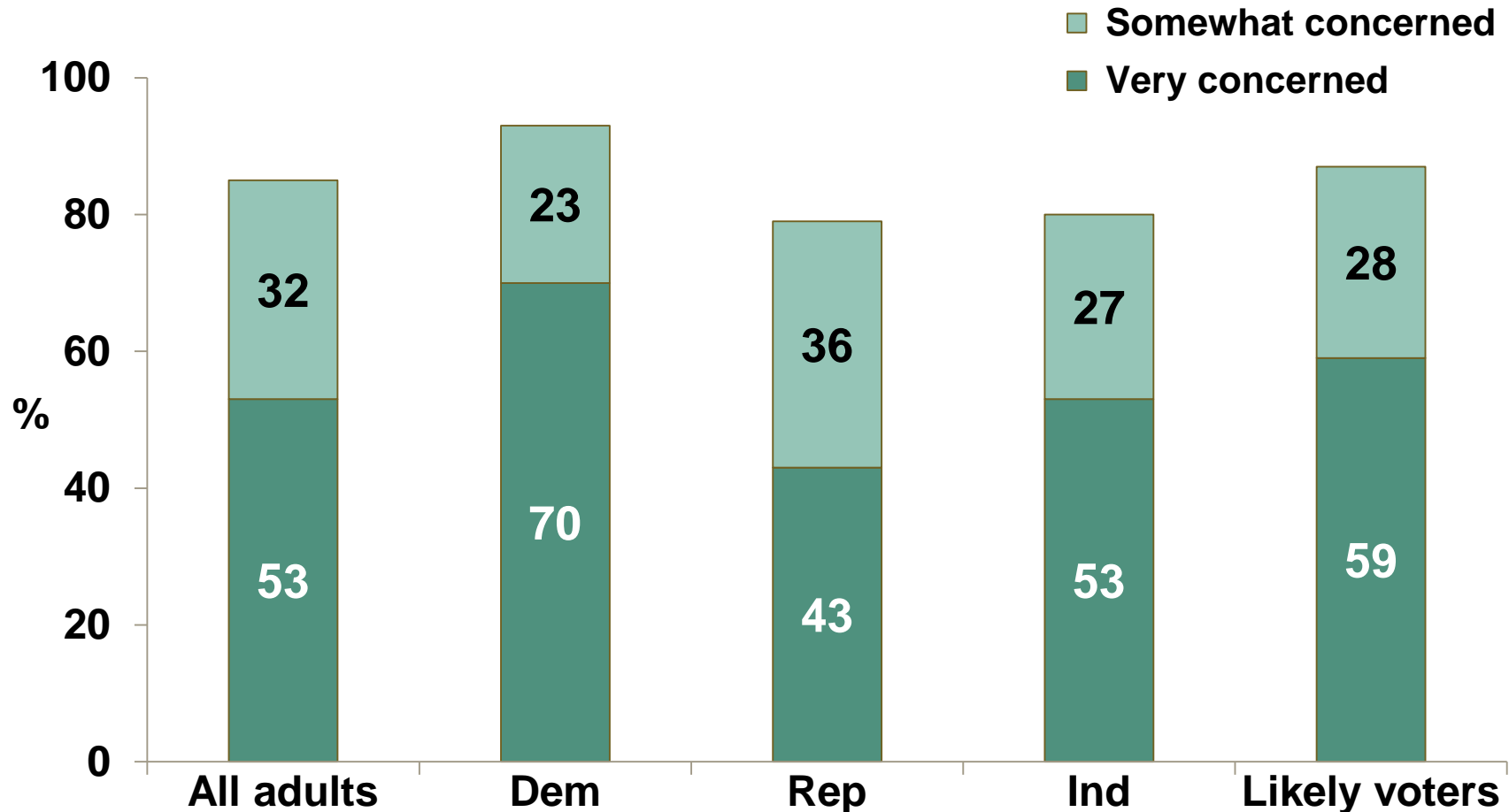
# Dealing With the Budget Gap

How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap if revenue is below expectations?

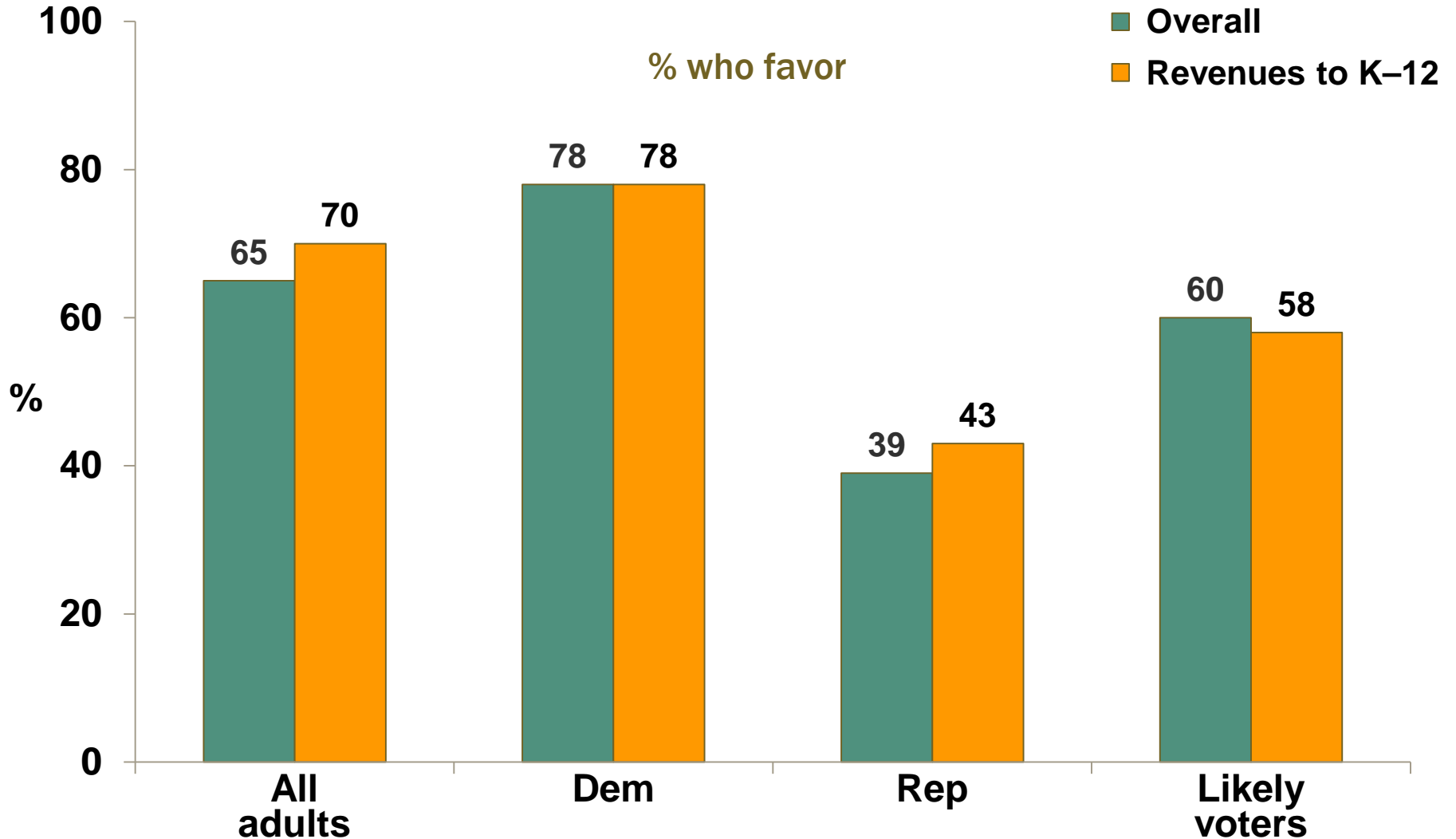


# Automatic Spending Cuts to K-12 Education

How concerned are you about the potential effects of automatic spending cuts in K-12 public education?



# Governor's Tax Plan\*

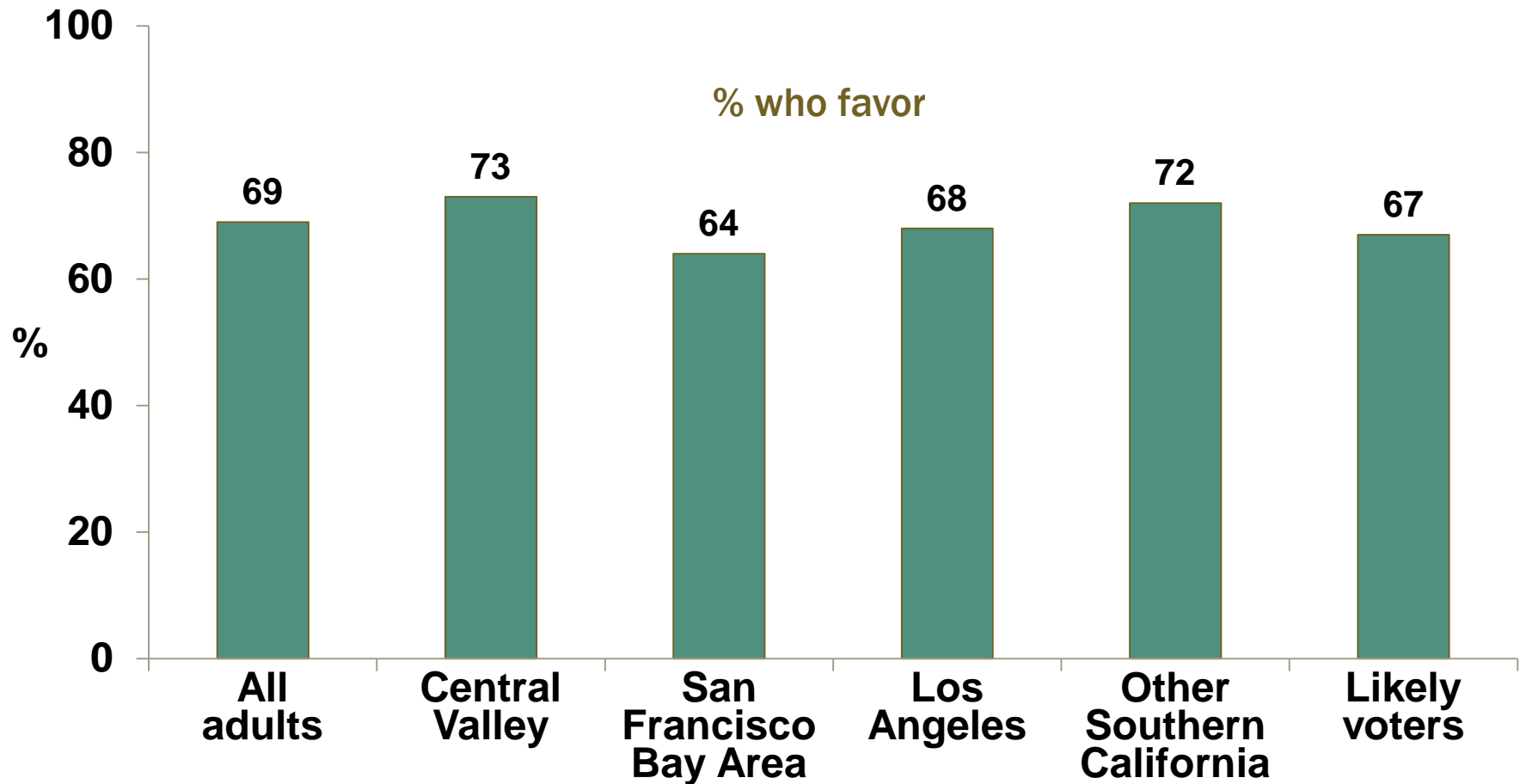


\*Asked starting Dec. 2

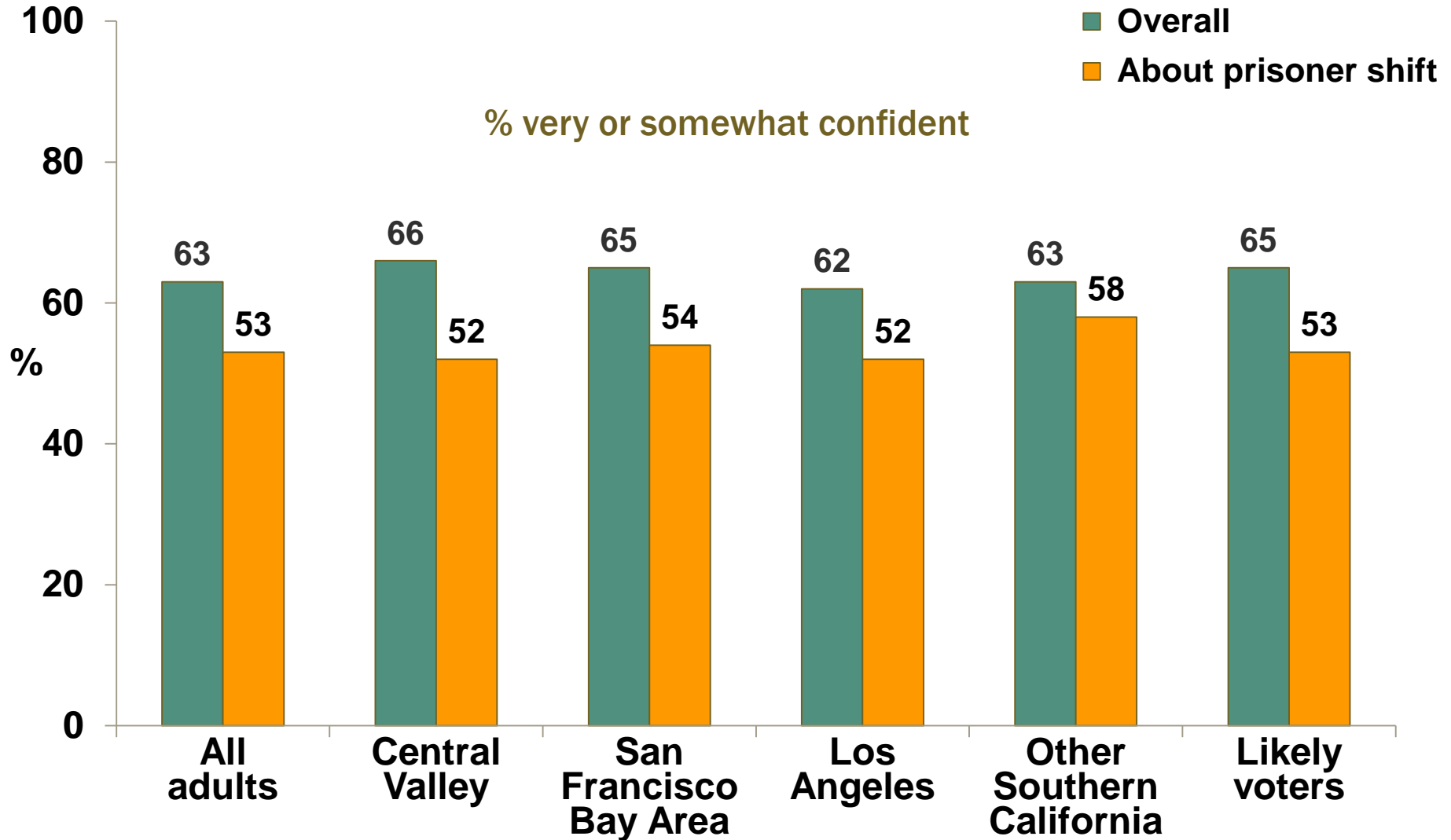


# State and Local Realignment

Would you favor or oppose a shift of some tax dollars and fees from the state government to local governments, in order for local governments to take on the responsibility of running certain programs currently run by the state?



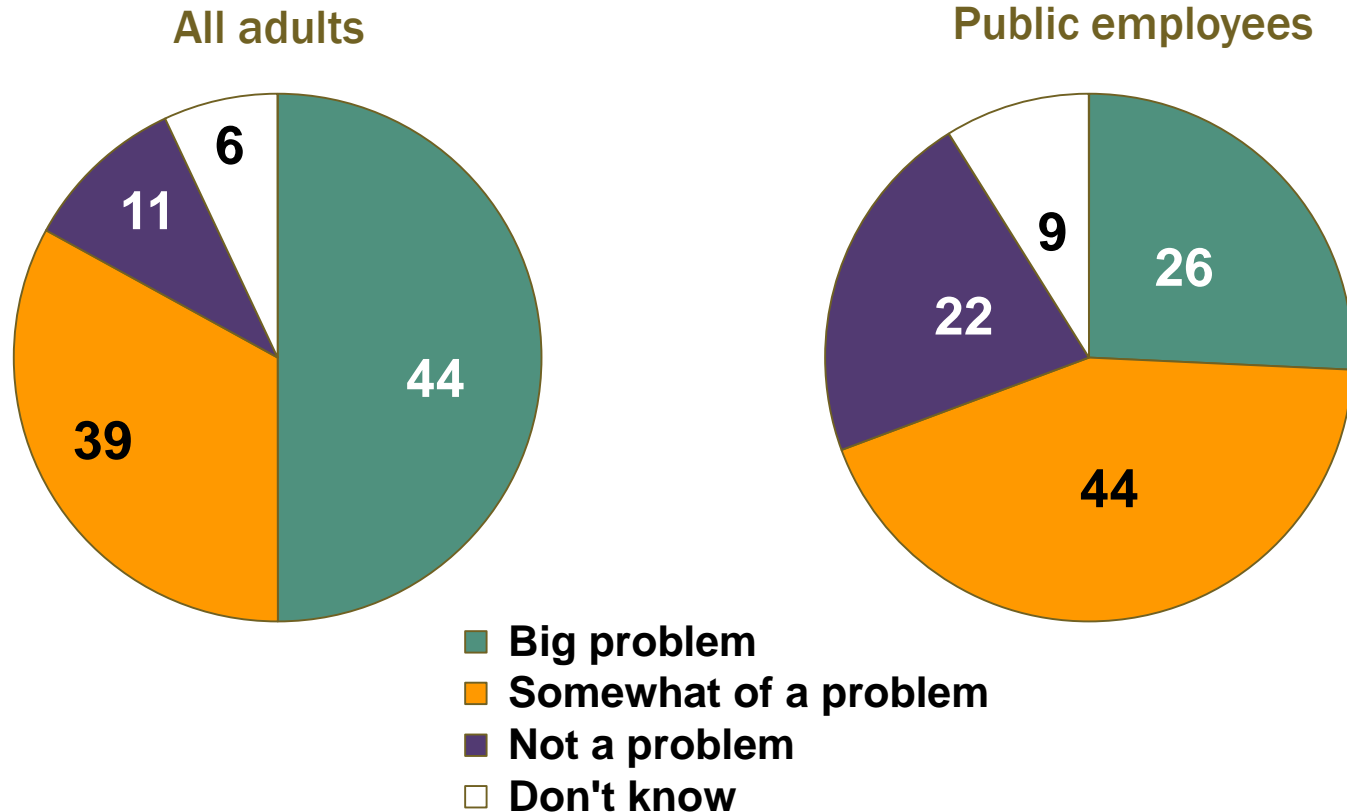
# Confidence in Local Government to Handle Realignment





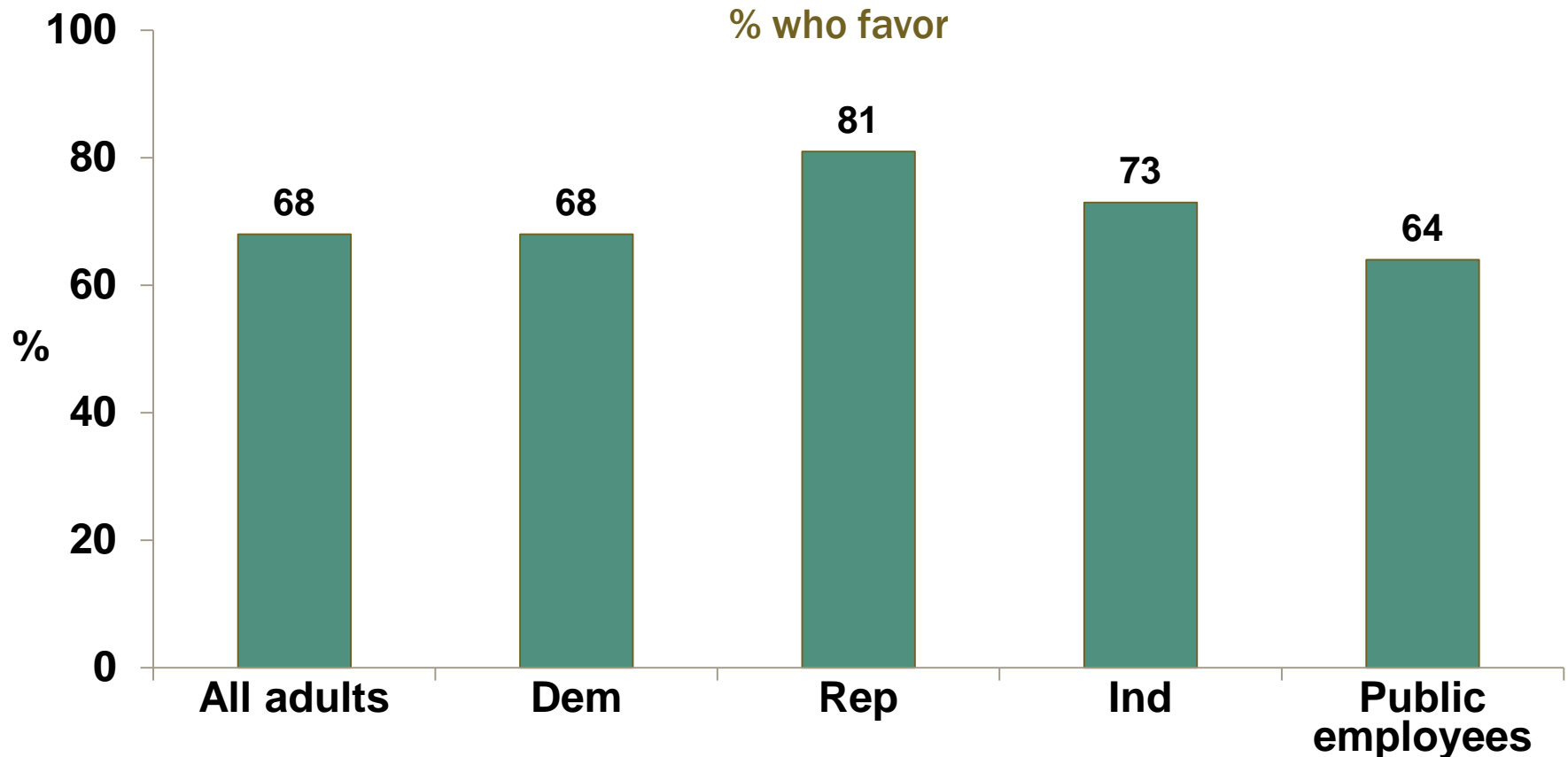
# State and Local Pensions

At this time, how much of a problem for state and local government budgets is the amount of money that is being spent on their public employee pension or retirement systems?



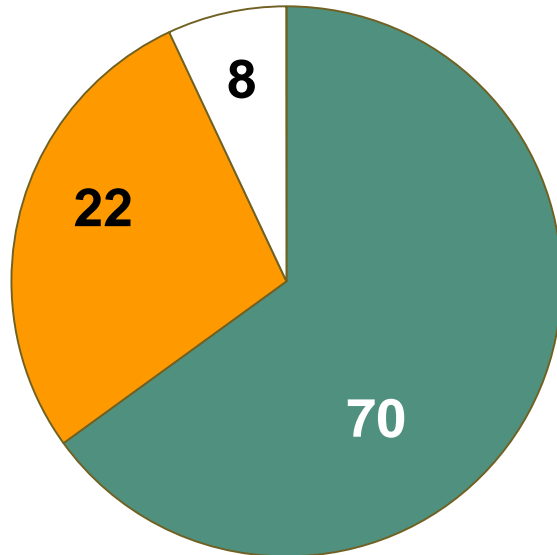
# Proposed Pension Reform: Defined Contribution System

Would you favor or oppose changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401 (k) plan?



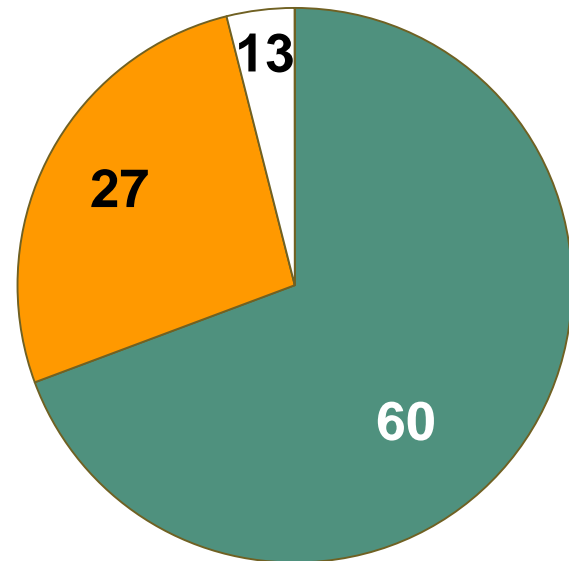
# Other Pension Reforms

Would you favor or oppose increasing the amount new and current public employees contribute to the annual cost of their pensions so that they pay a share equal to what employers contribute?



All adults

Would you favor or oppose basing a new public employee's pension benefits on the highest average annual compensation over a 3 year period, rather than basing it on compensation from a single year of employment?



- Favor
- Oppose
- Don't know



# Outline

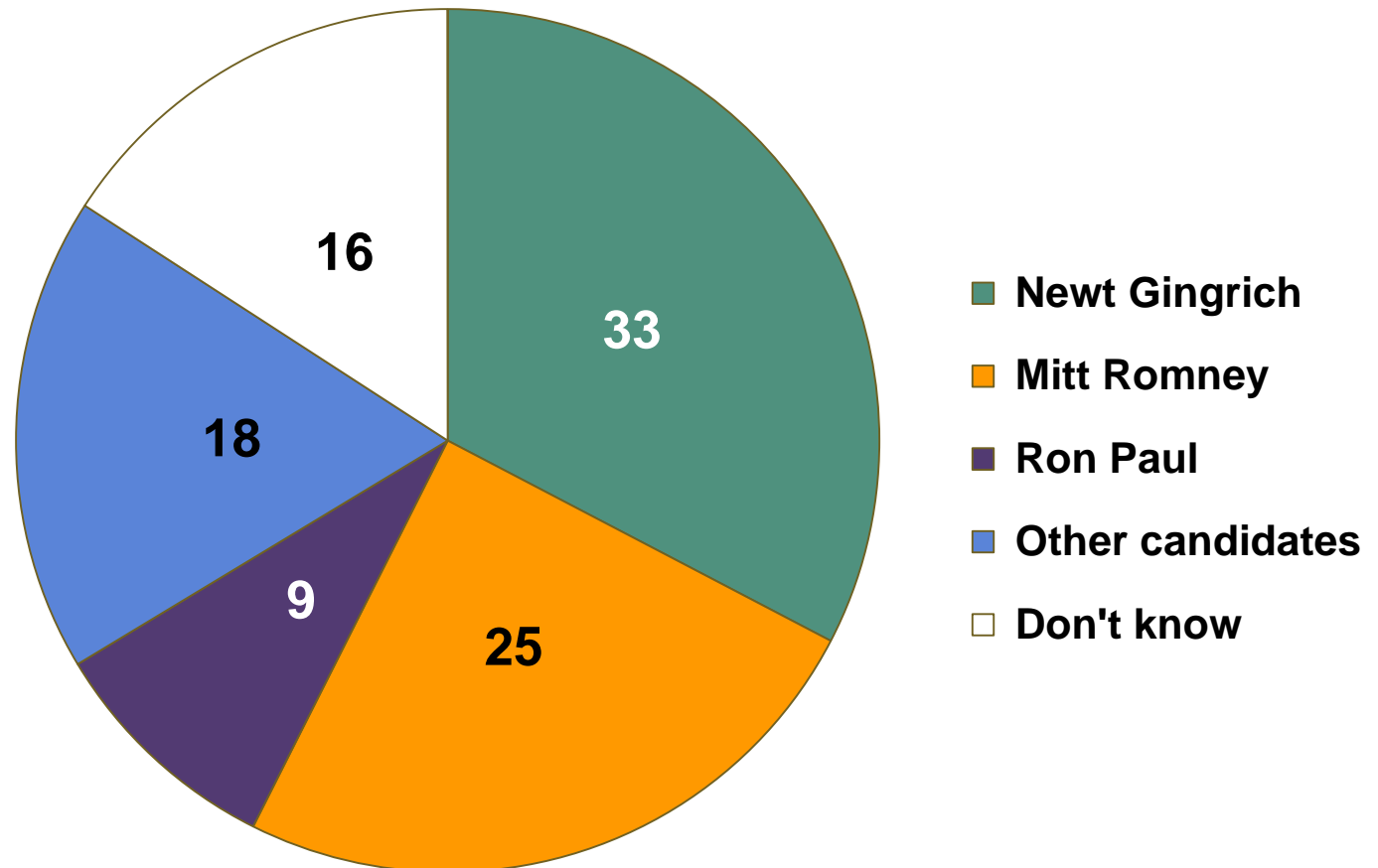
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# 2012 Republican Primary

If the 2012 Republican primary for president were held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?

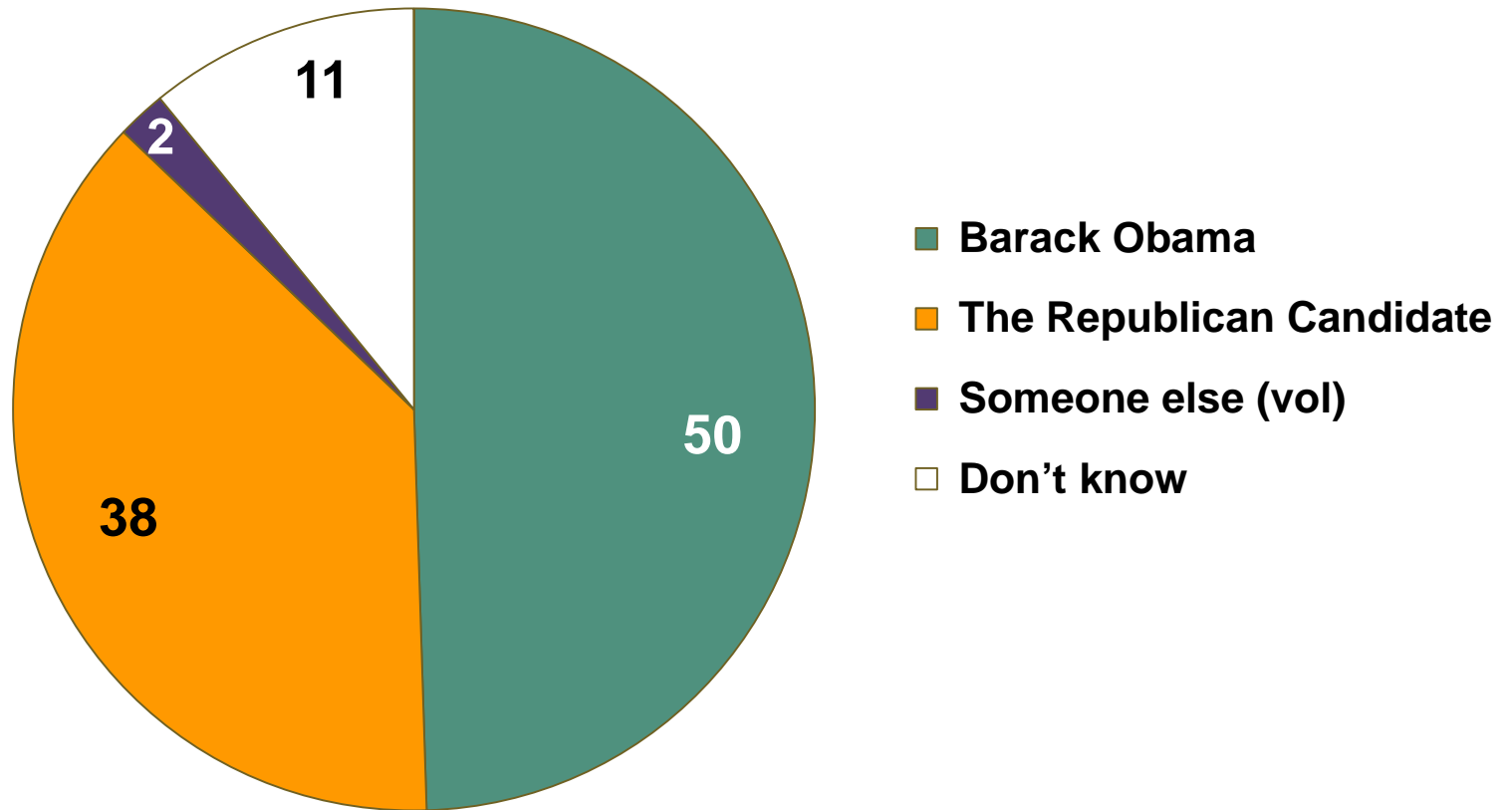


Likely voters



# 2012 Presidential Election

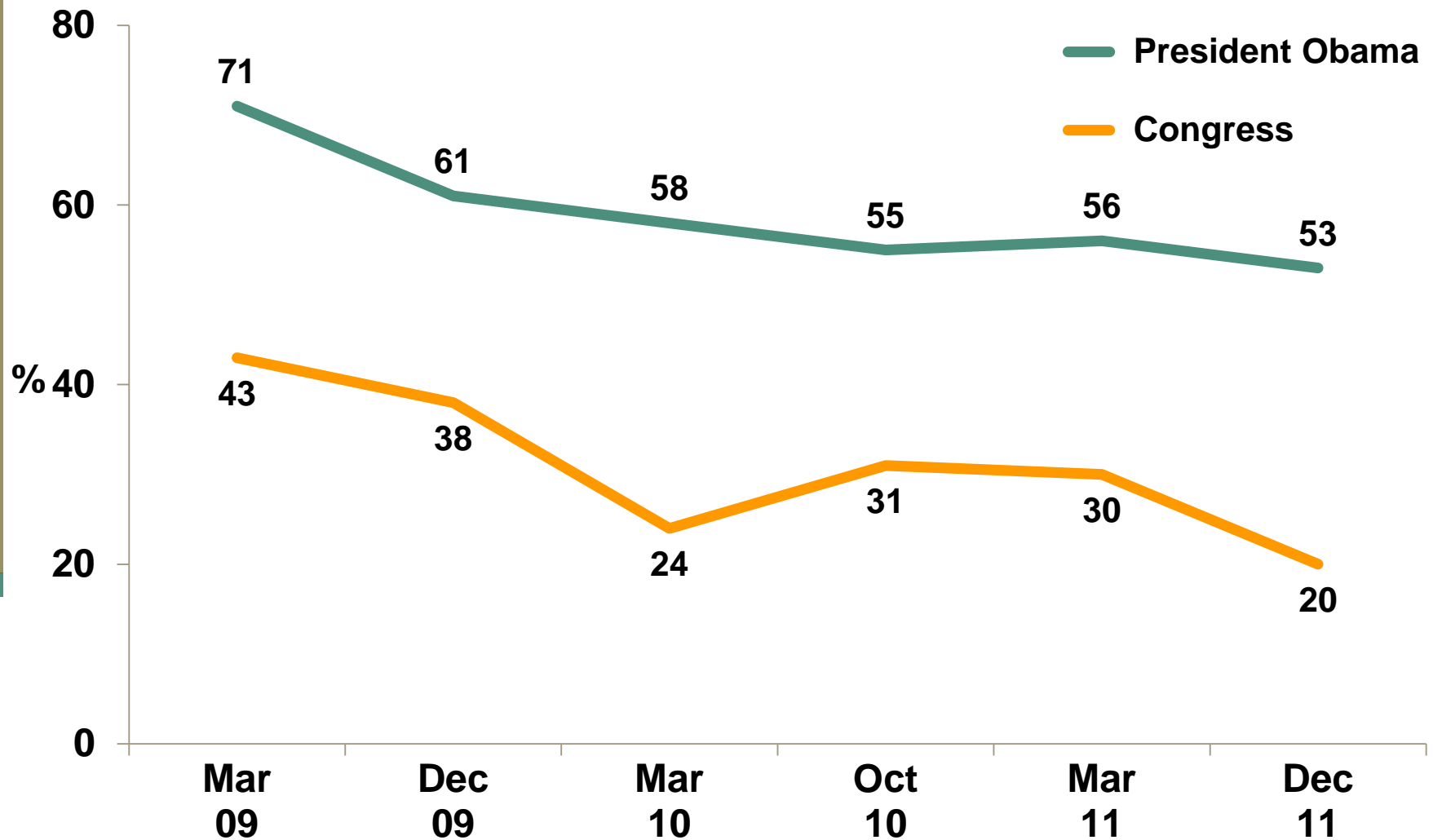
If the 2012 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for:  
Barack Obama, the Democrat, or the Republican candidate?



Likely voters

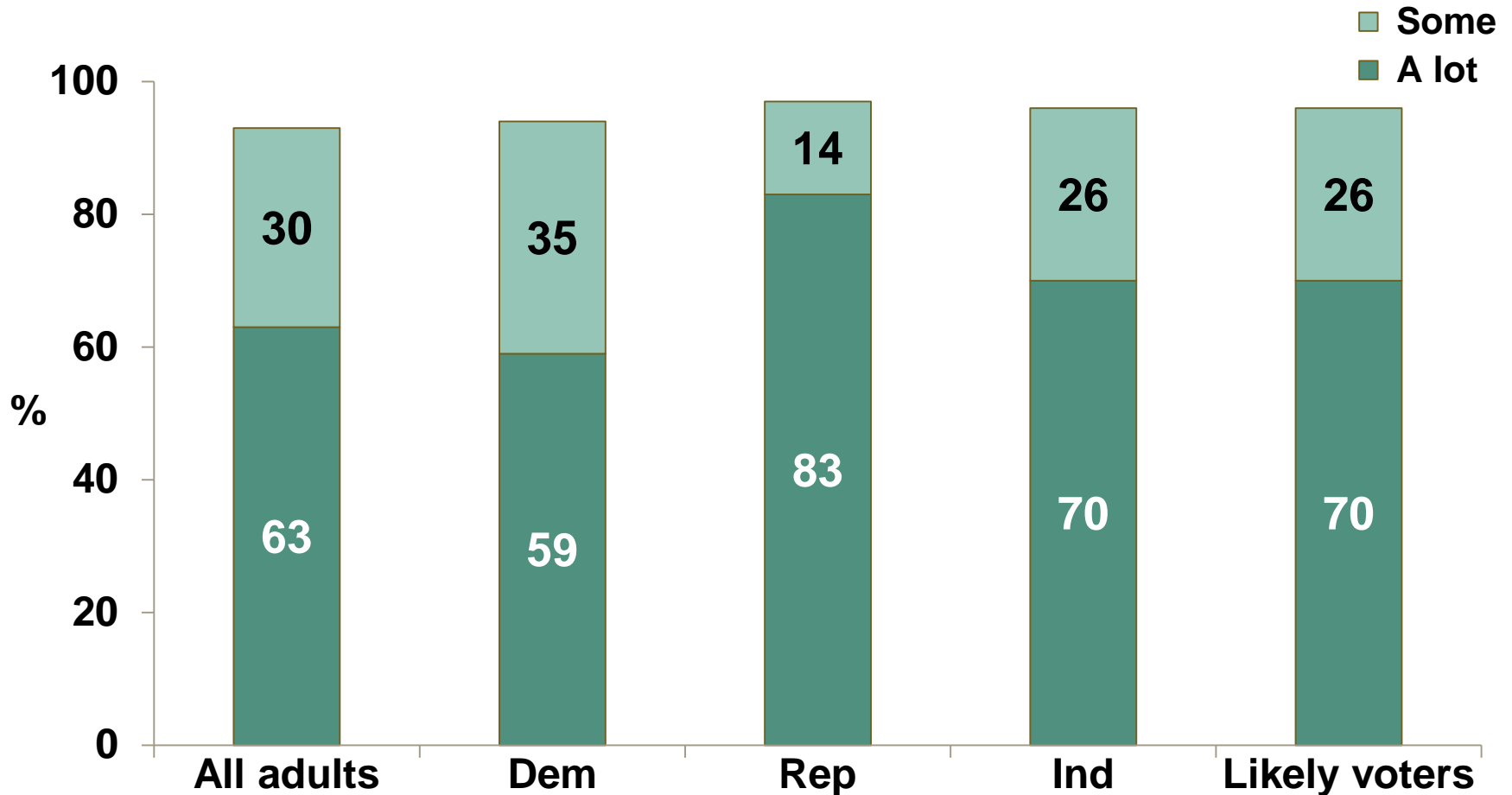


# Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



# Federal Government Waste

Do you think the people in federal government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?

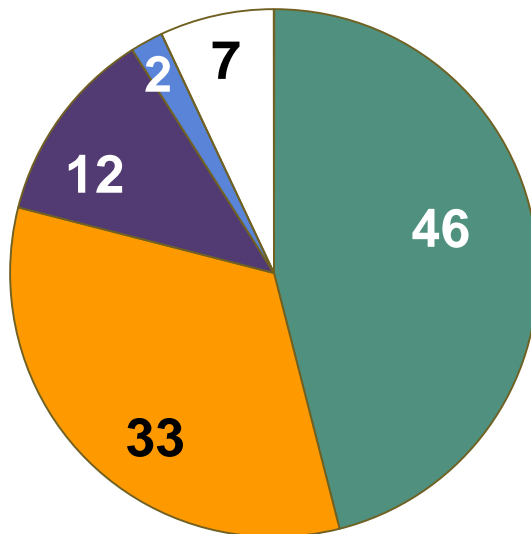




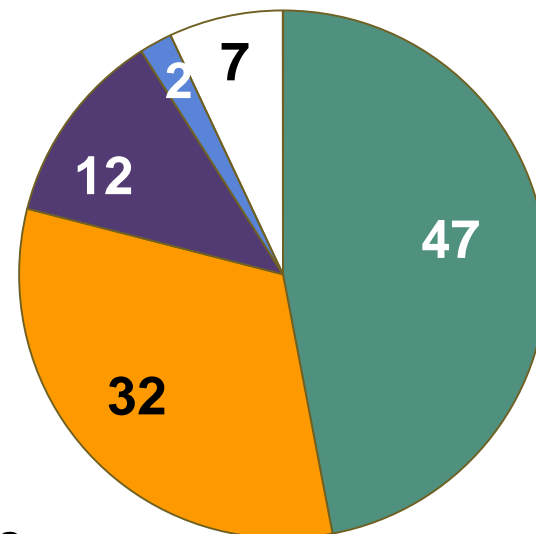
# Party Perceptions

Regardless of how you usually vote, overall, which political party do you trust to do a better job in handling the following issues that the nation will face over the next few years? How about \_\_\_\_\_

Jobs and the economy



The federal budget and taxes

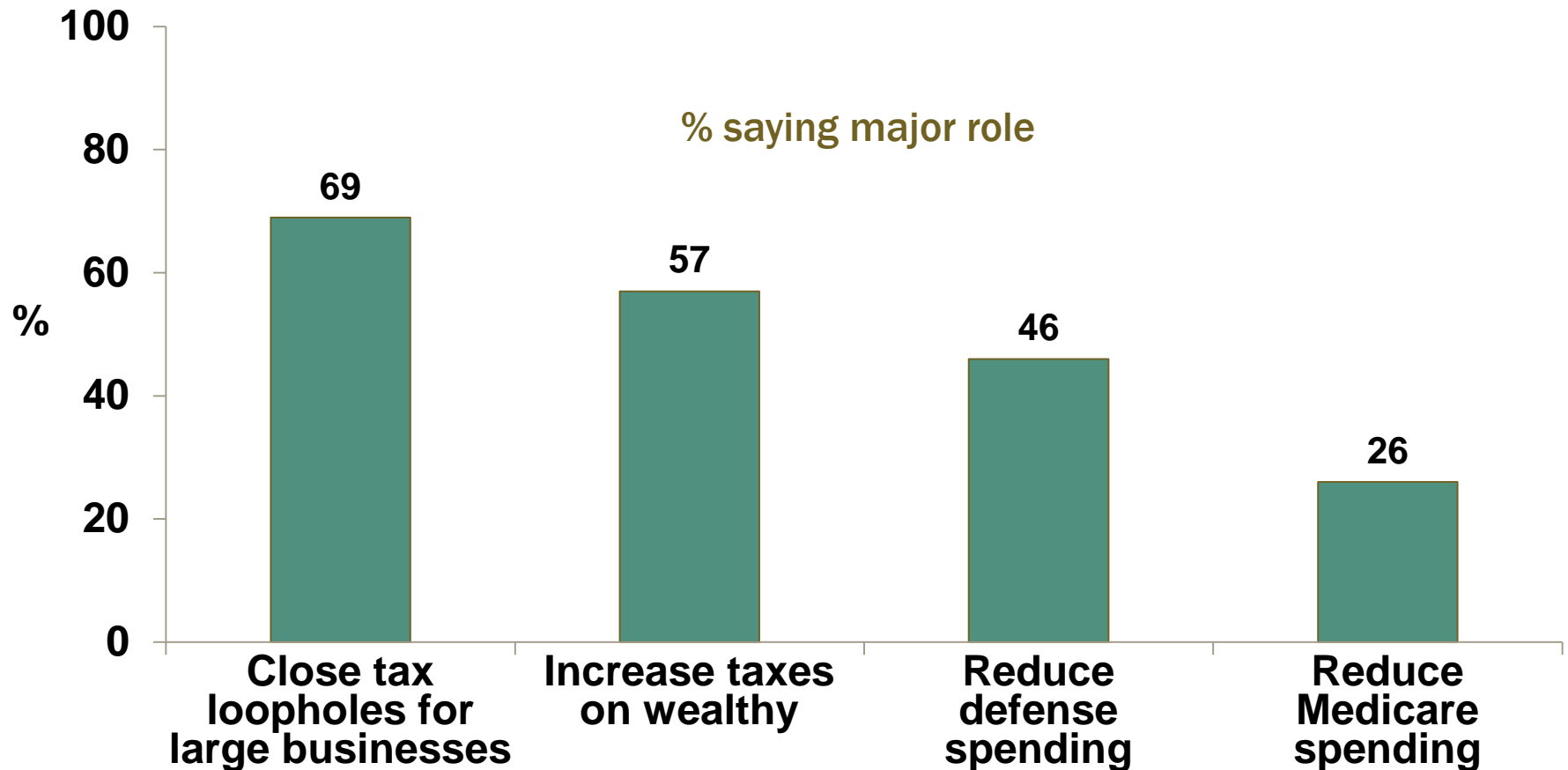


- Democrats
- Republicans
- Neither (vol)
- Both (vol)
- Don't know



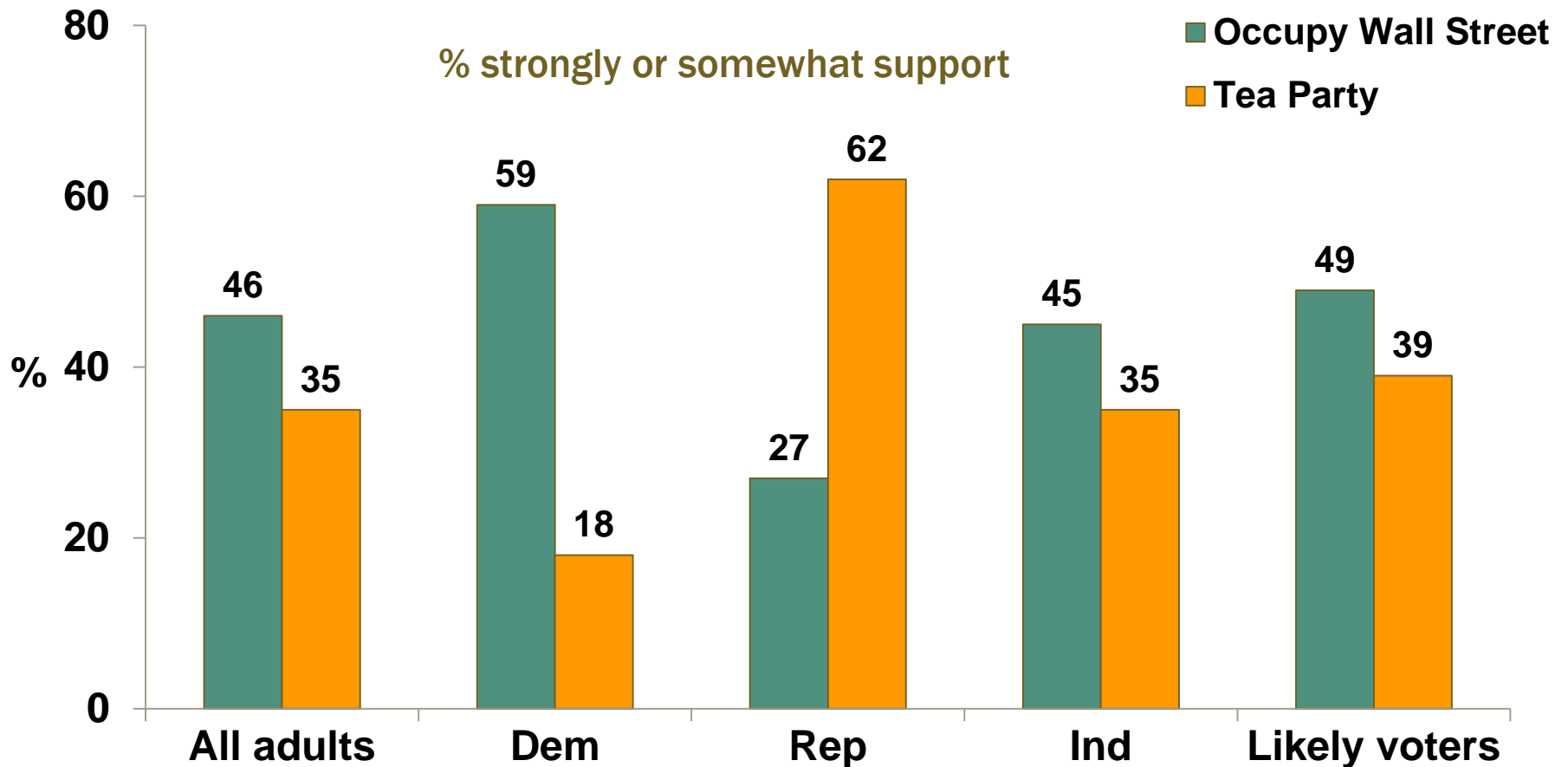
# Federal Deficit Reduction Proposals

Thinking about different approaches to reduce the federal budget deficit, how big a role you think each of the following should play in an overall deficit reduction strategy? Would you say a major role, a minor role, or no role at all?



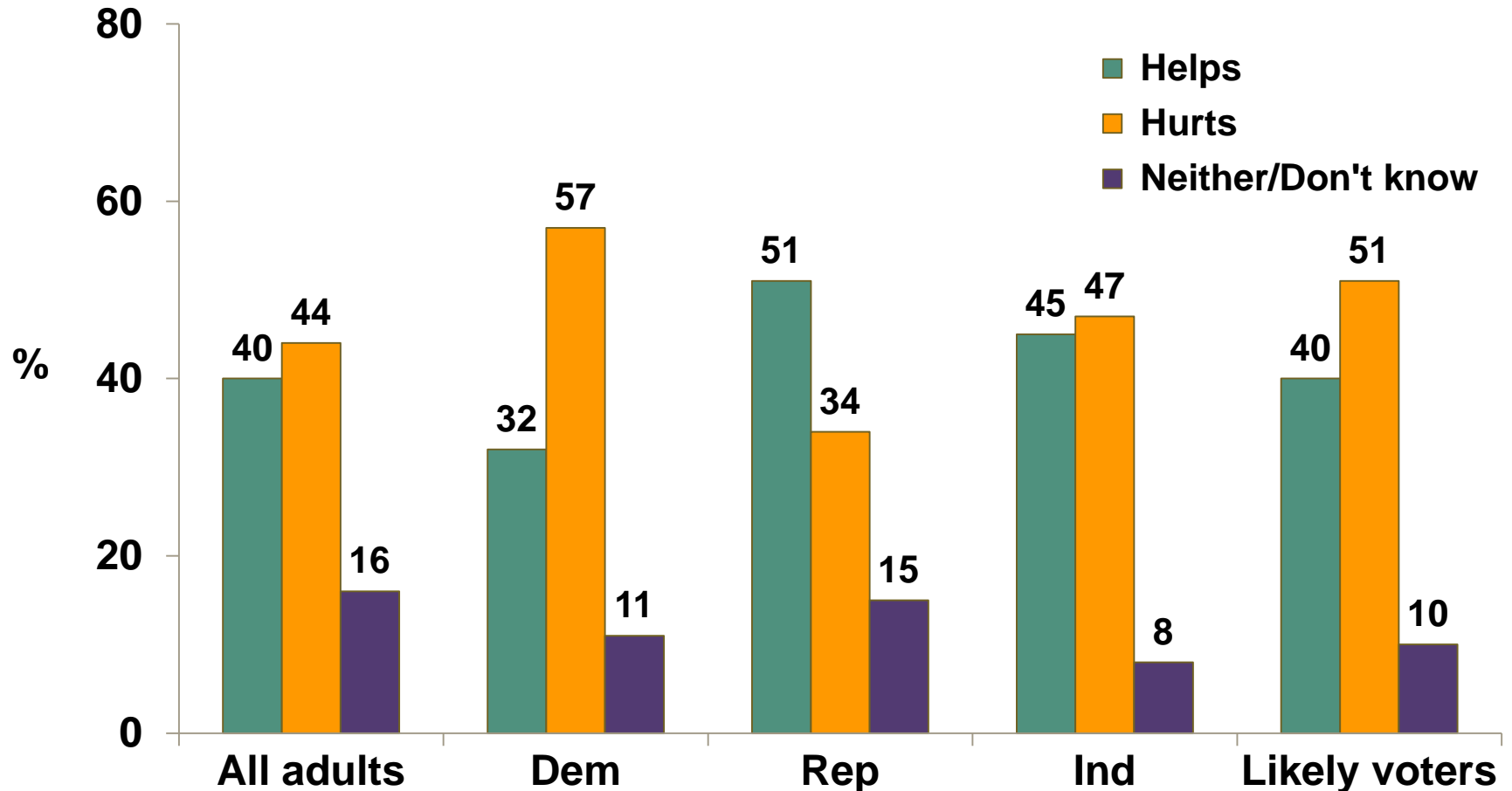
# Support for Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party Movements

From what you've read and heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the \_\_\_\_\_



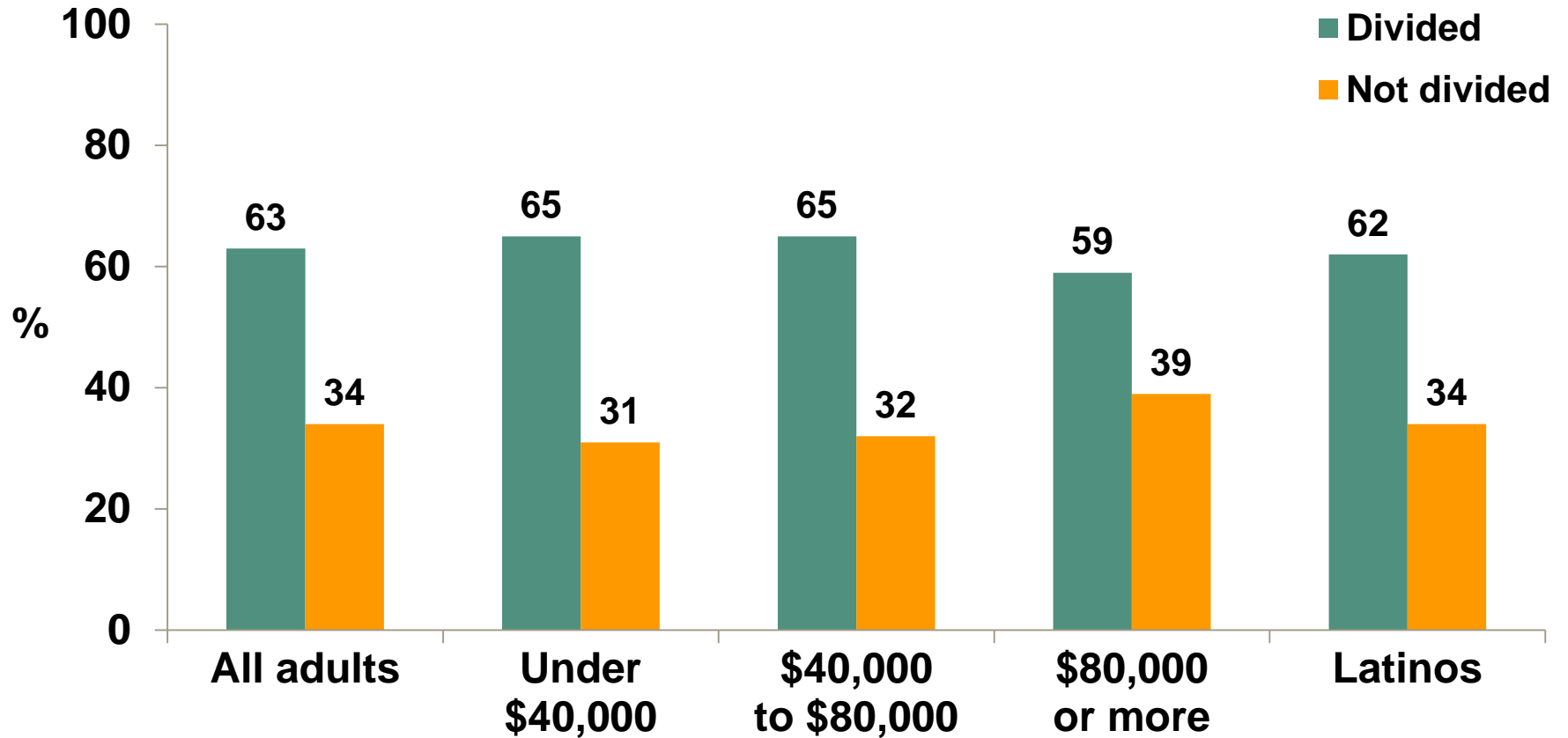
# Wall Street's Influence on the American Economy

Which of the following statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right: Wall Street helps the American economy more than it hurts; or, Wall Street hurts the American economy more than it helps?



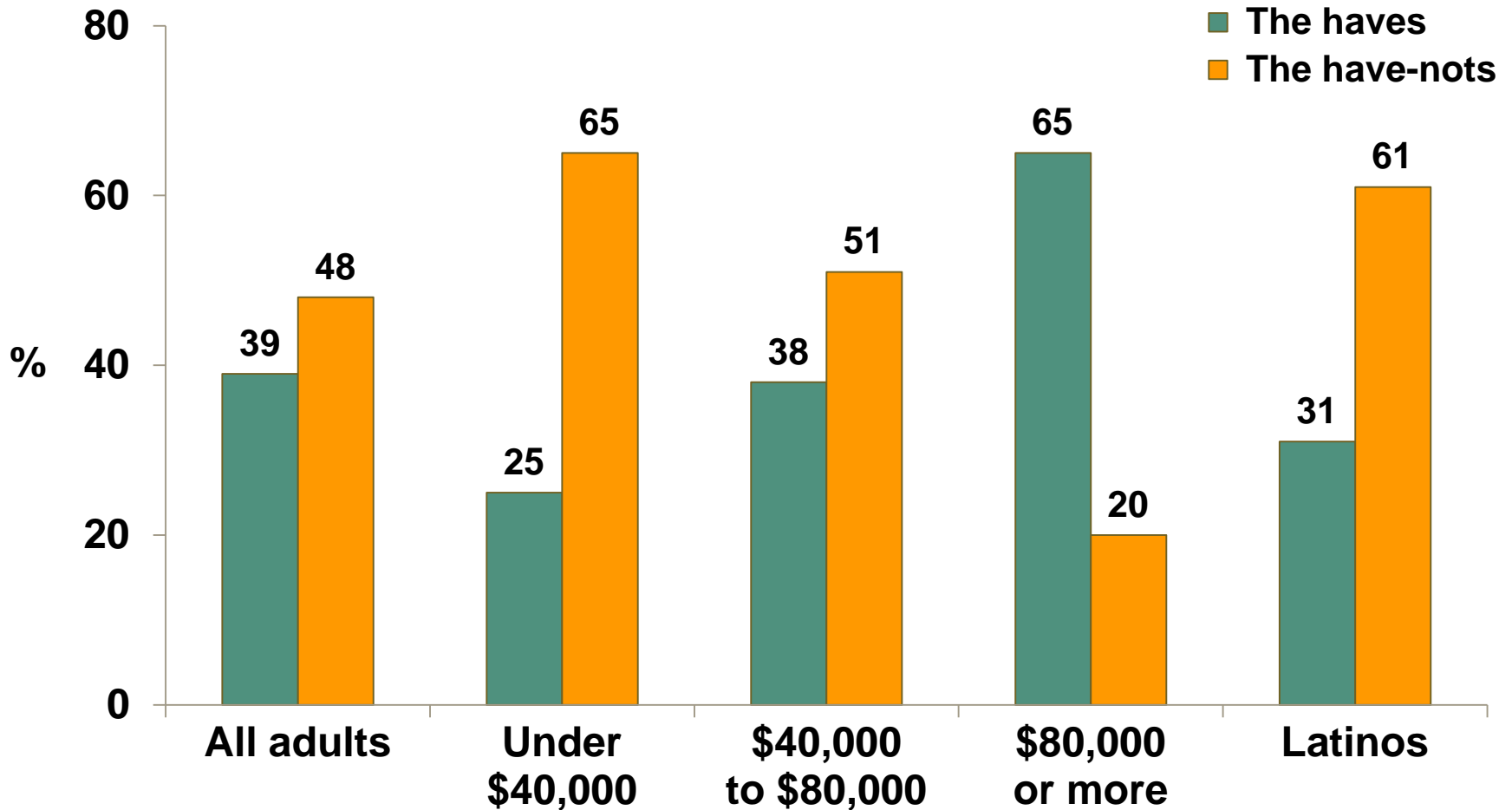
# Income Inequality in California

Some people think that California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think it is not divided that way. Do you think that California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think that California is not divided that way?



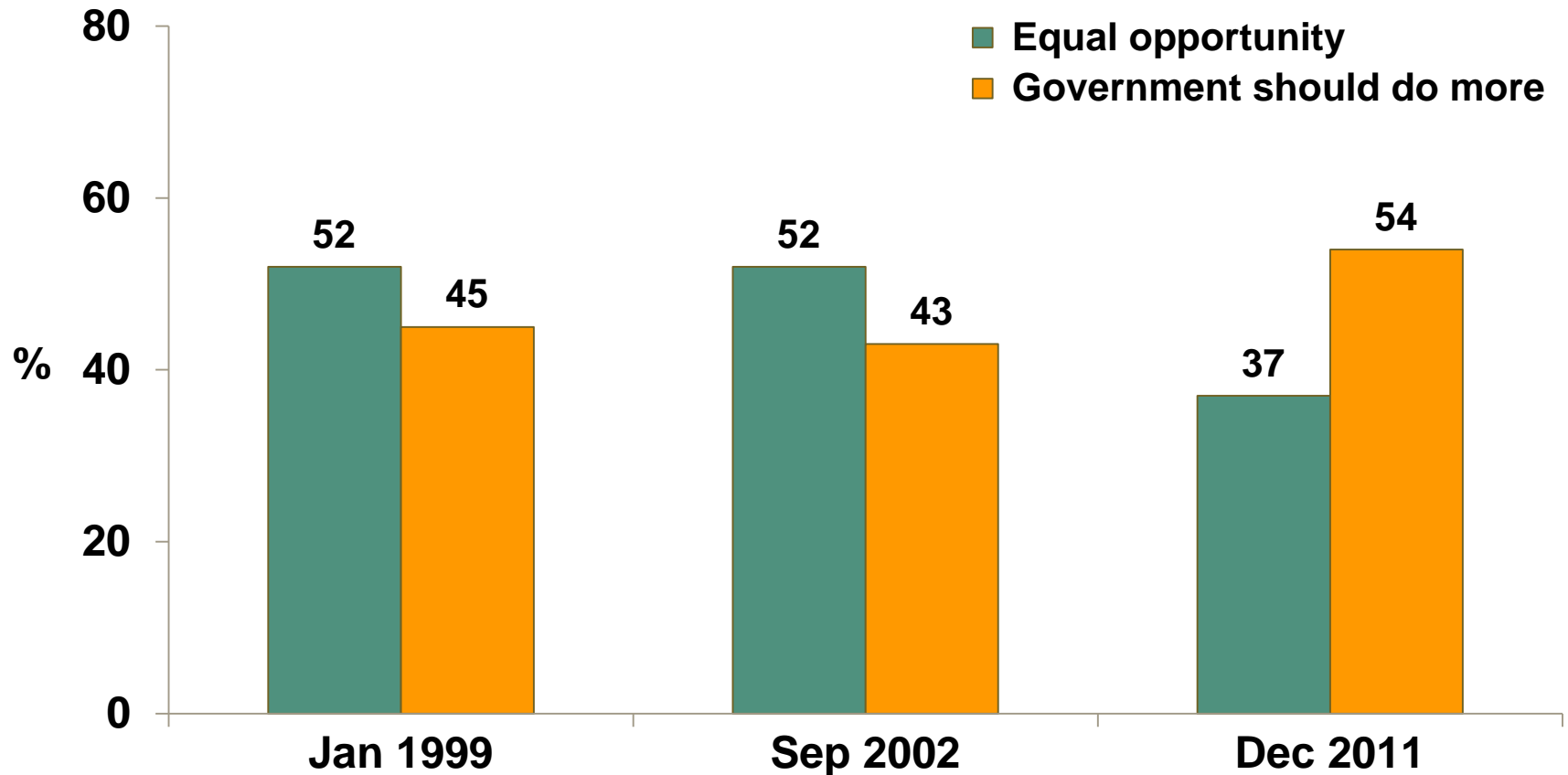
# Havees or the Have-nots?

If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in — the havees or the have-nots?



# Government Role in Reducing Inequality

Do you think that in California today all people have an equal opportunity to get ahead, or the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to get ahead?



# Conclusions

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- Half very concerned about trigger cuts in K-12; most say local services affected by recent cuts
- Strong majorities support governor's tax proposal and proposed pension reforms
- Continued support for realignment; half confident that local government can handle prisoner shift
- Record low approval of Congress, trust in federal government
- Gingrich leads in GOP primary; Obama in November
- Most see taxes playing a major role to reduce federal deficit
- More see themselves as have-nots than haves





# Notes on the use of these slides

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These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Mark Baldassare or Dean Bonner:  
[surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org)

Thank you for your interest in this work.

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