



Midterm Battleground State Poll: Political Priorities & Opinions on the Clean Energy Transition

Key findings from an August 28 – September 11, 2026 survey of likely midterm voters in Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas.

1. Executive Summary

This report highlights key findings from a survey of 5,014 likely midterm voters across eight US Senate battleground states. The survey was conducted via online panel from August 28 – September 11, 2026, by [Beacon Research](#) on behalf of the [Environmental Voter Project](#). With large, balanced samples in each of the eight states surveyed – Alaska (460), Iowa (506), Maine (512), Michigan (708), Georgia (713), North Carolina (707), Ohio (507), and Texas (901) – these are functionally eight state-specific polls that can also be viewed as one larger, multi-state survey. Full 8-state findings reflect an equal-weighted average of the eight battleground states, rather than weighting states to their relative electorate size.

The data relating to “climate hushing”¹ is particularly revealing, showing that – by large margins – battleground state voters (a) want politicians to spend more time talking about climate change (not less), and (b) are more likely to vote for candidates who make transitioning away from fossil fuels a top priority if elected.

Key findings include:

- **Candidates who prioritize transitioning away from fossil fuels are more likely to gain support, rather than lose it.** Only 19% of battleground state voters would rule out voting for candidates who support transitioning away from fossil fuels. Crucially, among the remaining 81% of gettable voters, 7-in-10 say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who make transitioning away from fossil fuels a top priority once elected, whereas only 1-in-20 would be less likely to vote for such candidates.
- **Voters don’t want “climate hushing.”** By a 3-to-1 ratio across US Senate battleground states, likely voters said they wanted politicians to spend more time talking about climate change and pollution (59%), rather than less (17%). By comparison, 23% of midterm voters want politicians to speak less about immigration and the border, and 28% want to hear less about abortion.

¹ The term “climate hushing” refers to the recent political practice – particularly among Democrats – of deliberately downplaying or avoiding the mention of climate change, clean energy, or environmental messaging. See [Inside Climate News: Elected Democrats Have Embraced Climate Hushing. Are They Making A Mistake As Midterms Loom?](#)

- **Midterm voters see climate change as Democrats' biggest issue advantage.** Across an average of eight battleground states, 46% of likely midterm voters think Democrats do a better job addressing climate change and pollution, as opposed to 21% who think Republicans perform better. This +25pt spread is Democrats' biggest issue advantage, significantly larger than their next biggest advantage on health care issues (+17 pts). Independent voters are even more likely to see "climate change and pollution" as a Democratic issue advantage (50%-10%).
- **Although climate change is still not a top-tier voter priority, significant numbers of Democrats and Independents do prioritize it as a top-3 issue.** 23% of battleground state Democrats and 19% of Independents list "climate change and pollution" as a top-3 issue priority for elected leaders to focus on right now. This ranking places climate change 5th among the 11 priorities tested for Democrats and 6th for Independents.
- **Majorities of both Independents and Republicans are open to voting for candidates who want to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels.** 3-in-4 Independent voters (76%) and 6-in-10 Republicans (59%) would consider voting for candidates who want to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy. Only 15% of Independents and 33% of Republicans would rule out voting for such candidates.
- **The solar and wind power industries are very popular.** Across eight US Senate battleground states, the solar power industry (70%-19%) and the wind power industry (64%-21%) enjoy extremely positive favorable/unfavorable ratings, especially when compared to the oil & gas industry (45%-46%). Even in the oil- and gas-producing states of Alaska and Texas, voters view clean energy industries much more favorably than the oil & gas industry.
- **Independents and first-time midterm voters are breaking for Democratic US Senate candidates.** 51% of Independents report they will vote for Democratic US Senate candidates in battleground states, with just 29% voting Republican and 21% undecided/third-party. Among voters who plan to vote in their first-ever midterm election this fall, 48% plan to vote for Democratic US Senate candidates, compared to 35% for Republicans and 17% undecided/third-party.

- **Requiring data center developers to add clean energy to the grid might soften opposition.** Although consistent majorities of voters oppose new data centers, two-thirds of battleground-state voters (64%) say they would be more likely to support local data center construction if the data center “added enough new clean energy to the local grid to cover its electricity use, potentially reducing residents’ electric bills.”

Topline survey data can be found [here](#). Crosstabs can be found [here](#).

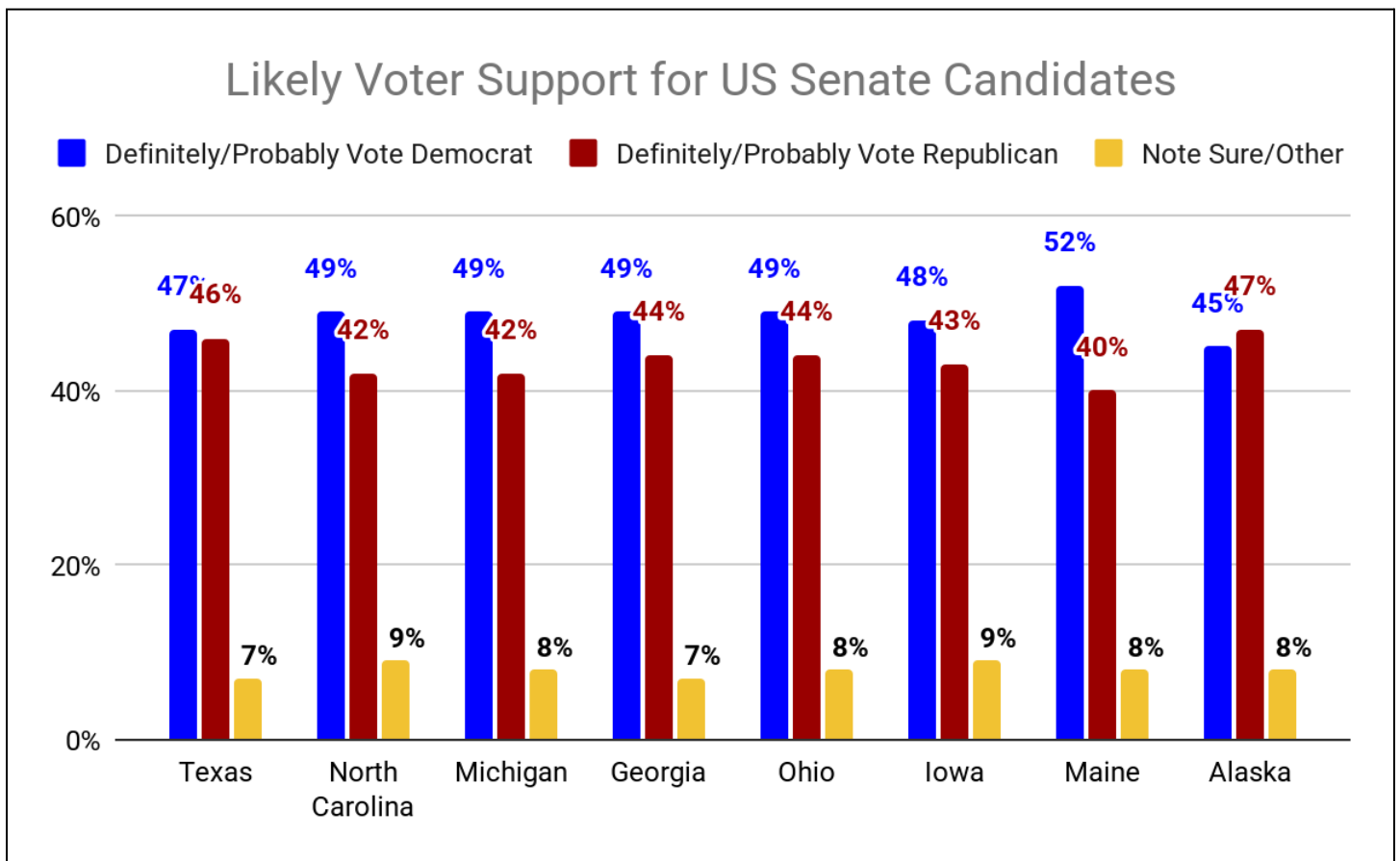
Some percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multi-response questions. A full methodology statement can be found at the end of this report.

2. Electoral Landscape

A. Likely Voters Prefer a Generic Democratic US Senate Candidates in Six Out of Eight Battleground States.

Likely midterm voters preferred generic Democratic US Senate candidates by five or more points in six of the battleground states surveyed: North Carolina, Michigan, Georgia, Ohio, Iowa, and Maine. In the remaining two states — Texas and Alaska — the US Senate races have no clear leader.

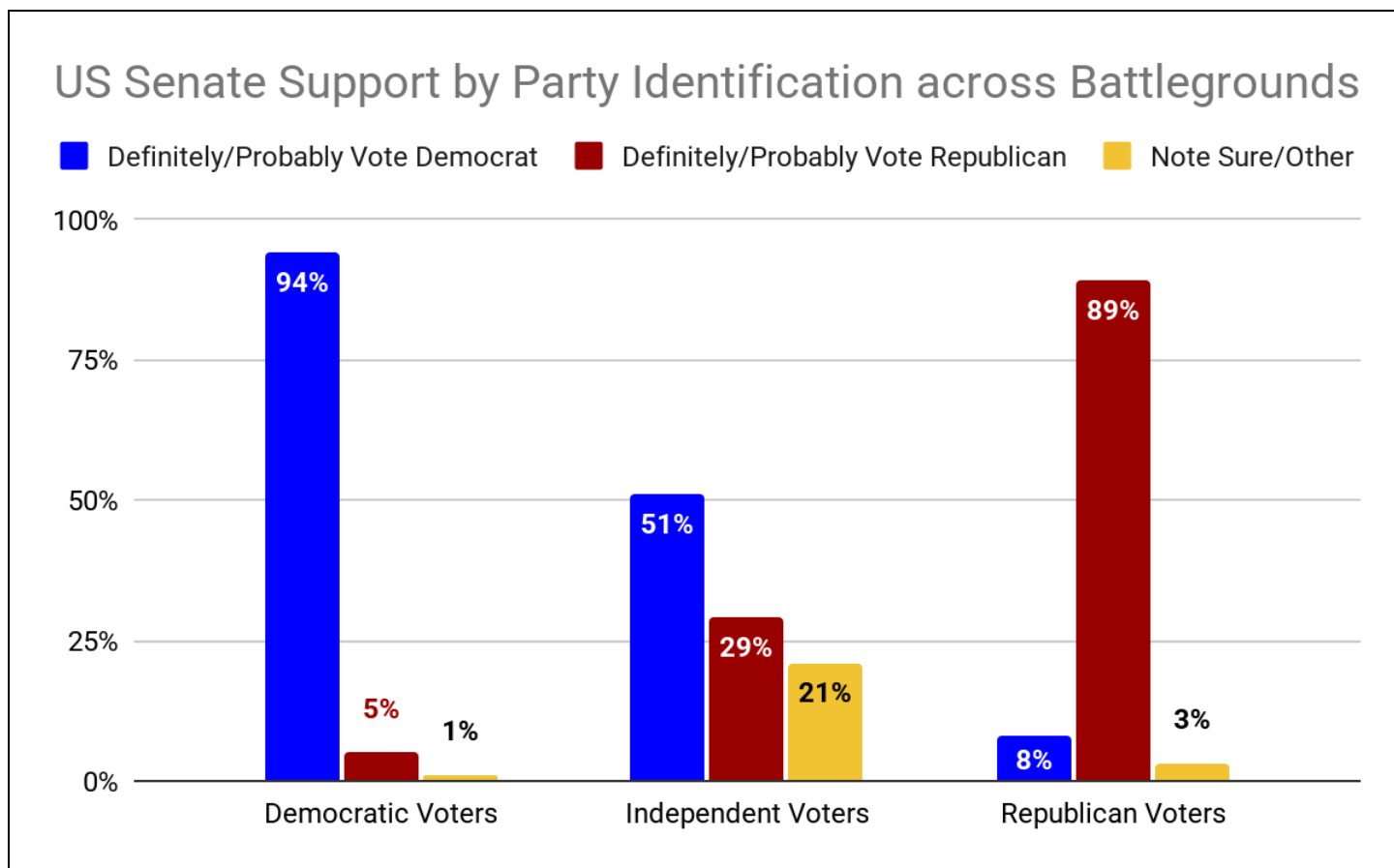
In each of the eight states surveyed, 7-9% of voters are either undecided or currently supporting third-party candidates.



B. Independent Voters are Breaking for Democratic Senate Candidates.

Among Democratic voters across these battleground states, the average support for Democratic US Senate candidates was 94%, while Republicans are supporting their party's nominees at a slightly lower 89% level.

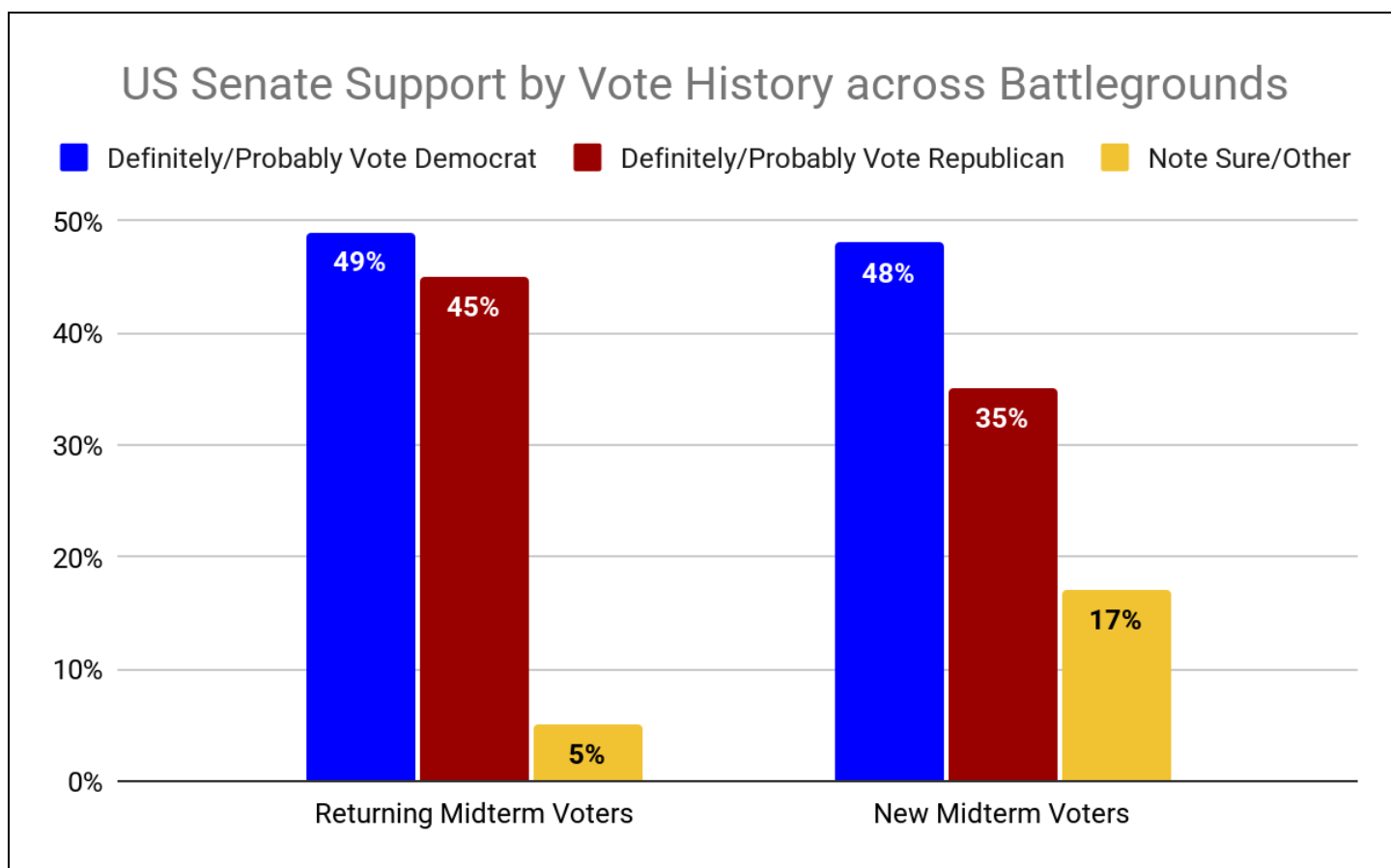
Among self-described Independent voters, the average support for Democratic US Senate candidates (51%) far surpasses support for Republican candidates (29%).



C. First-Time Midterm Voters are Breaking for Democratic Senate Candidates.

On average across all eight battleground states, returning midterm voters (respondents who reported voting in a previous midterm election) narrowly preferred Democratic US Senate candidates by a 4-pt margin (49%-45%).

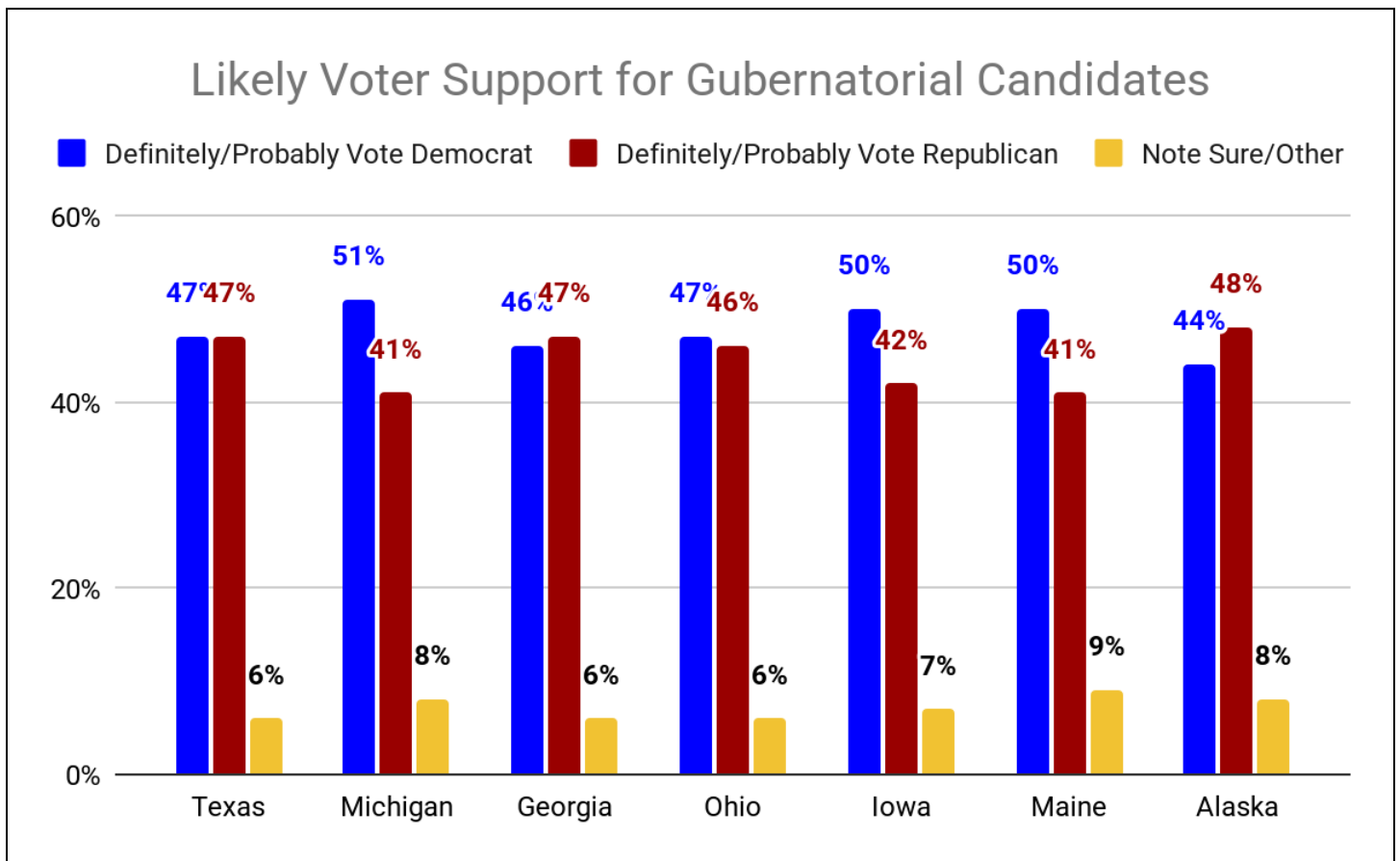
On the other hand, voters who plan to vote in their first-ever midterm election this November favored Democratic candidates by a much larger 13-pt margin (48%-35%).



D. Democrats Lead in the Michigan, Maine, and Iowa Gubernatorial Races.

Democratic gubernatorial candidates currently lead in Michigan (51%-41%), Maine (50%-41%), and Iowa (50%-42%), while Republicans are narrowly ahead in the Alaska gubernatorial race (48%-44%).

Neither Republicans nor Democrats have a clear advantage in the Texas, Georgia, and Ohio gubernatorial elections.

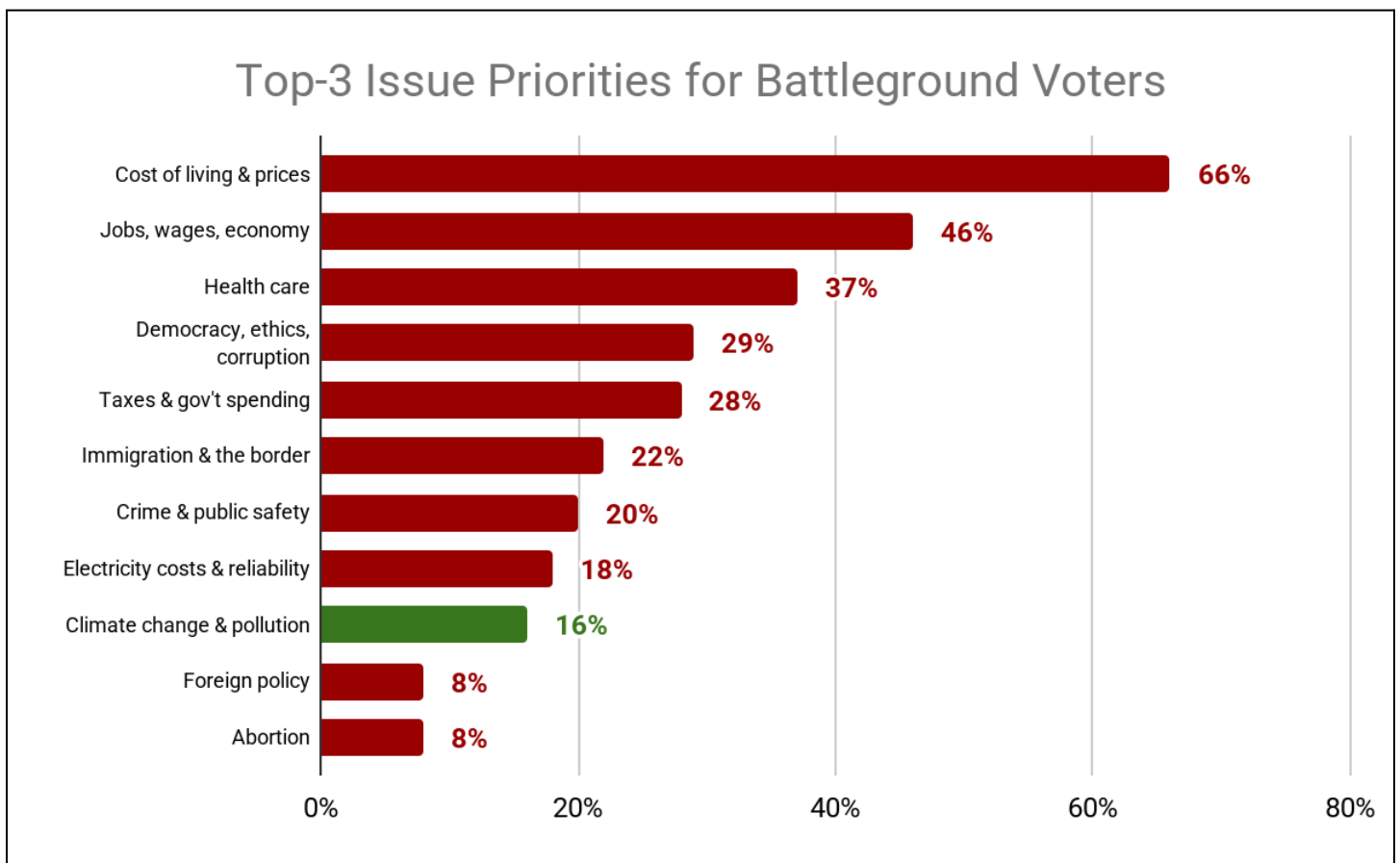


3. Issue Landscape

A. The Cost of Living and Economic Issues Top Voters' Concerns.

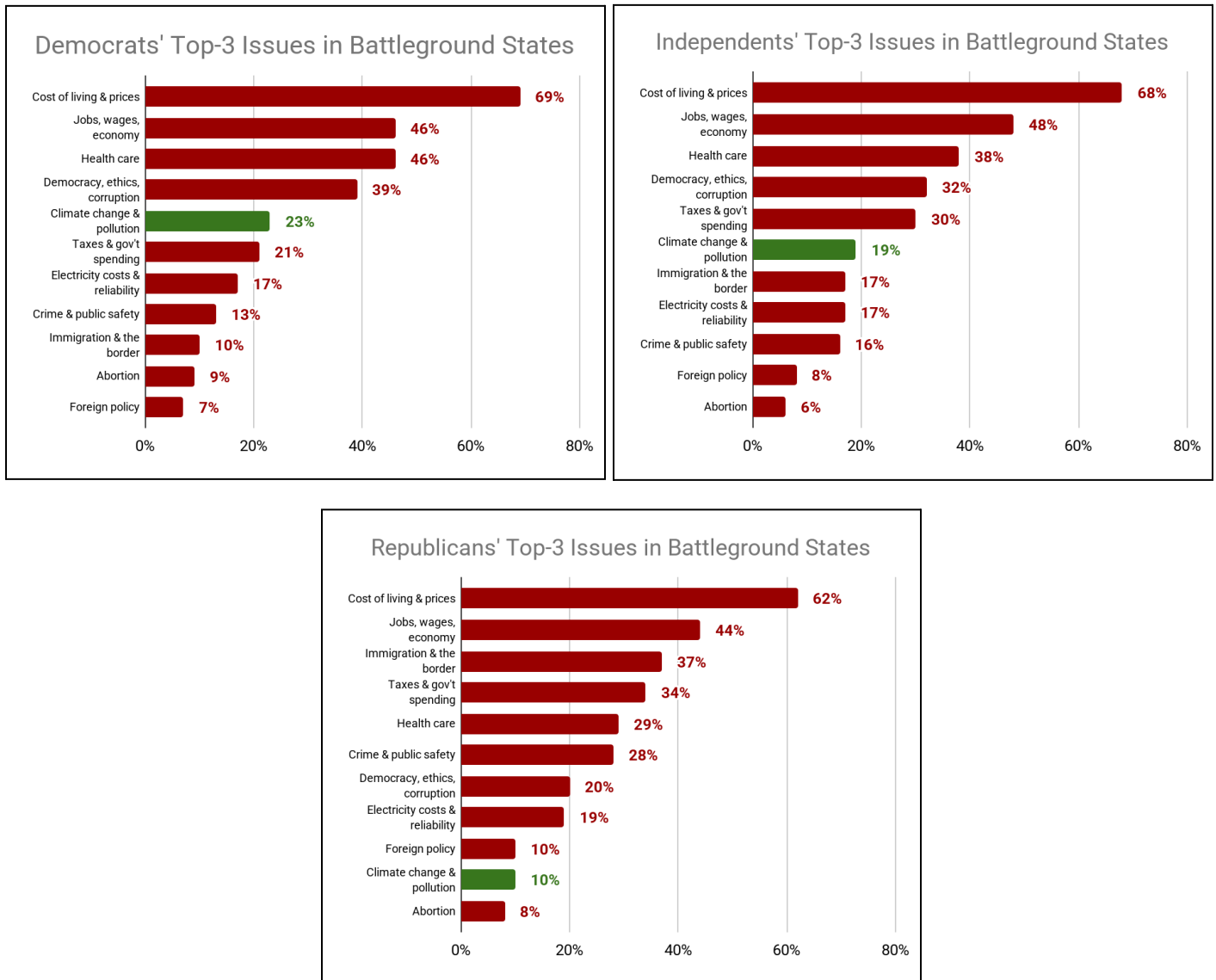
On average across all eight battleground states, two-thirds of all likely voters list “the cost of living and prices” as one of the three most important issues for elected leaders to focus on right now. Almost half of voters include “jobs, wages, and the economy” as a top-3 priority.

“Climate change and pollution” continues to rank lower among voter concerns, with only 16% of likely voters listing it as a top-3 priority.



B. Climate Change is a Significant Concern for Many Democrats and Independents.

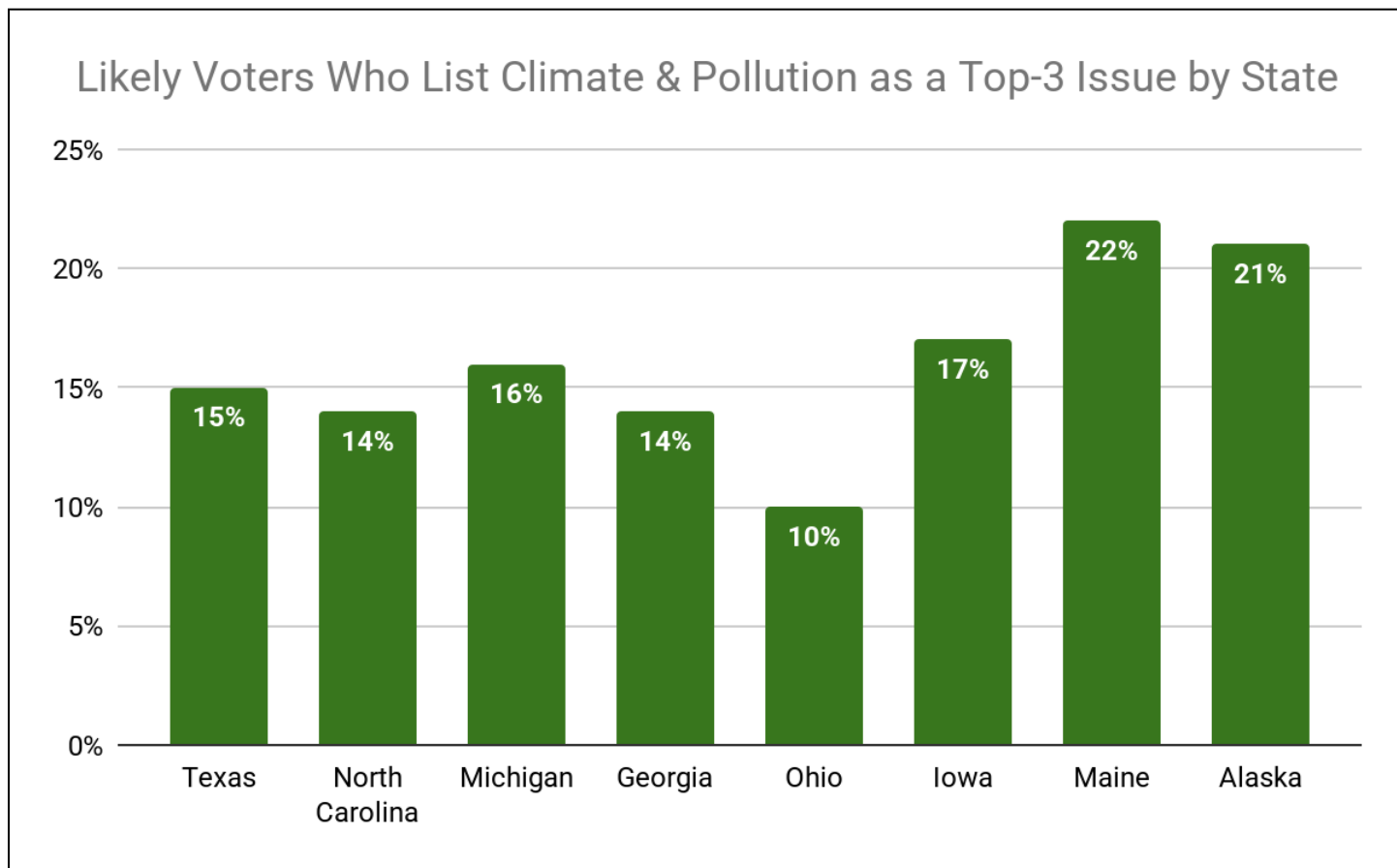
Self-identified Republicans pull down the overall average of climate-concerned voters across these eight battleground states, with only 10% listing climate change and pollution as a top-3 priority. 1-in-5 Independents list climate change as a top-3 priority as do almost 1-in-4 Democrats, firmly placing “climate change and pollution” as a significant (although not top-tier) concern for swingier, Independent voters.



C. One-in-Five Mainers and Alaskans List Climate Change as a Top-3 Priority.

Maine — the only state among these eight battlegrounds to vote for Kamala Harris in 2024 — is also the state with the most voters listing “climate change and pollution” as a top-3 priority (22%), followed closely by Alaska (21%).

Only 1-in-10 likely voters in Ohio view climate change and pollution as a top-3 priority.

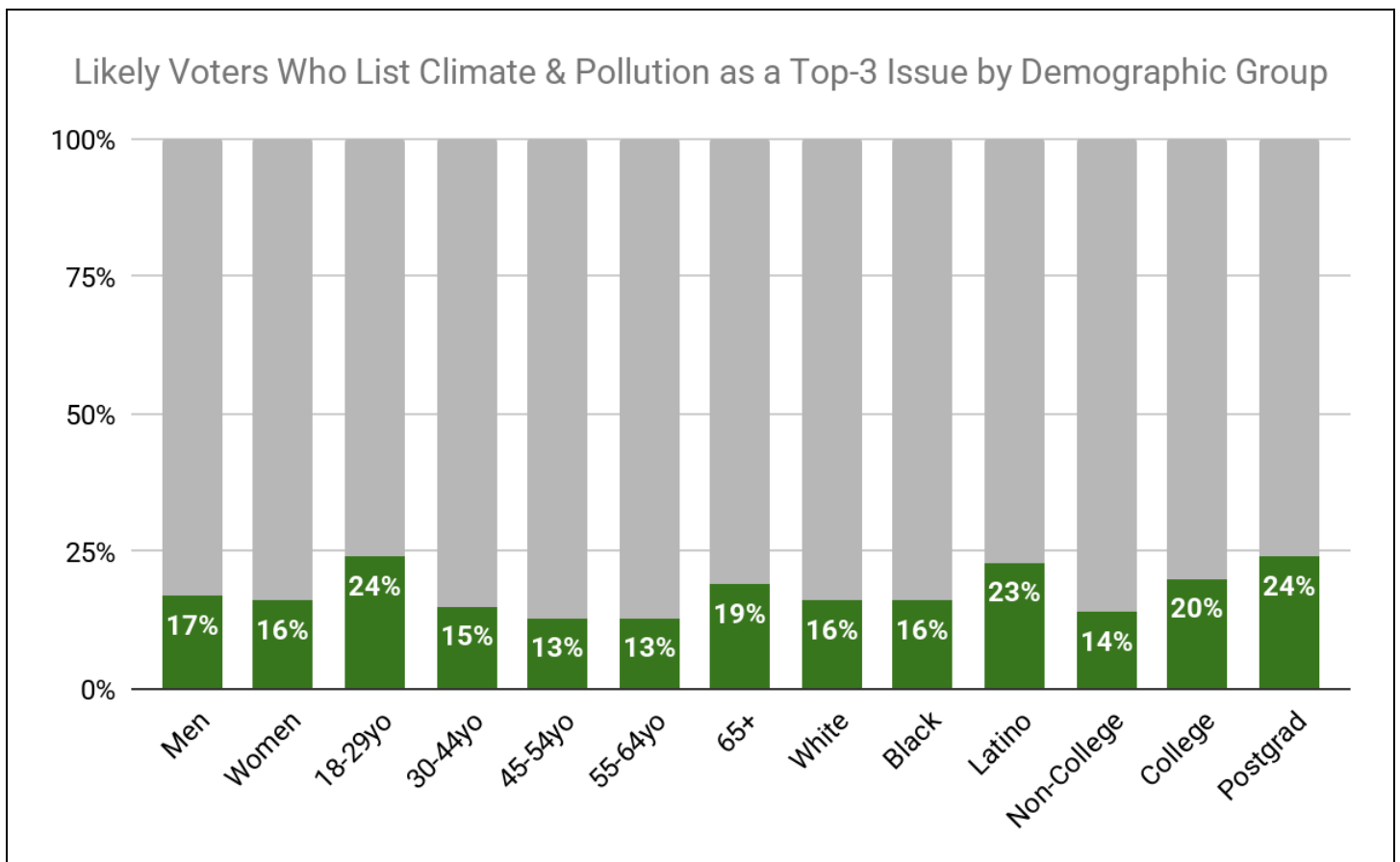


D. Gen Z and Baby Boomers Prioritize Climate, as do Latinos and College Graduates.

On average across all eight battleground states, likely voters aged 18-29 and those aged 65+ contain the highest percentage of climate-concerned voters, with almost 1-in-4 voters under 30 (24%) listing climate change and pollution among their top-3 priorities and almost 1-in-5 voters 65+ (19%) doing the same.

Appreciably more Latinos (23%) listed climate change and pollution as a top-3 priority than did White (16%) or Black (16%) voters across these battleground states.

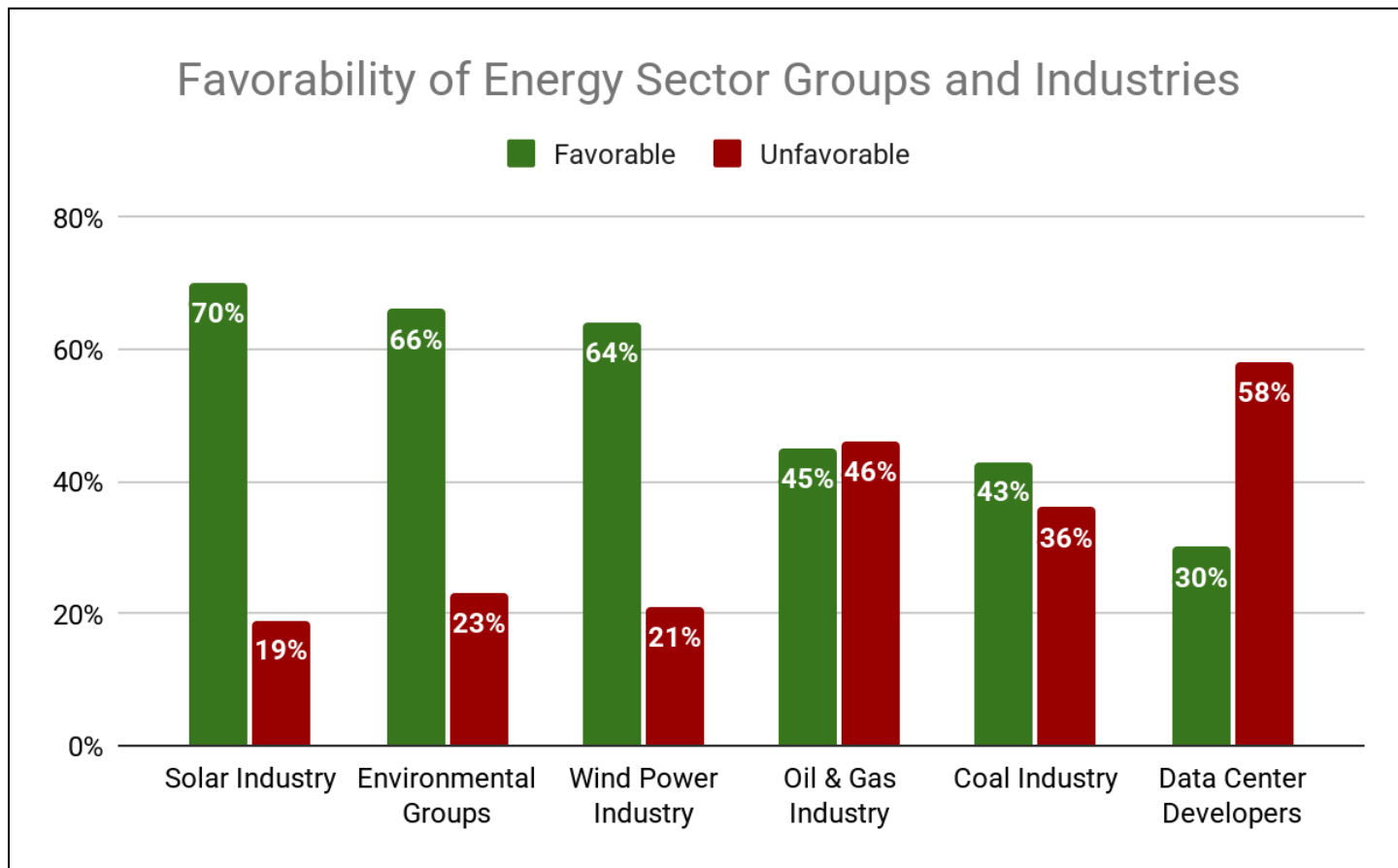
Only 14% of voters without a four-year college degree list climate change as a top-3 priority, compared to 20% of college graduates and 24% of voters with post-graduate degrees.



E. The Clean Energy Industry Is Very Popular.

Across an average of these eight battleground states, the solar power industry (70%-19%) and the wind power industry (64%-21%) enjoy very positive favorable/unfavorable ratings, especially when compared to the coal industry (43%-36%) and the oil & gas industry (45%-46%).

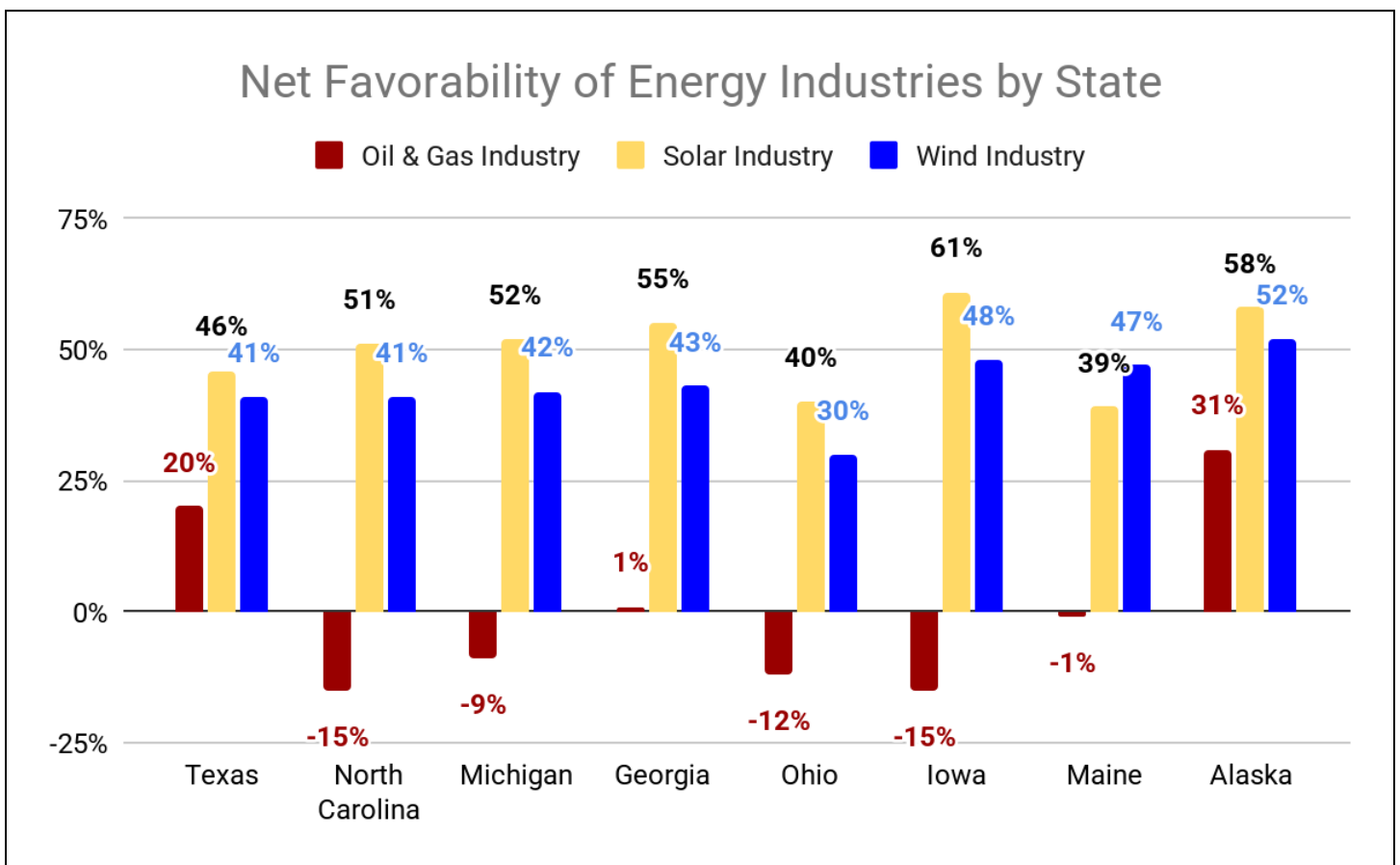
Voters hold a favorable opinion of environmental groups by a 3-to-1 margin, and they disfavor data center developers by a 2-to-1 margin.



F. The Solar and Wind Industries are Twice as Popular as Oil & Gas, even in Texas and Alaska.

When looking at specific states, the solar and wind power industries are consistently much more popular than the oil & gas industry, even in Alaska and Texas where oil and gas are major industries and job sources.

In Texas — where the oil & gas industry is viewed 20pts more favorably than unfavorably — the solar and wind industries are still more than twice as popular, enjoying +46pt and +41pt net favorabilities respectively. In Iowa — where the oil & gas industry is 15pts *underwater* (i.e., a minus 15pt net favorability rating) — the solar and wind industries have significant +61pt and +48pt net favorabilities respectively.

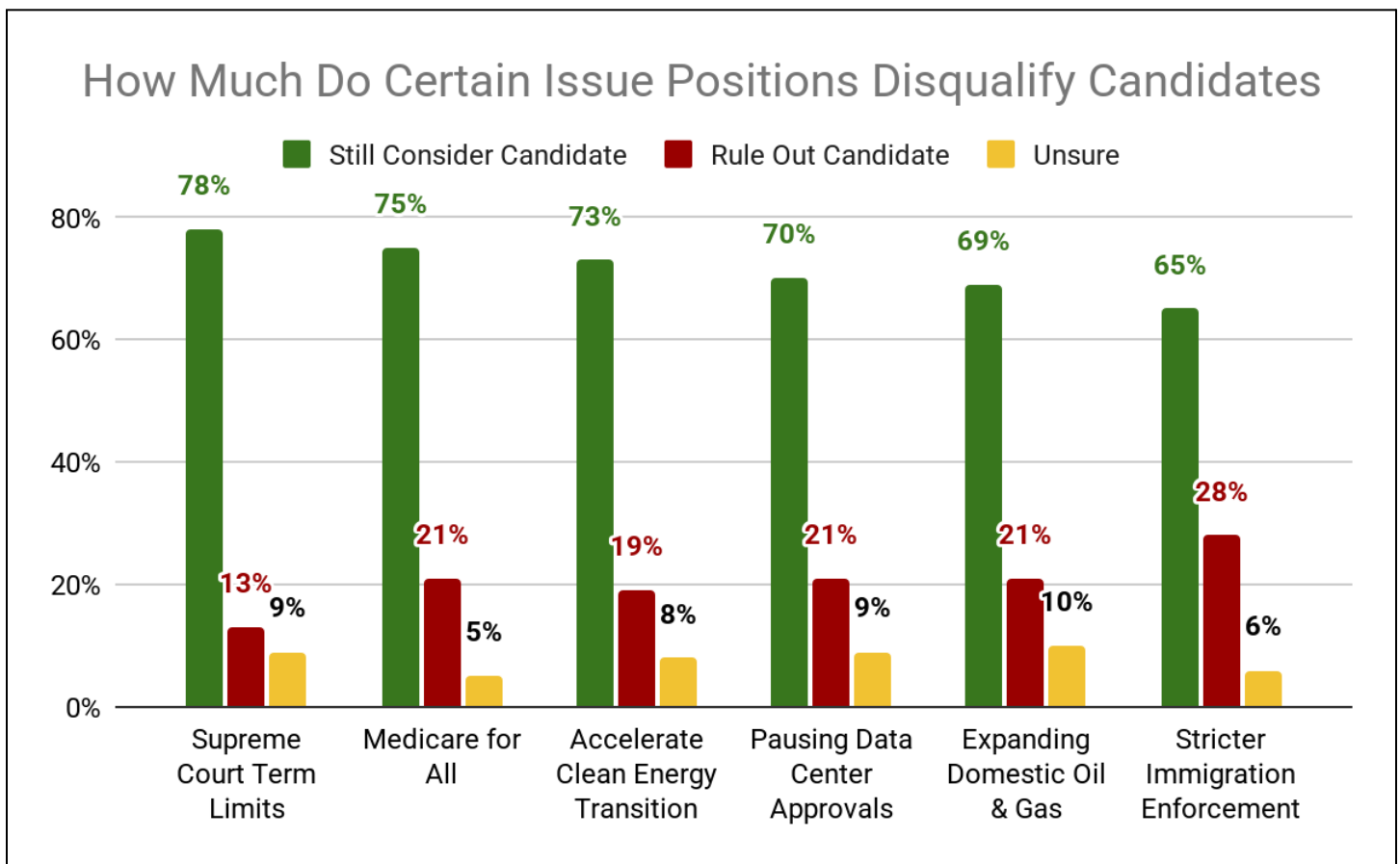


4. Is It Politically Beneficial to Talk about Transitioning to Clean Energy?

Lower-salience issues are not always vote-losing issues. This survey researched whether candidates who want to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy would frustrate/excite voters or gain/lose votes.

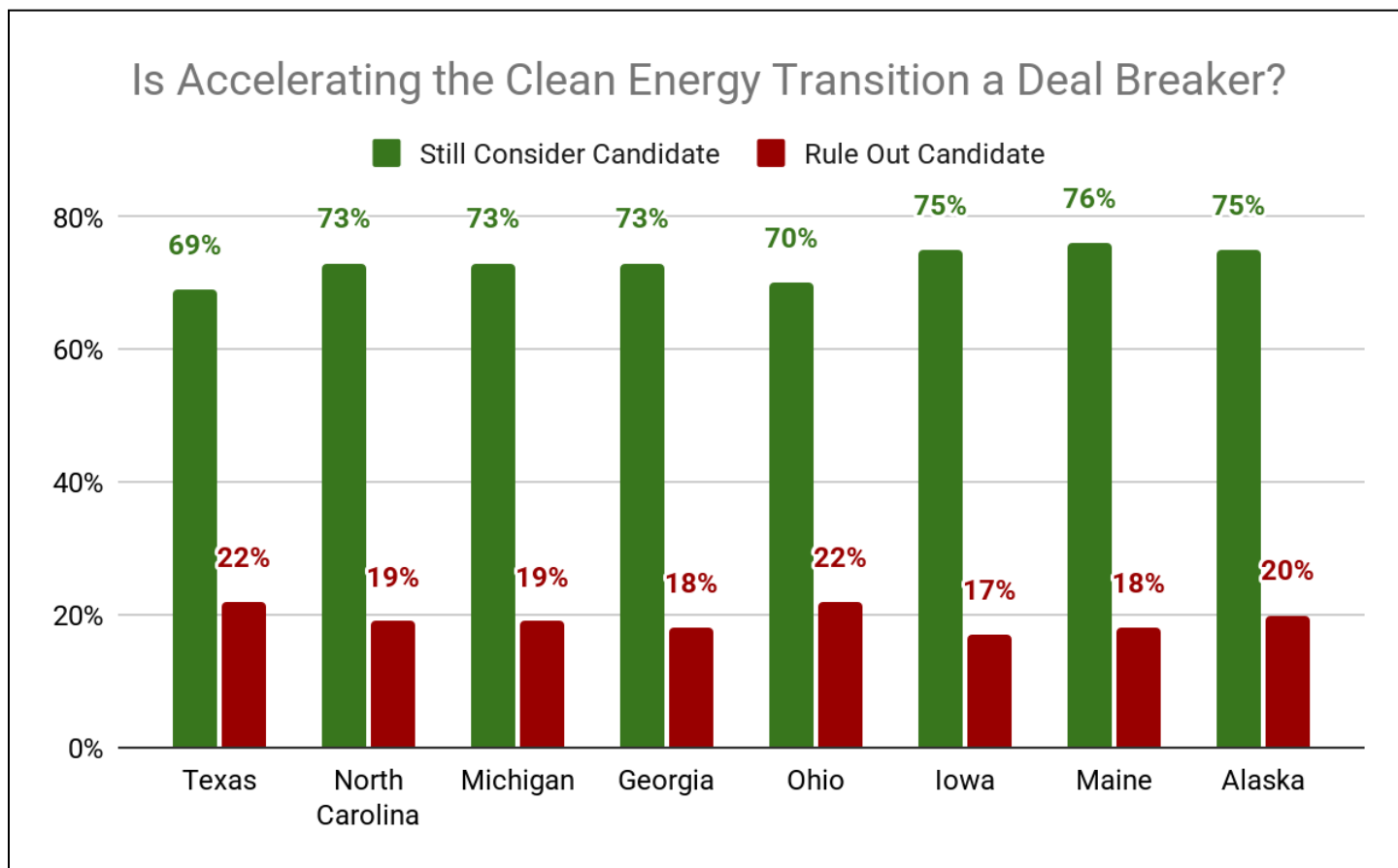
A. Survey Question: *"If you were considering voting for a candidate and learned that candidate held each of the following positions, would you still consider voting for the candidate, or rule them out?"*

Across the states surveyed, 73% of voters would still consider voting for candidates who want to accelerate the clean energy transition, while only 19% would rule out such candidates. This 19% rejection rate is lower than the percent of voters who rule out candidates supportive of expanding domestic oil & gas production (21%) and those who rule out candidates supporting stricter enforcement of immigration laws (28%).



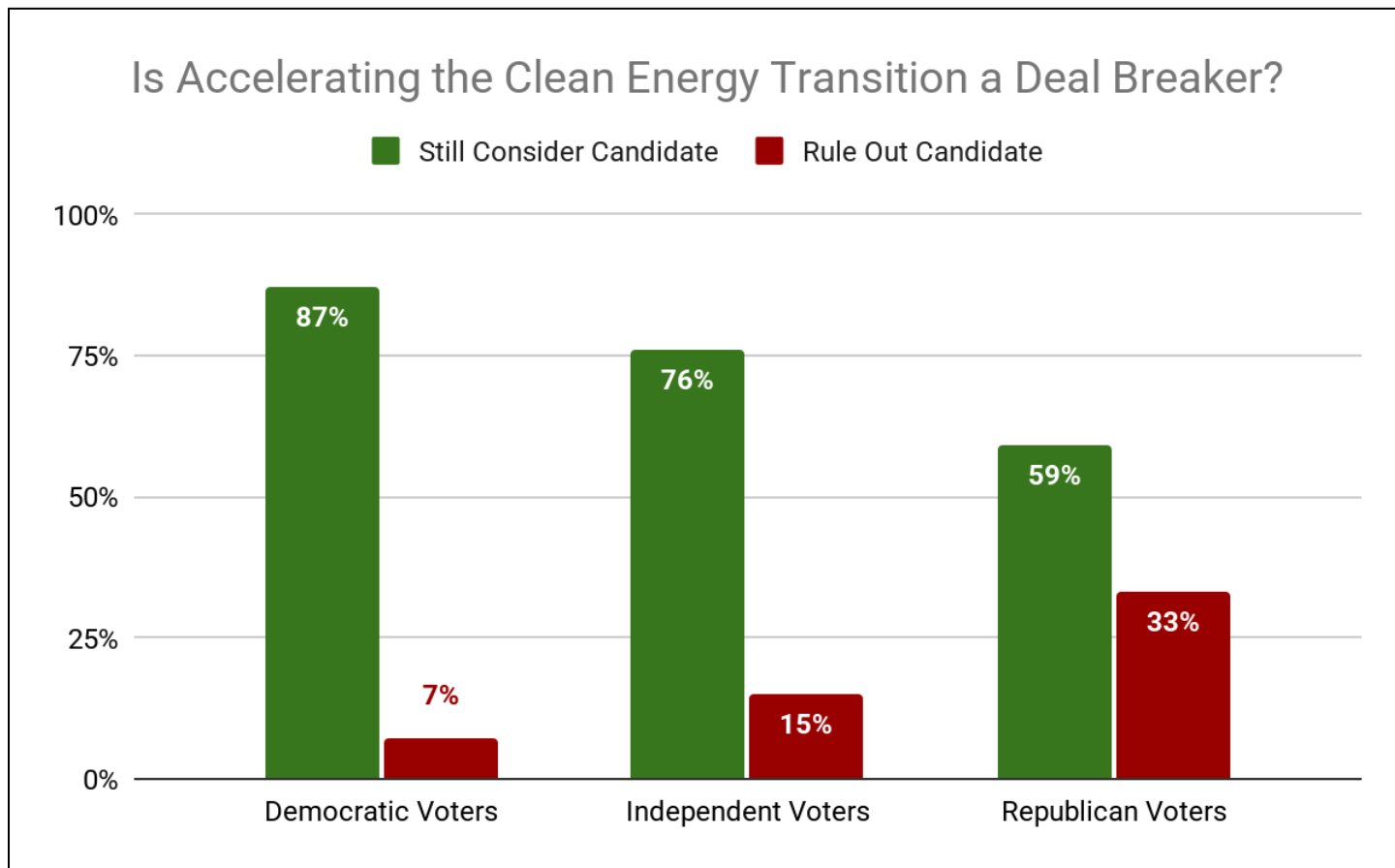
B. Even in Texas, No More Than 22% of Voters Would Rule Out Clean Energy Candidates.

In each of the battleground states surveyed, only 17–22% of voters would rule out voting for candidates who want to accelerate our transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Texas (22%) and Ohio (22%) had the most voters who would disqualify clean energy candidates, whereas Iowa (17%) contained the fewest such voters.



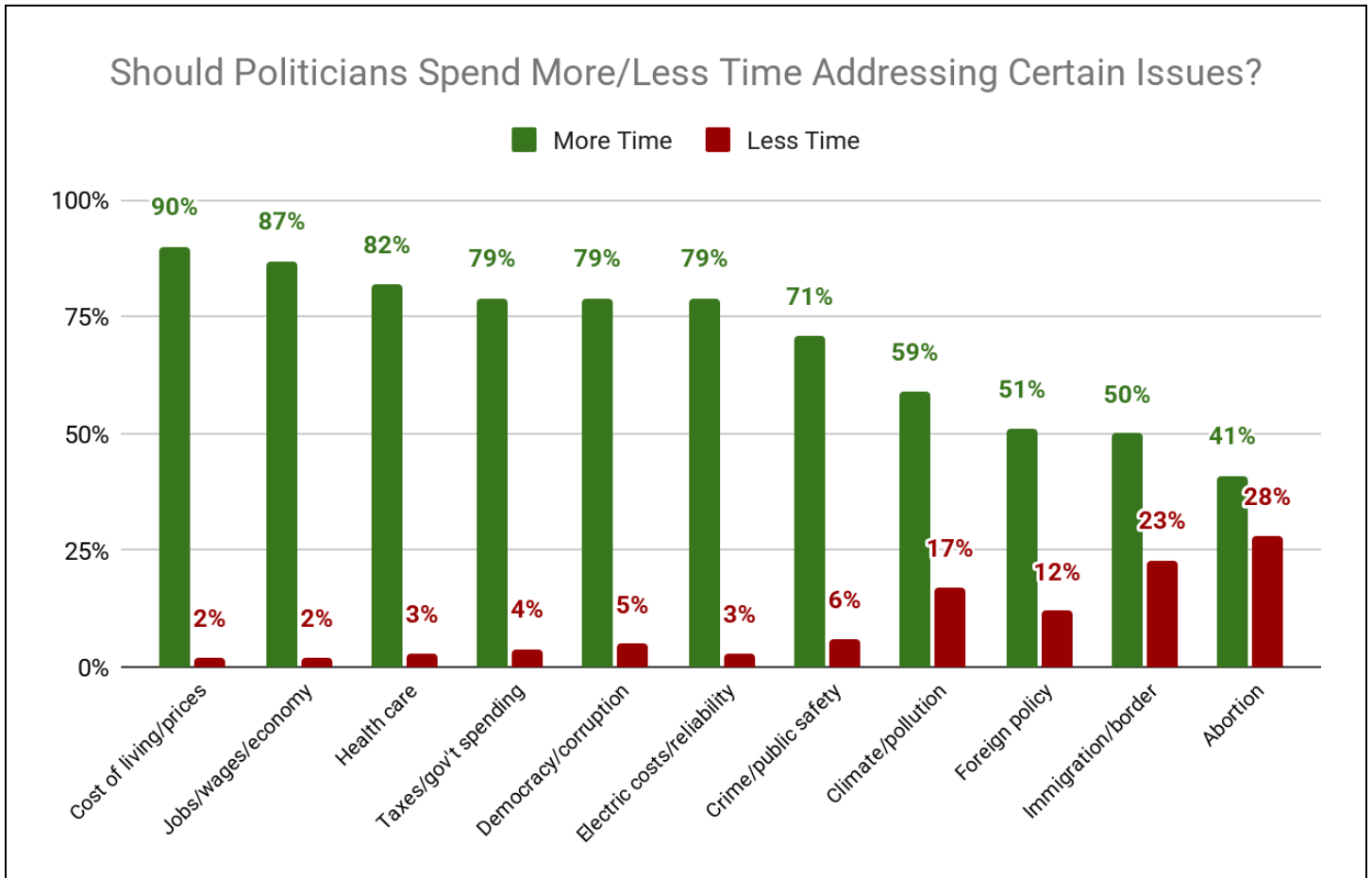
C. 3-in-4 Independents and 6-in-10 Republicans Would Consider Voting for Candidates Who Want to Accelerate the Transition to Clean Energy.

Across an average of the eight battleground states surveyed, 76% of Independent voters would consider voting for candidates who want to accelerate the clean energy transition, while only 15% would rule out such candidates. 59% of Republicans would consider clean energy transition candidates, compared to only 33% who would rule such candidates out.



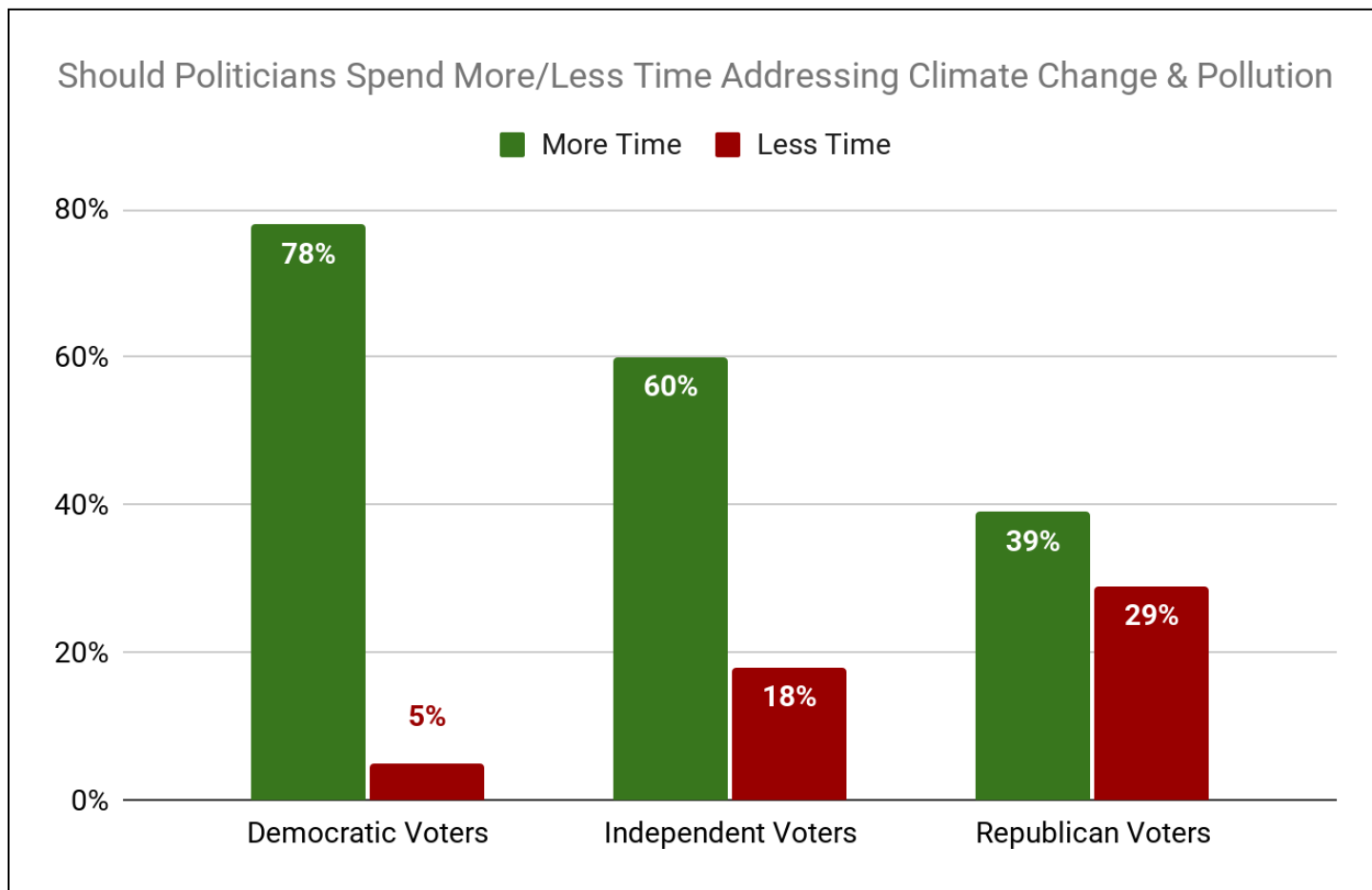
D. 59% of Voters Want Politicians to Talk More about Climate Change and Pollution;
Only 17% Want to Hear Less.

By a 3-to-1 ratio across an average of the battleground states surveyed, midterm voters want politicians to spend more time talking about climate change and pollution (59%), rather than less time (17%). By comparison, 23% of midterm voters want politicians to speak less about immigration and the border, and 28% of voters want to hear less about abortion.



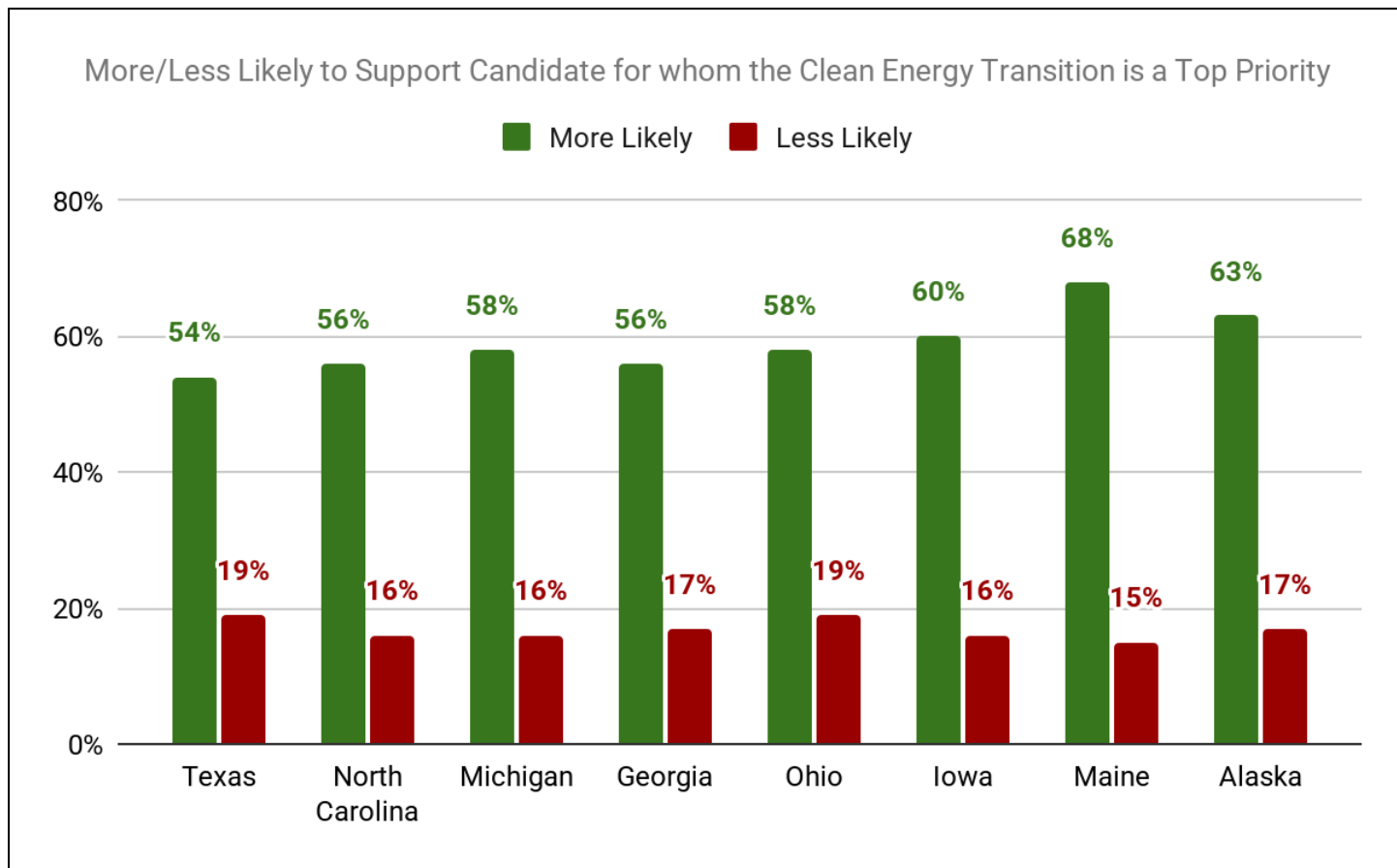
E. A Majority of Independents and a Plurality of Republicans Want Politicians to Talk More about Climate Change and Pollution.

6-in-10 Independent voters want politicians to talk more about climate change and pollution, rather than less. Moreover, a 39% plurality of Republican voters want to hear more about climate change and pollution, as opposed to 29% who want to hear less.



F. A Majority of Battleground Voters Are More Likely to Support Candidates for whom the Clean Energy Transition is a Top Priority.

In each of the eight battleground states surveyed, a consistent majority of voters said they would be more likely to support a candidate who said transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy would be a top priority if elected. In Maine, voters who said they were more likely to support such candidates outnumbered those who were less likely to do so by a greater than 4-to-1 margin.



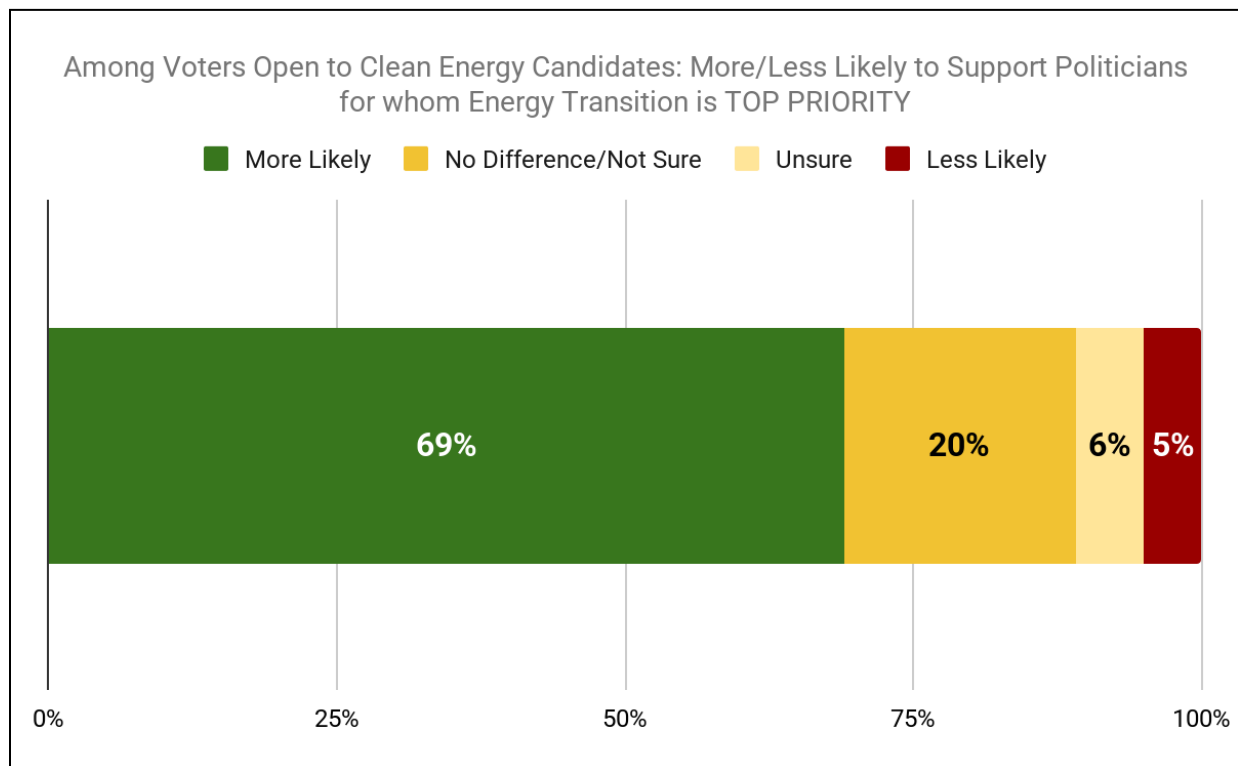
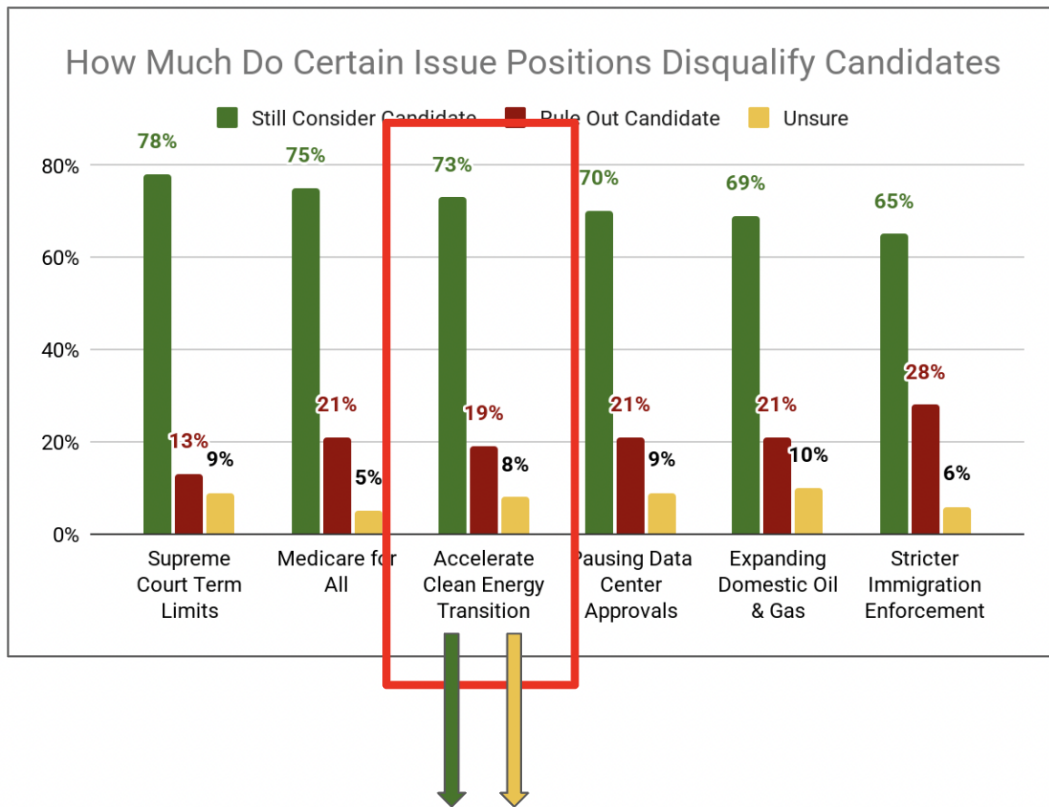
G. Making the Clean Energy Transition a Top Priority Risks Very Few Gettable Votes and Offers Political Upside for Candidates

Early in this survey, battleground state voters were asked whether they would consider voting for a candidate (or rule that candidate out) based on whether the politician wanted to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to a clean energy economy. The first chart below repeats those findings. As a reminder, in response to that earlier question, 81% of voters did not rule out voting for clean-energy supporting candidates (73% said they would still consider the candidates and 8% were unsure).

Later in this survey, when this group of “open to clean energy candidate” voters was asked a new, more stringent question — *Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who said accelerating the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy would be a top priority if elected* — only 5% of those ‘gettable’ voters said they were less likely to support a candidate for whom the clean energy transition wasn’t just a stance, but would actually be a top priority if elected.

Moreover, the second chart below shows that, among voters who had not already rejected a candidate over their support for a clean energy transition, 7-in-10 say they would be *more likely* to vote for a candidate who makes transitioning away from fossil fuels a *top priority* once they are elected, whereas only 1-in-20 would be less likely to vote for such candidates.

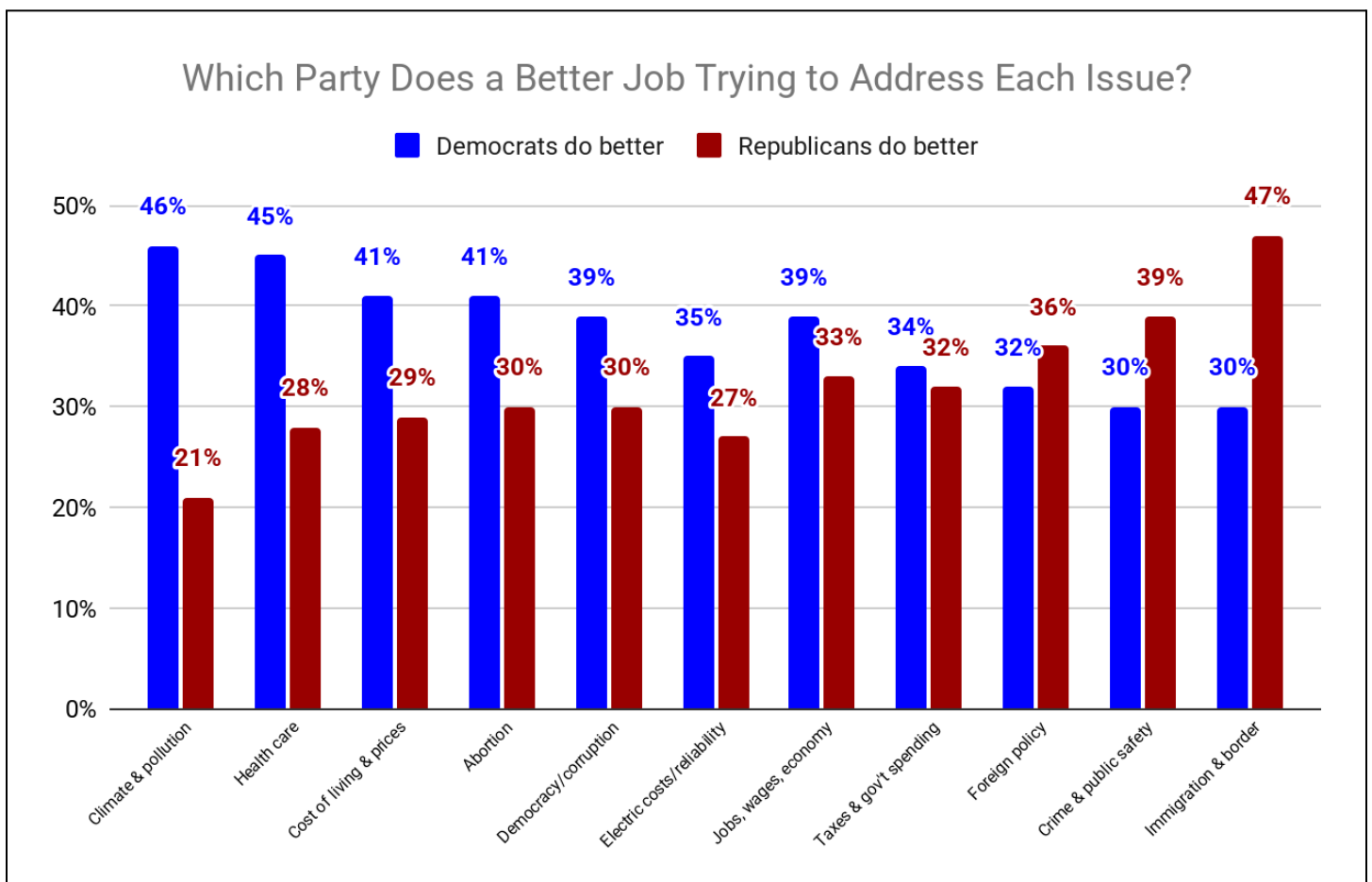
These particular findings suggest that very few ‘gettable’ voters peel away from candidates who decide to make transitioning away from fossil fuels a top priority if elected.



H. Midterm Voters See Climate Change as Democratic Candidates' Biggest Issue Advantage. Immigration is Republicans' Biggest Advantage.

Although climate change and pollution is not a top-tier voter priority, it is currently viewed as Democratic candidates' biggest issue advantage over Republicans. Across an average of the eight battleground states surveyed, 46% of likely midterm voters think Democrats do a better job addressing climate change and pollution, as opposed to only 21% who think Republicans perform better.

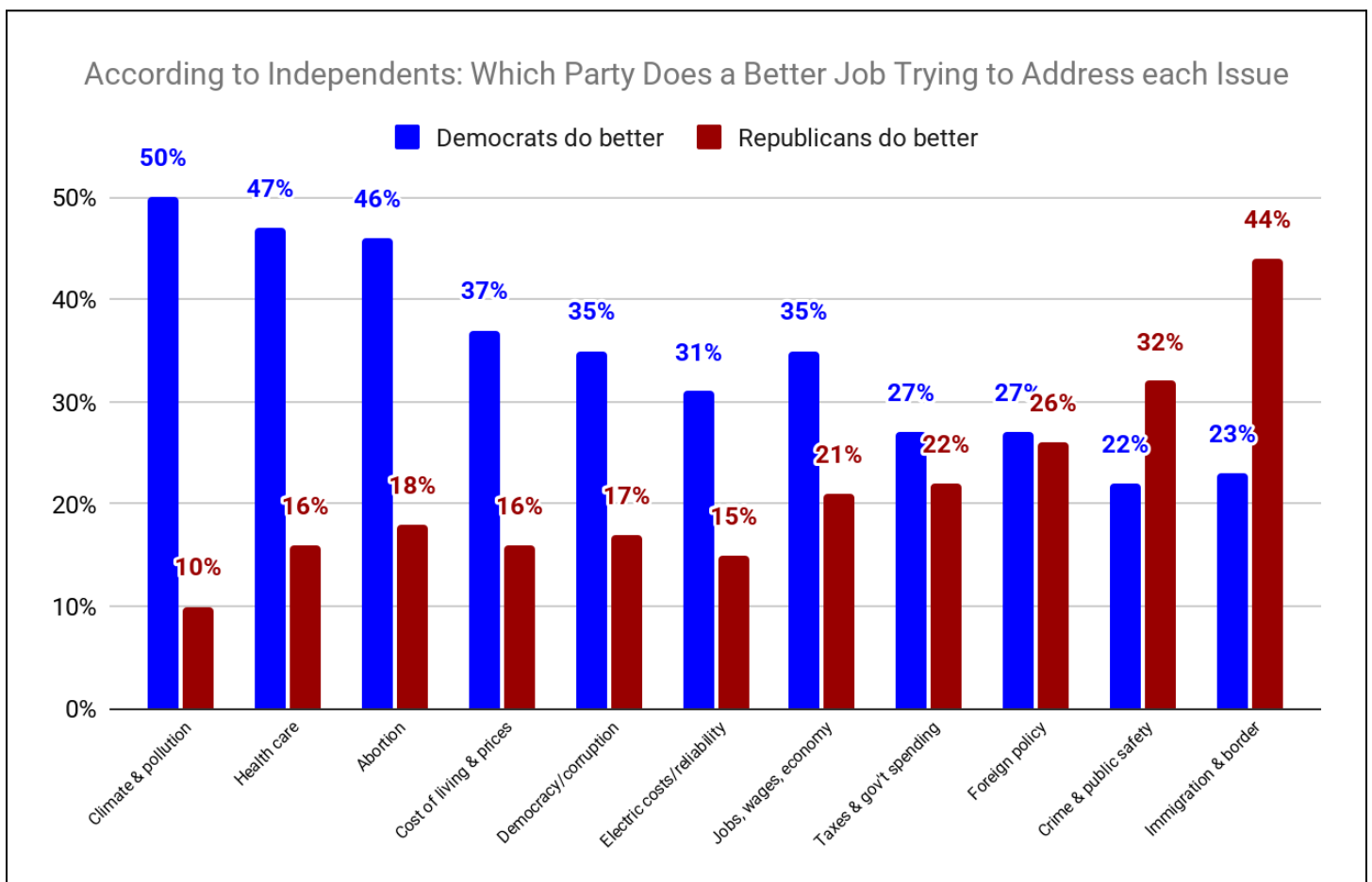
Immigration and the border is Republicans' best issue advantage, with 47% of midterm voters saying that Republicans do a better job on immigration compared to 30% for Democrats.



I. Independent Voters also See Climate Change as Democratic Candidates' Biggest Issue Advantage.

Among likely voters who identify as Independents, Democratic candidates' issue advantage on climate change and pollution is even larger than it is within the overall electorate, with 50% of Independents saying that Democrats do a better job trying to address climate change, compared to only 10% who chose Republicans. Independents also give Democrats a big advantage on addressing health care over Republicans (47%-16%).

Independents consider immigration and the border to be Republicans' biggest issue advantage by a 44%-23% margin over Democrats.

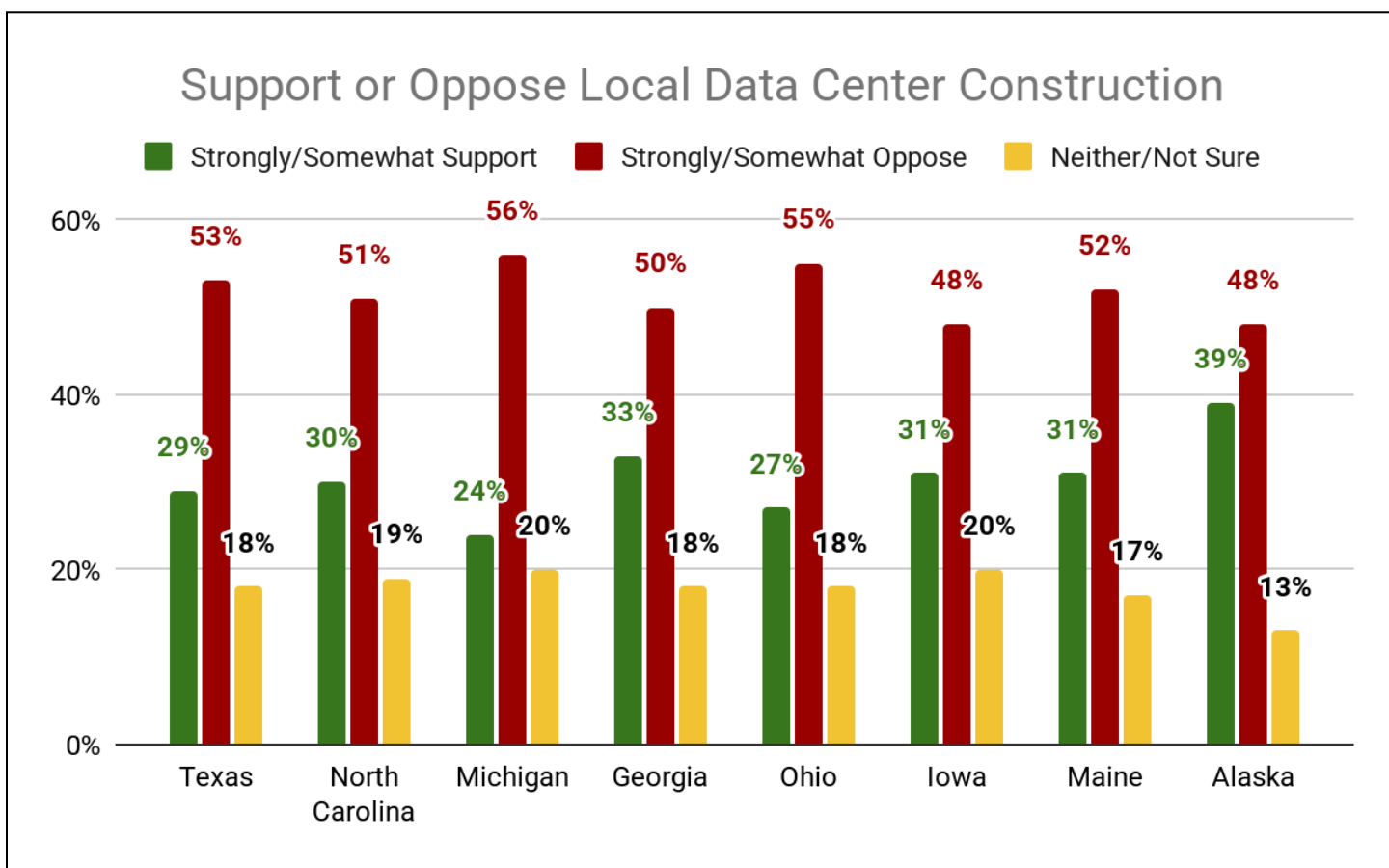


5. Data Centers

A. Voters Oppose Local Data Center Construction by Large Margins, but Less so in Alaska.

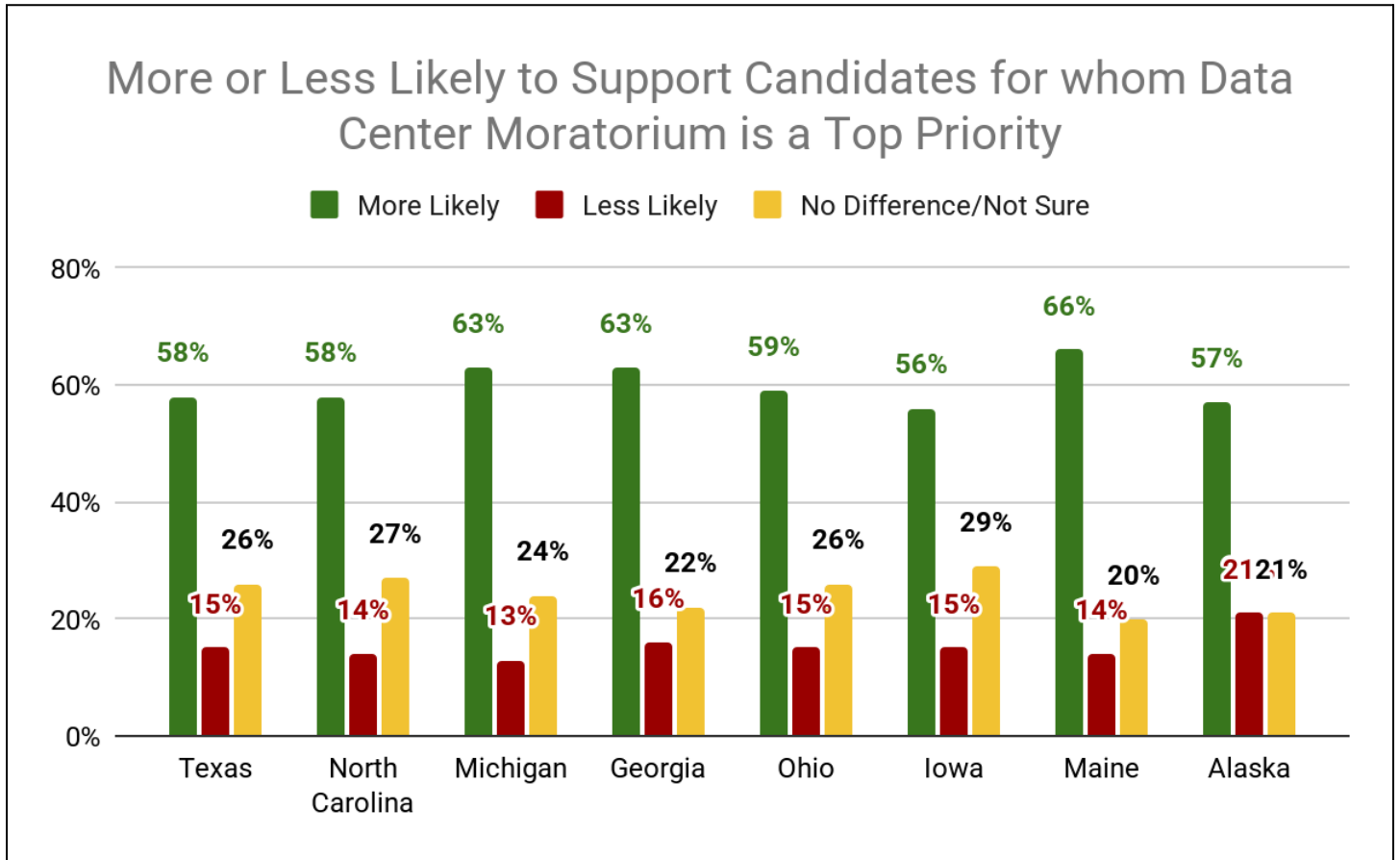
In seven of the eight battleground states surveyed, voters opposed local data center construction by significant margins: from a 17-pt opposition margin in Iowa (48%-31%) up to a 32-pt opposition margin in Michigan (56%-24%).

Alaska was a different story. In Alaska, likely midterm voters still disapprove of local data center construction, but by a relatively small 48%-39% margin.



B. 3-in-5 Midterm Voters are More Likely to Support Candidates for whom a Data Center Moratorium is a Top Priority.

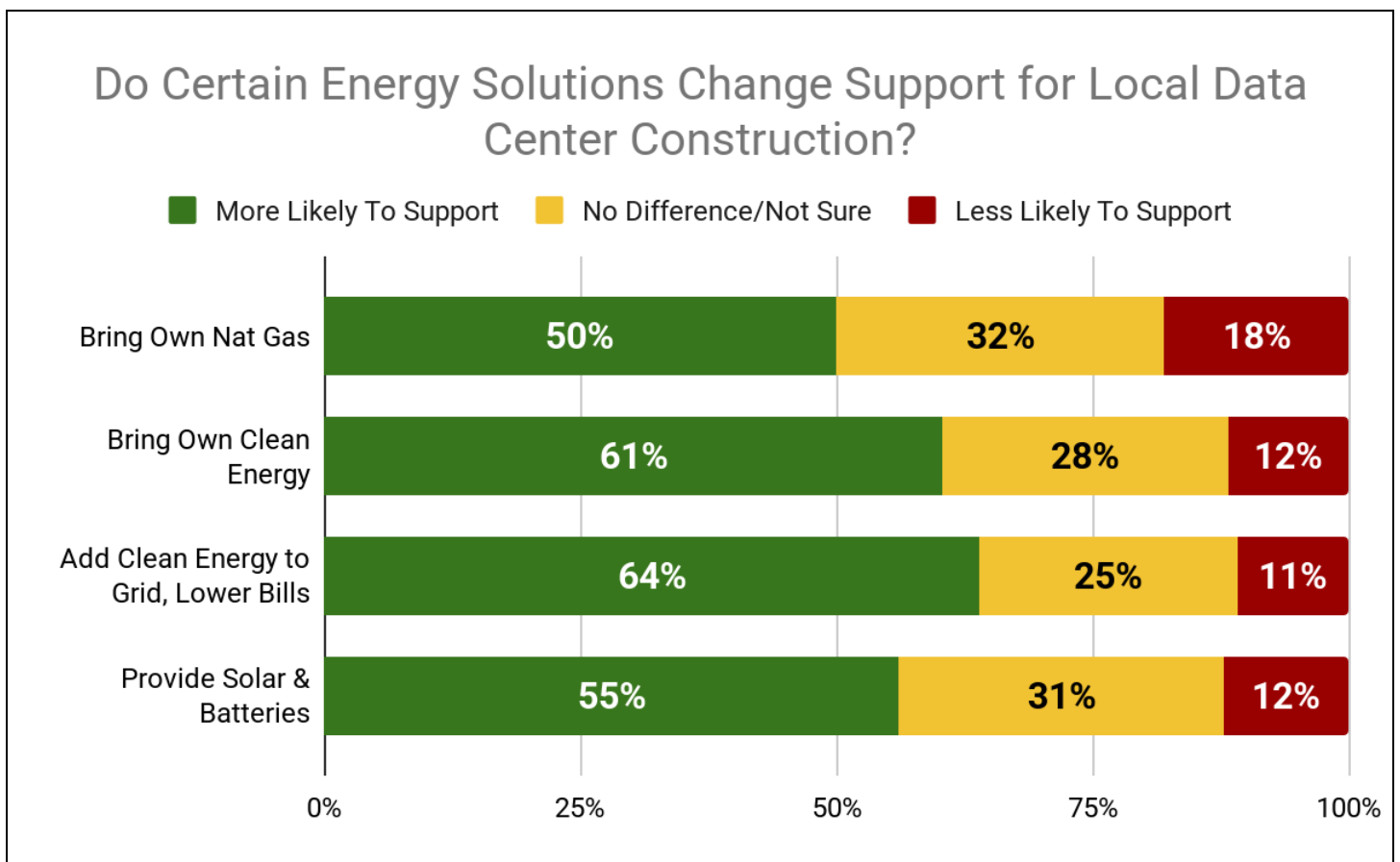
By consistently large margins in all eight states surveyed, midterm voters are more likely to support candidates for whom pausing approval of all new data centers in the state would be a top priority.



C. Certain Energy Solutions – Especially New Clean Energy – Increase Support for Data Centers.

Across an average of the eight states surveyed, 50% of voters would be more likely to support local data center construction if developers used their own natural gas power plant to run their operations. 55% of voters would be more likely to support data centers if residents were given solar panels and batteries for their homes, and 61% would be more likely if developers met their electricity needs from their own solar, wind, and battery storage. The most popular way to increase support for local data center construction (64% more likely) was for the data center to “add enough new clean energy to the local grid to cover its electricity use, potentially reducing residents’ electric bills.”

It is not clear whether any of these solutions significantly alters the strong opposition to local data center construction.

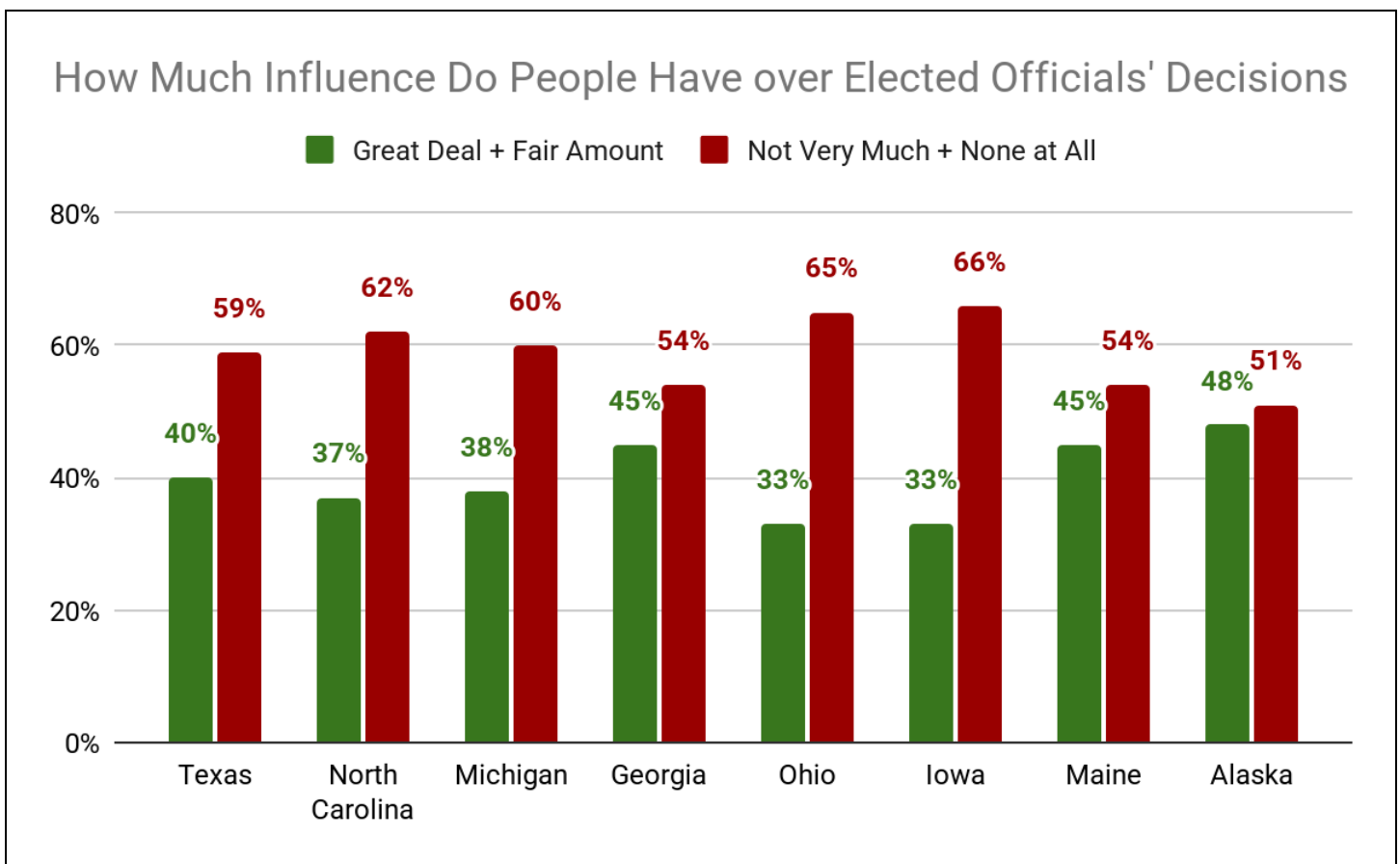


6. Views on Effectiveness of Civic Engagement.

A. Even in Battleground States, Most Americans Don't Think They Have Much Influence over Political Decision-Making.

Even in battleground states where politicians spend more time appealing to voters, most midterm voters do not feel that people like them have much influence over the decisions made by elected officials. This perceived lack of influence is most prevalent in Iowa and Ohio, where two-thirds of all midterm voters feel they have “not very much influence” or “none at all” over the decisions made by elected officials.

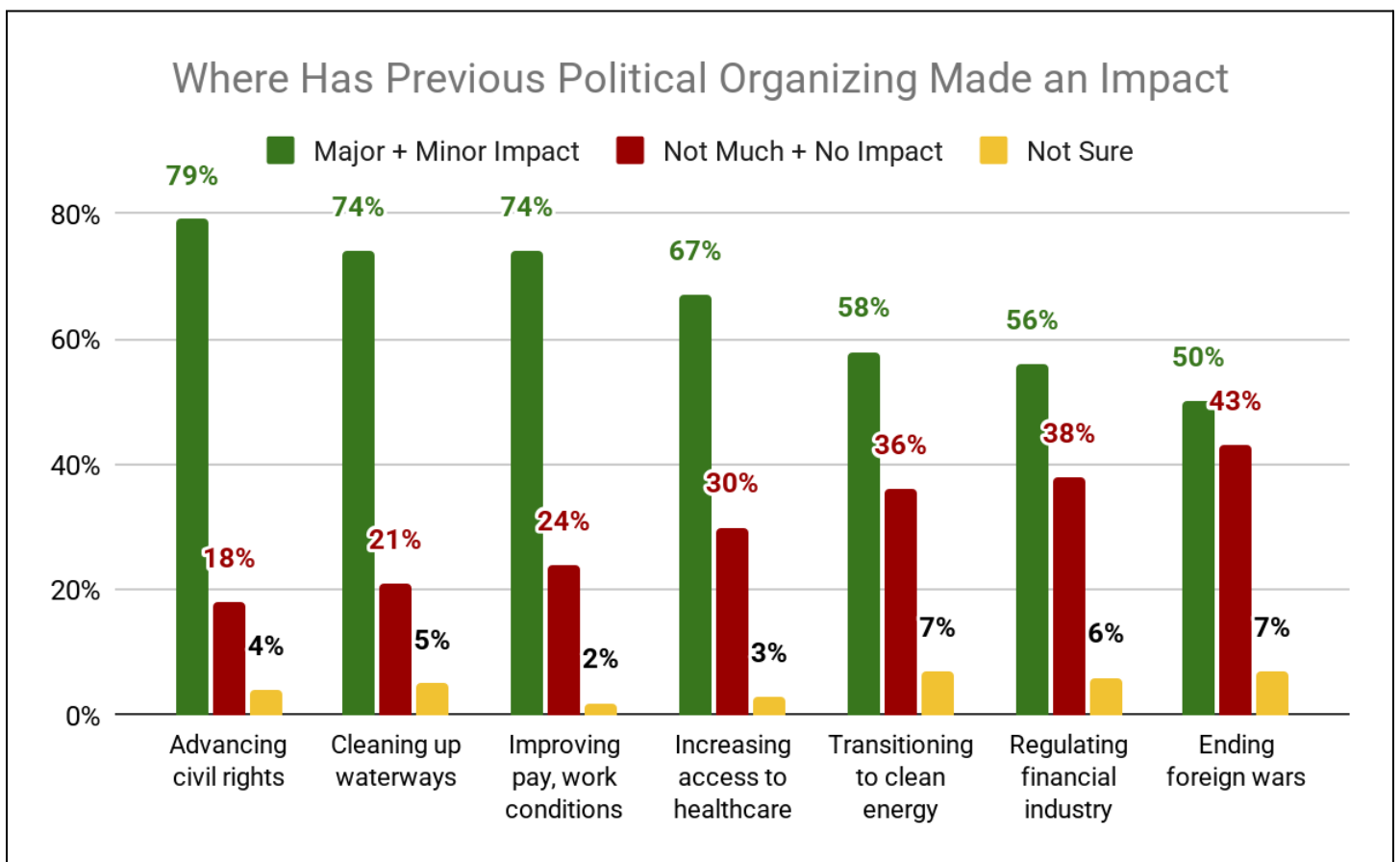
Voters in Maine, Georgia, and Alaska, though, are slightly more likely to think they have influence over political decisions compared to voters in other states. In both Maine and Georgia, 45% of voters feel like they have “a fair amount” or “a great deal” of influence, and the number reaches 48% among Alaskan voters.



B. Voters' Views of Past Organizing Successes and Failures.

When thinking about the past, voters from these eight states felt that political organizing had been fairly successful – to varying degrees – in achieving progress across different social movements. 79% of voters thought that when Americans have organized and worked together, they made either “a major impact” or “a minor impact” in advancing civil rights and 74% felt that way about cleaning up waterways.

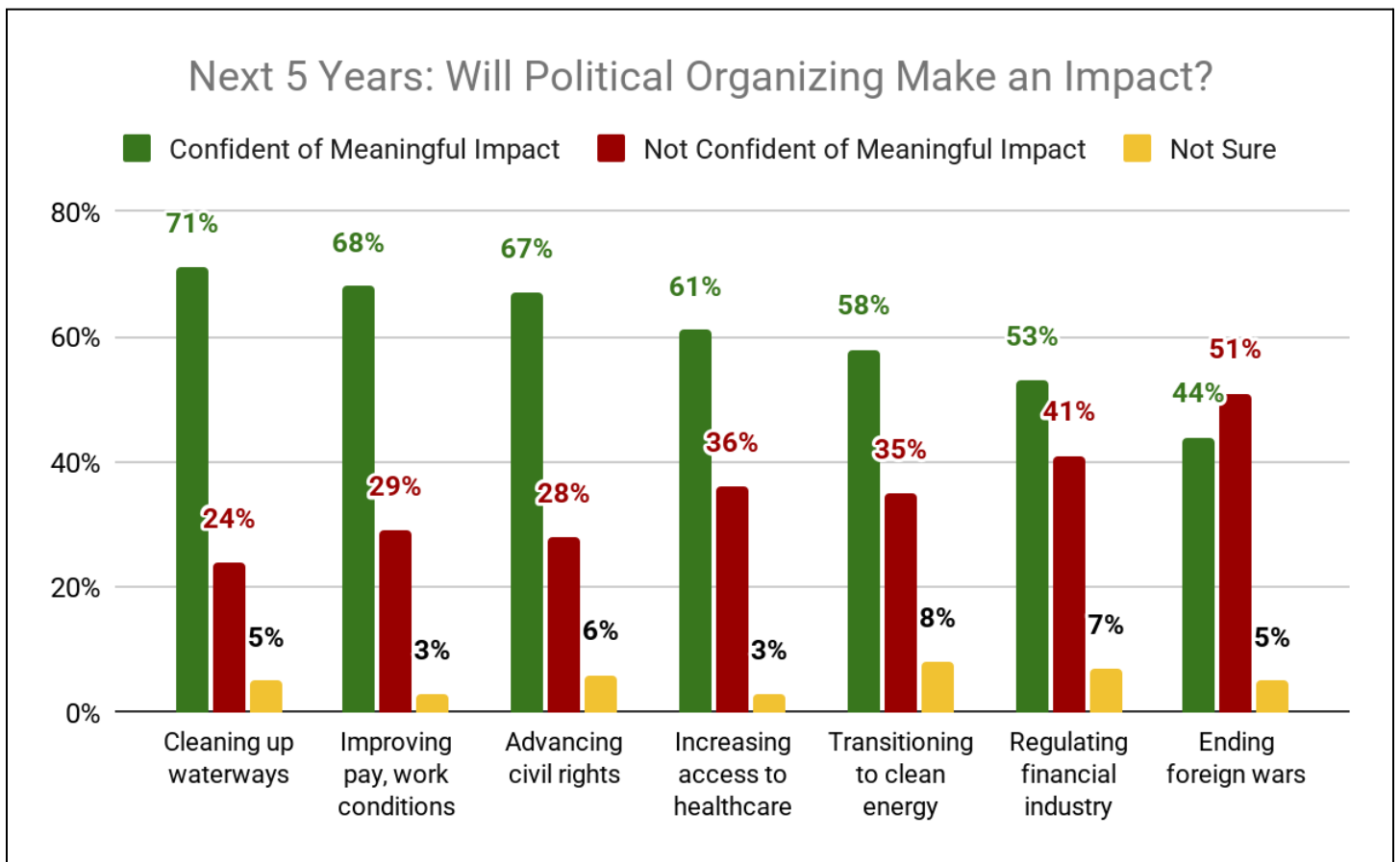
On the other hand, a fair number of voters said that past organizing efforts have had “not much impact” or “no impact at all” on certain issues, such as the 38% who see a lack of impact on regulating the financial industry and the 43% who see a lack of impact on ending foreign wars.



C. Voters' Confidence in Future Organizing Successes and Failures.

When asked to look ahead over the next five years, battleground state voters were a bit more pessimistic than their views of the past, yet they still largely thought that Americans can make a meaningful impact when they organize and work together on various issues.

71% of voters said they were “very” or “somewhat” confident that we could make a meaningful impact on cleaning up the country’s waterways, and 68% were confident we could improve pay and working conditions. Only 44% of voters were confident we could work together to end foreign wars over the next five years.



D. Does Understanding of Past Organizing Success Impact Confidence in Future Success?

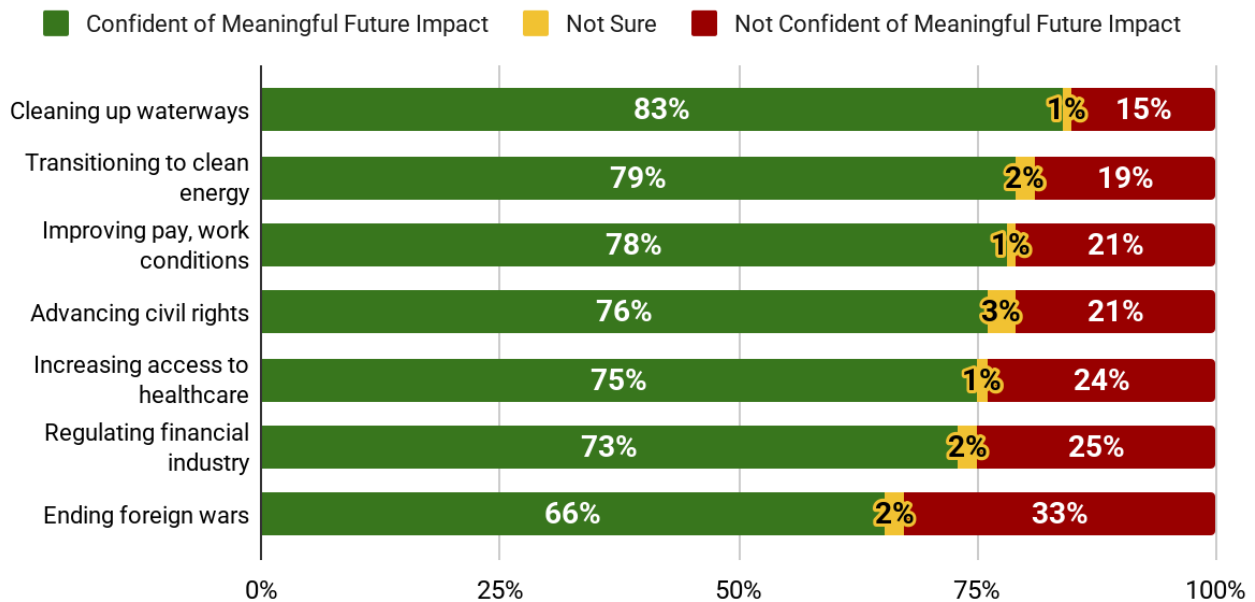
Recent [research](#) shows that Americans are more likely to engage in collective climate action if they believe similar climate solutions have worked in the past. This survey's results reinforce those findings with evidence of strong correlations between voters' views of past organizing success vs. failure and their confidence in future organizing success vs. failure.

The first chart below shows that, among those voters who said that past political organizing had been successful for a specific issue, consistent majorities of at least two-thirds were also confident of future meaningful impact in that particular issue area.

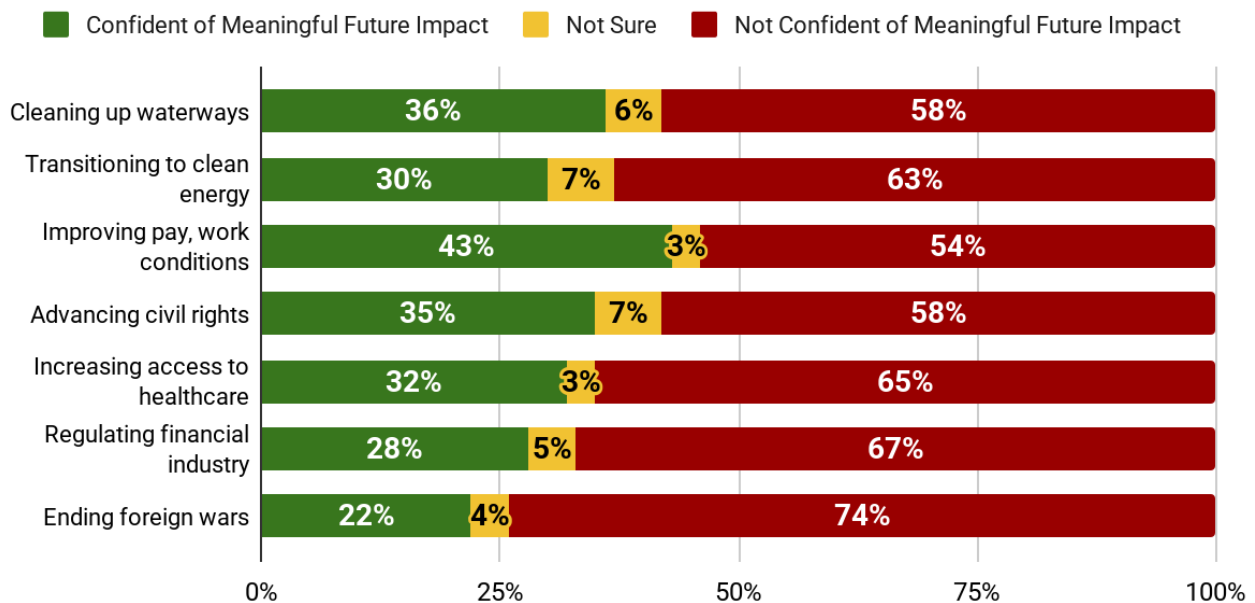
Similarly, the second chart below shows that, among those voters who said that past political organizing had *not* been successful for a specific issue, consistent majorities were also *not* confident of future meaningful impact in that particular issue area.

For example, among battleground voters who said past organizing efforts were impactful in transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy, 79% of such voters were also confident of future success in transitioning to clean energy. Yet among the voters who originally did *not* think political organizing had achieved successes in the clean energy transition, 63% were similarly unhopeful about future success in that area.

Confidence of Future Impact Among Those Who Said the Past Was Impactful for that Issue



Confidence of Future Impact Among Those Who Said the Past Was NOT Impactful for that Issue



7. Environmental Voter Project

The Environmental Voter Project (EVP) is a nonpartisan nonprofit that uses data analytics to identify environmentalists who don't vote and then applies cutting-edge behavioral science messaging to nudge them into being more consistent voters. Working in 21 states with thousands of volunteers, EVP will canvass, call, mail, and send digital ads to over 3 million low propensity environmental voters in hundreds of local, state, and federal elections in 2026.

8. Methodology

This survey of likely voters in eight US Senate battleground states was conducted between August 28 and September 11, 2026, by Beacon Research. This survey consists of a total of 5,014 interviews conducted online among likely voters in Alaska (n=460), Iowa (n=506), Maine (n=512), Michigan (n=708), Georgia (n=713), North Carolina (n=707), Ohio (n=507), and Texas (n=901). The survey was offered in English.

Recipients were sourced from a marketplace of online panels. Quotas were used during recruitment to help ensure that each state sample reflected the demographic and political composition of its likely voter population.

To ensure data quality, the survey included attention checks and trap questions designed to identify respondents who were not sufficiently focused on the questions. Respondents who completed the survey improbably fast or otherwise failed established data-quality checks were removed during data cleaning.

Post-stratification weights based on age, gender, race, education, and 2024 presidential vote were applied separately within each state to align each sample with the demographic and political profile of likely voters in that state.

Overall findings reflect an equal-weighted average of the eight battleground states, rather than weighting states according to their relative size. Each state therefore contributed 12.5% to the overall result, regardless of the size of its likely-voter electorate or the number of interviews conducted in that state. Overall results should be

interpreted as a measure of opinion across the battleground states, rather than as an estimate of the combined population of voters living in those states.

This survey was funded by the Environmental Voter Project.