



Voters' Attitudes Toward Social Security in Key States for 2012

Findings from five statewide surveys of likely 2012 voters in Colorado, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, & Virginia

Commissioned by Social Security Works, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare Foundation & Alliance for Retired Americans

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Survey Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered five statewide surveys, which were conducted by telephone by professional interviewers from March 3-10, 2011. The survey reached likely voters in five states:
 - Colorado: 502 likely voters;
 - Florida: 503 likely voters;
 - Minnesota: 584 likely voters;
 - Missouri: 502 likely voters;
 - Virginia: 603 likely voters.
- Each state's survey is representative of likely voters in each respective state. The "total" data contained in this document combines the data from all five state surveys, with each state weighted equally.
- Telephone numbers for the base sample were drawn from a listed voter sample. The sample was stratified geographically based on the proportion of likely voters in each region of the state. Data have been weighted slightly by gender, age, education, race, marital status, region, and party identification to reflect the attributes of the actual population in each state. The margin of error for the combined, "total" survey data is +/- 1.9 percentage points. The margin of error for the surveys in Colorado, Florida, and Missouri is +/- 4.4 percentage points. The margin of error for the survey in Minnesota is +/- 4.1 percentage points, and Virginia is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

Key Findings

- **The issue of Social Security could play a major role in the 2012 U.S. Senate elections in Colorado,* Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, and Virginia, especially among swing voters. Because voters adamantly oppose cutting Social Security to deal with the deficit, this could be a real wedge issue.**
- **As we have seen nationwide, voters in these states see little relationship between the deficit and Social Security. Despite negative rhetoric, Social Security is a highly popular program that voters across all political and demographic groups want to protect.**
- **Across party lines, voters in the five key states strongly oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit (74 percent oppose, 19 percent favor). Swing voters across the key states feel strongly on this measure: 77 percent of those undecided on who they will vote for in a generic ballot for Senate* in 2012 are opposed to cutting Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit (71 percent strongly opposed) and 72 percent of independents are opposed (66 percent strongly oppose). Additionally, strong majorities of Democrats (86 percent), Republicans (64 percent), and Tea Party supporters (57 percent) oppose cutting benefits. Strong opposition to cutting benefits for deficit reduction is also cross-generational (70 percent of voters under age 30 oppose cutting benefits; 69 percent aged 30-39; 70 percent aged 40-49; 78 percent aged 50-64; and 79 percent aged 65 and older).**
- **This has electoral impacts: at least six in ten voters across the key states say they would be less likely to vote for a Senate** candidate who supports cutting benefits to reduce the deficit. Seven in ten Democrats (70 percent) and 54 percent of independents would be *much less* likely to support such a candidate. This issue also has the potential to swing 2012 undecided voters: 56 percent of those who are undecided in a generic 2012 Senate* ballot would be *much less* likely to vote for a candidate who supports cutting Social Security benefits for deficit reduction.**

*Colorado voters were asked the generic 2012 ballot question for House of Representatives rather than Senate.

**Colorado voters were asked about a Congressional candidate rather than a Senate candidate on this measure.

Key Findings

- In an engaged debate at least seven in ten voters across the key states agree with the Senate** candidate who says that Social Security did not cause the federal deficit and should not be on the table for cuts to address the deficit because it is funded by and belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program, over the candidate who calls for cutting Social Security to avoid burdening future generations with debt. This view is strong across party lines and among swing voters, with 77 percent of undecided voters and 72 percent of independents siding with the Senate candidate who calls for protecting Social Security because it belongs to the people, rather than siding with the candidate who makes the argument that we must cut Social Security to avoid burdening future generations with debt.
- Majorities of voters oppose three specific proposals that would cut Social Security benefits by: Raising the retirement age (59 percent oppose), changing the COLA formula in a way that reduces the amount beneficiaries receive (57 percent oppose), and reducing benefits for people earning above \$60,000 (60% oppose).
- There is strong bipartisan support among key state voters for lifting the cap to impose Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800 and requiring both employees and employers to pay (77 percent of Democrats support; 68 percent of independents; 65 percent of Republicans; 65 percent of Tea Party supporters; and 69 percent of those who are undecided in a generic 2012 Senate* ballot). Further, over half of voters across party lines say they would be *more likely* to vote for a Senate** candidate who supports requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800. This includes 56 percent of those who are undecided on the generic Senate ballot.*
- Across the five key states, six in ten voters favor a proposal that, instead of extending the tax cuts for the top two percent of Americans due to expire in 2012, would have Congress dedicate those additional taxes to guarantee Social Security benefits for the next 75 years. Nearly six in ten 2012 swing voters are in favor of the proposal (59 percent).
- Democratic politicians no longer have the advantage they have traditionally enjoyed on Social Security among voters. Voters in the five key states lean toward believing Republicans in Congress will handle Social Security better than their Democratic counterparts by a margin of two points, and better than President Obama by a margin of four points. These margins are similar among independent voters (Republicans have a four-point advantage over Congressional Democrats; Republicans have a five-point advantage over President Obama). Congressional Republicans also have a lead among voters who are currently undecided about who they will vote for on the generic 2012 Senate ballot.*

*Colorado voters were asked the generic 2012 ballot question for House of Representatives rather than Senate.

**Colorado voters were asked about a Congressional candidate rather than a Senate candidate on this measure.



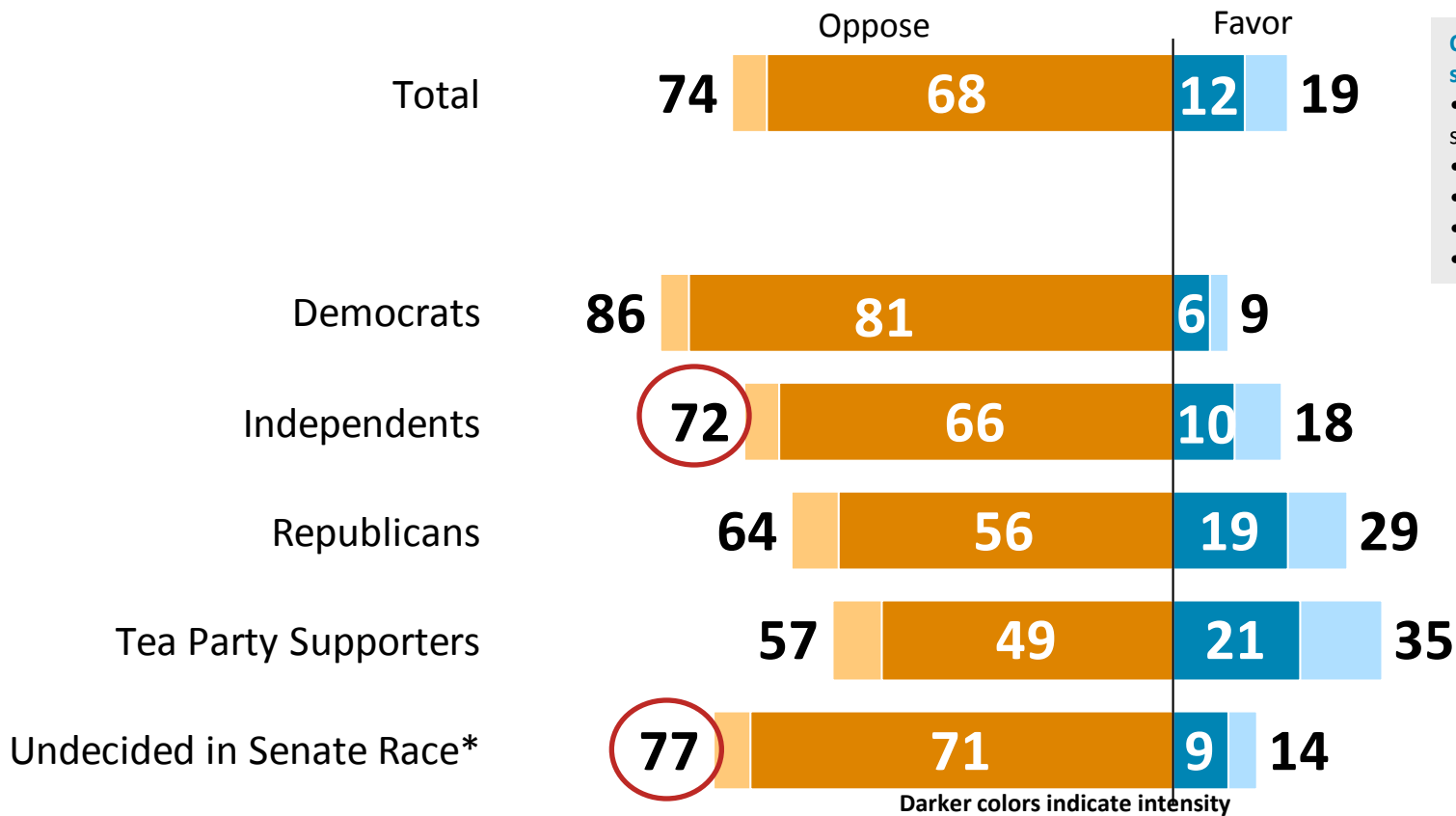
Reactions to Cutting Social Security Benefits in Order to Reduce the Deficit

Across the key states, there is strong, widespread opposition to cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit. This holds across Democratic, Republican and independent voters, as well as Tea Party supporters. Swing voters—those undecided on who they will vote for in a generic 2012 Senate ballot—are also strongly opposed to cutting Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit.



Three-quarters of voters in the key states oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, with two-thirds strongly opposed. Strong opposition carries across party lines and among independent voters and those currently undecided on who they will vote for in the 2012 Senate race.*

Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce the Federal Deficit



Opposition holds across all five states:

- Colorado – 71% oppose (66% strongly oppose)
- Florida – 76% (70%)
- Minnesota – 72% (65%)
- Missouri – 78% (71%)
- Virginia – 75% (67%)

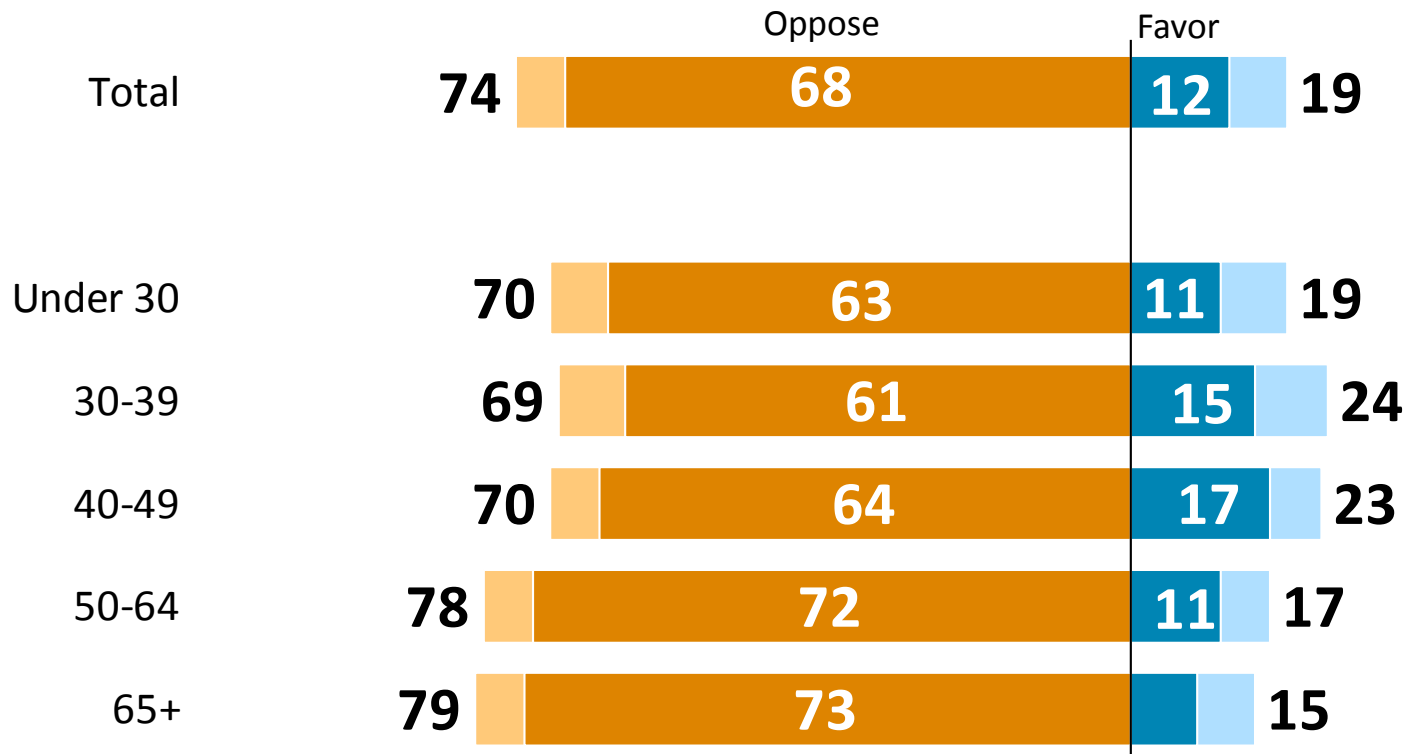
Would you favor or oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?]

*In Colorado, voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012



Across age groups, sizeable majorities of voters in the key states strongly oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit.

Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce the Federal Deficit



Majorities of all demographic subgroups oppose cutting benefits to reduce the deficit.

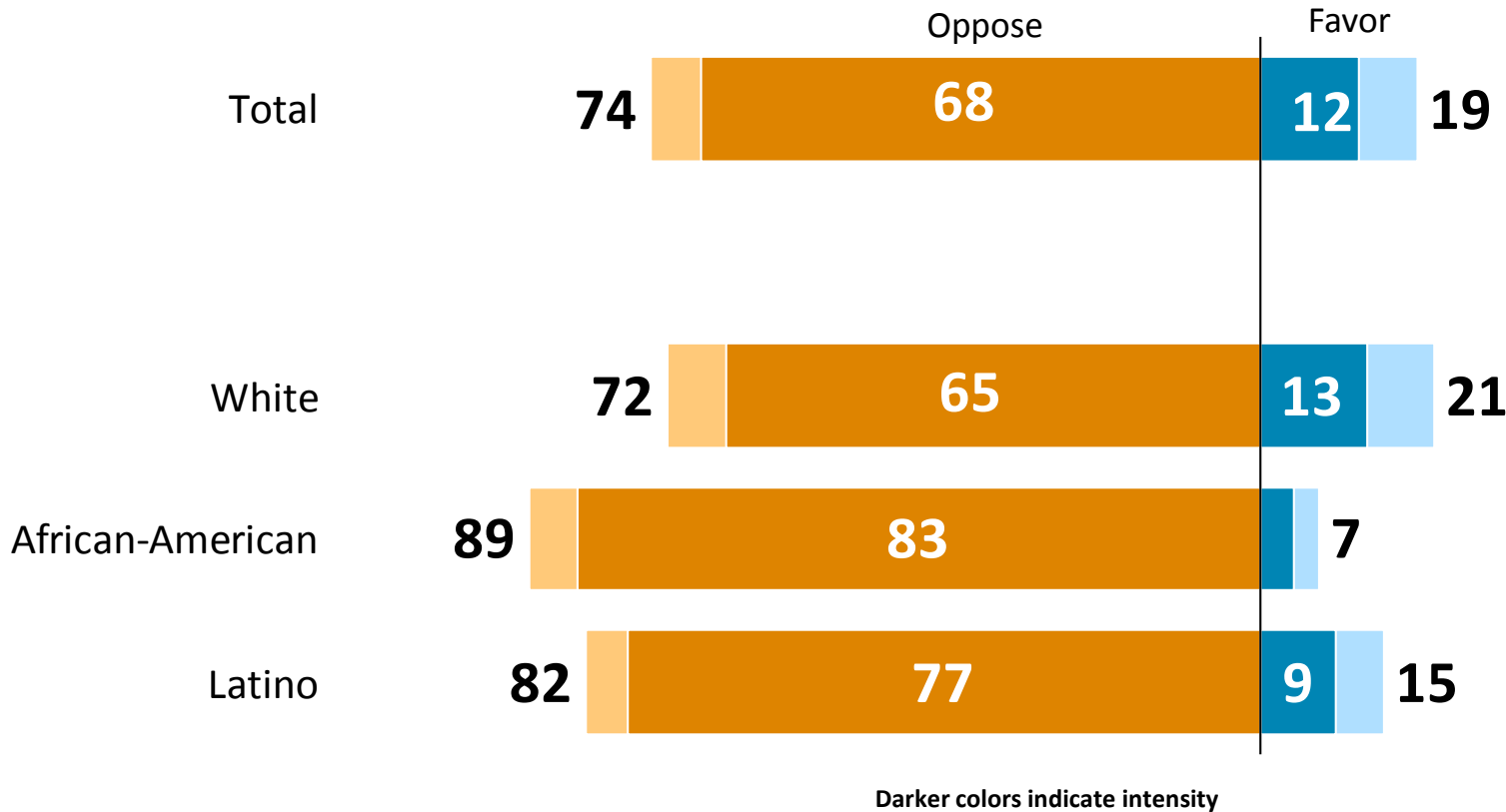
Darker colors indicate intensity

Would you favor or oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?]



Overwhelming majorities of African-American and Latino voters in the key states strongly oppose cutting Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit.

Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce the Federal Deficit



Opposition is especially strong among African-American women (85% strongly oppose) and Latino women* (82% strongly oppose).

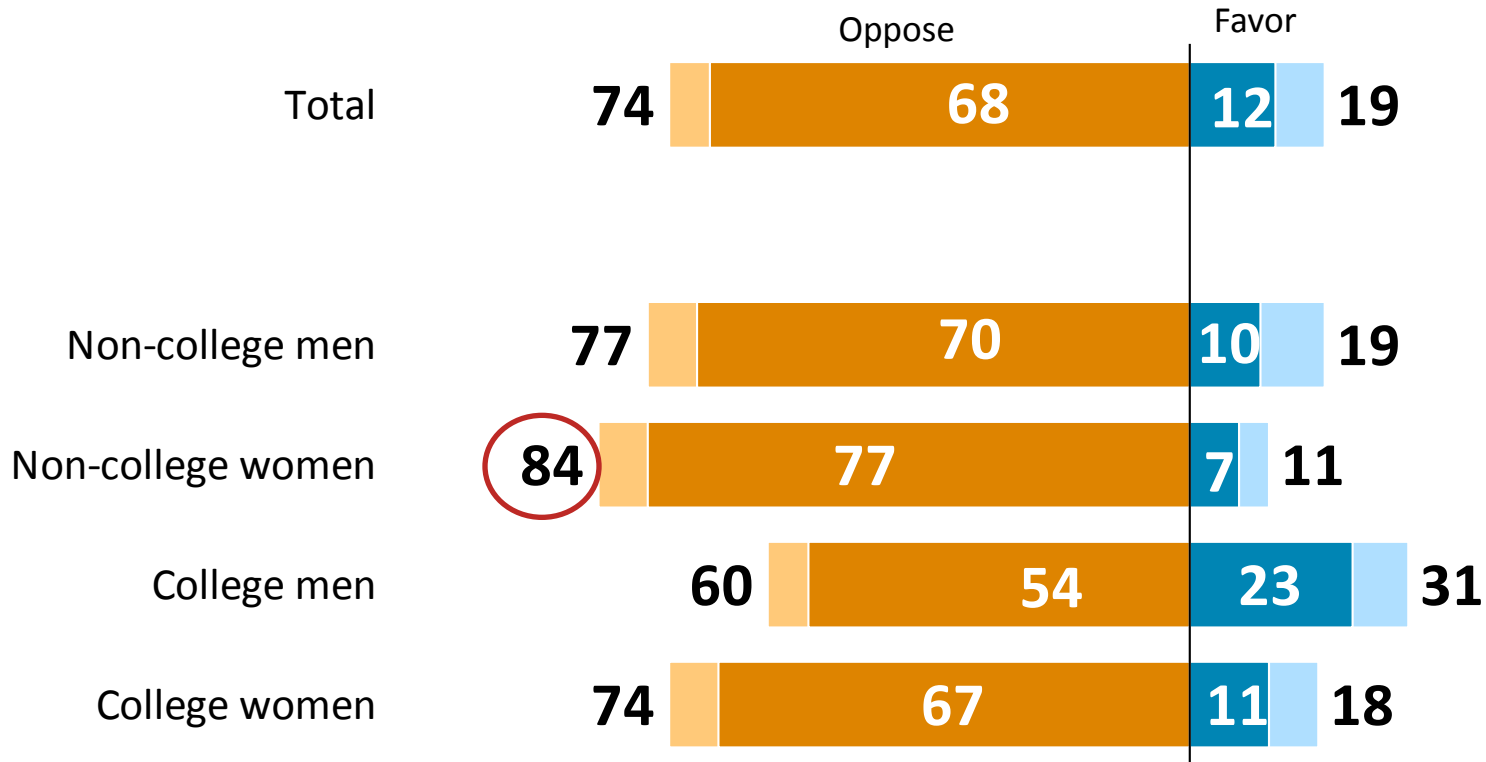
*Note small sample size

Would you favor or oppose cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?]



Opposition to cutting Social Security benefits for deficit reduction is particularly robust among blue-collar voters in the key states, particularly among blue-collar women.

Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce the Federal Deficit



--82 percent of white blue-collar women oppose cutting Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit (74 percent strongly oppose).

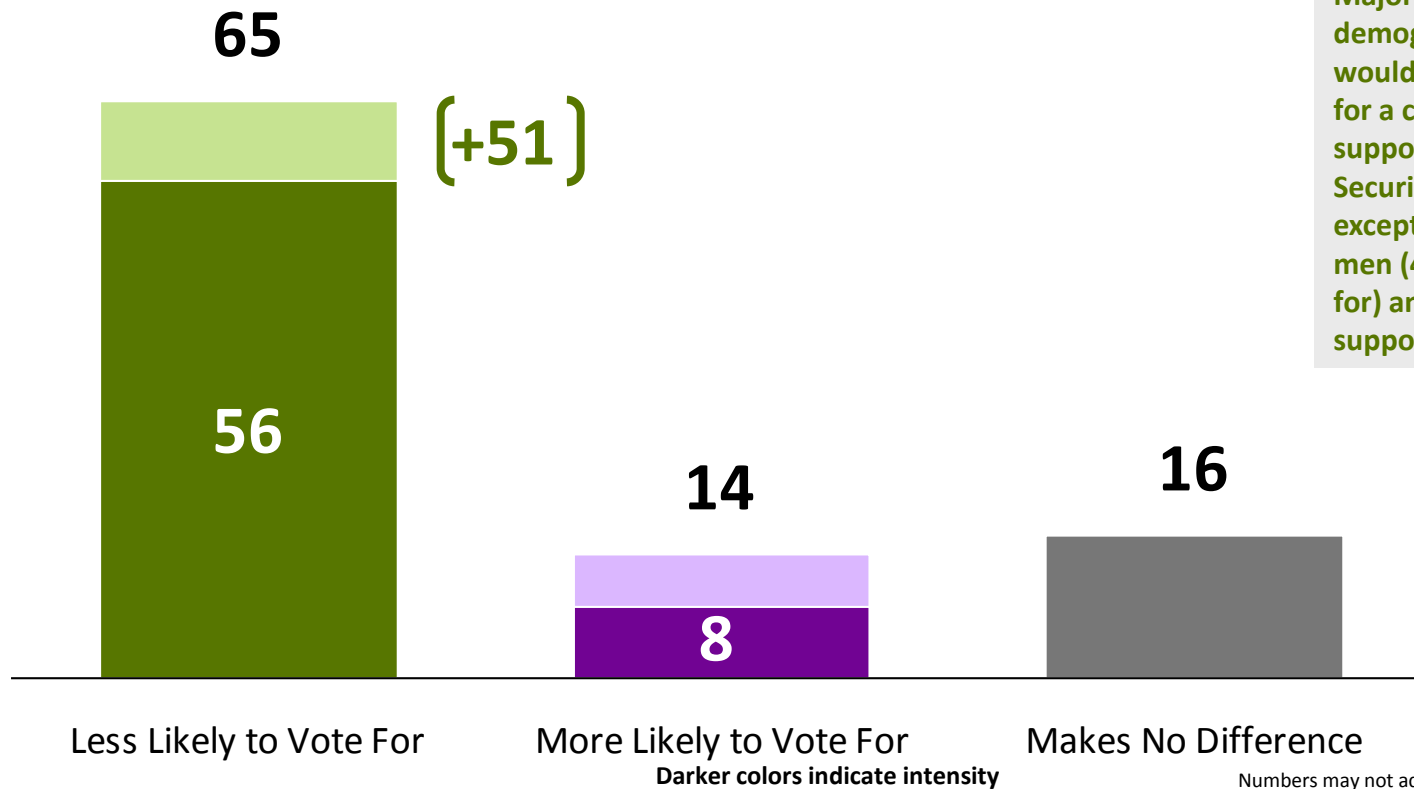
--74 percent of white blue-collar men oppose (69 percent strongly oppose).

Darker colors indicate intensity



Two-thirds of voters in the key states say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit. Over half would be much less likely to vote for such a candidate.

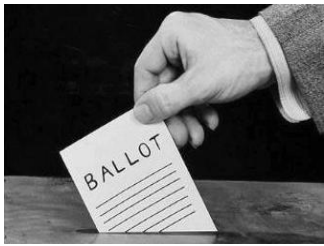
More or Less Likely to Vote for a Senate Candidate* Who Supports Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce the Deficit



Majorities of all demographic subgroups would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports cutting Social Security benefits, with the exception of Republican men (47% less likely to vote for) and Tea Party supporters (48%).

And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that MUCH MORE/LESS or SOMEWHAT MORE/LESS?]

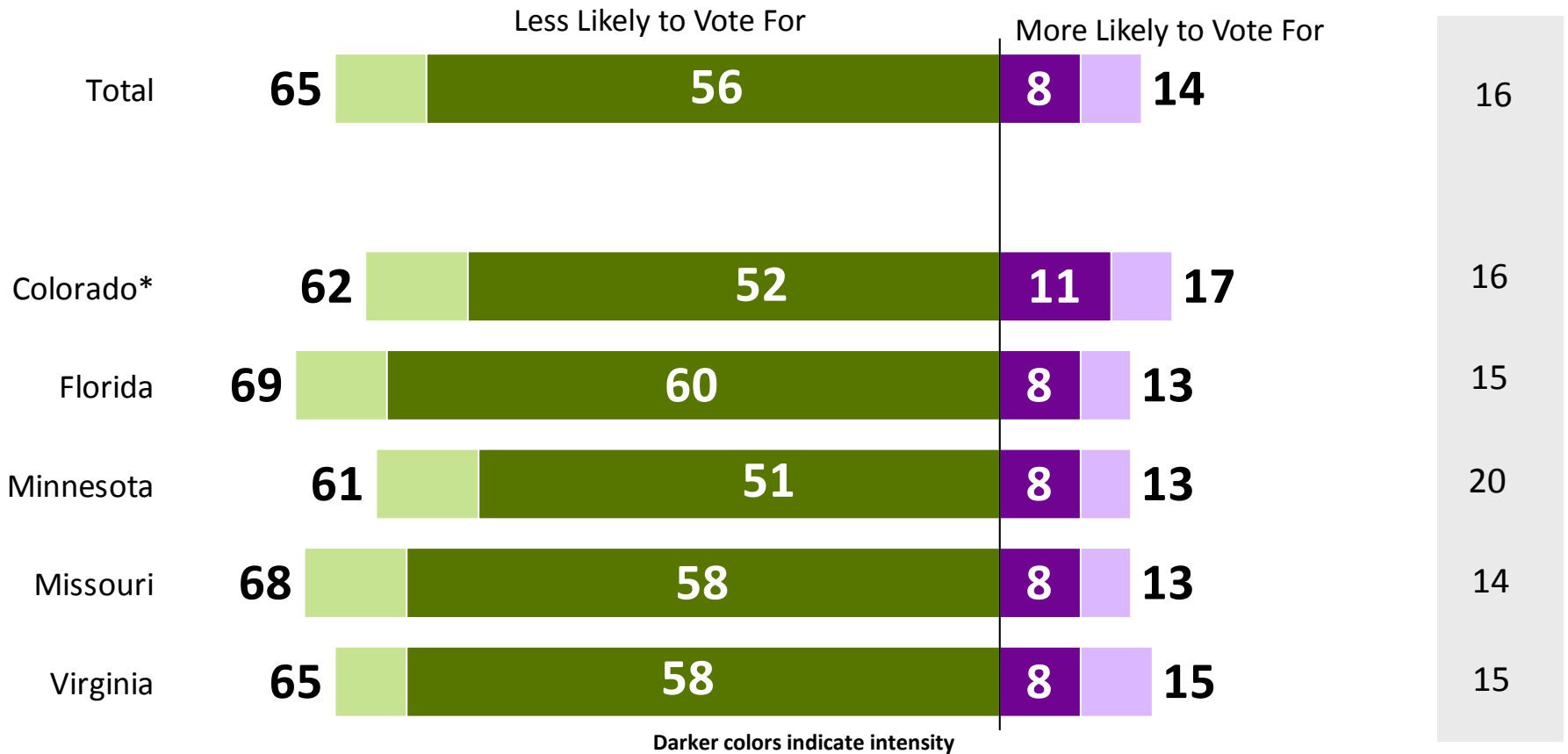
*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate *for Congress* who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you?



Across the five key states, robust majorities of voters would be less likely to vote for a candidate who would cut benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit.

Candidate Who Supports Cutting Social Security Benefits to Reduce Deficit

No Difference

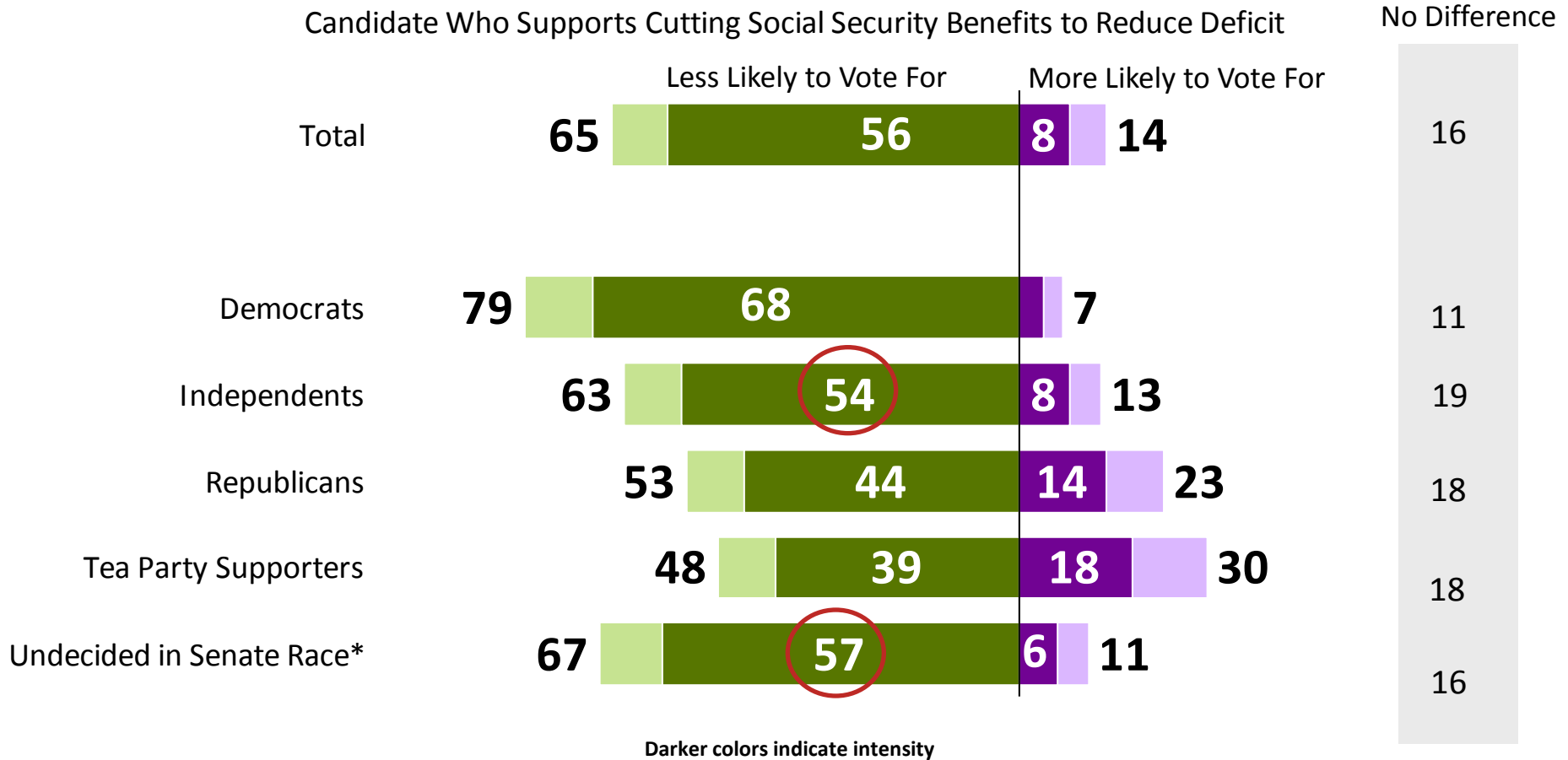


And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that MUCH MORE/LESS or SOMEWHAT MORE/LESS?]

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you?



Majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans in the key states say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate if that candidate supported cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, including nearly six in ten swing voters on the generic 2012 Senate ballot* who say they would be much less likely.

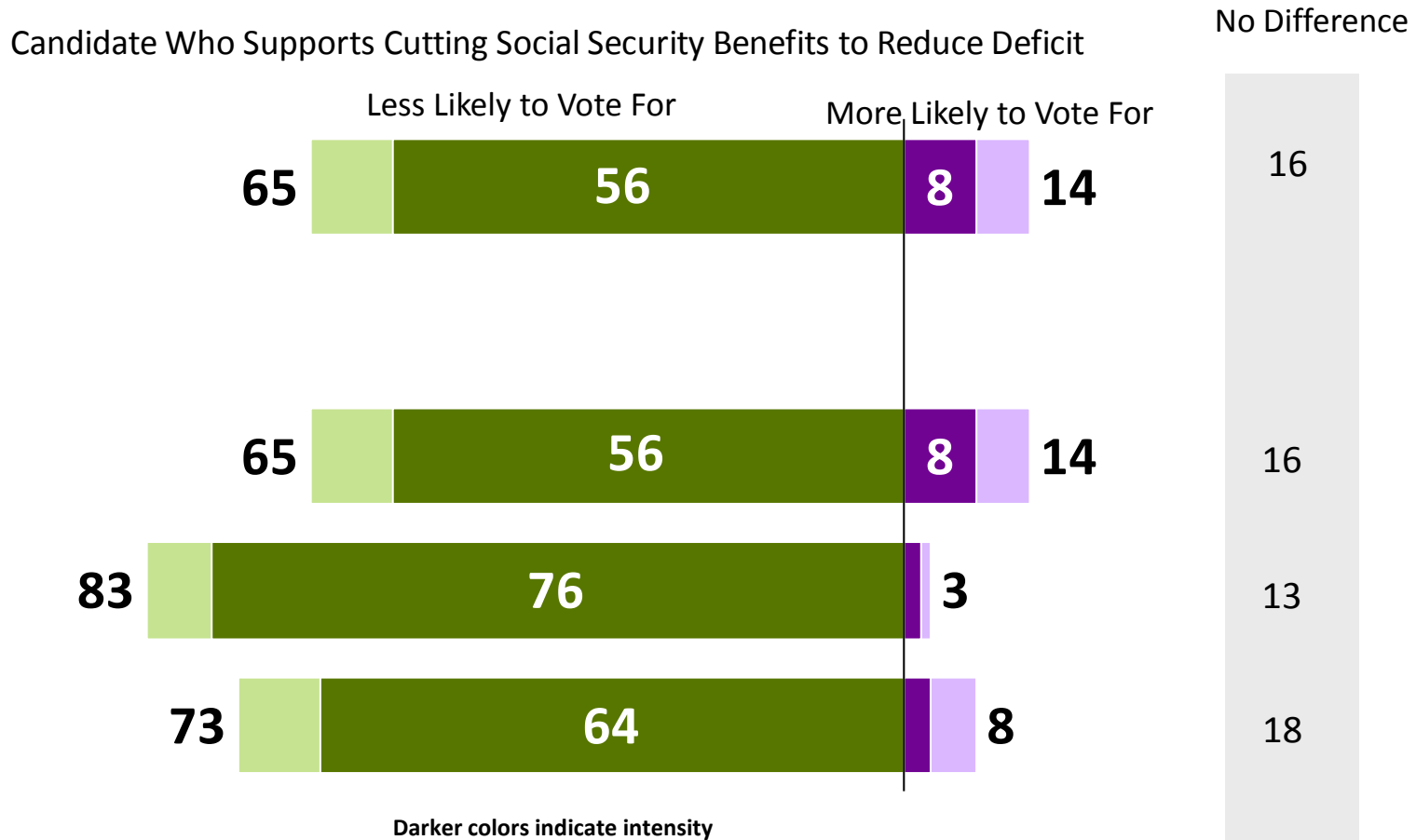


And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that MUCH MORE/LESS or SOMEWHAT MORE/LESS?]

COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you? *Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.



Three-quarters of African-American voters and nearly two-thirds of Latino voters in the key states say they would be much less likely to vote for a candidate who would cut benefits for deficit reduction.



And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you? [IF MORE/LESS: Is that MUCH MORE/LESS or SOMEWHAT MORE/LESS?]

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: And, please tell me, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supports cutting Social Security benefits in order to reduce the federal deficit, or would it make no difference to you?

In an engaged debate three-quarters of voters agree with the candidate who says that Social Security should not be on the table for cuts to address the deficit because it is funded by and belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program. They pick this candidate over one who makes the argument that we must cut Social Security to avoid burdening future generations.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

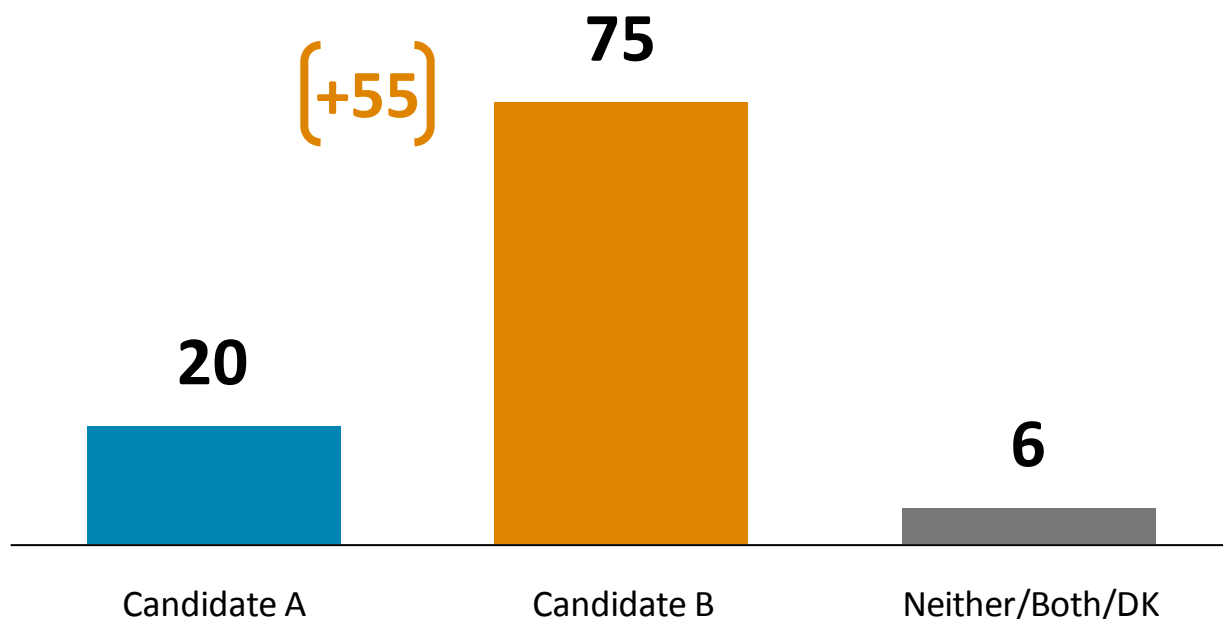
Candidate A

Split Sampled question

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security did not cause the federal budget deficit and it is fully funded. Social Security is funded by contributions from working Americans. It belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program, not to the government. Social Security has not contributed to the federal deficit, and should NOT be on the table for cuts to address the deficit.



*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

Over seven in ten independent voters and undecided voters agree with the candidate who says that Social Security did not cause the federal deficit and should not be on the table for cuts to address the deficit because it is funded by and belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Candidate A

Split Sampled question

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security did not cause the federal budget deficit and it is fully funded. Social Security is funded by contributions from working Americans. It belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program, not to the government. Social Security has not contributed to the federal deficit, and should NOT be on the table for cuts to address the deficit.

	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	20%	75%	+55
Democrats	9%	87%	+78
Independents	22%	72%	+50
Republicans	31%	64%	+33
Tea Party Supporters	36%	57%	+21
Undecided in Senate race**	16%	76%	+60

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view. **Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.

Overall, support for a candidate who argues that Social Security belongs to the people who have paid into the program it should not be considered for cuts is consistent across these states...

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Candidate A Split Sampled question

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Candidate B:

Says Social Security did not cause the federal budget deficit and it is fully funded. Social Security is funded by contributions from working Americans. It belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program, not to the government. Social Security has not contributed to the federal deficit, and should NOT be on the table for cuts to address the deficit.

	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	20%	75%	+55
Colorado*	25%	70%	+45
Florida	21%	74%	+53
Minnesota	18%	76%	+58
Missouri	17%	76%	+59
Virginia	18%	78%	+59

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

...and across racial groups and age cohorts.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Candidate A

Split Sampled question

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security did not cause the federal budget deficit and it is fully funded. Social Security is funded by contributions from working Americans. It belongs to the people who have worked hard and paid into the program, not to the government. Social Security has not contributed to the federal deficit, and should NOT be on the table for cuts to address the deficit.

	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	20%	74%	+54
Under 30	25%	68%	+43
30-39	21%	74%	+53
40-49	23%	71%	+48
50-64	18%	78%	+58
65 and older	14%	79%	+65
White	21%	73%	+52
African-American	9%	86%	+77
Latino	14%	82%	+68

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

Strong majorities of voters in the five key states—including independents and undecided 2012 voters—are also much more likely to agree with a candidate who says Social Security is a promise that should be kept for current and future generations, over a candidate who argues that Social Security should be on the table for cuts to avoid shackling future generations with massive debt.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

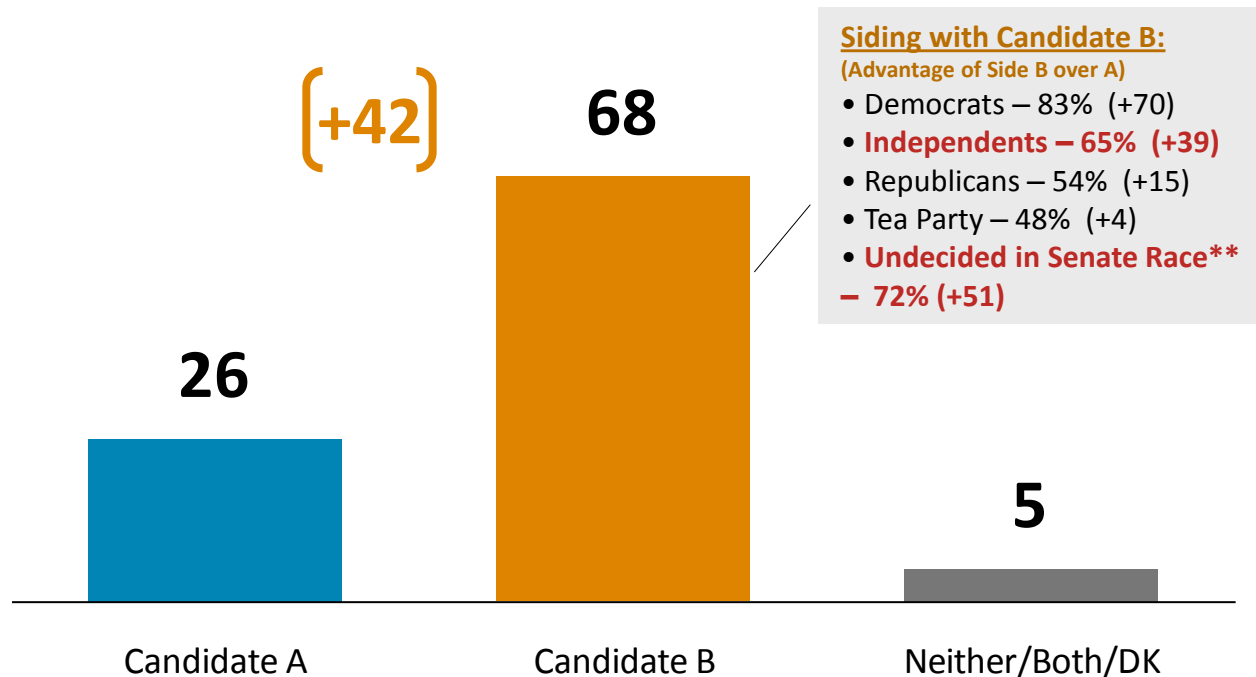
Candidate A

Split Sampled question

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security is a promise made to all generations to provide a basic and reliable retirement income for when they retire, become widowed or disabled, or leave loved ones behind. Americans need to know the promise of Social Security will continue to be kept for them and for future generations.



*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view. **Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.

At least two-thirds of voters in the five key states side with the candidate who argues for protecting the promise of Social Security for current and future generations, rather than the candidate who espouses cutting Social Security to address the deficit.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Split Sampled question

Candidate A

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security is a promise made to all generations to provide a basic and reliable retirement income for when they retire, become widowed or disabled, or leave loved ones behind. Americans need to know the promise of Social Security will continue to be kept for them and for future generations.

	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	26%	68%	+42
Colorado*	27%	67%	+40
Florida	27%	67%	+40
Minnesota	27%	69%	+42
Missouri	27%	67%	+40
Virginia	24%	69%	+45

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

Young and old voters alike side with a candidate who says Social Security is a promise that should be kept for current and future generations, by margins of at least two-to-one.

*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Split Sampled question

Candidate A

Says it is simply wrong to shackle future generations with such a massive debt burden. We must cut our entitlement spending now to leave our children and grandchildren a better future. Everything has to be on the table, including cutting Social Security.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security is a promise made to all generations to provide a basic and reliable retirement income for when they retire, become widowed or disabled, or leave loved ones behind. Americans need to know the promise of Social Security will continue to be kept for them and for future generations.

	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	26%	68%	+42
Under 30	33%	65%	+32
30-39	31%	61%	+30
40-49	31%	63%	+32
50-64	24%	70%	+46
65 and older	19%	76%	+57
White	28%	65%	+37
African-American	10%	85%	+75
Latino	17%	78%	+61

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.



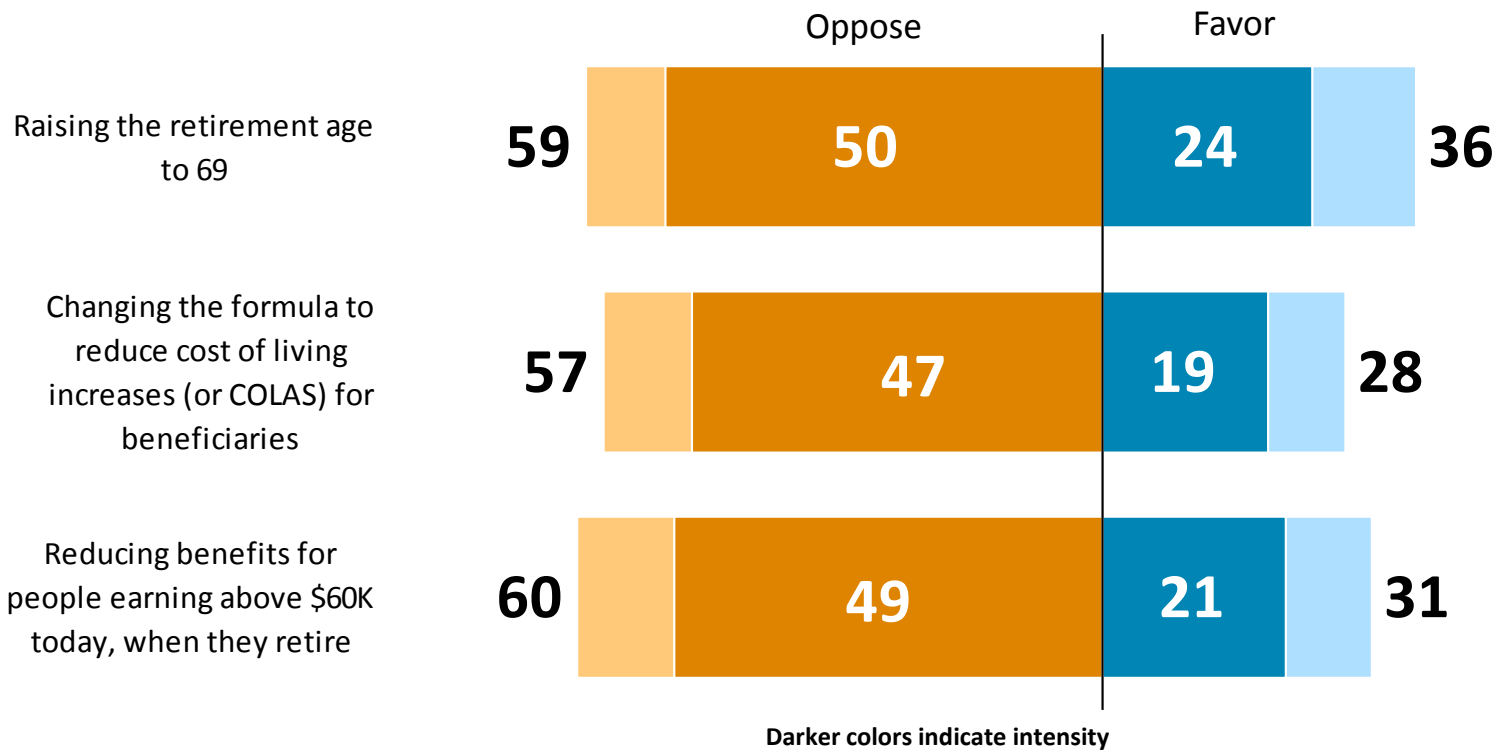
Reactions to Specific Cuts to Social Security Benefits

Across the five key states, there is solid opposition among voters to raising the retirement age, changing the COLA formula in a way that reduces the amount beneficiaries receive, and reducing benefits for people earning above \$60,000.



Majorities of voters across the key states oppose three specific proposals that would cut Social Security benefits by: Raising the retirement age, changing the COLA formula in a way that reduces the amount beneficiaries receive, and reducing benefits for people earning above \$60,000.

To Help Make Social Security More Solvent Would You Favor or Oppose.....



Opposition to raising the retirement age is particularly robust among blue-collar voters: 63% of non-college educated voters oppose raising the retirement age (55% strongly). Fifty-five percent of college-educated voters are opposed (44% strongly).

Here are some changes people are proposing to help make Social Security more solvent. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following proposals to make Social Security more solvent [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?] Q. Raising the retirement age to 69; Q. Changing the formula to reduce cost of living increases – or COLAs—for people receiving Social Security benefits; Q. Reducing Social Security benefits for people earning above \$60,000 today when they retire.

Across the five key states, majorities of voters oppose the three proposals.

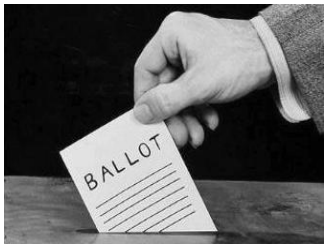
<i>% oppose (% strongly oppose)</i>	Raising the retirement age to 69	Changing COLA formula to reduce benefits	Reducing benefits for those earning above \$60K
Total	60% (50%)	57% (47%)	60% (49%)
Colorado	56% (48%)	59% (50%)	62% (48%)
Florida	60% (51%)	57% (48%)	57% (47%)
Minnesota	58% (49%)	55% (43%)	58% (48%)
Missouri	61% (51%)	56% (47%)	56% (46%)
Virginia	61% (53%)	60% (48%)	66% (54%)

Net opposition to these specific benefit cuts holds across nearly all political affiliations and age groups, though there is some variation among Republicans in different states. Undecided 2012 voters and independent voters are solidly against these specific benefit cuts.

% oppose (% strongly oppose)	Raising the retirement age to 69	Changing COLA formula to reduce benefits	Reducing benefits for those earning above \$60K
Total	60% (50%)	57% (47%)	60% (49%)
Democrats	66% (58%)	65% (55%)	60% (50%)
Independents	59% (51%)	56% (45%)	60% (47%)
Republicans	51% (42%)	51% (42%)	59% (48%)
Tea Party Supporters	46% (39%)	51% (43%)	56% (46%)
Undecided in Senate race**	60% (53%)	58% (46%)	60% (47%)
Under age 30	70% (60%)	44% (35%)*	56% (46%)
30-39	61% (54%)	53% (39%)	63% (49%)
40-49	60% (53%)	58% (50%)	62% (52%)
50-64	61% (52%)	62% (53%)	60% (51%)
65 and older	46% (36%)	60% (51%)	56% (44%)

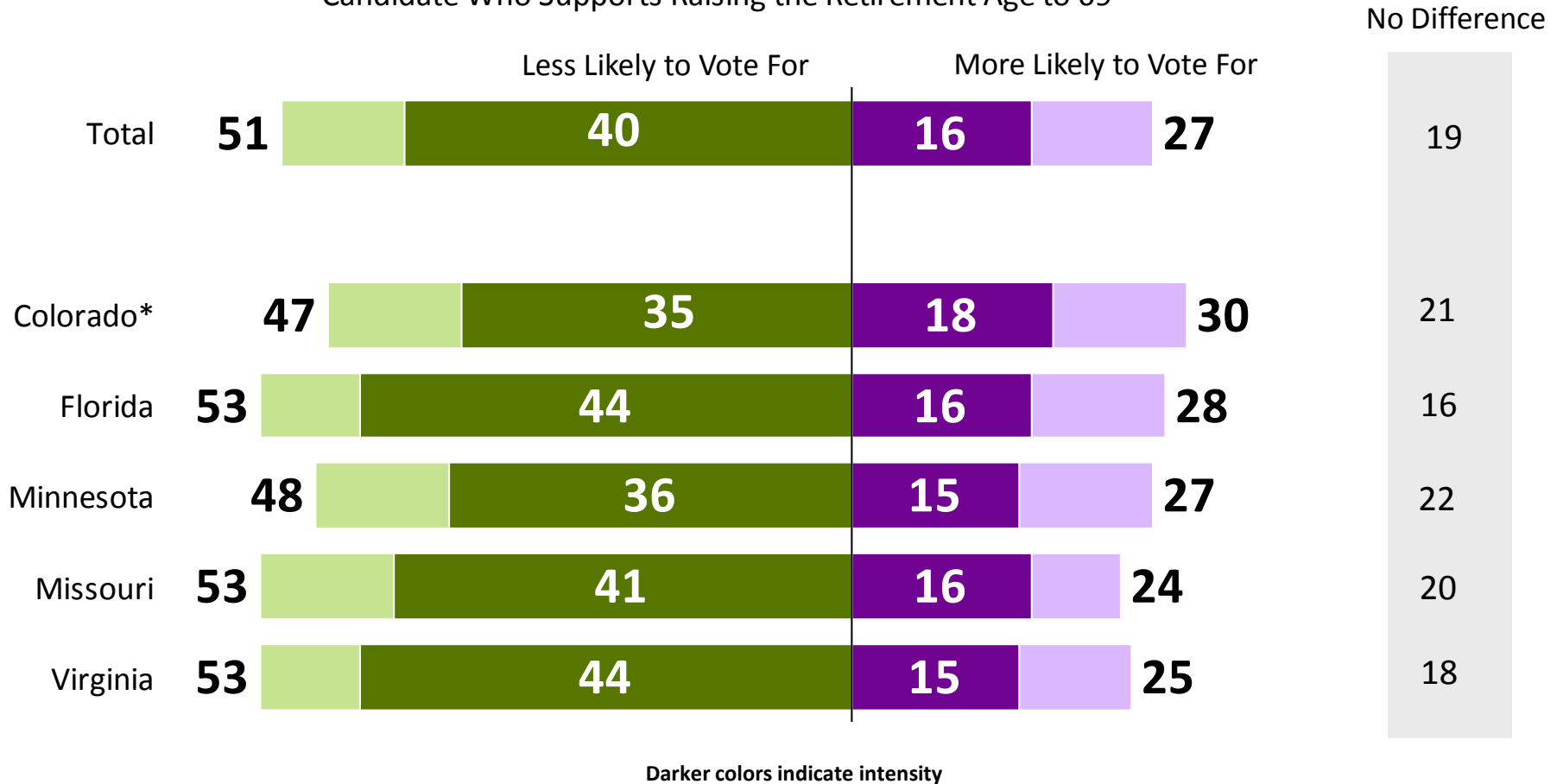
*Voters under age 30 are slightly more opposed (44%) than in favor (42%) of changing the COLA formula in a way that would reduce benefits, but this is within the margin of error.

**Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the *U.S. House of Representatives* for 2012.



A majority of voters in Florida, Missouri and Virginia say they would be less likely to vote for a Senate candidate* who would support raising the retirement age, as do nearly half of voters in Colorado and Minnesota.

Candidate Who Supports Raising the Retirement Age to 69



Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate, or if it would make no difference to you. [IF MORE/LESS LIKELY: Is that much or somewhat more/less likely?] Q. The candidate supports raising the retirement age to 69.

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress, or if it would make no difference to you.



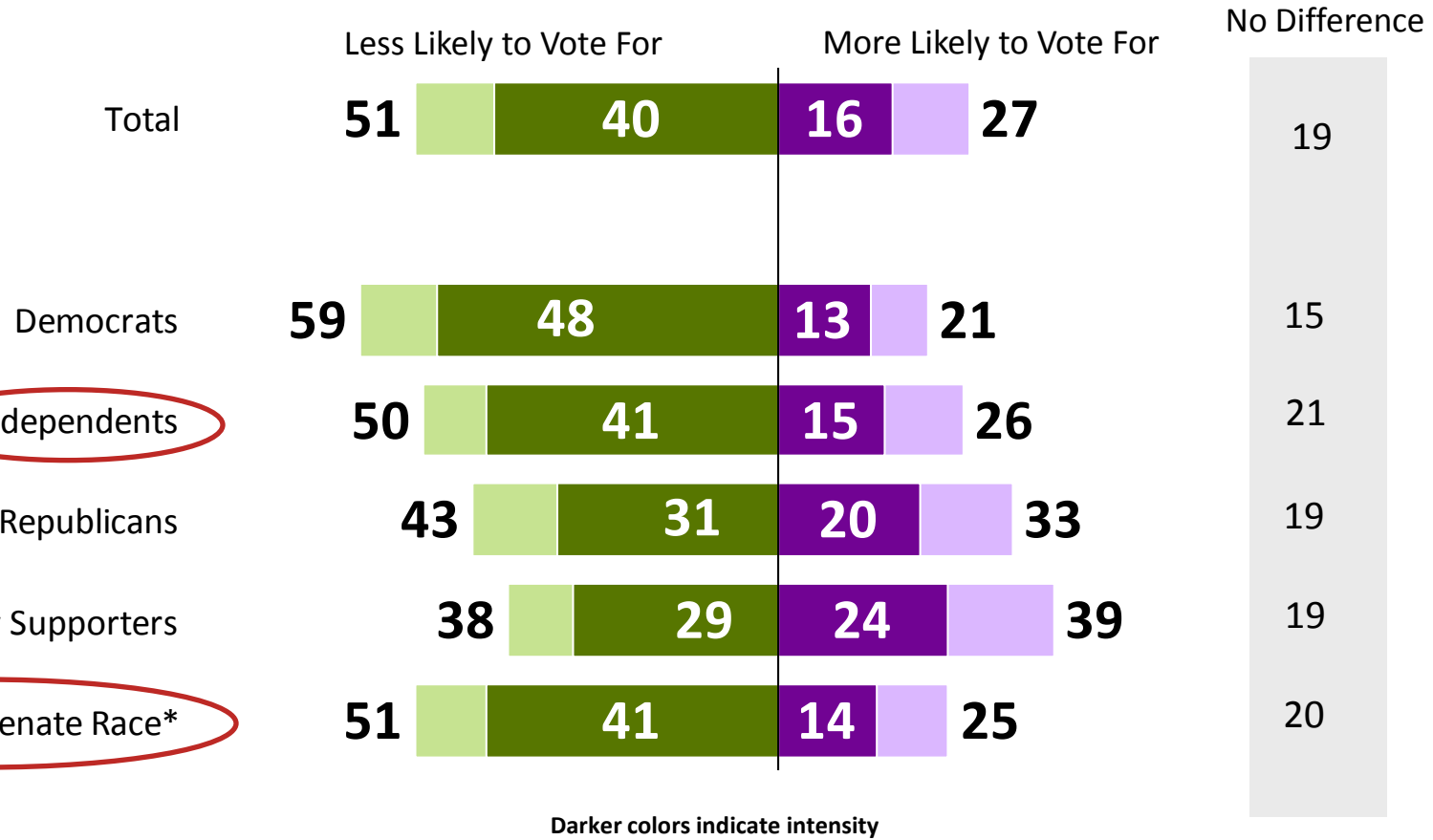
By a margin of two-to-one, independent voters and those currently undecided in the 2012 Senate race* would be less likely to vote for a candidate who would support raising the retirement age. This is also especially unpopular among blue-collar voters in the key states.

Candidate Who Supports Raising the Retirement Age to 69

55 percent of blue-collar voters would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports raising the retirement age (44 percent much less likely). This compares to 46 percent of those with a four-year college degree or more (35 percent would be much less likely).

Independents

Undecided in Senate Race*



Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate, or if it would make no difference to you. [IF MORE/LESS LIKELY: Is that much or somewhat more/less likely?] Q. The candidate supports raising the retirement age to 69.

COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress, or if it would make no difference to you. *Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.



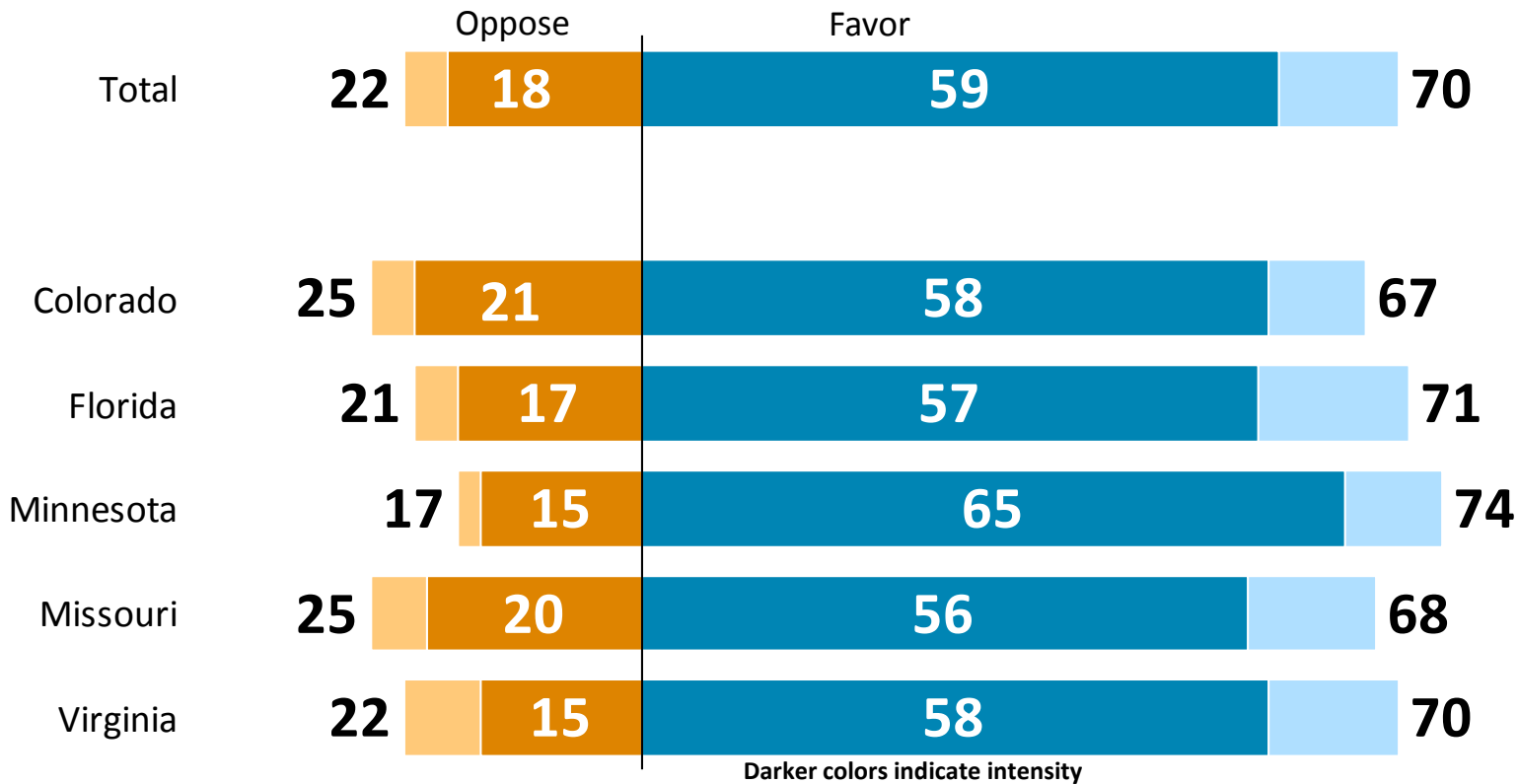
Attitudes Toward Imposing Social Security Taxes on Wages Above \$106,800 & Other Revenue Proposals

Across the key states, at least two-thirds of voters favor a proposal to gradually require employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800, and a majority would be more likely to vote for a Senate candidate who supports this proposal.



Across all of the key states at least two-thirds of voters favor requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800.

Requiring Employees & Employers to Pay Social Security Taxes on All Wages Above \$106,800



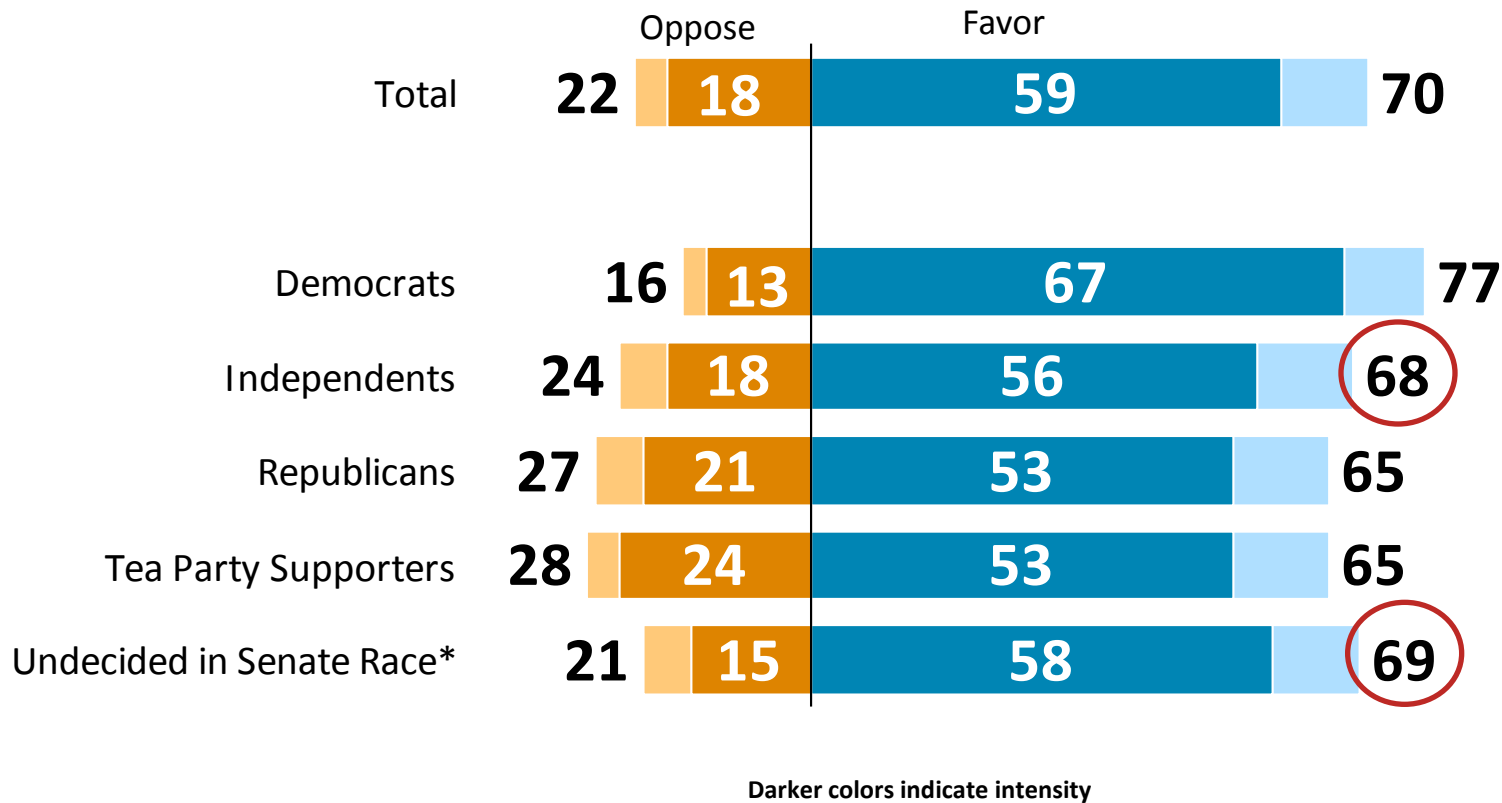
Majorities of all demographic subgroups favor this proposal, including voters across age and racial groups.

Here are some changes people are proposing to help make Social Security more solvent. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following proposals to make Social Security more solvent [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?] Q. Gradually requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above one-hundred and six thousand eight-hundred dollars, which they do not do now.



Across political lines, robust majorities of voters strongly favor gradually requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800, which they do not currently do. Swing voters also strongly support this proposal.

Requiring Employees & Employers to Pay Social Security Taxes on All Wages Above \$106,800



Here are some changes people are proposing to help make Social Security more solvent. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following proposals to make Social Security more solvent [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not so strongly?] Q. Gradually requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above one-hundred and six thousand eight-hundred dollars, which they do not do now. *Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.

Majorities of voters across age, education, and racial groups in the key states strongly favor the proposal to enact Social Security taxes on wages above \$106,800.

Requiring Employers & Employees to Pay Social Security Taxes on All Wages Above \$106,800	
	<i>% favor (% strongly favor)</i>
Total	70% (59%)
Under age 30	67% (56%)
30-39	72% (60%)
40-49	65% (53%)
50-64	75% (65%)
65 and older	69% (59%)
Non-college	71% (60%)
College graduates	70% (58%)
White	71% (59%)
African-American	62% (53%)
Latino	75% (59%)

In an engaged debate, seven in ten voters agree with the candidate who argues that instead of drastic cuts to Social Security, what is needed is closing the loophole to make all wages over \$106,800 subject to Social Security payroll taxes. They pick the candidate who makes this argument over the candidate who calls for cutting benefits for solvency's sake.

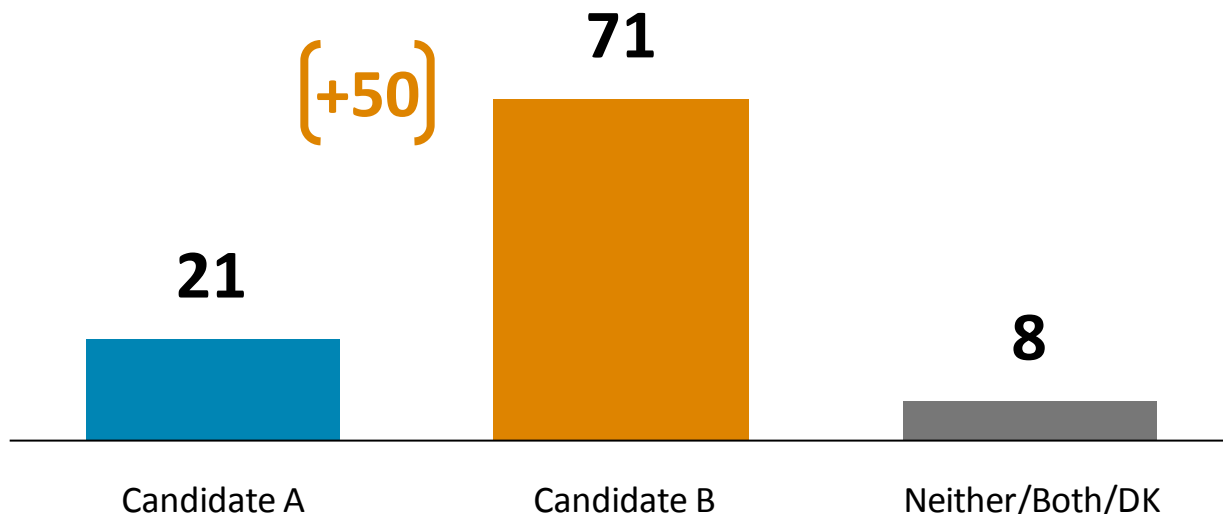
*Now I am going to read two statements that might be made by a U.S. Senator in your state. Which one comes closer to your point of view?

Candidate A

Says the Social Security program is going broke, leaving us with some very difficult choices to make. In order to protect the program for our children and our grandchildren we must make changes, including raising the retirement age to 69 and make cuts in other Social Security benefits.

Candidate B:

Says Social Security is fully funded through 2037, so drastic cuts are not needed. Instead, to protect the program for future generations we should close a loophole, and make all wages over \$106,800 subject to Social Security payroll taxes, which they are not now. Doing this will ensure that Social Security is fully funded for the next 75 years.



*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

By margins of three-to-one, voters across the five key states side with the candidate who espouses subjecting all wages above \$106,800 to Social Security taxes over the candidate who believes the answer is to cut benefits and raise the retirement age.

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Candidate A

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Candidate B:

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	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	21%	71%	+50
Colorado*	23%	70%	+47
Florida	23%	69%	+46
Minnesota	19%	74%	+55
Missouri	20%	71%	+51
Virginia	20%	71%	+51

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

Majorities across party lines support the candidate who argues for imposing Social Security taxes on wages above \$106,800, over the candidate who calls for benefit cuts and raising the retirement age. This argument is especially strong among undecided 2012 voters.

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	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	21%	71%	+50
Democrats	10%	84%	+74
Independents	20%	68%	+48
Republicans	32%	60%	+26
Tea Party Supporters	36%	53%	+17
Undecided in Senate race**	16%	75%	+59

*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view. **Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.

A candidate who calls for making all wages over \$106,800 subject to Social Security payroll taxes, as opposed to the alternative of cutting Social Security benefits, is highly compelling among young and old voters, and across racial groups.

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Candidate A

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Candidate B:

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	Side with Candidate A	Side with Candidate B	Candidate B Advantage
Total	21%	71%	+50
Under age 30	21%	72%	+51
30-39	21%	70%	+49
40-49	27%	64%	+37
50-64	19%	74%	+55
65 and older	17%	73%	+55
White	22%	69%	+47
African-American	11%	82%	+71
Latino	17%	78%	+61

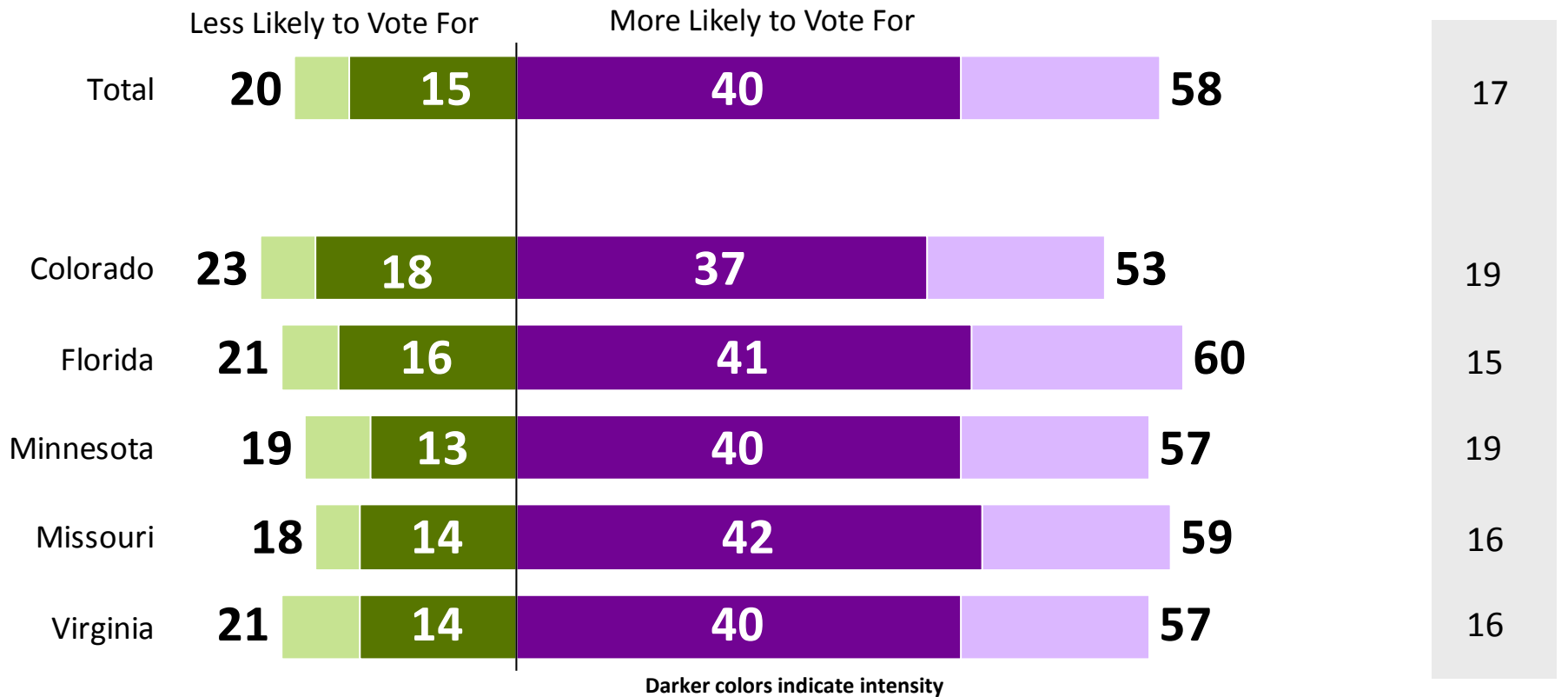
*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: I am going to read you two statements that might be made by a U.S. Member of Congress in your state. Please tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.



Around six in ten voters in Florida, Minnesota, Missouri and Virginia say they would be more likely to vote for a Senate candidate who supports requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800 – as do a majority of Colorado voters.

Candidate Who Supports Requiring Employees & Employers to Pay Social Security Taxes on All Wages Above \$106,800

No Difference



Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Senate, or if it would make no difference to you. [IF MORE/LESS LIKELY: Is that much or somewhat more/less likely?] Q. The candidate supports requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$106,800.

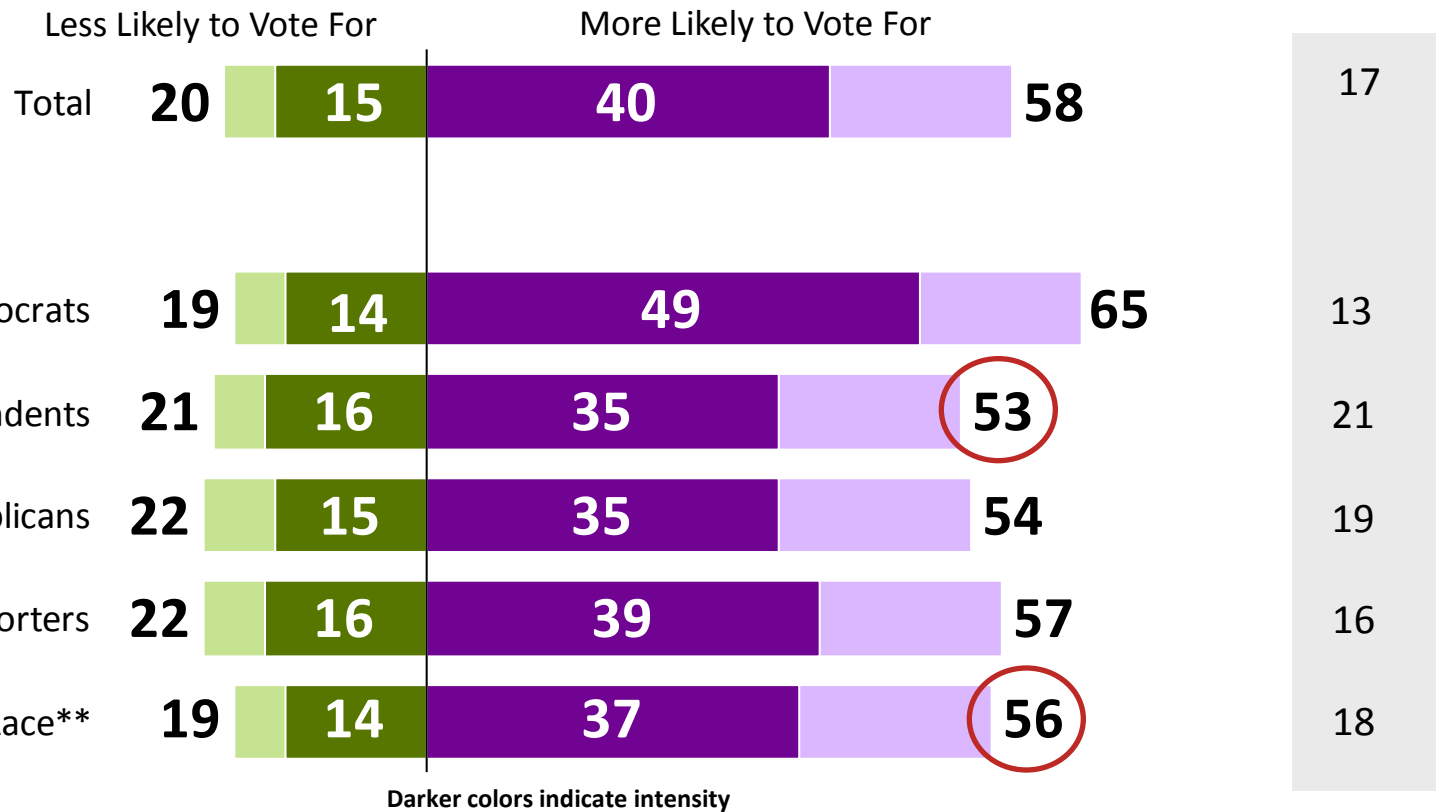
*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress, or if it would make no difference to you.



Across party lines, over half of voters in the key states indicate they would be more likely to vote for a Senate candidate* who supports requiring Social Security taxes be paid on wages over \$106,800 - including 53 percent of independents and 56 percent of 2012 undecided voters.

Candidate Who Supports Requiring Employees & Employers to Pay Social Security Taxes on All Wages Above \$106,800

No Difference



Darker colors indicate intensity

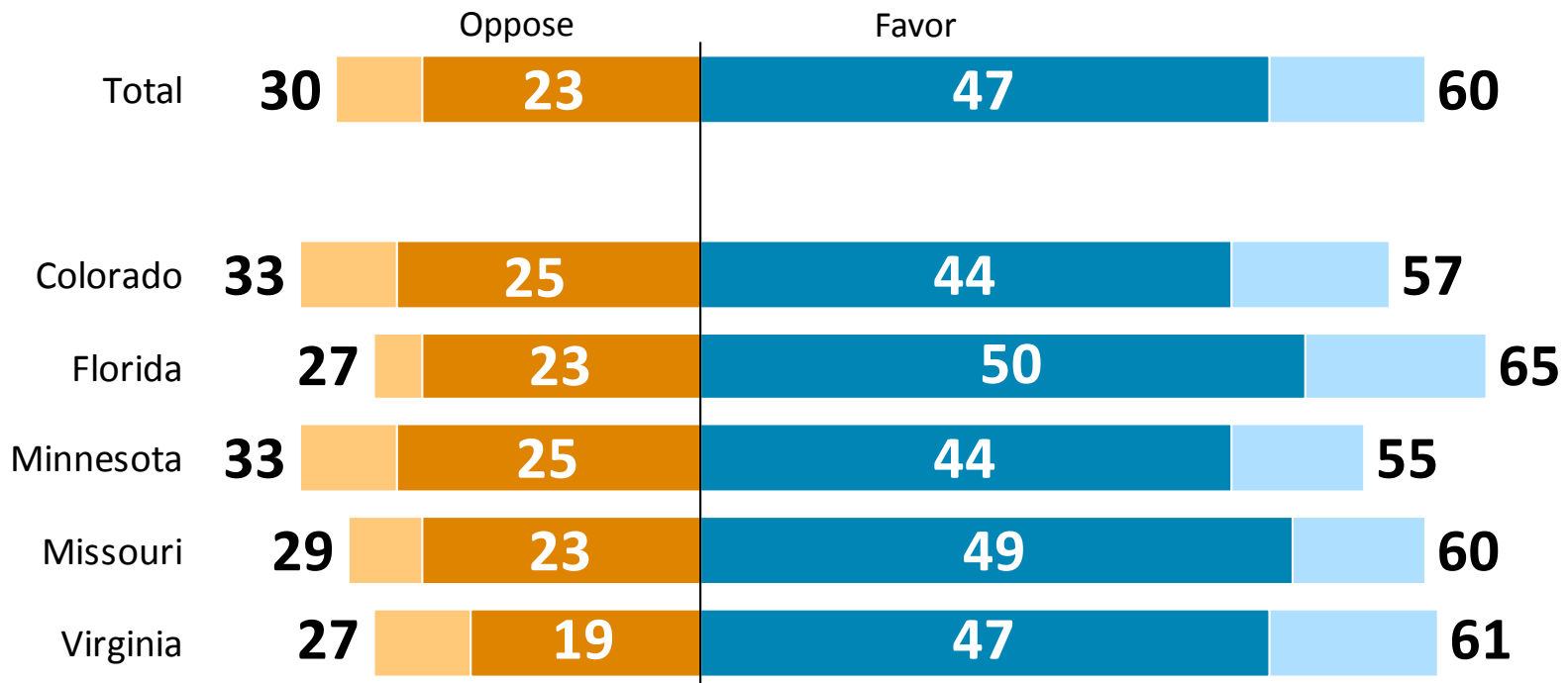
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*COLORADO VOTERS WERE ASKED: Now let me read you some items and tell me if that item would make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress, or if it would make no difference to you. **Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.



Across the five key states, roughly six in ten voters favor a proposal that, instead of extending the tax cuts for the top two percent of Americans due to expire in 2012, would have Congress dedicate those additional taxes to guarantee Social Security benefits for the next 75 years.

Instead of Extending Tax Cuts for Richest Americans in 2012, Let These Expire and Dedicate Additional Money to Social Security



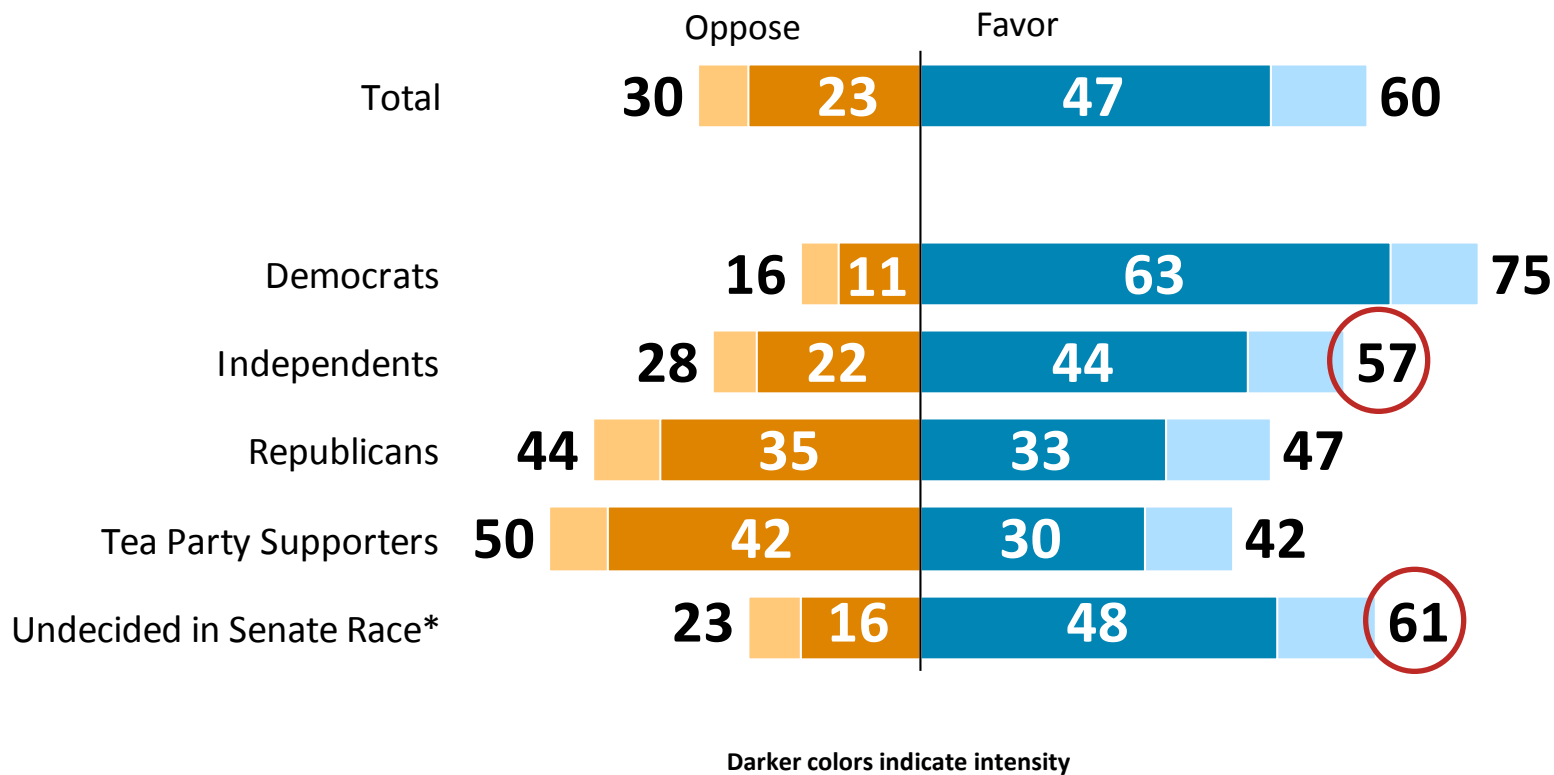
Darker colors indicate intensity

Now let me read you another proposal, please tell me if you would favor or oppose this: Instead of extending the tax cuts for the top two percent of Americans that will be due to expire in 2012 Congress should instead dedicate the additional taxes from the richest Americans to guarantee Social Security benefits for the next 75 years. Do you favor or oppose this proposal, or are you not sure?



Nearly six in ten independents and voters undecided in the 2012 Senate race* favor a proposal letting tax cuts for top two percent expire in 2012 and dedicating additional money to guarantee Social Security benefits for the next 75 years.

Instead of Extending Tax Cuts for Richest Americans in 2012, Let These Expire and Dedicate Additional Money to Social Security



Now let me read you another proposal, please tell me if you would favor or oppose this: Instead of extending the tax cuts for the top two percent of Americans that will be due to expire in 2012 Congress should instead dedicate the additional taxes from the richest Americans to guarantee Social Security benefits for the next 75 years. Do you favor or oppose this proposal, or are you not sure?

*Colorado voters were asked about the generic ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives for 2012.

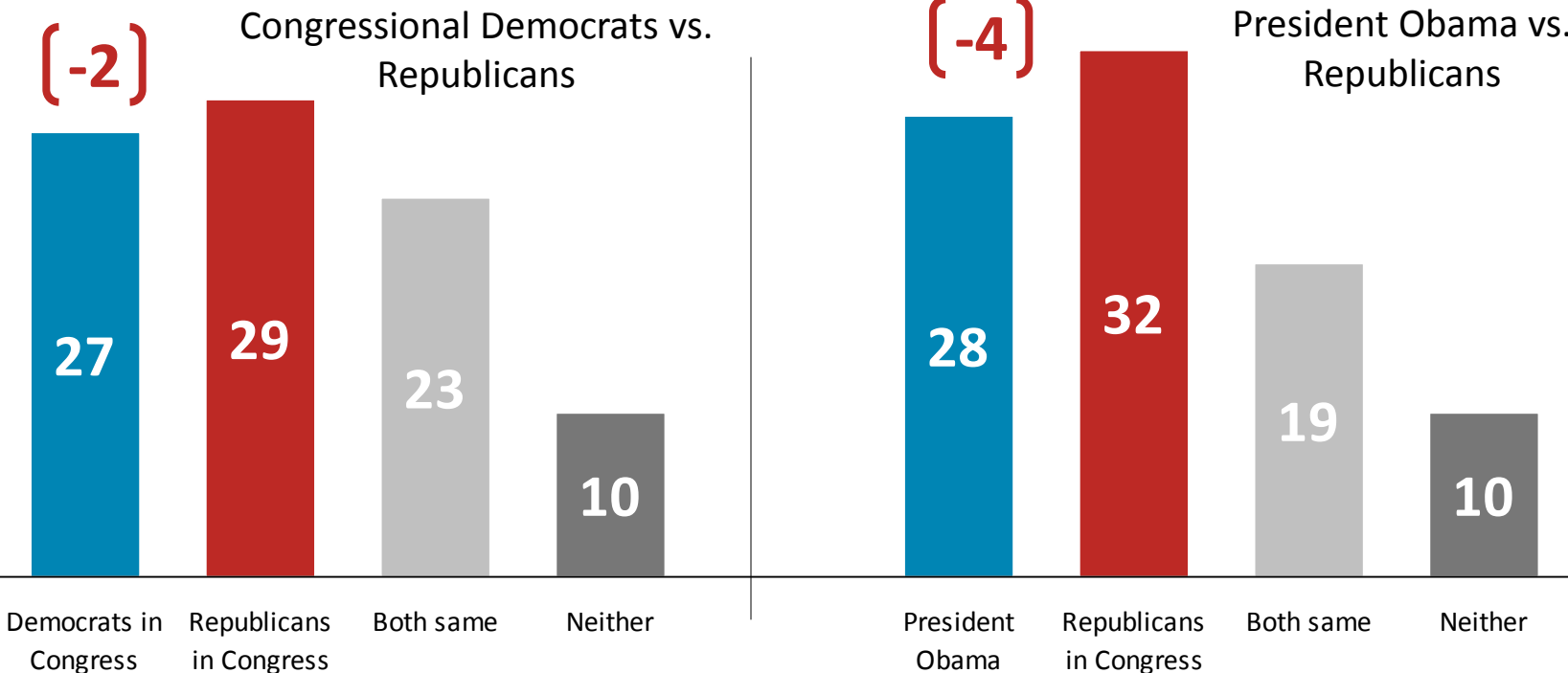


Political Leadership on Social Security

Democrats no longer enjoy their traditional advantage when it comes to which party would better handle Social Security. Voters, including independents and undecided voters, give Republicans in Congress a slight advantage over their Democratic counterparts and President Obama on handling Social Security.

Voters in the five key states give Republicans in Congress a slight advantage on who will better handle the issue of Social Security, over both Congressional Democrats and over President Obama.

Who Will Better Handle Social Security



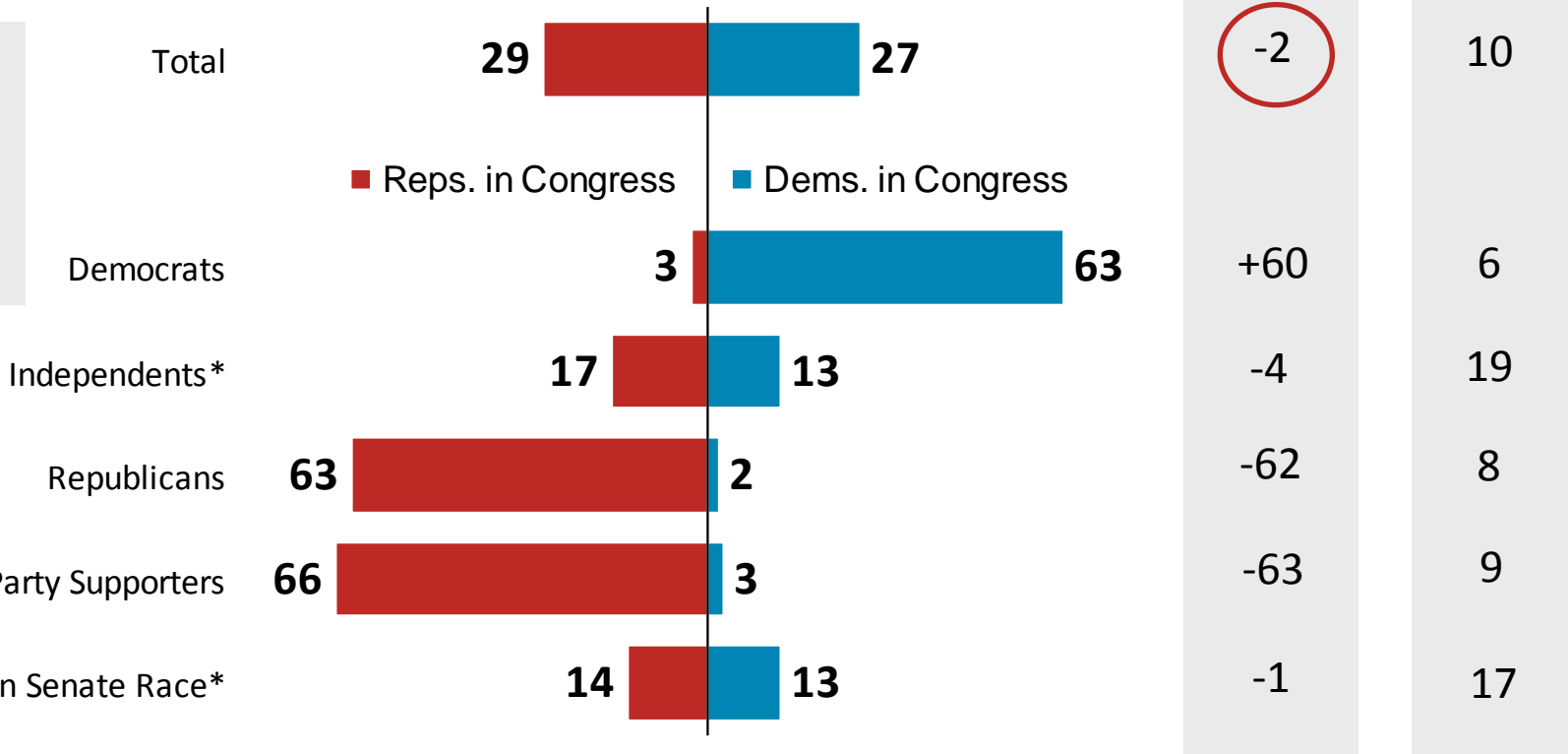
Who do you think will better handle the issue of Social Security: [ROTATE: _ the Republicans in Congress, _ the Democrats in Congress], or are they both about the same? Who do you think will better handle the issue of Social Security: [ROTATE: _the Republicans in Congress, _President Obama], or are they both about the same?



Congressional Republicans have the advantage over their Democratic counterparts on Social Security among independents and undecided voters.

Who will Better Handle Social Security

- Margins among states:**
- Colorado: -4
 - Florida: -5
 - Minnesota: +2
 - Missouri: -3
 - Virginia: -5



*Respondents who say they are “Undecided” when asked for whom they will vote in the 2012 elections for U.S. Senate; and for Congress in Colorado. 35% of “Undecideds” and 33% of independents say Republicans in Congress and Democrats in Congress are “Both about the same” in how they will handle Social Security.

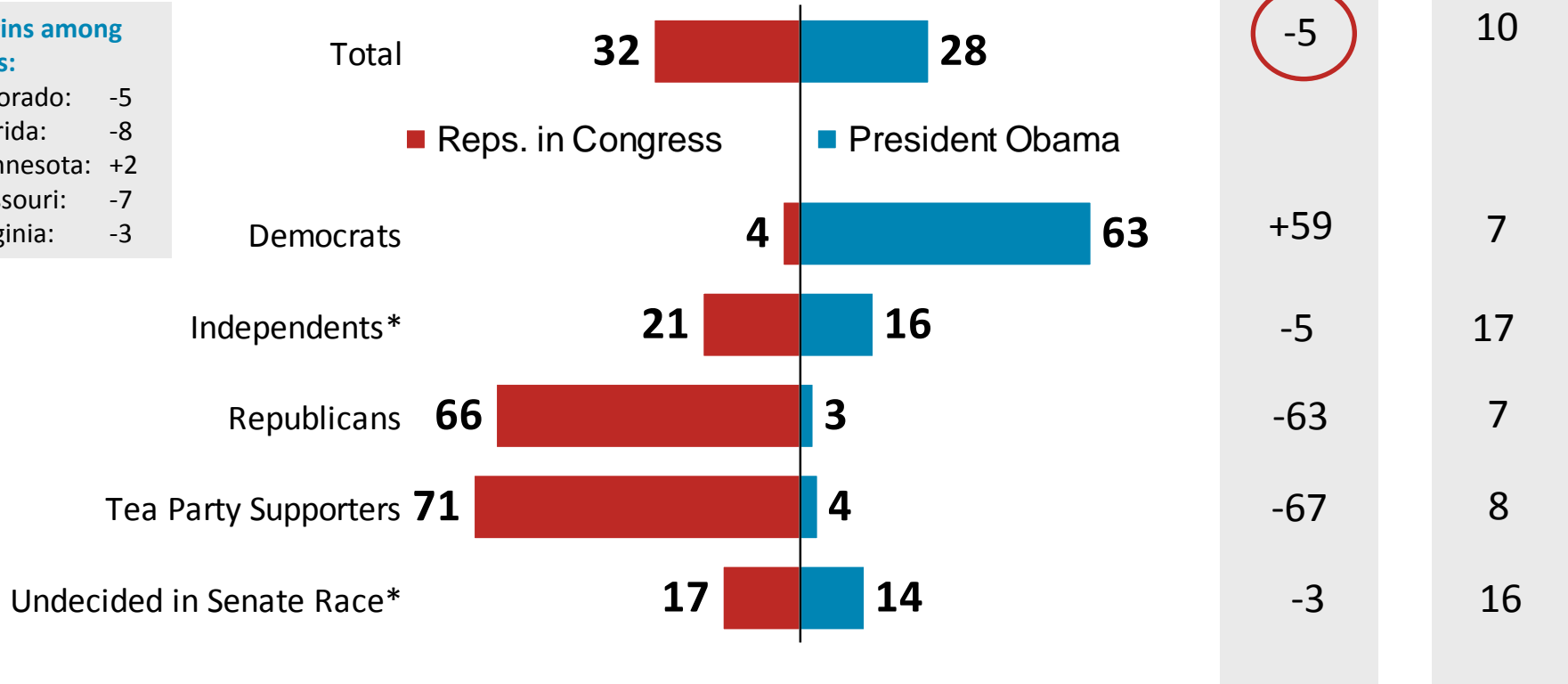
Who do you think will better handle the issue of Social Security: [ROTATE: _ the Republicans in Congress, _ the Democrats in Congress], or are they both about the same?



Republicans in Congress also hold an advantage over President Obama on Social Security among independents and undecided voters.

Who will Better Handle Social Security

- Margins among states:**
- Colorado: -5
 - Florida: -8
 - Minnesota: +2
 - Missouri: -7
 - Virginia: -3



*Respondents who say they are “Undecided” when asked for whom they will vote in the 2012 elections for U.S. Senate; and for Congress in Colorado. 30% of “Undecideds” and 28% of independents say Republicans in Congress and President Obama are “Both about the same” in how they will handle Social Security.

Who do you think will better handle the issue of Social Security: [ROTATE: _the Republicans in Congress, _President Obama], or are they both about the same?

Appendix

Demographic Profile By State

	CO	FL	MN	MO	VA
Men	48	48	48	48	48
Women	52	52	52	52	52
Under age 40	28	22	32	26	32
40-49	19	17	19	19	21
50-64	21	32	28	33	26
Over 65	22	29	18	21	19
Non College Graduate	47	55	49	61	47
College Graduate	52	46	50	38	51
White	82	69	92	85	74
African American	2	13	4	10	17
Latino	10	12	1	1	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	2	1	1	2
Democrats	35	36	38	33	36
Independents	25	22	22	25	20
Republicans	38	40	34	38	39
Tea Party Supporters	29	31	21	27	24



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