

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

# Voters Ready to Act Against Big Money Politics

November 10, 2014



**DEMOCRACY CORPS**  
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG



**EVERY VOICE**

# Methodology and Overview

**This presentation is based on a survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps and Every Voice.**

**The survey of 1429 2016 likely voters (904 weighted), including 1030 2014 voters (588 weighted) nationwide was conducted from November 3-5, 2014.**

**Results among 2014 voters are weighted to reflect election results and Exit Poll demographic results publicly posted by Edison Research. The 2016 electorate is weighted to reflect 2012 responses.**

**Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/-2.59 percentage points at 95% confidence.**

**This presentation is part of a larger post-election survey on which Democracy Corps has partnered with a range of progressive groups.**

**50 percent of respondents were reached by cell phone, in order to account for ever-changing demographics and trying to accurately sample the full American electorate.**

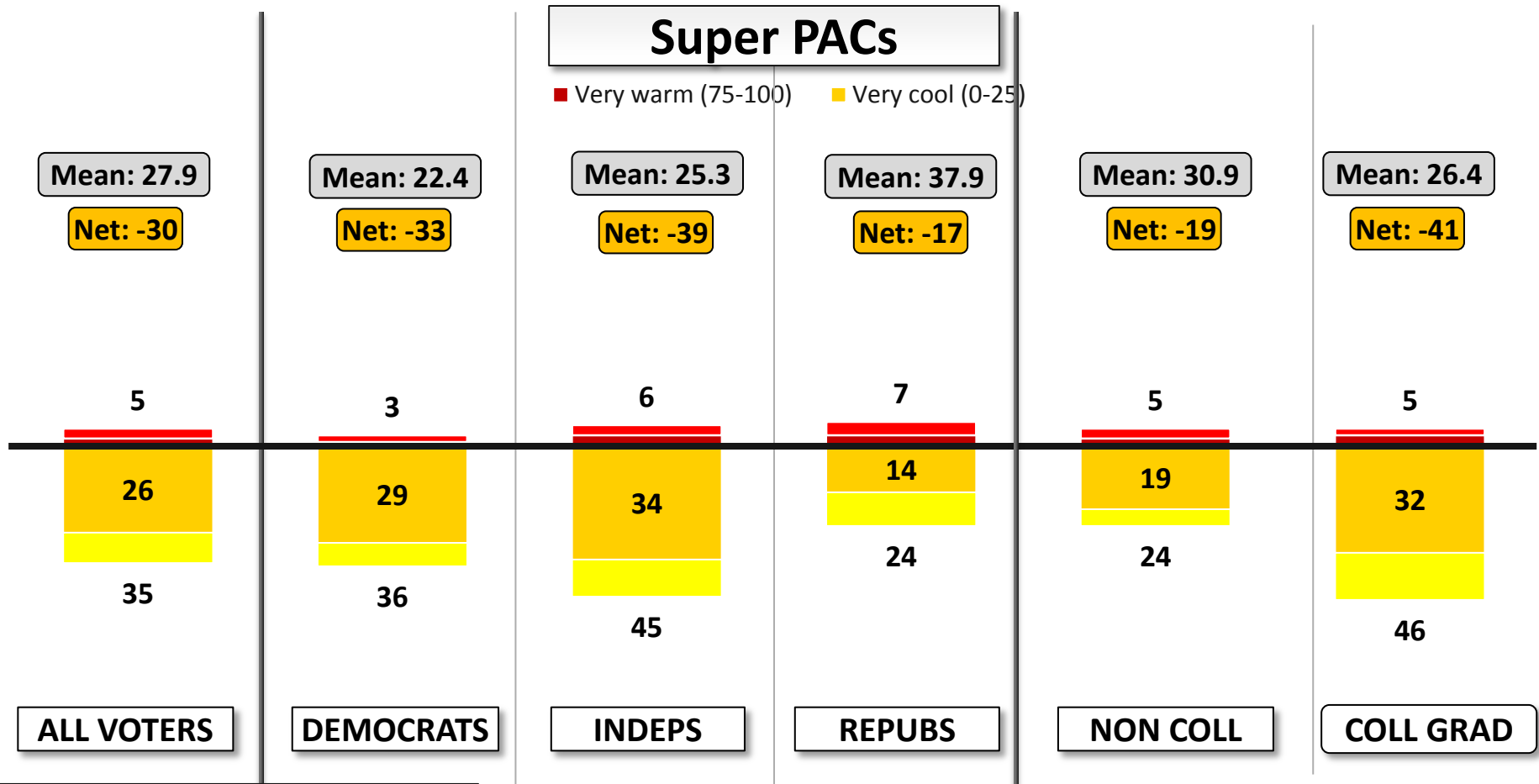
# Key Findings

- Voters recognize the pervasive influence of money in campaigns and on Congress – and believe members of Congress are most responsive to lobbyists and their campaign contributors. Only 14 percent say the views of their constituents are one of the top two influences on how members of Congress vote. Super PACs remain deeply unpopular among voters of every political stripe.
- Meanwhile, a majority of voters say the amount of spending this cycle was more than normal, and nearly all react negatively to it, with 26 percent calling it a nuisance and 17 percent saying it is unhealthy for our democracy.
- And voters display an eagerness for change. Over a third say reducing the influence of money and special interests in influencing government should be a top priority, including 16 percent who say it should be *the* top priority for Congress. Non-college graduates lag on this metric, suggesting the need to re-emphasize the impact that allowing big moneyed interests to control the political process has on working families' pocketbooks. The status quo must have a clearer cost for more voters to prioritize a solution.
- Campaign spending policy has clear electoral ramifications. This survey shows that big money ties are damaging and are among the top reasons given for not supporting candidates for Congress.
- Every Voice's plan to overhaul campaign spending is popular across the political spectrum, and a specific proposal with language on matched taxpayer funds draws nearly 70 percent support.

**Voters upset with spending, and 2014  
the most expensive midterm election in  
history: \$3.7 billion spent**

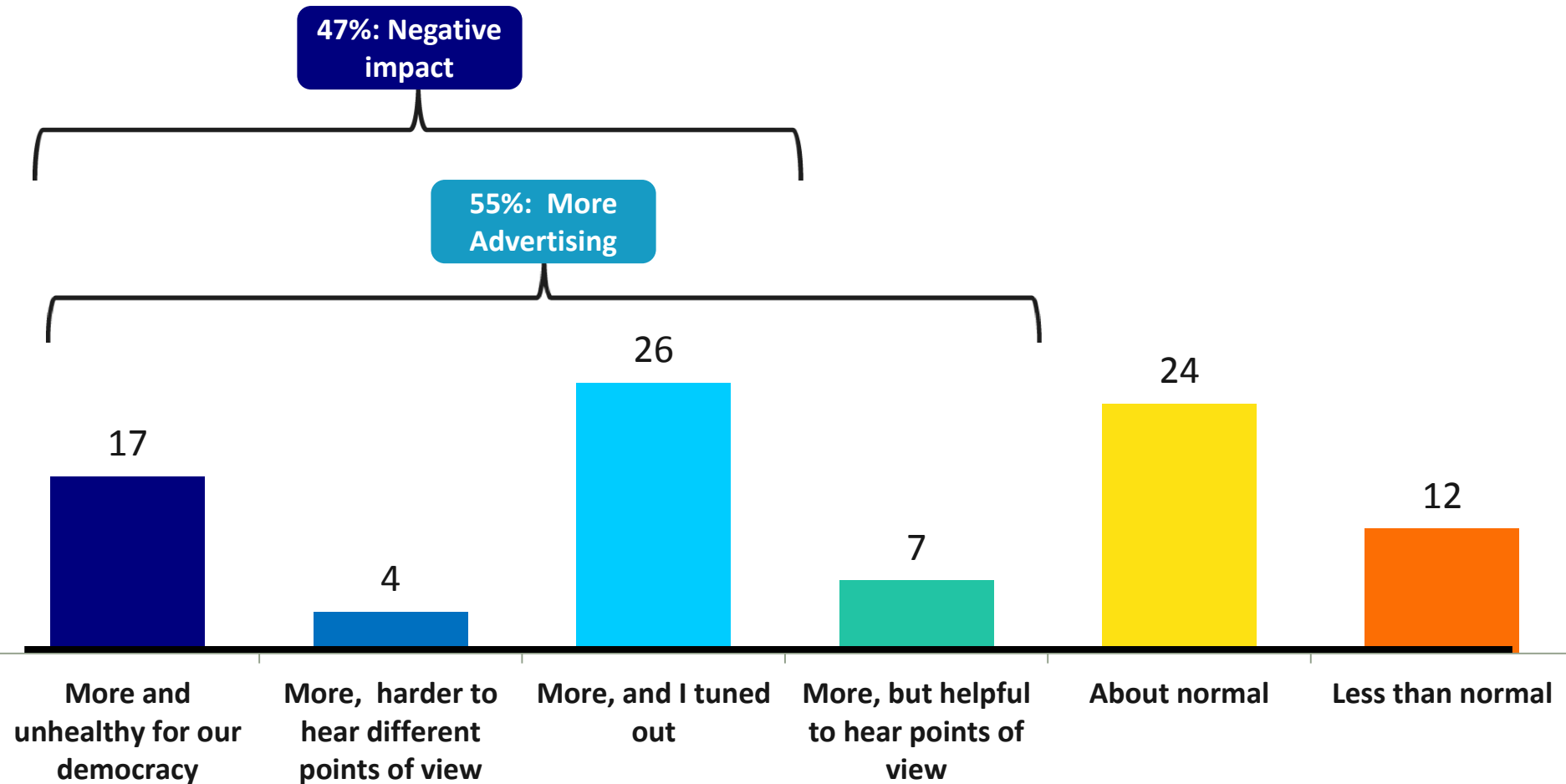
# Disdain for Super PACs is universal

Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that person or organization. If you have no opinion or never heard of that person or organization, please say so.



# Voters conscious of that spending and view it negatively

*How would you characterize the level of advertising by the campaigns and outside groups in this election?*



# Extreme cynicism toward money's influence on Congress – voters recognize the problem

*Now I'm going to read you some various people and organizations that might influence how members of Congress vote. Of the following, which TWO do you think have the most influence on how members of Congress vote?*

Of the following,  
which two do you  
think have the  
**MOST** influence  
on how members  
of Congress vote?

Special interest groups and  
lobbyists

52

Campaign contributors

38

Party leaders

27

The media

27

Views of their constituents

14

Their own conscience

12

**Presidential  
Electorate**

# Voters on both sides say Congress influenced by special interests and contributors

*Now I'm going to read you some various people and organizations that might influence how members of Congress vote. Of the following, which TWO do you think have the most influence on how members of Congress vote?*

Special interest groups  
and lobbyists

54

Campaign contributors

43

Party leaders

27

The media

23

Views of their  
constituents

11

Their own conscience

9

**Voted for Cong. Democrat**

Special interest groups  
and lobbyists

50

Campaign contributors

34

Party leaders

25

The media

32

Views of their  
constituents

15

Their own conscience

14

**Voted for Cong. Republican**



# **Increasing the Urgency of Campaign Spending Reform**

# Ties to special interest and big money a top reason to oppose candidates

*When thinking about voting for the Republican candidates for the U.S. House or Senate, which TWO of these worried you the most - which two really held you back from voting for the Republican candidate?*

Supports tax cuts for the rich over tax breaks for the middle class



Is beholden to the billionaire special interests that fund their campaign



Opposes raising the minimum wage for working people



Supports cuts in education and opposes helping students with college loan debt



Opposes equal pay for women and allowing women access to birth control



Wants to end Medicare's promise and increase health care costs for seniors.



Wants to repeal the new health care law



Against helping working families with college affordability, minimum wage, and childcare



**2014 Voters**

# More than a third say reducing influence of money should be one of Congress' top two or three priorities

*I'm going to read you a list of issues that you may have heard candidates talk about during this campaign and are now things they may prioritize going forward. I'd like to find out how high a priority you think each of these issues should be. For each proposal, tell me if you think it should be the SINGLE highest priority, one of the TOP FEW priorities but not the highest, NEAR THE TOP of the list, in the MIDDLE OF THE LIST, or TOWARD THE BOTTOM of the list of priorities for Congress.*

## Reducing the influence of money and special interests in influencing government

**60%: High priority**

Single highest priority

18

One of the top few priorities

17

Near the top of the list

25

In the middle of the list

24

Toward the bottom of the list

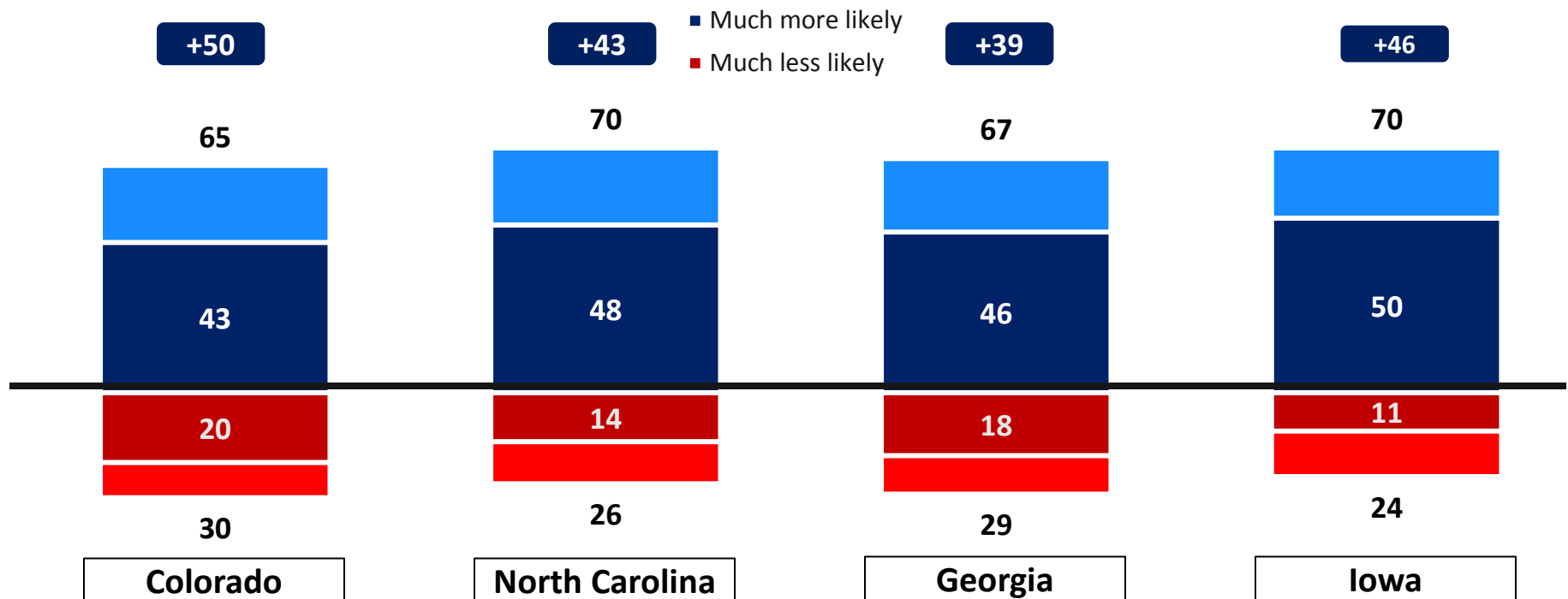
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**2014 Voters**

# In Senate Battleground states, positive Citizens United message increases vote for messenger

*Now I am going to read you some things being proposed by [Party member] like [Candidate name] as part of their plan to deal with the economy. After each item, please tell me whether you would be more or less likely to support a candidate who proposed that policy.*

**Pass a Constitutional amendment to prevent wealthy special interests and big corporations from spending unlimited amounts of secret money to buy elections, so we can take the power away from a few billionaires and give the power to regular citizens.**

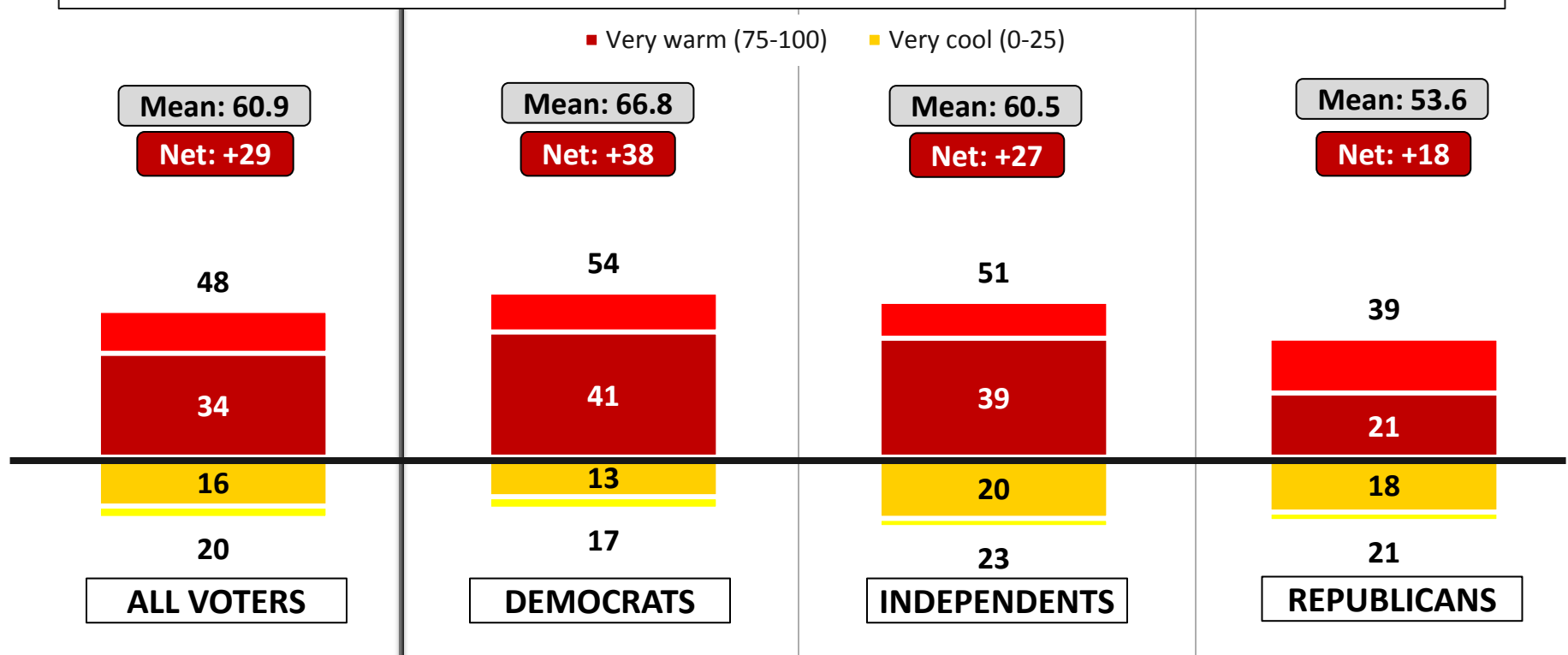


**Strong support for Every Voice plan to limit the influence of money in politics**

# Little opposition to plan to overhaul campaign spending, even with mention of taxpayer matched funds

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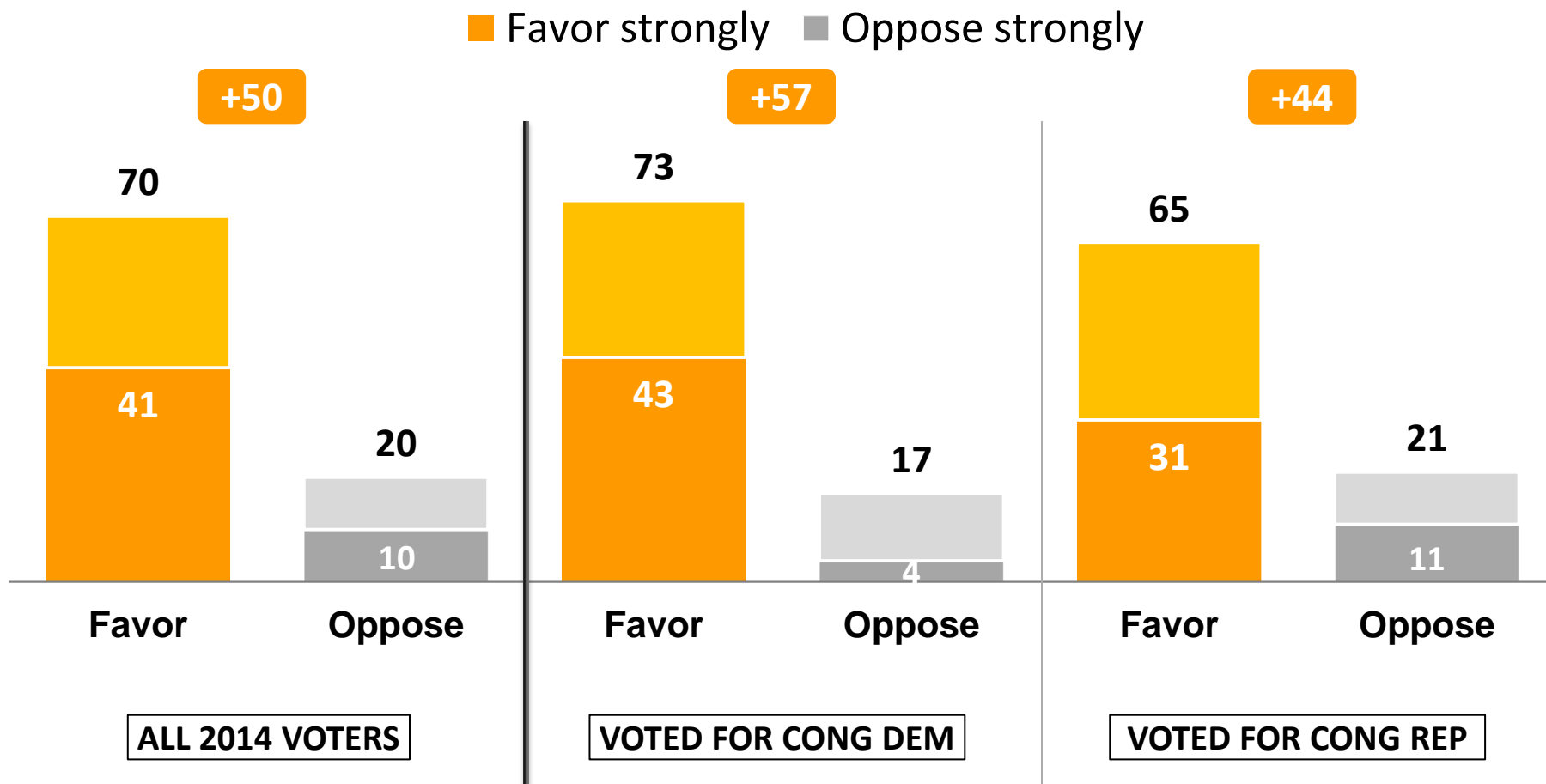
## A plan to overhaul campaign spending by getting rid of big donations and allowing only small donations to candidates, matched by taxpayer funds



Presidential Electorate

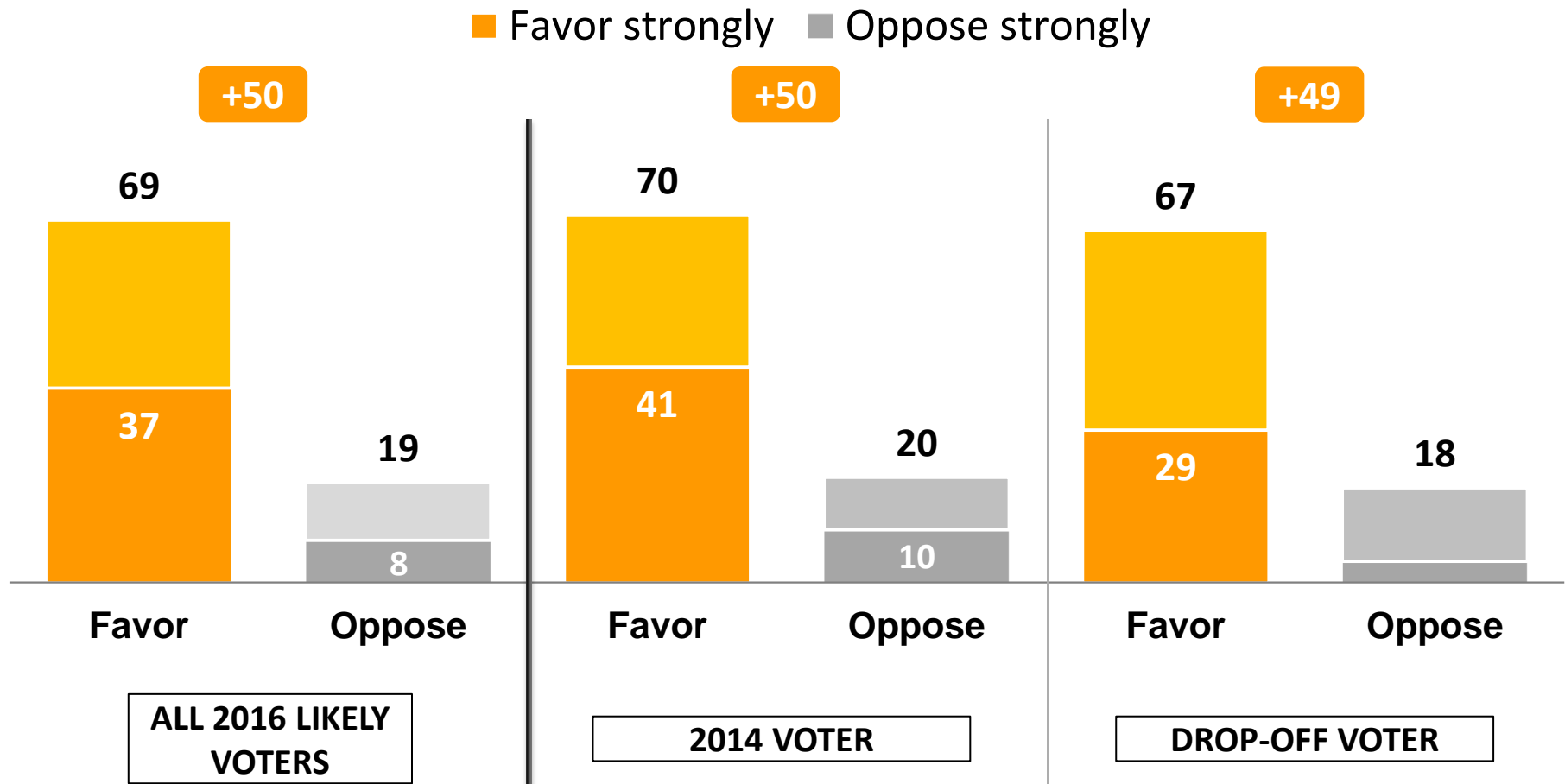
# Overwhelming support for specific Every Voice plan among 2014 voters, both Democrat and Republican voters

*Some people propose addressing the role of money in politics with a new law that would provide qualified candidates with limited public matching funds for small contributions they raise from constituents. The law would also require disclosure for all political spending by outside groups, and strictly enforce election laws.*



# And nearly equal support from 2016 likely voters demonstrates enduring strength of Every Voice plan

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