

## Public Opinion • Public Policy • Organizations • Campaigns

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San Diego  
County Issues  
Barometer

Sept. 2022



**Homelessness, Housing are Top Concerns, but County's Mood Evens Out as Inflation Cools and Gas Prices Abate**

Stricter Rent Control Seen as Way to Address Housing Crisis Due to Strong Democrat Backing

# Summary

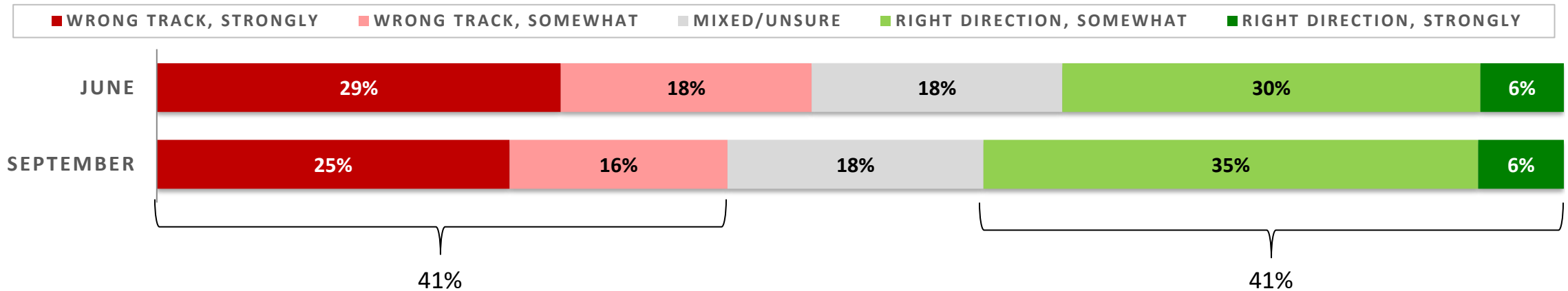
<b>Research Objectives:</b>	1) Document trends in civic mood and important issues 2) Explore the issue of housing costs
<b>Sample Size:</b>	n=505
<b>Margin of Sampling Error:</b>	± 4.4%
<b>Confidence Level:</b>	95%
<b>Sample Methodology:</b>	Simple random sampling from listed sample
<b>Jurisdiction:</b>	San Diego County
<b>Eligibility:</b>	Adult residents
<b>Interview Methods:</b>	Telephone (including cell phones), e-mail push-to-web, text push-to-web
<b>Field Dates:</b>	September 2-10, 2022
<b>Field Facility:</b>	Competitive Edge Research, El Paso TX
<b>Project Director:</b>	John Nienstedt, Sr.
<b>Research Assistant:</b>	James Iwu

# Trends

# It's Not Quite "Happy Days Are Here Again"

- The mood is brightening here in San Diego County
  - It's recently happened on the national scale
- The same number of residents see things as headed in the right direction as being on the wrong track

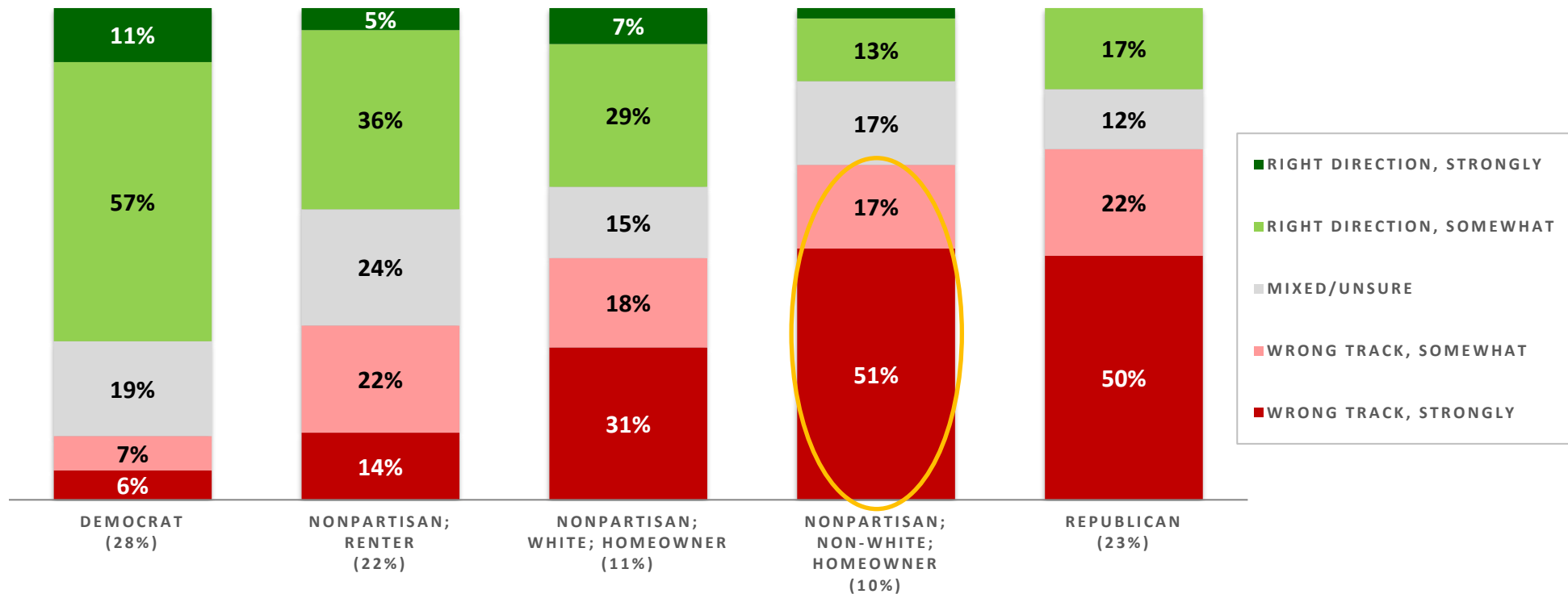
SAN DIEGO COUNTY CIVIC MOOD



# Mood is Largely a Partisan Thing

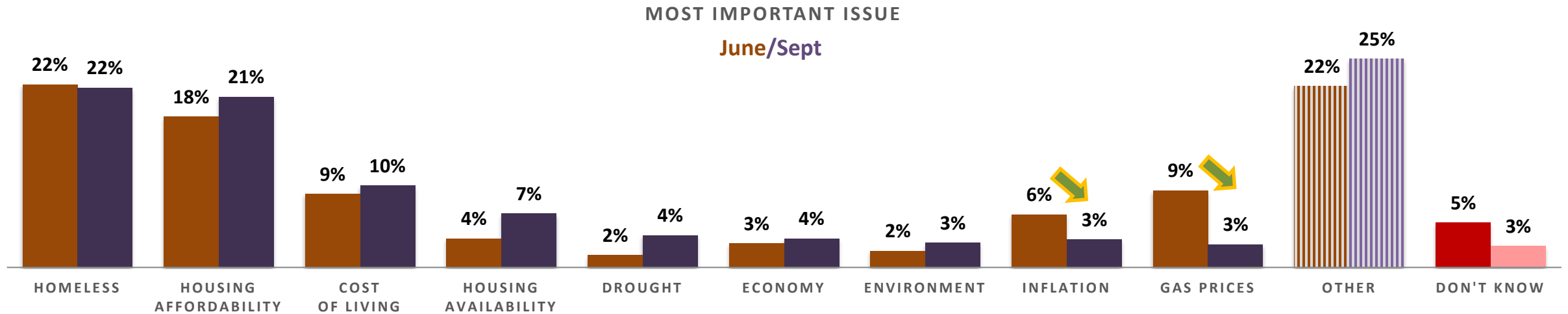
- Republicans continue to be very upset about how things are going
- Among non-partisans, minor party voters, and non-voters, *non-white* homeowners match Republicans in their desultory mood
- Democrats aren't effusive, but are easily the most upbeat group
  - Non-elderly Democrats have become enthusiastic since June.

CIVIC MOOD BY PARTY/HOMEOWNERSHIP/RACE



# Big Issues Still Remain, with Homelessness and Housing Tops

- Homelessness hasn't gone anywhere
- It's rarely mentioned where population density is low, but jumps off the page in the county's densest parts
  - 40% in crowded areas -- regardless of party or the city -- say homelessness is most important



- Affordable housing is another tremendously important issue
  - Renters are quite focused on it, but it's also a very big deal among homeowners south of SR-54
- Cost of living is in double digits
- Salience of drought and climate change increased
- Inflation and gas prices subsided.



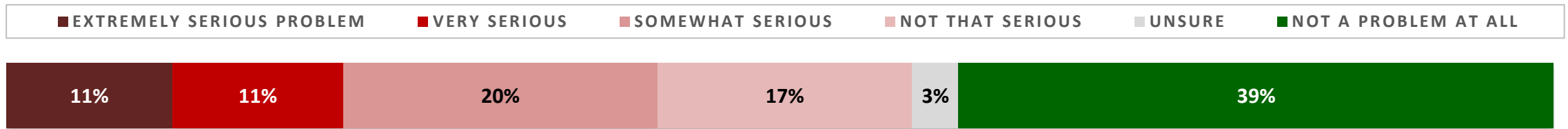
# Housing Affordability



# Is Paying the Mortgage or Rent a Problem?

- Most residents don't see their housing costs as a serious problem
- But 43% do and more than one-in-ten are in crisis mode
  - It depends on who you ask.

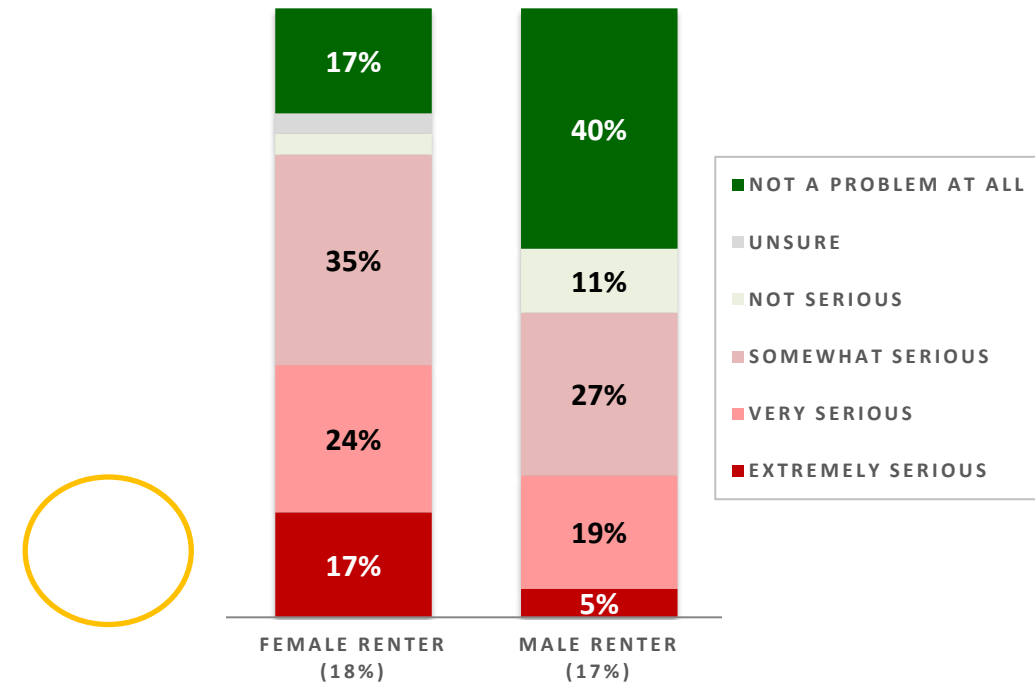
PROBLEM PAYING MORTGAGE OR RENT



# Serious Payment Problems are Essentially Limited to 2 Groups

- Women who rent are in stark contrast to male renters
- Recent homebuyers are the other stressed group
  - 22% who registered to vote locally after 2017 say paying their mortgage is an extremely serious problem
  - These homeowners -- who likely pushed themselves to qualify for a loan as home prices rose and kept rising – are even more anxious than renters!
- Homeowners who have been around longer rarely have serious problems paying their mortgage.

PROBLEM PAYING MORTGAGE OR RENT BY HOMEOWNERSHIP/GENDER/REGISTRATION YEAR



# Where Will Home Prices be in a Year?

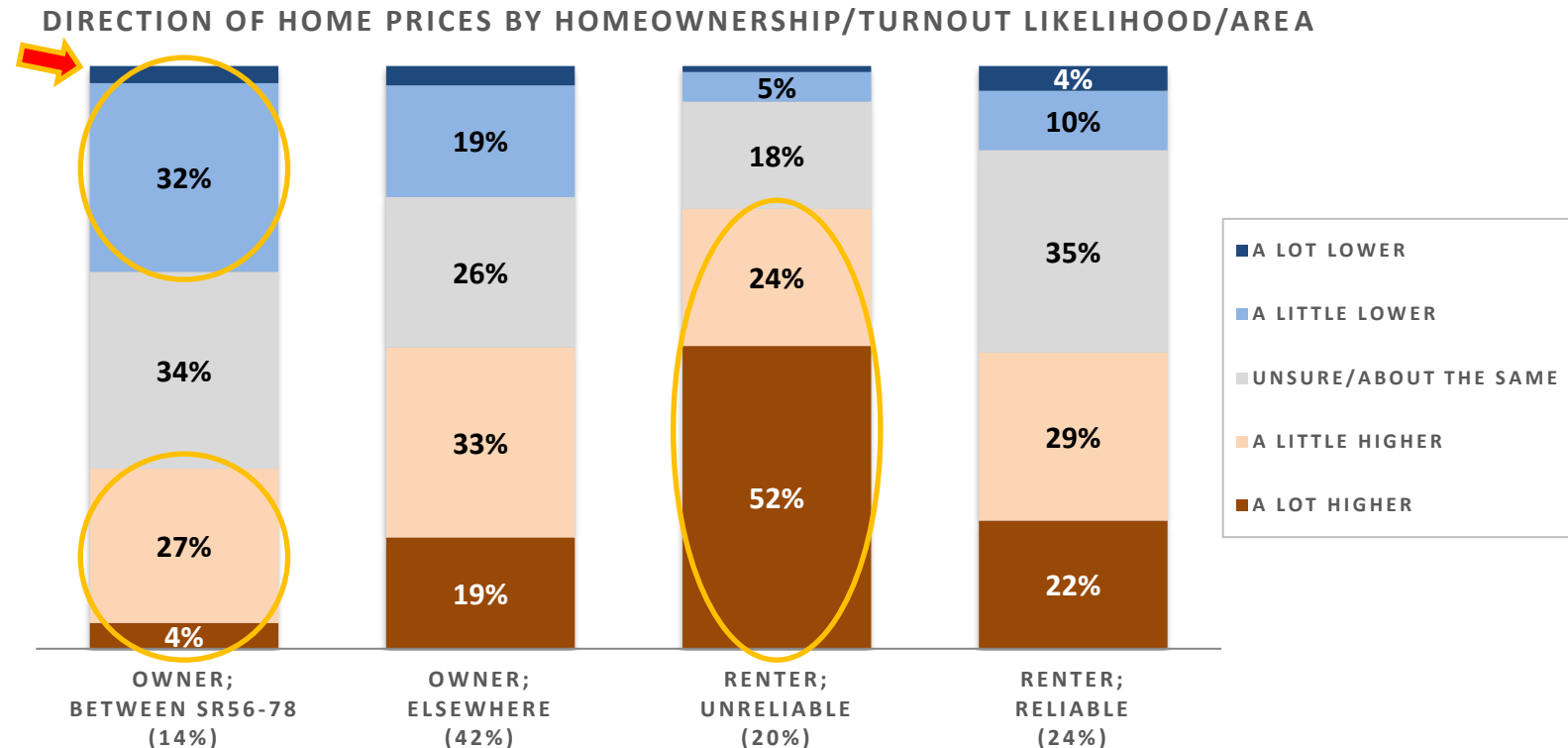
- Resale prices have roughly doubled since 2020's first quarter
- Despite interest rates jumping and a predicted recession, most residents remain convinced rising prices are here to stay
- 54% predict home prices will rise, and 25% believe they'll increase a lot
- Only 19% sense prices will actually retreat.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY HOME PRICE PREDICTION ONE YEAR FROM NOW



# Renters and Homeowners Differ on Where Home Values Will Go

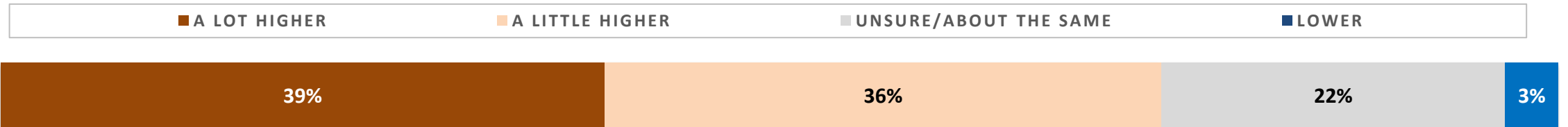
- Renters continue to believe prices will increase
- Those who are unreliable when it comes to voting or don't vote at all are the most bullish
- It appears residents who pay less attention are driving the idea that housing prices will keep going up
- On the other hand, homeowners aren't so sure of that
- In fact, more homeowners in communities between SR-56 and SR-78, arguably the area with the biggest price run-ups, feel prices will decrease than increase
- But, speaking to the fundamental health of county home values, **even they** aren't predicting a collapse.



# Where Will Rents be in a Year?

- Residents see rents as going up during the next year
- The question is by how much
- 36% believe they'll increase just a little, while 37% expect them to go a lot higher
- Almost no one thinks they're going down.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY RENT PREDICTION ONE YEAR FROM NOW



# Latino Residents are the Most Fearful of Increases

- 58% of Hispanic renters predict much higher rents
- But even 44% of Hispanic *homeowners* agree with that assessment
- The news is better for non-Hispanics, but huge differences exist based on political party
- Non-Latino Democrats are unconvinced rents will increase much
- Non-Latino Republicans are fairly convinced rents *will* rise
- Then we have non-Latino nonpartisans, voters with minor parties and non-voters:

- 81% predict an increase, with 41% saying rents will jump by a lot.

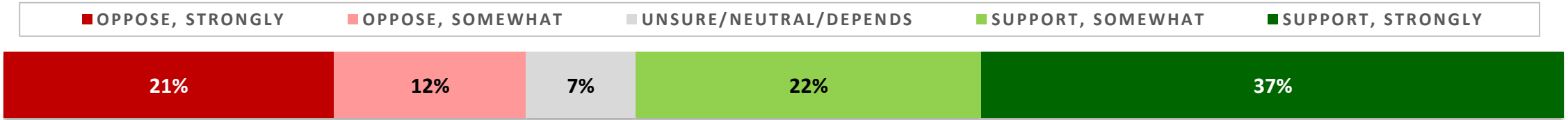


# Is More Rent Control the Answer?

# Residents Generally Favor the Concept of Stricter Controls

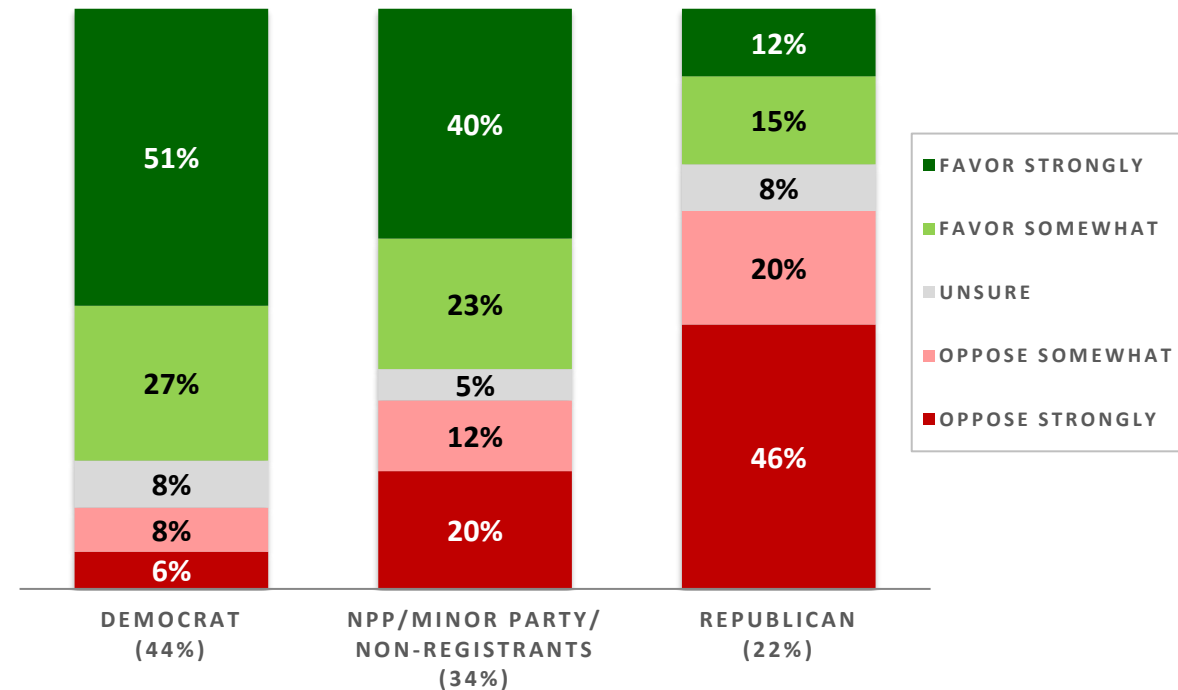
- “The devil is in the details,” but...
- 60% conceptually support imposing stricter rent controls on landlords

OPINION OF IMPOSING STRICTER RENT CONTROLS ON LANDLORDS



- More than anything else, rent control is a political question
- Most Republicans don't like it
- Democrats love it
- Non-partisans, voters with minor parties and unregistered individuals are far less opposed to more rent control than Republicans, but, while supportive, are not as enthusiastic as Democrats
- In heavily Democratic San Diego, this adds up to widespread support for stricter rent control.

OPINION OF IMPOSING STRICTER RENT CONTROL BY PARTY

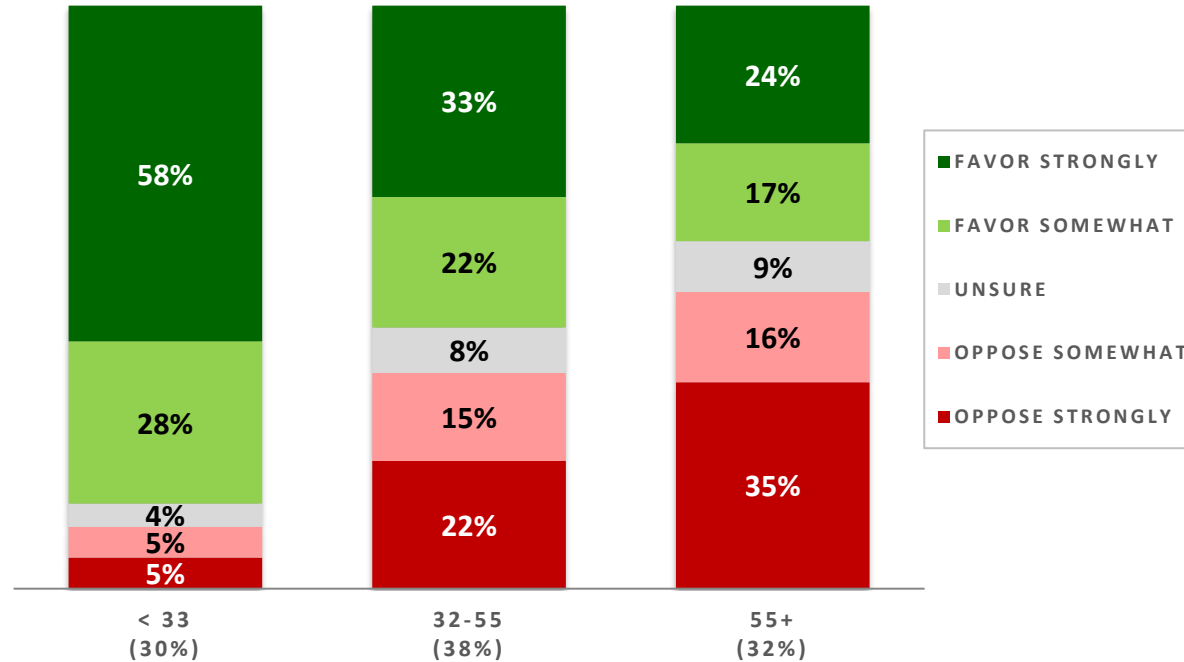




# Age is Another Factor

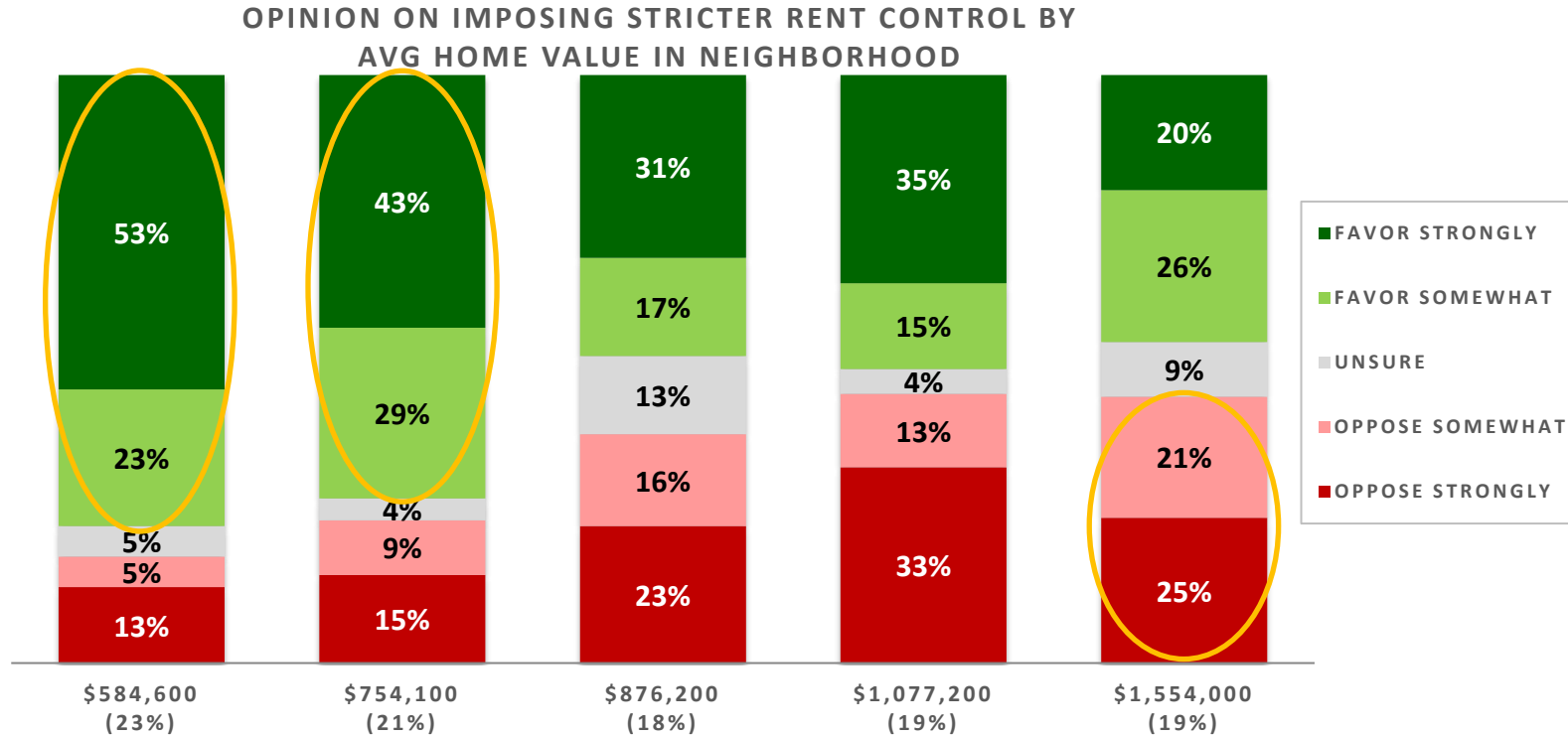
- The younger generation is overwhelming behind stricter controls
- But half of seniors are opposed.

OPINION OF IMPOSING STRICTER RENT CONTROL BY AGE



# More Fans Where Home Values are Relatively Low

- Not surprising
- However, opposing stricter controls in upscale areas is out of style
  - Reflects the depth of the affordability crisis



- Residents who believe rents will increase also favor stricter rent control a lot more
- Renters are much more in favor.

Thank You!

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