

Desert Healthcare District Desert Regional Medical Center Voter Survey Results Presentation

March 2024



**Opinion Research on
Elections and Public Policy**



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Desert Healthcare District – DRMC Voter Survey

Survey Methodology*

	Survey Details
Mode	Phone (landline and mobile) Online (email and text to web)
Language	English and Spanish
Length	18 minutes
Target Respondents	Desert Healthcare District likely General Election voters
Survey Fielding	February 28 – March 5, 2024
Margin of Error	+/-5%
Survey Participants	400

Sample

The sample was compiled from data obtained from the Riverside County Registrar of Voters. We called, emailed, and texted voters. We matched the demographics of Desert Healthcare District likely General Election voters.

Data Collection Explained

Interviews were conducted by phone (33%) and online (67%) modes. Phone interviews were conducted via landline (34%) or mobile (66%). Online participants were invited by email (50%) and text message (50%) for the online method.

Respondents in all modes chose their preferred language, English (90%) and Spanish (10%).

The online survey was accessible by computer, tablet, and smart phone.

Security measures precluded individuals from completing the survey more than once.

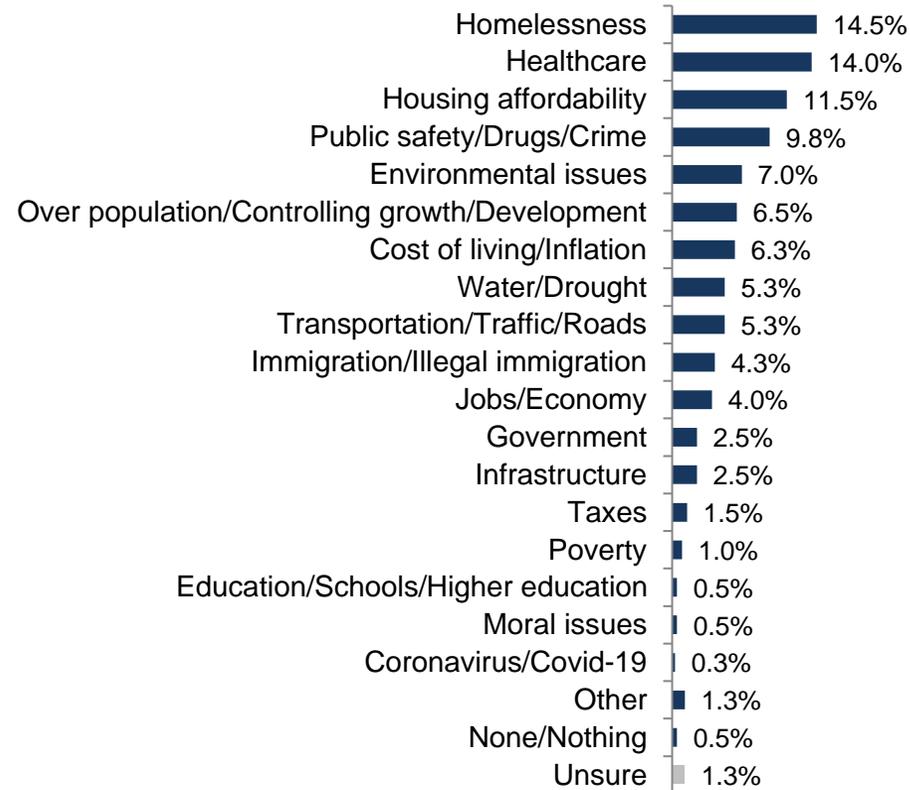
Probolsky Research is a Latina- and woman-owned market and opinion research firm with corporate, election, government, and non-profit clients.

**Due to rounding, totals shown on charts may not add up to 100%*



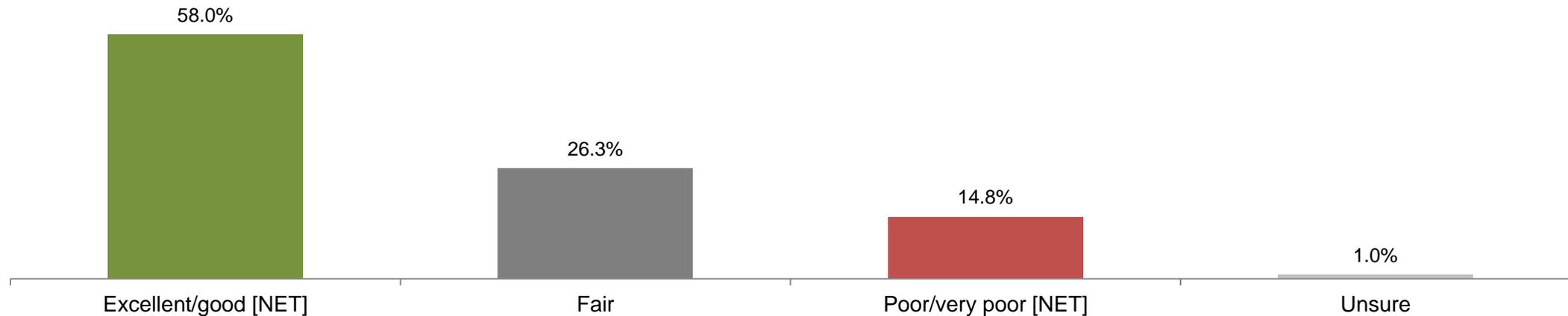
Homelessness and healthcare are the most important issues facing the Coachella Valley today

Question 1: In your own words, what do you feel is the most important issue facing the Coachella Valley today?
[OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]



58% rate the overall quality of health care that is available in their community as excellent/good

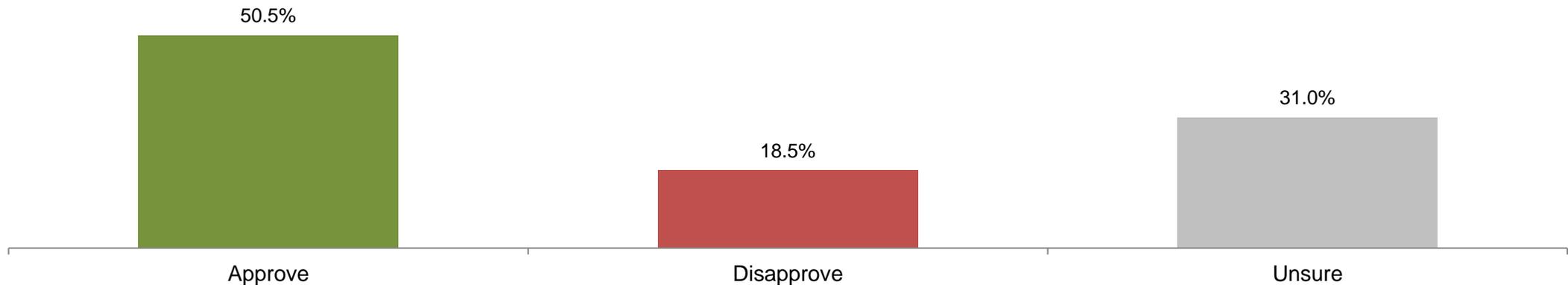
Question 3: How would you rate the overall quality of health care that is available in your community? Would you say that it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?



51% approve of the job the Desert Healthcare District is doing

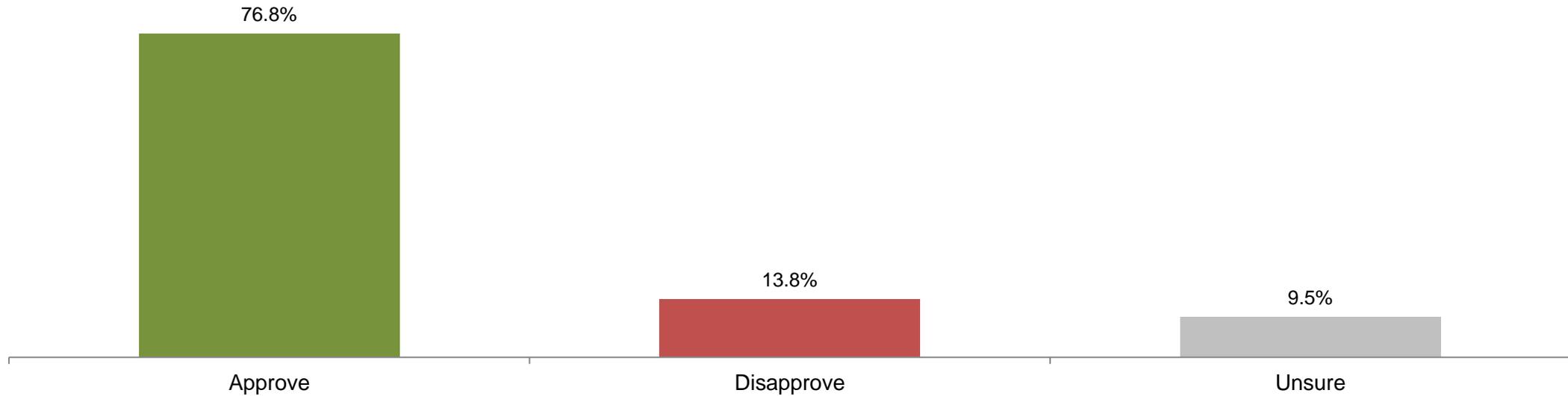
The Desert Healthcare District is a local government agency formed in 1948. Its mission is to achieve optimal health at all stages of life for all Desert Healthcare District residents. The Desert Healthcare District includes more than 400,000 residents and encompasses the entire Coachella Valley. The District, which is governed by a seven-member elected board of directors, owns Desert Regional Medical Center hospital in Palm Springs, the only trauma center in the Coachella Valley. Along with its Desert Healthcare Foundation, they are one of the largest funders of nonprofits in the Coachella Valley. These funds are used to assist residents — especially the underserved — in accessing vitally needed resources, such as primary and behavioral healthcare.

Question 4: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Desert Healthcare District is doing?



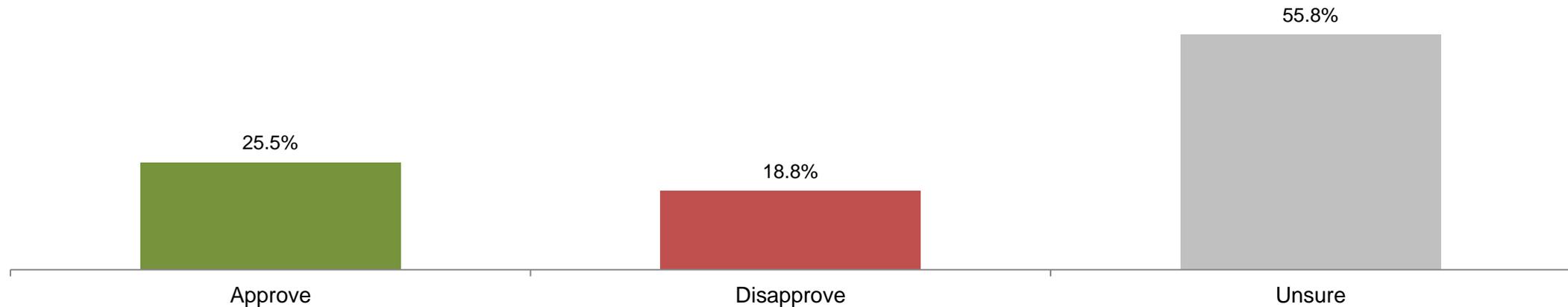
77% approve of the healthcare services Eisenhower Medical Center is providing

Question 5: Do you approve or disapprove of the healthcare services the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage is providing?



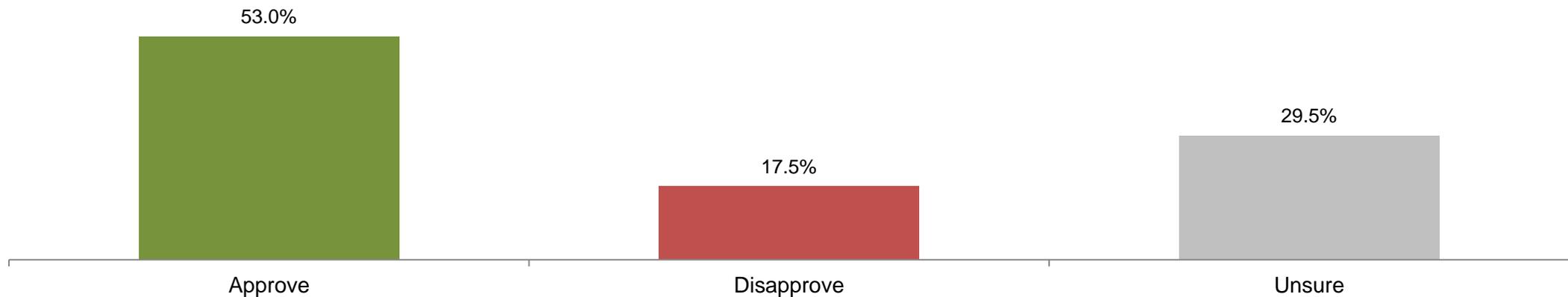
Majority is unsure about the healthcare services John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital is providing

Question 6: Do you approve or disapprove of the healthcare services the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Indio is providing?



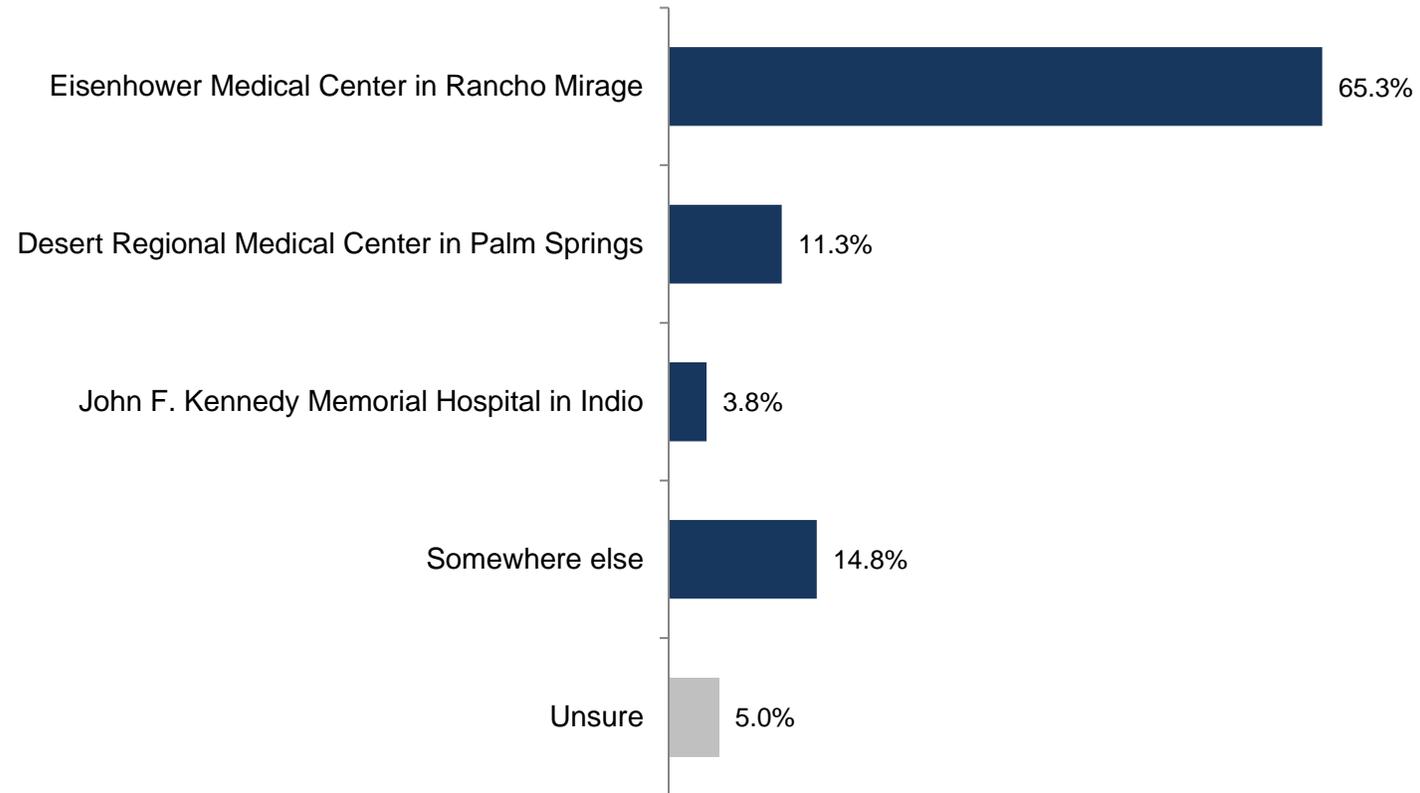
53% approve of the healthcare services Desert Regional Medical Center is providing

Question 7: Do you approve or disapprove of the healthcare services the Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs is providing?



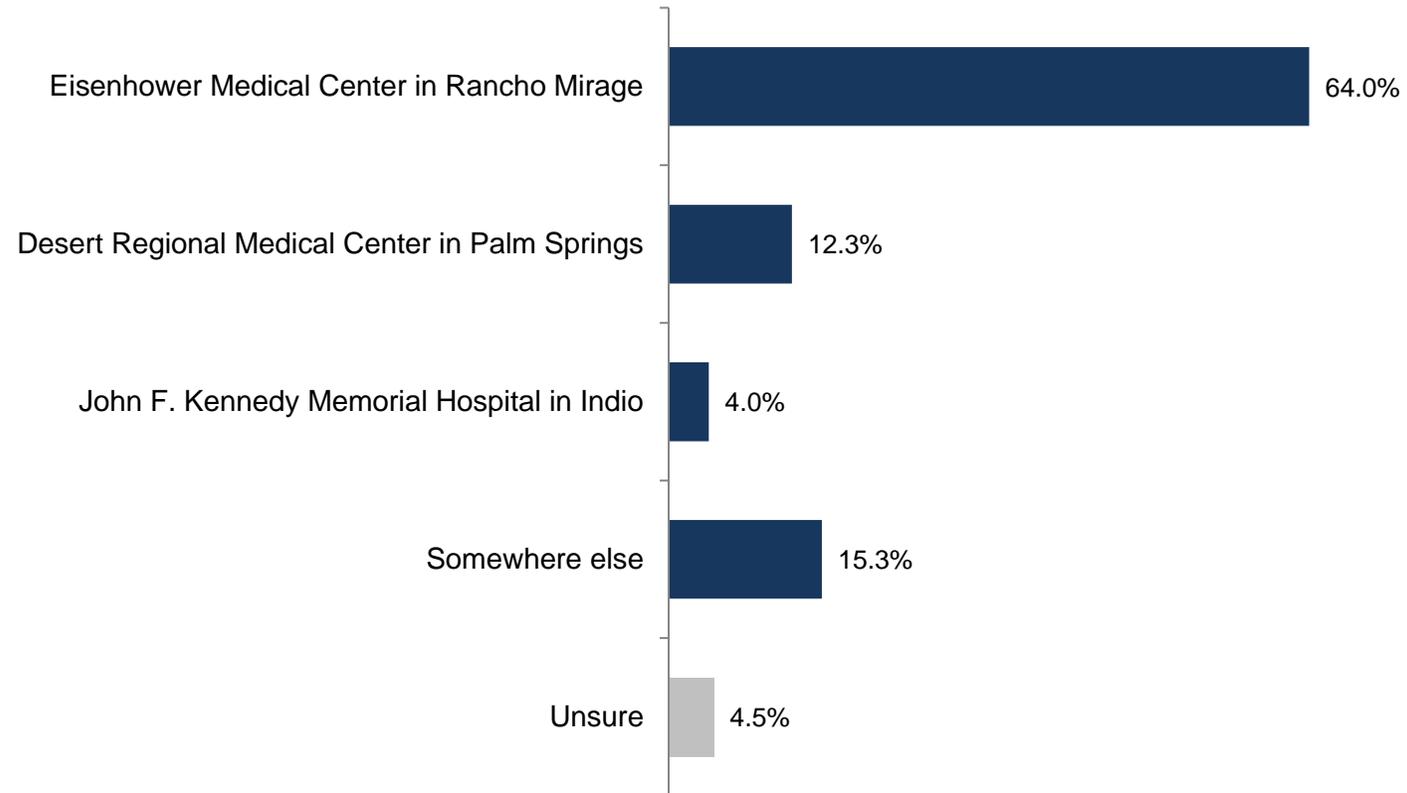
65% would choose to go to Eisenhower Medical Center, based on their insurance coverage, if they were sick with a non-life-threatening illness

Question 8: Based on your insurance coverage, if you were sick with a non-life-threatening illness, where would you go for treatment? Choose one.



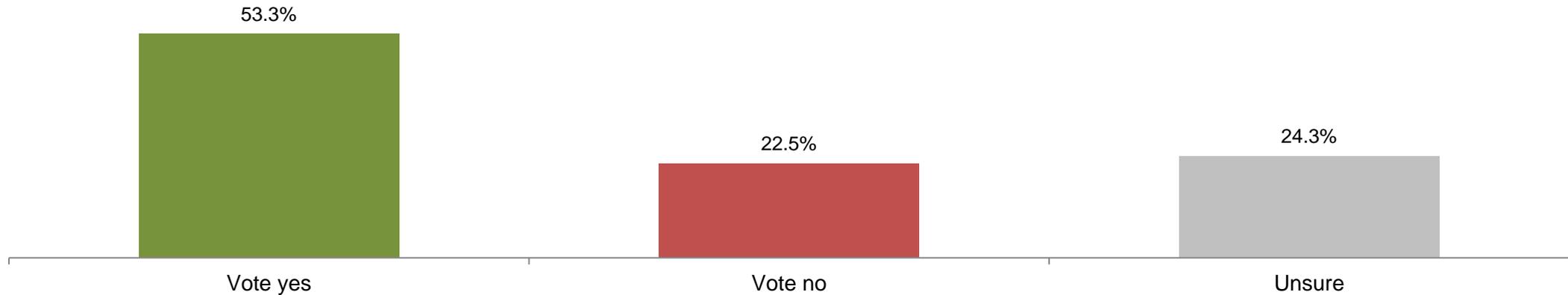
64% would choose to go to Eisenhower Medical Center if they were sick with a non-life-threatening illness and could go anywhere for treatment

Question 9: If you were sick with a non-life-threatening illness and could go anywhere for treatment, where would you choose to go? Choose one.



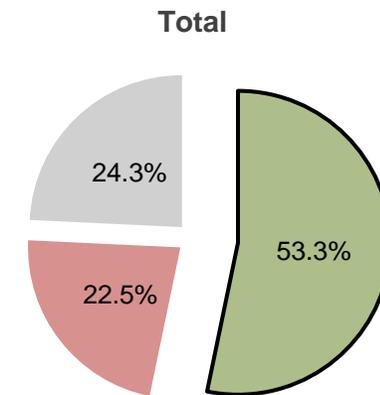
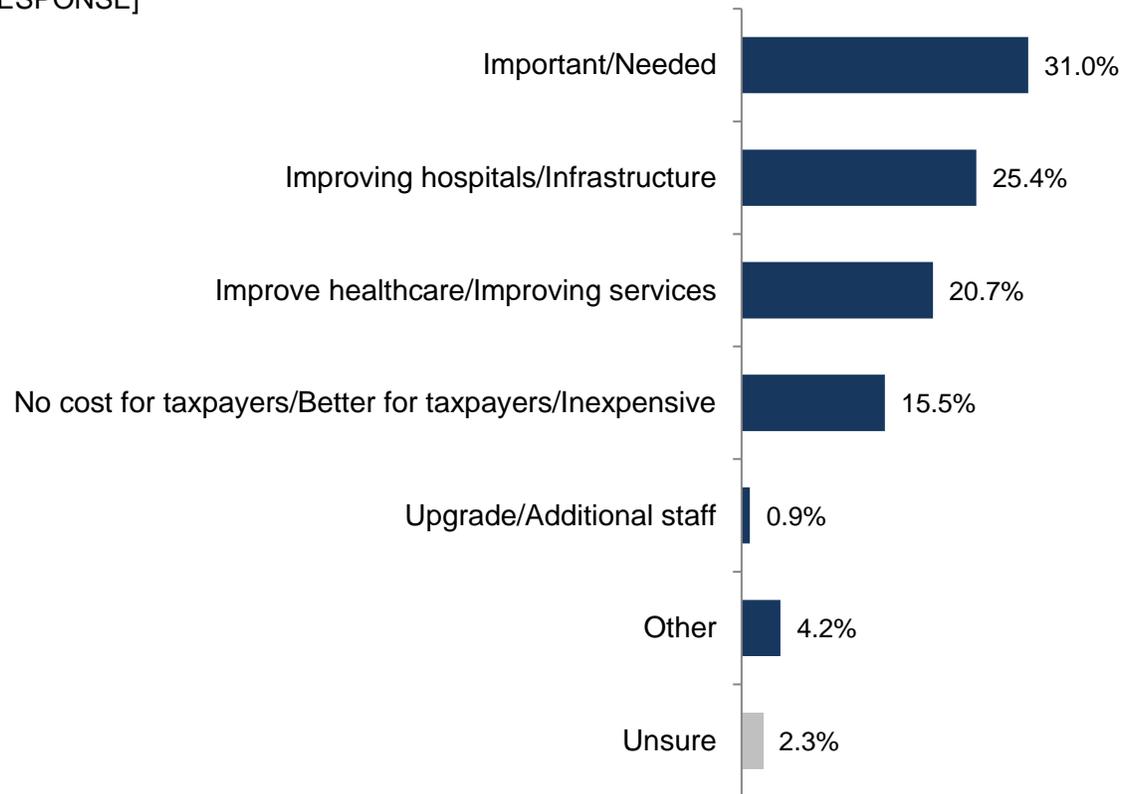
Initial vote: 53% vote yes on measure that includes transfer of ownership

Question 10: If the election were held today, how would you vote on the following measure? "In order to continue providing comprehensive medical and emergency healthcare services at Desert Regional Medical Center, shall the Desert Healthcare District extend the current lease of the hospital with Tenet Health for an additional 30-year period, with ownership of the hospital transferring to Tenet Health, if it chooses, at the end of that new lease period? In consideration for that 30-year lease with ownership transfer, Tenet Health would pay approximately \$300 million to the District, as well as assume responsibility for seismic upgrades of the hospital, currently estimated to cost \$185 million, at no additional cost to the taxpayers. All amounts in today's dollars." Would you vote yes or vote no?



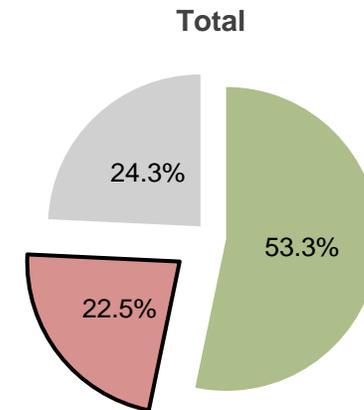
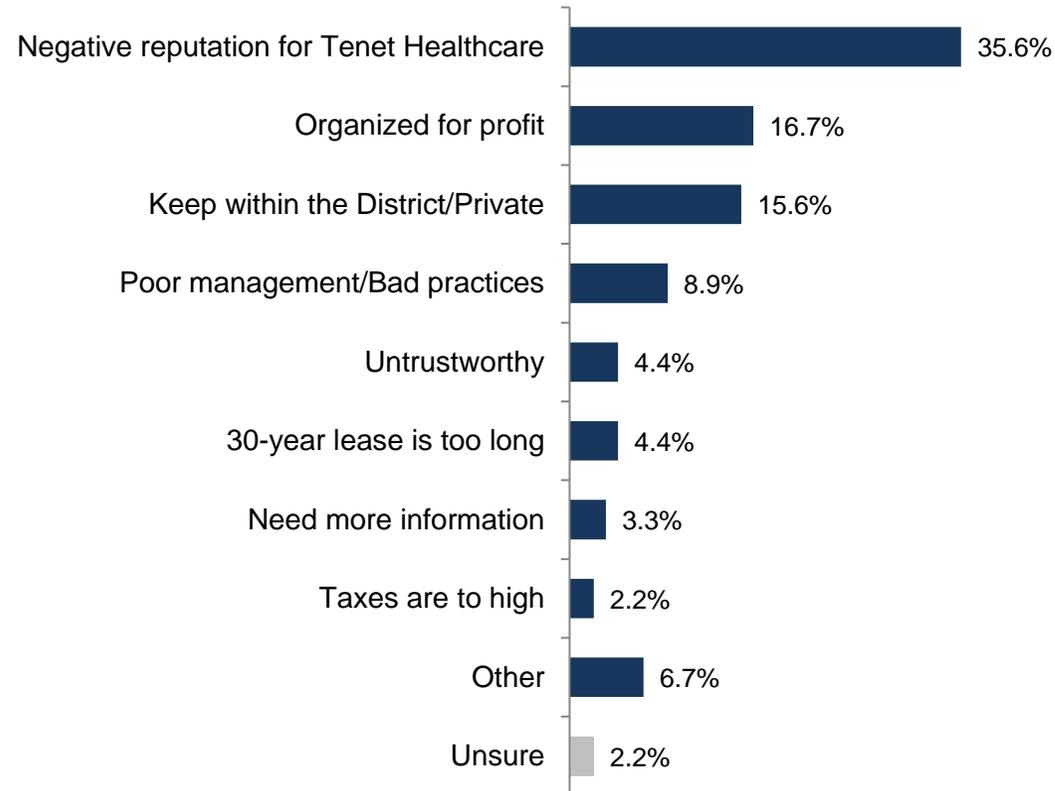
Among those who would vote yes on the measure that includes transfer of ownership, 31% cite its importance/need

Question 11: Why would you vote yes on the measure?
[IF ANSWERED 'VOTE YES' TO Q10]
[OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]



Among those who would vote no on the measure that includes transfer of ownership, 36% cite Tenet Healthcare's negative reputation

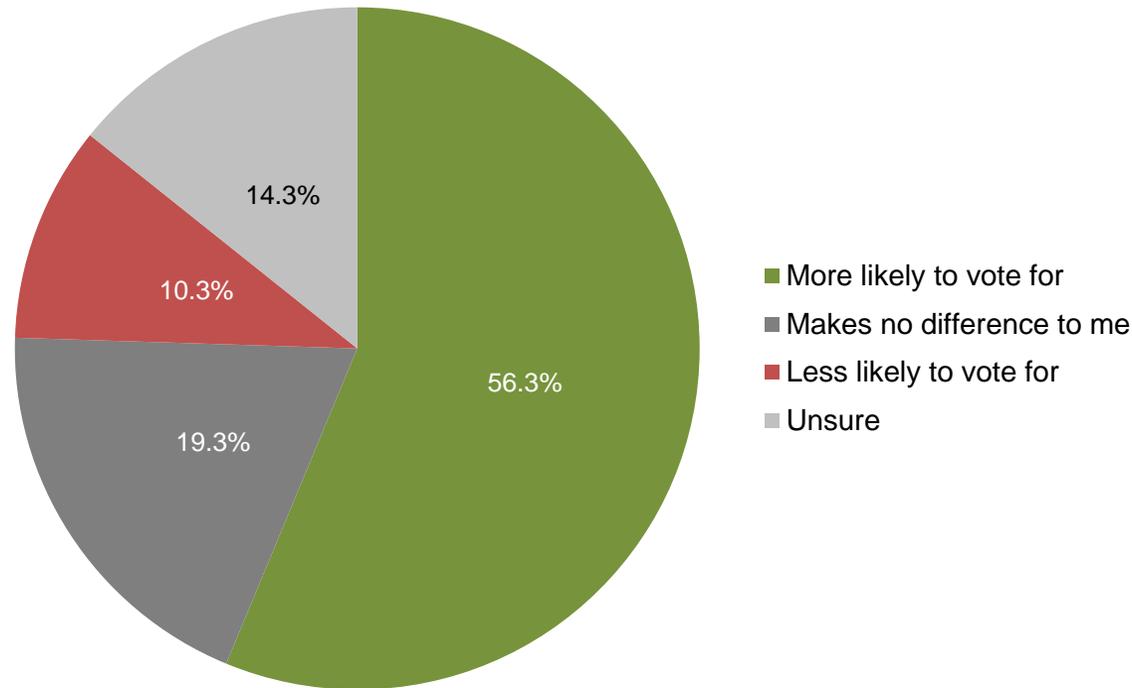
Question 12: Why would you vote no on the measure?
[IF ANSWERED 'VOTE NO' TO Q10]
[OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]



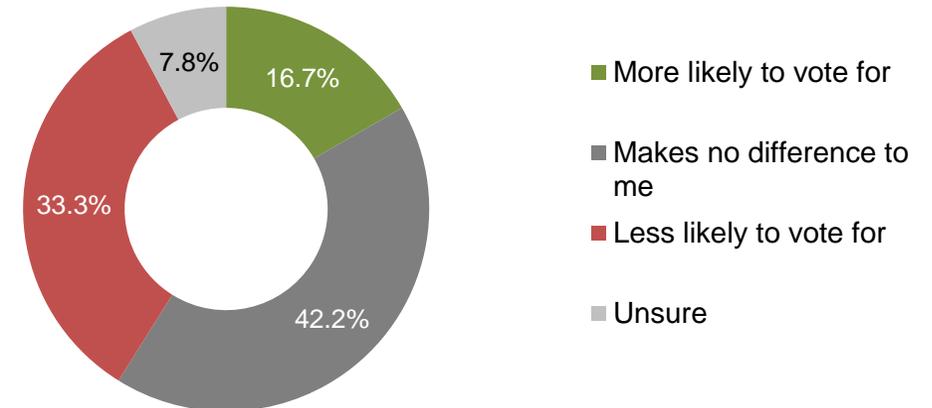
Desert Healthcare District owns the Desert Regional Medical Center and leases it to Tenet Health who operates it. The current lease ends in 2027. Tenet Health proposed renewing the lease for another 30 years with the stipulation that they would acquire the hospital at the end of the lease. Tenet Health proposes paying a total of \$300 million to the District for the lease with transfer of ownership. Tenet Health would also be responsible for the state mandated seismic earthquake safety retrofit estimated to cost approximately \$185 million. The new lease with ownership-transfer that Tenet has proposed would be placed on a future ballot and would require voter approval.

56% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing payments from the proposed lease could be used to support the expansion of primary care and mental health services across the Coachella Valley

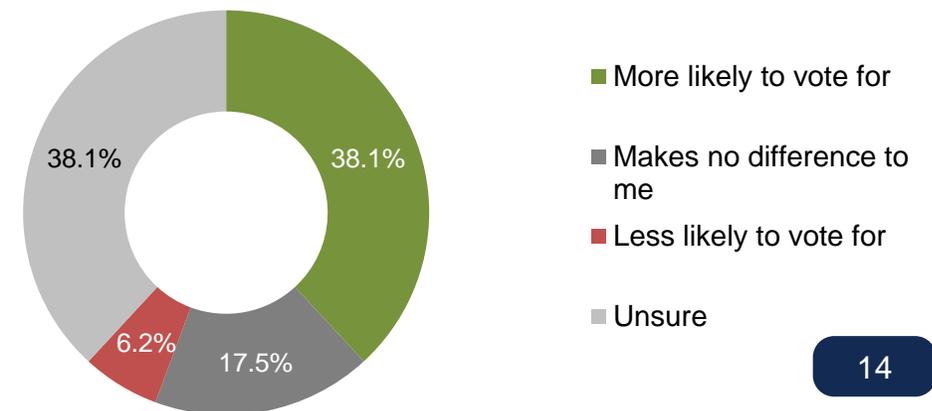
Question 13: Tenet Health is required to pay fair market value for the medical center. The cash payments under the proposed lease total approximately \$300 million and could be used by the District to support the expansion of other forms of medical care such as primary care and mental health services across the Coachella Valley, better serving the healthcare needs of underserved residents. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with an option to purchase the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

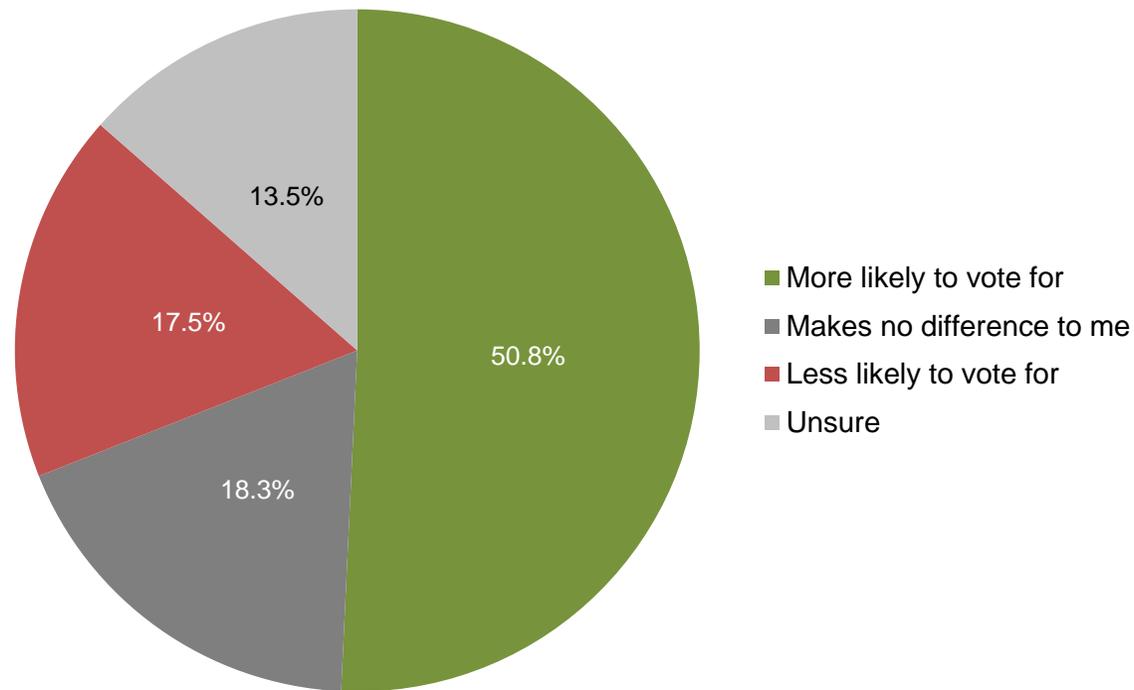


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

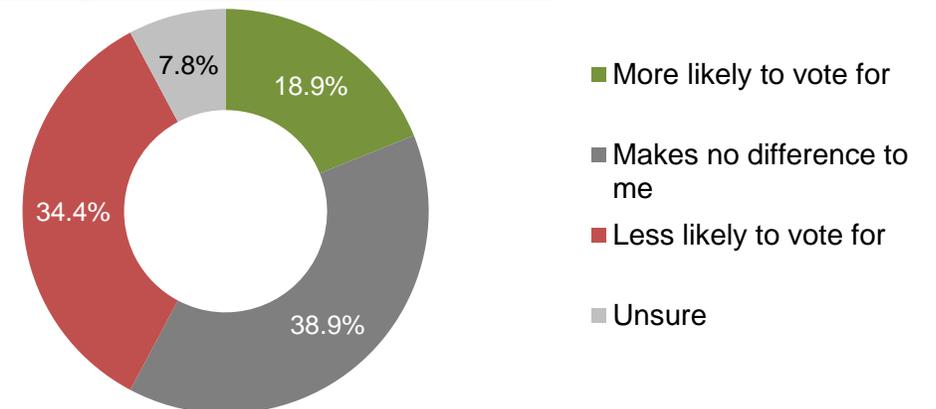


51% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing property taxes on residents would increase to pay for state-mandated seismic earthquake safety retrofit upgrades

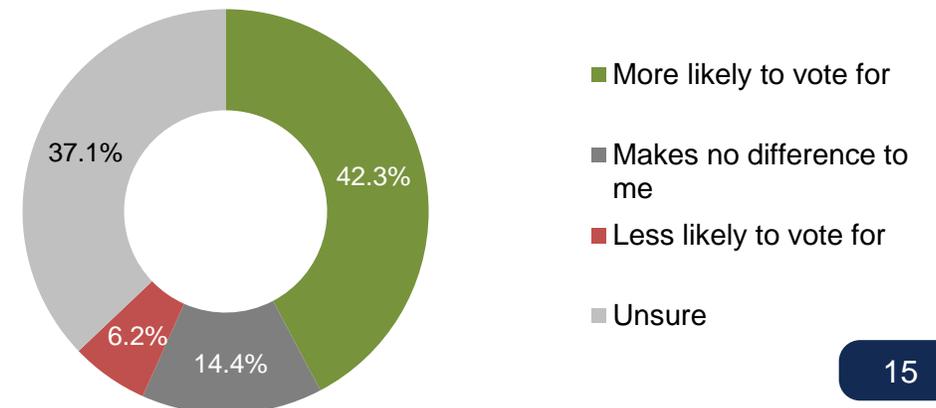
Question 14: If the Desert Healthcare District **chose not** to accept Tenet’s lease with transfer of ownership, it is unlikely they would find another long-term lessee in the time available and might be forced to take over operation of the Desert Regional Medical Center. This would require an increase in property taxes on local residents to cover the approximate \$185 million in seismic earthquake safety retrofit upgrades mandated by the state and at least \$100 million in new operating capital. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with an option to purchase the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

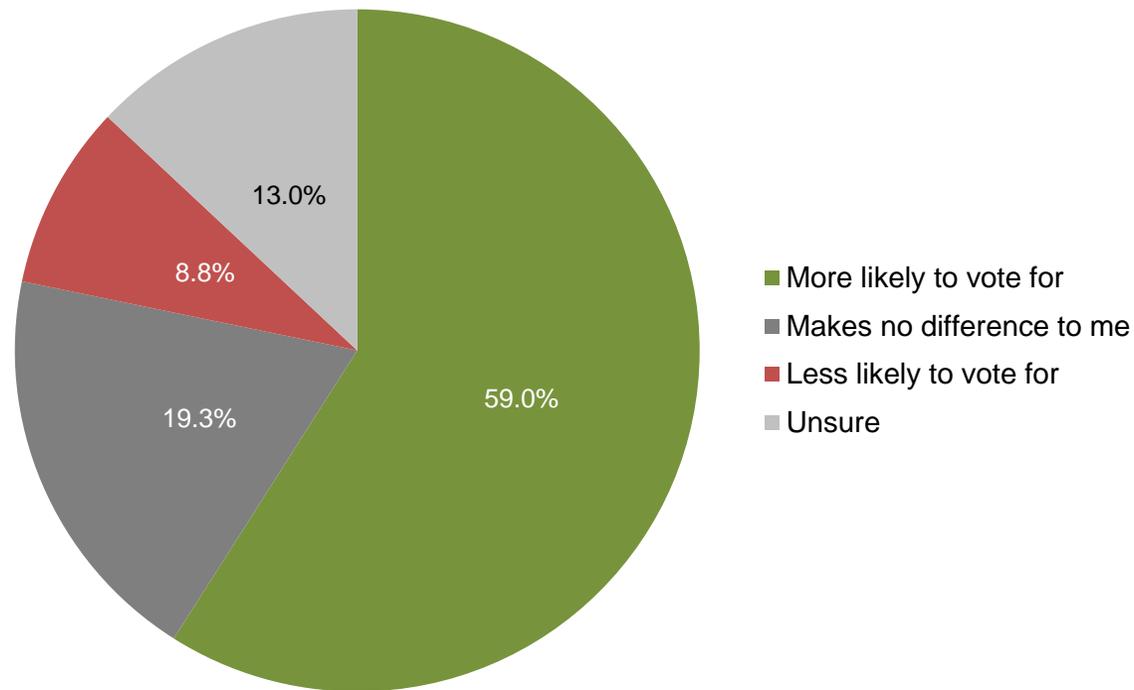


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

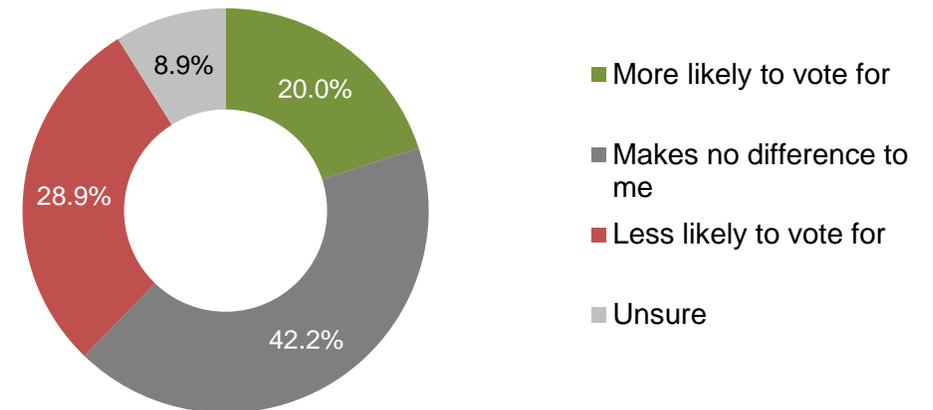


59% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing Tenet Health will take responsibility for the state-mandated seismic earthquake safety retrofit

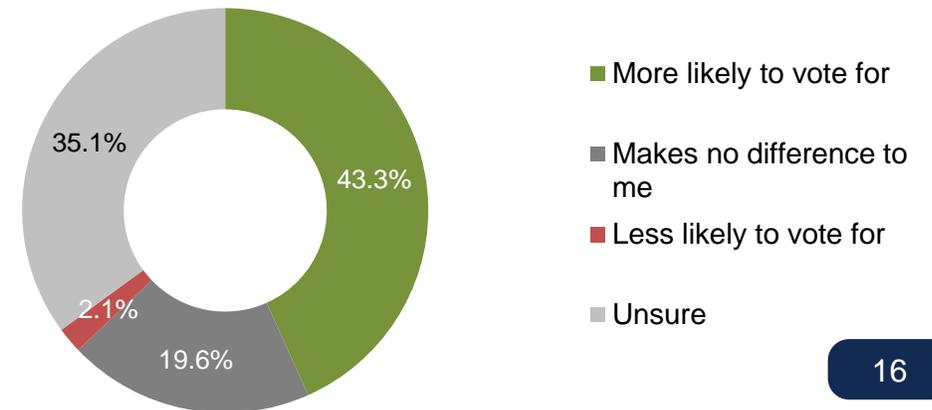
Question 15: If the Desert Healthcare District and the voters agree to a lease with transfer of ownership with Tenet Health, Tenet Health will take responsibility for the state-mandated seismic earthquake safety retrofit which is estimated to cost \$185 million. Senate Bill 1953 mandates that by Jan. 1, 2030, all hospitals rebuild or retrofit so they are able to remain fully functional in the event of an earthquake. If a hospital does not make this deadline, it may be required under current law to close their doors and cease operation. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

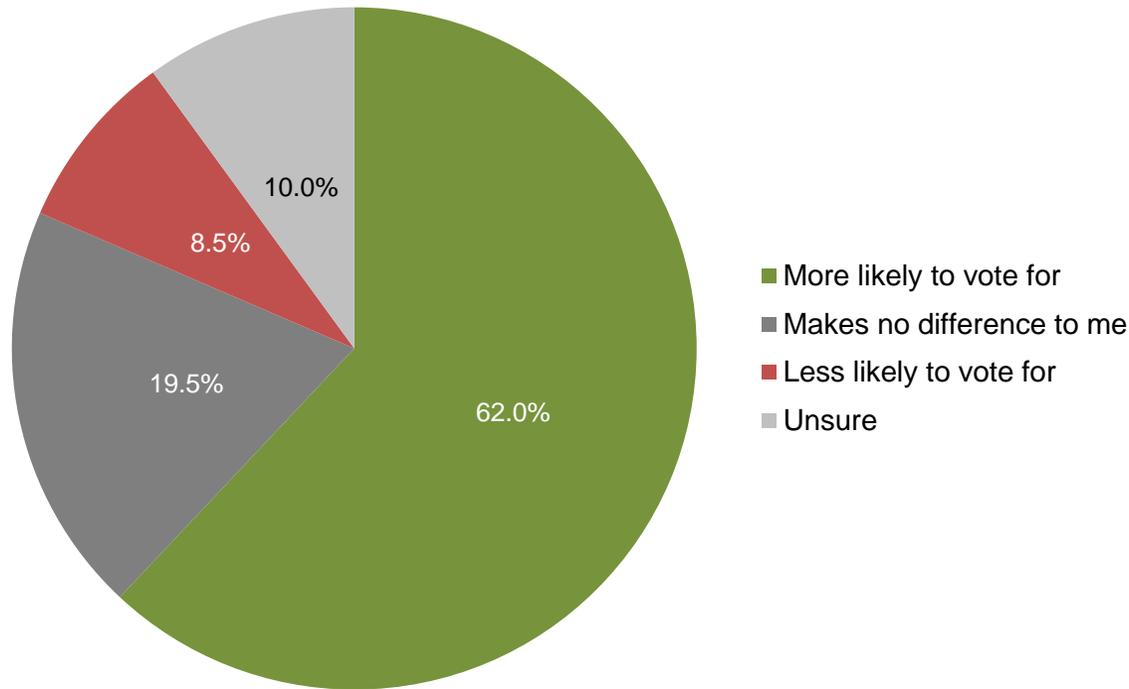


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

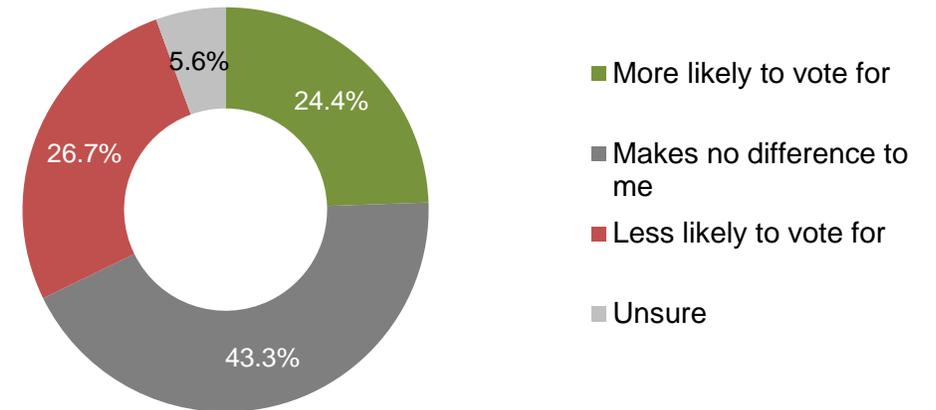


62% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing funds can allow Desert Healthcare District to address the physician shortage

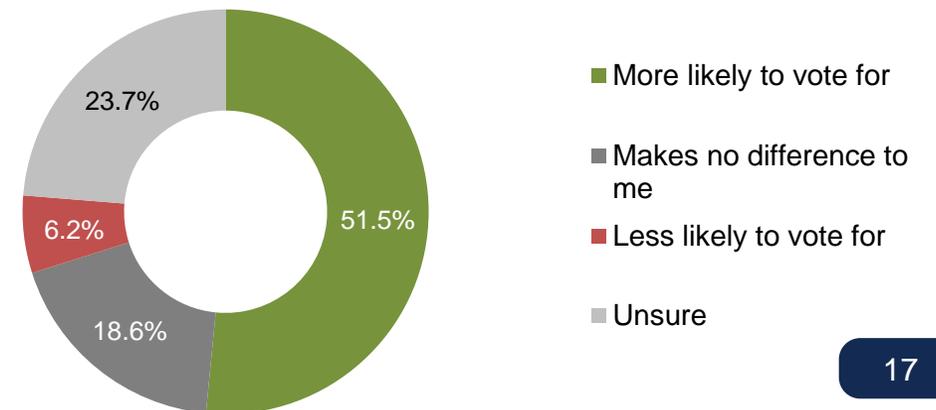
Question 16: Studies by the District indicate the Coachella Valley is currently facing a shortage of approximately 240 physicians with 75% of that shortage being in primary care. Continual population growth is only making this shortage worse. Funds from a lease with ownership transfer of the Desert Regional Medical Center can allow the Desert Healthcare District to address this critical shortage of physicians. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

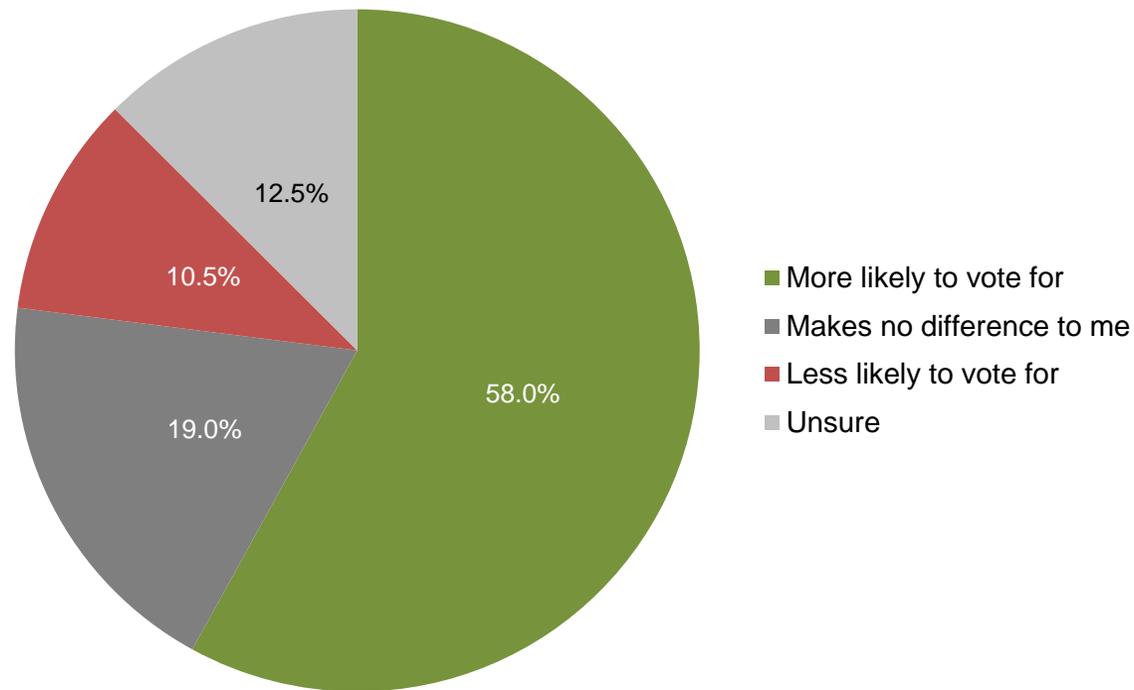


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

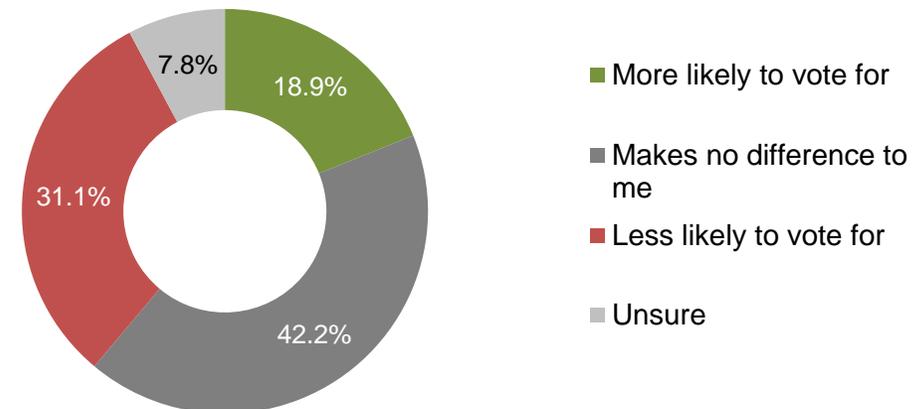


58% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that the funds from the transfer can improve access to healthcare throughout the Valley

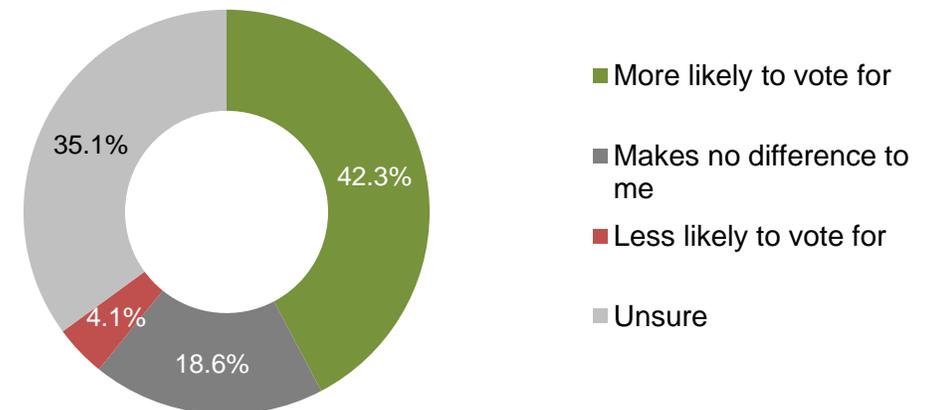
Question 17: Healthcare resources are clustered in the middle of the Coachella Valley leaving many outer areas of the region medically underserved. Nearly one in three people in the Coachella Valley live in one of these underserved communities. Funds from the lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center will allow the Desert Healthcare District to improve access to healthcare to all communities in the Valley. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

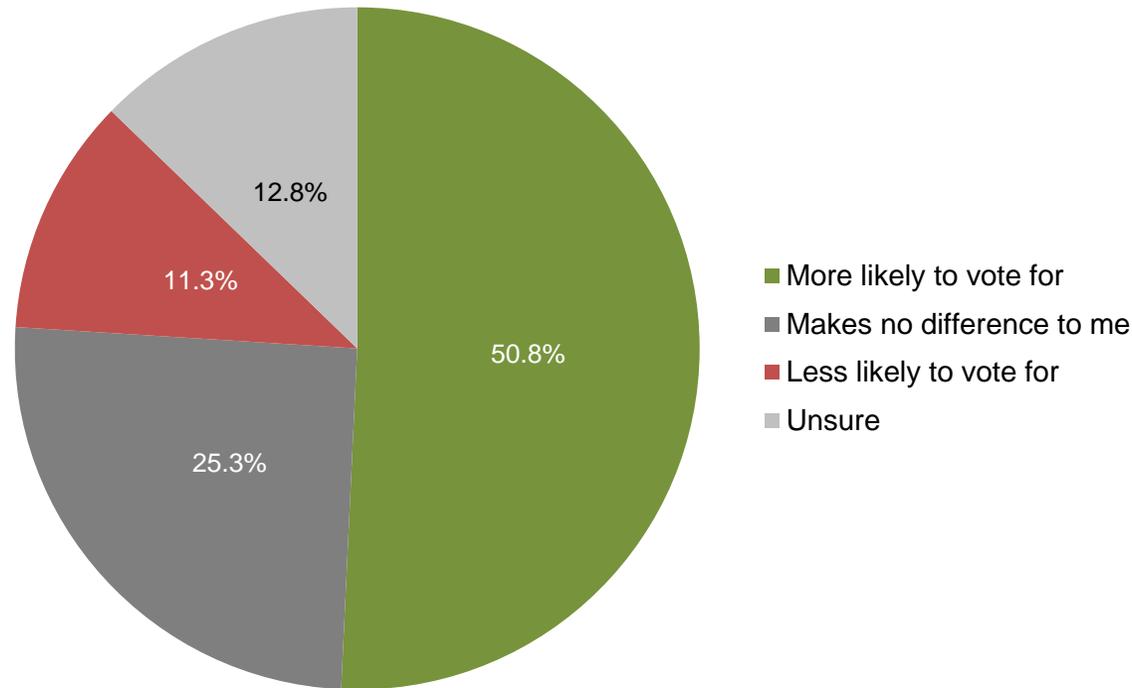


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

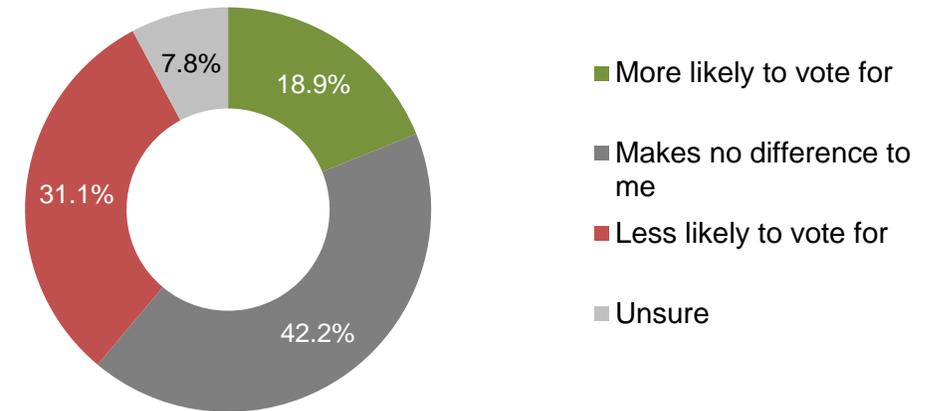


51% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that the funds from can increase the number of pediatricians in the Valley

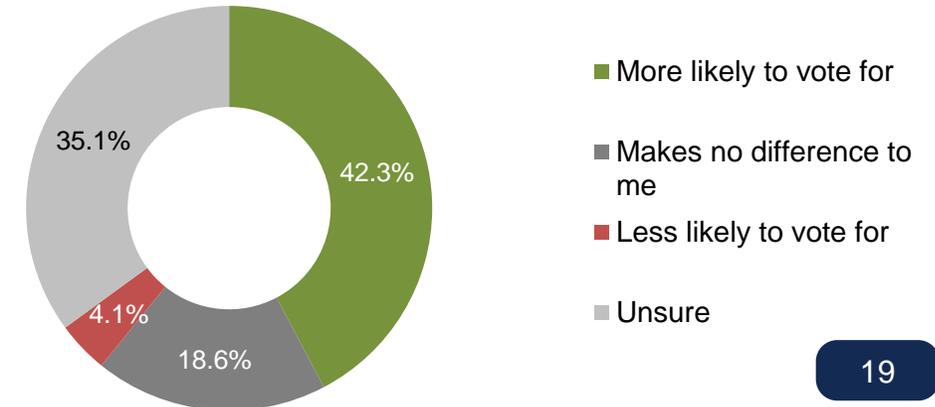
Question 18: Studies by the District indicate there are 70 fewer pediatricians in the Coachella Valley than there should be based on the youth population. Every child in the Coachella Valley deserves access to healthcare and the funds from the lease with an option to purchase of the Desert Regional Medical Center could be used by the Desert Healthcare District to begin to make that a reality. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted "no"

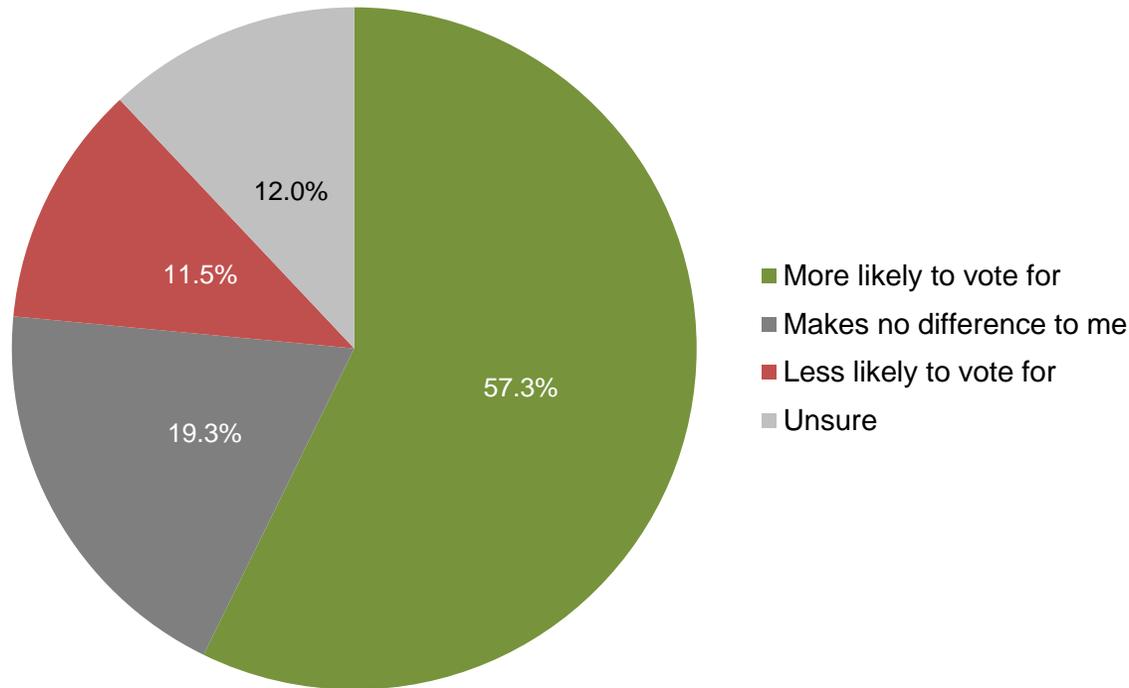


Among those who initially voted "unsure"

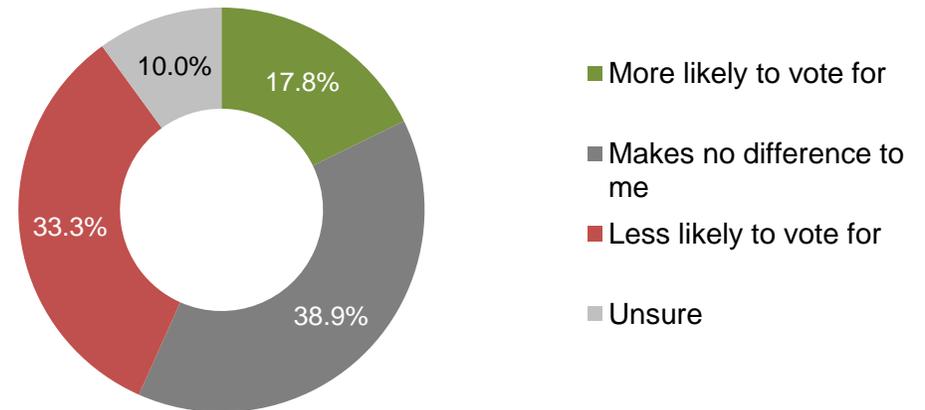


57% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that the funds from the transfer can fix mental health disparities in the Valley

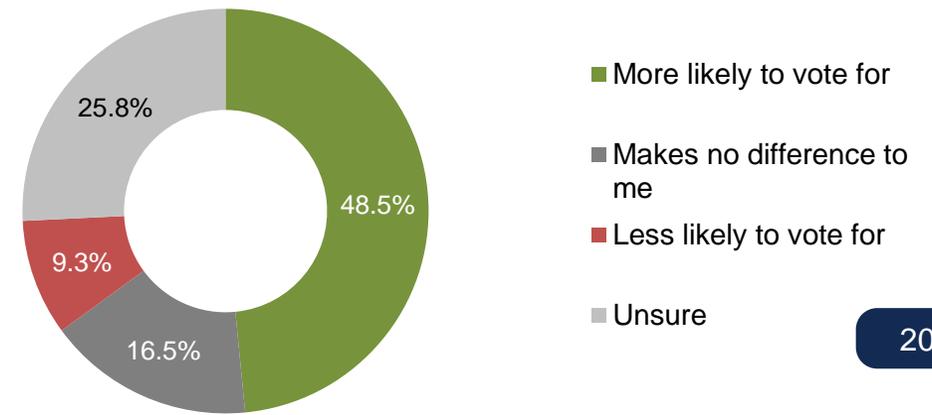
Question 19: Mental health is just as important as physical health but there exist major disparities in psychiatry and mental health services in the Coachella Valley. Funds from the lease with an option to purchase of the Desert Regional Medical Center could allow the Desert Healthcare District to expand access to and use of telehealth and other means to fix these disparities. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

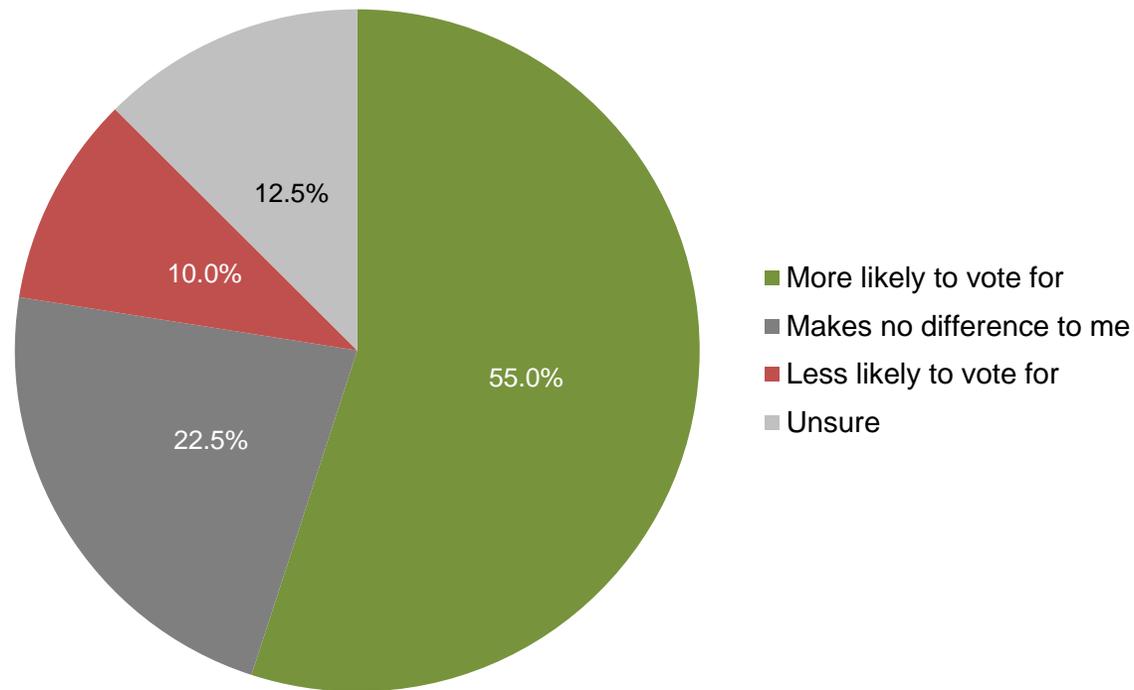


Among those who initially voted “unsure”

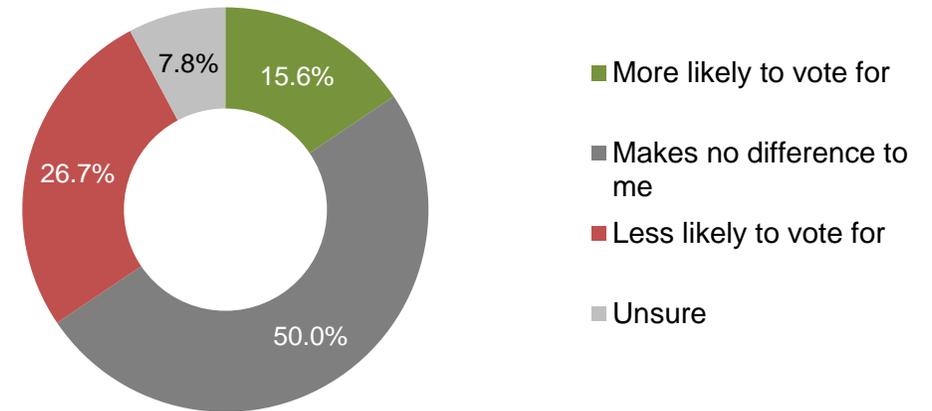


55% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that it will limit disruptions to healthcare services in the Valley

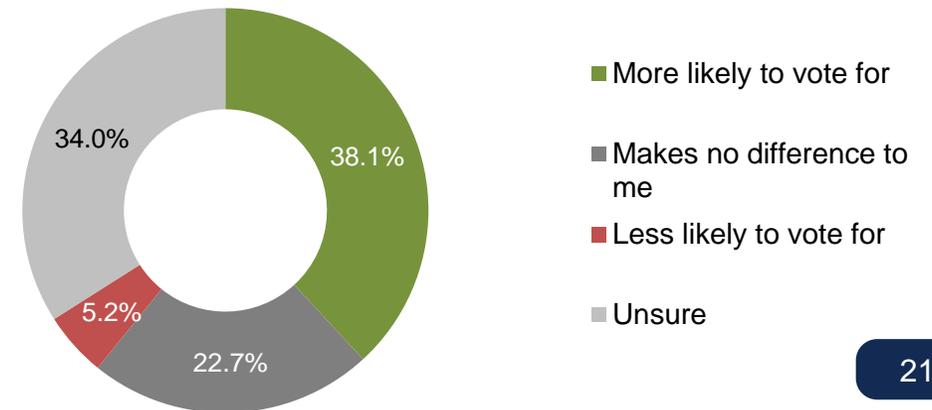
Question 20: Tenet Healthcare has operated Desert Regional Medical Center successfully in partnership with the Desert Healthcare District for over 25 years and has a long history of understanding how to best serve the needs of this community. If Tenet Health enters into a new lease with an option to purchase the hospital, there would be no disruptions to healthcare services in the Coachella Valley from a transition to another operator. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

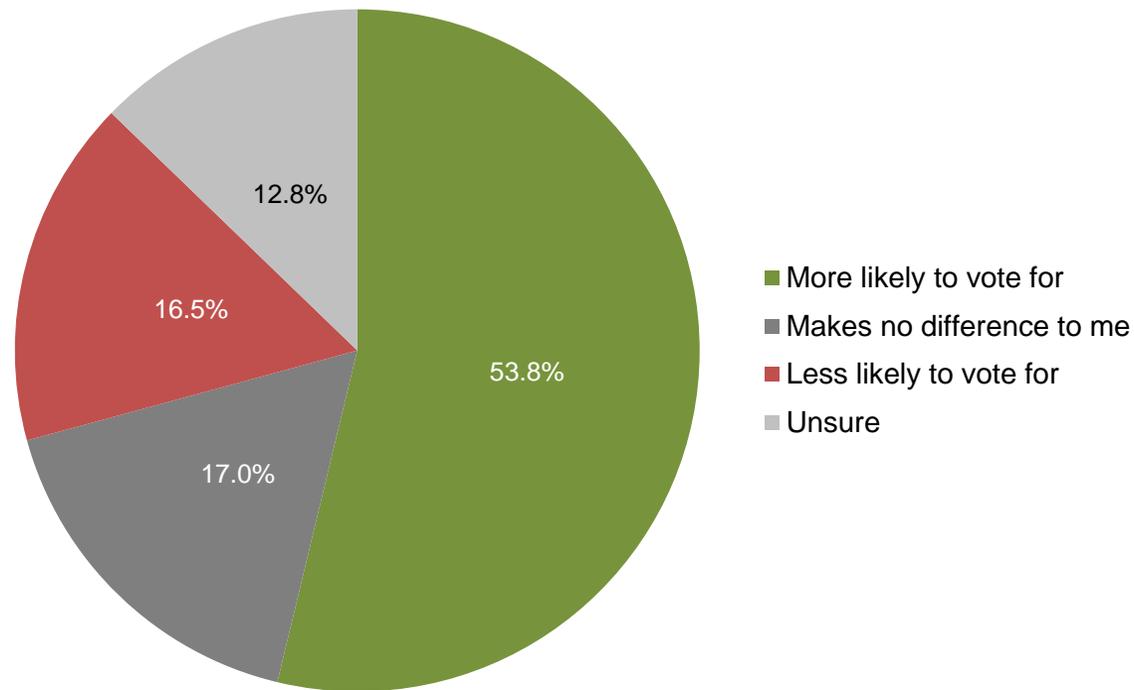


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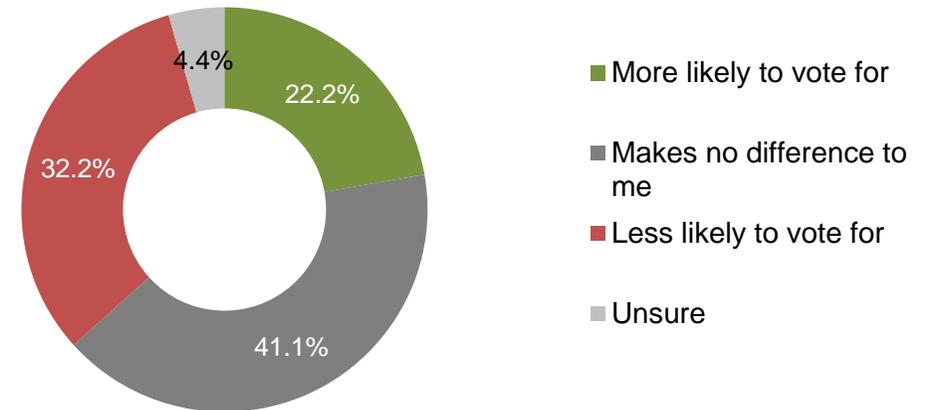


54% are more likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that any potential takeover of DRMC will require the end of the District's grants and programs

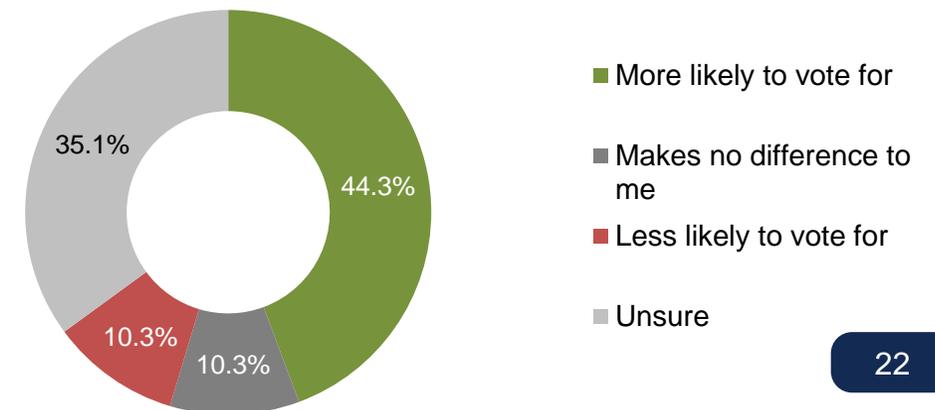
Question 21: If there is no lease extension agreement for Desert Regional Medical Center with Tenet Healthcare, the Desert Healthcare District would need to take over operations of the hospital. This would require so much money in start-up costs that it would end the District's ability to fund grants in the Coachella Valley and halt all programs to expand healthcare beyond the hospital. For context, over the last ten years these kinds of grants and programs have totaled \$60 million. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted "no"

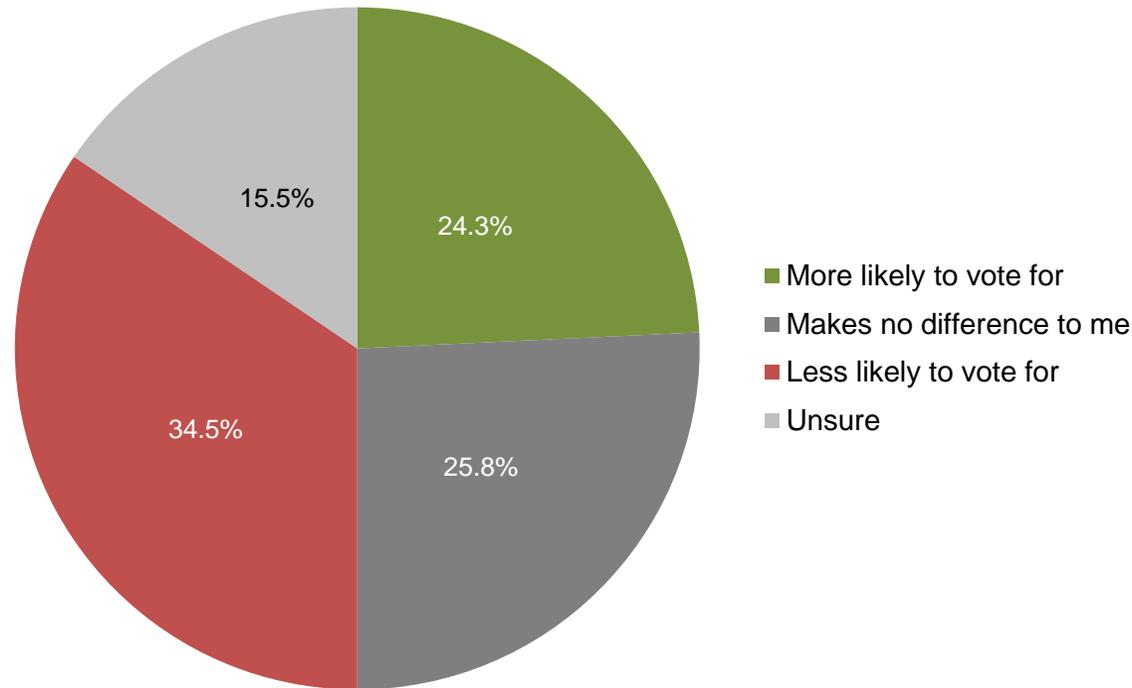


Among those who initially voted "unsure"

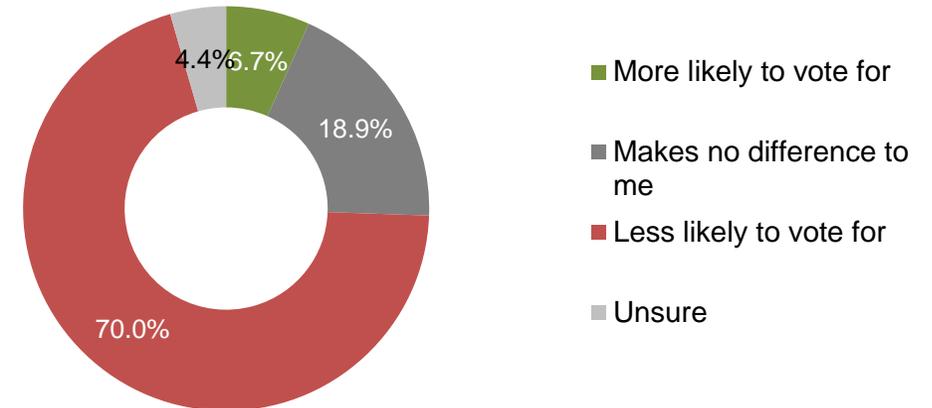


35% are less likely to vote for the transfer after hearing that the District will cease to have oversight over the DRMC

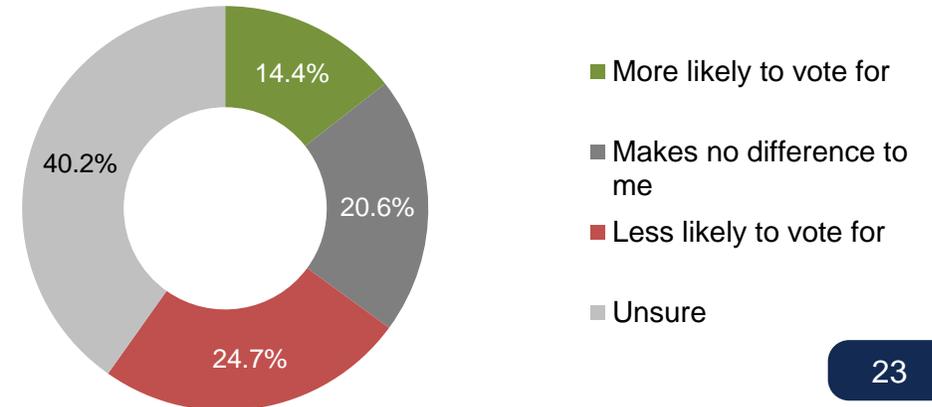
Question 22: The Desert Healthcare District does not have operational control over the Desert Regional Medical Center, but since Tenet Health leases it from the District, the Desert Healthcare District does have minor oversight. If, at the end of a new 30-year lease, the transfer of ownership option is exercised by Tenet Health, District oversight will cease. Does this make you more likely to vote for or less likely to vote for a lease with transfer of ownership of the Desert Regional Medical Center to Tenet Health?



Among those who initially voted “no”

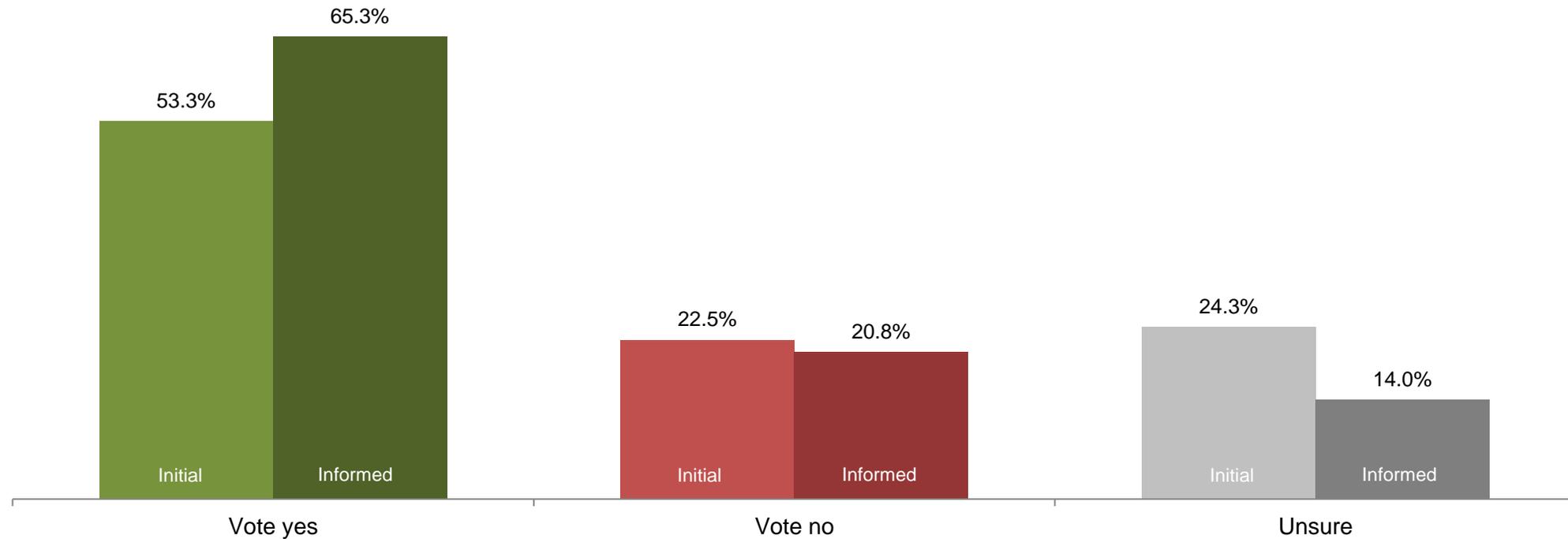


Among those who initially voted “unsure”



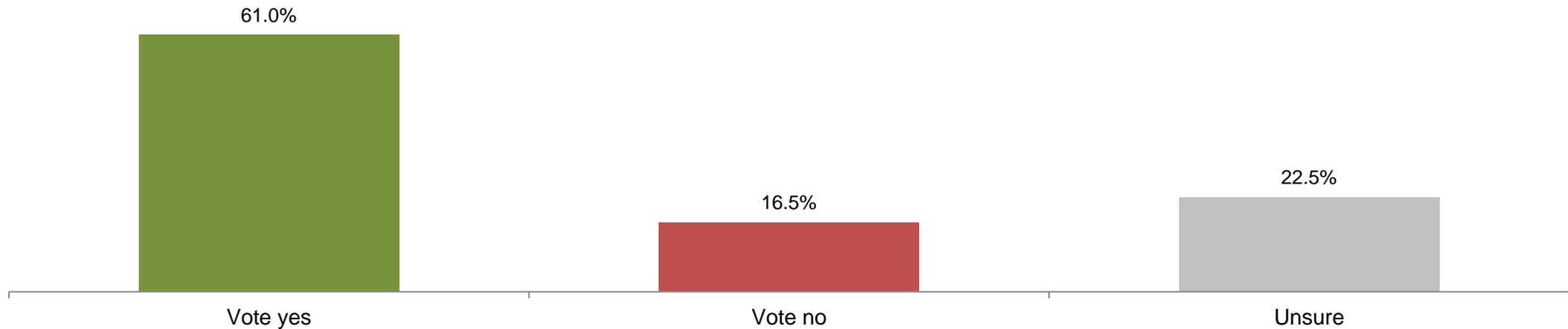
Informed Vote: 65% vote yes on the measure that would transfer ownership

Question 23: Knowing what you know now, if the election were held today, how would you vote on the following measure? "In order to continue providing comprehensive medical and emergency healthcare services at Desert Regional Medical Center, shall the Desert Health District extend the current lease of the hospital with Tenet Health for an additional 30-year period, with ownership of the hospital transferring to Tenet Health, if it chooses, at the end of that new lease period? In consideration for that 30-year lease with ownership transfer, Tenet Healthcare would pay approximately \$300 million to the District, as well as assume responsibility for seismic upgrades of the hospital currently estimated to cost \$185 million, at no additional cost to the taxpayers. All amounts in today's dollars.". Would you vote yes or vote no?



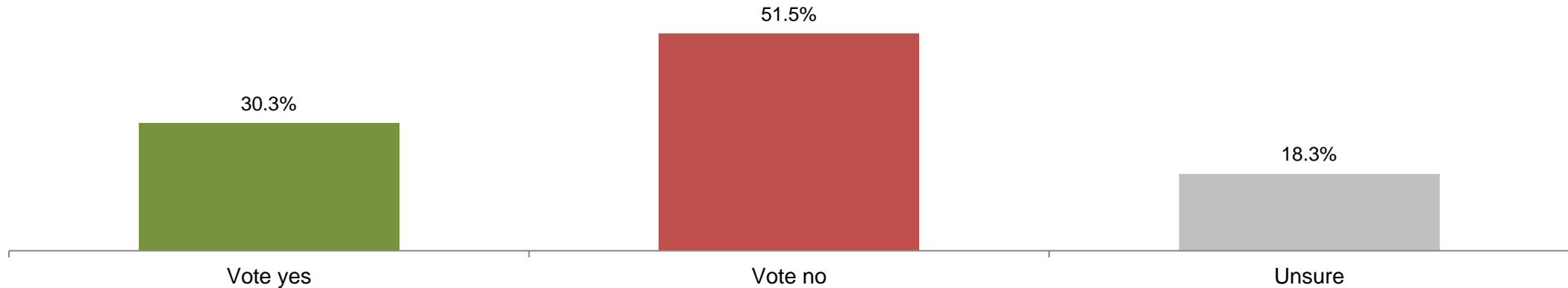
61% would vote yes on the extension of the lease with no transfer of ownership

Question 24: Knowing what you know now, if the election was held today, how would you vote on the following measure? "In order to continue providing comprehensive medical and emergency healthcare services at Desert Regional Medical Center and to ensure that seismic earthquake safety compliance and future hospital improvements are completed at no additional cost to the taxpayers, shall the Desert Healthcare District, in consideration for payment from Tenet Health of approximately \$290 million in today's dollars, extend the current lease to operate the hospital for an additional 30-year period with no transfer of ownership to Tenet Health at the end of the term." Would you vote yes or vote, no?



52% vote no on the District assuming operational responsibility and management of the DRMC

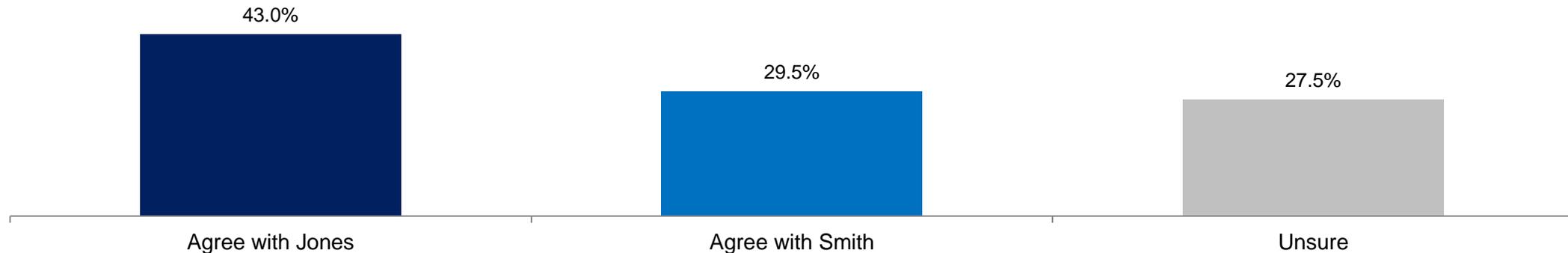
Question 25: Knowing what you know now, if the election was held today, how would you vote on the following measure? “Shall the Desert Health District assume operational responsibility and management of the Desert Regional Medical Center in 2027 when the current lease with Tenet Health ends and impose a property tax on all residential properties to pay for the cost of the state-mandated seismic earthquake safety upgrades at a cost of approximately \$185 million and eliminate all community grants for expanded access to healthcare in the Coachella Valley.” If the election was held today, would you vote yes or vote no?



43% agree with Jones that the District should transfer ownership

Question 26: Smith says: “The Desert Regional Medical Center is one of the most prized public assets in our community. Tenet Health has profited millions from our region. The Desert Healthcare District should assume operational responsibility and management over the Desert Regional Medical Center and run it as a public hospital for the benefit of the residents.”

Jones says: “Tenet Health has been part of our community for 30 years. We can’t afford to have any disruptions to the healthcare. The Desert Healthcare District should agree to the proposed lease with transfer of ownership, let Tenet Health worry about the \$185 million cost of the seismic earthquake safety retrofit, and use the \$300 million from the new lease to support other forms of healthcare service throughout the Coachella Valley.”



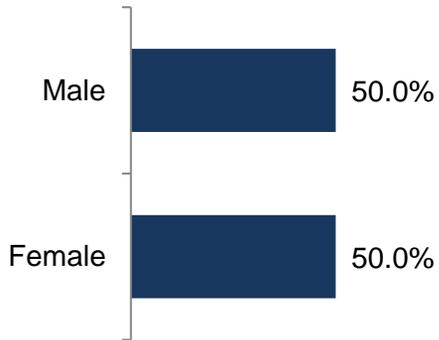
Key Findings

- When comparing the regions medical centers, respondents rated **Eisenhower Medical Center** top with **77%** approval followed by **Desert Regional Medical Center (53%)** and **JFK Memorial Hospital (26%)**.
- Before learning any additional information, the ballot measure that includes a new 30-year lease with ownership transfer received **53% Yes**, 23% No, and 24% Unsure.
- The top messages that move voters to be more likely to support a ballot measure that includes a new 30-year lease with ownership transfer were Q16 “**address physician shortage**” (**62%**), Q15 “**Tenet to cover seismic retrofit costs**” (**59%**), and Q17 “**improve access for underserved communities**” (**58%**).
- After hearing the messages, support increases for the ballot measure that includes a new 30-year lease with ownership transfer to **65% Yes**, 21% No, and 14% Unsure.
- When testing a possible lease renewal only, the **yes vote totals 61% Yes**, 17% No, and 23% Unsure.
- When testing the District taking over operations of the Desert Regional Medical Center, votes said: 30% Yes, **57% No**, and 18% Unsure.

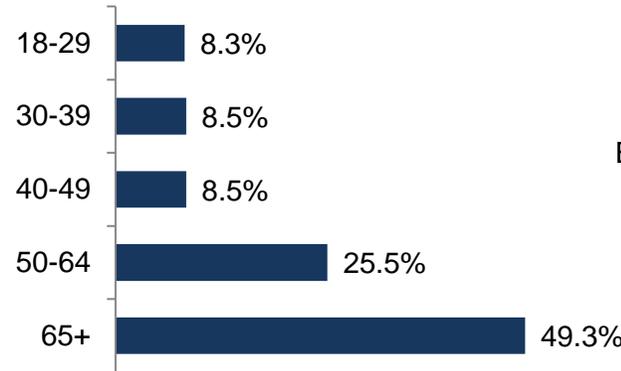
Demographics

Respondent demographics by gender, age group, ethnicity, city, party preference, vote propensity, and birth origin

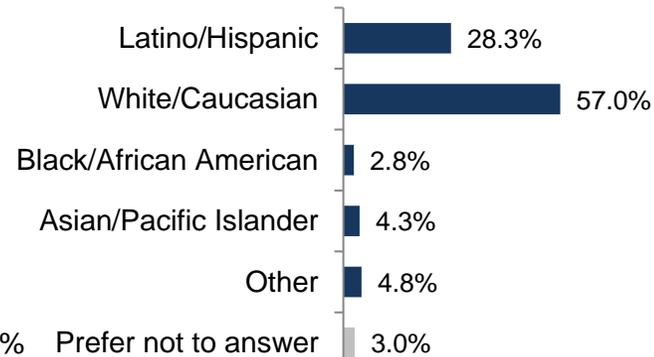
Gender



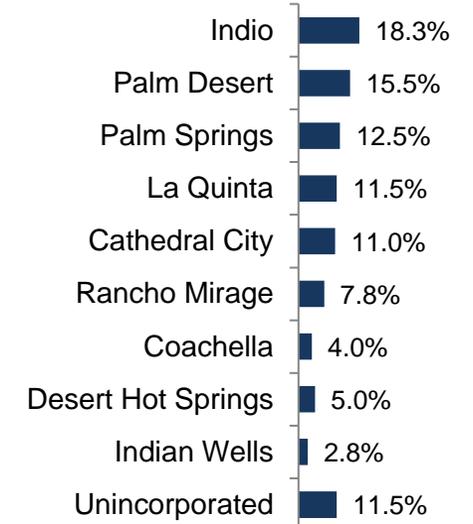
Age Group



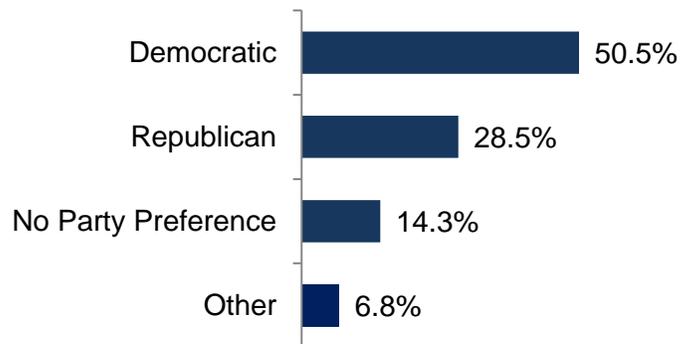
Ethnicity



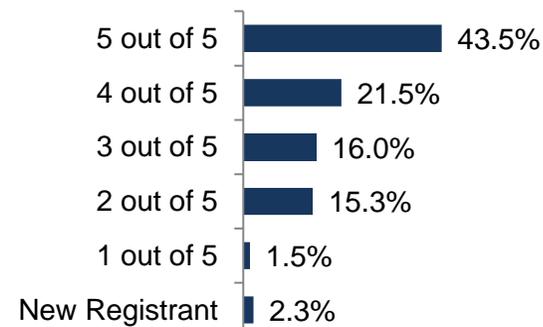
City



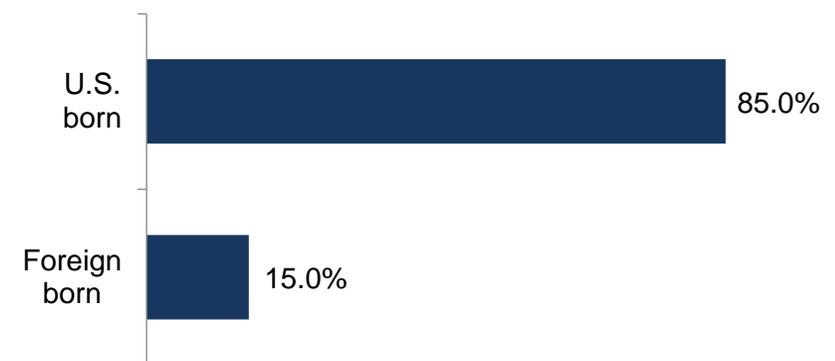
Party Preference



Vote Propensity



Birth Origin



Questions?

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**Opinion Research on
Elections and Public Policy**



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