



**DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT
SPECIAL STUDY SESSION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**July 24, 2018
5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

Jerry Stergios Building, 2nd Floor
Arthur H. "Red" Motley Boardroom
1140 N. Indian Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262
This meeting is handicapped-accessible

Telephonic Location:
3030 Holiday Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316 – Treasurer Matthews

Page(s)	AGENDA	Item Type
	<i>Any item on the agenda may result in Board Action</i>	
	A. CALL TO ORDER – President Zendle, MD Roll Call ____ Vice-President/Secretary Rogers, RN ____ Director/Treasurer Matthews ____ Director Hazen ____ Director Wortham, DrPH	
	B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA	Action
	C. PUBLIC COMMENT At this time, comments from the audience may be made on items <u>not</u> listed on the agenda that are of public interest and within the subject-matter jurisdiction of the District. The Board has a policy of limiting speakers to no more than three minutes. The Board cannot take action on items not listed on the agenda. Public input may be offered on agenda items when they come up for discussion and/or action.	
2-43	D. STUDY SESSION – DISTRICT EXPANSION INITIATIVE a. Focus Groups and Polling Results, Presentation, Lake Research Partners, David Mermin	Information
44-46	b. Ballot Language & Board of Supervisor's Resolution	Information
47-52	c. Board and Staff Activities Through November 6	Information
	E. ADJOURNMENT	



Date: July 24, 2018
To: Board of Directors
Subject: District Expansion Initiative – Focus Groups and Polling Results –
Lake Research Partners

Background:

- As part of the robust efforts of the District’s Board and Staff to bring the District Expansion Initiative to the November 6, 2018 ballot, the District Board engaged the services of Lake Research Partners to perform Focus Groups and Phone Polling Surveys to gain insight into criteria surrounding the proposed District expansion.
- Four (4) Focus Groups – (White Males, White Females, Latino Mixed Gender (English) & (Spanish)
- Phone Polling Surveys of 500 registered voters of the proposed expansion area were completed.
- The results are included in the packet and will be presented by David Mermin of Lake Research Partners.



Desert Healthcare District

Focus Group and Survey Research Findings
from Voters in the Desert Healthcare
District's Proposed Expansion Area.

David Mermin, Bob Meadow, and Jessica Mejia Peña

Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY

LakeResearch.com

202.776.9066

Methods

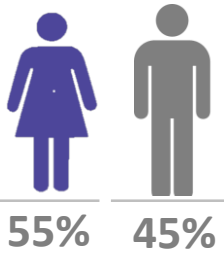
- **Exploratory Focus Groups:** Lake Research Partners conducted and moderated four focus groups among likely voters in the Desert Healthcare expansion district, segmented by race, age, and region to promote open conversations among respondents, organized as follows:

Date	Group
6/11/18 – 6/12/18	White males
	White females
	Latinos mixed gender (English) Latinos mixed gender (Spanish)

- **Survey Research:** Following the focus groups, to drill down into themes raised by the respondents and to provide a quantitative assessment of the electorate, Lake Research Partners designed and administered a live telephone survey conducted from June 30 – July 5, 2018 with 500 likely 2018 General Election voters in the area of proposed expansion of the Desert Healthcare District. The sample was stratified by gender, age, region, race, and party registration to reflect the demographic composition of likely voters. Where there were slight differences between our survey sample and the expected voting population, data were weighted accordingly.
- The margin of error of the overall sample is $\pm 4.4\%$.

Demographics of Desert Healthcare Expansion District Likely Voters

GENDER



AGE

Under 30	12%
30-39	13%
40-49	13%
50-64	25%
65+	38%

EDUCATION LEVEL

High School Grad or Less	27%
Post High School	34%
Non-College Grad	61%
College Graduate or Post Grad	35%

PARTY REGISTRATION

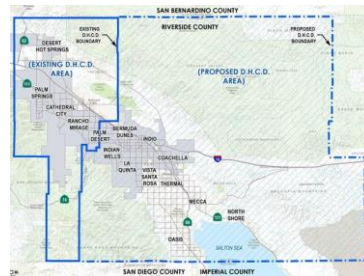


RACE

White	48%
Latino	41%
Black	2%

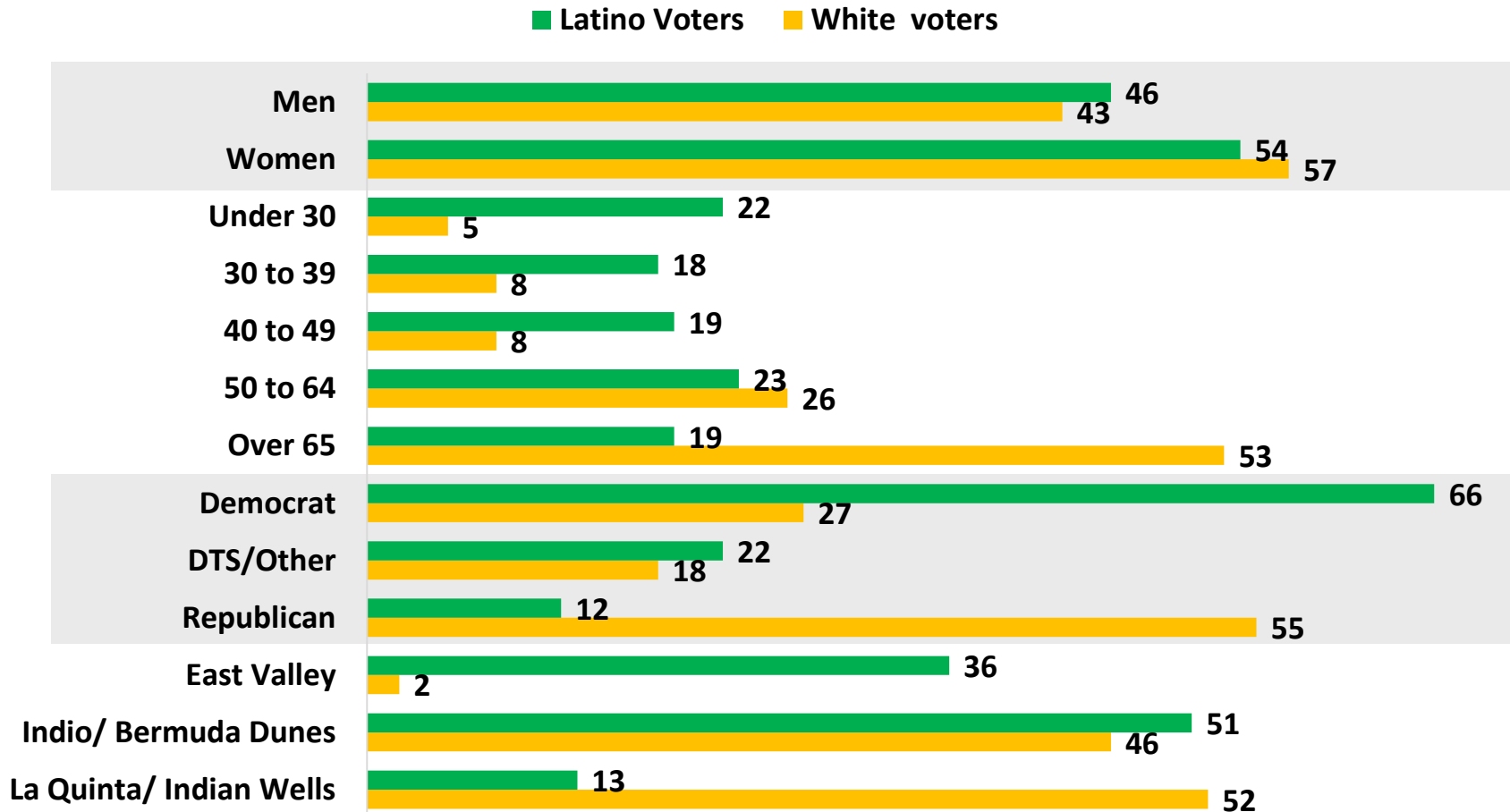
REGION

La Quinta/ Indian Wells	34%
Indio/ Bermuda Dunes	49%
East Valley	17%



Married	60%
Unmarried	35%
Refused/DK	6%

Within the expansion district, the Latino voters are much younger, more Democratic, and more concentrated in the East Valley compared to white voters.



Key Findings



Key Findings

- Health care is a very important issue for voters in the proposed expansion area, with 53% saying it is very important compared to other issues they face. When it comes to health care, the most important aspects to the voters are access issues directly affecting the delivery of health care: health insurance coverage (40%), access to health care facilities such as hospitals and clinics (30%), highly skilled doctors (27%), and affordable prescription drugs (22%).
- When asked about their impressions of a series of regional health care facilities, the Eisenhower Medical Center is most favorably rated (68% very favorable), followed by the Desert Regional Medical Center (47%), and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital (27%). Among the elected officials tested, Congressman Raul Ruiz (46%) had the most favorable ratings from voters.
- Tenet Healthcare is largely unknown: 72% have no opinion or have not heard of it.
- The Desert Healthcare District is not well-known: only one-third of voters (29% favorable/ 5% unfavorable) having an impression. When presented with a brief description of the Desert Healthcare District, 79% of voters say they have a favorable view of the District, including 45% who say they are very favorable.

Ballots

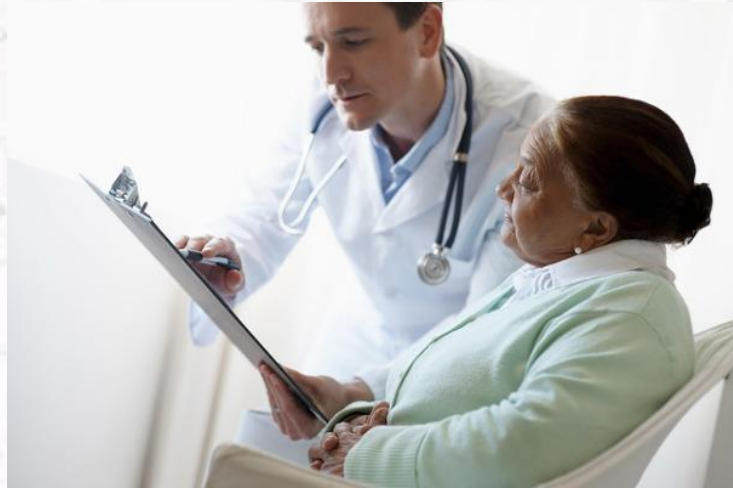
- On the initial ballot asking voters if they would vote Yes or No on expanding the Desert Healthcare District's service area, 58% would vote Yes (including 40% who would vote Yes strongly), 13% of voters would vote No, and 26% of voters are undecided.
 - The measure's strongest supporters include Latino men (77% Yes), Democrats (73%), and East Valley residents (83%).
- After hearing a series of positive and negative messages on the District expansion, there is little movement among voters; support for the measure holds at 59% Yes, opposition rises to 21% from 13%, and the number of undecided voters drops from 26% to 18%.
 - After messaging, the measure's top supporters are younger women (72%), Latinos (79%), Democrats (76%), and East Valley residents (82%).

Messaging – Positives

- The top messages in support of the expansion are **Need Pediatrics** (54% very convincing), **Benefits** (51%), and **More Services** (51%).
 - Need Pediatrics highlights the need for more pediatric specialists in the Coachella Valley and the expansion’s ability to break down barriers to pediatric care and improve access to these services for the Valley’s children.
 - Benefits and More Services point out the importance of everyone in the Valley having access to the health care they need, including seniors and people with chronic conditions. They also highlight how the expansion will improve access to health care through funding and partnerships with local organizations, so Coachella Valley residents can have a chance for a better, healthier life.
- These messages are highly convincing reasons to support the measure for the following groups:
 - Need Pediatrics for younger women (76% very convincing), Latinos (63%), Democrats (65%), and Indio/Bermuda Dunes voters (55%).
 - Benefits for younger men (54%), Latinos (71%), Democrats (66%), and East Valley residents (76%).
 - More Services for older women (52%), Democrats (69%), and unmarried voters (56%).

Messaging - Negatives

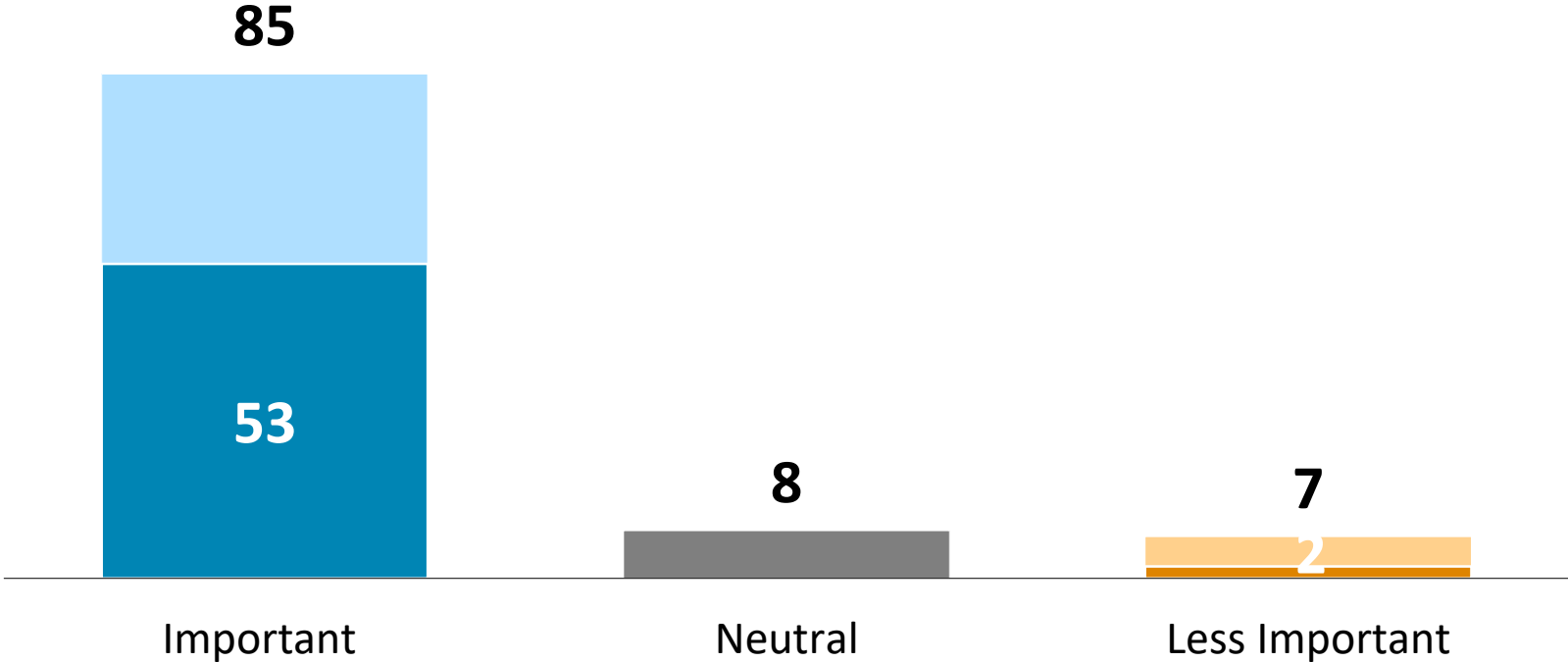
- Respondents also heard a series of potential messages opposing the District expansion measure. The top messages against the measure are **Handle** (36% serious doubts) and **Tenet Healthcare** (35%).
 - **Handle** raises concerns about existing problems with service delivery and questions whether the District can handle an expanded population.
 - **Tenet Healthcare** raises concerns about the profit motive of the company operating the District's hospitals.
- These messages raise serious doubts for over one-third of voters and the following groups:
 - **Handle** raises the most serious doubts for younger voters (38% men and women), white (38%) and Latino (38%) voters, Democrats (34%), married (39%) and unmarried (35%) voters, and voters in La Quinta/Indian Wells (38%) and East Valley (38%) residents.
 - **Tenet Healthcare** raises the most serious doubts for older voters (36% men; 37% women), Republicans (44%), and voters in Indio/Bermuda Dunes (36%).
 - Notably, another message, **Resources** raises serious doubts for a plurality of older women (43%).



Concerns About Health Care in the Expansion Area

Compared to other issues facing voters and their families, health care is considered very important by a majority of voters.

The Importance of Health Care



Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Q5. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is much more important and 0 is much less important, how important is health care as an issue compared to other issues facing you and your family? You can choose any number between 0 and 10.

From the focus groups, the most important things to voters regarding healthcare are access to a quality care and skilled doctors, preventive care, and the ability to see a doctor in a reasonable amount of time.

“Access means that you can get to a doctor, you can get to be taken care of within a reasonable period of time so they can get in.” - White male

“Better appointments. Our appointments - example, my husband's appointment is two months ahead. In order to see - you have to go to urgent care to get seen by a doctor sooner.” - Latina female

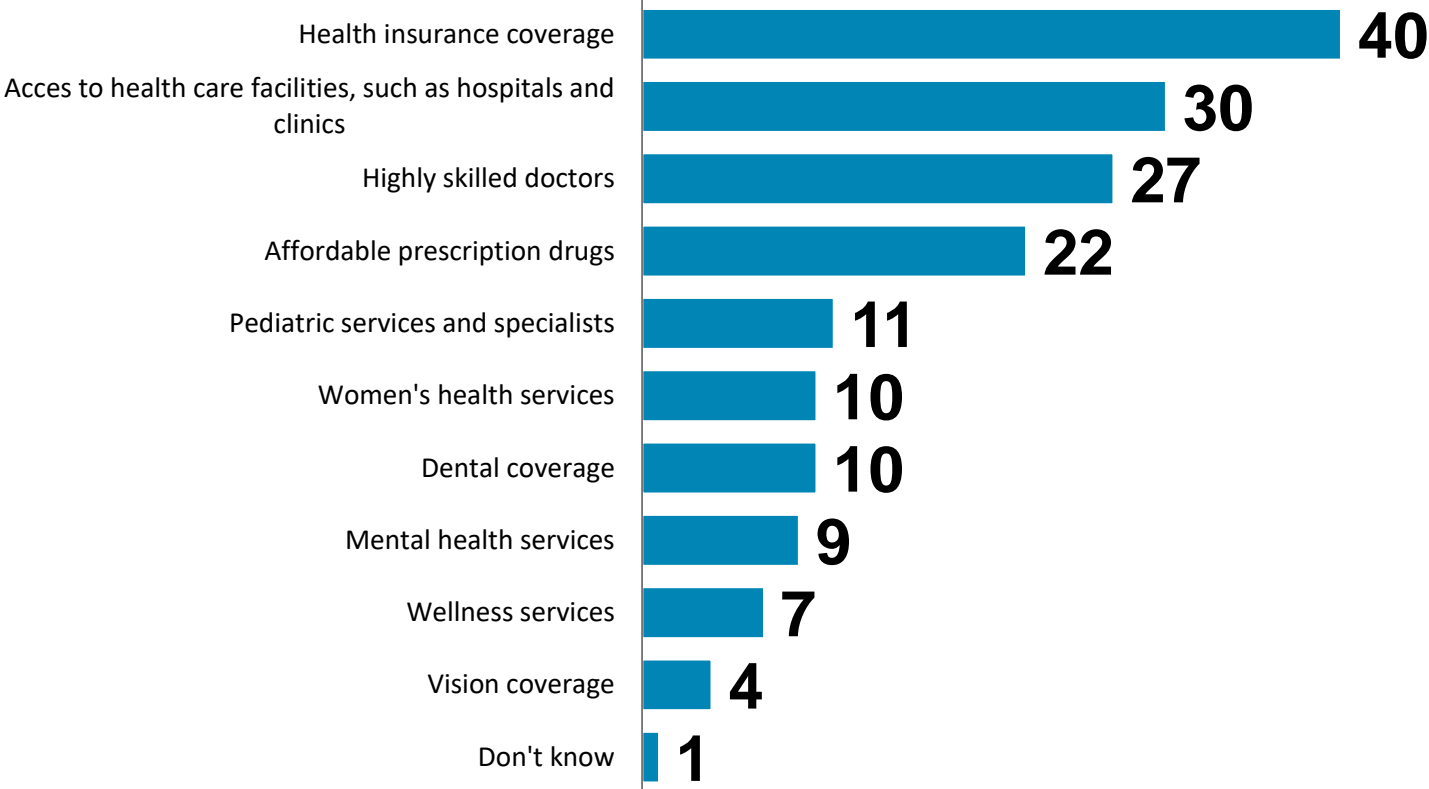
“There's no preventive care for dental or for problems that are afflicting society, and then once there is a problem you try to get an appointment, and you need an appointment now, not two months, three months in advance. And then you have to get seen by a certain person to even get referred to a second doctor or a specialist that they could have just sent you with to begin with. It's too much trying to navigate the system in order to get what you need, which is kind of ridiculous.” - Latino male

“Basic healthcare.” - Latino male

“Good prescription coverage.” - White male

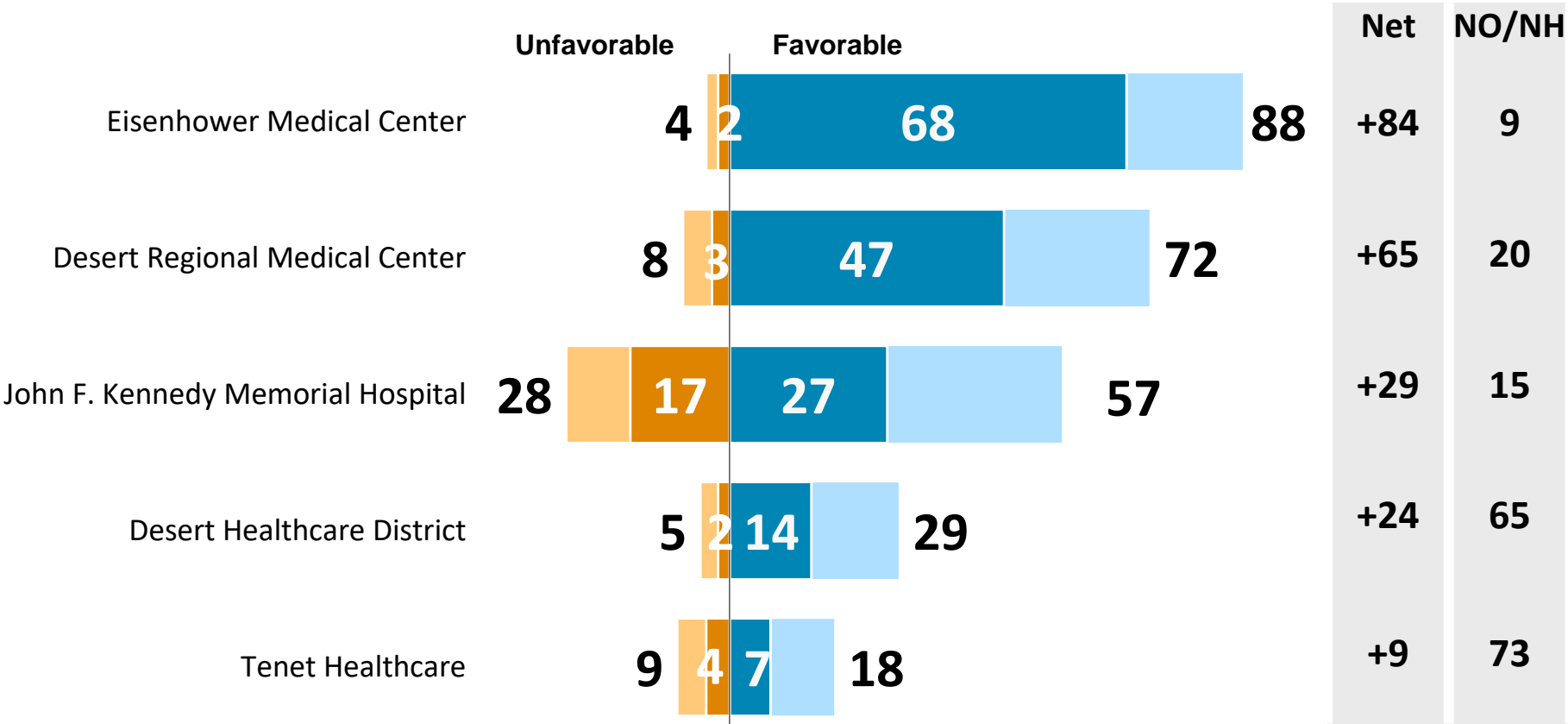
Survey research confirmed these findings; when it comes to health care, the most important issue for voters in the proposed expansion area is health insurance coverage, followed by access to the health care facilities, highly skilled doctors, and affordable prescription drugs.

And when you think about health care and what you want for your family's health, which one or two of these things are most important to you?



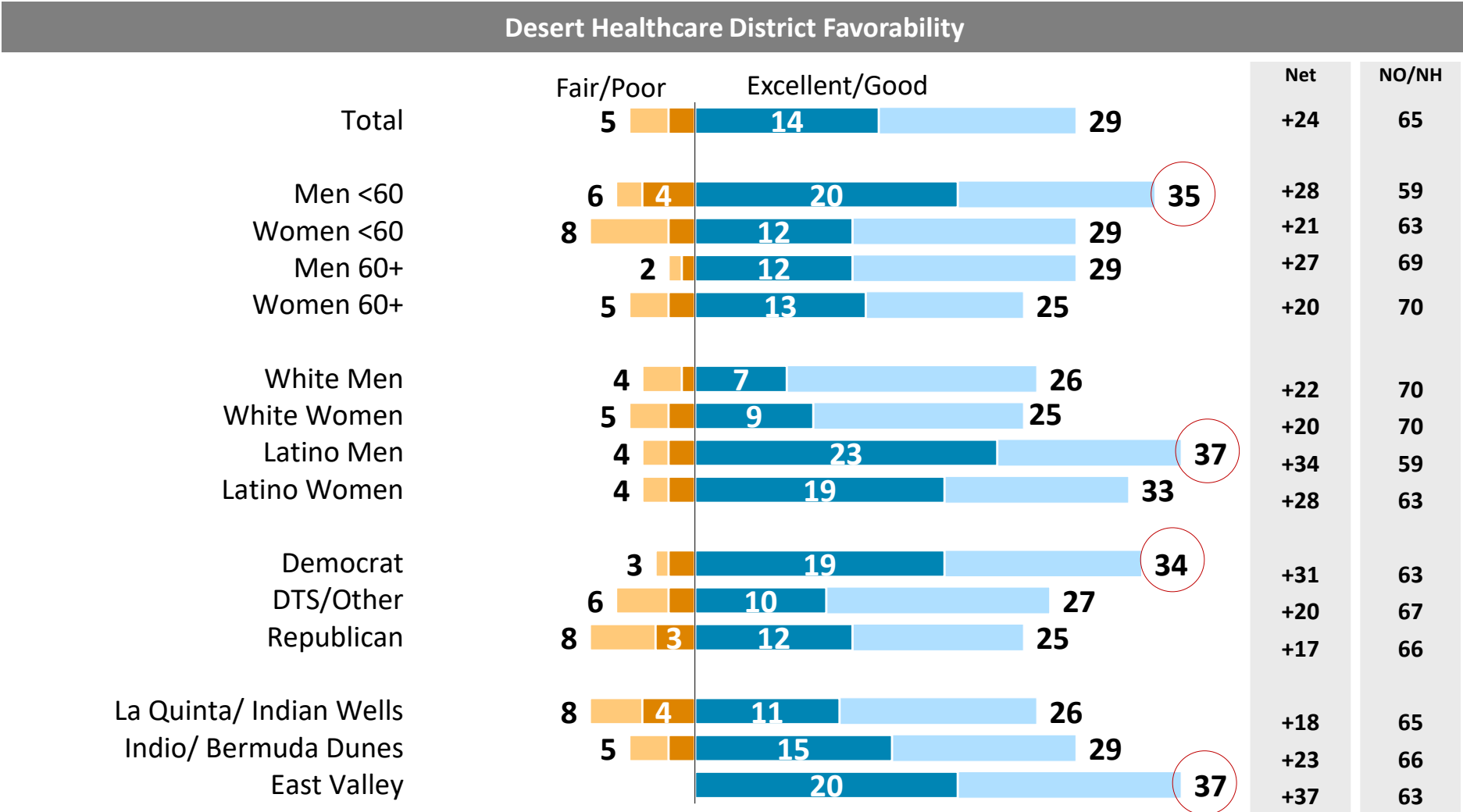
Eisenhower Medical Center is the most favorably rated facility, followed by Desert Regional, and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital. About one-third of respondents know Desert Healthcare District well enough to have an opinion, with most of those having a favorable opinion.

Favorability Ratings



Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Approximately one-third of younger men, Latinos, Democrats, and East Valley residents have a favorable impression of the Desert Healthcare District; still the District is not familiar to likely voters.



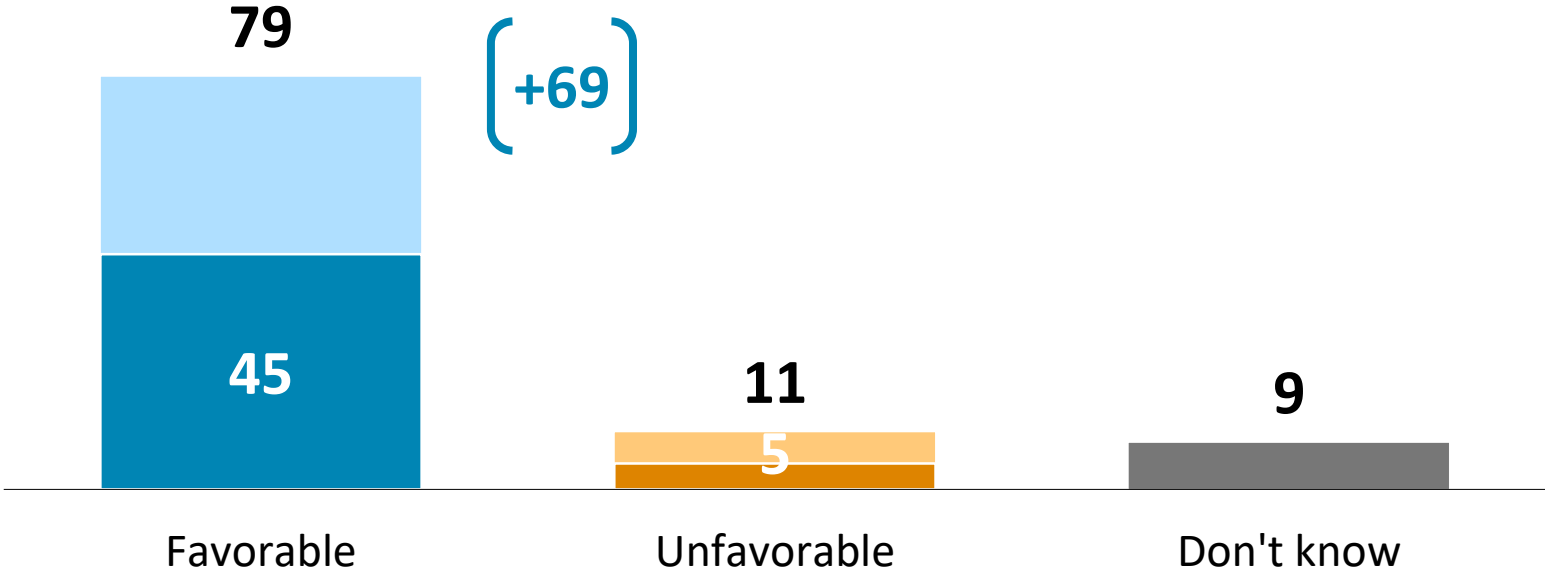
Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Q7c. Desert Healthcare District. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression of Desert Healthcare District?

When presented with a brief description of the Desert Healthcare District, an overwhelming majority of voters feel more favorable toward the District, with a plurality saying they feel very favorable.

Desert Healthcare Description

The Desert Healthcare District is a local governmental agency created in 1948. Its mission today is to connect Coachella Valley residents to health and wellness services and programs. The District and its non-profit foundation provide funds to connect all residents to health-related resources, such as primary and behavioral healthcare, housing, food, and transportation – including children, the elderly, disabled, those who lack insurance, or otherwise need assistance to access the health services they need.

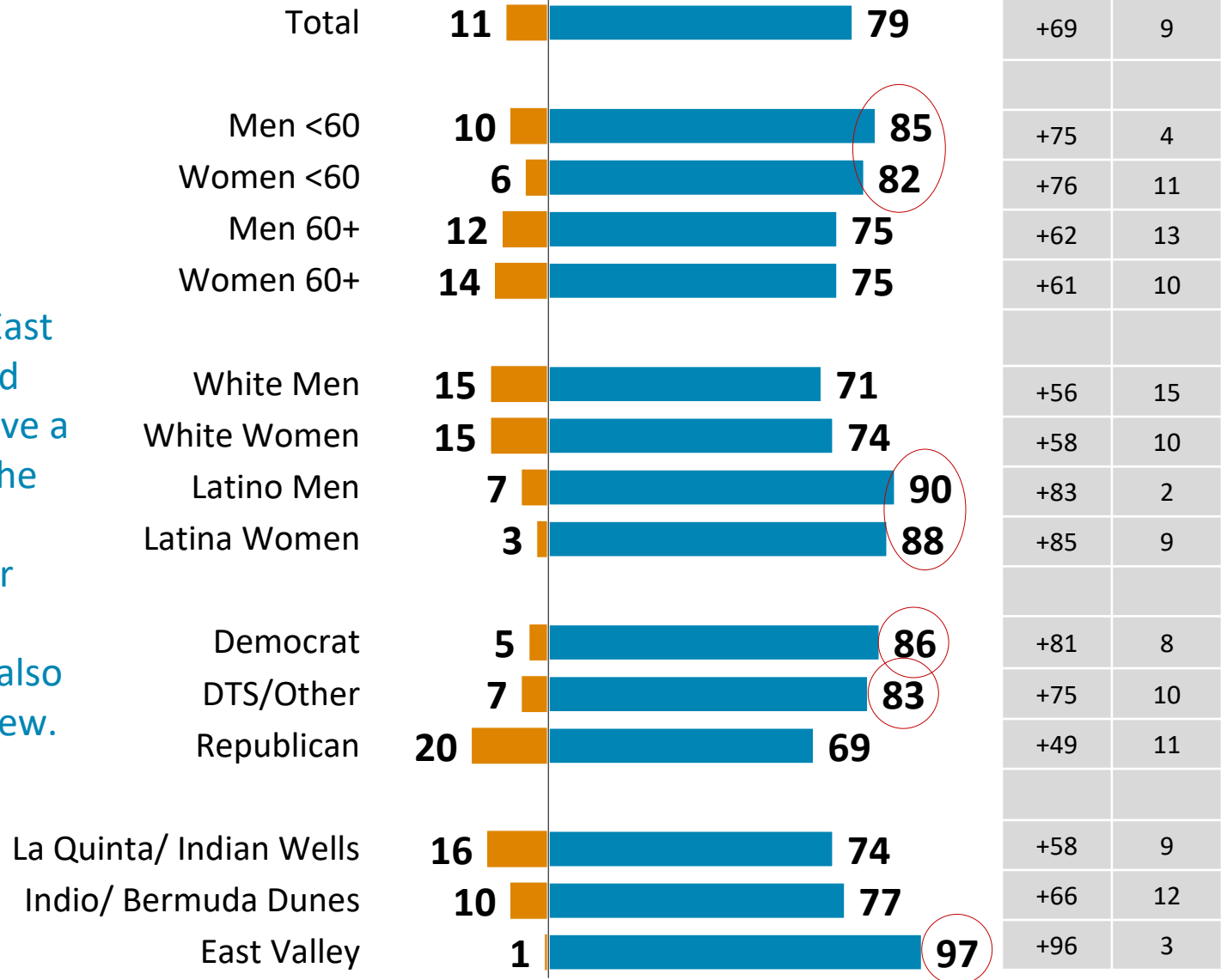


Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Informed about Desert Healthcare District

■ Unfavorable ■ Favorable

After hearing a description of the Desert Healthcare District, nearly all East Valley residents and Latinos say they have a favorable view of the district. A solid majority of younger voters, Democrats, and independents also have a favorable view.



Focus group respondents were also presented with a description of the Desert Healthcare District. While many had positive reactions to the description and like that it works to connect residents to health resources, they also have concerns about Tenet Healthcare and its management of health facilities.

“The Tenet Health, does that have to do with Desert regional?”
-White male

“I just put that the homeless, the war veterans, the young people with mental or drug problems will receive healthcare and medication to get them off the streets.” -
Latino female

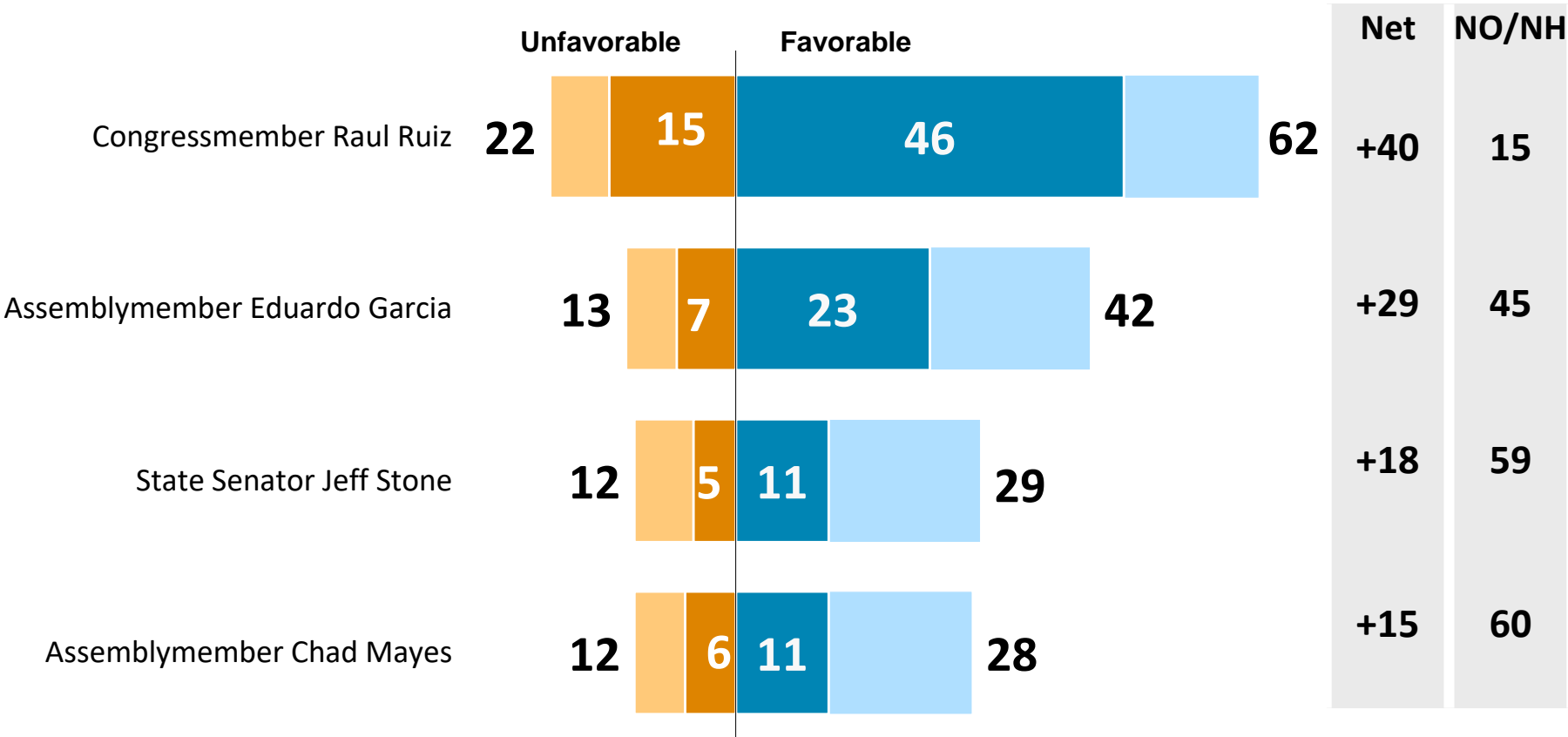
“The fact that it's been around since 1948 is a positive for me... Obviously it has met with a fair amount of success to be still existing and then the non-profit part was attractive as well. Then if you really want to get down to the nuts and bolts, if they're going to start providing all this stuff they're going to need to build places, which provides jobs for people ...” -White male

“That they will be providing transportation for people that don't have a way to get to their health care provider.” -Latino female

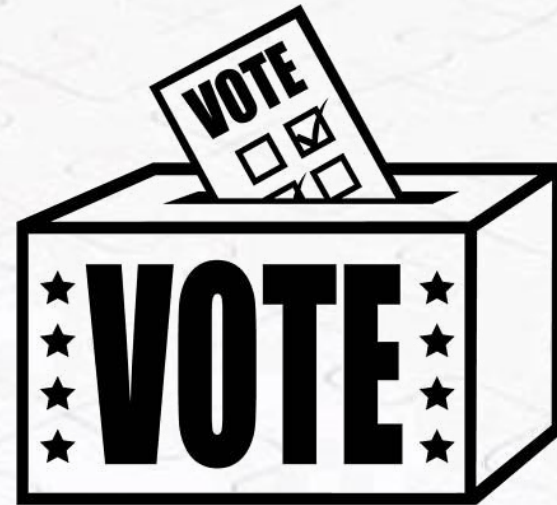
“They purposely put in the name Tenet Health as the operator and because of the things I read, I know that Tenet Health is not necessarily the best organization to run a medical [facility].” -White male

Among elected officials, Congressman Raul Ruiz has the highest favorability rating and name recognition, followed by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia. State Senator Jeff Stone and Assemblymember Chad Mayes are less known. In the focus groups, Congressman Ruiz was often cited as the most credible authority on health care in the region.

Favorability Ratings



Darker colors indicate greater intensity



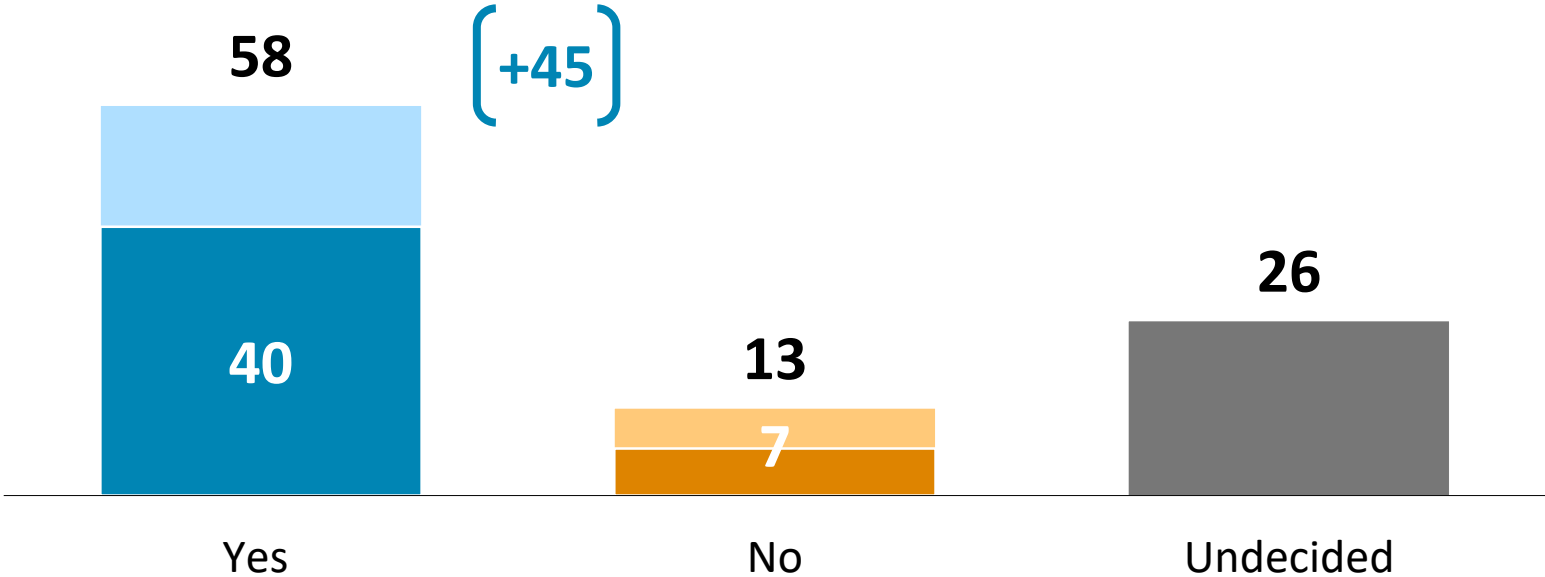
Ballots

The Desert Healthcare District expansion ballot measure starts with majority support across the board. While support remains consistent after exposure to positive and negative messaging, some undecided voters move to opposition.

On the initial ballot, a majority of voters support the ballot measure, with 58% of voters likely to vote Yes and 13% likely to vote No. One fourth of the voters are undecided.

Initial Ballot

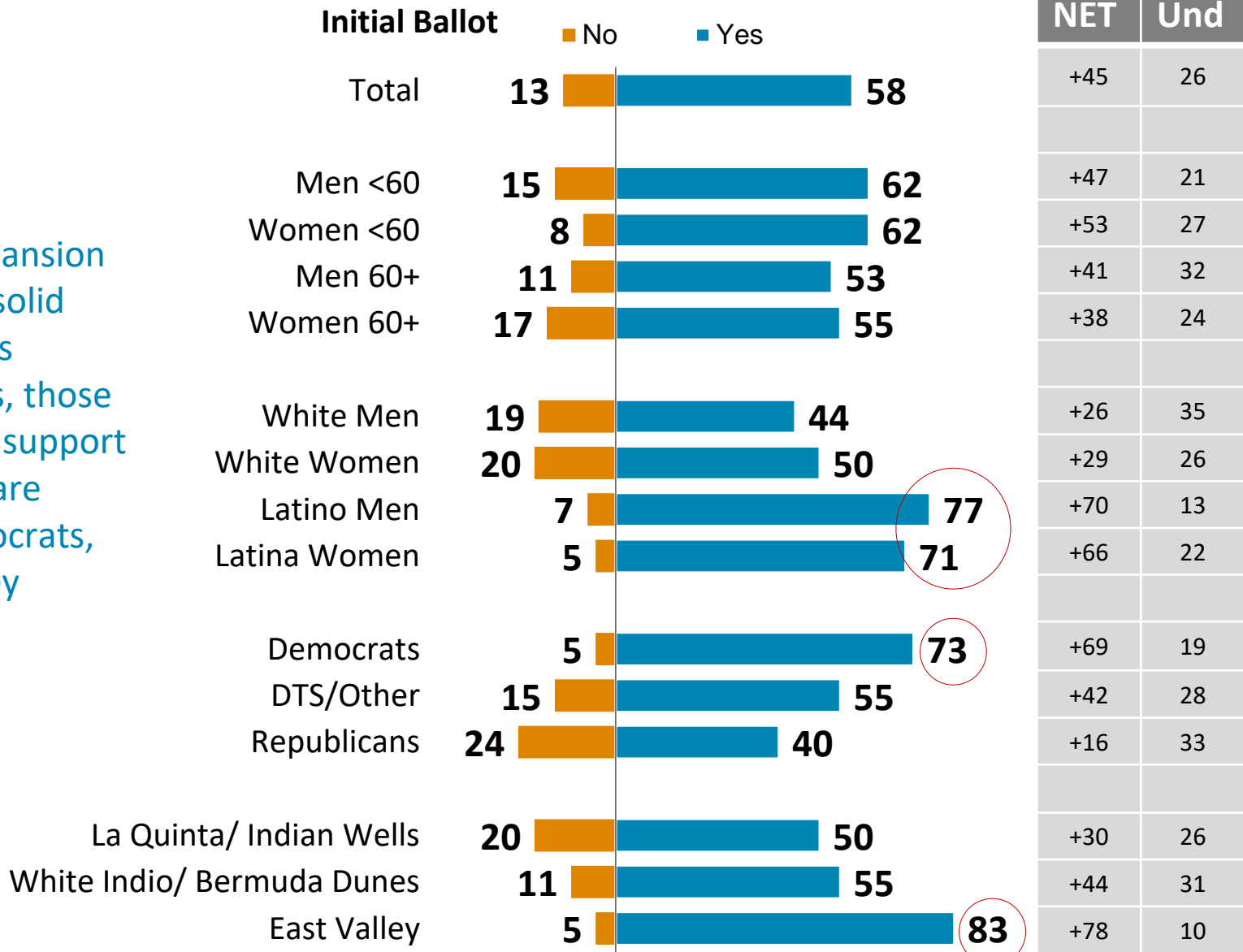
In order to expand access to health care providers and services and help connect residents to programs through community-based organizations across all of the Coachella Valley, shall there be an annexation to expand the Desert Healthcare District's service area to include all of the cities of Palm Desert and Indian Wells and the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella; and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore, and Vista Santa Rosa?



Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Q8. In order to expand access to health care providers and services and help connect residents to programs through community-based organizations across all of the Coachella Valley, shall there be an annexation to expand the Desert Healthcare District's service area to include all of the cities of Palm Desert and Indian Wells and the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella; and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore, and Vista Santa Rosa? If the election were held today, would you vote Yes or No on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well, which way do you lean? [IF YES/NO:] Is that a strong or not so strong yes/no?

While the expansion measure has solid support across demographics, those most likely to support the measure are Latinos, Democrats, and East Valley residents.



Q8. In order to expand access to health care providers and services and help connect residents to programs through community-based organizations across all of the Coachella Valley, shall there be an annexation to expand the Desert Healthcare District's service area to include all of the cities of Palm Desert and Indian Wells and the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella; and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including Bermuda Dunes, Mesquite, The Palms Oasis, North Shore, and Vista Santa Rosa? If the election were held today, would you vote Yes or No on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well, which way do you lean? [IF YES/NO:] Is that a strong or not so strong yes/no?

The focus groups provide some insights to voter reasoning—and uncertainty about what the measure will do. Although most voters are unsure what the expansion of the District means for them, they like the idea of more of the Coachella Valley being covered under the District and improved access to health care providers and services.

“I said yes, like he said everyone needs healthcare and won't cost the taxpayers as well. That's another thing too. I would like to research it more but that's why I wasn't strong.” - White male

“I feel it would make it easier access if everybody's on the same type of thing in the area. If it's going to cover everyone in the valley why not have the same plan? Not same plan, but same access would be easier, I'd say.” -Latino male

“My answer is the same. I put down everyone, which would mean all cities, should have access to healthcare services.” -Latino female

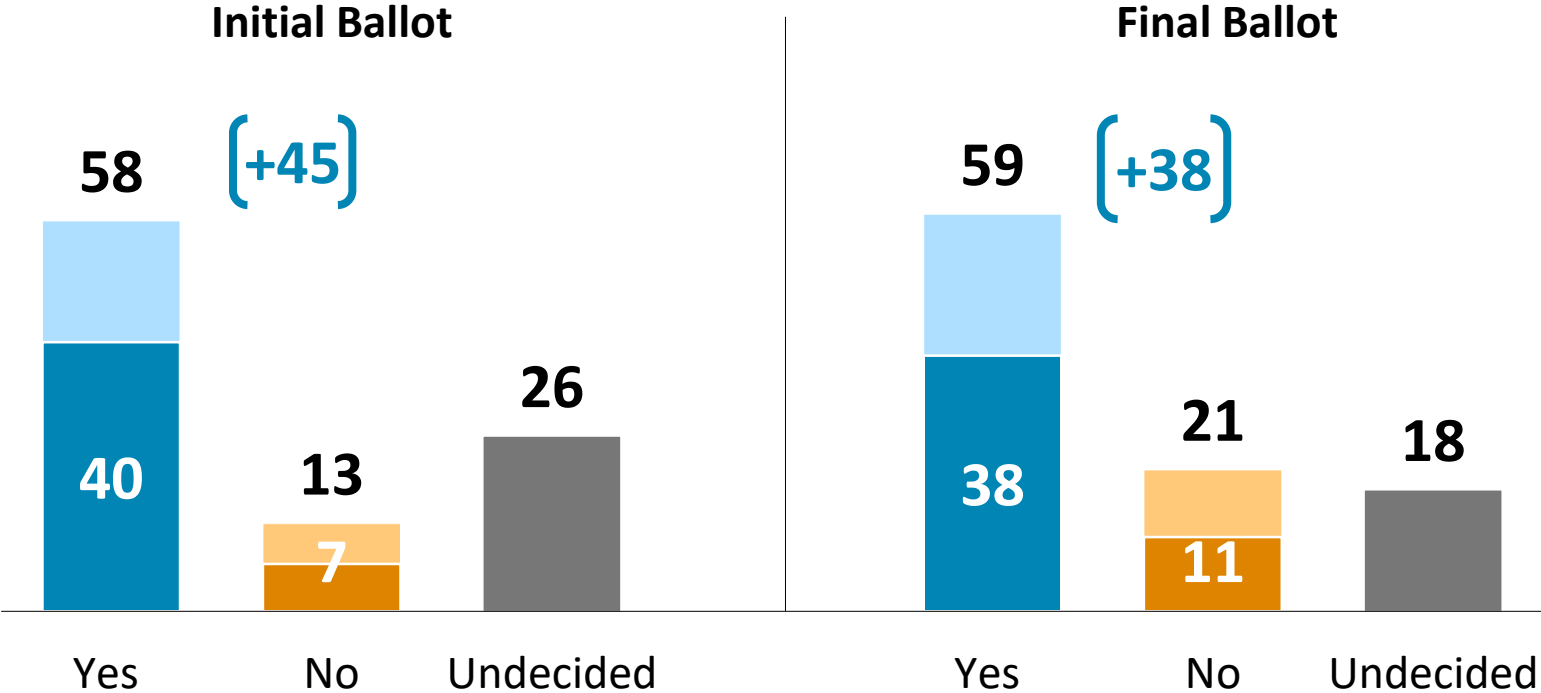
“The annexation. I mean, period. There shall be an annexation to expand, what does that mean?” - Latino female

“It would cover enough doctors for everybody on the same plan, so it would make it easier, faster access for everyone. Ideally that would be awesome, but in reality somebody from Salton Sea or the east side of the community can come in and get the same treatment as somebody from Rancho Mirage or Indian Wells because we're on the same platform, then by all means. [CROSSTALK] That's the only reason I'd say yes.” -Latino male

“The wording is too vague.” -Latino male

After hearing positive and negative messages on the district expansion, support for the measure holds at 59%, while opposition rises from 13% to 21%. The number of undecideds drops from 26% to 18%.

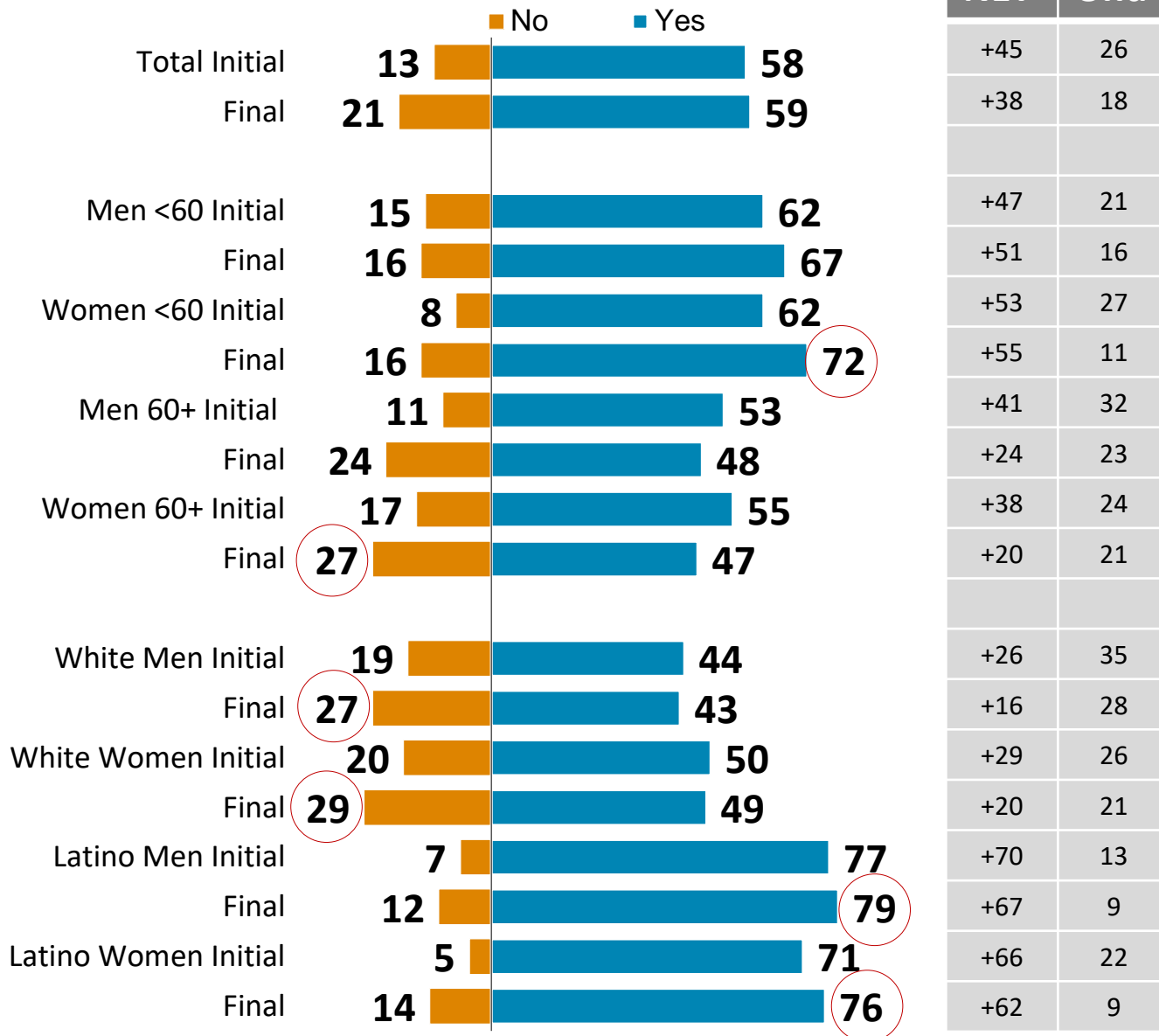
Initial to Final Ballot



Darker colors indicate greater intensity

Q12. Sometimes in a survey like this people change their minds. I'd like to ask you one more time about a measure that may appear on the ballot this year. In order to expand access to health care providers and services and help connect residents to programs through community-based organizations across all of the Coachella Valley, shall there be an annexation to expand the Desert Healthcare District's service area to include all of the cities of the desert and Indian Wells and the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella; and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore, and Vista Santa Rosa? If the election were held today, would you vote Yes or No or are you undecided?

Initial to Final Ballot

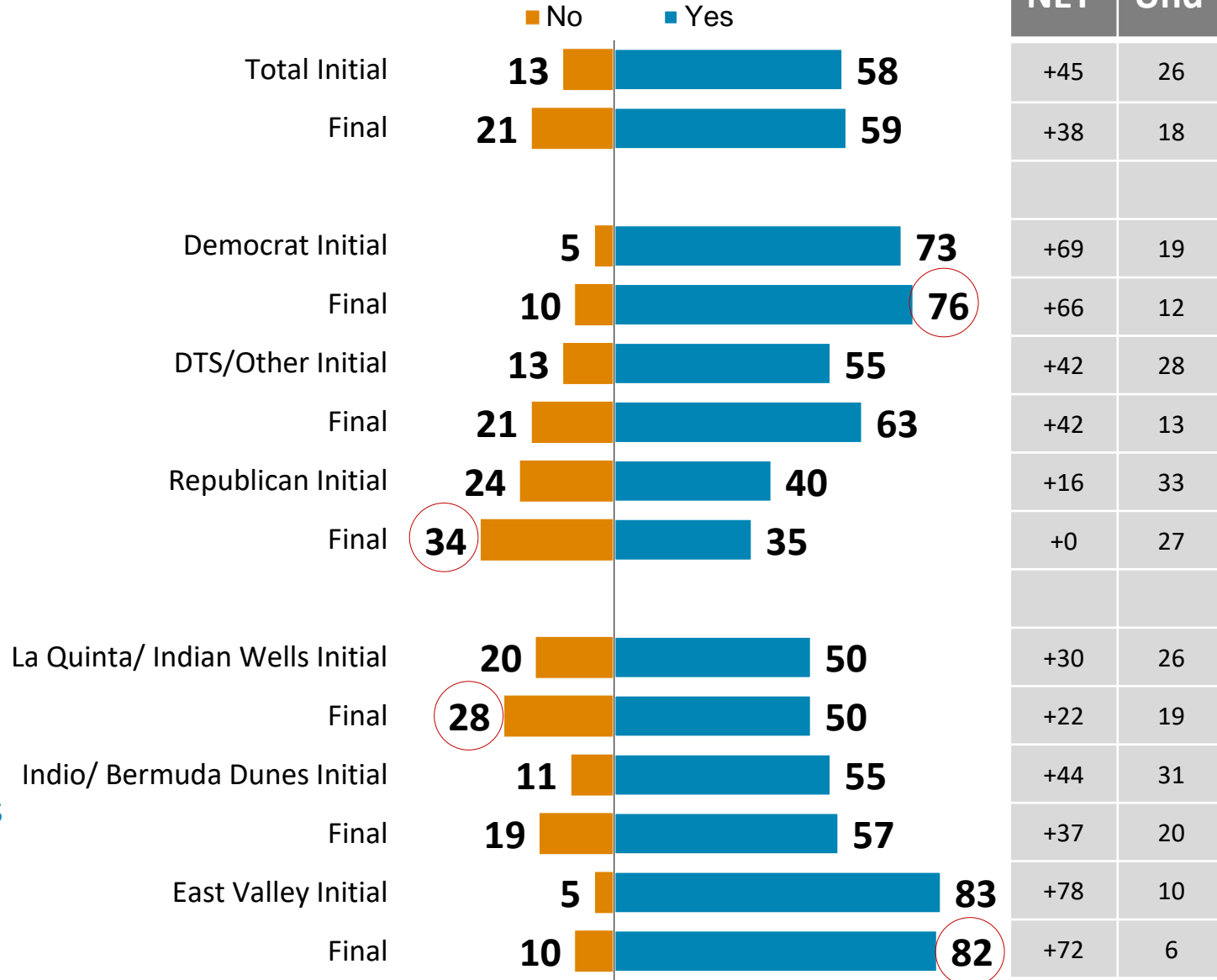


While support for the district expansion holds after exposure to messaging, opposition to the expansion increases across demographics, especially among older, white voters.

Support increases significantly among younger women and Latinas.

While messaging lifts support for the district expansion among Democrats, DTS/Other voters, and voters in the Indio/ Bermuda Dunes region, opposition to the expansion also rises across the board, especially among Republicans and voters in the La Quinta/Indian Wells region.

Initial to Final Ballot



Q12. Sometimes in a survey like this people change their minds. I'd like to ask you one more time about a measure that may appear on the ballot this year. ...If the election were held today, would you vote Yes or No or are you undecided?

Messaging

After a series of positive and negatives messages of the expansion measure the most convincing messages in support of the measure focus on the need for greater access to pediatric specialists and expand access to health care and better health. The messages that raise the most serious doubts about the measure highlight the Desert Healthcare District not being able to handle serving the entire Valley and criticize Tenet Healthcare's operation of the facilities in the district



While all of the positive messages in support of the expansion are convincing for a majority of voters, the best reasons to support the measure are the need for greater access to pediatric specialists (**Need Pediatrics**) and expand access to health care and better health (**Benefits and More Services**).

Positive Messages (4/9)	% Very Convincing	% Total Convincing
<p>Need Pediatrics*: Even with three hospitals, the Coachella Valley has major gaps in quality care for children with chronic diseases. While there are pediatricians and ER care for common diseases and injuries, most children who require a specialist – such as an oncologist, endocrinologist, or cardiologist – must travel at least an hour away. Expanding the Desert Healthcare District will break down barriers to pediatric care and improve access to these services for local children.</p>	54	79
<p>More Services*: Even with three hospitals, the Coachella Valley has major gaps in quality care for seniors and people with chronic conditions. While there are doctors for common diseases and injuries, some Valley residents must travel at least an hour away to see a specialist – such as an oncologist or cardiologist. Expanding the Desert Healthcare District will improve access to these services, especially for seniors and patients with conditions who need specialists.</p>	51	80
<p>Benefits: Everyone in the Coachella Valley should have access to the health care they need. The Desert Healthcare District expansion will unify the valley, improving access to health care through funding and partnerships with local organizations, including free and low-cost medical and dental clinics, counseling services, drug and alcohol treatment, food distribution programs and expanded in-patient and out-patient facilities, so every Valley resident has a chance for a better, healthier life.</p>	51	77
<p>Migrant Communities: Everyone in the Coachella Valley deserves access to healthcare. Yet some communities in the East Valley lack the resources needed to serve residents’ basic health needs, including migrant workers living in poor housing without access to transportation. Many currently have to travel long distances to access services. Expanding the District will improve access to health and wellness services for everyone in the valley, including our most vulnerable residents.</p>	46	76

Q10. Now let me read you a series of statements that people have made in support of the ballot measure to expand the Desert Healthcare District. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT VERY convincing, or not AT ALL convincing reason to support the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

Pointing out that the expansion doesn't raise taxes (**Funding**), making sure good health care doesn't stop at Cook Street (**Health Disparities**), and clarifying that the District is a facilitator for improved access to health care (**Facilitator**) are also very convincing for a plurality of voters. But these administrative and financial messages are less powerful than those directly related to health services.

Positive Messages (5/9)	% Very Convincing	% Total Convincing
<p>Funding: This vote on the Desert Healthcare District expansion does not raise taxes, and no new agencies or bureaucracies would be created. The District's Board has already gone through a comprehensive and transparent public process to determine its funding, meaning dollars for this expansion have already been allocated. Expanding the District is an opportunity to move toward better quality health care.</p>	45	75
<p>Health Disparities: Good health care shouldn't stop at Cook Street and the Desert Healthcare District expansion will help address the health disparities throughout the Coachella Valley by advancing a unified approach to community health. Reducing the imbalance in health access across the Valley, the District expansion will lead to improved access to health resources and services covering all areas of the Valley.</p>	45	72
<p>Facilitator: The Desert Healthcare District is not a health care provider – it's a facilitator that works to ensure all residents get the healthcare they need by connecting people to health-related resources that improve access to care and, in turn, improve quality of life. The Desert Healthcare District expansion will help make better healthcare a reality for everyone in the Valley, including residents in the underserved areas of the Valley.</p>	44	75
<p>Representation: Instead of a divided Valley, there should be one health care district for all the Coachella Valley so all residents are able to readily access quality health care services and have a say in the decisions that affect their health care. The Desert Healthcare District expansion guarantees representation of Central and East Valley residents, allowing us to be part of the conversation on where funding and services should go.</p>	40	70
<p>Health disparities- One Coachella: Good health care shouldn't stop at Cook Street, and the Desert Healthcare District expansion will help address the health disparities throughout the Coachella Valley by advancing a One Coachella Valley approach to community health. Reducing the imbalance in health access across the valley, the District expansion will lead to improved access to health resources and services covering all areas of the Valley.</p>	40	70

Q10. Now let me read you a series of statements that people have made in support of the ballot measure to expand the Desert Healthcare District. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT VERY convincing, or NOT AT ALL convincing reason to support the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

Focus Group respondents rated the **Need Pediatrics** statement very highly and what stood out to them was that families wouldn't have to travel as far to see specialists. However, they wanted more details about how they will increase access to specialists and where the community-based grants would be going.

"That they don't have to travel, that it will be right here locally, which is better. A lot of parents don't have the funds to travel. It'll be better for the children." - Latino female

"The fact that it's very clear that we do have major gaps regardless that we do have three hospitals in the area, so bringing more specialists, bringing in more help, to help. It's a great thing." -Latino male

"That it'll improve the access." - Latino female

"Maybe how well they improve the access, because it says it's going to be improved by grant programs, but what are those grants going to do?" -Latino female

"Are they going to bring enough doctors if they do? Because there's a lot of children that are sick. We've had already a few that were in the news that have passed, that had to travel to New York and all that stuff. Is it going - are they going to be having a long wait to see them, just like our primary doctors?" -Latino female

Benefits is another message tested in both the survey and focus groups. In the groups, voters liked everyone having access to health care, drug and alcohol treatment, dental services, and counseling services. However, some thought the message was overly broad by also offering food distribution programs

“Just help for everybody, the people in need. Especially the drug and alcohol treatment, food distribution.” -White male

“I like that it includes free and low cost medical and dental clinics, counseling service, drug and alcohol treatments.” -White male

“The food distribution program, the expanded in-patient, out-patient facilities. It just looks too - it's too over-sweetening. It's too encompassing.” - White male

“I like the part where it's improving access to healthcare...Because through my past experience of at first having a lot of hard time finding the right doctor I want and then plus the employees not knowing exactly what's going on and bouncing me around and a lot of confusion.” -White male

“Yes. I crossed out the food thing too because I don't think that's a medical problem. I think there are other programs that could do food distribution in the valley.” -White male

Need for Pediatrics is the top message with younger voters, including three-quarters of younger women, and older men. Older women are more convinced by **More Services**. **Benefits** are also a top concern for younger men and women.

Messages (% very convincing)	Total	Men <60	Women <60	Men 60+	Women 60+
Need Pediatrics*	54	54	76	49	35
More services*	51	47	60	43	52
Benefits	51	54	67	42	41
Migrant communities	46	46	62	36	39
Funding	45	49	56	38	36
Health Disparities*	45	48	50	33	45
Facilitator	44	44	57	36	38
Representation	40	44	53	32	32
Health Disparities – One Coachella*	40	46	54	32	26

* Split sampled

Q10. Now let me read you a series of statements that people have made in support of the ballot measure to expand the Desert Healthcare District. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT VERY convincing, or not AT ALL convincing reason to support the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

While **Need for Pediatrics** is the most convincing message overall, Democrats are more convinced by the **Benefits** and **More Services** messages. A majority of Latinos also find the **Benefits** message very convincing.

Messages (% very convincing)	Total	White	Latino	Democrat	DTS/ Other	Republican
Need pediatrics*	54	48	63	65	54	38
More services*	51	42	57	69	43	32
Benefits	51	42	59	66	50	32
Migrant communities	46	42	45	64	44	26
Funding	45	38	55	58	48	27
Health disparities*	45	31	60	62	39	26
Facilitator	44	34	61	59	43	26
Representation	40	28	57	55	42	21
Health disparities- One Coachella*	40	26	56	49	42	26

* Split sampled

Q10. Now let me read you a series of statements that people have made in support of the ballot measure to expand the Desert Healthcare District. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT VERY convincing, or not AT ALL convincing reason to support the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

Need for Pediatrics is very convincing in all regions and marital statuses. In the East Valley, the **Benefits** and **Migrant Communities** messages are slightly more convincing.

Messages (% very convincing)	Total	Married	All Unmarried	La Quinta/ Indian Wells	Indio/ Bermuda Dunes	East Valley
Need pediatrics*	54	57	54	41	55	74
More services*	51	49	56	40	51	74
Benefits	51	55	50	41	50	76
Migrant communities	46	48	48	33	46	75
Funding	45	48	43	41	43	59
Health Disparities*	45	43	46	33	46	67
Facilitator	44	47	44	36	44	61
Representation	40	41	41	27	45	52
Health Disparities- One Coachella*	40	43	38	33	36	62

* Split sampled

The strongest message against the measure is **Handle**, which expresses concerns that the Desert Healthcare District won't be able to handle serving the entire Valley, and **Tenet Healthcare**, a negative message criticizing Tenet Healthcare's operation of the facilities in the district.

Negative Messages	% Serious Doubts	% Total Doubts
<p>HANDLE: The Desert Healthcare District wants to expand its district boundaries and start serving thousands more people when they can barely handle what's going on in the existing boundaries. Wait times at local hospitals are too long, emergency rooms are crowded, and parking is a disaster. If the current District can't handle these issues in just one area of the valley, how can they handle serving the entire Coachella Valley?</p>	36	60
<p>TENET HEALTHCARE: We can't trust the Desert Healthcare District to have our best interests in mind, and the expansion they are proposing is just a ploy to make more money, by allowing Tenet Healthcare, a for-profit Texas company that operates the hospital, to build more poor-quality hospitals, mismanage facilities, and send our money back to Dallas. Our health and well-being should not be for sale.</p>	35	64
<p>FUNDS SHORTAGE: The Desert Healthcare District claims it currently has the funding for the District expansion to help us achieve better health care, but how can we trust them if they don't have a plan for future funding? The expansion is only going to lead to funds being shifted away from services we already have and watering down services for the whole Valley. We need a real plan for better health care, not a district expansion.</p>	32	62
<p>RESOURCES: We have a shortage of medical services in some areas of the Valley, but drawing a new line on the map is not the answer to that problem. We need more doctors, nurses, hospitals, and clinics here, but this proposal does nothing to actually build facilities or bring in doctors, it's just bureaucratic shuffling. We need a real plan for better health care, not a district expansion.</p>	29	53

Q11. Now let me read you a series of statements made by opponents of the Desert Healthcare District expansion. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, raises serious doubts, some doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your own mind about the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

When voters were presented the Handle negative message in the focus groups, it resonated with concerns they had already mentioned, including overcrowded wait rooms and not having enough doctors to service the area, unless more are brought in.

“Well to me, it's simple math. You only have so many people and so many facilities and now you're going to throw 240,000 people into that system.” -White male

“If this is what they're doing right now and the emergency rooms are overcrowded then they're screwing it up already.” -White male

“I know, I've been to the emergency room. My God, seven times over the last three or four years. And generally if you don't come in on an ambulance, you are waiting for a very, very long time. Depending on what time of year it is. And even if you can get a room, parking I mean, unless you're at Eisenhower, they've got pretty good parking but no it's all, it's true.” -White male

“I think it would probably bring more issues, because how are they - they're not handling it right now. How are they going to handle it with just one district?” -Latino female

The Tenet Healthcare statement also raised doubts for voters in the focus groups. Several respondents wanted to know if Tenet Healthcare would be involved in the expansion and would prefer that a different company operate any facilities in the expansion area.

“Why do they have to use Tenet healthcare? Why can’t they use a different company for the expansion.”
– Latina female (Spanish)

“If this is true, then right now, being sick is a business for someone. If this company is from somewhere else, why don’t we find a company from here, if this company has been running the hospitals badly. Tenet already has a bad image.” – Latino male (Spanish)

“This does raise doubts for me. Tenet Healthcare sounds bad and I want to know more. Why do they trust this company?” – Latina female (Spanish)

Younger voters exhibit more serious doubts about the measure when exposed to the **Handle** message, while older voters are more effected by the **Tenet Healthcare** message. A plurality of older women have serious doubts about the measure after hearing the **Resources** message.

Messages (% Serious Doubts)	Total	Men <60	Women <60	Men 60+	Women 60+
Handle	36	38	38	34	35
Tenet Healthcare	35	36	33	36	37
Funds shortage	32	35	29	35	29
Resources	29	22	28	21	43

Q11. Now let me read you a series of statements made by opponents of the Desert Healthcare Project expansion. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, raises serious doubts, some doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your own mind about the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

Across race and party registration, the **Handle** message raises the most serious doubts.

Messages (% Serious Doubts)	Total	White	Latino	Democrat	DTS/ Other	Republican
Handle	36	38	38	34	29	44
Tenet Healthcare	35	36	36	32	28	44
Funds shortage	32	33	30	28	25	41
Resources	29	31	29	27	25	34

Handle raises the most serious doubts for both married and unmarried voters, as well as voters in the La Quinta/Indian Wells and East Valley regions. **Tenet Healthcare** raises the most serious doubts for Indio/Bermuda Dunes voters.

Messages (% Serious Doubts)	Total	Married	All Unmarried	La Quinta/ Indian Wells	Indio/ Bermuda Dunes	East Valley
Handle	36	39	35	38	34	38
Tenet Healthcare	35	37	32	36	36	34
Funds shortage	32	32	34	35	30	32
Resources	29	30	31	35	25	29

Q11. Now let me read you a series of statements made by opponents of the Desert Healthcare District expansion. Please tell me whether each statement, if it were true, raises serious doubts, some doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your own mind about the measure. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.



Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY

LakeResearch.com

202.776.9066

David Mermin

dmermin@lakeresearch.com

Bob Meadow

bmeadow@lakeresearch.com

Jessica Mejia Peña

jmejia@lakeresearch.com



Date: July 24, 2018
To: Board of Directors
Subject: District Expansion Initiative – Board of Supervisor’s Resolution and Ballot Language

Background:

- AB2414, authored by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, was signed into law in September 2016.
- The legislation required the current District expand its current boundaries to include communities east of Cook Street and to be placed on an election ballot allowing registered voters of the proposed annexation area the opportunity to vote for the expansion.
- The expansion would allow the District to provide the same access to facilities, programs and services currently received by District residents for all residents of the Coachella Valley.
- A LAFCO Application was submitted January 5, 2017, which included a Plan of Services and proposed expanded boundary map.
- Over the course of the next several months, Board and Staff engaged in several meetings, conversations, and public forums with community members and public/County officials to not only educate the community on the potential expansion, but to gain public input.
- The legislation also required a funding source be identified.
- Board and Staff pursued several funding options, including negotiations with Riverside County, May 8, 2017, for an exchange of property taxes to support the expansion.
- On April 10, 2018, the County Board of Supervisors eventually adopted a Resolution to support the expansion into the Eastern Coachella Valley, with no exchange of property tax revenue.
- The District/Foundation’s Board of Directors on February 29, 2018, ultimately made a commitment of \$6,000,000 (\$300,000 per year for 20 years) to provide access to programs and services to the residents of the expanded area.
- The Board of Supervisors, as a result of the LAFCO approval of the Application on April 26, 2018, was requested to conduct an election for the proposed expansion.
- A resolution adopted on July 17, 2018 by the Board of Supervisors paves the way for the final step, requiring the Registrar of Voters to set the expansion to election on the ballot of the November 6, 2018 election.
- Countless hours, effort, and dedication, occasionally with significant challenge, by the Board, Staff, Community Members, and Public Officials, collectively, have brought the initiative to the Voters of the proposed annexed area.
- Included in the packet is the resolution adopted by the BOS and draft language for the Impartial Analysis that will be on the November ballot.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
SETTING THE DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT'S EXPANSION
FOR ELECTION
(LAFCO. NO. 2017-02-4)

WHEREAS, the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission ("LAFCO") on April 26, 2018, conditionally approved the expansion of the Desert Healthcare District to include approximately 1,760 square miles of the Eastern Coachella Valley (Exhibit "A"), generally located between the San Bernardino County and San Diego and Imperial County lines and from Cook Street in Palm Desert on the west to the community of Chiriaco Summit on the east, including the cities of Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio and Coachella, and the communities of Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore and Vista Santa Rose and other unincorporated County areas, and as more particularly described by the maps in Exhibit "A" upon voter-approval by the majority of the voters within the territory to be annexed; and

WHEREAS, LAFCO requested the Board of Supervisors conduct an election on the subject expansion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside, State of California, in regular session assembled on July 17, 2018, that:

1. The expansion shall be subject to confirmation of the voters upon the question thereof at an election that shall be held on November 6, 2018, within the entire territory described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein. The question submitted shall be as follows:

"In order to expand access to health care providers and services and help connect residents to programs through community-based organizations across all of the Coachella Valley, shall there be an annexation to expand the Desert Healthcare District's service area to include all of the cities of Palm Desert and Indian Wells; the cities of La Quinta, Indio, Coachella; and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore and Vista Santa Rosa?"

This order of expansion shall be confirmed where such question is favored by a majority of the votes cast within the entire territory within the election is held.

2. The Clerk of the Board shall transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to the Executive Officer of the Local Agency Formation Commission and the Registrar of Voters.

DRAFT **IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS**

Desert Healthcare District (“District”) is a local healthcare district created in 1948 pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code and is the owner of Desert Regional Medical Center (“Hospital”). Its mission today is to connect Coachella Valley residents to health and wellness services and programs. The District and its non-profit foundation provide funds to connect all the residents of the District, including children, elderly, and the under and uninsured to health-related resources, such as primary care, behavioral healthcare, housing, food, and transportation.

In 2016 AB 2414 (Garcia) was signed by the Governor and authorizes the expansion of the District to include the eastern Coachella Valley region including the remaining portion of Palm Desert and Indian Wells and the communities of La Quinta, Indio and Coachella, and the unincorporated areas of Bermuda Dunes, Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, North Shore, and Vista Santa Rosa, subject to a vote of the registered voters residing within the territory to be annexed.

The purpose and intent of AB 2414 was to maximize the use of District assets to provide direct health services to individuals within the District. According to the legislative history of the bill, the goals of the expansion are to address the significant barriers preventing access to healthcare providers and services for the residents of the eastern Coachella Valley, to secure sufficient funding to provide grants, programs and services, comparable to those provided to residents within the current District boundaries, and to narrow health disparities that exist between the eastern and western sides of the Coachella Valley.

On April 26, 2018 Riverside County Local Formation Commission voted unanimously to approve the Amendment to add the Eastern Coachella Valley to the Desert Healthcare District Sphere of Influence and directed the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors to place this annexation measure on the November 6, 2018 ballot.

A “yes” vote on this proposition would authorize the annexation of the eastern Coachella Valley into the Desert Healthcare District boundaries.

A “no” vote on this proposition would prevent the annexation of the eastern Coachella Valley into the Desert Healthcare District boundaries.



Date: July 24, 2018

To: Board of Directors

Subject: District Expansion Initiative – Board & Staff Activities Through
November 6

Background:

- The ballot Resolution was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on July 17, 2018.
- The District, a public agency, is allowed to engage in limited activities between now and the election on November 6, 2018.
- Included in the packet, Ballot Measure Activities & Public Resources, is a good summary of the activities allowed and disallowed for public officials and public resources.
- The District's Legal Counsel will provide additional guidance.

LAW OFFICES
SCOTT & JACKSON
16935 WEST BERNARDO DRIVE, SUITE 170
SAN DIEGO, CA 92127

(858) 675-9896

JEFFREY G. SCOTT
BLAISE J. JACKSON
JAMES R. DODSON

FAX (858) 675-9897

Date: July 24, 2018
To: Board of Directors, Desert Healthcare District
Chris Christensen, CFO
From: Jeff Scott, General Counsel
Re: District Activities related to the District Expansion measure

Issue:

This memo addresses the activities that the District can and cannot undertake once the proposed District Expansion measure qualifies for the November 6, 2018 ballot.

Conclusion:

Once a measure qualifies for the ballot, there are significant restrictions on the use of public funds and resources. Board members and District employees have many ways to exercise their right to promote or oppose ballot measures but the key is **not to use the public's time, money, or other resources** to do so.

Analysis:

It is well settled that a public agency may not use public funds to campaign for one side or the other in an election contest. Government Code section 8314 provides in part:

“(a) It is unlawful for any elected state or local officer, including any state or local appointee, employee, or consultant, to use or permit others to use public resources for a campaign activity, or personal or other purposes which are not authorized by law.”

Moreover, once a resolution placing a measure on the ballot is passed by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, the measure qualifies for the ballot and any use of public resources becomes very restricted. Government Code section 54964 was enacted in 2000 and begins:

“An officer, employee, or consultant of a local agency may not expend or authorize the expenditure of any of the funds of the local agency to support or oppose the approval or rejection of a ballot measure, or the election or defeat of a candidate, by the voters.” (Gov. Code, § 54956(a).)

The consequences for violating this law can be serious. Improper use of public resources can be a criminal offense. Both Board members and District employees should be careful to separate their official District work from their political and campaign work. In addition to possible criminal penalties, Board members may be subject to personal liability and required to reimburse the District for the value of the resources used.

“An officer, employee, or consultant of a local agency may not expend or authorize the expenditure of any of the funds of the local agency to support or oppose the approval or rejection of a ballot measure, or the election or defeat of a candidate, by the voters.” (Gov. Code, § 54956(a).)

Examples of activities and use of public resources that the District is permitted to use after a measure qualifies for the ballot includes:

- a. The Board may go on the record in support of or in opposition to a ballot measure. The Board’s decision should be made during a regular meeting that is open to the public and to the expression of the public’s view. If the Board adopts a resolution endorsing or opposing a ballot measure, the resolution should include a statement that no public funds shall be used in the campaign for or against the measure;
- b. Directors and employees have a first amendment right to take a position on a ballot measure. However public officials should not use public resources to campaign for or against a ballot measure. District officials should not take part in a ballot measure campaigns while on “District time” and should be careful to separate their official work from their political and campaign work;
- c. Preparing staff reports and other analyses to assist decision-makers in determining the impact of the measure and what position to take. The results of a fair and impartial analysis may then be made available to the local newspapers, advocacy groups, and others who may make use of the information if they choose. Public funds must be used only for materials that are strictly informational and not for those that advocate a particular position;

- d. Responding to inquiries about ballot measures in ways that provide a fair presentation of the facts about the measure and the agency's view of the merits of a ballot measure;
- e. Accepting invitation to present the District's views before organizations interested in the ballot measure's effects. It would be a good idea to use a prepared script that would be used each time the presentation is made.
- f. Directors and employees can work on the campaign during their personal time, including lunch hours and breaks;
- g. District Directors and employees can make campaign contribution using personal funds and/or pay for and attend a fundraiser during personal time; and
- h. The District can provide a public forum in which proponents and opponents for a ballot measure are given equal time to present their views.

Examples of activities and use of public resources that the District is precluded from utilizing include:

- a. Providing links on the District website to one side of the debate for the measure;
- b. Using email communications that advocate the passage or defeat of the measure;
- c. Using newsletters or other mass mailings to advocate the passage or defeat of the measure;
- d. District employees are prohibited from working on the campaign during working hours;
- e. District letterhead to advocate a position should not be used;
- f. It is not appropriate to ask staff to support or oppose the measure by making campaign contributions or volunteering their time;
- g. Public funds may not be used to attend a fundraiser to support or oppose a measure; and
- h. District phones (including cell phones) should not be used to discuss campaign activities.

It is important to emphasize that just because a given course of action may be lawful, it may not satisfy the District's or the public's notion of what constitutes an appropriate use of public resources.

Additional Trap for the Unwary:

Lastly, if a local agency improperly expends public funds supporting or opposing a ballot measure, it may qualify as a "committee" under the Political Reform Act. This exposes the agency to registration and reporting requirements. Even though the expenditures would be considered improper, once qualified as a committee, the local agency would be required to meet these disclosure obligations or face additional penalties for non-filing.

Ballot Measure Activities & Public Resources



As important as ballot measures are to policymaking, public agencies and officials face important restrictions and requirements related to ballot measure activities.

The basic rule is that public resources may not be used for ballot measure *campaign* activities. Public resources may be used, however, for *informational* activities. The key difference between campaign activities and informational activities is that campaign activities support or oppose a ballot measure, while informational activities provide accurate context and facts about a ballot measure to voters.

This document summarizes some of the key applications of these principles. The law, however, is not always clear and the stakes are high. Missteps in this area are punishable as both criminal and civil offenses. Always check with agency counsel for guidance on how these rules apply in any specific situation.

Public Agency Resources May Be Used To

- ✓ Place a measure on the ballot.
- ✓ Prepare and distribute an objective and fact-based analysis on the effect a ballot measure may have on the agency and those the agency serves.
- ✓ Express the agency's views about the effect of the measure on the agency and its programs, provided the agency is exceedingly careful not to advocate for or against the measure's passage.
- ✓ Adopt a position on the measure, as long as that position is taken at an open meeting where all voices have the opportunity to be heard.
- ✓ Respond to inquiries about the ballot measure in an objective and fact-based manner.
- ✓ Agency communications about ballot measures should not contain inflammatory language or argumentative rhetoric.
- ✓ Public employees and elected officials may, on their own time and with their own resources, engage in the following activities:
 - Work on ballot measure campaigns or attend campaign-related events on personal time (for example, evenings, weekends and lunch hours).
 - Make campaign contributions to ballot measures, using one's own money or campaign funds (while observing campaign reporting rules).
 - Send and receive campaign related emails using one's personal (non-agency) computer and email address.

Ballot Measure Activities & Public Resources

Public Officials Should Not

- × Engage in campaign activities while on agency time or with agency resources.
- × Use agency resources (including office equipment, supplies, staff time, vehicles or public funds) to engage in advocacy-related activities, including producing campaign-type materials or performing campaign tasks.
- × Use public funds to pay for campaign-related expenses (for example, television or radio advertising, bumper stickers, or signs) or make campaign contributions.
- × Use agency computers or email addresses for campaign communication activities.

Best Practices

- ✓ Inform agency employees and public officials about these legal restrictions, particularly once a ballot measure affecting the agency has qualified for the ballot.
- ✓ Include language on informational materials that clarifies that they are for informational purposes only. For example, “these statements shall not be construed in support of or against XX ballot measure.”

WHEN DO THESE RESTRICTIONS KICK IN?

The rules against the use of public resources for campaign activities are triggered once a measure has qualified for the ballot. There may be more latitude before a measure has qualified, but consult with agency counsel regarding the permissibility of specific activities.

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Ballot measure activities that cross the line into advocacy are also subject to disclosure (transparency) requirements under California’s Political Reform Act (Government Code sections 81000 *et seq.*).

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties and the California Special Districts Association. Our mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources for California communities. For more resources related to ballot measures and campaigns, visit www.ca-ilg.org/campaigns.

© 2018 Institute for Local Government. All rights reserved.