



## Washington Paid Leave

Findings from a Survey of 529 Registered Voters Statewide

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# Methodology

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Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey which was conducted using professional interviewers March 21 - March 28, 2016. The survey reached a total of 529 registered voters statewide.

Telephone numbers were drawn from listed sample and screened to be registered voters. The data were weighed slightly by gender, region, age, race, and Party ID to reflect attributes of the actual population.

The margin of error for the sample is +/-4.4%.

# Key Findings

# Key Findings: Attitudes toward Paid Family and Medical Leave

- With and without contextual information about FMLA, a majority voters believe it is very important for Washington to establish a program to guarantee access to paid family and medical leave.
- Two versions of a program were tested: 6 weeks/cost of \$2 per week per worker OR 12 weeks/cost of \$3 per week per worker. A solid majority strongly favor both options.
- Voters slightly favor the 6 week/\$2 option (61% strongly favor, 76% favor overall) to the 12 week/\$3 option (57% strongly favor/72% favor overall). This is within the margin of error.
- Across gender, age, party identification, educational attainment level, household income level, marital status, parental status, and employment status, voters favor a paid family and medical leave program. Older, married and not employed voters are more likely to oppose the programs, but a majority of these subgroups still support the programs overall.

## Key Findings – Specific Policies

- By wide margins, voters strongly favor all of the policy iterations tested:
  - A woman with pregnancy-related complications – 74% strongly favor
  - People who have a family member like a child, spouse, parent, or sibling with a serious health condition – 68% strongly favor
  - People who have their own serious health condition – 65% strongly favor
  - Mothers AND fathers when they have a baby, adopt, or foster a child – 63% strongly favor
  - Mothers when they have a baby, adopt, or foster a child – 57% strongly favor

## Key Findings – Individual Components of Programs

- Similarly, by wide margins, voters favor each of the components.
- The best testing component of the paid family and medical leave proposal is job protection (73% strongly favor).
- The length of the leave are the next best testing items :
  - 6 weeks: 66% strongly favor
  - 12 weeks: 60% strongly favor
- Voters rate wage replacements up to two-thirds of pay (53% strongly favor) slightly better than wage replacements on a sliding scale (49% strongly favor).
- There is no difference between the \$2/week and \$3/week component (50% strongly favor each).

# Key Findings – Payment Mechanisms and Reimbursement Rates

- There is little difference whether employees would be reimbursed for two-thirds or three-quarters of their wages, with a cap of \$900 per week. A solid majority believe this sounds about right.
- Voters lean toward agreeing that minimum wage earners should get a higher percentage of their wages reimbursed while on paid family or medical leave, but a significant percentage either disagree or are unsure.
- Voters prefer a split payment between employees and employers (50% strongly favor, 68% favor).
- Payroll taxes paid by the employer that include a tax credit for small business (47% strongly favor, 67% favor) tests better than just payroll taxes paid by the employer (42% strongly favor, 64% favor).
- Only about a third strongly favor paying for the program through payroll taxes paid solely by employees, though 60% favor it overall (36% strongly favor).

## Key Findings – Interaction of Minimum Wage and Paid Sick Days

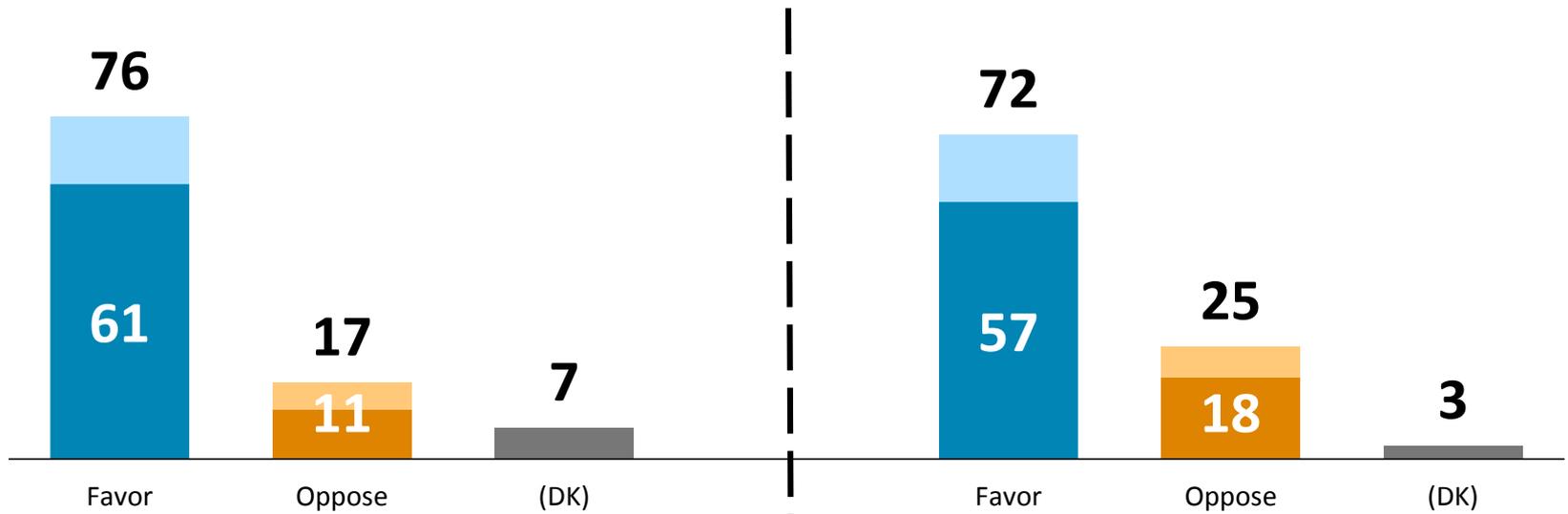
- Half of voters say it would make no difference in how they view paid family and medical leave if the state raises the minimum wage and requires paid sick leave. Of those who have an opinion, voters feel more favorable toward paid leave.



# Reactions to Paid Family and Medical Leave

Whether presented with a program of 6 weeks at a cost of \$2 per week or 12 weeks at \$3 per week per worker, voters overwhelmingly and intensely support a paid family and medical leave program.

Paid Family Leave Program Favorability



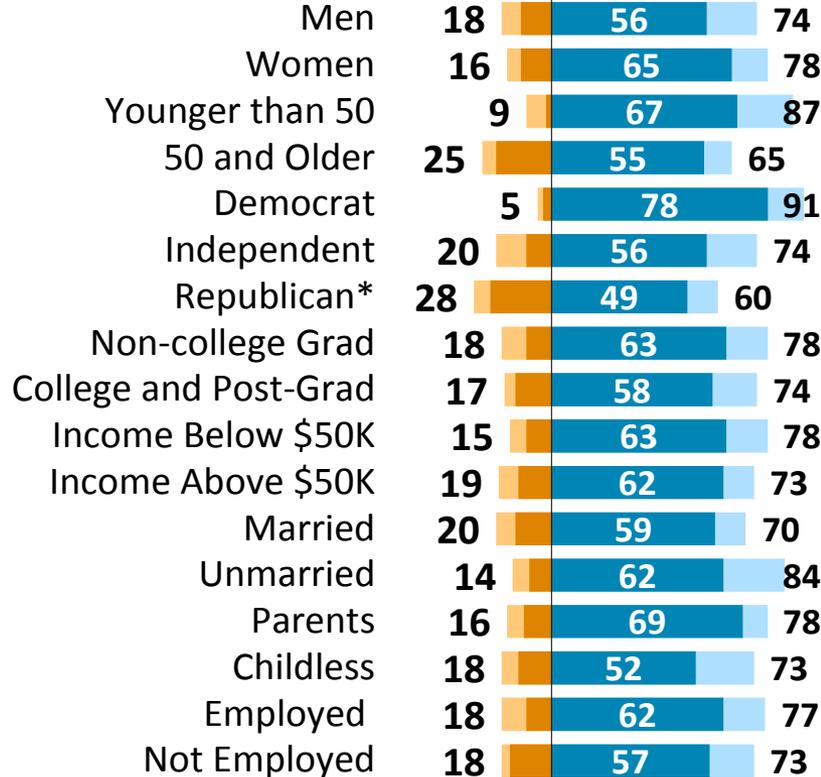
Do you favor or oppose a program that entitles workers **6 weeks per year** of paid family and medical leave that men and women can use when they need to care for a new baby or adopted child, need to care for a seriously ill family member, or when they have an illness? The benefit would be 2/3 of normal salary with a cap of \$900 per week. The program cost would be about **two dollars per week** per Washington worker.

Do you favor or oppose a program that entitles workers **12 weeks per year** of paid family and medical leave that men and women can use when they need to care for a new baby or adopted child, need to care for a seriously ill family member, or when they have an illness? The benefit would be 2/3 of normal salary with a cap of \$900 per week. The program cost would be about **three dollars per week** per Washington worker.

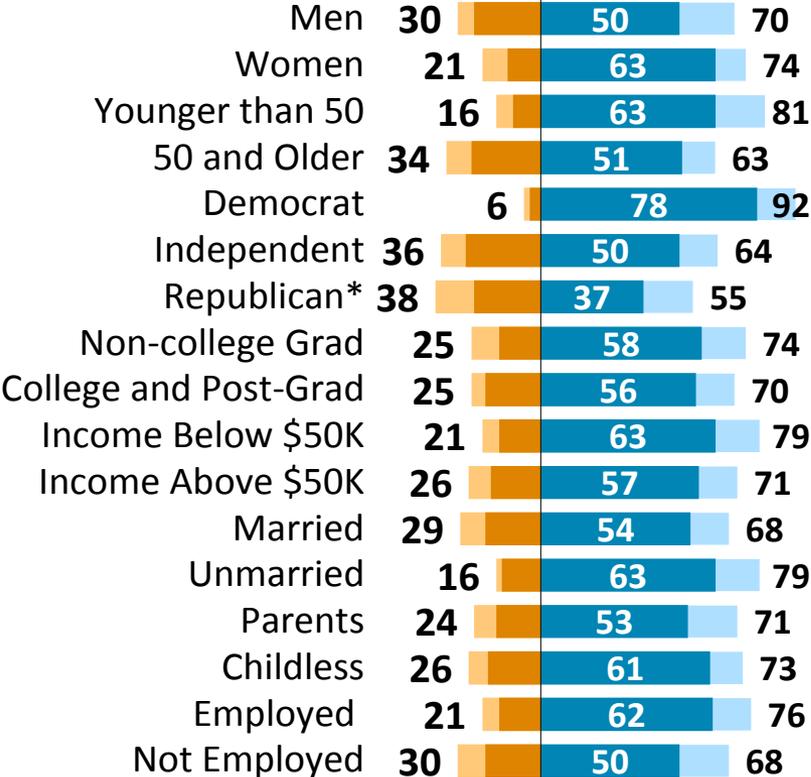
Split sampled questions

No demographic or political group opposes these paid leave programs. Across gender, age, party identification, educational attainment level, household income level, marital status, parental status, and employment status, voters favor a paid family and medical leave program. Older, married and not employed voters are more likely to oppose the programs.

6 Week Program



12 Week Program



Split sampled questions \*Note small sample size

Do you favor or oppose a program that entitles workers...

There is almost no difference in how Democrats, voters with household incomes below \$50,000, childless voters, and employed voters consider a 6 week program versus a 12 week program. The greatest drop off of favorability is among Independents, younger voters, and parents, but support is still high.

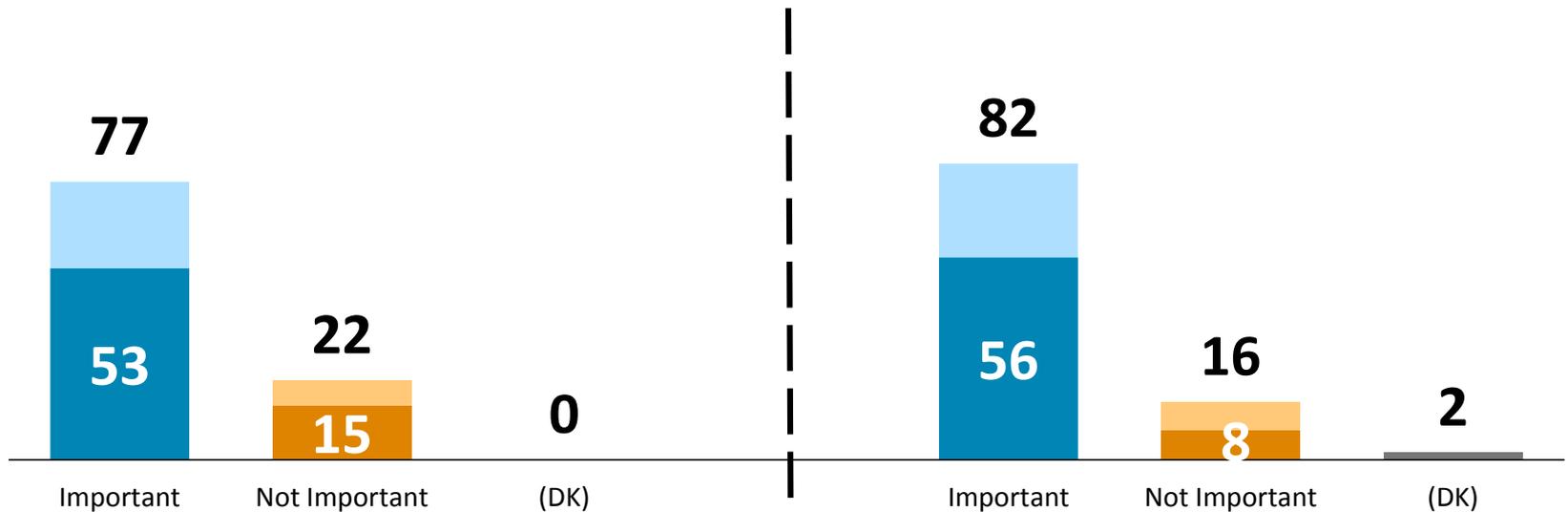
	Favor 6 Weeks	Favor 12 Weeks	Difference
Men	74	70	-4
Women	78	74	-4
Younger than 50	87	81	-6
50 and Older	65	63	-2
Democrat	91	92	1
Independent	74	64	-10
Republican*	60	55	-5
Non-college Grad	78	74	-4
College and Post-Grad	74	70	-4
Income Below \$50K	78	79	1
Income Above \$50K	73	71	-2
Married	70	68	-2
Unmarried	84	79	-5
Parents	78	71	-7
Childless	73	73	0
Employed	77	76	-1
Not Employed	73	68	-5

Split sampled questions

Do you favor or oppose a program that entitles workers...

With and without contextual information, a majority voters believe it is very important for Washington to establish a program to guarantee access to paid family and medical leave.

Importance of Establishing a Program



**Current state and federal law allows many workers to take 12 weeks of UNPAID leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, a seriously ill family member, or their own serious health condition. Some states have established programs to provide workers with PAY during these leaves.**

How important is it for Washington to establish a program to guarantee access to PAID family and medical leave – very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not important at all?

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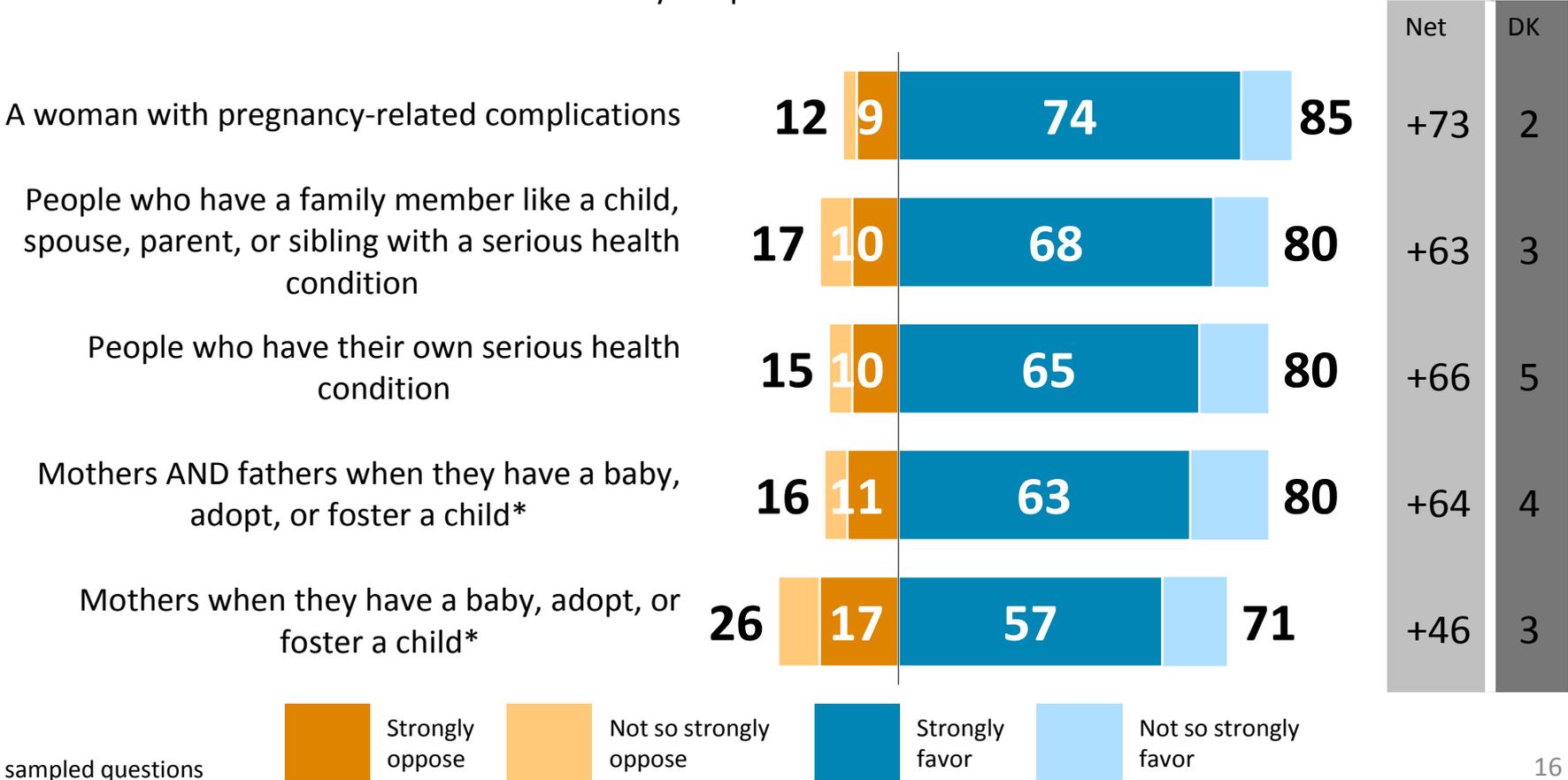
Split sampled questions



# Specifics of the Program

Voters strongly favor all of the policy iterations. The best testing is pregnancy complications, followed by ill family member, own illness, and parental leave. Parental leave is stronger than maternity leave.

Favorability of Specific Policies

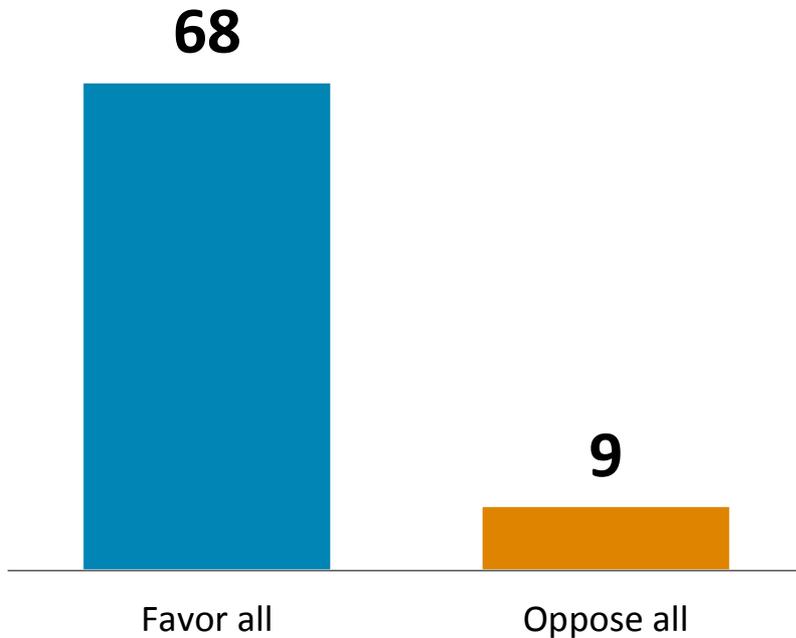


\*Split sampled questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions about specific policies that the state could consider. Would you favor or oppose a proposal that includes paid leave for [read options] If favor/oppose, ask: is that strongly or not so strongly favor/oppose?

# Over two-thirds of voters favor every specific policy we tested; about one-in-ten oppose every policy.

Favorability of Specific Policies



## Policies Tested:

- A woman with pregnancy-related complications
- People who have a family member like a child, spouse, parent, or sibling with a serious health condition
- People who have their own serious health condition
- Mothers AND fathers when they have a baby, adopt, or foster a child\*
- OR
- Mothers when they have a baby, adopt, or foster a child\*

\*Split sampled questions

Now I am going to ask you some questions about specific policies that the state could consider. Would you favor or oppose a proposal that includes paid leave for [read options] If favor/oppose, ask: is that strongly or not so strongly favor/oppose?

The most likely to favor all policies include younger voters, people of color, and Democrats. Seniors and older Republicans are more likely than other groups to oppose all of the specific policies, but a plurality still favors all of the policies.

Groups who are more likely to favor all specific policies include:

- Voters younger than 30 – 87% favor all policies
- Women younger than 50 – 86% favor all policies
- People of color – 84% favor all policies
- Democrats – 83%, especially Younger Democrats – 91% favor all policies
- Single voters – 82% favor all policies
- Voters ages 40 to 49 – 80% favor all policies
  
- All respondents – 68% favor all policies

A plurality of all demographic groups favor all policies.

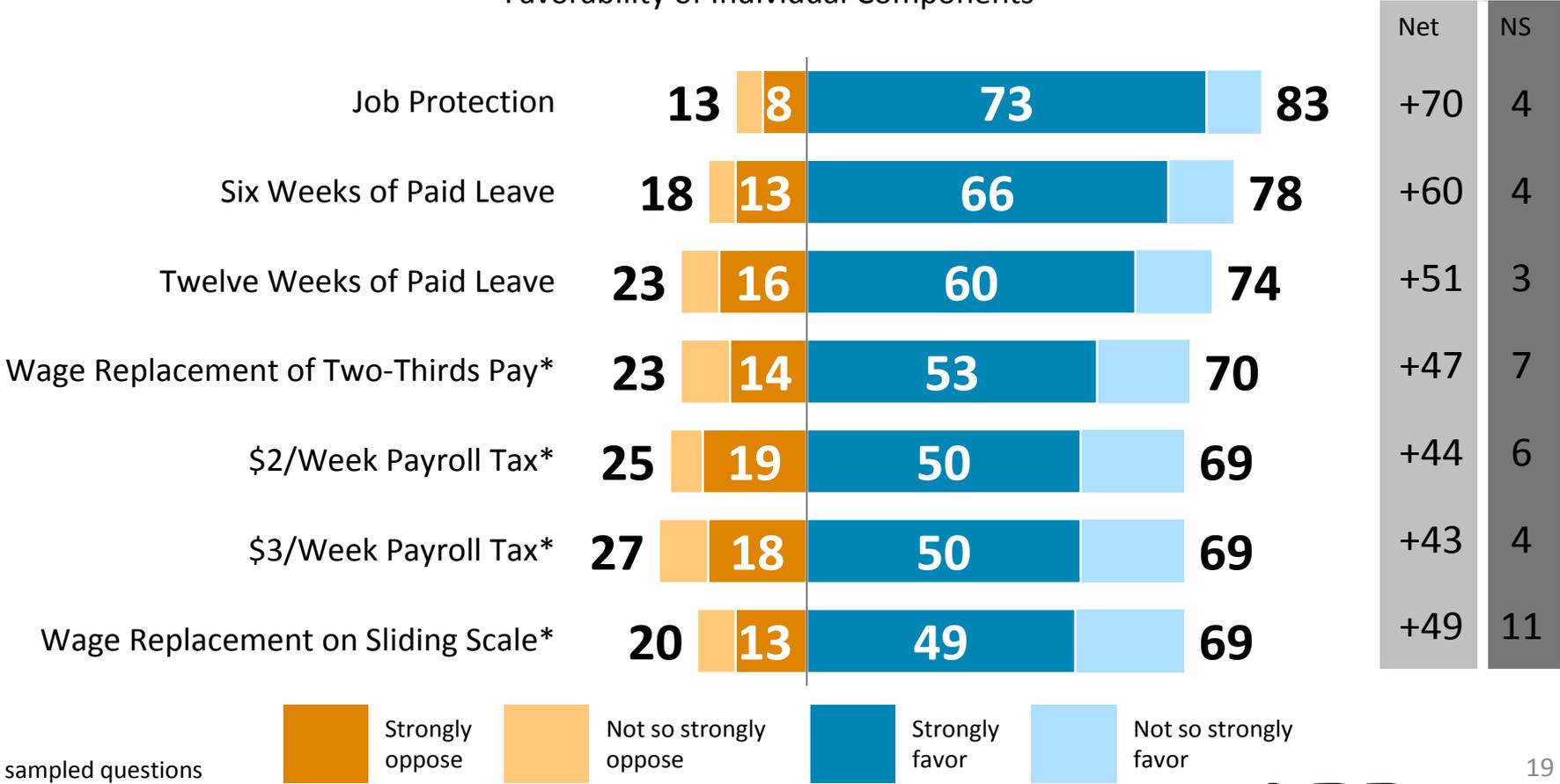
Those who are more likely to oppose all policies include:

- Older Republicans – 33% oppose all policies
- Seniors – 20% oppose all policies
  
- All respondents – 9% oppose all policies

Now I am going to ask you some questions about specific policies that the state could consider. Would you favor or oppose a proposal that includes paid leave for [read options] If favor/oppose, ask: is that strongly or not so strongly favor/oppose?

Half or more of voters strongly favor every component of leave tested. The best testing element of paid family and medical leave is job protection. The duration options of the leave test next best. Six weeks is slightly stronger than twelve weeks. When talking about wage replacement, voters respond slightly better to the more specific language.

Favorability of Individual Components



\*Split sampled questions

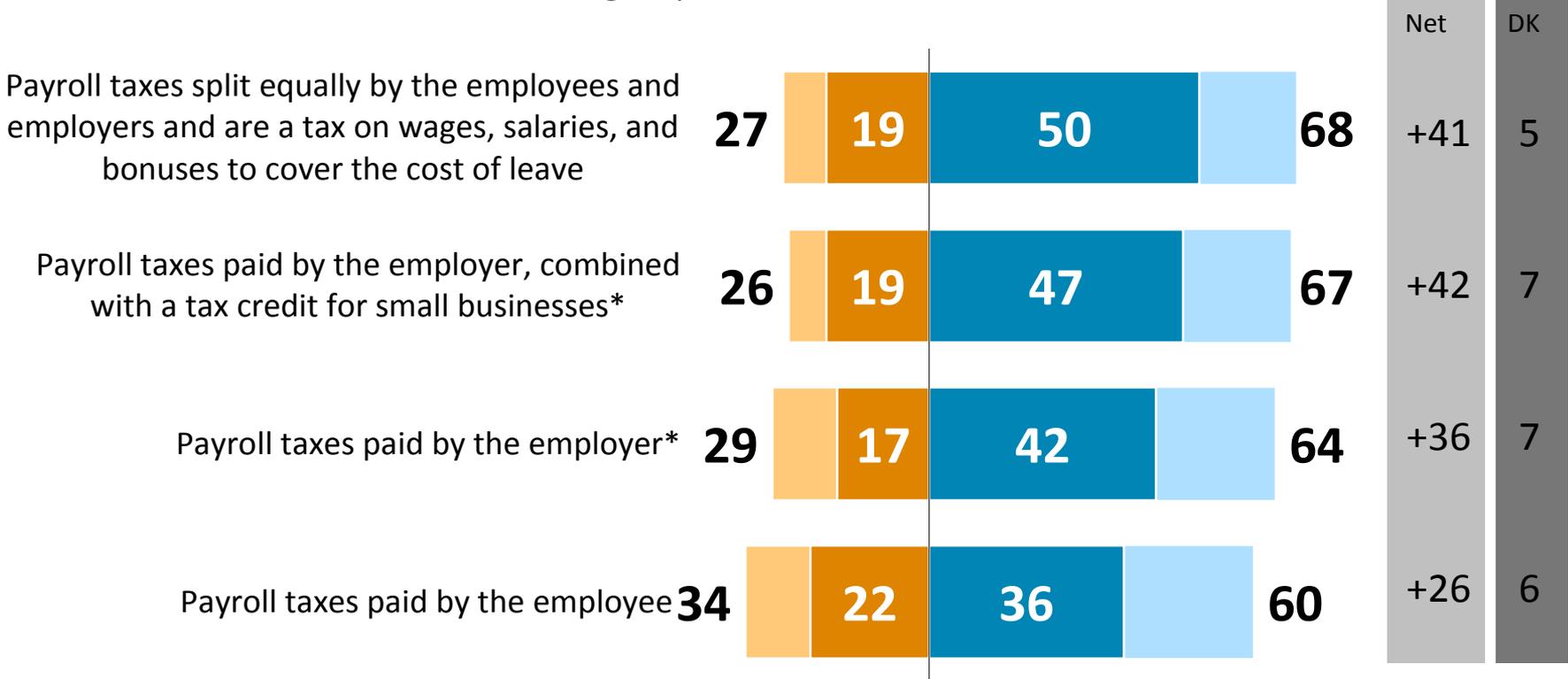
Now, I'm going to read you some individual components of the paid family and medical leave proposal I just read you. For each one, please tell me if you favor or oppose it. If you are not sure, please say so. Here is the first one: If favor/oppose, ask: is that strongly or not so strongly favor/oppose?



# Funding the Program and Reimbursing Wages

The most well-received funding proposals are equal responsibility from employees and employers and an employer-funded payroll tax that includes tax credits for small businesses. While a majority still favor employee-only contributions, intensity is significantly lower.

Funding Proposals



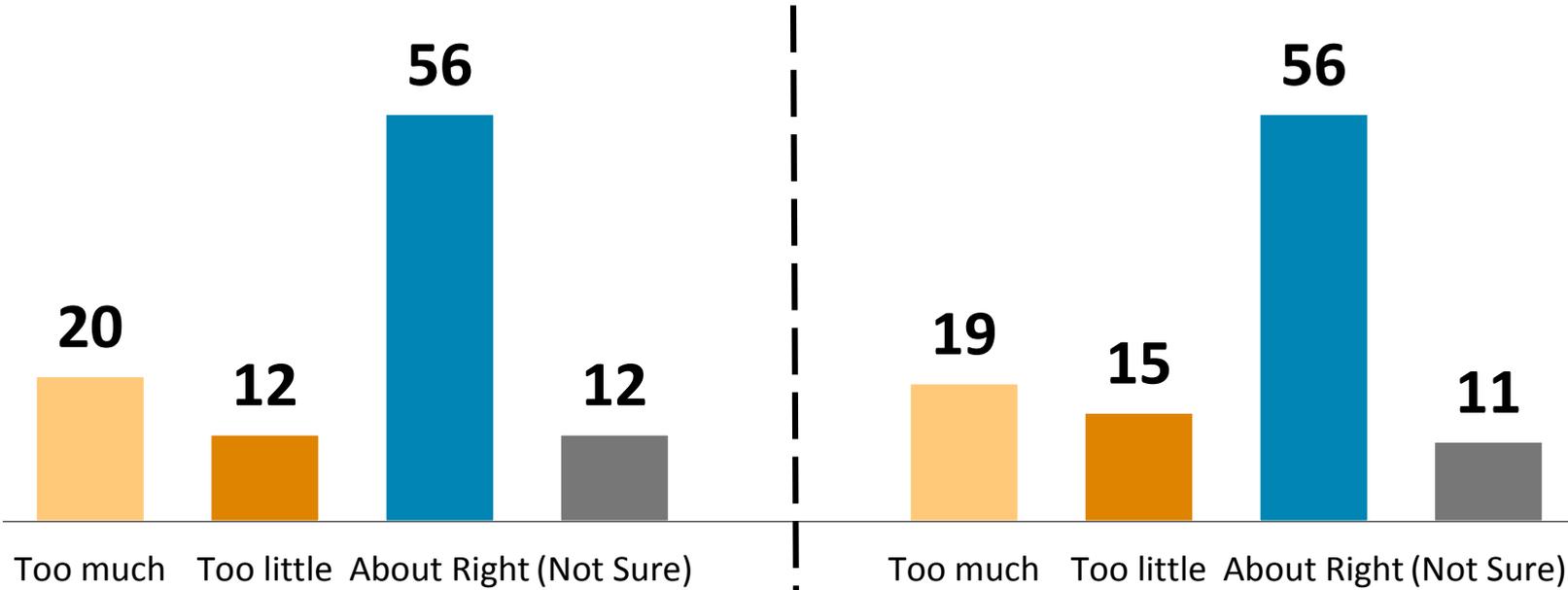
Strongly oppose
  Not so strongly oppose
  Strongly favor
  Not so strongly favor

\*Split sampled questions

I am going to read you some proposed ways to fund the paid family and medical leave program. Please tell me if you favor or oppose each one. [READ ITEM] Do you favor or oppose this? [IF CHOICE] And is that strongly or not so strongly?

Whether employees would be reimbursed for two-thirds or three-quarters of their wages, with a cap of \$900 per week, there is little difference in reactions. A solid majority believe these reimbursement rates sound about right.

Wage Reimbursement Options



Employees who take paid family leave from their jobs when they need to care for a new baby or adopted child, have a serious illness or need to care for a seriously ill family member would be **reimbursed for two-thirds of their wages**, up to \$900 a week. Does that amount sound like too little, too much, or about right?

Employees who take paid family leave from their jobs when they need to care for a new baby or adopted child, have a serious illness or need to care for a seriously ill family member would be **reimbursed for three-quarters of their wages**, up to \$900 a week. Does that amount sound like too little, too much, or about right?

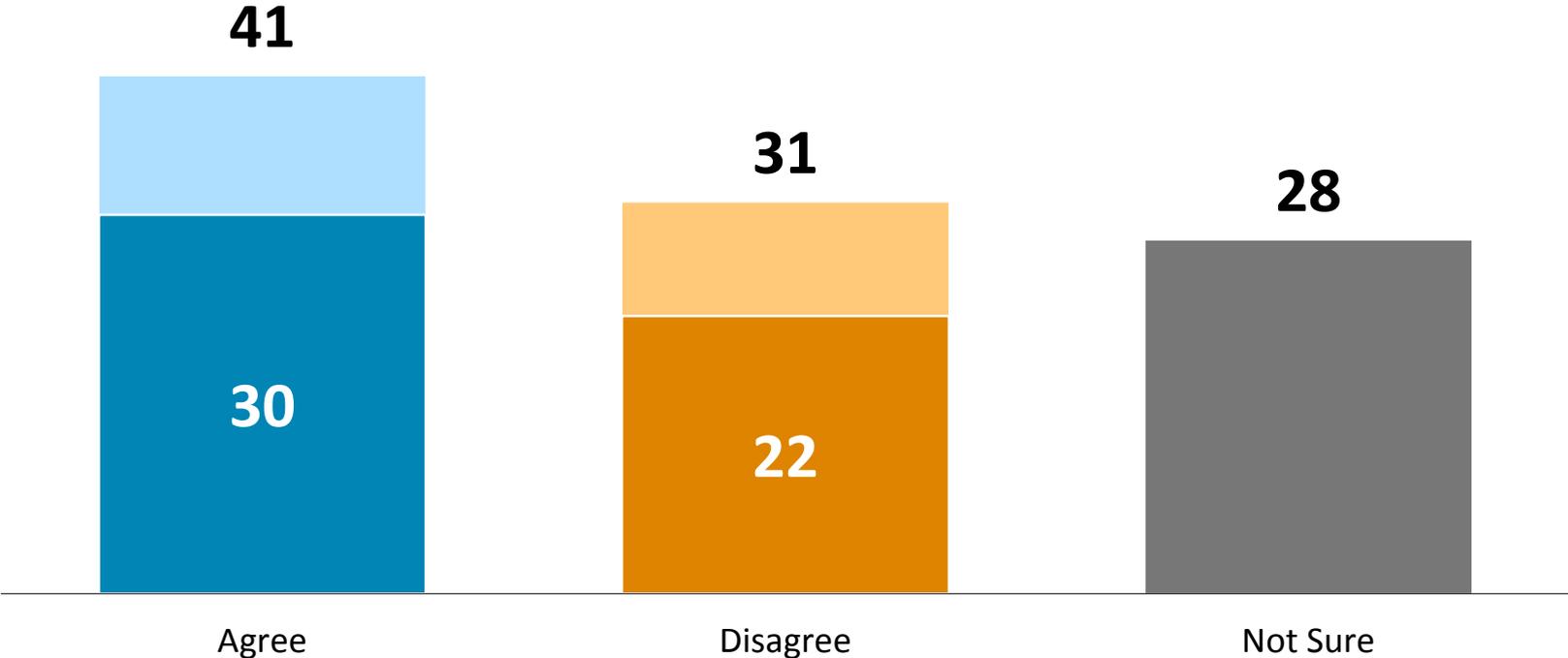
Split sampled questions



# Interaction of Minimum Wage and Paid Sick Days

Voters lean toward agreeing that minimum wage earners should get a higher percentage of their wages reimbursed while on paid family or medical leave, but a significant percentage either disagree or are unsure. This requires more explanation.

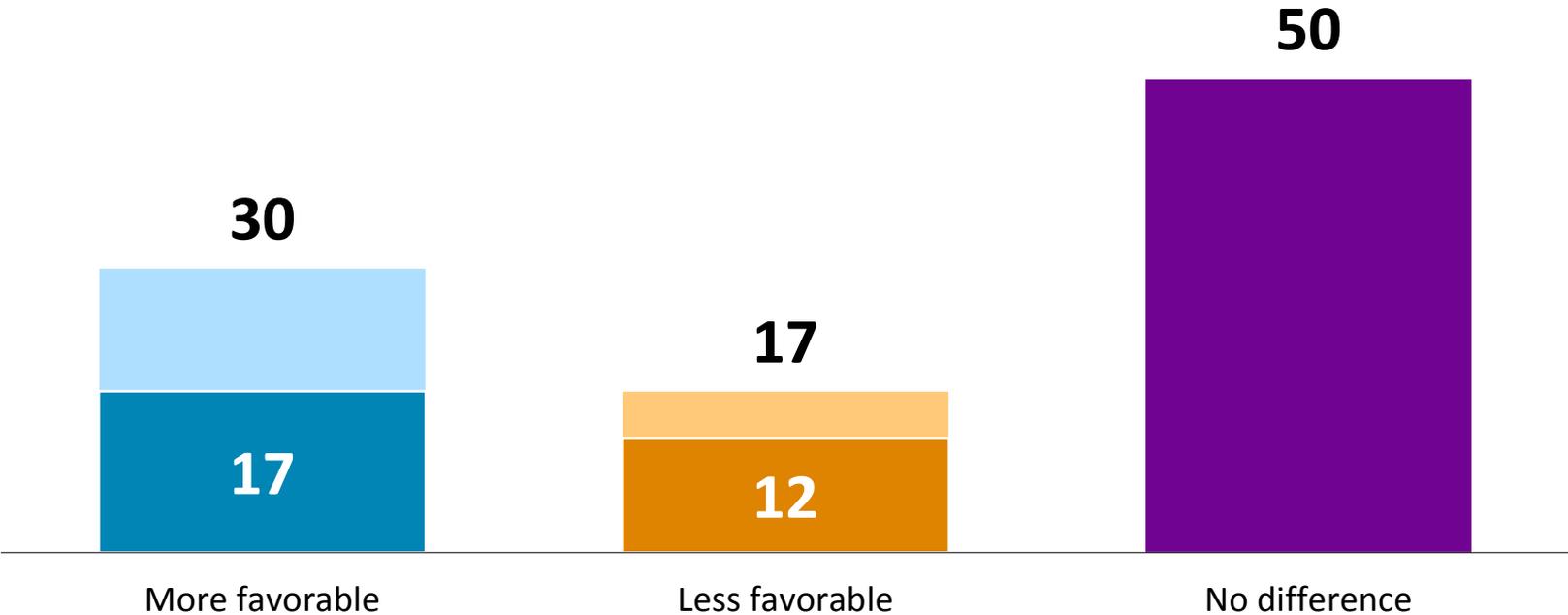
Agreement with Minimum Wage Paid Leave Earnings



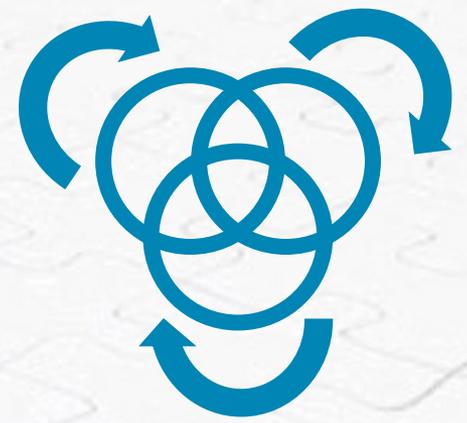
The minimum wage is \$9.47 per hour in Washington. Do you agree or disagree that minimum wage earners should get a higher percentage of their wages than other workers that are paid more when on family or medical leave, or are you not sure? If agree/disagree, ask: is that strongly or not so strongly?

Voters say it would make no difference in how they view paid family and medical leave if the state raises the minimum wage and requires paid sick leave. Of those who have an opinion, voters feel more favorable toward paid leave.

Impact of Paid Sick Leave/Min Wage on Favorability toward Paid Family and Medical Leave



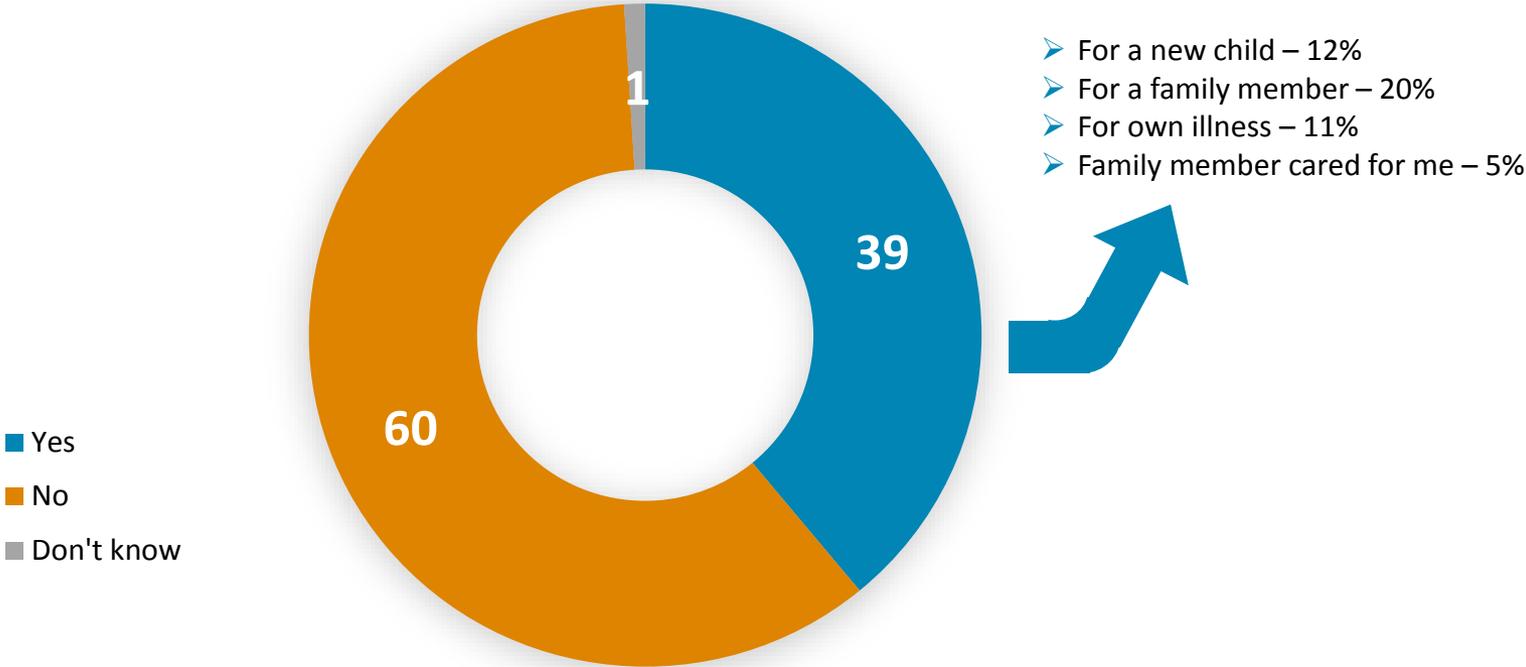
Next year, Washington is considering requiring paid sick leave for all employees and raising the minimum wage. If Washington raises the minimum wage and requires paid sick days for all employees, would that make you more favorable or less favorable toward paid family and medical leave or would it not make a difference? If more/less favorable, ask: is that much more/less favorable or somewhat more/less favorable?



Context

About four in ten report that they or their spouse has needed to take time off of work within the past five years to care for a new child or family member, or to tend to their own serious illness or to be cared for by a family member.

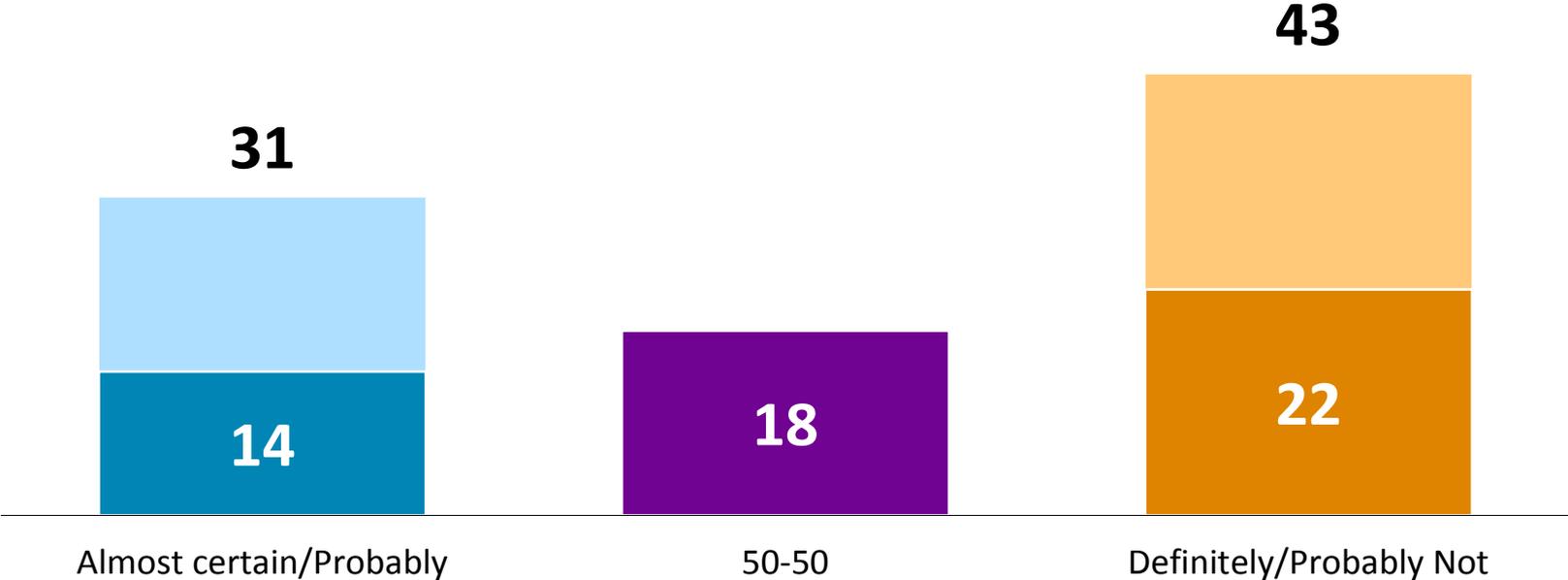
### Needed Leave Over Past Five Years



Thinking back over the past five years, have you or your spouse had to take time off work to care for a new child, a seriously ill family member, or your own serious illness, or has a family member needed to take time off work to care for you? **[IF YES:]** Was that to care for a new child, an ill family member, or your own illness, or some combination of these? **[ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

Among all voters, a plurality do not anticipate needing leave within the next five years. About a third say leave is probable or certain.

Projected Need for Leave in Next Five Years



Thinking ahead over the next five years, how likely is it that you or your spouse will have to take time off work to care for a new child, a seriously ill family member, your own serious illness, or that a family member will need to take time off to care for you --are you almost certain to take time off or need a family member to take time off, will you probably take time off or need a family member to take time off, are the chances about 50-50, are you probably not going to take time off or need a family member to take time off, or are you definitely not going to take time off or need a family member to take time off?



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