

# **Messaging Research:**

Findings, Recommendations,  
and Resources

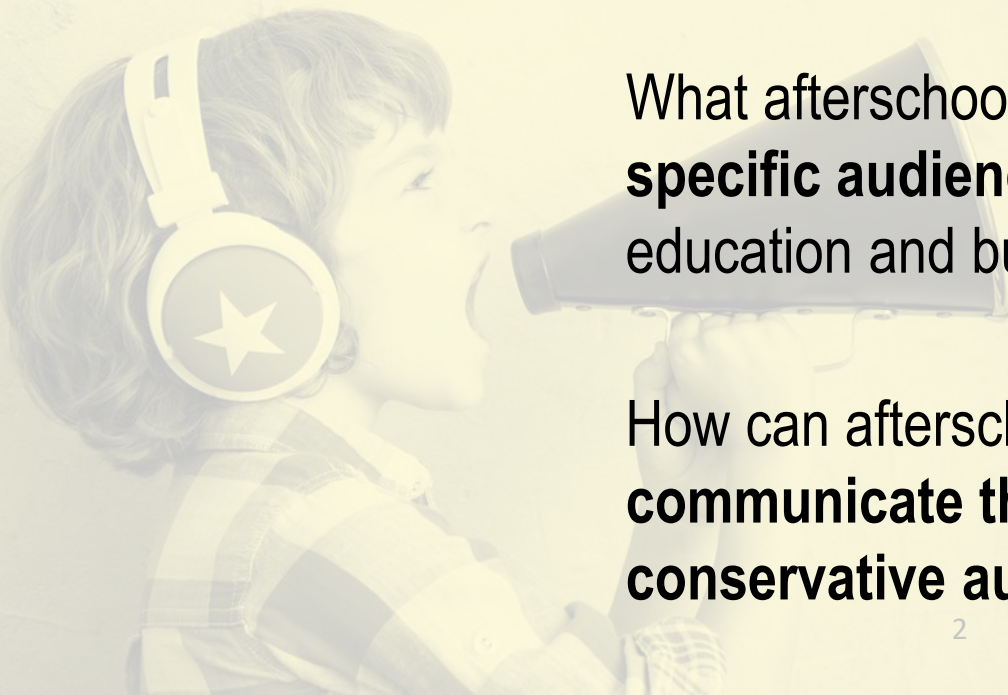


# Questions driving the research

What are the **values that should lead** messaging building support around afterschool?

What afterschool messages **best resonate with specific audiences**, including policy influencers, education and business leaders, and parents?

How can afterschool advocates **better communicate the value of afterschool to conservative audiences**?



# How we got here

## One-on-One Interviews

- 15 w/ education leaders
- 14 w/ business leaders

## Focus Groups (NC & WI)

- White & Asian mothers of children in afterschool
- Low-income parents of children not in afterschool
- High-income parents of children not in afterschool
- White fathers of children in afterschool
- African American & Latina mothers of children in afterschool

## Online Bulletin Board

- 23 “education opinion influencers”
- Defined as: Registered to vote, have children under the age of 18 living at home with them, have at least a bachelor’s degree, earn more than \$100,000/yr, consume news regularly from at least two sources, & engaged in at least 3 levels of civic participation on an education policy issue in the past year.

## National Survey

## Omnibus Poll

# Initial Recommendations

**Connect afterschool  
to learning**

- Position quality afterschool as integral part of the learning process
- Talk about afterschool as new opportunities for learning and giving kids new experiences
- Don't over-rely on STEM

**Be explicit**

- Broaden the notion of safety in the hours afterschool
- Define the benefit to parents
- Policymakers need statistics, and need them cited

**Focus on broadening  
opportunity**

- Don't focus on achievement gaps
- When talking about funding disparities, mention rural communities



# National Survey Results



# Methodology



## National Online Survey

Lake Research Partners and the Tarrance Group designed and administered this survey that was conducted online from May 16 – May 23, 2018. The survey reached a total of 1,000 adults nationwide with an oversample of 200 adults living in rural areas.

The base sample was weighed by gender, region, age, educational attainment, race, and gender by race to reflect attributes of the actual population. The oversample was weighed by gender and age to reflect the attributes of their actual populations. The rural oversample was also weighed down into the base to reflect their natural proportion of adults in the country.

The margin of error for the sample is +/-3.1 for the total likely voter sample.

# Message Testing



# Top 4 takeaways

Afterschool, and funding for afterschool, has strong support, but be cautious of K-12 education match ups.

Safety resonates.

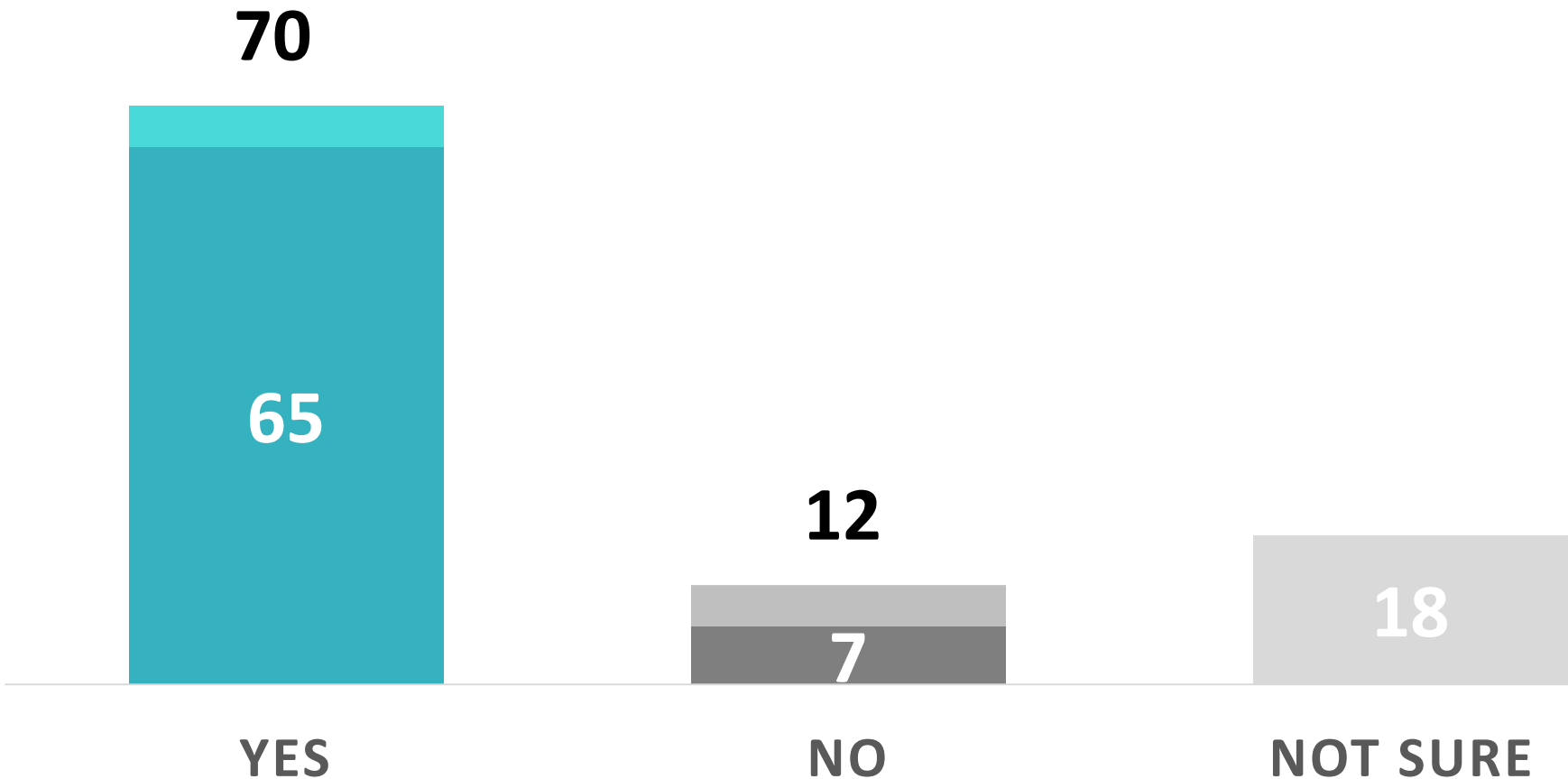
Connect afterschool to learning, including building foundational skills and creating new opportunities.

Focus on aspirational, values driven language.





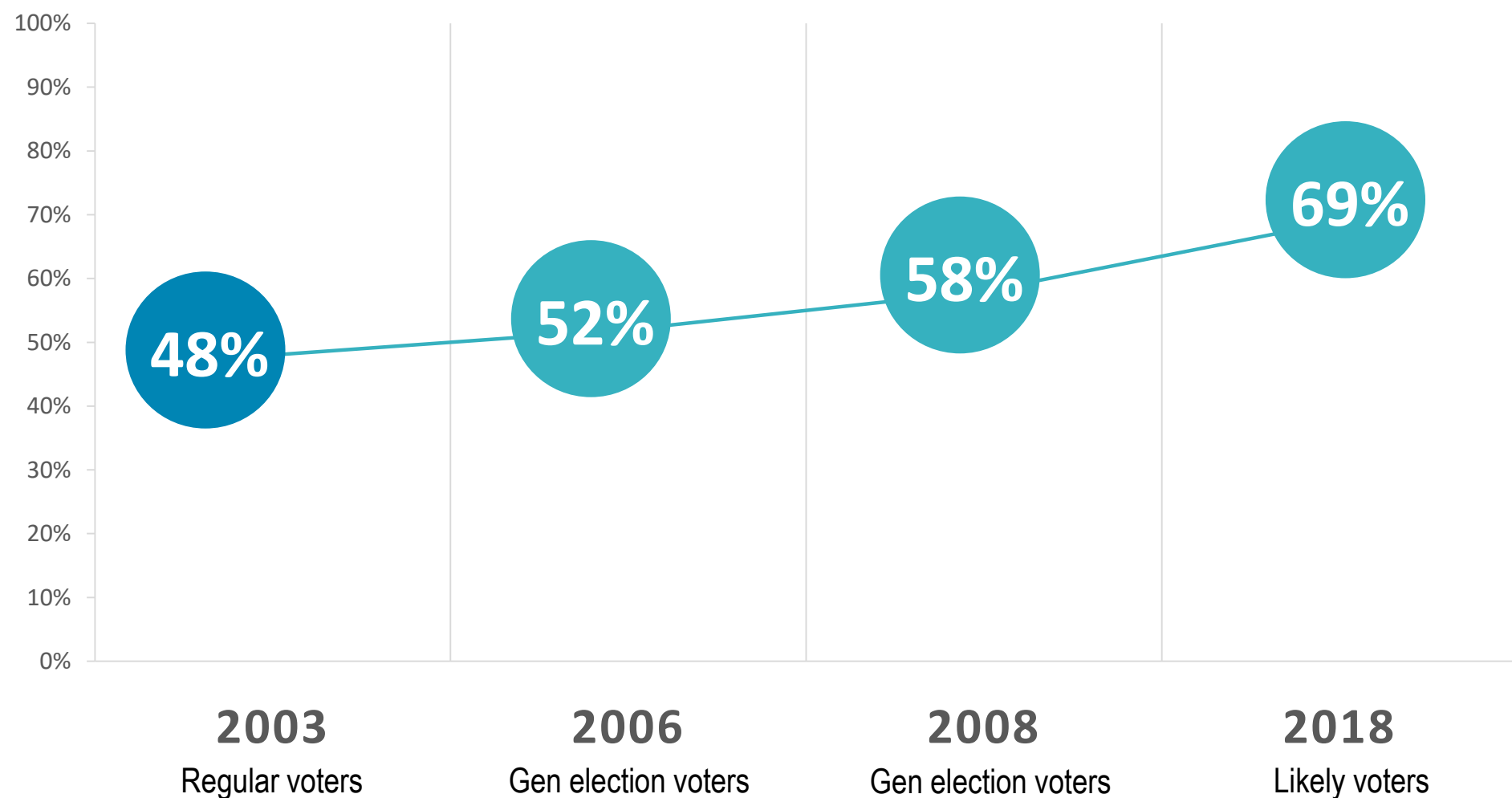
Americans **agree afterschool programs** are an absolute necessity for their community.



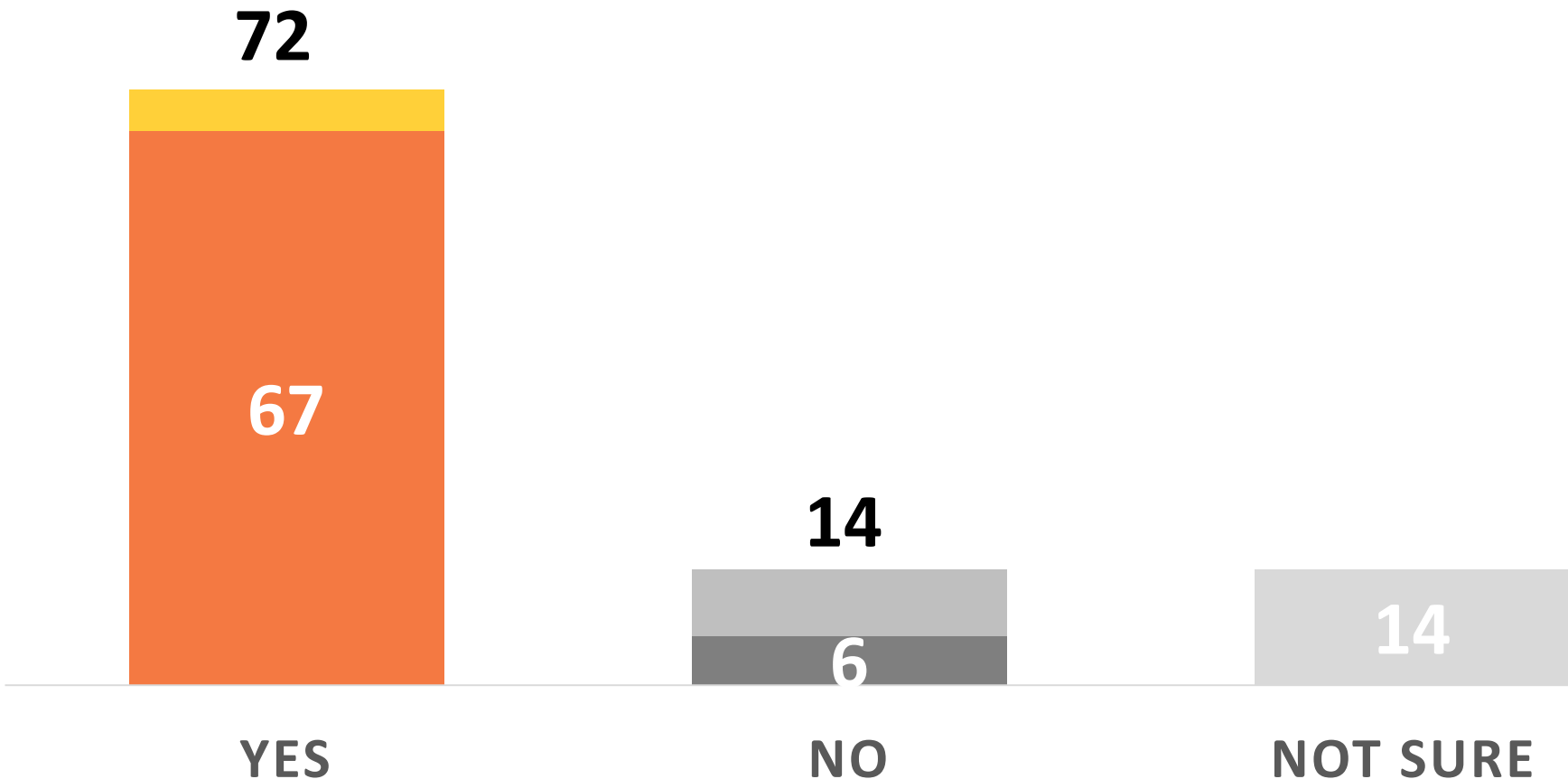
\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

Since 2006, there has been a 17-point increase among likely voters strongly believing afterschool programs are an absolute necessity to their community.



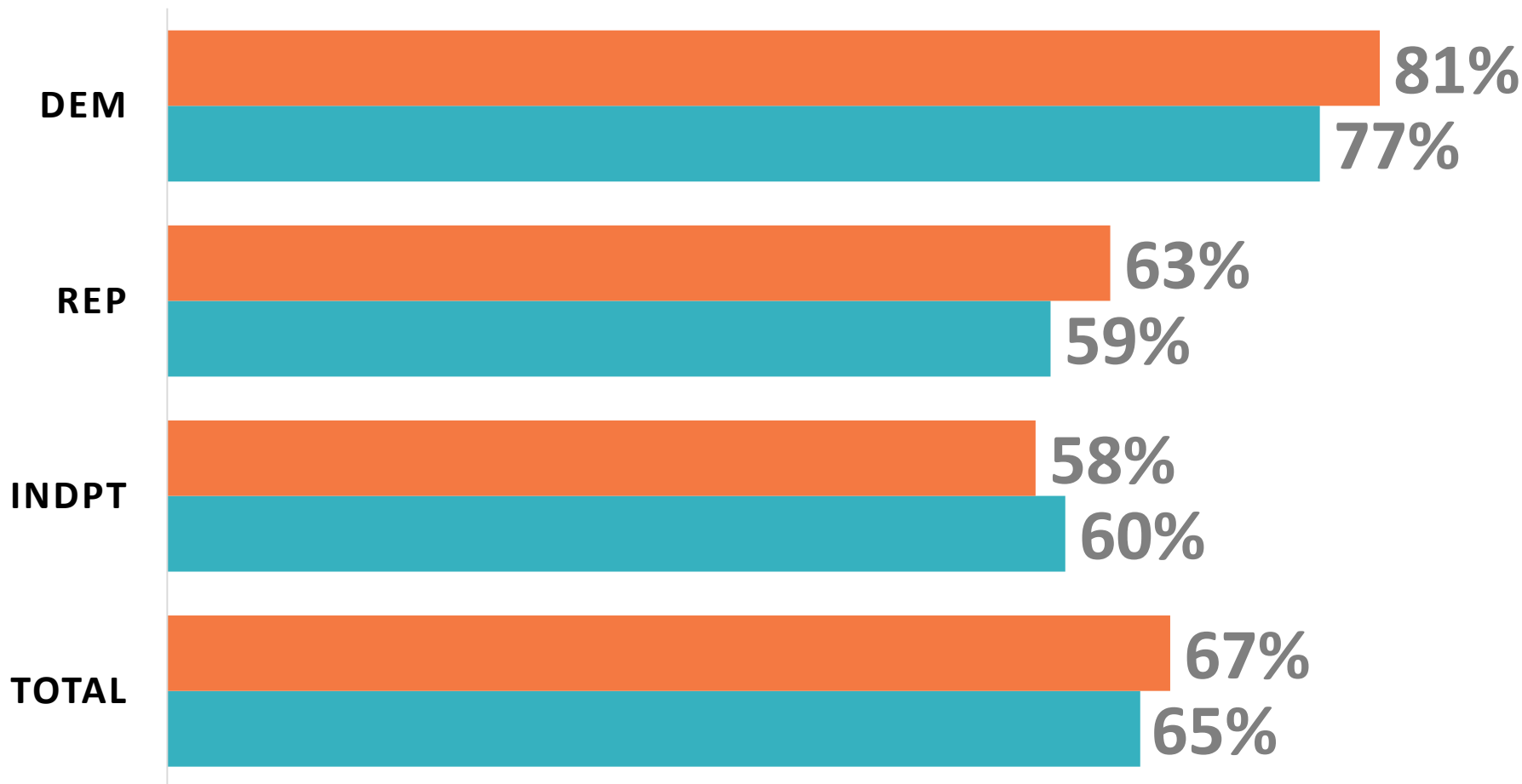
Americans agree afterschool **and summer programs** are an absolute necessity for their community.



\*Split Sampled

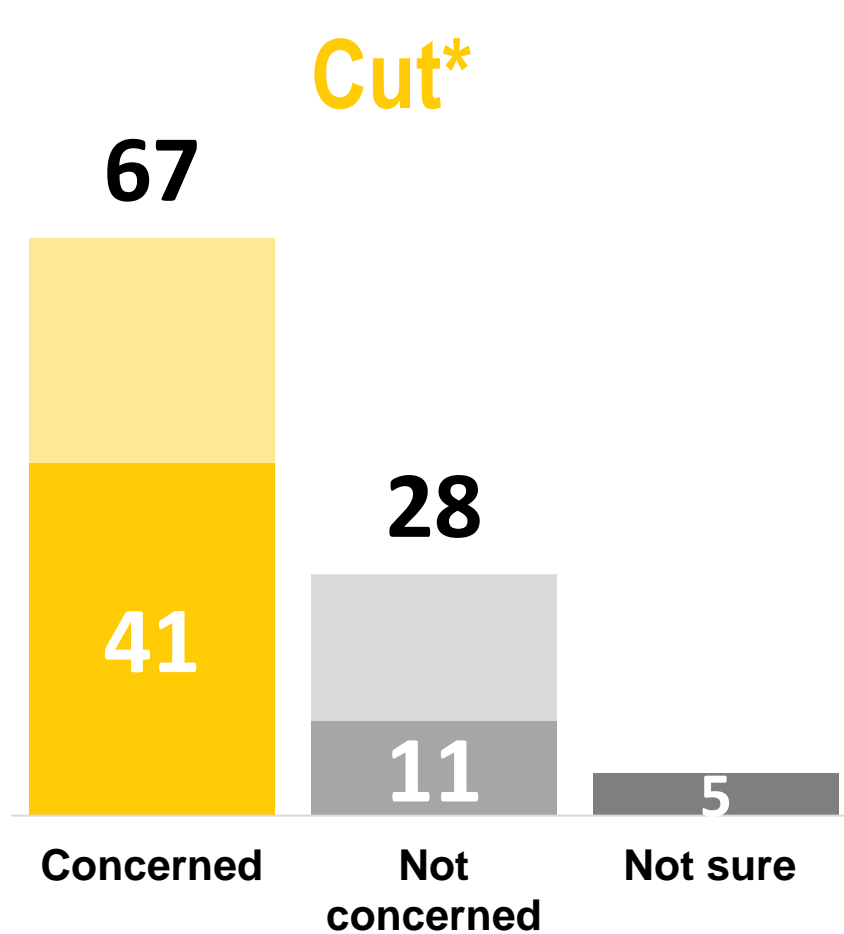
**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

Intensity (“strong yes”) increases among partisans when asked if **afterschool and summer programs** are an absolute necessity for their community compared to **afterschool programs on its own**.



\*Split Sampled

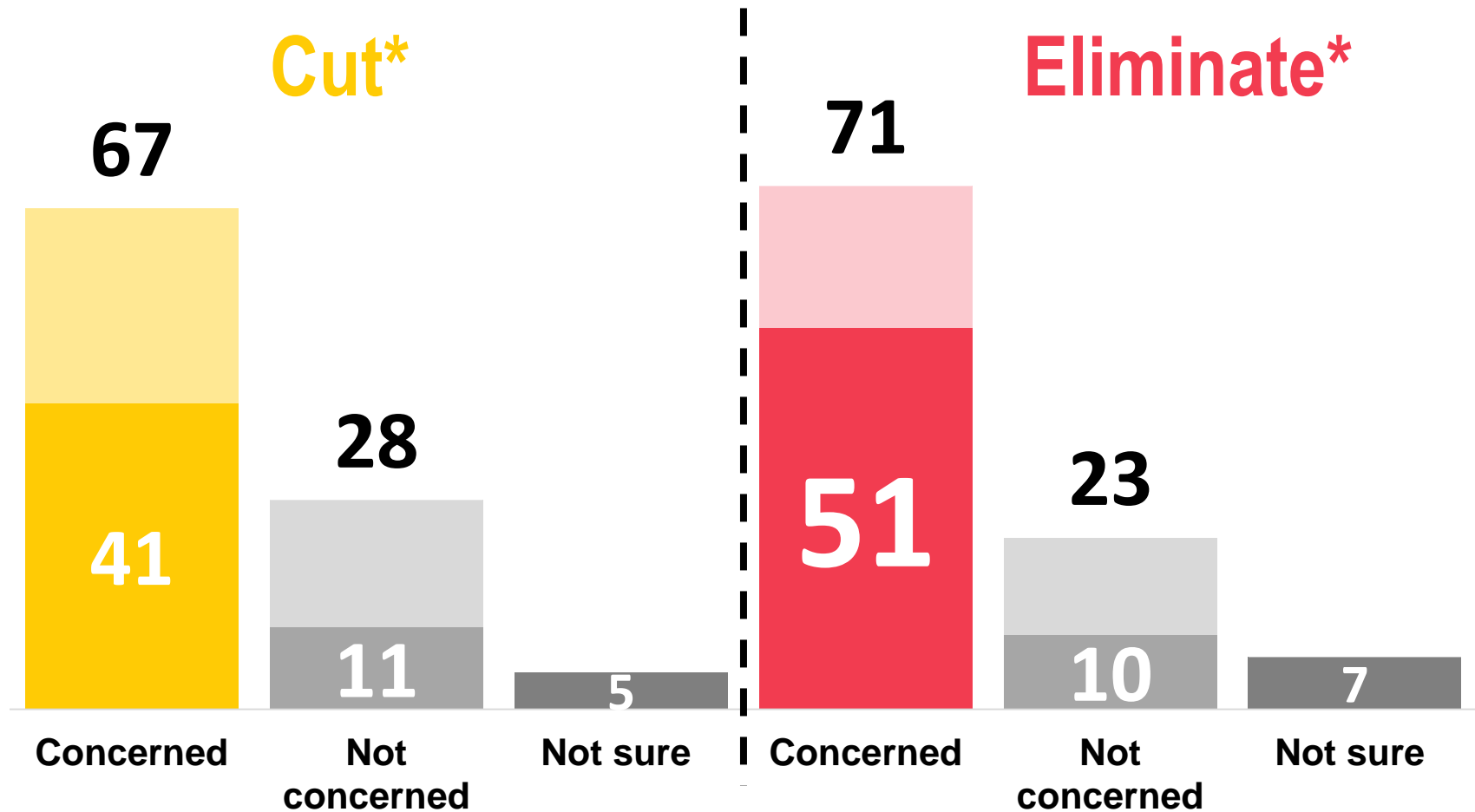
# Adults are concerned when they hear a proposal **cut federal funds** for afterschool and summer programs



\*Split Sampled



Adults are concerned when they hear a proposal cut federal funds for afterschool and summer programs, but are **more concerned when they hear a proposal to eliminate all federal funds**, including a majority who are very concerned.

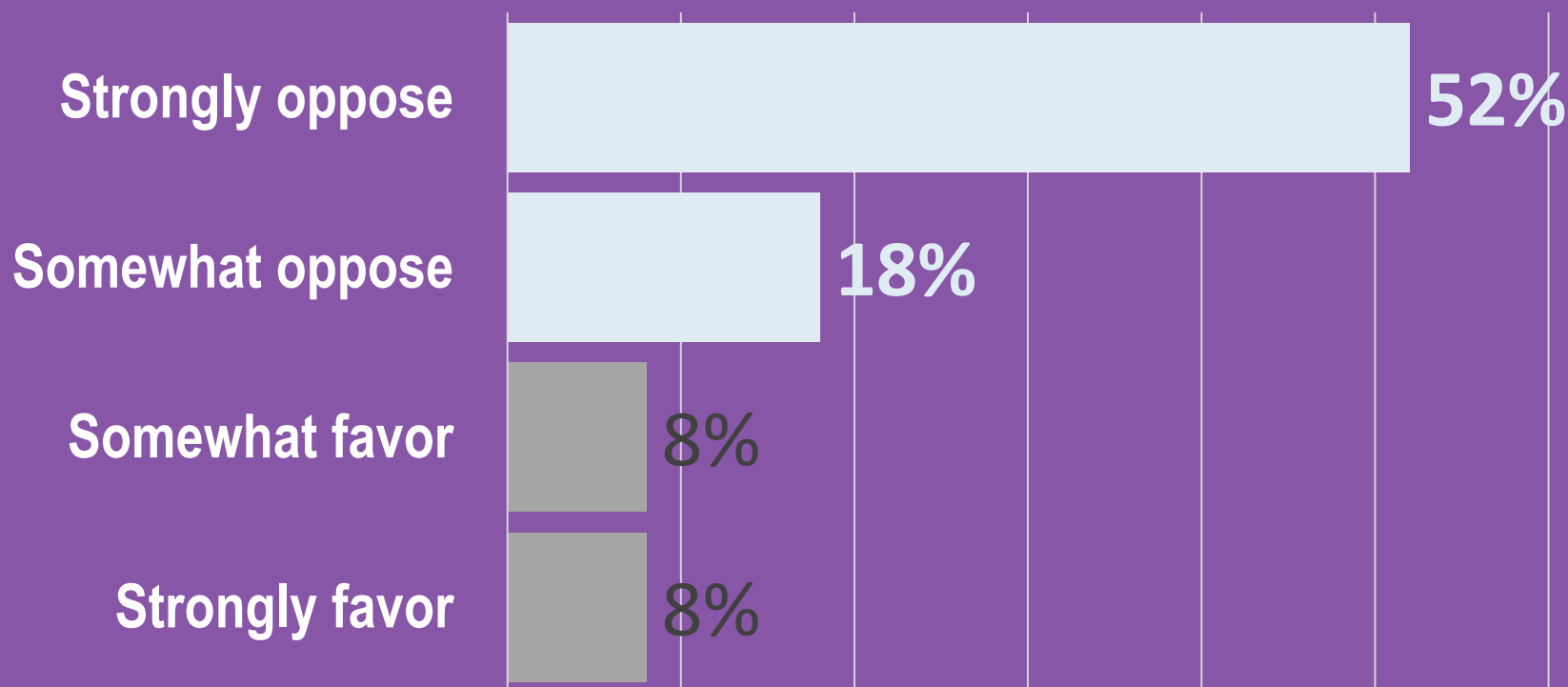


\*Split Sampled

**Republicans are much more concerned about eliminating all federal funds, as well as people in urban areas and rural areas.**

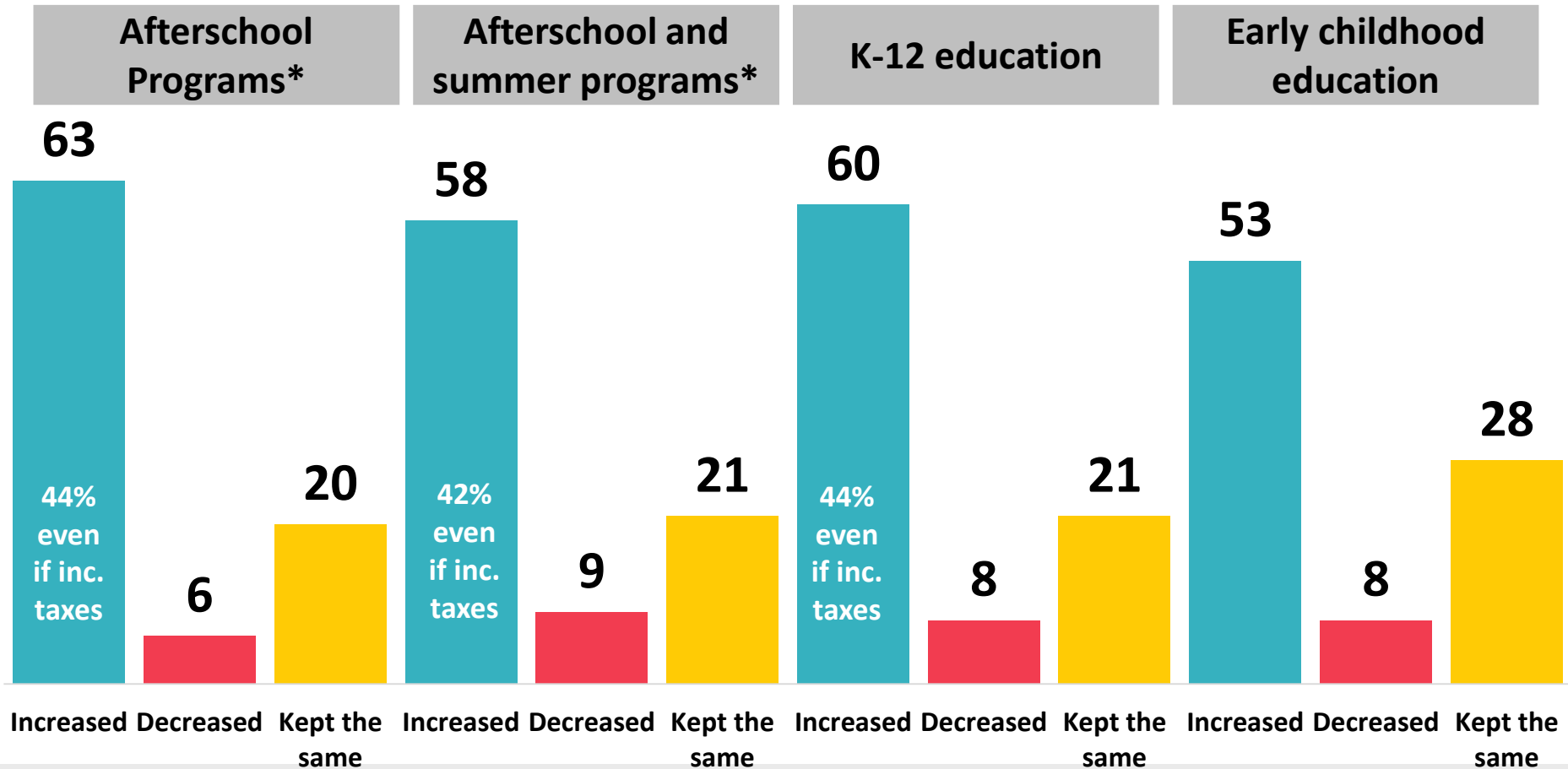
<b>% total concerned</b>	<b>Eliminate all</b>	<b>Cut</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Democrat	88	84	+4
African American	87	82	+5
Latino	78	82	-4
Urban	76	66	<b>+10</b>
Rural	73	58	<b>+15</b>
Republican	67	57	<b>+10</b>
Suburban	67	71	-4
White	65	62	+3
Independent	62	60	+2

In our national poll, 70 percent of respondents said that they are opposed to eliminating all federal funds for afterschool and summer learning programs.



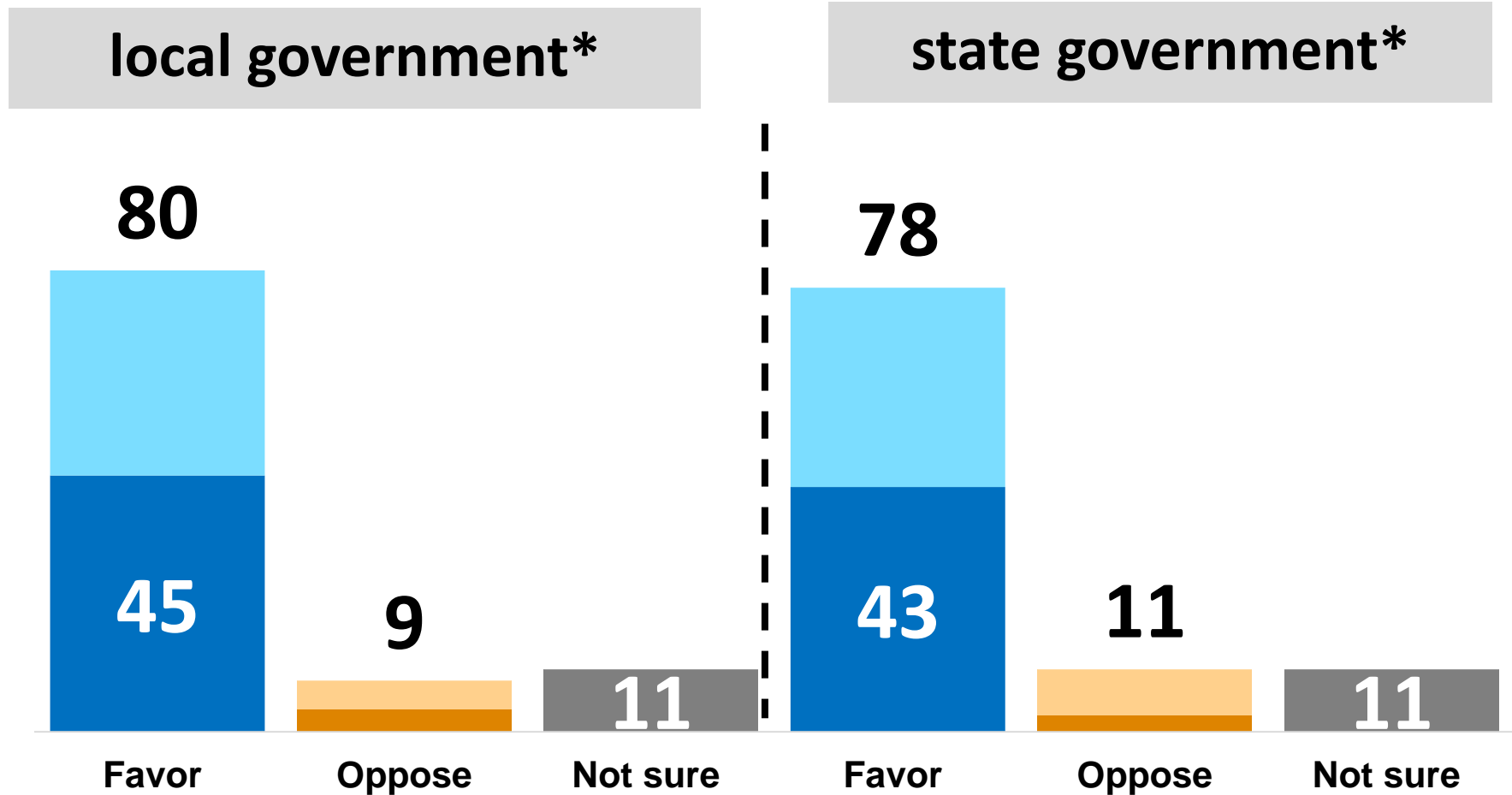
# Americans overwhelmingly believe **funding needs to be increased across the continuum of education**. People are as supportive of increasing funding for afterschool programs as K-12.

Please indicate if you think public funding for each of the following should be increased, decreased, or kept the same:



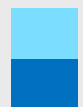
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People **want government to set aside specific funds to be used for afterschool programs** regardless of whether it is their local or state government.



\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**



Somewhat favor  
Strongly favor



Somewhat oppose  
Strongly oppose

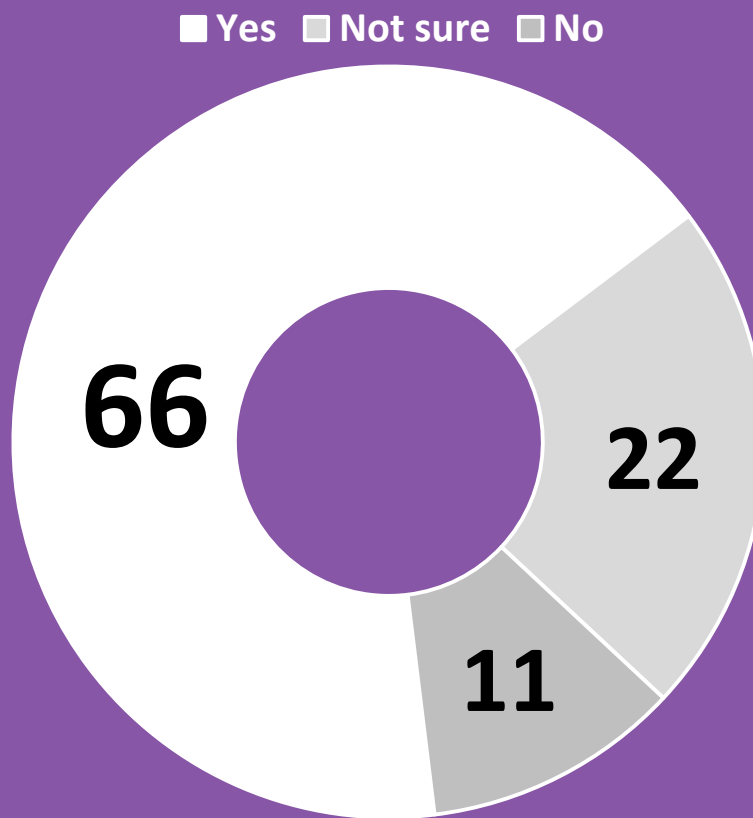


## Support for set asides at the local or state government is true across demographics

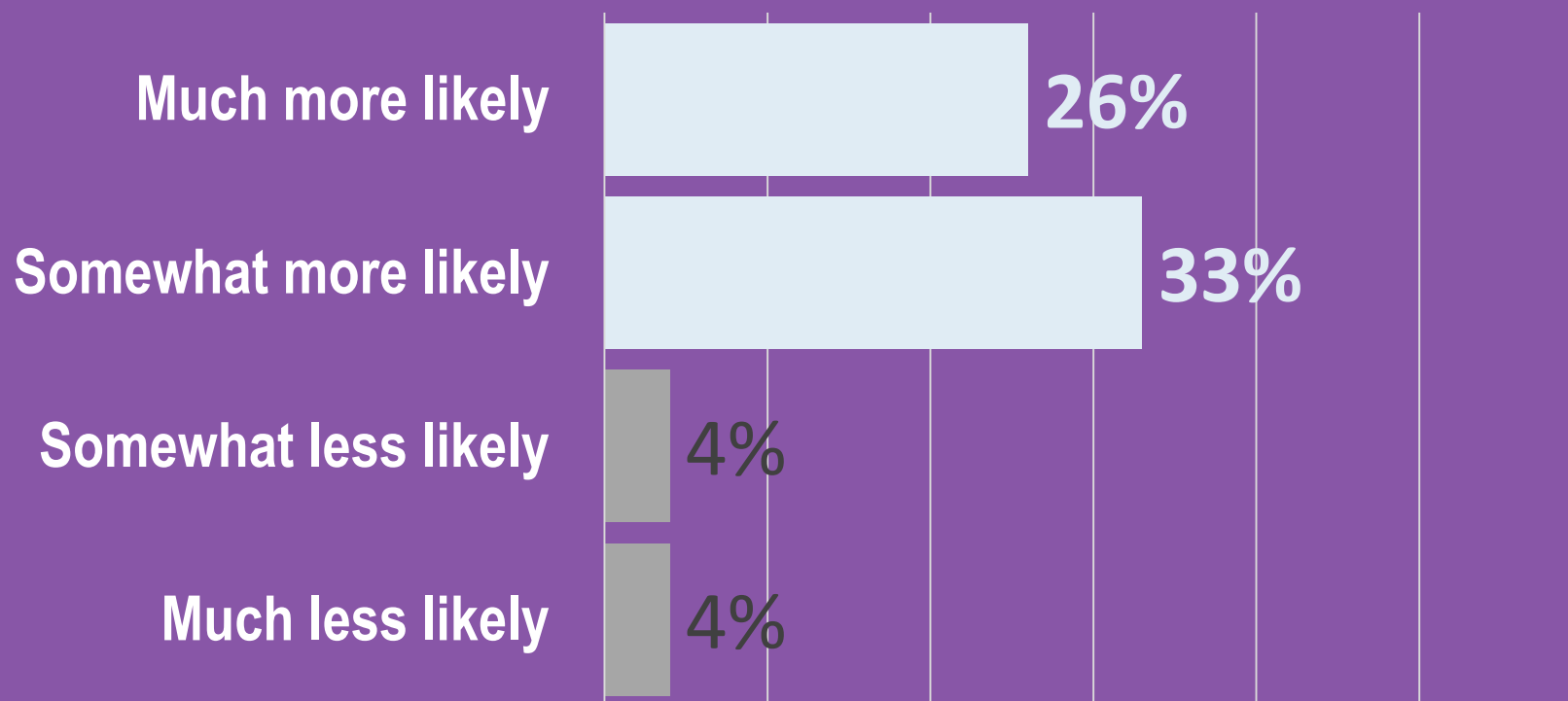
<b>% total favor</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>State</b>
Democrat	90	90
Latino	89	80
African American	82	86
Suburban	82	81
Urban	82	77
White	79	76
Republican	79	77
Independent	75	70
Rural	71	74

\*Split Sampled

In our national poll, a strong majority of respondents say they want federal, state, and local leaders to provide funding for afterschool and summer learning programs

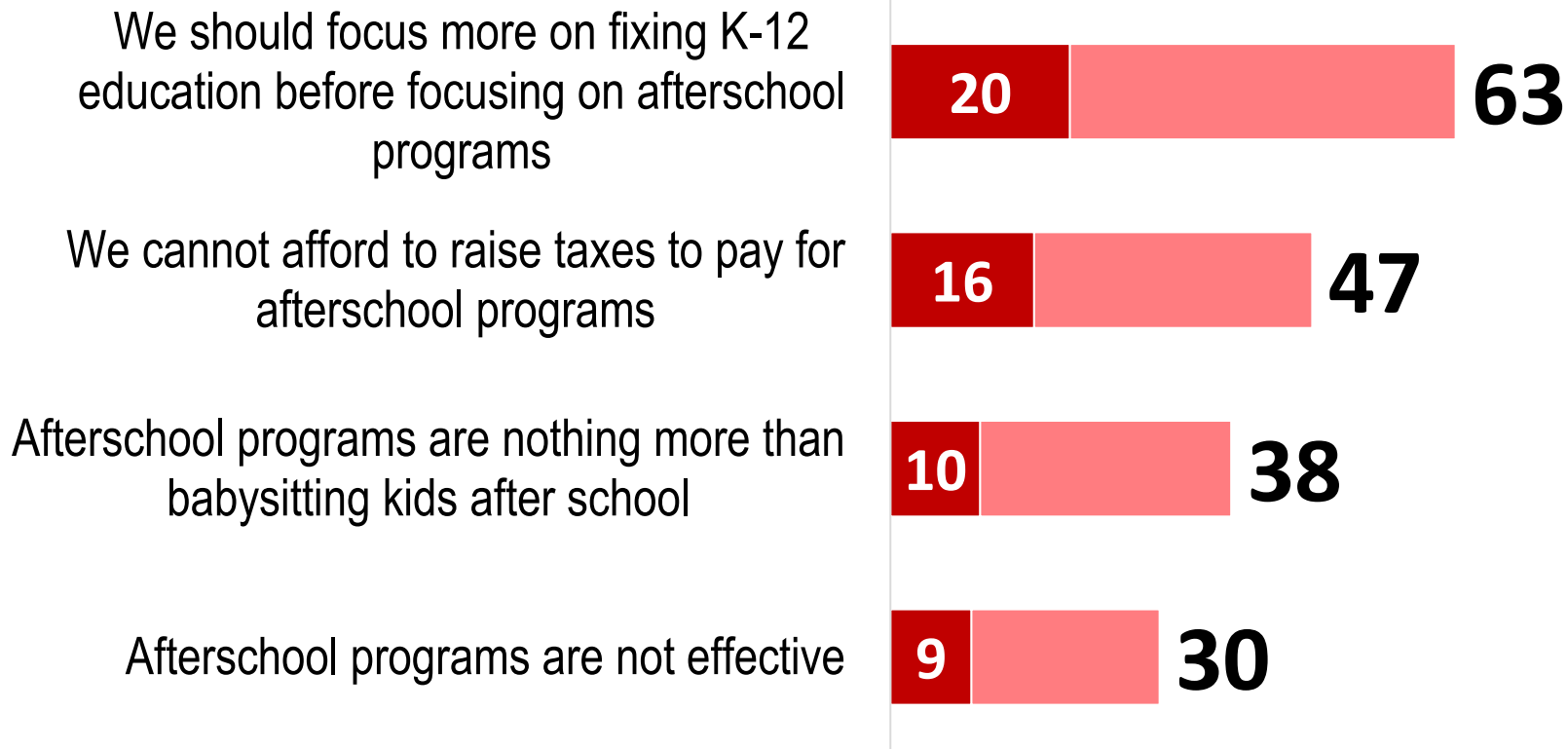


In our national poll, 59 percent of respondents said that they are more likely to vote for an elected official if that person supported public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Overall, “opposition” values that we tested find less agreement.

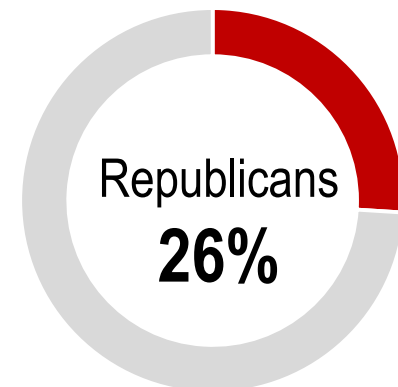
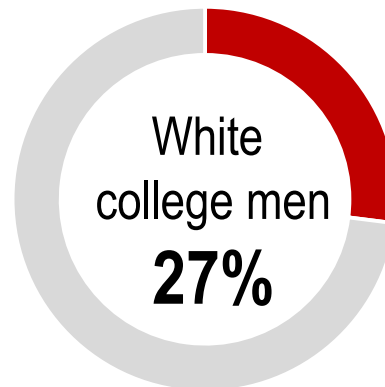
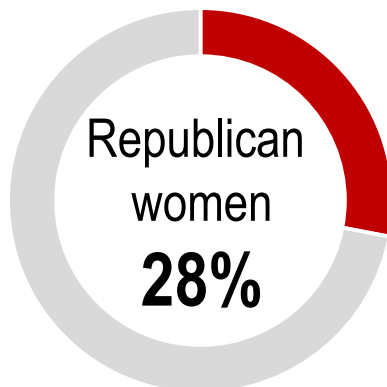
Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.



However, a majority agree that we should focus more on fixing K-12 education, with **Republican women, white college men, and Republicans** most likely to strongly agree.

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.

We should focus more on fixing K-12 education before focusing on afterschool programs





# Top 4 takeaways

Afterschool, and funding for afterschool, has strong support, but be cautious of K-12 education match ups.

Safety resonates.

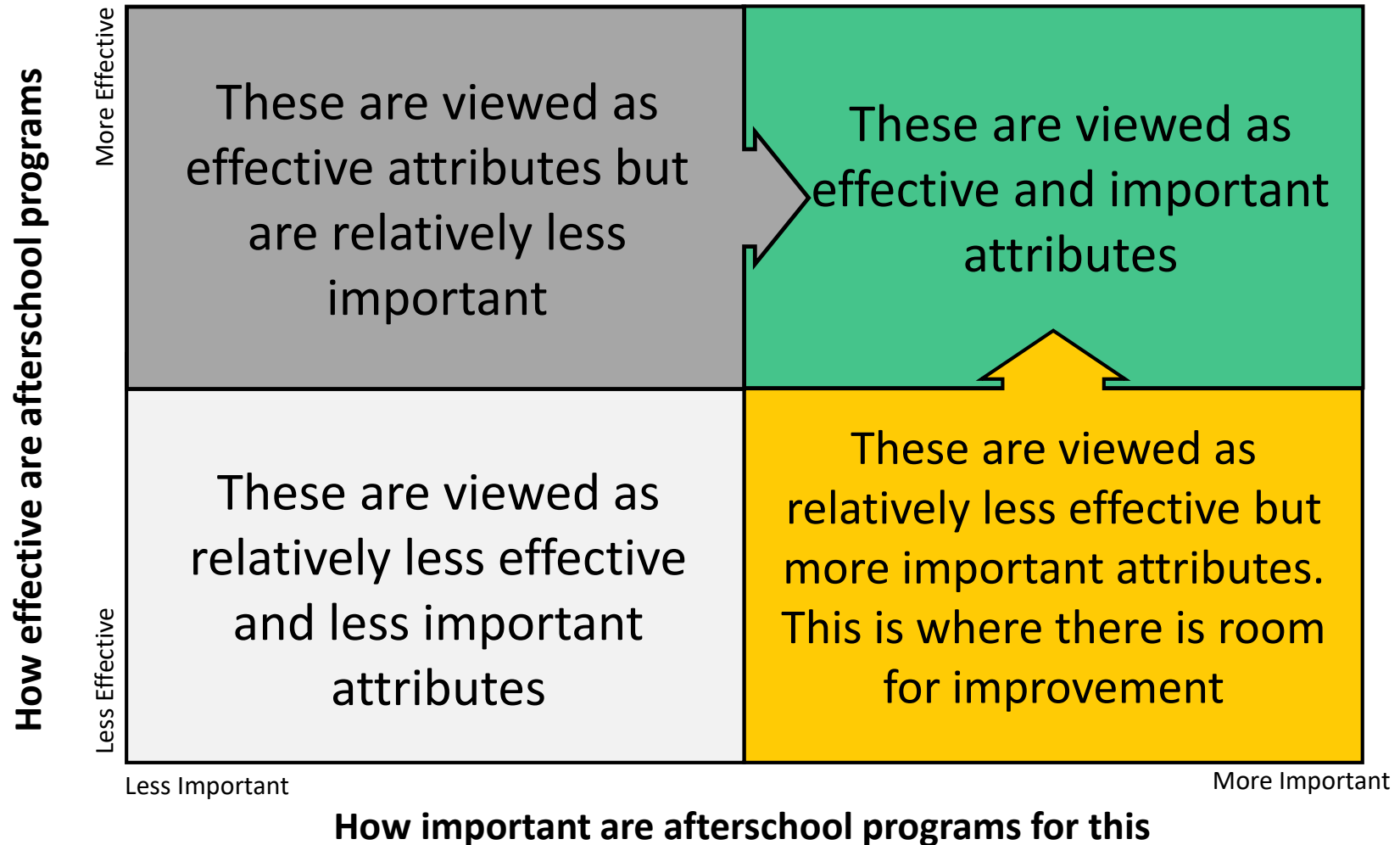
Connect afterschool to learning, including building foundational skills and creating new opportunities.

Focus on aspirational, values driven language.

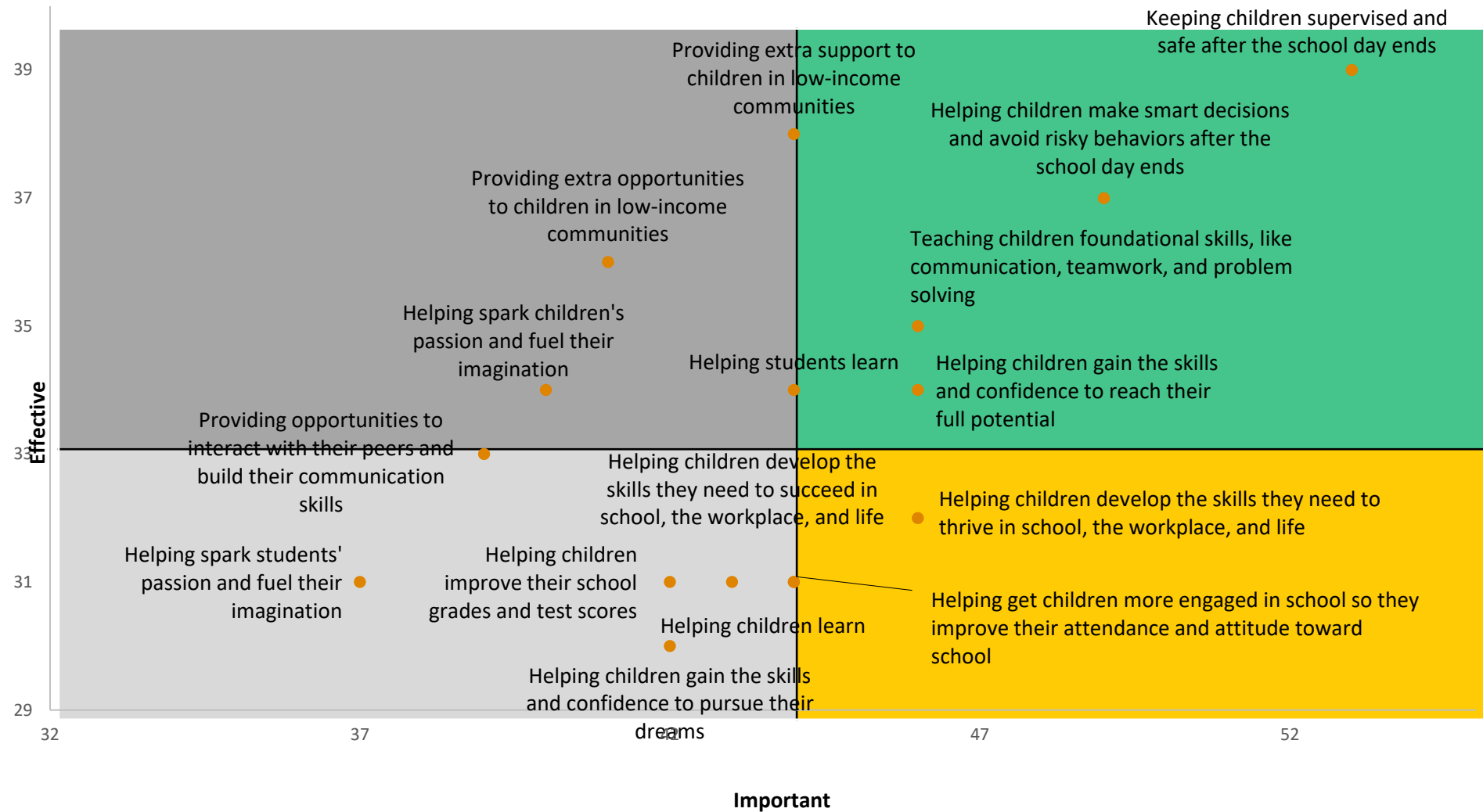


# How to Read Effective vs Important Analysis:

Each quadrant intersects on the average importance or effectiveness rating



# Full Data...



Keeping children supervised and safe after school is the most important and effective impact that Americans believe afterschool programs have.

Effective

Keeping children supervised and safe after the school day ends

Helping children make smart decisions and avoid risky behaviors after the school day ends

Teaching children foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving

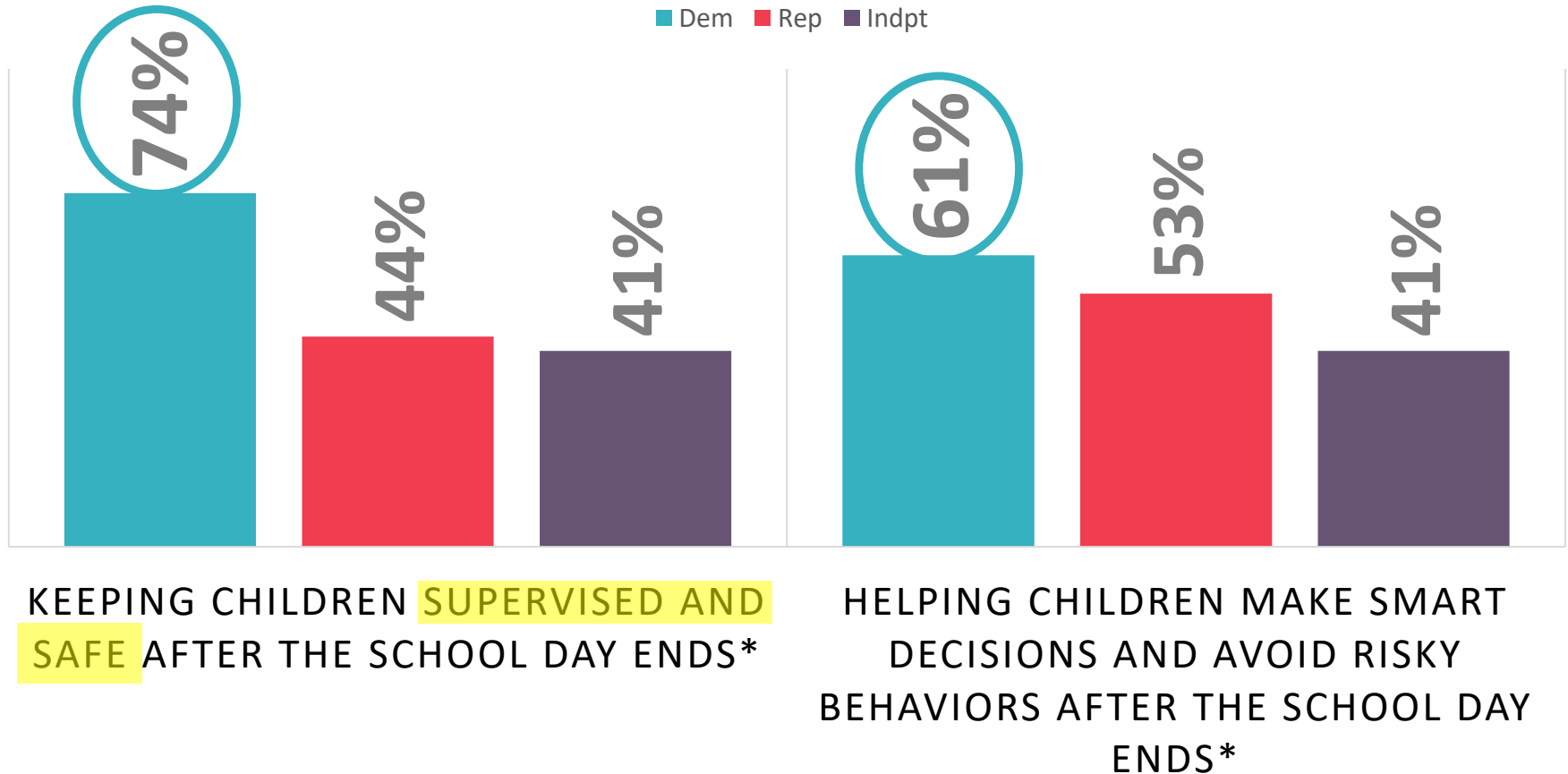
Helping children develop the skills they need to thrive in school, the workplace, and life

All Adults

## Democrats more strongly value supervision...

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

■ Dem ■ Rep ■ Indpt



\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

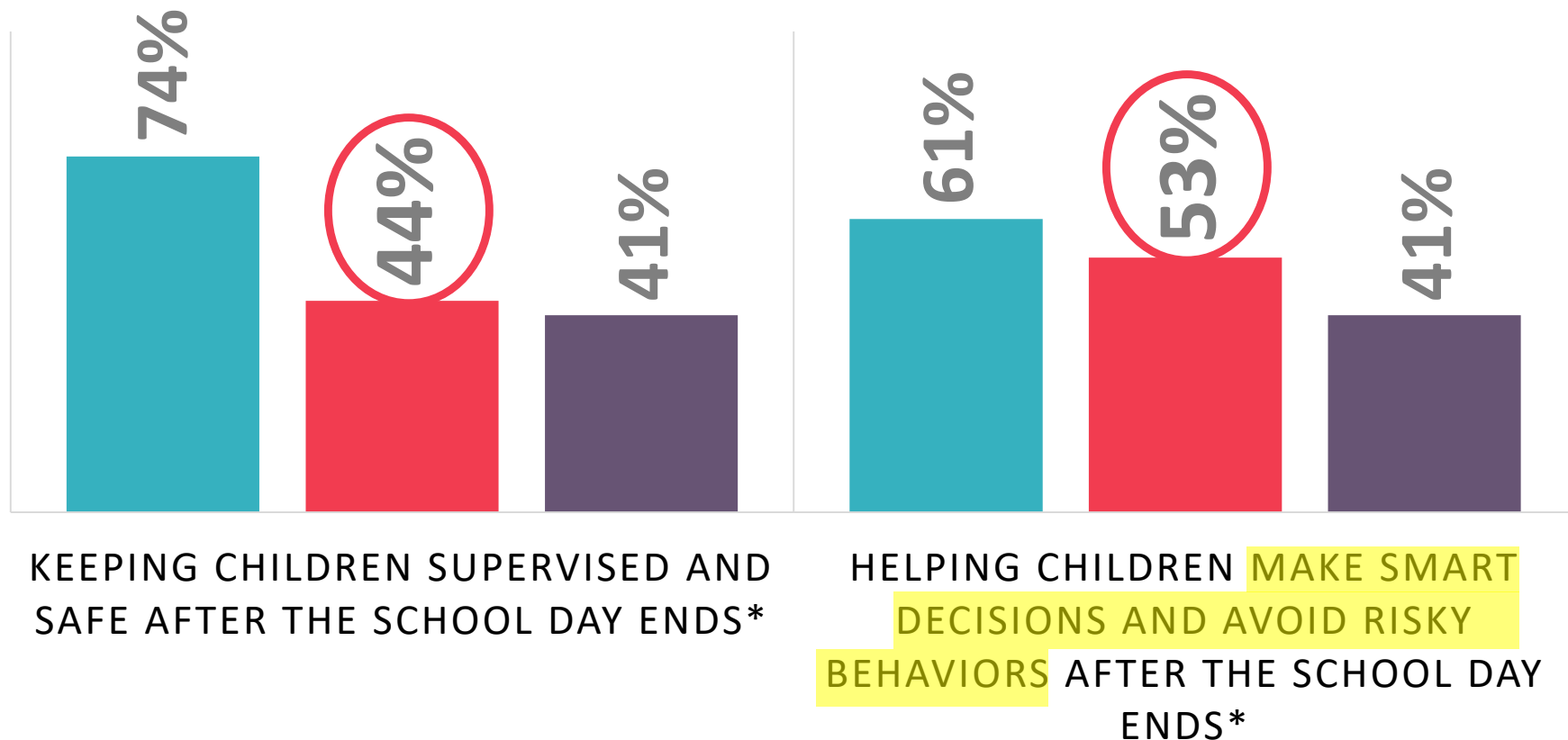
% Very Important = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale



...while **Republicans more strongly value helping children make smart decisions and avoiding risky behaviors**, tapping into values of personal responsibility.

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

■ Dem ■ Rep ■ Indpt



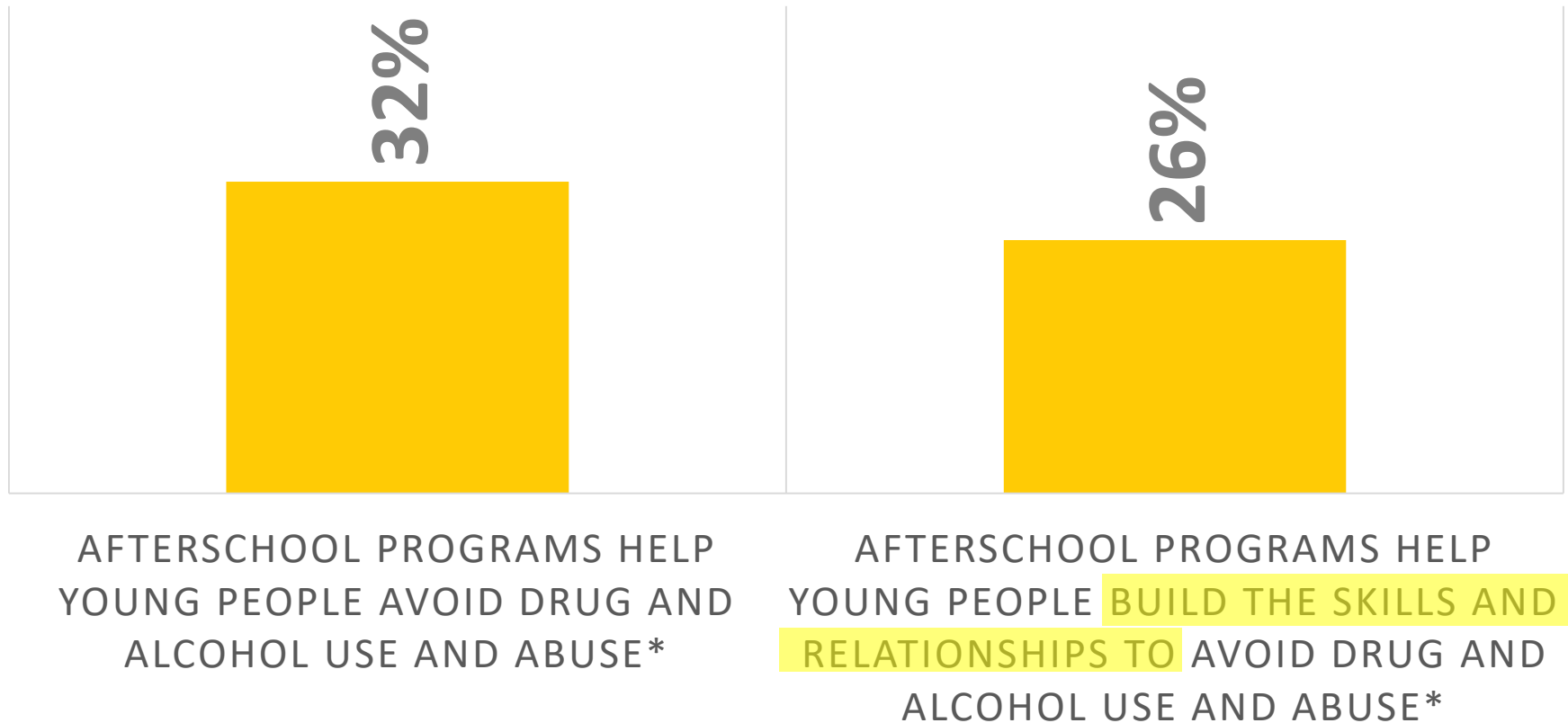
\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Very Important = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

# Asserting the role of programs in helping children avoid risky behaviors should **avoid hedging language**.

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)



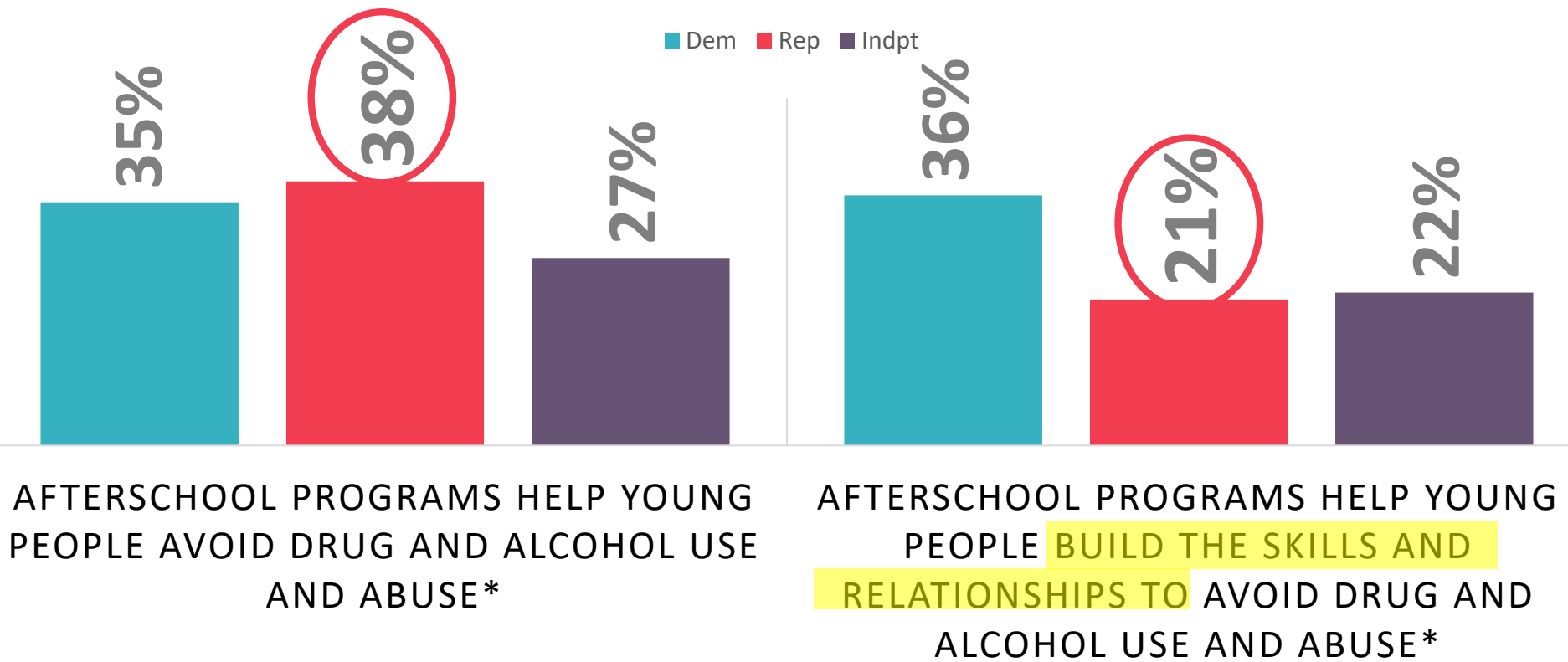
\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Strongly Agree = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

# The indirect language **erodes agreement particularly with Republicans...**

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)



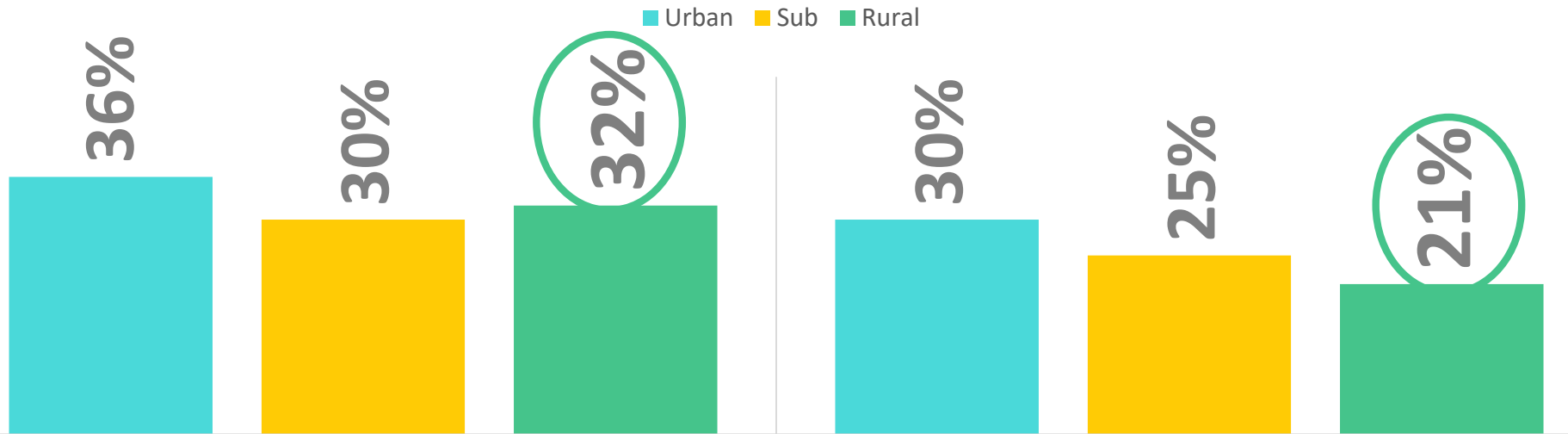
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**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Strongly Agree= Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

...and people in rural areas.

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AVOID DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE\*

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE BUILD THE SKILLS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO AVOID DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE\*

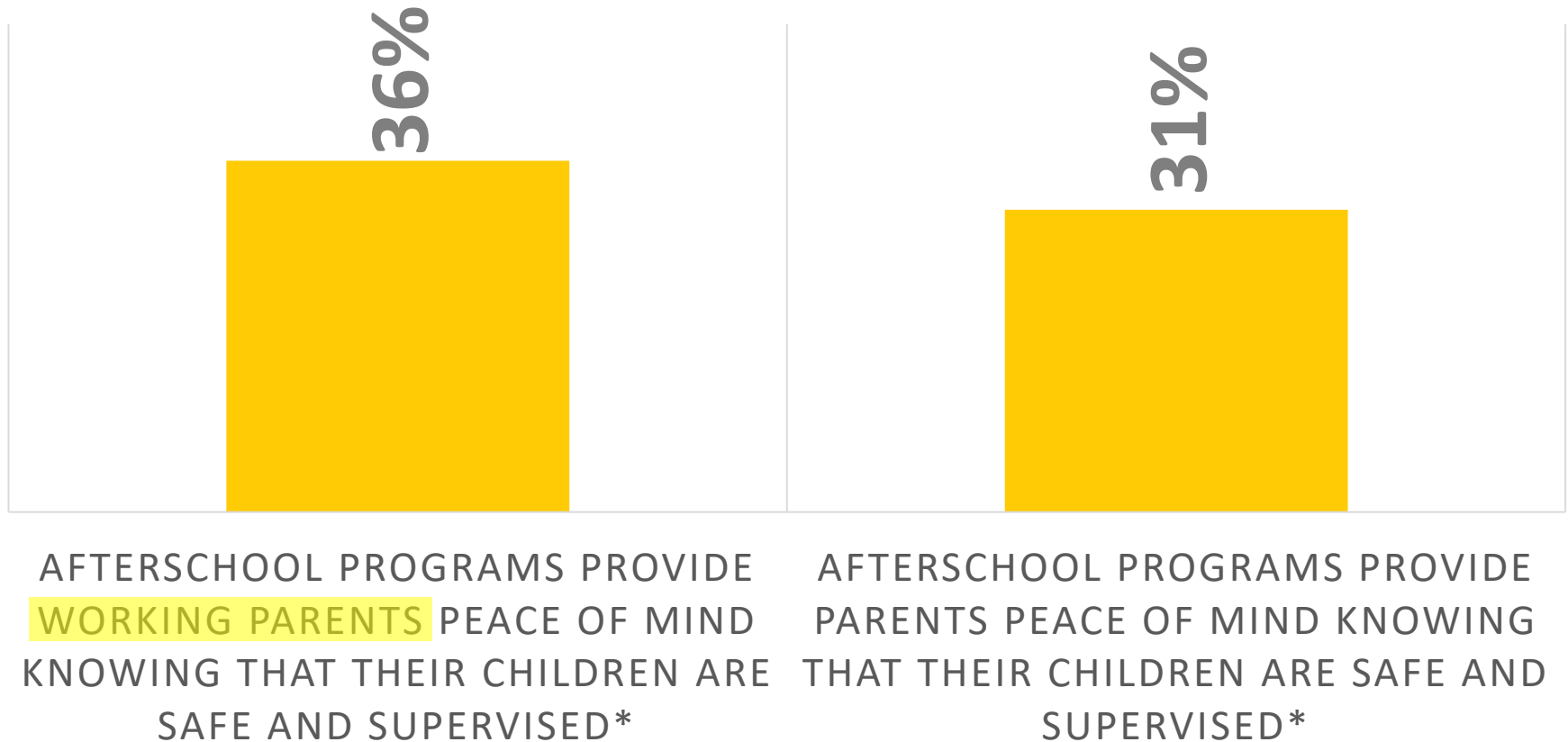
\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Strongly Agree= Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

# Including **working parents increases agreement** on the safety dimension...

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)



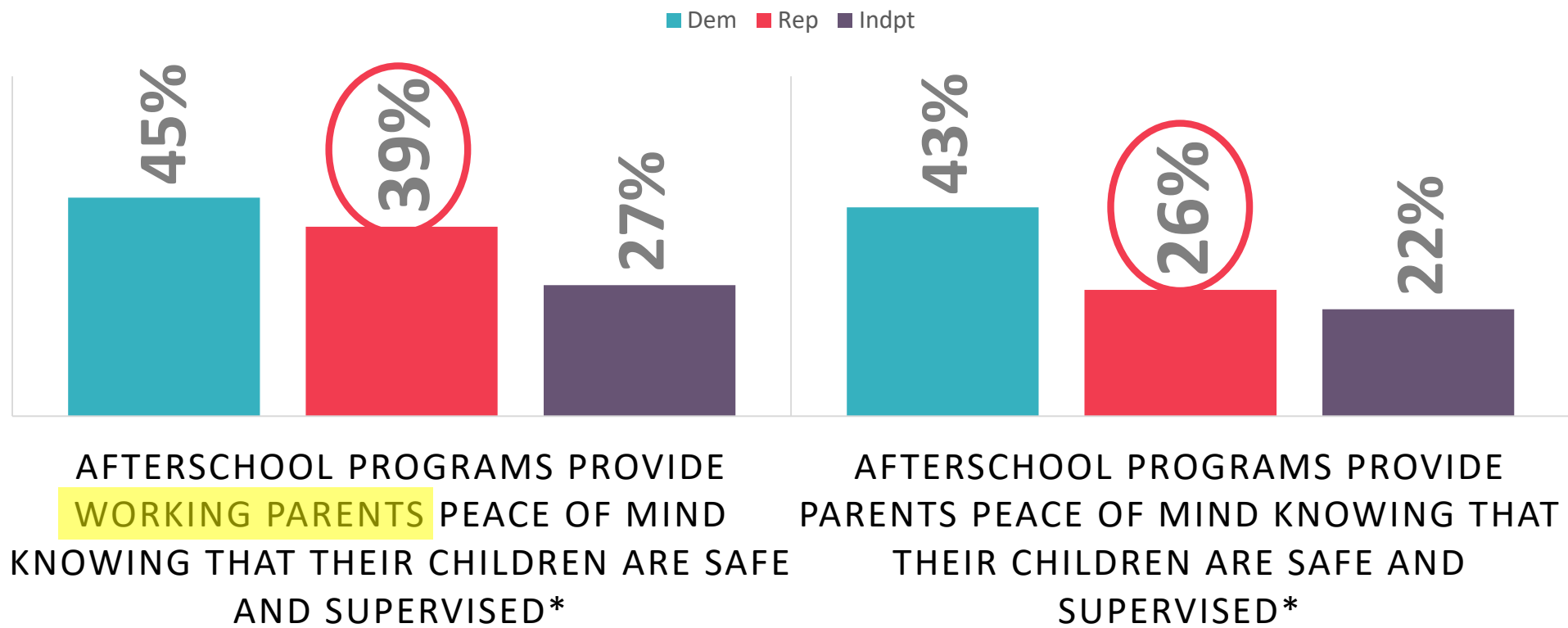
\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Strongly Agree= Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

...especially for **Republicans**.

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)



\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Strongly Agree = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

# Top 4 takeaways

Afterschool, and funding for afterschool, has strong support, but be cautious of K-12 education match ups.

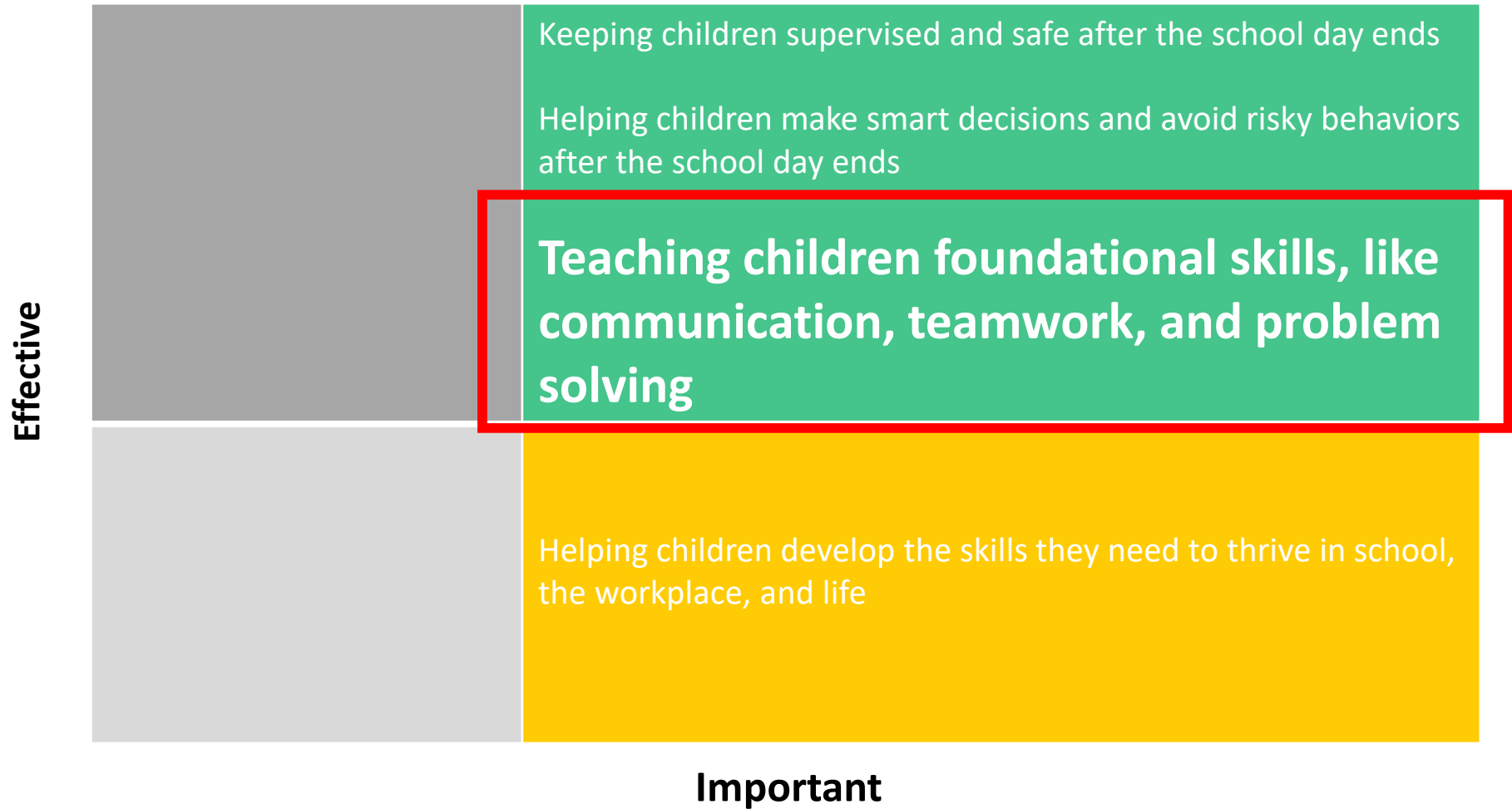
Safety resonates.

Connect afterschool to learning, including building foundational skills and creating new opportunities.

Focus on aspirational, values driven language.



Teaching children foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving, is another area where Americans believe afterschool programs play an important and effective role.





Framing communication and teamwork as **foundational skills that can be taught** rather than as skills that can result from providing opportunities is more important for **Republicans, women, rural respondents, and Independents.**

<b>% very important</b>	<b>Teaching children foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving*</b>	<b>Providing opportunities to interact with their peers and build their communication skills*</b>
Democrat	53	55
Republican	51	32
Women	49	41
Urban	47	45
Rural	46	31
Suburban	44	39
Men	43	37
Independent	37	31

\*Split Sampled

Positioning programs as **providing “more opportunities for learning”** rather than “clos[ing] the achievement gap” **increases agreement particularly in urban areas and among Republicans.**

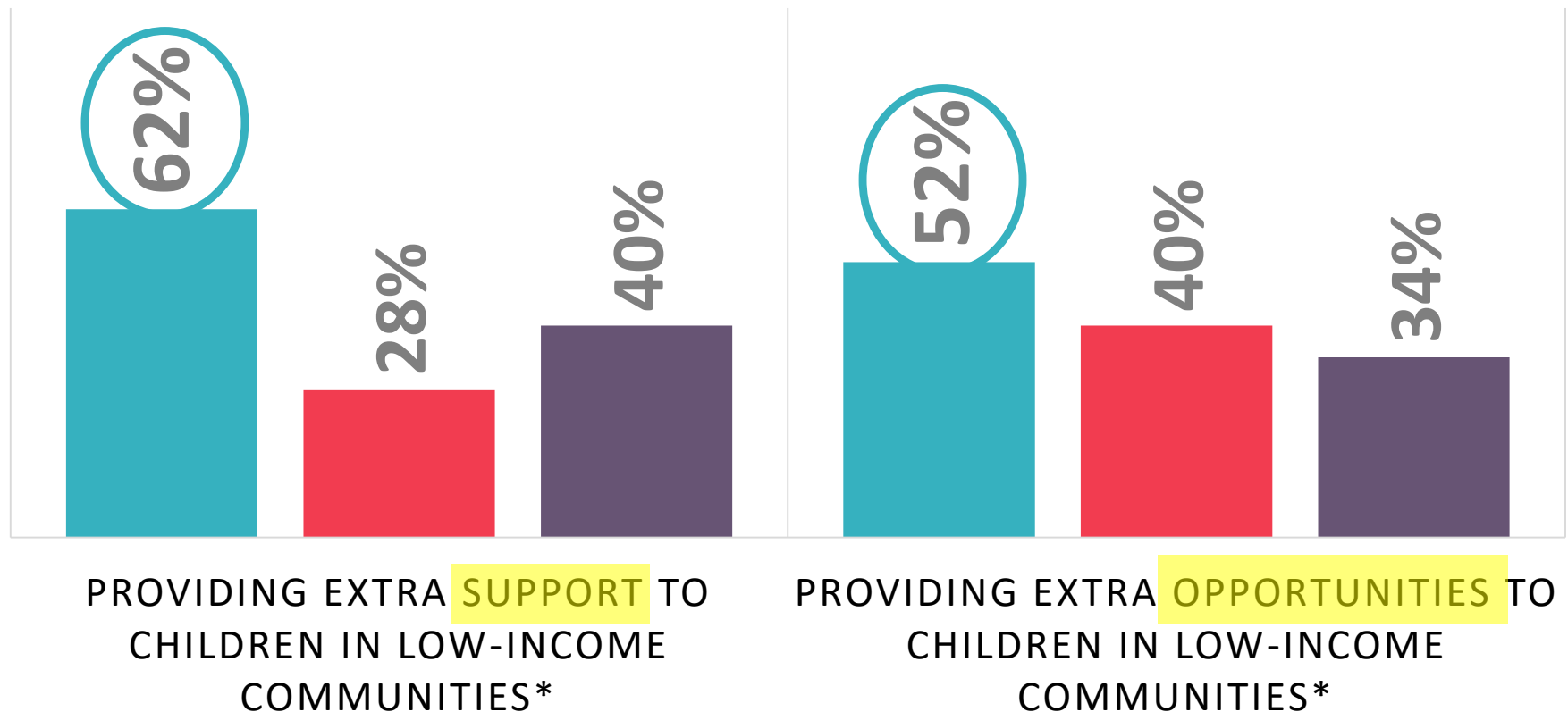
<b>% strongly agree</b>	<b>...provide <u>more opportunities for learning</u> for students in underserved communities*</b>	<b>...help <u>close the achievement gap</u> for students in underserved communities*</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Urban	40	27	<b>+13</b>
Democrat	37	35	+2
Republican	32	16	<b>+16</b>
Rural	29	23	+6
Independent	27	20	+7
Suburban	25	21	+4
Total	31	24	+7

\*Split Sampled

# Democrats more strongly value “support” when considering children in low-income communities.

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

■ Dem ■ Rep ■ Indpt



\*Split Sampled

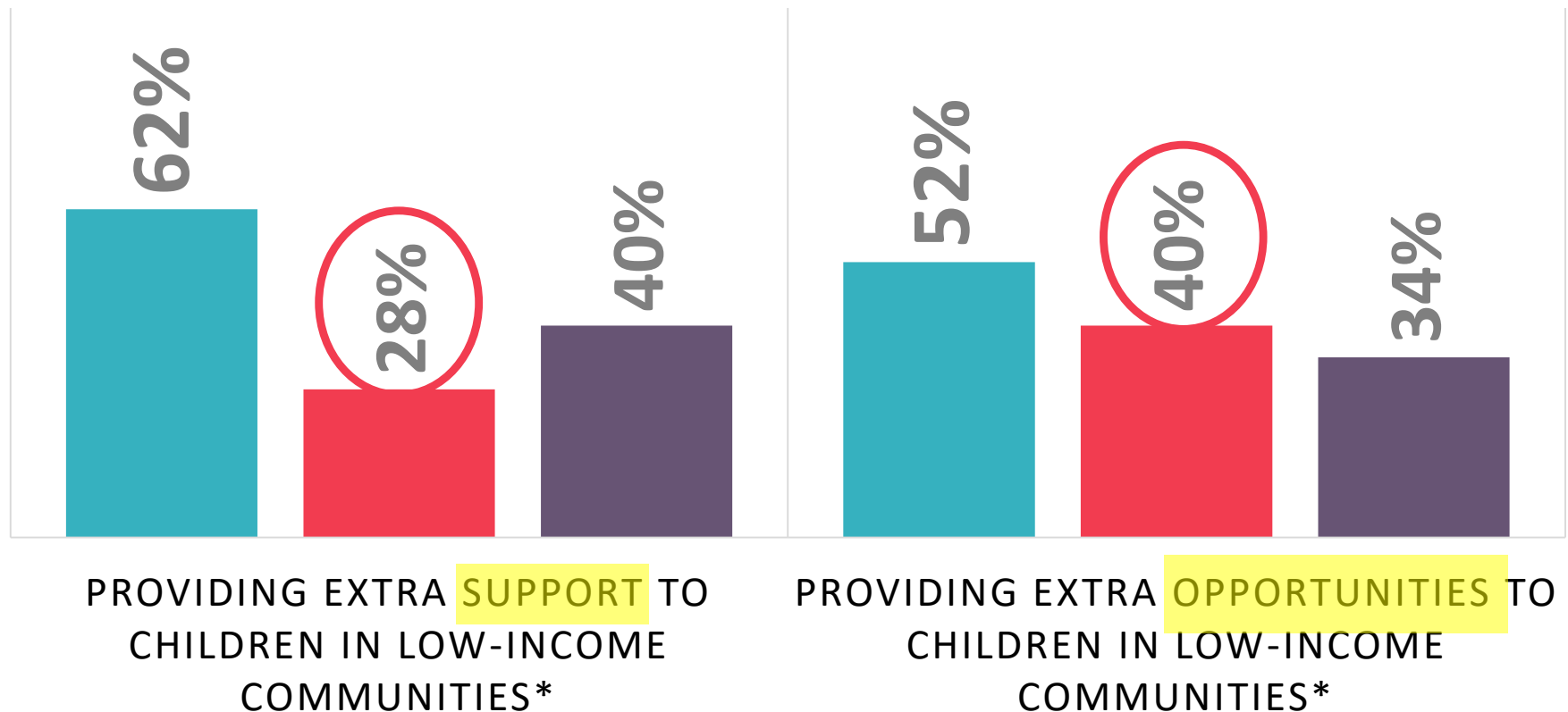
**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Very Important = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

# Republicans more strongly value “opportunities.” Support likely implies programs or something requiring funding for Republican adults.

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

■ Dem ■ Rep ■ Indpt



\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Very Important = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

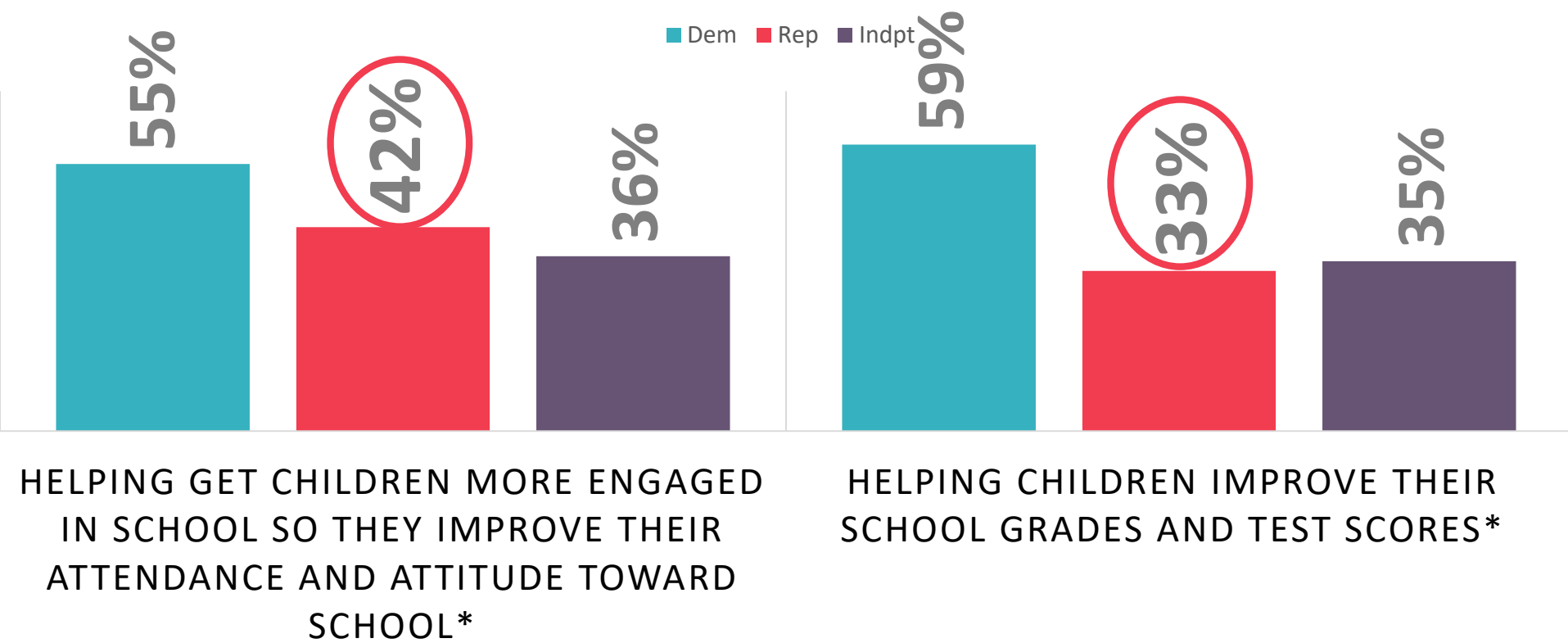
Asserting that afterschool is an **integral part of the learning process** resonates with Democrats.

<b>% strongly agree</b>	<b>Afterschool programs are an integral part of the learning process, helping students learn and grow through fun and new experiences*</b>	<b>Afterschool programs help students learn by complementing the school day, but not replicating the school day*</b>
Democrat	39	33
Urban	30	34
Suburban	26	22
Rural	23	27
Republican	21	27
Independent	20	21

\*Split Sampled

It is better to say afterschool programs **help children become more engaged in school** rather than to improve their school grades and test scores, **particularly among Republicans.**

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]



\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

% Very Important = Rate 10 on 0 to 10 scale

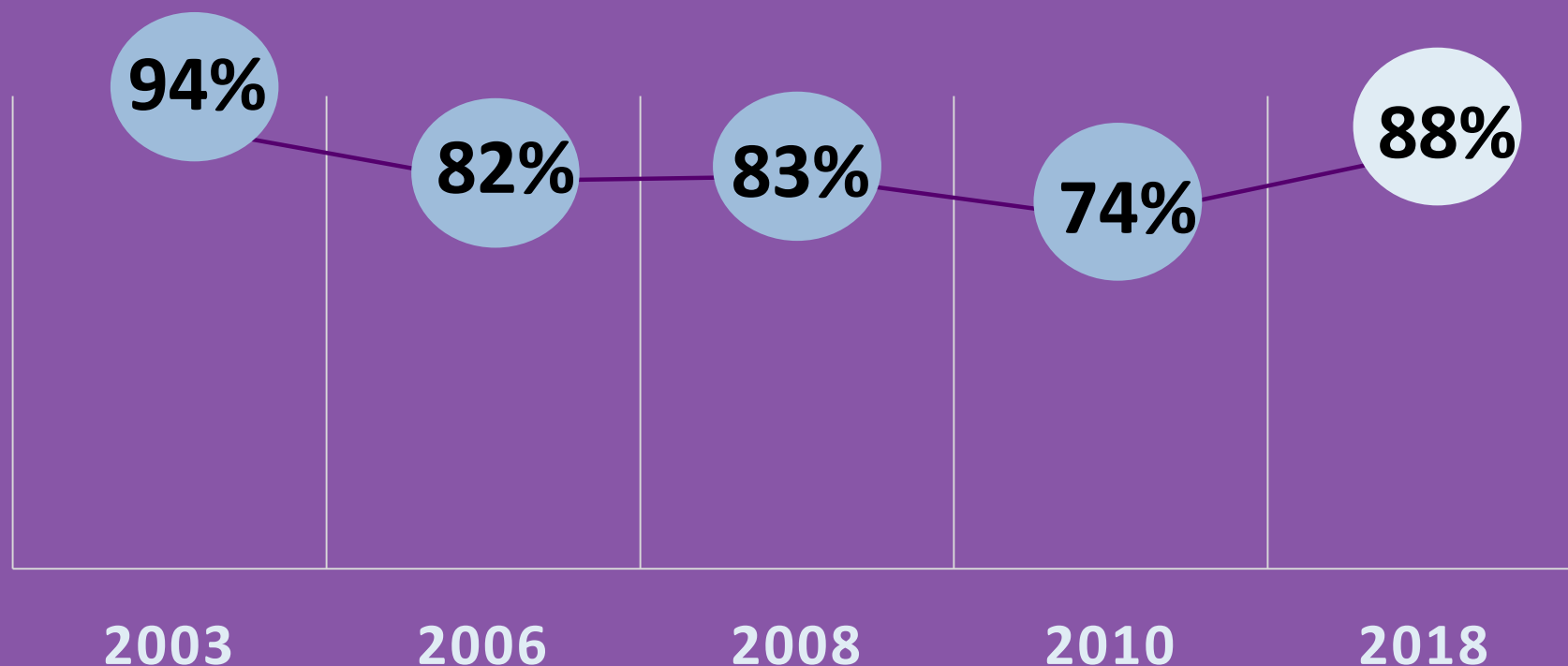
In our national poll, nearly 9 in 10 respondents agree that children should have opportunities outside of the school day to explore topics that interest them, try out new things, and gain skills like communication and teamwork.



88%

2018

Through the years, support has remained high for some type of **organized activity or safe place** for children and teens to go after school every day that provides **opportunities to learn**.





# Top 4 takeaways

Afterschool, and funding for afterschool, has strong support, but be cautious of K-12 education match ups.

Safety resonates.

Connect afterschool to learning, including building foundational skills and creating new opportunities.

Focus on aspirational, values driven language.



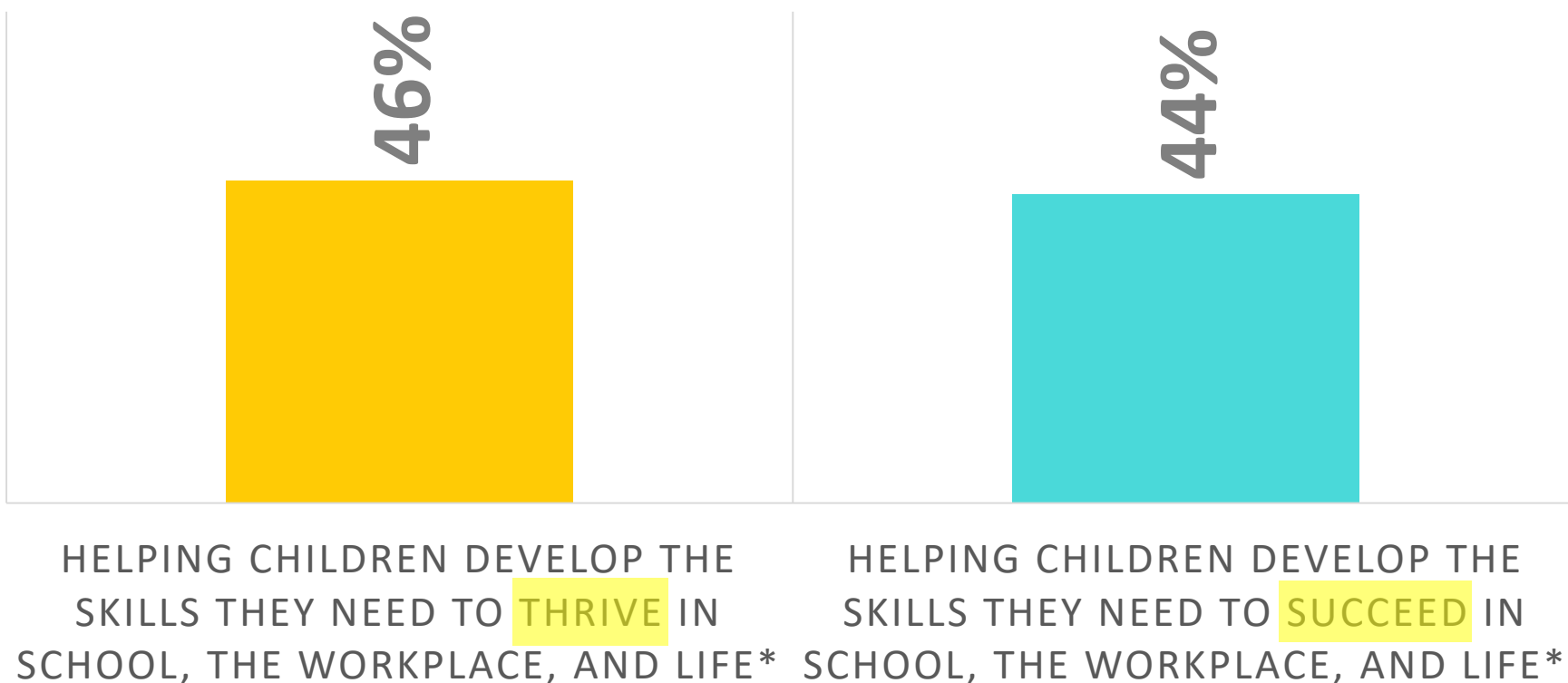
Helping children gain the skills and confidence to “reach their full potential” is a strong concept for Republicans and rural respondents, while also being important for Democrats. However, the goal of helping children “pursue their dreams” has strong importance particularly for Democrats.

% very important	Reach full potential*	Pursue dreams*
Democrat	51	60
Rural	48	38
Republican	48	29
Urban	45	46
Suburban	45	42
Independent	41	38

\*Split Sampled

Both “thrive” and “succeed” are strongly valued overall.

How important do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]



\*Split Sampled

**“Thrive”** is a stronger outcome for women, Republicans, and people in suburban and rural areas. **“Succeed”** is a stronger outcome for Democrats and people in urban areas.

% very important	Thrive	Succeed
Democrat	54	60
Republican	51	36
Women	48	43
Suburban	48	43
Rural	45	39
Urban	44	51
Men	44	47
Independent	37	38

\*Split Sampled

While not a true language test, **rural adults and Republicans are more likely to strongly agree that afterschool “inspires children”** compared to Democrats who are more likely to strongly agree that afterschool helps “spark interest” in learning.\*\*

% strongly agree	Afterschool programs <b>inspire children to learn</b> by giving children engaging hands-on and fun projects, opportunities to express themselves creatively, and connecting them with mentors*		Afterschool programs help <b>spark interest in learning</b> by giving children time to explore, express themselves, connect with mentors, and have fun*	
Democrat	33		40	
Urban	33		30	
Rural	32		25	
Republican	32		20	
Suburban	24		28	
Independent	24		24	

\*Split Sampled

**THE TARRANCE GROUP**

\*\*There are several variants to these statements, but the highlighted text is the predominant frame being tested.

Across the board, “**jobs of the future**” is a **stronger payoff** for afterschool programs helping young people gain foundational skills like teamwork and communication than “help them land their first job,” **in particular among urban communities and Republicans.**

<b>% strongly agree</b>	<b>...prepare them for the jobs of the future*</b>	<b>...help them land their first job*</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Democrat	41	35	+6
Urban	40	30	<b>+10</b>
Republican	35	20	<b>+15</b>
Rural	34	25	+9
Suburban	30	24	+6
Independent	28	24	+4
Total	34	26	+8

\*Split Sampled

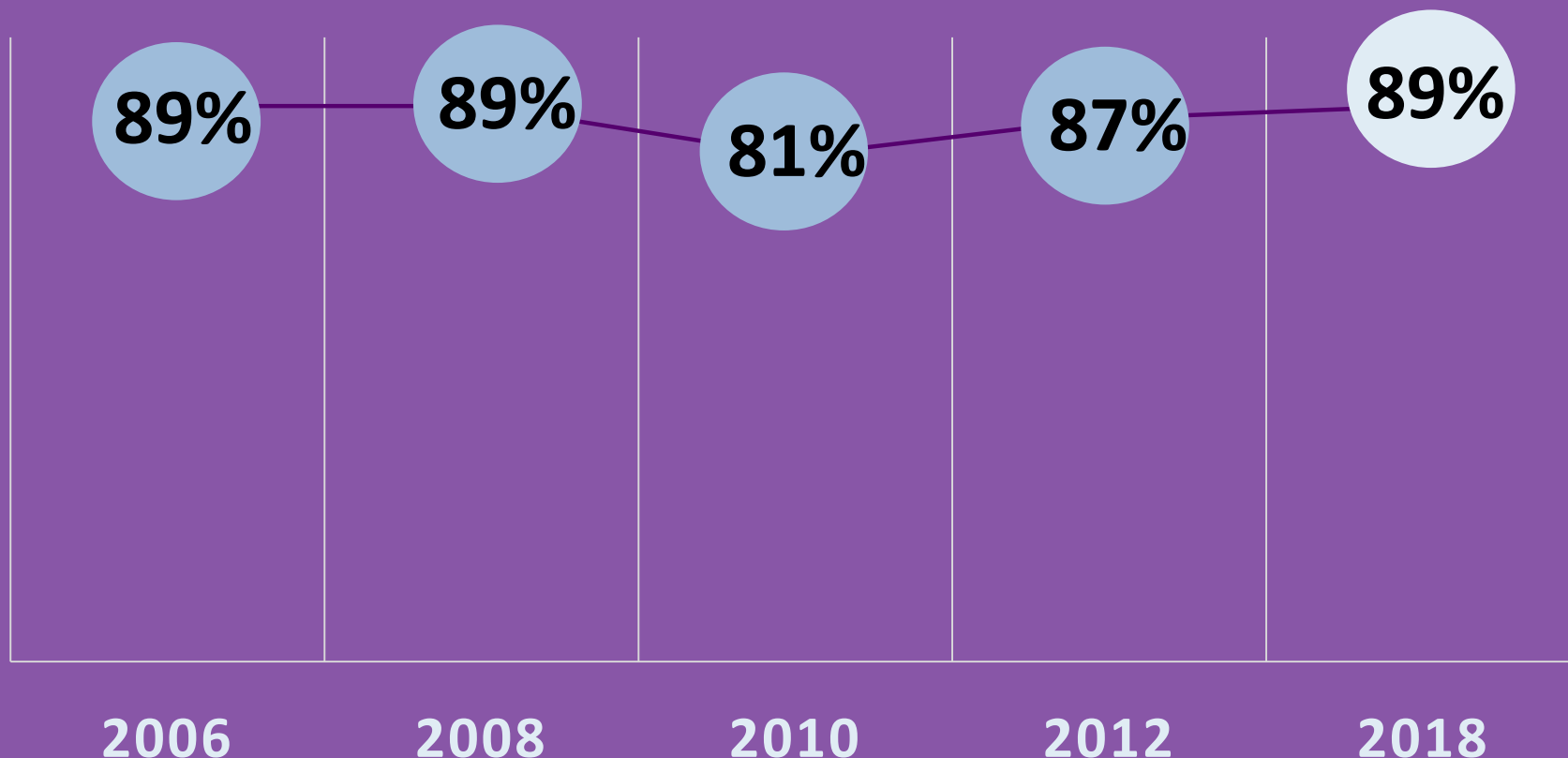
In our national poll, nearly 9 in 10 respondents say that afterschool programs are important to their community



89%

2018

Recognition of the importance of afterschool programs has been a continuing trend.





Say	Instead of	Notes
<u>Eliminate</u> funding	<u>Cut</u> funding	Generate greater concern & urgency around protecting valued programs.
Provide <u>working</u> parents peace of mind	Provide parents peace of mind	“Working parents” in a safety context provides helpful context for supervision benefits.
Develop the skills they need to <u>thrive</u>	Develop the skills they need to <u>succeed</u>	More aspirational language with a broader range of positive outcomes.
Reach full potential	Pursue dreams	Both values driven & stronger than “succeed.” Potential better suited in academic context.
More opportunities for learning	Close the achievement gap	Increasing more of something good is better than reducing something bad. “Gap” language allows people to fill in causality on their own.
Jobs of tomorrow/the future	Land that first job	Stronger values orientation for a key outcome.
Teach children foundational skills...	Through [activity] help children learn [skill]	Try to assert the positive benefits without bridging or hedging language.