

Enforcement Working Group

Analysis of Findings from Focus Groups and a Nationwide Survey of Likely Voters

Celinda Lake, Daniel Gotoff, and Eric Schoenfield

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

LakeResearch.com

202.776.9066

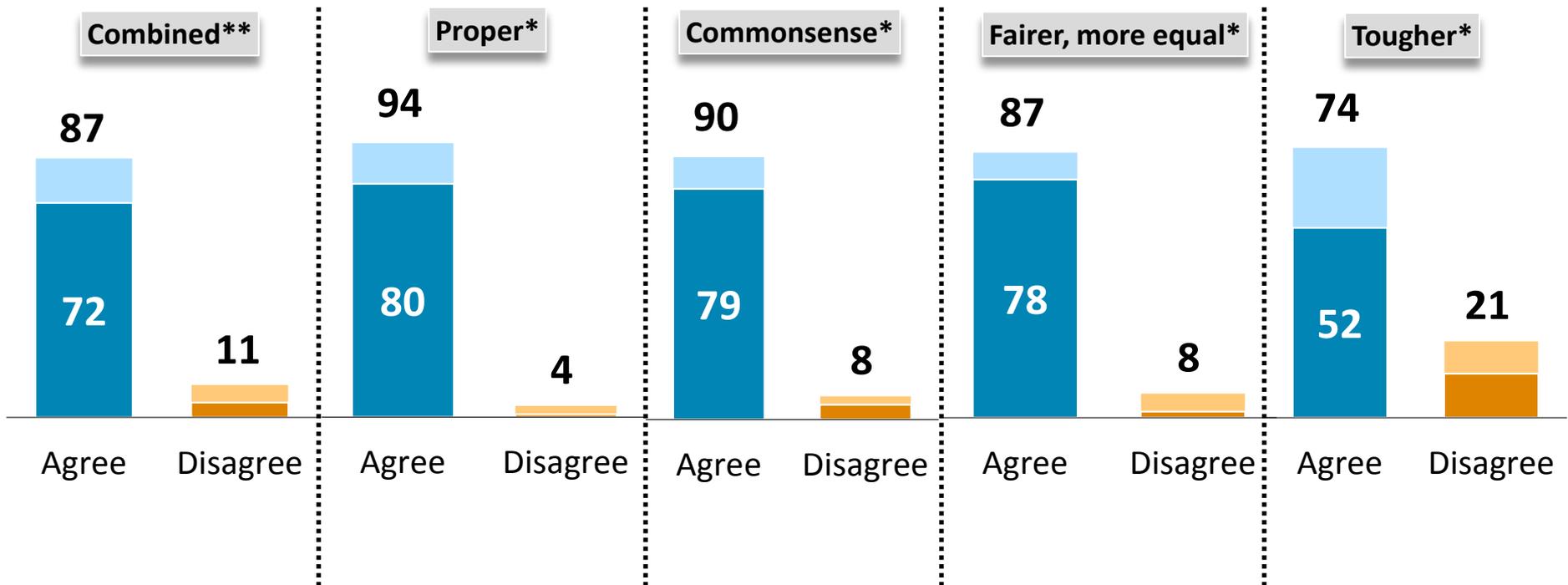


Strategic Summary: Framework for Increased Enforcement

- **With near unanimity, voters believe there should be increased enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S.** Voters respond positively whether increased enforcement is defined as “commonsense”, “fairer, more equal”, “proper”, or “tougher”. Across these various semantic permutations, fully 74%-94% of voters agree that we need increased enforcement of laws and regulations. However, differences in the intensity appear across the partisan spectrum depending on how increased enforcement is described.
 - The “tougher” iteration of increased enforcement of our laws and regulations draws less intense support, relatively speaking, than the other qualifiers.
 - The strongest language with survey independent voters is “fairer, more equal” (87% strongly agree) and “proper” (73% strongly agree).
 - Voters of all partisan stripes agree: 89% of Democrats, 85% of Republicans, and 87% of independents.
 - There is little regional variation with voters across the county agreeing that we need increased enforcement: 86% in Northeast, 88% in Midwest, 88% in South and 84% in the Western United States.
 - Strong supporters of increased enforcement include: voters ages 50-64, strong Democrats, African Americans, Hispanics, men (over 50, Democratic, married, college educated, living in either the Midwest or South), and blue collar women.
 - Weak supporters include: voters under age 40, independents (particularly women), weak Democrats, weak Republicans, and college educated women.
- More than seven-in-ten voters believe that increased enforcement of the nation’s or state’s laws and regulations is a good thing.
 - There is some regional variation, **but a strong majority of all regions believe that increased enforcement is a good thing** (76% in South, 72% in Midwest, 66% in West and 63% in Northeast).
 - **While Republicans (63% good thing) are less enthralled with increased enforcement** than Democrats (79%), or independents (73%), a solid majority of them believe that increased enforcement is a good thing.
- Focus group participants offered a range of descriptors they would use to qualify the kind of enforcement they would like to see, including “better”, “proper”, “equal”, “universal”, “essential”, and “judicious”.

Voters express near-unanimous support for increased enforcement of laws and regulations, and respond with similarly impressive levels of backing whether increased enforcement is described as “commonsense”, “fairer, more equal”, “proper”, or “tougher”. Intensity however is lower for toughness. The last of these is the weakest formulation, in relative terms, and still draws the support of three-quarters of voters, including a majority who support it strongly.

Enforcement of our Laws and Regulations

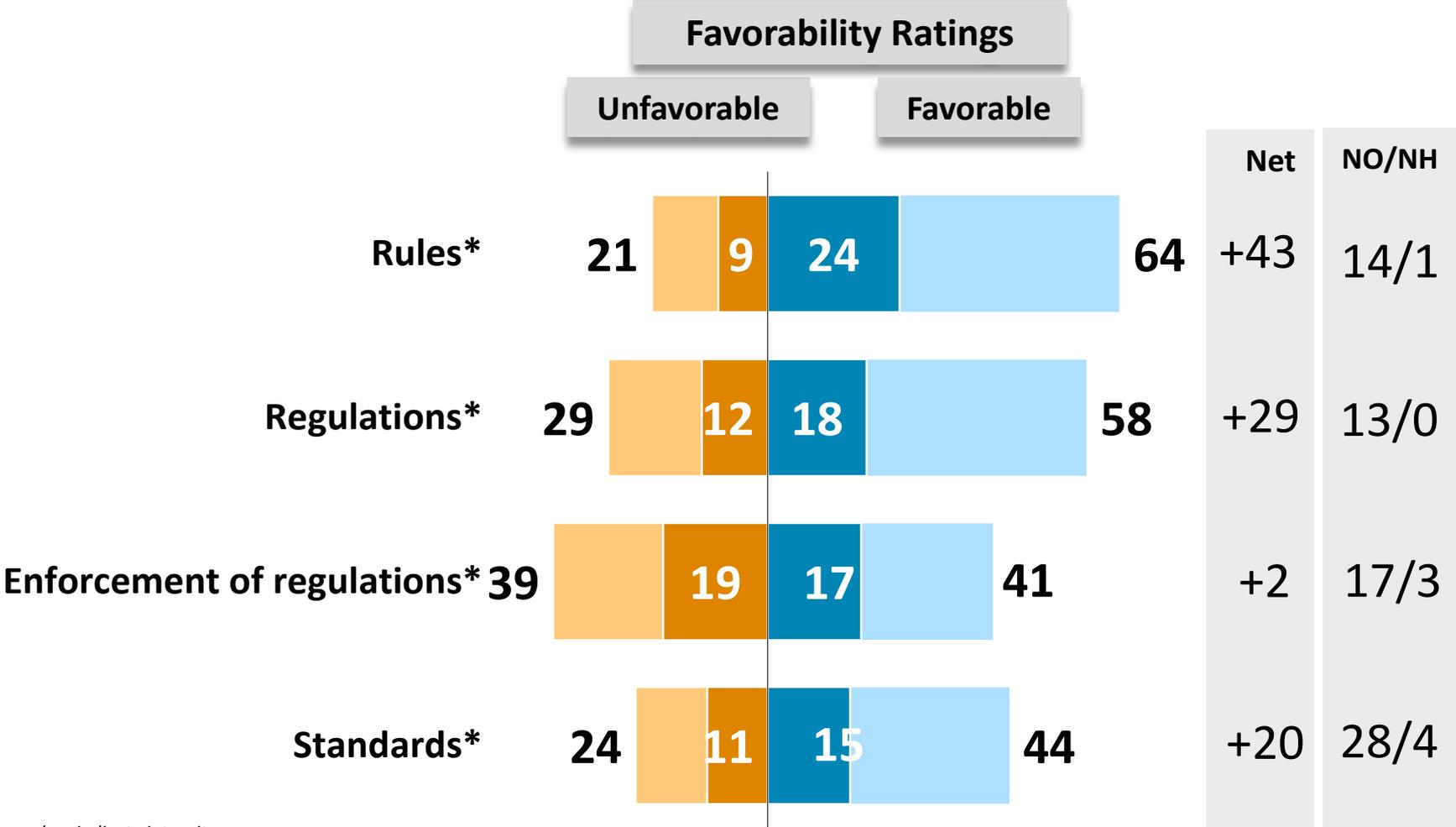


Darker colors indicate intensity.

*Asked to ¼ of sample

**Combined results from Q23-26

“Rules” proves to be stronger language than “regulations” or “standards”. Voters are far less favorable toward the “enforcement of regulations” than to the term, “regulations”, on its own. However, as this data reveals, this discrepancy stems from the public’s dissatisfaction with the ways in which regulations are enforced (or not enforced, to be more precise), rather than any concerted opposition to the notion of enforcement in general.



Darker colors indicate intensity
 *Asked to ½ of the respondents

Q14-17: Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures or institutions. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of the person, or if you don't know enough about that person to have an impression, just say so and we will move on.

In explaining their misgivings about enforcement, participants described an elasticity to the rules that only applies to those in power. This discussion tapped into a larger debate over economic inequality and a well-connected elite reaping the benefits of others' hard work.

"Well, I mean this is probably not PC, but like my husband sometimes they, you know, you see them go by and police will stop somebody and sometimes he'll go; oh, they got caught driving black, you know, that kind of thing." – Swing white woman



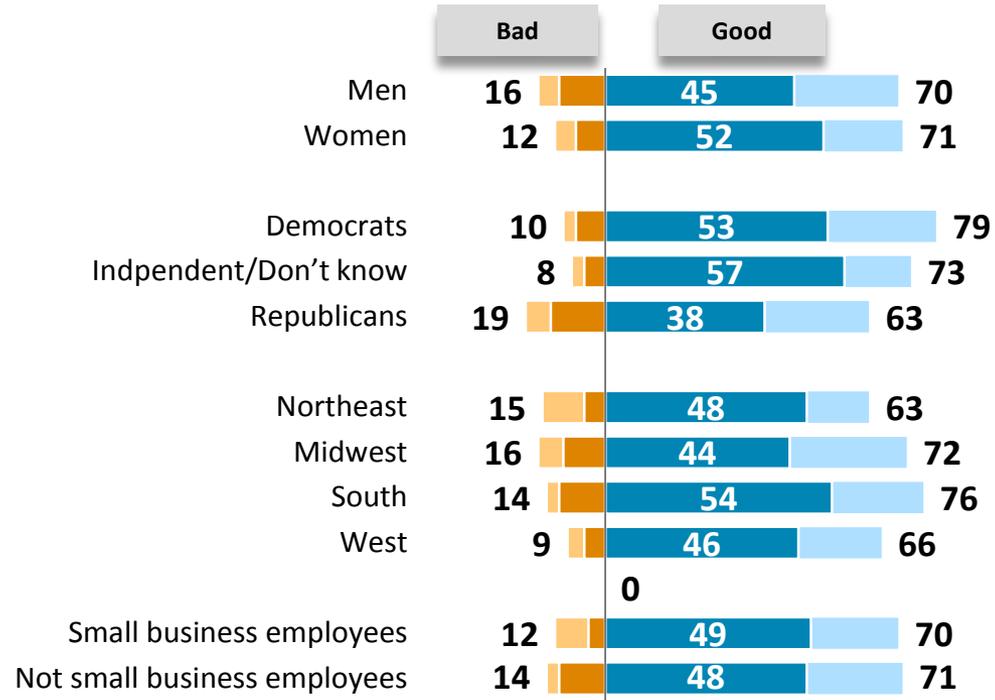
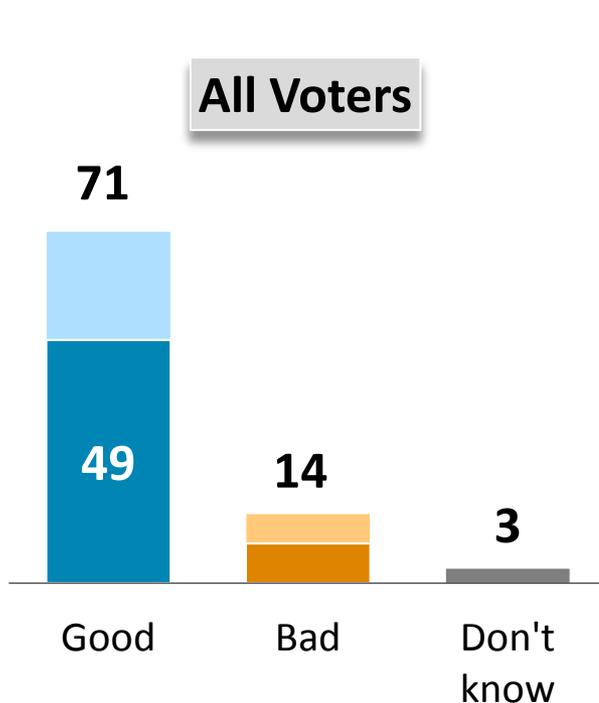
"I mean I was kind of like talking earlier about the haves and have-nots. It's like you know if your company's rich enough you can pollute anything you want as long as you pay the fine you know. So and that's ludicrous." – Swing white man

"Laws, favoritism, crime, lawmakers, that's about it... Just letting some get away with things that others would never be able to get away with." – Swing white woman



Seven-in-ten voters, including commanding majorities of every major subgroup, believe that increased enforcement of the nation's laws and regulations is a good thing.

Perception of Increased Enforcement of National Laws and Regulations*



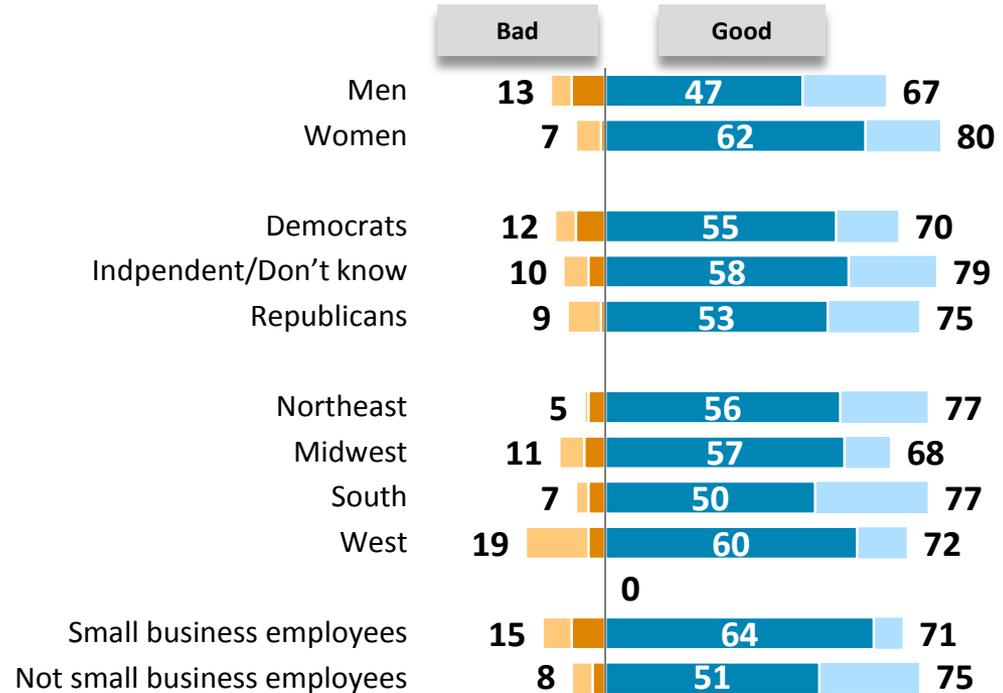
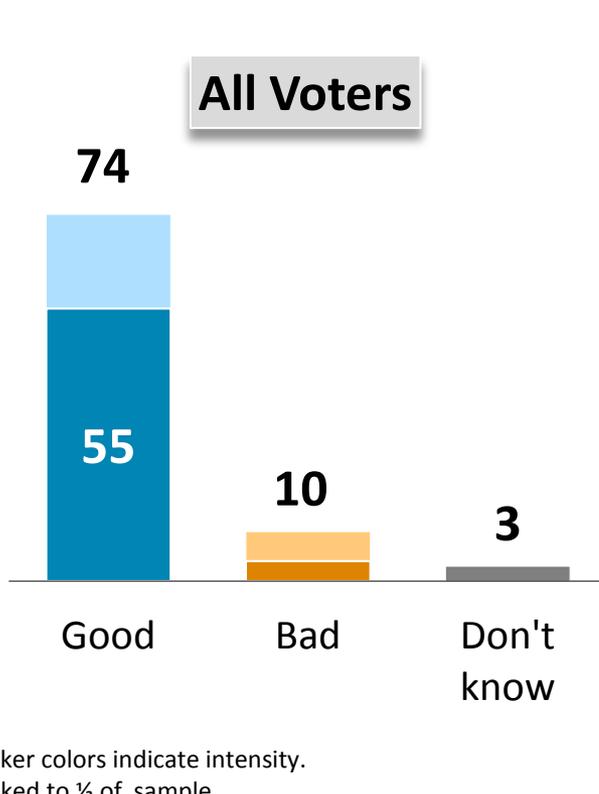
Darker colors indicate intensity.

*Asked to 1/2 of sample

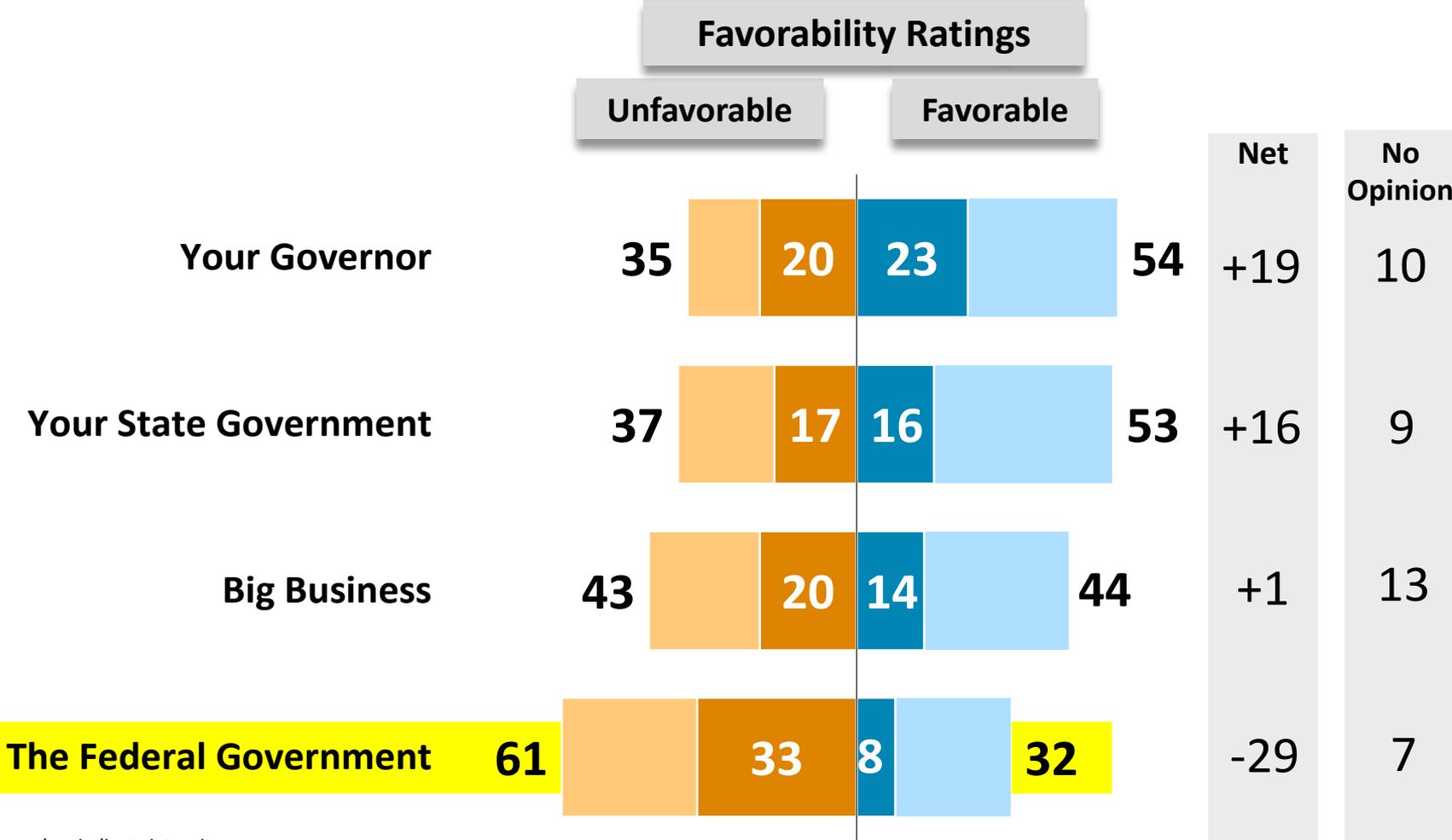
Q27. Generally speaking, do you think that increased enforcement of our national laws and regulations is a good thing or a bad thing? [IF GOOD/BAD] And do you feel that way strongly, or not-so strongly?

Similarly, nearly three-quarters of voters believe that increased enforcement of state laws and regulations is a good thing, including a solid majority of voters who feel that way strongly. While the differences are relatively minor, independents are slightly more supportive of increased enforcement of state laws than Democrats or Republicans; the same is true for women vis-à-vis men.

Perception of Increased Enforcement of State Laws and Regulations*



Voters are fairly positive toward their governors and their state governments—far more so than toward the federal government. Big business draws a mixed rating, but the level of negative intensity is noteworthy.



Darker colors indicate intensity

Q3-6: Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures or institutions. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of the person, or if you don't know enough about that person to have an impression, just say so and we will move on.

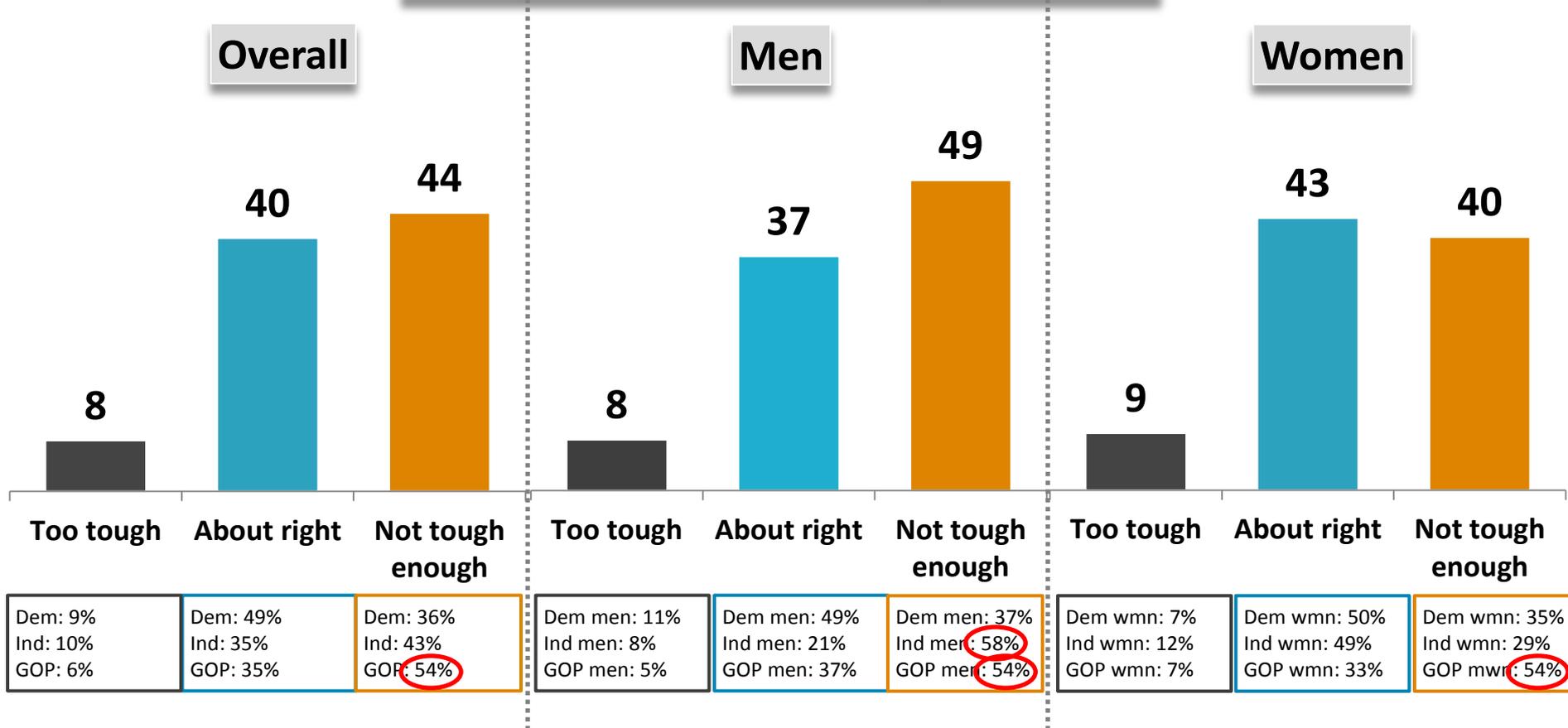
Nearly half of all voters believe that the nation's laws and regulations are not tough enough, with Republicans, men and independent voters the most adamant in their opinion that enforcement needs to be tougher. Perceptions are undoubtedly influenced by those currently in power.

Toughness of Laws and Regulations*

Overall

Men

Women



*Asked to 1/2 of sample

Q21: In your opinion, do you think that enforcement of our laws and regulations in the U.S. is too tough, not tough enough, or about right?

Strategic Summary: Framework for Increased Enforcement (cont.)

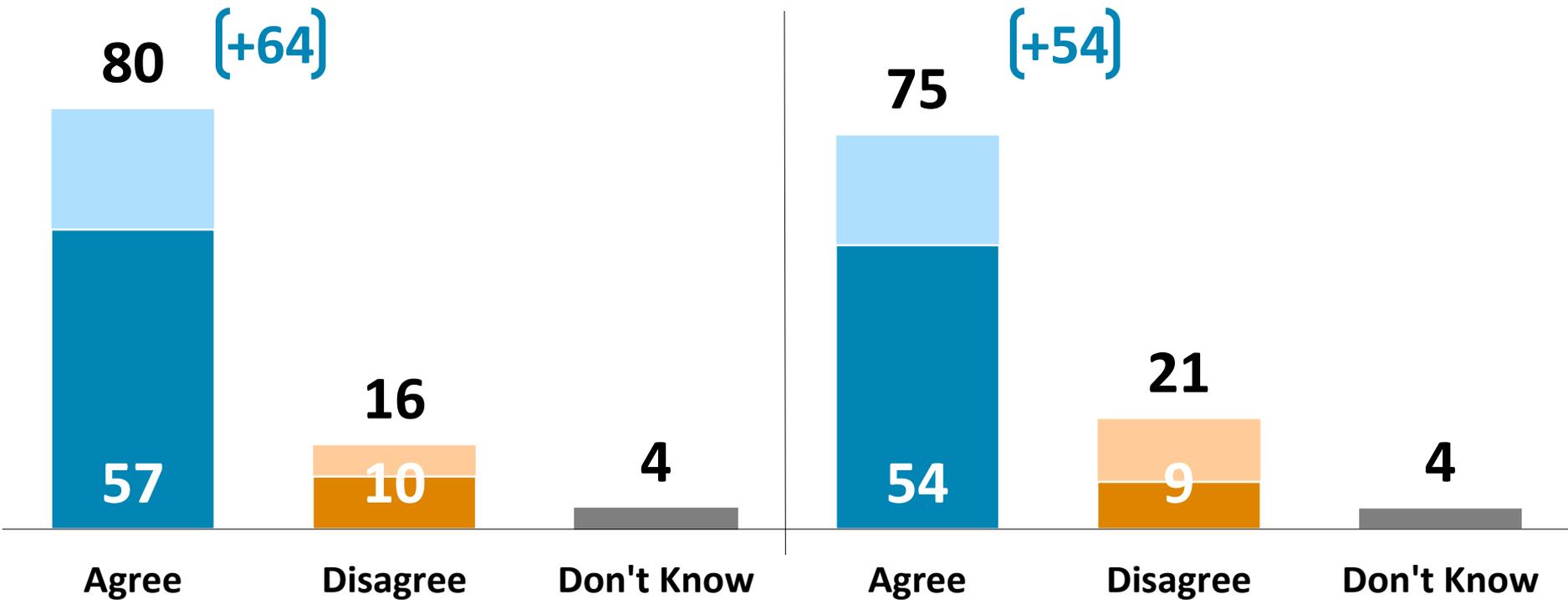
- **Engaging the debate over this issue does little to diminish support for greater enforcement**, even when attacks on increased enforcement characterize it as a costly, big government job-killer.
 - After voters hear arguments for and against, fully 77% agree we need tougher enforcement (including 56% who feel that way strongly). Just 18% of voters disagree.
 - Support holds up whether the argument for increased enforcement is framed in populist economic terms or in more traditional terms, emphasizing themes of protection from harm. The former is slightly more powerful, and brings the debate into a more current milieu. Among survey independents the protection/prevention frame generates more intensity (61% to 49%) though they respond similarly overall to both.
 - Younger women, Republicans, college educated women, African Americans and voters in the Midwest were more likely to support the populist version of the argument for increased enforcement, while older women, non-college women and younger men support the more traditional framework that emphasizes themes of protection and harm prevention.
- **A plurality of voters believes that our laws and regulations fail more than they succeed.** They are concerned that **enforcement is unequally—and unfairly—applied**, that it **hurts small businesses, cost jobs** and that it is **costly** and **ineffective**.
 - Slim majorities of Republicans (54%) and independents (52%) believe that our laws fail more than they succeed.
 - Older women, white women, non-college educated women, and independents—i.e. the chief persuasion targets for political campaigns across the country this fall—are among the most likely to fault enforcement for being unequally and unfairly applied.
- A few participants in the focus groups were concerned by the specter of giving the government too much control. Many of the them were slightly more receptive toward the populist framing of the argument for increased enforcement, situating this issue within the broader—and ongoing—debate over the growing lack of fair play in American life, which lends to arguments for increased enforcement additional power and currency. However, participants responded positively to components of a more traditional prevention frame as well.

Engaging a debate over this issue does little to diminish support for greater enforcement, even when attacks on increased enforcement characterize it as a costly, big government job-killer. A populist economic framework for the argument in favor of increased enforcement performs slightly better than a more traditional approach that frames the need for increased enforcement along the thematic lines of protection and preventing harm.

Simulation of Engaged Debate

Populist/Fair, Just Application

Protection/Prevention



Q73/Q74 Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: we need tougher enforcement of our laws and regulations in the U.S.?

Text of Engaged Debate Messages

PRO MESSAGE: POPULIST/FAIR, JUST APPLICATION (80% Agree, 16% Disagree, 4% Don't Know)

(Some people say/Other people say) proper enforcement of our laws and regulations can ensure that everyone plays by the same set of rules. Today, the system is too often rigged to favor the wealthy and powerful over ordinary Americans, or big corporations over small businesses. That's an argument for better enforcement. Whether prohibiting big banks from destroying our economy, stopping the credit card industry from charging hidden fees, or preventing the wealthiest 1% from hiding billions of tax dollars in offshore tax havens—we need stronger, more just enforcement of our laws and regulations to ensure that everyone has a fair shot.

PRO MESSAGE: PROTECTION/PREVENTION (75% Agree, 21% Disagree, 4% Don't Know)

Some people say/Other people say) enforcement of our laws and regulations is about safeguarding Americans. And when done properly, enforcement can prevent economic catastrophe, protect our health, and save lives. Whether it's preventing dangerous foreign imports and food products—affected by e.Coli and salmonella poisoning—from coming to U.S. markets. Preventing dangerous pollutants from contaminating our land, air and drinking water. Or ensuring nuclear and toxic waste facilities safely contain their content. Proper enforcement of our laws helps keep Americans and our communities safer from physical and economic harm.

OPPONENTS' MESSAGE

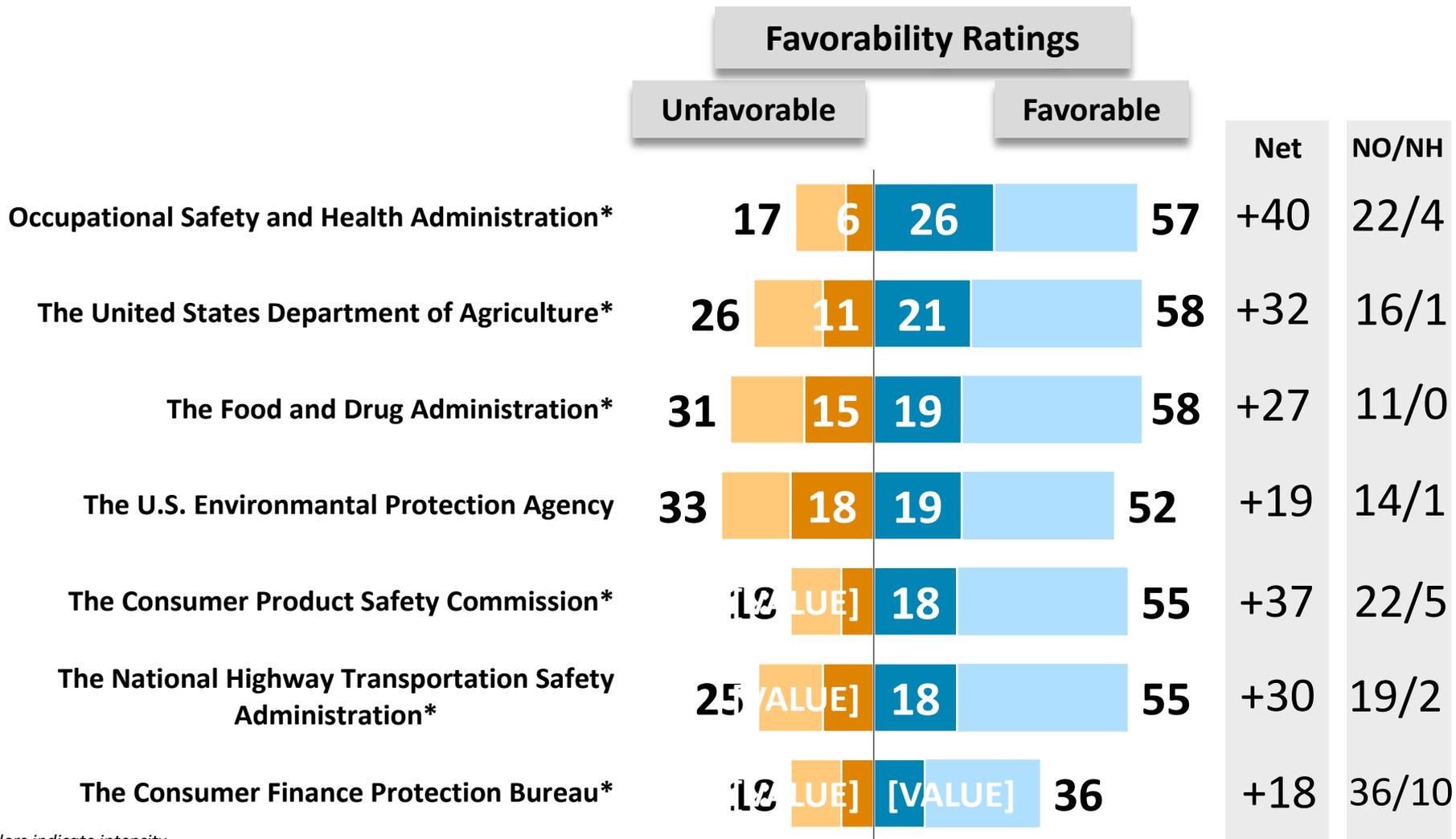
(Some people say/Other people say) protecting consumers is important but government regulation has gone too far, so that some politicians seem to think government is the answer to every problem. Increased regulation, bureaucratic red tape, mandates, and uneven enforcement hold back economic growth and destroy jobs. America was built on the free market and free enterprise. Forcing entrepreneurs, small business owners, and citizens to submit to arbitrary government regulations puts all the power in the hands of out-of-touch bureaucrats. It raises the costs of goods and services at a time when we can't afford higher prices.

Q74/Q75.Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: we need tougher enforcement of our laws and regulations in the U.S.?

Strategic Summary: Framework for Increased Enforcement (cont.)

- Contrary to conventional wisdom, perceptions of the regulatory agencies tested in this study are by-and-large positive, with majorities of voters expressing favorable opinions of the **FDA**, the **USDA**, **OSHA**, the **NHTSA**, the **Consumer Product Safety Commission**, and even the much-maligned **EPA** enjoys majority positive ratings from voters. As important, no more than one-third of voters has an unfavorable opinion of any of these agencies. These findings may stun a good number of opinion-makers, who believe that the criticism of these agencies has permeated the public conscience.
 - A plurality of voters lacks an opinion of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, though positive attitudes outweigh negative attitudes by two-to-one among those voters who have an impression (36% favorable, 18% unfavorable).
 - The **EPA however does have more detractors than many of the other agencies**. Republicans, white men, college educated men, and voters living in the South are more likely to find the EPA more of a hindrance than a help. By contrast, voters in the West and Northeast, Democrats, African Americans, and white women are supportive of the EPA's work.
- Though there are positive ratings of the enforcement agencies and the fact that two-thirds of voters believe the enforcement of laws in the U.S. generally works well, voters nevertheless see plenty of room for improvement. **A slim majority believes there is too little enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S.**, compared to just a third who believe there is too much enforcement. This turns conventional wisdom on its head.
 - Women, Democrats, **independents**, voters residing in the Midwest and South, and non-small business employees feel there is too little enforcement of our law and regulations.
 - Republicans are split on this measure, as are voters in the western U.S.

Voters' perceptions of specific government regulatory agencies are by-and-large positive, with majorities of voters—including majorities of Republicans—expressing favorable opinions of the FDA, the USDA, OSHA, the NHTSA, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Even the much-maligned EPA enjoys positive ratings from a 52% majority of voters. A plurality of voters lacks an opinion of the CFPB, though positive attitudes outweigh negative attitudes by two-to-one among voters who have an impression.



Darker colors indicate intensity

*Asked to ½ of sample

Q7-13: Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures or institutions. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of the person, or if you don't know enough about that person to have an impression, just say so and we will move on.

In the focus groups, participants discussed the positive aspects of various federal agencies, including the FDA and the EPA, as well as the need for these agencies to perform their functions properly. Protection from abuse was a central theme, as was the importance of rules in ensuring fair play and fair treatment.

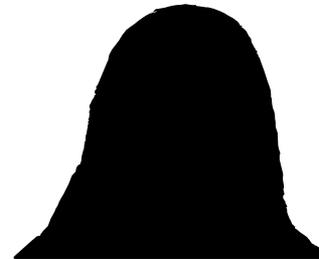


“And through lending, I think is an area where you know the government actually stepped in and said no, you can’t do this anymore. You’re taking advantage of people and you know you can’t charge 9 or 10% interest and then also charge somebody you know \$20,000 on top of that. You know there’s got to be somebody that says you know these are the rules and regulations; what you can’t charge and what you...you know and so forth.” -- Swing white man

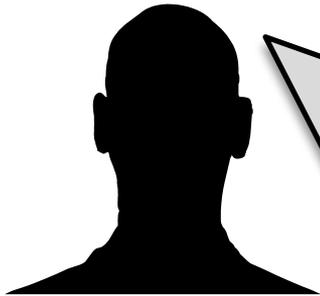


“Because the Food and Drug Administration I think we take it for granted that you go and buy you, you know, your ground beef and it’s going to be safe, it isn’t always, but I think, you know...big picture for the most part, we assume that it is.” – Swing white woman

“It’s at the EPA with regulations for manufacturing and, you know, dumping hazardous materials and chemicals.” – Swing white woman



At the same time, participants voiced skepticism about the enforcement of rules and regulations. They thought that new laws were added arbitrarily or worse—to allow those in power to pervert the rules to their own benefit.



“Well it’s taking...it’s over-enforcement. I mean it’s you know take a little snippet or adding what they needed to and just you know overextend what is actually afforded them. So they’re just sort of playing with the rules ‘cause they’re in power.” -- Swing white man



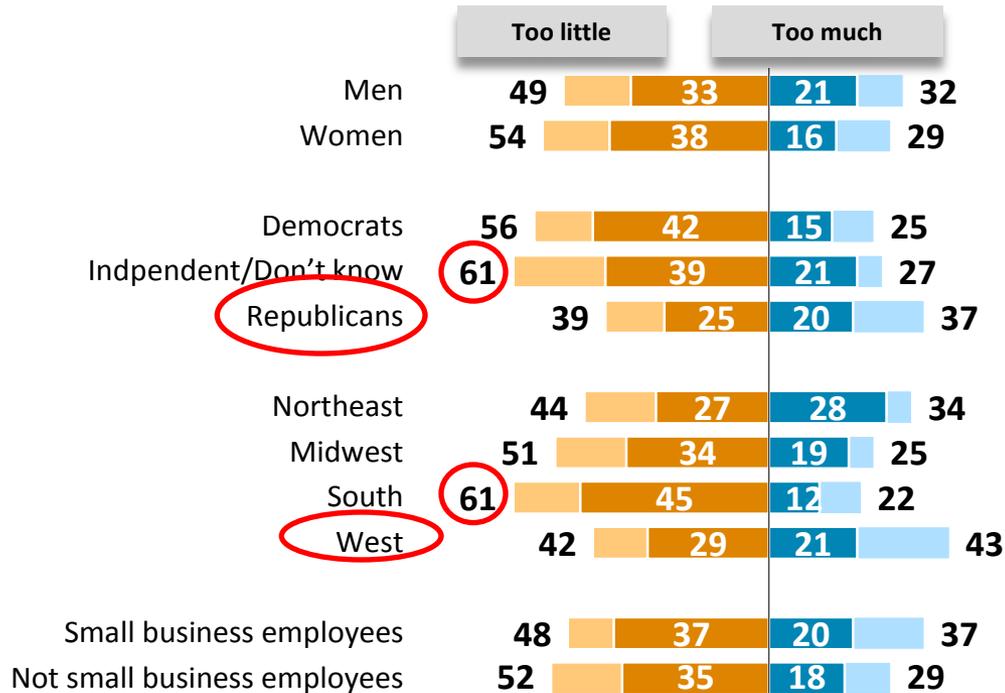
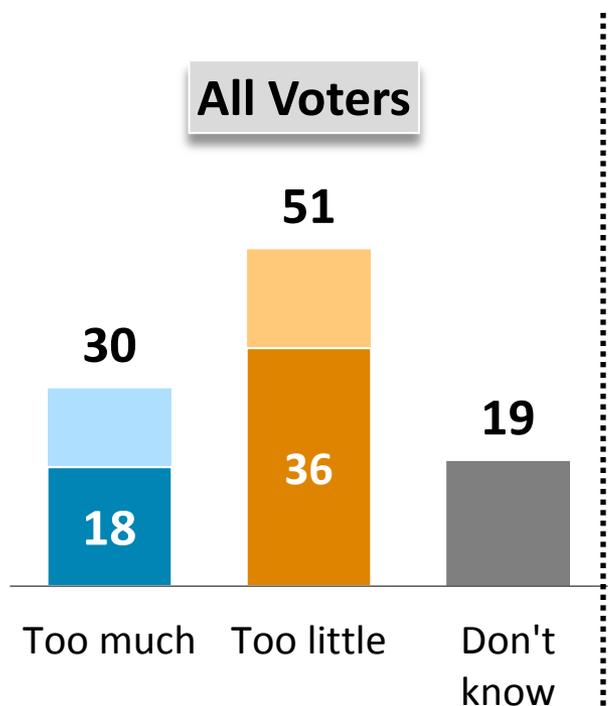
“Again it goes back to perception. You know it’s you’re giving these people the opportunity to enforce the rules and regulations and they perceive it one way and the next person perceives it the other way and before you get people that are going through the TSA lines with no problems; you get the other ones that are getting held up and strip-searched and everything else.” – Swing white man



“...something is right back to us because we put the same people in government and elect them time after time and they’re just passing laws but not enforcing them; just passing another law on top of another law.” – Swing white woman

Despite conventional wisdom, a majority of voters is concerned that there is too little enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S., with independents, voters in the South, Democrats, and women the most ardent in this belief. Republicans and voters in the West are slightly more likely to worry that there is too much enforcement, but even these groups are divided.

General Concerns About our Laws and Regulations*



Darker colors indicate intensity.

*Asked to 1/2 of sample

Q19. And which of the following concerns you more: Too much enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S. or Too little enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S.

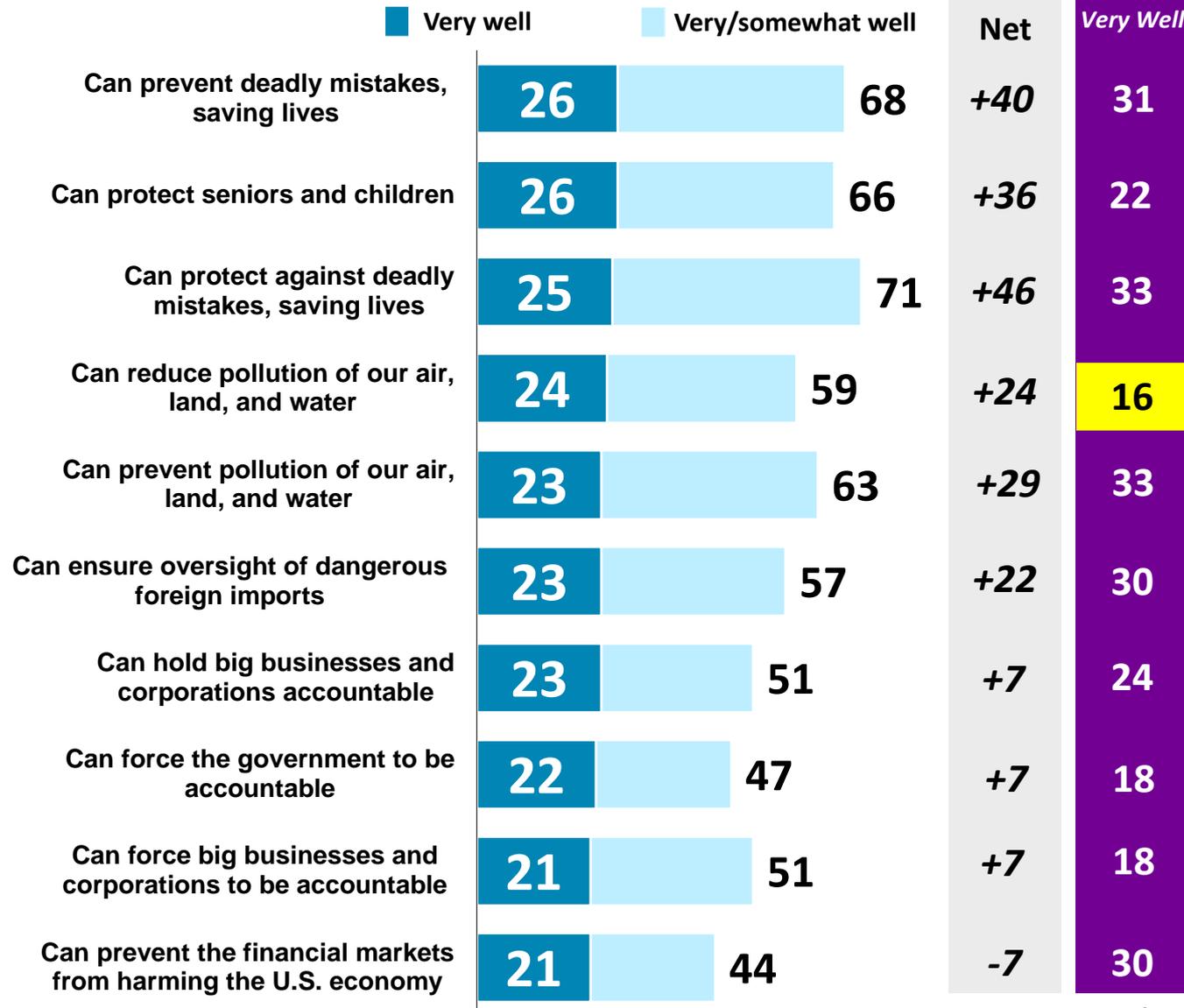
Strategic Summary: Positive and Negative Associations with Enforcement

- Voters believe that enforcement of laws and regulations can be most effective when it comes to **“protecting seniors and children”, “preventing deadly mistakes”, “reducing pollution”, and “holding big business accountable”**.
 - **Older voters** tend to see enforcement as a way to prevent pollution and ensure oversight of dangerous foreign imports.
 - **Younger voters** see it as a way to protect the most vulnerable (i.e. seniors and children).
 - **Democrats** and **blue collar voters** tend to see enforcement as a means of keeping big business in check.
 - Independents and older men believe that enforcement can promote government accountability, but other groups are more doubtful of enforcement’s utility on that particular front.
 - Voters are more skeptical that enforcement can hold big business accountable, force the government or businesses to be accountable, or prevent the financial markets from harming the economy.
- Voters are **less certain** of enforcement’s effectiveness when it comes to **helping small businesses, protecting** (voters see a greater role for enforcement in preventing harm from the markets) **the economy from the ravages of the financial markets, and making life better for people of color**.
 - Interestingly, voters in the Northeast—the “home” of the financial industry—are one the few groups who believe that enforcement can help prevent harm from the financial markets.
- Participants in the focus groups saw an important role for enforcement when it came to protecting Americans from **physical harm**—including dangerous pollution and unsafe foods—as well as **economic harm**, in particular unscrupulous loans that force young people into a lifetime of debt.
- Voters feel the economic arena is potentially an area where enforcement did not work and often repeated in the focus groups – why wasn’t that illegal?

Regulation – Positive Descriptions (Top Tier)

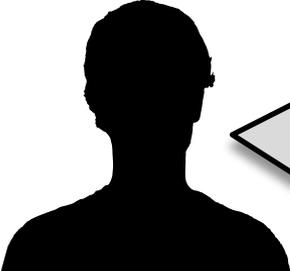
Voters believe that enforcement of laws and regulations can be most effective when it comes to protecting seniors and children, and preventing deadly mistakes, reducing pollution.

Voters are more skeptical that enforcement can hold big business accountable, force the government or businesses to be accountable or prevent the financial markets from harming the economy.



Q29-48. Now, I am going to read you some words and phrases that have been used to describe the enforcement of laws and regulations. Please tell me how well you think each describes the enforcement of laws and regulations: VERY well, PRETTY well, NOT too well, or not well AT ALL. If you don't know how well a word or phrase describes the enforcement of laws and regulations, just say so and we'll go on.

Participants in the focus groups saw an important role for enforcement when it came to protecting Americans from physical harm—including dangerous pollution and unsafe foods—as well as economic harm, in particular unscrupulous loans that force young people into a lifetime of debt.



“It’s a safety factor, too, so I mean there’s rules and regulations that are put into place to make sure that we’re safe; or we should be safe.” – Swing white man



“Well because if you have industry just polluting however they want you know, no enforcement of any law there, you know that’s a big problem. And I still don’t think enough is being done so.” – Swing white man

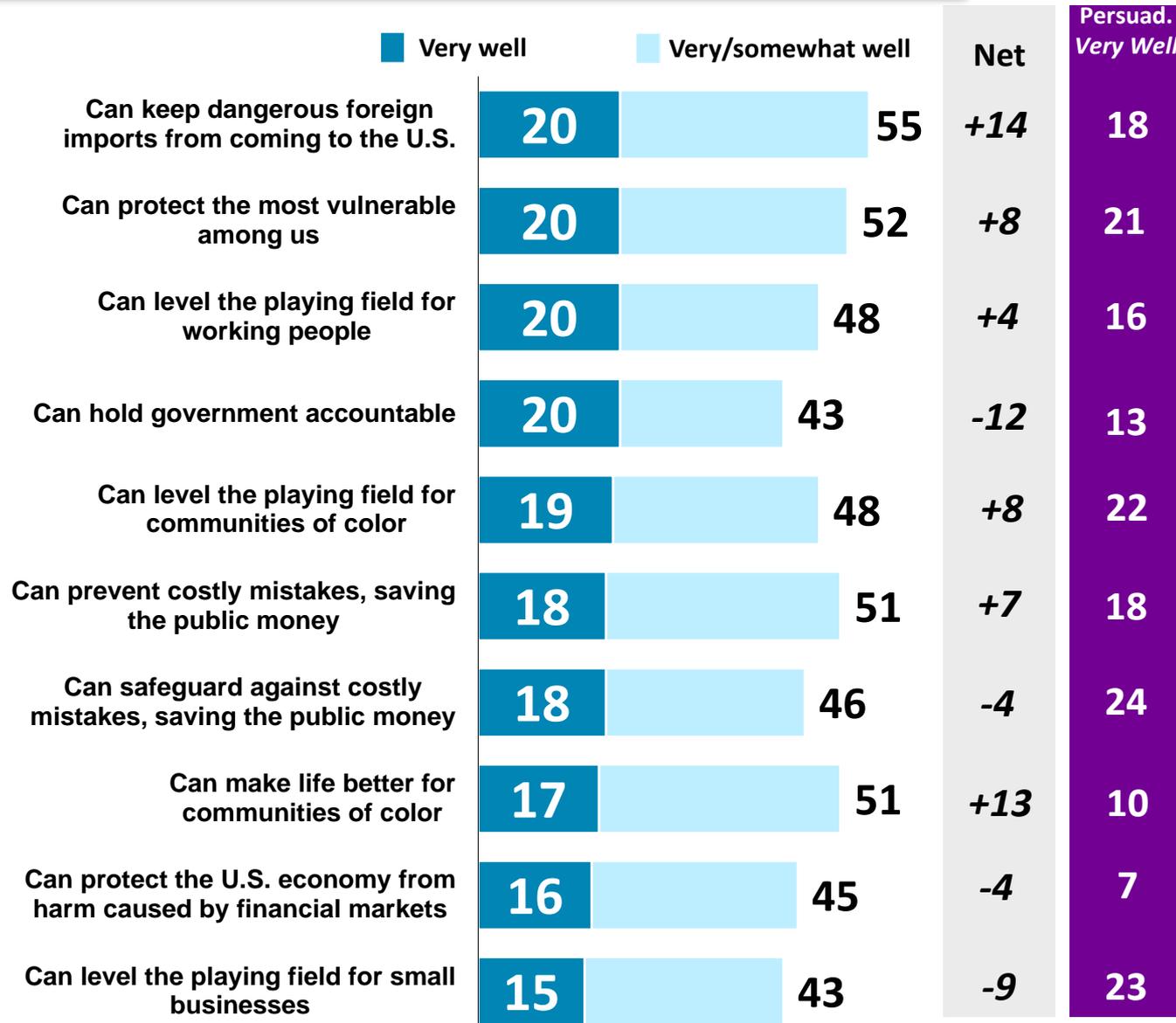
“But it’s not, I mean, it’s getting out of control because these kids can’t pay it back because there’s no jobs for them to.” – Swing white woman



“Again we were talking about having the safe food supply, having policemen and fire, you know to safeguard those kind of things in our lives and enforcing things that make that happen is important.” – Swing white woman

Regulation – Positive Descriptions (Bottom Tier)

Voters are less certain of enforcement's effectiveness when it comes to helping small businesses, *protecting* the economy from the ravages of the financial markets, and making life better for people of color.



Now, I am going to read you some words and phrases that have been used to describe the enforcement of laws and regulations. Please tell me how well you think each describes the enforcement of laws and regulations: VERY well, PRETTY well, NOT too well, or not well AT ALL. If you don't know how well a word or phrase describes the enforcement of laws and regulations, just say so and we'll go on.

Strategic Summary: Where Enforcement can Make the Biggest Difference

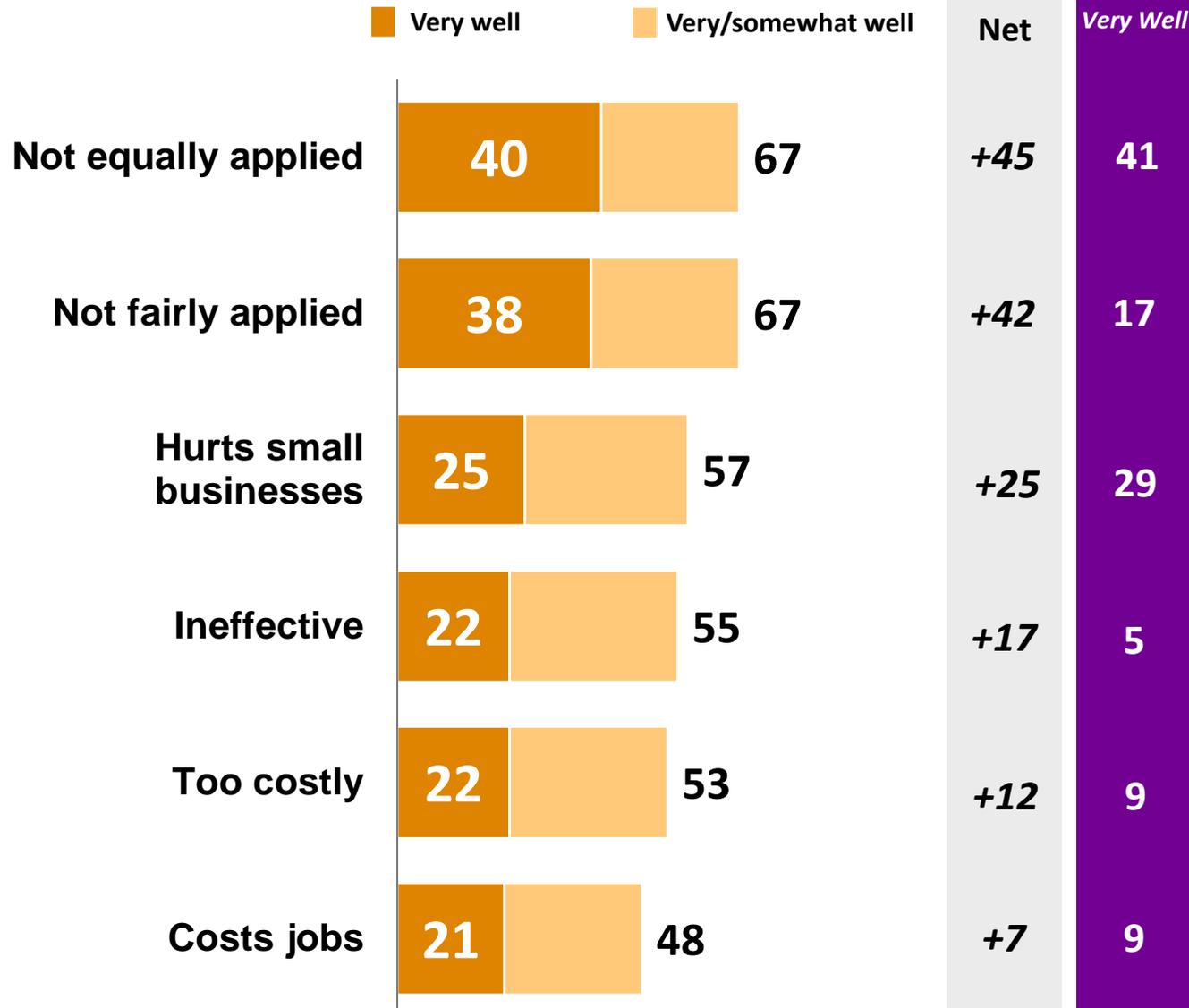
- The one vulnerability increased enforcement faces is its impact on small business. This enforcement frame offers voters a way to overcome this vulnerability.
- However, majorities of voters do worry that enforcement is unequally—and unfairly—applied, that it hurts small businesses, and that it is costly and ineffective.
 - **Older women, white women, non-college educated women, and independents**—i.e. the chief persuasion targets for political campaigns across the country this fall—are among the most likely to fault enforcement for being unequally and unfairly applied.
 - While voters are concerned that enforcement hurts small businesses, voters tend to push back against characterizations of enforcement as costing jobs.
- Voters see a critical role for enforcement of laws and regulations in a number of areas of American life. Majorities believe enforcement is extremely important when it comes to **“clean water”**, and **“food and drugs from other countries”**.
 - Across **generational, gender, and partisan lines**, voters acknowledge the role that **government officials** can play in ensuring the safety and cleanliness of drinking water, as well as of food and drugs imported from other countries.
 - **Democrats and independents place more importance than Republicans on enforcement as a means to compel accountability on the part of government.**
- Other areas where voters believe enforcement can play an important role include **civil rights, pharmaceuticals produced in the U.S., nuclear energy, and the financial industry**.
 - Majorities of older women also see an important role for enforcement when it comes to Wall Street.

Regulation – Negative Traits

Majorities of voters worry that enforcement is unequally or unfairly applied, that it hurts small businesses, and that it is costly and ineffective.

Equality and fairness have the greatest intensity.

In addition, voters tend to be less inclined to push back against characterizations of enforcement as costing jobs.

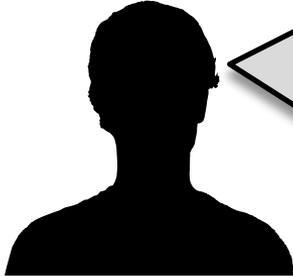


Q49-54. And now for a different list of words and phrases that have been used to describe the enforcement of laws and regulations. Asked of ½ the sample

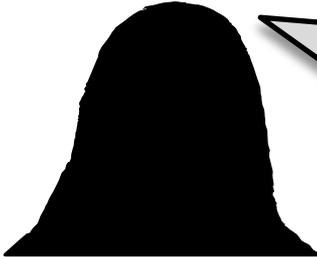
Participants in the focus groups were in agreement that for enforcement to work, it needed to be applied fairly and equally. There was also broad consensus that, all too often, enforcement was implemented in exactly the opposite manner.



“Um, I don’t know. It just seems so much, differences in how things are enforced and I get angry because it’s not all the same for everyone. I think when things are uniform that it’s, people get a good feeling about that. They’re not as angry, but they see things across the board being enforced the same.” – Swing white woman



“Or as somebody mentioned earlier about the fee; the penalty you know. You can’t cross those lines; oh except for this amount of money and then you’re totally cool.” – Swing white man

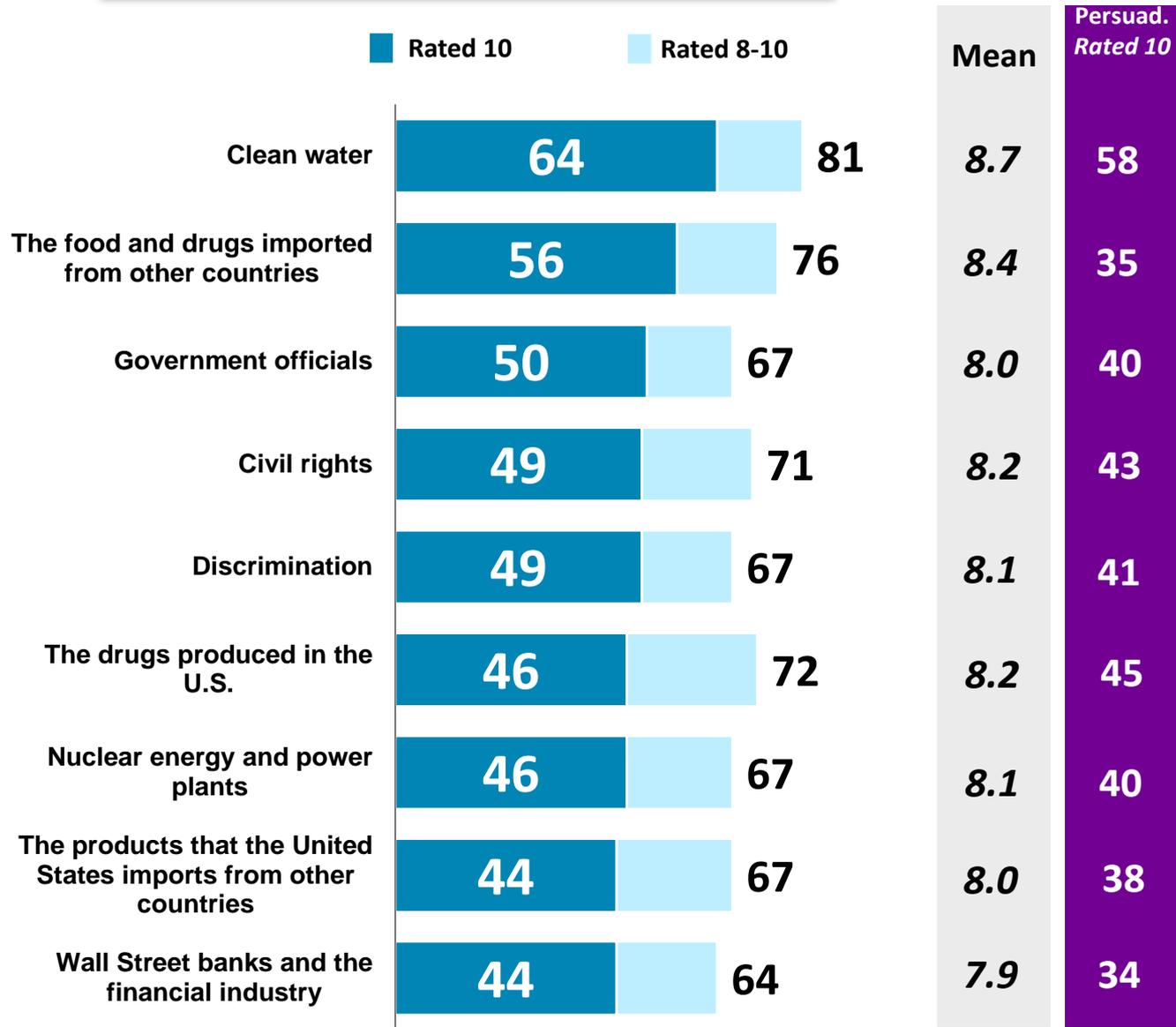


“Because I feel that what goes for one doesn’t go for another so if we’re going to say the public’s going to... protection’s going to be enforced it’s a joke. I think that is right because what goes in one area does not go in another area and there’s no way that you’re going to enforce it, you know, you can’t enforce it everywhere.” – Swing white woman

Importance of Enforcing – First Tier

Voters see a critical role for enforcement of laws and regulations in a number of areas of American life. Strong majorities believe enforcement is extremely important when it comes to clean water, food and drugs from other countries, and—as we have seen in previous research—government officials.

Other areas where voters believe enforcement can play an important role include civil rights, discrimination, pharmaceuticals produced in the U.S., nuclear energy, imports and the financial industry.



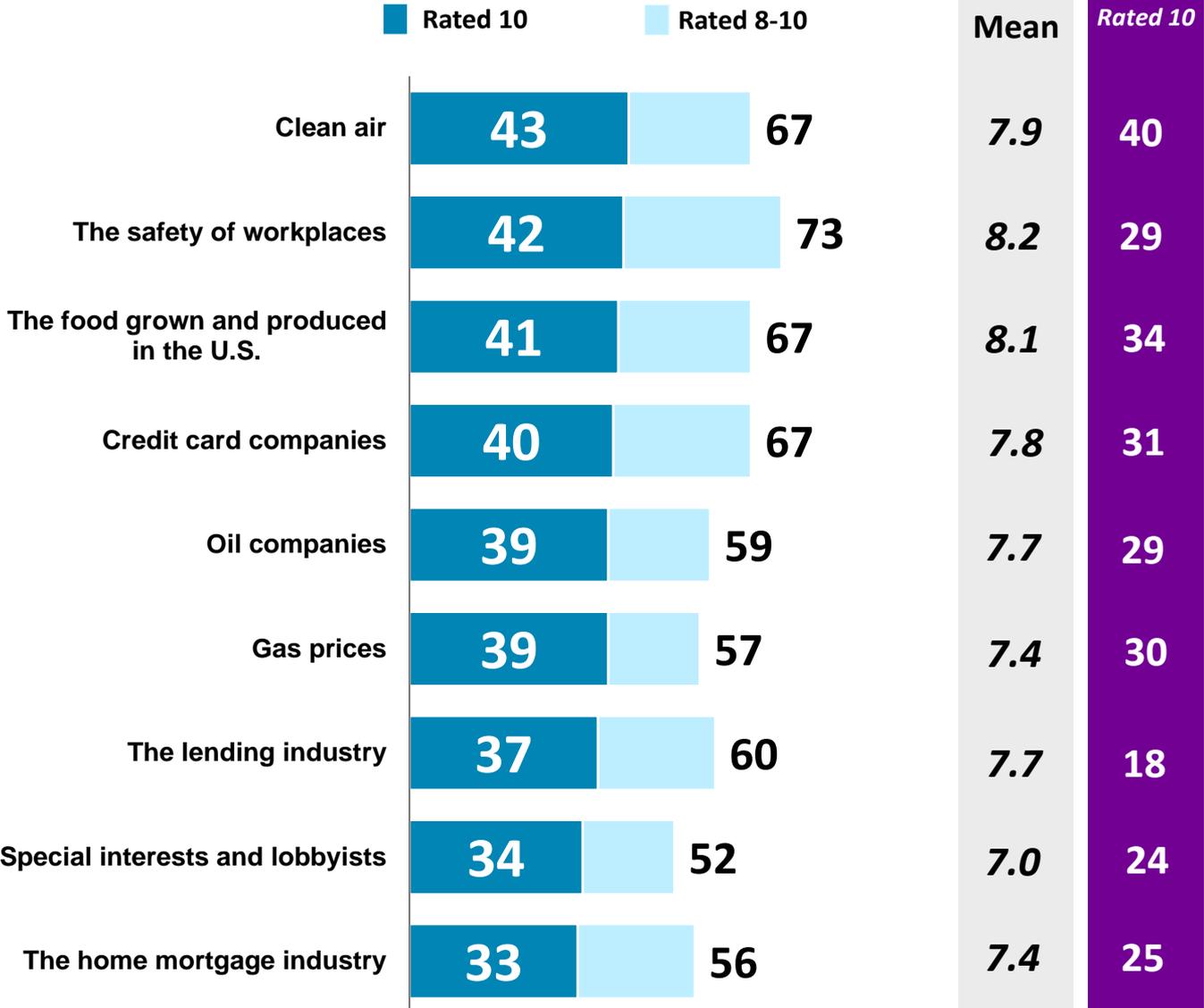
Q55-72 Now, I am going to read you a list of entities where enforcement of laws and regulations can take place. For each entity, please tell me how important you think enforcement of laws and regulations is, using a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 meaning you think enforcement is extremely important, 0 meaning you think it is not important at all, and 5 meaning you don't know or are undecided. You can be anywhere in between. If you're unsure about a particular item, just say so, and we'll go on.

Importance of Enforcing – Second Tier

A second tier of priorities for enforcement includes clean air, the safety of workplaces, food grown in the United States, and credit card companies.

Voters place less emphasis on enforcement when it comes to oil companies, gas prices, the lending industry, and the home mortgage industry.

While a majority of voters believes it is important to enforce laws and regulations regarding lobbyists and special interests, respondents' reactions are noticeably lacking in both breadth and intensity. This may be an instance, however, of voters' priorities taking a backseat to their cynicism.



Now, I am going to read you a list of entities where enforcement of laws and regulations can take place. For each entity, please tell me how important you think enforcement of laws and regulations is, using a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 meaning you think enforcement is extremely important, 0 meaning you think it is not important at all, and 5 meaning you don't know or are undecided. You can be anywhere in between. If you're unsure about a particular item, just say so, and we'll go on.

Strategic Summary: Messaging

- The case study messaging was a major breakthrough. Tapping into real consequences where **lives** and great sums of money were lost as a result of insufficient enforcement proves very effective. These case studies make it painfully clear that **failing to enforce our laws and regulations causes costly and deadly disasters.**
 - This is particularly evident in the **West Virginia case study**, where an estimated 10,000 gallons of toxic chemical waste leaked from a private storage facility into a river due to lax enforcement. The leak contaminated the drinking water supply of over 300,000 residents, putting pregnant women, seniors, and children at risk. **States are required to test public water systems regularly, but this water system hadn't been tested in over a decade, and warnings of contamination were ignored.** We need proper enforcement to ensure disasters like this don't happen again.
 - In West, Texas an explosion at a fertilizer facility killed **15 people, including 12 first responders**, and destroyed three schools, a nursing home, and hundreds of homes. **The last time that facility was inspected by OSHA was in 1985 and, despite a serious violation ,it got just a \$30 fine.** We need strong and improved enforcement to prevent deadly situations like this.
- At the same time, it is important to convey the massive benefits the public can enjoy from enforcement being implemented properly.
 - U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission investigators analyze data to focus their inspections on high-risk cargo. During one six-month period in 2013, the CPSC identified more than 600 shipments containing illegal or defective products from other countries, totaling about 8.2 million units, which inspectors prevented from moving into U.S. markets and into the hands of unsuspecting consumers. When enforcement is done right, it can save Americans dollars and lives.
 - Recently, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ordered Bank of America to pay nearly \$727 million in fines because of the bank's deceptive practices, including charging consumers for products they never agreed to. It also ordered JPMorgan Chase to pay customers \$309 million, and American Express to pay customers \$59.5 million for deceptive and unauthorized billing. This agency saved consumers nearly \$3.5 billion in excessive fees and interest since its creation two years ago. We need to strengthen enforcement of these laws, not weaken enforcement.

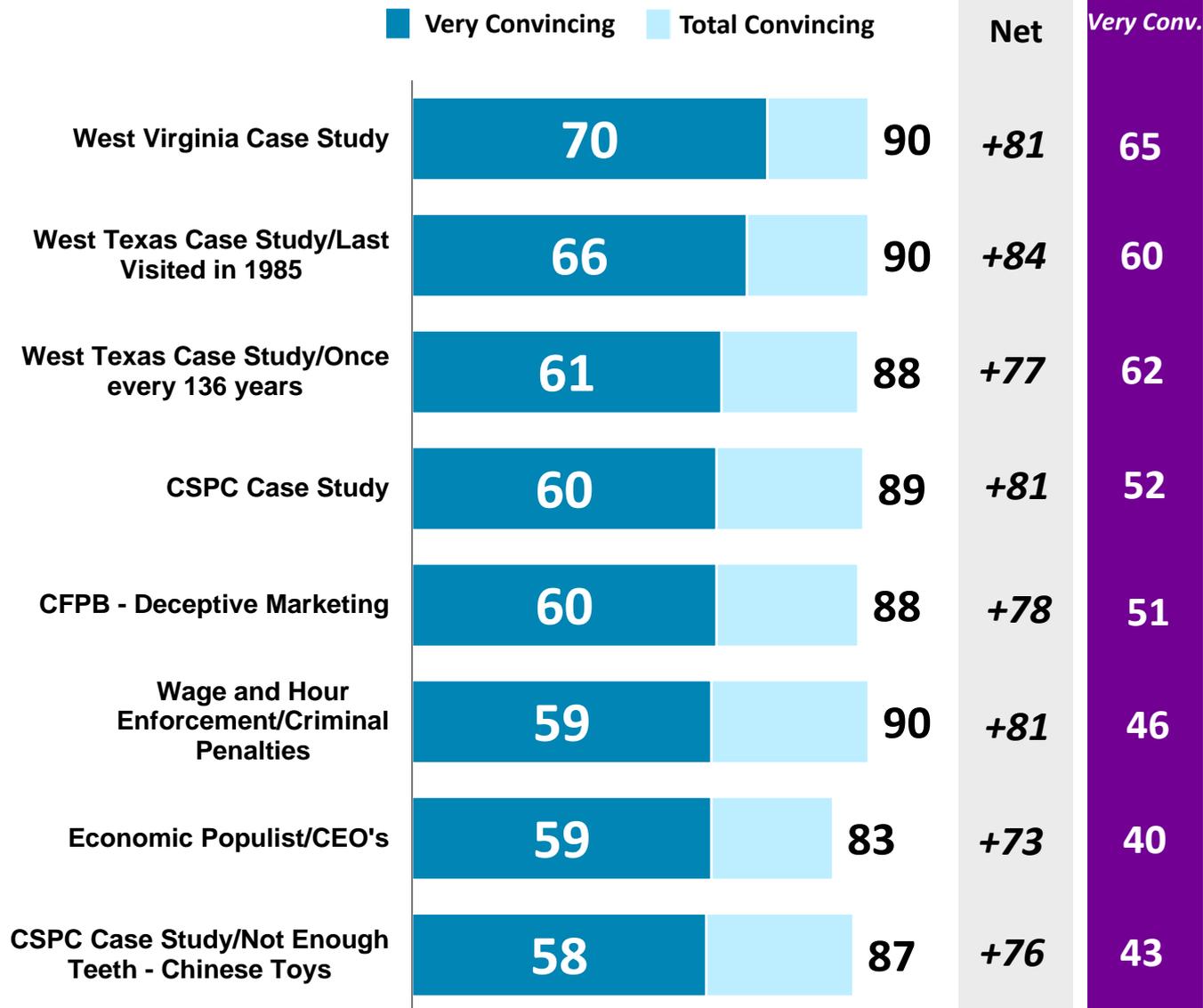
Strategic Summary: Messaging (cont.)

- A second tier of messages is also remarkably compelling, with more than eight-in-ten voters finding them convincing, including majorities finding them very convincing. These arguments emphasize the need for real teeth, or consequences, for violating the law. Voters do not flinch at criminal penalties for CEOs found guilty of engaging in wage theft or otherwise abusing their employees. These build on the current populist tide.
 - Enforcement of our laws needs to be updated regularly to reflect new threats in a rapidly changing world. We can't trust Wall St. CEOs, big polluters, or foreign companies to police themselves when penalties are so low. Currently, employers who have a death in their workplace are fined an average of \$7,000. We owe it to our families to make sure enforcement measures have real teeth and are updated to meet new realities and new threats.
 - Small businesses are the engine of the American economy. But one of the biggest threats to small businesses comes in the form of big corporations using their political influence and armies of paid lobbyists to negotiate fines down to nothing and squeeze small businesses out of the marketplace. Universally enforcing clear, simple standards helps small businesses compete on equal turf. Big corporations already have enough advantages. Our small businesses need someone looking out for the little guy.
- Notably, voters are less moved by a populist economic argument that rests on platitudes, but fails to include the kind of hard evidence that voters find so appealing in the case study messages.
- The survey confirmed and reinforced perceptions from the focus group that the most powerful way to impress on voters the need for increased enforcement is by using hard evidence of the major (and avoidable) disasters caused by lax and/or compromised enforcement of laws and regulations. **However, arguments that emphasize the consequences of insufficient enforcement should be buttressed by similarly compelling messages detailing the benefits to ordinary Americans of proper enforcement.**

Messages for Enforcement – First Tier

All case studies were strong. The best ones tended to revolve around where lives and great sums of money were lost as a result of insufficient enforcement. These case studies make it painfully clear that failing to enforce our laws and regulations causes costly and deadly disasters.

Voters also prioritize case studies that emphasize how lives and dollars can be saved when enforcement agencies do their job properly, as well as a message that calls for criminal penalties for CEOs found guilty of engaging in wage theft.



Q75-88 Now I am going to read you some statements in support of tougher enforcement of laws and regulation. Please tell me whether each statement I read is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing reason to support tougher enforcement of laws and regulation. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so.

Positive Messages – Tier 1

Text of Positive Messages (in order of intensity)

West Virginia Case Study

Just this year, an estimated 10,000 gallons of toxic chemical waste leaked from a private storage facility into a West Virginia river due to lax enforcement. The leak contaminated the drinking water supply of over 300,000 residents, putting pregnant women, seniors, and children at risk. States are required to test public water systems regularly, but this water system hadn't been tested in over a decade, and warnings of contamination were ignored. We need proper enforcement to ensure disasters like this don't happen again.

West Texas Case Study/Last Visit '85

When enforcement of public protections is neglected, the results can be disastrous. In 2013, an explosion at a fertilizer facility in West, Texas killed 15 people, including 12 first responders, and destroyed three schools, a nursing home, and hundreds of homes. The last time that facility was inspected by OSHA was in 1985, and despite a serious violation it got just a \$30 fine. We need strong and improved enforcement to prevent deadly situations like this.

West Texas Case Study/Once Every 136 Years

When enforcement of public protections is neglected, the results can be disastrous. In 2013, an explosion at a fertilizer facility in West, Texas killed 15 people, including 12 first responders, and destroyed three schools, a nursing home, and hundreds of homes. With current staff, OSHA inspectors can visit workplaces like these only once every 136 years, on average. We need strong and improved enforcement to prevent deadly situations like this.

CSPC Case Study

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission investigators analyze data to focus their inspections on high-risk cargo. During one six-month period in 2013, the CPSC identified more than 600 shipments containing illegal or defective products from other countries, totaling about 8.2 million units, which inspectors prevented from moving into U.S. markets and into the hands of unsuspecting consumers. When enforcement is done right, it can save Americans dollars and lives.

CFPB – Deceptive Marketing

Recently, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ordered Bank of America to pay nearly \$727 million in fines because of the bank's deceptive practices, including charging consumers for products they never agreed to. It also ordered JPMorgan Chase to pay customers \$309 million, and American Express to pay customers \$59.5 million for deceptive and unauthorized billing. This agency saved consumers nearly \$3.5 billion in excessive fees and interest since its creation two years ago. We need to strengthen enforcement of these laws, not weaken enforcement.

The survey confirmed and reinforced perceptions from the focus group that the most powerful way to impress on voters the need for increased enforcement is by using hard evidence of the major (and avoidable) disasters caused by lax and/or compromised enforcement of laws and regulations. However, arguments that emphasize the consequences of insufficient enforcement should be buttressed by similarly compelling messages detailing the benefits of proper enforcement to ordinary Americans.



“(West Texas) this was a good case for better enforcement but it’s also a case where there needs to be enforcement on the enforcement. Like this is...to have that going on and that type of situation for that long is just unconscionable. It shouldn’t be allowed to continue like that.” – Swing white man

(West Virginia) “I like the way that it, I mean there were numbers. I mean like 10 thousand gallons, it was 300 thousand residents and then the final sentence the way it concluded; this is why. I mean it’s like, it’s telling you, you know if you need to know this is it right here, boom.” – Swing white woman



“(CFPB)The fact that this all happened without somebody’s knowledge or consent, that you should be allowed to say; I want it or I don’t.” – Swing white woman



Arguments in support of increased enforcement must reflect the broadly-held contention that in order for enforcement to be effective, it must be implemented fairly, and the consequences of violation must serve as a deterrent.



"Yeah, might as well break the law 'cause it's cheaper to pay the fine then."
Swing white man

"...and I want actual... but I want to know, I want to see it. I think that we're not, even though we're seeing numbers, so what the number? What's a million dollars, to a company that's so, that's so big, what is 309 million? Nothing. You know, so that's what I want to see, I want to actually see it. Show me, show me it was 727 million, so you did that, and that's what it is, then show me. Show me, give me some more proof besides just a number. Anybody can write a number down, pay attention we don't want them to, um are we wanting them to be accountable, but I still want to see, I still want to see it." – Swing white woman



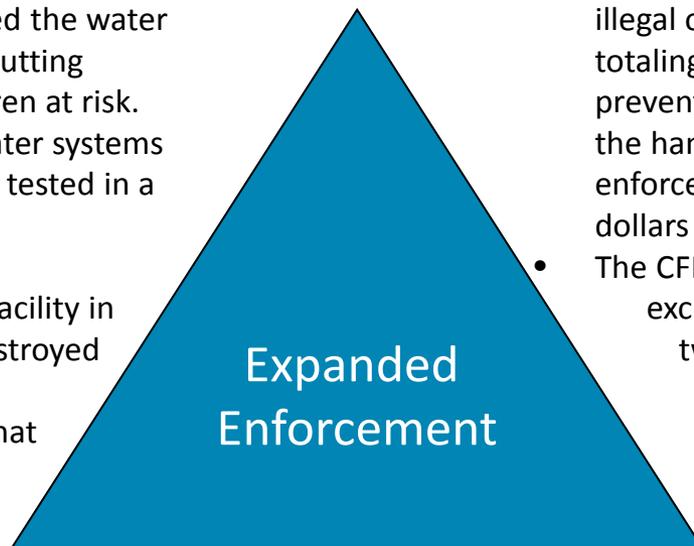
"Is it because it's too complicated, it's impersonal, it's not an area you care about? What does it take to light you up?" – Swing white woman



Message Triangle:

Disasters Resulting from Lack of Enforcement

- An estimated 10,000 gallons leaked from a private storage facility in West Virginia due to lax enforcement. The leak contaminated the water supply for over 300,000 residents, putting pregnant women, seniors and children at risk. States are required to test public water systems regularly, but this one had not been tested in a decade.
- In 2013, an explosion at a fertilizer facility in West, Texas killed 15 people and destroyed three schools, a nursing home, and hundreds of homes. The last time that facility was inspected by OSHA was in 1985, and despite a serious violation, it got just a \$30 fine.



Enforcement Success Stories

- During one six-month period in 2013, the CPSC identified more than 600 shipments containing illegal or defective products from other countries, totaling about 8.2 million units, which inspectors prevented from moving into U.S. markets and into the hands of unsuspecting consumers. When enforcement is done right, it can save Americans dollars and lives.
- The CFPB saved consumers nearly \$3.5 billion in excessive fees and interest since its creation two years ago. It forced Bank of America to pay nearly \$727 million in fines because of the bank's deceptive practices. It also ordered JPMorgan Chase to pay customers \$309 million for deceptive and unauthorized billing.

Need for Increased Enforcement

- With near unanimity, voters believe there should be increased enforcement of laws and regulations in the U.S.
- Voters believe that increased enforcement of the nation's or state's laws and regulations is a good thing and see a critical role for enforcement of laws and regulations it comes to protecting "**clean water**", "**food and drugs from other countries**", and can also help in redressing the fundamental imbalance and inequality in American life.
- Small businesses, entrepreneurship, and hard work are the engine of the American economy. But that means little when multinational corporations are allowed to use their political influence to squeeze small businesses out of the marketplace.

Survey Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 700 likely 2016 voters nationwide. The survey was conducted July 21-28, 2014.
- Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn using a file of registered voters. The sample was stratified geographically to reflect the expected turnout of General Election voters in 2016. Data were weighted by gender, party identification, education, age, race, and region. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.7 percentage points.
- In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of respondents in the total sample answered “yes” to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage will fall within +/-3.7 percentage points of this percentage, or between 46.3% and 53.7%.
- “Persuadables” are defined as respondents who are either undecided on the need for tougher enforcement on both the initial ballot and the final ballot, or who shift in the direction of supporting tougher enforcement from the initial ballot to the final ballot.

Focus Groups Methodology

- Two focus groups were designed, conducted, and moderated by Lake Research Partners. The focus groups were located in Columbus, Ohio and took place on June 3, 2014.
- The focus groups were recruited off of a voter file to ensure that the participants were, indeed, likely voters with proven records of voting in midterm elections.
- In order to ensure the most open and honest discussions possible, it is essential to separate focus group respondents along key demographic and attitudinal divides. The groups were divided by gender, and the participants further screened to ensure homogeneity within each group based on race (i.e. white voters) and age (i.e. ages 30-65), as well as lack of strong partisan affiliation (i.e. independents, including some independents who lean toward either the Republican or Democratic parties).
- Focus groups are structured but open ended discussions that serve as a powerful research tool for developing insight into public attitudes and concerns. Because focus groups are qualitative rather than quantitative, the results are not scientific in a statistical sense.