



Telling a Story About Families and Opportunity

Increasing support for Paid Family and Medical Leave
policies among key audiences

Key Findings from focus groups and a
national survey

March 2020



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Research Goals

1. Determine the characteristics of audiences that do or could be persuaded to care about this issue from an equity perspective, as well as for other reasons. Assess “salience,” or the strength and urgency of the views held on this topic.
2. Identify narrative elements and message frames that most effectively help “persuadables” to connect with and support concrete family and medical leave policy proposals, as well as messages that activate the base of current supporters.
3. Develop, test, and refine messages best positioned to advance these frames and narratives, including messages that work with racial and ethnic communities as messengers. At the same time, determine the views and activation points of communities of color who are often ignored in traditional polling.
4. Identify narratives that enable Americans who have concerns with demographic change to envision a more diverse future that is attractive, or at least acceptable.

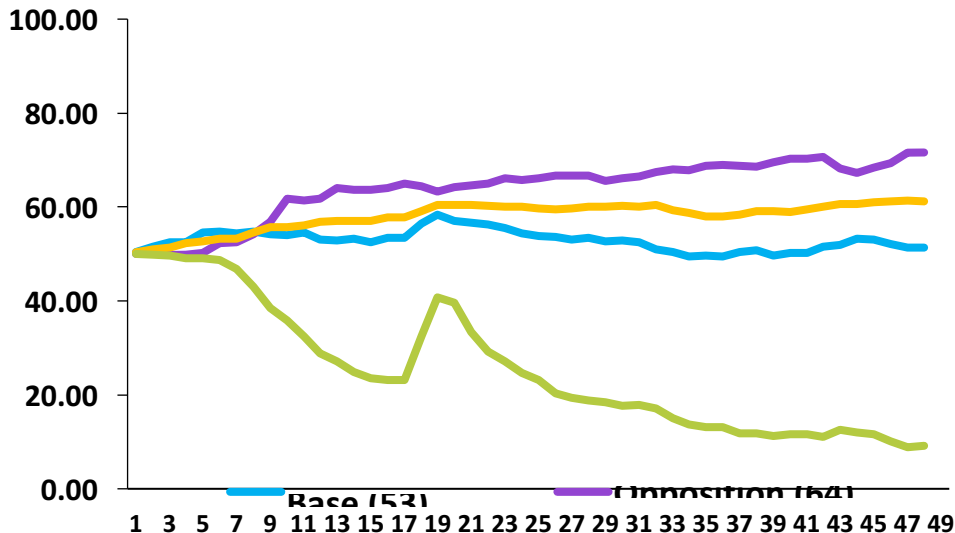


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Methodology: Focus Groups & Online Dial Survey

- Nationwide representative survey of 1,000 adults administered between October – November 2019.
- Oversamples of 100 African Americans, 150 Latinx, 150 Asian American/Pacific Islanders, 150 Native Americans, and 100 Advocates
- The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1%. The margin of error for the oversamples is +/- 9.8%.



6 in-person focus groups in May 2019

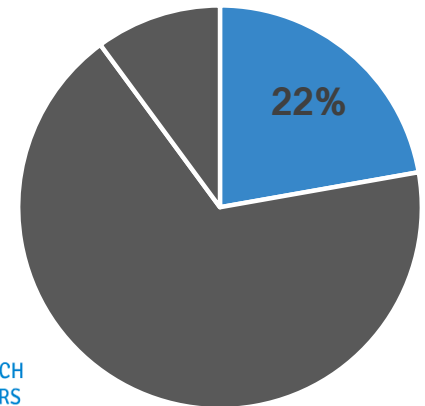
CITY	COMPOSITION
Detroit, MI	White Non-College, Mixed Gender
	African American, Mixed Gender
Phoenix, AZ	Native American Women
	Latinas
Raleigh, NC	Small Business Owners, Mixed Gender
	Asian/Pacific Islander Women

Audience Analysis



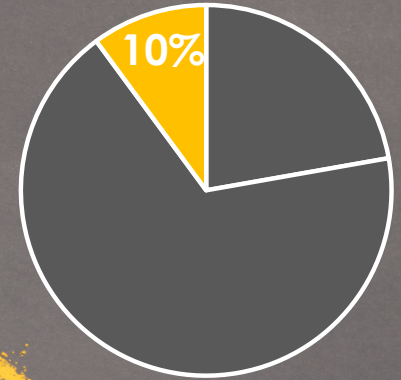
The Base

- Are just as likely to be very concerned that low-income people, Black, and Hispanic people are less likely to have paid leave.
- About three-quarters agree that people, including low-income people and people of color face barriers to accessing health care and can't afford to take time off of work, and that the burden is on people and families.
- More likely to be women and Democrats.



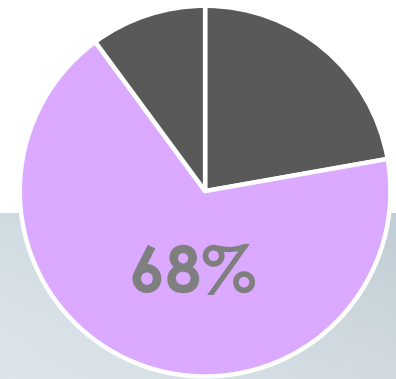
The Opposition

- Are most acutely concerned about abuse, trusting the government to run it, waste, and the impact on small business.
- Believe we can't afford a program, it is too hard on small business, and it is each person's responsibility to take care of their own family, the government should stay out of it.
- More likely to be men, over 65, white, and Republicans.



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Persuadables



- Are generally favorable toward a paid family and medical leave program.
- More closely reflect demographics of the general public.



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Defining Base, Opposition, and Persuasion

Demographics	Total	Base	Opp.	Pers.
Men	48	35	64	49
Women	52	64	36	51
Under 30	21	17	17	23
30-39	17	19	10	17
40-49	16	19	12	15
50-64	25	27	27	24
Over 65	22	17	34	21
White	59	61	70	57
AA	13	16	7	13
Latino	16	15	6	18
Asian/PI	7	6	9	7
Native Am.	2	2	3	2
Northeast	18	20	18	18
Midwest	20	17	23	21
South	38	42	32	37
West	23	21	26	24
Democrat	44	59	17	43
Independent	14	10	19	14
Republican	35	25	56	35



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Experiences with Leave & Current Access

A third to half of adults* have access to a fully or partially paid benefit that would be covered by a national paid family and medical leave program.

% Fully or Partially Paid

Paid Time Off	53
Sick days for own health	52
Short-term disability insurance	43
Family and medical leave	42
Maternity leave	38
Routine health issues or medical appointments for family	38
Serious health issues for family	36
Parental leave	36
Paternity leave	32

*Asked only of those who are employed full-time or part-time



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Latinx adults are more likely to care for an older relative; Native Americans are more likely to have had a personal need for leave or a seriously ill family member. Parents, those living with an aging relative, and those who have a disability or an immediate family member or close friend with a disability have had a range of caregiving needs recently.

Thinking back over the past five years, have you or your spouse or partner had to take time off or reduce your hours at work to...

% Selected	All	Gender		Age					Race					Caregiver			PID			Targets		
		M	W	<30	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+	W	AA	L	API	NA	Parent	Aging	Disability	D	I	R	B	P	O
Care for an older family member	12	14	11	15	19	12	13	4	11	12	18	16	10	19	33	21	13	9	14	14	13	8
Recover from your own serious illness or injury	10	11	9	12	14	8	12	5	11	9	12	8	21	13	14	19	12	10	9	11	10	7
Care for a seriously ill family member	9	11	7	14	16	11	6	3	8	10	12	10	16	18	23	17	10	6	10	10	9	8
Care for a newly born or adopted child	9	11	8	17	20	13	1	1	9	7	14	8	10	28	24	12	9	9	11	10	9	8
Care for a foster child	3	4	2	6	5	5	0	0	3	4	3	3	1	5	8	5	3	0	5	3	3	0
Support a military member during deployment	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	3	1	0	2	2	1	0
None of these	70	67	73	59	52	72	73	90	72	72	59	66	61	46	38	53	68	74	68	67	69	78

A tenth to a fifth have ever experienced a negative outcome because of a care-giving obligation or had to hide an obligation from their employer.

Have you ever...



No



Yes



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Younger adults and caregivers are more likely to have had negative experiences due to caregiving. Seniors and the Opposition are less likely to have ever had a negative experience due to caregiving.

Have you ever...

% Yes	All	Gender		Age					Race					Caregiver			PID			Targets		
		M	W	<30	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+	W	AA	L	API	NA	Parent	Aging	Disability	D	I	R	B	P	O
Had to leave a job	19	20	17	27	28	19	15	7	19	17	22	13	23	32	39	27	19	14	21	19	20	8
Had to hide a care-giving obligation from employer	13	17	9	24	22	13	4	4	13	14	16	9	13	25	33	19	12	11	15	15	13	8
Taken a pay cut	12	14	11	20	23	14	6	4	12	11	17	13	14	26	26	16	12	10	15	16	12	10
Not been given a raise	11	14	8	19	23	12	4	3	10	13	15	13	17	24	29	15	10	11	14	11	12	6
Not been promoted	10	13	8	21	19	9	4	2	10	11	13	12	15	20	24	15	9	9	13	12	10	8
Been fired	10	12	8	17	19	10	5	2	10	12	9	9	12	20	24	14	10	10	13	11	10	6

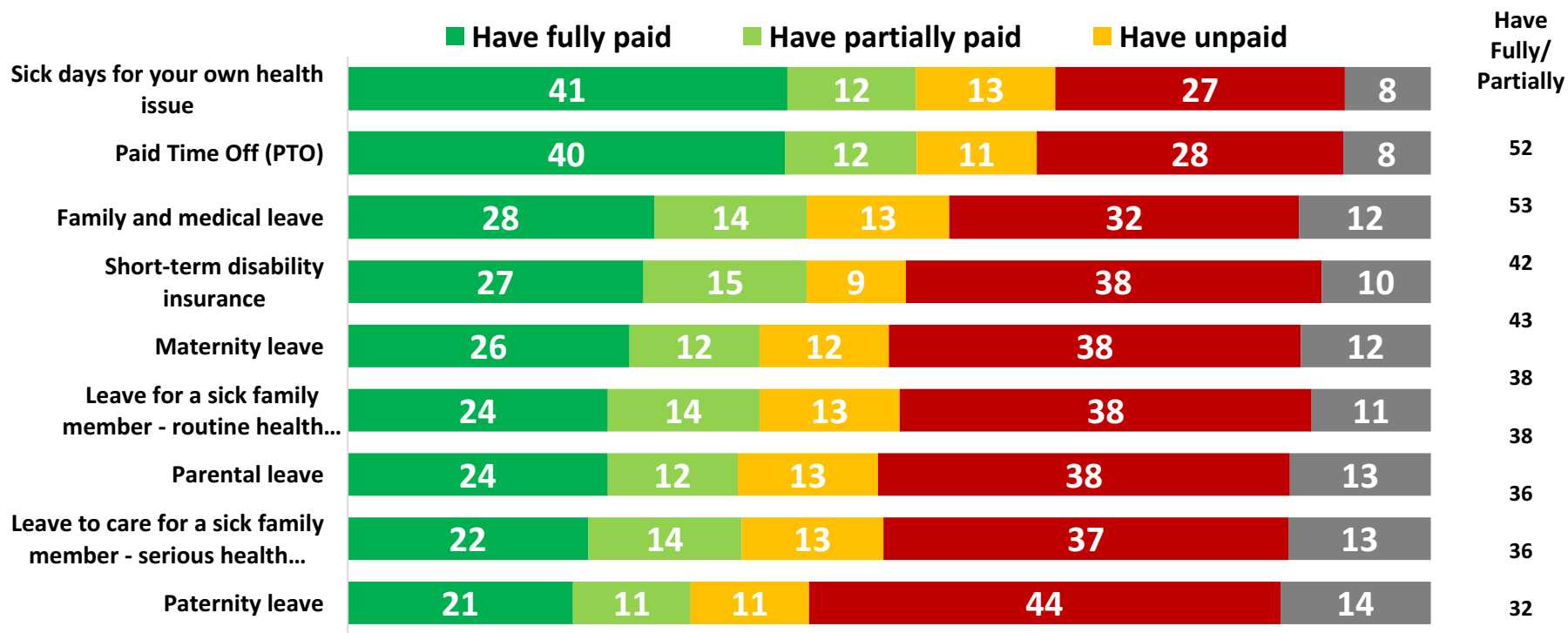


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Employed adults are most likely to have sick days and paid time off. Only about a quarter to a fifth have a fully paid benefit that would be covered by a national paid family and medical leave program.

Among employed people: Here are some benefits that people may have. For each, mark if you have that benefit and it is paid, you have it and it is unpaid, you do not have that benefit, or if you are unsure.



Would be covered by a national program



Attitudes toward a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

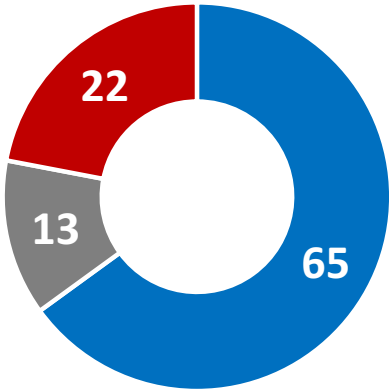
Across every demographic and attitudinal subgroup, people side with the idea that the US should ensure all employers adopt a universal paid family and medical leave program. Only the Opposition sides with employers deciding. Persuadables side with adopting a program - 62% to 21%. Women, those under thirty and in their forties, African Americans, those with a disability connection, Democrats, and the Base have the widest margins in favor of a national program.

Thinking about PAID family and medical leave, do you believe that...

Employers should choose whether to provide their employees paid leave

The United States should ensure all employers nationwide adopt a paid family and medical leave program that is available to everyone

Not sure

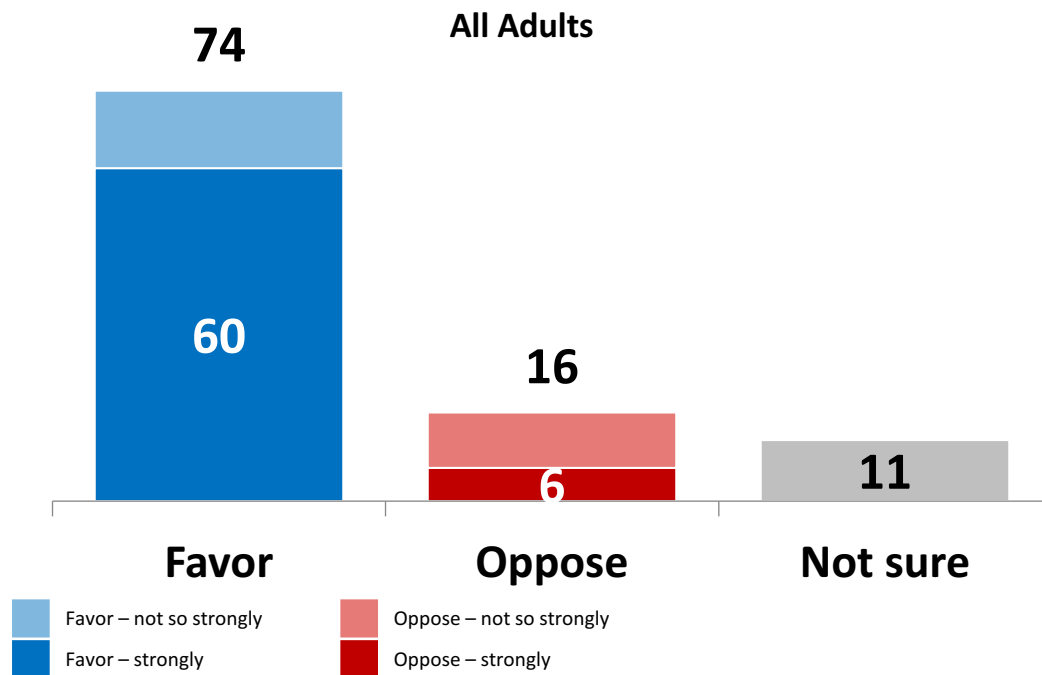


All Adults

	US should ensure	Employers choose	Margin
Men	58	28	30
Women	70	17	54
Under 30	70	18	52
30 to 39	61	25	36
40 to 49	69	15	54
50 to 64	63	26	37
65 and over	60	24	36
White	64	22	42
African American	73	18	56
Latinx	66	23	42
Asian/PI	60	21	39
Native American	55	34	21
Parent	69	24	44
Aging	70	24	47
Disability	72	20	52
Democrat	78	15	63
Independent	59	17	42
Republican	53	34	19
Base	92	7	85
Persuadable	62	21	41
Opposition	20	67	-47

Across subgroups, two-thirds or more favor a national program, with about half or more who strongly favor it. The strongest favorability comes from women, those in their thirties, African Americans, Latinx people, parents, those living with an aging relative, those who have a disability or an immediate family member or close friend with a disability, and Democrats.

Initial Paid Family and Medical Leave Favorability

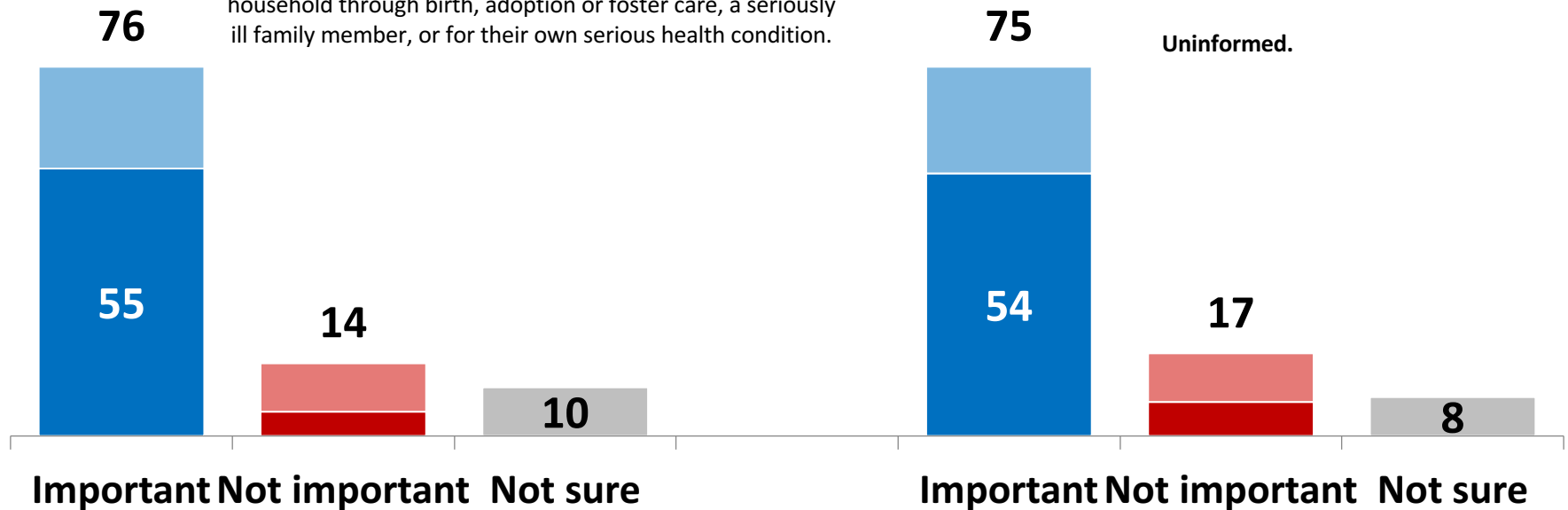


	Favor	Strongly Favor	Oppose	Margin
Men	70	53	20	49
Women	77	66	12	66
Under 30	75	64	13	62
30 to 39	81	69	9	72
40 to 49	73	59	12	62
50 to 64	73	57	18	55
65 and over	68	53	23	45
White	71	56	18	53
African American	84	72	9	75
Latinx	82	70	8	73
Asian/Pacific Islander	74	56	15	59
Native American	69	51	21	50
Parent	84	74	11	73
Aging	83	72	11	72
Disability	83	71	11	72
Democrat	86	74	8	78
Independent	64	48	16	48
Republican	67	51	25	42
Base	100			100
Persuadable	76	56	8	68
Opposition			100	-100

Three-quarters believe it is important for America to establish a nationwide program to guarantee access to up to 12 weeks of paid leave, with a majority who think it is very important. Information about FMLA does not impact views.

How important is it for America to establish a nationwide program to guarantee access to up to 12 weeks per year of PAID family and medical leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, an aging or seriously ill family member, or for their own serious health condition?

Informed: Current federal law allows many workers to take 12 weeks of UNPAID leave to care for a new child joining their household through birth, adoption or foster care, a seriously ill family member, or for their own serious health condition.



Split sampled question

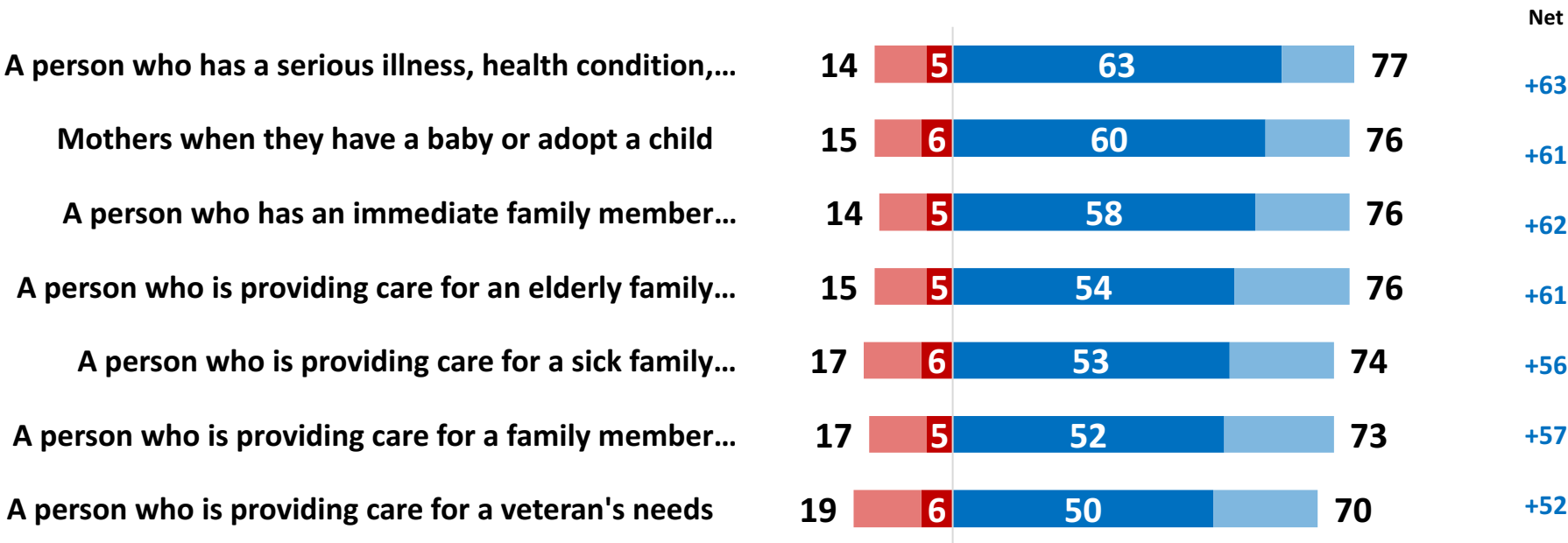


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At least half of people strongly favor eligibility for scenarios ranging from personal need or family need to new mothers or to care for veterans. The best-testing are someone’s personal illness, condition, or injury, new mothers, and someone with an immediate family member with an illness, condition, or injury.

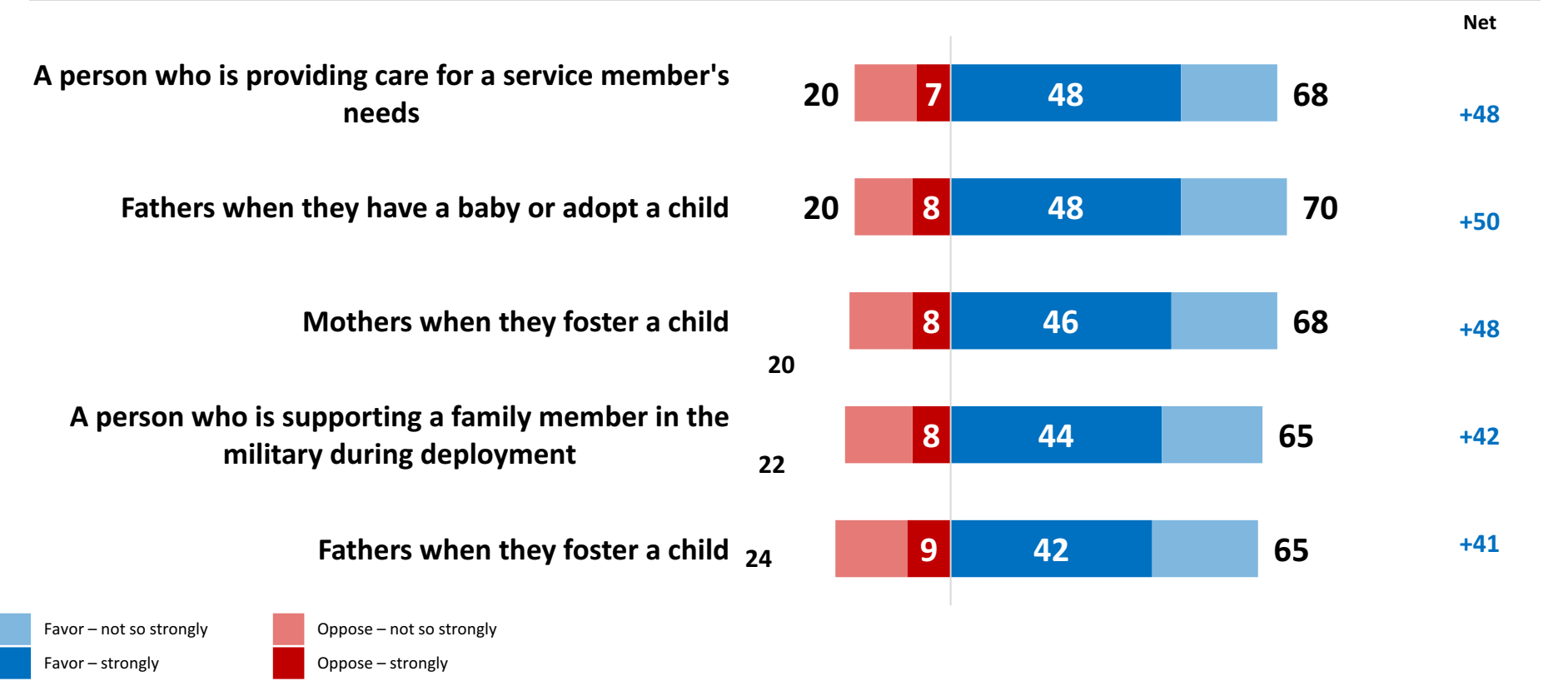
Here are some specific types of people that could be eligible for paid family and medical leave under a national program. Would you favor or oppose a proposal that includes an option for these people to take paid leave?



Favor – not so strongly
 Favor – strongly
 Oppose – not so strongly
 Oppose – strongly

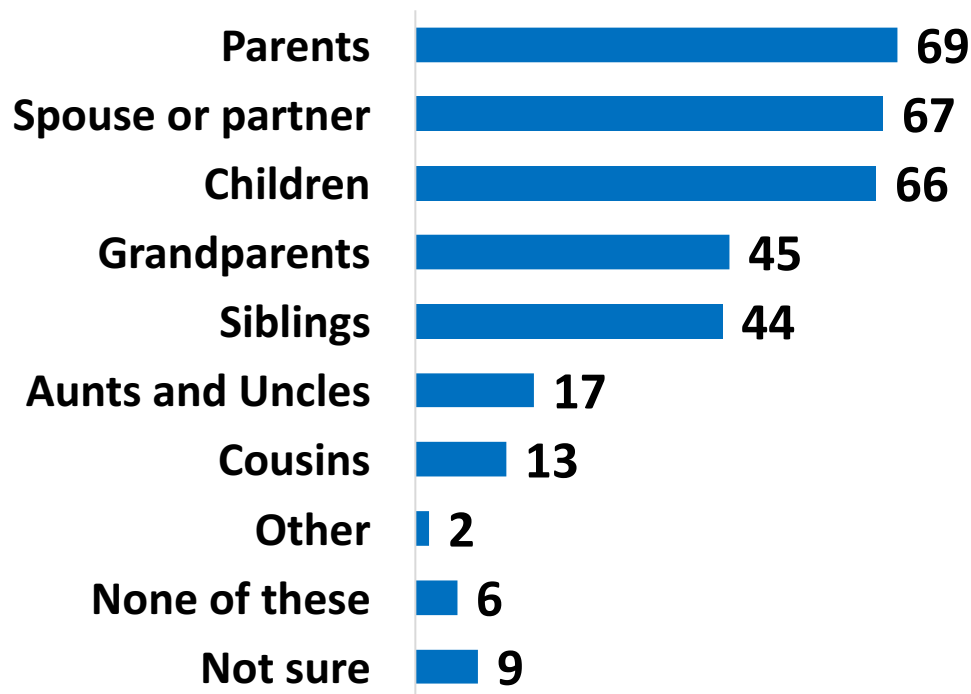
While about two-thirds favor eligibility to care for service members, new fathers, new foster parents, and supporting a family member who is deployed, fewer than half strongly favor these scenarios.

Here are some specific types of people that could be eligible for paid family and medical leave under a national program. Would you favor or oppose a proposal that includes an option for these people to take paid leave?



About two-thirds of people think someone should be able to take time to care for their parents, spouse or partner, or children. Just under half would include grandparents and siblings. Fewer think aunts, uncles, or cousins should be covered.

If someone needs to take time to care for a family member who is aging, seriously ill, or injured, which family members do you think should be covered?

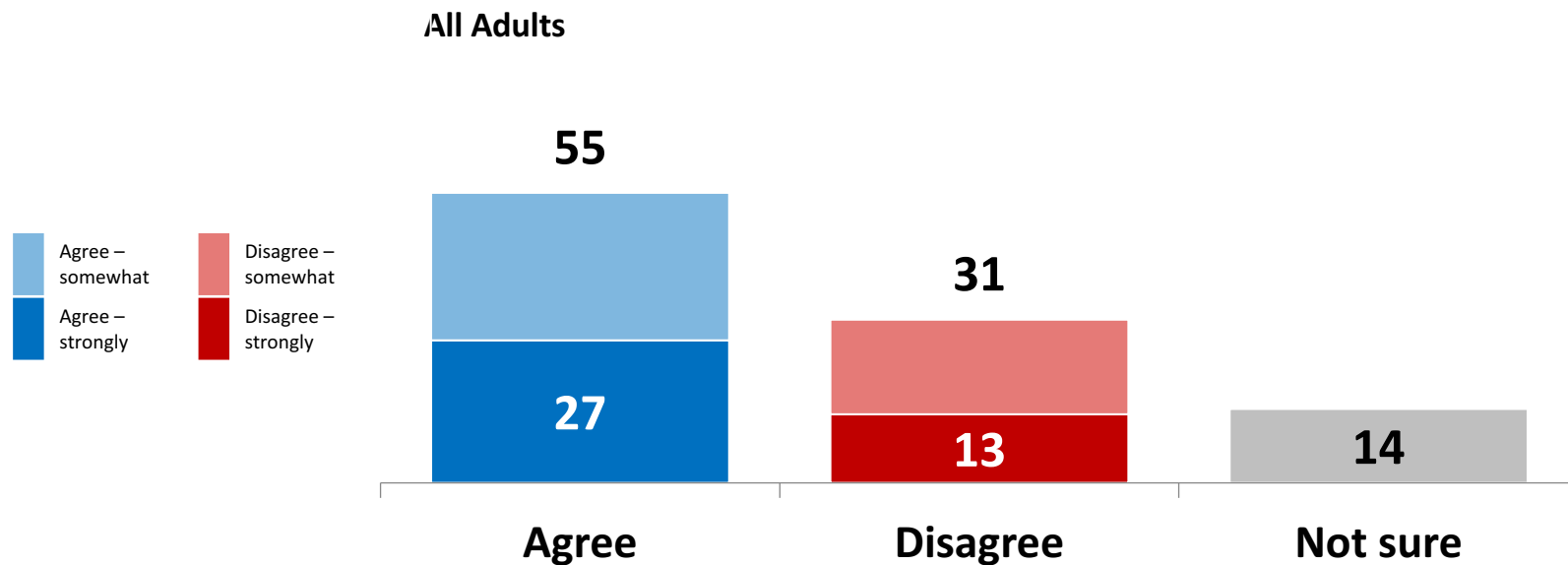


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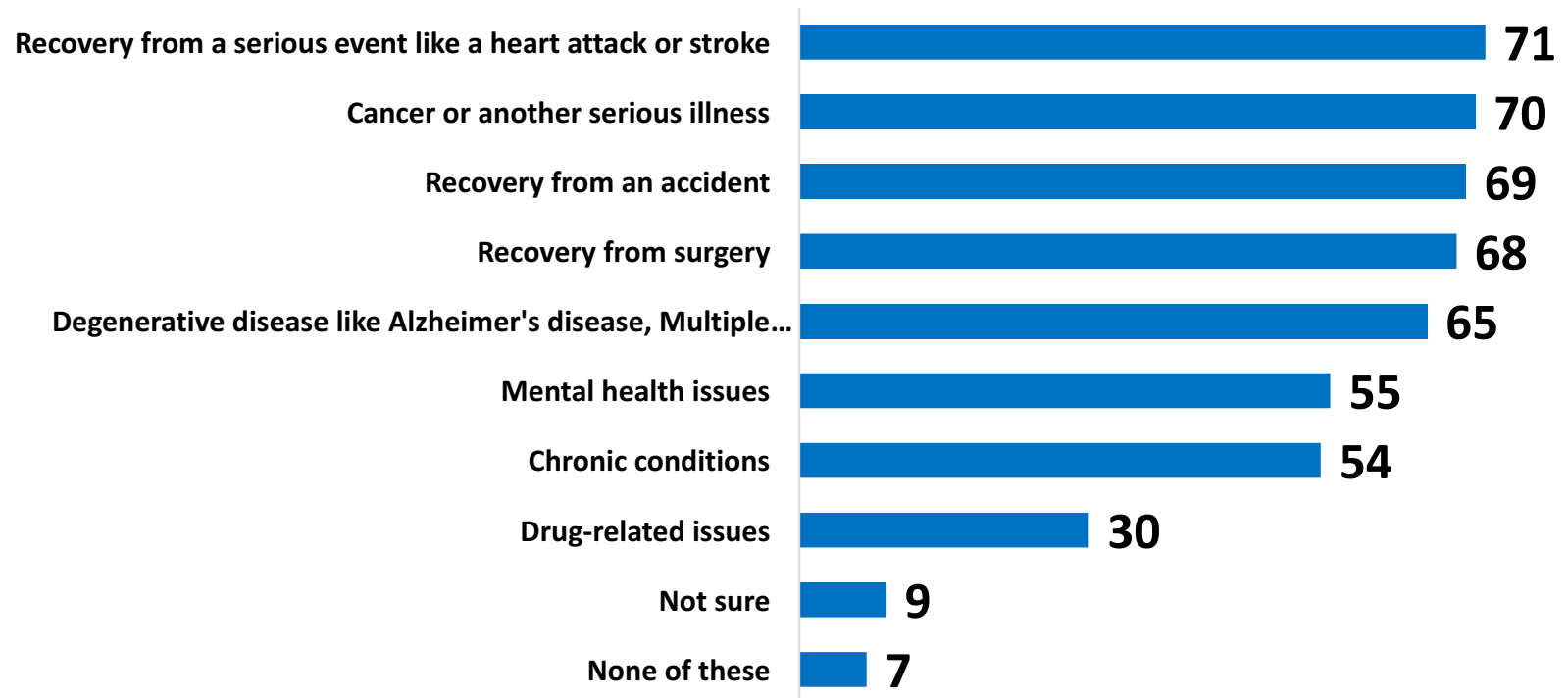
People are open to the idea that godparents, chosen family, friends who are like family, or other relatives should be included in the paid family leave program. Younger people, parents, those living with an aging family member, and the Base are the most likely to agree. Only people over age 50 and the Opposition disagree.

Some people have said it is important to include people in the paid family leave program who may not be immediate family, but whom you may need to take time off to care for anyways, such as godparents, chosen family, friends who are like family, or other relatives. Do you agree or disagree with this?



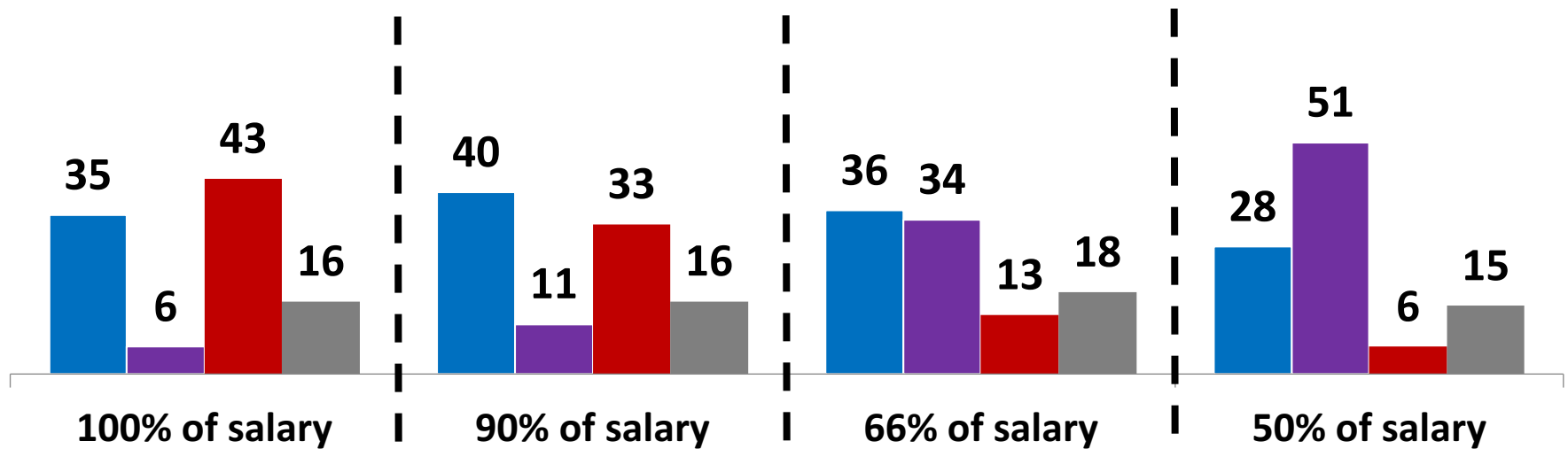
About two-thirds or more would cover recovery from a serious event, accident, or surgery, cancer and other serious illnesses, or degenerative diseases. Over half would include mental health issues or chronic conditions. Only three-in-ten would include drug-related issues.

Which types of illnesses and issues should be covered by a paid family and medical leave program?



People tend to think paying people 100% of their salaries while on leave is too much, 90% of their salaries is about right, and 50% of their salaries is not enough. Paying 66% of a salary splits between about right and not enough.

The implementation of a national paid family and medical leave program may allow people to be paid a percentage of their salary while on leave. For each of the following salary payment options, please select if you think being paid that percentage of your salary would be too much, not enough, about right, or if you are not sure.



■ About right ■ Not enough ■ Too much ■ Not sure



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VALUES

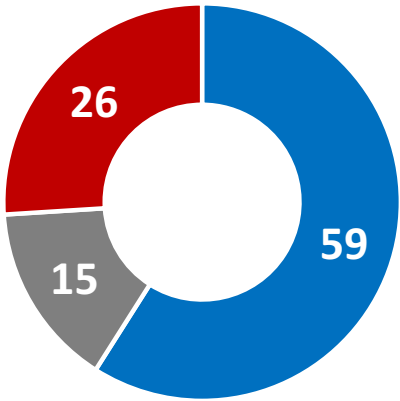
Facts, Values, and
Concerns

By a 33-point margin, people side with an argument that government should have an active role to ensure people can care for themselves and their families without experiencing financial harm. Only the Opposition thinks the government should stay out.

Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?

It is each person's responsibility to take care of their own family, the government should stay out of it.

The government should play an active role in society in ensuring people can care for themselves and their families without experiencing financial harm.



Not sure

All Adults

*split sampled question

	Can Care Without Financial Harm	Stay Out of It	Margin
Base	82	12	70
Persuadable	59	23	36
Opposition	17	68	-51



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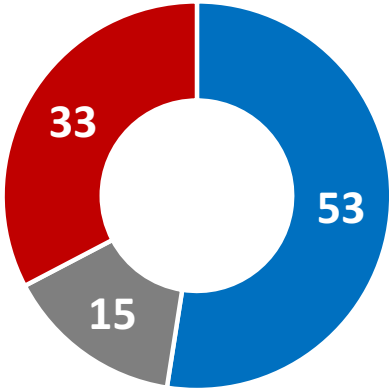


While concerns about small business is a vulnerability, we can contest this. By 20-points, people agree that a national program would take the burden off small businesses rather than an argument that says leave is too hard on small businesses. Republicans split and the Opposition sides with this being a burden on small business.

Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?

It is too hard on small businesses to give their employees paid family and medical leave for up to 12 weeks.

A national program of paid family and medical leave would take the financial burden of providing such benefits off of small businesses.



Not sure

All Adults

	Take Burden Off	Too Hard	Margin
Base	77	17	60
Persuadable	49	33	16
Opposition	21	65	-44



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A plurality strongly agree that people face barriers to accessing health care and can't afford to take time off from work and that the burden of not having a national program already falls on people and their families.

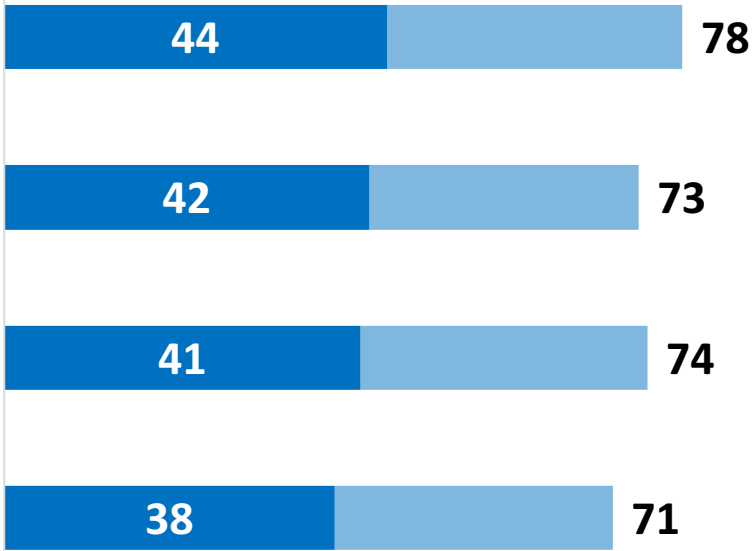
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements people have made about the need for a national paid family and medical leave program?

Not only do people face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take

Not only do low-income people and people of color face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to

Right now, the burden of lost wages or even lost jobs is on people and their families because we don't have a national paid family and medical...

Right now, people are paying the cost through lost wages or even lost jobs because we don't have a national paid family and medical leave program

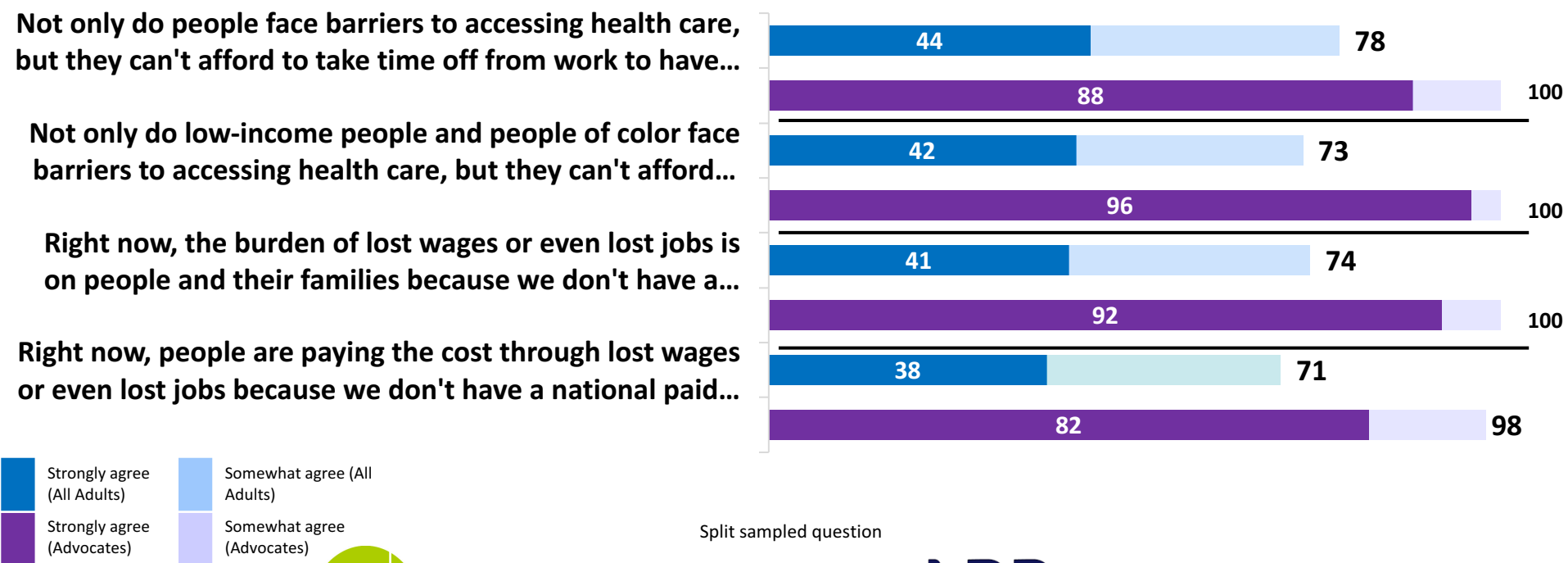


Strongly agree Somewhat agree

Split sampled question

Solid majorities of advocates strongly agree that people are paying the costs of the absence of a national paid family and medical leave program, and that people, especially low-income people and people of color, cannot afford to take time off to care for themselves and their families.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements people have made about the need for a national paid family and medical leave program?



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While there is little difference among Democrats and Republicans, Independents drop when low-income people and people of color are explicitly referenced.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements people have made about the need for a national paid family and medical leave program?

% Strongly Agree	All Adults	Dem	Ind	Rep
Not only do people face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	44	57	34	36
Not only do low-income people and people of color face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	42	58	26	32

Split sampled question



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Not mentioning low-income people and people of color is slightly stronger among Native Americans. However, mentioning them explicitly is stronger among African Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements people have made about the need for a national paid family and medical leave program?

% Strongly Agree	All Adults	White	African American	Latinx	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American
Not only do people face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	44	42	50	52	31	50
Not only do low-income people and people of color face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	42	39	55	48	42	40

Split sampled question



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While there is little difference among non-college men and women, college educated men and women drop when low-income people and people of color are explicitly referenced.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements people have made about the need for a national paid family and medical leave program?

% Strongly Agree	All Adults	Non-college men	Non-college women	College men	College women
Not only do people face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	44	42	46	35	50
Not only do low-income people and people of color face barriers to accessing health care, but they can't afford to take time off from work to have the time and space to take care of themselves and their families	42	41	47	29	43



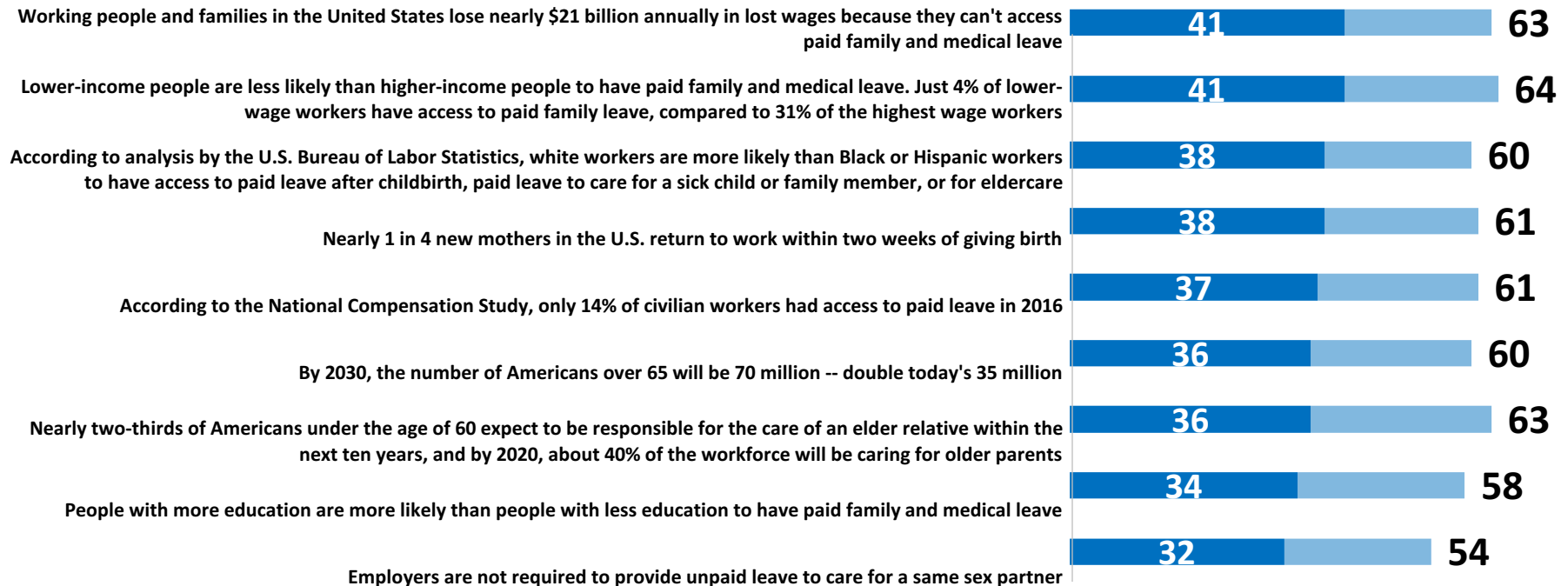
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Split sampled question

The most concerning facts are that working people lose nearly \$21 billion annually in lost wages and lower-income people are less likely to have paid family and medical leave. Following these are a range of facts about racial disparities, how quickly mothers return to work after giving birth, only 14% having paid leave, the aging population, disparities based on education, and unequal treatment of same-sex partners.

Here are some facts about people's access to paid family and medical leave in the United States. For each, how concerned are you?



Very concerned

Somewhat concerned

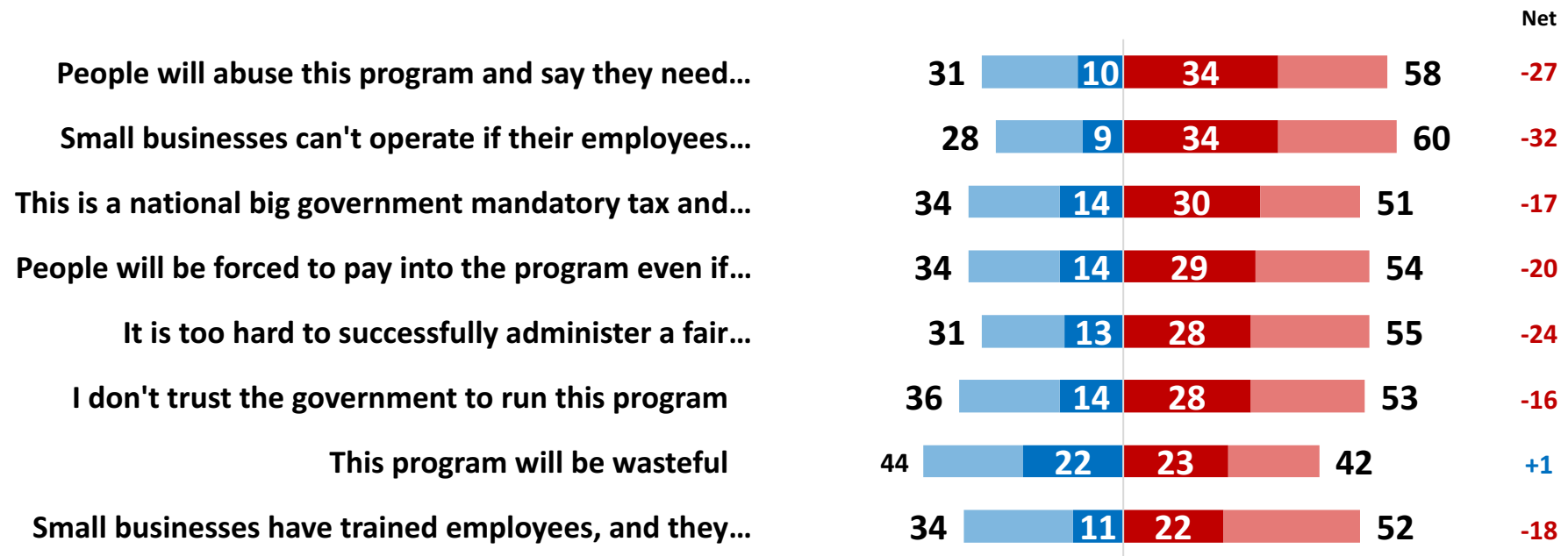


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About a third are very concerned that people will abuse a national program and that small businesses can't operate with their employees taking off for weeks or months. In a second tier of concerns are this being a national big government tax and program, people paying in who won't use it, it is too hard to fairly administer, and distrust in government. The only concern that people push back on is that the program will be wasteful.

Some people have concerns about a national program to provide paid family and medical leave. For each, how concerned are you?



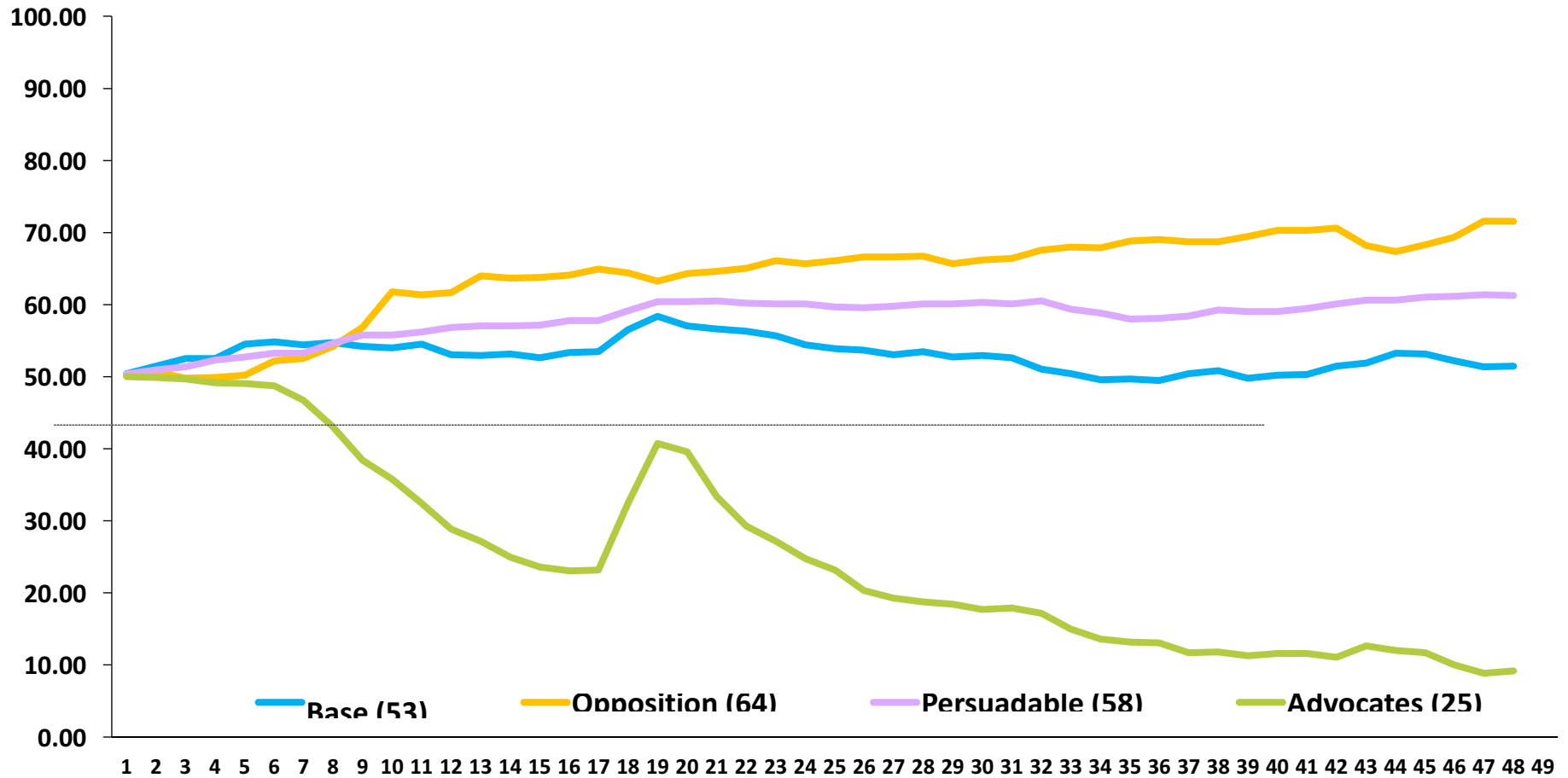
A little concerned
Not concerned at all
Somewhat concerned
Very concerned

*split sampled question



**Messages &
Recommendations**

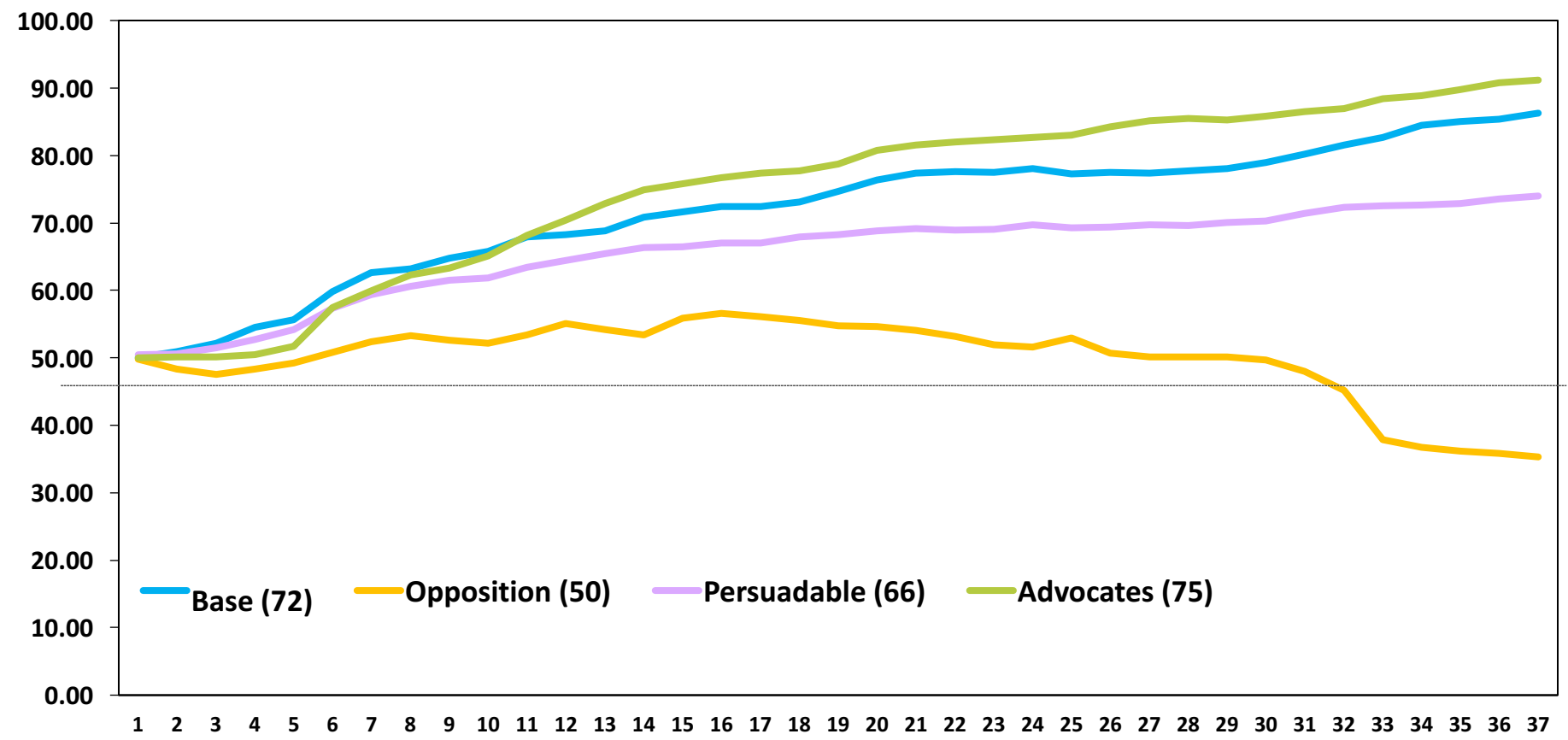
Opposition



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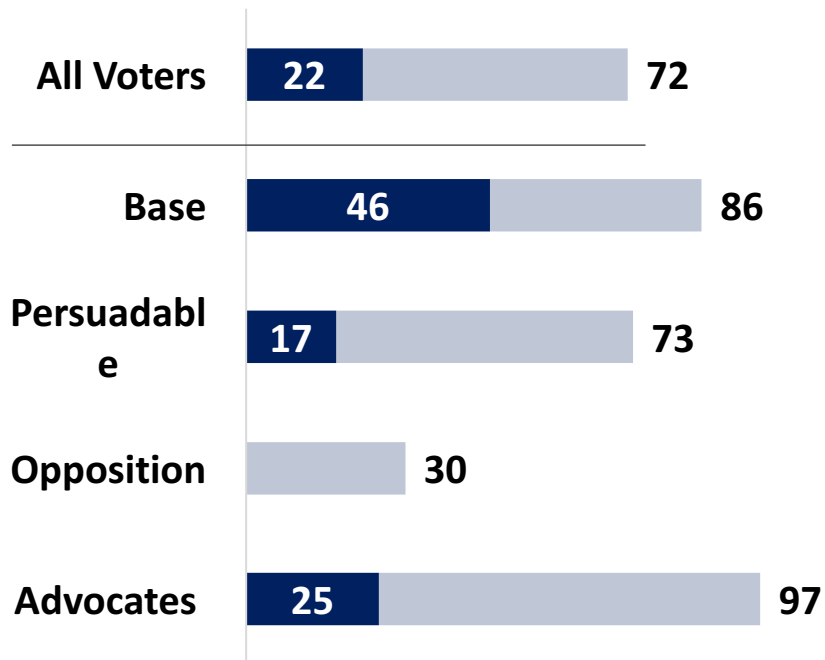
Being There



Being There

How convincing did you find this message?

■ 100 – very convincing ■ Total 51-100



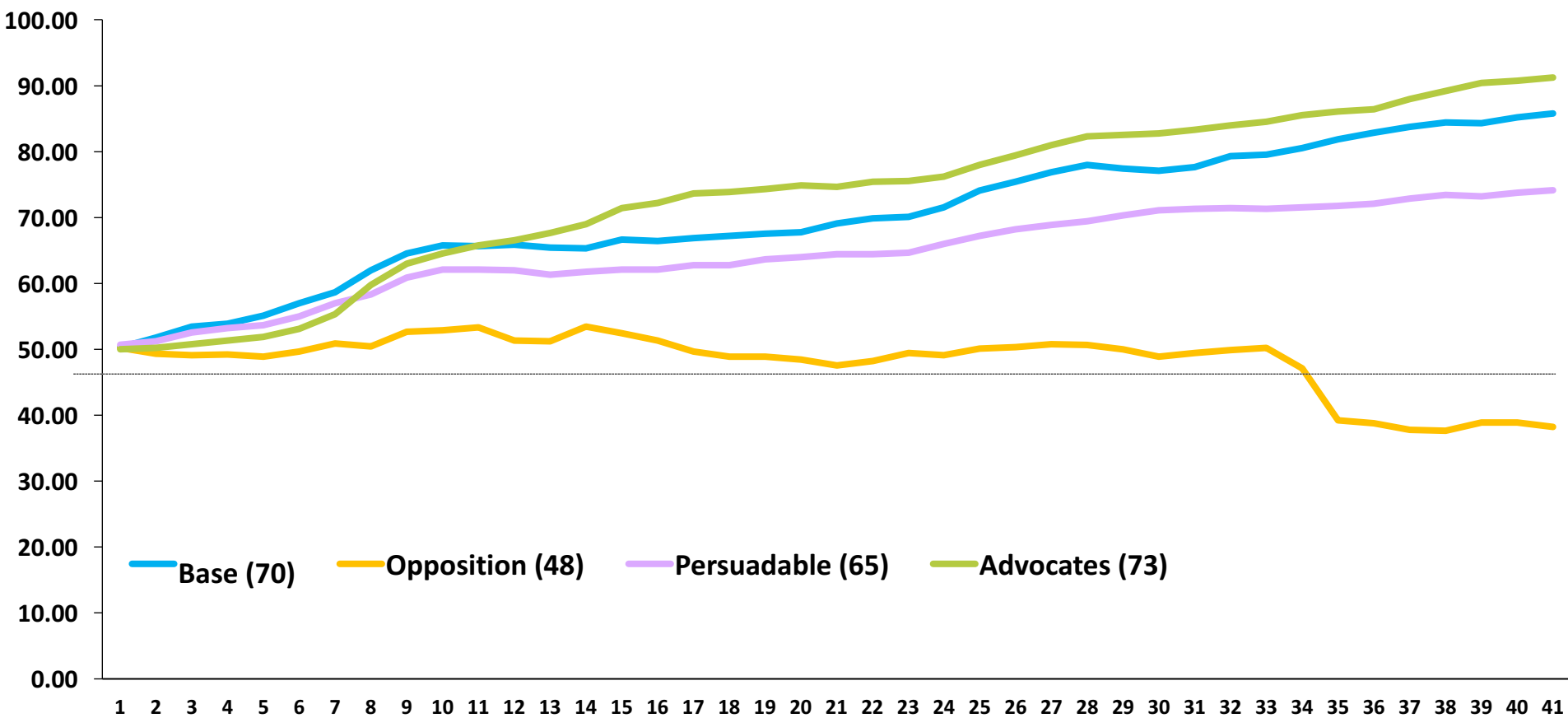
WHAT WORKS

- ✓ Strong conscious and unconscious ratings for Base and Persuadables.
- ✓ Alienates the Opposition.
- ✓ Effectively leads with values, then pivots to identifying the problem and providing a solution.
- ✓ Good call to action.
- ✓ “Guarantee” is a strong word for us and alienates the Opposition.
- ✓ Advocates continue to dial up throughout the message.

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- X A slightly slower takeoff for Base and Persuadables.

Guarantee No Exceptions



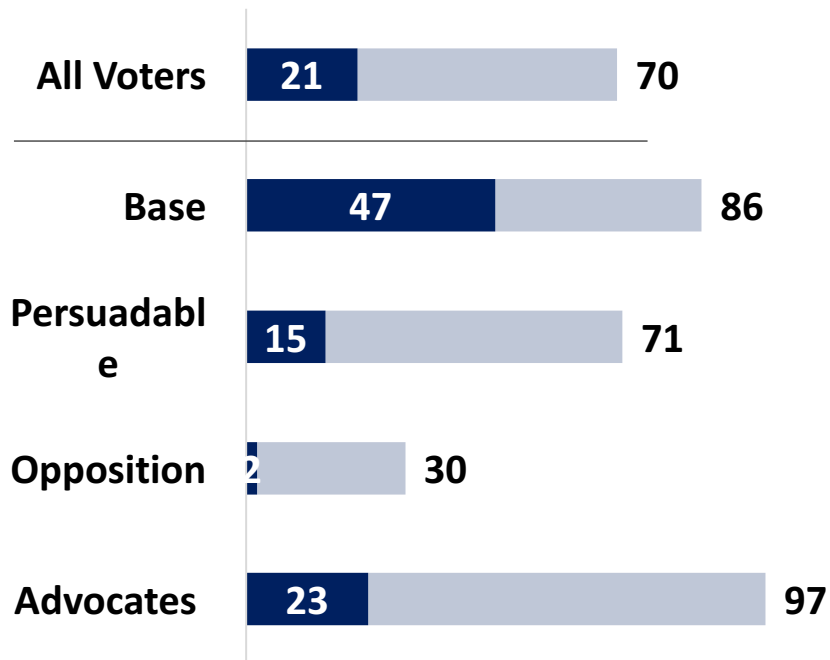
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Guarantee No Exception

How convincing did you find this message?

■ 100 – very convincing ■ Total 51-100



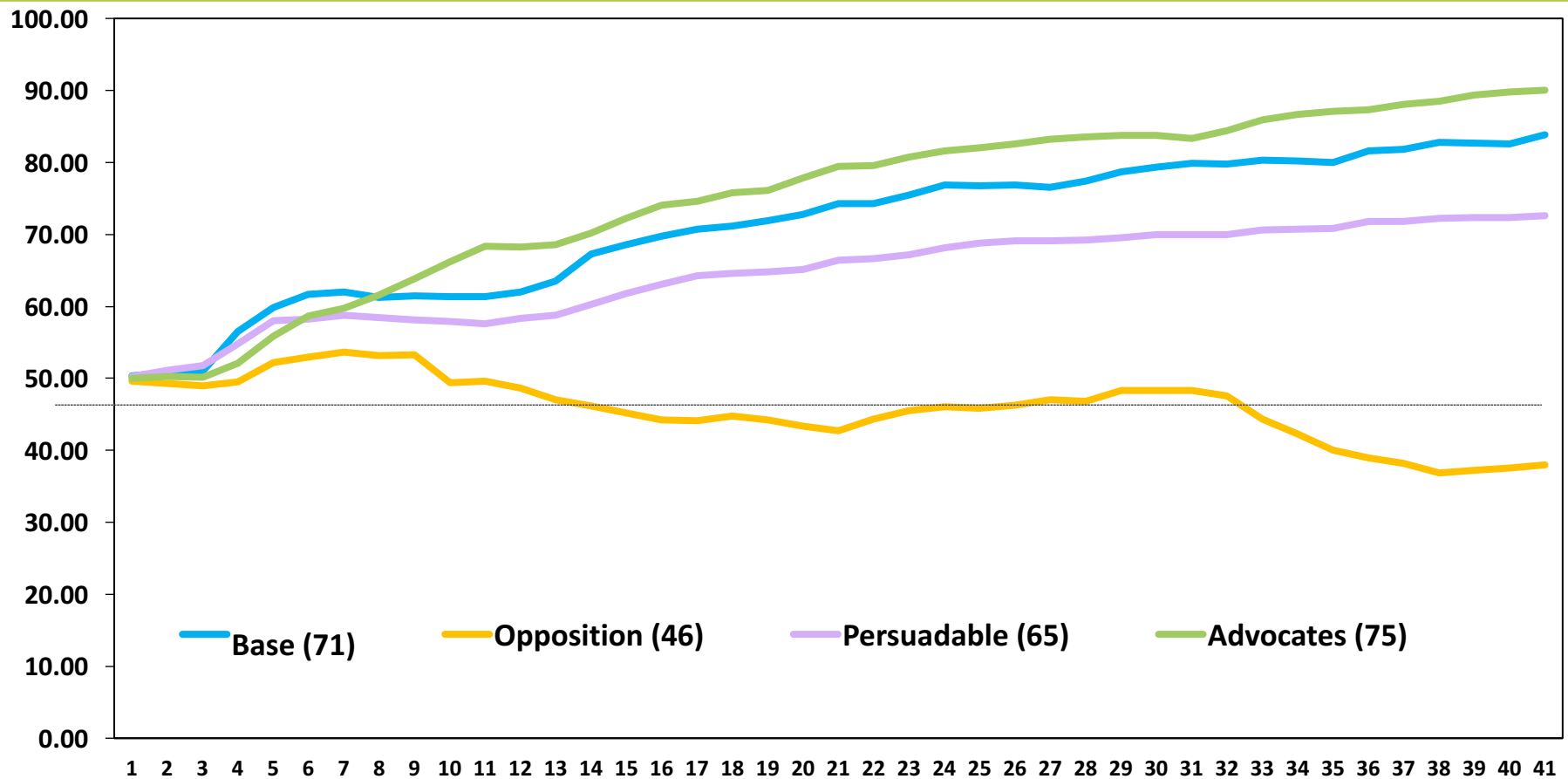
WHAT WORKS

- ✓ Leads with strong values.
- ✓ The Base responds well to forcing people to choose.
- ✓ The solution of a law that resolves the need to choose is seen warmly.
- ✓ Alienates the Opposition again with the idea of a guarantee.
- ✓ Advocates find this message convincing, and dial up when the need to take care of family is mentioned. They respond to the call for no more exceptions.

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- X After a modest take-off for Persuadables they only pick up 10 more points through the end.
- X People stall when the problem is identified.

Opportunity



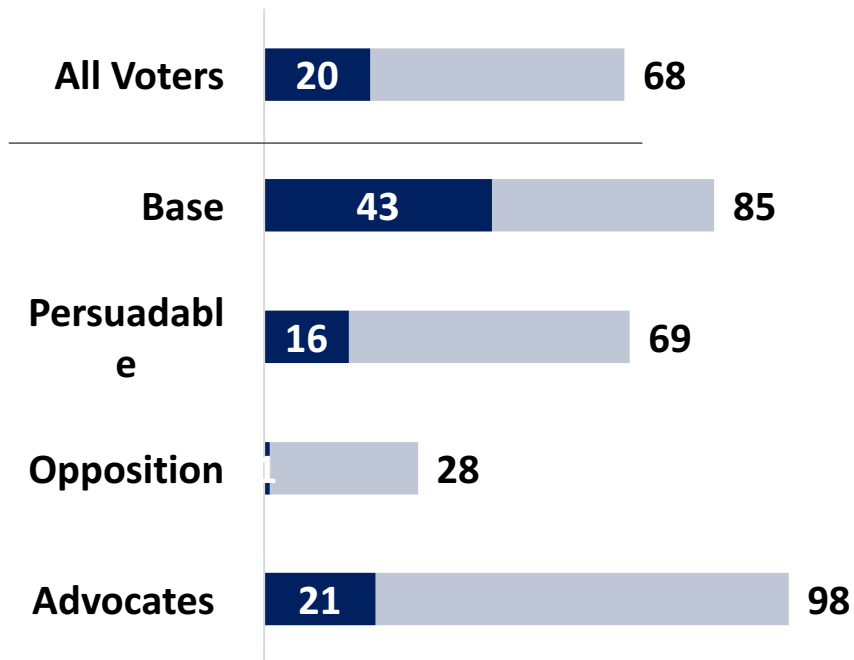
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Opportunity

How convincing did you find this message?

■ 100 – very convincing ■ Total 51-100



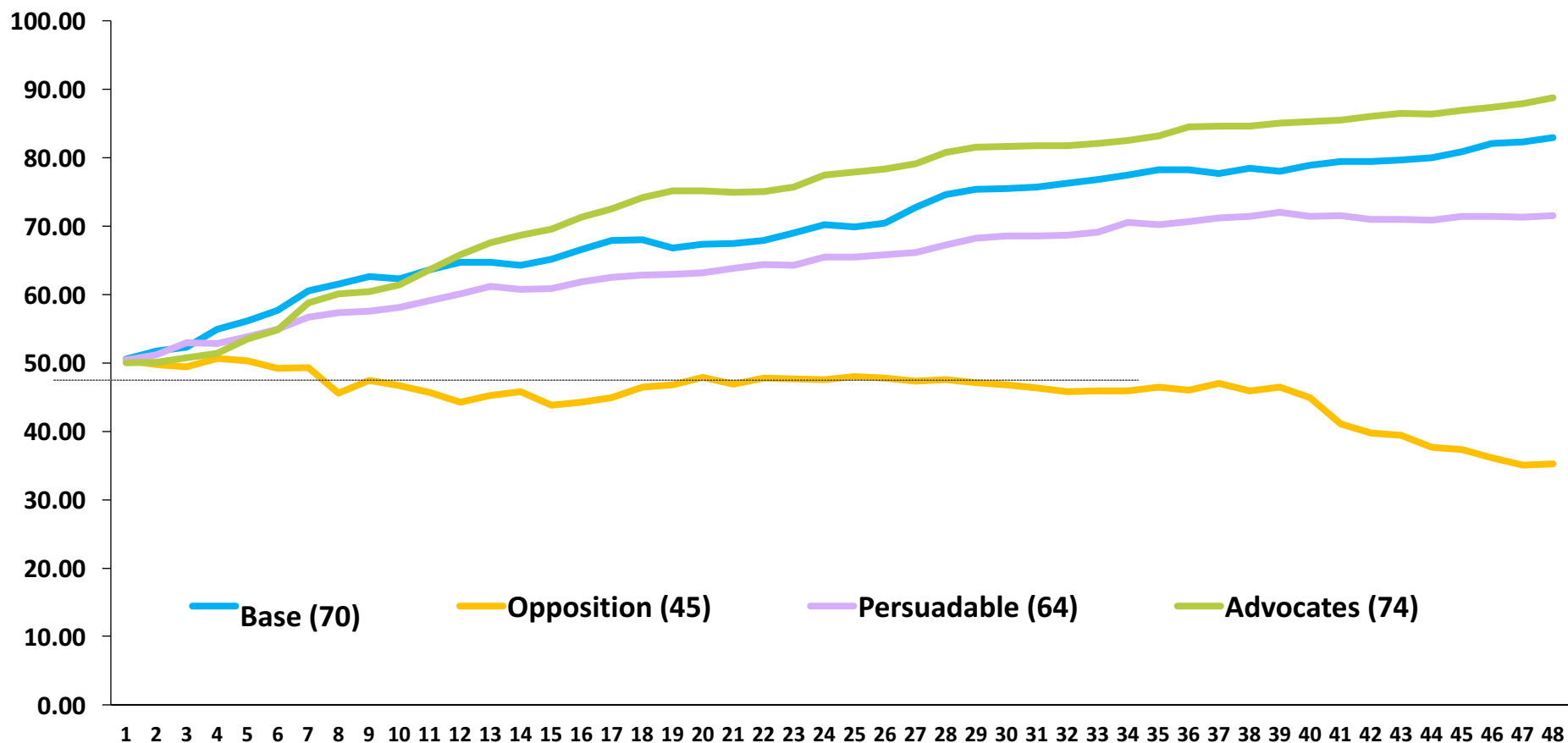
WHAT WORKS

- ✓ Strong, fast takeoff.
- ✓ The values of equal opportunity and fairness are strong.
- ✓ Race Class Narrative language works well in this context.
- ✓ Alienates the Opposition.
- ✓ Good, inclusive, collective call to action.
- ✓ Is very strong among advocates.

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- X The Base and Persuadables stall when the problem is identified, which happens almost immediately, but inclusion starts the upward trend again.

Changes



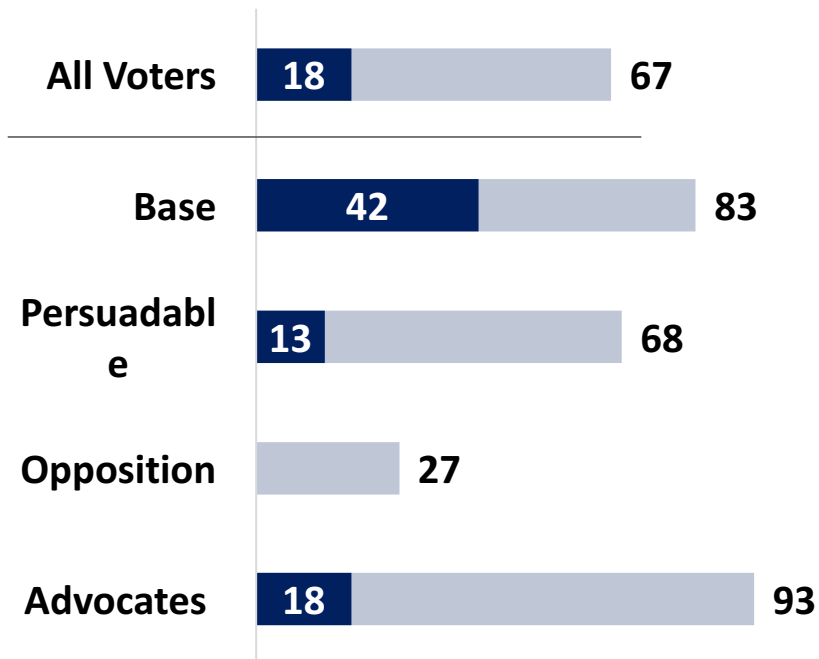
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Changes

How convincing did you find this message?

■ 100 – very convincing ■ Total 51-100



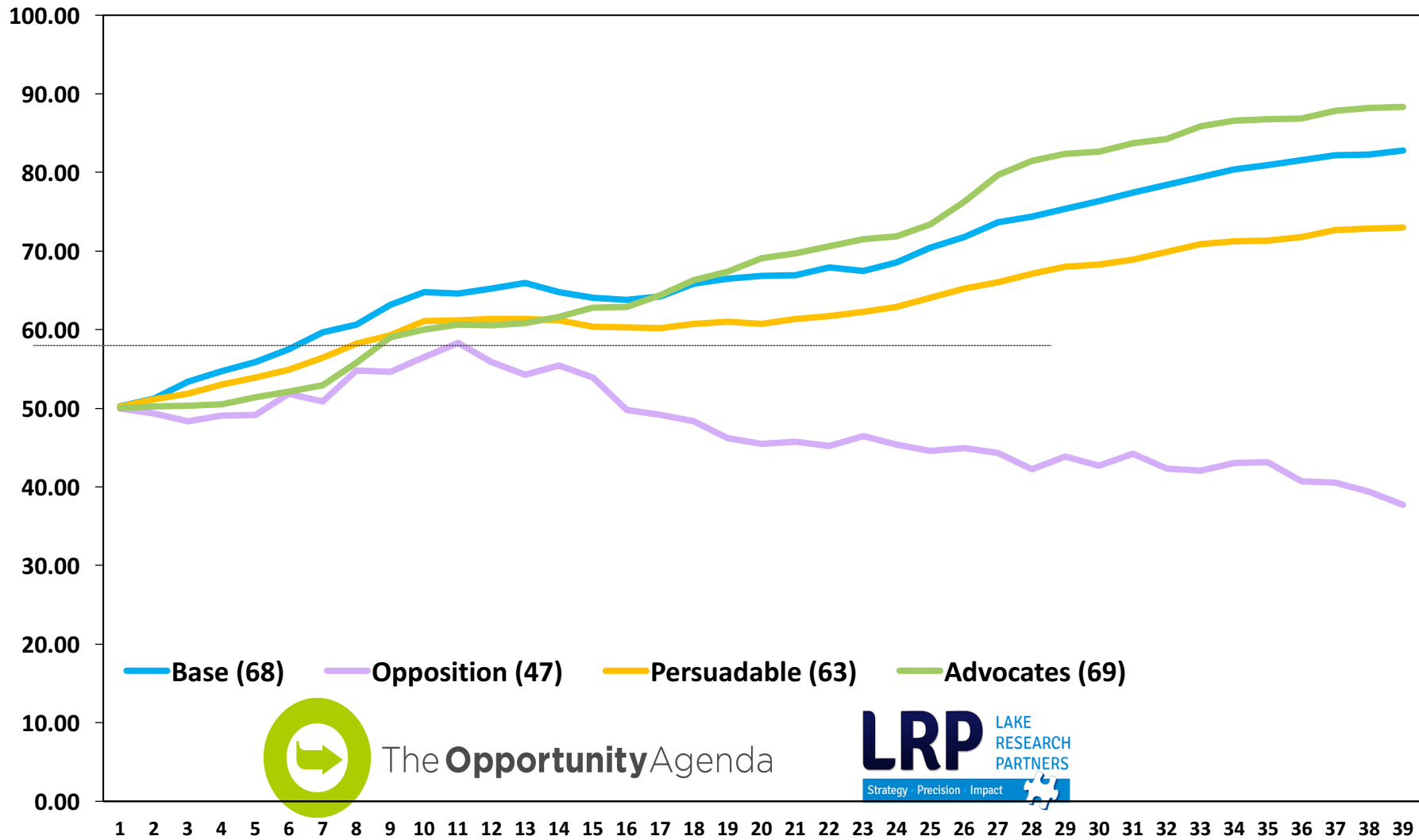
WHAT WORKS

- ✓ Acknowledging families have changed.
- ✓ Base and Persuadables do not stall when problems are identified.
- ✓ The solution to changes is well received: updated work-place standards.
- ✓ Idea of changing families alienates the Opposition.
- ✓ Strong take off by advocates when changing standards is mentioned.
- ✓ Advocates respond to “it is time our employment standards change as well.”

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- X Slower, steady takeoff for Persuadables.

Unacceptable Choices

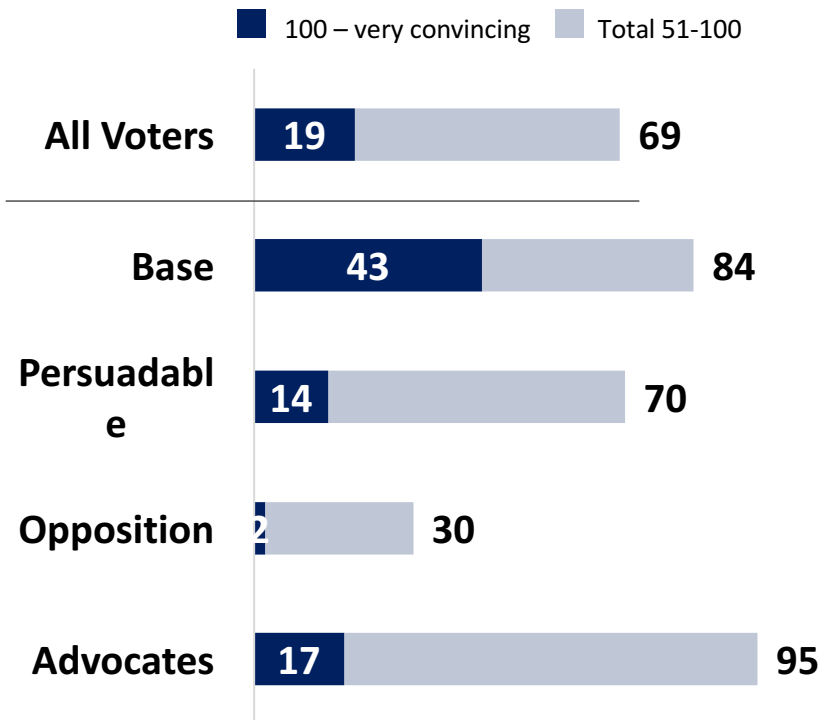


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Unacceptable Choices

How convincing did you find this message?



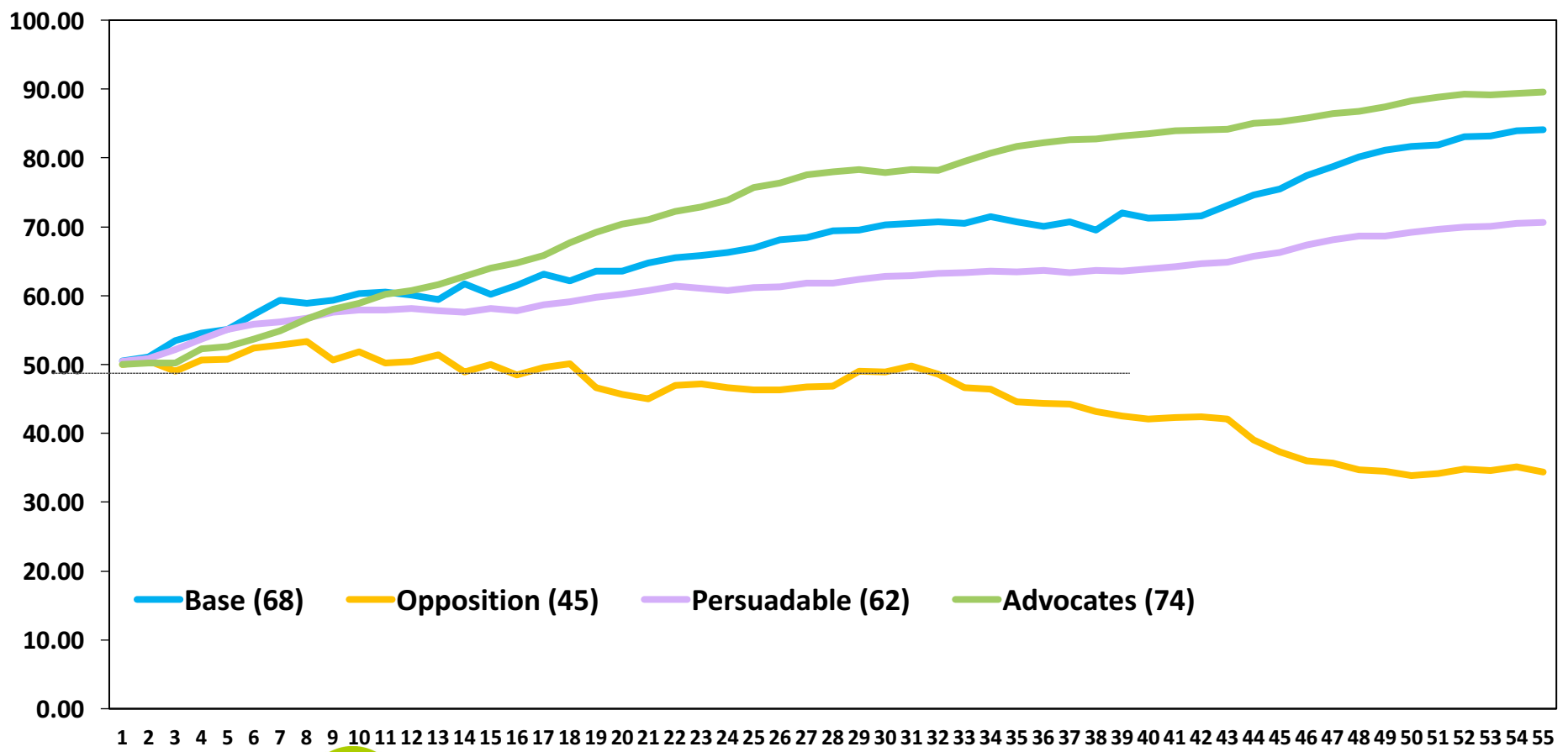
WHAT WORKS

- ✓ The Base and Persuadables respond to the core premise that the ability to work while keeping family safe and healthy are complimentary goals.
- ✓ It helps to assert no one should have to choose.
- ✓ Good reach, though slightly less intensity for Persuadables.
- ✓ Advocates dial up when choice between caring for sick family and earning a salary is mentioned.

WHAT FALLS SHORT

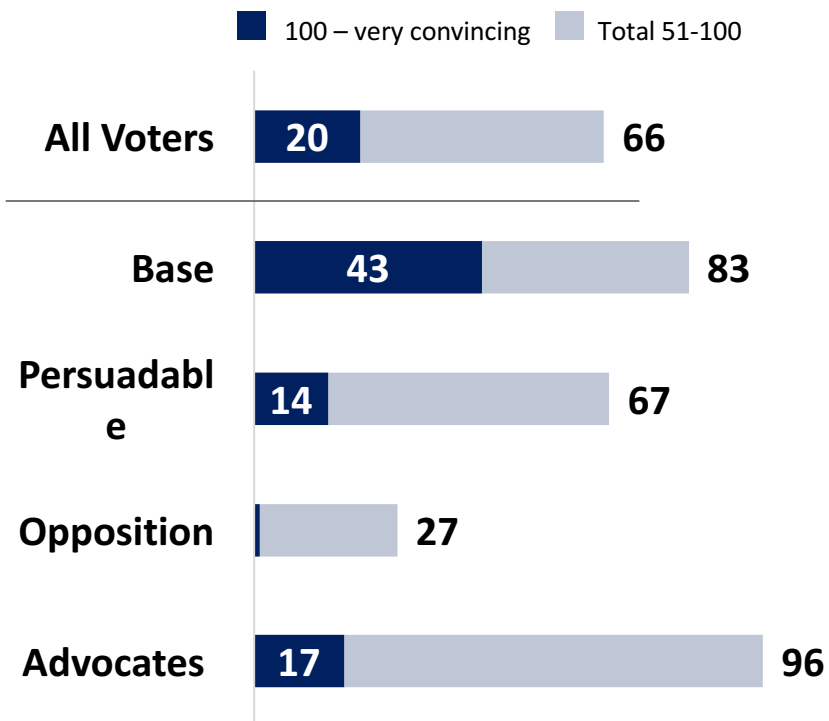
- X Slow, steady take off for Persuadables.
- X Slower take off for advocates.

Health Equity



Health Equity

How convincing did you find this message?



WHAT WORKS

- ✓ The Base really responds to the unevenness of inequity that are income and race-based.
- ✓ The last sentence is especially strong: *promote health equity and reduce struggles for families by improving the health and well-being for all Americans, regardless of income and race.*
- ✓ Advocates continue to dial up throughout the message and take off at “As of 2019, only 19% of people had access to paid leave.”

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- X Slow takeoff for Persuadables.
- X There is a lot of bouncing around for the Base and the Opposition.



The **Opportunity** Agenda

