

Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Survey

May 6th to 27th, 2023



Methodology



Hello, the Cortez Fire Protection District invites you to participate in an important survey regarding a potential ballot measure to fund Fire District personnel, apparatus, and equipment. We want to know your opinion, so please make your voice heard. The survey will only take 10 minutes to complete, and your answers will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. Let's get started.
REPLY STOP TO OPT OUT

Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the results of an online survey of 580 registered voters in the Cortez Fire Protection District in Montezuma County, Colorado. The interviews were conducted from May 6th – 27th, 2023.

The overall survey responses have a margin of error of +/- 3.97% at the 95% confidence interval. Population subgroups will have a higher margin of error than the overall sample.

The survey data was weighted to be representative of voter turnout demographics within the Cortez Fire Protection District in Montezuma County, Colorado, for an odd-year November general election.

Cortez Fire Protection District Voter Registration and Past Turnout Demographics

Cortez Fire Protection District

Magellan Strategies Voter Registration and Past Election Turnout Report

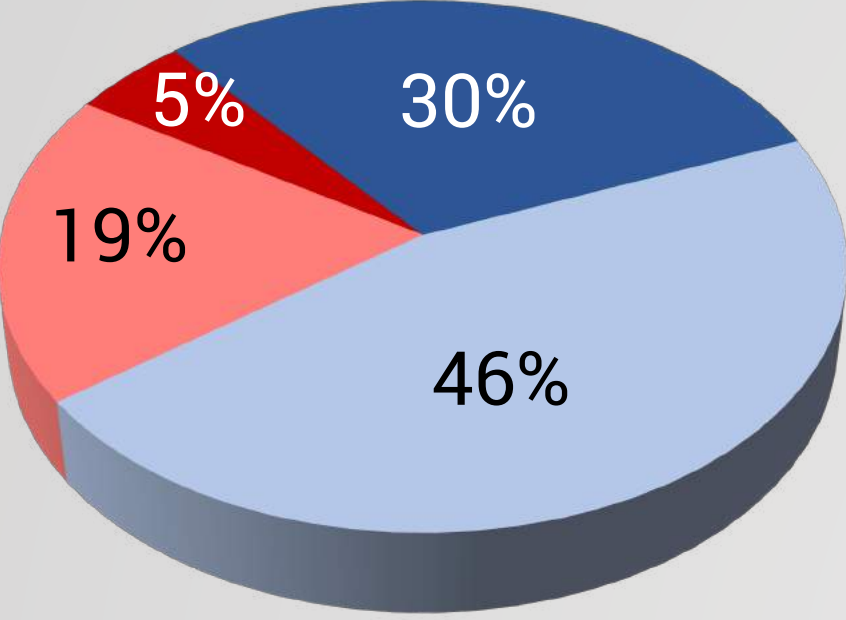
Sex	Registration				2022		2021		2020		2019	
Female	5,810	50.5%	3,250	51.9%	1,923	52.1%	4,119	51.9%	2,270	52.3%		
Male	5,689	49.5%	3,014	48.1%	1,770	47.9%	3,815	48.1%	2,069	47.7%		
Total	11,499		6,264		3,693		7,934		4,339			

Age Group	Registration				2022		2021		2020		2019	
18-34	2,677	23.3%	798	12.7%	280	7.6%	1,492	18.8%	422	9.7%		
35-44	1,846	16.1%	770	12.3%	320	8.7%	1,058	13.3%	429	9.9%		
45-54	1,480	12.9%	785	12.5%	394	10.7%	1,029	13.0%	501	11.5%		
55-64	1,900	16.5%	1,223	19.5%	803	21.7%	1,563	19.7%	988	22.8%		
65+	3,596	31.3%	2,688	42.9%	1,896	51.3%	2,792	35.2%	1,999	46.1%		
Total	11,499		6,264		3,693		7,934		4,339			

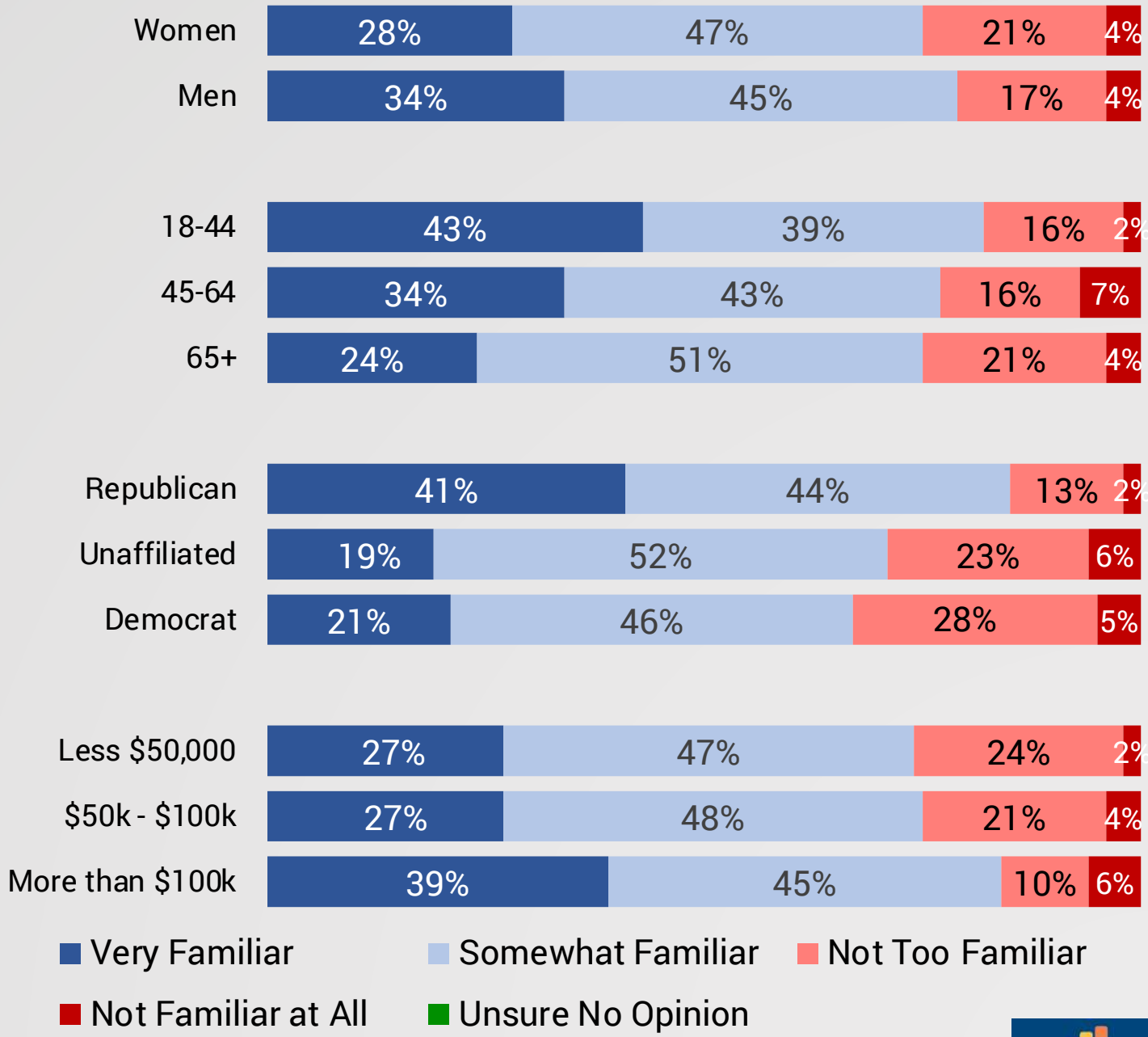
Party	Registration				2022		2021		2020		2019	
Unaffiliated	4,916	42.8%	2,251	35.9%	1,053	28.5%	2,553	32.2%	1,111	25.6%		
Democrat	1,810	15.7%	1,015	16.2%	727	19.7%	1,427	18.0%	923	21.3%		
Republican	4,567	39.7%	2,914	46.5%	1,876	50.8%	3,844	48.4%	2,244	51.7%		
Libertarian	88	0.8%	42	0.7%	13	0.4%	56	0.7%	27	0.6%		
Other	118	1.0%	42	0.7%	24	0.6%	54	0.7%	34	0.8%		
Total	11,499		6,264		3,693		7,934		4,339			



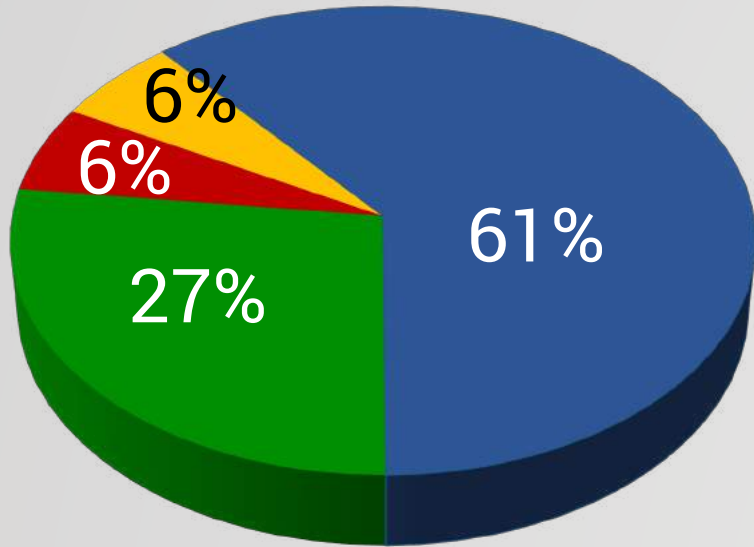
How familiar are you with the Cortez Fire Protection District and the services they provide?



■ Very Familiar ■ Somewhat Familiar
■ Not Too Familiar ■ Not Familiar at All
■ Unsure or No Opinion

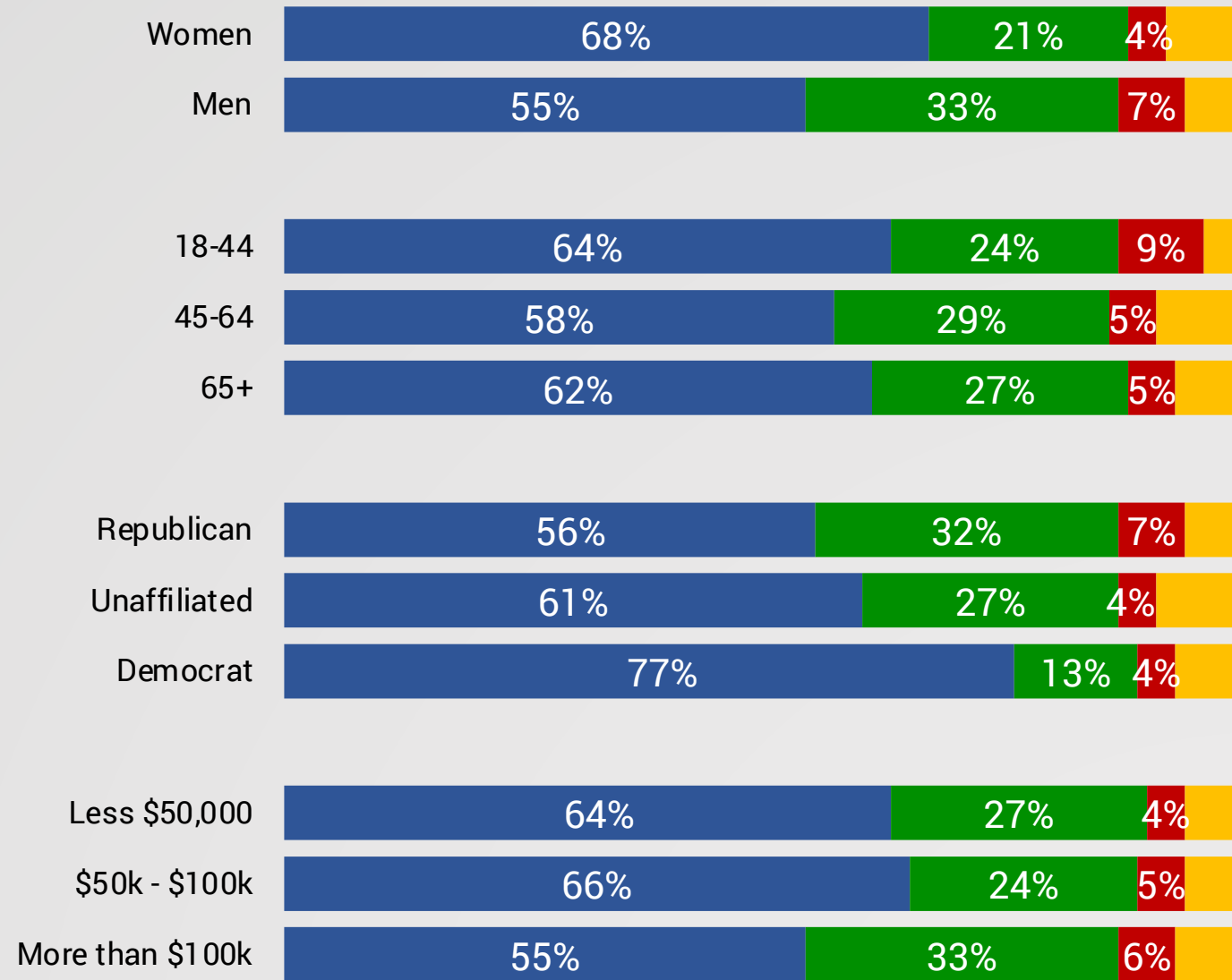


Do you think fire risk in the Cortez Fire Protection District has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same in the last couple of years?



- Total Increased
- About the Same
- Total Decreased
- Unsure

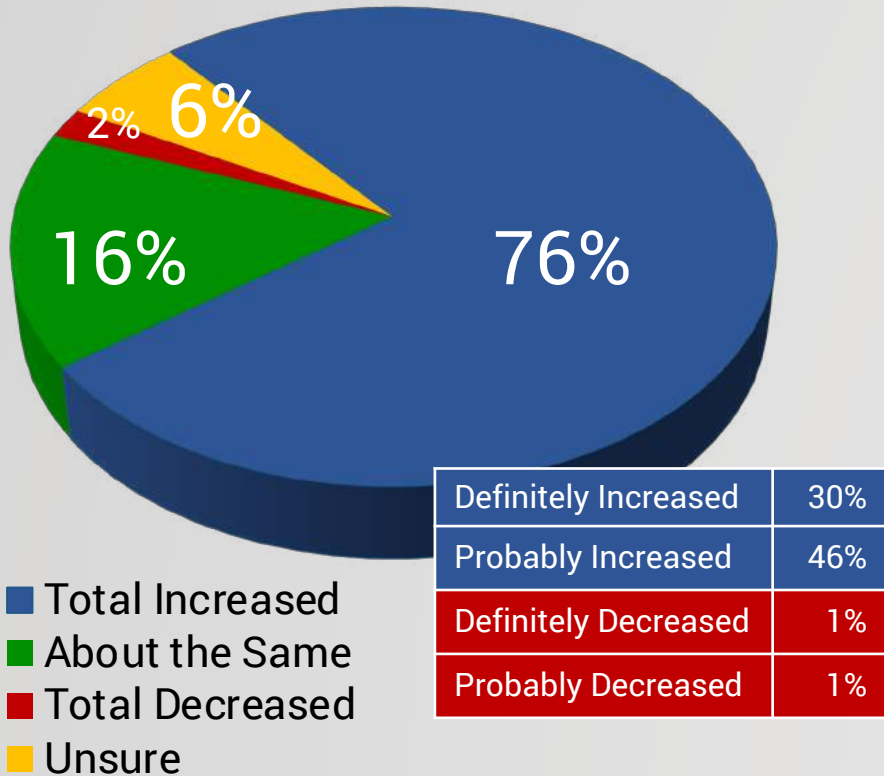
Definitely Increased	23%
Probably Increased	38%
Definitely Decreased	1%
Probably Decreased	5%



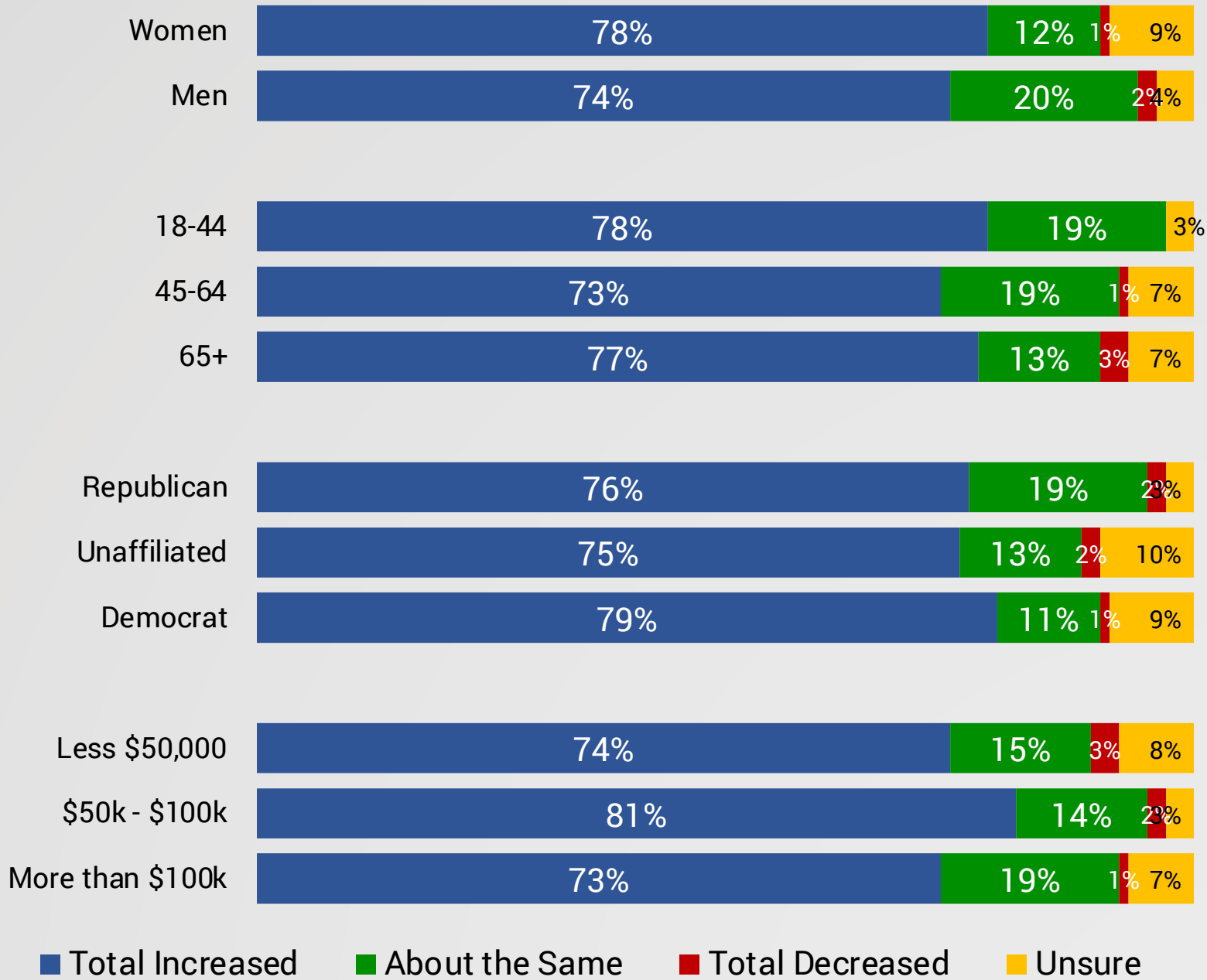
- Total Increased
- Total Decreased
- About the Same
- Unsure



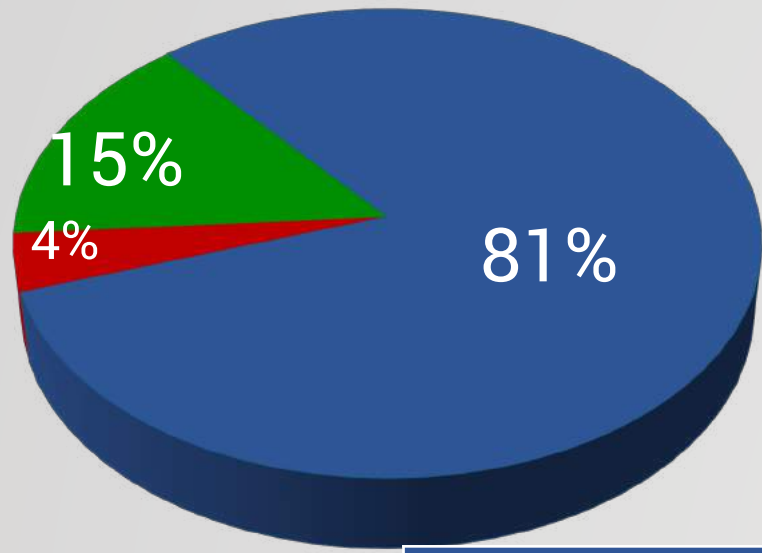
Do you think the need for emergency services (medical calls, automobile accidents, rescues, etc.) in the Cortez area has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same in the last couple of years?



Definitely Increased	30%
Probably Increased	46%
Definitely Decreased	1%
Probably Decreased	1%

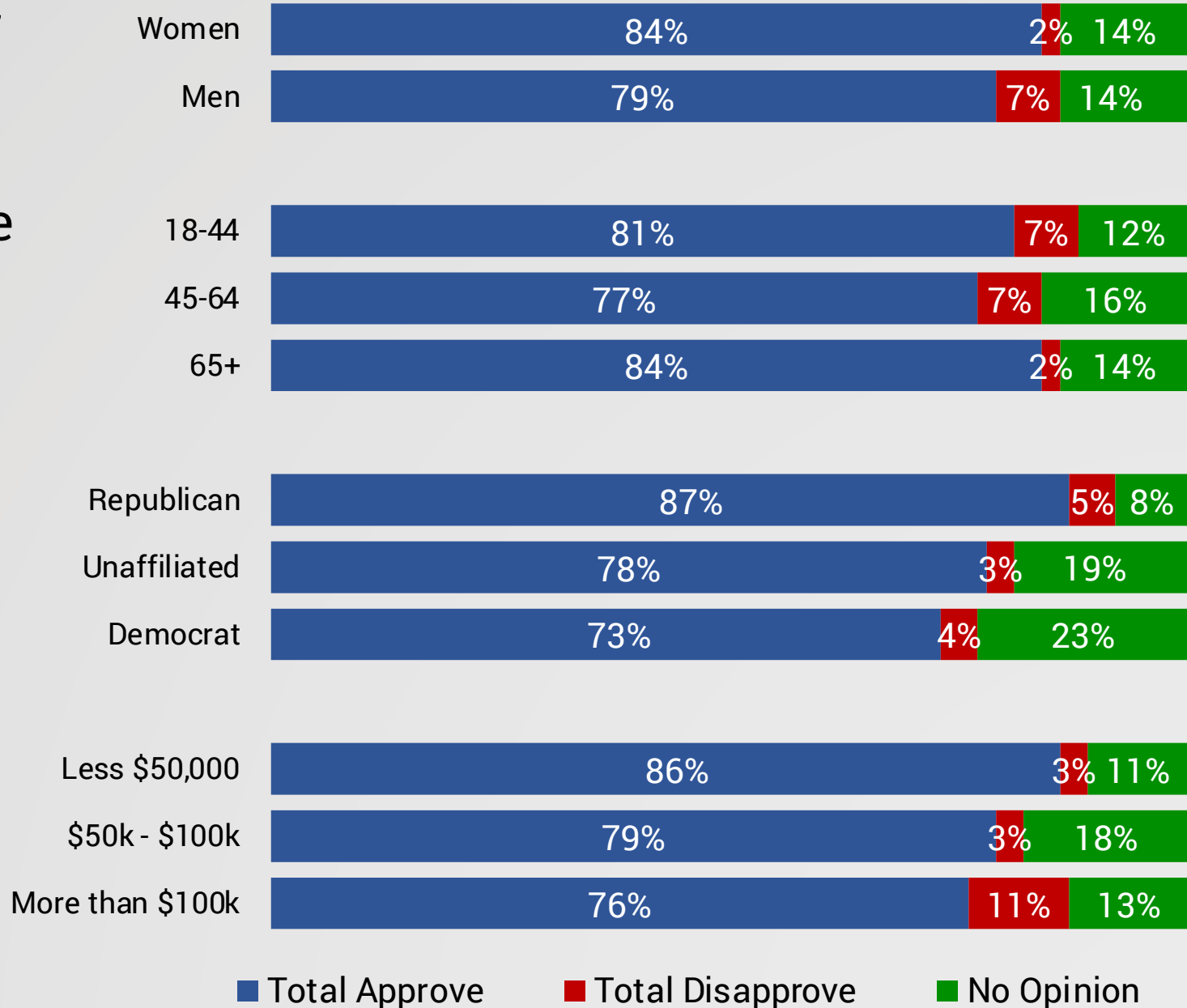


Do you approve or disapprove of the job Cortez Fire Protection District is doing, providing fire protection and emergency rescue services to your community?



- Total Approve
- Total Disapprove
- No Opinion

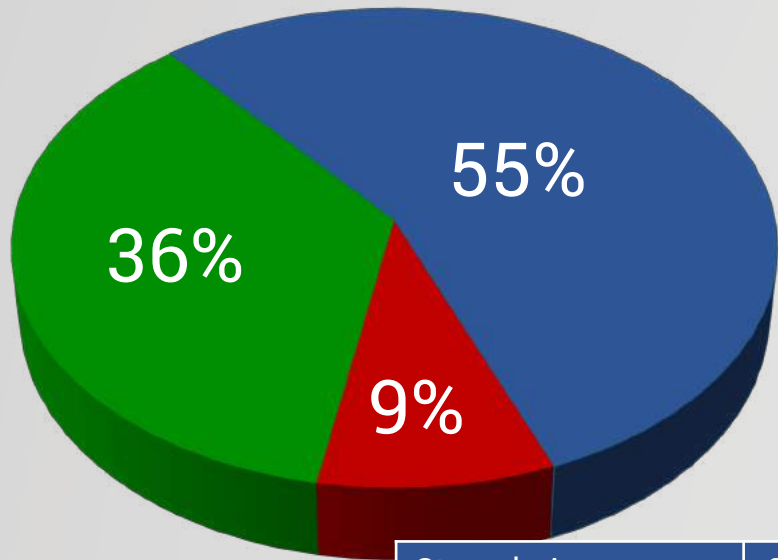
Strongly Approve	63%
Somewhat Approve	18%
Strongly Disapprove	2%
Somewhat Disapprove	2%



- Total Approve
- Total Disapprove
- No Opinion

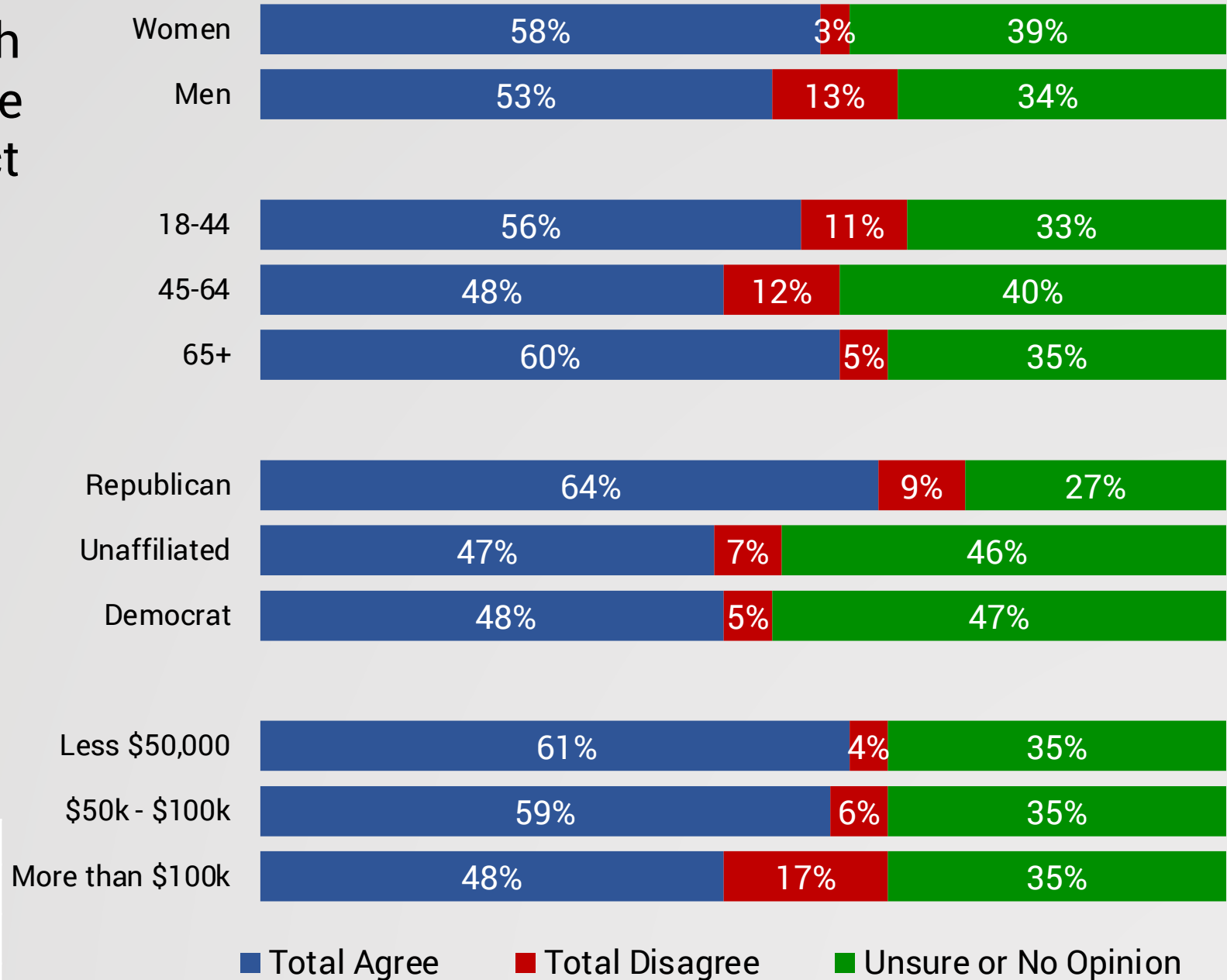


Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The Cortez Fire Protection District is fiscally responsible and spends taxpayer money wisely."

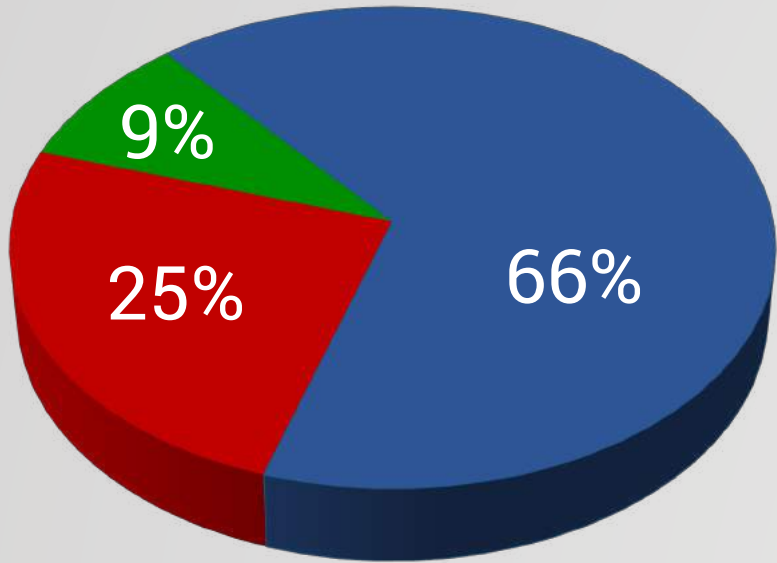


■ Total Agree
 ■ Total Disagree
 ■ Unsure

Strongly Agree	34%
Somewhat Agree	21%
Strongly Disagree	4%
Somewhat Disagree	5%

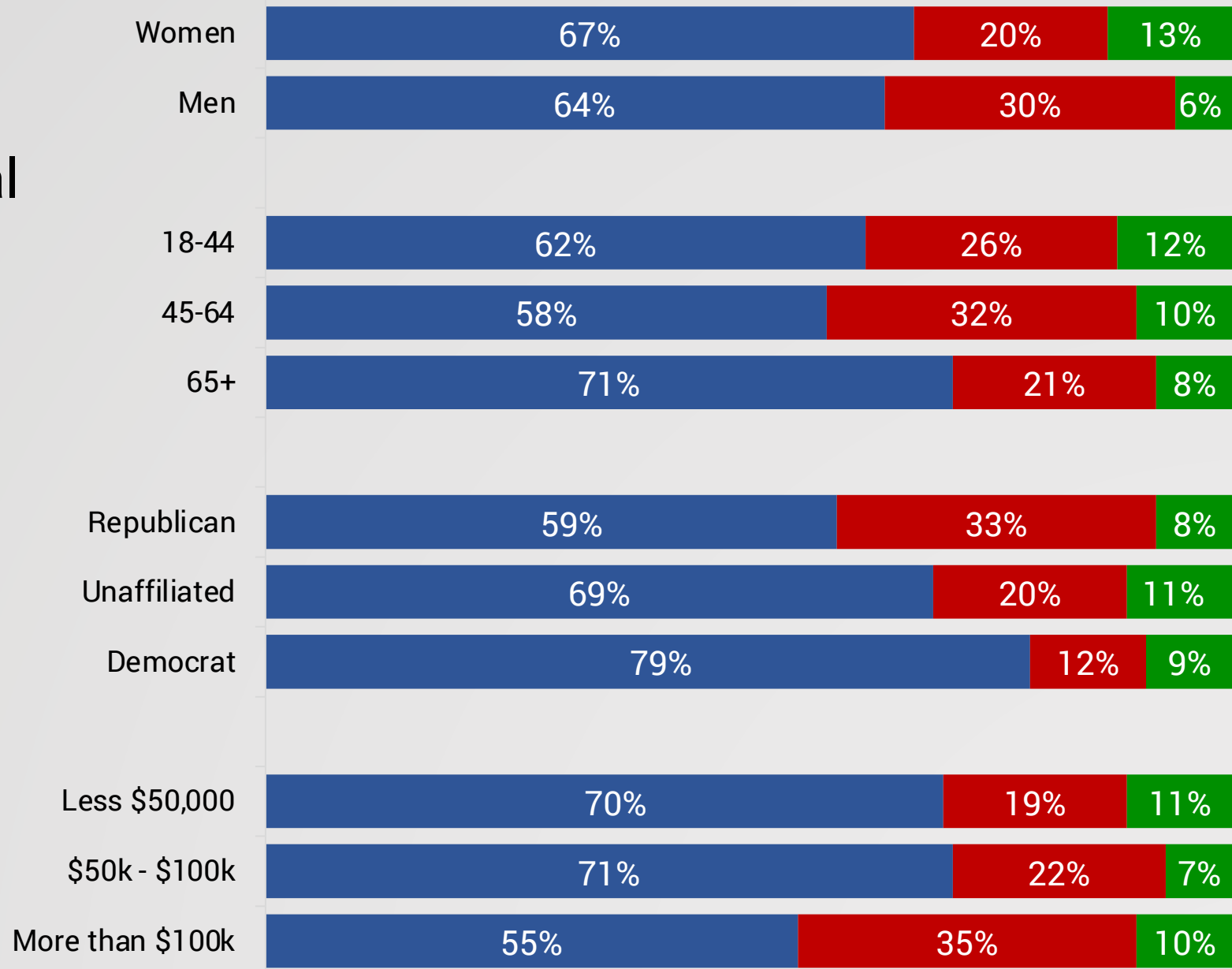


Would you support or oppose a property tax increase to create additional funding for the Cortez Fire Protection District?



■ Total Support
■ Total Oppose
■ Unsure

Strongly Support	30%
Somewhat Support	36%
Strongly Oppose	16%
Somewhat Oppose	9%



■ Total Support
 ■ Total Oppose
 ■ Unsure



Cortez Fire Protection District Uninformed Ballot Measure Question



The Cortez Fire Protection District is considering a 6.78 mill ballot measure property tax increase to generate approximately \$1,000,000 in additional funding. The additional revenue would be used for the district's day-to-day operations, including, but not limited to, maintenance, fuel, and insurance costs.

The additional funding would also allow the district to increase salaries for current full-time staff, as well as update aging engines and equipment.

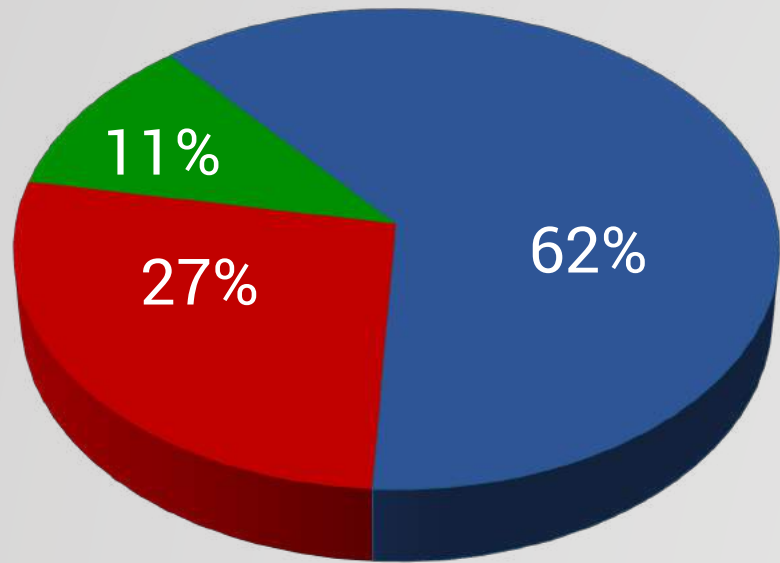
The ballot measure would increase the current Fire District mill levy from 10.957 to 17.737. A 6.78 mill property tax increase for a home valued at \$350,000 would cost a homeowner about \$108 annually, or \$9 a month.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 6.78 mill property tax increase to raise \$1,000,000 in additional funding for the Cortez Fire Protection District?

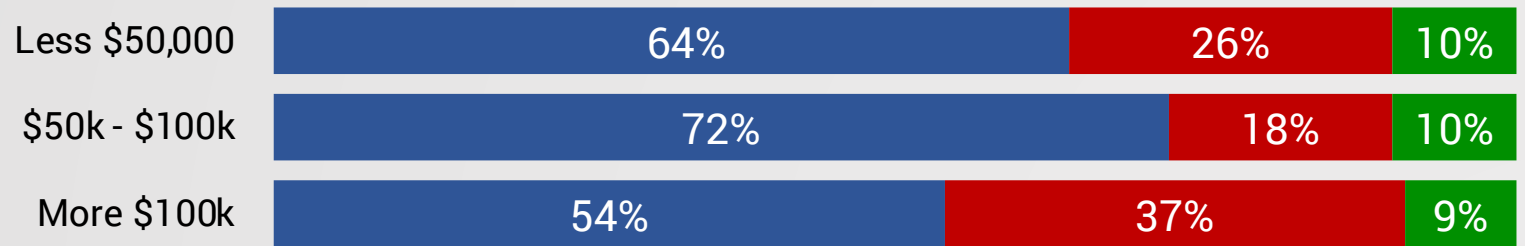
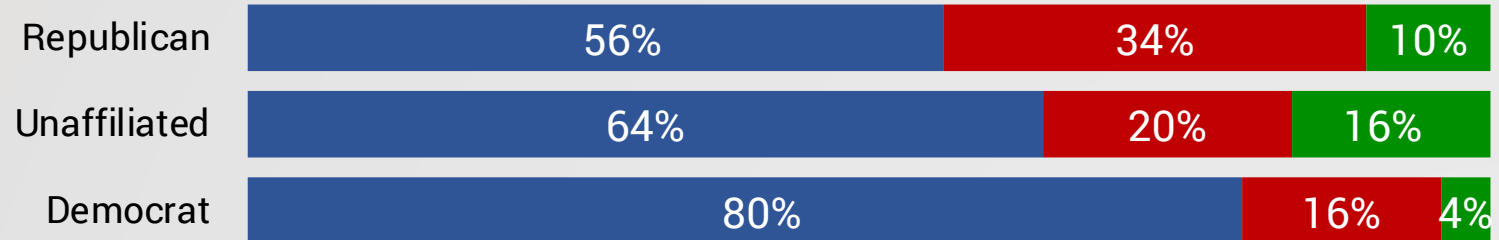
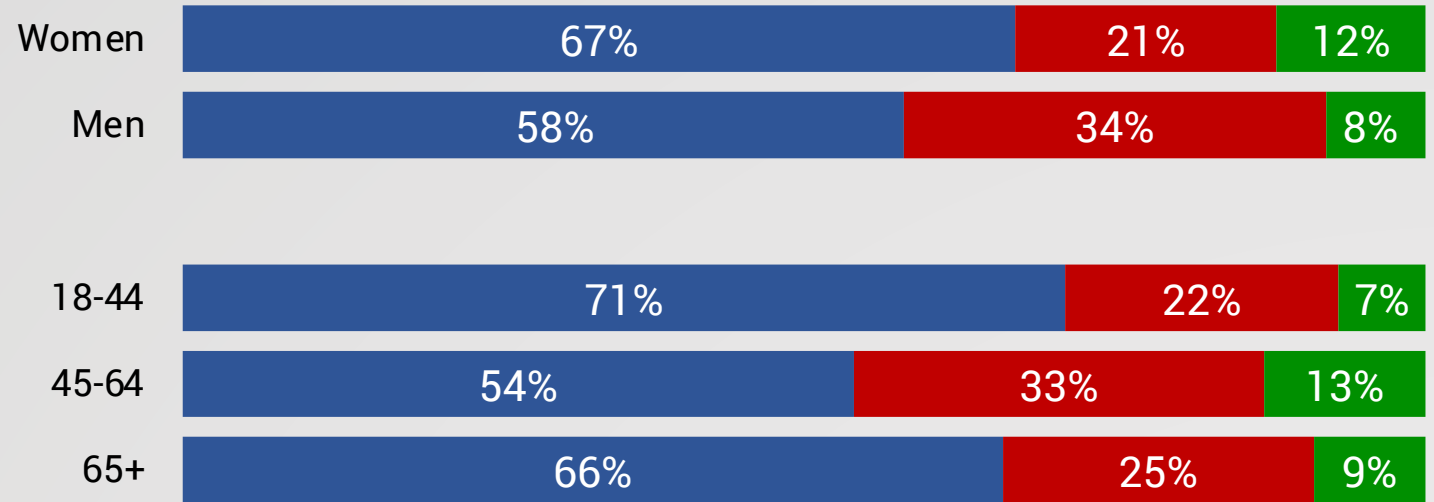


Uninformed Ballot Measure Question

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 6.78 mill property tax increase to raise \$1,000,000 in additional funding for the Cortez Fire Protection District?



Total Yes	Definitely Yes, Approve	30%
	Probably Yes, Approve	32%
Total No	Definitely No, Reject	15%
	Probably No, Reject	12%
Undecided		



■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions



CFPD Number of Employees, Give Competitive Wages - The Cortez Fire Protection District currently runs out of one fire station and staffs 5 full-time firefighters per day on 3 shifts (15 total), 9 part-time firefighters who fill in when a full-time firefighter is out sick or on vacation and has approximately 7 volunteers who are all going through their basic training. If the ballot measure were to pass, the Cortez Fire Protection District would look to provide competitive and livable wages by increasing salaries to their current staff and hiring additional firefighters at competitive wages in the future.

One Station, Overlapping Calls, Hire Additional Staff - Currently, the Cortez Fire Protection District runs out of one station operating two trucks 24/7. Approximately 40% of the calls are overlapping, often with 3 to 4 other calls occurring at the same time. This can cause firefighters and EMS to be delayed or completely unable to respond to additional calls. Funds from this ballot measure would allow the district to hire additional staff and firefighters to help with the overlapping of calls on a day-to-day basis.



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions

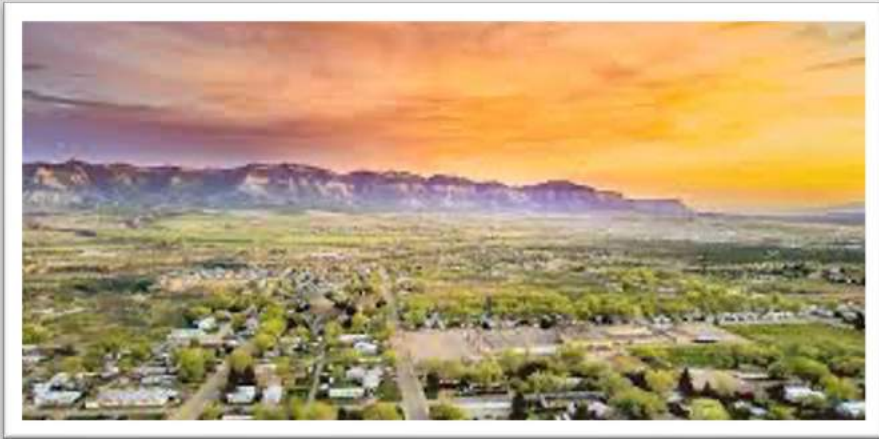


CFPD Age of Apparatus and Cost to Maintain - Currently, all but one of the fire trucks used by the district are more than 10 years old and need to be updated and replaced. The ladder truck is nearly 30 years old. Last year, the Cortez Fire Protection District spent approximately \$49,000 to maintain the front-line trucks, and mechanics are warning the district to replace them; otherwise, costs will increase substantially. Funds from the ballot measure would be used to help upgrade its aging engines and equipment to provide the district with up-to-date technology, as well as safer and more reliable equipment.

CFPD Good Stewards of Taxpayer Money, No Tax Increase Since 2013—The Cortez Fire Protection District has successfully provided fire protection services without raising taxes since 2013. However, the cost to maintain fire engines, vehicles, and equipment and to keep an adequate number of continually trained firefighters has become increasingly difficult in the past ten years.



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions



CFPD Increase in Calls Over the Last Four Years—The number of calls has increased substantially over the last four years, going from an average of 6.26 calls a day in 2018 to 9.33 calls a day in 2022, and 40% of these calls overlap each other. Funding for this ballot measure will help with call volume by hiring additional firefighters.

Increase in Population Due to Tourism in Area—The area around Cortez has been continually growing, and the population has increased by 10,000 people over the last two years. Each year, the Cortez area sees an increase in the population of approximately 700,000 people just due to tourism and recreation. This influx of people has noticeably increased the call volume for the Cortez Fire Protection District over the last couple of years. Funding for this ballot measure will help hire additional firefighters to help with this increase in call volume.



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions

CFPD Wages Compared to Other Fire Districts - Cortez Fire Protection District starts all entry-level firefighters at minimum wage. However, other districts in the area pay better wages to their firefighters, making it difficult to hire and retain good firefighters. For example, Los Pinos Fire Protection District pays their starting firefighters \$2-\$3 an hour more than Cortez, and they have a much smaller volume of calls. Another example would be the Lower Valley Fire Department in Fruita, CO. They pay their firefighters \$14,000 more per year than Cortez Fire and have close to the same number of yearly calls. The additional funds from this ballot measure would help to retain and compensate firefighters going forward.

CFPD Starts Entry-Level Firefighters at Minimum Wage - As mentioned before, Cortez Fire Protection District starts entry-level firefighters at minimum wage. Due to the increase in minimum wage required by the State of Colorado, the Cortez Fire Protection District has increased salaries for not only new firefighters but all firefighters across the board. These salary increases will cost Cortez Fire Protection District approximately an additional \$200,000 in 2023.



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions



CFPD Current Deficit Due to Inflation, Day-to-Day Costs - The Cortez Fire Protection District currently has a deficit of \$655,000 due to inflation and the increased cost of day-to-day operations. Part of the additional funding from the ballot measure would go toward closing the yearly budget gap.

Wildfire Explanation, Staff, Equipment, Reimbursement - Wildfire danger is a major concern for the Cortez Fire Protection District. During high or extreme fire danger, the district employs additional on-call seasonal staff to meet the needs of the district. The additional staff also provides local and national fire support when local conditions are moderated. The district is reimbursed for the cost of crews and equipment used while assisting with national large fire support. In previous years wildfire funding has helped with day-to-day costs for the fire protection district.

However, the income is very inconsistent year to year and typically has a limited reimbursement amount. Most wildland fire employees are seasonal staff and are not qualified for structure fires or EMS. They are paid from and are part of the Cortez Fire Protection District, use a fire truck (apparatus), and are based out of a CFPD station.

Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions



Wildfire Reimbursement Previous Years, Budget Impact - Unfortunately, without the additional income from the national wildfire support assignments, the Cortez Fire Protection Districts' annual budget of \$1.6 million in 2023 could potentially face a deficit of \$900,000.

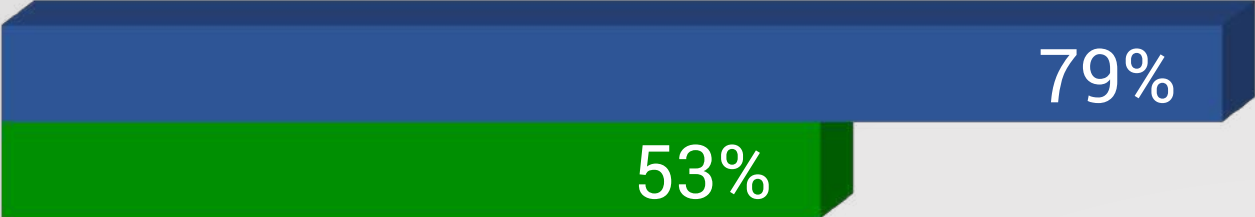
In 2022, the district faced a deficit of \$549,000, however, with \$295,000 from the national wildfire assignments, the fire district had an ending deficit of \$254,000. In 2021, with the additional wildfire funds, the district had an ending deficit of \$88,000.

The wildfire funds do make a difference in minimizing the deficit, but unfortunately, they are entirely based on the number of wildfires over the summer months, making it very inconsistent on how much the fire district will receive year to year.

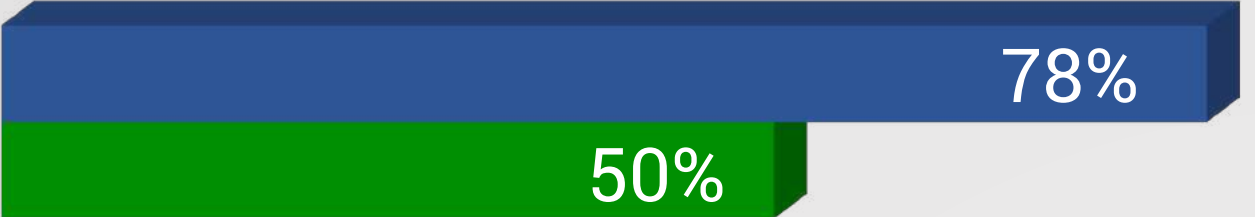


Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions

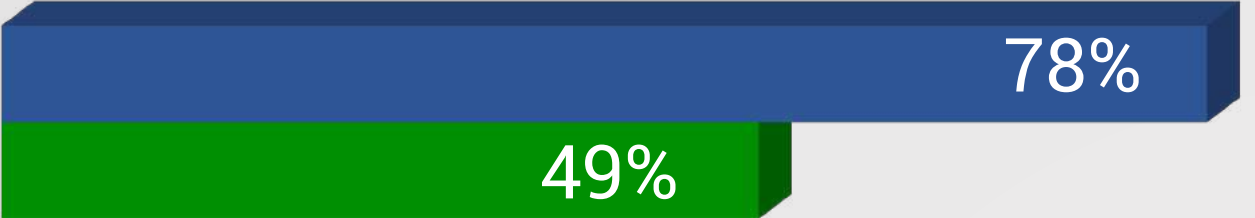
CFPD Wages Compared to Other Fire Districts



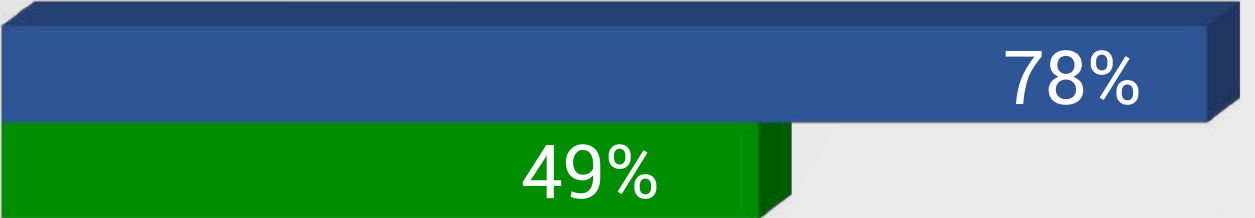
CFPD Starts Entry-Level Firefighters at Minimum Wage



CFPD Good Stewards of Taxpayer Money, No Tax Increase Since 2013



CFPD Age of Apparatus and Cost to Maintain

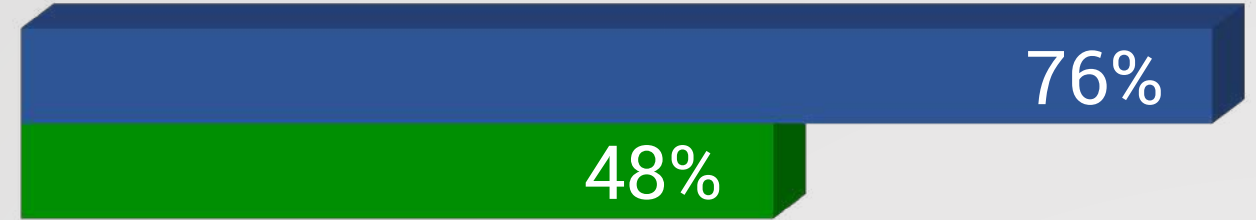


■ Total More Likely to Approve
■ Much More Likely to Approve

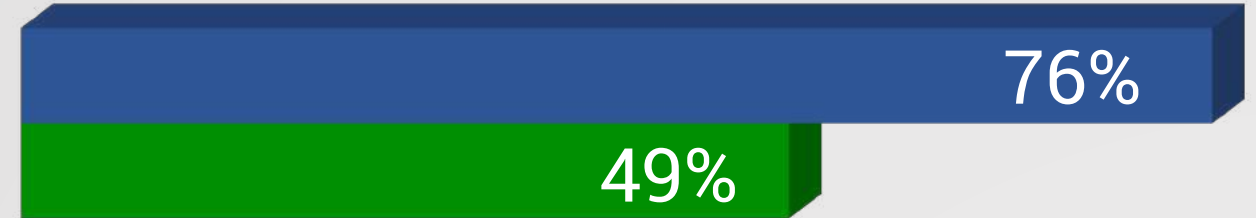


Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions

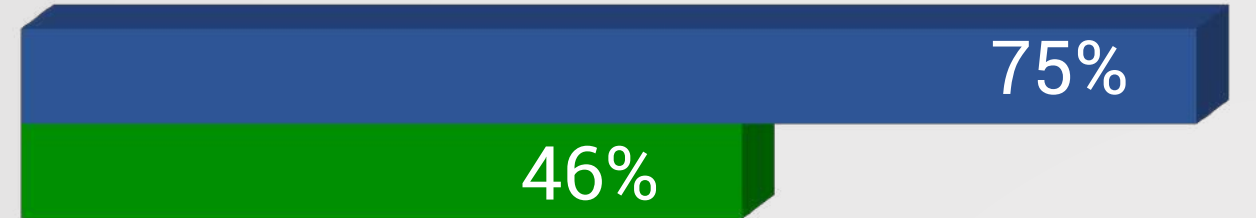
CFPD Current Deficit Due to Inflation, Day-to-Day Costs



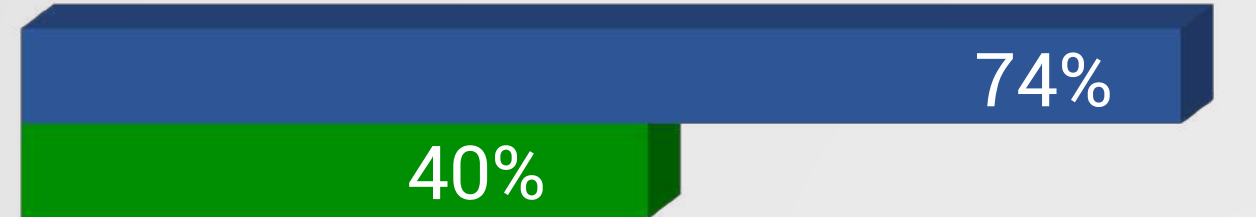
CFPD Increase in Calls Over the Last Four Years



One Station, Overlapping Calls, Hire Additional Staff



CFPD Number of Employees, Give Competitive Wages

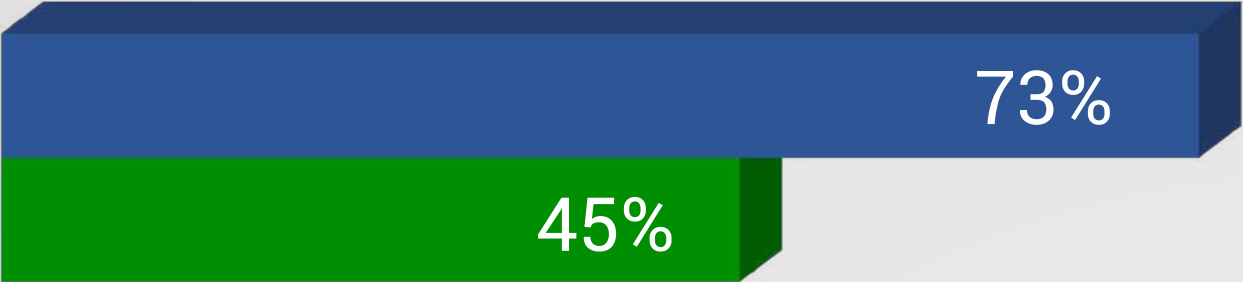


■ Total More Likely to Approve
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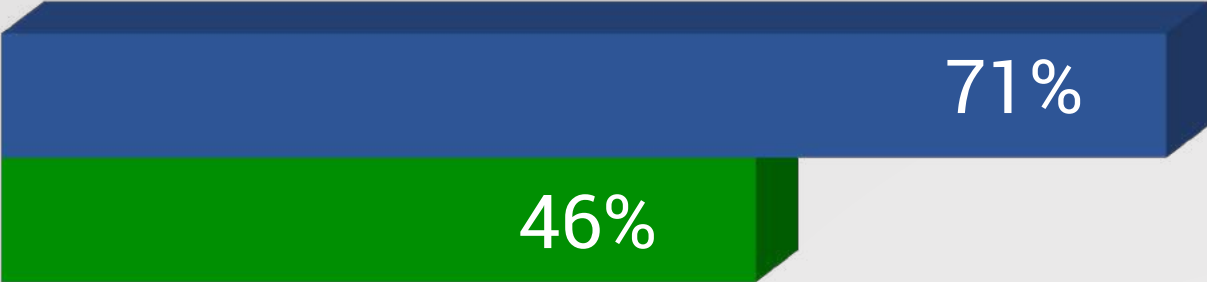


Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Information Questions

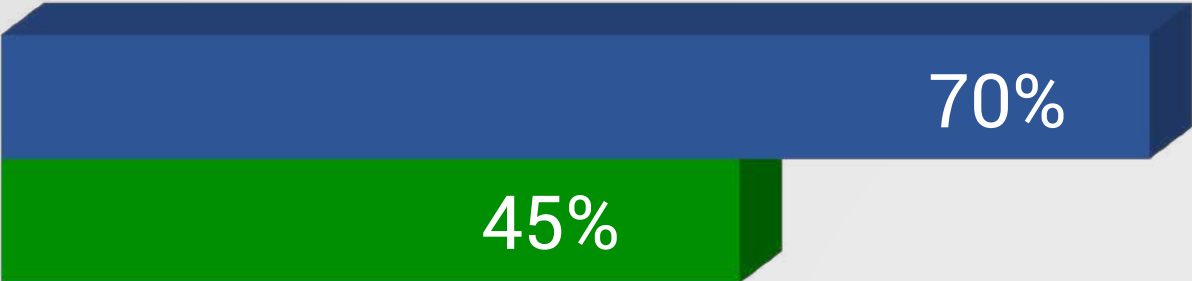
Increase in Population Due to Tourism in Area



Wildfire Reimbursement Previous Years, Budget Impact



Wildfire Explanation, Staff, Equipment, Reimbursement



■ Total More Likely to Approve
■ Much More Likely to Approve



Cortez Fire Protection District Informed Ballot Measure Question



Thank you for reading the information on why the Cortez Fire Protection District is considering a 6.78 mill ballot measure increase to fund approximately \$1,000,000 in additional resources for the Cortez Fire Protection District.

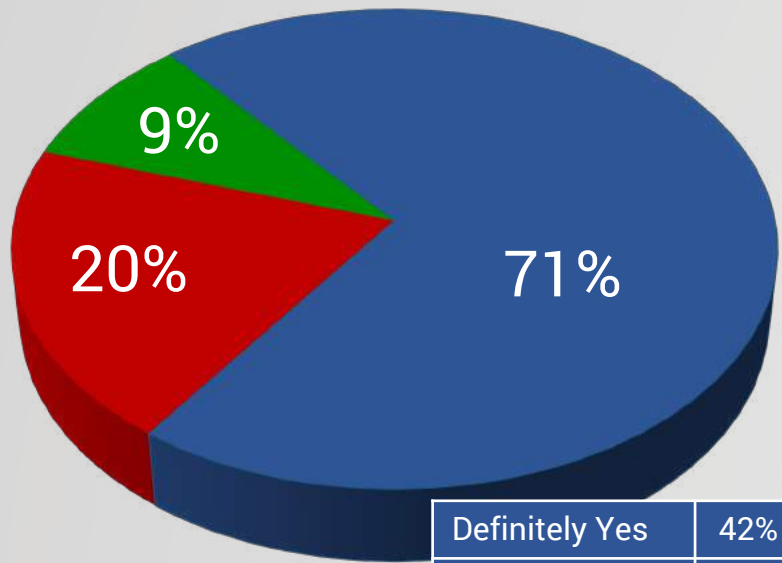
As a reminder, the ballot measure would increase the current Fire District mill levy from 10.957 to 17.737. A 6.78 mill property tax increase would cost a homeowner about \$108 annually, or \$9 a month for a home valued at \$350,000.

The additional revenue would be used for day-to-day operations of the fire district including but not limited to maintenance, fuel, and insurance costs. The additional funding would also allow the district to increase salaries for current full-time staff, as well as update aging engines and equipment.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve a 6.78 mill property tax increase to raise \$1,000,000 in additional funding for the Cortez Fire Protection District, or would you vote no and reject it?

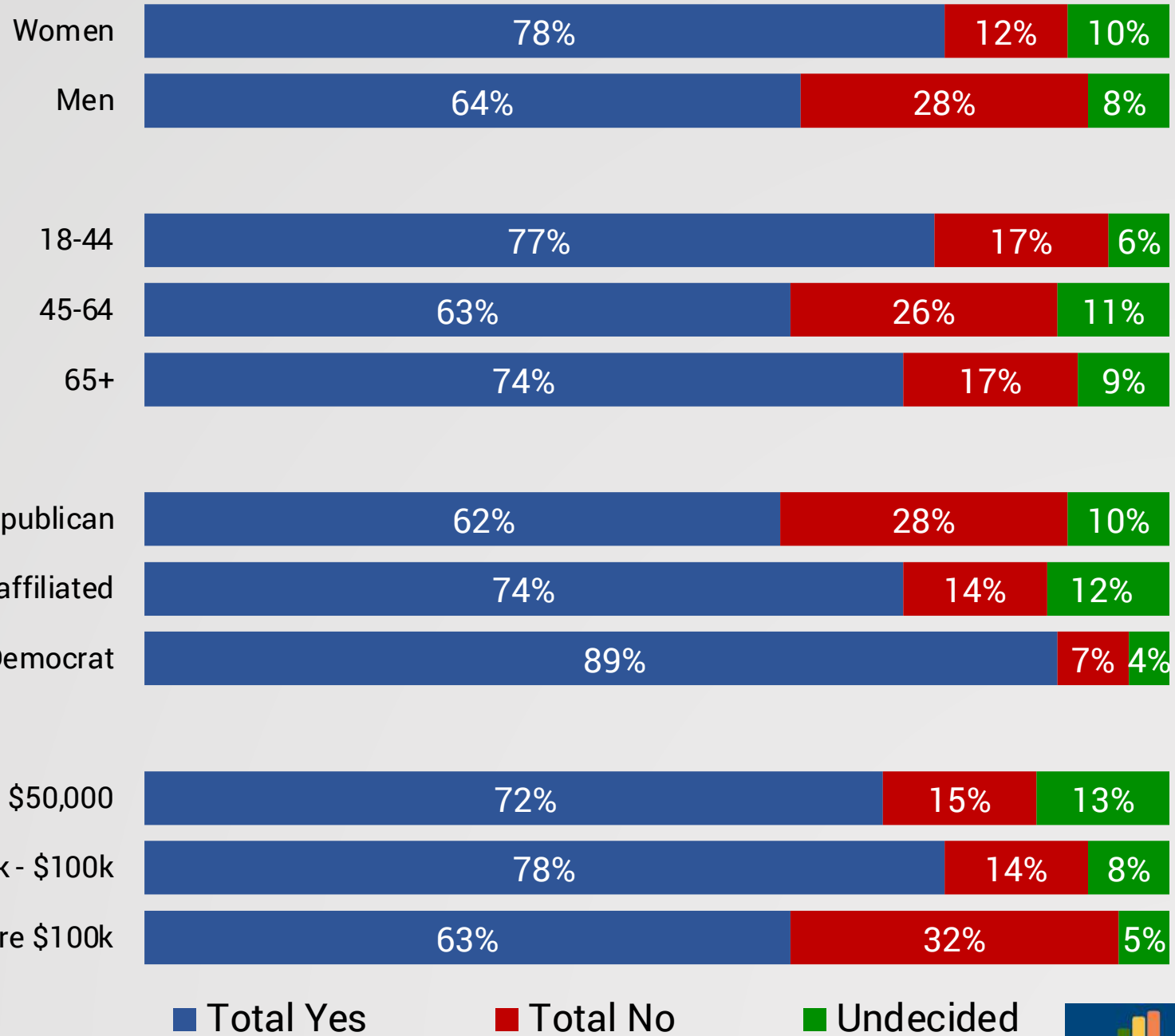
Informed Ballot Measure Question

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve a 6.78 mill property tax increase to raise \$1,000,000 in additional funding for the Cortez Fire Protection District, or would you vote no and reject it?

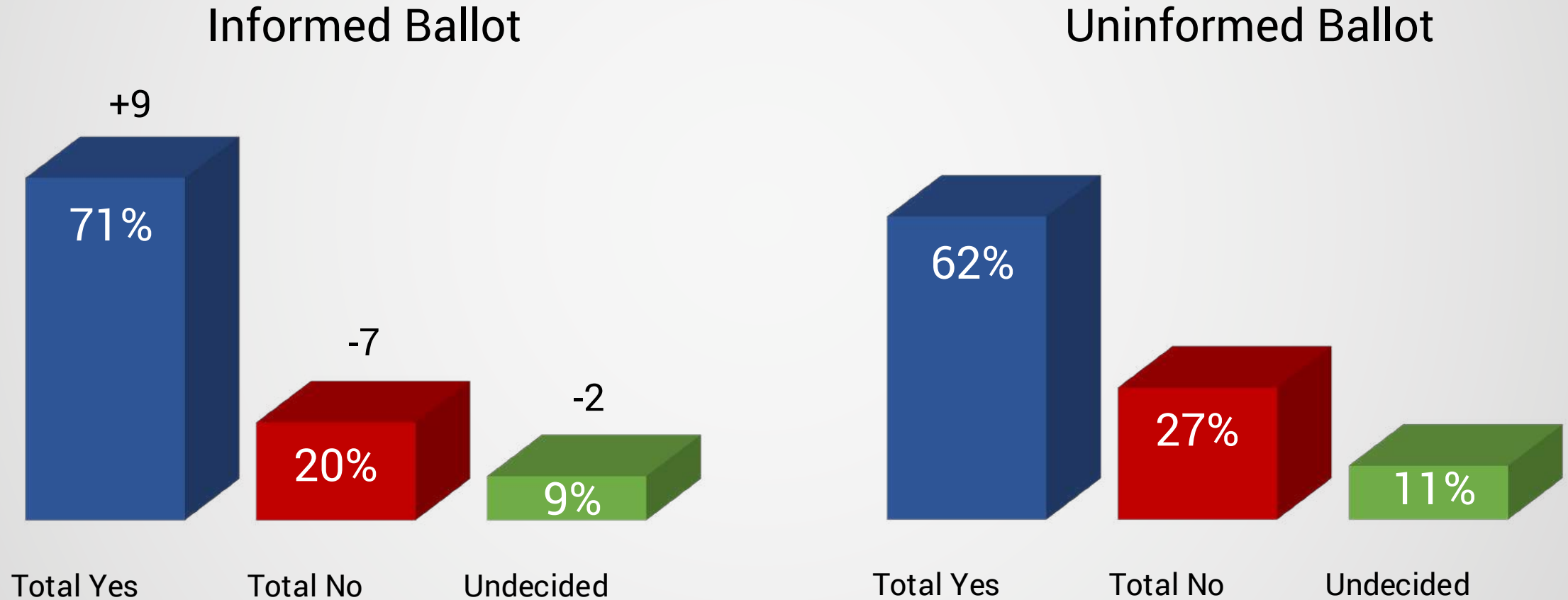


■ Total Yes
■ Total No
■ Undecided

Definitely Yes	42%
Probably Yes	29%
Definitely No	12%
Probably No	8%



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Informed vs. Uninformed



Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Opinion Change from Uninformed to Informed Ballot Question by Voter Subgroup

	<u>All</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Unaf</u>	<u>More \$100k</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>Less \$50k</u>	<u>65+</u>
Difference	+9	+11	+10	+9	+9	+9	+8	+8
Informed	71%	78%	74%	63%	89%	63%	72%	74%
Uninformed	62%	67%	64%	54%	80%	54%	64%	66%

*Every subgroup moved at least 6 points.



Why 71% of Voters Would Vote Yes and Approve the CFPD Ballot Measure

Please describe the reasons why you would vote yes and approve the Cortez Fire Protection District ballot measure.

Themes

Support for First Responders

Recognition of Fire Protection Needs

Community Responsibility and Solidarity

“Our first responders deserve living wages. As a resident of our community, I want to know you are fully staffed and have working engines if my family were to have an emergency.” - **Female, 35-44, Democrat**

“Fire danger is our biggest fear living in the country. We need to pay our firefighters a living wage, which would mean a huge increase. They deserve it.” - **Female, 55-64, Democrat**

“They’re doing an amazing job serving this community, and they all deserve to have better gear, better equipment, and better pay.” - **Female, 18-34, Republican**

“We don’t value the services provided by a fire district as a community. It’s a service we don’t appreciate until a person needs it- personally. I support any increase that is needed if it keeps our communities safe and healthy.” - **Male, 55-64, Republican**

“This service is vital to our community, and I would hate to see services reduced.” - **Male, 18-34, Unaffiliated**

Why 71% of Voters Would Vote Yes and Approve the CFPD Ballot Measure

Please describe the reasons why you would vote yes and approve the Cortez Fire Protection District ballot measure.

1. Support for First Responders: Many respondents express appreciation for the work of firefighters and believe they deserve adequate funding, equipment, and compensation for their service. They emphasize the importance of supporting first responders who protect lives and property in the community.

2. Recognition of Fire Protection Needs: Respondents recognize the importance of fire protection services, particularly in the face of increasing wildfire risks and climate change impacts. They acknowledge the need for well-equipped and well-staffed fire departments to ensure the safety and security of residents.

3. Community Responsibility and Solidarity: There is a sense of community responsibility and solidarity among respondents who believe in supporting essential services like fire protection through modest tax increases. They view funding for fire protection as an investment in the safety and well-being of the entire community.



Why 20% of Voters Would Vote No and Reject the CFPD Ballot Measure

Please describe the reasons why you would vote no and reject the Cortez Fire Protection District ballot measure.

Themes

Tax Burden Concerns

Questions about Fiscal Responsibility

Alternative Funding Solutions

“I will not vote for ANY tax increases in this economy.”

-Female, 45-54, Republican

“Cortez continues to have a high turnover at all positions. The amount of money paid to the district from my taxes is second next to the school district. You get more than the county we live in and I use their services daily. You continue to overspend and ask for more money.” **-Male, 35-44, Republican**

“The dramatic increase in property taxes for 2023 will leave many homeowners shocked. I think it just isn’t the best climate for a mill levy change at this time even though there is clearly a need.”

-Male, 45-54, Other Party

“I believe the fire district should be funded with a consumption tax, not a property tax. This would ensure funding from tourism and lessen the burden on property owners. It is a more fair way to fund special districts.”

-Male, 55-64, Unaffiliated



Why 20% of Voters Would Vote No and Reject the CFPD Ballot Measure

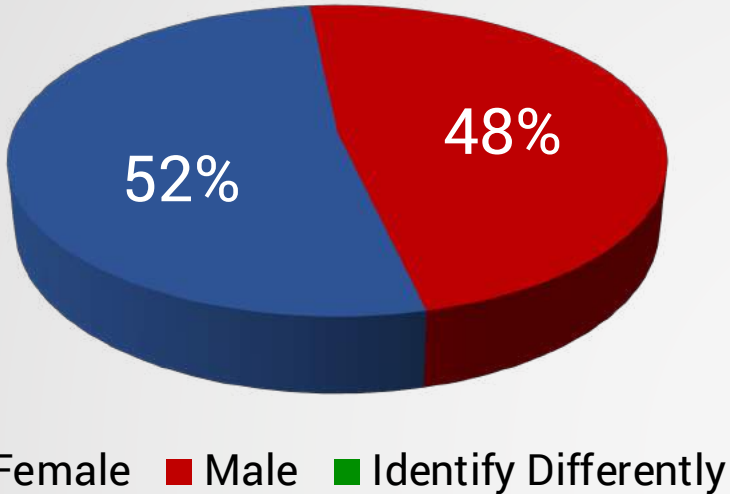
Please describe the reasons why you would vote no and reject the Cortez Fire Protection District ballot measure.

- 1. Tax Burden Concerns:** Many respondents express opposition to increased property taxes, citing concerns about affordability and the burden already placed on taxpayers. They argue that property owners, especially those on fixed incomes, cannot bear additional tax hikes, particularly given recent increases in property valuations and other economic challenges.
- 2. Questions about Fiscal Responsibility:** Skepticism exists regarding the Cortez Fire Protection District's fund management. Respondents question the need for additional revenue when deficits persist and express doubts about the district's financial management practices. Some criticize past decisions, such as excessive spending on equipment and personnel, and call for greater transparency and accountability in budgeting.
- 3. Alternative Funding Solutions:** Several respondents suggest alternative methods for generating revenue, such as implementing sales taxes instead of property taxes or seeking funding from sources like grants or marijuana taxes. They argue that these approaches would distribute the financial burden more equitably and alleviate pressure on property owners.

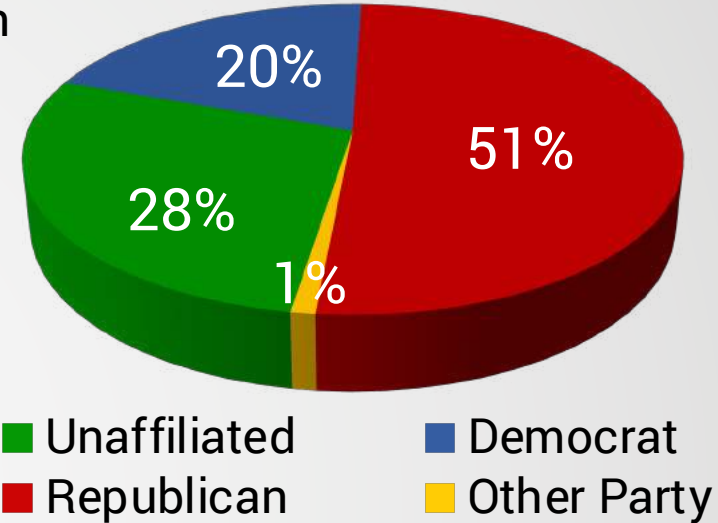


Survey Demographics

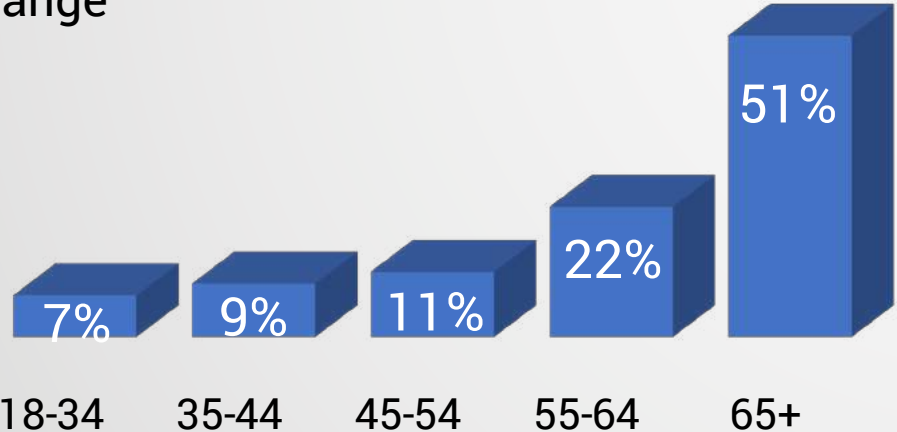
Gender



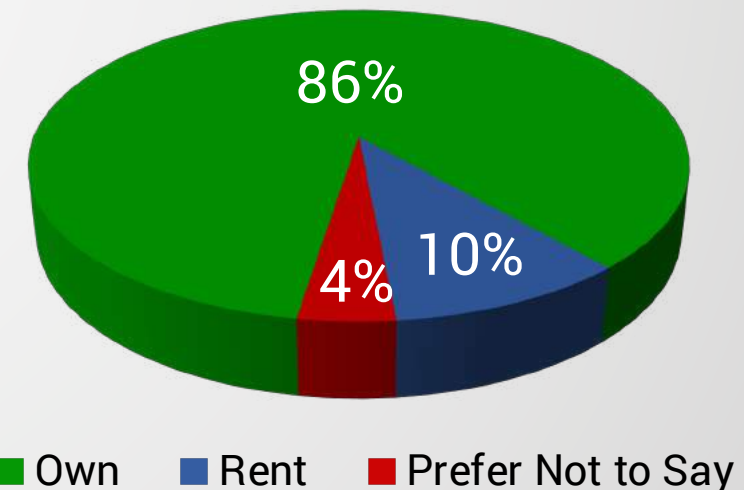
Party Affiliation



Age Range

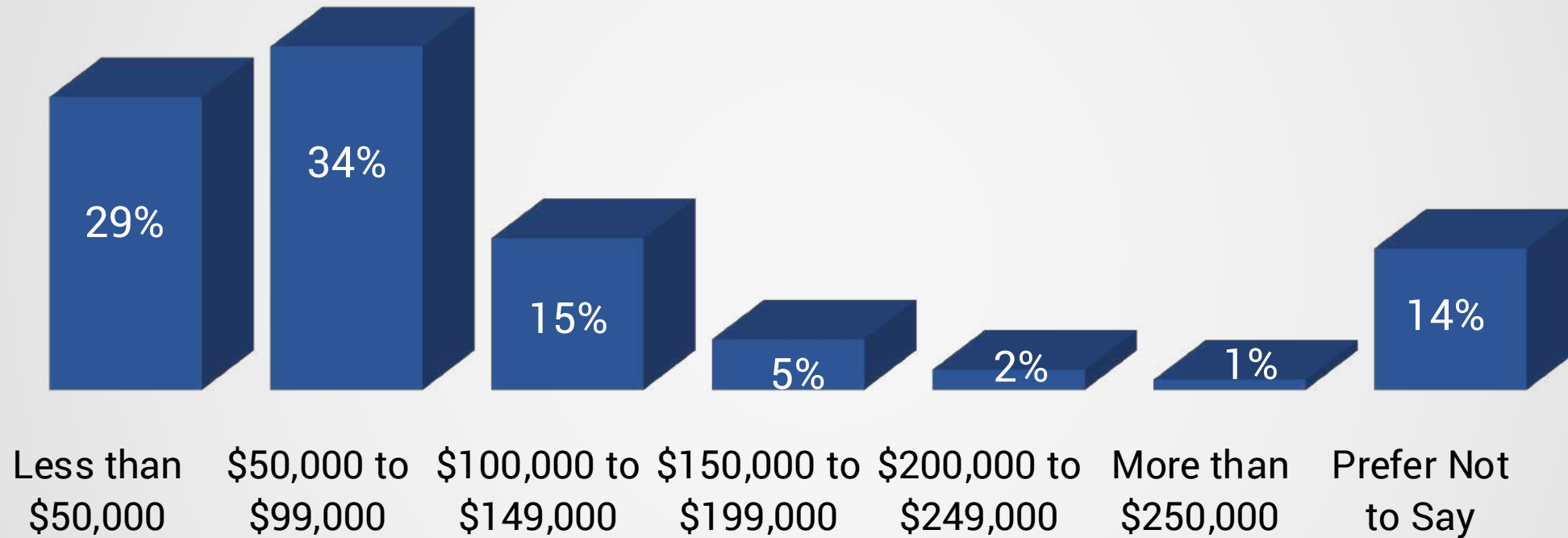


Race/Ethnicity



Survey Demographics

Household
Income



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