

Restoring the Mississippi River Delta



Findings from a Nationwide Survey of 1,006 Likely 2012 General Election Voters

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Methodology

- Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research & Consulting designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers.
- The survey reached a total of 1,006 likely 2012 General Election nationwide.
- The survey was conducted April 12th through April 17th, 2011.
- The margin of error for this poll is +/- 3.1%.
- Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a file of registered voters.
- The sample was stratified geographically to reflect the expected turnout of voters in the 2012 General Election.
- The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, race, education, party identification, and region.

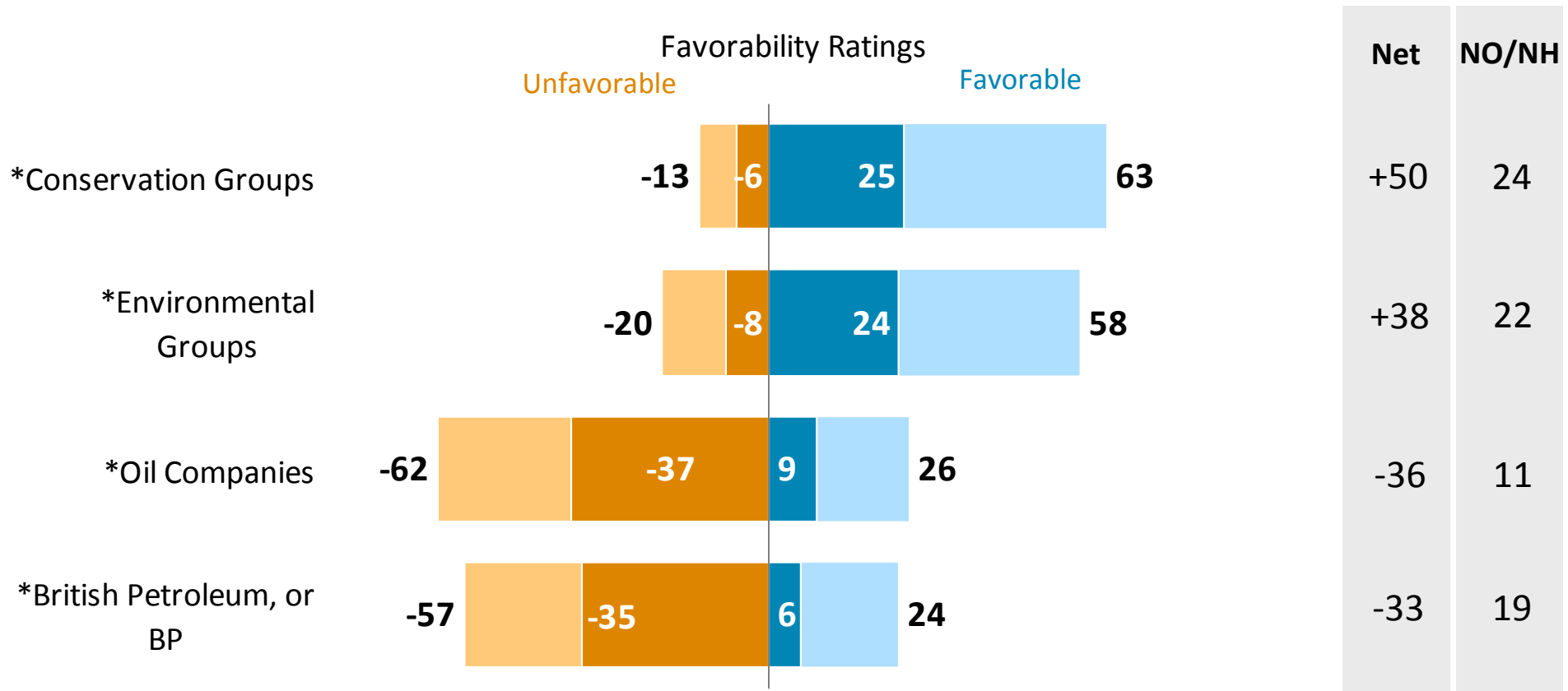
Key Findings

- Initial support for a proposal that allocates the BP oil spill penalties toward restoration of the Mississippi River Delta surpasses opposition nearly 12 times over (83% favor to 7% oppose). A 69% majority favors this proposal strongly.
- Environmental entities all enjoy net-favorable ratings, while antipathy for the oil companies generally, and BP in particular, remains high, even a year after the spill.
- Voters nationwide fault the BP oil spill for the current environmental condition of the Mississippi River Delta, though a significant percentage recognize there was some degradation in the region even before the spill.
- Voters clearly see the region as a key economic hub with an irrefutable impact on the economy both of the country (84%) and in their part of the country (63%).
- This is a voting issue for the electorate. Over six-in-ten voters (61%) nationwide say that they would be either much more (31%) or somewhat more (30%) more likely to vote for a representative in Congress who supports a proposal to use BP oil spill penalties for restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast, while fewer than one in ten (6%) say they would be less likely.
- Even in our current economy and discussions about the federal budget and deficit, over three-quarters (77%) of voters are insistent that these funds be allocated toward restoration and restoration alone, instead of paying down the federal deficit, including solid majorities of every partisan group.

The Political Context

Voters believe the Mississippi River Delta is not in good condition, with a sizeable portion acknowledging it had degraded before the oil spill and Hurricane Katrina. They strongly believe this affects both the national economy and the economy in their part of the country. These planks are key to understanding their overwhelming support of restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and their desire to reward politicians who vote for such a proposal.

Voters are net positive toward environmental groups, yet solid majorities of voters have an unfavorable impression of both oil companies generally and BP specifically. More voters are *very* unfavorable to oil companies overall than are *totally* unfavorable toward any environmental group.



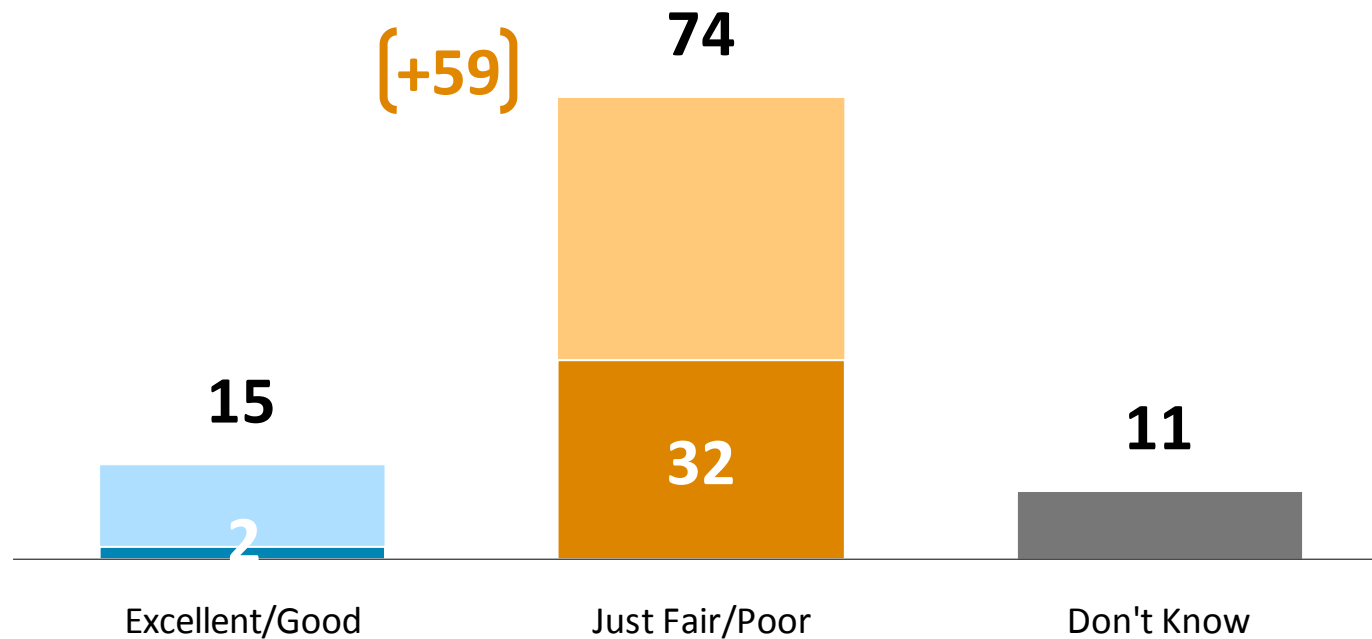
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*Each question asked of 1/2 the sample.

Now I'd like to ask you about some places, institutions and organizations. For each, please tell me whether you have a VERY favorable, SOMEWHAT favorable, somewhat UNFAVORABLE, or VERY unfavorable impression. If you have heard of the institution or organization but do not know enough to have an impression [5] or if you haven't heard of the institution or organization [6], just say so, and we will move on. Have you heard of [READ NAME]?

Voters have an intuitive sense that the Mississippi River Delta is in trouble. After learning its precise location, nearly three-quarters of voters perceive the Mississippi River Delta's environmental condition to be just fair or poor.

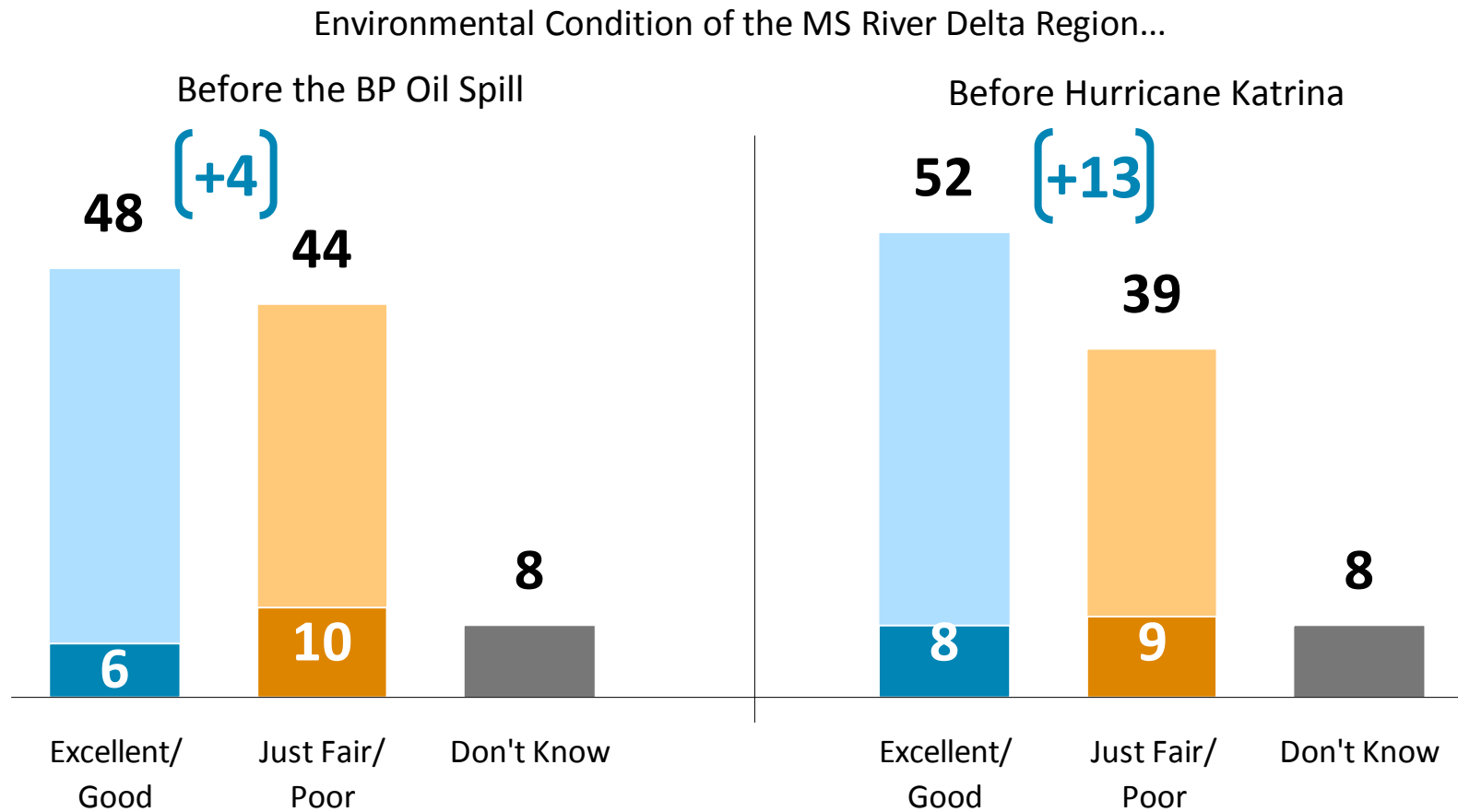
Environmental Condition of the MS River Delta



Darker colors used to indicate intensity.

And just your best guess, what is the environmental condition of the Mississippi River Delta? Is it in excellent condition, good condition, just fair condition, or poor condition?

While conventional wisdom may suggest some voters are only concerned about the Mississippi River Delta because of highly visible disasters like the BP oil spill and Hurricane Katrina, about two-in-five voters also recognize the environmental condition of the region was either just fair or poor before these disasters.

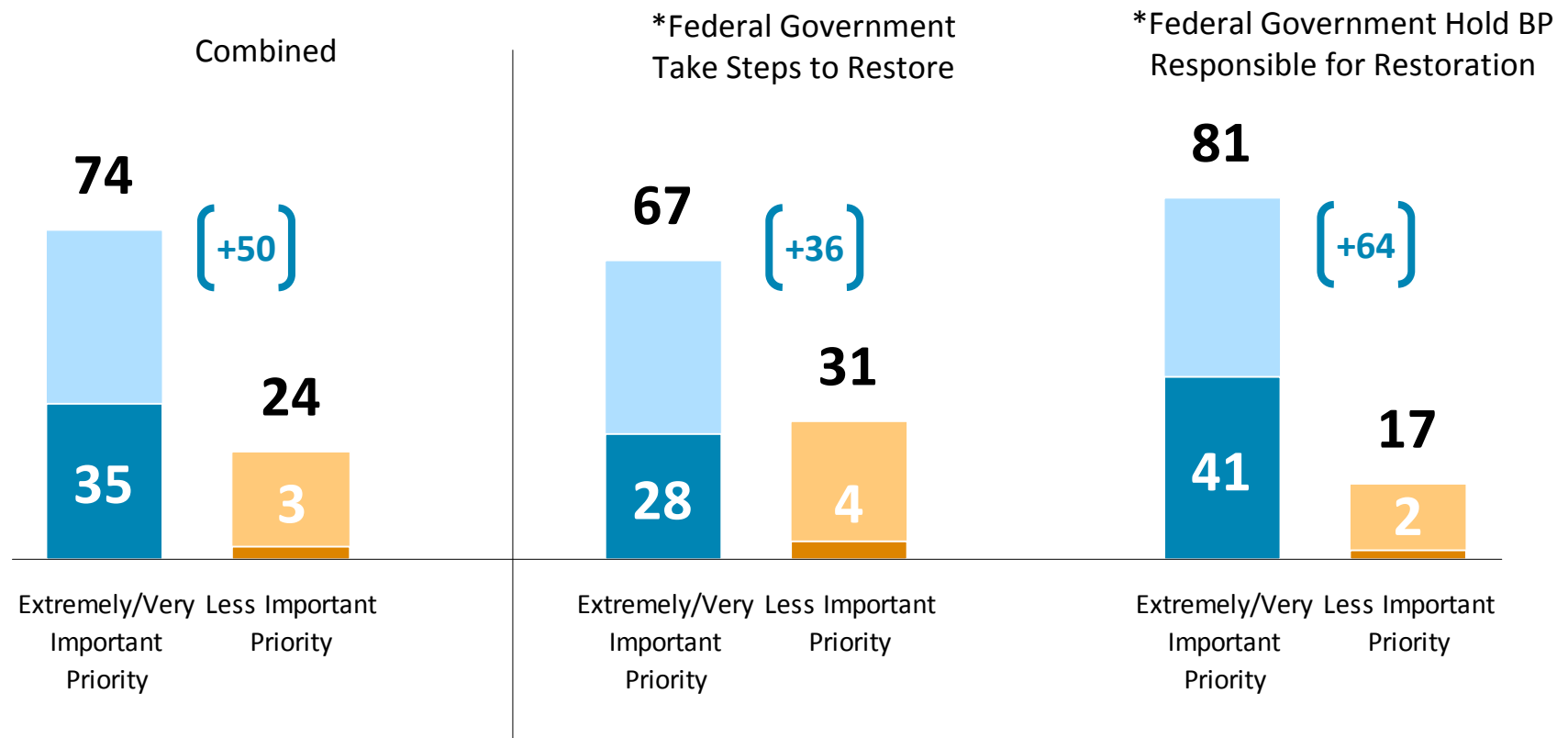


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And just your best guess, what was the environmental condition of the Mississippi River Delta before the BP oil spill [floods associated with Hurricane Katrina]? Was it in excellent condition, good condition, just fair condition, or poor condition?

Over seven-in-ten voters believe that restoration of the Mississippi River Delta is a key priority of the federal government. Adding BP to the frame fuels voters' desire to hold those at fault responsible, though even without mentioning BP, voters are convinced restoration is an important priority.

Importance of Taking Steps to Restore the MS River Delta

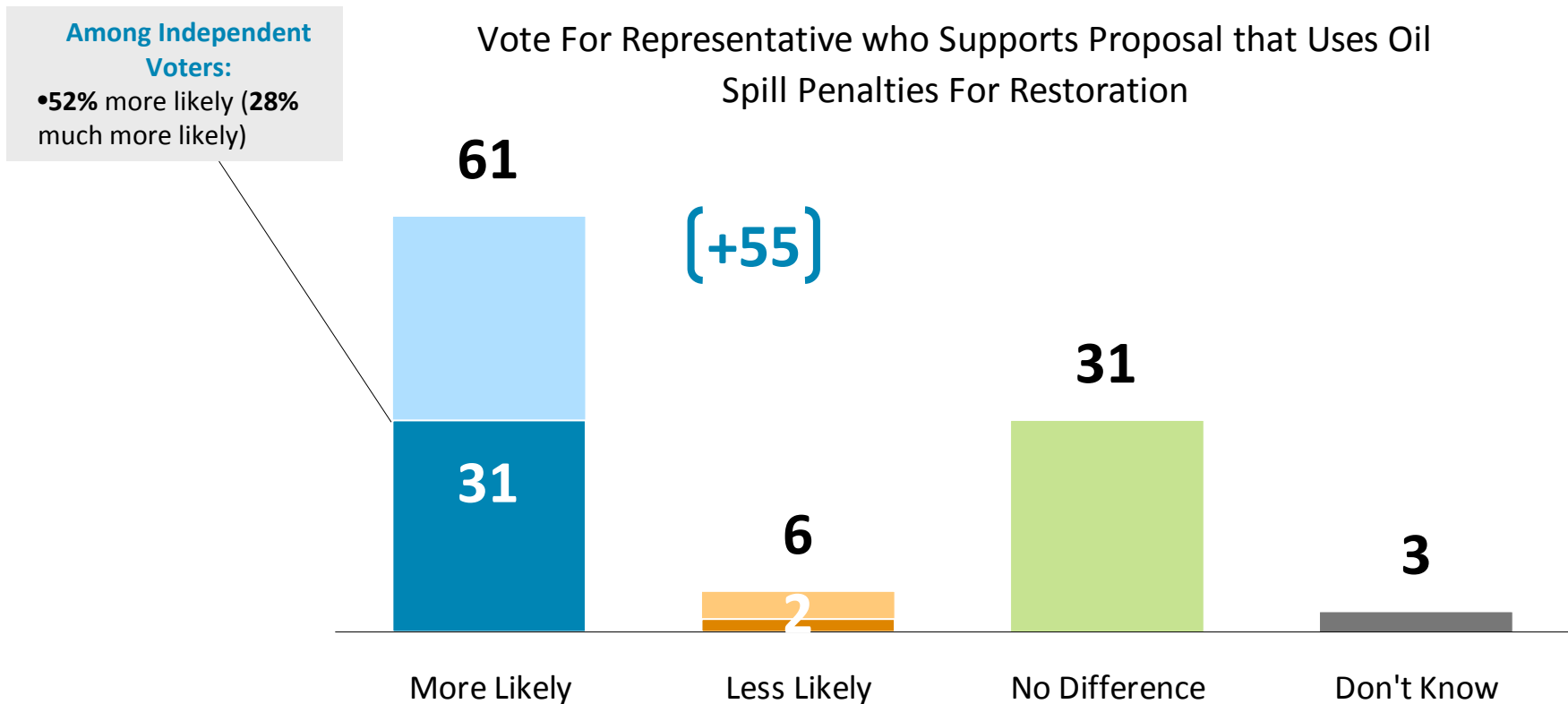


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And thinking about the Mississippi River Delta, how important of a priority is it for the federal government to take steps to restore [that those responsible for the damage take steps to restore] the Mississippi River Delta? Is it an extremely important priority, a very important priority, a somewhat important priority, not too important of a priority, or not a priority at all?

This is a voting issue, and legislators should look to get on the right side of public opinion. Over six-in-ten voters say that they would be more likely to vote for a representative in Congress who supports a proposal to use BP oil spill penalties for restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast; fewer than one in ten would be less likely.

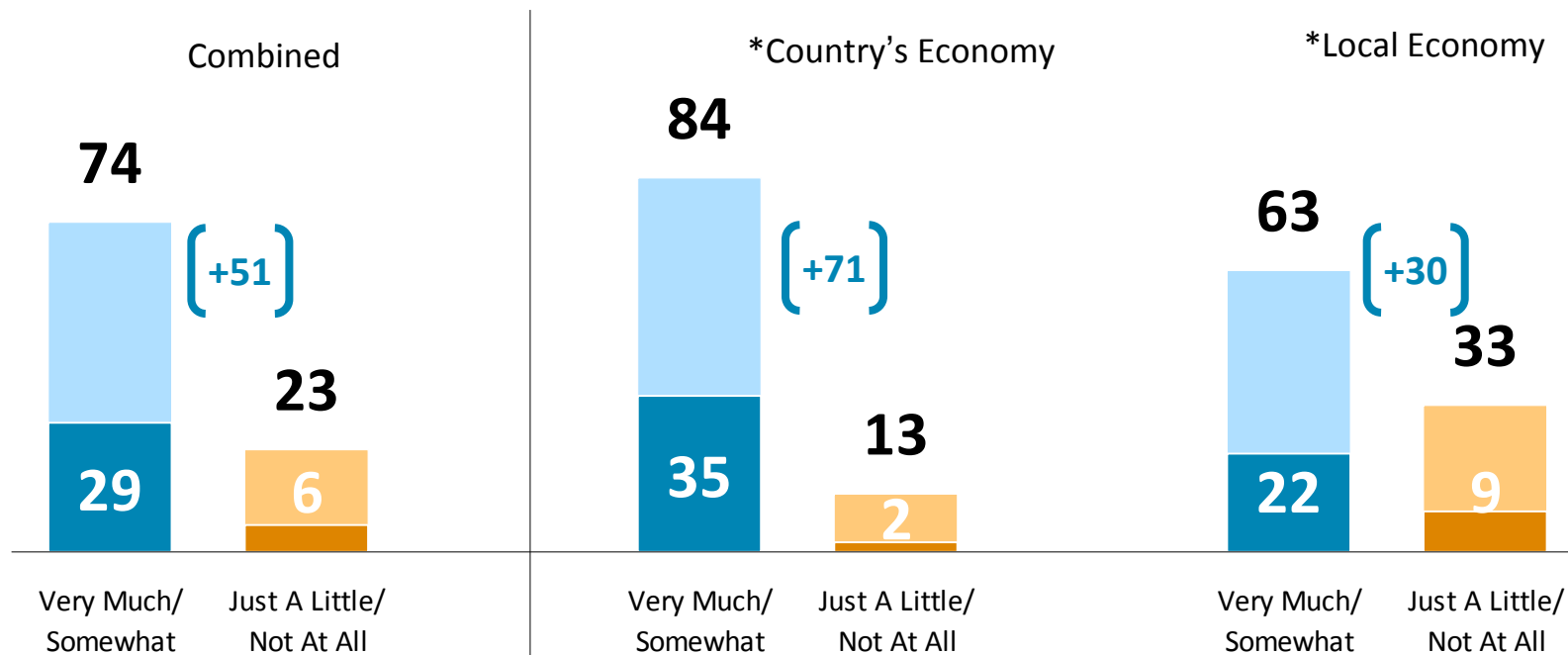


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And if your Representative in Congress SUPPORTED a proposal to take the BP oil spill penalties collected from BP and others responsible and designate those fines for restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast, would you be more or less likely to vote for them? [IF MORE/LESS] And is that much [more/less] or only somewhat [more/less]?

Voters do not view this as an isolated region that has little import to their lives. Not only do more than four in five say the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast region are critical to our national economy, but nearly two in three believe it is important to their part of the country as well.

Economic Impact of the MS River Delta and Gulf Coast On...



*Each question asked of 1/2 the sample.

Darker colors used to indicate intensity.

And how much of an economic impact do you think the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast has on the country's economy [the economy in your part of the country]? Does it impact the economy in your part of the country very much, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?

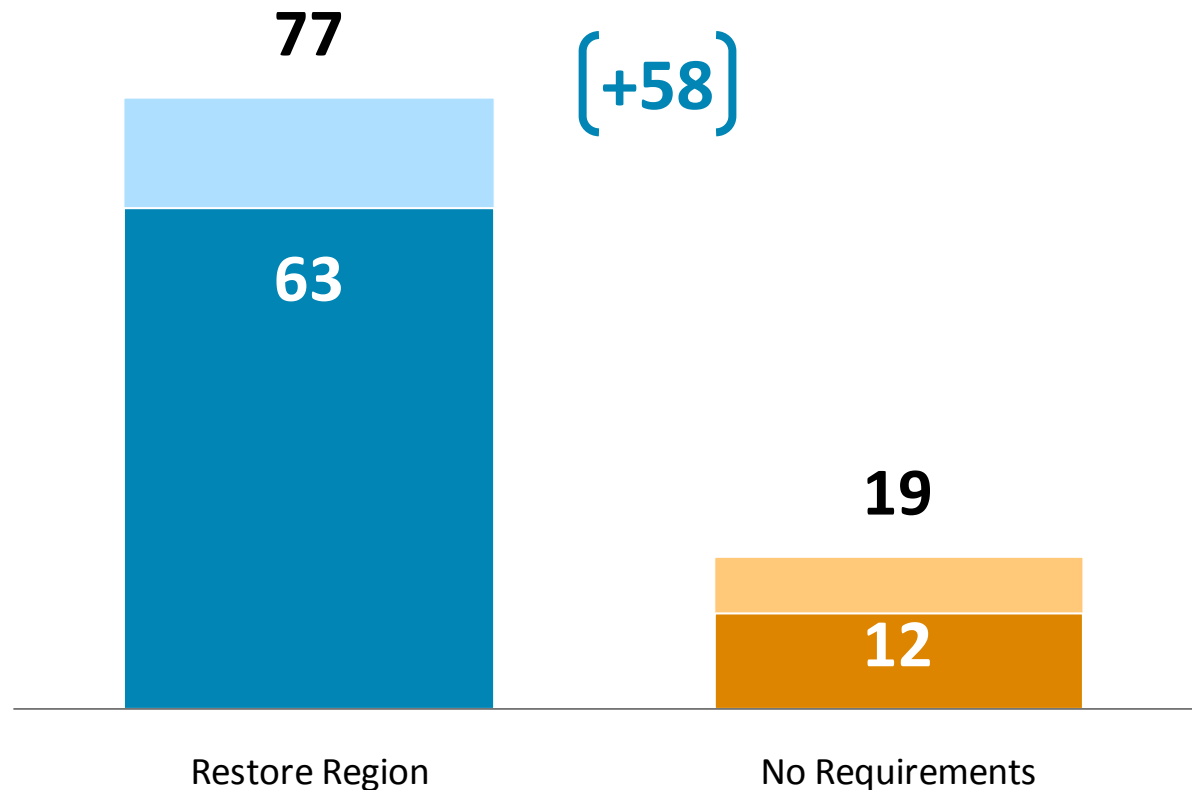
Amidst ubiquitous talk of the federal budget, one might expect voters to want to allocate these funds toward the deficit. However, this is not the case. Over three-quarters of voters believe the oil spill fines and penalties should be REQUIRED to go toward restoration, not toward paying down the deficit even after hearing both sides of the argument.

I'm going to read you two statements about the Mississippi River Delta, and please let me know which one you agree with more.

Statement A: [Some/others] say that we should require that the oil spill funds go toward restoring the region most affected by the oil spill, which is the Mississippi River Delta, because it is the fair thing to do.

Statement B: [Some/others] say that we shouldn't set requirements on how this revenue is spent because we have a lot of problems that need to be addressed, like paying down the deficit.

Set Requirements on What BP Oil Spill Penalties Can Be Used For

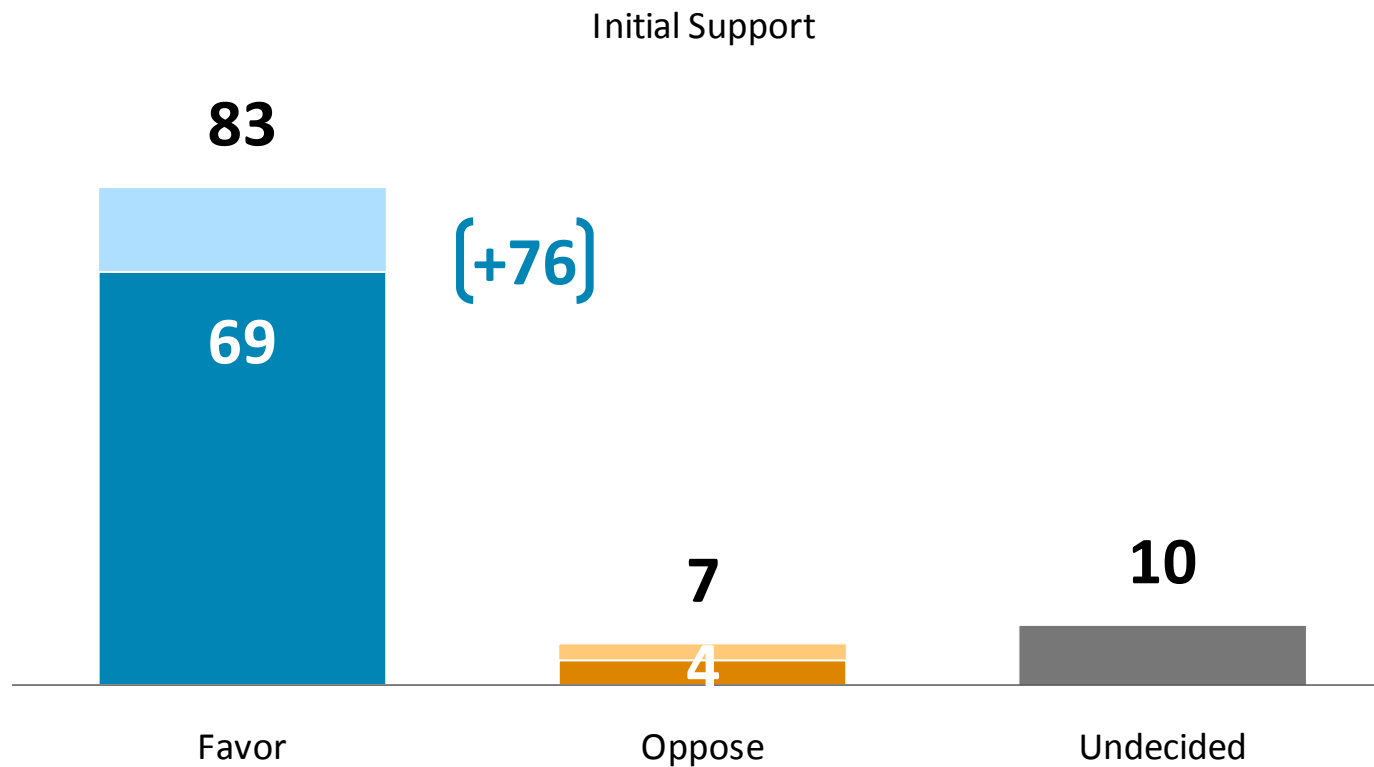


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Dynamics of Support for Restoration

Voters overwhelmingly favor a proposal designating the BP oil spill penalties to the restoration of the Mississippi River Delta. The strength and solidity of voters' support is undeniable, a 69% majority of voters overall support the proposal, including solid majorities of every partisan group.

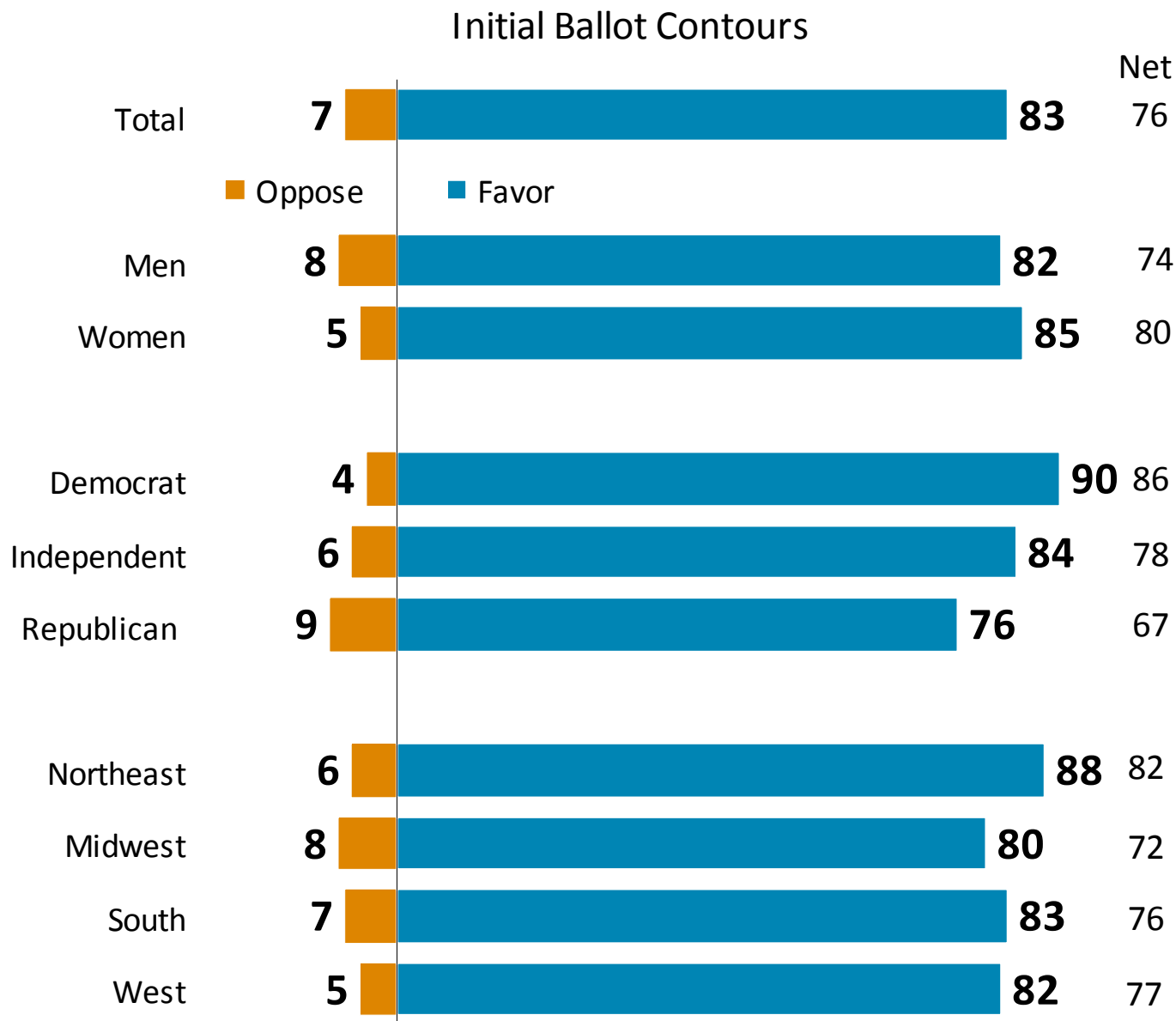
Support for a proposal that allocates the BP oil spill penalties for restoration outpaces opposition overwhelmingly, by a margin of nearly 12:1. A solid majority of nearly seven-in-ten voters overall supports this proposal strongly. With a mere tenth of voters undecided, it is clear that voters are looking for, and are strongly in support of, action to restore the Mississippi River Delta.



Darker colors used to indicate intensity.

Do you favor or oppose a proposal to take the BP oil spill penalties collected from BP and others responsible and designate those fines for restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast, or are you undecided? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE] And do you feel that way strongly, or not so strongly?

Support for dedicating BP oil spill penalties for restoration efforts is widespread and intense, including three-quarters or more of Democrats, independents, and Republicans; men and women; and voters in every region of the country.





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