

# Barr Foundation – Connecticut Clean Energy Survey

October 2021



# Methodology

## Voters

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **600 registered voters in Connecticut**, between October 5 to 14, 2021.

## Margin of error

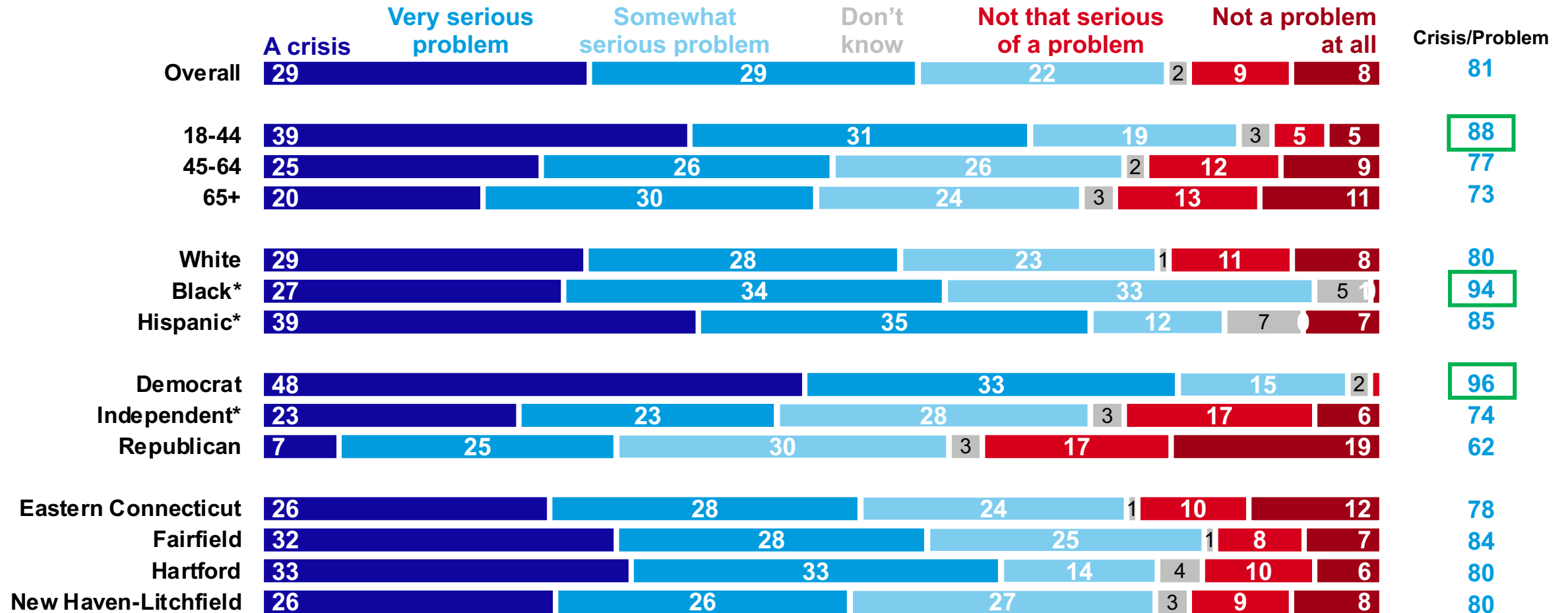
The confidence intervals for the registered voters population are **+/- 4%**.

The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

# Issue Landscape

# The vast majority of voters see climate change as a problem, with nearly one-third calling it a “crisis”

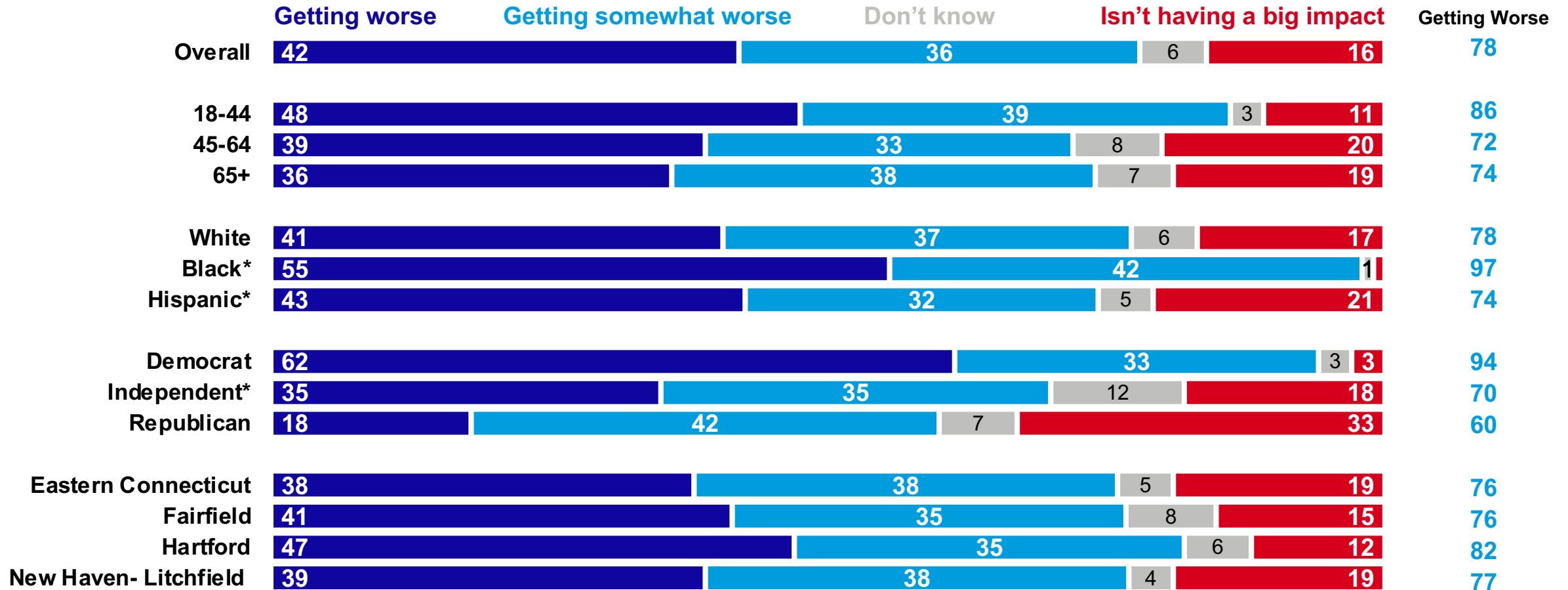
How much of a problem do you consider climate change to be – a crisis, a problem, or not a problem?



\* = small n size

# Almost eight in ten voters believe the impact of climate change is getting worse

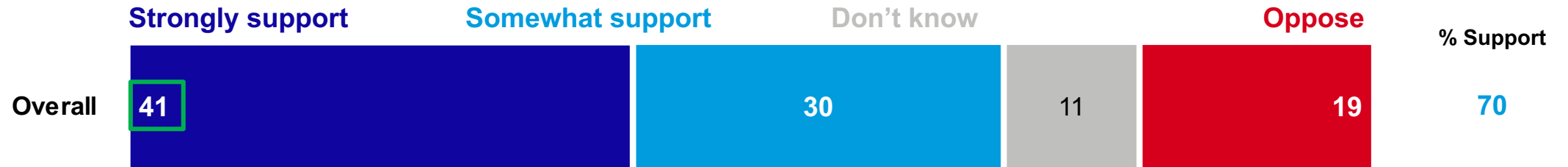
Thinking about recent weather events, which is closest to your view?



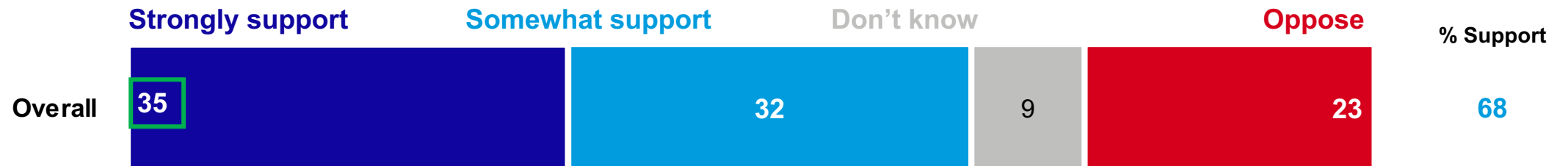
\* = small n size

# Voters broadly support the transition to zero carbon electricity by 2040 as well as the transition to zero emissions by 2050

**ZERO CARBON ELECTRICITY:** As you may know, Connecticut currently gets most of its electricity from natural gas. However, the state has a plan to transition to zero carbon electricity by 2040, meaning that Connecticut would no longer get electricity from sources like natural gas and instead get all of its electricity from sources like wind, solar, and nuclear energy. Based on what you know, would you support or oppose such a goal?

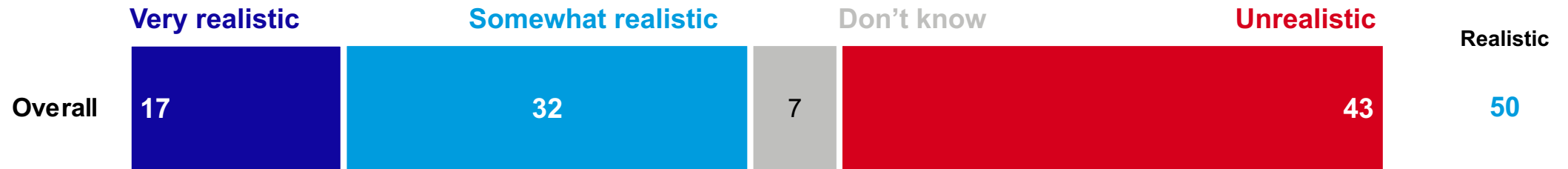


**ZERO EMISSIONS:** As you may know, Connecticut currently gets most of its heating and electricity from natural gas and oil. Some have proposed that Connecticut should transition to zero emissions by 2050, meaning that all power sources in Connecticut should come from sources like wind, solar, and nuclear energy, rather than natural gas or oil. Based on what you know, would you support or oppose such a goal?



# At least half of voters view both the zero carbon electricity and zero emissions goals as realistic, but few believe it's very realistic

**ZERO CARBON ELECTRICITY:** Thinking about the plan for Connecticut to get 100% of its electricity from zero carbon sources like wind, solar, and nuclear power, would you say this is realistic or unrealistic proposal?

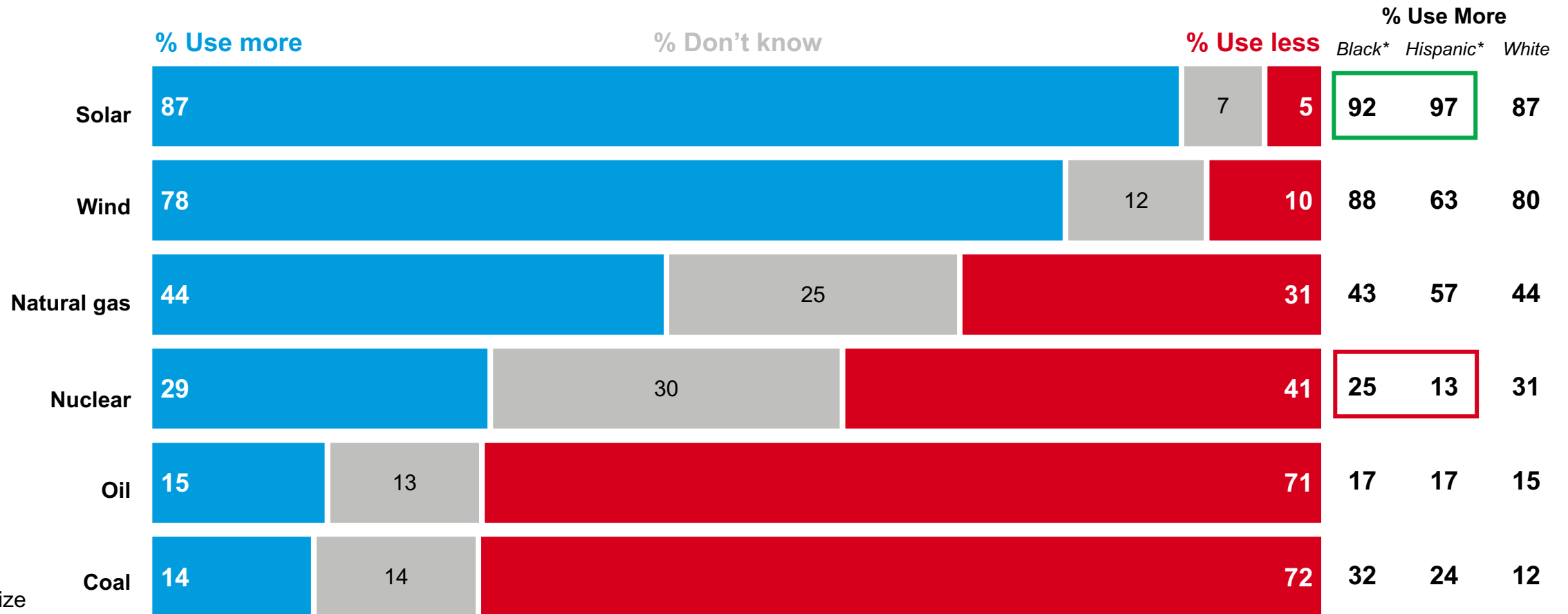


**ZERO EMISSIONS:** Thinking about the proposal for Connecticut to transition to zero emissions by 2050, would you say this a realistic or unrealistic proposal?



# Voters want Connecticut to use more solar and wind energy and less oil and coal

As you may know, the main sources of energy for electricity in Connecticut are gas, nuclear, and a mix of renewable energy from wind, solar and hydropower. Below is a list of energy sources. Please indicate whether you think we should use each source more or less.



\* = small n size

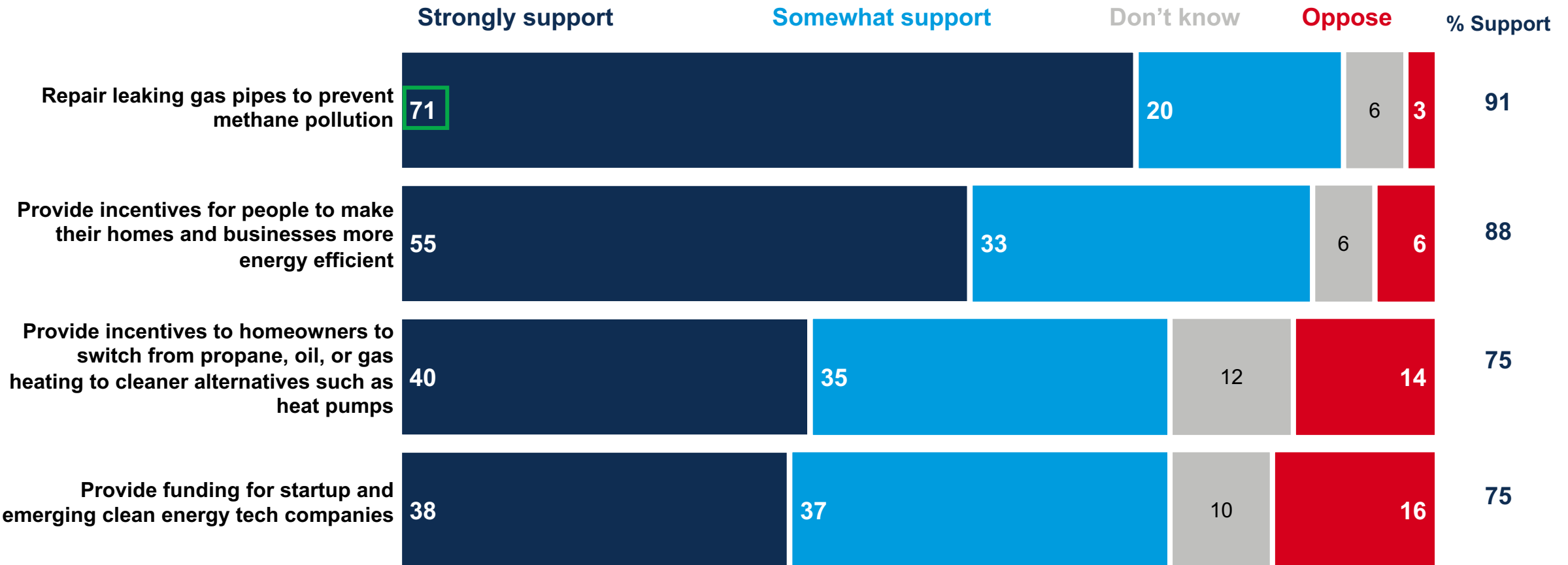


# Policy Perceptions & Impact



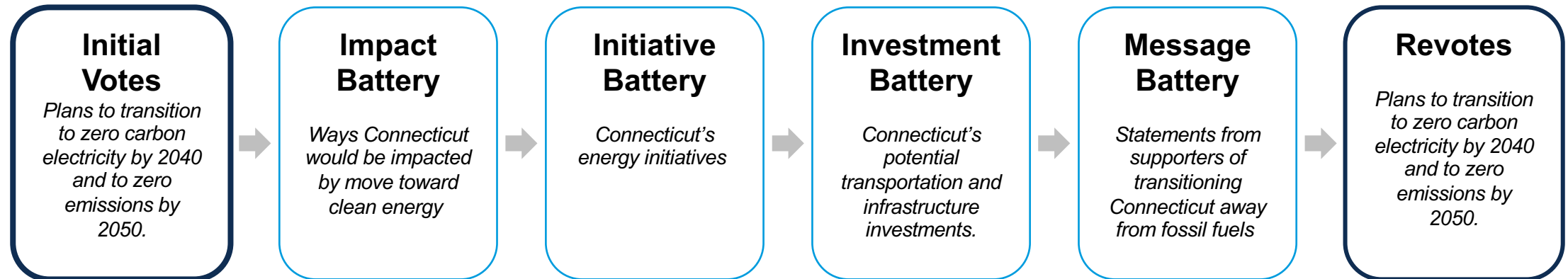
# Voters support the state government taking action on a range of clean energy initiatives, with repairing leaking pipes at the top of the list

Tell me how much you support or oppose each of the following proposals that the Connecticut state government could do to address the threat of climate change.



# Effective Targeting

# Survey Structure



# Swing voters are more likely to be women, Independents, and voters of color

## Targets



### Base

Always strongly supports (1) plan to transition to zero carbon electricity by 2040 and (2) plan to transition to zero emissions by 2050.

- **Democrats** (40% are base)
- **Ages 18 – 44** (36%)
- **Hartford** (37%)
- **College-educated women** (36%)

### Swing

Neither base nor oppo.

- **Women** (61% are swing)
  - Women 18-54 (63%)
  - Non-college women (65%)
- **Fairfield** (61%)
- **Independents** (66%)
- **Voters of color** (62%)

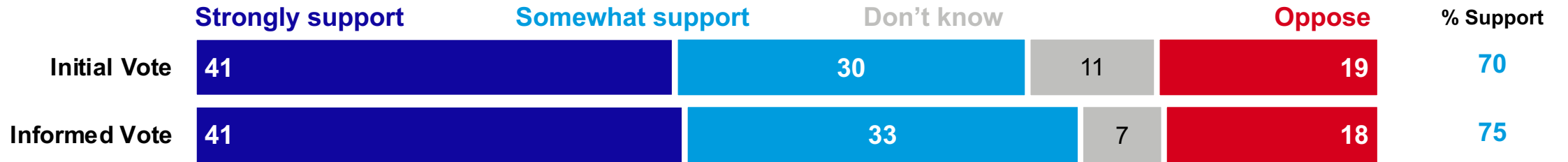
### Oppo

Always opposes or oppose after more information

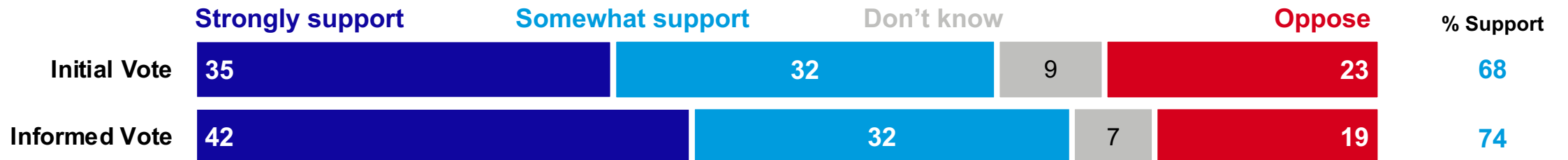
- **Men** (26% are oppo)
  - Men 55+ (33%)
- **Ages 65+** (26%)
- **Eastern CT** (26%)
- **White** (21%)
- **Republicans** (37%)

# Support for both clean energy initiatives increases after messaging

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# Messaging



# Messages related to climate change and air pollution are most convincing to voters and to persuadable Connecticut voters

## Most Effective Messaging

| Overall           | Voters of Color | Swing |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------|
| % very convincing |                 |       |
| 47                | 46              | 46    |
| 46                | 51              | 43    |
| 42                | 45              | 39    |
| 40                | 48              | 39    |

47

46

46

**[CLIMATE]** 97% of scientists, NASA, and the Department of Defense all agree that climate change is a threat to our kids' future, and we are already seeing the impact of increasingly strange weather and more severe storms, droughts, and wildfires. If we don't take action, the impact will only get worse.

46

51

43

**[AIR]** Burning fossil fuels puts dangerous pollutants and other toxic chemicals into our air. Doctors and scientists confirm that this pollution contributes to many kinds of health problems including asthma and heart and lung disease. Moving away from using fossil fuels in favor of clean energy would protect our communities from this dangerous air pollution.

42

45

39

**[LOCAL]** We have renewable energy sources, like offshore wind and solar, right here in Connecticut. This means that consumers will pay lower prices than they would for imported gas. At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, moving away from gas would provide real savings - after all, the wind and sun are free.

40

48

39

**[PRICE VOLATILITY]** The price of gas and oil changes all the time, often driving up the price that families pay for their power. Meanwhile, the cost of offshore wind and solar power is already cheaper than gas in most parts of the country, and it only continues to drop. At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, moving away from oil and gas would provide real savings.

# Less effective messaging focused on the economic impact of clean energy, safety, and equity

## Less Effective Messaging

| Overall | Voters of Color | Swing |   |
|---------|-----------------|-------|---|
|         |                 |       | <i>% very convincing</i>  |
| 38      | 33              | 33    | <b>[ECONOMY/JOB]</b> The clean energy industry is creating opportunity for Connecticut residents. In 2019, it added \$6.5 billion to the Connecticut economy and created nearly 3,700 new jobs since 2015. What's more, clean energy jobs in Connecticut pay more than similar jobs in other industries. By making the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, we can create more economic opportunity in Connecticut.                    |
| 34      | 37              | 32    | <b>[NOT NATURAL]</b> "Natural" gas isn't natural at all - it's a fossil fuel, just like oil and coal, and it is made up of methane and toxic chemicals that oil companies get from pumping chemicals into the earth. The big oil and gas companies have spent billions marketing gas and trying to claim that it is clean and safe. If we want to use truly clean sources, we should be moving to wind, solar, and nuclear, not using more gas. |
| 33      | 34              | 28    | <b>[PORTS]</b> Investing in offshore wind projects has the capacity to transform Connecticut's ports into cutting-edge facilities that can accommodate wind turbine manufacturing and assembly. These initiatives will revitalize facilities like State Pier in New London and position Connecticut to be a regional leader in offshore wind production, creating hundreds of good-paying jobs.   |
| 33      | 40              | 29    | <b>[SAFETY]</b> Gas pipelines and distribution lines carry highly flammable gas across and under our communities, threatening nearby homes, schools, churches, and businesses with potentially deadly explosions. Dangerous pipeline accidents occur in the United States around once a month.  |
| 32      | 31              | 30    | <b>[CMU]</b> Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University estimate that the process of producing shale gas worsens air quality and results in 1,200 to 4,600 premature deaths a year, costing our economy up to \$61 billion. Moving away from gas and towards clean energy sources will save lives and reduce health costs.   |
| 31      | 37              | 24    | <b>[EQUITY]</b> Fossil fuel infrastructure, like power plants, compressor stations, and pipelines, generate air pollution that disproportionately harms communities of color and low-income communities where they are typically located. If we want to increase public health and equity, then we need to transition away from gas and oil to cleaner energy sources.  |

# Conclusions

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## **Voters think climate change is getting worse, and they support finding clean energy solutions.**

The vast majority of Connecticut voters see climate change as a serious and worsening problem. When faced with possible solutions or paths forward, Connecticut voters want to see the state move toward cleaner energy sources.

## **Support for clean energy initiatives has broad support, and we can increase support through messaging.**

Voters start out broadly supportive of initiatives to transition to zero carbon electricity by 2040 and of zero emissions by 2050. After voters hear messaging in support of the programs, support solidifies and grows.

## **Focus messaging on air quality and climate change**

The top-testing messages in support of transitioning to clean energy – among voters overall and swing voters and voters of color – focused on the danger of fossil fuels to air quality and the impact of climate change.