

# Anchorage, Alaska Issues Poll

December 2023

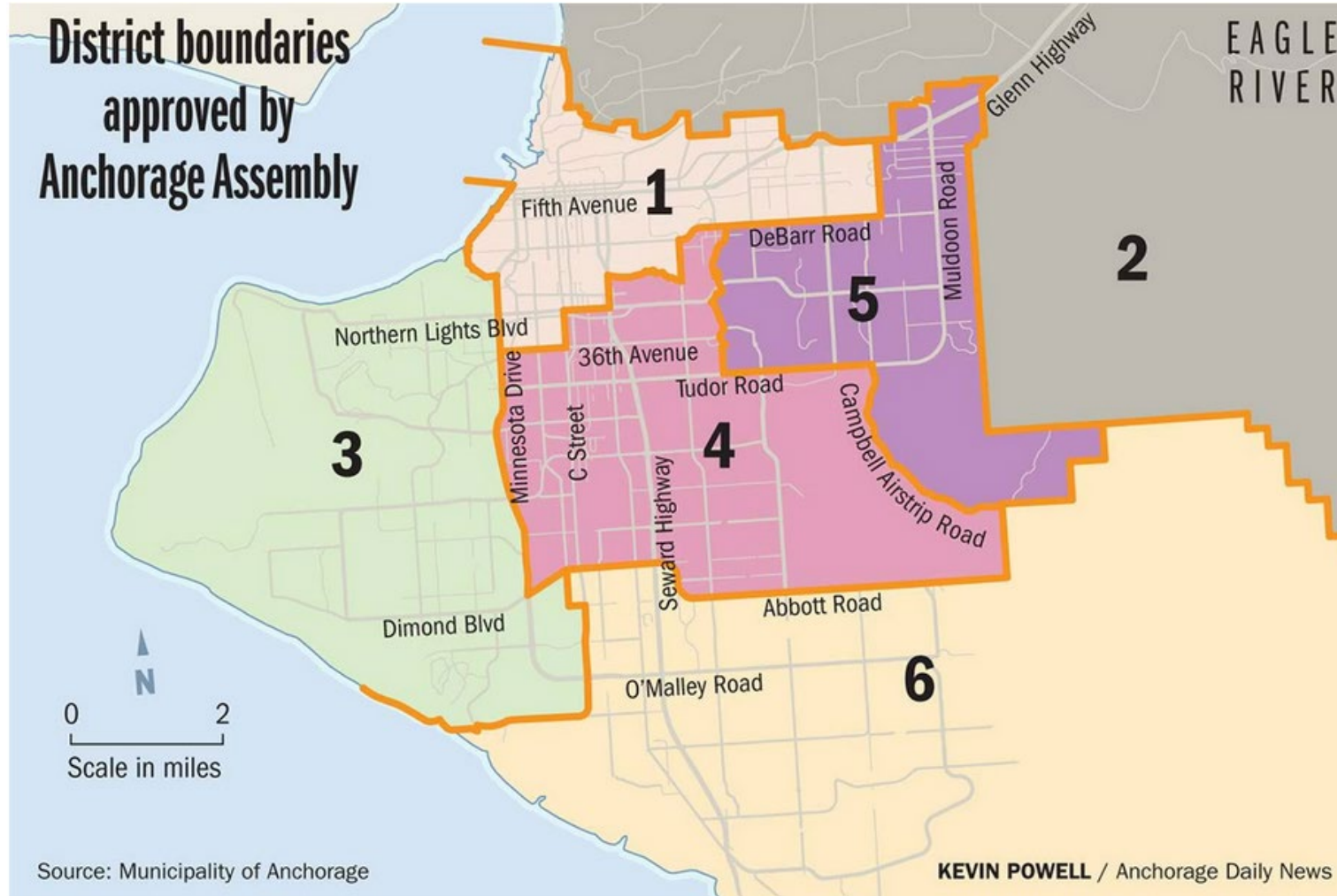


**PATINKIN  
RESEARCH  
STRATEGIES**



- **Patinkin Research Strategies designed and administered this multi-modal survey. The survey reached n=600 registered voters, age 18 or older in the Municipality of Anchorage. The survey was conducted December 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2023, via live phones with trained operators (n=400) and online via a link from a direct SMS (n=200). The survey reached n=600 respondents in total.**
- **The survey universe was diminished to reflect a likely April 2024 municipal electorate. The sample was randomly selected from Target Smarts enhanced voter file. 66% of respondents were reached on telephones (64% weighted). 71% of respondents who took the survey via phone were reached on a wireless phone (74% weighted). 33% of respondents were reached via SMS and took the survey online (36% weighted).**
- **Quotas were assigned to reflect the sample universe of likely municipal election voters using voter participation in 2 or more of the following elections: April and May 2021, or April 2018. The data were weighted by gender, age, race, party registration, TargetSmart Partisan Scores, TargetSmart High School Only Scores, TargetSmart Off Year General Election Turnout Scores, and municipal assembly district.**
- **Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding. The credibility interval (the theoretical margin of error for a blended methodology poll that relies partially on telephone-based probability sampling and partially on non-probability based online panel sampling is +/-4.9%.**

# Regional definitions:





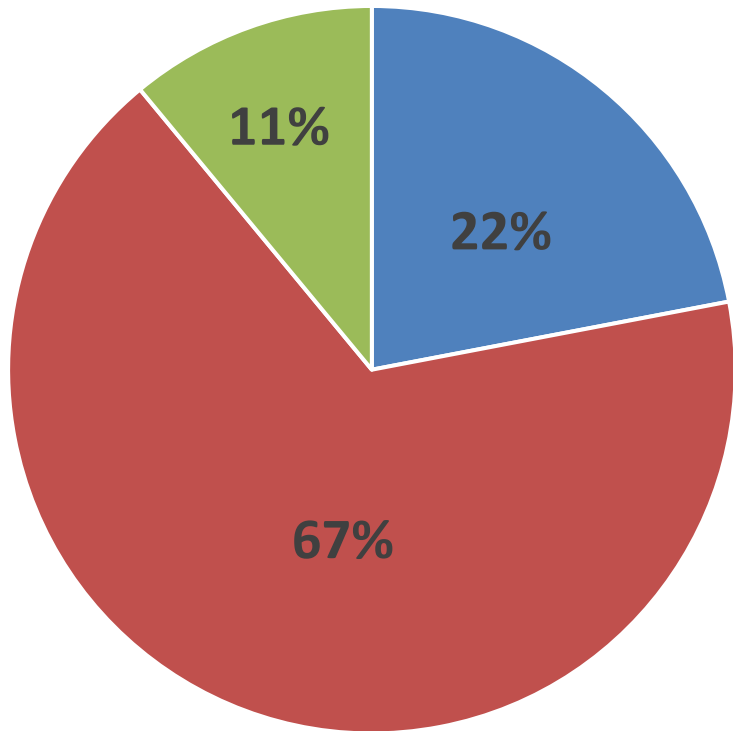
City Atmospherics

# Perceptions of Anchorage lean very much “wrong track”



Voters are in a dour mood regarding the direction of their city regardless of party registration.

*Perceptions of Anchorage*

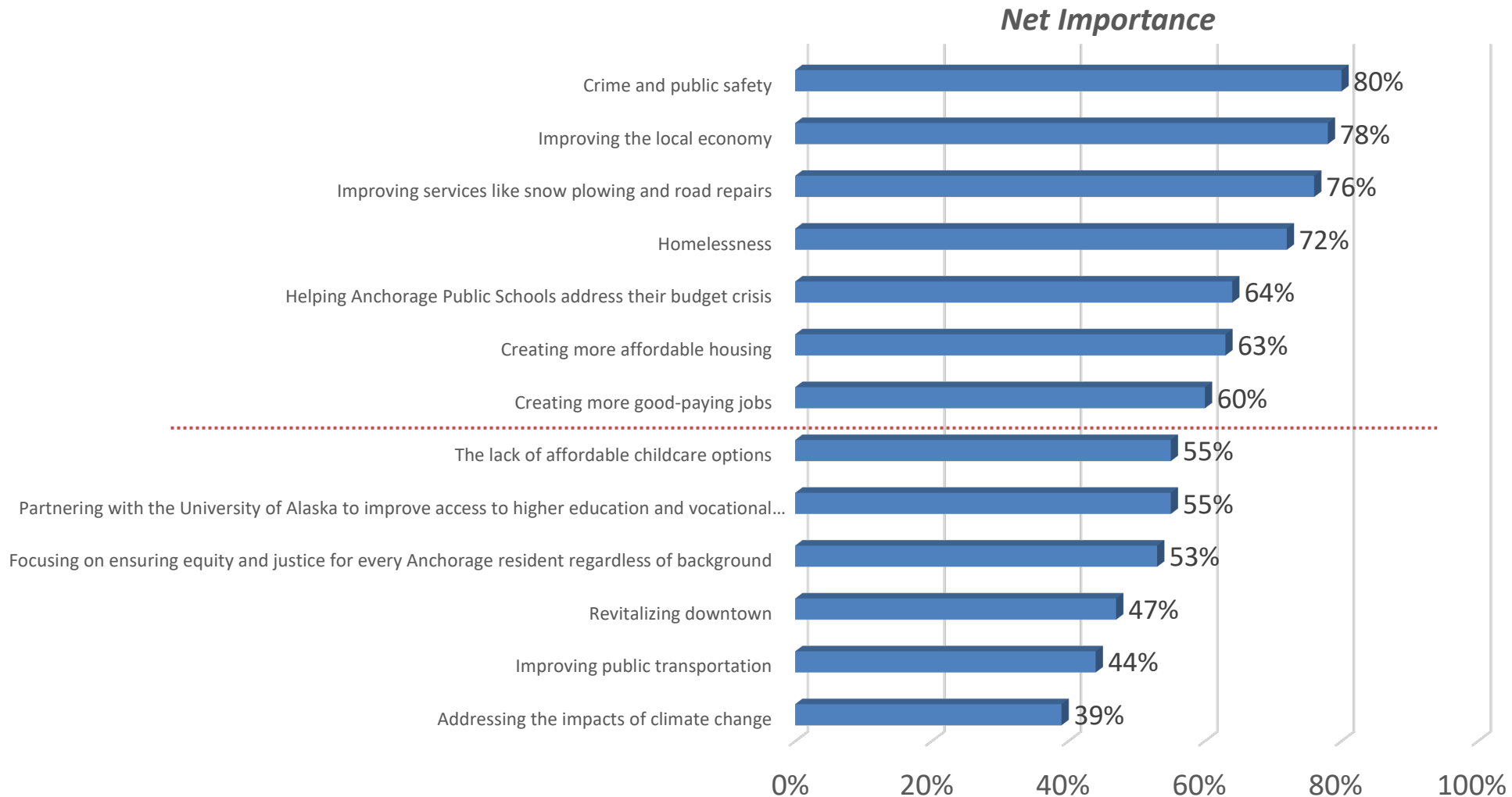


■ Right Direction ■ Wrong Track ■ DK

	Republicans	Democrats	No Party	Undeclared
Right Direction	21%	18%	22%	26%
Wrong Track	67%	73%	64%	65%
DK	12%	9%	14%	9%

*Generally speaking, do you think things in Anchorage are moving in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track?*

# Top issue priorities are crime and safety, improving the local economy, managing services like road repairs, and addressing homelessness



*Next are a number of issues people say they would like to see the Anchorage Assembly address in the near future. Please rate how important you think it is that the Anchorage Assembly address that issue, with one hundred meaning it's VERY IMPORTANT that the issue be addressed; zero meaning not important at all; and fifty meaning neutral. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more important you think it is that the issue be addressed soon by the Anchorage Assembly.*

# Prioritizing improvements to city services and the local economy are the top two issue areas for voters



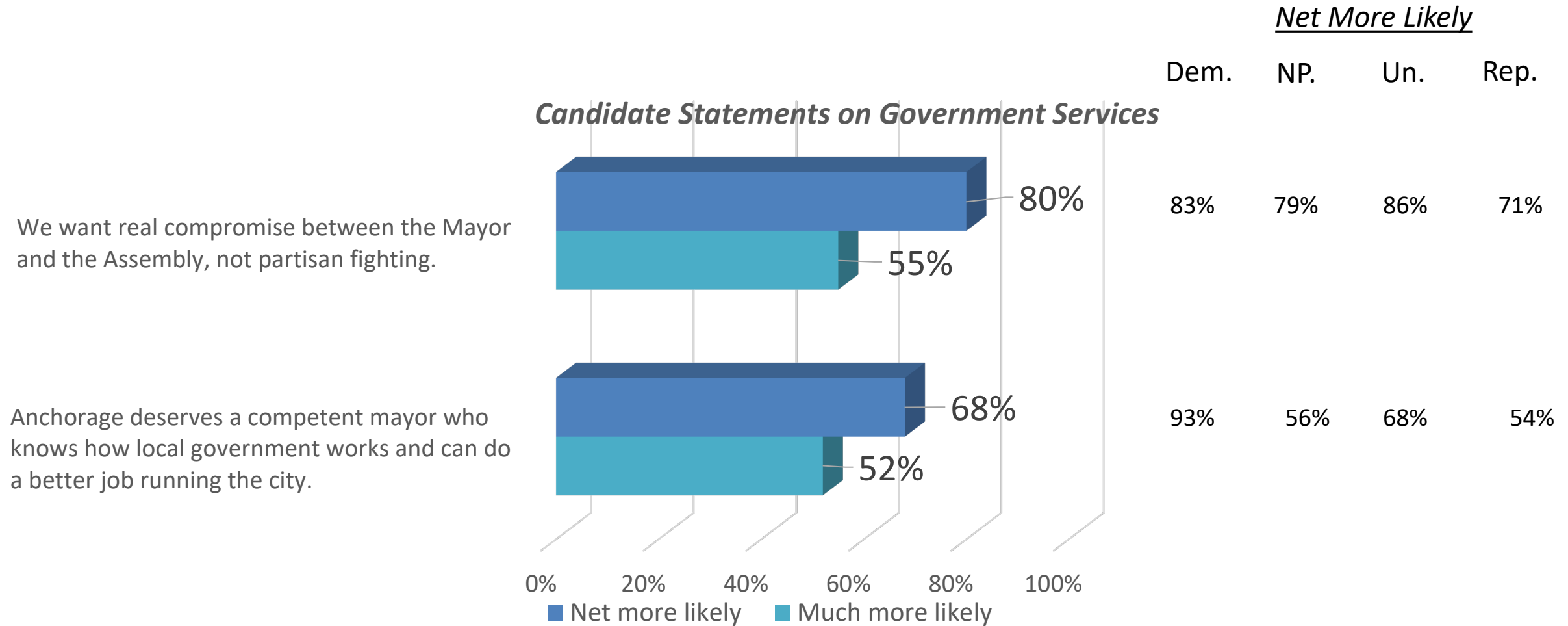
Republicans and Non-Partisan voters want an additional focus on crime and public safety, while Undeclared voters and Democrats would also prioritize homelessness.

	Democrats	Non-Partisan	Undeclared	Republican
Crime and public safety	74%	83%	76%	86%
Improving the local economy	76%	77%	83%	76%
Improving services like snow plowing and road repairs	83%	86%	75%	72%
Homelessness	85%	75%	80%	58%
Helping Anchorage Public Schools address their budget crisis	81%	68%	73%	44%
Creating more affordable housing	88%	71%	63%	49%
Creating more good-paying jobs	74%	58%	60%	53%

# At the highest and most basic level, Anchorage voters are prioritizing elected leaders who promise compromise and competency



Messaging should be framed with this in mind.



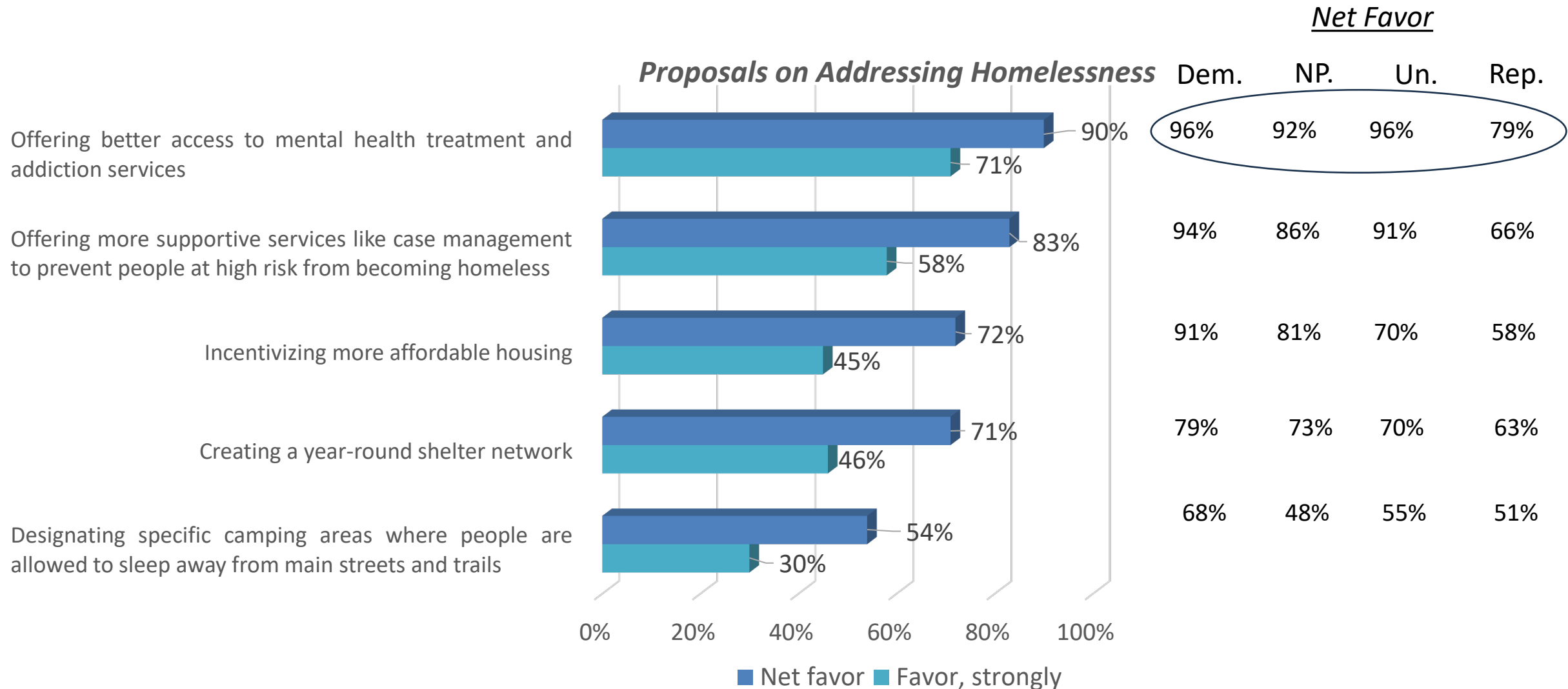
*Next are some statements made by candidates for elected office in Anchorage on the issue of government services. After each statement please indicate whether it makes you more or less likely to vote for that candidate.*





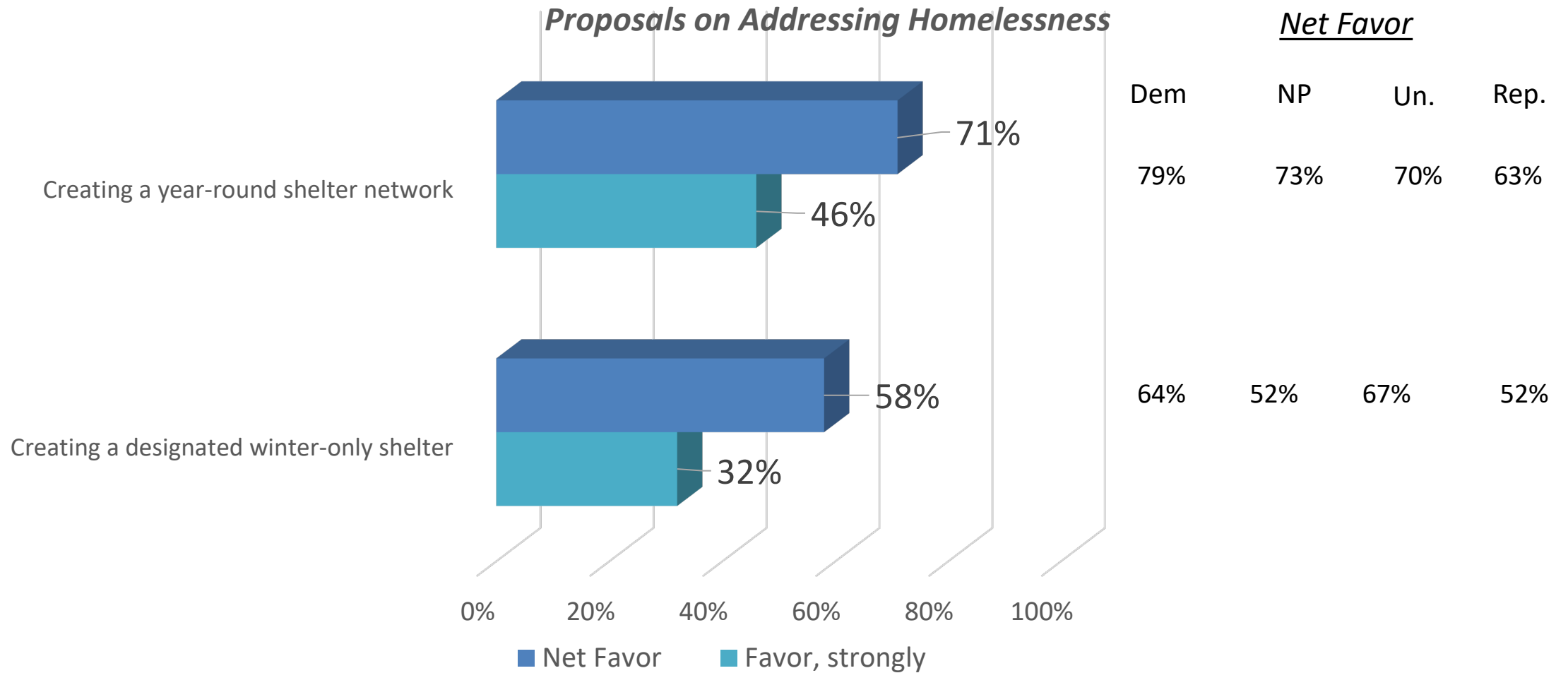
# Policy Issues: Addressing Homelessness

# Proposals emphasizing the need for more support services, especially mental health, addiction treatment, and prevention programs, are very popular



Next are a number of proposals the Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage's next mayor may consider to address the issue of homelessness. After each, please indicate whether you favor or oppose that proposal.

When talking specifically about shelters, voters prefer an emphasis on a “year-round” network as opposed to designating “winter-only” shelters



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# Voters want a candidate who'll “clean up the street” to keep families safe and businesses prosperous, and will work across the aisle to do so with data-backed efficiency



It's clear that voters are taking an “all of the above” approach to homelessness. On the one hand they are most supportive of policies that provide more wraparound services for the houseless; on the other, they prefer messaging that emphasizes a need to “clean up the streets.”

	<i>Much more likely</i>	<i>Net more likely</i>
We need to clean up our streets and our trails so that they're safe for families.	<b>50%</b>	82%
We need city leaders that will put differences aside, find compromises, and work urgently to get people off the streets.	<b>49%</b>	76%
Downtown Anchorage should be safe and welcoming for residents, visitors, and businesses. We can't have people loitering and sleeping downtown.	<b>46%</b>	73%
With over 4,000 people experiencing homelessness in Anchorage, we need to take a data driven approach to homelessness, focusing resources on what works and taking resources away from what doesn't.	<b>36%</b>	77%

> “cleaning up the streets” works well across party lines: Republicans are 82% and Democrats 87% net more likely to support a candidate using this framework.

> A split sample test revealed that this message is significantly stronger accompanied by the 4K figure than the same message, but without the statistic (which was only 68% net more likely)

*Next are some statements made by candidates for elected office in Anchorage on the issue of homelessness. After each statement please indicate whether it makes you more or less likely to vote for that candidate.*

# Rejecting the issue of homelessness outright is a strike against a candidate, as is claiming that the solution is to just build “more housing”



Claiming that enough money has been spent on homelessness only works among Republicans (58% net more likely), while 88% of Democrats, 56% NP voters, and 50% of Undeclared voters are net less likely to vote for such a candidate.

	<i>Much <u>less</u> likely</i>	<i>Net <u>less</u> likely</i>
We've spent enough money on homelessness. It's time to put taxpayer dollars elsewhere.	<b>37%</b>	51%
The truth is that homelessness is a housing problem and that cities that build more housing have less homelessness.	<b>29%</b>	53%
Homelessness is primarily about who has been left behind. It's our government's responsibility to focus on building an economy that works for everyone.	<b>25%</b>	50%
Today, there are over one thousand people living on the streets of Anchorage. The truth is that homelessness is a housing problem and that cities that build more housing have less homelessness.	<b>25%</b>	46%

<Democrats ID affordable housing as issue priority #1, but in the context of homelessness, this message falls flat (58% net likely, 35% net less likely).

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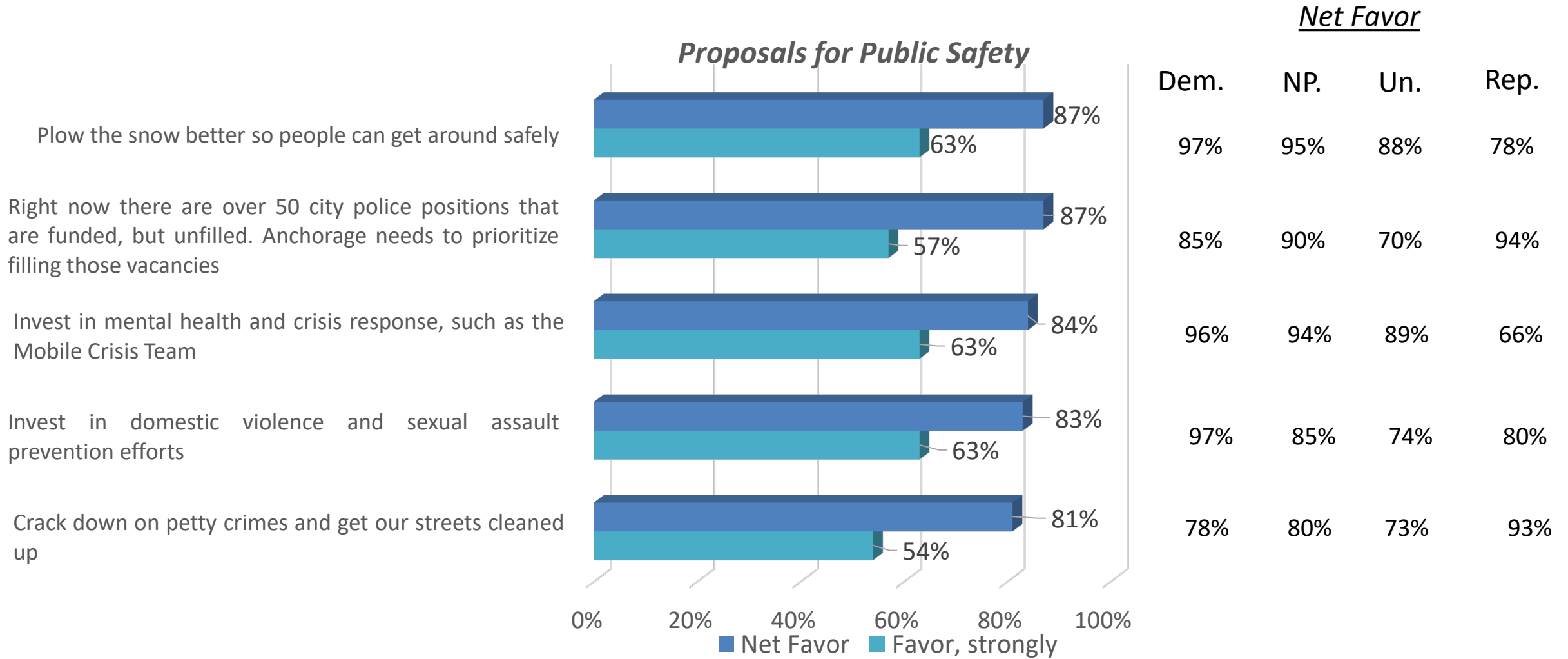


- Voters want their government to address the homeless crisis by increasing access to mental health services and preventative care to tackle the root of the problem.
  - “Offering better access to mental health treatment and addiction services” garners the highest favor among voters of all registered parties. The establishment of more preventative services is widely approved as well.
    - Voters want to see politicians “put differences aside” and work with each other to find permanent solutions: The creation of a year-round shelter network is far more favored than the creation of a winter-only network.
- Anchorage voters clearly want their streets cleaned up and will follow an “all of the above” approach to achieve that goal, preferring proposals that funnel monies to wraparound services that tackle the root of the problem, while also responding well to more conservative messaging that highlights “cleaning up the streets.”
- Messaging that isolates more housing is weak even among Democrats. Positing the idea of an unfair economy as the source of the problem of homelessness was also less well testing.



# Policy Issues: Public Safety

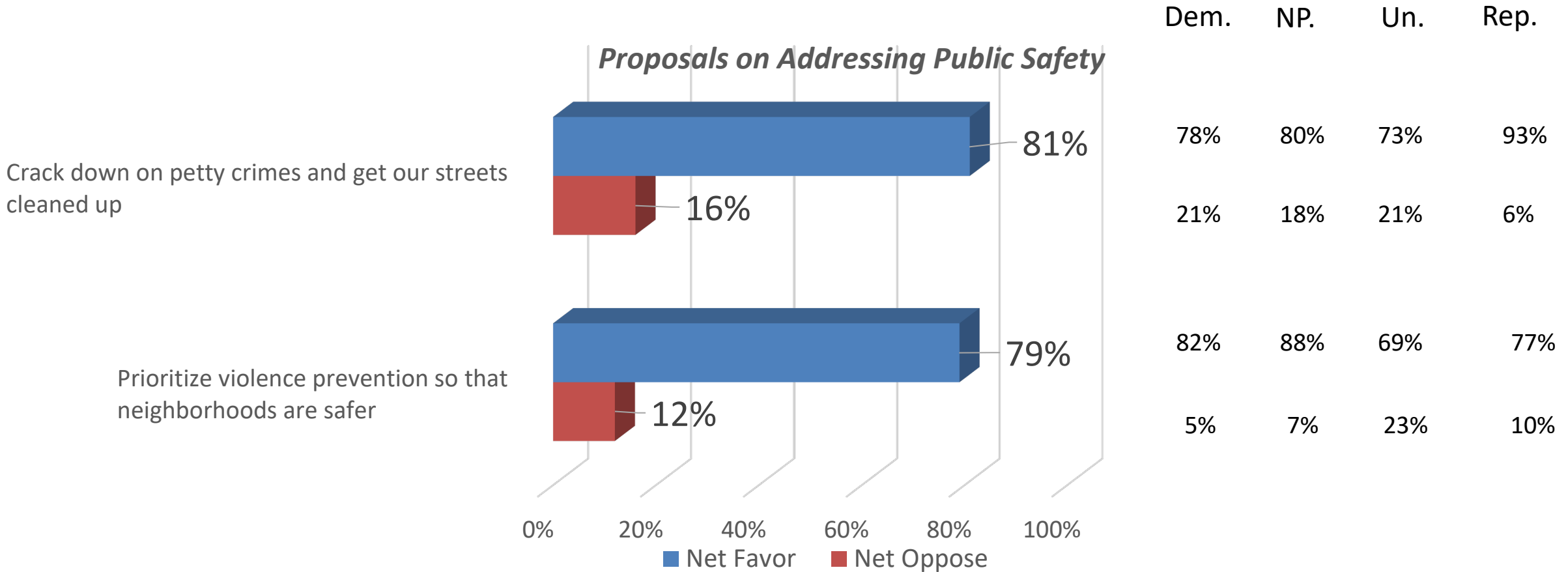
Voters want an “all of the above” approach to safety that includes better plowing, more police to help crack down on petty crime and domestic violence, while also investing in mental health and crisis response



*Next are a number of proposals the Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage’s next mayor may consider to address the issue of public safety. After each, please indicate whether you favor or oppose that proposal.*



# In split sample testing voters are equally amenable to candidates who proclaim a willingness to take on either petty or violent crime

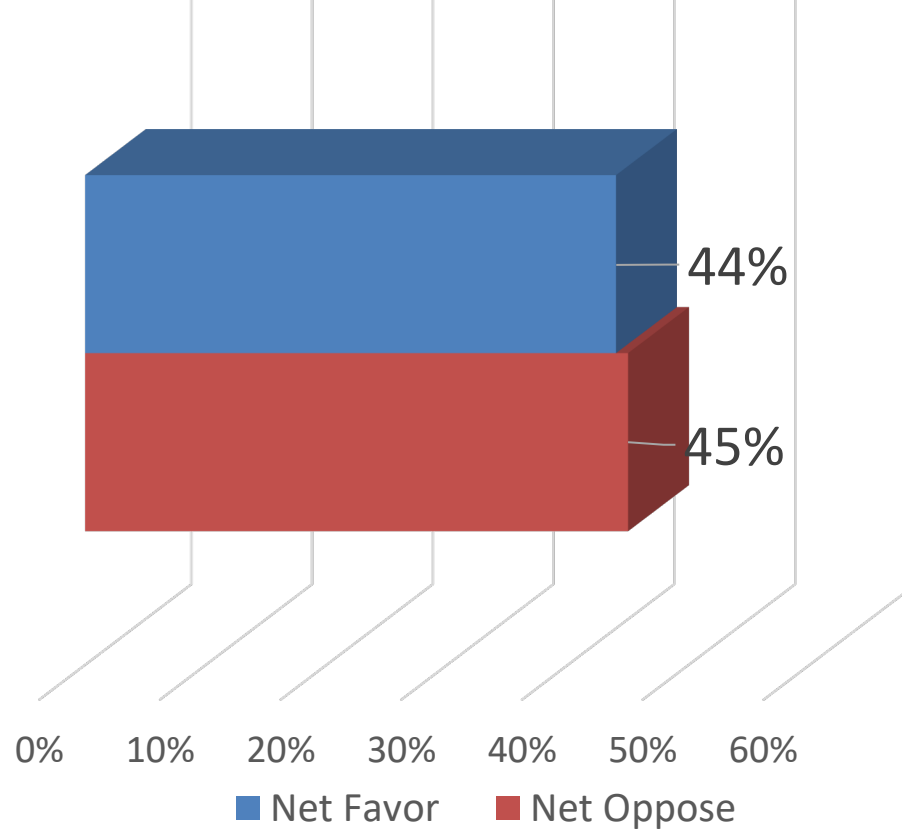


*Next are a number of proposals the Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage's next mayor may consider to address the issue of public safety. After each, please indicate whether you favor or oppose that proposal.*



**Proposals on Addressing Public Safety**

Redirect over three million dollars from the city's Mobile Crisis Team and other mental health first responder programs to allow the hiring of more neighborhood patrol officers



	Dem.	NP.	Un.	Rep.
Net Favor	22%	53%	40%	50%
Net Oppose	73%	44%	53%	28%

*Next are a number of proposals the Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage's next mayor may consider to address the issue of public safety. After each, please indicate whether you favor or oppose that proposal.*

Voters want a candidate who'll take a multi-faceted approach to public safety, funding police services while investing in communities to prevent crime before it happens



	<i>Much more likely</i>	<i>Net more likely</i>
We need to support our police officers, who keep us safe.	<b>50%</b>	81%
The way to make Anchorage safer is to build strong communities with good schools and good jobs with opportunities to advance, giving residents more opportunities to get ahead, stopping more crime before it happens.	<b>48%</b>	81%
Last year violent crime and homicides were up across Anchorage. We need to staff up our public safety departments to address crime and make our neighborhoods safe again.	<b>46%</b>	80%
Keeping our cities safe is the most basic responsibility of local government.	<b>46%</b>	86%

> This top testing message makes Republicans **71%** much more likely to vote for a candidate. It is comparatively less effective among Dems (**31%**) but as it evokes statistically zero backlash from voters, we recommend leaning into it whenever possible.

*Next are some statements made by candidates for elected office in Anchorage on the issue of public safety. After each statement please indicate whether it makes you more or less likely to vote for that candidate....*



- **Public safety is a top-of-mind issue and voters want a multi-faceted response from their government.** This includes everything from safer roads to more police who'll “crack down” on petty and/or violent crime, to investing in mental health and crisis response.
- Solutions should not posit an either/or solution that pits funding police against funding crisis prevention and mental health services. Instead, voters favor prioritize both funding police and filling vacancies in emergency personnel and investing in programs like the Mobile Crisis Team.
  - Nearly half of respondents opposed a proposal to divert funds away from the Mobile Crisis Team.
- “Cracking down on crime” language resonates - especially Republicans.
- **In sum, a safe city requires both support for police and community investments.**

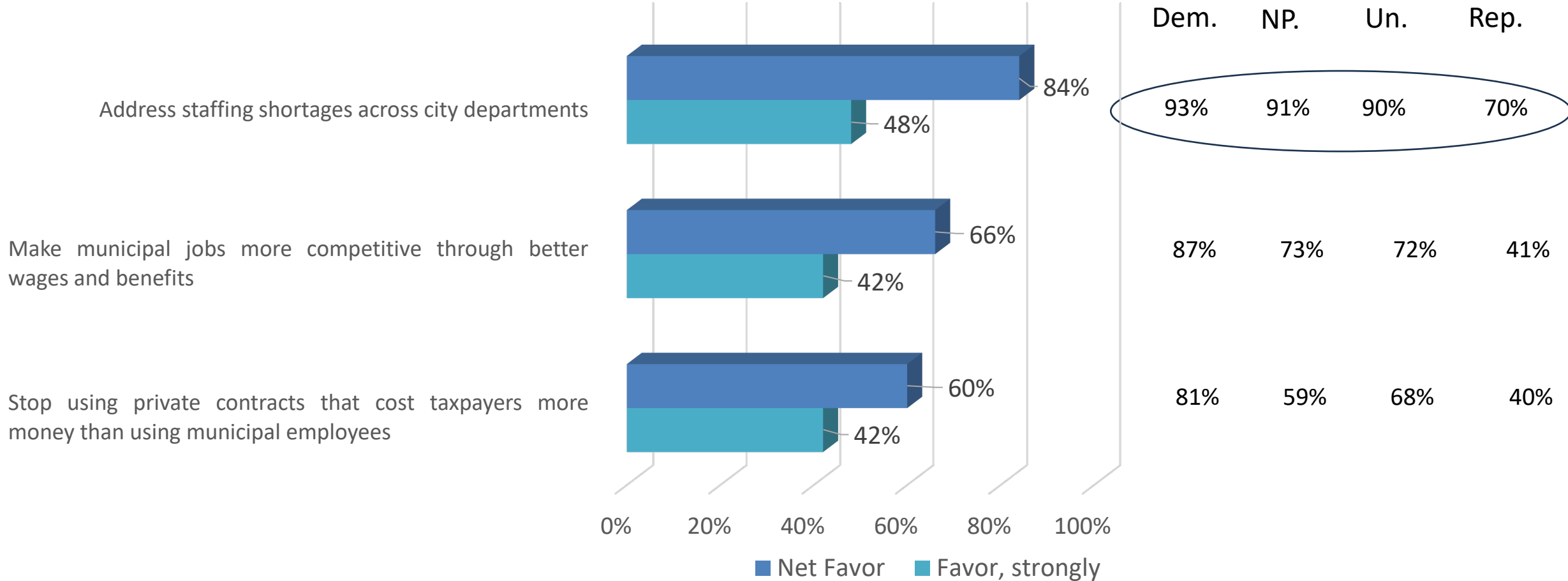


# Policy Issues: Government Services



**Proposals on Addressing Government Services**

Net Favor



*Next are a number of proposals the Anchorage Assembly and Anchorage's next mayor may consider to address the issue of government services. After each, please indicate whether you favor or oppose that proposal.*



	<i>Much more likely</i>	<i>Net more likely</i>
Anchorage is facing a recruitment and retention crisis among its frontline public employees. From police officers, to EMTs, to snowplow drivers, our city is struggling to recruit and fill vacant positions. We need to do more to keep staff in place serving our community	<b>50%</b>	81%
Severe staffing shortages impact all of us. When streets don't get plowed, kids can't get to school and adults can't get to work and ultimately our economy suffers.	<b>40%</b>	78%

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# They also want leaders who'll keep a sharp eye on the bottom line



A candidate who cares about saving taxpayers money is especially appealing to Republicans (57% much more likely), while Democrats want to see a reinvestment in frontline public employees over expensive private contractors (64% much more likely).

	<i>Much more likely</i>	<i>Net more likely</i>
It's the Mayor's job to make the tough decisions that save taxpayers money-that includes cutting waste and making government a more efficient service provider.	<b>43%</b>	70%
Instead of giving sweetheart deals to private contractors, we need to reinvest in our frontline public employees so we can ensure safe neighborhoods, safe roads, and a stronger economy.	<b>42%</b>	67%

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- **Voters clearly believe that addressing staffing shortages is one of the best paths forward in improving the delivery of city services.** There is opportunity here to tie this in with chief concerns including lack of police (crime and safety) and unsafe roads.
- **Our strongest messages RE government services focus on the broad implications of staffing shortages, pointing to the disruptions felt across public employee positions and city services.**
- **Messaging that falls flat:** Getting too specific here doesn't work as well as focusing on the big picture (though these messages still work if more detail is called for):
  - “Experienced staff are fleeing city government, and in many cases leaving the state entirely for better paying jobs in the lower '48. We need to do more to keep staff in place serving our community. (72% net more likely; 23% net less likely)
  - Our police are at significant risk to their life and safety because of a lack of personnel to provide critical backup and assistance on dangerous calls (70% net more likely; 22% less likely)
  - We need to reinvest in our parks, trails, and schools to make Anchorage an attractive place to raise a family and start a business (65% net more likely; 31% net less likely)
- **As with homelessness and public safety, voters are nuanced in their approach. While they want to see staffing shortages addressed, they also place a high value on candidates who emphasize making government more efficient.**



# Policy Issues: Affordable Housing

## When it comes to housing, voters prefer a candidate who stresses keeping Anchorage affordable for current and future residents



As we saw earlier, the intensity of feeling behind these messages is more limited, indicating that while relatively important as a policy, this issue takes a back seat to hotter topics like crime, homelessness, the economy, and efficient delivery of government services.

	<i>Much more likely</i>	<i>Net more likely</i>
To address Anchorage's housing crisis, we need to make sure that every family-low income, working, and middle class-can afford to have a roof over their head.	<b>39%</b>	70%
Anchorage needs to invest in building more affordable housing, which will create jobs and allow the next generations to live here.	<b>34%</b>	69%
We need common sense reforms to make it easier and more affordable to build housing, bring down costs, and preserve our communities.	<b>29%</b>	70%
We need to do more to preserve our aging homes across Anchorage, including providing incentives to help repair run down properties.	<b>23%</b>	58%

*Next are some statements made by candidates for elected office in Anchorage on the issue of affordable housing. After each statement please indicate whether it makes you more or less likely to vote for that candidate.*