



Ohio Legislative Children's Caucus

*Learning, connecting, and problem-solving
together. Our children are counting on us.*

November 18, 2024

Universal School Meals Help Students Thrive



Cynthia Rees
State Director

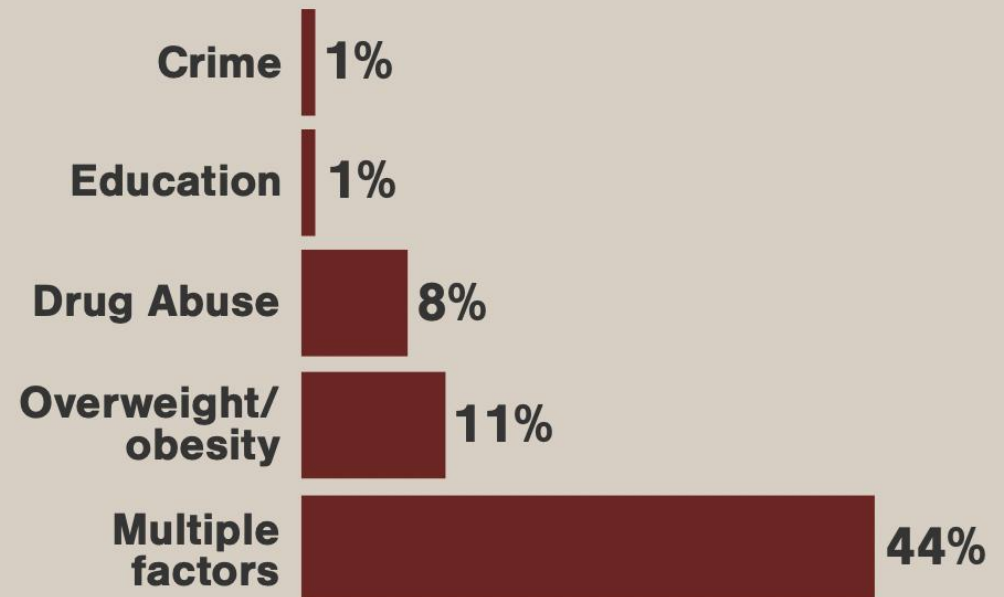
77 Percent of American Youth Can't Qualify for Military Service

Better nutrition and physical activity can yield healthier outcomes for youth and bolster national security

“Nationwide, 77% of youth between the ages of 17 and 24 cannot qualify for the military service.”

Common Barriers to Military Service

US Population of Young Adults Ages 17-24



Notes:

1. Young adults can be counted in more than one category and therefore categories do not sum to 77 percent. Not all disqualifiers are listed.

Policymakers should support nutrition and physical activity programs

The retired admirals and generals of Mission: Readiness recognize that the underlying causes of obesity cannot be solved by the efforts of the military alone. With an increase in youth being ineligible for military service, it is more important than ever for policymakers, including state and local school boards, to promote healthy eating, increased access to fresh and nutritious foods, and physical activity for children from an early age.



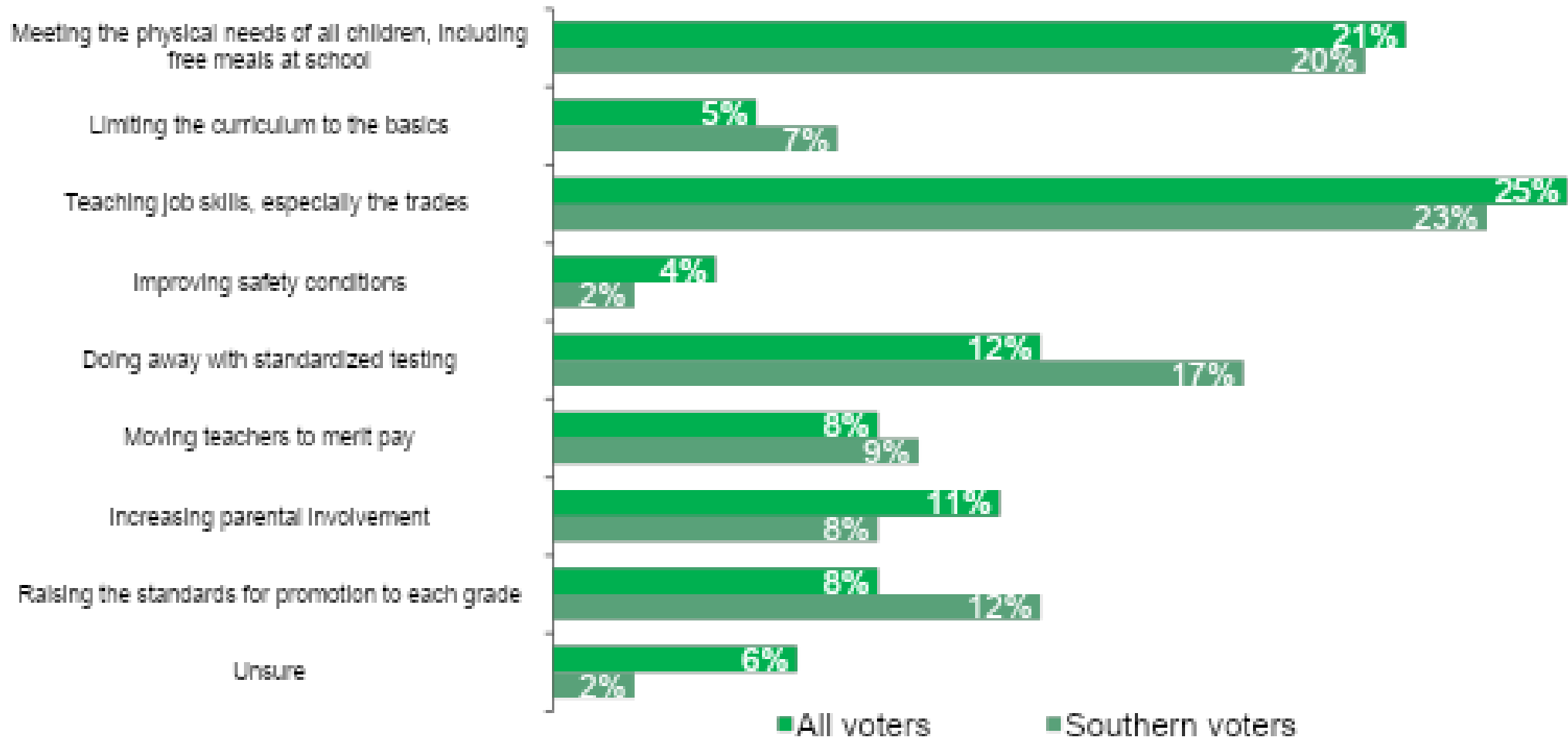
Alexi Donovan
Vice President

A Survey of Voter Attitudes in Ohio – School Meals

Field Dates: May 11–19, 2024

Tusk Philanthropies

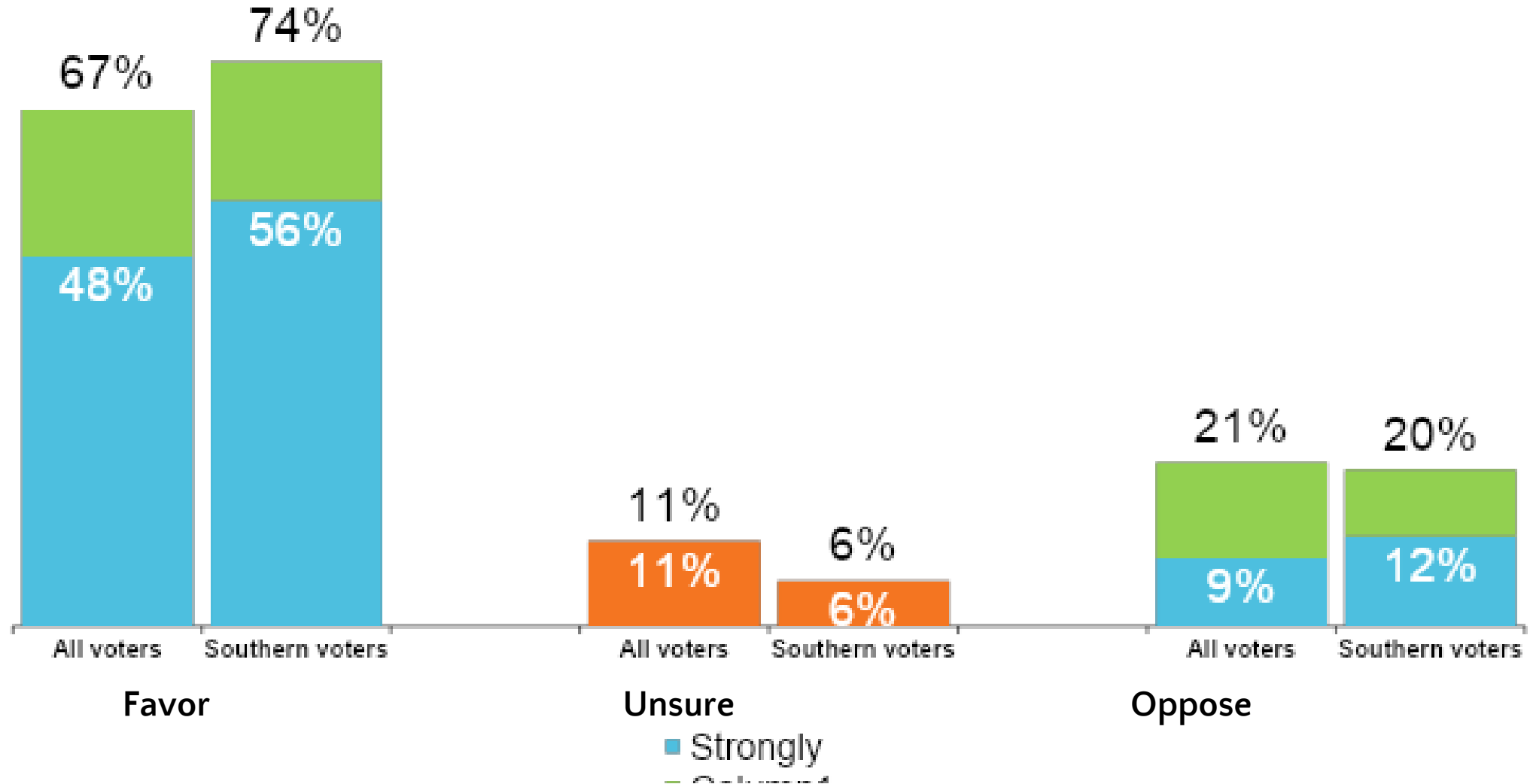
Now here is a list of issues that some people here in Ohio have said might improve the performance of our public schools here in Ohio. Please indicate which one issue you think would do the most to improve the performance of our public schools here in Ohio.



Focus on free meals (21%)

- Columbus media market
- Franklin County
- Hamilton County
- Working women
- Kids in parochial or private school
- Women under 45
- Democrat/strong
- Republican/weak
- Black
- Liberal
- Unchurched

One piece of legislation under consideration is an expansion of state funding to provide school meals free for ALL children – meaning breakfast and lunch at school. Would you favor or oppose that legislation?



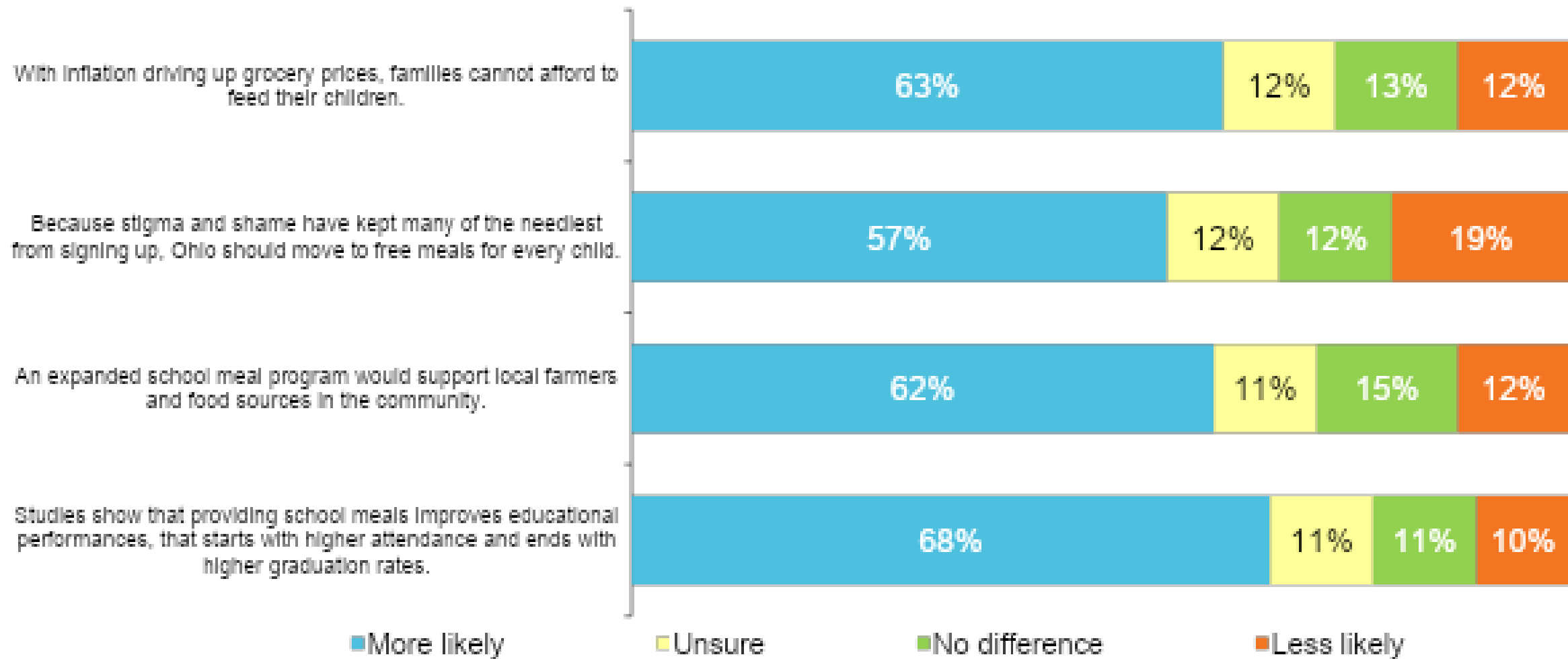
Free Breakfast & Lunch I (Ballot)

	<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Unsure</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %
Media Market			
Cleveland	64	10	25
Cincinnati	74	8	18
Columbus	73	7	20
Youngstown	50	28	22
Dayton	68	10	22
Toledo	64	15	21
Rural	73	15	11
Gender/Emp			
Men	61	14	25
Working women	79	5	17
Women at home	68	13	18
TOTAL	67	11	21

Free Breakfast & Lunch II (Ballot)

	<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Unsure</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %
Ideology			
Conservative	53	14	34
Moderate	79	14	6
Liberal	80	6	5
Income			
Under \$40K	76	10	14
\$40-70K	75	10	15
\$70-100K	66	11	23
\$100K+	62	11	27
Party			
Republican	48	16	36
Ticket-splitter	66	12	22
Democrat	90	5	5
TOTAL	67	11	21

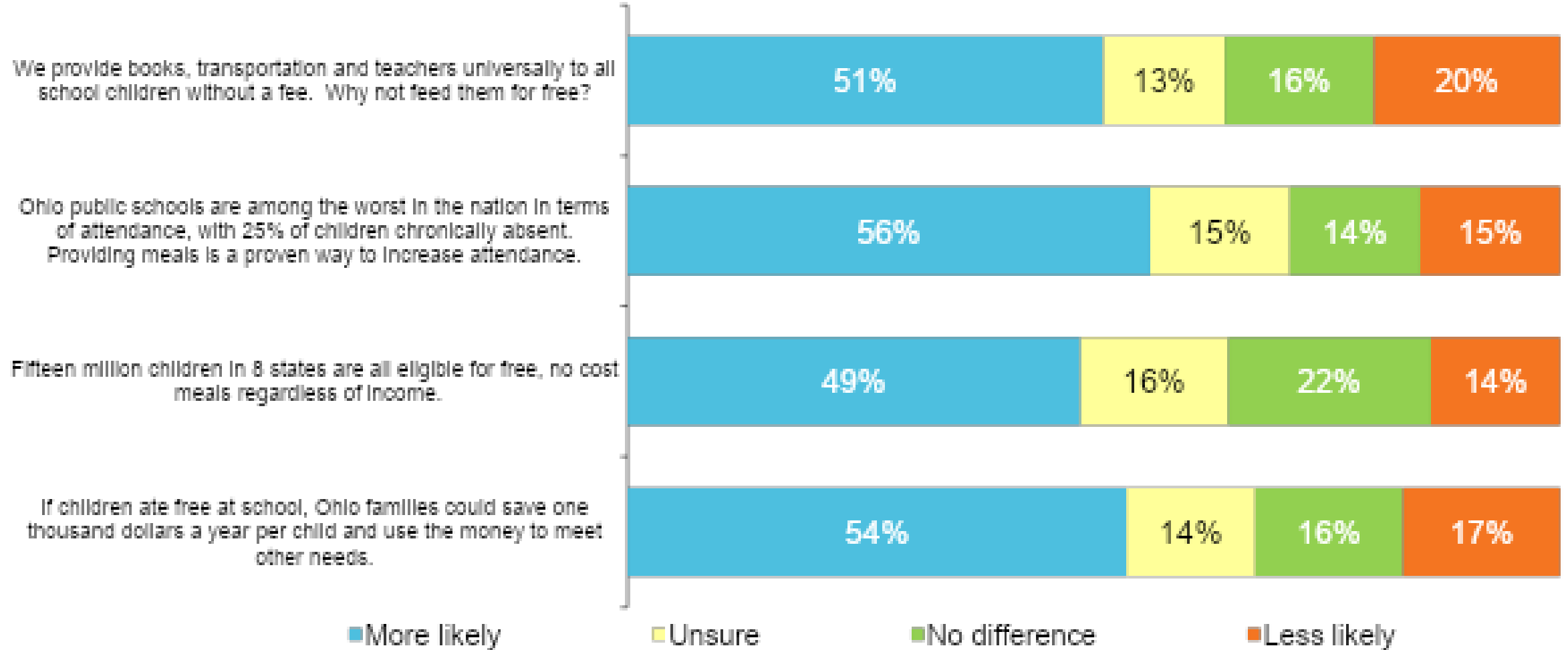
Ohio Free Lunches Messages 1
(All voters)



Stigma & Shame/Impact

	More <u>Likely</u> %	Less <u>Likely</u> %	Net <u>Diff.</u>
IDEOLOGY			
Very conservative	33	43	-10
Somewhat conservative	47	23	24
Moderate	68	6	66
Liberal	78	4	74
PARTY			
Republican	41	31	10
Ticket-splitter	48	20	28
Democrat	78	6	72

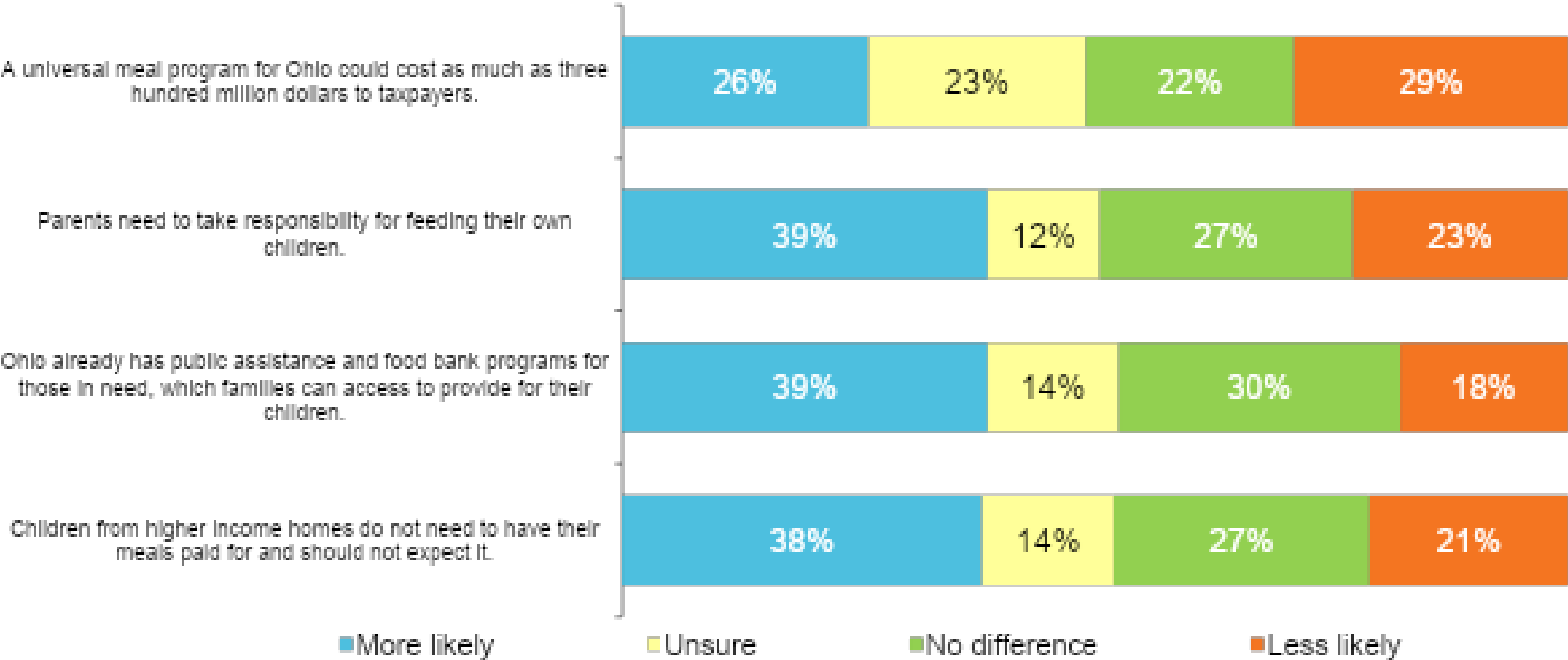
Ohio Free Lunches Messages 2 (All Voters)



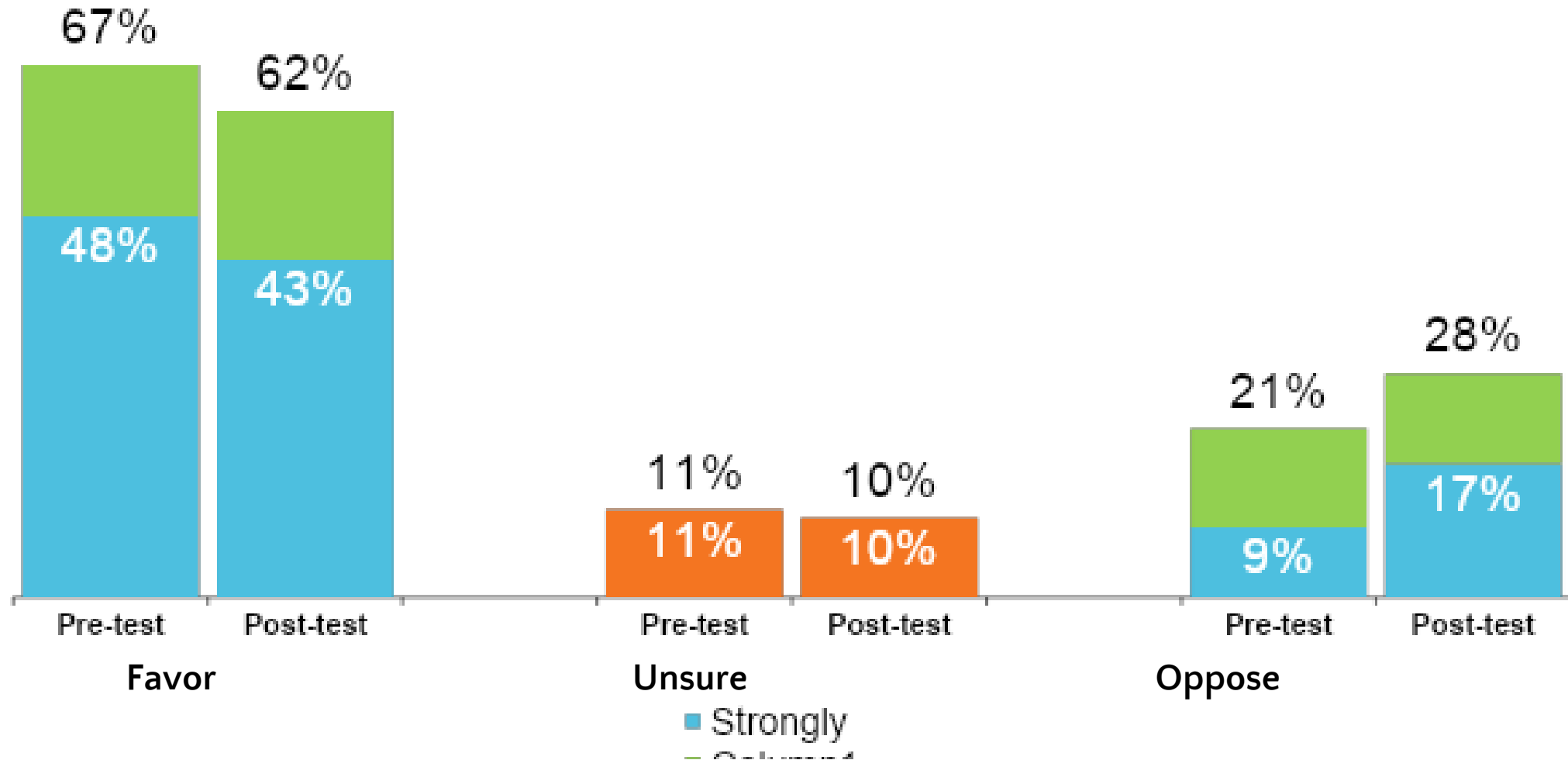
Already Provide Books & Transportation/Impact

	<u>More Likely</u> %	<u>Less Likely</u> %	<u>Net Diff.</u>
IDEOLOGY			
Very conservative	29	42	-13
Somewhat conservative	41	23	18
Moderate	63	13	50
Liberal	71	6	65
PARTY			
Republican	33	31	2
Ticket-splitter	45	23	22
Democrat	73	8	65

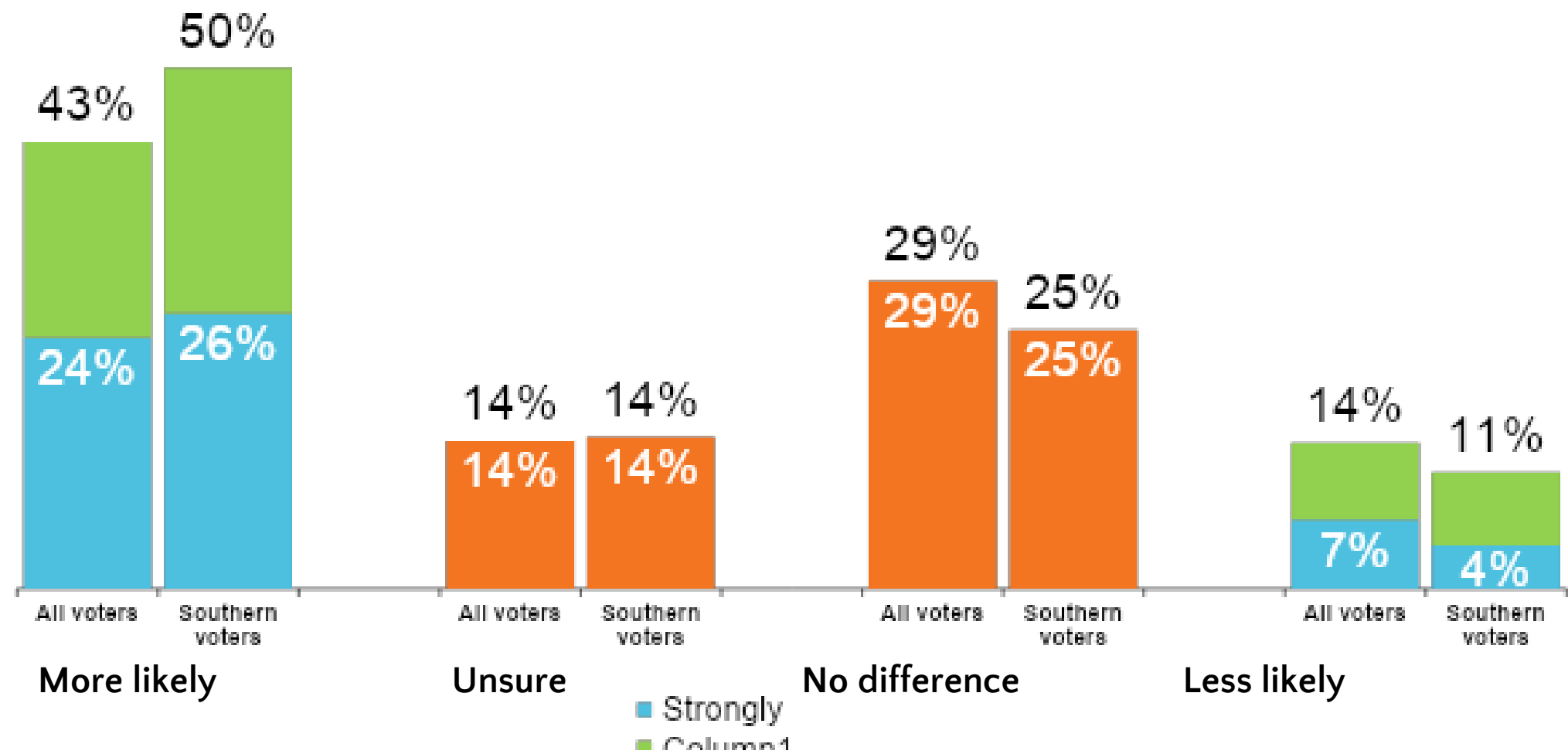
Ohio Free Lunches Messages 3 (All Voters)



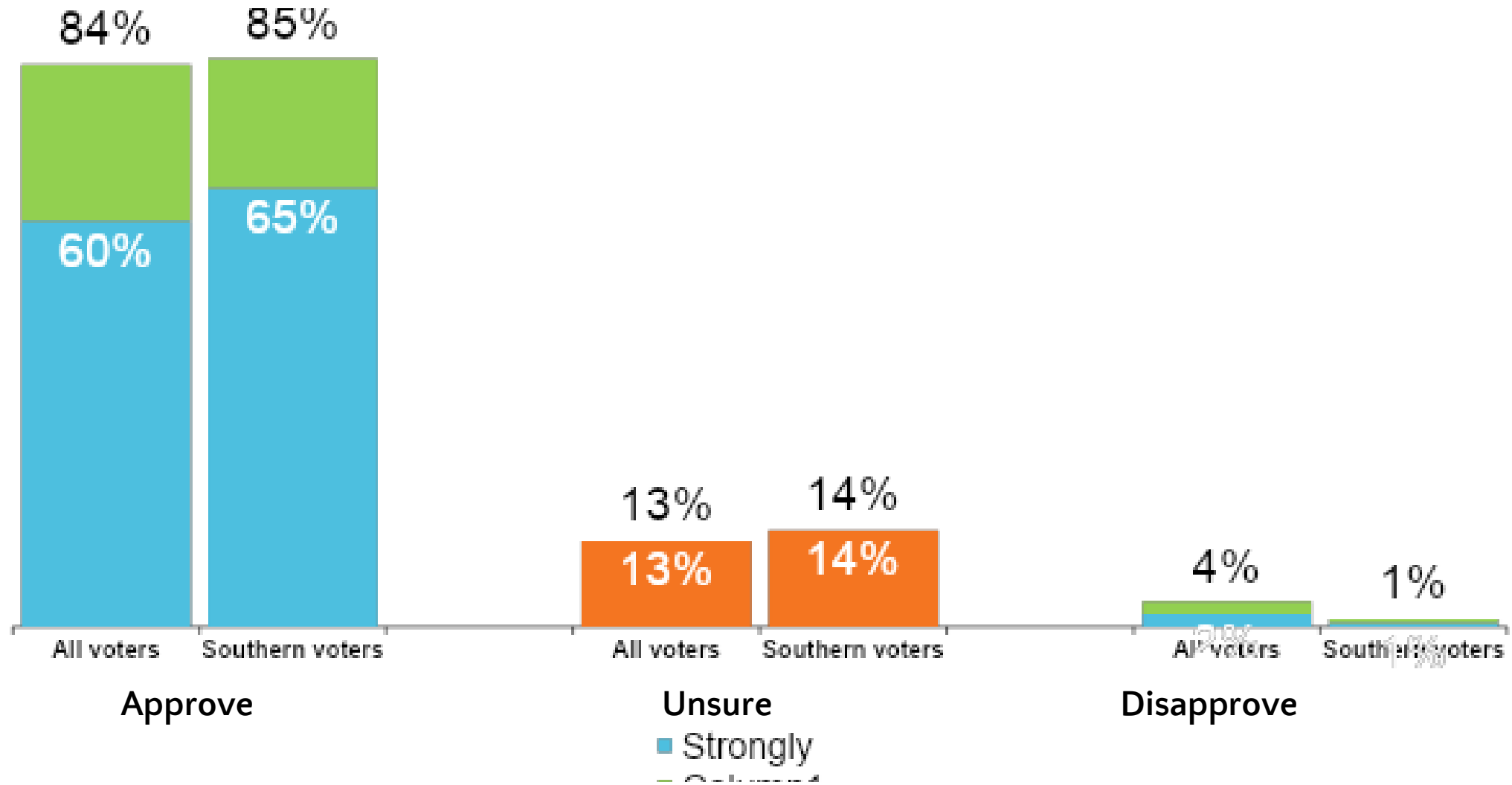
Now that you have had a chance to think about it, one piece of legislation under consideration in the state legislature would expand state funding to make school meals, including breakfast and lunch, free for ALL children. Would you favor or oppose that legislation?
(All Voters)



Would you, yourself, be more likely or less likely to vote for a member of the State Legislature if you know that he or she had voted to support free meals for public school children here in Ohio?



As you may be aware, Ohio's First Lady Fran DeWine, has partnered with Dolly Parton and her foundation to provide school aged children with free books. Called the Imagination Library, it is part of a legacy to support children and parents in every corner of Ohio. Do you approve or disapprove of this program?



Findings

- Two-thirds (67%) of Ohio voters support a free breakfast and lunch in public schools. A breakfast only opinion receives slightly less support (64%), although it remains popular. The language read,
“One piece of legislation under consideration is an expansion of state funding to provide school meals free for ALL children – meaning breakfast and lunch at school. Would you (ROTATE) < favor or oppose > that legislation?”
- Voters from the oversampled southern region are actually more supportive than the state as a whole (73%) of a universal lunch.
- After a series of both positive and negative messaging, the support for a universal breakfast and lunch program remains above 60%. That suggests that this program would be very popular with voters statewide, even after a period of public debate.
- By a wide margin (+29), voters would be more likely to support a candidate who voted for a universal breakfast and lunch program in Ohio.
- The “umbrella” message for this effort should focus on the ability of universal breakfast and lunch to raise academic performance across a range of factors.
- There are three messages that most positively impact voters, including (in order);
 - Stigma and shame for children,
 - We already provide so much, &
 - Potential family savings.

TUSK PHILANTHROPIES

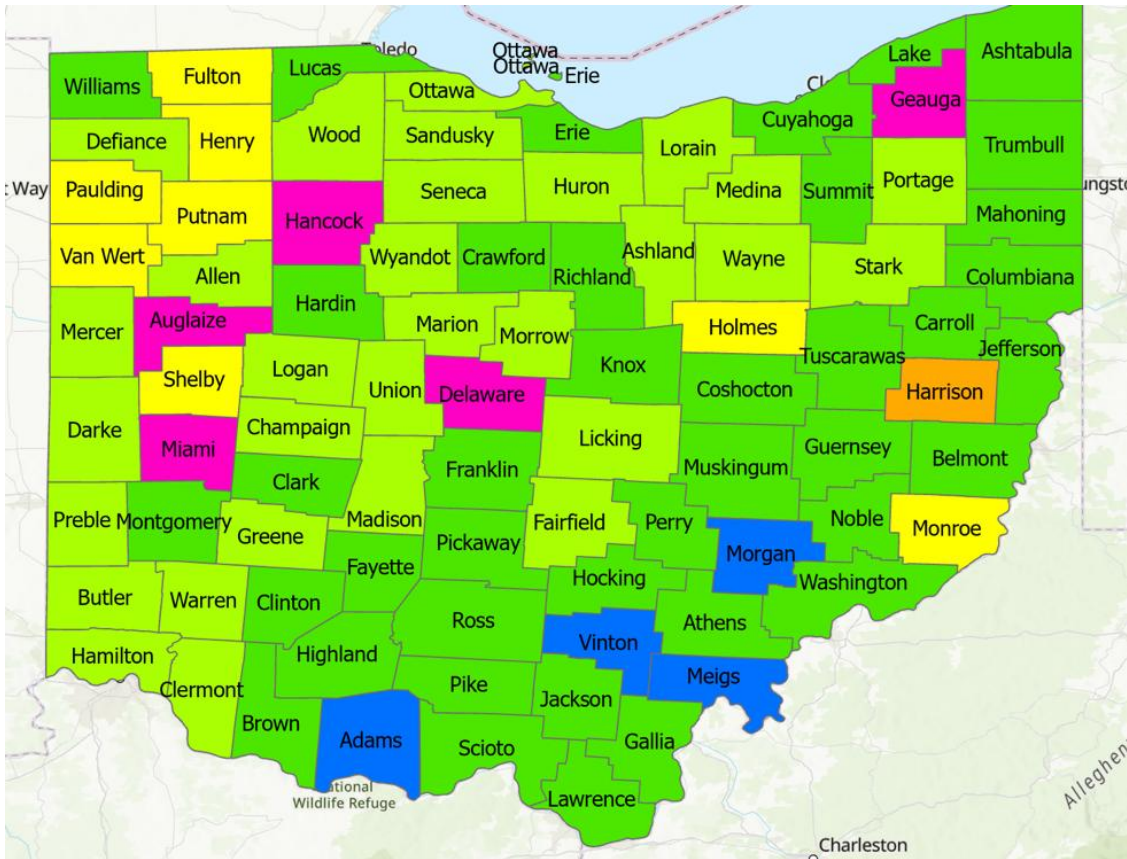
Lisa Quigley
Director, Solving Hunger



The poorest, hungriest children are in the South and the Midwest, mostly in rural areas.
That's where we work, with local leaders.

Ohio, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma

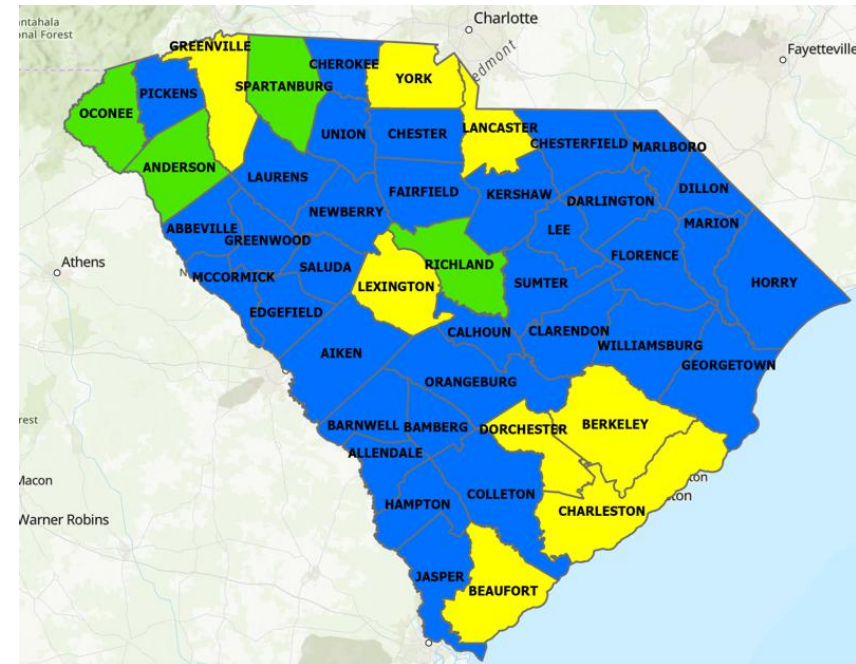
Lisa Quigley, Director, Solving Hunger — Nashville, TN



Ohio child hunger 17.7%



Tennessee child hunger 17.6%



South Carolina child hunger 19.1%