A Presentation to:
FOHVAMP

Prepared by RBI Strategies & Research

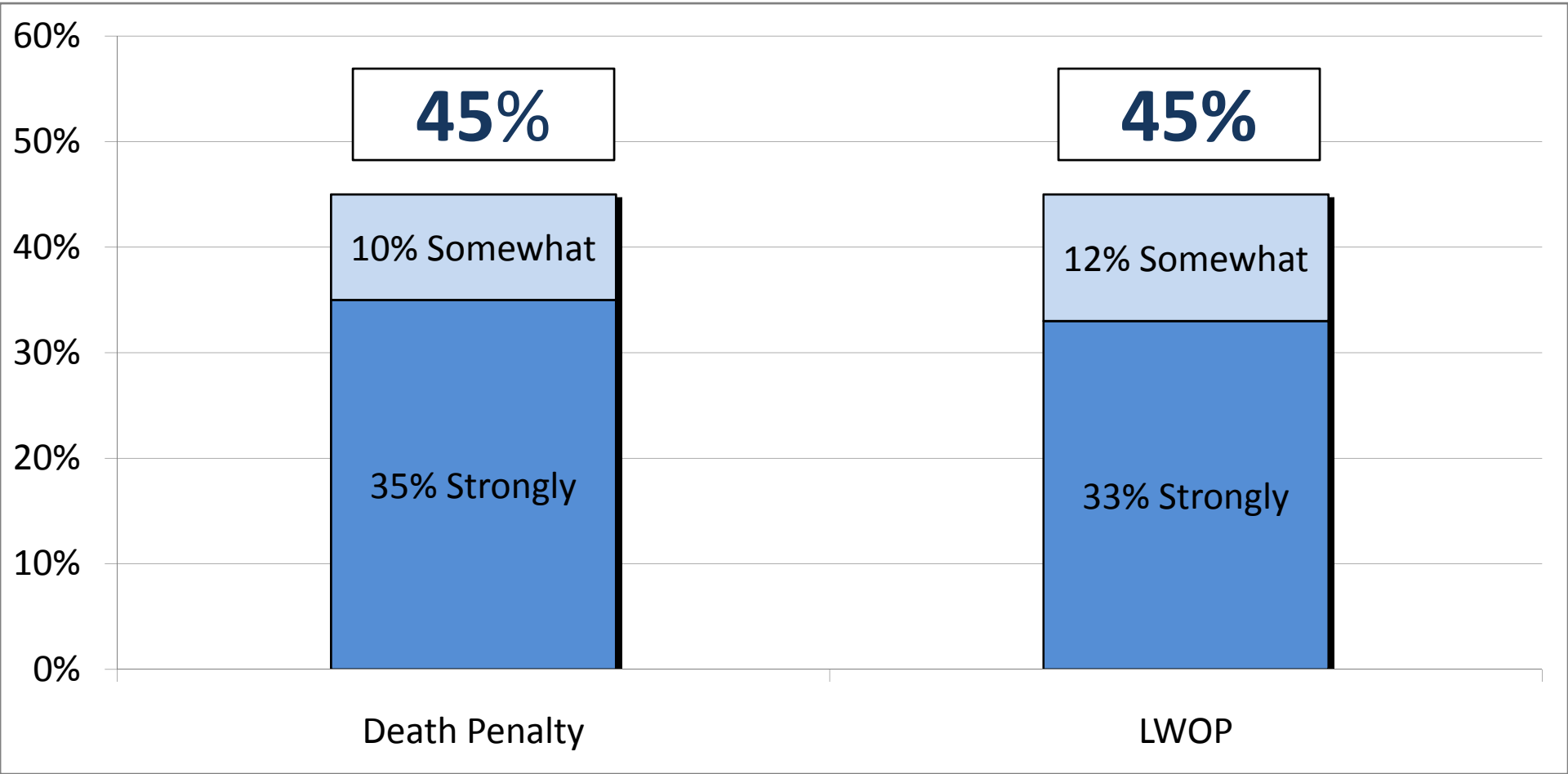
February, 2008

Methodology

- RBI conducted 500 interviews with Colorado voters likely to participate in the November 2008 General Election
- The random sample was drawn from an updated file of registered voters.
- The margin of error for the sample is +/-4.36% at the 95% confidence level.
- The survey was conducted from February 12-17, 2008.

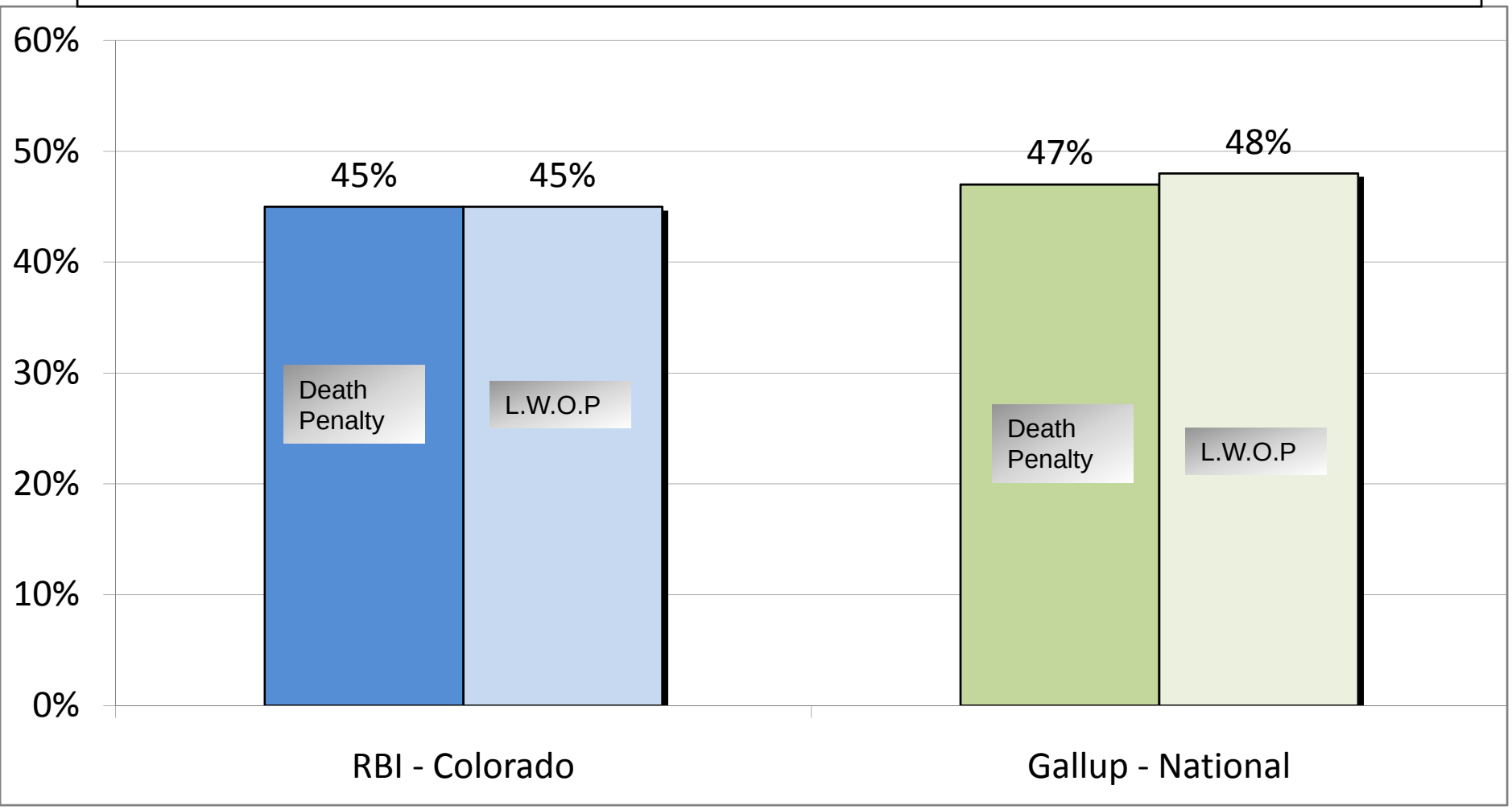
Voter Opinion is Evenly Split on Best Penalty for Murder

"If you could choose between the following two approaches, which do you think is the better penalty for committing murder: the death penalty or life imprisonment with absolutely no possibility of parole?"

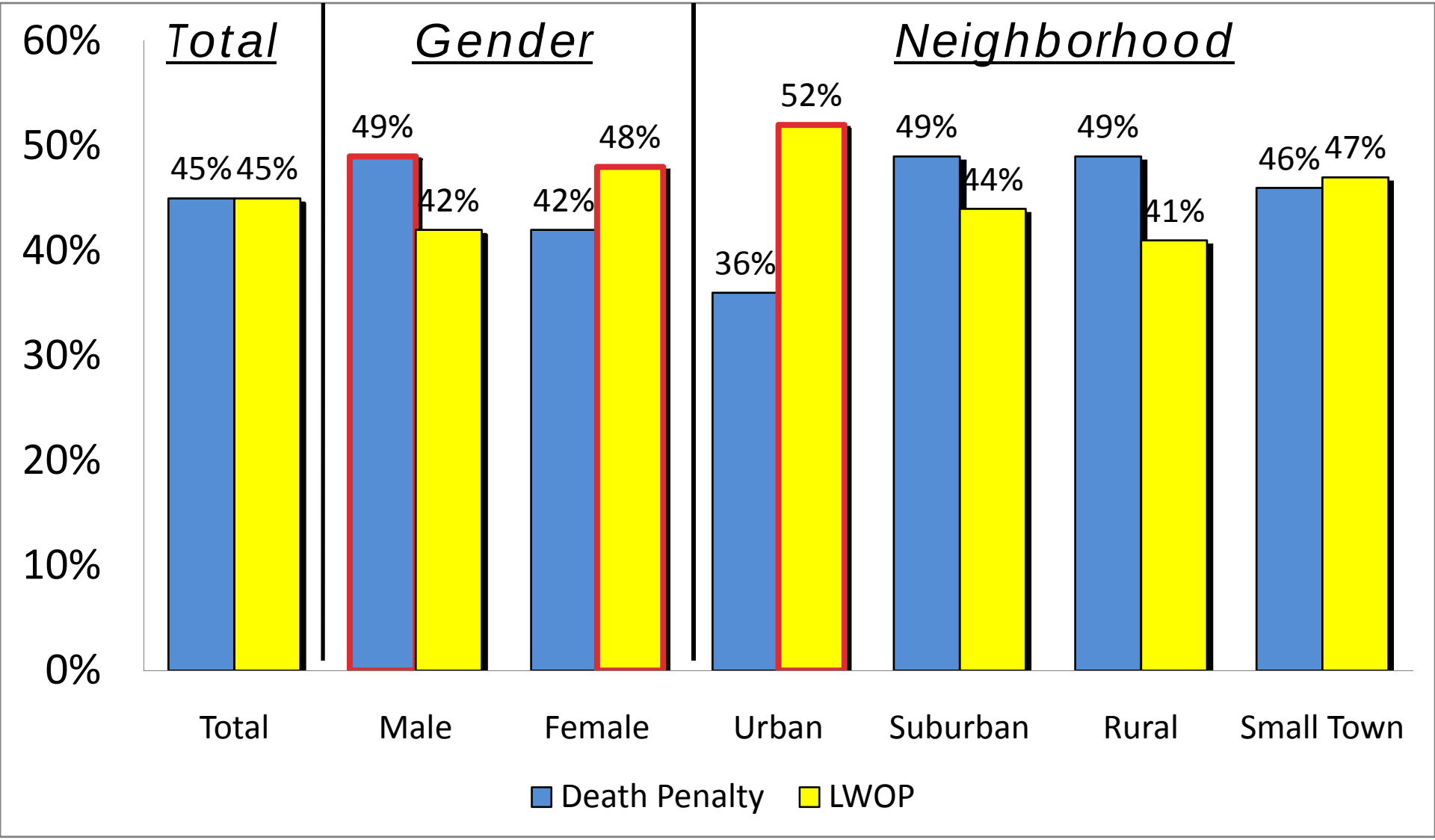


Colorado Results Mirror National Feelings Toward the Death Penalty

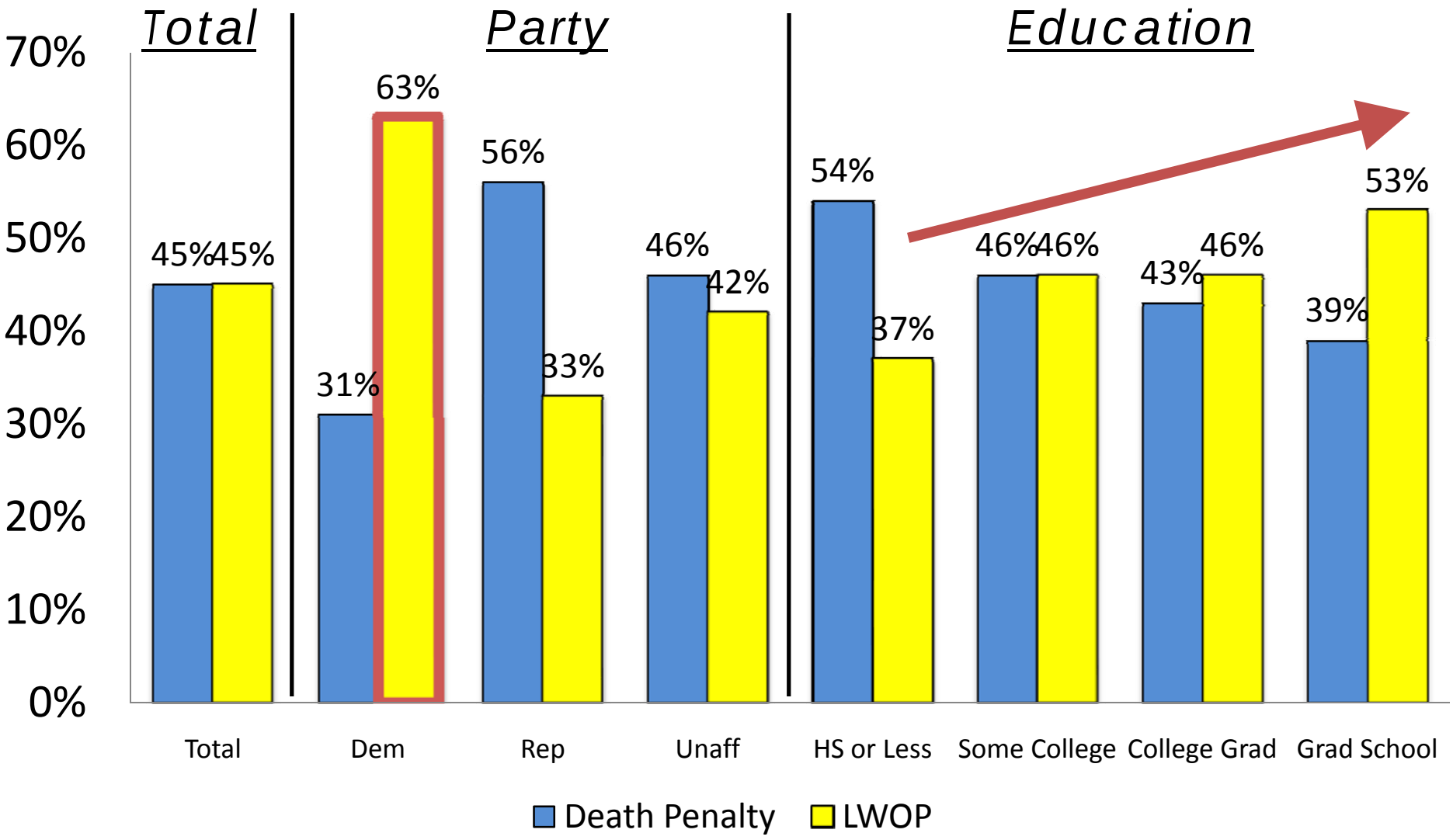
"If you could choose between the following two approaches, which do you think is the better penalty for committing murder: the death penalty or life imprisonment with absolutely no possibility of parole?"



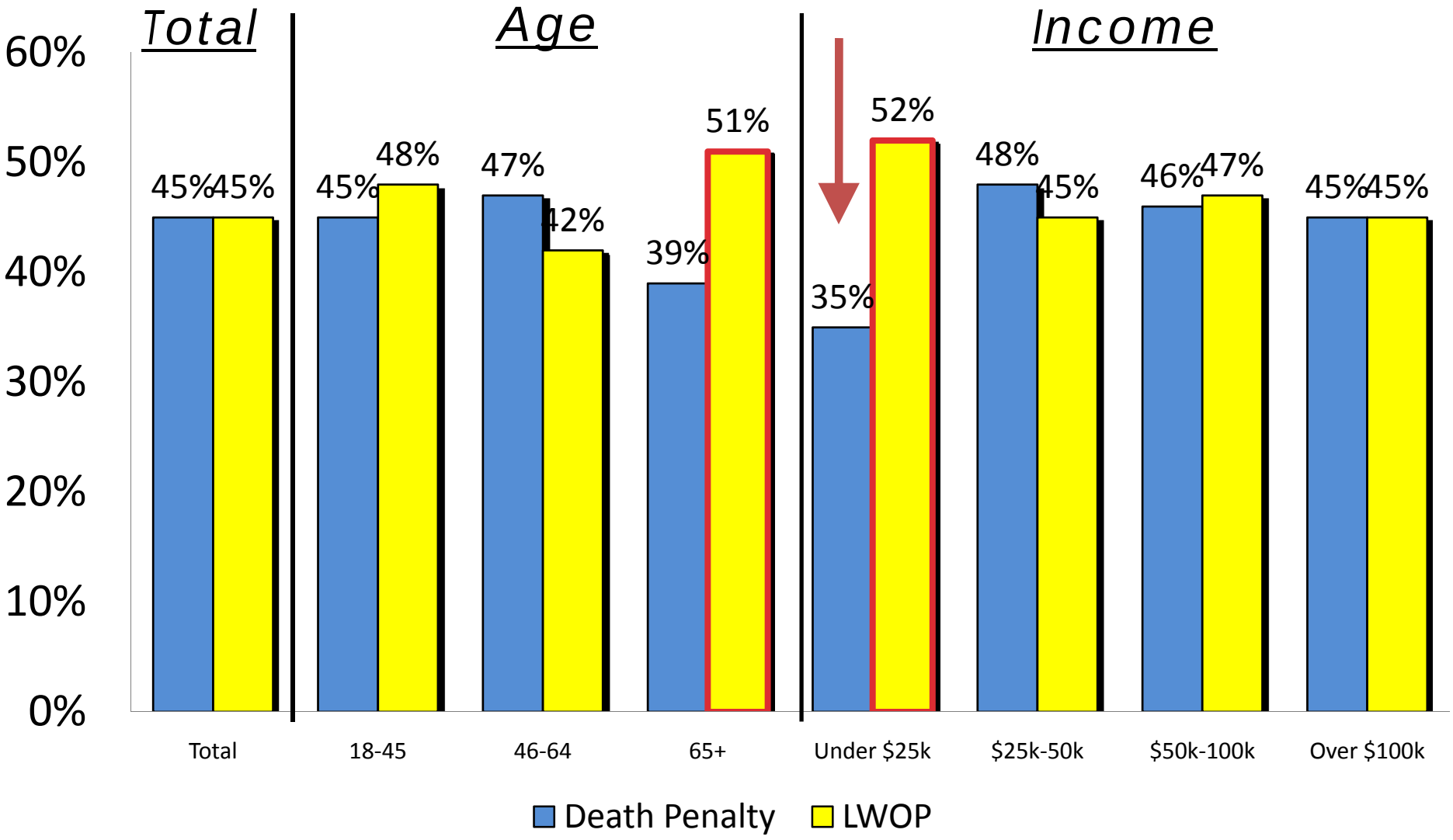
Clear Gender Gap in Death Penalty Preference; Urban Voters Strongly Favor LWOP



Democrats Favor LWOP by Two-to-One Margin; Preference Correlated with Education

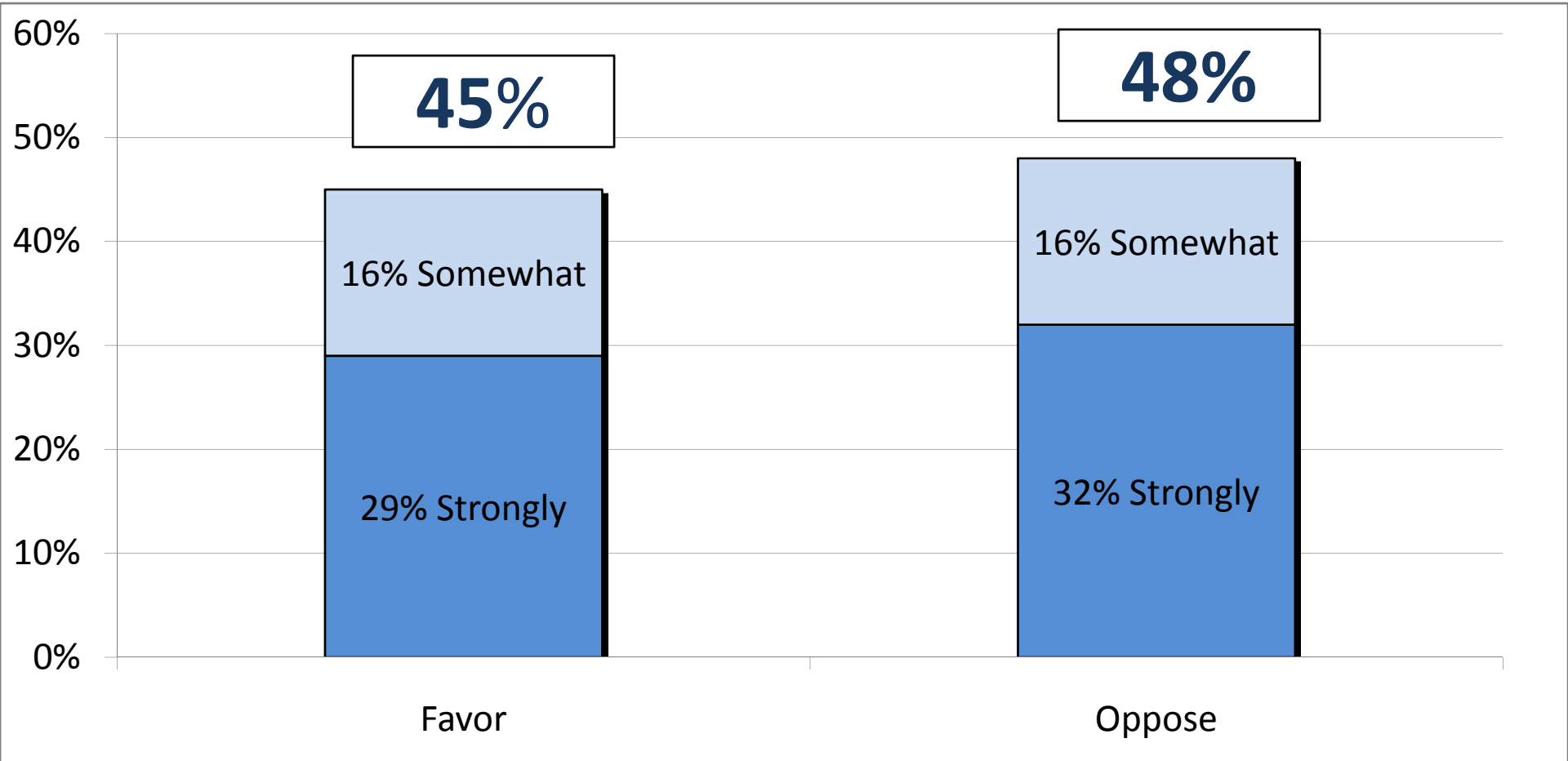


Older Voters, those with Incomes under $25k Far More Likely to Support LWOP



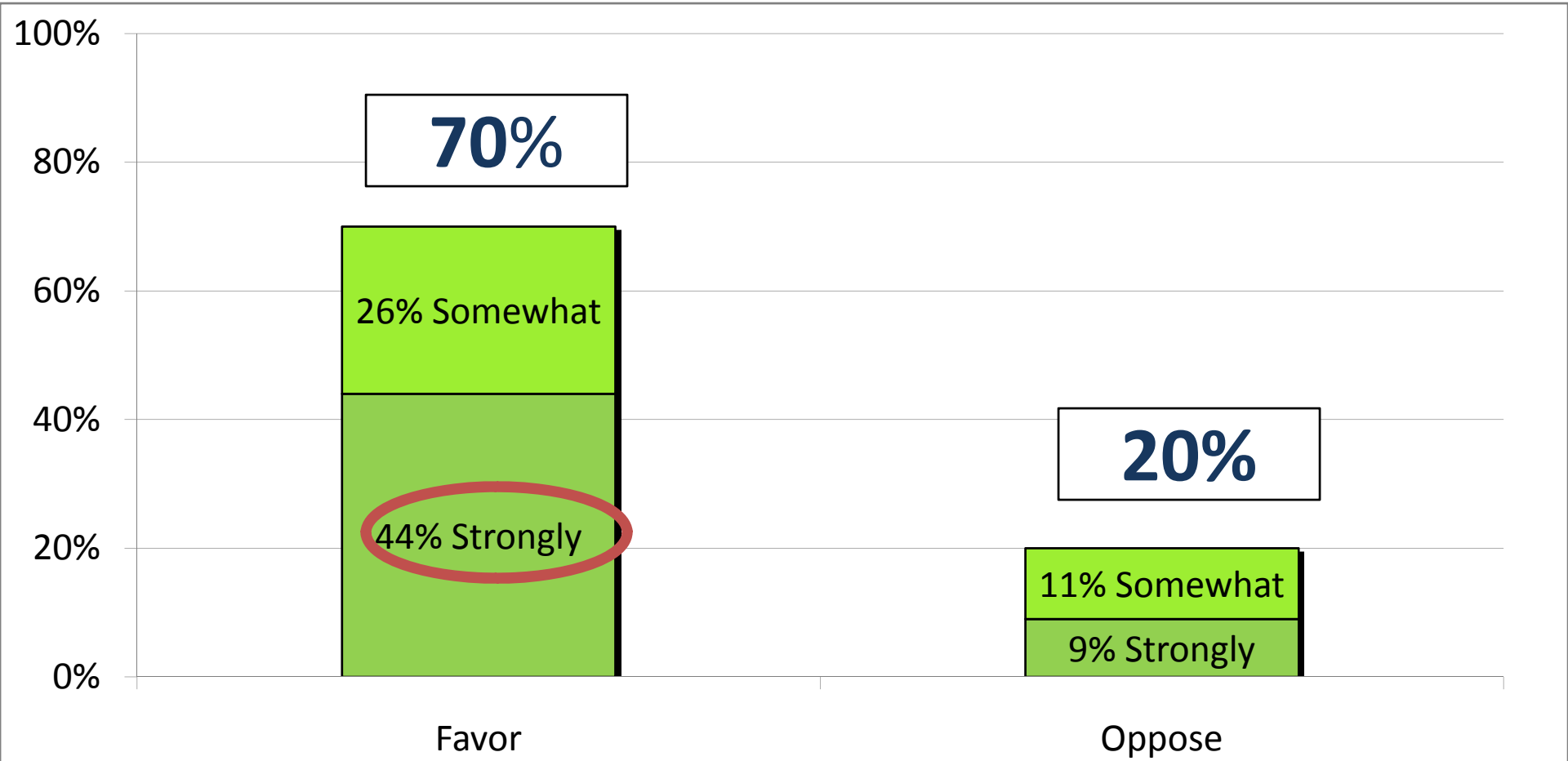
Additional Information Slightly Increases Opposition to Death Penalty

"Let me give you a little more information. The State now spends over $3 million every year to prosecute death penalty cases. That is $3 million more than it costs to prosecute murder cases without the death penalty. In the past thirty years, only one person has been executed. Given that, do you favor or oppose the State's use of the death penalty for convicted killers?"



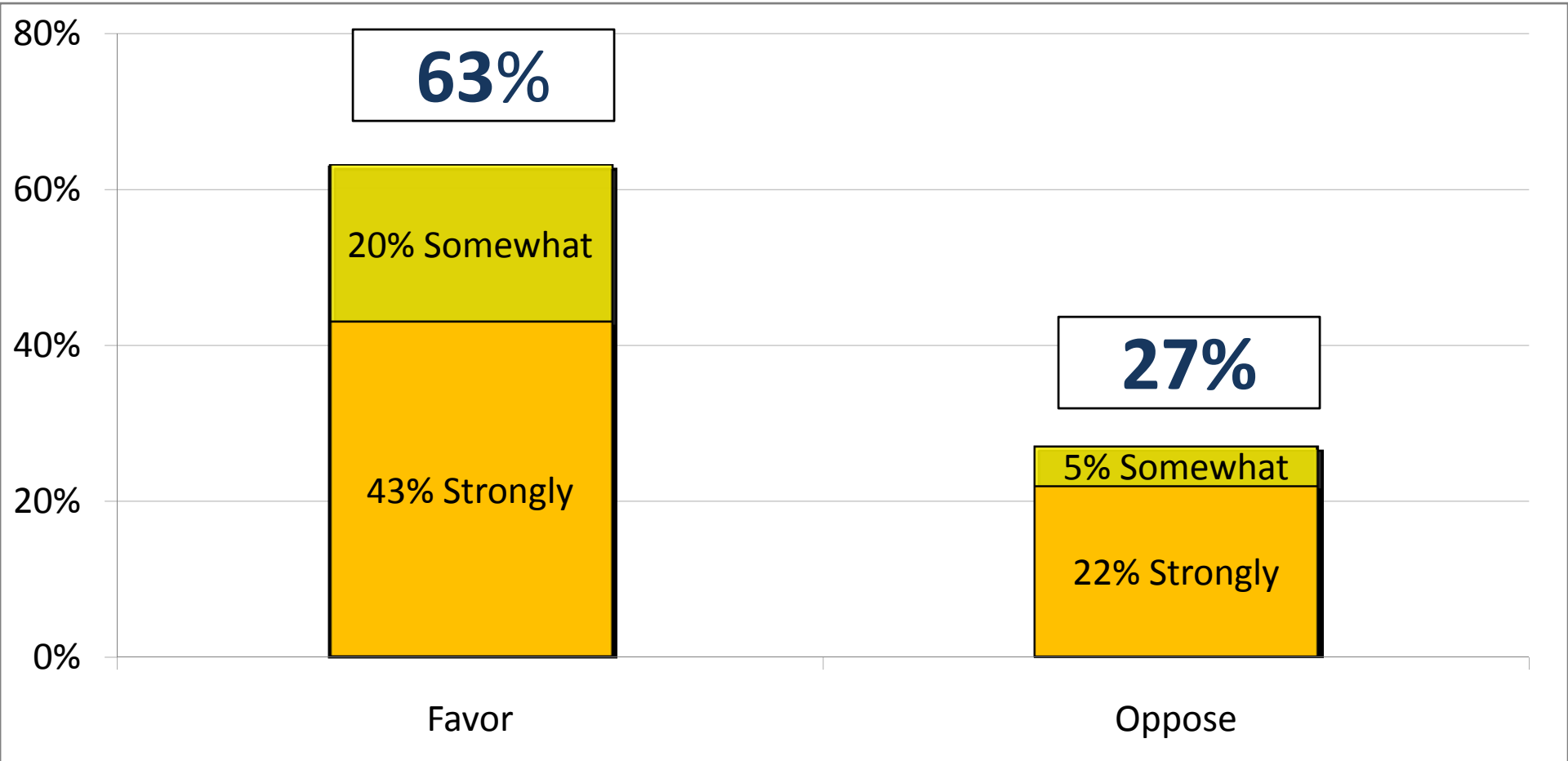
Strong Majority of Voters Favor Spending Additional State Money to Close Cases

"In the past thirty years, there have been 1250 murders in Colorado that are still considered open cases, meaning no one was ever prosecuted for these killings. Would you favor or oppose the State of Colorado spending an additional $3 million a year in taxpayer money to track down and prosecute the killers in these unsolved murder cases?"

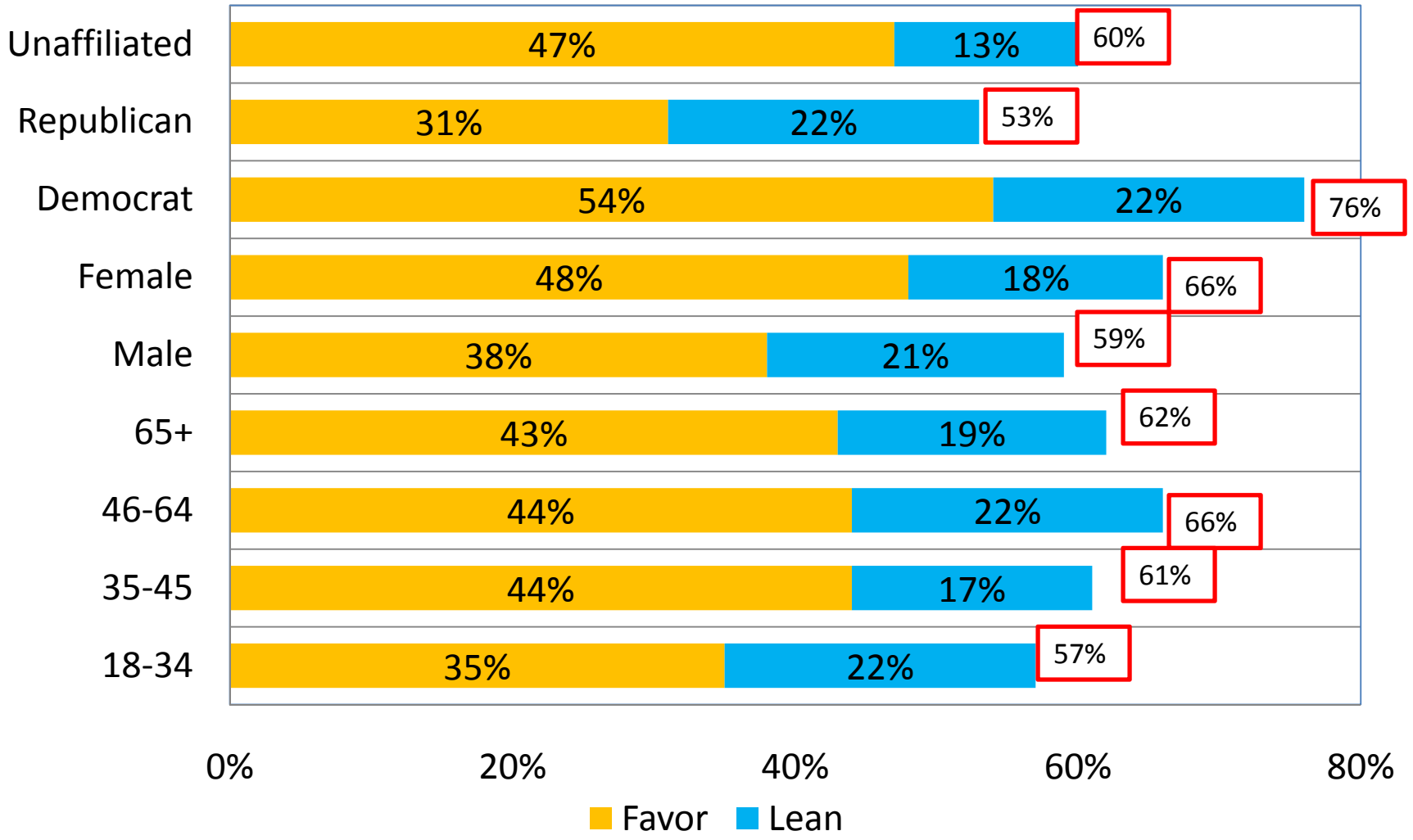


Over 60% of Informed Voters Favor Redirecting Funds to Solving Open Cases

"Given what you know now about the cost of the death penalty and the number of unsolved murders in Colorado, would you favor or oppose replacing the death penalty with life imprisonment with no possibility of parole, and using the money saved to track down and prosecute the killers in unsolved murder cases?"

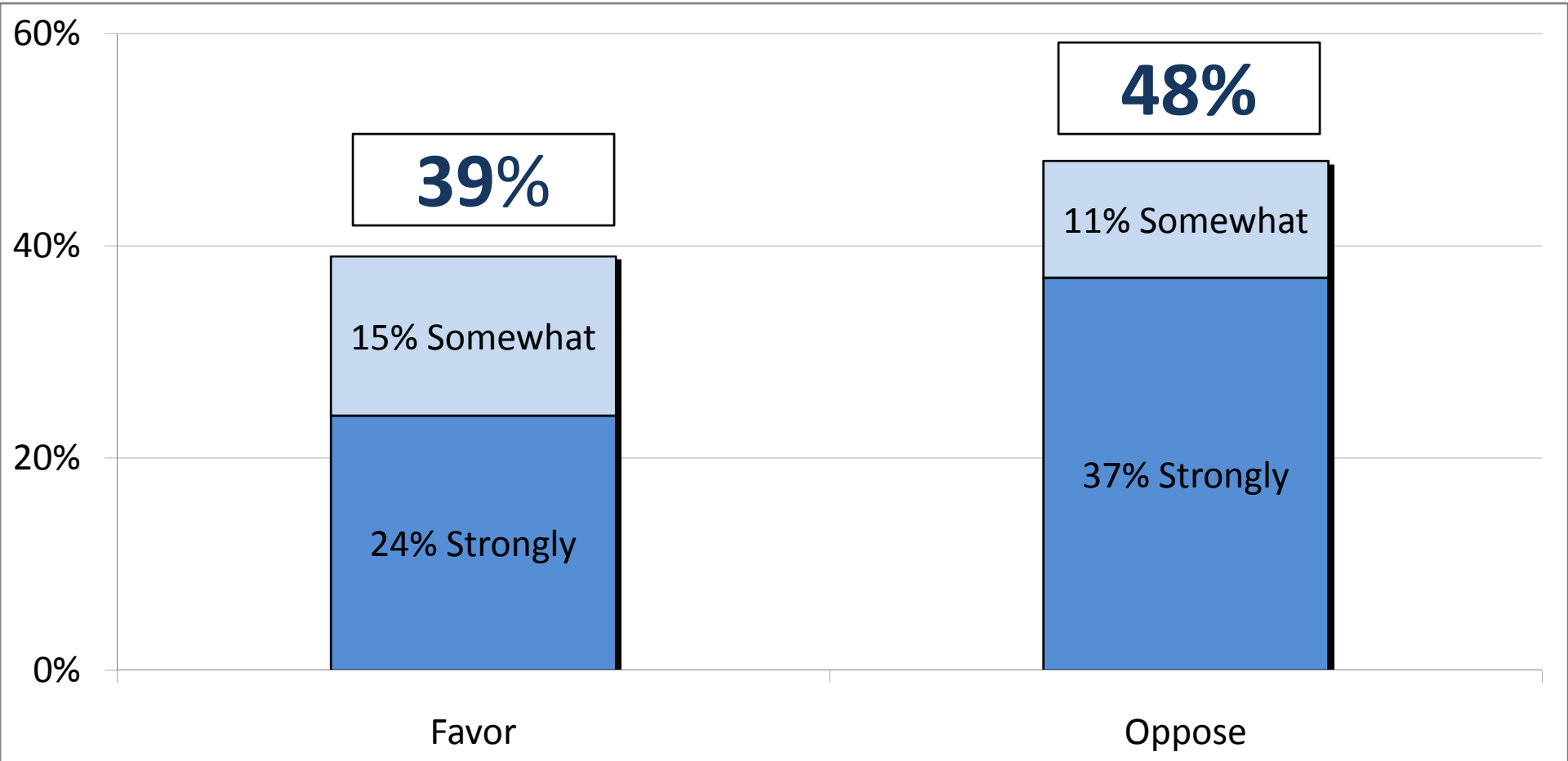


Democrats, Women, Unaffiliated Voters Most Likely to Support



Voters Unwilling to Cut Funds From Current Budgets to Solve Open Cases

"Let's leave the death penalty out of this. Would you favor or oppose legislation that directed the state of Colorado's law enforcement agencies to cut $3 million per year out of their current operating budget, and dedicate that money to track down and prosecute the killers in unsolved murder cases?"



Conclusions

- Colorado voters, closely mirroring national results, are evenly split between the death penalty and LWOP as proper punishment for capital crimes.
- When made aware of the number of unsolved murder cases, voters strongly favor dedicating $3 million per year in state resources to solve these crimes.
- A large majority of voters favor replacing the death penalty with life imprisonment in order to fund solving open-cases.
- However, voters were not in favor of cutting current law enforcement operating budgets.