



Southern California Voter Attitudes Toward Investing in Youth

***Key Findings from Community Surveys
Conducted April 2-13, 2017***

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PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

- 1,513 telephone interviews with voters in Southern California
 - *301 interviews conducted in San Diego's 4th Supervisorial District and in Long Beach, and 311 in Santa Ana*
 - *150 interviews in Boyle Heights, 150 interviews in South LA, and 300 in the balance of LA*
 - *Margin of sampling error of +/- 8.0% for South LA and Boyle Heights, and +/- 5.7% for other sites*
- Interviews conducted April 2-13, 2017
- Interviews in English and Spanish and on landlines and cell phones
- Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



Issue Context

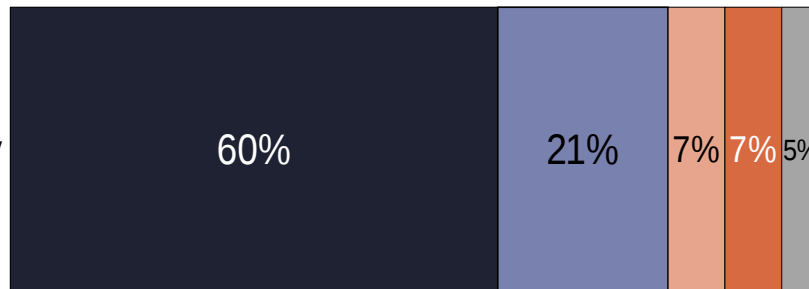
Voters are much more optimistic about their own future than the future of young people.

Looking ahead would you say you are generally optimistic or pessimistic about _____?

DK/NA
 Very Pess.
 Smwt. Pess.
 Smwt. Opt.
 Very Opt

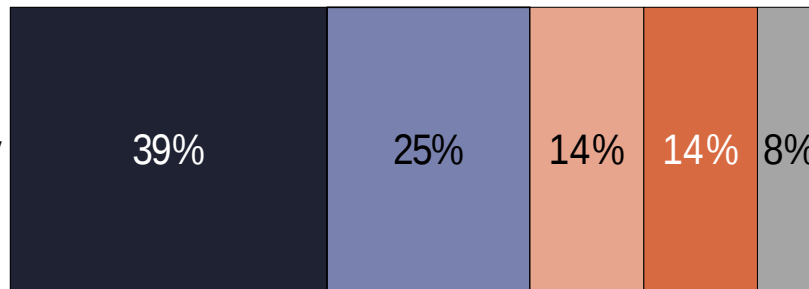
Total Opt. **Total Pess.**

The future for you and your family



82% **14%**

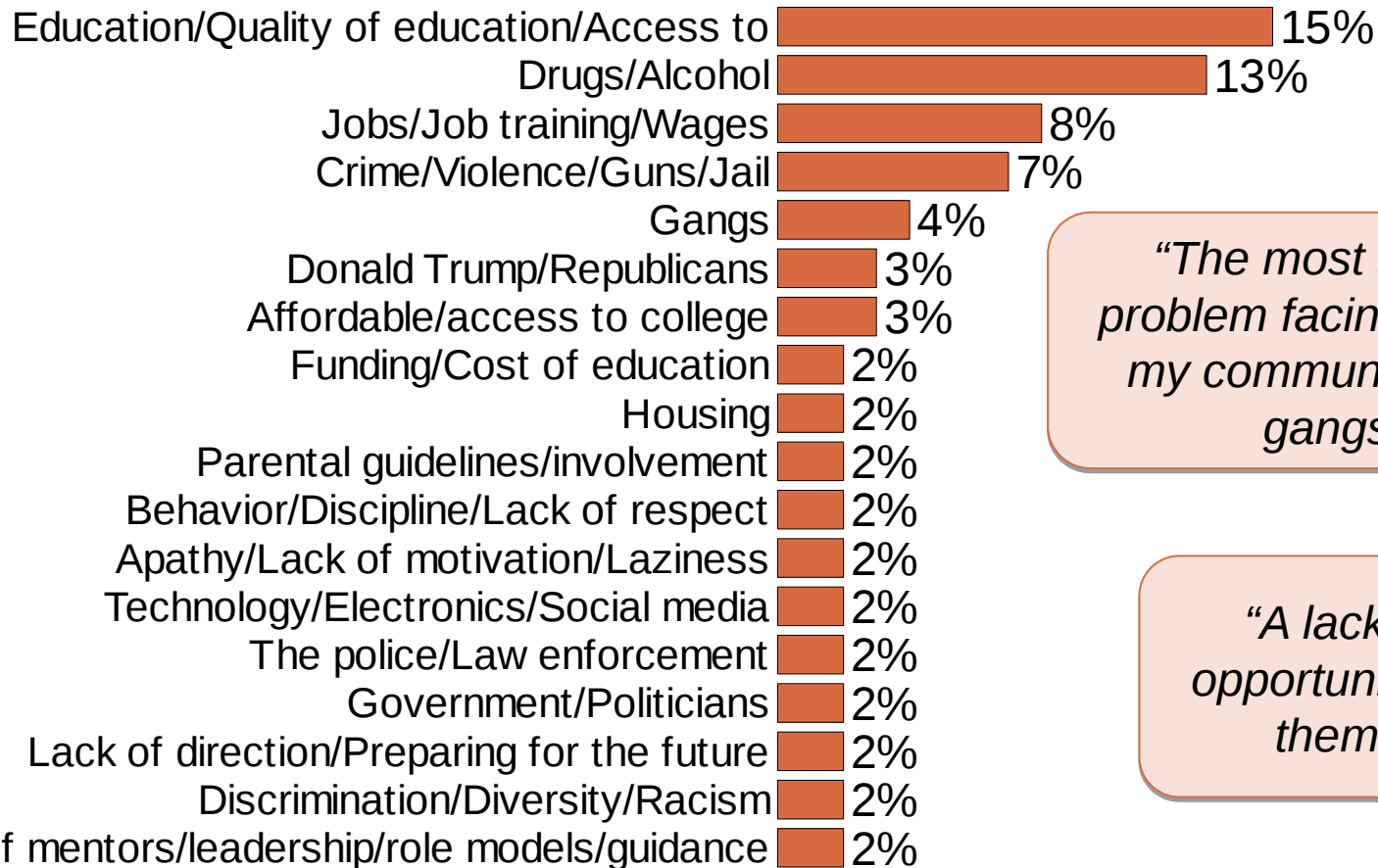
The future of young people in your community



65% **28%**

Quality of education and drugs and alcohol were seen as the biggest problems facing youth.

In a few words of your own, what would you say is the most serious problem facing youth in your community?

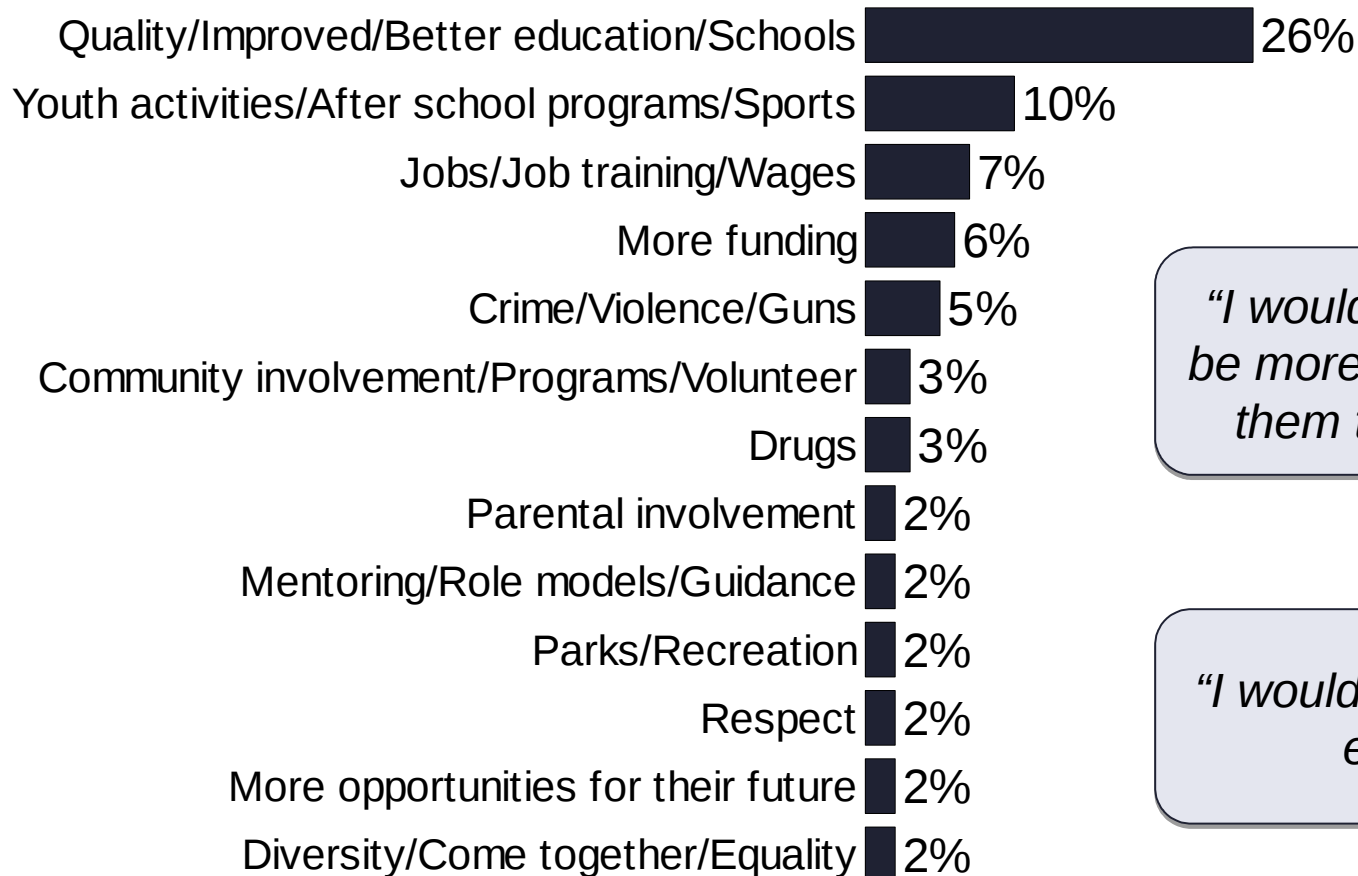


“The most serious problem facing youth in my community is the gangs.”

“A lack of opportunity for them.”

Voters most wanted to see improved education and increased youth activities.

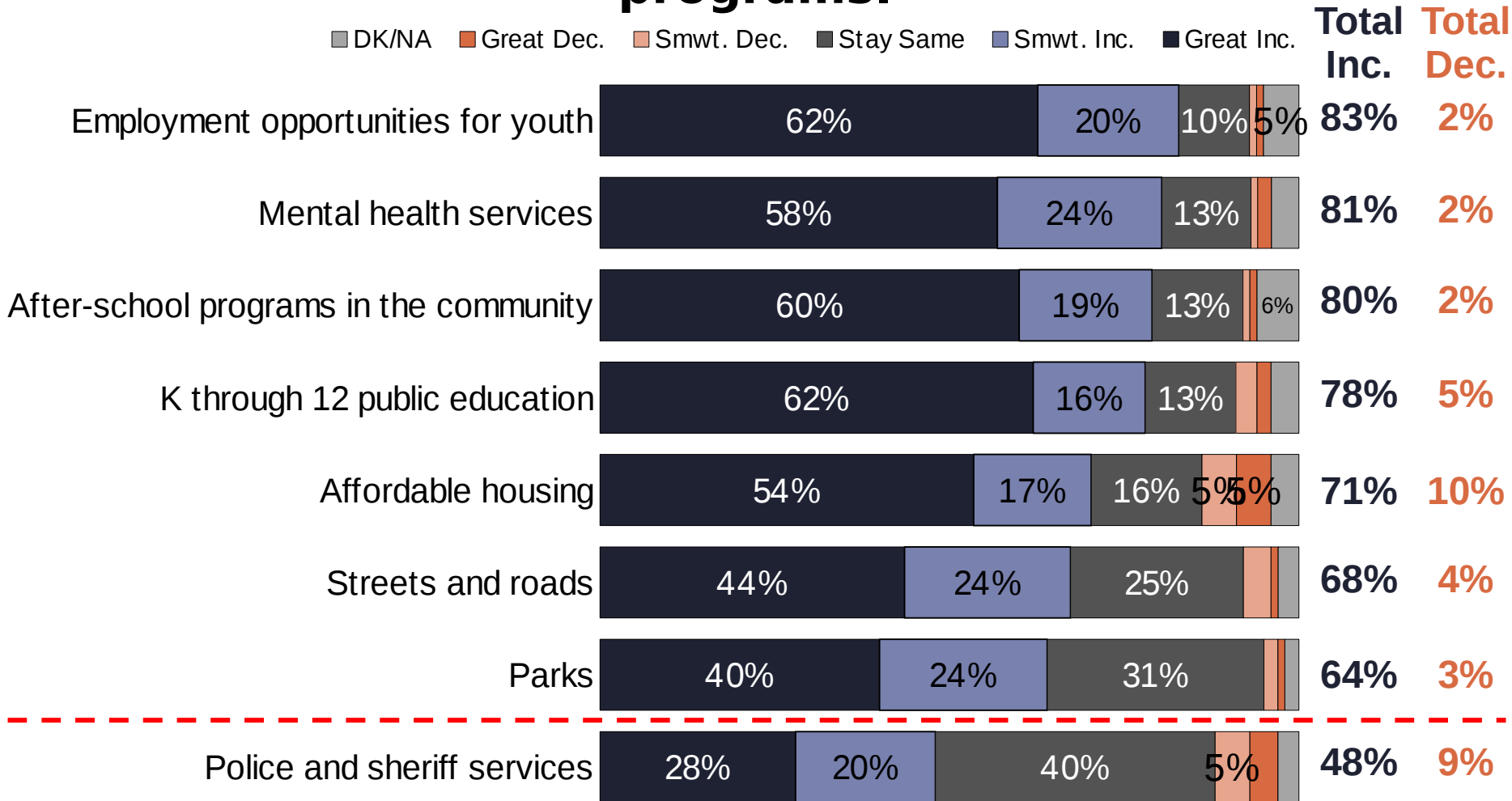
In a few words of your own, what is the one positive change you would most like to see happen to benefit youth in your community?



"I would like for there to be more opportunities for them to excel in life."

"I would like to see better education."

Voters most strongly want to see increased funding for youth employment, mental health and after-school programs.



Q5. I am going to read you a series of programs local government in your area spends money on. Please tell me if you think spending in this area should be increased, decreased, or stay the same. Split Sample

Police and sheriff services ranked as the lowest funding priority across all sites.

(Total % Wanting Increased Funding)

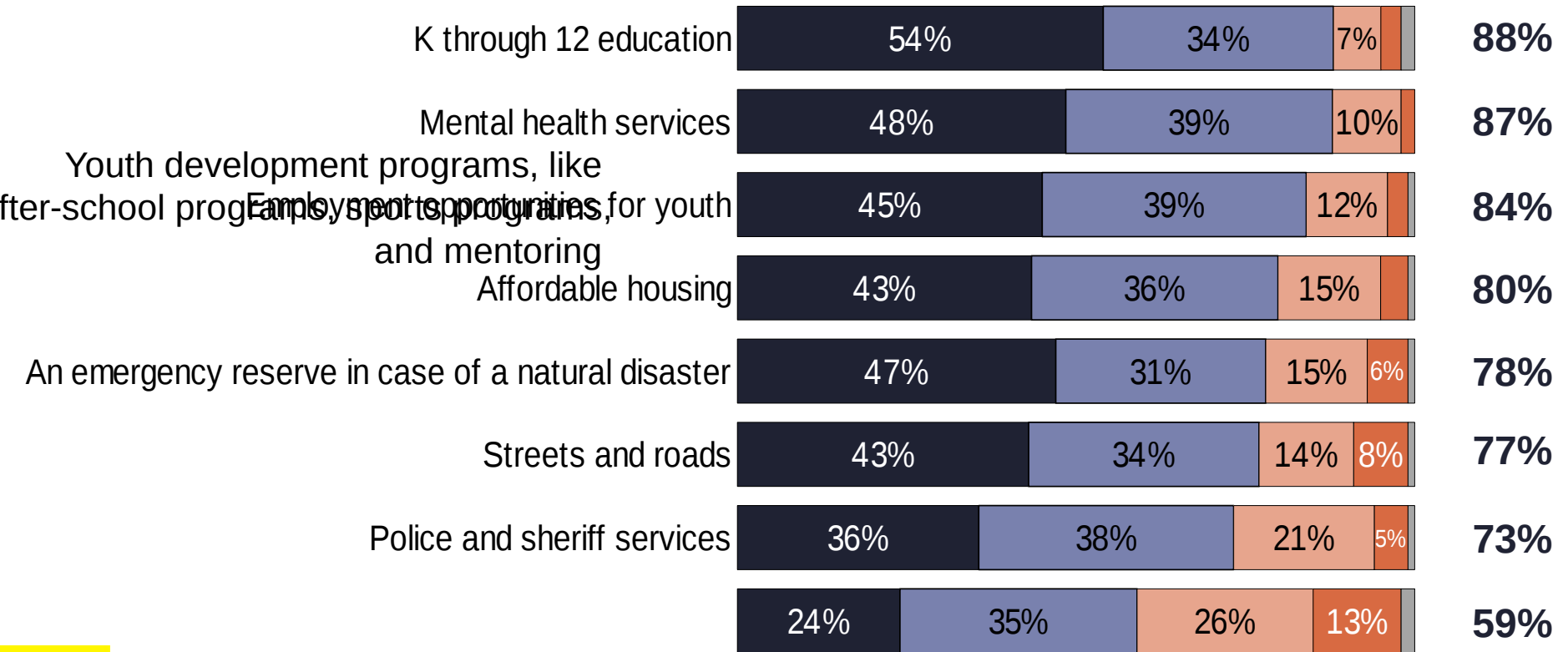
Demographic Group	All Voters	Long Beach	Santa Ana	Boyle Heights	South LA	Balance of LA
Employment opportunities for youth	83%	75%	79%	88%	92%	87%
Mental health services	81%	80%	73%	81%	92%	87%
After-school programs in the community	80%	79%	82%	72%	88%	77%
K through 12 public education	78%	76%	79%	74%	84%	79%
Affordable housing	71%	72%	71%	56%	81%	71%
Streets and roads	68%	66%	60%	71%	83%	70%
Parks	64%	59%	60%	77%	63%	67%
Police and sheriff services	48%	45%	55%	56%	50%	38%

With a slightly different context, voters in San Diego's 4th District had similar priorities.

San Diego County currently has a \$2 billion reserve that they can spend on programs. I am going to read you a list of potential spending areas for this reserve. Please tell me how important each one is, from your perspective: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

■ DK/NA ■ Not Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Ext. Impt.

Ext./Very Impt.





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Perspectives on Investing in Youth

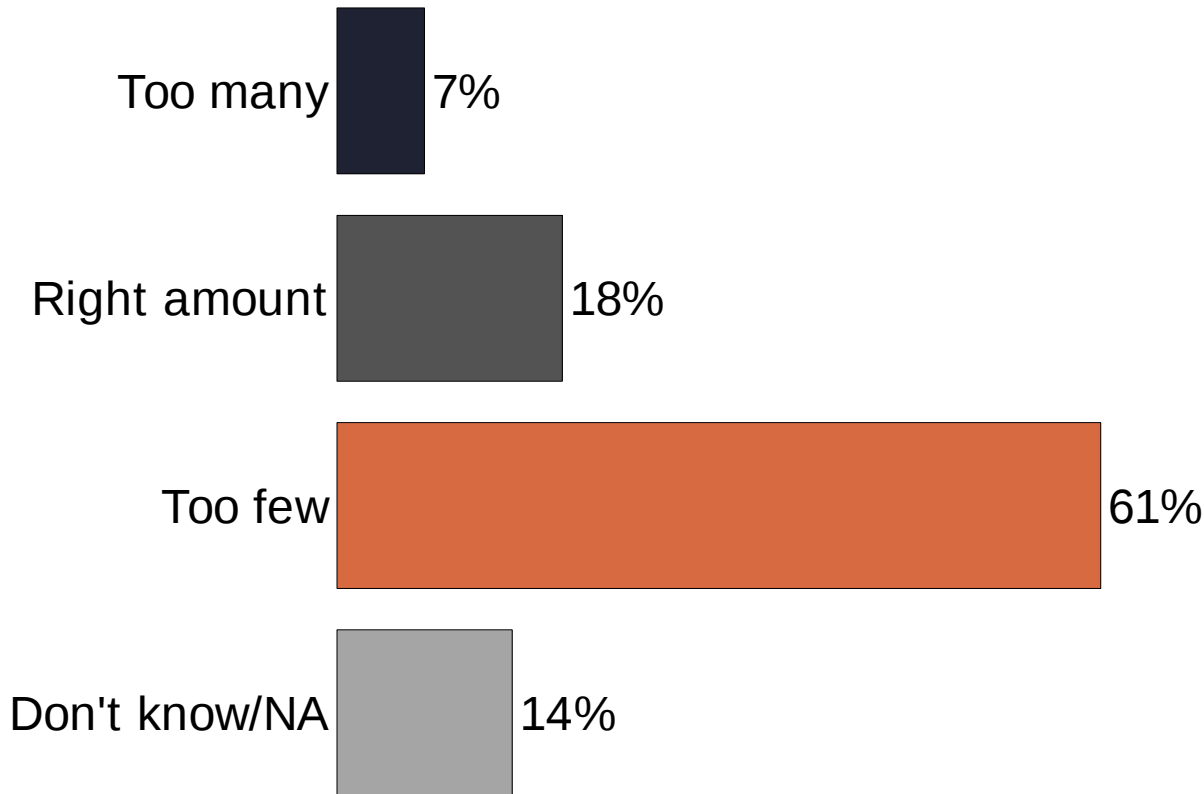
Description of Youth Development Programs



Youth development programs provide opportunities for youth to foster academic, economic, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness to become healthy, successful adults. Youth development programs engage and empower young people; promote positive identity, bonding and mentoring with other youth and adults; and provide educational, economic and civic engagement opportunities for youth to build leadership and positively shape their lives and communities.

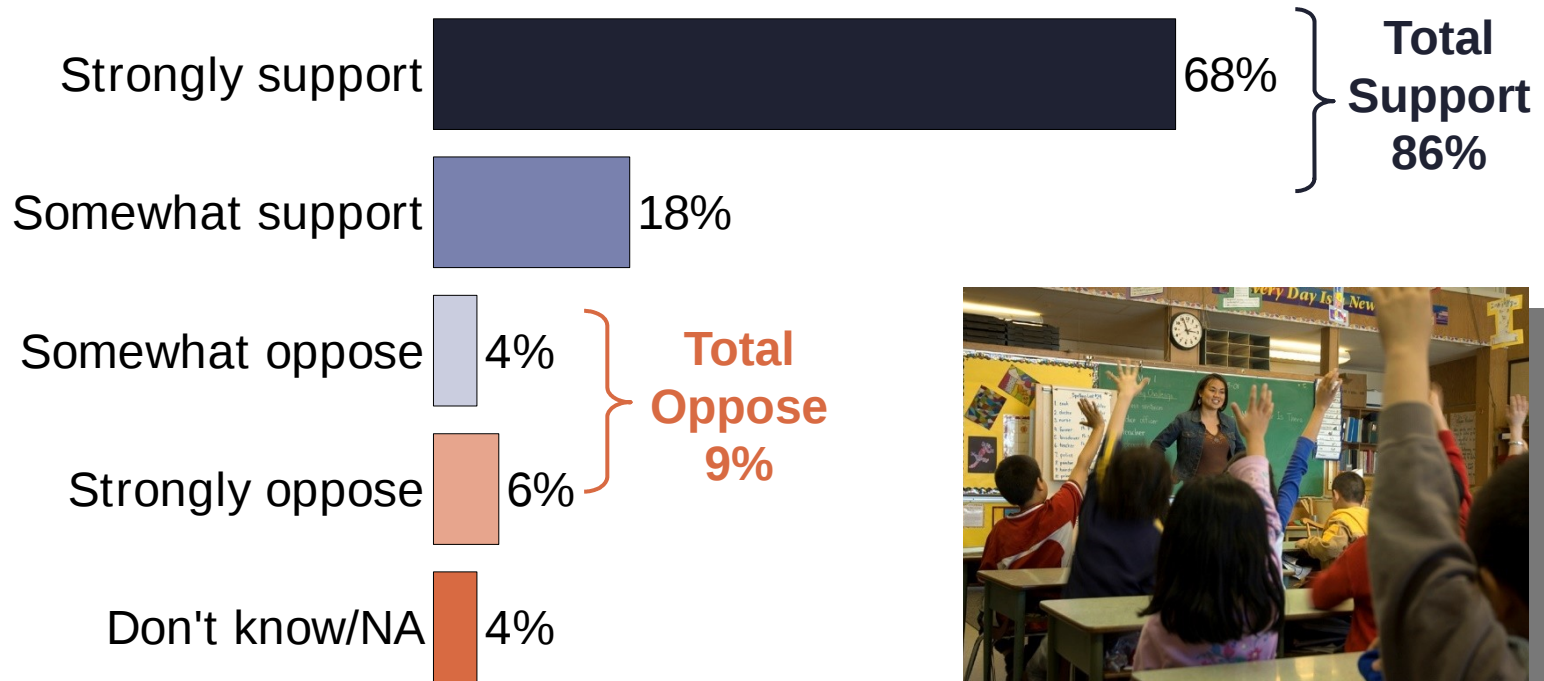
Three in five voters agree there are too few youth development programs.

Having heard this, do you think your community has too many, too few or the right amount of youth development programs?



More than four in five voters support increasing public funding for youth development.

Would you support or oppose increasing public funding for youth development programs in your community?



Support for increased funding is most broad in South LA and Boyle Heights.

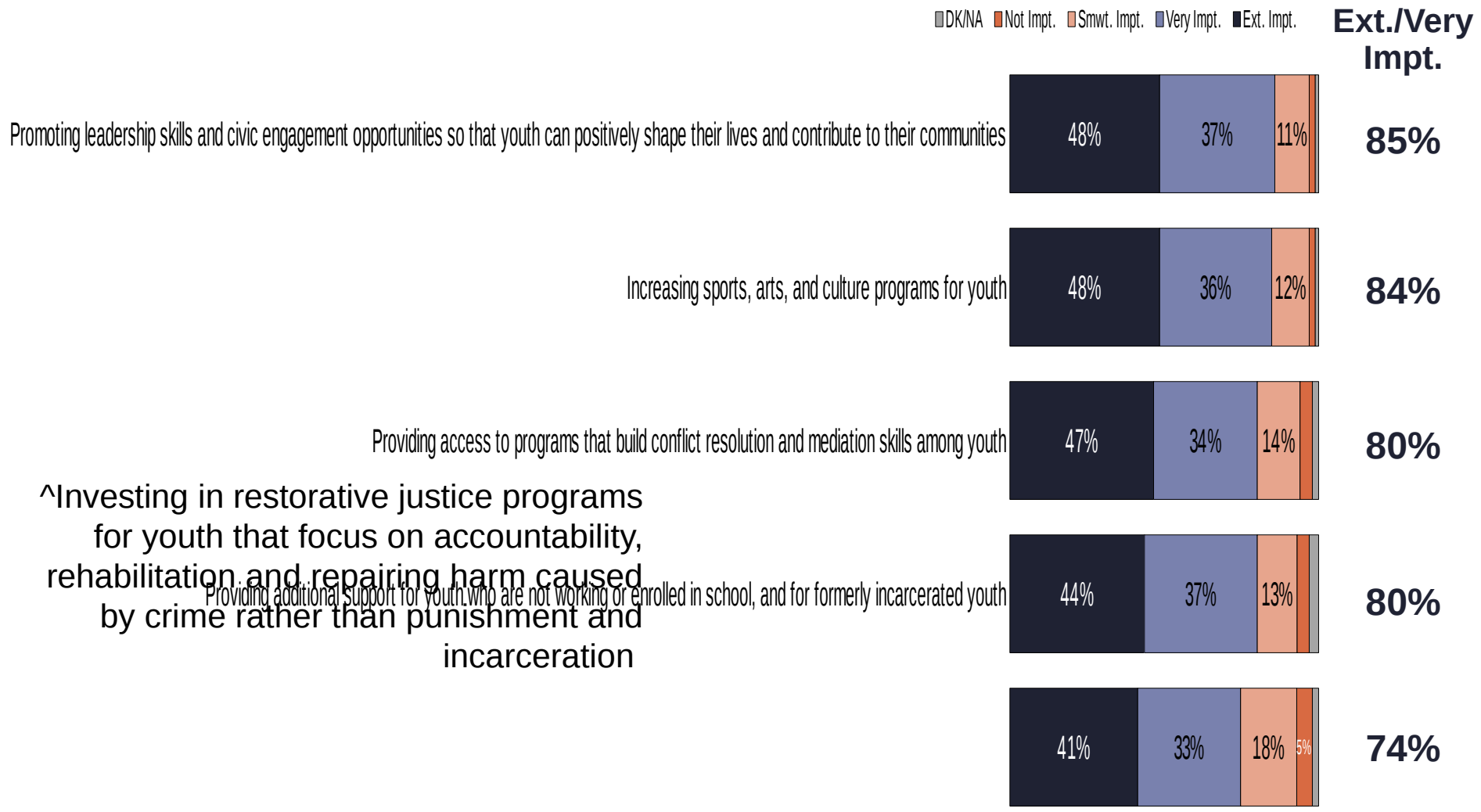
Demographic Group	Total Support	Total Oppose	Don't Know/NA
Long Beach	84%	12%	4%
Santa Ana	85%	9%	5%
Boyle Heights	96%	2%	2%
South LA	96%	3%	2%
Balance of LA	86%	10%	5%
San Diego Sup. Dist. 4	82%	12%	6%

Voters saw job training, access to safe environments, and promoting health among young people as the most important investments in youth development.



Q9. I am going to read you a list of specific kinds of investment in youth development that could be made in your community. Please tell me how important each one is, from your perspective: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important? ^Not Part of Split Sample

Other investments were also broadly valued by voters, but with somewhat less intensity.



More than two-thirds support allocating funding based on need.

I am going to read you a pair of statements about how available funding for youth development might be divided between communities. Please tell me which one comes closest to your personal opinion.

69%

Communities should receive different amounts of funding for youth development programs, based on their level of need.

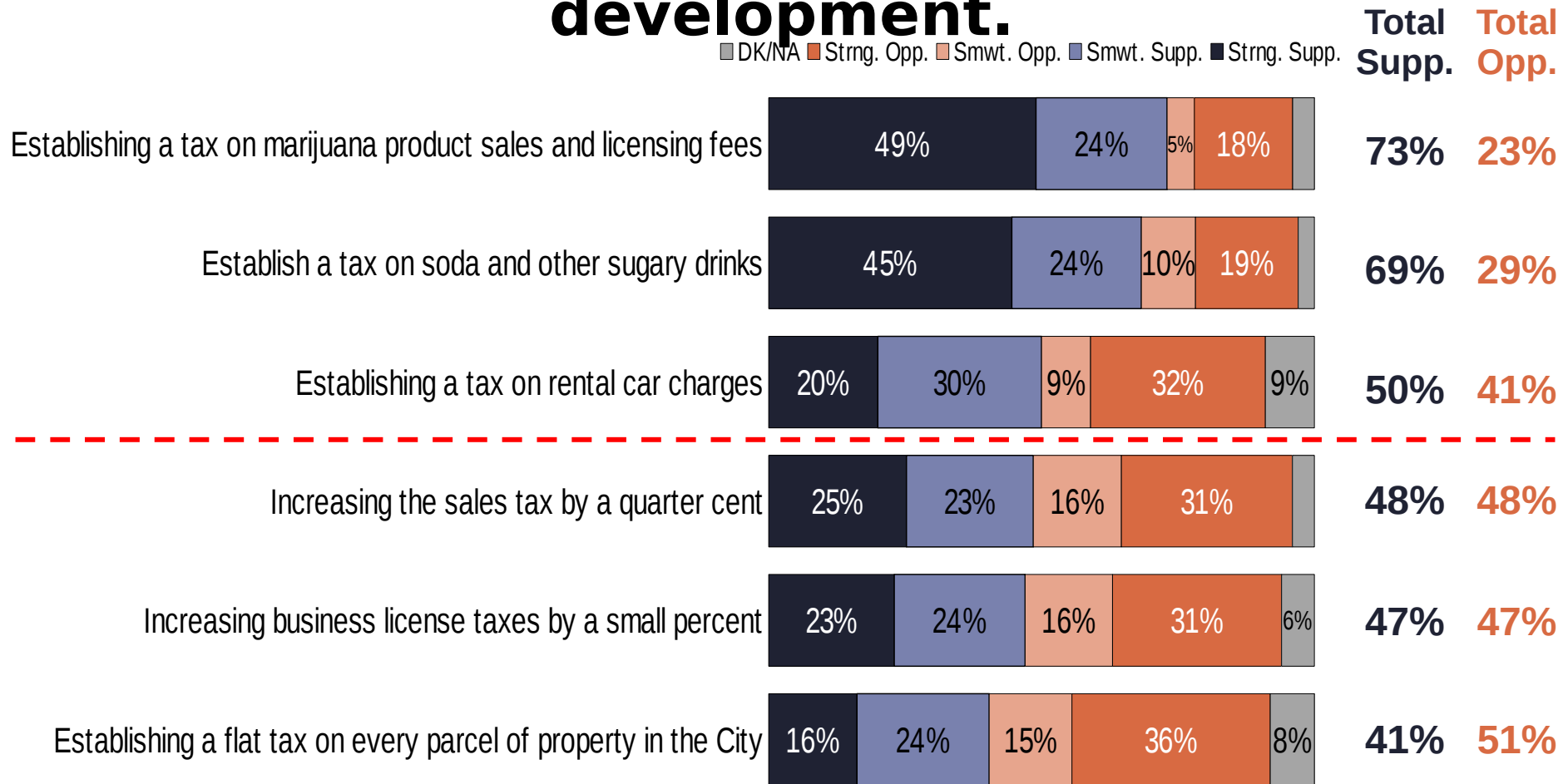
23%

All communities should receive the same amount of funding for youth development programs, regardless of need.

8%

Don't Know

More than two-thirds of San Diego 4th district voters support establishing taxes on marijuana or on soda to fund youth development.



Q11. I am going to read you a list of specific kinds of investment in youth development that could be made in your community. Please tell me how important each one is, from your perspective: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important? Asked in City of San Diego Only ^Not Part of Split Sample



Perspectives on Law Enforcement and Youth

Three-quarters agree that the best way to make the community safer is to invest in youth.

I am going to read you a few pairs of statements about strategies for keeping youth safe in your community. Please tell me which one comes closest to your personal opinion.

76%

The best way to make our community safer for youth is to invest in education, job training, and youth development programs that will keep youth involved in positive activities and prepare them for the future.

14%

The best way to make our community safer for youth is to invest in law enforcement and put more police on the street to enforce the law.

10%

Don't Know

Seven in ten agree that youth development programs should be based in the community, rather than run through law enforcement.

I am going to read you a few pairs of statements about strategies for keeping youth safe in your community. Please tell me which one comes closest to your personal opinion.

70%

The best way to support youth development and promote their social, emotional, behavioral and academic growth is through youth development programs based in the community.

15%

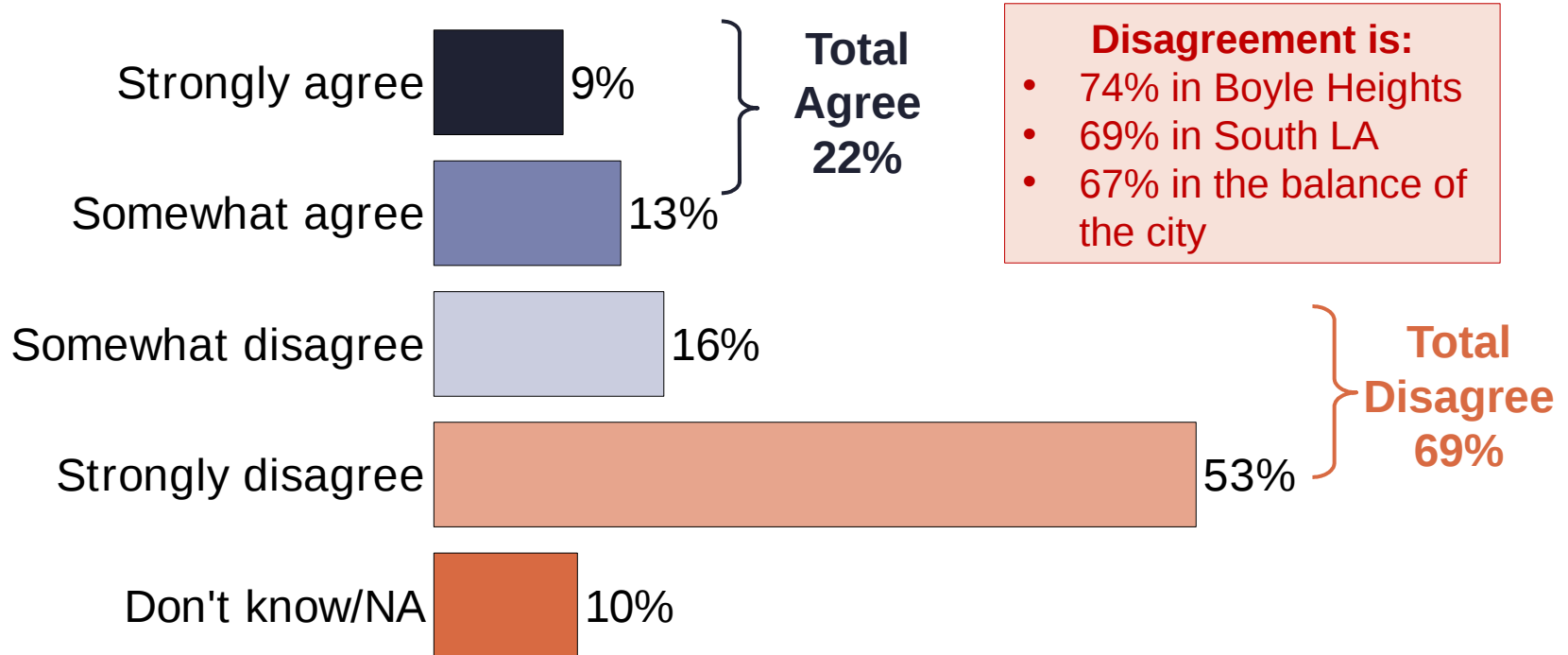
The best way to support youth development and promote their social, emotional, behavioral and academic growth is through youth development programs offered by law enforcement.

15%

Don't Know

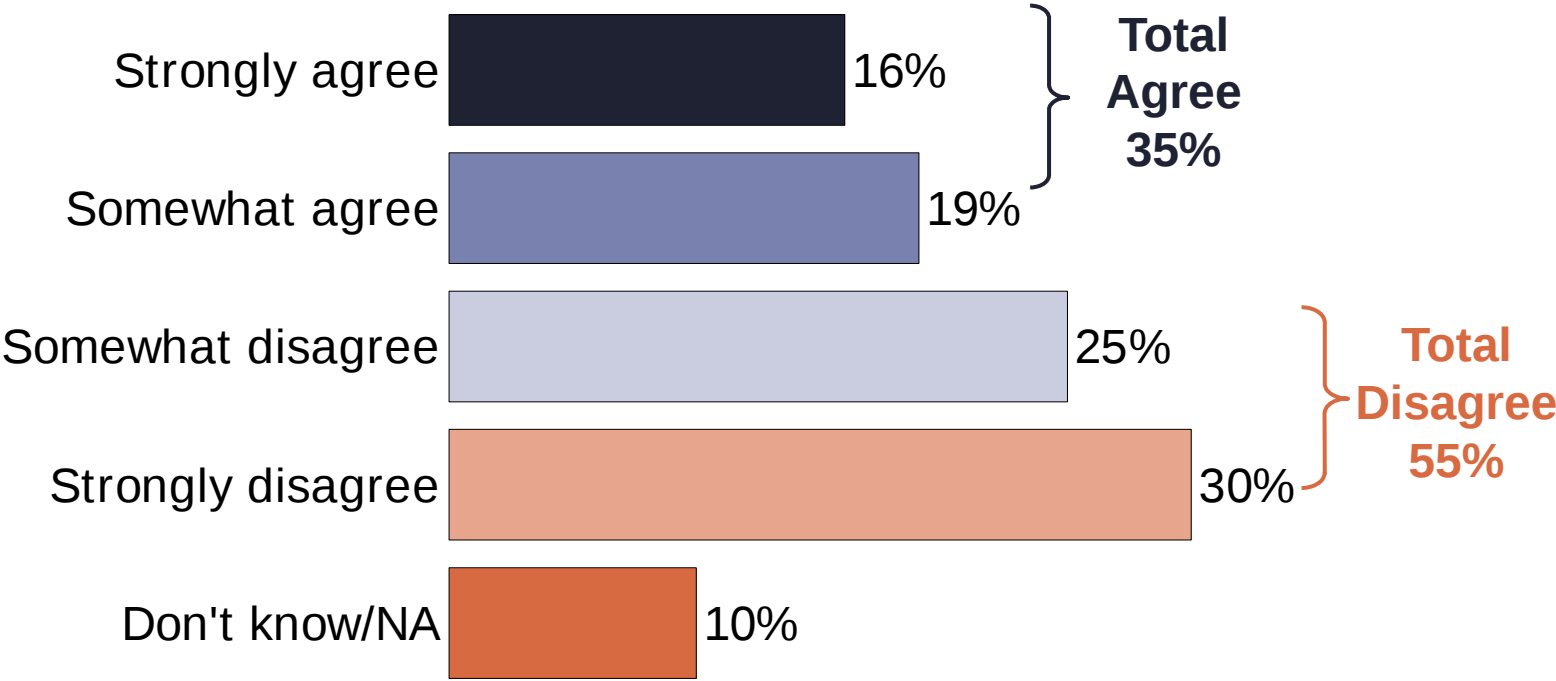
Two-thirds disagree with the City of LA's allocation of funding for youth.

The City of Los Angeles spends \$47 per youth on positive youth development each year. At the same time, the City spends \$29,000 on each of the 10,000 youth arrested in the city. Do you agree or disagree with how the City is spending these funds?



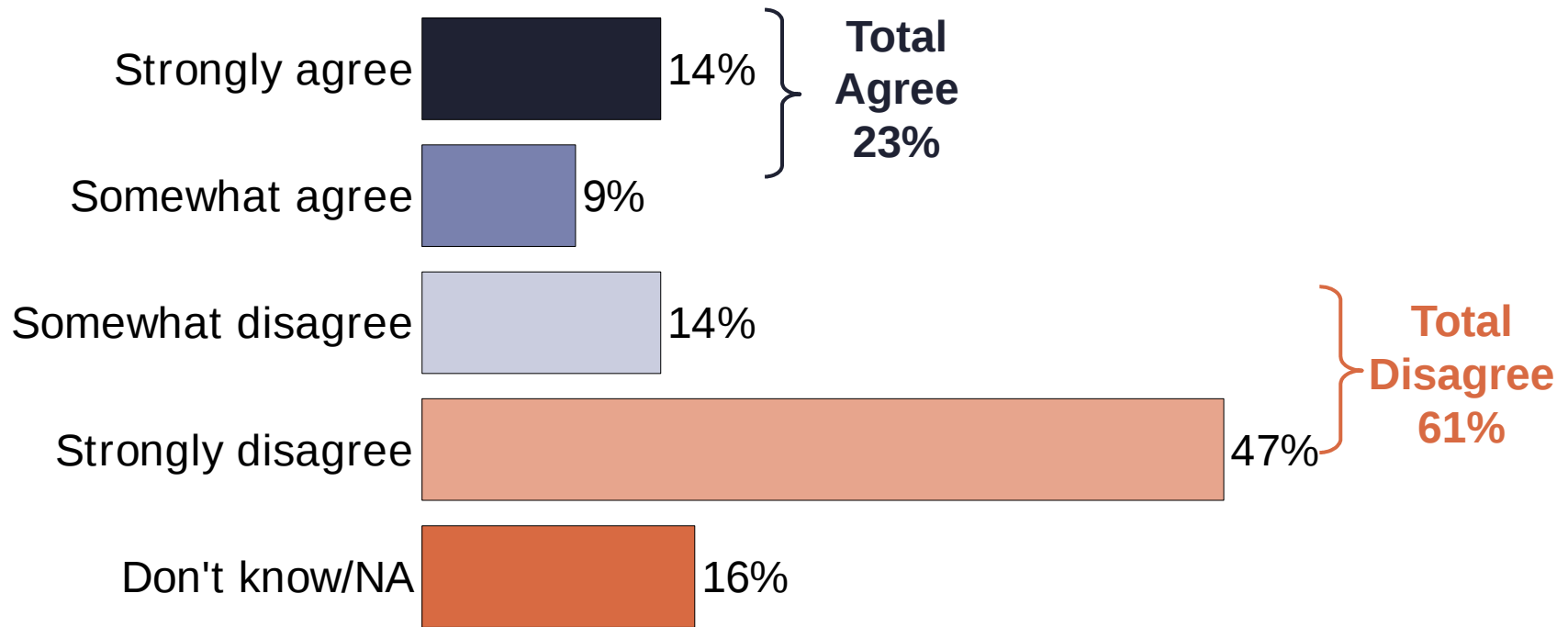
Over half disagree with how the City of Santa Ana is allocating funding.

The City of Santa Ana spends \$143 per youth on positive youth development each year. At the same time, the City spends nearly \$13,000 on each of the 1,500 youth arrested in the city. Do you agree or disagree with how the City is spending these funds?



And three in five in Long Beach disagree with how the City is distributing funds.

The City of Long Beach spends \$187 per youth on positive youth development each year. At the same time, the City spends nearly \$10,000 on each of the 2,300 youth arrested in the city. Do you agree or disagree with how the City is spending these funds?





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Messaging

Message Testing Methodology

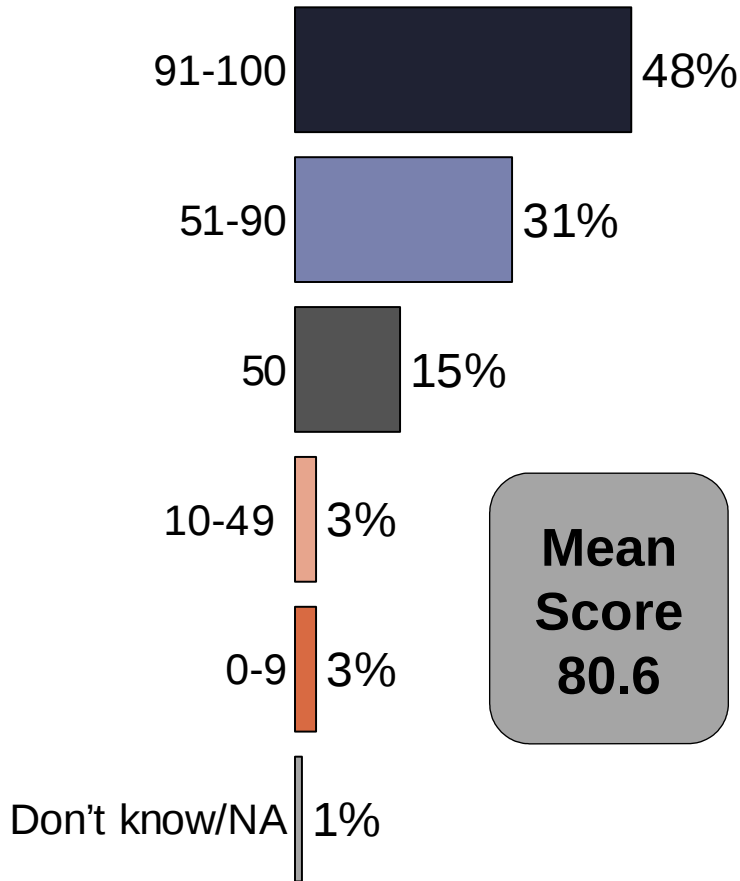
- Voters were read three framing messages in favor of increasing public funding for youth development, in random order.
- Voters were asked to:
 - *Rate their agreement with each framing on a 0-100 scale; and*
 - *Express agreement or disagreement with individual sentences that were part of each frame.*



“Top Priority” Message

(TOP PRIORITY) Some people are saying that we should be as invested in young people outside the classroom as we are in students inside the classroom. Our local teachers invest their time and energy into developing and preparing our youth every day, but it's not enough: it takes more than what's happening in schools to make sure our youth are truly being put first. Imagine if every community had the kind of support that young people need to reach their full potential, such as youth wellness centers, career development centers, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

This message was most compelling in South LA and among African-American voters.



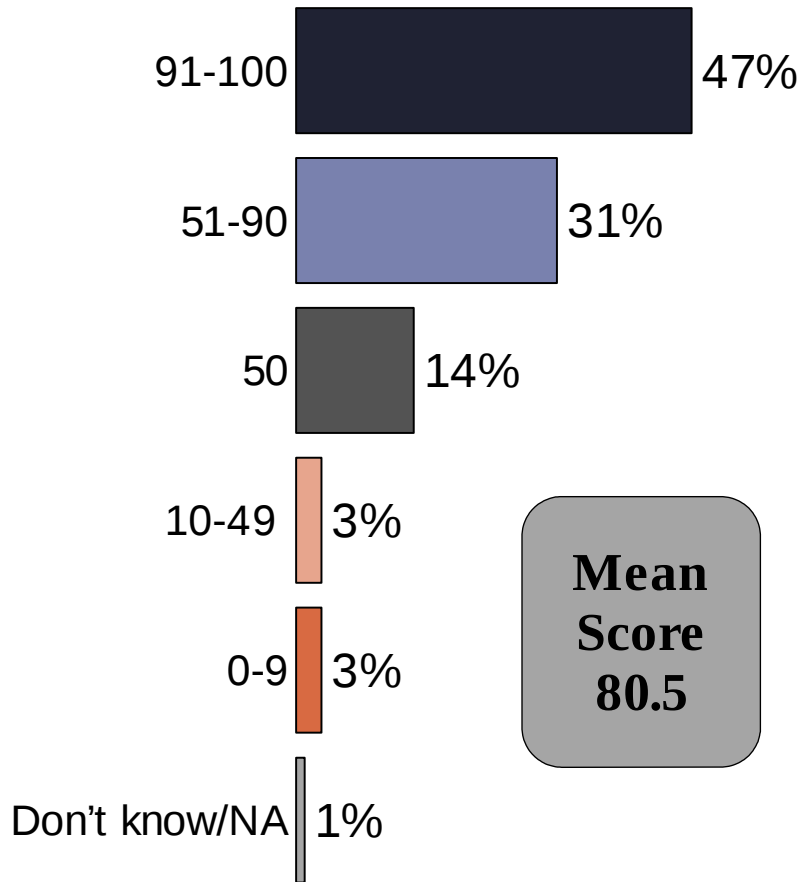
Demographic Group	Mean Score
Site	
Long Beach	79.8
Santa Ana	75.3
Boyle Heights	84.1
South LA	85.9
Balance of LA	82.3
San Diego Supervisorial Dist. 4	80.9
Ethnicity	
Latinos	83.3
African-Americans	86.4
Whites	78.0
Asians/Pacific Islanders	71.0
Voters of Color	82.2
Household Income	
<\$30,000	83.9
\$30,000-\$60,000	82.5
\$60,000-\$100,000	79.4
\$100,000+	77.3

Q17. On a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 represents strongly disagree and 100 represents strongly agree, with 50 being neutral, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement. You can use any number between 0 and 100.

“Invest in Youth” Message

(INVEST IN YOUTH) Some people are saying that we are not allocating enough of our budget to our most important investment: our youth. Investing in youth means a more qualified workforce, safer communities, and a healthier city with more opportunities to thrive. Our dollars will go further if we spend them on prevention and not short-term fixes.

“Invest in Youth” resonated strongly as well

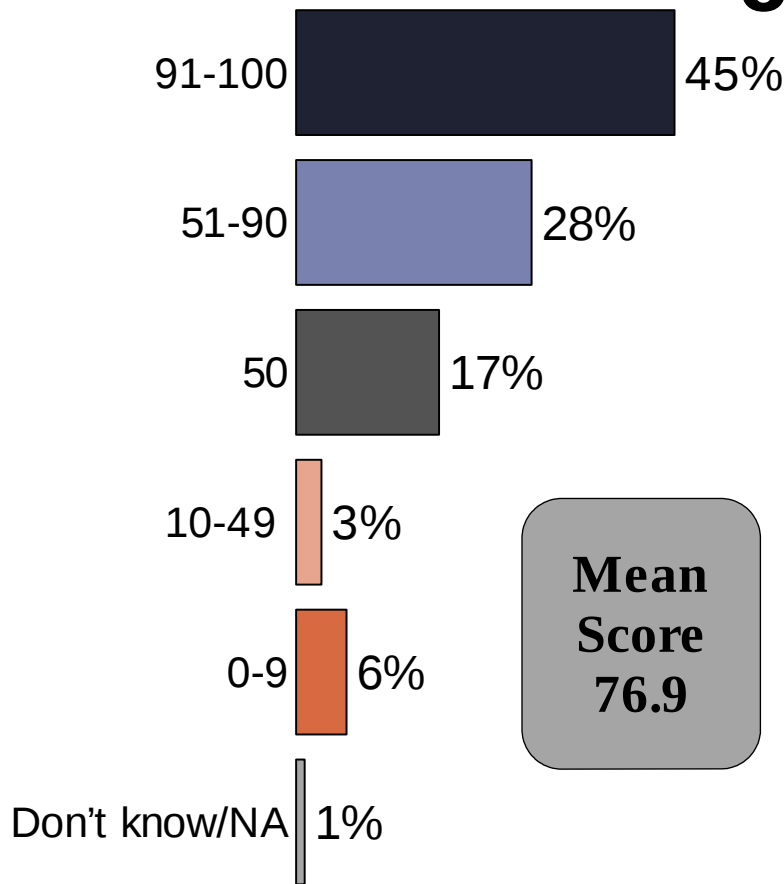


Demographic Group	Mean Score
Site	
Long Beach	80.1
Santa Ana	74.6
Boyle Heights	80.5
South LA	87.2
Balance of LA	82.2
San Diego Sup. Dist. 4	82.2
Ethnicity	
Latinos	81.9
African-Americans	86.6
Whites	79.2
Asians/Pacific Islanders	70.6
Voters of Color	81.4
Household Income	
<\$30,000	81.8
\$30,000-\$60,000	81.8
\$60,000-\$100,000	81.0
\$100,000+	79.3

“Failing Our Kids” Message

(FAILING OUR KIDS) Some people are saying that not all youth get to be children. Jailing our kids is failing our kids, and youth of color are disproportionately sentenced as adults, robbing them of their childhood and of their chance at having a bright future. It's time to invest in the vital resources all youth deserve. Our vision of a thriving community is not an officer on every corner, it's providing our youth with the opportunities and support to keep them safe and allow them to reach their full potential. Police and prosecutors are essential – our youth should be too.

“Failing Our Kids” was a compelling message, but less intensely so than the others

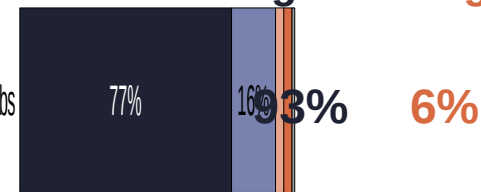


Demographic Group	Mean Score
Site	
Long Beach	78.5
Santa Ana	69.7
Boyle Heights	74.7
South LA	85.4
Balance of LA	78.8
San Diego Supervisorial Dist. 4	78.0
Ethnicity	
Latinos	77.2
African-Americans	83.5
Whites	77.0
Asians/Pacific Islanders	66.1
Voters of Color	77.0
Household Income	
<\$30,000	78.8
\$30,000-\$60,000	75.7
\$60,000-\$100,000	75.3
\$100,000+	79.5

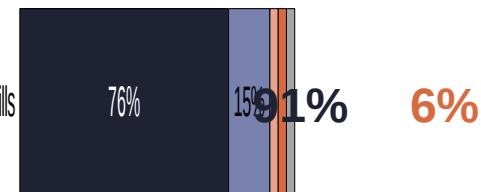
Voters strongly agreed that youth should have the supports to succeed and deserve safe, engaging spaces.

DKNA Strng. Disagree Smwt. Disagree Smwt. Agree Strng. Agree Total Agree Total Disagr.

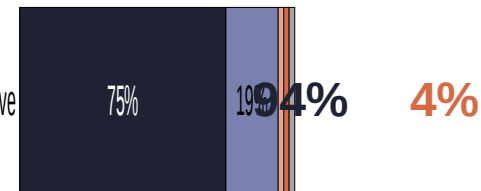
Every community deserves the kind of support that young people need to reach their full potential, such as youth wellness centers, career development centers, and boys and girls clubs



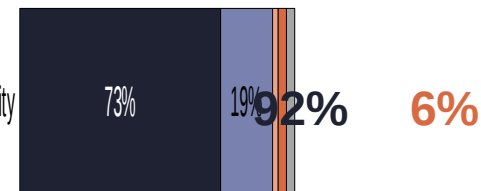
We should ensure that youth have all it takes to succeed, safe, engaging places to spend time after school, mentorship and support, and the ability to gain skills



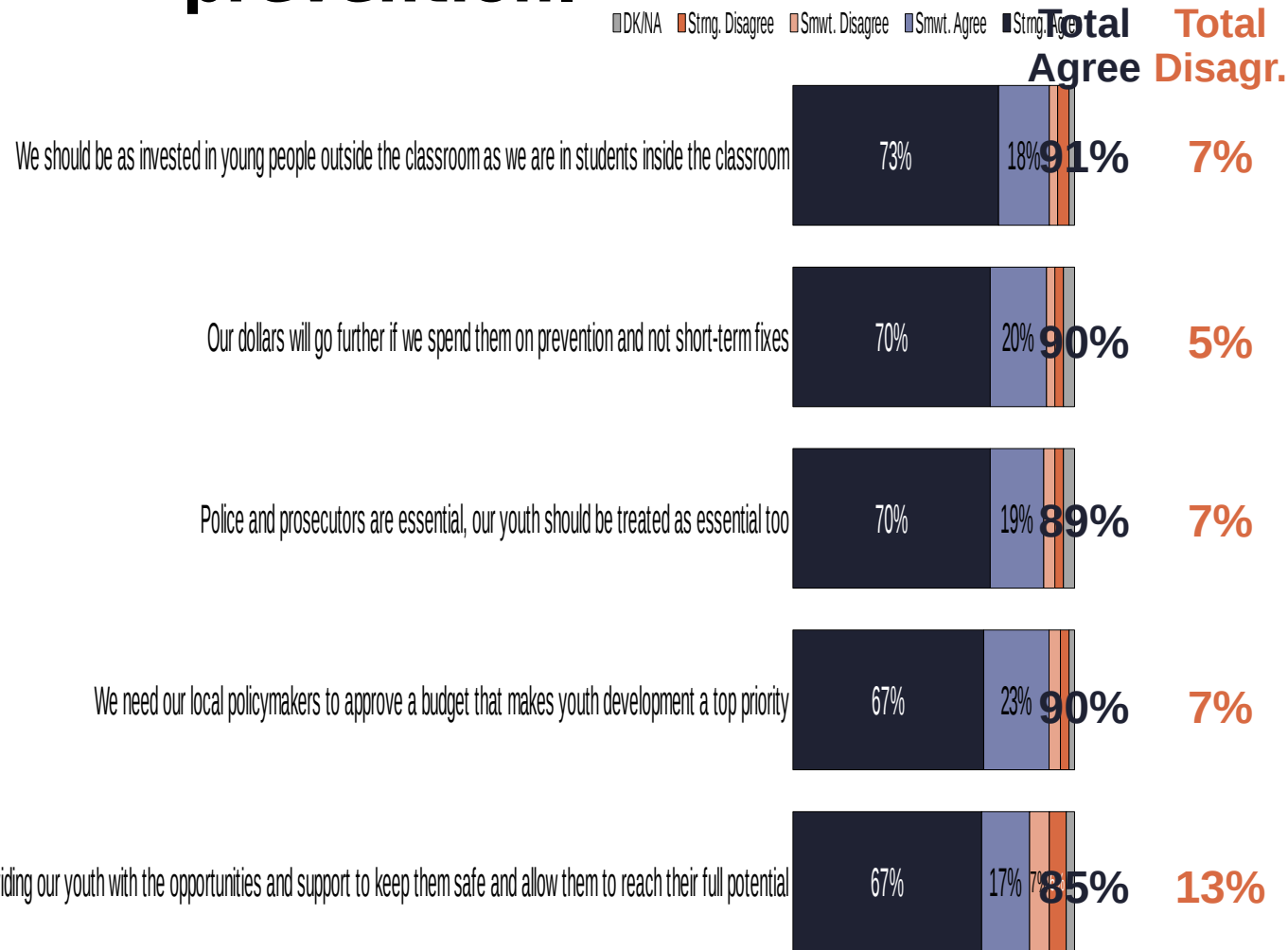
Investing in youth means a more qualified workforce, safer communities, and a healthier city with more opportunities to thrive



Instead of relying on the criminal justice system to deliver vital mental health services, we should make sure our youth get the support they need through trusted health care professionals in their community

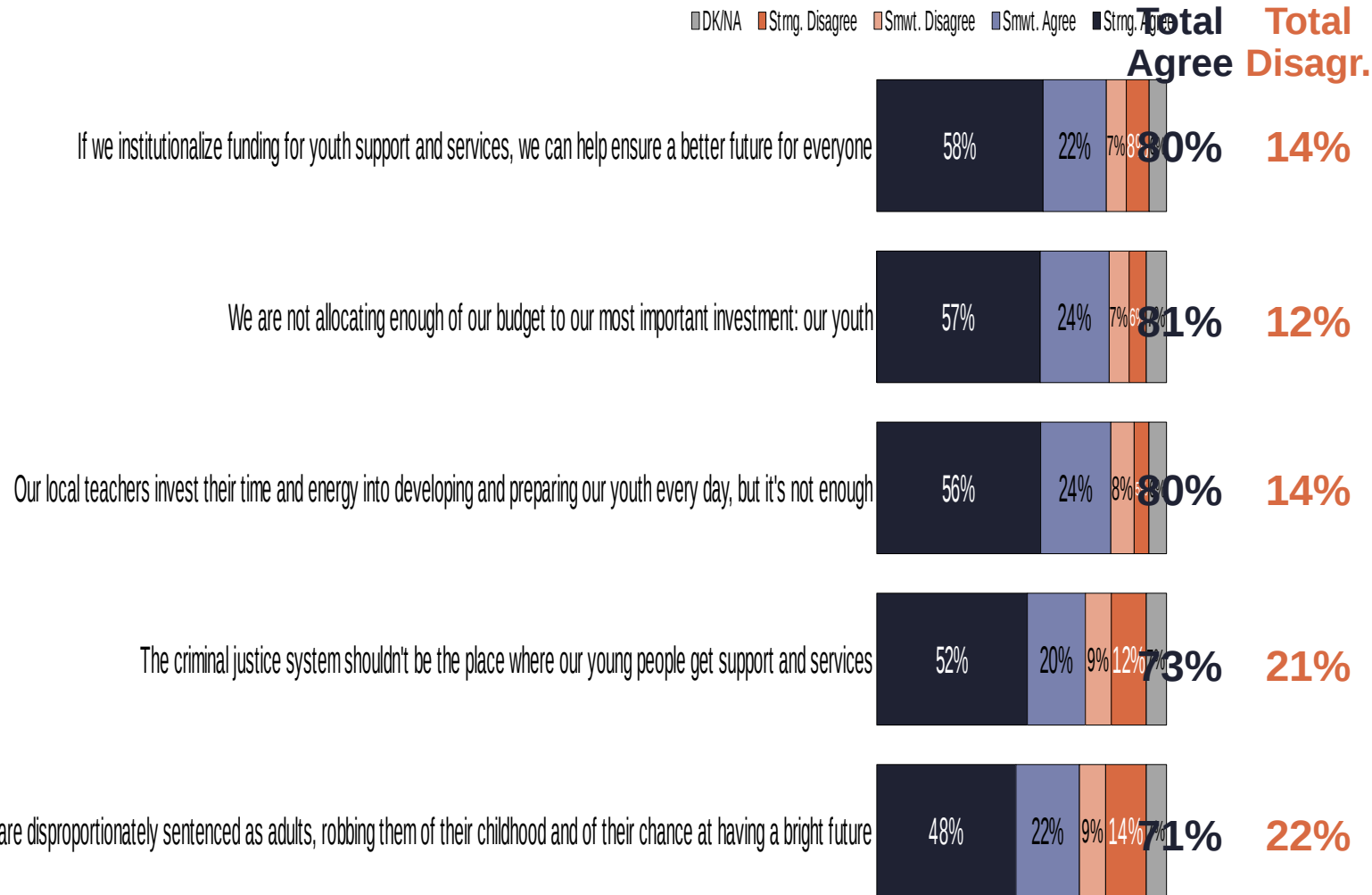


They also feel strongly that we should invest in children *outside* the classroom, and focus on prevention.



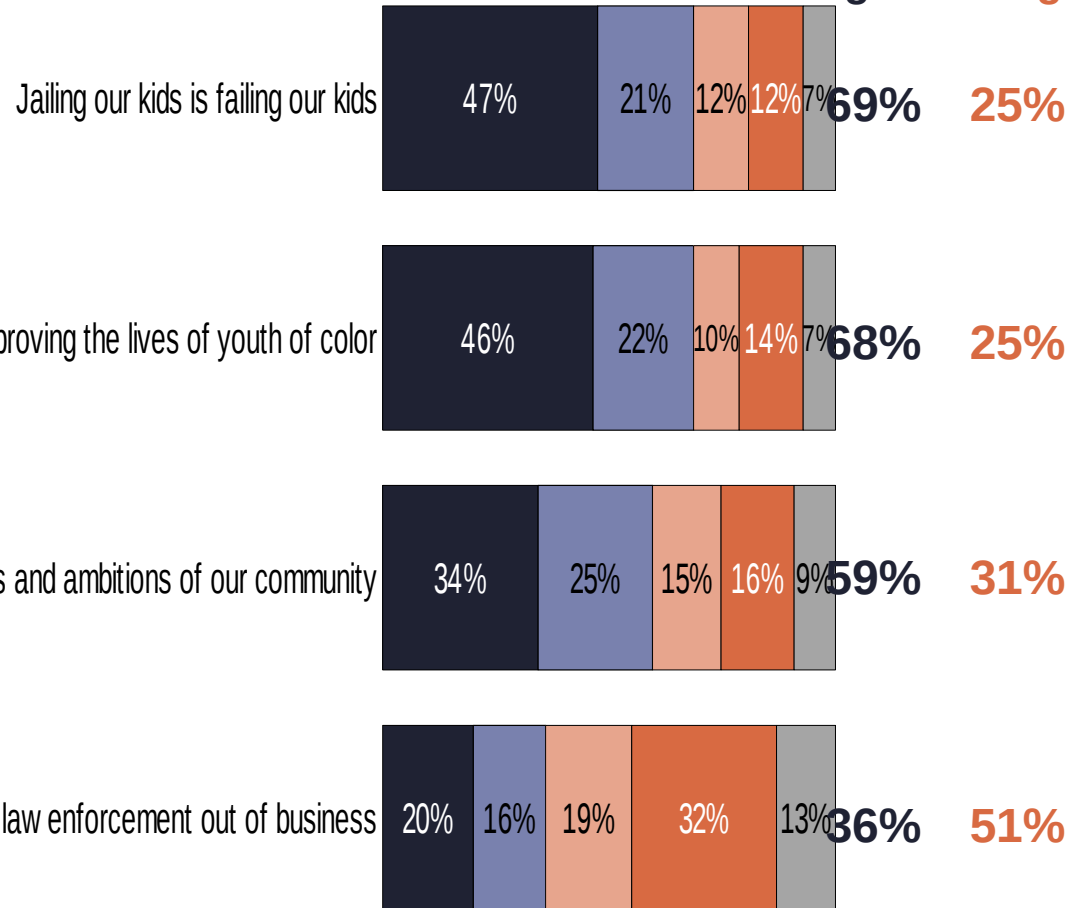
Our vision of a thriving community is not an officer on every corner, it's providing our youth with the opportunities and support to keep them safe and allow them to reach their full potential

Statements calling for increased and institutionalized funding were middle-tier.



Value statements about law enforcement tended to be more polarizing.

DK/NA
 Strng. Disagree
 Smwt. Disagree
 Smwt. Agree
 Strng. Agree
 Total Agree
Total Disagr.





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Conclusions

Implications for Messaging

- Keep in mind that whatever challenges voters see facing their communities, they retain a sense of optimism about the future for themselves and their children.
- When voters think about improving their communities, their instinct is to focus on young people – they call for improvements to schools, recreation programs, and greater parental involvement.
- Voters are ambivalent about messaging critical of law enforcement; they believe public safety funding should be increased, and react negatively to a statement suggesting law enforcement could be “put out of business.”
- At the same time, there is no question that they want more vastly more resources dedicated to youth development – even at the cost of funding for law enforcement.
 - Voters believe their communities have too few youth development programs, overwhelmingly support an increase in funding for youth development in the abstract.
 - They are roughly twice as likely to support increased funding for key youth development services as for police and sheriff services.
 - More than two-thirds say funding should be directed to communities based on need, not divided equally.
 - They want youth development services delivered in communities – and not through the vehicle of law enforcement.

Implications for Messaging (*Continued*)

- Voters believe that such investments are the best way to make communities safer, along with the other benefits that they provide.
- Among other youth development services, voters particularly support increasing employment opportunities for youth, supporting mental health services, and expanding after-school programs.
- Voters strongly object to the current ratio of City spending on youth development services versus arrests – it should provide an effective data point to validate messaging.
- Key mobilization targets already solidly supportive of youth development are younger, Democratic, parents, communities of color, and female.
- Key persuasion targets include groups whose support for youth development can be intensified – which end to skew Democratic, centrist, white, and male.

Implications for Messaging (*Continued*)

- All three narrative frames tested (“Top Priority,” “Invest in Youth” and “Failing Our Kids”) scored highly – though “Failing our Kids” slightly trailed the other two.
- Other broadly appealing message points include:
 - Talking about the need to support youth in reaching their potential and succeed, with specific examples of the kinds of supports that should be provided
 - Connecting youth development to safer, healthier communities with a stronger workforce
 - Investing in young people outside the classroom as much as inside it
 - Spending money on prevention rather than short-term fixes
 - Treating youth as just as essential as police and prosecutors

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