



# Key Findings

## *Western Voter Attitudes Toward Management of Public Lands*

*September 2014*

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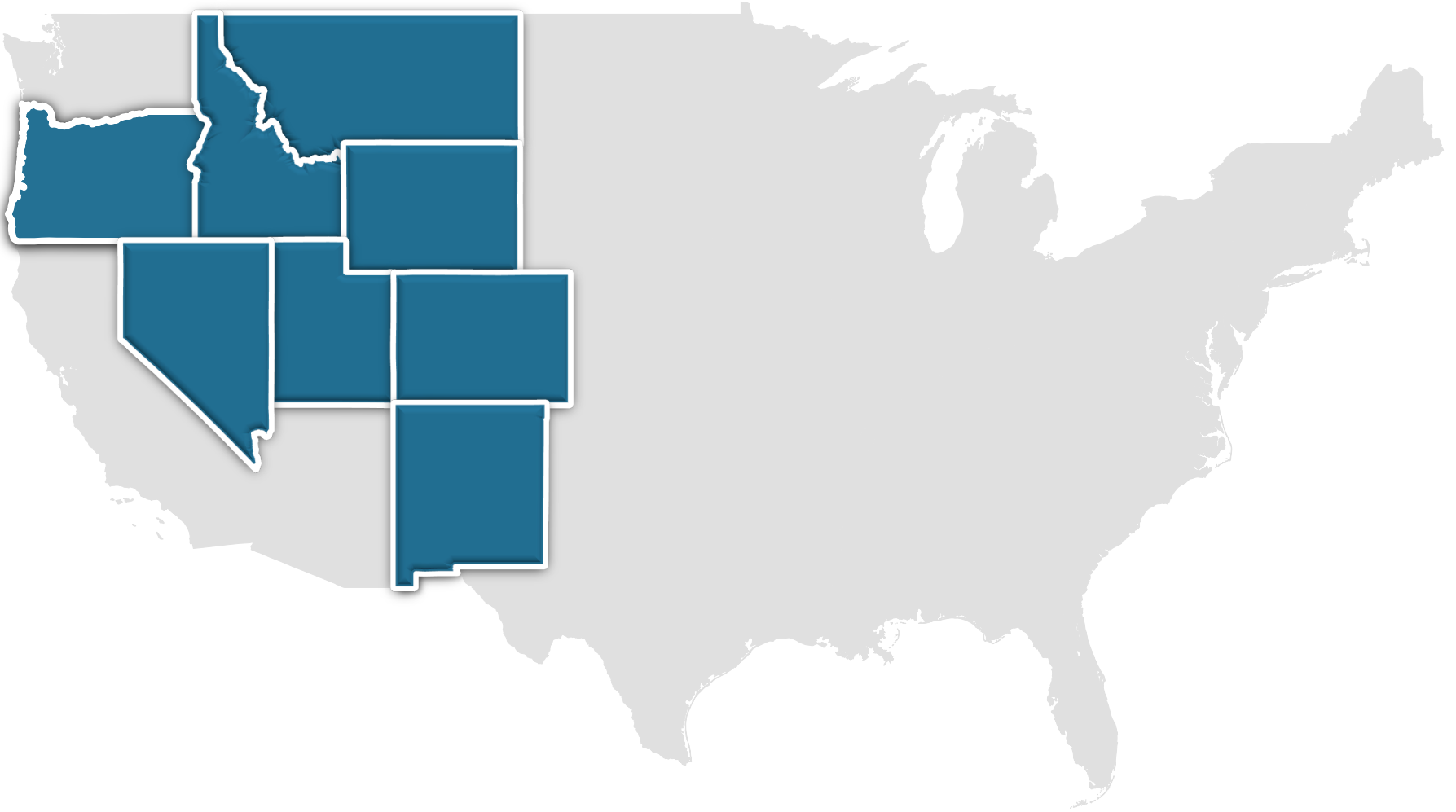
# METHODOLOGY

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- + 1,600 telephone interviews (cell and landline) with 200 registered voters in each of 8 states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.
- + Interviews conducted September 10-14, 2014.
- + Statistically valid sample with margin of sampling error  $\pm 3.54\%$  at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample;  $\pm 6.9\%$  for each state.
- + The total numbers have been statistically weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters throughout the region. Interviews within each state were distributed proportionally by region and each sample is demographically representative of its electorate.
- + Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D).

# The Region

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**PUBLIC OPINION  
STRATEGIES**

*Fairbank, Maslin, Mauldin, Metz & Associates - FMA*  
*Public Opinion Research & Strategy*

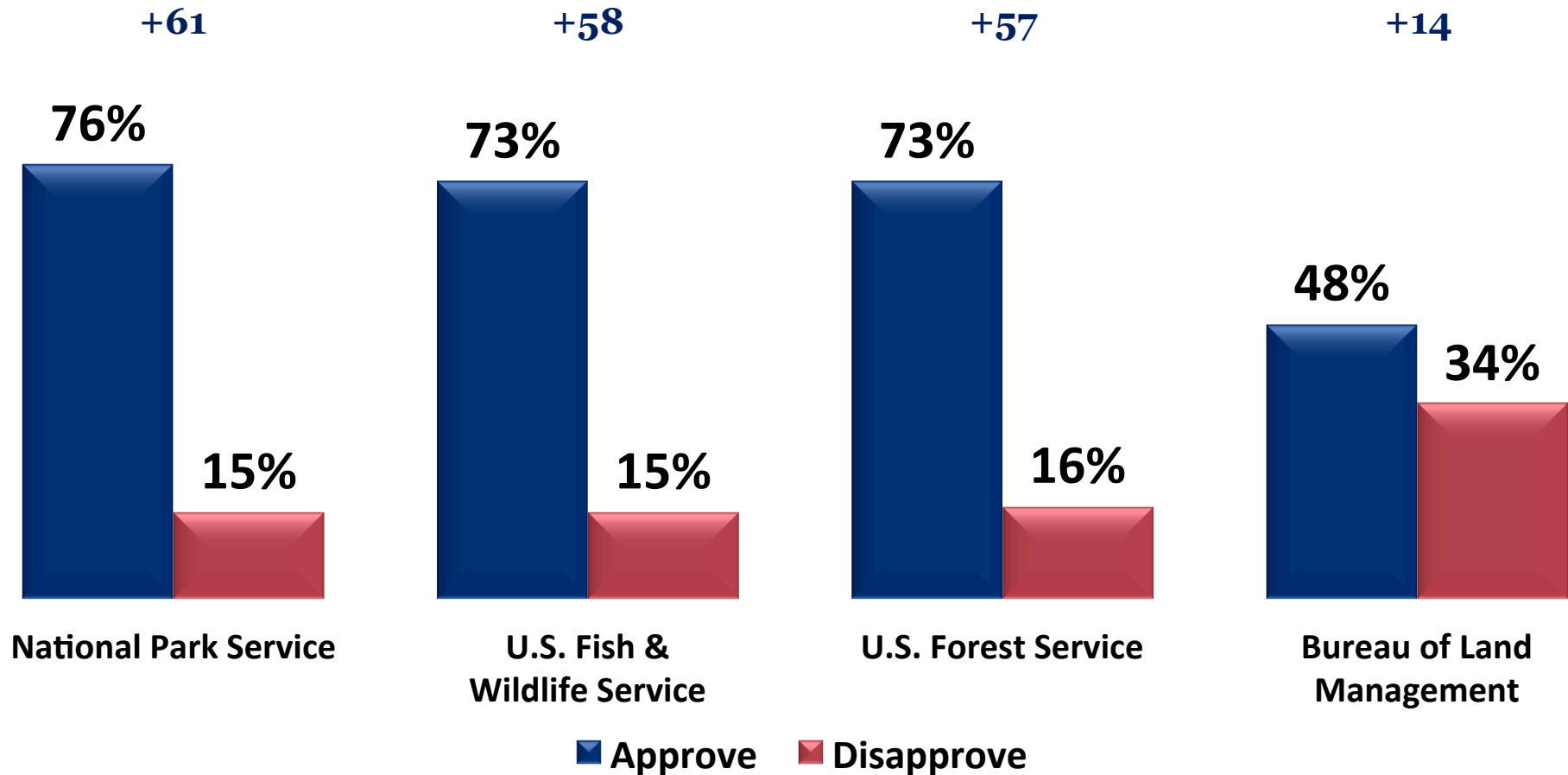
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# Key Findings

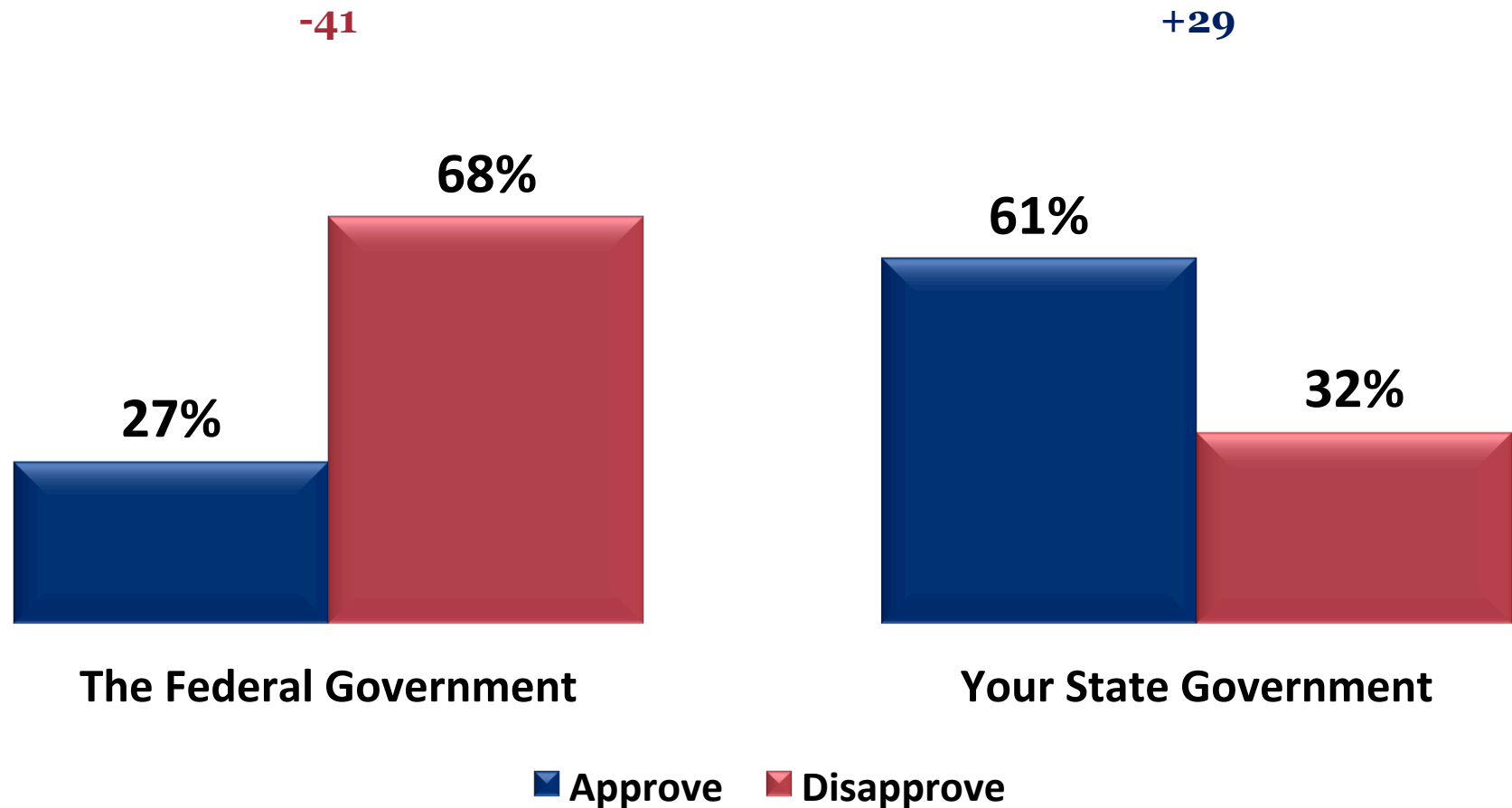


# Voters have fairly positive views of the job these U.S. government agencies are doing in their states.



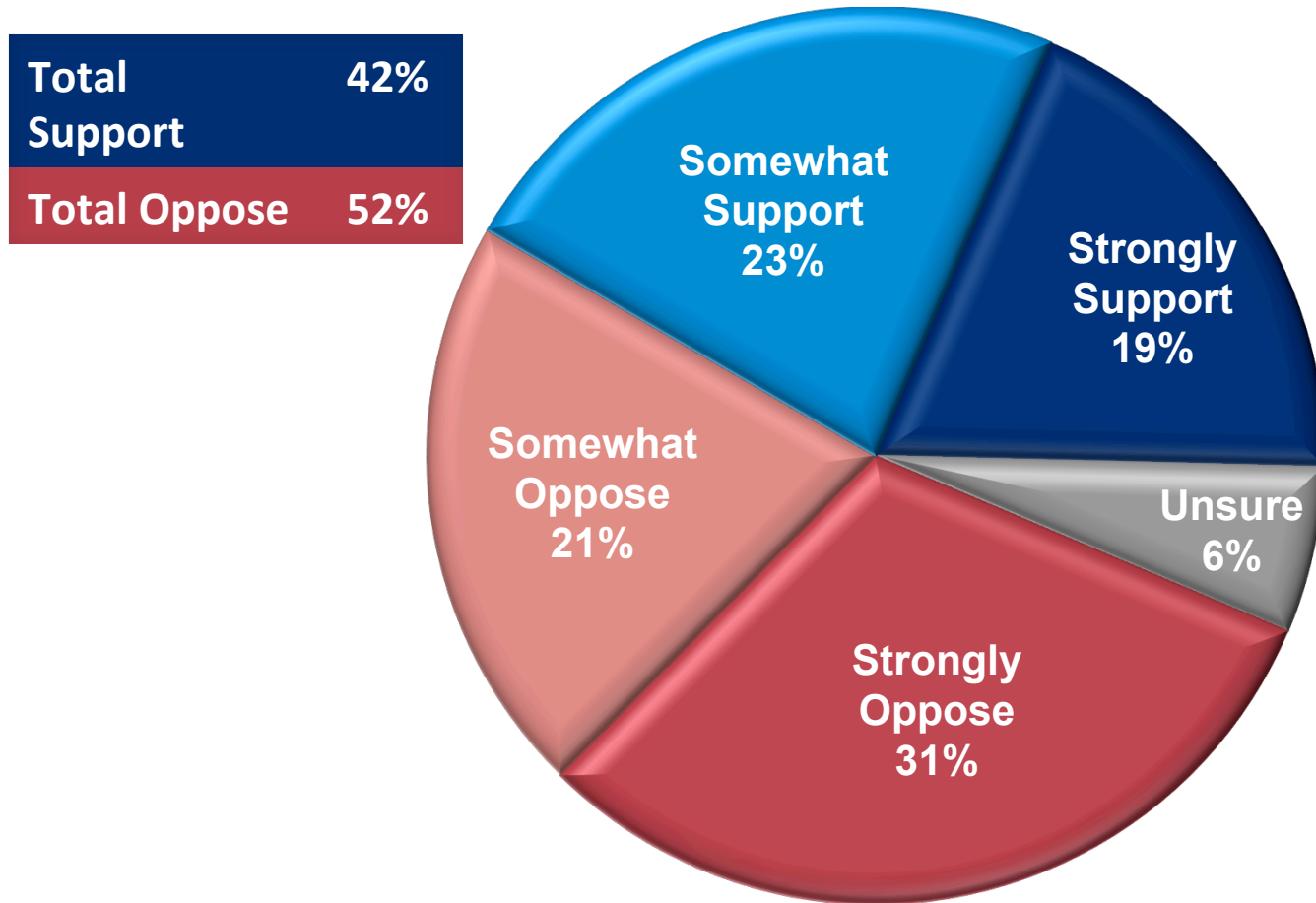
*I'd like to read you some different individuals and agencies which deal with issues in your state. For each one, please indicate whether you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing at this time.*

But, hold very negative views of “the federal government,”  
in contrast to how they view those agencies or their own  
“state government.”



*I'd like to read you some different individuals and agencies which deal with issues in your state. For each one, please indicate whether you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing at this time.*

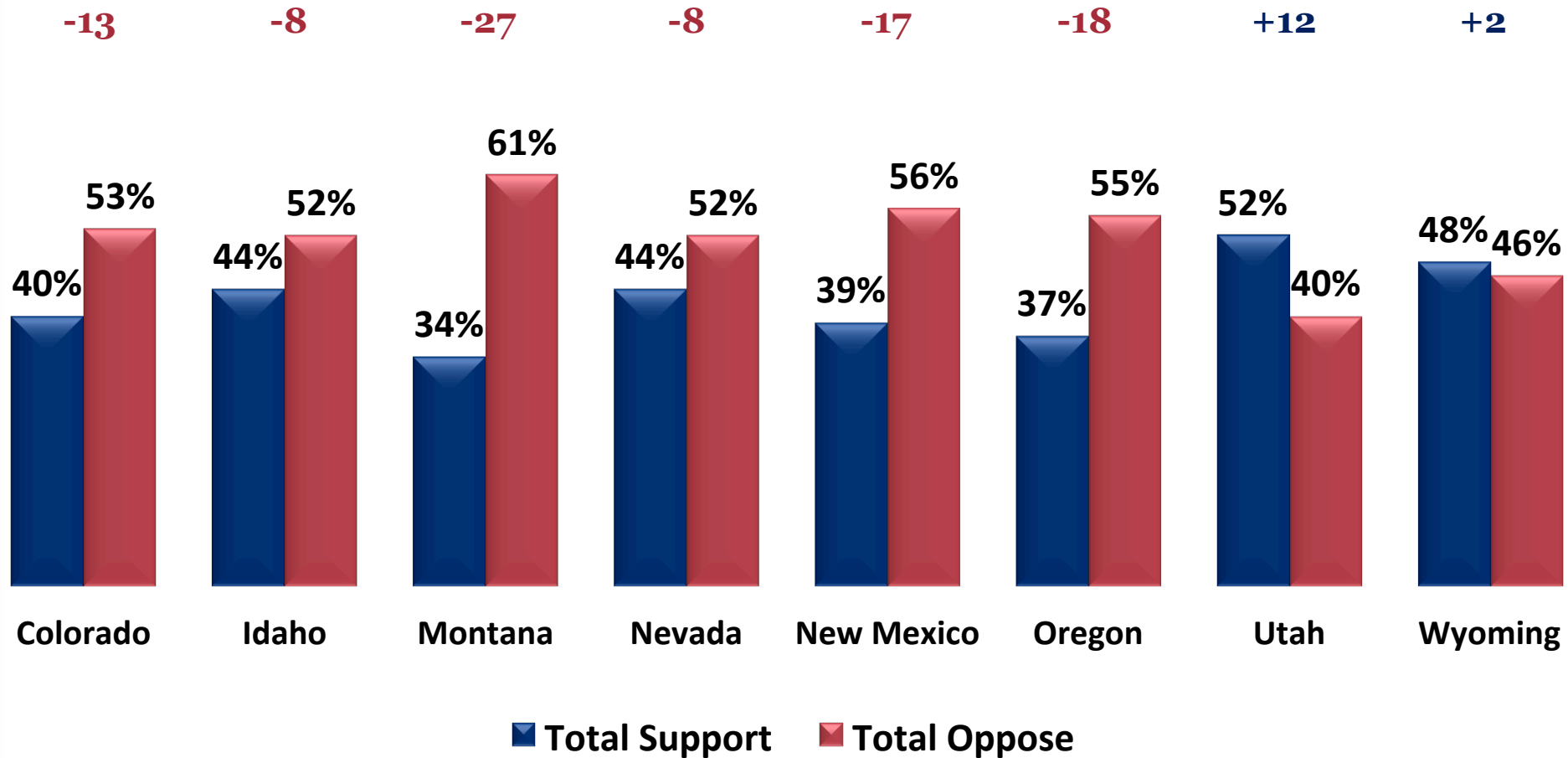
**So it is striking that a majority opposes having state government assume control and cost of managing public lands; two-in-five support.**



*Thinking about one idea related to national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges, and other national public lands in your state, would you support or oppose having your state government and taxpayers assume full control of managing these public lands, including paying for all related costs, including the cost of preventing and fighting wildfires?*

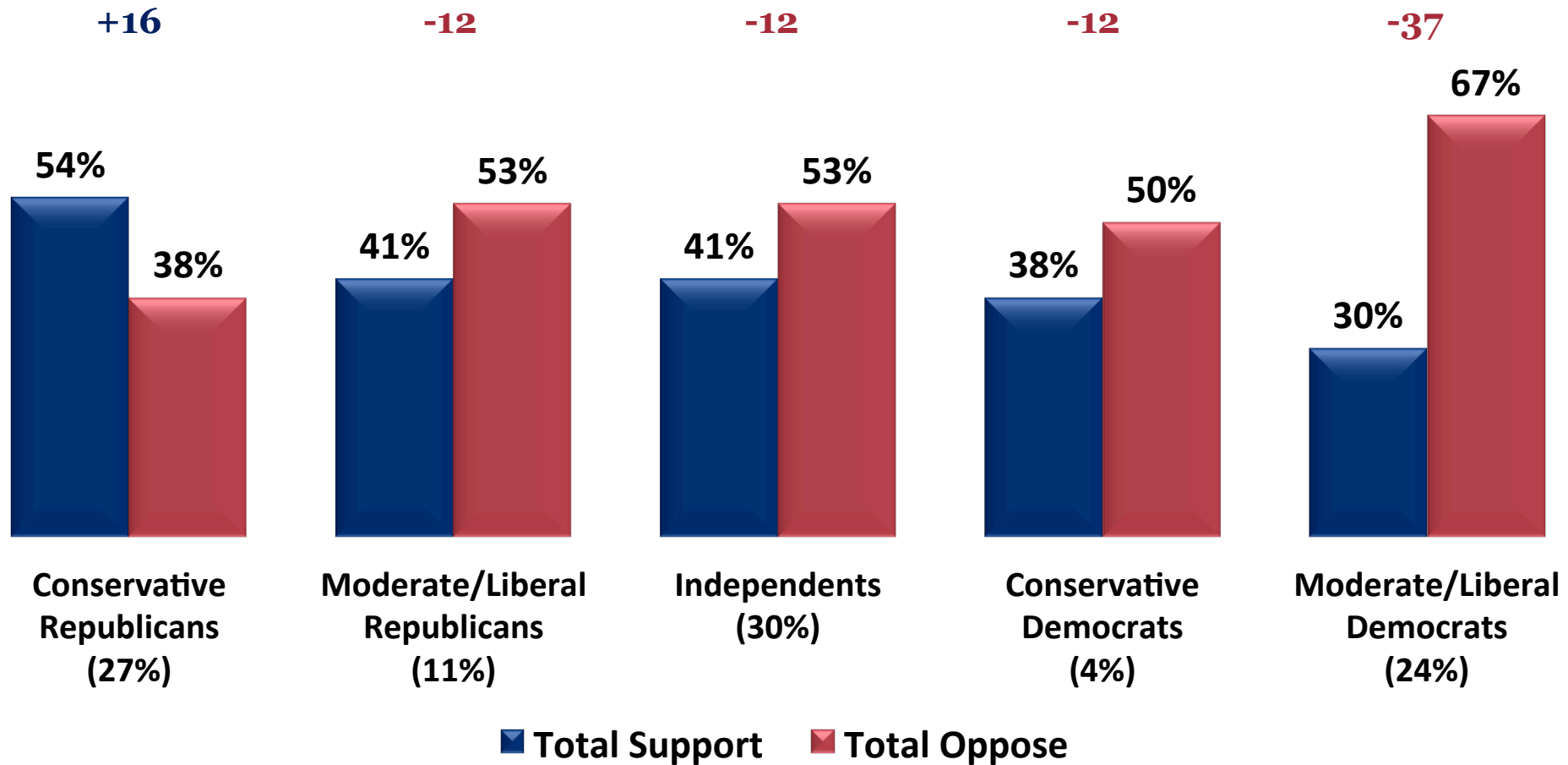
# Six of eight states balk at this proposal; Utah is the only one where a majority support.

## *Proposal By State*



# Majorities across most of the political and ideological spectrum oppose this proposal; conservative GOP stand in contrast.

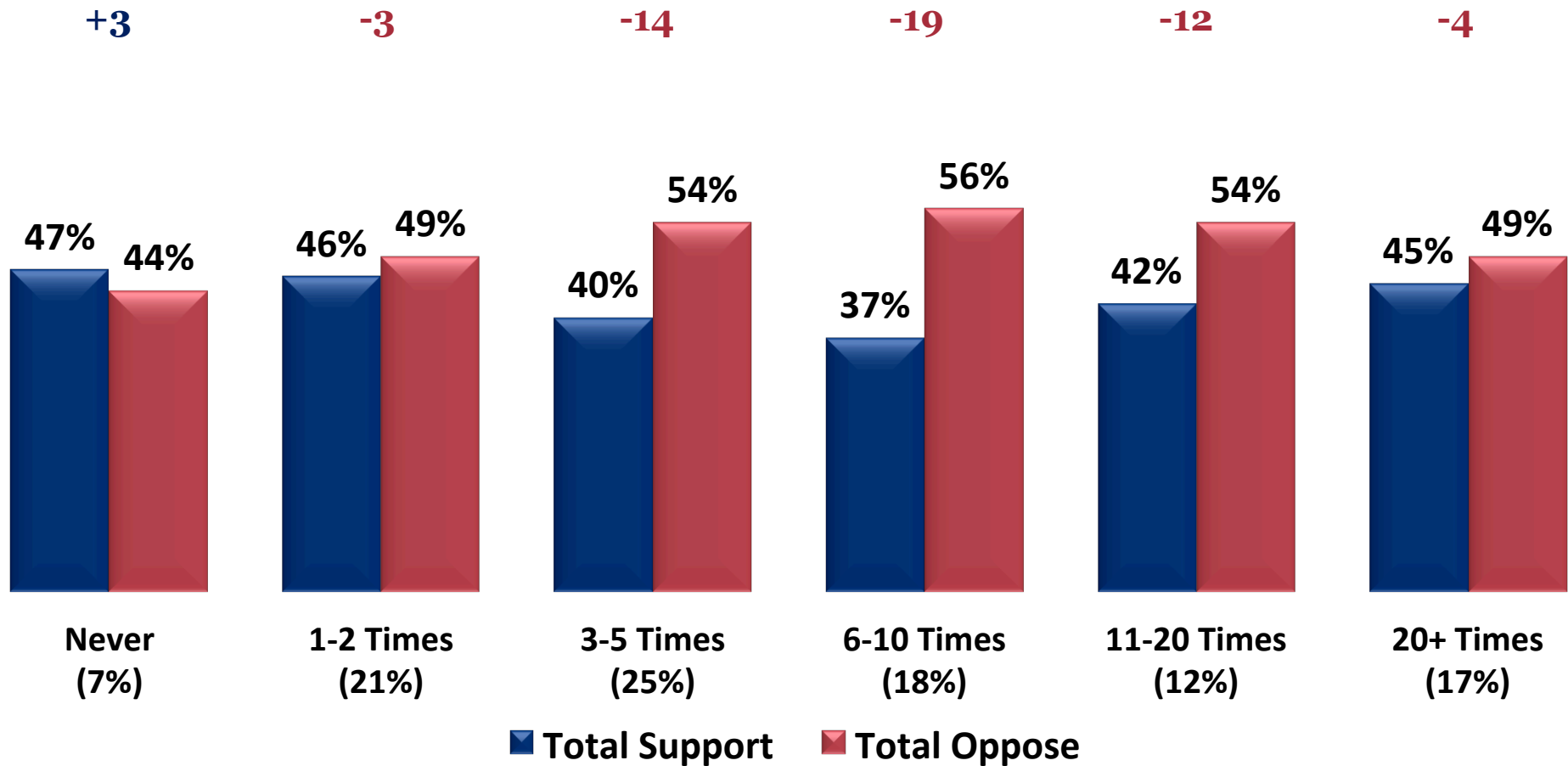
## *Proposal By Party/Ideology*





# Only those who say they have NOT visited national public lands in the last year support this idea.

## *Proposal By Visited Public Lands*

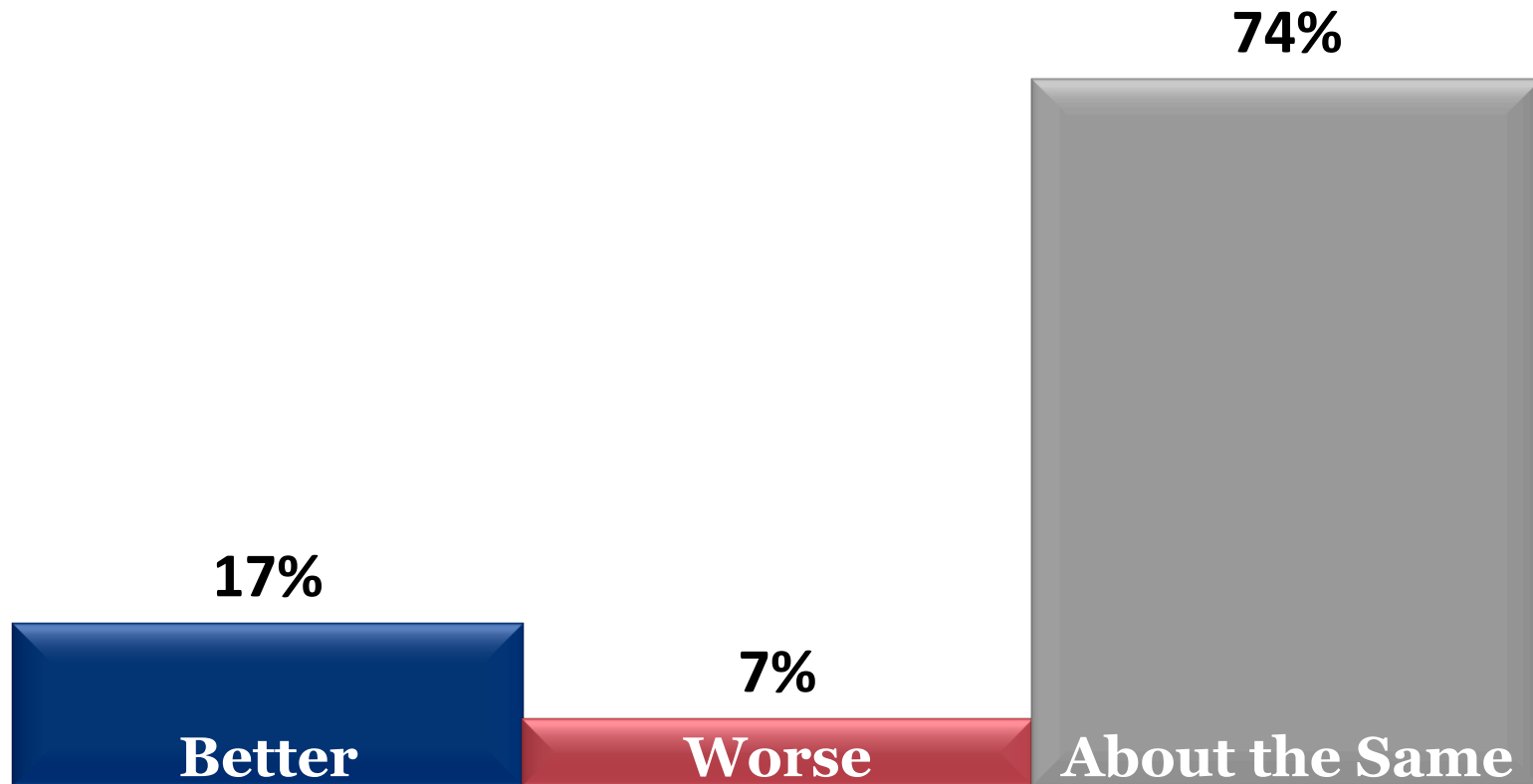


**Vast majority have in fact visited these national public lands;  
94% labeled it a “positive” experience.**

Once or twice	21%
3-5 Times	25%
6-10 Times	18%
11-20 Times	12%
More than 20 Times	17%
<b>Not in the last year</b>	<b>7%</b>

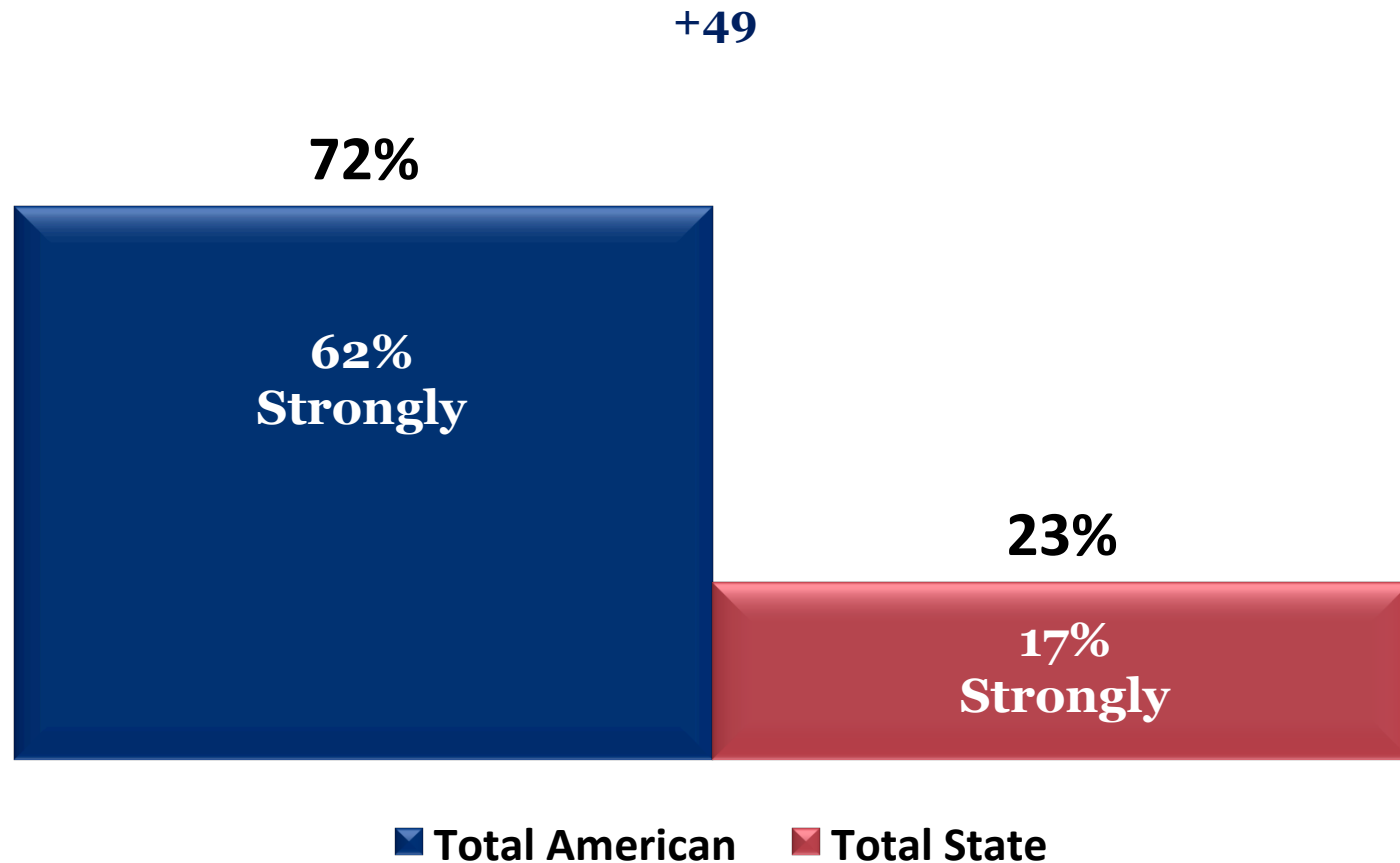
*And over the past year, how many times do you think you have visited public lands managed by one of the national agencies I mentioned before, such as national parks, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, or other national public lands?*

**And among those who have visited both state and public lands, the vast majority say their experience was “the same.”**



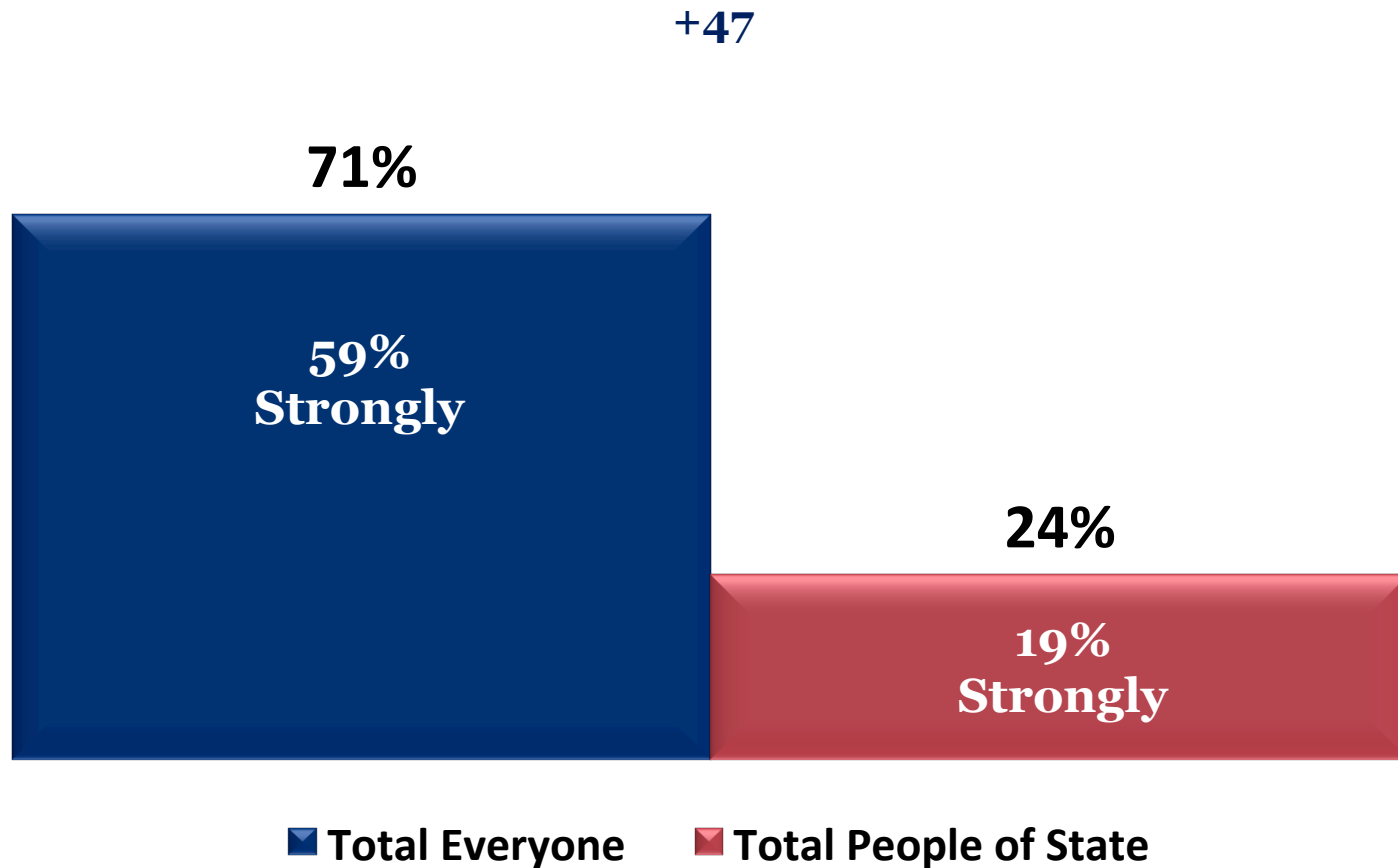
*And is your experience better, worse or about the same at public lands managed by state government as it is in national parks, national forests, national monuments, or other public lands managed by national agencies?*

# Voters consider public lands like national forests and BLM lands to be more “American places” than “state places.”



And do you think of these public lands more as – American places that belong to everyone in our country, OR STATE places that belong more to the people of \_\_\_\_\_?

And voters say that they **SHOULD** belong to everyone in the country, not just their state.



And **SHOULD** these public lands – belong to everyone in our country, OR belong to the people of \_\_\_\_\_?



# Six-in-ten voters side with opponents of state government assuming control of these public lands.

People who oppose having state government and **STATE** taxpayers assume full control of managing these public lands, including paying for all related costs, say it wouldn't be fair to make **STATE** taxpayers pay the full cost of managing lands that rightly belong to all Americans. A single wildfire can cost one hundred million dollars to fight. Our state requires a balanced budget, so we will be forced to raise taxes or sell off lands to the highest bidder to cover these expenses. As a result, we will lose access to places **STATE** families have visited for decades and that we want future generations to enjoy.

59%

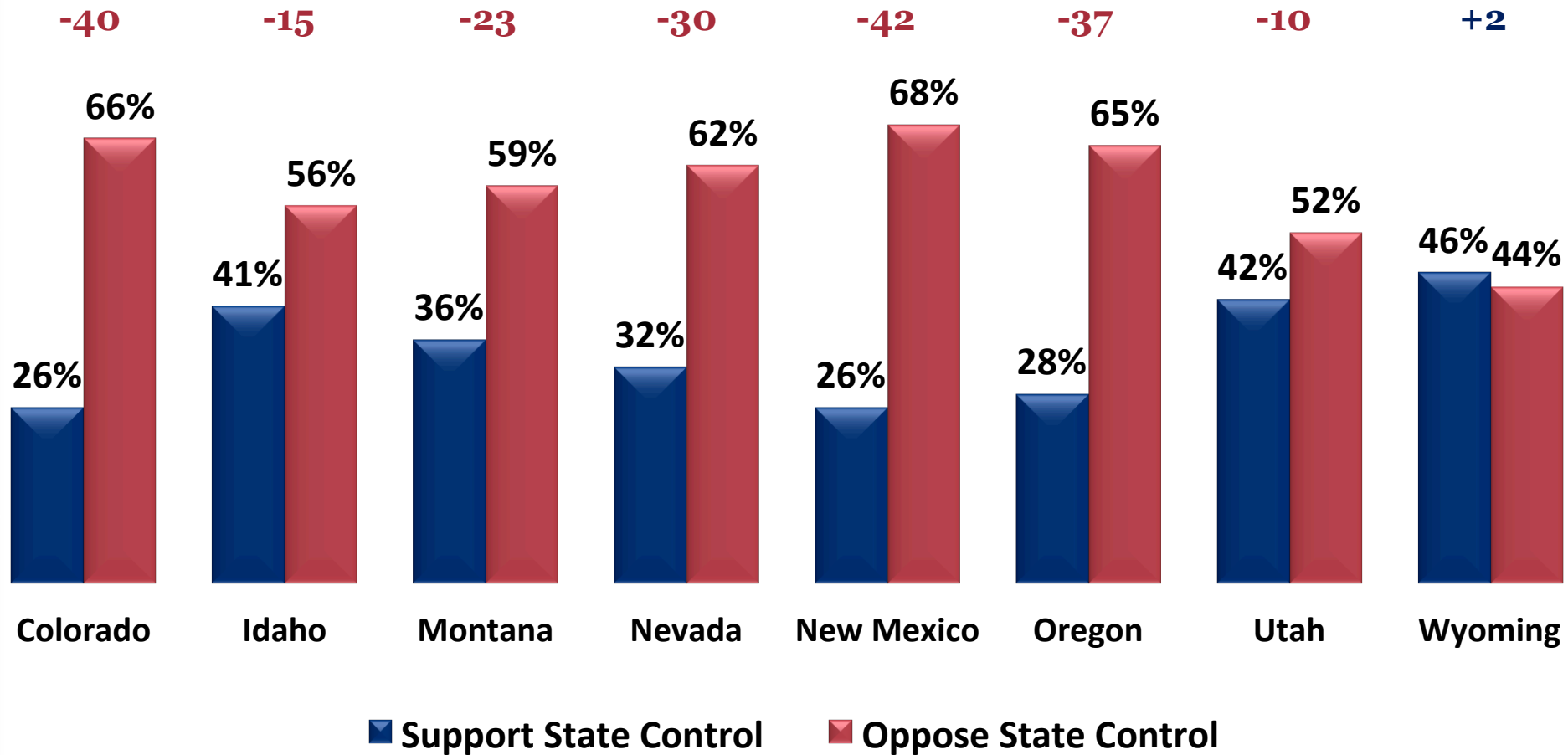
People who support having state government and **STATE** taxpayers assume Full control of managing these public lands, including paying for all related costs, say that historically these lands were never meant to be held by the U.S. government forever. Besides, the states will manage these lands better than national agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, as they can allow more logging, mining and other resource extraction on these lands to help raise revenues to fund needs in our states.

35%

*Please listen to two different viewpoints and tell me which one comes closer to your own even if neither matches what you think exactly...*

# Most states' voters say they agree with the opposition over supporters by double digit margins.

## *Control of Public Land Viewpoint By State*

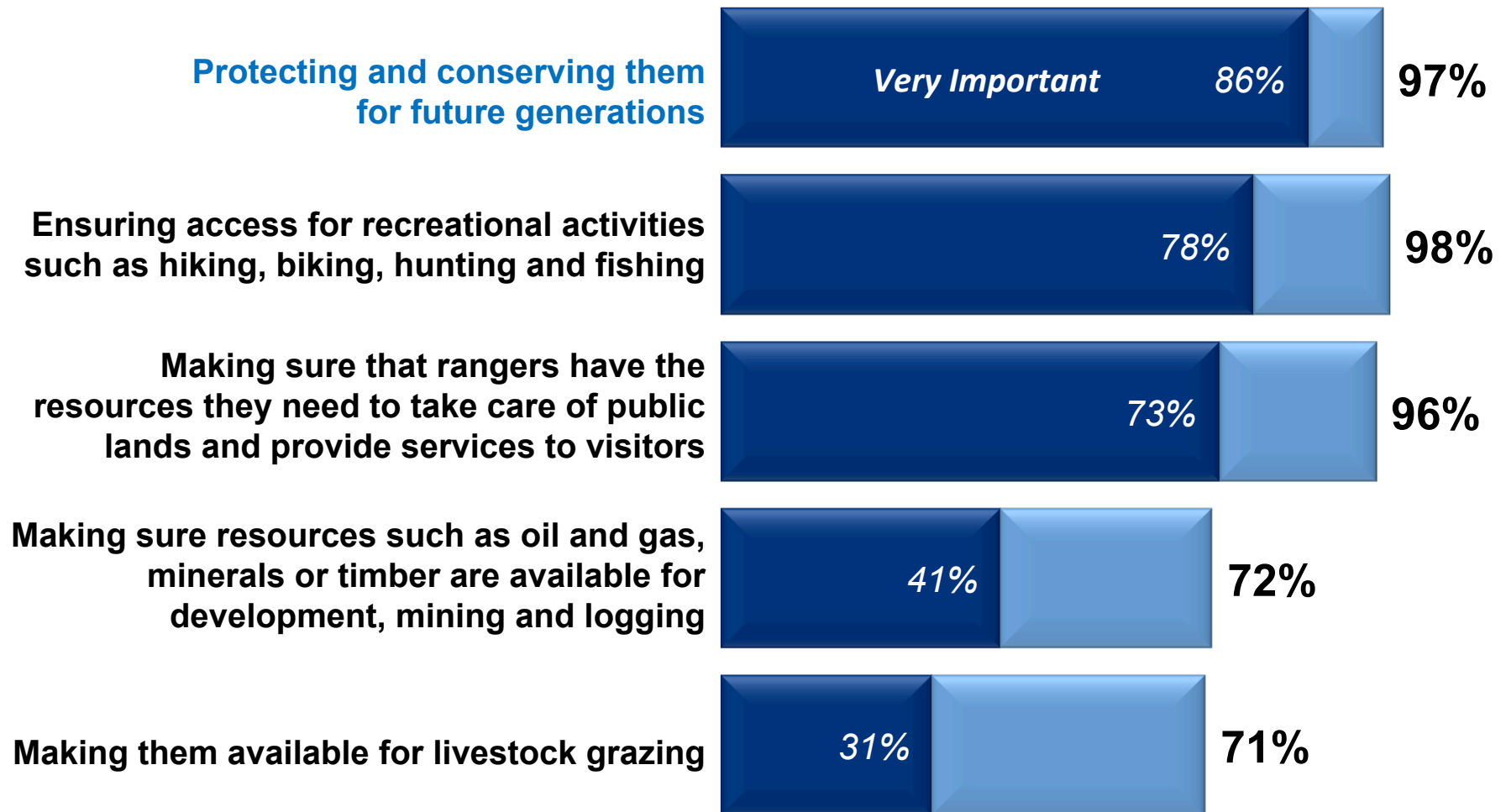


# Opposition increases after hearing message among key swing sub-groups:

	Oppose	Net Change
Conservative Democrats	67%	+17
Women Under Age 45	65%	+15
Moderates	67%	+14
Men Under Age 45	57%	+13
Latino Voters	58%	+11
Suburban Voters	65%	+11

# Voters do not want to lose these places - Conserving them for future generations and access are deemed “most important.”

*Funding Priorities Ranked By Very Important*





# The Bottom Line



# THE BOTTOM LINE

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- + Voters in these Western states are visiting public lands like national forests, BLM lands, and national wildlife refuges and overwhelmingly say the experience is positive and comparable to that of state public lands.
- + They say they approve of the job specific government agencies are doing in their state, although they tend to disapprove of the job the “federal government” is doing generically.
- + Voters are more likely to reject than embrace a proposal to have state government assume full control of and the costs associated with managing public lands currently managed by national agencies. They think of these places more as “American places” than as places solely for their state.
- + This view is widespread and broad based. It also sustains even after hearing viewpoints on both sides of this issue.

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