



Key Findings

National Survey of Hunters and Anglers

June/July 2015

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METHODOLOGY

- + 1,000 interviews with voters who identify as a hunter, an angler or both.
- + Respondents participated in the survey via landline phone, cell phone, or on-line interviews.
- + Interviews conducted June 23 – July 4, 2015.
- + Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research (D).

Demographics – Gender



Men

75%



Women

25%

Demographics – Community Type



City **19%**



Suburb **32%**

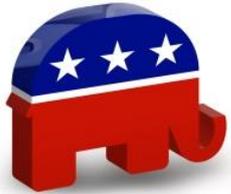


Town **21%**



Rural **28%**

Demographics – Party



Republican

38%



Independent

32%



Democrat

28%



Tea Party

49%

Hunters and anglers view water quality protections as compatible with economic prosperity.

We can protect our water quality and have a strong economy with good jobs for Americans at the same time, without having to choose one over the other.

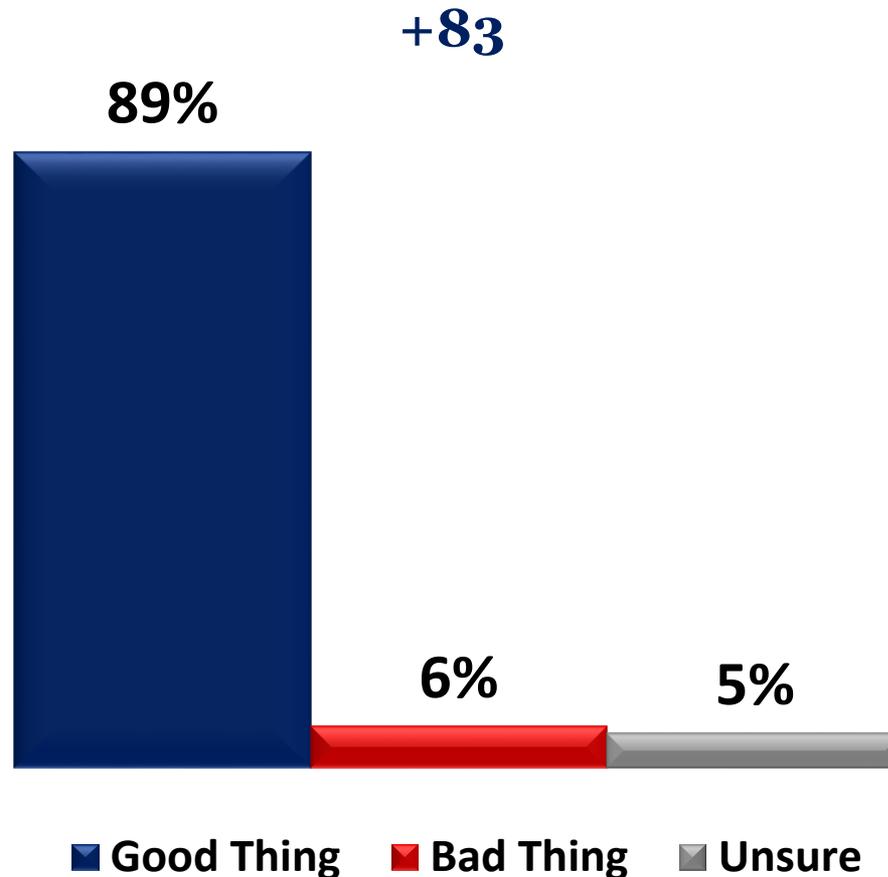
82%

Sometimes protections for our water and a strong economy with good jobs are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.

15%

Which of the following comes closer to your opinion:

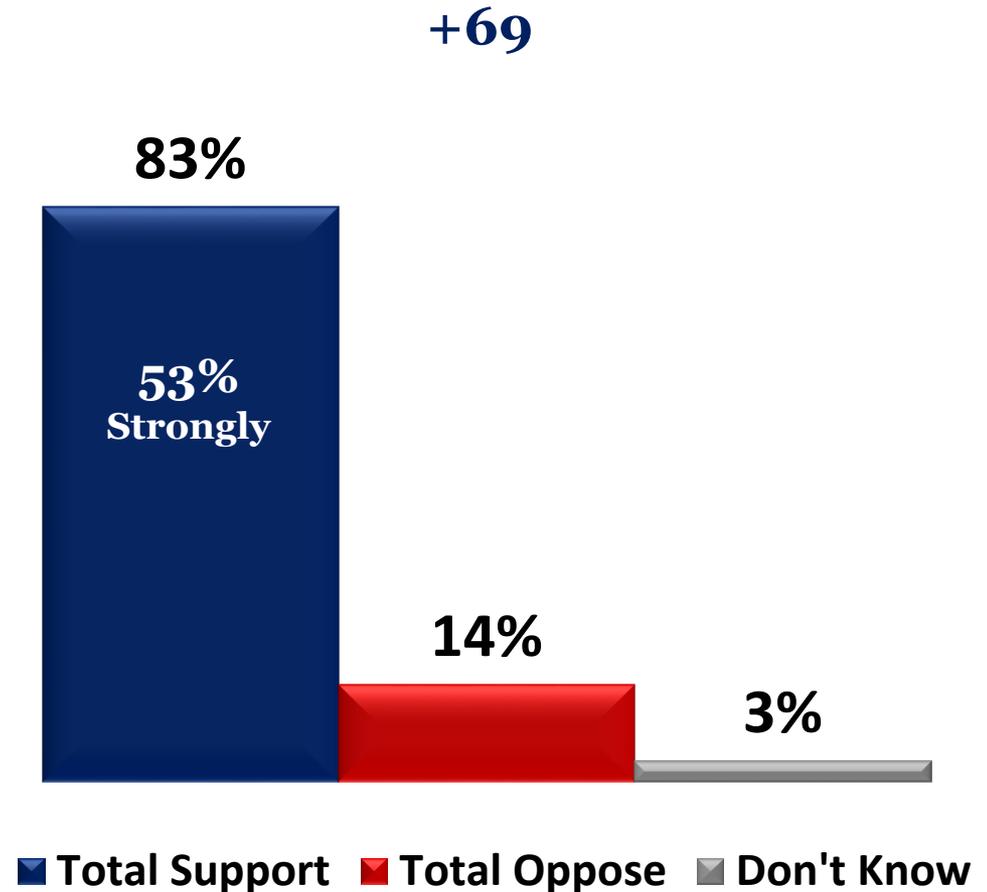
Nearly nine-in-ten believe that the Clean Water Act has been a good thing for the country. Overwhelming majorities of all sub-groups hold this view.



“As you may recall, the Clean Water Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Nixon in 1972 in an effort to reduce water pollution and protect lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Generally, would you say the Clean Water Act has been more of a good thing or a bad thing for the country?”

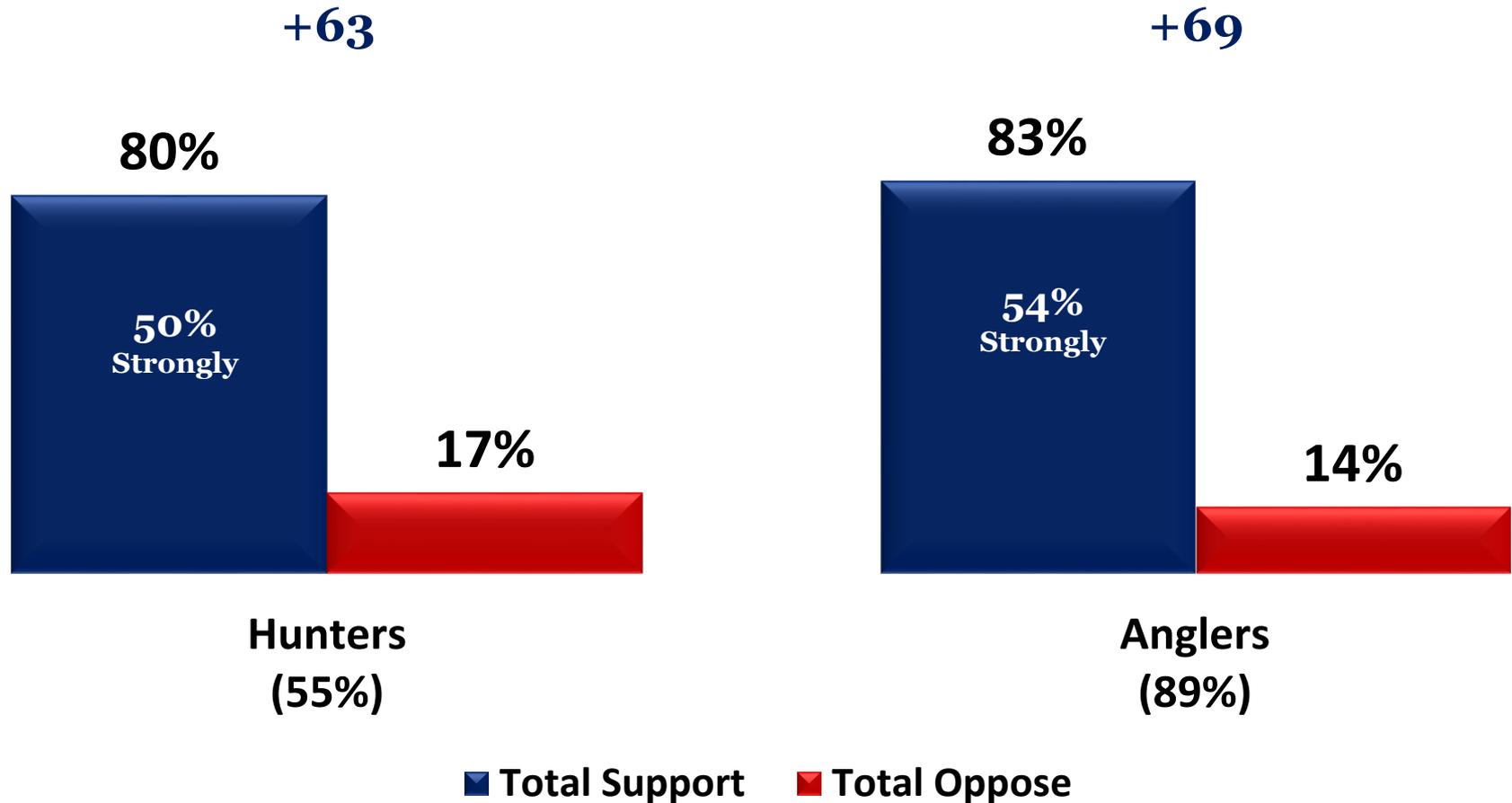
More than four-in-five hunters and anglers support applying the same rules and standards to smaller streams and wetlands.

“Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said that smaller streams and wetlands that flow into larger rivers, lakes and eventually the ocean are protected under the Clean Water Act – a point that had been unclear after a number of recent court decisions. Do you support or oppose applying the same rules and standards from the Clean Water Act to these smaller, headwater streams and wetlands?”



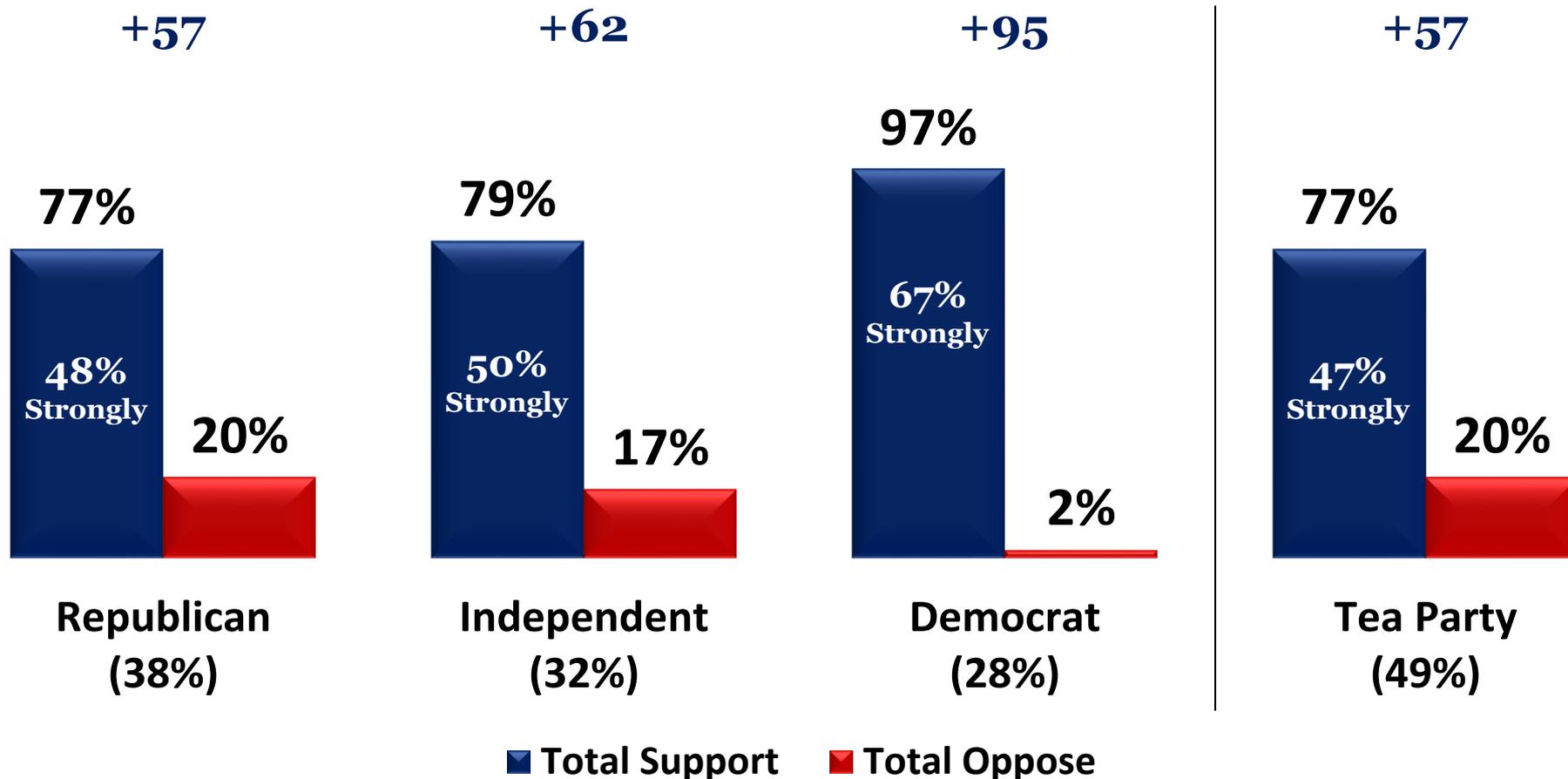
There is similar support levels and intensity among both hunters and anglers.

Support for EPA Rule By Sportsmen



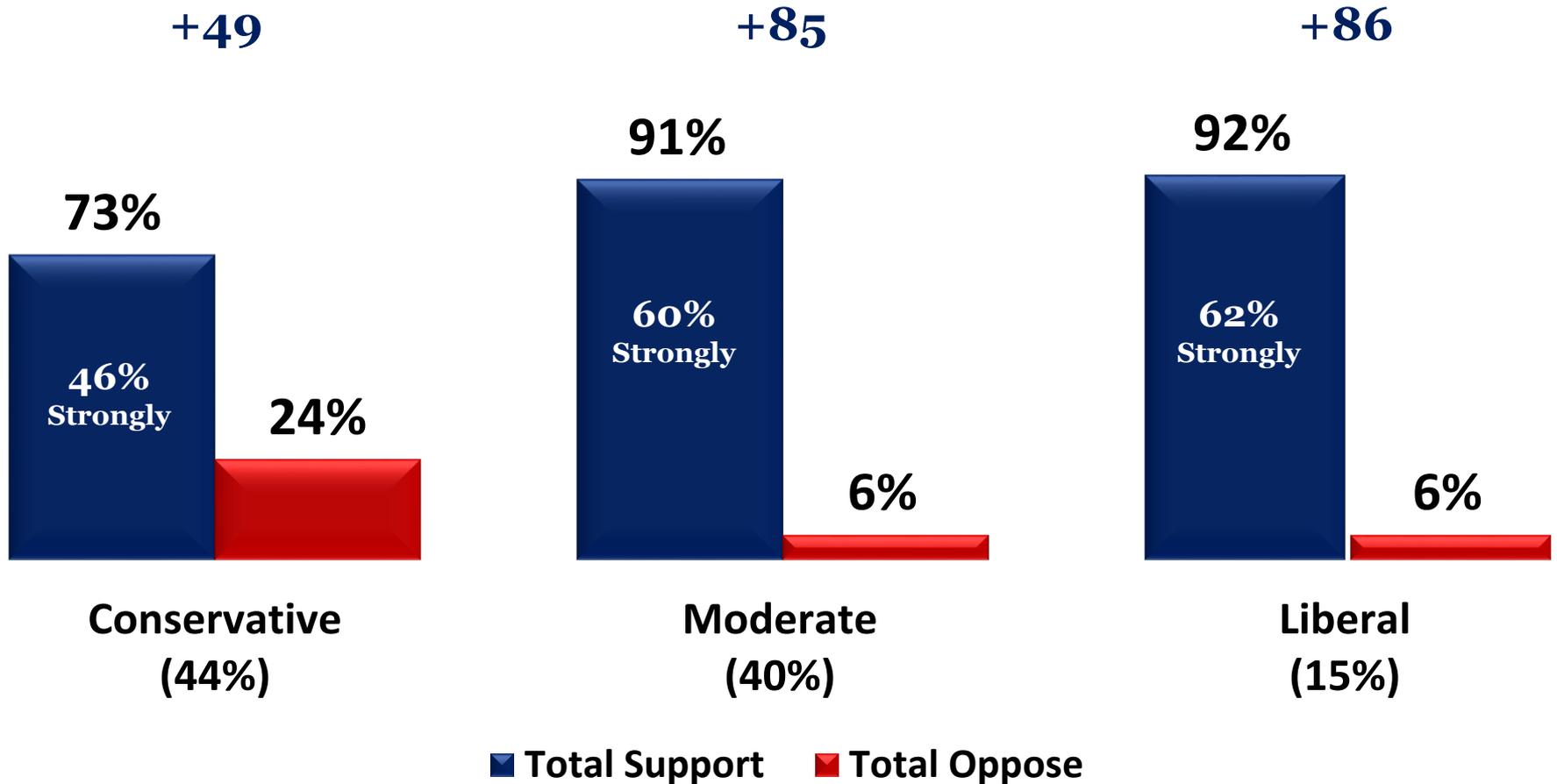
More than three-quarters across the partisan spectrum supports applying these rules to smaller streams.

Support for EPA Rule By Party and Tea Party



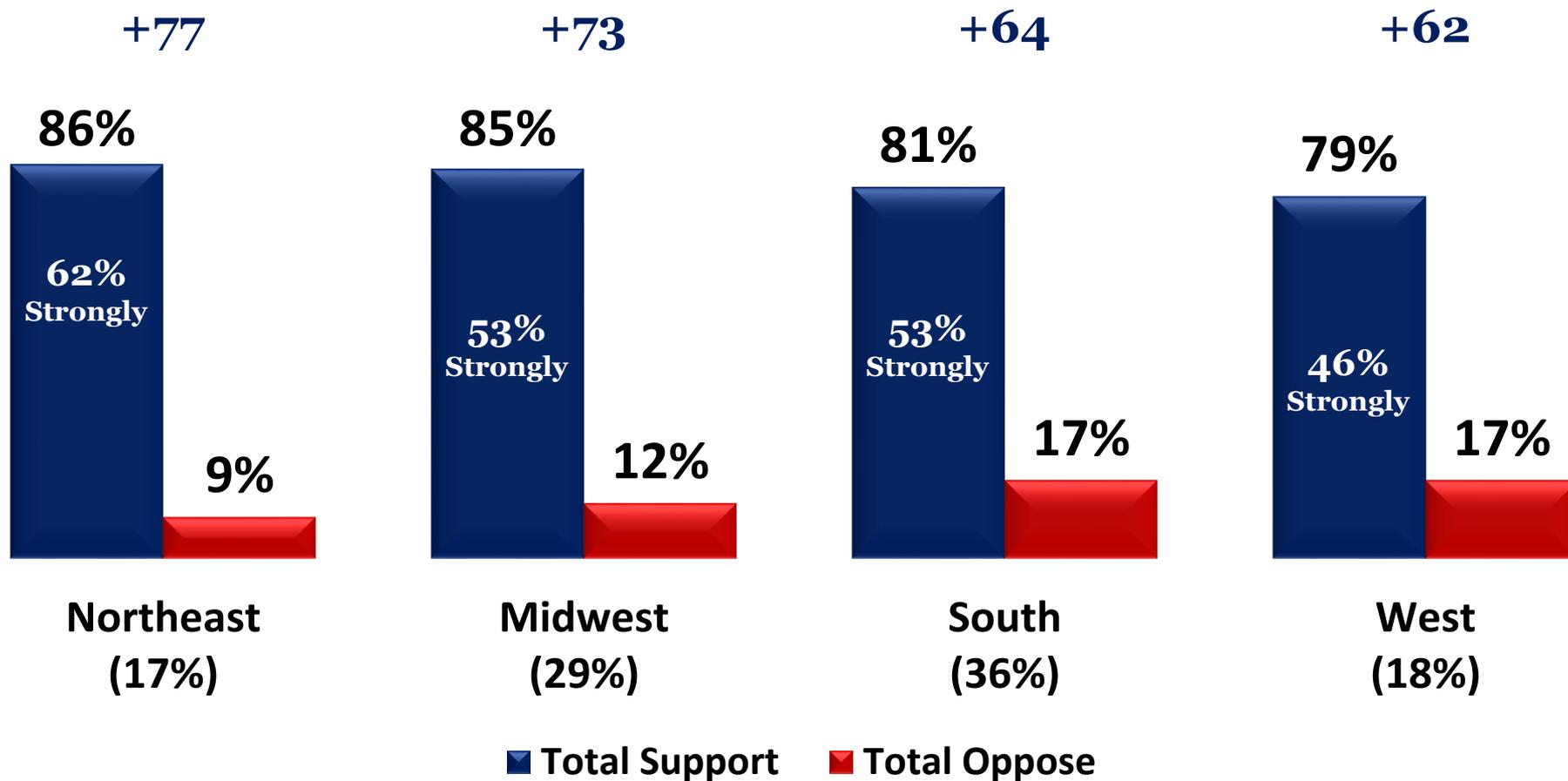
There is a relationship to ideology, but still significant support among conservative sportsmen.

Support for EPA Rule By Ideology



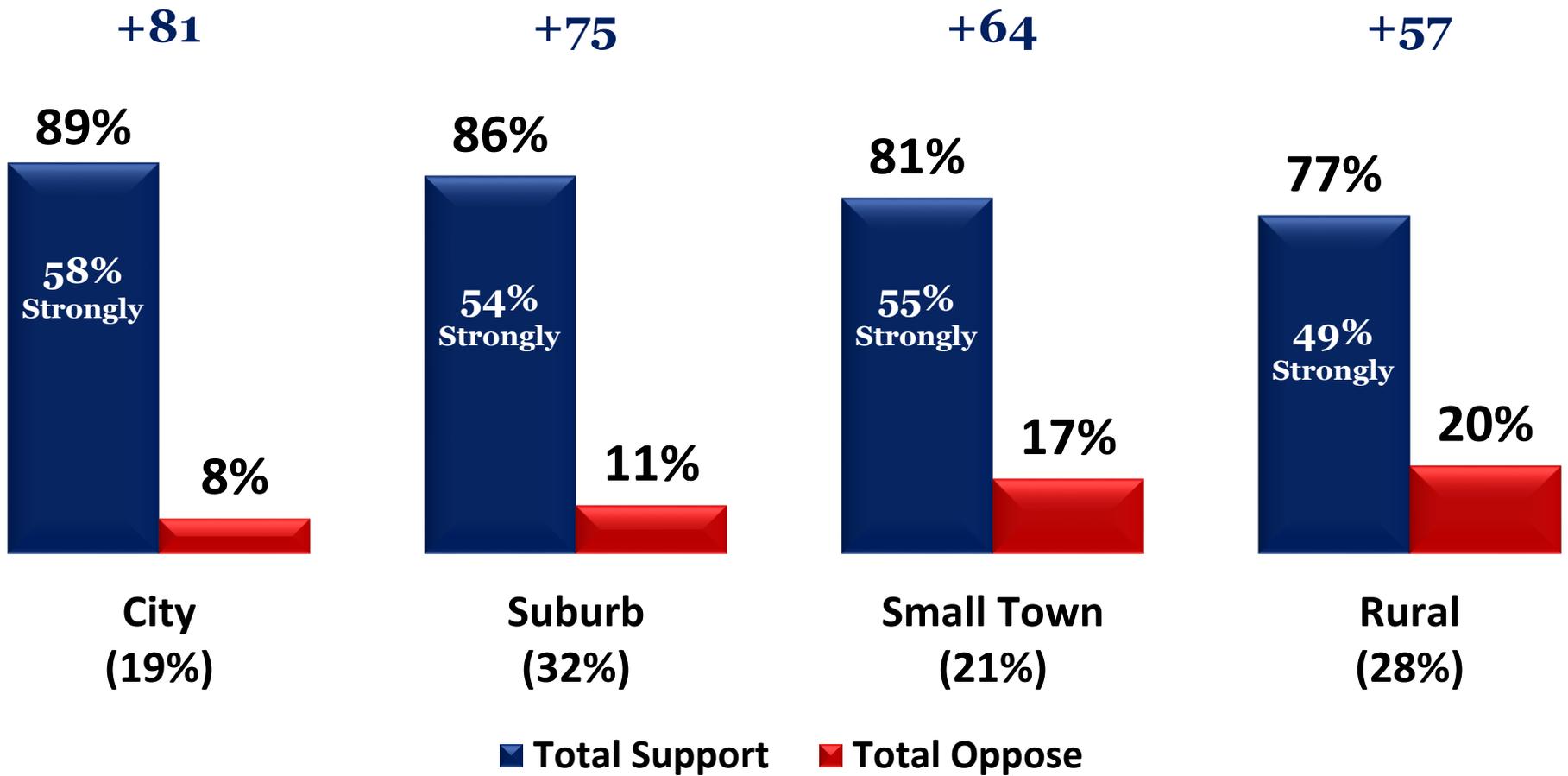
More than four-in-five in every region register support; bigger geographic distinction in intensity though.

Support for EPA Rule By Region



Similarly, three-quarters or more in every type of community – including rural areas – register support for the policy.

Support for EPA Rule By Community



Mostly, supporters express a sense that it is futile to clean up larger bodies of water if headwaters are ignored.

“These bodies of water are intimately connected, so are we to ignore them due to some technicality or red tape associated with language of a bill from forty years ago? The intention was then and should now be considered the same no matter the bill's wording, making this issue a non-issue.”
– **Democratic Man Angler from Washington**

“Because the smaller streams lead into bigger rivers and etc. The population of fish may increase. I believe this should've been in the original Clean Water Act.”
– **Democratic Man Hunter & Angler from Virginia**

“It all flows together so the same laws should apply.”
– **Independent Man Angler from Virginia**

“The water all runs into the bigger water. If the little ones get screwed up, then so will the big ones. The deer and elk and the rest of the wildlife drink from the little streams as well as the big ones.”
– **Independent Man Hunter & Angler from Colorado**

“Our waters lead into one another. If one is bad, both are. Also, people need to be respectful. If it is a law with consequences, (they are) more likely to follow (it).”
– **Republican Woman Hunter & Angler from Wisconsin**

What are the two or three reasons you **SUPPORT** applying the same rules from the Clean Water Act to other...

Sportsmen also connect these smaller streams and wetlands with the health of fish and wildlife.

“They are good fishing places, wildlife drinks from the smaller streams, wetlands should be protected for future game.”

– Republican Man Hunter and Angler from Pennsylvania

“They still have habitats living in them, even if they are not a main body of water.”

- GOP Man Hunter from Minnesota

“The native fish. There will be no polluted water moving down stream. The ecosystem will be stronger.”

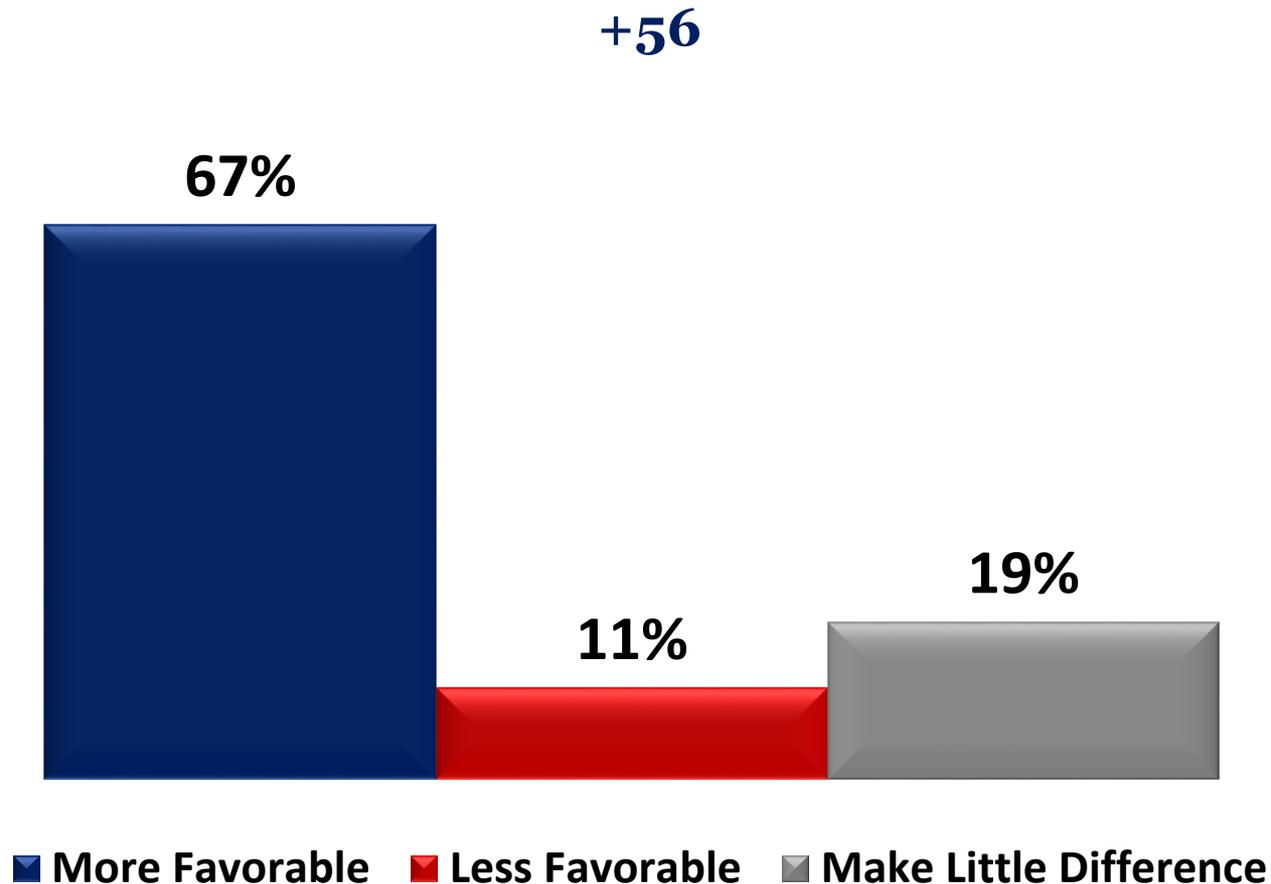
– Independent Man Hunter & Angler from West Virginia

“I feel that our smaller streams and wetlands are important to the wildlife that depend on them for their survival.”

– Democratic Woman Hunter & Angler from Arizona

What are the two or three reasons you **SUPPORT** applying the same rules from the Clean Water Act to other...

Two-thirds of sportsmen say support for this policy will generate a more favorable impression of their U.S. Senator.

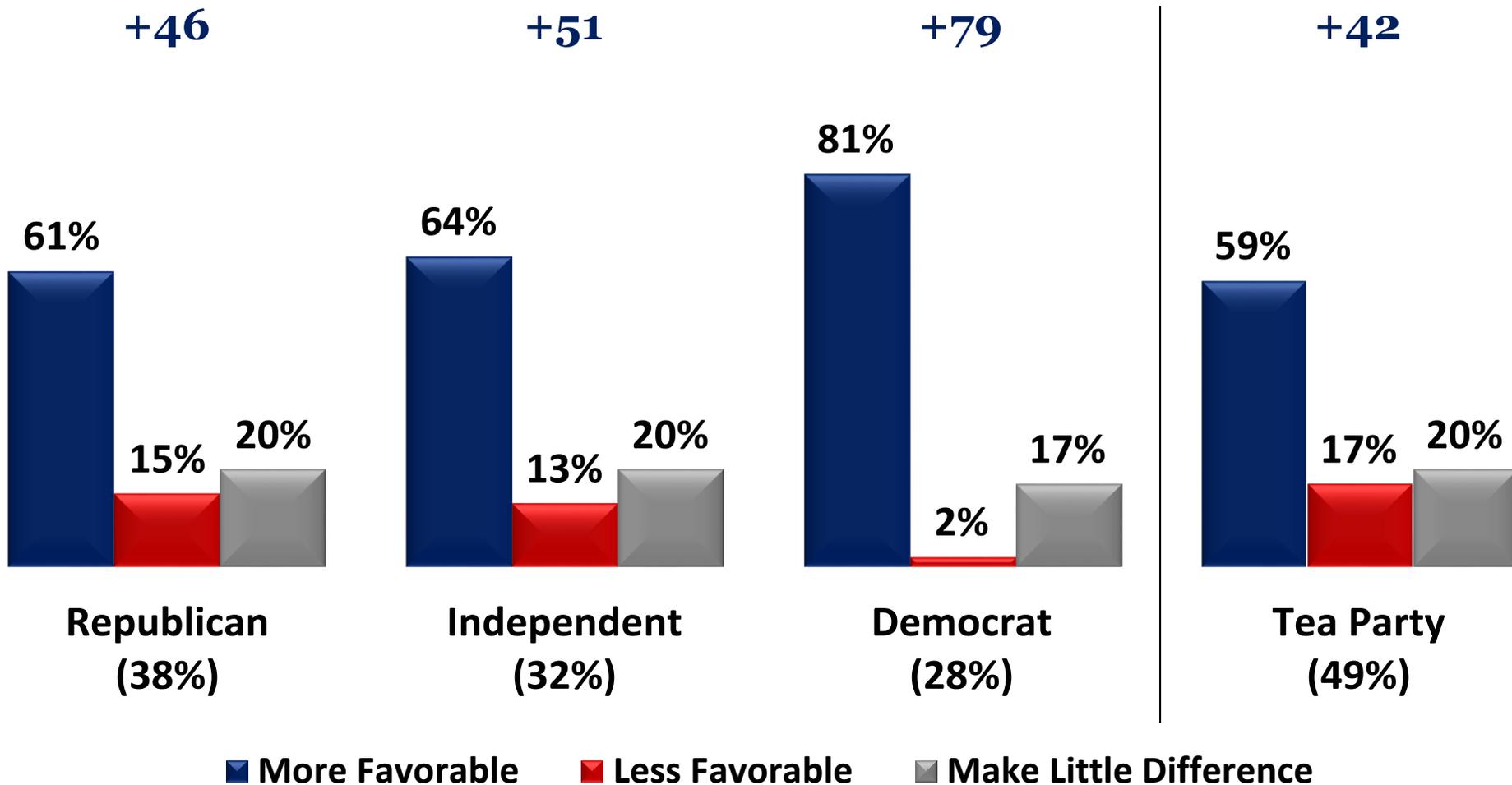


* Split Sampled (N=496)

And if your U.S. Senator supported applying the same rules and standards from the Clean Water Act to these smaller, headwater streams and wetlands, would that give you a more favorable, less favorable or make little difference in your impression of him or her?

This positive impression holds true across party lines.

Candidate Support EPA Rule Impact By Party and Tea Party



These respondents perceive applying the Clean Water Act to smaller streams as a safeguard, rather than burdensome.

Important safeguards to protect drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat, public health, private property owners, small business owners, and taxpayers from water pollution and costly clean-ups

75%

Burdensome regulation that will tie up agriculture, developers and other businesses in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs

22%

And do you think that making sure that the Clean Water Act applies to smaller headwater streams and to wetlands is more....

By more than a two-to-one margin, sportsmen side with proponents over opponents on this issue.

Supporters of applying the same rules to smaller streams and wetlands say that these smaller streams provide drinking water for more than one-in-three Americans, are vital to public health, and are important for fish, waterfowl and other wildlife. Wetlands help filter out pollution, and act as a natural defense against flooding, yet they and our streams are increasingly threatened by development and pollution.

68%

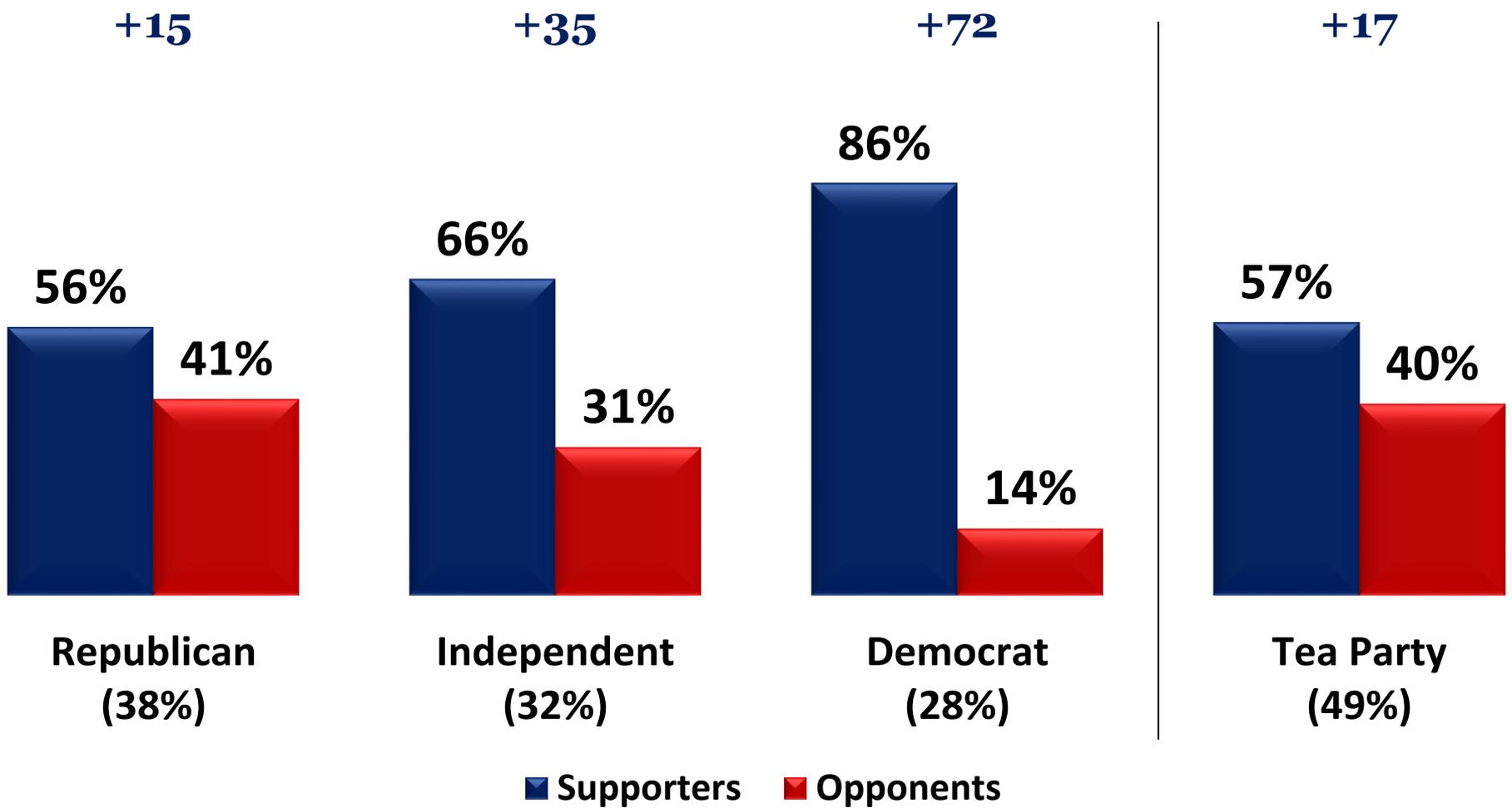
Opponents of applying the same rules to smaller streams and wetlands say that the Environmental Protection Agency is overstepping in trying to regulate small waterways, giving it the power to dictate land-use decisions and farming practices that are better left to state and local agencies. This will hurt businesses and farmers and cost jobs, due to more government red-tape and higher costs.

30%

And do you think that making sure that the Clean Water Act applies to smaller headwater streams and to wetlands is more....

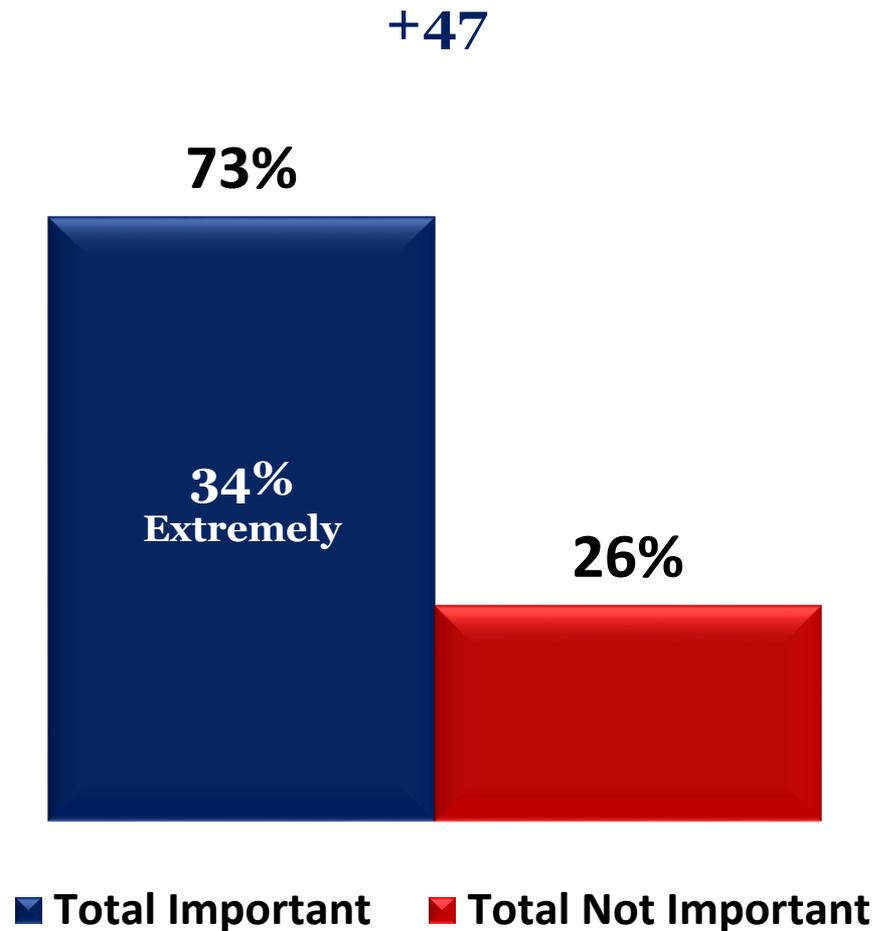
Majority of hunters and anglers across the partisan spectrum sides with supporters over critics of the policy.

EPA Rule Statements By Party and Tea Party



Three-quarters say this issue is important to them after hearing connection to wildlife; one-in-three say extremely important.

“Some hunters and anglers are also speaking out in support of applying the same rules to these smaller streams and wetlands for a number of reasons. They say that smaller streams are important for cold water fish like trout and that protecting clean water is important for fish across the country—from bass to salmon. They say that wetlands are the breeding grounds for migratory birds, like the prairie pothole region in the Dakotas where more ducks are born than in any other area of the nation. And these areas are often habitat for large and small game, which in turn supports small business owners and local economies that depend on hunting and fishing. Having heard that, how important would you say this issue is to you personally?”



Even more broadly, a near majority view water quality and wildlife habitat as a primary factor in their vote decisions.

Very important, they are a primary factor in deciding whether to support an elected public official

47%

Somewhat important; they are one of several issues you consider

45%

Not too important; they are not a significant consideration in deciding whether to support an elected public official

5%

Not at all important for you in deciding whether to support an elected official

2%

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care, and education, how important are issues involving protecting fish and wildlife habitat and the quality of our drinking water and streams, and rivers for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official? Are they...



The Bottom Line

THE BOTTOM LINE

- + There is broad support among hunters and anglers for applying the same rules and standards of the Clean Water Act to smaller streams and wetlands. Support is broad-based and wide-spread, cutting across partisan and ideological divisions.
 - + Hunters and anglers perceive applying the Clean Water Act to smaller streams as a safeguard, rather than burdensome regulation that will hurt business.
 - + Those who support this policy believe that it is necessary to address water quality issues in these headwaters in order to ensure quality downstream. They also express how these smaller streams are critically important to wildlife and fish.
 - + Support endures after hearing arguments from both proponents and opponents of this policy.
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