

Advocating for Clean Energy Policies in Illinois

Research Findings for NRDC Action Fund and The Majority Institute



NRDCACTIONFUND



Understanding the Political Context

Methodology

Voters

Global Strategy Group conducted a phone survey of **801 likely 2018 Democratic primary voters in Illinois, with an oversample of 200 voters downstate** between January 4 and 8, 2018.

Total of **265 downstate interviews**. Downstate defined as counties including and to the south of Kankakee, Grundy, LaSalle, Bureau, Henry, and Rock Island.

Margin of error

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.5%.

The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

Demographics of likely 2018 Democratic primary electorate

Gender

Men 45%
Women 55%

Age

18-29 year olds 7%
30-44 year olds 18%
45-54 year olds 21%
55-64 year olds 25%
Seniors 65+ 29%

Education

High School or Less 18%
Some College 34%
4-year College Graduates 23%
Post Graduate 21%

Ethnicity

White 67%
African American 23%
Hispanic 8%

Ideology

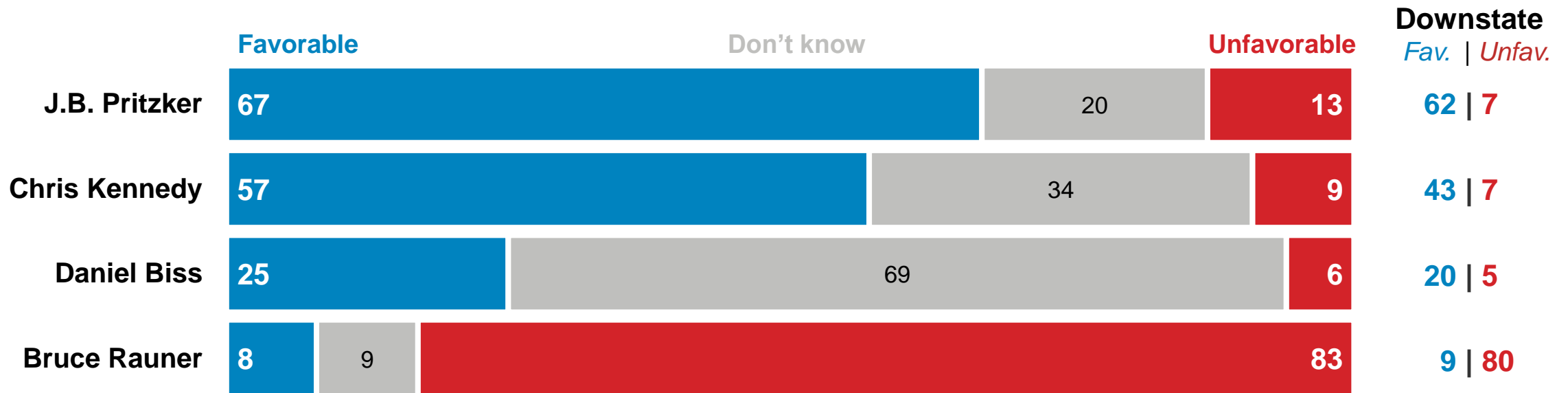
Very liberal 28%
Somewhat liberal 27%
Non-liberal 38%

Region

City of Chicago 35%
Rest of Cook County 23%
Collar Counties 15%
Downstate 26%

Pritzker has a solid starting point, as his favorability exceeds his Democratic competition among Democratic primary voters

Favorability Toward Candidates for Governor



Familiarity translates into a Pritzker lead, but the race remains fluid, with a large portion of the electorate considered “movable”

Vote for Democratic Nominee for Governor



Moveable Voters (39%)

Movable voters – likely voters who are either undecided (18%) or only lean toward their candidate of choice (21%) – make up **39% of the overall electorate and 40% of voters downstate**. The following groups are more likely to be movable than the overall electorate:

- Ages 18-44 (46% are movable)
- Residents of central Illinois (46%)
- Hispanics (43%)
- College-educated men (43%)
- Residents of Chicago’s collar counties (42%)
- Non-union members (42%)

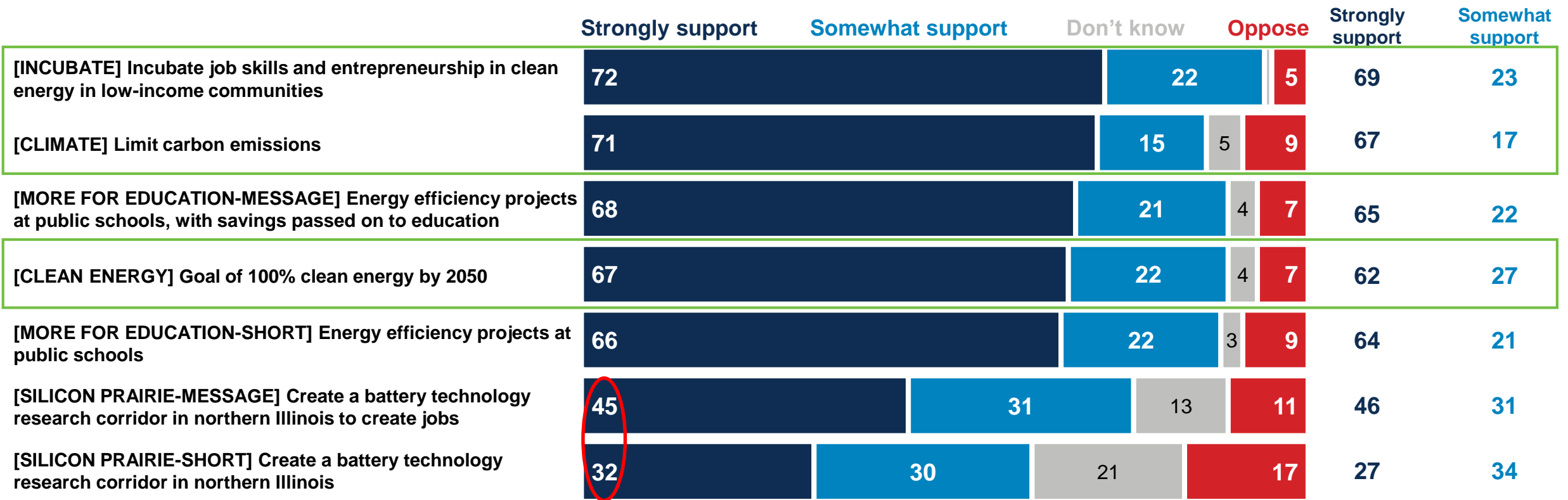


Gauging Overall Support for Policies

Voters strongly support most of the policies tested, though much less intensity for battery research corridor, particularly without messaging

Support for Policies

Movable Voters



All three tested policies hold up well after simulated debates, with incubate policy showing the most resilience and strongest vote impact

Resiliency and Impact of Select Clean Energy Policies – Overall

	Initial Vote			Informed Vote*			Net change in support	Impact on Vote for Candidate		
	Support	Oppose	Net	Support	Oppose	Net		More likely	Less likely	Net More
[Incubate] Using state funds to develop job skills and entrepreneurial support for people in low-income communities to work in the renewable energy sector	93	5	+88	91	5	+86	-2	59	2	+57
[Climate] Limiting the amount of carbon emissions that power plants can produce	86	9	+77	82	11	+71	-6	54	4	+50
[Clean Energy] Requiring electric utilities to increase their use of energy sources, like wind and solar, so Illinois can get 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by the year 2050	89	7	+82	66	22	+44	-38*	53	5	+48



*Participants were asked whether Illinois should require electric utilities to get 100% of power from renewable sources by year 2050 OR stay with current requirement and get 25% of their power from renewable sources by year 2030 in informed vote on “Clean Energy” policy; on other policies, participants were re-asked if they supported or opposed the policy.

The results tell a similar story among voters who are movable on the gubernatorial ballot

Resiliency and Impact of Select Clean Energy Policies – Movable Voters

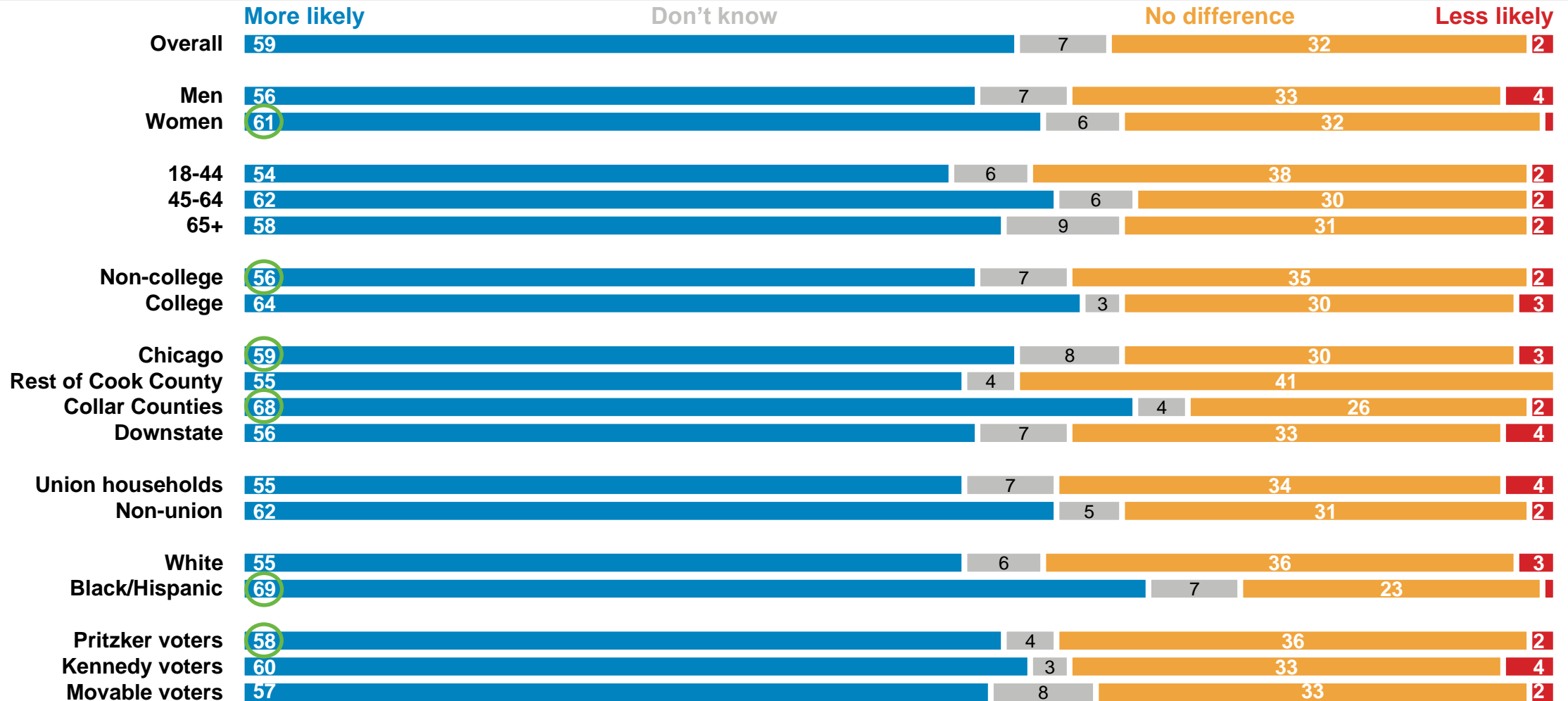
	Initial Vote			Informed Vote*			Net change in support	Impact on Vote for Candidate		
	Support	Oppose	Net	Support	Oppose	Net		More likely	Less likely	Net More
[Incubate] Using state funds to develop job skills and entrepreneurial support for people in low-income communities to work in the renewable energy sector	92	6	+86	91	4	+87	+1	57	2	+55
[Climate] Limiting the amount of carbon emissions that power plants can produce	84	10	+74	78	9	+69	-5	55	1	+54
[Clean Energy] Requiring electric utilities to increase their use of energy sources, like wind and solar, so Illinois can get 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by the year 2050	89	6	+83	66	21	+45	-38*	52	3	+49



Measuring Impact on the Vote

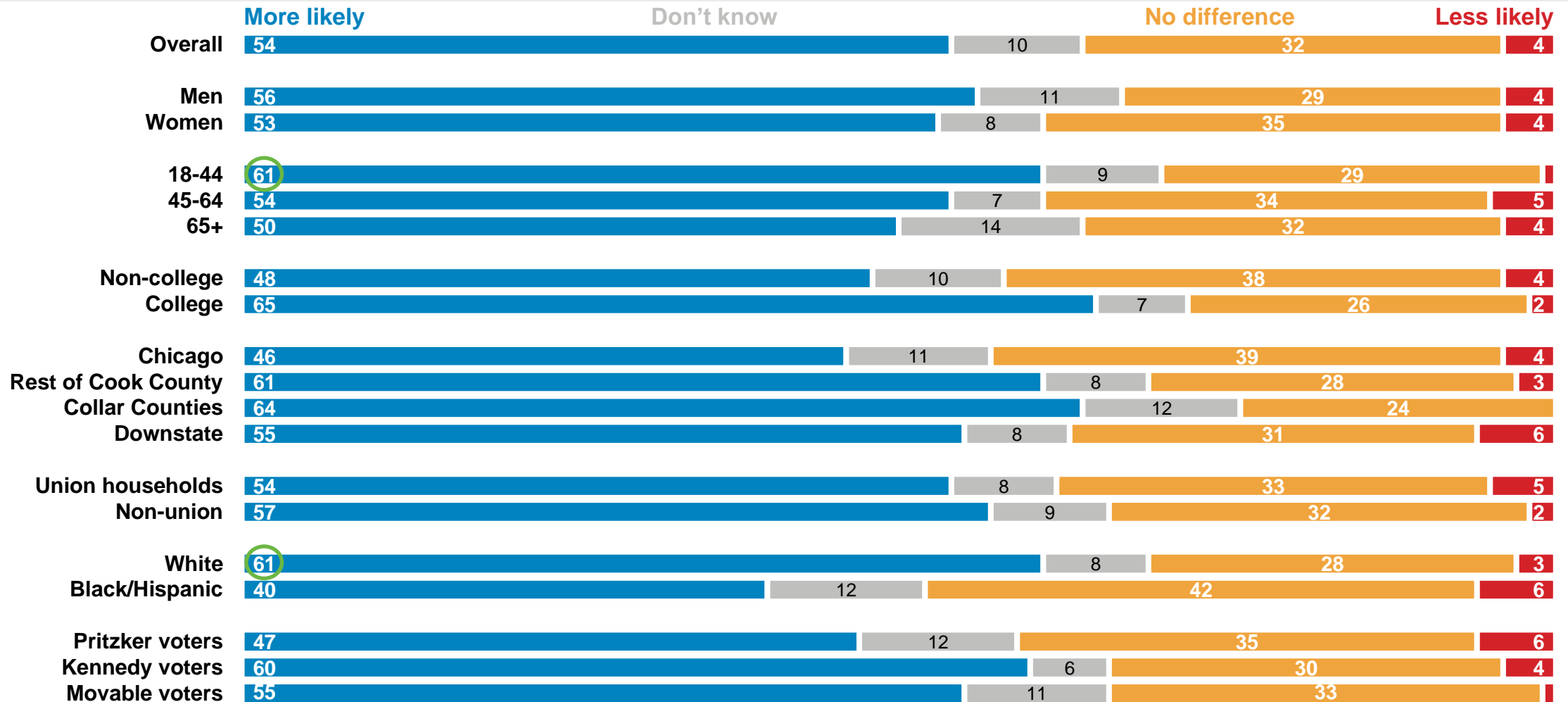
The incubate policy, which focuses on helping low-income groups, is stronger than the other two policies with women, non-whites, non-college

More or less likely to vote for elected official in next election who supports the 'Incubate' policy



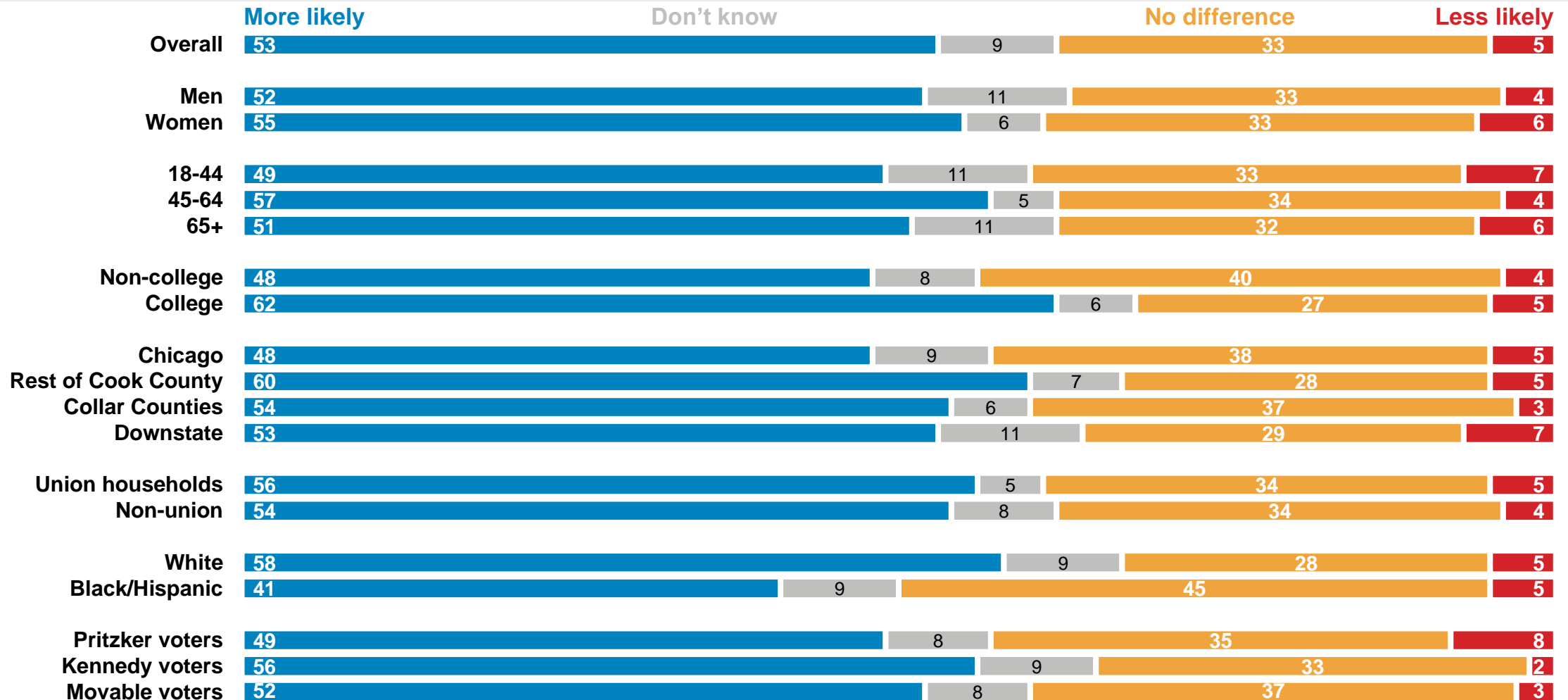
Younger and white voters are excited by carbon pollution limits; it has good, but relatively less, impact among non-whites than “incubate”

More or less likely to vote for elected official in next election who supports the ‘Climate’ policy



Vote impact of boosting RPS to 100% follows similar demographic trends as carbon pollution limits, though not quite as strong among youngest voters

More or less likely to vote for elected official in next election who supports the 'Clean Energy' policy



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- **The Democratic primary is still up for grabs.** Despite Pritzker's strong lead in the Democratic primary, nearly 40% of voters remain unsure of their vote, indicating Pritzker, Kennedy, and Biss could benefit from supporting these popular policies.
- **The whole range of policies tested are major winners that will benefit Democratic candidates.** Democratic primary voters strongly support these clean energy policies, regardless of their geographic or demographic background, and say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who does as well.
 - The lone exception may be the Silicon Prairie policy, which while popular and still likely to get some support, doesn't have as much reach as the other policies.
- **The three policies explored further are resilient in the face of opposition messaging, making them very powerful.** The incubate, clean energy, and climate policies are all winners among primary voters, even after voters hear opposition messaging. Candidates looking to improve their standing in the Democratic primary can feel comfortable supporting these policies.
 - The incubation policy that funds programs for job skills and entrepreneurship in clean energy in low-income communities is particularly effective given its near-universal popularity and intense support absent any debate, its resilience in the face of opposition messaging, and its effectiveness among constituencies critical to a primary win: African Americans, Hispanics, women, and undecided voters.

Appendix

Full Language of Policies Tested

Climate. Limiting the amount of carbon emissions that power plants can produce

Clean Energy. Requiring electric utilities to increase their use of energy sources, like wind and solar, so Illinois can get 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by the year 2050

Incubate. Using state funds to develop job skills and entrepreneurial support for people in low-income communities to work in the renewable energy sector

More for education – short. Using state capital funds for solar, wind, and energy efficiency projects at local public schools

More for education – message. Using state capital funds for solar, wind, and energy efficiency projects at local public schools so they can invest the energy savings into improving learning

Silicon Prairie – short. Using state funds to create a research corridor for battery technology centered around Argonne National Laboratory in Northern Illinois

Silicon Prairie – message. Using state funds to create a research corridor for battery technology centered around Argonne National Laboratory in Northern Illinois, to create thousands of high-paying jobs

Simulated Debate – Incubate

Supporters say that by helping people in every part of Illinois develop the skills to start a business or work in the renewable energy economy, we can revitalize hard-hit communities by creating good jobs while also improving our environment and lowering energy bills.

Opponents say this policy is another example of government picking winners and losers. If these jobs are viable, then the free market should be responsible for their growth and we shouldn't be wasting our tax dollars.

Simulated Debate – Climate

Supporters say that by placing hard limits on carbon pollution from power plants, Illinois will dramatically reduce toxic air and water pollution, lead to lower energy costs for Illinois families, spur thousands of jobs building new renewable energy in wind and solar power, and improve the environment for future generations.

Opponents say this policy would force many power plants to close, killing thousands of good, union jobs and decimating whole communities. And by forcing us to phase out less-expensive energy sources, this would amount to a massive new energy tax, driving up electricity bills for Illinois families.

Simulated Debate – Clean Energy

Supporters say transitioning to renewable energy will create thousands of high-paying jobs for all kinds of people, from recent high school graduates to advanced engineers. This transition will dramatically reduce the toxic air and water pollution that comes from burning dirty fuel like coal, and save Illinois families thousands of dollars on their electricity bills.

Opponents say this policy is a massive hidden energy tax that would raise electricity bills for Illinois families by hundreds of dollars a year. Just last year the state passed a sensible law to require utilities to get 25% of their electricity from renewable sources. We should let that law have a chance to work before passing a costly - and unrealistic - new policy.

Thank You

New York

215 Park Avenue South
15th Floor
New York, NY 10003

Washington, DC

1001 G Street NW
6th Floor East
Washington, DC 20001

Hartford

185 Asylum Street
16th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

Chicago

222 W. Ontario Street
Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60654

Denver

1120 Lincoln Street
Suite 905
Denver, CO 80203

