



Center for Western Priorities: Winning the West: Public Attitudes on Public Lands, Recreation & Energy

July 2022

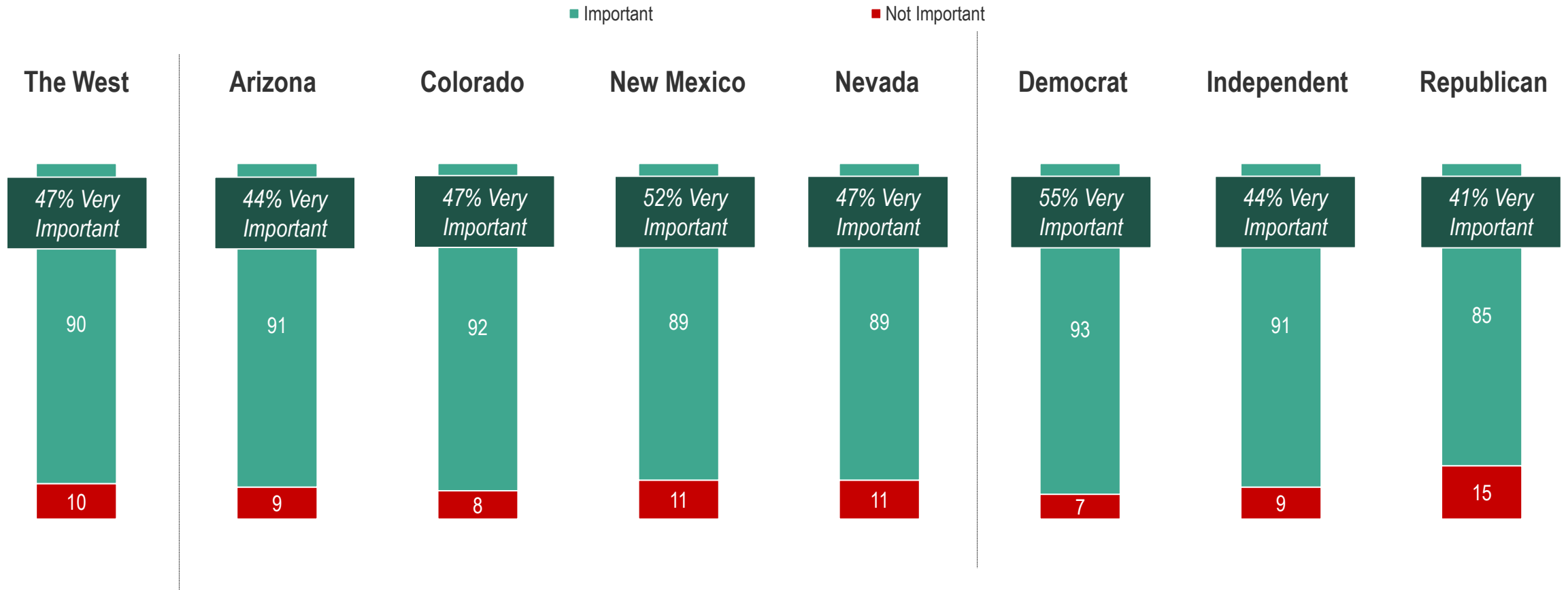
Methodology

- ✓ Benenson Strategy Group conducted 2,011 interviews with 2022 likely voters in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada from May 19 – 27, 2022. Interviews were conducted online. The sample was weighted to ensure it was proportionately representative of voters in each state.
 - The margin of error for the entire sample is $\pm 2.19\%$. It is higher among subgroups.
 - Due to rounding, displayed answer choices may not always add up to 100%.

- ✓ This deck refers to several groups throughout:
 - The West: Likely 2022 voters across all 4 states who voted in 2018, or voted in both 2016 and 2020, or are new registrants who say they will vote in 2022.
 - Outdoor Voters (OV): Likely 2022 voters living in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada who say conservation issues are important to how they plan to vote in November 2022, who participate in outdoor activities, visit public lands/the outdoors frequently, and are ticket splitters.

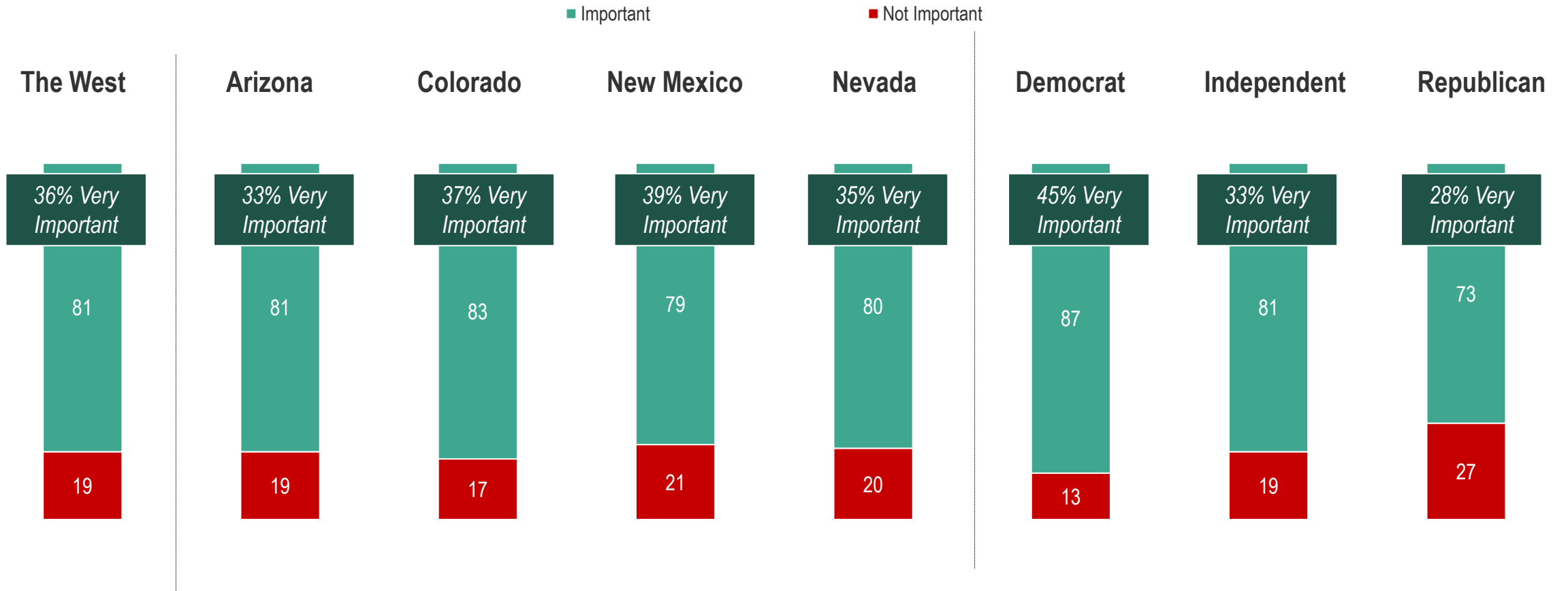
Conservation issues are overwhelmingly important to Western Voters across the spectrum...

Public lands, parks, and wildlife issues importance



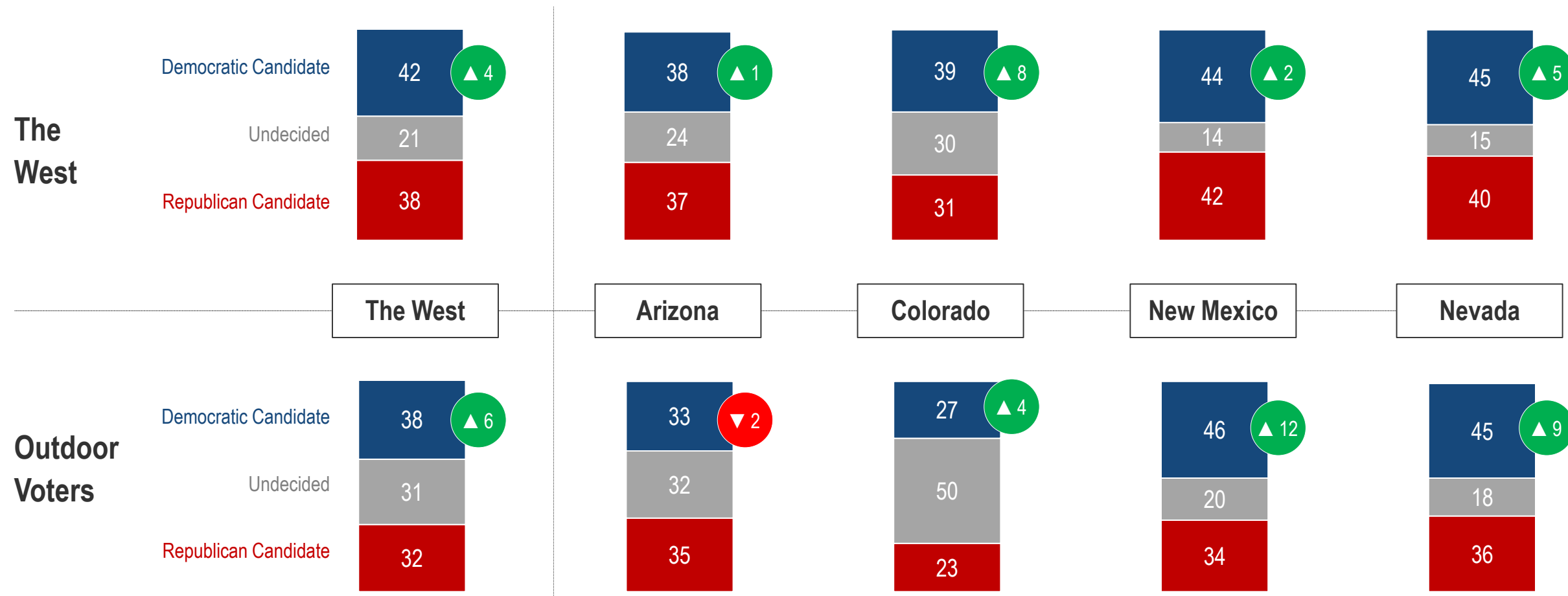
...And will play a hugely influential role in how they choose to cast their ballots this November

Public lands, parks, and wildlife issues importance to midterm vote choice



Dems have a slight lead on generic ballots across the West, but with 1 in 3 Outdoor Voters up-for-grabs, candidates have substantial room to grow support

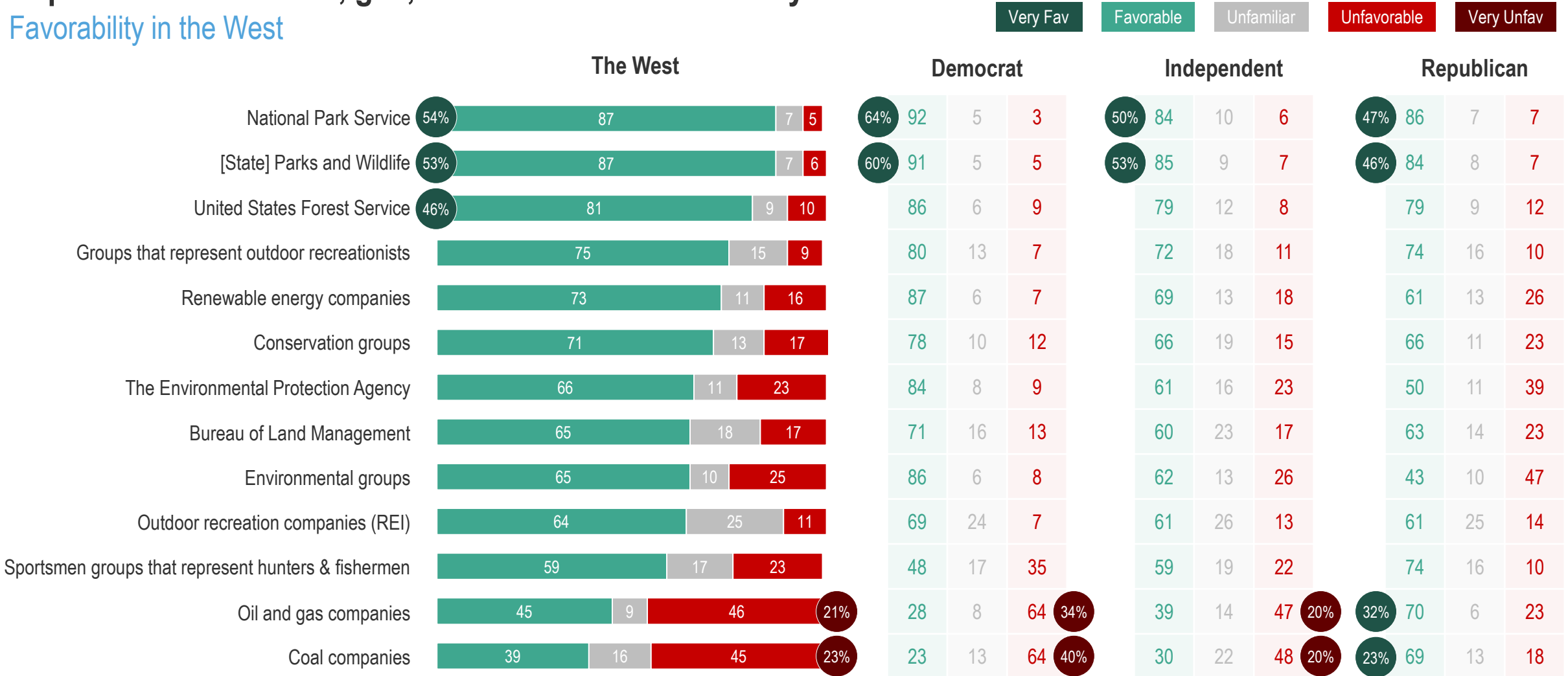
Generic Congressional



Q1. As you may or may not know, in November 2022 there will be an election for U.S. Congress in your district. If the election for Congress were held tomorrow, which of the following would you vote for?

Parks, wildlife organizations, and even renewable energy have very broad and bipartisan appeal, while only Republicans look at oil, gas, and coal sectors favorably

Favorability in the West



Q3. Now you will read the names of a few organizations or groups. For each, please indicate if you are favorable or unfavorable to them.

Western Voters don't think DC is focused enough on key environmental issues affecting their communities and way of life

Issues that impact the West



The issues that impact Western states that politicians in DC don't understand or don't pay enough attention to...

Global warming

Gun control Reducing gun violence

Climate change

Poverty and homelessness

Preserving open spaces and parks

Affordable and accessible healthcare

Wildfires Fire mitigation

High cost of gas and electricity

Water shortages Drought

Inflation Cost of living

Land use, land management
Forestry services, forestry management

Production of gas and oil

Economy

Energy and fuel issues

Gas and oil independence



Immigration and border security

- Mentioned by Democrats
- Mentioned by Democrats and Independents
- Mentioned by Democrats, Independents, and Republicans
- Mentioned by Republicans and Independents
- Mentioned by Republicans

**Note: Size of words corresponds to frequency of times mentioned*

Western Voters are asking leaders to take bold actions to meet their environmental priorities and concerns

Conservation and environmental statement agreement



There's even some bipartisan agreement on conservation priorities, providing guidance of how to reach across the aisle particularly on addressing droughts and wildfires

Conservation and environmental statement agreement

% Strongly Agree / Total Agree	% Strongly Agree / Total Agree		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Leaders need to do more to plan for more severe droughts and wildfires	72/96	56/89	52/88
The effects of climate change are fundamentally changing life in the West	73/94	48/81	26/54
Leaders need to do more to support the clean energy industries in our state	67/94	42/76	24/61
States in the West need better options for clean energy to suit our unique climate and landscapes	60/93	40/82	28/67
Leaders aren't doing enough to reverse the effects of climate change	62/89	38/70	24/49
America's public lands are one thing that brings us all together as Americans	42/86	35/83	35/81
Leaders need to do more to address overcrowding and necessary maintenance in our national parks and on public lands	45/88	35/82	32/78
Leaders need to do more to protect public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation	32/79	29/81	40/83
The current administration hasn't done enough to create and protect new public lands and national monuments	23/59	28/67	38/74
There's too much federal regulation over public lands	16/41	20/57	39/74

Officials need to address the effects of climate change on our public lands and check the corporations who make profits off the land but aren't paying for the damages they cause

Conservation Concerns



Q13. Now you are going to see a list of issues relating to conservation and the outdoors. For each one, indicate how much it makes you feel concerned on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means it doesn't concern you at all, and 7 means it concerns you a great deal.

And these concerns are key across the board

Top Five Conservation Concerns by Key Audiences

Showing 7/7 – Extremely concerned

	The West	Outdoor Voter	Arizona	Colorado	New Mexico	Nevada	Dem	Ind	Rep
The effects of climate change, like severe droughts and wildfires, on our public lands	45	49	41	44	47	45	66	41	23
Oil and mining companies, huge foreign-owned corporations, and developers making record profits off America's land, but not paying their fair share for the damage they do to it	44	46	41	47	46	44	61	40	28
The government isn't doing enough to explore domestic energy sources, leaving us dependent on oil from other countries	43	45	46	39	48	39	39	39	52
Oil and mining companies, huge foreign-owned corporations, and developers making record profits off America's land, while gouging customers with record prices	42	47	41	37	50	40	55	42	26
Pollution is threatening our rivers, lakes, and streams	40	43	40	38	44	38	57	36	24

Q13. Now you are going to see a list of issues relating to conservation and the outdoors. For each one, indicate how much it makes you feel concerned on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means it doesn't concern you at all, and 7 means it concerns you a great deal.

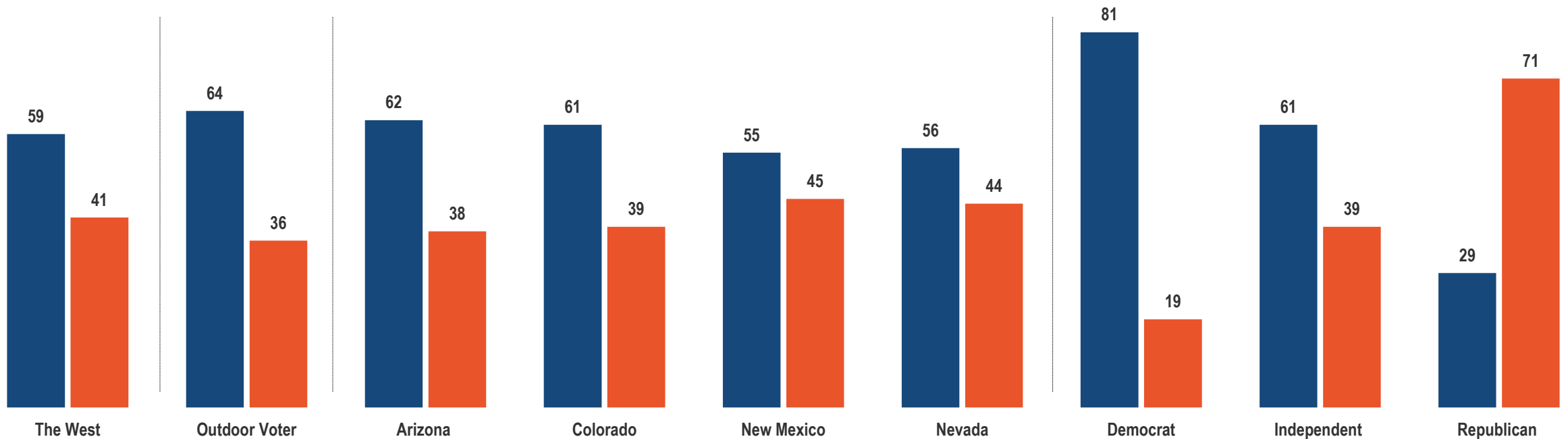
And most support meeting our needs while protecting our lands – not drilling wherever, whenever

Boom and Bust vs. Gas price relief

Which do you agree with more:

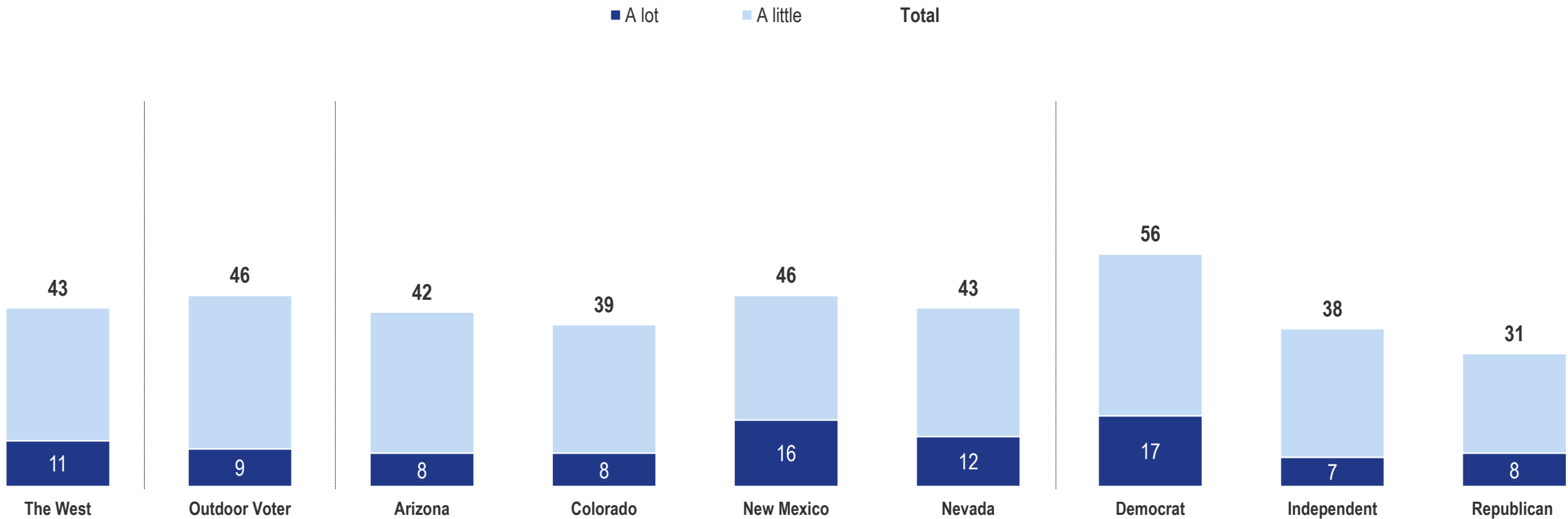
If the current times have taught us anything, it's that we need to prioritize renewable resources — like wind and solar power — so we can meet our energy needs without dangerous, boom-and-bust sources, while still protecting our public lands, forests, mountains, and deserts.

With the cost of oil skyrocketing, we need to use all available options to give us some relief on energy prices, including increasing oil and gas drilling wherever oil is available, including on public lands.



Fewer than half have heard much about the President's conservation agenda, including environmentally tapped-in and invested Outdoor Voters

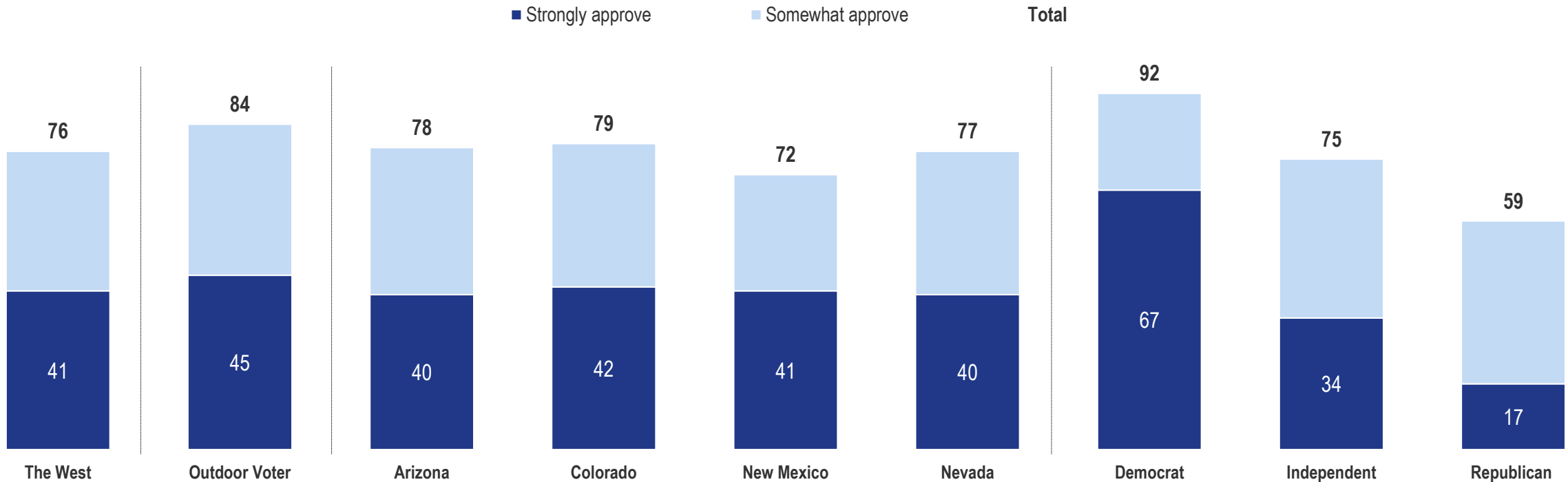
How much would you say you've heard about President Biden and his administration's efforts to protect and conserve public lands, parks, and wildlife since he took office?



A majority of voters, including Republicans, approve of President Biden's America the Beautiful initiative, across all Western states and across the political spectrum

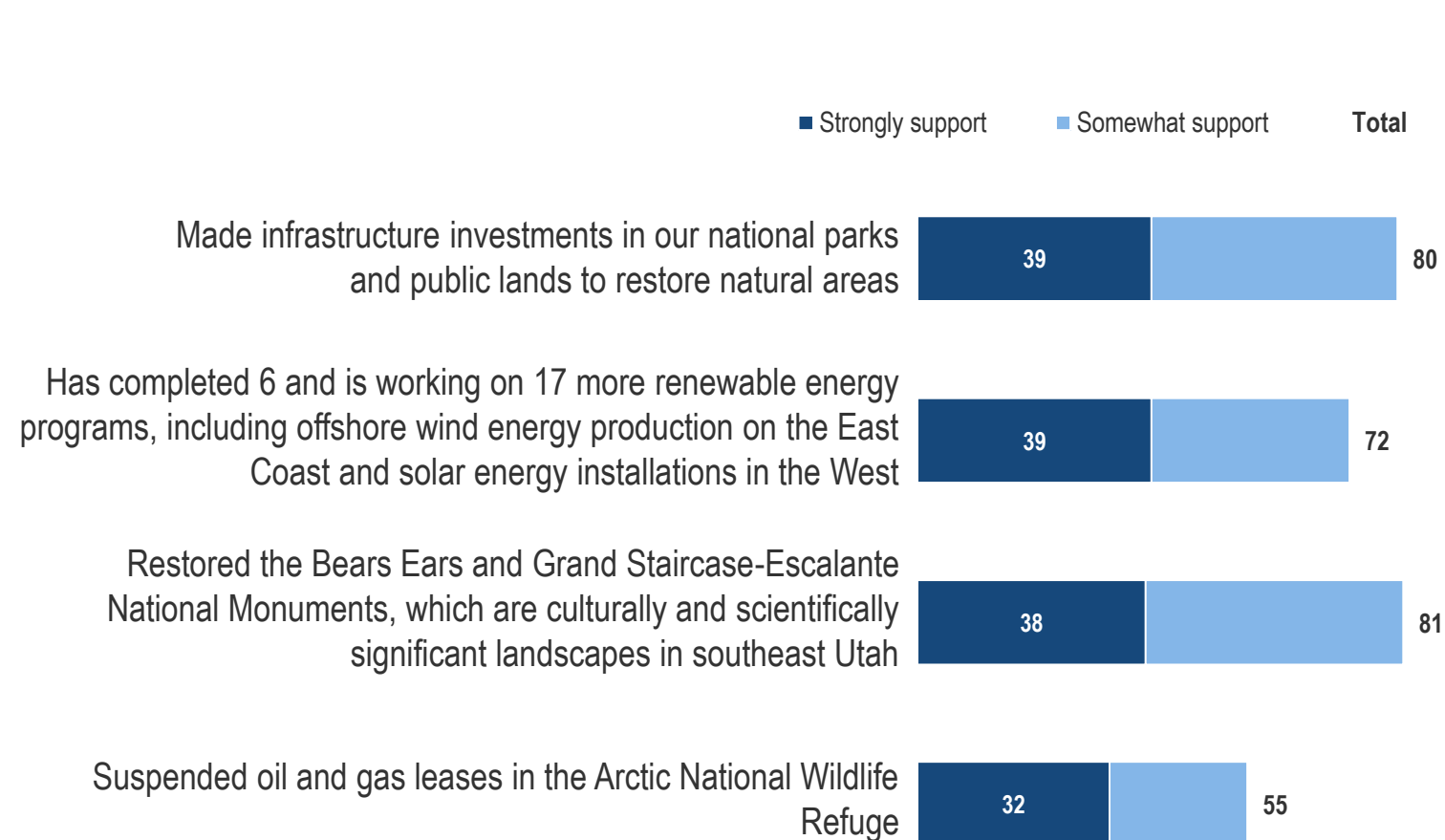
America the Beautiful Approval

Last year, President Biden signed an executive order calling for a plan to meet the 30x30 goal that became known as the America the Beautiful initiative. This initiative is working to conserve at least 30 percent of lands and waters across the United States. Right now, only 12% of land and 25% of freshwater and oceans are under permanently protected status.



Many of the Biden administration's environmental accomplishments are also widely supported

Support for Biden Environmental Accomplishments



% Strongly Support / Total Support

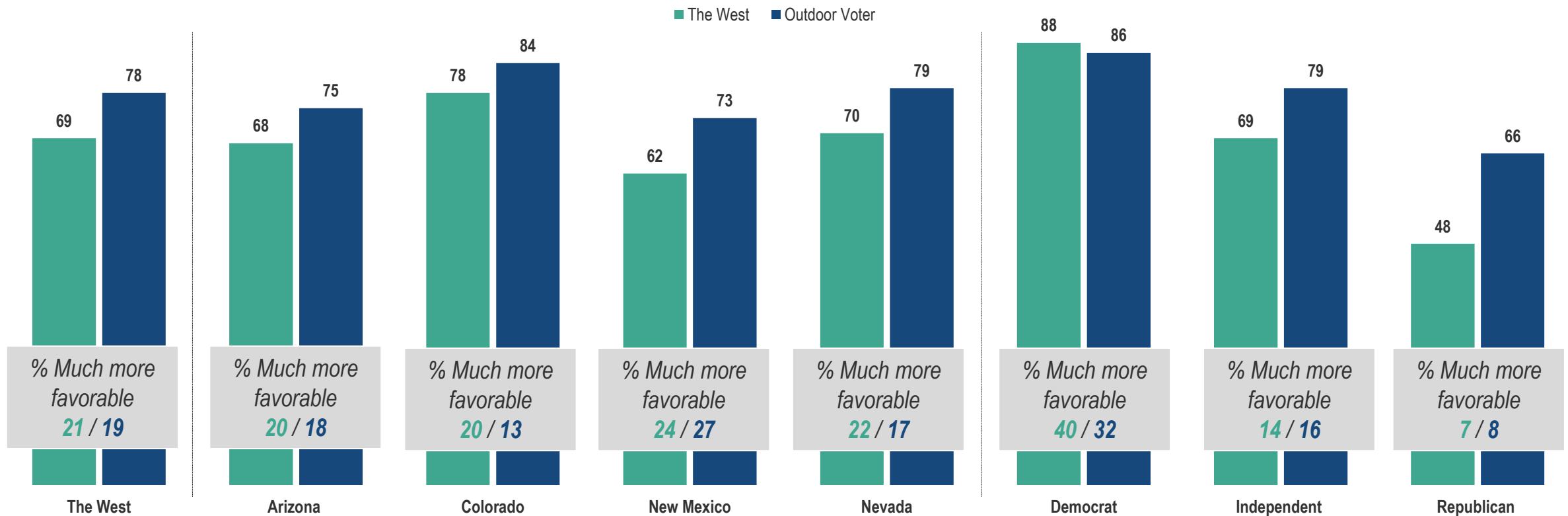
Outdoor Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep
43/84	64/91	31/78	18/69
40/80	67/90	30/70	15/52
40/86	60/91	32/79	17/70
33/60	54/81	28/54	10/25

Q28. Here are a few other things the Biden administration has done. For each, please indicate whether you support or oppose this policy.

The administration should focus more on – and communicate its efforts – to protect public lands: 7 in 10 voters would be more favorable

Biden Conservation Efforts Impact on Favorability: % More Favorable

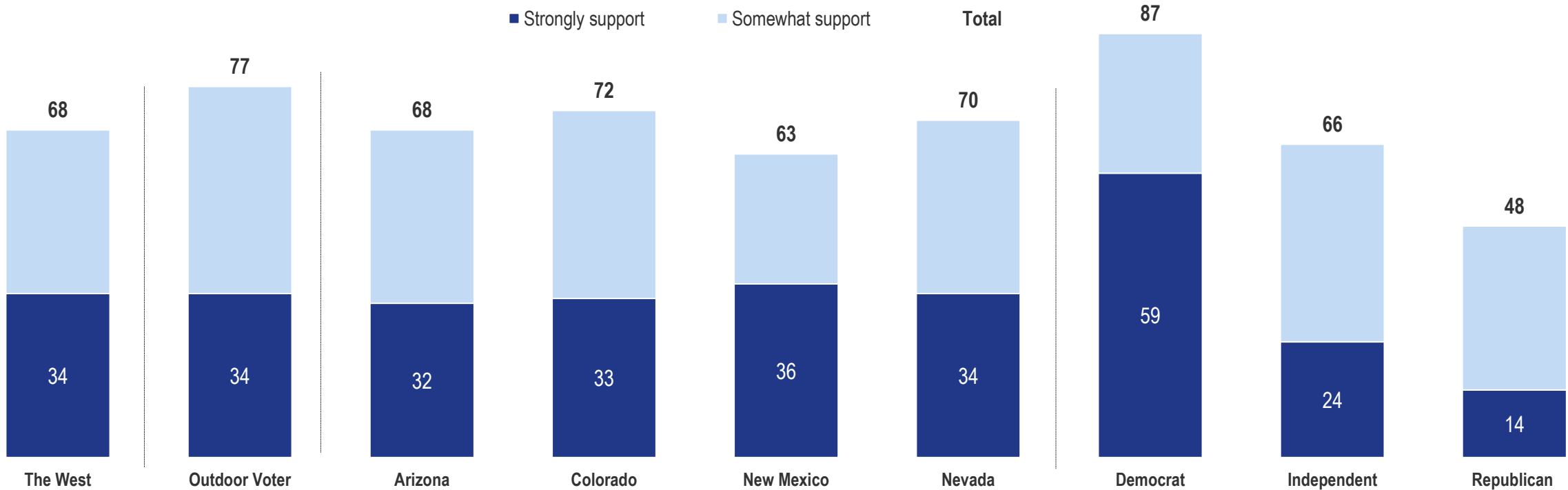
If President Biden and his administration did more to focus efforts to protect and conserve public lands, parks, and wildlife would that make you more or less favorable to them?



And there's strong support from voters – including nearly half of all Republicans – for the President to use his executive authority to designate national monuments

Executive Authority and Conservation

Would you support or oppose the President using executive authority to protect land because of its cultural and historical significance or unique, natural value by designating a national monument, with the input and/or recommendation of the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management, and state and local input and public support?



Making environmental issues front and center this election season can also help to drive turnout among Western Voters

Issue Motivation on Likelihood to Vote

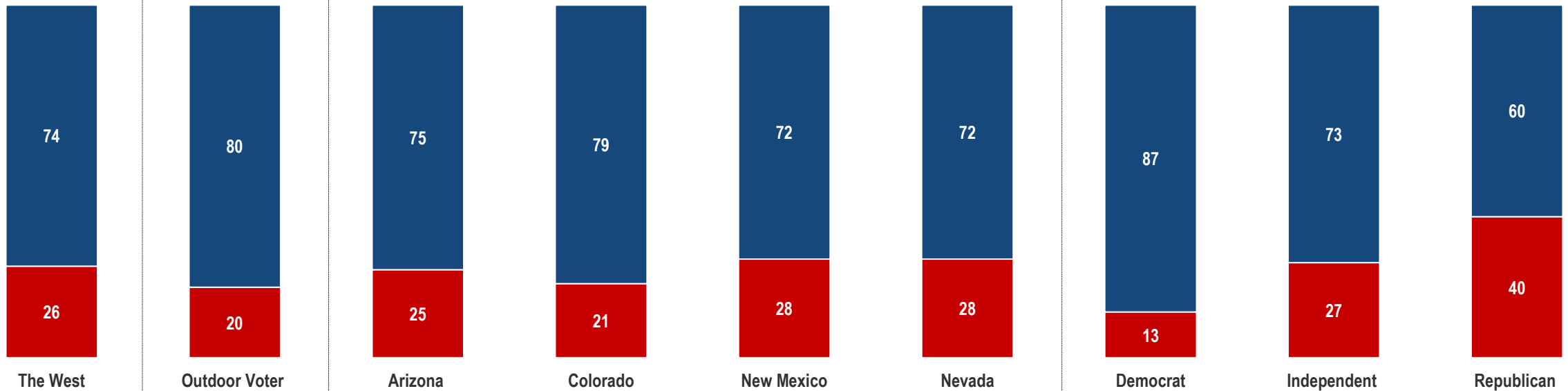
% Much More Likely / Total more likely to vote in November if issue was being debated in your area...	% Much More Likely / Total More Likely				
	The West	Outdoor Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep
Innovative solutions to address droughts, wildfires and other extreme weather the West faces	55/90	58/90	67/92	52/90	43/87
Wildfire mitigation and preparedness	50/89	54/91	57/92	48/87	43/86
An effort to create parks and protected public lands for the next generation	45/87	52/91	54/91	43/85	37/83
How climate change is impacting the West	48/80	53/86	63/92	48/82	30/63
An effort to get rid of public lands, encourage more development, and make more private property available	40/65	44/67	44/66	44/70	31/60

Western Voters agree: The Western way of life should be about protecting, not profiting off public lands

Which of the following do you agree with most:

The Western way of life should be about protecting public lands, water, and wildlife, making the outdoors available and accessible for all to respectfully share for hunting, fishing and recreation, and pass down to future generations.

The Western way of life should be about using our public lands to profit and drive economic growth by opening them up for energy exploration, investment, and development.



Western Voters agree: There's strong agreement we need to protect lands and have strong limits and regulation before drilling

Which of the following do you agree with most:

Oil and gas development on public land should be only allowed with strict limitations and regulations to ensure that our land, wildlife, water, and public safety are protected first and foremost.

Oil and gas development should be significantly expanded on public land to help the U.S. maintain energy independence.

