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# Michigan statewide voter opinion poll

Medicaid issues, April 7-8, 2013



Mackinac Center for Public Policy &  
The Liberty Foundation of America

# Background

## ● Methodology

- Statewide random sample of 507 active voters in Michigan
- Interviews conducted April 7-8, 2013
- Margin of error of  $\pm 4.4\%$  for 507 cases
- Typical interview was about 14 minutes long

## ● HRC Contributors

- Dr. David B. Hill, Director, Hill Research Consultants
- Dr. Stephen N. White, Assistant Director
- Randy Ellison, Senior Research Consultant
- Jason Nemeck, Project Manager
- David Benzion, Senior Research Analyst

## ● Sponsorship

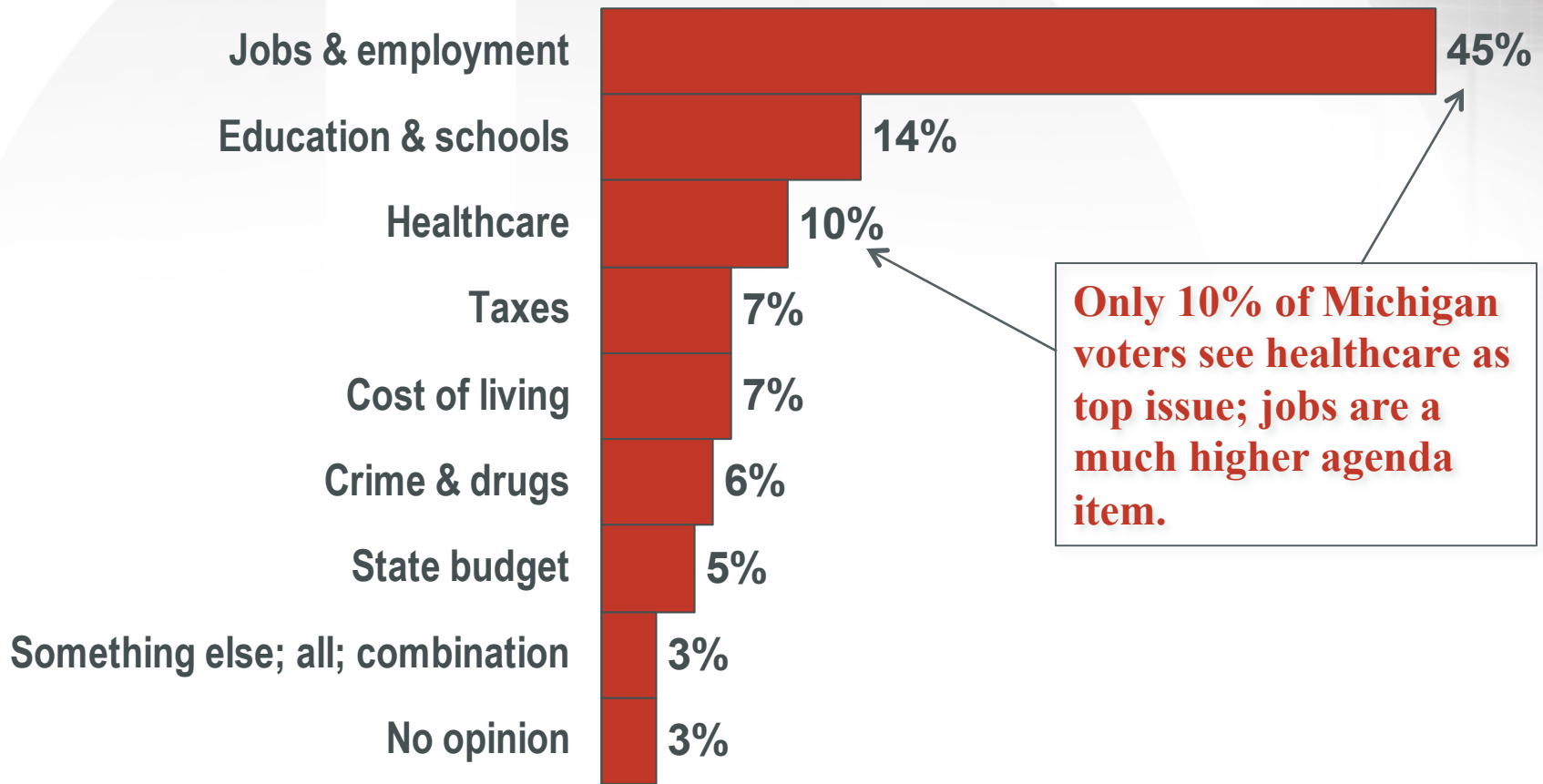
- Commissioned by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and The Liberty Foundation of America.

# Key findings and conclusions

## *A poll of active voters in Michigan*

- Michigan voters don't think there's a healthcare crisis in the state, so presumably they don't endorse sweeping changes in healthcare programs. Most are very satisfied with their own healthcare plans.
- Only 5% of voters are Medicaid recipients themselves, but 35% see Medicaid as “very important” to themselves and their families. A robust 79% of Michigan voters would enroll in Medicaid if they needed coverage and qualified, so the notion of adding more recipients like themselves to the Medicaid rolls is likely plausible.
- But 39% oppose expansion generally; and 40-44% oppose when given specific details of proposed expansion, including eligibility levels and numbers of new recipients; opinions about expansion split sharply along party lines, with about two-in-three Republican voters (64%-72%) opposed when told of proposed expansion details.
- Opposition to expansion is justified firstly by concerns about rushing to approve expansion when estimates for costs vary so widely, and by concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicaid system.

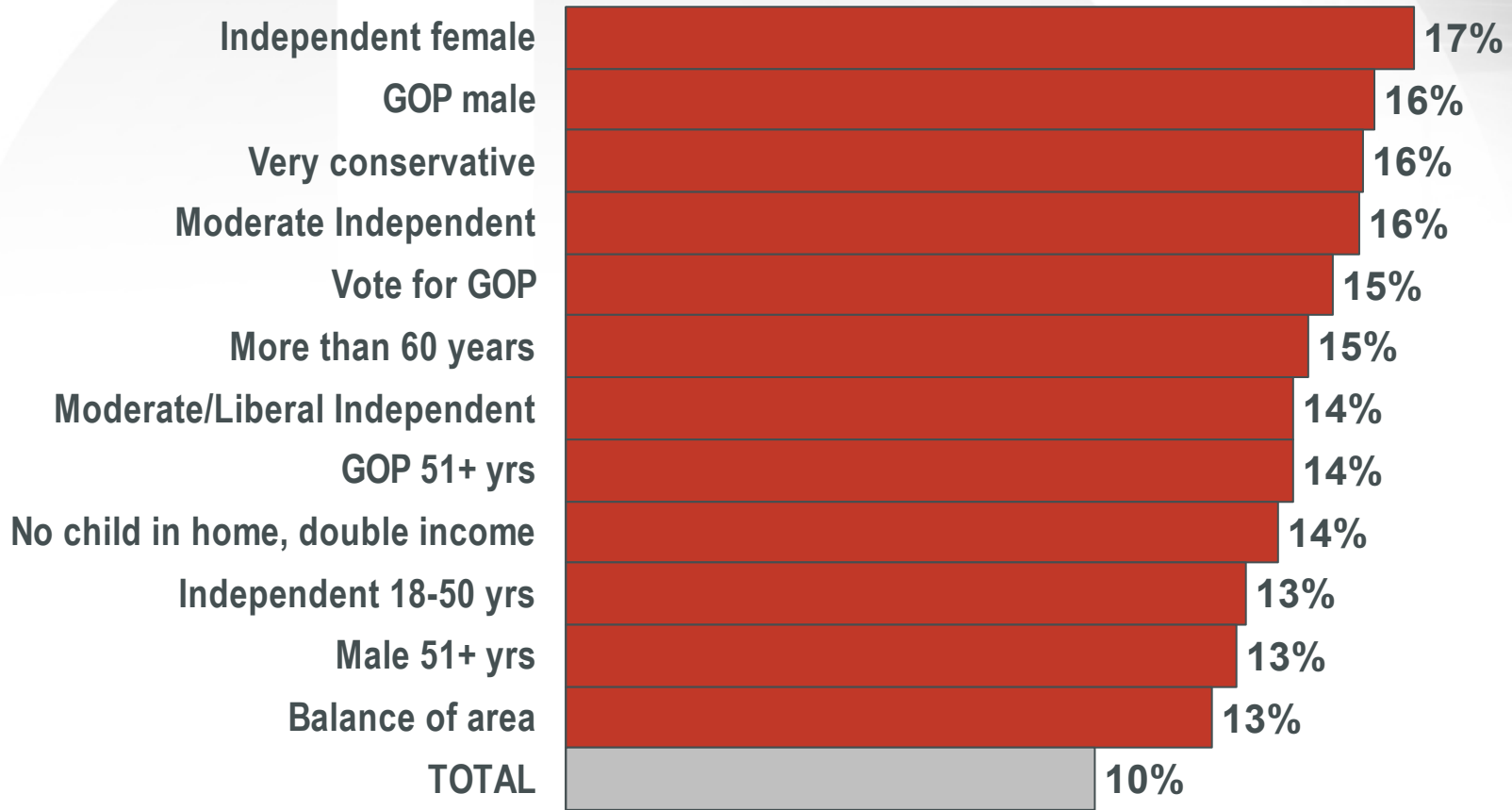
# Most important issue facing people in own part of Michigan today



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## profile of selected categories with the highest percentages of “healthcare”

No segment of the electorate ranks healthcare as its top priority; at best, as shown below, fewer than one-in-five rank healthcare their top agenda item; jobs hold the #1 spot across the board.



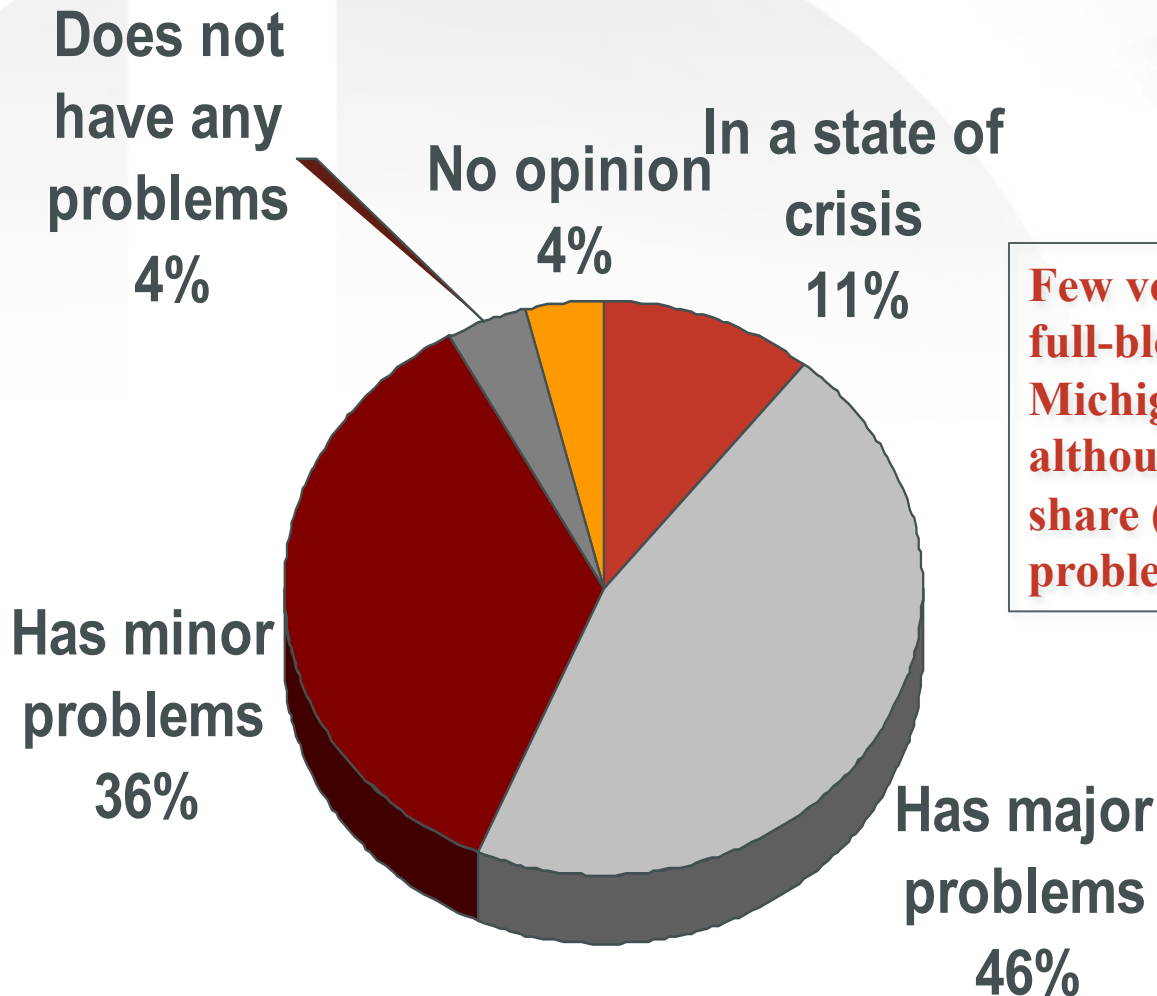
# Most important issue facing people in own part of Michigan today

profile of selected categories with the highest percentages of “jobs & employment”

An interesting mix of liberal Democrats and older and male Republicans see “jobs and employment” as their top issue.



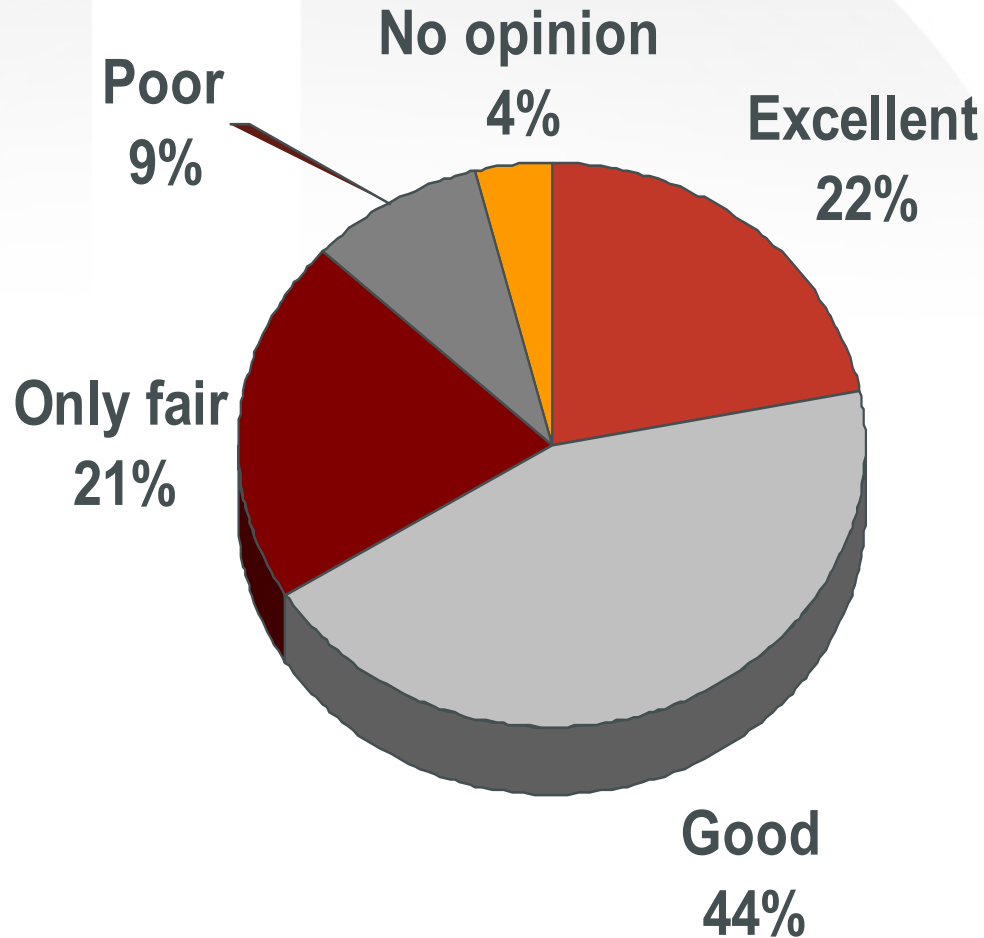
# Best describes Michigan's healthcare system today



**Few voters (11%) see a full-blown crisis in Michigan healthcare, although a significant share (46%) see major problems.**

*Note: percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

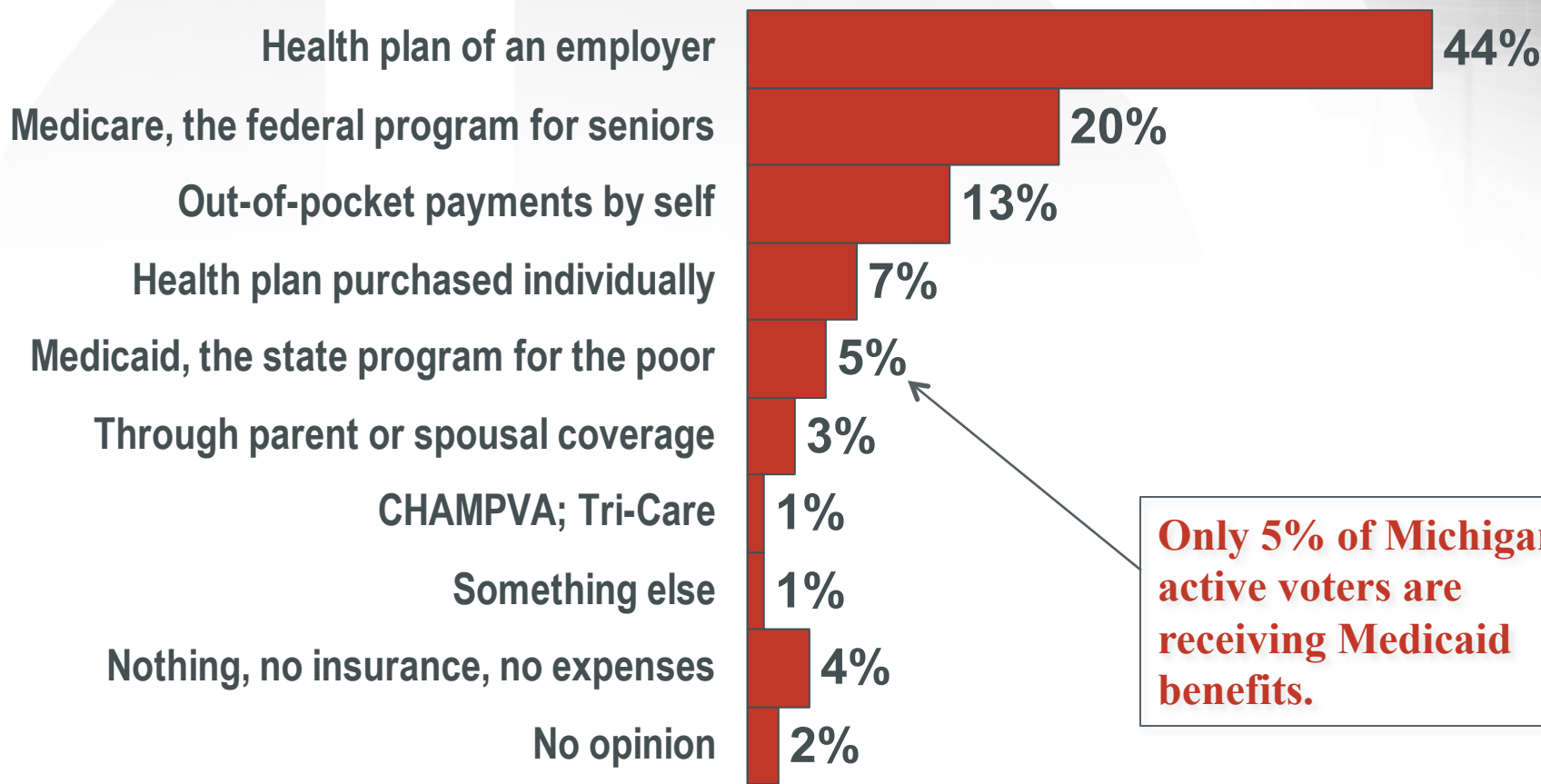
# Rating of own personal healthcare coverage



**Most Michigan voters are happy with their own healthcare coverage.**

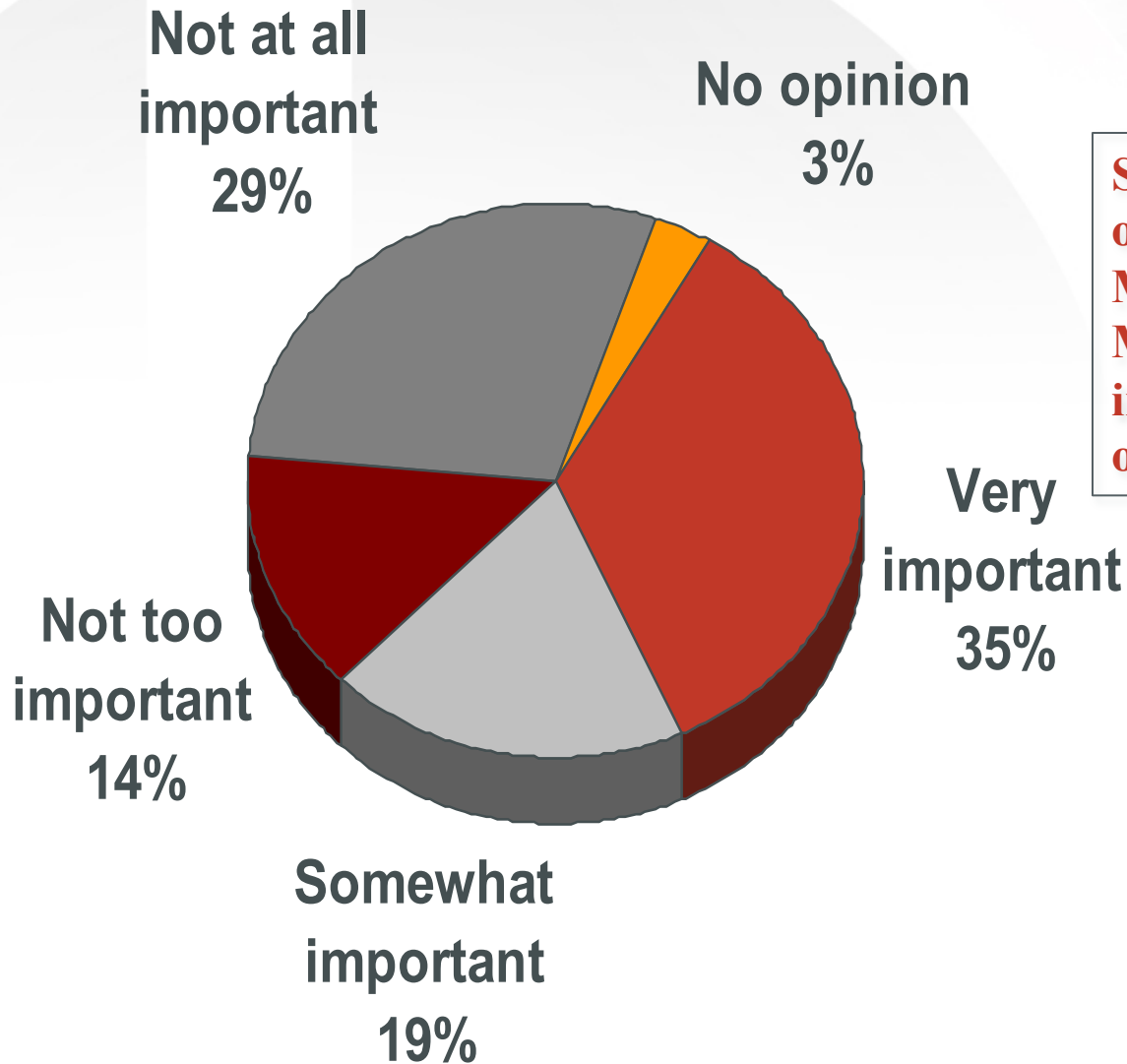


# Which pays for more of your own personal healthcare expenses?



**Only 5% of Michigan's active voters are receiving Medicaid benefits.**

# Importance of Medicaid program for you & your family

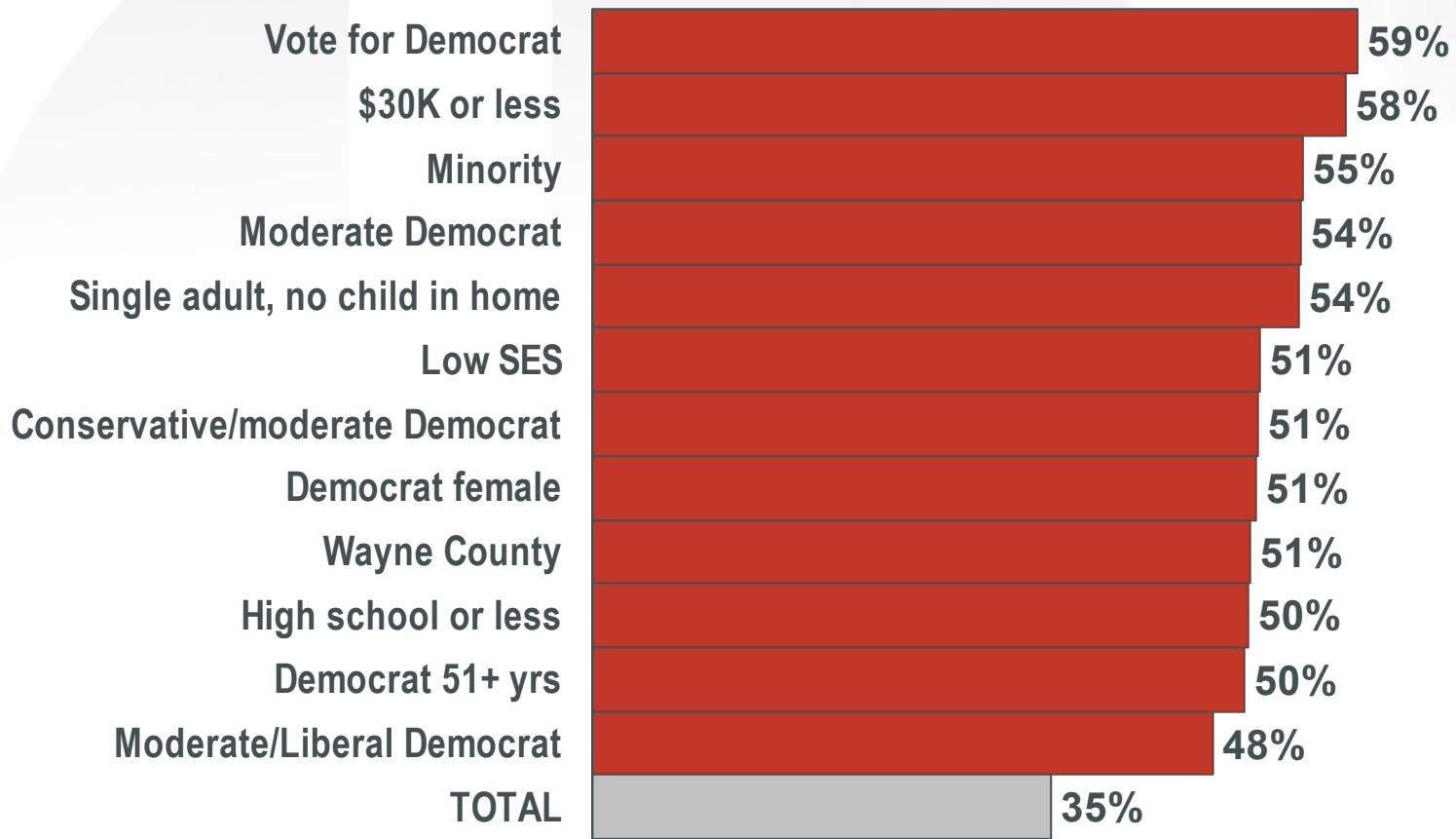


**Slightly more than one-third (35%) of Michigan voters see Medicaid as very important to their own families.**

# Importance of Medicaid program for you & your family

profile of selected categories with the highest percentages of “very important”

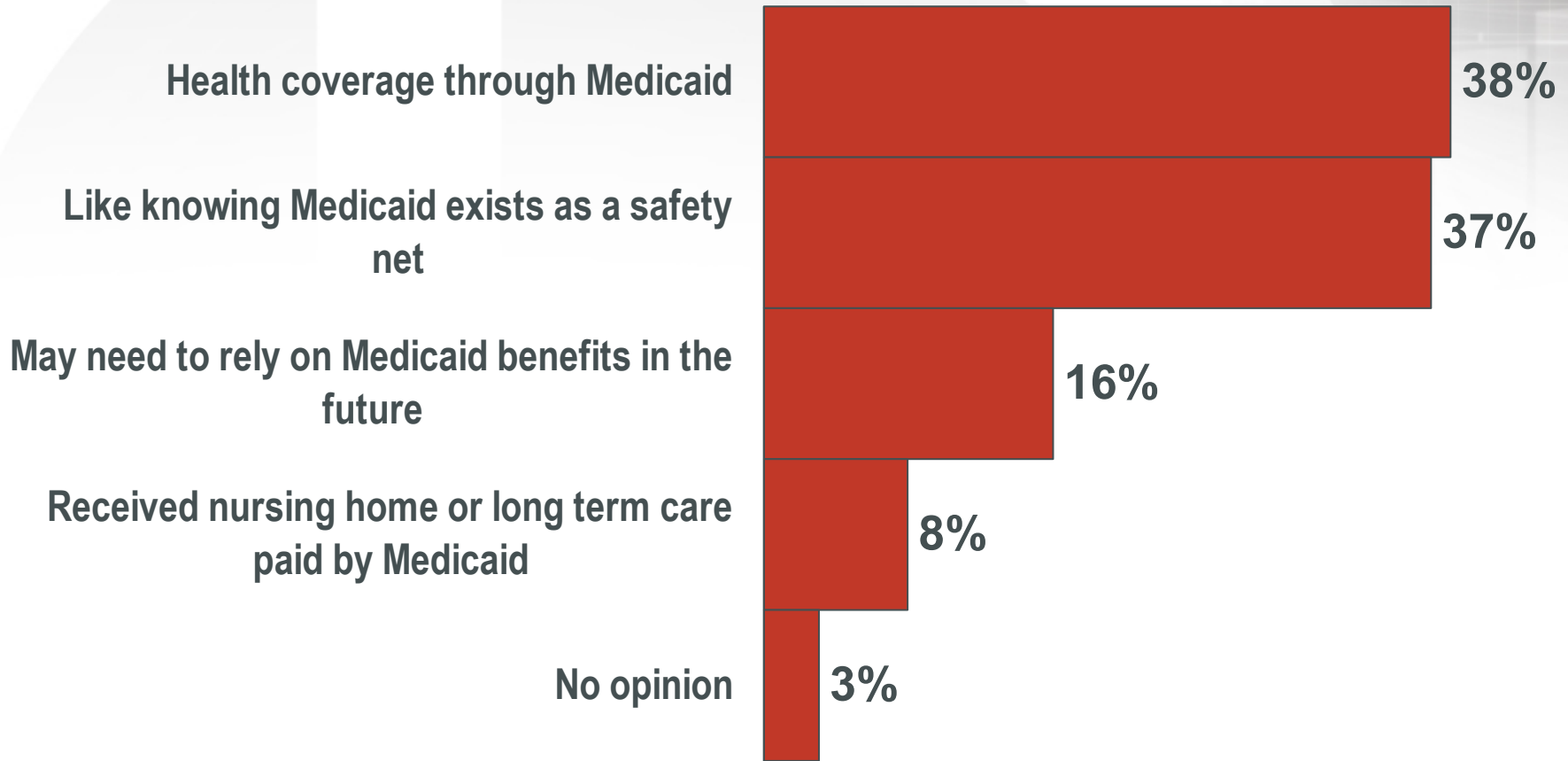
Large majorities of Democrats, minorities, and low socio-economic status voters describe Medicaid as being very important to their own families.



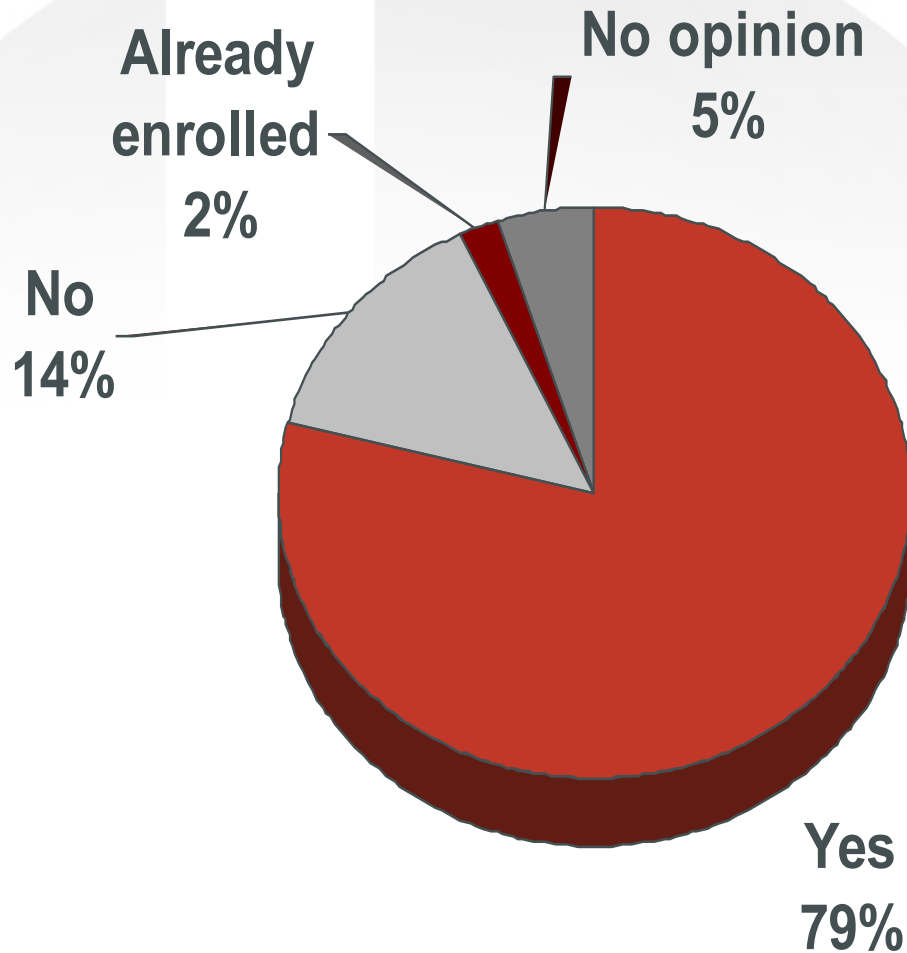
# Most important reason Medicaid is important

*(Subset of respondents who say Medicaid is very or somewhat important only)*

The perceived importance is driven by a combination of self-interest by current or potential users and philosophical assent to the notion of Medicaid as a safety-net.

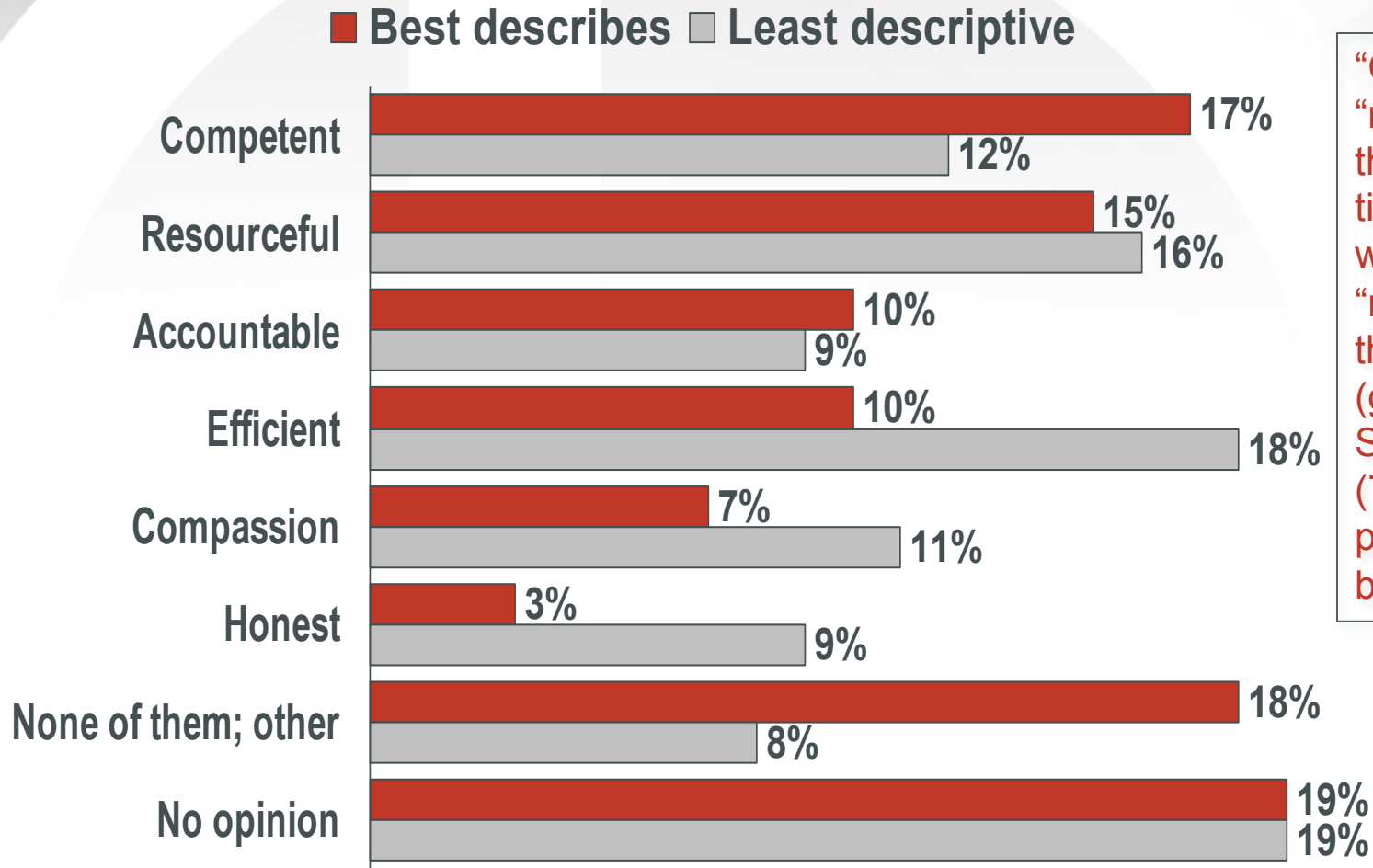


# Would enroll in Medicaid program if uninsured, needed healthcare & qualified



**Most all voters would enroll in Medicaid if need be.**

# Words that might describe Michigan's Medicaid program — most and least descriptive

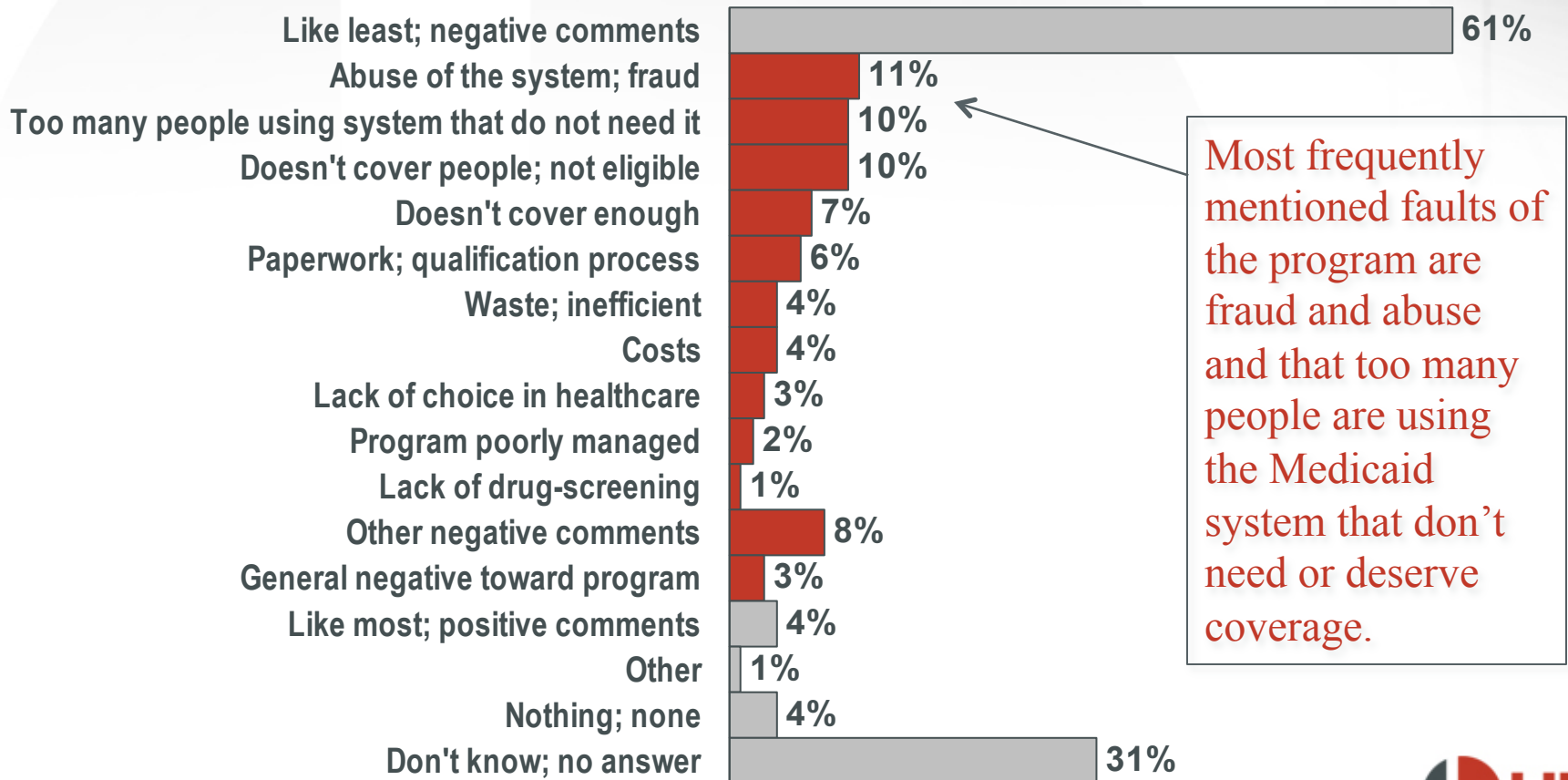


“Competent” and “resourceful” are the most descriptive words tested while “efficient” and “resourceful” are the least descriptive (gray bars at left). Surprisingly few (7%) see the program as defined by “compassion.”

# Like (most or) least about Michigan's Medicaid program?

## Open-ended, verbatim negative comments on the program

Aside from positive thoughts (31%\*) about the “safety net” aspect of Medicaid, negative comments (61% total) far outnumber positive ones when poll respondents were given the chance to say anything they chose to say about the program.



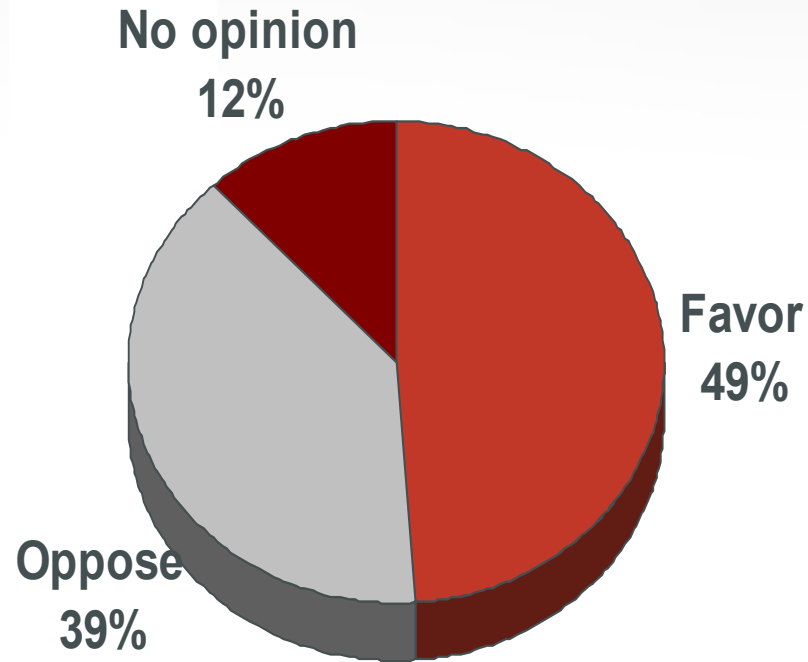
\* Multiple responses allowed so data will not total 100%

# Favor or Oppose?

Changing the rules for Michigan Medicaid to allow more people to qualify for coverage under Medicaid

**Opinions on expansion are polarized along partisan and ideological lines, with large majorities of Democrats and liberals favoring expansion while large majorities of Republicans and conservatives oppose it.**

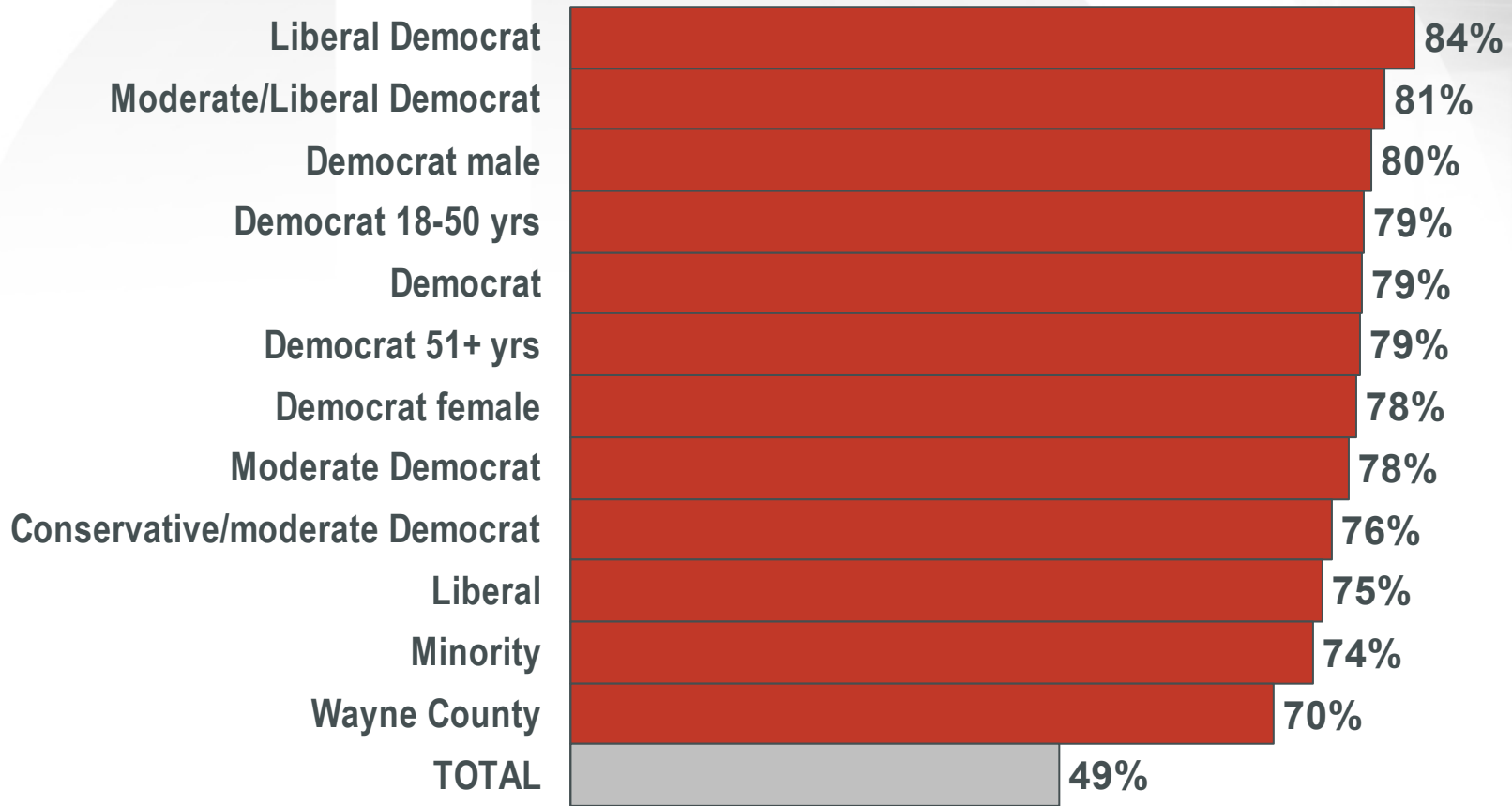
*(See two charts that follow on pages 17-18)*





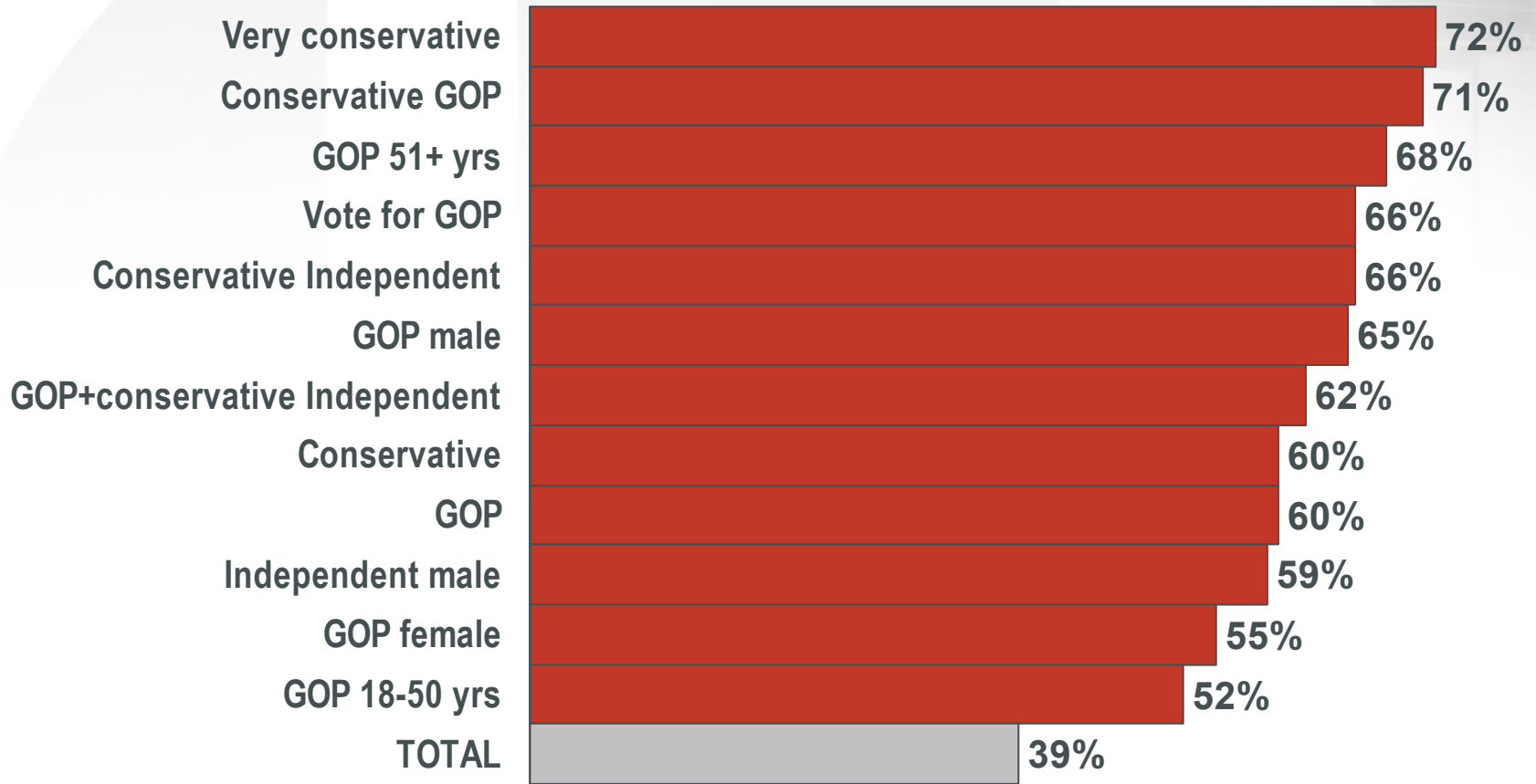
# Changing the rules for Michigan Medicaid to allow more people to qualify for coverage under Medicaid

profile of selected categories with the highest percentages of “favor”



# Changing the rules for Michigan Medicaid to allow more people to qualify for coverage under Medicaid

profile of selected categories with the highest percentages of “oppose”

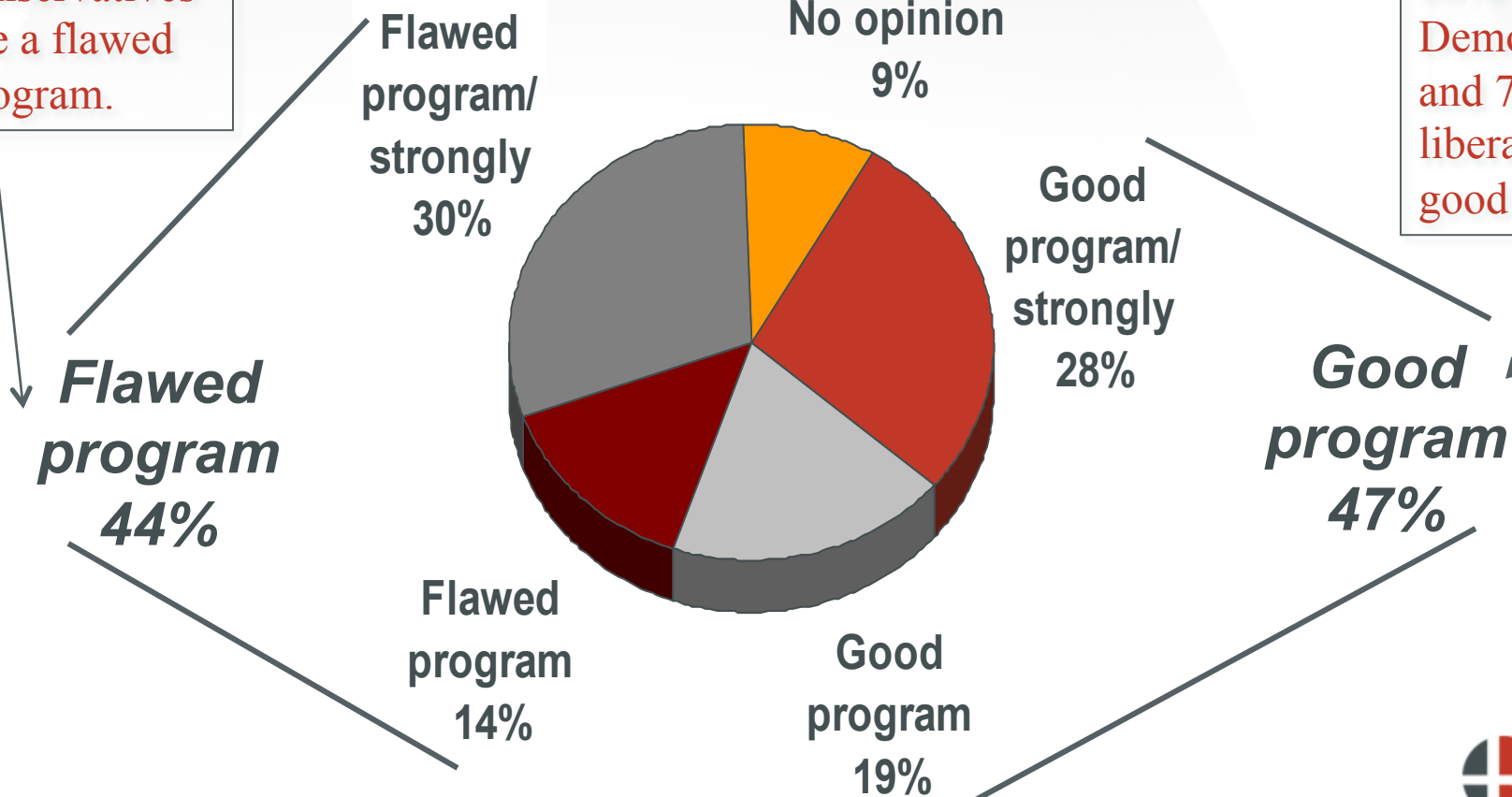


# Point of view closest to your own about Medicaid in Michigan?

*A good program that provides essential healthcare benefits to the deserving poor  
OR  
a flawed program that wastes a lot of money, has problems of fraud & abuse & is in severe need of reform*

59% of GOP and 57% of conservatives see a flawed program.

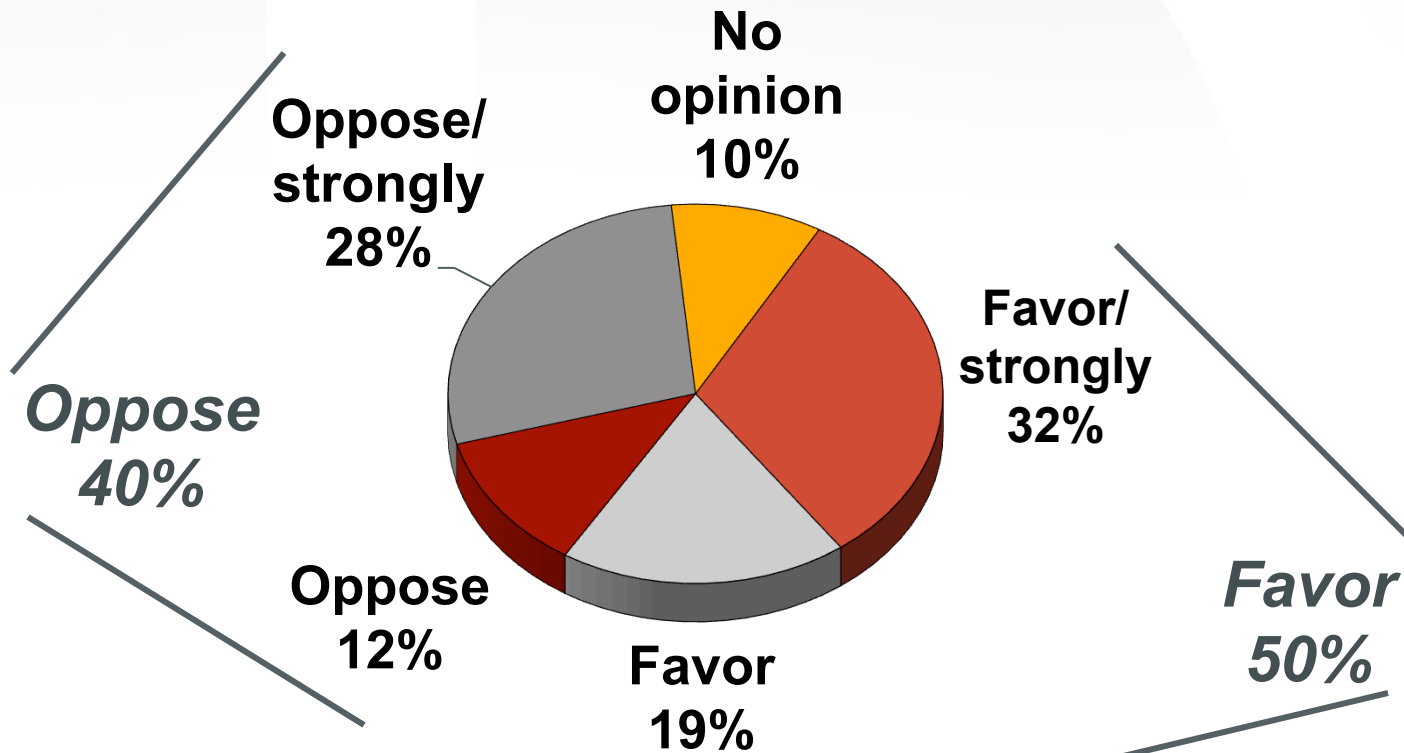
66% of Democrats and 71% of liberals say a good program.



# Favor or oppose?

Expanding Medicaid coverage to all uninsured state residents with household income levels up to 138% of the current federal poverty level

Again, opinions are sharply divided along partisan lines: 80% of Democrat voters favor such expansion while 64% of Republican voters oppose it.



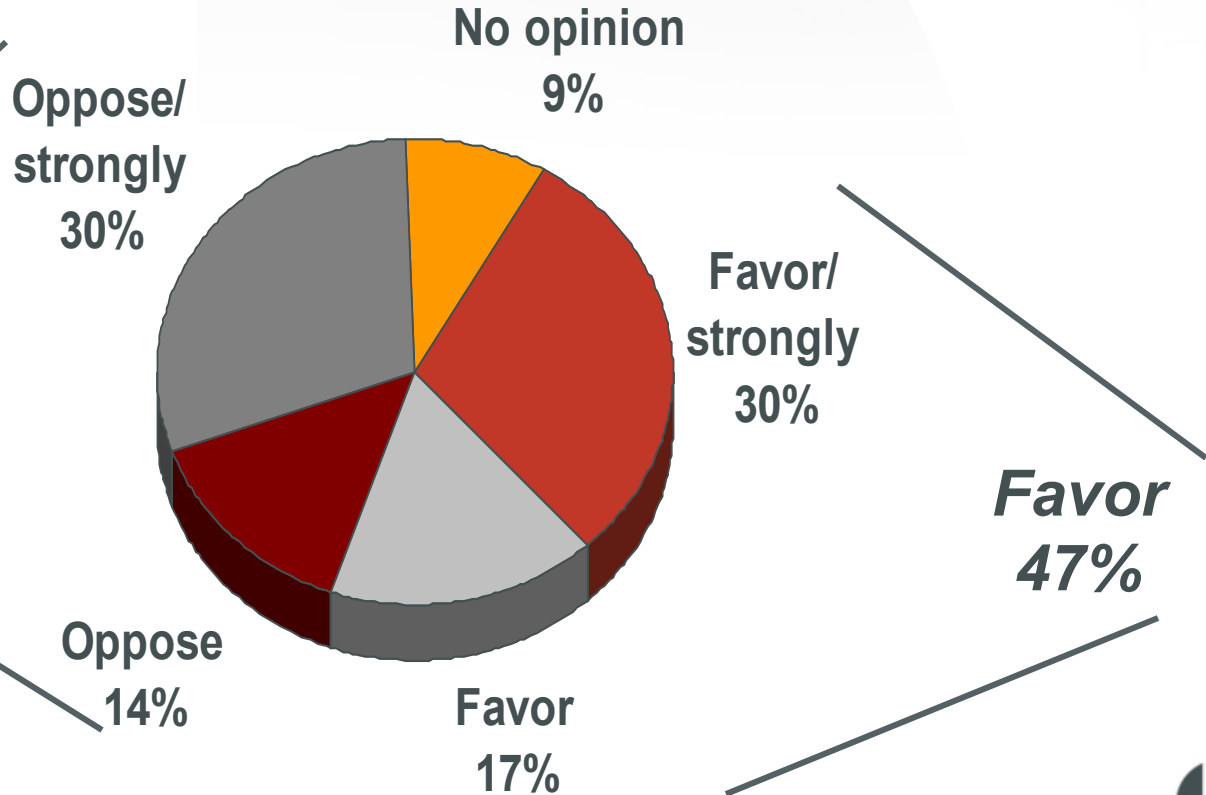
Note: percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

# In view of varying estimates of additional residents qualified, do you favor or oppose expansion?

QUESTION: The Governor estimates that expanding Medicaid would add 320,000 new recipients to the program statewide. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that 564,000 would be newly eligible for Medicaid if the state expands Medicaid. The non-partisan Urban Institute and the State Health Access Data Assistance Center says that expansion would make 1.2 million new recipients eligible statewide. In view of these varying estimates, would you favor or oppose the state of Michigan expanding Medicaid coverage to all uninsured state residents with household income levels up to 138 percent of the current federal poverty level?

Opposition grows to 44% (+4 points) when told of varying estimates of new recipients, from 320k to 1.2M.

GOP voter opposition rises to 72%.



# How convincing?

## Arguments made by people who oppose expansion of Medicaid

<b>QUESTION:</b> <i>Any expansion of Medicaid will have supporters and opponents. I'm going to read a list of the arguments being made by those opposing expansion of Medicaid. For each argument, tell me whether the argument is very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not very convincing as a reason to NOT expand Medicaid.</i>	% VERY convincing		
	ALL voters	DEM	GOP
Medicaid should not be expanded until the waste, fraud, & abuse in the program is cleaned up	46%	30%	63%
Because there is so much disagreement among experts on the costs of expanding Medicaid, we shouldn't rush into any expansion until we have a better handle on the financial consequences	45%	30%	62%
We can't count on the debt-ridden federal government's contribution to Michigan Medicaid to last forever, so in the future Michigan taxpayers will be left to foot the bill for all the new Medicaid recipients added	35%	19%	52%
Expanding Medicaid would allow too many able-bodied young people to get insurance, even if they just choose not to work to provide for their own healthcare needs	35%	22%	52%
Cost of expanding Medicaid would leave less money for other needed state services & programs, like education, public safety & environmental protection	30%	16%	48%
Expanding Medicaid would just give the federal government more power & control over our lives	29%	8%	44%
If expanded, Medicaid would become an unreasonably large program, covering as many as one in four residents of the state	28%	12%	44%