



# Attitudes of Carson Voters on City Charter

*Highlights of Public Opinion Survey*



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& ASSOCIATES

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# Methodology

- 467 interviews
- Carson residents likely to vote in November 2018
- Interviews conducted online and by cell phone/landline telephone
- Interviews conducted in English and Spanish
- Overall Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.9\%$



# City Charter Ballot Measure

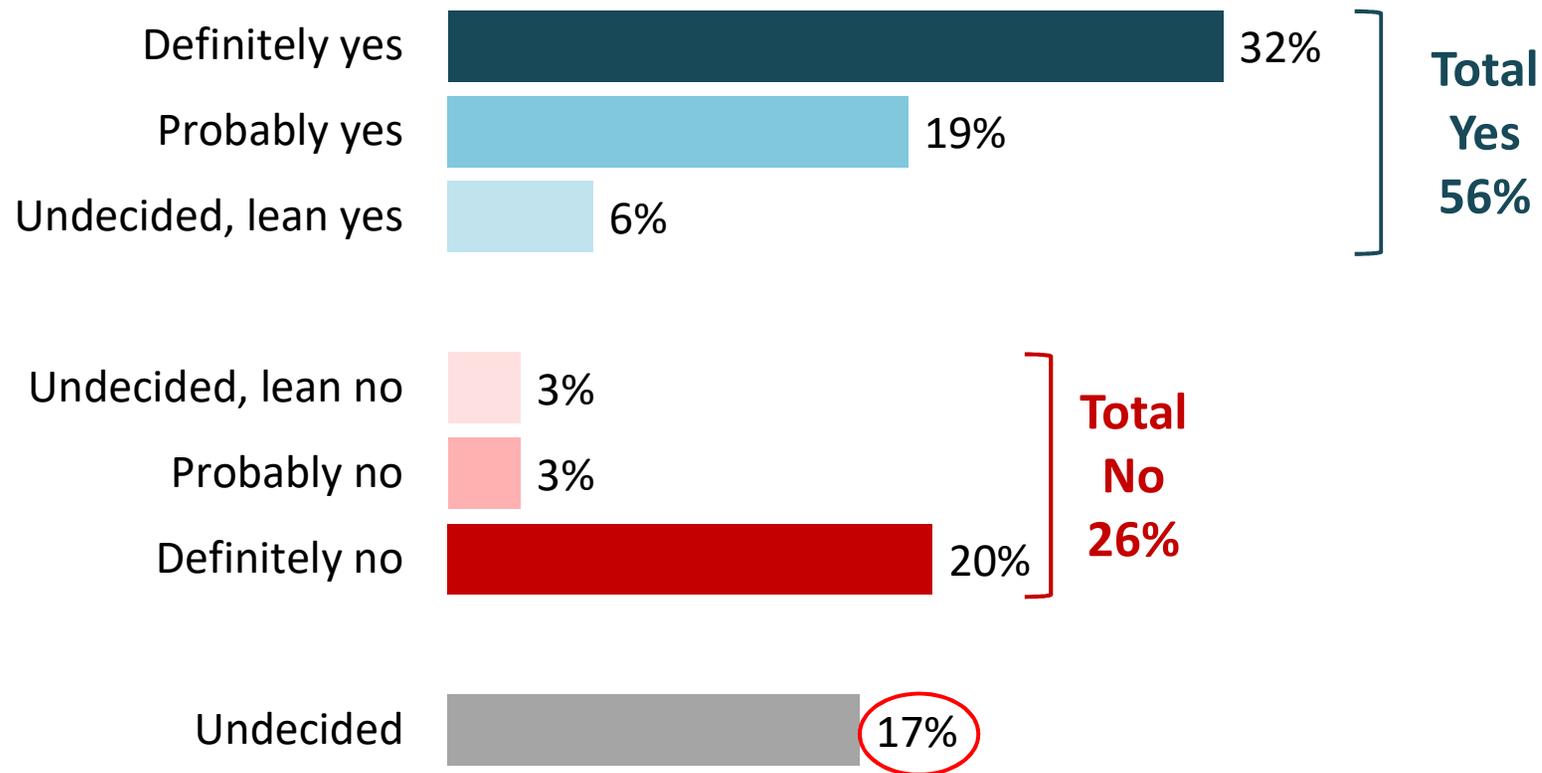
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# Ballot Language Tested in Survey

## **CARSON CHARTER MEASURE.**

To preserve self-governance and enhance local control over City municipal affairs, shall the City of Carson Charter be adopted to establish the City as a charter city providing better control over public works projects and local economic development, with more transparent and efficient elections, but with no increased taxing authority, restricted councilmember compensation, and all changes to the charter required to be approved by voters?

# On the initial vote, more than half of voters would support the ballot measure, with a significant number of undecided voters.

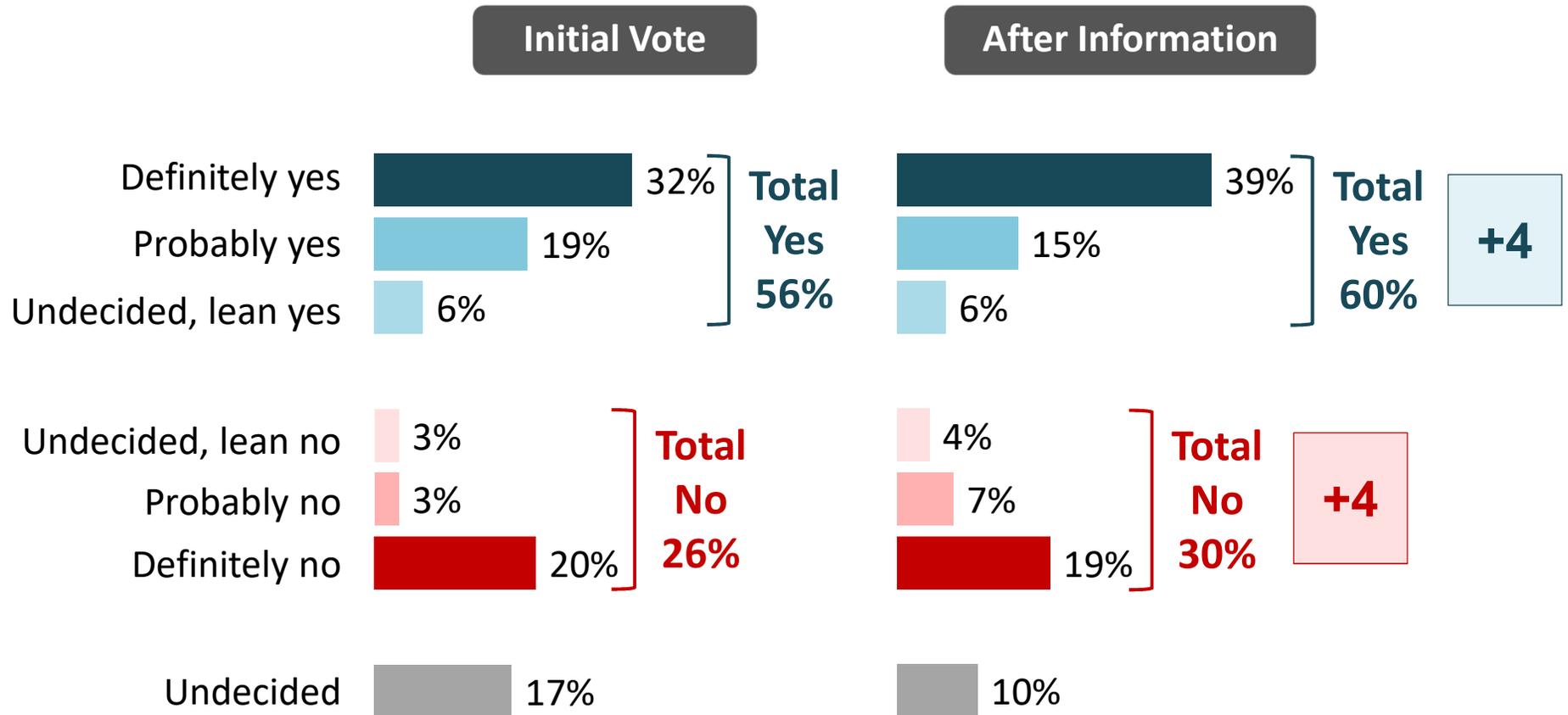


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# Explanation of Measure Provided to Respondents

Currently, Carson is a general-law city, meaning that the State Legislature makes generic laws governing the City. Becoming a charter city would allow Carson to write its own ordinances tailored to the specific needs of the community rather than those made generally at the state level. These can include regulation of the local law enforcement, land use and zoning decisions, municipal elections procedures, contracts with vendors, and increased accountability and transparency in local government. To become a charter city, a majority of Carson voters have to adopt a city charter, something like a Constitution, which a majority of voters can also amend or repeal in the future. About one-quarter of California cities are charter cities, including Torrance, Culver City and Long Beach.

# With further explanation, the percentage of undecided voters decreases.

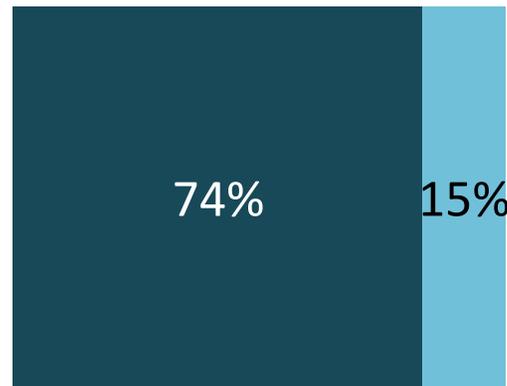


# There is a strong preference for electing the mayor directly instead of rotating the position.

*The structure of the Carson City charter measure has not been finalized. I am going to read you a few pairs of potential options for City government that could be in a potential City charter document. Please tell me which you prefer.*

**OR**

Directly electing a mayor every four years

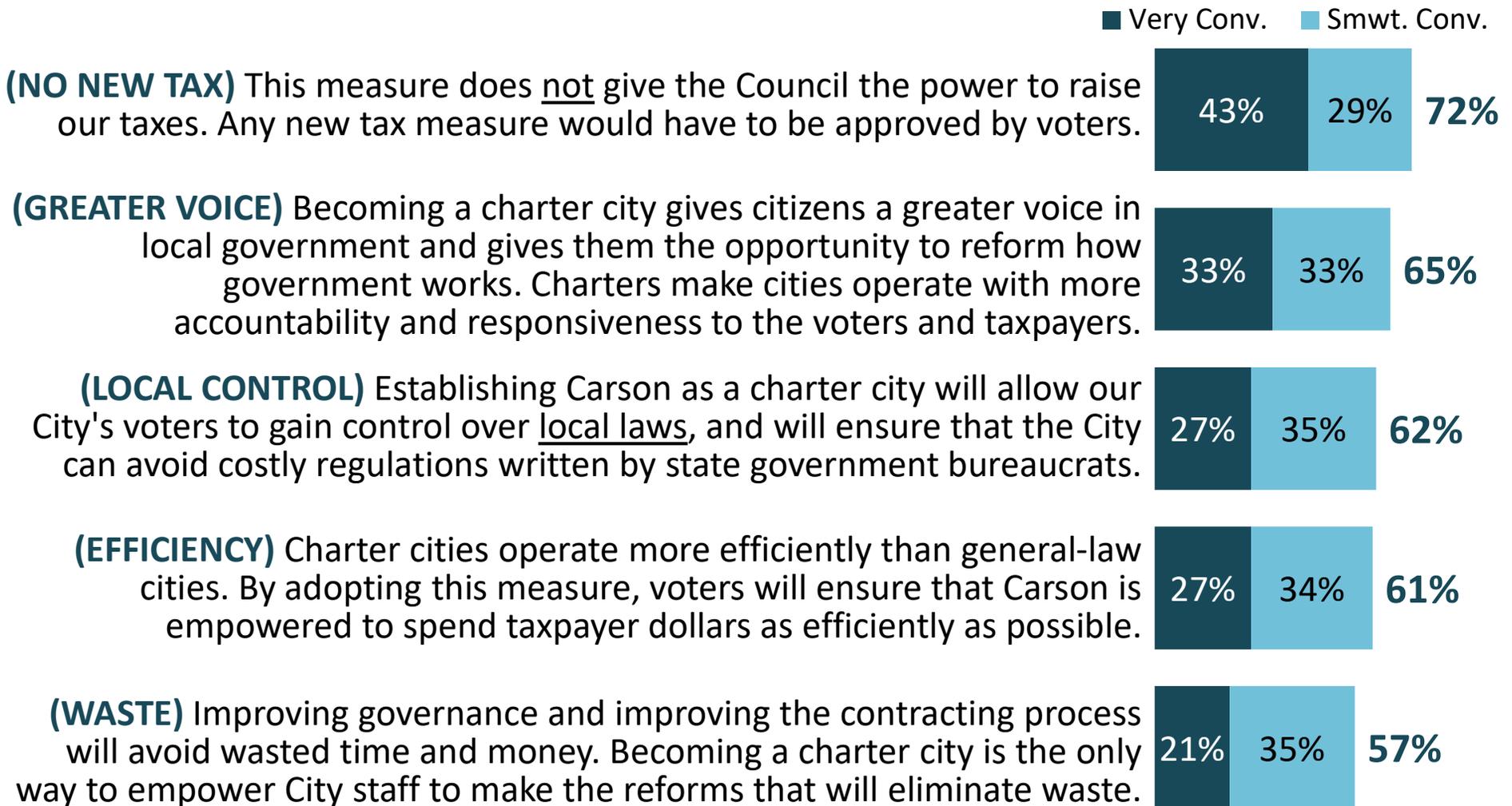


Rotating the position of mayor to a different City Council member each year



# **Pro and Con Statements about the City Charter Measure**

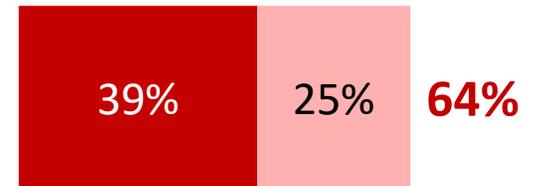
# The most convincing reasons to support the measure are that it does not raise taxes and gives citizens a greater voice.



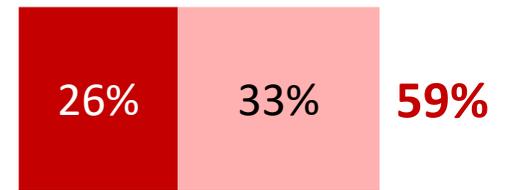
# The most convincing reason to oppose the measure is that it could lead to corruption in the city.

**(NO RULES)** Because charter cities do not have to follow the same rules as everyone else, they have greater authority to raise local taxes and fees, and if we became a charter city, the City Council could increase their take-home pay, impose unlimited penalties on residents and business and give out jobs and city contracts to whomever they choose. We've seen this happen before in places like Bell, a city that quickly went bankrupt after adopting a charter.

■ Very Conv. ■ Smwt. Conv.



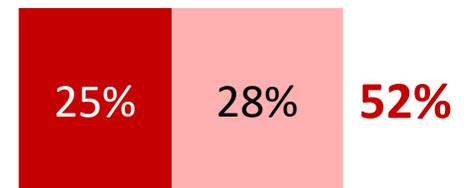
**(UNNECESSARY)** This measure is simply not necessary. There's nothing wrong with the way our city runs now, and if Carson becomes a charter city, we'll become vulnerable to special interests putting charter amendments on the ballot.



**(TRICK)** Supporters say this measure won't raise taxes, but cities that adopt a charter always seem to ask for more taxpayer money soon after. We shouldn't vote for this deceptive measure.



**(LABOR)** Becoming a charter city sounds like a positive reform, but it is really a trick to allow the City to avoid fair wage standards and other laws meant to protect working people employed by businesses with lucrative government contracts.





# Conclusions

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- Support for a ballot measure to adopt a city charter starts above 50% with a relatively high number of undecided voters.
- There is strong support for writing the charter so voters directly elect the mayor.
- The most convincing themes in favor of adopting a charter are that it does not allow the City to raise taxes without voter approval and it gives residents a greater voice in local government.
- The most convincing themes in opposition to a charter are that it would reduce oversight and lead to corruption.

**For more information, contact:**



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