



California
Road Charge

Public Private Roads Project

APPENDIX

I

Public Polling Results

Appendix was prepared to follow industry guidelines and standards for accessibility and usability to the extent feasible. If you have difficulty accessing content in this document, please contact Caltrans for assistance.



**California Road Charge
Statewide/Rural/Tribal Polls**
December 2022-April 2023

- ▶ Three polls conducted for the public/private roads pilot phase
 - Multi-modal live telephone, email- and text-to-web poll of **California statewide general population** (Gen Pop poll)
 - Conducted March 2-8, 2023
 - 600 interviews; overall margin of error ± 4.00 percentage points
 - Multi-modal live telephone, email- and text-to-web poll of **California residents living in rural areas** (Rural poll)
 - Conducted March 2-7, 2023
 - 500 interviews; overall margin of error ± 4.4 percentage points
 - Static web **tribal communities** poll (Tribal poll)
 - Conducted December 1, 2022, – April 30, 2023
 - 42 interviews
 - Please note that due to small sample size, the results of the tribal communities poll cannot be considered representative
- ▶ *Where applicable, results of the general population poll compared with the following:*

Wave	Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Wave 3	Mixed-mode	January 18–24, 2022	California Residents	800	± 3.5 percentage points	22-7747
Wave 2	Mixed-mode	April 6–12, 2021	California Residents	615	± 3.9 percentage points	21-7746
Wave 1	Mixed-mode	July 24 –30, 2020	California Residents	603	± 3.9 percentage points	20-7743

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Respondent Demographic Profile

	General Population (n=600)	Rural (n=500)	Tribal (n=42)
Male <50	30%	27%	7%
Male 50+	20%	25%	21%
Women <50	28%	22%	12%
Women 50+	22%	26%	48%
Hispanic/Latino	35%	31%	2%
White	35%	48%	2%
Black/African-American	6%	1%	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	1%	-
Native American	1%	2%	90%
Graduated from college	45%	34%	43%
Less than college education	55%	66%	57%

Respondent Demographic Profile – Drivers

Among drivers only

	General Population (n=539)	Rural (n=450)	Tribal (n=34)
Drive most days of the week	78%	77%	76%
Drive at least once a week	19%	19%	24%
Drive less than once a week	1%	3%	-
Gasoline/Diesel	84%	88%	91%
Hybrid/Electric/Other	14%	10%	9%
Drive <50 miles/week	31%	26%	24%
50-100 miles/week	28%	28%	29%
101-200 miles/week	19%	18%	15%
Over 200 miles/week	16%	23%	26%

Key Findings

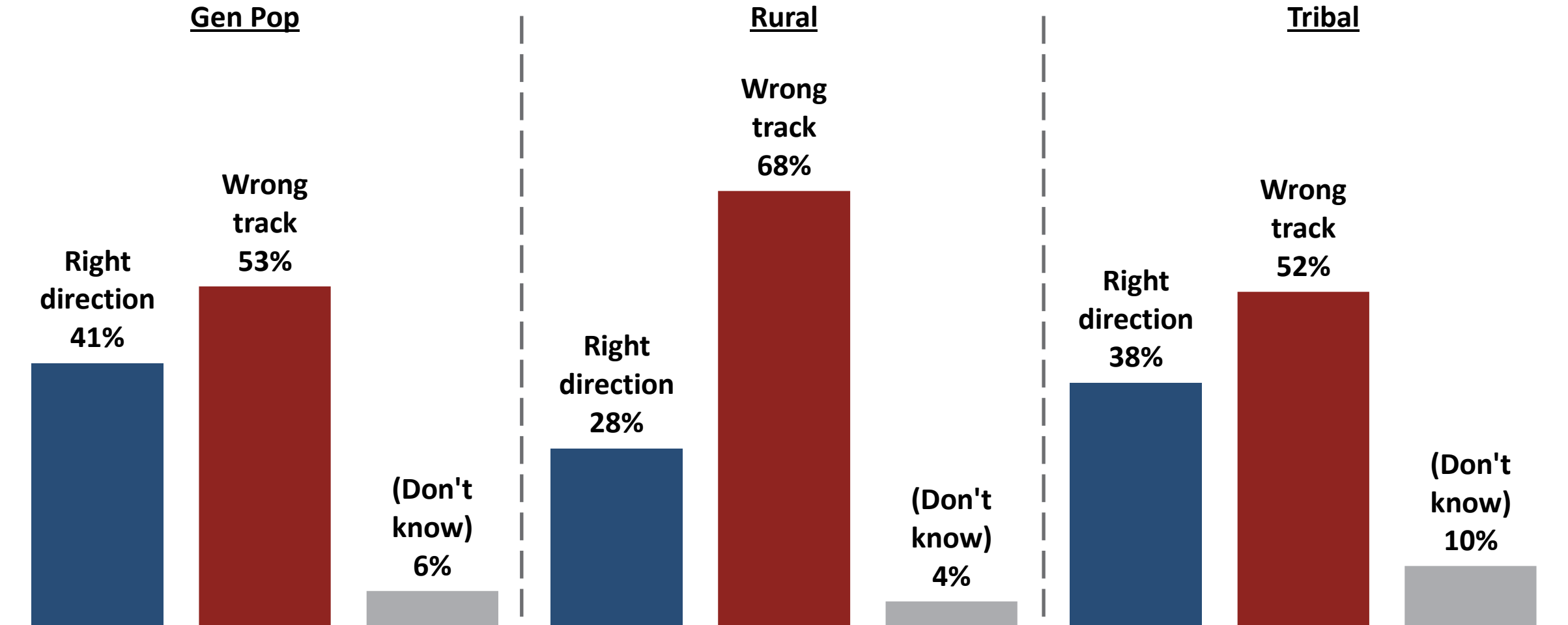
- ▶ Californians, especially rural residents and tribal participants, give low ratings to the condition of freeways, state highways, and local roads. Majorities across the audiences agree that there is at least some need for additional funding for road repairs.
- ▶ Although majorities across the three polls agree that it's important to replace the gas tax with a sustainable revenue stream, only half of the general population has a positive first impression of the road charge, and these initial ratings are lower among rural and tribal respondents.
- ▶ Additional information about road charge improves the impressions around it among all three audiences, and more respondents find road charge more fair than gas tax upon hearing information.
- ▶ However, positive impressions drop below initial ratings after participants hear about the mileage-reporting device.
 - Respondents, especially rural residents, are particularly concerned about the privacy implications of using a mileage-reporting device.



Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track

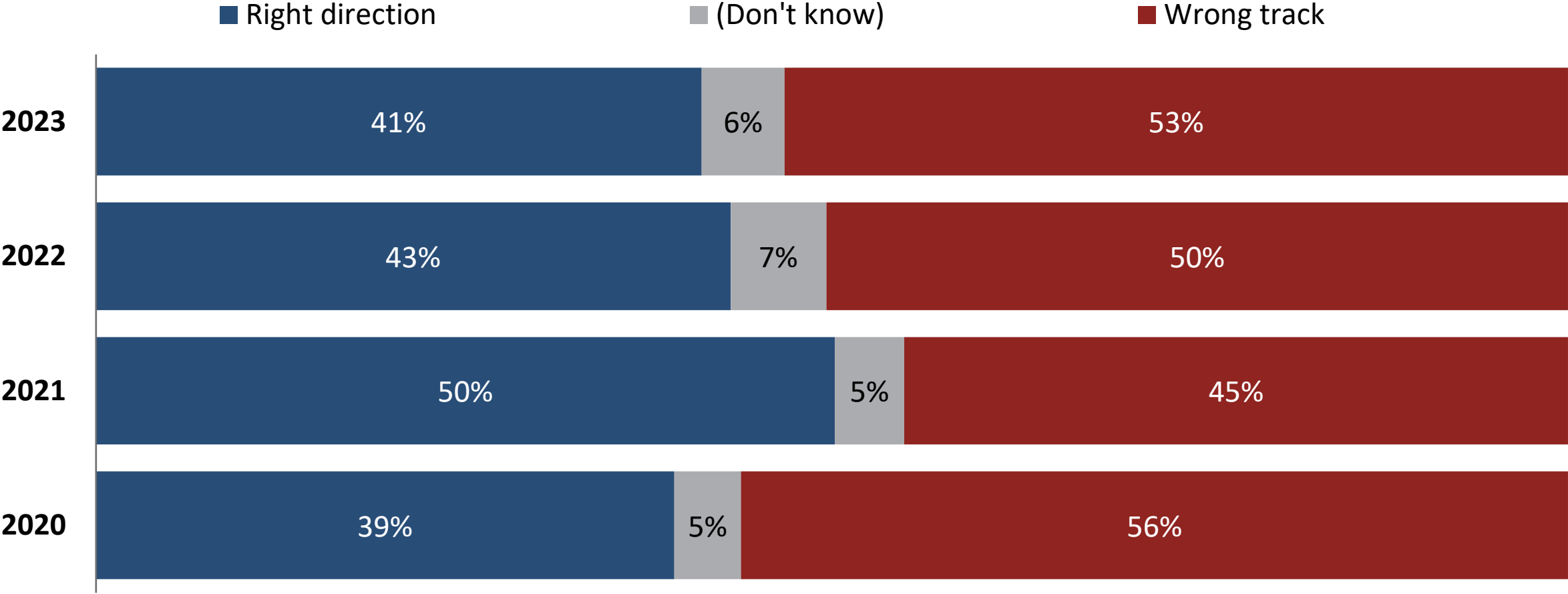
A majority of Californians are pessimistic about the direction general direction things are going in the state, with 2-in-3 rural residents saying “things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track”.



Q6. Do you feel that things in California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Right Direction/Wrong Track – Trend*

The overall mood continued to worsen after peaking in 2021 with half of Californians saying things in California are generally in the right direction.

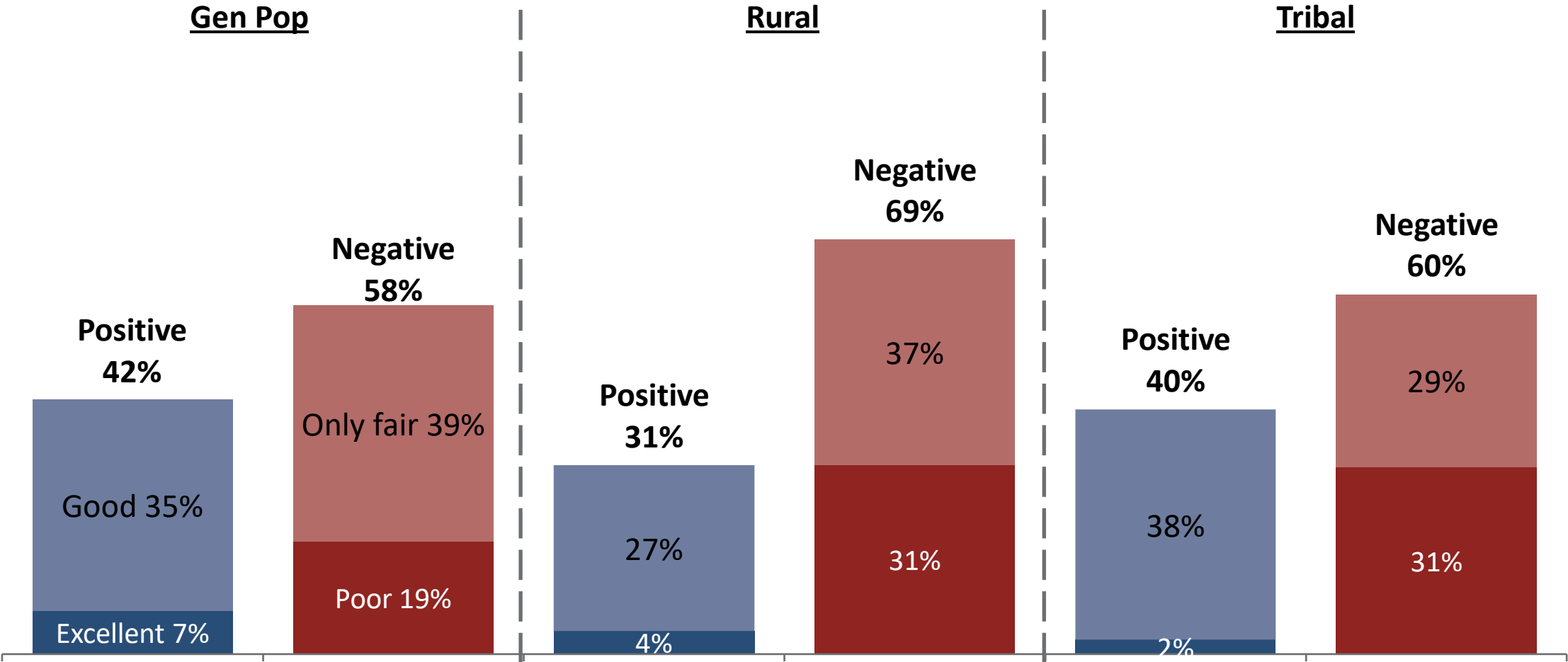


Q6. Do you feel that things in California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

* All trend data shown in this report reflect results from the general population poll.

State Road Conditions

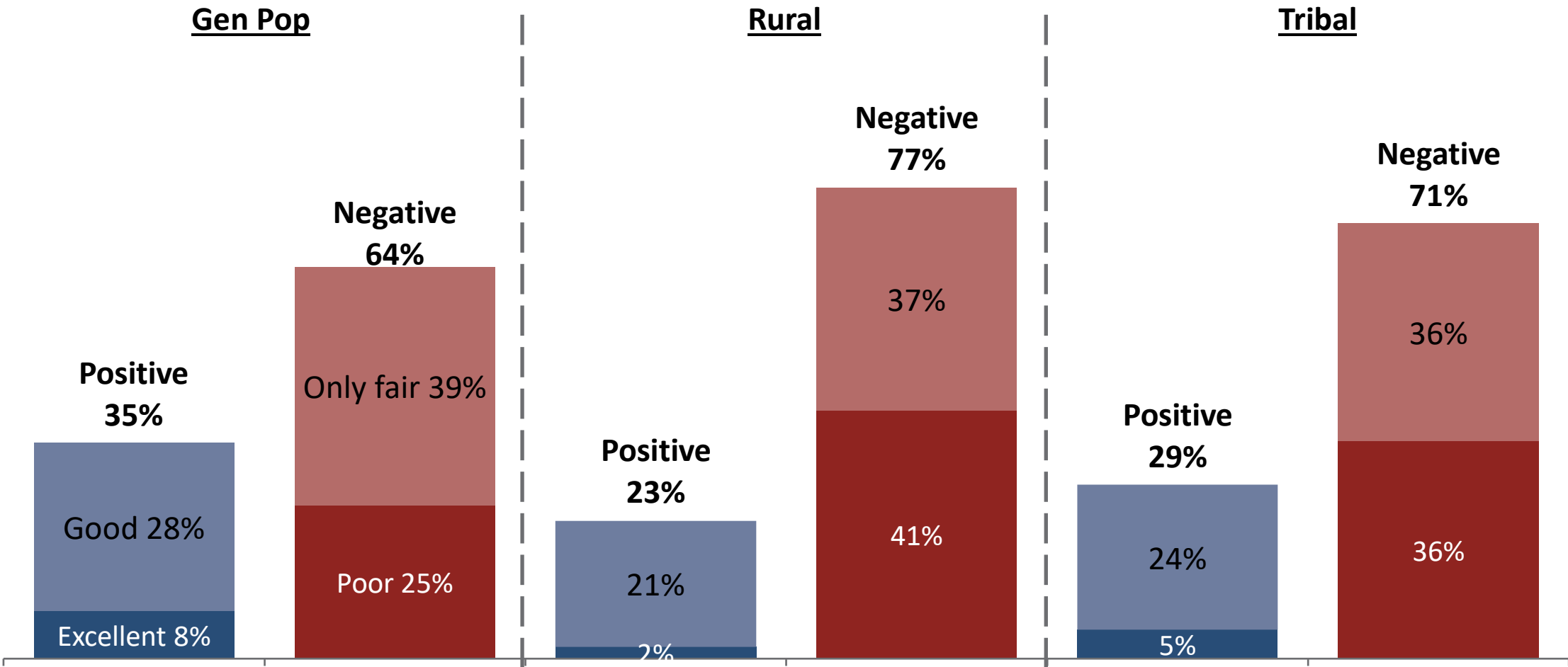
A majority of respondents in all three polls rate the condition of freeways and highways negatively.



Q7. Generally speaking, would you describe the condition of the freeways and highways in your area as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Local Road Conditions

Perceptions of local road conditions trail behind state roads, and rural respondents view the condition of their local roads more negatively than general population respondents.

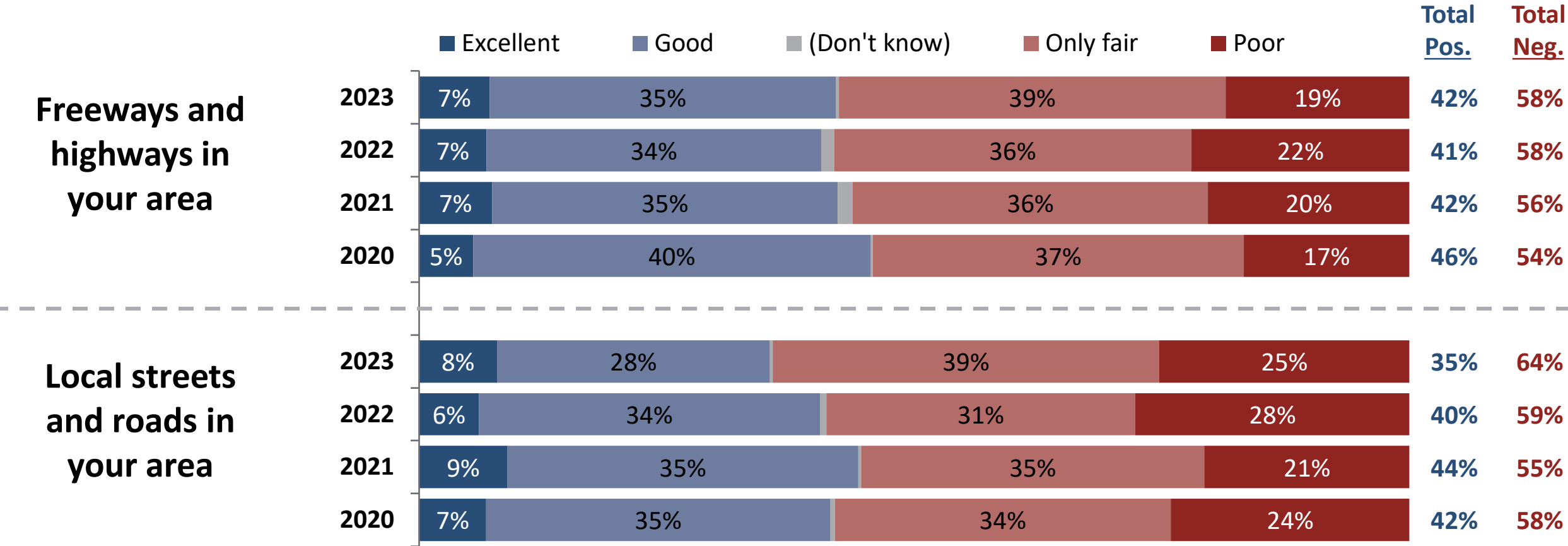


Q8. And would you describe the condition of the local streets and roads in your area as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

State and Local Road Conditions – Trend

Freeway and highway ratings among the general population have remained steady, while the ratings for local roads have slightly dropped over time.

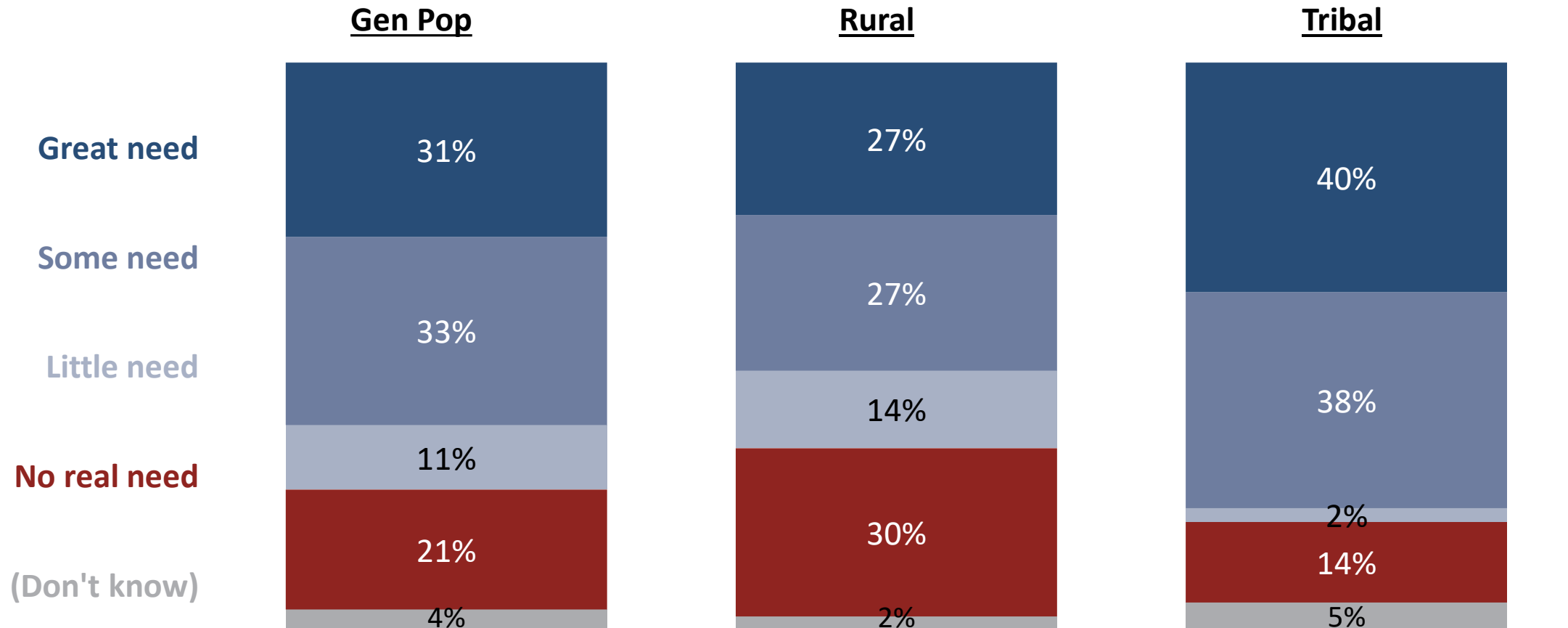
How would you describe the condition of...



Perceived Need for Additional Funding

Majorities in all three polls agree that California has at least some need for additional funding for road repairs.

When it comes to repairing and maintaining roads and freeways, would you say that California has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money?

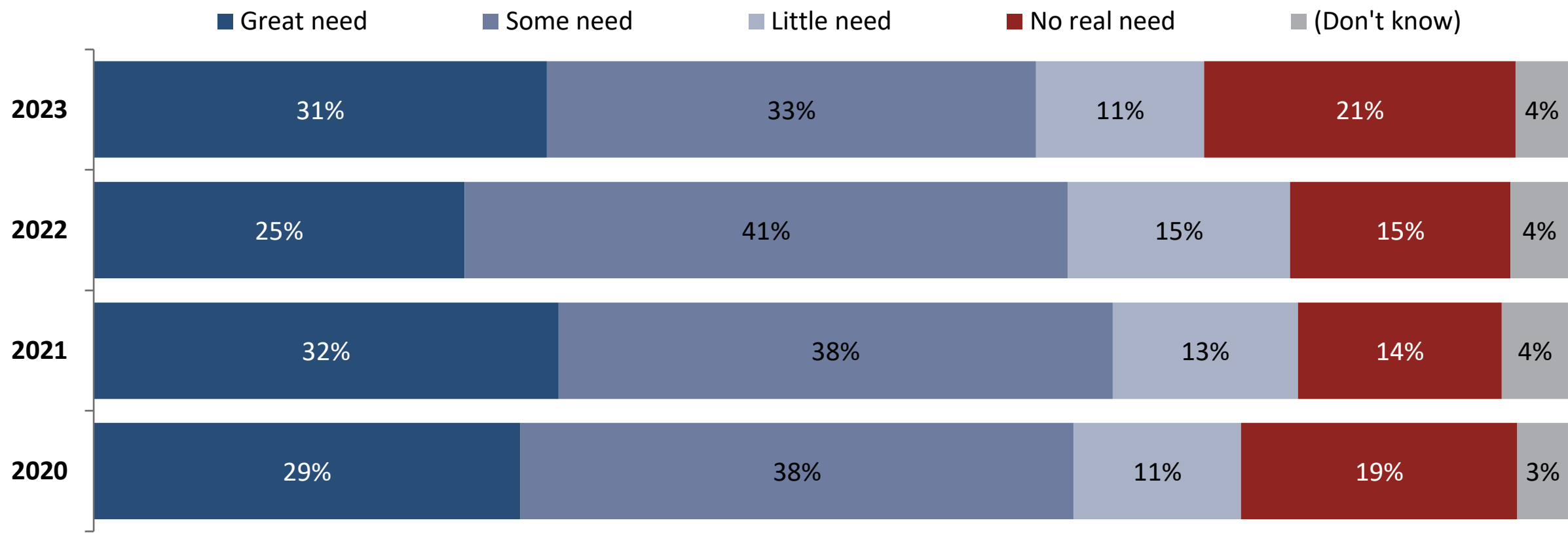


Perceived Need for Additional Funding – Trend



Perceptions of need for additional funding have not changed drastically, although the intensity to the perceived need for additional funding rebounded after a slight decline in 2022.

When it comes to repairing and maintaining roads and freeways, would you say that California has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money?





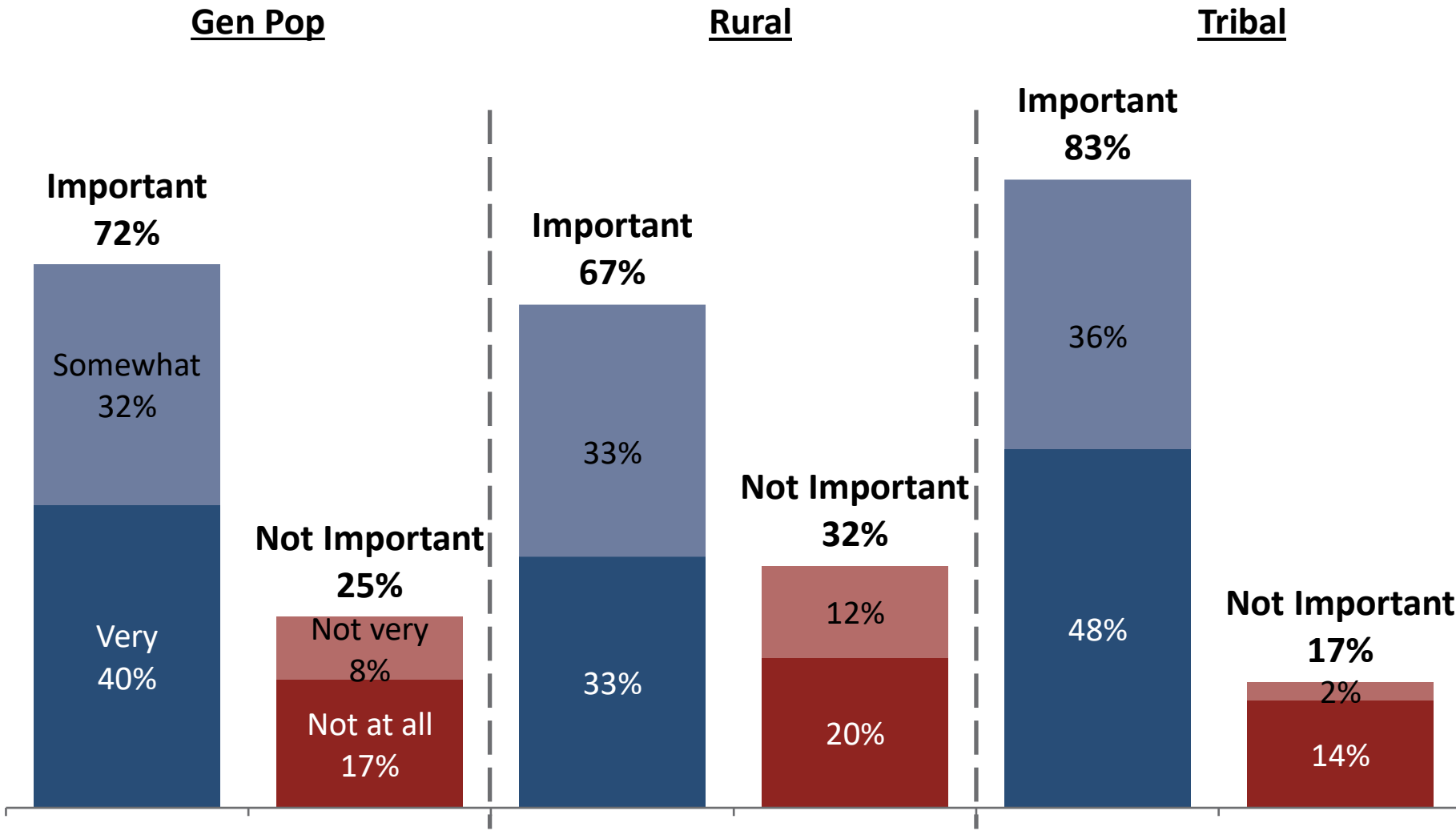
Initial Impressions of Road Charge

Gas Tax Replacement Importance

Strong majorities in all three polls find it important to replace the gas tax with a stable revenue source.

Currently, much of the money for repairing and maintaining California's roads and freeways comes from the state gas tax. As cars get more fuel-efficient and more people start driving hybrid and electric vehicles, revenues from the gas tax are declining, which means California's roads and freeways are falling farther and farther behind in necessary maintenance and repairs.

Having heard this, how important would you say it is that California replace the gas tax with something that can provide a stable revenue stream for the state's road and freeway maintenance?

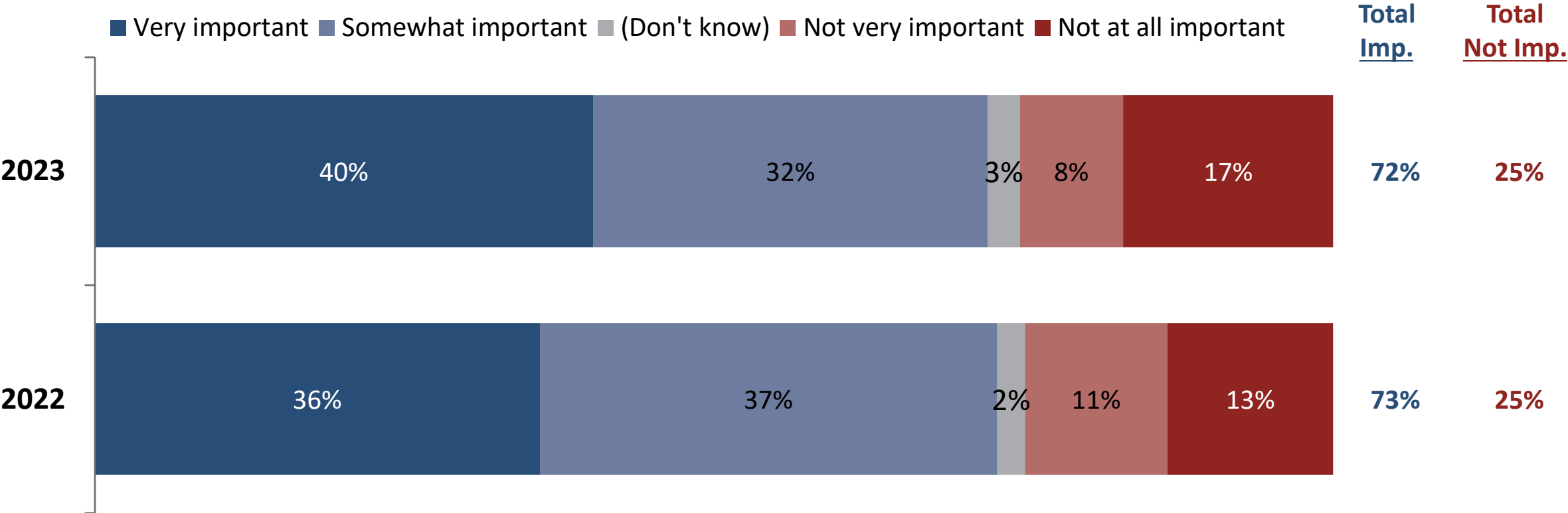


Gas Tax Replacement Importance – Trend

While total importance ratings have remained consistent since 2022, there is now more intensity behind these ratings.

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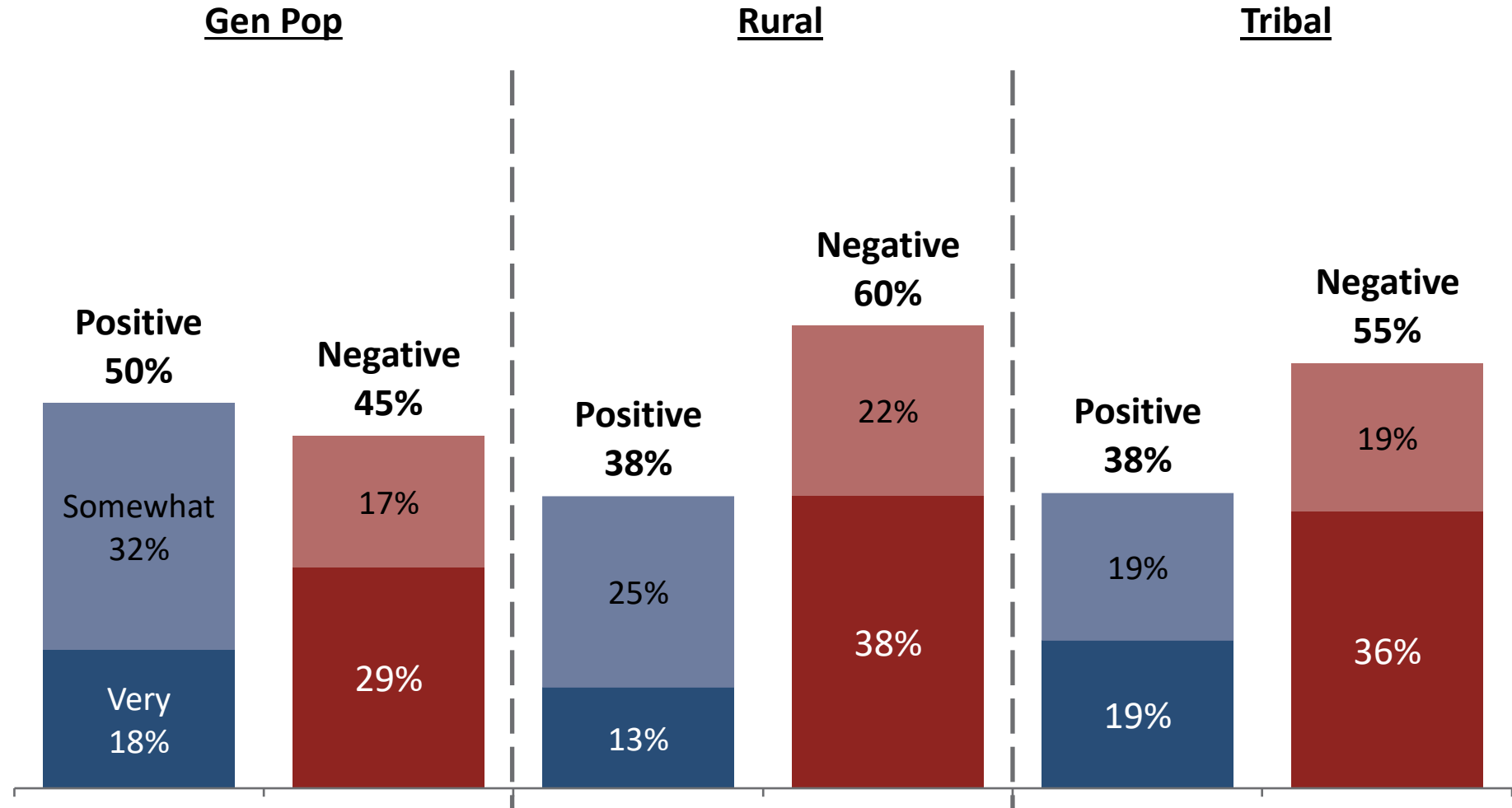


Road Charge Impression – Initial

The general population is split in their initial impression of the road charge mechanism, whereas rural and tribal respondents lean towards a more negative first impression.

The state is exploring getting rid of the state gas tax and replacing it with a road charge. The gas tax is based on the number of gallons of fuel purchased, while a road charge would be based on the number of miles driven. Nobody would pay both, since the road charge would replace the gas tax.

After hearing this, please tell me if you have a positive or a negative impression of replacing the state gas tax with a road charge for California.

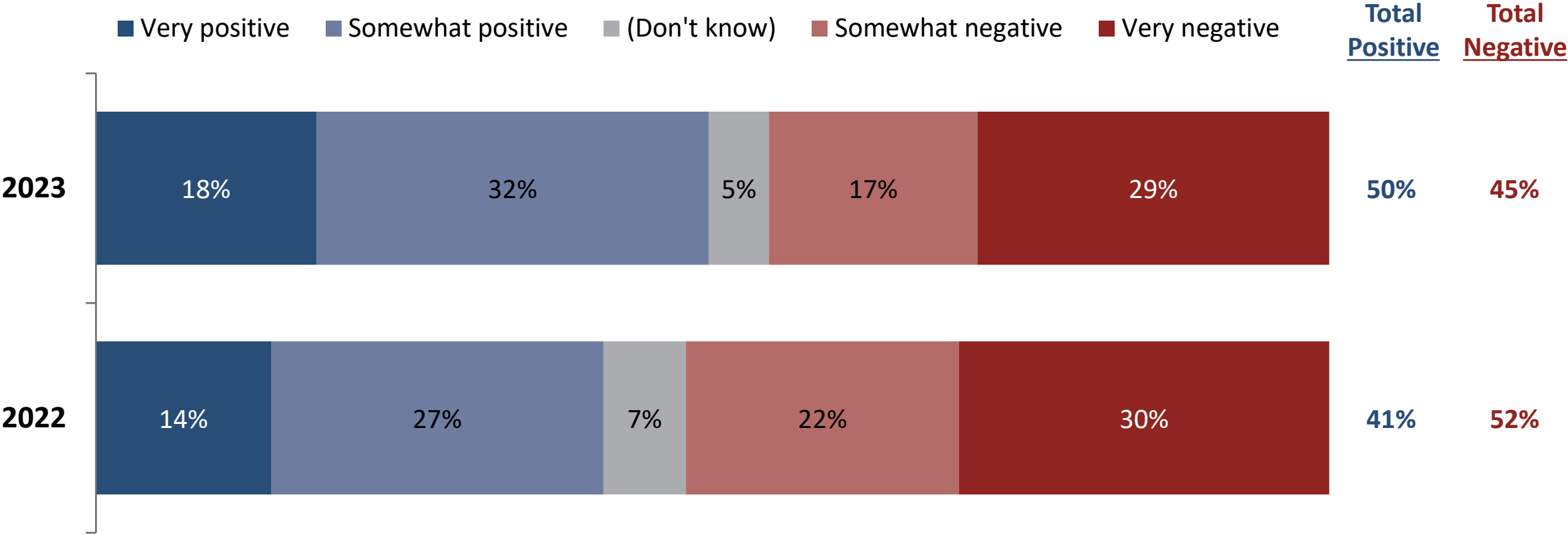


Initial Road Charge Impression – Trend

Initial program impressions are more positive in 2023 compared to 2022.

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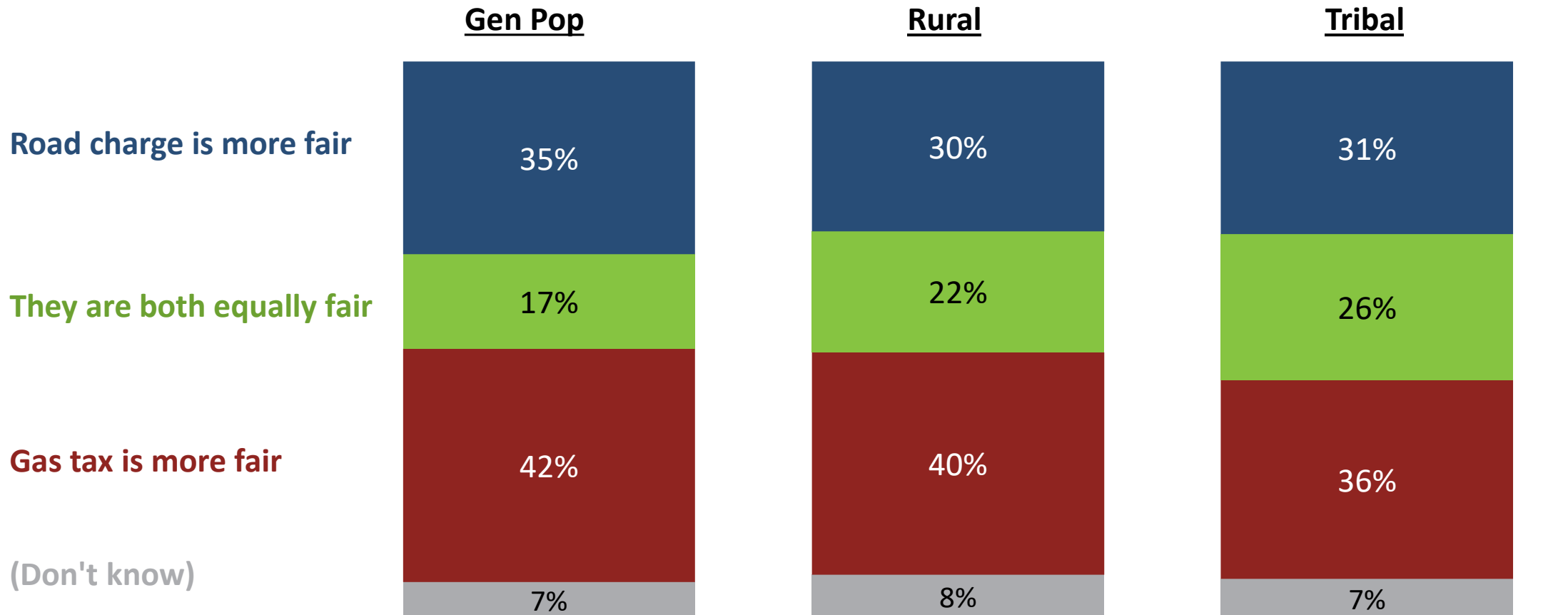
After hearing this, please tell me if you have a positive or a negative impression of replacing the state gas tax with a road charge for California.



Perception of Fairness – Initial

There is little differentiation in the perceived relative fairness of road charge across audiences.

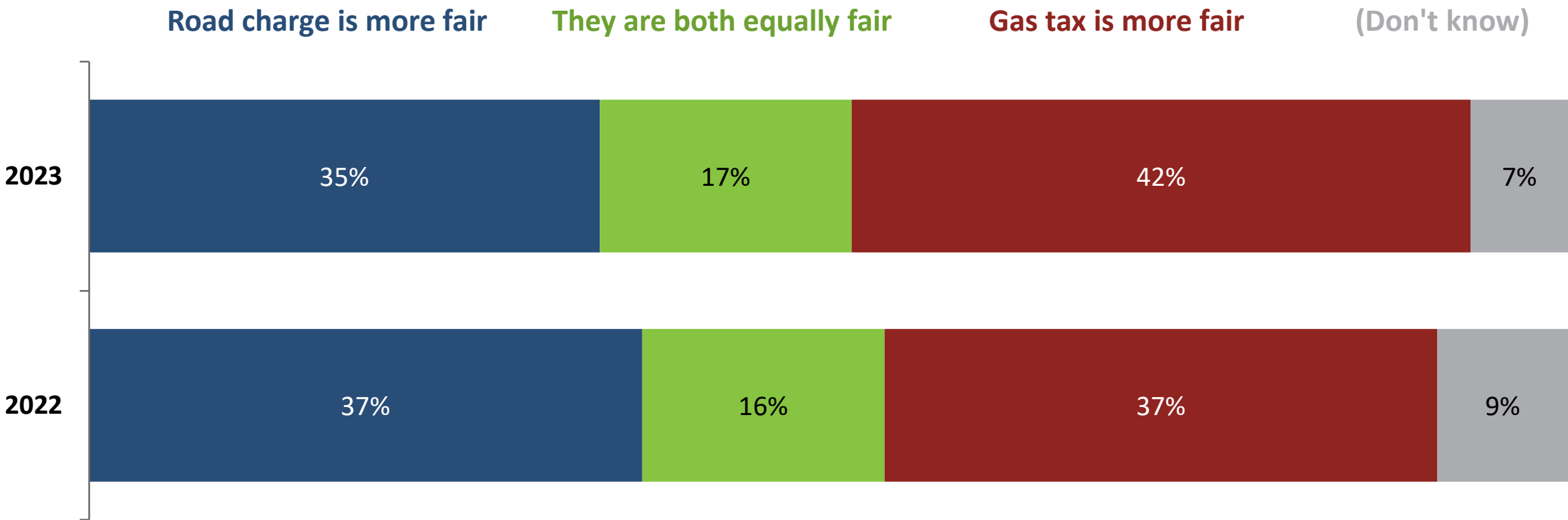
Which would you say is more fair for California drivers: Replacing the state gas tax with a road charge, or continuing the state gas tax as it is now?



Initial Perception of Fairness – Trend

Initial perception of fairness around road charge has remained relatively stable since 2022.

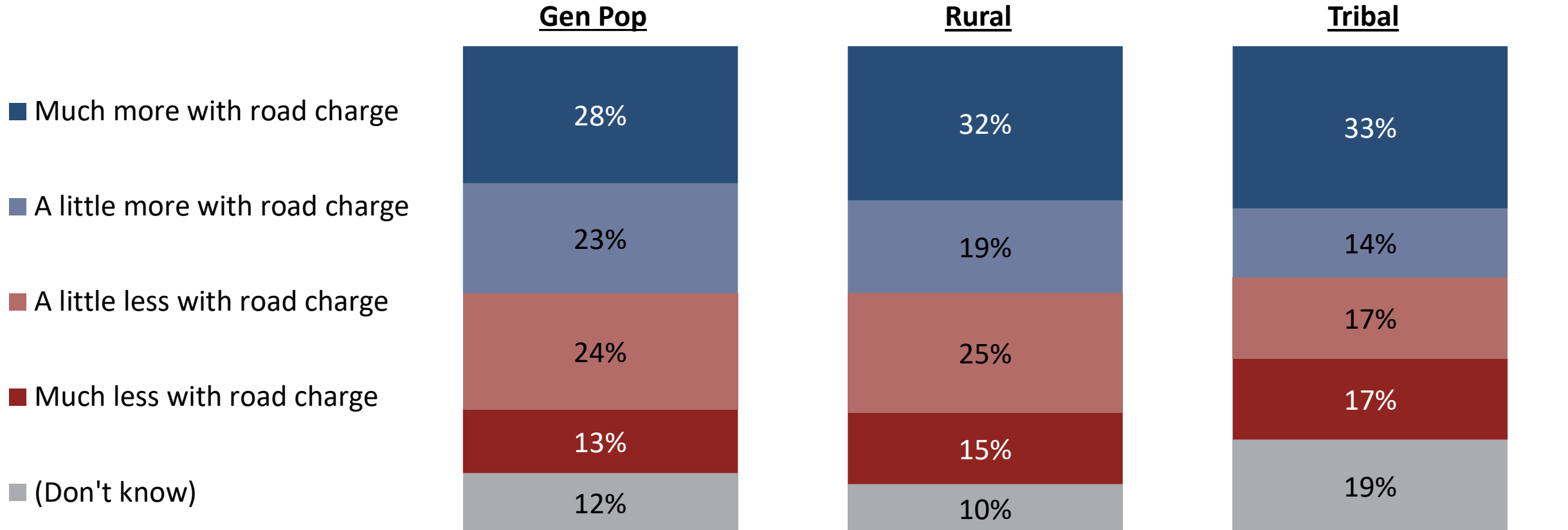
Which would you say is more fair for California drivers: Replacing the state gas tax with a road charge, or continuing the state gas tax as it is now?



Impression of Personal Cost of Program

Around half of respondents in all three polls believe that they would pay more under the road charge program compared to what they are currently paying with the state gas tax.

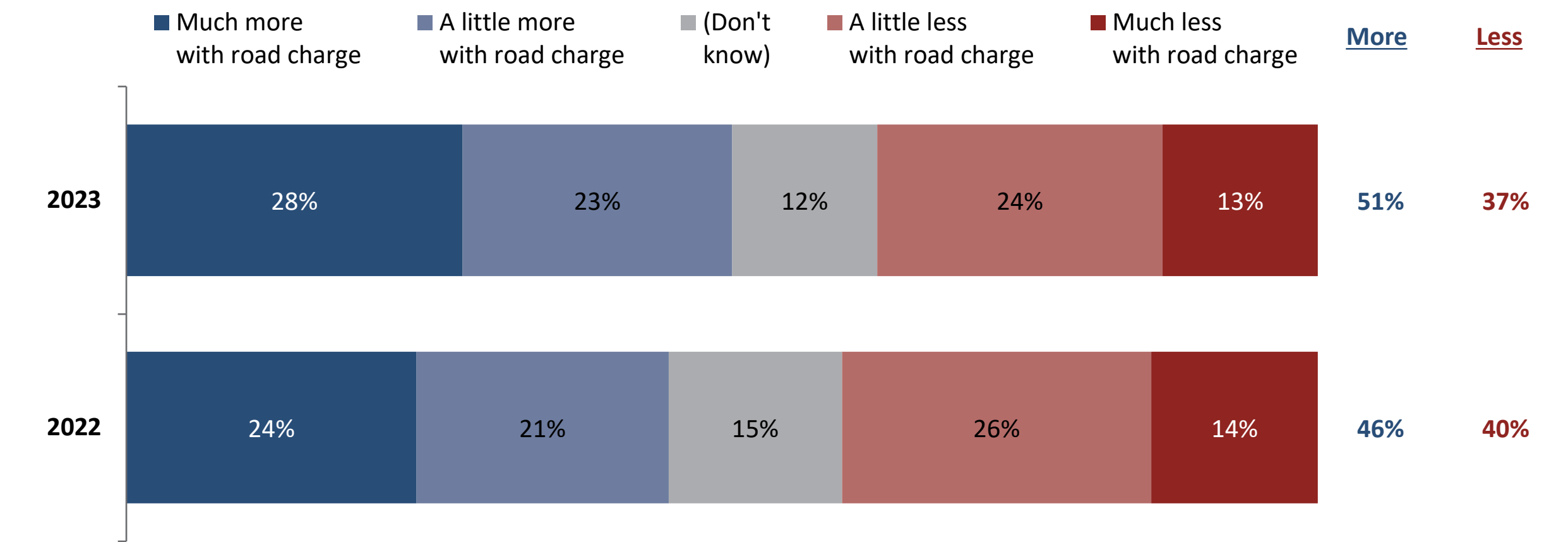
Do you think you personally would pay more with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax, or less with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax?



Impression of Personal Cost – Trend

There is a slight increase in the percentage of California residents who think they would be paying more under a road charge than they are paying now with the gas tax.

Do you think you personally would pay more with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax, or less with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax?

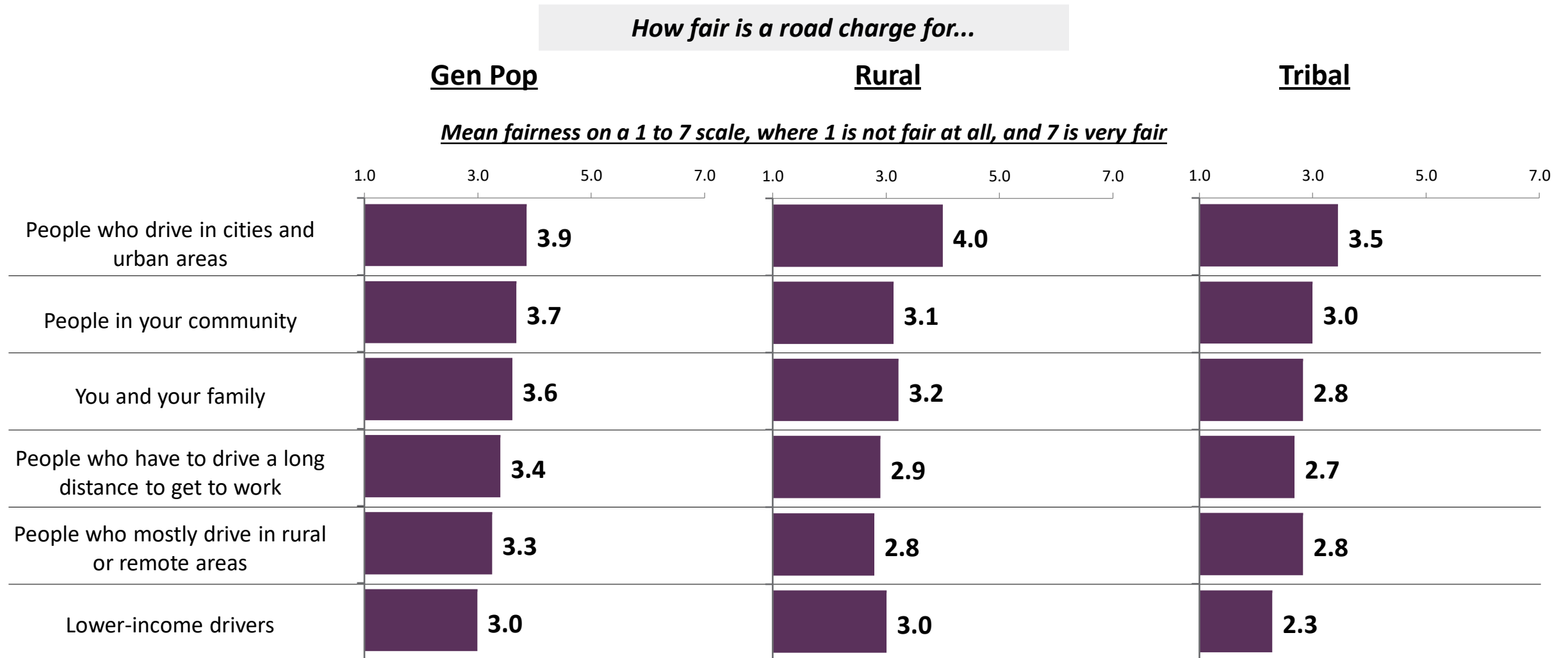




Fairness Perceptions & Concerns

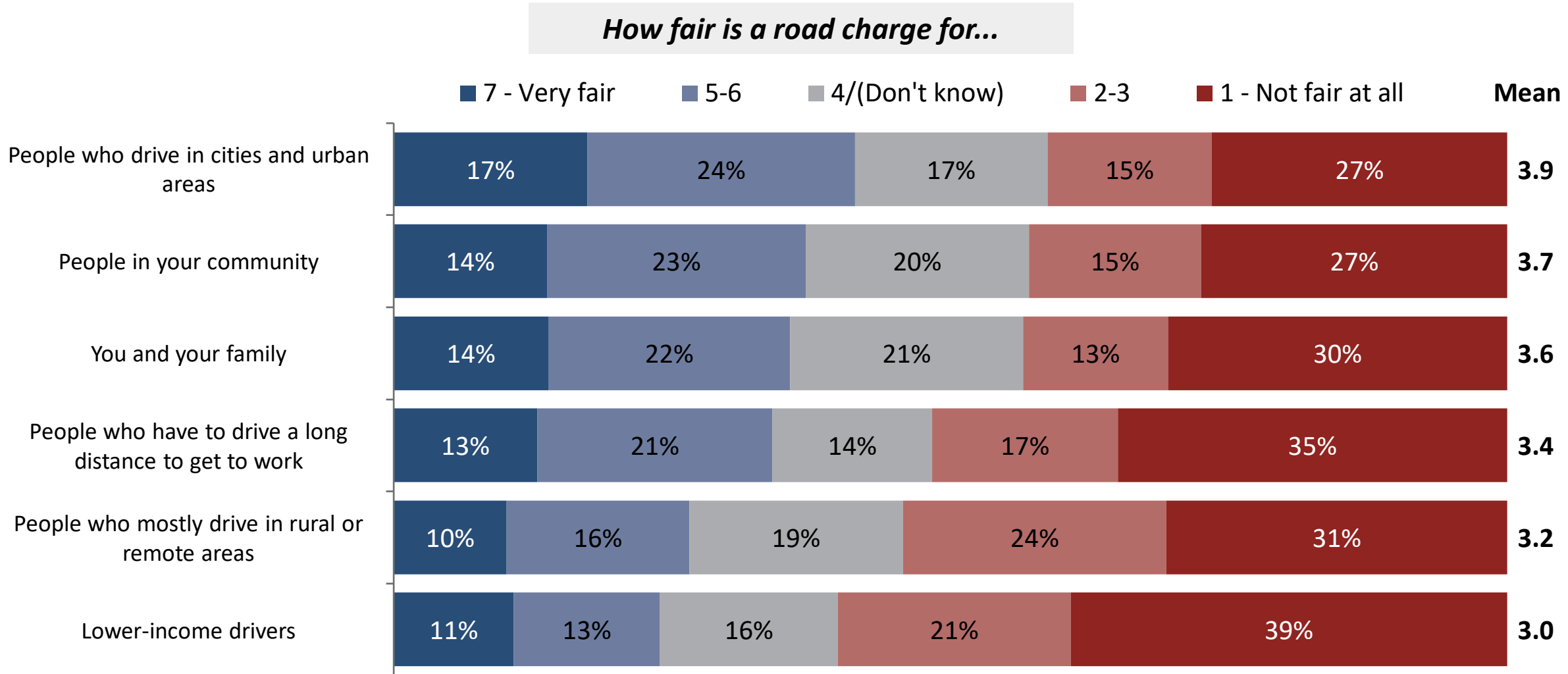
Road Charge Fairness Perceptions

Fairness perceptions around the road charge are similar across audiences, with urban drivers being seen at an advantage while it is considered unfair to lower-income drivers, long-distance commuters, and those living in rural and remote areas.



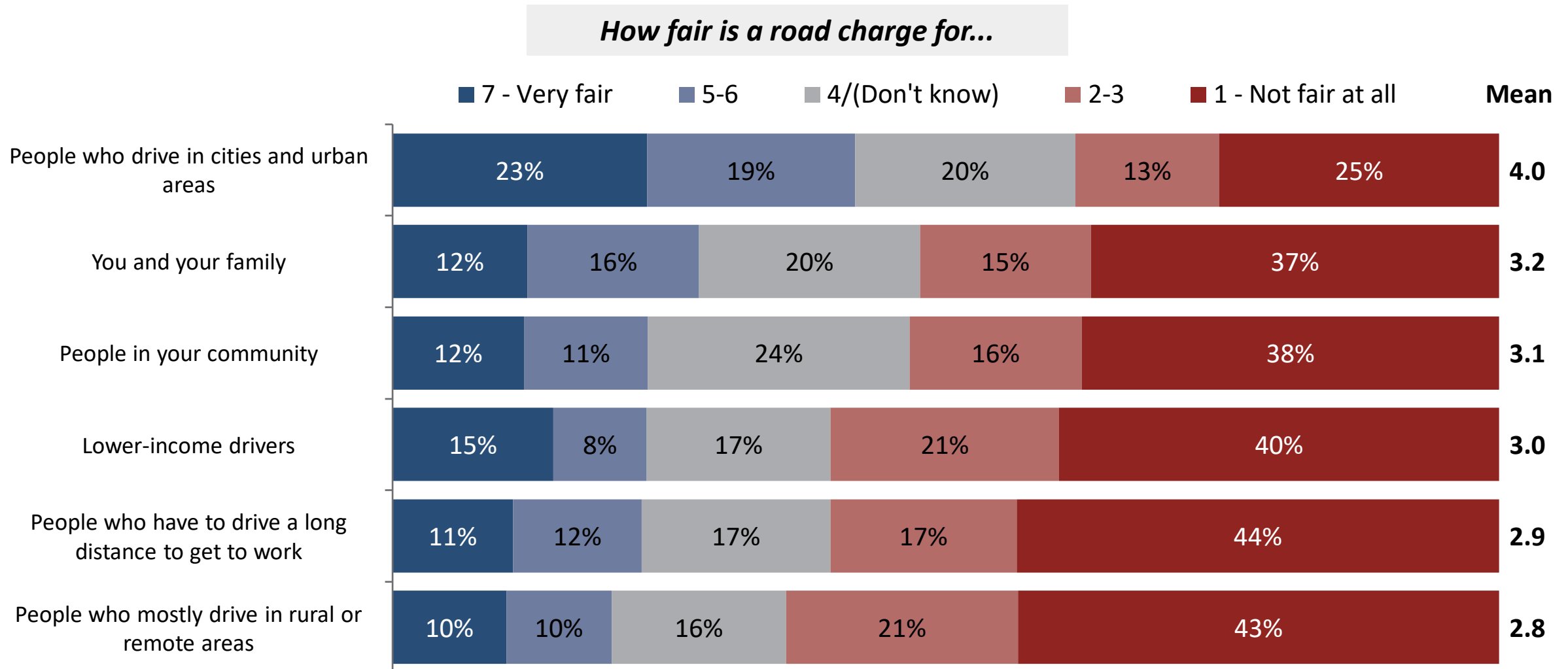
Road Charge Fairness Perceptions – Gen Pop (Detail)

The general population finds the road charge to be most unfair to lower-income drivers and those who mostly drive in rural or remote areas.



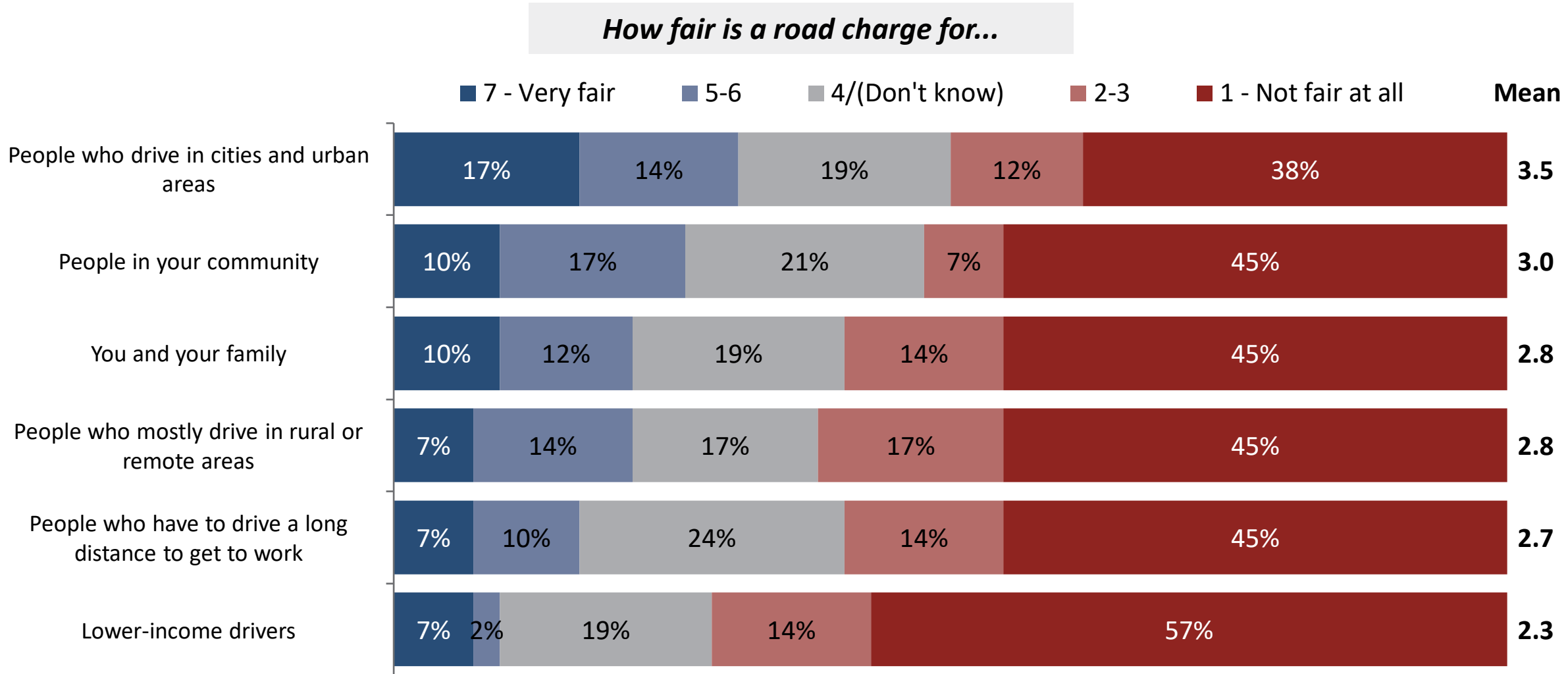
Road Charge Fairness Perceptions – Rural (Detail)

Rural residents find road charge more unfair to all the groups listed in the survey, except to urban drivers. They rate the fairness of road charge towards rural/remote drivers and supercommuters especially low.



Road Charge Fairness Perceptions – Tribal (Detail)

Perceptions around the fairness of road charge is generally low among tribal respondents.

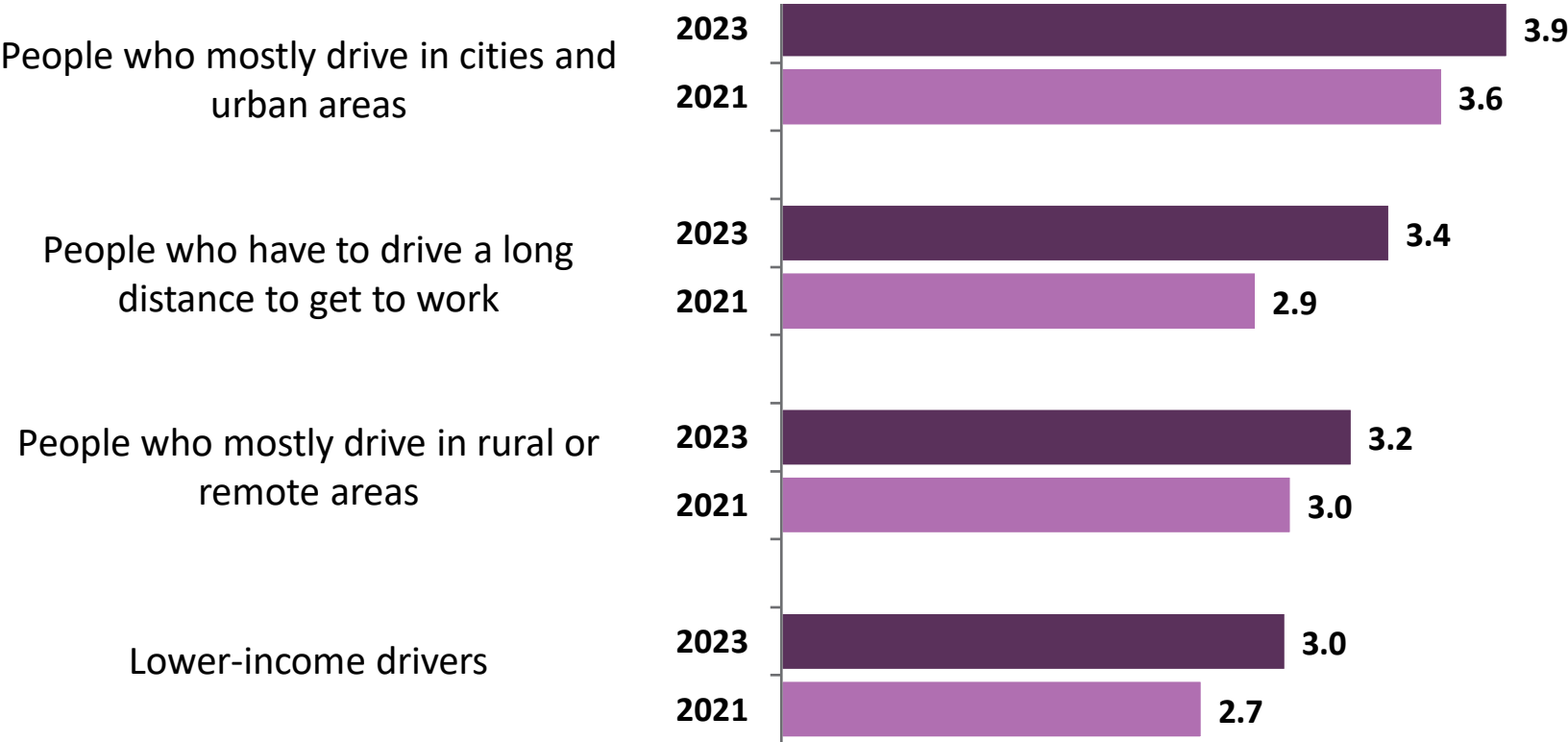


Road Charge Fairness Perceptions – Over Time Comparison

Among the general population, the perception around the fairness of road charge for urban residents, long-distance commuters, rural/remote area residents, and lower-income drivers slightly improved compared to 2021.

How fair is a road charge for...

Mean fairness on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 is not fair at all, and 7 is very fair



Road Charge Concerns

Levels of concern around several items related to the mechanics and security/privacy of the data collected through the road charge system are high across the board. The general population is around equally concerned about each item while rural residents and tribal respondents are slightly more concerned with security/privacy.

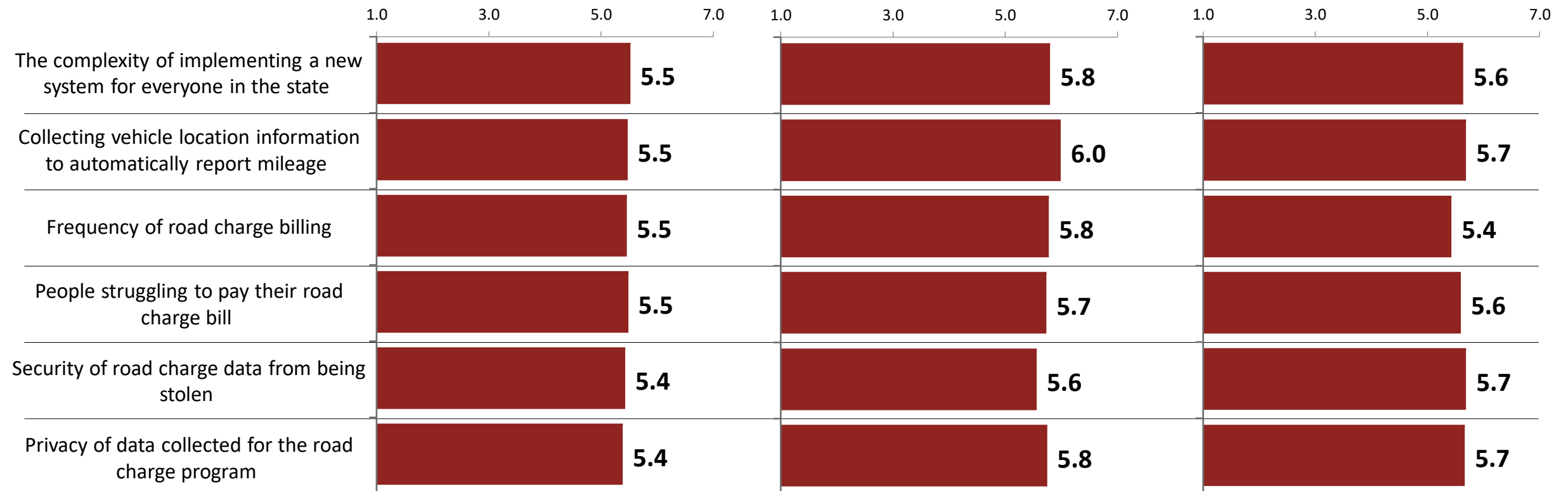
How concerned are you with...

Gen Pop

Rural

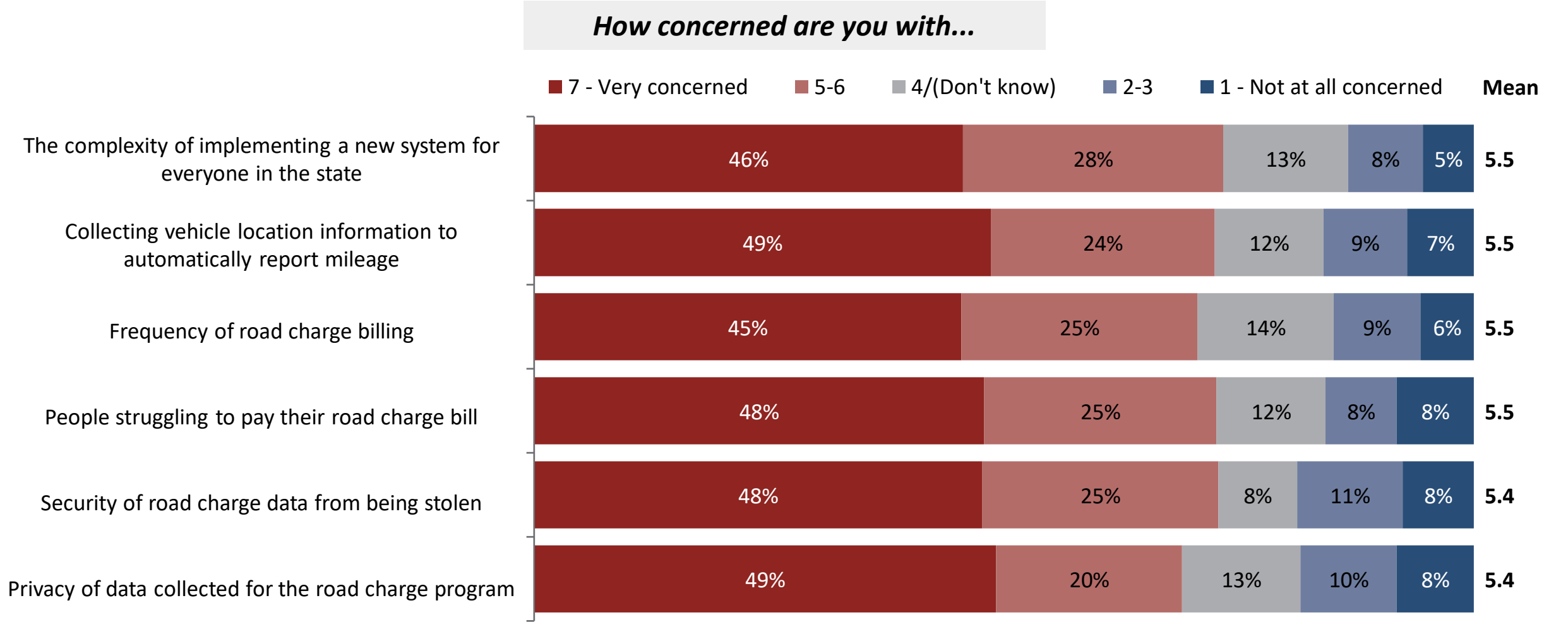
Tribal

Mean concern on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 is not concerned at all, and 7 is very concerned



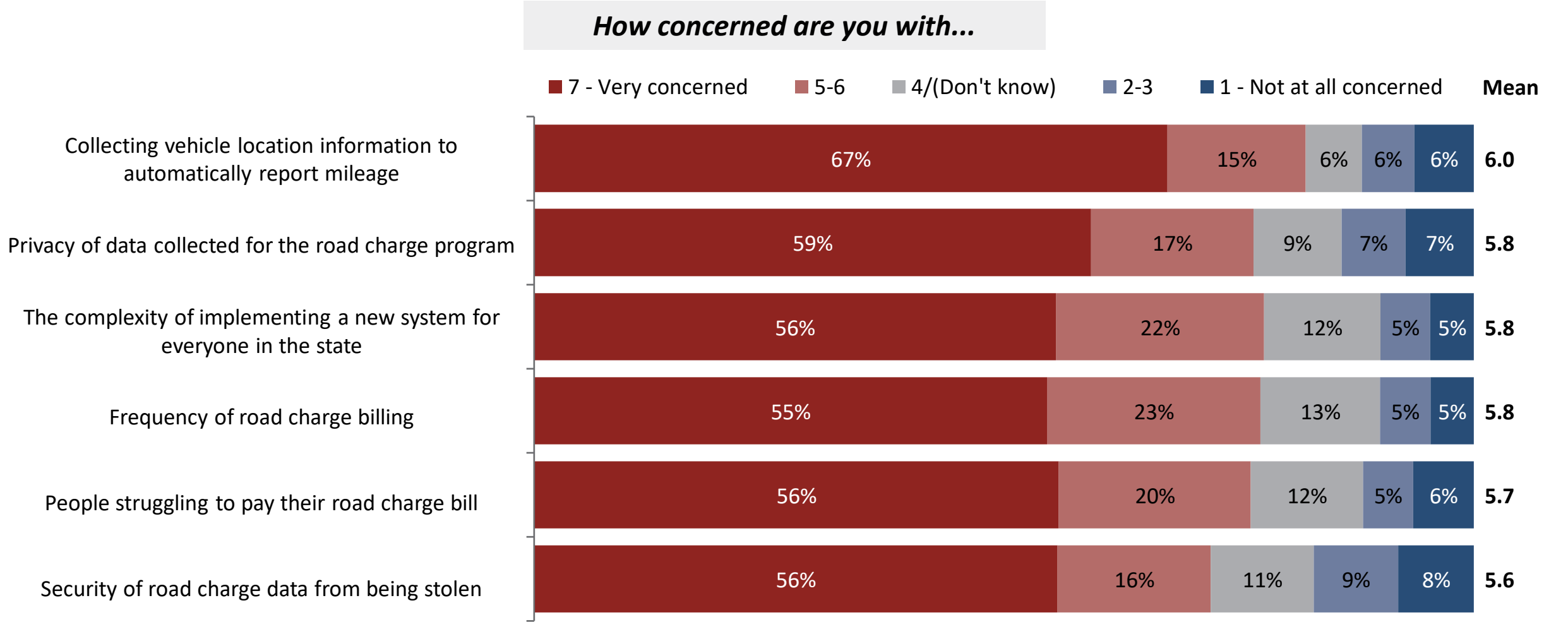
Road Charge Concerns – Gen Pop (Detail)

Californians in general are about equally concerned about several issues related to the mechanics and privacy/security of a road charge.



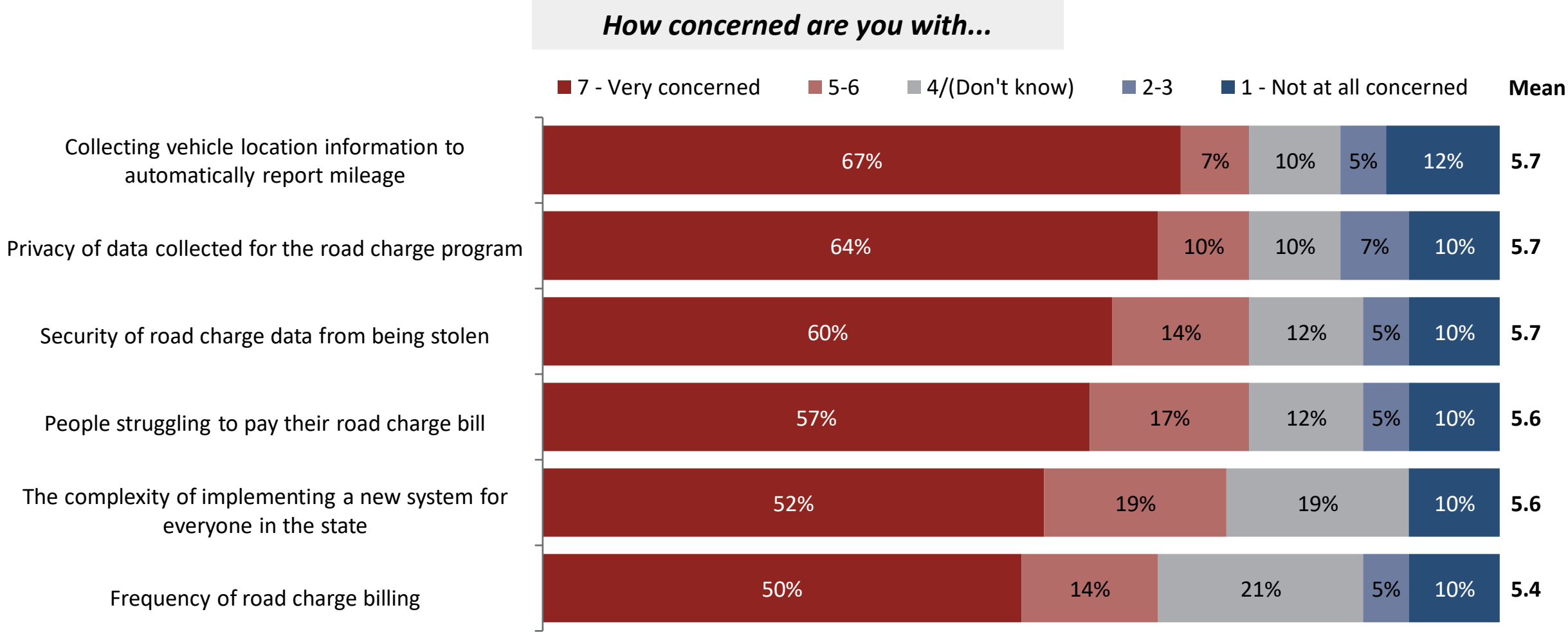
Road Charge Concerns – Rural (Detail)

Concerns related to data privacy/security in relation to road charge rise to the top among rural residents.



Road Charge Concerns – Tribal (Detail)

While the levels of concern are slightly lower among tribal respondents than rural residents, they also express higher levels of concern around the security/privacy of road charge data.

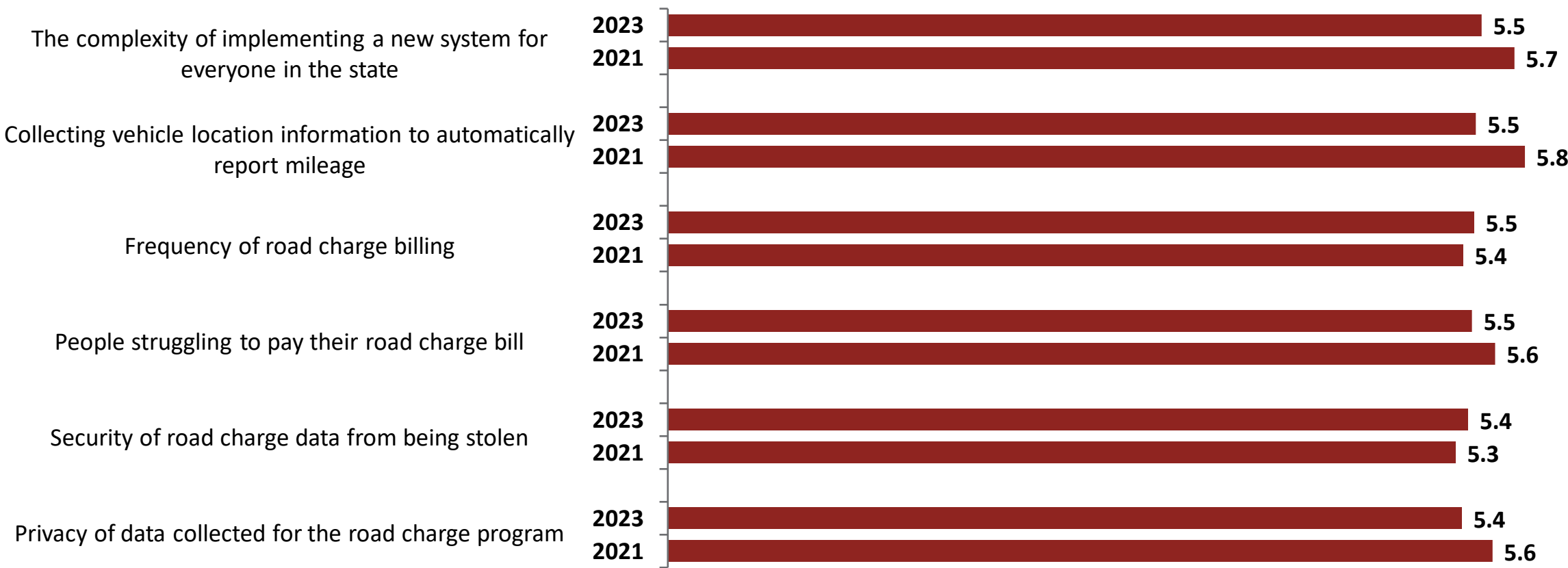


Road Charge Concerns – Over Time Comparison

Concerns about the security/privacy and the mechanics of road charge remained comparable to 2021 levels.

How concerned are you with...

Mean concern on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 is not concerned at all, and 7 is very concerned



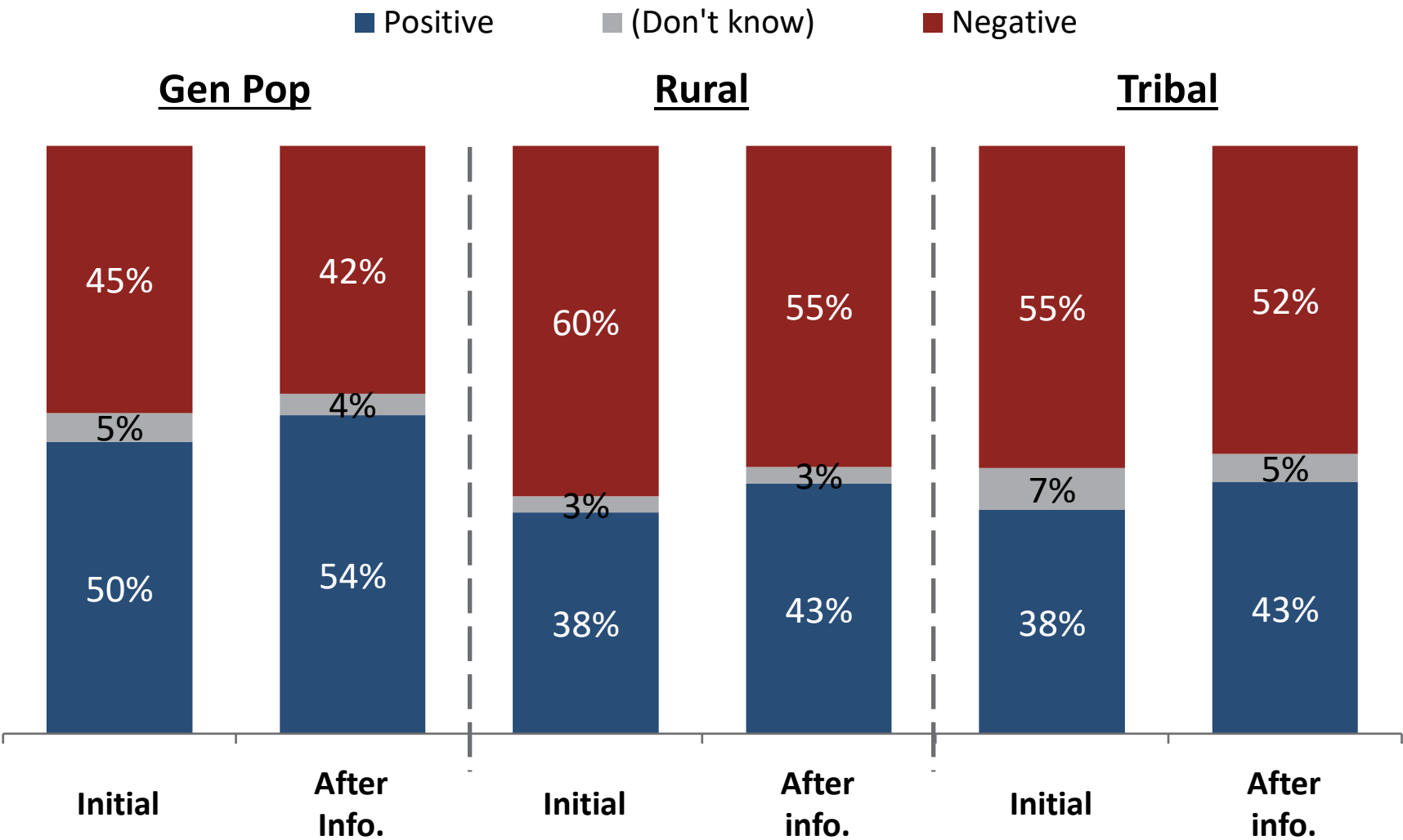


Road Charge Information

Road Charge Impression – After Information

The overall impression of road charge slightly improves across audiences after additional information.

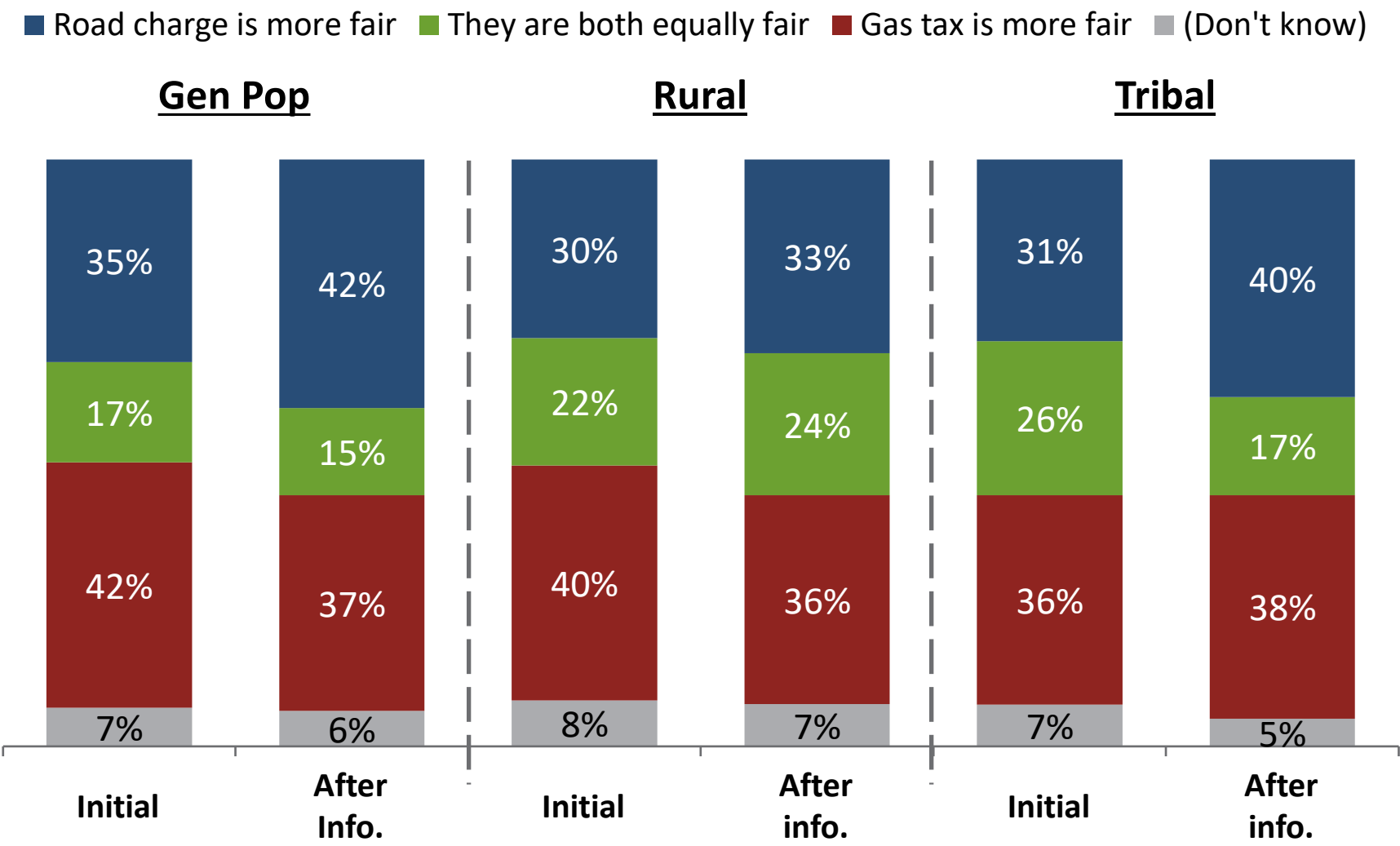
The gas tax was created 100 years ago to make sure everyone was paying their fair share. But now with more and more electric cars on the road that don't pay any gas tax at all, California needs a new, modern system. A road charge would ensure everyone pays for road usage, would be more fair and more transparent, and ensure we can fund road and highway maintenance into the future. California is currently studying the potential impact of road charge on all types of communities, including urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas, to make sure this solution is equitable and fair to all.



Road Charge Fairness – After Information

Similarly, after additional information, the percentage rating road charge more fair than gas tax at least somewhat increases.

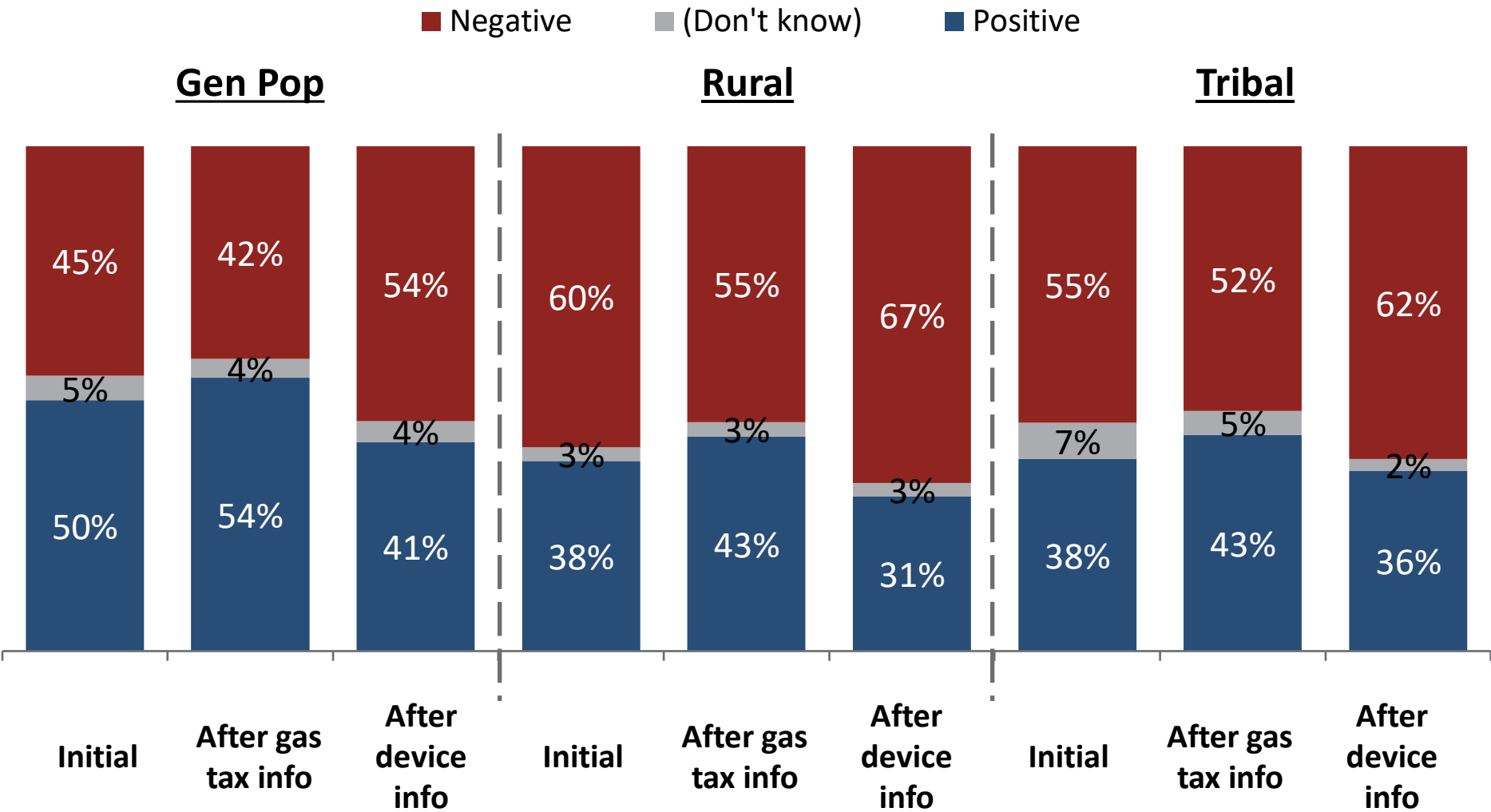
The gas tax was created 100 years ago to make sure everyone was paying their fair share. But now with more and more electric cars on the road that don't pay any gas tax at all, California needs a new, modern system. A road charge would ensure everyone pays for road usage, would be more fair and more transparent, and ensure we can fund road and highway maintenance into the future. California is currently studying the potential impact of road charge on all types of communities, including urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas, to make sure this solution is equitable and fair to all.



Road Charge Impression – After Device Info

Information about the mileage-reporting device suppresses positive impressions of the road charge below the initial levels across the three polls.

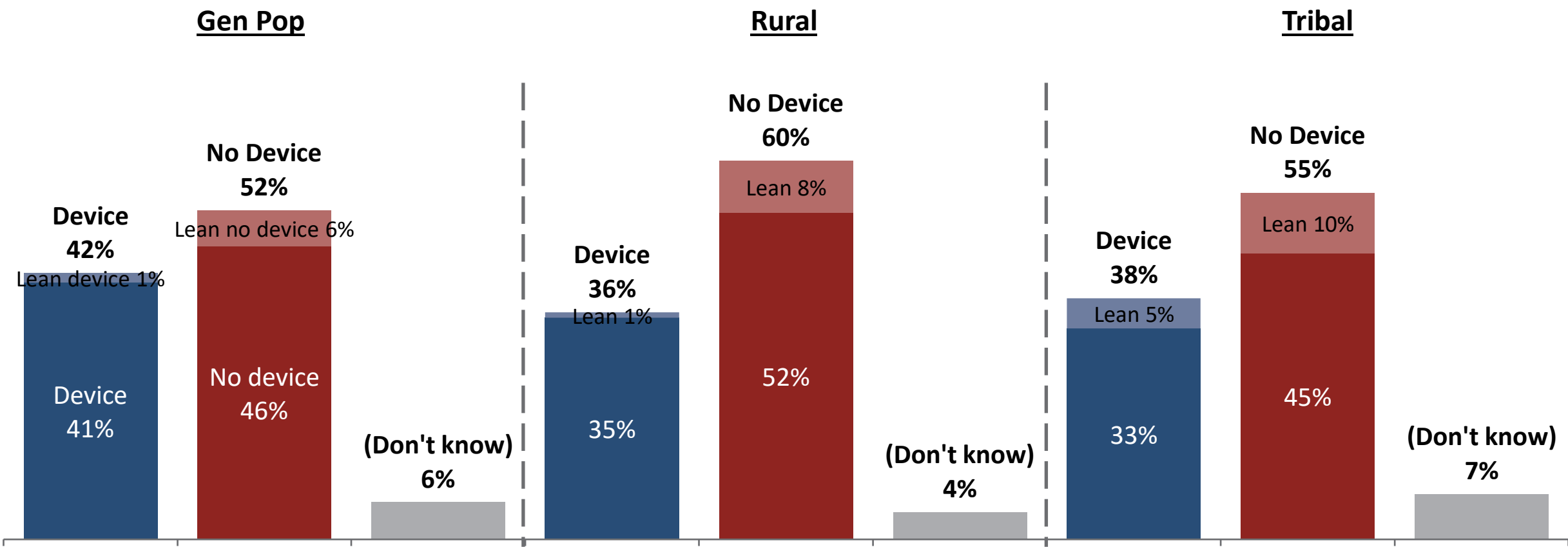
One option being considered for road charge is to provide Californians with a device that would allow your car to automatically track and report only the miles you drive on public roadways, while the miles driven on private roads would be free from road charge. Californians who do not want to install the device could choose instead to pay for all miles they drive regardless of the type of road.



Device Preference

A majority in all three polls say they would prefer not to install the mileage tracking device in their vehicle.

Just knowing what you know now, do you think you would choose the device that automatically tracks and reports eligible miles, or would you rather not install the device and pay for every mile you drive at a slightly higher cost?



Reasons to Prefer Device

Not wanting to pay for miles driven on private roads is the top reason for preferring to install the mileage-reporting device, followed by its perceived convenience.

Why did you choose that option?	Gen Pop % (n=249)	Rural % (n=171)	Tribal % (n=16)
Don't want to pay more/Cheaper	29%	27%	31%
Will track miles for me/Accurate/Easy/Simple	29%	17%	19%
Road charge is more fair	8%	10%	13%
Don't drive much/Don't travel far	7%	9%	-
Don't like either option	4%	10%	6%
Drive on private roads/Out of state	3%	12%	-
Privacy/Data security	2%	-	-
Don't want to be tracked/Government tracking	1%	1%	6%
Too many taxes already/Govt mismanages	1%	4%	-
Other	6%	4%	19%
Unsure/Don't know/Just because	10%	6%	6%

"I'm on a very limited budget and assuming this saves me some money, it just makes sense."

"It's simpler [because] it automatically tracks and I don't have to turn in paperwork."

Reasons to Prefer No Device

Not wanting to be “tracked” by the government and privacy/security concerns are the primary reasons for opting out.

Why did you choose that option?	Gen Pop % (n=320)	Rural % (n=307)	Tribal % (n=23)
Don't want to be tracked/Govt tracking	34%	35%	57%
Privacy/Data security	21%	18%	9%
Too many taxes already/ Govt mismanages	12%	10%	-
Don't want to pay more/Cheaper	4%	4%	-
There are better alternatives/Split system	3%	1%	4%
Don't drive on private roads	3%	2%	-
Gas tax is better	2%	3%	-
Don't like either option	2%	6%	-
General oppose	-	4%	22%
No bandwidth to support device in rural areas	-	3%	-
Other	9%	4%	9%
Unsure/Don't know/Just because	11%	7%	-

“A sense of protecting privacy [and] data security. Those people don't seem to worry about it, but I still do. I don't want Big Brother tracking my every move.”

“California collects plenty of gas tax money. It's how they spend it that is the problem...”

“I would prefer to pay for actual mileage.”

- ▶ Rural residents and tribal respondents find replacing the gas tax almost as important as the general population, but their impressions of road charge lag behind both before and after more information about the mechanism is provided.
 - That said, even additional information about road charge helps improve the perceptions around it across audiences; indicating the need for more communication and education around the road charge for strengthening public support.
- ▶ Compared to the general population, rural residents and tribal respondents hold more negative impressions around the fairness of road charge towards different categories of drivers, as well as expressing higher levels of concern around the mechanics and data privacy/security of the road charge mechanism.
- ▶ The option of installing a device in one's vehicle to record the number of miles driven damages positive impressions around road charge, and majorities across audiences indicate they would prefer not to install the device in their own cars.
 - Among rural residents and tribal respondents, who potentially would benefit the most from the mileage-reporting device, the preference for **not** installing it is higher than among the general population.

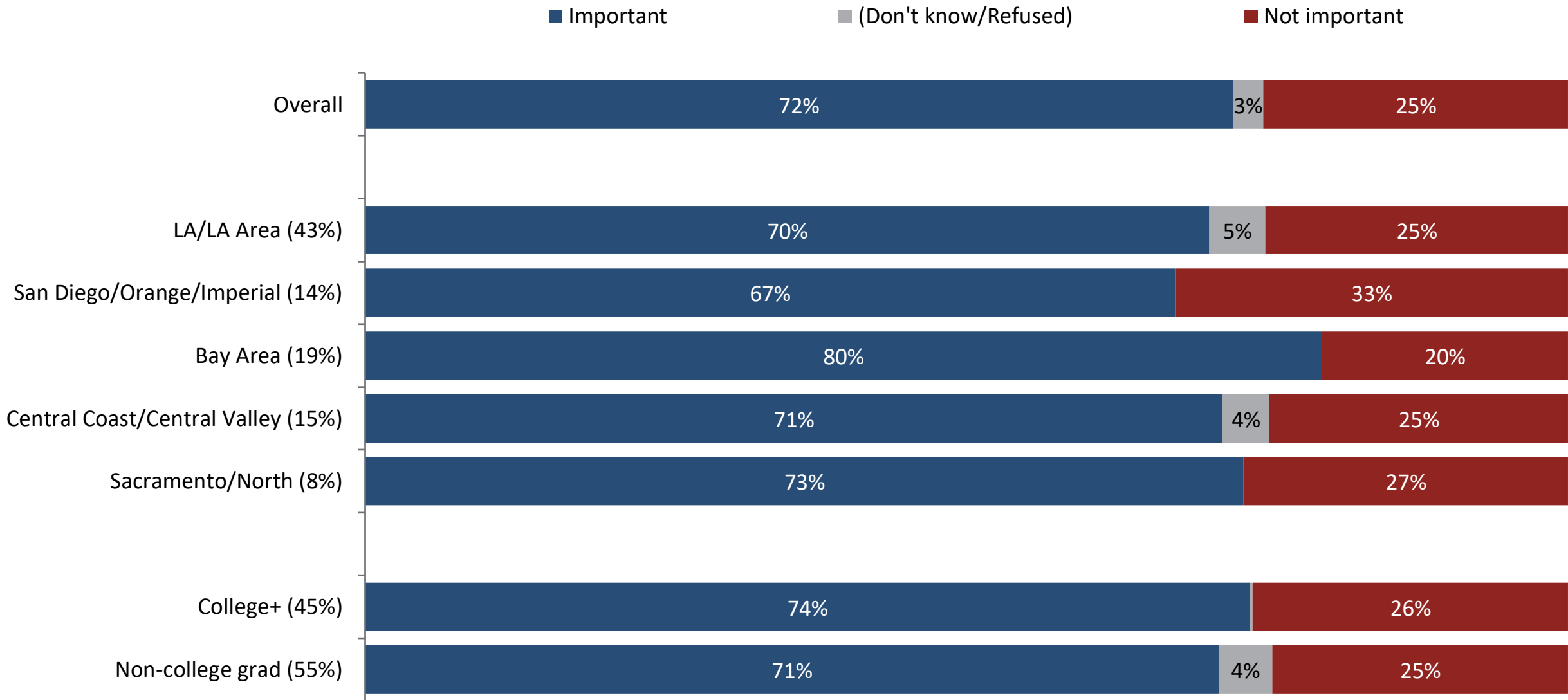


APPENDIX



Subgroup Analysis on Key Questions - General Population

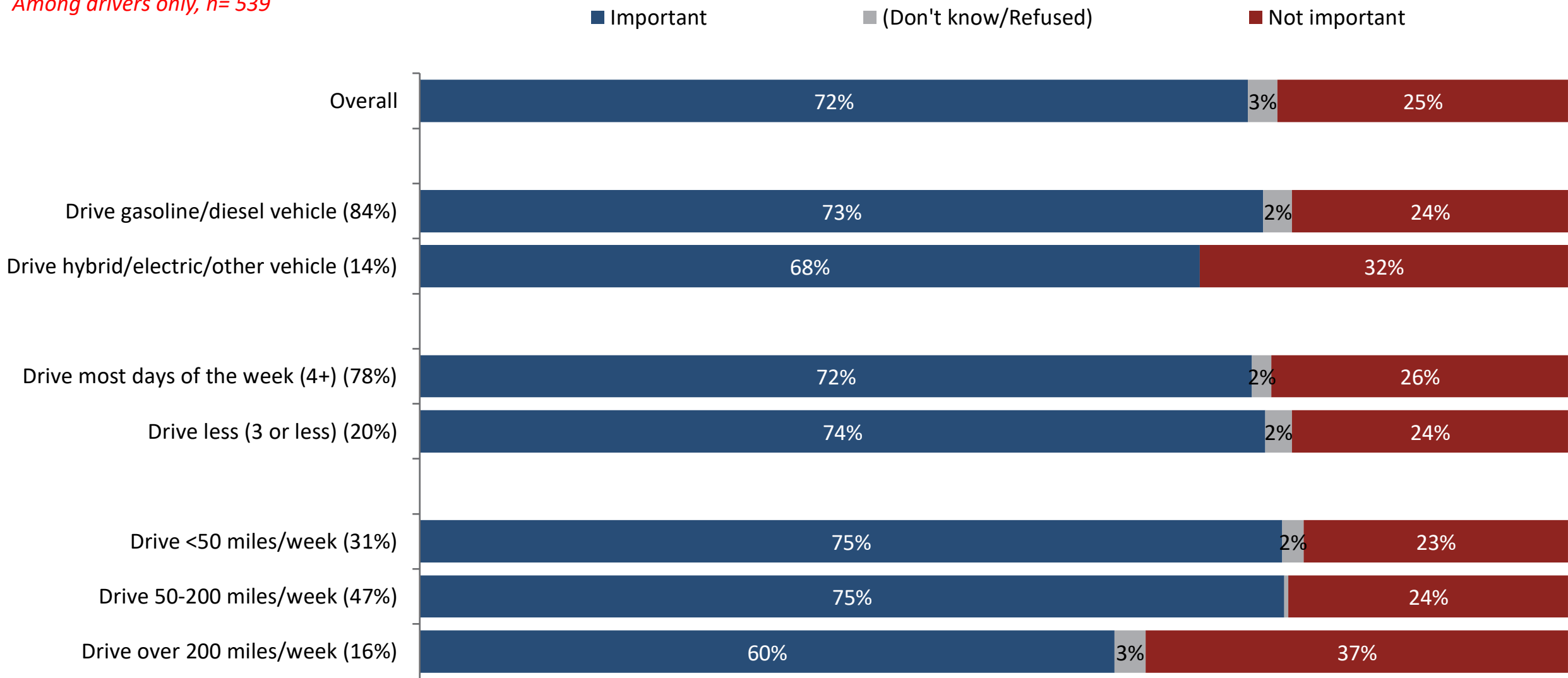
Important to Replace Gas Tax by Resident Subgroups



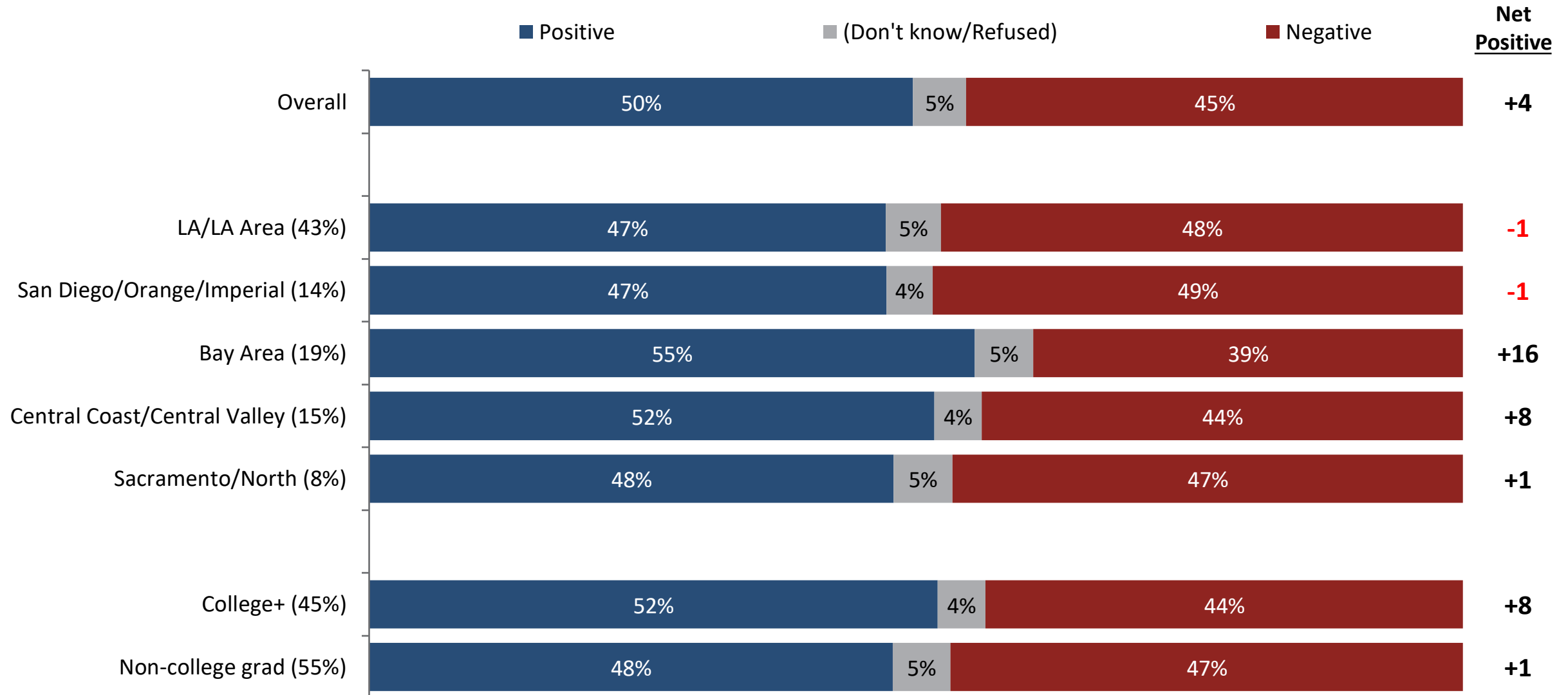
Important to Replace Gas Tax by Driver Subgroups



Among drivers only, n= 539



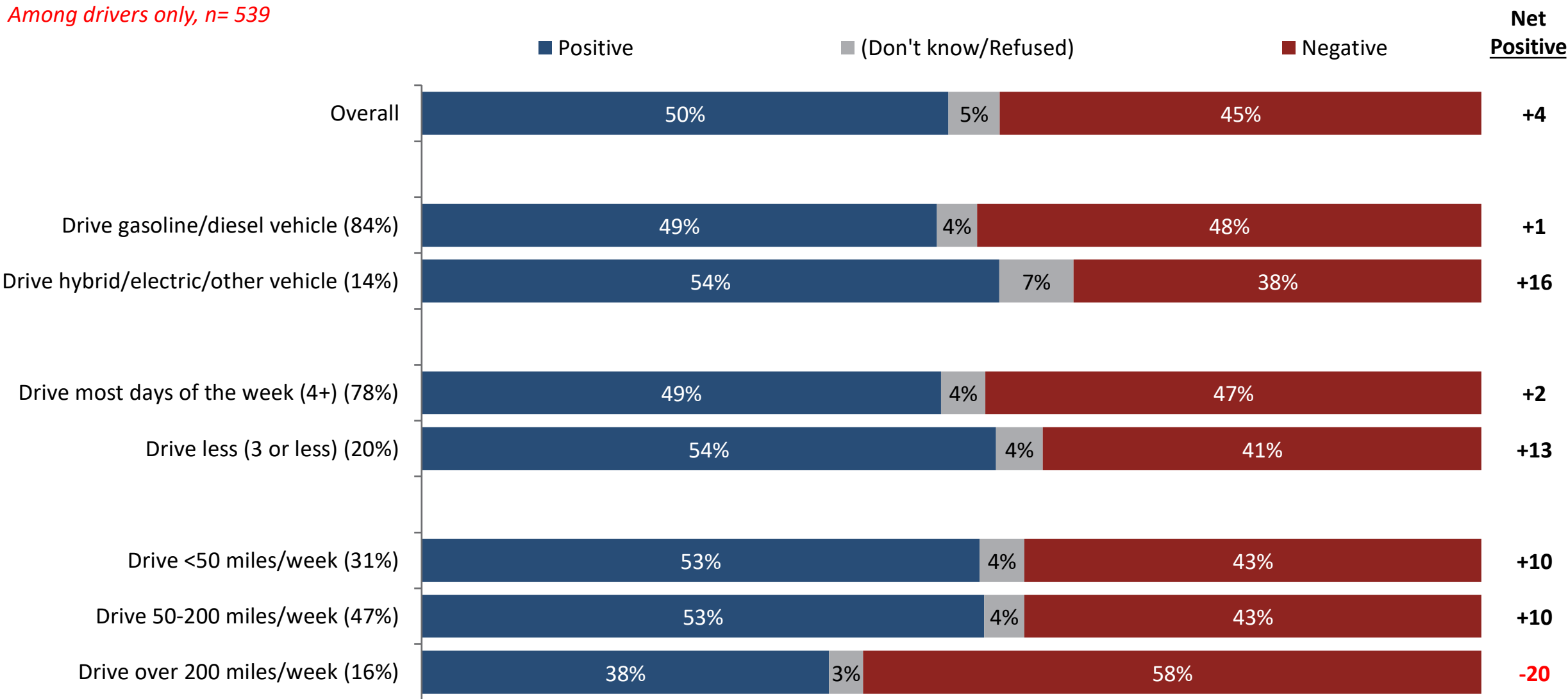
Road Charge Initial Impression by Resident Subgroups



Q12. After hearing this, please tell me if you have a positive or a negative impression of replacing the state gas tax with a road charge for California.

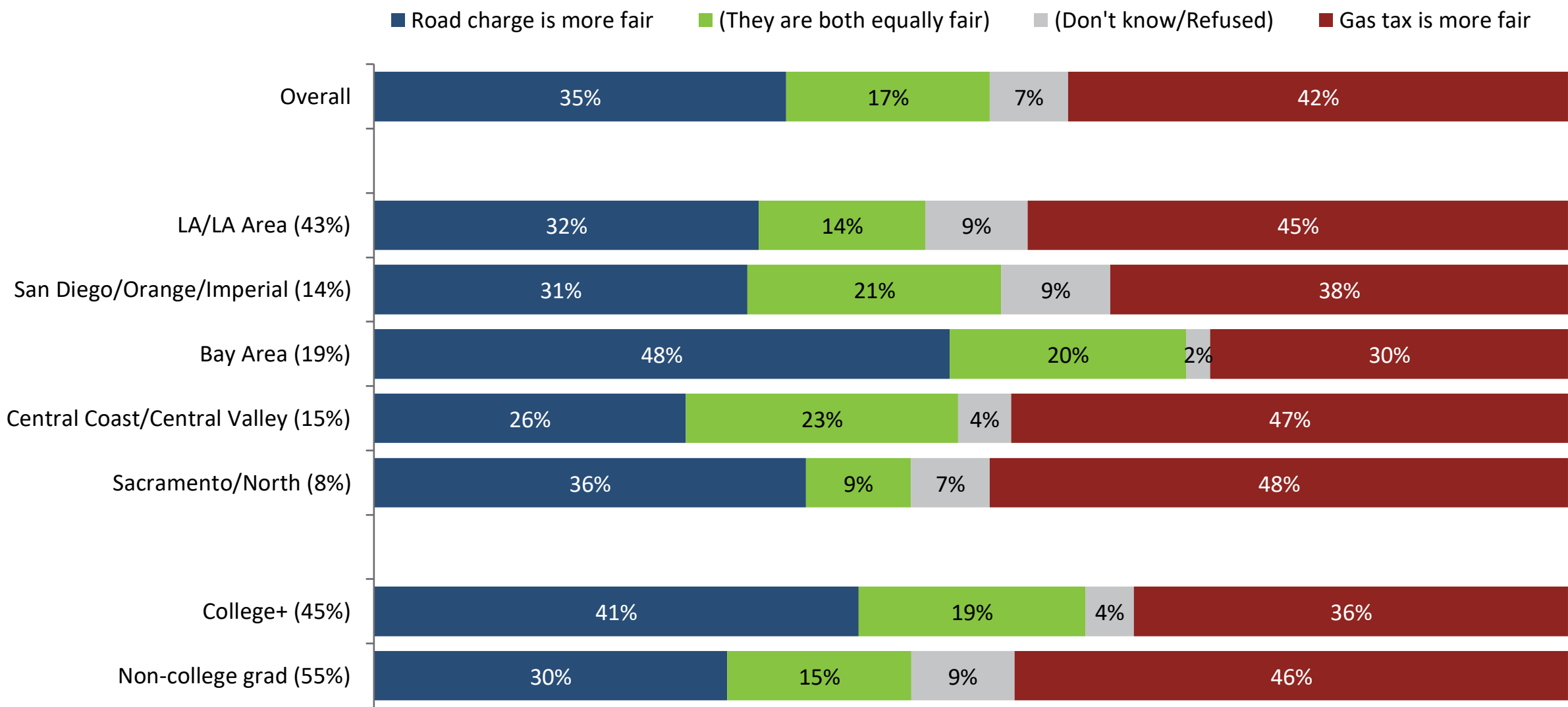
Road Charge Initial Impression by Driver Subgroups

Among drivers only, n= 539



Q12. After hearing this, please tell me if you have a positive or a negative impression of replacing the state gas tax with a road charge for California.

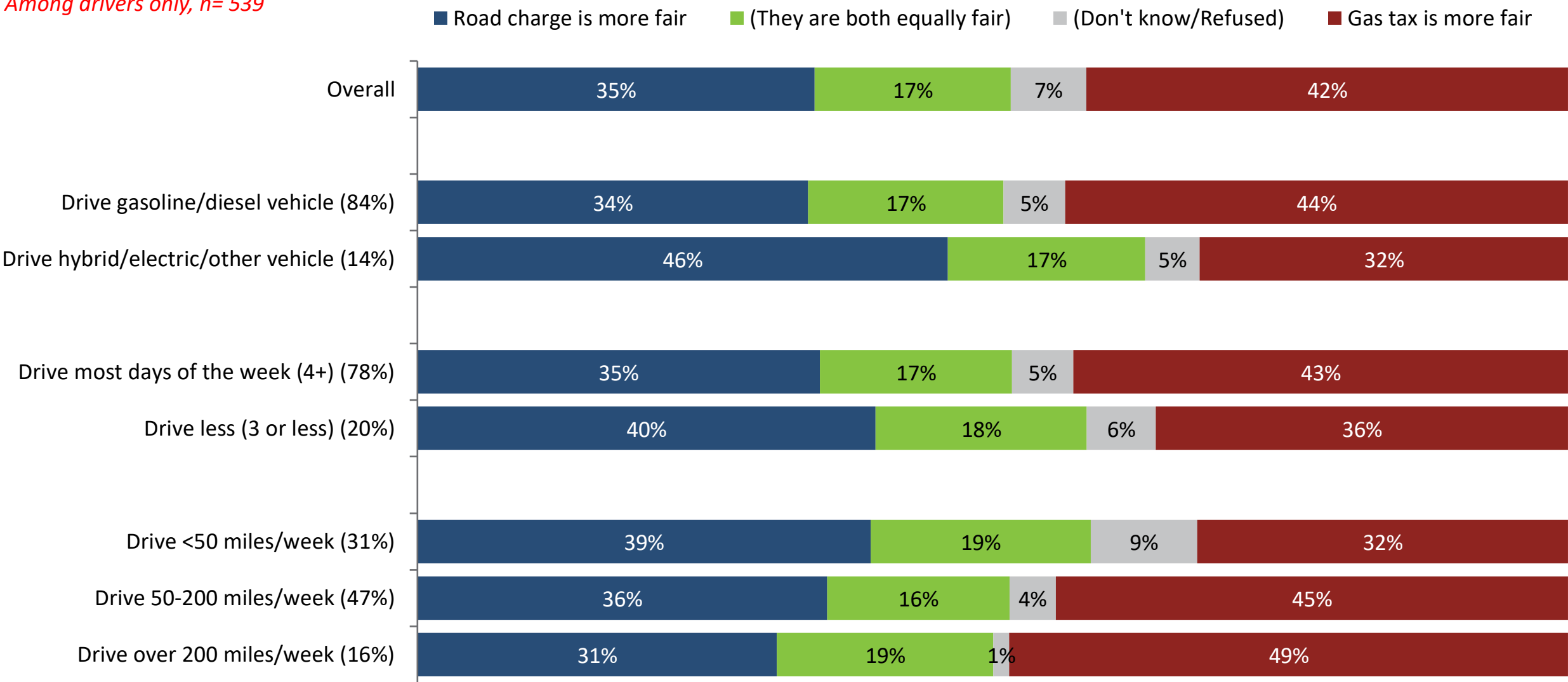
Initial Perception of Fairness by Resident Subgroups



Initial Perception of Fairness by Driver Subgroups

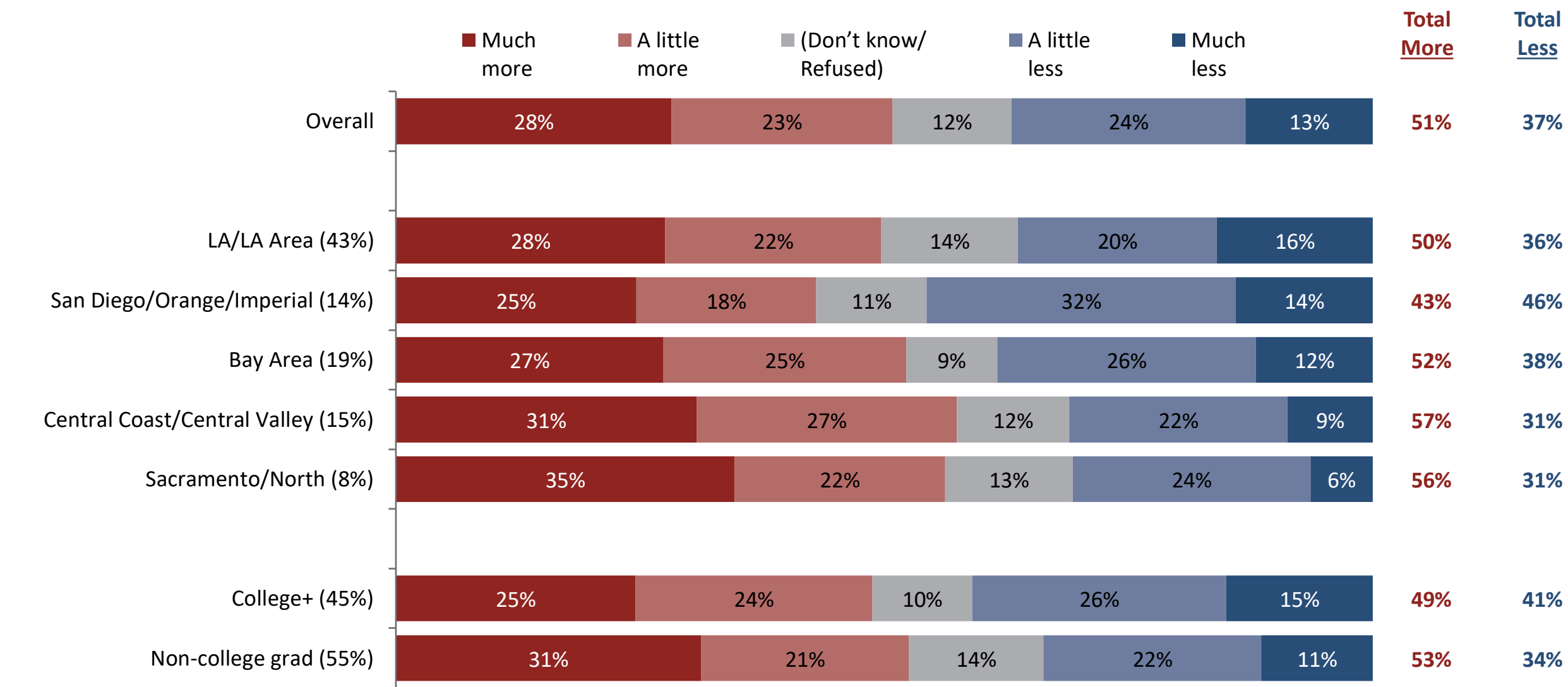


Among drivers only, n= 539



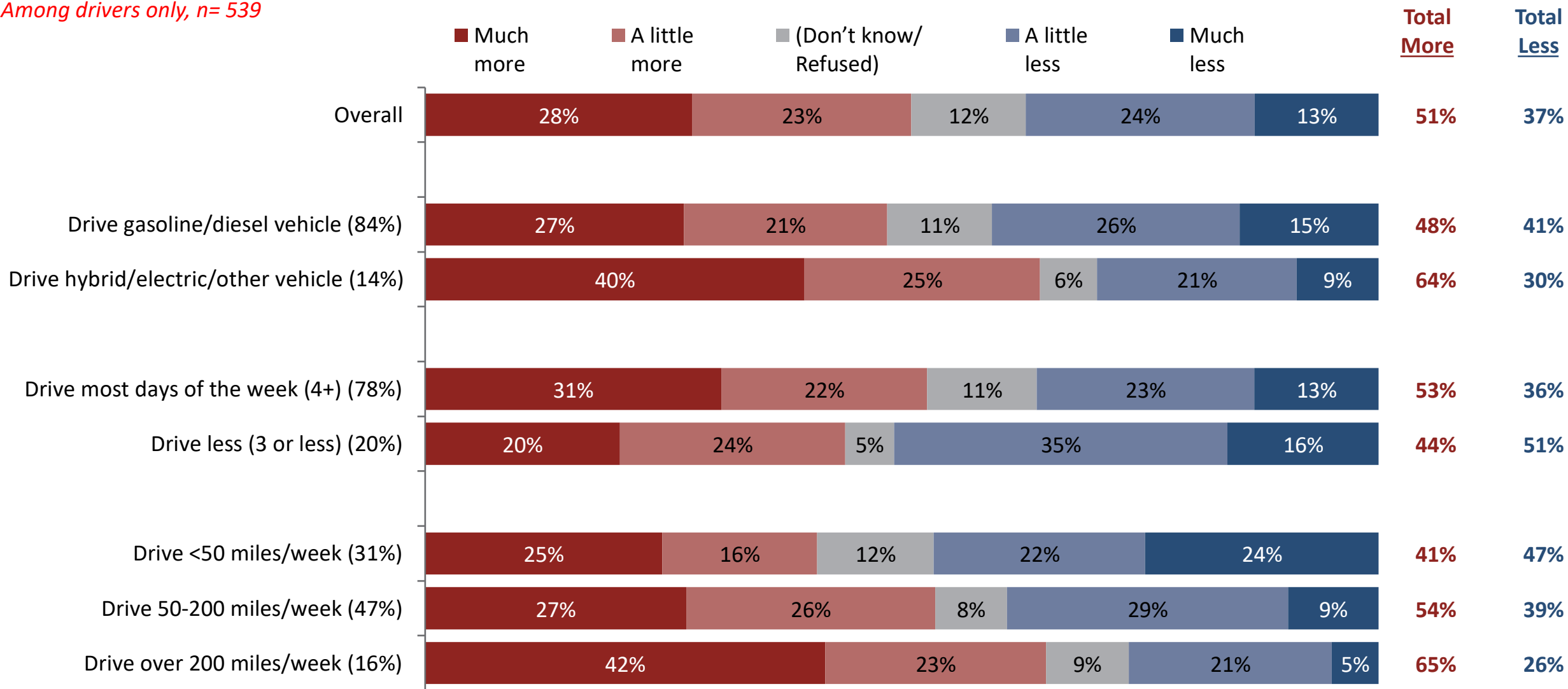
Q13. Which would you say is more fair for California drivers: Replacing the state gas tax with a road charge, or continuing the state gas tax as it is now?

Resident Impressions of Personal Cost of Program



Driver Impressions of Personal Cost of Program

Among drivers only, n= 539

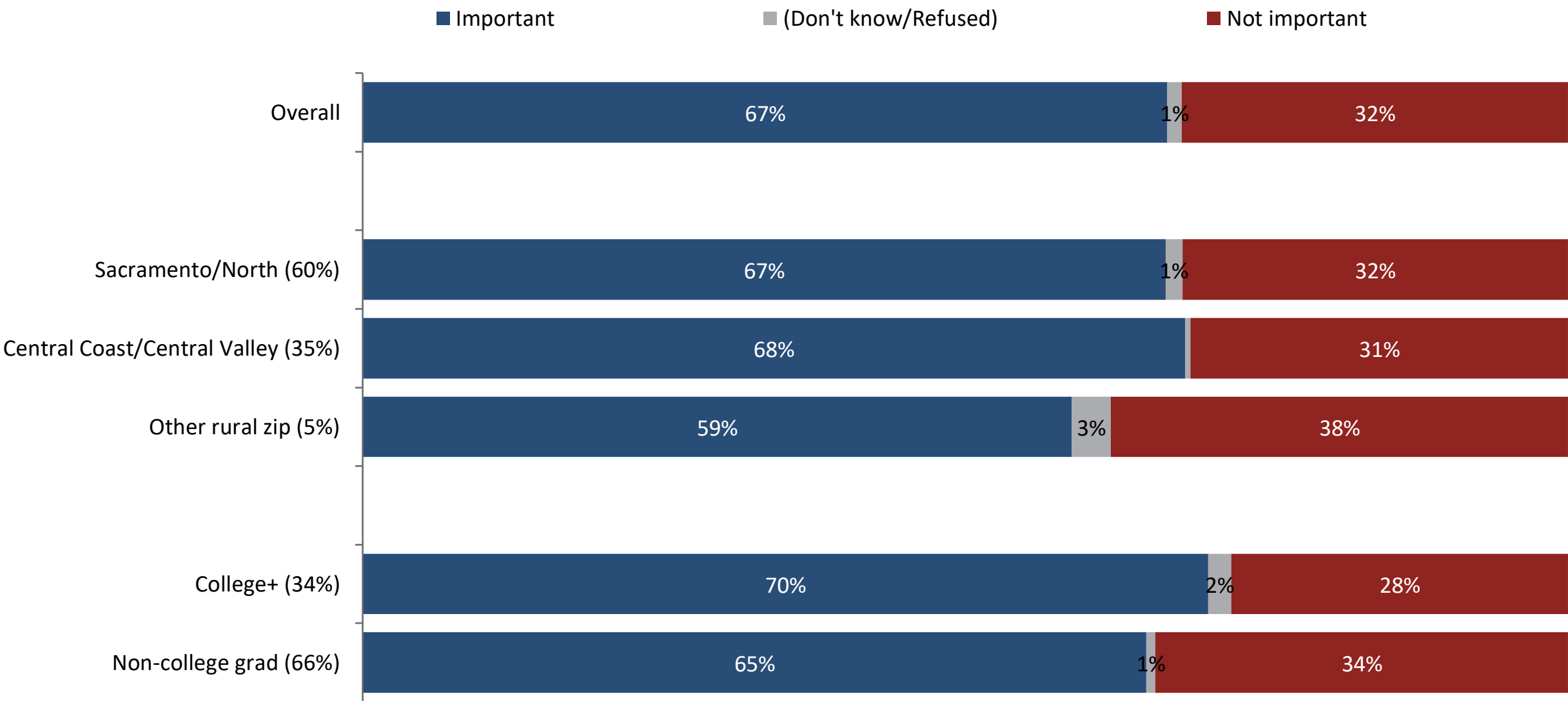


Q14. Do you think you personally would pay more with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax, or less with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax?



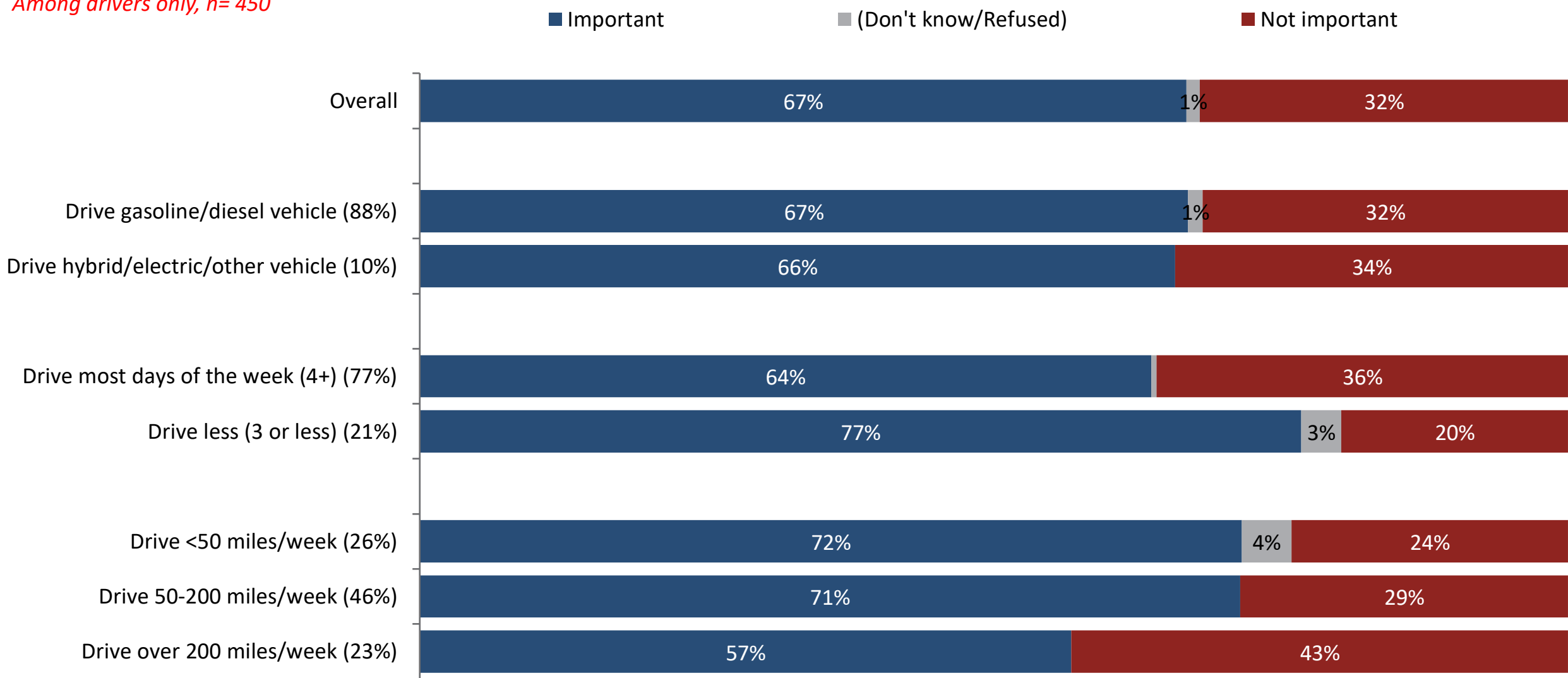
Subgroup Analysis on Key Questions - Rural Population

Important to Replace Gas Tax by Resident Subgroups

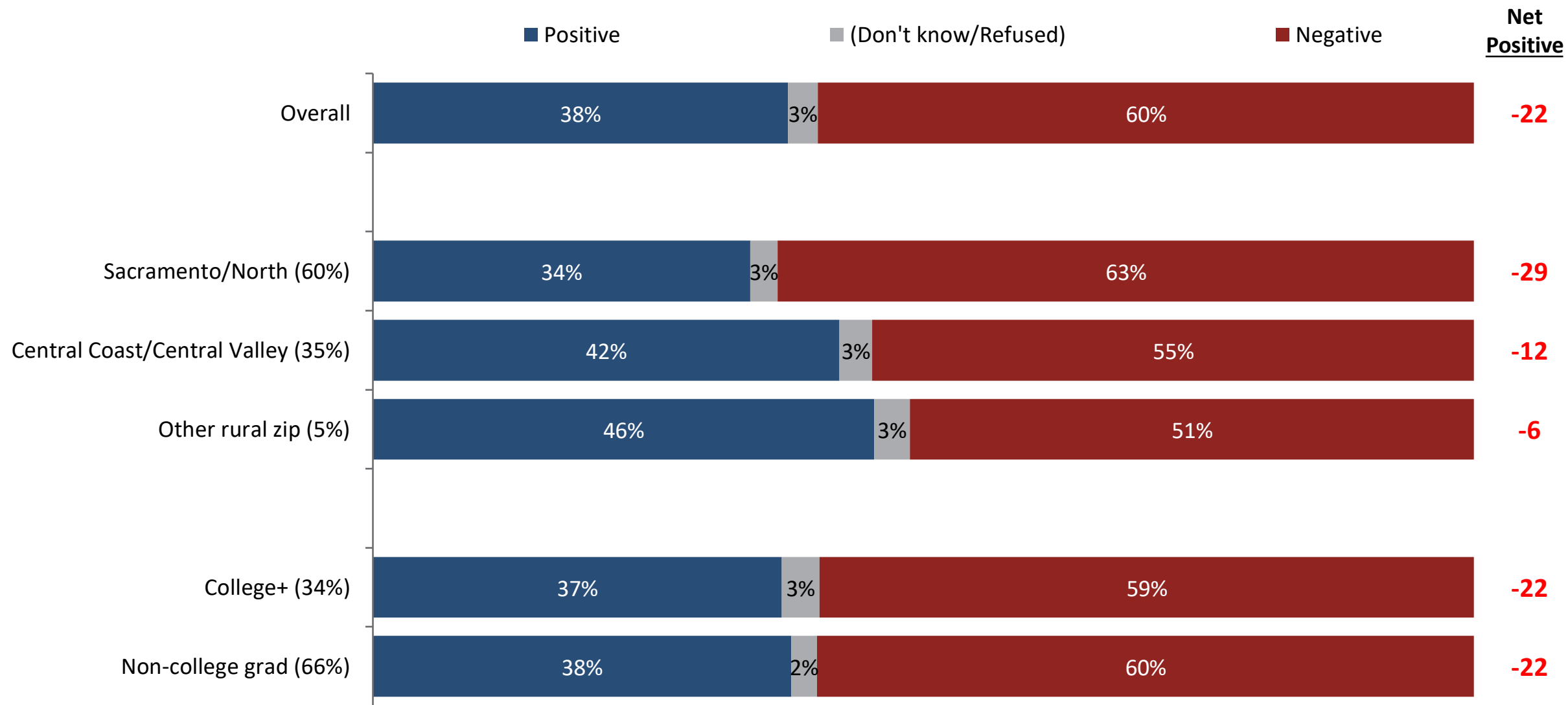


Important to Replace Gas Tax by Driver Subgroups

Among drivers only, n= 450

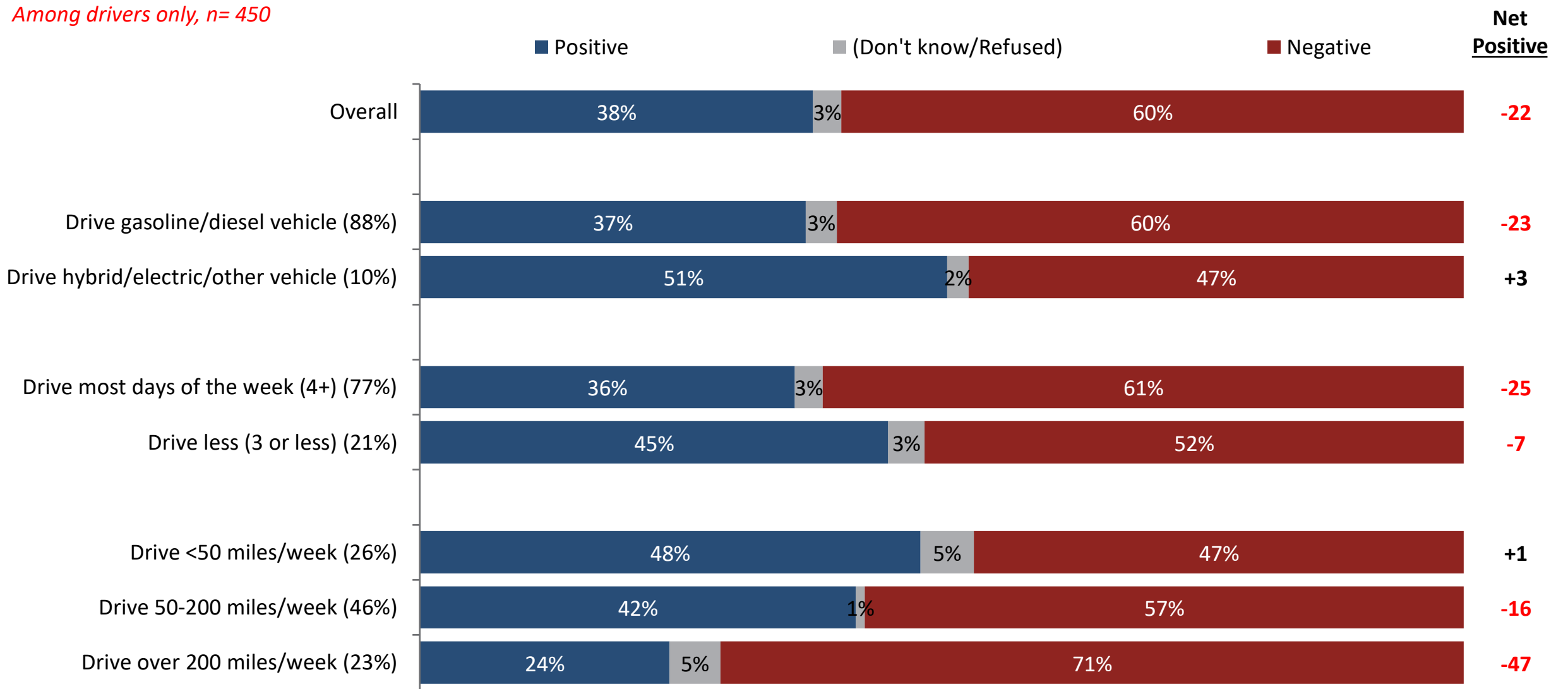


Road Charge Initial Impression by Resident Subgroups



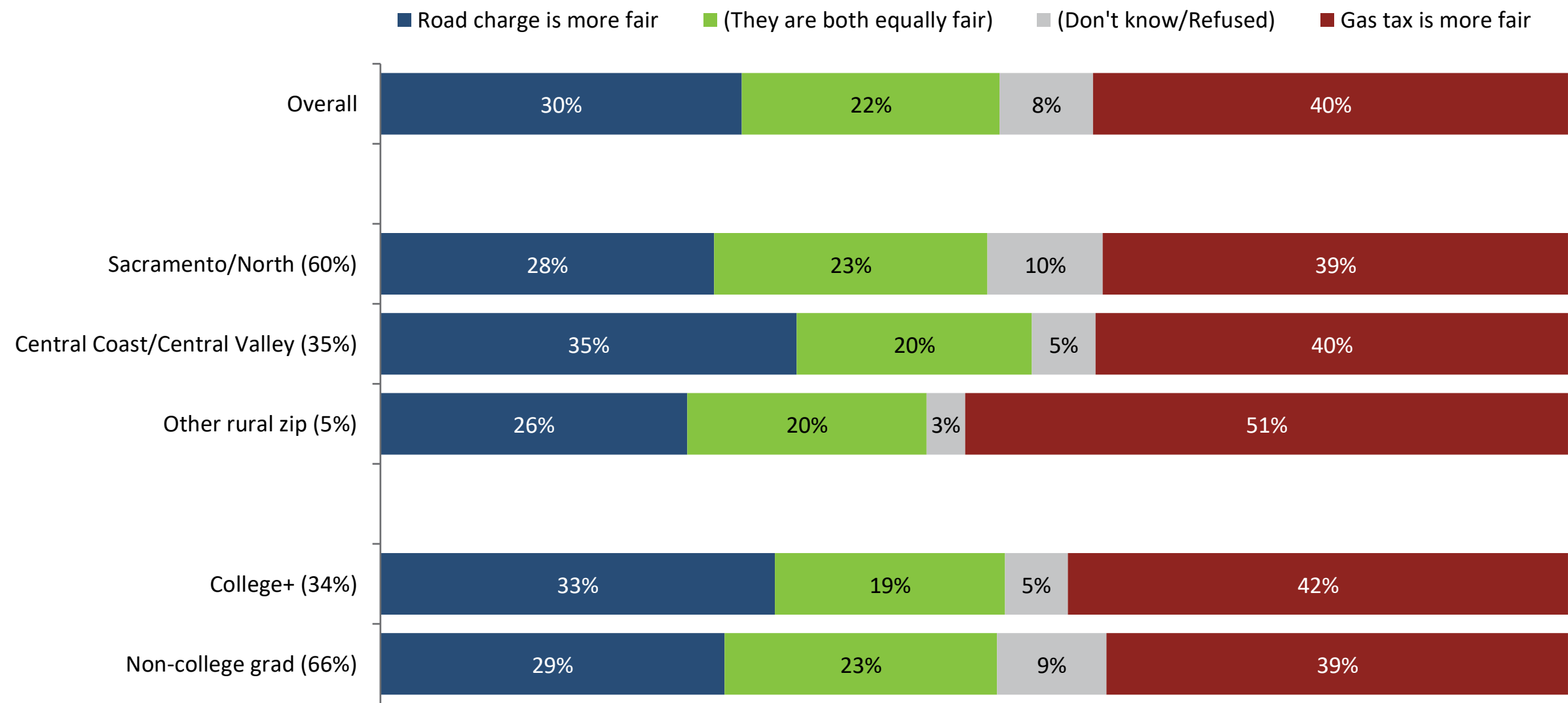
Road Charge Initial Impression by Driver Subgroups

Among drivers only, n= 450



Q12. After hearing this, please tell me if you have a positive or a negative impression of replacing the state gas tax with a road charge for California.

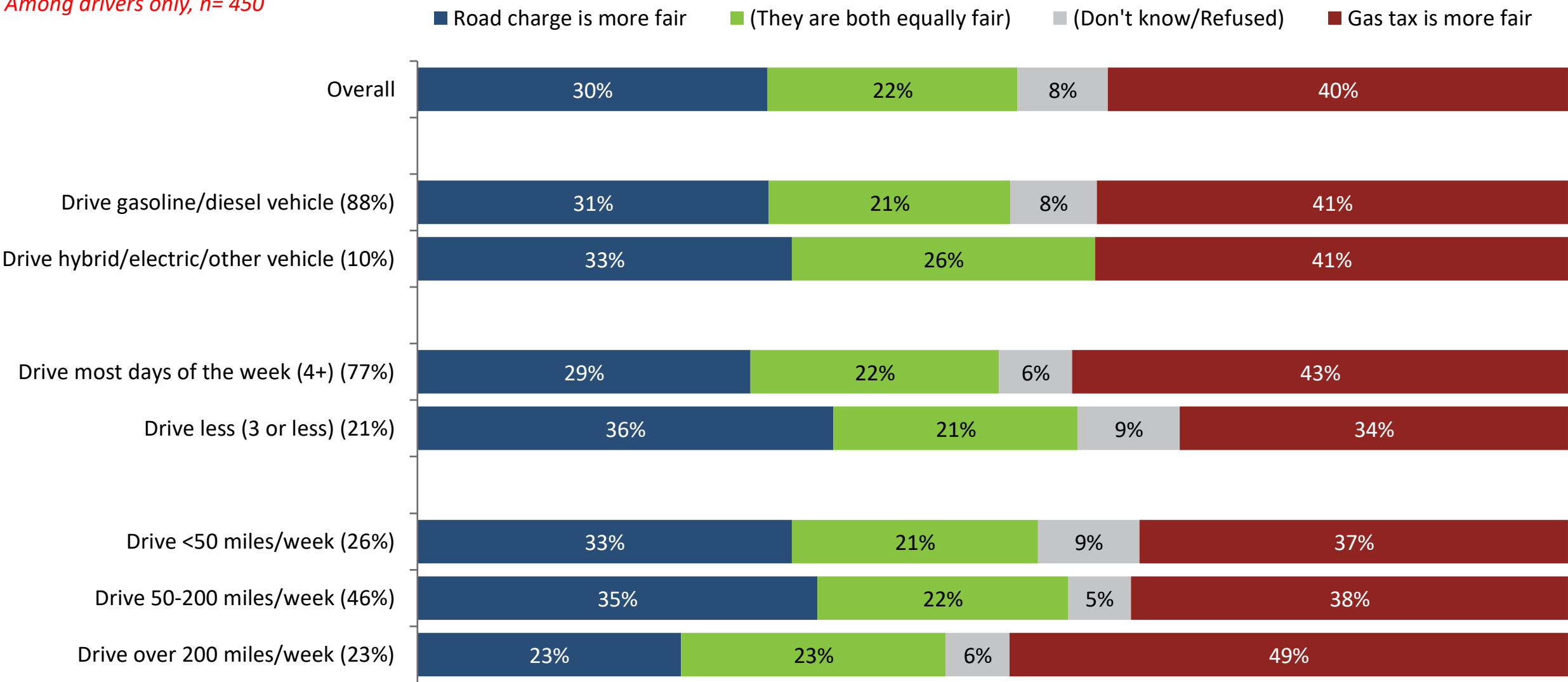
Initial Perception of Fairness by Resident Subgroups



Q13. Which would you say is more fair for California drivers: Replacing the state gas tax with a road charge, or continuing the state gas tax as it is now?

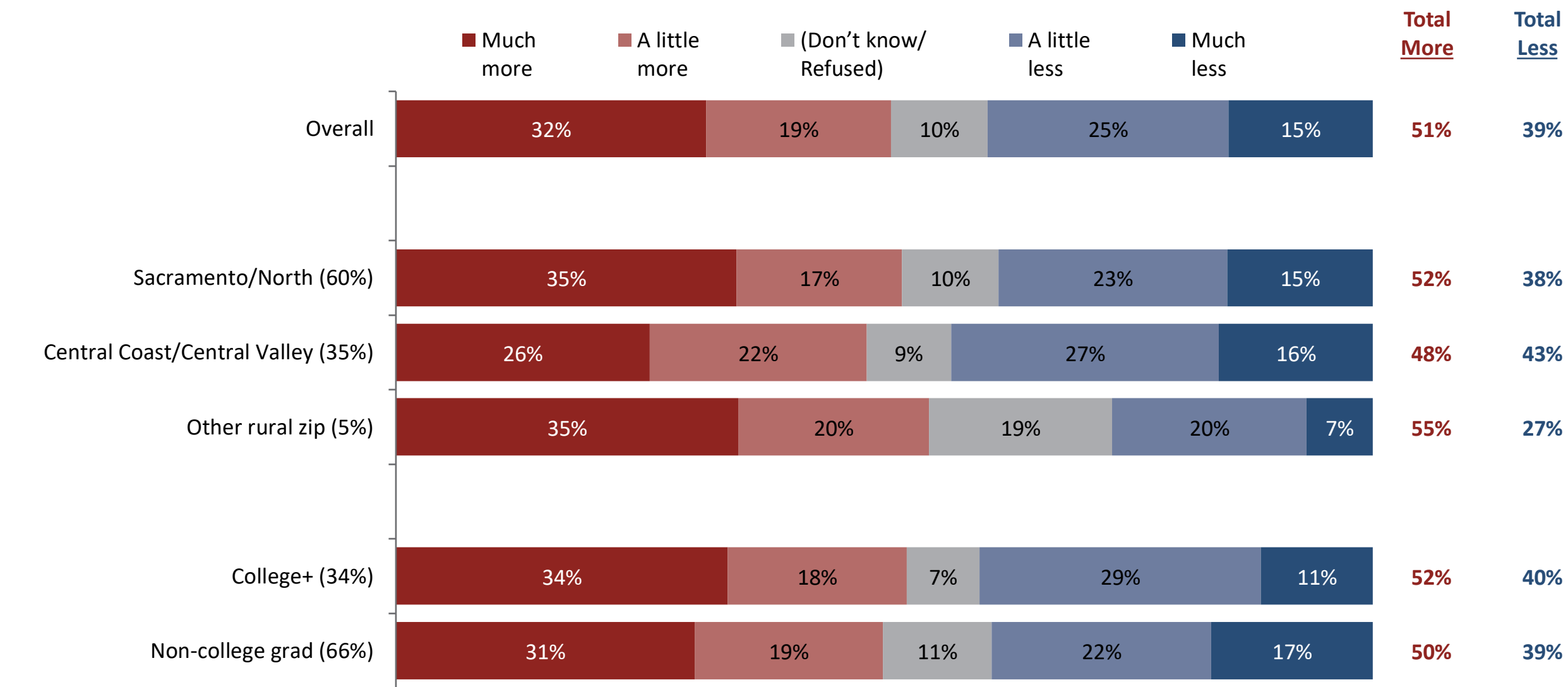
Initial Perception of Fairness by Driver Subgroups

Among drivers only, n= 450



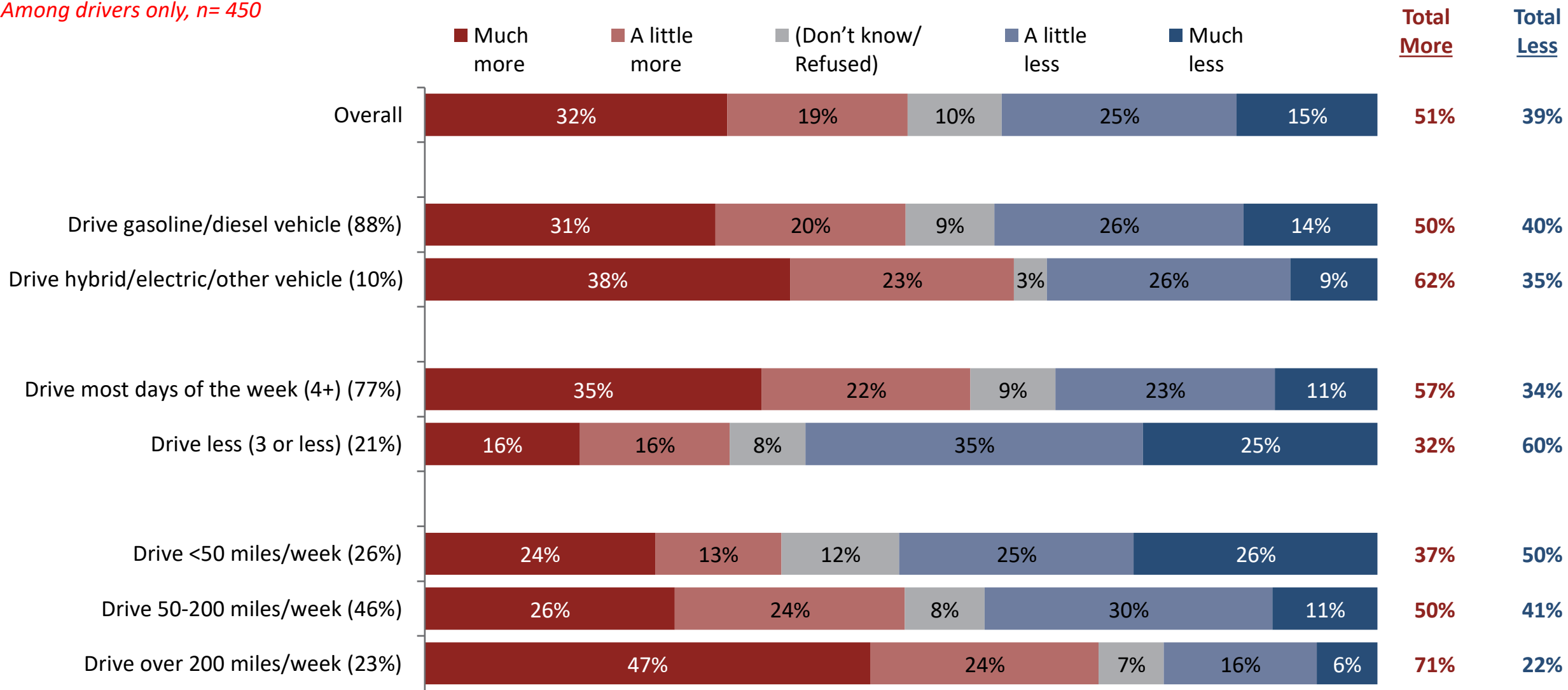
Q13. Which would you say is more fair for California drivers: Replacing the state gas tax with a road charge, or continuing the state gas tax as it is now?

Resident Impressions of Personal Cost of Program



Driver Impressions of Personal Cost of Program

Among drivers only, n= 450



Q14. Do you think you personally would pay more with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax, or less with a road charge than you do now with the state gas tax?



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