



# Responsible PA Targeted Districts Poll

**POLL DEBRIEF**

January 25 - 30, 2025

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# About Change Research

*Fast. Accurate. Affordable.*

## Who We Are



Change Research was founded in 2017 with the mission of improving American democracy by making public opinion insights more accessible to forward-thinking political campaigns and advocacy organizations. We are a team of pollsters, engineers, data scientists, and strategists. Our team brings expertise in methodological innovation, research design, public opinion, and strategic consulting.

## Our Unique Approach



All of our surveys are completed online, but we do **not** use panels! We recruit new participants for every poll using targeted online advertisements on websites and social media platforms, and using SMS text-to-web.

## Our Products



In addition to custom polling, we offer:

- **Spark** candidate viability & election tracking (standardized and cost-effective polling)
- **Magnify** AI targeting (custom modeling)
- **Voices** qualitative research (in-depth interviews and text-based chats)

# METHODOLOGY



Survey n = 1,129 likely voters across Pennsylvania, January 25-30, 2025



Respondents were recruited via dynamic online sampling and SMS to obtain a sample reflective of the population.



Post-stratification performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2024 presidential vote.



The average modeled margin of error is +/- 3.1%

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Understanding voters' attitudes on legalizing marijuana in Pennsylvania

# SAMPLE OVERVIEW



52% Women  
46% Men



76% White  
9% Black  
8% Hispanic  
7% Other



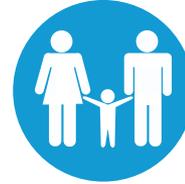
46% Democrat  
44% Republican  
11% Independent



21% 18-34  
22% 35-49  
27% 50-64  
29% 65+



21% High-School or Less  
26% Some College/No Degree  
14% Associate's Degree  
24% Bachelor's Degree  
15% Graduate Degree



37% Parent  
26% Grandparent  
27% No children

# Key Takeaways



## **Strong mandate for cannabis legalization**

Two-thirds (67%) of Pennsylvania voters support legalizing cannabis, with nearly half (47%) strongly supporting it. The data shows a clear public consensus for moving forward with legalization in 2025 rather than delaying.



## **Private Market Model Preferred**

Voters want to avoid replicating Pennsylvania's current state-run liquor store system for cannabis. A clear majority (57%) of voters prefer a private retail model for cannabis sales over a state-run system (25%). This preference holds across party lines.



## **Child safety & product testing are top priorities**

The top priorities for cannabis implementation are: preventing minor access (75% very important), ensuring product safety testing (73%), keeping revenue in local communities (67%), and preventing excessive government control (59%).



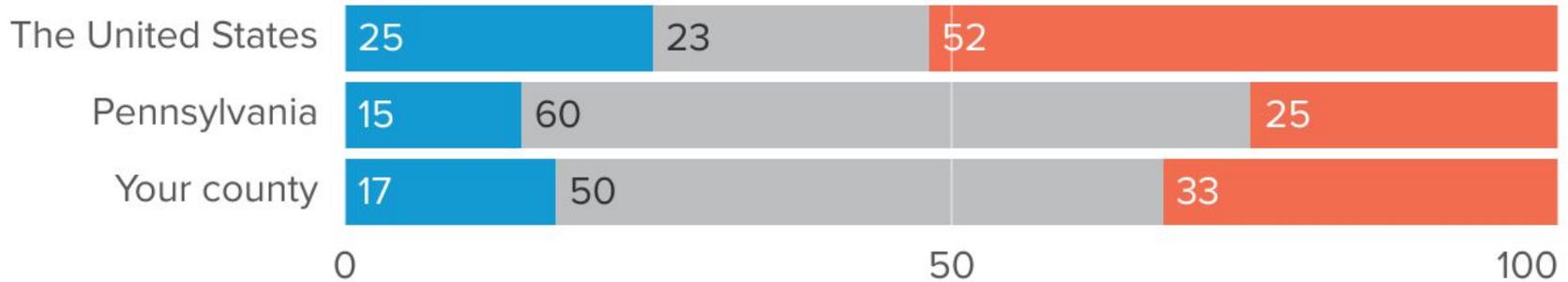
## **Public investments favored for tax revenue**

Voters want cannabis tax revenue directed toward public goods, with education funding (61%), infrastructure improvements (53%), and substance abuse treatment (47%) leading the priorities. There's less support for social equity initiatives.

# Voters see national direction negatively but are more neutral on state and local trajectory

- Across all three geographies, voters are more likely to say things are going off on the wrong track than in the right direction

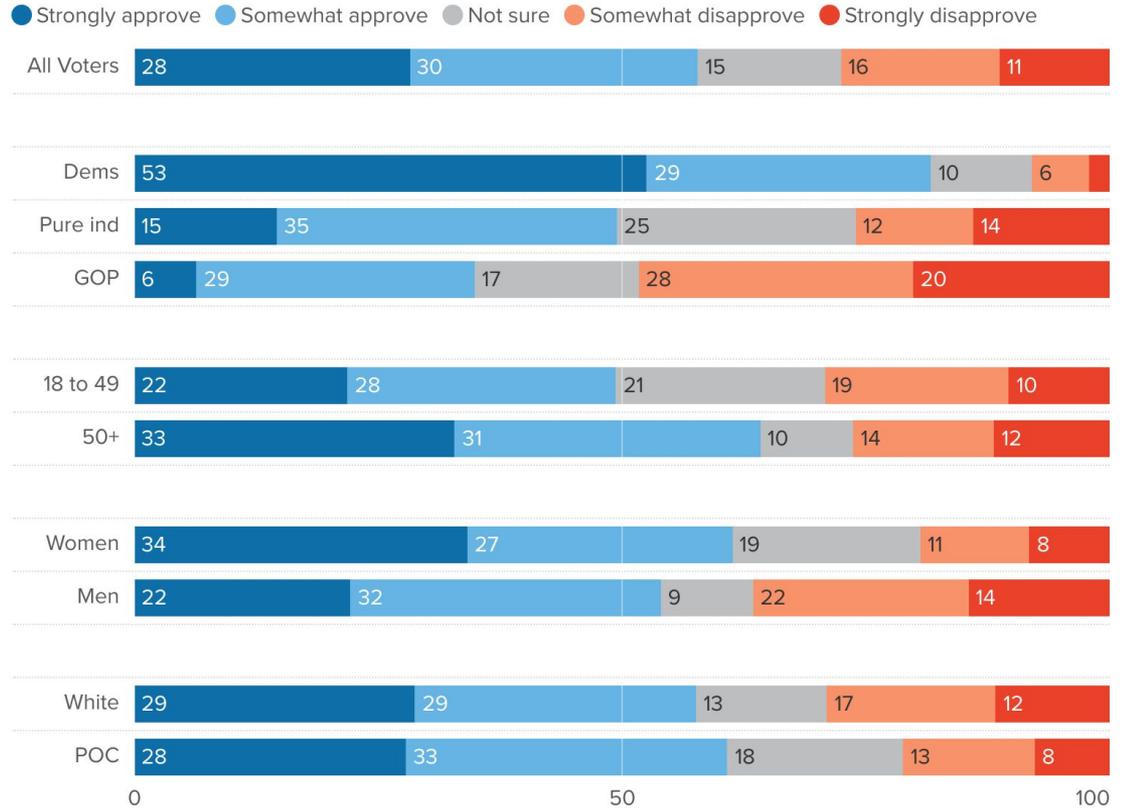
● Right direction ● Somewhere in the middle ● Wrong track



*Q: How would you say each of the following things is going? Are they going in the right direction, going off on the wrong track, or somewhere in the middle?*

# 58% of voters approve of the job that Shapiro is doing, while only 27% disapprove

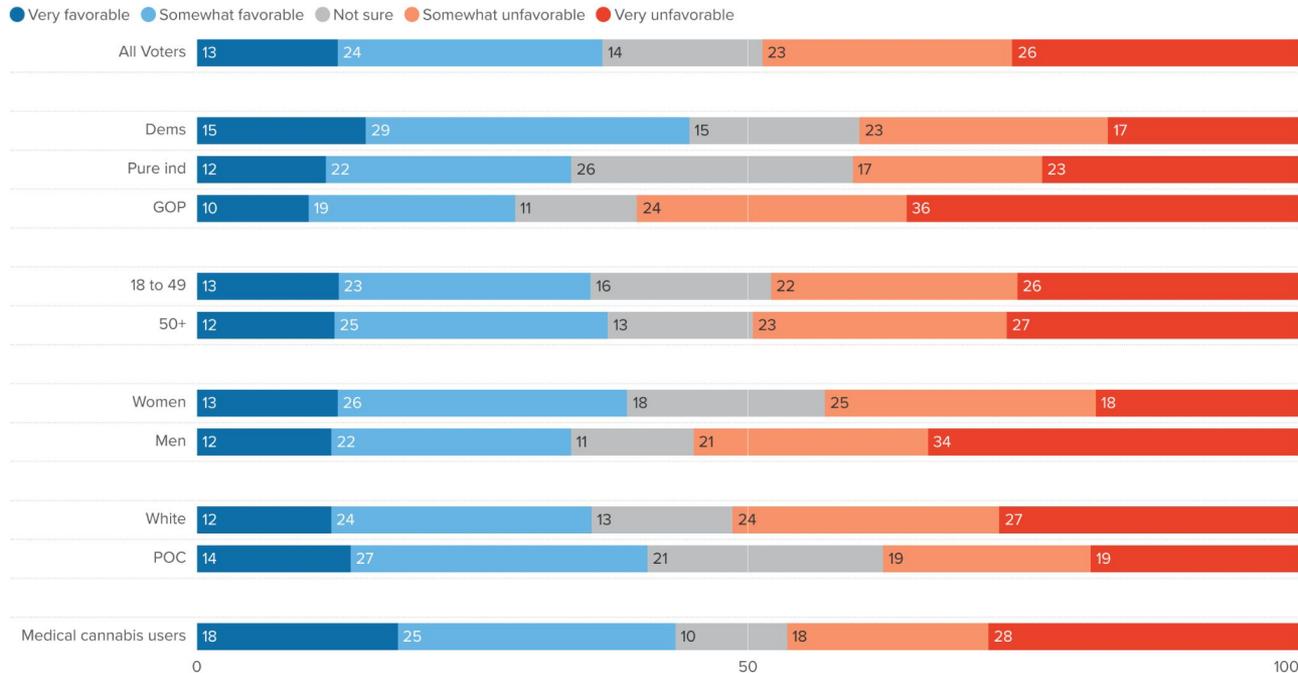
- Approval is highest among Democrats, voters over 50, and women



Q: How would you rate the job that Josh Shapiro is doing as Governor?

# Roughly half (49%) of voters view state-run liquor stores unfavorably, while only 37% view the system favorably.

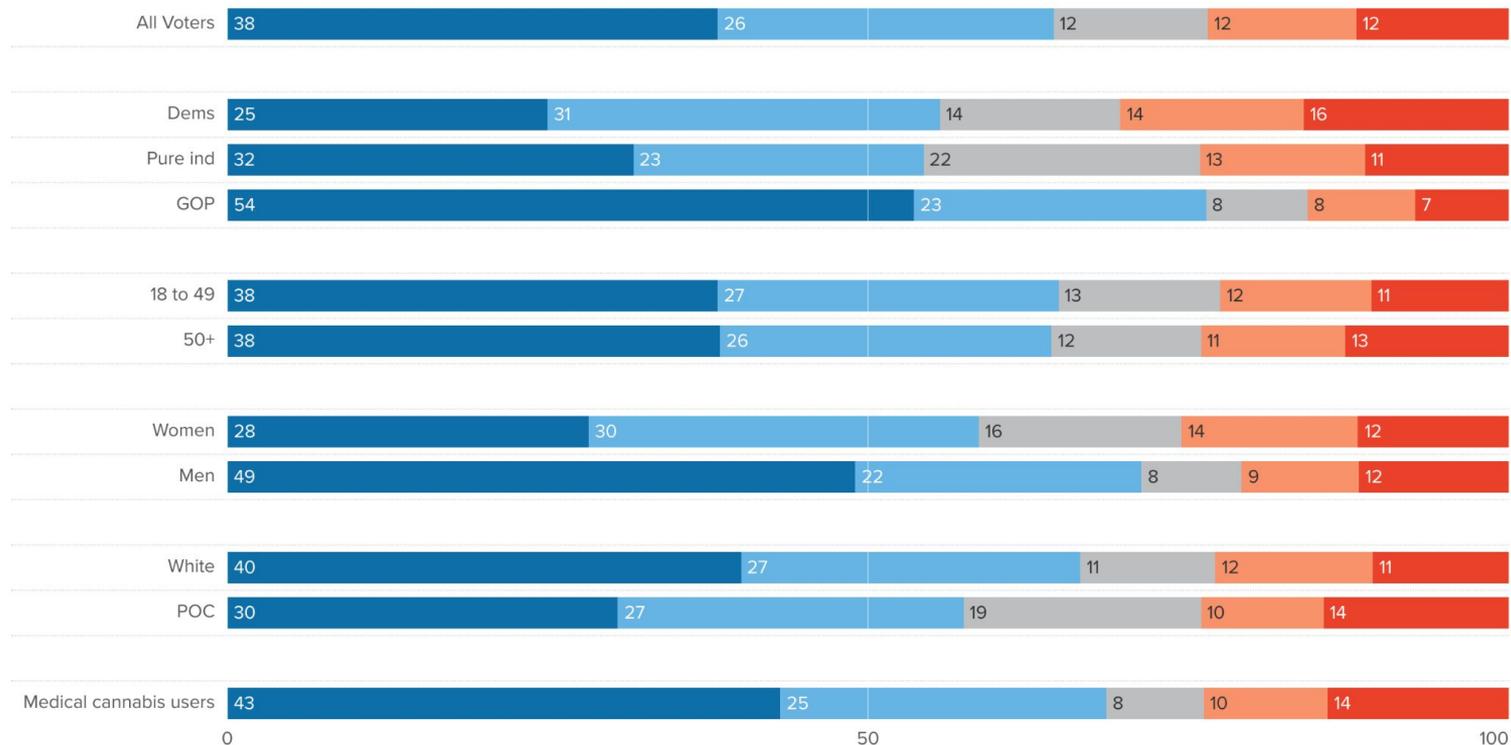
- State-run liquor stores are least popular among GOP voters (60% unfavorable), men (55% unfavorable), and white voters (51% unfavorable)



Q: Pennsylvania currently operates a state-run system for alcohol sales, meaning wine and spirits are sold through state-owned stores by state employees rather than private retailers. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of this state-run system for alcohol sales?

# Nearly two-thirds of voters support privatizing state-run liquor stores, with support highest among GOP

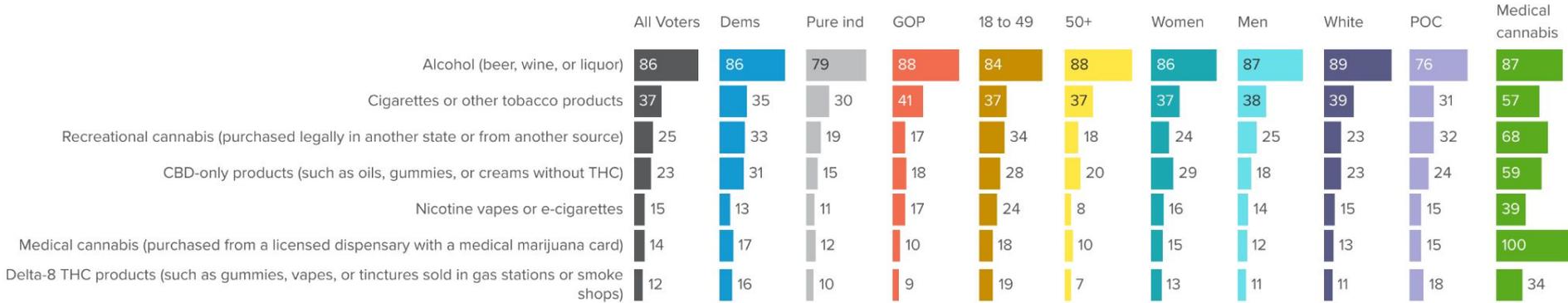
● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Not sure ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



Q: Would you support or oppose privatizing Pennsylvania's state-run liquor stores, allowing private businesses to sell wine and spirits instead of state-owned stores?

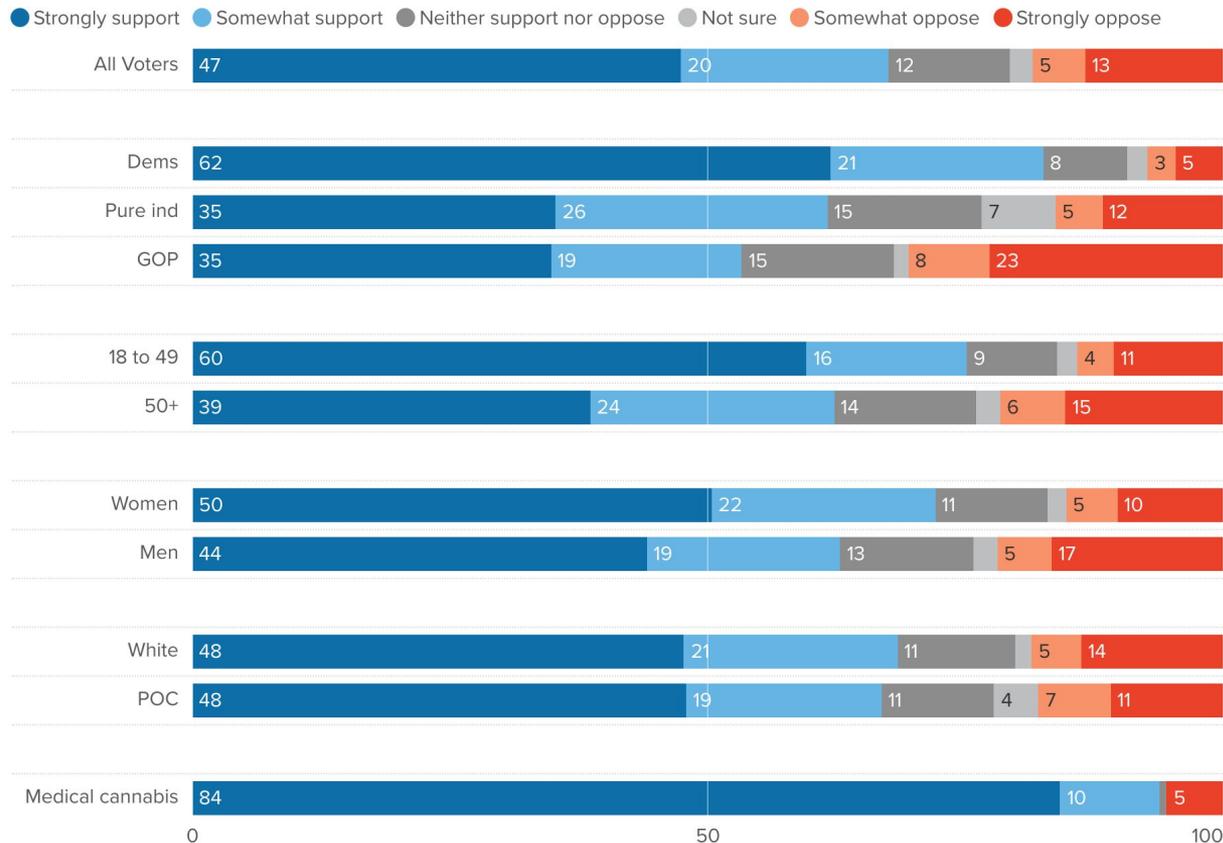
# The vast majority (86%) drink alcohol regularly or occasionally

- With the exception of cigarettes/tobacco (37%), no more than 25% of voters use other substances
- These trends hold broadly true across demographics, with the exception of medical cannabis users, who use non-alcoholic substances at much higher rates



Q: Have you ever used any of the following products? Graph shows percentage of respondents who say they use occasionally or regularly.

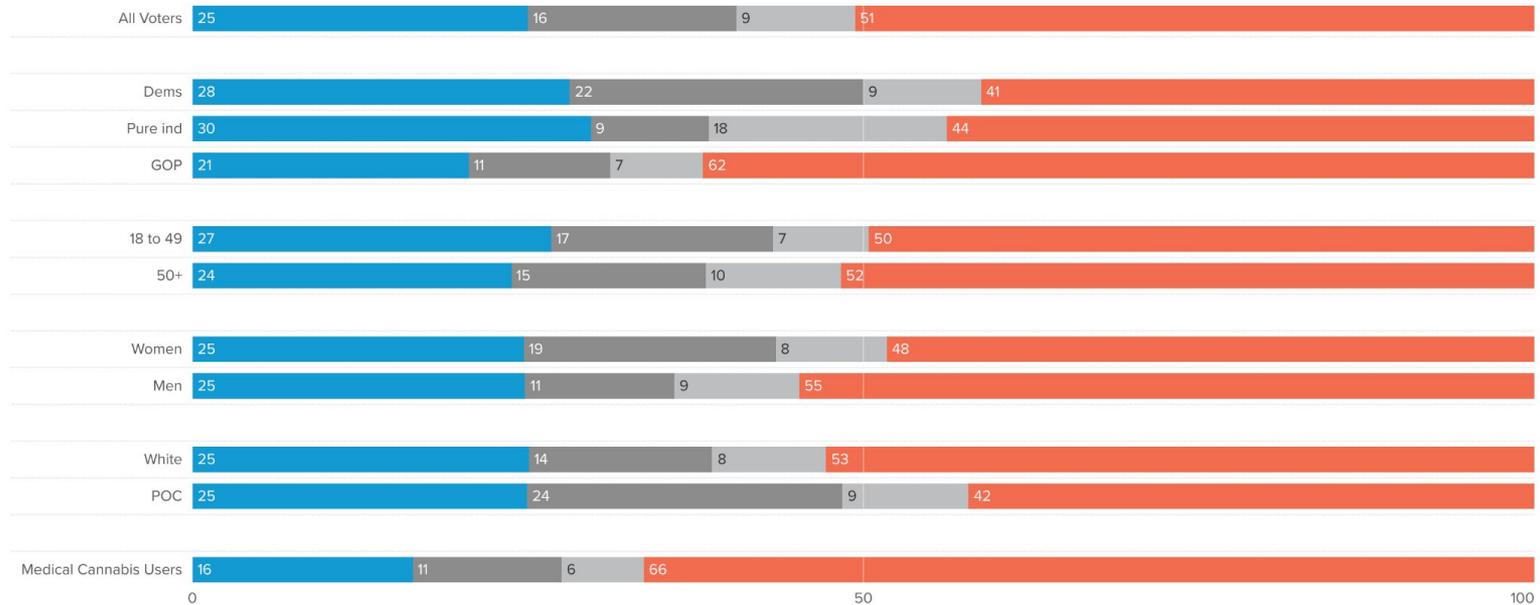
# Two-thirds of voters support cannabis legalization, with nearly half *strongly* supporting legalization



Q: Given that cannabis is already in Pennsylvania communities and is routinely used for non-medical purposes, do you support or oppose allowing adults to legally purchase and use regulated, taxed and quality-tested cannabis products?

# Voters consistently prefer private retail model over state-run system across both versions tested.

- A state store model, where cannabis is sold through government-operated stores, similar to Pennsylvania's liquor store system
- No preference
- Not sure
- A private retail model, where licensed private businesses can sell cannabis

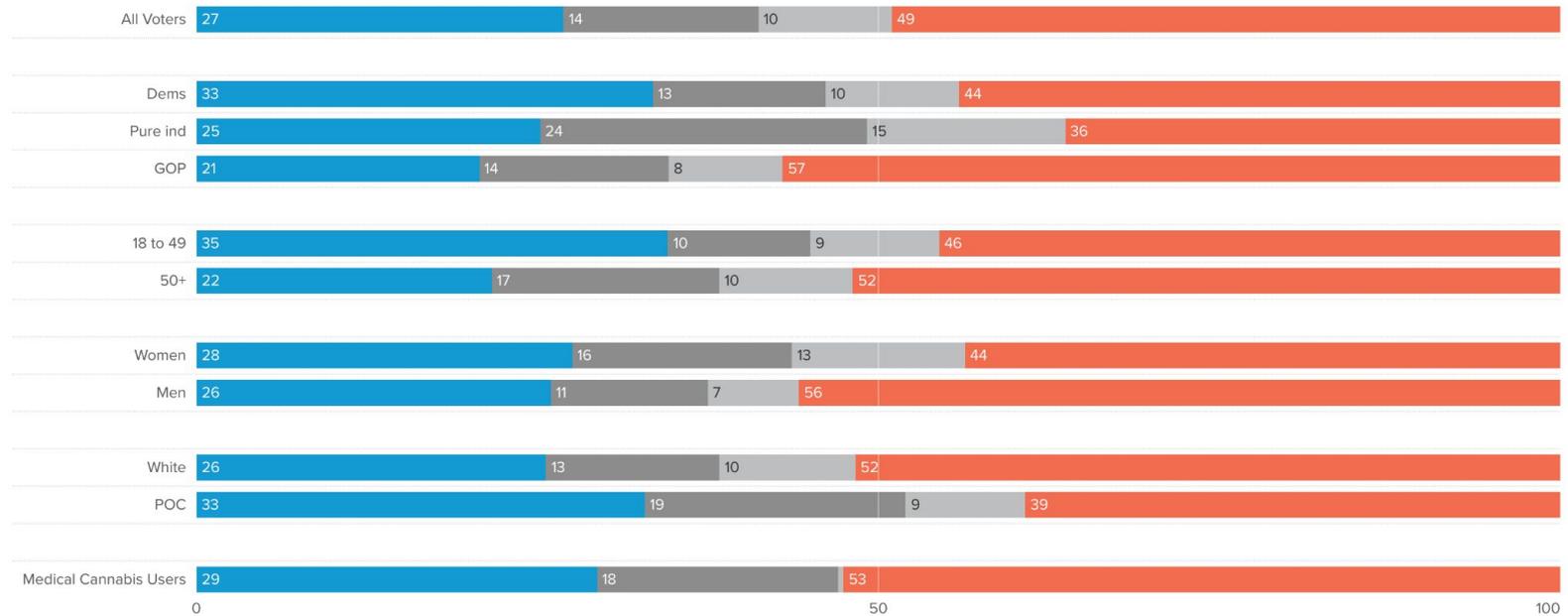


Q: [50% saw version A] Pennsylvania is considering how to regulate cannabis sales if it legalizes adult-use marijuana. Under a state-store model, the government would own and operate all cannabis stores, just like Pennsylvania's state-run liquor stores. **This system would make Pennsylvania the first state to sell marijuana in state-owned stores.** However, it would also allow the state to control pricing, sales, and distribution, potentially generating more public revenue but limiting opportunities for PA businesses and competition.

A private retail model allows licensed private businesses to sell cannabis. The state sets regulations but does not directly operate the stores. This approach encourages competition, creates jobs, increases consumer choice, and supports small businesses. If Pennsylvania were to legalize cannabis for adult use, which sales model would you prefer?\*

# Voters consistently prefer private retail model over state-run system across both versions tested.

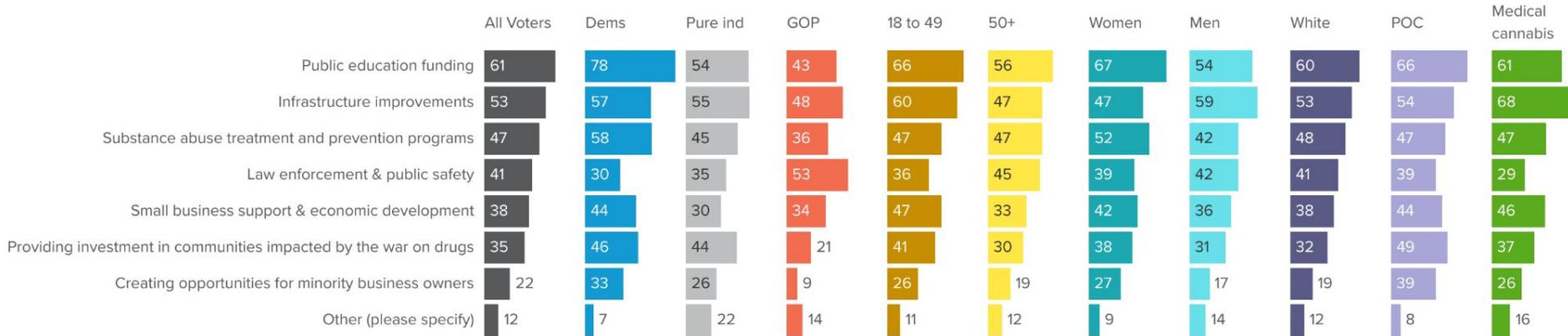
- A state store model, where cannabis is sold through government-operated stores, similar to Pennsylvania's liquor store system
- No preference
- Not sure
- A private retail model, where licensed private businesses can sell cannabis



Q: "[50% saw version B] Pennsylvania is considering how to regulate cannabis sales if it legalizes adult-use marijuana.

*Under a state-owned model, the government would own and operate all cannabis stores, just like Pennsylvania's state-owned liquor stores. This system would allow the state to control pricing, sales, and distribution, potentially generating more public revenue but limiting opportunities for PA businesses and competition. A private retail model allows licensed private businesses to sell cannabis. The state sets regulations but does not directly operate the stores. This approach encourages competition, creates jobs, increases consumer choice, and supports small businesses. If Pennsylvania were to legalize cannabis for adult use, which sales model would you prefer?\**

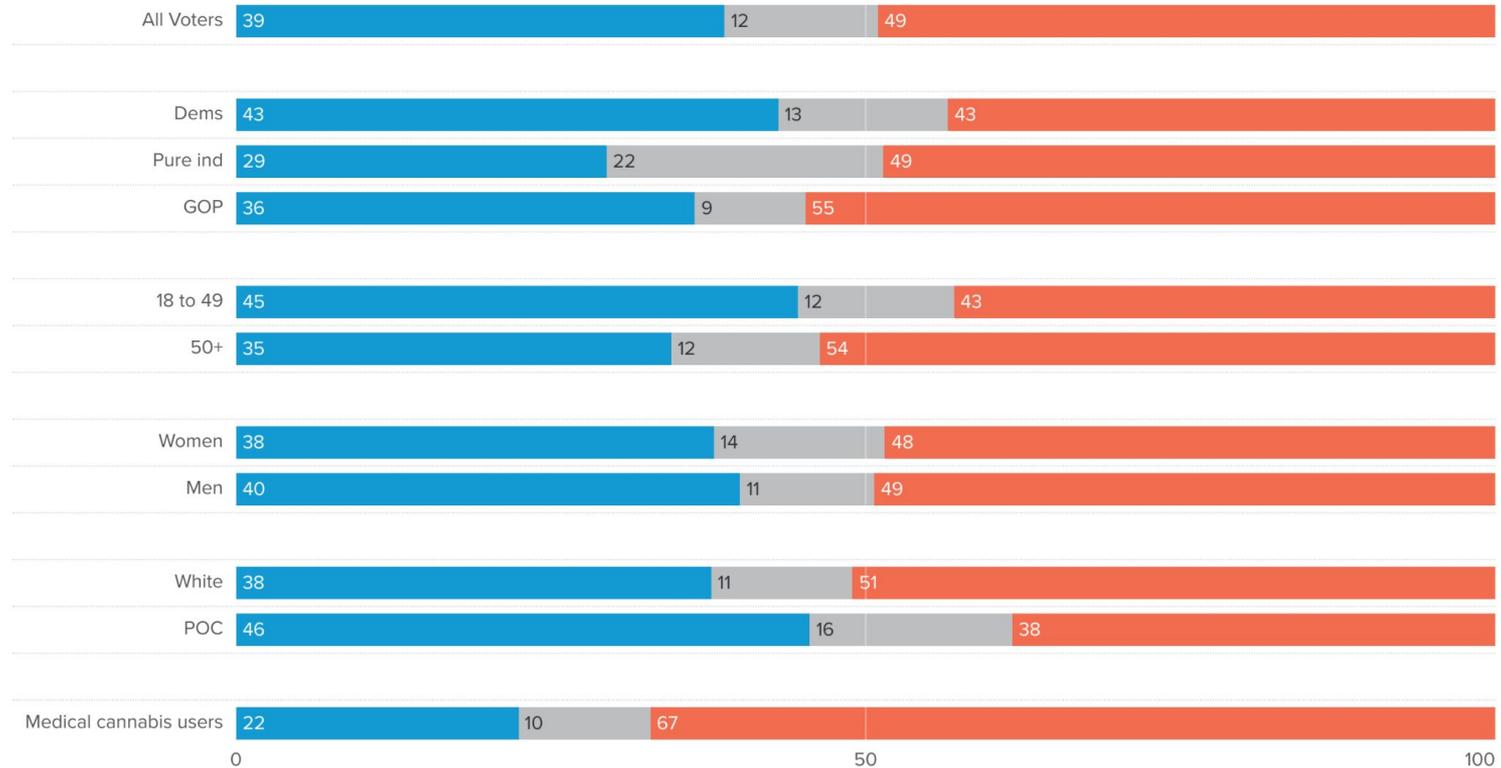
# 6 in 10 voters want to see revenue invested in public education, followed by infrastructure (53%) and substance abuse treatment programs (47%)



Q: If Pennsylvania legalizes cannabis, how should tax revenue from sales be used? (Select all that apply)

# Voters narrowly oppose allowing local governments to add additional cannabis taxes

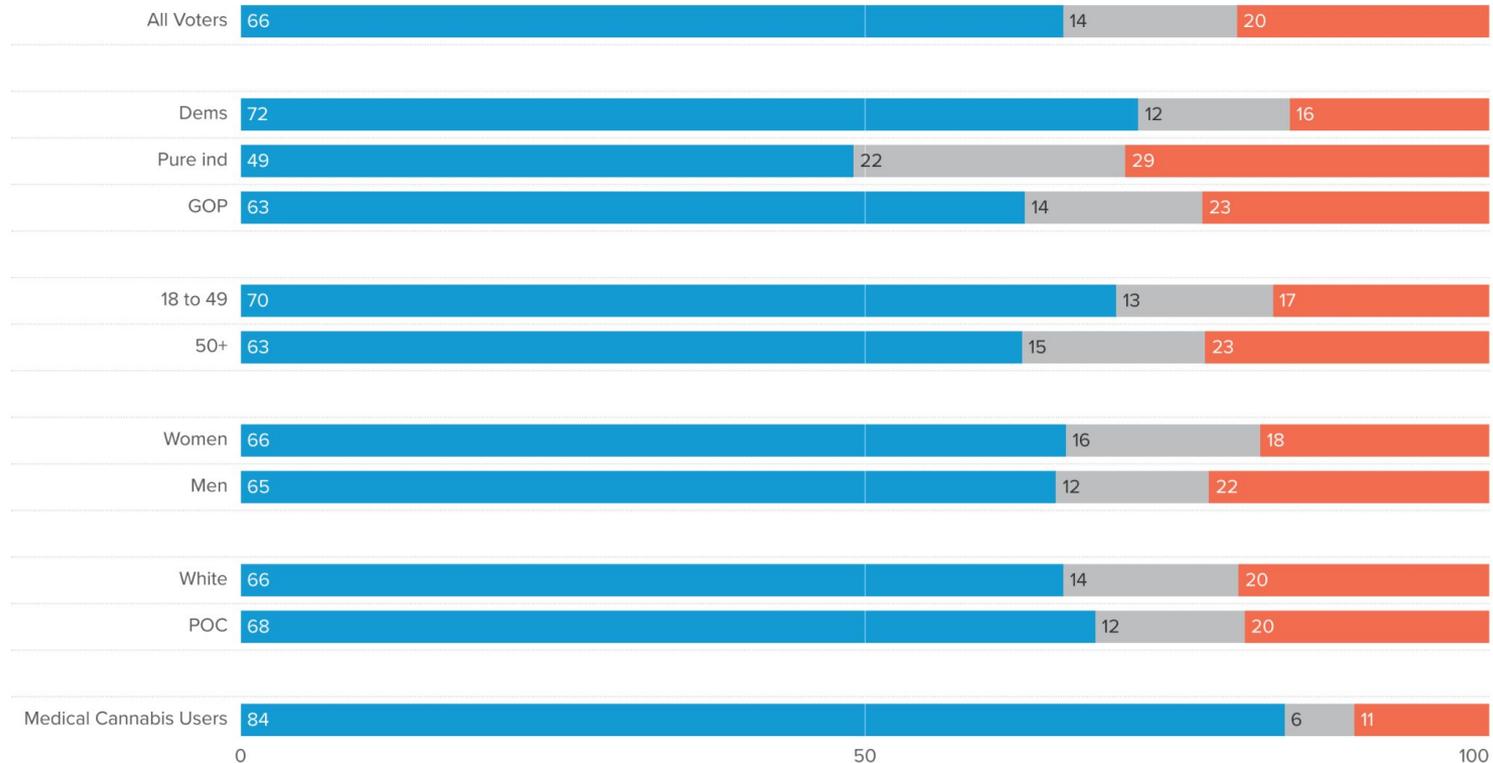
● Yes, local governments should be able to add an additional local tax on cannabis sales ● Not sure ● No, cannabis taxes should be set only at the state level



Q: Should local governments in Pennsylvania be allowed to impose an additional tax on cannabis sales to fund local services such as schools, infrastructure, or public safety?

# Majority believe communities banning cannabis sales should not receive tax revenue benefits

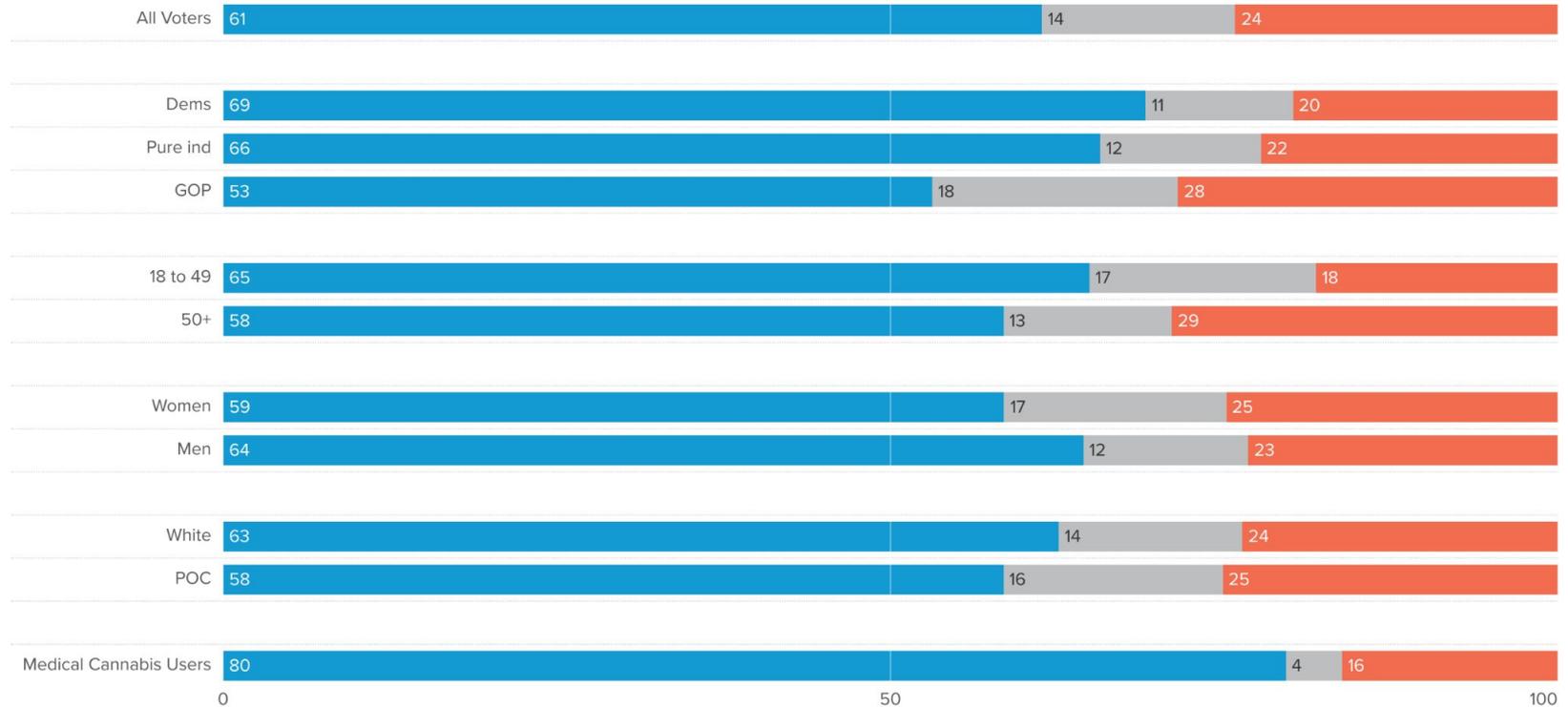
● Yes, if a town bans cannabis sales, they shouldn't get tax revenue from it ● Not sure ● No, all communities should receive tax revenue whether they allow sales or not



Q: Some states require local governments to allow cannabis sales in order to receive a share of state cannabis tax revenue. Should Pennsylvania consider this approach?

# Majority prefer expanding existing medical dispensaries rather than creating new state-run stores

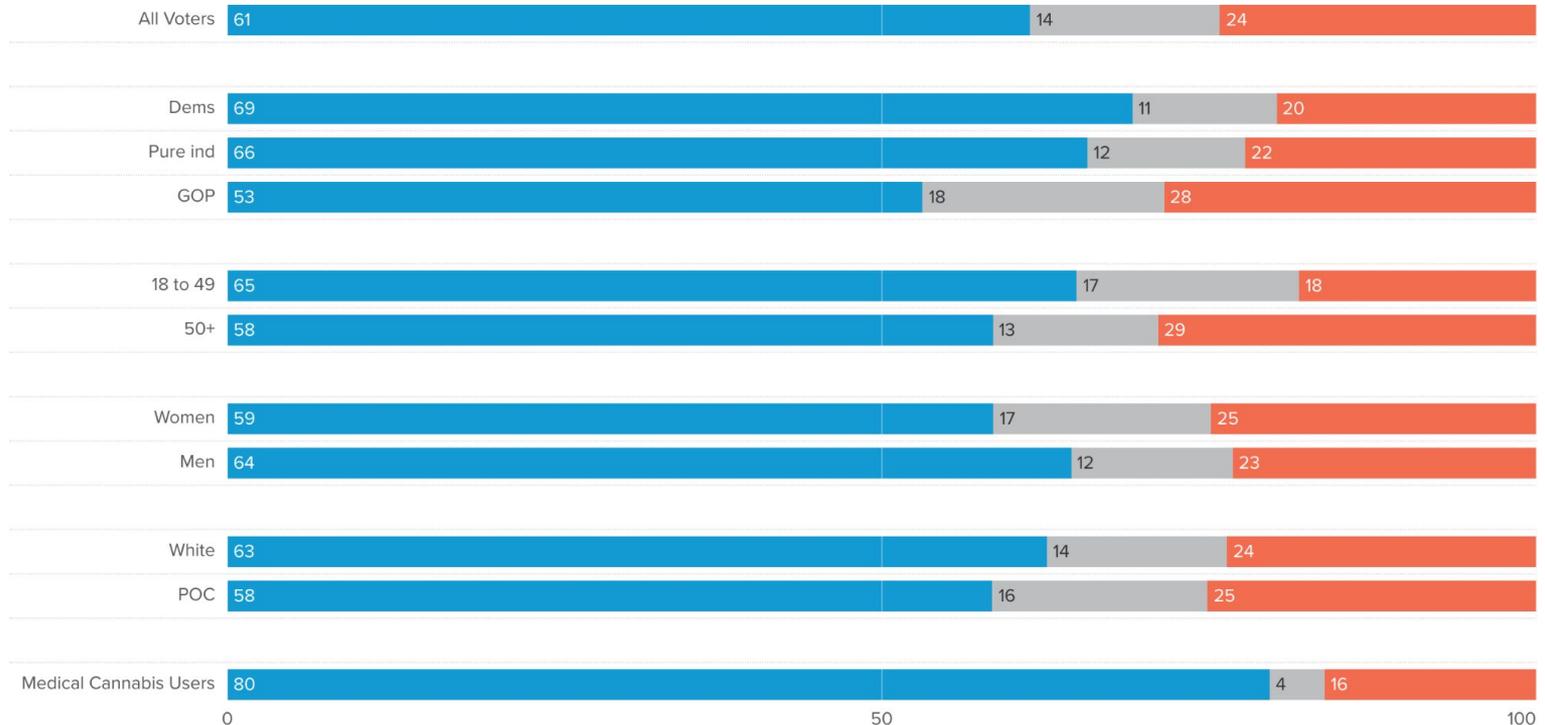
● Yes, immediately expand the current private dispensary system to include recreational sales. ● Not sure ● No, create a separate network of state-run stores for recreational sales.



Q: [50% saw version A] Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program has a well-established network of private dispensaries and producers that could be expanded to support legal cannabis sales. Do you support allowing Pennsylvania's existing medical marijuana dispensaries to immediately sell recreational cannabis once legalization takes effect?

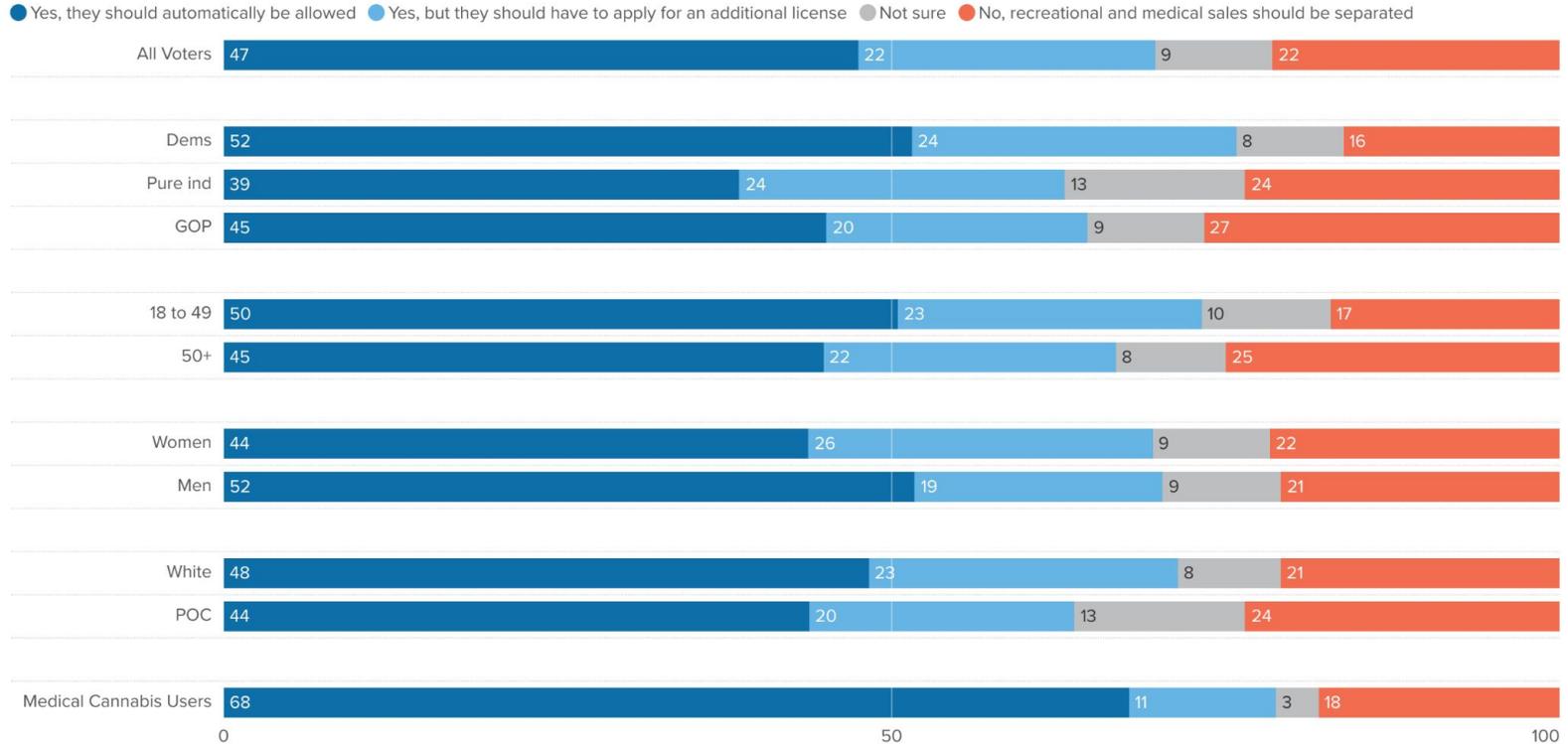
# Results remain consistent even when mentioning other states' experiences with delayed implementation

● Yes, immediately expand the current private dispensary system to include recreational sales. ● Not sure ● No, create a separate network of state-run stores for recreational sales.



Q: [50% saw version B] In states that have delayed allowing medical marijuana dispensaries to convert to recreational sales, illicit stores have rapidly expanded to fill the gap. Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program has a well-established network of private dispensaries and producers that could be expanded to support legal cannabis sales. Do you support allowing Pennsylvania's existing medical marijuana dispensaries to immediately sell recreational cannabis once legalization takes effect?

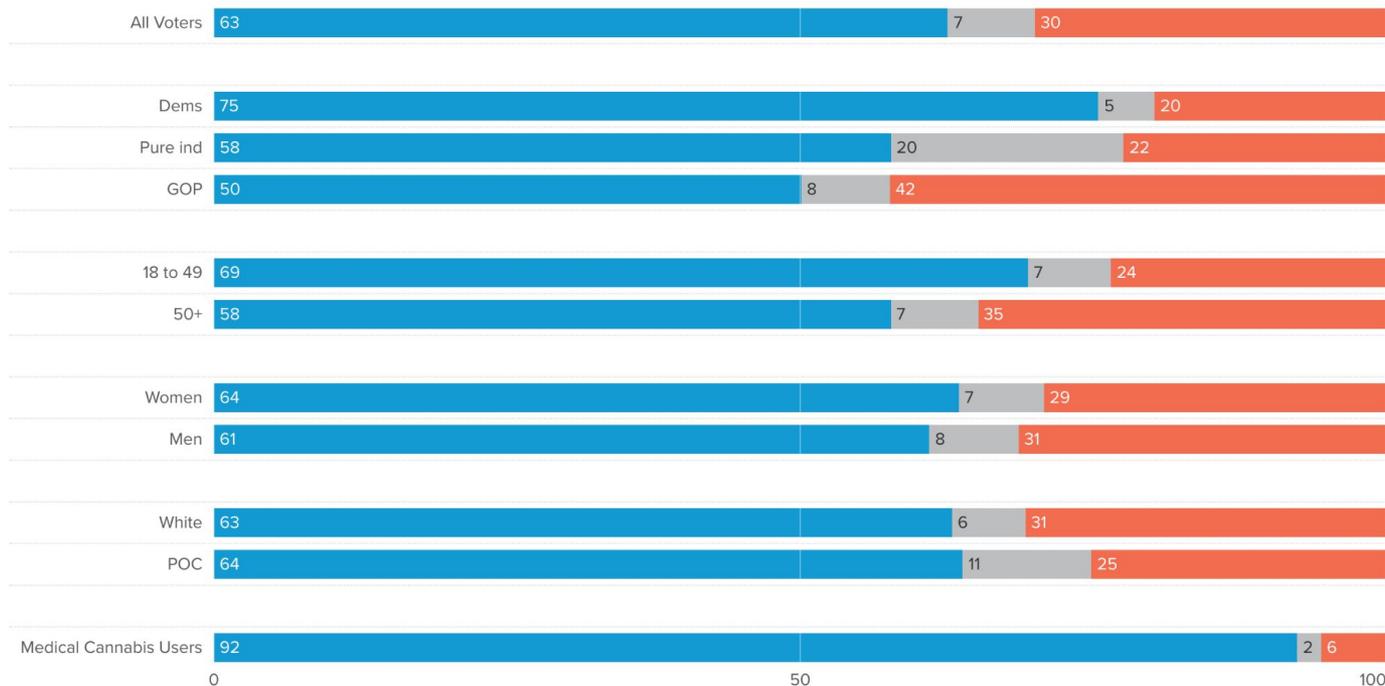
# Clear preference for allowing medical dispensaries into recreational market



Q: If Pennsylvania legalizes adult-use cannabis, should existing medical marijuana dispensaries be allowed to sell recreational cannabis?

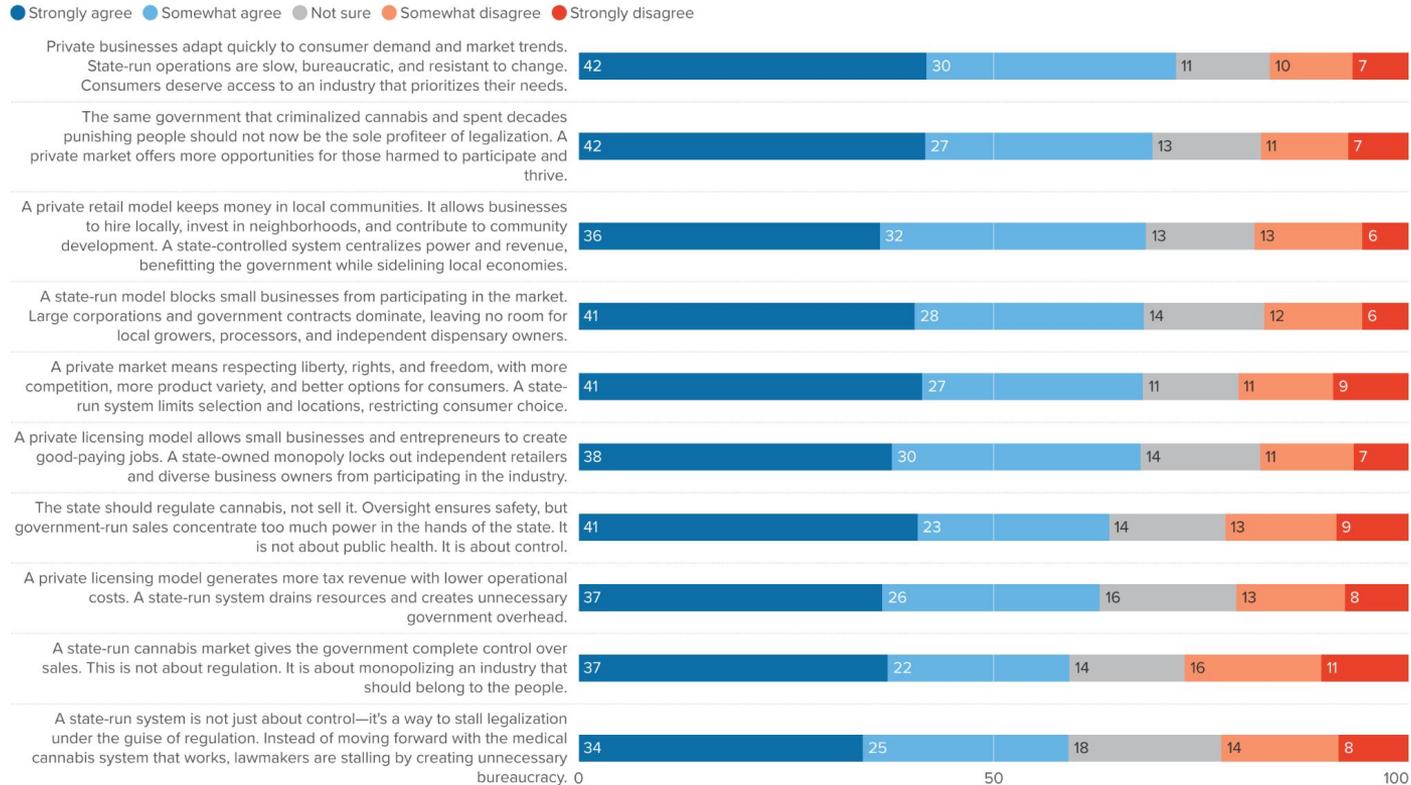
# 63% support moving forward with legalization in 2025 rather than delaying for more study

- Pennsylvania should move forward now and pass cannabis legalization in 2025. Delaying only hurts the economy, restricts access for patients and consumers, and allows the illicit market to thrive.
- Not sure
- Pennsylvania should not rush the process, taking more time to evaluate potential challenges. Before making a decision, more research, planning, and debate are needed.

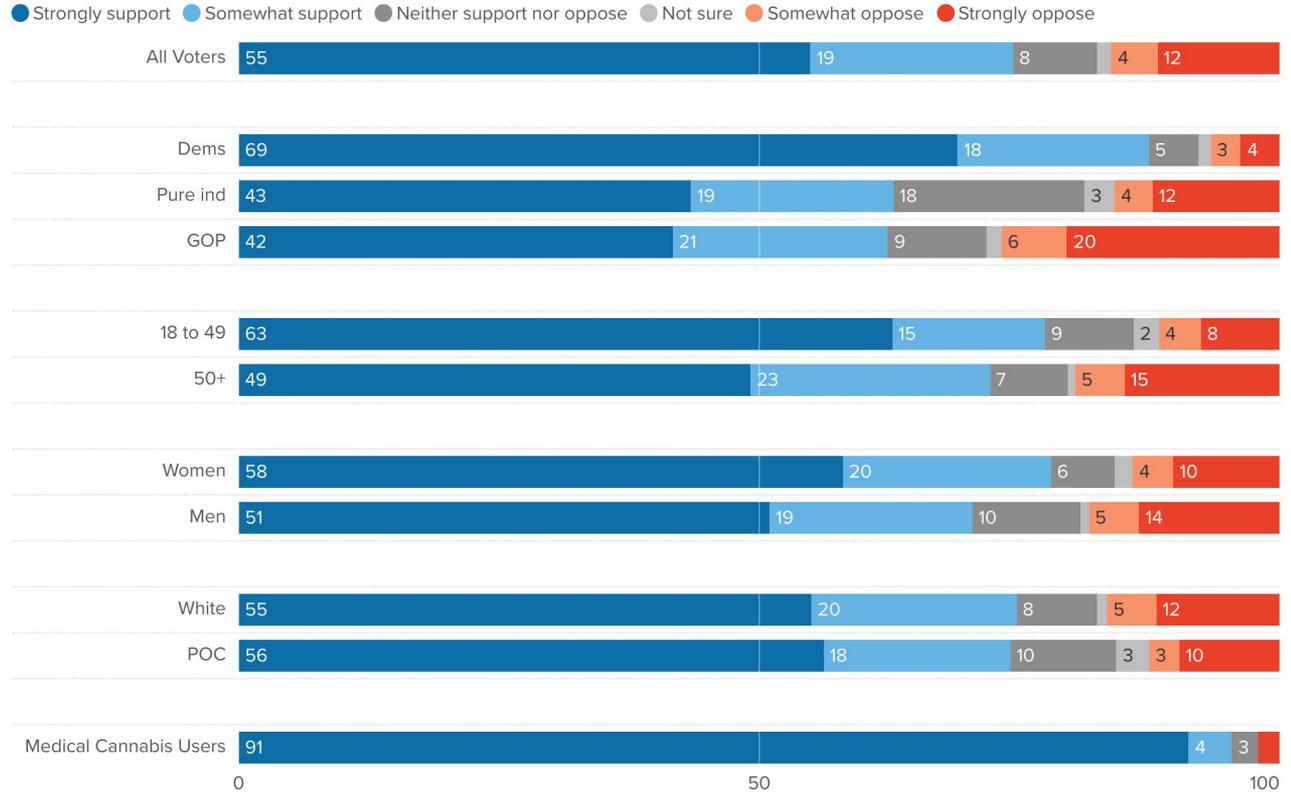


Q: Which statement do you most agree with?

# The strongest pro-private arguments focus on business adaptability and local economic benefits



Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

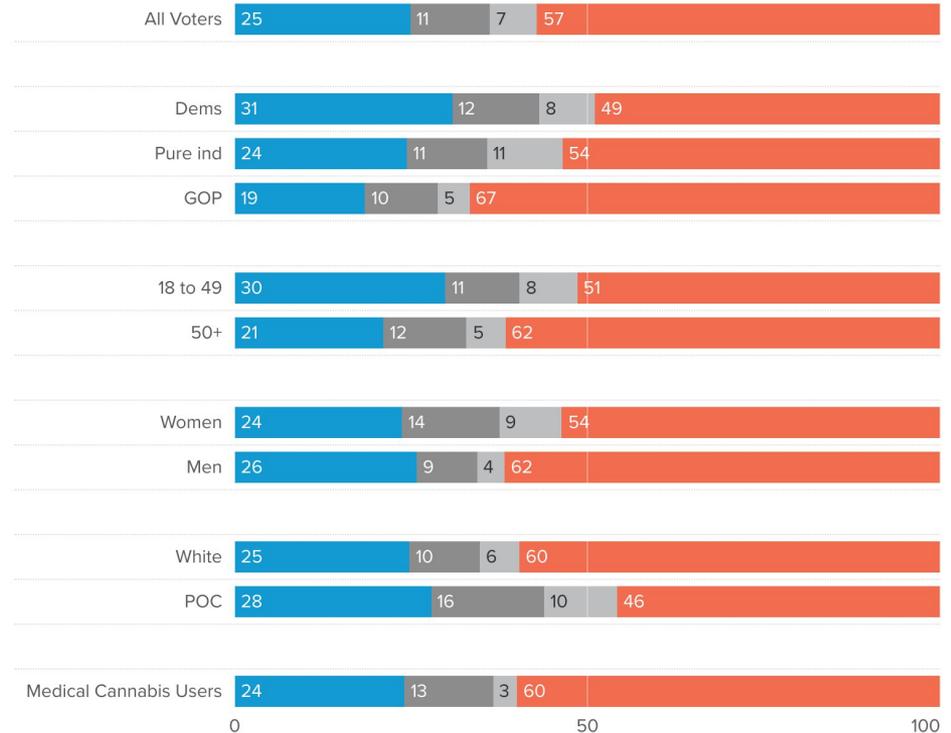


# Final support for legalization remains strong at 74%

Q: Once again, do you support or oppose allowing the sale of adult-use cannabis in Pennsylvania?

# Private retail model maintains clear advantage (57%) over state-run system (25%) in final ask

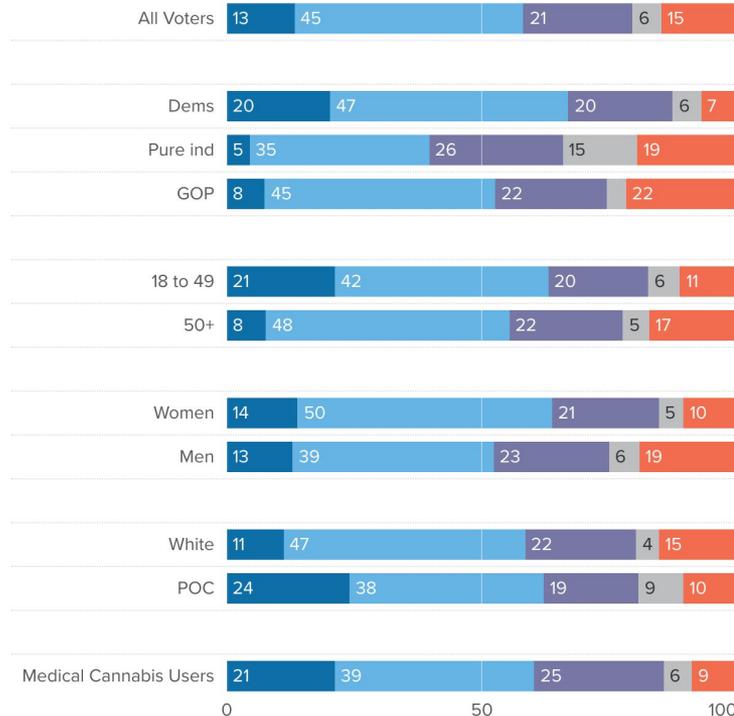
- A state-controlled model, where cannabis is sold through government-operated stores, similar to Pennsylvania's liquor store system
- No preference
- Not sure
- A private retail model, where licensed private businesses can sell cannabis



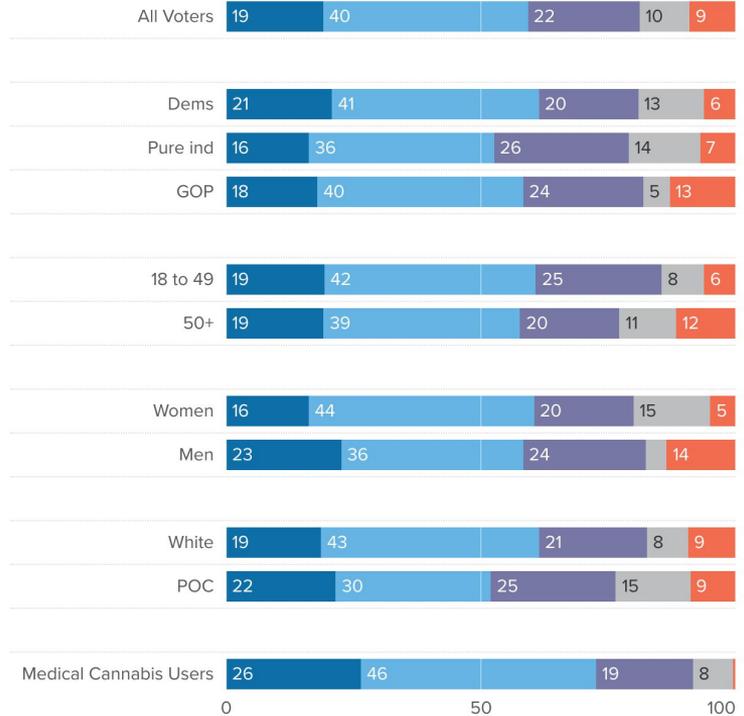
Q: One last time, if Pennsylvania were to legalize cannabis for adult use, which sales model do you prefer?

# Voters are more likely to support a legislator who will support a private business sales model

- Support their re-election
- Consider their entire record before deciding
- Make no difference in your vote
- Not sure
- Vote them out of office



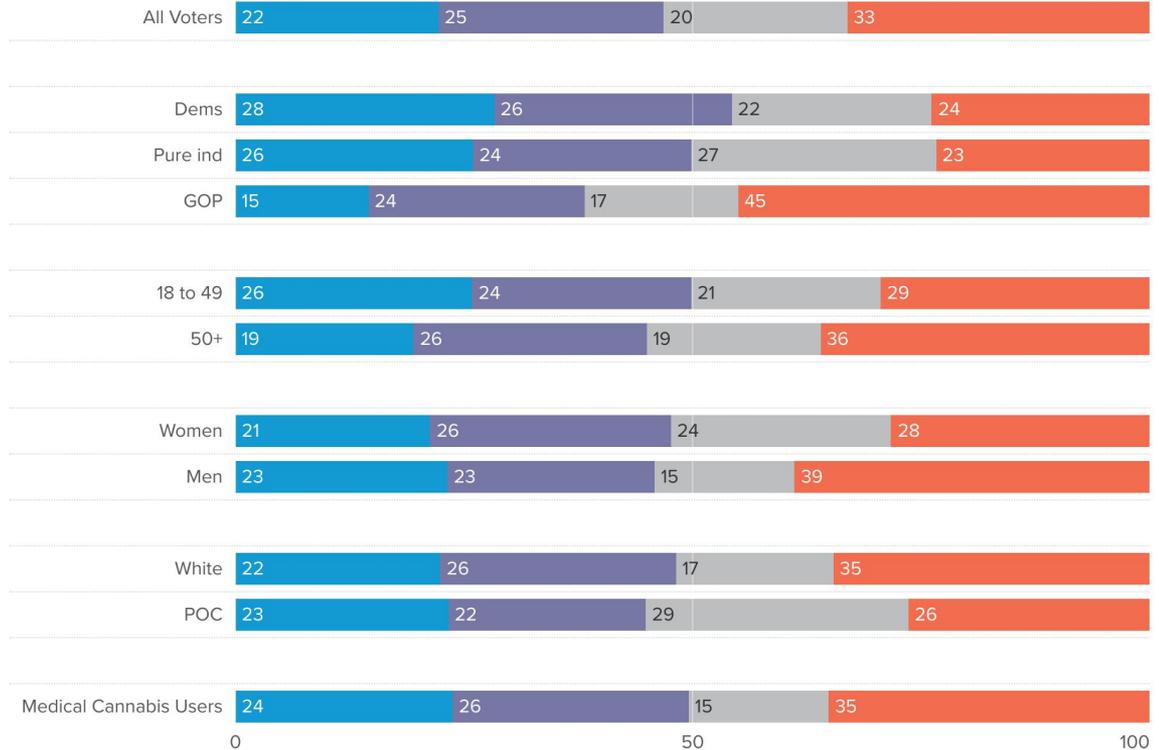
Q: [50% saw version A] If a Pennsylvania legislator voted to **implement a state-controlled cannabis sales model**, how would it affect your vote in their re-election?



Q: [50% saw version B] If a Pennsylvania legislator voted to **allow private businesses to sell cannabis instead of a state-controlled model**, how would it affect your vote in their re-election?

# Plurality (33%) believe private system would generate more tax revenue than state-run stores

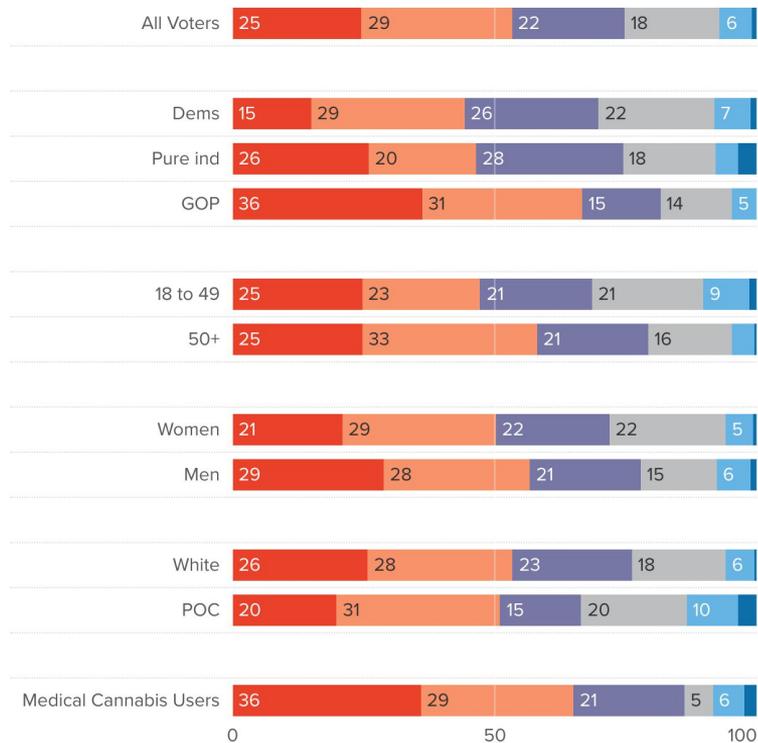
- Yes, a state-controlled system would generate more tax revenue
- Both would generate about the same amount
- Not sure
- No, a private system would generate more tax revenue



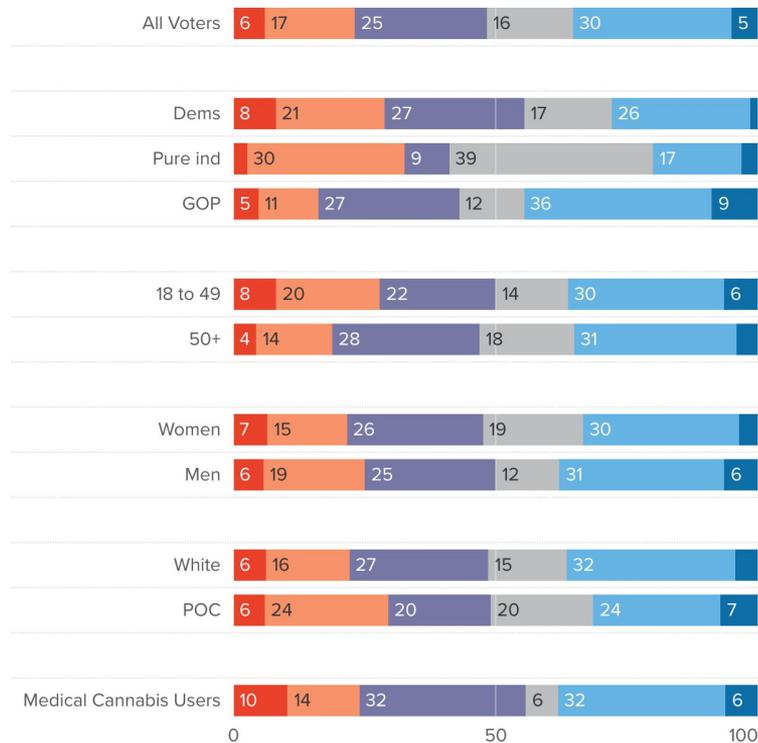
Q: Do you believe a state-controlled cannabis market would generate more tax revenue than a privately licensed market?

# Voters expect lower prices under private model compared to state-store

- Much higher
- Somewhat higher
- About the same
- Not sure
- Somewhat lower
- Much lower

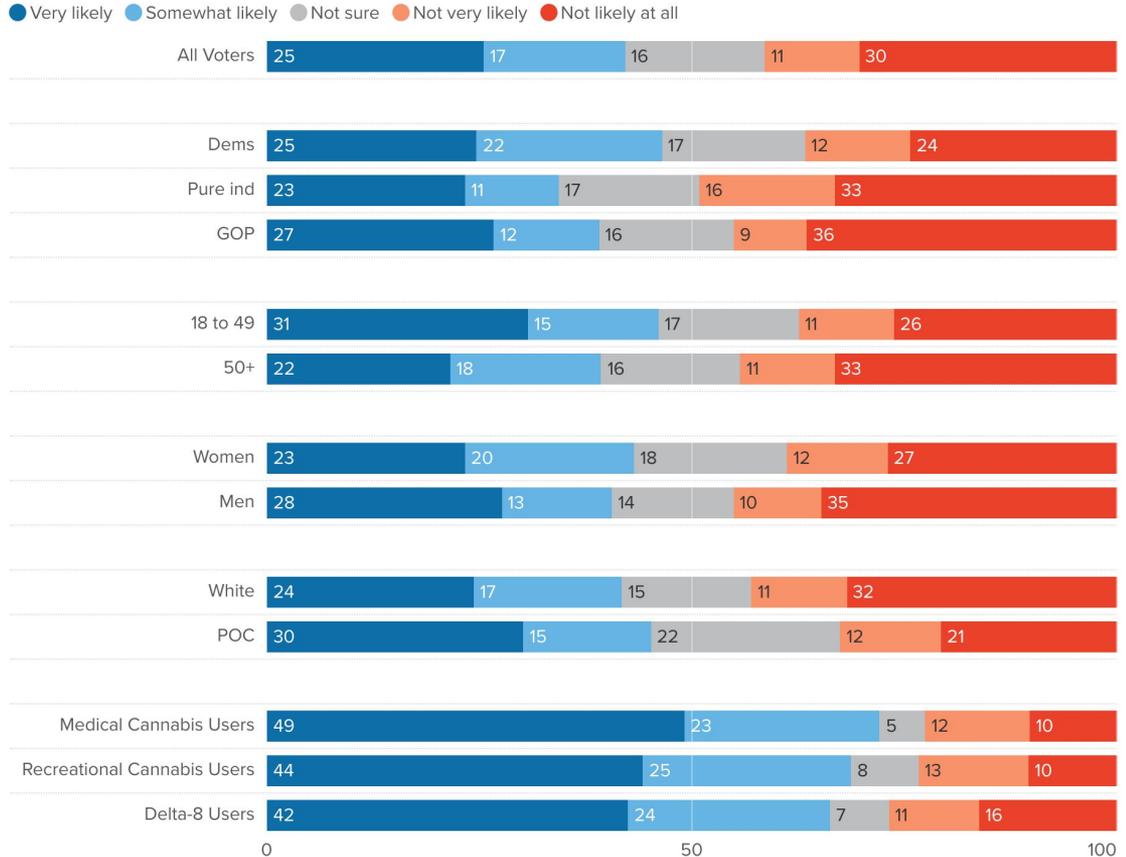


Q: [50% saw version A] Do you think prices under a **state-controlled cannabis market** would be higher or lower compared to a private retail market?



Q: [50% saw version B] Do you think prices under a **private retail cannabis market** would be higher or lower compared to a state-controlled market?

# 42% would likely buy cannabis in neighboring states if PA implements higher-priced state-store system.



Q: If Pennsylvania had a state-run system with fewer locations and higher prices than neighboring states, how likely would you purchase cannabis from another state?

# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

**Emphasize Economic Benefits for Local Communities:** Data shows overwhelming voter preference for private retail over state control (57% vs 25%). Frame advocacy around how private businesses keep money in local communities (69% agree) while preventing government monopolies (68% worried about state control limiting opportunities). Highlight how competition drives innovation and customer service, with 72% of voters believing private businesses better serve consumer needs. Emphasize tax revenue benefits for education (61%), infrastructure (53%), and community investment (35%), showing how private enterprise can serve public good.

**Build on Medical Program Success and Infrastructure:** Build on Pennsylvania's successful medical program, where 62% support immediate expansion to recreational sales through existing dispensaries. Emphasize how current infrastructure provides proven safety protocols and quality controls (87% rate product testing as "very important"). Focus on how medical dispensaries already comply with strict regulations while serving patients effectively. Position current operators and healthcare professionals as credible voices for responsible expansion.

# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

**Focus on Cross-Partisan Coalition Building:** The data reveals remarkably consistent support across party lines, with majorities of Democrats (87%), Independents (63%), and Republicans (62%) backing legalization. Frame as good governance issue focused on efficient regulation, local control, and economic opportunity. Target messaging to core values: free enterprise, community investment, and practical oversight. Emphasize how 74% total support creates political safety for legislators, especially with strong backing from both Trump (52%) and Harris (82%) voters.

**Drive Urgency Through Regional Competition:** With 63% supporting 2025 implementation, emphasize costs of delay. Show how 42% of cannabis users would purchase from neighboring states under a restricted state-store model. Highlight potential loss of \$500M+ in annual tax revenue to border states. Demonstrate how 79% of Philadelphia and 74% of Allegheny County voters support swift action. Present clear timeline leveraging existing infrastructure for responsible but efficient launch.

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# THANK YOU

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QUESTIONS? NEXT STEPS?



# POLLING for the PEOPLE



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