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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 5, 2008

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## **THREE IN FOUR VOTERS FAVOR LAW TO GUARANTEE PAID SICK DAYS TO ALL WORKERS IN CALIFORNIA**

Oakland, CA -- A new statewide survey conducted for the California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF), a program of the nonprofit Public Health Institute, finds that by a 73% to 23% margin voters would support a law to guarantee that workers receive a minimum number of paid sick days from their employer. Support for such a law crosses party lines, and includes 85% of Democrats, 75% of non-partisans and 56% of Republicans. Women, lower income voters, Latinos, younger voters and households where a union member resides report higher levels of support for a paid sick days law.

The poll finds that 77% of voters report being concerned that not all workers in California receive paid sick days from their employers, with 44% strongly concerned. Currently it is estimated that about 5.4 million workers in the state do not receive paid sick days from their employers.

"What's striking about the survey is that there is strong public support for paid sick days across demographic, economic, ethnic and party lines," said Kate Karpilow, Ph.D., Executive Director of CCRWF.

Californians also express greater and stronger support for three arguments that proponents have made in favor of paid sick day laws than two arguments made by opponents against such laws. For example, 82% agree (58% strongly) with proponents that paid sick day laws are a good idea because when sick people go to work their coworkers and customers can also get sick.

Similarly, 81% agree (57% strongly) that guaranteeing paid sick day laws to all restaurant workers who handle food would increase the chances that these workers would stay home when they get sick and not infect the public. Another 76% agree (50% strongly) that paid sick days should be considered a basic worker right, like being paid a decent wage.

Voter support for two arguments made by opponents of paid sick day laws is comparatively weaker. While a large majority (74%) of voters concur that paid sick days laws would increase the cost of doing business and that such costs would likely be passed on to consumers, just one in three (35%) feel this way strongly. Also, just 52% agree (21% strongly) that paid sick day laws will hurt some workers because businesses will be forced to cut back on worker hours or lay off some employees.

"Voters appear to understand that providing paid sick days has some costs to businesses and consumers, but appear to have greater concerns about the public health benefits and are willing to support the proposed law regardless," said Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH, Director of Occupational and Environmental Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health.

When asked about whether a paid sick days law should apply equally to all employers large and small or whether small businesses should be allowed to offer fewer paid sick days to their workers, 47% of voters favor the former, while 40% support the latter. Democrats, non-partisans, lower income voters, Latinos, other ethnic voters and those under age 40 are more likely to support having a paid sick days law apply equally to both large and small employers. On the other hand, Republicans and middle and upper income voters are more supportive of allowing small businesses to offer their workers fewer paid sick days.

These are the findings from the survey conducted for the California Center for Research on Women and Families by Field Research Corporation, an independent opinion research organization based in San Francisco. The study was completed July 8-14 among a random sample of 809 registered voters in California in English and Spanish.

*Notice to Editors: PowerPoint graphics summarizing the survey's main findings are attached.*

### **About The Survey**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 809 California registered voters conducted by Field Research Corporation, an independent opinion research company based in San Francisco. Interviewing was completed by telephone in English and Spanish July 8-14, 2008. The overall sample was divided into two approximately equal sized random subsamples with regard to the pro and con arguments posed in the survey. All other questions were asked of the total sample. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from findings based on the overall sample of 809 registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points, while findings relating to each pro and con argument have a sampling error of +/- 5.0 percentage points.

#### **About the California Center for Research on Women and Families**

The California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF) is a public policy research organization that provides information, facilitation, analysis and policy primers to educate policymakers, program providers and the general public about major policy issues in California. Established in November 2000 CCRWF is a program of the nonprofit Public Health Institute.

#### **About The Public Health Institute**

The Public Health Institute (PHI), an independent nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California, is dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout California, across the nation and around the world. PHI's primary methods for achieving these goals include sharing evidence developed through quality research and evaluation, providing training and technical assistance, and promoting successful prevention strategies to policymakers, communities, and individuals.

# California Voter Views About Paid Sick Day Laws

- graphics packet -

- *conducted by* -

Field Research Corporation

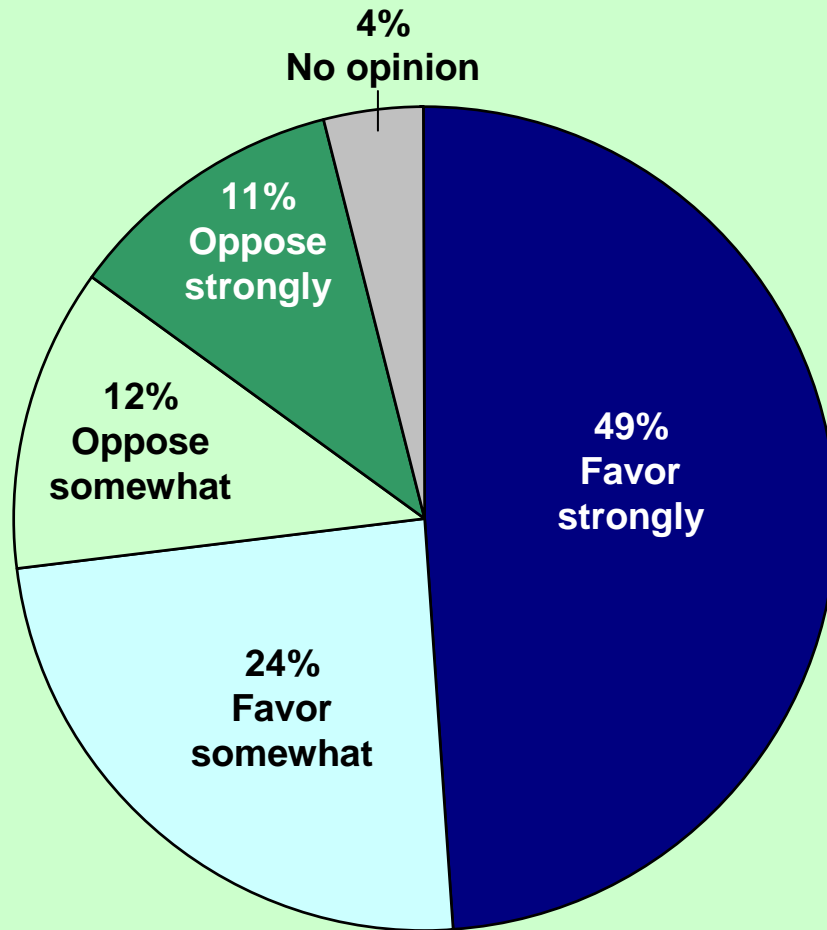
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California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF),  
a program of the Public Health Institute

August 5, 2008

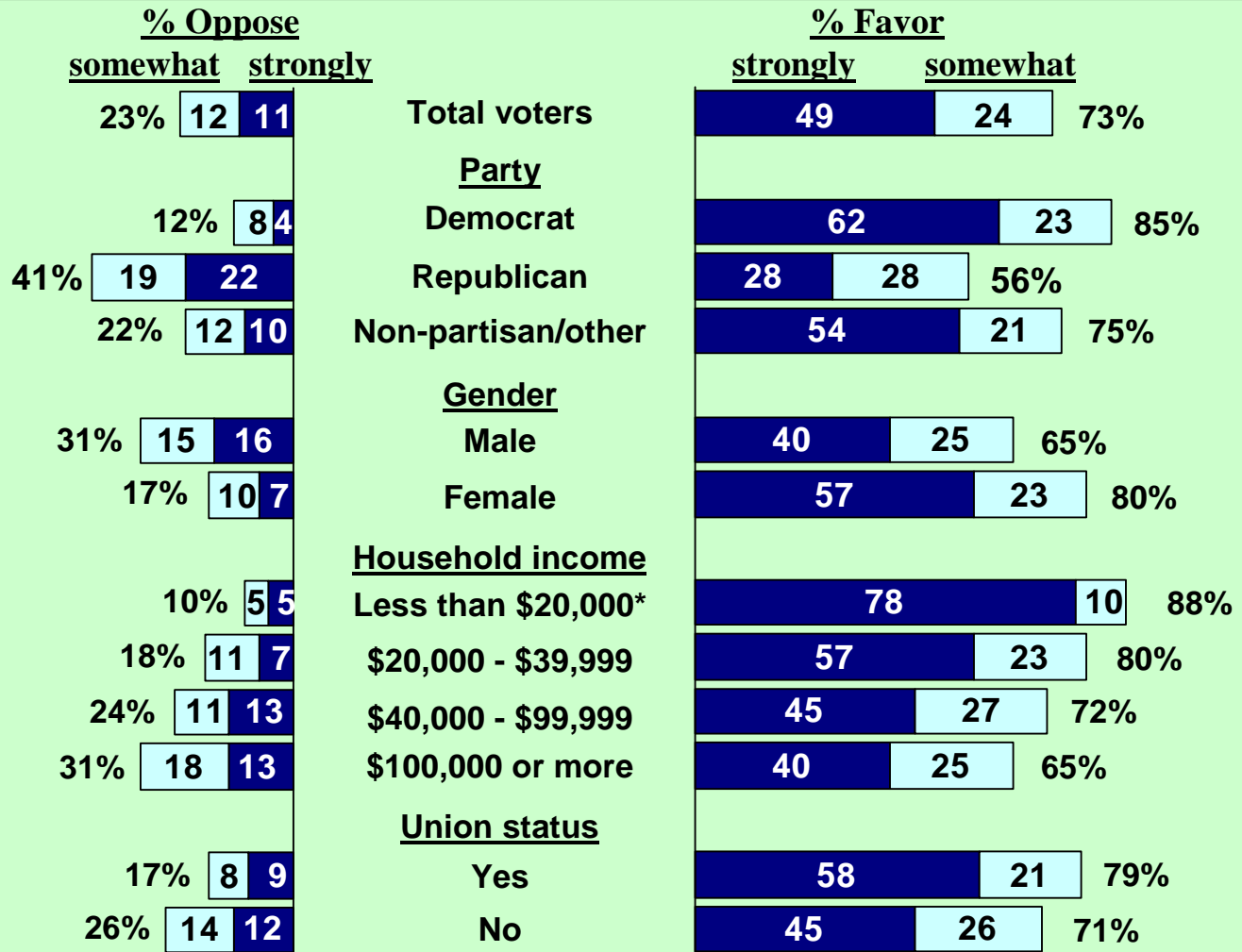
Table 1

**By a 73% to 23% margin California voters would support a state law to guarantee that workers receive a minimum number of paid sick days from their employer**



**Table 2**

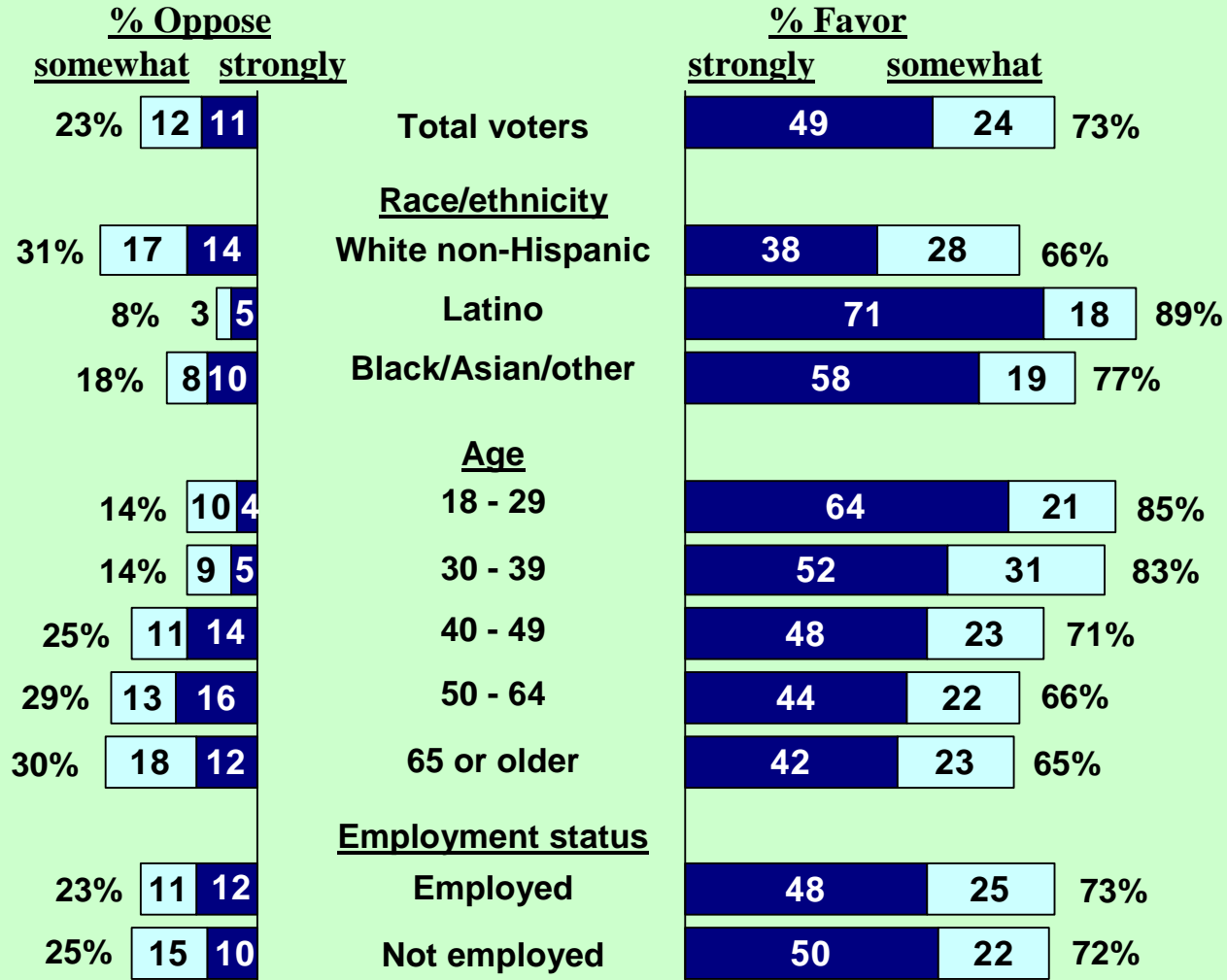
# Democrats, non-partisans, women, lower income voters and households with union members are most supportive of a paid sick days law



\* Small sample base. Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 2 (cont'd)

# Latinos and younger voters are also more supportive of a paid sick days law than other voters

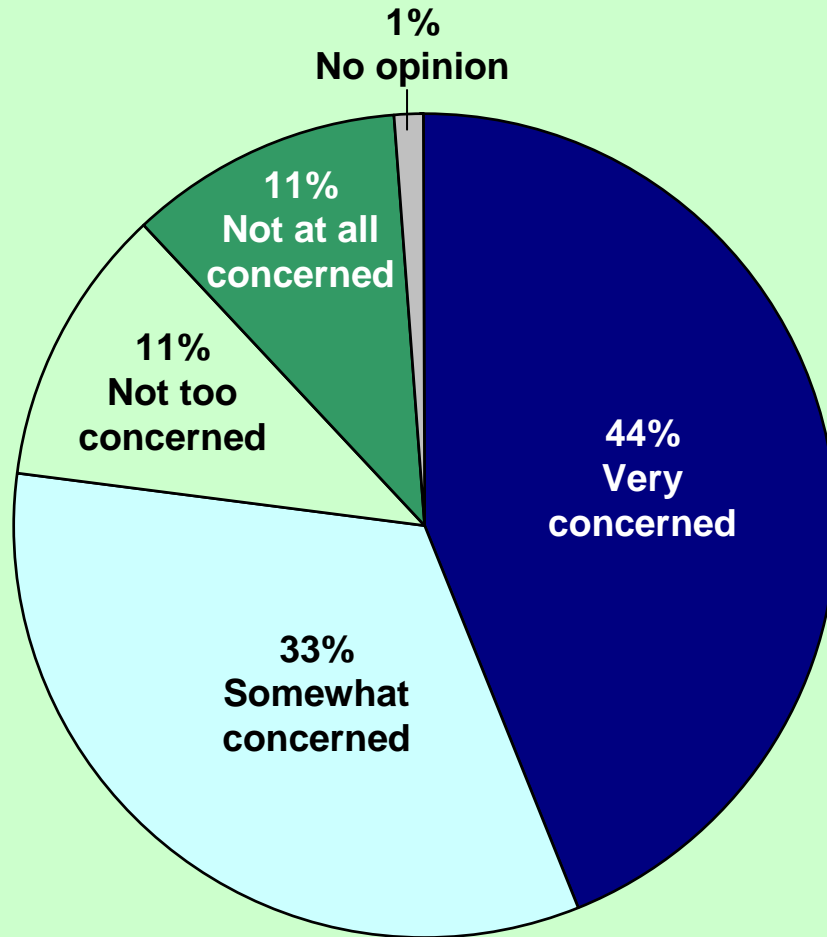


Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 3

**Three in four voters are concerned about the estimated 5.4 million California workers not currently receiving paid sick days from their employer**

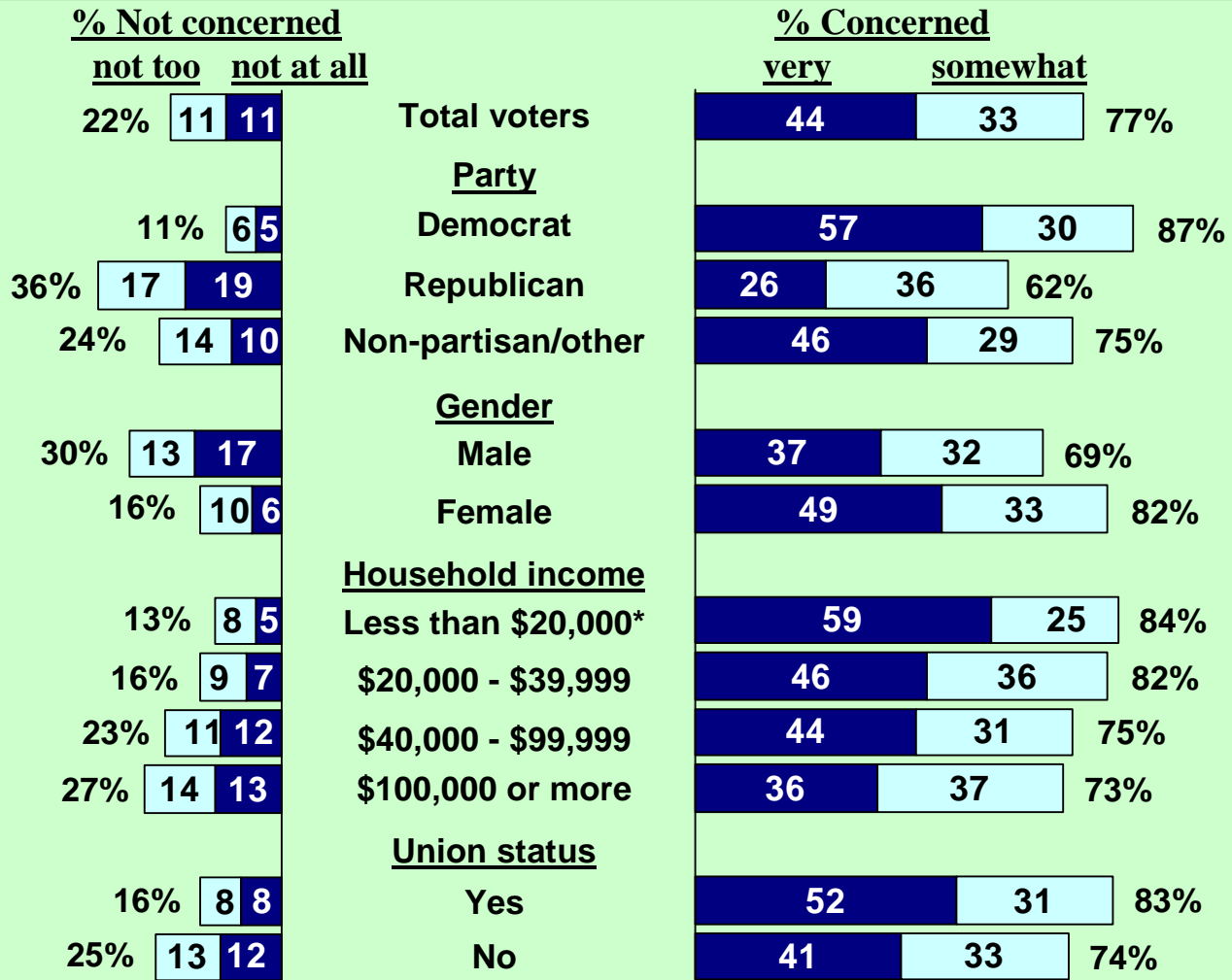
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**Table 4**

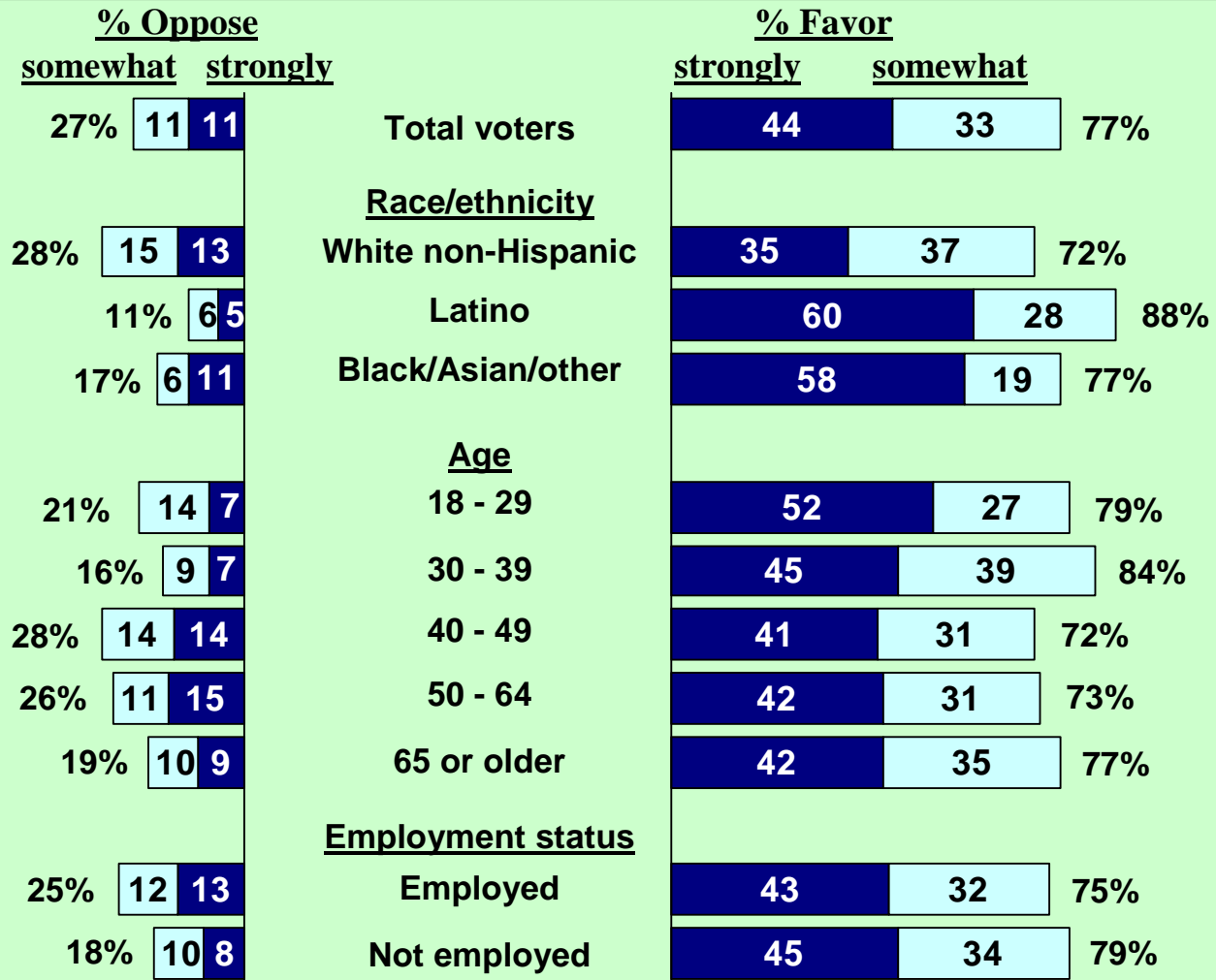
# Democrats, women, lower income voters and households with union members are most concerned about workers without paid sick days



\* Small sample base. Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 4 (cont'd)

# Latinos also more concerned than other voters about workers being without paid sick days

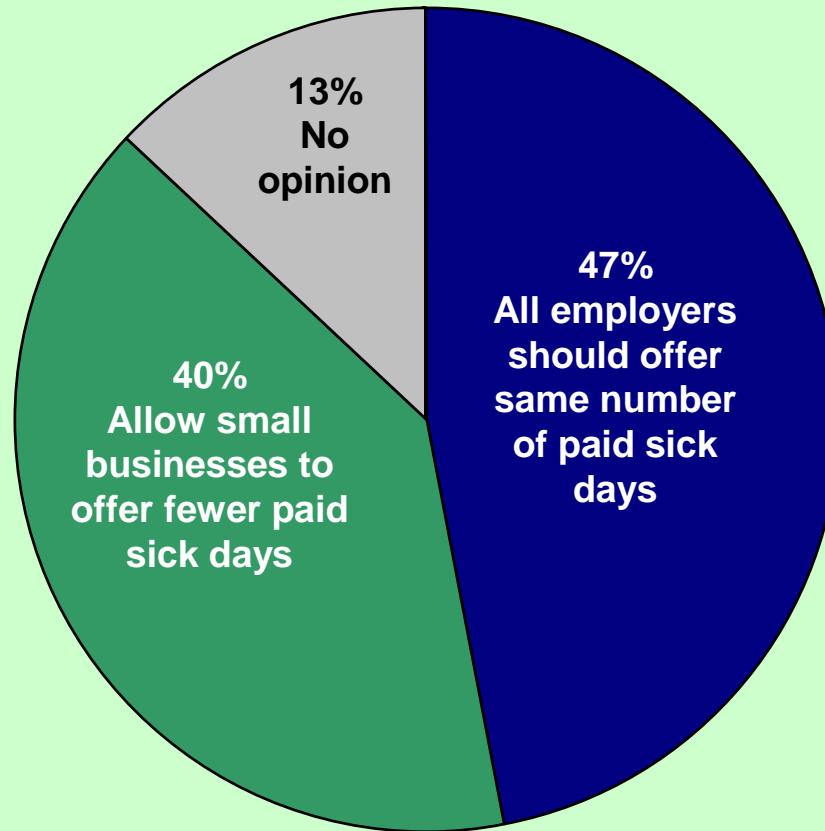


Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 5

# No consensus about whether small businesses should be allowed to offer fewer paid sick days than other businesses

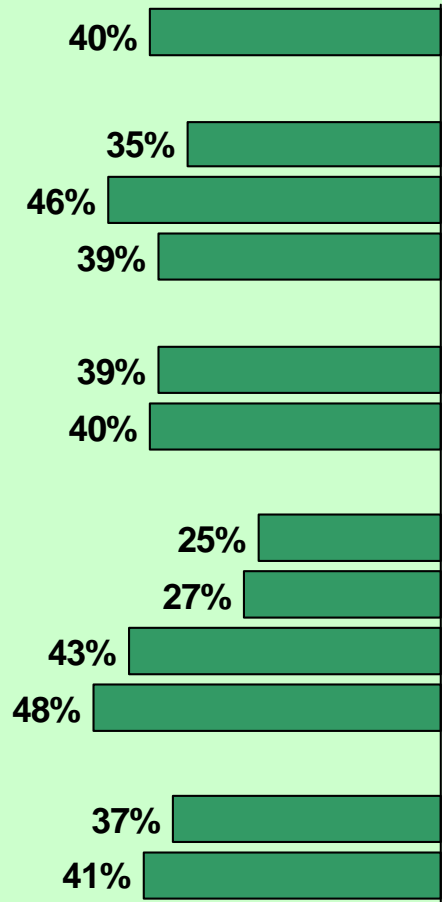
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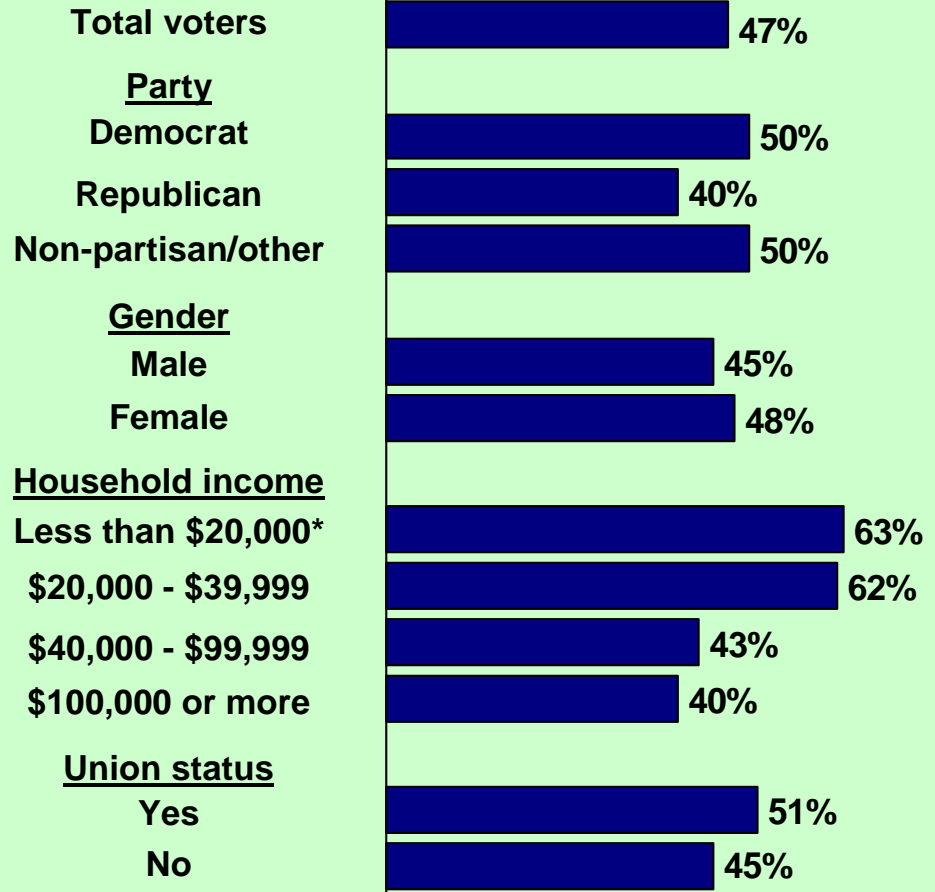
**Table 6**

# Democrats, non-partisans, lower income voters and households with union members more likely to support all employers offering the same number of paid sick days to workers

## % Fewer days for small businesses



## % All employers same

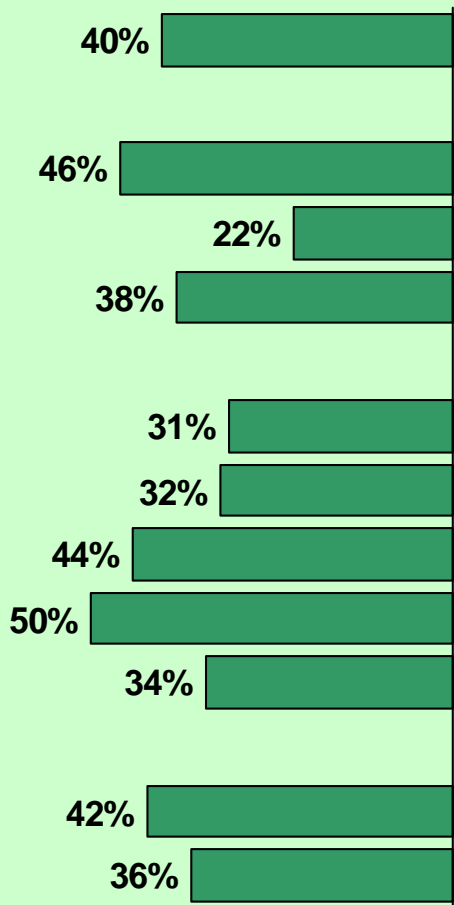


\* Small sample base. Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

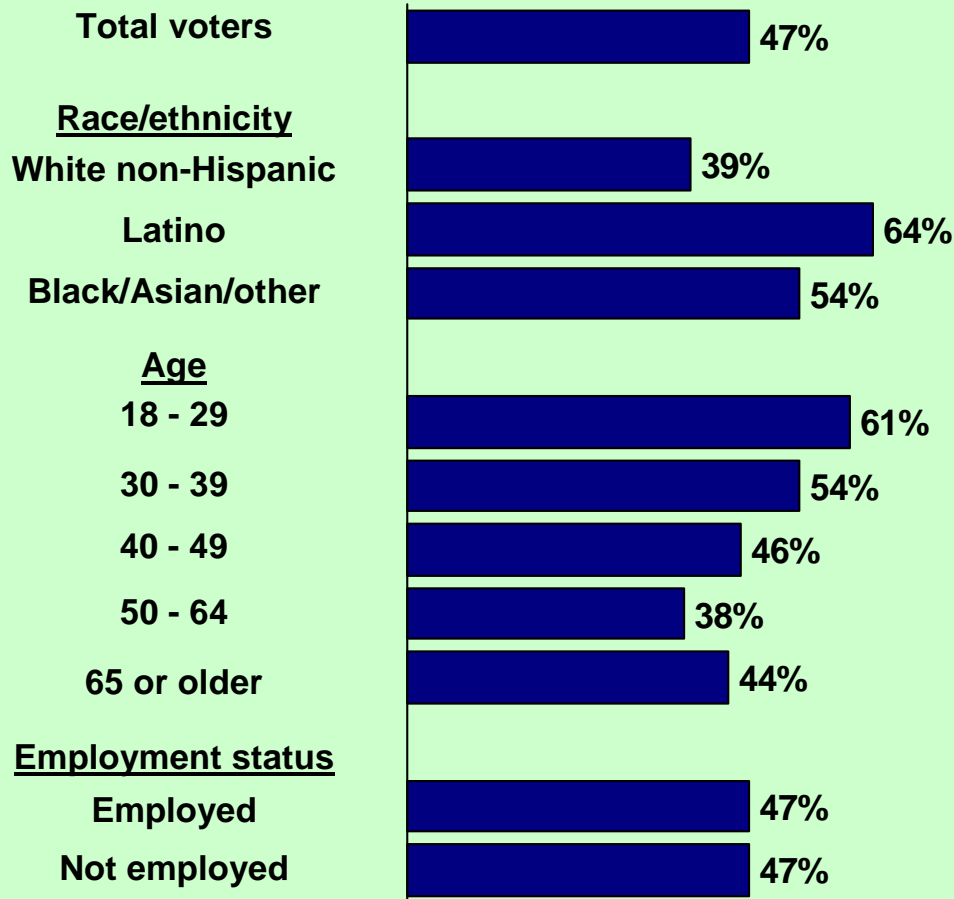
**Table 6 (cont'd)**

# Latinos, other ethnic voters and younger adults also more supportive of all employers offering the same number of paid sick days to workers

**% Fewer days for small businesses**



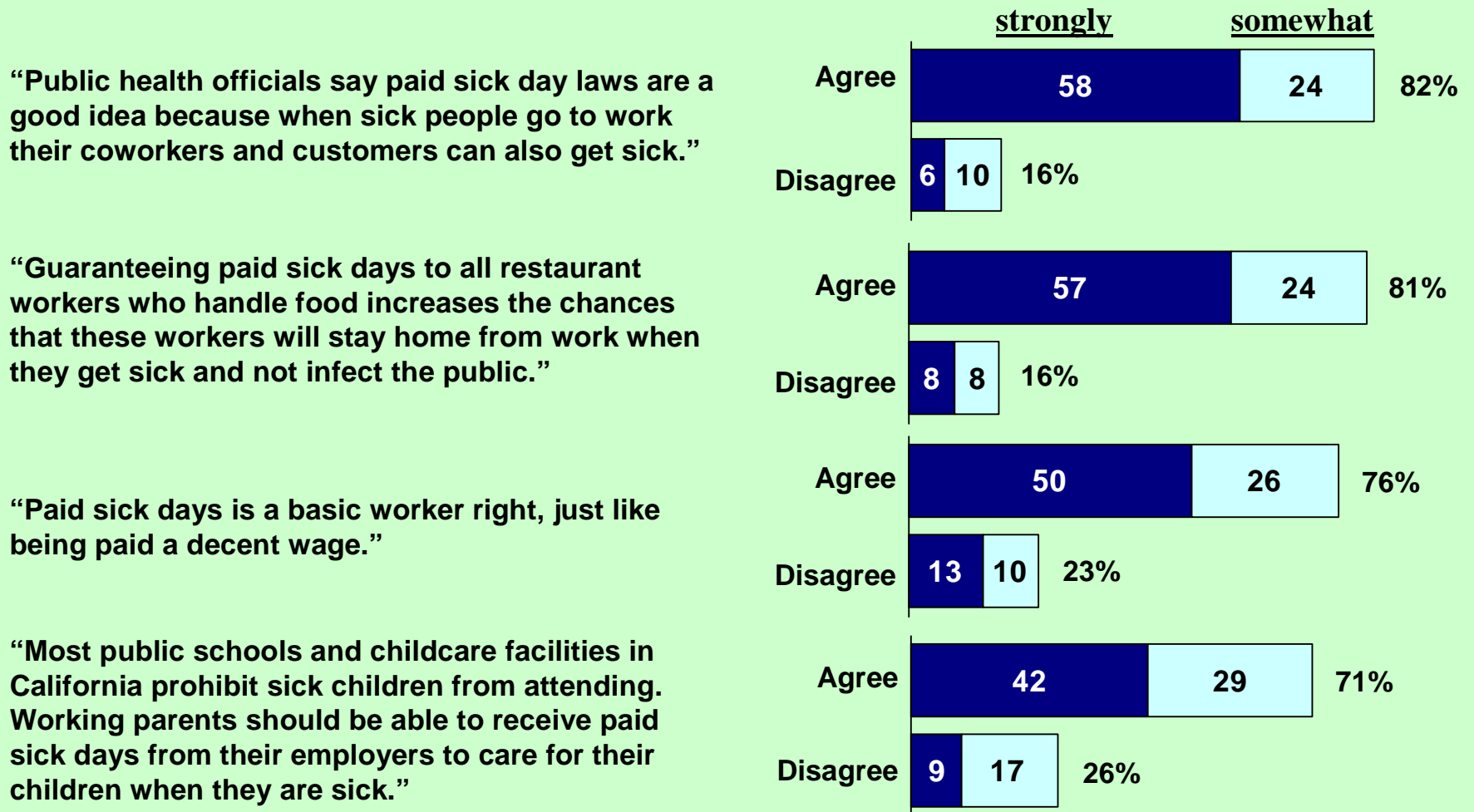
**% All employers same**



Note: Differences between sum of each category's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 7

# Voter reaction to arguments in support of paid sick day laws

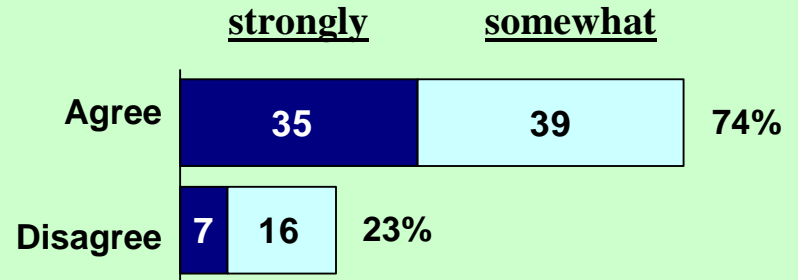


Agree/disagree questions asked of approximately one-half of the total sample.  
Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages to each statement equal proportion with no opinion.

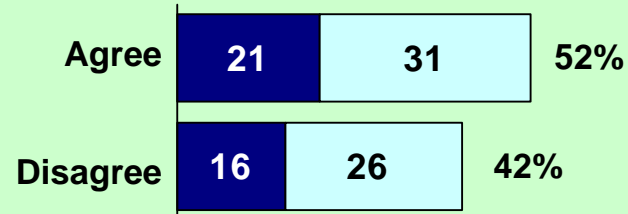
Table 8

# Voter reaction to arguments opposing paid sick day laws

“Paid sick day laws will significantly increase the cost of doing business and these costs will be passed on to consumers.”



“Business groups say paid sick day laws will end up hurting some workers because they will force businesses to cut back on worker hours or lay off some employees.”



Agree/disagree questions asked of approximately one-half of the total sample.  
Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages to each statement equal proportion with no opinion.