

EDF Texas Railroad Commissioner Survey

Findings and Recommendations Prepared by Global Strategy Group



EDF ACTION
Advocacy partner of Environmental Defense Fund

Political advertising paid for by Environmental Defense Action Fund

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Methodology

Texas Likely Voters

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **801 likely 2022 voters in Texas** between March 9 – 13, 2022.

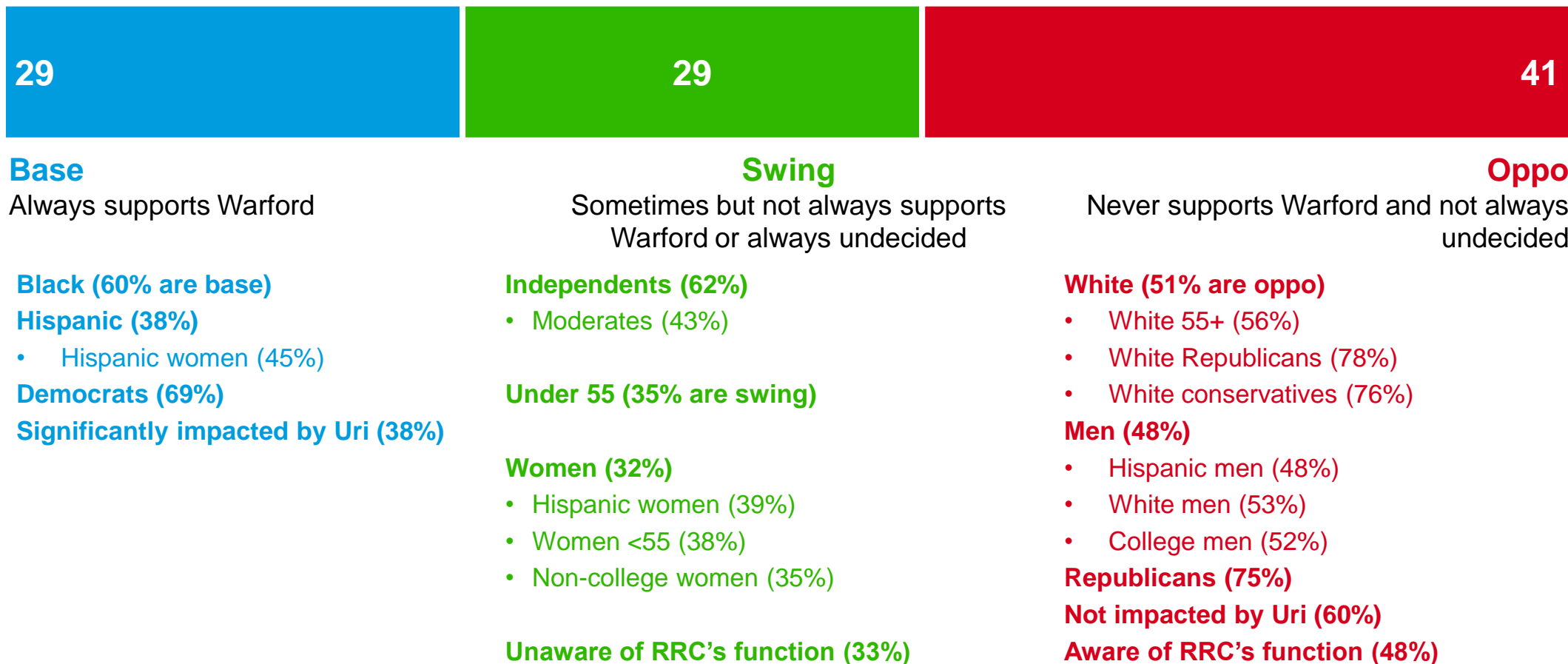
Margin of error

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.5%.

The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

Younger, non-college women and moderate voters are most likely to be swing. While many Hispanic men are out of reach, Hispanic women are efficient mobilization and persuasion targets

Vote Targets in Race for Texas Railroad Commissioner



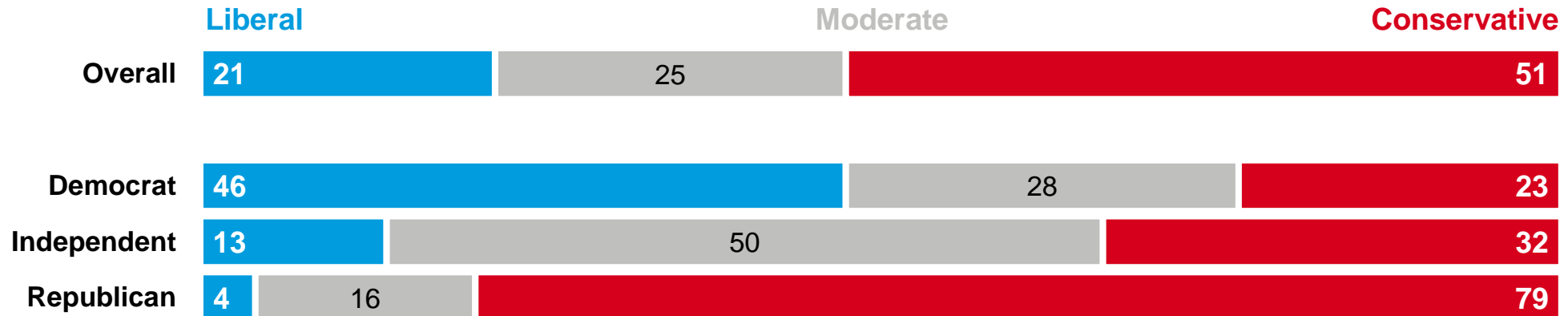
Lay of the Land

A challenging environment: Republicans have a clear partisan advantage in the likely 2022 Texas electorate

Party ID (with leaners)

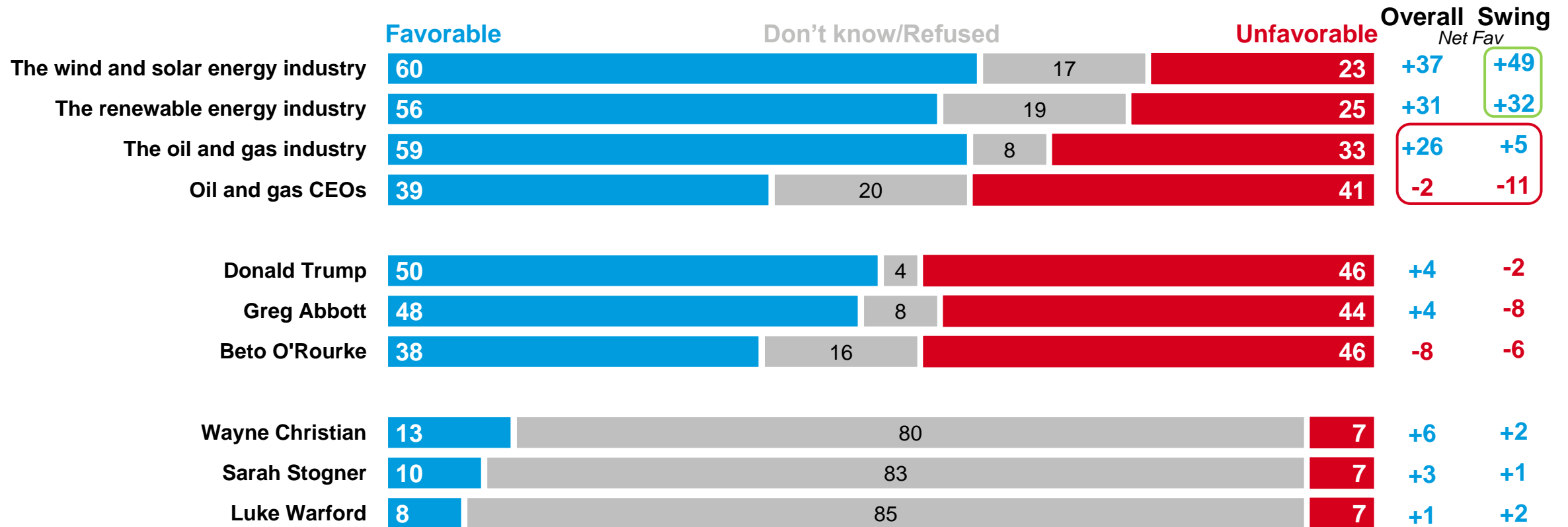


Ideology



RRC candidates unknown. Oil and gas industry generates positive feelings, but CEOs do not. “Wind and solar” better than “Renewable”

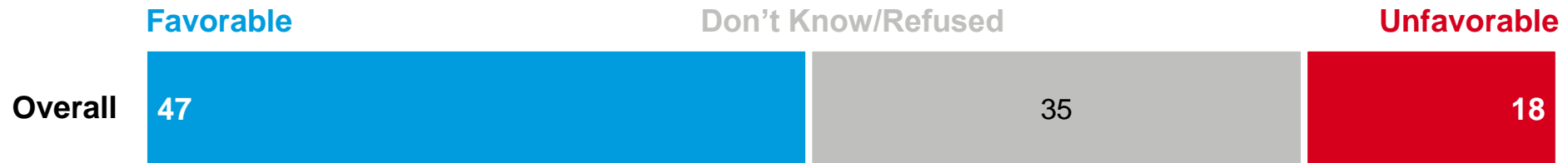
Favorability of People and Groups



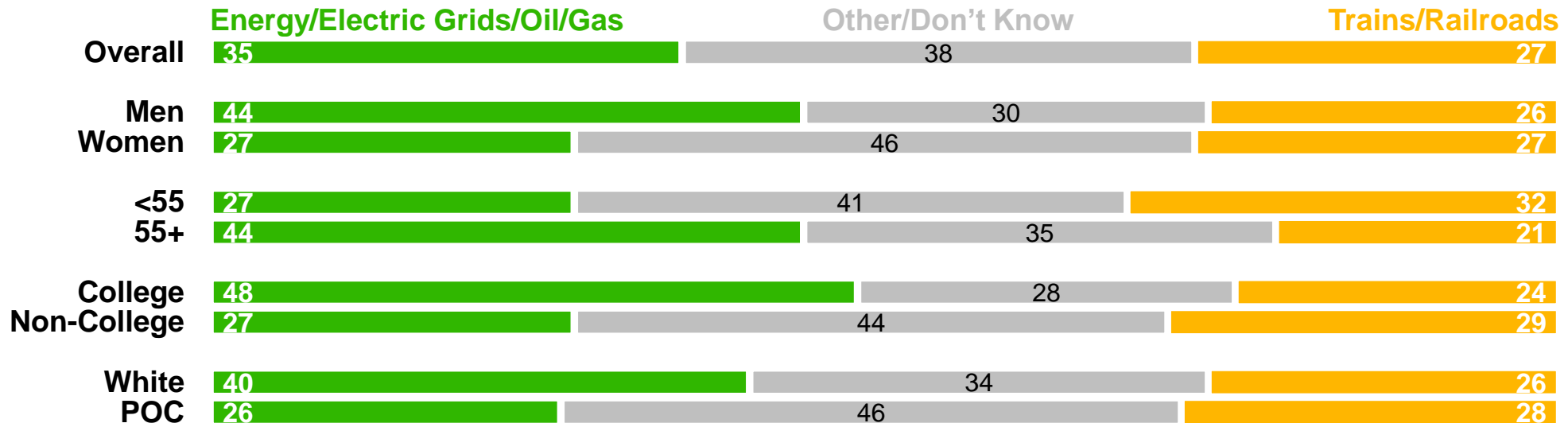
Swing Voters are those who sometimes support Warford or are always undecided

RCC gets solid ratings but, when we dig deeper, just a third know what it does. Knowledge higher with men, older voters, college-educated, and whites

Texas Railroad Commission Favorability



Just to the best of your knowledge, what is the role of the Texas Railroad Commission? (Open Ended Question)



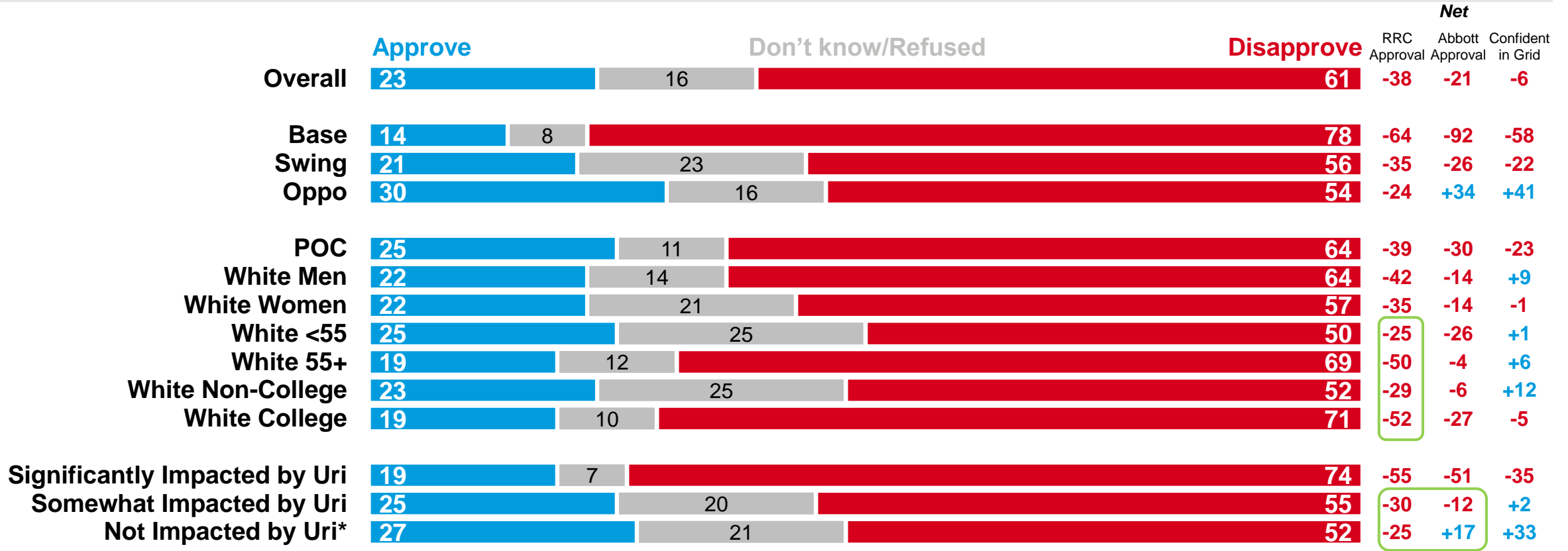
Texas Railroad Commission Explanatory Text

Prior to asking voters about the Commission's response to Winter Storm Uri, respondents were provided the following explanation of the Texas Railroad Commission:

As you may know, the Texas Railroad Commission no longer oversees the railroad industry. Instead, it is the state agency charged with overseeing the oil and gas industry in Texas and dealing with energy policy. It has been called “one of the most important environmental offices that you’ve never heard of.”

Voters overwhelmingly disapprove of both Abbott's and, especially, the RRC's handling of Uri. Worst among older and college whites

Do you approve or disapprove of how the Texas Railroad Commission handled Winter Storm Uri?

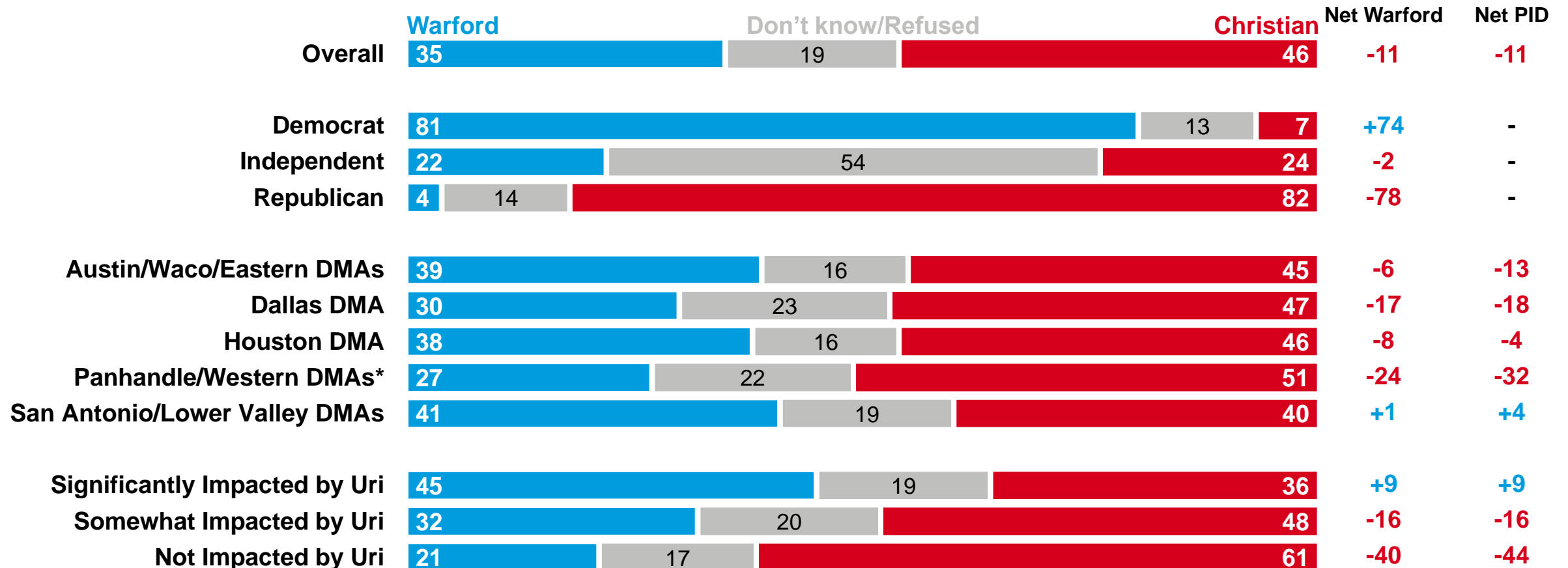


Net "Abbott Approval" refers to net approval of the Governor's handling of Winter Storm Uri
 Net "Confident in Grid" is [% of Voters Confident Grid Can Withstand Another Storm] – [% Not Confident]

The Race for Railroad Commissioner

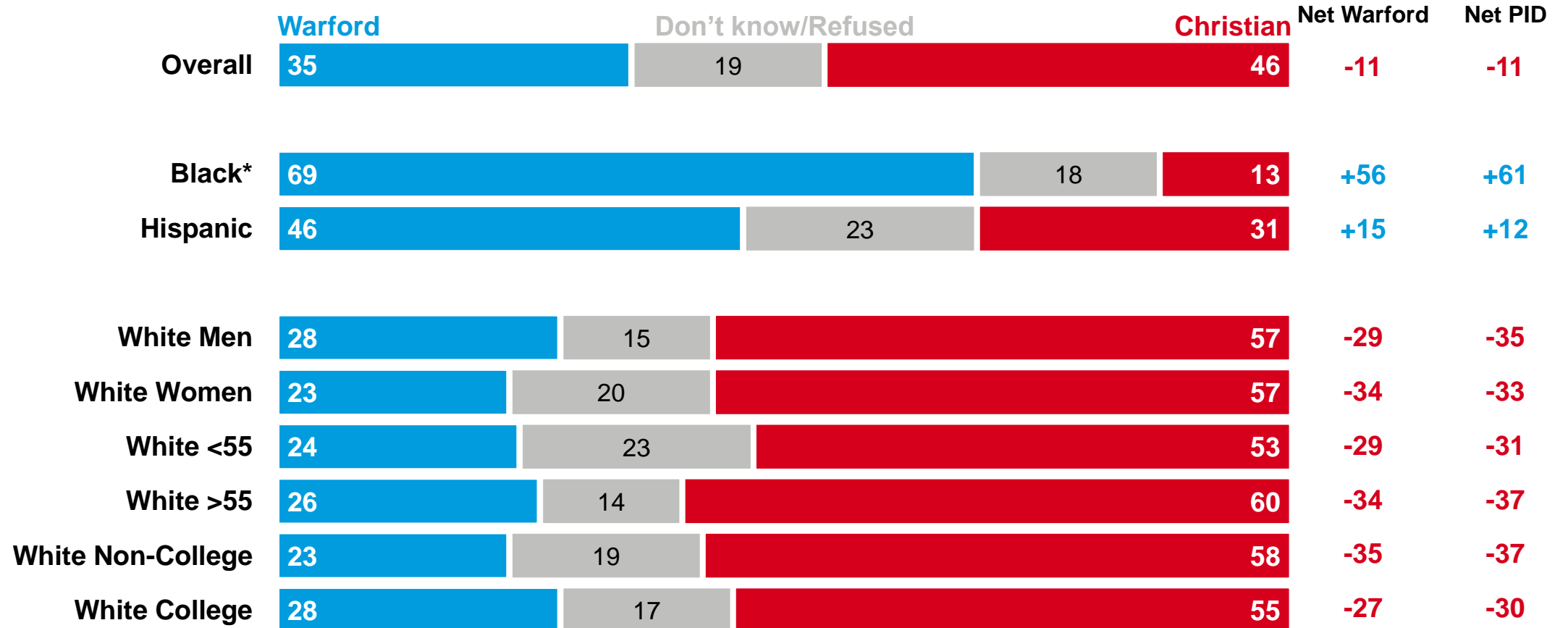
With neither candidate known at this early stage, partisanship drives the head-to-head giving Christian a clear lead

If the election for TX Railroad Commissioner were held today, would you vote for Democrat Luke Warford or Republican Wayne Christian?



Partisanship drives vote choice among voters regardless of race, gender, age, and education

If the election for TX Railroad Commissioner were held today, would you vote for Democrat Luke Warford or Republican Wayne Christian?



After voters hear from both candidates, Warford gains a bit of ground, but Christian maintains a clear lead

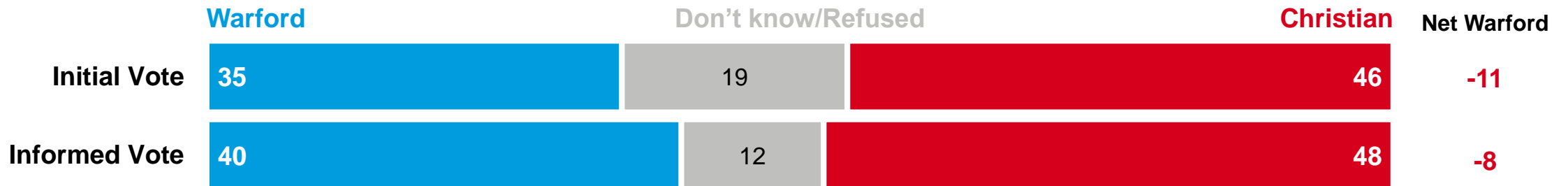
Candidate Profiles & Informed Vote

Democrat **Luke Warford** has spent most of his career consulting for energy companies and working to help businesses create jobs while remaining accountable to their customers. Warford is running because 700 Texans needlessly died during Winter Storm Uri because of a grid failure that should have been prevented and because when the power was out, the Commission was focused on helping the oil and gas CEOs gouge Texans for billions of dollars. As Commissioner, Warford will embrace technology and innovation to make sure Texas remains an energy leader and that energy jobs continue to be the backbone of our economy for decades to come.

Shift to Warford **+5**

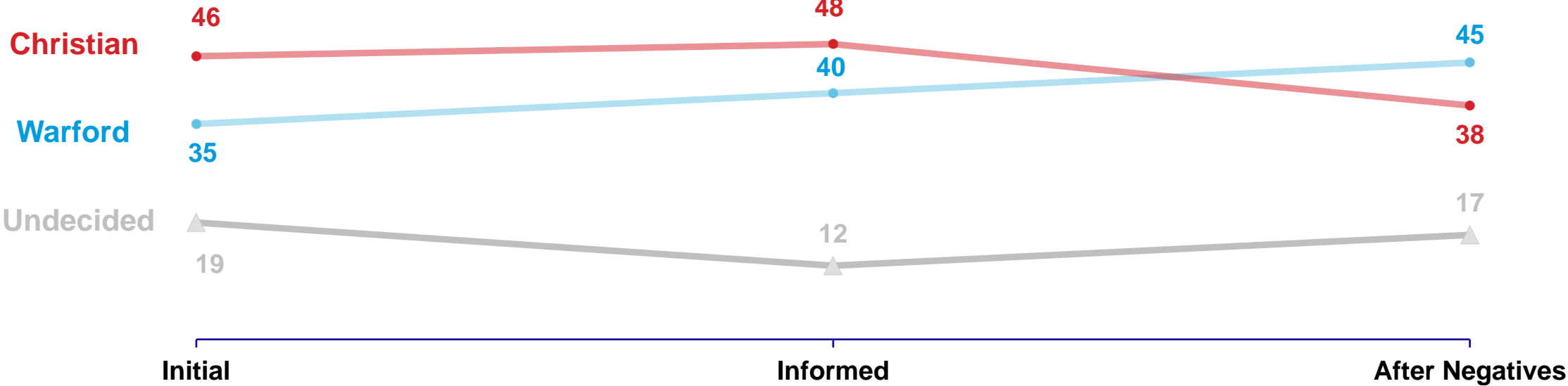
Republican **Wayne Christian** is a businessman and former state representative who has served as Texas Railroad Commissioner since 2017. Christian understands that big government kills jobs and increases costs. He has focused on making sure that regulation is limited and predictable, so that Texas families and businesses have access to safe, affordable, and reliable energy while the oil and gas industry continues to thrive and create jobs. As Commissioner, Christian will continue to fight against the Biden administration's industry-killing policies which would increase costs, kill jobs, and leave us reliant on oil from Russia and the Middle East.

Shift to Christian **+2**



A robust negative campaign against Christian gives Warford the lead

Vote Movement



Messaging drives largest gains with center-right, white women, white non-college, younger whites and those at least somewhat impacted by Uri

Vote Movement							
	Initial Margin	Post-Messaging	Change in Margin		Initial Margin	Post-Messaging	Change in Margin
Overall	-11	+7	+18	Overall	-11	+7	+18
Democrat	+74	+71	-3	Black*	+56	+64	+8
Independent	-2	+39	+41	Hispanic	+15	+20	+5
Republican	-78	-50	+28	White Men	-30	-11	+19
Austin/Waco/Eastern DMAs	-7	+10	+17	White Women	-34	-2	+32
Dallas DMA	-17	+7	+24	White <55	-29	0	+29
Houston DMA	-8	+5	+13	White >55	-34	-12	+22
Panhandle/Western DMAs*	-24	-4	+20	White Non-College	-35	0	+35
San Antonio/Lower Valley DMAs	+1	+19	+18	White College	-27	-12	+15
Significantly Impacted by Uri	+10	+33	+23	A Lot of Attention to Utility Bills	-10	+10	+20
Somewhat Impacted by Uri	-16	+4	+20	Some Attention to Utility Bills	-19	+1	+20
Not Impacted by Uri	-40	-37	+3	No Attention to Utility Bills	0	+11	+11

How to Talk About Christian

We have a wealth of messages that resonate strongly. Not much differentiation aside from climate scoring lower

Negative Messaging

Overall Swing

% Raises doubts - major

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 46 | 58 | [CORRUPTION] Wayne Christian voted to approve an oil waste dump even though the Commission's staff had determined that the site was, "dangerously close" to underground water sources that provide millions of people with drinking water. And just three days later, Christian received a \$100,000 campaign contribution from the company building the waste dump. |
| 46 | 58 | [BAILOUT] Even after oil and gas CEOs increased natural gas prices dramatically during Winter Storm Uri, Wayne Christian voted for a \$3.4 billion bailout for the oil and gas companies that will be paid for by raising utility bills on Texas families and businesses for up to 30 years. Meanwhile, Christian has received thousands in campaign contributions from these energy companies. |
| 43 | 59 | [GOUGING] During Winter Storm Uri, Wayne Christian allowed the oil and gas executives who fund his campaign to gouge Texas consumers out of billions of dollars. Afterward, these executives gloated that the crisis had been a "jackpot" for them because they were allowed to charge freezing consumers, "super-premium prices." |
| 43 | 57 | [SPLIT B - POLLUTION] Flaring of fossil gas results in the emission of toxic pollutants like methane and benzene that cause serious health problems, including causing half of all the pregnancies in the surrounding areas to result in premature births. Yet Wayne Christian has worked to implement policies that encourage even more of this dangerous flaring. |
| 41 | 55 | [GRID FAILURE] Before Winter Storm Uri, Wayne Christian ignored warnings about the vulnerability of the gas supply system and failed to do his job by refusing to enforce the Commission's own rules that require the oil and gas industry to prepare for winter weather. According to Texas energy experts, this failure caused their power plants to, "fail in spectacular fashion," leading to the failure of Texas' energy grid during the storm and the needless deaths of over 700 Texans. |
| 41 | 54 | [COSTS] Since Wayne Christian was elected to the Railroad Commission, Texas households' power bills have gone up by 50% while service has only gotten worse. Thanks to Christian's policies, Texas's energy system is now less secure, less reliable, and much more expensive than it was when he was elected to the Commission. |
| 35 | 45 | [SPLIT A - CLIMATE CHANGE] Even though 99% of scientists, NASA, and the Department of Defense all say that climate change is real and a threat – as we saw with Winter Storm Uri – Wayne Christian continues to deny that climate change is real. When asked how Americans should combat climate change, his proposed solution was to, "turn the damn air conditioner up." |

Summarizing Christian's negatives is effective at further diminishing his vote share, especially with Hispanics and younger women

Wayne Christian Negative & Final Vote

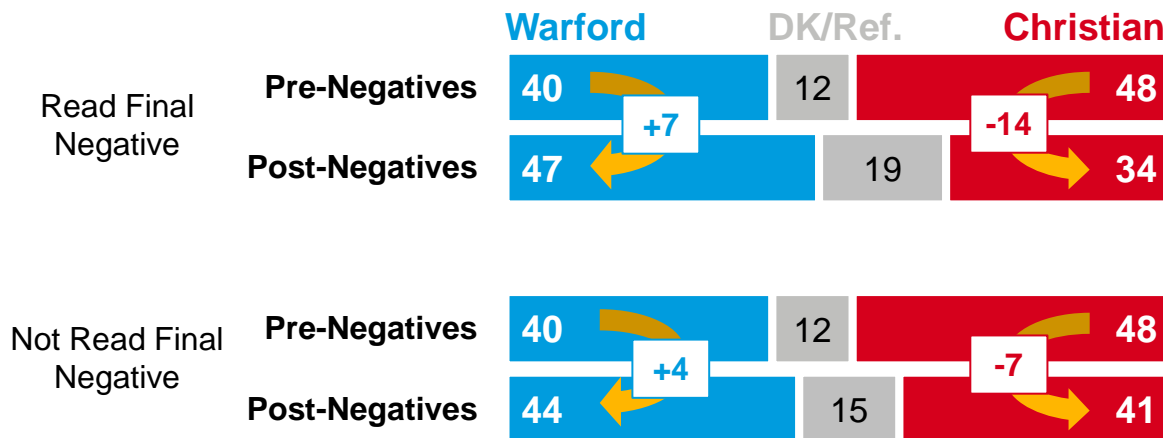
[Read only to Split C] Under Wayne Christian, the Texas Railroad Commission has failed you. His incompetence has cost you money and left your power unreliable. Texas needs better. This job isn't about party, it's about competence and who has your back. Wayne Christian has shown that he cares more about protecting himself and his special interest cronies than he does about you.

Vote Margin Shift **+21**

[Split D] Not read anything

Vote Margin Shift **+11**

Final Vote Choice



Groups Where Final Message Has Greatest Impact

Audience	Warford Margin Change		
	Split C	Split D	Difference
Overall	+21	+11	+10
Hispanic	+23	+3	+20
Women 18-54	+39	+19	+20
Non-College Men	+13	-5	+18
Republicans	+33	+15	+18
College Women	+27	+10	+17

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The political environment in Texas is challenging. Party ID is -11 and both Donald Trump and Governor Abbott are above water. In a down ballot race for an office that only a third of voters know anything about, such as Texas Railroad Commissioner, voters often default to that partisanship.

Winter Storm Uri does provide an opening. After we explain the RRC's role, voters give its handling of Winter Storm Uri abysmal ratings.

And a robust negative campaign against Christian is effective at dropping his vote share. We also have several potent negatives that, taken together, turn Warford's initial 11-point deficit to a 7-point lead (45-38). And in the split that heard our summary negative, that final margin is an even stronger 13-point lead (47-34).

Messaging Recommendations

If and when communicating with voters, we recommend **beginning by establishing what the Texas Railroad Commission is responsible for** to set the stage and build off existing frustration with their performance around Winter Storm Uri.

Then, when talking to voters about Christian, we recommend a focus on Christian's history with corruption as well as his support for price gouging and a bailout during Winter Storm Uri. While we have several potentially potent negatives, we would focus on these three above all based on the post-messaging open-end.

Close by summarizing and personalizing these negatives to voters. Tying everything together with the summary message that we tested clearly boosts the impact of our messaging.

Our most important persuasion targets are center-right white women – especially younger and non-college. Hispanic women don't move as a group as much, but over-index on being swing and would, therefore, also be an important target group.

Our Message in 60(ish) Seconds...

The Texas Railroad Commission no longer oversees the railroad industry. Instead, it is responsible for regulating the oil and gas industry, including preventing disasters such as the blackout during Winter Storm Uri.

Under Wayne Christian, the Texas Railroad Commission has failed you.

During Winter Storm Uri, Christian allowed the oil and gas executives who fund his campaign to gouge Texas consumers out of billions of dollars. Afterward, these executives gloated that the crisis had been a “jackpot” because they were allowed to charge freezing consumers, “super-premium prices.”

And even after the oil and gas CEOs gouged consumers, Christian voted to give them a \$3.4 billion bailout that will be paid for by raising utility bills on Texas families and businesses for up to 30 years.

Even worse, Christian voted to approve an oil waste dump even though the Commission’s staff had determined that the site was, “dangerously close” to underground water sources that provide millions of people with drinking water. And just three days later, Christian received a \$100,000 campaign contribution from the company building the waste dump.

This job isn't about party, it's about competence and who has your back. Wayne Christian has shown that he cares more about protecting himself and his special interest cronies than he does about you.

Thank You

New York

Washington, DC

Hartford

Chicago

Denver

Seattle

Appendix

Demographics of the Electorate

Party ID (including leaners)

Democrats	37
Independents	15
Republicans	48

Party and Ideology

Liberal Democrats	17
Non-Liberal Democrats	19
Non-Conservative Independents	9
Conservative Independents	5
Non-Conservative Republicans	10
Conservative Republicans	38

Region

Austin/Waco/Eastern DMAs	20
Dallas DMA	30
Houston DMA	25
Panhandle/Western DMAs	9
San Antonio/Lower Valley DMAs	16

Gender

Men	47
Women	53

Age

18-29 year olds	14
30-44 year olds	23
45-54 year olds	18
55-64 year olds	20
Seniors 65+	25

Education

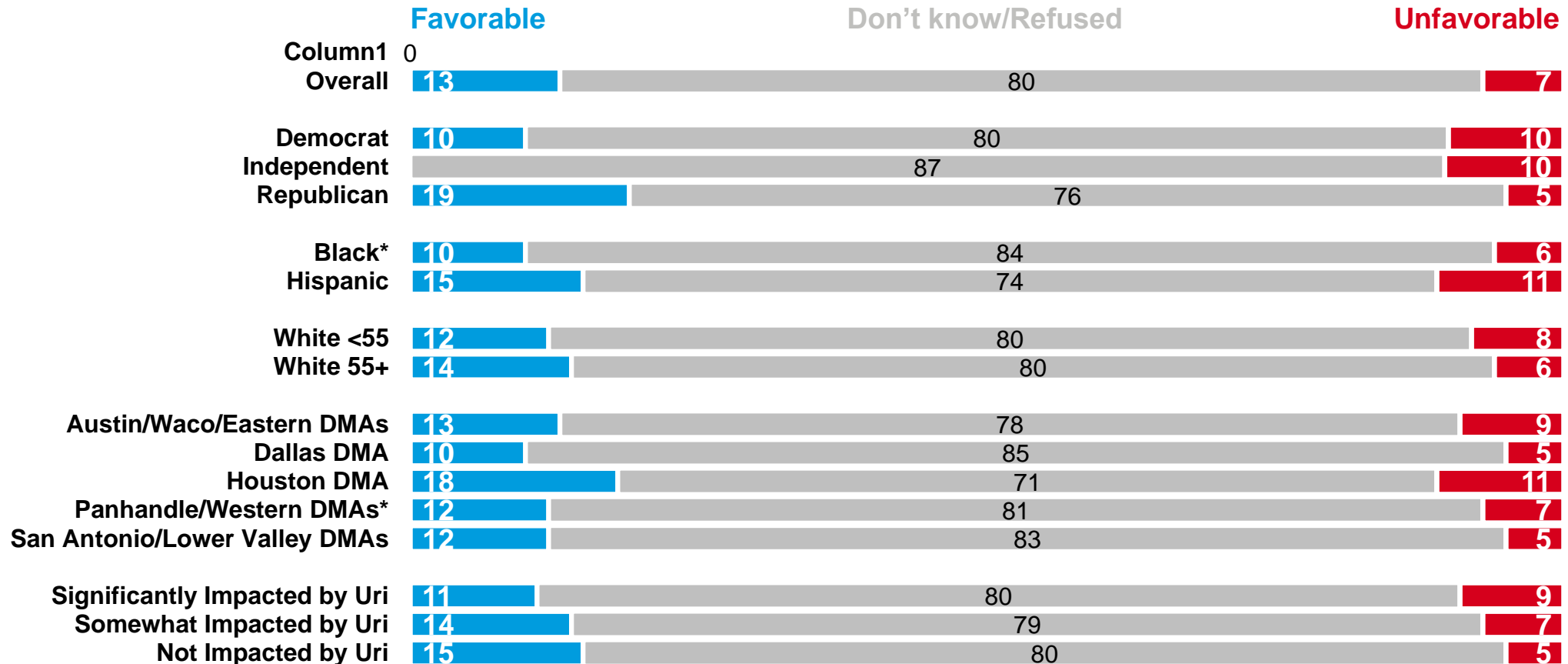
High School or Less	16
Some College	43
College Graduates	26
Post-Graduate	14

Impacted by Winter Storm Uri

Impacted Significantly (in at least 3 ways)	36
Impacted Somewhat (in 1 or 2 ways)	48
Not Impacted	16

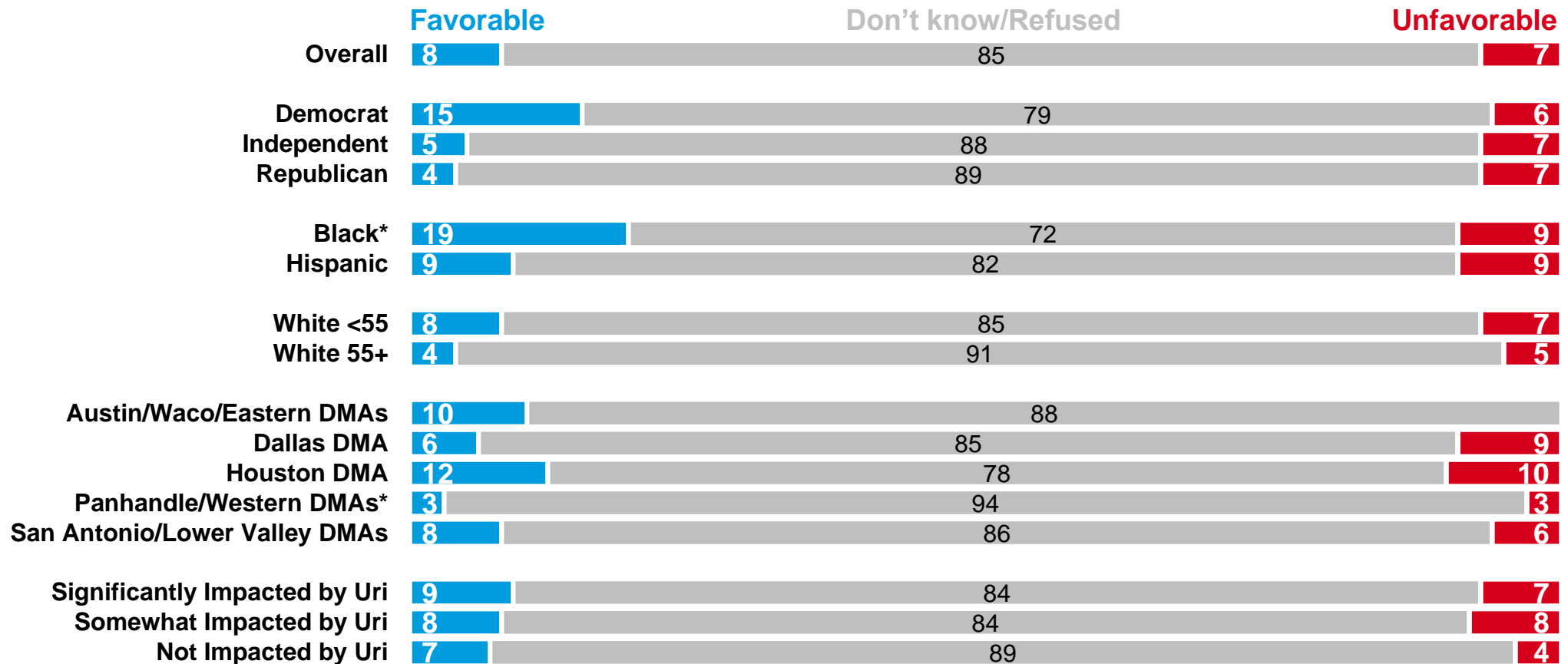
Few voters are familiar with Wayne Christian; Republicans and Houston residences are most familiar, but awareness remains below 30%

Wayne Christian Favorability



Familiarity with Luke Warford is low across demographics, but is slightly higher among Democrats and Black voters

Luke Warford Favorability



*Sample size under 100