

Date: March 1, 2024

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Civil Service Proposed Charter Amendment - Polling Results**

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In anticipation of the November 2024 election, the City sought to survey voters and gauge support for a proposed City Charter Amendment for Civil Service Reform that may be placed on the ballot. Performing this type of survey is a standard practice for public agencies while they are in the research stage of whether to invest time and resources to place items before voters for consideration. To do so, the City of Long Beach (City) contracted with FM3 Research, a policy-oriented opinion research firm based in California, to perform a survey of likely voters in Long Beach.

Data was collected through telephone and online interviews October 21 through October 29, 2023. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish. In total, FM3 surveyed 909 likely voters in Long Beach. Survey respondents were presented with a mock ballot summary and potential provisions of the potential measure and asked to vote. Voters were also presented with pro and con arguments about each measure and were then asked to vote a second time.

### **Charter Amendment – City Hiring System Modernization / Civil Service Reform**

The voter's polled were advised of the following as it relates to the proposed Charter Amendment for City Hiring System Modernization:

- Reduce the time it takes to fill vacant positions, including firefighters/paramedics, police officers, sanitation workers and other city employees.
- Creates a single, unified city department to improve efficiencies, service quality, responsiveness and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Maintain an independent board of community members who rule on personnel-related actions and hear employee appeals for disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and dismissals.
- Maintain merit-based hiring and establish a preference system to encourage the hiring of Long Beach residents and workers who have attended local schools and universities.
- Consolidate all hiring to a single City department.

The results of the polling determined:

- The vast majority of Long Beach voters favor this proposal, including one-third who say they would vote “definitely yes” to approve if the election were held at the time of survey.
- The potential measure received strong support from a broad cross-section of Long Beach voters (Attachment).

## Charter Amendment Polling Results

March 1, 2024

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- Voters strongly favor provisions to speed up hiring of essential workers, ensure merit-based hiring and promote efficient hiring employment practices.
- A majority “strongly” favors a faster disciplinary appeal process and eight in ten back local hiring preferences.
- Most also support implementing preferences to hire existing part-time or temporary city workers.
- Voters express high levels of support for hiring City interns and those who have attended local schools.
- Six in ten are “much more likely” to vote in favor after learning how the current hiring process prevents the City from filling key positions.
- Seven in ten are likely to vote in favor to consolidate hiring to a single department, but four in ten are less likely when it is claimed the measure weakens worker protections.
  - The proposed Charter Amendment would at minimum maintain all of the current worker protections that currently exist.
- After more information, more than seven in ten Long Beach voters continue to favor this Charter Amendment measure to improve the City’s process.

### Summary of Findings

A solid majority of Long Beach voters support amending the City Charter to modernize the City’s hiring system by consolidating all hiring to a single City department, with 71 percent of those surveyed initially indicating that they would vote yes to approve the Charter Amendment. This proposed measure receives strong support from a broad cross-section of Long Beach voters, who strongly favor provisions to speed up the hiring of essential workers and implementing preferences for local hires and existing City employees. After hearing statements for and against this proposed measure, more than seven in ten Long Beach voters continue to favor this Charter Amendment measure. Finally, the proposed measure had majority support in all nine Council Districts.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrew Chang, Assistant to the City Manager, at (562) 570-6724 or at [andrew.chang@longbeach.gov](mailto:andrew.chang@longbeach.gov).

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# City of Long Beach Charter Amendments Issues Survey

*Summary of Findings from a Survey of Long Beach  
Likely November 2024 Voters Conducted October 21-29, 2023*



FAIRBANK, MASLIN,  
MAULLIN, METZ  
& ASSOCIATES

# Survey Specifics and Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	October 21-29, 2023
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	Long Beach Likely November 2024 Voters
<b>Total Interviews</b>	909
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Contact Methods</b>	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
<b>Languages</b>	English & Spanish

*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*

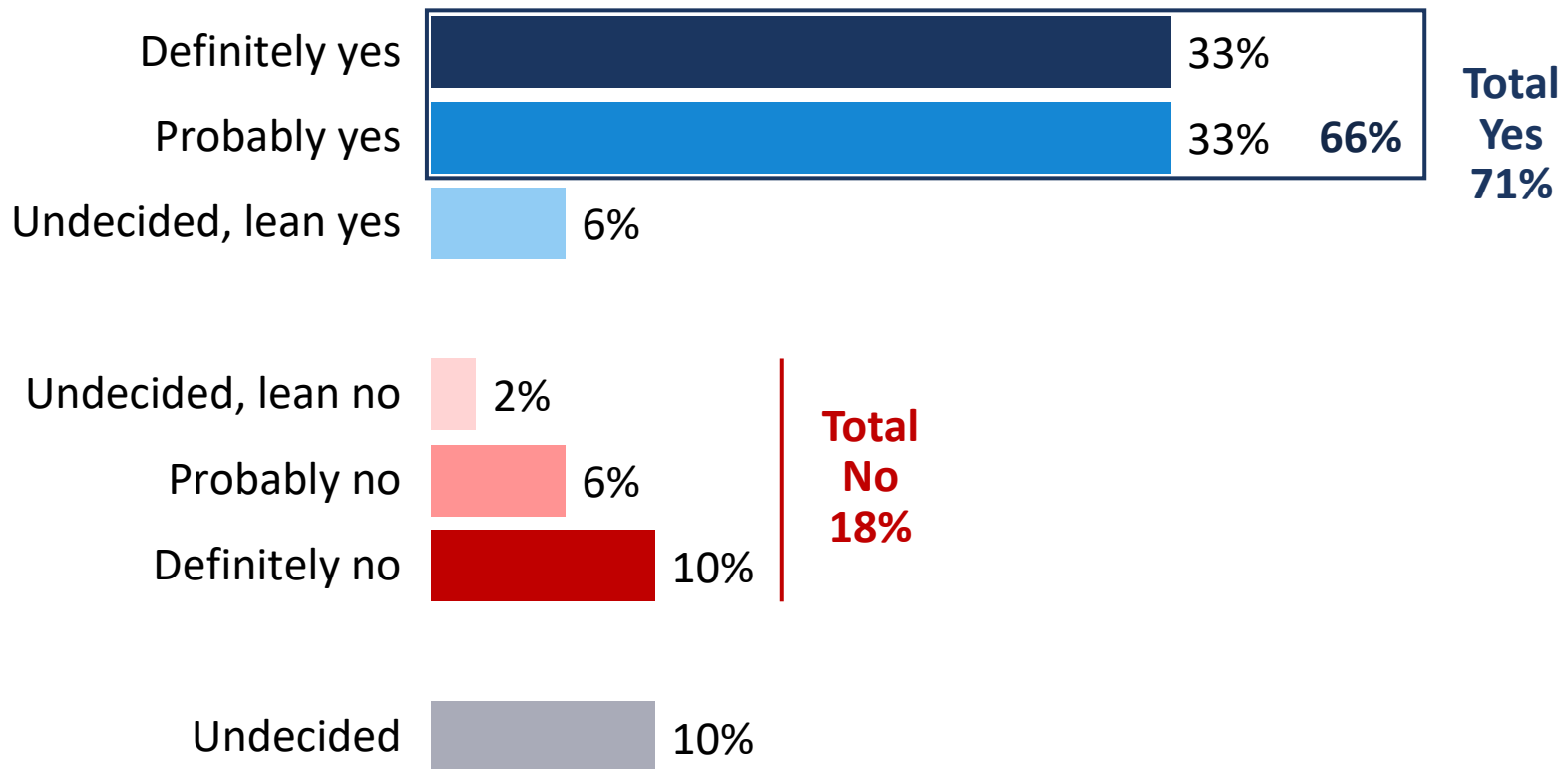
# Summary of City of Long Beach Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment Measure

The Long Beach Charter Amendment would modernize the City's hiring system to:

- Reduce the time it takes to fill vacant positions, including firefighters/paramedics, police officers, sanitation workers and other city employees.
- Creates a single, unified city department to improve efficiencies, service quality, responsiveness and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Maintain an independent board of community members who rule on personnel-related actions and hear employee appeals for disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and dismissals.
- Maintain merit-based hiring and establish a preference system to encourage the hiring of Long Beach residents and workers who have attended local schools and universities.
- Consolidate all hiring to a single City department.

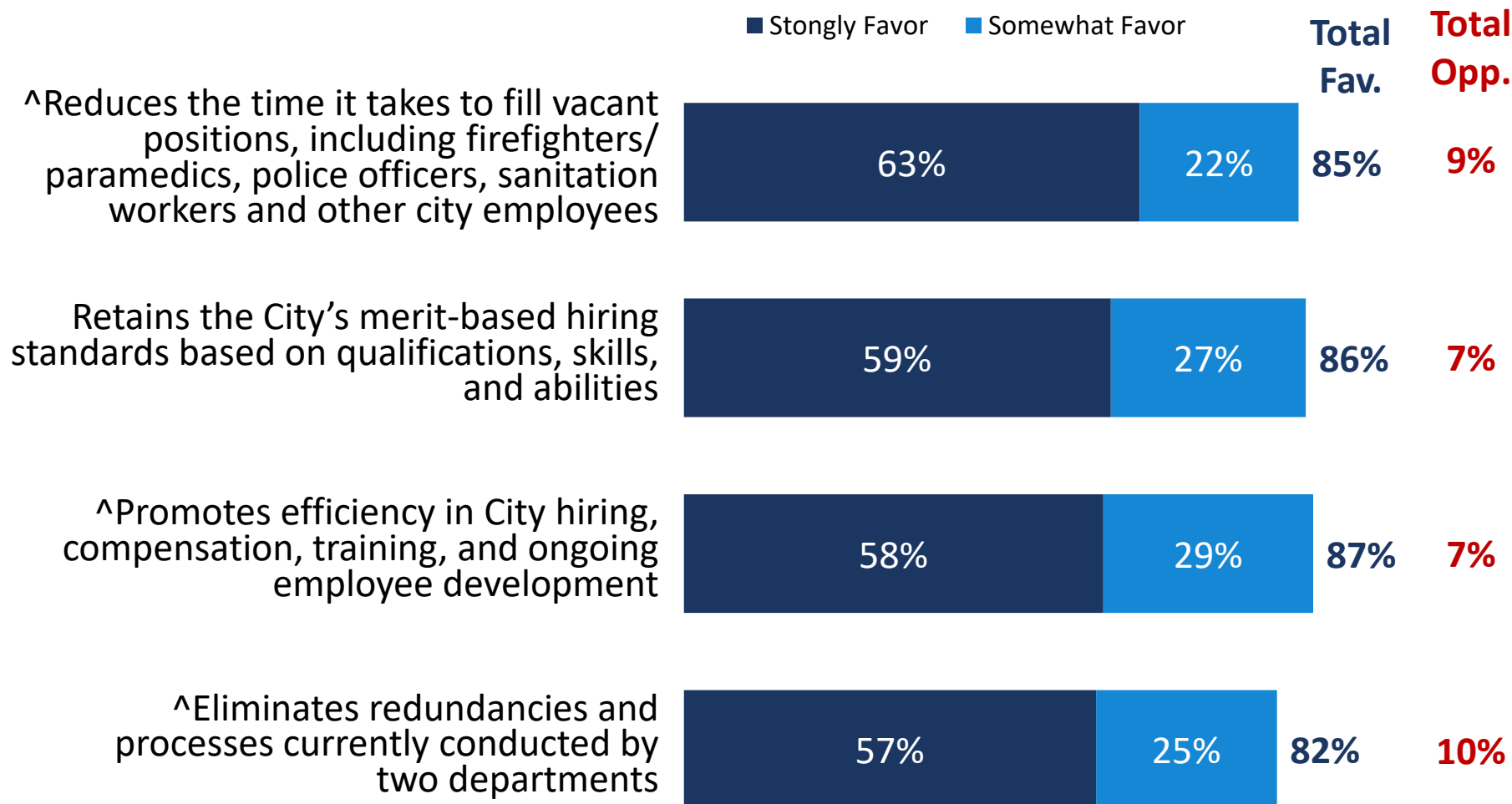
# The vast majority of Long Beach voters favor this proposal, including a third who say they would vote “definitely yes” to approve if the election were held today.

## *Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment*



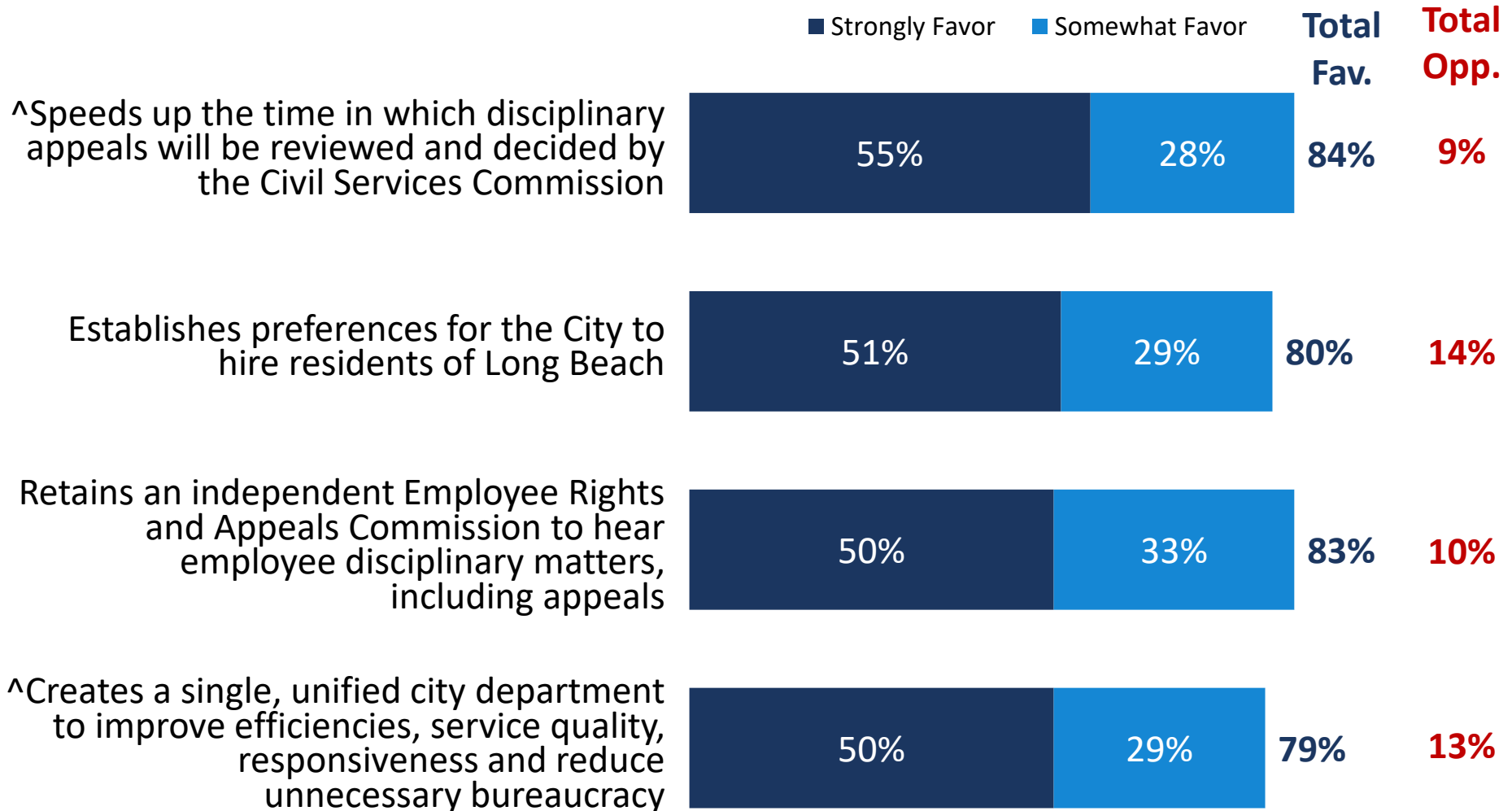
# Voters strongly favor provisions to speed up the hiring of essential workers, ensure merit-based hiring and promote efficient hiring employment practices.

## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment



# A majority “strongly” favors a faster disciplinary appeals system and eight in ten back local hiring preferences.

## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment





# Most voters also support implementing preferences to hire existing part-time or temporary city workers.

## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment

■ Strongly Favor ■ Somewhat Favor

**Total Fav.** **Total Opp.**

Reduces the time it takes the City to hire workers by combining the City of Long Beach's Civil Service Department and Human Resources Department into a single department



**81%** **13%**

Establishes preferences to promote part-time or temporary city employees who have worked at least 1,500 hours in the past two years



**80%** **13%**

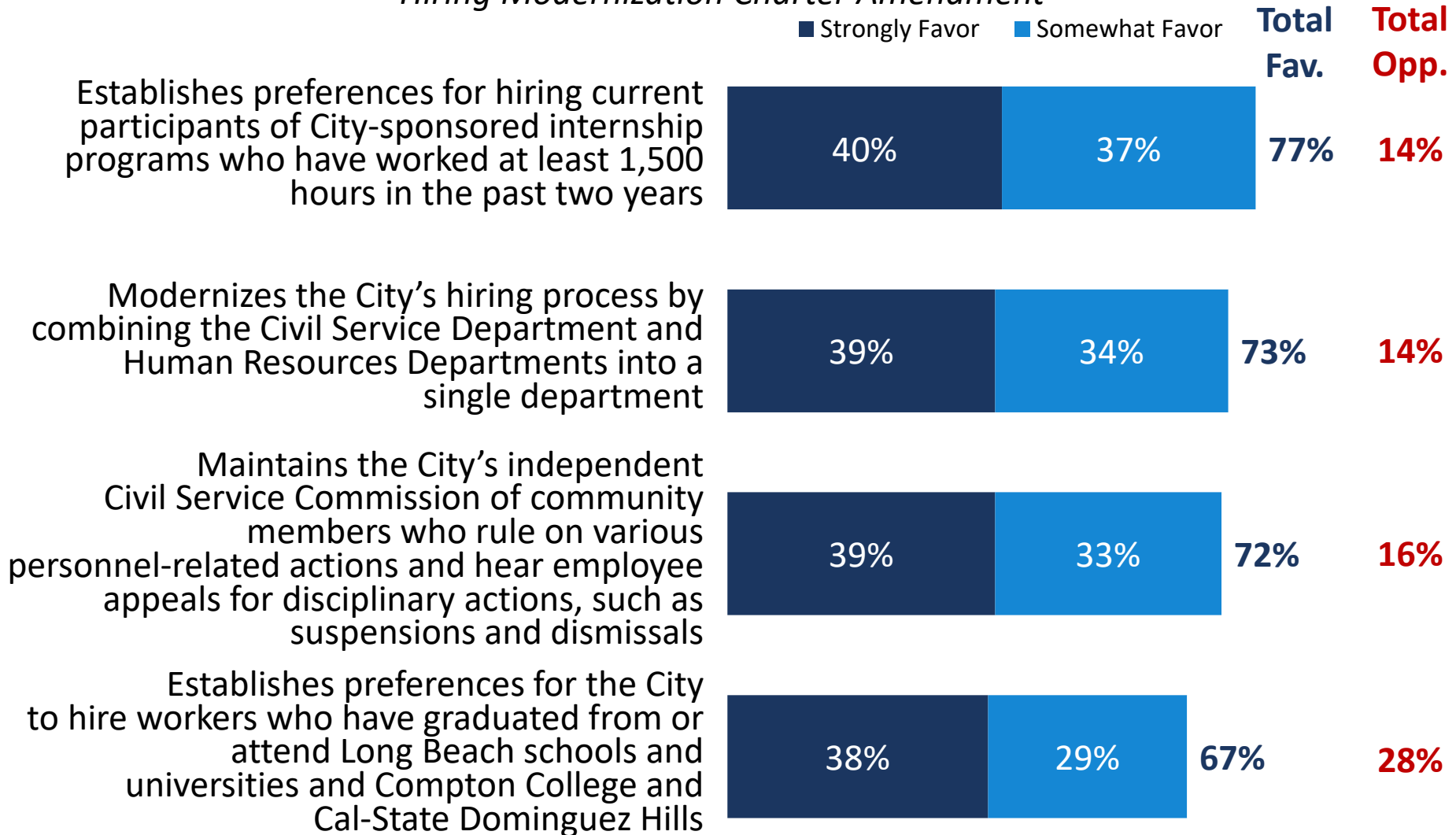
Maintains the City's independent Civil Service Commission of community members who rule on various personnel-related actions and hear appeals for disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and dismissals



**74%** **15%**

# Voters express high levels of support for hiring city interns and those who have attended local schools.

## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment



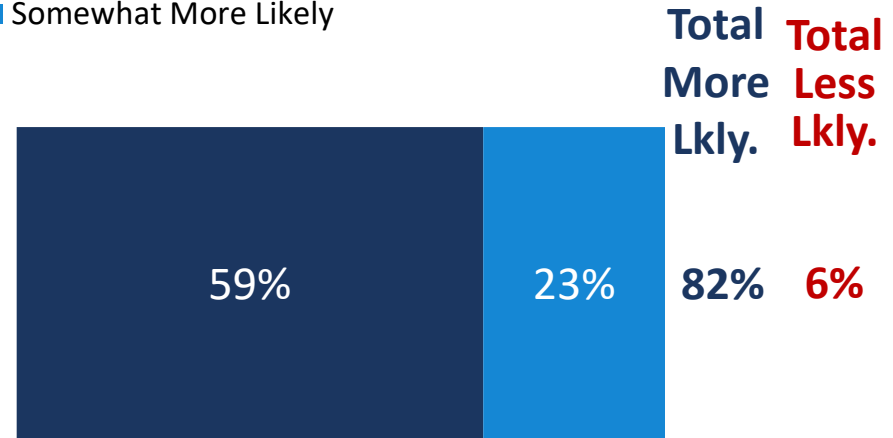
Q4. I am now going to mention different features, elements and provisions of this Charter Amendment measure to modernize the City's hiring system. Please tell me whether you are in favor or oppose that aspect of this proposal. Split Sample

# Six in ten are “much more likely” to vote in favor after learning how the current hiring process prevents the city from filling key positions.

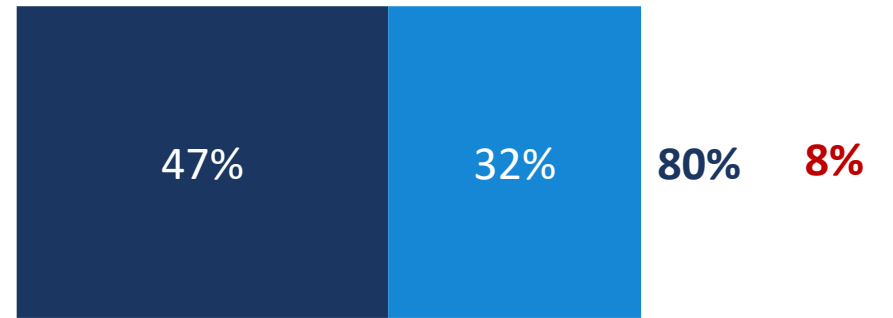
## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment

■ Much More Likely   ■ Somewhat More Likely

It currently takes the City up to 12 months to hire new employees, which has created an unprecedented level of vacancies in the Long Beach Fire, Police and Public Works Departments. This Charter Amendment will modernize and shorten the hiring process to 90 business days to ensure Long Beach has a qualified workforce needed that provides quality services and is responsive to residents’ needs.



\*This proposal will expedite the hiring of essential workers in departments that are significantly understaffed to improve city services. This includes hiring additional sanitation workers needed for trash removal services, firefighters/paramedics, police officers and other frontline workers that provide 911 emergency services.



# Seven in ten are likely to vote in favor to consolidate hiring to a single city department, but four in ten are less likely when it is claimed the measure weakens worker protections.

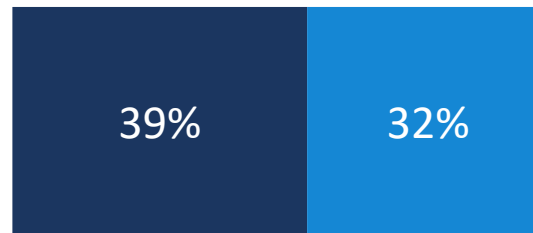
## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment

■ Much More Likely ■ Somewhat More Likley

Total  
More  
Lkly.

Total  
Less  
Lkly.

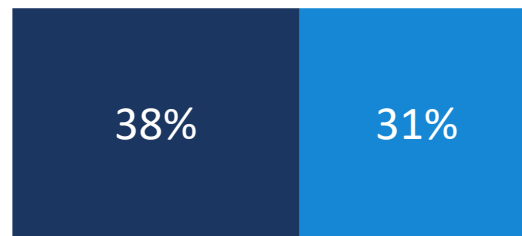
This proposal for a single hiring department will eliminate redundancies to save time and resources to improve hiring of essential workers, employee training and development, and preserves the city's independent commission of Long Beach residents to address personnel matters and disciplinary actions.



71%

8%

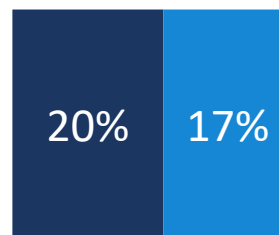
\*This proposal maintains the city's merit-based hiring system while also establishing new practices to increase job opportunities by giving preference to qualified Long Beach residents, current part-time and temporary City employees and people who attend Long Beach schools and Compton College and Cal-State Dominguez Hills.



69%

15%

This proposal would weaken the independent Civil Service Commission by giving more power to politicians and city bureaucrats to hire and fire city employees. We need to keep politics out of the city's employment process and protect Long Beach workers from political influence and intimidation.



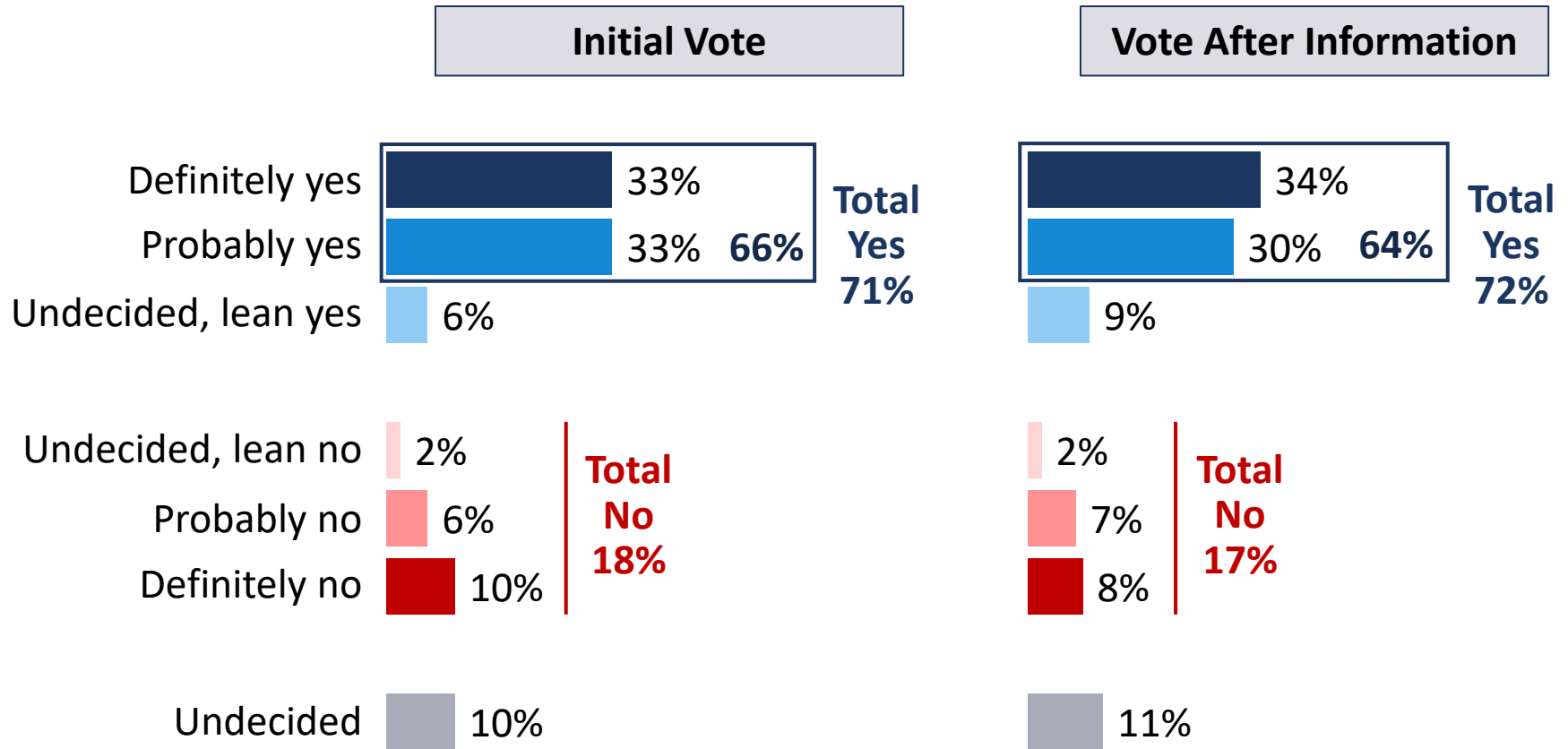
38%

39%

Q5. I am going to read you several statements from supporters and opponents of this Charter Amendment measure. Please tell me whether it makes you more likely or less likely to support it. If it has no effect on your thinking either way, you can tell me that too. \*Split Sample

# After more information, more than seven in ten Long Beach voters continue to favor this Charter Amendment measure to improve the city's process.

## Hiring Modernization Charter Amendment



Q3. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this Long Beach Charter Amendment measure or "no" to oppose it?  
 Q6. Having heard more about this City Charter Amendment to modernize the City's hiring practices, if the election were held today, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?

**For more information,  
contact:**



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