

2020 NEW MEXICO REDISTRICTING SURVEY



Latino  Decisions

September, 2020

Research Design and Process

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- In partnership with the Thornburg Foundation, the UNM Center for Social Policy contracted with Latino Decisions to randomly interview 500 registered voters in New Mexico
- The survey was designed to not only gather attitudes about redistricting in New Mexico, but to educate respondents on this process.
 - Background information provided on each issue they were questioned about, including having active live links to the current maps for the state.
 - The decision to interview on-line allowed respondents to reference any of the text boxes containing information about the redistricting process made available within the survey prior to provide responses.

Advisory Committee Helped Guide Process

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- Dr. Matt Barreto (UCLA Political Science, Voting Rights Project, Founder, Latino Decisions)
- Dick Mason (New Mexico League of Women Voters)
- Dr. Jason Rhode (National Coordinator, Princeton University Gerrymandering Project)
- Brian Sanderoff (President, Albuquerque Polling Inc.)
- Lilly Irvin-Vitela (President and Executive Director, NM First)
- Michael Weinberg (Policy Officer, Thornburg Foundation)
- Ben Williams (Policy Specialist, National Conference of State Legislatures Elections and Redistricting Program)

Research Design and Process

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- The sample was randomly drawn from a database of registered voters who had voted in the 2016 election, and/or the 2018 election.
- Field Dates: August 4-September 1, 2020
- Mode: Web-based survey which has advantage of allowing respondents to read background information before providing responses.
- Margin of error +/- 4.3%
- Survey available in English and Spanish
- Data was weighted to demographics of NM registered voter population to ensure a representative sample

Survey Methodology

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- Data weighted to demographics of NM registered voter population to ensure a representative sample
- Party ID and ideology of the sample is reflective of New Mexico's electorate:
 - 48% Democrat, 34% Republican, 18% Independent or third party
 - 39% identified themselves as "liberal", 31% as "moderate", 28% as "conservative"

POLITICALLY COMPETITIVE VERSES “SAFE” DISTRICTS



Which of the following best reflects your views on the political party makeup of future districts? (State Sample)

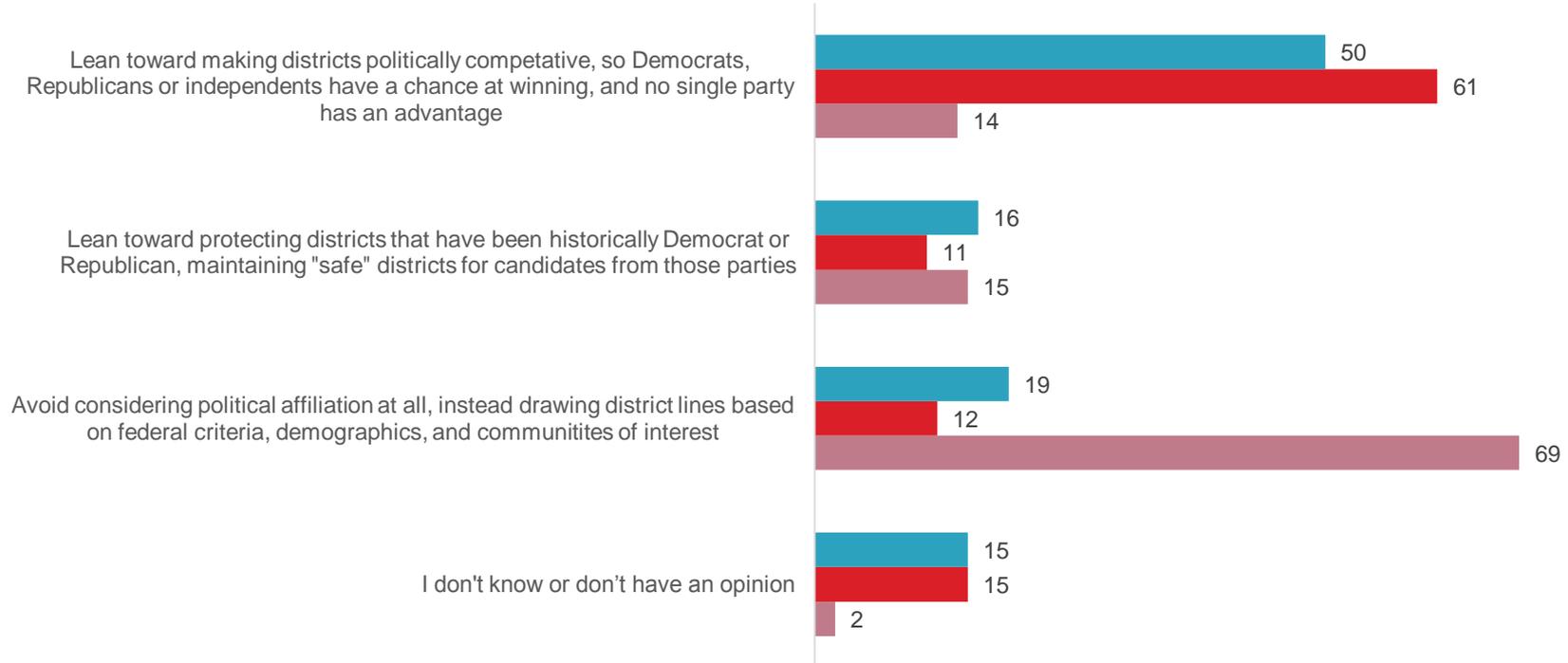
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- Lean toward making districts **politically competitive**, so Democrats, Republicans, or independents have a chance at winning, and no single party has an advantage **47%**
- Lean toward protecting districts that have been historically Democrat or Republican, maintaining “**safe**” **districts** for candidates from those parties **14%**
- **Avoid considering political affiliation** at all, instead drawing district lines based on federal criteria, demographics, and communities of interest **26%**
- I don't know or **don't have an opinion** **13%**

Political Competition Item Broken out by Partisanship

Generally speaking, which of the following best reflects your views on the political party makeup of future districts?

■ DEM ■ GOP ■ IND / OTHER

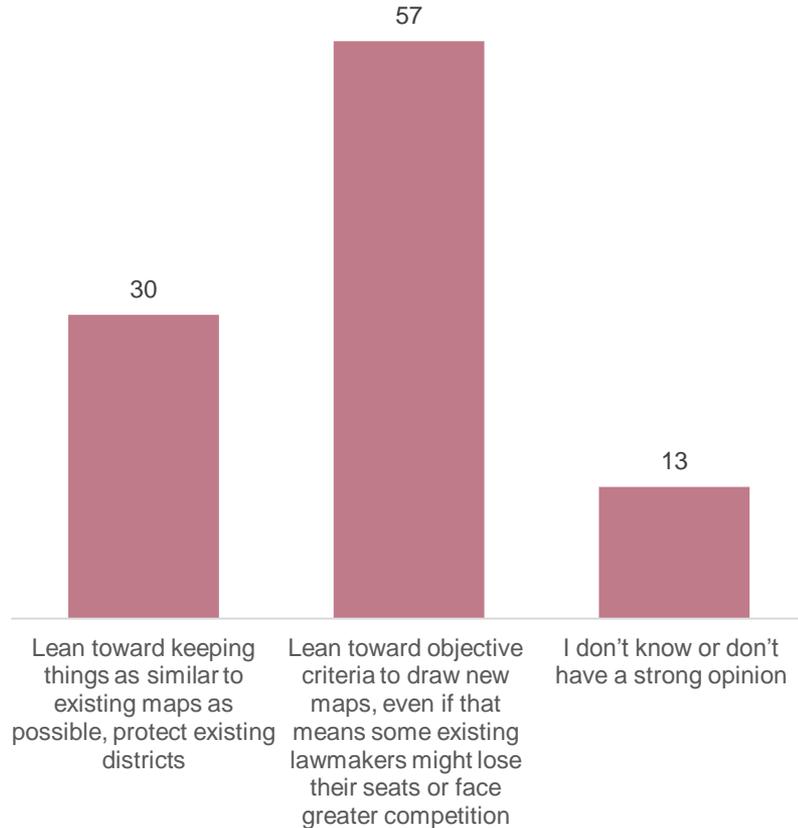


Which of the following best reflects your views on the political party makeup of future districts? (Committee Data)

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- Lean toward making districts **politically competitive**, so Democrats, Republicans, or independents have a chance at winning, and no single party has an advantage
47% (37%)
- Lean toward protecting districts that have been historically Democrat or Republican, maintaining **“safe” districts** for candidates from those parties
14% (4%)
- **Avoid considering political affiliation** at all, instead drawing district lines based on federal criteria, demographics, and communities of interest
26% (58%)
- I don't know or **don't have an opinion**
13% (1%)

Views on Preserving Existing Districts



“No, partisanship or incumbency should be considered when developing districts. It is unfair to create a district specifically to elect a person from a chosen party.”

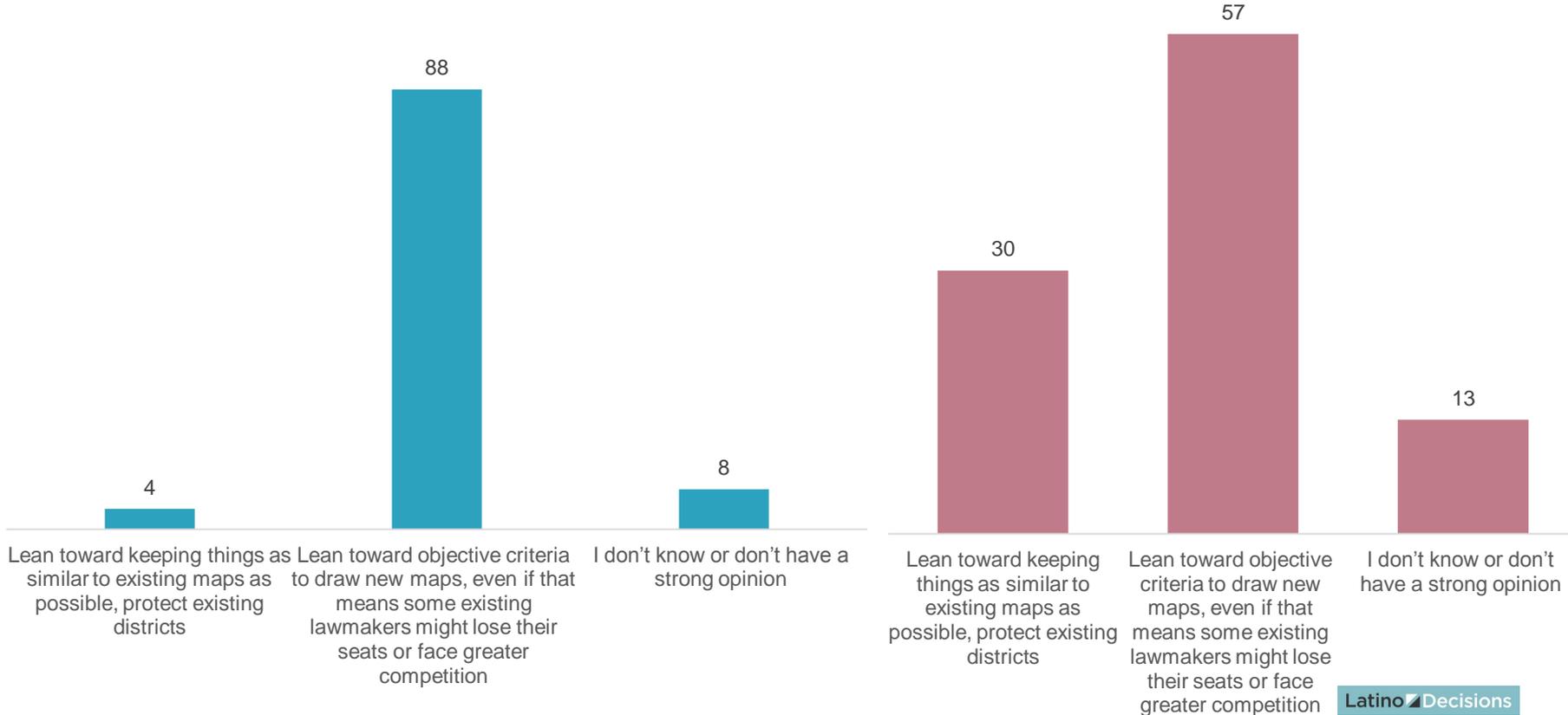
“Although I do feel that districts should be made politically competitive in order to accurately represent the political views of residents in each district I also agree with the fact that political affiliation should not be the biggest factor for re-designating districts and that the biggest factor should be protecting groups of interest.”

“I think district lines should be drawn by an independent third party, to mitigate the issue of partisanship.”

Views on Preserving Existing Districts Among

Advisory Committee Applicants

State Electorate

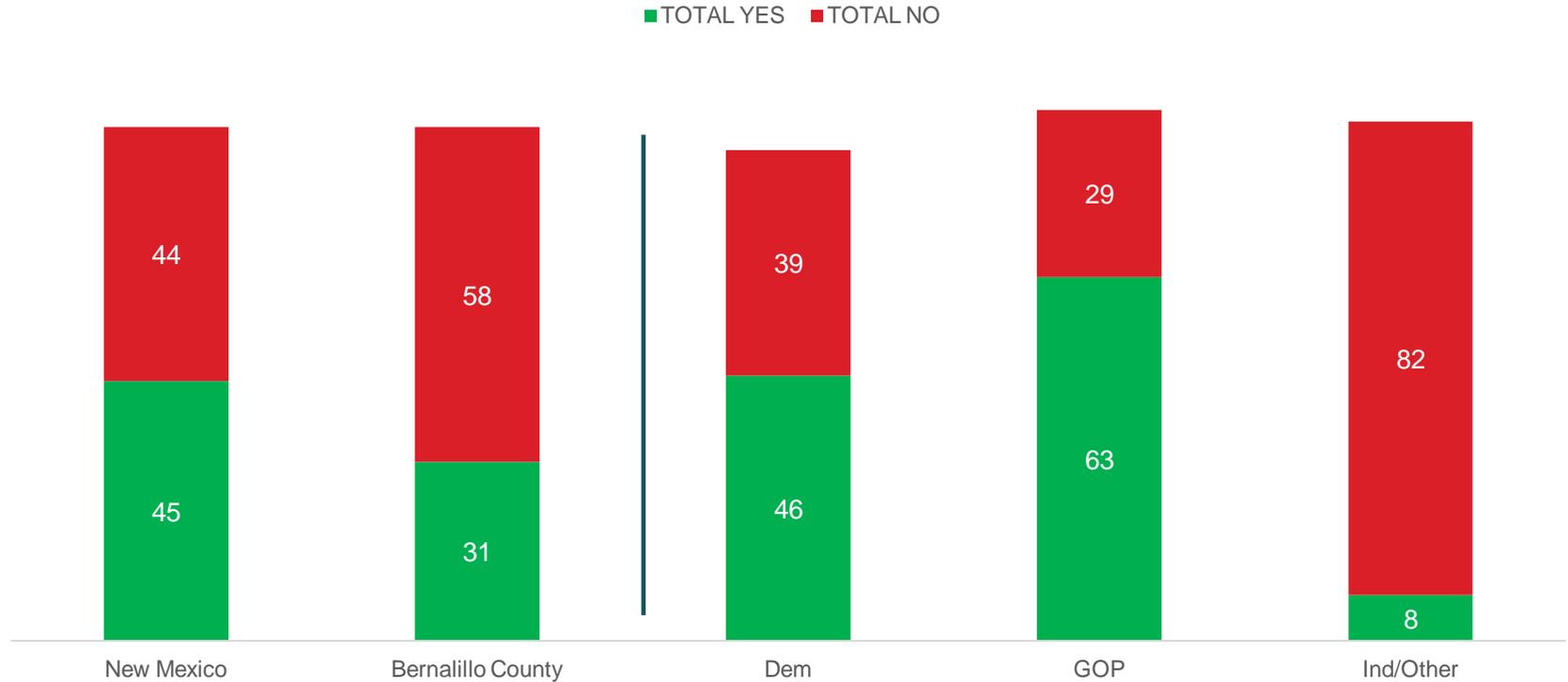


THE USE OF INCUMBENT ADDRESS IN THE DRAWING OF DISTRICTS



Drawing Maps Based on Lawmakers Home Address

Which of the following best reflects your opinion about using the home addresses of current lawmakers as a factor in drawing their district's map? (Percentages Below Combine Definitely/Probably)



Only 12% of Committee Applicants responded "Yes"

Comments about How to use Address the Creating of Maps

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Overall lack of consensus across the electorate on support for using the addresses for the creation of maps and lack of clarity as on whether this would be useful to increase competitiveness of the overall process

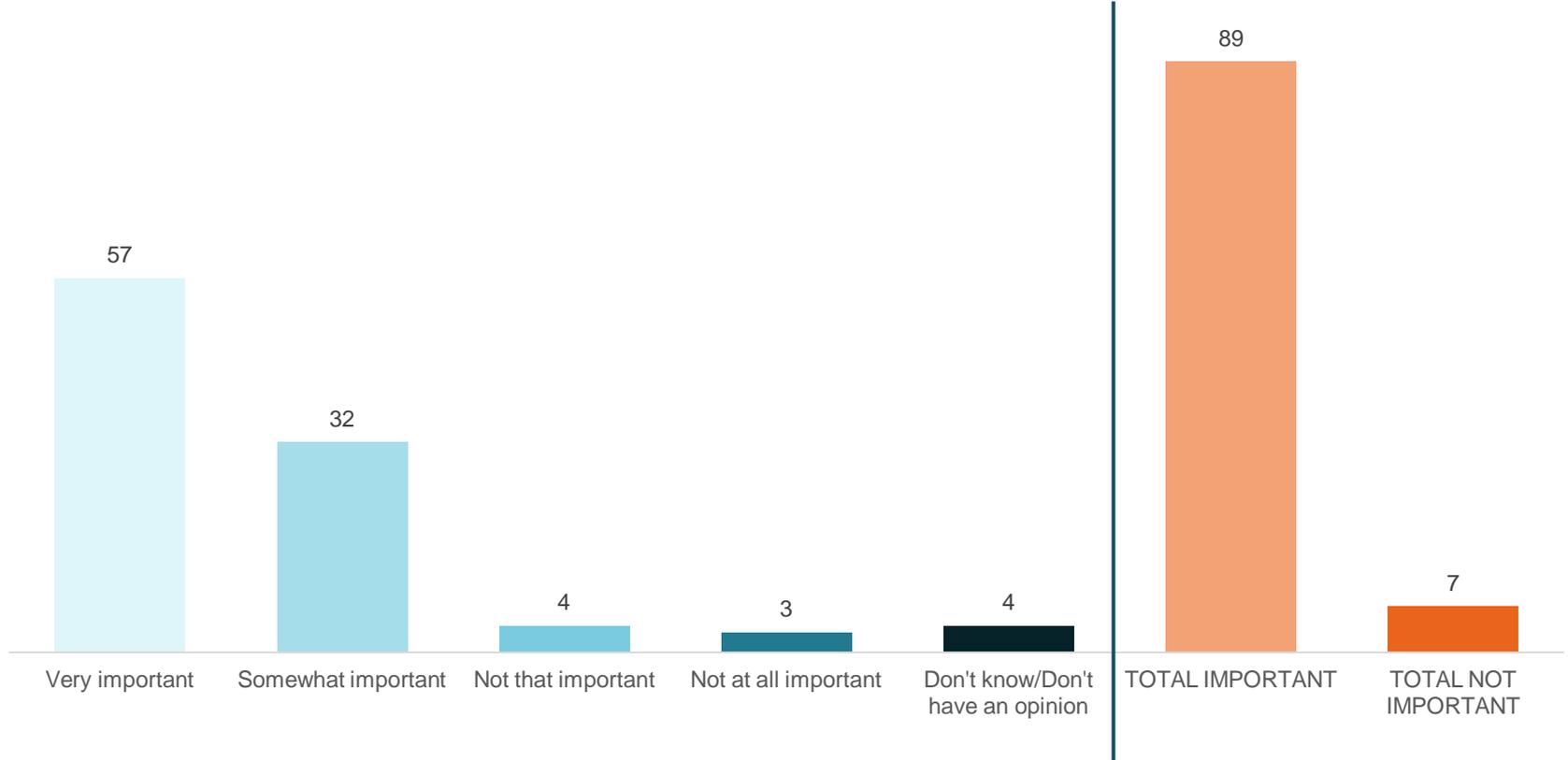
- *“Lawmakers should live in the districts they run for office in, however their address should not matter in terms of the district that is defined.”*
- *“It seems the use of addresses creates a powerful incentive to manipulate district lines for political gain.”*
- *“It seems like the use of addresses is an excellent idea that will ensure fair selections.”*
- *“I don't what to really say about this one I haven't really focused on it that much and it is complex*

THE PUBLIC'S ROLE IN THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS



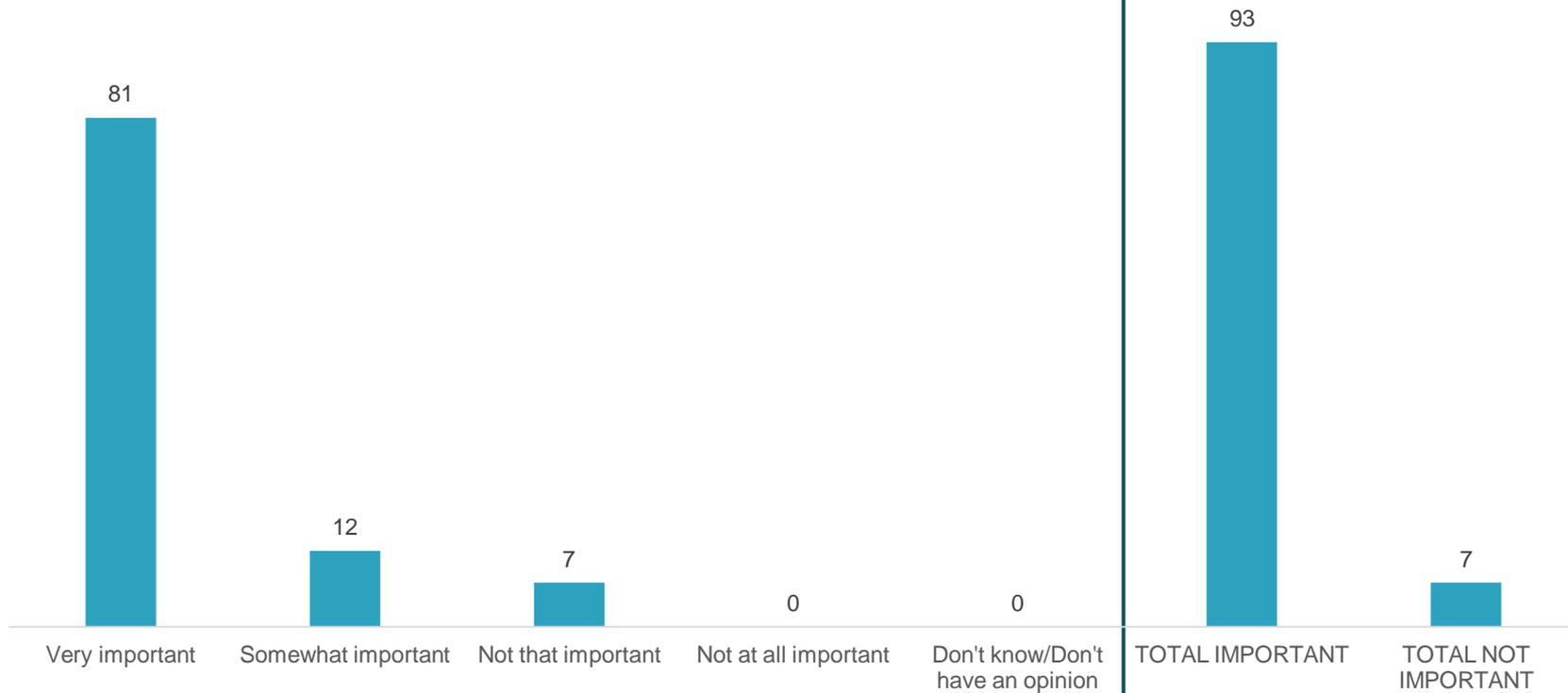
Lawmaker Transparency

How important is it to you that all redistricting meetings be held in public?



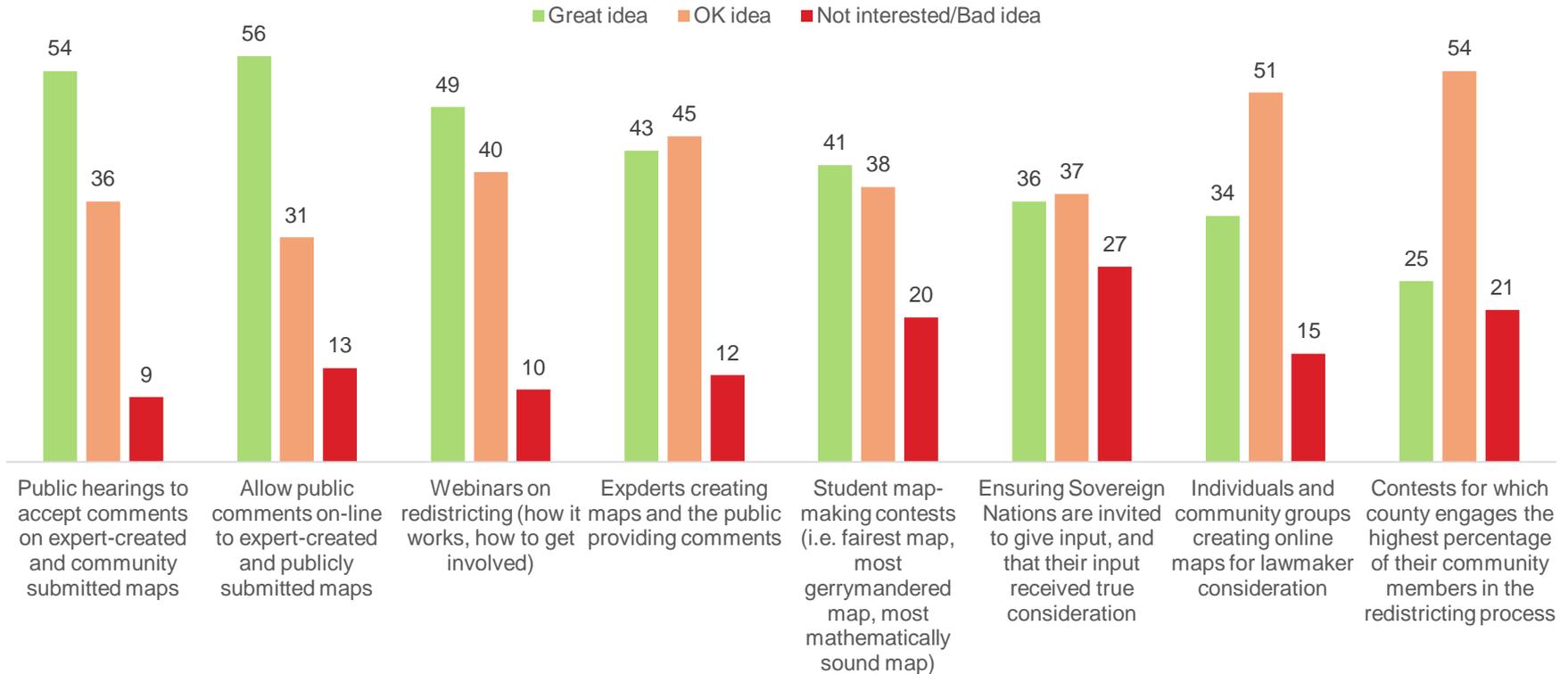
Lawmaker Transparency Among Advisory Committee Applicants

How important is it to you that all redistricting meetings be held in public?



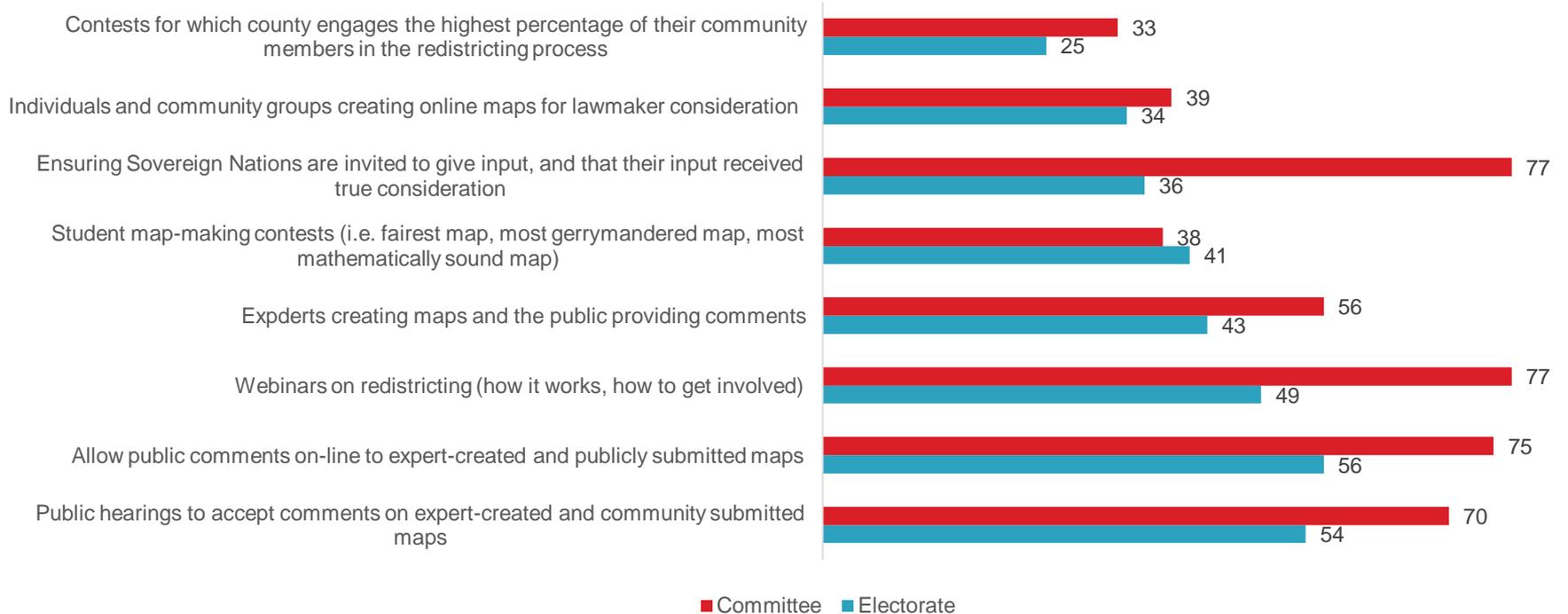
Support for the Public's Role in Redistricting

Please share your opinions about the following options:



Support for the Public's Role in Redistricting

Please share your opinions about the following options:



Comments on Transparency and Public Involvement

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New Mexico's electorate is hungry for seeing greater transparency in the redistricting process and believes that this could go a long way toward improving public trust in how district lines are drawn

"I think transparency for the public is paramount to regaining the public's trust. Far to much 'back door' and secret closed door meetings have destroyed the public's trust."

"It might be hard to have the actual map districting done in public setting; too many different ideas to actually finalize a map, however input or first draft districting map in public might work..."

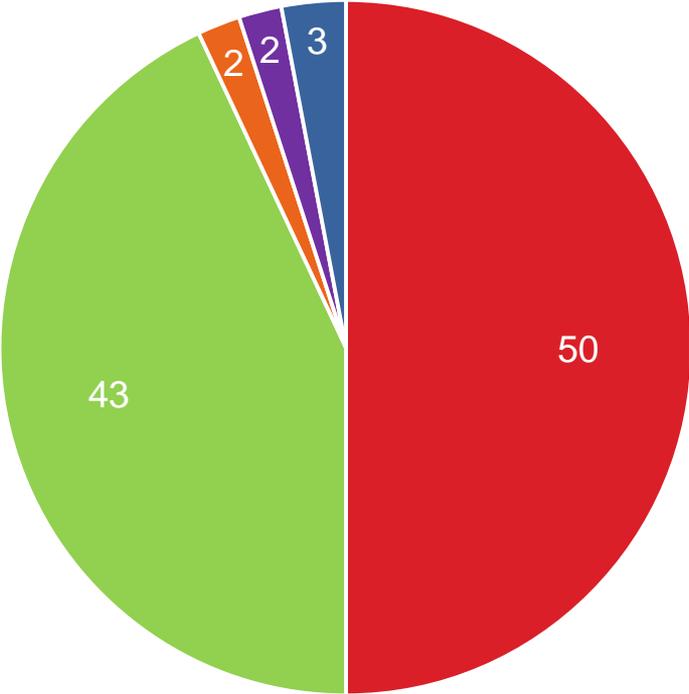
"Creating maps behind closed doors makes one believe that gerrymandering is happening. By opening up the process, then it's much more believable that it's not gerrymandered."

ATTITUDES TOWARD FUTURE REFORMS TO NEW MEXICO'S REDISTRICTING PROCESS



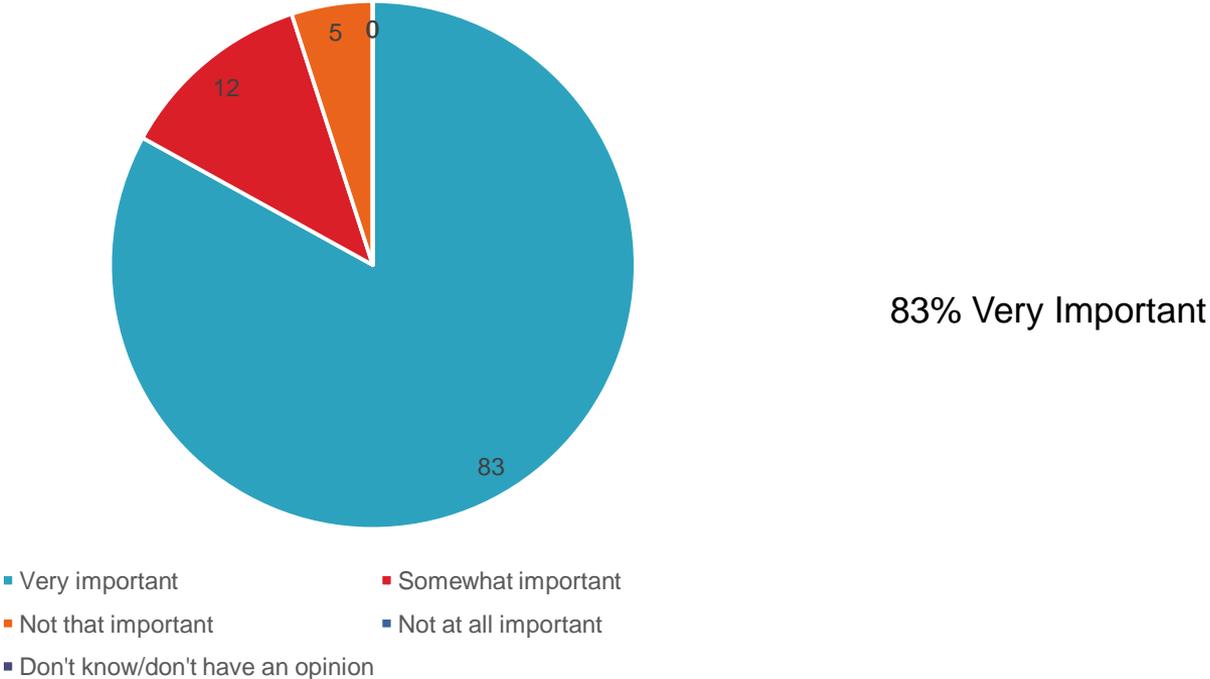
How important is it for New Mexicans to consider new laws (such as an independent redistricting commission) to reform redistricting in the future?

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not that important ■ Not at all important ■ Don't know/don't have an opinion



93% Important

How important is it for New Mexicans to consider new laws (such as an independent redistricting commission) to reform redistricting in the future? (Advisory Committee Data)



Comments on Reforms the Community Would Like to See

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The comments provided by respondents in the open-ended follow up question identify some of the specific reform ideas members of the community would like to see in the future.

- ***“I also completely agree with the view that voters should choose their lawmakers, rather than lawmakers choosing their constituents.”***
- *“I like the idea of nonpartisan committees having the task of drawing redistricting maps, rather than simply just lawmakers, who always have a hidden political agenda in either direction.”*
- *“Redistricting MUST be independent of party politics. partisan redistricting is how one particular party has gained nominal control of state and national seats despite being a minority party in the state in some other states.”*
- *“We need to make those process more trusted by the people so it is good to have a future reform where people have more participation and can be in peace of mind with the process.”*

Key Takeaways

1. Although the redistricting process is highly complex and technical, this survey provides evidence that with sufficient background information, New Mexico's voters are both capable and interested in providing their informed views on the process.
2. Based on the survey data New Mexico's lawmakers should strongly consider new laws that would increase competition across political races and ensure that the map-making process is more transparent.
3. Whether engagement of the public occurs through webinars or through in-person meetings, the voting public has a strong desire to see this process be opened up for all interested parties to participate in.
4. Congratulations, and we hope the data helps with your efforts on behalf of our state.

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September 22, 2020