

OPEIU LOCAL 153

HART RESEARCH

Our Core Message

1. Our strongest message is that a ConCon would be dominated by special interests and lobbyists, and that the delegates would be double-dipping politicians and their family members. This would NOT be a “people's convention.”
2. The overall cost (\$200 million) is also a concern for many voters, especially Republicans, but cost alone is not disqualifying IF voters' believe that a ConCon would result in major improvements to the constitution.
 - The best-testing slogan marries both of those themes: *A \$200 million boondoggle for politicians and lobbyists.*
- Raising the specter of potential policy outcomes proves less effective for two related reasons: the voters get to approve/reject any proposed amendments, and are skeptical that the worst potential outcomes (undermining LGBT rights, environmental protections, gun safety) would really happen in solid blue New York.

Methodology

■ Statewide Survey

- 806 likely Nov 2017 general election voters, conducted February 27 to March 2, 2017
- Margin of error = ± 3.5 percentage points among all voters

■ Four Focus Groups

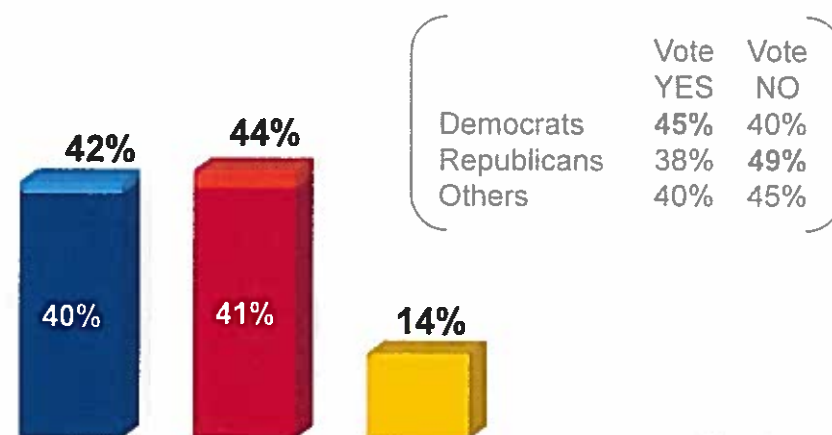
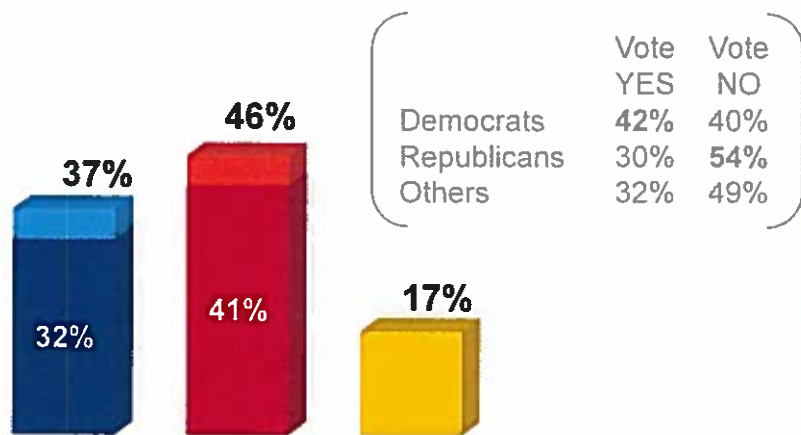
- Albany January 18: Democratic college graduates, Republican non-college graduates
- NYC January 19: Republican college graduates, Democratic non-college graduates

Initial support for a constitutional convention starts well under 50%, with a large number of voters undecided.

How will you vote if this is on the ballot in November: "Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?"

If a majority vote YES, a convention will be held to debate and propose changes to the state constitution; If a majority vote NO, the convention will not be held—how will you vote?

■ YES voters ■ Undecided/leaning YES ■ NO voters ■ Undecided/leaning NO ■ Completely undecided



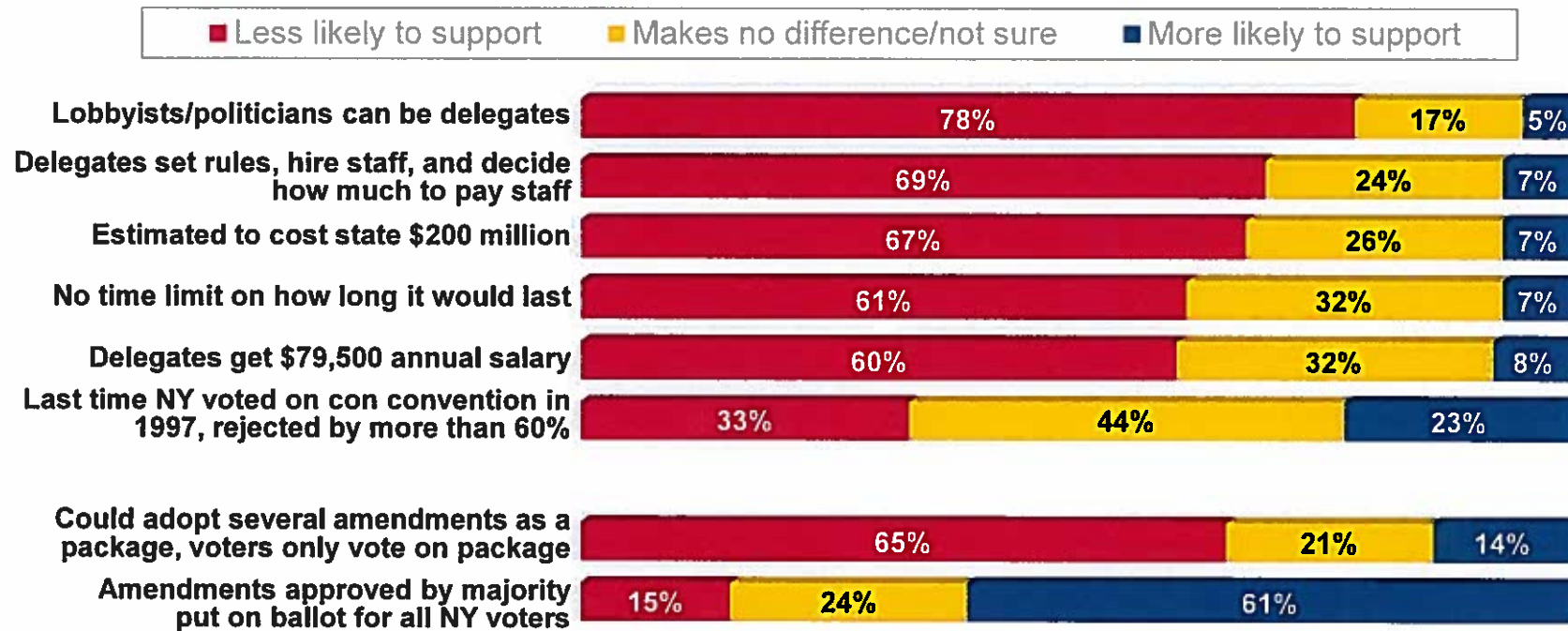
Initial Vote Among Key Subgroups

How will you vote if this is on the ballot in November: "Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?"

	Vote YES	Vote NO		Vote YES	Vote NO
Most frequent voters	34%	48%	Men	38%	44%
Less frequent voters	43%	41%	Women	35%	48%
NYC	43%	38%	White men	37%	45%
Rest of NYC media	33%	47%	White women	29%	53%
Upstate	33%	52%	Whites	33%	49%
Democrats	42%	40%	Blacks	56%	29%
Republicans	30%	54%	Hispanics	48%	41%
Other	32%	49%	Income under \$50K	47%	38%
Downstate Democrats	43%	35%	Income \$50K to \$100K	35%	50%
Downstate Republicans	32%	51%	Income over \$100K	29%	52%
Upstate Democrats	36%	49%	Current public employees	27%	56%
Upstate Republicans	32%	55%	Retired public employees	32%	50%
			Non-public employees	41%	41%

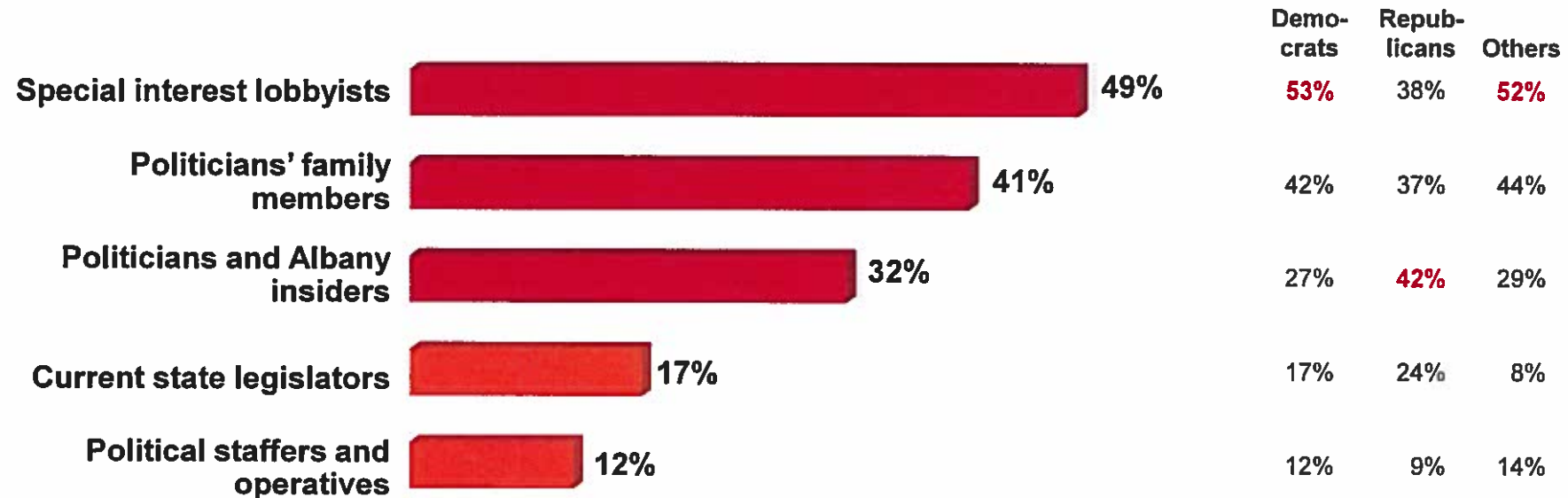
Many ConCon details give voters pause, especially the rules (and lack of rules) for delegates.

Effect of Selected Information on Likelihood of Supporting Constitutional Convention

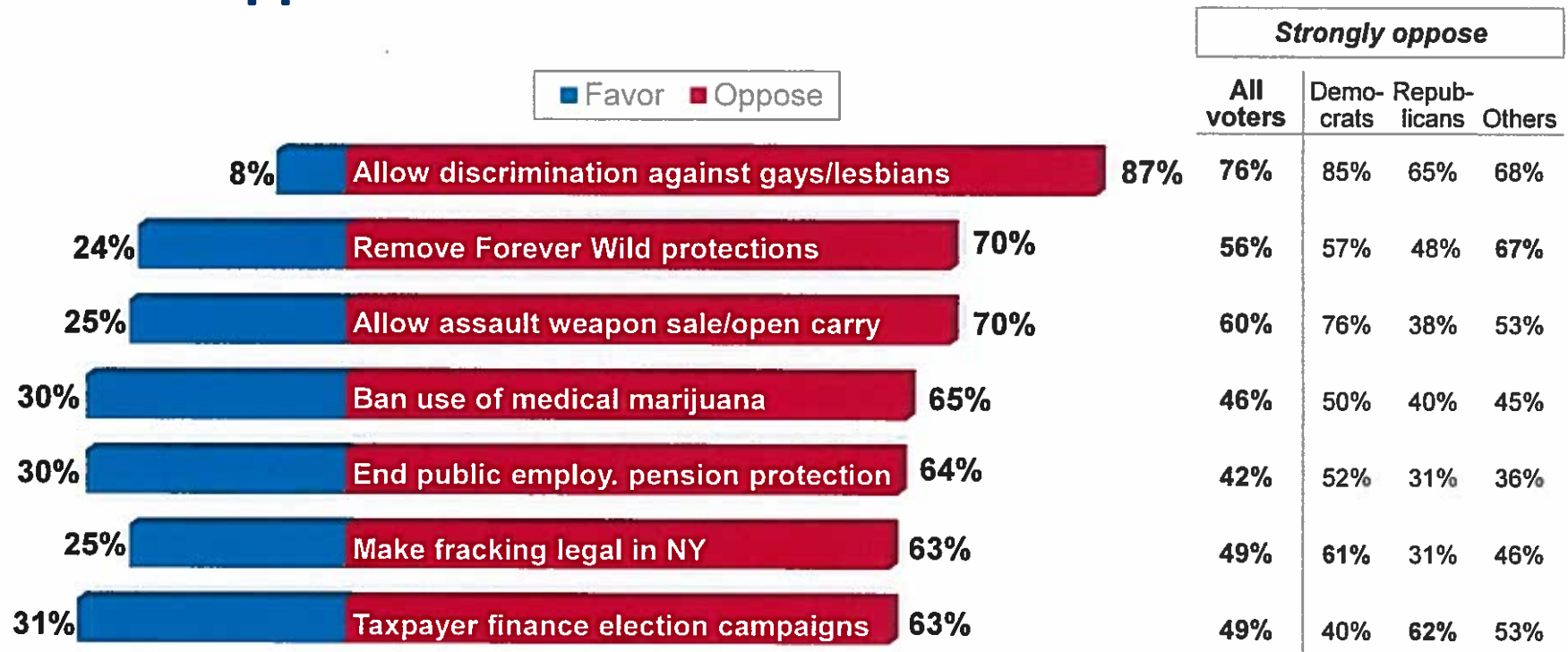


Most troubling potential delegates: special interest lobbyists and politicians' family members.

Which two of these types of people would concern you most if they were delegates?



Several potential constitutional changes receive broad opposition.



Main arguments in favor of ConCon are lower taxes, reducing corruption, and modernizing constitution.

Proportions of SWING VOTERS saying each is a very convincing reason for convention

- 48%** New York has some of the highest taxes in the country. A convention could add a **Taxpayer Bill of Rights** to the state constitution, requiring that all future tax increases be approved by voters, and requiring the government to refund any surplus revenue back to taxpayers.
- 46%** Government is supposed to be by the people and for the people, but Albany politicians are ineffective, corrupt, and controlled by wealthy special interests. A constitutional convention **gives power back to the people** by letting them vote directly on changes to the constitution.
- 40%** There is too much corruption in Albany, and the legislature isn't doing anything about it. Since the legislature won't police themselves, a constitutional convention is the best way to **bring more transparency, tougher campaign finance rules, and stronger ethics and oversight** to state gov't.
- 40%** New York's constitution is full of meaningless, out-of-date language. One section details how the state will fund bonuses for World War II veterans and bonds issued before 1910. New York has not held a convention since 1967. The world has changed, and **it is time to bring the constitution up to date.**
- 23%** Governor Cuomo, many Democrats and Republicans, government watchdog groups, and constitutional experts all support a convention. **The only opposition is coming from public employee unions** who want to protect lavish pensions and special protections for their members.

Most effective opposition messages focus on special interest/ lobbyist influence and taxpayer cost.

*Proportions of SWING VOTERS saying each is a very convincing reason **against convention***

- 68%** The convention will be **dominated by special interests and lobbyists, not regular New Yorkers**. Delegates' campaigns will be funded by wealthy special interests. And under the law, lobbyists are allowed to pressure delegates to rewrite the constitution to benefit their clients.
- 63%** Current state legislators and other politicians are allowed to serve as convention delegates, and delegates will earn the same salary as assembly members. That means **legislators and other politicians can double-dip**--earning their regular legislative salary PLUS a salary for attending the convention.
- 62%** A constitutional convention is estimated to **cost taxpayers about \$200 million**, but there is **no time limit on the convention and delegates make their own rules**, so they could keep meeting and collecting a salary indefinitely. And delegates get to hire their own staff and decide how much to pay them. This will be another **big Albany boondoggle at taxpayer expense**. *(Top message for GOP)*

Potential Taglines Against the Convention

Which two of these statements best reflect your concerns about a convention?

	All voters	Democrats	Republicans	Others
\$200 million boondoggle for politicians/lobbyists	34%	32%	36%	38%
Waste of time and taxpayer money	31%	29%	38%	24%
Politician's convention, not a people's convention	27%	27%	25%	28%
Party for lobbyists and insiders, but we aren't invited	26%	26%	23%	30%
Puts our constitutional rights at risk	17%	17%	19%	16%
A constitutional convention is nothing but a con	9%	10%	8%	9%

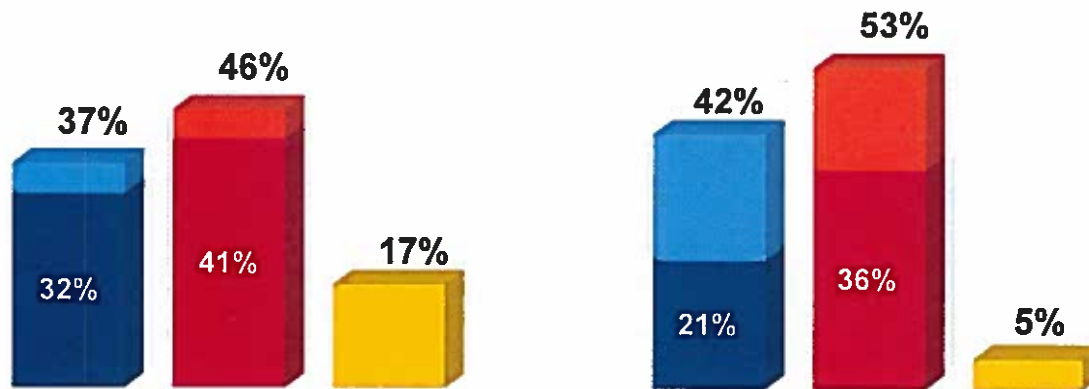
After debate, the NO vote increases to 53% and shows more intensity than YES vote.

How would you vote on a ballot question to convene a constitutional convention in NY?

■ YES voters ■ Undecided/leaning YES ■ NO voters ■ Undecided/leaning NO ■ Completely undecided

Initial Vote

Post-Messaging Vote



NO Votes by Party

	Initial vote	Post-messaging vote
Democrats	40%	48%
Republicans	54%	60%
Others	49%	53%

Other Messaging Recommendations

1. Police, firefighters, and teachers are more effective faces and voices for the campaign than are labor unions.
2. In general, Democrats (especially downstate Democrats) support a ConCon more than Republicans, who are more worried about both the cost and likely policy outcomes in a Democratic state.
3. Strongest message for downstate Democrats:

You know a convention is a bad idea based on who supports it. The official campaign committee is run by lobbyists and political operatives, and one of the main organizations campaigning in favor of a convention is funded by the Koch brothers' network donors, and was founded by Donald Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon.

Downstate Dems also worry about influence of NRA and corporate lobbyists.