



## Medicaid Expansion in Virginia

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As Virginia enters a special session to consider Medicaid expansion, advocates will need tools to persuade legislators to support expanding the program to cover hundreds of thousands of low-income people. To that end, Data for Progress, Indivisible and Civis Analytics have produced this research memo, detailing the results of a poll fielded by Civis Analytics in early April of 2018.

**Key Findings:**

- In every House of Delegates and State Senate district in Virginia, likely voters support Medicaid expansion by an overwhelming margin. Two-way support for Medicaid expansion is 66 percent in the median House of Delegates district and 67 percent in the median State Senate district.
- Medicaid expansion carries little risk of backlash. In the median House of Delegates and State Senate district, two-way support among Republicans is 43 percent.
- Voters support Medicaid expansion even using partisan language and attached revenue pay-fors, in this case, a tax on hospitals.
- Medicaid expansion is popular even in red districts. Two-way support in the median Republican-held House of Delegates district is 60 percent and is 61 percent in the median State Senate district.

## **Methodology:**

To estimate support for Medicaid expansion, 2,400 adults were asked, “Democrats in your state's legislature are proposing a bill to expand eligibility for Medicaid to provide health insurance to families that make less than 138 percent of the federal poverty line. This expansion would be paid for by a 1.4% tax on hospital revenue. Would you be for or against this policy?” Civis then estimated support in every Virginia state legislative district among the 1,400 likely 2018 voters in the sample (determined using probabilistic modeling based on their demographics and vote history) and used multilevel regression and post-stratification to generate estimated support among likely 2018 voters in every Virginia state legislative district. Extensive political science research has shown that these tools can generate reliable estimates for public opinion in geographies the size of a HOD (roughly 80,000) and State Senate district (200,000 people).<sup>1</sup> Civis also generated estimates in each district among 2016 Trump voters in the sample.

We find that Medicaid expansion has two-way majority support (excluding “don’t know” respondents) in *every* House of Delegates and State Senate district. Net support (support – opposition) ranges from around 7 points in the least supportive House district (District 97) to 50 percent in the most supportive district (District 71). In the State Senate, net support ranges from 7 points in the lowest district (District 23) to 41 percent in the most supportive district (District 30).

## **Medicaid Expansion is Popular Across Virginia:**

Net support in the median House of Delegates district is 21 points, even when we include explicit pay-fors and partisan framing. There is no district in which expressed opposition is greater than support. Excluding unknowns to generate two-way support suggests that in the median district has 66 percent support. Two-way support is 55 percent in the lowest House of Delegate district, and 56 in the lowest State Senate district. These high estimates of support are supported by exit polling, which showed Northam winning 77 percent of voters who considered healthcare to be their top issue, these voters made up 39 percent of the electorate.<sup>2</sup>

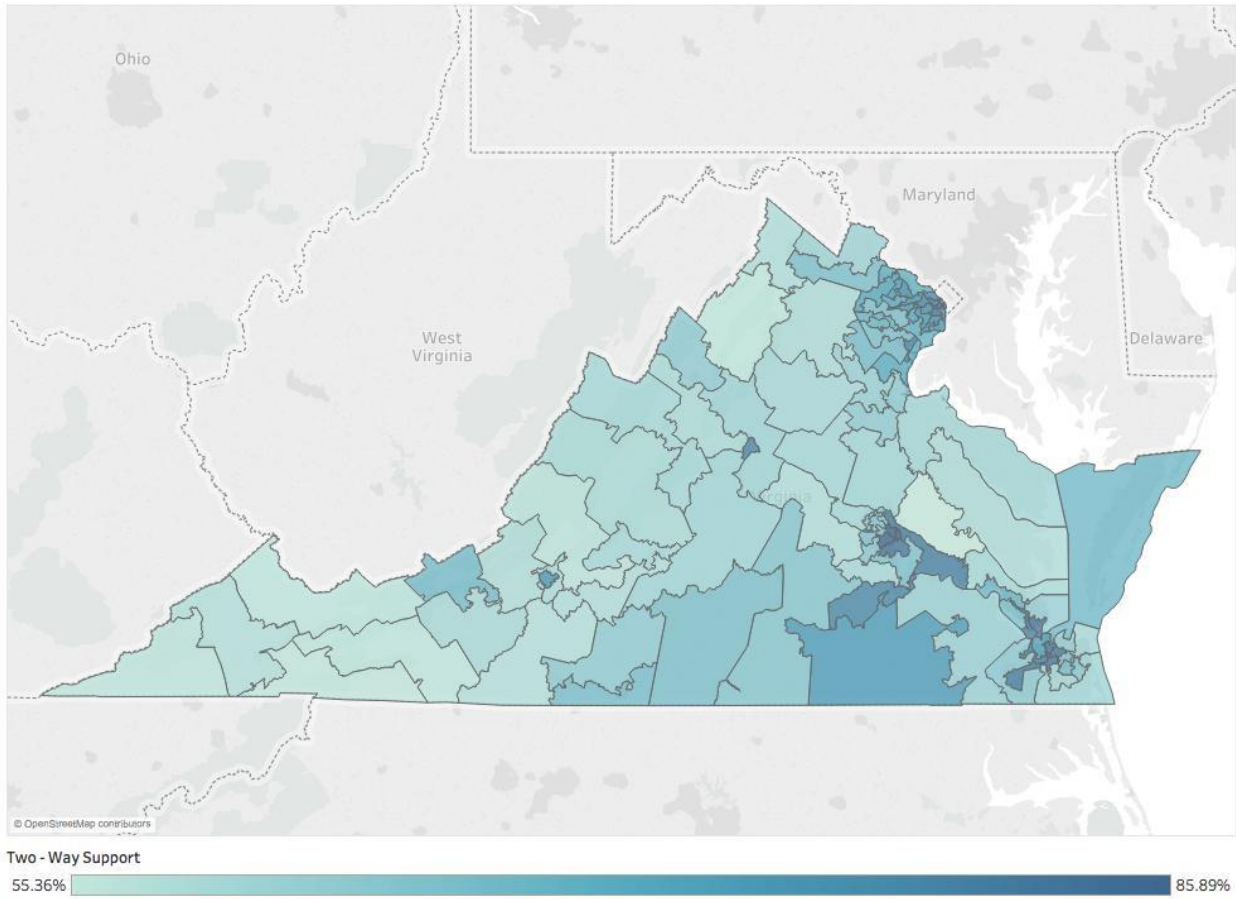
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<sup>1</sup> Civis used a nonlinear generalization of multilevel regression and post-stratification on variables like race, partisanship, education, and religiosity in order to estimate support for Medicaid expansion among likely 2018 voters and Trump voters in every state legislative district in Virginia. For an academic treatment of this empirical strategy, see: <http://www.ctausanovitch.com/TausanovitchWarshaw.pdf>.

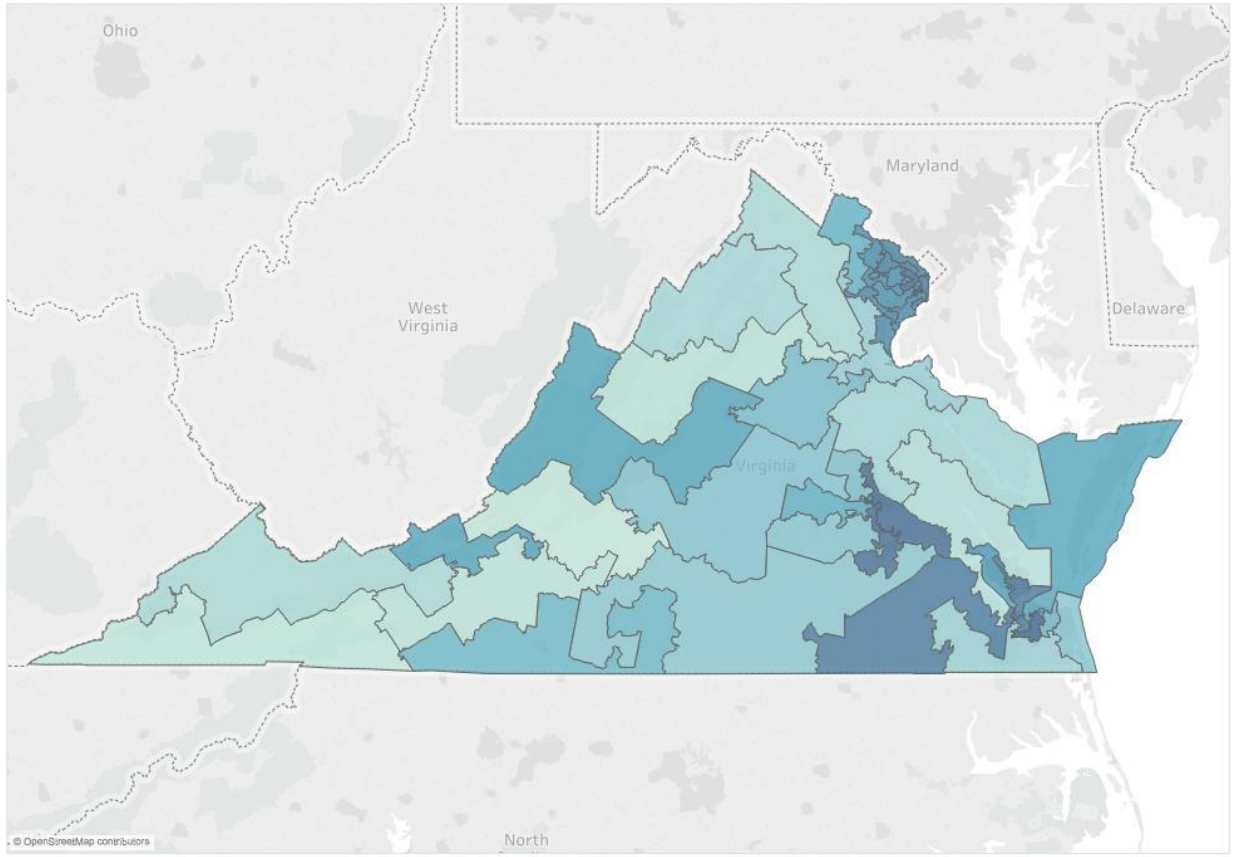
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/local/virginia-politics/governor-exit-polls/?utm\\_term=.f5deda60d3e0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/local/virginia-politics/governor-exit-polls/?utm_term=.f5deda60d3e0)

### Map of House of Delegates Support:

The map below displays two-way support for Medicaid expansion in every Virginia House of Delegates district. For an interactive map, [click here](#).



**Map of State Senate Support:** The chart below shows two-way support for Medicaid expansion in every State Senate district. For an interactive map, [click here](#).



Two - Way Support

55.51%

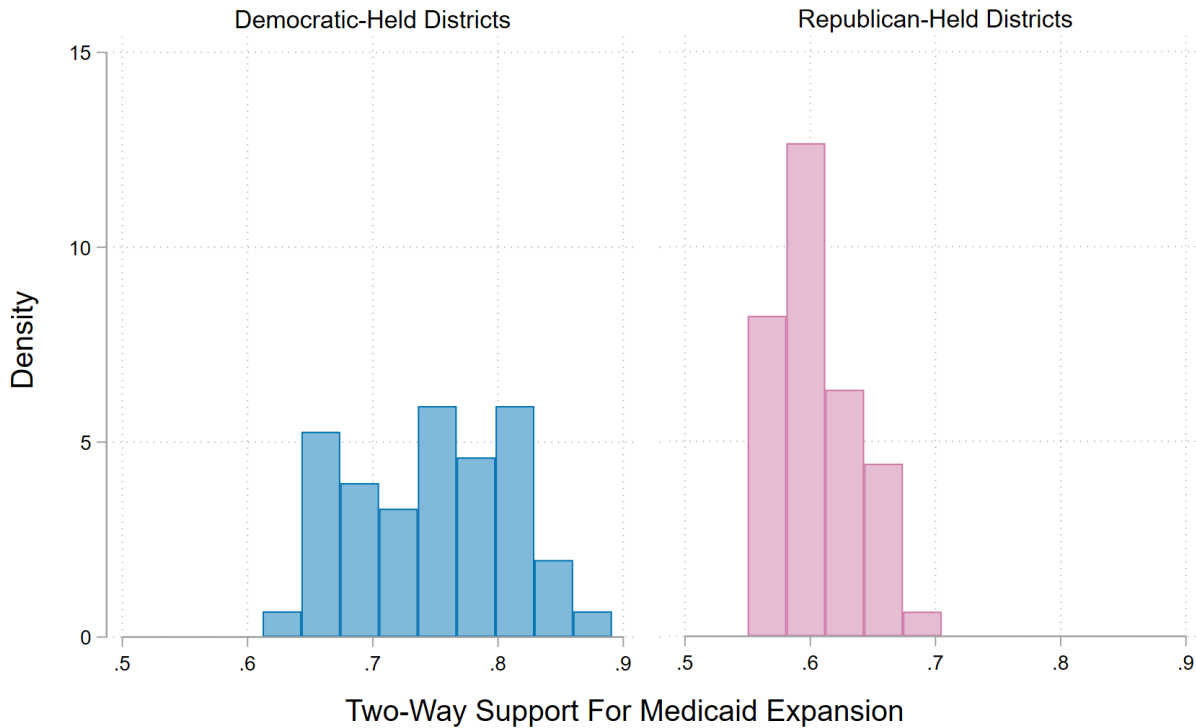


79.46%

**Little Risk of Backlash:**

Even using framing that would be highly likely to elicit opposition, we find little evidence of an overwhelming backlash. There are only 29 House of Delegates districts in which net opposition among Republicans is greater than 10 points. In the median House of Delegates district, net opposition among Republicans is nine points. Medicaid expansion garners reliable support even in Trump country. In House of Delegates districts 3 and 1, where Trump won 83 and 82 percent of the two-party vote (respectively), Medicaid expansion has two-way support of 56 percent. In State Senate districts 40 and 38, where Trump won 79 and 77 percent of the two-party vote respectively, two-way support for Medicaid expansion is 56 and 58 percent, respectively.

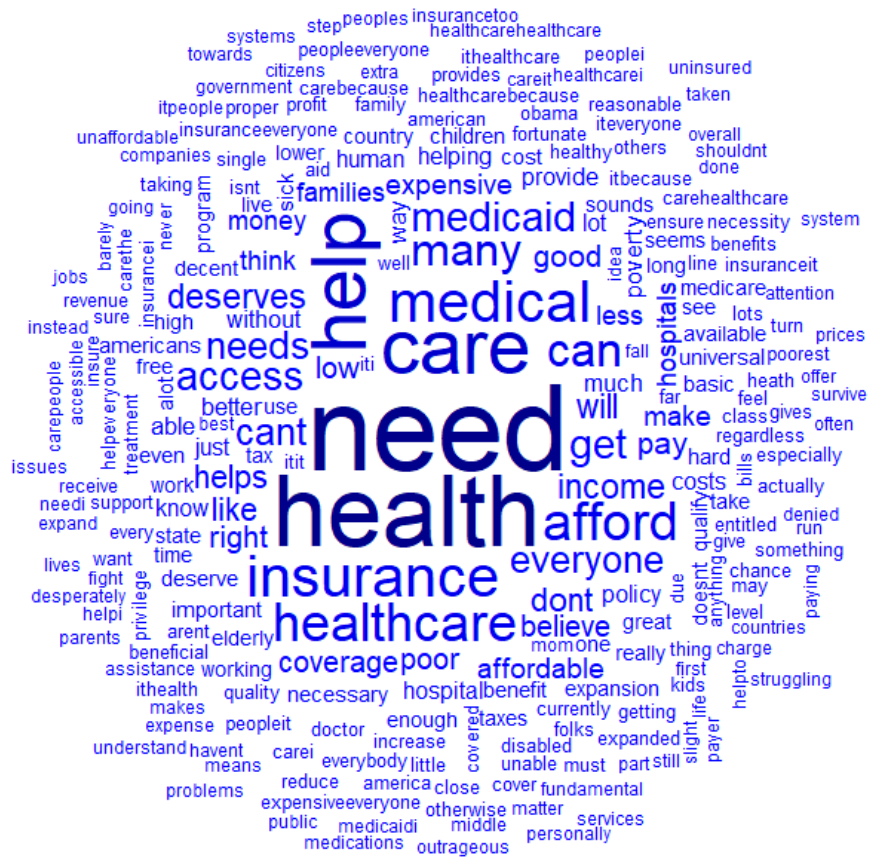
Medicaid expansion is popular even in Republican districts. The chart below shows the distribution of support for Medicaid expansion in Republican and Democratic-held House of Delegates districts. As the chart shows, two-way support is consistently higher than fifty percent, and in the majority of Republican held districts two-way support is greater than sixty percent.



**Word Clouds:**

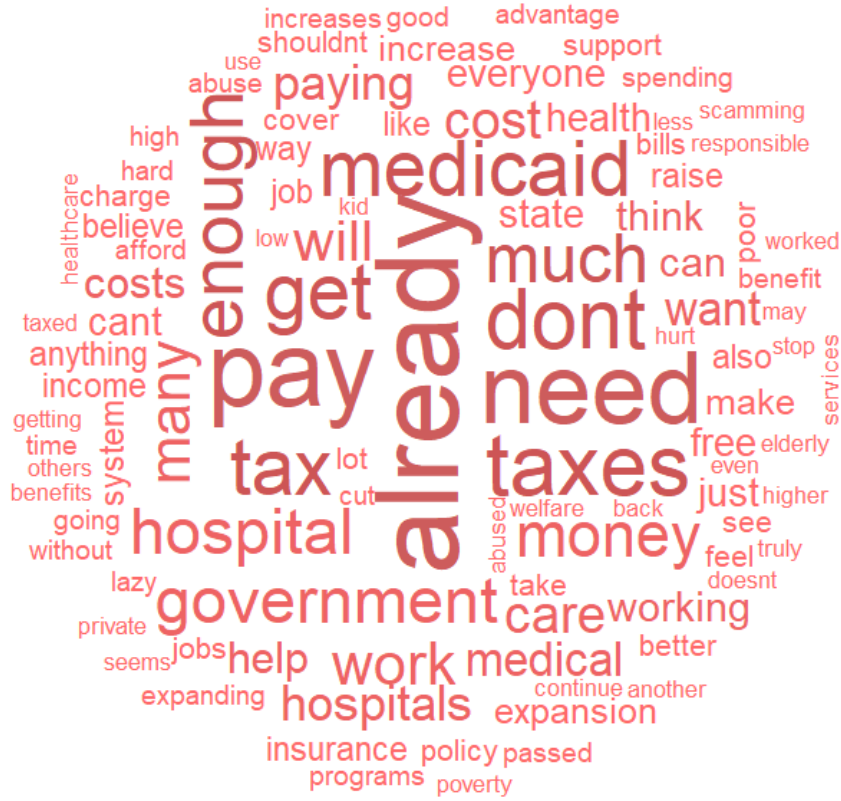
In addition, the Civis Analytics polling included an open-ended response option for each respondent.<sup>3</sup> The charts below display word clouds for support and opposition. The words most disproportionately associated with support for Medicaid expansion were health, care, people, insurance, afford, medical, helps, access poor, families, deserves, coverage, children, sick, human, income and affordable. The words most disproportionately associated with opposition were taxes, government, pay, money, lazy, spending, welfare, abuse, and Democrats.

*Support Medicaid Expansion:*

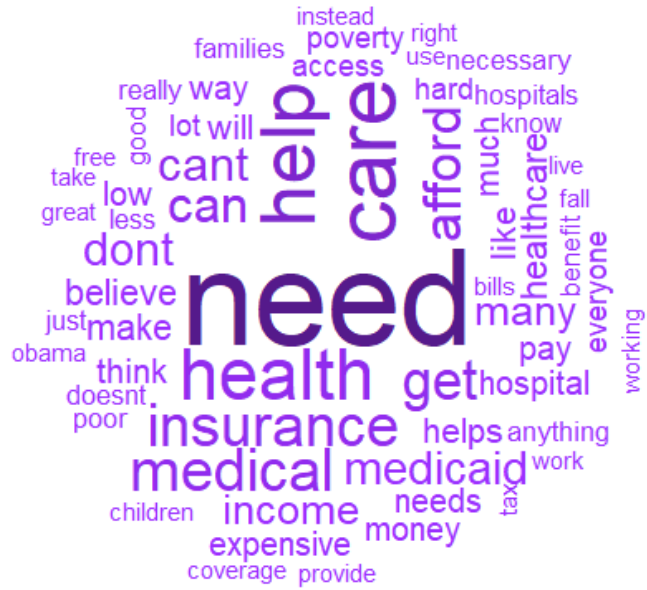


<sup>3</sup> We excluded the word “people” from the word cloud, as well as words that appeared fewer than three times.

*Oppose Medicaid Expansion:*



*Trump Voter, Supports Medicaid Expansion*







**Data Appendix:**

## A. Medicaid Expansion Support by State Senate District

<b>Virginia State Senate District</b>	<b>Support 2 Way</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Net Support</b>
1	71%	48%	20%	28%
2	77%	52%	15%	37%
3	58%	38%	28%	10%
4	59%	39%	26%	13%
5	79%	54%	14%	40%
6	69%	46%	21%	25%
7	65%	44%	23%	21%
8	63%	43%	25%	18%
9	79%	55%	14%	41%
10	67%	46%	22%	24%
11	63%	42%	25%	17%
12	64%	43%	25%	18%
13	67%	46%	23%	23%
14	60%	40%	26%	14%
15	62%	39%	24%	15%
16	78%	53%	15%	38%
17	65%	43%	24%	19%
18	76%	51%	16%	35%
19	56%	37%	28%	9%
20	65%	41%	22%	19%
21	69%	46%	21%	25%
22	63%	41%	24%	17%
23	56%	36%	29%	7%
24	57%	37%	28%	9%
25	69%	47%	21%	26%
26	59%	39%	27%	12%

<b>27</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>35</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>37</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>39</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>7%</b>

B. Medicaid Expansion Support by House of Delegates District

<b>Virginia State House District</b>	<b>Support 2 Way</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Net Support</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>24%</b>

22	58%	38%	27%	11%
23	60%	39%	26%	13%
24	59%	38%	26%	12%
25	59%	39%	27%	12%
26	63%	42%	25%	17%
27	64%	43%	24%	19%
28	64%	43%	24%	19%
29	58%	38%	27%	11%
30	60%	39%	26%	13%
31	67%	46%	23%	23%
32	70%	49%	21%	28%
33	61%	42%	27%	15%
34	69%	49%	22%	27%
35	75%	54%	18%	36%
36	76%	55%	17%	38%
37	74%	52%	18%	34%
38	76%	54%	17%	37%
39	74%	51%	18%	33%
40	66%	46%	24%	22%
41	72%	50%	20%	30%
42	69%	48%	22%	26%
43	77%	55%	17%	38%
44	75%	53%	18%	35%
45	79%	59%	16%	43%

<b>46</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>47</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>48</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>51</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>52</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>53</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>54</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>55</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>56</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>57</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>58</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>59</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>60</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>61</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>62</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>63</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>64</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>65</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>66</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>67</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>68</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>69</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>50%</b>

<b>70</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>71</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>72</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>73</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>74</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>75</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>76</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>77</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>78</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>79</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>81</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>82</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>83</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>84</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>85</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>86</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>87</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>88</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>89</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>90</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>91</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>92</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>93</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>

<b>94</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>95</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>96</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>
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<b>98</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>99</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>