

Introduction

States United Action (SUA)'s Replacing the Refs tracker followed candidates who disavowed the results of the 2020 election—also known as Election Deniers—as they ran for the offices of Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General in 2022. These state officials are the referees of our democracy: they run elections, supervise vote counts, certify results, and defend the will of the voters in court.

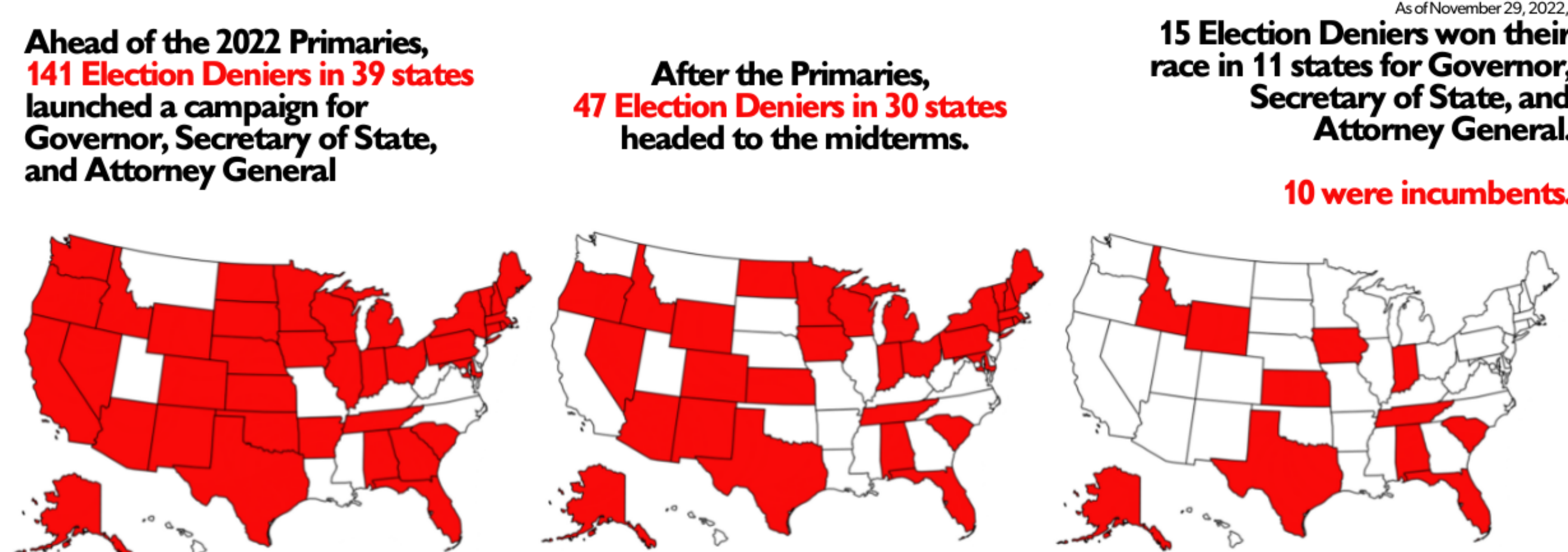
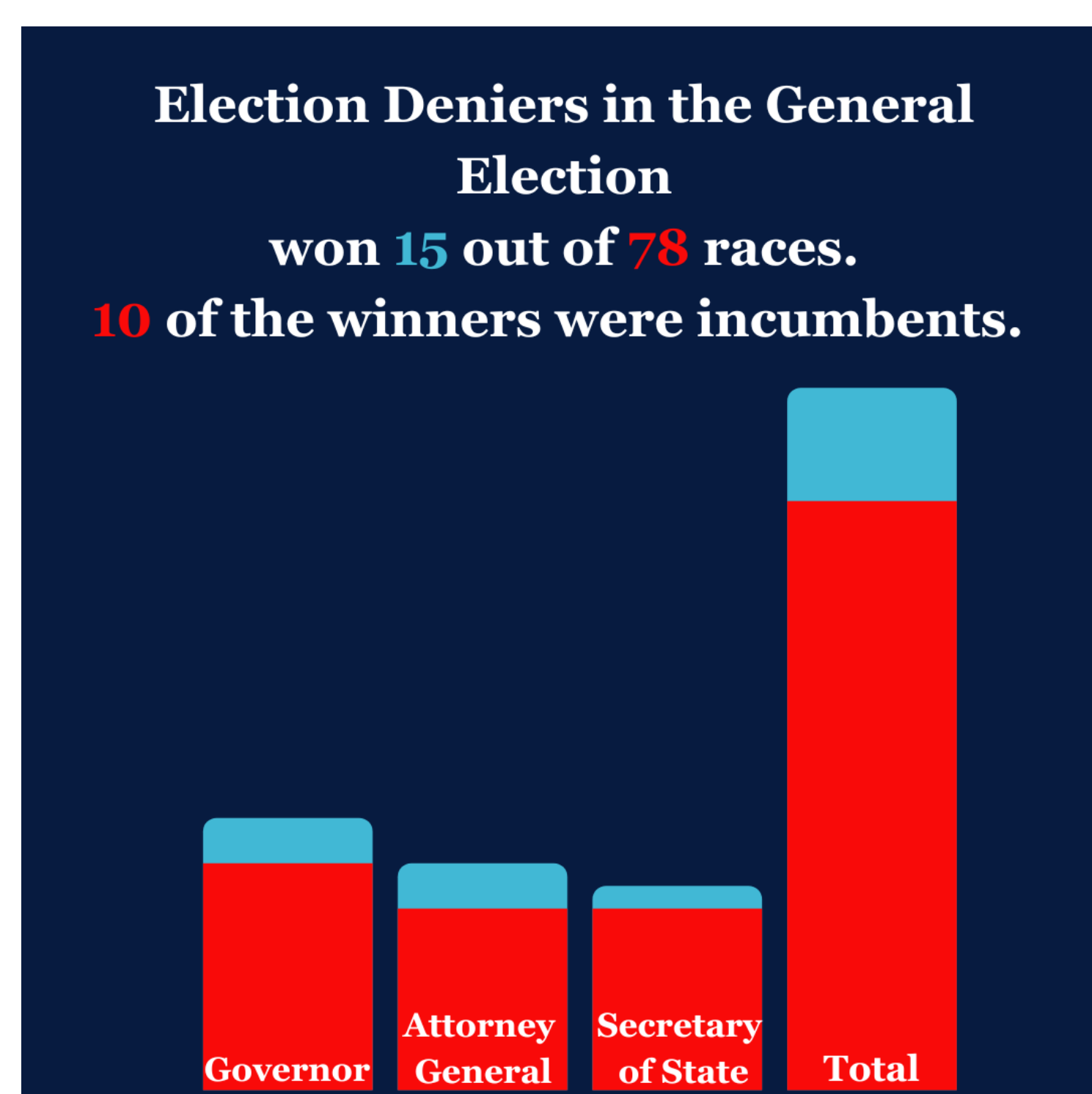
Methodology

To qualify as an Election Denier, a candidate had to meet one or more of the criteria below:

- * Falsely claimed former President Trump won the 2020 election instead of the legitimate winner, President Joe Biden.
- * Spread lies about the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election in public fora, including in social media, press statements, and/or comments to press.
- * Called for a "forensic audit" of the 2020 presidential election after the results were certified and/or officially audited and/or stood up to multiple legal challenges.
- * Promoted conspiracies about the 2020 presidential election in public fora, including in social media, press statements, and/or comments to press.
- * Took actions to undermine the integrity of the 2020 presidential election, including: filed or supported litigation seeking to overturn the results; and/or promoted/participated in a Stop the Steal sponsored/branded event or rally.

Tracker Results

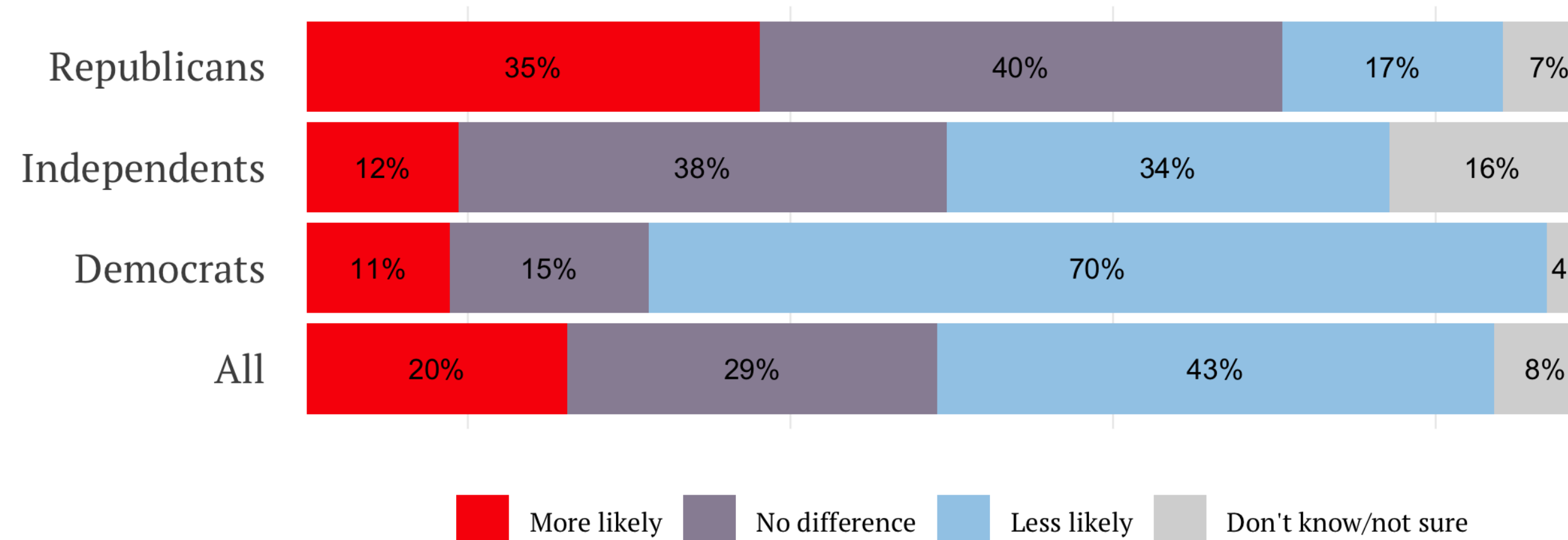
SUA conducted research into each candidate and identified a total of 141 candidates as Election Deniers. Forty-seven Election Deniers won their primary races and went on to participate in the general election. Ultimately, 15 Election Deniers won their races (six Governors, six Attorneys General, and three Secretaries of State).



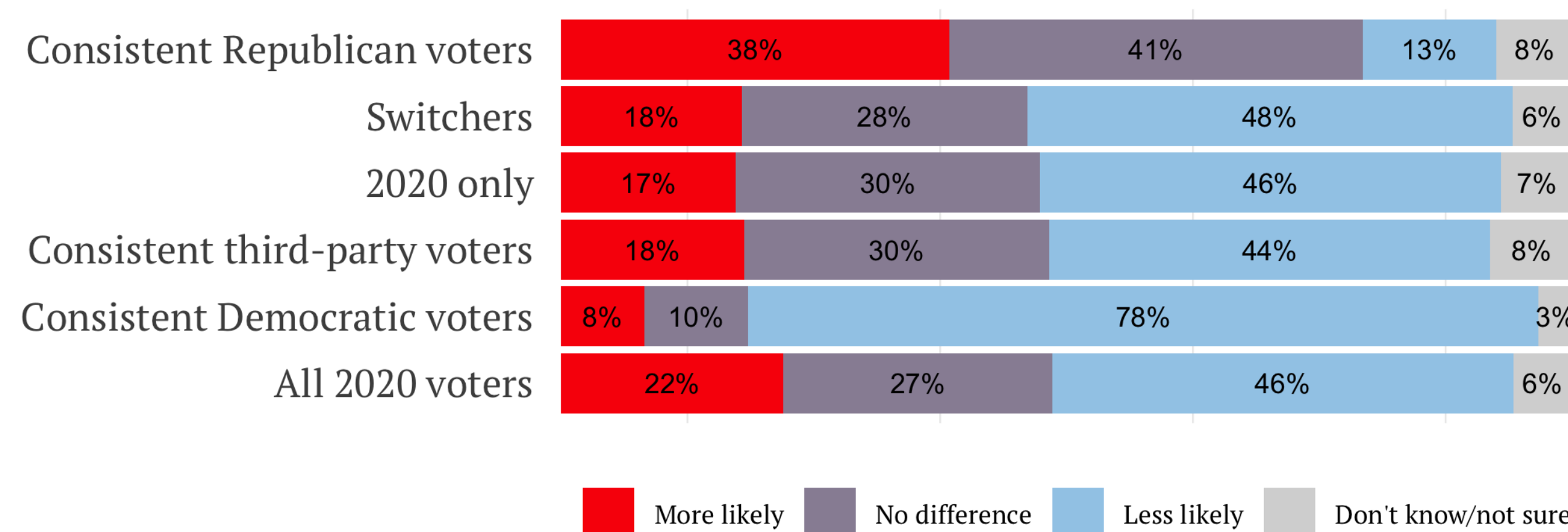
Survey Results

Likelihood of Support for an Election Denier by Party

"If a political candidate for office says they believe the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Donald Trump, would that make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make a difference in your vote?"

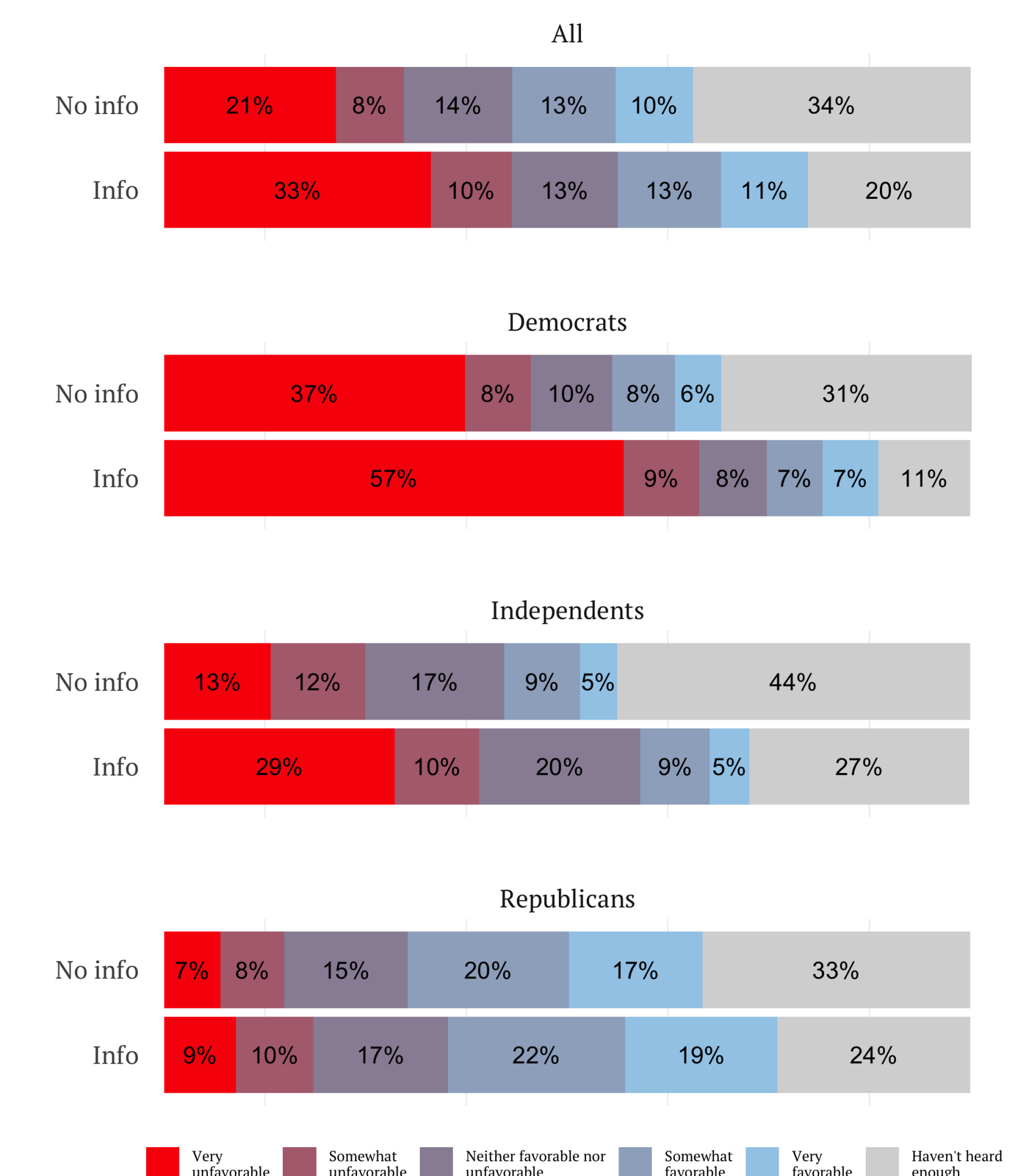


Likelihood of Support for an Election Denier by Voter Type



Election Denier Information Survey Experiment by Party

All respondents were asked to rate their favorability of a candidate for Governor, Attorney General, or Secretary of State who questioned the results of the 2020 election. However, SUA only provided information highlighting a candidate was an Election Denier—in the form of a short sentence describing their election denial activities or statements—to a random half sample of respondents. The other half of respondents did not receive any information indicating the candidate was an Election Denier. The results demonstrate that providing information about the troubling activities of Election Denier candidates reduced voters' tendency to report that they "haven't heard enough" about the candidate to form an opinion, and in most cases, shifted favorability ratings downwards by 14 percentage points.



Survey Methodology

SUA conducted public opinion polls in which an Election Denier was running for Governor, Attorney General, and/or Secretary of State. These states included Arizona (n=2,412), Michigan (n=2,422), Pennsylvania (n=2,378), and Wisconsin (n=2,175). Surveys were fielded between August 23rd and September 6th, 2022. The margins of error for each poll were ± 2% and ± 2.1% for Wisconsin.

Conclusion

Election Deniers fared poorly in statewide races in 2022. SUA's research shows voters were less likely to vote for a candidate that continued to spread lies about the 2020 election. Democrats and Independents were less likely to support an Election Denier than Republicans, and providing voters with information about Election Deniers' specific actions substantially hurt their favorability ratings.