



**Presidential Election
Poll Results September 2011**

Sunday Independent

Introduction

Sunday Independent



POLL

The survey results presented here are derived from **The Sunday Independent/Millward Brown Lansdowne Poll**. The poll was conducted among a sample of 976 adults representative of the approximate 3.35 million adults aged 18 and over - interviewed on a face-to-face basis in the home at 64 sampling points throughout all constituencies in the Republic of Ireland.

Interviewing on the poll was carried out on 30th August - 14th September

Margin of error +/-3%

The poll was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set by ESOMAR and AIMRO (European and Irish Market and Opinion Research governing bodies). Extracts from the report may be quoted or published on condition that due acknowledgement is given to Millward Brown Lansdowne and The Sunday Independent.

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**Data was weighted at the analysis stage to represent the adult population aged 18+ years*

First Preference Votes

- Fine Gael's honeymoon period with the electorate continues - Four in ten claim they would vote for them in a general election, four percentage points higher than their actual result in February. Support is relatively consistent across the generational span, although the party musters less than a third support in Dublin - an ominous sign for Gay Mitchell perhaps?
- Labour have remained steady, and are up one point on their general election performance. Their support is largely drawn from Dublin (where they are just marginally behind their senior government party colleagues. With the exception of Connaught/Ulster (never a stronghold), support for the party is well spread.
- Sinn Fein are also holding steady, up one from February. They may well be slightly disappointed with this, given they have been the most vocal of opposition parties. Opposition for opposition's sake may not be to the taste of much of the electorate.
- Fianna Fail's annus horribilis continues. Shell shocked after the election (and their subsequent public washing of their dirty laundry in the media), and startled by the indecision of the presidential nomination process, the party has slumped to just 10 percent support. Is there any sign of the party bottoming out?
- Independents have remained at their historically high levels, which may well bode well for those independent presidential candidates. It seems that much of the electorate have washed their hands of the conventional party political structure.

Presidential Election

- Michael D. Higgins' remains in pole position in this latest poll, with one in three of those likely to vote claiming they will vote for him. His support has remained steady since our August poll, and is driven by a relatively strong backing (58%) of his own party.
- Gay Mitchells' campaign continues to stutter. At just 17%, the only momentum so far for him has been of the backwards variety. Even among Fine Gael supporters, support is tepid at best - just one in three of them give him the nod. In Dublin, his alleged heartland, just 21% support him.
- David Norris, perhaps the most talked-about non-candidate, continues to attract significant support. Nearly one in five give him their vote (in the event of course, of him being nominated), up marginally since our August poll. There is undoubtedly a public appetite for his return - getting the nomination will be his biggest problem.
- Perhaps the most significant result is the impressive increase in support for Mary Davis - as the nomination process is becoming more visible, her profile is following suit, and people seem to like what they see. She may well become the surprise package of this election.
- Sean Gallagher has increased his support marginally, and must be itching for the campaign to properly commence, as opposed to the phoney war we are currently enduring. His only hope is that once the firing gun is shot, his profile will increase. At his stage however, it looks like he will be out muscled by the bigger guns.

Candidate Image

- Davis and Gallagher have made some notable gains on their image profiles now that they have secured nomination. Davis is increasingly ‘trusted’ and seen as ‘honest’ and her ‘inspiring’ rating has also risen sharply, whilst Gallagher is emerging as the candidate of modernity.
- Gay Mitchell’s image has disimproved marginally, in line with his overall vote. He will have to shake off images like ‘boring’ and ‘conservative’ if he is to make gains.
- Michael D. Higgins has established a solid foundation of honesty and trust. His sole ‘vice’ appears to be his age - but voters may not see that as a negative when they cast their votes - they don’t appear to at the moment at least.
- For the most part Labour supporters have a more positive view of Higgins than Fine Gael supporters have of Mitchell - ‘inspiring’ is a key example where Higgins leads. This belief in their ‘own brand’ is behind much of Higgins’ success to date.
- We expect to see more pronounced movements on candidate image once the spotlight of the campaign proper begins to shine in earnest on their platforms and personalities.

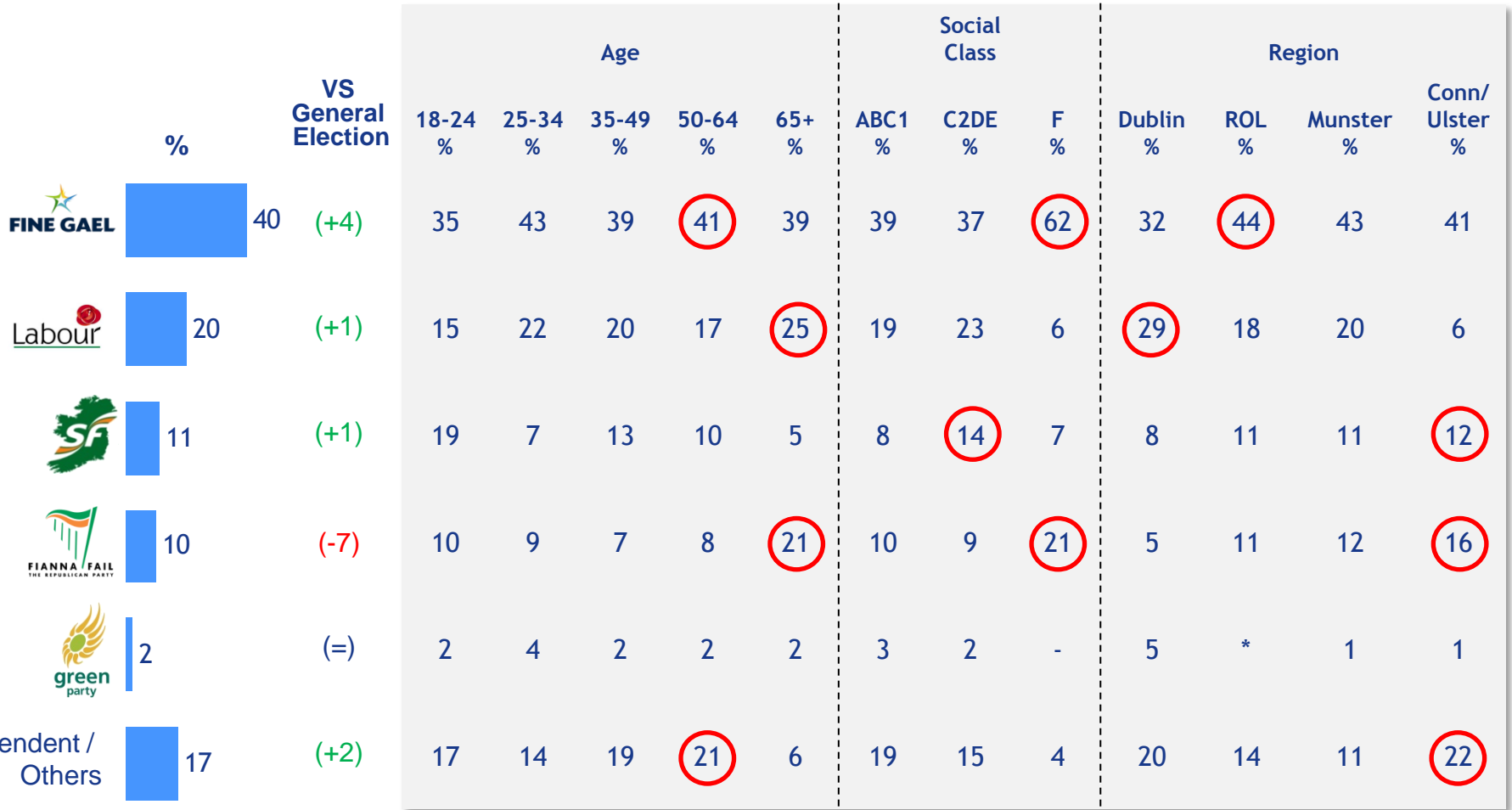
Conclusions

- The race is Michael D. Higgins' to lose at this point. He has a clear lead over the chasing pack and also benefits from being the most transfer friendly candidate, which will be crucial.
- However there are still some factors that could have a serious impact on the campaign
- Can Norris get a nomination? - there is a lot of latent support for him if he can.
- Can Davis and Gallagher continue on their upward trajectory? They could perform very well on the day - perhaps not well enough to take the Aras- but well enough to play a major role in deciding who does.
- And can Gay Mitchell start attracting the Fine Gael vote? - they are easily the most popular party in the state - but his performance as it stands lags a long way behind. He will need the votes of most Fine Gael supporters, as well as many from elsewhere if he is to begin to close the gap - there is not much time left to do it.

Party Support - First Preference

(Base: All aged 18+)

Party Support x Demographics








Q.1a/b If a general election were held tomorrow which party, or independent candidate would you vote for/be the most inclined towards voting for?

Presidential election First Preference x Demographics

(excluding 'don't knows')

(Base: All likely voters)

(August Results)*

| | % | Sex | | Age | | | | | Social Class | | | Region | | | |
|--|----|--------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|--------------|--------|------|----------|-------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Male % | Female % | 18-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 % | 50-64 % | 65+ % | ABC1 % | C2DE % | F# % | Dublin % | ROL % | Munster % | Conn/ Ulster % |
| (32)  Michael D Higgins | 32 | 37 | 27 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 34 | 45 | 33 | 31 | 31 | 29 | 35 | 36 | 28 |
| (18)  David Norris | 19 | 22 | 16 | 24 | 21 | 22 | 17 | 13 | 23 | 17 | 8 | 24 | 21 | 5 | 13 |
| (13)  Mary Davis | 18 | 10 | 24 | 12 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 12 | 21 | 13 | 25 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 26 |
| (21)  Gay Mitchell | 17 | 17 | 17 | 23 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 20 | 14 | 20 | 22 | 21 | 14 | 15 | 18 |
| (11)  Sean Gallagher | 14 | 14 | 14 | 17 | 21 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 19 | 15 | 10 | 14 | 17 | 16 |

*Michael O' Muirheartaigh was on August poll
Small base size

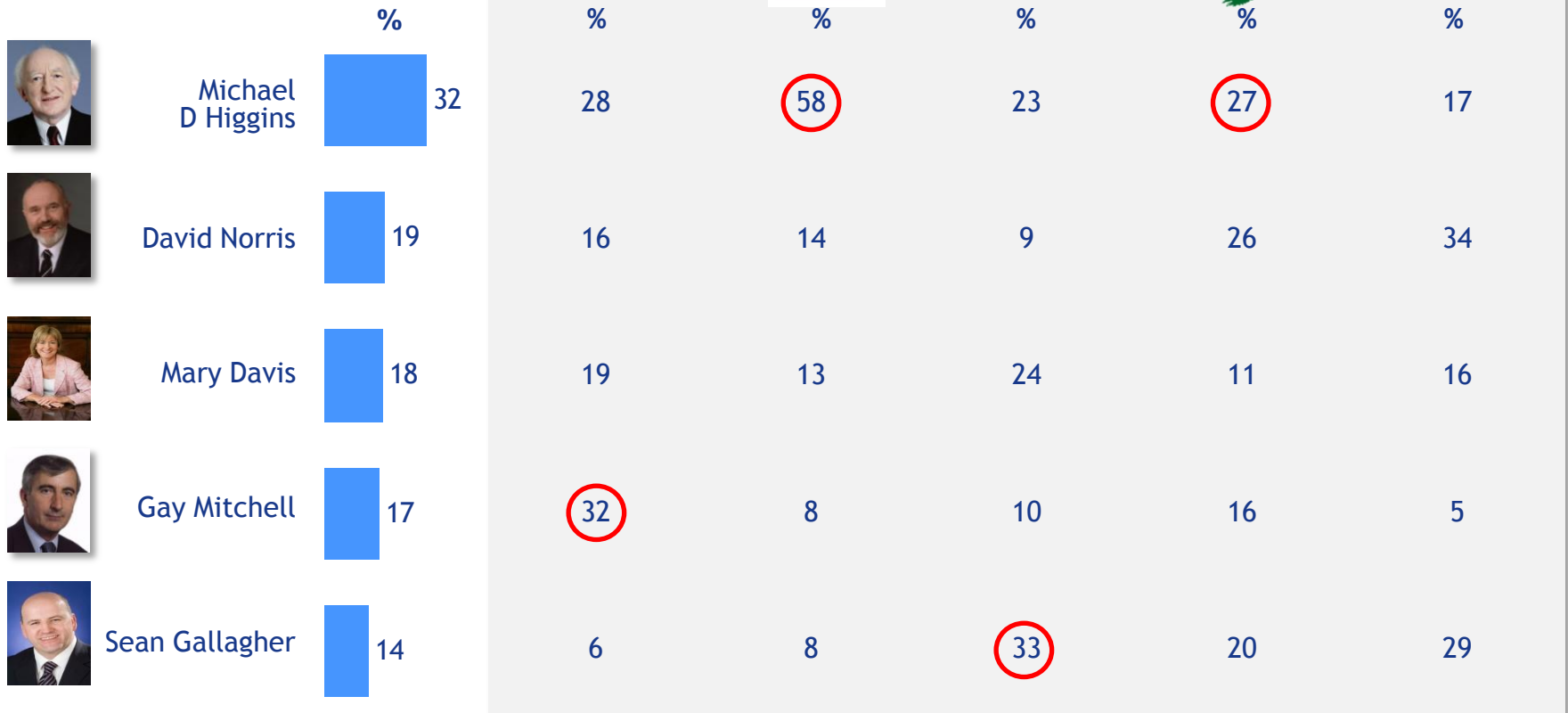
○ Stronger

□ Weaker

Candidate Support - First Preference x Party Support

(Base: All likely voters)

Candidate Support x Party



Only 1 in 3 FG supporters back Mitchell

Almost 6 in 10 Labour supporters back Higgins

Transfer Patterns - Second Preference x First Preference

(Base: All likely voters)



Second Preference x Candidate

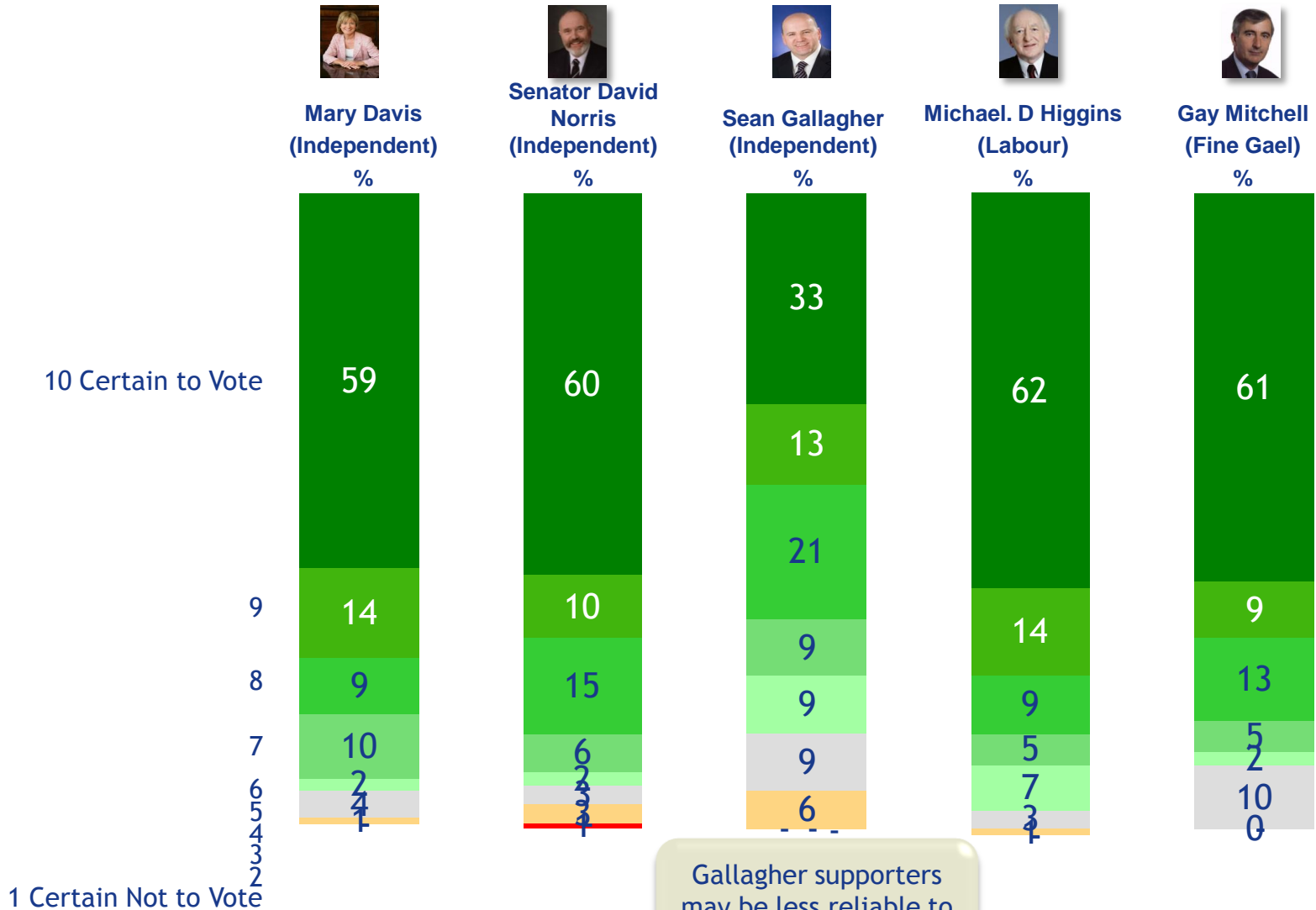
| | Mary Davis (Independent) % | Senator David Norris (Independent) % | Sean Gallagher (Independent) % | Michael. D Higgins (Labour) % | Gay Mitchell (Fine Gael) % |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Michael D Higgins | 15 | 29 | 26 | - | 30 |
| David Norris | 9 | 0 | 13 | 11 | 12 |
| Mary Davis | 0 | 19 | 24 | 18 | 22 |
| Gay Mitchell | 24 | 9 | 12 | 28 | - |
| Sean Gallagher | 28 | 16 | - | 13 | 10 |
| Don't know | 24 | 28 | 24 | 29 | 26 |

Higgins is the most transfer friendly

Likely Turnout x Support

Base: All Voters

First Preference Vote



Gallagher supporters may be less reliable to actually vote.

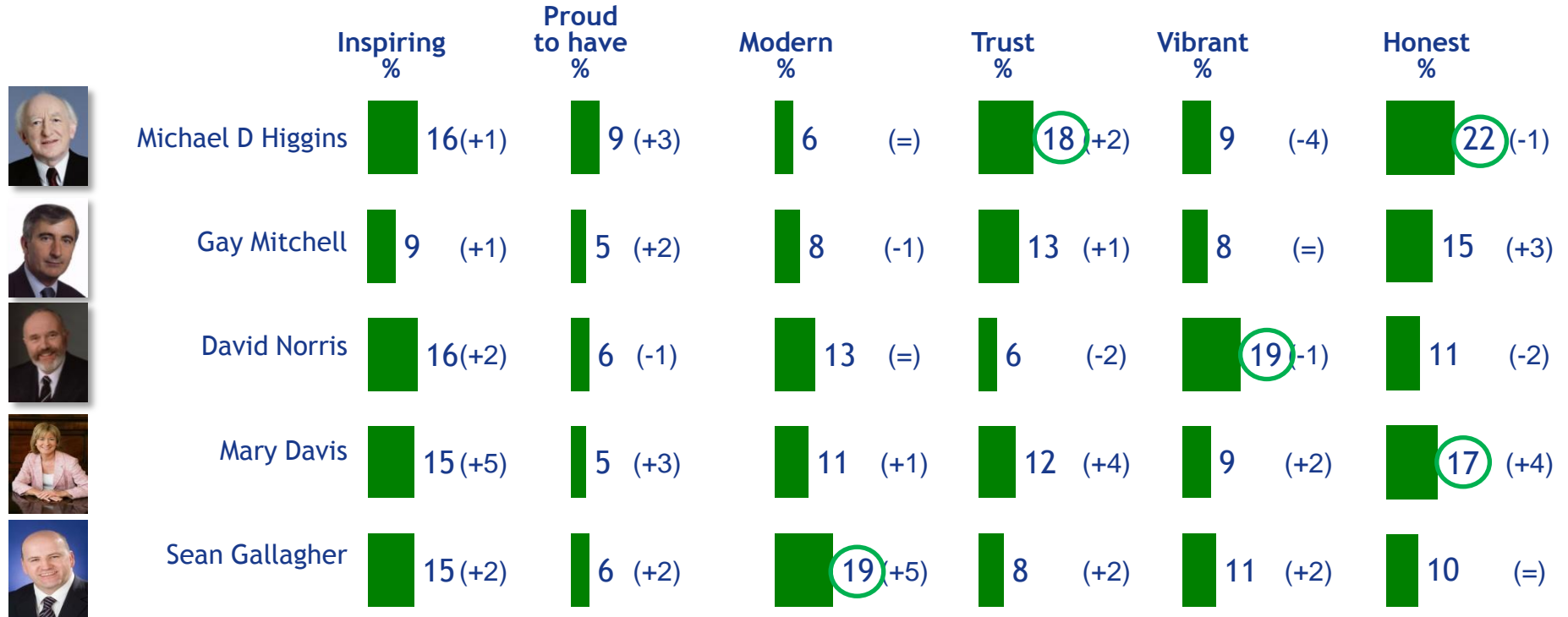
Q.1

How likely are you to vote in the Presidential election assuming you are eligible to vote in November?

Which words would you use to describe...



Positive Images

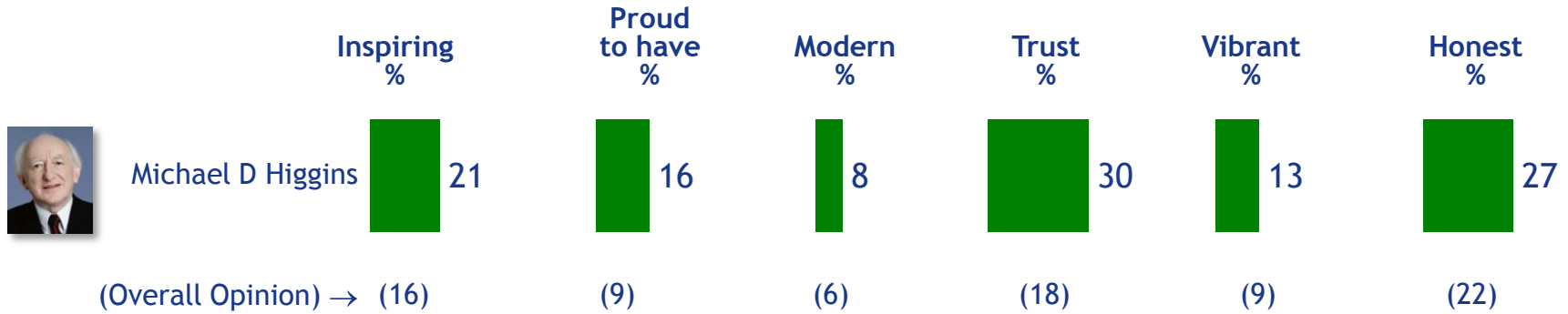


() = differences to August Poll

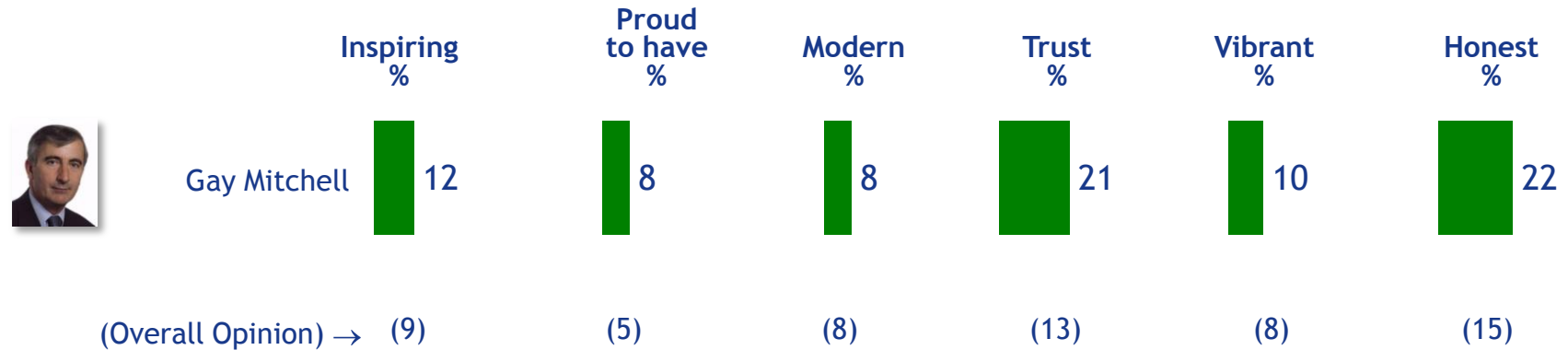
Q.4 Looking at the current list of candidates, who are confirmed or potential candidates for the Presidential race. For each candidate, please select which words would you use to describe them?

Main Candidates - What their own parties think of them

Labour Supporters



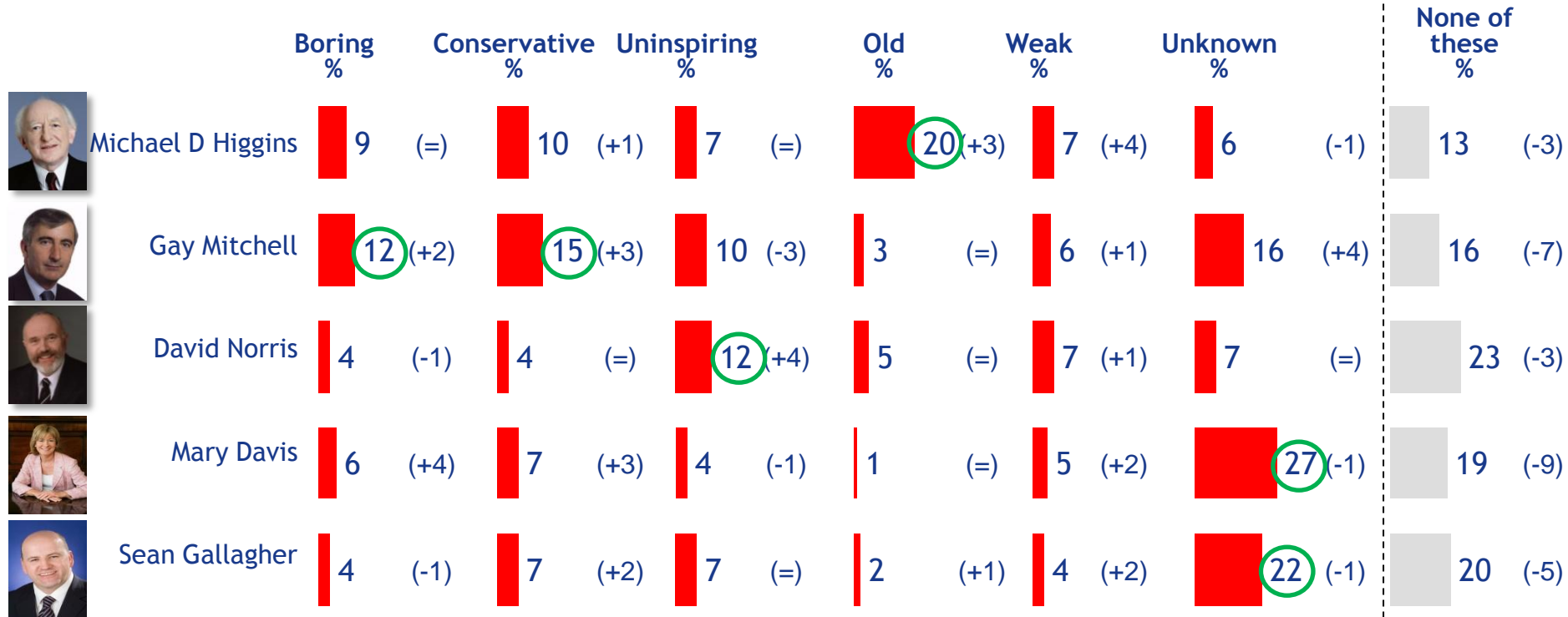
FINE GAEL Supporters



Which words would you use to describe...



Negative Images

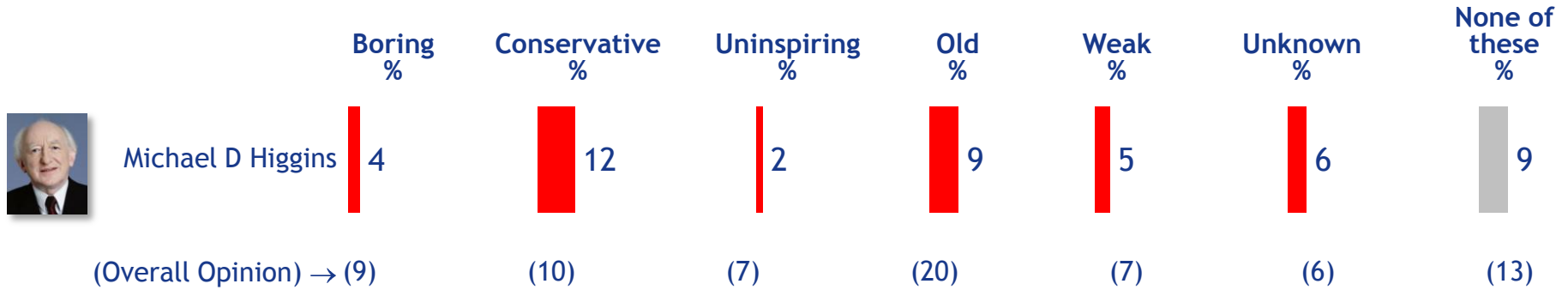


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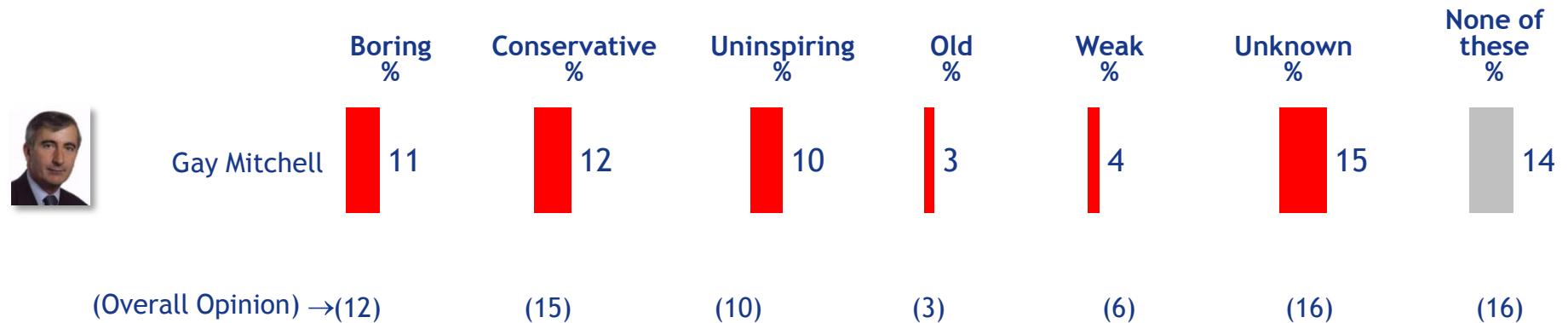
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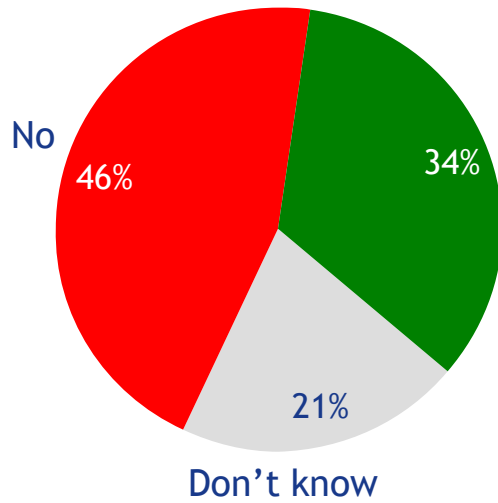
FINE GAEL Supporters



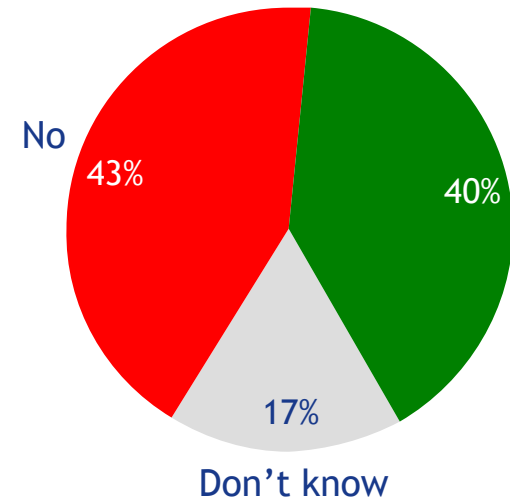
Attitudes towards a 'Norris Comeback'

(Base: All likely voters)

August

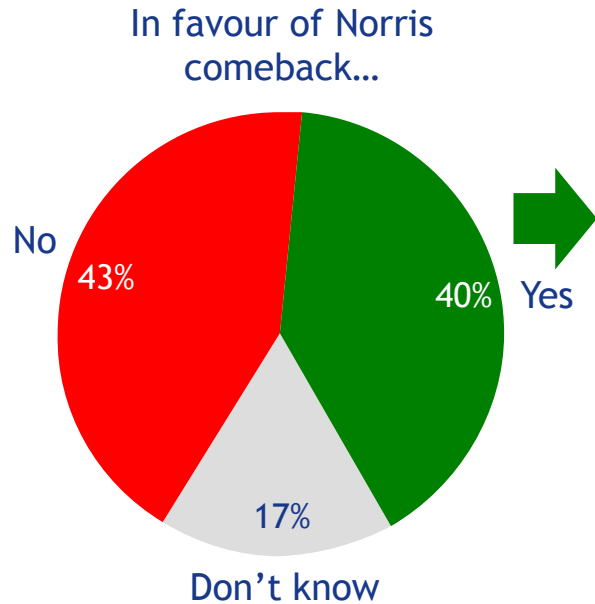


September



Attitudes towards a 'Norris Comeback'

(Base: All likely voters)



Yes - would support a comeback

| Sex | | Age | | | | | Social Class | | | Region | | | |
|--------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|--------------|--------|------|----------|-------|-----------|----------------|
| Male % | Female % | 18-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 % | 50-64 % | 65+ % | ABC1 % | C2DE % | F# % | Dublin % | ROL % | Munster % | Conn/ Ulster % |
| 43 | 38 | 38 | 46 | 45 | 41 | 26 | 43 | 39 | 29 | 48 | 46 | 36 | 26 |

Party Support

| Party | % |
|----------------------------------|----|
| FINE GAEL | 40 |
| Labour | 45 |
| FIANNA FAIL THE REPUBLICAN PARTY | 27 |
| SF | 33 |
| Independent / Others | 48 |

% in favour →

Small base size

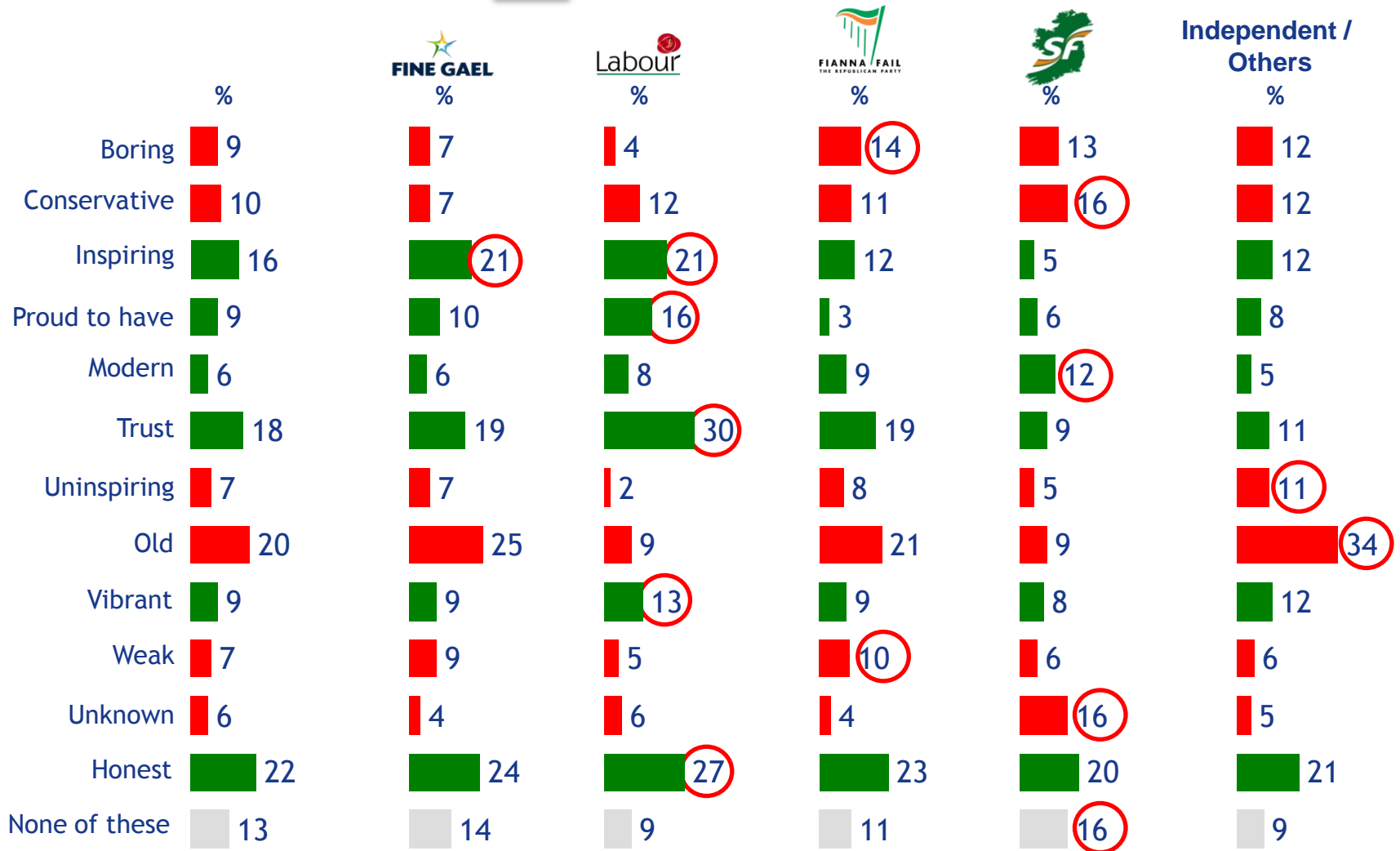


Appendix Charts (Detailed Image x Party)

Candidate Imagery x Party Support



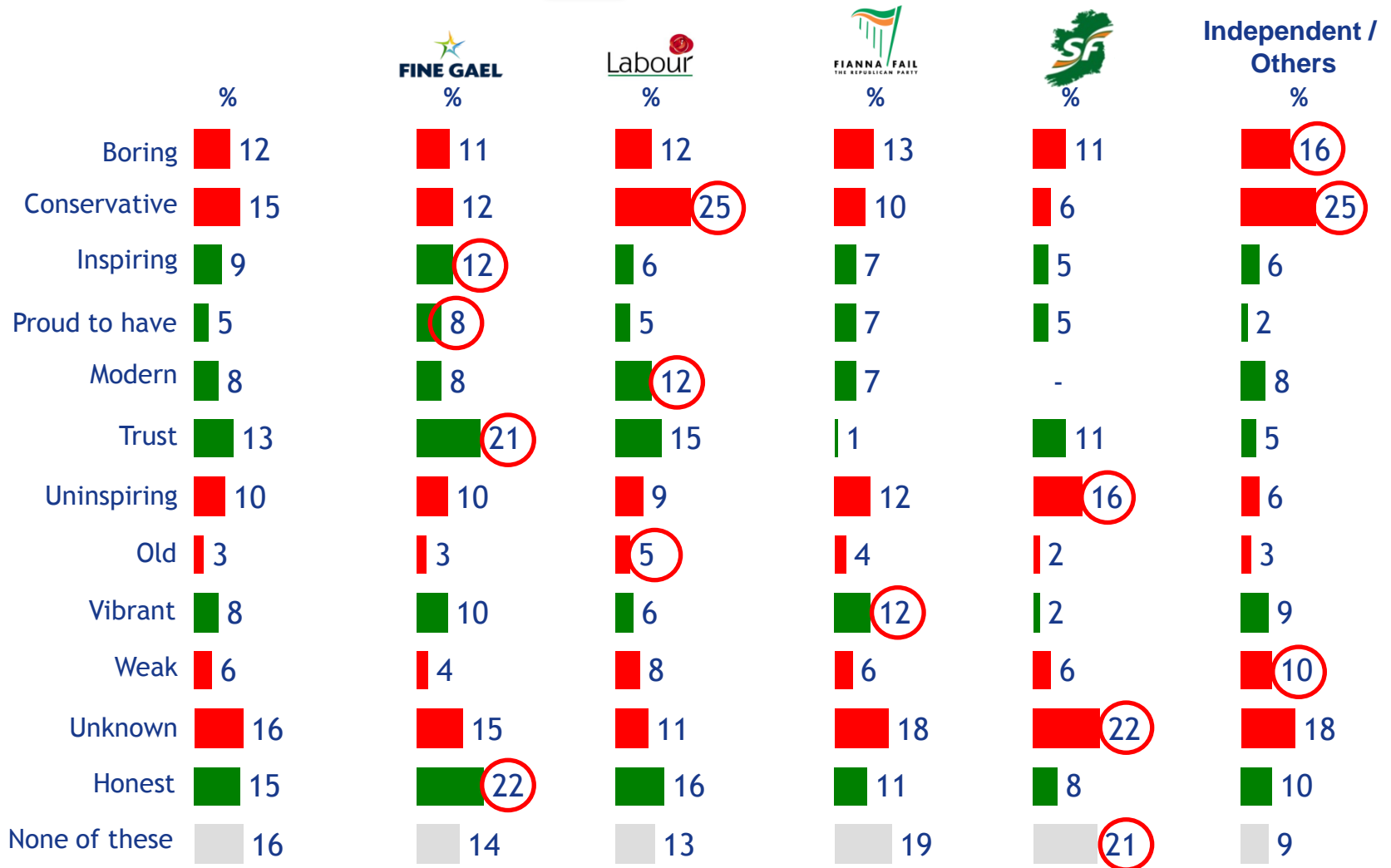
Michael D Higgins



Candidate Imagery x Party Support



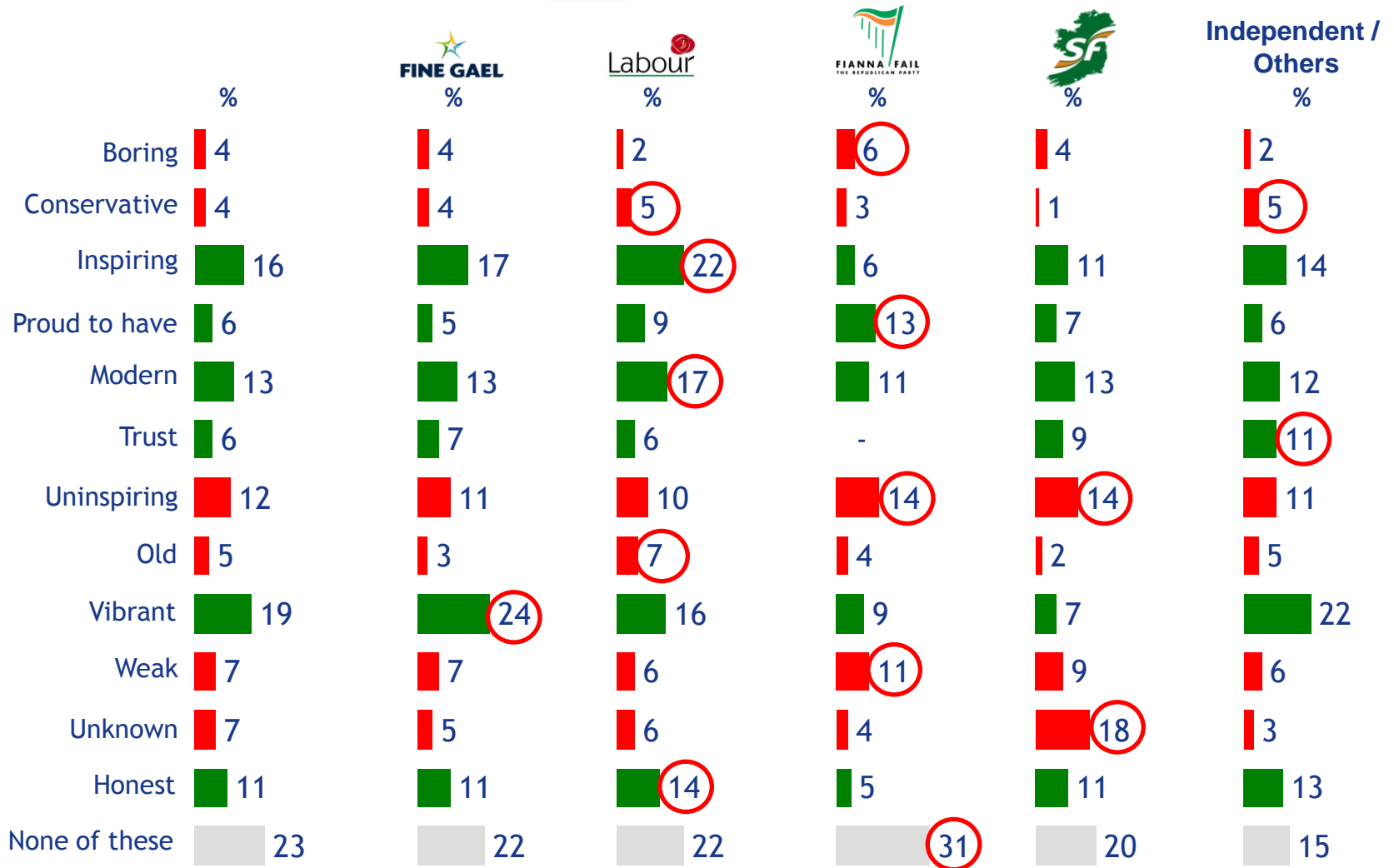
Gay Mitchell



Candidate Imagery x Party Support



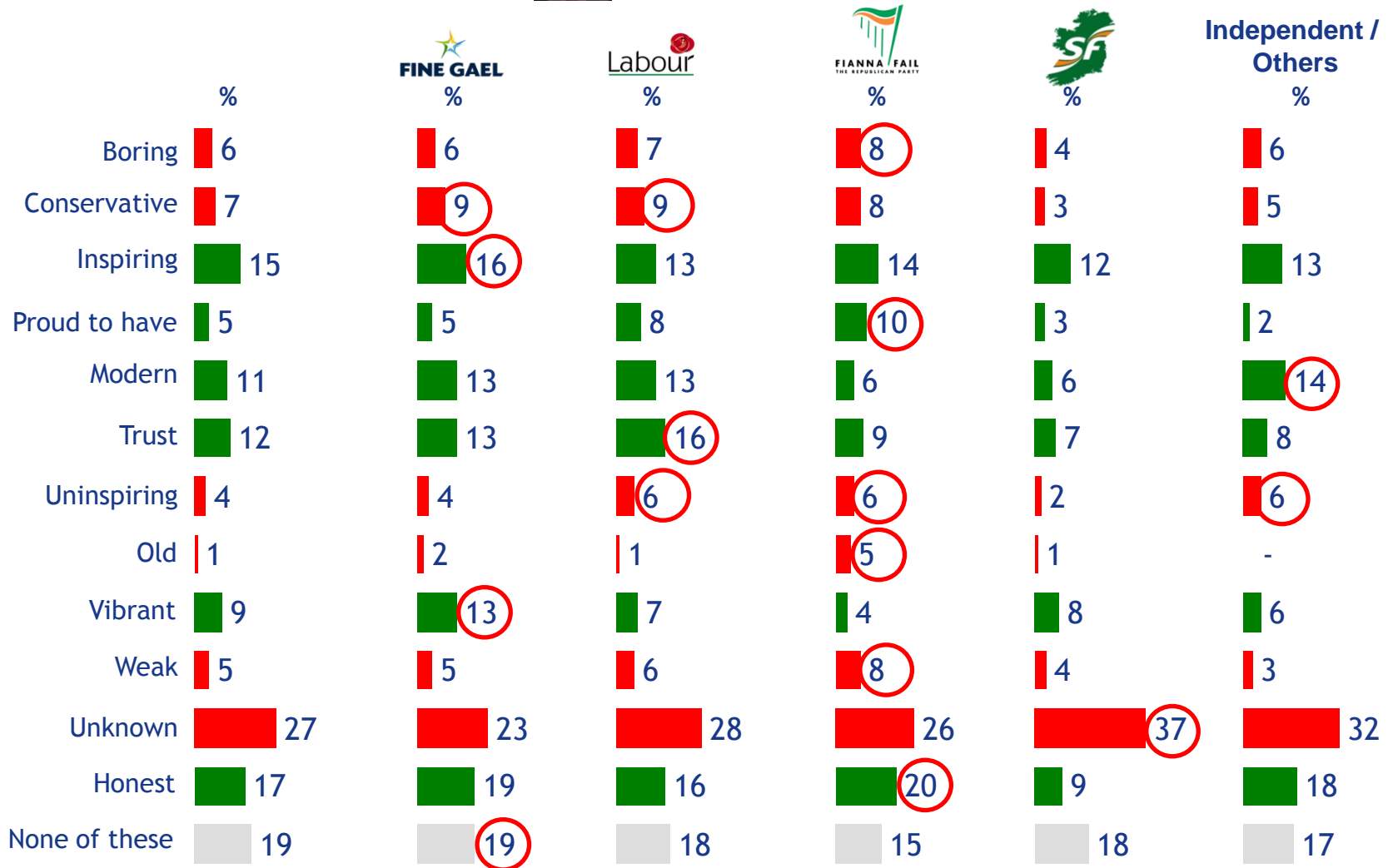
David Norris



Candidate Imagery x Party Support



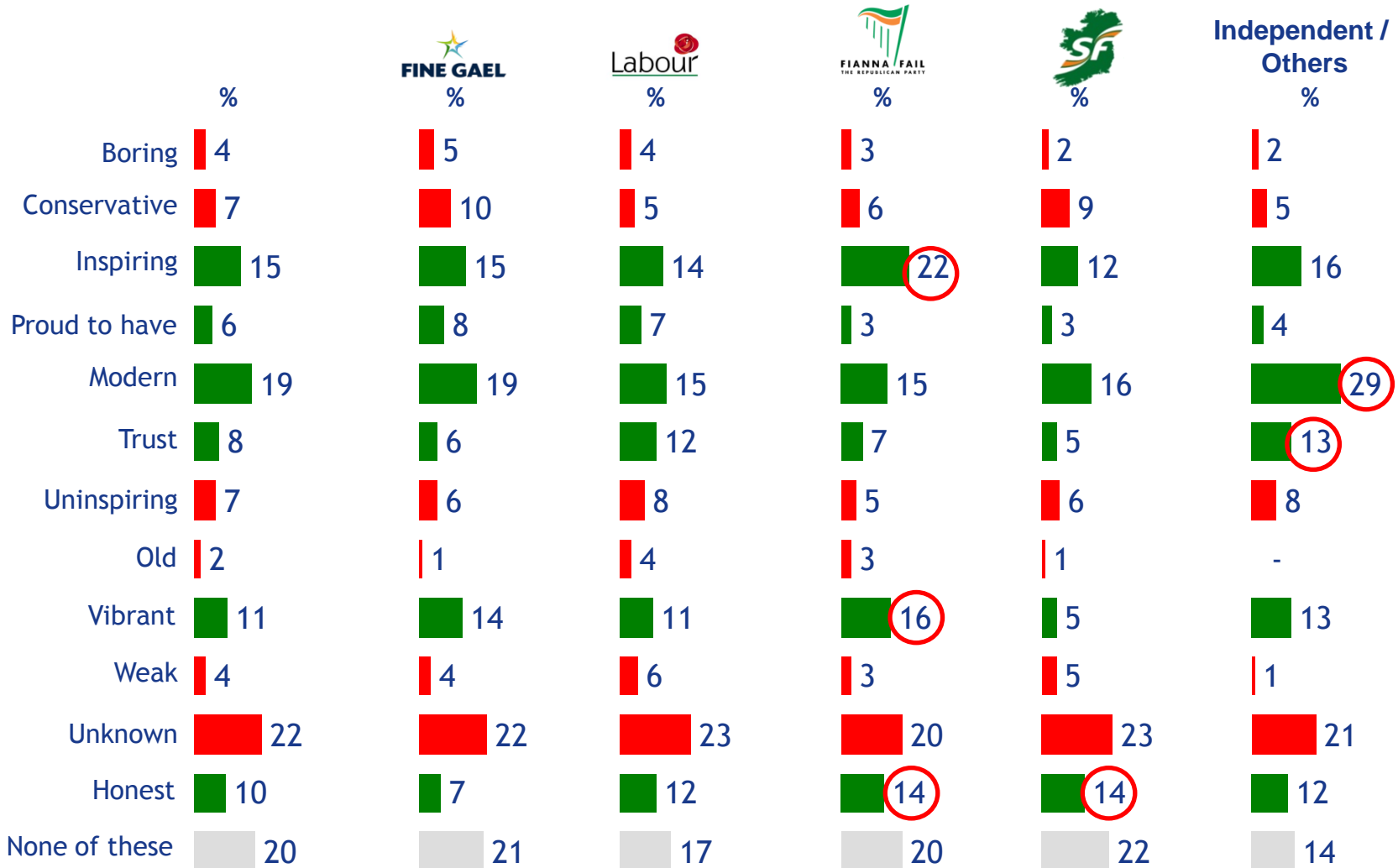
Mary Davis



Candidate Imagery x Party Support



Sean Gallagher



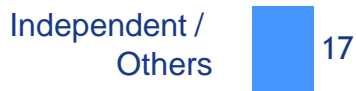
Profile of Candidates x Party Support






(Base: All aged 18+)

Mitchell 'borrows' few votes from other party's

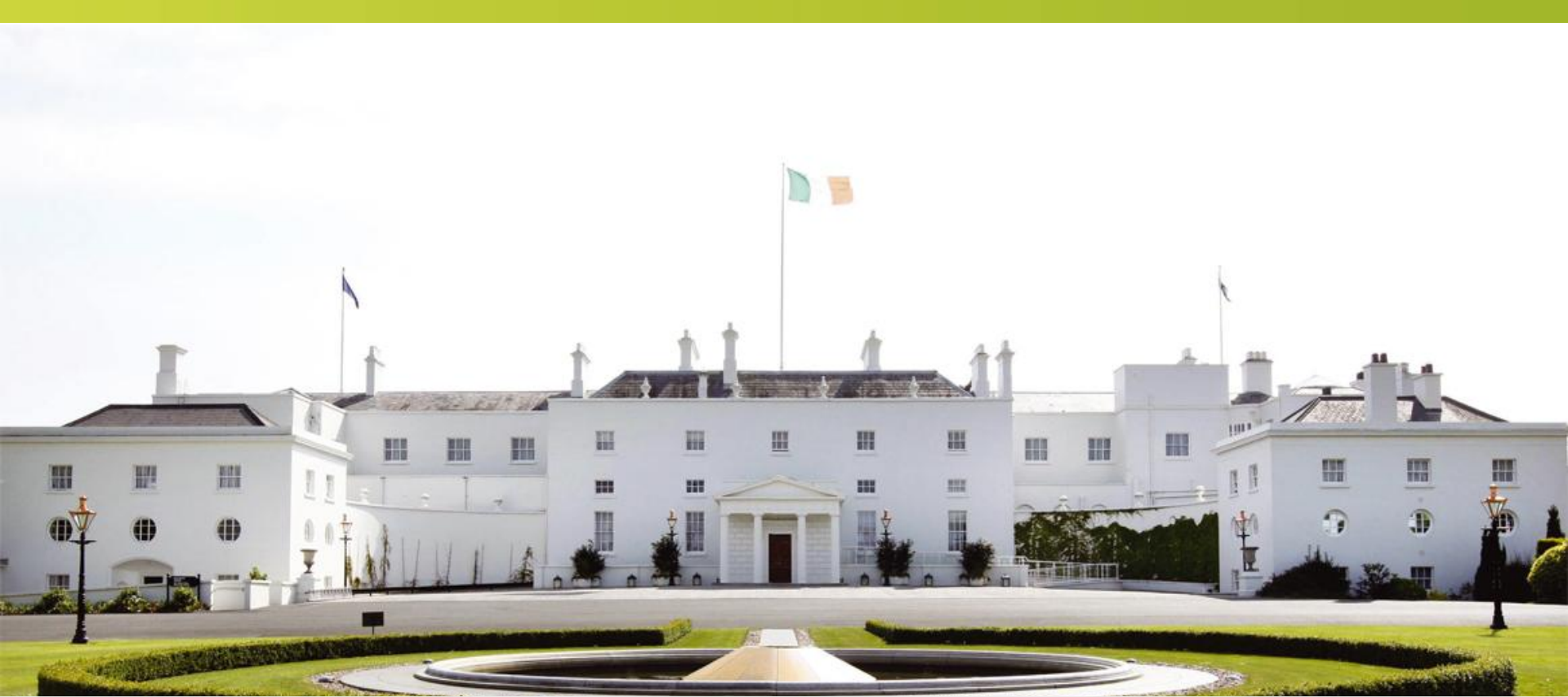
Candidate Support →

Party Support ↓ %



| |  Mary Davis (Independent) % |  Senator David Norris (Independent) % |  Sean Gallagher (Independent) % |  Michael. D Higgins (Labour) % |  Gay Mitchell (Fine Gael) % |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| FINE GAEL | 46 | 34 | 17 | 35 | 72 |
| Labour | 17 | 16 | 12 | 40 | 10 |
| SF | 5 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 7 |
| FIANNA FAIL THE REPUBLICAN PARTY | 15 | 5 | 24 | 7 | 6 |
| green party | - | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Independent / Others | 17 | 30 | 35 | 9 | 4 |

Higgins' base is 1/3 FG supporters



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