

Widespread Support for Economic Development and Business Incentives

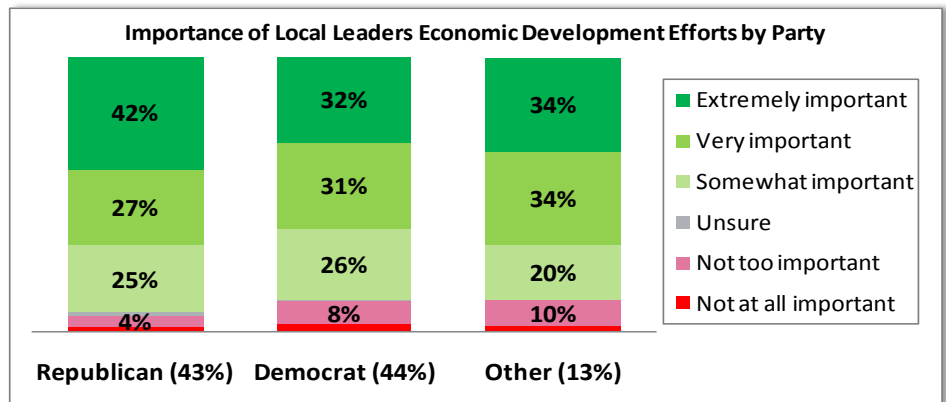
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County residents generally believe it is important for local leaders to work to bring high tech firms to the region. Residents also support incentives for those companies and tend to believe that high tech companies, on balance, help the local economy.

Nearly two-thirds rate economic development assistance by local leaders as very or extremely important. Another 24.5% say these efforts are somewhat important and only 9% believe they are unimportant.

Most residents in all demographic sub-groups think it is important for local leaders to attract new companies to the San Diego region and to help existing firms grow. However, analysis shows that Republicans attach a bit more importance to this assistance than do Democrats. Forty-two percent of Republicans say helping attract new companies and grow existing ones is extremely important while only 31% of Democrats agree. Parsing the data further, we find that this less extreme assessment is also held by non-partisan liberals while middle-aged non-partisans tend to reflect GOP sentiment on this issue.



While there are clear -- though narrow -- partisan differences when it comes to work by officials related to economic development, the Barometer reveals an interesting relationship to Charger fandom on this question. Seventy-two percent of the team's biggest fans say attracting and assisting firms is very or extremely important but only 63% of non-fans rate these efforts as highly.

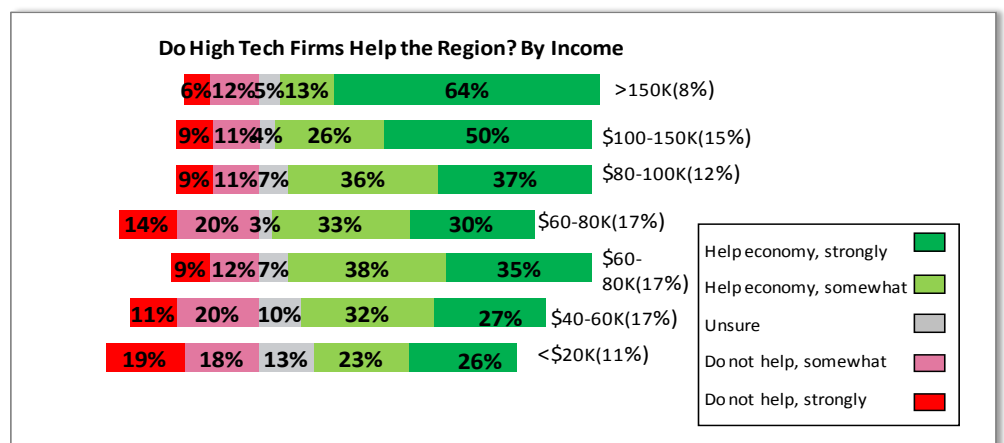
Providing incentives and regulatory relief, commonly called "corporate welfare" by detractors, can be met with skepticism. Not so, however, in San Diego County. A broad swath -- 84% -- support these efforts (43% strongly) and only 11% oppose them. The support gets even stronger among upper income earners. But even 77% of the folks who make less than \$40,000 a year support more incentives and less regulation for high tech firms; their support is only less intense. So the issue is not as class-based as one might think. Highly educated residents (even when income is controlled for) and middle-aged Republicans are also among the strongest proponents of incentives.

Sometimes people question whether high tech firms really generate the kind of economic growth that actually helps a region develop and provides opportunity to all residents. In this relatively highly educated county, most San Diegans believe that high tech firms do, on balance, benefit the region. Overall, 65% (35% strongly) side with those who say San Diego is helped rather than hurt by high tech firms and the jobs they bring.

Even among those with a high school education or less, 58% agree with that sentiment and only 21% believe that economic development efforts targeted at high tech firms ultimately do not benefit San Diegans.

Most low income residents, though not as supportive as those

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earning more than \$80,000 annually, believe high tech firms help the region. While a lot more Republicans than Democrats believe high tech firms are a positive influence, the support stretches across the partisan divide. Fifty-seven percent of Democrats perceive that high tech firms are a virtue rather than a drain on the region.

The Barometer does reveal that some geographic areas are not quite as taken with high tech firms as other portions of the county. Specifically, residents in the south suburbs (National City to the border) and east suburbs (La Mesa, El Cajon, Santee, etc.) are notably less inclined to believe high tech firms benefit the county, but again, this may speak more to the rest of the region's strong support for high tech companies. While 56% in the two suburban areas mentioned above see high tech firms as beneficial, more than 70% elsewhere agree with that assessment.

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