



# Nova Scotia Politics in the Time of COVID-19: June 2020 Update

Public Opinion Research  
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Field Dates: May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020



# Spotlight on Nova Scotia Politics

The COVID-19 outbreak has set off a series of changes in the Canadian political landscape. In Nova Scotia, McNeil has very strong favourability compared to other party leaders. In addition, the Liberals are far ahead of their competitors in vote share and most think McNeil is the best option for premier out of all party leaders.

Today, INNOVATIVE is releasing a spotlight on Nova Scotia from wave 8 of our COVID-19 Tracking survey. This online survey was in field from May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> with a weighted sample size of 200 Nova Scotia residents. Detailed methodology is provided in the appendix.

This report covers key results on how those from Nova Scotia are rating their government's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, their vote choice, and satisfaction with government handling of several issues related to the outbreak.

# Government Approval

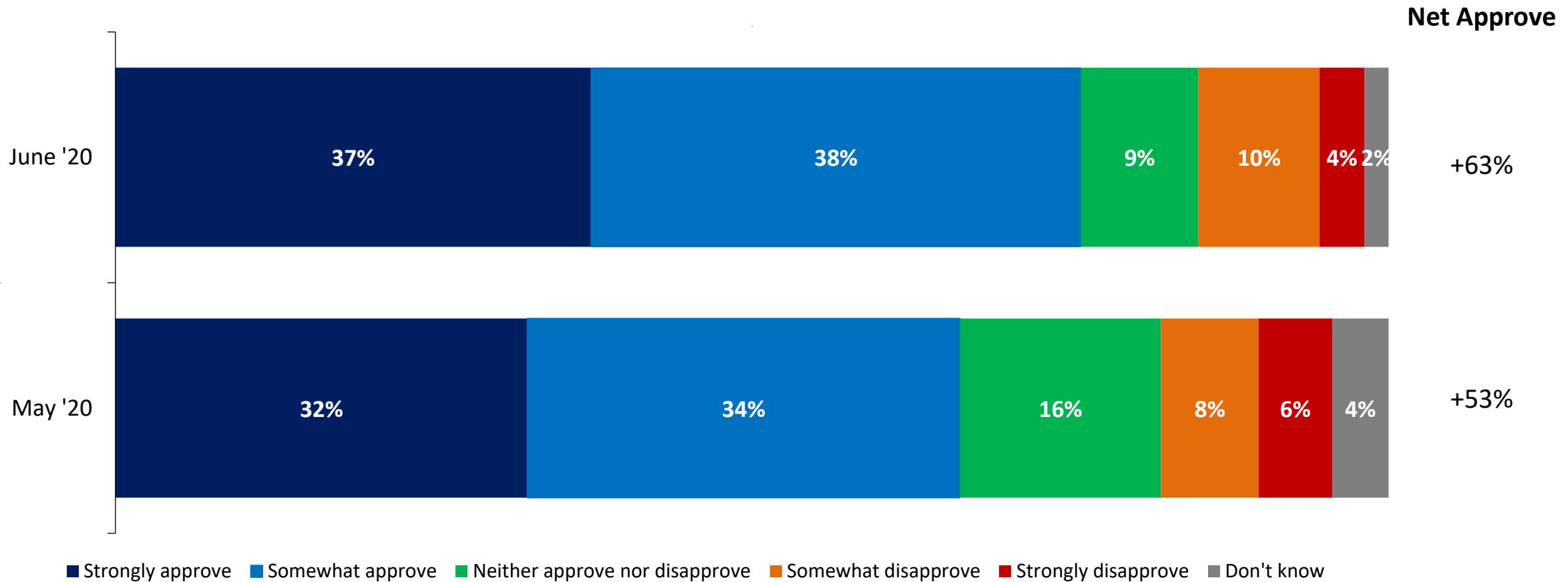
The Nova Scotia government is continuing to receive top marks on their handling of the outbreak with net approval up 10-pts since last month

# COVID-19 Handling Tracking: Net approval of the NS government's handling of the outbreak jumped 10 points since May 2020



Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Nova Scotia Government has handled the outbreak of COVID-19?

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



# Leadership

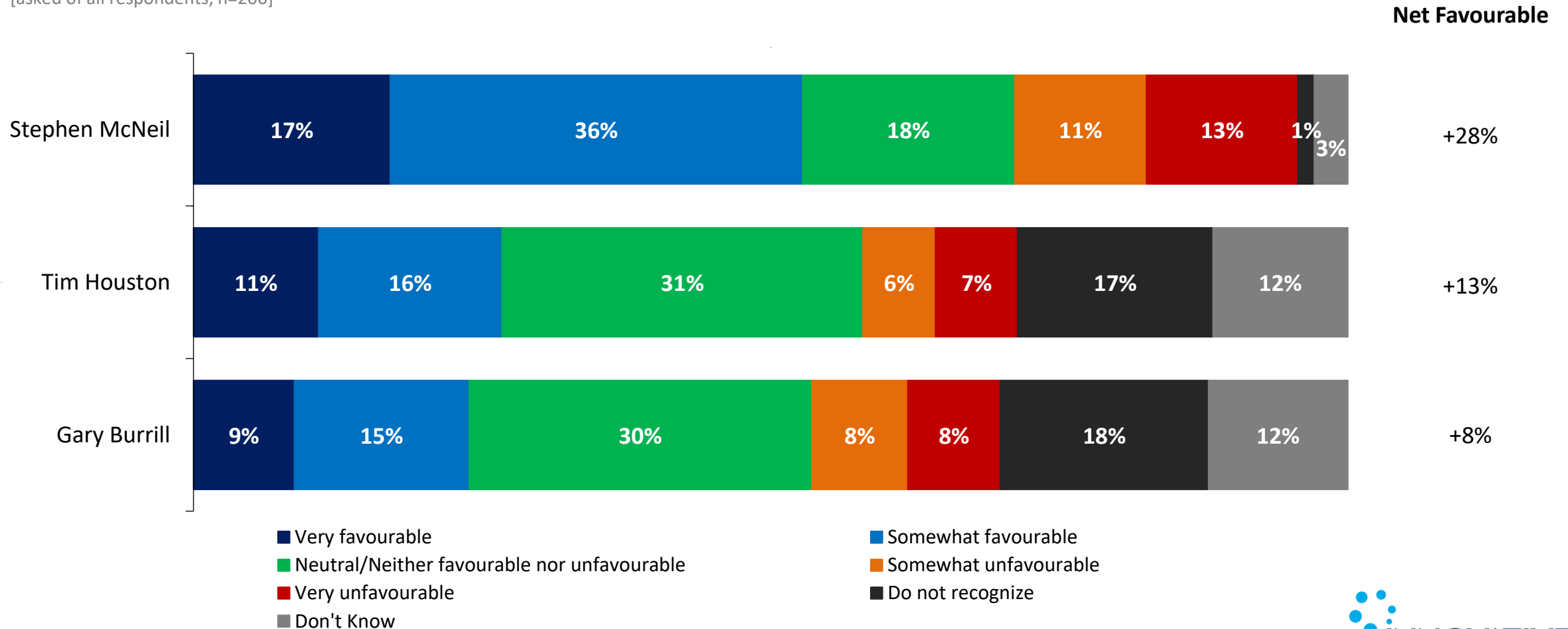
Stephen McNeil continues to be seen more favourably than other party leaders in Nova Scotia and continues to be considered as the best option for Premier.

# Leader Favourables: Stephen McNeil has the highest net favourability of any party leader at +28%



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=200]

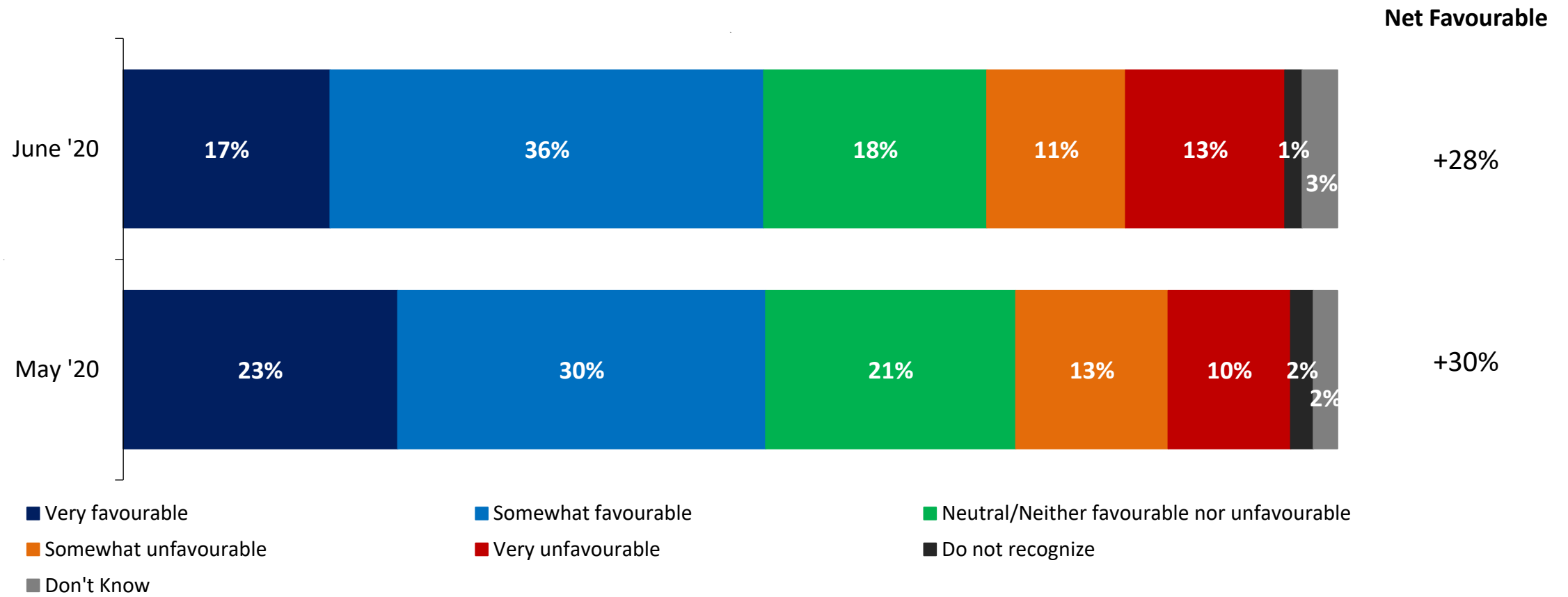


# Leader Favourables, McNeil: Stephen McNeil's net favourability stays stable since May at +28%



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate. **Stephen McNeil**

[asked of all respondents; n=200]

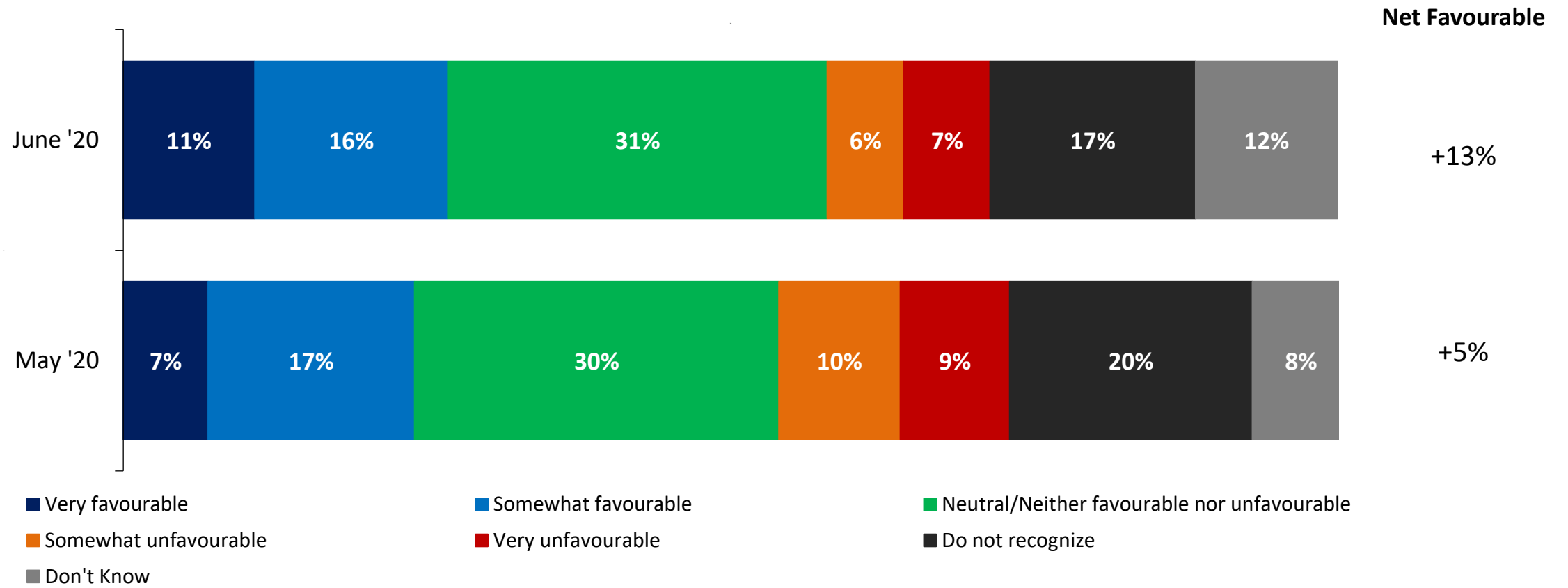


# Leader Favourables, Houston: Tim Houston sees a jump in net favourability by 8-pts since May with less saying they are unfavourable



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate. **Tim Houston**

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



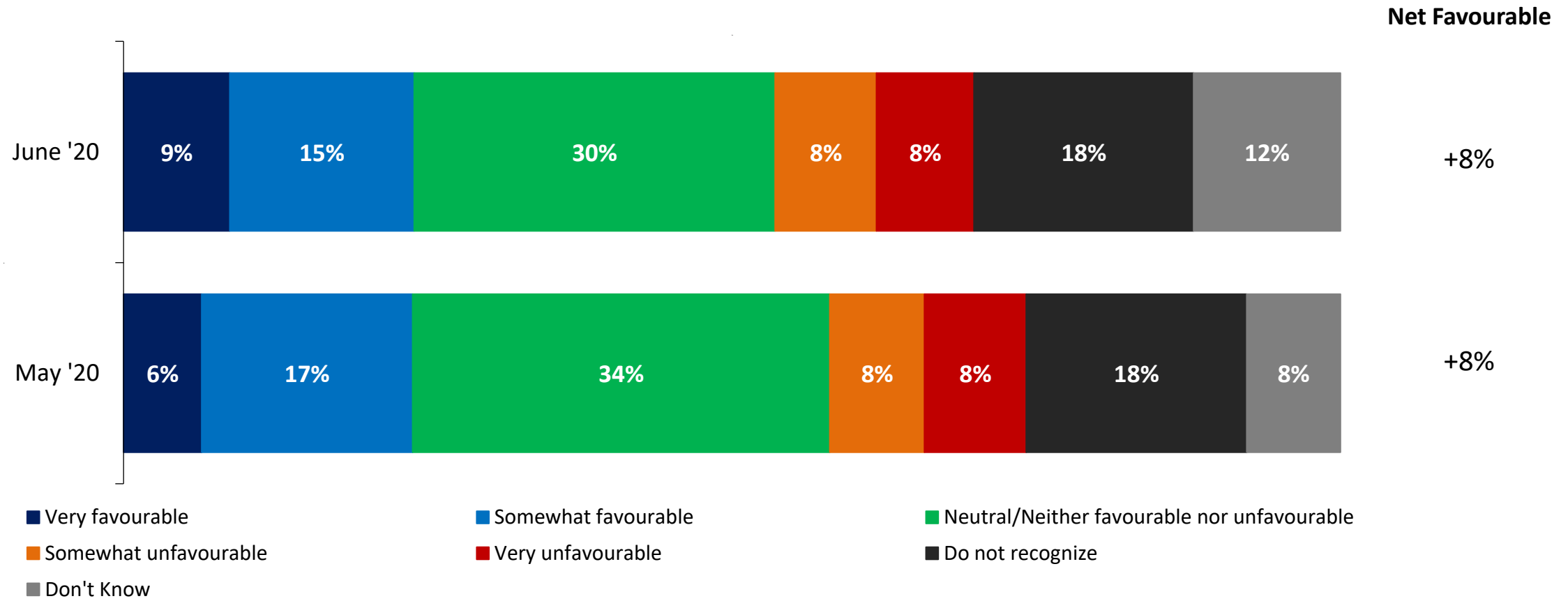


# Leader Favourables, Burrill: Respondents net favourability of Gary Burrill is unchanged since May, steady at +8%



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate. **Gary Burrill**

[asked of all respondents; n=200]

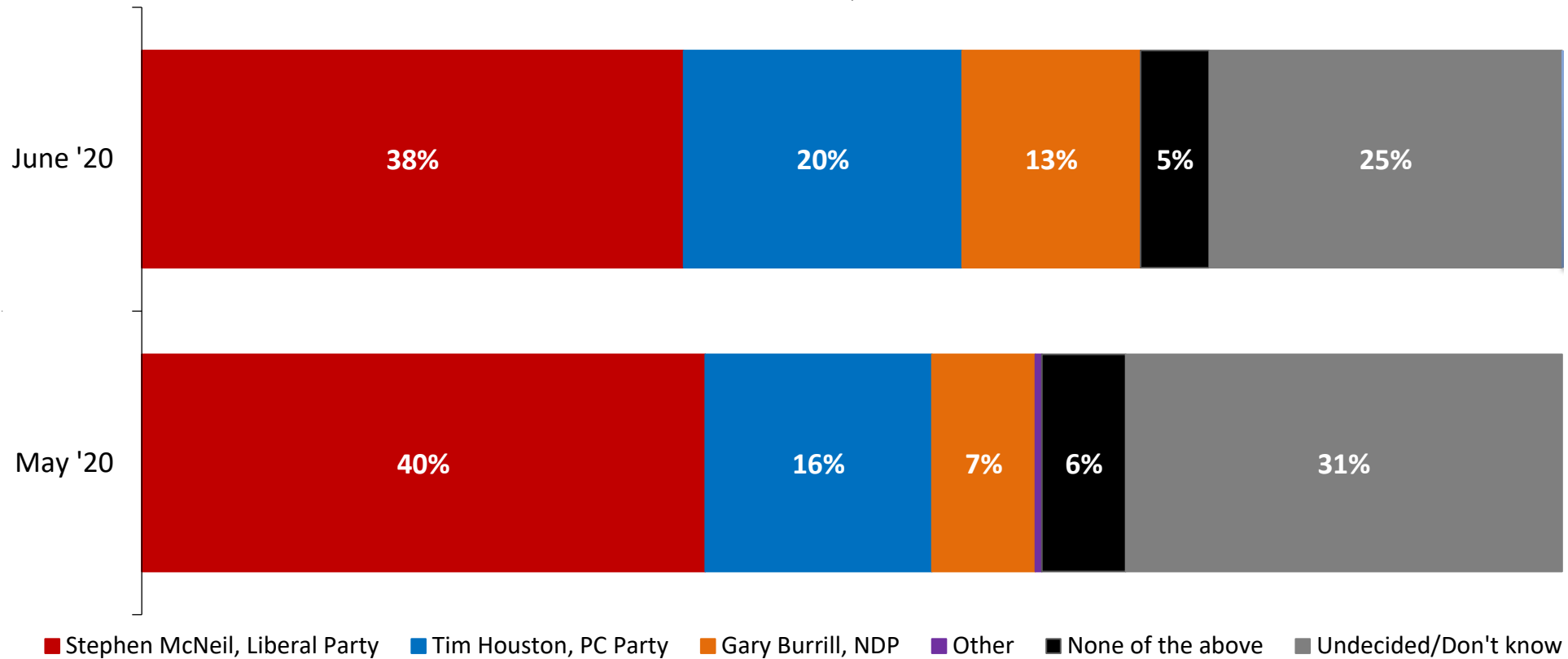


# Best Premier: McNeil (38%) continues to enjoy a strong lead on best to be Premier; Burrill (13%) sees a 5 point jump since last month



Which of the following leaders would make the best Premier of Nova Scotia?

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



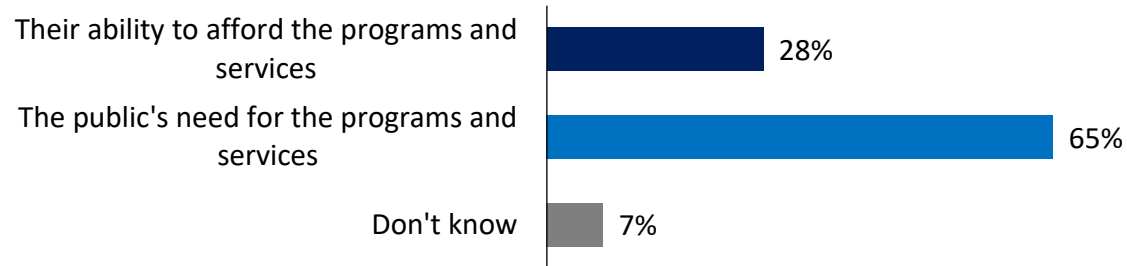
# **We group individuals into segments based on key political and economic values and attitudes**

We use these segments throughout the remainder of the report to analyze vote leadership results.

# Core Political Values: Respondents are torn on whether gov't should listen to common sense (44%) or experts (44%) when it comes to policy

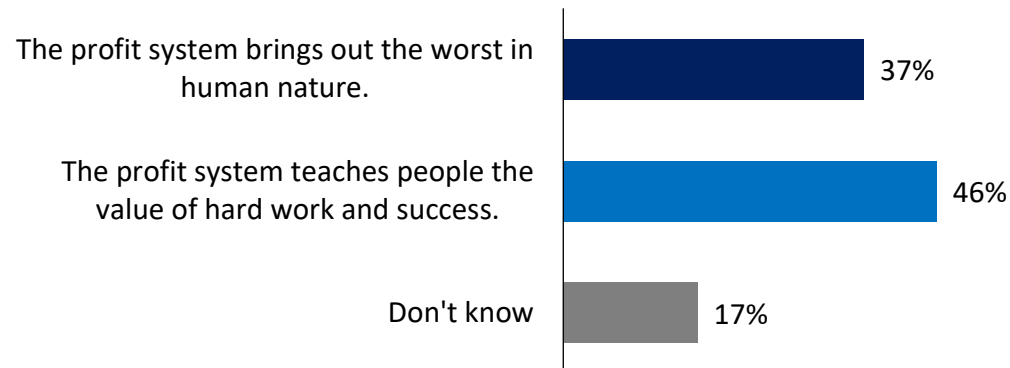
**Q** Now we would like to ask a few questions about basic values and society...When governments make major decisions concerning spending on programs and services, do you think they should be basing their decisions mainly on...?

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



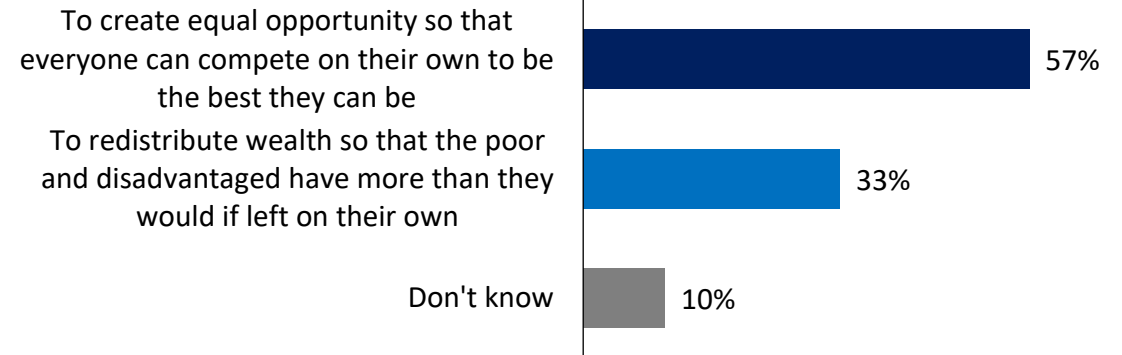
**Q** Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



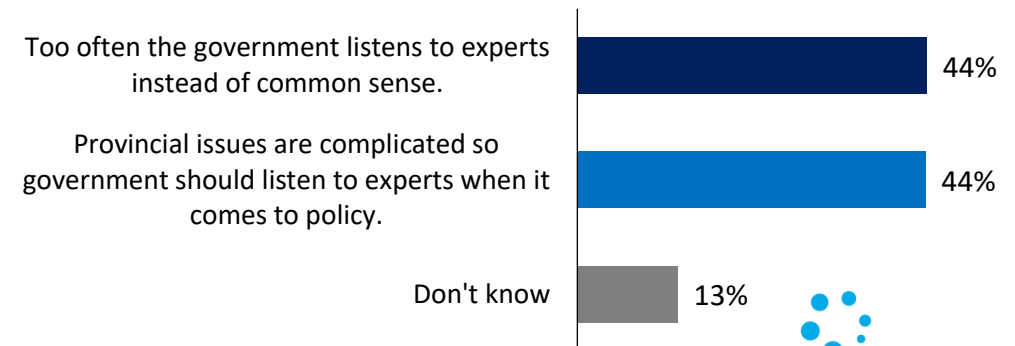
**Q** Is the main role of government to...?

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



**Q** When it comes to government decision making, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

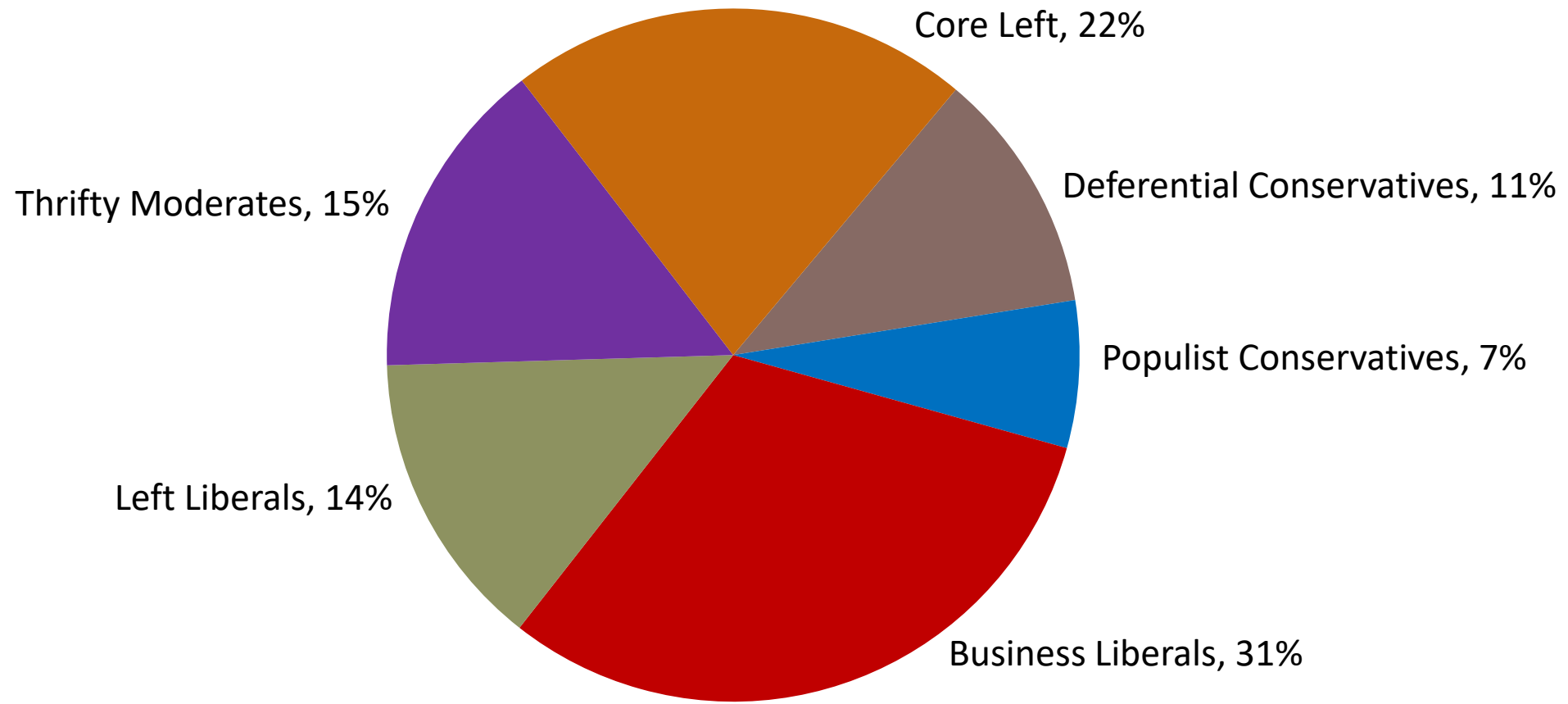
[asked of all respondents; n=200]



# Value Clusters: Most are Business Liberals (31%), Core Left (22%), or Thrifty Moderates (15%)

Clusters are based on 4 basic values: equal opportunity versus redistribution; trust in the profit system; whether spending should be based on ability to afford or public need; and whether government should listen to experts or common sense.

[asked of all respondents; n=200]





# Defining Value Clusters: 6 value clusters are defined by 4 key political values

Core Political Values by Value Clusters

Column %		Deferential Conservatives	Populist Conservatives	Business Liberals	Left Liberals	Thrifty Moderates	Core Left
Governments should base decisions on...	Ability to afford	100%	86%	0%	0%	70%	0%
	Public Need	0%	0%	99%	94%	0%	98%
Is the main role of government to .?	Create equal Opportunity	85%	93%	74%	90%	35%	0%
	Redistribute wealth	15%	0%	18%	0%	29%	98%
When it comes to government decision making...	Rely on common sense	0%	100%	43%	56%	42%	43%
	Listen to experts	92%	0%	54%	32%	22%	40%
The profit system...	Brings out the worst in human nature	0%	0%	0%	78%	52%	86%
	Teaches value of hard work and success	96%	100%	88%	0%	5%	0%

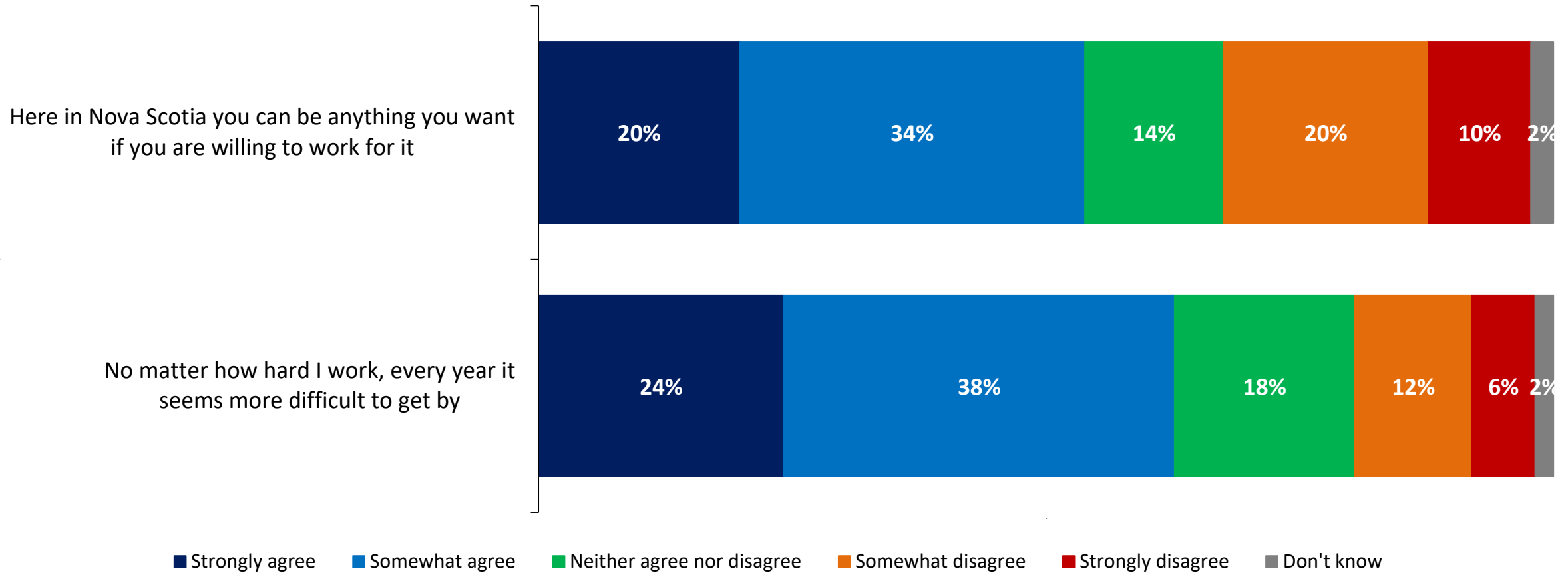
Note: Current data: June 2020

# Segmentation Attitudes: Nearly 2-in-3 (63%) say they agree that every year it seems more difficult to get by



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

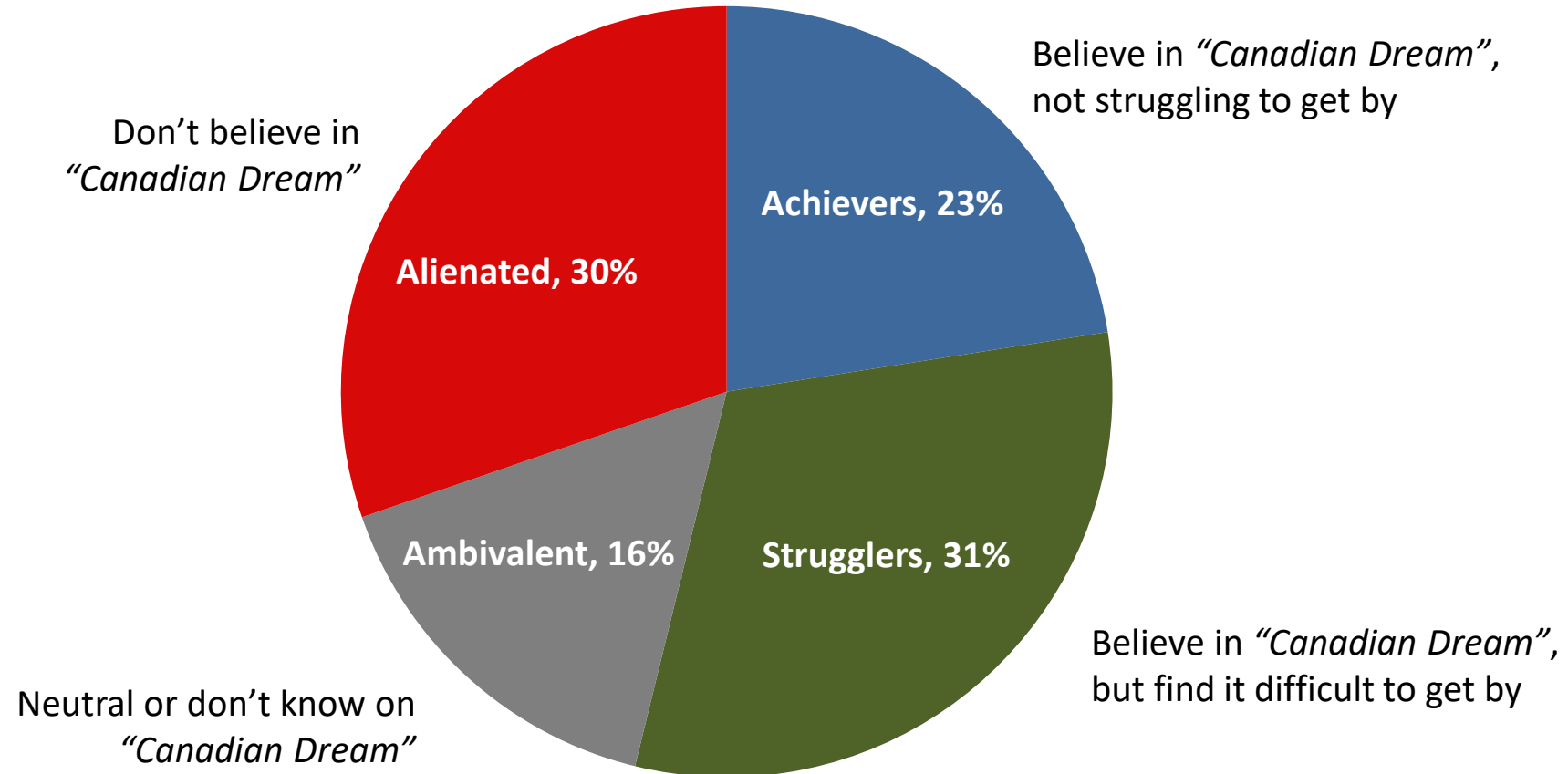
[asked of all respondents; n=200]



# Economic Gap Segmentation: Most are either Dream Strugglers (31%) or Alienated (30%) followed by Dream Achievers (23%)

Gap segmentation: Agree with 'Here in Nova Scotia you can be anything you want if you are willing to work for it' BY Agree with 'No matter how hard I work, every year it seems more difficult to get by'.

[asked of all respondents; n=200]

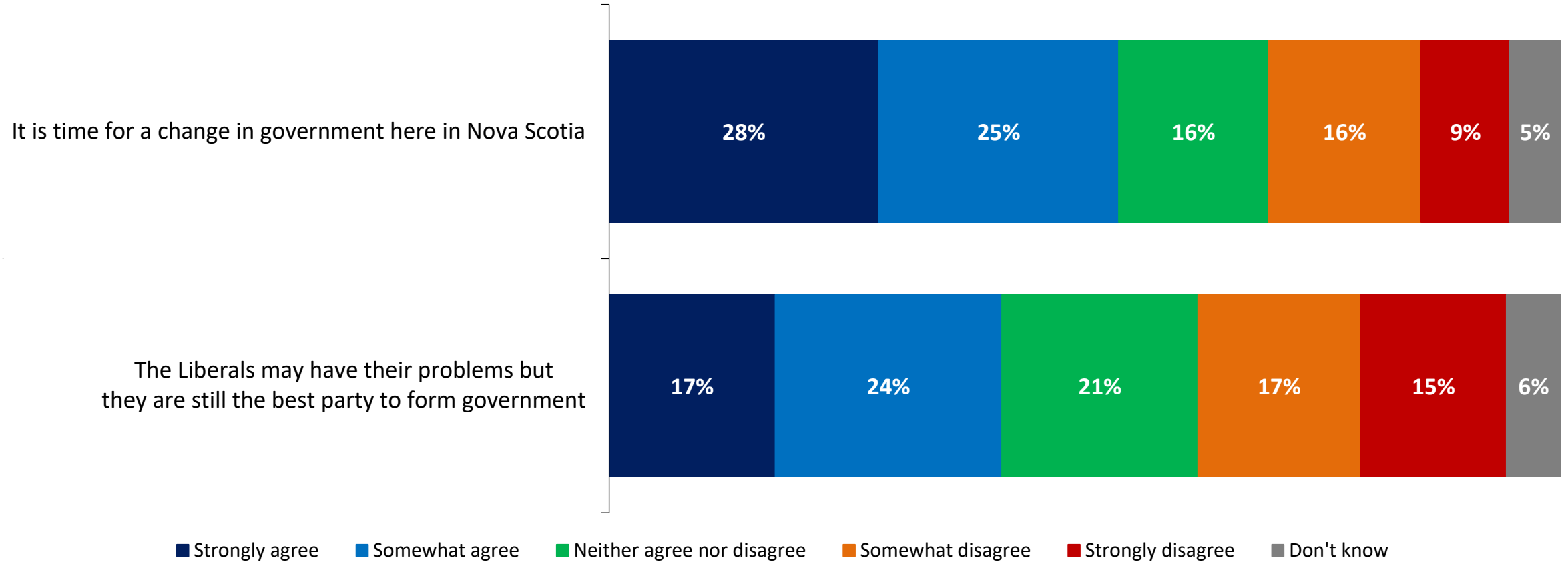


# Time for a Change Attitudes: Over half (54%) say it is time for a change in government; 2-in-5 (41%) say the Liberals are still the best party <sup>17</sup>



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

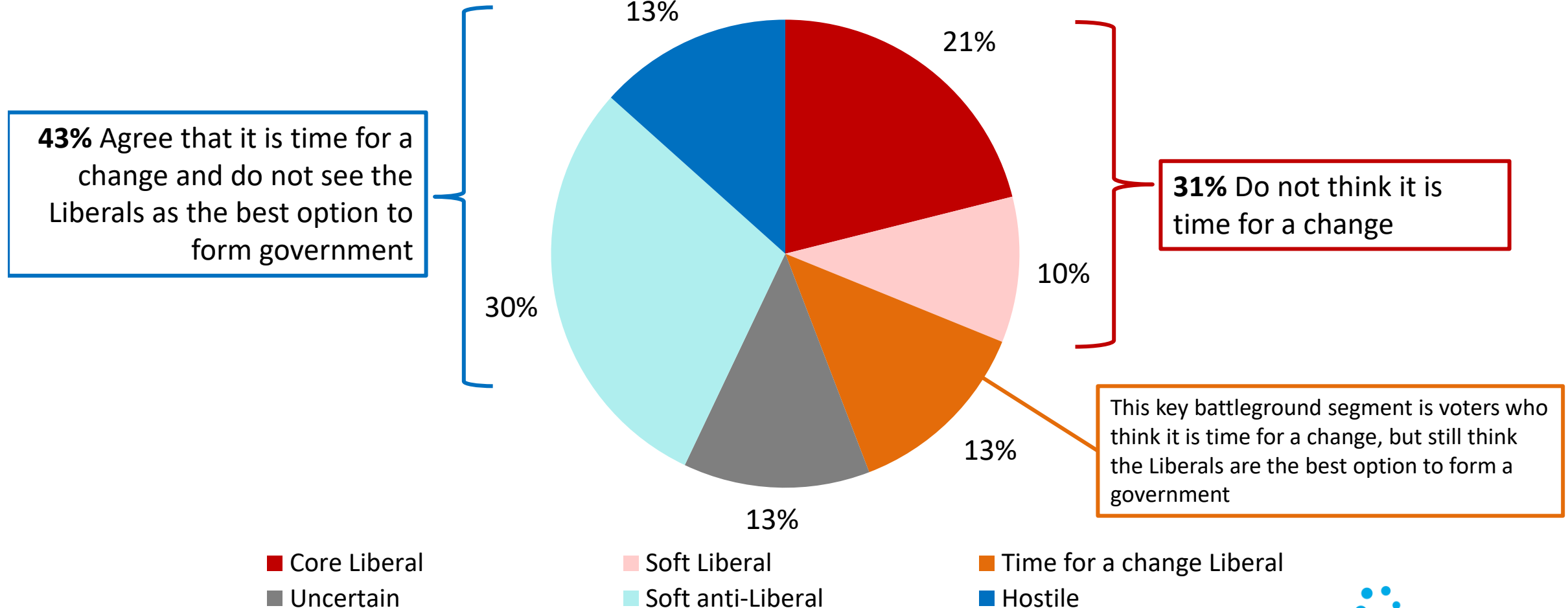
[asked of all respondents; n=200]



# Time for Change Segmentation: Most (43%) think it is time for a change of government and do not see Liberals as the best option

Time for Change segmentation: Agree with 'The Liberals may have their problems but they are still the best party to form government' BY Agree with 'It is time for a change in government here in Nova Scotia'.

[asked of all respondents; n=200]





# The Liberals remain far ahead of other parties on vote

Innovative reports on vote intention in two ways.

When we ask people who they would vote for if an election were held today, and who they lean towards if they are unsure, we call those results Combined vote. This accounts for the views of everyone in the population including decided voters, undecided voters, and non-voters.

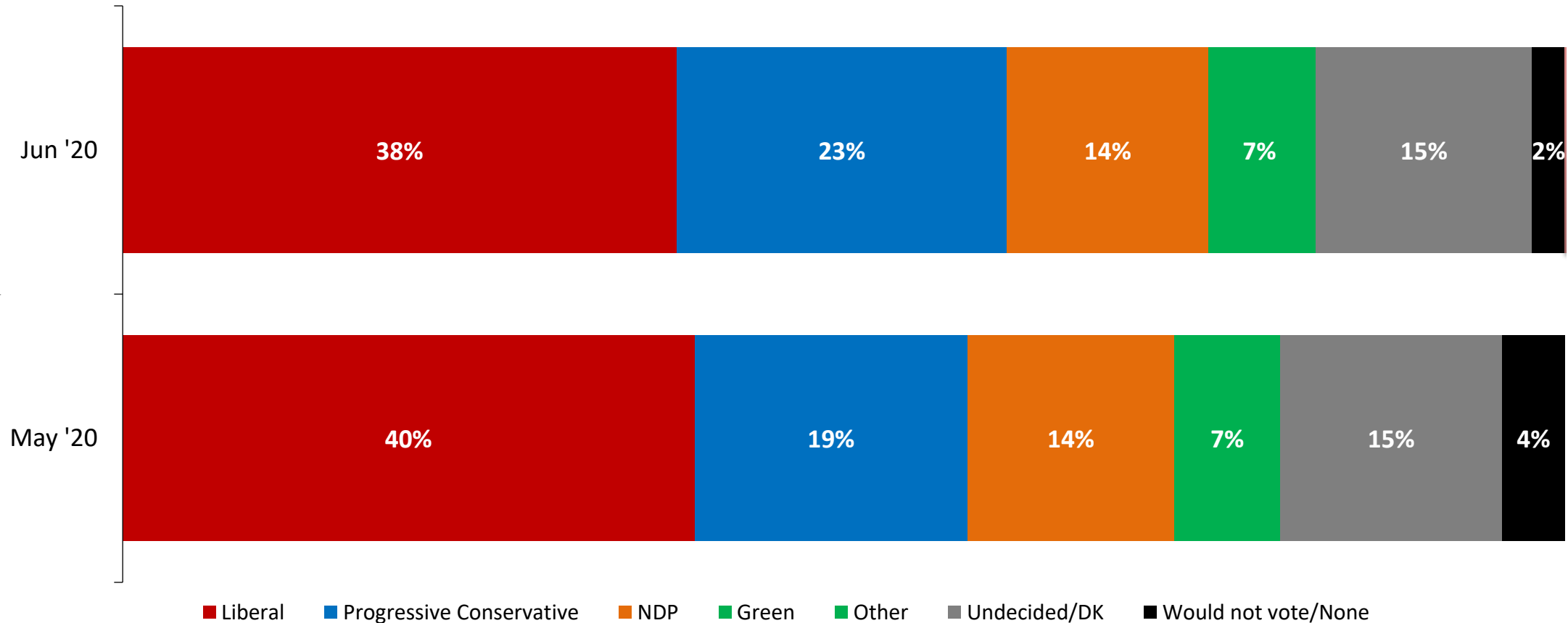
When we look at the results among *only* decided voters, we call that Decided vote. These results most tell us what the election results would be like if the survey results matched the election exactly.

# Provincial Combined Vote: The Liberals (38%) are far ahead of both the PCs (23%) and NDP (14%) in reported vote share; PCs up 4 pts from May<sup>20</sup>



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[Vote + Lean]**

[asked of all respondents; n=200]

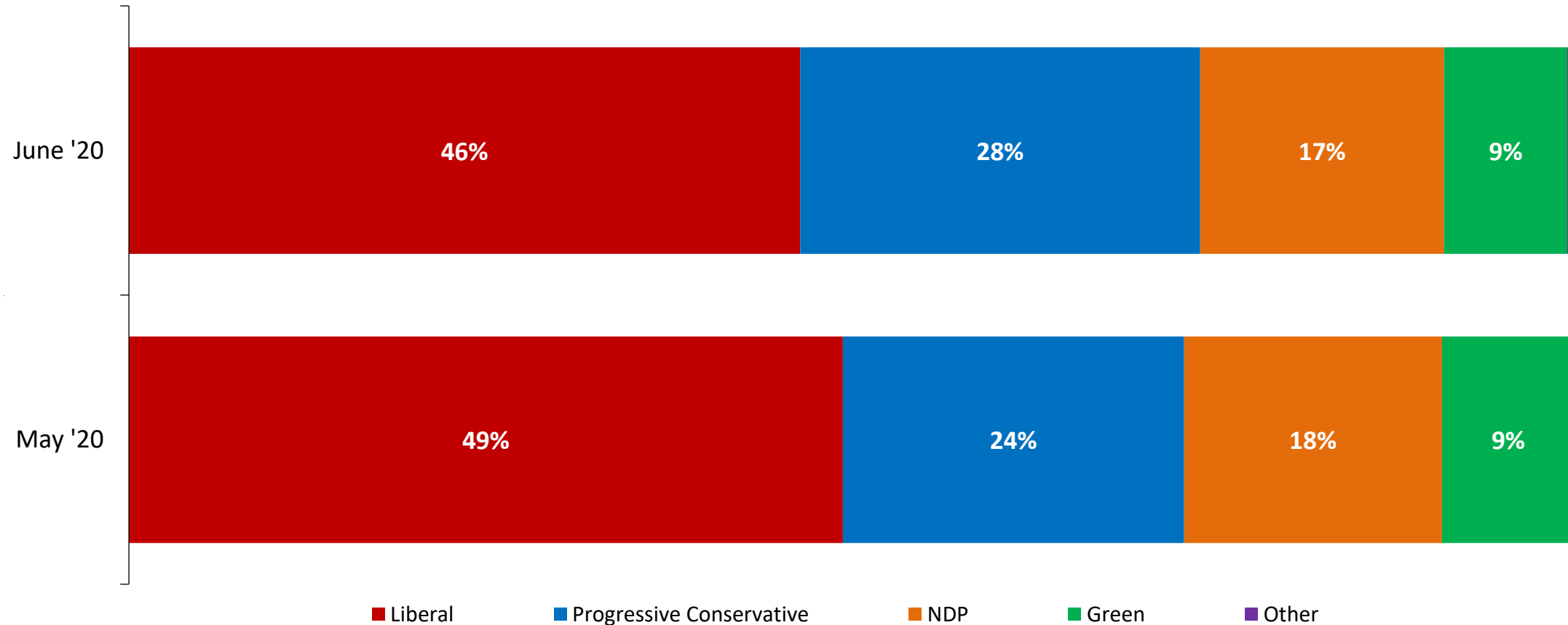


# Provincial Decided Vote: The Liberals (46%) have a plurality of the decided vote while the PCs (28%) and NDP (17%) trail



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[DECIDED]**

[decided voters only; n=165]



# Combined Vote by Value Cluster: The Liberals are the clear top choice among Business Liberals, Left Liberals, and Thrifty Moderates

Combined Vote	Value Clusters				
	Deferential/Populist Conservatives	Business Liberals	Left Liberals*	Thrifty Moderates*	Core Left
	(N=36)	(N=63)	(N=28)	(N=30)	(N=43)
Liberal	32%	49%	43%	33%	29%
Progressive Conservative	42%	17%	22%	15%	22%
NDP	6%	15%	19%	9%	19%
Green	3%	6%	3%	8%	14%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Undecided/DK	17%	14%	6%	31%	9%
Would not vote/None	0%	0%	7%	3%	4%

# Combined Vote by Economic Gap: Liberals lead among all groups besides the Ambivalent cluster, which leans towards voting PC (31%)

		Economic Gap			
		Achievers	Strugglers	Ambivalent	Alienated
		(N=45)	(N=63)	(N=32)	(N=61)
Combined Vote	Liberal	46%	45%	25%	33%
	Progressive Conservative	20%	27%	31%	17%
	NDP	15%	6%	9%	24%
	Green	5%	11%	6%	4%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Undecided/DK	12%	9%	28%	17%
	Would not vote/None	2%	3%	0%	3%



# Combined Vote by Time for Change: Among the Soft anti-Liberal/Hostile group, PCs (37%) are the top vote choice

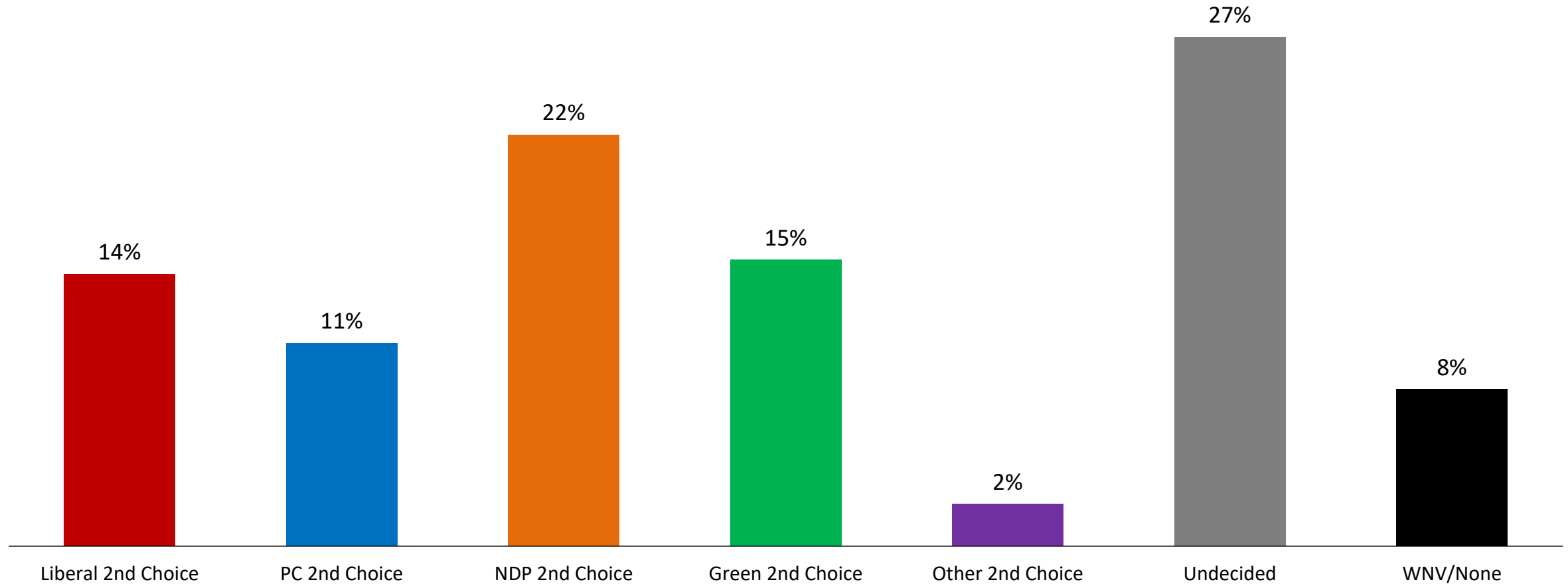
Combined Vote	Time for Change			
	Core/Soft Liberal	Time for a change Liberal*	Uncertain*	Soft anti-Liberal/Hostile
	(N=62)	(N=26)	(N=26)	(N=86)
Liberal	85%	55%	17%	6%
Progressive Conservative	5%	25%	17%	37%
NDP	3%	4%	4%	28%
Green	1%	17%	0%	10%
Other	0%	0%	3%	0%
Undecided/DK	5%	0%	49%	17%
Would not vote/None	2%	0%	10%	1%

# Provincial 2nd Choice: 1-in-5 (22%) say their second-choice party would be the NDP and 27% say they would be undecided



And which party would be your second choice?

[only decided voters; n=165]



# Provincial 2nd Choice: The top 2<sup>nd</sup> choice among NDP voters is split between Liberals and Green Party; top 2<sup>nd</sup> choice among PC is the NDP

And which party would be your second choice? BY [Vote+Lean]

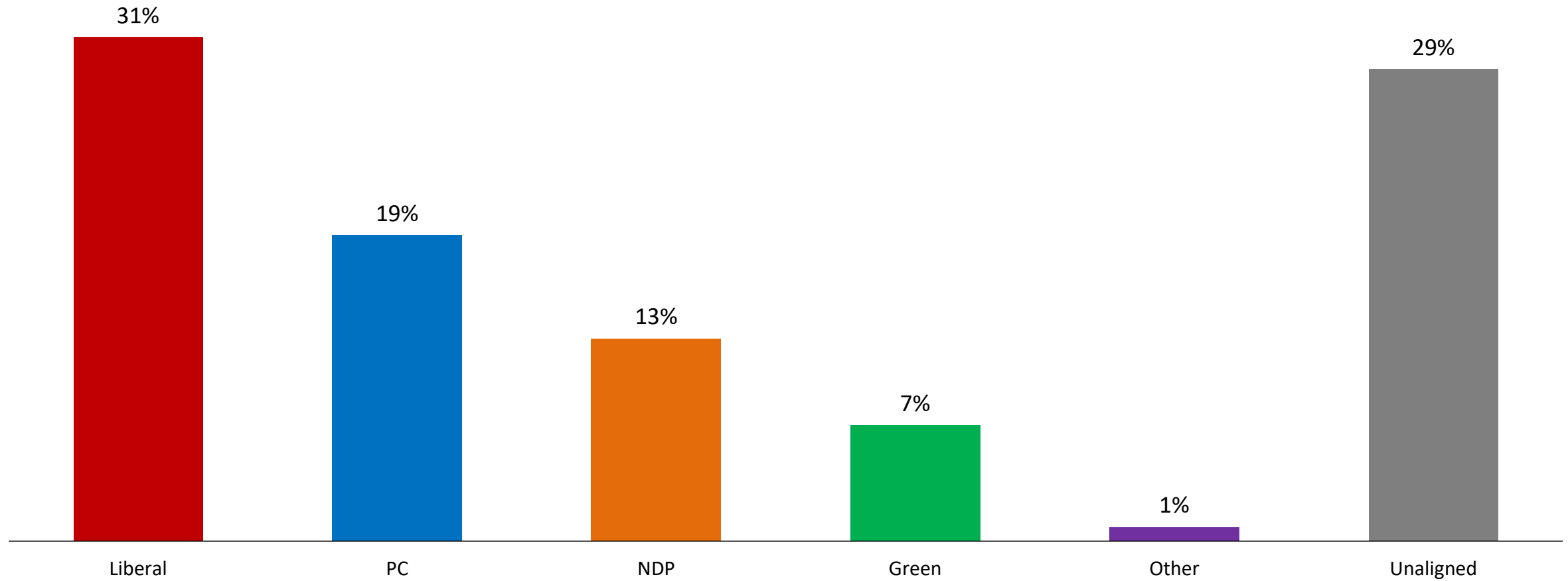
Second Choice	First Choice		
	Liberal 1st Choice	Progressive Conservative 1st Choice	NDP 1st Choice*
	(N=77)	(N=46)	(N=28)
	Liberal 2nd Choice	20%	35%
	PC 2nd Choice	7%	18%
	NDP 2nd Choice	28%	35%
	Green 2nd Choice	15%	11%
Second Choice	Other 2nd Choice	4%	2%
	Undecided	21%	32%
	WNV/None	12%	10%

# Provincial Party ID: Most (31%) identify as Liberal partisans followed closely by 'Unaligned' (29%)



Thinking about politics in Nova Scotia, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a...

[asked of all respondents; n=200]



# Combined Vote by Party ID: Liberal and NDP partisans both give 82% of their vote to the party they identify with, more loyal than PCs

		Provincial Party Identification			
		Liberal	Progressive Conservative	NDP*	Unaligned
		(N=62)	(N=38)	(N=25)	(N=58)
Provincial Combined Vote	Liberal	82%	12%	0%	28%
	Progressive Conservative	9%	78%	8%	13%
	NDP	3%	0%	82%	8%
	Green	0%	0%	11%	3%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Undecided/DK	6%	10%	0%	39%
	Would not vote/None	0%	0%	0%	8%



# Preparing for the Future

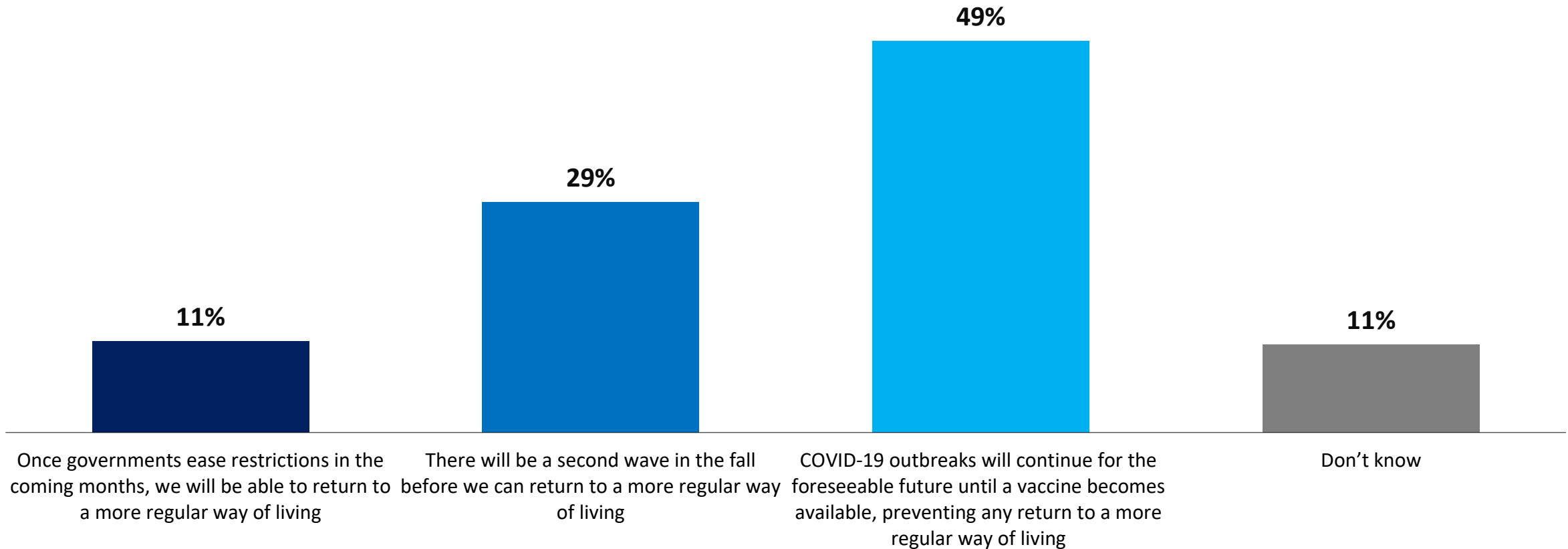
Most believe outbreaks will continue, preventing things from returning to normal until a vaccine is available. Making changes to the long-term care system to better protect seniors is at risk for becoming a critical weakness for Nova Scotia's provincial government.

# Re-opening: Half (49%) say outbreaks will continue until a vaccine is available, preventing any return to a more regular way of living



Which of the following comes closest to your point of view?

[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]



# Shorthand for the Issues

Respondents are asked to rate the importance of various issues and how satisfied they are with the federal and provincial government on those issues in preparation for the near future. The table below shows the shorthand which is used in the report and the corresponding full wording shown on the survey.

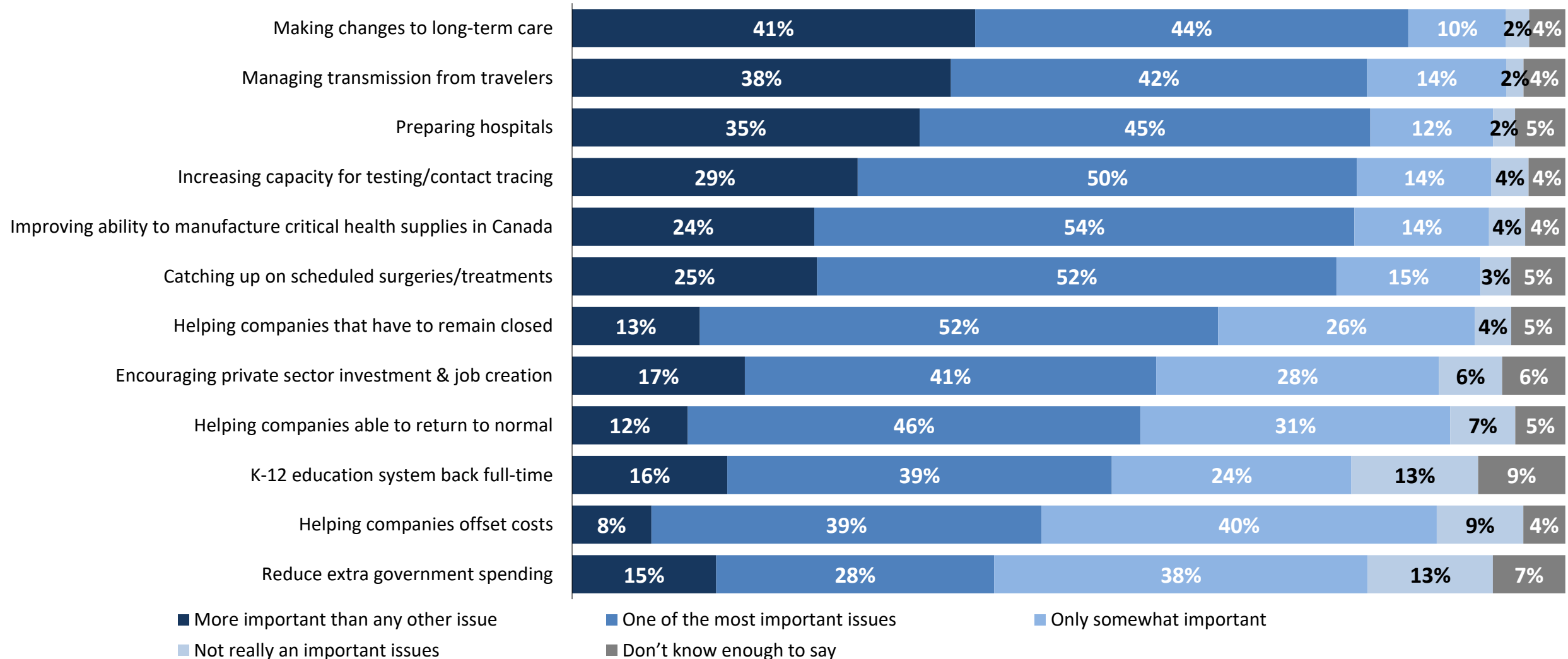
<i><b>Full Question Wording</b></i>	<i><b>Shorthand</b></i>
Helping companies that are able to return to normal operations to manage the damage from the “lockdown”	Helping companies able to return to normal
Helping companies offset the costs associated with new COVID-19 rules and restrictions	Helping companies offset costs
Helping companies that have to remain closed for now to survive	Helping companies that have to remain closed
Catching up on scheduled surgeries and other healthcare treatments that have been delayed	Catching up on scheduled surgeries/treatments
Making changes to the long-term care system to better protect seniors	Making changes to long-term care
Preparing hospitals in case there is a future spike in new cases	Preparing hospitals
Increasing public health agencies’ capacity to conduct testing and contact tracing	Increasing capacity for testing/contact tracing
Beginning to reduce the amount of extra government spending on COVID-19 measures	Reduce extra government spending
Transitioning the K-12 education system back to full time instruction, either in person or online	K-12 education system back full-time
Managing COVID-19 transmission from international travelers coming to Canada	Managing transmission from travelers
Improving Canada’s ability to manufacture more of our critical health supplies here in Canada (e.g. personal protective equipment)	Improving ability to manufacture critical health supplies in Canada
Encouraging private sector investment and job creation	Encouraging private sector investment & job creation

# Important Issues: Top issues include changing long-term care, managing transmission from travelers, and preparing hospitals



Currently, experts expect that COVID-19 outbreaks will continue in Canada for the next year or more. As governments address these ongoing impacts from COVID-19, there are a number of issues they may consider. On the list below, please indicate how important each issue is to you personally?

[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]

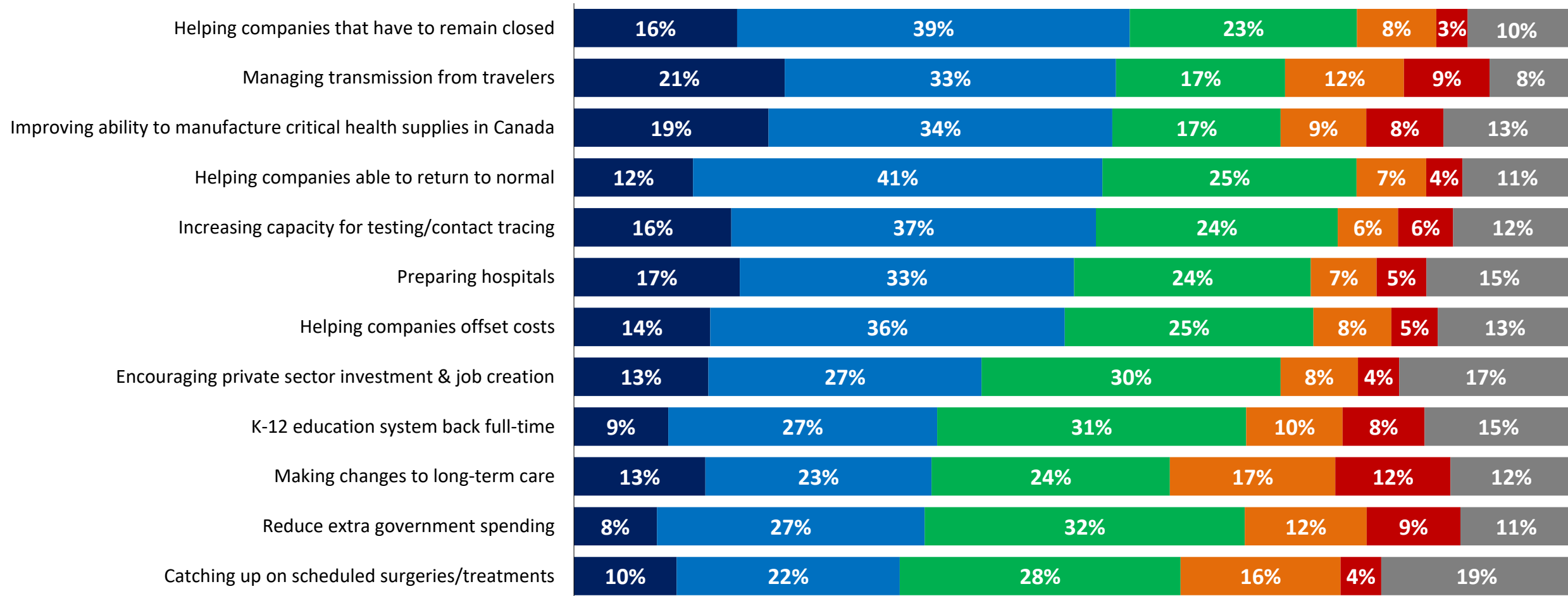


# Federal Satisfaction: Top issue respondents are satisfied with the federal gov't is helping companies that have to remain closed to survive



And how satisfied are you with the work done so far by the Federal Government on each of these issues?

[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]



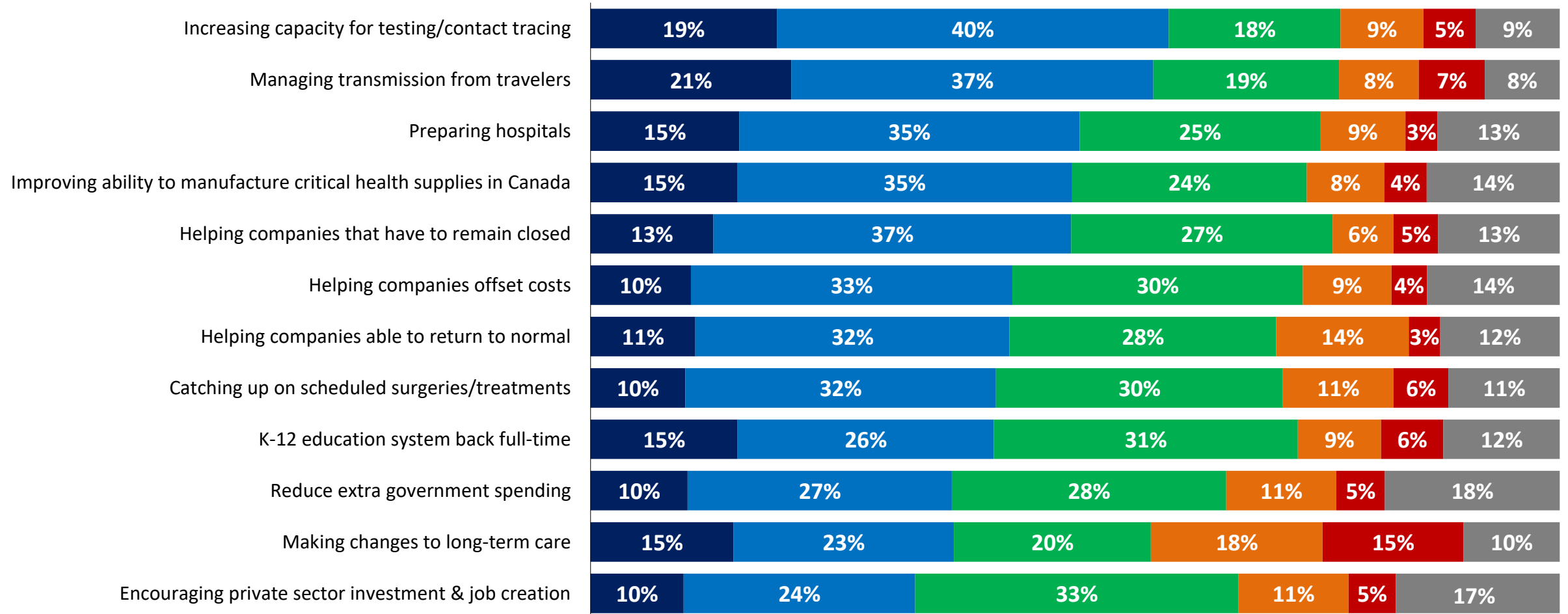
■ Very satisfied 
 ■ Somewhat satisfied 
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied 
 ■ Very dissatisfied 
 ■ Don't know

# Provincial Satisfaction: Top provincial issues respondents are satisfied with are capacity of testing/contact tracing and managing transmission



And how satisfied are you with the work done so far by the Nova Scotia Provincial Government on each of these issues?

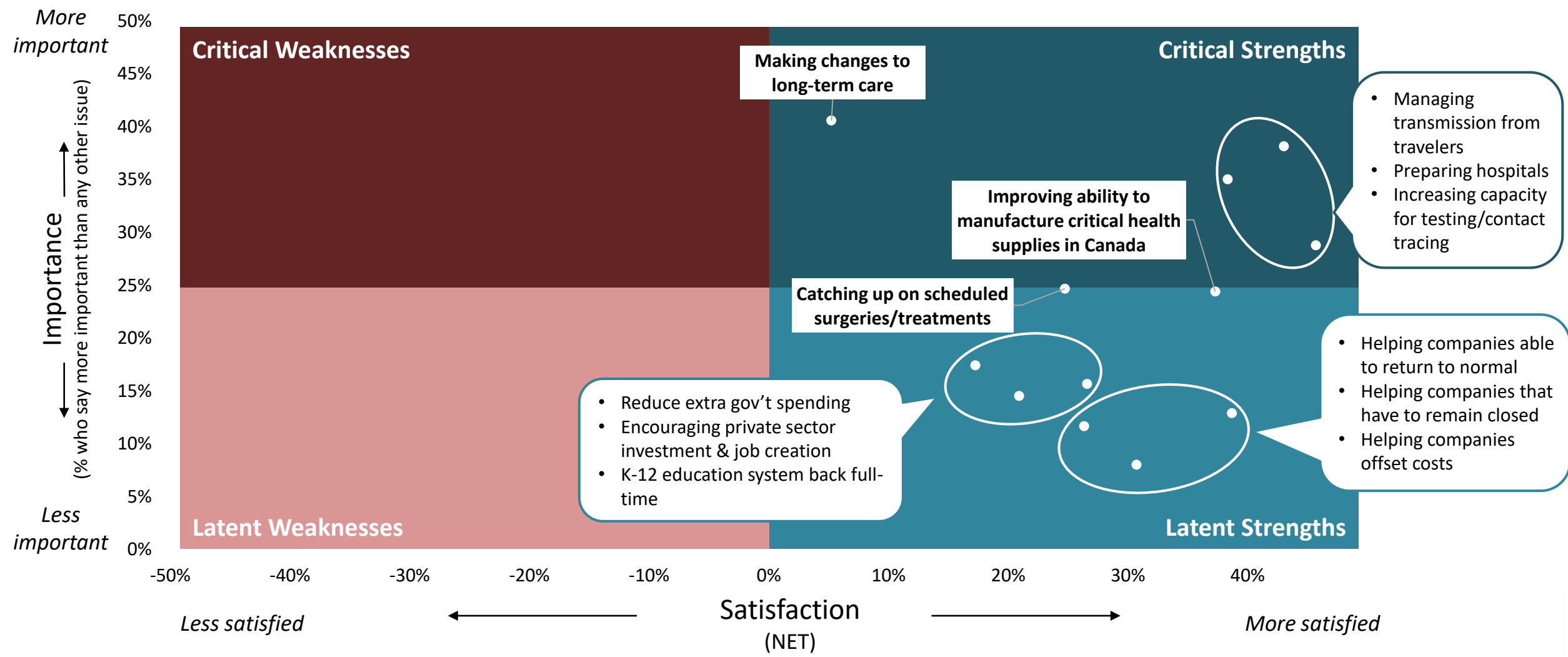
[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]



■ Very satisfied 
 ■ Somewhat satisfied 
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied 
 ■ Very dissatisfied 
 ■ Don't know

# Importance by NS Provincial Satisfaction: Making changes to long-term care homes is the issue most at risk for becoming a critical weakness

The Nova Scotia provincial government is receiving positive net satisfaction on all areas and are receiving the highest marks on preparing hospitals fir a second wave, increasing capacity for testing/contact tracing, and managing international transmission. The area most at risk for becoming a critical weakness is for making changes to the long-term care system to better protect seniors.



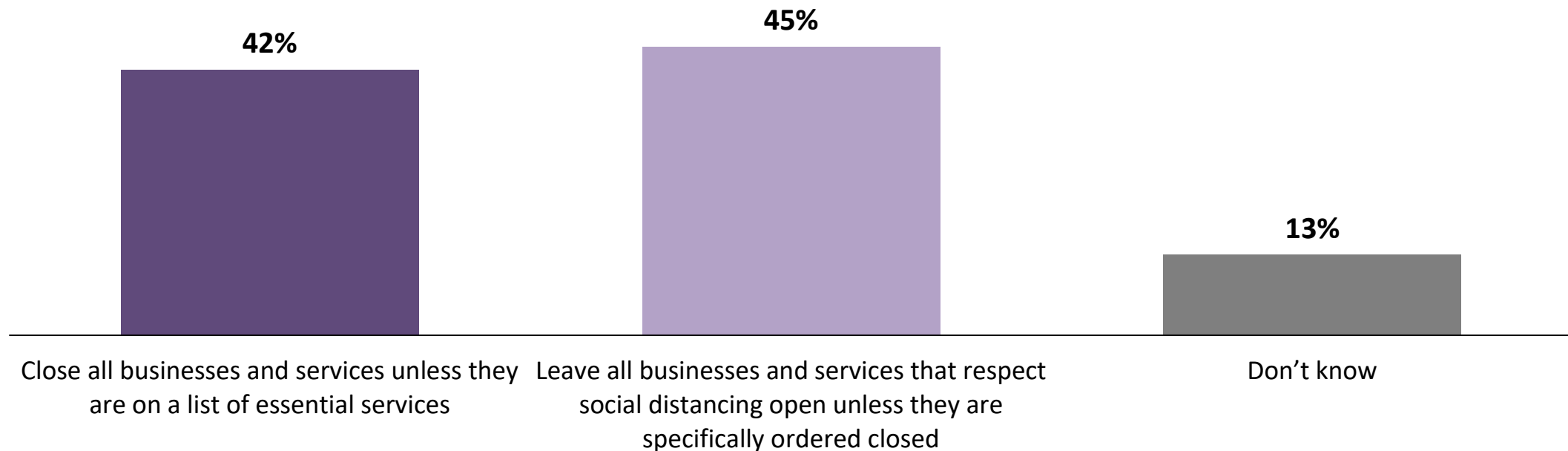
# 2<sup>nd</sup> Lockdown: NS split between leaving all social distancing businesses or services open (45%), and only opening essential services (42%)

Q

During the recent “lockdown” phase of COVID-19, provincial and territorial governments across Canada took two different approaches. Some governments said all business and services must close unless they are on a list of essential services. Other governments said business and services that respect social distancing measures can remain open unless the top public health official specifically ordered them closed.

If there is a second wave of COVID-19 cases in Nova Scotia, which approach would you prefer the Provincial Government take?

[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]



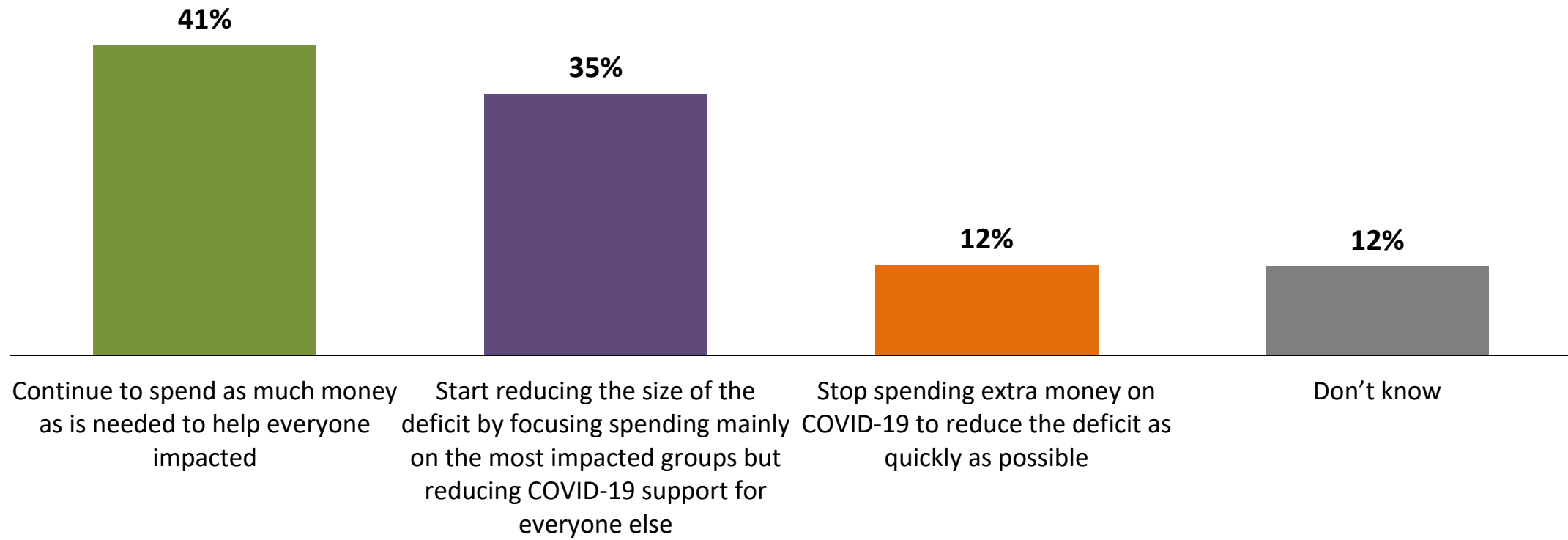


# Government Spending Decisions: 2-in-5 (41%) say to continue spending as much as is needed to help everyone impacted



When governments make major decisions concerning spending on COVID-19 relief programs, do you think they should...

[asked of all respondents in NS; n=200]



# Methodology

# Survey Methodology

**These are the results of an online survey conducted between May 29<sup>th</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.**

**Method:** This online survey was conducted using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Lucid, a leading provider of online sample. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

**Sample Size:** n=208 Nova Scotia residents, 18 years or older. The results are weighted to n=200 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

**Field Dates:** May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

**Weighting:** Results for Nova Scotia are weighted by age and gender to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data; in order to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Weighted and unweighted frequencies are reported in the table.

**Margin of Error:** This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

**Note:** Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
<b>Males 18-34</b>	13	6.3%	25	12.3%
<b>Males 35-54</b>	37	17.8%	35	17.5%
<b>Males 55+</b>	39	18.8%	36	17.9%
<b>Females 18-34</b>	31	14.9%	25	12.6%
<b>Females 35-54</b>	36	17.3%	38	18.8%
<b>Females 55+</b>	52	25.0%	42	20.8%

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**Building Understanding.**

