

Canada This Month

2026 Ontario Budget

Public Opinion Research

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Field Dates: March 06, 2026 to March 30, 2026

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Study Overview



This report presents findings from a survey on reactions to the 2026 Ontario provincial budget, using March data about public approval of the ON government, party preferences, Time-for-Change attitudes, and expectations across key policy areas, including taxes, jobs, healthcare, education, and user fees.

Vote intention tracking was conducted through the first three weeks of March among n=800 ON residents. With the March 26th, 2026, release of the ON budget, an additional sample was added to the last week of March to provide a sample of n=500 ON residents for budget questions.

Key Findings

1

The Ontario PC Budget was hardly noticed by Ontarians, but those who have seen it do not like it.

Only one-third of Ontarians have read, heard, or seen (RSH) anything about the budget, a 7-point increase compared to the previous '25 budget, but far from the popularity of Ford's first budget in '19, when 61% of Ontarians had RSH about it. The majority (52%) are dissatisfied with the budget, 22% are very dissatisfied, with net satisfaction dropping 17 points from Mar '25.

2

The March '26 budget is damaging to the PC gov's favourability, sentiment driven more by indifference than opposition

Among those who RSH (32%) about the budget, net favourability toward PC government sits at -6, a 9-point drop from Mar '25 (+3). A plurality report that it made no difference (35%), one-in-three (33%) that it left them less favourable, and 27% feel more favourable.

3

The budget's impact is broadly negative across both economic and personal measures, with taxes as primary pressure point.

Among those who RSH the budget, majorities or pluralities expect negative outcomes across every domain tested except impact on personal situation, where a 40% see no impact (36% see it as negative, with a net score at -20). The tax burden is the primary concern, 52% expect to pay more taxes (net -44), a 12-point increase from 2025. Education (44% say worse off, net -25) follows. Healthcare and environment both sit at net -15, while employment is the least negative dimension (32% say higher unemployment, net -10).

4

The budget displaced OSAP cuts as the dominant news story, but neither narrative helped the government.

Prior to the budget, OSAP cuts dominated mentions (19% mention it, with a net impact of -66). Post-budget, the budget release took over (22% mention it, with a net impact of -6), with OSAP still remaining the second most cited issuer (15% with a net impact of -59).

5

PC support holds, but the budget is quietly contributing to the erosion of the government's political standing.

Vote intention is unchanged post-budget, with PCs leading at 48% among decided voters. The share of core opponents to the government has actually been shrinking. However, net satisfaction with government slipped 4 points pre to post budget (net -8), Ford's net favourability has trended to -1% and time for a change is now sitting at 64%.

Key Voter Segments

Key Segmentations: We use attitudinal clusters to explore opinions within groups that share common motivations

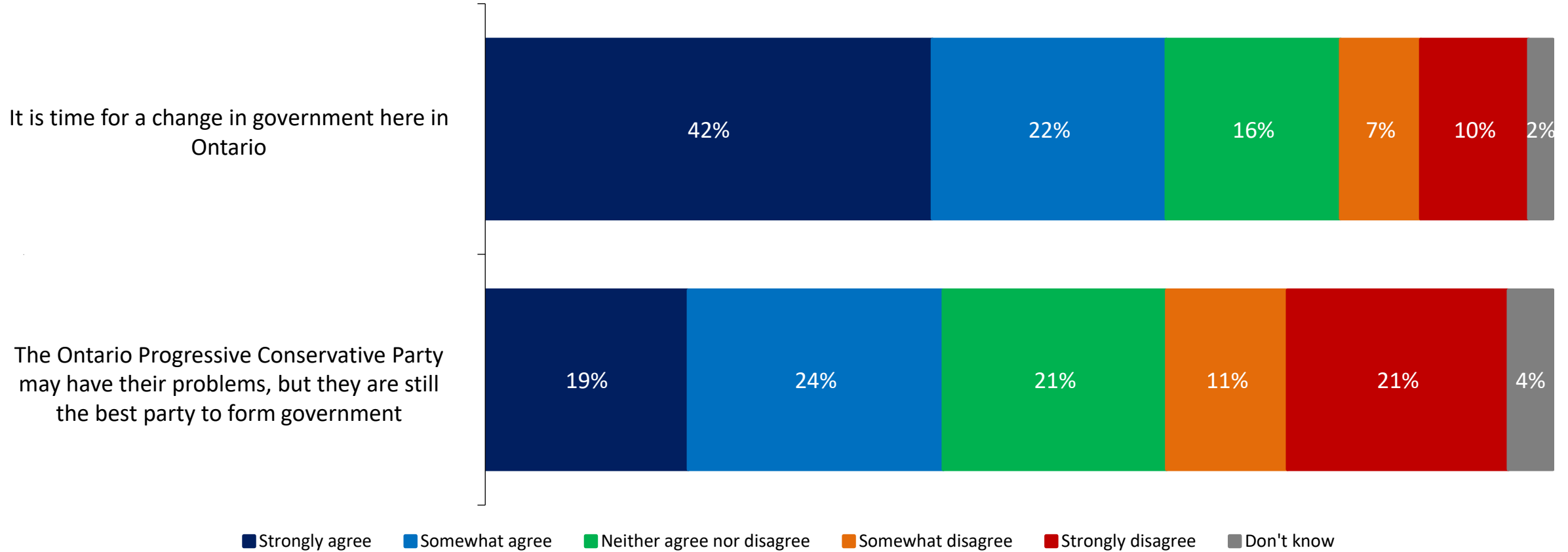
Time For Change

This segmentation separates Ontarians by their views on the incumbent government. Is it time for a change, and is there a better alternative than the current government? This creates six groups:

1. **Core PC** (16%) - Strongly support the PC and don't want change.
2. **Soft PC** (6%) - Lean toward NDPs but aren't firmly committed.
3. **Time for Change PC** (20%) - Want change but still see NDPs as the best option to govern.
4. **Uncertain** (10%) - Conflicted about whether it's time for a change at all
5. **Soft anti-PC** (28%) - Want change and don't see NDPs as the best government option
6. **Hostile** (19%) - Strongly oppose PCs and are eager for change

Time for Change Attitudes: Almost 2-in-3 Ontarians (64%) agree it's time for a change in provincial government

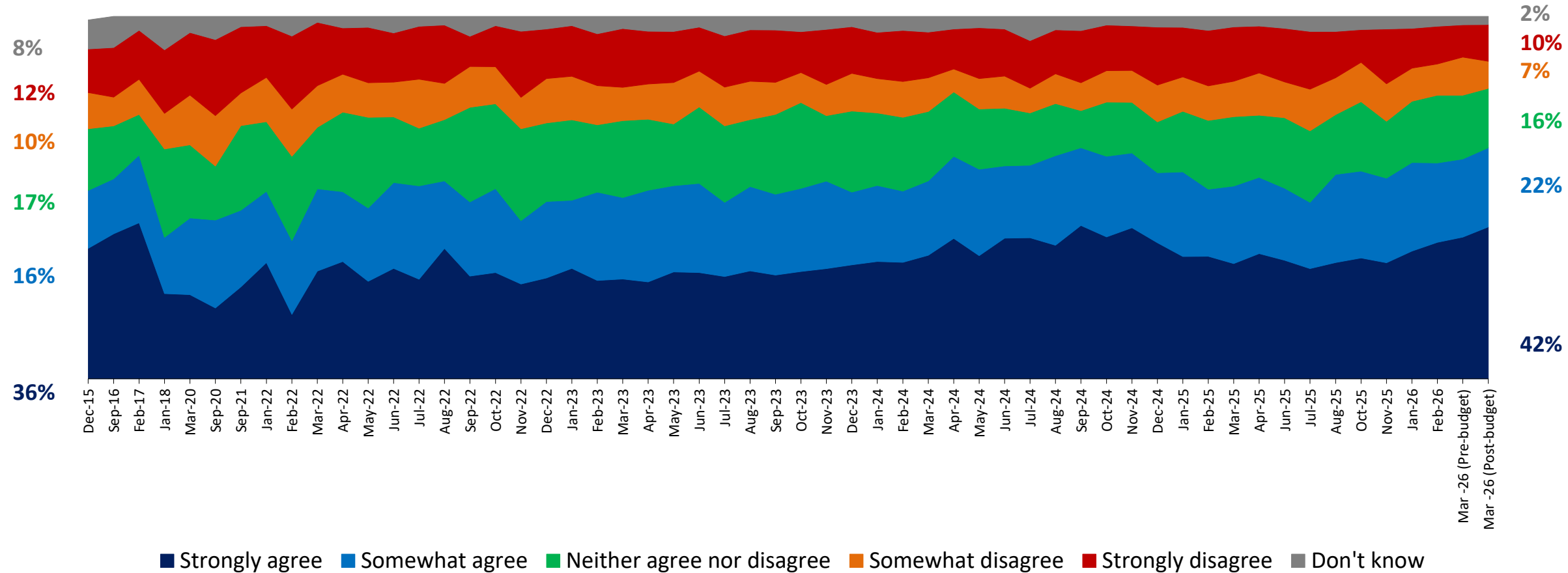
Q Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? -
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



ON Time for Change Tracking: An increasing number of Ontarians agree that it's time for change; 3-pts increase from pre to post budget



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - It is time for a change in government here in Ontario
[asked of all respondents; n=500]

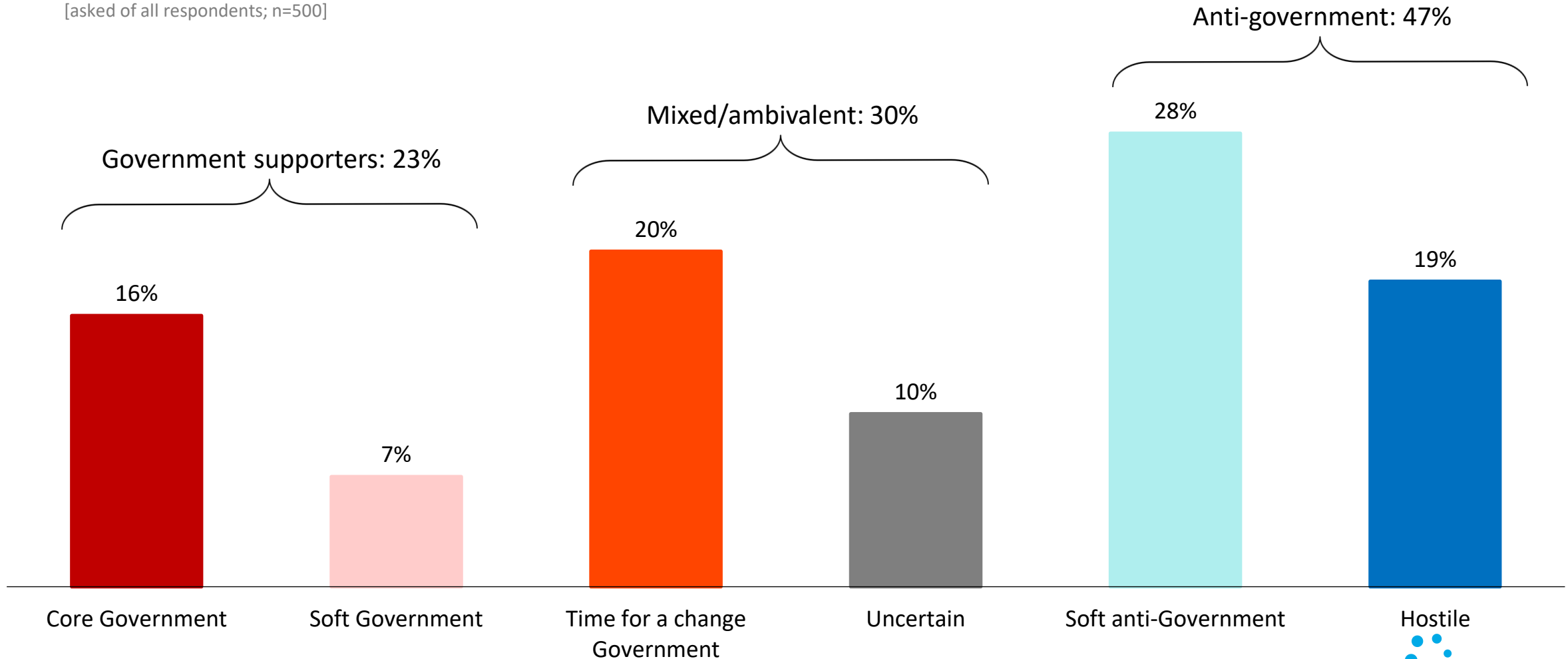


Time for Change Segmentation: 47% identify as anti-government, followed by 30% who identify as mixed/ambivalent



Time for Change segmentation: Agree with 'The ON NDP 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 ON'.

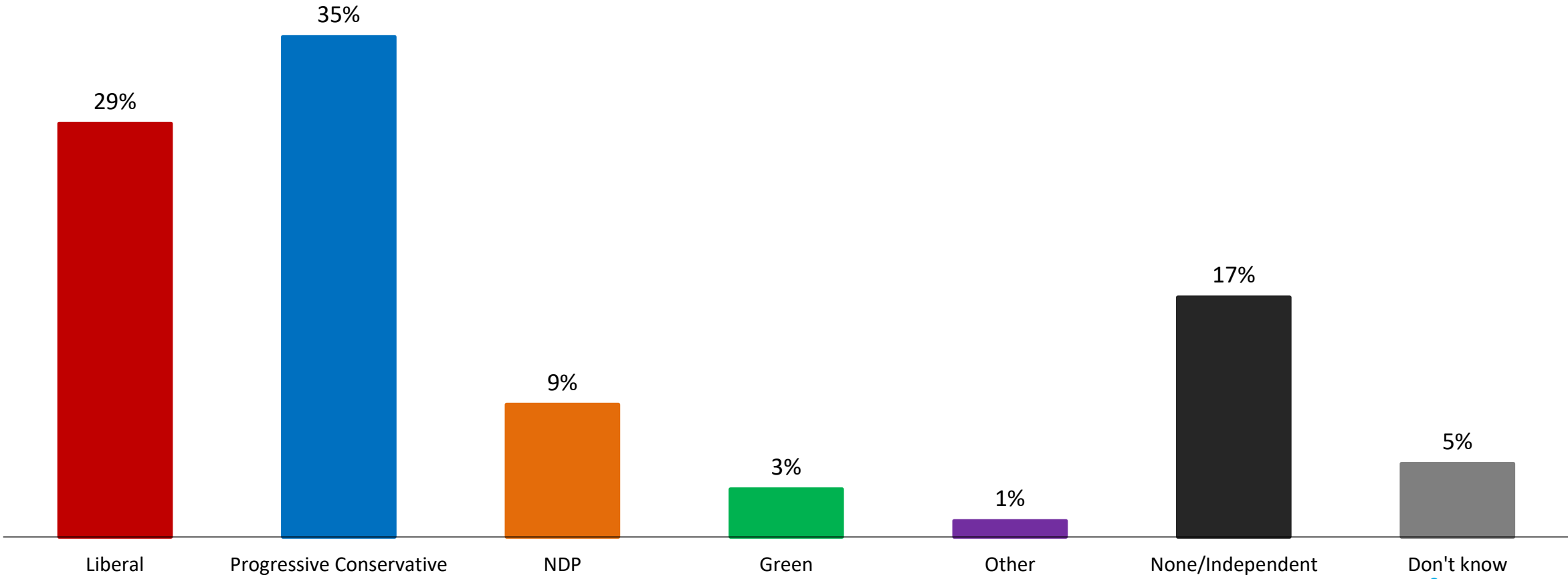
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



Provincial Party ID: 35% identify as Progressive Conservative, followed by 29% who identify as Liberal ¹⁰



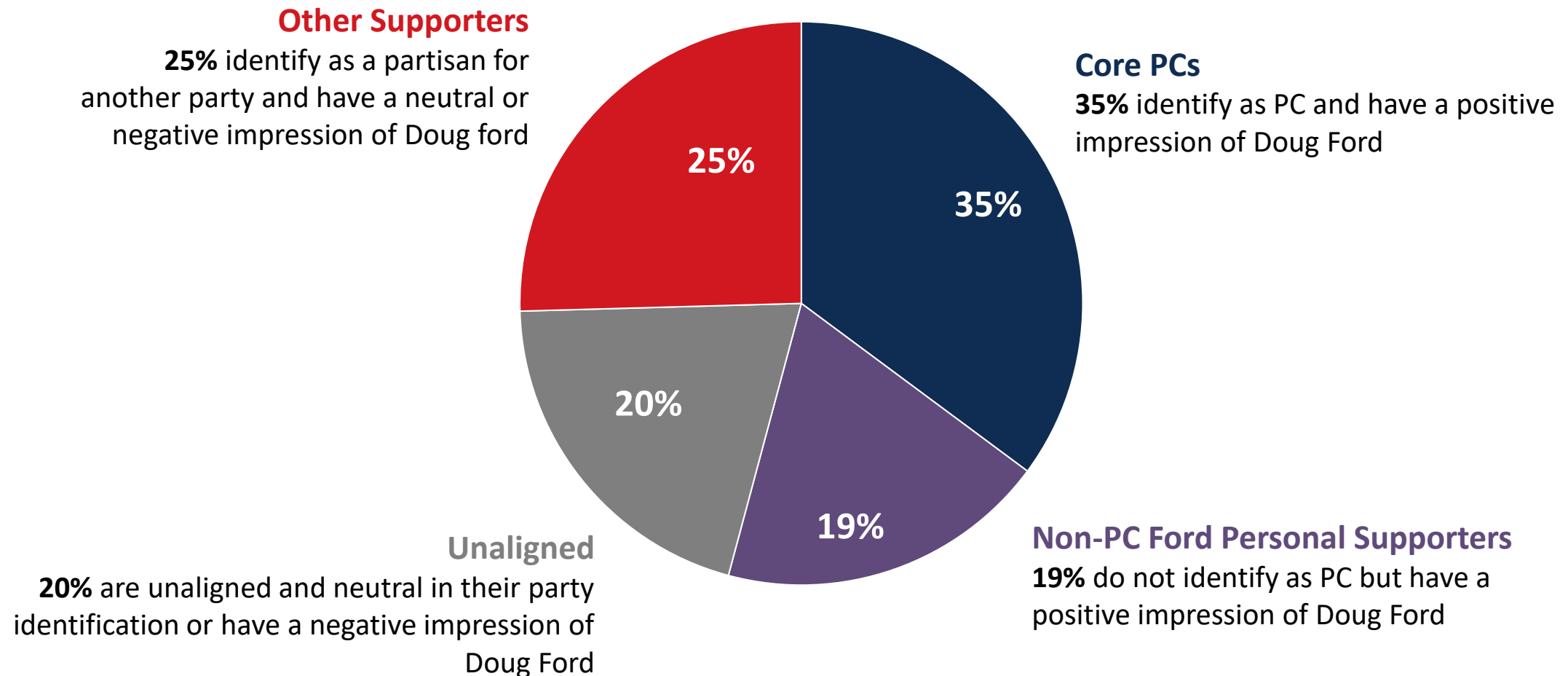
Thinking about politics in Ontario, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a...
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



Doug Ford Personal Vote Segmentation:

35% are Core PCs, while 1-in-4 support other parties

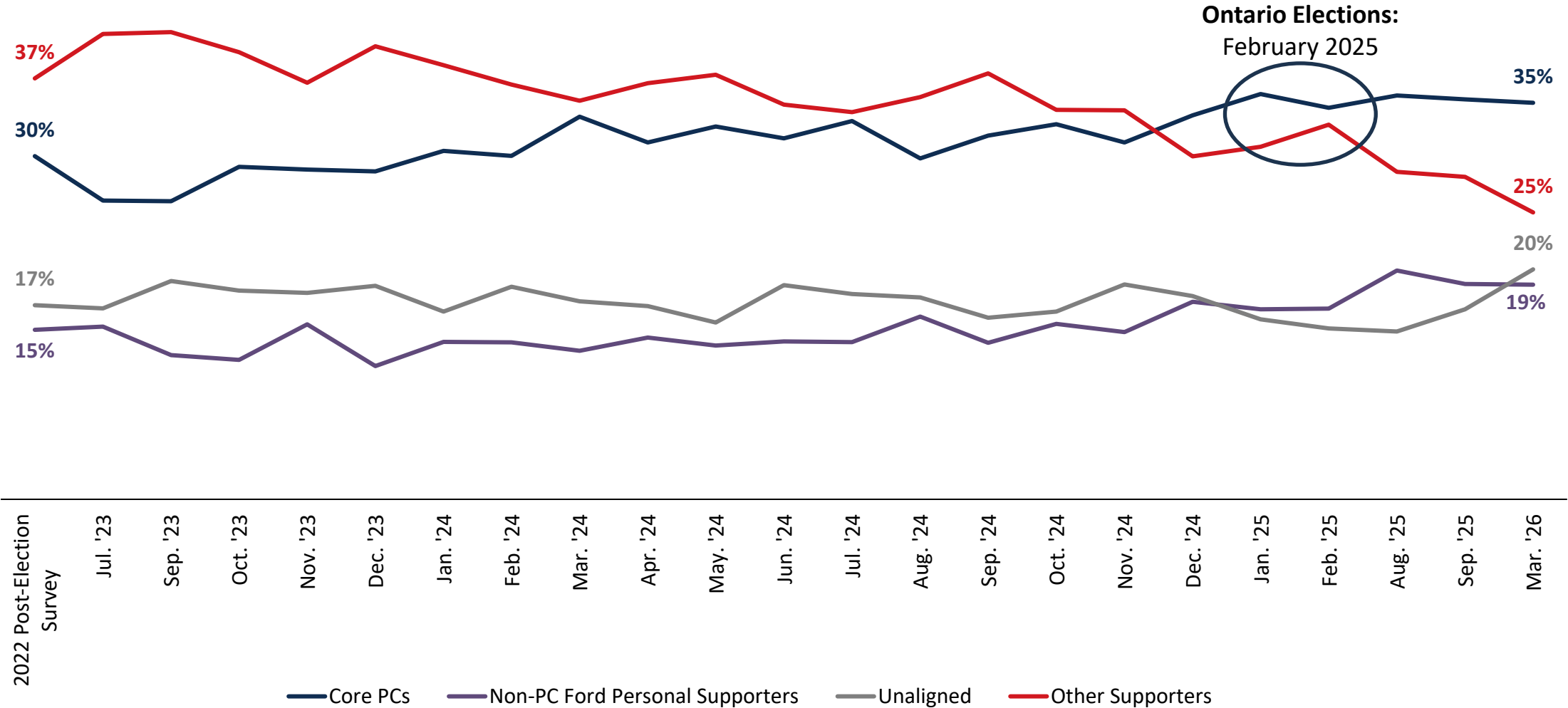
Q Respondents are grouped based on their party identification and impression of Doug Ford
[asked of all respondents in Ontario, n=1,000]



Doug Ford Personal Vote Tracking:

Ford personal vote segment has stayed the same the past 6 months

Respondents are grouped based on their party identification and impression of Doug Ford
 [asked of all respondents in Ontario, n=1,000]



Combined Vote by Doug Ford Personal Vote Segmentation: 2-in-3 of Non-PC Ford Personal Supporters are Liberal voters

	Core PCs	Non-PC Ford Personal Supporters	Unaligned	Other Supporters
Liberal	4%	68%	8%	40%
Progressive Conservative	86%	13%	24%	12%
NDP	5%	13%	8%	32%
Green	2%	2%	3%	11%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%
Undecided/Don't know	2%	5%	39%	3%
Would not vote/None	0%	0%	18%	1%

Decided Vote by Doug Ford Personal Vote Segmentation:

Almost 3-in-4 of Non-PC Ford Personal Supporters are Liberal voters

	Core PCs	Non-PC Ford Personal Supporters	Unaligned	Other Supporters
Liberal	4%	72%	19%	42%
Progressive Conservative	88%	13%	56%	12%
NDP	6%	13%	18%	34%
Green	2%	2%	6%	11%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%

Vote

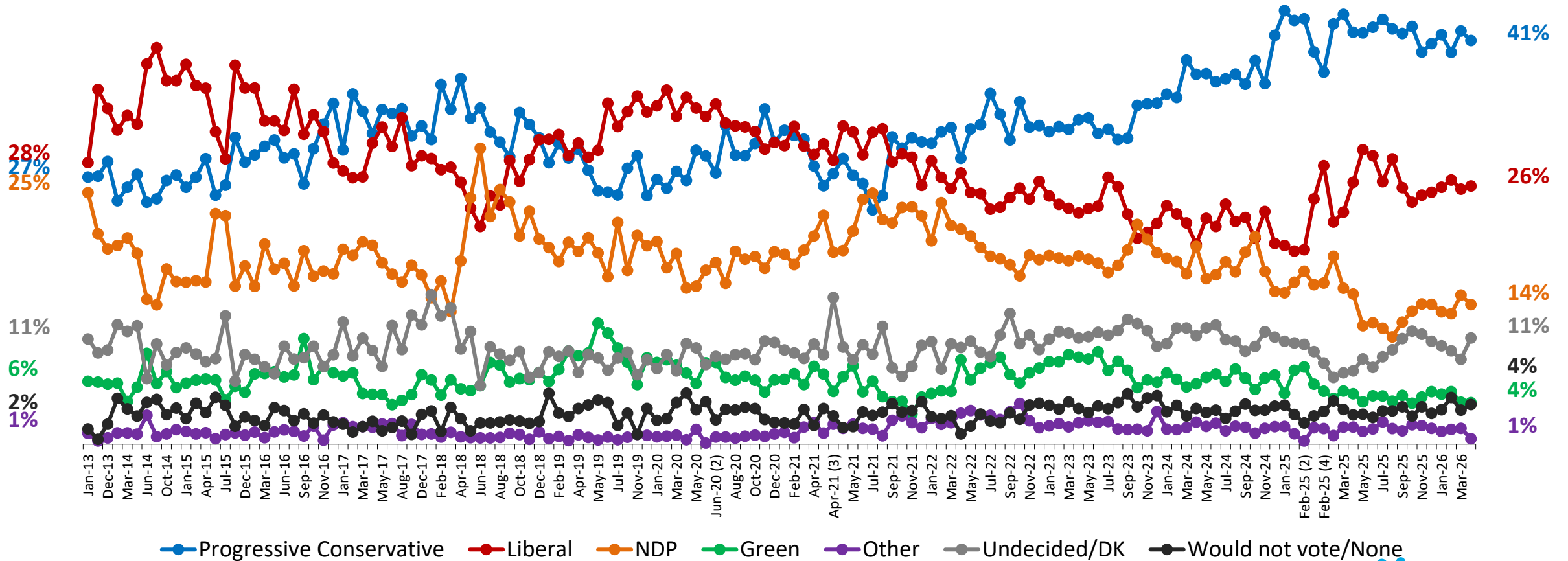
The background of the image is a solid dark blue color. It features several light blue circles of varying sizes scattered across the space. The circles are thin-lined and do not have a fill. One large circle is positioned in the upper left, another large one in the upper right, a medium-sized one in the center, and a smaller one in the lower right. There are also some circles partially cut off by the edges of the frame.

Provincial Vote Tracking: PCs lead at 41%, Liberals follow at 26% and NDP at 14%, support remain steady since Sep. '25



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=500]

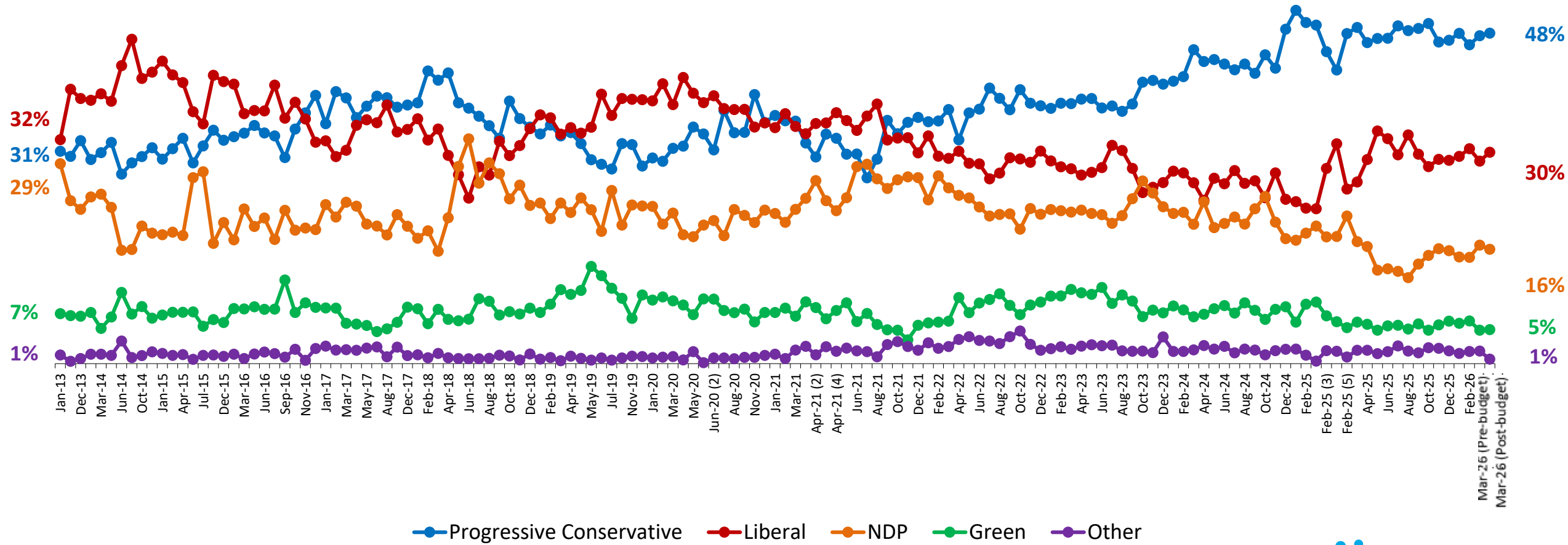


Provincial Decided Vote Tracking: Conservatives at 48%, Liberals at 30%¹⁷ marginally unchanged since Sep. '25; no detectable vote shift post budget



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

[only decided voters; n=427]

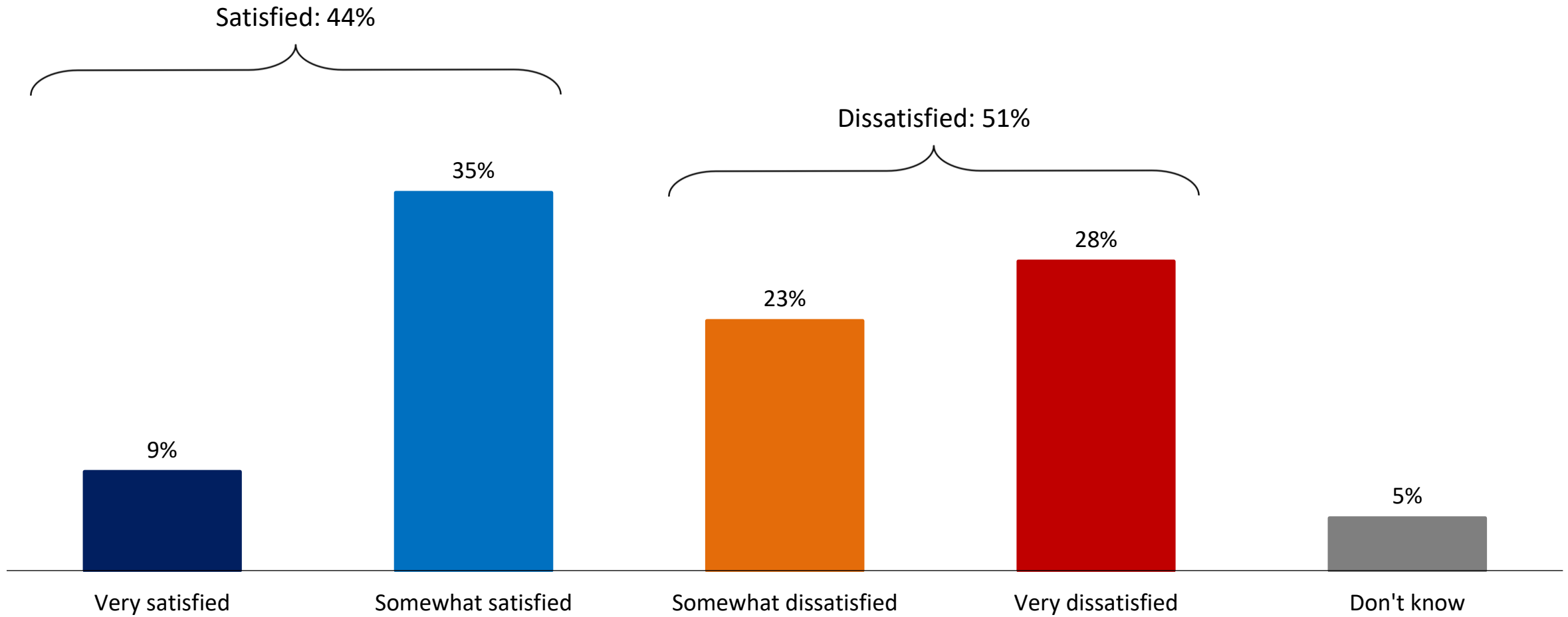


ON Government Approval

ON Government Approval: Over half (51%) are dissatisfied with the provincial government while 44% are satisfied; 5% don't know



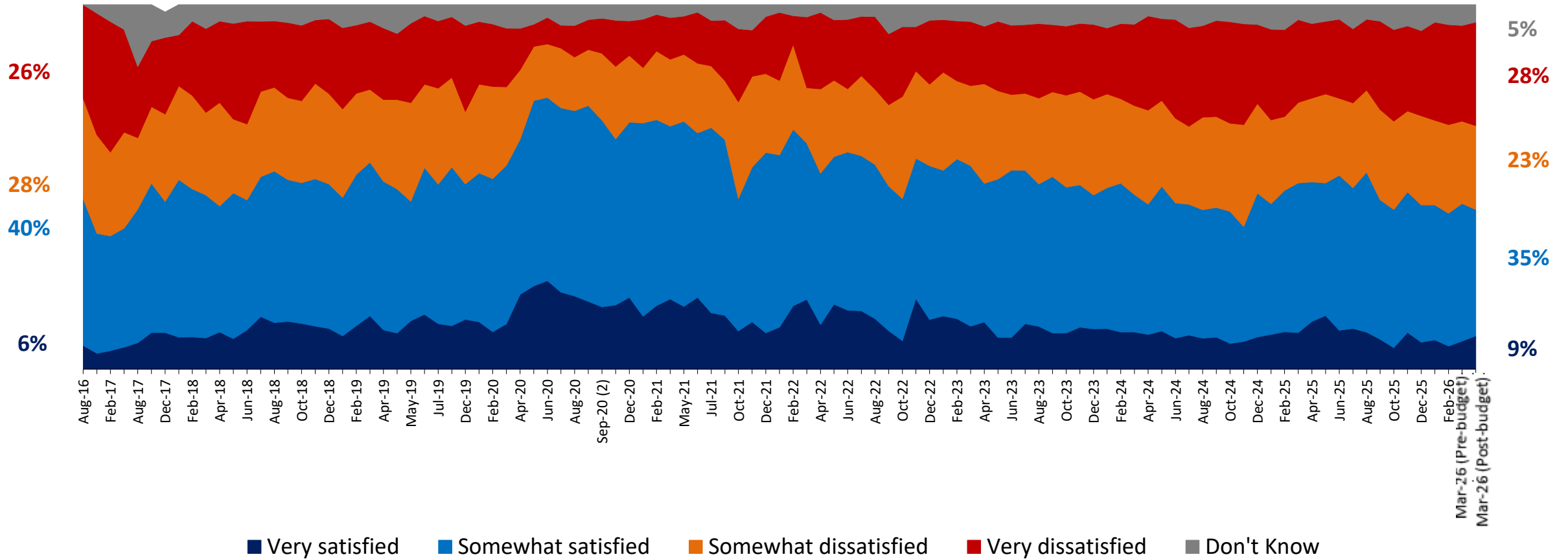
Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the performance of the PROVINCIAL government in Ontario? Would you say you are...?
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



ON Government Approval Tracking: Net satisfaction with government has decreased 4 points pre-budget (-3) to post-budget (-8)



Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the performance of the PROVINCIAL government in Ontario? Would you say you are...?
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



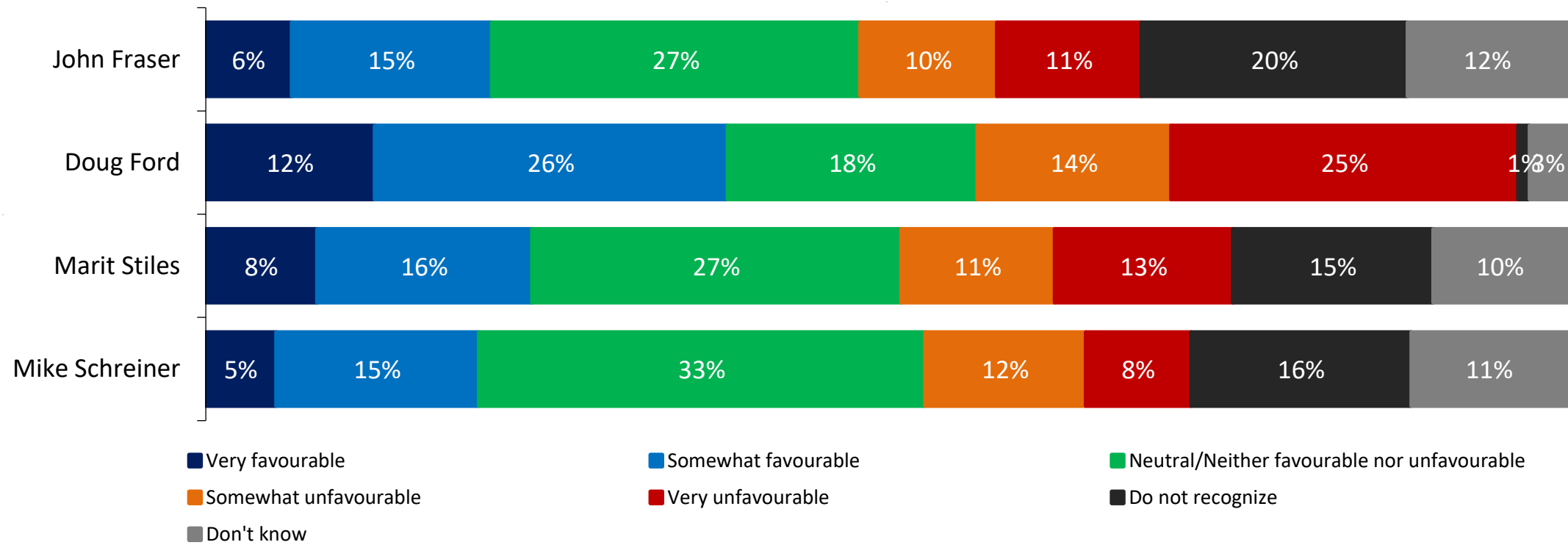
Leader Favourability

Leader Favourables: 1-in-4 Ontarians see Doug Ford very unfavorably to a total of 40% unfavourable vs. 38% favourable



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=500]

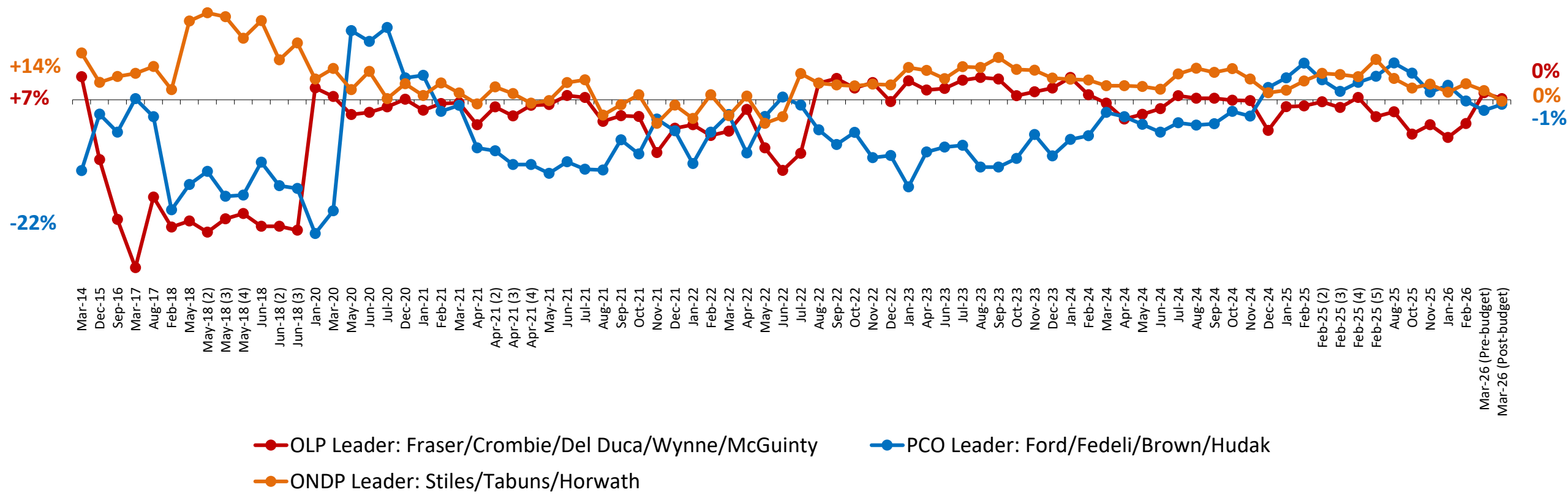


ON Party Leader NET Favourables Tracking: PCO leader net favourability²³ on a gradual downward trajectory since early '25; OLP's slowly increasing



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=500]



● OLP Leader: Fraser/Crombie/Del Duca/Wynne/McGuinty

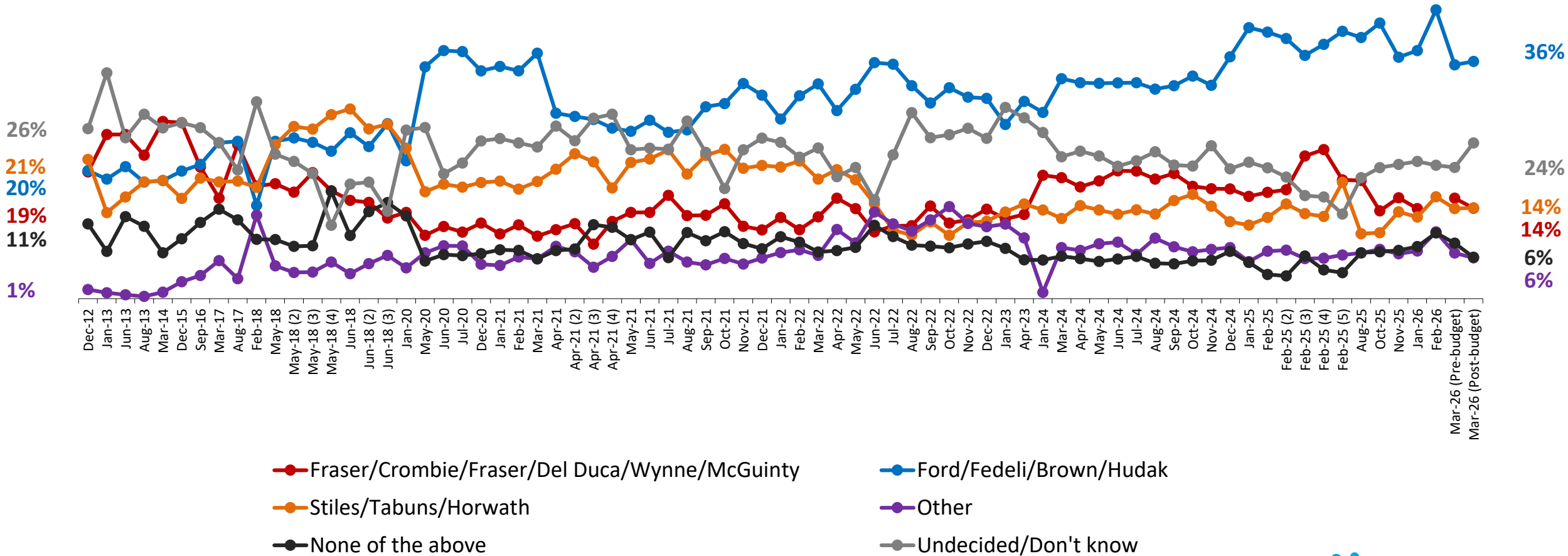
● PCO Leader: Ford/Fedeli/Brown/Hudak

● ONDP Leader: Stiles/Tabuns/Horwath



Best Premier Tracking: While Ford is still perceived as best PM by 36% of Ontarians, number of undecided has increased 4-points post-budget

Q Which of the following leaders would make the best Premier of [PROV]?
[asked of all respondents; n=500]

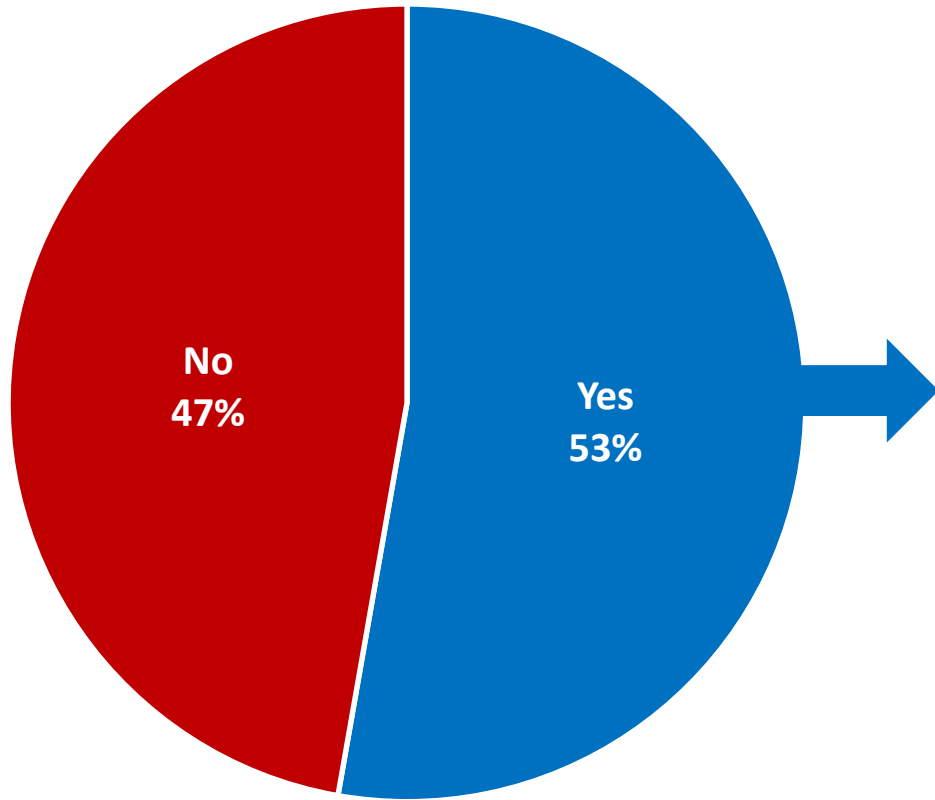


**Read, Seen,
Heard**

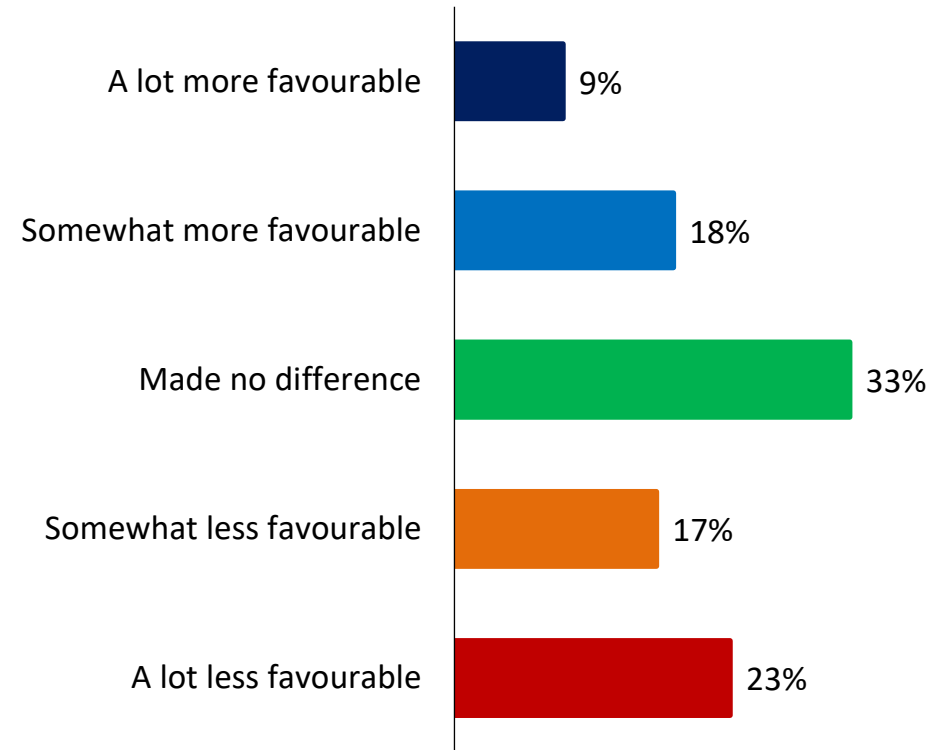
The background is a solid dark blue color. It features several white circles of varying sizes scattered across the page. The circles are semi-transparent, allowing the blue background to show through them. There are approximately seven circles in total, with the largest one in the lower-left quadrant and the smallest one in the lower-right quadrant.

ON Read, Seen, Heard: Among the 53% that have RSH, 30% felt less favourable, 33% felt no difference, and 27% felt more favourable

Q Have you read, seen or heard anything about Ontario's Premier Doug Ford and the provincial government in the last few days?
[asked of all respondents; n=500]



Q Did what you read, see or hear leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable or a lot less favourable towards Ontario's Premier Doug Ford and the provincial government, or did it make no difference?
[asked of respondents who have RSH; n=264]

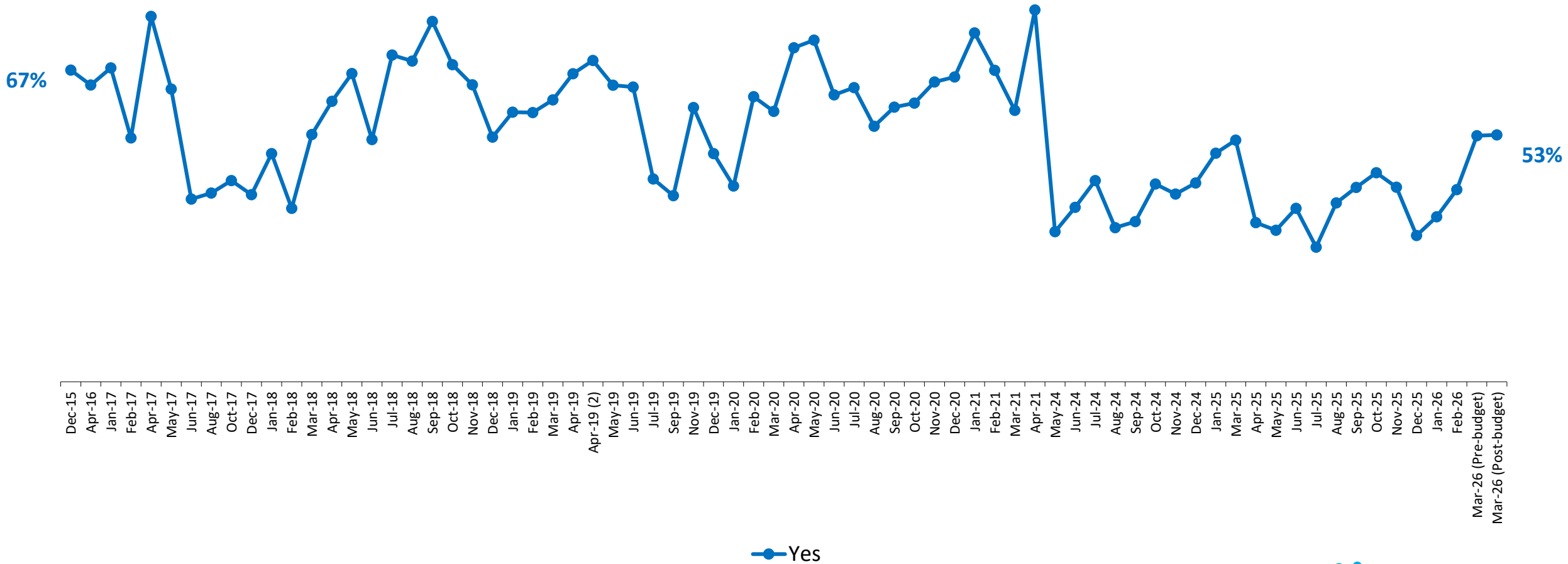


Read, Seen, Heard Tracking: 53% have RSH something about Premier, a 22-point increase from Dec '25



Have you read, seen or heard anything about Ontario's Premier Doug Ford and the provincial government in the last few days?

[asked of all respondents; n=500]



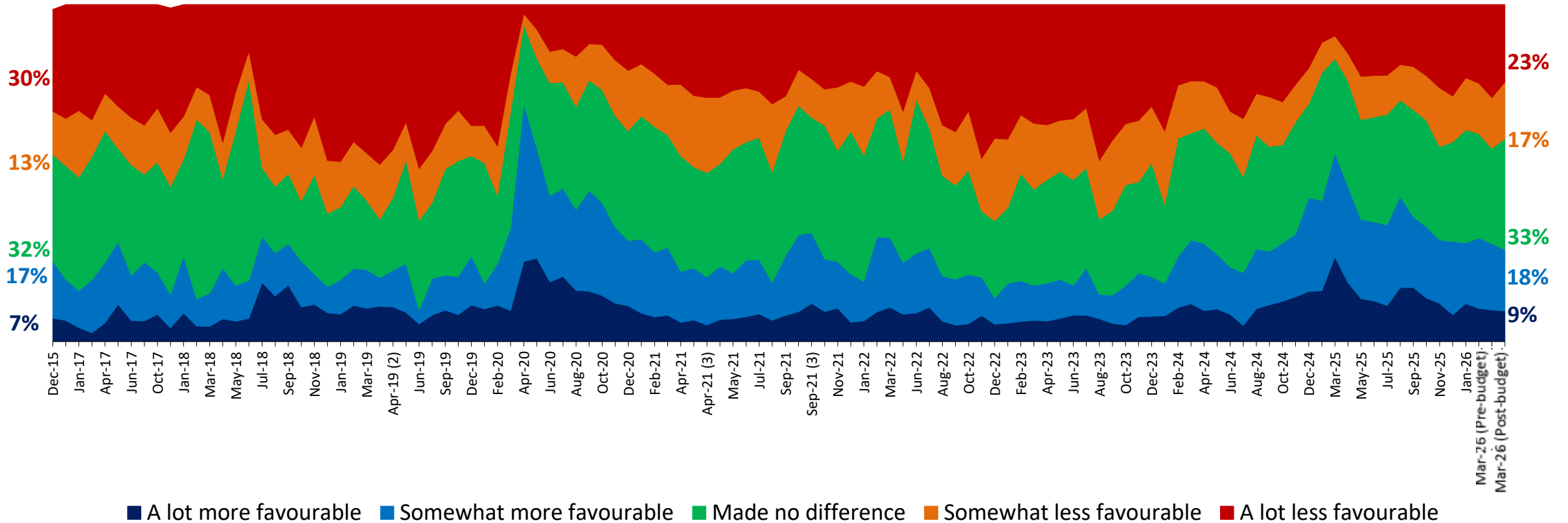
Note: Don't know not shown.
Current data: March post-budget 2026

RSH's Impact on Premier's Fav. Tracking: Net impact of RSHs on Ford's favourability has remained negative since Nov. '25 (now at -13 points)



Did what you read, see or hear leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable or a lot less favourable towards Ontario's Premier Doug Ford and the provincial government or did it make no difference?

[asked of those respondents have RSH; n=264]

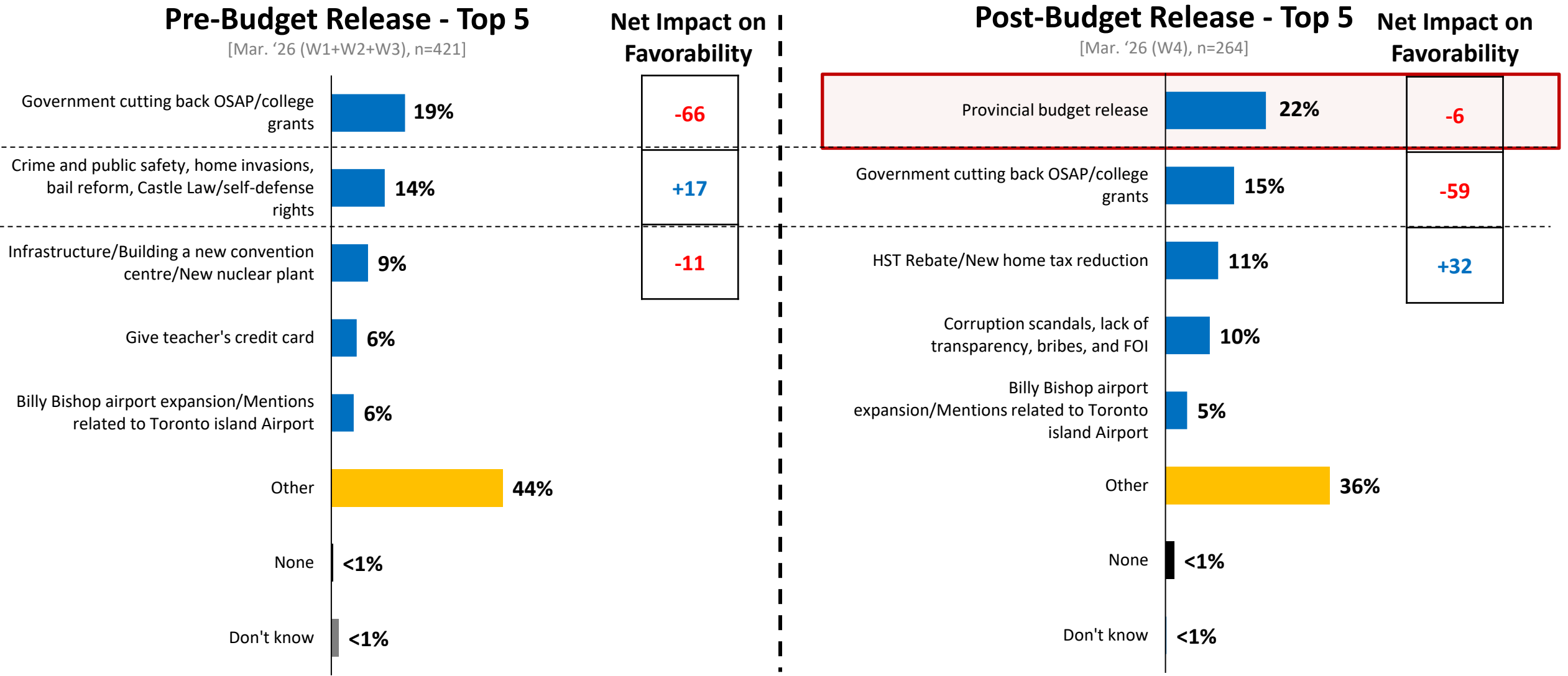


Note: Don't know not shown.
Current data: March post-budget 2026

Impact of RSH of Premier and ON Gov't: The budget release dominated mentions with a negative impact on favourability



And what have you read, seen or heard about Canada's Prime Minister and the Federal government in the last few days?
[Asked of those who RSH about Doug Ford and Gov't]



Note: 'Refused' (1%) not shown.

Impact of RSH of Premier and ON Gov't (Verbatims): Before the budget, March opened with negative sentiment around Ford cutting OSAP grants



And what have you read, seen or heard about Canada's Prime Minister and the Federal government in the last few days?

[Asked of those who RSH about Doug Ford and Gov't]

Pre-Budget Release - Top 5

[Mar. '26 (W1+W2+W3), n=421]

Government cutting back OSAP/College grants

"They cut the amount of grants for the OSAP program, putting students deeper into debt."

"Students protesting about cuts to OSAP."

"Him taking away OSAP funding and ruining lives."

Crime and public safety, home invasions, bail reform, Castle Law/Self-defense rights

"Doug Ford applauded a homeowner for shooting an intruder in his home."

"I've read that Doug Ford is all for people being able to defend their homes in case of home invasion or break ins."

Post-Budget Release - Top 5

[Mar. '26 (W4), n=264]

Provincial budget release

"He introduced a new budget that increases the provincial deficit and debt as if he was a tax and spend Liberal."

"He was on the news again something about an over blown budget."

Government cutting back OSAP/College grants

"To cut the OSAP on college people is unfair."

"The issue regarding the OSAP grants and how many will be transitioning to loans."

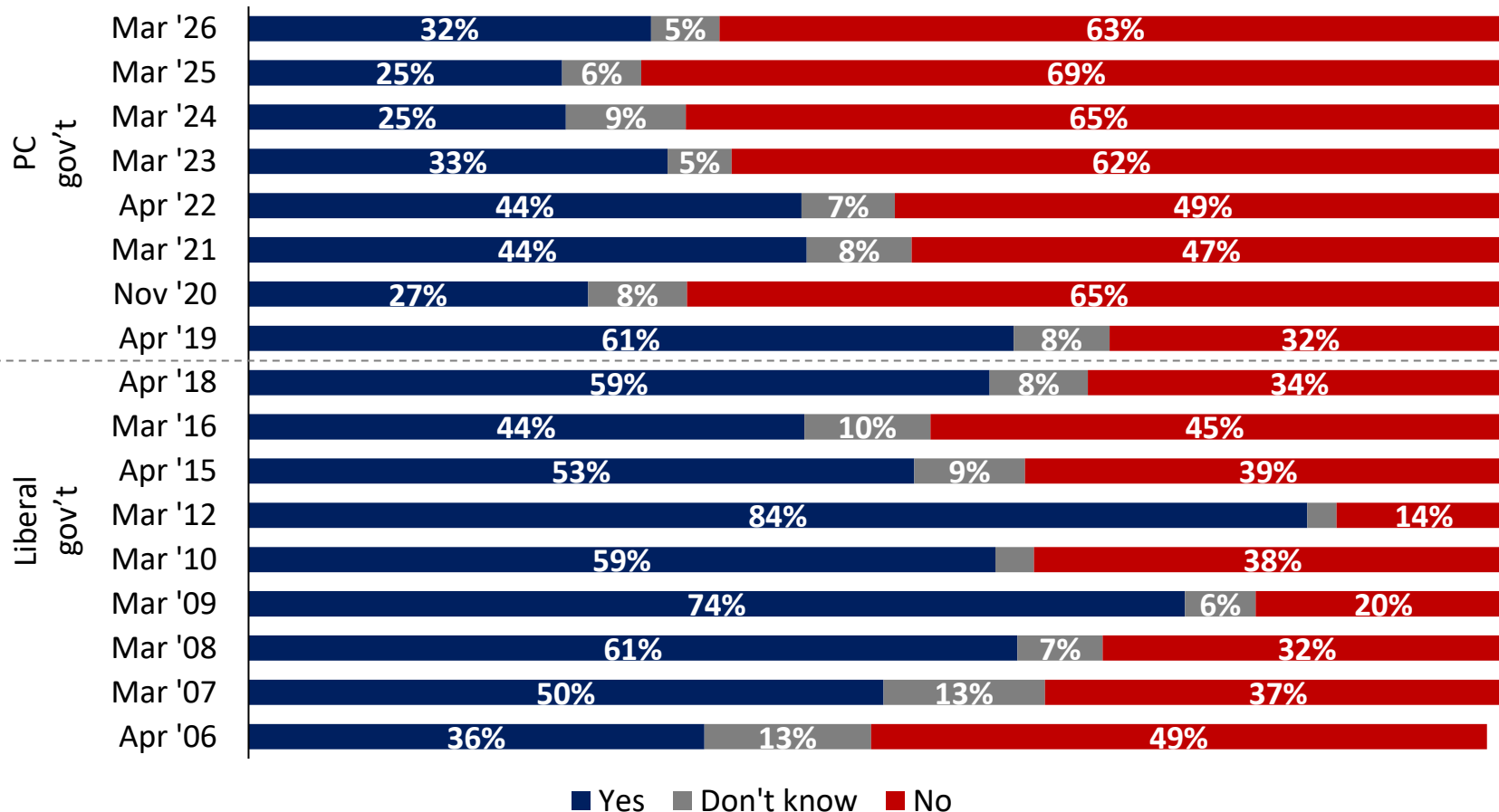
Reaction to the 2026 Budget

RSH Budget: Only 1-in-3 Ontarians have RSH about the budget, a 7-points increase compared to March '25; highest in Toronto (39%)



Have you read, seen, or heard anything about the recent provincial budget that was presented in the Legislature on March 26th, 2026?

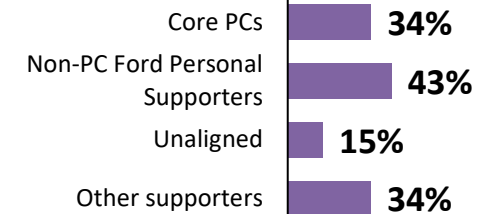
[asked of all respondents, n=500]



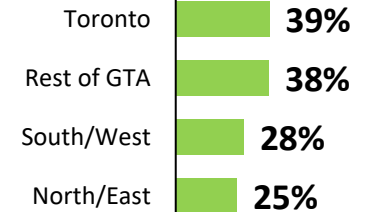
Segmentation

Those who say 'yes'

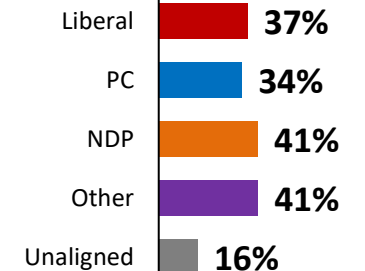
Doug Ford Segment



Region



Party ID

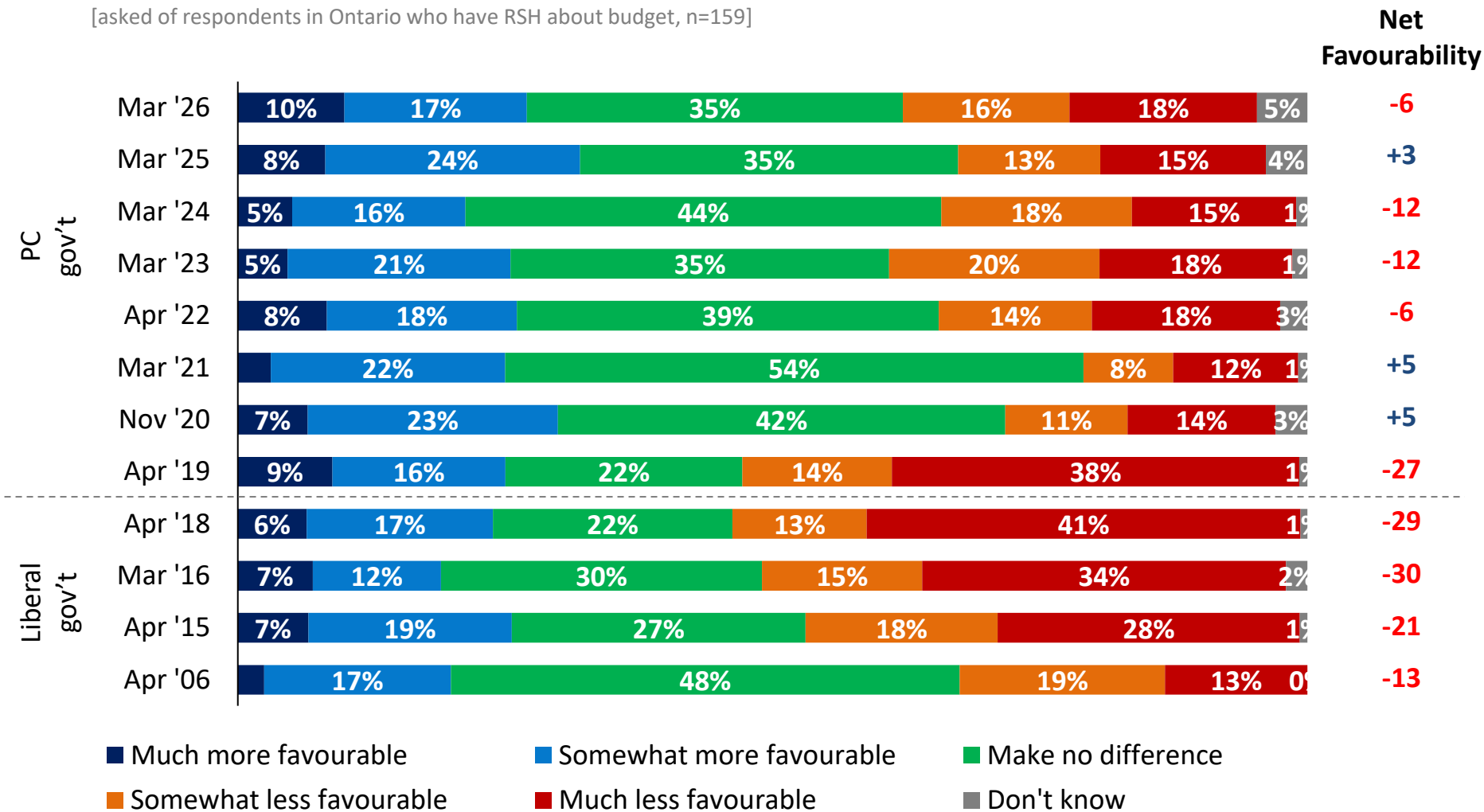


Impact of Budget's RSH on Gov's Favourability: Net favourability has decreased 9-points from last year, with 35% feeling indifferent



Did it leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable, or a lot less favourable towards the provincial Progressive Conservative government?

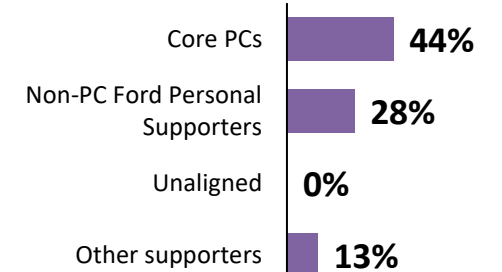
[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



Segmentation

Those who say 'More favourable'

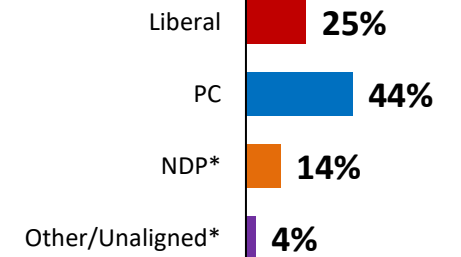
Doug Ford Segment



Region



Party ID

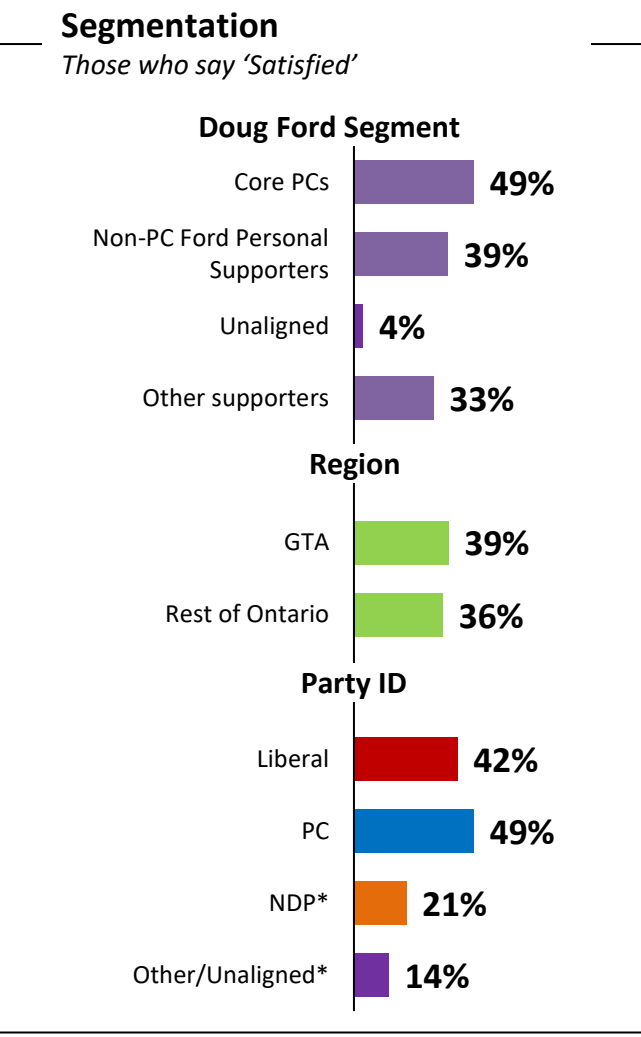
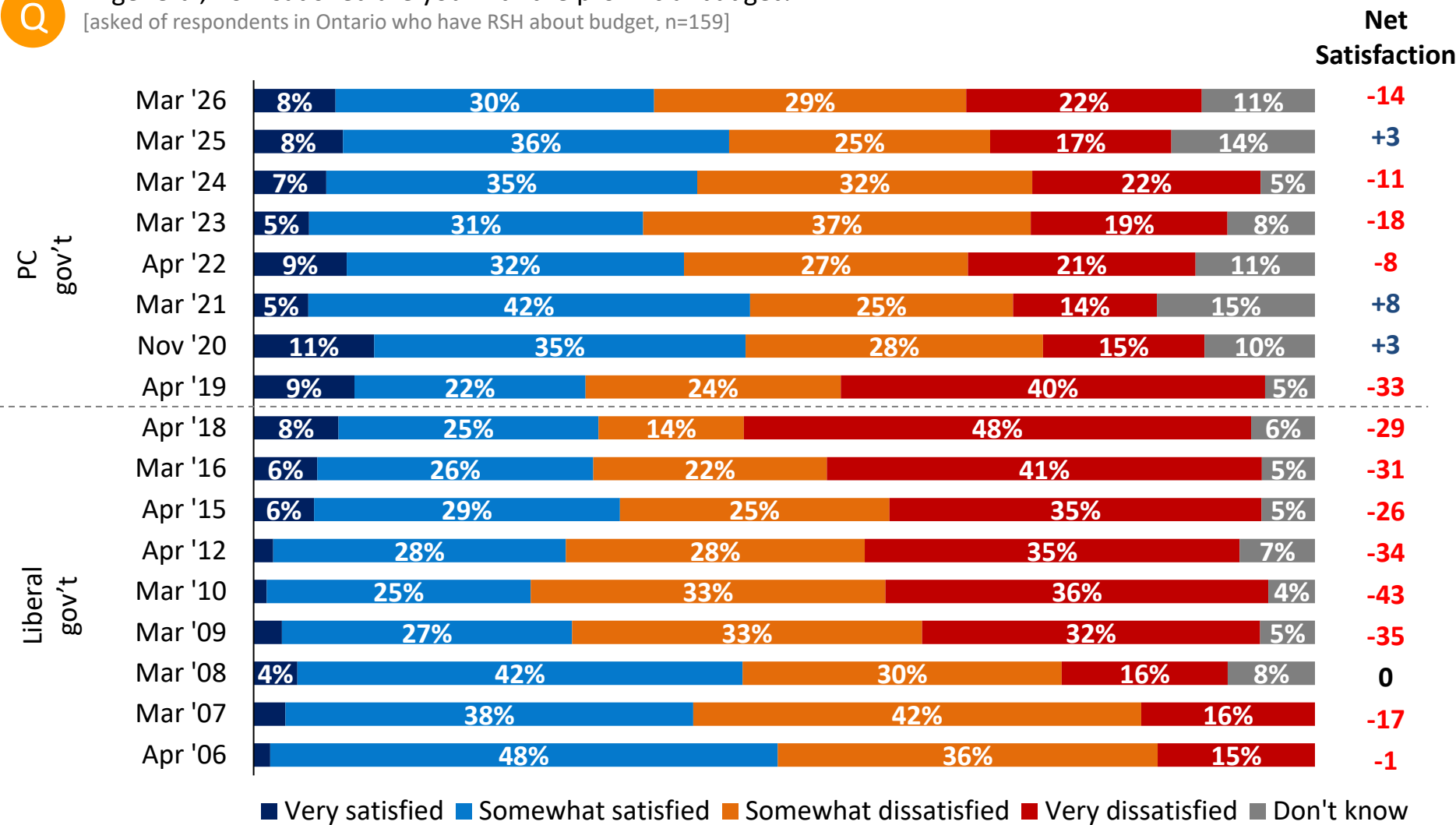


Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Note: "Don't know" was not provided as an option in Apr '06

Satisfaction With The Budget: Net satisfaction has decreased 17 points from last year; most satisfied are Government supporters

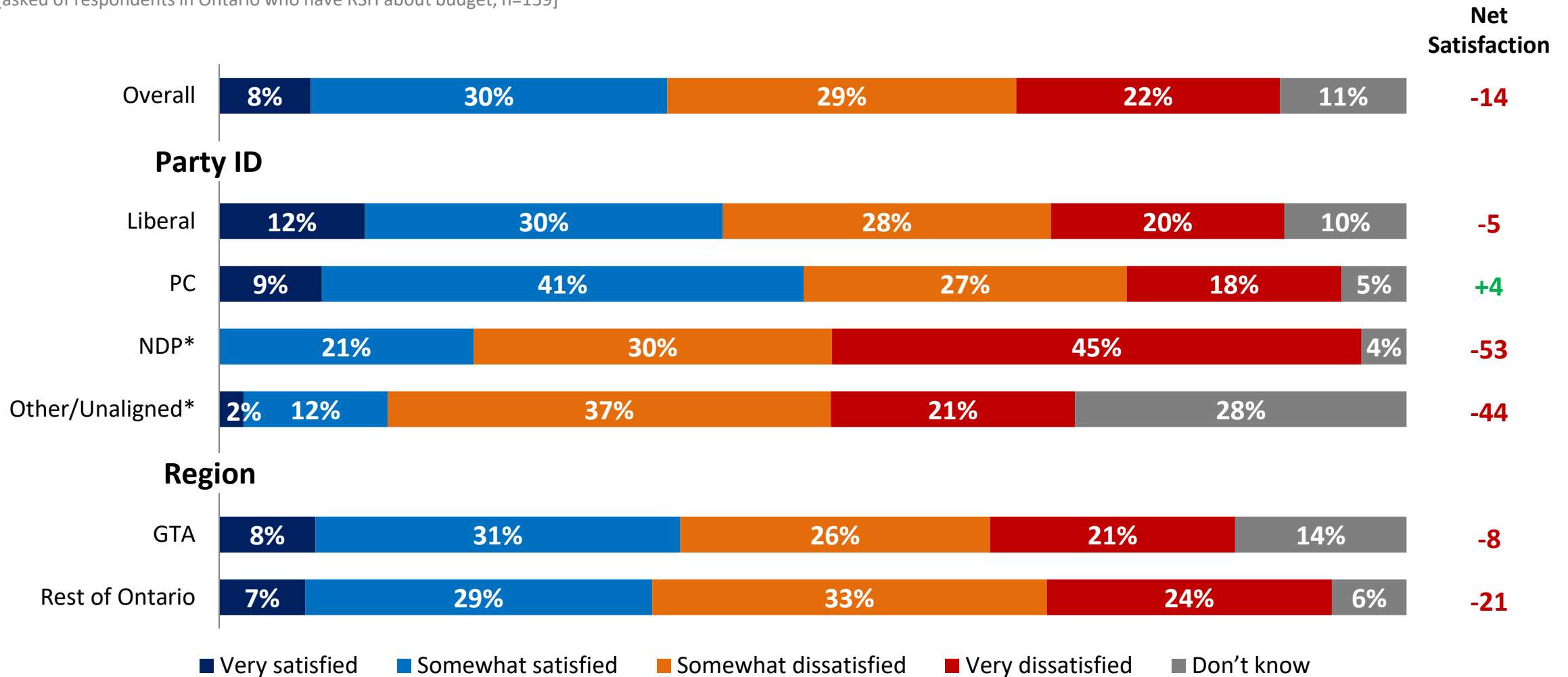
Q In general, how satisfied are you with the provincial budget?
 [asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.
Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '07 and Apr '06.

Satisfaction With The Budget: Those identifying with PC are most satisfied with the budget (net satisfaction +4)

Q In general, how satisfied are you with the provincial budget?
[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



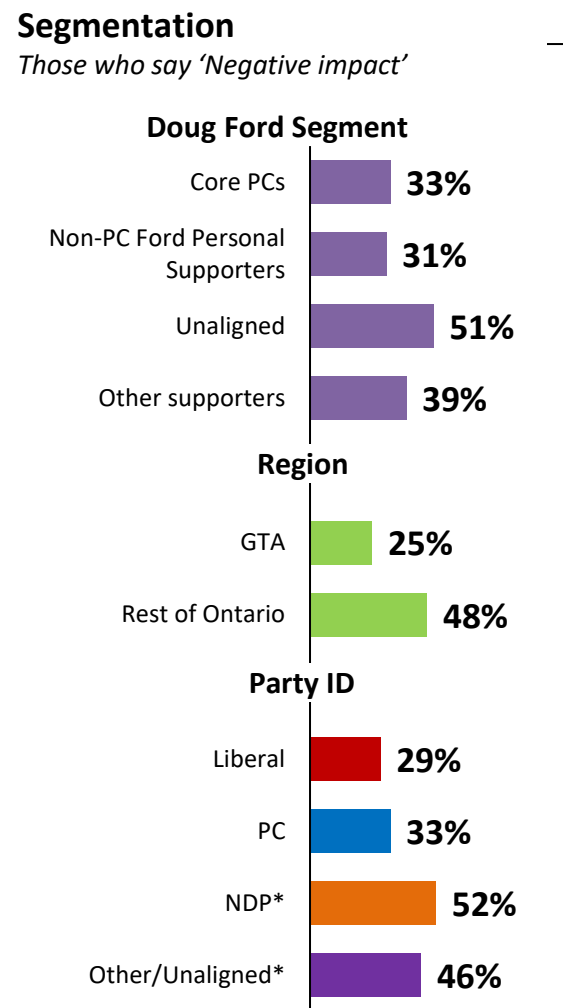
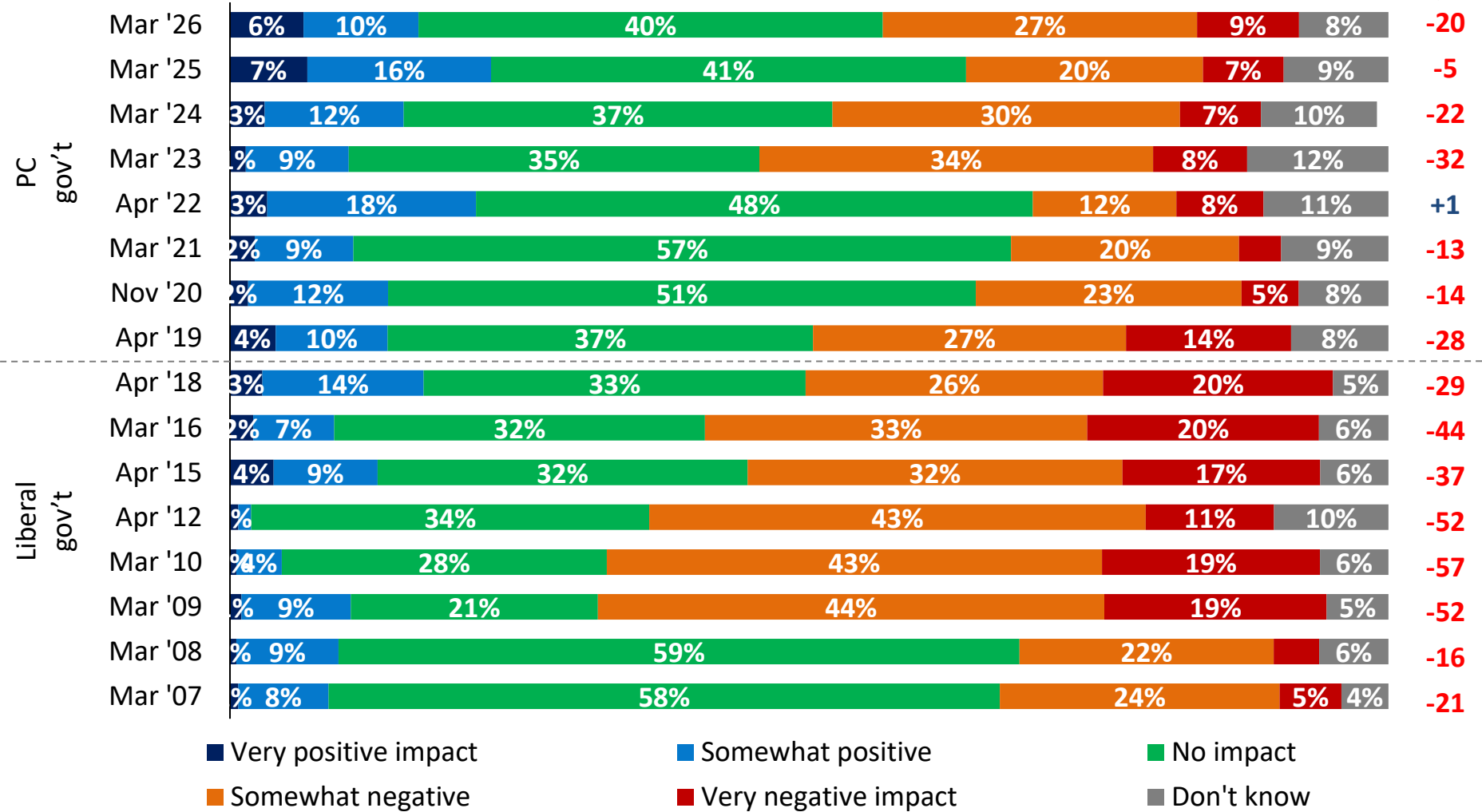
Note: *n-size of less than 30; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Impact on Personal situation: Plurality (40%) think that budget will not impact their personal situation; 36% see it as negative (net score -20pts)



How do you think the new budget will impact your own personal situation?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



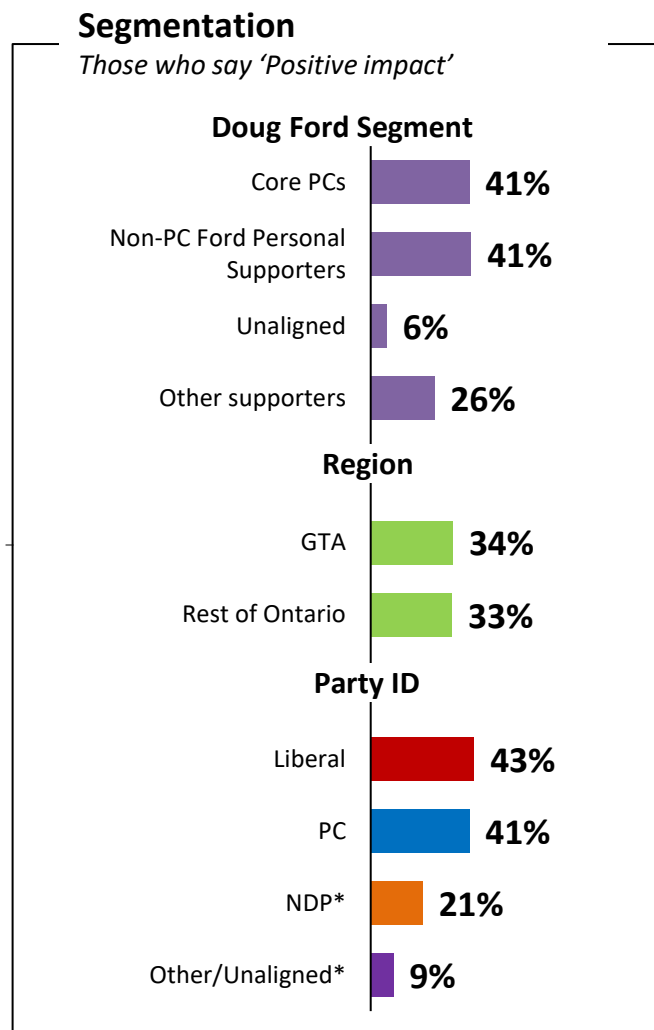
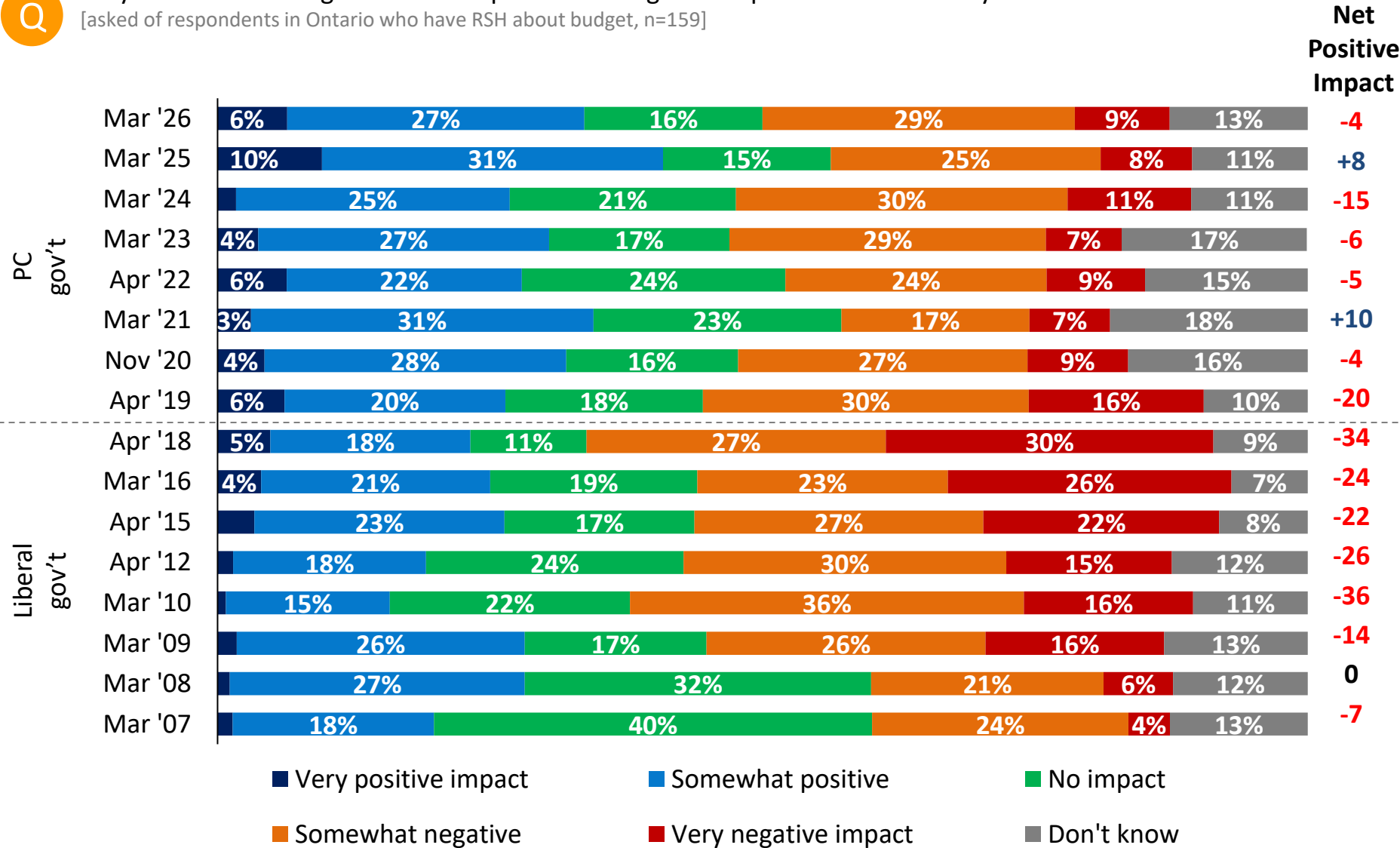
Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Impact on Economy: 34% of respondents believe budget will have positive impact on the economy; plurality of PCs (41%) and Lib's (43%) agree



Do you think the budget will have a positive or negative impact on the economy?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



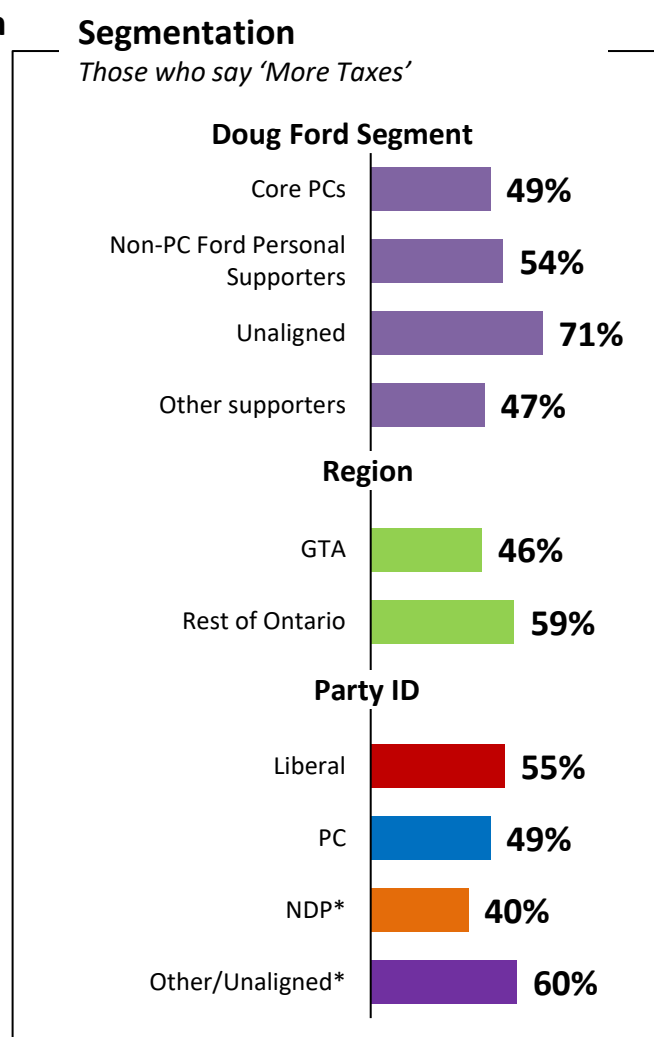
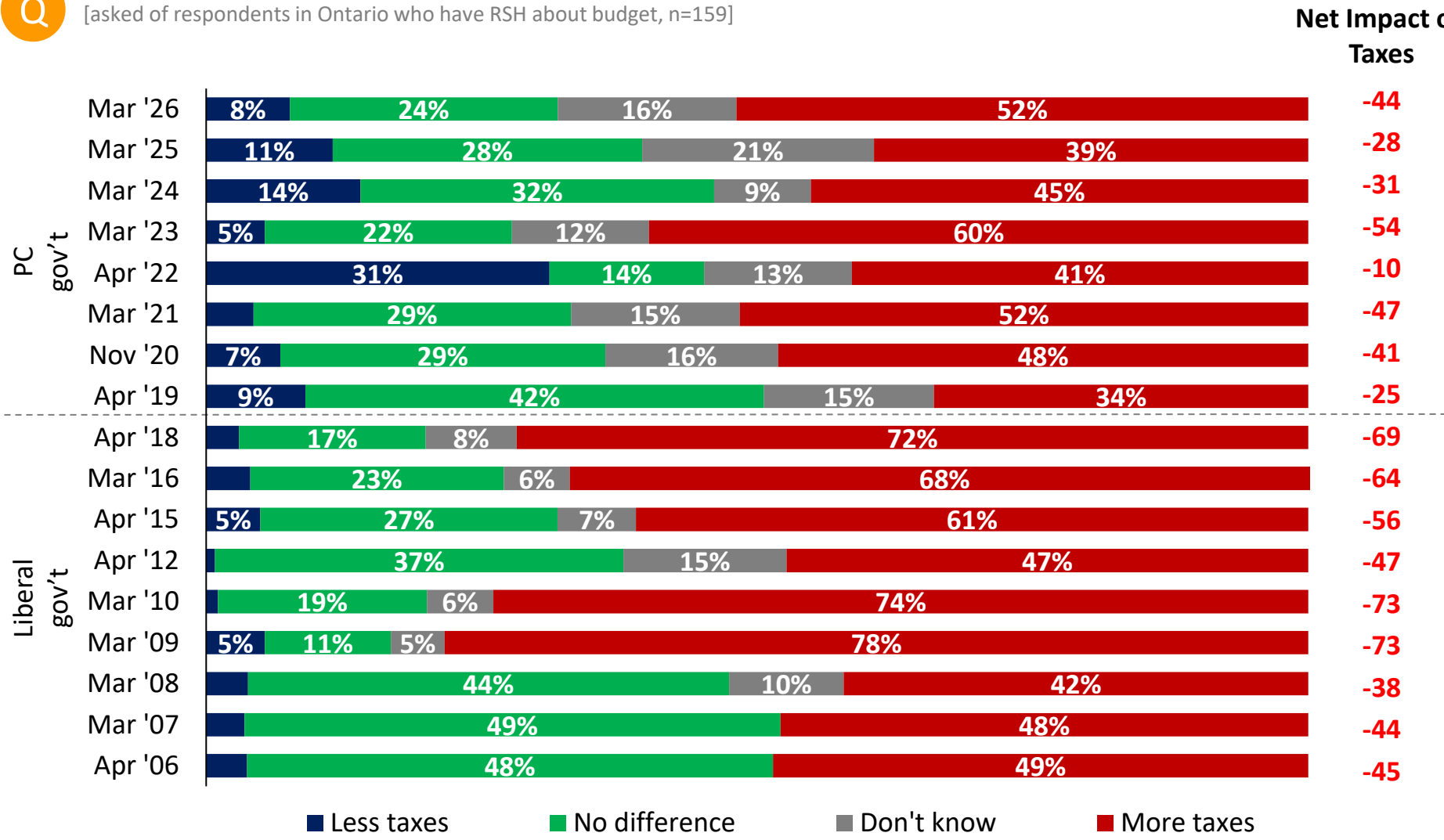
Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Impact on Taxes: More than half (52%) of respondents think the budget will result in them paying more taxes, 12-point increase compared to '25



Do you think the budget will result in your paying more taxes, less taxes, or will it make no difference?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



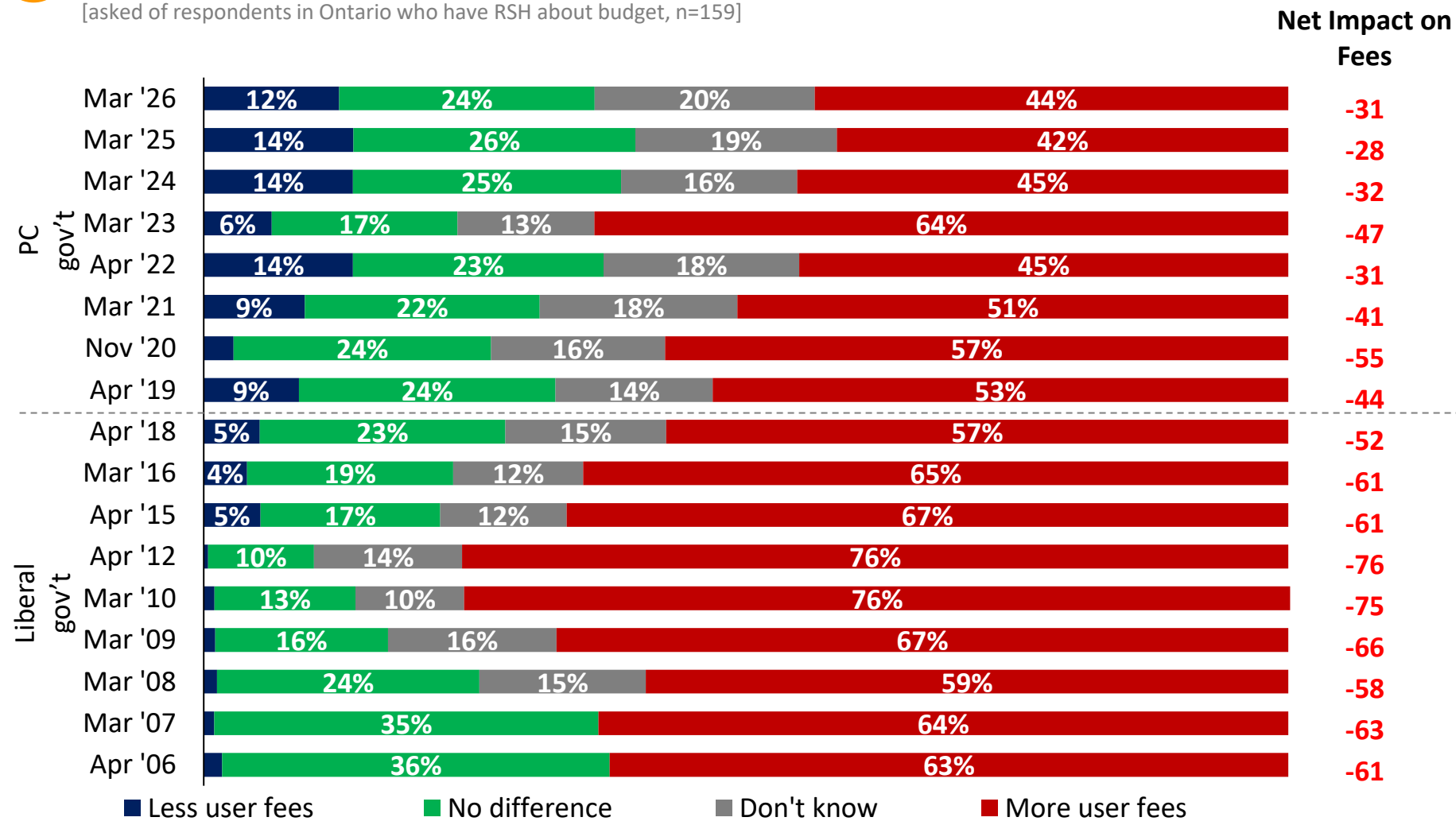
Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.
Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '06 and May '07.

Impact on User Fees: 44% of respondents think the budget will result in more user fees, the highest among Anti-government (51%)



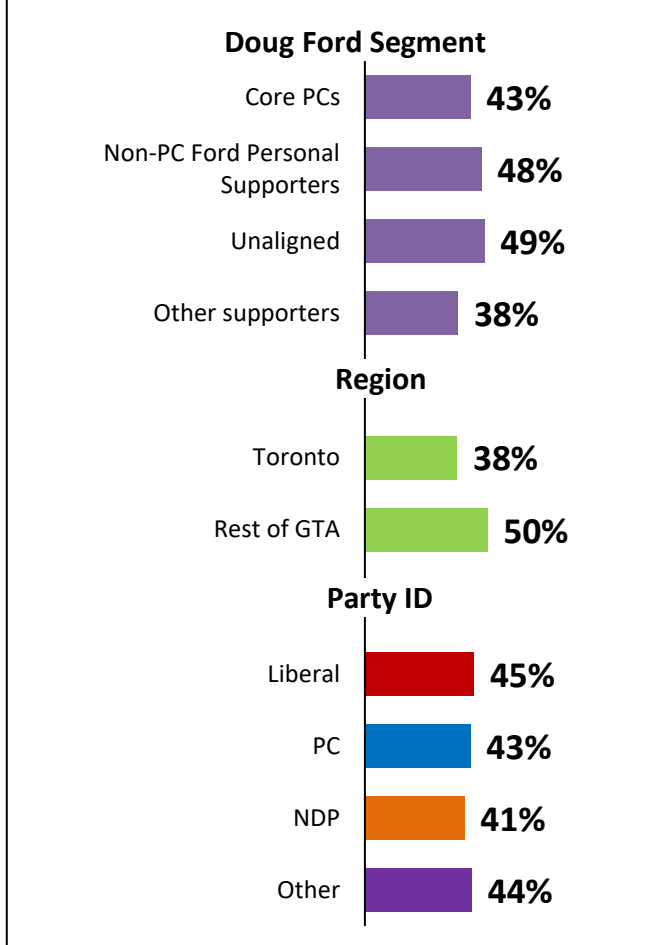
Do you think the budget will result in you paying more user fees for government services, less user fees for government services, or will it make no difference?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



Segmentation

Those who say 'More user fees'



Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

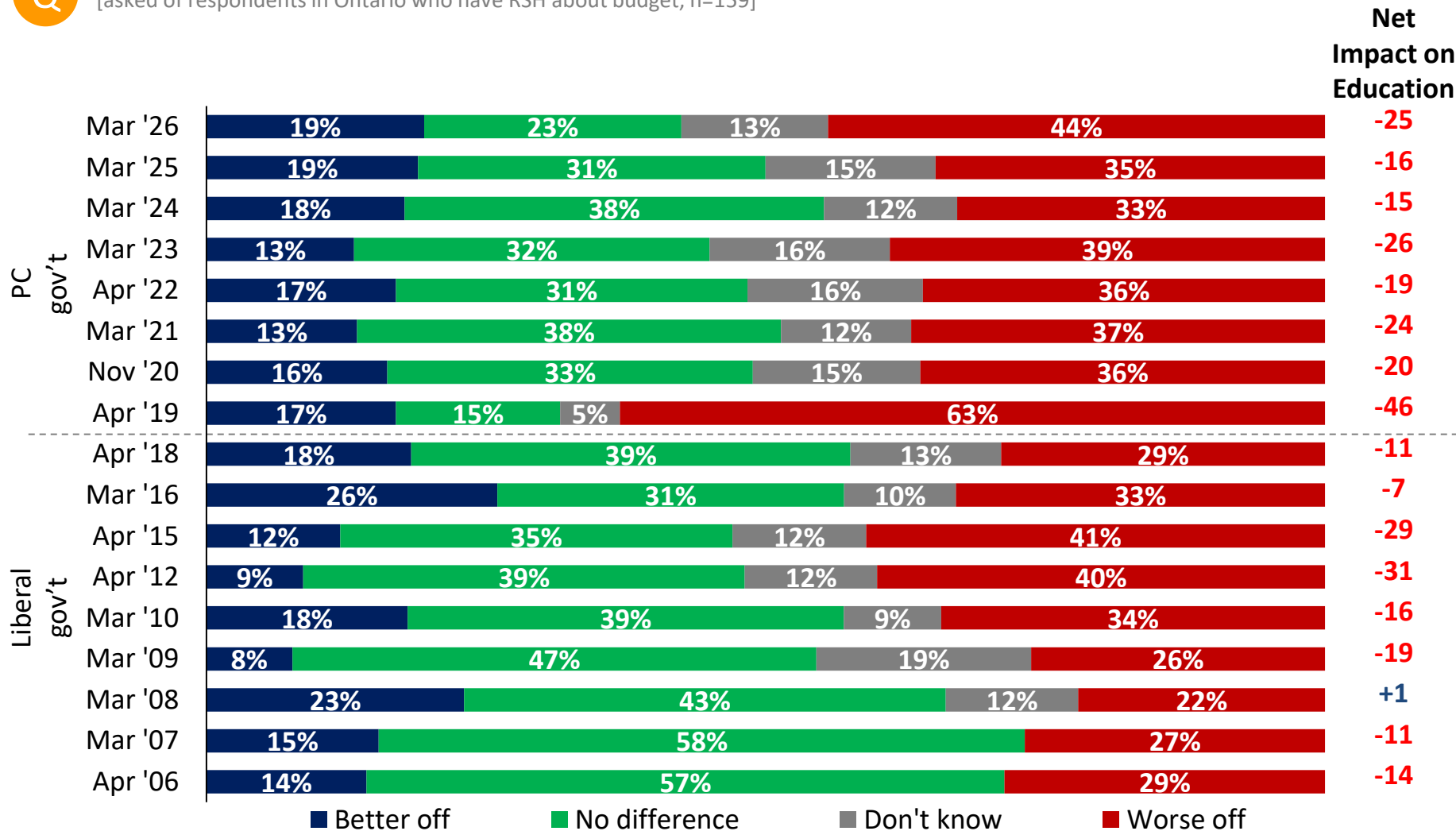
Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '06 and May '07.

Impact on Education: More than 2-in-5 (44%) think the budget will leave the education system worse off, highest among NPD (71%)



Do you think the budget will leave your province's education system better off, worse off or will it make no difference?

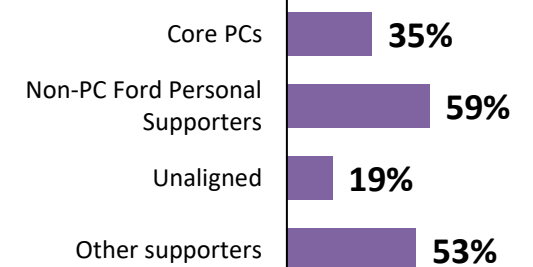
[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



Segmentation

Those who say 'Worse off'

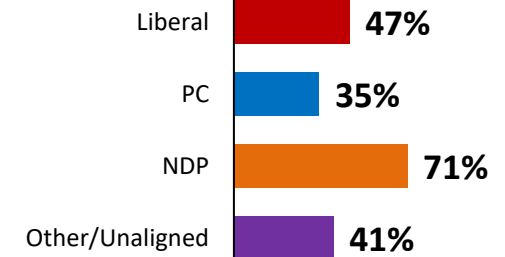
Doug Ford Segment



Region



Party ID



Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

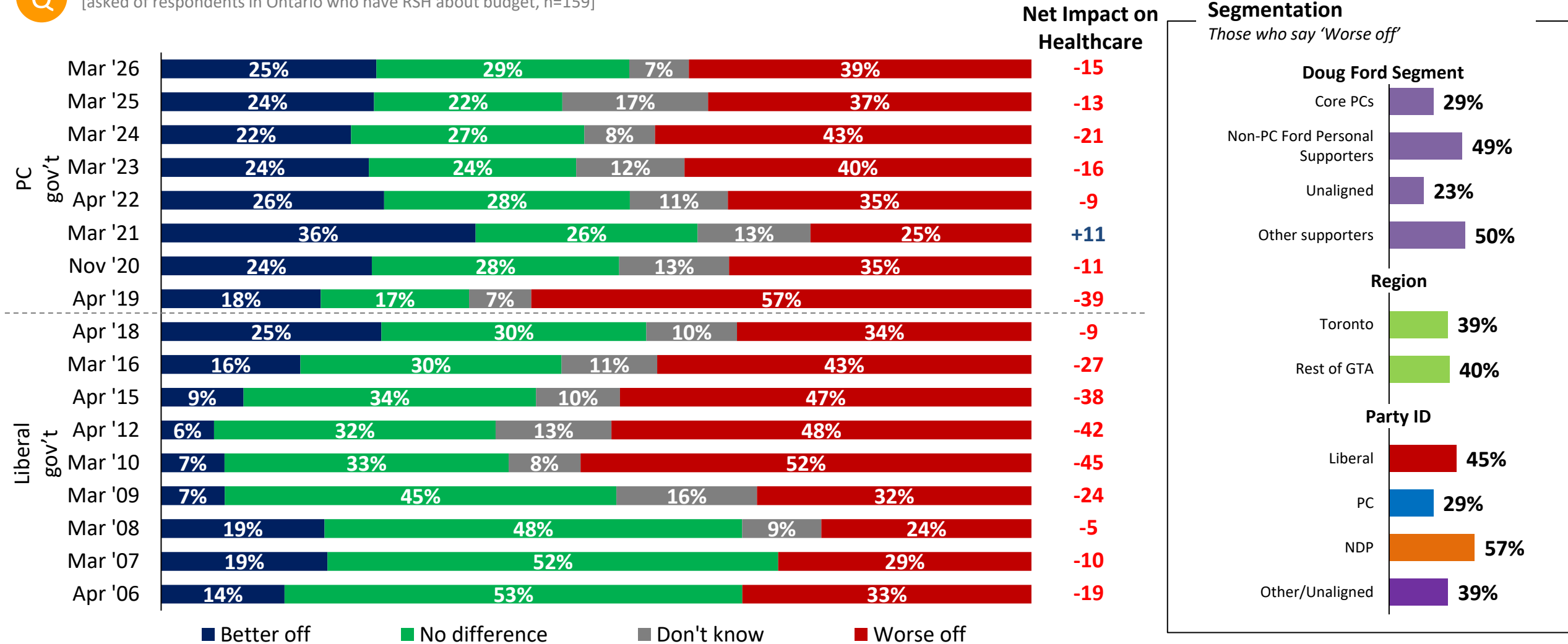
Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '06 and May '07.

Impact on Healthcare: Net impact (-15) remains similar to last year's; highest among Anti-government (58%) and NDP* (57%)



Do you think the budget will leave your province's health care system better off, worse off or will it make no difference?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



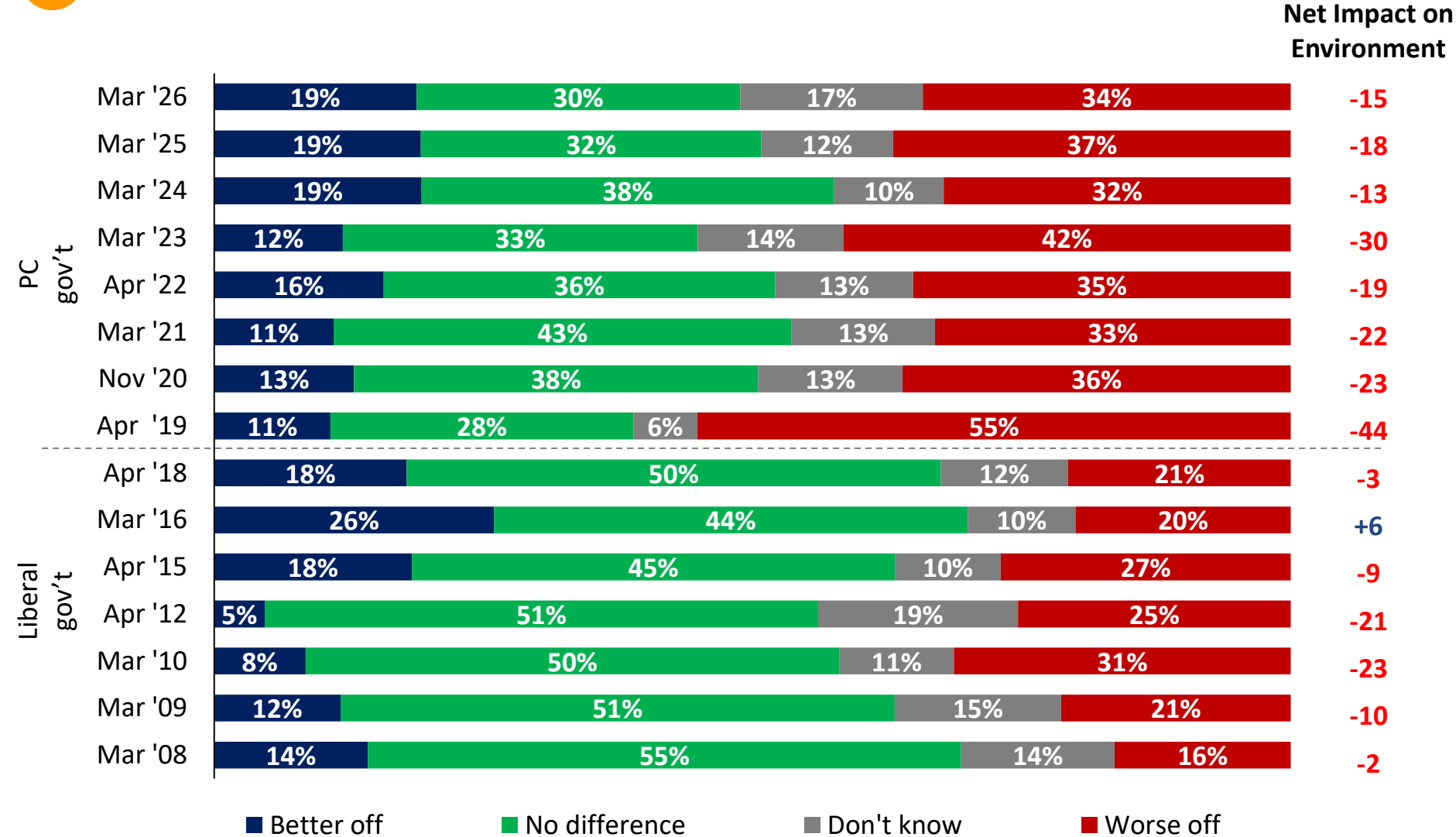
Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '06 and May '07.

Impact on Environment: 1-in-3 think the budget will leave the environment worse off; highest among NDP* supporters (61%)



Do you think the budget will leave the environment in your province better off, worse off, or will it make no difference?

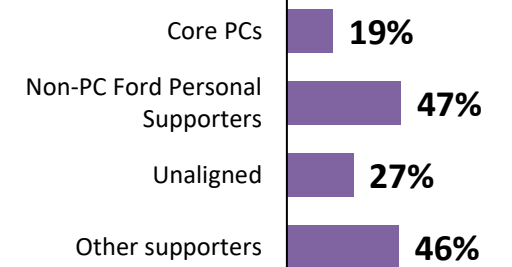
[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



Segmentation

Those who say 'Worse off'

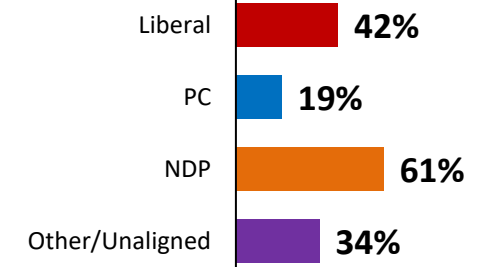
Doug Ford Segment



Region



Party ID



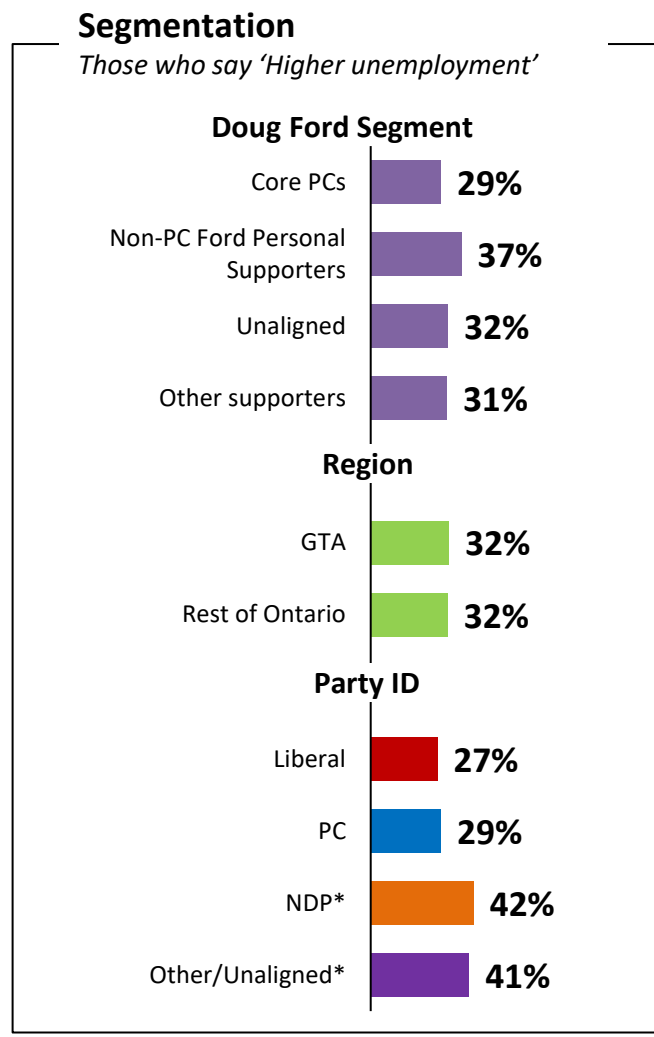
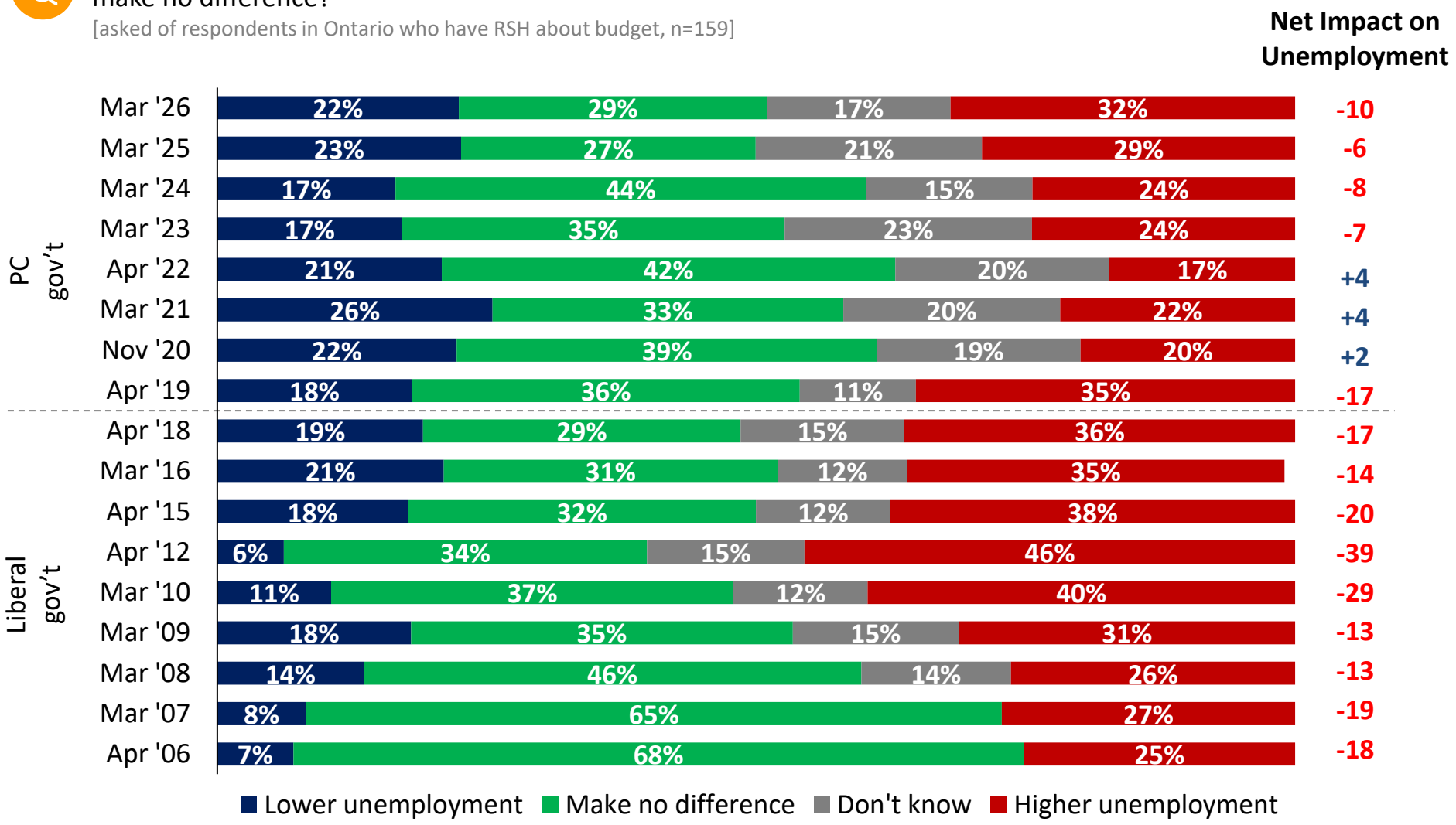
Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Impact on Employment: 32% think the budget will result in higher levels of unemployment, 22% say lower



Do you think the budget will result in higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of unemployment or will it make no difference?

[asked of respondents in Ontario who have RSH about budget, n=159]



■ Lower unemployment ■ Make no difference ■ Don't know ■ Higher unemployment

Note: *n-size of less than 40; For NDP n=19, for Other/Unaligned n=27. Please treat results with caution.

Note: "Don't know" is not provided as an option in Apr '06 and May '07.

Methodology

The background of the slide is a solid dark blue color. It features several faint, light blue circles of varying sizes scattered across the surface, creating a subtle pattern.

Survey Methodology – Pre-budget March W1-3 '26



These are the results of an online survey conducted between March 06, 2026, and March 24, 2026.

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 samples. 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=1030 ON citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=800 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: March 06, 2026, to March 24, 2026.

Weighting: Results for Ontario are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and self-reported federal past vote 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.

For budget: While vote intention tracking was conducted through the full month of March among n=1300 ON residents, budget-related questions were only asked in the second half of the month (March 27 to March 30, 2026). Those results are weighted to n= 500

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
Men 18-34	84	8.2%	112	14.1%
Men 35-54	158	15.4%	127	15.9%
Men 55+	266	25.9%	157	19.7%
Women 18-34	94	9.1%	106	13.3%
Women 35-54	164	16.0%	120	15.0%
Women 55+	262	25.5%	175	21.9%
Region				
Toronto	242	23.5%	170	21.2%
Rest of GTA	232	22.5%	209	26.1%
South/West	273	26.5%	205	25.6%
North/East	283	27.5%	217	27.1%

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

Survey Methodology – Post-budget March W4 '26



These are the results of an online survey conducted between March 27, 2026, and March 30, 2026.

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 samples. 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=616 ON citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=500 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: March 27, 2026, and March 30, 2026.

Weighting: Results for Ontario are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and self-reported federal past vote 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 (%)
Men 18-34	42	6.8%	59	11.9%
Men 35-54	95	15.5%	74	14.8%
Men 55+	141	23.0%	88	17.8%
Women 18-34	63	10.3%	72	14.4%
Women 35-54	136	22.1%	104	20.9%
Women 55+	137	22.3%	101	20.2%
Region				
Toronto	126	20.5%	96	19.2%
Rest of GTA	147	23.9%	127	25.3%
South/West	184	29.9%	141	28.2%
North/East	159	25.8%	136	27.3%



Building Understanding.

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