



PUBLIC OPINION ON ALBERTA PENSION ISSUES

RESEARCH REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This survey was designed to explore Albertans' attitudes towards the proposal to withdraw Alberta from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A total of 1,002 Albertans completed this online survey, between January 30 and February 16, 2024

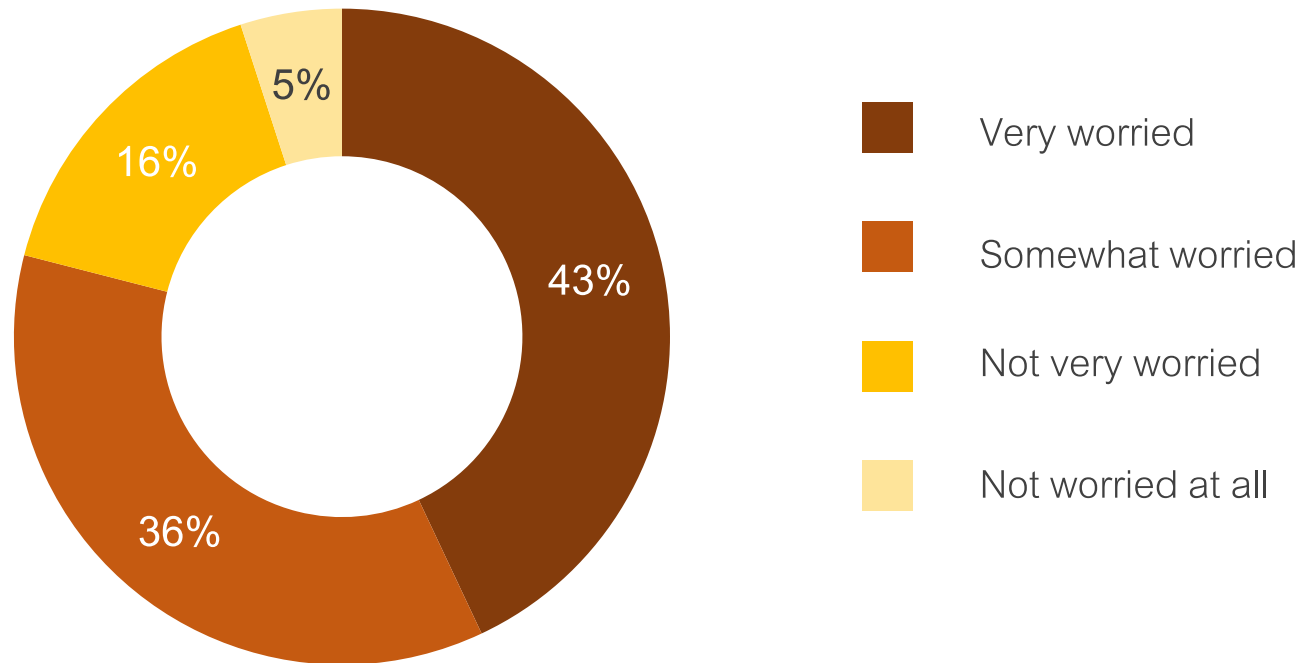
- The survey data are weighted by region, age, and gender to match census data
- 410 surveys were completed among residents of Calgary including 317 in Edmonton and 275 in the rest of Alberta.
- In this report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.
- Results under 4% may not be shown on some charts.

WITHDRAWING FROM CANADA PENSION PLAN – GENERAL ATTITUDES

PERSPECTIVE | **WORRY ABOUT RETIREMENT SAVINGS**

The vast majority of Albertans are at least somewhat worried about whether they will have enough money for retirement; over four in ten are very worried.

To what extent do you worry whether you will have enough money from pensions and savings to live on in retirement? Are you...?



Most likely to be very worried:

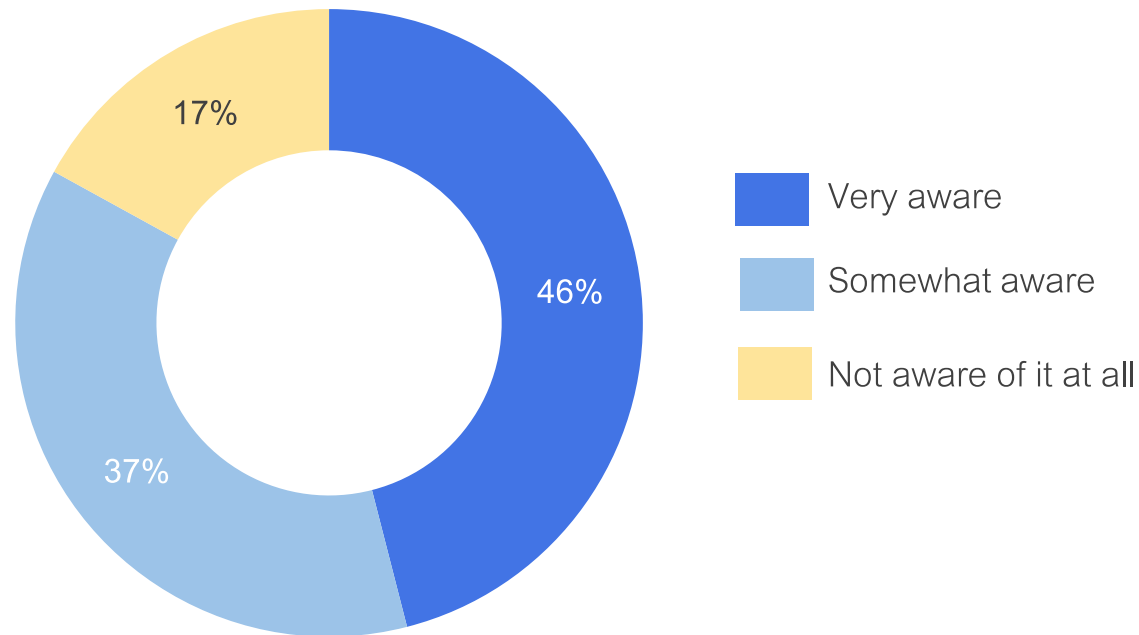
- Women (50%, vs. 35% men)
- Under age 45 (51%)
- High school or less education (50%)
- Household incomes under \$80K (51%)
- Identify as 'low income' (61%)
- Stay at home full-time/disability (68%)
- Indigenous (56%)
- Only have CPP (51%)

NB: 42% of UCP voters are very worried, comparable to 40% of NDP voters

AWARENESS | PROPOSAL TO LEAVE THE CPP

Most Albertans are at least somewhat aware of the UCP proposal withdraw from the CPP and almost half are very aware. Less than two in ten are not aware of it at all.

As you may know, the Alberta UCP government has put forward a proposal to pull Alberta workers and retirees out of the Canada Pension Plan and put them into an Alberta-only plan? How aware were you about this?



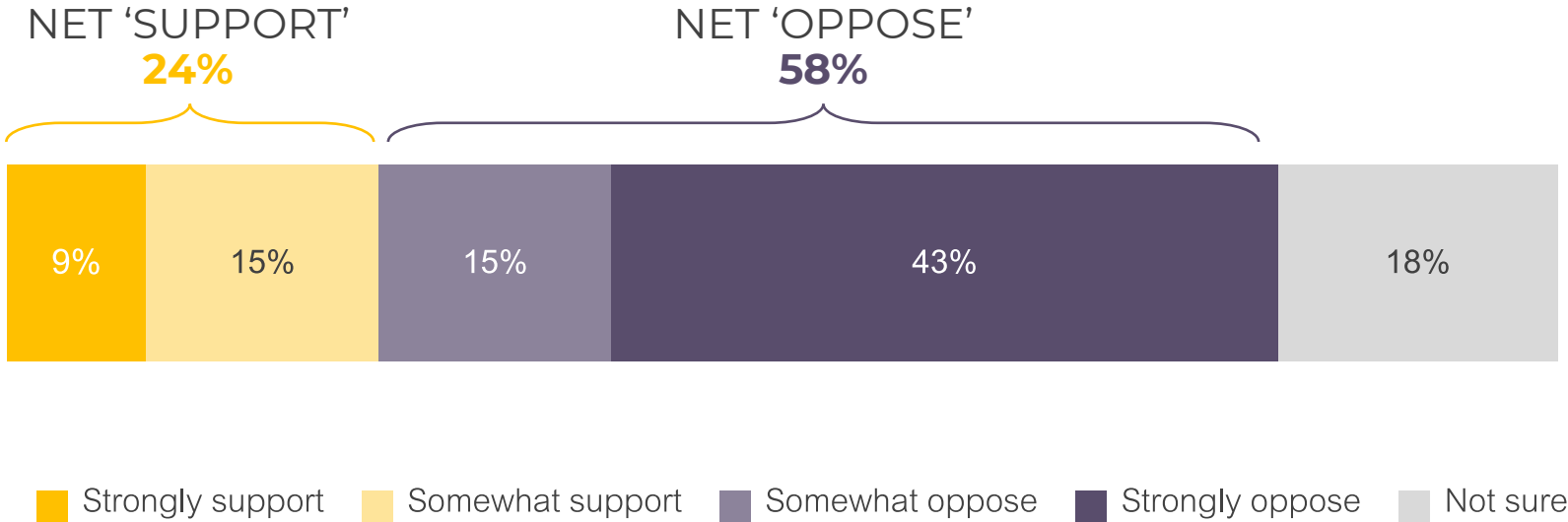
Most likely to be very aware:

- Men (52% vs. 41% of women)
- Age 60+ (69%)
- University + (54%)
- Retired (70%)
- Those not very or at all worried about retirement (56%)

SUPPORT | PROPOSAL TO LEAVE THE CPP

Close to six in ten Albertans oppose the proposed plan to withdraw from the CPP; just one-quarter are at all supportive. Opposition is consistent in all regions of the province.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal for Alberta to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan and replace it with an Alberta-only plan?



Most likely to oppose:

- Women (60%, vs. 56% men)
- Age 60+ (67%)
- University + (69%)
- Edmonton (64%)
- Retired (68%)
- Not worried about retirement (70%)
- NDP voters (85%)

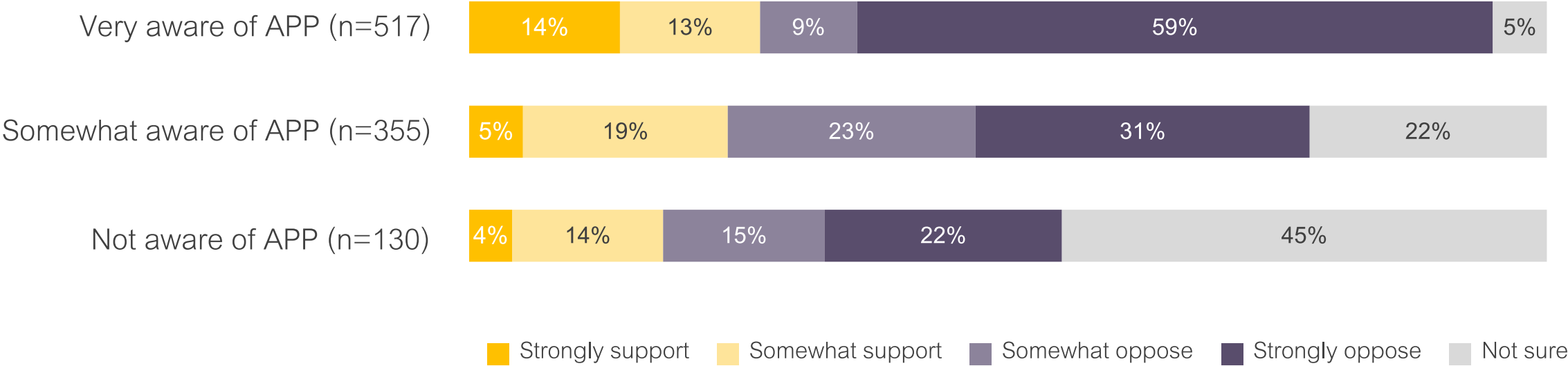
NB: 40% of 2023 UCP voters are opposed

SUPPORT BY AWARENESS | ALBERTA-ONLY PLAN

Six in ten of those who say they are very aware of the APP proposal are strongly opposed to it; those with no previous awareness are more inclined to oppose than support it.

As you may know, the Alberta UCP government has put forward a proposal to pull Alberta workers and retirees out of the Canada Pension Plan and put them into an Alberta-only plan? How aware were you about this?

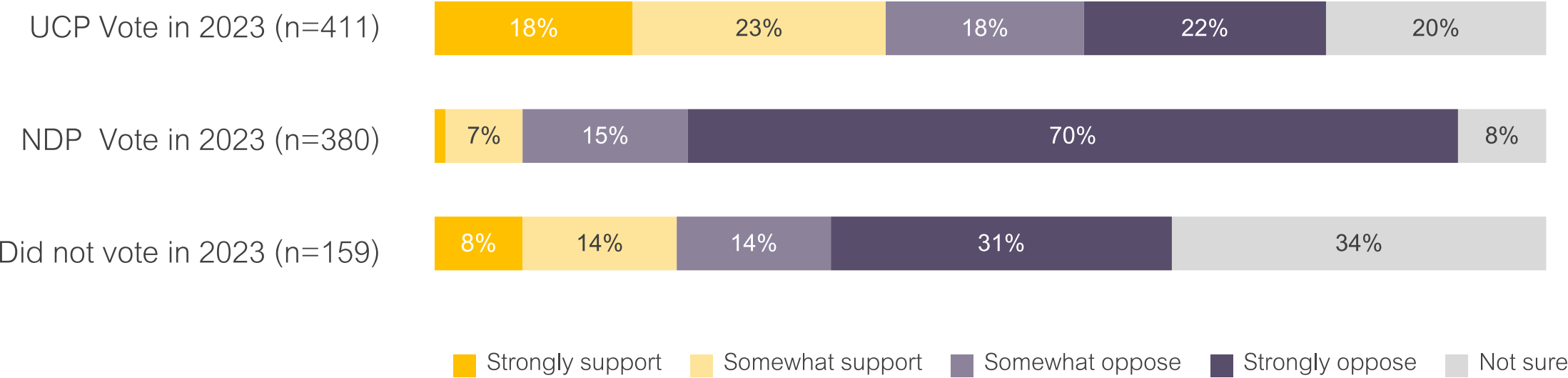
To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal for Alberta to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan and replace it with an Alberta-only plan?



SUPPORT BY 2023 VOTE | **WITHDRAW FROM CPP**

The vast majority of NDP voters are opposed to the plan. Those who voted UCP in 2023 are split with four in ten opposed to the proposal and two in ten undecided. Just four in ten UCP voters are at all supportive.

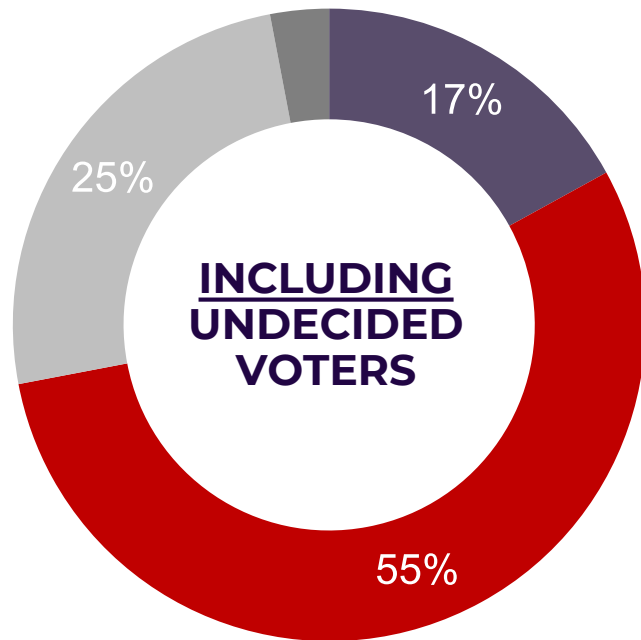
To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal for Alberta to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan and replace it with an Alberta-only plan?



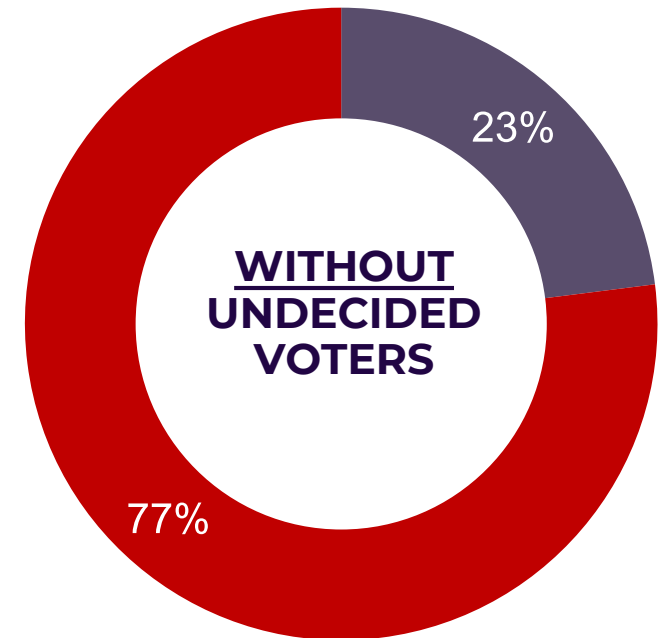
VOTE INTENTION | ALBERTA PENSION REFERENDUM

Most Albertans would vote for Alberta to remain in the CPP. Among decided voters, 77 percent would vote to Remain.

If there was a referendum today on this issue, how do you think you would vote?



- Yes (Leave CPP) - for Alberta to leave the Canada Pension Plan in favour of creating an Alberta-only plan
- No (Remain in CPP) – for Alberta to stay in the Canada Pension Plan
- Undecided
- I would not vote

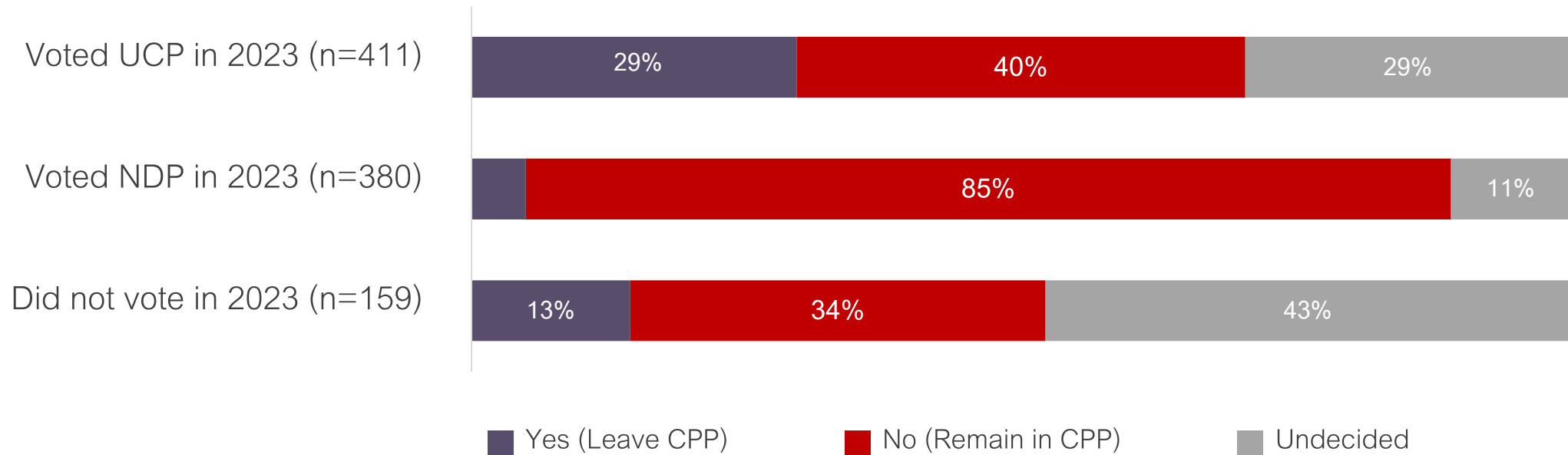


VOTE INTENTION BY VOTE | ALBERTA PENSION REFERENDUM

Just three in ten Albertans who voted UCP in 2023 would vote in favour of leaving the CPP. Four in ten would vote NO and many are undecided.

Which party did you vote for in the most recent Alberta provincial election that took place in May 2023?

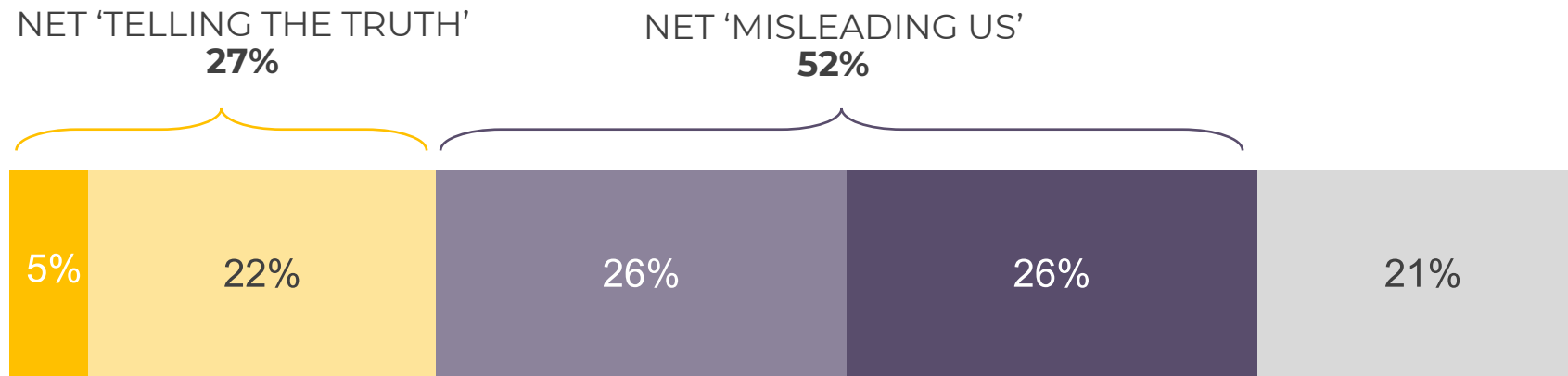
If there was a referendum today on this issue, how do you think you would vote?



PERSPECTIVE | BELIEVING ALBERTA GOV'T ON PENSIONS

Over half of Albertans think they are being misled by the provincial government on the pension proposal. Just 27 percent think the government is telling them the truth. Almost three in ten (28%) 2023 UCP voters think they are being misled.

When it comes to its proposal about pulling Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan, to what extent do you think the Alberta government is misleading us or telling us the truth?
Is the Alberta government...?



Most likely to think 'misleading us':

- University + (63%)
- Voted NDP in 2023 (81%)
- Union household (61%)
- Very aware of APP (63%)

NB: 28% of UCP voters think the Alberta government is 'misleading'

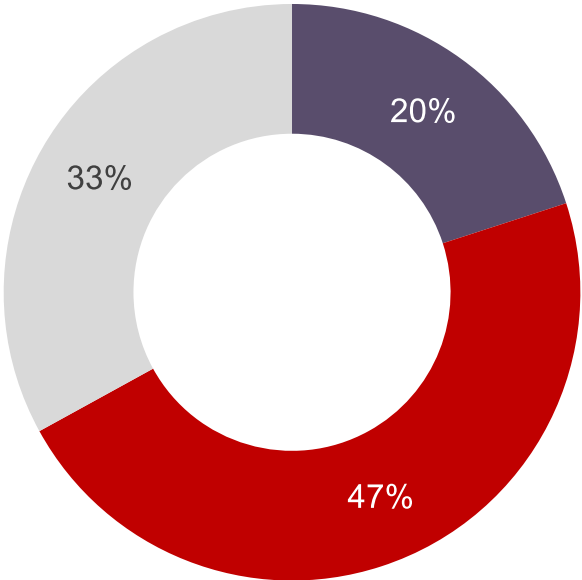
■ Totally telling us the truth ■ Mostly telling us the truth ■ Mostly misleading us ■ Totally misleading us ■ Not sure

WITHDRAWING FROM CANADA PENSION PLAN: FACTS AND ARGUMENTS

OPINION | WHAT WOULD ALBERTA BE ENTITLED TO?

Just two in ten believe the UCP government claim that Alberta would be entitled to over half of the savings in the entire CPP fund. Close to half believe the economists'/CPP claim that Alberta would only be entitled to about 20 percent of the accumulated savings in the CPP fund.

The Alberta UCP government says that if Alberta were to leave the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Alberta would be entitled to over half (53%) of the accumulated savings in the entire CPP fund. Many economists and the people who administer the CPP say that's incorrect, and that Alberta would only be entitled to about 20 percent of the accumulated CPP savings. What do you believe is closer to the truth?

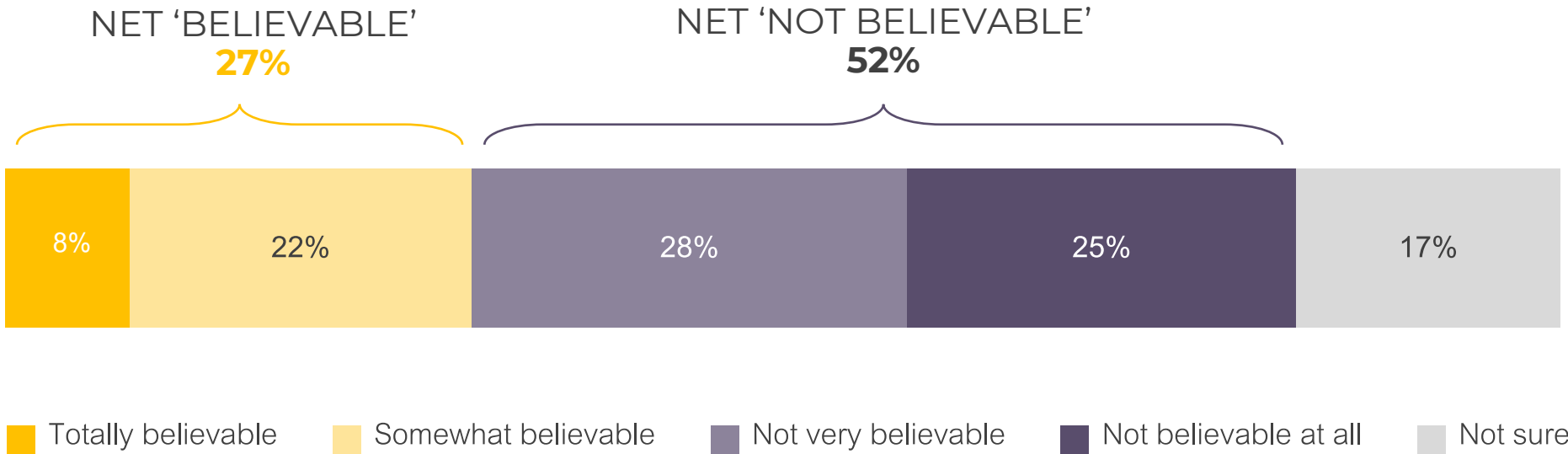


- Alberta government's claim that Alberta would be entitled to over half (53%) of the accumulated savings in the CPP fund
- Economists' and CPP administrators' claim that Alberta would be entitled to about 20 percent of the accumulated savings in the CPP fund
- Not sure

OPINION | **WOULD LEAVING CPP SAVE \$1,425 A YEAR?**

Over half of Albertans do not believe the UCP government claim that each worker could save \$1,425 per year in pension premiums in an Alberta-only pension plan. Just over one quarter believe this.

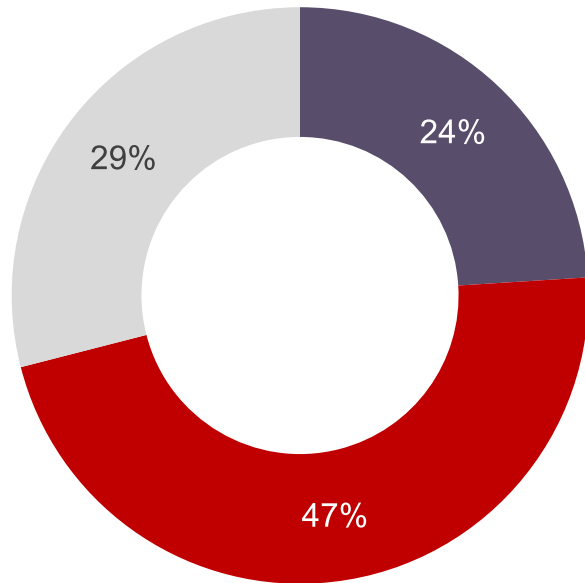
According to the Alberta UCP government, if Alberta leaves the Canada Pension Plan and takes 53 percent of the CPP Fund with it, it means that by switching to an Alberta-only plan each Alberta worker would save about \$1,425 a year in pension premiums while getting the same level of retirement benefits as they get now with the CPP. To what extent do you believe that leaving the Canadian Pension Plan would actually save each Alberta worker \$1,425 a year? Is it...?



POINT OF VIEW | **WOULD +\$1,425 LEAD TO VOTE TO LEAVE CPP?**

Albertans are about twice as likely to say they would still vote to stay in the CPP than to say \$1,425 would be enough reason to leave the CPP.

Which of these statements is closest to your point of view about leaving the Canada Pension Plan in favour of an Alberta-only plan?

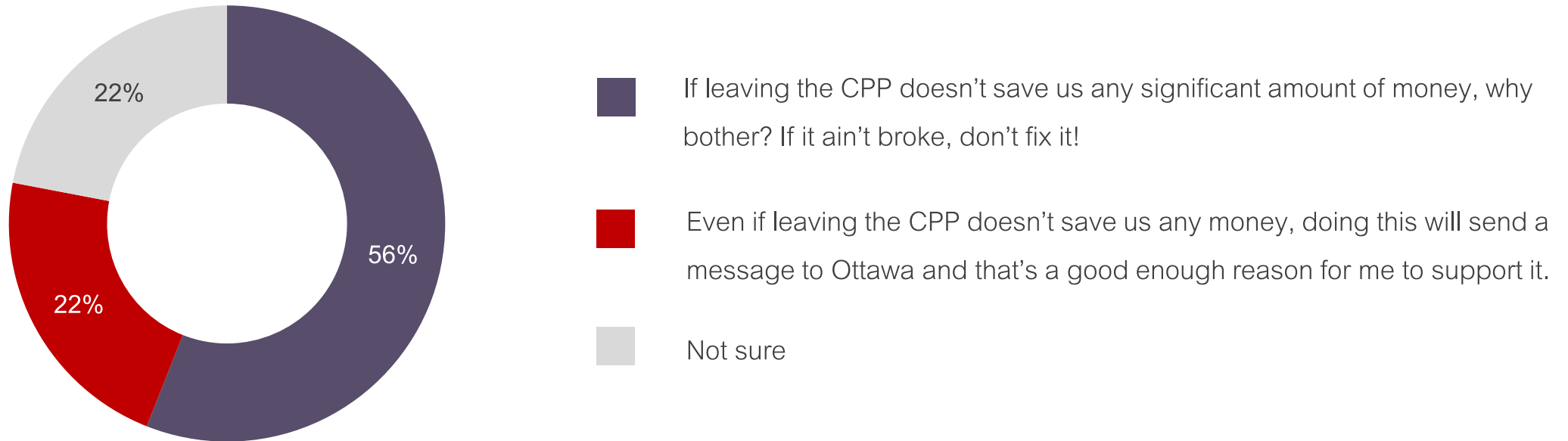


- Saving \$1,425 each year in premiums would be a big deal and would be enough reason for me to vote to leave the CPP.
- Even if we could each save \$1,425 per year in premiums, as the UCP claims, I would still vote to stay in the CPP.
- Not sure

POINT OF VIEW | **SEND MESSAGE TO OTTAWA BY LEAVING CPP?**

Close to six in ten Albertans agree with “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!” about leaving the CPP, vs. two in ten who agree more that leaving the CPP would send a necessary message to Ottawa.

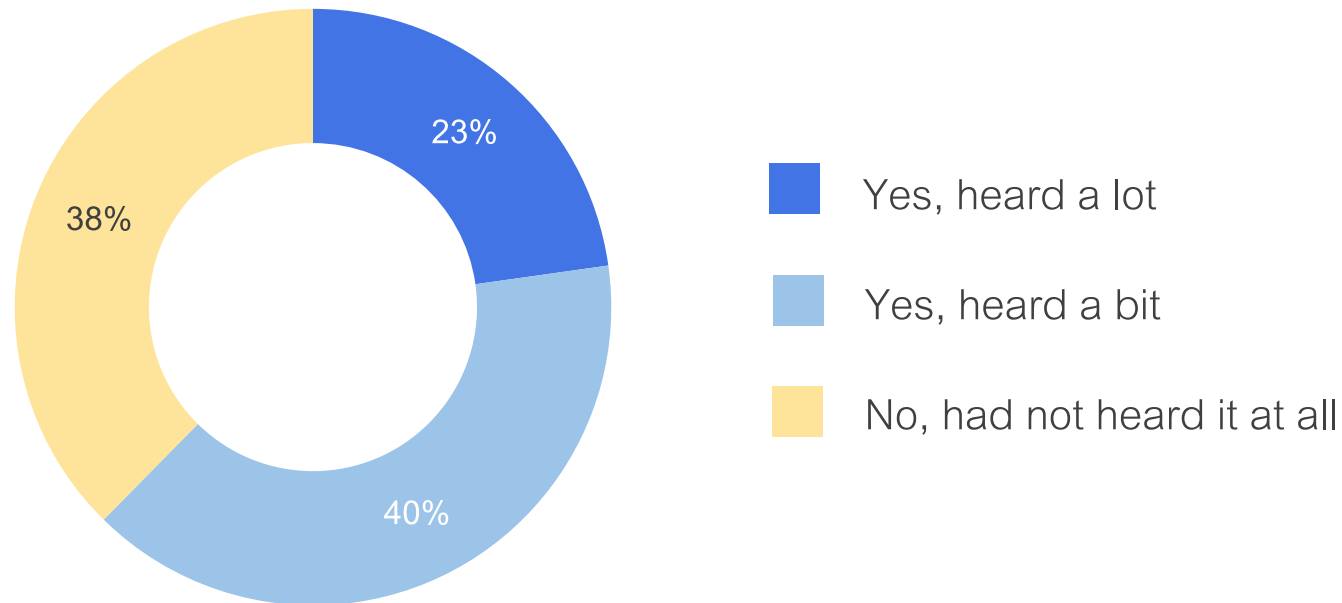
Which of these statements is closest to your point of view about leaving the Canada Pension Plan in favour of an Alberta-only plan?



AWARENESS | UCP OVERCONTRIBUTION TO CPP CLAIMS

Six in ten have heard at least a bit of the UCP claim that Albertans have been over-contributing to the CPP. Four in ten have not heard about this claim at all.

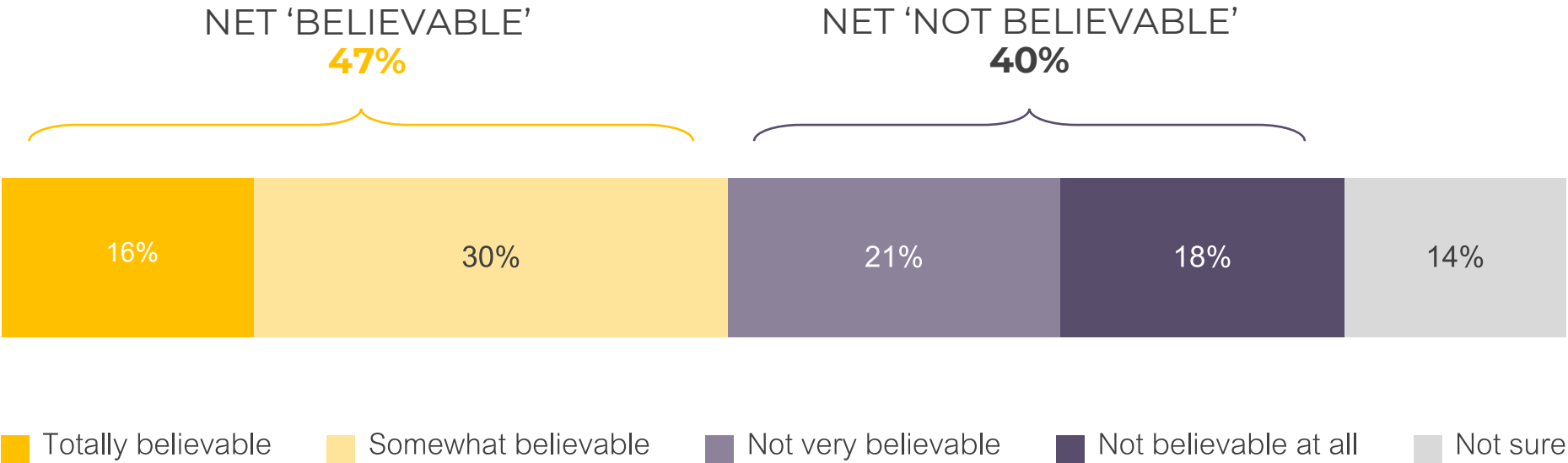
Lately, the Alberta UCP government has claimed that Albertans have been “over-contributing” to the CPP by as much as \$5 billion each year and that this is just the latest example of how Alberta is unfairly forced to subsidize the rest of Canada. Had you heard this claim before today?



OPINION | BELIEVE UCP OVERCONTRIBUTION CLAIMS

Almost half of Albertans think it is at least somewhat believable that they have been overcontributing to the CPP by \$5 billion per year; four in ten are skeptical of this claim.

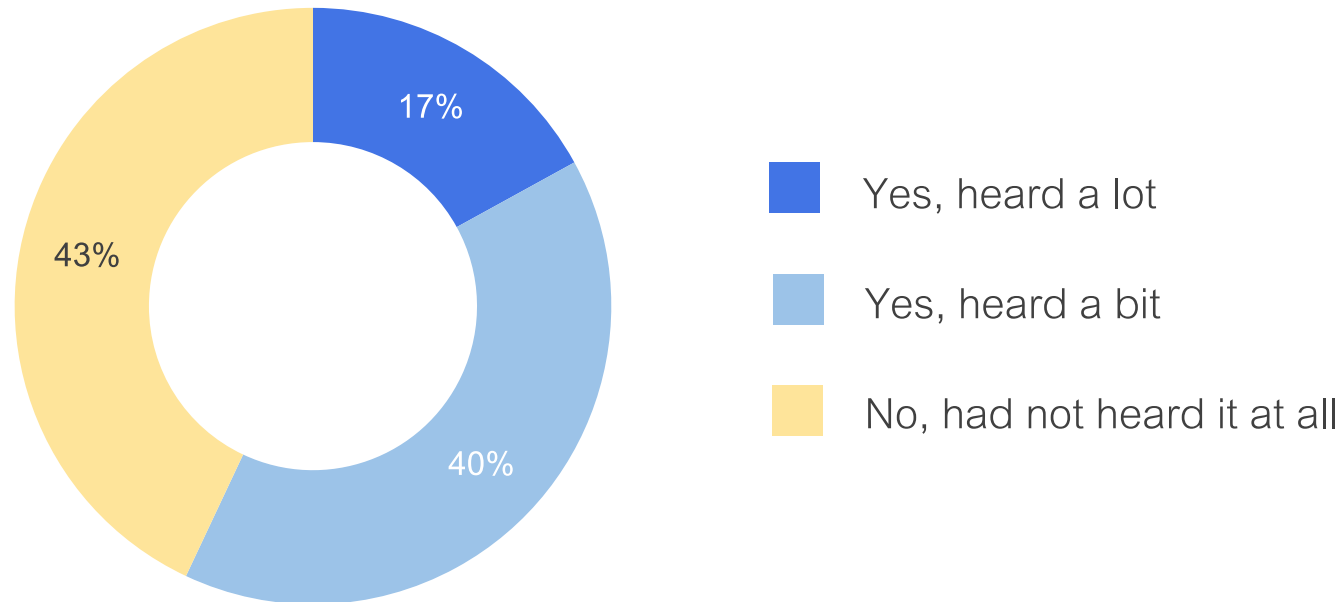
To what extent do you believe this claim that Albertans have been overcontributing \$5 billion per year to the Canada Pension Plan? Is it ...?



AWARENESS | **CPP OVERCONTRIBUTION CLAIM IS MISLEADING**

Just under six in ten have heard the argument that Albertans overcontributing to the CPP is misleading because the formula is the same for all Canadians regardless of where they live.

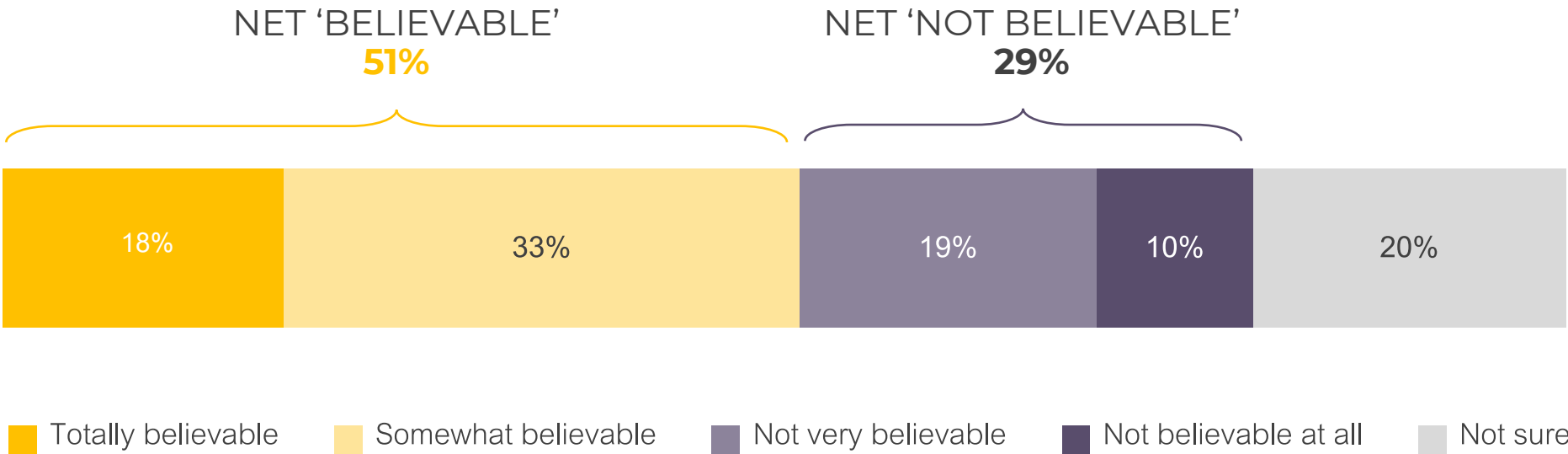
Some people say this claim that Albertans are overcontributing billions to the CPP is misleading. They point out that the formula for calculating CPP premiums and retirement benefits is the same for all Canadians regardless of where they live, and that individual Albertans pay no more for CPP than do other Canadians. Had you heard this argument before today?



OPINION | BELIEF ALBERTANS DO NOT OVERCONTRIBUTE TO CPP

Half say it is at least somewhat believable that they are not overcontributing to the CPP and pay the same amount as other Canadians. Three in ten do not find this believable.

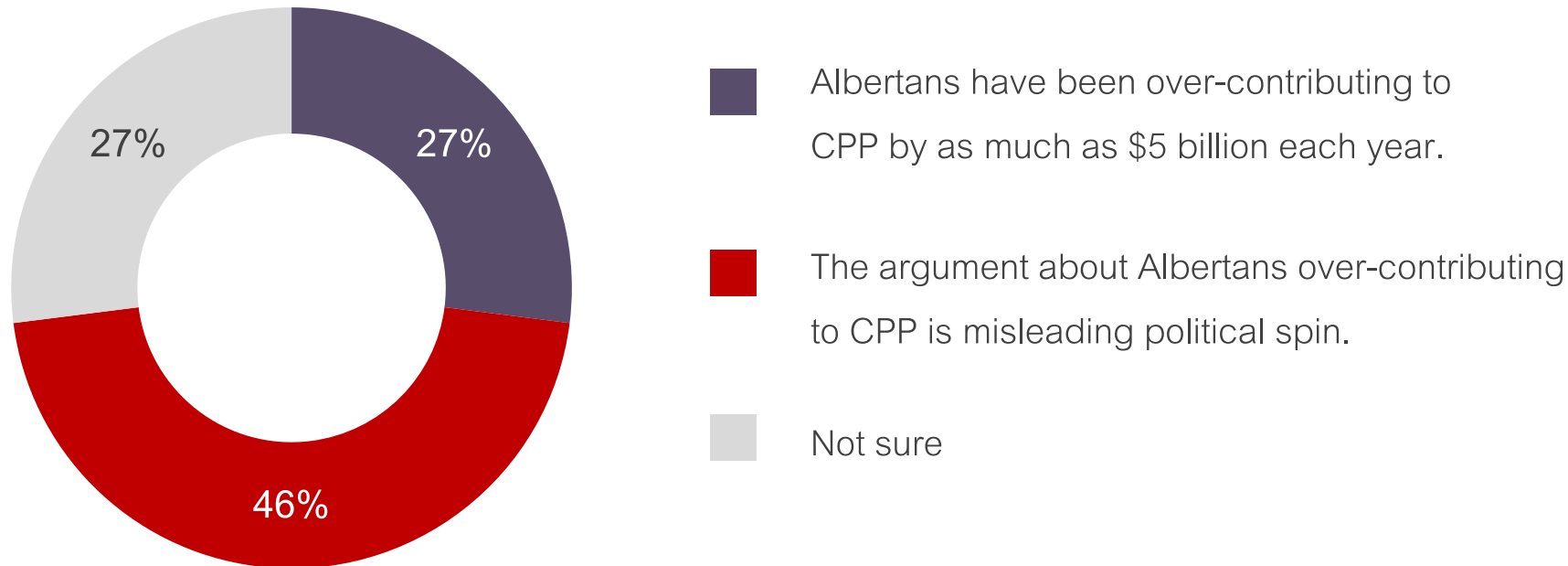
To what extent do you believe this argument that Albertans do not in fact overcontribute to the Canada Pension Plan and actually pay the same amount as other Canadians? Is it...?



POINT OF VIEW | IS OVERCONTRIBUTION CLAIM TRUE OR SPIN?

After hearing the argument that the contribution formula is the same for all Canadians, just under half Albertans think the claim they are over-contributing to CPP is a misleading political spin; around one-quarter still believe it and another quarter are unsure.

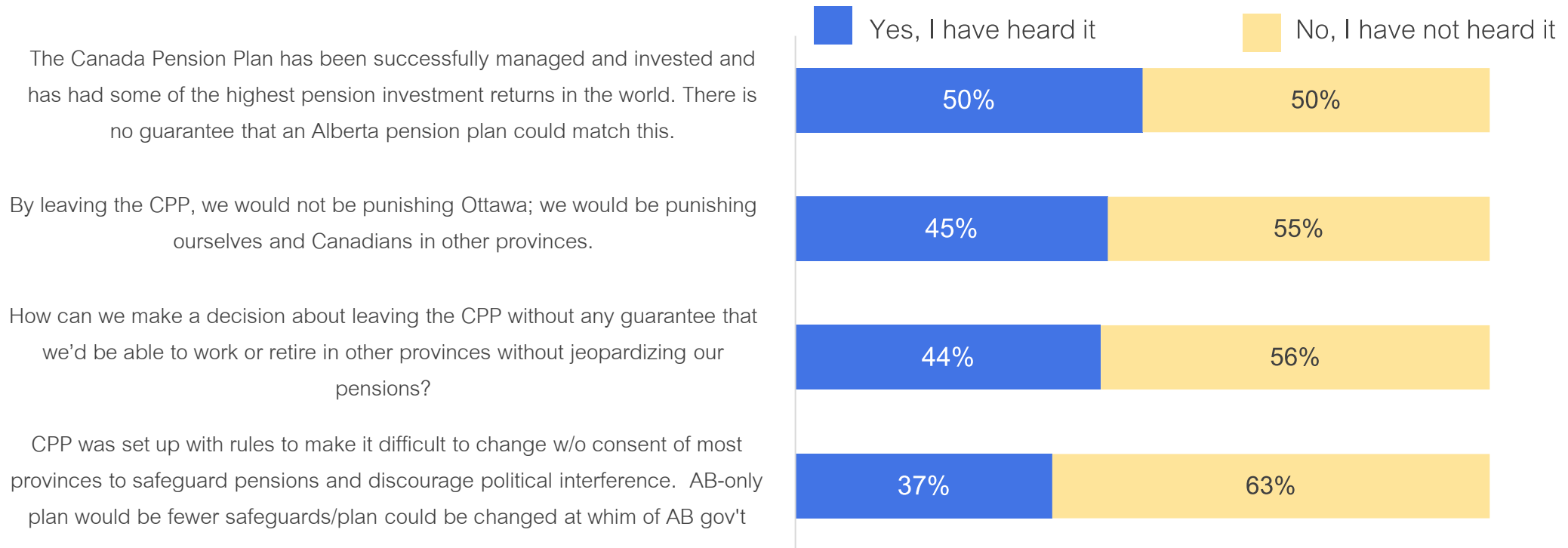
Which of these statements is closest to your point of view?



AWARENESS | ARGUMENTS AGAINST LEAVING CPP

The most well-known arguments heard against the UCP’s pension proposal are that the CPP has high investments returns that the AB government might not match, that leaving would punish Albertans and other Canadians, and that there are no guarantees about the ability to work and retire elsewhere

Here are some arguments that have been made about the Alberta UCP government’s proposal to pull Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan. Have you heard each argument and does each make you likely to support or more likely to oppose Alberta leaving the CPP or does it have no impact on your opinion.



AWARENESS | ARGUMENTS AGAINST LEAVING CPP cont'd

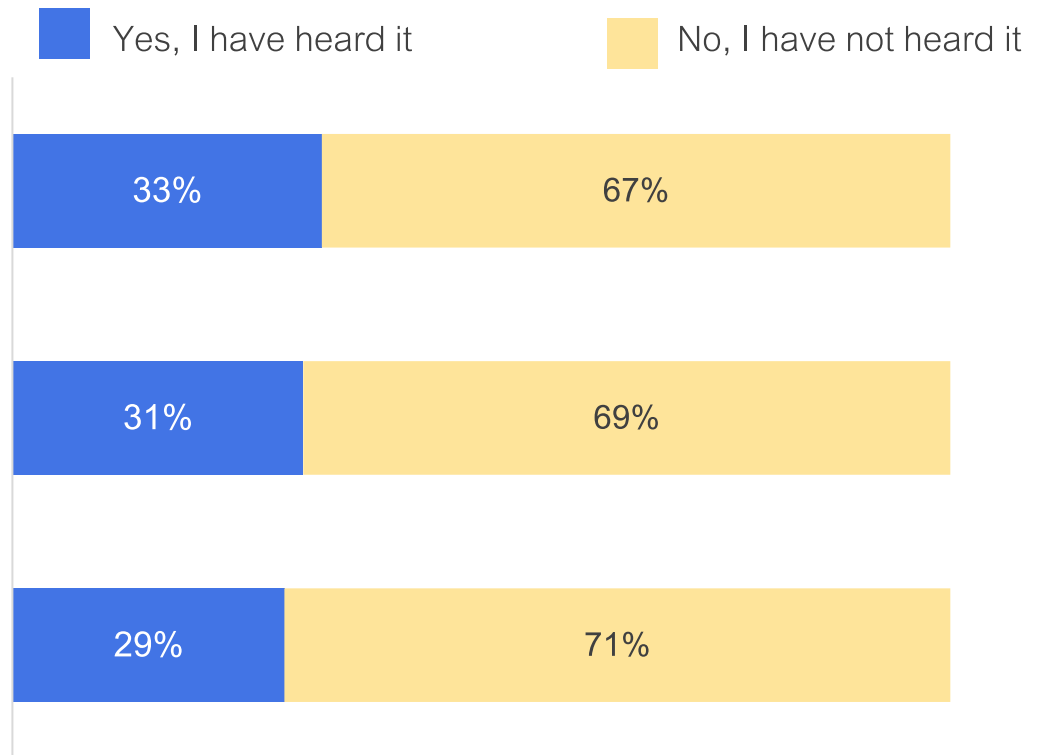
Albertans are less likely to have heard arguments related to an Alberta-only pension plan dissuading workers from coming to the province, or that the AB government might use the money to shore up the oil and gas industry.

Here are some arguments that have been made about the Alberta UCP government's proposal to pull Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan. Have you heard each argument and does each make you likely to support or more likely to oppose Alberta leaving the CPP or does it have no impact on your opinion.

Alberta currently has a younger population than other provs/younger average age means in short-term an AB pension plan could have lower premiums than the CPP. But AB's average age is trending up and premiums could become more expensive in the future

Calgary C of C raised concerns that AB businesses may have a harder time attracting/retaining workers if AB leaves the CPP. They're worried workers won't want to move here if they're forced to put their retirement savings into an AB plan instead of CPP.

Most pension plans incl. CPP have rules that investment strat. should focus exclusively on the best possible returns for retirees. Premier Smith suggested AB pension plan could be used by AB gov't to shore up oil & gas industry – even w/ lower return rate



IMPACT ON OPINION | ARGUMENTS ON SUPPORT FOR LEAVING CPP

Over half of Albertans say four arguments would make them more likely to oppose an AB-only pension plan: its impact on work and retirement mobility, possible investment in oil and gas, being changed on government whim, or CPP's current successful rate of return.

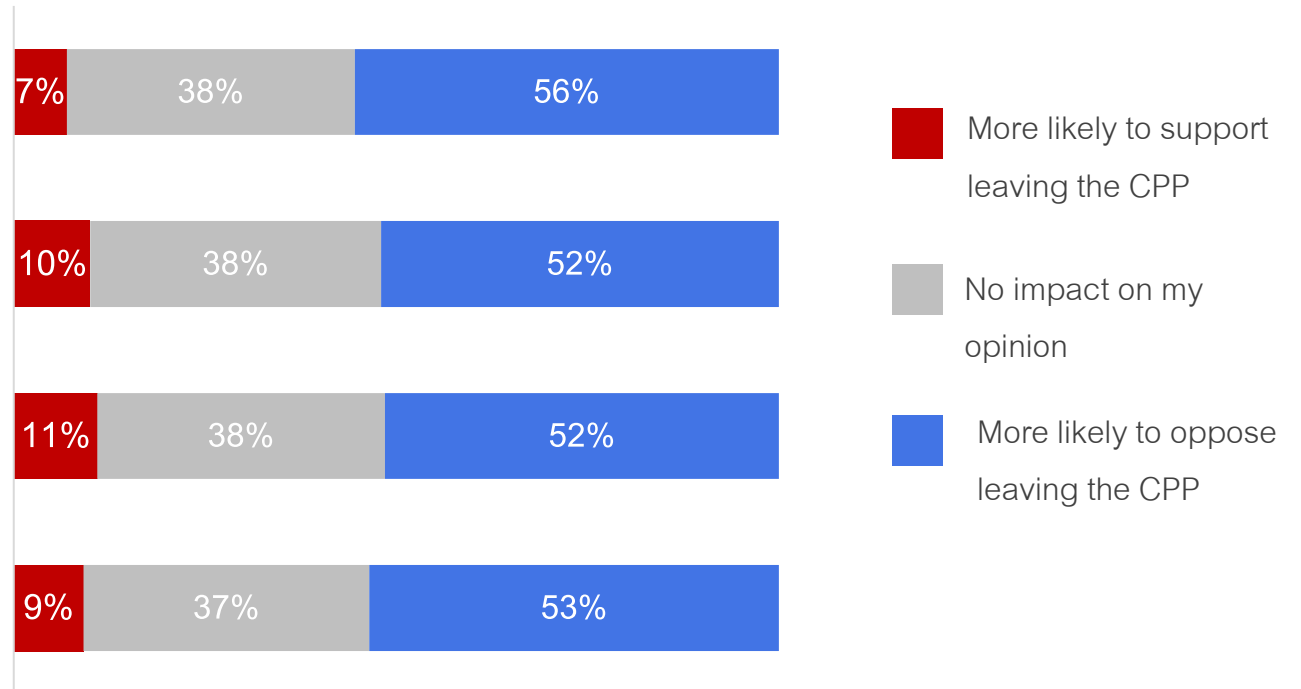
Here are some arguments that have been made about the Alberta UCP government's proposal to pull Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan. Have you heard each argument and does each make you likely to support or more likely to oppose Alberta leaving the CPP or does it have no impact on your opinion.

How can we make a decision about leaving the CPP without any guarantee that we'd be able to work or retire in other provinces without jeopardizing our pensions?

Most pension plans incl. CPP have rules that investment strat. should focus excl. on best possible returns for retirees. Premier Smith suggested AB pension plan could be used by AB gov't to shore up oil & gas – even w/ lower return rate

CPP was set up with rules to make it difficult to change w/o consent of most provinces to safeguard pensions and discourage political interference. AB-only plan would be fewer safeguards/plan could be changed at whim of AB gov't

The Canada Pension Plan has been successfully managed and invested and has had some of the highest pension investment returns in the world. There is no guarantee that an Alberta pension plan could match this.



IMPACT ON OPINION | ARGUMENTS ON SUPPORT FOR LEAVING CPP, con't

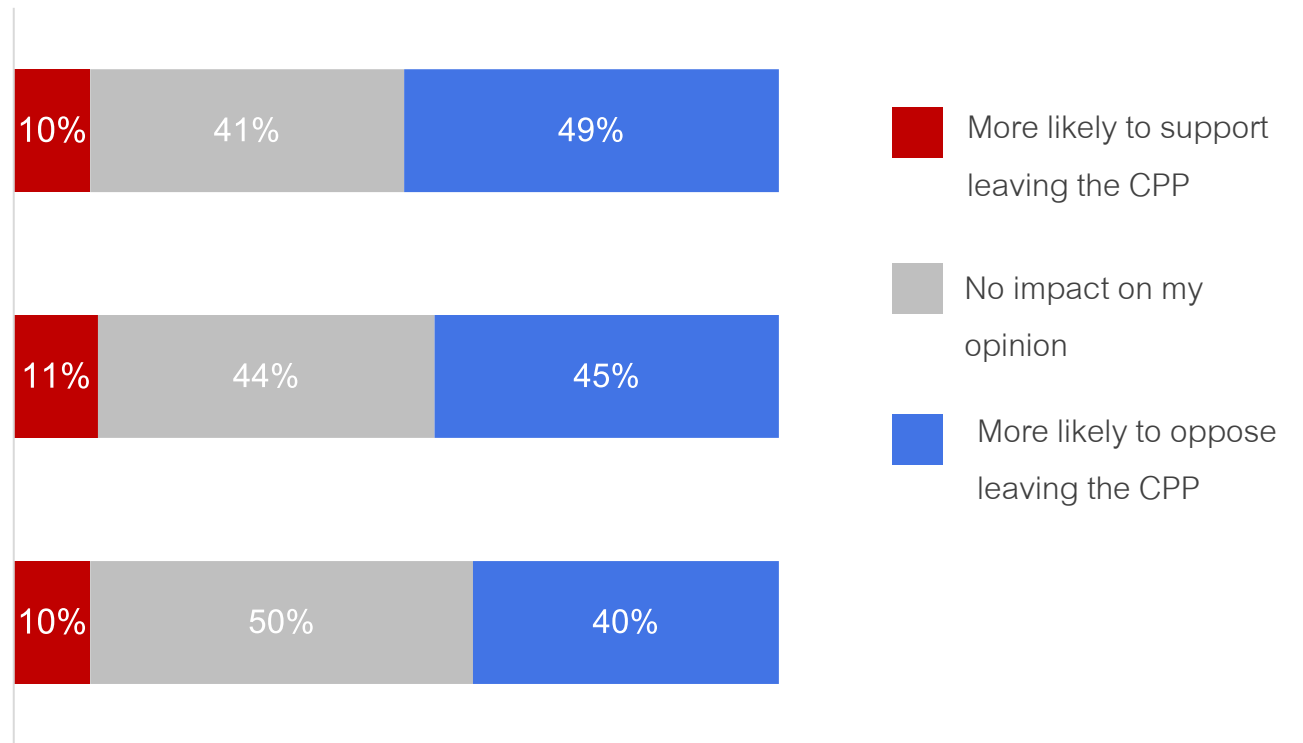
Significant proportions also say they would be more likely to oppose the plan after hearing that leaving the CPP would make it harder for businesses to attract people to Alberta, that it would punish people and not Ottawa, or that AB's aging population could mean higher premiums in the future

Here are some arguments that have been made about the Alberta UCP government's proposal to pull Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan. Have you heard each argument and does each make you likely to support or more likely to oppose Alberta leaving the CPP or does it have no impact on your opinion.

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce has raised concerns that Alberta businesses may have a harder time attracting and retaining workers if Alberta leaves the CPP. They're worried that workers won't want to move here if they're forced to put their retirement sa

By leaving the CPP, we would not be punishing Ottawa; we would be punishing ourselves and Canadians in other provinces.

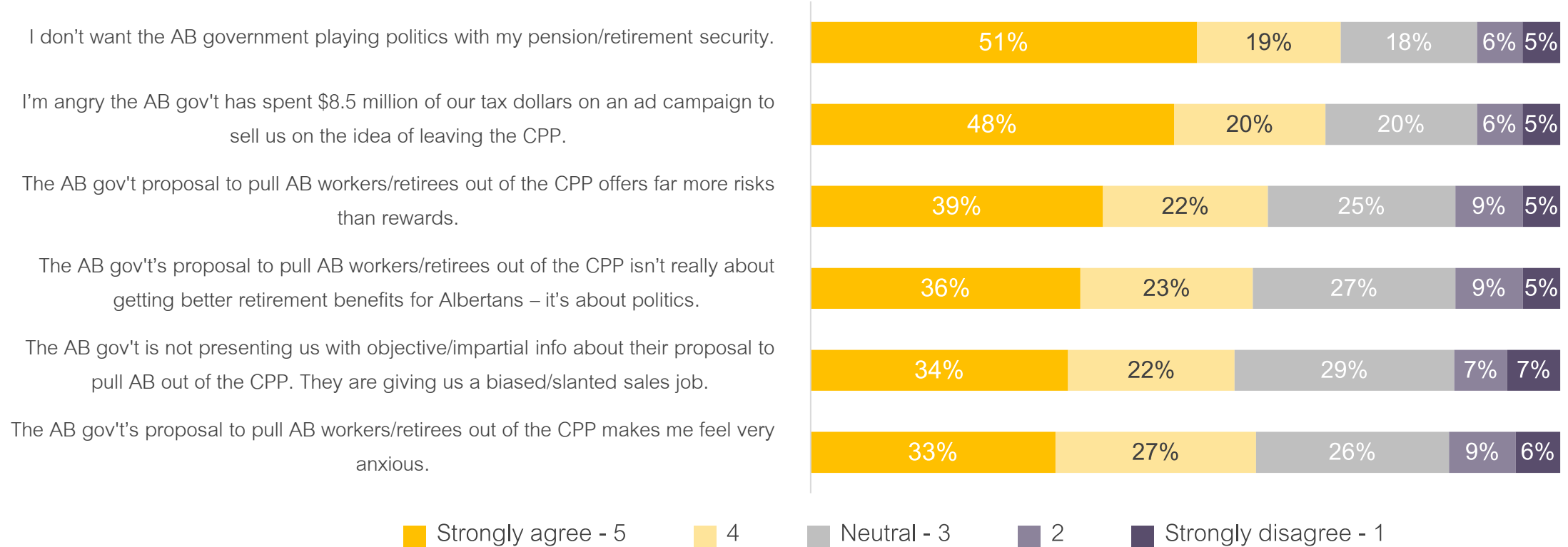
Alberta currently has a younger population than other provinces and our younger average age means that in the short-term an Alberta pension plan could have lower premiums than the Canada Pension Plan. But Alberta's average age is trending up. and premiums



PERSPECTIVE | STATEMENTS AGAINST LEAVING CPP

The vast majority agree that they do not want the government to play politics with pensions, and are angry over the millions spent on ads to sell the idea of leaving the CPP.

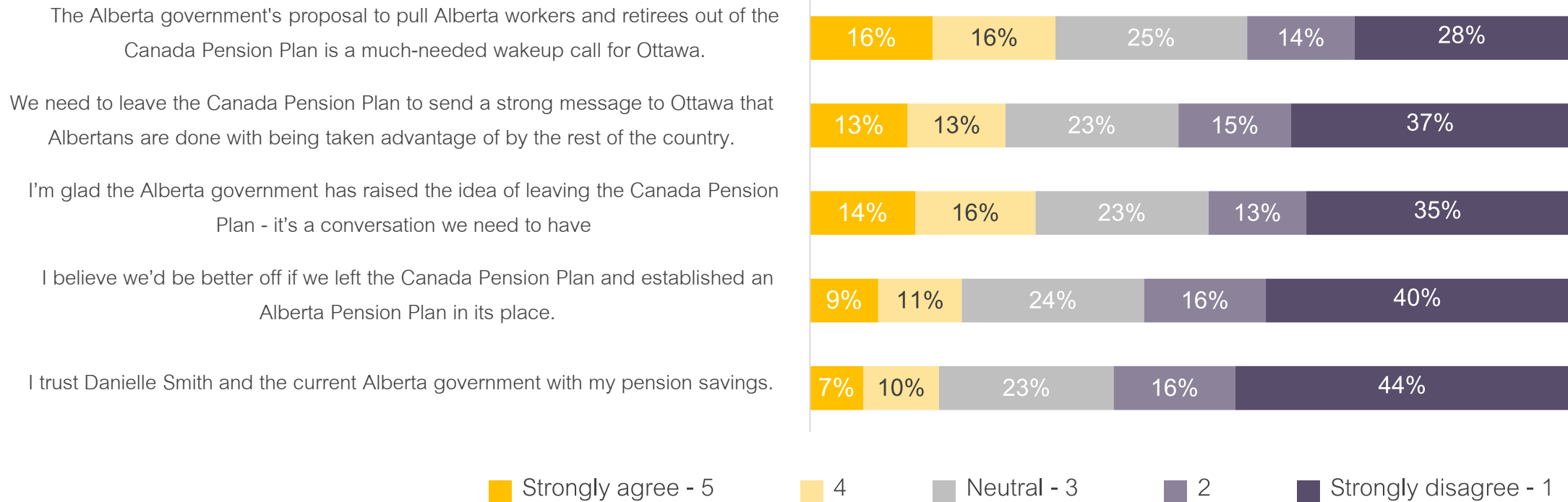
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements – with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”?



PERSPECTIVE | STATEMENTS FOR LEAVING CPP

None of the statements in favour of leaving the CPP resonate with the majority agreement of Albertans.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements – with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”?



PERSPECTIVE | OTHER STATEMENTS ON LEAVING CPP

Pluralities agree that the results of a referendum on leaving the CPP should be binding on the government and that the government's proposal to leave the CPP is part of a long-term plan for Alberta separation.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements – with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”?

The results of a referendum on whether or not to leave the Canada Pension Plan should be binding on the Alberta government.



I think the Alberta government's proposal to pull out of the Canada Pension Plan is part of a long-term plan to put Alberta on a track to separate from Canada.

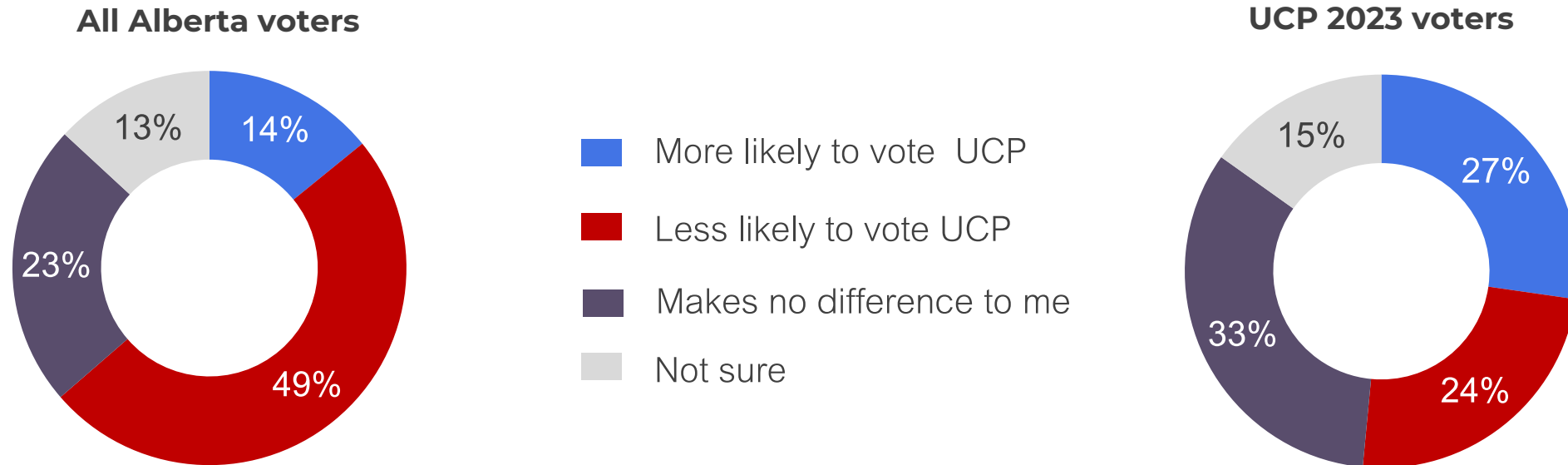


Strongly agree - 5 4 Neutral - 3 2 Strongly disagree - 1

VOTE INTENTION | IMPACT OF CPP WITHDRAWAL ON UCP VOTE

If Danielle Smith and the UCP keep pushing for the province to withdraw from the CPP, over one-quarter of Albertans who voted UCP in 2023 say they would be less likely to vote UCP in the next provincial election.

If Danielle Smith and the UCP keep pushing for Alberta to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan, what impact would it have on your likelihood of voting UCP in the next Alberta election? Would it make you...?



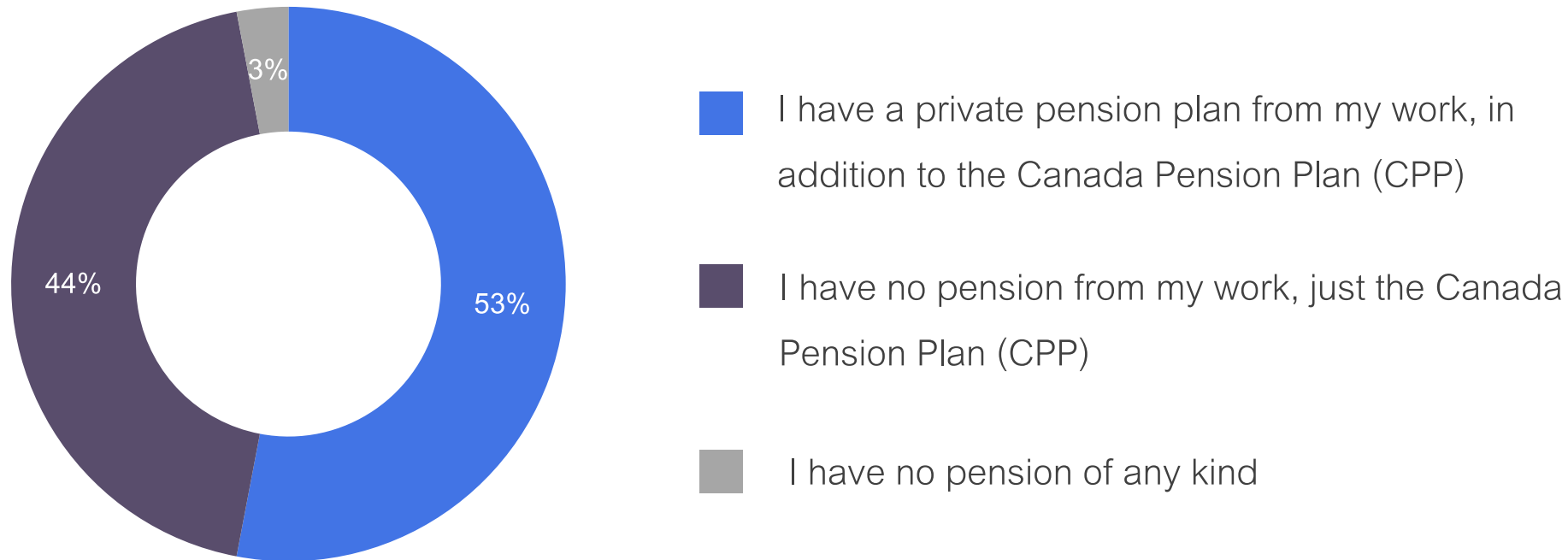
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

PENSION PLANS | **AMONG THOSE WHO ARE RETIRED**

Just over half of Albertans have a private pension plan in addition to the CPP; just over four in ten only have the CPP.

Which of the following best describes what pension plan you have contributed to or are entitled to, if any?

Subsample: those who are retired (n=256)

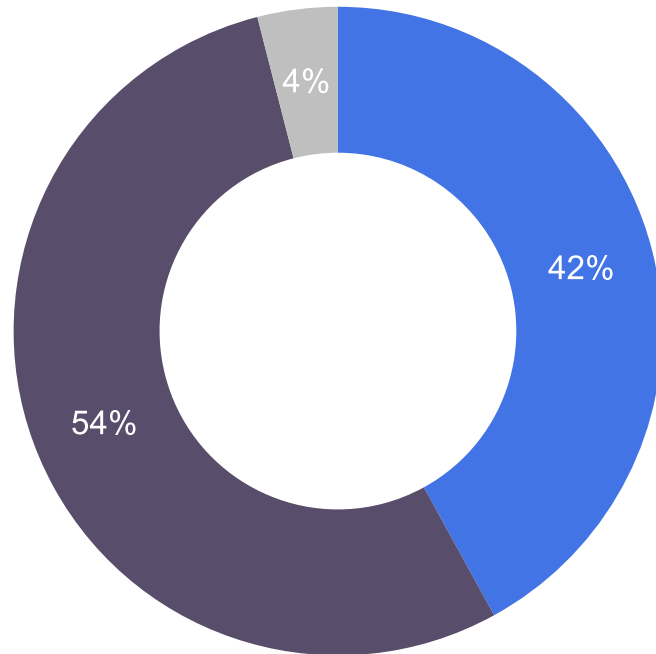


PENSION PLANS | **AMONG THOSE WHO ARE NOT RETIRED**

Over half of Albertans who have not yet retired will only have the CPP for a retirement pension.

Which of the following best describes what pension you expect to have when you retire, if any?

Subsample: Those who are not retired (n=746)



- I'll have a private pension plan from my work, in addition to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- I will only have the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- I will not have any pension (e.g. I never worked in Canada)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Gender



Female, 52%

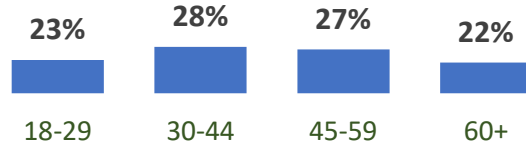


Male, 48%

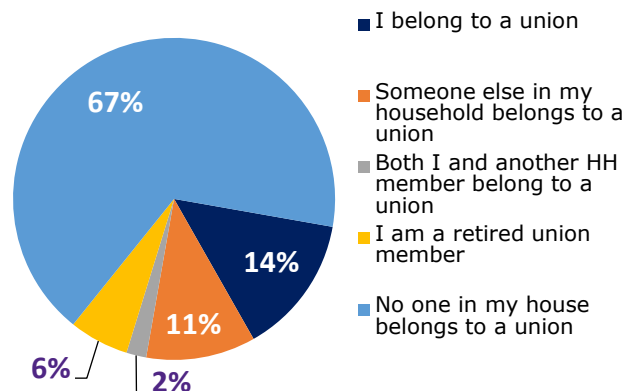
* 1% identified as non-binary

* <1% identified as "other"

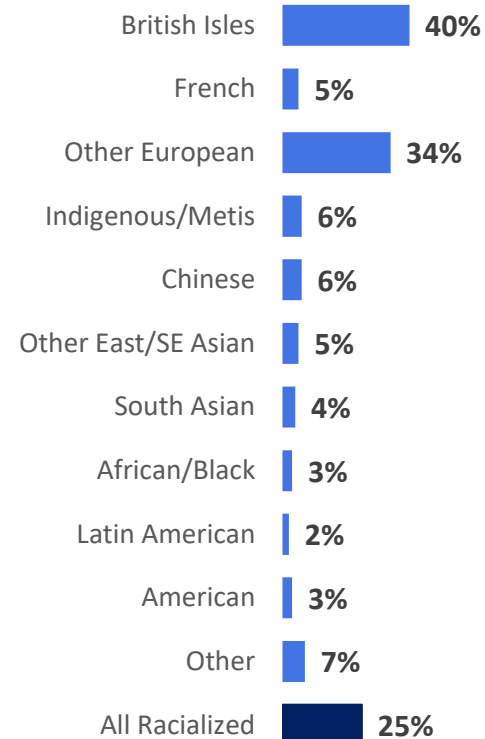
Age



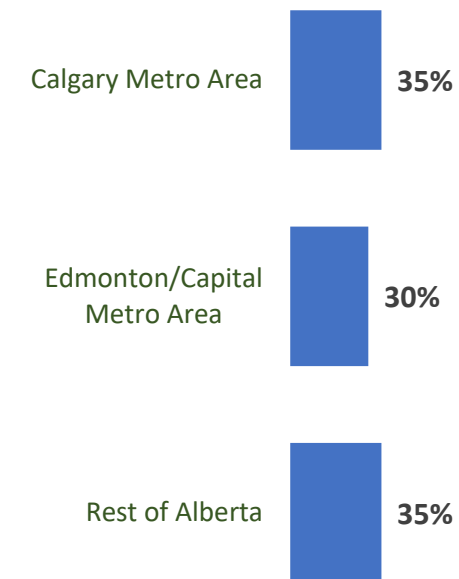
Belonging to Union



Ethnic Background

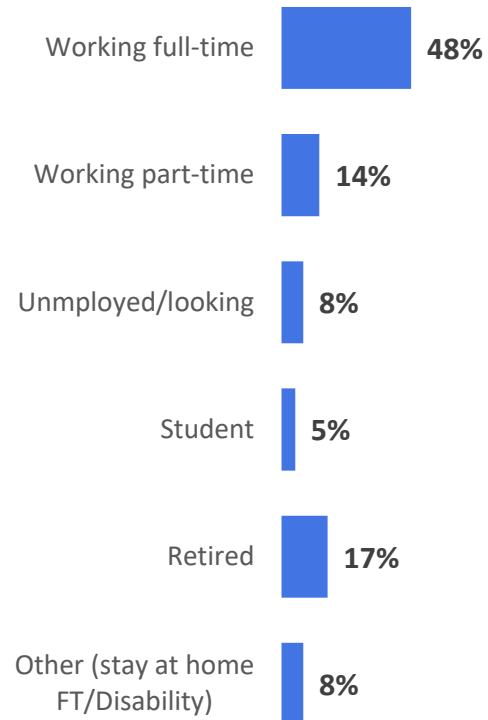


Region of Alberta

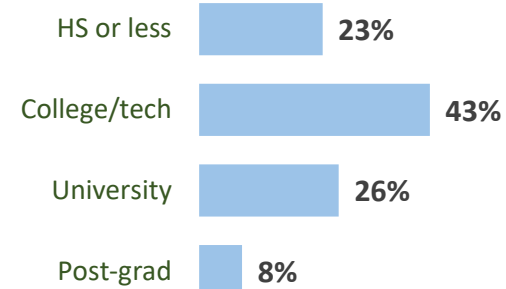


SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

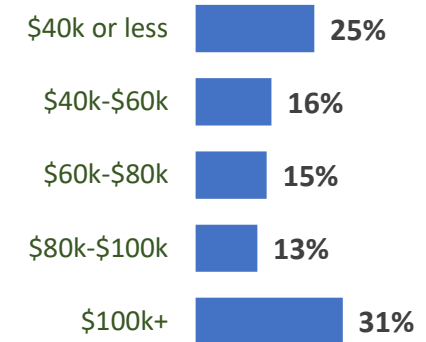
Employment



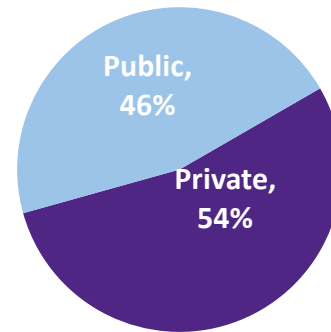
Level of Education



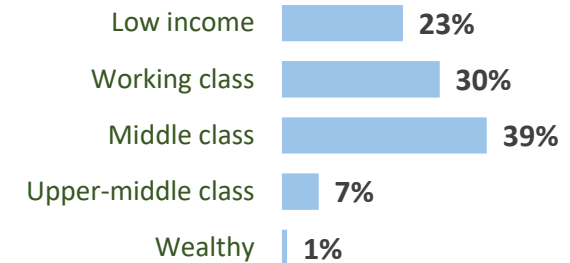
Household Income



Sector of Work



Self-Described Economic Class



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