

Report

Climate Change Politics

Western Canada: November 2020



DATE 2021-01-18

Leger

We know Canadians

METHODOLOGY

Context and Objectives

Context

Clean Prosperity works at the federal and provincial level to find climate change solutions that are innovative, support economic growth and generate new economic opportunity. Through this project, the Clean Prosperity team wants to understand the opinion of Western Canada residents on climate change, carbon taxes and policies to address carbon pollution.

Objectives

Through this research, the Clean prosperity team wants to understand:

- The importance of climate change for Western Canadian voters
- The views of respondents on the carbon tax
- Impressions of the provincial governments' position toward the federal carbon tax

Methodology

Study Population

- Western Canada (MB, SK, AB and BC) residents from Federal target ridings, aged 18 and older.
- The target ridings consisted of all CPC held ridings (71) in Western Canada

Data Collection

- A total of n=2004 online surveys were conducted via Leger's online panel, LEO.
- Data was collected from November 12 to November 24, 2020.

Statistical Analysis

- As a non-probability internet survey, a margin of error is technically not to be reported.
- If the data were collected through a random sample, the margin of error would be Western Canada residents (n=2004) $\pm 2.2\%$, 19 times out of 20.
- Quotas were set to ensure survey completions were properly distributed across the EDAs in the region.
- Using data from the 2016 Census, results were weighted according to age, gender and region in order to ensure a representative sample of the population.
- The results are often reported across specific sub-groups: provinces; CPC vote intention (current and accessible) and riding risk (Low, Medium, and High).
 - Riding Risk was determined by examining the results of the 2019 election and creating categories of ridings based on the plurality of the CPC victory: Low Risk (margin of victory greater than 50%); Medium Risk (margin was greater than 20% but less than 50%) and High Risk (margin of victory was 20% or less)
- The numbers presented have been rounded to the nearest whole number. However, raw values were used to calculate the sums presented and therefore may not correspond to the manual addition of these numbers.

Key Findings

Key Findings (1/2)

Voters' Top of mind concerns:

Priority Issues: Growing Economy and creating jobs is top concerns among western Canadians, 39% want it prioritized by federal government. Climate change is most important concern for 14% residents. On asking specifically about the climate change concerns, 63% mentioned that it makes them worried.

- 49% also agreed that they will only vote for a federal party if it has a credible climate change plan. 56% accessible voters mention the need for federal party to have credible plan.
- A credible climate change plan will increase the likelihood of 31% accessible and 25% CPC voters to support the CPC. This will benefit CPC in high risk ridings where it increases the likelihood for support among 30% voters.
- Two-thirds of respondents support policies targeting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and achieving net zero carbon emission goal by 2050.

Support for climate change policies is higher among British Columbia ridings than other regions.

Carbon Pricing

Carbon Tax: Initial idea of carbon tax where you pay more for the activities that create pollution finds support among 47% western Canadian residents, 26% CPC voters. A third of those opposing this form of carbon tax believe that it won't be effective in achieving its goal. 33% of opposing CPC voters see it as a tax grab while 42% of accessible voters believe it may not be affordable for all.

Current Provincial Carbon Tax (Increased Gasoline and Heating price with rebate in the form of Income tax refund): This form of Carbon Tax has over 40% support in each of the prairie province.

Key Findings (2/2)

Carbon Tax (Income Tax Exemption instead of direct rebate): The form of carbon pricing where the rebate is provided as increase in income tax exemption threshold finds support among half of the residents (51%) of Western Canada. Interestingly, Support among CPC voters and accessible CPC voters is very similar. This will also make about a quarter of CPC and accessible voter more likely to vote CPC. Of those opposing, 44% of voters would start supporting this pricing method if it improves likelihood of CPC to win elections.

Carbon Tax (All Tax money Rebated back to Families and Businesses): 57% of residents support the carbon pricing policy if they were assured that all money from the tax gets rebated back to families and businesses. This also increases the likelihood to support CPC among a quarter of accessible CPC voters. The assurance that the plan improves CPC's chances of winning elections converts 44% of initially opposing CPC voters to start supporting this carbon pricing policy. Adding that the tax would provide an additional rebate to rural residents and farmers find support among 35% voters who initially opposed the policy.

Carbon Tax – Benefits for Oil & Gas Sector: 64% of residents will support a carbon pricing policy if it would benefit the oil & gas sector greatly. Of the current voters, 59% would still vote CPC if it introduces a policy that raises gas or heating cost but returns money by other means. This will make 38% of accessible voters more likely to vote for the CPC. Half of Alberta and Saskatchewan residents support a carbon pricing policy that increases gas and heating costs but provides money back. Manitobans show slightly less support.

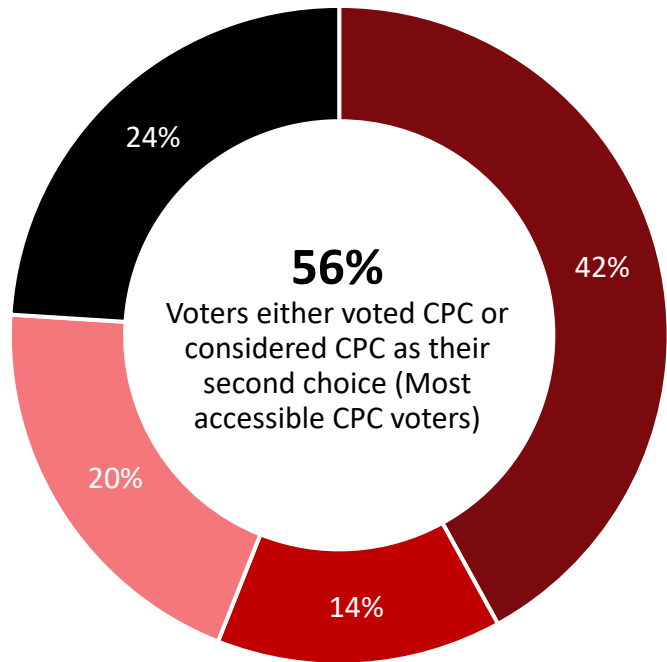
Elements of a Carbon Pricing Policy: Most residents want 'Investing in technology to reduce emissions' to be prioritized in a climate change plan.

Finally, 67% of CPC voters will support any credible carbon pricing policy if Erin O'Toole proposes it in order to increase the party's chances of winning government.

Detailed Results

CPC Voter Pool

Over half of the western Canada target riding residents considered Conservative Party among their top two choices for federal elections

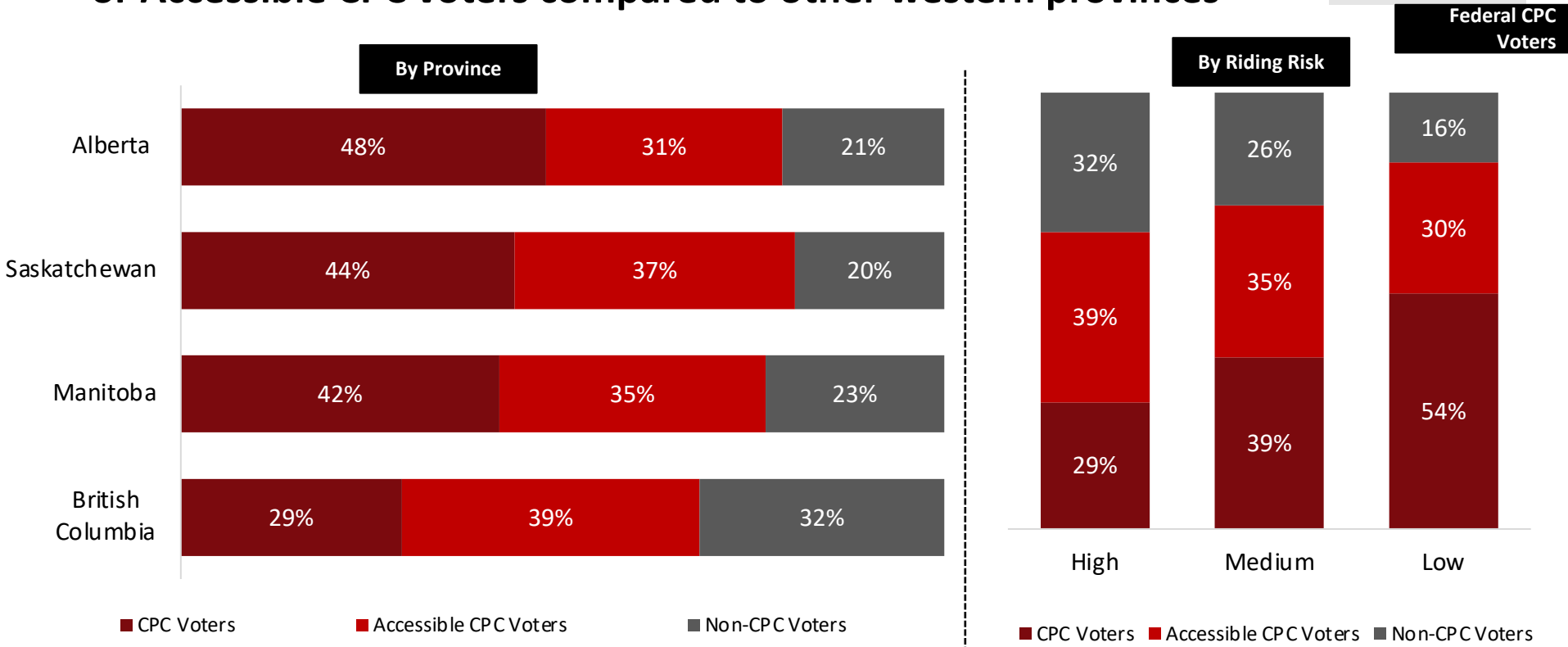


- CPC voters
- Most Accessible CPC voters
- Potential CPC voters
- Non-CPC voters

Term	Definition	Proportion
CPC Voters	Voted CPC on 2019 General Election	42%
Most Accessible CPC Voters	CPC 2 nd choice/CPC-Liberal Switcher	14%
Potential CPC Voters	CPC not excluded as a possible ballot choice	20%
Non-CPC Voters	Other than above (Never vote CPC)	24%

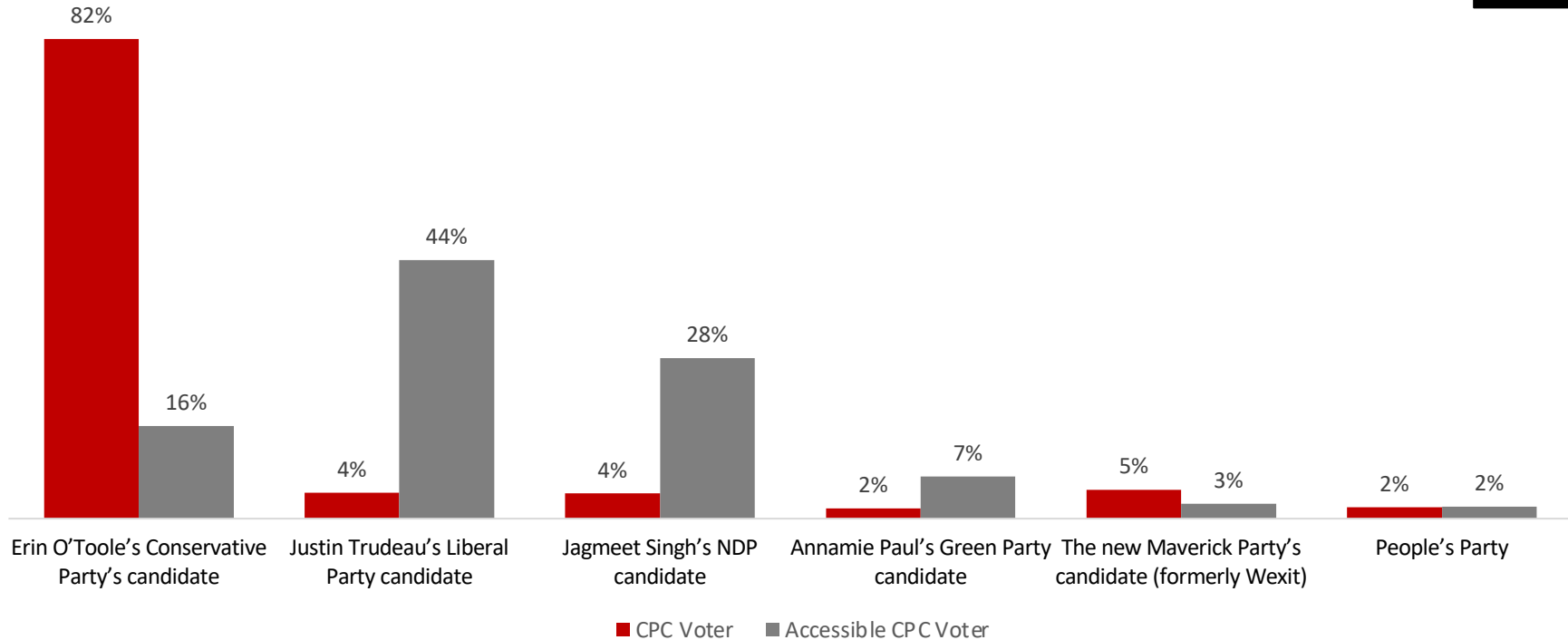
Accessible
Voters

British Columbian target ridings have the lowest proportion of CPC or Accessible CPC voters compared to other western provinces



High Risk ridings have about 68% voters considering CPC in Federal elections vs. 84% in low risk ridings (CPC or Accessible CPC Voters)

If a federal election happens tomorrow, 82% of CPC voters and 16% of Accessible voters would choose CPC









Q6: And if a Federal election was tomorrow which of the party's candidates below would you be most likely to support?

Q6A: Is there a Party you are leaning toward supporting, even just a little? (Committed Votes)

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Also, 42% of target riding votes would go to the Conservative party; 29% in British Columbia

Committed Votes by Regions	 Conservative Party of Canada	 Liberal Party of Canada	 New Democratic Party	 Green Party of Canada	 Maverick Party	 People's Party of Canada
Western Canada	42%	27%	21%	5%	3%	2%
Manitoba	45%	28%	21%	3%	1%	2%
Saskatchewan	45%	24%	20%	5%	3%	3%
Alberta	47%	26%	18%	3%	4%	2%
British Columbia	29%	30%	29%	8%	2%	1%

Only 29% of high risk riding will vote for CPC, compared to 55% low risk ridings in Western Canada

Q6: And if a Federal election was tomorrow which of the party's candidates below would you be most likely to support?

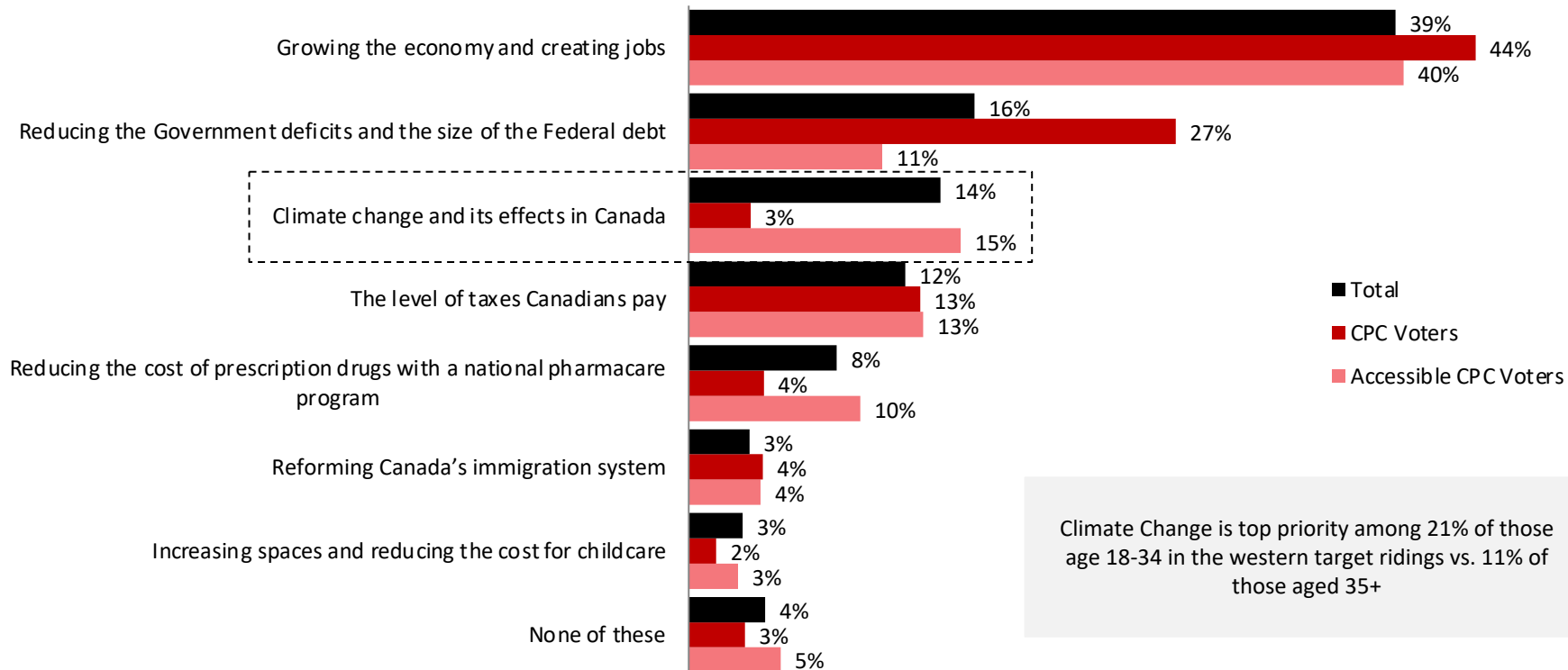
Q6A: Is there a Party you are leaning toward supporting, even just a little? (Committed Votes)

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Detailed Results

Priority Issues

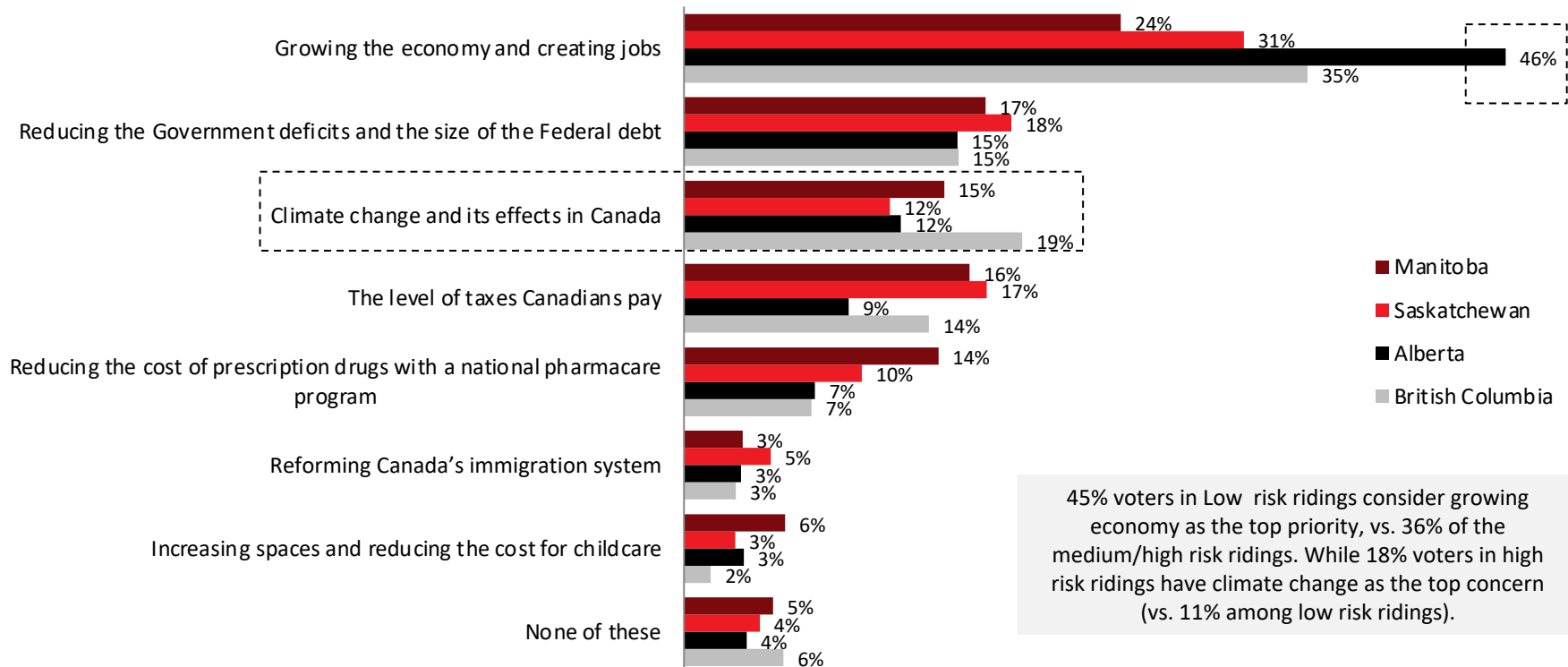
About 14% of voters are most concerned about climate change, while economy is top concern among 39%



Q7: Once the COVID-19 situation is under control and we likely have a vaccine in place, what is the other issue that you think the government in Ottawa should prioritize? Please select from the list the issue that for you personally is the most important

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

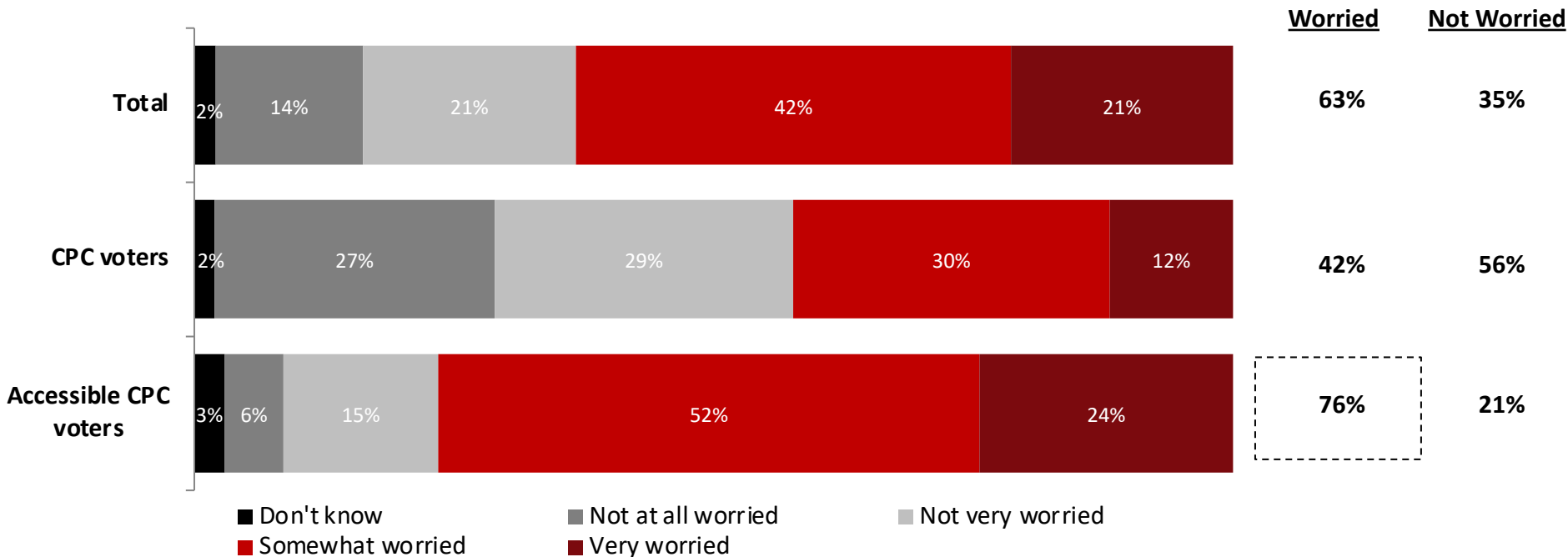
Provincially, British Columbians show high interest in climate change while the majority of Albertan ridings have economy as top concern



Q7: Once the COVID-19 situation is under control and we likely have a vaccine in place, what is the other issue that you think the government in Ottawa should prioritize? Please select from the list the issue that for you personally is the most important

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

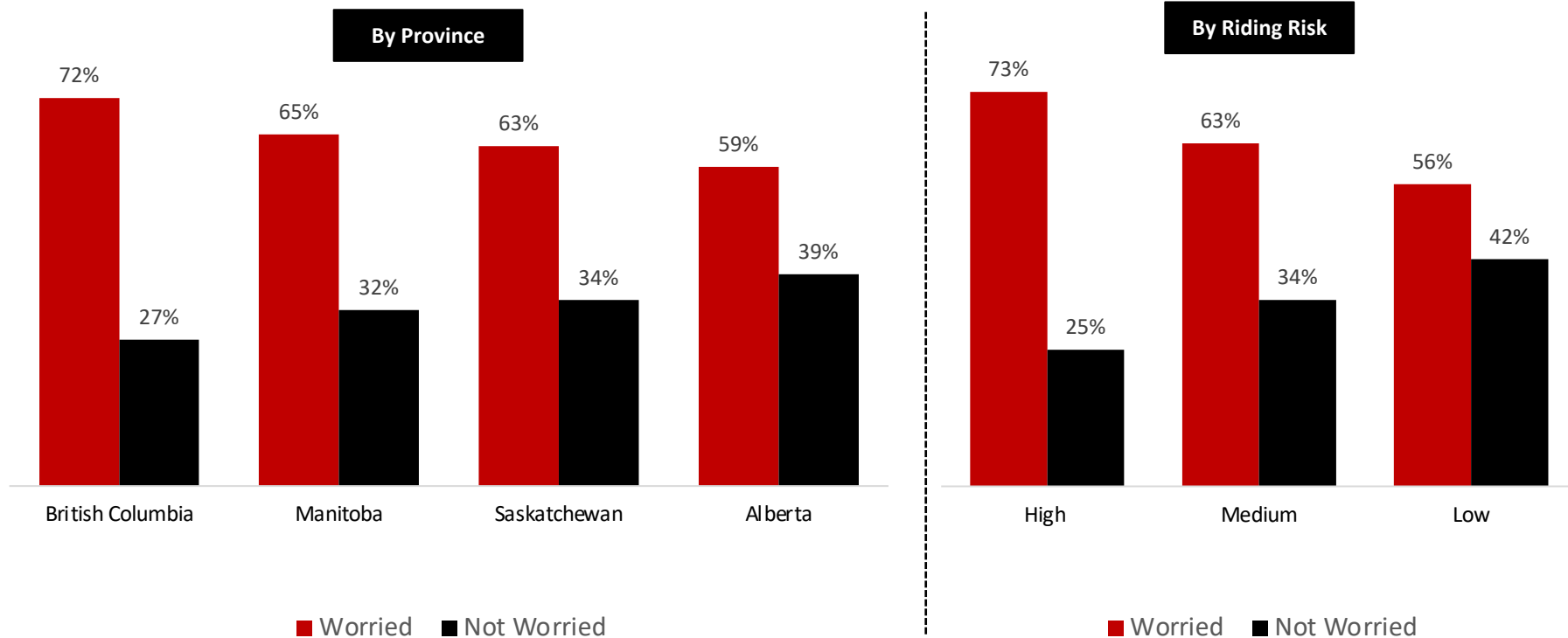
Asking specifically about climate change concerns, 76% accessible CPC voters mention being worried about its impacts



62% of aged 18-34 are worried in these target ridings, vs. 60% of 35+

Mirroring provincial unaided concerns, Climate change and its effects worry British Columbians the most

Medium to high risk ridings are more worried than low risk ridings



Q9: When you hear news and discussion about climate change how worried are you about how this will impact you and your family?

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

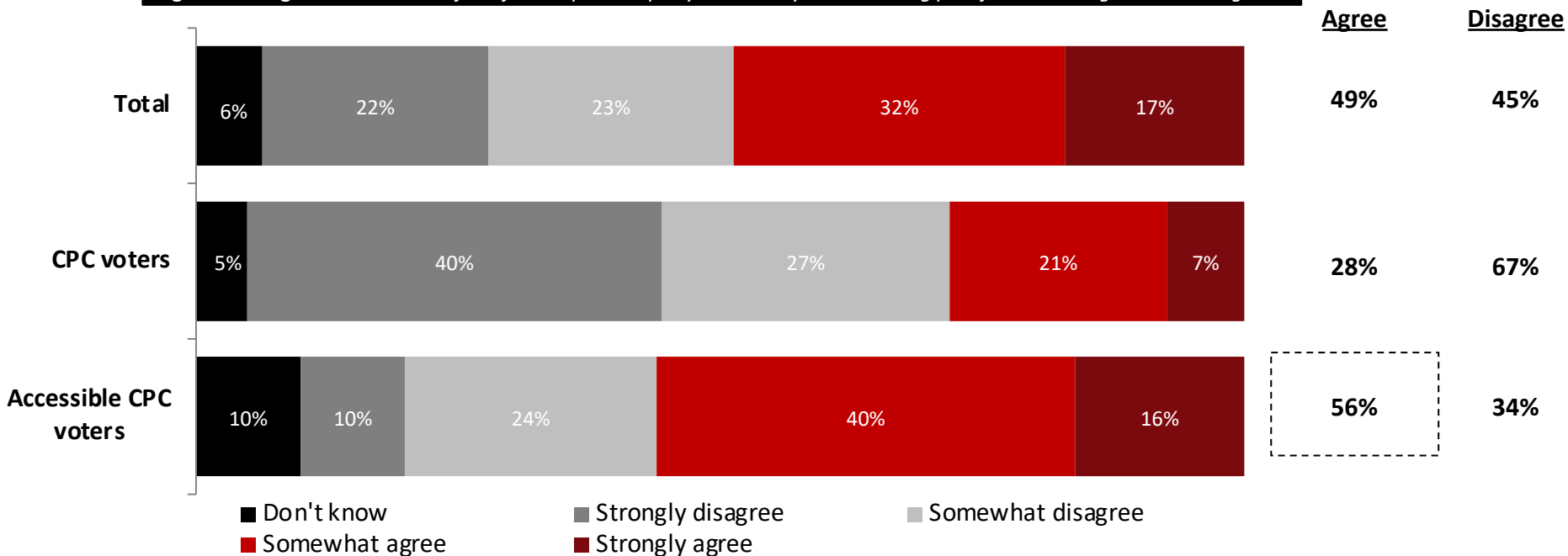
Detailed Results

Climate Change and Government Policies

About half of residents, 56% accessible CPC voters agree that they would vote for a federal party only if it has strong climate change plans

Agree/Disagree

Agree or disagree: *I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.*



56% of aged 18-34 agree to the statement, vs. 45% of 35+; Males are significantly more likely to disagree (48% vs. 42% females)

Q10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.*

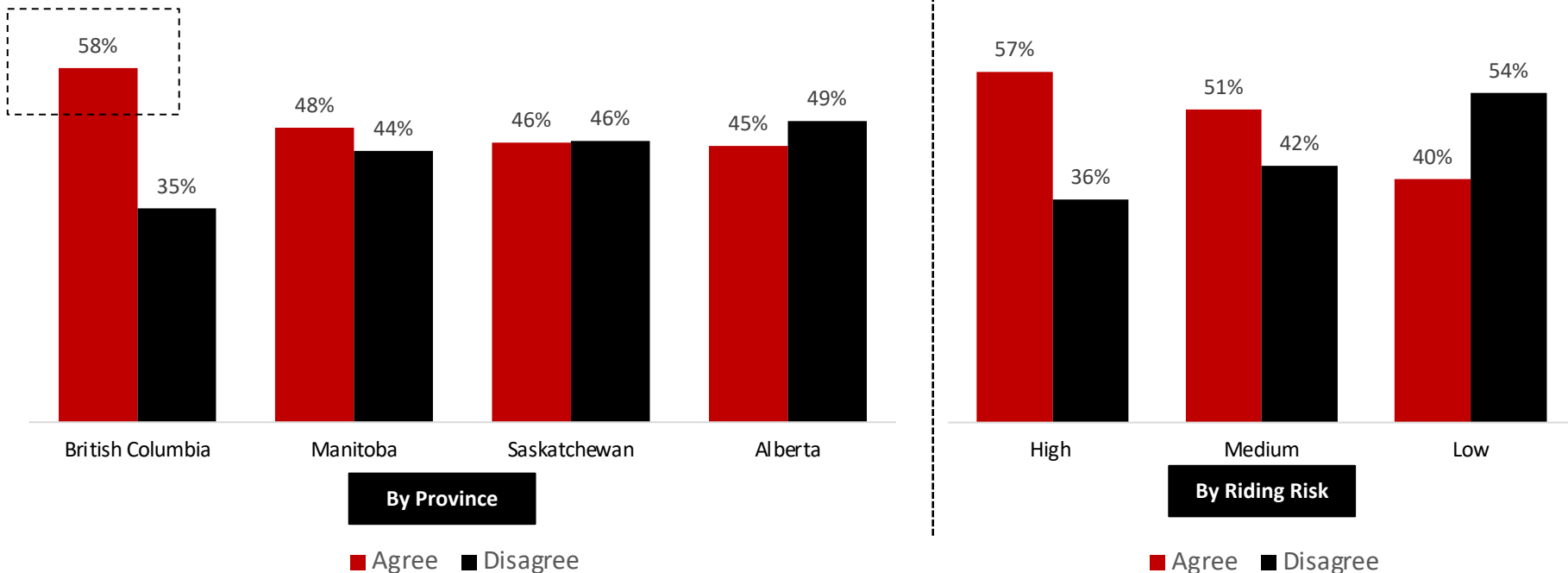
Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

British Columbian ridings are more likely to choose federal party that has a strong plan to address climate change

Recall that proportion of those most worried about climate change is highest in British Columbia.

Agree/Disagree

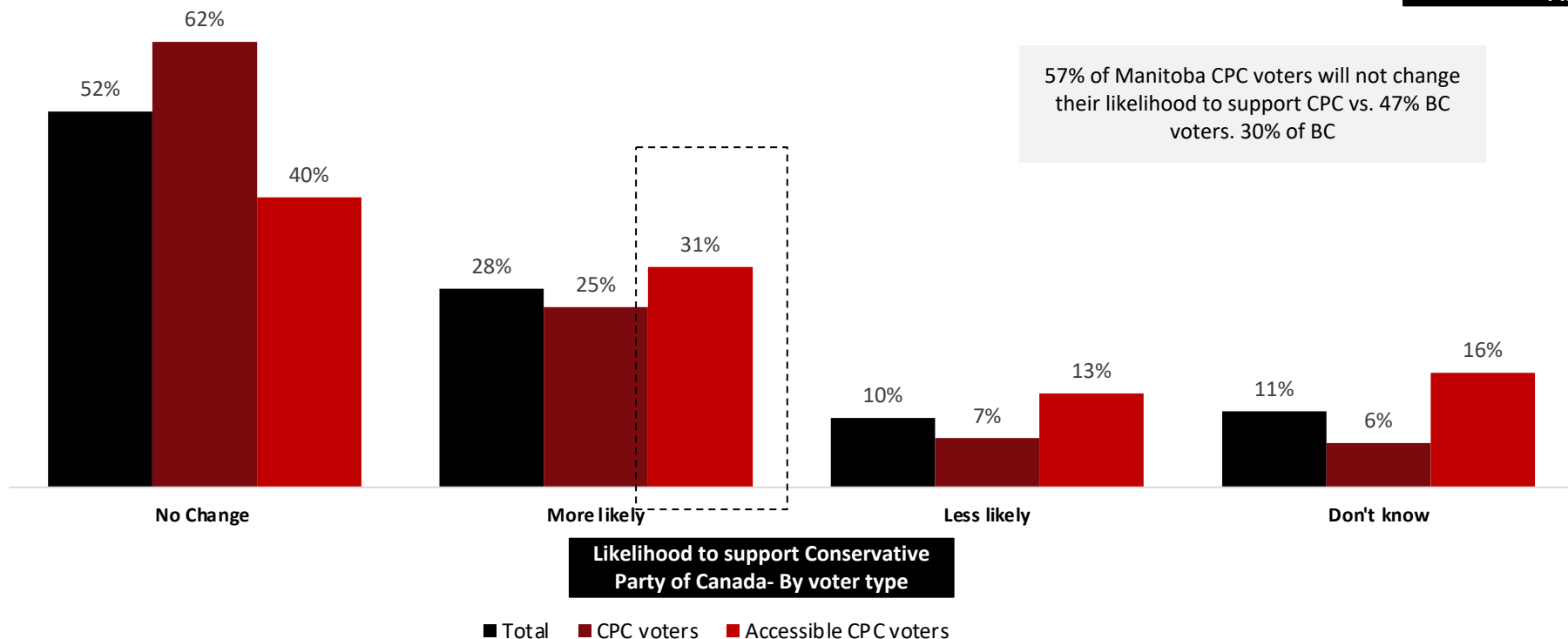
Agree or disagree: I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.



Q10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.*

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

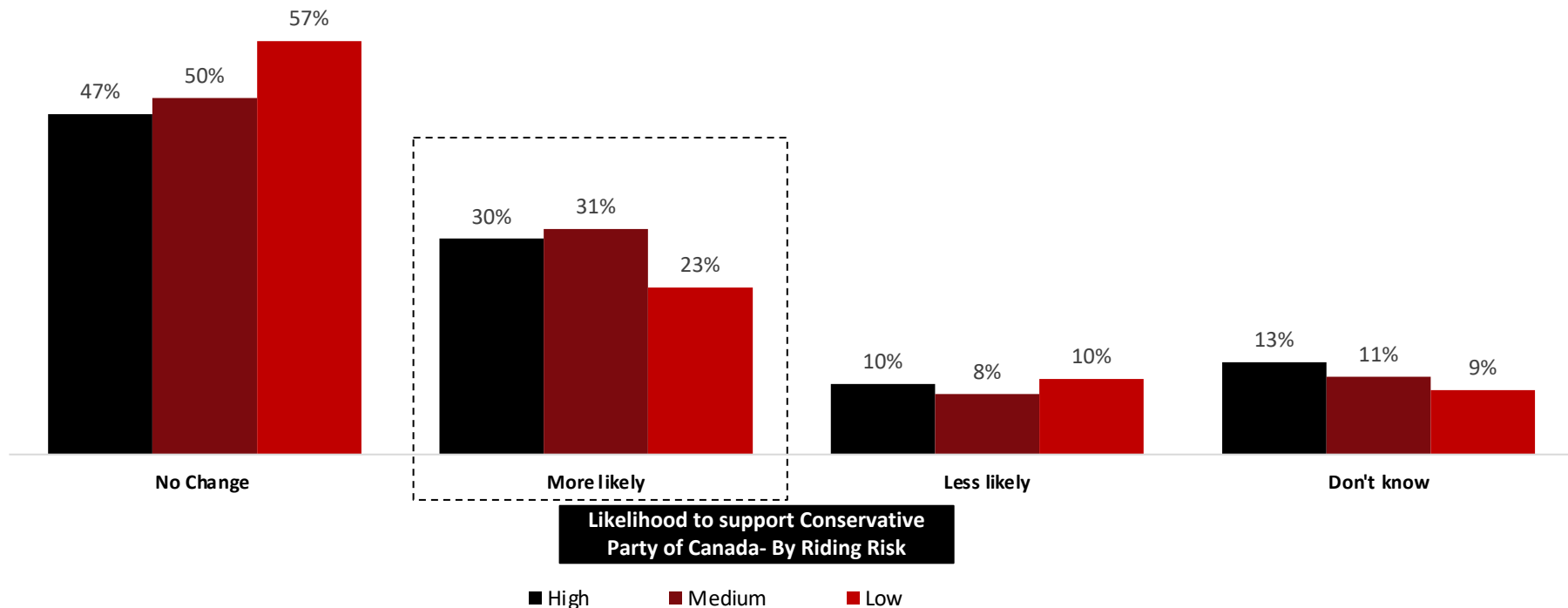
A credible climate change plan will increase likelihood of one-third accessible and a quarter of CPC voters to support the CPC



Q12: There was some discussion after the last federal election that the Conservative Party of Canada lacked a credible climate change plan. Would you have been more likely or less likely to support the Conservative Party if they had a credible, scientifically supported climate change policy?

Base : Western Canadian Ridings, CPC and Accessible CPC Voters (n=1537)

A credible climate change plan will also increase likelihood to choose CPC among a quarter of low risk and 30% high risk ridings

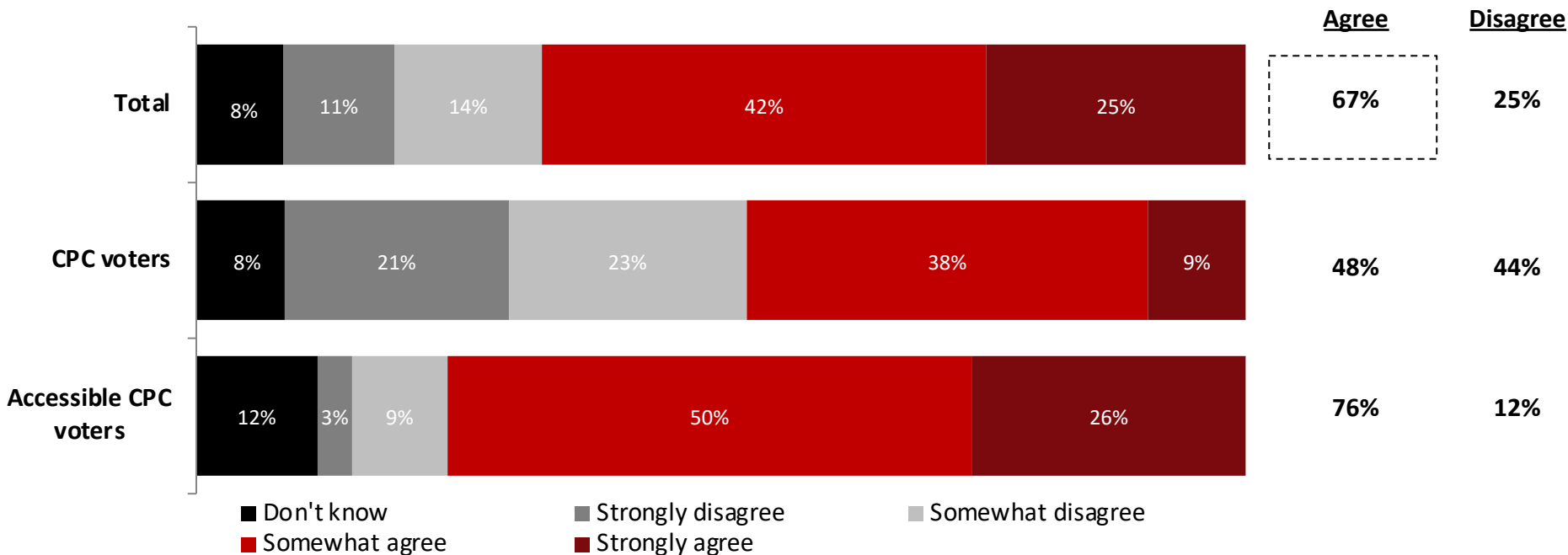


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Base : Western Canadian Ridings, CPC and Accessible CPC Voters (n=1537)

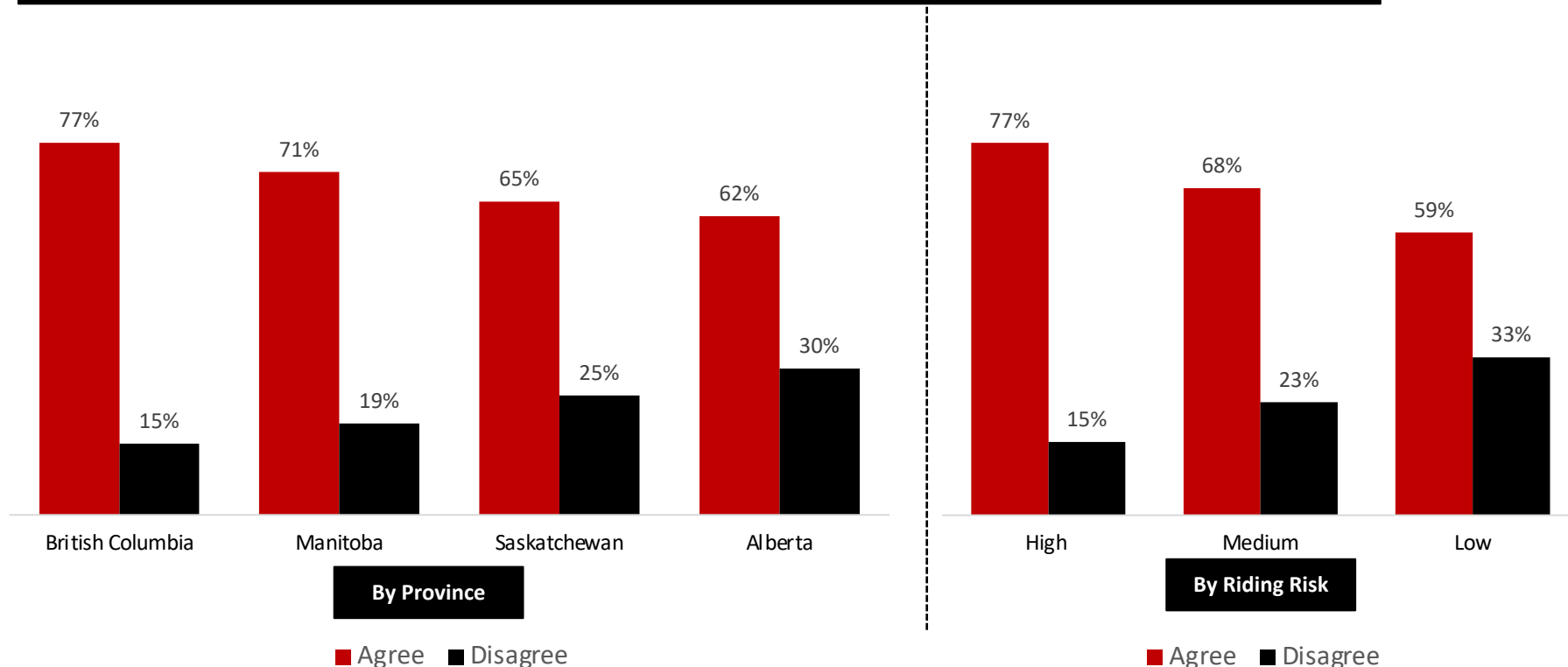
Over two-thirds voters support the federal government implementing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Agree or disagree: *The Federal government should implement policies that addresses climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions*



The support for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is stronger in British Columbia and Manitoba than other provinces

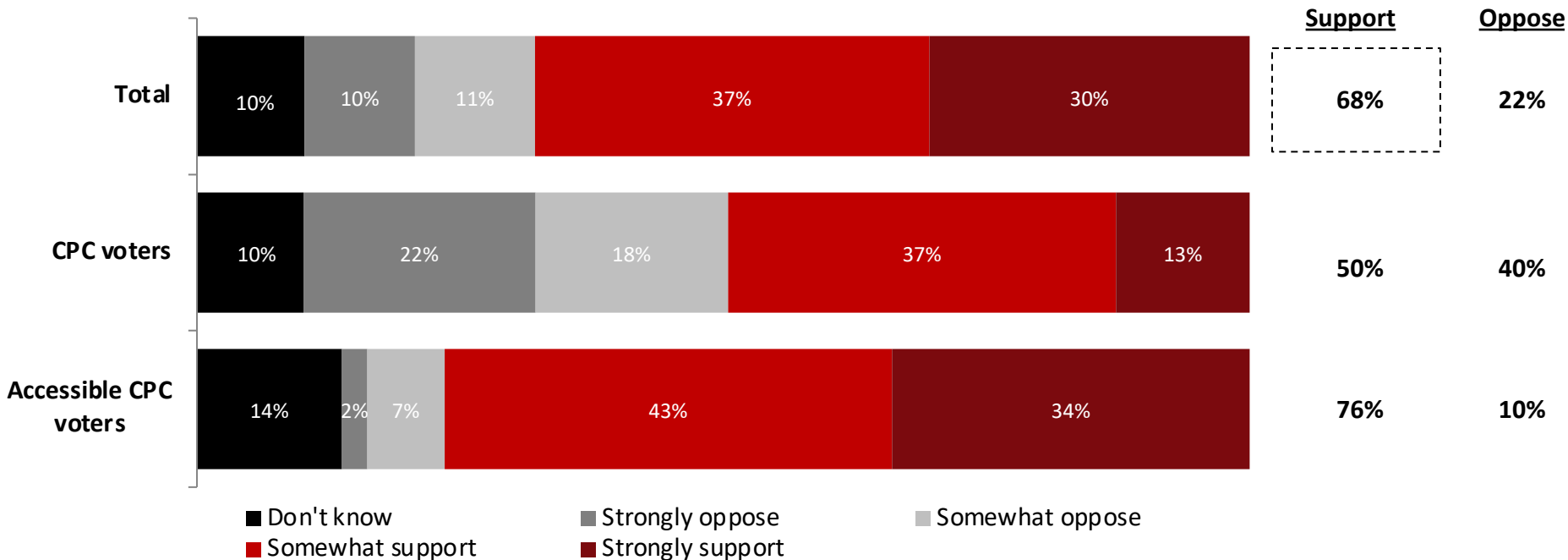
Agree or disagree: *The Federal government should implement policies that addresses climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions*



Q12_1: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *The Federal government should implement policies that addresses climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions* Base: Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Three-quarters accessible and half of current CPC voters support the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050

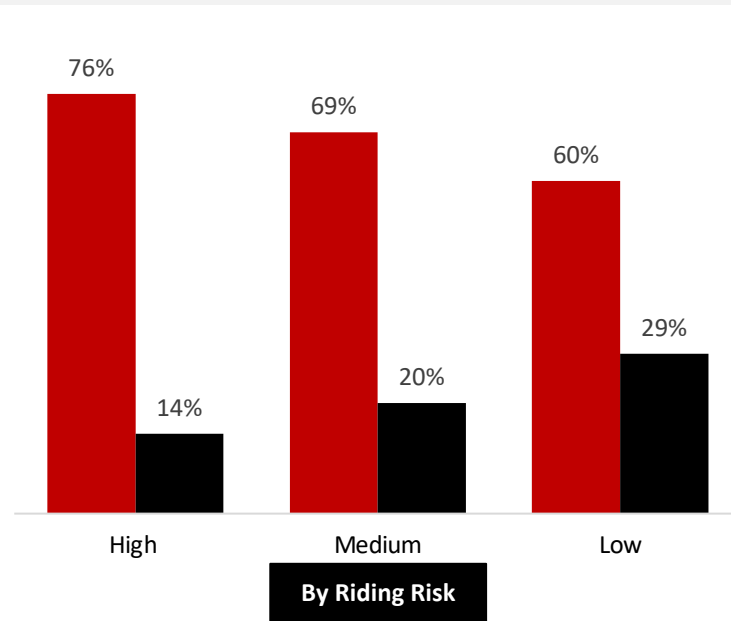
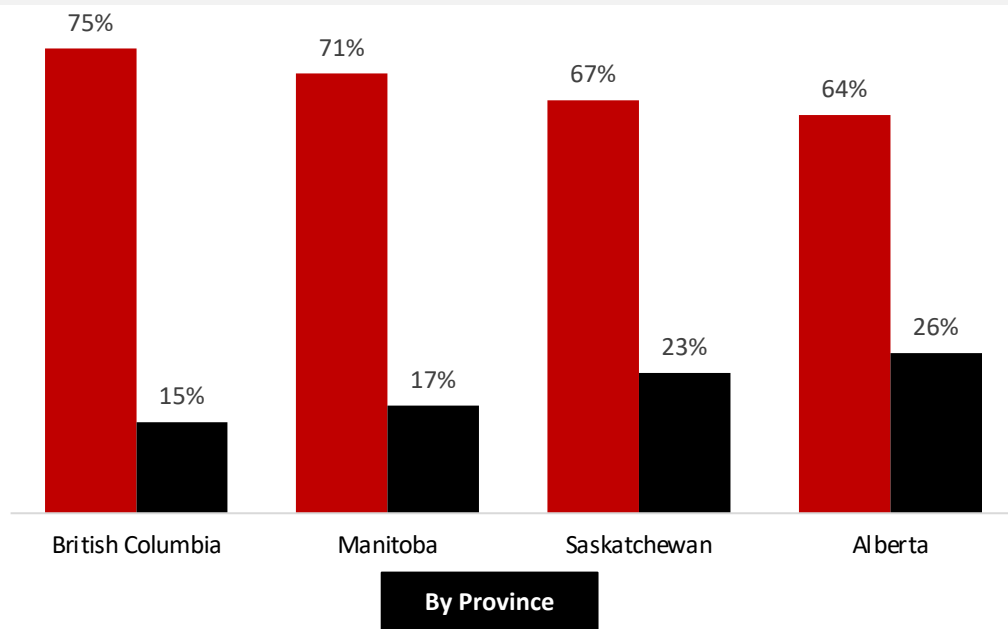
2050 Goal - Net
Zero Emission



Additional Information: Some scientists have suggested that to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, countries around the world need to adopt a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, meaning that significant actions are required to remove as much greenhouse gases from the atmosphere as is emitted.

British Columbia and Manitoba target ridings also show high support for net zero carbon emission goal

Additional Information: Some scientists have suggested that to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, countries around the world need to adopt a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, meaning that significant actions are required to remove as much greenhouse gases from the atmosphere as is emitted.



■ Support ■ Oppose

■ Support ■ Oppose

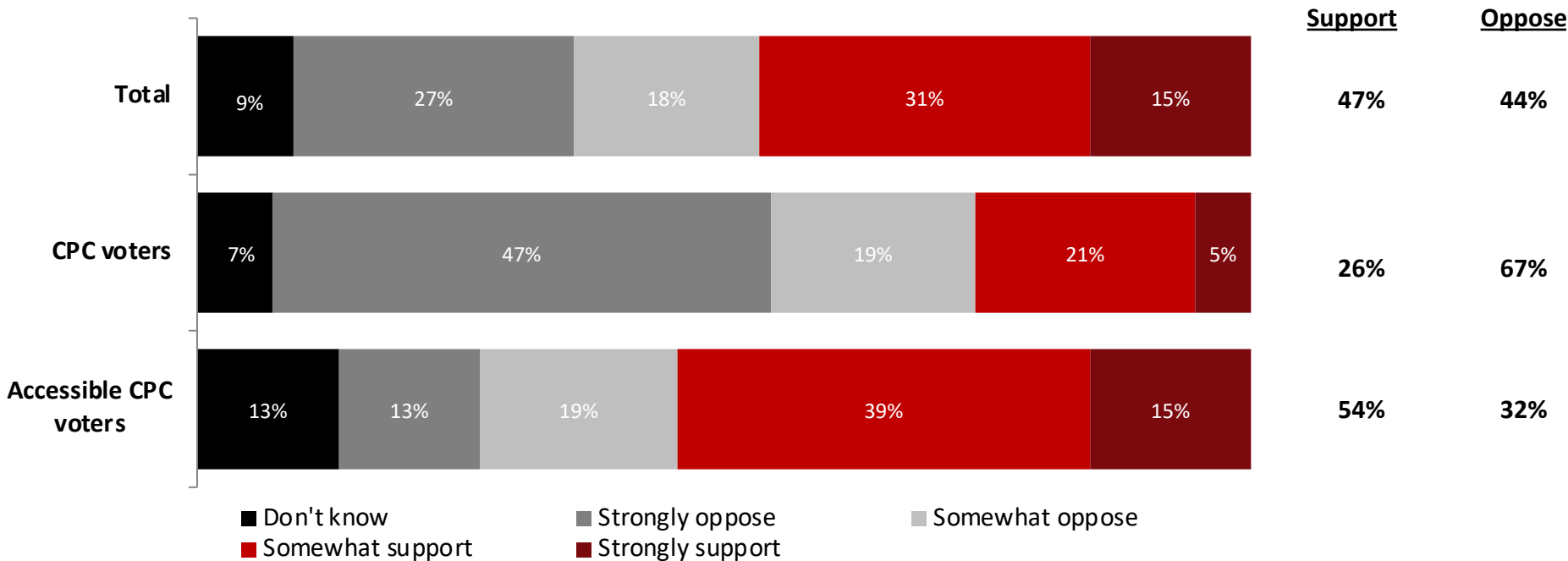
Q12_2: Do you support or oppose the goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050?

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Detailed Results

Carbon Pricing

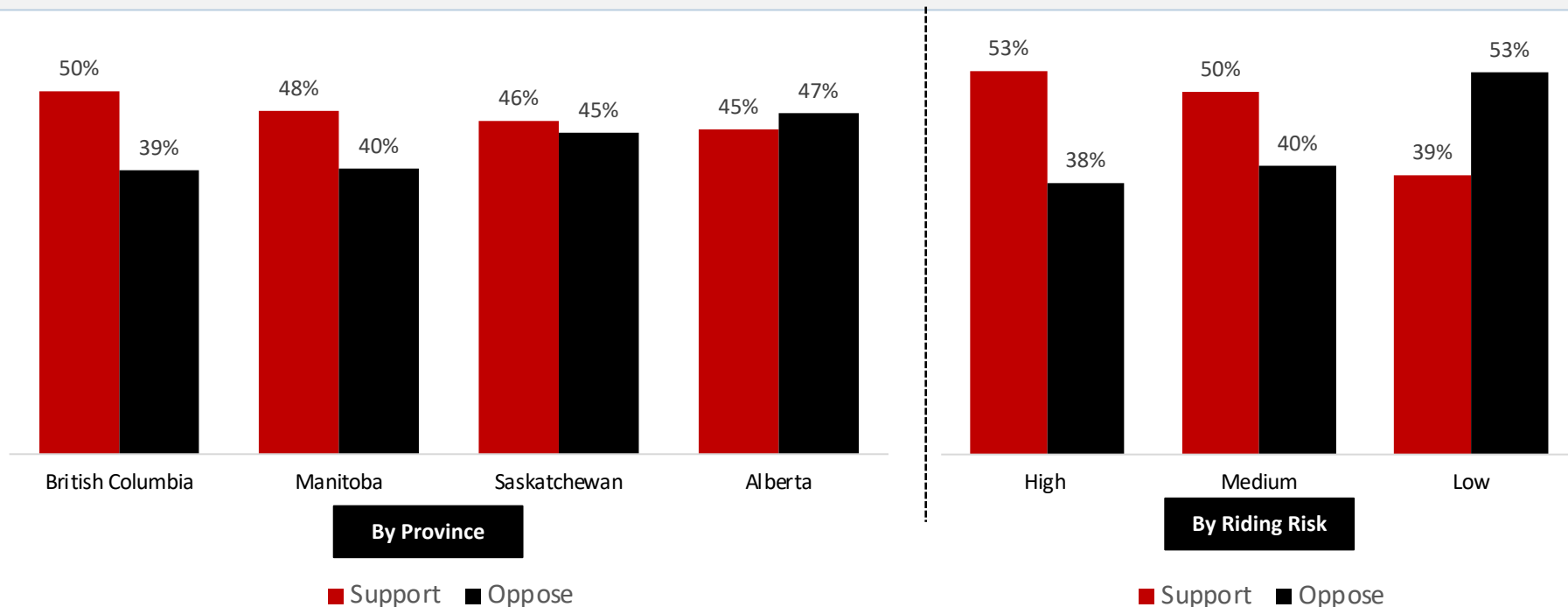
Western Canada voters are divided on the policy of charging for carbon pollution, over half of accessible voters are in favour



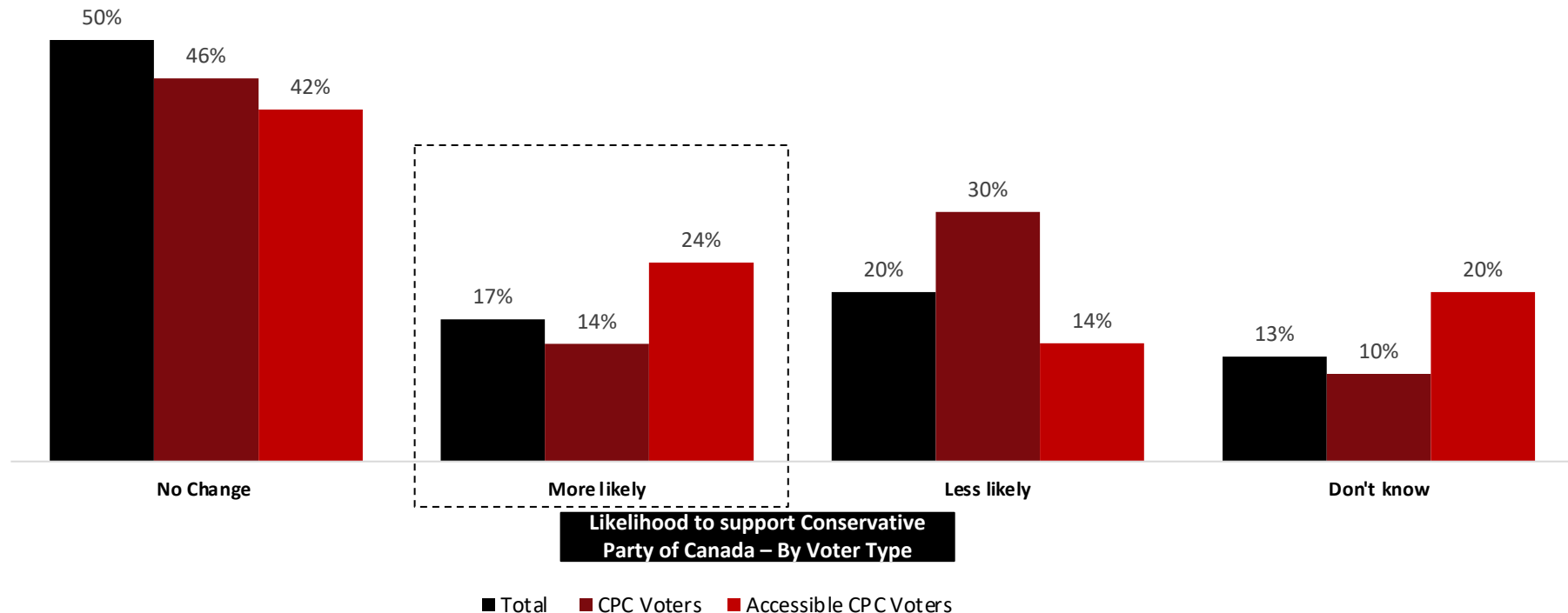
Information on screen: A common approach to address climate change is to charge for carbon pollution, which creates a financial incentive to generate less carbon pollution. Under this policy, people would pay more for activities that create pollution. For example, they would pay more per litre at the gas station, and pay more per unit of natural gas used for home heating. Companies that produce carbon pollution would also pay more.

British Columbians are more likely to support a carbon tax. Mixed response in Alberta & Saskatchewan

Information on screen: A common approach to address climate change is to charge for carbon pollution, which creates a financial incentive to generate less carbon pollution. Under this policy, people would pay more for activities that create pollution. For example, they would pay more per litre at the gas station, and pay more per unit of natural gas used for home heating. Companies that produce carbon pollution would also pay more.



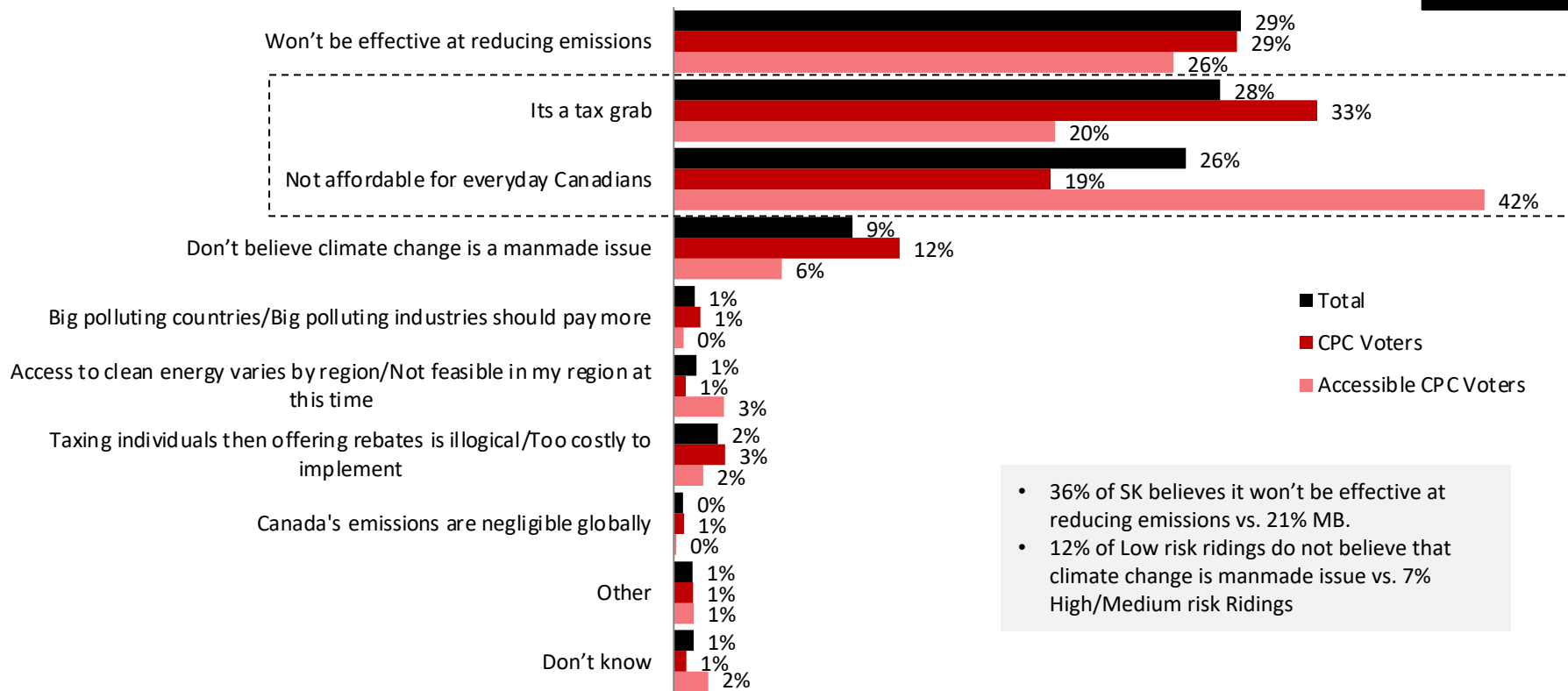
A quarter of accessible voters are more likely to choose the CPC if it adopts a carbon tax policy for addressing climate change



Q13B: If the Conservative Party of Canada were to adopt this policy of charging for carbon pollution, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative?

Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Plurality of accessible CPC voters that oppose the policy are concerned it won't be affordable for Canadians, CPC voters see it as a tax grab



Detailed Results

Support for Carbon Tax

Q13C. Respondents were asked to read the following information:

Alberta:

The system of charging for carbon pollution that is currently active in Alberta is commonly referred to as a carbon tax. This year, it added 7 cents to the price of a liter of gasoline and 6 cents to the cost of a cubic metre of natural gas for home heating. The average Alberta household of four also received \$888 back in rebates in 2020 from this carbon tax (as an income tax refund). The carbon tax and the carbon rebate will both rise each year until 2022. In that year, the tax will add \$12 cents / liter in gasoline and will return \$1200 in rebates to the average household of four.

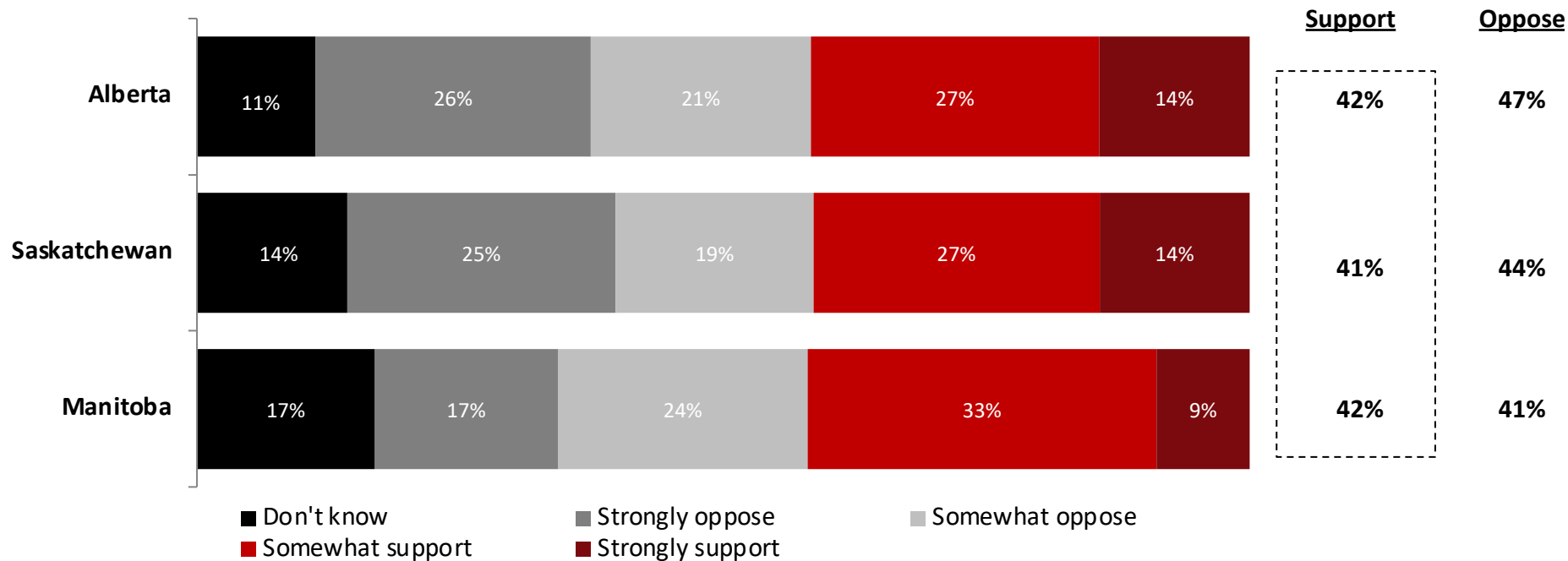
Saskatchewan:

The system of charging for carbon pollution that is currently active in Saskatchewan is commonly referred to as a carbon tax. This year, it added 7 cents to the price of a liter of gasoline and 6 cents to the cost of a cubic metre of natural gas for home heating. The average Saskatchewan household of four also received \$903 back in rebates in 2020 from this carbon tax (as an income tax refund). The carbon tax and the carbon rebate will both rise each year until 2022. In that year, the tax will add \$12 cents / liter in gasoline and will return \$1,459 in rebates to the average household of four.

Manitoba:

The system of charging for carbon pollution that is currently active in Manitoba is commonly referred to as a carbon tax. This year, it added 7 cents to the price of a liter of gasoline and 6 cents to the cost of a cubic metre of natural gas for home heating. The average Manitoban household of four also received \$499 back in rebates in 2020 from this carbon tax (as an income tax refund). The carbon tax and the carbon rebate will both rise each year until 2022. In that year, the tax will add \$12 cents / liter in gasoline and will return \$801 in rebates to the average household of four.

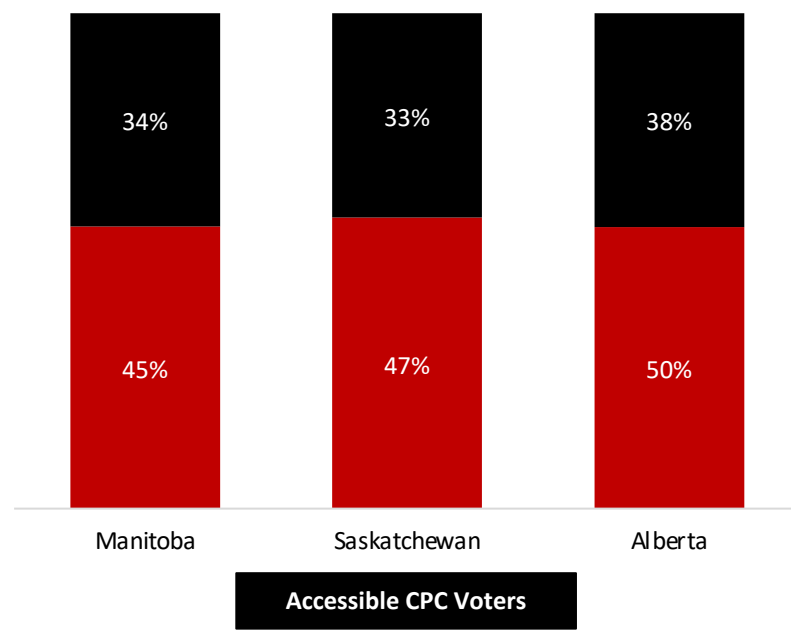
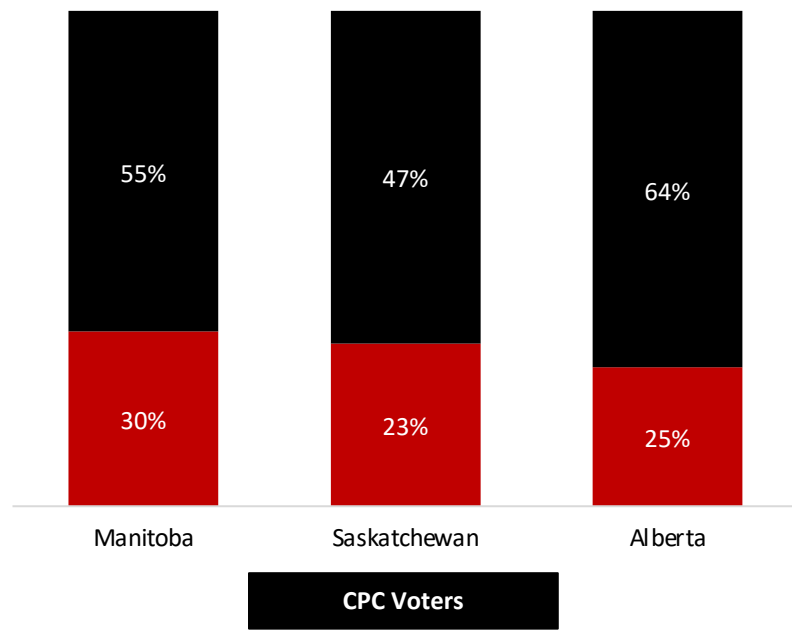
Across Prairie provinces, over two in five residents support the current carbon tax policies in their provinces



Q13C: Do you support or oppose this policy?

Base : Alberta (n=802); Saskatchewan (n=402); Manitoba (n=400)

These supporters of carbon tax policies include about half of accessible voters and a quarter of CPC voters



■ Support ■ Oppose

■ Support ■ Oppose

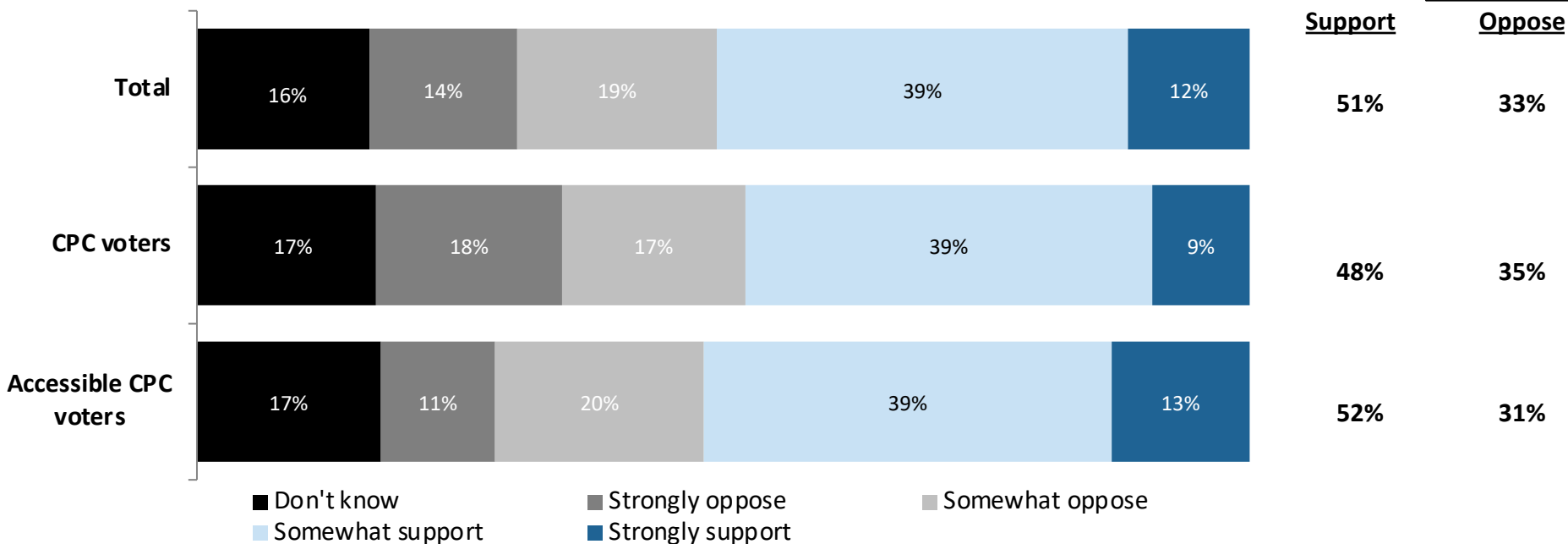
Q13C: Do you support or oppose this policy?

Base : Alberta (n=802);Saskatchewan (n=402); Manitoba (n=400)

Support for Different Designs of Carbon Pricing Systems

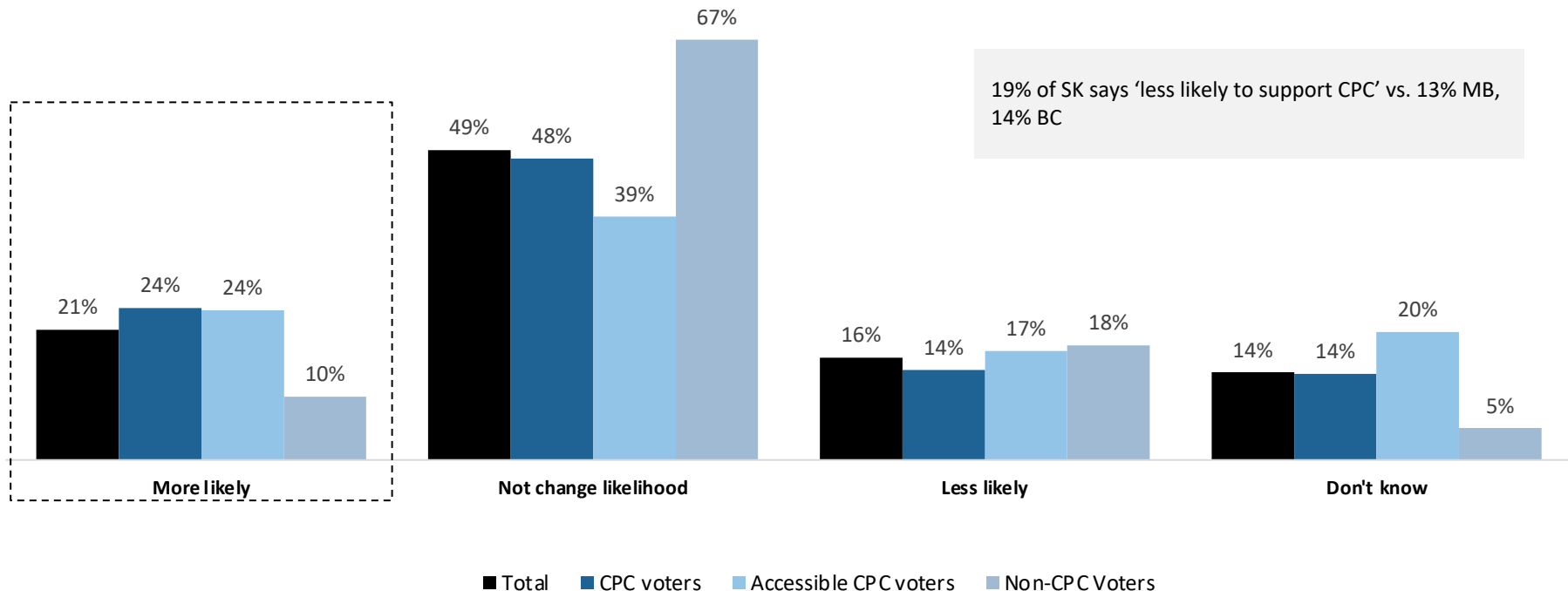
Assumptions shared before questions: The next set of questions asks you for your opinion on several different designs of a carbon pricing system. Please assume for these questions that the next Prime Minister has chosen to cancel the current federal carbon tax and is considering replacing it with one of the new systems described below (ahead). I have a few different approaches to how the Federal government could manage a carbon tax in Canada. These are provided next for you to assess.

Half of residents support a carbon tax if its proceeds are used to reduce personal income tax rates



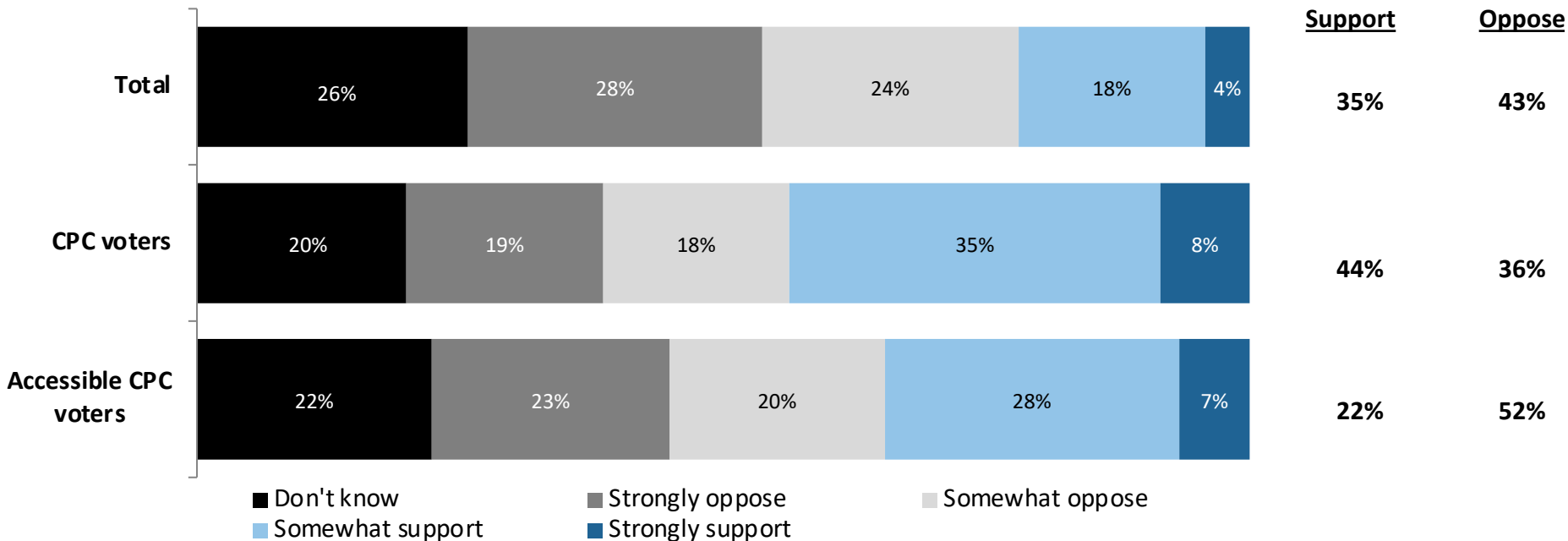
Information on screen: Instead of a system where the rebate is directly provided to Canadian households, the proceeds are instead used to reduce personal income taxes, including an increase in the personal tax exemption threshold.

Adoption of a carbon tax that reduces income tax rates makes 24% accessible voters and 10% non voters more likely to vote CPC



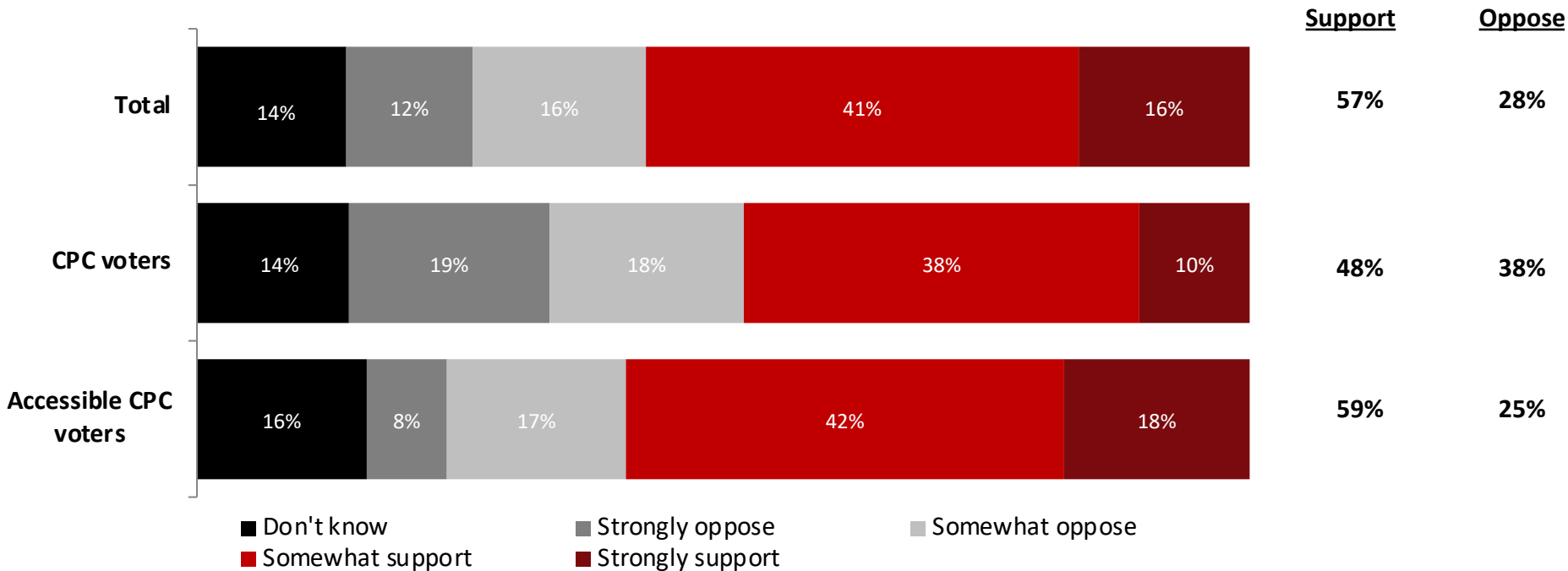
Q14B: If the Conservative Party of Canada were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative? Base: Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

Over two in five CPC voters start supporting the policy if the adoption of this policy could help the party win an election



Q14C. If you knew that adopting this carbon pricing policy would help the Conservative Party of Canada win the next federal election, would you support or oppose the policy? Base: Western Canadian Ridings, CPC and accessible CPC voters opposing the policy (n=2004)

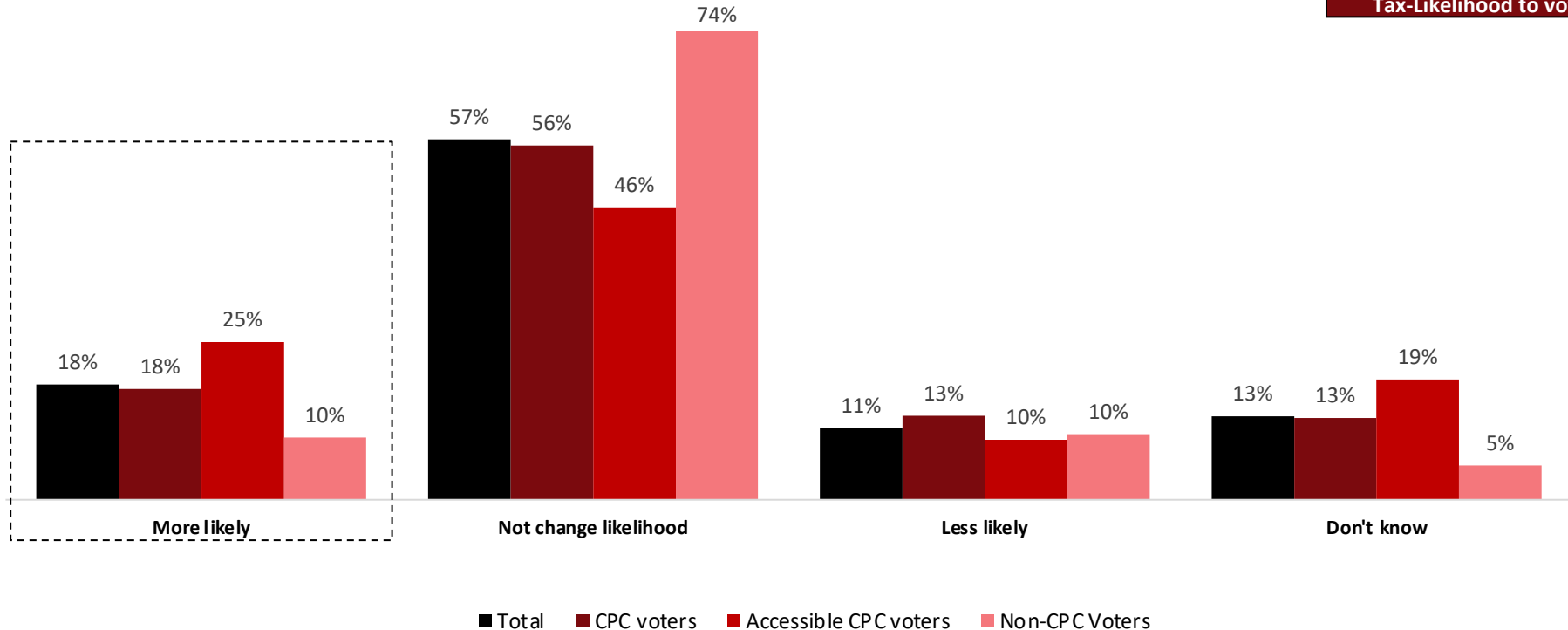
Support for carbon tax policy improves slightly if told that all the tax money is being rebated back to families and businesses



Q23: Would you support or oppose a carbon tax if you knew that all the money from the tax was being rebated back to families and businesses?

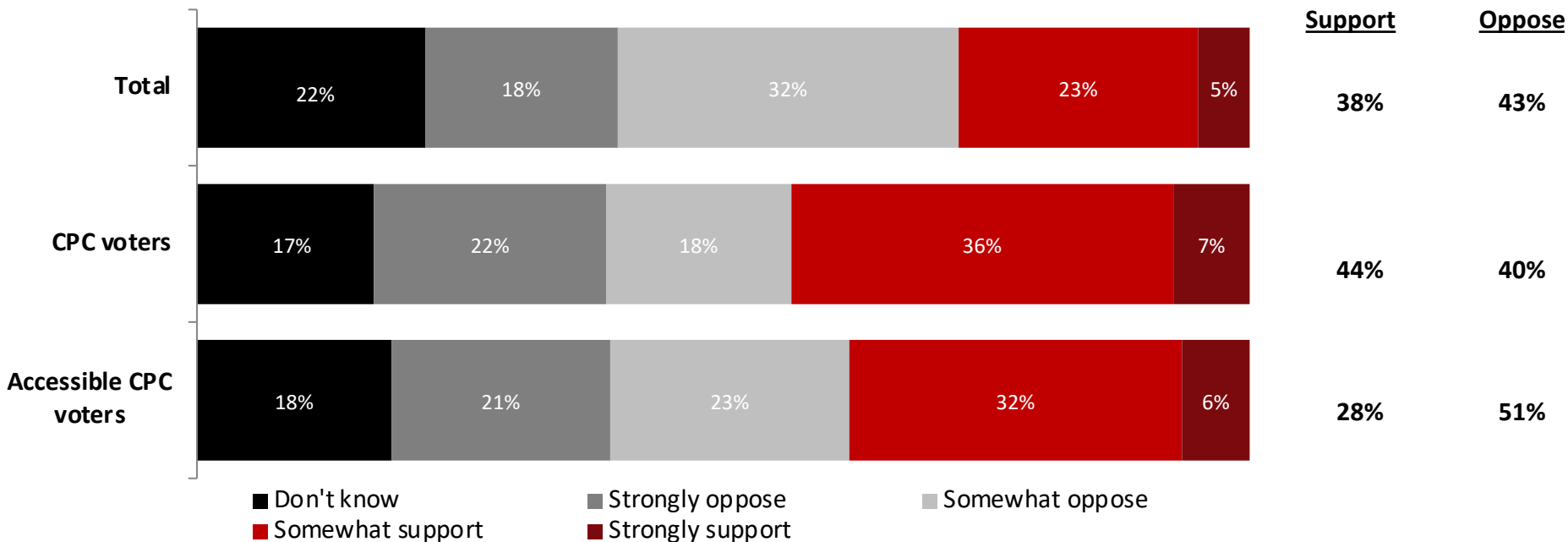
Base : Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

CPC's adoption of policy where tax money is rebated back makes 25% accessible voters and 10% non voters more likely to vote them

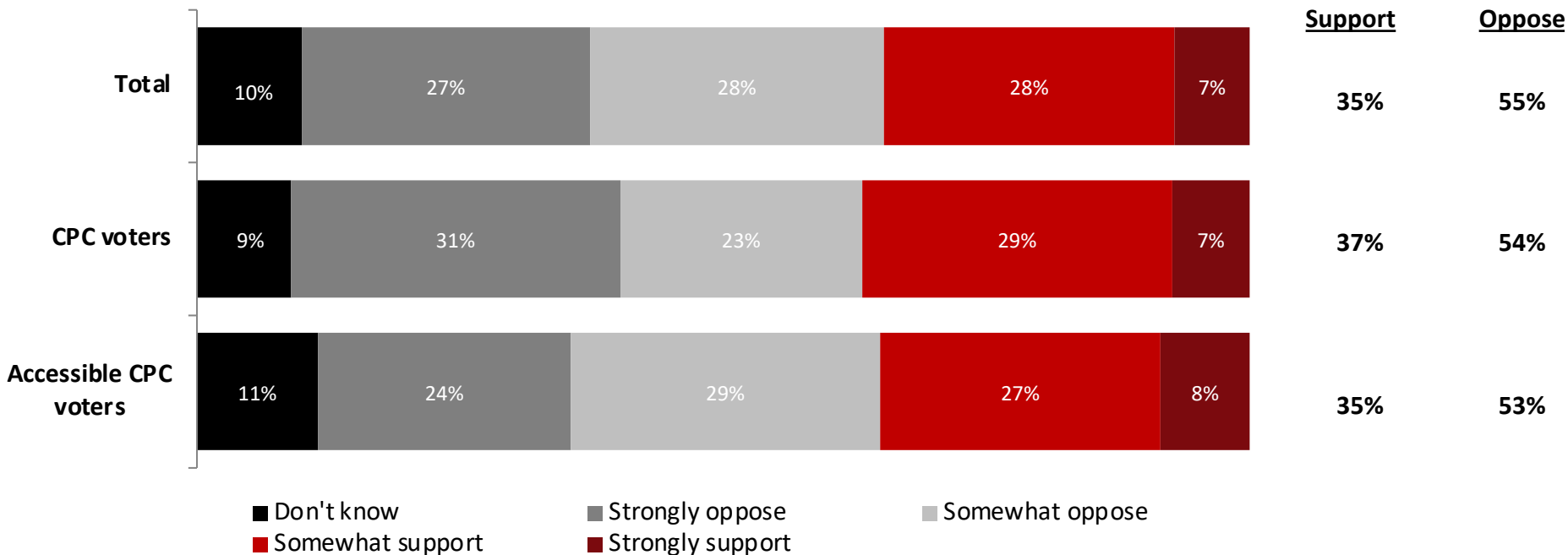


Q23B: If the Conservative Party of Canada were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative? Base: Western Canadian Ridings (n=2004)

On explaining the importance of this policy to win an election, 44% initially opposing CPC voters support the policy of rebating money back



Additional rebate payment to rural residents and farmers finds support among 35% of voters who initially opposed the policy



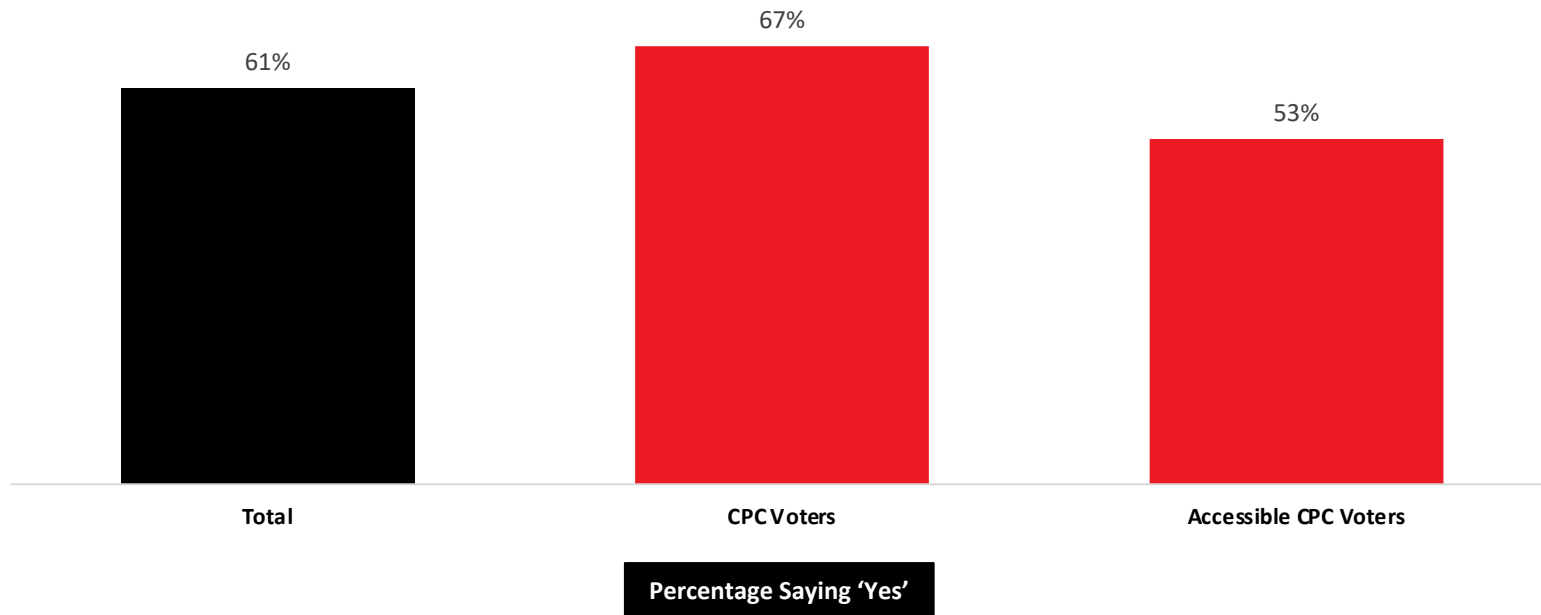
Q23D. Let's assume that the carbon tax also sent an additional rebate payment to rural residents and farmers to address the extra costs faced by these populations. Would you support or oppose this policy? Base : Western Canadian Ridings, **Opposed to the Policy** (n=585)

Detailed Results

Carbon Pricing – Expected O'Toole's Policies

Two-thirds of CPC voters would support the carbon pricing policy if Erin O'Toole proposes it in order to increase chances of winning an election

Recall that only 26% of CPC voters supported the carbon tax policy where the rebate is directly provided back. 48% CPC voters supported Carbon tax policy (that either includes rebating back the families or cutting personal income tax rate). This increase in support for a carbon pricing policy when proposed by Erin O'Toole may be a sign of trust in his leadership.



Q24: Erin O'Toole won a clear mandate in the leadership election to do what is necessary to form government. He has said that one way to increase the party's appeal is through a more credible climate plan. If O'Toole proposes a carbon pricing policy in order to increase the Party's chances of winning government will YOU support that decision? Base: Western Canadian Ridings, **CPC and Accessible CPC voters** (n=1537)