

November 23, 2020

**ALBERTANS PAN NOV. 12TH
PROVINCIAL COVID-19
RESTRICTIONS, ENDORSING BROADER
MEASURES INCLUDING A MANDATORY
PROVINCIAL MASK LAW**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Copyright © 2020 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved

The contents of this document are the exclusive property of ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc., and may not be used in any manner whatsoever, without the prior written consent of ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. No license under any copyright is hereby granted or implied.



Research Methodology

- Study fielded with Adult Albertans, via online research panel
 - Field dates: November 18 - 21, 2020
 - Panel source: MARU Voice Canada
- n=1,126
- Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of Alberta population according to Stats Canada
- A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from the MARU Voice Canada panel. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is +/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
- Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes

Regional Sample Sizes and Margins of Error

Region	Total Interviews		Margin of Error*
	Unweighted	Weighted	
ALBERTA TOTAL	n=1,126	n=1,126	+/- 2.9 percentage points
Calgary	n=419	n=394	+/- 4.8 percentage points
Edmonton	n=359	n=355	+/- 5.2 percentage points
Northern Alberta	n=98	n=136	+/- 9.9 percentage points
Central Alberta	n=120	n=125	+/- 9.0 percentage points
Southern Alberta	n=130	n=116	+/- 8.6 percentage points

*NOTE: The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size



COVID-19 IN ALBERTA

CONFIDENTIAL: MEDIA RELEASE: November 23, 2020
Copyright © 2020 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.



ThinkHQ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS INC.

Albertans Pan Nov. 12th Provincial COVID-19 Restrictions, Endorsing Broader Measures including a Mandatory Provincial Mask Law



With the province now firmly in the clutches of the anticipated “Winter Wave” of COVID-19, most Albertans feel the provincial government’s Nov. 12 restrictions to stem the tide of the virus’ spread fall well short, according to a new survey by ThinkHQ Public Affairs, Inc.

Over one-half of those interviewed feel these measures don’t go far enough, with strong support offered for sterner measures designed to curtail private social gatherings, stricter enforcement of the rules, and requiring mask-wearing in all public indoor spaces.

Reaction to November 12th Restrictions Overall

Just over one-half (51%) of Albertans believe new COVID-19 restrictions instituted on November 12th do not go far enough overall, compared to 13% who believe they “go too far” and 29% who feel they are “about right”.

- This sentiment is strongest in the province’s largest cities (particularly Edmonton), is slightly higher among women than men, and tends to increase with education levels
- Those with children at home and those with household incomes under \$50,000 are somewhat less likely to believe these restrictions don’t go far enough
- There is a huge partisan divide on this issue. Those who voted NDP in the last provincial election overwhelmingly maintain the November 12th rules are insufficient (81%), while Conservative voters are more divided on the issue (A plurality feel they are “about right” (39%), 36% “not far enough” and 19% “too far”)

Reaction to Specific November 12th Measures

The controls introduced by the Province earlier this month included a handful of prohibitions, along with a number of strong recommendations for behaviour. While the actual restrictions are reasonably well received by Albertans (in some cases), many feel the province should have taken a firmer hand in mandating behaviour.

For instance, banning group indoor fitness/team sports, along with indoor singing/dancing and performances, seem to hit the mark – Over one-half of those interviewed say these actions are “about right”, while roughly equal proportions feel they are “too far” or “not far enough”.

Limiting private indoor gatherings to a maximum of 15 people and funeral/wedding attendees to no more than 50 persons however is too lenient for many – 47% and 55% respectively say these restrictions “don’t go far enough”.

While the Province has strongly recommended behaviour such as distancing/masking and avoiding indoor private social gatherings, many of those interviewed feel this direction should have more teeth, moving from advice to legal direction.

Restrictions on Bars & Restaurants

COVID response has been particularly challenging for these businesses; initially closing them entirely, then allowing take out, followed by limited capacity and distancing (e.g. Plexiglas partitions, etc.) provisions. On November 12th, the Province mandated that bars/restaurants close by 11:00 p.m. with liquor service ceasing at 10:00 p.m.

Albertans offer interesting, if mixed, feedback on the most recent move by the provincial government. Over four-in-ten (44%) say that closing by 11:00 p.m./liquor cut-off by 10:00 p.m. doesn't "go far enough", while 16% feel it goes "too far".

Yet, bar and restaurant owners have pushed back on the move suggesting that it may unintentionally promote the spread of COVID by driving people out of a reasonably supervised bar/restaurant environment to private residential gatherings when these establishments close. This argument resonates with most Albertans. Fully 54% agree that the new closing/cut-off provisions will likely encourage spread at smaller, private social functions (while 34% disagree).

What Should the Province Do Now?

The most conspicuous omission from the Province's November 12th restrictions is transitioning from "recommending" mask wearing in public spaces to "mandating" it. While the UCP Government may be reluctant to impose such move, it is overwhelmingly popular with Albertans – indeed 81% would approve of mandatory masks, compared to only 16% who would oppose it.

Albertans also endorse stronger enforcement of public health rules in the province, both with businesses and individuals (78% approve of each) who don't follow public health orders. In contrast, fewer than one-in-five are opposed to enhanced enforcement.

In light of growing infection, hospitalization and death rates in recent days, there is a segment of public health experts calling for a so-called "circuit breaker lockdown", similar to the stay at home orders imposed across the country in the spring. This measure of last resort is surprisingly popular; over six-in-ten (61%) Albertans say they would approve of a lock-down of all non-essential businesses in the province for between 14 to 28 days (compared to 31% opposed).

Closing schools (and moving back to online learning) is the least popular action tested, although even here, a bare majority (51%) of those interviewed say they would approve, while 40% disapprove of this move.

- There are some modest variations in support for more stringent measures to curtail COVID spread by demographic breaks, but the most interesting variable is past voting behaviour. In this, 2019 NDP voters are overwhelmingly supportive of tighter measures to clamp down on COVID, while the sentiment of UCP voters is far more mixed.

Commentary



Commenting on the new survey, ThinkHQ President Marc Henry notes:

“The health experts told us it was coming, and here we are – the Winter Wave. A vaccine may be on its way in the months ahead, but today Albertans are seeing daily headlines of record infection rates, hospitalizations, shrinking intensive care capacity and spiking COVID related deaths. As Dr. Hinshaw recently noted, our current situation is quite ‘dire’.

Ten days ago, the Provincial Government introduced new measures to blunt the spread of the virus, but they appear to be ineffective, both from a public health and political perspective. The case counts keep climbing, and in many respects, there is growing public disaffection with the lack of something more tangible from government to stop it.

Beyond the obvious public health situation, the Kenney government has both a communications and political problem on their hands; they are trying to thread an almost impossibly small needle. Aside from reprising our spring lockdown, the most obvious action was, and remains, imposing a provincial mask mandate, banning private social gatherings and enhanced enforcement, yet the Conservatives have been reluctant to move in this direction. Though most of their supporters would likely support them in taking such actions, there is a minority (comprised predominantly of UCP voters) who would strongly bristle.

And as each day passes, the Provincial Government’s options and prospects shrink. If spread of the virus finally forces their hand to shut down the economy again, Conservative voters certainly won’t thank them for the delay, while others will criticize them for not taking interim steps to try to ‘bend the curve’ to avoid an economic shutdown.”

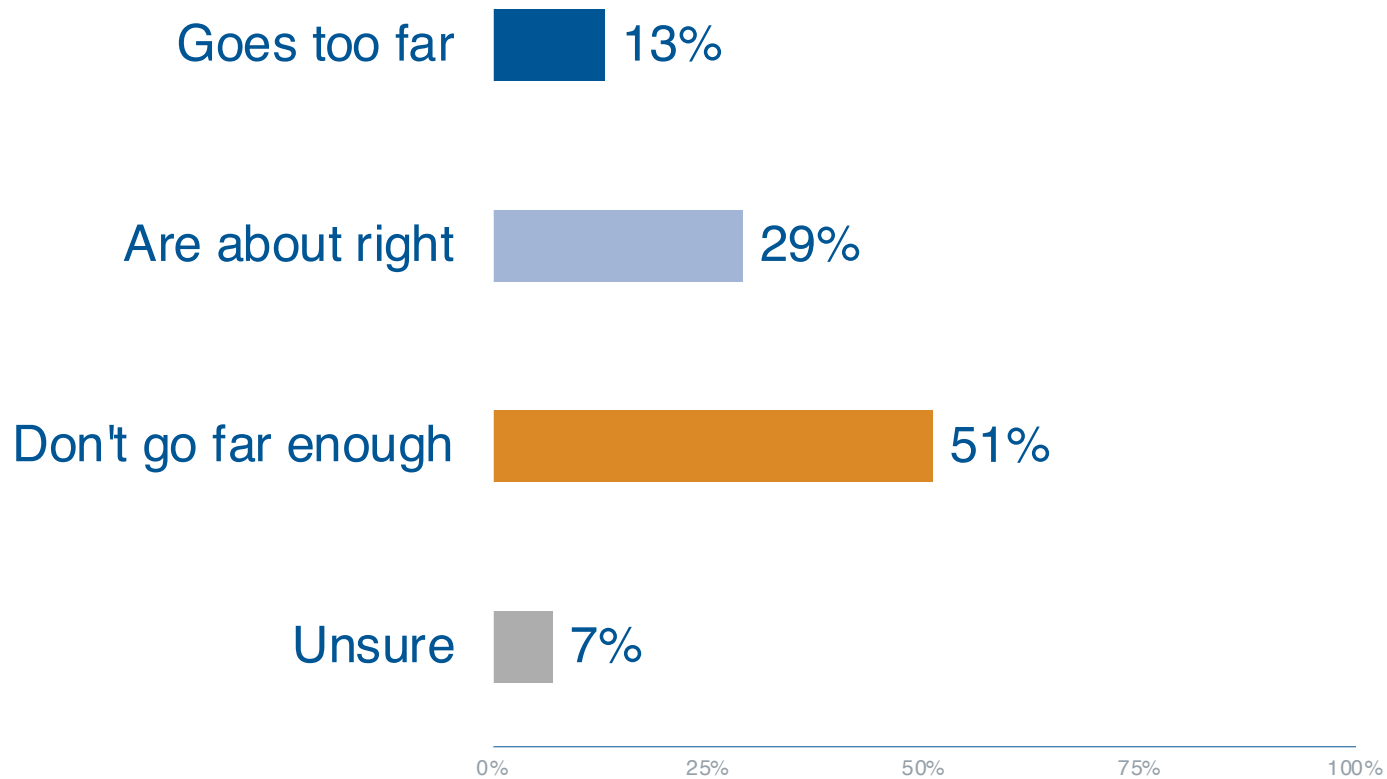
Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

The Province's New Measures Overall



"The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these "Enhanced Status" communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don't go far enough or Are about right?"

"The Province's new measures overall"



Base: All respondents

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

The Province's New Measures Overall by Region



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”

“The Province’s New Measures Overall”

	TOTAL	Region				
		CGY	EDM	North	Central	South
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=394)	(n=355)	(n=136)	(n=125)	(n=116)
Goes too far	13%	9%	9%	20%	19%	20%
Are about right	29%	31%	24%	37%	28%	27%
Don’t go far enough	51%	53%	60%	36%	44%	43%
Unsure	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	11%

□ Significantly higher ○ Significantly lower

Base: All respondents

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

The Province's New Measures Overall by Education and Gender



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”

“The Province’s New Measures Overall”

	TOTAL	Education			Gender	
		HS or less	Some PS	Uni+	Male	Female
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=173)	(n=211)	(n=735)	(n=559)	(n=564)
Goes too far	13%	8%	15%	13%	17%	8%
Are about right	29%	40%	31%	26%	30%	28%
Don’t go far enough	51%	40%	48%	54%	48%	54%
Unsure	7%	12%	7%	7%	5%	10%

□ Significantly higher ○ Significantly lower

Base: All respondents

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

The Province's New Measures Overall by Income, Kids and Last Provincial Vote



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”

“The Province’s New Measures Overall”

	TOTAL	Income			Kids at Home	Last Prov. Vote	
		<\$50K	\$50K-\$99K	\$100K +		UCP	NDP
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=225)	(n=356)	(n=354)	(n=334)	(n=485)	(n=304)
Goes too far	13%	13%	13%	15%	19%	19%	3%
Are about right	29%	36%	26%	26%	32%	39%	13%
Don’t go far enough	51%	42%	55%	55%	43%	36%	81%
Unsure	7%	8%	5%	5%	6%	6%	3%

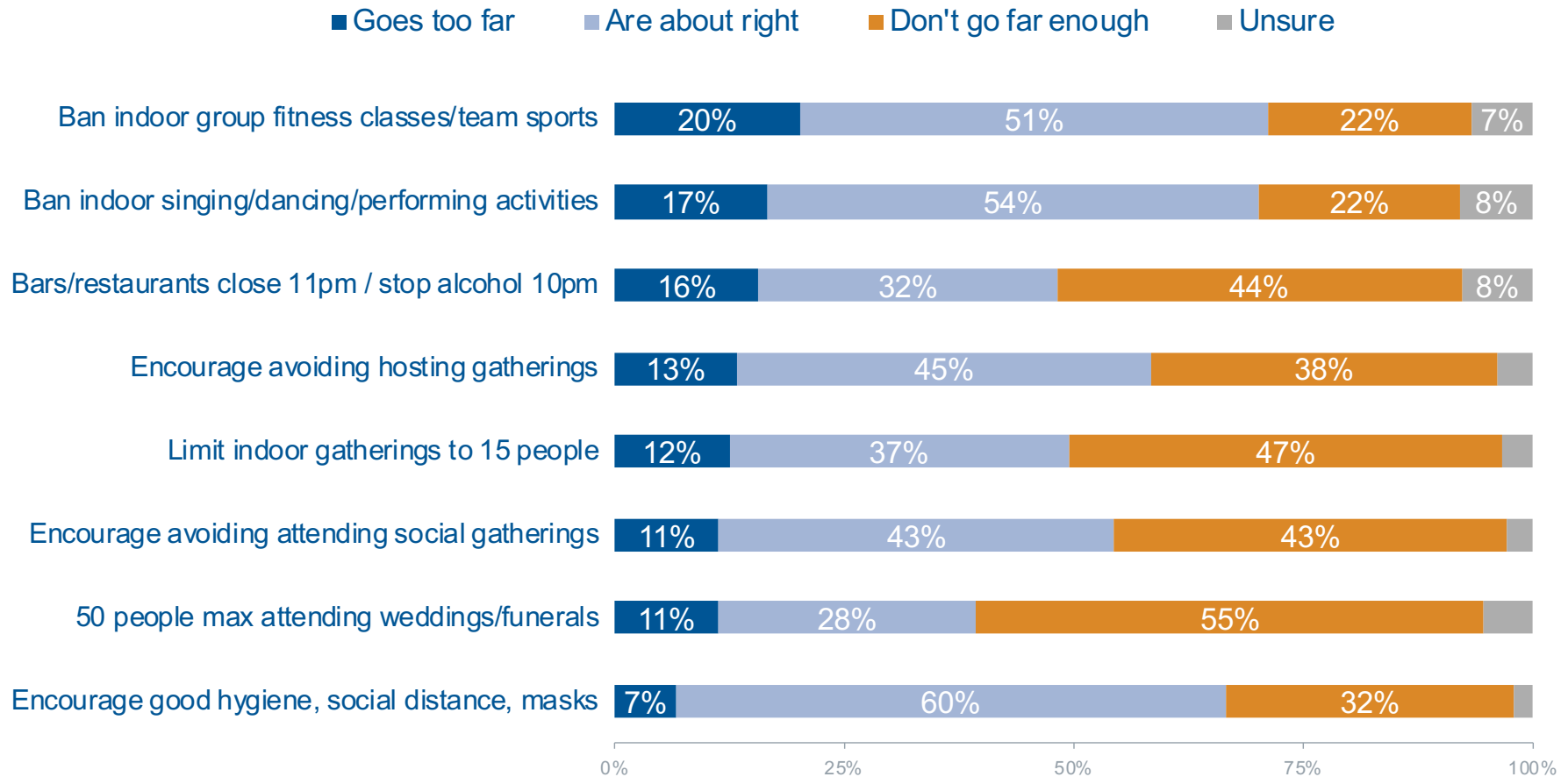
□ Significantly higher ○ Significantly lower

Base: All respondents

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”



Base: All respondents (n=1,126)

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

By Age and Last Provincial Vote



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”

		TOTAL	Age (Years)			Last Prov Vote	
			<35	35-54	55+	UCP	NDP
Base size:		(n=1,126)	(n=349)	(n=410)	(n=368)	(n=485)	(n=304)
Ban indoor fitness/team sports	Goes too far	20%	21%	21%	18%	29%	9%
	About right/Unsure	58%	60%	56%	58%	55%	56%
	Don’t go far enough	22%	19%	23%	24%	16%	35%
Ban indoor singing/dancing	Goes too far	17%	18%	17%	15%	24%	7%
	About right/Unsure	61%	63%	60%	62%	59%	59%
	Don’t go far enough	22%	19%	23%	23%	17%	34%
Bars/Restaurants close at 11pm, stop alcohol at 10pm	Goes too far	16%	22%	14%	12%	24%	3%
	About right/Unsure	40%	40%	39%	41%	45%	26%
	Don’t go far enough	44%	38%	47%	47%	31%	71%
Encourage avoiding hosting gatherings	Goes too far	13%	18%	13%	10%	20%	2%
	About right/Unsure	49%	51%	46%	50%	53%	40%
	Don’t go far enough	38%	31%	41%	40%	27%	58%

Continued ...

Base: All respondents

Perceptions on Provincial COVID Reduction Measures

By Age and Last Provincial Vote ... continued



“The following is a list of new measures introduced by The Province to try to reduce COVID infections over the next few weeks in these “Enhanced Status” communities. Do you personally feel each of these measures Goes too far, Don’t go far enough or Are about right?”

		TOTAL	Age (Years)			Last Prov Vote	
			<35	35-54	55+	UCP	NDP
Base size:		(n=1,126)	(n=349)	(n=410)	(n=368)	(n=485)	(n=304)
Limit indoor gatherings to 15 people	Goes too far	12%	17%	12%	8%	19%	2%
	About right/Unsure	41%	46%	38%	38%	44%	28%
	Don't go far enough	47%	37%	50%	54%	37%	70%
Encourage avoiding attending social gatherings	Goes too far	11%	15%	11%	9%	17%	2%
	About right/Unsure	46%	49%	45%	43%	53%	32%
	Don't go far enough	43%	36%	44%	48%	30%	66%
50 people maximum at weddings/funerals	Goes too far	11%	17%	11%	6%	17%	3%
	About right/Unsure	34%	38%	32%	31%	40%	19%
	Don't go far enough	55%	45%	57%	63%	43%	78%
Encourage good hygiene, social distancing, masks	Goes too far	7%	10%	6%	4%	10%	2%
	About right/Unsure	61%	62%	61%	64%	68%	46%
	Don't go far enough	32%	28%	33%	32%	22%	52%

Base: All respondents

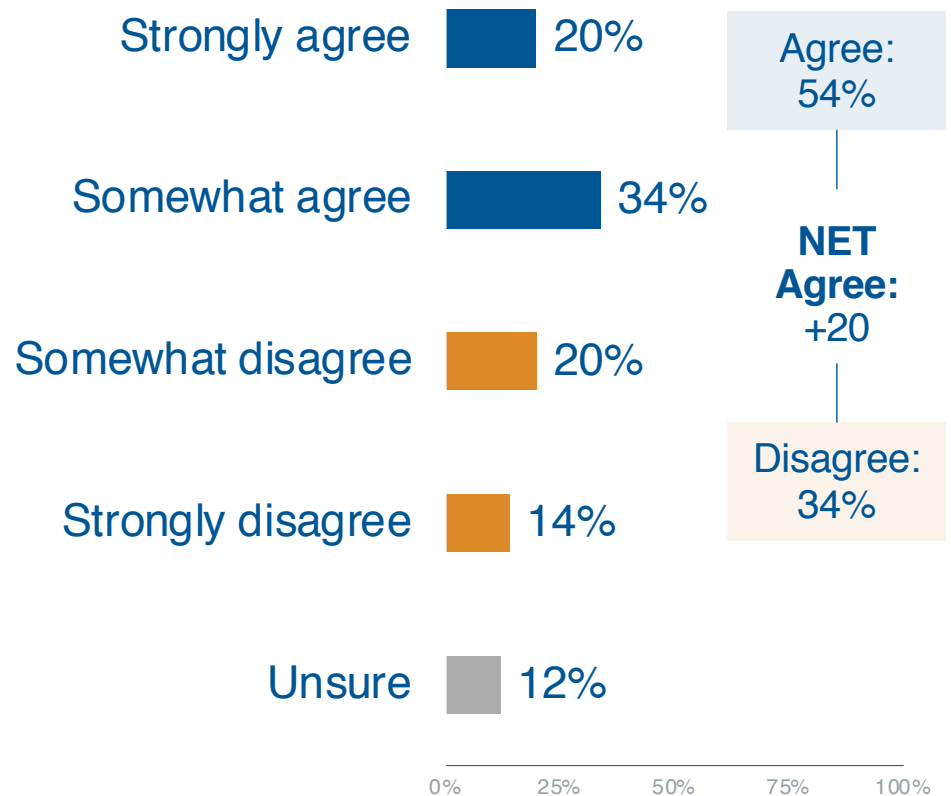
Agreement with Bar/Restaurant Owner's Concerns



The following was shown to survey respondents, who were then asked the follow up question:

Some bar and restaurant owners have expressed some concerns with the Province's move to have them close by 11:00 p.m. and require liquor service to stop at 10:00 p.m. They maintain that not only will these measures hurt their struggling businesses; it will likely encourage the spread of COVID as people will be likely to move their social gathering from the bar/restaurant when it closes to private residences where COVID rules are less likely to be enforced.

"Overall, would you say that you personally agree or disagree with this argument?"



NET Agree: Agree minus disagree | Base: All respondents (n=1,126)

Agreement with Bar/Restaurant Owner's Concerns

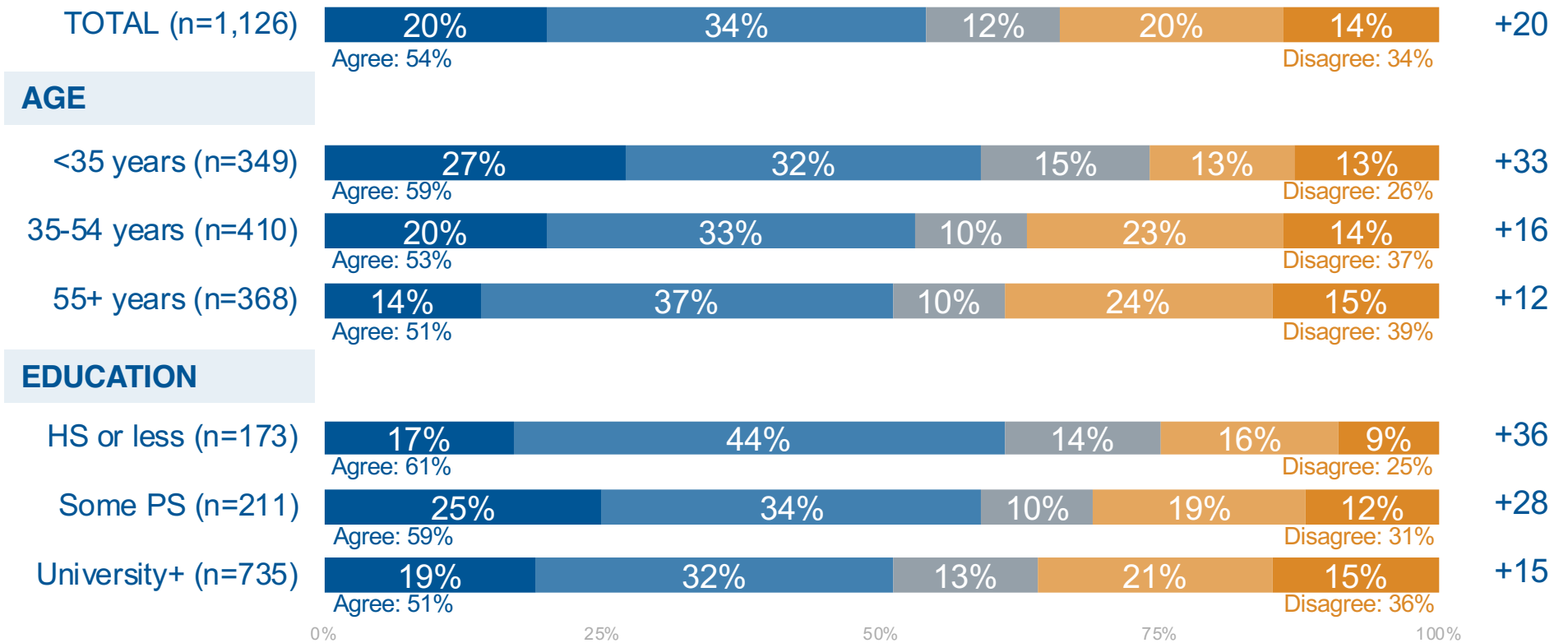
By Age and Education



"Overall, would you say that you personally agree or disagree with this argument?"

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Unsure
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree

NET Agree



NET Agree: Agree minus disagree | Base: All respondents

Agreement with Bar/Restaurant Owner's Concerns

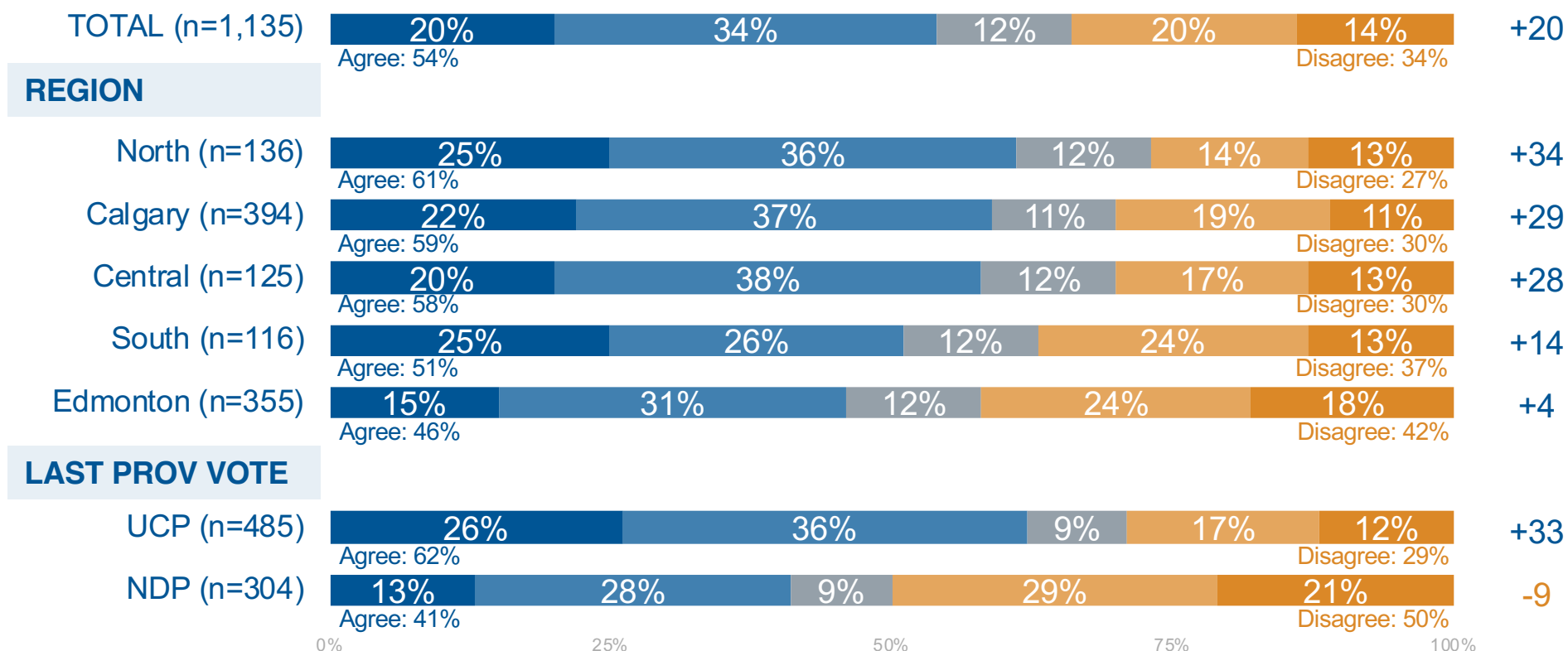
By Region and Last Provincial Vote



"Overall, would you say that you personally agree or disagree with this argument?"

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Unsure
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree

NET Agree

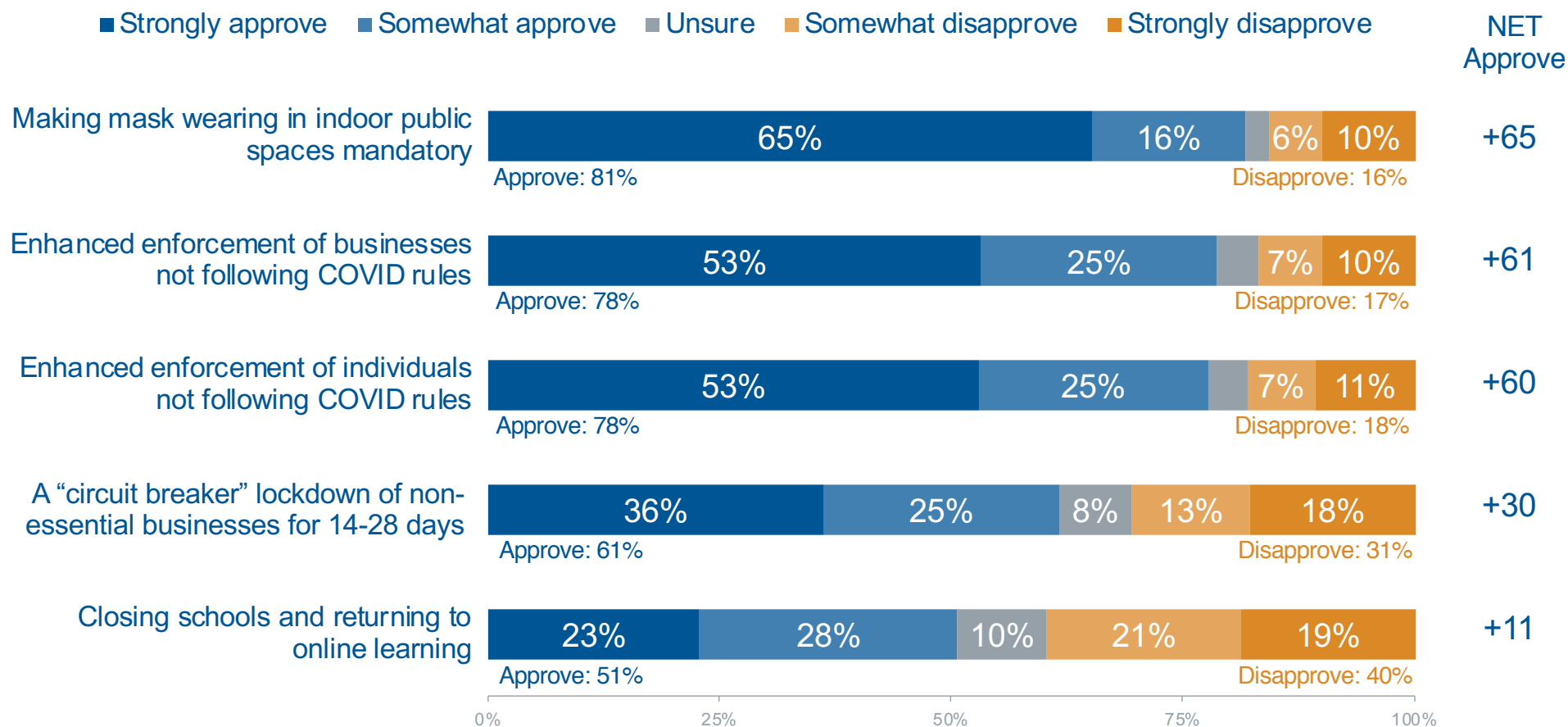


NET Agree: Agree minus disagree | Base: All respondents

Approval of Other Provincial Government's COVID Restriction Measures



“The following is a list of measures other governments have implemented to curb the spread of COVID. Would you personally approve or disapprove of the provincial government introducing these measures in Alberta right now?”



NET Approve: Approve minus disapprove | Base: All respondents (n=1,126)

Approval of Other Provincial Government's COVID Restriction Measures

By Region



“The following is a list of measures other governments have implemented to curb the spread of COVID. Would you personally approve or disapprove of the provincial government introducing these measures in Alberta right now?”

% say ‘Approve’ (Strongly or Somewhat)	Region					
	TOTAL	CGY	EDM	North	Central	South
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=394)	(n=355)	(n=136)	(n=125)	(n=116)
Making masks in indoor public spaces mandatory	81%	86%	89%	72%	70%	69%
Enhanced enforcement of businesses not following COVID rules	78%	83%	86%	67%	68%	68%
Enhanced enforcement of individuals not following COVID rules	78%	81%	82%	72%	69%	66%
“Circuit breaker” lockdown non-essential businesses for 14-28 days	61%	63%	69%	52%	54%	53%
Closing schools and returning to online learning	51%	54%	53%	46%	48%	42%

□ Significantly higher ○ Significantly lower

Base: All respondents

Approval of Other Provincial Government's COVID Restriction Measures

By Age and Education



“The following is a list of measures other governments have implemented to curb the spread of COVID. Would you personally approve or disapprove of the provincial government introducing these measures in Alberta right now?”

% say ‘Approve’ (Strongly or Somewhat)	TOTAL	Age			Education		
		<35	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some PS	Uni+
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=349)	(n=410)	(n=368)	(n=173)	(n=211)	(n=735)
Making masks in indoor public spaces mandatory	81%	81%	79%	86%	79%	82%	82%
Enhanced enforcement of businesses not following COVID rules	78%	75%	78%	83%	77%	75%	80%
Enhanced enforcement of individuals not following COVID rules	78%	75%	77%	81%	74%	79%	78%
“Circuit breaker” lockdown non-essential businesses for 14-28 days	61%	63%	59%	63%	61%	62%	62%
Closing schools and returning to online learning	51%	63%	46%	45%	60%	58%	47%

□ Significantly higher ○ Significantly lower

Base: All respondents

Approval of Other Provincial Government's COVID Restriction Measures

By Income, Kids at Home and Last Provincial Vote



“The following is a list of measures other governments have implemented to curb the spread of COVID. Would you personally approve or disapprove of the provincial government introducing these measures in Alberta right now?”

% say 'Approve' (Strongly or Somewhat)	TOTAL	Income			Kids at Home	Last Vote	
		<\$50K	\$50K- \$99K	\$100K +		UCP	NDP
Base size:	(n=1,126)	(n=225)	(n=356)	(n=354)	(n=334)	(n=485)	(n=304)
Making masks in indoor public spaces mandatory	81%	81%	81%	84%	79%	75%	96%
Enhanced enforcement of businesses not following COVID rules	78%	76%	81%	82%	75%	69%	96%
Enhanced enforcement of individuals not following COVID rules	78%	73%	80%	81%	73%	70%	93%
“Circuit breaker” lockdown non-essential businesses for 14-28 days	61%	61%	65%	63%	55%	48%	89%
Closing schools and returning to online learning	51%	58%	54%	46%	46%	41%	65%

Significantly higher Significantly lower

Base: All respondents



MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Marc Henry, President
ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc.
marc@thinkhq.com