

April 5, 2022

KENNEY'S NUMBERS STALL: MOST VOTERS STILL WANT A NEW UCP LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kenney's Numbers Stall – Most Voters Still Want a New UCP Leader

(Calgary) With only a handful of days to go before the leadership review vote in the UCP Party, Premier Jason Kenney's approval ratings have stalled below 30%, and with his party trailing in the polls, most voters want new UCP leadership according to the latest ThinkHQ Public Affairs survey of Albertans.

Public sentiment about whether or not the UCP should seek a new party leader has remained remarkably stable since December of last year, with over six-in-ten (63%) now saying Kenney should be replaced vs. 22% wanting him to stay as UCP leader. This is the dominant view even among UCP voters and UCP members – fully 61% of current UCP members surveyed want Kenney replaced vs. 32% who feel he should stay on.

The next provincial election is roughly one year away, and at this point, voter intentions would have the NDP forming a majority government, holding a 12-point lead province-wide over the UCP, with healthy margins in both major urban centres. The prospects for the UCP to repeat as the governing party appear more promising with a new leader. Almost four-in-ten (39%) voters say they are more likely to vote UCP with a new leader vs. only 13% saying they'd be less likely. In contrast, only 12% of provincial voters say they are more likely to vote UCP with Jason Kenney remaining as leader, compared to 45% who say they would be less likely.

Kenney's Approval

Jason Kenney's approval ratings have plateaued at 29% compared to 69% saying they disapprove of the premier's performance (53% strongly disapprove). His performance ratings are largely unchanged since the end of February.

- Kenney's approval is slightly higher outside of the province's two major urban centres (particularly Edmonton), and is better among men (35%) than women (22%)
- The Premier's ratings improve with the age of voters (37% among those 55+), and declines with education levels
- Even among those who voted UCP in the last election, Kenney's approval sits at 50%

UCP Leadership

Jason Kenney's future will be decided by eligible voting members of the UCP Party, but if the decision were left to ordinary voters, the province would be getting a new premier and UCP leader. Fully 63% of those interviewed say Kenney should go, compared to only 22% saying they would prefer he stay on as UCP leader and another 15% unsure. These findings are virtually unchanged since December of 2021.

Preferences for new leadership of the UCP are very consistent across most demographic breaks, with interesting partisan variation:

- Even among current UCP members, 61% feel the party should seek a new leader vs. 32% preferring Kenney at the helm for the next election
- Past UCP voters (from 2019) are more likely to say Kenney should go (61%) than those who plan to vote for the party in the next election (46%)
- Those planning to support the Wildrose Independence Party in the next election are most likely to want Kenney gone (82%), along with 76% of undecided voters

The Provincial Political Horserace

If a provincial election were held tomorrow, the NDP would win decisively. Currently almost one-in-five (18%) voters are undecided, but among those who have made up their minds, the NDP lead province-wide with 46%, followed by the UCP 12-points back at 34%, the Wildrose (13%), Alberta Party (5%) and Liberals (2%). The NDP currently enjoy significant leads in Alberta's two largest cities, with other areas of the province tilting in favour of the UCP.

- In Edmonton, the NDP completely dominate with an almost 30-point lead over the UCP
- In Calgary, the NDP lead is more modest (14-points), with the WIPA playing the “spoiler” capturing 12%
- Even in less urban areas of the province, while the UCP have an edge over the NDP, it is fairly nominal (within margin of error), with WIPA pulling significant vote percentages (particularly in Central and Southern Alberta)

UCP Prospects Following Leadership Vote

According to voter sentiment today, the UCP may stand a better chance of repeating as government with a new leader than with Jason Kenney. Only one-in-ten (12%) voters say they are more likely to vote UCP in the next election with Kenney at the helm, compared to 45% who would be less inclined to do so. In contrast, four-in-ten (39%) say they would be more likely to consider a vote for the UCP under new leadership, while 13% would be less likely.

- Fresh leadership would likely bolster UCP prospects across all regions of the province
- Among those who voted UCP in the last provincial election, the prospects of new leadership provide a significant incentive. Among this group, Kenney's continued leadership nets a -21 more/less likely to vote UCP vs. +26 if a new leader is in place

Commentary

Commenting on the results of the survey, ThinkHQ Public Affairs President Marc Henry notes:

“The lack of variation in Jason Kenney’s numbers over the past few months is a surprise and suggests voter impressions have just hardened on him. There are a multitude of positive events – many instituted by Kenney himself – which one might think would add some positive wind to his sails but it’s not happening. His approval is deeply negative and static. Six-in-ten voters want him out as UCP leader and Premier, and we’re down to the final hours before the leadership review at this point.

The UCP coalition in 2019 was resounding. Two parties, once split, came together to unseat an unpopular NDP government. The challenge for the ‘United’ Conservatives at this point is the 2019 coalition of voters don’t appear ready to support a party led by Kenney again. They are well back in the polls, the Wildrose Independence Party is a force (or at least at this stage a vote-splitting force), and voters aren’t especially motivated to give the Premier another go – WIPA voters are particularly vitriolic toward Kenney’s leadership.

Commentary ... continued

The outcome of the mail-in vote this weekend is anyone's guess – this survey gives some insights into the thinking of past/present UCP Party members and voters in general, but it's not a representative sample of those who will actually be casting their votes this weekend.

The findings do shed some light on what may happen after the vote, however. If Kenney is ousted, there is a large segment of voters who will suddenly be more attentive to a leadership race and potentially more inclined to support the UCP than they are today.

If Kenney stays, the UCP will have its work cut out for it. If they have any chance of re-election, Kenney would need to improve his personal reputation in a way that has eluded him for the past 18 months or so. Governments typically don't get re-elected when their party's leader is sitting at 30% approval.”

Media Inquiries:

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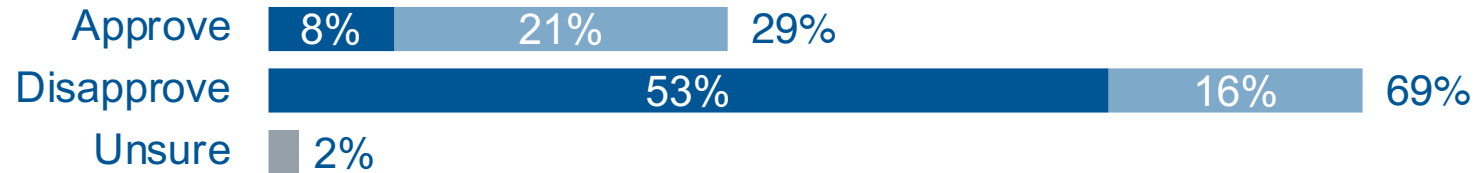
marc@thinkhq.com

Provincial Leadership Evaluations

Would you generally say you approve or disapprove of the performance of the following provincial party leaders?

■ Strongly ■ Somewhat

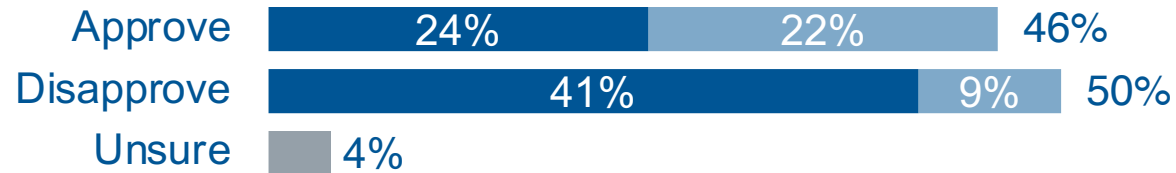
Jason Kenney: United Conservative Party



NET Approve

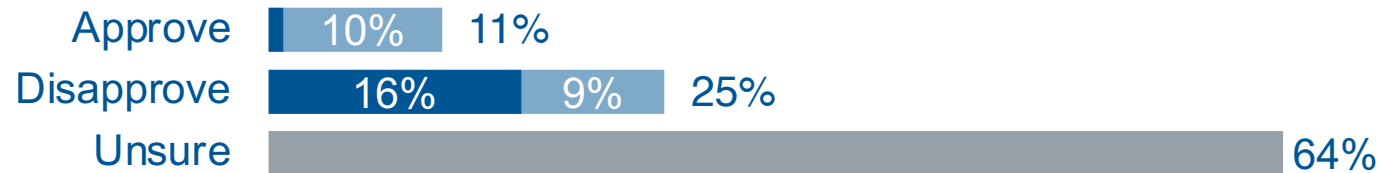
-40

Rachel Notley: NDP



-4

Barry Morishita: Alberta Party



-14

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

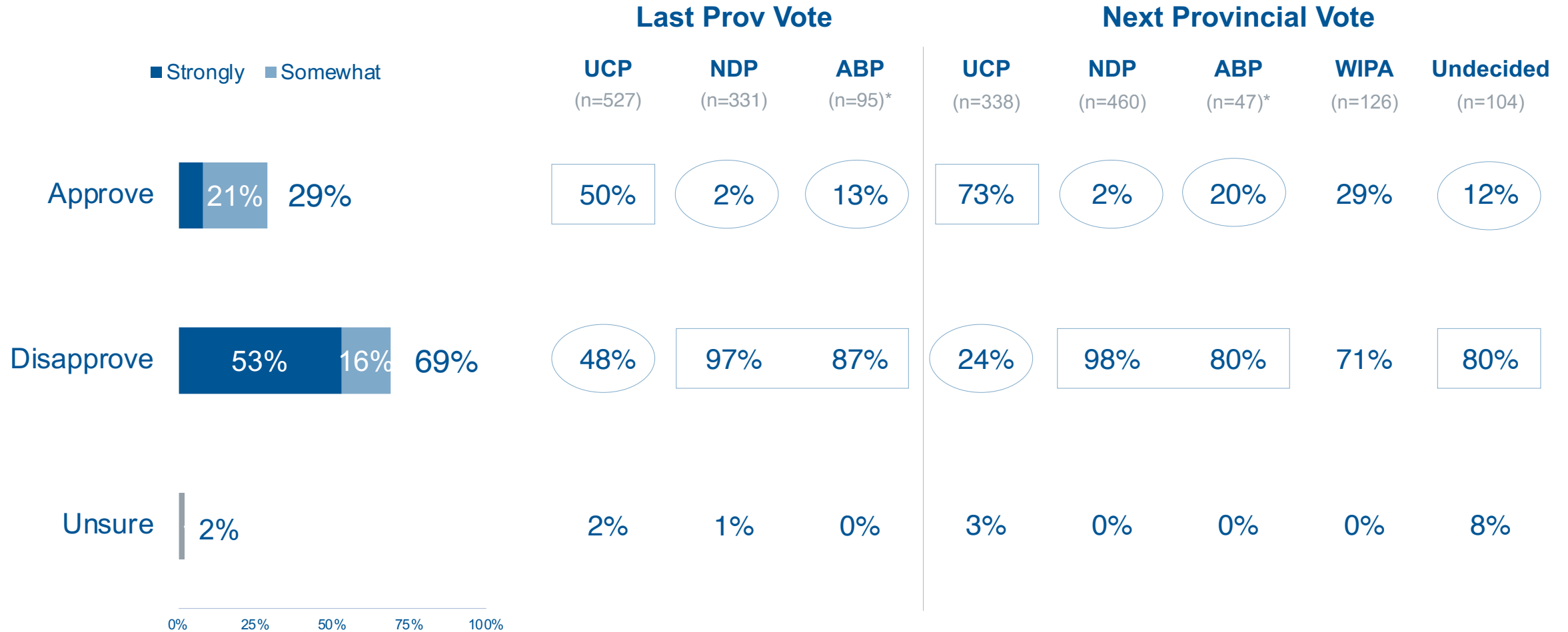
Base: All respondents (n=1,135) | NET: Approve minus disapprove

Provincial Leadership Evaluation: Jason Kenney's Approval

By Last / Next Provincial Vote



Would you generally say you approve or disapprove of the performance of Premier Jason Kenney?



Base: All respondents (n=1,135) | *Caution: Small sample size



Significantly higher



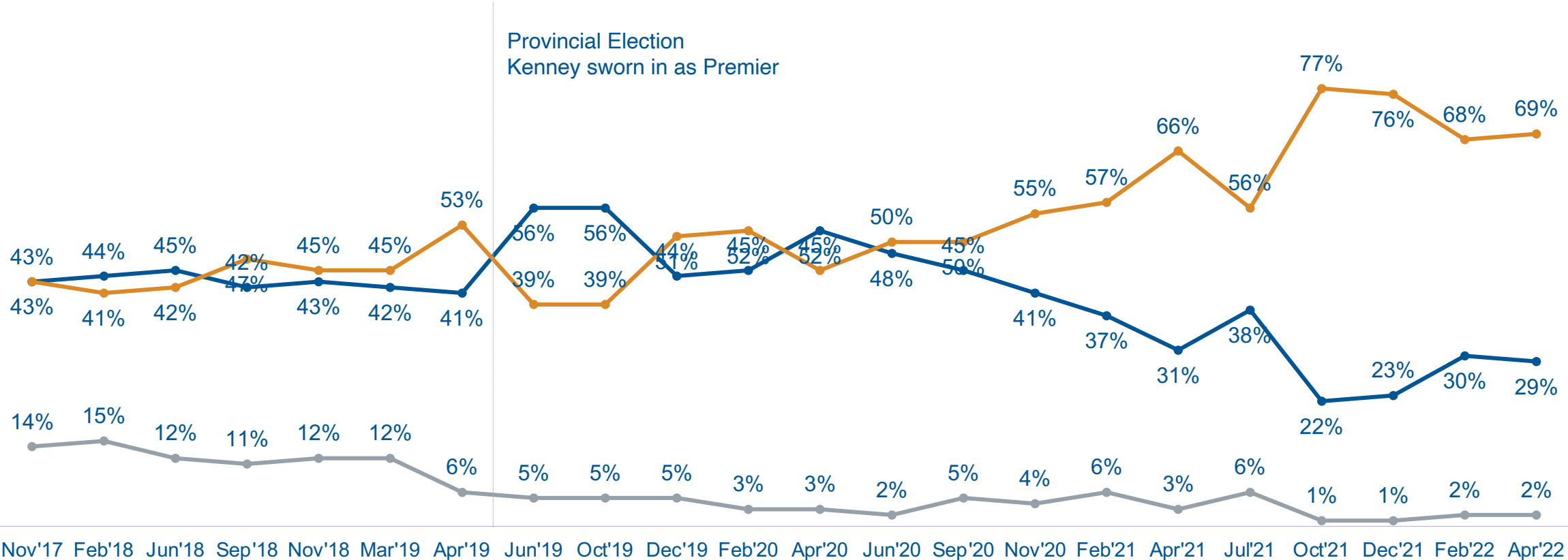
Significantly lower

Provincial Leadership Evaluation: Jason Kenney's Approval



Would you generally say you approve or disapprove of the performance of Premier Jason Kenney?

— Approve — Disapprove — Unsure



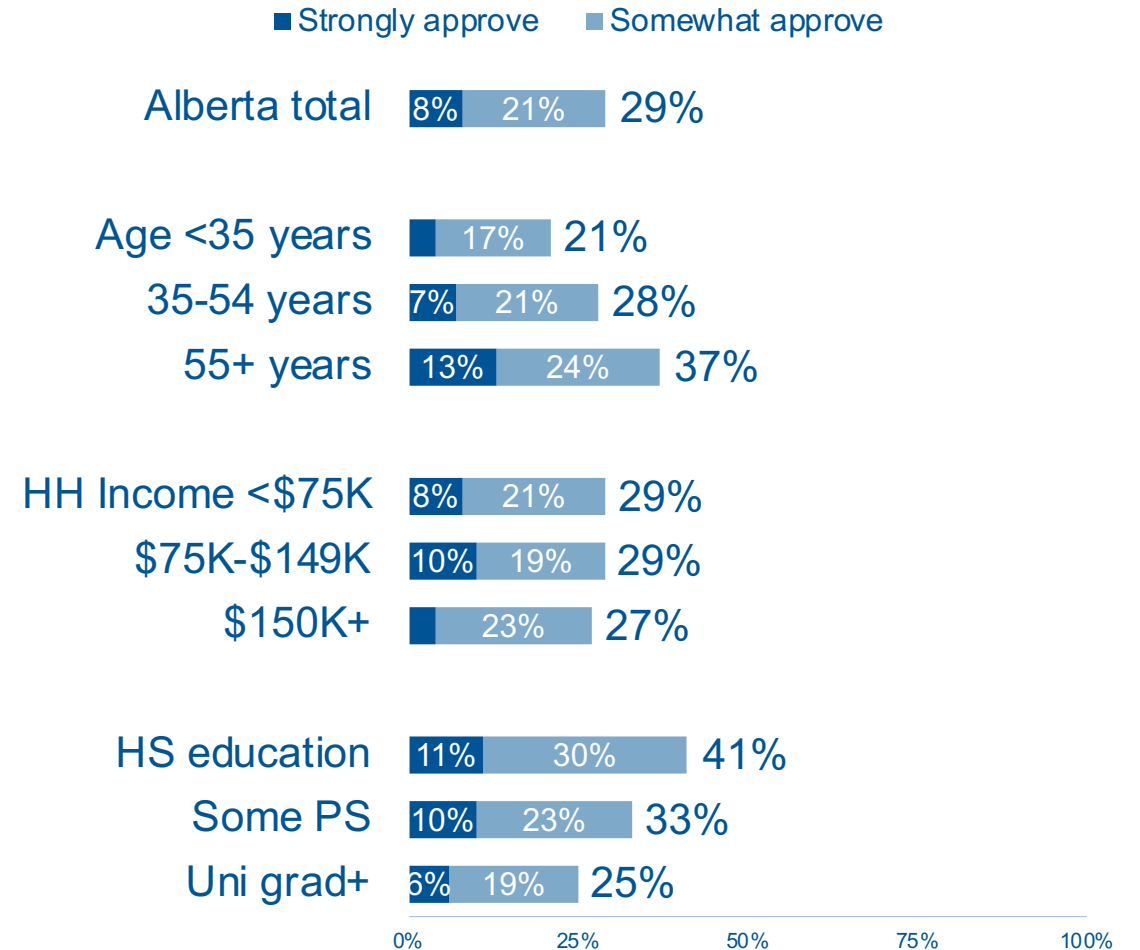
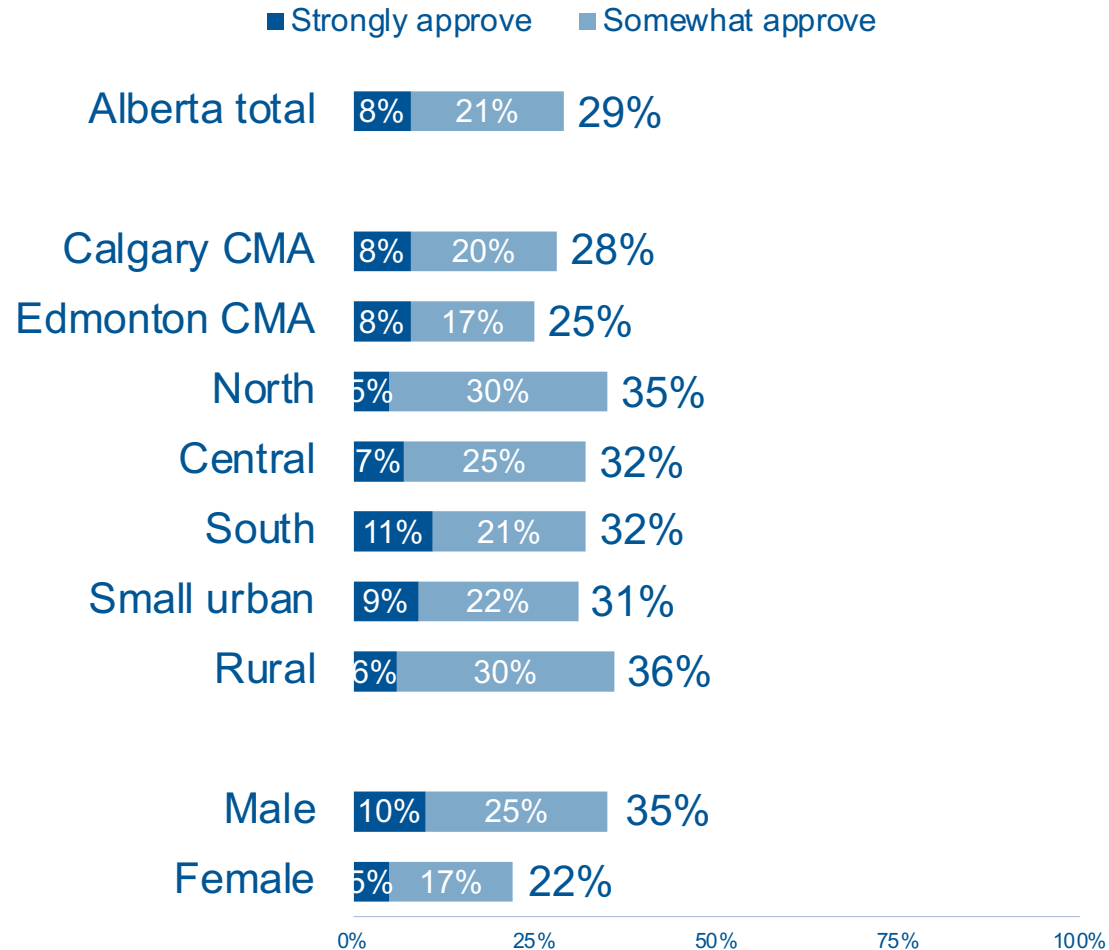
Base: All respondents

Provincial Leadership Evaluation: Jason Kenney's Approval

By Key Demographics



Would you generally say you approve or disapprove of the performance of Premier Jason Kenney?

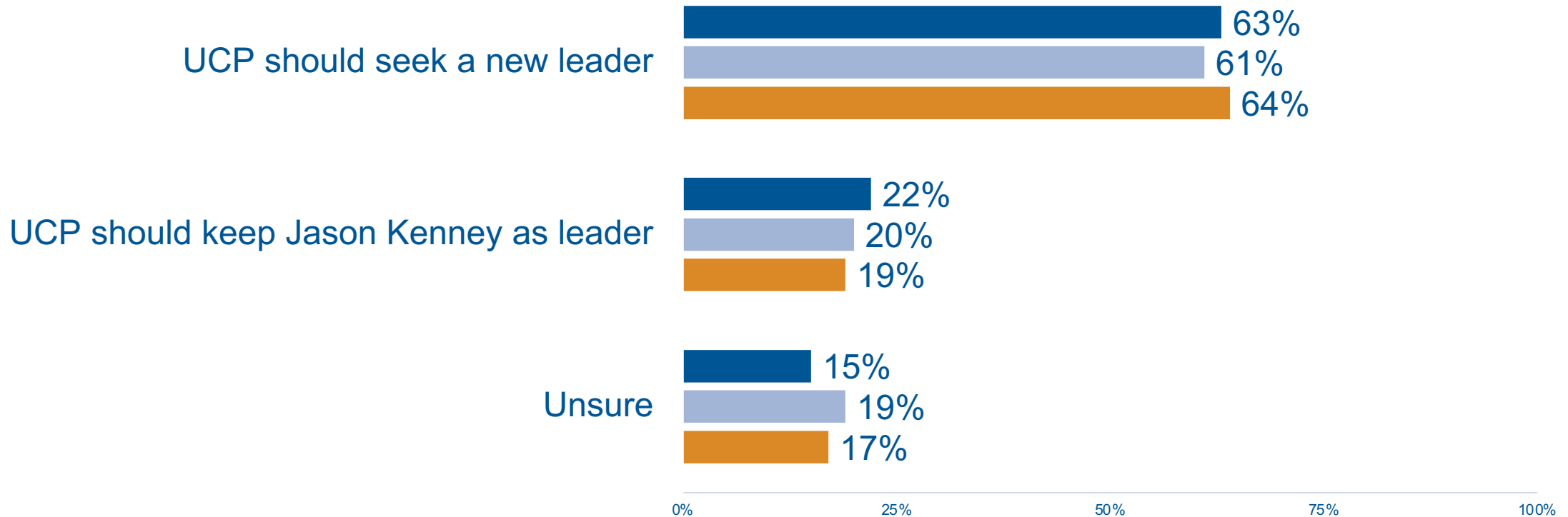


Base: All respondents

Should the UCP Keep Kenney as Leader?

Should Jason Kenney continue as leader of the United Conservative Party or should the UCP seek a new leader in a leadership election before the next provincial election?

■ Apr'22 ■ Feb'22 ■ Dec'21

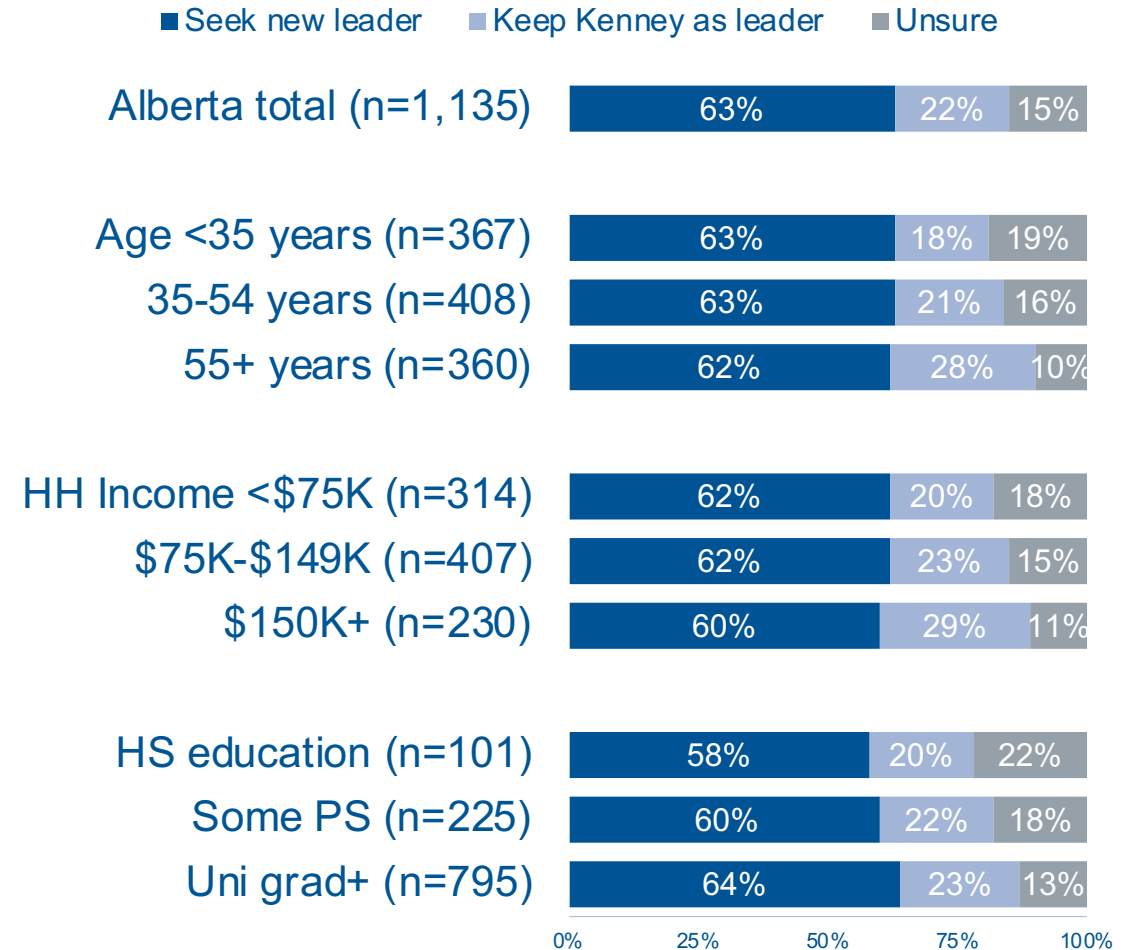
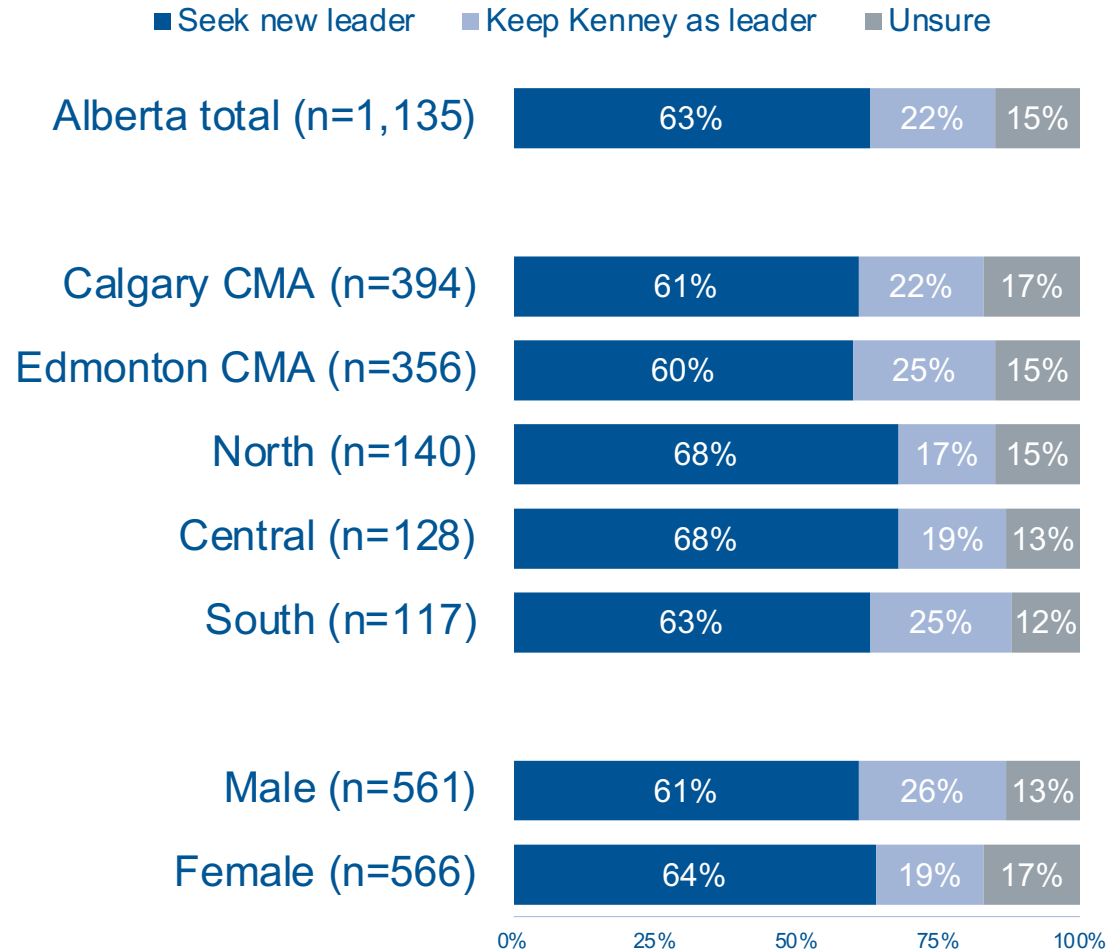


Base: All respondents (n=1,135)

Should the UCP Keep Kenney as Leader?

By Key Demographics

Should Jason Kenney continue as leader of the UCP or should the UCP seek a new leader in a leadership election before the next provincial election?



Base: All respondents

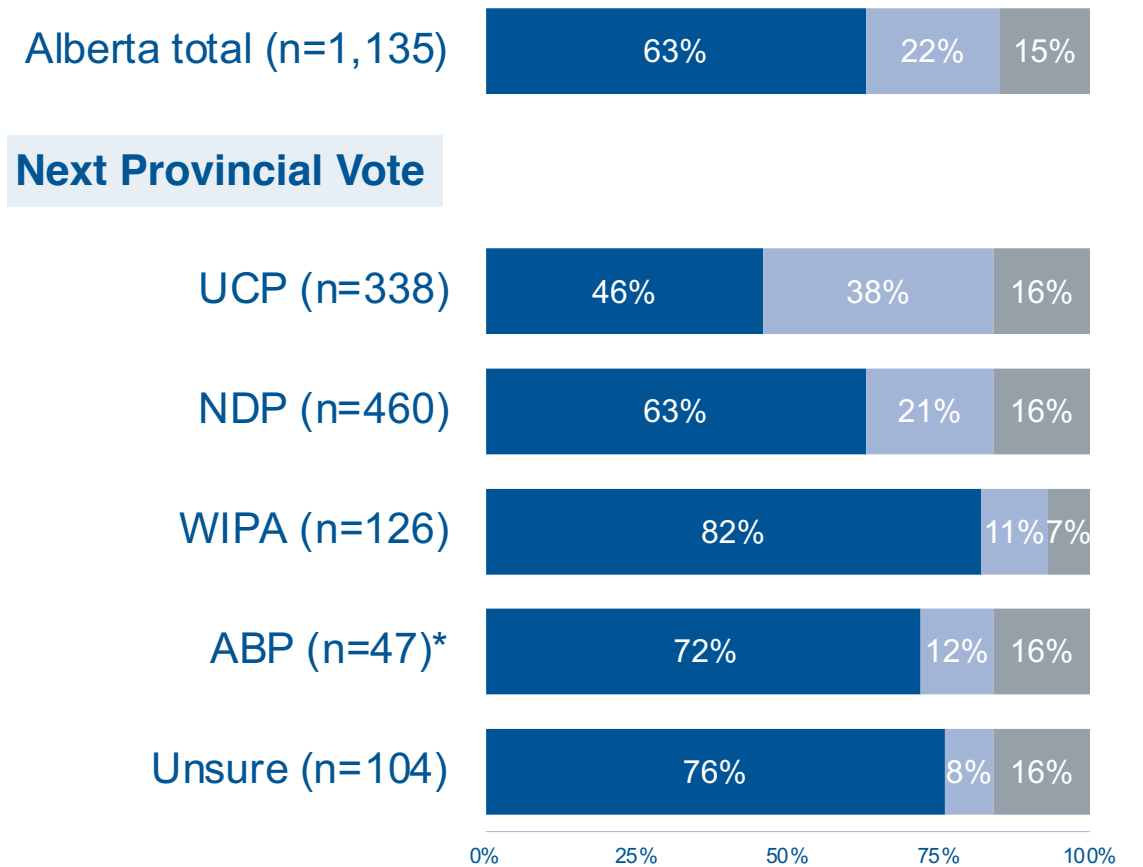
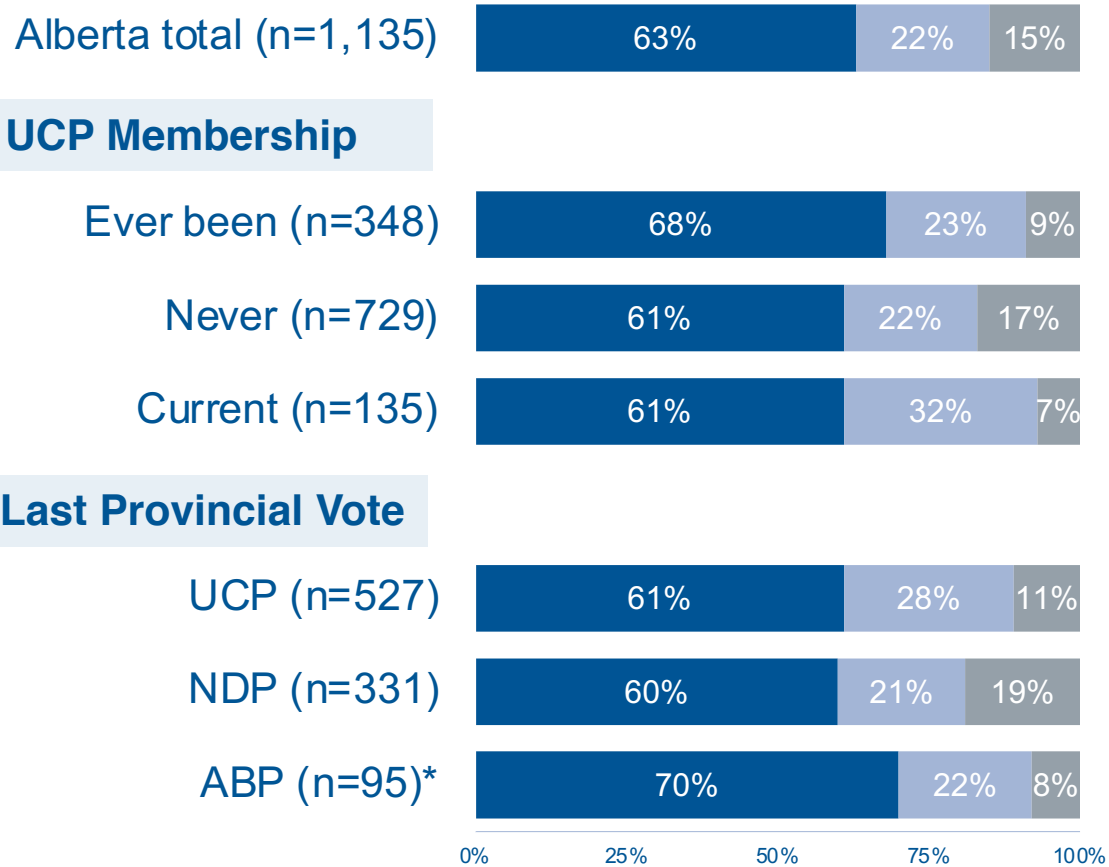
Should the UCP Keep Kenney as Leader?

By UCP Membership and Last / Next Provincial Vote

Should Jason Kenney continue as leader of the UCP or should the UCP seek a new leader in a leadership election before the next provincial election?

■ Seek new leader ■ Keep Kenney as leader ■ Unsure

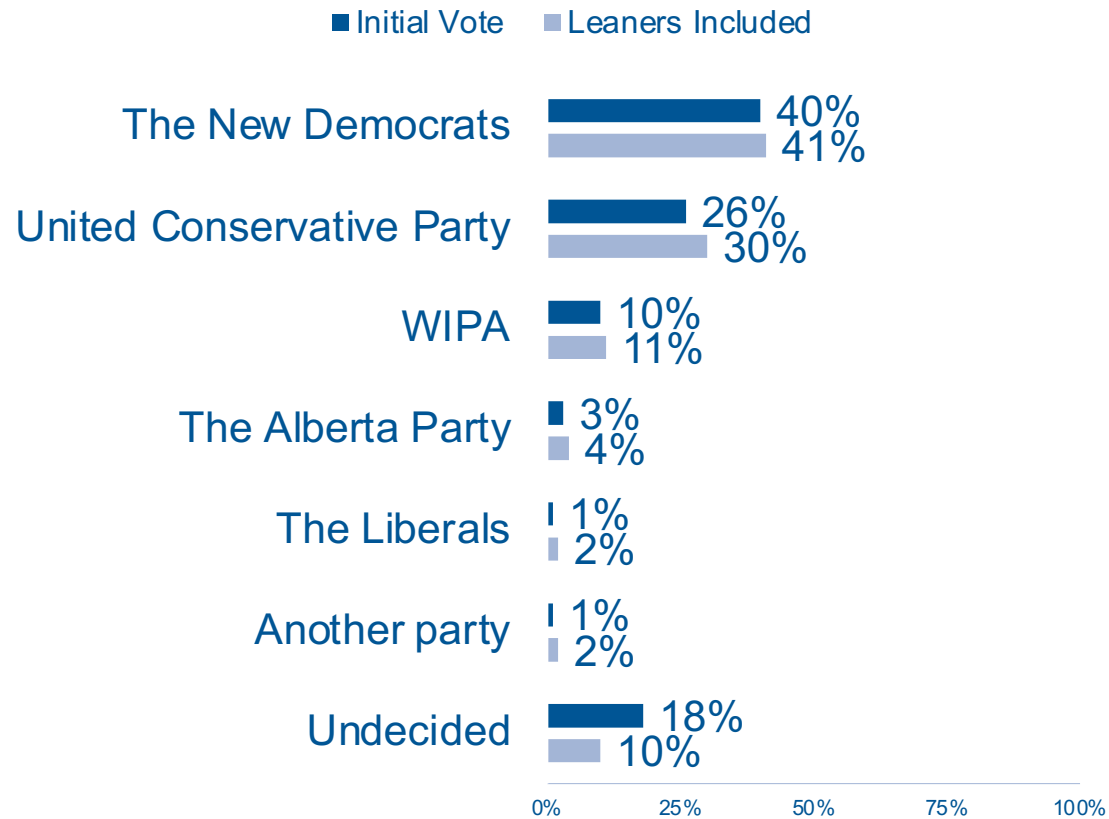
■ Seek new leader ■ Keep Kenney as leader ■ Unsure



Base: All respondents | *Caution: Small sample size

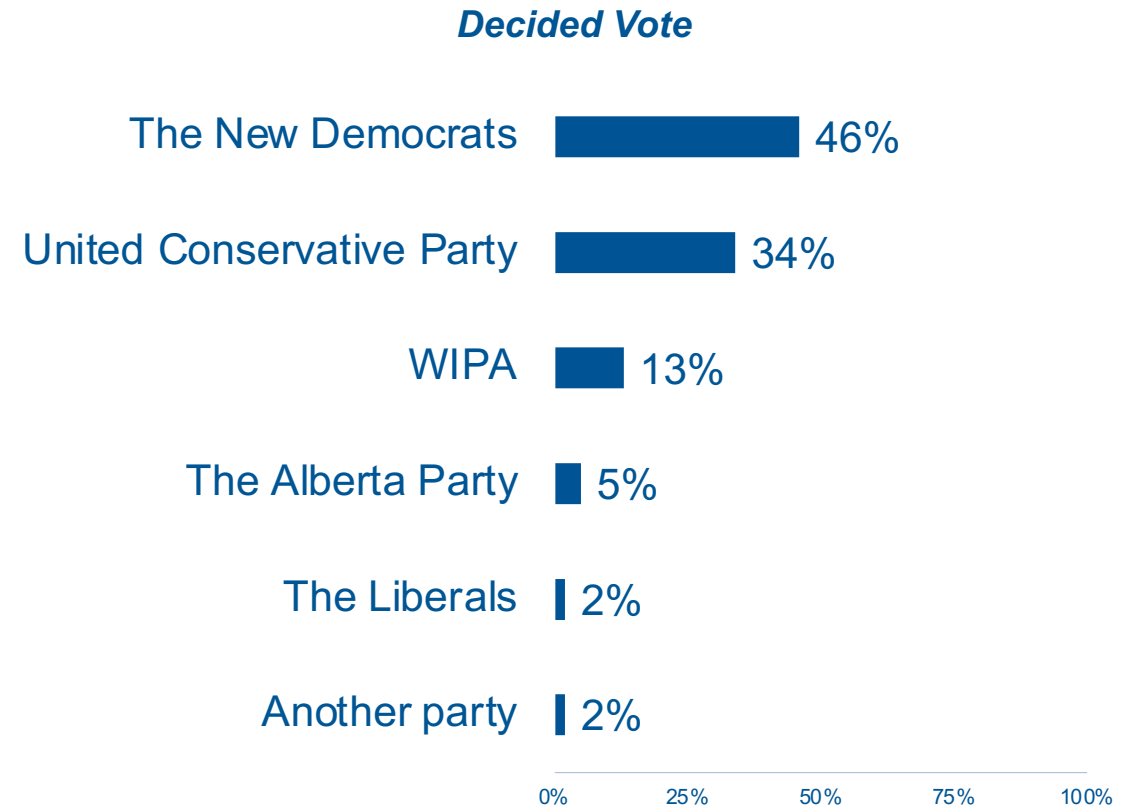
Provincial Political Horserace

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?



Base: All respondents (n=1,135) | Note: 1% say they would not vote

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?



Base: Decided voters (n=1,010)

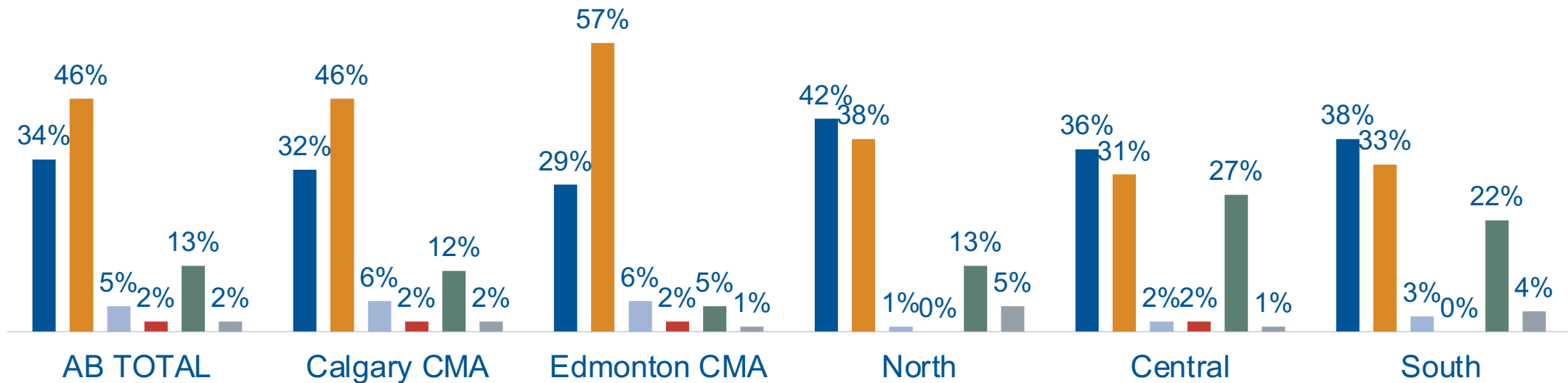
Provincial Political Horserace

By Region

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?

■ UCP ■ NDP ■ Alberta Party ■ Liberals ■ WIPA ■ Another party

% decided voters



Base: Decided voters

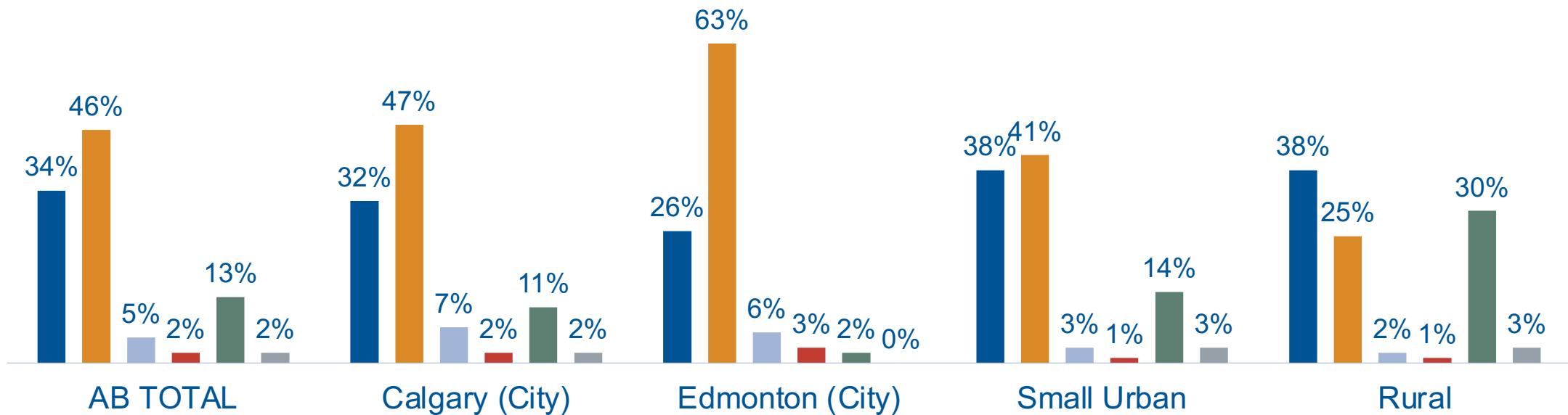
Provincial Political Horserace

By Region

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?

■ UCP ■ NDP ■ Alberta Party ■ Liberals ■ WIPA ■ Another party

% decided voters



Base: Decided voters

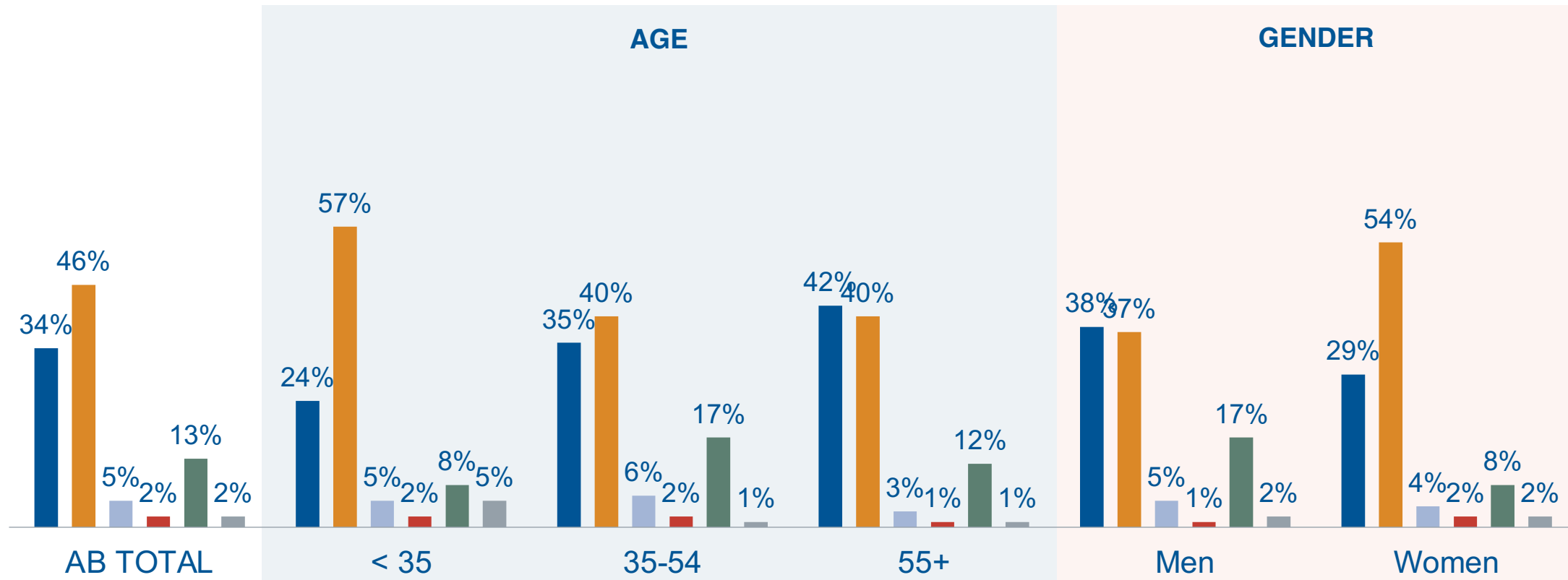
Provincial Political Horserace

By Age and Gender

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?

■ UCP ■ NDP ■ Alberta Party ■ Liberals ■ WIPA ■ Another party

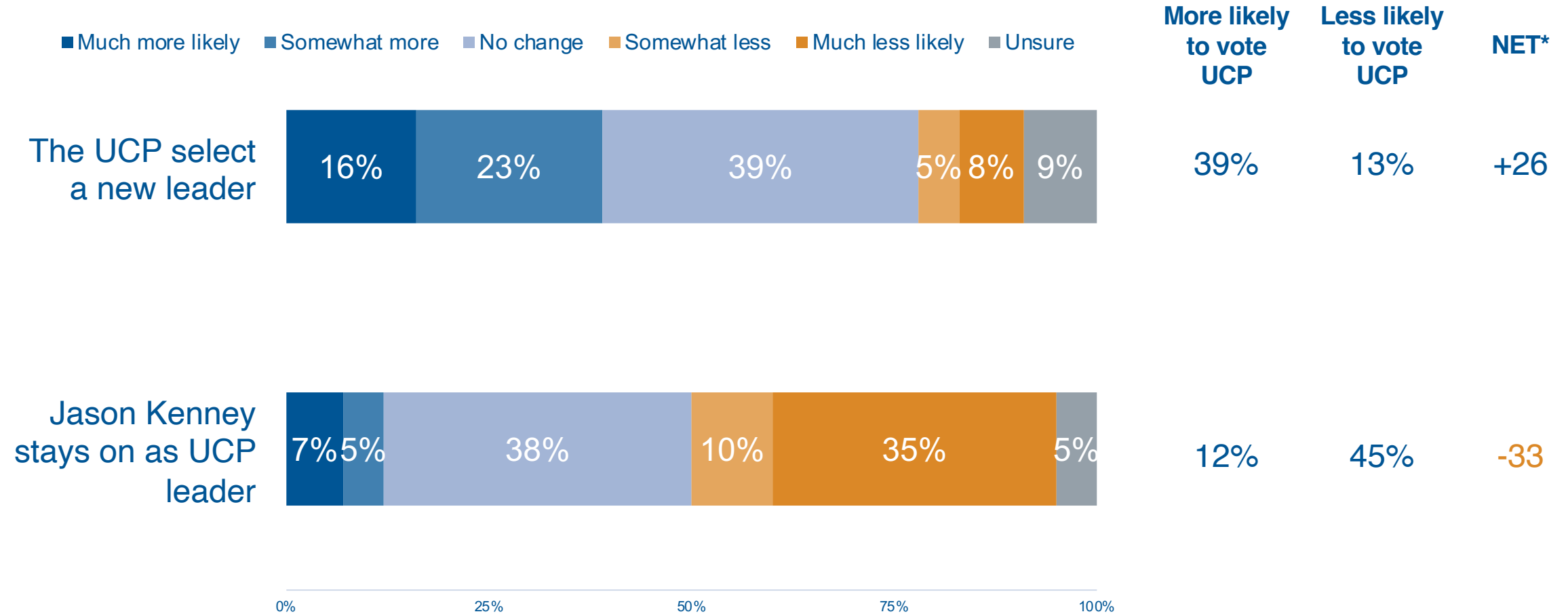
% decided voters (leaners included)



Base: Decided voters

Likelihood to Vote UCP following UCP Leadership Vote Outcome

On April 9th, United Conservative Party members will be voting to either keep Jason Kenney as their leader or call a leadership race to select a new leader to lead them in next year's election. Thinking about yourself personally, would you say that you are more likely to vote UCP, less likely UCP, or doesn't matter to you if...?



Base: All respondents (n=1,135) | *NET: More likely minus less likely

Likelihood to Vote UCP following UCP Leadership Vote Outcome

By Region and Gender



Thinking about yourself personally, would you say that you are more likely to vote UCP, less likely UCP, or doesn't matter to you if...?

		Region					Gender		
		TOTAL	YYC	YEG	North	Central	South	Male	Female
Base Size:		(n=1,135)	(n=394)	(n=356)	(n=140)	(n=128)	(n=117)	(n=561)	(n=566)
The UCP select a new leader	More likely	39%	37%	36%	39%	48%	45%	42%	36%
	No change	39%	39%	42%	45%	29%	36%	38%	40%
	Less likely	13%	12%	16%	10%	14%	12%	14%	13%
	NET	+26	+25	+20	+29	+34	+33	+28	+23
Jason Kenney stays on as UCP leader	More likely	12%	11%	13%	11%	13%	16%	14%	11%
	No change	38%	38%	41%	43%	28%	33%	39%	37%
	Less likely	45%	43%	43%	44%	54%	48%	42%	47%
	NET	-33	-32	-30	-33	-41	-32	-28	-36

Base: All respondents



Significantly higher



Significantly lower

Likelihood to Vote UCP following UCP Leadership Vote Outcome

By Last / Next Provincial Vote

Thinking about yourself personally, would you say that you are more likely to vote UCP, less likely UCP, or doesn't matter to you if...?

		Last Prov Vote				Next Prov Vote				
		TOTAL	UCP	NDP	ABP	UCP	NDP	ABP	WIPA	Unsure
Base Size:		(n=1,135)	(n=527)	(n=331)	(n=95)*	(n=338)	(n=460)	(n=47)*	(n=126)	(n=104)
The UCP select a new leader	More likely	39%	54%	15%	38%	41%	21%	72%	47%	62%
	No change	39%	28%	60%	47%	36%	57%	16%	27%	15%
	Less likely	13%	11%	21%	8%	14%	18%	6%	6%	5%
	NET*	+26	+43	-6	+30	+27	+3	+66	+41	+57
Jason Kenney stays on as UCP leader	More likely	12%	21%	3%	9%	31%	4%	5%	13%	2%
	No change	38%	33%	50%	49%	45%	48%	18%	24%	18%
	Less likely	45%	42%	45%	38%	20%	47%	71%	52%	69%
	NET*	-33	-21	-42	-29	+11	-43	-66	-39	-67

Base: All respondents | *NET: More likely minus less likely | *Caution: Small sample size



Significantly higher



Significantly lower

STUDY APPROACH



Research Methodology

- **Approach:** Online survey of Adult Albertans
- **Region:** Alberta
- **Field dates:** March 29 - April 1, 2022
- **Sample size:** n=1,135
- **Panel source:** Angus Reid Forum
- **Sampling:** A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from the Angus Reid Forum panel
- **Weighting:** Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of the Alberta population according to Stats Canada
- **Margin of error:** The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is ***+/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20***

Sample sizes:	Unweighted	Weighted	MOE*
Alberta total	n=1,135	n=1,135	+/- 2.9
Calgary	n=393	n=394	+/- 4.9
Edmonton	n=346	n=356	+/- 5.3
Northern Alberta	n=125	n=140	+/- 8.8
Central Alberta	n=137	n=128	+/- 8.4
Southern Alberta	n=134	n=117	+/- 8.5

*Margin of error: Percentage points 19 times out of 20.

The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size.

Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes



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