



MEDIA RELEASE  
MAY 1, 2023

# ALBERTANS' VIEWS ON CALGARY EVENT CENTRE AGREEMENT

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# Albertans Divided on Calgary Event Centre Deal



(Calgary) On the eve of a provincial election, Albertans are divided – in fact, slightly negative - on a deal for a new Event Centre complex in Calgary, according to the latest ThinkHQ Public Affairs provincial survey.

The deal, which involves a \$300 Million contribution from the Government of Alberta, has quickly become a profile issue as the provincial campaign starts. Indeed, only 12% of Alberta voters say they have not heard anything about it, while almost two-thirds (64%) report being “definitely aware” of the issue.

At first blush, it’s not a particularly compelling campaign issue for Danielle Smith’s UCP, with 50% of those interviewed saying they disapprove of the deal (32% strongly), compared to 43% who are in favour (14% strongly), and 7% are unsure.

Province-wide it's a divisive issue, one that tilts slightly negative. However, most political watchers agree the announcement, made just days before the official start of the election, is really geared toward wooing Calgary votes. If that's the case, it's not a particularly effective effort. In Calgary, sentiment toward the new agreement is flipped compared to the province-wide average – 50% approve (20% strongly) while slightly fewer (45%) disapprove (27% strongly), and another 5% are unsure.

In the rest of the province, sentiment is generally divided, except with respect to Edmonton. In the provincial capital region, fully 61% of those interviewed disapprove of the deal (44% strongly), compared to only 33% offering support.

Looking across demographic breaks:

- Approval for the deal tends to increase modestly with age and income, and is lower among women and those with university education

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

“The results on this aren’t especially surprising. We’ve tracked public sentiment on every proposed Event Centre deal that’s come forward in the past decade, and they always seem to divide Calgarians in half. Not shocking. It’s also not shocking that Edmontonians don’t like the deal, given the historical rivalry between the two cities and the lack of provincial support for Rogers Place.

This is not the issue that is going to win a lot of new votes for the UCP in Calgary – in fact, it may cost them votes in the ridings surrounding Edmonton. That said, it is an issue that could cost the NDP the election if mishandled, i.e., if they threaten to stop the deal as Government.

For the NDP to win the election, they MUST capture the lion's share of Calgary seats. And as the polls sit today, many of those constituencies will be determined by very thin margins – a couple of points either way could mean the difference between the winning and losing parties. Killing a deal popular with one-half of Calgarians is the kind of thing that could tip the balance in several of these 'toss up' ridings. For the NDP, that's the difference between having a chance at forming Government and not."

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# Awareness of New Calgary Event Centre Agreement



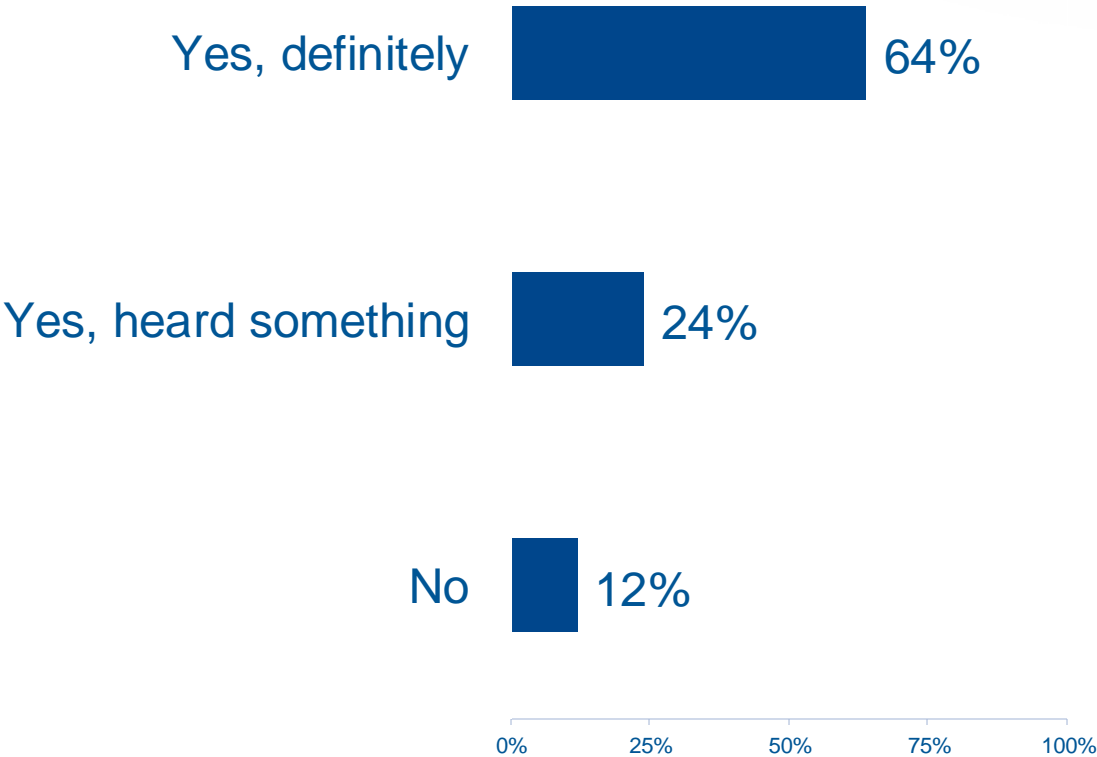
**Information shown to respondents, who were asked follow up questions:**

Recently it was announced that an agreement has been struck to fund a new Event Centre complex in Calgary to replace the Saddledome.

The following funding terms are part of the deal:

- City of Calgary will pay \$537 Million
- Flames ownership will pay \$356 Million
- Province of Alberta will pay \$330 Million, specifically for infrastructure related to the complex like roads, sidewalks, reclamation, etc.

*Were you personally aware of this agreement before today?*

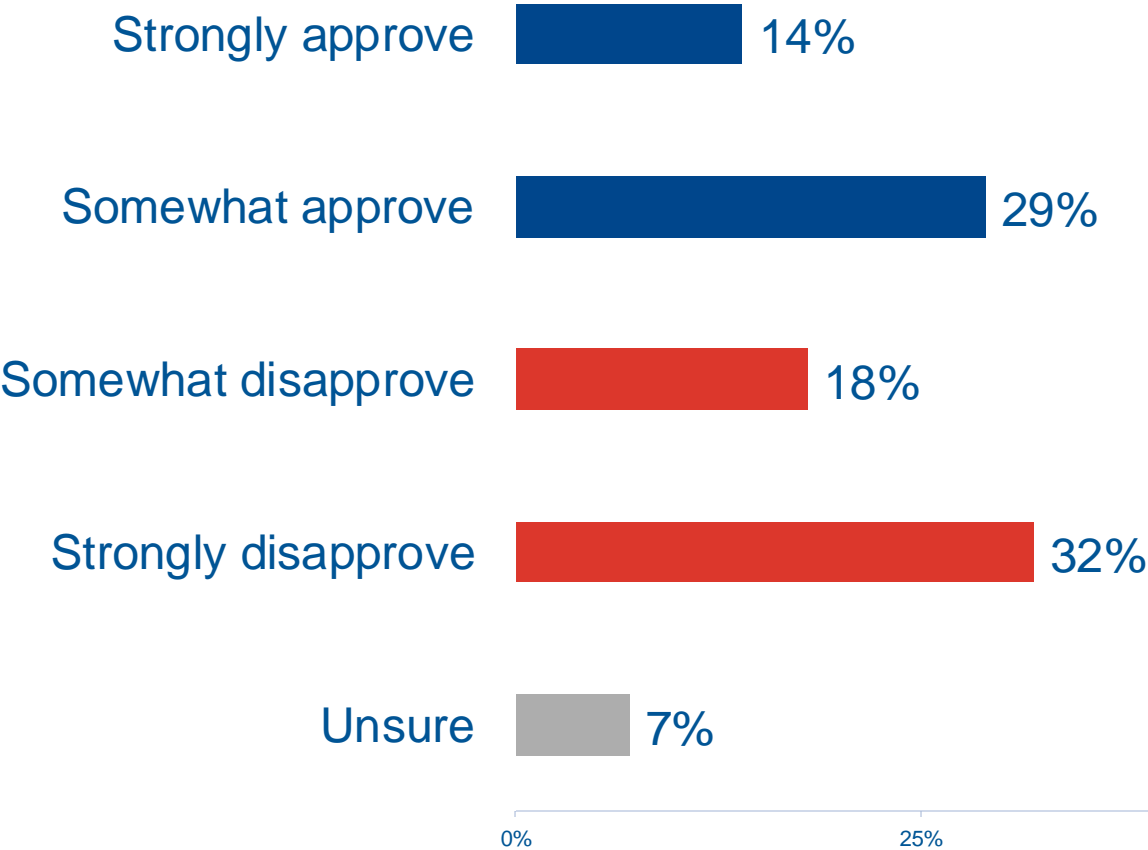


Base: All respondents (n=789) | Note: Question added mid-field

# Approval of New Calgary Event Centre Agreement



Thinking about your own feelings, would you say that you personally approve or disapprove of this new agreement to fund a new Event Centre in Calgary?



## Summary

Approve	43%
Disapprove	50%
NET	- 7

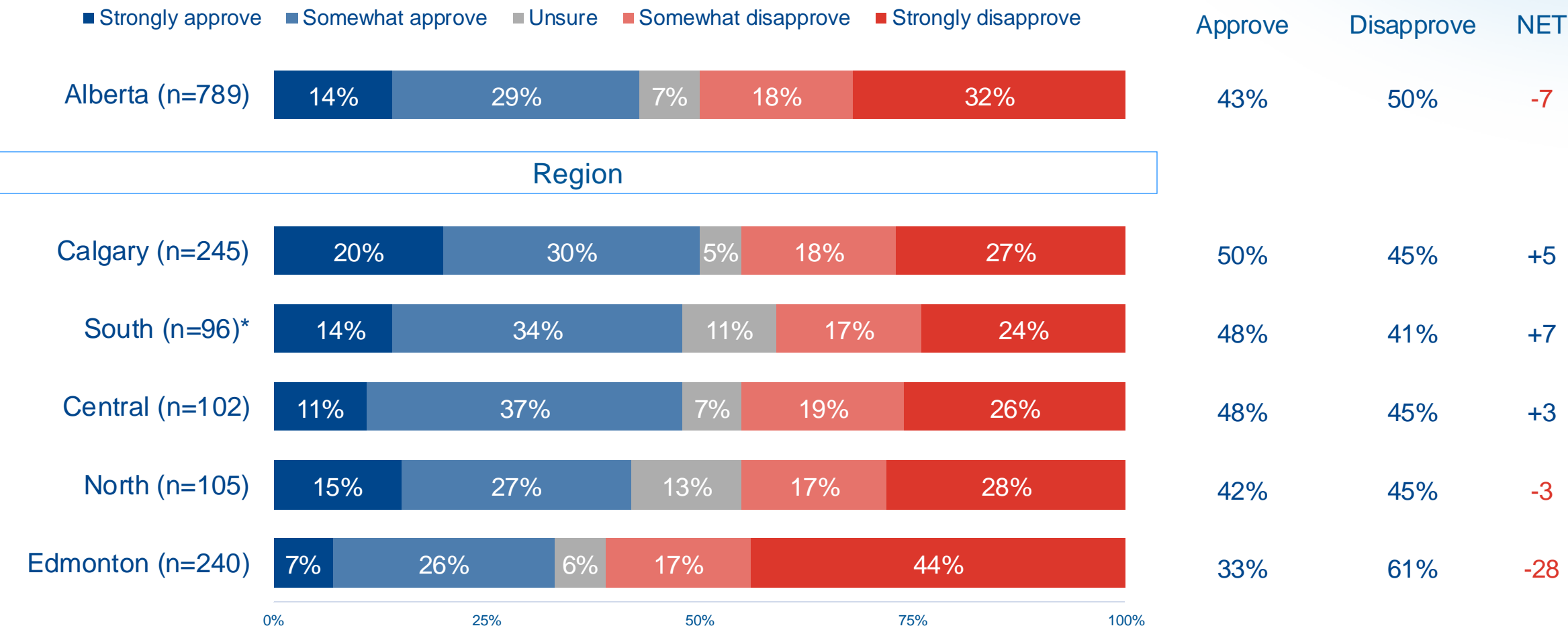
Base: All respondents (n=789) | Note: Question added mid-field | NET: Approve minus disapprove

# Approval of New Calgary Event Centre Agreement

## By Region



Would you say that you personally approve or disapprove of this new agreement to fund a new Event Centre in Calgary?



Base: All respondents | \*Caution: Small base size | NET: Approve minus disapprove

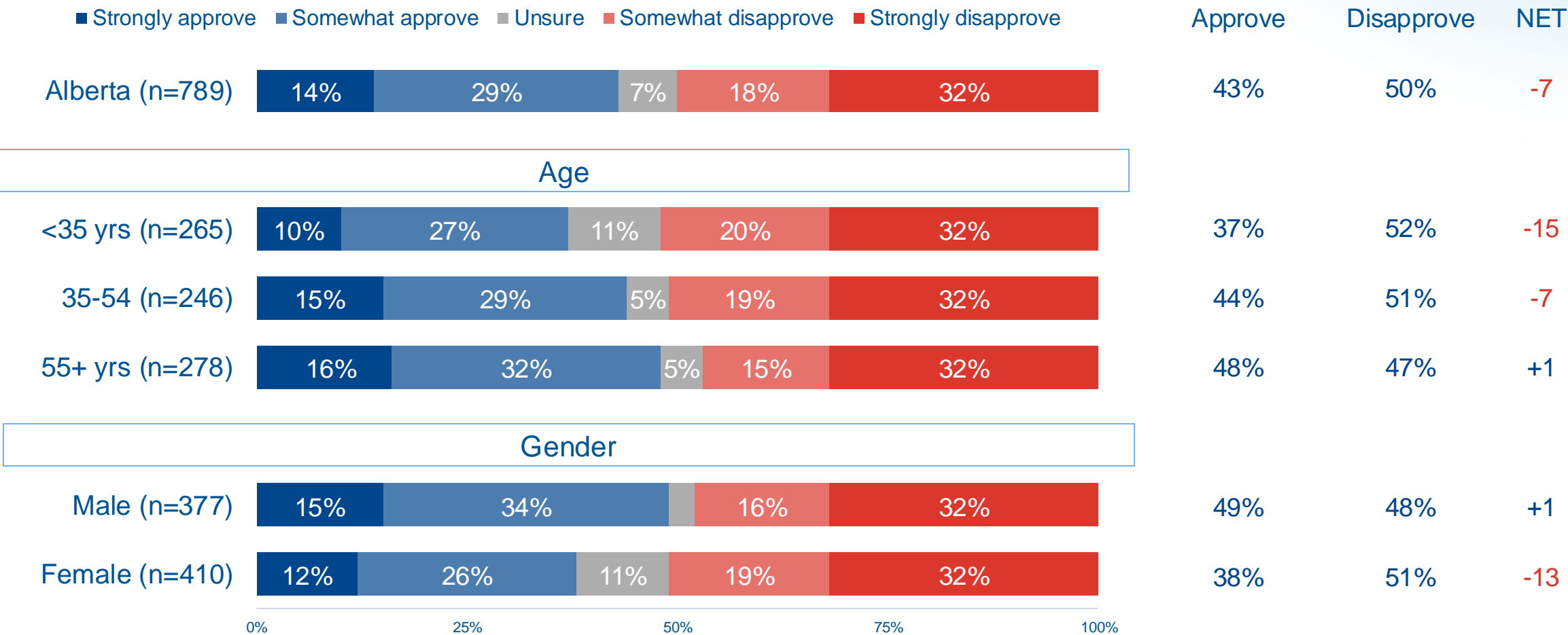


# Approval of New Calgary Event Centre Agreement

## By Age and Gender



Would you say that you personally approve or disapprove of this new agreement to fund a new Event Centre in Calgary?



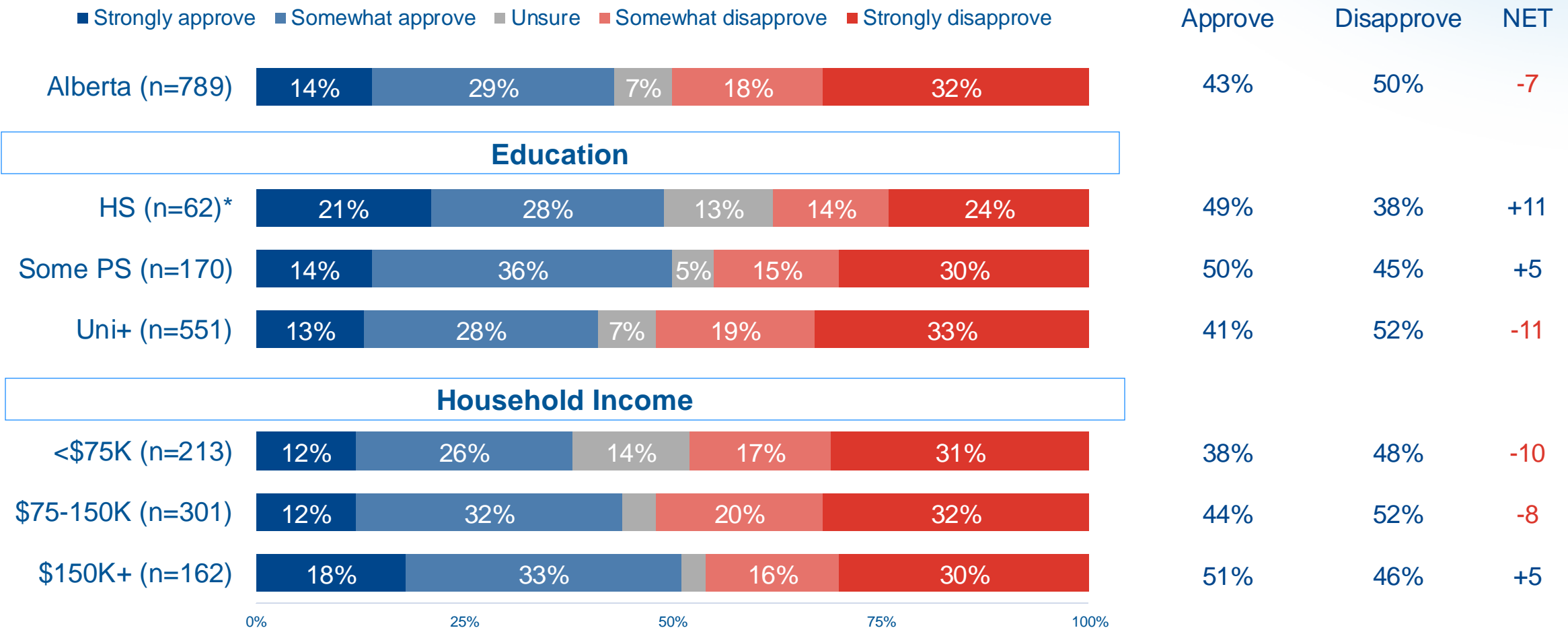
Base: All respondents | Note: Question added mid-field | NET: Approve minus disapprove

# Approval of New Calgary Event Centre Agreement

## By Education and Household Income



*Would you say that you personally approve or disapprove of this new agreement to fund a new Event Centre in Calgary?*



Base: All respondents | \*Caution: Small base size | Note: Question added mid-field | NET: Approve minus disapprove



# STUDY APPROACH



# Research Methodology



- **Approach:** Online survey of Adult Albertans
- **Region:** Alberta
- **Field dates:** April 26 - 29, 2023
- **Sample size:** n=789
- **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 **+/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20**

Sample sizes:	Unweighted	Weighted	MOE*
Alberta total	n=789	n=789	+/- 3.5
Calgary	n=287	n=245	+/- 5.8
Edmonton	n=248	n=240	+/- 6.2
Northern Alberta	n=86	n=105	+/- 10.6
Central Alberta	n=90	n=102	+/- 10.3
Southern Alberta	n=78	n=96	+/- 11.1

\*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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