



A New Approach: Advancing Protected and Conserved Areas in Ontario

Recommendations from Ontario's Protected Areas Working Group

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INTRODUCTION

Chair's Message

Under pressure from climate change and biodiversity loss, nature is in crisis. This crisis threatens food security, water supply, economic development and the way of life for future generations. One of the most powerful ways to combat these threats is to ensure a healthy network of natural spaces. Protected and conserved natural spaces expand opportunities for outdoor recreation, provide a safe haven for wild animals and plants, support critical ecosystem services and create jobs. If done thoughtfully, they can also aid in reconciliation with First Nations and provide much-needed clarity for industry.

Most importantly, protected and conserved areas ensure that our children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from Ontario's natural heritage.

Ontario Conservative's have a long history of leadership on protected and conserved areas. In 1999, Ontario's Living Legacy set an ambitious goal of completing the Provincial Parks system within the Area of the Undertaking and protecting 12% of its land and water base. This historic agreement created over 200 new protected areas and resulted in the largest increase in protected areas in the province's history.

Unfortunately, since this time, very little progress has been made. With only 10.7% of our lands and water protected and conserved, Ontario now ranks eighth in the country.

As a direct result of COVID-19, Ontario has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for access to nature. Getting a reservation at our one of our parks has become a real challenge, and near-urban greenspaces are experiencing unprecedented visitation. Our recent polling shows that over 86% of Ontarians support the expansion of parks and protected and conserved areas and that the majority would pay higher taxes to support this work.

We commend MECP on the recent investments in the Greenlands Partnership Program and Wetland Conservation Partner Programs. In this report, we have proposed a mixture of near-term, "easily actionable" opportunities that build on these investments and would allow this government to move past 12% protected and conserved areas before Spring 2022. But we cannot stop there. Governments around the world are setting ambitious targets of 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 and committing to meet these goals through meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities. Ontario has the opportunity to get out in front and once again lead both nationally and internationally.

Moving forward will require a new approach. Progress will require a steadfast commitment from the top, but it must be developed in partnership with Indigenous communities, municipalities, industries and conservation organizations. Our report recommends the development of a new innovation fund and a Made-in-Ontario Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy that we believe can return the province to national leadership.

I want to thank the committee members for their invaluable advice and assistance in preparing this report in just two months. Our ability to deliver this report demonstrates how adopting practical pathways, with the right partners, can lead to clear action.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Minister Yurek for recognizing the important role that parks and protected and conserved areas play in the lives of all Ontarians and for showing leadership on this file during such a difficult time.

Protected Areas Working Group (PAWG) Mandate

- Formed to make recommendations to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks on opportunities to reclaim Ontario's leadership in conservation including:
 - Identification of low-cost/low-barrier opportunities to increase protected and conserved areas in Ontario.
 - Identification of current protected and conserved areas that could be posted to the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database.
 - Identification of potential barriers to new protected and conserved areas and recommendations on how these barriers can be addressed through policy, program and/or funding approaches.
 - Identification of potential funding partners and other partners for the highest-priority protected and conserved areas.
 - Any general recommendations on scientific, legislative, policy, regulatory and programming approaches that could be considered to enhance Ontario's expansion and management of protected and conserved areas.
- Appendix slides 32 and 33 provide short biographies for each of the PAWG members.

Protected Areas Working Group (PAWG) Approach

- Met virtually seven times between March 31, 2021 and June 3, 2021.
- MECP staff joined the working group meetings and were additionally available to provide expertise, guidance and technical details as needed.
- 70+ external experts engaged: NGOs, land trusts, conservation authorities, sustainable resource industry leaders, First Nations and provincial and territorial governments.
- While the Protected Areas Working Group spoke with a number of experts, our short timeline and mandate did not allow for formal consultation. It is our expectation that where appropriate formal consultation will be undertaken before any of the working group's recommendations are implemented.

Where we stand: Ontario's current situation

- Ontario has fallen behind other provinces and territories, ranking eighth in terms of area protected or conserved (*see Appendix slides 29 and 30 for more detail*).
- In the past five years, the Ontario government has added only 3,007 ha, compared to 20 million ha across the rest of Canada.
- Other provinces and territories have realized significant achievements in protected and conserved areas (*see Appendix slide 31 for recent achievements in other provinces and territories*).
- Protected and conserved areas work has been a low, under-resourced, priority within government.
- Private organizations (e.g., forest companies, conservation authorities, and land trusts) and regional planning efforts (e.g., natural heritage systems) have made significant strides to help fill this void, largely unsupported by government.
- Aligned conservation organizations, First Nations and industry are frustrated by a lack of direction and support for protected and conserved areas.
- In November 2020, the Auditor General of Ontario issued the report *Value-for-Money Audit: Conserving the Natural Environment with Protected Areas*, highlighting a lack of capacity at MECP and the need for clear protected and conserved areas targets and strategy.
- Recent government announcements, including the Greenlands Conservation Partnership and the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program, indicate growing support for investments in the protection and stewardship of Ontario's natural areas.

Overwhelming support for more protected areas: Campaign Research poll

To inform our work Campaign Research polled 2,023 Ontario residents who are eligible to vote. The complete study results are included as an addendum to this report.

Key findings from this poll include:

- Overwhelming support for the creation of more parks and protected areas (86% support with 7% unsure).
- Support for the creation of parks and protected areas was equally strong in Northern Ontario (86% support with 9% unsure).
- Near unanimous agreement that the COVID pandemic has emphasized the importance of access to natural spaces (83% support with 11% unsure).
- 3 to 1 support for Indigenous government and groups to create new parks and protected areas (47% support and 22% opposed).
- Respondents believe 2 to 1 that co-managed parks can create economic benefits.

A photograph of a forest path with the word 'RECOMMENDATIONS' overlaid in large white text. The path is made of dirt and pine needles, winding through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground. The overall tone is dark and moody, with a focus on the natural environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Four-Part Framework for Action

Ontario can regain its national leadership on conservation by taking the following four actions:

1. Recognize what is already protected and conserved
2. Secure near-term opportunities for new protected and conserved areas
3. Launch a Wild Ontario Accelerator Fund
4. Clearly articulate a provincial strategy that is:
 - Built on a commitment to nation-to-nation dialogue, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and land managed by Indigenous Guardians
 - Supported by a suite of legislation, policy, programs and targets
 - Driven by a reinforcing partnership between government (provincial and federal) and aligned conservation organizations
 - Based on clear targets, objectives and timelines
 - Incentivized by innovative financial tools

Action 1: Recognize what is already protected and conserved

- Progress on protected and conserved areas is measured by areas included in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD). There is national guidance on what can be counted, but the final decision is made by the province.
- The tools and approaches for protected and conserved areas are evolving, with growing recognition that conservation is a collaborative effort of governments, Indigenous communities, industry and NGOs. Screening for CPCAD needs the flexibility to encourage private sector participation in the protection and conservation of our landscape.
- MECP is responsible for screening sites submitted to CPCAD but is limited in capacity for this work **s.65(6)** Completing this work will require a realistic resourcing of MECP.
- Much of the necessary work (e.g., obtaining spatial data) can be supported by landholders, ENGOs and academic partners.
- Some provinces/territories have adopted a broader definition than Ontario for what is included:
 - B.C. accepted a suite of areas – including OGMA (Old Growth Management Areas) and source water protection – adding roughly 5% to its protected and conserved areas.
 - The Tlicho First Nation (N.W.T.) is moving forward on identification and conservation of Traditional Lands as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).
 - Canadian Wildlife Service has developed a database of privately protected areas for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These provinces are exploring accepting these areas directly into CPCAD.

Action 1: Recognize what is already protected and conserved

Recommendations

Ontario should take a more inclusive approach to recognizing protected areas and OECMs. This can be accomplished by:

- Providing Ministerial direction to maximize recognition of areas that are protected or conserved, but not currently counted in Ontario.
- Resourcing MECP with sufficient capacity to support this work.
- Leveraging federal, industry and philanthropic funds to support landholders and ENGOs to assist MECP in identifying and submitting properties.
- Creating a multi-partner review process for the assessment and approval of CPCAD submissions (involving other relevant departments, industry and conservation organizations).
- Creating an inter-ministerial group (including MNRF and IAO) to facilitate this work.
- Establishing updated guidance for landowners.
- Providing bi-monthly reporting on progress to the Minister.

Slides 13 and 14 outline specific opportunities to streamline acceptance of private lands for inclusion in the database.

Action 1: Recognize what is already protected and conserved

Opportunity	Ha	% of ON	Rationale	Recommendations	Ministries / Potential Partners
Protection Forest	1,300,000	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection Forests represent a potential Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) opportunity Protection Forests are areas of a Forest Management Plan excluded from the managed forest land base (harvesting and road construction). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a collaborative program between MECP, MNRF and the forestry industry to determine how Protection Forests and other biodiversity set-asides can be counted as OECMs without hindering forestry production (wood supply and cost). Within this program, undertake three pilots: one each in the North West, North East and Southern Ontario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF Partners: Sustainable forest managers, affected First Nations Funders: Certified forestry companies, private foundations, federal government
Certified Forest Set-asides	1,100,000	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified forest operations (SFI/FSC) set lands aside from harvesting for conservation. This a significant opportunity to recognize conservation lands that have been protected for years. Including them recognizes the long-term work of the forestry industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a joint pilot with MECP, MNRF and the forestry industry to determine how to count set-asides within certified forests as OECMs while maintaining the available area of the forest license. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF Partners: Sustainable forest managers, affected First Nations Funders: Certified forestry companies, private foundations, federal government
Tax Incentive Programs: Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) / Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP)	1,000,000	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under CLTIP and MFTIP, the provincial government supports long-term private stewardship of important natural areas CLTIP prioritizes areas of high ecological value (e.g., Niagara Escarpment and wetlands), providing up to 100% property tax exemption. Including them recognizes the long-term protection of private landowners across the province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend guidance to accept lands into CPCAD that are registered in Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program and Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (set aside from commercial forestry). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: Finance, MECP, MNRF Partners: Forest managers Funders: Forestry companies, private foundations, federal government

Action 1: Recognize what is already protected and conserved

Opportunity	Ha	% of ON	Rationale	Recommendations	Ministries / Potential Partners
Conservation Authority Lands	150,000	0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, less than 10,000 ha of 150,000 ha of Conservation Authority (CA) land is counted in CPCAD. Some CA properties contain a small percentage of land that has no ecological value (parking lots, splash pads). Which has been a barrier to valuable conservation lands being counted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund Conservation Ontario to compile a database of sites and complete a batched submission of all Conservation Authority lands. Provide guidance to ignore small non-ecological features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP Partners: Conservation Ontario, individual CAs, affected First Nations Funders: private foundations, federal government
Fee-simple Land Holdings	140,000	0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of fee-simple land purchase is a tool used by land trusts to protect ecologically significant areas in areas of high land-use pressure. Trusts are established for the purpose of ensuring long-term protection of ecologically significant lands. Recent applications of lands north of the French River for submission to CPCAD have been denied, due to subsurface rights not being owned by land trusts. However international guidance states that this alone is not a reason to exclude areas from counting as protected or conserved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend guidance to submit all fee simple land trust holdings to CPCAD, including areas with subsurface mining rights owned by a separate entity. Should a mine be developed, remove that portion of the site from the database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP Partners: Ontario Land Trust Alliance, leading land trusts Funders: private foundations, federal government
Conservation Easements	32,000	<0.03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation easements protect natural features on private lands (allowing the landowner to maintain possession of their property). Landowners who place conservation easements often receive a tax benefit under the federal Ecological Gifts Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund Ontario Land Trust Alliance to compile a database of sites and complete a batched submission of all easment lands. Amend guidance to accept areas with conservation easements submitted by land trusts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP Partners: Ontario Land Trust Alliance, leading land trusts Funders: private foundations, federal government

Action 1: Recognize what is already protected and conserved

Opportunity	Ha	% of ON	Rationale	Recommendations	Ministries / Potential Partners
Environmentally Protected Areas of Approved Municipal Official Plans	15,000	<0.015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Provincial Policy Statement requires all municipalities to identify and protect environmentally significant areas (e.g., core areas or environmentally significant areas) within Natural Heritage Systems protecting features like Provincially Significant Wetlands, Areas of Natural Scientific Interest and ravines. Municipalities, land trust ownership, and provincial protection can be “stacked” on these areas for additional protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake targeted assessments in upper tier municipalities with strong natural heritage systems (e.g., Toronto, Peel, Oakville) to assess the overlap between municipal natural asset management processes and CPCAD. Amend the guidance to accept core areas of approved official plans as long-term protection. Future gains can be made by encouraging, in collaboration with MMAH, the implementation of Natural Heritage Systems within Official Municipal Plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MMAH Partners: Municipalities, conservation organizations Funders: private foundations, federal government
Military Bases	15,000	<0.015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manitoba counts 23,061 ha of Canadian Forces Base Shilo as an OEEM. As military bases fall under federal jurisdiction, Department of National Defence is required to pursue application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the federal government to submit natural areas of CFB Borden and CFB Trenton to CPCAD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP Partners: ECCC Funders: Federal government
County Forests	10,000	<0.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified forests set aside a minimum of 10% for conservation for small woodlot groups and community forests. County forests often provide access to nature and locally important connectivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend guidance to accept “protected reserves” within county forests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF Partners: Certified forest managers Funders: Private foundations, federal government

Action 2: Secure near-term opportunities for new protected and conserved areas

- Recognition of currently protected and conserved areas should be accompanied by the announcement of progress on new protected and conserved areas. This will:
 - Avoid criticism that this is simply an “accounting exercise” and will demonstrate a commitment to biodiversity and habitat conservation.
 - Encourage funders (including the federal government) to support the provincial effort.
- Significant gains in new protected and conserved areas will require the development of a provincial protected and conserved areas strategy.
- In the interim, there are several near-term opportunities that the working group is recommending be announced before Spring 2022.
- Completing this work will require a realistic resourcing of MECP.

Recommendations

- Immediately resource MECP with sufficient capacity to support this work.
- Create up to 2% of new protected areas by:
 - Completing protection for Ontario Living Legacy sites.
 - Assessing previously acquired lands and regulating suitable sites or transferring ownership of them to conservation partners.
 - Issuing a call for interest to First Nations to identify potential Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and initiate two or more pilot projects.
 - Working with conservation partners to explore where additional protection can be provided to Enhanced Management Areas (EMAs) and Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) on Crown land adjacent to or ecologically important to existing Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves.
- Encourage and support the federal government to establish National Marine Conservation Areas in the Great Lakes.

Action 2: Secure near-term opportunities for new protected and conserved areas

Opportunity	Ha	% of ON	Rationale	Recommendations	Ministries / Potential Partners
Ontario Living Legacy Sites without Land Claims	177,000	0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 34 sites from Ontario Living Legacy not subject to land claims that may be regulated relatively simply. Additional work is required to complete regulation includes consultation, Environmental Assessments, Sustainable Forest License boundary amendments, Crown Land Use Policy Atlas amendments, title searches regulation plans, and regulatory amendments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide MECP with the mandate to complete protection of Ontario Living Legacy sites not subject to land claims. Increase capacity at MECP for a dedicated staff team to complete this work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF, IAO Partners: Affected First Nations, conservation organizations Funders: Private foundations, federal government
Ontario Living Legacy Sites with Land Claims	170,819	0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 10 sites from Ontario Living Legacy with ongoing land claims. These land claims may be more readily resolved by engaging in nation-to-nation dialogue with affected First Nations. Additional work required to complete regulation includes consultation, Environmental Assessments, Sustainable Forest License boundary amendments, Crown Land Use Policy Atlas amendments searches regulation plans, and regulatory amendments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide MECP, in consultation with IAO, with the mandate to engage with affected First Nations to determine interest in resolving land claims and establishing IPCAs on these sites. Increase capacity at MECP for a dedicated staff team to explore designating these sites as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF, IAO Partners: Affected First Nations, conservation organizations Funders: Private foundations, federal government
Acquired Lands	14,000	0.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 152 acquired land sites (~899 parcels) in Southern and Central Ontario covering 20,000 ha. Sites are located <2 km from existing Provincial Parks or Conservation Reserves. Desktop analysis has been completed by MECP, with further analysis required. It is estimated that 30% of sites would be unlikely candidates under further analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide MECP with the mandate to assess and regulate suitable sites under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA) or transfer them to protection by a conservation partner (e.g., land trust, conservation authority). Increase capacity at MECP for a dedicated staff team to complete this work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries: MECP, MNRF, MMAH, IAO Partners: Affected First Nations, conservation organizations Funders: Private foundations, federal government

Action 2: Secure near-term opportunities for new protected and conserved areas

Opportunity	Ha	% of ON	Rationale	Recommendations	Ministries /Potential Partners
Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA)	TBD	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We cannot advance protected areas in Ontario in a meaningful way without addressing IPCAs and Guardians. This will need to be done through committed Nation to Nation dialogue. In the interim there are several IPCAs at various levels of progress that are worthy undertaking as pilots to better inform these discussions Will likely be significant federal and philanthropic funding available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a call for interest to identify IPCA opportunities. Identify 2 or 3 IPCAs and commit to pursuing these as pilots. Increase capacity at MECP for a dedicated staff team to complete this work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries MECP, MNRF, IAO Partners: Affected First Nations, conservation organizations, ECCC Funders: Private foundations, federal government
EMAs and PSWs on Crown Land	TBD	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate good news story (examples available where partners can double the impact of a conservation project by regulating the adjacent EMAs to protected or conserved status). Provincial regulation and forest management planning offer protection of PSWs on crown land but lack monitoring or long-term certainty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with conservation partners to explore areas where EMAs or PSWs on crown land adjacent to protected areas could be secured permanently. Through discussion with partners determine whether it is more appropriate for external partners or the province to lead land securement and/or management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries MECP, MNRF Partners: Affected First Nations, sustainable forest managers, conservation organizations Funders: Private foundations, federal government
Marine Protected Areas	TBD	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Canada has a goal of at least one national marine conservation area within each of the country's 29 distinct marine regions, with the Great Lakes representing five Two of the five Great Lakes regions include a marine conservation element. The Lake Superior NMCA alone (which is counted but not yet finalized) is over 1M ha and represents 1% of the province's protected and conserved areas. Some work underway in other Great Lakes (Ontario and Erie) to identify candidate NMCAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Government of Canada and other partners to help establish at least one National Marine Conservation Area in each of the five Great Lakes regions. Complete the Lake Superior NMCA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries MECP, MNRF, IAO Partners: Affected First Nations, conservation organizations, ECCC Funders: Private foundations, federal government

Action 3: Launch a Wild Ontario Accelerator Fund

- Increasing land-use demands and costs require innovative new approaches to create and manage protected and conserved areas.
- COVID-19 has produced an unprecedented demand for access to natural areas, putting a significant strain on parks and protected/conserved areas.
- Conservation organizations and others have been successful in identifying opportunities for land conservation, but high land values makes this work cost-prohibitive.
- Many Indigenous communities have expressed interest in IPCAs or are advancing them.
- Local conservation organizations have strong connections to landowners and other local agencies. Working in partnership to support their work will generate community buy-in and in-kind contributions.
- New protected and conserved areas require support for both establishment and long-term stewardship.
- Significant federal and private-sector funding is available to match innovative provincially led projects.
- Other jurisdictions have successfully established similar leveraged funds, including:
 - Federal \$175M *Challenge Fund*,
 - Manitoba's *Conservation Trust* (a \$204M partnership with The Winnipeg Foundation and The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation), and
 - Quebec's *Programme de partenariat pour les milieux naturels* (a \$53M fund for conservation partnerships).

Action 3: Launch a Wild Ontario Accelerator Fund

Recommendations

It is recommended that Ontario establish a new *Wild Ontario Accelerator Fund* to identify innovative approaches to facilitate and manage new protected and conserved areas. This initiative should:

- Work with Indigenous communities, conservation organizations, and municipal partners to identify candidate sites for protection/conservation.
- Leverage recent federal government budget commitments that can be further doubled by municipalities, industry and private funders, resulting in \$4 of contribution of every \$1 invested by the Province.
- Be large enough to incent action and produce results — we recommend a provincial investment of \$100M over four years (resulting in \$400M in new investment).
- Set clear objectives for the fund, including minimum size of project (ha), geographic area, connection to existing parks/protected areas, protection of endangered species, and innovative financing.
- Set clear criteria for use of funds, including fee-simple acquisitions, development of new OECMs, public/private partnerships on Crown/municipal lands, and development on IPCAs.
- Be established as an independent entity enabled by legislation and managed by experts, with clear criteria set by government.

Action 4: Articulate a provincial strategy

The need for a Provincial Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy:

- There is no comprehensive provincial policy in place for protected and conserved areas, and there has been no substantive, target-based activity since Lands for Life in the mid '90s.
 - A myriad of legislation, policy and programs exist, but they are fragmented and under-resourced and lack coherence. It is unclear how these pieces support the *Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan*.
 - There is an opportunity to be more intentional in the Province's engagement with Indigenous communities, municipalities, conservation organizations, the philanthropic community and the private sector to share objectives and leverage funding and expertise.
 - Will be critical to maximize nature funding announced in the last federal budget.
- Historic top-down (government-led) approaches to land-use planning and reliance on regulatory tools have created conflict and are no longer appropriate. An innovative strategy is needed, driven by approaches that are regionally relevant, economically sound and built from the community up.
- Resource industries are looking for clarity. A provincial strategy for protected and conserved areas would complement government resource sector plans (e.g., the forest sector strategy).
 - Conservation organizations provide significant on-the-ground stewardship activity guided by best practices and regional knowledge. A provincial strategy would provide greater context and connection for this work.

The Importance of targets to drive strategy

A credible provincial policy will require setting realistic, evidence-based targets that commit to current national and international level targets of 30% by 2030. Doing so will:

- Set expectations for conservation partners and other levels of government.
- Provide a point of focus for government/stakeholder activities.
- Leverage funding from the federal government and private foundations.
- Provide a strong image of conservation, building upon a legacy of protected and conserved areas work (e.g., Ontario's Living Legacy).
- Align with societal expectations and demonstrate a commitment to natural spaces protection and conservation.

Action 4: Articulate a provincial strategy

Recommendation

It is recommended that MECP lead the development of a ***Made-in-Ontario Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy*** that reinforces the ***Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan***. This strategy should be:

- Approved by Cabinet with clear Ministerial leadership.
- Built on nation-to-nation dialogue and in keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Provincial in scope and reflective of Crown land and private land realities and regional differences.
- Based on clear targets, objectives and timelines (*see slide 26*).
- Comprehensive, addressing the establishment of new protected and conserved areas, connectivity between these areas, permitted uses policy and the need for ongoing stewardship of these areas.
- Informed by best practices and leading science and rooted in evidence-based policy analysis.
- Supported by the appointment of a ***Provincial Protected and Conserved Areas Facilitator***.

Action 4: Articulate a provincial strategy – Development

In developing a *Made-in-Ontario Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy*, it is recommended that MECP:

- Seek the advice and input of Indigenous communities and leading conservation organizations to build a strategy that reinforces their role and utilizes their expertise and professional capacity.
- Include a current-state analysis of legislation, policy, incentives and programs (governments, agency and NGO) that are related to land-based conservation and assess their policy drivers, scope and resourcing.
- Assess jurisdictional best practices employed in developing new protected and conserved areas nationally, especially where new approaches have been employed to overcome conflict, further reconciliation efforts and build community buy-in.
- Establish a formal inter-ministerial mechanism to deliver on the strategy and ensure inter-ministerial alignment, especially with key ministries: MNRF, ENDM, IAO and MMAH.
- Support the *Made-in-Ontario Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy* with a companion communications strategy that:
 - Celebrates Ontario's legacy of parks and protected and conserved areas.
 - Connects citizens, communities and conservation organizations to the promotion of protected and conserved areas nationally and on the international stage.
 - Reinforces the importance of connecting to nature as a key part of a healthy lifestyle.

Action 4: Articulate a provincial strategy – Implementation

The *Made-in-Ontario Protected and Conserved Areas Strategy* must be supported by an implementation roadmap and plan that:

- Establishes clear objectives, targets, timelines and accountabilities.
- Is supported by guidelines and facilitated processes.
- Eliminates internal barriers, addresses organizational culture impediments across ministries by establishing an “all of government” priority.
- Mobilizes new interactive mapping and public-facing resources and tools.
- Is accompanied by a realistic resourcing and skills plan and budget.
- Is overseen and supported by a stakeholder/expert group.

The strategy should be accompanied by the appointment of a *Provincial Protected and Conserved Areas Facilitator* whose role will be to:

- Enhance the government’s role in establishing new protected and conserved areas by being a key point of contact for conservation organizations, other governments, Indigenous communities (through co-facilitation) and the private sector.
- Work (within the provincial government and across organizations) to find innovative solutions to barriers limiting the establishment of new protected and conserved areas.
- Support expedited decision-making through facilitation and co-facilitation.

Action 4: Articulate a provincial strategy – Other incentives

To be effective, the strategy will need to incorporate augmented incentives to address the following barriers:

- Conservation activities in regions experiencing high growth pressure have become prohibitively expensive due to land values further eroding the spending power of conservation organizations.
- Private acquisition and easements by conservation organizations offers a practical approach for securing land in highly developed areas of Southern Ontario.

Recommendations

- In addition to the establishment of the *Wild Ontario Accelerator Fund*, it is recommended that:
 - The *Species at Risk Conservation* Fund (when established) make funds available to support stewardship, maintenance and rehabilitation activities on private lands protected under Ontario's programs where those lands contain species at risk or high levels of biodiversity
 - MECP explore incentives and approaches that support private landowners to enroll their lands as OECMs. These incentives may:
 - facilitate conservation easements by recognized land trusts
 - incorporate a process to remove road allowances that hinder conservation efforts
 - include tax-based and direct financial incentives to promote stewardship activities
 - MECP explore incentives for lands recognized as OECMs. This could include:
 - waiving of some land transfer tax
 - limited coverage of legal fees
 - flow-through tax benefits to charity organizations, etc.

What can be achieved

Ontario can establish a national and global leadership position in conservation by implementing the recommendations of the Working Group on the following timeline:



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The global pandemic has highlighted the importance of our connection to natural areas. Unlike ever before, Ontarians are looking to local natural areas for recreation and sustenance, for connection with family and for a place to reset. The working group’s polling, and that of others, indicates clearly that having access to natural spaces is an important part of life in Ontario.

Starting with the creation of Algonquin Park in 1893, Living Legacy in 1999 and more recently the Greenlands Conservation Partnership and the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program, Ontario has a long history of conservation leadership. But we urgently need action from governments and conservation partners to ensure that our natural spaces across the province are remain intact for future generations.

During one of our meetings, Working Group member, David Flood, introduced us to the Ojibwe concept of Mino Bimaadiziwin. David explained that the term translates to “living a good life – in a good way.” That is, to live a life that is balanced, in connection with family, community, and the land (Mother Earth).

Our group feels this concept captures the spirit of this project well. Protected and conserved areas help us to create a sustainable balance. They support continued growth and prosperity. They offer spaces where families can reconnect. And they provide safe havens where plant and animal life can thrive. The good life is one where Ontario prospers while ensuring a healthy network of protected and conserved natural spaces.

This report presents an ambitious but realistic set of recommendations that will allow Ontario to act immediately to build on our history of conservation. By acting on these recommendations we can once again be a global leader in conservation and, if done collaboratively with leadership from the Indigenous community, the working group believes it can also advance reconciliation in a meaningful way.

The working group encourages you to take advantage of this unique moment in history. Like never before, your government has the opportunity to ensure all Ontarians are able to live “the good life” for generations to come.



APPENDIX

Protected and Conserved Areas in Canada

Province	Baseline area (Ha)	Total (Ha)	Total (%)
British Columbia	94,473,500	18,422,700	19.5
Quebec*	151,241,800	25,711,106	17.0
Northwest Territories	13,4610,600	21,232,100	15.8
Alberta	66,184,800	10,159,400	15.4
Nova Scotia*	5,528,400	727,100	13.1
Yukon	48,244,300	5,680,800	11.8
Manitoba	64,779,700	7,156,100	11.0
Ontario	107,639,500	11,489,600	10.7
Nunavut	209,319,000	21,137,300	10.1
Saskatchewan	65,103,600	6,355,900	9.8
Newfoundland & Labrador	40,521,200	2,811,000	6.9
New Brunswick	7,290,800	354,800	4.8
Prince Edward Island	566,000	23,700	4.4

Protected and Conserved Areas in Ontario

Type	Description	#	% of ON
Provincial Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. Important for outdoor recreation, scientific research, environmental monitoring and education. 	347	7.3%
Conservation Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect significant natural and cultural features while providing opportunities for a variety of compatible traditional activities (e.g. fishing, hunting, trapping). Regulated under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. 	295	1.4%
Wilderness Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established to preserve areas in their natural state to protect flora and fauna. Regulated under the Wilderness Areas Act. Research and educational activities may be carried out. 	11	<0.1%
Dedicated protected areas in the Far North	<p>Under the Far North Act, dedicated protected areas can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unregulated designations in community-based land use plans regulated under the Far North Act or the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act 	4	0.8%
National Protected Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composed of a variety of area types (e.g., National Parks, National Wildlife Areas) regulated under the Canada National Parks Act. Protect examples of major natural environments that represent Canada's natural heritage. Preserve biodiversity and important wildlife habitat, celebrate the beauty and infinite variety of our land and offer gateways to nature, adventure, discovery and solitude. National marine conservation areas account for 1M ha (1% of the province's protected and conserved areas). Note that when marine conservation areas protect inland waters they are counted within CPCAD) 	42	1.3%
Privately protected areas (including OECMs)	<p>Protected areas managed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> private citizens, non-governmental organizations, corporations, for-profit owners, research entities, religious entities 	359	<0.1%
Total Protected/Conserved		1,054	10.7%

Recent Conservation Achievements

- In 2014, **Canada** had 10.3% protected and conserved areas coverage; today the total is 13.4% (approx. 31M ha)
- February 2021: **Nova Scotia** announced the addition of 20 new sites, achieving their goal of protecting 13% of the province.
- December 2020: **Quebec** announced the addition of 10 new conserved areas, achieving its goal of increasing the percentage protected from 10.7% to 17% in two years.
- December 2019 - December 2020: **Saskatchewan** 522,200 ha of protected and conserved areas, increasing the percentage protected from 9% to 9.8%.
- August 2020: **New Brunswick** recommitted to achieving 10% protection/conservation by the end of 2021, more than doubling protected areas in the province
- August 2019: The Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area in **Northwest Territories** was established, its first Territorial Protected Area under the new NWT Protected Areas Act
- March 2019: **Alberta** created the Kitaskino Nuwenëné Wildland Provincial Park, increasing protection of the Peace Athabasca watershed
- July 2018: In **Yukon** the Dehcho First Nations established Canada's first IPCA (the Edézhíé Protected Area) and the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan
- June 2017: **Manitoba** designated Goose Islands and Grand Island provincial parks

Protected Areas Working Group – Experts

JOHN BEAUCAGE

Eyaabay (his traditional name) is a Pipe Carrier from the Bear Clan. A band member (and former Chief) of Wasauksing First Nation, he was raised on the Shawanaga First Nation and served as Grand Council Chief of the First Nations of the Anishinabek Nation. John is a Principal with Counsel Public Affairs specializing in government relations, strategic communications and integrated campaigns.

DAVID FLOOD

Chair of the FSC Canada Board of Directors and GM of Wahkohtowin Development GP, David supports business development and participation in the Forest Sector of Ontario on behalf of its owner First Nations. David is a member of the Matachewan First Nation.

MIKE HENDREN

Mike is Vice-President, Ontario Region with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. A registered professional planner, he led the Kawartha Land Trust as executive director for nine years and served two terms as chair of the board of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance.

LYNETTE MADER

Lynette is Manager of Provincial Operations (Ontario) with Ducks Unlimited Canada, where she oversees conservation program delivery and associated programs including industry and government relations, restoration services, education programs, marketing and communications and development fundraising.

CHRIS McDONELL

Chris is Chief Forester at Rayonier Advanced Materials, where he is accountable for relations between Rayonier Advanced Materials operations and First Nation and Métis communities in Ontario and Quebec. He serves as coordinator of forest certification standard implementation (FSC) and liaison with various public, private and community organizations.

JOHN SNOBELEN

A member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 1995 to 2003, John held various portfolios including Natural Resources Minister, where he was integral in implementing the “Lands For Life” program. John is a renowned public affairs and strategy consultant at Michael Keegan and Associates.

GEORGE ROSS

George is a public-sector executive with over 32 years of diverse experience. Previous Ontario Deputy Minister roles include Northern Development and Mines, Research and Innovation and Consumer Services. He is currently active on not-for-profit boards at the local and provincial level.

Protected Areas Working Group – Philanthropic community

GEOFF BURT

CEO of the Consecon Foundation. Consecon works nationally and locally to protect natural environments and wildlife for future generations. Geoff is an experienced charitable sector executive with a background in public policy research.

PAUL GENEST

Senior Vice-President, Power Corporation of Canada. He has served as deputy minister in the Ontario Government and was Director of Policy in the Office of the Prime Minister. He was also CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities. Paul actively volunteers with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and is the incoming Chair, Ontario Region. He sits on the boards of the National Gallery of Canada Foundation and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

LORNE JOHNSON

Vice-President with the Ivey Foundation. Lorne has more than 20 years of experience in forging collaborative solutions to sustainability challenges in Canada. Prior to joining Ivey, Lorne played a leadership role in establishing FSC and headed up the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement Secretariat.

PETER KENDALL

Executive Director of the Schad Foundation, a private family foundation that focuses on having a direct and measurable impact on large-scale conservation initiatives. Peter also co-founded Earth Rangers.

ANDRE VALLILLEE

Environment Program Director with the Metcalf Foundation. Metcalf supports natural climate solutions that take an integrated approach to benefit biodiversity, sustain livelihoods and mitigate climate change. Prior to joining Metcalf, Andre worked as a Program Manager with the Ontario Trillium Foundation. He is a past Chair of the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network and former National Trustee of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Protected Areas Working Group – Advisors

Rob Davis

Manager, Protected Areas Section with Ontario Parks. Rob's section is responsible for the development, interpretation and transfer of policy and science for Ontario's system of provincial parks and conservation reserves. Rob has worked for the Ontario government since 1992 in the fields of forest management and protected areas, and provided information and analysis to inform the working group's work.

Nic Schulz

Project Manager, Protected Areas Working Group. Nic has more than 10 years experience providing program management and facilitation to advance sustainability in Canada. He has launched several leading national charities, lead the world's first certification system for responsible aggregate extraction and developed source water protection plans for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Kristyn Ferguson

Program Director for Large Landscapes at the Ontario Region of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Kristyn has been with NCC for 14 years in a variety of roles including conservation planning, land stewardship, senior management, and land securement. Her current focus is on the conservation of large landscapes across Ontario, with a focus on collaboration with governments, Indigenous communities, philanthropic and industry partners.

Protected Areas Working Group

May 2021



Marketing Research and
Intelligence Association
L'Association de la Recherche
et de l'Intelligence Marketing

Protected Areas Working Group - May 2021

This study was conducted May 17th to 21st, 2021, among a sample of 2,023 respondents who are eligible voters in Ontario and are members of Dynata's online panel. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of a similar size would have a margin of error of +/- 2%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Where and how is the study conducted?

The study included respondents from an online panel of Ontarians, 18 years old and older. The sample is weighted to regional, age and gender demographics, as per Statistics Canada.

Click to add text

Click to add text

Stats Testing:

 Significantly higher than Ontario

 Significantly lower than Ontario

This study is conducted in two parts.

In Part One of the study, we want to determine the following:

- To gain a better understanding of how important the policy of ***“protecting environmentally sensitive areas/lands from development”*** is, relative to a broad range of other important government policies.
- To gain a better understanding of the true importance of each policy for each political party.

In Part Two of the study, we go on to determine the following:

- To gain a better understanding of how voters in Ontario really feel about the creation, development, maintenance and operations of existing and new parks and/or protected areas.
- How voters feel about increased taxes to support parks and/or protected areas.
- How each political party is positioned on the issue of parks and/or protected areas in the minds of voters.

Background - To Better Understand Part One of the Study (Pg1)

Respondents rate the level of importance they place on a range of policies. This allows for a simple analysis of the **importance of each policy relative to all other policies**. Slide11 shows the 'overt importance' of each policy relative to all other policies.

On Slide 11 we can see that "Protecting environmentally sensitive areas/ land from development" ranks in the top half of the 20 policy areas listed when solely considering the 'overt relative importance' of each policy against all other policies as told to us by the survey respondents.

Respondents are then asked to rate each political party leader on how they perceive that leader's (and their party's) performance on the same set of policies. This allows for a simple analysis of the **performance of each leader on each policy relative to their performance on all other policies**. At the end of the study, respondents are also asked to rate each leader (and their party) "as a Candidate for Premier, regardless of who they might vote for". (Slide 12)

We evaluate correlations between how respondents rate the performance of each leader on each policy with the overall rating for each leader "as a Candidate for Premier" **to derive the covert importance of each policy for each leader and their party**. This allows for determining which policies are **key drivers of positive and negative ratings for each leader and their party**. In other words, the 'covert importance' analysis helps to determine each policy's 'actual' importance. Slide 13 illustrates the 'covert importance' of each policy relative to all the policies as a share out of 100.

On Slide 13 we see the policy "Protecting environmentally sensitive areas/land from development" ranking in the bottom half of the 20 policy areas listed. This is because this analysis weighs how the leaders are perceived to perform on each policy, and then how those leaders are rated overall on their performance (covert relative importance).

Background - Overt Relative Importance VS. Covert Relative Importance (Pg2)

On **Slide 14**, we plot 'overt importance' of each policy on the y-axis (top to bottom) and the 'covert importance' of each policy on the x-axis (left to right) to help determine which policies are 'overtly and covertly' more important relative to each other, taken altogether.

This is an important analysis because there are certain policies which drive positive and negative ratings for leaders (and their parties) more than others.

The higher up (top of grid) and the further to the right a policy is positioned, indicates the increased importance of that policy.

For example, though the policy of "Bringing more immigrants to Ontario" may seem to be or is very important, the analysis clearly shows that this policy is less important than all the other policies from an overt perspective (because it is at the bottom of the grid) and from a covert perspective (because it is furthest to the left on the grid).

Therefore, in terms of ranking policies from most important to least important, the **red box** captures the most important policies (overtly and covertly), the **purple box** captures the policies that should be considered 2nd in priority, the **green oval** captures the policies that are not 'covertly' as important, but they are 'overtly' important (3rd priority), and the **blue oval** captures the policies that are least important, overtly and covertly relative to all other policies.

Taken altogether, the policy of "Protecting environmentally sensitive areas/land from development" ranks in the middle of the pack of all policies with respect to 'overall importance'.

The government of Ontario should give more attention to this policy area than it does to the other policy areas that, overall, rank lower when taking into account both 'overt' and 'covert' importance.

Background - What are Relative Leadership Strength Scores (Pg3)

On **Slide 16**, each leader is assessed in terms of their own performance (on each policy) and then assessed on their performance relative to the other leaders and against all policies.

A more detailed explanation of “Relative Leadership Strength”

Absolute levels of leader performance only tell part of the story. To fully understand how leaders compare to one another, we must go deeper and look at relative performance. Correspondence Analysis maps are one way to explore relative performance but maps sometimes suffer from difficulties in interpretation. “Relative Leadership Strength Scores” are based on an analysis closely related to Correspondence Analysis.

In the analysis of a leader-by-policy plank performance summary, **“Relative Leadership Strength Scores” highlight areas where leaders over-or-under index on key policies relative to their competition.** As such, Relative Leadership Strength scores characterize a leader's relative strengths and weaknesses in a highly relevant and contextualized context. In this sense, Relative Leadership Strength scoring is similar in principle to double-normalization in that it accounts both for leader performance across the policy areas and ratings across leaders. **(Slide 16)**

Technically, Relative Leadership Strength scores are adjusted standardized residuals based on a chi-square analysis of the leader/policy plank performance summary table. Statistically, Relative Leadership Strength scores function as a set of context-specific Z-scores that are useful for evaluating relative leader performance.

Executive Summary – Pg1

With respect to overall importance, “Protecting environmentally sensitive areas/land from development” ranks in the middle, when assessed across a broad range of government policy areas.

The government of Ontario should give more attention to this policy area as compared to other policy areas that overall, rank lower in overall importance. For a more detailed explanation please review **Slides 4, 5 and 6** (Background Part 1 of Study).

Key Findings

There is overwhelming support for the creation of more parks and protected areas across all ages, males and females. Support is very high across all regions of Ontario and across all party lines, including PC voters and those who remain “undecided” (about who they would vote for). **(Slides 17-19)**

Voters believe there are many good reasons for supporting parks and protected areas. Nearly half of all voters do not see any good reason to oppose this. The costs associated with creating parks and protected areas and a shortage of housing does stand out with 25% of voters. Hiking, picnicking, camping, fishing and passive agriculture are all activities that have broad support with the public and should be allowed in parks and protected areas. **(Slides 20-22)**

Voters are evenly split on whether regulated business activity should be accommodated within parks and protected areas. Younger voters are much more open to accommodating “reasonably regulated business and economic activity” than voters who are 55 years of age and older. Voters in more urban areas are more open to accommodating some business activity, while voters in more suburban and rural areas tend to be more opposed. OLP and PC voters are more evenly split on the question, while ONDP and Green Party voters tend to lean against allowing economic activity in parks and protected areas. **(Slides 23-25)**

When considering different aspects of the environment, voters do not see much difference in importance between the list of attributes provided. Almost all are “very important”. **(Slide 26)**

Executive Summary – Pg2

When it comes to terrestrial conservation, most voters do not believe that Ontario ranks “towards the bottom or is the worst” when compared to other provinces and/or territories. (Slides 27-28)

Voters are split on the question of who should manage parks and protected areas. (Slide 30)

Support for Indigenous government and groups to create new parks and protected areas is 3 to 1. Support is high across all ages, males and females, but not with males 55 years of age or older. Voters breakout roughly the same way across all regions of Ontario and across party lines. A plurality of PC voters support. (Slides 31-33)

Support for Indigenous governments and groups to manage parks and protected areas is 2 to 1. Support is high across all ages, males and females, but not with males 55 years of age or older. Voters across Ontario breakout roughly the same way except in Eastern Region where voters are evenly split. There is overwhelming support with voters across party lines. (Slides 34-36)

Very few voters assign credit to a specific political party for showing leadership for increasing parks and protected areas. 3 out 5 voters either “don’t know” or say, “none of them”. Females much more than males “don’t know”. Voters breakout roughly the same way across the regions of Ontario. In the City of Toronto more voters say that the OLP has shown the greatest leadership. When looking at this question by party support, it’s not surprising that answers breakdown in a more partisan way. (Slides 37-39)

On the question of which party cares most, 3 out 10 voters choose “Green Party” while about 1 out 10 voters choose each of the other main political parties. Voters breakout roughly the same way across the regions of Ontario with voters in the City of Toronto choosing the OLP much more than any other voters. When looking at this question by party support, it’s not surprising that answers breakdown in a more partisan way. Across party lines, supporters of the main parties also choose the Green Party as much as their own party, despite their partisan leanings. (Slides 40-42)

Executive Summary – Pg3

With respect to how voters view the current PC government approach to protecting the environment, only 36% of all voters believe that the PCs “don’t care about the environment & only care about helping businesses”. 33% believe that the PC’s approach has “been to balance environmental and economic growth” and 6% believe that the PCs are too focused on protecting the environment. There is a significant difference between how PC voters answer this question compared to voters supporting the other parties. (Slides 43-45)

There is near unanimous support/agreement that the COVID pandemic has emphasized the importance to access natural spaces. (Slides 46-48)

Nearly 2/3rd support for Indigenous communities to co-manage parks & protected areas. Support is very high across all ages, males and females. Support is very high across all regions. Support is very high across all party lines. (Slides 49-51)

Voters 2 to 1, believe that co-managed parks can create economic benefits. Support is evenly split among males who are 55 years old and older. Voters breakout roughly the same way across regions of Ontario. PC voters are evenly split on this question, while supporters of the OLP, ONDP and Green Party strongly believe that co-managed parks can create economic benefits for Indigenous communities. (Slides 52-54)

There is significant support for higher taxes to build and maintain parks and protected areas across all ages, males and females. Opposition to higher taxes is about 1/3rd across all regions of Ontario while support for higher taxes for this purpose is higher in most regions. OLP, ONDP and Green Party voters (more than 2 to 1) support higher taxes for creating/building and maintaining parks and protected areas, while about half of PC voters oppose paying more taxes for this purpose (1/3rd of PC voters support). (Slides 46-48)

Overt Importance of each Policy and Relative Importance of all Policies

Short explanation about the next slide:

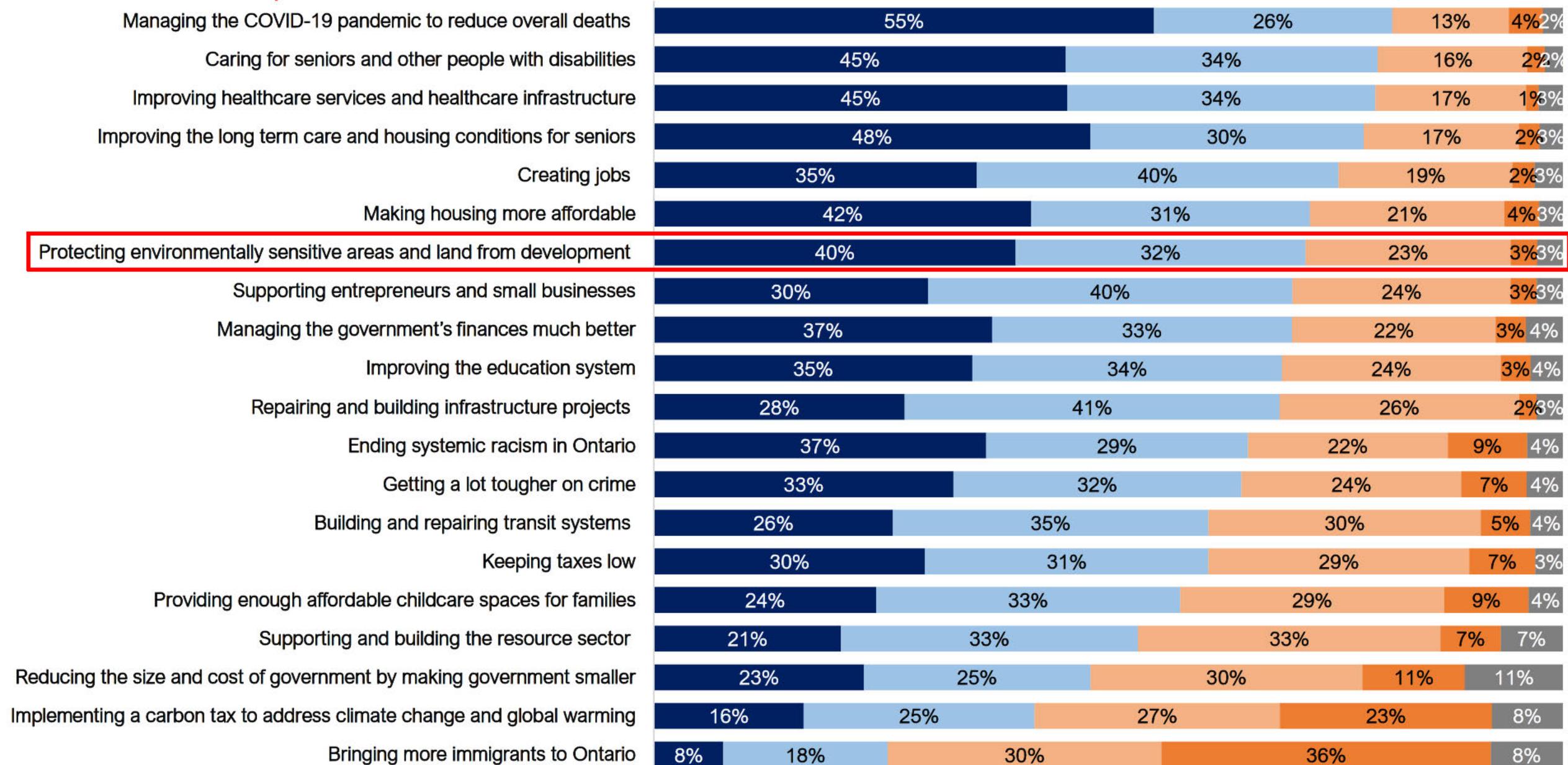
On the next slide we have 20 distinct policies. (Slide 7)

We ask respondents to rate the level of importance they place on each of the policies.

This allows for a simple analysis of the relative importance of each policy relative to all other policies (from an overt perspective).

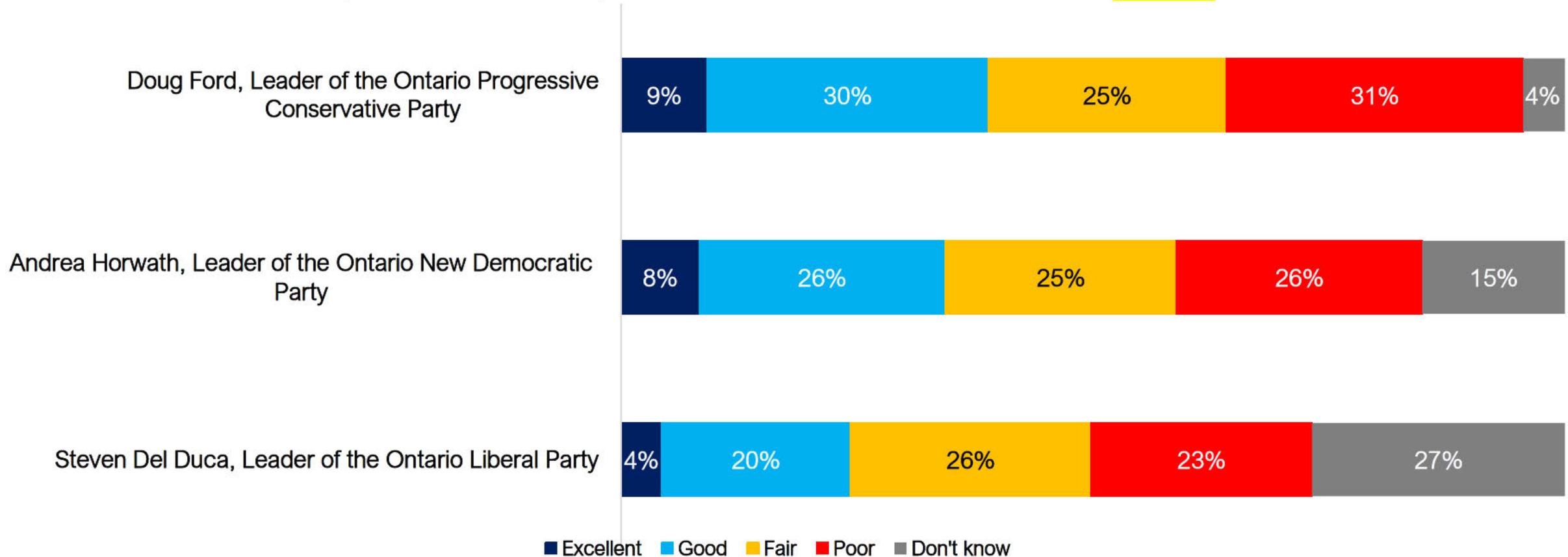
Note: Policies that rank at the bottom may be important, but they are 'relatively' less important to the voters than policies ranked at the top.

OVERT – Relative Importance of Policies

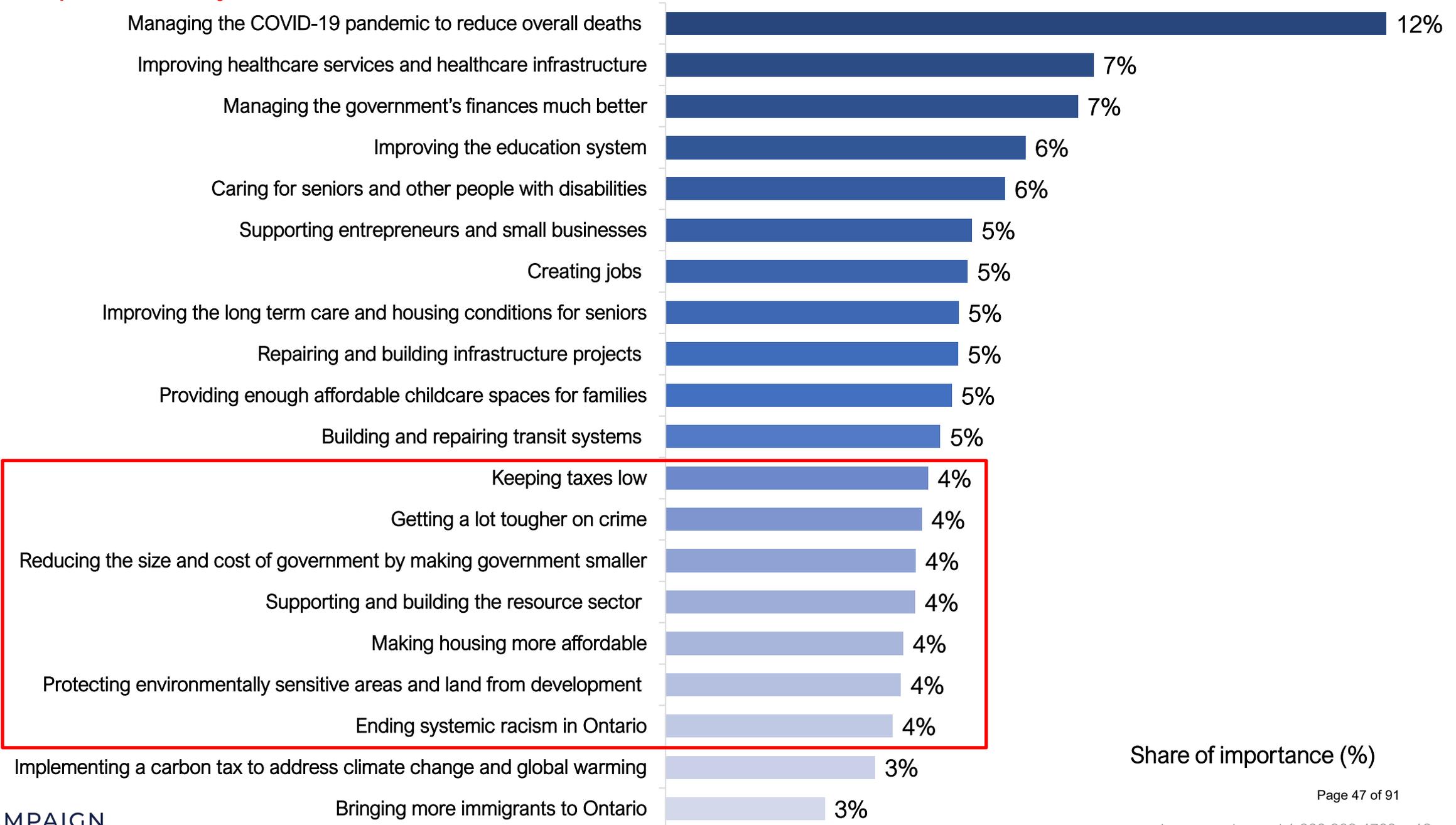


OVERT – Leader (and their party) Ratings

Near the end of the study, respondents also rate each party leader “as a candidate for premier” (the full question is at the bottom of this slide). We then correlate between how respondents rate the “performance of each Leader on each policy plank” with the “overall” rating for each Leader “as a candidate for premier” **to derive the covert importance of each policy**. From this, we can then determine which policies are most important. This is shown on the next slide. (Slide 9)



Covert Important Analysis



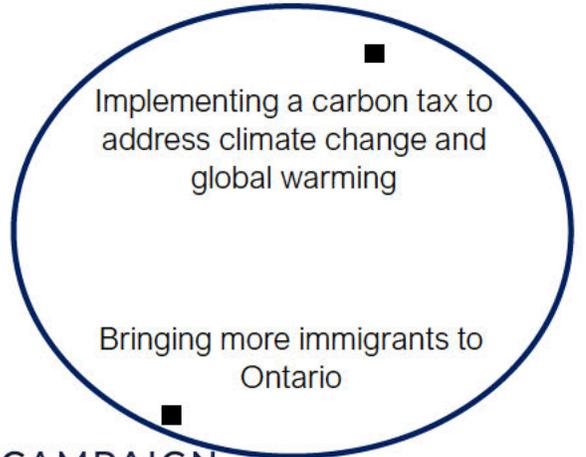
Share of importance (%)

Stated Importance (Overt) vs. Derived (Covert) Importance



- Caring for seniors and other people with disabilities
- Improving the long term care and housing conditions for seniors
- Creating jobs
- Improving the education system
- Supporting small business
- Building Infrastructure

- Improving healthcare services and healthcare infrastructure
- Managing the government's finances much better
- Managing the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce overall deaths



Relative Leadership Strength Scores

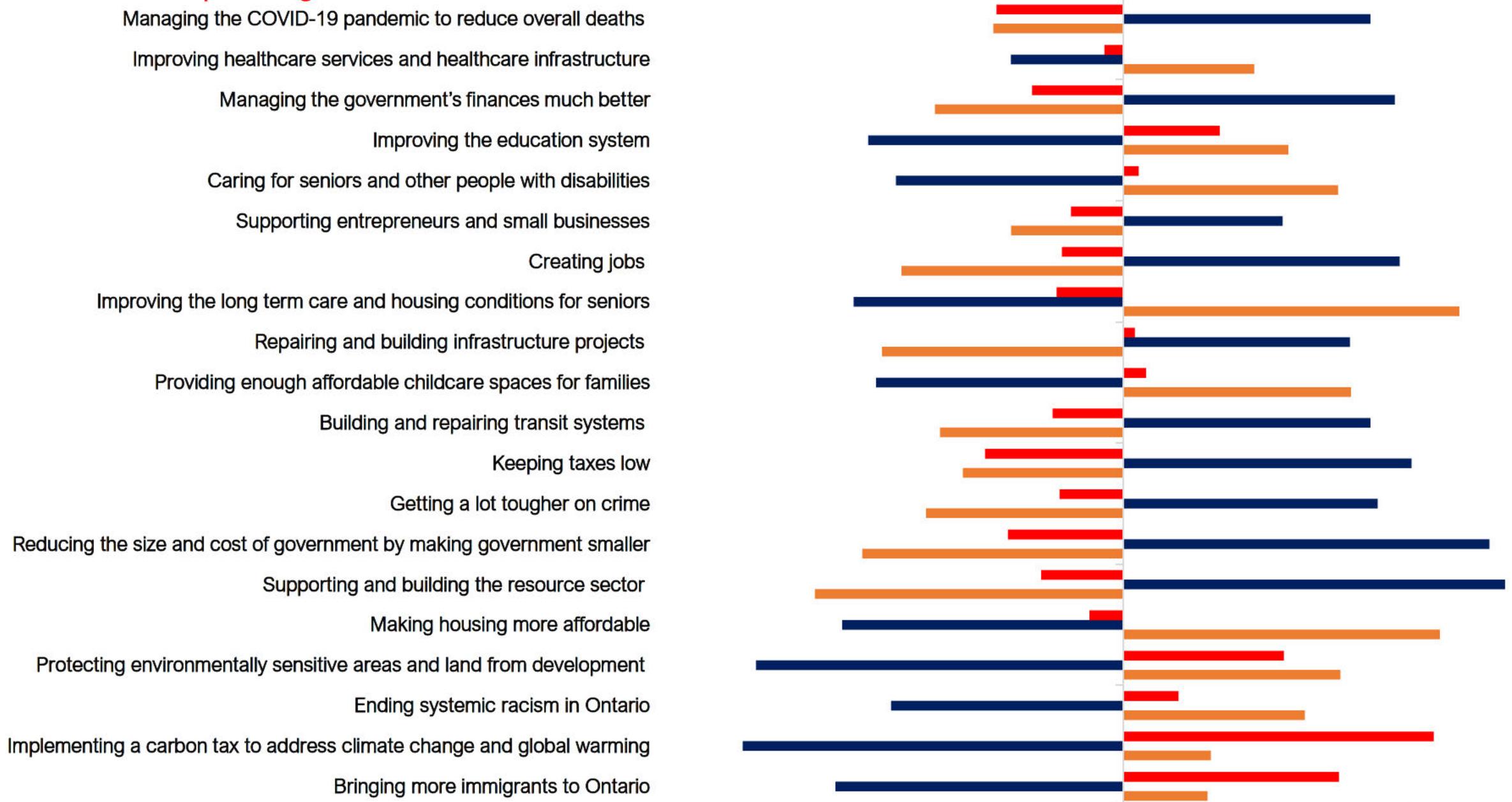
Short explanation of the next slide: (Slide 13)

On the left-hand side of the slide, we see the policy planks organized from most important (covert importance) to least important (top to bottom).

On the right-hand side of the slide, we see the corresponding “Relative Leadership Strength Scores” for each leader.

We are now able to see a more complete picture of how Premier Ford and the PCs are performing on each policy against the other leaders.

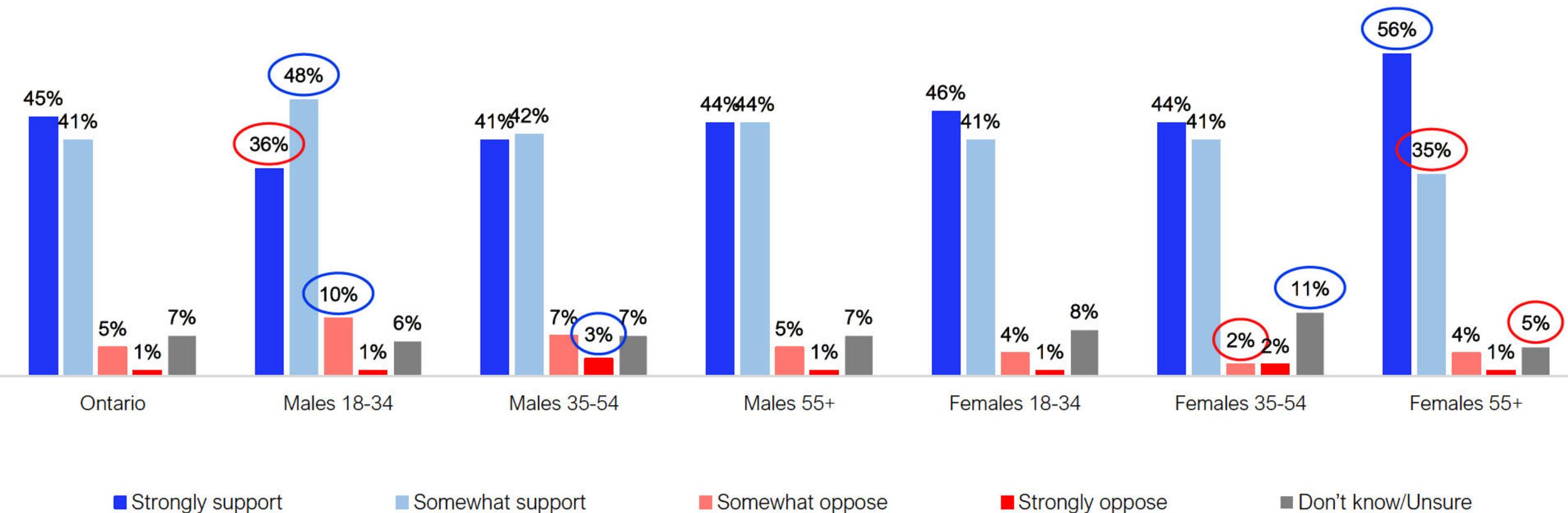
Relative Leadership Strength Scores



Support/Oppose the creation of more parks/protected areas - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

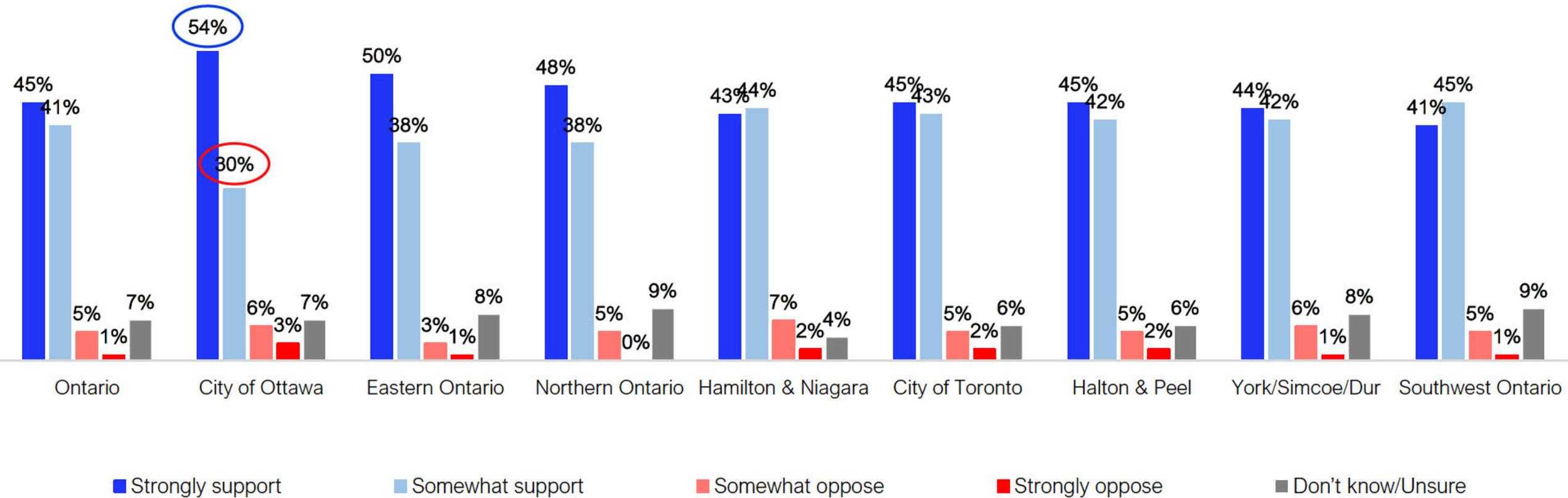
Overwhelming support for the creation of more parks and protected areas with all ages, males and females.



Support/Oppose the creation of more parks/protected areas - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

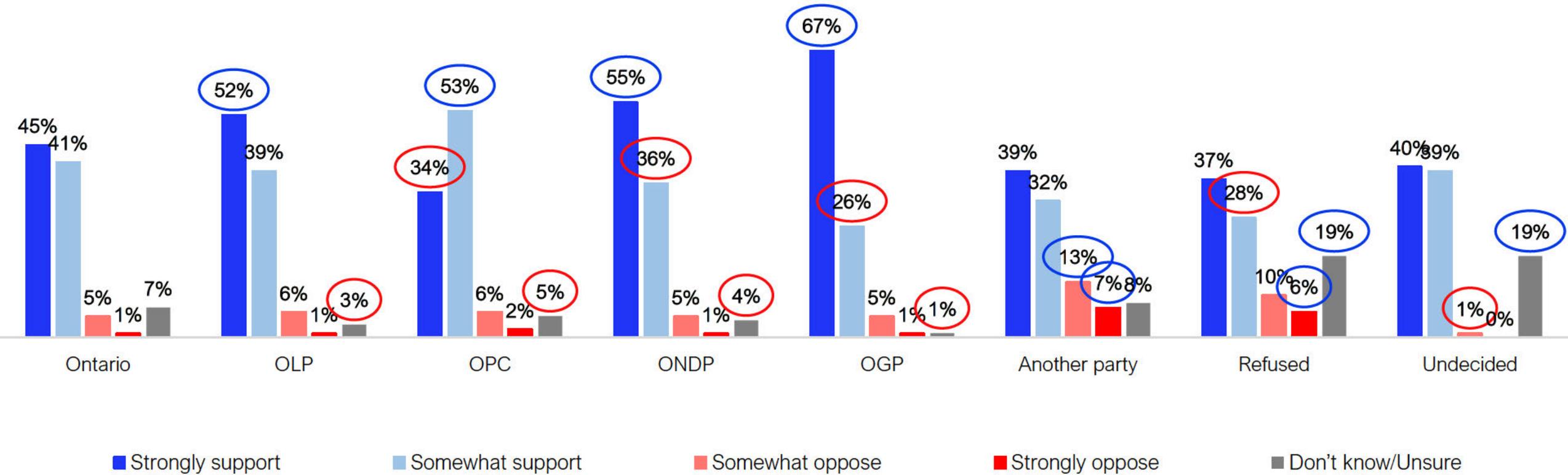
Overwhelming support for the creation of more parks and protected areas across all regions of Ontario.



Support/Oppose the creation of more parks/protected areas - Ballot test

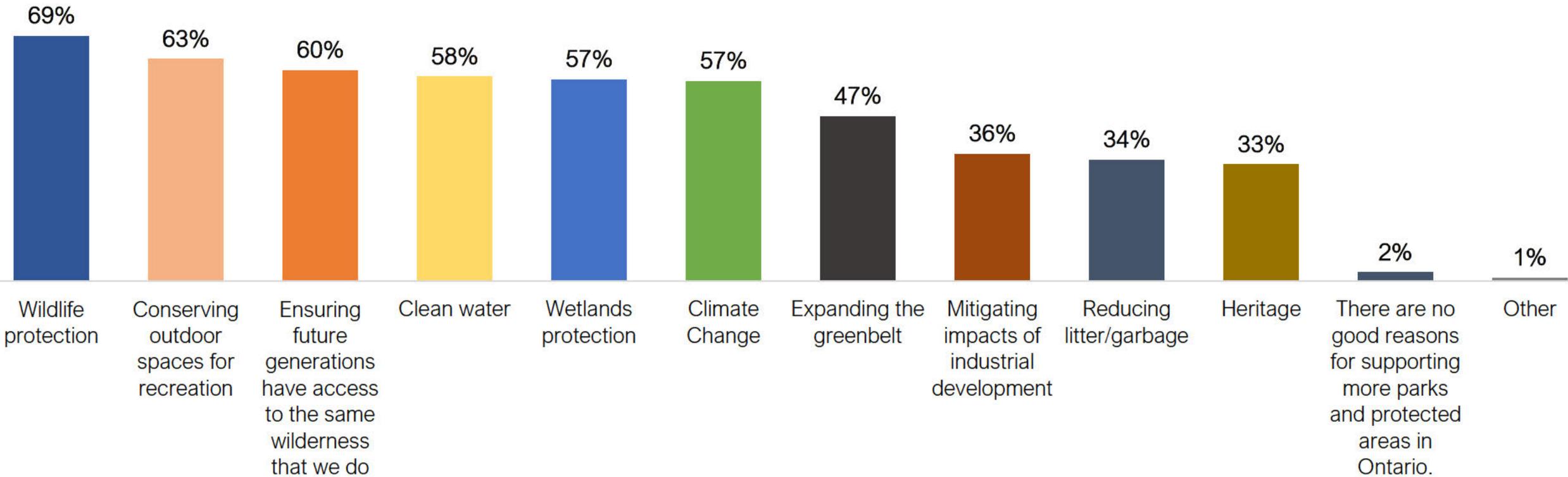
○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

Overwhelming support for the creation of more parks and protected areas across all party lines, including PC voters and “Undecideds”.



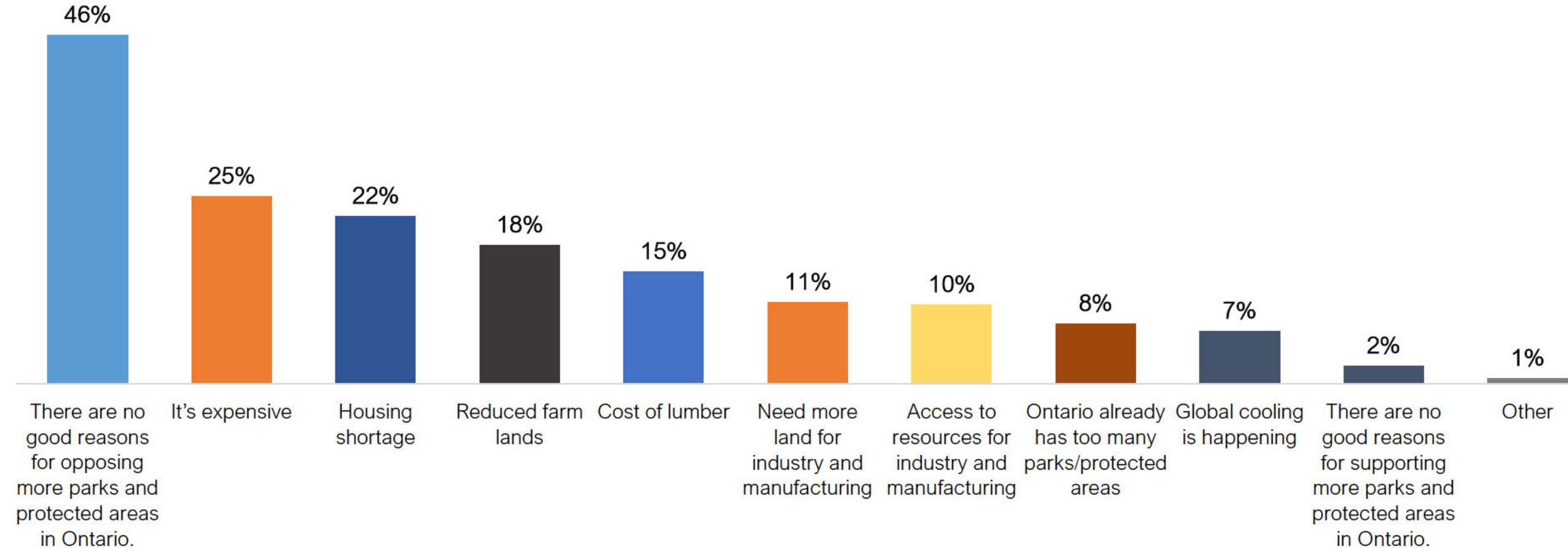
👤 Multiselect – Which are good reasons for supporting more parks and protected areas

Voters believe there are many good reasons for supporting parks and protected areas and very few voters believe that there are no good reasons to do this.



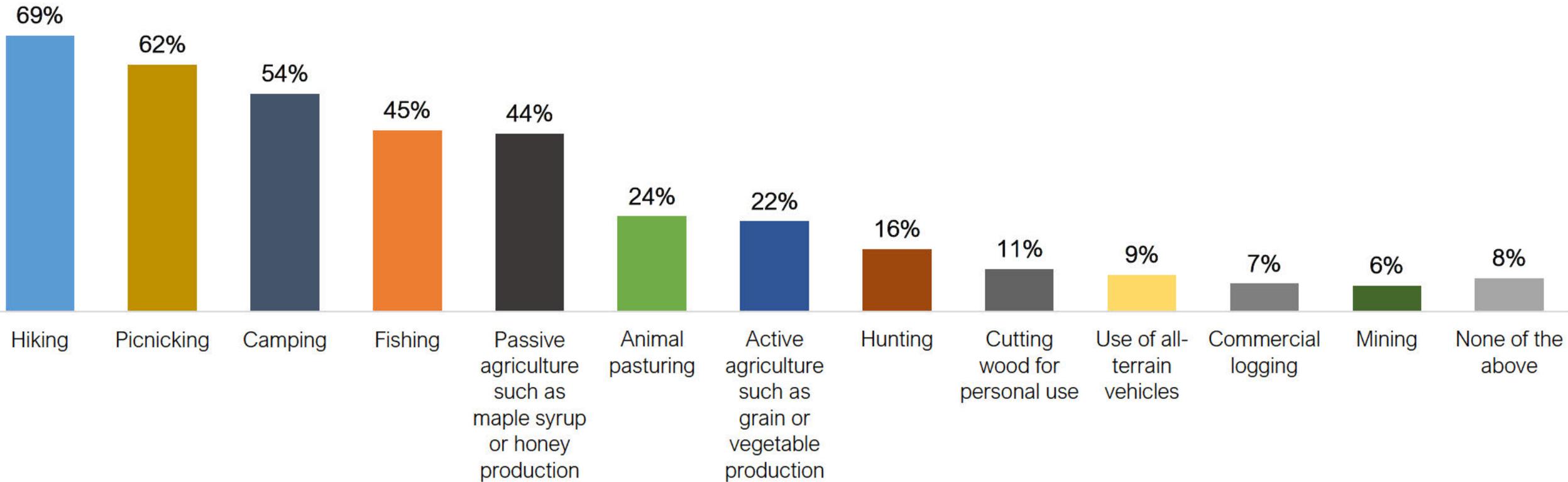
👤 Multiselect – Which are good reasons for opposing more parks and protected areas

Nearly half of voters do not see any good reason for opposing more parks and protected areas in Ontario. The 2 items that stand out with ¼ of voters are costs associated and shortage of housing.



 **Multiselect – Which should be allowed in protected natural areas**

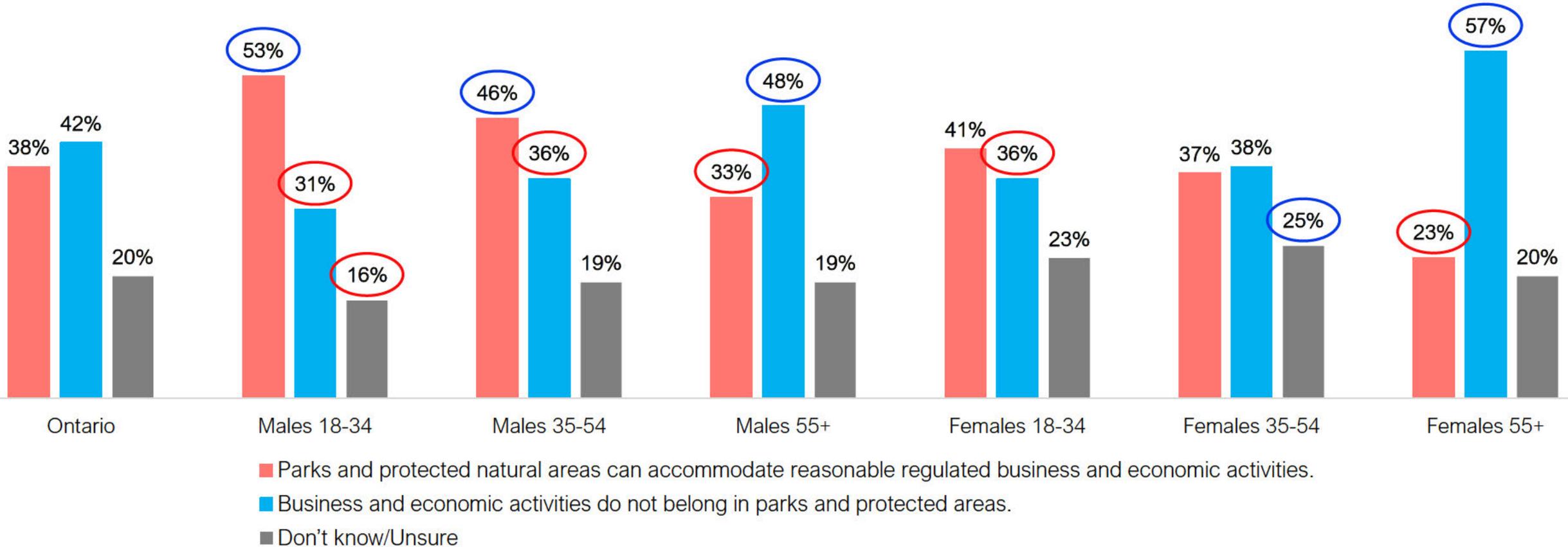
This analysis makes it clear what most voters would approve of.



Should parks accommodate regulated business activities? - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

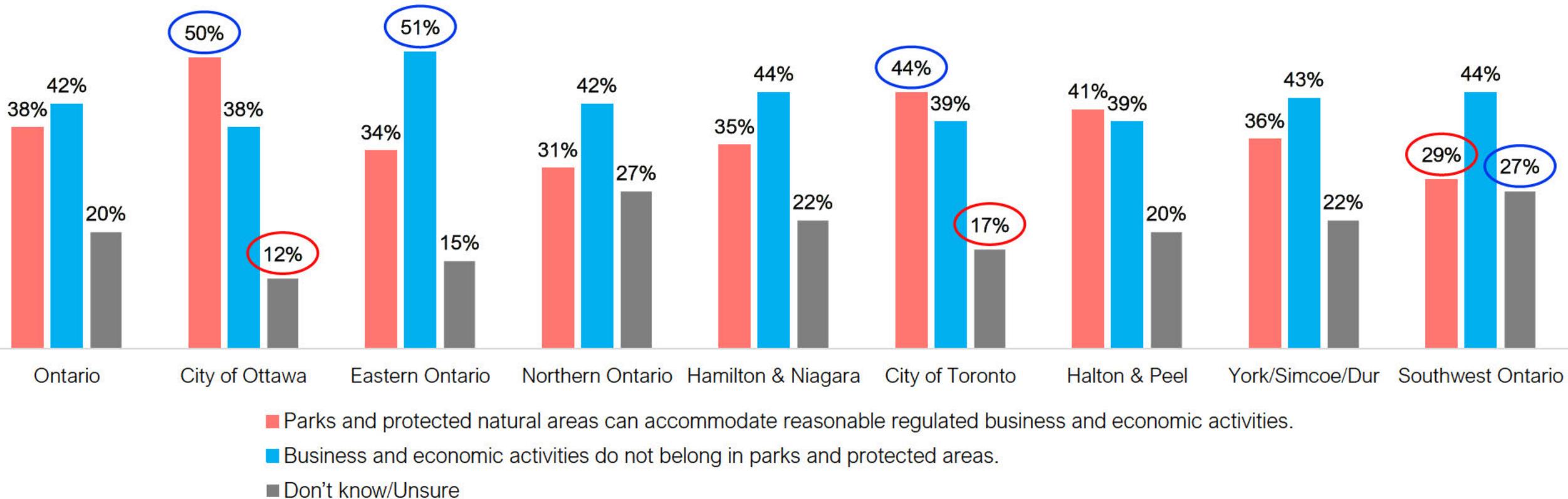
Voters are evenly split on whether or not regulated business activity should be accommodated within parks and protected natural areas. Younger voters are much more open to accommodating “reasonable regulated business and economic activity”.



Should parks accommodate regulated business activities? - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

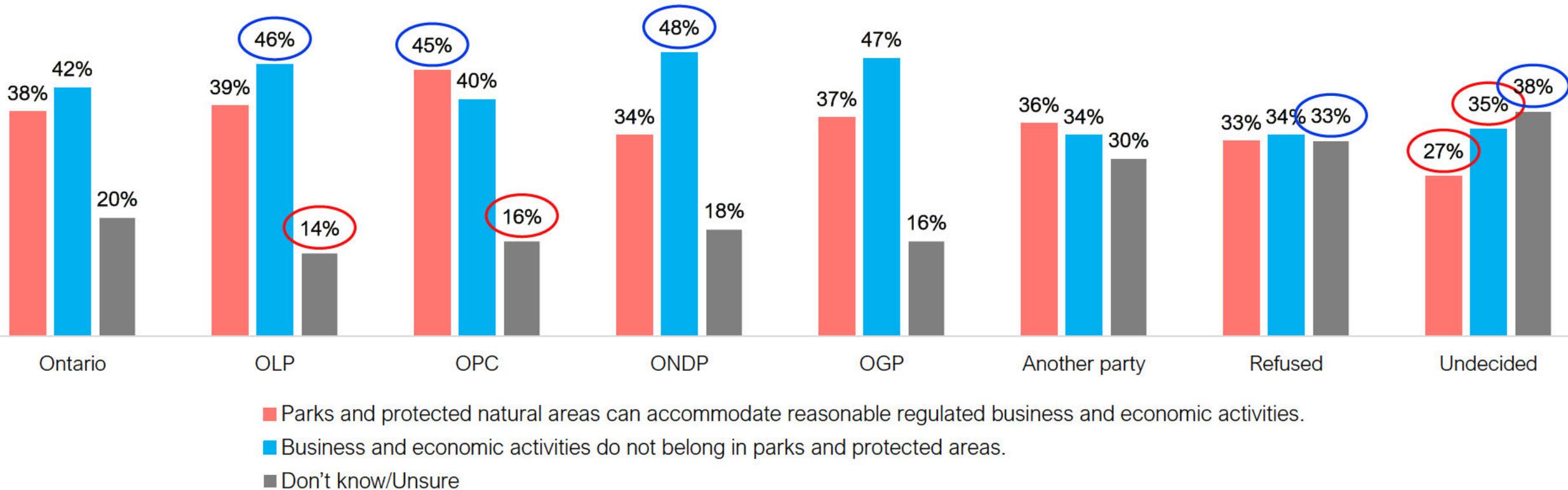
Voters in the more urban areas are more open to the idea of accommodating some business activity, while voters in more suburban and rural areas tend to be more opposed.



Should parks accommodate regulated business activities? - Ballot test

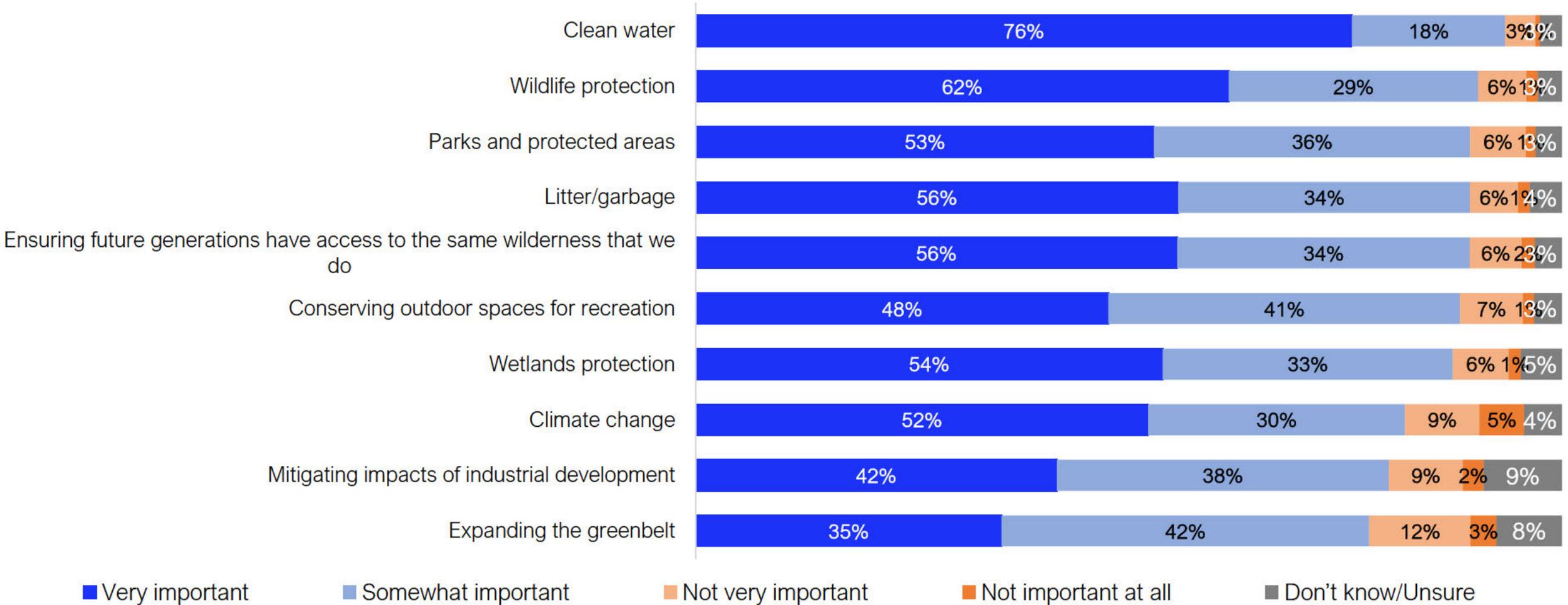
○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

OLP and PC voters are more evenly split on the question, while the ONDP and Green Party voters tend to lean against allowing economic activities in parks and protected areas.



Importance of the following environmental issues:

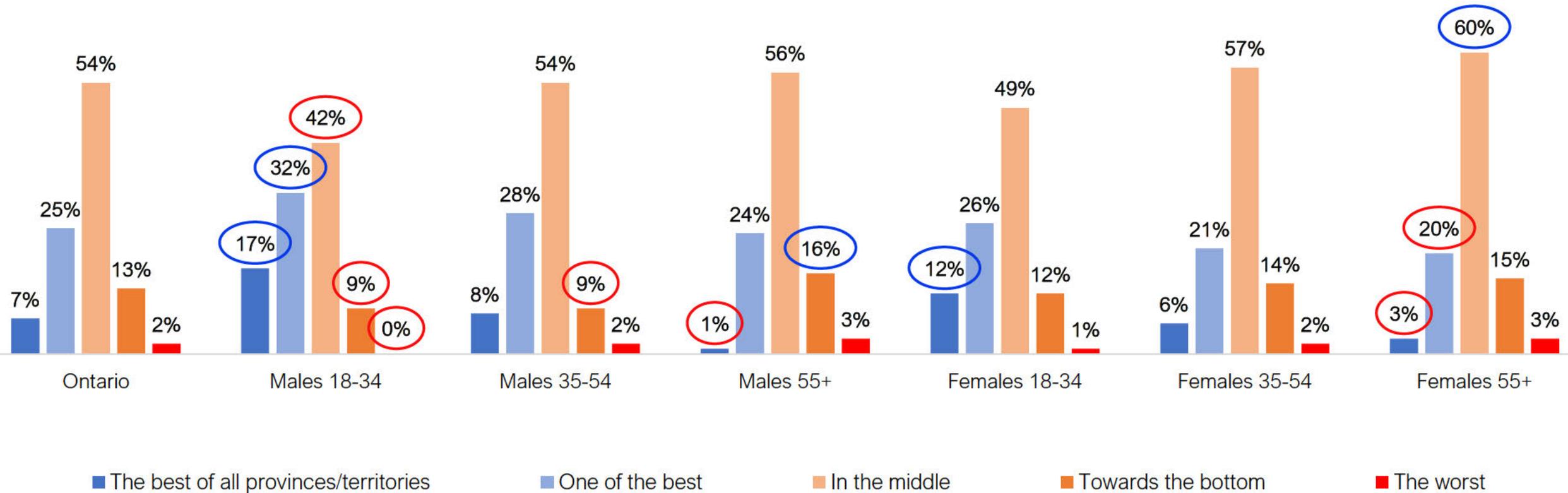
Voters do not see much difference in importance. Almost all are “very important”.



Terrestrial conservation in Ontario compared to other provinces - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

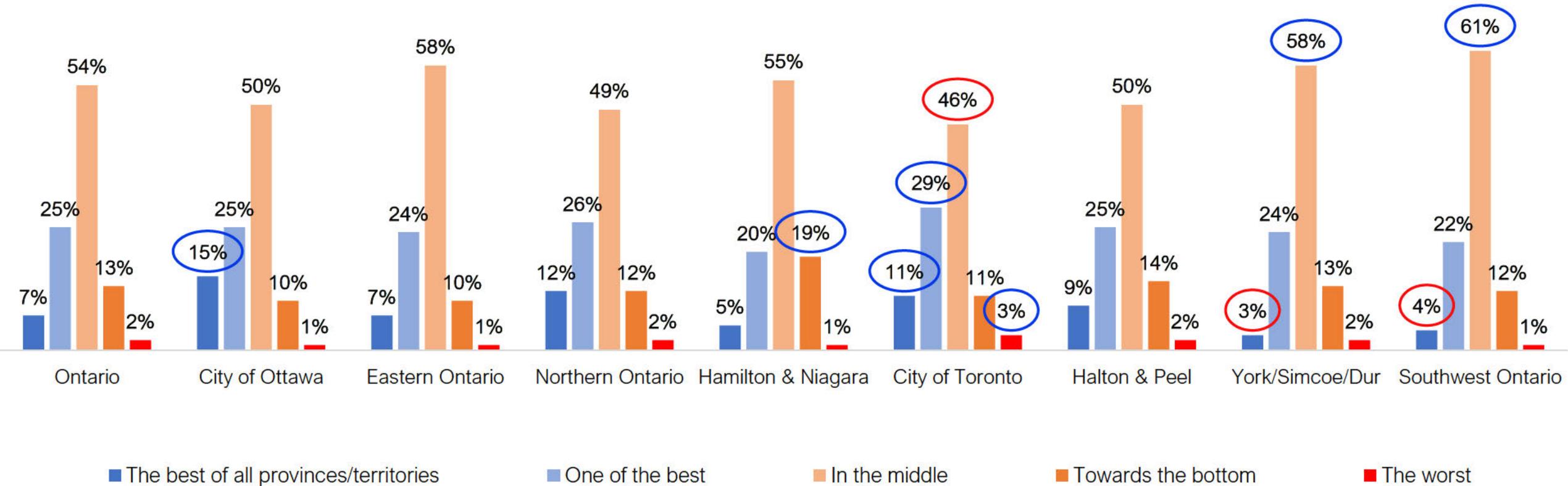
Most voters do not believe that Ontario ranks “towards the bottom or is the worst” when compared to other provinces and/or territories.



Terrestrial conservation in Ontario compared to other provinces - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

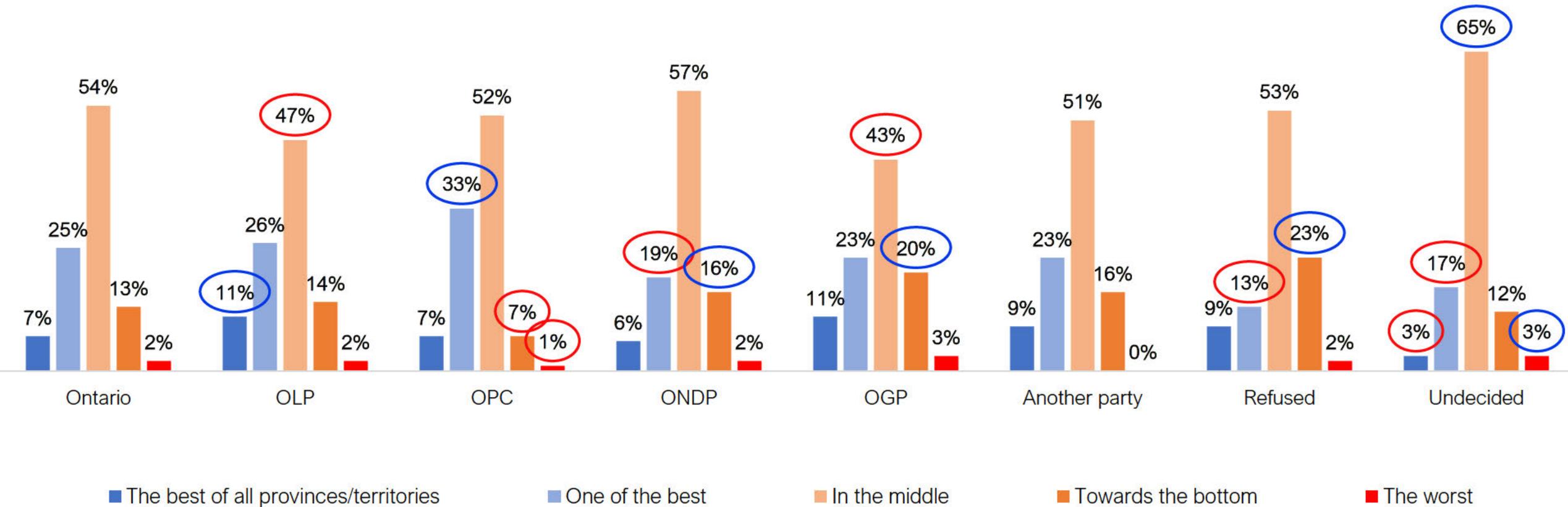
Voters across the regions of Ontario breakout roughly the same way.



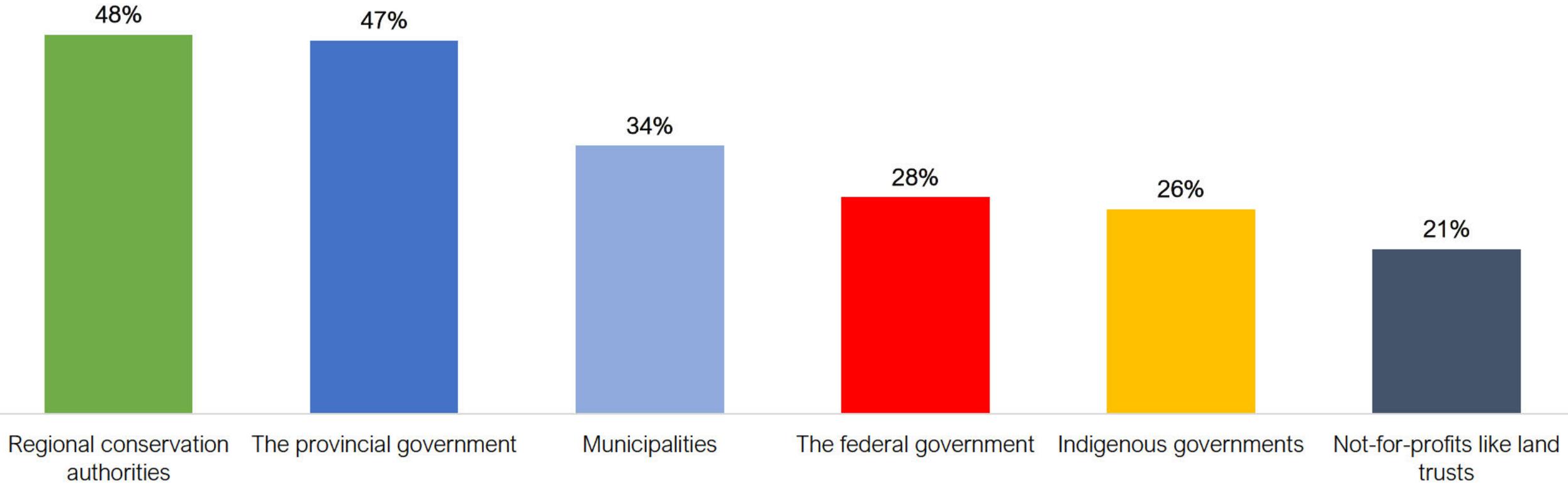
Terrestrial conservation in Ontario compared to other provinces - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

Voters across party lines breakout roughly the same way.



 **Multiselect – Who should have priority when it comes to building and managing parks?**

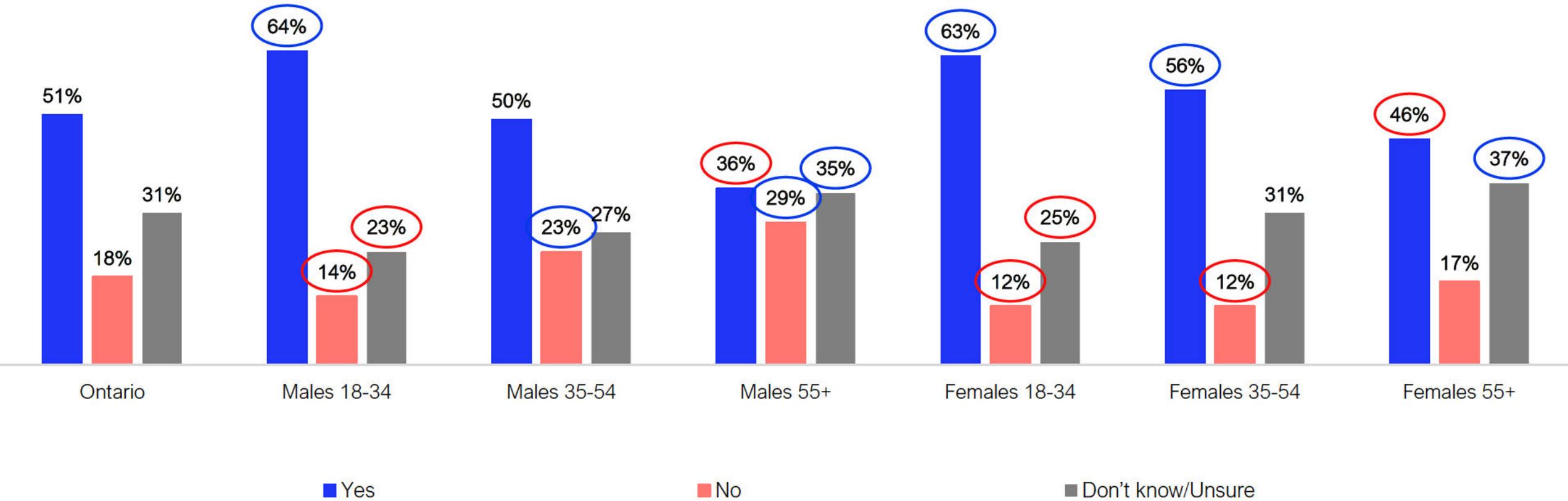




Should Indigenous groups be allowed to create new parks/protected areas - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

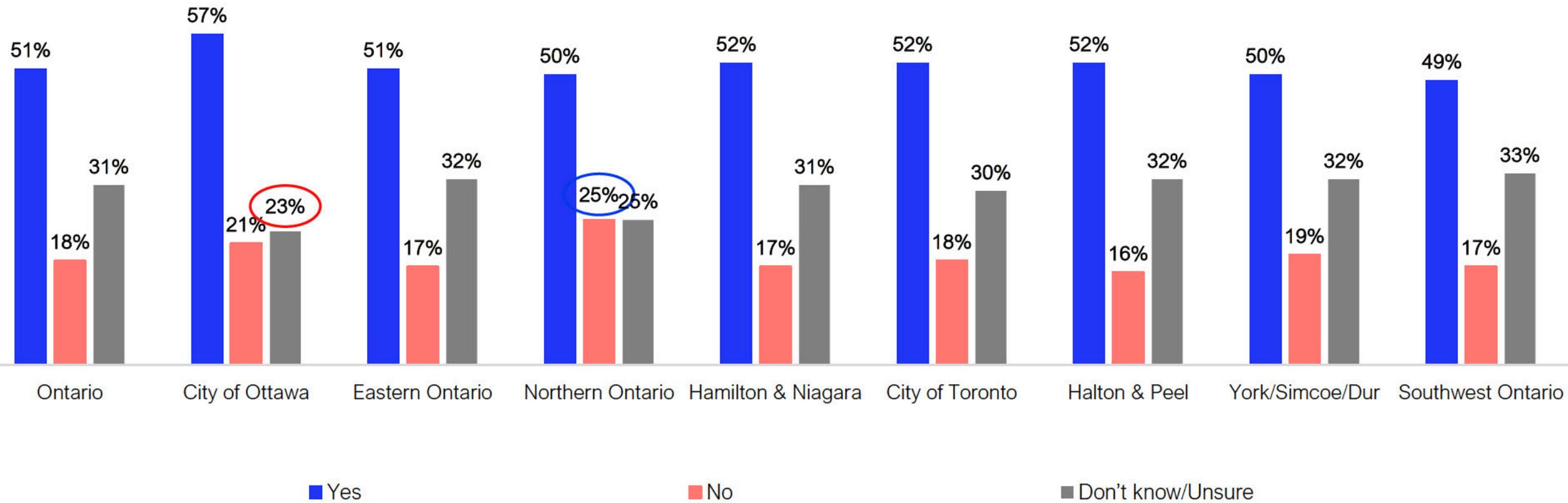
Support for Indigenous government and groups to create new parks and protected areas is 3 to 1. Support is high across all ages, males and females, except males over 55 years of age.



Should Indigenous groups be allowed to create new parks/protected areas - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

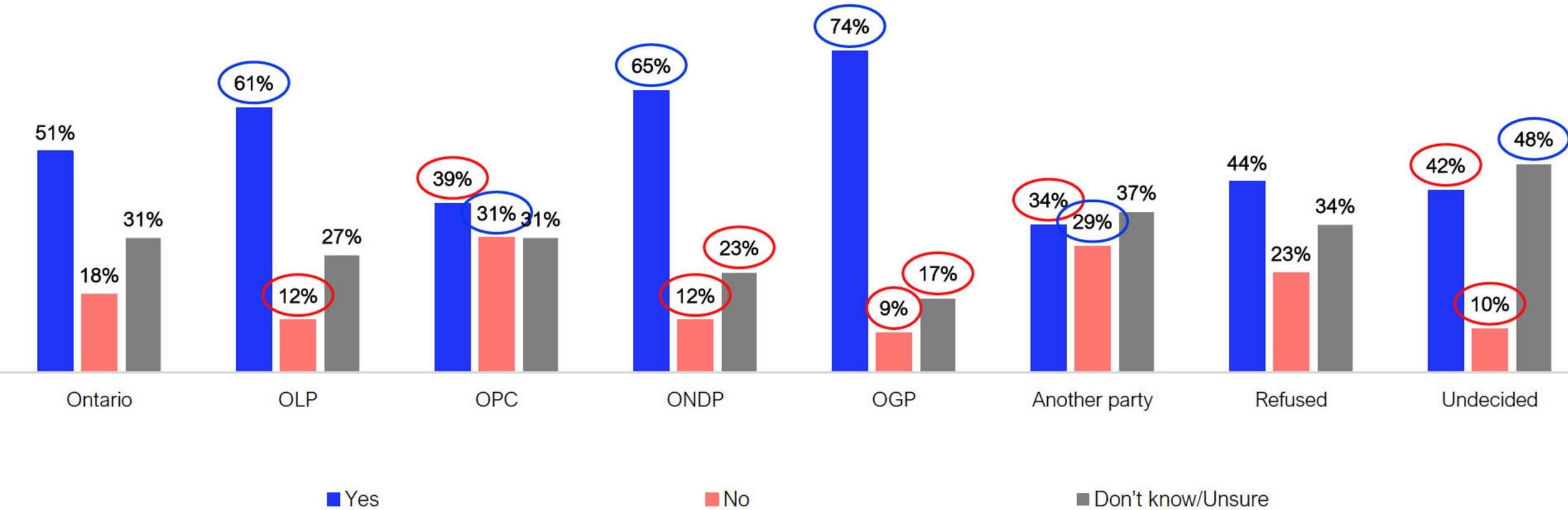
Voters breakout roughly the same way across all regions of Ontario.



Should Indigenous groups be allowed to create new parks/protected areas - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

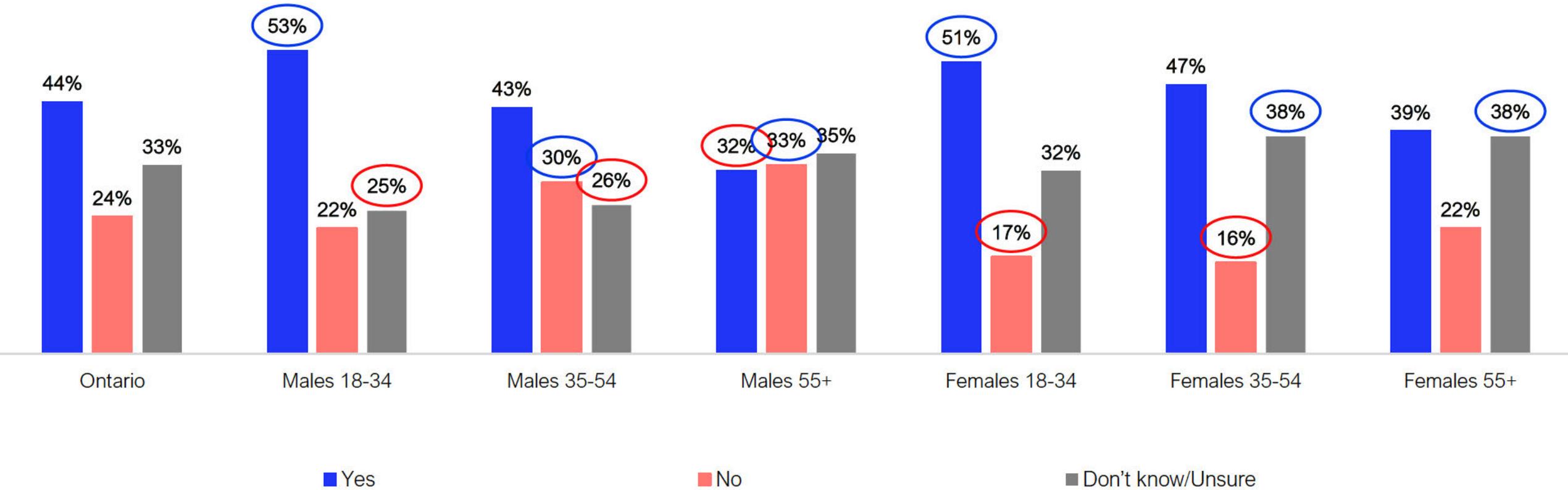
Overwhelming support with voters across party lines. A plurality of PC voters who also support.



Should Indigenous groups manage more parks/protected areas - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

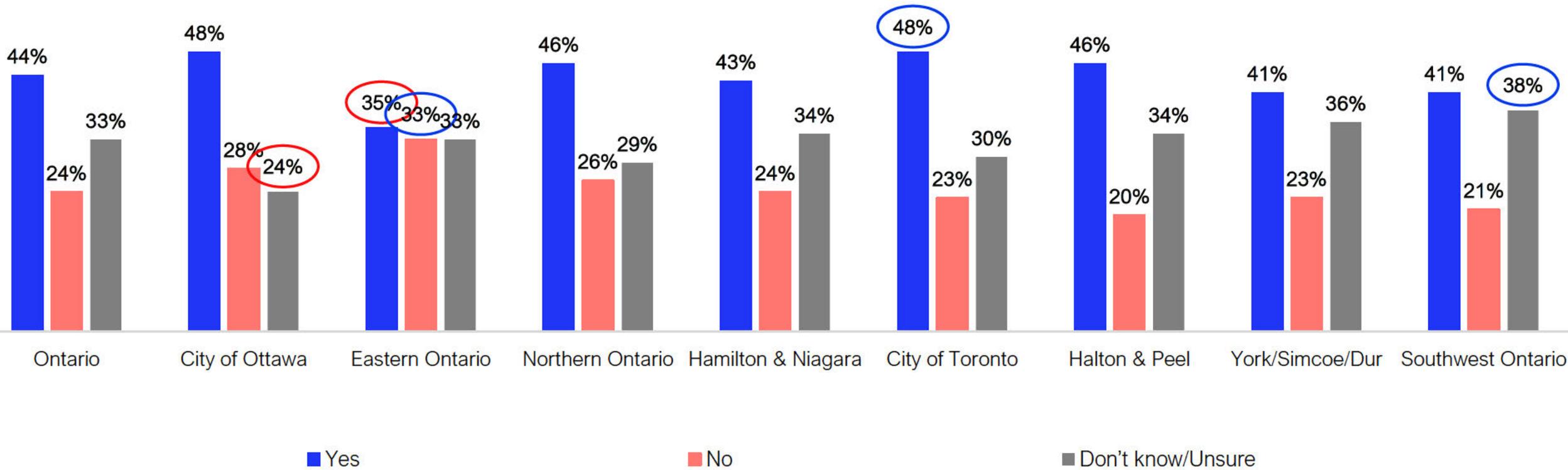
Support for Indigenous government and groups to manage more parks and protected areas is 2 to 1. Support is high across all ages, males and females, except males over 55 years of age.



Should Indigenous groups manage more parks/protected areas - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

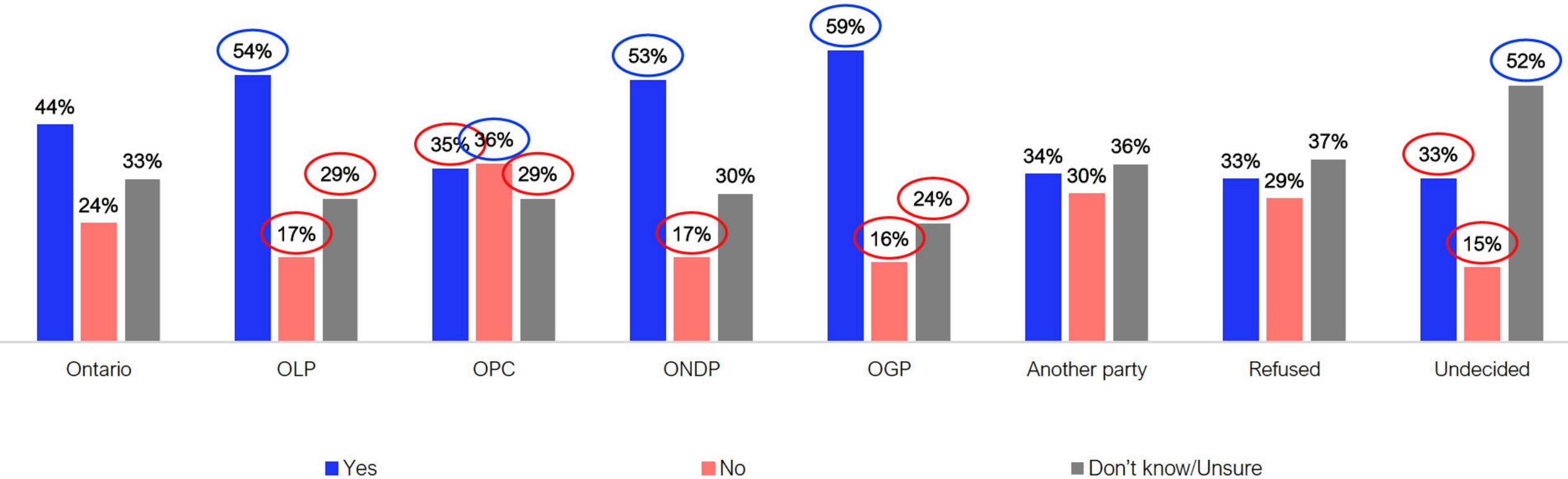
Voters across regions of Ontario breakout roughly the same way except in Eastern Region where voters are evenly split.



Should Indigenous groups manage more parks/protected areas - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

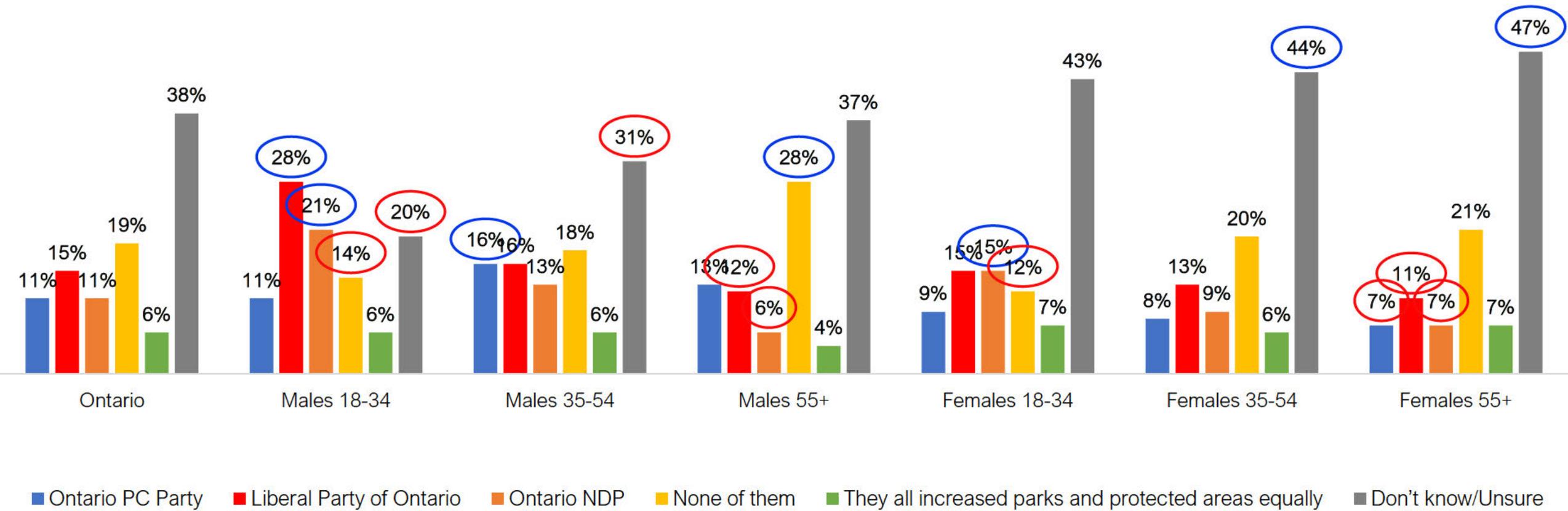
Overwhelming support with voters across party lines and there are a plurality of PC voters who also support.



Which political party has shown the greatest leadership re Parks... - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

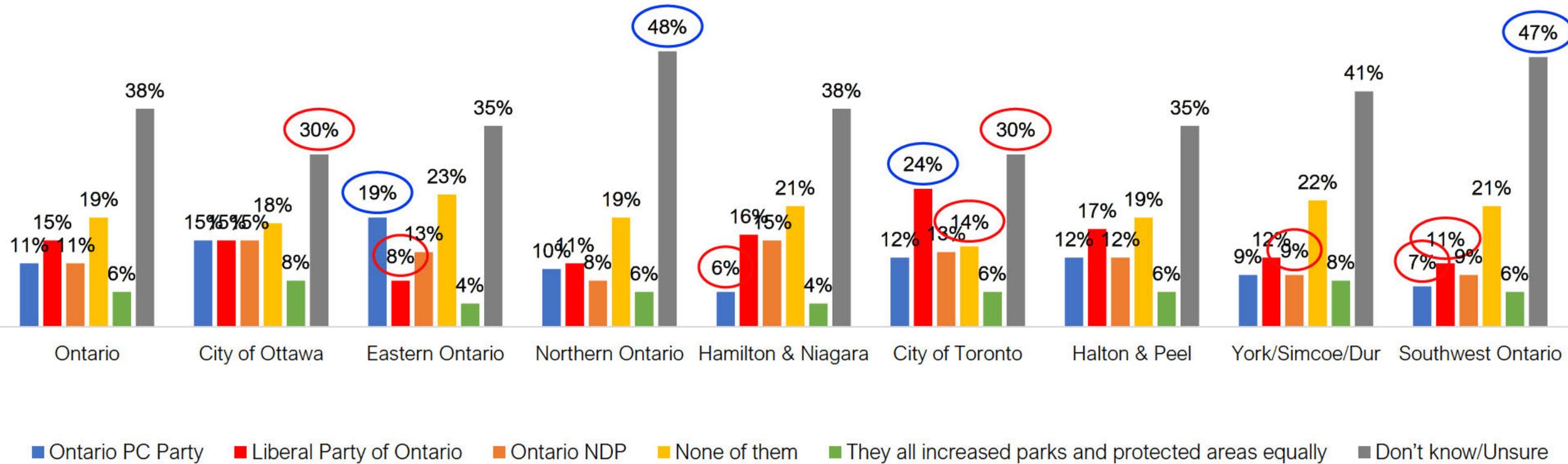
Very few voters are able to assign credit to a specific party for showing leadership regarding increasing parks and protected areas. 3 out of 5 voters either “don’t know” or say “none” (of them). Females much more than males “don’t know”.



Which political party has shown the greatest leadership re Parks... - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

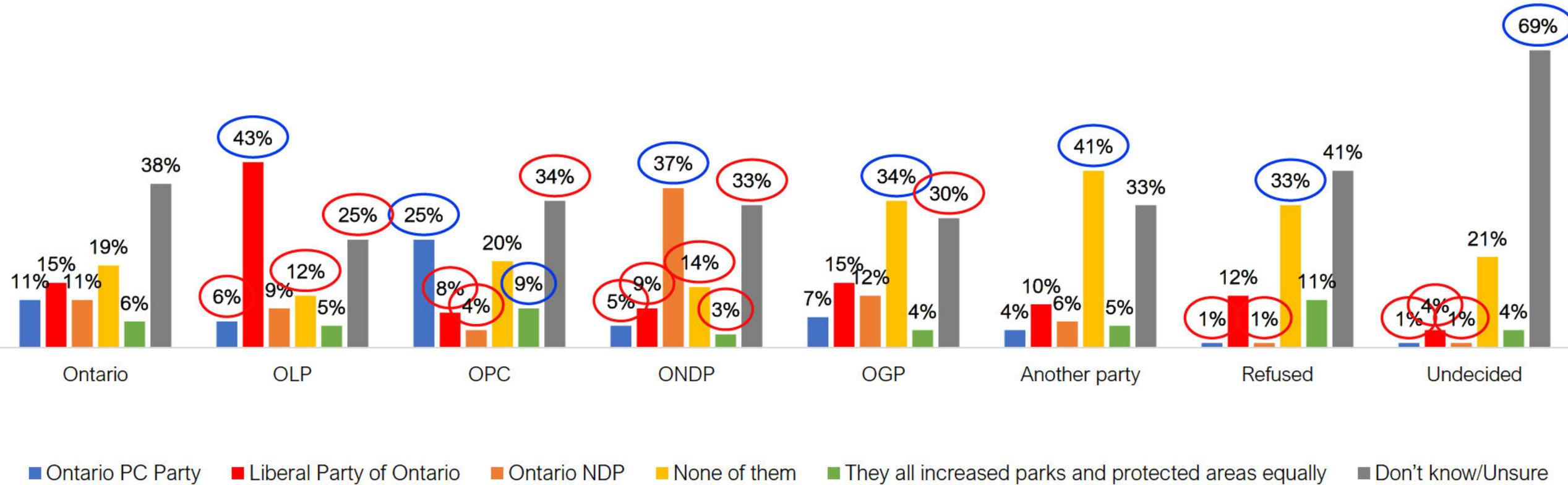
Voters breakout roughly the same way across the regions of Ontario. In the City of Toronto more voters say that the OLP has shown the greatest leadership in this area.



Which political party has shown the greatest leadership re Parks... - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

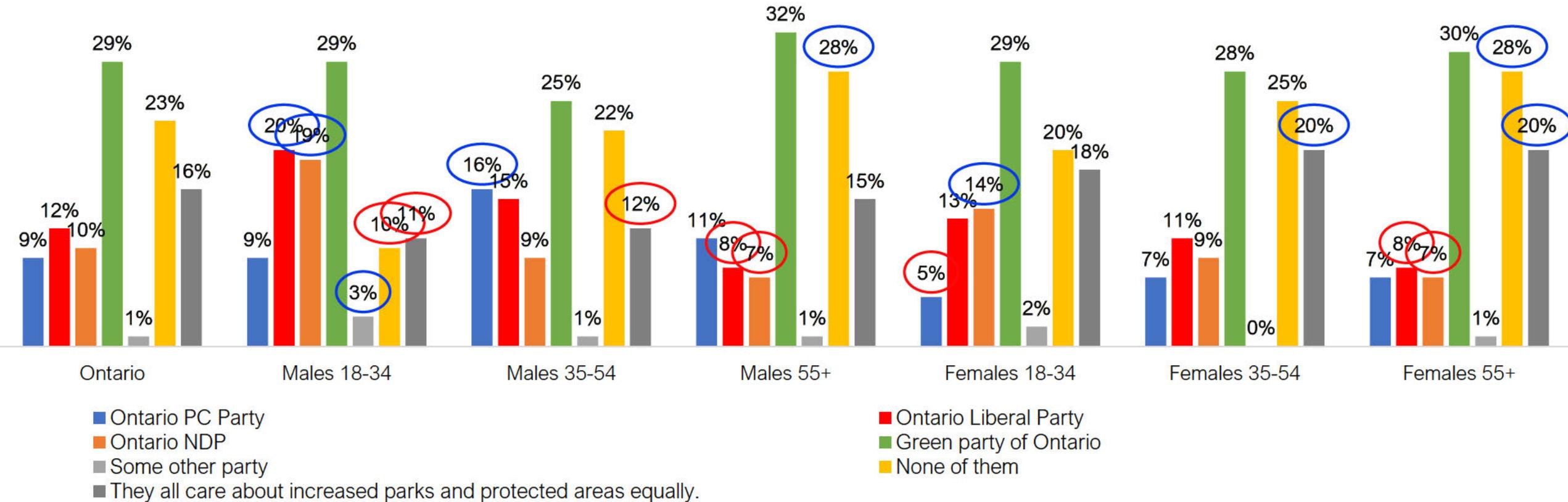
When looking at this question by party support, it's not surprising that answers breakdown in a more partisan way.



Which political party cares most about increasing parks/protected areas - Age & Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

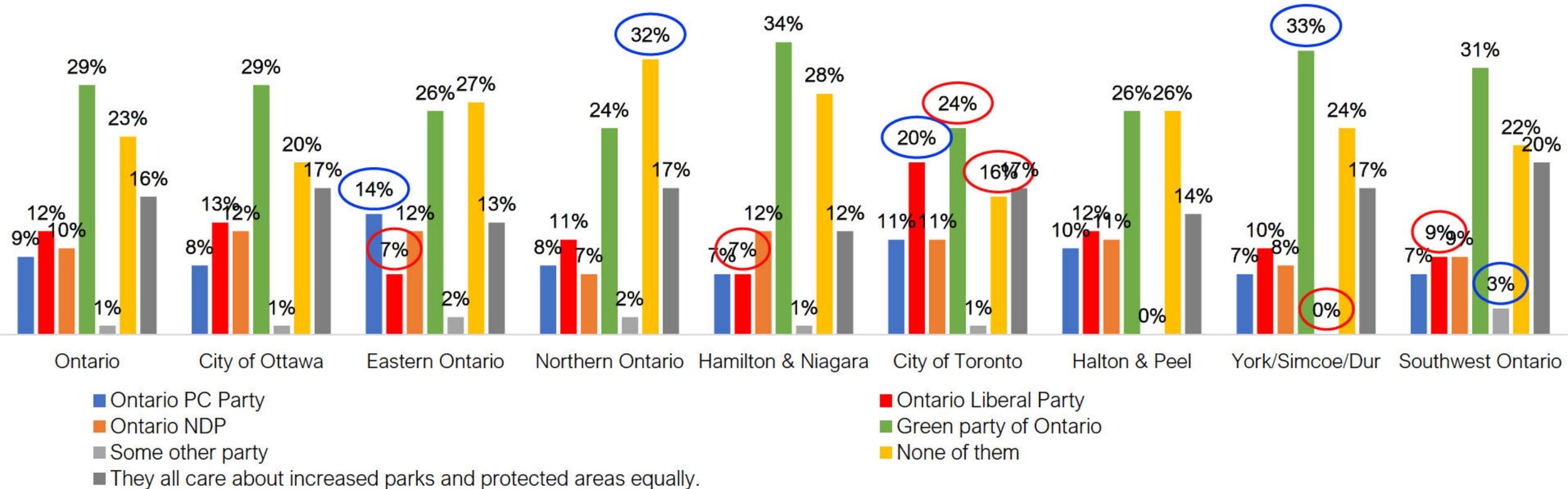
Voters breakout roughly the same way across age categories, males and females. 3 out of 10 voters choose “Green Party” while about 1 out of 10 voters choose each of the main political parties.



Which political party cares most about increasing parks/protected areas - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

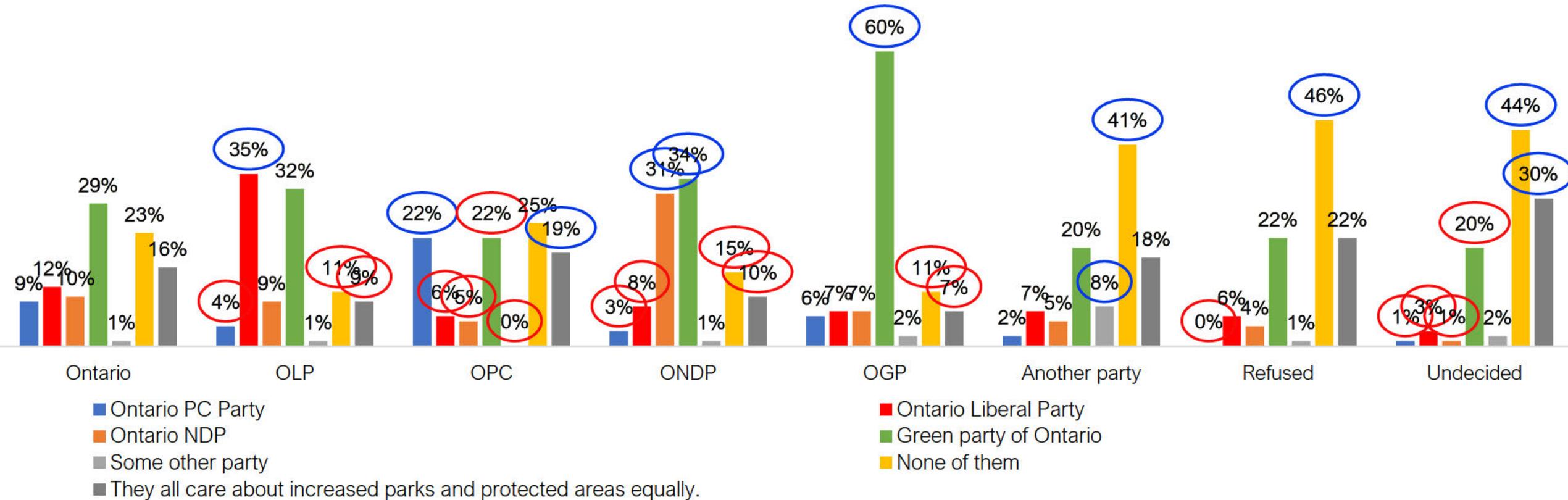
Voters breakout roughly the same way across the regions of Ontario with voters in the City of Toronto choosing the OLP much more than other voters.



Which political party cares most about increasing parks/protected areas - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

When looking at this question by party support, it's not surprising that answers breakdown in a more partisan way. Across party lines, supporters of the main parties also choose the Green Party as much as their own party, despite the partisan leanings.





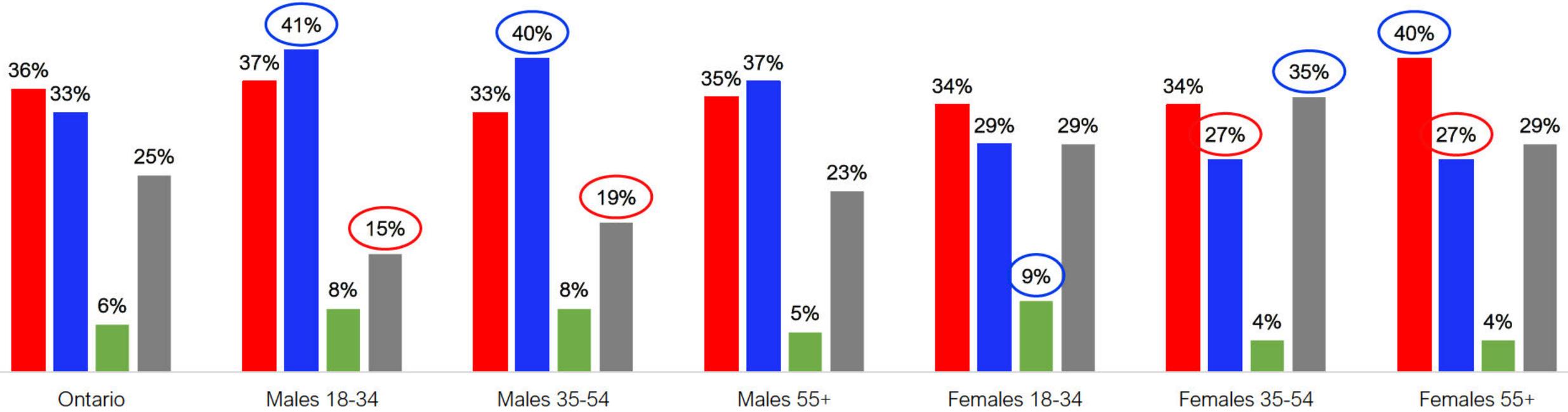
Describe the Ontario PC Government's approach to environmental protection – Age & Gender



Significantly higher than Ontario

Significantly lower than Ontario

Voters breakout roughly the same way across ages, males & females. Only 36% of voters believe that the PCs “don’t care about the environment & only care about helping businesses”. 33% believe that the PC’s approach has “been to balance environmental protection and economic growth”.

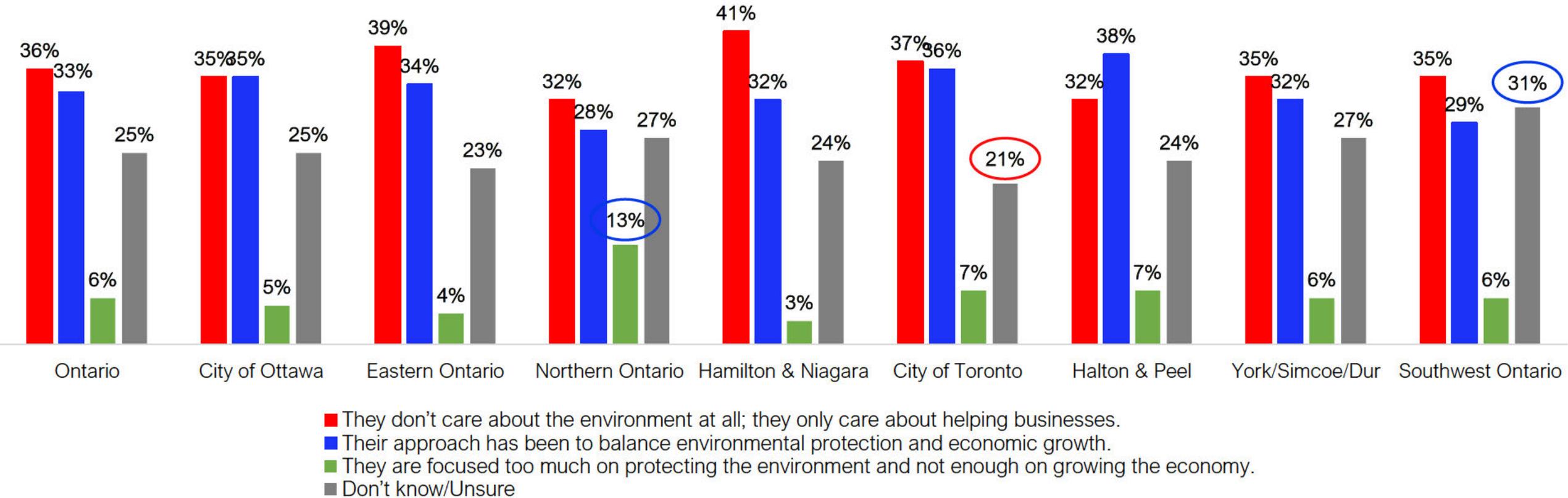


- They don't care about the environment at all; they only care about helping businesses.
- Their approach has been to balance environmental protection and economic growth.
- They are focused too much on protecting the environment and not enough on growing the economy.
- Don't know/Unsure

Describe the Ontario PC Government's approach to environmental protection - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

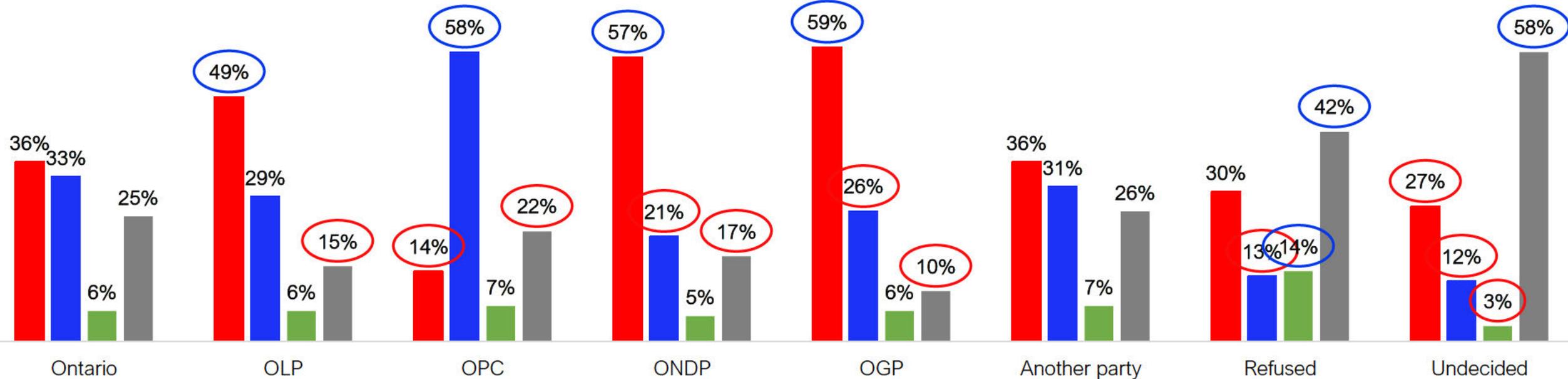
Voters breakout roughly the same way across regions of Ontario.



Describe the Ontario PC Government's approach to environmental protection - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

There is a significant difference between how PC voters answer this question compared to voters supporting the other parties.

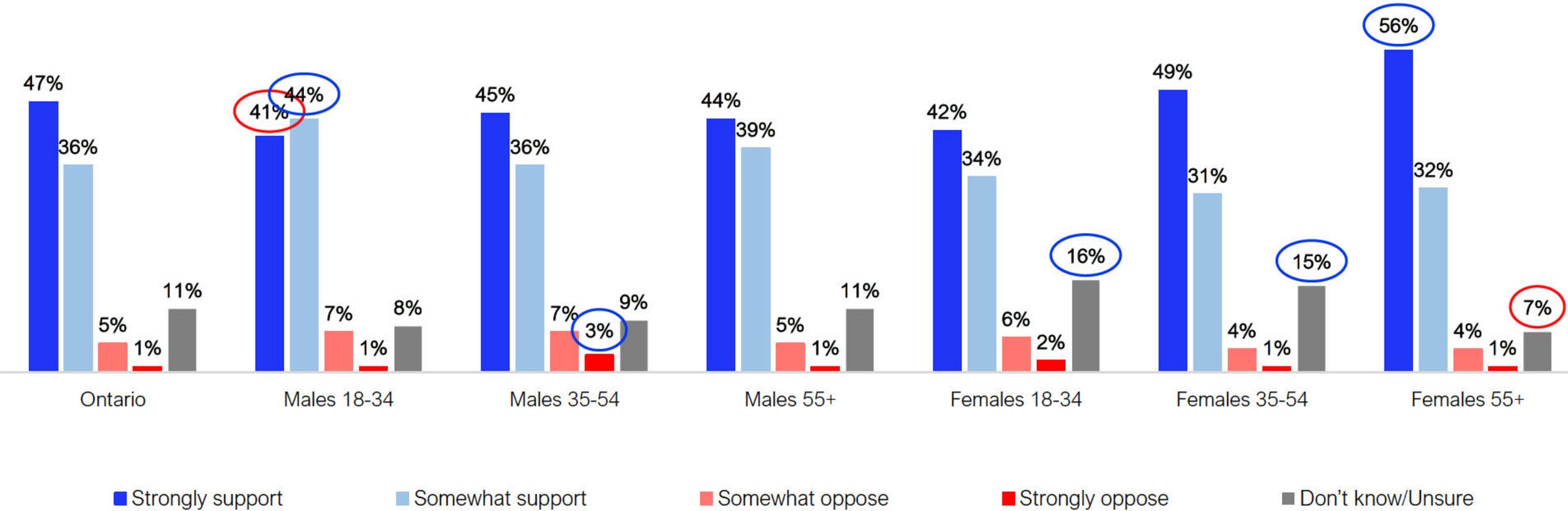


- They don't care about the environment at all; they only care about helping businesses.
- Their approach has been to balance environmental protection and economic growth.
- They are focused too much on protecting the environment and not enough on growing the economy.
- Don't know/Unsure

Support/Oppose Ontario creating more parks and protected areas - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

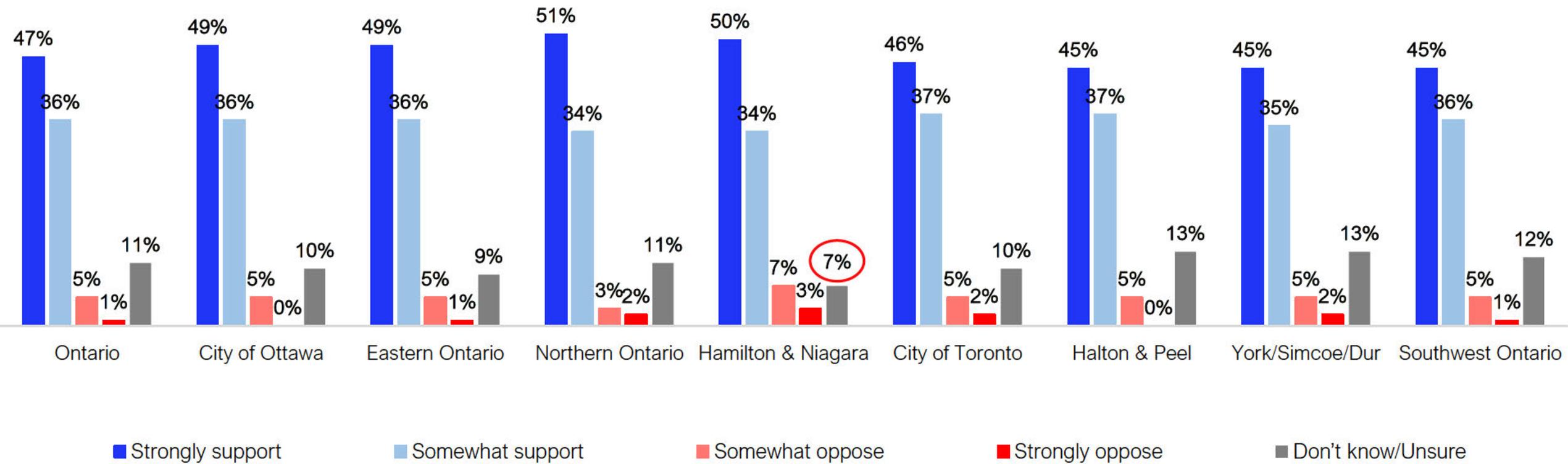
Near unanimous support across all ages, males and females.



Support/Oppose Ontario creating more parks and protected spaces - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

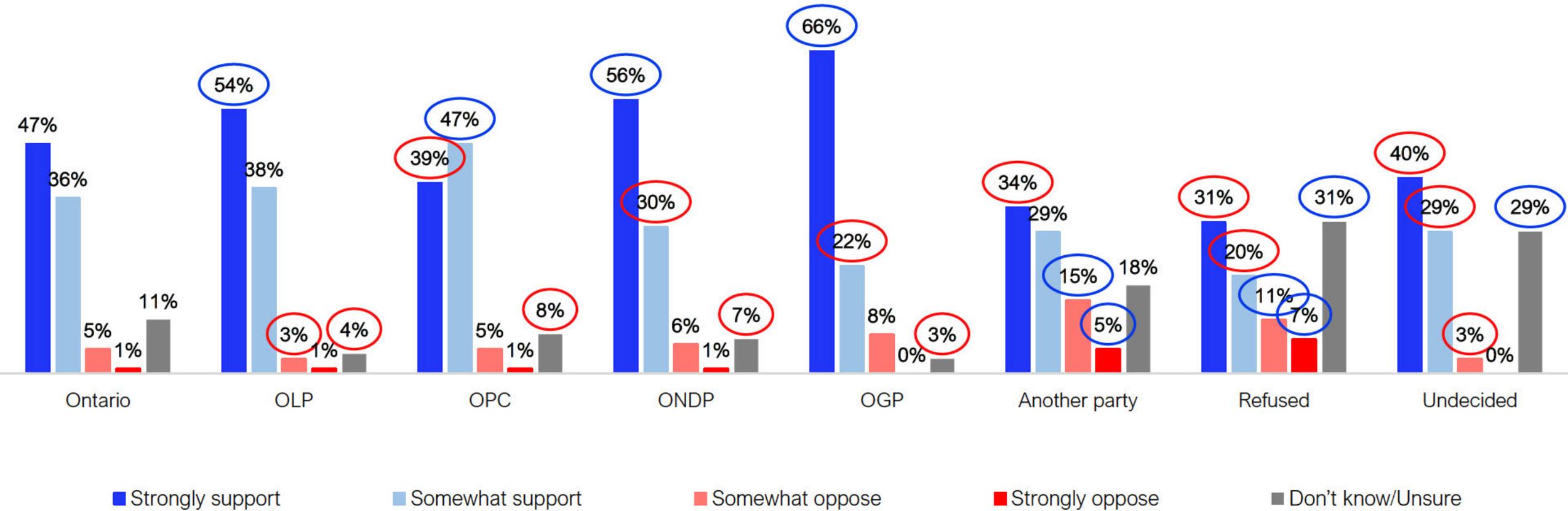
Near unanimous support across all regions of Ontario.



Support/Oppose Ontario creating more parks and protected areas - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

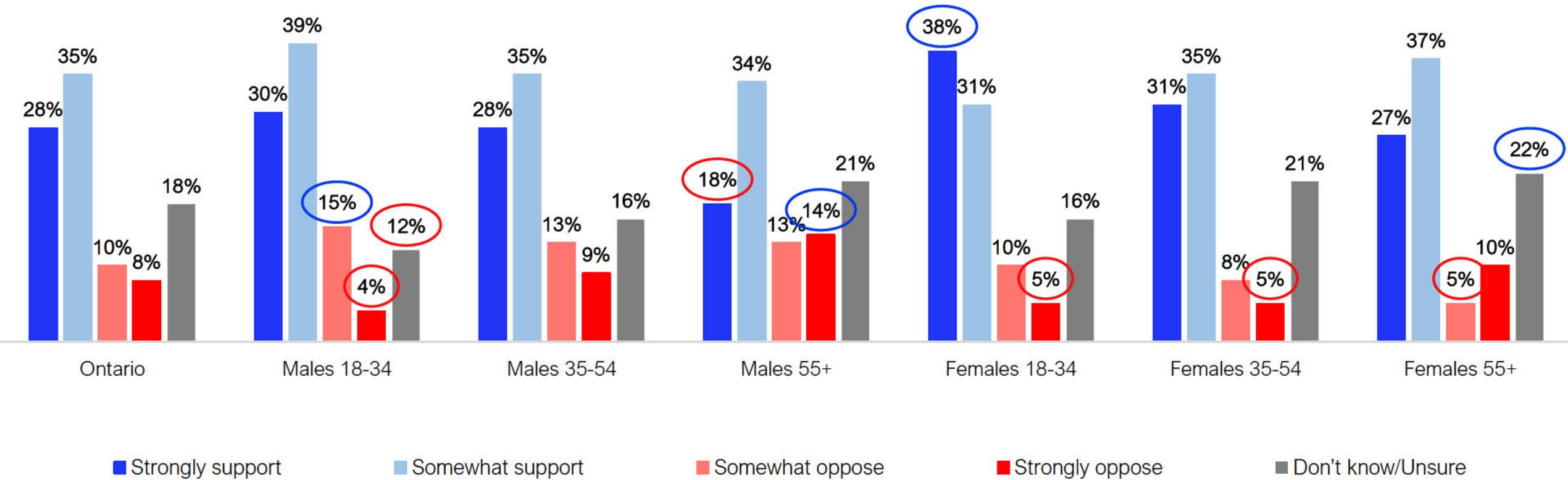
Near unanimous support across all party lines.



Support for parks that are co-managed by Indigenous communities - Age & Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

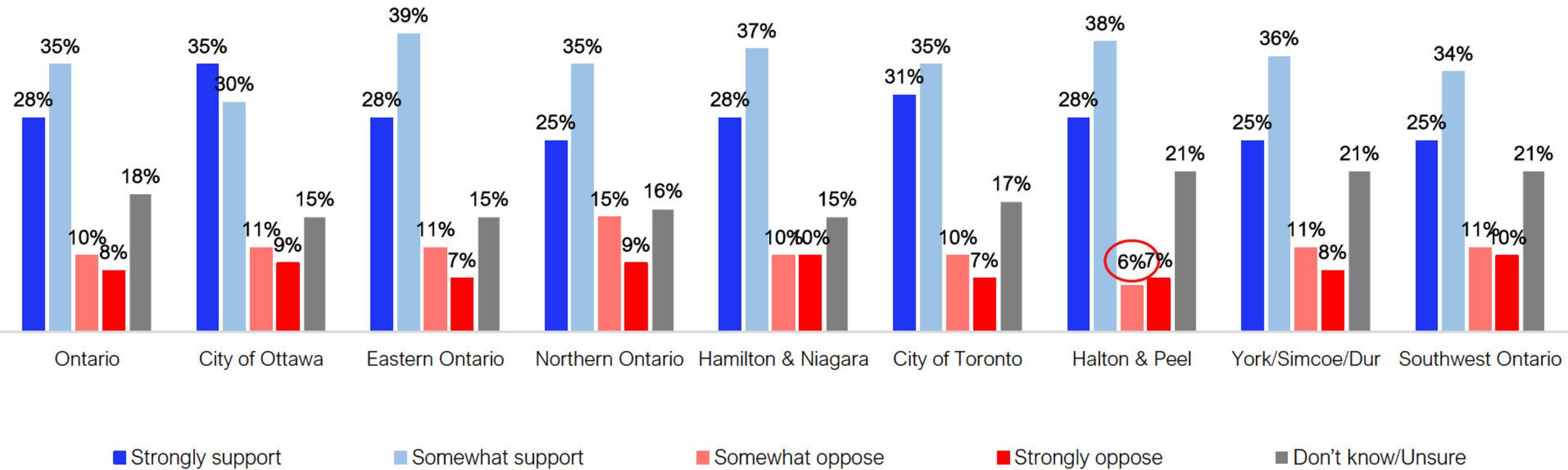
Nearly 2/3rd support for Indigenous communities to co-manage parks & protected areas. Support is very high across all ages, males and females.



Support for parks that are co-managed by Indigenous communities - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

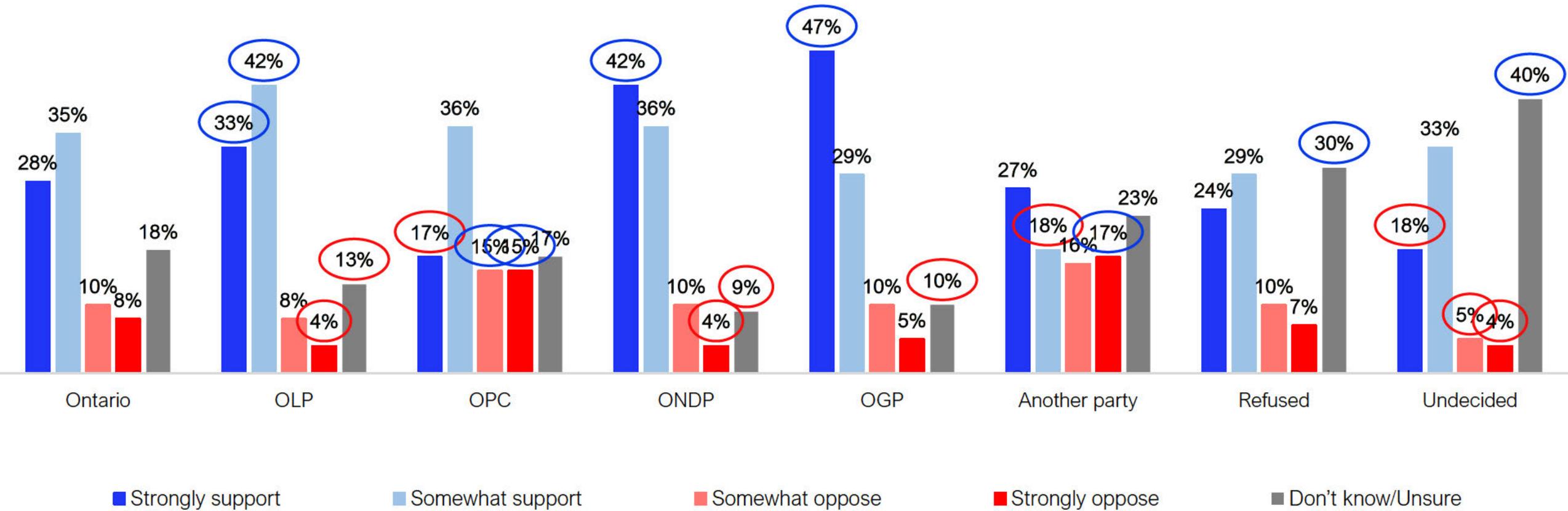
Support is very high across all regions.



Support for parks that are co-managed by Indigenous communities - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

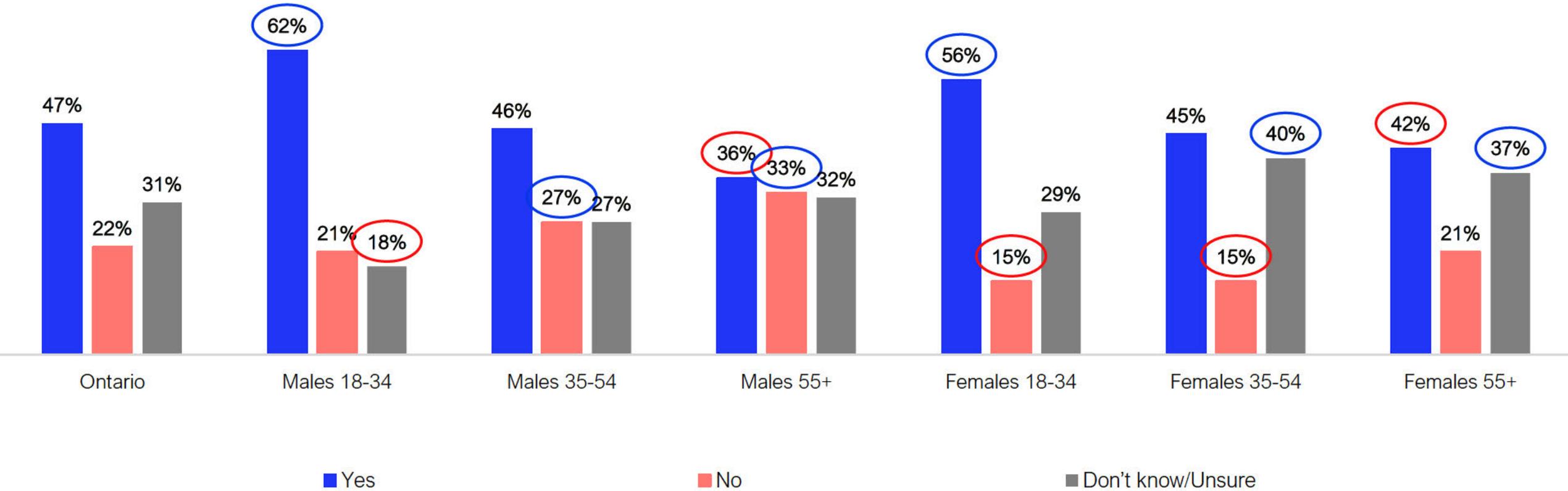
Support is very high across all party lines.



Can co-managed Indigenous parks create economic benefits? - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

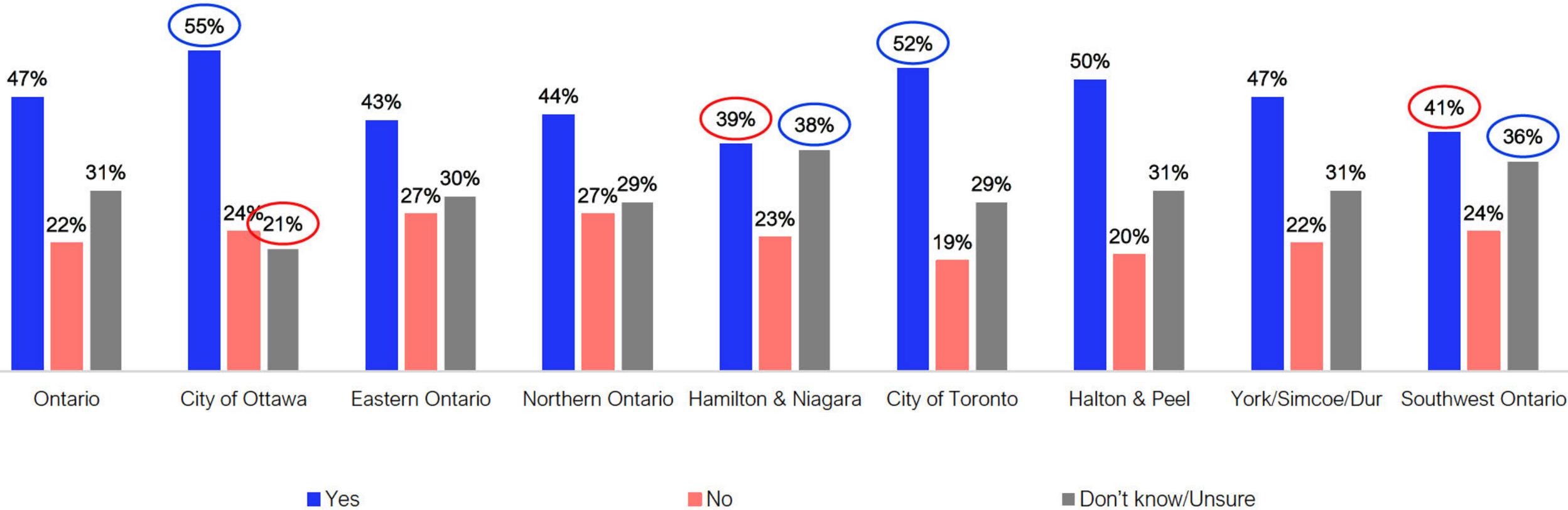
Voters 2 to 1, believe that co-managed parks can create economic benefits. Support is evenly split among males who are 55 years old and up.



Can co-managed Indigenous parks create economic benefits? - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

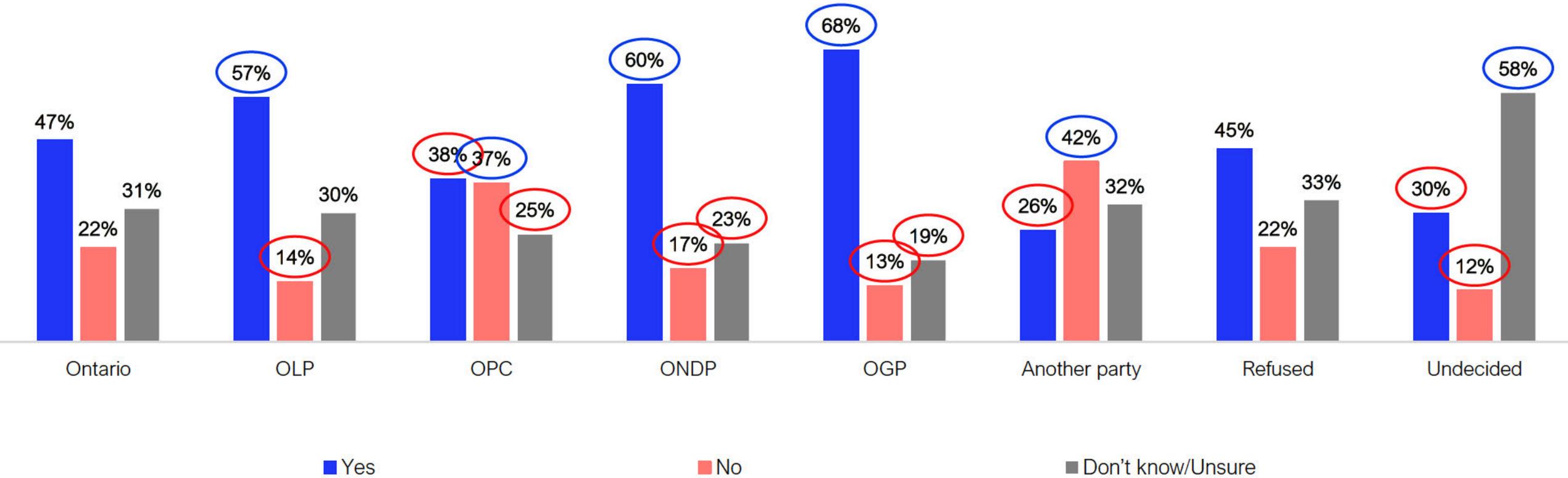
Voters breakout roughly the same way across regions of Ontario.



Can co-managed Indigenous parks create economic benefits? - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

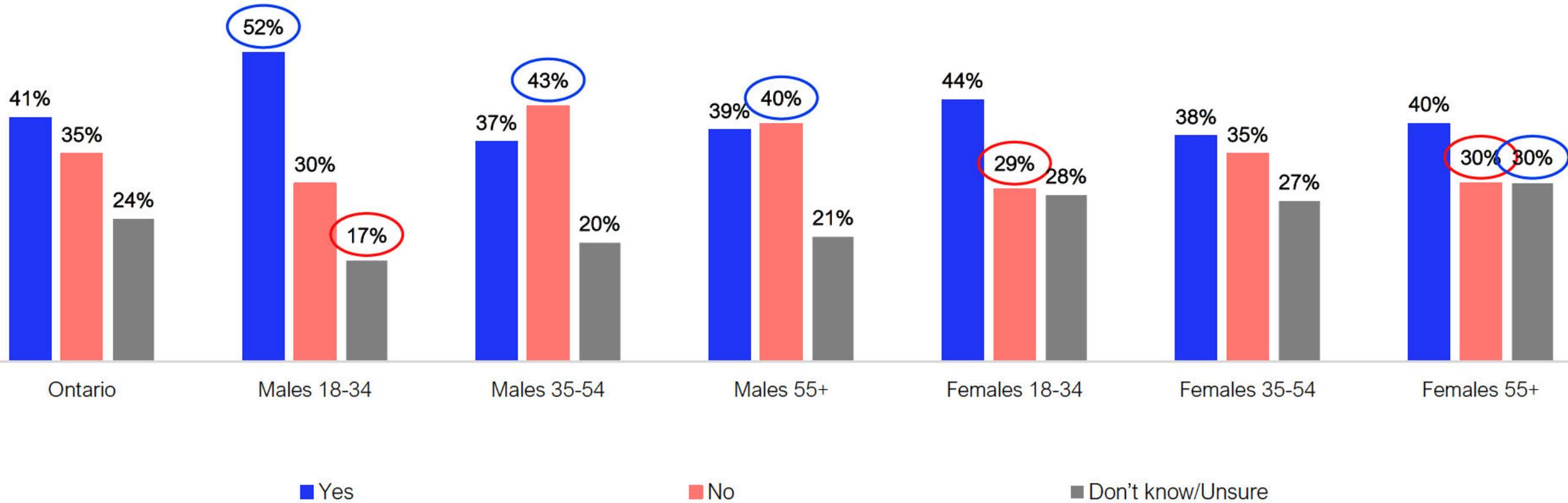
PC voters are evenly split on this question, while supporters of the OLP, ONDP and Green Party strongly believe that co-managed parks can create economic benefits for Indigenous communities.



Willingness to pay higher taxes to build and maintain more parks - Age and Gender

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

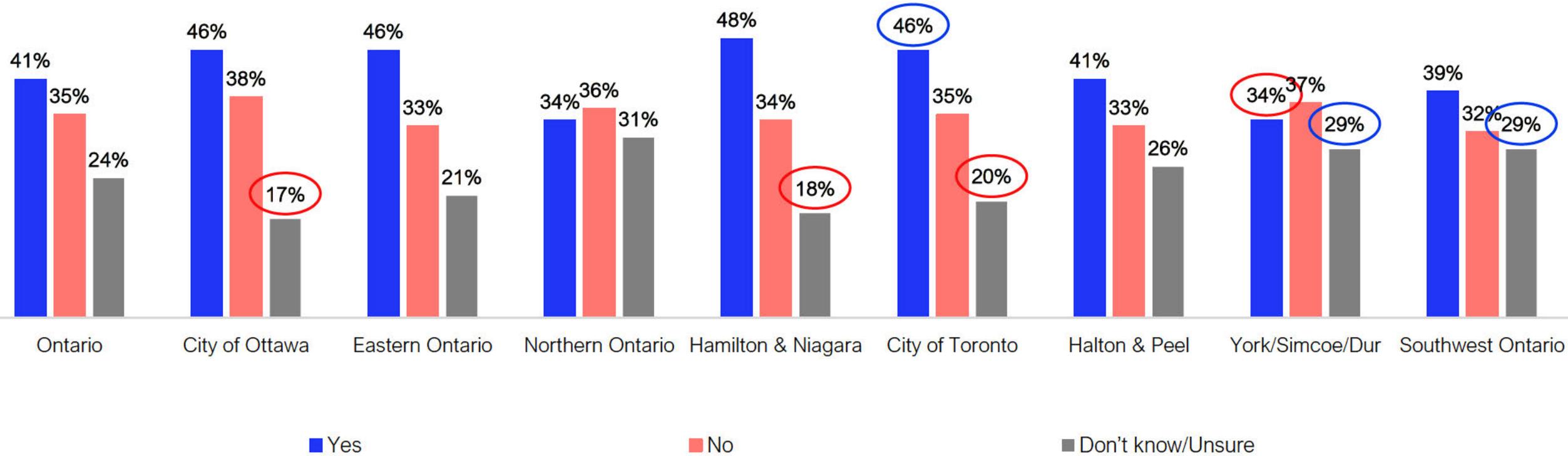
There is significant support for higher taxes to build and maintain parks and protected areas across all ages, males and females.



Willingness to pay higher taxes to build and maintain more parks - Regions

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

Opposition to higher taxes is about 1/3rd across all regions of Ontario while support is higher in most regions.



Willingness to pay higher taxes to build and maintain more parks - Ballot test

○ Significantly higher than Ontario
○ Significantly lower than Ontario

OLP, ONDP and Green Party voters (more than 2 to 1) support higher taxes for creating/building and maintaining parks and protected areas, while about half of PC voters oppose paying more taxes (1/3rd of PC voters support).

