

Albertans' Views on Referendums and Separatism

May 2026

PROBE Research



Key Findings

Albertans are more likely to feel negatively than positively about the nine referendum questions they will answer in October. When Albertans were asked to use one word to describe the nine referendum questions on the ballot this fall, fully one-half use negative words – like angry, frustrated, or unnecessary – compared to one-quarter who have something positive to say about this.

Feelings about the referendums divide sharply along partisan lines. A majority of UCP supporters feel positively about the referendum process, with some saying they are “hopeful” or praising it as “democratic.” Most NDP supporters, meanwhile, express negative feelings.

As for the current direction of the province, Albertans are more likely to say it’s moving in the wrong direction. Opinions are split along partisan and geographic lines, with majorities of UCP supporters and rural residents feeling Alberta is moving in the right direction.

If a referendum question on Alberta separation is asked, **seven in 10 Albertans say they would vote No to the province leaving Canada.** Only two in 10 would vote Yes, with one in 10 who are unsure. Support for separation is strongest among UCP supporters and rural residents.

Strong majorities of Albertans agree the separation discussion is harming the province’s economy and distracting from other issues. Roughly two-thirds of Albertans worry about foreign interference in the separation debate. And more than three-quarters of Albertans reject the idea of Alberta joining the United States if it does separate.

Overall, the UCP enjoys a seven-percentage-point lead over the NDP in vote intention. Battleground Calgary continues to live up to its name, as the UCP and NDP are neck-and-neck in support, with the NDP leading in Edmonton and the UCP up in rural parts of the province.

Methodology

Probe Research conducted an online survey with a representative sample of 1,484 Alberta adults between April 27 and May 6, 2026. This included an oversample of 598 Calgary adults.

All respondents were recruited from a national online panel (LEO). The sample has been weighted slightly by age, gender, region and educational attainment so it properly reflects Alberta's population, based on Census data. The totals calculated in this report are based on weighting back oversampled groups to the correct proportions within the overall population.

Because an online survey is a sample of convenience, no margin of error can be ascribed. For the purposes of comparison, a probabilistic sample of 1,484 would have a margin of error of ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error would be higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS, with coding/analysis of open-ended responses completed with MQO A.I. Hub, a Canadian-hosted AI platform. All coding was tested and verified with experienced human coders.

About Probe Research

Probe Research is one of Canada's leading public opinion and market research firms, serving as an indispensable insights partner to clients and communities throughout the country.

The Probe team blends the traditions of social science and journalism to help clients better understand the world around them – asking the most insightful questions and using storytelling skills to make data come to life and drive strategic decision-making.

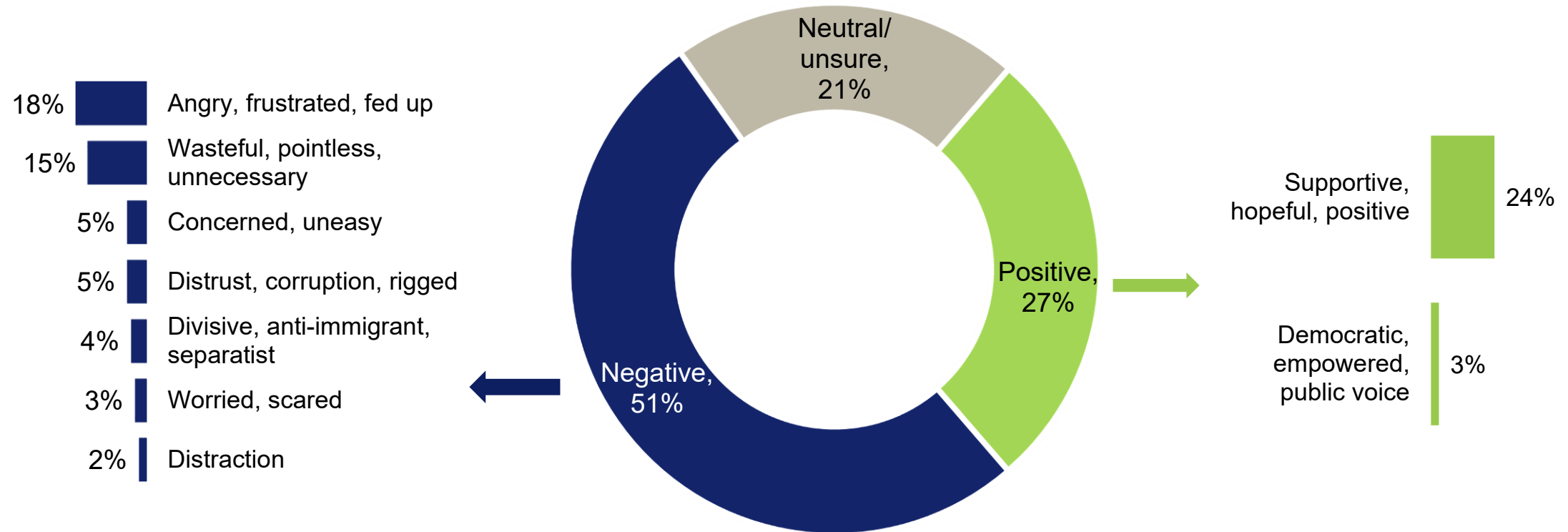
All research conducted by Probe Research is based on responses from real human respondents. Probe Research is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and complies with its Public Opinion Research Standards.

The survey instrument was designed and paid for by Probe Research.

Notes on this Report

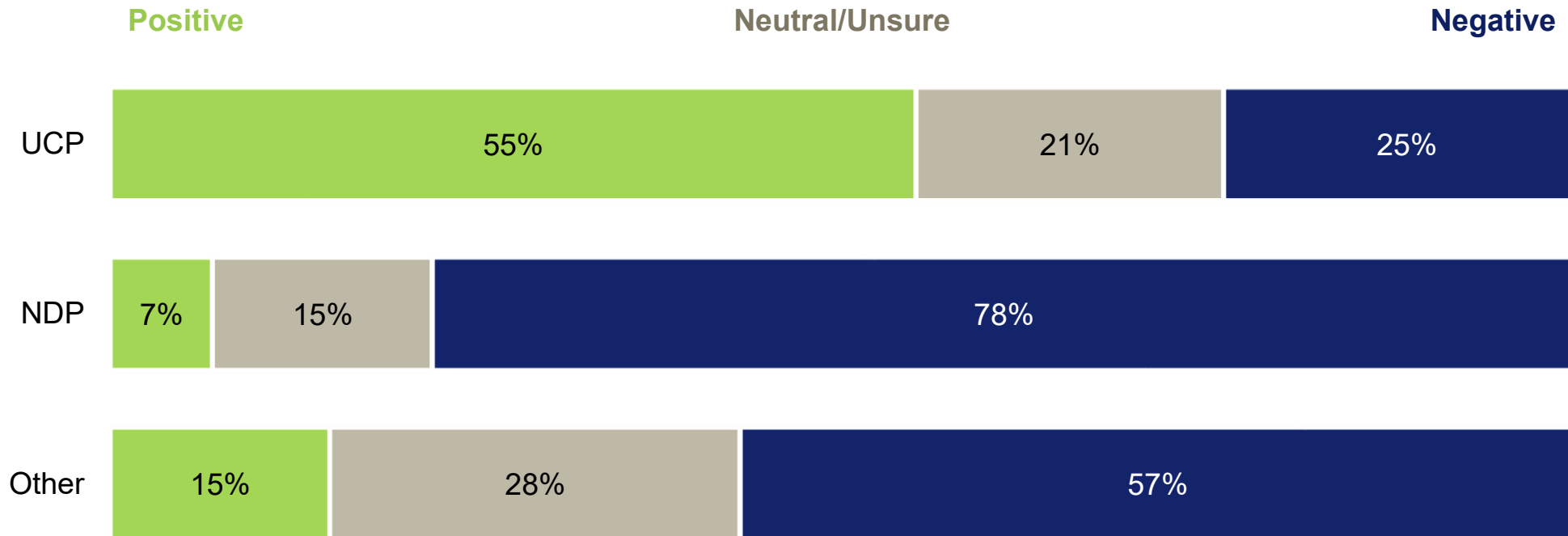
Totals in this report may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding. We may not show results of 2% or less in the graphs.

How Albertans feel about the nine October referendum questions — in their own words



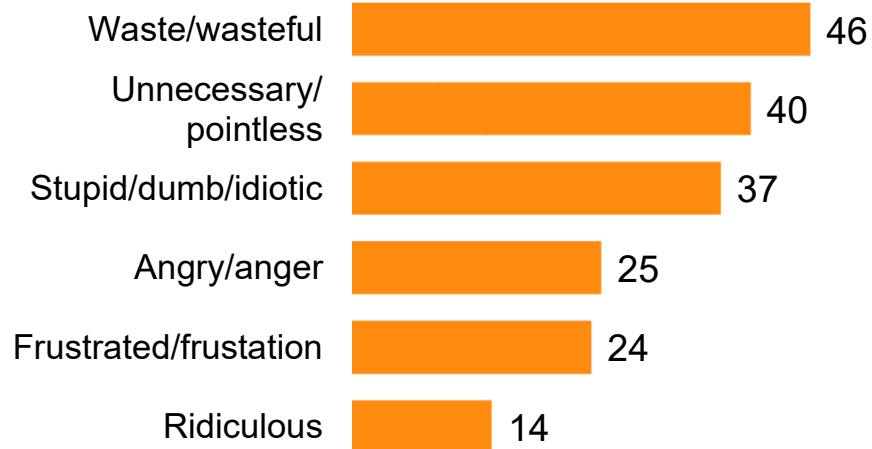
AI1. Premier Danielle Smith has announced Albertans will vote on nine referendum questions in October 2026. Most of the questions are about immigration and the Canadian constitution. When you think of this entire referendum process, what single word best describes how you feel about it? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Referendum sentiment by vote intention



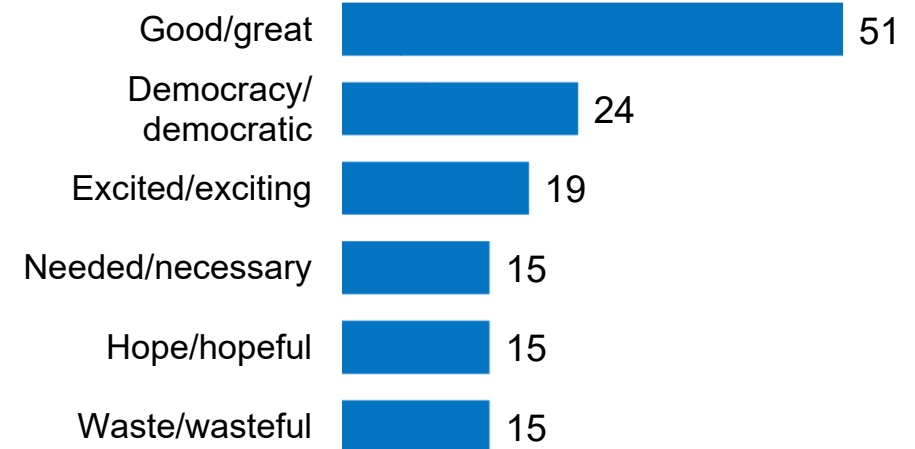
A11. Premier Danielle Smith has announced Albertans will vote on nine referendum questions in October 2026. Most of the questions are about immigration and the Canadian constitution. When you think of this entire referendum process, what single word best describes how you feel about it? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Top words used by NDP and UCP supporters



Themes:

- **Waste of time & money – a distraction from key issues**
- **Seen as an unnecessary and even “stupid” exercise**
- **General anger and frustration towards UCP government**

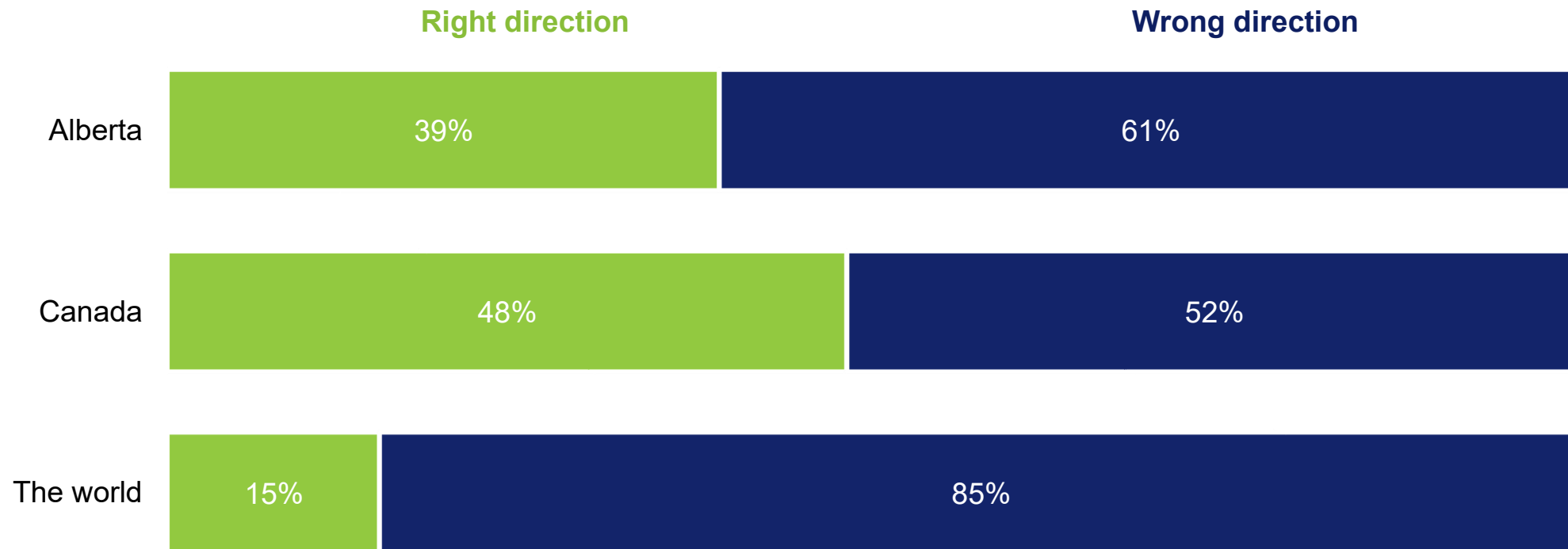


Themes:

- **Good & democratic – giving Albertans a direct voice**
- **Excitement, hope and a sense that it’s “about time”**
- **Some concerns about the cost of this exercise**

A11. Premier Danielle Smith has announced Albertans will vote on nine referendum questions in October 2026. Most of the questions are about immigration and the Canadian constitution. When you think of this entire referendum process, what single word best describes how you feel about it? (Base: Decided NDP and UCP voters, n=980)

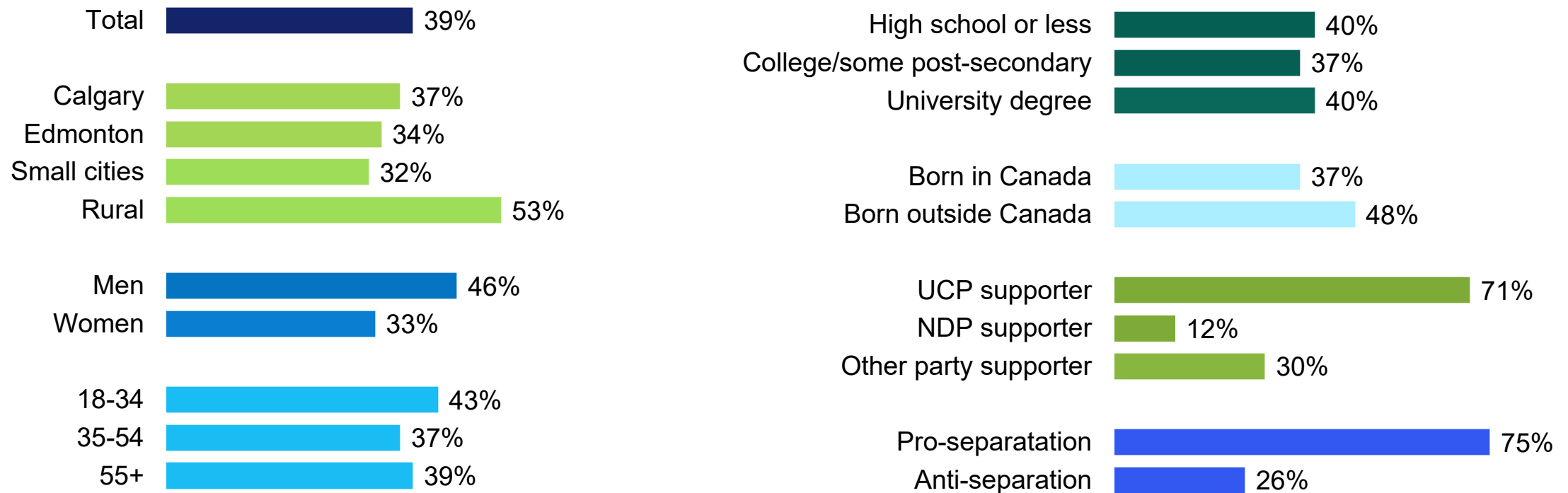
Albertans are more likely to believe their province is heading in the wrong direction



CG2. Overall, would you say things are going in the right direction or the wrong direction in ...
(Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

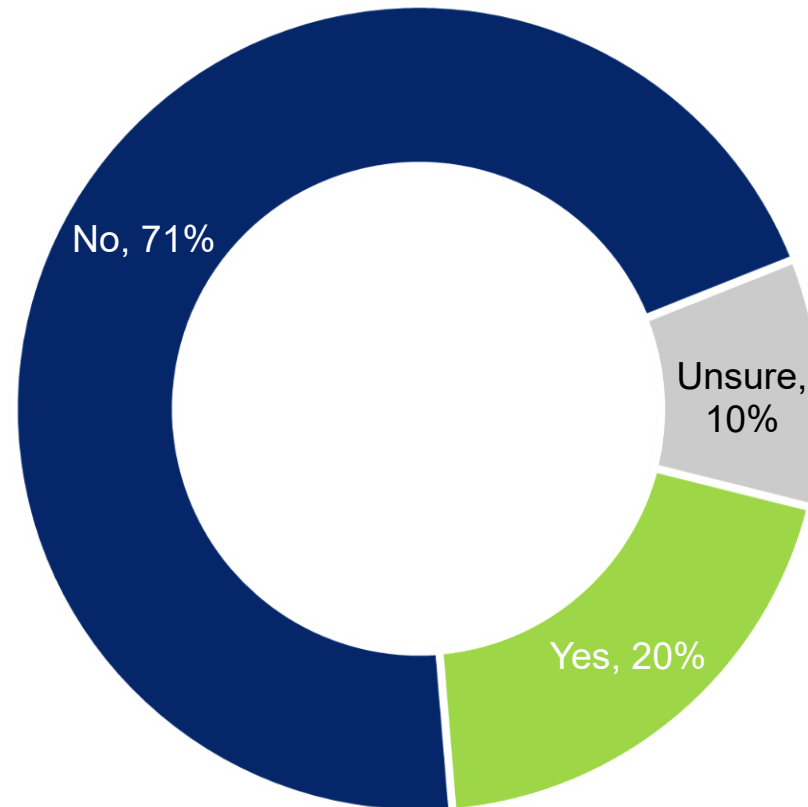
Rural Albertans are more likely to believe things are heading in the right direction

% who agree Alberta is going in the right direction



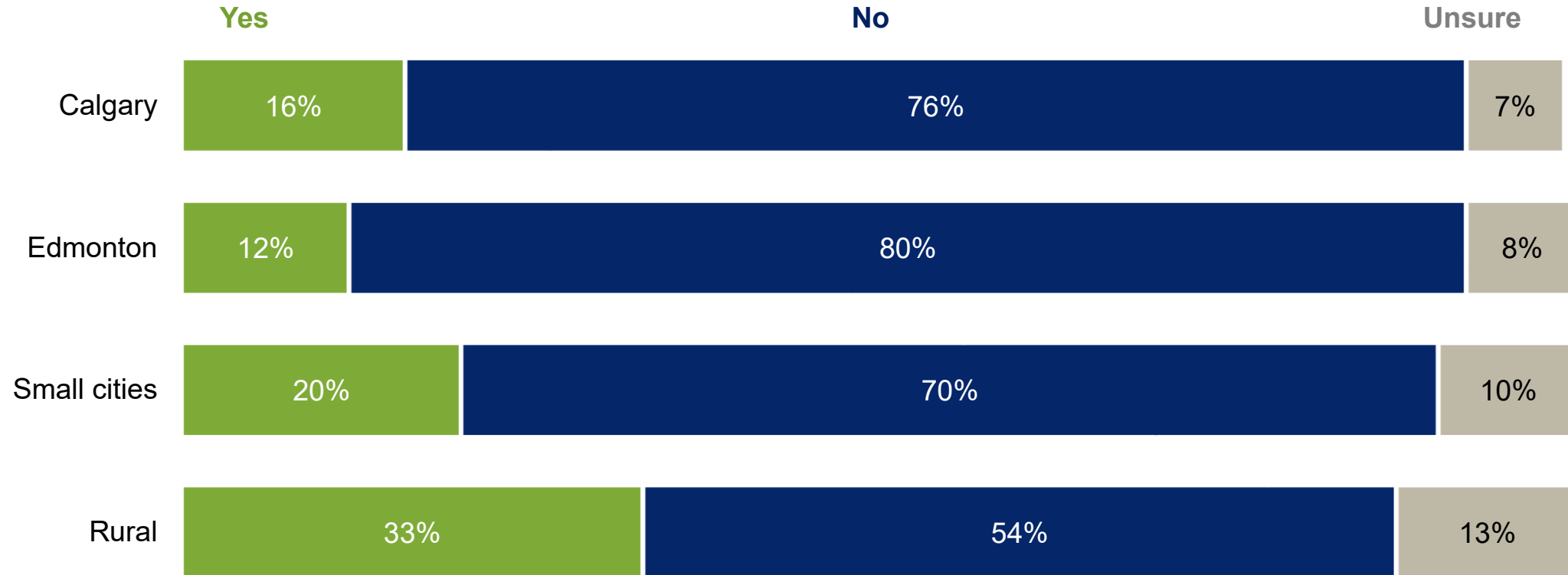
CG2b. Overall, would you say things are going in the right direction or the wrong direction in Alberta? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Seven in 10 Albertans would vote No to separating from Canada



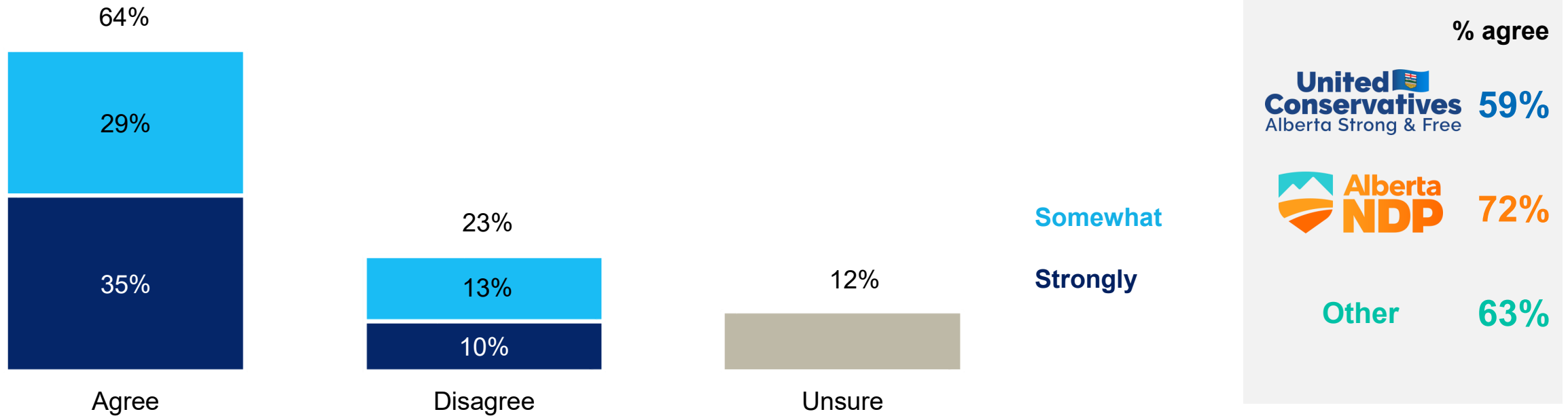
AI2. There may be a referendum held soon on Alberta separating from Canada. Based on how you feel today, would you vote Yes or No in this referendum? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Support for separation is higher in rural Alberta



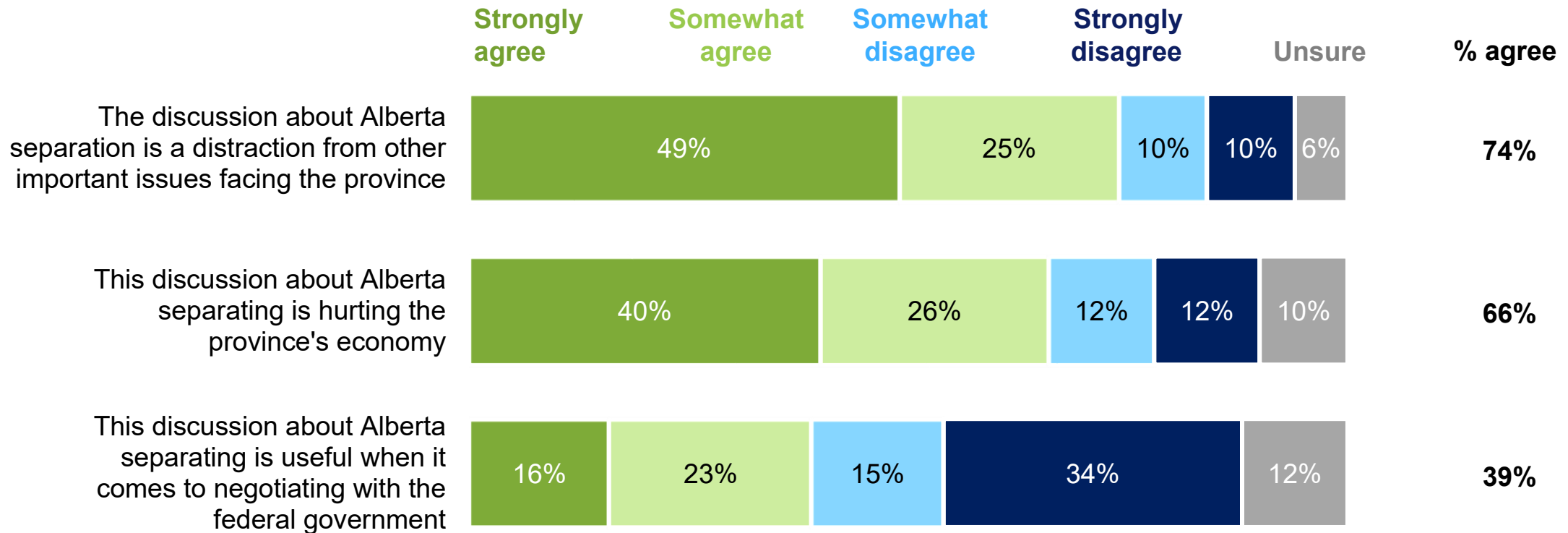
A12. There may be a referendum held soon on Alberta separating from Canada. Based on how you feel today, would you vote Yes or No in this referendum? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Nearly two-thirds of Albertans worry about other countries interfering in the separatism debate



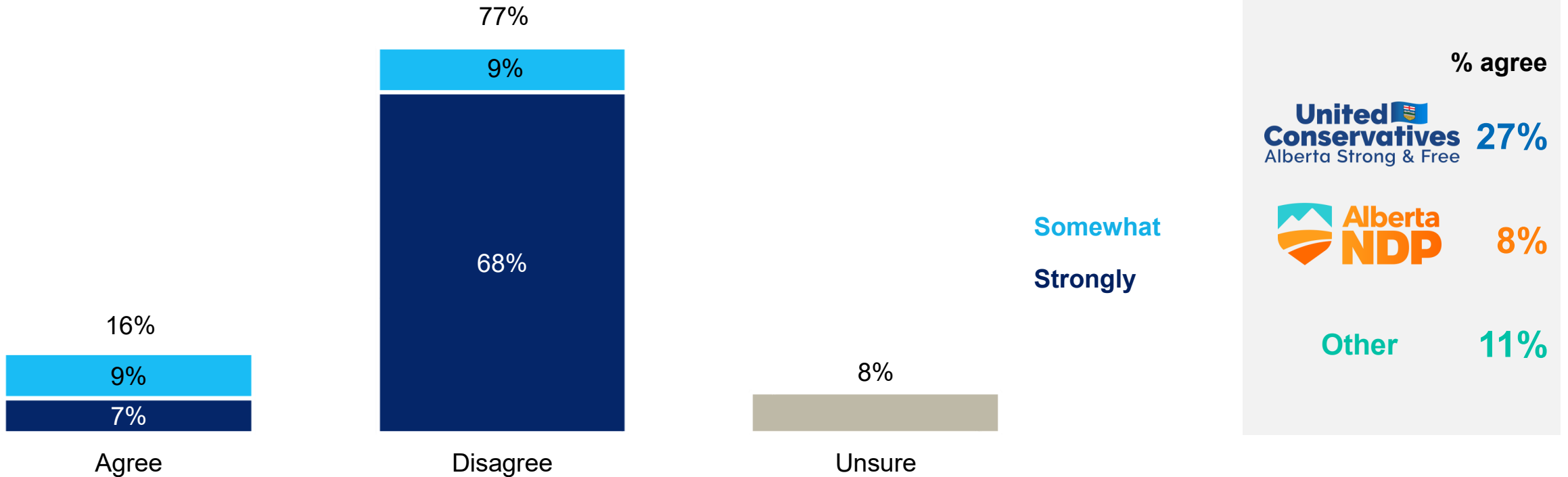
AI3d. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Alberta potentially separating from Canada:
I am worried about other countries interfering in the debate about Alberta separation. (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Separation debates are widely seen as a distraction — and not good for the economy



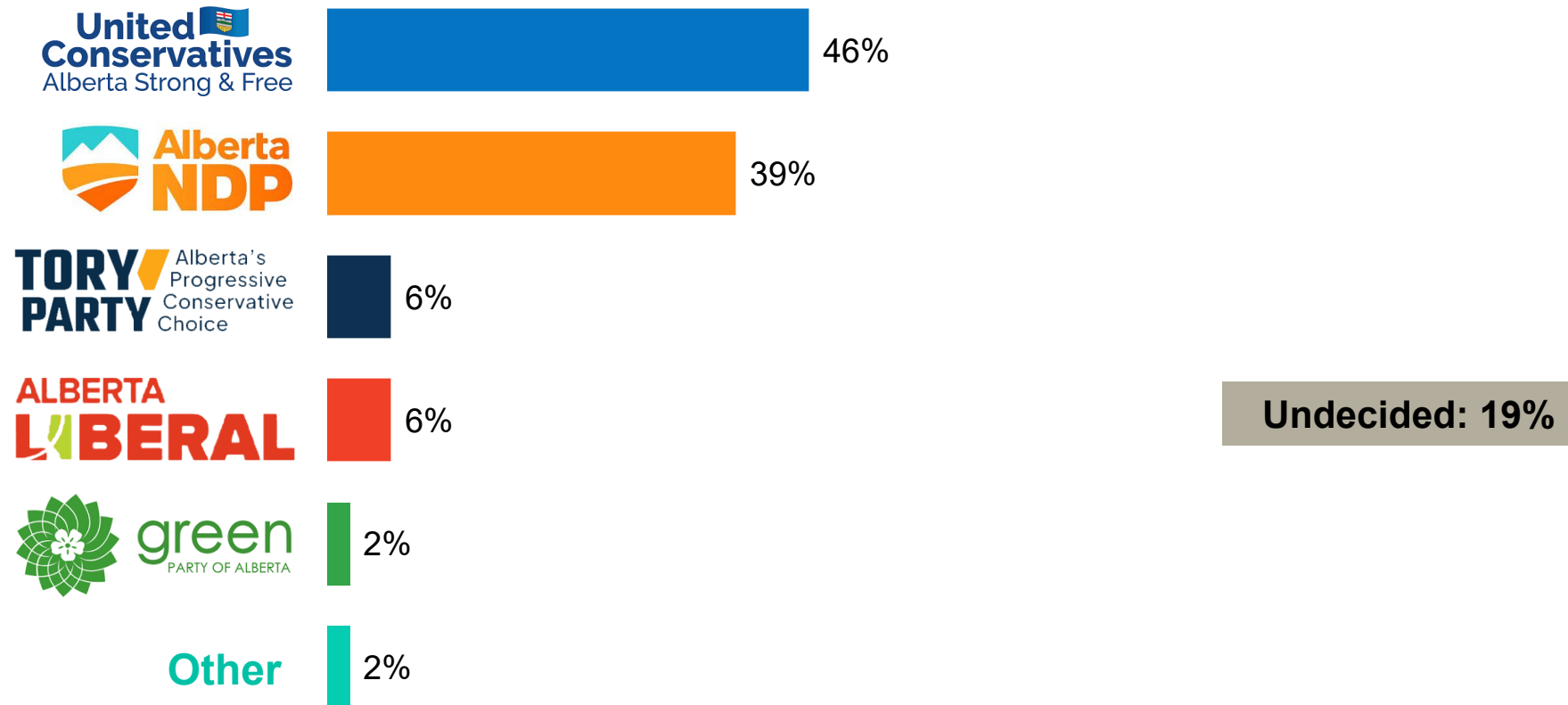
AI3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Alberta potentially separating from Canada? (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

Most Albertans reject the idea of their province joining the U.S.



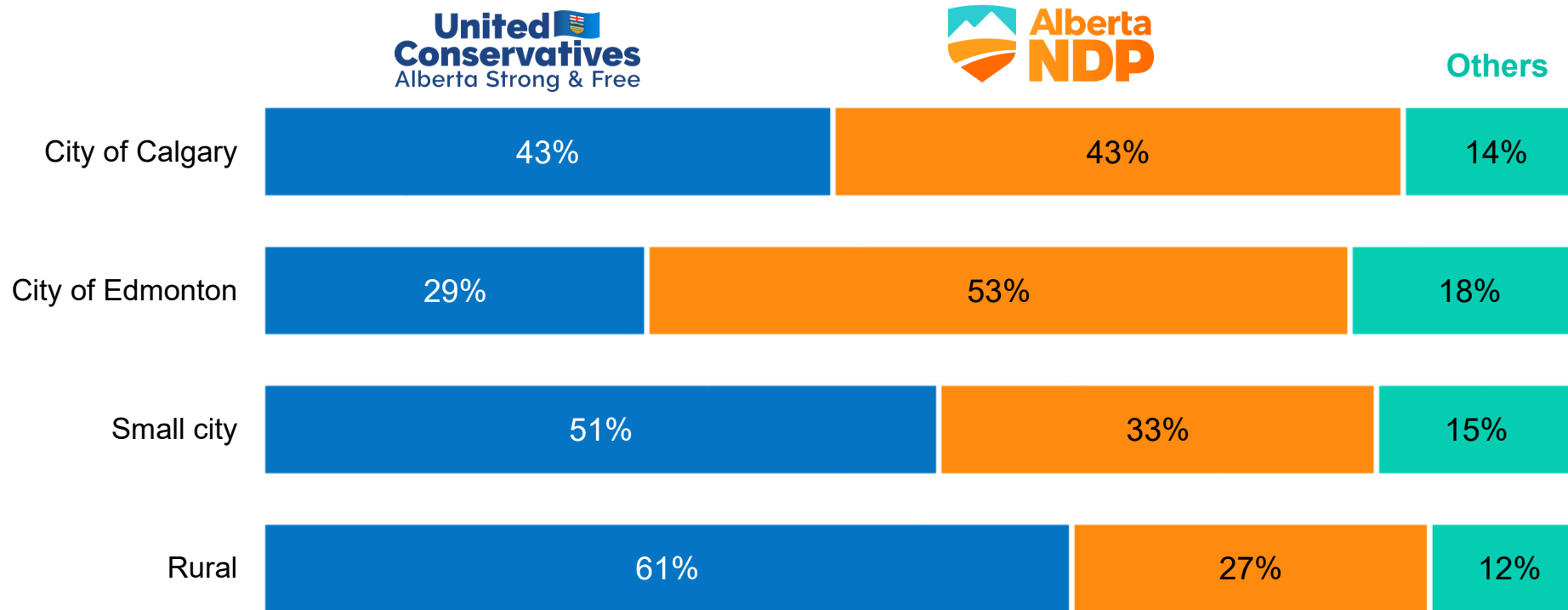
AI3a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Alberta potentially separating from Canada:
If Alberta separates from Canada, it should join the United States. (Base: All respondents, N=1,484)

The United Conservative Party holds a seven-point advantage over the Alberta NDP



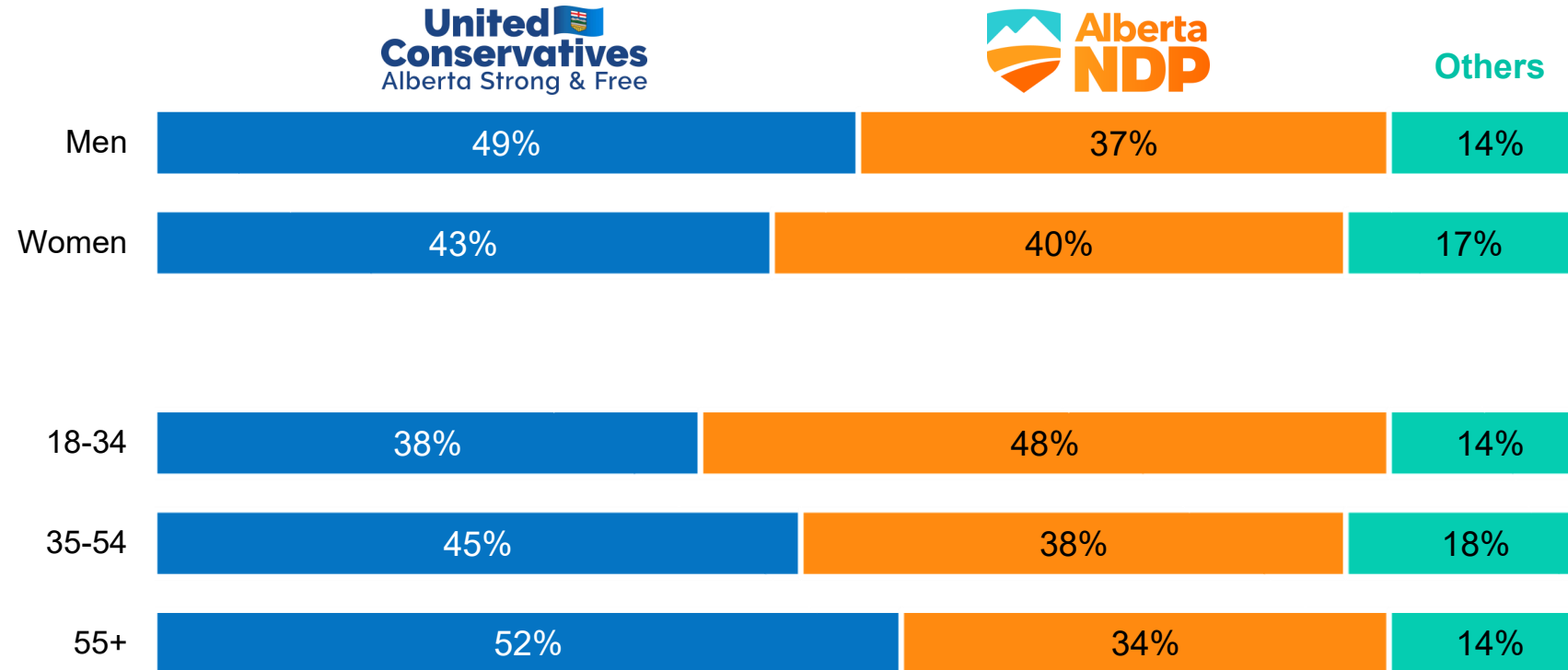
AB1/2. Thinking about provincial politics for a moment...If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which party's candidate would you be most likely to support? (Base: Decided and leaning voters, N=1,237)

Calgary remains the battleground as the UCP and NDP are tied in voter support



AB1/2. Thinking about provincial politics for a moment...If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which party's candidate would you be most likely to support? (Base: Decided and leaning voters, N=1,237)

The UCP advantage still lies among men and older voters



AB1/2. Thinking about provincial politics for a moment...If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which party's candidate would you be most likely to support? (Base: Decided and leaning voters, N=1,237)

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