CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS & CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS AFFORDABILITY OMNIBUS RESEARCH AUGUST 2026

PREPARED BY: COUNSEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS INC.

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BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Purpose: National survey of Canadians on post-secondary affordability issues and related topics.

1,622 Canadians

1,622 Canadians 18+ were surveyed between August 14-16.

The survey was conducted online using the Leger Opinion (LEO) Panel.

Results are weighted for age, gender, and region with targets set out in the most recent Census.

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89% of Canadians anticipate an impact on students and families if grants are eliminated or reduced

Key Insights

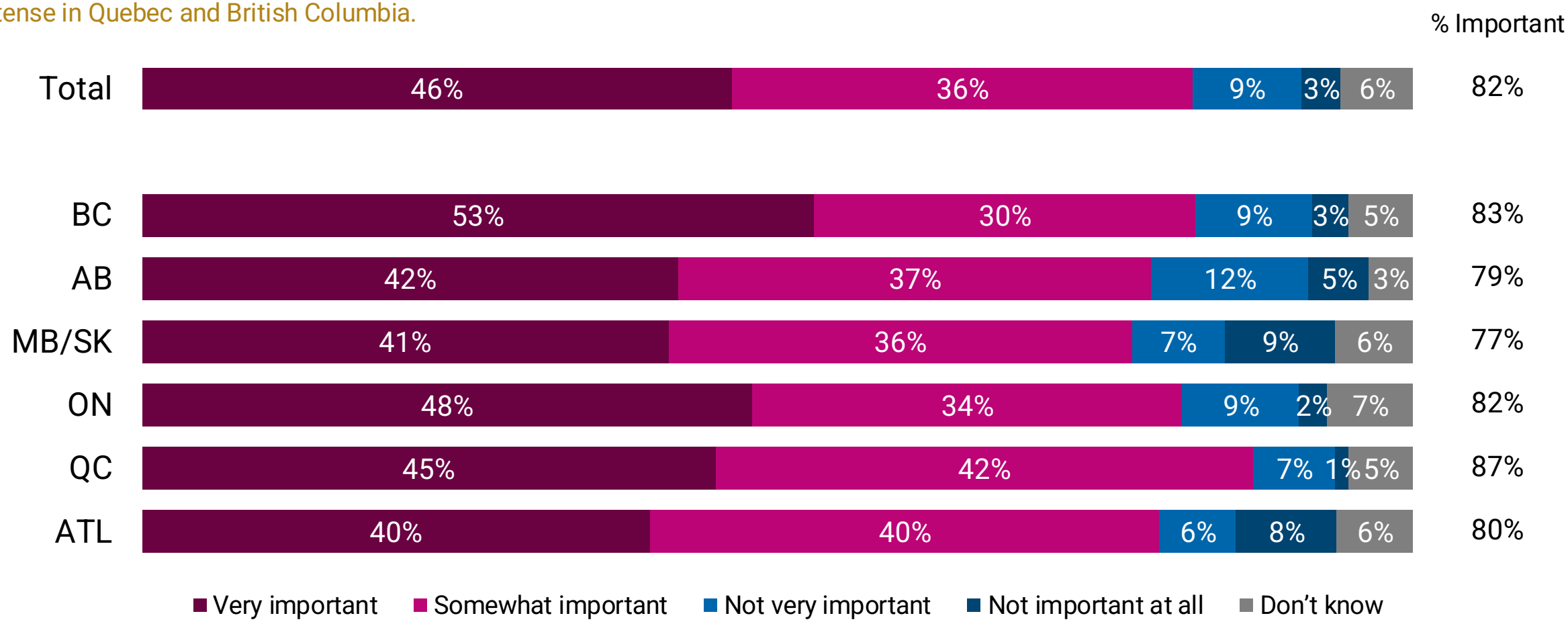
1 **Access to post-secondary education is a strongly entrenched national value.** Canadians widely believe that qualified students should have equal access to education regardless of financial circumstances, and there is widespread agreement that post-secondary grants are a good investment of public funds.

2 **Canadians largely recognize that the affordability of post-secondary education is under threat.** Most feel concern about students being able to afford education in the future, and believe that reducing federal grants will be a strain on students, their families, and the post-secondary system overall.

3 **Reductions in grant funding are misaligned with Canadians' views.** Very few think that financial support for students is more than enough, and most expect students to encounter difficulties without access to grants.

IMPORTANCE OF POST-SECONDARY AFFORDABILITY

Access to post-secondary education is important to a vast majority of Canadians in all regions, and importance is especially intense in Quebec and British Columbia.



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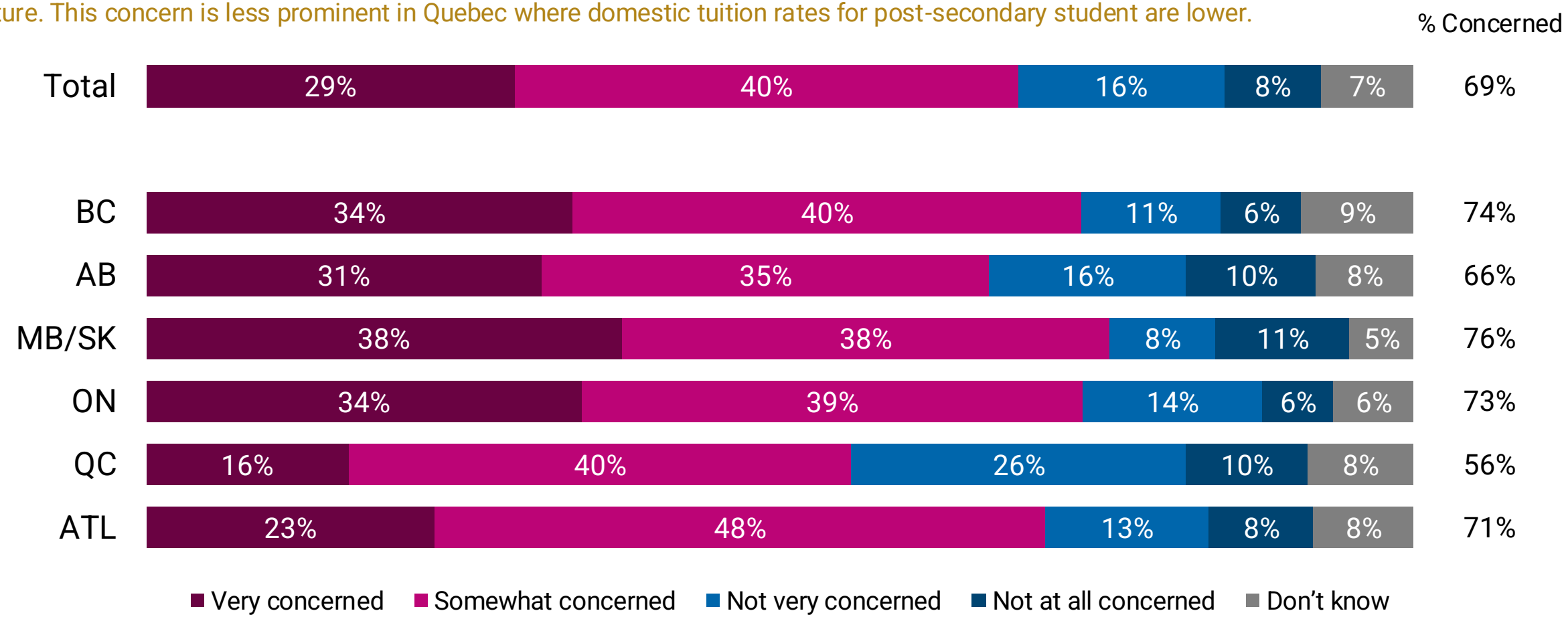
Q: How important is it to you, if at all, that all qualified students in Canada have equal access to post-secondary education, regardless of their financial situation?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

CONCERN ABOUT POST-SECONDARY AFFORDABILITY

More than two in three Canadians say they are concerned about students being able afford post-secondary education in the future. This concern is less prominent in Quebec where domestic tuition rates for post-secondary student are lower.

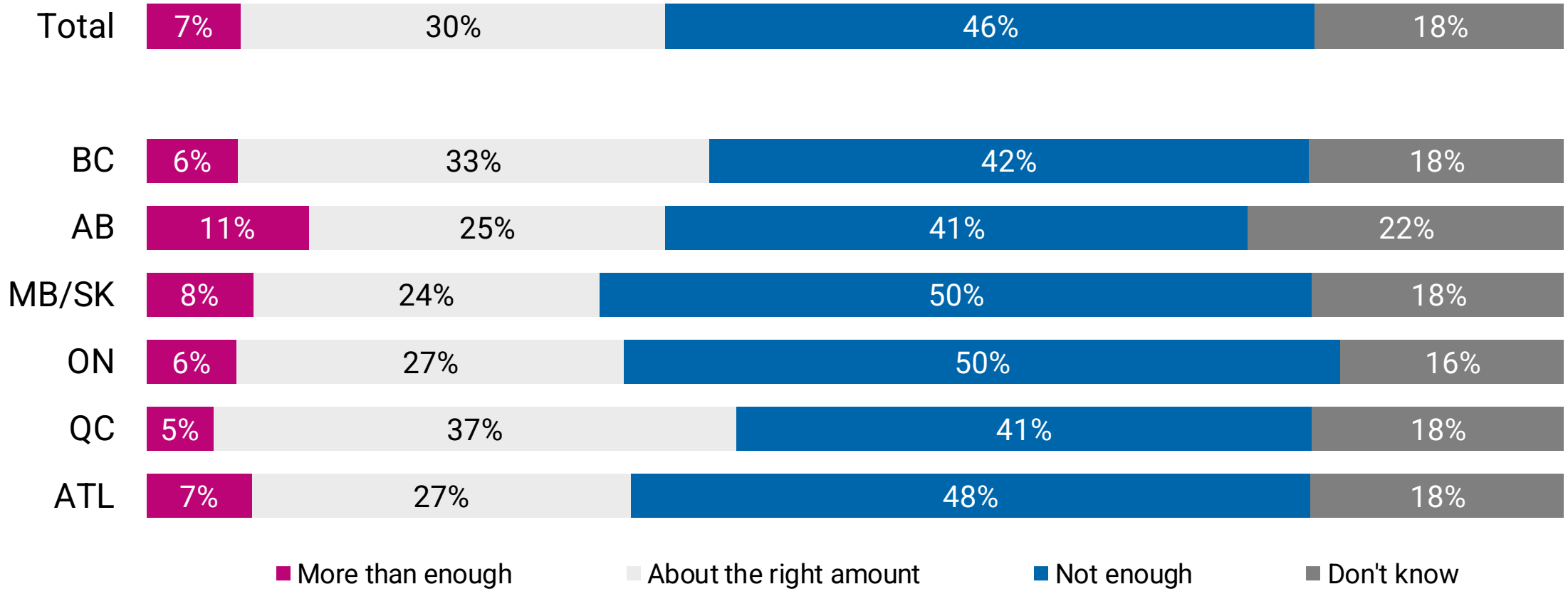


COUNSEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Q: How concerned are you, if at all, about whether students in Canada will be able to afford post-secondary education in the future?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

VIEWS ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Almost half of Canadians say that financial support available to Canadian students is **not enough**.



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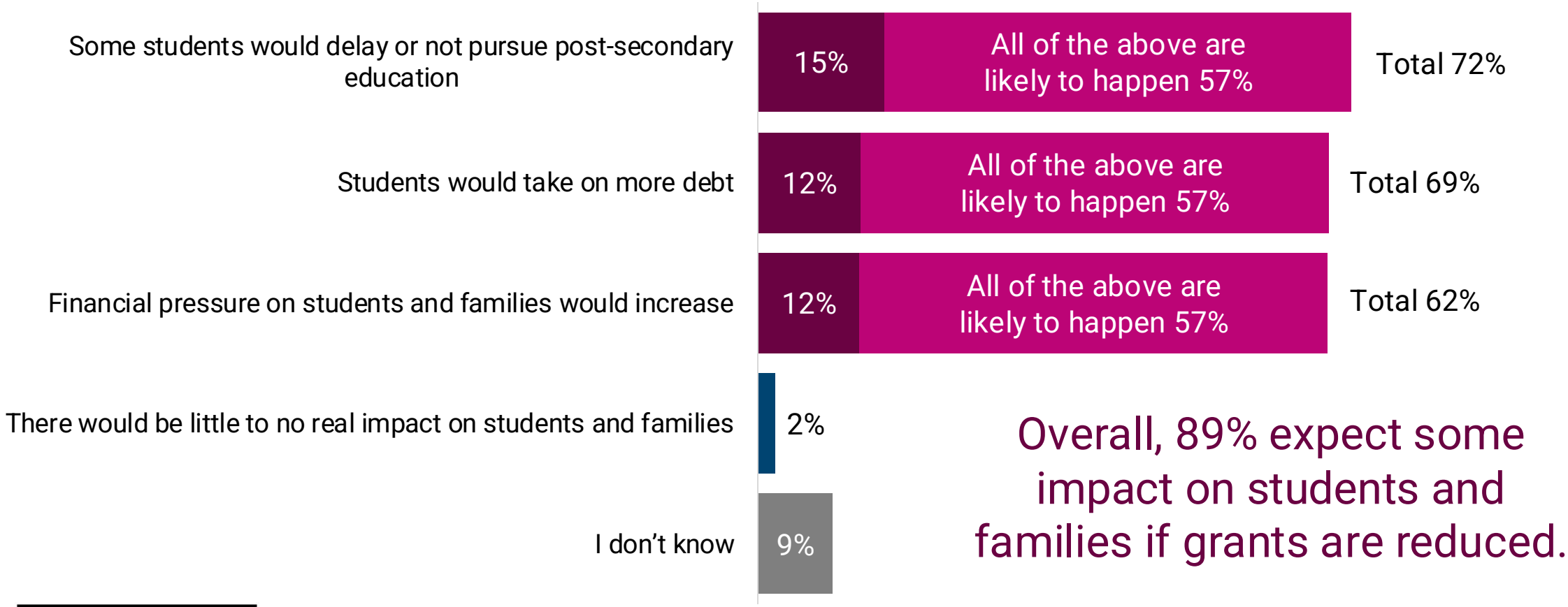
Q: Do you feel that financial support available to Canadian post-secondary students is…
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

CONSEQUENCES OF GRANT REDUCTION / ELIMINATION

If federal student grants are reduced or eliminated, most Canadians anticipate consequences like delayed post-secondary education, higher debt, and more financial pressure. Over half expect all three to happen.



Overall, 89% expect some impact on students and families if grants are reduced.

COUNSEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Q: If federal student grants were reduced or eliminated, which of the following do you think would be likely to happen, if any?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

CONSEQUENCES OF GRANT REDUCTION / ELIMINATION

Most regions are similar in their views of the consequences should federal grants be reduced, but those in Manitoba and Saskatchewan are more likely to say that students would delay or not pursue post-secondary education, specifically.

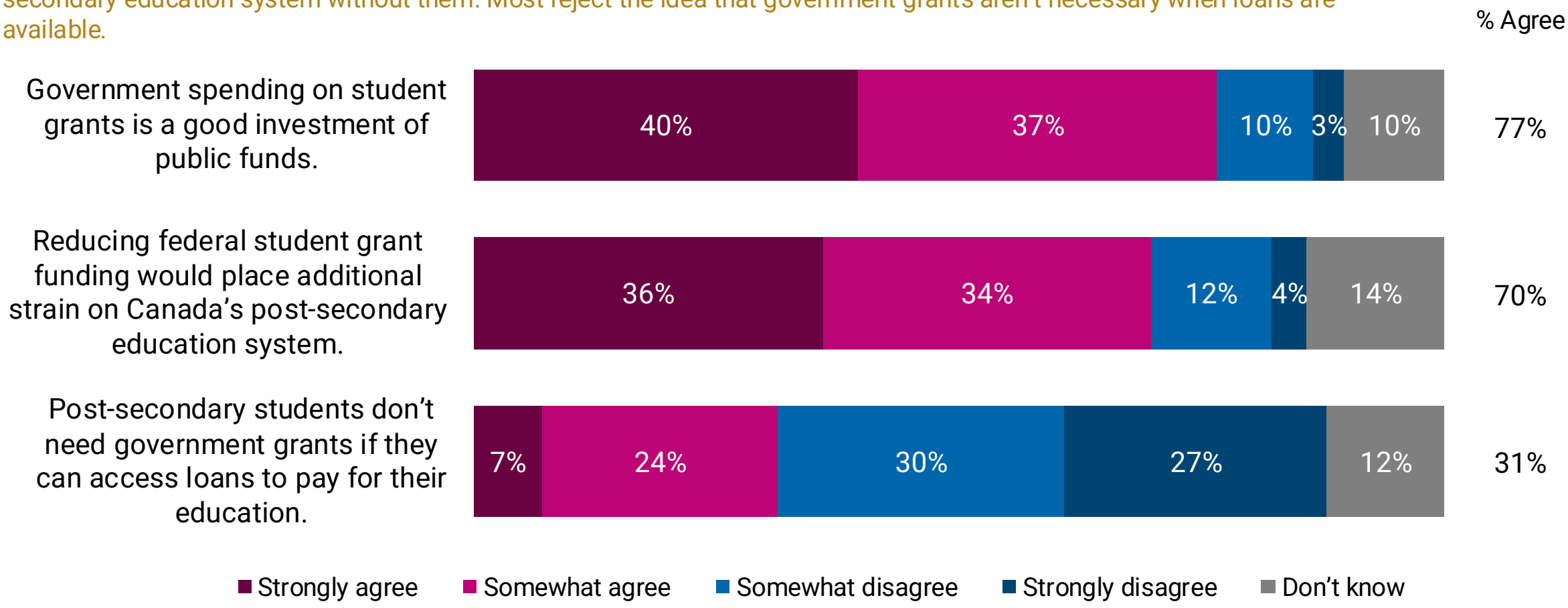
	TOTAL	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	ATL
Some students would delay or not pursue post-secondary education	15%	15%	15%	22%	13%	18%	15%
Students would take on more debt	12%	7%	11%	17%	12%	14%	15%
Financial pressure on students and families would increase	12%	8%	11%	7%	16%	12%	10%
All the above would be likely to happen	57%	65%	63%	45%	57%	54%	52%
There would be little to no real impact on students and families	2%	2%	2%	6%	1%	3%	5%
I don't know	9%	11%	8%	10%	9%	8%	11%

COUNSEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Q: If federal student grants were reduced or eliminated, which of the following do you think would be likely to happen, if any?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING

A strong majority agree that student grants are a good investment of public funds, and most expect additional strain on the post-secondary education system without them. Most reject the idea that government grants aren't necessary when loans are available.



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Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements…?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).

VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING (% AGREE)

Looking across regions, views on government funding of post-secondary education are mostly consistent.

	TOTAL	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	ATL
Government spending on student grants is a good investment of public funds.	77%	79%	73%	75%	75%	81%	75%
Reducing federal student grant funding would place additional strain on Canada's post-secondary education system.	70%	70%	69%	66%	71%	68%	73%
Post-secondary students don't need government grants if they can access loans to pay for their education.	31%	27%	35%	33%	35%	25%	35%

COUNSEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements…?
Base: Canadians (n=1,622).