LIAISON STRATÉGIES

Hockey in Canada

National Survey

October 22, 2026

Player retention and the Hellebuyck dispute

No majority when return to the lineup is offered

39% / 35%

Trade / return

Followers, with return offered (Q7)

39% choose a trade, 35% return pending an acceptable offer, and 19% a paid holdout.

58% / 30%

Trade / paid holdout

Followers, restricted choice (Q8)

58% choose a trade and 30% a paid holdout when return is not offered.

65%

Canada, all respondents

Support extra cap room

National support for extra cap room in higher-tax locations is 65%, versus 25% opposed.

Q7 and Q8 offer different choices, not changes over time. Q7 assumes willingness and eligibility to play. Both trade options accept less than the Jets consider fair value. Cap views follow a balanced tax briefing.

Survey method and sample

1,500

Canadians aged 18+

±3.04

percentage points, 19/20

October 19 to October 20, 2026

Field dates

Sampling and weighting

Random sample using Interactive Voice Recording (IVR), with random digit dialling to landline and cellular networks.

Weighted by age, gender and region to 2021 Census targets.

Manitoba oversample

527 interviews in Manitoba, including 350 in Winnipeg CMA and 177 elsewhere in the province.

Weighted back to Manitoba's national population share.

Followers: very/somewhat interested in Q1. Non-followers: all other responses, including unsure.

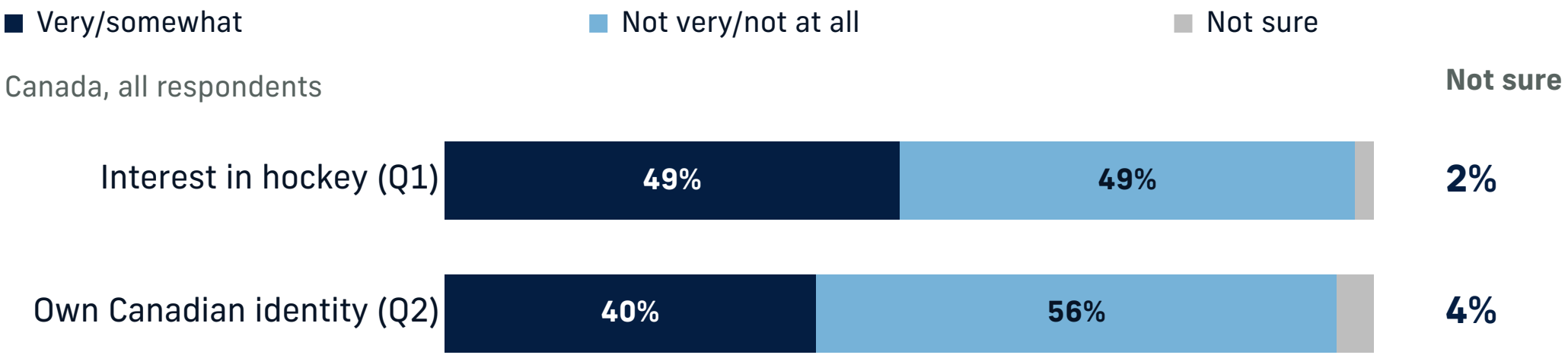
Subsample margins of error are higher. Figures may not total 100% due to rounding. Combined figures sum rounded percentages.

Source: Liaison Strategies National Survey, October 19 to October 20, 2026.

Hockey interest and Canadian identity

Q1. How interested are you in hockey?

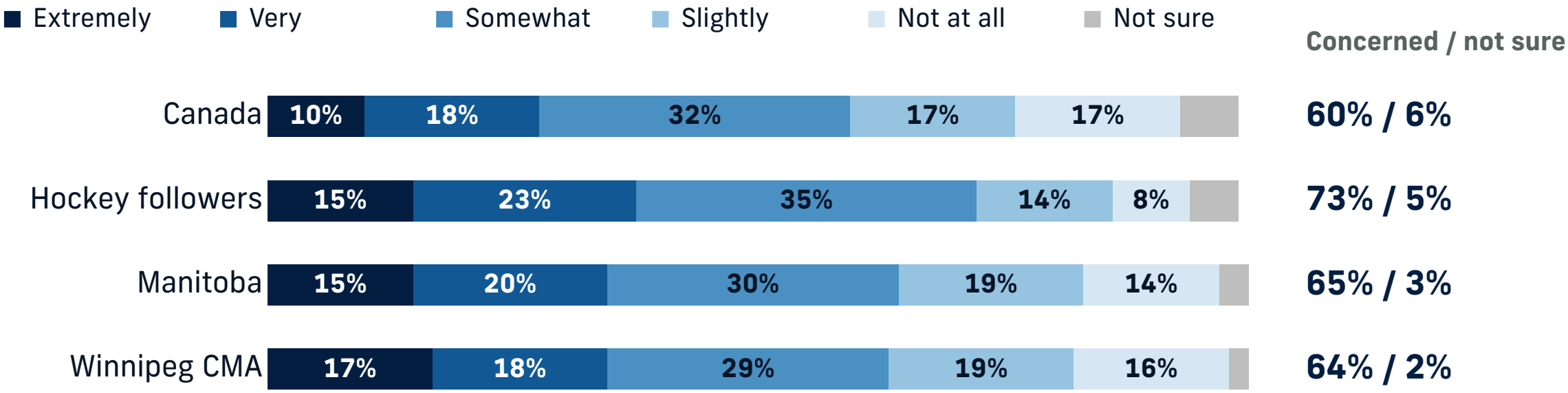
Q2. How important is hockey to your own sense of Canadian identity?



Among hockey followers, 58% say hockey matters to their own Canadian identity.

73% of followers are concerned about player retention

Q4. How concerned are you about Canadian NHL teams' ability to keep their best American players?



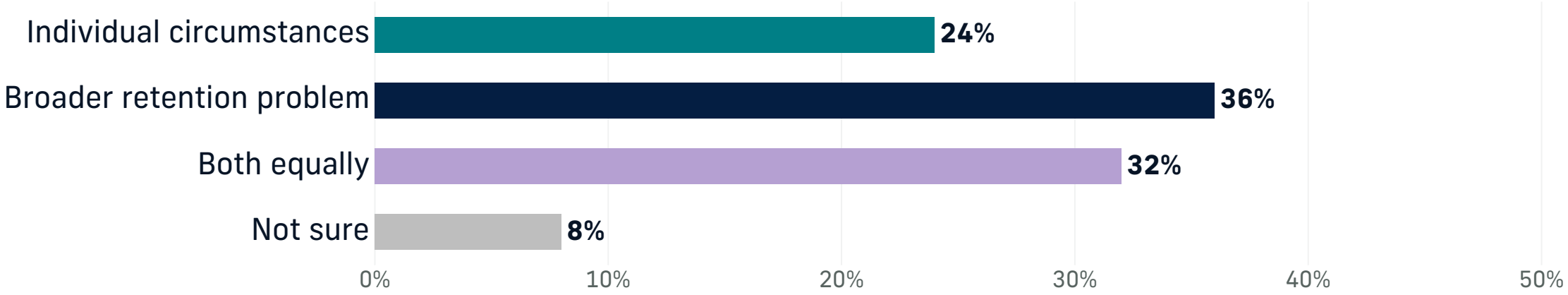
Concerned = extremely + very + somewhat. Manitoba includes Winnipeg CMA.

36% see a broader retention problem

Some prominent American NHL players have sought moves away from Canadian teams, while other American stars have chosen to stay.

Q9. Which statement comes closer to your view?

Canada, all respondents

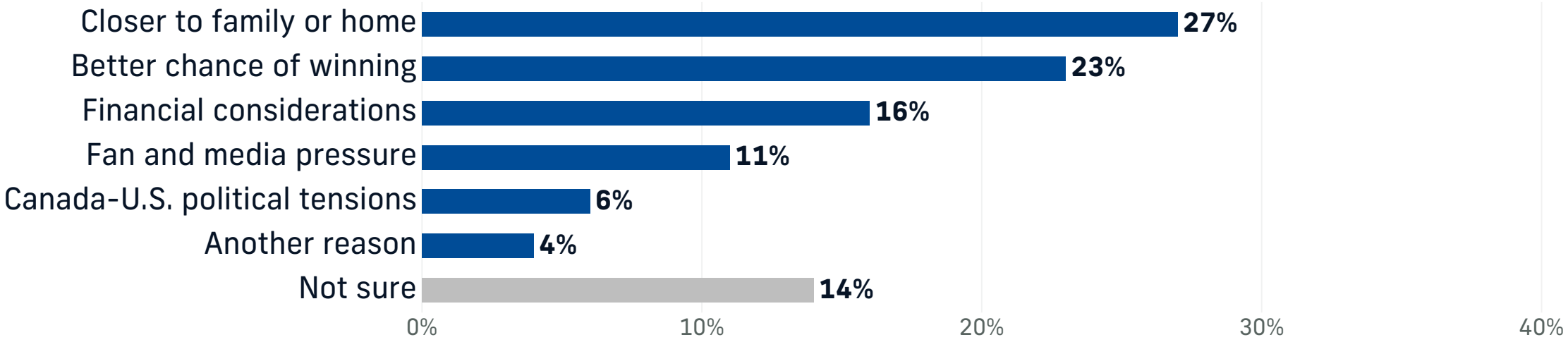


32% give equal weight to individual circumstances and a broader retention problem.

Family and winning lead perceived reasons for leaving

Q10. Which of the following do you think is usually the biggest reason American NHL players seek to leave Canadian teams?

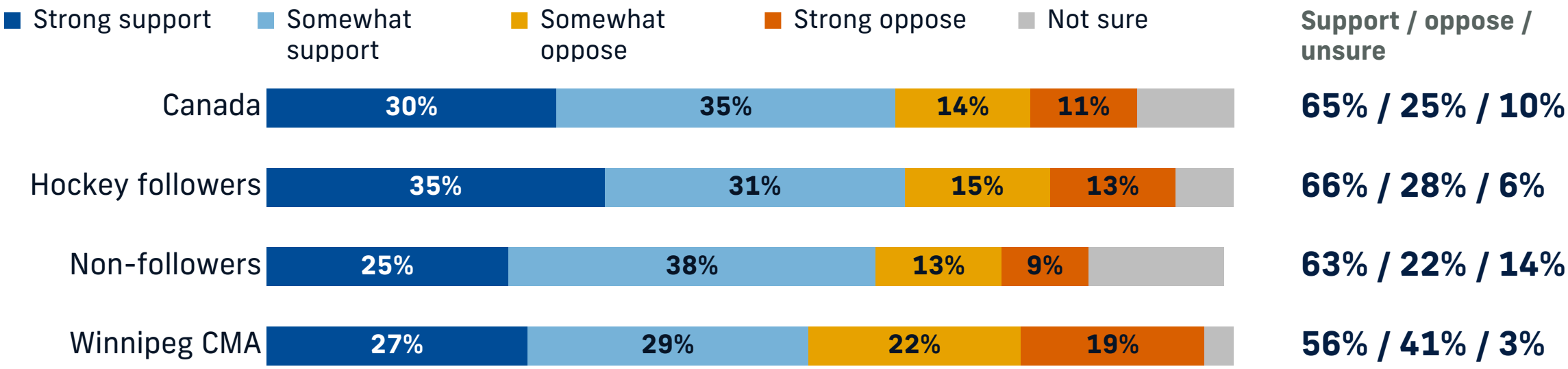
Canada, all respondents



6% select political tensions. The question measures perceptions of player motives.

65% support extra cap room in higher-tax locations

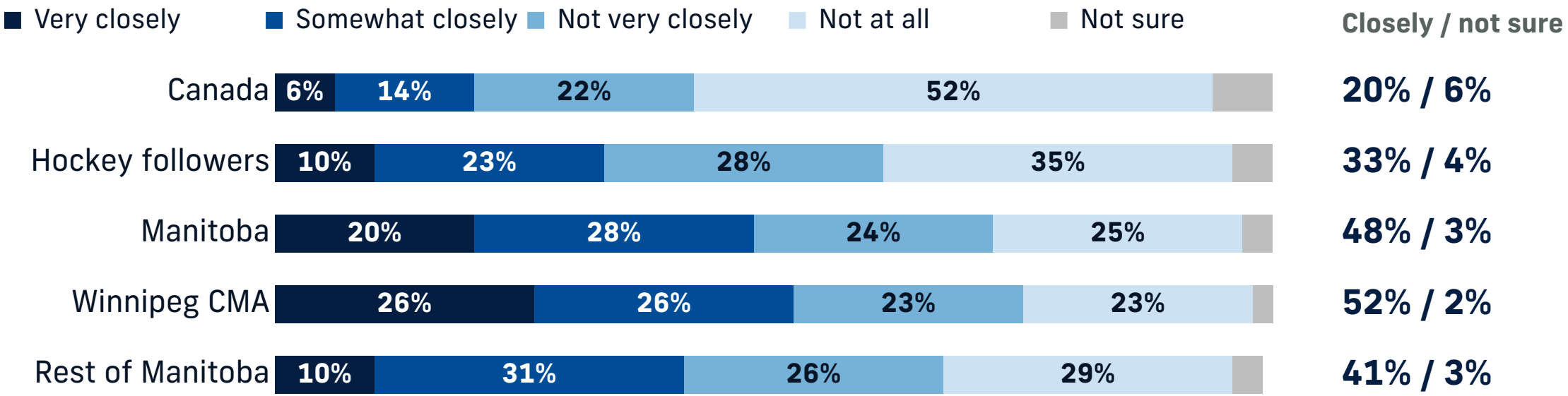
Q12. Do you support or oppose allowing NHL teams in higher-tax locations to spend more under the salary cap to account for differences in the income taxes players pay?



Extra room could offset take-home pay differences; equal limits keep the cap consistent. Respondents heard both arguments (appendix, page 17). The proposal changes cap room, not tax rates.

Winnipeg follows the dispute more closely

Q5. How closely have you followed news about the dispute between goaltender Connor Hellebuyck and the Winnipeg Jets over his request to be traded?

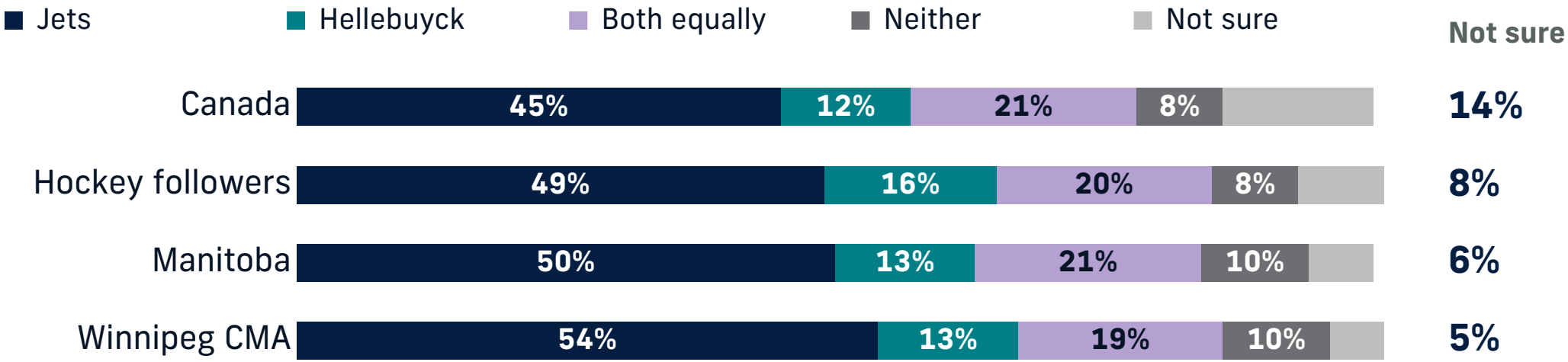


Closely = very + somewhat closely. Manitoba includes Winnipeg CMA.

Sympathy is more with the Jets than with Hellebuyck

Q6. Taking this information into account, where do your sympathies lie?

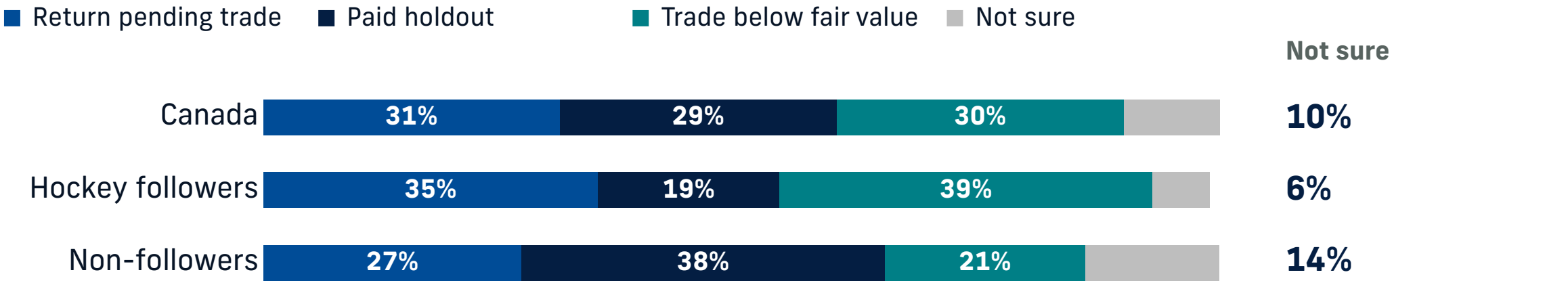
Respondents heard about his trade request, family reasons, contract, unpaid suspension and reported willingness to return, as well as the Jets' wish for a suitable return. Full wording: appendix, page 18.



Followers: 49% sympathize more with the Jets. Trade preference is 39% with return offered (Q7, page 11), versus 58% under the restricted choice (Q8, page 13). These are separate aggregate answers.

Followers split when return is offered

Q7. If Hellebuyck is willing and eligible to play but still wants a trade, which approach do you think the Winnipeg Jets should take?



Return: willing and eligible to play, while waiting for an acceptable trade offer.

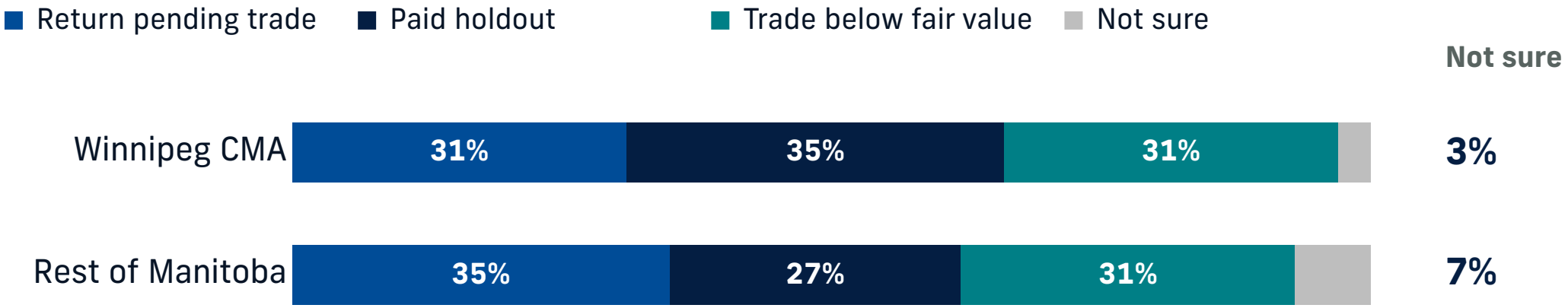
Paid holdout: refuse a trade, keep him out for the rest of the contract and keep paying him to discourage similar demands.

Trade: accept the best available offer, even below the Jets' view of fair value.

Full response wording: appendix, page 19. No option has a national majority.

Winnipeg is divided when return is offered

Q7. If Hellebuyck is willing and eligible to play but still wants a trade, which approach do you think the Winnipeg Jets should take?



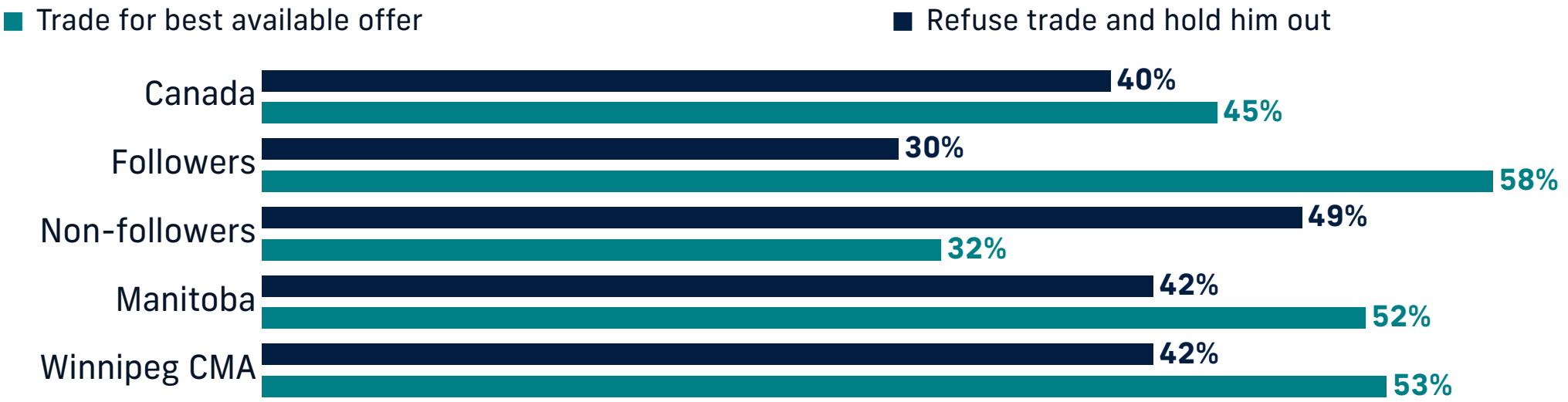
Winnipeg: 35% choose a paid holdout, 31% return and 31% a trade. No option has a majority.

Unweighted n=350 in Winnipeg CMA and n=177 elsewhere in Manitoba. Interpret local differences cautiously. Full options: appendix, page 19.

Followers prefer a trade to a paid holdout

Q8. If the choice were limited to the following two approaches, which would you prefer?

Return is not offered. Choose only a trade or a paid holdout with continued pay.

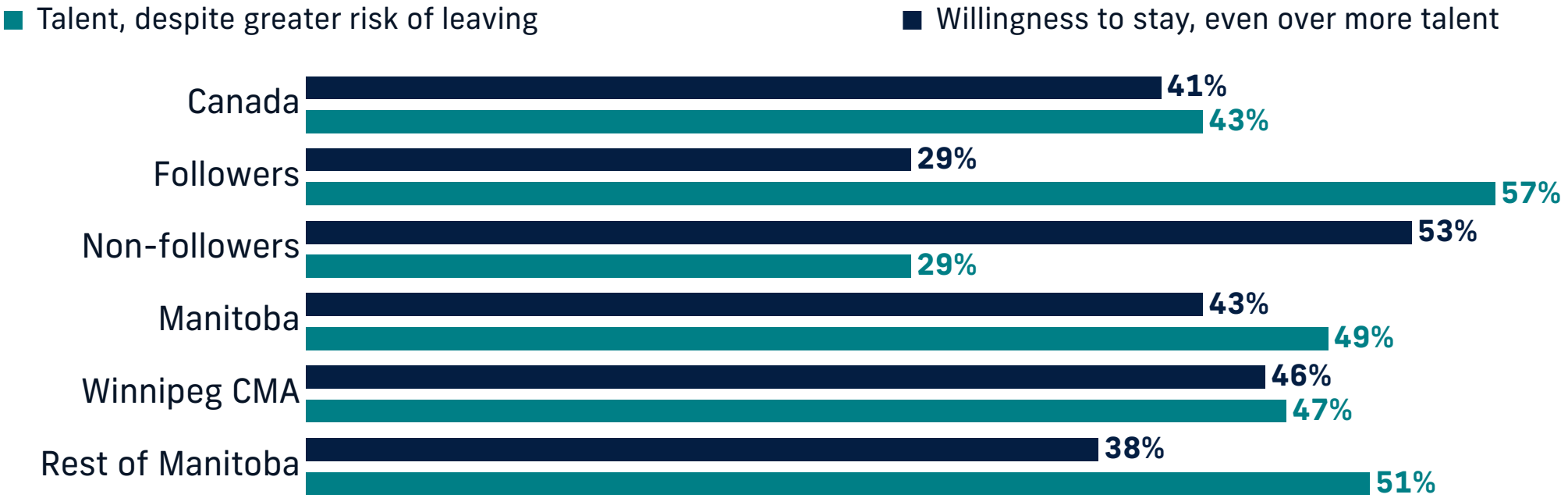


Trade: accept less than the Jets consider fair value and grant his request to leave.
Hold-out: pay him to sit out the rest of his contract, discourage similar demands and receive nothing in a trade.

Not sure: Canada 15%, followers 11%, non-followers 19%, Manitoba 7%, Winnipeg 5%.

Followers favour talent, non-followers favour staying

Q11. When choosing players, which approach do you think Canadian NHL teams should take?



Not sure: Canada 16%, followers 14%, non-followers 18%, Manitoba 8%, Winnipeg 6%, rest of Manitoba 11%.

Winnipeg follows the dispute more closely

52% in Winnipeg follow the dispute very or somewhat closely, compared with 20% nationally.

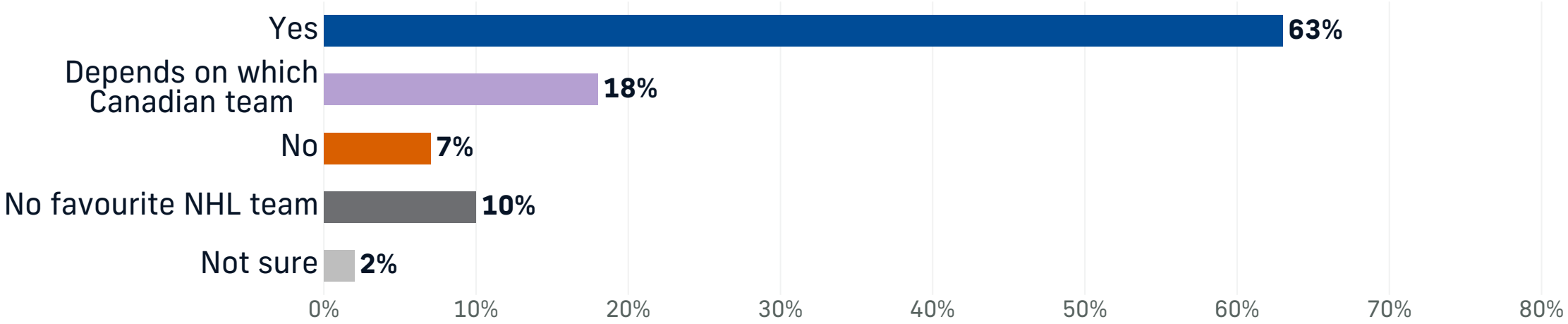
Measure	Winnipeg CMA	Canada	Rest of Manitoba
Q5 Following very/somewhat closely	**52%**	**20%**	**41%**
Q6 More sympathetic to the Jets	**54%**	**45%**	**42%**
Q6 More sympathetic to Hellebuyck	**13%**	**12%**	**15%**
Q8 Trade, restricted choice	**53%**	**45%**	**50%**
Q8 Paid holdout, restricted choice	**42%**	**40%**	**41%**

Unweighted n: Winnipeg 350, Canada 1,500, rest of Manitoba 177. Canada includes both local areas. Q6 briefing: appendix page 18. Q8 offers only a trade below fair value or a paid holdout; return is not offered.

63% of followers cheer for another Canadian team

Q3. When your favourite NHL team is out of the playoffs, do you generally cheer for another Canadian team because it is Canadian?

Hockey followers



Among hockey followers, 18% say it depends on the team and 10% have no favourite NHL team.

Salary cap and income-tax differences

Information read to respondents before Q12

The NHL's salary cap limits what teams can spend on player salaries. However, differences in income taxes mean players earning the same salary can take home different amounts depending on where they play.

Some argue that teams in higher-tax locations should receive extra salary-cap room to help them compete for players. Others argue that the league should keep the same salary-cap limit for every team rather than adjust for differences between locations.

The proposal changes salary-cap room, not players' tax rates.

The Hellebuyck dispute

Information read to respondents before Q6

Connor Hellebuyck is an American goaltender for the Winnipeg Jets. He has requested a trade with five years remaining on a seven-year contract, saying moving on is best for him and his family. The Jets say they want a suitable return.

He missed training camp and was suspended without pay. Sportsnet has since reported that he told the team he was willing to return, although his return to the lineup remains unresolved.

Q6. Taking this information into account, where do your sympathies lie?

Return, trade or paid holdout: Q7

Q7. If Hellebuyck is willing and eligible to play but still wants a trade, which approach do you think the Winnipeg Jets should take?

1. Allow him to return to the lineup while waiting for an acceptable trade offer, even if the dispute continues
2. Refuse a trade and keep him out of the lineup for the rest of his contract to discourage similar demands, even if Winnipeg must keep paying him
3. Trade him for the best available offer, even if Winnipeg receives less than it considers fair value

The fourth response was “Not sure”. Q8 is a separate restricted choice that does not offer return to the lineup (page 13).

Nobody's perfect.

But you can trust Liaison polls because our methodologies have been tested against real-world outcomes.

Ontario Poll Accuracy	
1st	**Liaison**
2nd	**Mainstreet**
3rd	**Innovative**
4th	**Research Co.**
5th	**Forum**
6th	**Abacus**
7th	**Pallas**
8th	**Leger**
9th	**Nanos**
10th	**Ipsos**

Federal Poll Accuracy			
1st	**Mainstreet**	11th	**Abacus**
2nd	**Liaison**	12th	**MQO**
3rd	**Angus Reid**	13th	**EKOS**
4th	**Cardinal**	14th	**Pollara**
5th	**Nanos**	15th	**IRG**
6th	**Research Co.**		
7th	**Pallas**		
8th	**Leger**		
9th	**Forum**		
10th	**Ipsos**		

There's no tougher race than an election campaign. Shifting headlines, commentary on leadership debates, and millions of voters changing their minds right up to the last minute. In the most recent 2025 elections, the accuracy of Liaison's polls ranked 1st provincially and 2nd federally. Next race, who knows? There's always room to improve. **Even at Liaison**.

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Contact

For questions about this survey or a briefing on the results

David Valentin, Principal

david@liaisonstrategies.ca

+1 514-913-5524

liaisonstrategies.ca