



NEWSQUARE

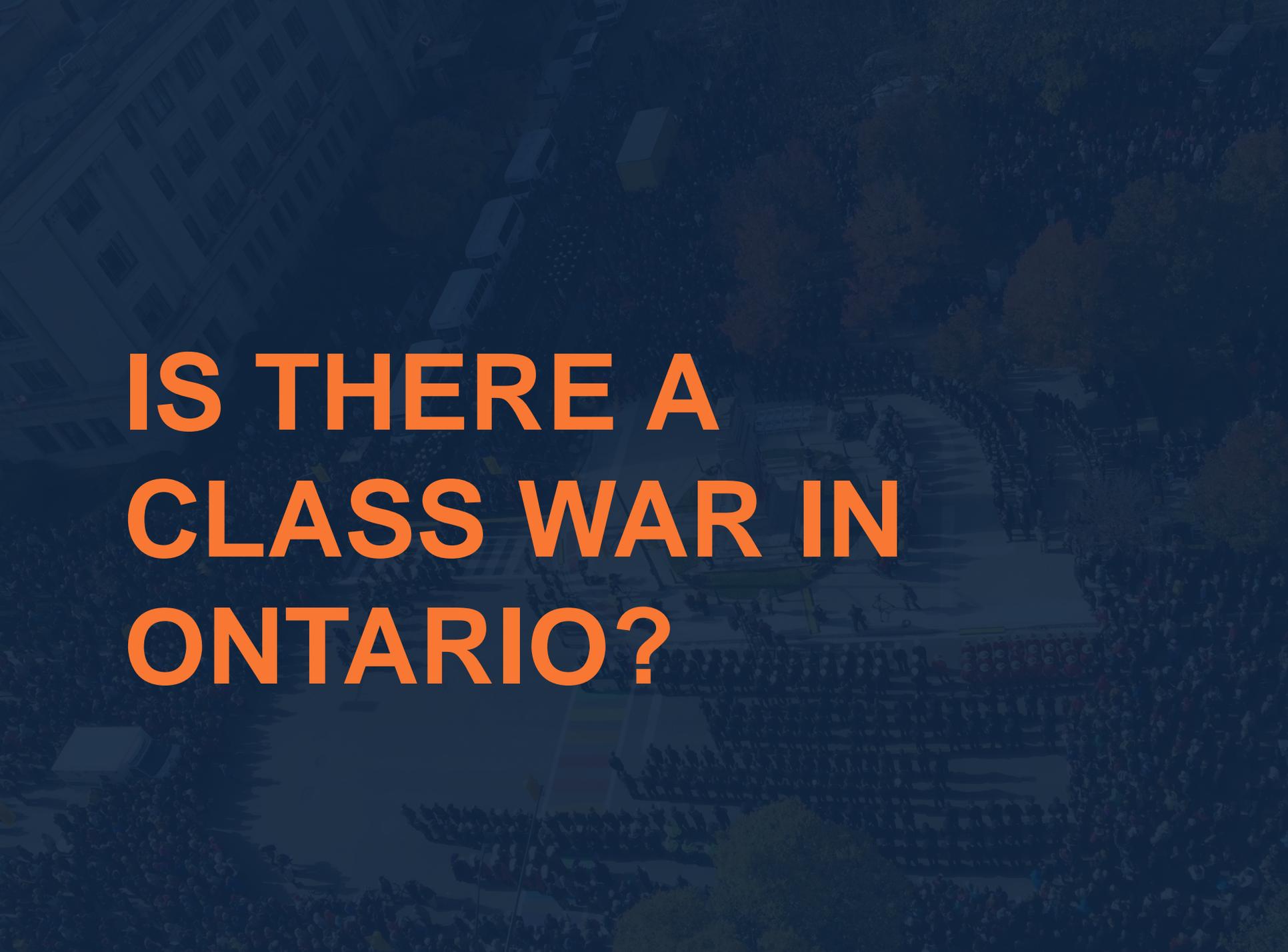
Gathering Working Class Ontarians around the issues
that matter—amplifying their voice



We have had a lot of conversations about **populism**, but fewer conversations *with* those who are supposed to be driving it.

Are the **working class** really somehow different? Is that difference somehow driving voter choice?

This survey compares **500 working class Ontarians** with **500 elite Ontarians** in the run up to the Ontario election to better understand differences in attitudes between these two groups.

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Toronto, showing a large crowd of people gathered on the sidewalks and crossing the street. The image is heavily filtered with a dark blue color, making the details of the buildings and trees less distinct. The text is overlaid in a bright orange color.

**IS THERE A
CLASS WAR IN
ONTARIO?**



Working Class vs. Elite: Lifestyle Findings

1. Working class are less likely to engage politically

They are also less likely to be comfortable when it comes to using their voice in general, compared to the elite.

2. Roughly three quarters of the working class in Ontario are affected by the cost of groceries and the cost of gas

This is only marginally higher than seven in ten elites.

3. Affordable housing, crime and safety, job opportunities and fentanyl/drug addiction are of greater concern to working class Ontarians

Elites are more concerned about traffic congestion.



Political Findings

1. Government mismanagement and health care are most important issues across both groups

Where affordable housing comes third for the working class, deficit spending takes that honor for the elite.

2. Almost Half of Ontarians say None of the leaders stand for them

No between group differences when it comes to leader rankings.

3. The working class are less likely to identify with the PCs (22%) compared to 26% of their elite counterparts

16% of working class identify with the Liberal party, compared to 23% of the elite, and 12% of working class say they are NDP supporters, compared with 10% of the elite. There is also a greater number of working class who are unsure (21%), than the elite (13%).

An aerial, top-down view of a city street. The street is filled with a large crowd of people. In the center of the street, there is a building with a prominent dome. The surrounding area includes other buildings and trees. The entire image is overlaid with a dark blue, semi-transparent filter.

TURF WAR IN ONTARIO?



GTA vs. Outside the GTA: Issues Findings

1. Issues are different depending on where you live

Traffic congestion, affordable housing and public transit top the list for those living inside the GTA, whereas housing, crime/safety and jobs emerge as the top three concerns for those living outside the GTA.

2. Cost of living differences are dramatic outside the GTA

Those living outside the GTA are much more likely to be affected by the cost of living—particularly the cost of gas, food and electricity. However, those who reside in the GTA are much more affected by the cost of housing and public transit.



Political Findings

1. Government mismanagement and health care top both lists for most important issue in the election

But affordable housing is an issue for those inside GTA and electricity pricing is much more important for those outside the GTA.

2. Doug Ford is the major contender inside the GTA but Ford (16%) and Horvath (15%) are close outside the GTA

When they do select a leader 18% inside the GTA favour Doug Ford, 14% favour Kathleen Wynne, and 12% choose Andrea Horvath.

Outside the GTA, Kathleen Wynne is trailing with only 6% support.

2. GTA residents are also more likely to identify with the Liberal party (23%) than those who live outside the GTA (16%); PCs are equally popular (22%) inside the GTA

The PCs (26%), and the NDP (12%) are more popular outside the GTA, and Liberal party is less popular (16%).

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street, likely in a European city, showing a large crowd of people walking along the sidewalks and crossing the street. The buildings are multi-story and have a classic architectural style. The image is darkened with a blue overlay, and the text "IS IT THE COST OF LIVING?" is superimposed in the center in a bright orange color.

**IS IT THE COST
OF LIVING?**



Cost of Living: Issues Findings

1. Three in ten Ontarians are struggling with almost everything

Six in ten are feeling the squeeze when it comes to the cost of gas, buying food at the grocery store and the cost of electricity, and 15% are relatively unaffected by cost of living increases.

2. More than half those struggling say it's getting worse

Those who are struggling with the cost of housing, gas and food are much more likely to feel that things are getting worse (55%), compared with those who are unaffected, who are much more likely to feel that things are getting better (27%).

3. Affordable housing, job opportunities and traffic congestion top the list for those struggling

Those issues are much less concerning for those who are feeling the squeeze or those unaffected.



Political Findings

1. The major election issues remain stable regardless of cost of living effects

However, those who are struggling are slightly more likely to select affordable housing or electricity and those who are feeling the squeeze select electricity more often than those unaffected by cost of living increases.

2. Those who are unaffected are much more likely to say that Kathleen Wynne stands for them.

Those who are struggling favour Doug Ford and Andrea Horvath, and those feeling the squeeze are most in favour of Doug Ford.

3. Those who are feeling the squeeze or struggling are more likely to be Progressive Conservative supporters

Those unaffected rank the Liberal party highest

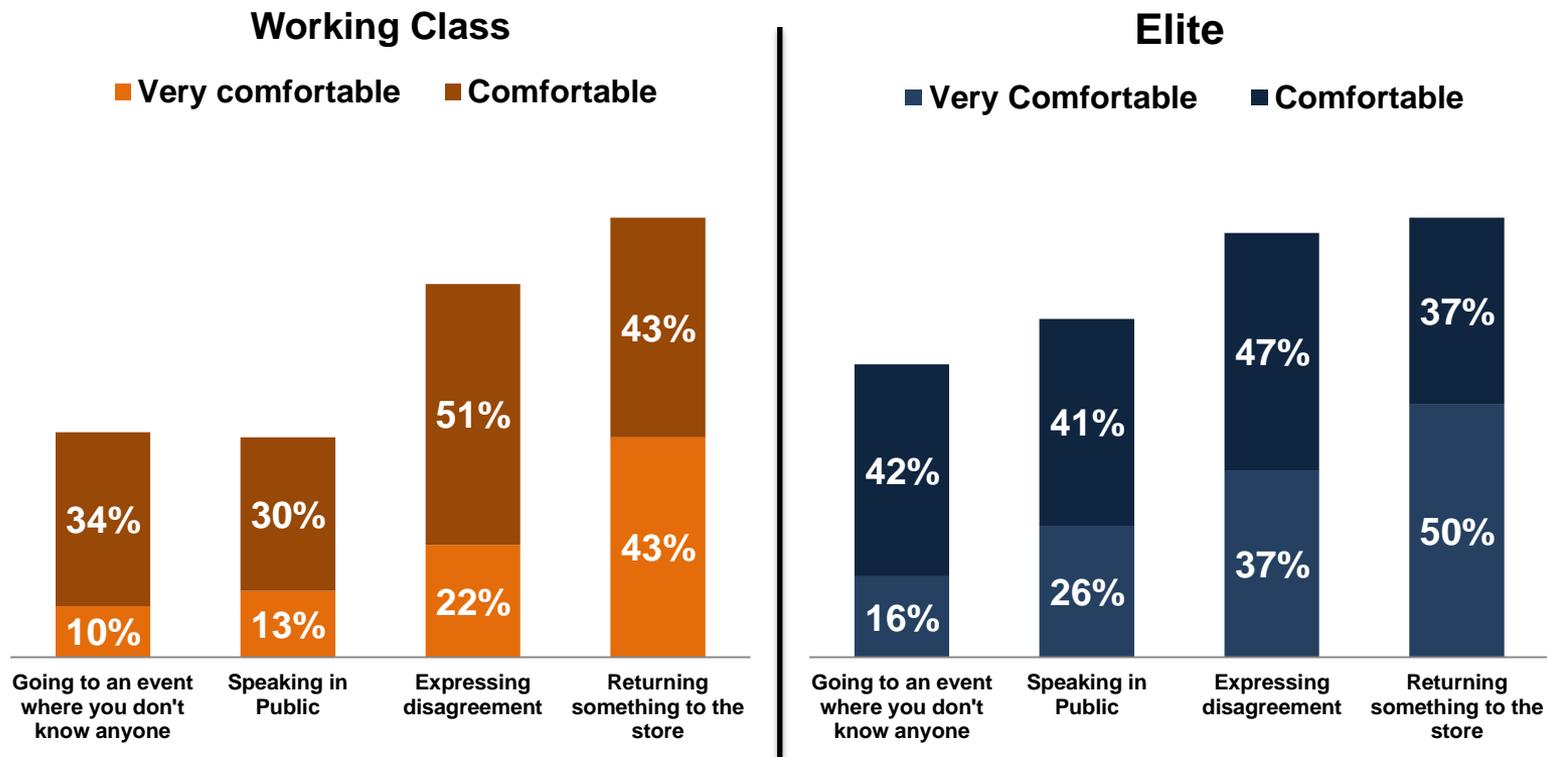
An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street, likely in a European city, showing a large crowd of people gathered on the sidewalks and crossing the street. A prominent building with a large dome is visible in the center. The image is overlaid with a dark blue, semi-transparent filter. The text 'WORKING CLASS VOICE' is centered in a bold, orange font.

WORKING CLASS VOICE



Everyday Voice

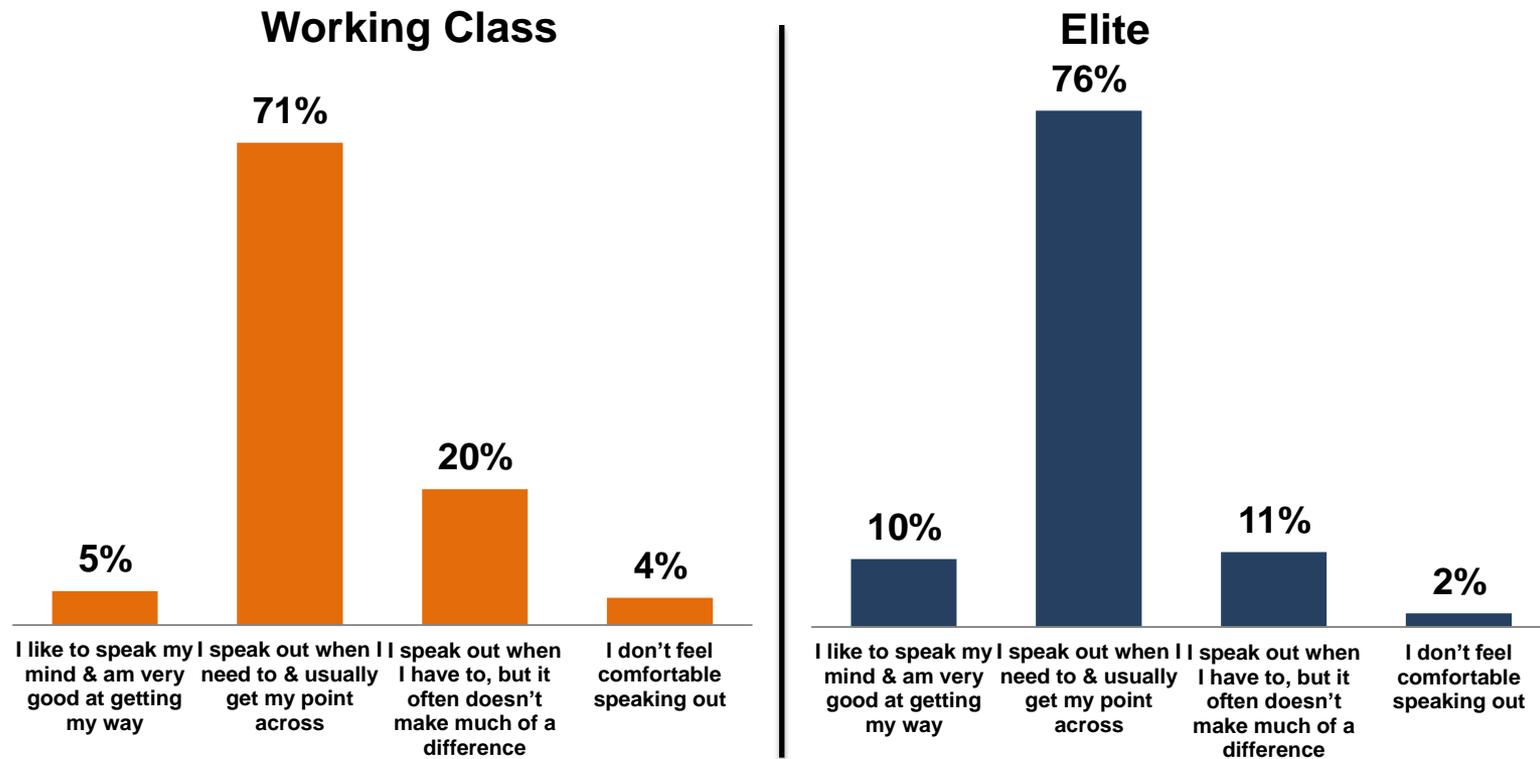
Working class are less likely to be very comfortable or comfortable when it comes to using their voice in general, when compared to the elite. This discomfort extends beyond traditionally difficult situations, such as going to an event or public speaking.



Q4: How comfortable are you in the following?

Comfort Speaking Out

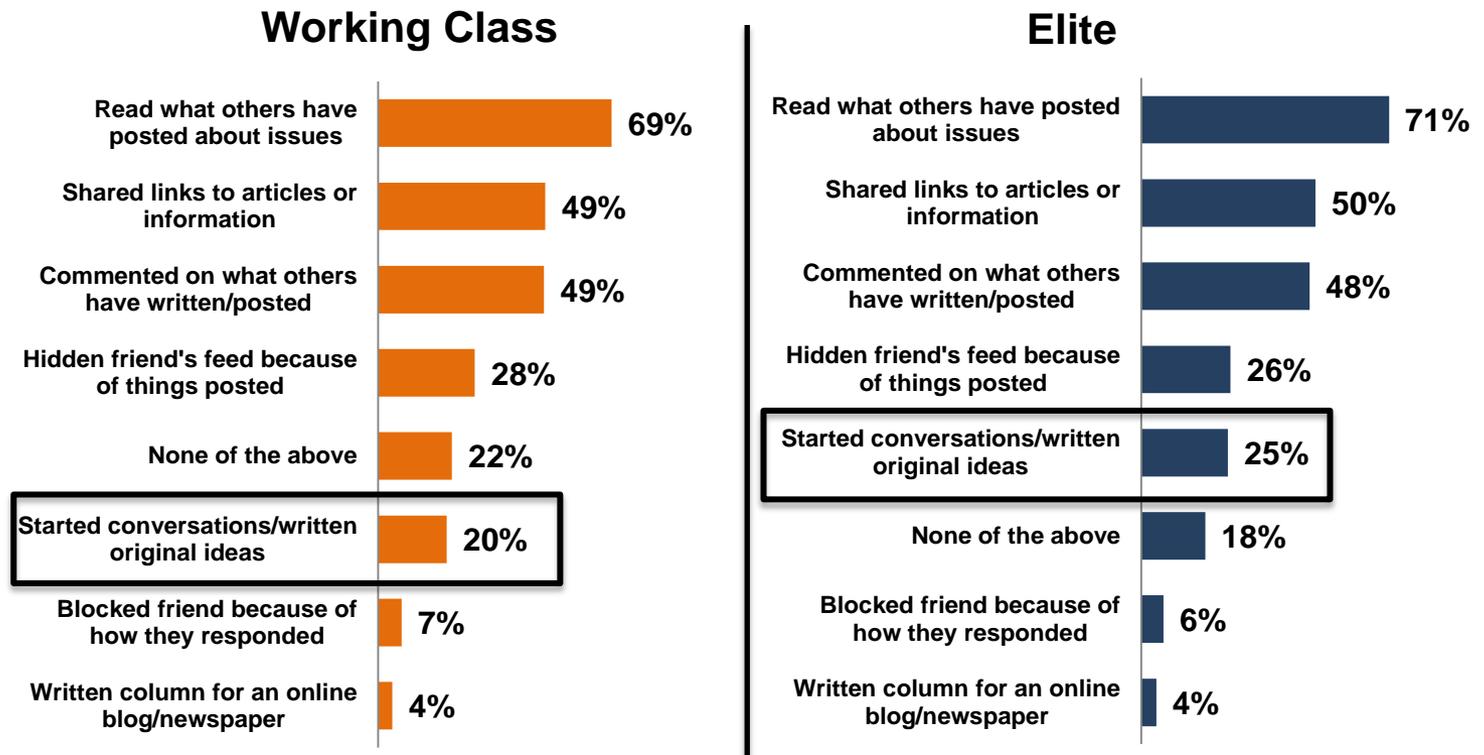
Again, working class respondents are slightly less likely to speak out, and much more likely to feel that speaking out makes little difference. That said, more than three quarters say they speak out and usually get their point across.



Q5: If you had to describe yourself, when it comes to speaking out to get your way on an issue that affects you personally, which comes closest to how you see yourself?

Online Engagement

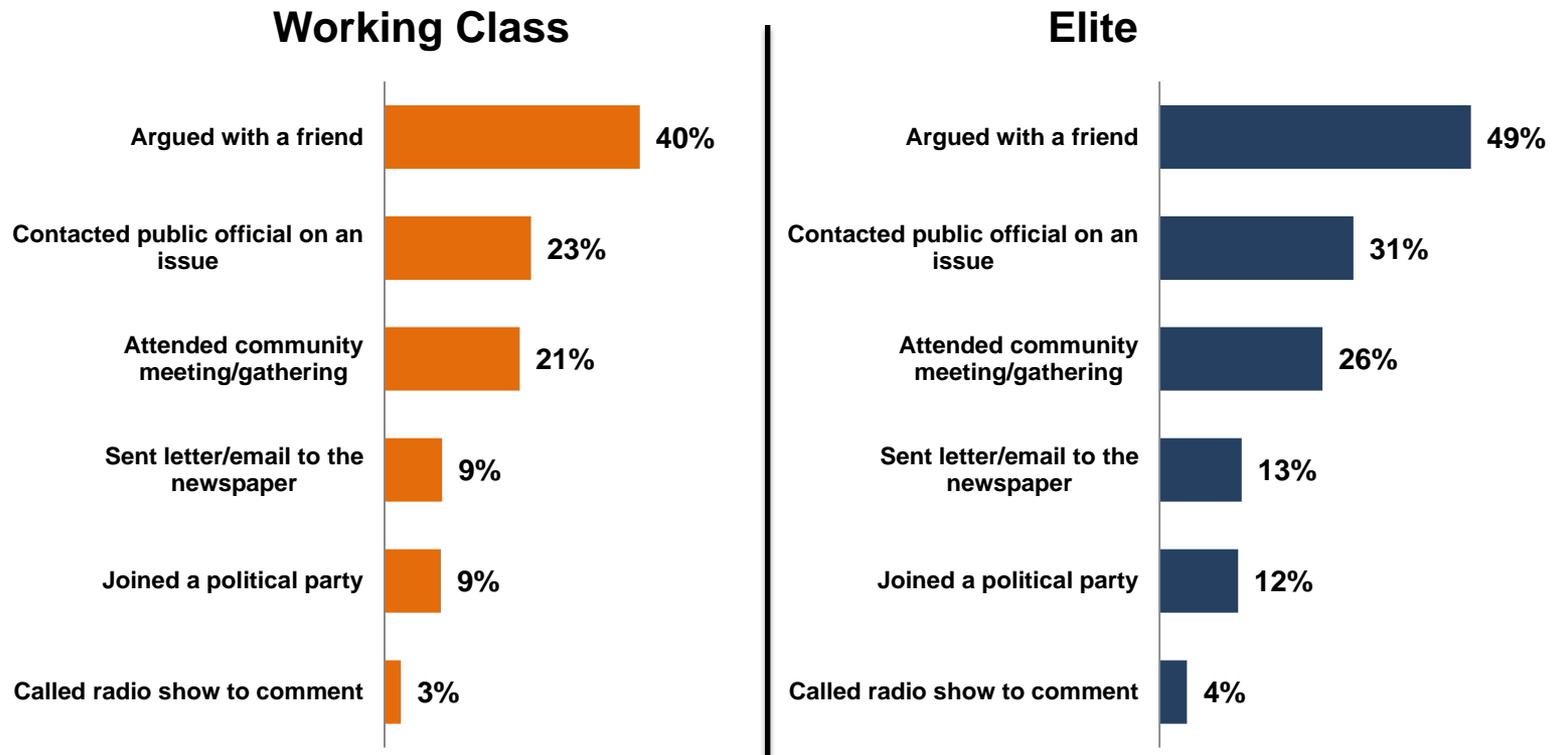
No real differences emerge between the working class and elite when it comes to engaging online. The only exception would be starting a conversation – which working class are slightly less likely to do, compared to their elite counterparts.



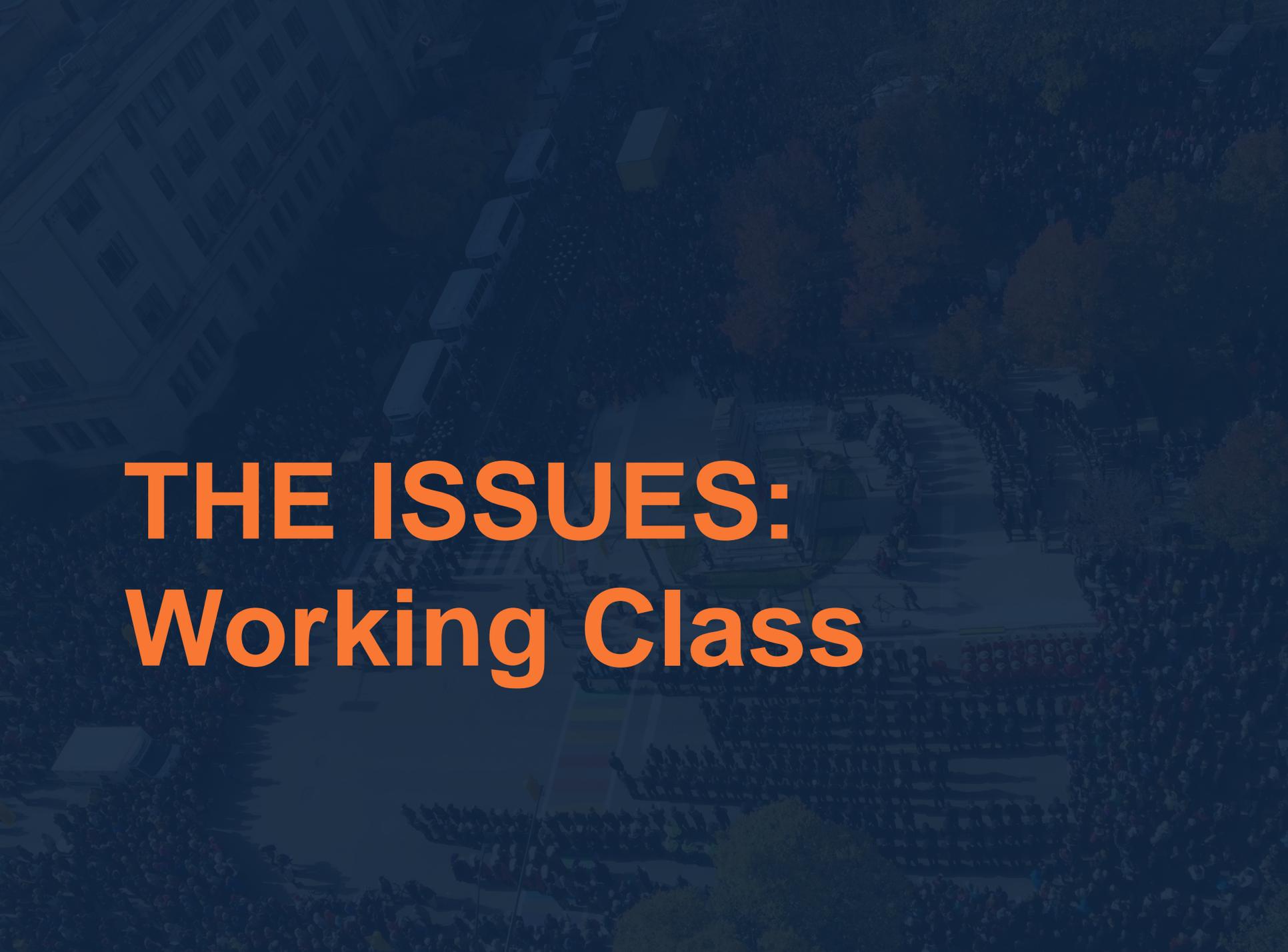
Q7: When it comes to being engaged online, which have you done in the last year? [Choose all that apply; random order]

Political Engagement

Working class respondents were markedly less likely to argue with a friend about politics, contact a public official, attend a meeting, or send an email, than their elite counterparts. However, the groups were equally likely to call into a radio show.



Q12: When it comes to getting involved on a social or political issue, which of the following have you done in the past year? [random order; choose all that apply]

An aerial, top-down view of a city street. The street is lined with multi-story buildings on the left and a dense crowd of people on the right. The image is dark and has a blue tint. The text 'THE ISSUES: Working Class' is overlaid in the center in a bright orange color.

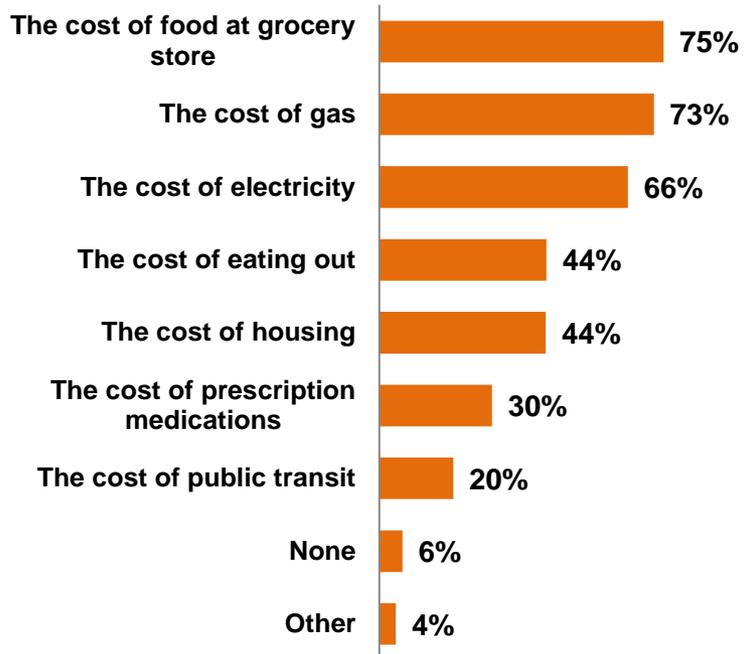
THE ISSUES: Working Class



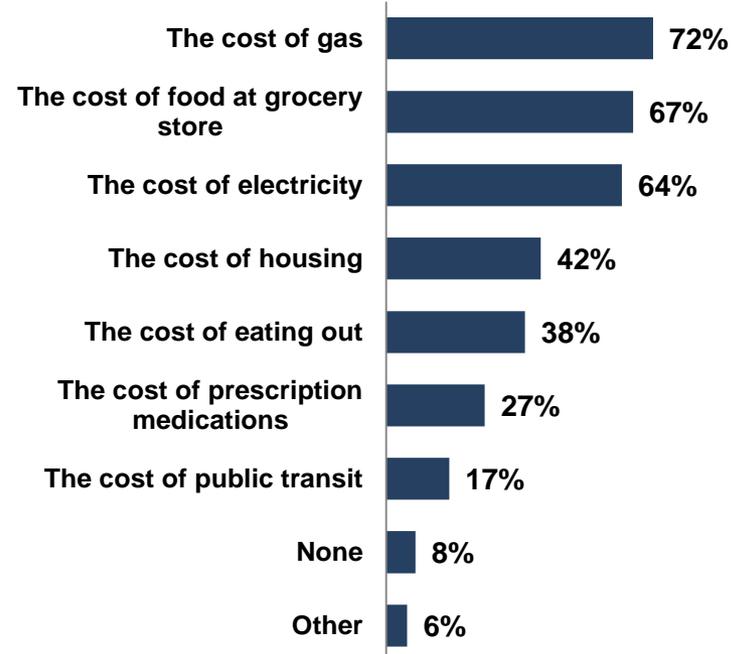
Cost of Living

Roughly three quarters of the working class in Ontario are affected by the cost of groceries and the cost of gas, which is marginally higher than seven in ten elites. However, very few real differences emerge when it comes to the cost of living.

Working Class

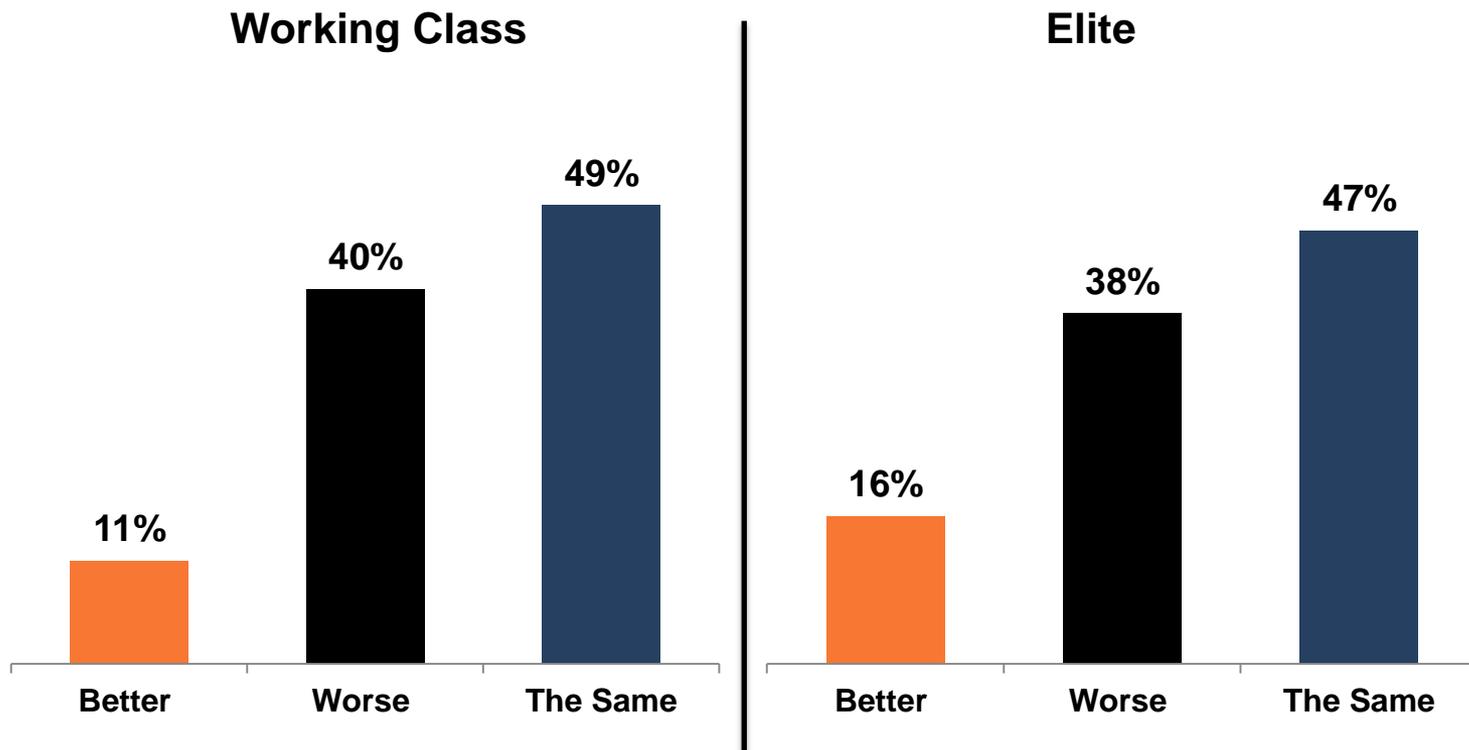


Elite



Better or Worse

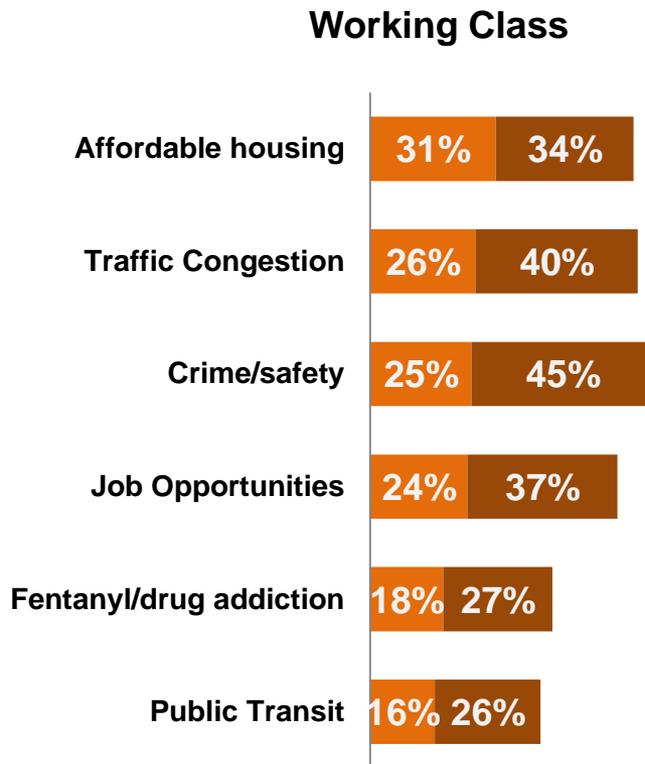
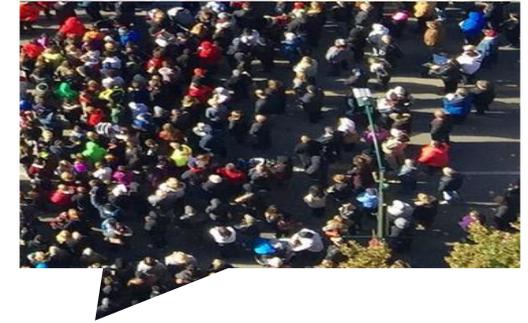
Working class respondents are less likely to feel that things are getting better (11%), compared with 16% for their elite counterparts. However, they are no more likely to believe that things are getting worse.



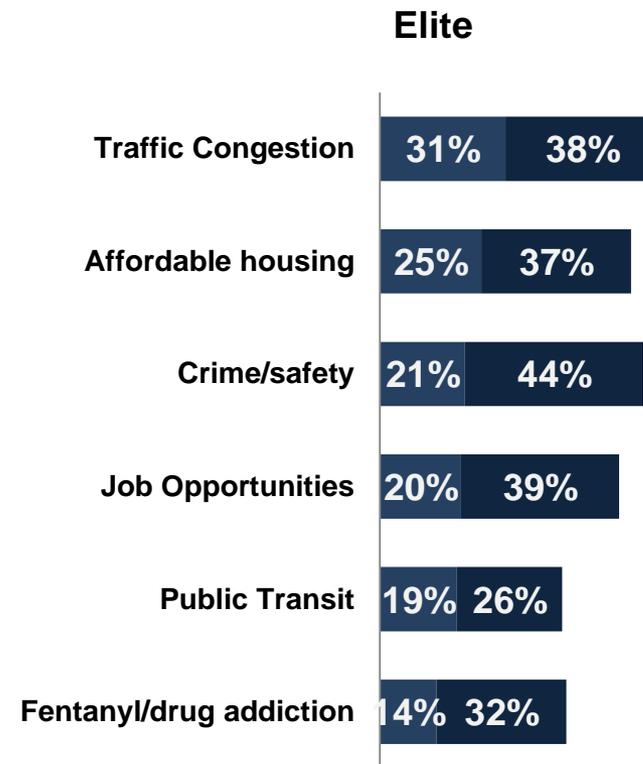
Q11. On the whole, would you say things are getting better, worse or staying the same for you and your family?

Your Concerns

Affordable housing, crime and safety, job opportunities and fentanyl/drug addiction are of greater concern to working class Ontarians, compared to the Elite who are more concerned about traffic congestion.



■ A big concern ■ A concern



■ A big concern ■ A concern

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street, likely in London, showing a large crowd of people gathered on the sidewalks and crossing the street. A prominent building with a large dome is visible in the center. The image is darkened and serves as a background for the text.

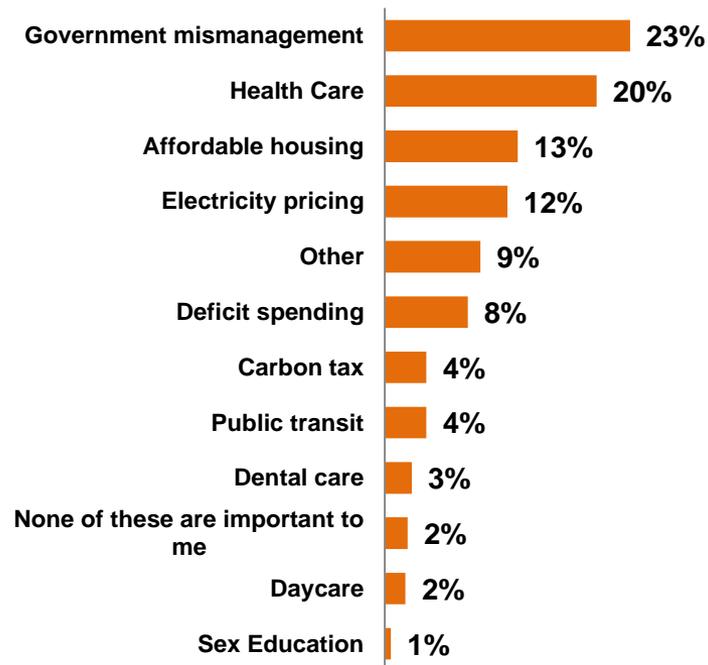
POLITICS: Working Class



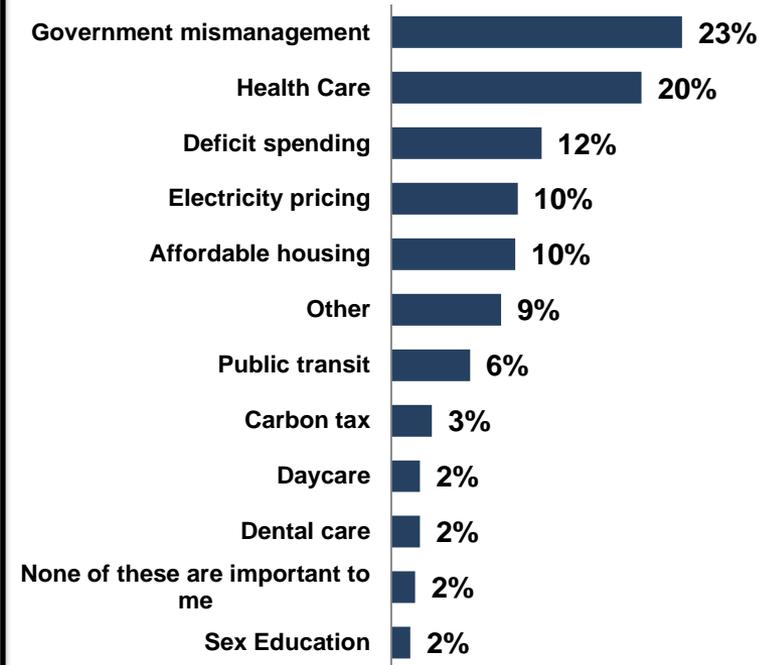
Election Issue

When it comes to election issues, there is little difference between working class and elite Ontarians. Both groups select government mismanagement and health care as their most important issues. Where affordable housing comes third for the working class, deficit spending takes that honor for the elite.

Working Class



Elite

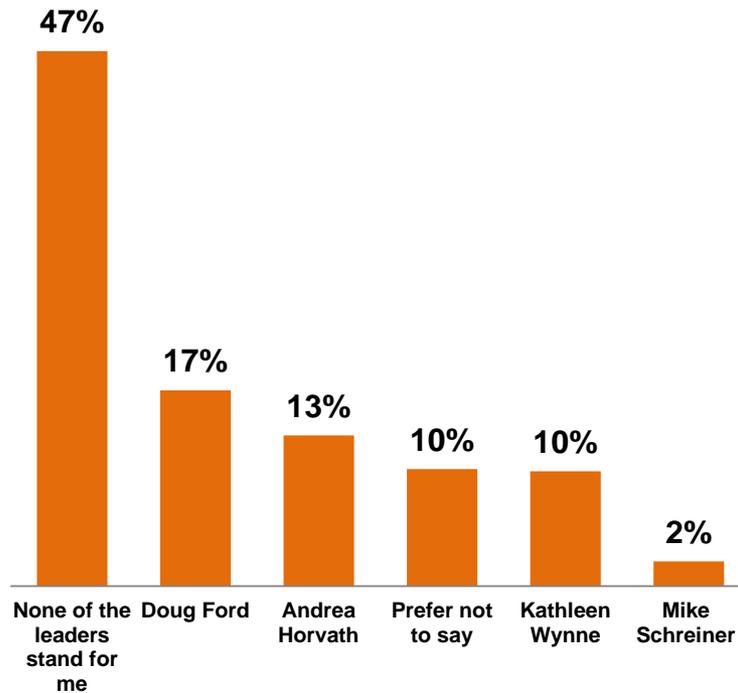


Q16. Thinking about the Ontario election specifically, is there an issue that is most important to you in this election? [Choose one only]

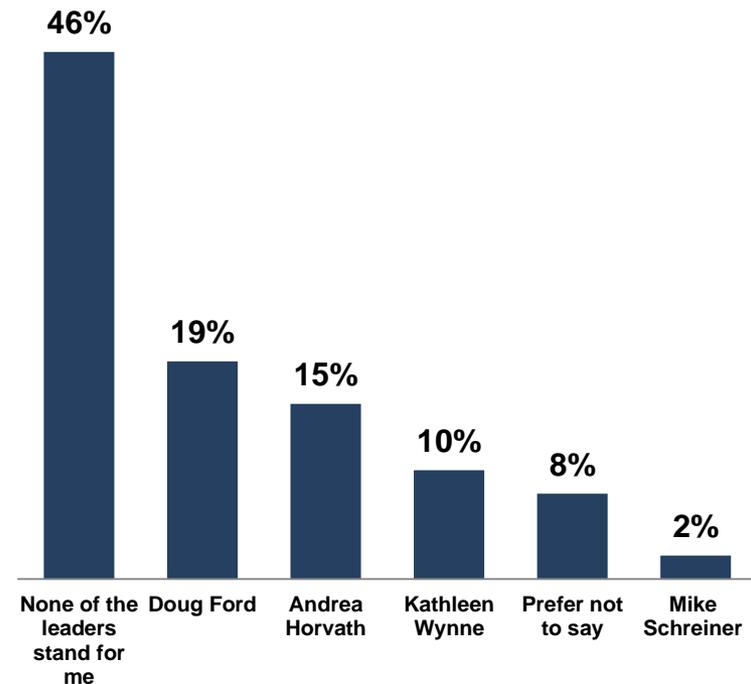
Leader that Stands for You

Again, there is almost no between group difference when it comes to leader rankings. However, close to half of Ontarians say that none of leaders stand for them.

Working Class



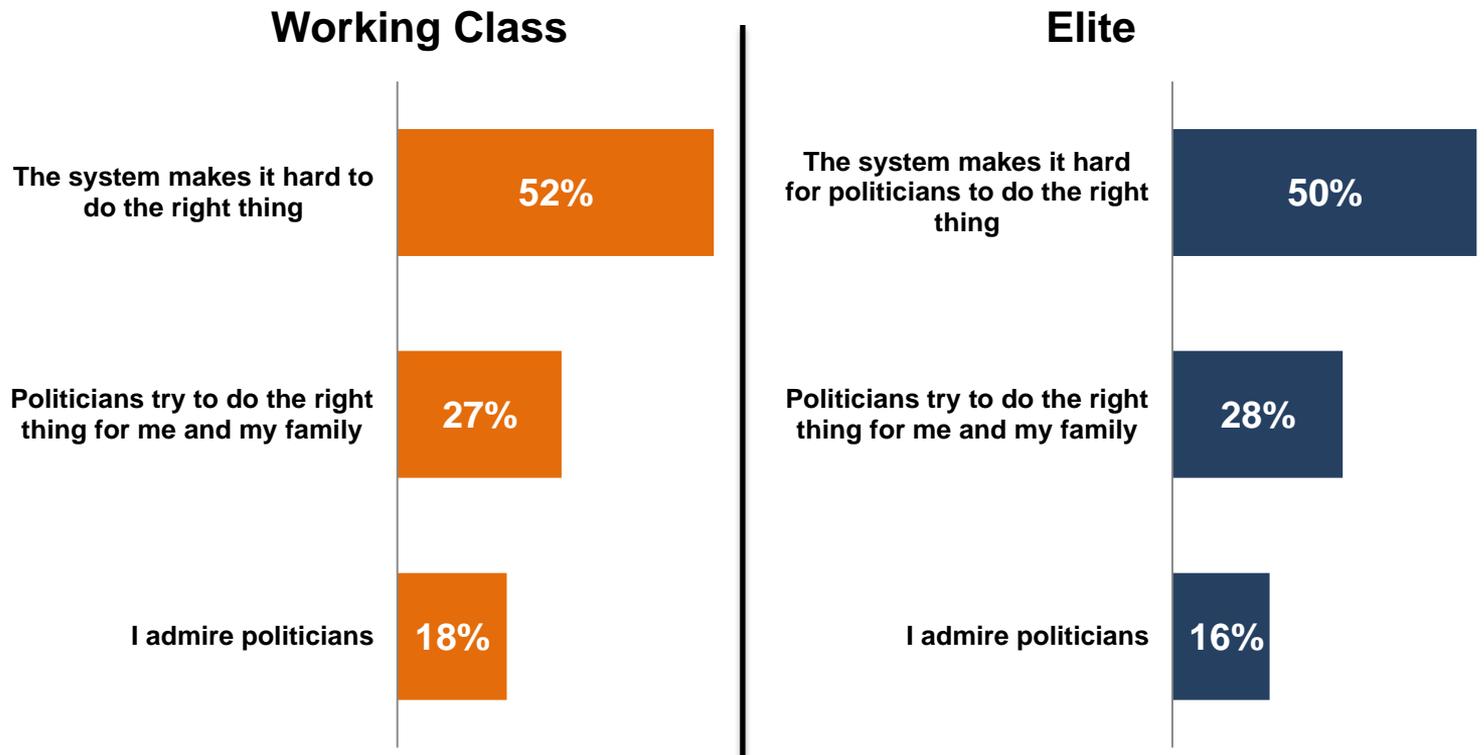
Elite





Politicians Positive

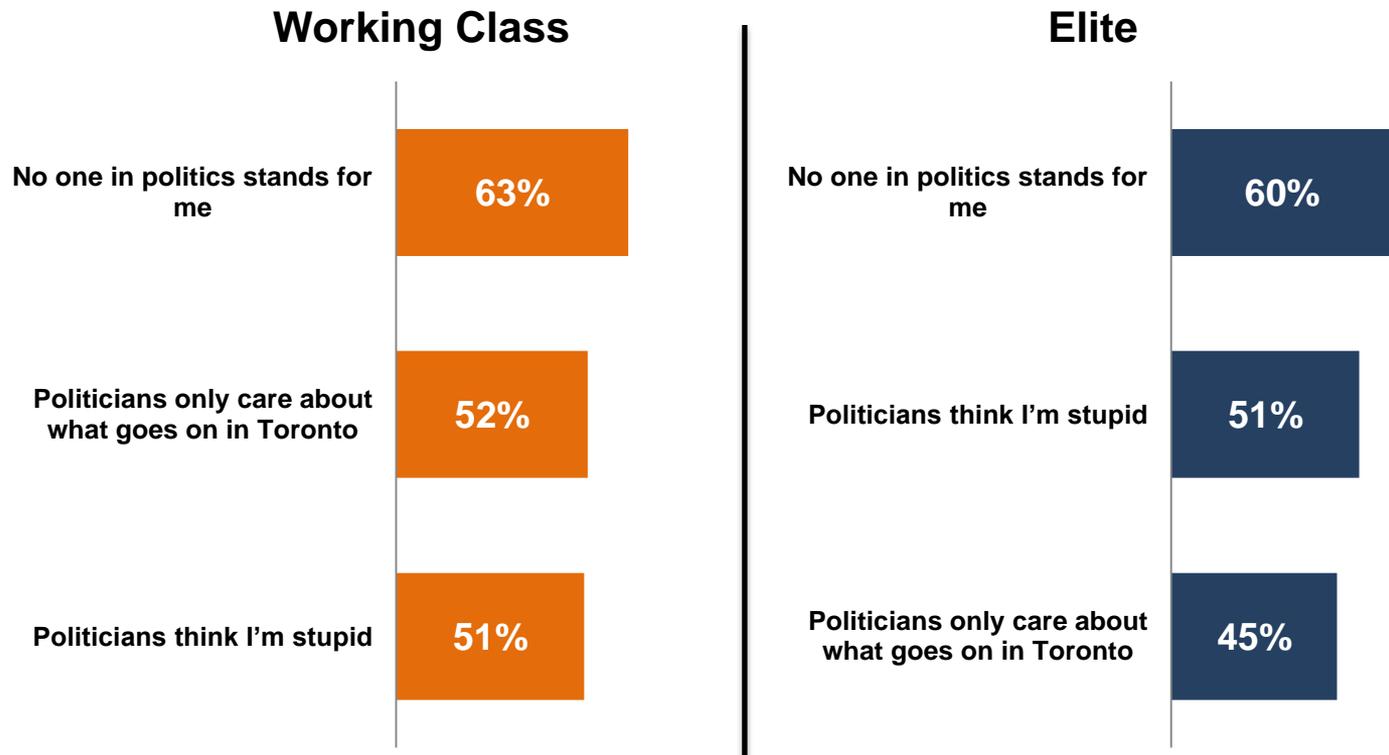
Roughly half of each group shares the opinion that the system makes it hard for politicians to do the right thing, but only about three in ten say that politicians try to do the right thing, and less than two in ten admire politicians.





Politicians Negative

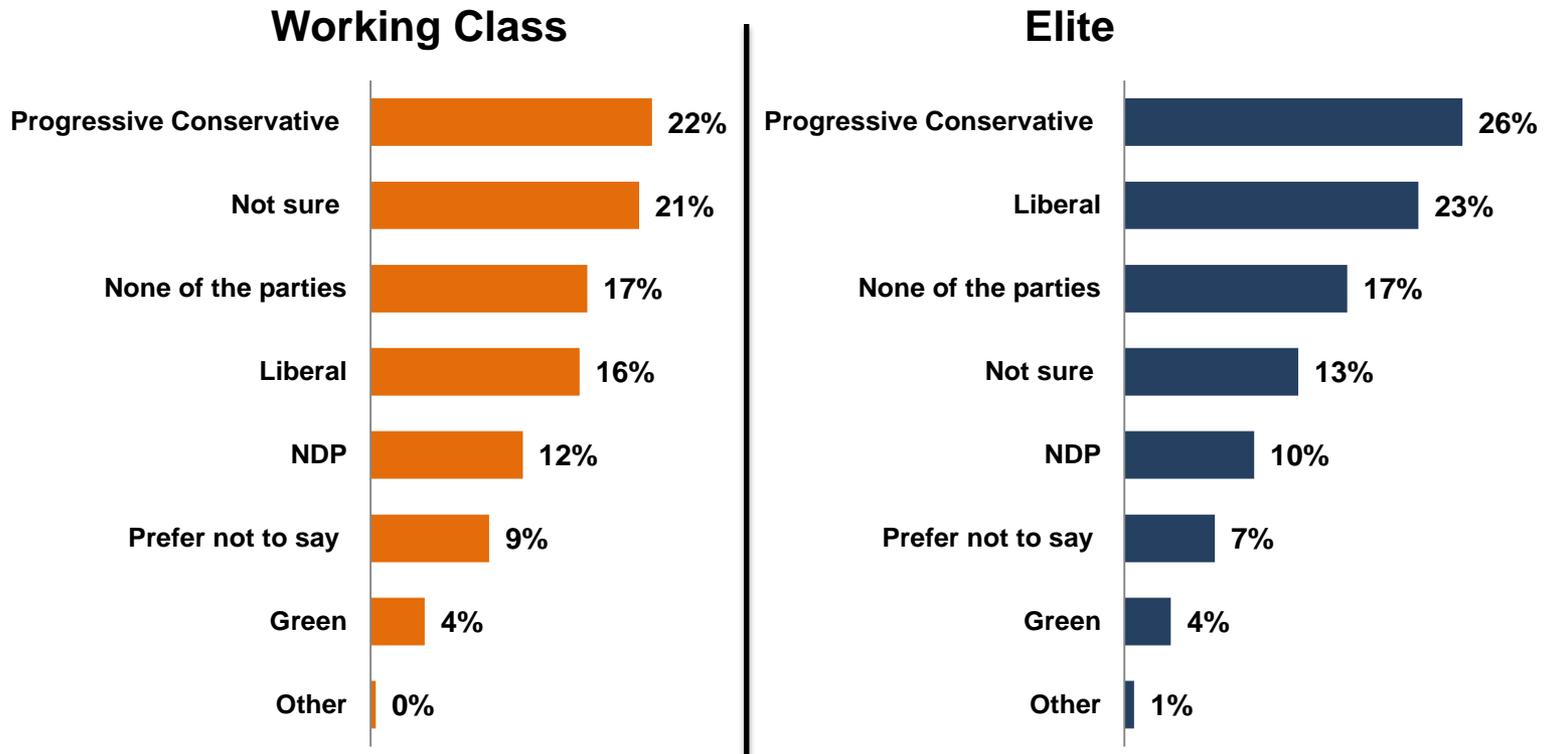
Altogether more than 6 in 10 feel that there is no political leader that stands for them, and half of Ontarians think that politicians think that they are stupid.

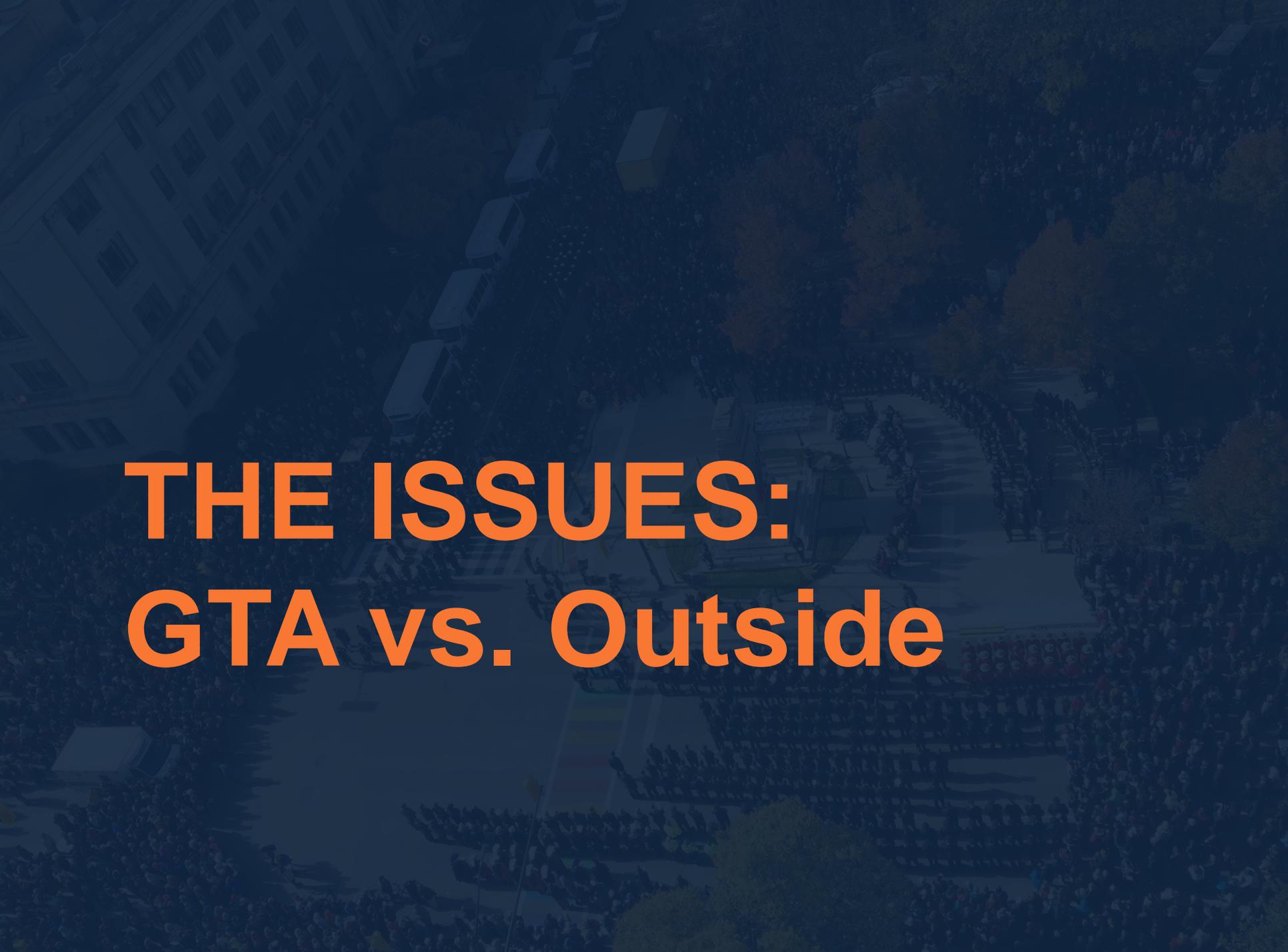




Party Identification

When it comes to party identification, the working class are less likely to identify with the PCs (22%) compared to 26% of their elite counterparts, and 16% of working class identify with the Liberal party, compared to 23% of the elite. There is also a greater number of working class who are unsure (21%) than the elite (13%).



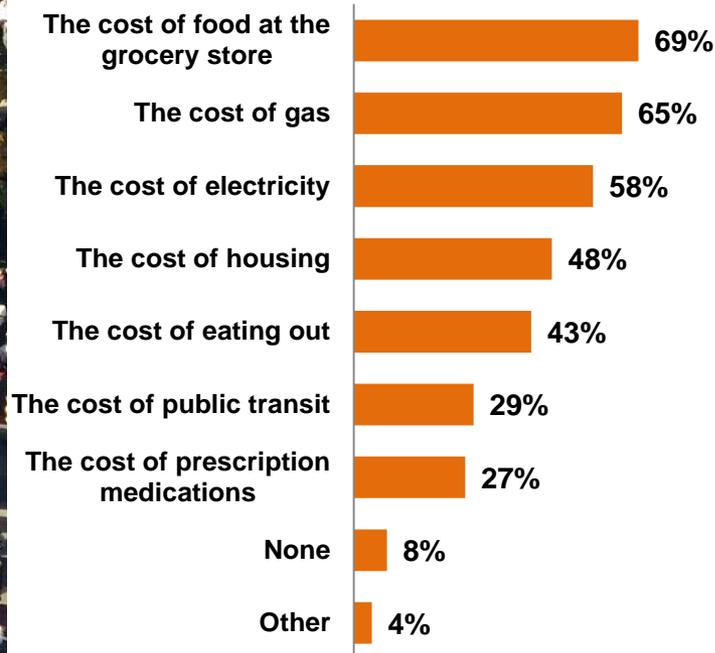


THE ISSUES: GTA vs. Outside

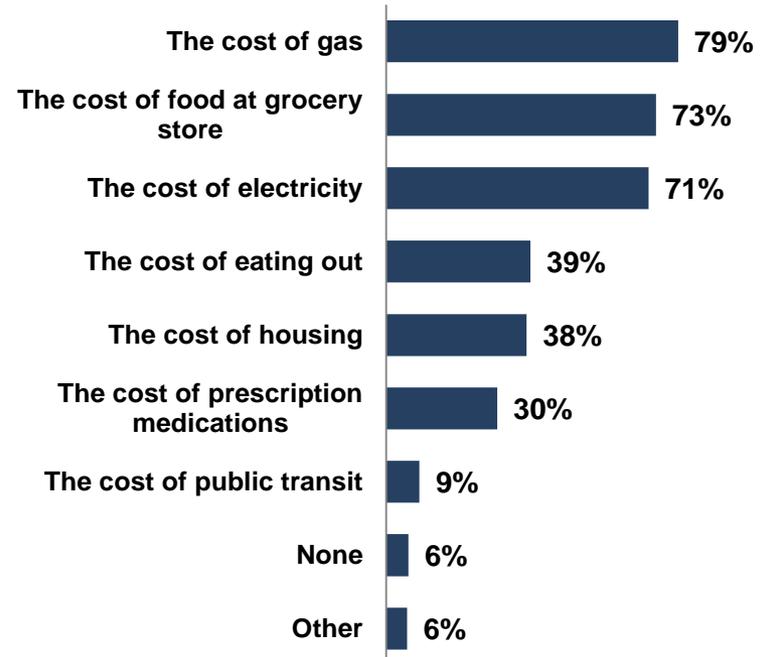
Cost of Living

Those living outside the GTA are much more likely to be affected by the cost of living—particularly the cost of gas, food and electricity. However, those who reside in the GTA are much more affected by the cost of housing and public transit.

GTA (416 & 905)

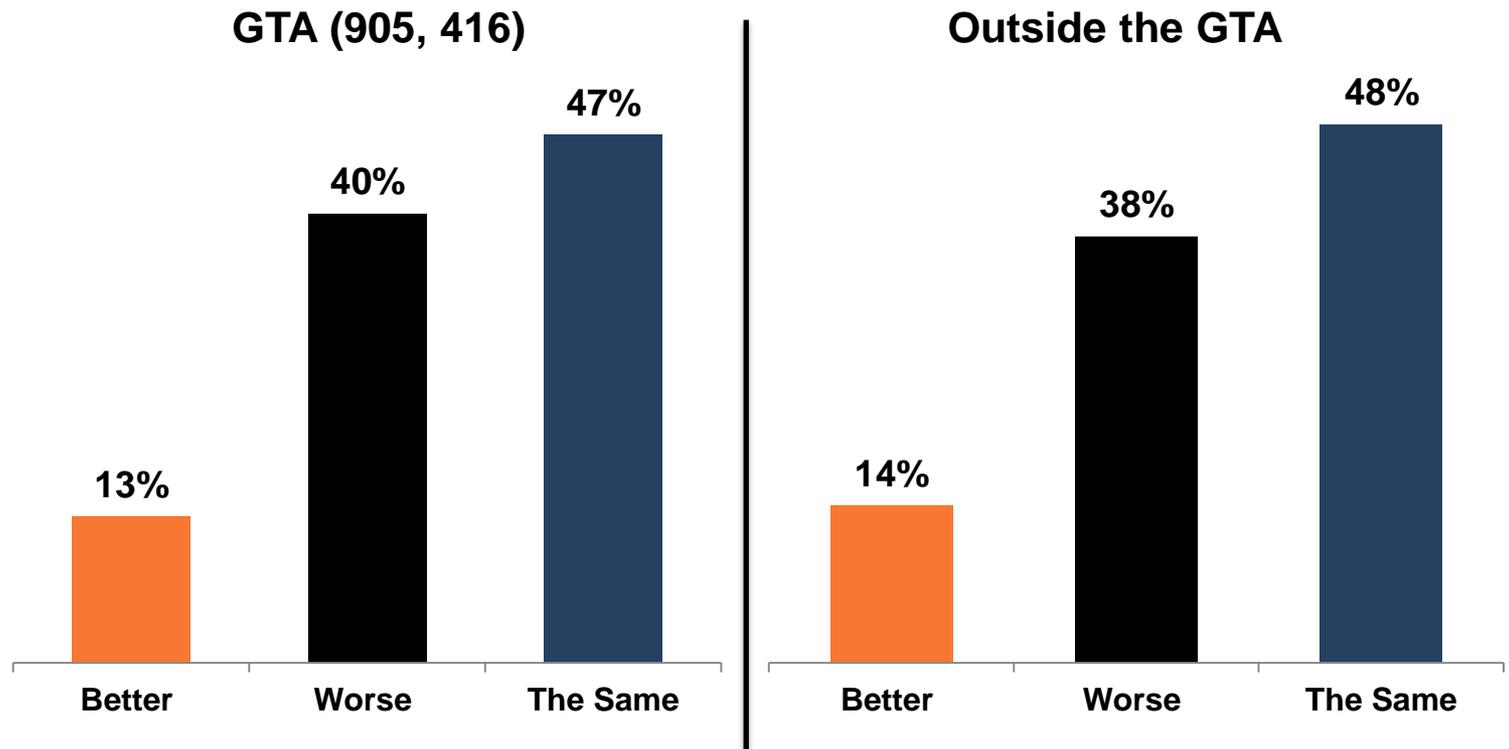


Outside the GTA



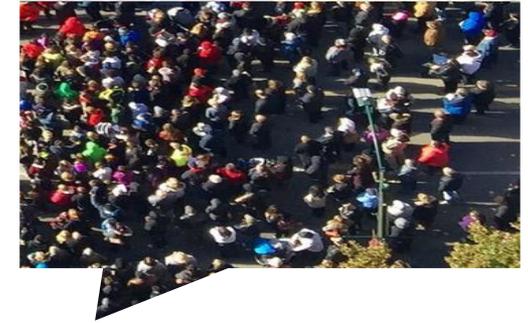
Better or Worse

There is no difference in optimism for those in the GTA or outside the GTA.



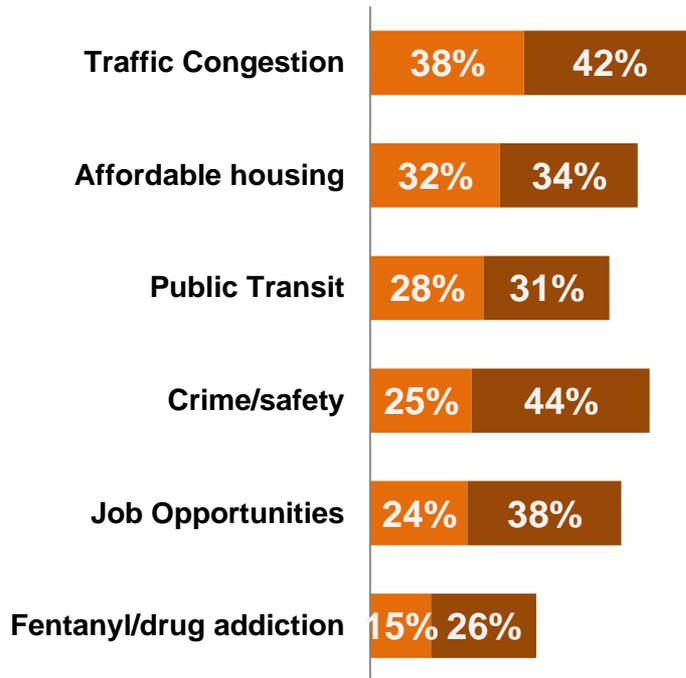
Q11. On the whole, would you say things are getting better, worse or staying the same for you and your family?

Your Concerns



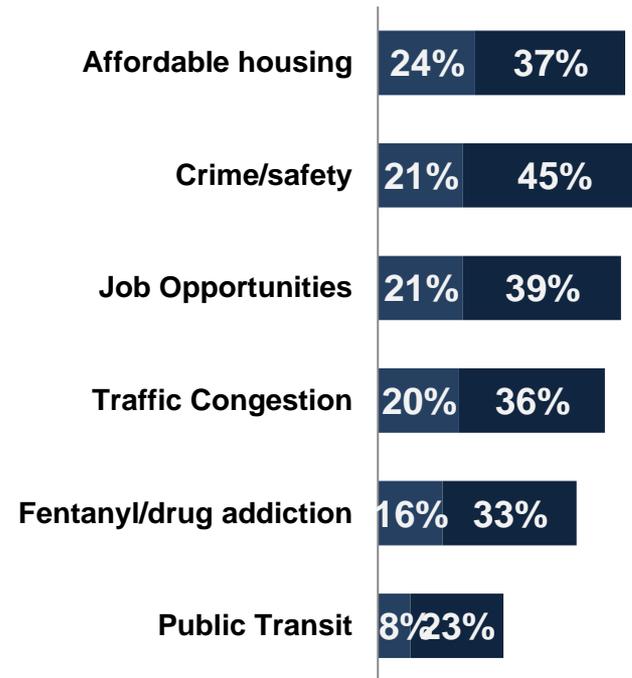
Traffic congestion, affordable housing and public transit top the list for those living inside the GTA, whereas housing, crime/safety and jobs emerge as the top three concerns for those living outside the GTA.

GTA (416 & 905)



■ A big concern ■ A concern

Outside the GTA



■ A big concern ■ A concern



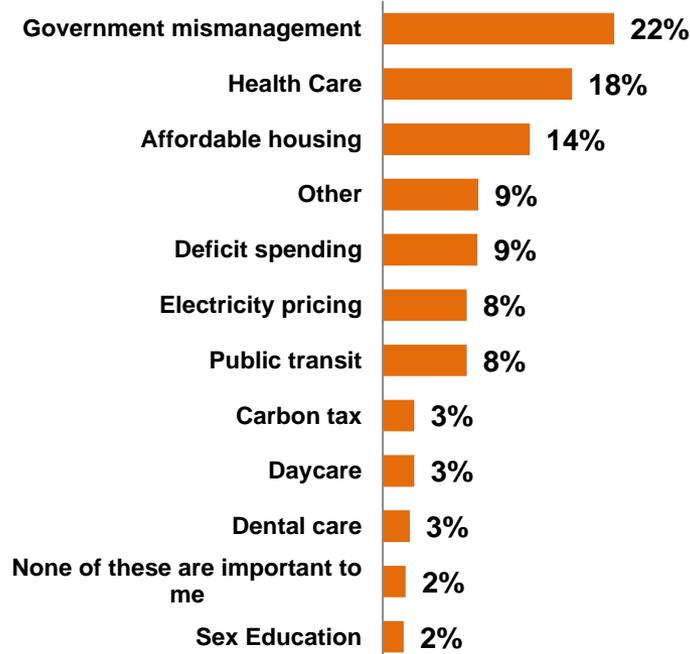
POLITICS: GTA vs. Outside



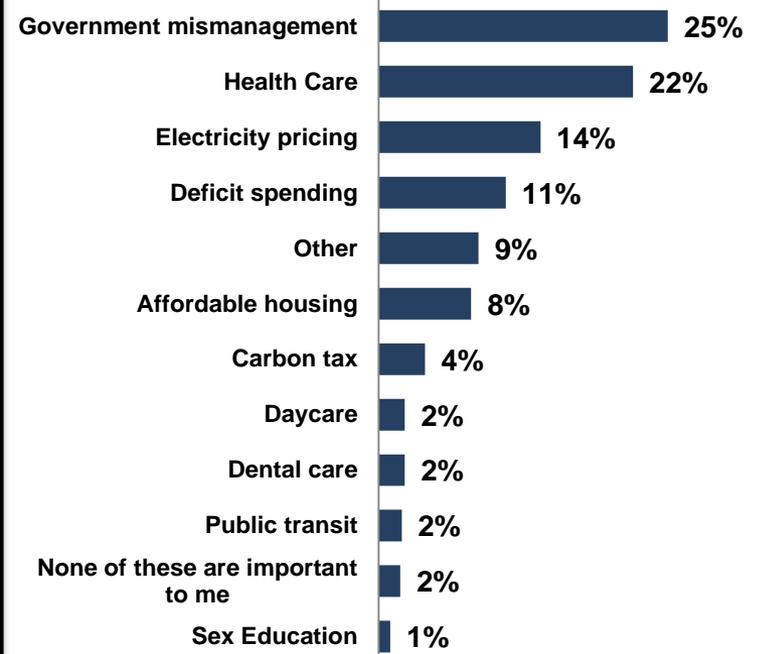
Election Issue

Although government mismanagement and health care top both lists, affordable housing is an issue for those inside GTA and electricity pricing is much more important for those outside the GTA.

GTA (416 & 905)



Outside the GTA

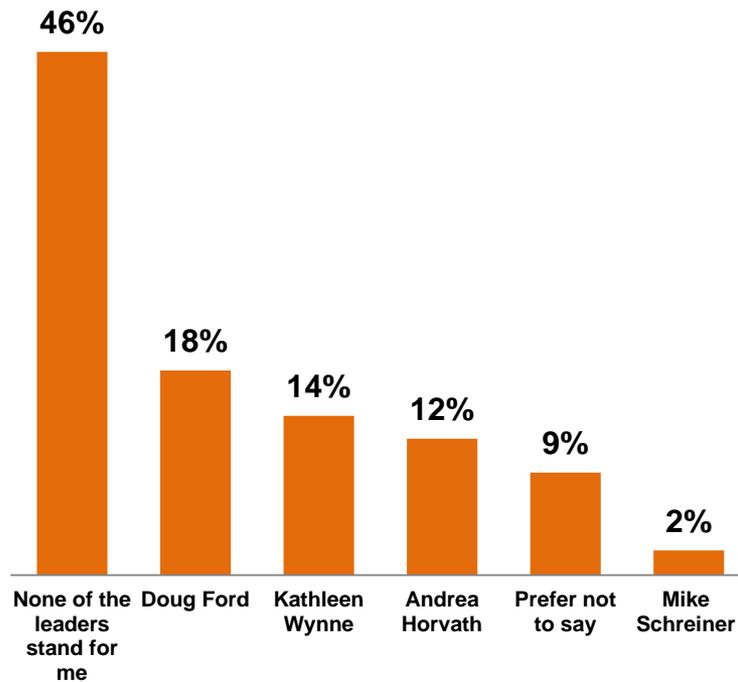


Q16. Thinking about the Ontario election specifically, is there an issue that is most important to you in this election? [Choose one only]

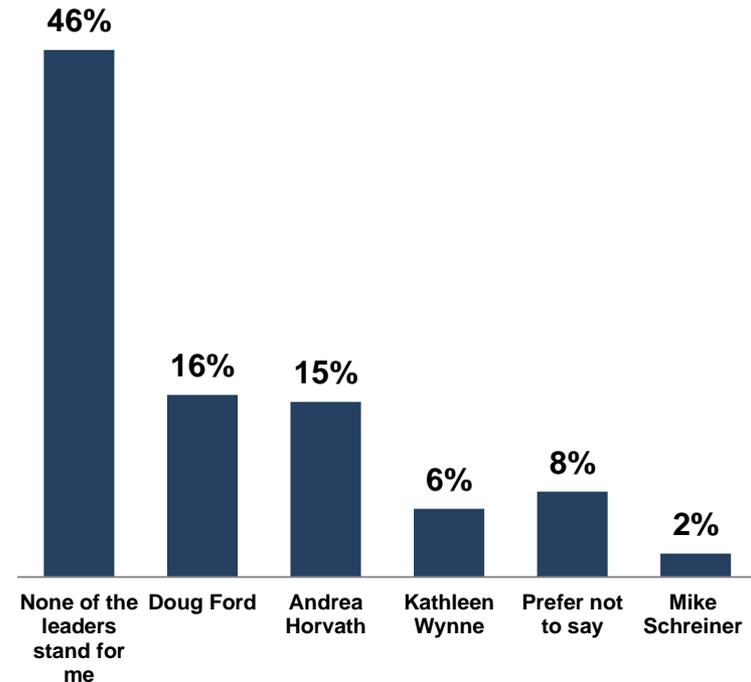
Leader that Stands for You

Close to half of both communities say that no leader stands for them. When they do select a leader 18% inside the GTA favour Doug Ford; 14% favour Kathleen Wynne, and 12% choose Andrea Horvath. By contrast, Doug Ford (16%) and Andrea Horvath (15%) are neck and neck outside the GTA, with Kathleen Wynne trailing with only 6% who say that she stands for them.

GTA (416 & 905)



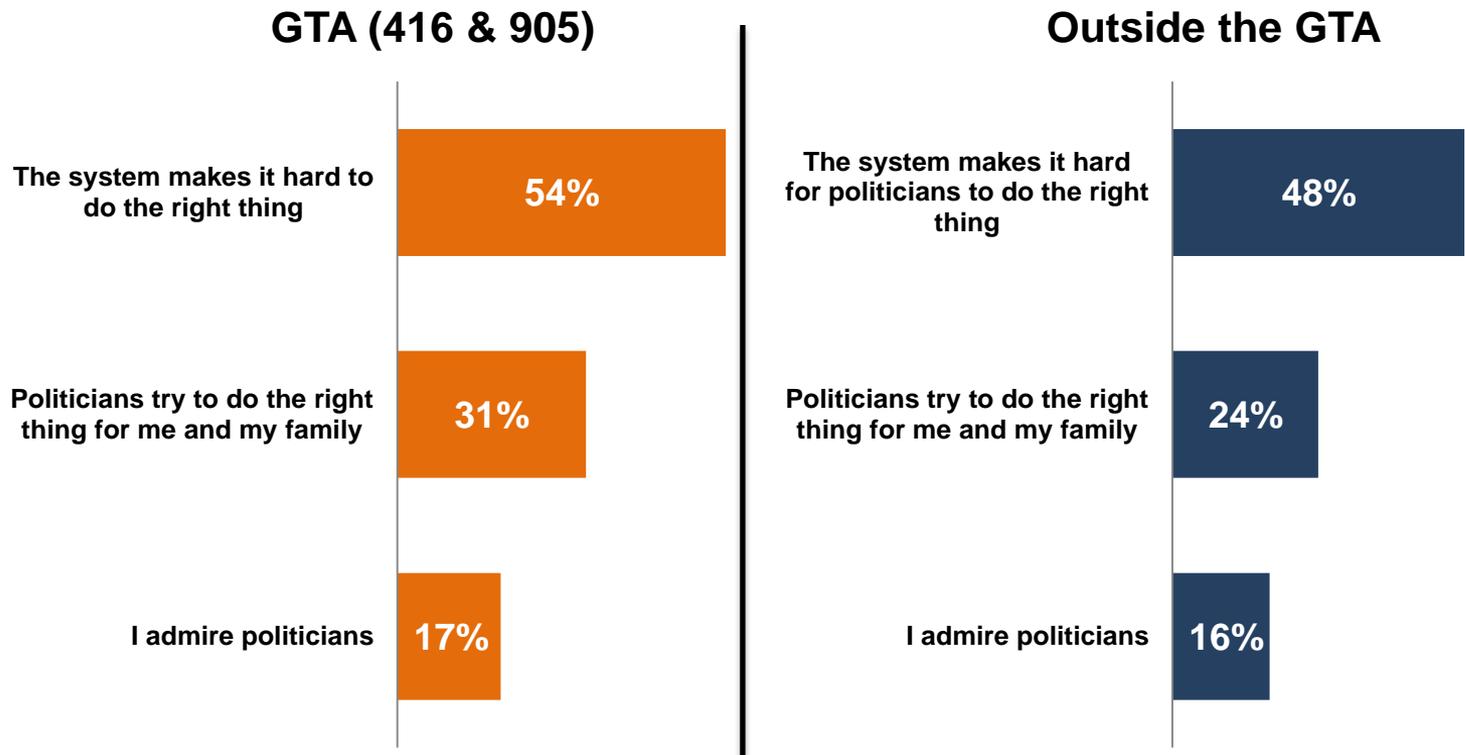
Outside the GTA





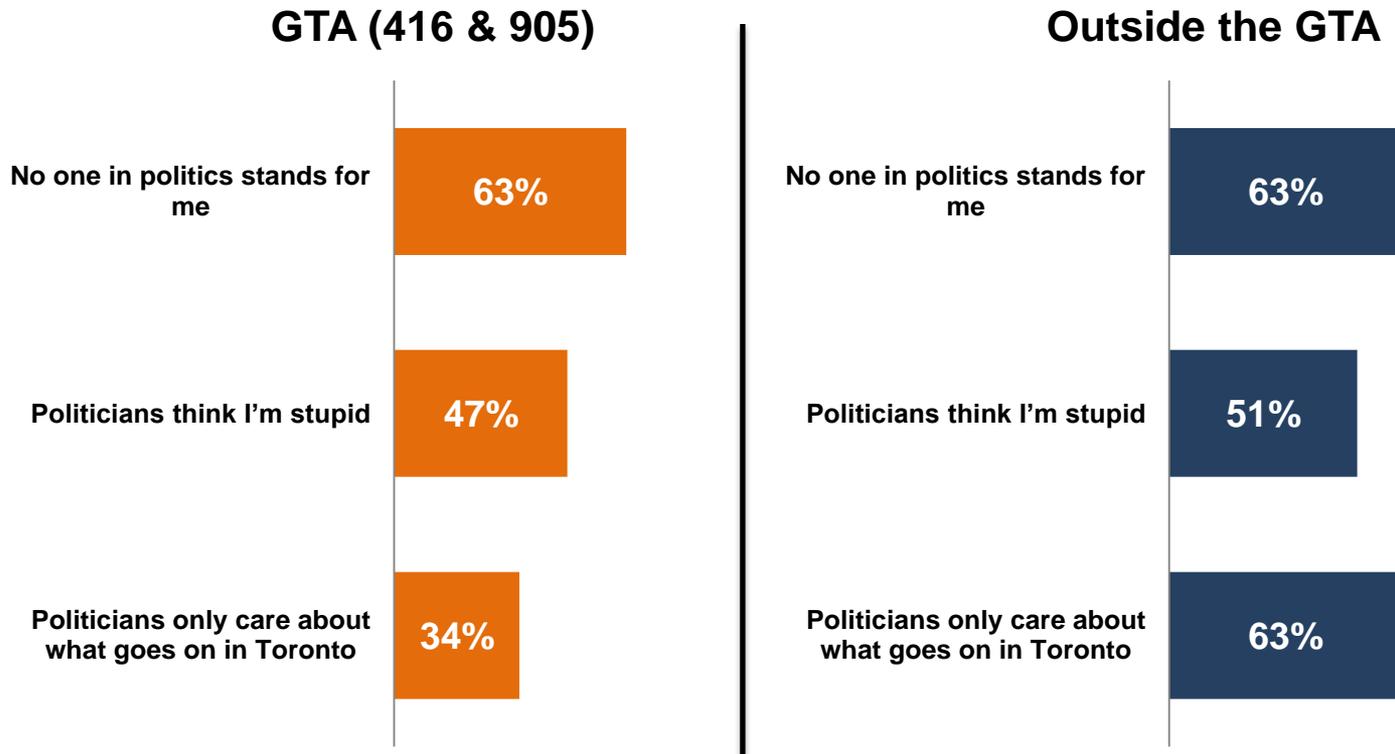
Politicians Positive

Greater Toronto residents are also slightly more positive than those who live outside the GTA, but few in each group say that they admire politicians.



Politicians Negative

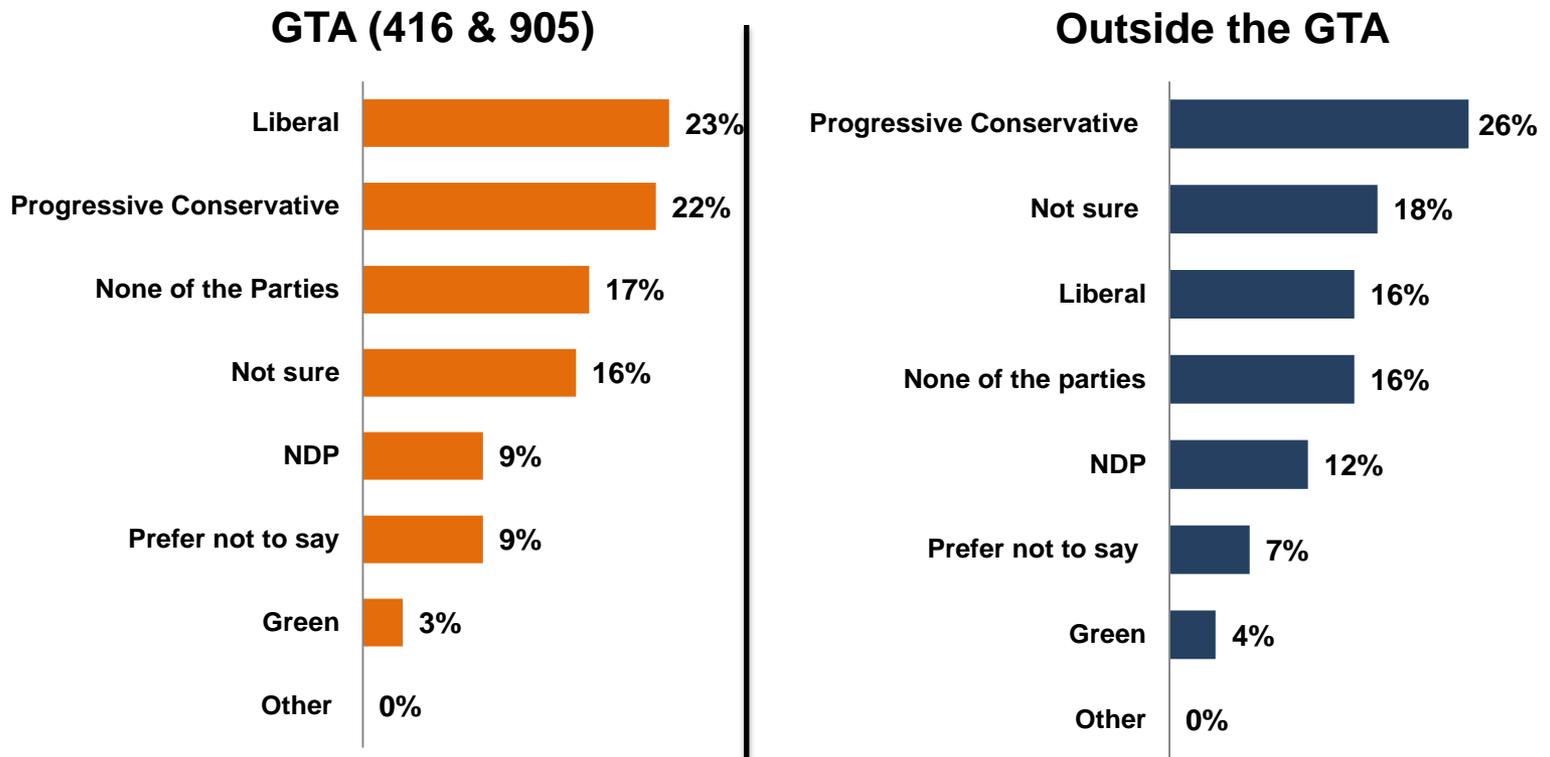
Not surprisingly, those who hail from outside the GTA are much more likely to feel that politicians only care about what goes on in Toronto (63%), compared to GTA residents at 34%.





Party Identification

GTA residents are also more likely to identify with the Liberal party (23%) than those who live outside the GTA (16%). The PCs and the NDP are more popular outside the GTA.

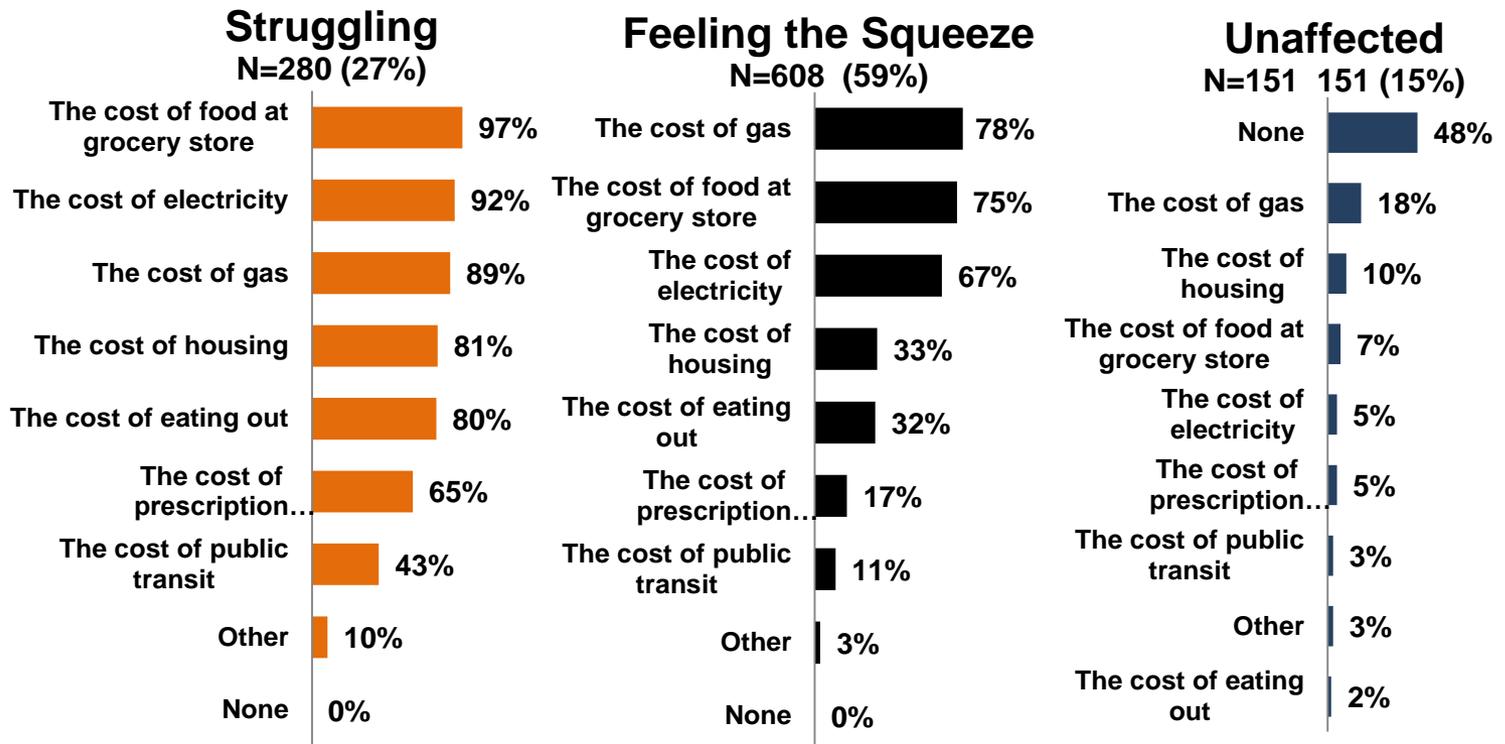




THE ISSUES: Cost of Living

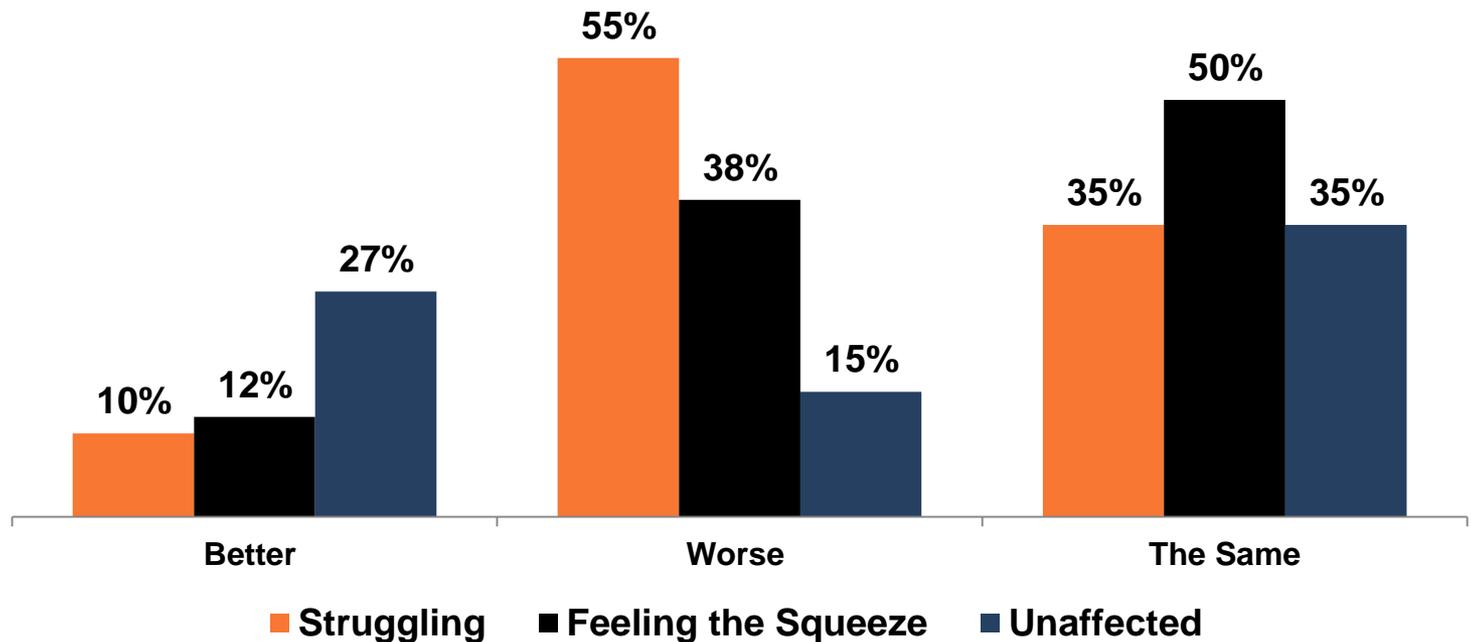
Cost of Living

Close to three in ten Ontarians are struggling with almost everything, whereas six in ten are feeling the squeeze when it comes to the cost of gas, buying food at the grocery store and the cost of electricity, and 15% are relatively unaffected by cost of living increases.



Are things Better or Worse

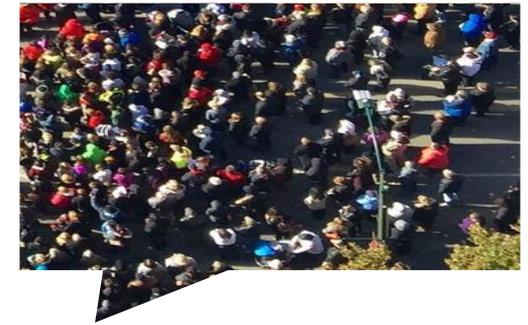
Those who are struggling with the cost of housing, gas and food (etc.) are much more likely to feel that things are getting worse (55%), compared with those who are unaffected, who are much more likely to feel that things are getting better (27%).



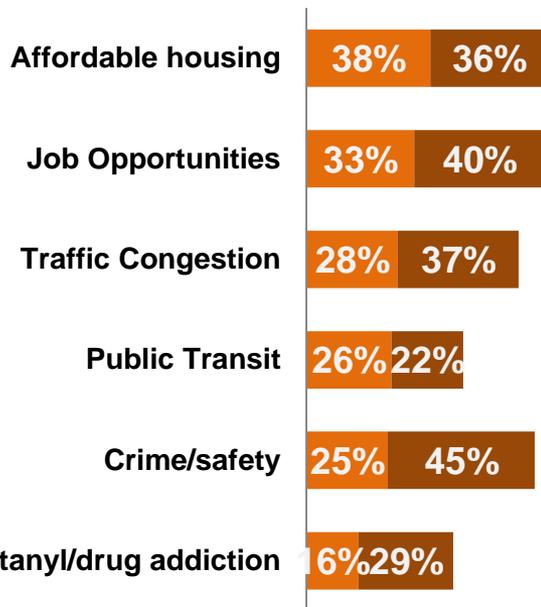
Q11. On the whole, would you say things are getting better, worse or staying the same for you and your family?

Your Concerns

Affordable housing, job opportunities and traffic congestion top the list for those struggling, and are much less concerning for those who are feeling the squeeze or those unaffected.

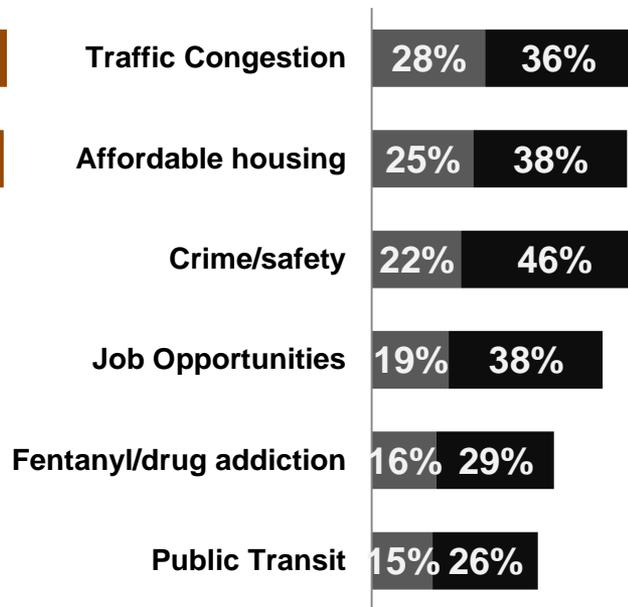


Struggling



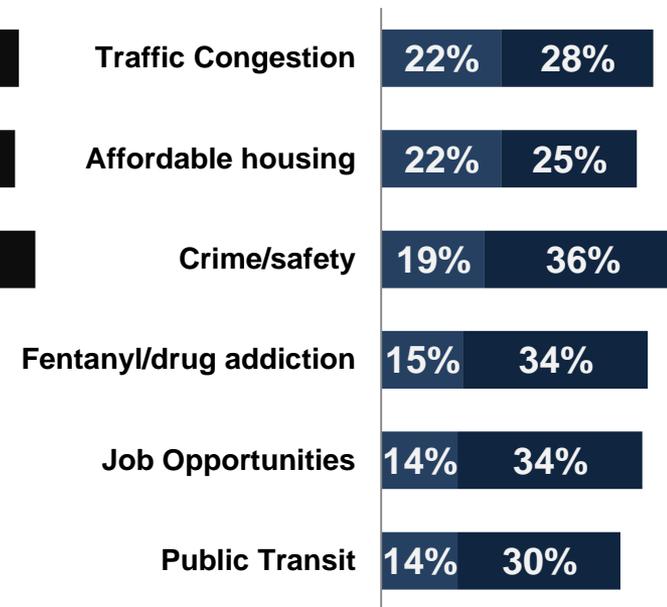
■ A big concern ■ A concern

Feeling the Squeeze



■ A big concern ■ A concern

Unaffected



■ A big concern ■ A concern

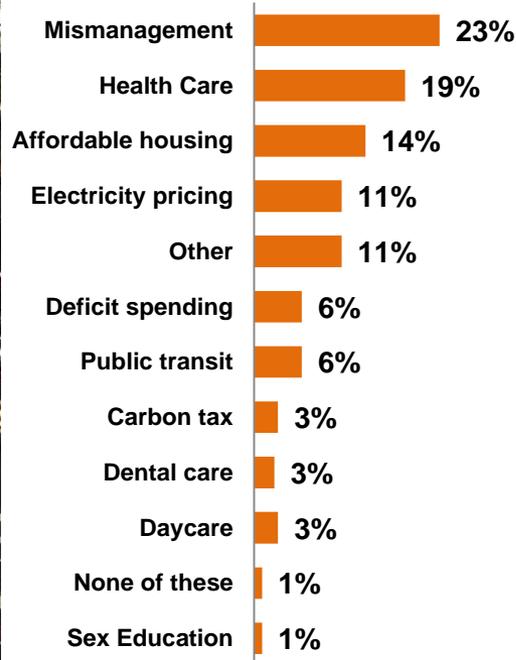


POLITICS: Cost of Living

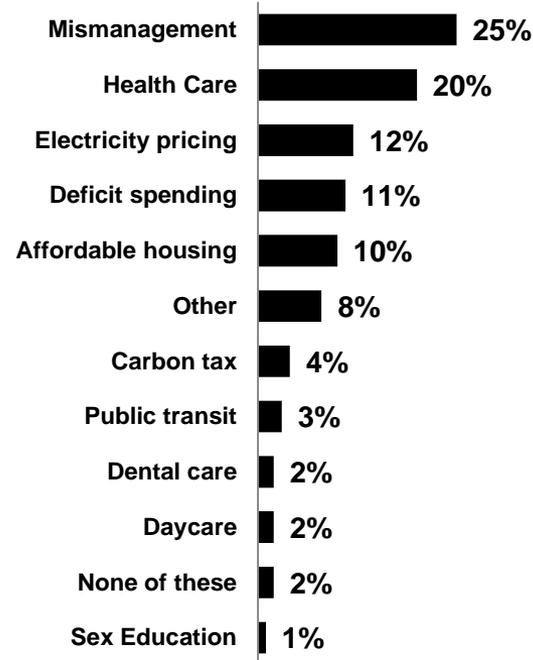
Election Issue

The major election issues remain stable regardless of the group, however, those who are struggling are slightly more likely to select affordable housing or electricity and those who are feeling the squeeze select electricity more often than those unaffected by cost of living increases.

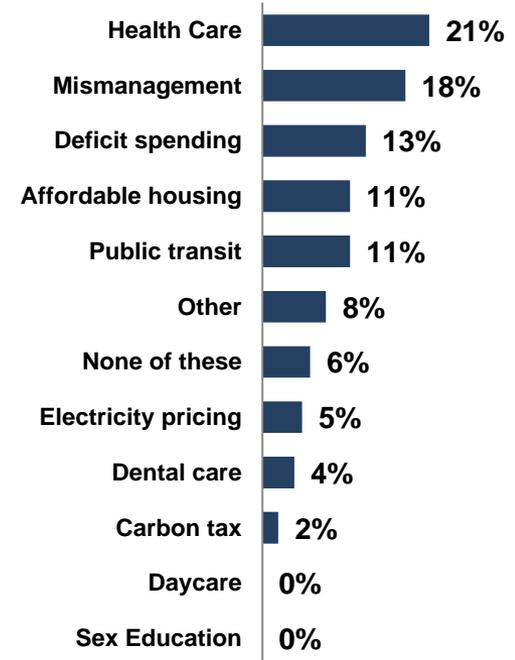
Struggling



Feeling the Squeeze



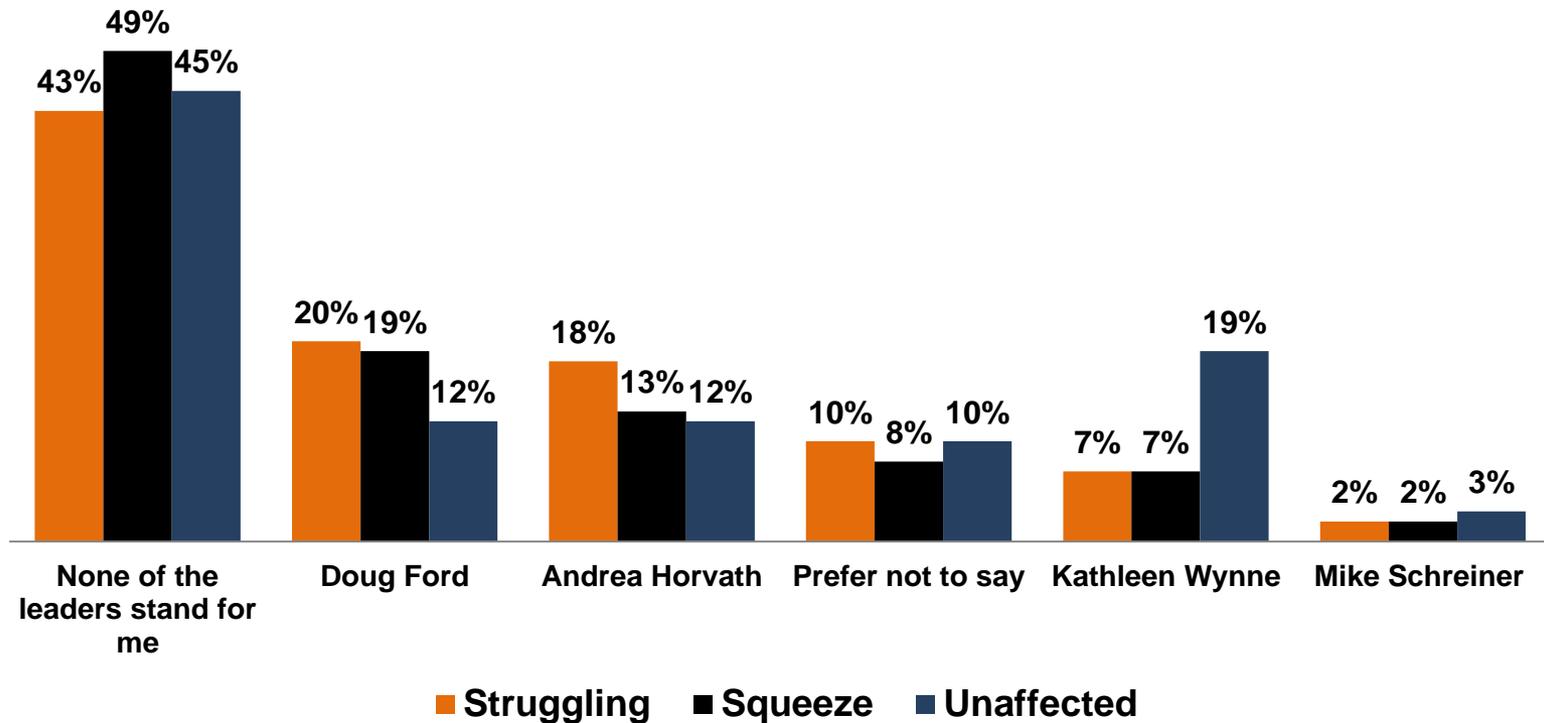
Unaffected



Q16. Thinking about the Ontario election specifically, is there an issue that is most important to you in this election? [Choose one only]

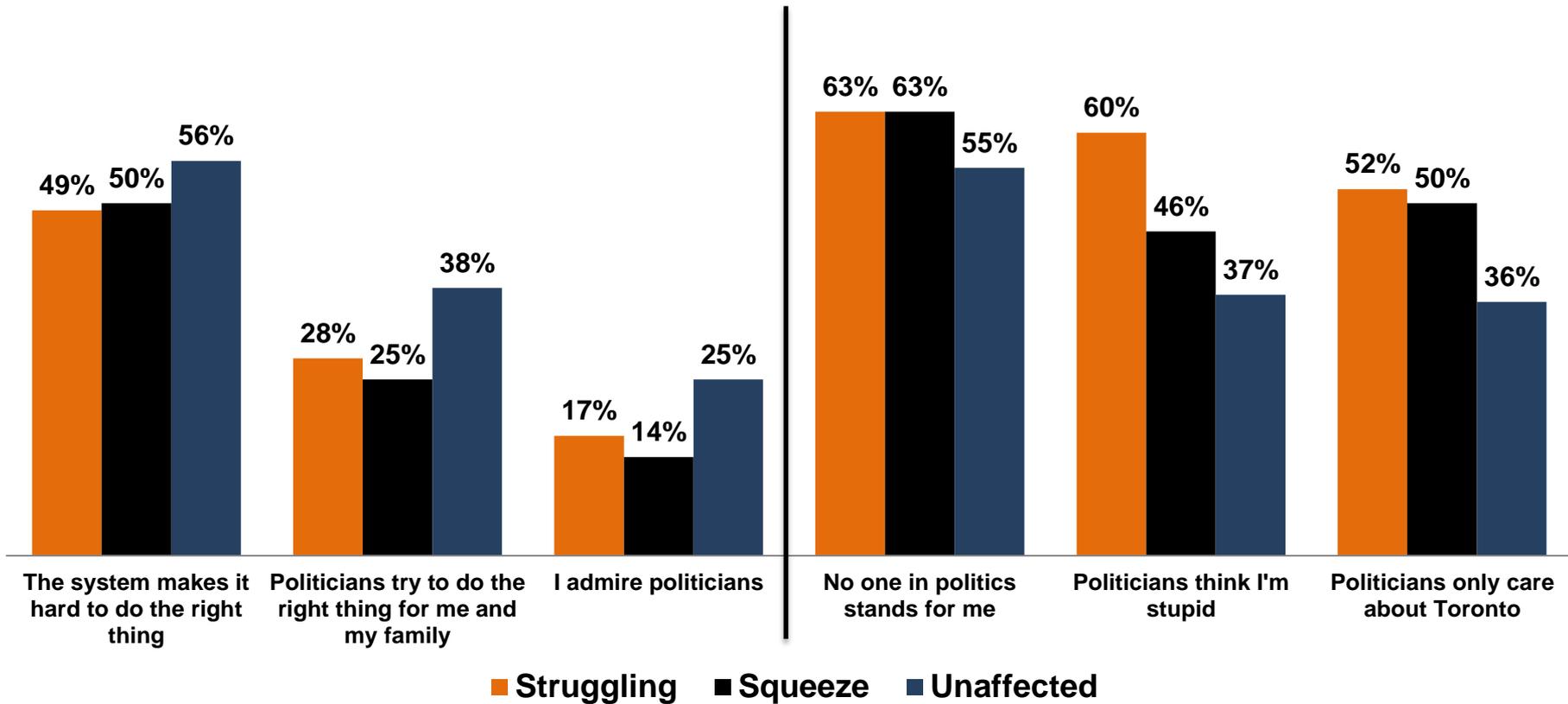
Leader that Stands for You

Those who are struggling and those who are feeling the squeeze are much less likely to say that Kathleen Wynne stands for them. Those who are struggling favour between Doug Ford and Andrea Horvath, and those feeling the squeeze are most in favour of Ford.



Politicians Positive and Negative

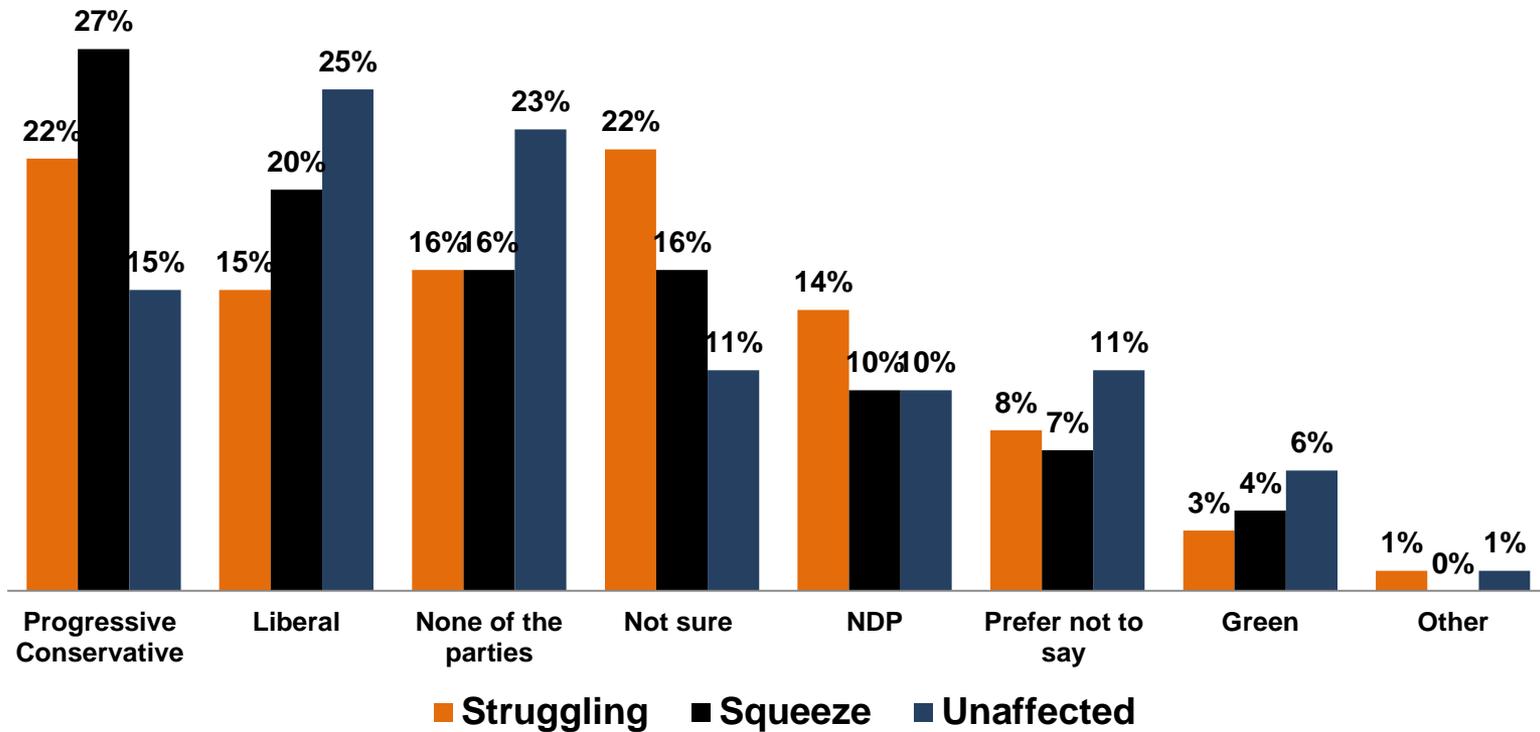
Those who are unaffected by cost of living are much more likely to feel positively, and less likely to be negative than those who are affected by cost of living increases.





Party Identification

Those unaffected rank the Liberal party highest, where those who are feeling the squeeze or struggling are more likely to be Progressive Conservative.



An aerial, top-down view of a city street, likely Times Square in New York City, showing a dense crowd of people, buildings, and trees. The image is darkened with a blue overlay. The text "KEY TAKE-AWAYS" is centered in a bold, orange font.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Key Take-Aways



NO CLASS WAR

The working class are more likely to be affected by the cost of living, but the most important issue and leader choice are no different than the elite in Ontario, and they are only slightly more likely to choose the PCs.



WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS

Housing, crime and jobs emerge as the top three concerns for those living outside the GTA, and Doug Ford and Andrea Horvath are close. But housing and transit are more important and Wynne is rated more favourably in the GTA.



ONTARIANS ARE FEELING THE SQUEEZE

Six in ten are feeling the squeeze when it comes to the cost of gas, groceries and electricity, and 3 in 10 are struggling. Those struggling or feeling the squeeze are more likely to choose Ford and the PCs.



METHODOLOGY



Survey Methodology

Maru/Blue Panel online survey of 1,000 English speaking adults from Ontarians (500 working class and 500 elite).

The Survey was in field May 10 to May 14, 2018.

Working class is defined as;

- **Having a job that is physical**
- **Earning an hourly wage (non-salaried)**
- **Having an annual income below \$35,000**
- **Unstable or precarious work (contract or freelance)**
- **Part-time employment**
- **Dependent on government assistance, charity or family for income**

Note: The data have not been weighted to reflect the demographic composition as they were selected to fall into working class or elite class definition. However the sample was collected to reflect the demographic background of Ontario based on statistics Canada (see appendix for detail). Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation in the Maru/Blue Forum rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated.

An aerial photograph of a city square, likely Times Square in New York City, showing a large crowd of people and surrounding buildings. The image is darkened and serves as a background for the text.

ABOUT THE NEW SQUARE



About New Square

Launched by Public Square, the New Square is Ontario's first not-for-profit online research initiative aimed specifically at giving working class Ontarians an opportunity to express their opinions about their communities, work and health, as well as other issues of importance. www.newsquare.ca

About Public Square

Public Square is a public affairs research organization that specializes in reaching hard to communities, building online communities, gauging change over time. Our client roster includes the CBC, Electricity Distributors Association, International Fund for Animal Welfare, McGill University, CUPE Saskatchewan, Campaign Gears and Campbell Strategies, among others. www.publicsquareresearch.ca

About Heather Bastedo

Heather holds a PhD and MA in Political Science from the University of Toronto. She is co-editor of *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up: Perceptions and Performance*, a book that measures the health of Canadian democracy, and co-author of *Representation in Action: Canadian MPs in the Constituencies*.



CONTACT

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NEWSQUARE



NEWSQUARE

Gathering Working Class Ontarians around the issues
that matter—amplifying their voice



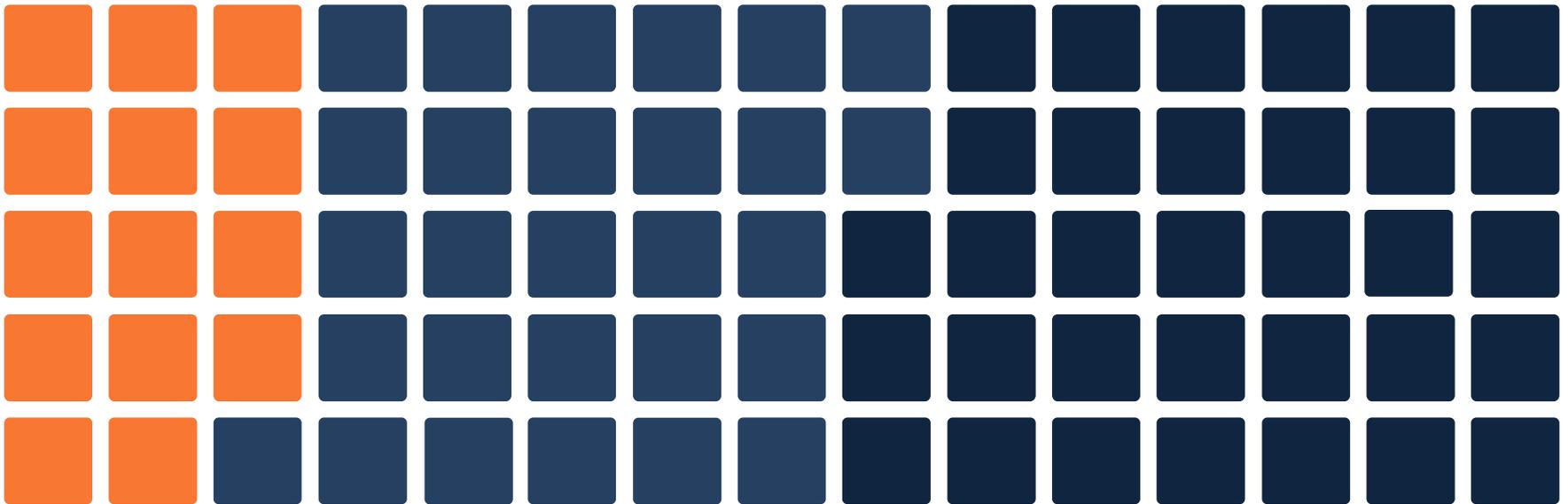
APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

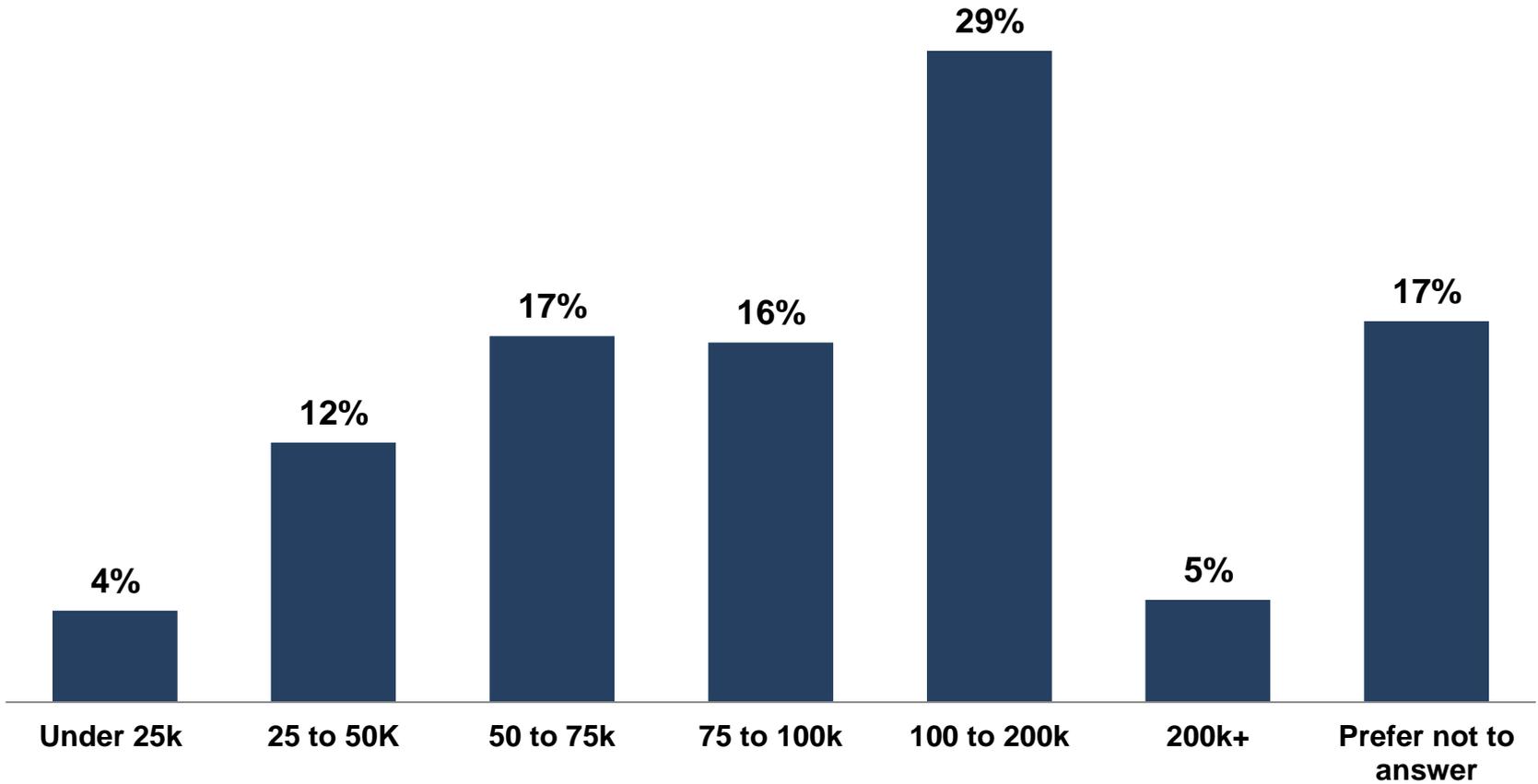
19%
18 to 34

37%
35 to 55

44%
More than 55

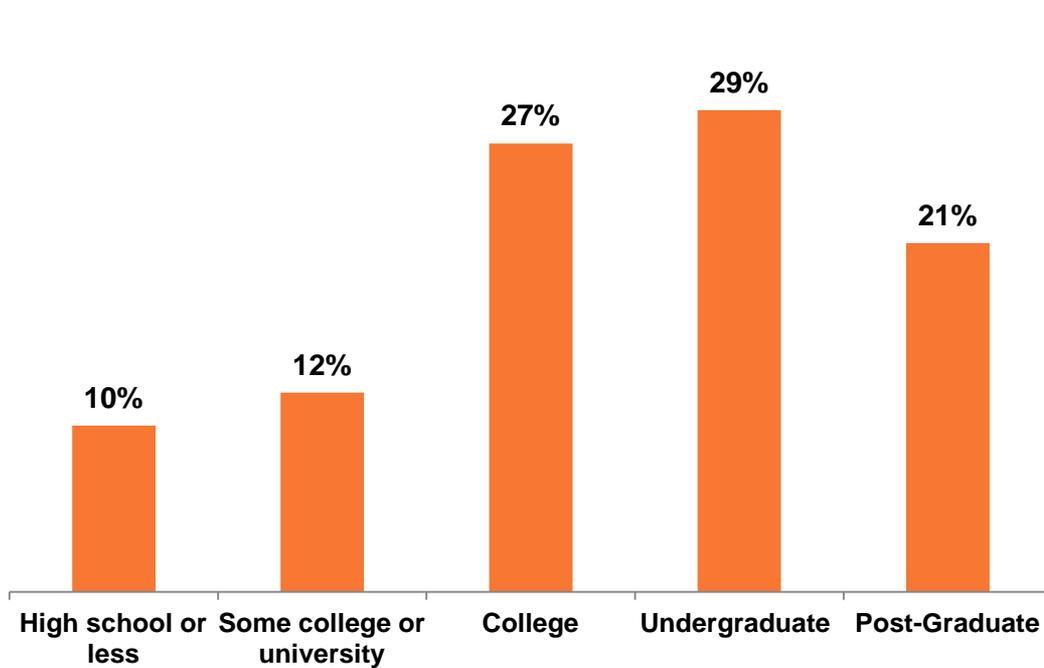


Income

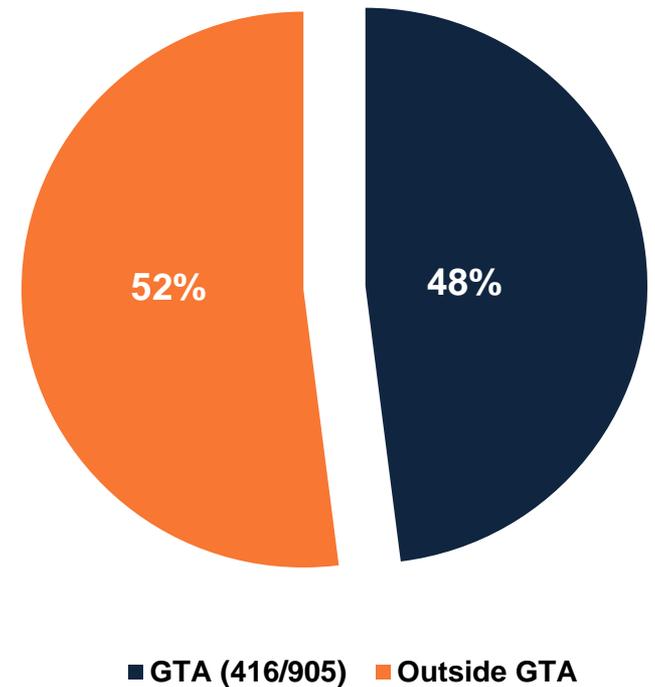


Education and Region

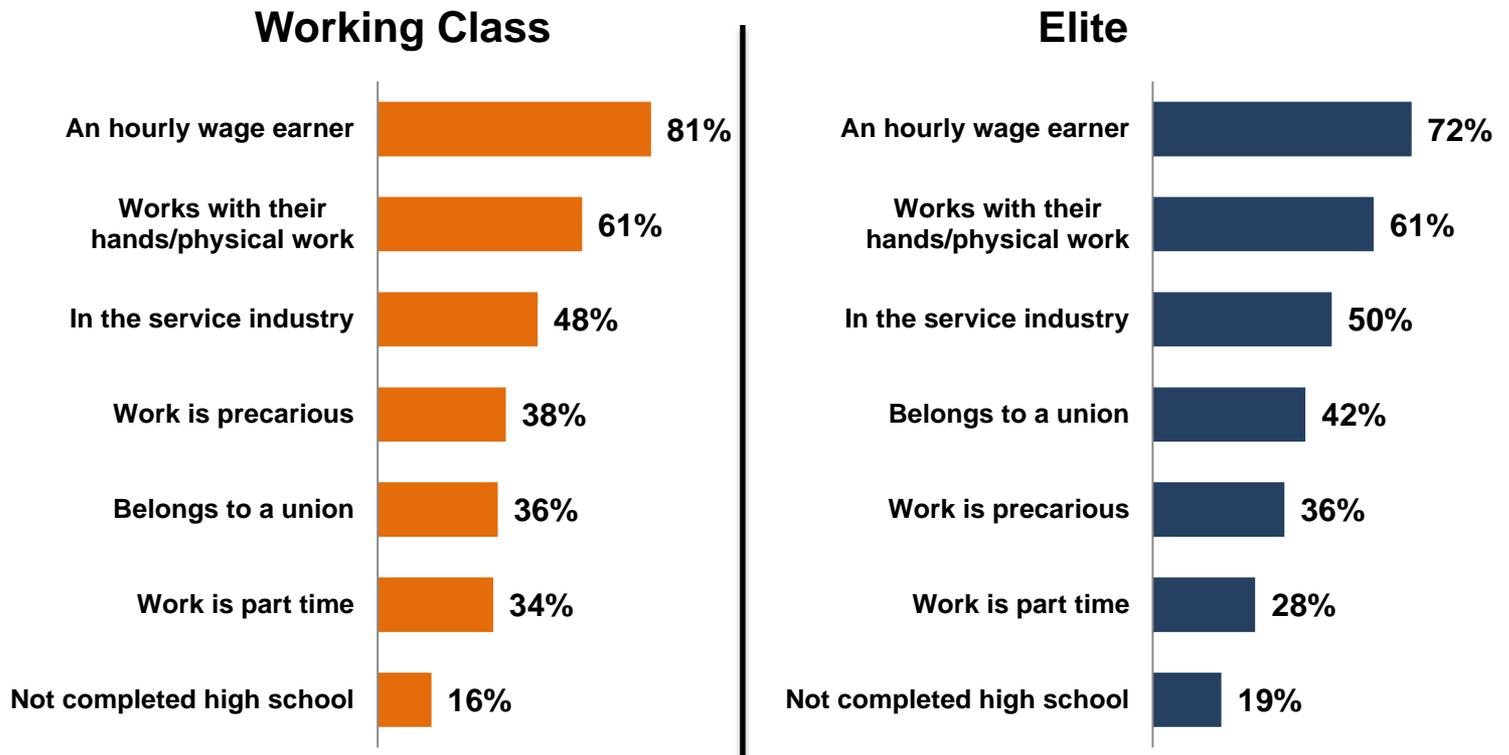
Education



Region



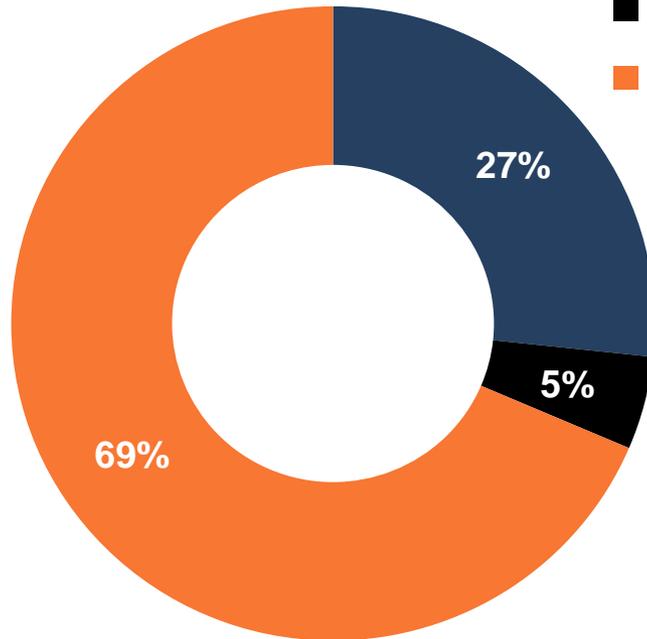
What is Working Class?



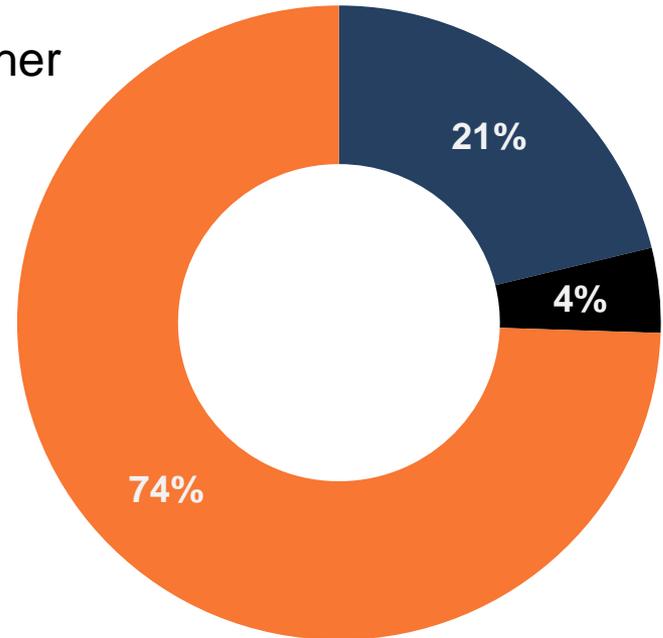
Q22. When you hear the term 'working class' which of the following statements comes to mind? Choose all that apply. [Random order]

Is Working Class Good?

Working Class

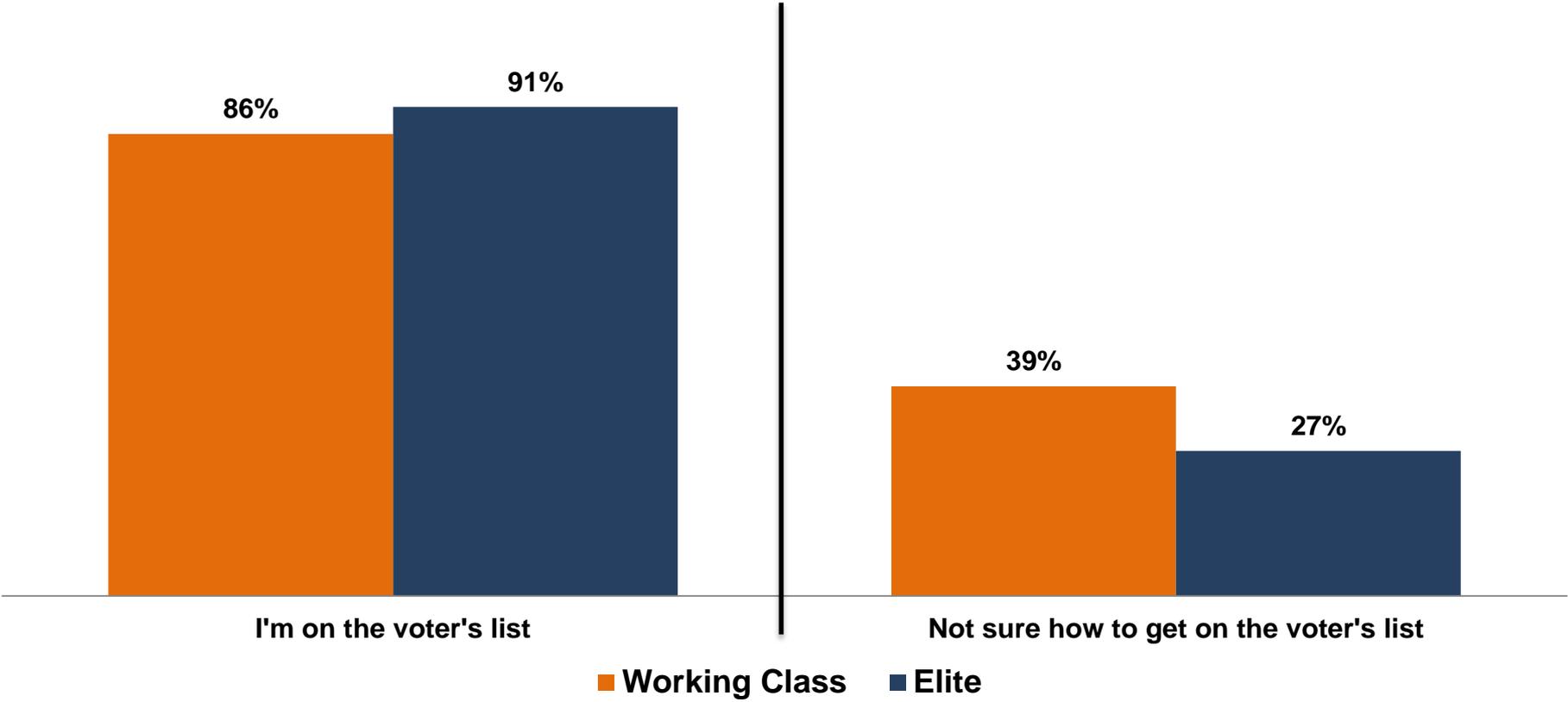


Elite

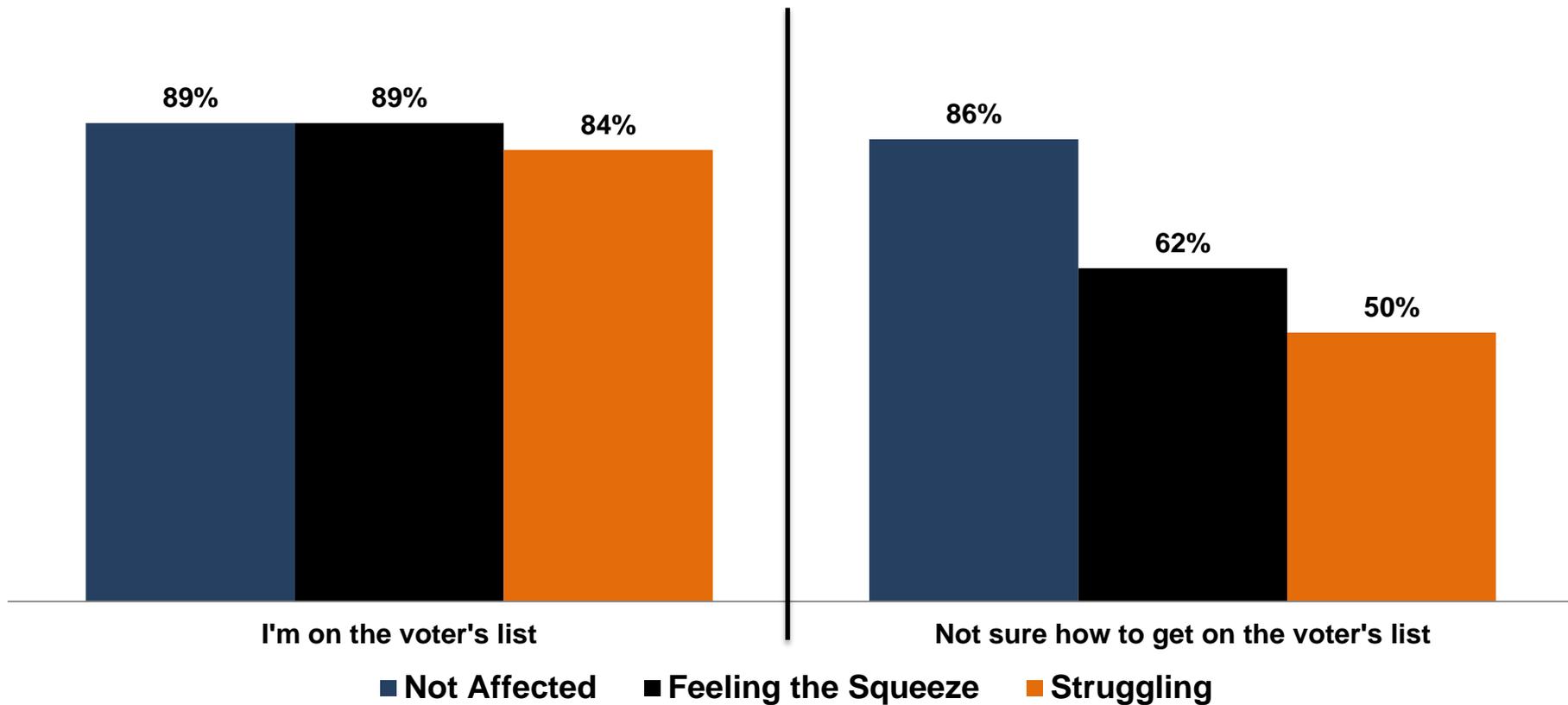


- Good
- Bad
- Neither

Voters List by Class



Voters List by Cost of Living

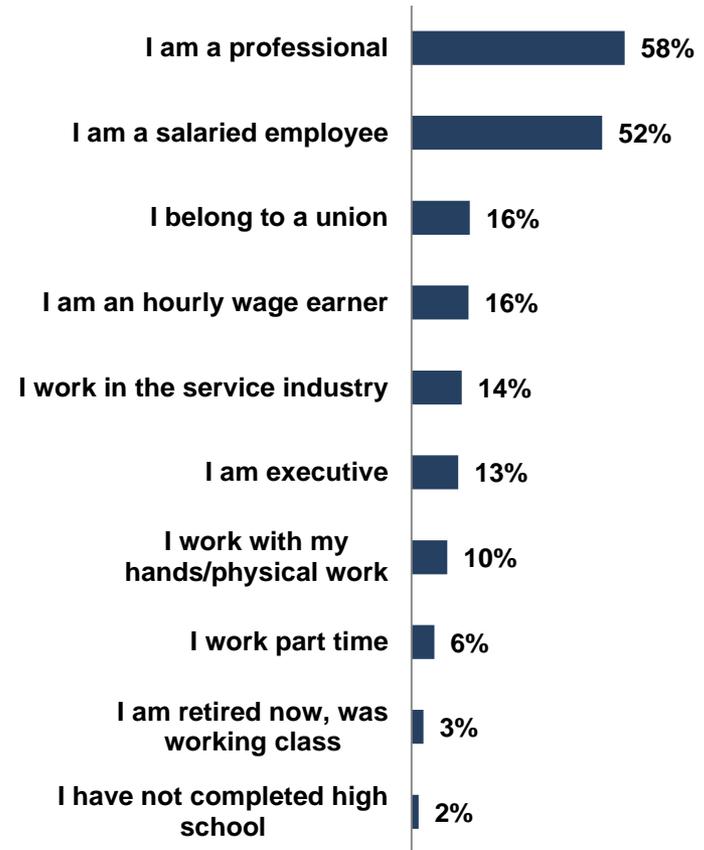


Work that you do?

Working Class

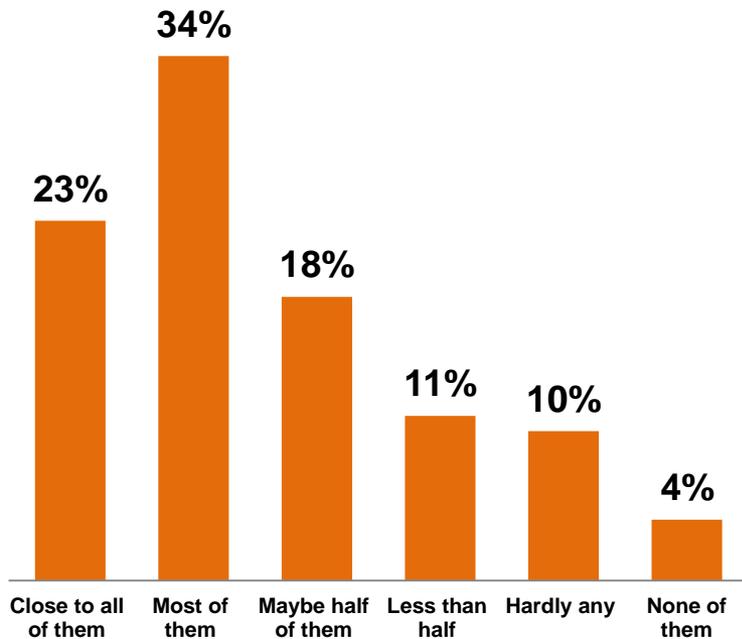


Elite



Friends & Family Working Class?

Working Class



Elite

