



the gandalf group



Public Perspectives on Food Security

June 20, 2024





Methodology



Core Sample Gen. Pop. n=2002

Quotas/weight reflect gender, age & regional distribution of Cdn. adults

Core Sample + Oversample (n=560)

- *First Nations/Indigenous =239*
- *Manitoba n=285*
- *Newfoundland & Labrador n=233*

Data in the deck drawn from the core sample n=2002, except for the three populations above which draw on the core + oversamples.



Margin of error for a probability-based sample of n=2002

+/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20



Online Panel Survey

May 24 – June 8, 2024

Comparisons with:

2023: n=1997 (June 8-14)

2022: n=2000 (May 19-22)

2021: n=2000 (June 28-30)



Key Findings - Context

- Year-over-year declines since 2021 in perceptions of living standards have halted.
- Somewhat fewer this year are as concerned about rising prices: 64% v. concerned → 59%.
- Yet the clear majority still rate this or monthly housing costs as their top concern.
- The proportion who feel they are “better off” financially has risen slightly (+4 points, directionally or not significant).
- Despite stable – if not better – financial assessments, the outlook is worse for the economy & direction of the country.
- Fewer believe the economy is growing or that Canada is headed in the right direction.
- And there is no change in the elevated proportion reporting they are food insecure. Nearly 1 in 5 in the past year.
- Significantly more now report they are familiar with the term “food insecurity”.



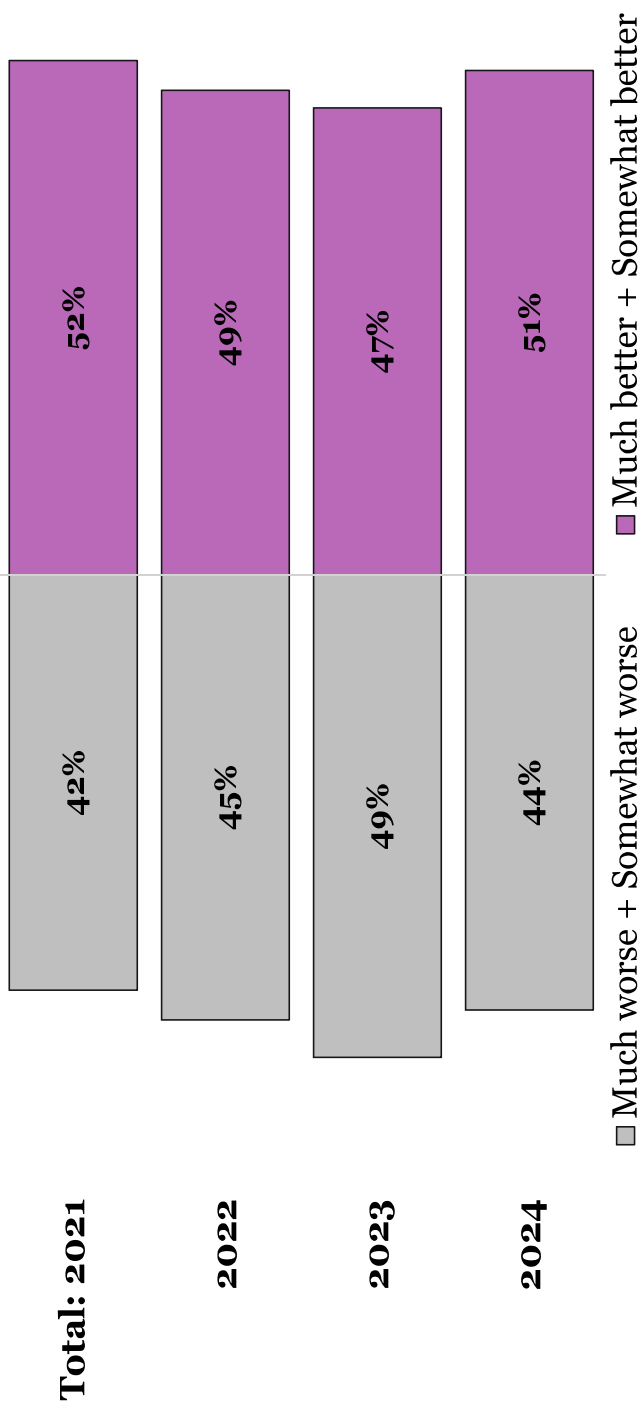
Key Findings - Policy

- Just behind cost of living or housing are concerns about access to health care & aspects of poverty or food insecurity.
- Cost of living concerns explain some of the strong interest in lowering the tax burden.
- Yet there is stronger interest in policies to make housing more affordable.
- Just behind these is strong support for or agreement with key policies to address poverty.
 - Strong support for a minimum income floor to provide a safety net for all Canadians.
 - Even stronger support for raising income support for people with disabilities.
 - Most would support these - nearly half strongly.
 - There is somewhat more interest in these policies than higher minimum wages or targeted programs e.g. for low-income workers or school food programs (although those still enjoy good support).
- The fact that much of the support for such initiatives has remained constant since before the recent increase in concern about inflation suggests these speak to core fundamental values.
- The vast majority agree that people going hungry runs counter to Canadian values.
- Slightly more agree measures should be taken to address this issue as it relates to children & those with a disability.
- Support for these and for a food security agenda is as strong among those who believe Canada's on the right track.
 - I.e. there is no complacency about these issues even among those who think the economy and government are headed in the right direction. This group is somewhat more likely to support these.



Worse Off vs. 2 Years Ago

- After steadily increasing, the proportion of Canadians who report they are worse off has declined.
- However, the proportion that feels better off has not increased significantly (+4 points).
- Younger Canadian adults – aged 18-44 – are mostly likely to say they are better off than 2 years ago.
 - Only about a third of those aged 18-34 said they were worse off, 61% better off;
 - Four in ten aged 35-44 said they were worse off, 57% better off.



Would you say that you are financially better off or worse off now than two years ago?

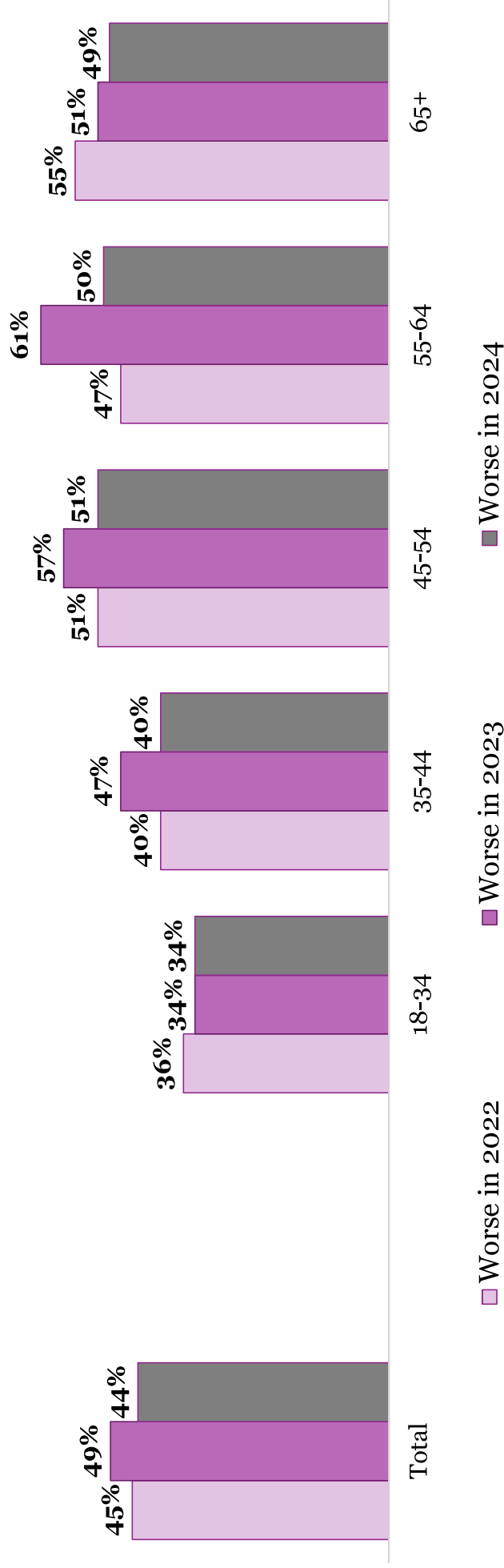
2024 n=2002 – “Don’t know” not shown



Worse Off vs. 2 Years Ago

Tracking data

- In 2023, middle-aged/middle-income were most likely to report they were worse off. This has moderated: close to half now.
- Younger Canadian adults – aged 18-44 – are mostly likely to say they are better off than 2 years ago.
 - Only about a third of those aged 18-34 said they were worse off, 61% better off;
 - Four in ten aged 35-44 said they were worse off, 57% better off.



Would you say that you are financially better off or worse off now than two years ago?

2024 n=2002; 2023 n=1997 – 2024 survey age groups min n=232 max. n=548

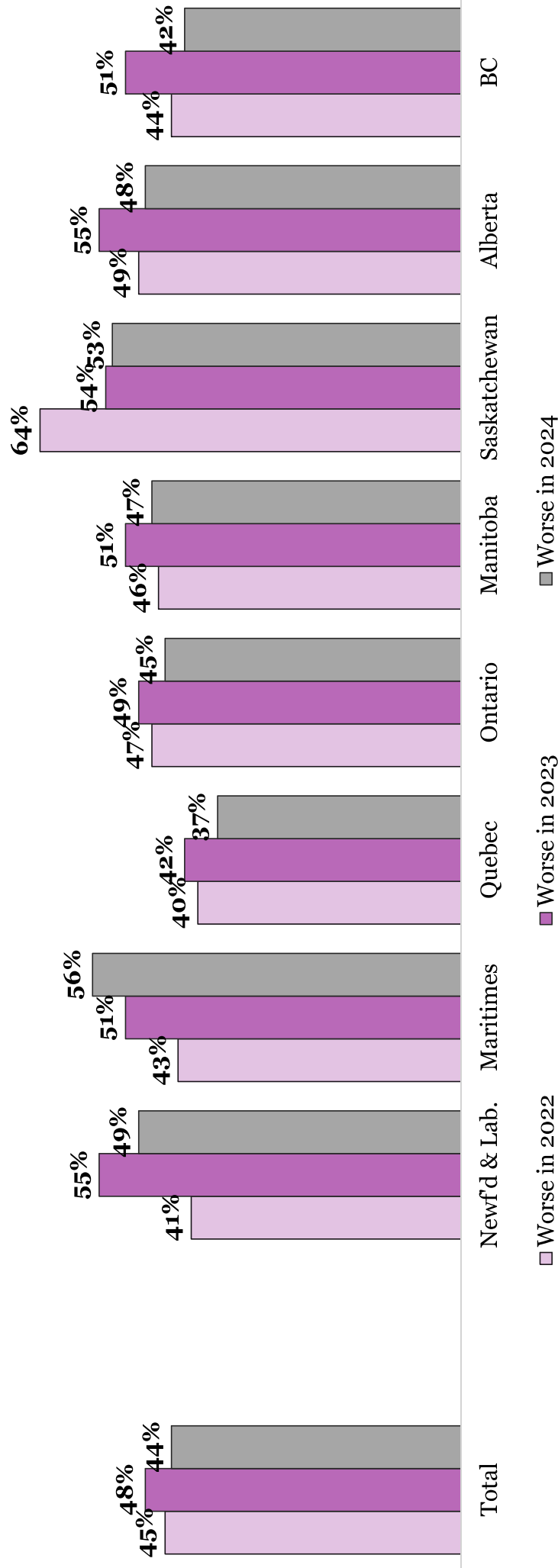
% choosing “Much worse and Somewhat worse”



Worse Off vs. 2 Years Ago

Tracking data

- As in 2023, Quebecers are less likely than others to report economic stress: e.g. worse off than 2 years ago.
- The % reporting they were worse off has declined slightly or significantly in all parts of Canada except the Maritimes.



Would you say that you are financially better off or worse off now than two years ago?

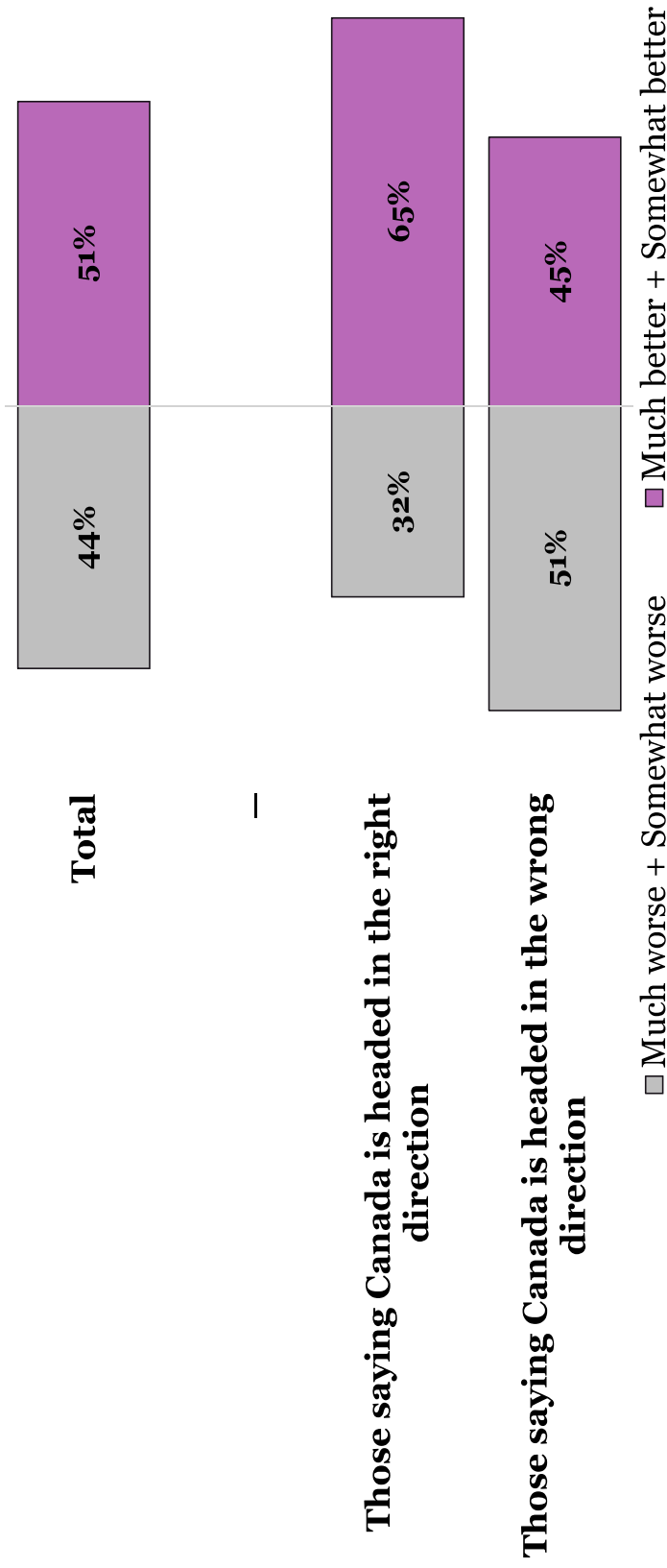
2024 - Total n=2002; NL n=233, Maritimes n=106, QC n=468, ON n=766, MB n=285, SK n=60, AB n=224, BC n=271 - 2022 & '23 smaller sample sizes for NL & SK n=17 & n=28 with Atlantic shown in lieu of Maritimes 7

% choosing "Much worse and Somewhat worse"



Worse Off vs. 2 Years Ago

- Those who feel the country is headed in the right direction tend to be likelier to say they're better off.
- But those who said it's headed in the right direction comprise a mix of assessments of personal financial situations, meaning this is a diverse group, that skews towards those who are worse off but not substantially differing from the average.



Would you say that you are financially better off or worse off now than two years ago?

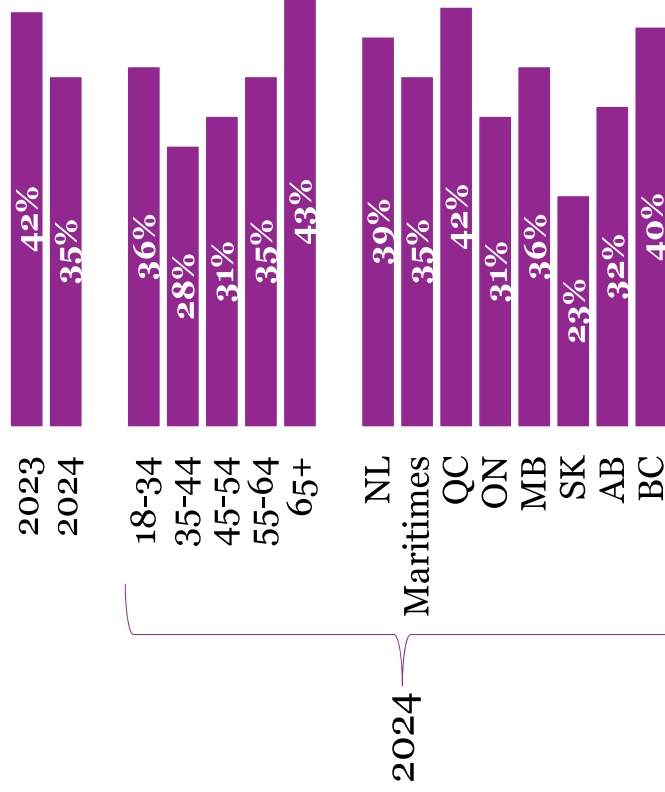
2024 n=2002 – “Don’t know” not shown – “Right direction” n=698; “Wrong direction” n=1119



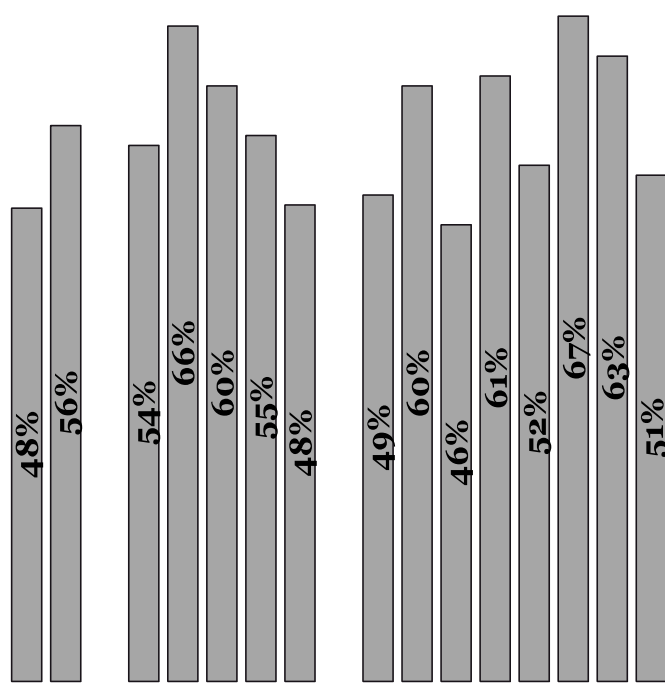
Direction of Canada

- Significantly fewer now say things in Canada are headed in the right direction – 7 points → 35% vs. 42% in 2023.
- Despite being less likely to say they were worse off now, ages 35-44 were the most pessimistic.
- As in 2023, Quebecers and seniors are likelier to say things are going in the right direction, but it is no longer the majority of each.

Some people say that, while the country has some problems, Canada is generally headed in
THE RIGHT DIRECTION



Some people say there are more things going badly than well and that Canada is generally headed in
THE WRONG DIRECTION

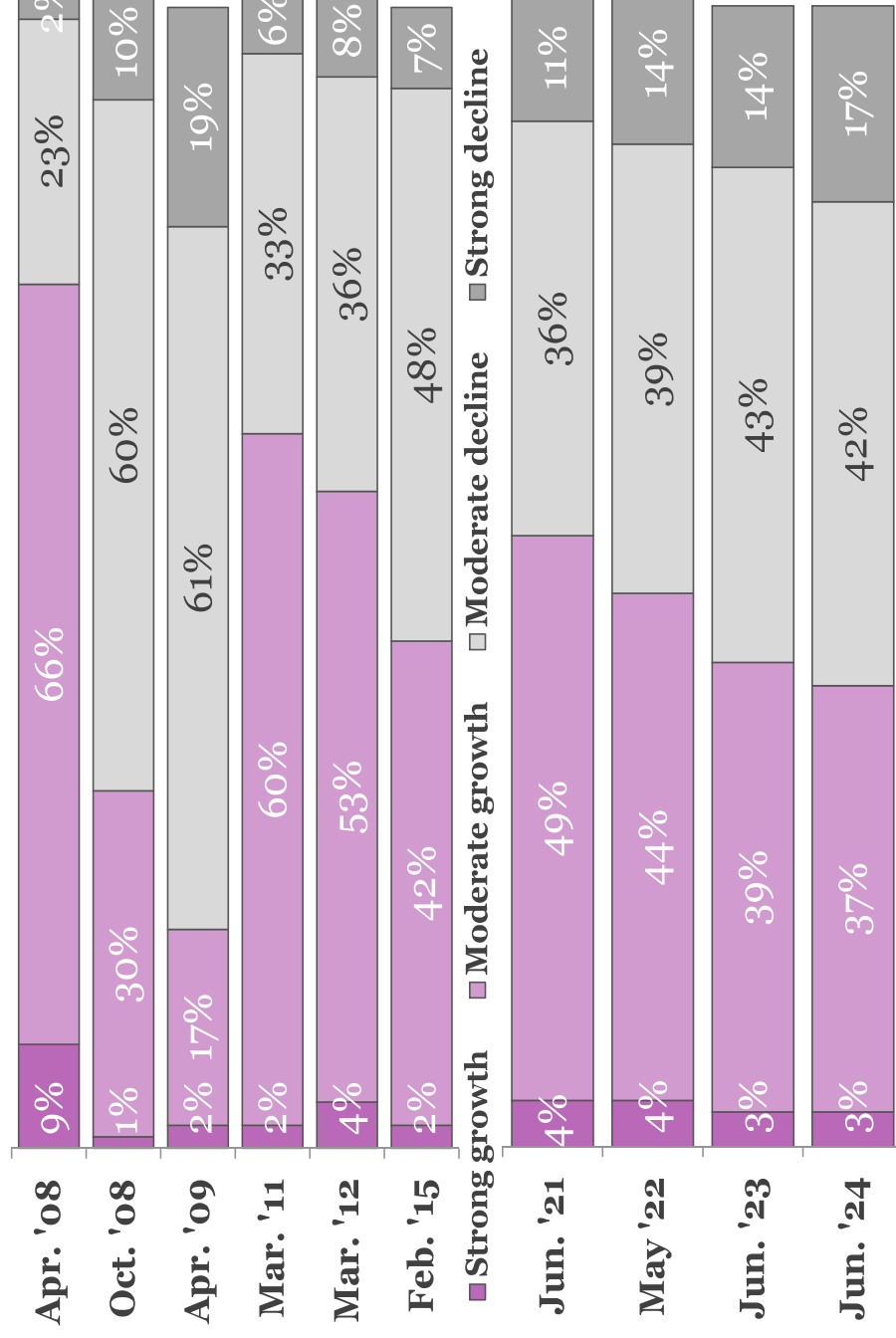


Which of these two statements is closer to your opinion?

Total n=2002; NL n=233, Maritimes n=106, QC n=468, ON n=766, MB n=285, SK n=60, AB n=224, BC n=271; Age groups min n=232 max. n=548



Current Assessments of the Economy



Underpinning this is a sense the economy is in decline.

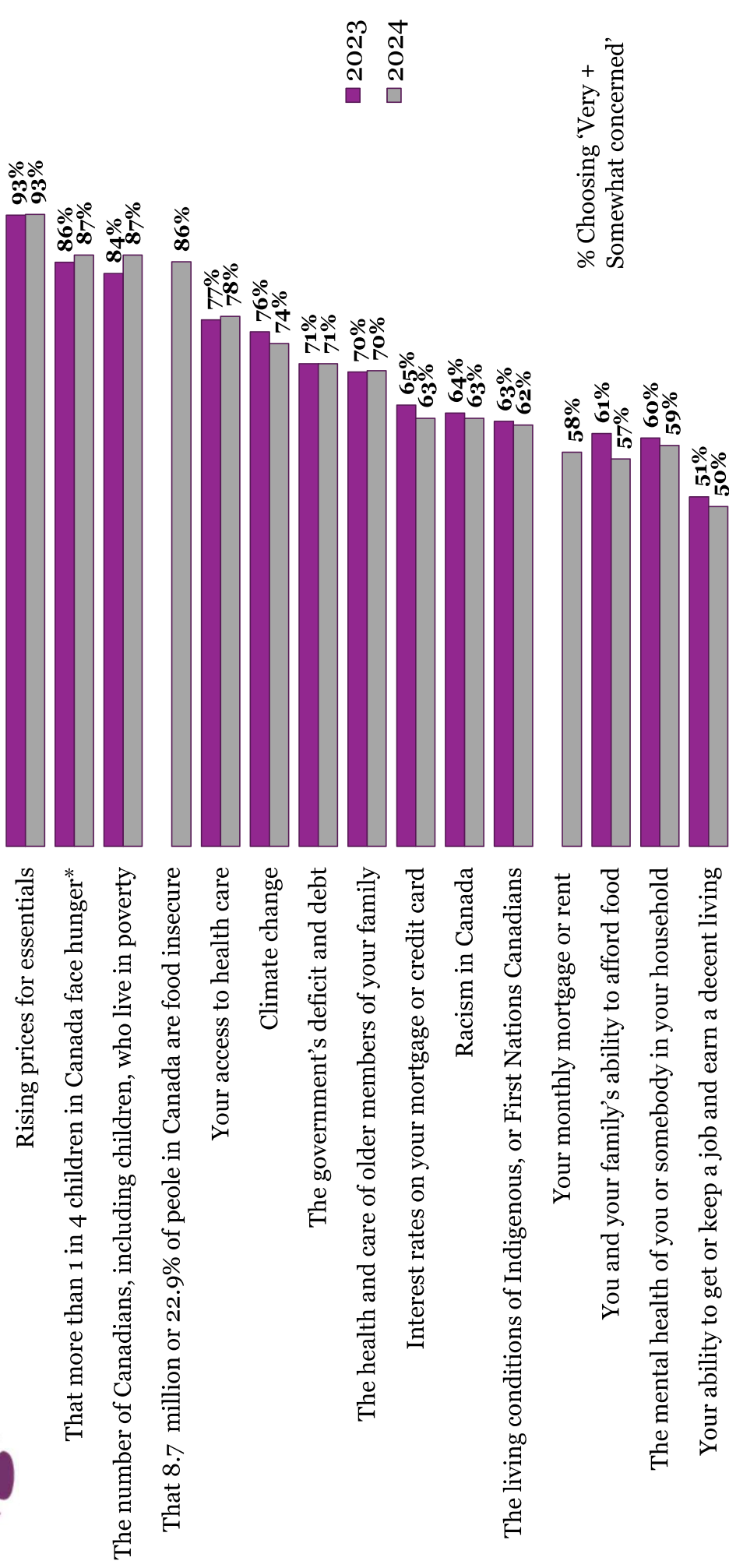
Despite an increase in the proportion who believe they are better off (+4 points vs. '23), slightly fewer think the economy is growing (-2 vs. '23).

Canadians' assessments are more positive than during the recession of 2008-09 but worse than the brief, near-technical recession of 2015-16.

"In general, how would you describe the state of the economy of Canada today – would you say that it is in a period of _____?"



Concern About Food Inflation, Poverty



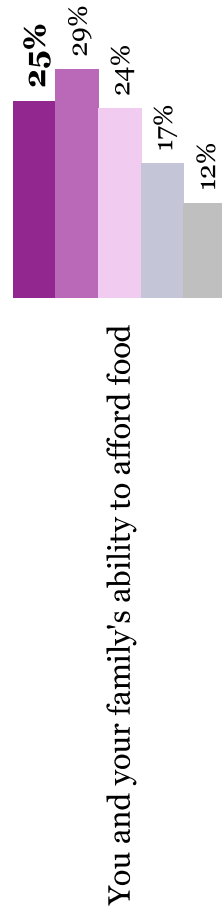
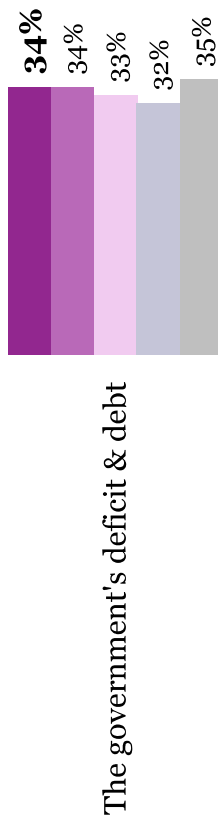
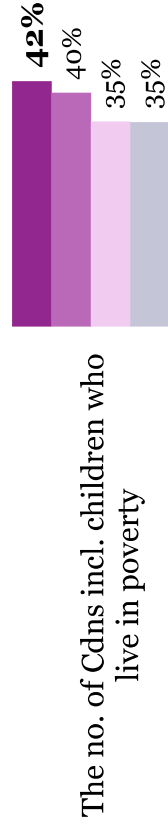
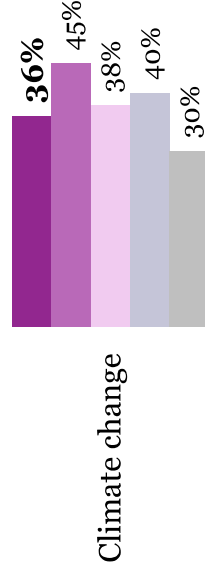
Looking ahead, how concerned are you about the following things? *2023: "That 1 in 4 children in Canada face hunger"

2023 n = 1997 & 2024 n = 2002



Concern About Food Inflation, Poverty

- Isolating the %s “very concerned” about each issue brings concern about rising prices into sharper focus.
- Concern about that & other issues has shifted slightly, with the only notable decline relating to climate change.
- Strong concern about food affordability is not significantly lower (-4 points) this year & still 2x what it was in 2020.



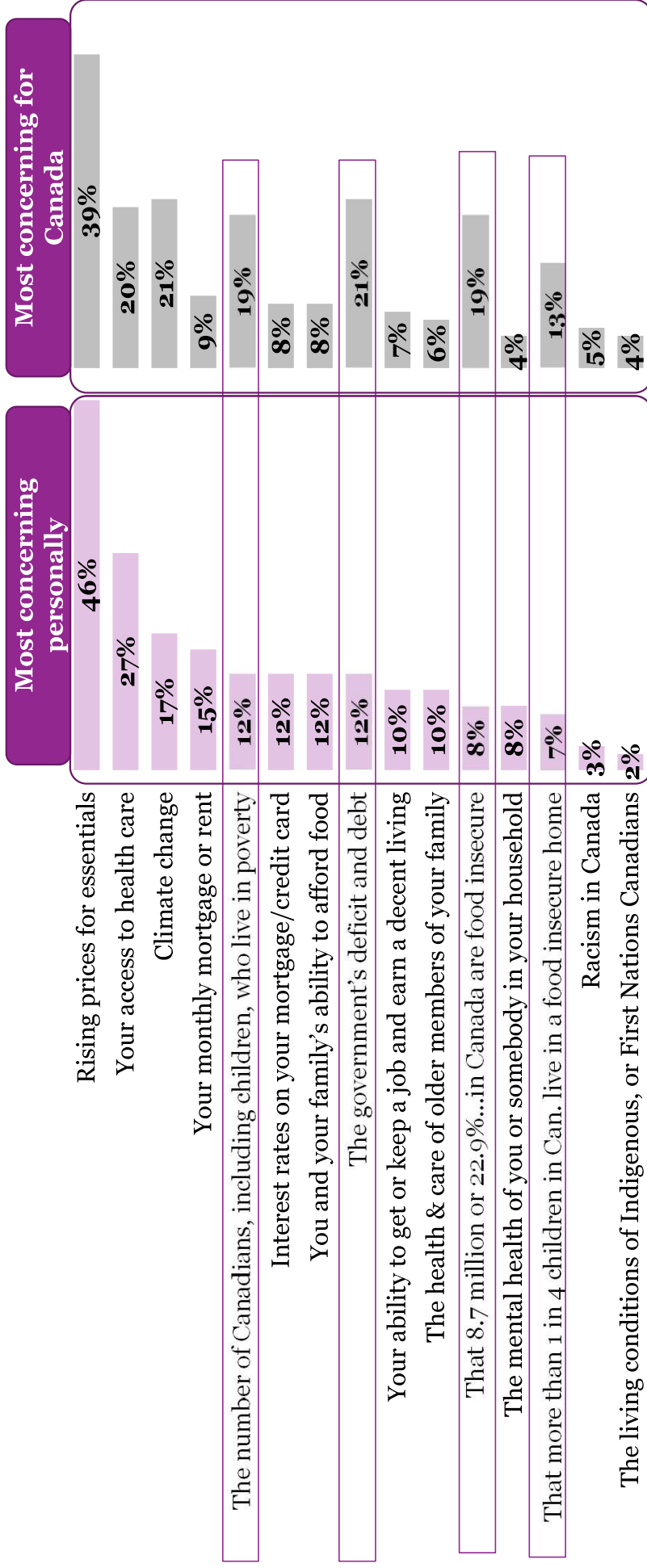
% Choosing 'Very concerned'

Looking ahead, how concerned are you about the following things?
 2024 n=2002; 2023 n=1997 - % of participants in 2022 selecting "Rising prices for essentials" OR "Inflation"



Priorities: Inflation, Health Care & Climate

Following inflation, top concerns in a forced choice are access to health care, climate change & housing costs. Many consider those to be concerning for Canada. Food insecurity & government debts/deficits are also top national concerns.



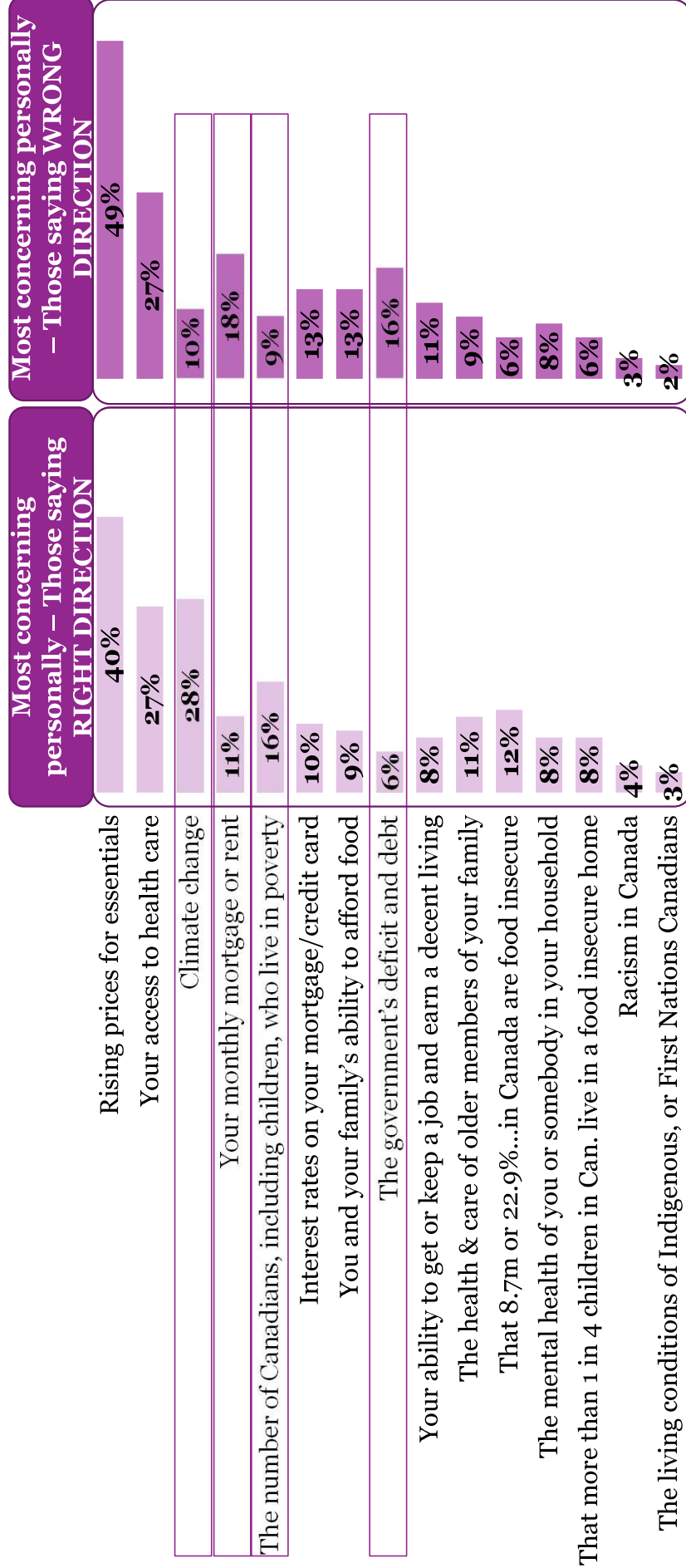
Which two of those are most concerning to you personally? | Which two of those are most concerning for Canada?
 % selecting each as one of the top 2 concerns

n=2002



Priorities: Inflation, Health Care & Climate

Concern about health care and inflation is significant across different or divergent perspectives about Canada's direction. Climate is less of a priority for those who said Canada's headed in the wrong direction. They prioritize government debt or housing.



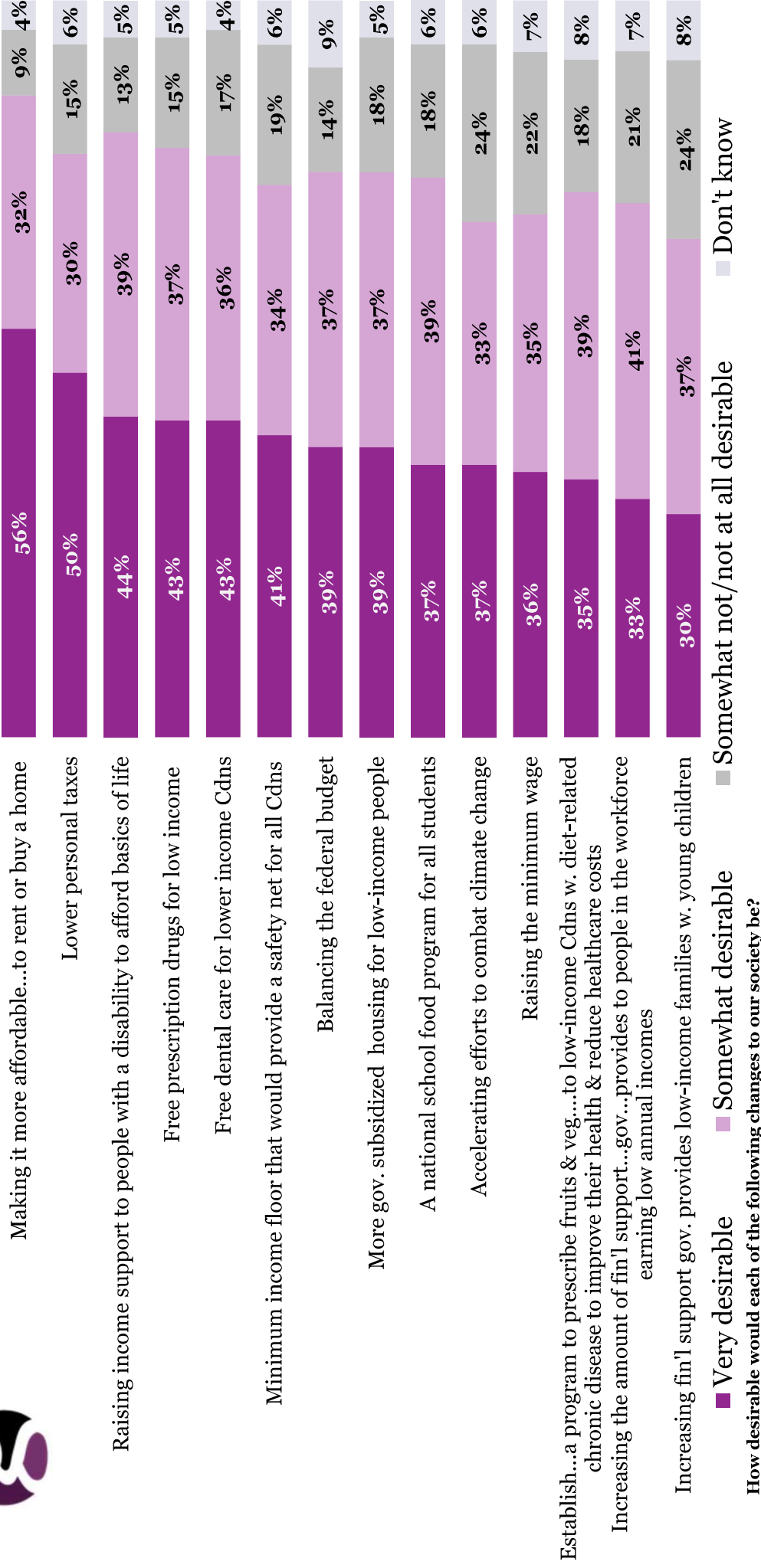
% selecting each as one of the top 2 concerns

Which two of those are most concerning to you personally? | Which two of those are most concerning for Canada?

those saying Canada headed in right direction n=698; those saying Canada is headed in the wrong direction n=1119

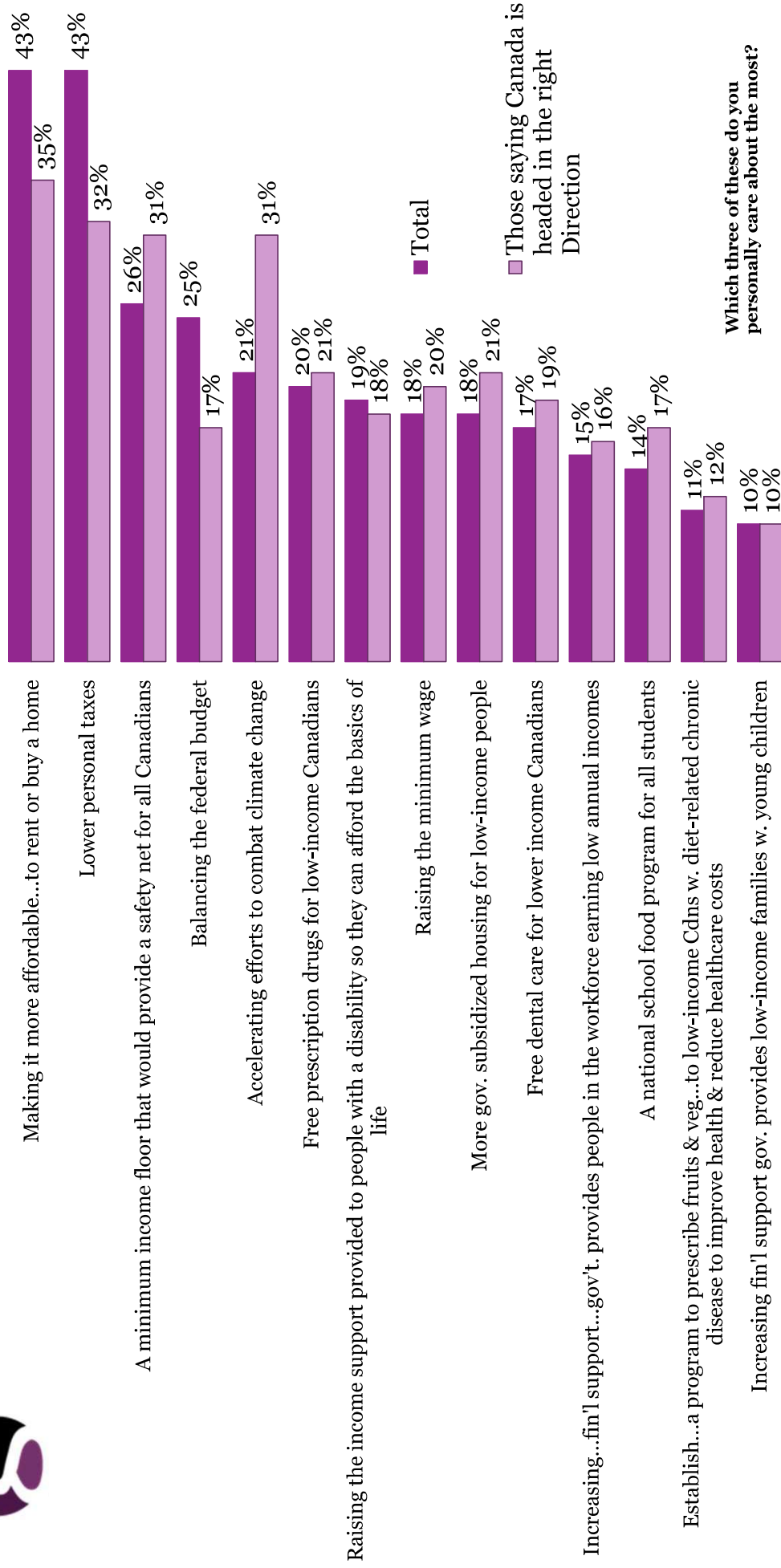


Policy Support





Policy Support: Top 3 Preferred



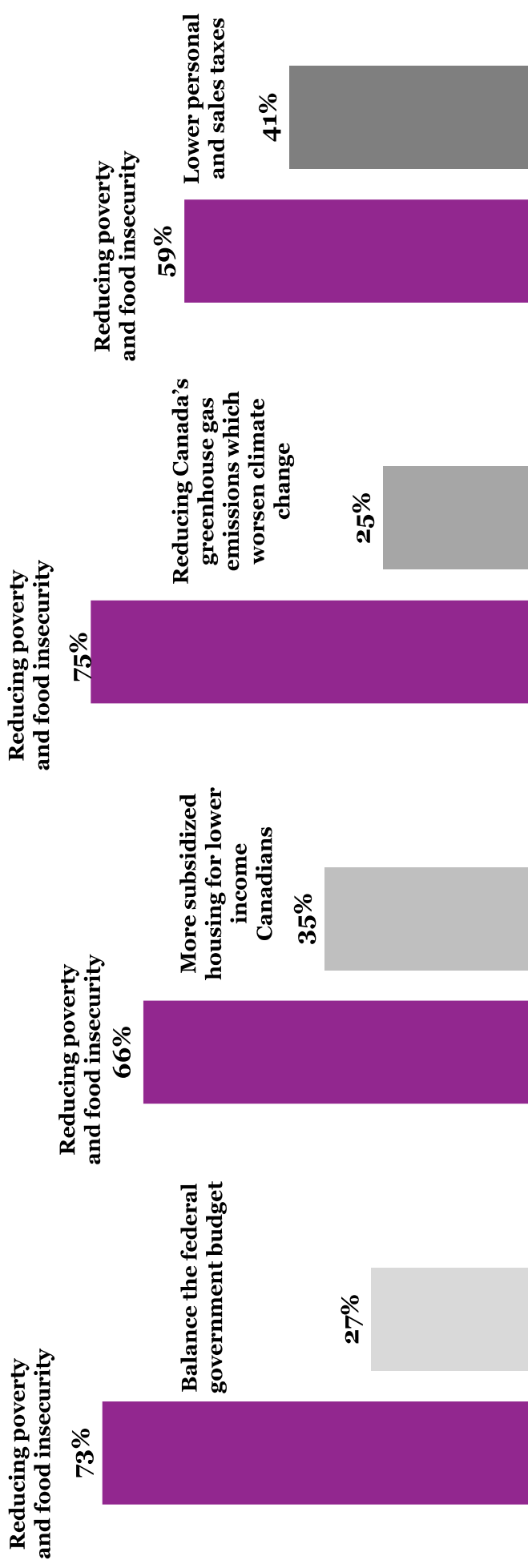
n=2002; those saying Canada headed in right direction n=698



Reducing Poverty: A Priority in a Forced Choice

In paired choices reducing poverty and food insecurity win out....

- by a substantial margin against balancing the budget, subsidized housing & climate
- by a narrower margin against lower taxes



Which of the following two initiatives do you think is more important for society?

A limited number of randomly chosen paired choices were presented: n=757-838 presented with each possible pair.



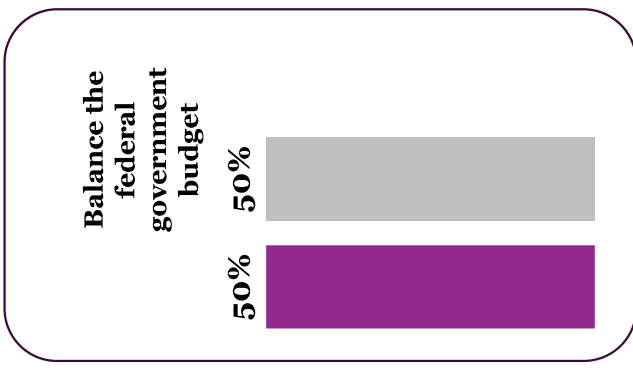
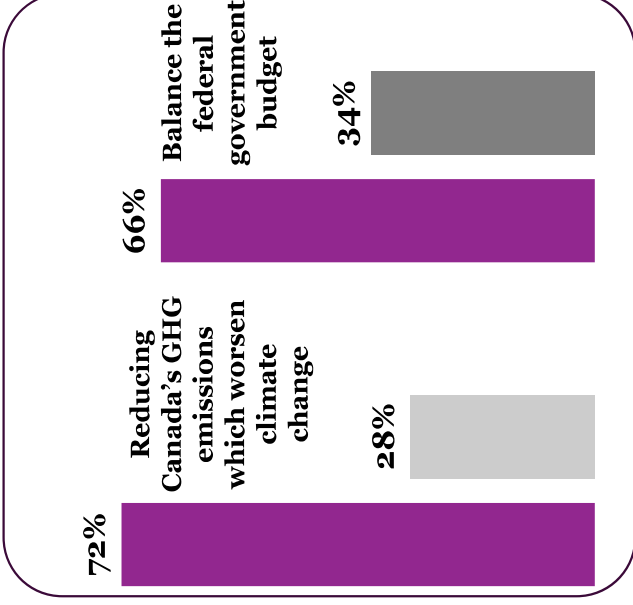
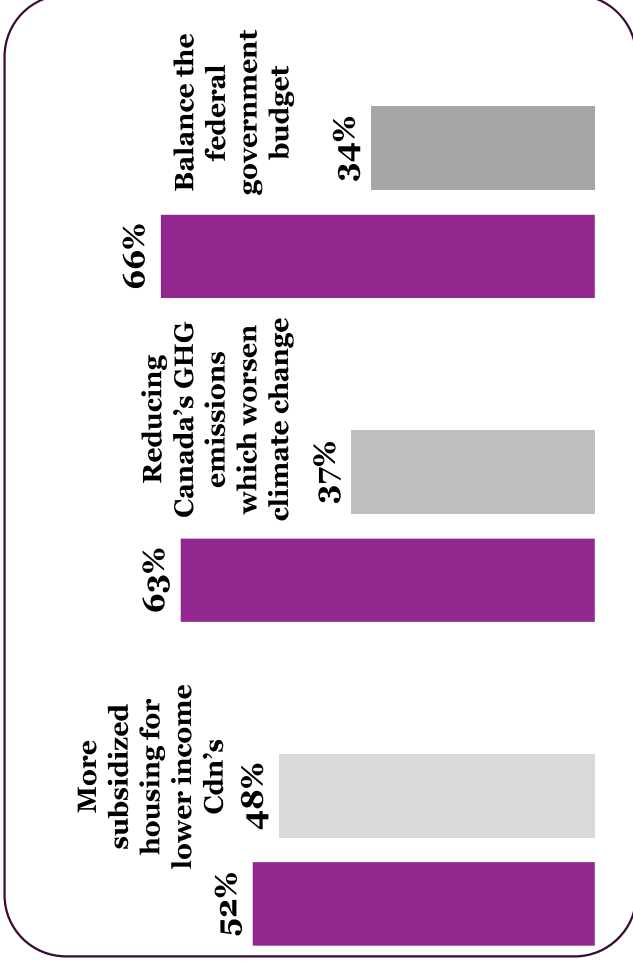
Taxes & Cost of Housing: Priorities

- The appeal of lower personal taxes splits Canadians when paired against housing but wins vs. climate or balanced budgets.
- Subsidized housing more clearly wins out over climate and balanced budgets.
- Canadians are also split between climate action and balanced budgets.

Reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions which worsen climate change vs....

More subsidized housing for lower income Canadians vs....

Lower personal & sales taxes vs....



Which of the following two initiatives do you think is more important for society?

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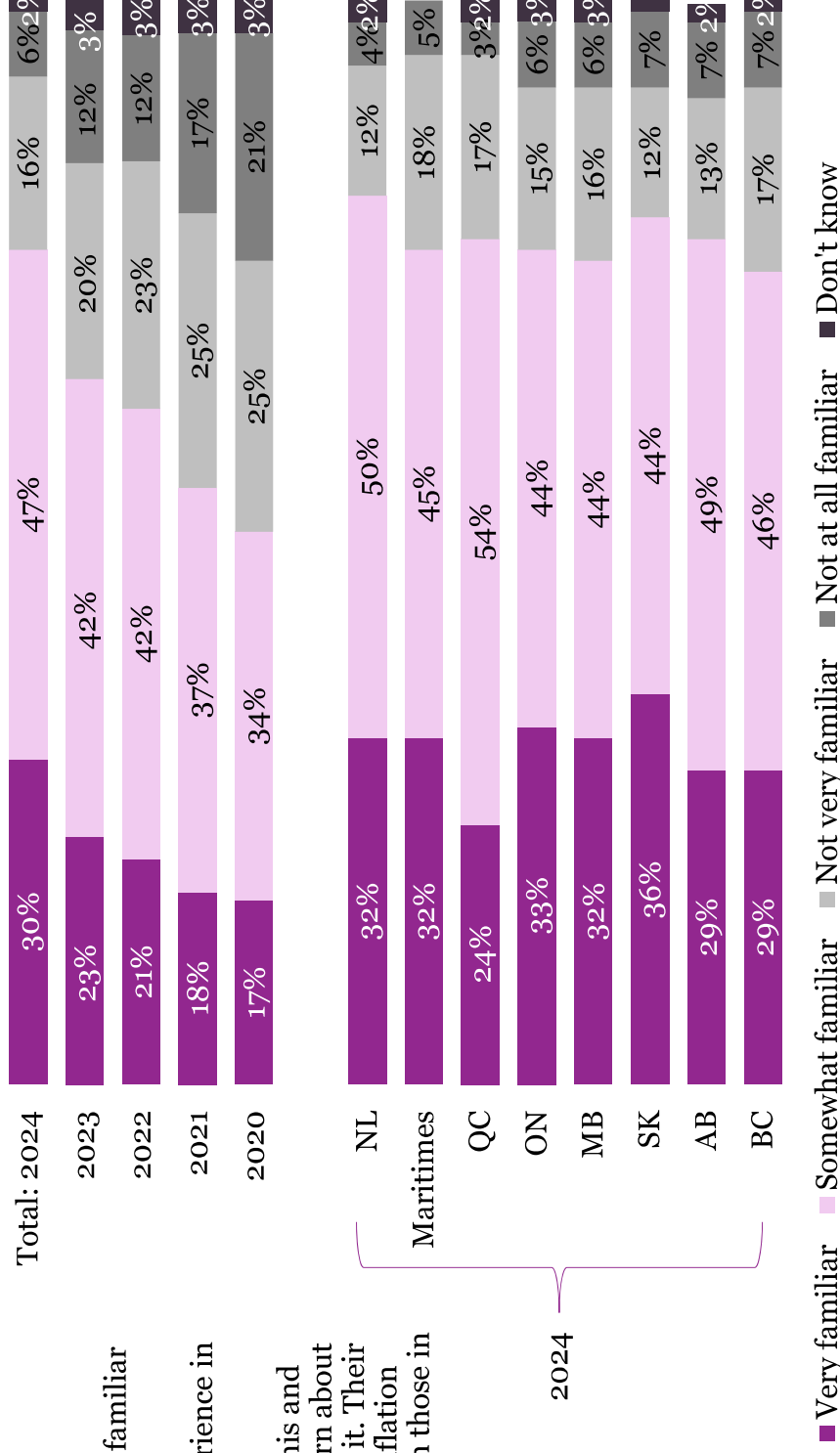


Familiarity with Food Insecurity

Significantly more Canadians are now familiar with the term “Food Insecurity”.

This may reflect what they see or experience in their community as well.

E.g. Quebecers are less familiar with this and significantly less likely to report concern about food insecurity or to have experienced it. Their perspective on economic security or inflation are likewise significantly different than those in the rest of Canada.



How familiar are you with the term 'Food insecurity'?

2023 n= 1997; Total n=2002; NL n=233, Maritimes n=106, QC n=468, ON n=766, MB n=285, SK n=60, AB n=224, BC n=271;



A Food Security Agenda for Canada

- Few think those facing poverty could mostly solve their problems without help from government.
- The clear majority agreed with arguments for government action and efforts to reduce poverty. Those who believe Canada’s on the right track are somewhat likelier to agree. I.e. they are not complacent about poverty.
- Fewer agreed (and significantly fewer strongly agreed) with arguments against government policy.
- They share a similar outlook to those who believe now is the time to address serious social issues such as poverty.



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

n=2002

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

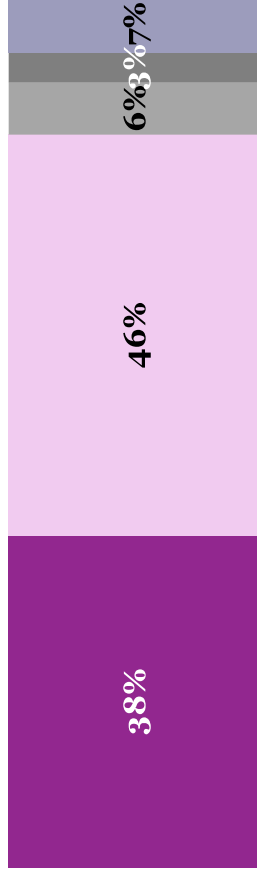


Disability & Food Insecurity

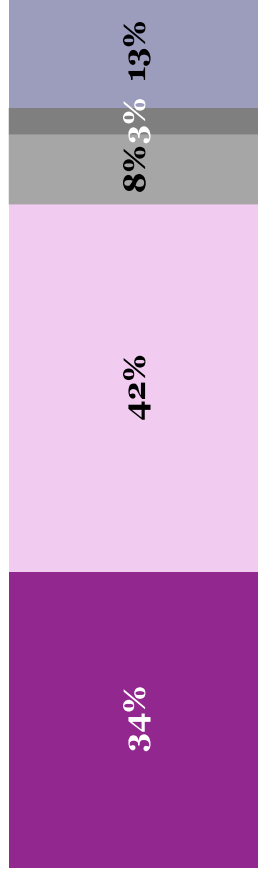
- There is effectively no opposition to measures to boost incomes of those with disabilities – 8/10 support, 1/10 oppose.

“People living with a disability are much more likely to be food insecure than other Canadians. Disability benefits are set below the poverty line and data shows that people with disabilities are far more likely than people without a disability to experience poverty and food insecurity. Would you support or oppose the following?”

A government benefit that lifted disabled people out of poverty, much like the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) does for seniors



A government benefit that provided disabled people with \$2400 a year



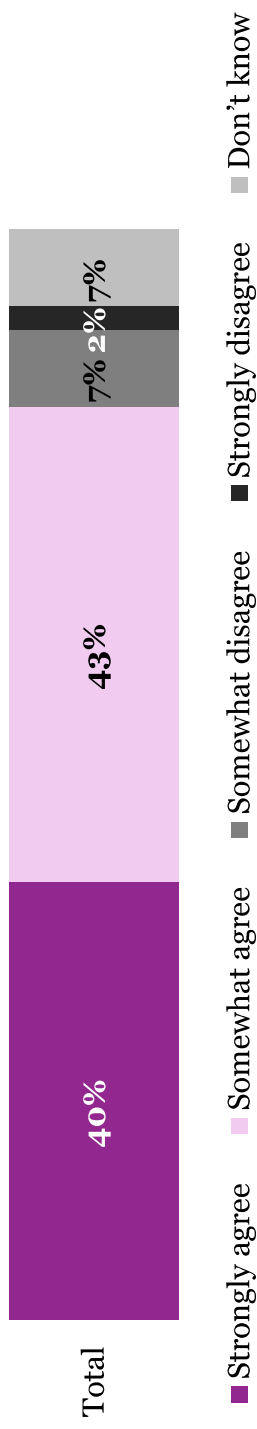
■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Don't know



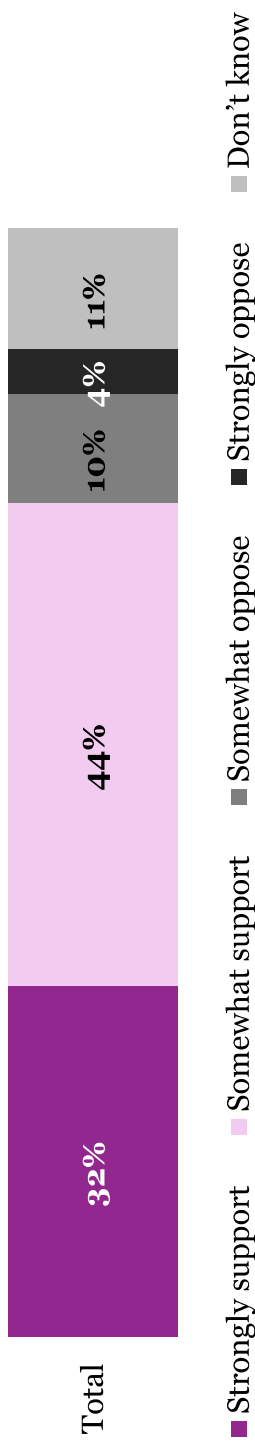
Food Insecurity & Disease

- Most agreed food insecurity contributes to myriad health challenges and almost as many – a clear majority support a prescription-based approach to promote uptake of e.g. fruits/vegetables to improve health among those with chronic disease.

“Food insecurity – and the inability to afford enough nutritious food – is a big part of many low-income people’s health problems, such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, depression. How much do you agree or disagree with that statement?”



“In the US, states and private insurers are increasingly financing the prescribing of healthy fruits and vegetables as a way to improve health among people who have chronic diseases to lower healthcare costs. Assuming that the costs of such prescriptions would be covered by the health care system, how much do you support or oppose that idea?”





There is no sig. change since 2022 or 2023 in the % that expects the federal government to increase efforts to address poverty & hunger.

Government Action

The federal government should **NOT DO MORE** to help people struggling with poverty & hunger in Canada

The federal government **SHOULD DO MORE** to help people struggling with poverty and hunger in Canada



Total 2023

Total 2024

A similar proportion said the same about their provincial government with no sig. differences between residents of QC, AB & ON.

The provincial government **SHOULD DO MORE** to help people struggling with poverty and hunger in our province

The provincial government should **NOT DO MORE** to help people struggling with poverty & hunger in our province



Total 2023

Total 2024

6-7% selected don't know on each.

Which of these two statements is closer to your opinion? [In Quebec, "provincial...province" replaced with "Quebec"]

2023 n = 1997 2024 n = 2002



Activism or Retrenchment?

Social Issues

- No change since 2022 in the proportion saying it is time to address major social issues like poverty or inequality vs. avoiding issues that could be divisive & costly to solve. Clear majorities of major groups agreed although men were less likely, as were Albertans (55%).
- Those who are better off financially in the last few years are as likely as others to agree (65%) and those who say the country is headed in the right direction are significantly more likely (79%).

Some people say that now is the time for government to seriously **ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES** like poverty, racism and inequality



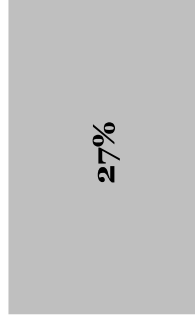
2023 - Total

Some people say that now is the time for government to seriously **ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES** like poverty, racism and inequality

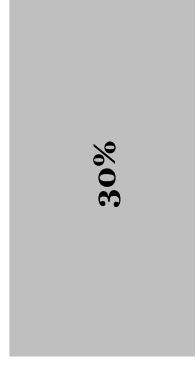


2024 - Total

Other people say that at this time government should **STAY AWAY FROM ISSUES** that could be divisive or expensive



Other people say that at this time government should **STAY AWAY FROM ISSUES** that could divide Canadians or be expensive to solve



Which of these two statements is closer to your opinion?

2023 n = 1997 & 2024 n = 2002



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If you would like to use these data, please cite
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Gandalf Group. (May 24-June 8, 2024). Public
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www.feedopportunity.com” .