

Post-Secondary Education in Ontario: Managing Challenges in an Age of Austerity

January 2013

Methodology

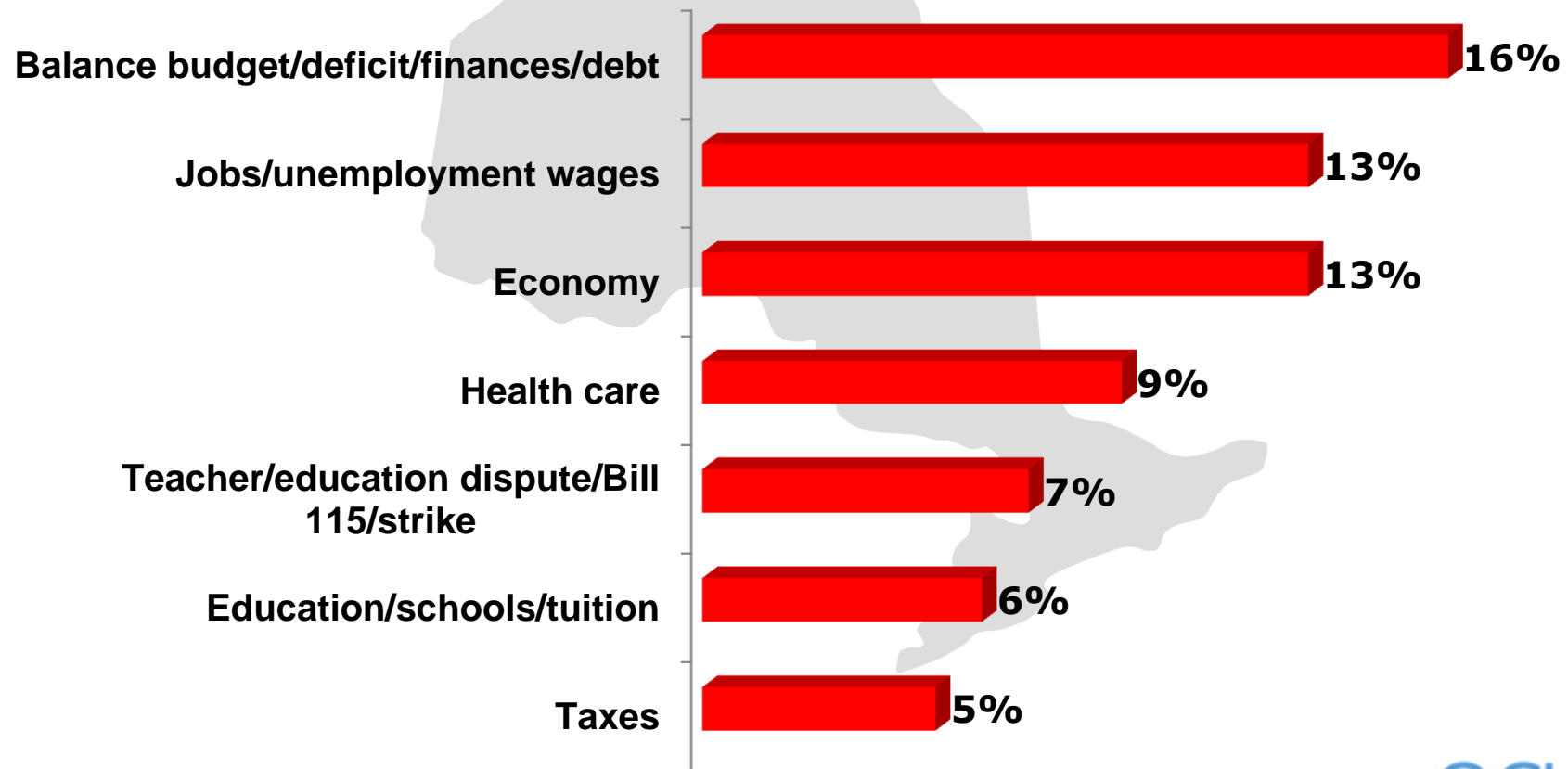
- **A total of 1,518 on-line interviews were conducted for the study between December 10th and 14th, 2012.**
- **The margin of error for a representative sample of this size is 2.5 percentage points within a 95% confidence interval. The margin of error is greater when looking at sub-segments of the population.**
- **The sample was designed to mirror the socio-demographic characteristics of the general Ontario adult population according to the latest census data.**
- **Detailed findings are outlined on the OCUFA website.**



The Political Environment

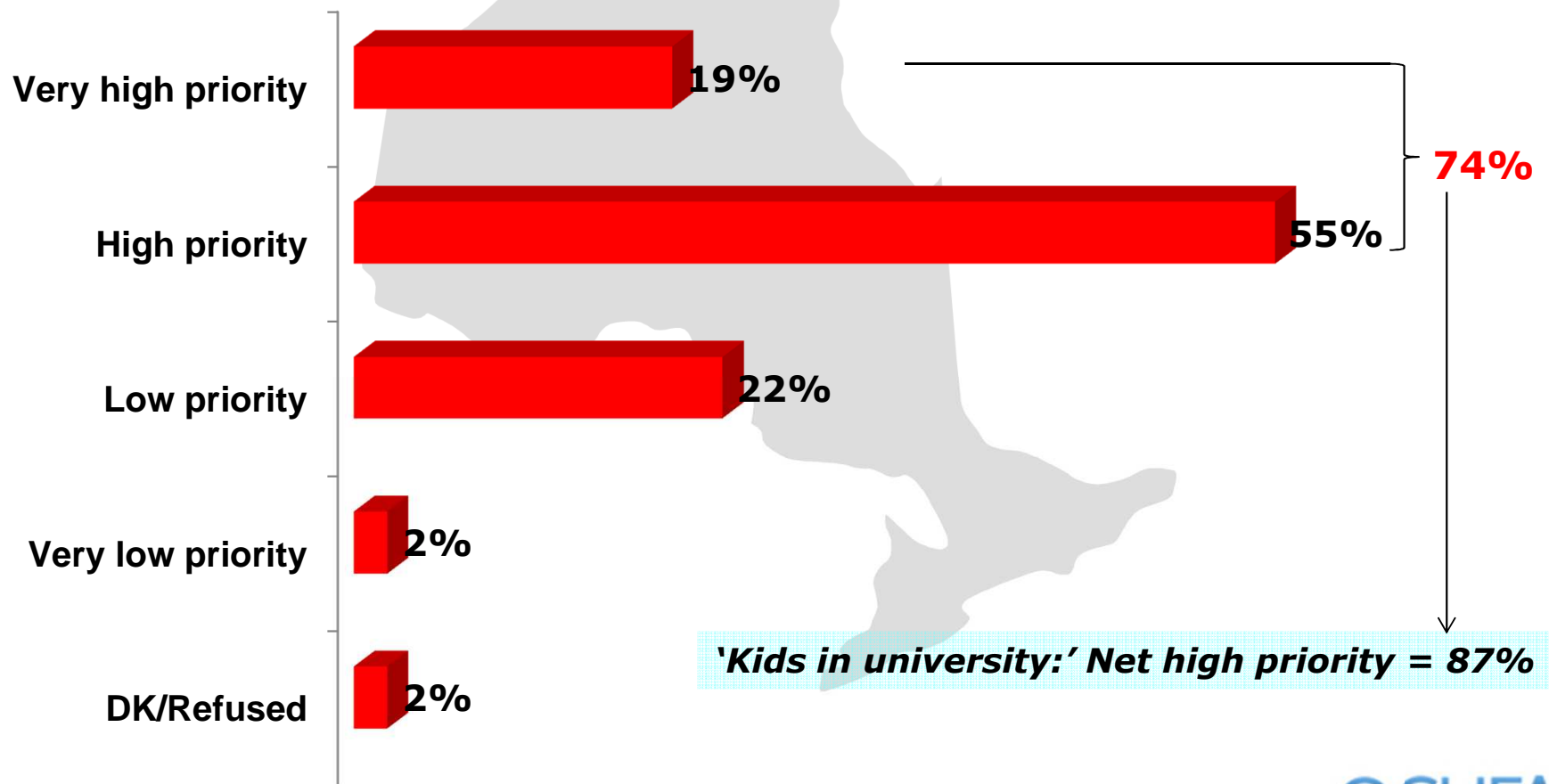
Most Important Issue in Ontario

- **Ontarians are most likely to identify the province's financial situation as the most important issue currently facing the Ontario government.**



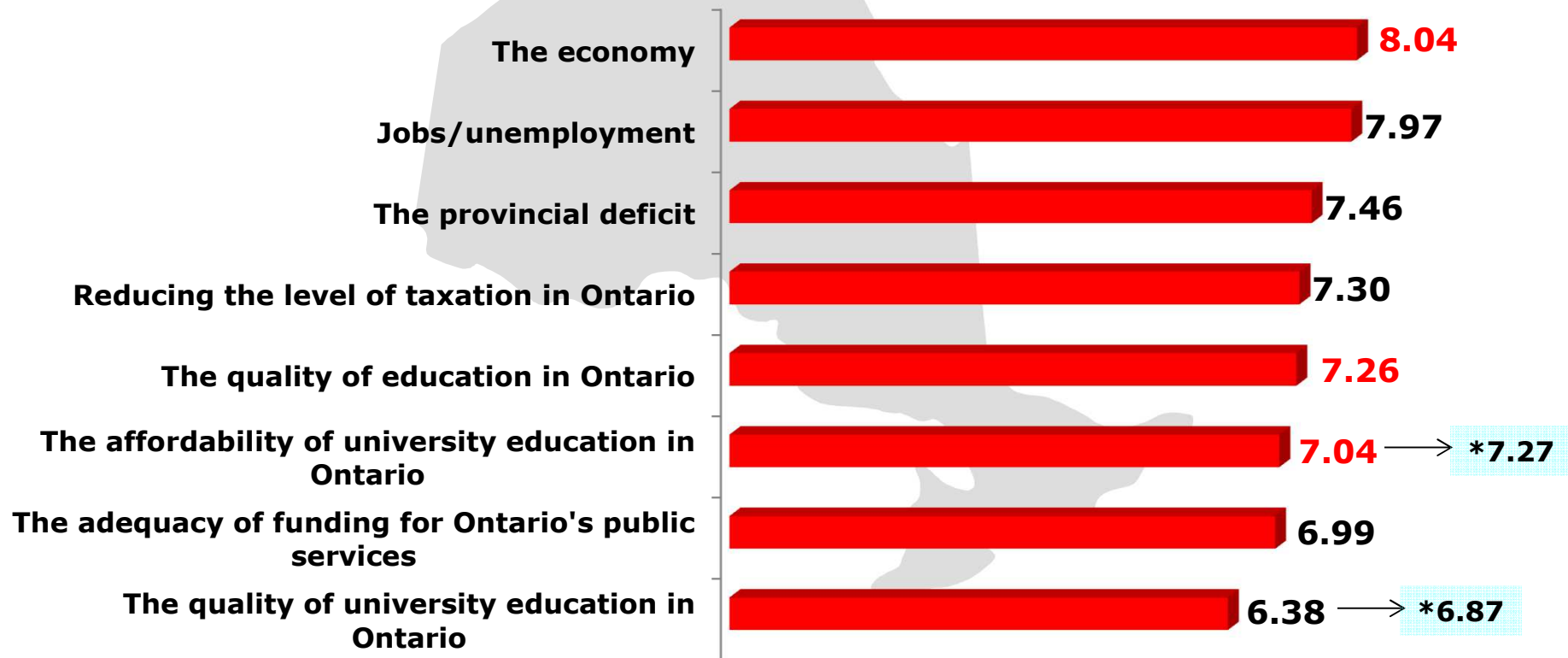
University Education: Level of Priority for Ontario Government

- Three in four Ontarians believe that university education should be considered a “high priority” by the provincial government.



Provincial Issues: Present Level of Concern

- **“The economy”** represents a high-level concern for Ontarians at present. The quality of education and affordability of university education also receive a moderately high concern rating from Ontario residents.



*Denotes results for respondents with children attending university

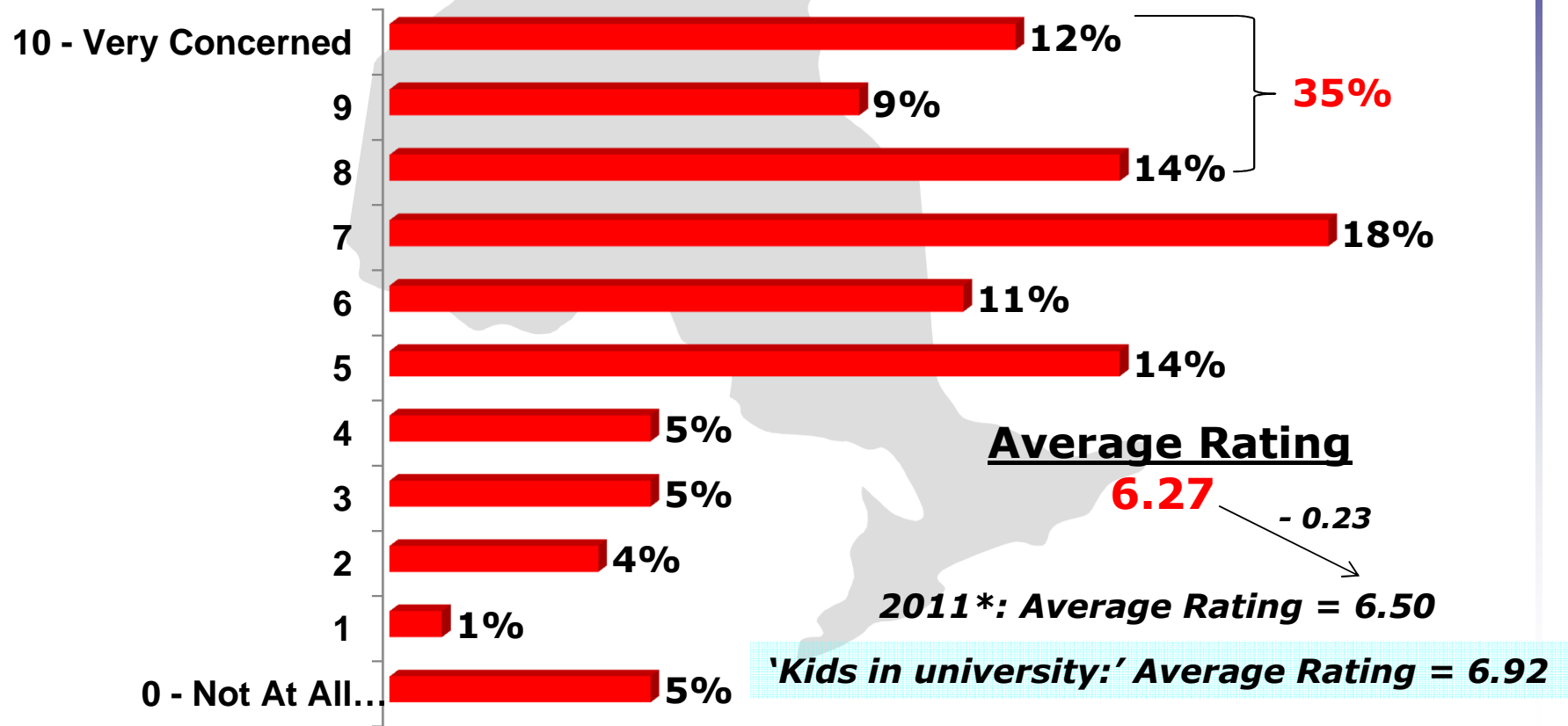
Education Issues: Tracking Level of Concern

- Compared to results from 2011, Ontario residents appear more concerned about the quality of education in the province generally. By contrast, Ontarians express less concern toward both the “affordability” and “quality” of university education specifically.

Education Issue	2012 Rating	2011 Rating	Change
The quality of education in Ontario	7.26	6.97	+0.29
The affordability of university education in Ontario	7.04	7.33	-0.29
The quality of university education in Ontario	6.38	6.68	-0.30

Quality of University Education in Ontario: Level of Concern

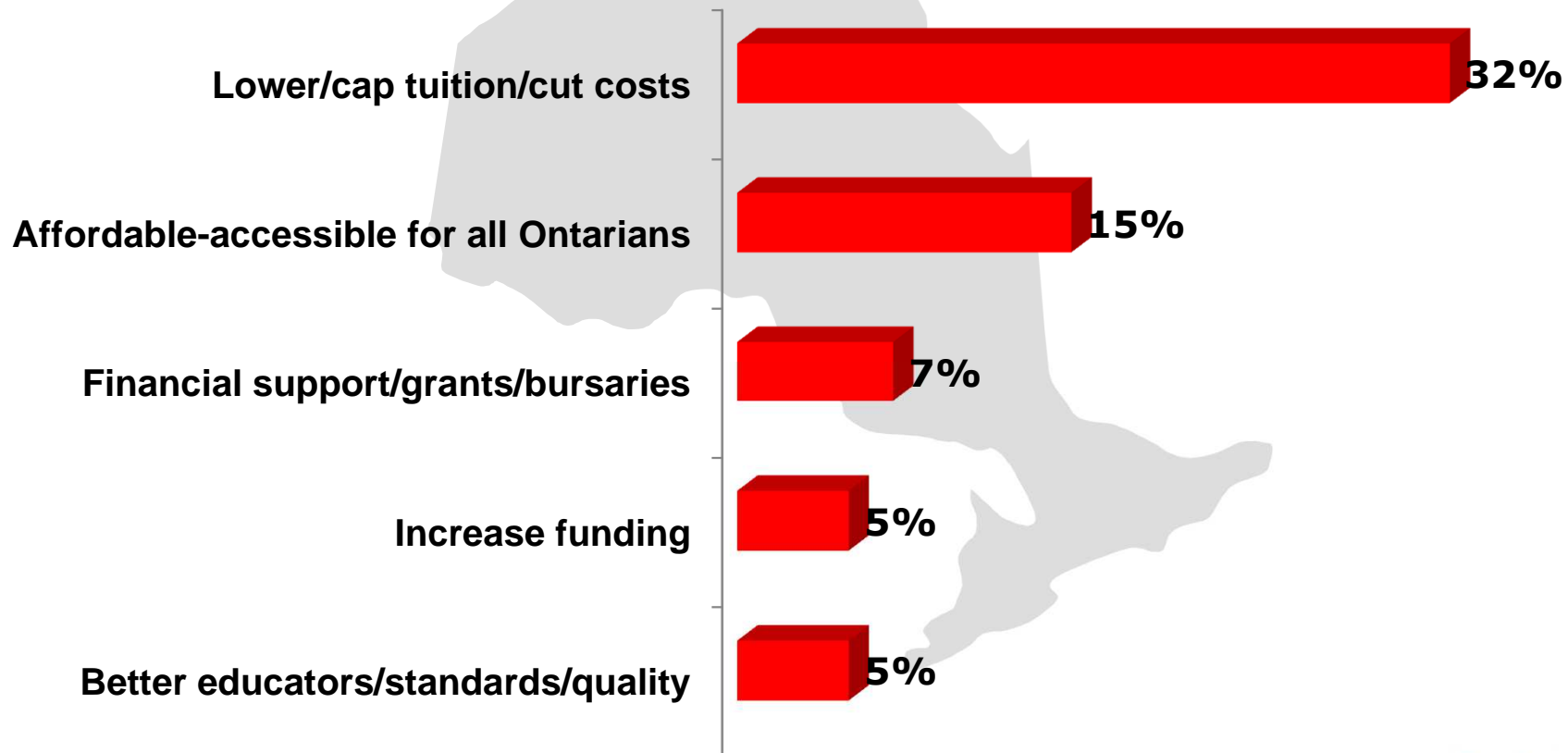
- Over a third of Ontarians are highly concerned about the quality of university education in Ontario (rating of 8,9 or 10). The average concern-rating across the province is moderate at 6.27.



*In 2011, this question used the phrase "post-secondary education" to refer to university education.

Most Important Strategy for University Education in Ontario?

- One-third of Ontarians identify lowering or capping tuition fees as the “single most important thing” the provincial government should do for university education in Ontario.

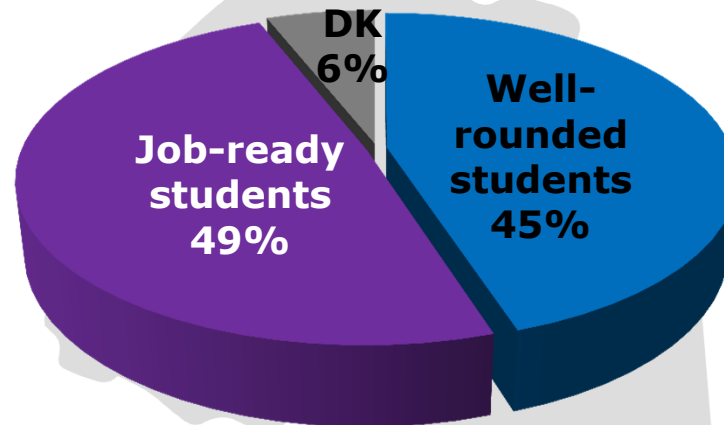




What Kind of University Education Do We Want?

Job-Ready or Well-Rounded Students?

- On average, Ontarians were slightly more likely to say that “job-readiness” should be the primary goal of university education.



'Kids in university' Results

Well rounded: 52%

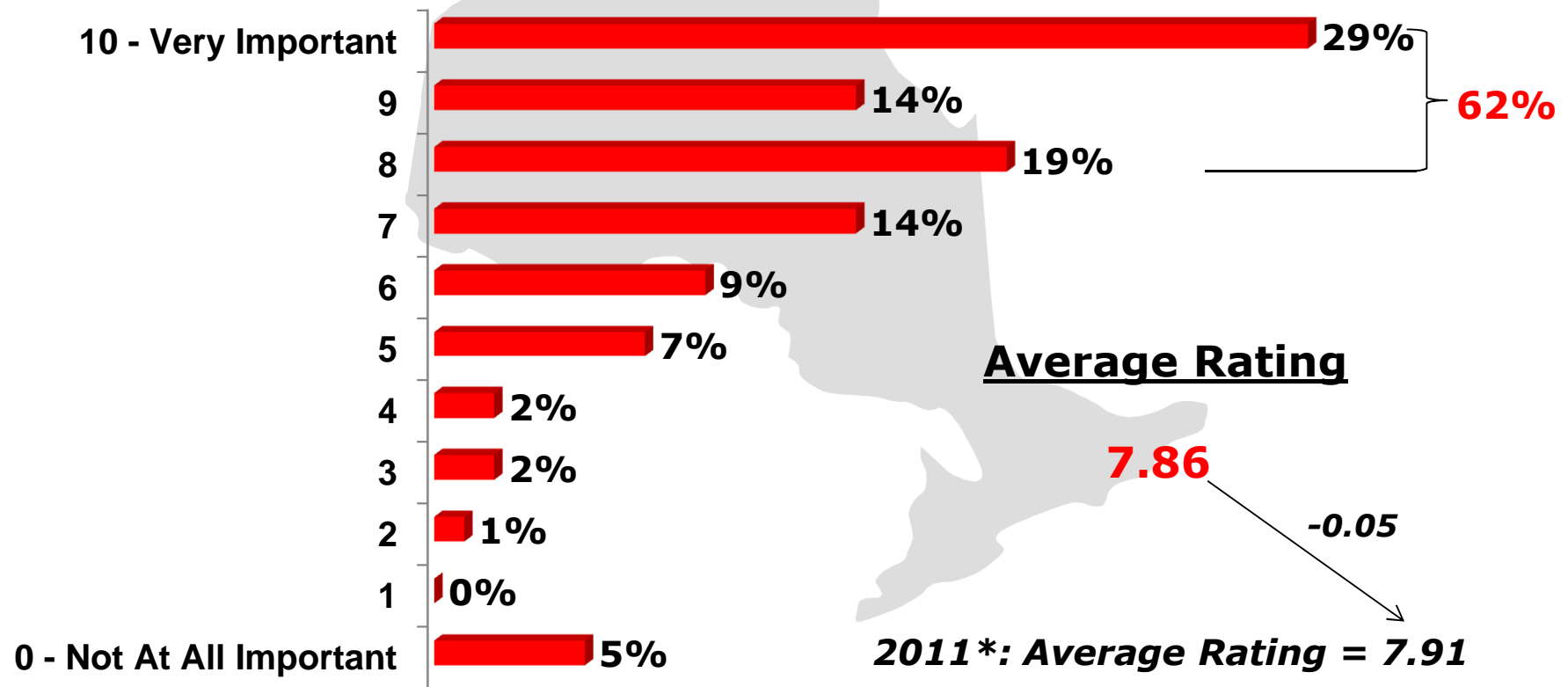
Job-ready: 45%

Tracking Results

Focus of university education should be...	2012 %	2011 %
Job-ready students*	49	50
Well-rounded students	45	44

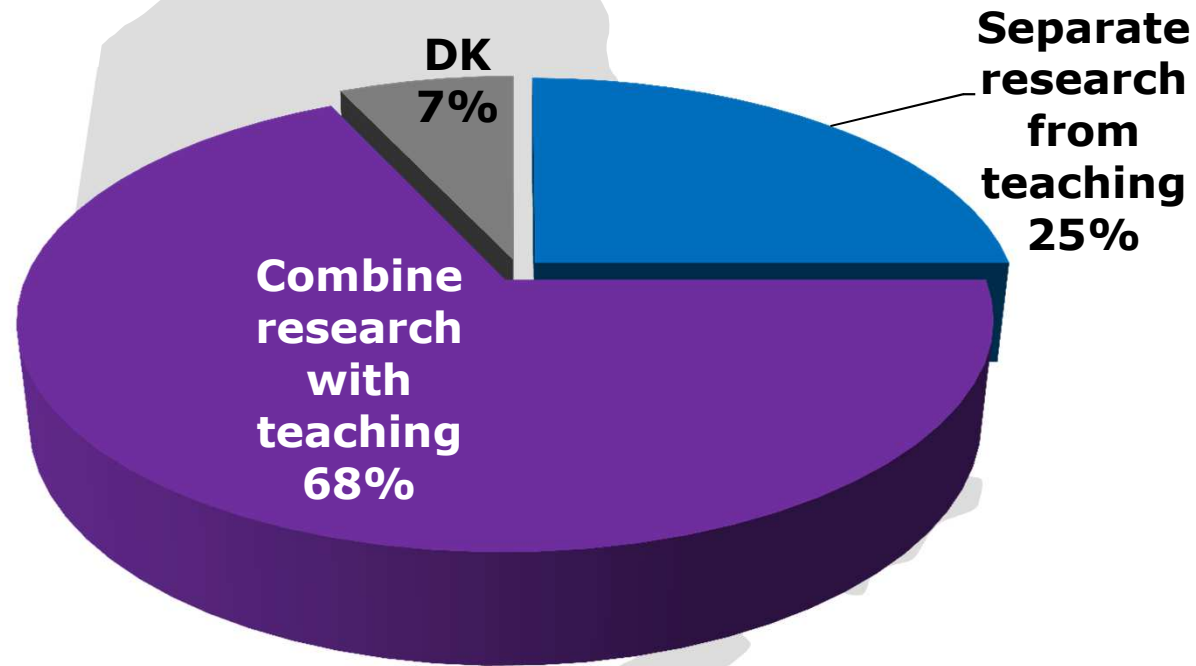
Conduct Research And Teach: Level of Importance

- Over three in five Ontarians believe it is highly important that universities conduct research as well as teach students. The average importance-rating across Ontario is a moderately high 7.86.



Best Model of Delivery?

- **Over two-thirds of Ontarians hold that in order to fulfill their mandate, universities must combine research with teaching.**



Question: Earlier you indicated that university education should focus on producing [job-ready/well-rounded students]...which model of delivery of university education would best achieve this objective?

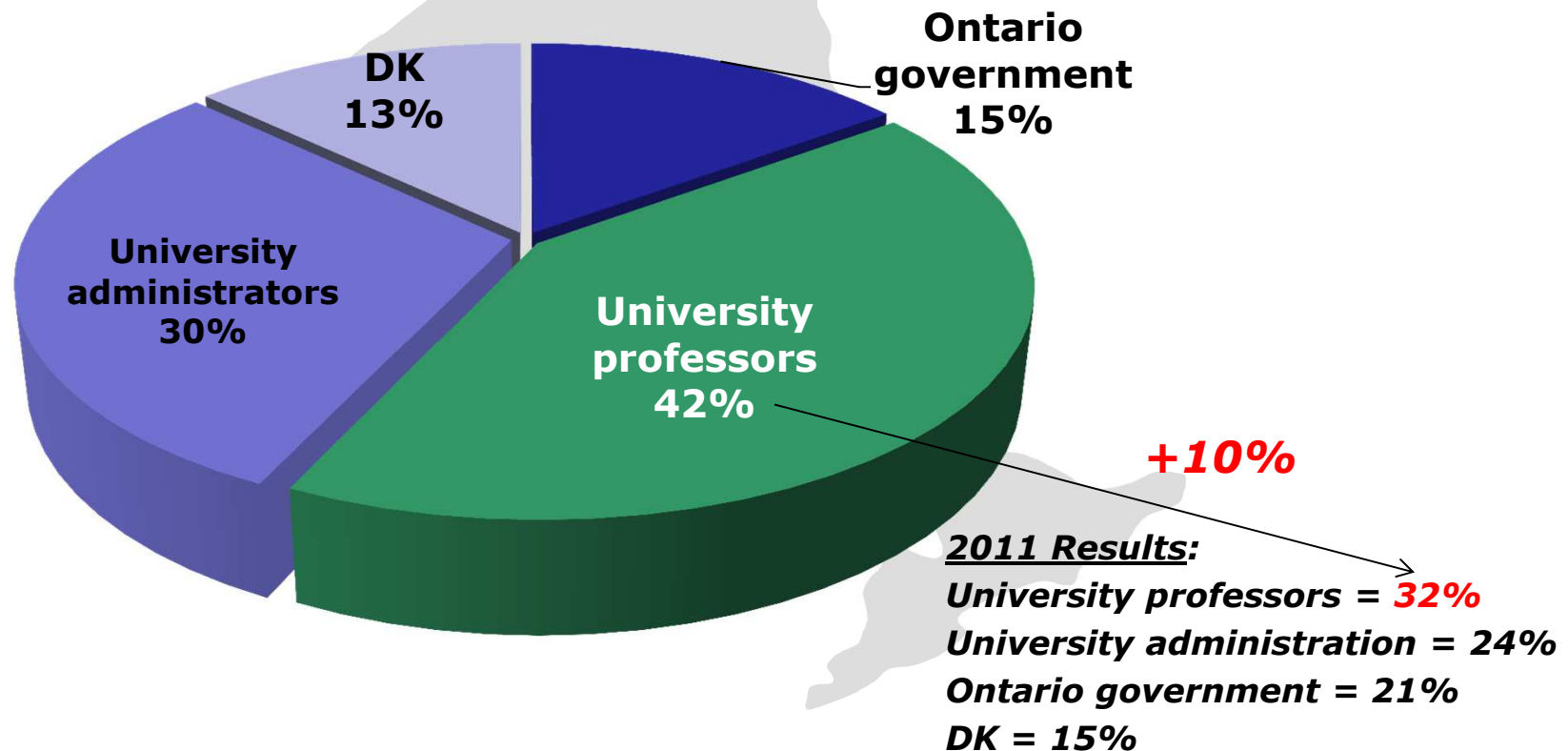
Provincial Government: Level of Control Over Post-Secondary Education

- On average, Ontarians appear to view the degree of control exercised by the provincial government over post-secondary education as appropriate at its current level.

	Level of Control Gov't <u>Does</u> Have	Level of Control Gov't <u>Should</u> Have	GAP
A lot of control	16%	12%	4
Some control	36%	43%	7
Not very much control	26%	28%	2
No control	4%	8%	4
Don't Know	18%	9%	

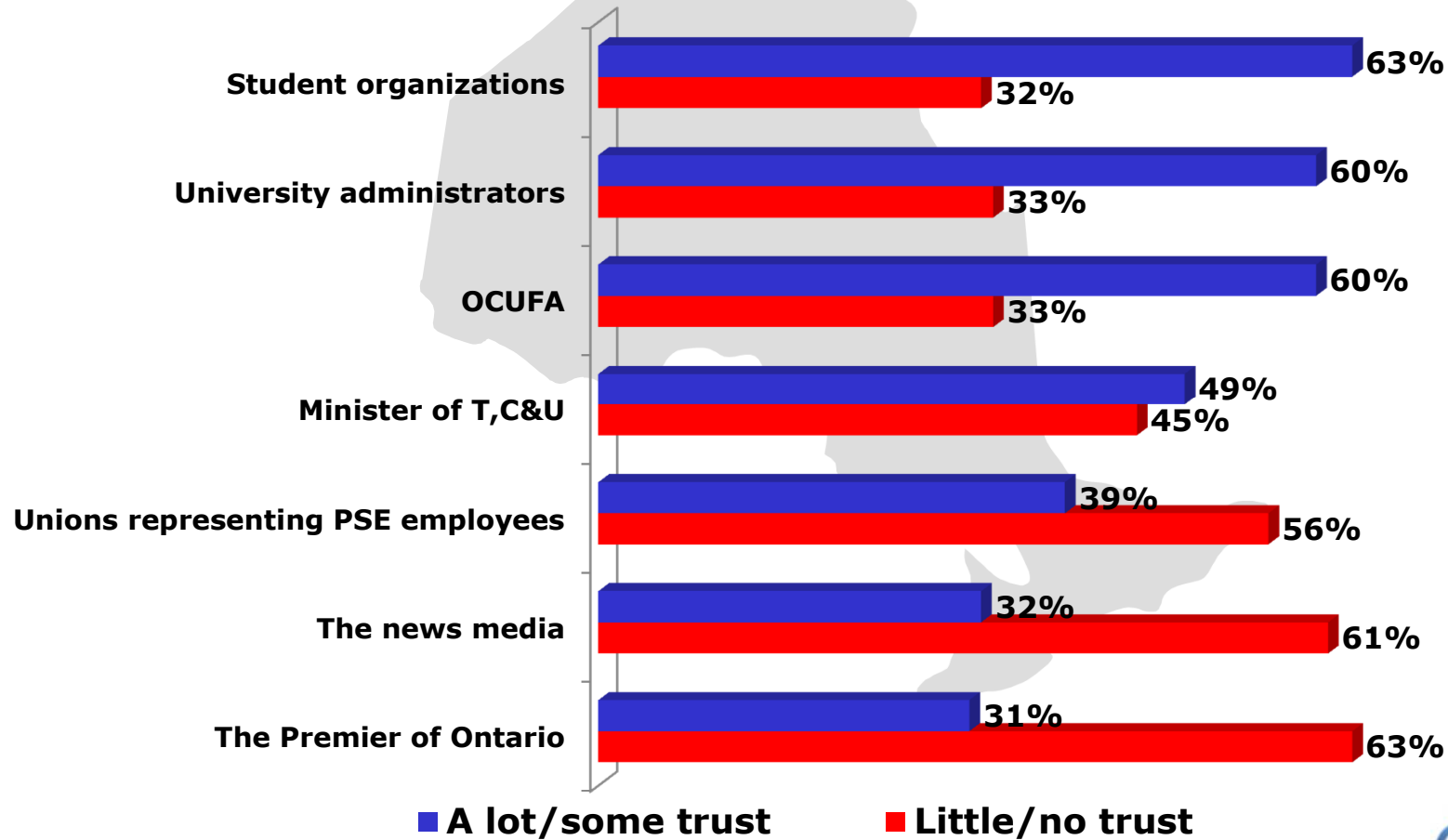
Ensuring A High Quality University Education: Who Do You Trust?

- Over two in five Ontarians say they trust university professors most with ensuring that students receive a high quality university education.



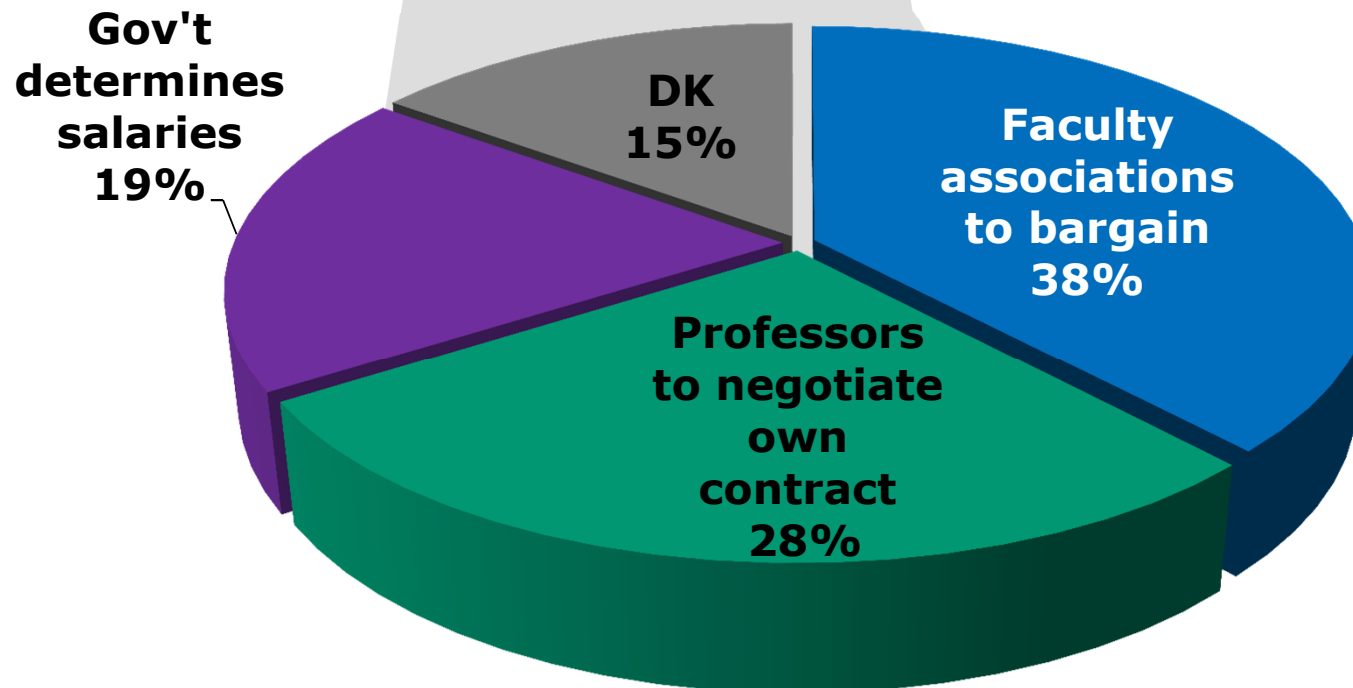
Sources of Information: Who Do You Trust?

- A large majority of Ontarians consider *student organizations*, *university administrators*, and *OCUFA* to be trustworthy sources of information about Ontario's universities.



University Professors: Salaries & Working Conditions

- Over one-third of Ontarians believe that the best way to determine the salaries and working conditions of university professors is to continue to allow collective bargaining between faculty associations and university administration.

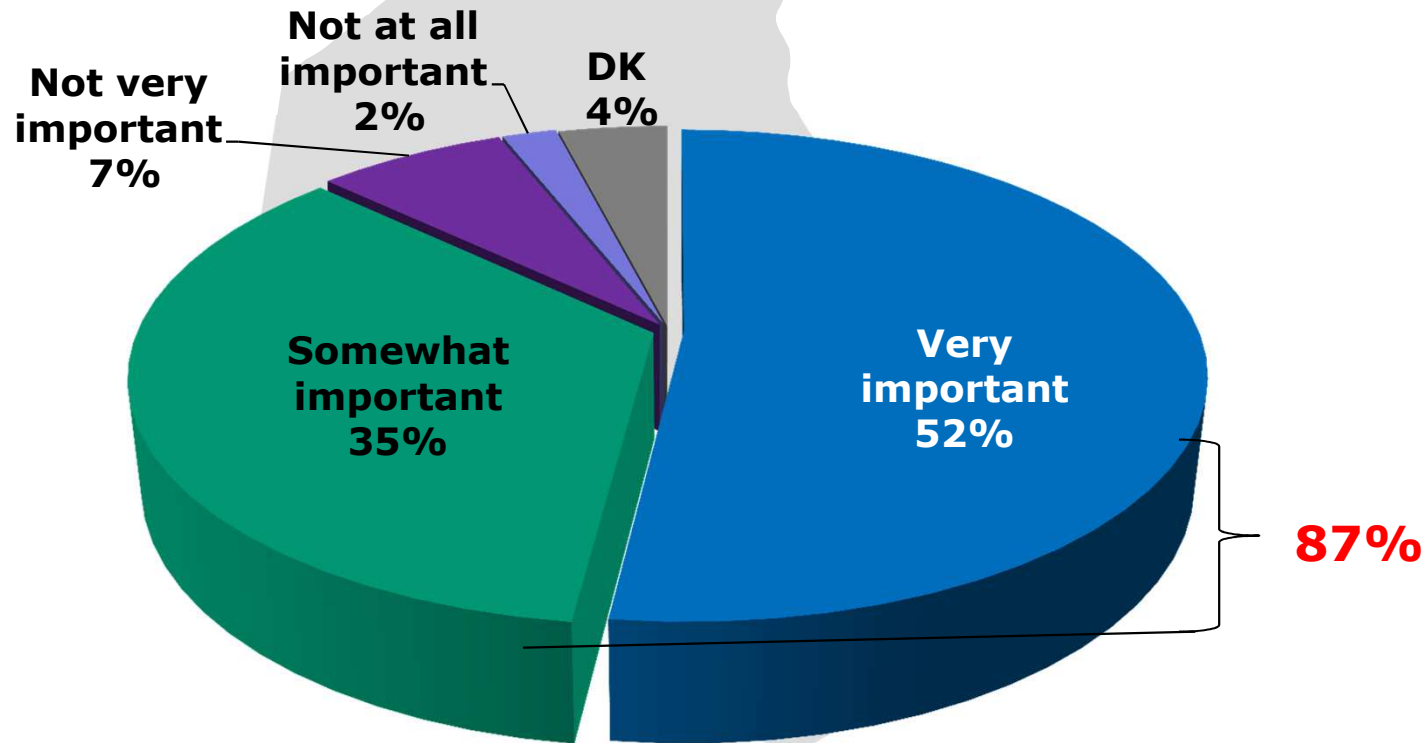




At What Cost?

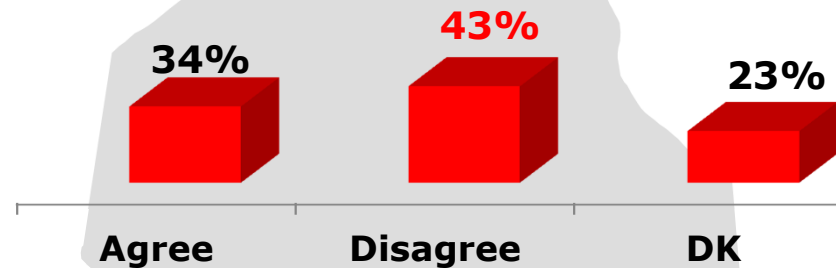
Importance of Provincial Deficit Reduction

- Over eight in ten Ontarians believe it is important that the provincial government reduce the provincial budget deficit.

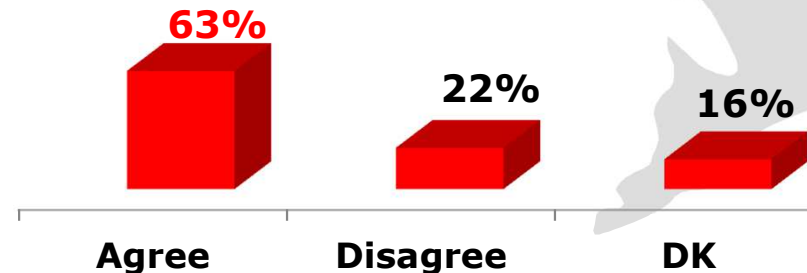


Deficit Reduction Strategies: Agree or Disagree?

- To meet deficit-reduction targets, gov't should override the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers.

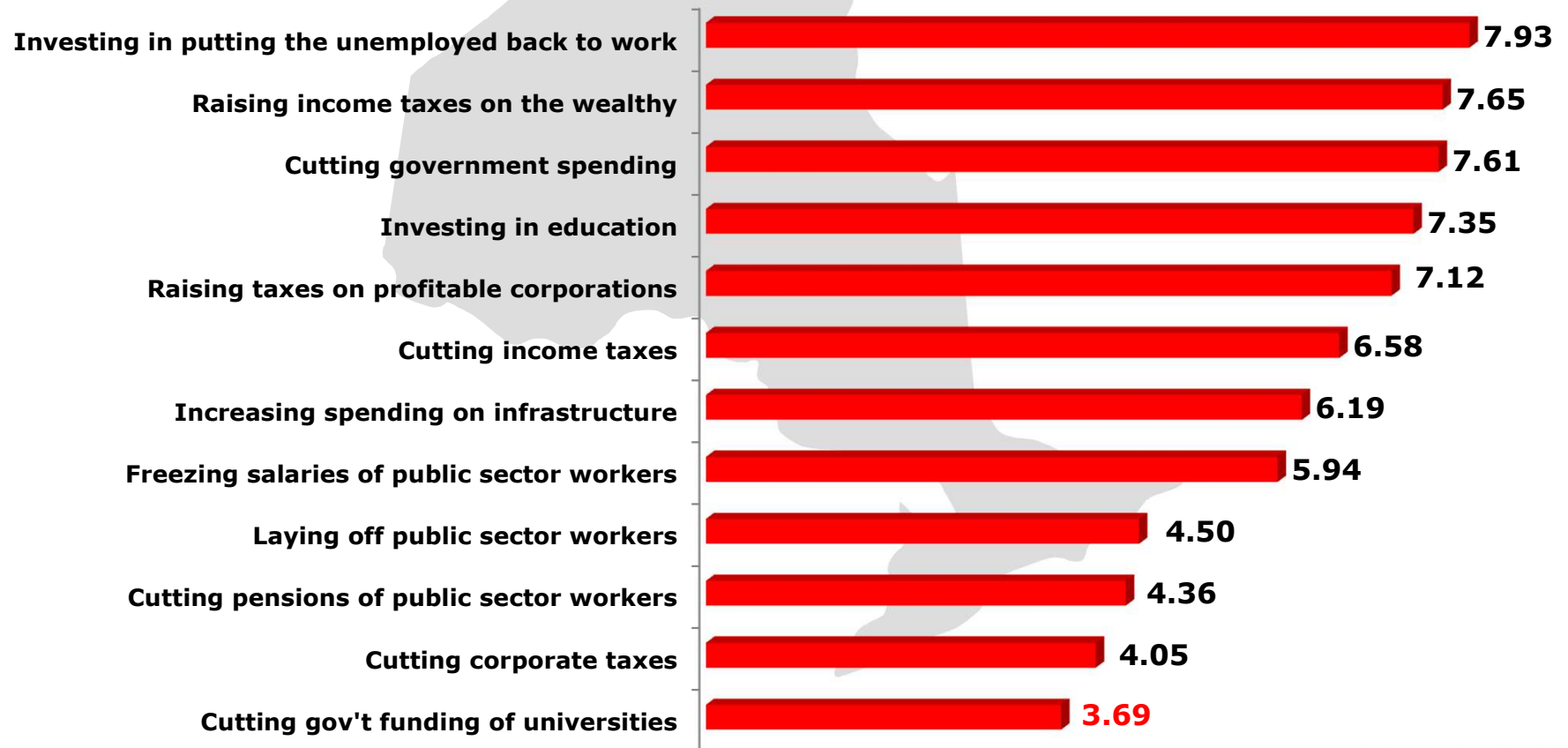


- Gov't should allow public sector workers to freely negotiate their working conditions and wages through a collective bargaining process.



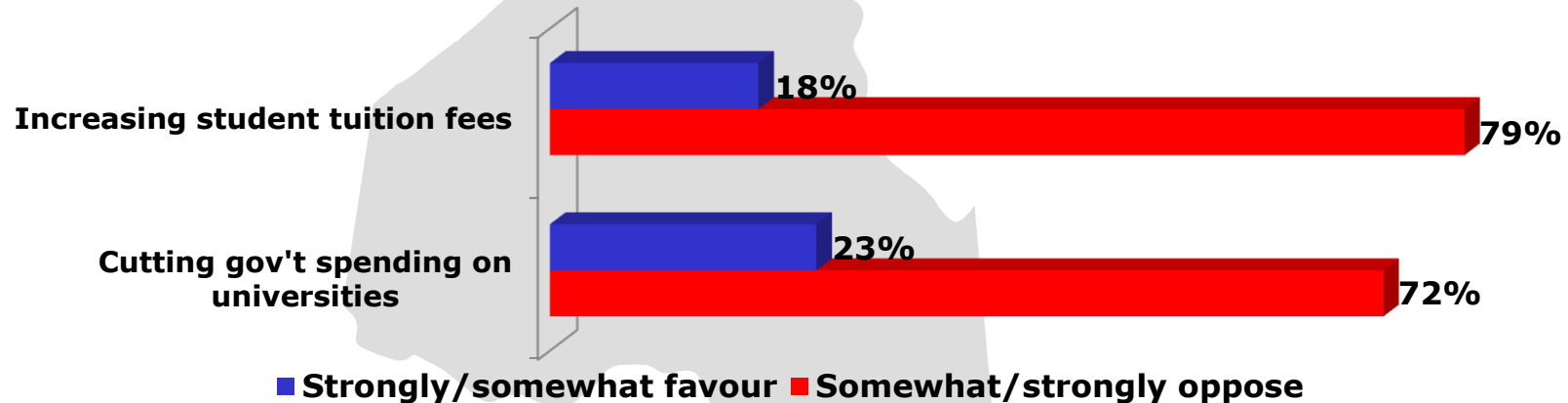
Strategies to Manage Fiscal Situation in Ontario: Level of Support

- A mix of stimulus and cost-cutting measures received a moderate to moderately high level of support from Ontarians (i.e., rating of 7 or above). Cutting funding for universities received the lowest support-rating on average.

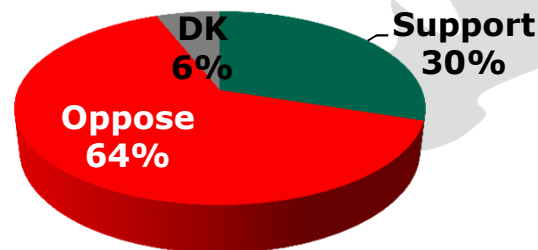


University Financing Strategies: Support for Government Investment

- A large majority of Ontarians oppose *increasing student tuition* and *cutting government spending on universities* as measures to reduce university costs.



- Almost two-thirds of Ontarians oppose the idea of increasing student tuition in programs expected to yield higher salaries after graduation.



Government Spending Freeze: Perceived Impact

- Over half of Ontarians believes that a government spending freeze on universities would have a negative impact on the quality of university education in the province.

Impact of the following on quality of university education:	Positive Impact (%)	Negative Impact (%)	No Impact (%)
Government spending freeze on universities	11 (+6)	52 (-13) ←	24 (+8)
Freeze on professors' salaries	12 (+6)	42 (-5%)	34 (+2)

() Denotes percentage change since 2011.

Deficit Reduction in Context

- Most Ontarians disagree with government measures to reduce the deficit in the context of three circumstances: 1) reduced education quality; 2) increased costs of education for students and families; and, 3) higher personal taxes.

How much do you agree or disagree that the provincial government should pursue measures to <u>reduce the deficit</u> ...	Agree strongly/ somewhat (%)	Disagree somewhat/ strongly (%)
...even if these measures will <u>reduce the quality</u> of university education.	29	64
...even if these measures will <u>increase the cost</u> of university education for students and their families.	36	56
...even if that means I would personally have to <u>pay more in taxes</u> .	39	51

***Would you support or oppose cuts to public services if it meant a negative impact on employment and economic growth?**

Support = 39%  **Oppose = 61%**

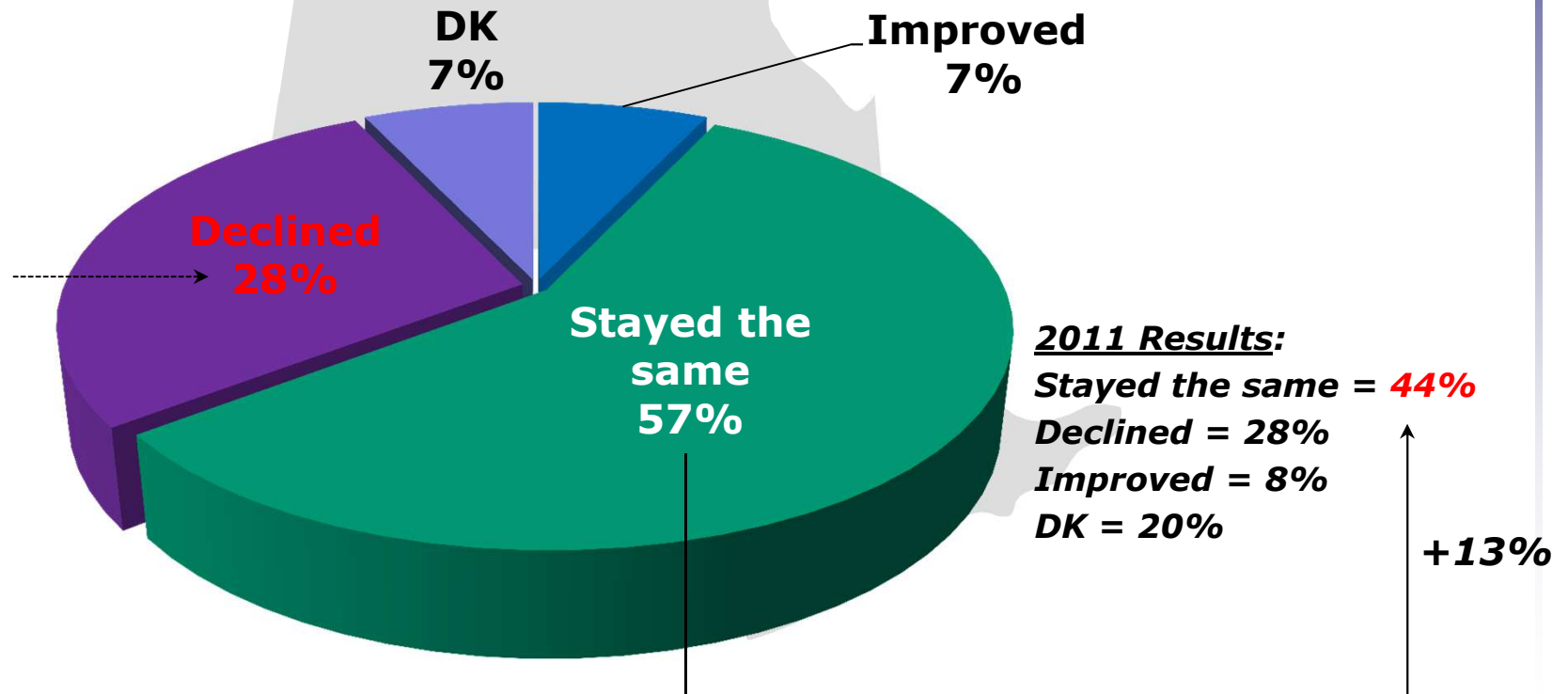
*This question was asked of a subsample of respondents (N=517).



Looking Ahead: Political Leadership

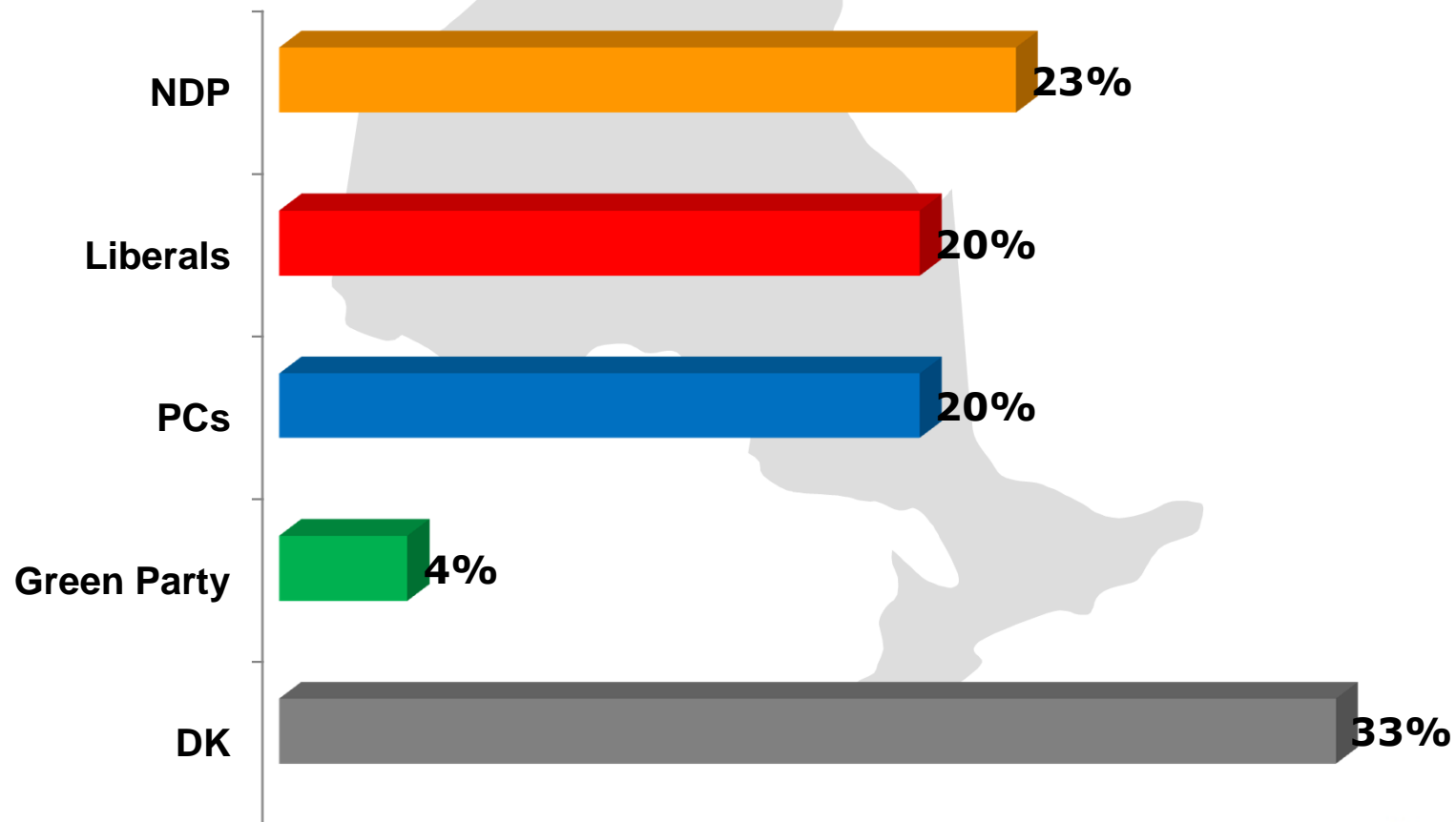
McGuinty Government: Impact on Quality of University Education

- More than one in four Ontarians believe that the quality of university education has declined under the McGuinty government. By contrast, less than one in ten say that the quality of university education has improved during McGuinty's tenure.



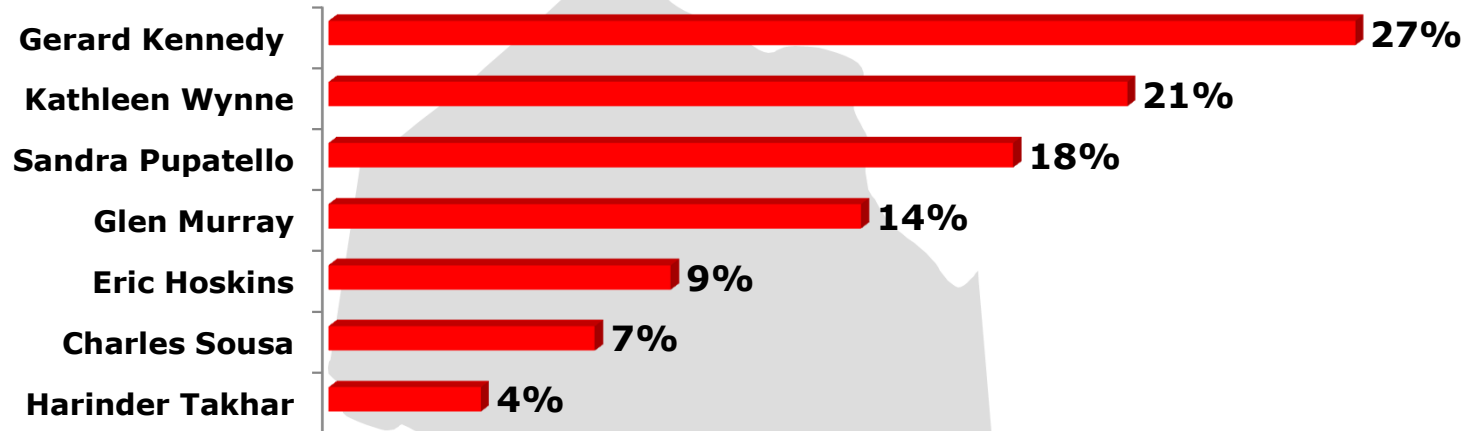
Quality of University Education: Which Political Party Is Best?

- **Almost one in four Ontarians believe that the NDP is the party most likely to improve the quality of university education in Ontario.**



Quality of University Education: Which Political Leader is Best?

- Which candidate for the Liberal leadership would be best handle the challenges facing university education in Ontario?



- Which political Leader would be best would be best handle the challenges facing university education in Ontario?

