



YOUR VOICE

Survey Results
October 2025

Insights From Canada's
Small Business Owners

Methodology

Your Voice October 2025

Survey Type: An omnibus, controlled-access online CFIB survey.

Survey period: October 9 - October 24, 2025.

Sample: Based on responses from 2,899 CFIB members who are owners of Canadian independent businesses, from all sectors and regions of the country. For comparison purposes, a probability samples with the same number of respondents would have a margin of error of +/-1.82%, 19 times out of 20.

Purpose and Context: The CFIB Your Voice omnibus survey is conducted bi-monthly, focusing on issues that matter most to small business owners across Canada. For over five decades, CFIB has harnessed the collective voice of its members to produce data-driven policy strategies that reflect the needs of small businesses. Our inhouse survey capacity is a powerful tool designed to empower business owners to share insights on topics from government support to regulatory burdens.

Impact: The survey's insights are gathered directly from CFIB members, ensuring an authentic representation of small business priorities. These responses help shape CFIB's advocacy efforts, driving policies that are aligned with the evolving needs of the small business community.

Notes: In some instances, responses may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

October Your Voice Survey Insights

The October 2025 edition of Your Voice captures the latest perspectives of 2,899 small business owners across Canada. Respondents were asked how well provincial governments understand their needs, whether they would recommend starting a business today, and how crime is affecting their operations. The findings reveal that small business owners are navigating a complex environment marked by cost pressures, policy disconnects, and safety concerns. Their priorities are clear: they want governments to focus on fiscal discipline, cost relief, and reduced taxation. These insights underscore the need for responsive, small-business-focused policy action.

Confidence in provincial government

Confidence in provincial governments is fragile, with two-thirds of business owners feeling unsupported. Most respondents doubt their governments understand the cost pressures they face and that there is a clear vision to foster entrepreneurship. Confidence in upcoming budgets is also low, with businesses expecting few measures to strengthen the economic environment. This signals a disconnect between small business realities and policy approaches.

Entrepreneurship

Rising expenses and economic volatility are dampening entrepreneurial confidence across all sectors, with 1 in 2 small business owners not recommending starting a business. High costs, economic instability, and tax burdens are driving caution, especially in transportation, hospitality, and manufacturing.

Community safety

Half of small business owners report rising crime in their communities, with concern highest in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. While worry about worsening crime has eased slightly, half remain concerned for personal and staff safety—especially in Western Canada—highlighting persistent safety challenges. Small businesses feel the taxes they pay are not reflective of improvements to community safety and are calling for tougher penalties on organized retail crime and better intergovernmental coordination.

For more insights — including breakdowns by region, sector, business size, and years in business — explore the interactive dashboard on our [Your Voice website](#).

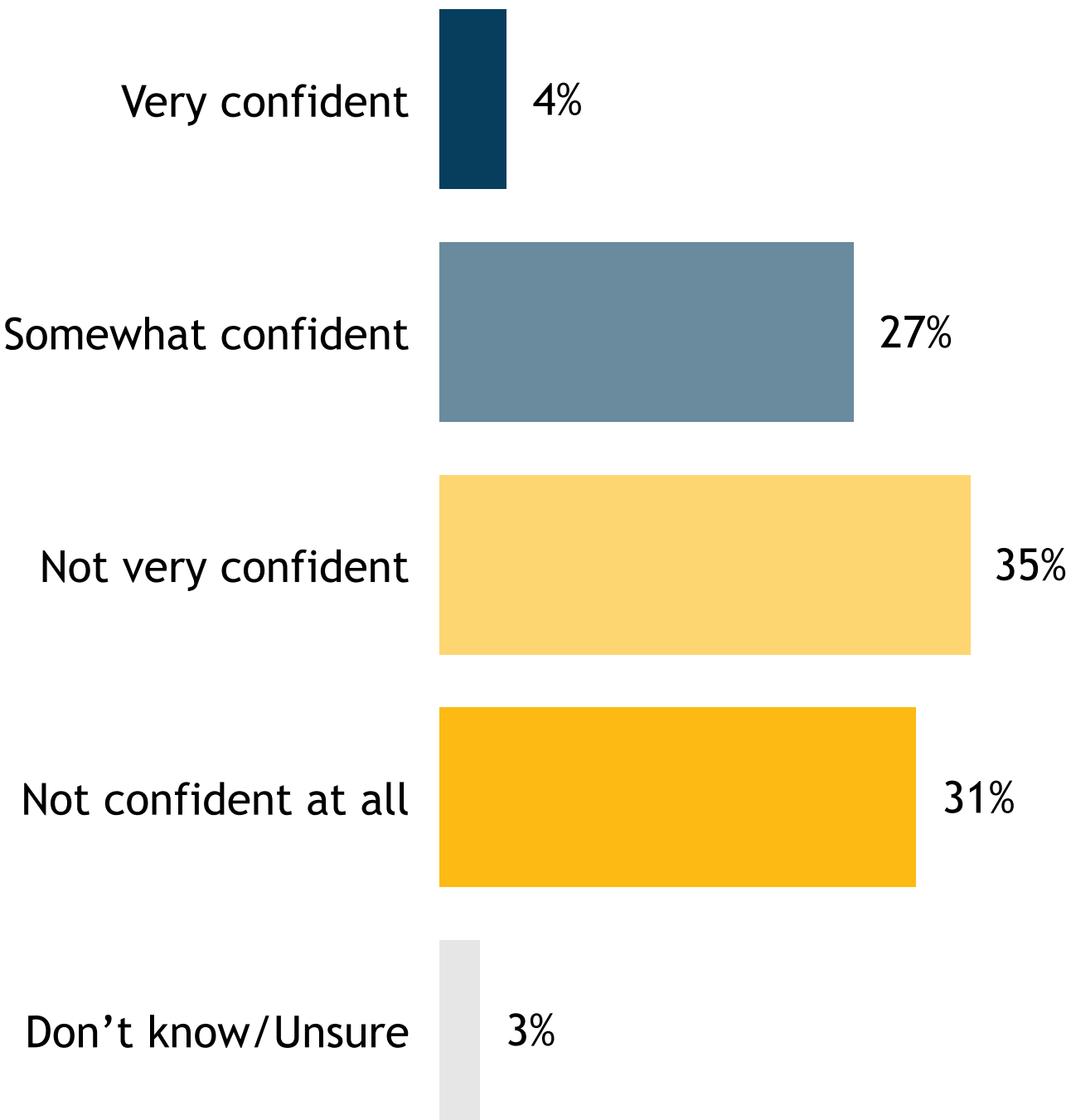
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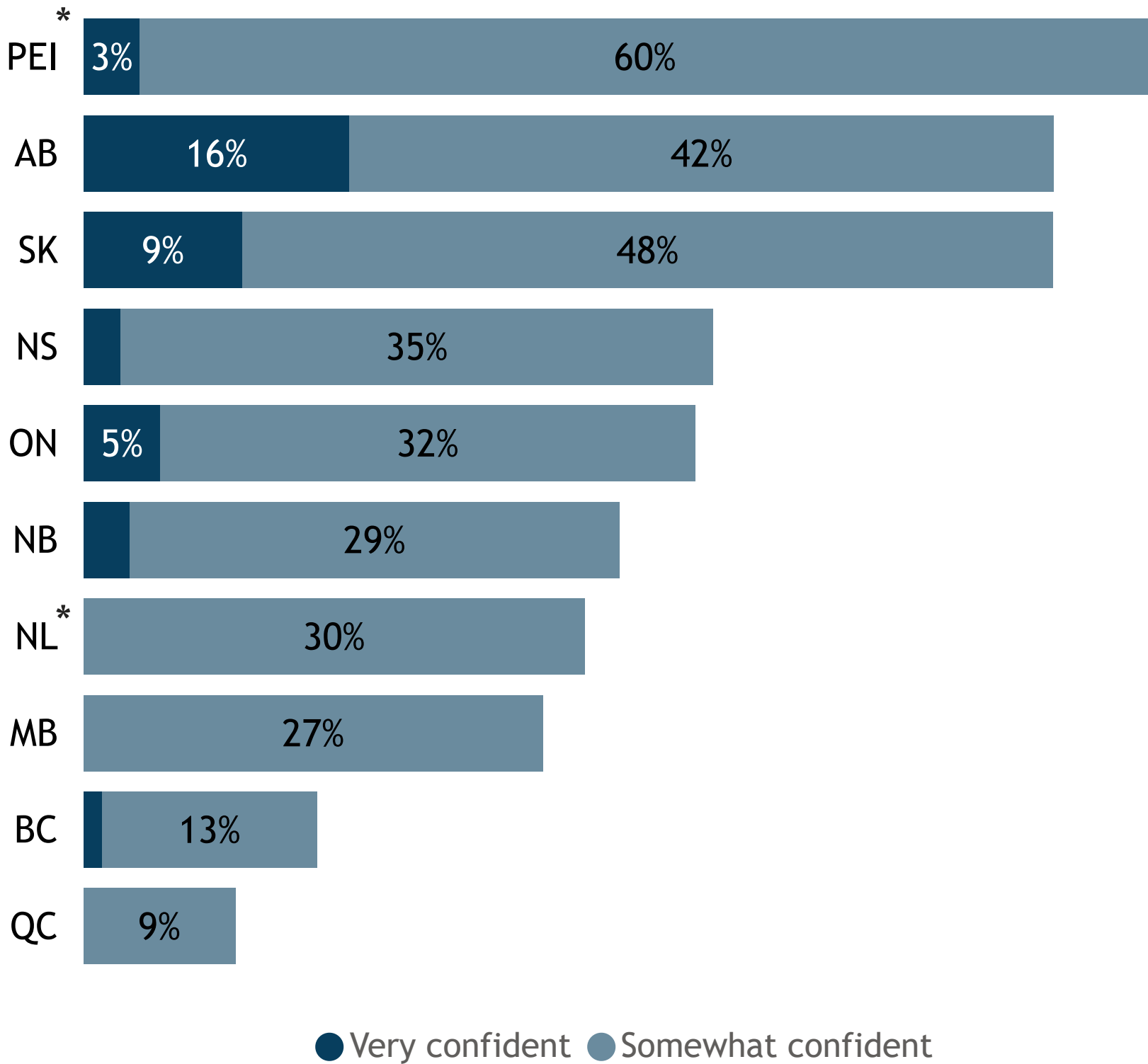
Confidence in provincial government

Confidence in provincial governments is fragile, with two-thirds of small business owners feeling unsupported.

Confidence that provincial government has your back as a business owner



Alberta and Saskatchewan businesses show the strongest confidence in their governments, with British Columbia and Quebec feeling most unsupported



● Very confident ● Somewhat confident

2,899 Responses

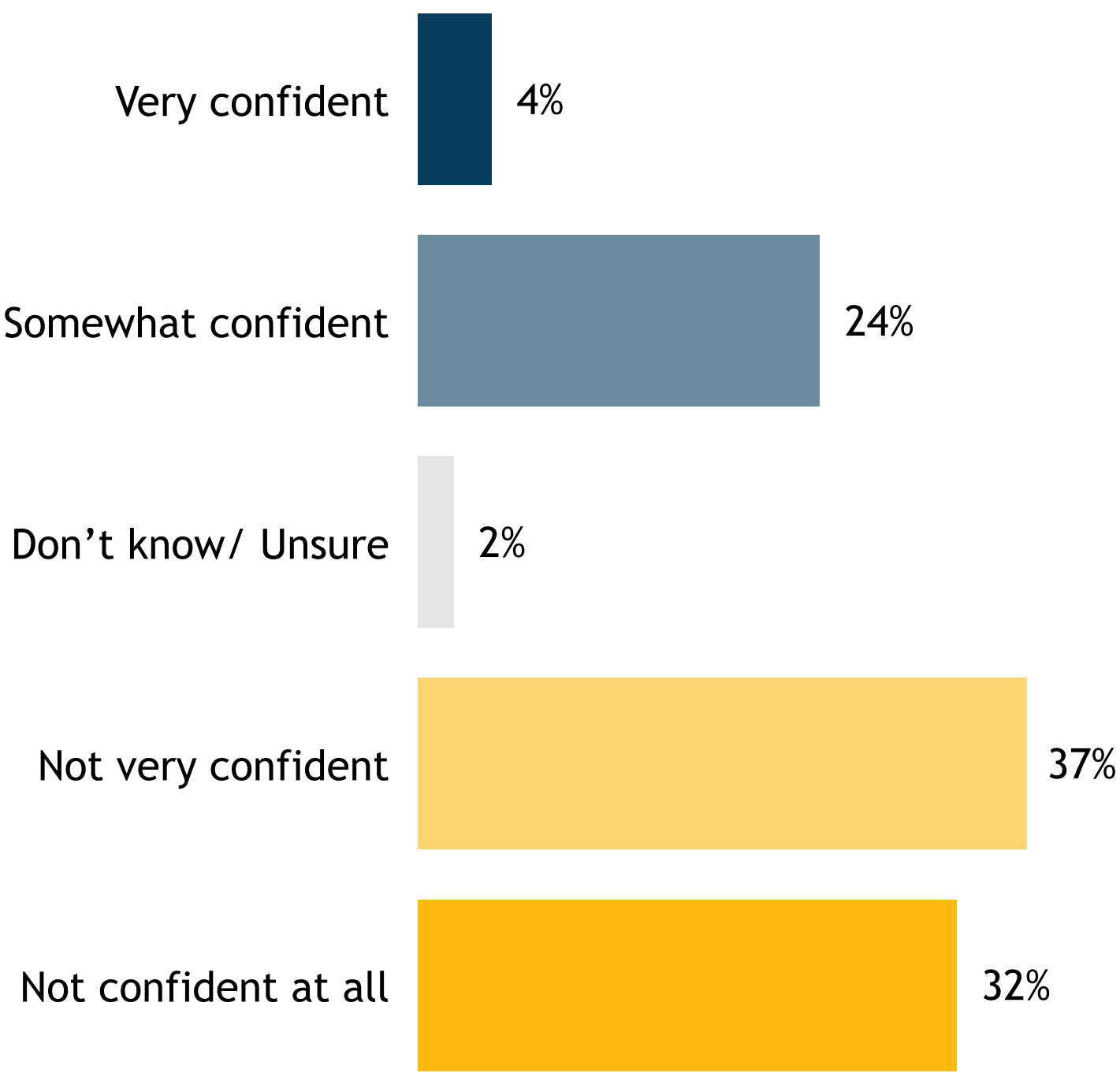
Question: How confident are you that the provincial/territorial government has your back as a business owner (i.e. supports your business, looks out for the interests of small business, makes your life easier)? (Select one)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

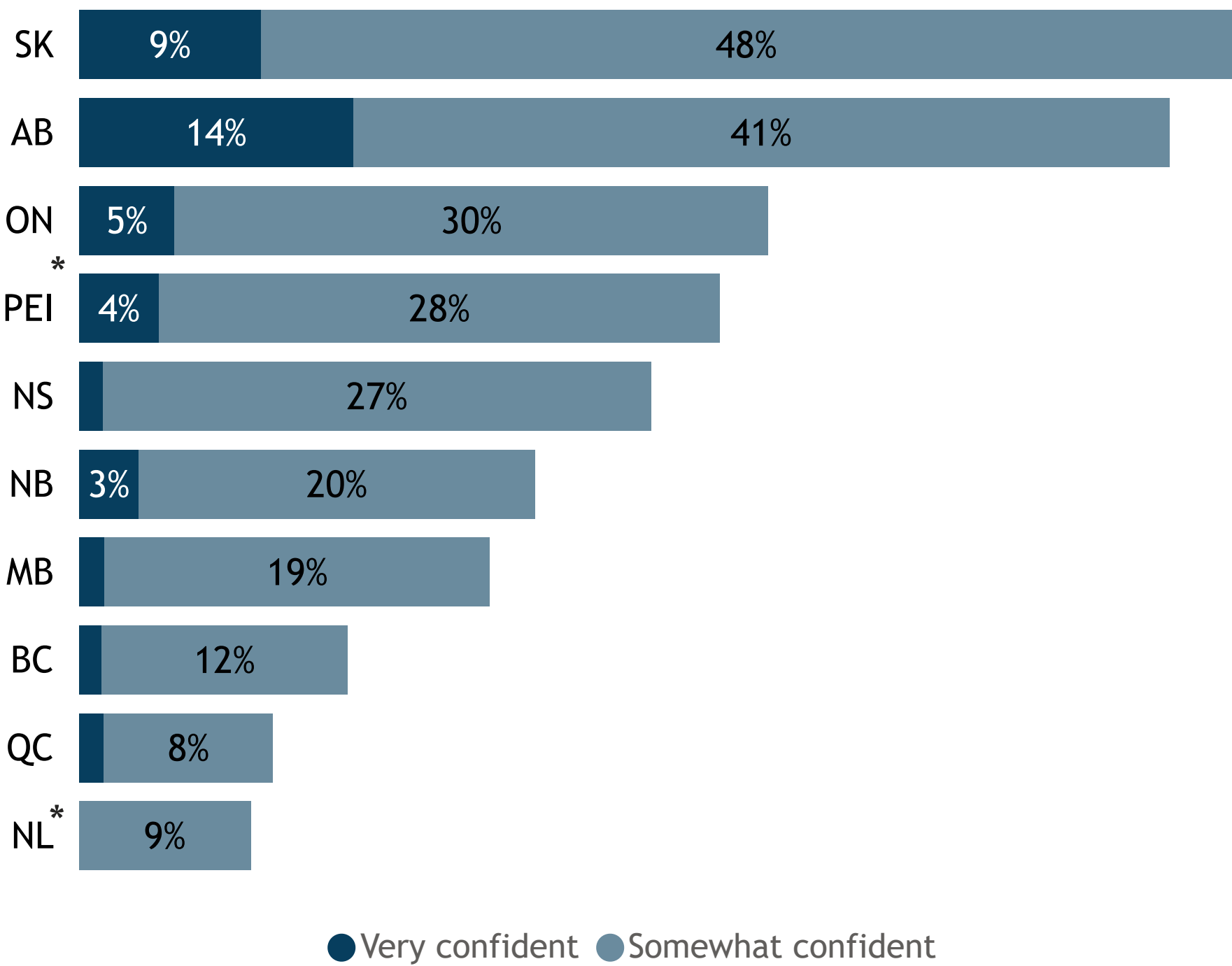
Note: *Small sample size (<40).

More than two-thirds of businesses believe their provincial governments do not grasp the impact of operational and regulatory cost pressures.

Our provincial government understands the impact of operational and regulatory cost pressures on small businesses.



Confidence levels are highest Saskatchewan and Alberta, while Quebec and British Columbia rank lowest.



2,745 Responses

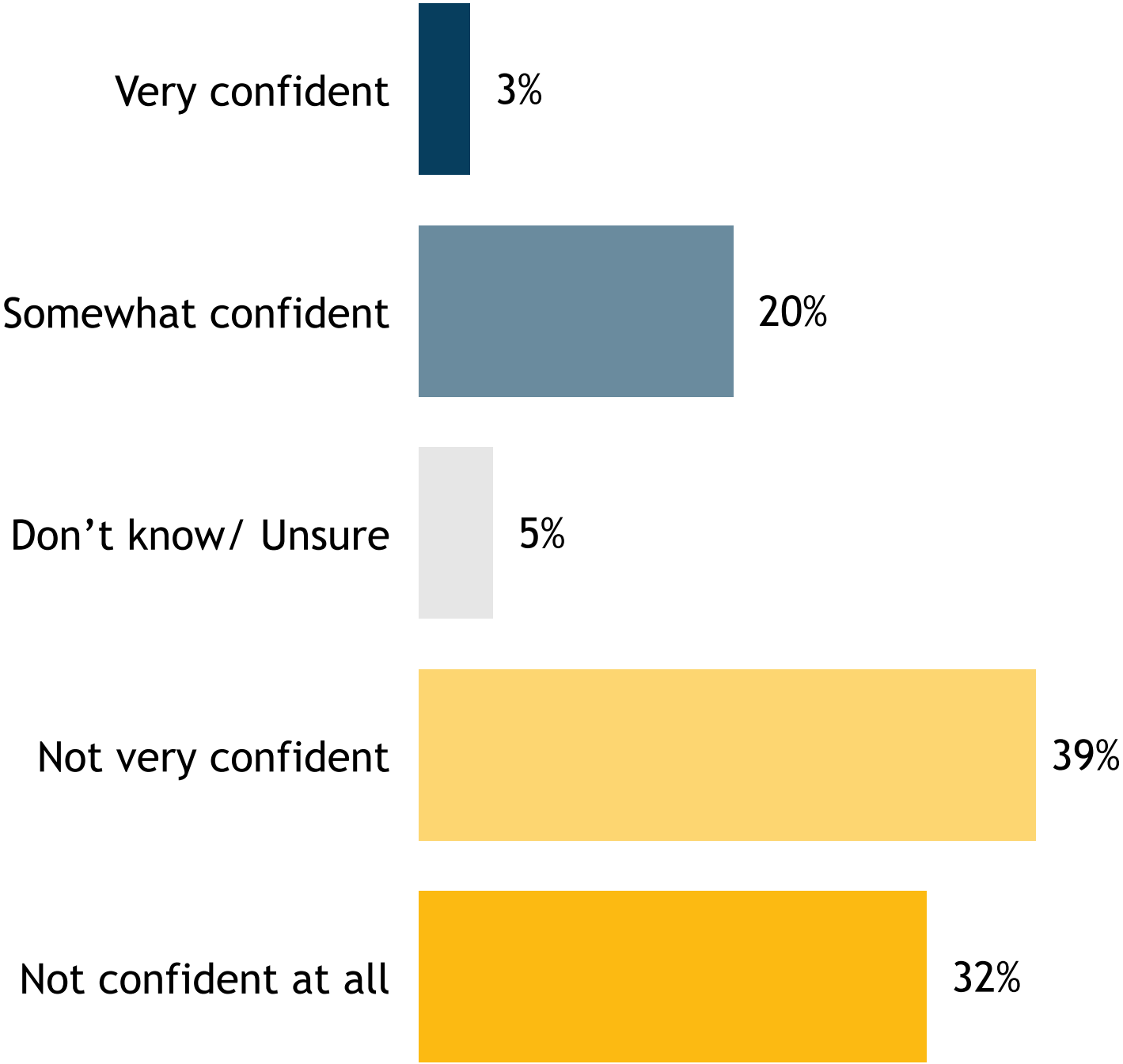
Question: Please indicate your level of confidence in each of the following statements. (Select one for each line)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

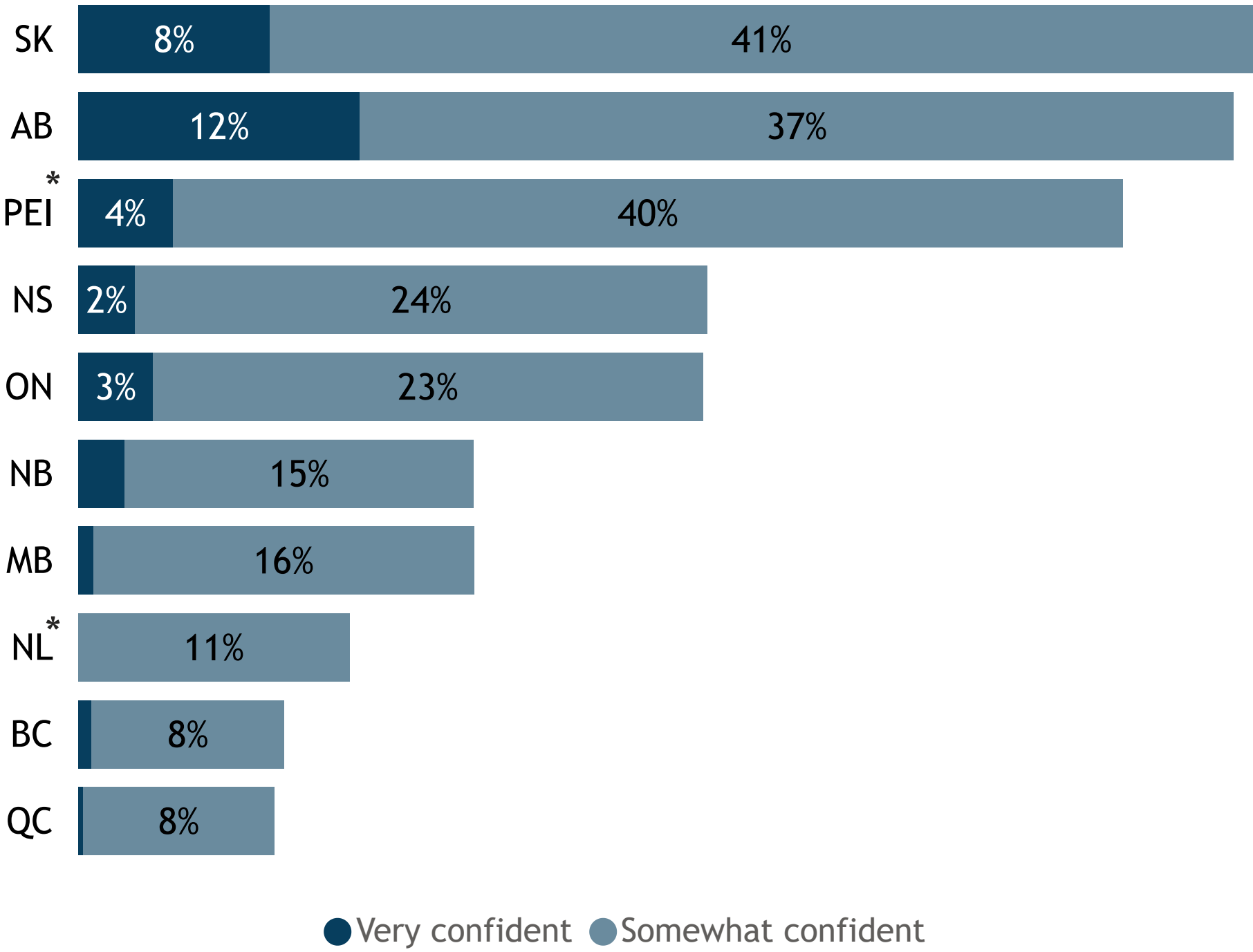
Note: *Small sample size (<40).

More than two-thirds of businesses lack confidence that their provincial or territorial government has a vision that supports small business and entrepreneurship.

Our provincial government has a vision that supports small business and entrepreneurship.



Confidence levels are highest in Saskatchewan and Alberta, while Quebec and British Columbia rank lowest.



Very confident Somewhat confident

2,743 Responses

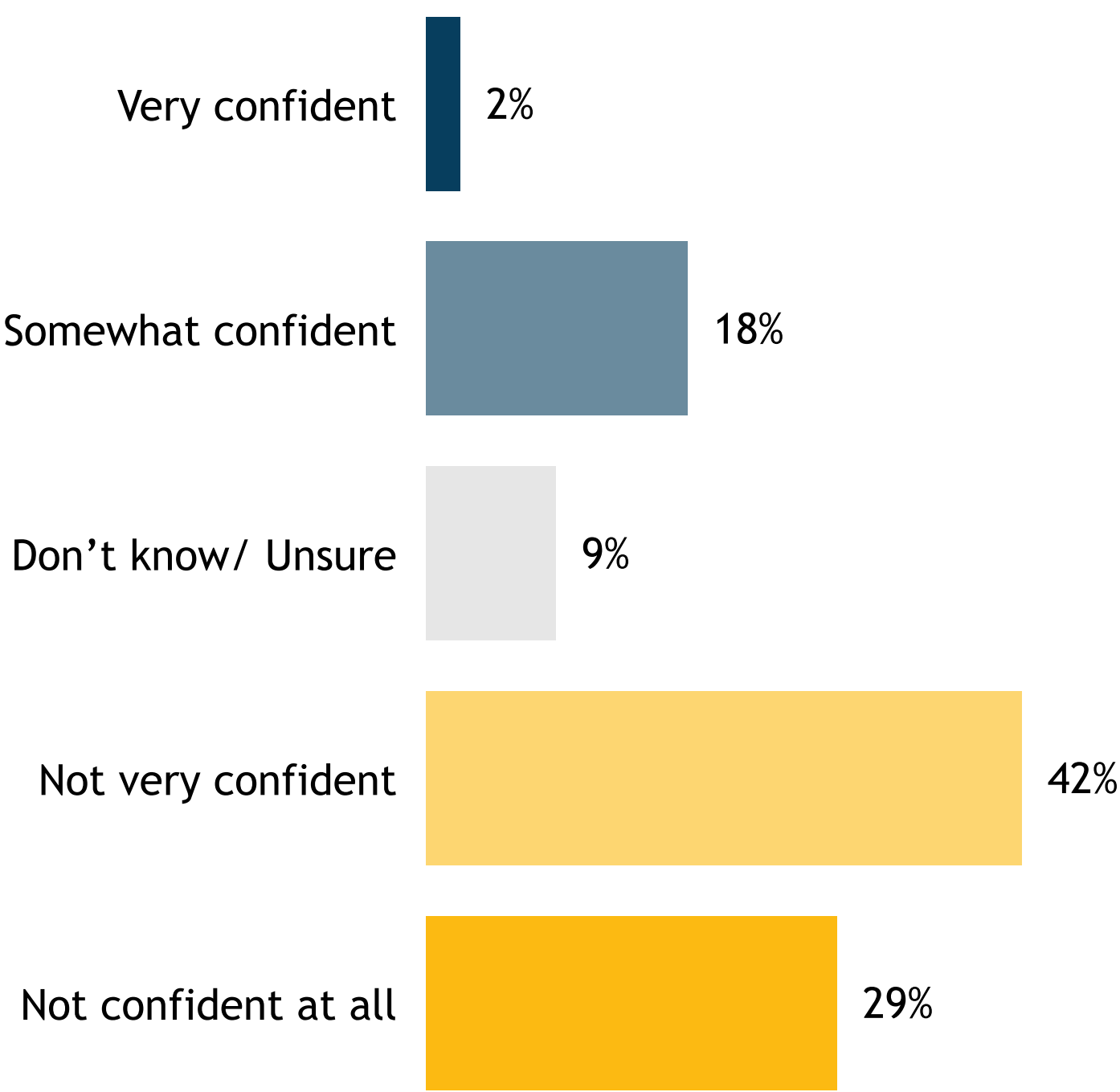
Question: Please indicate your level of confidence in each of the following statements. (Select one for each line)

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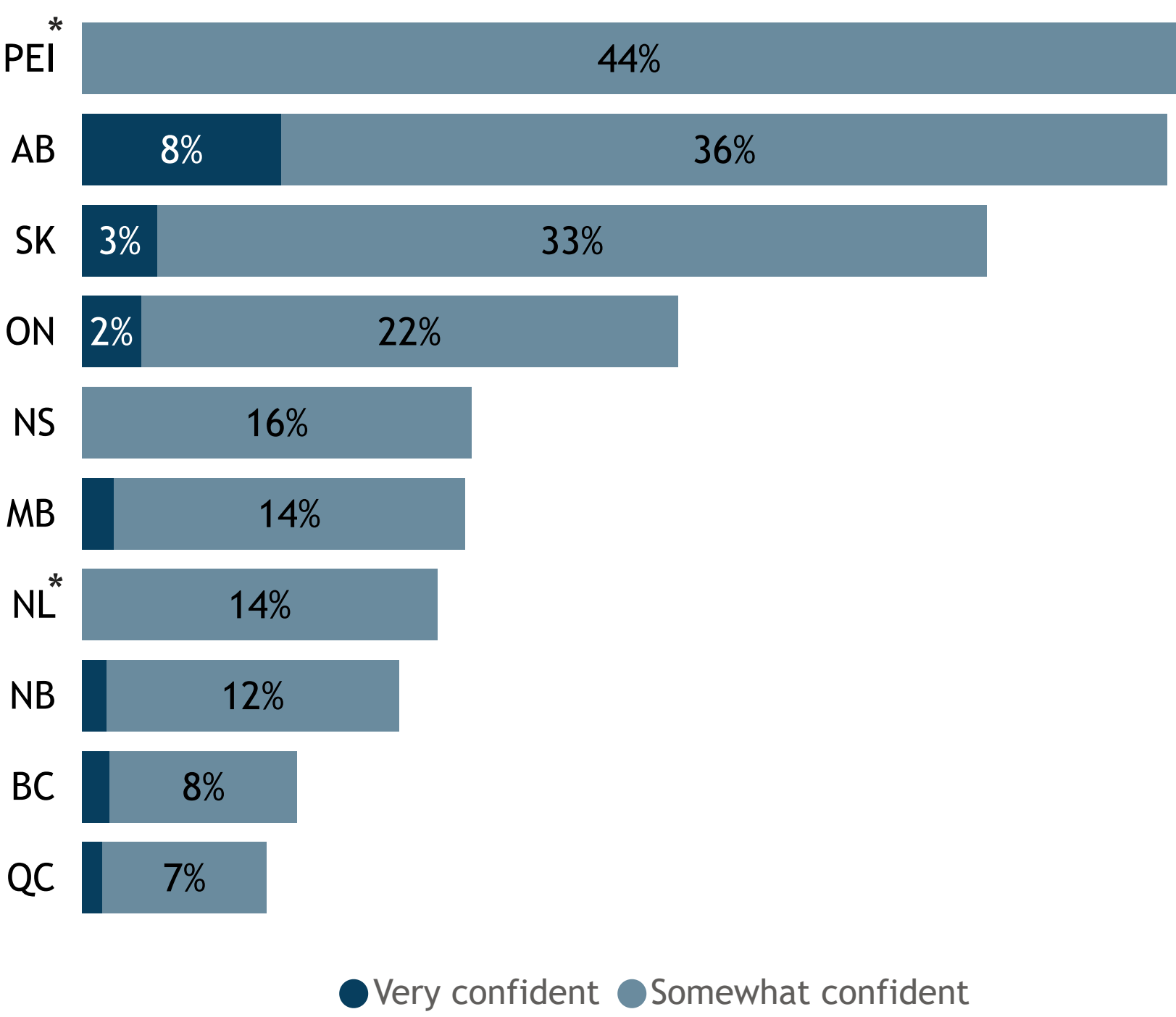
Note: *Small sample size (<40).

More than two-thirds of businesses aren't confident their provincial government's next budget will include measures that strengthen entrepreneurship or improve the economic environment.

The next budget for our provincial government will include measures to strengthen small businesses and the economic environment.



Confidence levels are highest in Alberta and Saskatchewan, while Quebec and British Columbia rank lowest.



● Very confident ● Somewhat confident

2,744 Responses

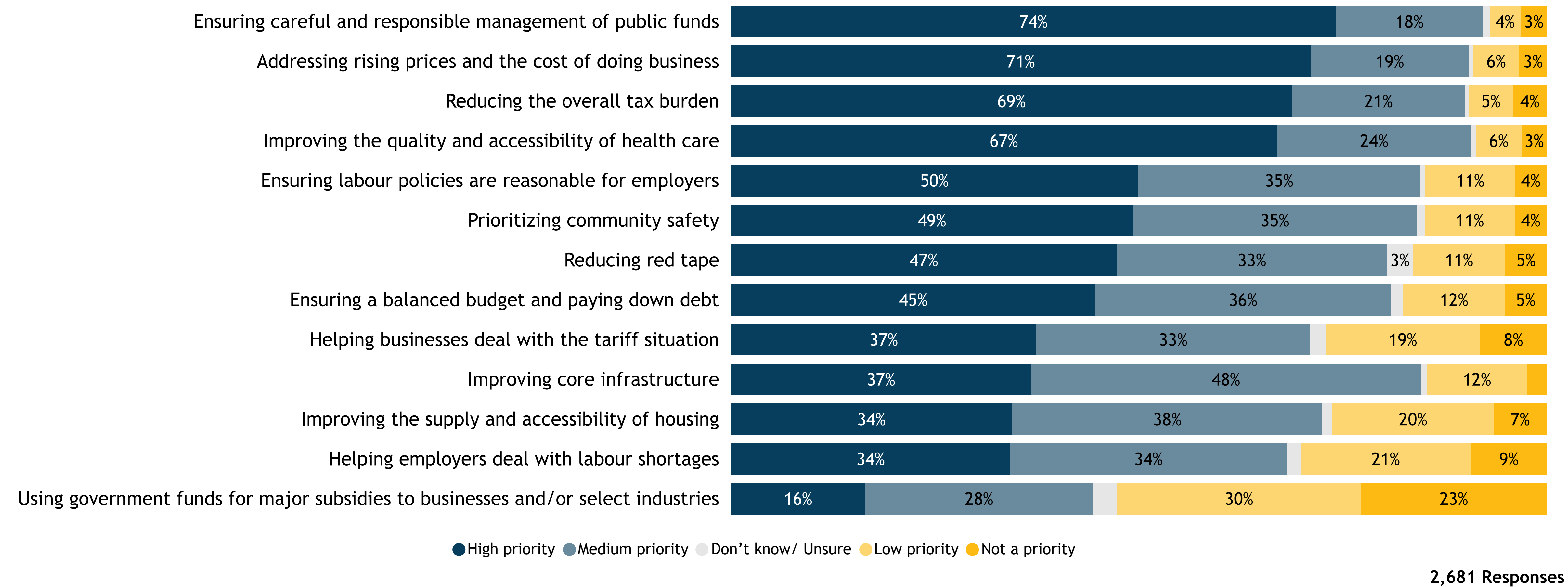
Question: Please indicate your level of confidence in each of the following statements. (Select one for each line)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Note: *Small sample size (<40).

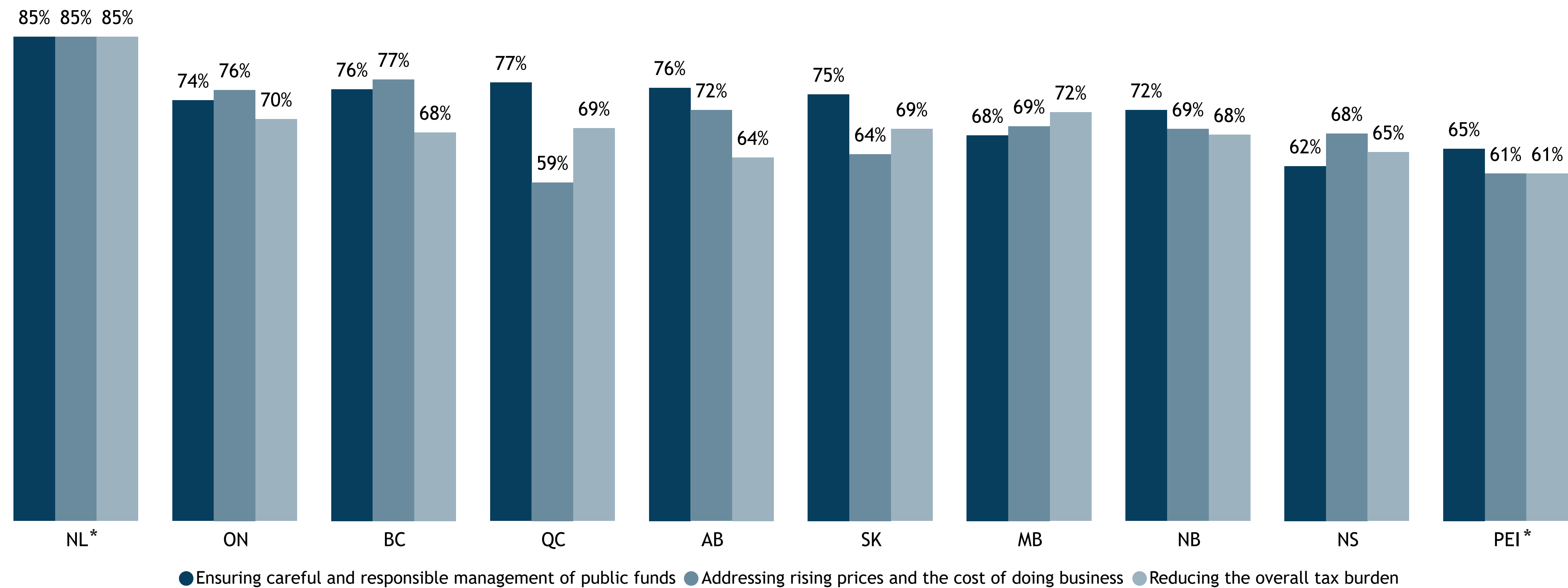
Provincial government priorities

Small businesses call for fiscal restraint, cost relief, and tax reduction from their provincial governments.



Question: Please indicate the level of priority you would like the provincial/territorial government to place on the following issues. (Select one for each line)

Support for the responsible management of public funds remains consistently high across provinces. Support for cost relief is strongest in Ontario and British Columbia.



2,679 Responses

Question: Please indicate the level of priority you would like the provincial/territorial government to place on the following issues. (Select one for each line)

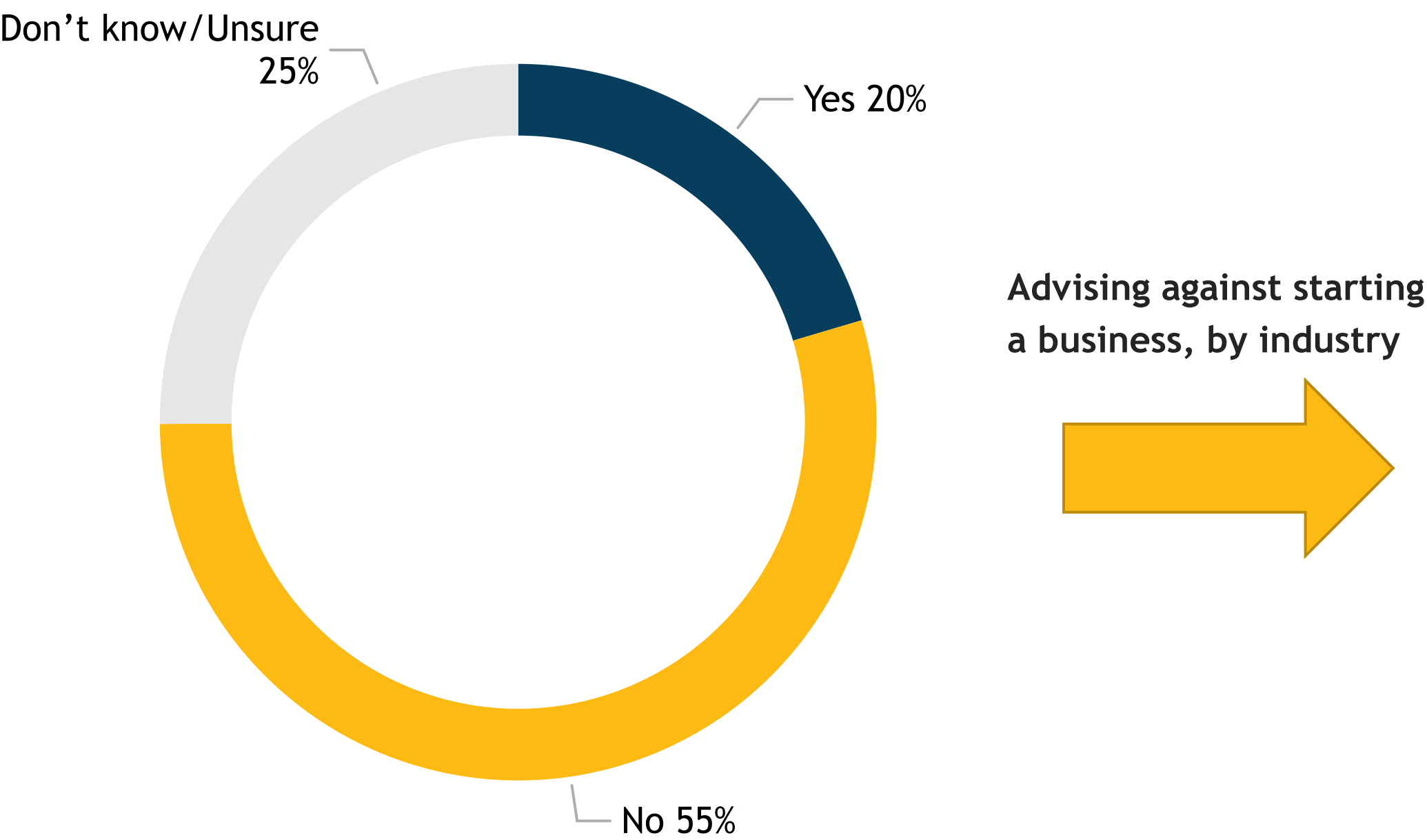
Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Note: *Small sample size (<40).

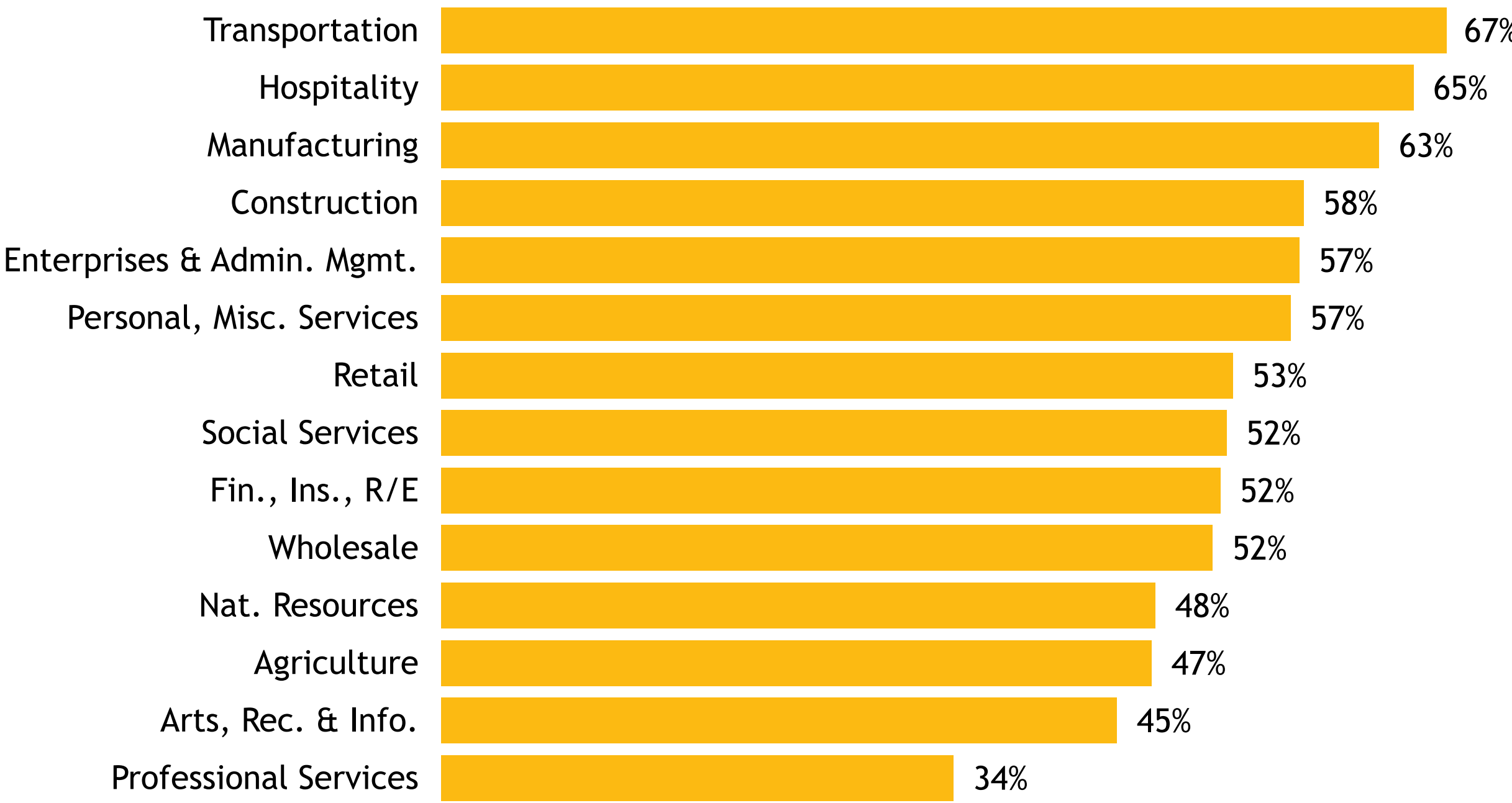
Entrepreneurship

Small business owners underscore caution towards starting a business in today’s conditions, with 1 in 2 not recommending it.

Transportation, hospitality, and manufacturing are the most likely to advise against starting a business right now.



Advising against starting a business, by industry



Previous result (Sept 2024): No = 53%, Yes = 19%, Don't know = 28%

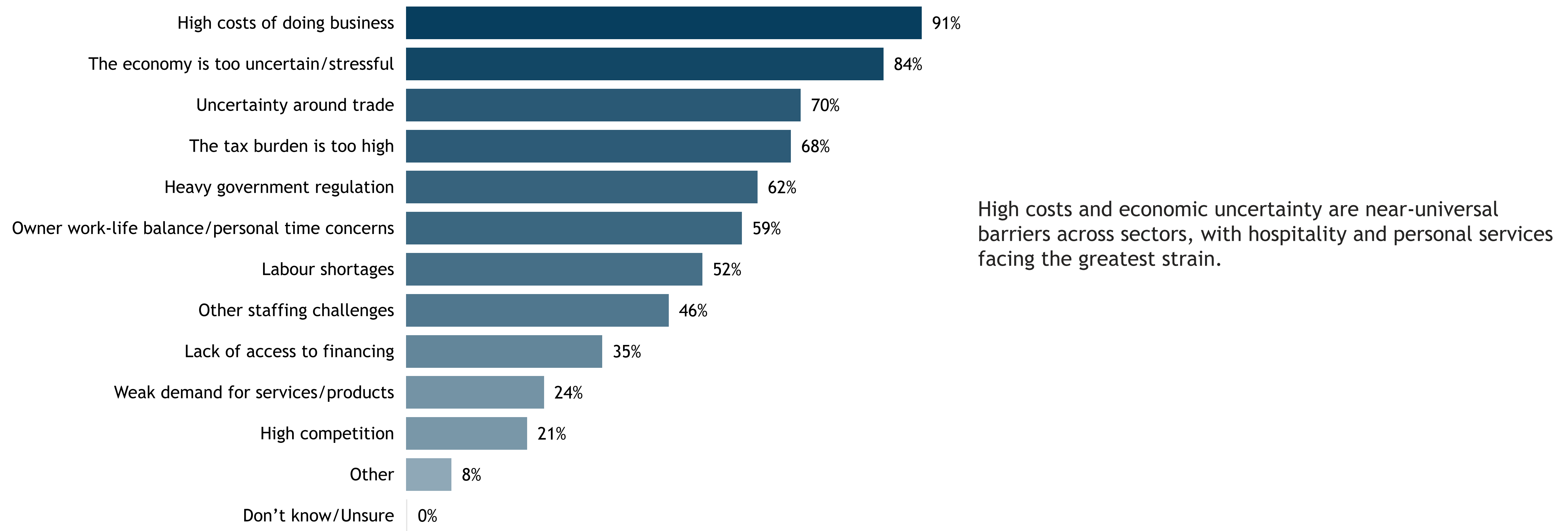
Previous result (Sept 2024): Hospitality (67%), Social Services (61%), Transportation (60%)

2,548 Responses

Question: Would you advise someone to start a business now? (Select one)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

High operating costs, economic and trade uncertainty, and the existing tax burden are the key factors driving caution in recommending starting a small business.



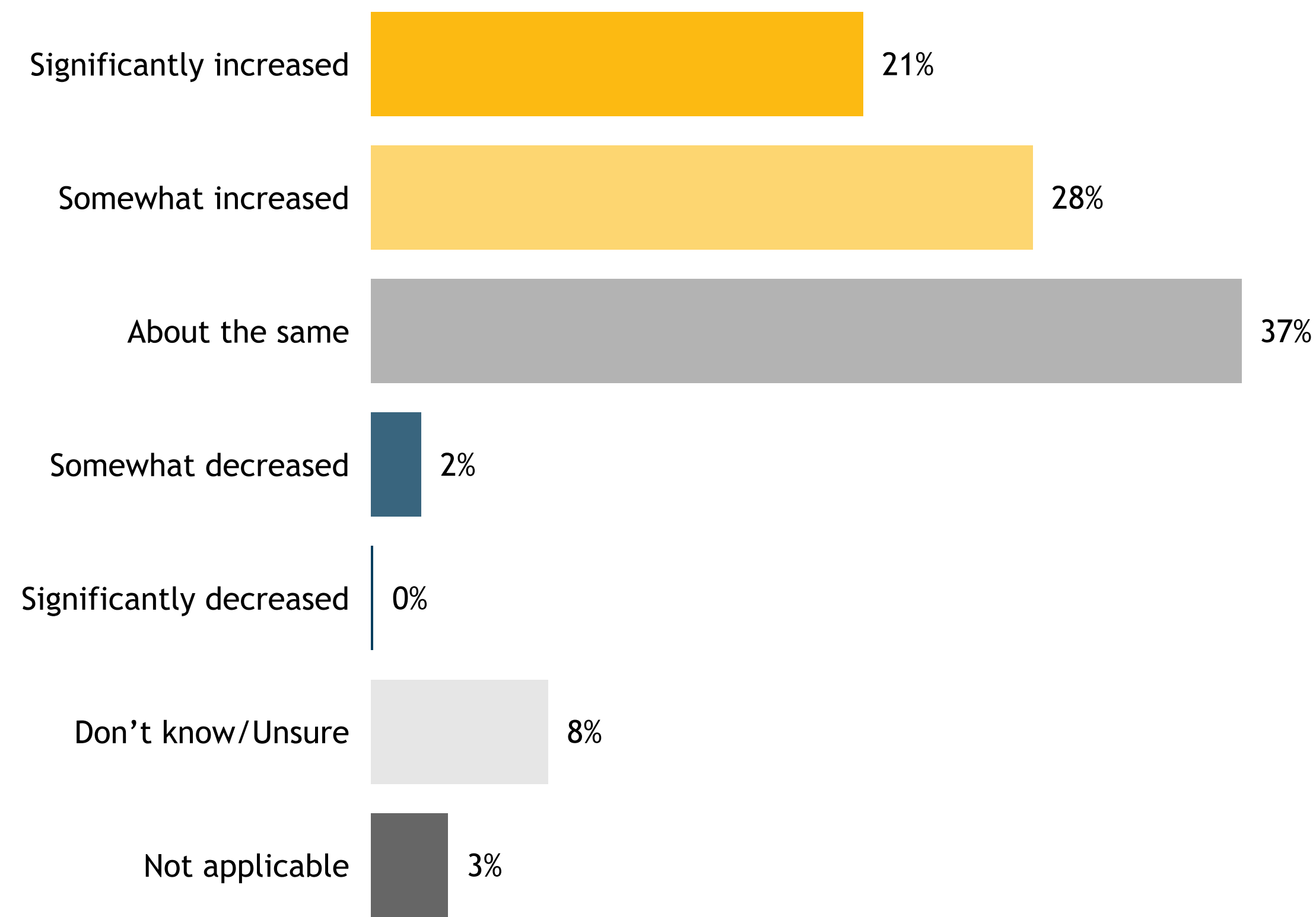
1,386 Responses

Question: Why do you think now is not a good time to start a business? (Select all that apply)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Community Safety

Business owners' concern about worsening crime has eased slightly in the past year, but half report increases and more than one third state crime rates have stayed the same—underscoring persistent safety challenges in their community.



Response	July 2024*	PP difference between 2025 and 2024
Significantly increased	29%	-8
Somewhat increased	33%	-4
About the same	28%	+9

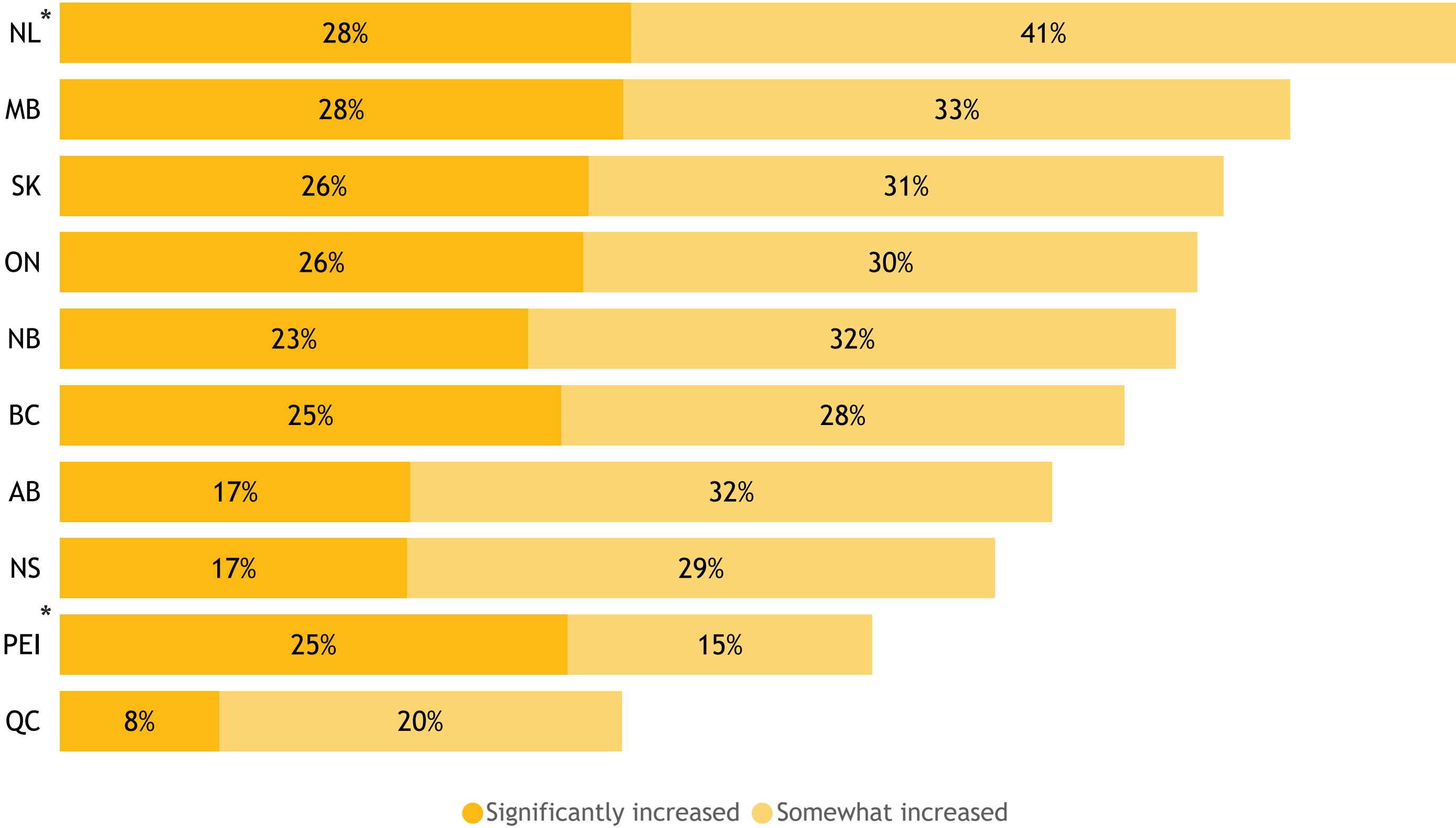
Note: *The same question was asked in July 2024 and October 2025

2,542 Responses

Question: Over the last 12 months, how has the level of crime changed in the community where your business is located? (Select one)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Perceptions of rising crime are highest in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, and lowest in Quebec.



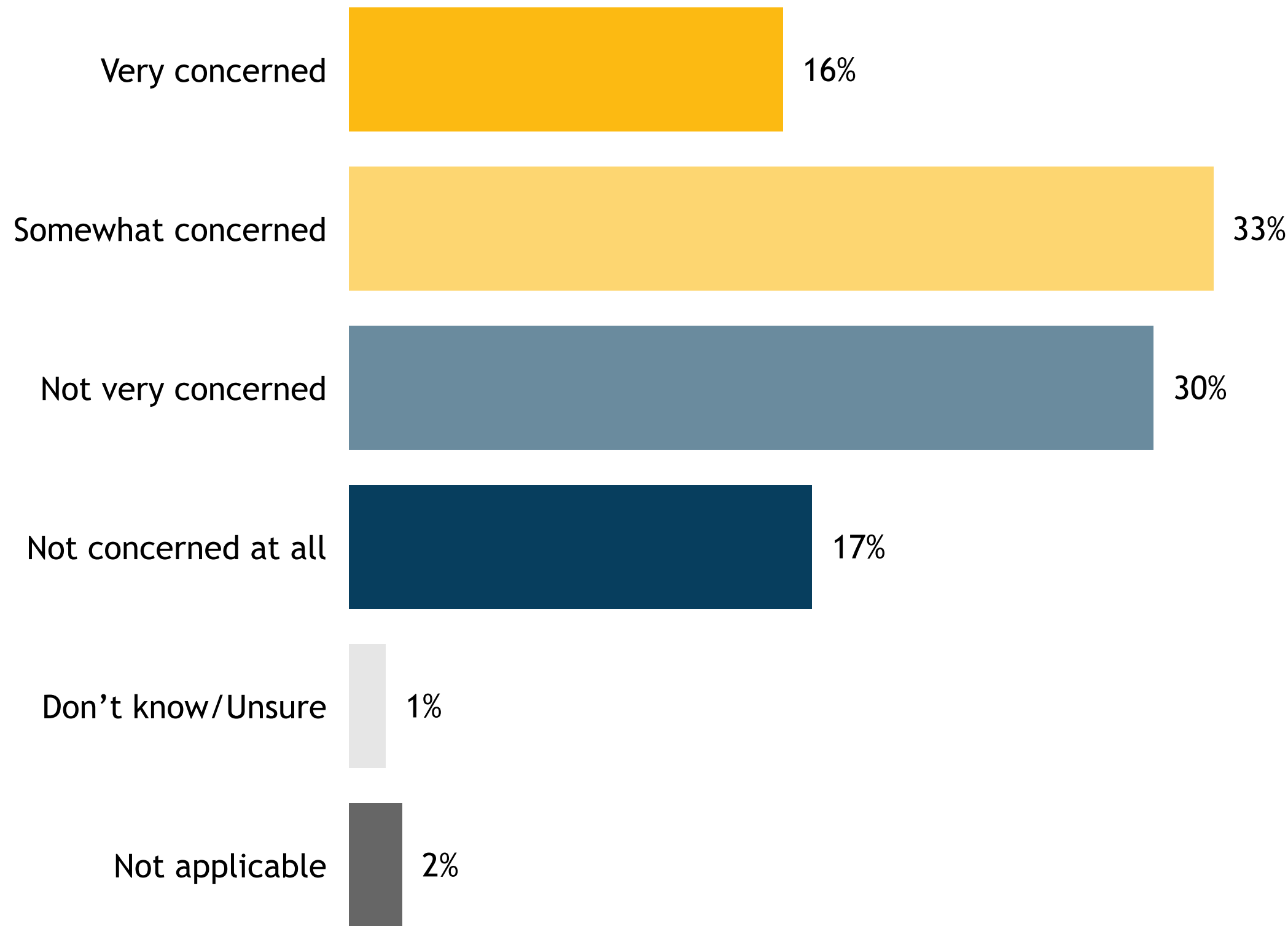
2,542 Responses

Question: Over the last 12 months, how has the level of crime changed in the community where your business is located? (Select one)

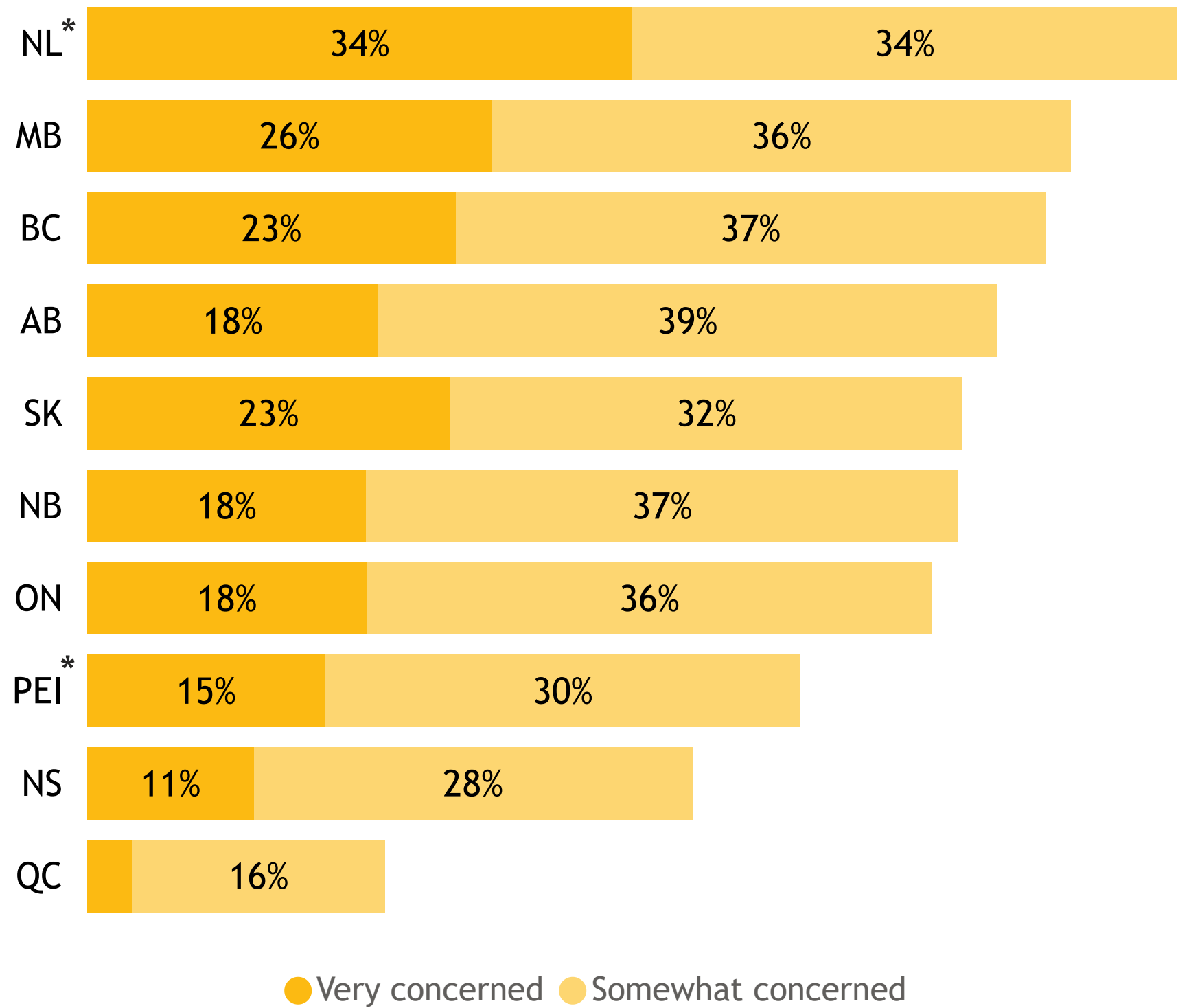
Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Note: *Small sample size (<40).

Half of small business owners are concerned about their personal and staff safety due to crime in their communities.



Manitoba and British Columbia businesses report the highest level of concern while Nova Scotia and Quebec report the lowest.



2,535 Responses

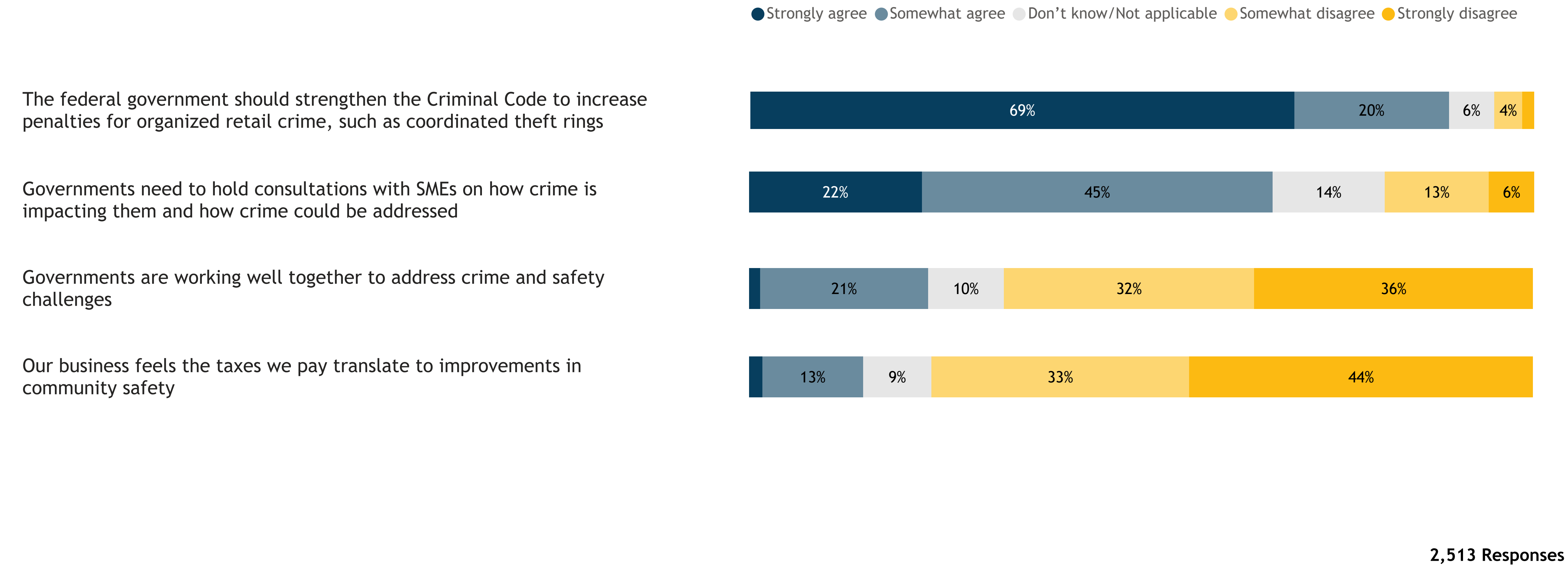
Question: How concerned are you about your personal safety, and the safety of your staff and customers due to crime and community safety issues? (Select one)

Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Note: *Small sample size (<40).

Initiatives addressing public safety issues

Small businesses strongly support tougher penalties for organized retail crime and want governments to consult with them. Many feel intergovernmental coordination is lacking and don't see their tax dollars translating into safer communities.

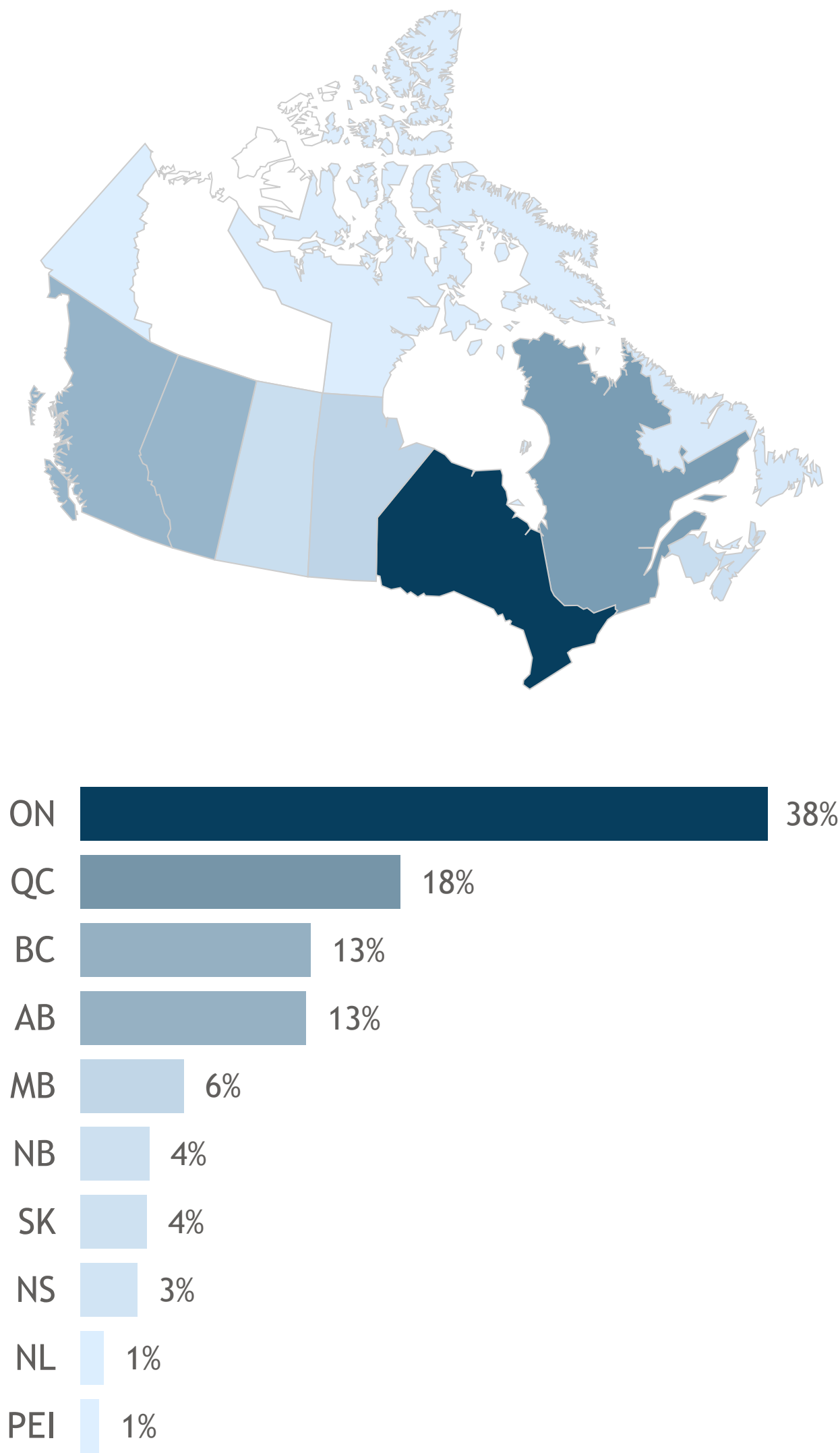


Question: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Select one for each line)

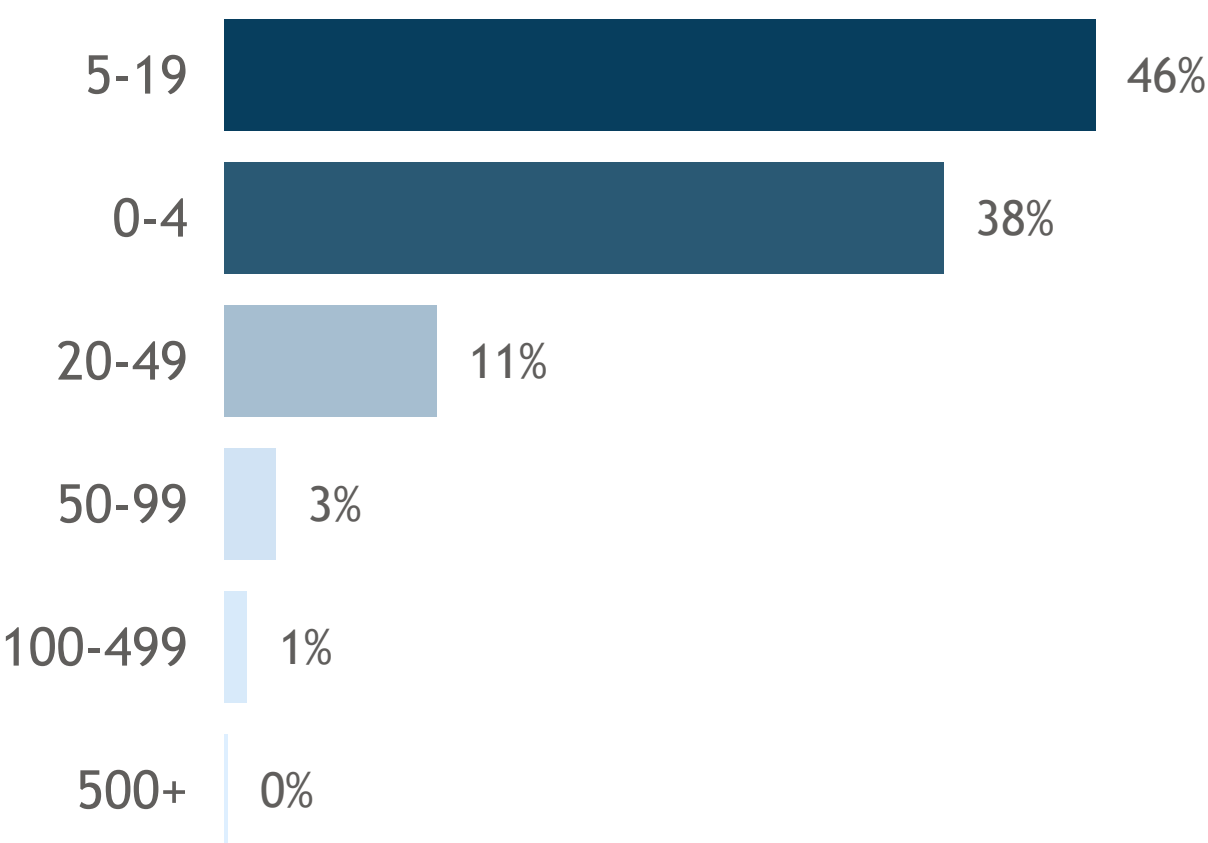
Source: CFIB, Your Voice Survey - October 2025, October 9 - 24, 2025, final results.

Appendix: Sample distribution

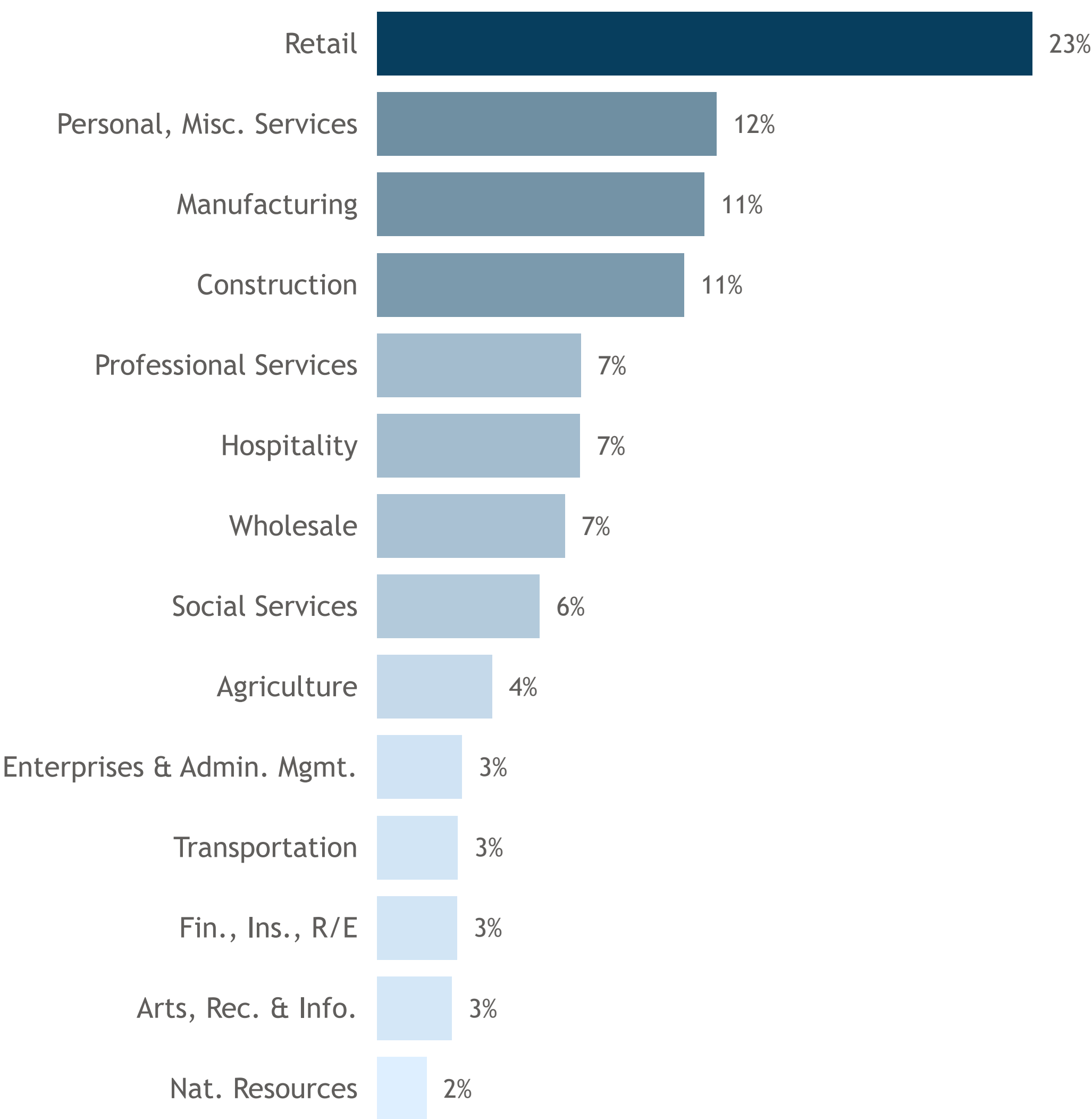
By location of the business



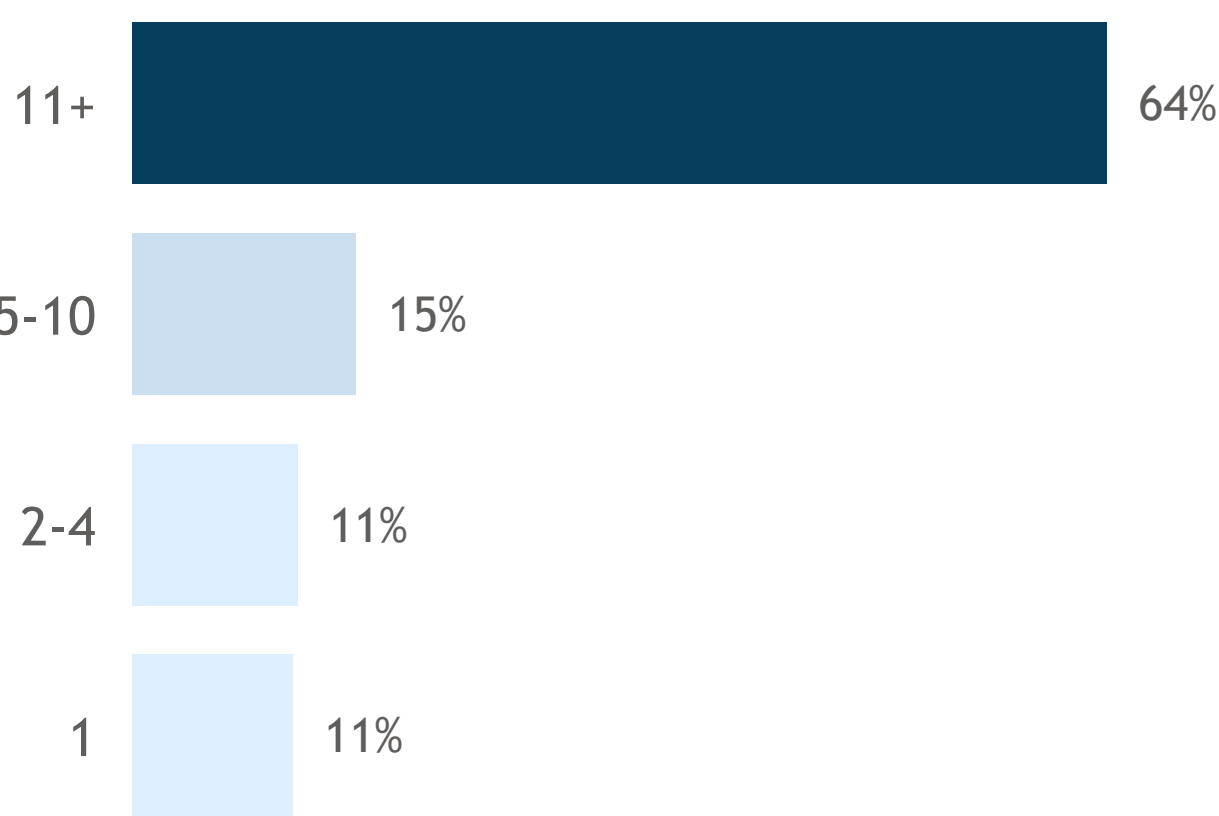
By number of employees



By industry



By years in business

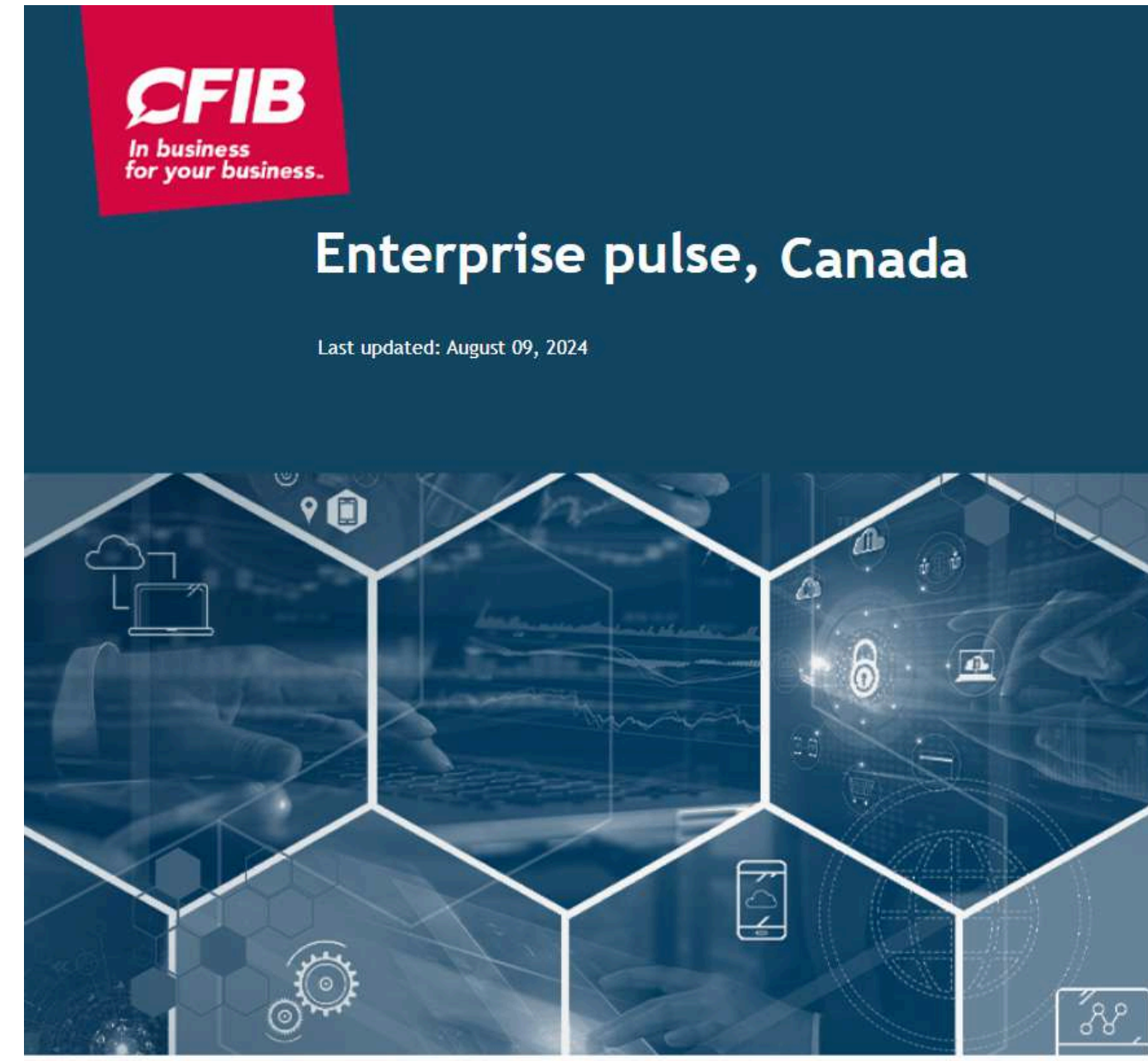


CFIB Research Publications and Business Stats



Monthly Business Barometer®

Our monthly survey tracks small business confidence, expectations and operating conditions in Canada.



Enterprise Pulse

Q2 2024 - Entrepreneurship in Canada is improving, but still not fully back to pre-pandemic strength.



Private Sector Job Vacancies in Canada

The private sector job vacancy rate in Canada remained fairly unchanged at 2.8% in 2025 Q1, though it is 0.6 percentage points lower than in 2024 Q1.

Questions or data requests

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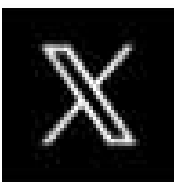


Additional information

All CFIB research



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