

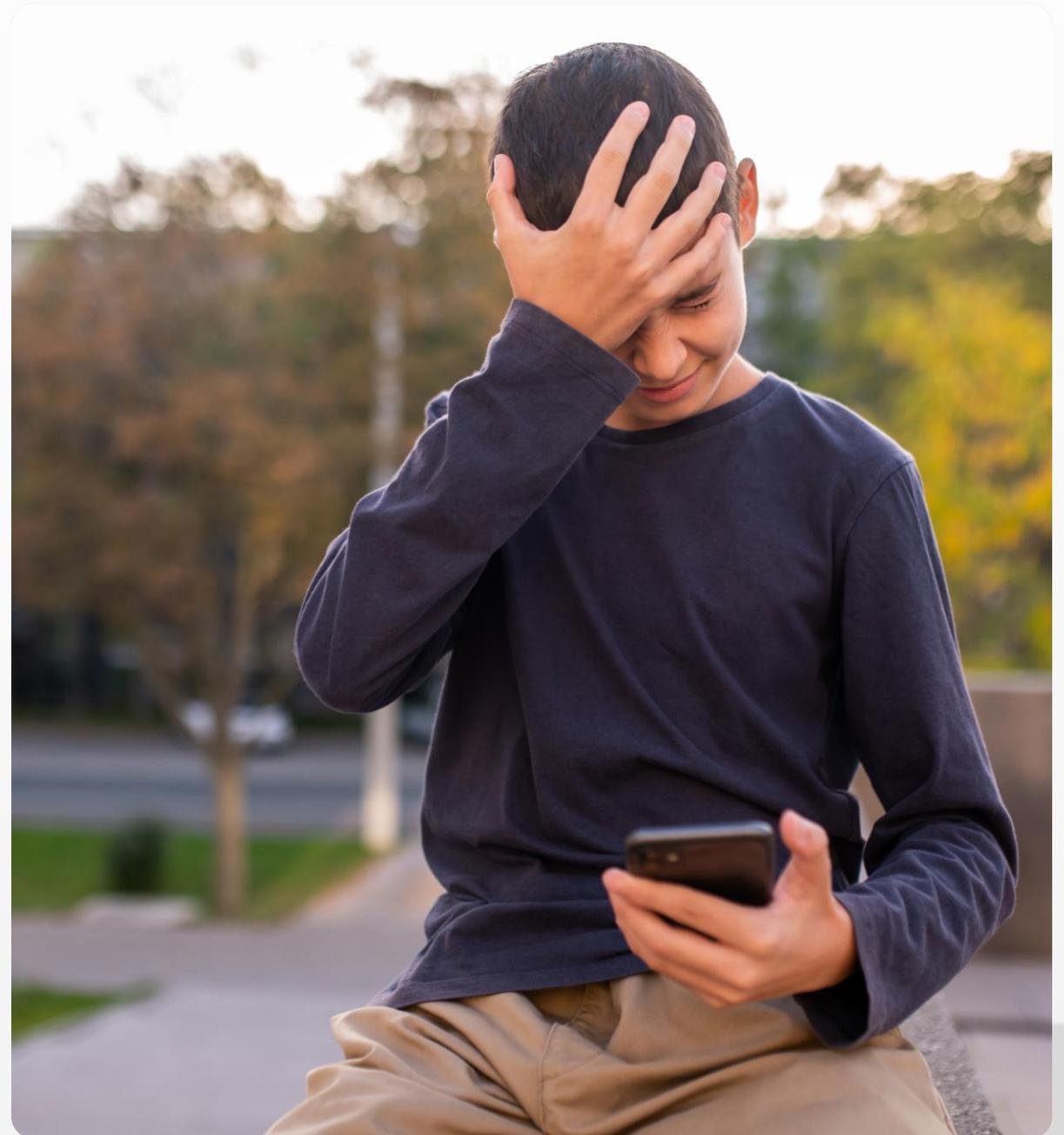


Survey Report

Safer Online Spaces Coalition

Online Safety Survey

Date: 10 / February / 2026
Project: 10015020



Methodology

How



An online survey.

Who



n=1,502 Canadians, 18+.

When



Completed between January 26th and January 29th, 2026, using Leger's online panel.

Other



No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (i.e. a web panel in this case). For comparative purposes, though, a probability sample of n=1,502 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Leger's online panel

Leger's online panel has more than 400,000 members nationally and has a retention rate of 90%.

Quality control

Stringent quality assurance measures allow Leger to achieve the high-quality standards set by the company. As a result, its methods of data collection and storage outperform the norms set by WAPOR (The World Association for Public Opinion Research). These measures are applied at every stage of the project: from data collection to processing, through to analysis. We aim to answer our clients' needs with honesty, total confidentiality, and integrity.

Leger is the largest Canadian-owned market research and analytics company, with more than 600 employees in eight Canadian and US offices. Leger has been working with prestigious clients since 1986.

Have questions about the data presented in this report? Please contact Jennifer McLeod Macey, Senior Vice-President, Public Affairs (see "Our Team" section).

Key Findings

U.S. Pressure, Canadian Sovereignty, and Mental Health

- Half of Canadians would support stronger regulation and oversight of platforms despite potential political or economic pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump (53%); half of Canadians are also at least moderately concerned that social media companies pose a threat to Canada's sovereignty (54%).
- Three-quarters (73%) are worried that children and youth close to them are becoming addicted to social media at the expense of their mental health.

Opinions of Social Media Companies

- Three-quarters of Canadians (73%) distrust major social media companies to act in the best interest of Canadian children and youth; 22% trust them.
- Three-quarters of Canadians are highly concerned regarding false information (76%) and/or sexual exploitation and abuse of children online (74%).

Social Media Youth Safety & Regulation

- Nine-in-ten Canadians believe social media companies and tech platforms should be held accountable for making their services safe for children and youth (90%). Nearly as many Canadians believe social media companies should be legally required to design products in a way that prioritizes children's safety, even if it limits engagement, features, or profits (88%).
- 79% of Canadians would support the creation of an independent public regulator to oversee social media companies.
- If a social media company operating in Canada fails to adequately protect Canadian children and youth, nine-in-ten (90%) would support requiring the company to overhaul its systems to better detect and remove harmful content.
- Roughly half of Canadians regarded age-appropriate content filters applied by default (50%), automatic privacy protections for minors (48%) and/or restrictions on targeted advertising to children (48%) among their top potential protections for children and youth.
- Nine-in-ten (90%) believe there should be some minimum age for social media platform use.

90%

believe social media companies should be held accountable for making their services safe for children and youth.

90%

believe there should be some minimum age for social media use.

75%

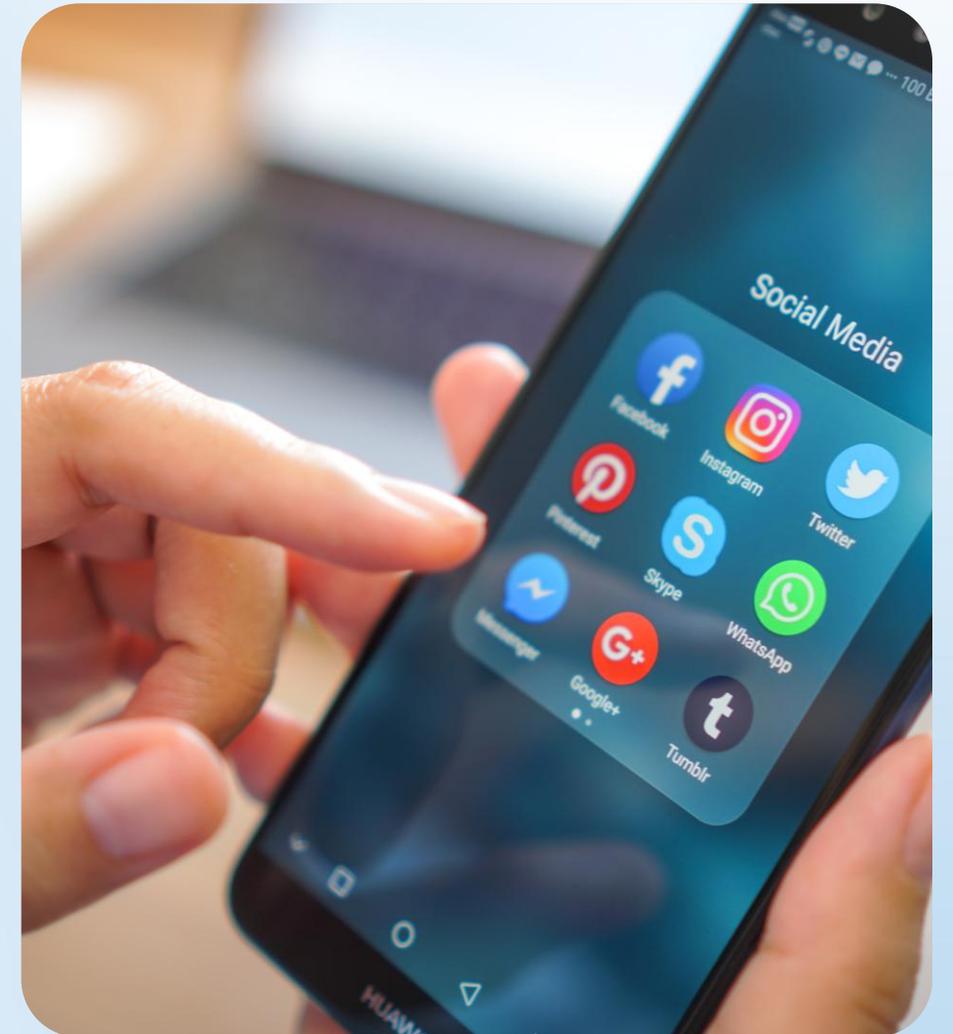
support public oversight of AI chatbots to reduce harmful outcomes for Canadian children and youth.

53%

support stronger regulations despite potential pressures from U.S. President Donald Trump.

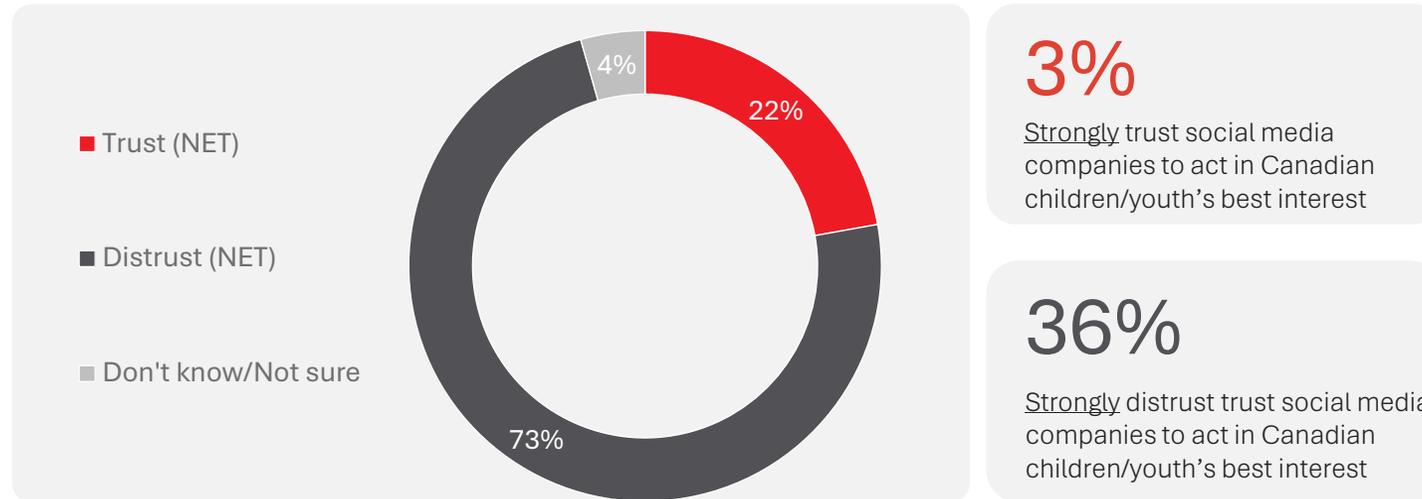
1

Opinions of Social Media Companies



Roughly three-quarters (73%) of Canadians distrust major social media companies to act in the best interest of Canadian children and youth.

Only one-in-five (22%) trust major social media companies with just 3% indicating *strong* trust; in contrast, a third (36%) *strongly* distrust major social media companies to act in the best interest of Canadian children and youth. In particular, women (vs men), those aged 55+ (vs 18-54) and those without children in the household (vs those with children) are more likely to express distrust of major social media companies.

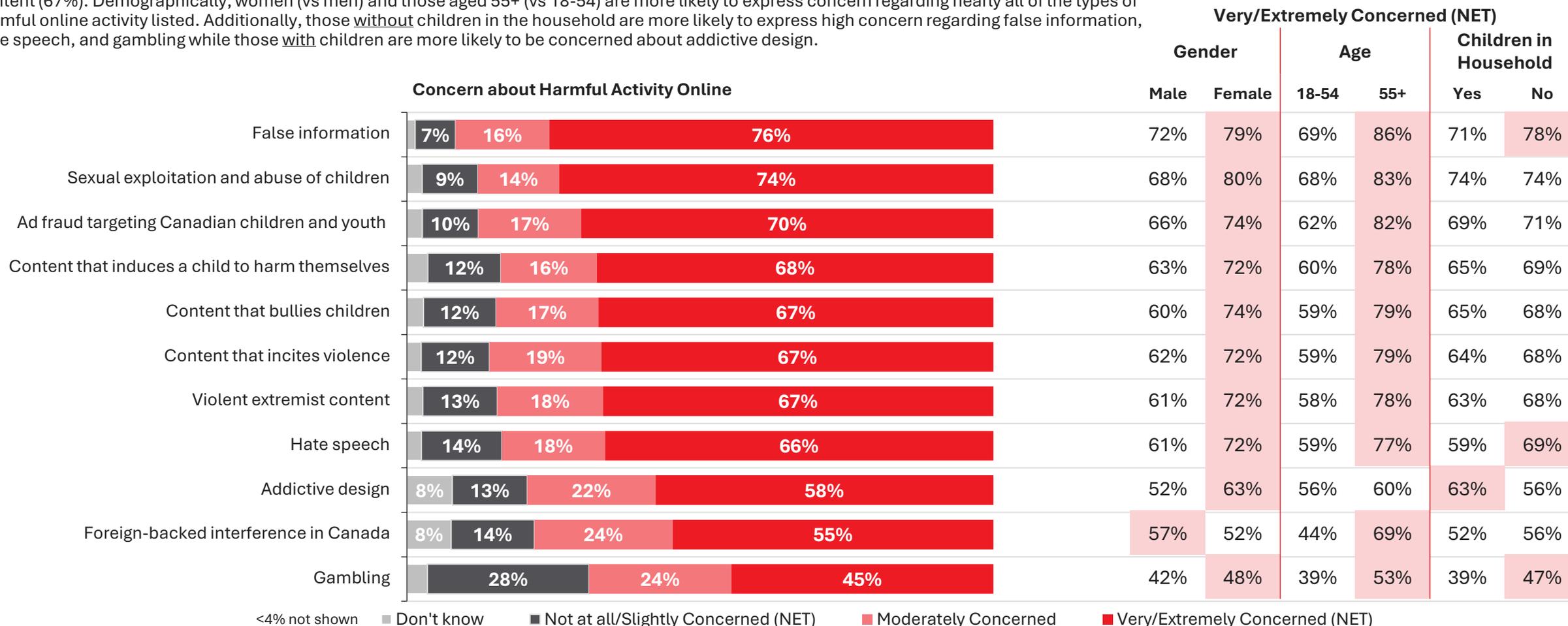


	Total	Gender		Age			Children in Household	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No
Trust (NET)	22%	27%	17%	35%	23%	13%	29%	20%
Strongly trust	3%	5%	1%	7%	3%	1%	6%	2%
Somewhat trust	19%	22%	16%	28%	20%	13%	23%	18%
Distrust (NET)	73%	69%	77%	62%	72%	83%	68%	76%
Somewhat distrust	38%	34%	41%	35%	37%	41%	37%	38%
Strongly distrust	36%	35%	36%	27%	35%	42%	30%	38%
Don't know/Not sure	4%	4%	5%	3%	6%	4%	3%	5%

Q. How much do you trust or distrust major social media companies (e.g. Meta, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, etc.)) to act in the best interests of Canadian children and youth? Base: All (n=1502)

Three-quarters of Canadians are highly concerned about false information (76%) and/or sexual exploitation and abuse of children (74%) online.

Seven-in-ten are also concerned about ad fraud targeting Canadian children and youth (70%) while two-thirds expressed high levels of concern regarding content that induces a child to harm themselves (68%), content that bullies children (67%), content that incites violence (67%) and/or violent extremist content (67%). Demographically, women (vs men) and those aged 55+ (vs 18-54) are more likely to express concern regarding nearly all of the types of harmful online activity listed. Additionally, those without children in the household are more likely to express high concern regarding false information, hate speech, and gambling while those with children are more likely to be concerned about addictive design.

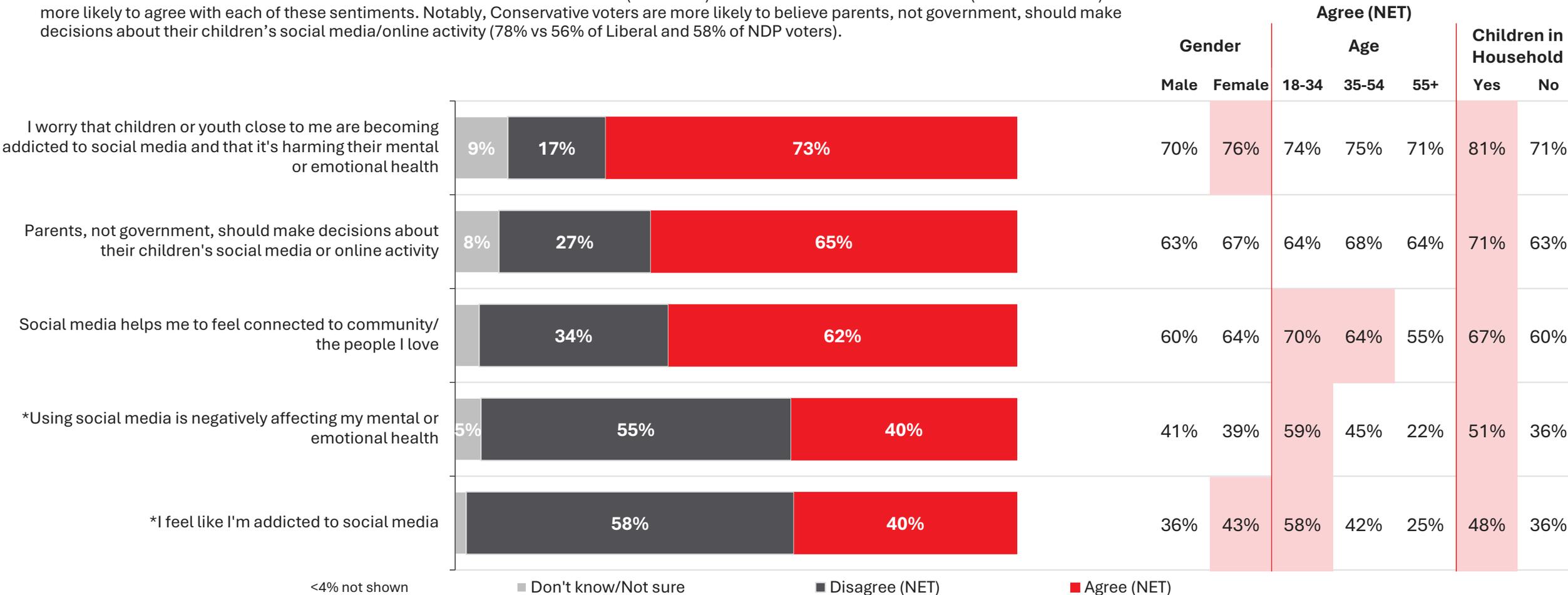


Q. How concerned are you about the following types of harmful activity online? Base: All (n=1502)

Significantly higher

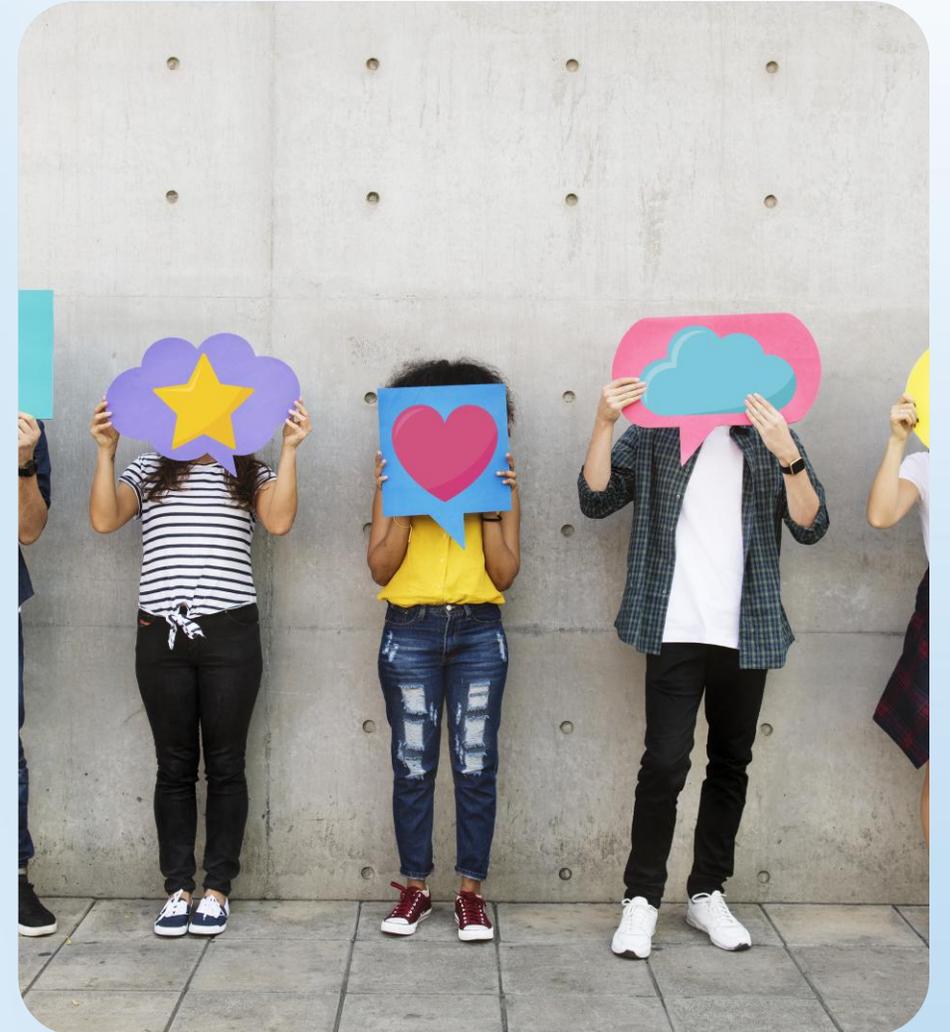
Three-quarters (73%) are worried that children or youth close to them are becoming addicted to social media at the expense of their mental health.

Six-in-ten believe parents, not government, should make decisions about their children’s social media/online activity (65%) and/or that social media helps them feel connected to community/the people they love (62%). Among those who use social media, four-in-ten believe it is negatively affecting their mental or emotional health and/or feel like their addicted to social media (40% each). Those with children in their home (vs those without) are more likely to agree with each of these sentiments. Notably, Conservative voters are more likely to believe parents, not government, should make decisions about their children’s social media/online activity (78% vs 56% of Liberal and 58% of NDP voters).



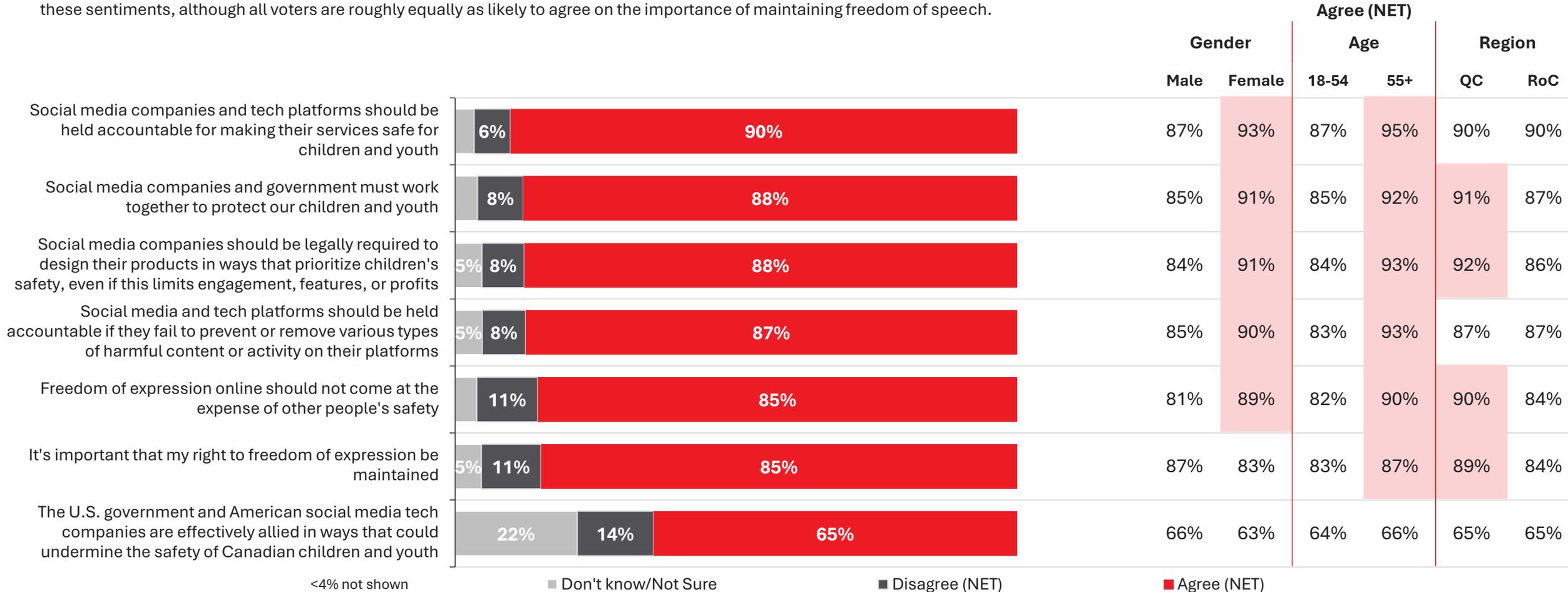
2

Social Media Youth Safety & Regulation



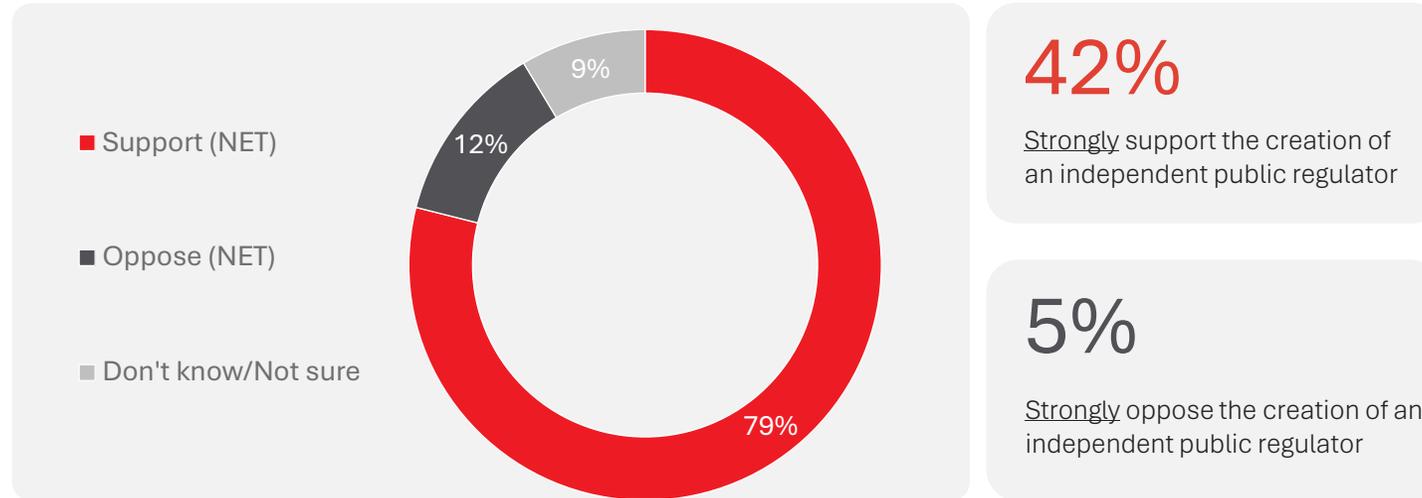
Nine-in-ten Canadians (90%) believe social media companies and tech platforms should be held accountable for making their services safe for children and youth.

Most Canadians, at least eight-in-ten, agree with nearly all the sentiments listed below while fewer, but still two thirds (65%), believe the U.S. government and American social media tech companies are effectively allied in ways that could undermine Canadian children/youth safety. Women (vs men), those aged 55+ (vs 18-54) and those living in Quebec (vs elsewhere in Canada) are more likely to agree with most of these sentiments. Additionally, Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives) are more likely to agree with each of these sentiments, although all voters are roughly equally as likely to agree on the importance of maintaining freedom of speech.



Eight-in-ten (79%) would support the creation of an independent public regulator to oversee social media companies.

In fact, four-in-ten *strongly* support the creation of this regulator (42%). Support is particularly strong among women (vs men), older Canadians aged 55+ (vs 18-54), and Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives).

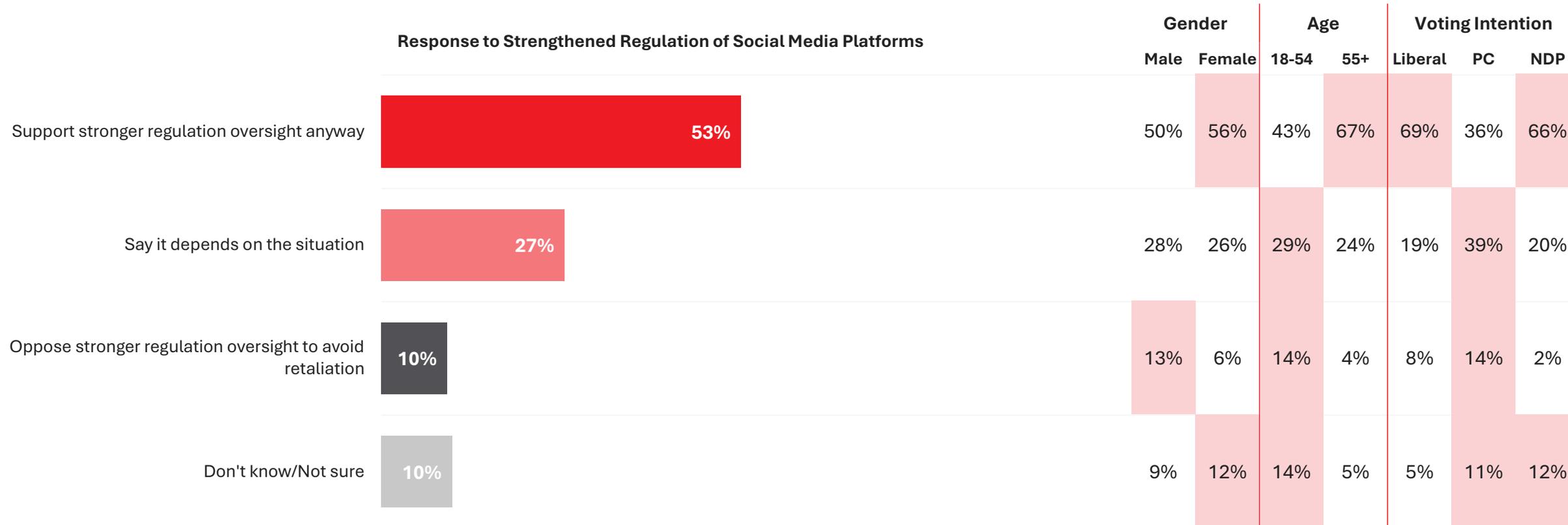


	Total	Gender		Age			Voting Intention		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Liberal	PC	NDP
Support (NET)	79%	77%	81%	75%	75%	85%	87%	70%	81%
Strongly support	42%	39%	46%	30%	37%	54%	49%	35%	50%
Somewhat support	37%	38%	35%	45%	38%	31%	38%	36%	32%
Oppose (NET)	12%	15%	10%	14%	17%	8%	8%	19%	9%
Somewhat oppose	7%	8%	6%	9%	10%	4%	5%	10%	4%
Strongly oppose	5%	7%	3%	5%	7%	4%	3%	9%	4%
Don't know/ Not sure	9%	8%	10%	11%	9%	7%	5%	10%	10%

Q. What extent would you support or oppose the creation of an independent public regulator to oversee social media companies, set online safety standards, and enforce accountability? Base: All (n=1502)

More than half of Canadians (53%) would support strengthening regulation of social media companies' platforms despite potential pressure from the U.S. President Donald Trump.

A quarter say it depends on the situation (27%) while one-in-ten oppose stronger regulation oversight to avoid retaliation (10%). Demographically, women (vs men), older Canadians aged 55+ (vs 18-54), and Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives) are more likely to support stronger regulation oversight anyway while their counterparts are much more likely to oppose.

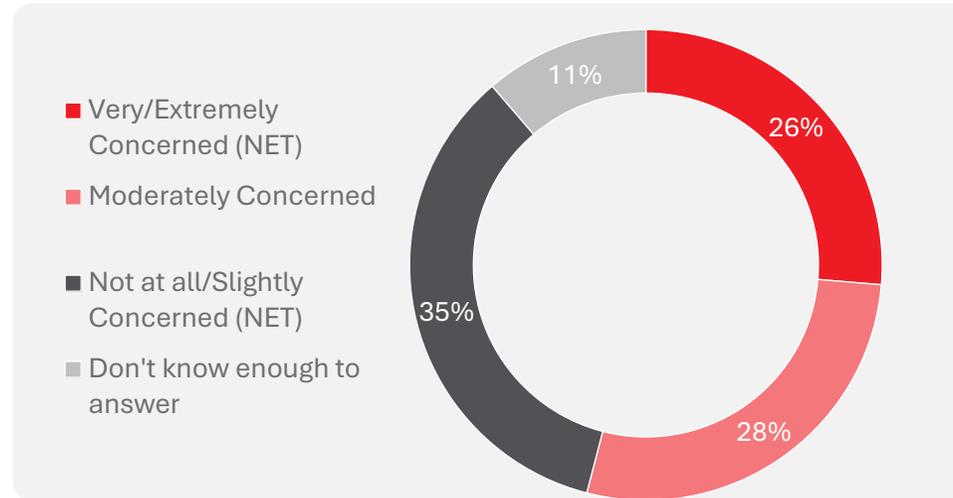


Q. If Canada strengthened regulation of social media companies' platforms and faced political or economic pressure from US President Donald Trump, would you... Base: All (n=1502)

Significantly higher

More than half of Canadians (54%) are at least moderately concerned that social media companies pose a threat to Canadian sovereignty.

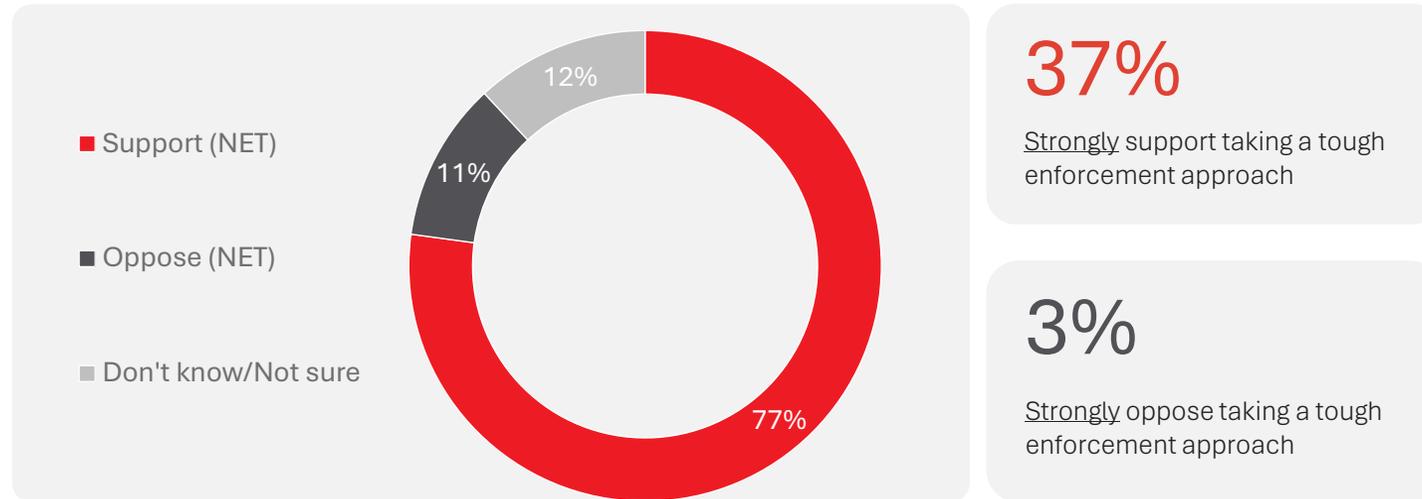
A quarter are either highly concerned or moderately concerned (26% and 28%, respectively) while a third are less concerned (35%). Concern is significantly higher however among those aged 35+ (vs 18-34) as well as among Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives) while men (vs women) and Conservative voters (vs Liberal and NDP) are more likely to be less concerned with social media companies' threat to the country's sovereignty.



	Total	Gender		Age			Voting Intention		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Liberal	PC	NDP
Very/Extremely Concerned (NET)	26%	28%	25%	20%	26%	31%	31%	22%	36%
Extremely concerned	11%	12%	9%	9%	9%	13%	12%	9%	15%
Very concerned	16%	16%	16%	11%	18%	17%	19%	13%	21%
Moderately concerned	28%	28%	28%	29%	28%	27%	30%	25%	22%
Not at all/Slightly Concerned (NET)	35%	38%	32%	36%	35%	34%	33%	44%	31%
Slightly concerned	23%	23%	23%	27%	22%	22%	25%	26%	21%
Not at all concerned	12%	15%	9%	9%	13%	12%	8%	19%	10%
Don't know/Not sure	11%	7%	15%	16%	10%	9%	6%	9%	11%

Three-quarters (77%) support governments taking a tough enforcement approach with respect to regulating social media platforms and AI tools.

A third of Canadians (37%) *strongly* support a tougher enforcement approach, particularly women (vs men), those aged 35+ (vs 18-34), and Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives). In contrast, men (vs women) are nearly twice as likely to oppose this approach.

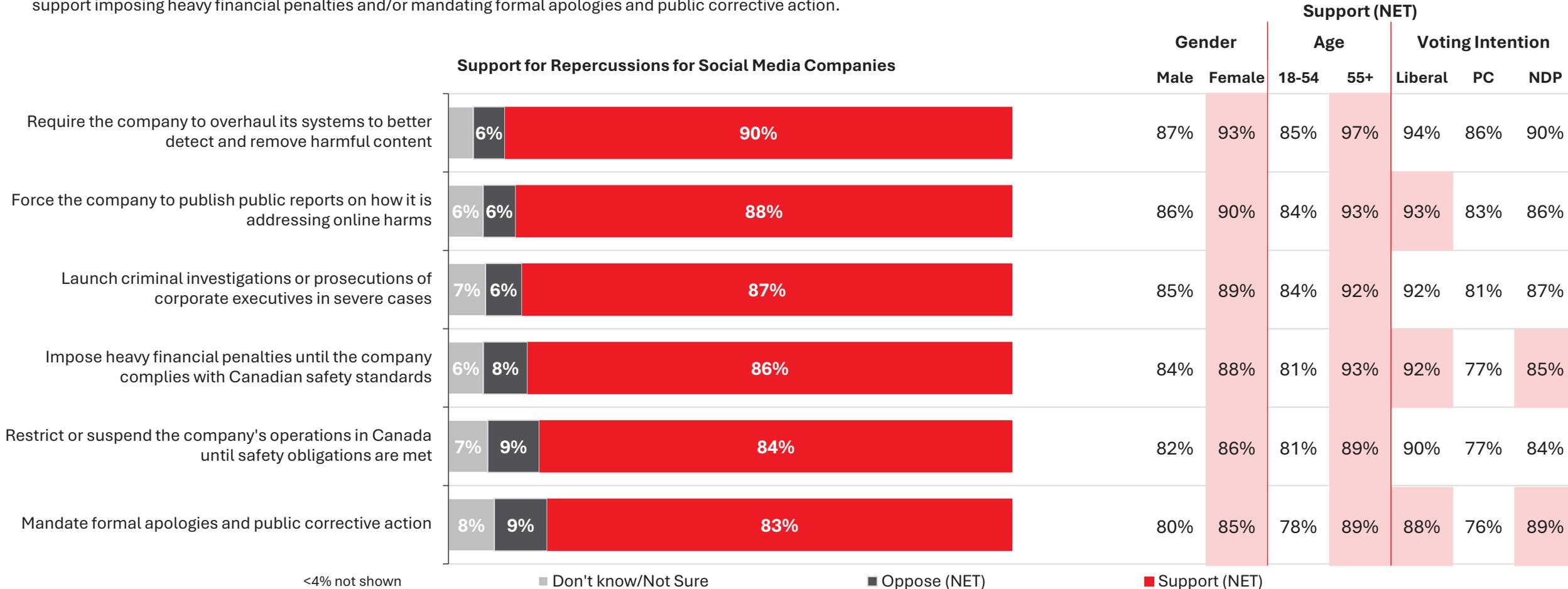


	Total	Gender		Age		Voting Intention		
		Male	Female	18-34	35+	Liberal	PC	NDP
Support (NET)	77%	77%	77%	72%	79%	89%	68%	82%
Strongly support	37%	34%	41%	26%	41%	48%	28%	52%
Somewhat support	40%	43%	36%	45%	38%	41%	40%	30%
Oppose (NET)	11%	14%	8%	13%	10%	6%	18%	11%
Somewhat oppose	8%	10%	6%	11%	7%	5%	13%	8%
Strongly oppose	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	1%	6%	3%
Don't know/ Not sure	12%	9%	15%	15%	11%	5%	13%	7%

Q. Some foreign governments have taken a strong regulatory approach toward social media platforms and AI tools following safety concerns. To what extent do you support or oppose governments taking a tough enforcement approach, even if it leads to conflict with social media companies? Base: All (n=1502)

Nine-in-ten Canadians (90%) support requiring social media companies that fail to protect children and youth to overhaul their systems to better detect and remove harmful content.

Furthermore, at least eight-in-ten would support the actions listed below being taken including forcing the company to publish public records on how its addressing online harm (88%), launching criminal investigations in severe cases (87%), and/or imposing heavy financial penalties until the company complies with Canadian safety standards (86%). Women and those aged 55+ are more likely to support each of the actions listed (vs their counterparts). Additionally, Liberal and NDP Voters (vs Conservatives) are more likely to support imposing heavy financial penalties and/or mandating formal apologies and public corrective action.

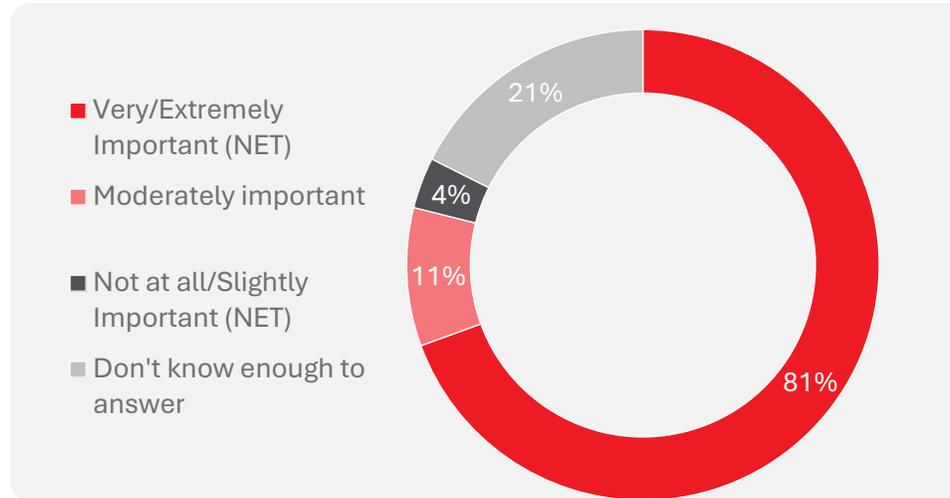


Q. If a social media company operating in Canada fails to adequately protect Canadian children and youth from serious online harms to what extent would you support or oppose the following actions being taken? Base: All (n=1502)

Significantly higher

If contributing to the harm of children, eight-in-ten (81%) believe it is highly important that platforms be legally required to publicly disclose their knowledge and actions taken.

In fact, more than half (55%) believe it is *extremely* important, particularly women (vs men), older Canadians aged 55+ (vs 18-54) , and Liberal and NDP voters (vs Conservatives).

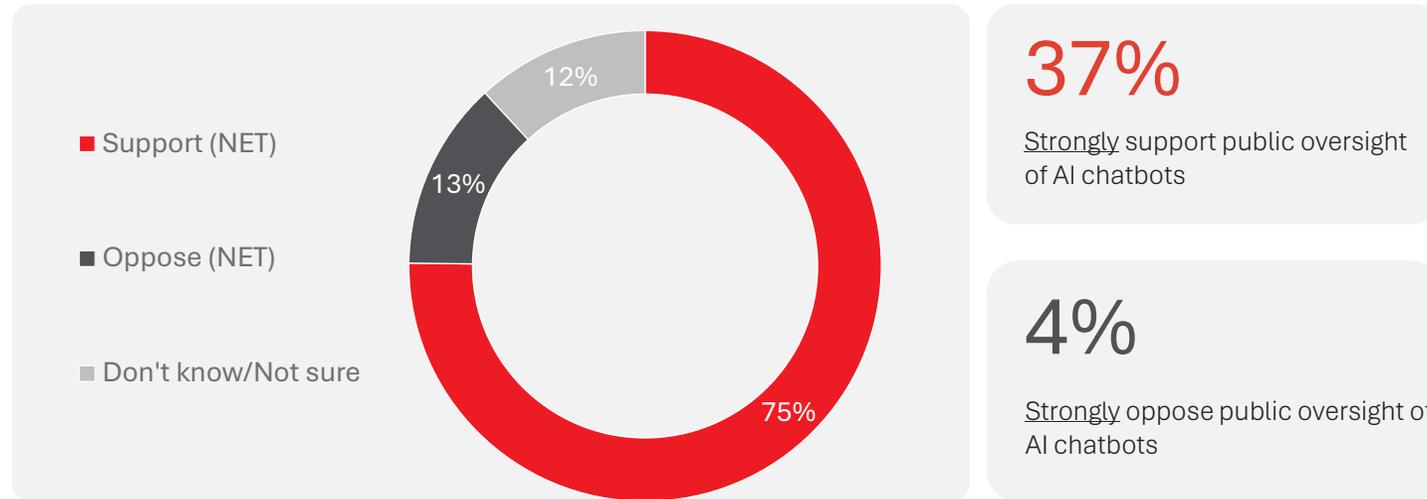


	Total	Gender		Age			Voting Intention		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Liberal	PC	NDP
Very/Extremely important (NET)	81%	78%	84%	68%	80%	91%	88%	74%	79%
Extremely important	55%	48%	61%	42%	50%	67%	62%	46%	61%
Very important	26%	30%	23%	26%	29%	24%	26%	28%	18%
Moderately important	11%	12%	11%	19%	12%	5%	7%	17%	16%
Not at all/Slightly Important (NET)	4%	7%	2%	8%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%
Slightly important	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%	1%	3%	4%	3%
Not at all important	1%	2%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	2%	-
Don't know/ Not sure	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Q. If credible evidence shows that a social media company is contributing to harm to children (such as addictive design, sexual exploitation, or serious mental health impacts), how important is it that the platform be legally required to publicly disclose what it knew and what actions it took? Base: All (n=1502)

Three-quarters (75%) support the public oversight of AI chatbots to reduce harmful outcomes for Canadian children and youth.

More than a third (37%) *strongly* support public oversight of AI chatbots with women, those aged 55+, and Liberal and NDP voters more likely to do so (vs their counterparts). While only 13% oppose public oversight, those aged 18-54 (vs 55+) and Conservative votes (vs Liberal and NDP voters) are more likely to be among them.



	Total	Gender		Age		Voting Intention		
		Male	Female	18-54	55+	Liberal	PC	NDP
Support (NET)	75%	75%	75%	71%	81%	87%	68%	80%
Strongly support	37%	34%	40%	29%	49%	47%	28%	50%
Somewhat support	38%	41%	35%	42%	32%	40%	40%	30%
Oppose (NET)	13%	15%	11%	16%	9%	8%	20%	11%
Somewhat oppose	9%	10%	7%	11%	6%	5%	13%	10%
Strongly oppose	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%	7%	2%
Don't know / Not sure	12%	11%	13%	13%	10%	6%	13%	9%

Q. AI chatbots (such as ChatGPT, Grok, or similar tools) are increasingly used for information, advice, and content creation. To what extent do you support or oppose public oversight of AI chatbots, such as government-set standards, transparency requirements, or independent regulation, to reduce harmful outcomes for Canadian children and youth? Base: All (n=1502)

Nine-in-ten Canadians (90%) believe there should be some minimum age for using social media platforms.

The most common age minimums indicated were 14-15 or 16-17 (27% each) while 18% believe the minimum age should be 18 or older; only 3% indicated there should be no minimum age and 7% were unsure. Women (vs men) and those with children in the household (vs those without) are more likely to believe there should be some minimum age requirement. Additionally, those who trust social media companies to act in the best interest of Canadian children and youth are more likely to believe the minimum age should be younger, either under 12 or 12-13.

	Minimum Age for Using Social Media Platforms		Gender		Children in Household		Social Media Companies Trust	
			Male	Female	Yes	No	Trust	Distrust
Any Age (NET)	90%		88%	92%	94%	89%	91%	91%
Under 12	6%		6%	6%	6%	6%	9%	5%
12-13	11%		13%	10%	12%	11%	15%	10%
14-15	27%		28%	26%	30%	26%	26%	27%
16-17	27%		25%	30%	32%	26%	23%	29%
18 or older	18%		17%	20%	14%	20%	18%	19%
There should be no minimum age	3%		4%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Don't know / Not sure	7%		8%	6%	2%	8%	5%	6%

Q. Some countries are considering setting a minimum age for using social media platforms. Which of the following do you think should be the minimum age, if any?

Base: All (n=1502)

Significantly higher

Three-quarters believe a minimum age for social media use should be established to protect children’s mental health (77%), prevent harmful exposure (76%) and/or protect children’s safety (76%).

Fewer, but still seven-in-ten, believe it should be implemented to protect children’s privacy and personal data (71%). Women (vs men) and those who distrust large social media companies to act in the best interest of Canadian children and youth (vs those who trust them) are more likely to select each of these rationales as reasons for establishing a minimum age for social media use.

Reason for Agreeing a Minimum Age Should be Established		Gender		Age			Social Media Companies Trust	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Trust	Distrust
To protect children's mental health	77%	73%	81%	73%	78%	80%	63%	82%
To prevent exposure to harmful or illegal content	76%	71%	81%	69%	73%	83%	63%	80%
To protect children's safety	76%	72%	80%	70%	76%	81%	65%	80%
To protect children's privacy and personal data	71%	66%	76%	68%	69%	75%	59%	74%
Other	3%	5%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Don't know/ Not sure	1%	<1%	1%	1%	2%	-	1%	1%

Significantly higher

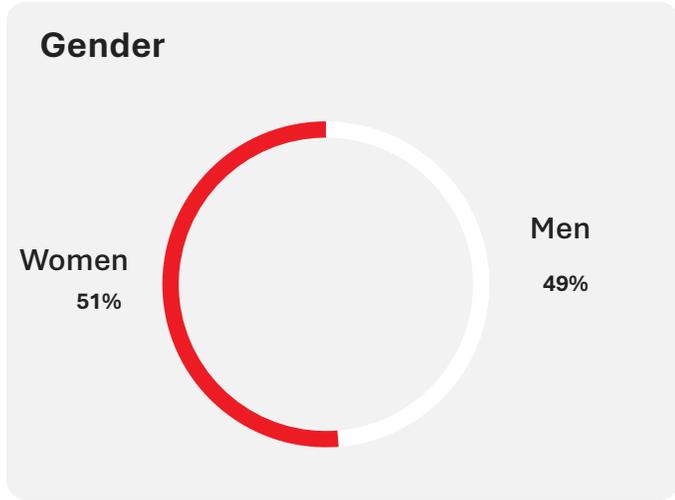
3

Respondent Profile



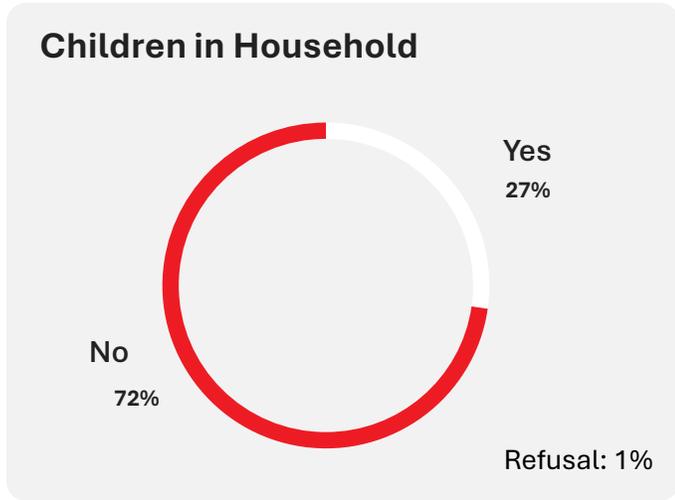
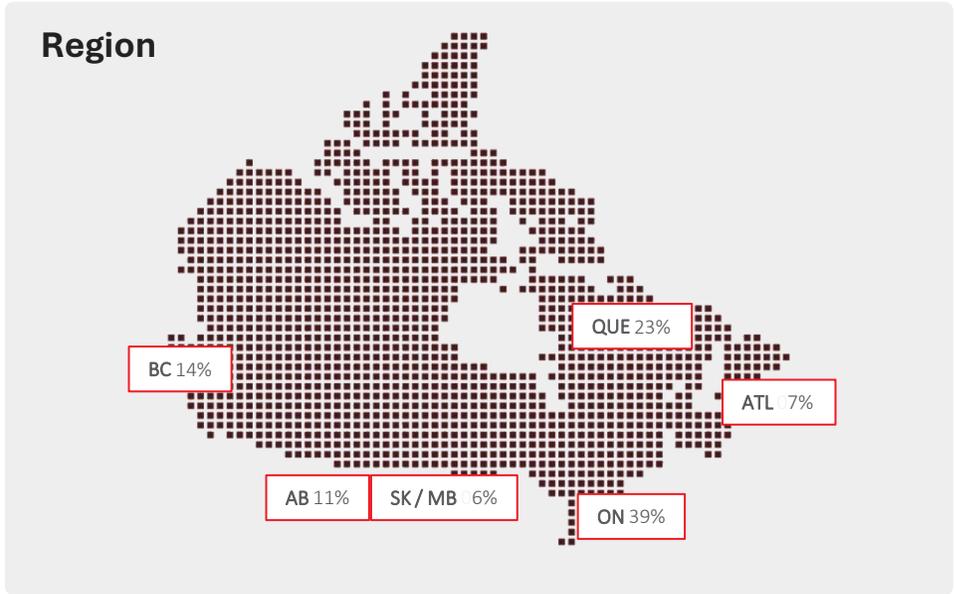
Respondent profiles

All respondents, (Base n=1502)



Age

NET: 18-34	27%
18-24	9%
25-34	17%
NET: 35-54	32%
35-44	16%
45-54	16%
NET: 55+	41%
55-64	18%
65-74	13%
75+	10%



Age of Children

0-4	32%
5-11	47%
12-17	47%
Prefer not to answer	1%

Respondent profiles

All respondents, (Base n=1502)

Education

HS or less (NET)	18%
College (NET)	32%
University (NET)	49%
Refusal: 1%	

Household Income

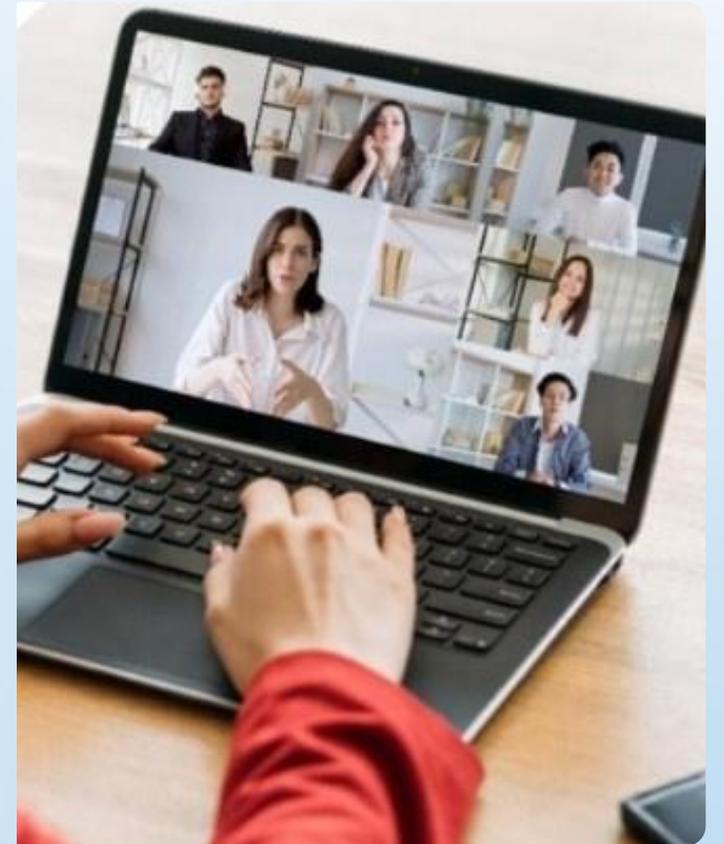
<\$60K	28%
\$60K-<\$100K	25%
\$100K+	37%
Refusal: 10%	

Ethnicity

West European	56%
East European	10%
Asian	9%
South Asian	7%
Indigenous	5%
Canadian	4%
Latin/South - Central American	2%
Middle Eastern, Arabic, North Africa	2%
African, African American	2%
Caribbean	1%
Other	1%
I prefer not to answer	7%

4

Our Team



Our Team

The Central Canada Public Affairs Team:



**Jennifer McLeod
Macey**
Senior Vice President
jmcleodmacey@leger360.com
416-964-9222



Llisa Morrow
Associate Vice President
lmorrow@leger360.com
431-808-0212



Caleb Chong
Senior Research Analyst
cchong@leger360.com
416-964-9222

Our services

Leger

Marketing research and polling

Customer Experience (CX)

Strategic and operational customer experience consulting services

Leger Analytics (LEA)

Data modelling and analysis

Leger Opinion (LEO)

Panel management

Leger Communities

Online community management

Leger Digital

Digital strategy and user experience

International Research

Worldwide Independent Network (WIN)

600
employees

185
consultants

8
offices

MONTRÉAL | QUÉBEC |
TORONTO | WINNIPEG
EDMONTON | CALGARY |
VANCOUVER | NEW YORK

Le^ger

Data-driven intelligence for a changing world.

leger360.com