

2026 CanTrust Index™ Results Report

February 24, 2026



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Our commitment to trust in Canada

The Proof Strategies CanTrust Index™ is now in its eleventh year and is a leading source of research and insights on trust in Canada. We track trust because societies, democracies and economies cannot function without it.

Our study uses a 7-point scale with 7 being the highest trust and 1 being the lowest. Respondents choosing 7, 6 or 5 result in the percentages of trust used in this report.

The 2026 Proof Strategies CanTrust Index™ is released within two months of completion to ensure the most current data and analysis. Our research tells the unique story of trust among Canadians and who they believe is trustworthy in this world of polarized politics, misinformation, and economic anxiety.

Proof Strategies Inc. is a leading Canadian-owned communications and public affairs agency. We ask better questions to create insight, grow trust and build stronger human relationships. Learn more at [getproof.com](https://www.getproof.com).



Methodology

This report provides a summary of findings from the 2026 Proof Strategies CanTrust Index™.

- Survey of 1,501 Canadians using a national opt-in panel administered by The Logit Group, an independent research company operating for over 25 years and a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council.
- Participants completed the survey instrument online from either a mobile device or a desktop computer. The study was completed in both official languages.
- Sample was representative of Canadian population statistics by region, age and gender.
- Fieldwork was conducted from January 7 to 15, 2026.



Trust in Team Canada

- **A hostile and mistrusted White House is influencing how Canadians trust:** if we can't trust the world, we can trust ourselves.
- **Trust in each other and key institutions is on the rise in Canada,** signalling a willingness to work together in a disrupted world context.
- **Prime Minister Carney is the most trusted national leader, at 45 per cent.** Trust that “the electoral system is fair” is at a seven-year high, at 58 per cent.
- Two-thirds of Canadians agree that government plays an important role in providing services that make Canada better.
- Investing in Canadian jobs and building the economy has jumped into the top reasons for driving trust in companies. **Being Canadian-owned also drives trust.**
- Two-thirds agree that most people are honest and trustworthy.



The Vaccine Divide

- **Trust in the Canadian healthcare system rose to 58 per cent from 54 per cent last year.** However, almost a quarter of Canadians said they have declined a vaccine for themselves after a doctor recommended it to them.
- **Most vaccine resistance in Canada is risk-based.** Half of those who have declined a vaccine for themselves were most concerned about side effects or negative outcomes.
- **Affordability ranks higher as a reason to decline a vaccine for Gen Z and Baby Boomers,** with 27 per cent and 31 per cent ranking this reason in their top two, respectively.
- Canadians trust expertise. **The strongest motivator for accepting vaccines is knowing that they have been widely studied for five or more years.**
- Canadians trust "white coats" – their own family doctor, physician specialists, pharmacists and pediatricians – for reliable information on vaccines.



Trust in AI Continues to Erode

- **AI use is now at 57 per cent of Canadians on a regular or occasional basis.** Despite a significant year-over-year increase in personal usage, trust in AI to better our economy is down to 29 per cent, and to improve the consumer experience remains at only 33 per cent.
- **Barely a third of Canadians say they trust federal regulation of AI.** By contrast, more than half trust Ottawa to regulate airports. The government needs to be cautious and convince people of their role before acting.
- Canadians are more cautious than Americans. When asked about the potential for AI to help industries function more effectively, **Americans show higher trust than Canadians in AI for every sector**, including healthcare, retail, travel, entertainment, and financial services.
- Canadians are affected by experience: hallucinations in their own research, social media mischief, or criminal fraud, meaning **AI may be the first technological advance where familiarity breeds mistrust.**





2026 CANTRUST INDEX™:

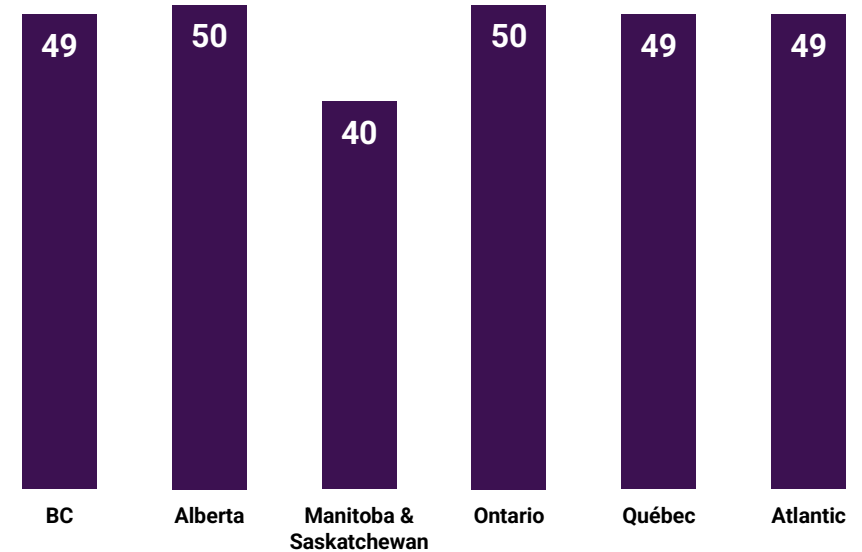
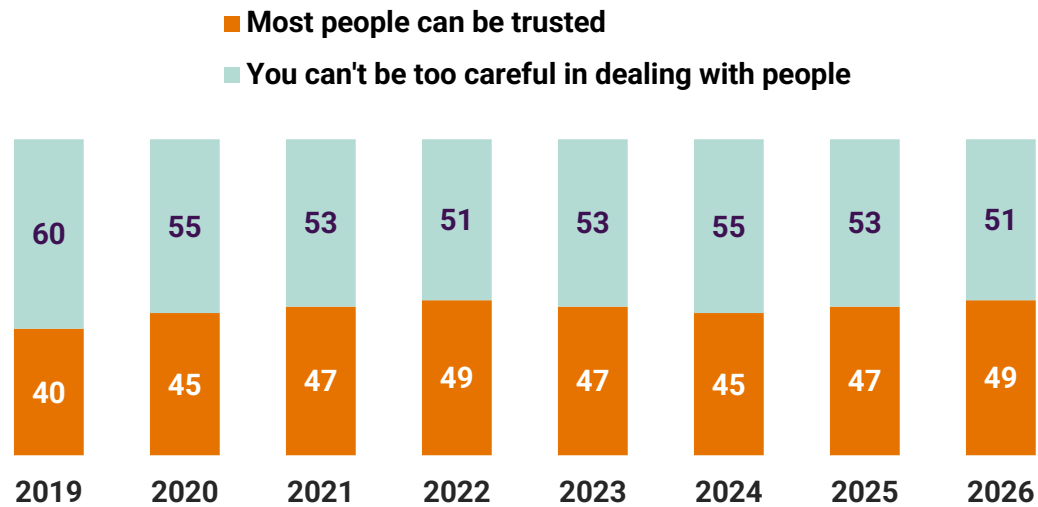
IN-DEPTH RESULTS AND INSIGHTS

Having a trusting predisposition remains at about half of the Canadian population.



Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

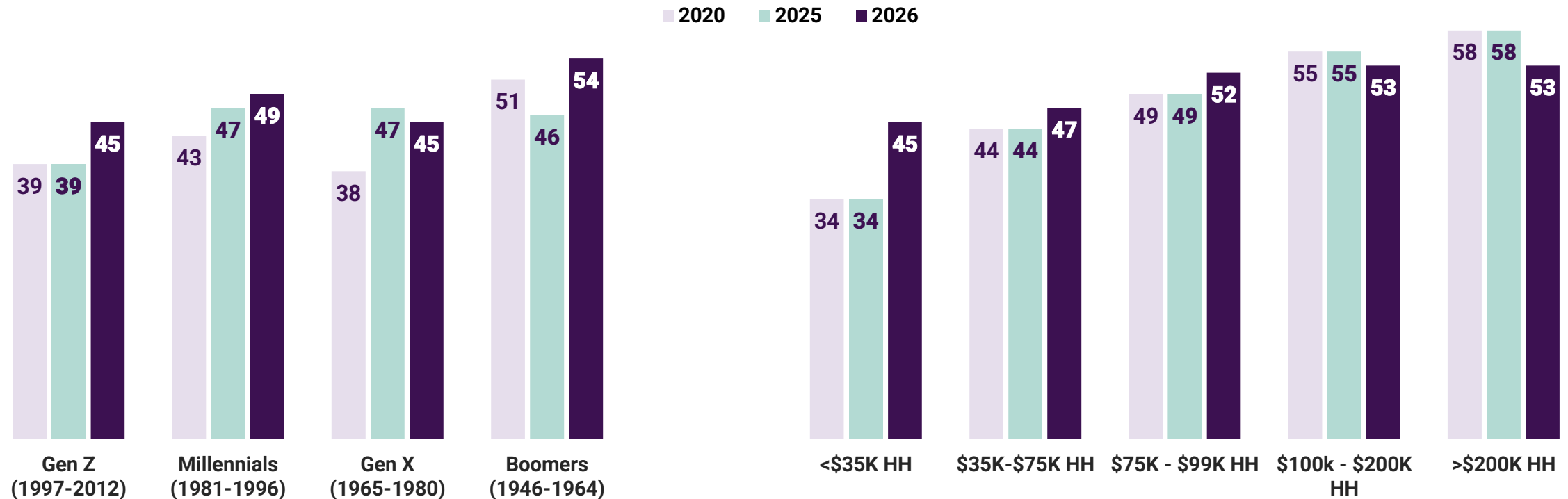
Most People Can Be Trusted (2026)



Trusting disposition levels tend to increase with income. Younger cohorts improved slightly this past year as did Boomers.

Higher predisposition to trust with higher income levels.

Most People Can Be Trusted



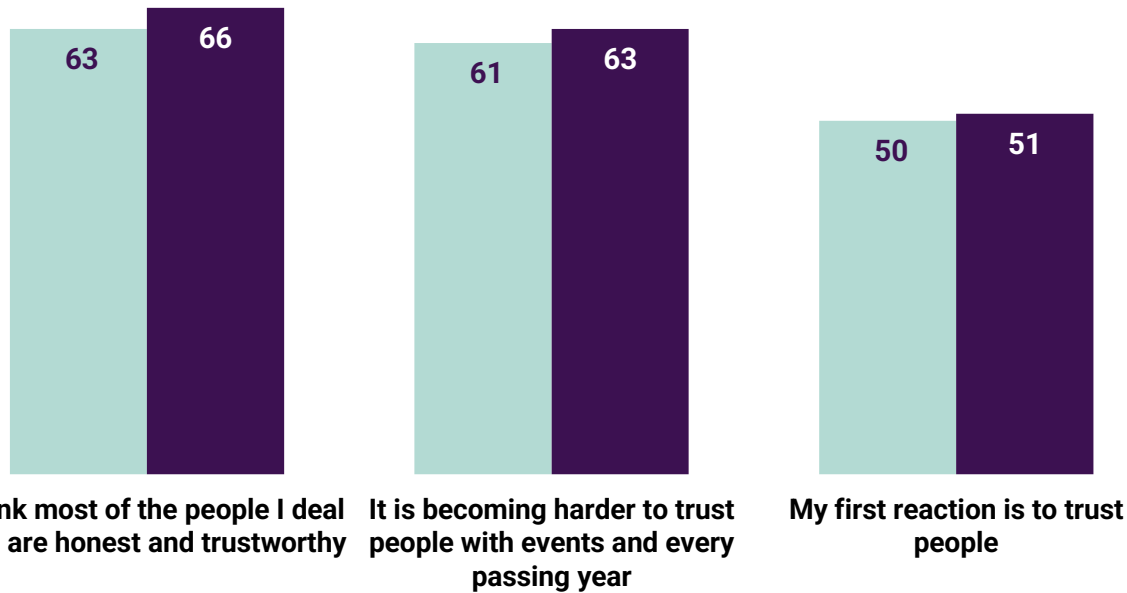
Two-thirds believe most people are honest and trustworthy.

More say they think people are honest than say that it is their first reaction to trust people.

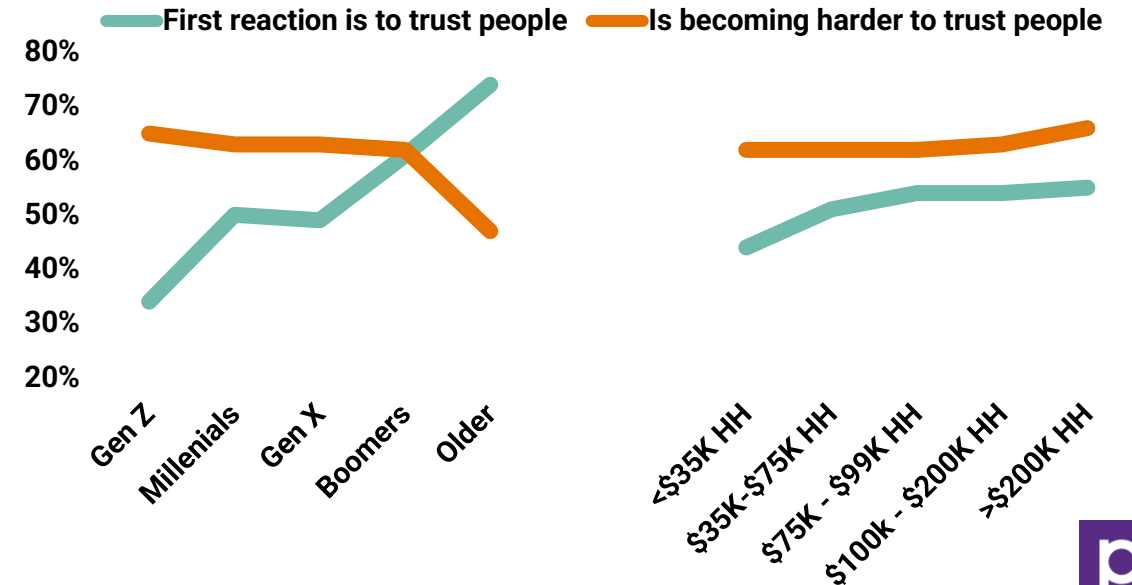


Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with these statements.

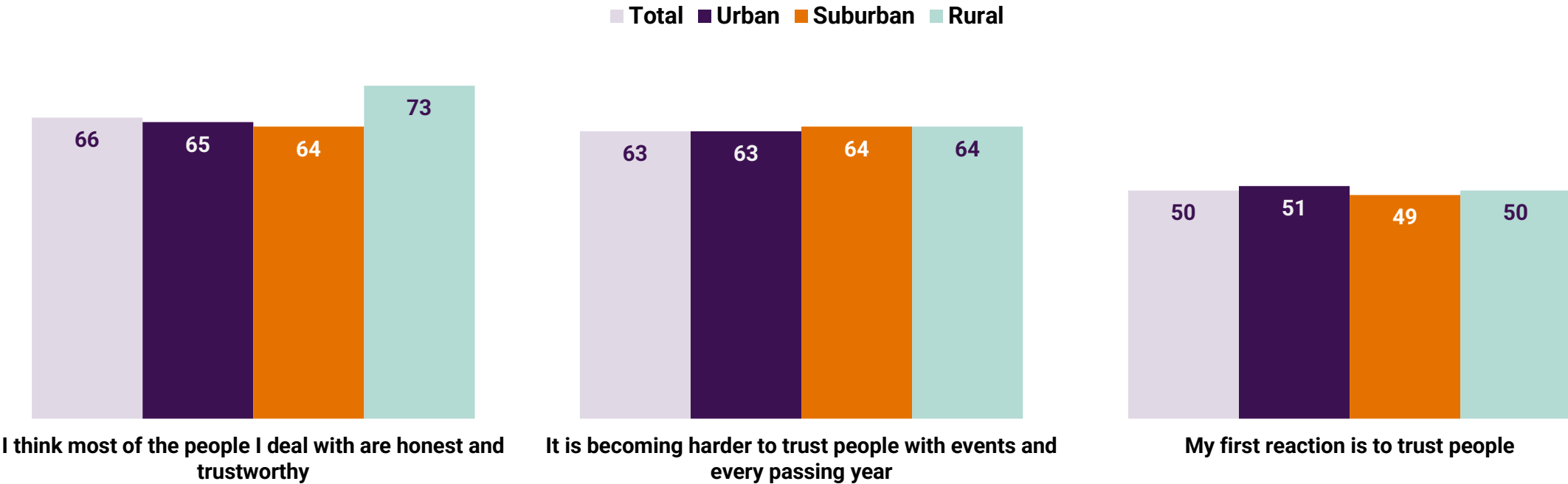
■ 2025 ■ 2026



Note the line slopes by age and income.



Rural residents are generally more inclined to trust people.



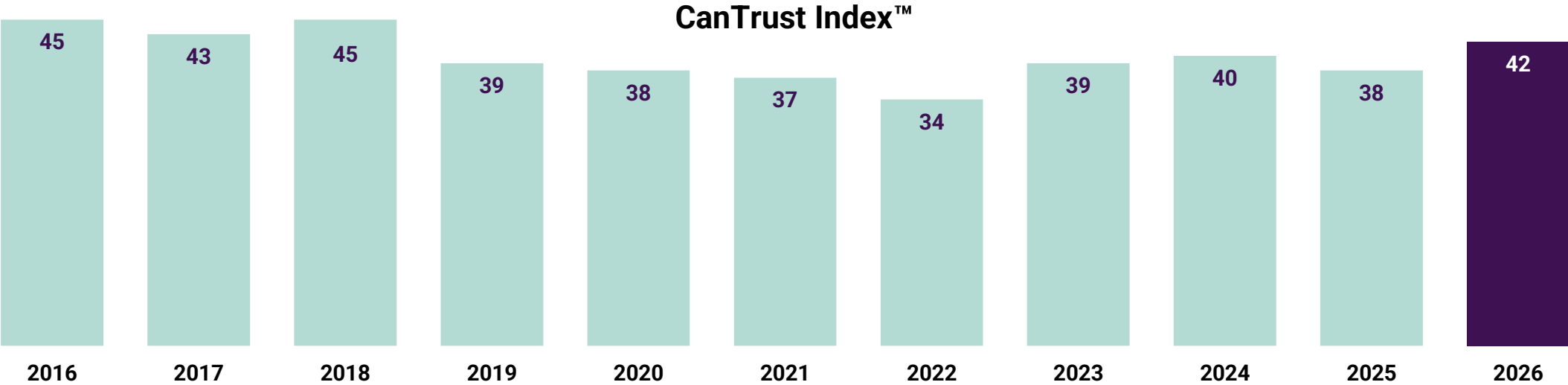


THE CANTRUST INDEX™

AGGREGATE TRUST SCORES

The annual index score increased by four per cent. It is now close to pre-Covid levels.

Thinking again about Canada, to what extent are you willing to trust the following organizational categories to be competent and effective and to do the right thing?
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



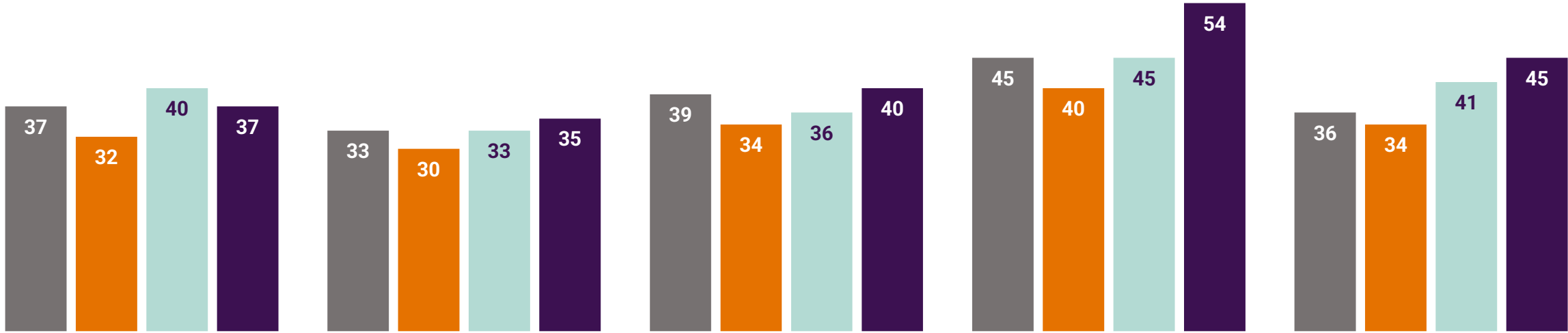
The CanTrust Index™ score: five institutional components of Canadian society were aggregated to create an overall aggregate trust score. This included trust in nonprofits/charities, media, small and medium businesses, governments and large corporations.



Regional scoring shows larger improvements in trust in Québec & Atlantic Canada.

CanTrust Index™

■ 2019 ■ 2022 ■ 2025 ■ 2026



B.C.

Prairies

Ontario

Québec

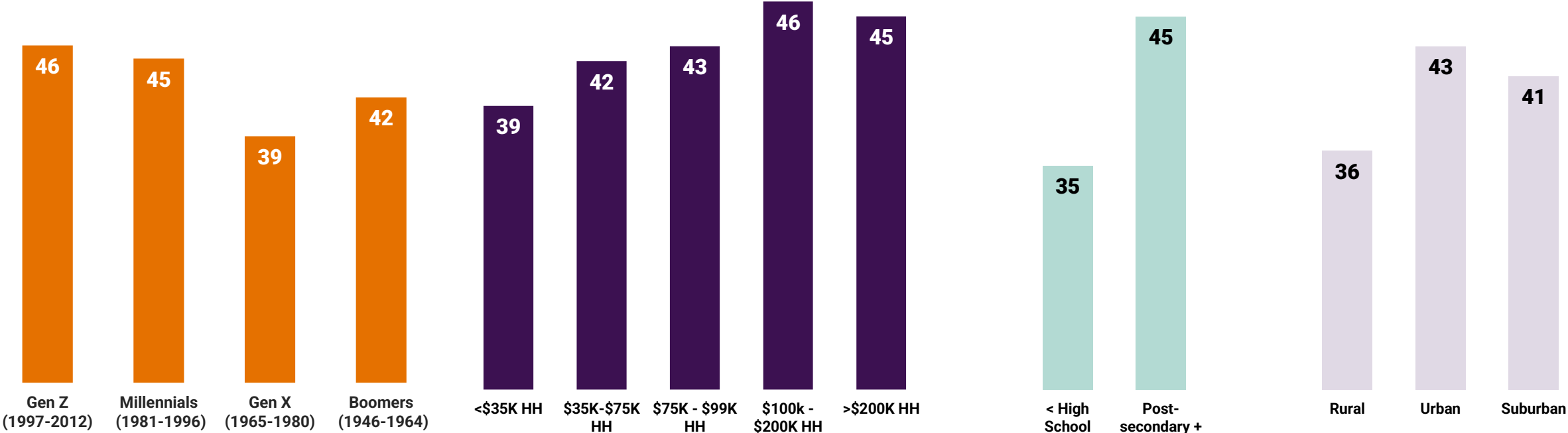
Atlantic



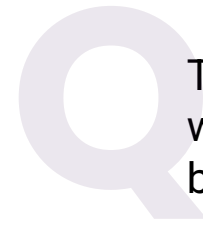
Gen X and lower-income Canadians score lower, as do those with high school educations.

Rural residents show lower overall trust in institutions.

CanTrust Index™

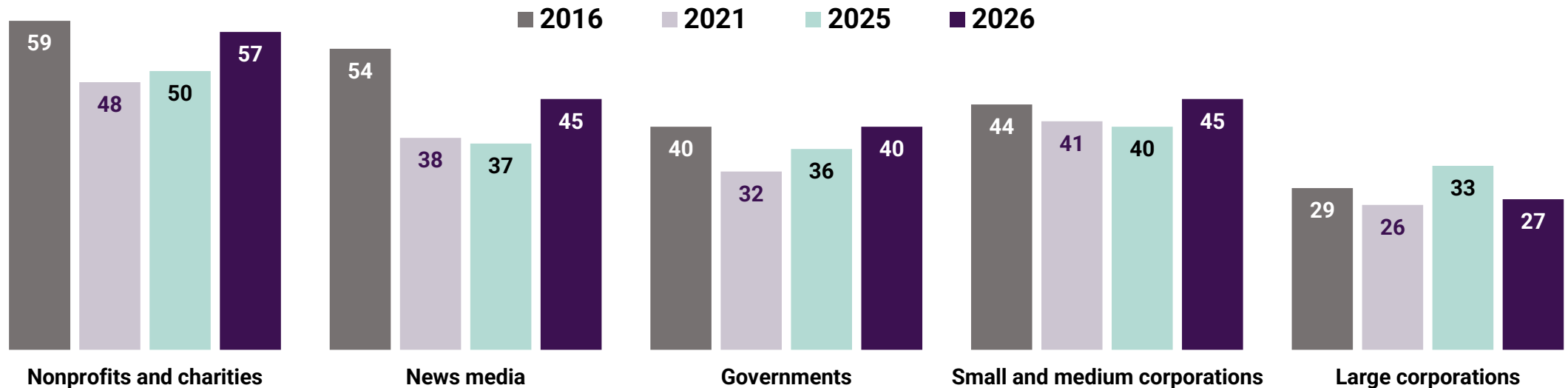


The charity sector leads and increased. Trust in the news media is the highest it's been in five years. Governments rebounded in 2026. The corporate sector is still lagging.



Thinking again about Canada, to what extent are you willing to trust the following organizational categories to be competent and effective and to do the right thing?

1 means you "trust very little" and 7 means you "trust a lot" [5-7 reported].



The background features a dark blue field with abstract, flowing lines in shades of purple, orange, and grey. On the left, a grey, segmented robotic hand is shown in a flexed position. On the right, a grey, textured glove with a halftone dot pattern is depicted. The text 'ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE' is centered over the image, with 'ARTIFICIAL' in white and 'INTELLIGENCE' in a light blue color.

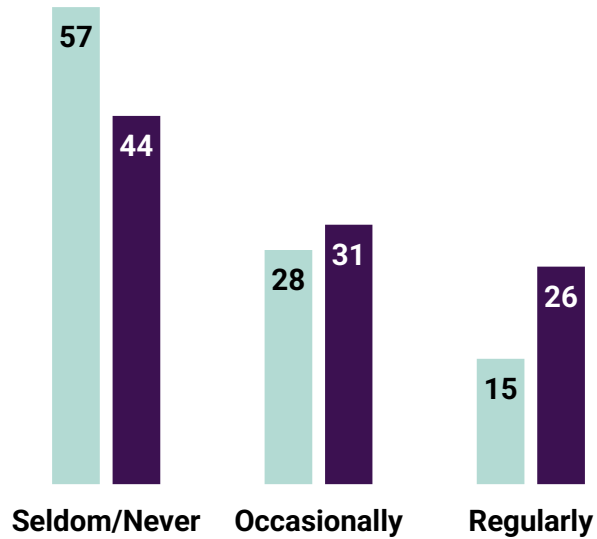
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI usage rises - both personal and work related.

To what extent do you personally use AI tools in your personal or work life?

Personal

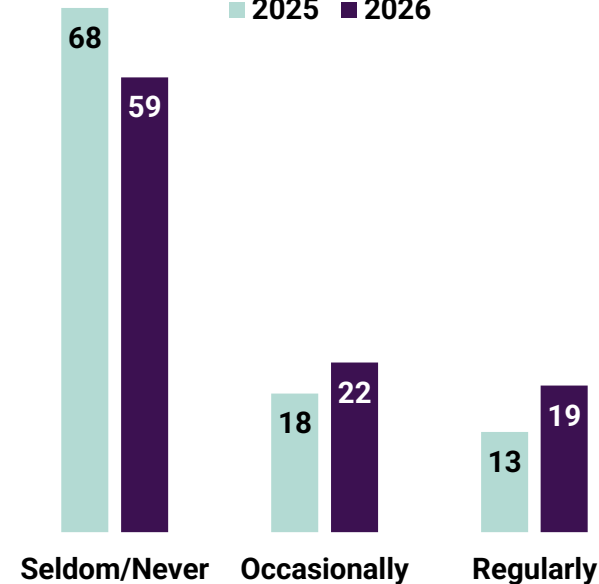
■ 2025 ■ 2026



Use Reg./ Occ.	2025	2026
Total	43	57
Male	50	61
Female	38	52
Gen Z	66	73
Millennials	55	69
Gen X	45	57
Boomers	24	34
Urban	-	59
Suburban	-	50
Rural	-	48

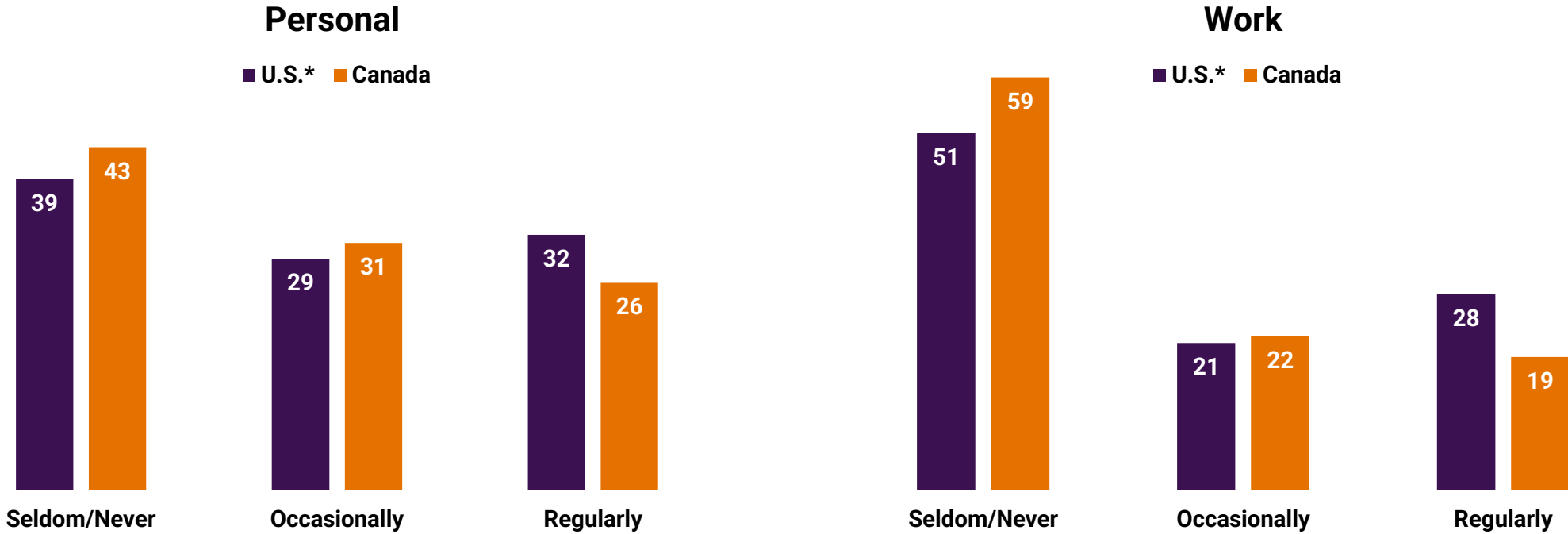
Work

■ 2025 ■ 2026



Use Reg./ Occ.	2025	2026
Total	31	41
Male	36	44
Female	27	37
Gen Z	50	57
Millennials	47	56
Gen X	36	45
Boomers	10	10
Urban	-	42
Suburban	-	36
Rural	-	33

Similar patterns compared to 2025 data from the United States.

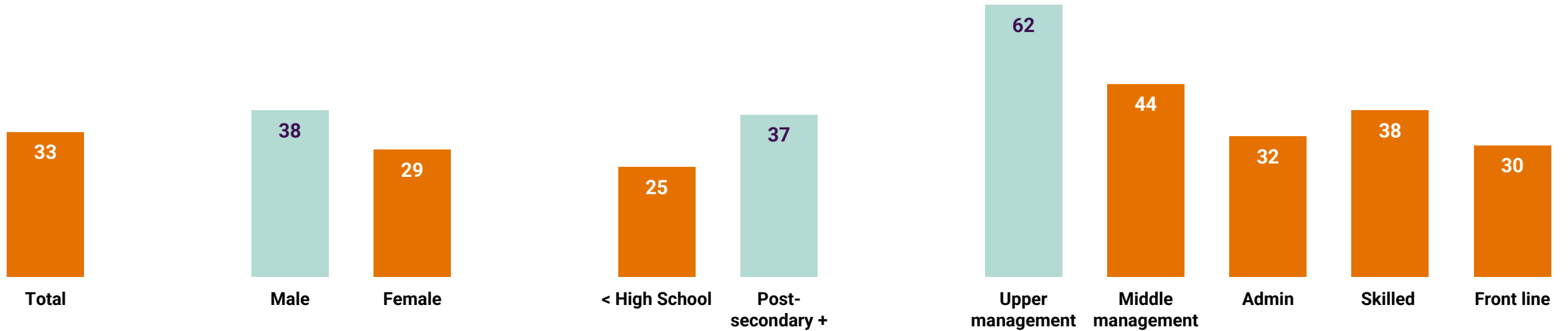


*Fieldwork for the U.S. study was conducted from November 5 to November 12, 2025



Those who do trust AI to improve the consumer experience hold more senior positions in their organizations.

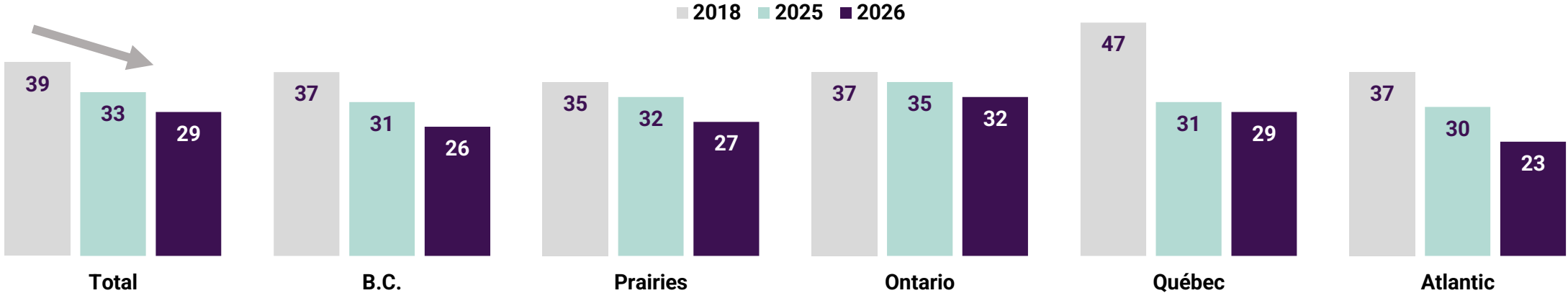
Trust in AI to improve consumer experience



Fewer than one in three trust AI to have a positive impact on the economy.

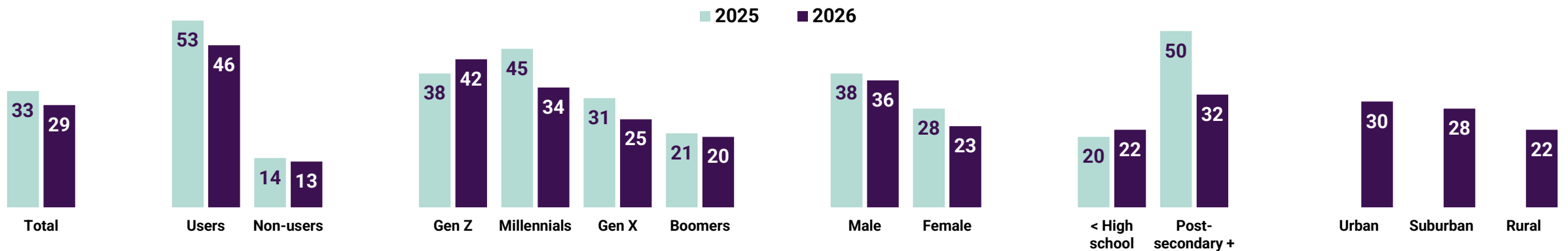
Q How much do you trust Artificial Intelligence to positively contribute to the Canadian economy?
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

Trust in AI to contribute to the economy



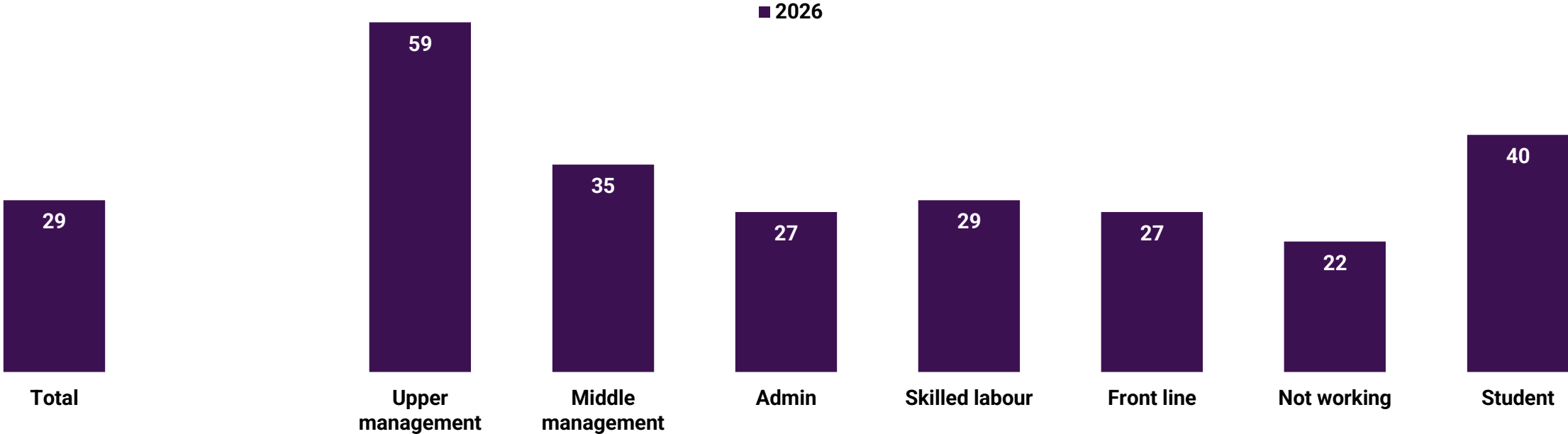
AI users are more likely to trust AI to make a positive impact. Younger Canadians – primarily men and higher-educated individuals – are also expressing greater confidence in AI to have a positive impact on the economy.

Trust in AI to contribute to the economy



It is mainly the more senior levels of employment that share this belief. Others across the board are far more skeptical.

Trust in AI to contribute to the economy

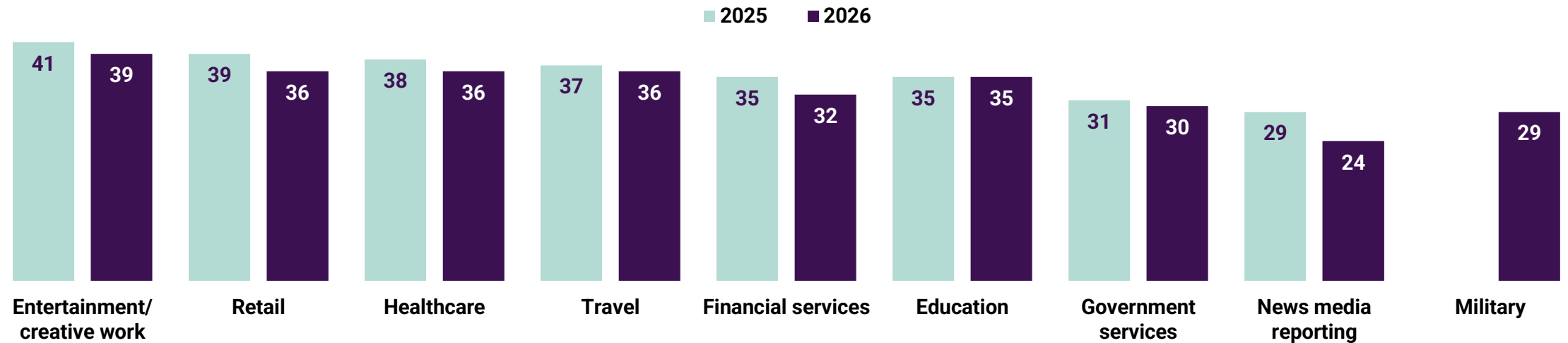


Canada's willingness to trust that AI will support specific industries remains low across the spectrum.

Q How much do you trust Artificial Intelligence to support the following Canadian sectors to operate competently and effectively?

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

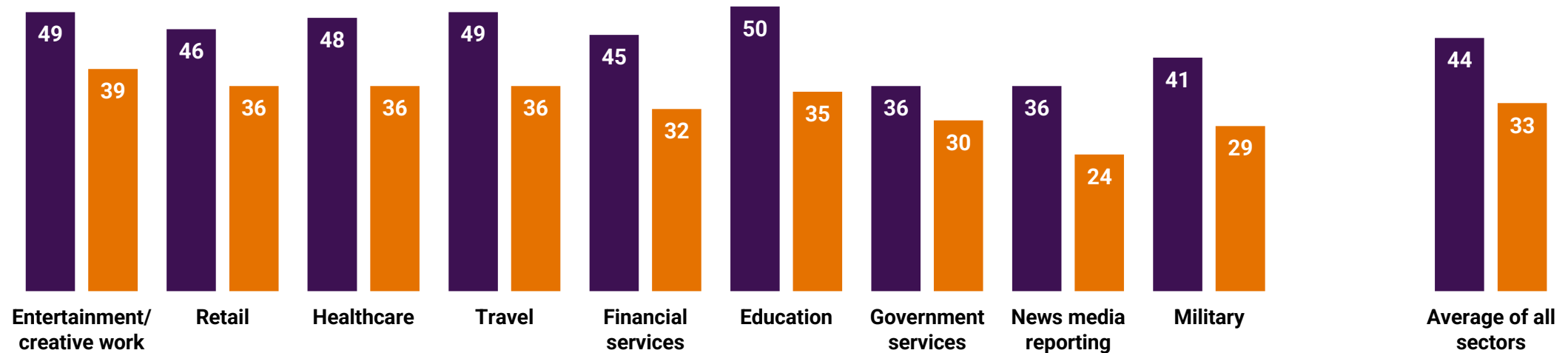
Trust in AI to support industries



Canadians are much less trusting that AI will help industries function more effectively than their American counterparts.

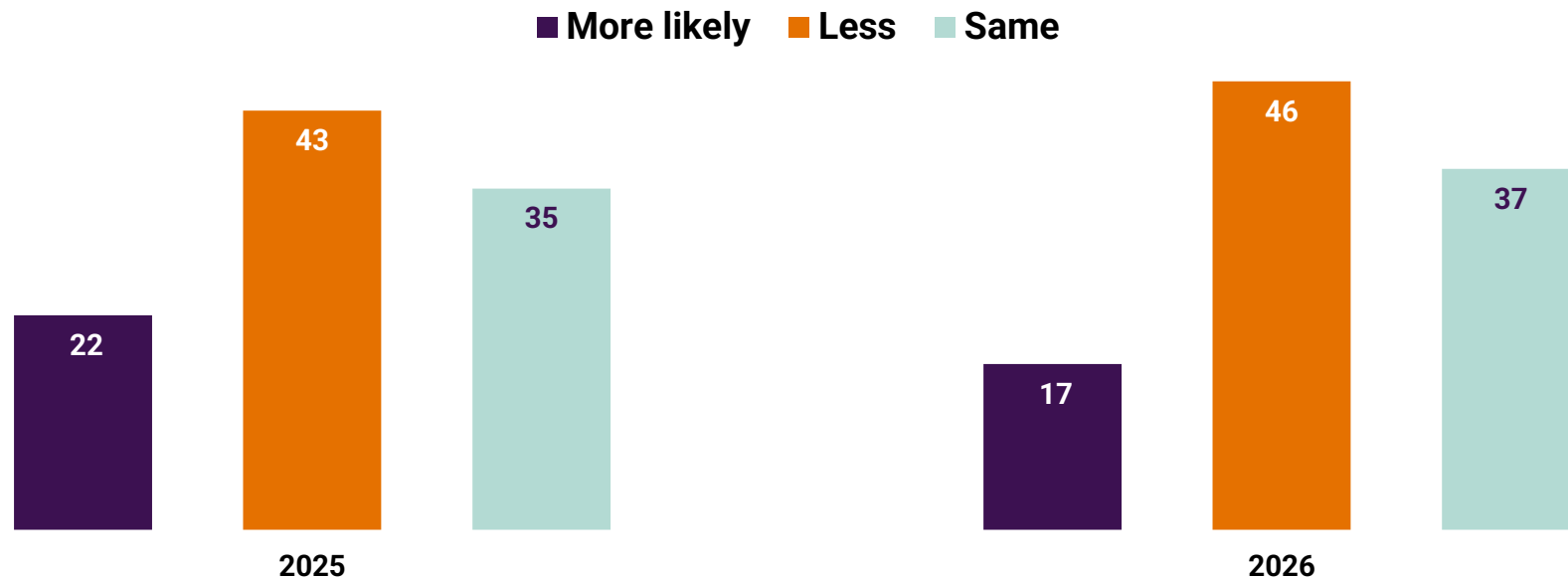
Trust in AI to support industries

■ U.S.* ■ Canada



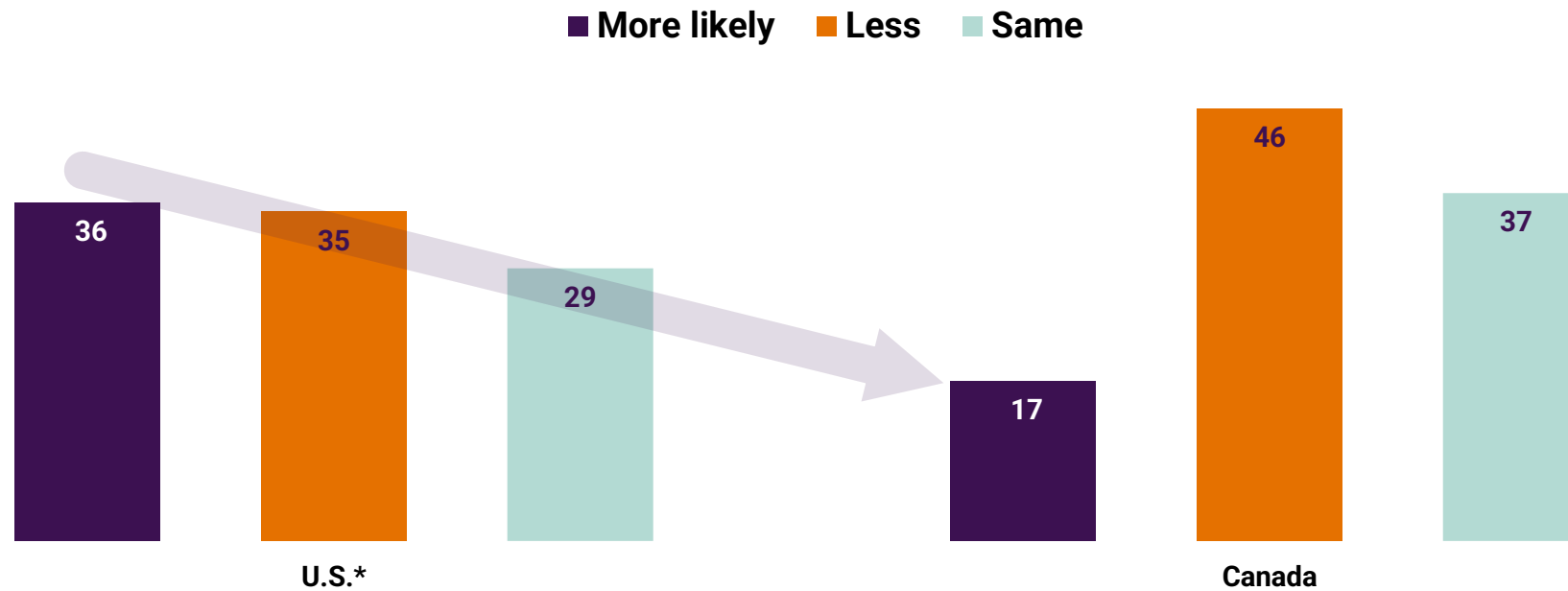
There was a five per cent drop in the number of Canadians who say AI is making sources more trustworthy.

As more and more is produced with the help of Artificial Intelligence, is content produced by AI more or less likely to increase or decrease your trust in the sources you read, or see?



Almost half of all Canadians say they are less likely to trust published content as AI usage grows.

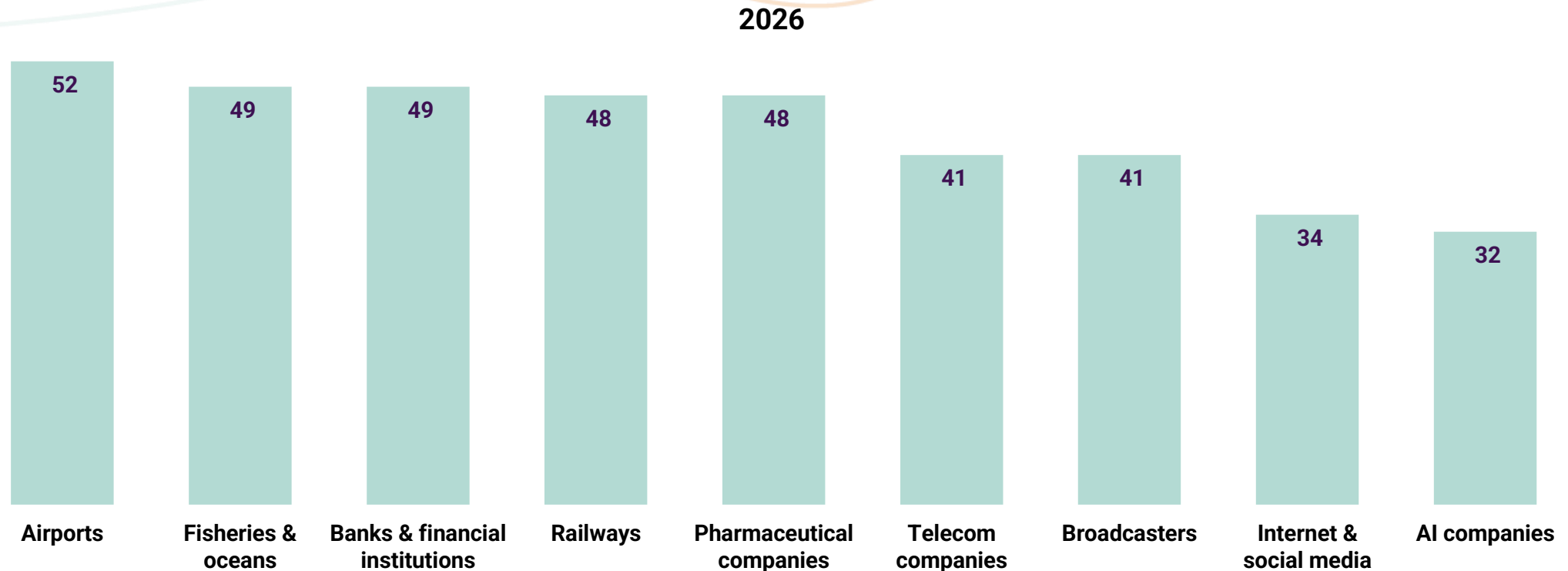
As AI becomes more prevalent across all areas of society, Canadian leaders in all sectors will have to address this underlying concern.



Only one in three Canadians say they trust the federal government to regulate AI companies – far below other industries.

To what extent are you willing to trust the federal government to regulate the following private sector services?

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



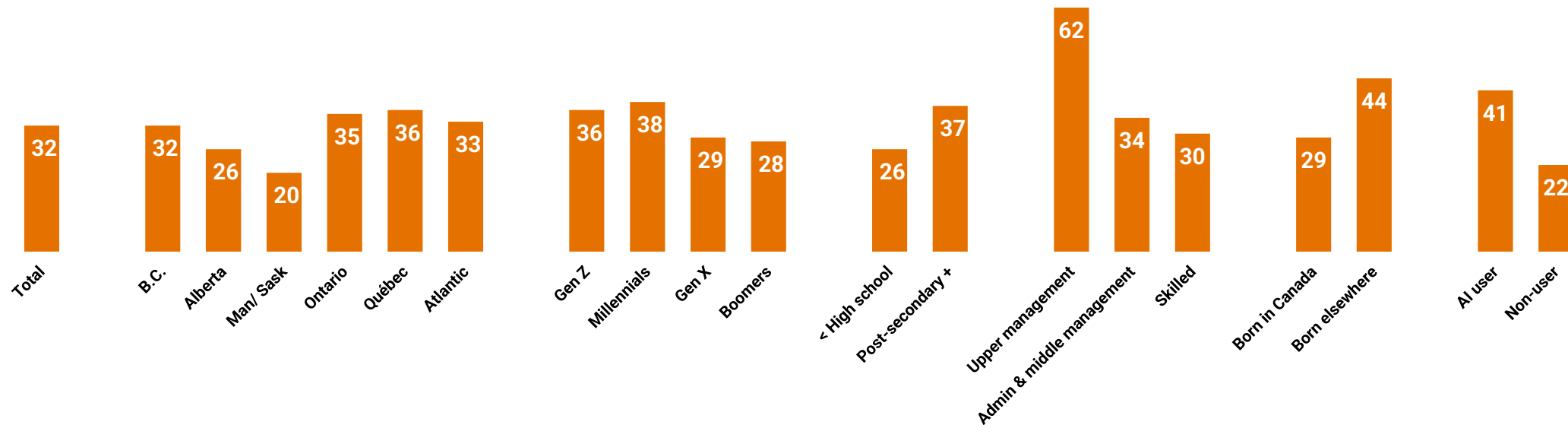
Looking closer at the 32 per cent overall, results are much lower in prairie provinces, among older Canadians, and those with a high school diploma or lower.

Trust is much higher in the C-suite than elsewhere in the corporate world.

Canadian-born individuals are less trusting.

Even among AI users, trust levels are low – at 41 per cent.

■ Trust Federal Government to Regulate AI Companies



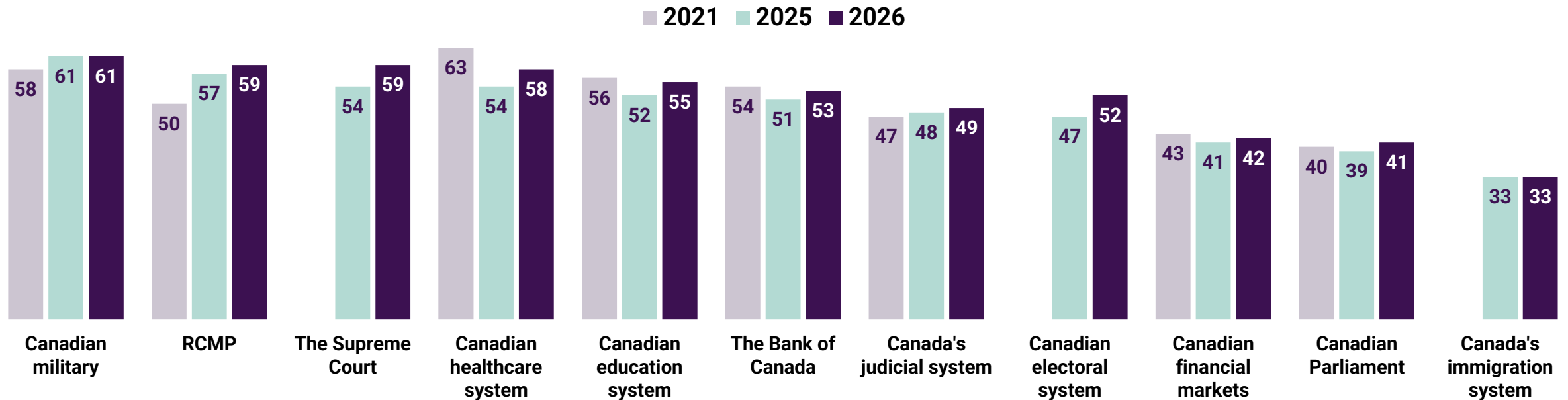


TRUST IN CANADIAN INSTITUTIONS

Trust in the military, RCMP, healthcare system, Supreme Court, education system and Bank of Canada remain high.

Thinking about Canada, to what extent are you willing to trust the following institutions to operate competently and effectively and to do the right thing?
 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

*Electoral system trust improved from last year.
 Immigration is low at 33 per cent.*

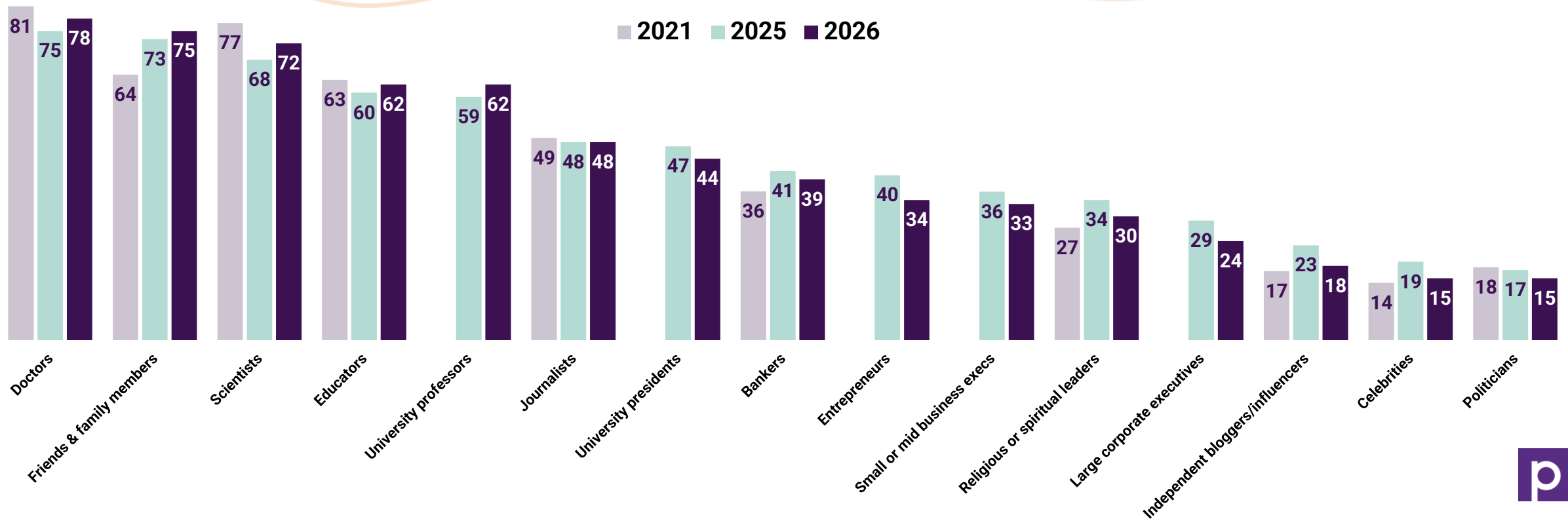


SOURCES WE TRUST

Canadians continue to trust doctors, friends & family and scientists for reliable information.

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate how much you are willing to trust each of the following categories of people for reliable information.

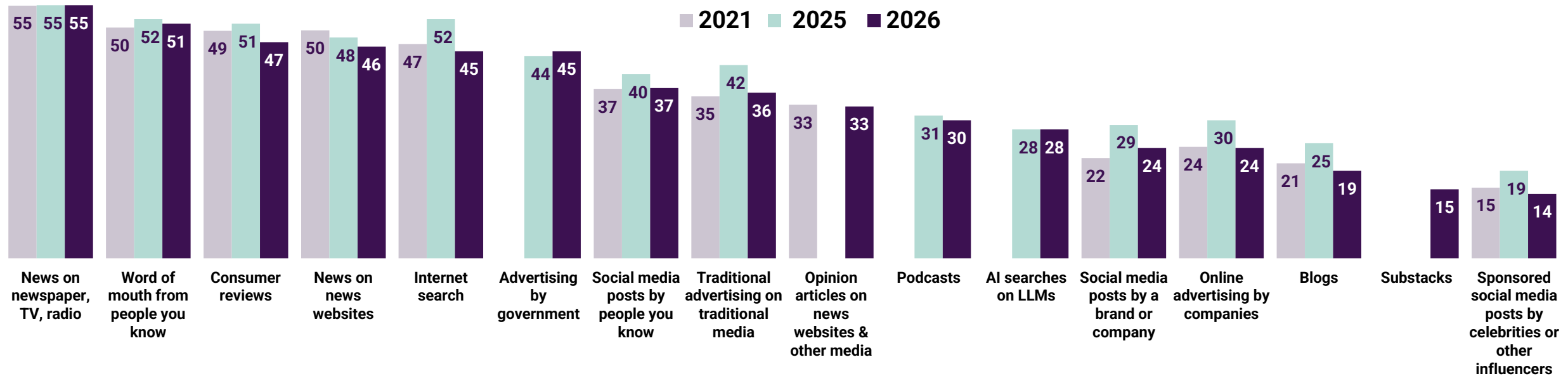
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



The list of sources people trust for reliable information has not changed much over five years.

None of these come close to the trust levels expressed on the previous slide for reliable information from family & friends.

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate how much you are willing to trust the following sources to provide you with reliable information.
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

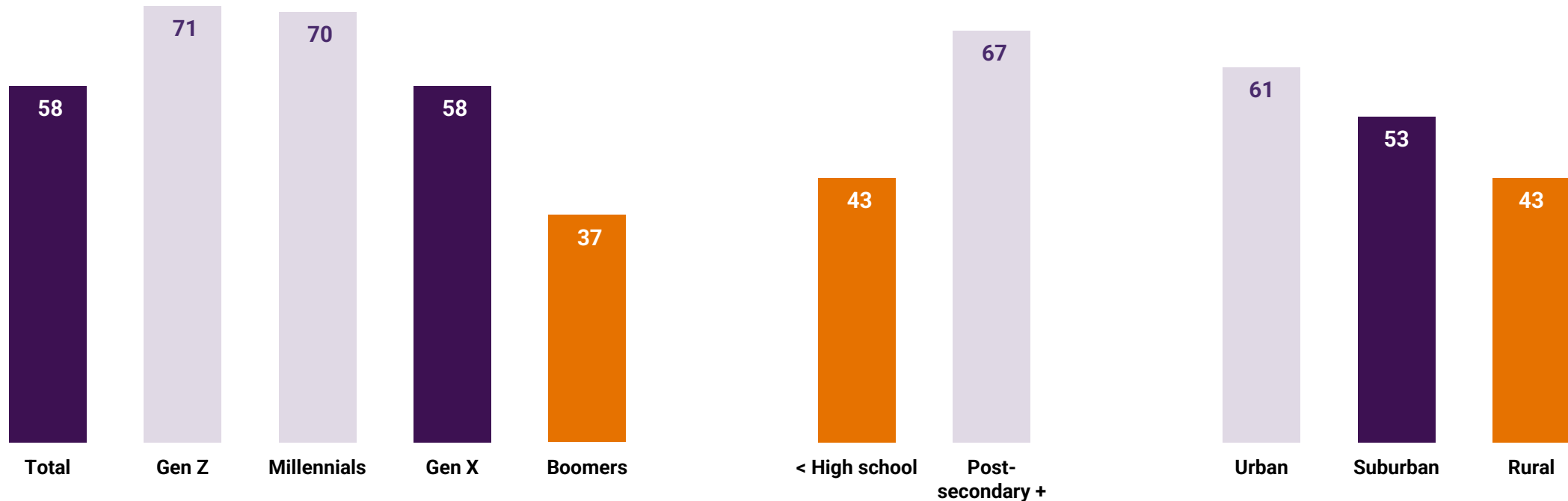


A look at podcasts and trust: three in five say they listen to podcasts from time to time.



Do you ever listen to podcasts?

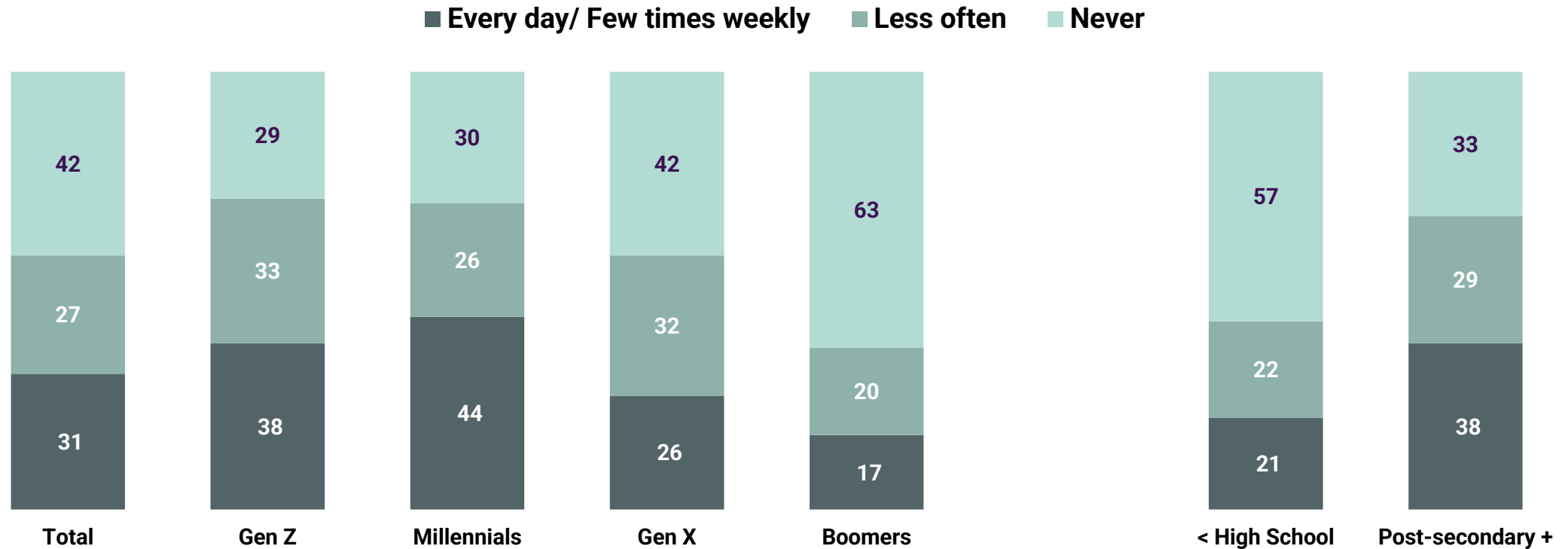
Listen to Podcasts



31 per cent say they listen to podcasts every day or a few times weekly, 27 per cent say less frequently and 42 per cent say they never listen.



How often do you listen to a podcast?

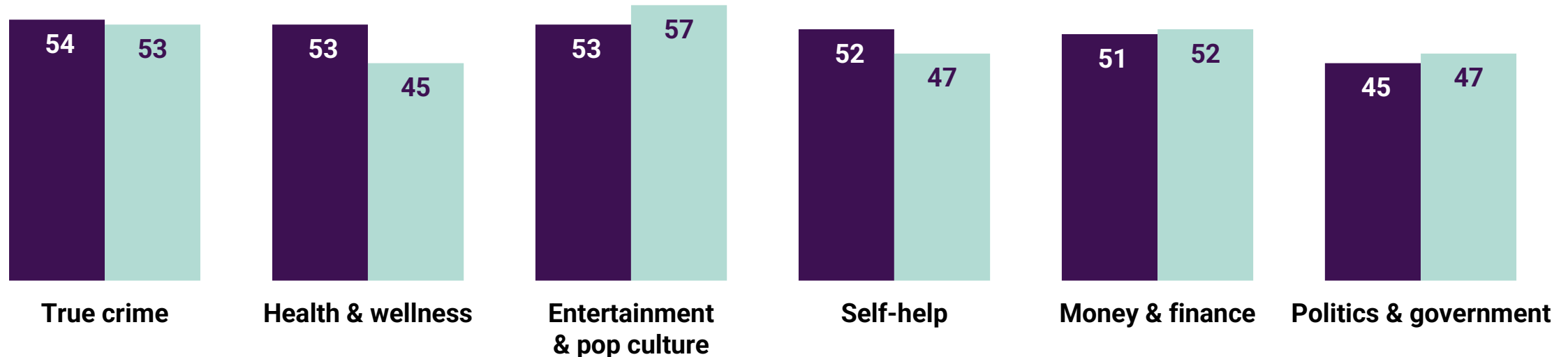


Generally, trust levels fall into the 50 per cent range regardless of the topic area. This is much higher than other digital platforms.

Q If you listen to podcasts, to what degree do you trust each of the following podcast subject areas to provide reliable information for you? 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

Trust Levels Among Listeners

■ Total Listeners ■ Listen Every Day



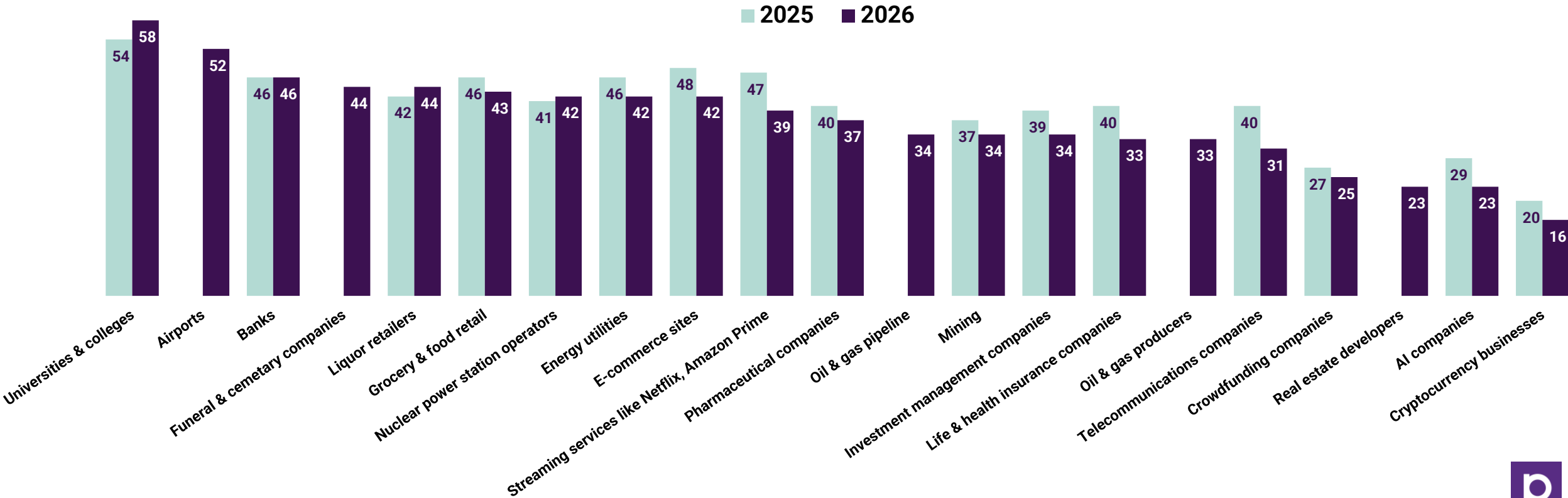
The image features a central figure, a man in a dark suit, standing on a large, light-colored upward-pointing arrow. He is pointing his right hand towards the top of the frame. Below him, a group of seven people are shown from behind, looking up at the man on the arrow. The background is a dark purple color with a halftone dot pattern. The text "TRUST IN BUSINESS LEADERS AND CORPORATIONS" is overlaid on the arrow.

TRUST IN BUSINESS LEADERS AND CORPORATIONS

Trust levels for industries to operate competently and do the right thing are generally low among Canadians.

Thinking about Canada and the economy, to what extent are you willing to trust the following industries to operate competently and effectively and to do the right thing.

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

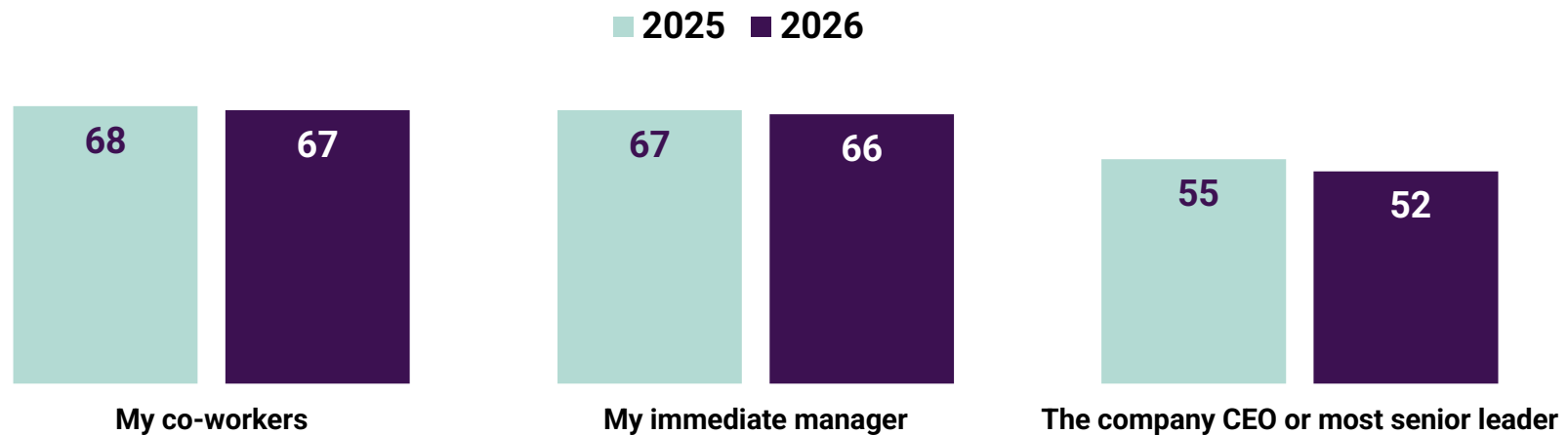


People trust coworkers and immediate managers more than they do their CEO for reliable information.



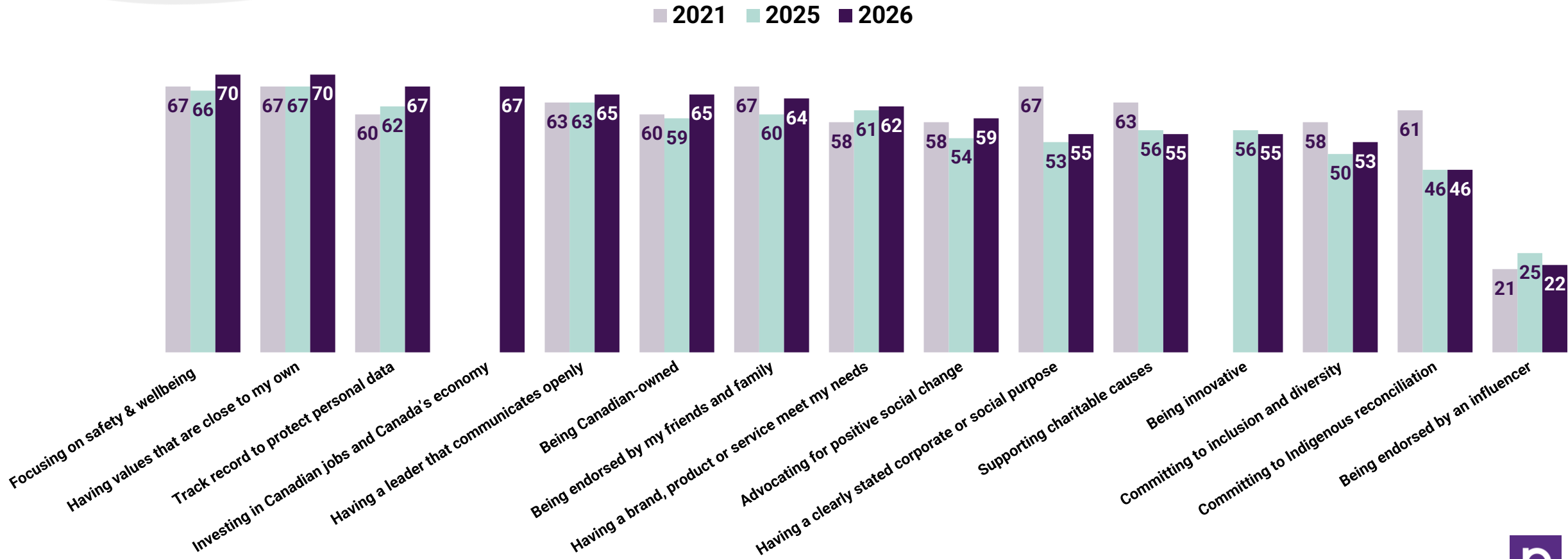
Please indicate how much you are willing to trust the following categories of people for reliable information.

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



The drivers of trust in companies. Building Canada matters more than ever.

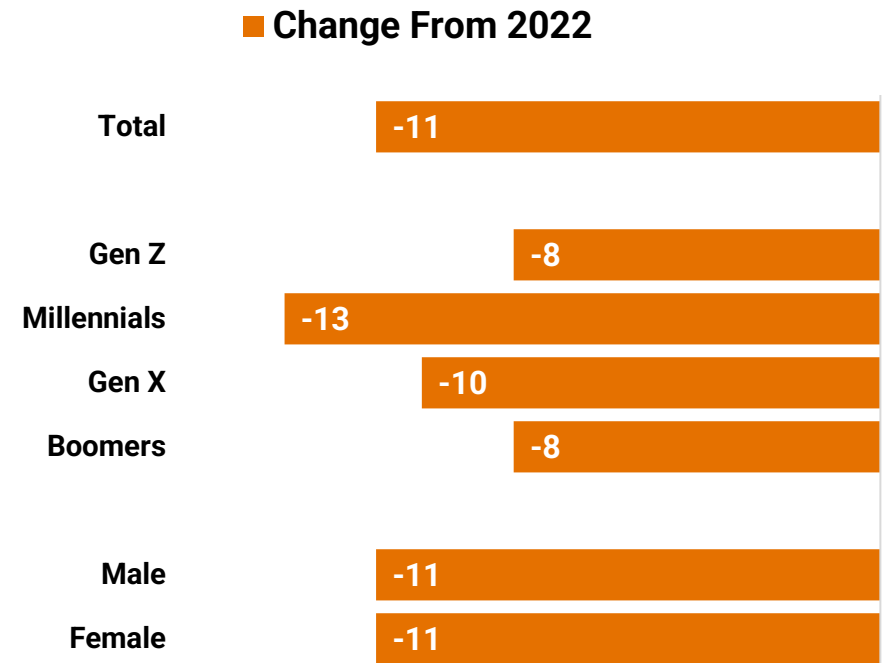
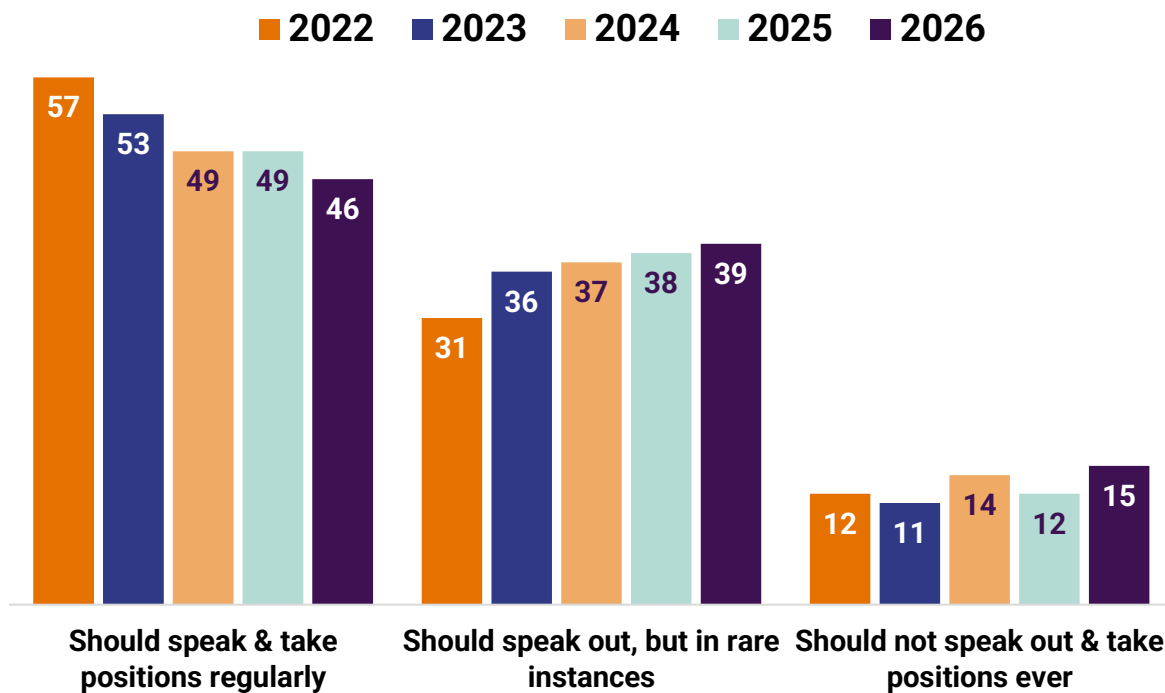
On a scale of 1-7 to what extent do you think each of the actions listed below will help make a company or brand more trustworthy to you personally?
 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



The number of Canadians who think business leaders should speak out on social issues continues to drop - from 57 per cent in 2022 to 46 per cent this year.

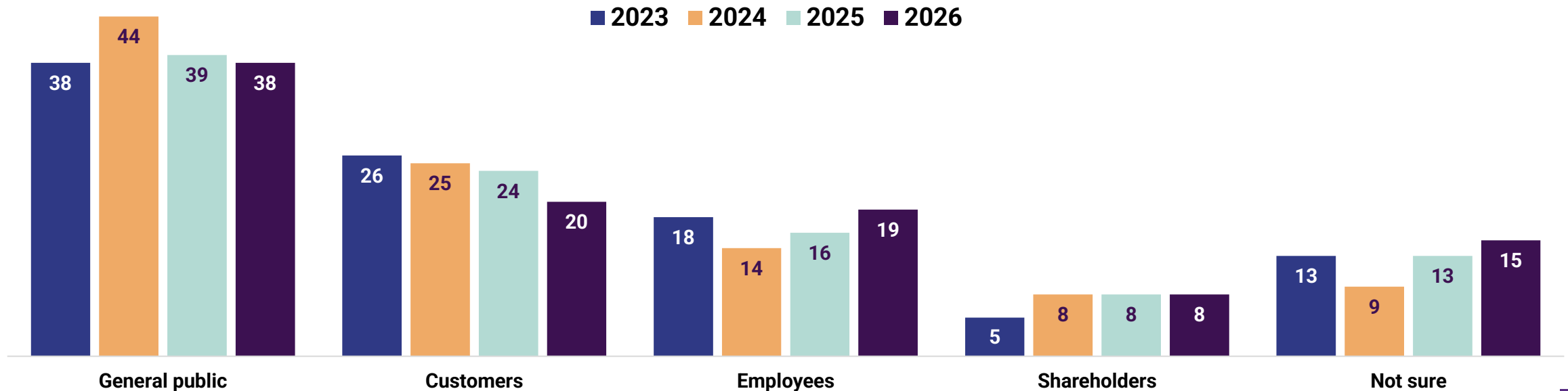
When it comes to important issues such as climate change, racism, and social equity, do you think business leaders should speak out and take positions regularly on behalf of their company?

The eight per cent drop from 2022 to 2026 is contrasted by age, region and gender identity.



Most believe that the general public is the most important stakeholder in any advocacy activity.

Q If a company or brand wants to advocate for positive social change, which audience is most important to consult and follow?

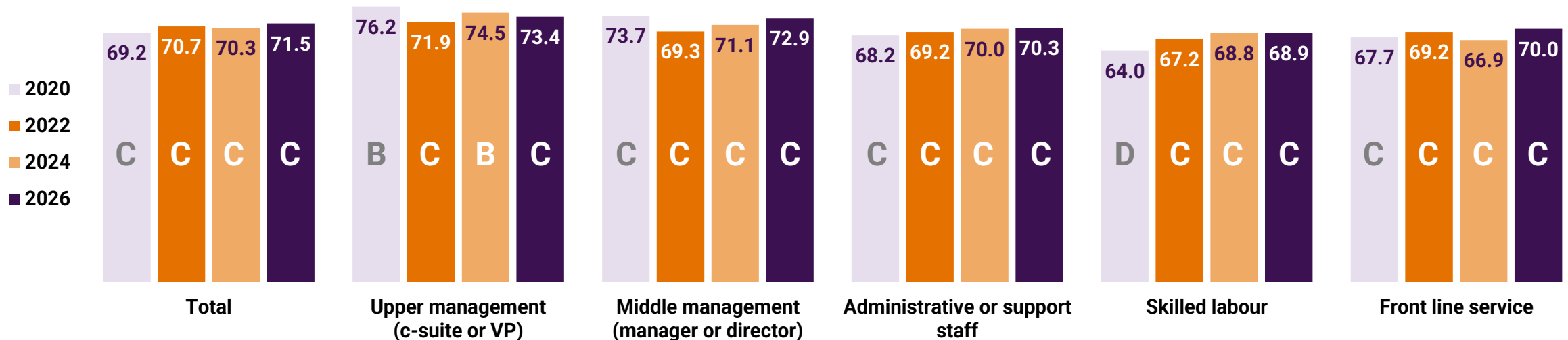


Canadians rate their company a “C” in terms of trust building capacity. This needle is not moving.

Q If you were to grade your employer on their capacity to build trust with external stakeholders (clients, customers, suppliers, partners, etc.), what grade from A+ to F would you give them?

Grade Given Indexed to 100 and Converted to Letter on below scale

LEGEND: A (85-100) B (75-84) C (65-74) D (50-64) F (<50)



GOVERNMENT, DEMOCRACY, THE PARTY SYSTEM

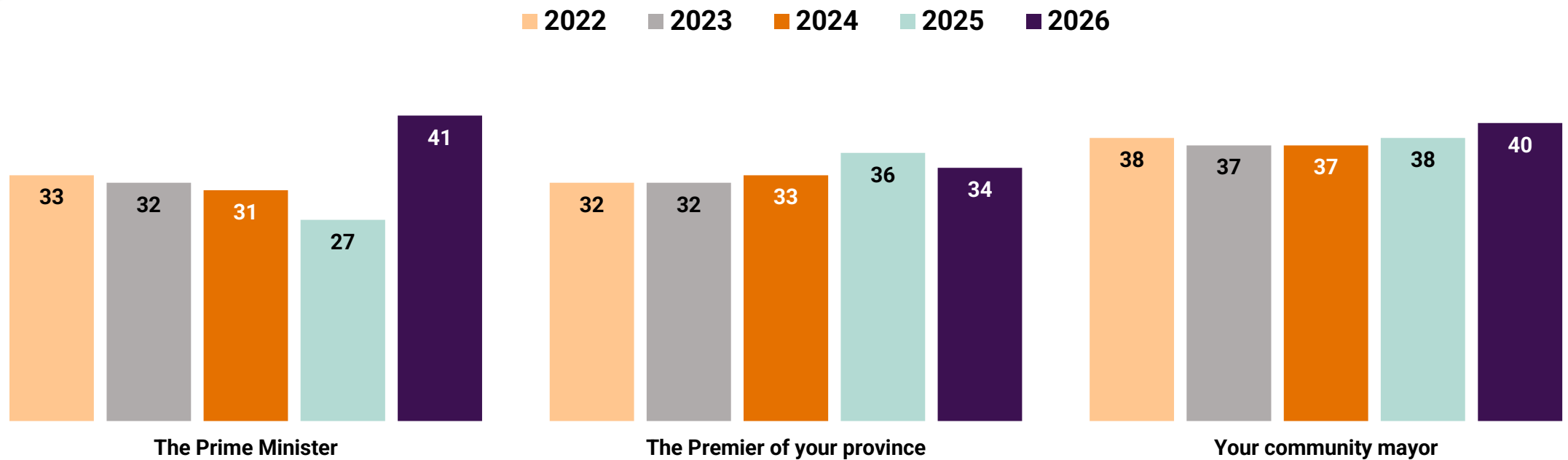
The background features a stylized illustration of a hand holding a document, a scale of justice, and a globe. The hand is rendered in a halftone dot pattern. The scale of justice is a simple line drawing. The globe is a wireframe grid. The overall color palette is dark with white and light blue accents.

An examination of how Canadians feel about the state of democracy and our political leaders in Canada today.

Trust in the Prime Minister improved from 2025, driven by the change in leadership and a federal election.

When you think of these people or groups of people to what extent do you trust each to do what is right for Canada, Canadians and our society in general?

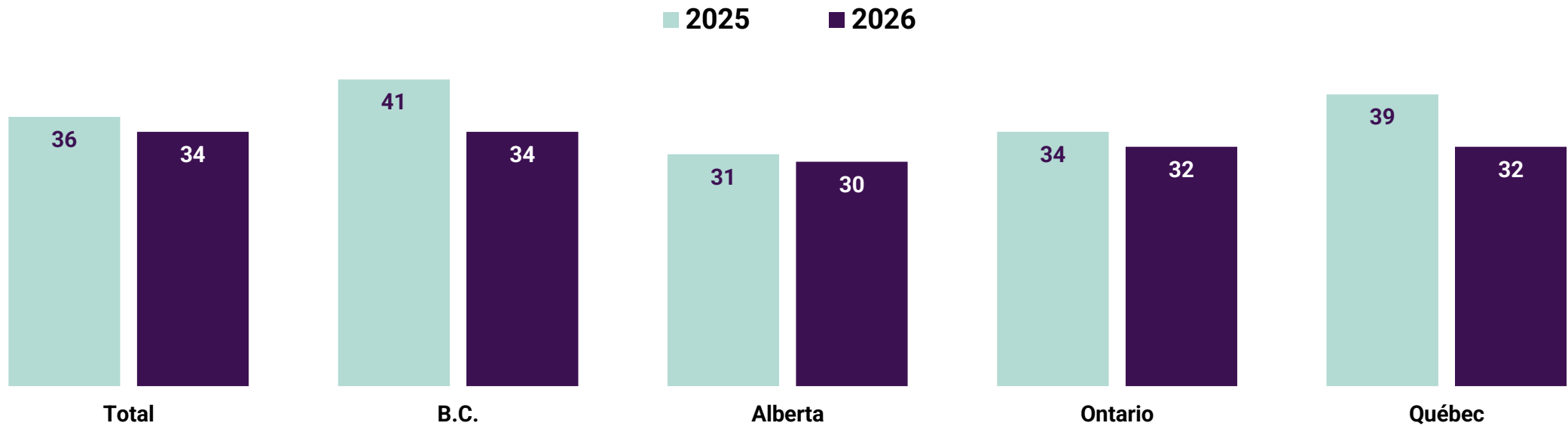
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



Trust in provincial Premiers is similar across provinces.

When you think of these people or groups of people to what extent do you trust each to do what is right for Canada, Canadians and our society in general?

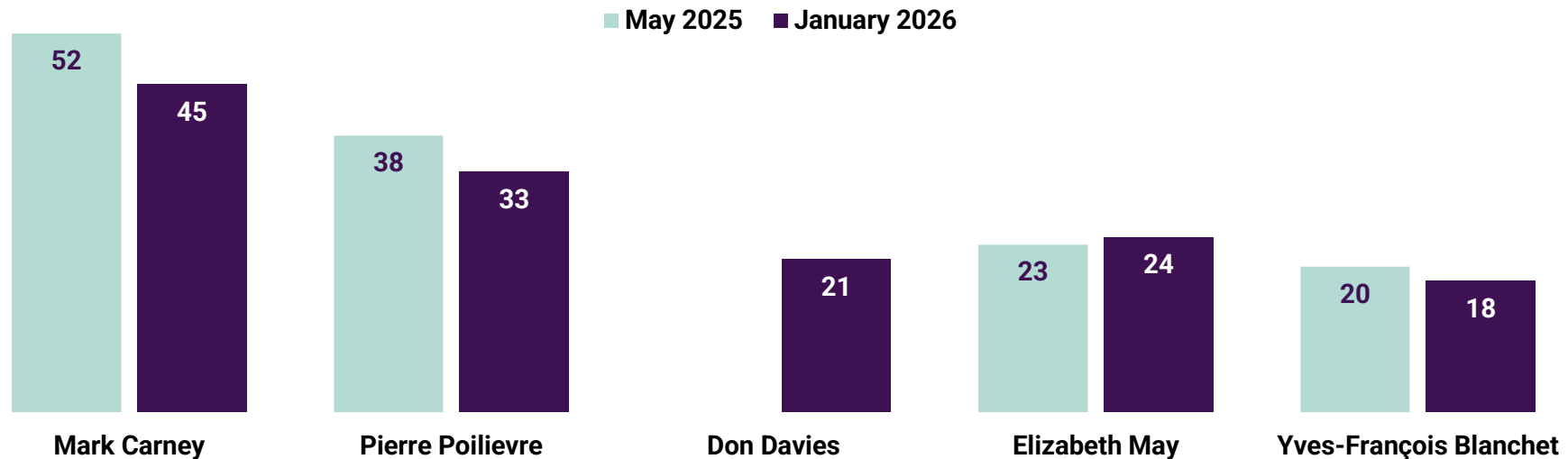
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



Prime Minister Carney is the most trusted national leader, at 45 per cent.

Thinking about the following Canadian political party leaders, please rate how much you trust each one and their ability or potential ability to do what is right for Canada and Canadians. 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

Trust in federal political party leaders



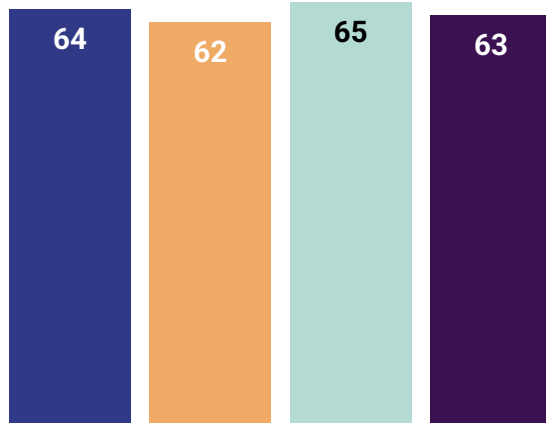
Most believe that government plays an important role in providing services that help make Canada a better country for citizens.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement below?

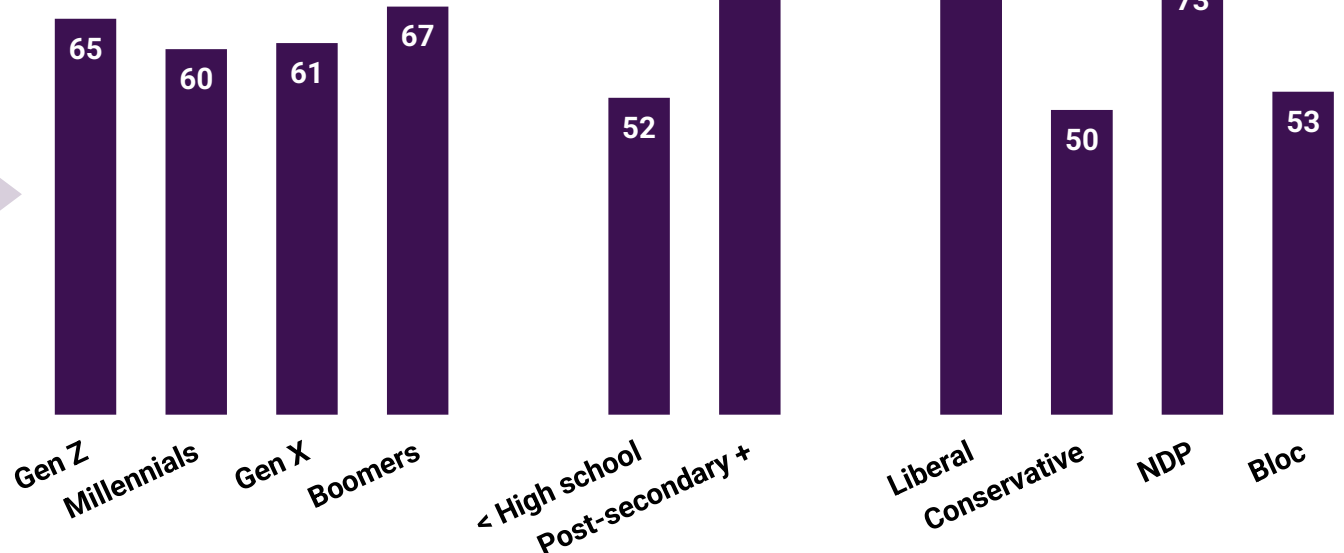
1 means you “do not agree at all” and 7 means you “agree completely” [5-7 reported].

This belief increases with age, income and education levels. And is much higher among Liberal supporters.

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025 ■ 2026

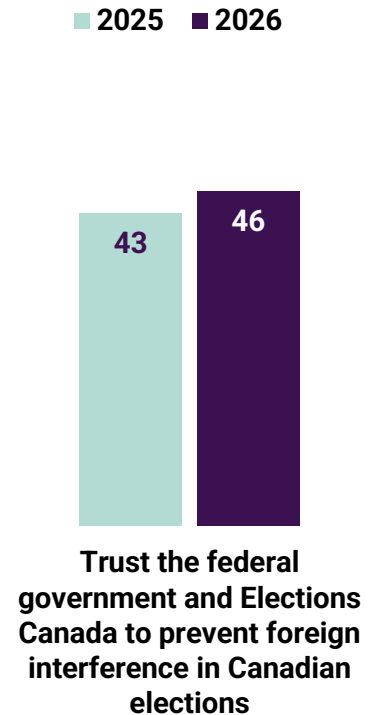
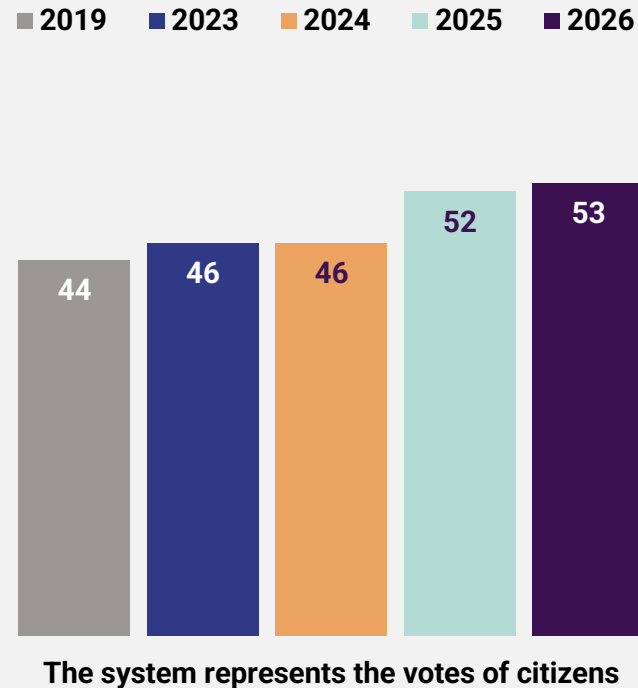
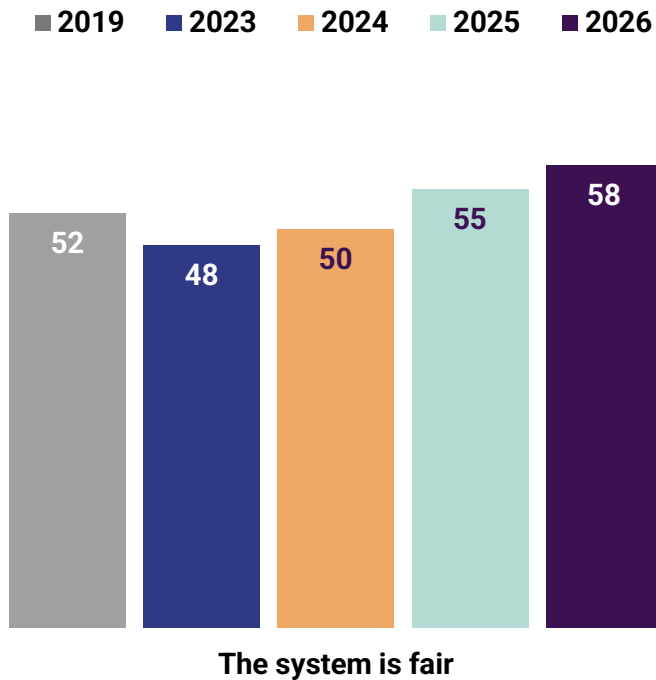


I believe government plays an important role in providing services that help make Canada a better country for our citizens



Confidence in the electoral system has improved over the past seven years.

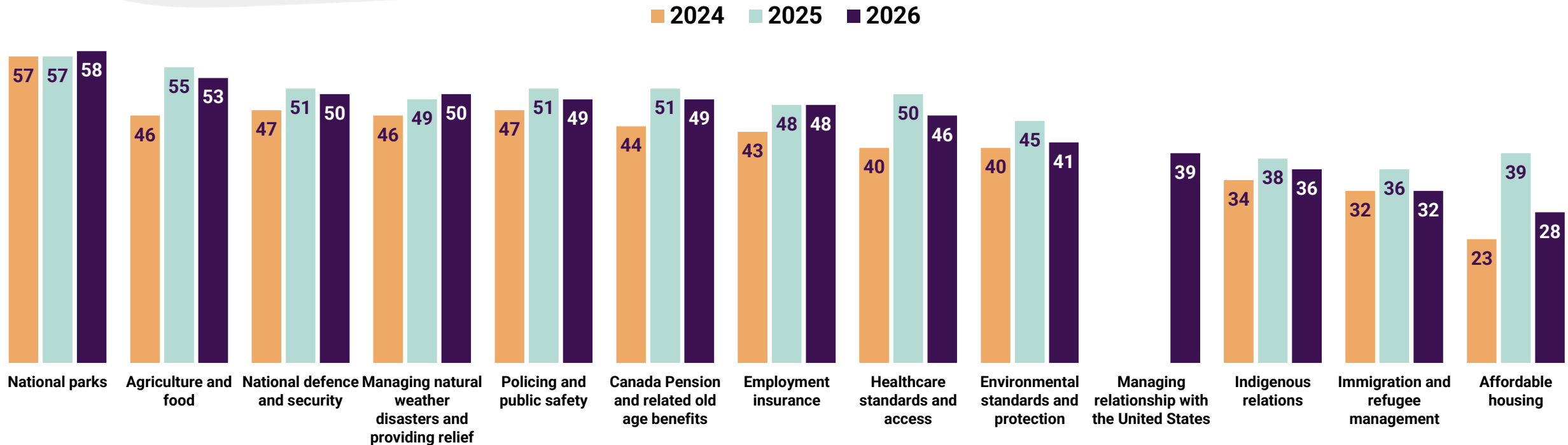
Thinking about Canada, to what extent do you trust that the current election system in Canada is a) fair; b) represents the votes of citizens?
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



Trust in the federal government to operate services competently and effectively is mixed.

To what extent are you willing to trust the following federal government services to operate competently and effectively and to do the right thing?

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].





VACCINES & HEALTH ISSUES

The Vaccine Challenge

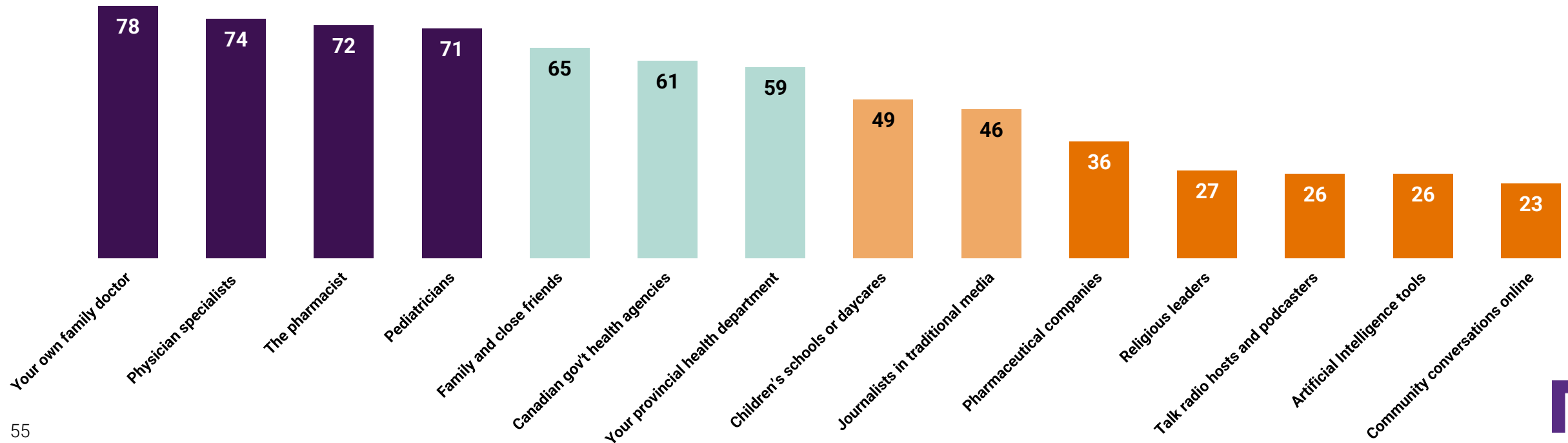
- In 2025, Canada lost its status as a nation where measles had been eliminated. Both Ontario and Alberta experienced sizable outbreaks. This public health setback requires a thorough examination. We need to understand the concerns of Canadians on all sides of this discussion.
- The 2026 CanTrust Index™, made in Canada, made for Canada, examines the issue of trust in vaccines.
- In summary, a large majority trust vaccines and the health system. On the other hand, a significant minority, in the vicinity of 20 per cent, have concerns and must be heard.
- Concern about vaccines is highest in Alberta and Ontario.
- The fractured range of sources of trusted information on vaccines should not be lost in this discussion: millions of Canadians trust radio talk show hosts, AI tools, and religious leaders, as examples.
- For some, vaccines are simply a question of affordability.



Family doctors and physician specialists are the most trustworthy sources when it comes to vaccines.

On a scale of 1 to 7, please indicate how likely you are to trust the following sources to provide reliable information about vaccines. 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

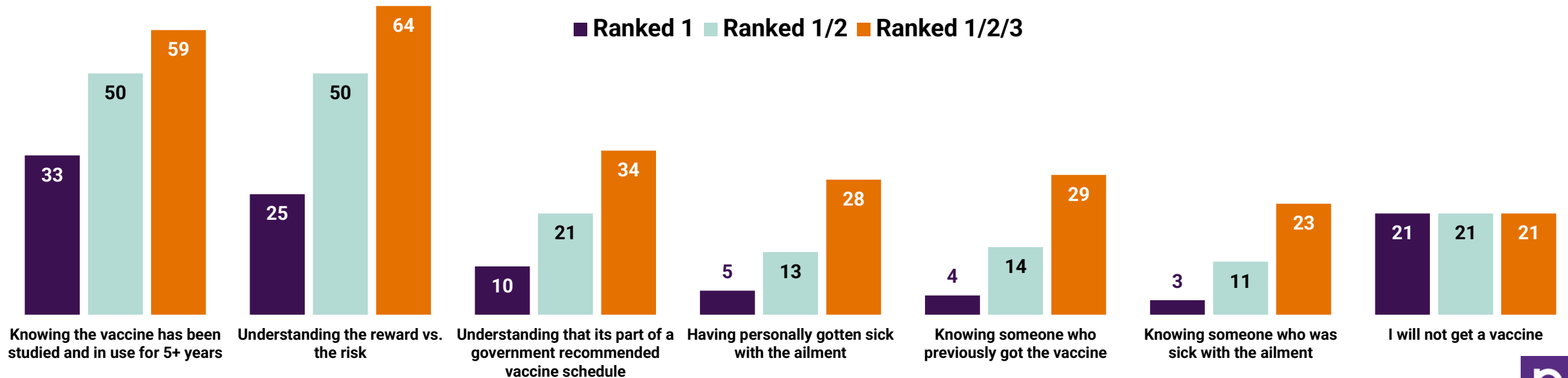
A quarter of Canadians expressed trust for reliable information from religious leaders, talk shows, AI and online chats.



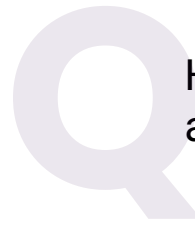
Canadians are more likely to get a vaccine if it has been studied and in use for five years or more; and if they understand the reward versus the risk of getting it.

Please rank the following reasons that would make you more likely to get a vaccine from your doctor or other healthcare professional.

No other argument comes close to these two.

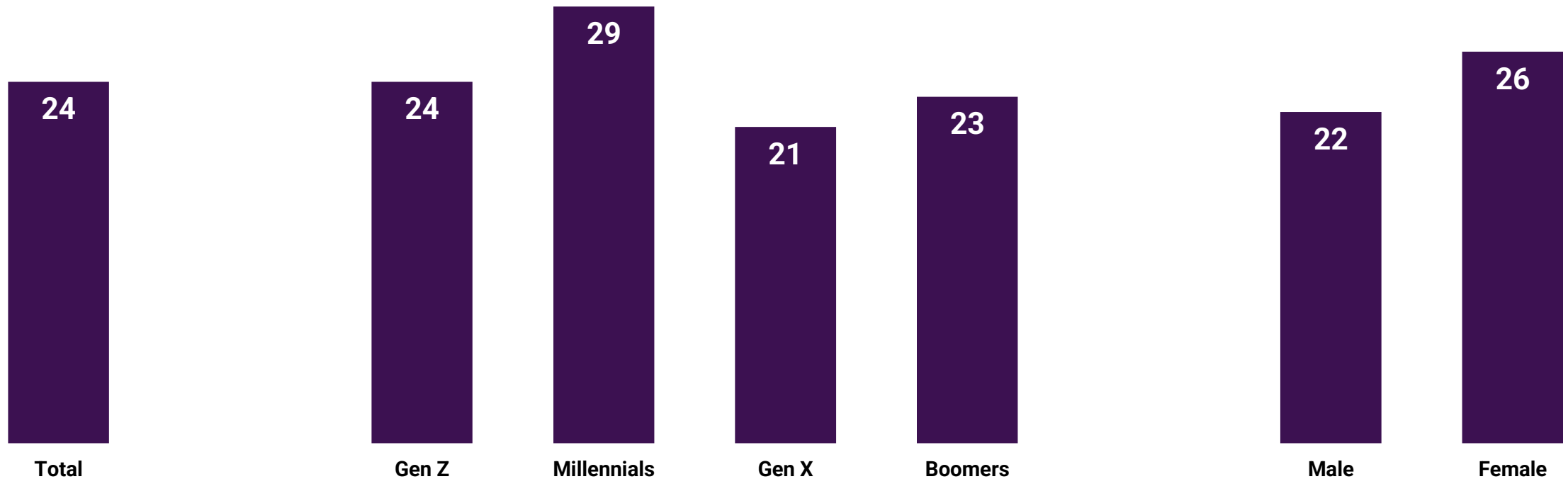


One in four Canadians claim to have declined a vaccine request from their doctor.

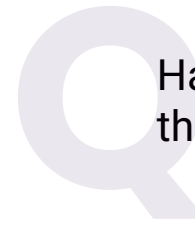


Have you ever personally declined to be vaccinated after it was recommended by your doctor for you?

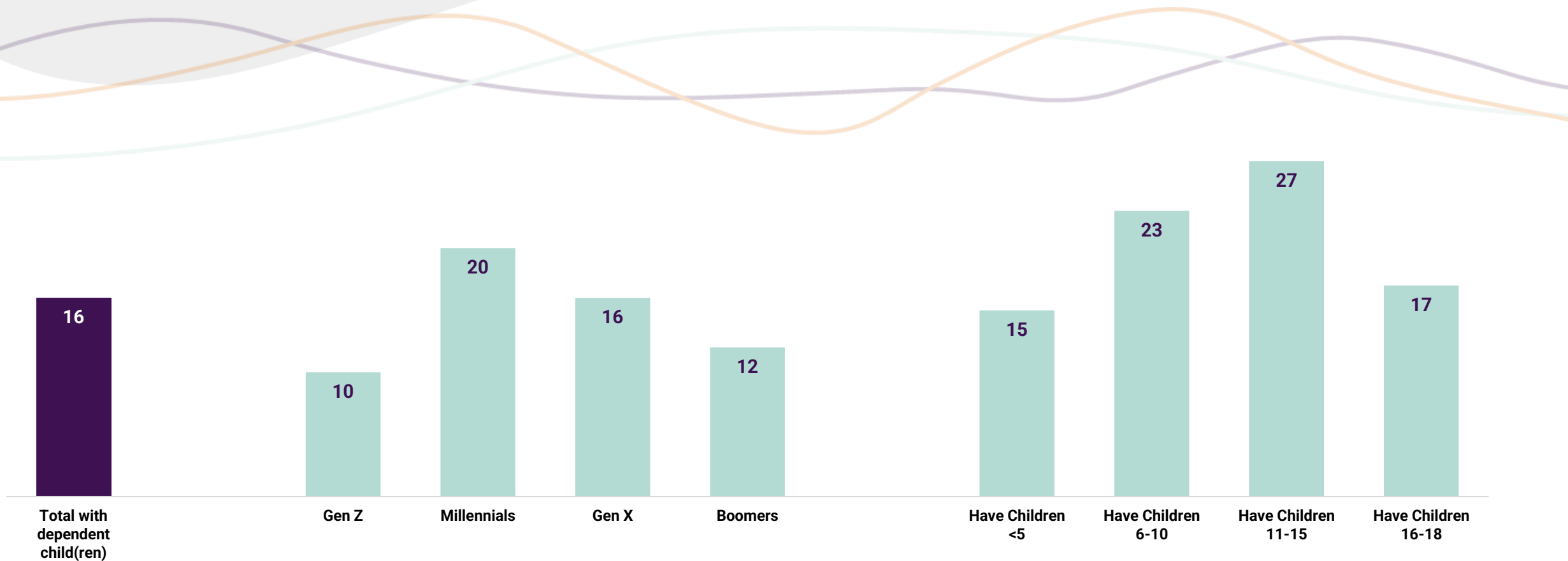
■ Personally declined a vaccine recommendation from a doctor



Slightly fewer (16 per cent) say they have declined for a dependent child.



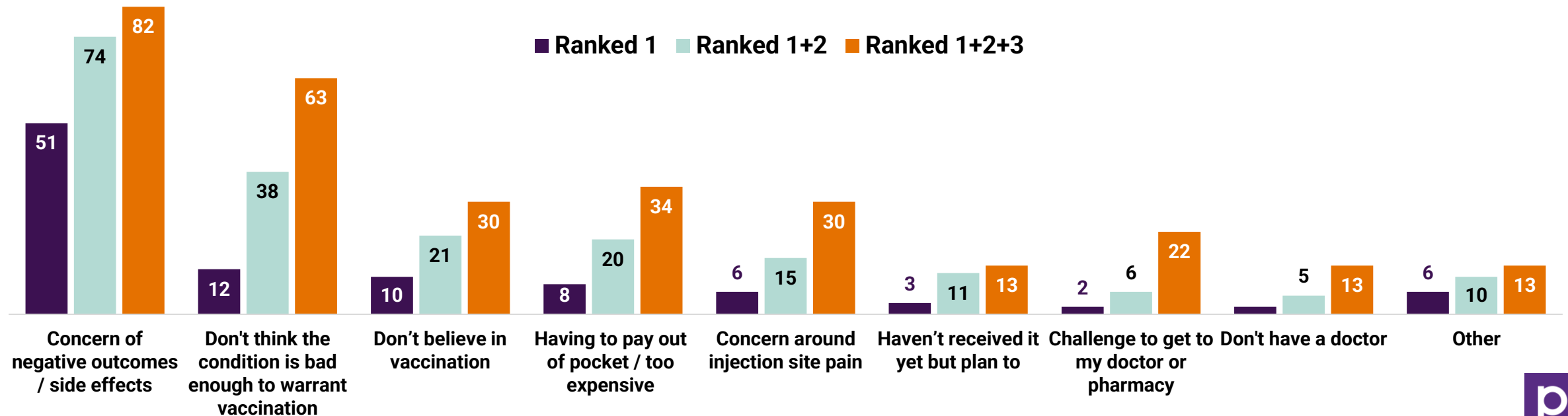
Have you ever declined a vaccine for one of your children that was being recommended by your child's doctor?



Canadians cite concerns about negative outcomes and side effects as reasons for not accepting vaccine recommendations.

Please rank the reasons that may have stopped you from accepting the recommendation of the doctor?

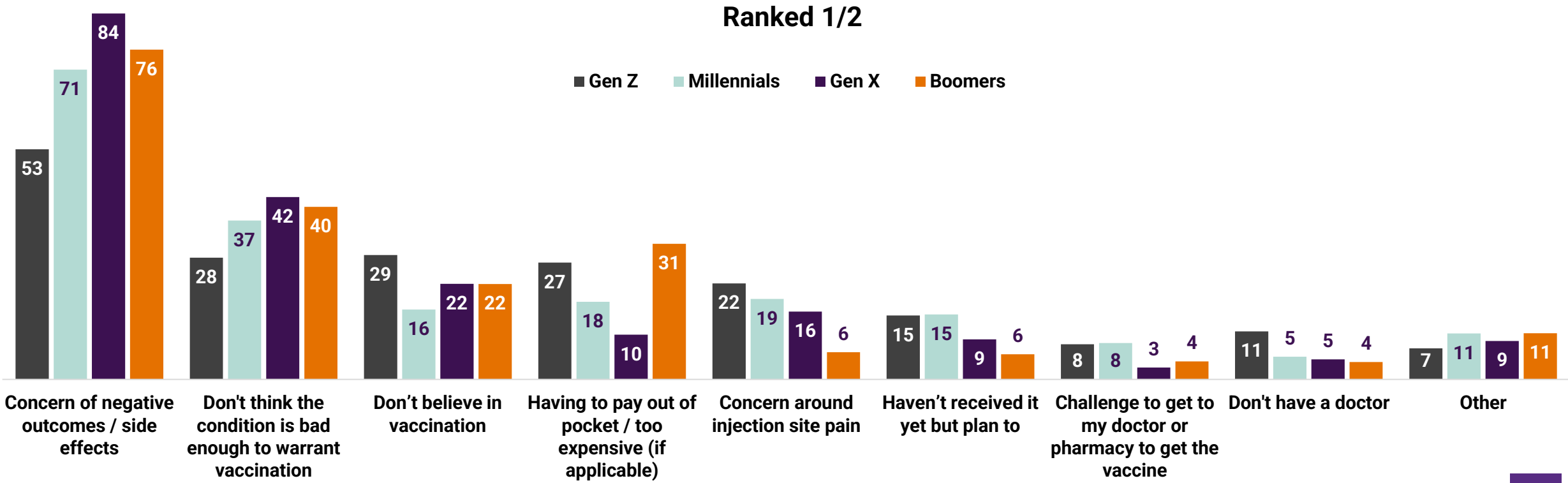
A large group ranked not thinking their condition required a vaccine as justification for not getting one. Almost a third of Canadians have refused a vaccine because they don't believe in them.



Concern about side effects and efficacy leads the ranking among all age groups.

Please rank the reasons that may have stopped you from accepting the recommendation of the doctor?

Affordability ranks higher among Gen Z and Boomers.

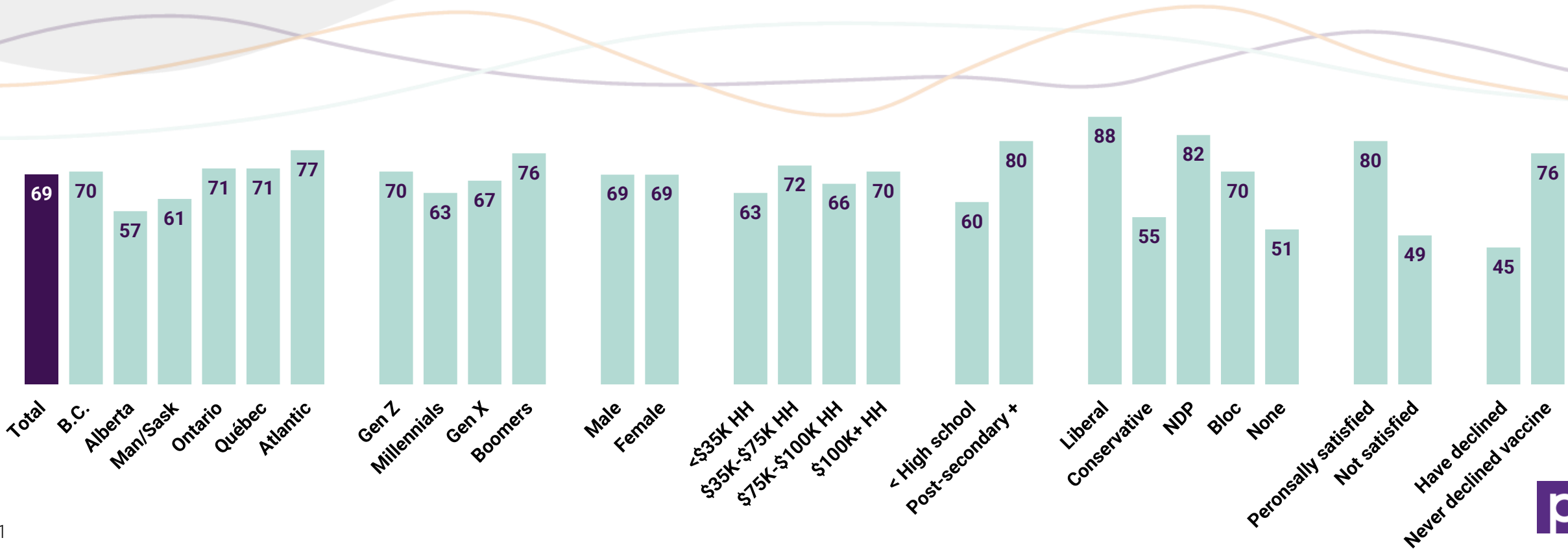


Trust in Health Canada to approve prescription drugs that are in the best interest of Canadians is high.

To what extent do you trust Health Canada to be doing what is in the best interest of Canadians in approving prescription drugs?

1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

Slightly lower in prairie provinces and among those less satisfied with life in Canada.



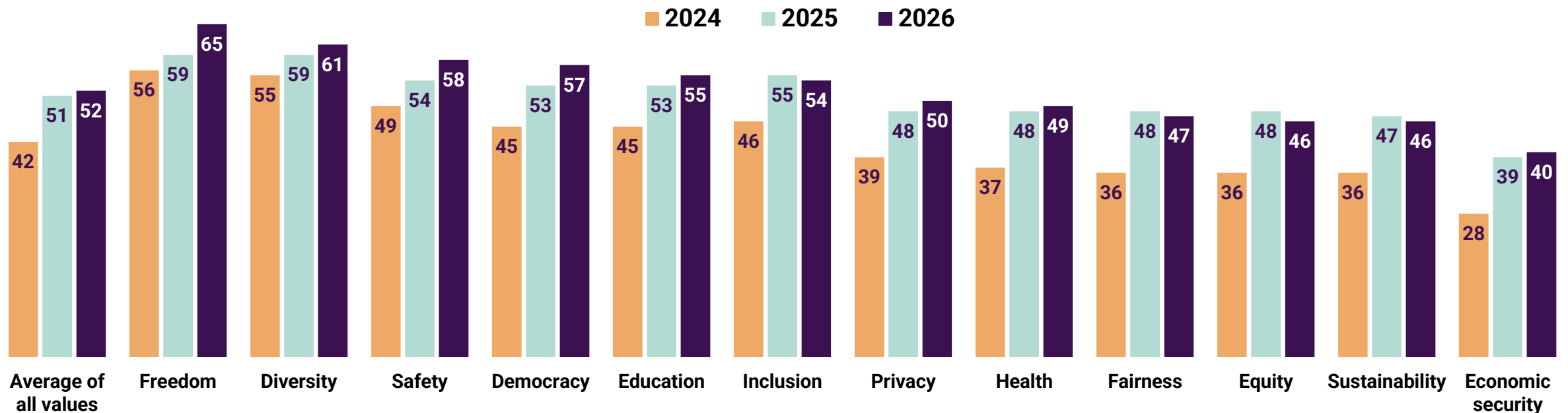


VALUES PERFORMANCE

From a list of values, more Canadians believe the country is living up to ideals of freedom, diversity, safety and democracy.

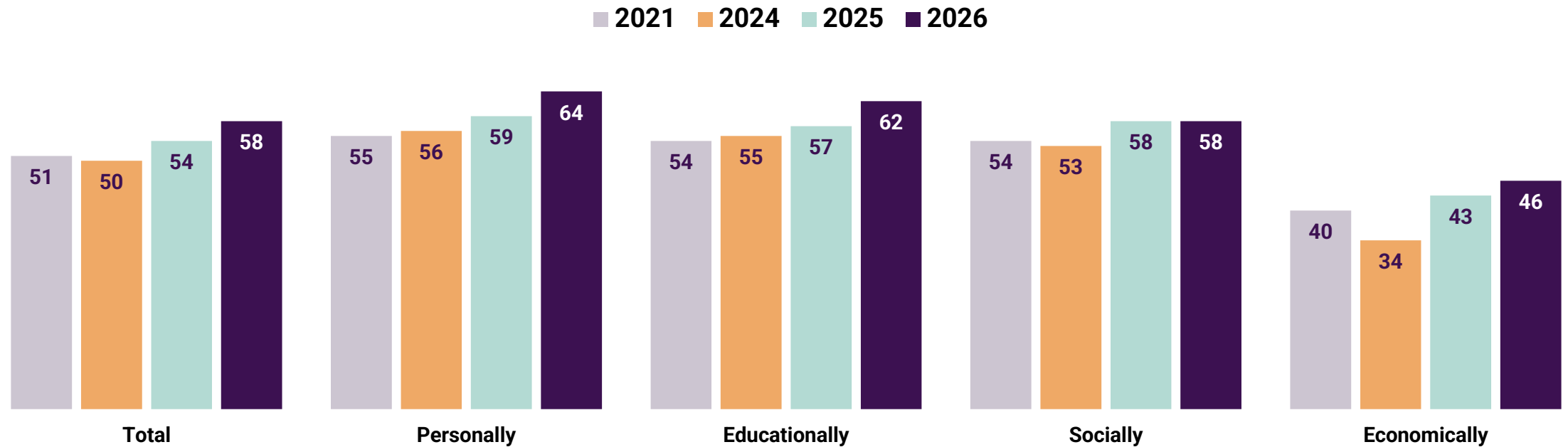
In thinking about Canada as a country, please rate how well you feel our country is living up to its values in the following areas using a scale of 1 to 7. 1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].

These numbers are showing signs of strengthening from 2024.



Canadians are more satisfied in their own lives.

Thinking about your own life in Canada, to what extent do you feel satisfied?
1 means you “trust very little” and 7 means you “trust a lot” [5-7 reported].



TRUST CAN BE GROWN

Building a plan for trust may be easier than you think

Trust is not binary

- Trust is not something you either have or don't.
- The CanTrust Index™ uses a 7-point scale, and many people choose the neutral 4 in the middle (scores on a range of 1 to 7).
- These individuals can represent a large portion, making them the "trust swing vote". This group trusts some things and distrusts others.
- Opportunity for organizations: Trust can be won with positive actions and communication.
- Failing to listen and engage can cause trust to be lost.
- Trust can be nurtured and grown through deliberate effort, creating opportunities to build loyalty.





THANK YOU

For more about our studies and how to build trust in your organization, please contact:

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cantrustindex.ca