



the gandalf group

# Liberal Leadership – The Public's Choice

September 14, 2006

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## ☐ Survey of 1000 Canadians

- National random sample, yielding a margin of error of +/- 3.1%
- Conducted in September, 2006



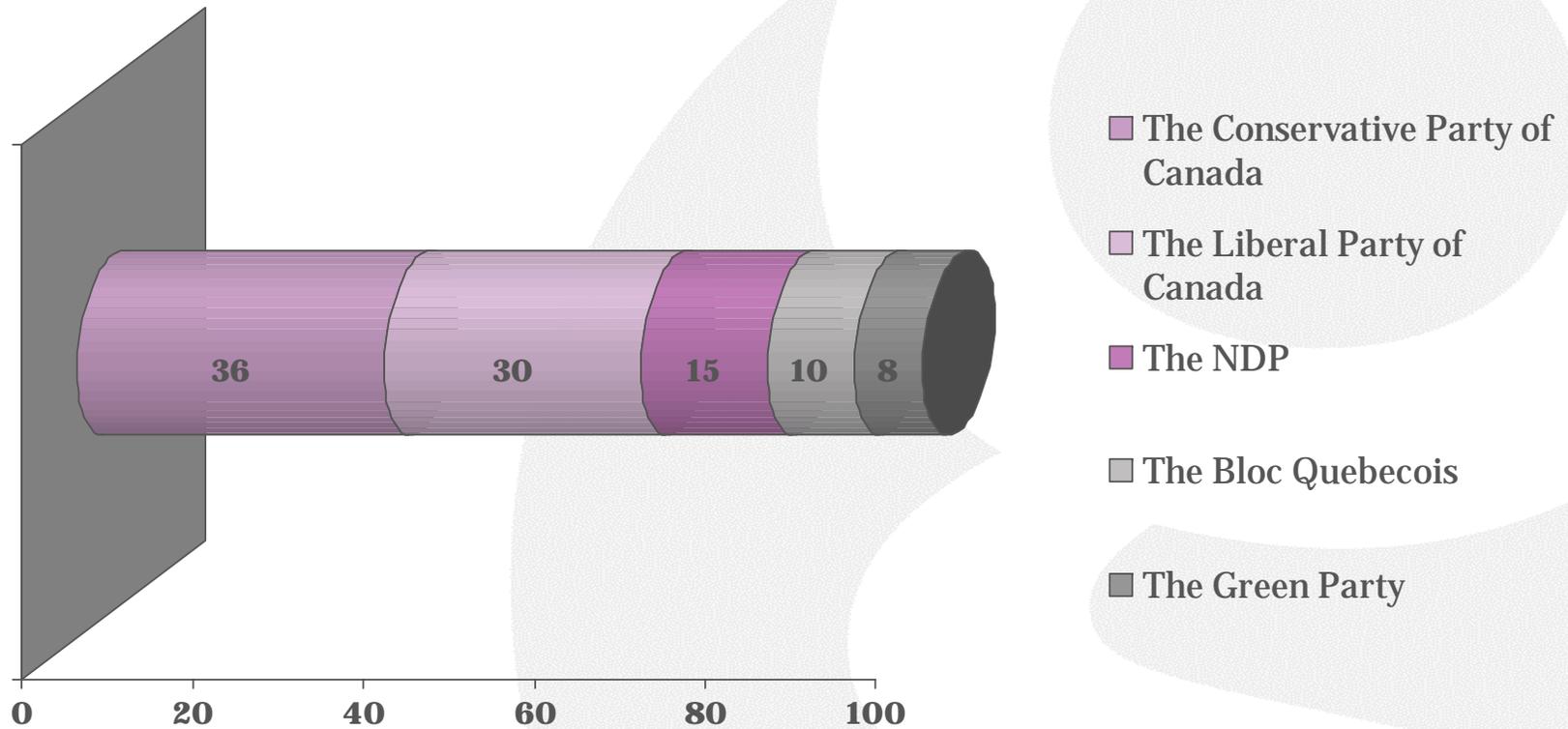
## Current Vote Intention

- ❑ The national numbers remain very similar to the 2006 election
- ❑ Underneath that apparent calm, some significant movement that would affect the composition of Parliament
- ❑ In Quebec, Conservatives are now in a fight to hold their seats, and could lose up to seven of them to the BQ
  - BQ could come out of an election now with 60 or more seats
- ❑ In Ontario, both the Conservatives (four seats) and the NDP (two seats) would lose seats to the Liberals



# National Vote Intention

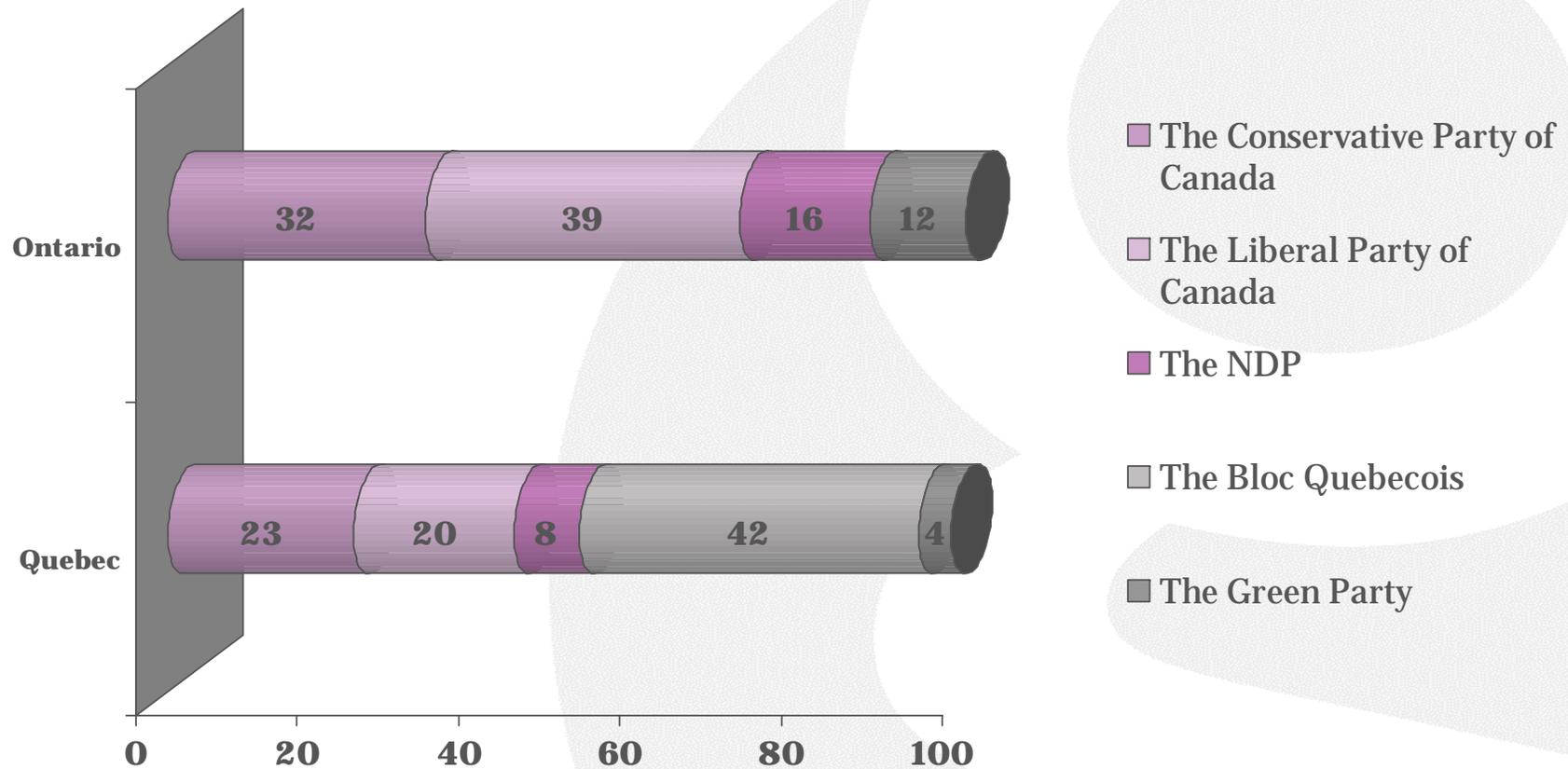
Assuming a federal election were held today, which party would you vote for?





## National Vote Intention: Ontario/Quebec

Assuming a federal election were held today, which party would you vote for?





## What Is Driving Votes

- ❑ Concern about the economy is rising, and for the first time in many years is the number one priority of Canadians
- ❑ Health Care, and specifically wait times, remains a key issue for many people
- ❑ Lack of credibility on fiscal management and balanced budgets is fatal in Canadian politics now
  - Remarkable culture shift
- ❑ Two perceived “hot button issues” – the Government’s strong support of Israel in the Hezbollah conflict and same sex marriage – are the least important issues to vote intention
- ❑ In the aftermath of the Sponsorship Program and Gomery, ethics in government is a key consideration for the electorate
- ❑ For two thirds of Canadians, getting out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible would be important in an election now
  - Especially important in francophone Quebec
- ❑ The fiscal imbalance is an important vote determiner in Quebec – not elsewhere



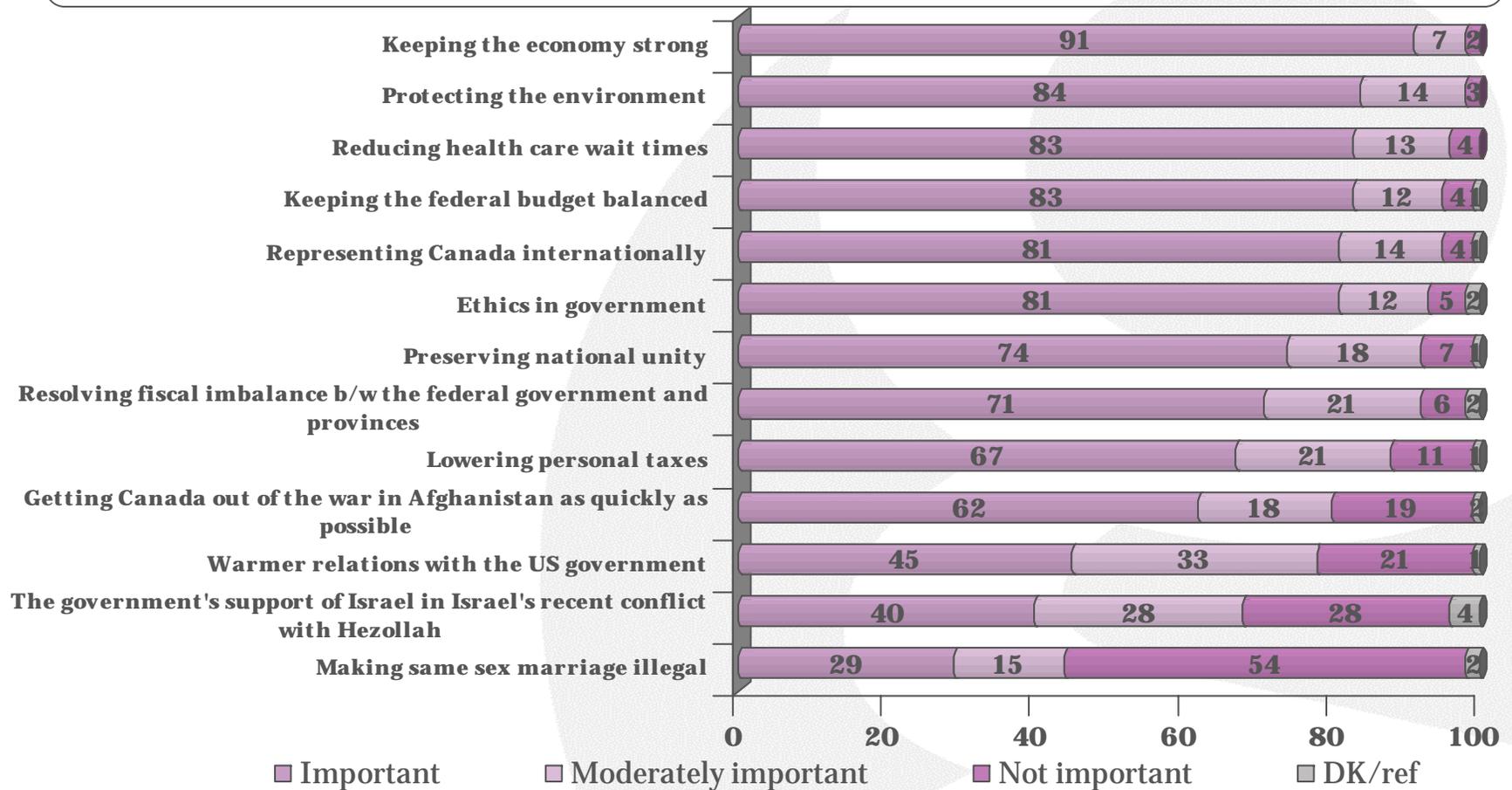
## Partisan Differences in Priority

- ❑ Making same sex marriage illegal is an important factor for Conservative voters, but not for supporters of other parties
  - Little difference among Liberal, NDP, BQ, and Green supporters
- ❑ Liberal and Conservative supporters see balancing the budget and keeping the economy strong as very important
  - NDP, Green and BQ voters much less so
- ❑ Liberal and BQ voters place much more priority on reducing health care wait times than do supporters of the Conservatives or the NDP
- ❑ NDP and Green voters are much less interested in personal tax cuts than are supporters of other parties
- ❑ Conservative voters are much less likely to vote on the basis of the environment than are supporters of any other party



# Importance of Issues

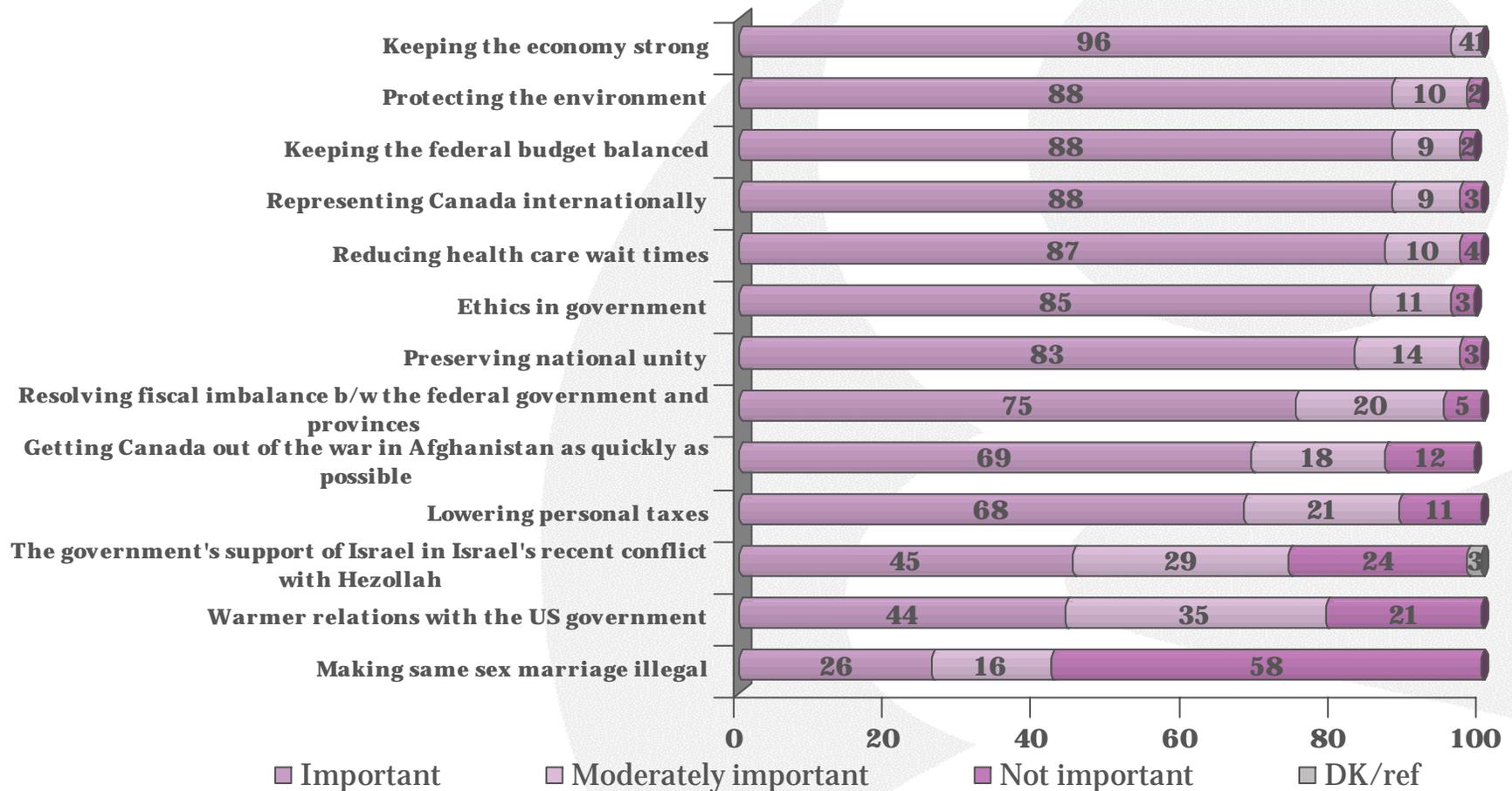
How important is each of the following issues in determining how you will vote in the next federal election:





## Importance of Issues – Liberal Voters

How important is each of the following issues in determining how you will vote in the next federal election:

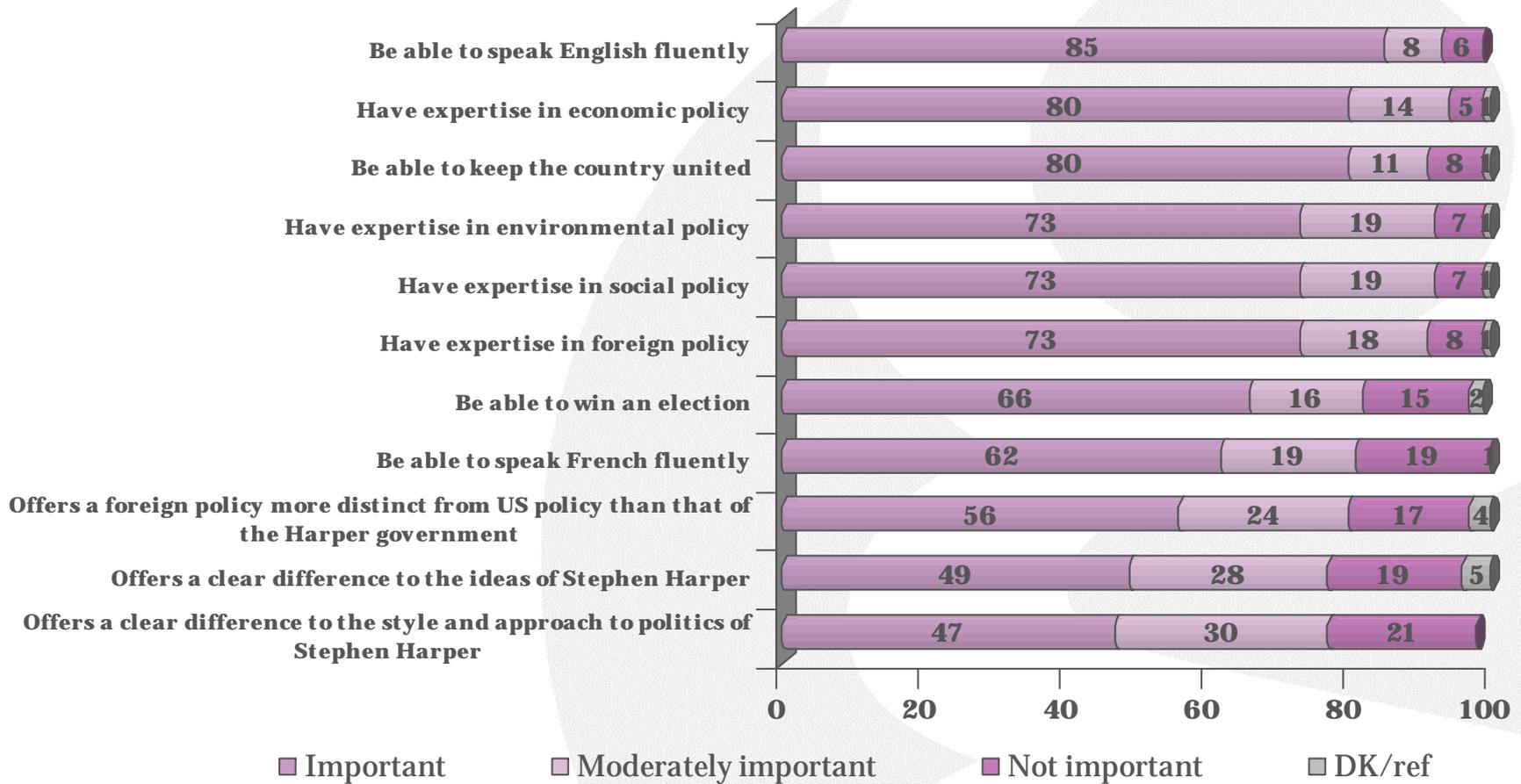




- ❑ French speaking voters are much more likely to think English fluency is very important than English speaking voters are to think fluency in French is very important
- ❑ Liberal voters place ability to win an election close to the top of the list of important attributes
- ❑ Female voters are much more likely to be looking for expertise in social policy than are male voters
- ❑ Three quarters of Liberal voters want the new leader to have a foreign policy more distinct from the US policy than the Harper government is providing
- ❑ The emerging constitutional debate between the candidates could be very important, given the priority Liberal voters place on national unity



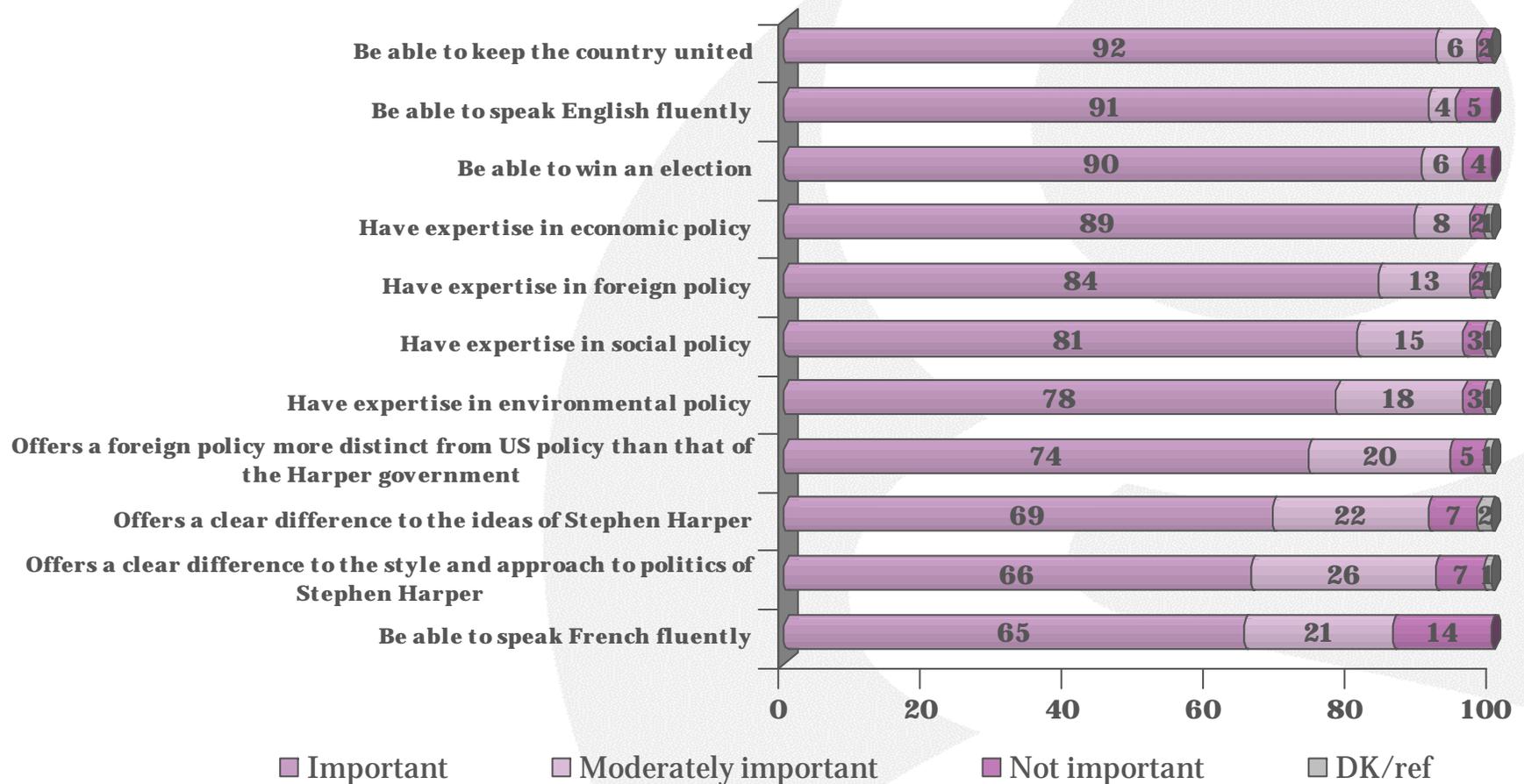
How important is it to you that the next leader of the LPC has the following characteristics:





# Leader Attributes (Liberal Voters)

How important is it to you that the next leader of the LPC has the following characteristics:





- ❑ Opinion is still forming and soft on most candidates – this is a snapshot at this time
- ❑ Dryden and Rae are significantly ahead of other contenders among the general public
- ❑ Perceived strong contenders Ignatieff, Kennedy, and Dion are well behind
- ❑ Carolyn Bennett effectively tied with Ignatieff for third place – behind Dryden and Rae – among female voters
- ❑ The same pattern is true among Liberal voters only, although the race is tighter as Ignatieff, Rae and Kennedy are all stronger among Liberal voters than among the general public
- ❑ Dryden's support is fairly uniform across regions, but is especially strong on the Prairies
- ❑ Rae does comparatively well in Ontario, where he is in first place
- ❑ Dion, who is sixth in Ontario, is a clear first in Quebec
- ❑ The media friendly Martha Hall Findlay campaign has not captured the public imagination
- ❑ Dryden does very well among middle aged male voters – in recent years a Liberal weak spot



- ❑ While name recognition is a factor, some of the candidates are assuming some definition
  - NDP voters are disproportionately attracted to Rae and disproportionately not supportive of Ignatieff
  - The two candidates who have talked most about environmental policy – Dion and Ignatieff – do disproportionately well among Green Party supporters
- ❑ Brison's numbers are hurt because there is a core group of Conservative voters who dislike him intensely, however he has appeal to more moderate, swing Conservative voters



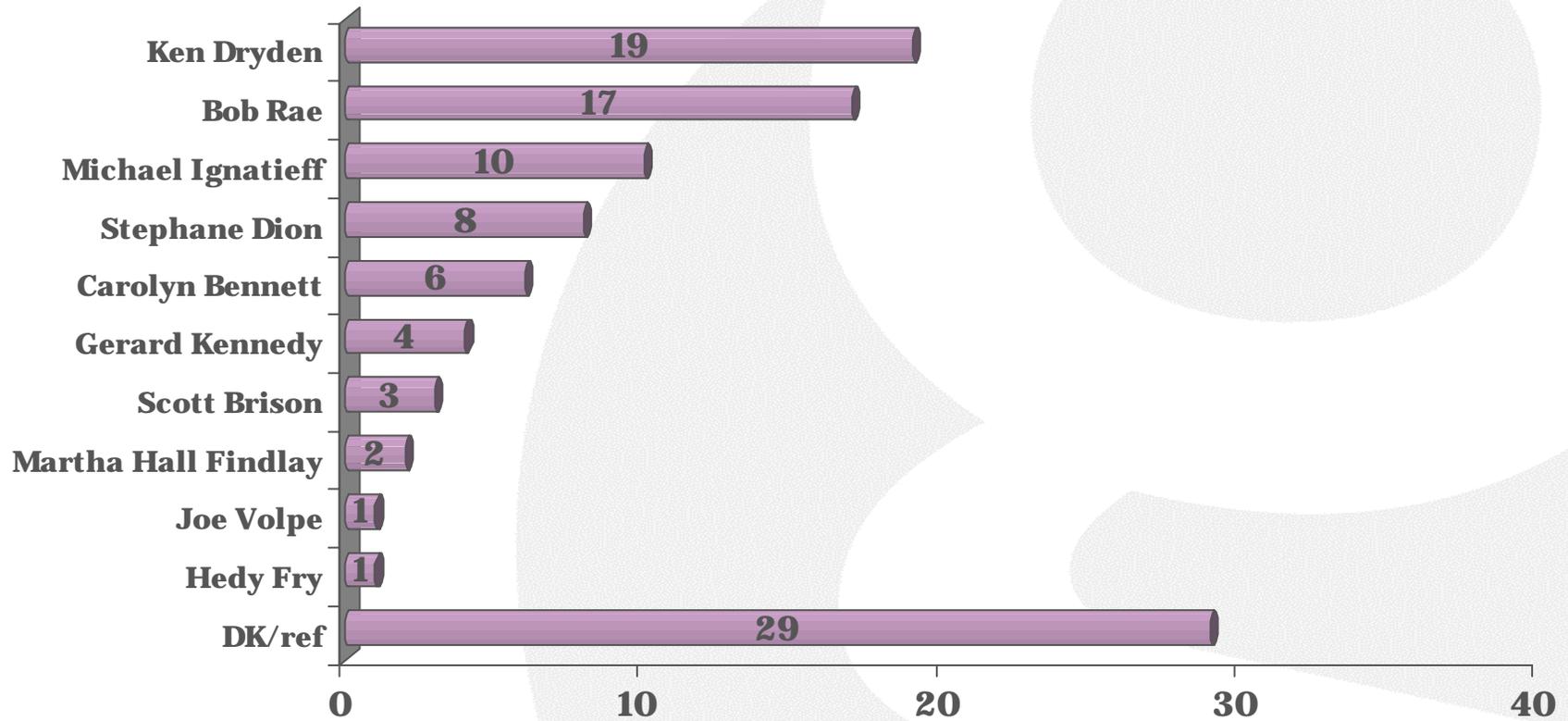
## What Kind Of Voters Do The Candidates Attract

- ❑ Supporters of Stephane Dion are much more likely to think French fluency is important than are supporters of any other candidate
- ❑ Voters who value economic expertise tend to be drawn disproportionately to Brison and Dion, and less to Rae or Kennedy
- ❑ Kennedy's background on social policy does not appear to have registered, and his supporters are least likely to place a high priority on expertise in social policy
- ❑ Michael Ignatieff appears to be drawing those who want a difference in ideas and approach from Harper more than do the other candidates
- ❑ Ignatieff supporters feel more strongly about ethics in government and less strongly about almost all other issues than do supporters of other candidates



# Choice of Candidate

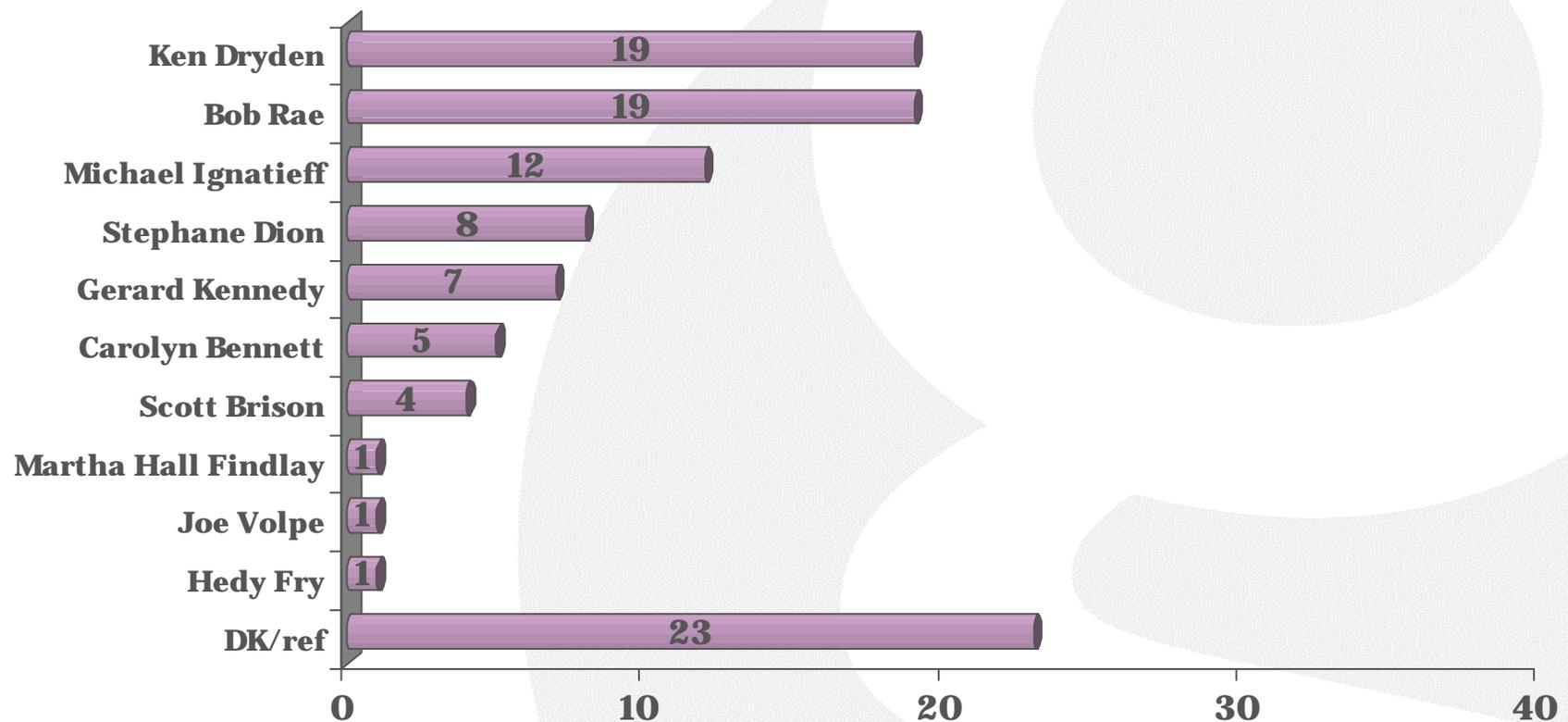
If you had to vote for the next Liberal leader, who among the candidates would you vote for?





## Choice of Candidate (Liberal Voters)

If you had to vote for the next Liberal leader, who among the candidates would you vote for?





- The candidate that brings the largest pool of potential voters to the Liberal Party is Ken Dryden
  - Only 34% of Canadians are certain not to vote Liberal if he is leader, much lower than for the other candidates- especially those with high profiles
  - He is equally well known, and equally strong electorally, among both English and French speaking voters
  - 46% of current NDP voters, 44% of current BQ voters and 41% of current Conservative voters would consider voting Liberal if Dryden were leader
- Bob Rae is a polarizing figure in the electorate
  - Along with Dryden, he is the best known. In Ontario, he is the best known by far
  - 40% of Canadians, including 43% of Ontario voters (compared to 32% for Dryden), are certain not to vote Liberal if he is the leader of the Party
  - His is vehemently opposed by Conservatives, but will be given a serious look by NDP and BQ voters



- ❑ Michael Ignatieff is not as well known as Dryden or Rae
  - As a result, opinion is quite soft – many voters do not know yet whether they would seriously consider voting for him or not
  - He is marginally more attractive than Rae to Conservative voters, but not nearly as interesting as Rae is to NDP voters
- ❑ Gerard Kennedy's public campaign is not going well
  - He has about the same recognition factor as Ignatieff
  - Those certain not to vote Liberal under his leadership is quite high, given the number of voters with no opinion yet
  - He does not appear to have a strong following in his home province of Ontario, as only 16% of Ontarians are certain or likely to vote Liberal if he is the leader (compared with 22% for Rae and 21% for Dryden)
  - The following he does have is very much contained to current Liberal voters – he has little appeal to either Conservative or NDP voters
  - He is much more attractive to female voters than to male voters

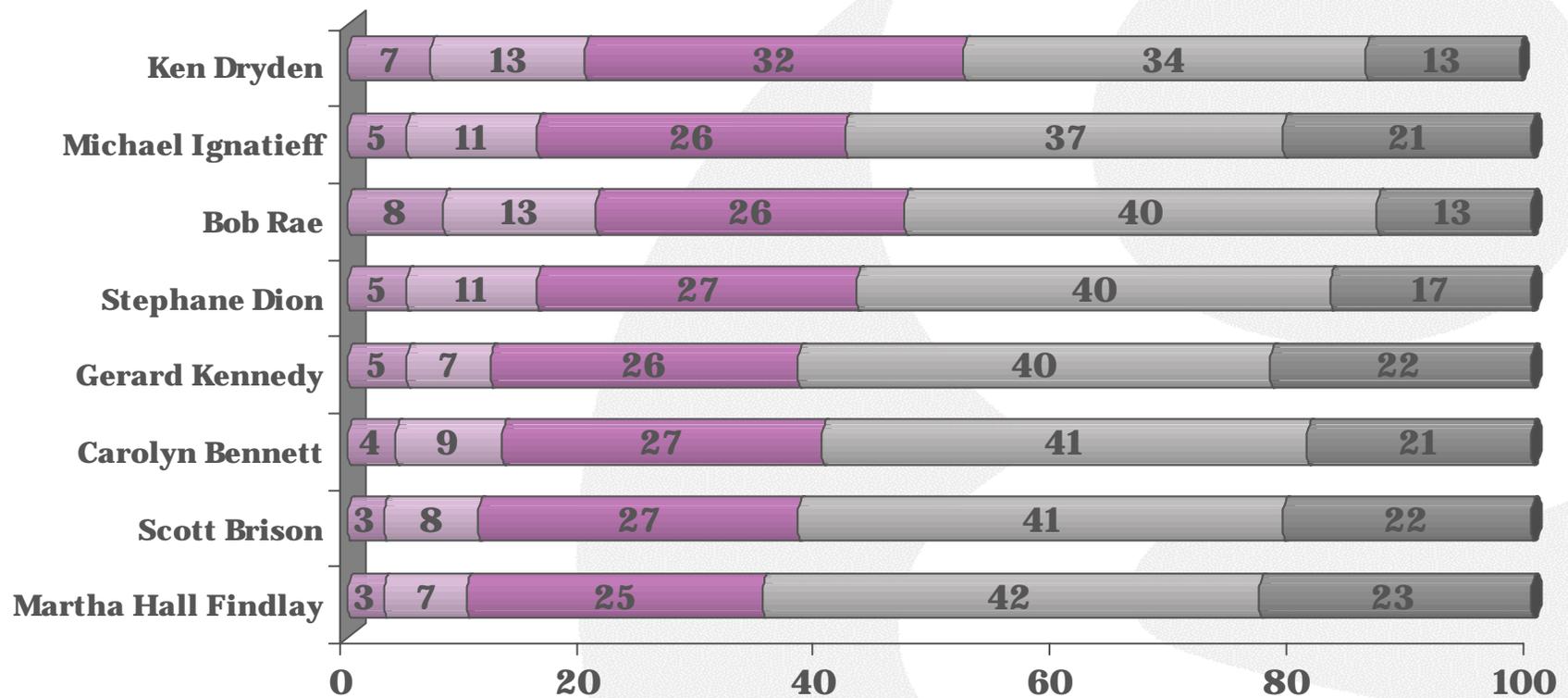


- Stephane Dion's campaign looks completely different in Quebec than in the rest of Canada
  - In Quebec, where there has been speculation that his negatives are unacceptably high, only 38% of voters are certain not to vote Liberal if he is leader – a number in line with or better than any of the other candidates
  - 31% of Quebecers say that they are certain or likely to vote Liberal if he is leader, an eye popping number for a Party currently at 20% in Quebec
  - On the other hand, the “certain nots” are high elsewhere in the country and his profile is low
  - He appears to have strong potential to erode the BQ vote, but little potential to cut into NDP or Conservative support



## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election?

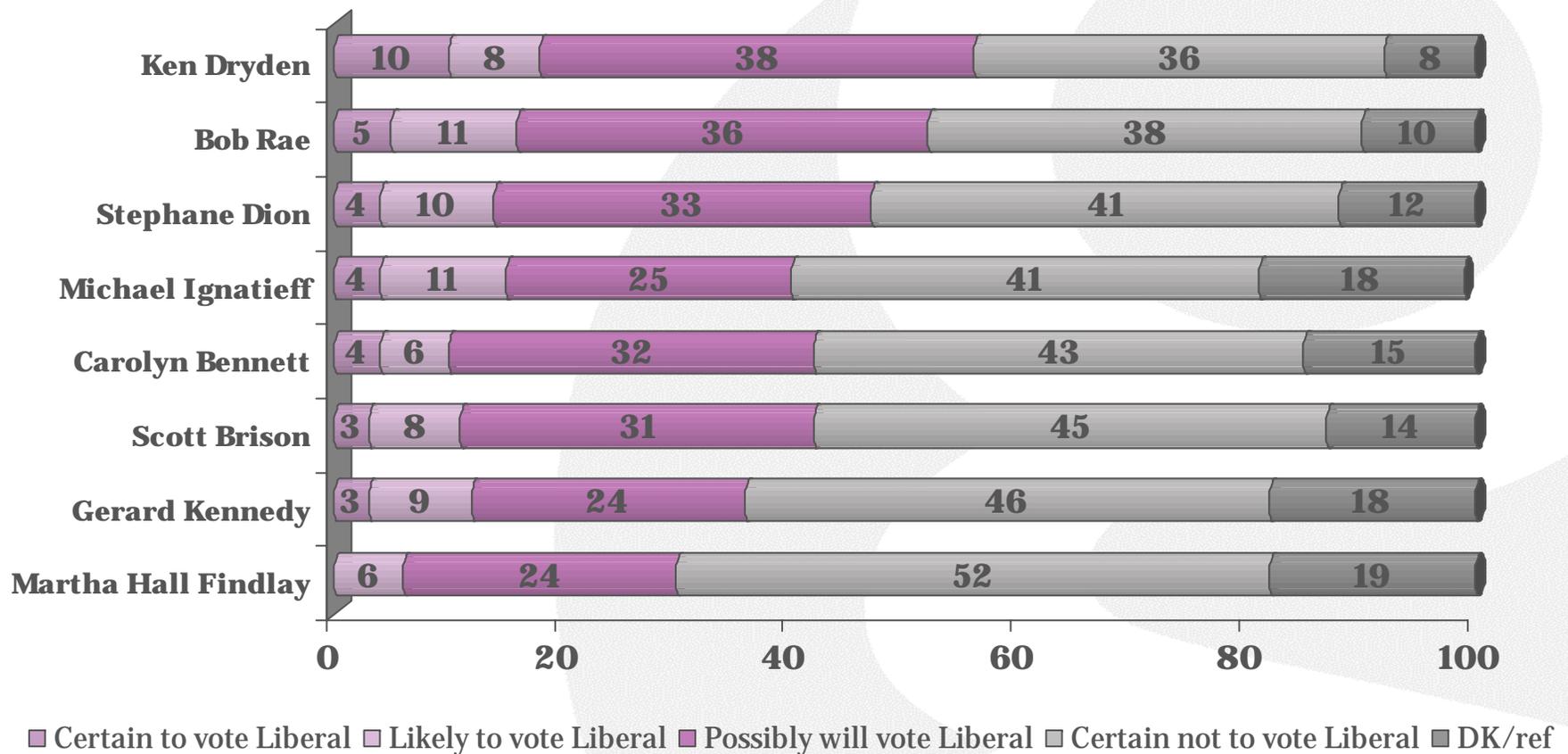


■ Certain to vote Liberal ■ Likely to vote Liberal ■ Possibly will vote Liberal ■ Certain not to vote Liberal ■ DK/ref



## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: Atlantic)

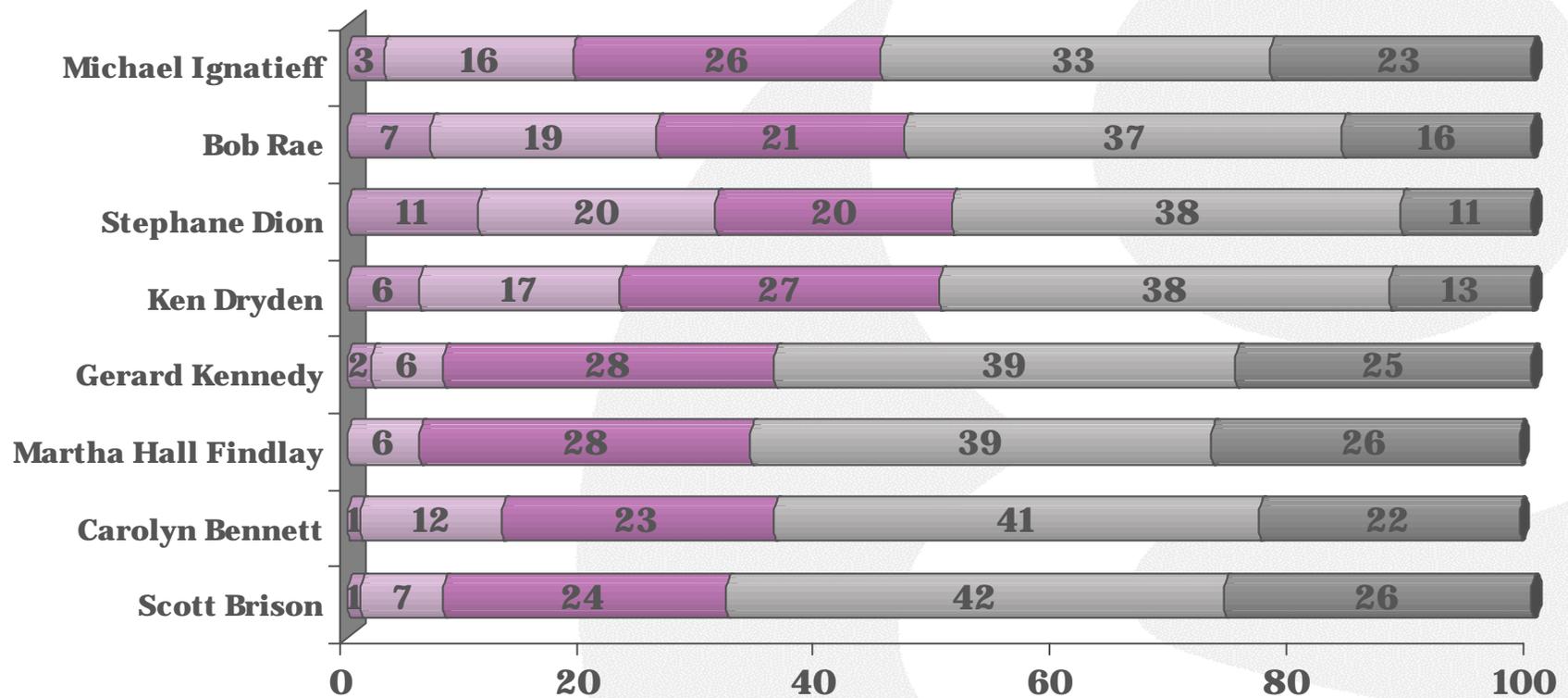
How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)





## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: Quebec)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)

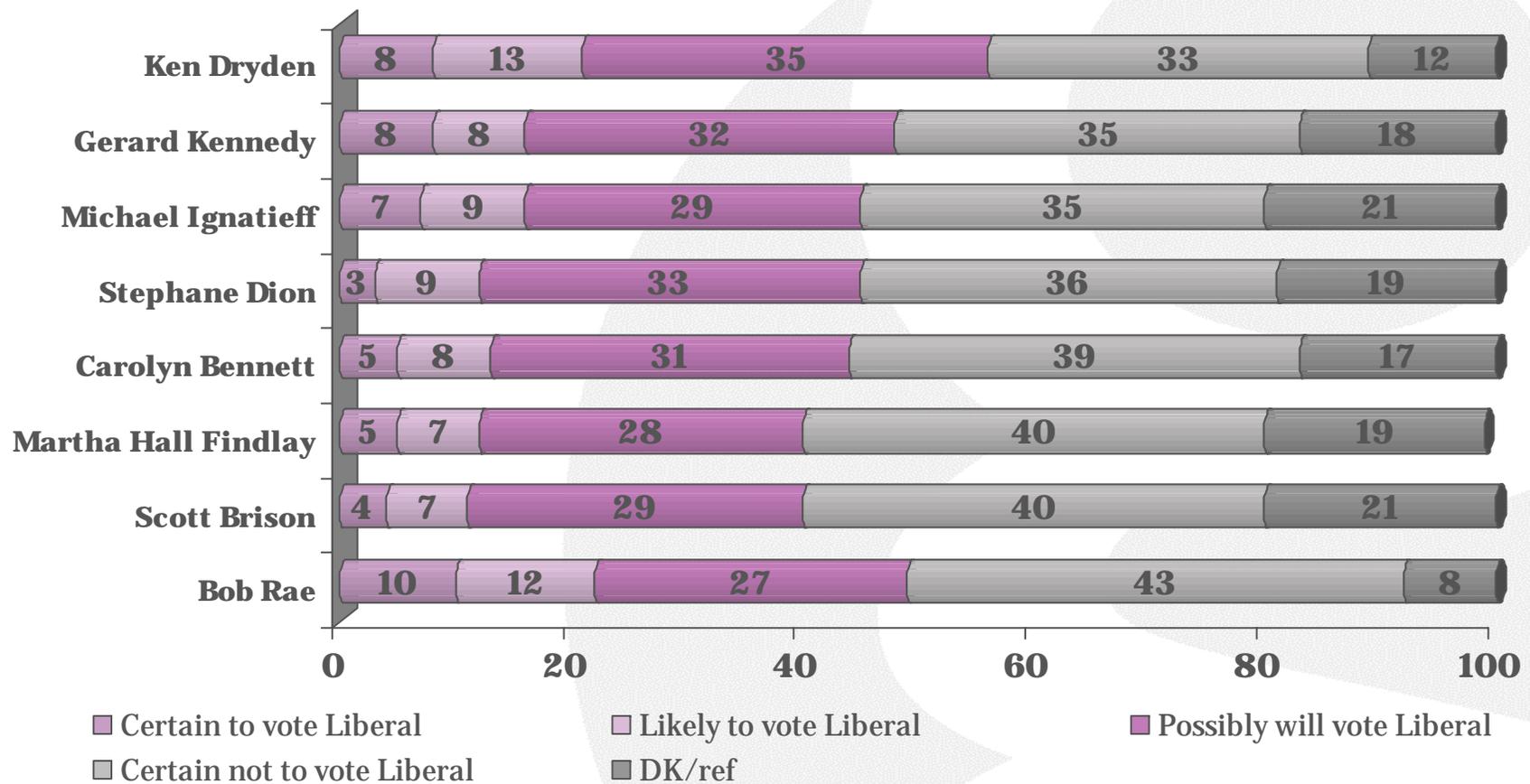


■ Certain to vote Liberal ■ Likely to vote Liberal ■ Possibly will vote Liberal ■ Certain not to vote Liberal ■ DK/ref



## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: Ontario)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)

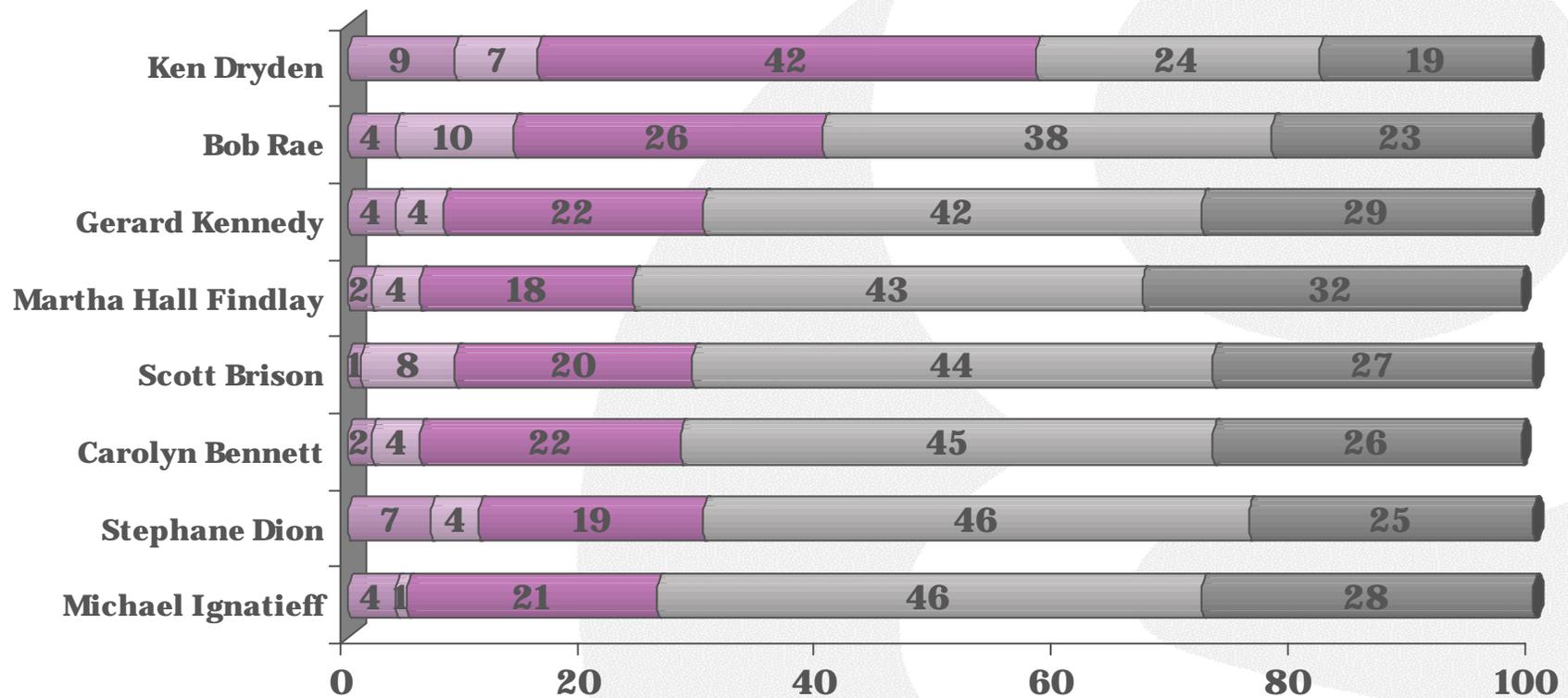




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## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: Prairies)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)

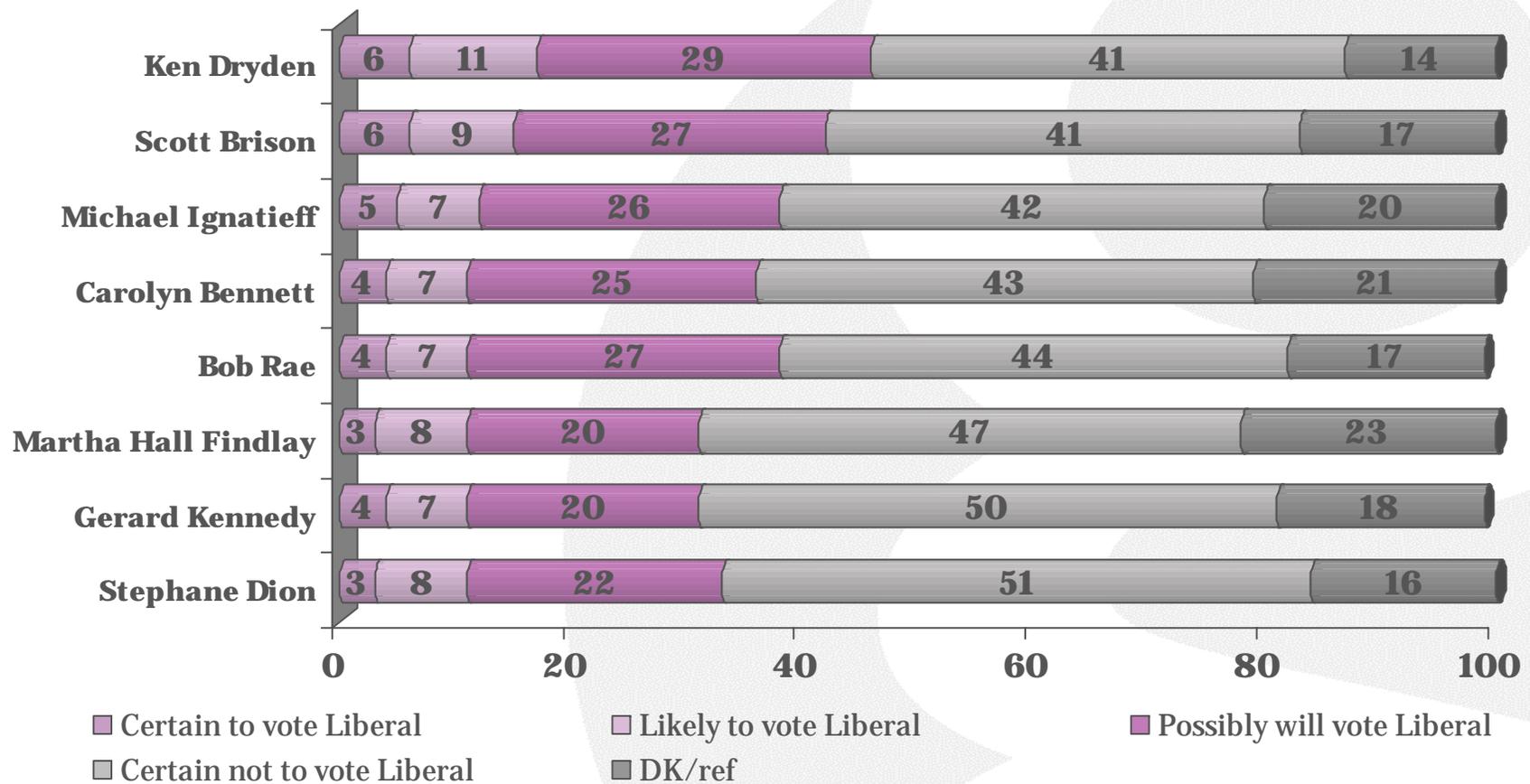


■ Certain to vote Liberal ■ Likely to vote Liberal ■ Possibly will vote Liberal ■ Certain not to vote Liberal ■ DK/ref



## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: Alberta)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)

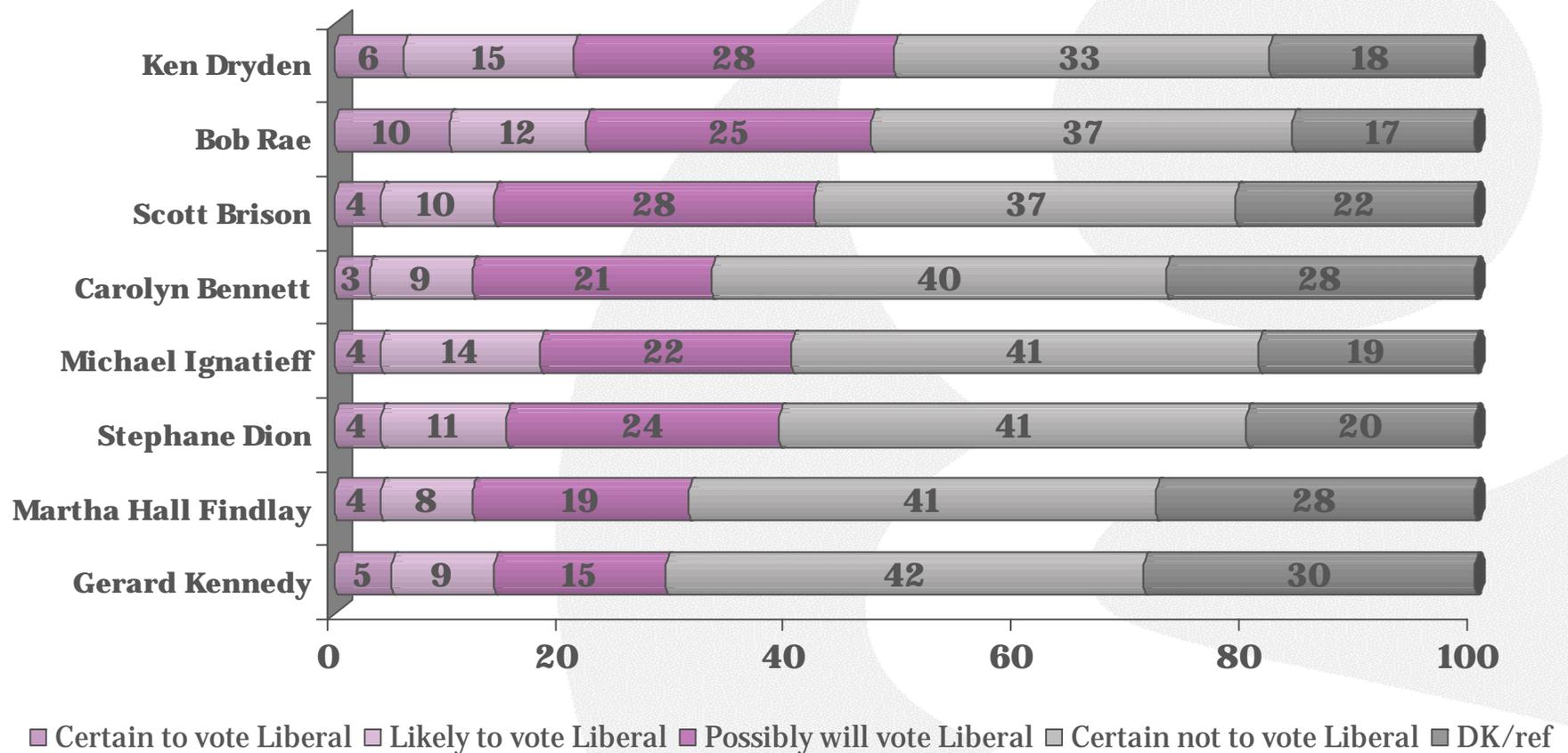




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## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Region: British Columbia)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)

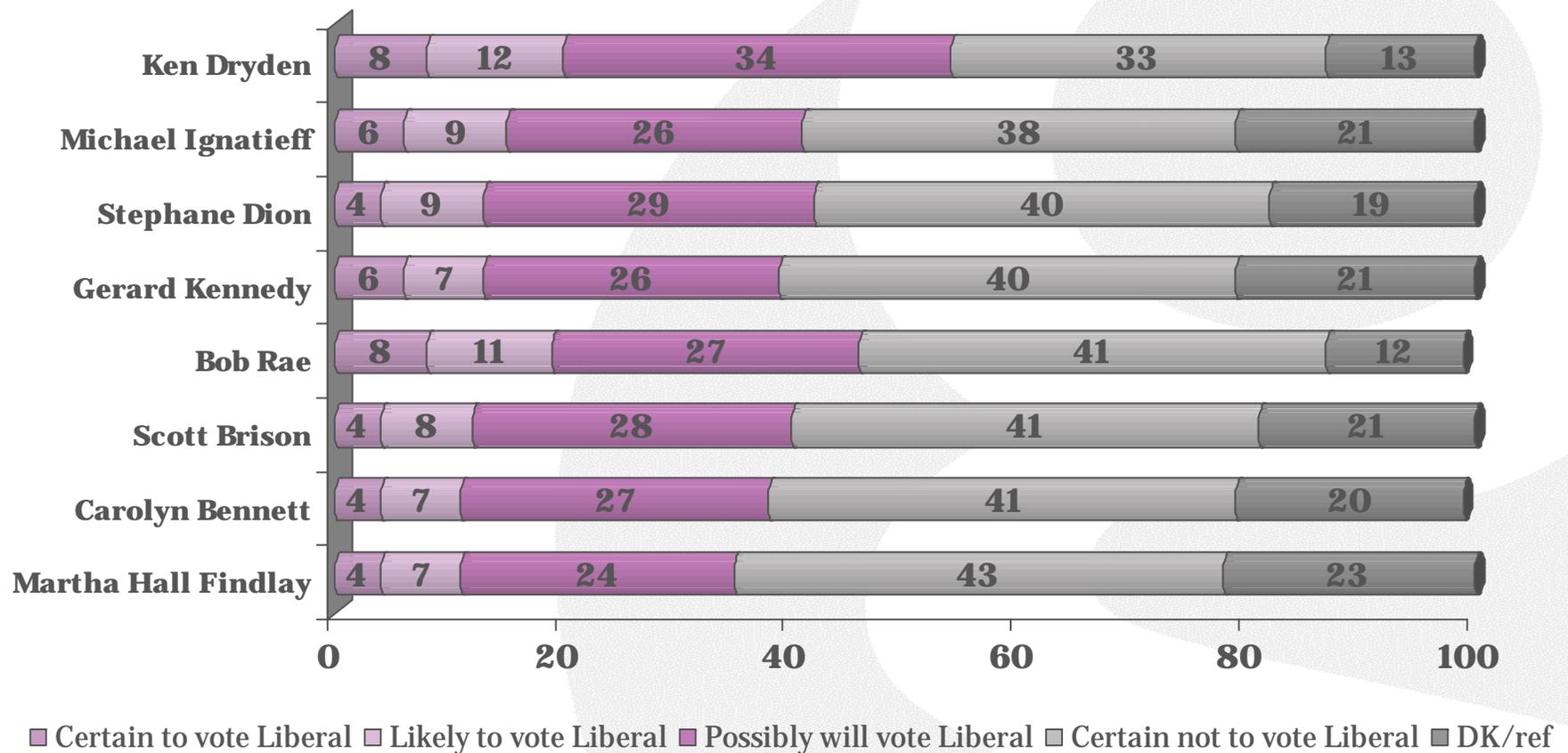




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## Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Language: English)

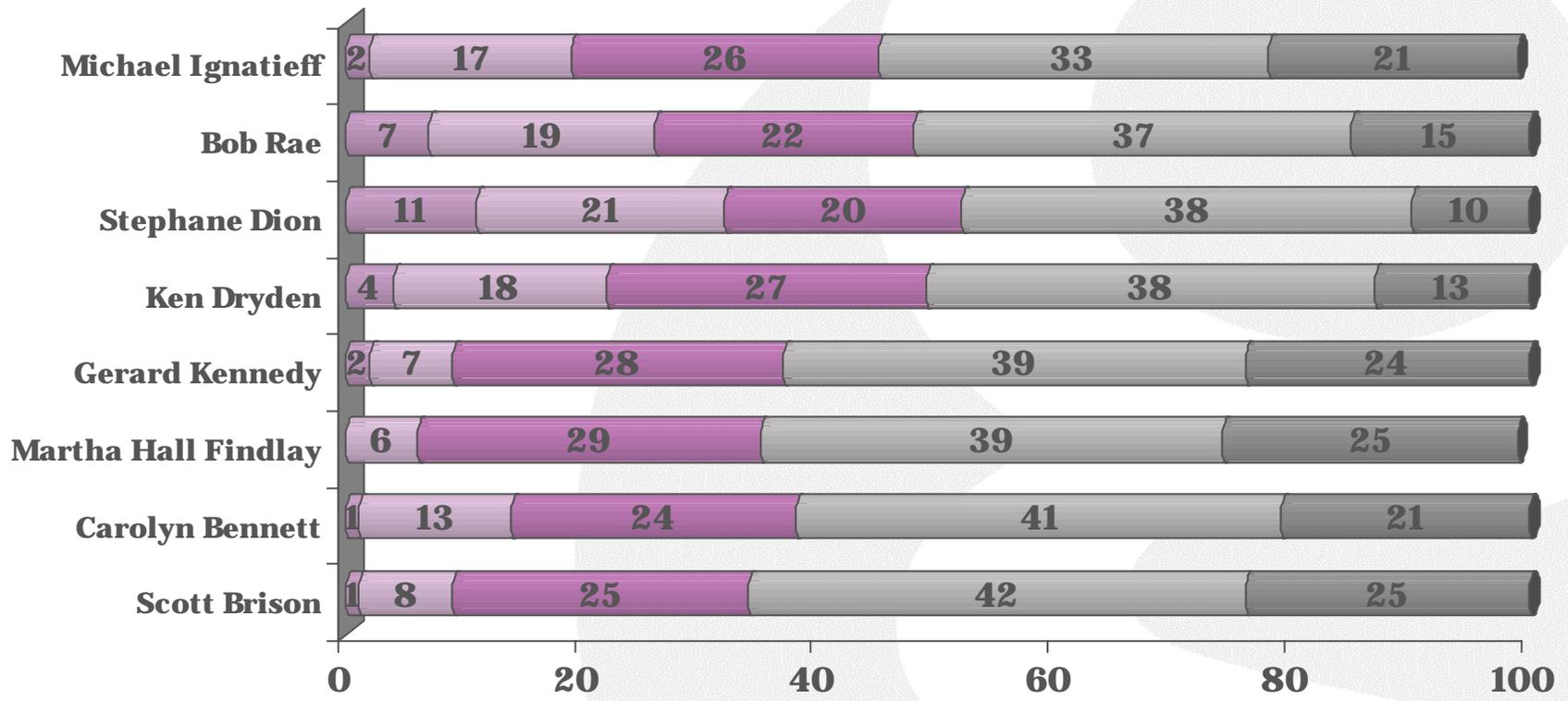
How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)





# Likelihood of Voting LPC: Candidates (Language: French)

How likely would you be to vote for the LPC if it were lead by the following candidates in the next election? (excluding “don’t know/no response” answers)



■ Certain to vote Liberal ■ Likely to vote Liberal ■ Possibly will vote Liberal ■ Certain not to vote Liberal ■ DK/ref



- ❑ The issues that are driving people to support one candidate over another are:
  - Name recognition and track record
  - Ability to win an election
  - Clear difference from Harper in style and approach to politics
  - Offering a greater distinction from US foreign policy than Harper is offering
- ❑ Liberals face difficult choices
  - Dryden has a very strong public following and a clear ability to attract votes to the Party, but he is not considered in the top tier among the Liberal membership
  - Rae is a relatively known quantity – he brings with him the most certain level of support, and a high level of opposition. This poll brings little comfort to those concerned about his ability to win seats in Ontario. He will likely pull some votes from the NDP and lose some current Liberals to the Conservatives
  - Dion appears to offer an exciting opportunity in Quebec, but could be in real trouble elsewhere as resistance is high
  - Ignatieff is largely an unknown quantity. He has little baggage and he appears to be capturing an element of “newness and difference”. However, he has little hard following, and – given his policy set – is least able to differentiate from Harper on foreign policy – an increasingly important issue.