

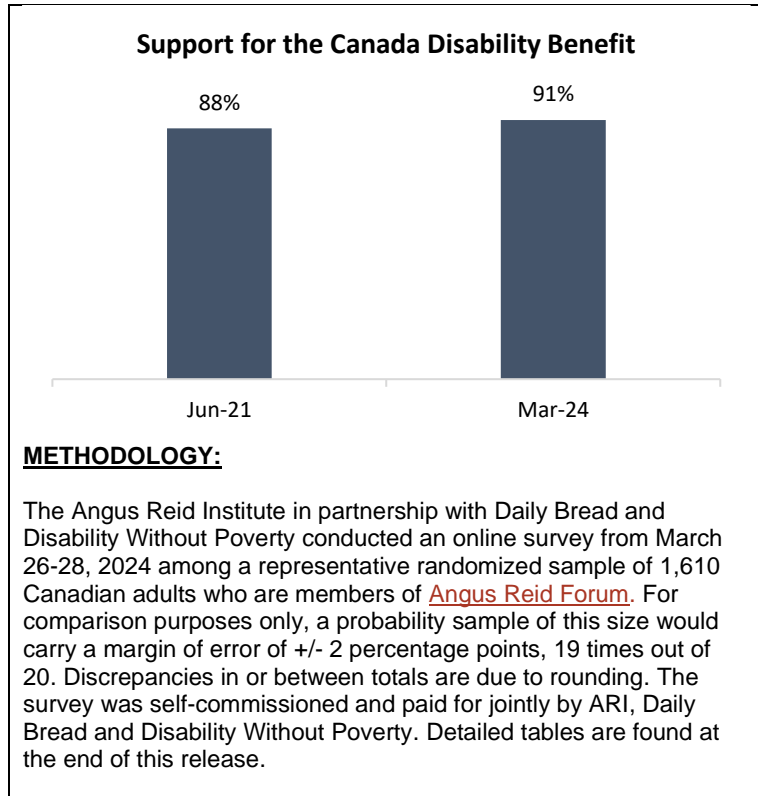
## Canada Disability Benefit: Nine-in-ten support benefit, but most doubt federal government will get it done

*Seven-in-ten say the federal government is moving too slow to enact benefit*

**April 8, 2024** – As Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland prepares to deliver the federal government's budget next week, she does so under increasing pressure to follow through on a promise made by her government to address the financial concerns of Canadians living with disability.

More than a third of the Liberal caucus have [signed a letter](#) addressed to Freeland asking for the budget to fund the Canada Disability Benefit, a form of financial support for those living with disability signed into law last June after years of discussion.

New data from a survey conducted by the non-profit Angus Reid Institute in partnership with [Daily Bread](#) and [Disability Without Poverty](#) finds overwhelming support for the benefit, but criticism from Canadians at the pace of implementation and doubt that the federal government will follow through.



Overall, nine-in-ten (91%) say they support the proposed Canada Disability Benefit, including at least four-in-five of past Conservative voters (83%), and nearly all past Liberal (98%), NDP (99%) and Bloc Québécois (98%) voters.

Support has increased slightly from 2021, when 88 per cent said they supported the Canada Disability Benefit as proposed. Perhaps that's why there is a sense among a majority of Canadians (71%) that the government is moving too slow enacting it.

The concept of the benefit was first discussed by the federal government in 2020, but it took until 2023 for parliament to pass a bill to enact it into law. This pace may be fueling doubt that the Canada Disability Benefit will ever be implemented. Only one-in-20 (5%) say they are confident the federal government will follow through, while 45 per cent doubt it will and 13 per cent say they are certain the benefit will never be distributed.

Meanwhile, there are many key details of the Canada Disability Benefit – eligibility, the amount of the benefit, and whether provincial governments will claw back existing supports – left to be decided. A plurality (37%) of Canadians believe eligibility should be automatic for those living with disability who are

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enrolled in provincial government programs. As well, two-thirds (65%) say those provincial supports should be maintained after the federal benefit is implemented.

### More Key Findings:

- Three-in-five (58%) say the Canada Disability Benefit should set a minimum income level above the poverty line. Half as many Canadians (31%) believe instead it should be equal to the poverty line.
- Most Canadians (61%) believe current financial support available to Canadians living with disabilities is inadequate (38%) or far too little (23%).
- Three-in-five (60%) Canadians living with a health issue that severely limits their day-to-day activities say they are often (35%) or all the time (25%) stressed about money.

### About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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- **Seven-in-ten say government is moving too slow in enacting benefit**

#### Part One: What should Canada Disability Benefit look like?

An initial bill to make the Canada Disability Benefit into law was introduced in 2021 but died when an election was called later that year. It took two years for [a follow-up bill to be passed](#), but the benefit still lacks funding and significant detail – such as who would be eligible and how those eligible register for the benefit. Meanwhile, [16.5 per cent of people living with a disability live in poverty](#), nearly twice the rate as those without.

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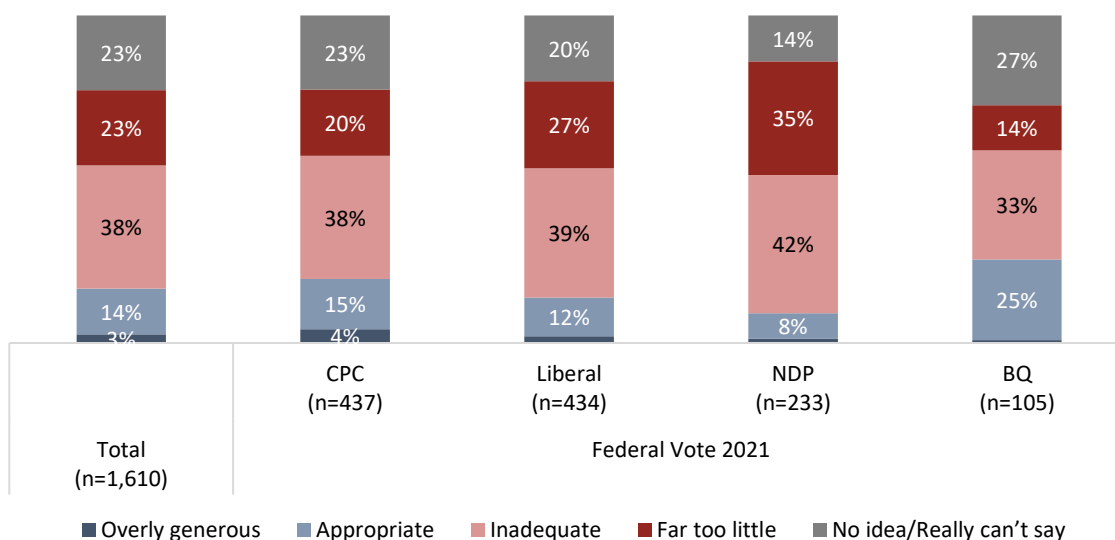
**Most feel current disability benefits are inadequate**

Given this background, Canadians are more likely than not to believe the current benefits available for those living with disabilities aren't enough. The one-in-five (17%) who describe the financial support available for those living with disability as "appropriate" or "overly generous" are outnumbered by three-to-one by those who instead describe current support as "inadequate" or "far too little".

Indeed, Canadians who are living with disabilities or health conditions that severely limit their day-to-day activities are less likely to believe current financial supports are enough compared to those who have no such problems ([see detailed tables](#)). Please note, a detailed explanation of how disability was assessed in this survey is included in the methodology section at the end of this report.

This belief in the inadequacy of current financial supports for those living with disabilities is seen across the political spectrum. A majority of past Conservative (58%), Liberal (66%), and NDP (77%) voters – and half of those who voted Bloc Québécois (47%) in 2021 – describe current benefits as insufficient:

**Overall, based on your own experience or on anything you might have seen or heard, how would you describe the financial support provided by the current benefits available for Canadians living with disability?**



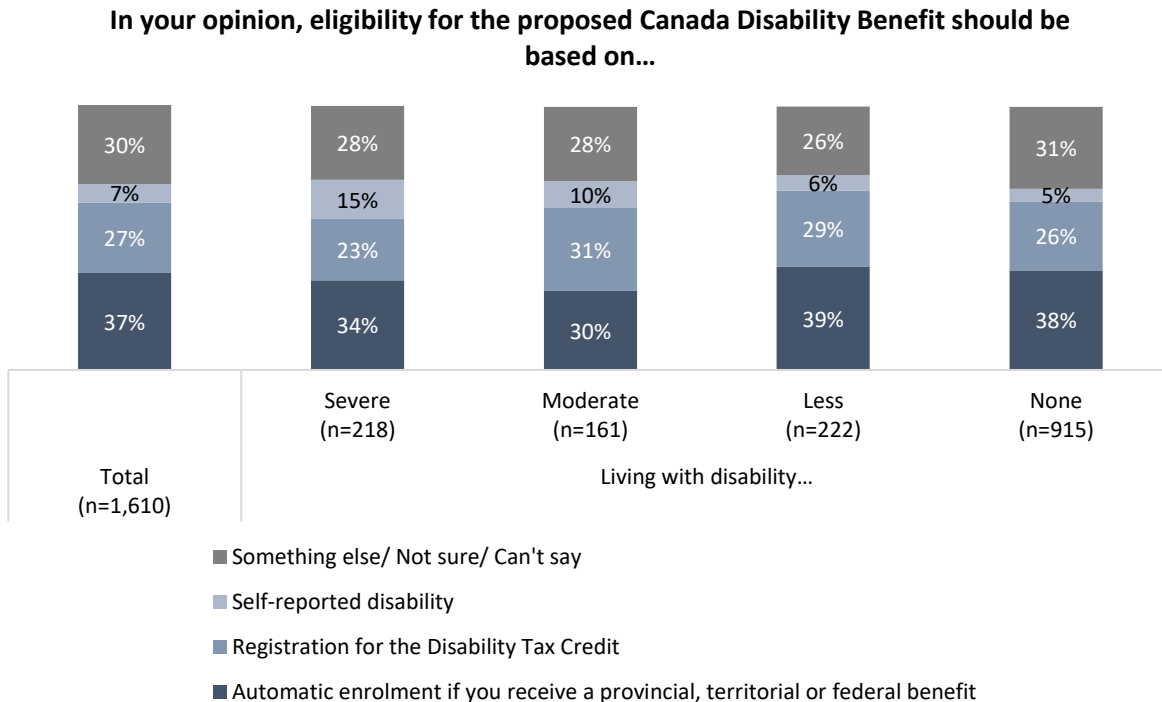
The federal government has yet to decide how to assess eligibility for this new benefit. The Parliamentary Budget Office set out [two potential scenarios for eligibility](#) – registration for the Disability Tax Credit or self-reported disability. But advocates worry the new benefit will not have its intended reach if it's based on the [stringent criteria](#) of the Disability Tax Credit, which is not well subscribed to. Instead, there has been a push to have it [based on enrolment for provincial disability benefits](#).

Canadians are split, but a plurality (37%) believe it should be based on enrolment for provincial benefits. One-quarter (27%) say it should be based on registration for the Disability Tax Credit, while fewer than one-in-ten (7%) say it should be based on self-reported disability. There is much division among Canadians living with disability on how to approach this part of the new Canada Disability Benefit, but

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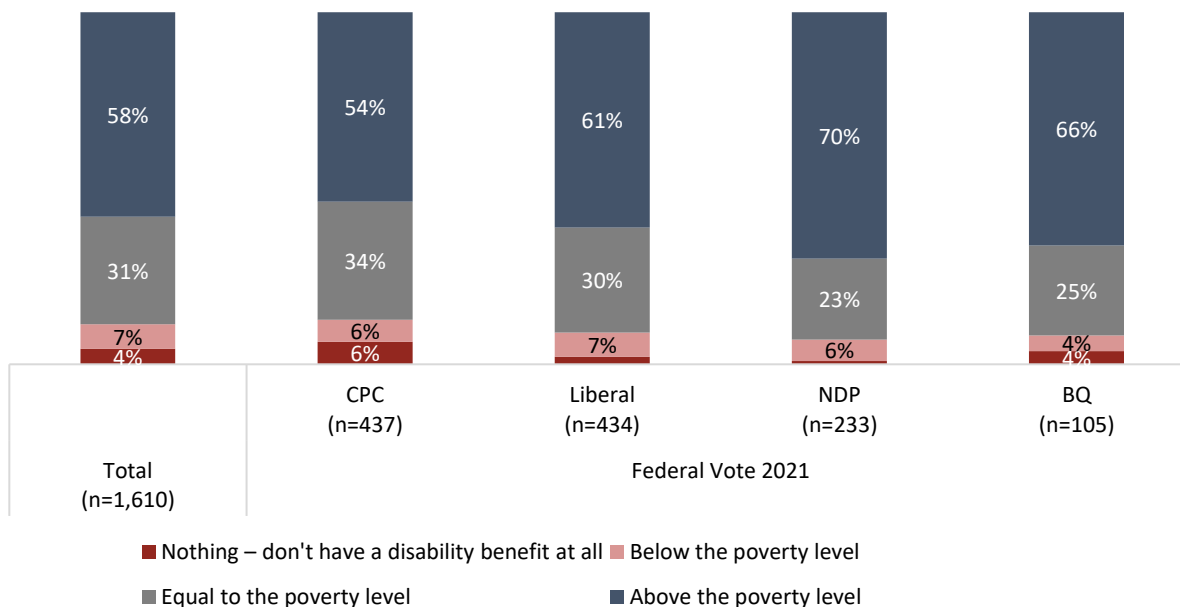
those who live with severe health issues that limit their daily activities are more likely to believe it should be based on self-reported condition (15%) than others:



In the bill establishing the Canada Disability Benefit, the federal government [acknowledges](#) that Canadians living with disabilities face additional costs than those living without. Canadians themselves believe the benefit should boost those living with disabilities to an income level above the poverty line at a majority level (58%). Three-in-ten (31%) believe instead it should be set at the poverty level, while one-in-ten believe it should be below (7%) or there should be no disability benefit at all (4%).

On this element, there is support across political lines for the benefit to take the income of those living with disability above the poverty line:

**Broadly speaking, where do you think the Canada Disability Benefit should set that minimum income level?**



**Majority say add federal benefit to existing provincial ones**

As the federal government's Canada Disability Benefit has been discussed, the province's have mulled how they might treat the new benefit and whether they would [claw back their own supports](#) for people living with disabilities. Advocates worry this would [counteract](#) the federal benefit's goal of lifting Canadians living with disabilities out of poverty.

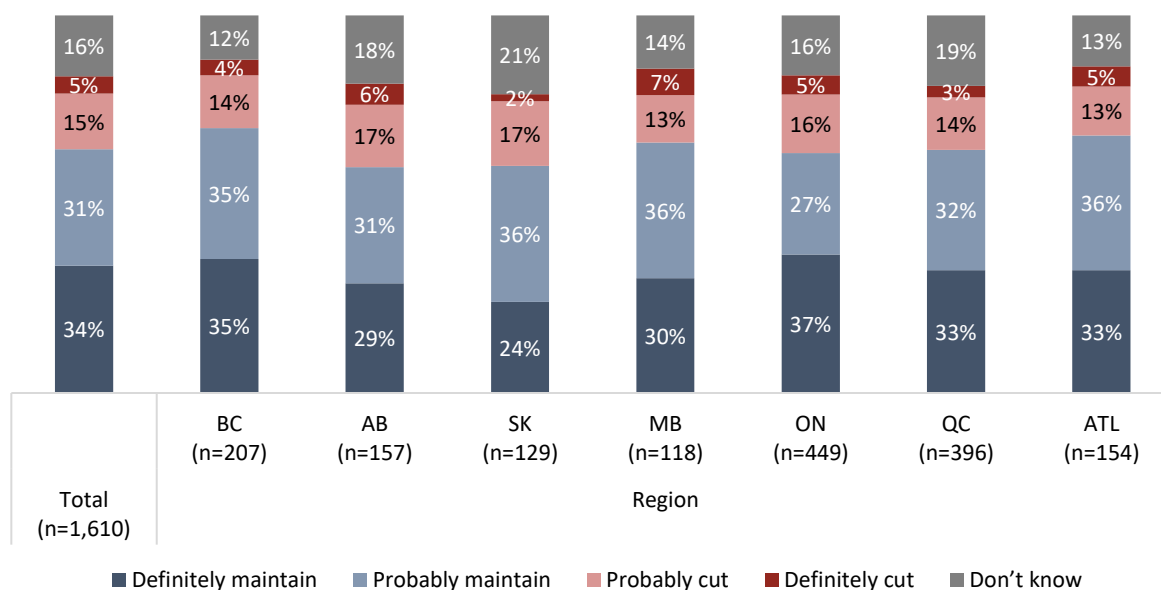
Two-thirds (65%) of Canadians believe existing benefits should be maintained, while one-in-five (20%) disagree. Past Conservative voters are the most likely of all political groups to be part of the latter group, but still believe there should be no claw back of provincial supports at a majority level (54%, [see detailed tables](#)).

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There is little disagreement across the country that existing provincial benefits should be maintained. At least three-in-five in every province believe that should be the case:

**If a new national CDB does come into being, do you think provinces should maintain or cut existing benefits?**



**Part Two: High support for Canada Disability Benefit**

The Angus Reid Institute first surveyed Canadians on the Canada Disability Benefit nearly three years ago in 2021. At the time, 88 per cent said they supported the proposed benefit.

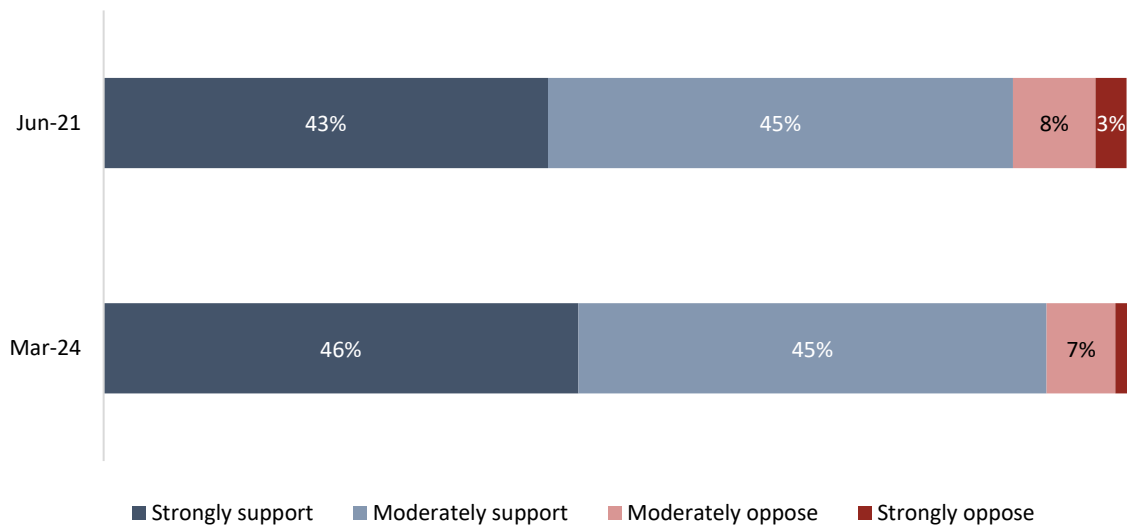
**Related: [Canadians concerned about disability poverty, on-board with proposed new national benefit](#)**

Support for the benefit has grown slightly in the intervening time to 91 per cent:

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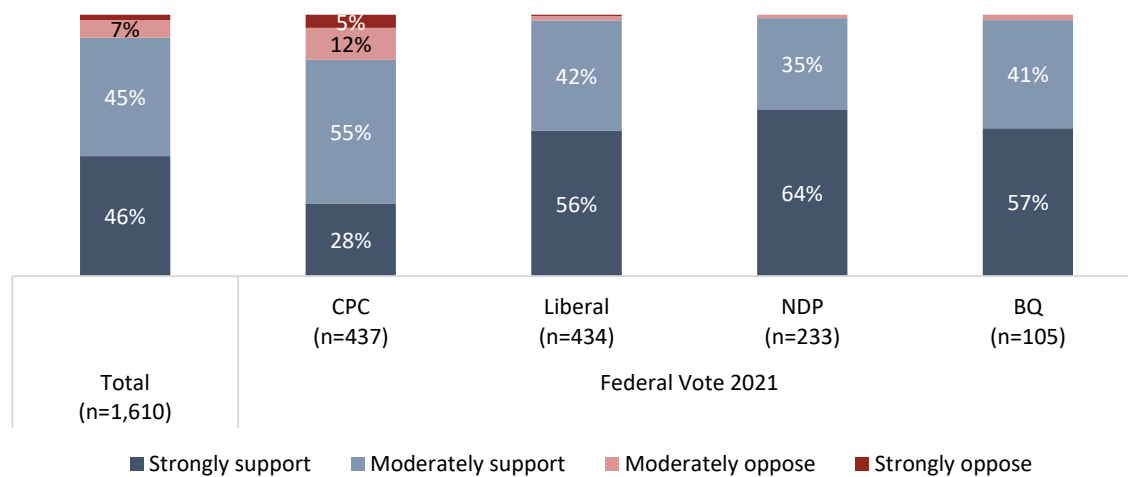
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**Do you support or oppose this proposed Canada Disability Benefit?**



Support for the Canada Disability Benefit is spread across the country – at least 84 per cent in all provinces say the support the proposed benefit ([see detailed tables](#)) – and across all demographics. Past Conservative voters are more likely to oppose the benefit than others, with approaching one-in-five (17%) saying they are against the benefit, but that leaves four-in-five (83%) who are on board with the federal government providing a new support for those living with disability:

**Do you support or oppose this proposed Canada Disability Benefit?**

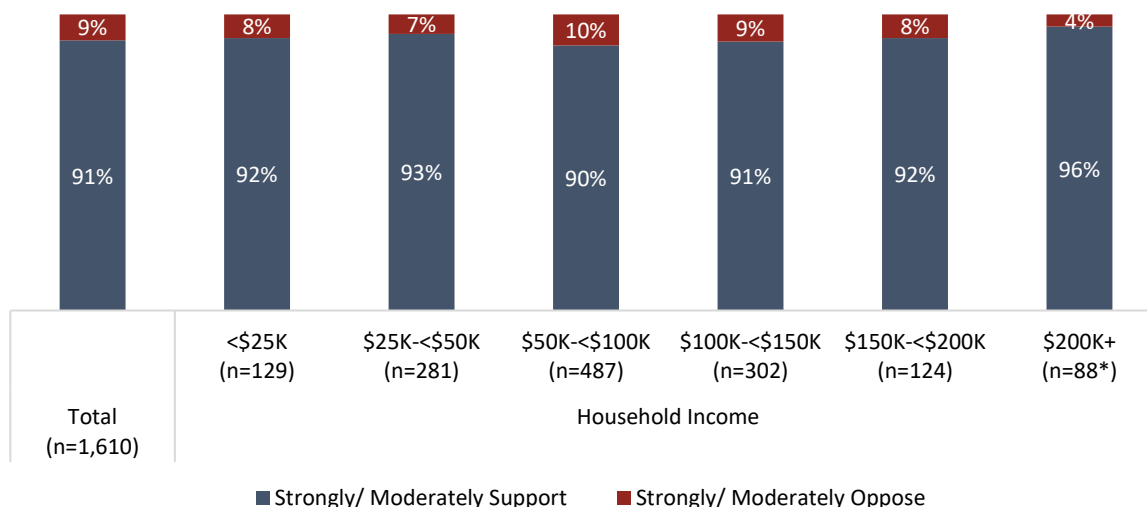


Support for the Canada Disability Benefit is strong across all income levels. At least nine-in-ten Canadians in each household income bracket support the proposed benefit.

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**Do you support or oppose this proposed Canada Disability Benefit?**



*\*Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

**Part Three: Canadians lack confidence in federal gov’t to follow through**

Part of the impetus for discussion of the benefit in 2020 was the [adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the finances of those living with disability](#). Since then, Canada has dealt with a countrywide cost-of-living crisis, driving up the cost of food and rent, putting more pressure on the finances of low-income Canadians.

**Related: [Fiscal Divide: Canada’s worst off expect more of the same ahead, the Thriving are most likely to expect even better](#)**

Canadians living with disabilities are more likely than those without to say they are struggling to get by. As well, three-in-five (60%) of those who live with a health issue that severely limits their day-to-day activities say they are often or all the time stressed about money ([see detailed tables](#)).

**Seven-in-ten say government is moving too slow in enacting benefit**

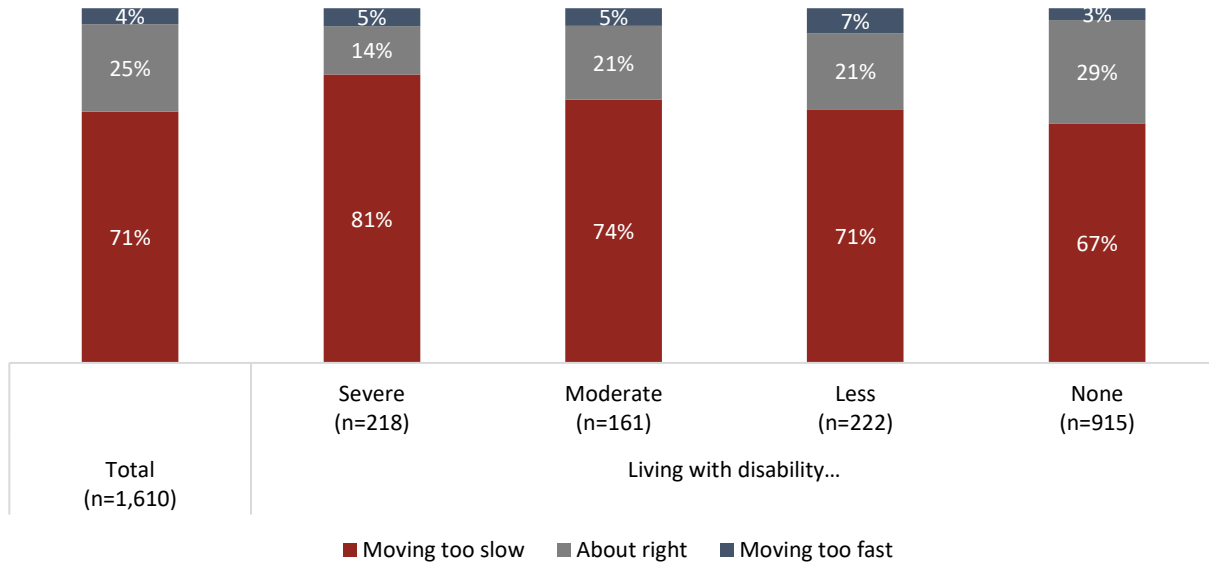
There is uncertainty as to whether the Canada Disability Benefit will be fully funded in the 2024 federal budget to be released on April 16. Liberal members of parliament have [written a letter](#) to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland to include money for the benefit.

Overall, Canadians feel the government is dragging its feet on implementing the benefit. Seven-in-ten (71%) say the government is moving too slow. A handful (4%) believe the opposite, that progress has come too quickly.

Those living with severe disability are more likely than others to say the government is not moving quickly enough:



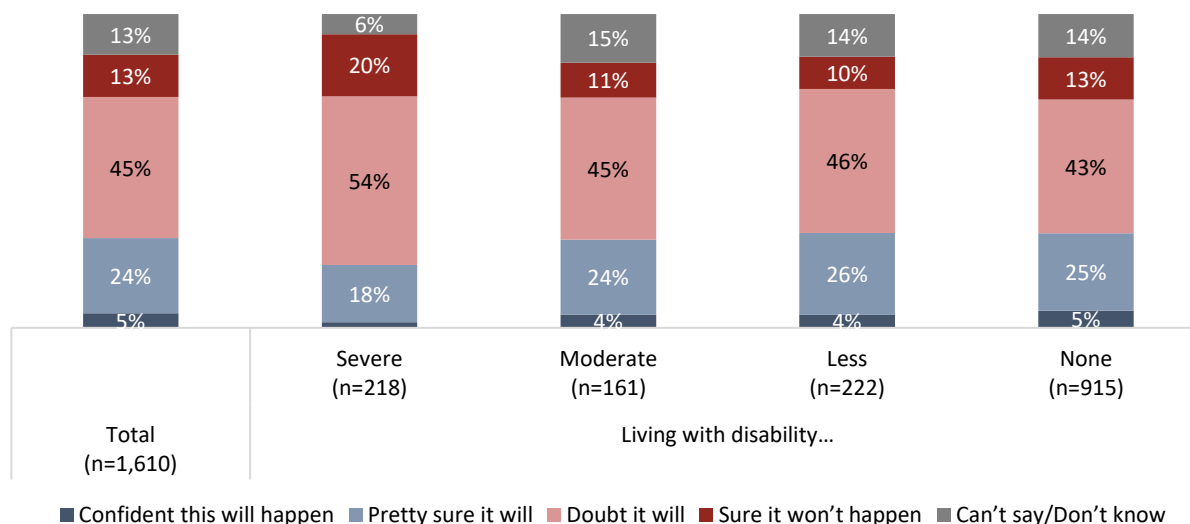
**Overall, do you feel the government is moving too fast, too slow or at the right speed in enacting the Canada Disability Benefit?**



Meanwhile, the slow pace has perhaps fueled doubt that the benefit will be enacted at all. Three-in-five (58%) Canadians believe the federal government will not follow through and implement the Canada Disability Benefit. Just one-in-20 (5%) say they are confident the benefit will be established.

Confidence is lower, and doubt is higher, among those who are living with more severe disabilities:

**How confident are you in the federal government to follow through on this commitment and establish a new Canada Disability Benefit in the next few years or so?**



**For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).**

**For detailed results by those living with disability, [click here](#).**

**Survey Methodology:**

*This survey estimates two-in-five (37%) of Canadians live with a disability or health condition that poses at least some difficulty for their daily activities.*

*In order to ascertain this categorization, Canadians participating in the survey were first asked if they live with one or more disabilities or health conditions, including those more officially associated with disability — such as chronic pain, mobility issues, vision/hearing impairment, or mental health — but also some other potentially debilitating conditions that may not traditionally be thought of under the definition of disability — such as an auto-immune disorder or other chronic health conditions. The broader list of conditions offered produces a somewhat higher proportion of Canadians qualifying as living with disability in this survey when compared to official Statistics Canada stats. [According to Statistics Canada](#), 27 per cent of Canadians aged 15 and older had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities.*

*Further probing on the frequency and extent to which their disability/condition interferes with or limits their daily activities was used together to assign a level of “severity” for analysis purposes. [See the full set of questions in the questionnaire](#).*

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