



General Election Opinion Poll

28th November 2007

Prepared for

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

Must be Included



RED C interviewed a random sample of 1000 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 19th – 21st November 2007. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.



SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 28th October 2007 Opinion Poll

Pay rises may be tipping point as Fianna Fail support plunges

The significant controversy surrounding the recent pay increases for Government Ministers may yet be the tipping point with regard to the public's goodwill for Fianna Fail. Today's Sunday Business Post/ RED C poll was conducted two to three weeks after the announcement on wages, and during this time the debate on the rights and wrongs of the wage increase hasn't left the headlines of most newspapers. Even Bertie Ahern himself has entered the debate, suggesting in the Dail that the wage increases were not significant when compared to all the perks that other world leaders are provided with.

This month has also seen more bad news for the Government in terms of Cancer care in the State, with the party accused of influencing RTE to drop a consultant who had an anti government stance on cancer services. Finally it comes at a time when the economic situation appears to be worsening worldwide and has led to further comments from Brian Cowen that the budget will be tight and promised tax cuts are unlikely.

So exactly what impact has all this bad news had on voter support? The benefit of regular tracking allows us to compare the poll results today to those taken last month, which was conducted the week before the announcements on wage increases, and so provide a clear picture of the level of impact that this issue has had on the electorate.

The poll findings suggest that the negative impact of recent events on public support for Fianna Fail has been significant, with the results showing a serious drop of 7% in support for the party, leaving the Fianna Fail share of the first preference vote at just 32%. This is a very significant fall over the space of just one month and leaves the party at its lowest support level since RED C began polling for the paper in 2005.

In contrast Fine Gael support rises by 4% since the last poll, taking the party's share of the first preference vote to 31%. This is in contrast to Fianna Fail the highest level of support recorded for the party since the Sunday Business Post/ RED C polls began, and means Fine Gael are now just 1% behind Fianna Fail.



Labour also come out of the wage increase affair relatively well, gaining 3% support since the last poll in October, and this means they now secure 13% of the total first preference vote. Parties do however tend to see an bounce in support at the time of their party conferences, which Labour held last weekend, and as such some of the gains may be attributed to this.

The Green Party will also be delighted that they appear to have not been tarred with the same brush as Fianna Fail even though they are government partners. In fact the party sees an increase of 2% in support since October, taking their share of the first preference vote to 9%. This suggests that the efforts by the party to distance themselves from the pay rise have been well received by the public. John Gormley's assertion earlier this week, which coincided with when the poll was being conducted, that the Green Party TD's will not be taking the increase for themselves, but rather passing this money on by some means to the party or similar Green causes, appears to have worked for the party in deflecting criticism and even garnering support.

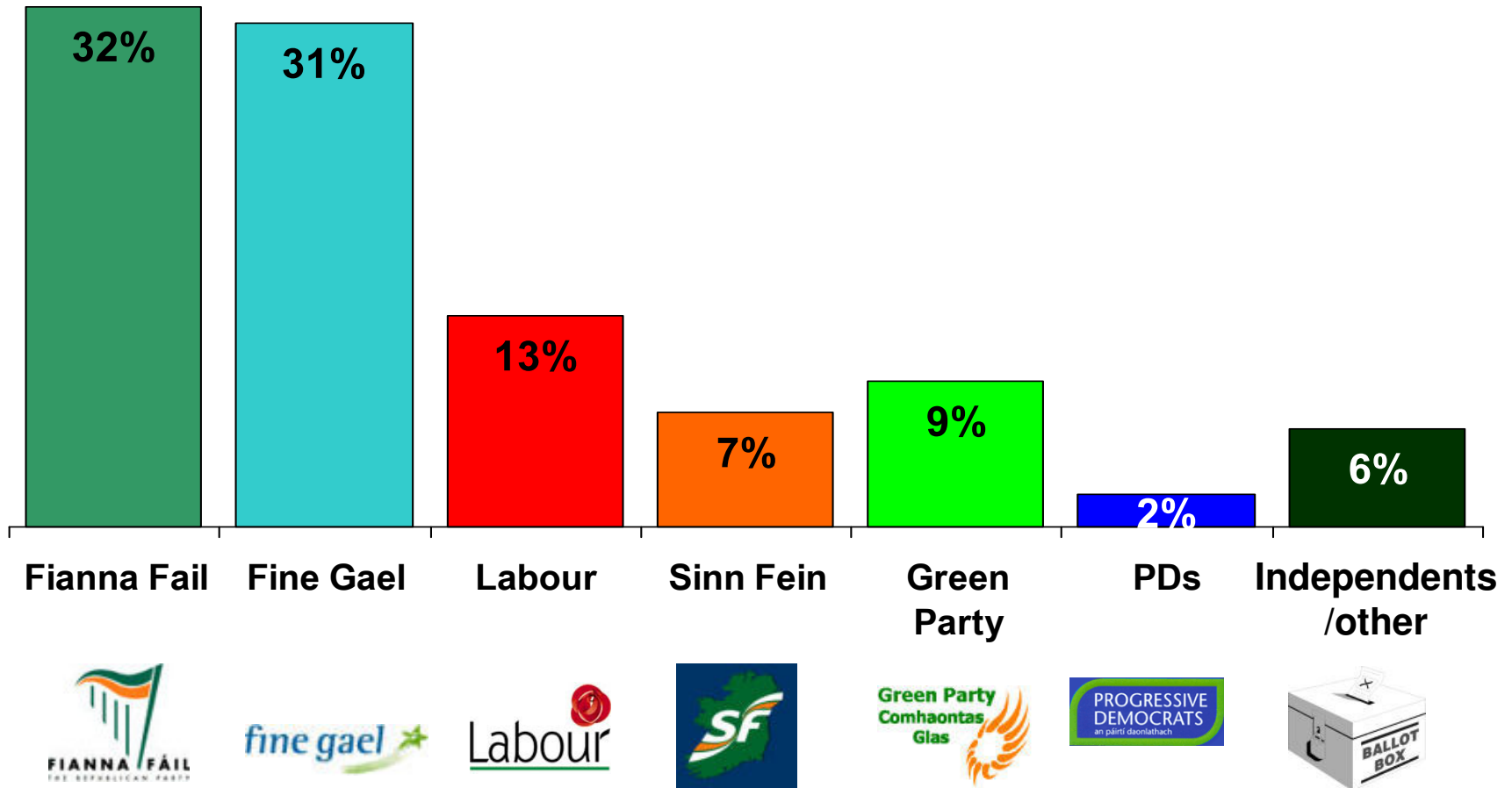
For the other parties there are no significant changes to support, with Sinn Fein and Independents both dropping 1% to leave them on 7% and 6% respectively of the first preference vote. The PD's see no change in support at 2% and also don't appear to have suffered as a result of being part of the Government with regard to the wage increase.

While the wage increases appear to have had the most impact on voters, there are other indicators within today's poll that suggest this may have been the "straw that broke the camel's back". It did not appear in October, that Brian Cowen's early suggestions at the time that the budget would be tighter than expected, had in itself had much impact on voters.

A month in politics however is a very long time. Results from today's poll suggest that the worsening economic position and the impact this may have on the budget is now to some extent being blamed on the government. When asked how much, if at all, voters felt that the Government had misled them about the economy before the election, 3 in 5 (69%) agreed that the felt this was the case, with almost half of all voters (45%) agreeing strongly that this was the case. Of even more concern for the party will be the finding that well over a third (42%) of those who voted for Fianna Fail at the last election, also agree that they feel the party misled them on the economy before the election. The economy has traditionally been a key strength for the party, and it will need to work hard to regain support through careful management of a tightening economic situation, in order to stem the downward trend in its share of the vote.

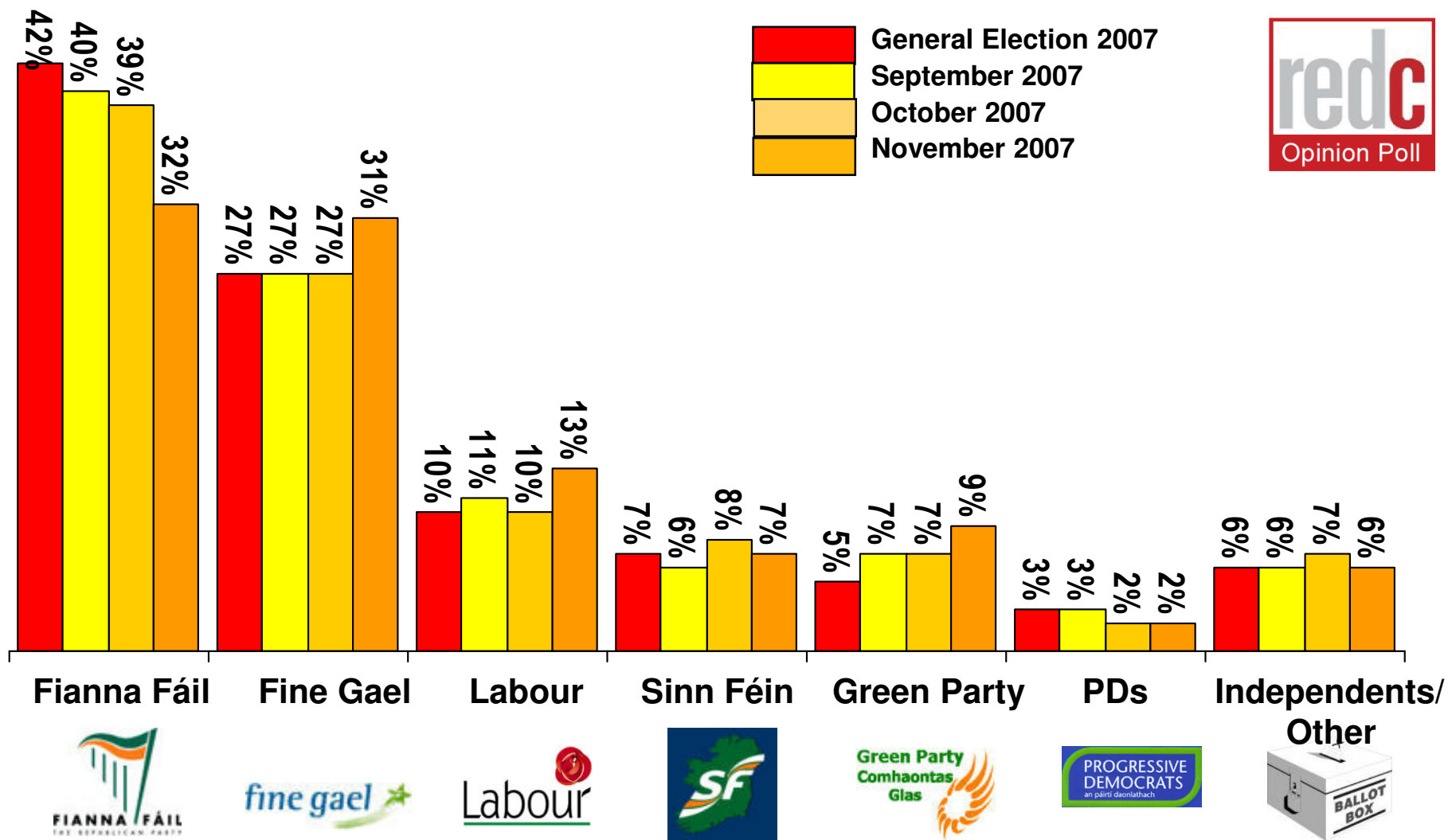
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



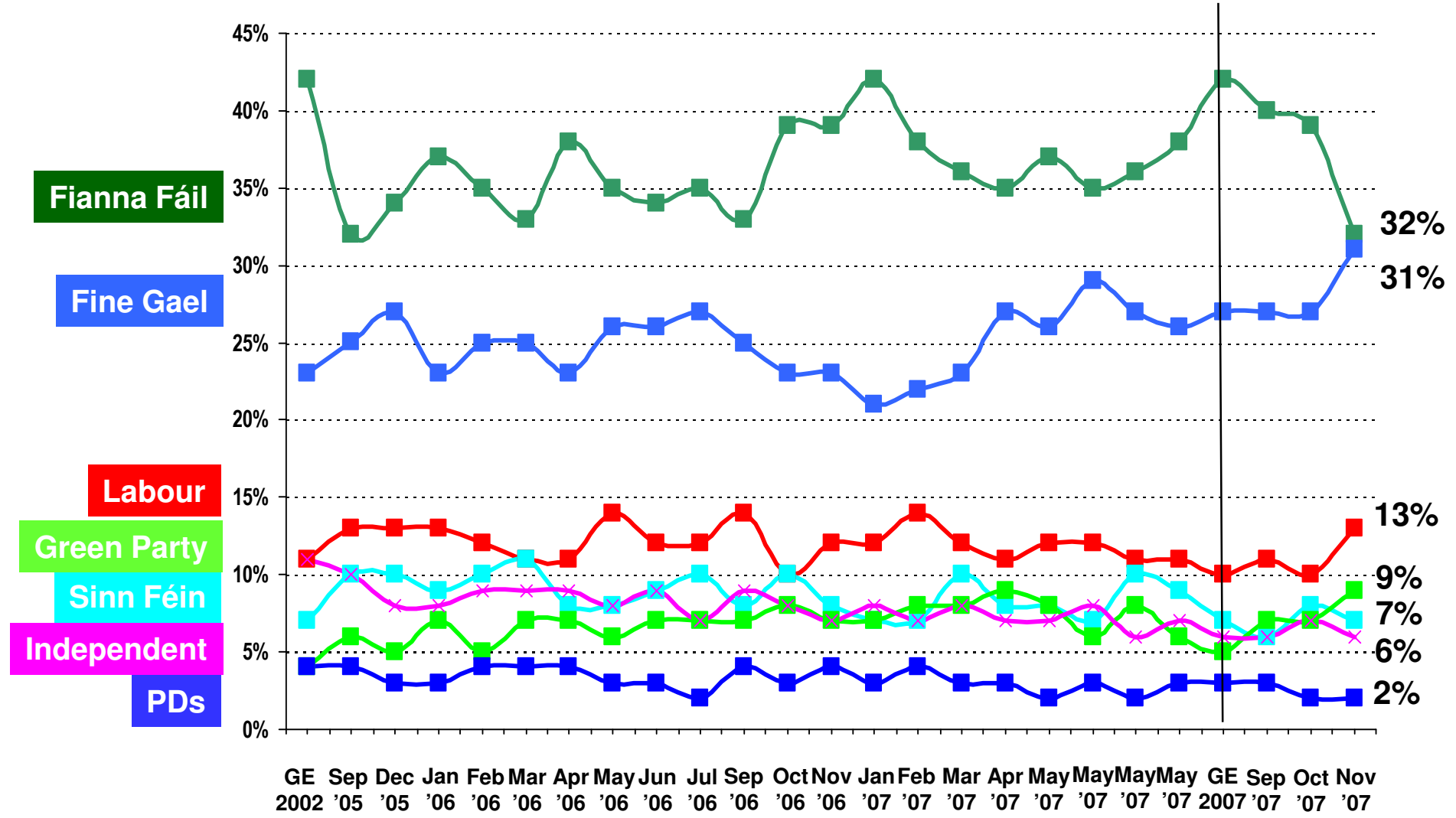
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



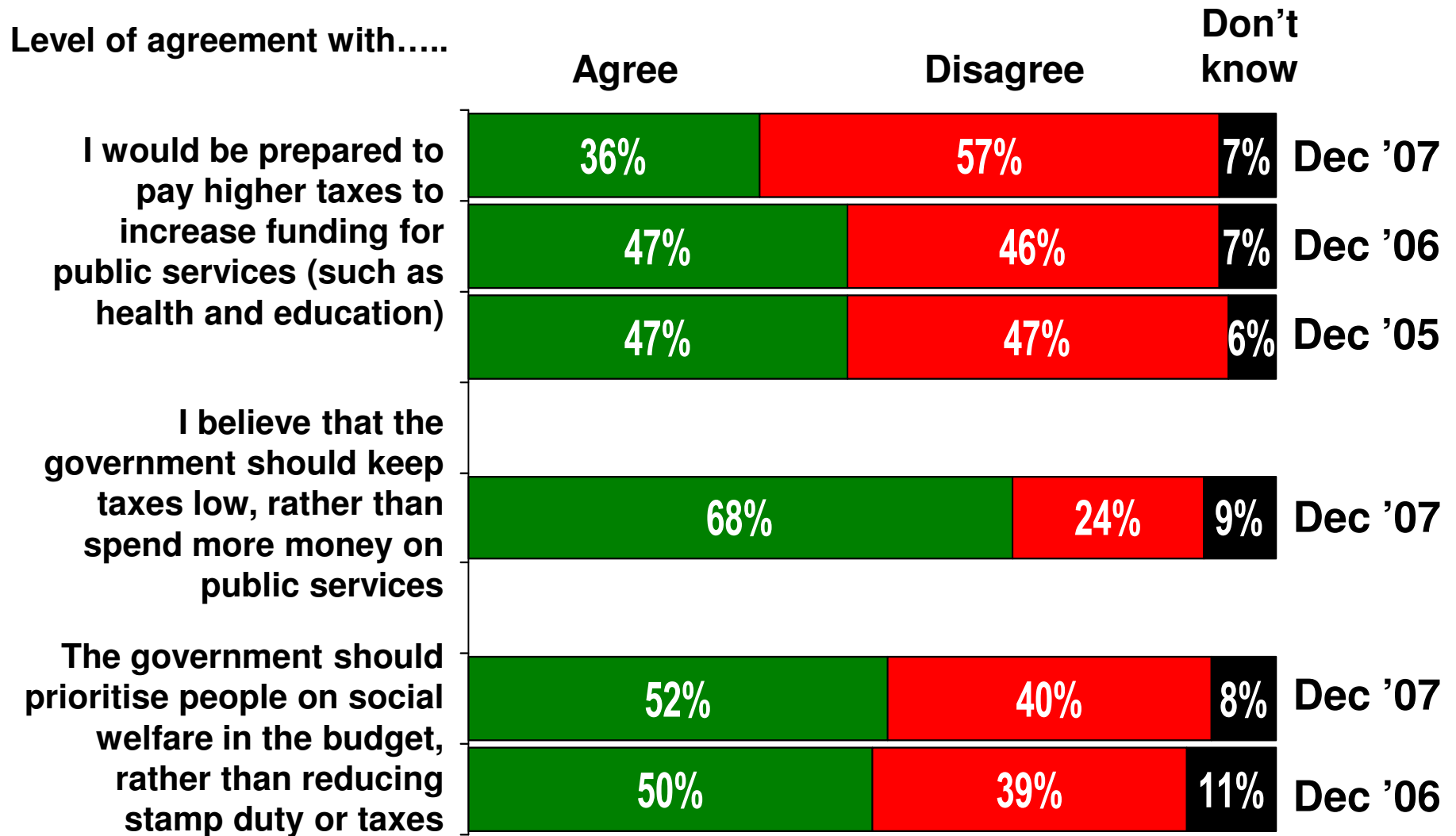
CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	28	32	42
Fine Gael	26	31	27
Labour	11	13	10
Sinn Féin	6	7	7
P.Ds	2	2	3
Green Party	8	9	5
Independents/Others	6	6	6
Undecided	13		

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT BY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE
 (those who give a score of 7 or more out of 10, on a scale where 1 = Definitely will not vote and 10 = Definitely will vote)

	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	Sept 2007	2002 Election Result
	%	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	33	40	42	42
Fine Gael	31	28	27	27
Labour	13	10	11	10
Sinn Féin	7	6	5	7
P.Ds	2	2	3	3
Green Party	8	7	6	5
Independents/ Others	5	7	6	6

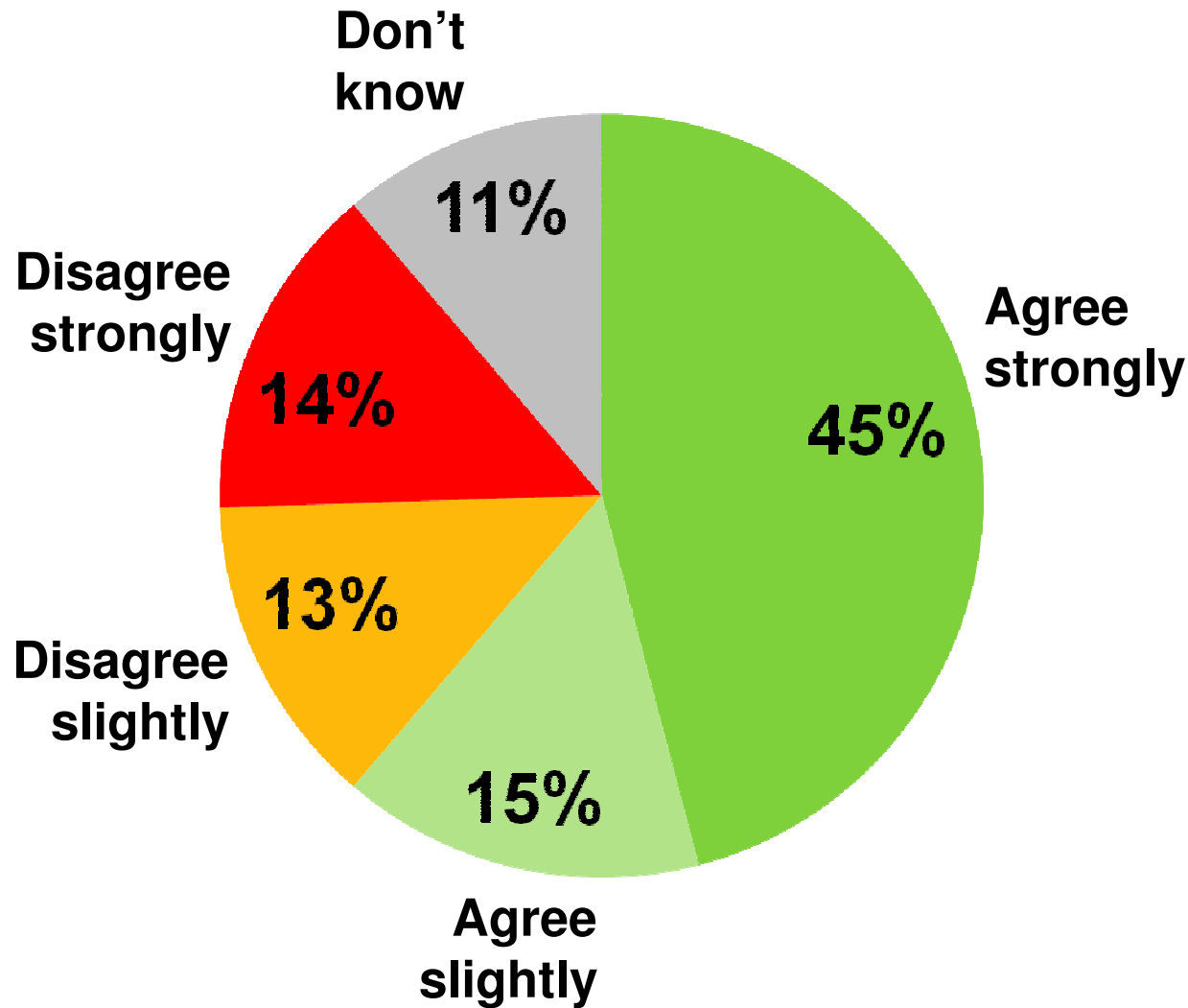
Attitudes to taxes and the next budget

(Base: All adults 18+)



I think that government misled me about the economy before the last election

(Base: All adults 18+)



% Agree by party voters at last election

Total	60%
Fianna Fáil	42%
Fine Gael	75%
Labour	75%
Green	75%