



ADVOCACY **2022** SUMMIT

The Essential Elements of Community Shared Value

October 26-28, 2022 | Bloomington, MN, USA

Effective Alternatives to Travel Boycotts

2022 Destinations International Advocacy Summit



A background
in politics and
government
relations



Use of the terms
“Weaponization
of Travel” and
“Holding Our
Industry
Hostage”



My role with
Destinations
International



Been there.
Done that.

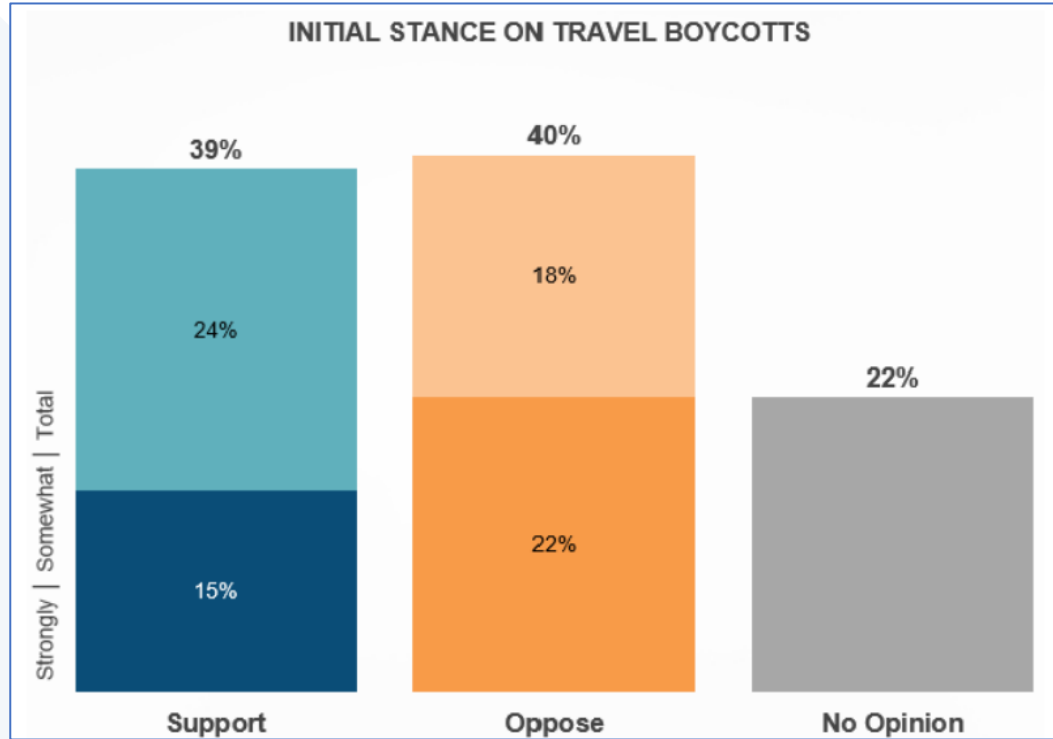
Travel Boycotts are Ineffective and Can Be Counter Effective

Travel Boycotts

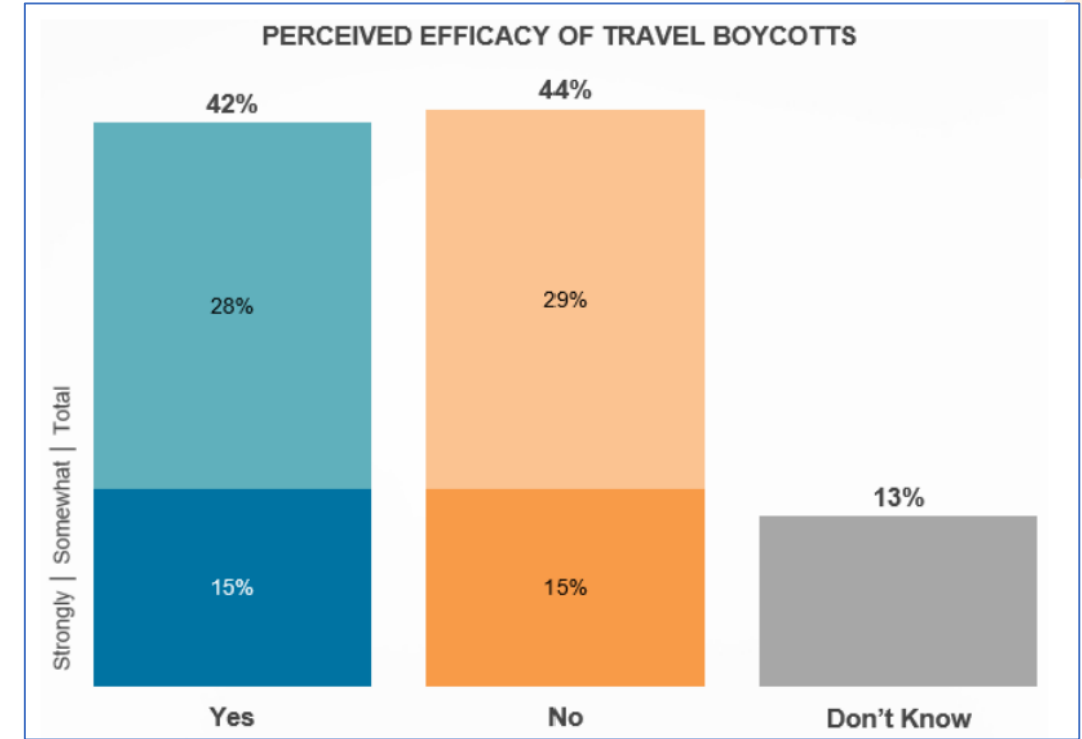
Boycotts that are effective when they are narrowly targeted (a specific problem and a specific action sought), well explained, well publicized, and targeted at the entity that can make the change.



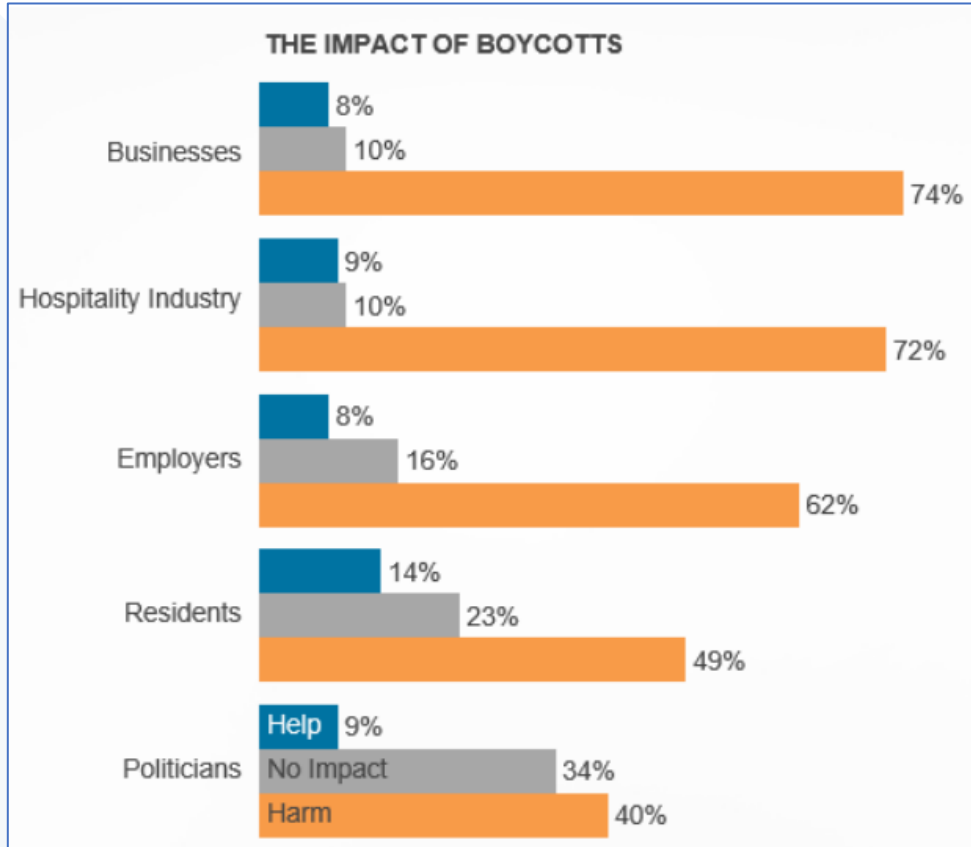
Travelers are split on support of boycotts



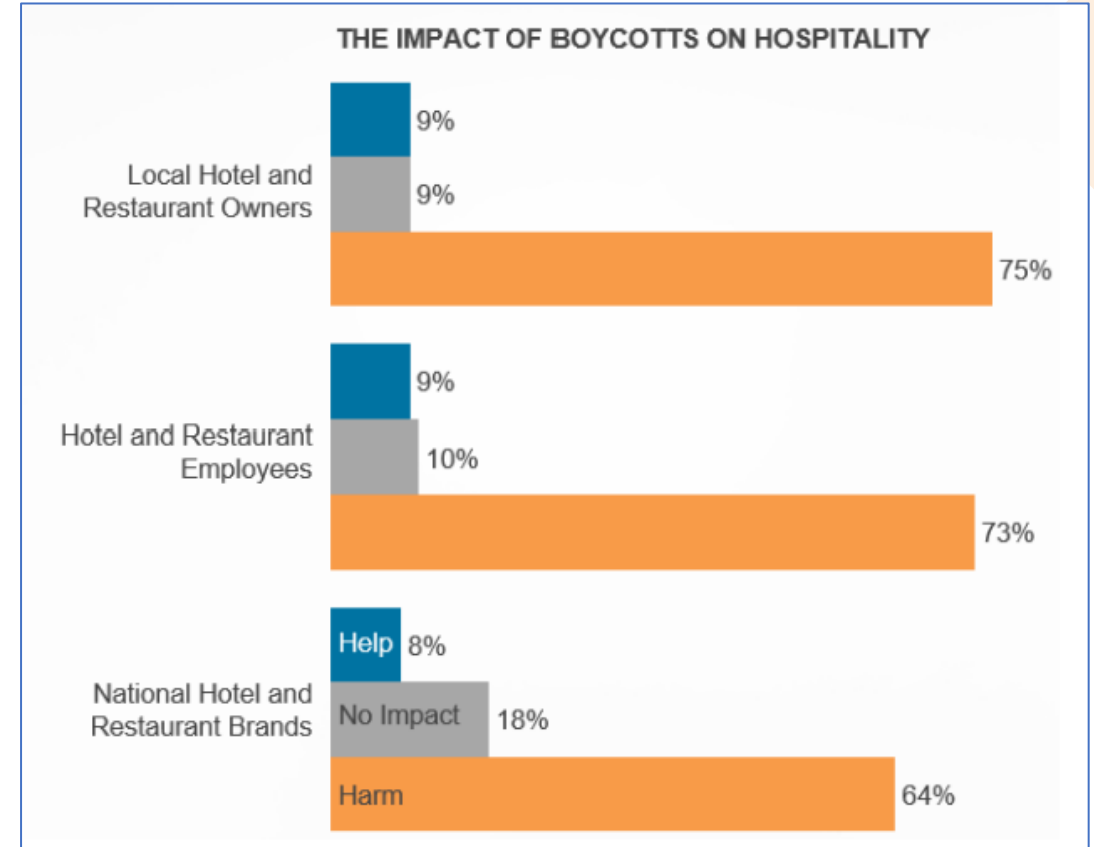
A lack of consensus on efficacy



Who do Travel Boycotts Hurt?



Do They Hurt our Industry?



House Bill 2

In February 2016, Charlotte passed an ordinance expanding its existing nondiscrimination protections to include LGBTQ people. The measure specifically allowed transgender people to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity as opposed to their sex assigned at birth.

A few weeks later, after conservative backlash, the North Carolina General Assembly held a special session to pass House Bill 2, also known as the "bathroom bill." The law blocked Charlotte's measure, and blocked cities from passing their own nondiscrimination ordinances.



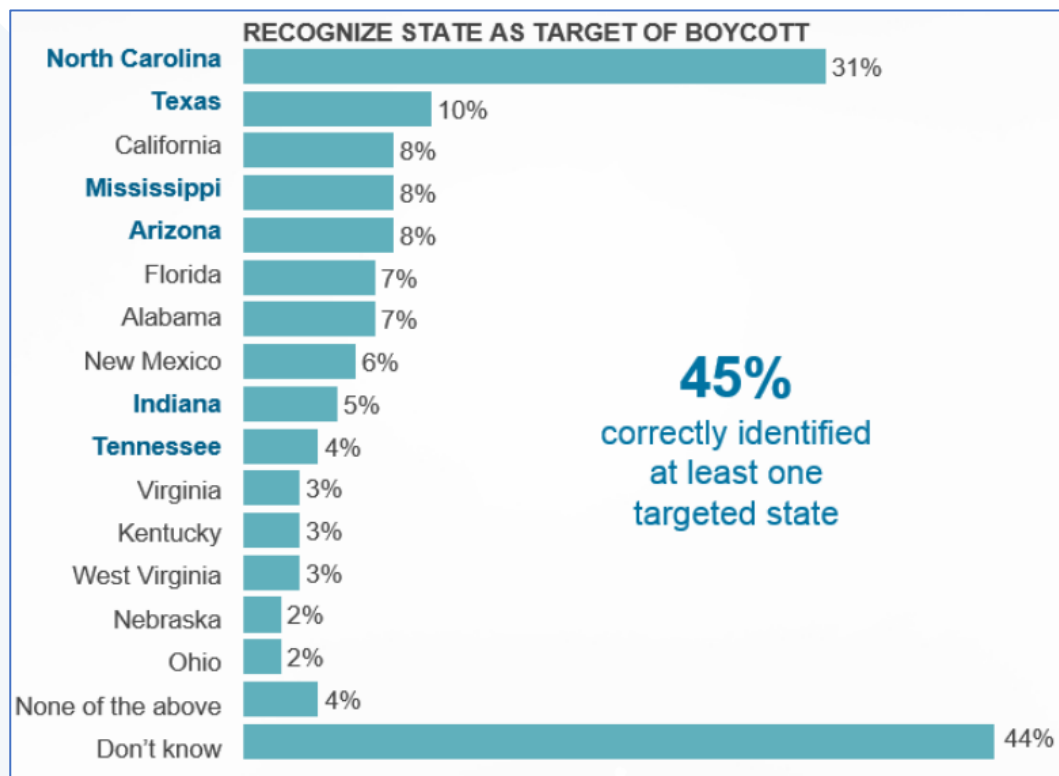
House Bill 2

HB2 essentially did three things:

1. It mandated people use a bathroom corresponding to their biological sex in public buildings, places, and schools.
2. It banned local governments from raising the minimum wage.
3. It banned discrimination lawsuits based on sexual orientation or identity in state courts.



7 Out Of 10 Could Not Identify North Carolina as a Boycott Target



A Mix of Issues and Targets



Result of the Travel Boycott

North Carolina tourism generated record visitor spending in 2017 with a total of \$23.9 billion, a 4.2 percent increase from 2016. Additionally, tourism industry-supported employment topped 225,000 jobs to set another record for the state.



Result of the Travel Boycott

What the boycott did was stop a natural evolution of the political make up of North Carolina.



Travel Boycotts are in Opposition to Our Core Beliefs

BELIEFS

The belief that the result of our work impacts other people or the greater society. To steal a lyric from a song, “maybe what's good gets a little bit better and maybe what's bad gets gone.”



BELIEFS

We believe in the Power of Travel.



BELIEFS

The eminent travel writer Pico Lyer once observed:

“Travel is not really about leaving our homes but leaving our habits.”

Getting away from the day-to-day is a powerful change of pace, and the benefits of far-away travel are so vital, so vivid and clear, that traveling is not a luxury, it is a necessity.



BELIEFS

In a joint study from the Global Commission on Aging and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, they uncovered a quantifiable link between travel and physical health, revealing benefits of travel that were nothing short of striking.



BELIEFS

According to the U.S. Travel Association, travel improves brain health as well. The change of scenery and pace, and the heightened present moment awareness—and sincere engagement and curiosity—literally build new synapses in the brain. Researchers have studied this link between spending time abroad and mental change.



BELIEFS

“The adventure of traveling consists of being able to experience the daily life of other people in places far from your home as an extraordinary event.”



BELIEFS

We believe in the power of
hosting travelers.



BELIEFS

“Meetings lead the way for creativity and inspire change,” she said. “Beyond economic impact, meetings drive social change, human connection and mental health. The importance of meetings is vast.”

~Julie Coker, president and CEO of San Diego Tourism Authority



BELIEFS

“There is power in assembly,
power in community and
power in association. We
need to tell our story and
work together as a
collective to do that.”

~Michelle Mason, president and CEO of ASAE



BELIEFS

“We are here to solve
human issues.”

-Sherrif Karamat, PCMA



Travel Boycotts are Efforts of Political Hobbyism

Travel Boycotts Are...

- Political hobbyism.
- Self-centered decision making often driven to make an emotional response to a legal problem.
- Shallowness of engagement.
- Losing sight of those that can make the change and the things that will move them.



Political Action Requires...

- Being brave. Brave enough to speak with people we disagree with – people we may fear. Brave enough to face nuances of our bias, to recognize the fragility of humanity. Be brave enough to forgive.
- To work. To do hard things.
- Intervention and participation. It requires taking responsibility.
- Setting emotion aside and think about what changes will move the needle and how policy needs to be implemented.



A Different Approach to Travel Boycotts



“There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.”

~ attributed to Vladimir Lenin



Passage of HB2 was a single battle of a larger war. When it was clear that the battle would be tough and hard, what did our industry do? We picked up and left the field of battle and went home. We were absent. We left our colleagues, our partners, our friends in North Carolina to fight the battle on their own.



When we meet, we can change the world. So, let's meet where change is needed.



We need to support those who fight for the cause we believe in. The hotels, restaurants, event centers, livery vehicles, caterers, etc. The people.

A Different Approach

Do not boycott a destination. Instead develop a plan to be visible, empower those who are working for change, and leave a legacy.

1. **Be visible:** Create an activity or action to let people know you are there. Meeting with press of civic leaders, newspaper ads, t-shirts. Coordinate with a local political action organization
2. **Empower those who are working for change:** Fundraiser, canvass for political action organization. Create a list of hotels, bars, restaurants and retail that are supportive of the cause and have the attendees frequent them.
3. **Leave a legacy:** Do not forget the destination after you leave. Provide updates on the battle to your membership. Encourage a continuing financial giving program. Provide financial support to candidates who support the cause.

Coming Soon

- ✓ **Policy Paper** – Providing in detail the case against travel boycotts and proposed alternative.
- ✓ **Toolboxes** – Providing strategies, actionable steps and case studies: one for destination organizations and a second for meeting planners and associations.
- ✓ **Building Alliances** – Build alliances on this issue with peer and other organizations. Outreach to public policy advocacy organizations.
- ✓ **Public Relations Effort** – A communications plan to be implemented by Destinations International and its allies.

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THANK YOU

communications@destinationsinternational.org