

# Showing Up and Making A Difference

## Alternatives to Travel Boycotts

## Celebrate A Victory

Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego) introduced and passed legislation that repeals the California's Travel Ban to other states and instead create a program to promote acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community.



## Celebrate A Victory

The law creates a donation-driven fund that could be used to create inclusive messages, discourage discrimination, and help members of the LGBTQ+ community feel less isolated.

Called the **BRIDGE** Project - **B**uilding and **R**einforcing **I**nclusive, **D**iverse, **G**ender-Supportive **E**quality - the law helps California promote compassion and build bridges to unite and unify communities.



## Celebrate A Victory

The goal here is to speak to people's hearts and open minds.

“The BRIDGE Project would be a conduit of hope and compassion and encourage others to open their hearts and minds to be more accepting and inclusive. It's within all of us to be that light.”





## Celebrate A Victory

A new strategy based on  
engaging others, not avoiding  
them.

Which, by the way, is an argument  
for travel.



**2016 / 2017**

# starting point

‘It’s not at all clear that travel bans and boycotts are ultimately effective at advancing the agendas of their advocates. What is clear is that boycotts have enormous potential for collateral damage - namely to the jobs of travel and tourism workers whose livelihoods depend on to their region.’

– Roger Dow, President and CEO, U.S. Travel Association

# weaponization of travel

Using travel as a political weapon or tactic – such as in a travel boycott, government travel ban or travel advisory - to change a government law or policy.

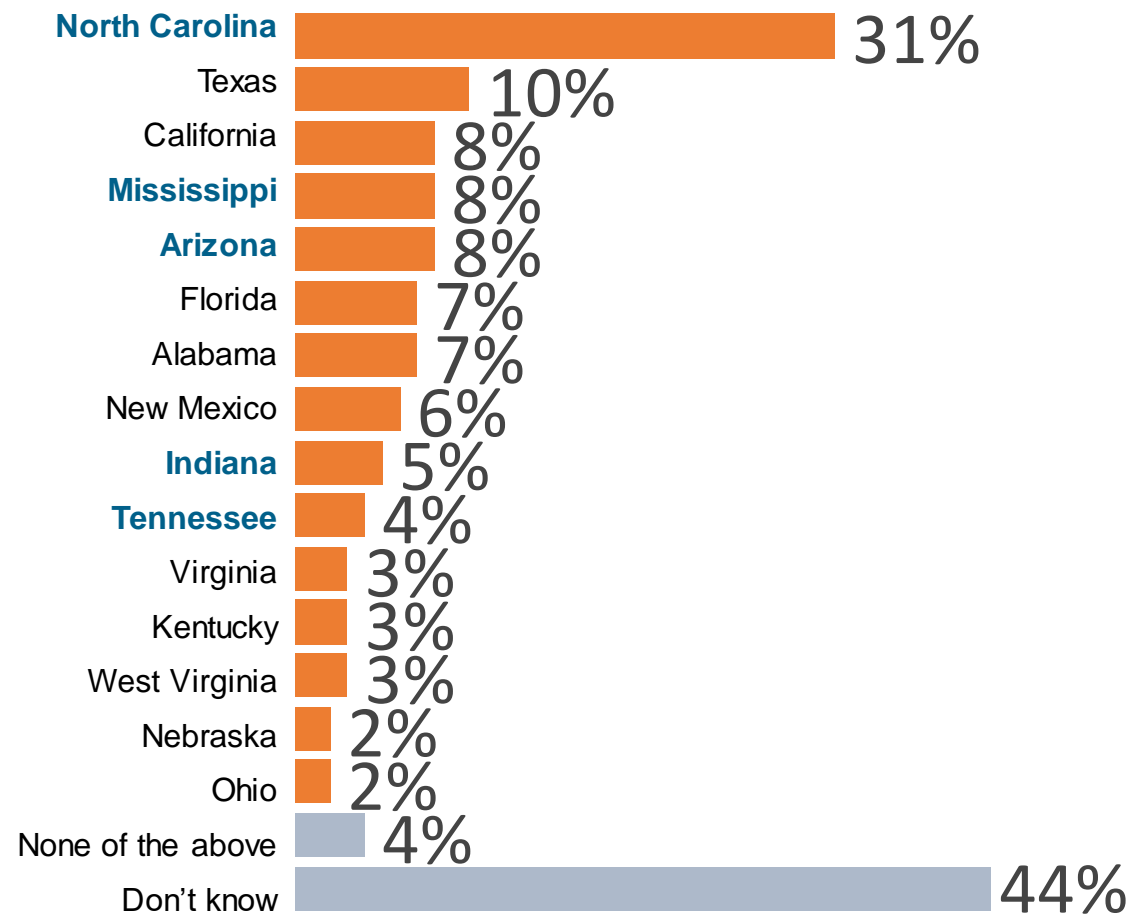
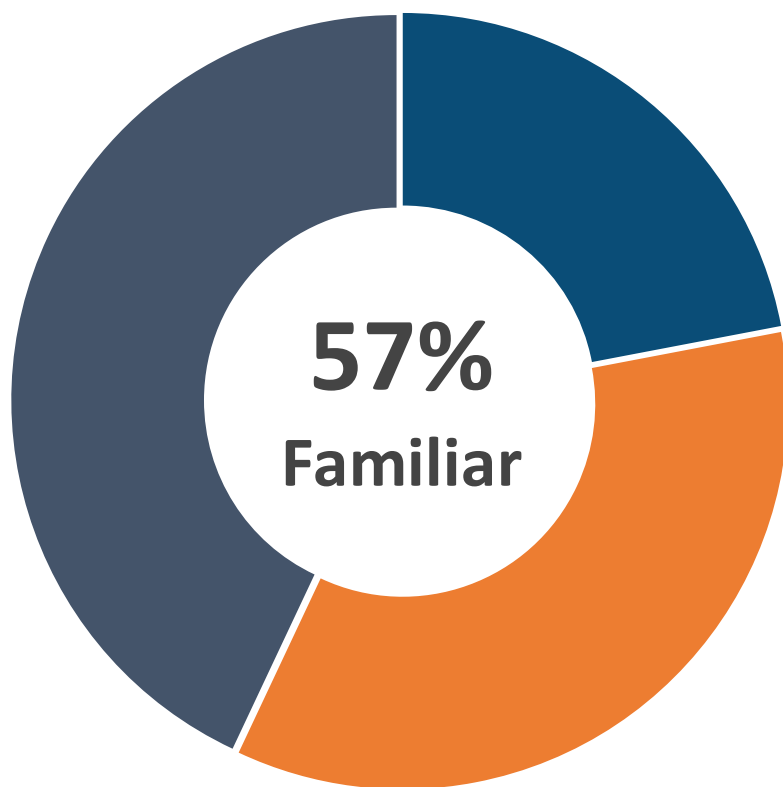


# starting point

We are working to end travel boycotts and bans as an acceptable tool of political change.

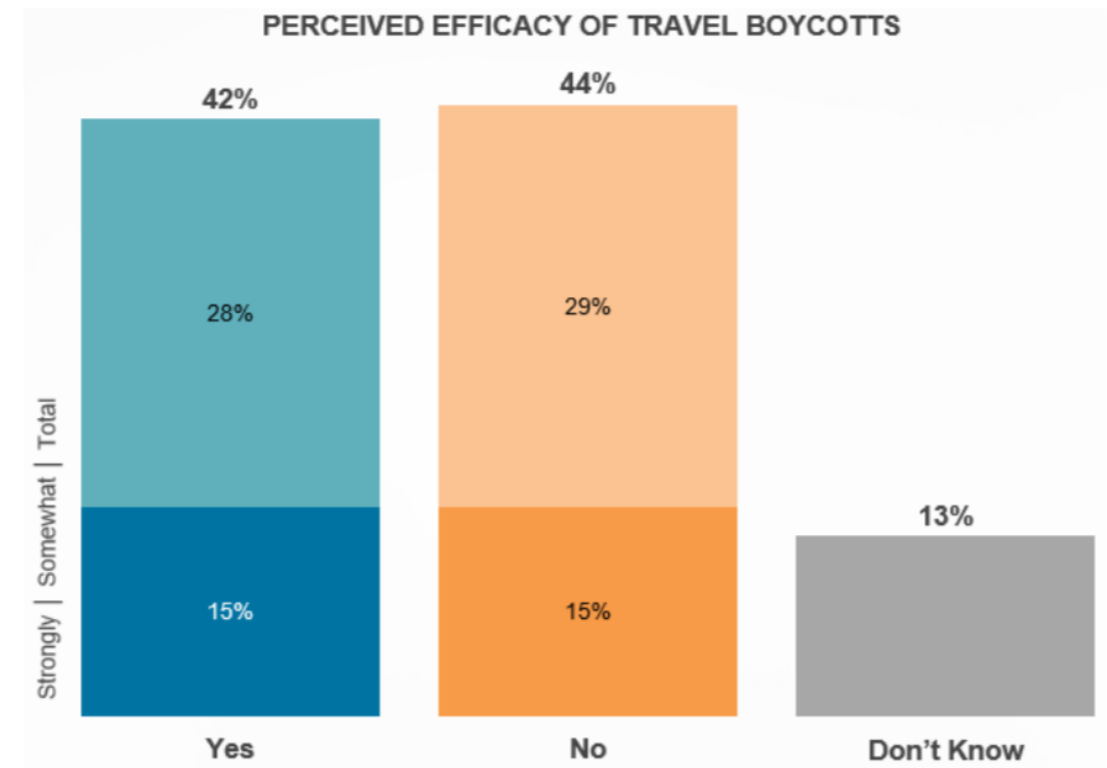
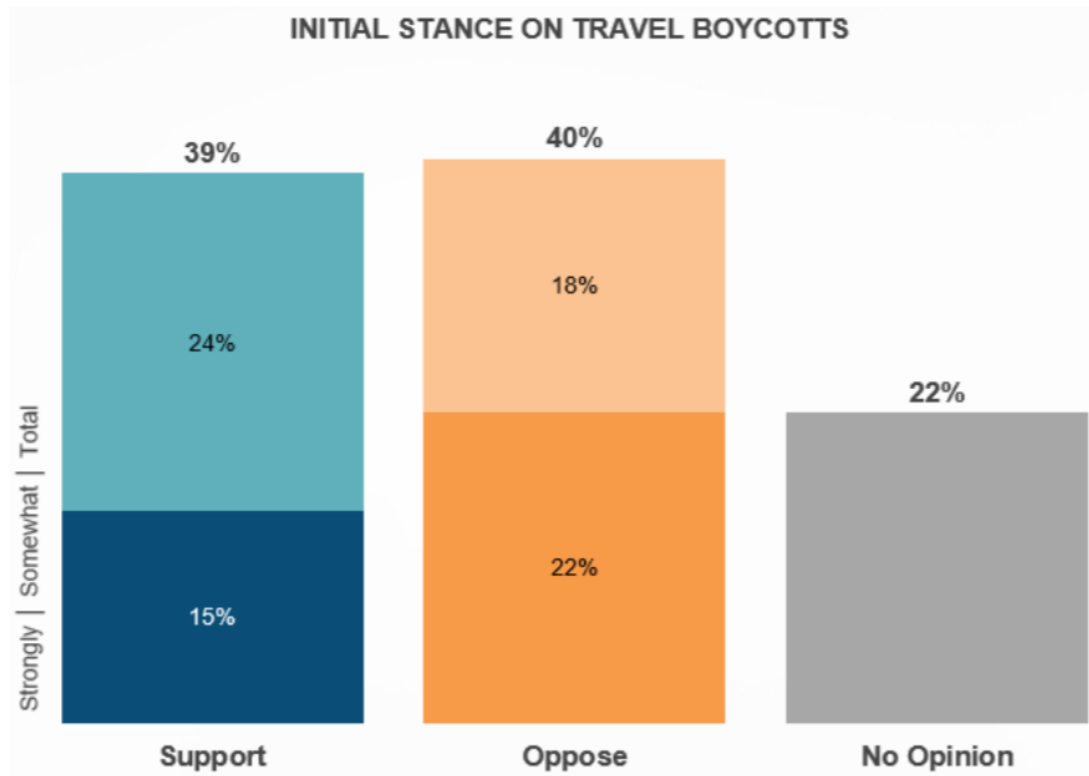
# **2017 Travelers Report**

# Awareness Of Travel Boycotts



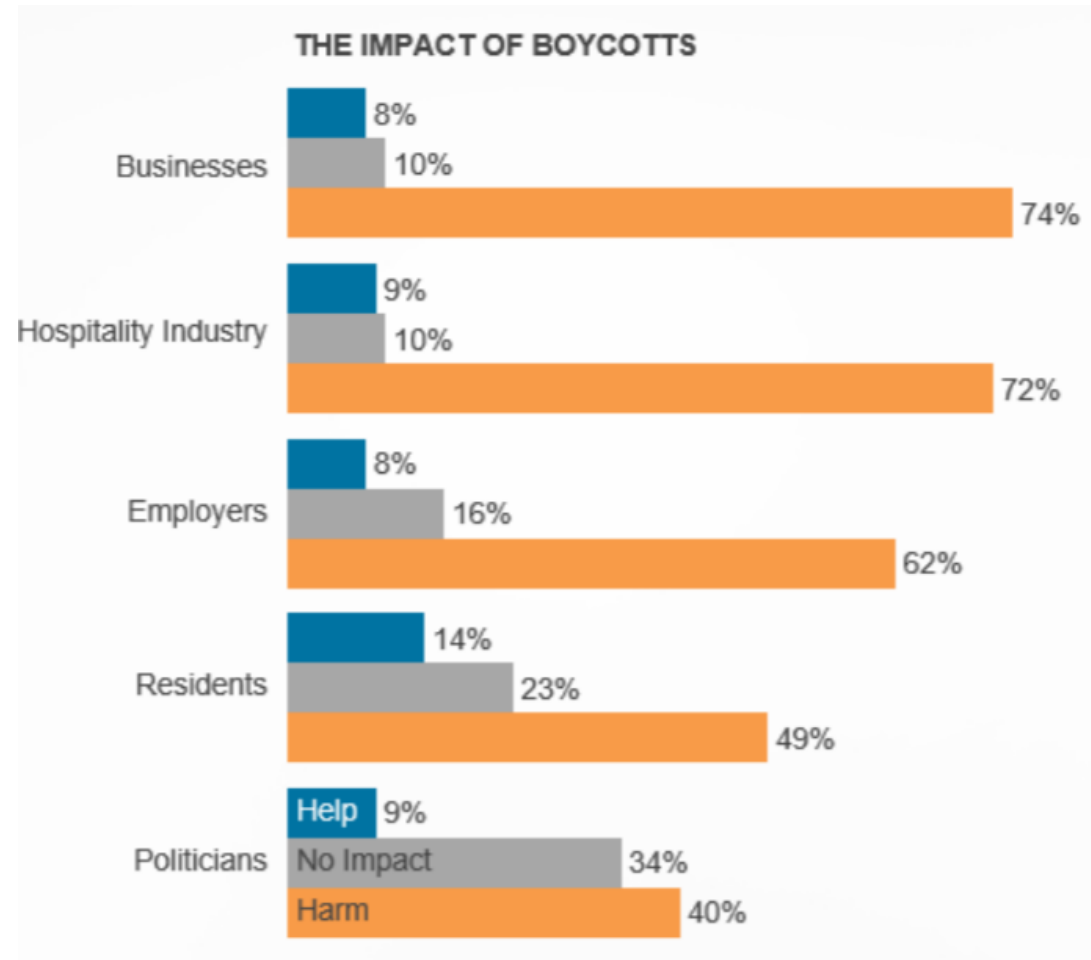
# Stance & Efficacy

- ✓ Almost an **equal number** in total say they **support or oppose boycotts**, but a closer look at intensity shows opposition is stronger indicating a slight advantage.
- ✓ Nearly **equal numbers** of respondents say boycotts are efficacious tactics to compel state action as those who do not. And unlike travelers' positions on the issue, intensity is equal on both sides. **Neither side appears to have an edge.**



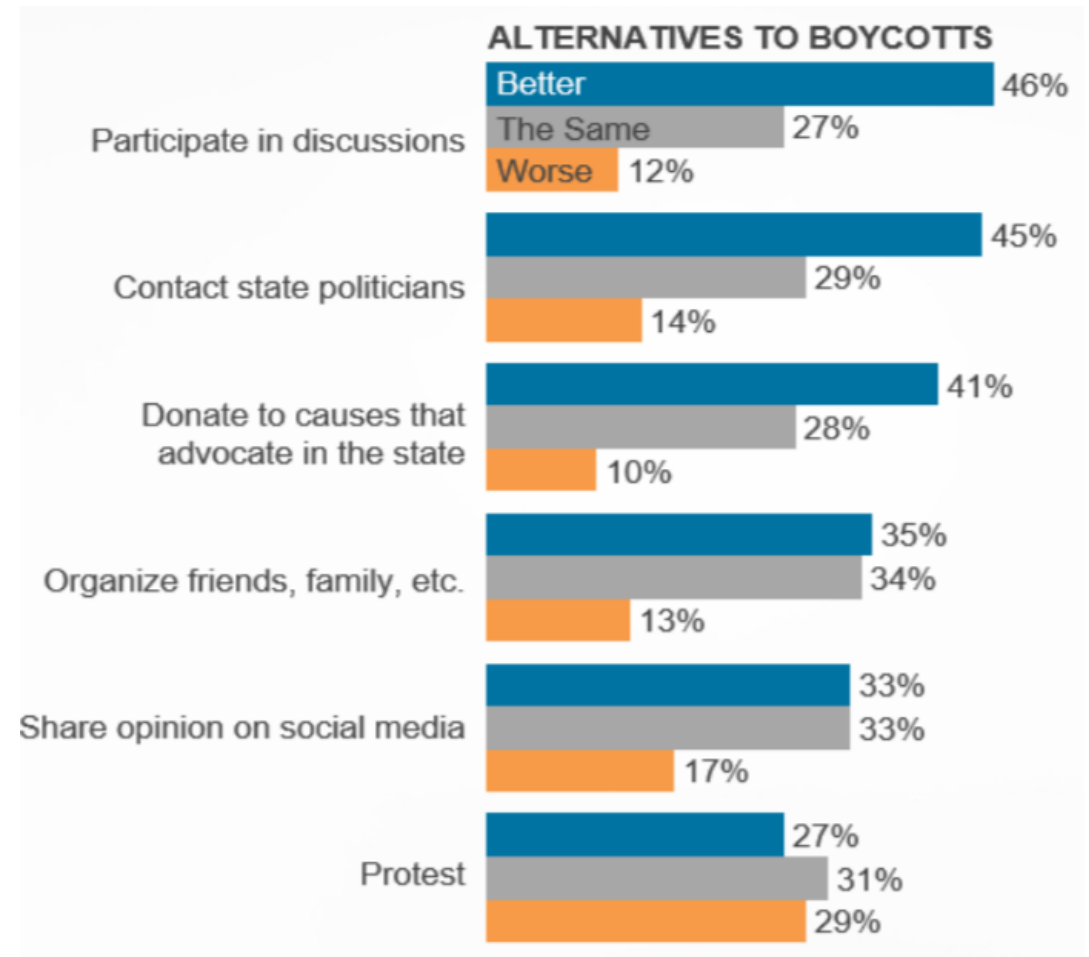
# Damage & Impact

- ✓ *A large majority (three in four) agree that **boycotts hurt business**, especially the **hospitality industry**.*
- ✓ *And it's not just business that is hurt-travelers also say **residents** are more than three times as **likely to lose** than gain from the boycotts.*



# Alternatives

- ✓ *A plurality believe participating in discussions, contacting state politicians and donating to causes that advocate in the state are all better ways to get state government to change..*
- ✓ *Acceptance of these alternatives is high regardless of whether travelers support or oppose boycotts.*





# **2023 Resident Sentiment Study – Travel Boycott Questions**

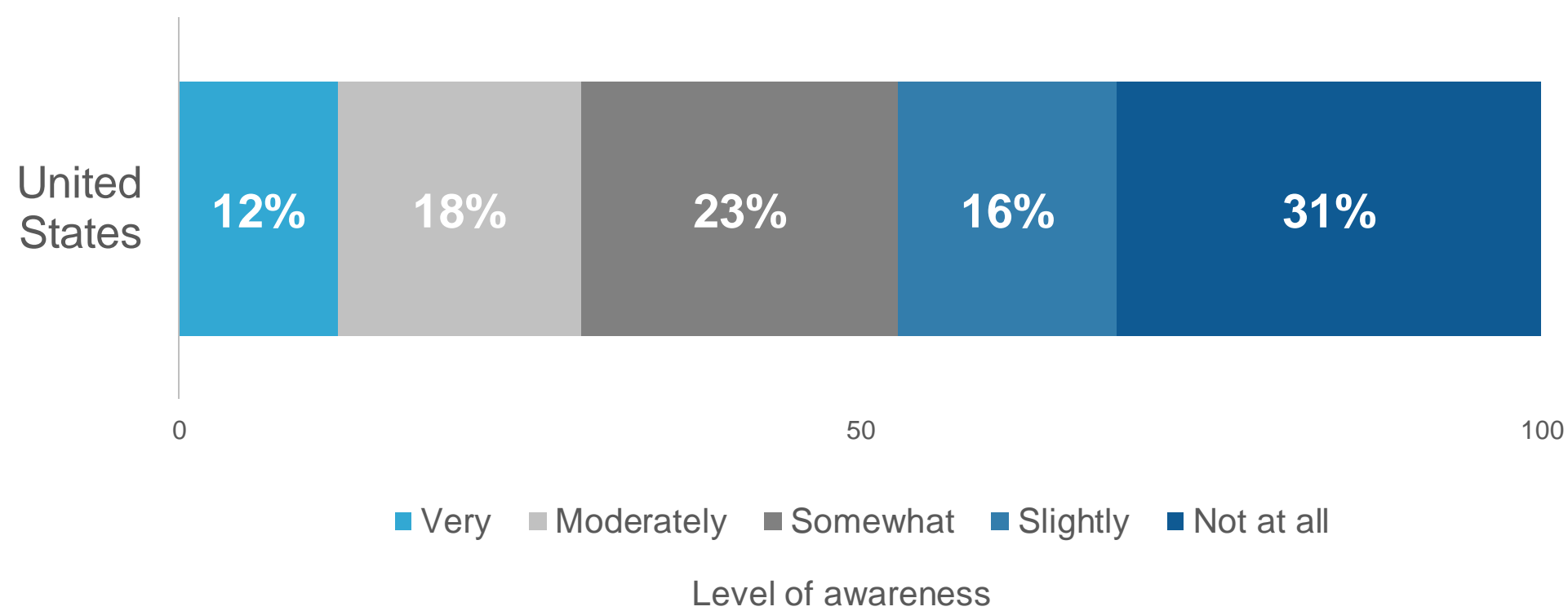


# Travel Boycotts

United States

# Awareness of Travel Boycotts

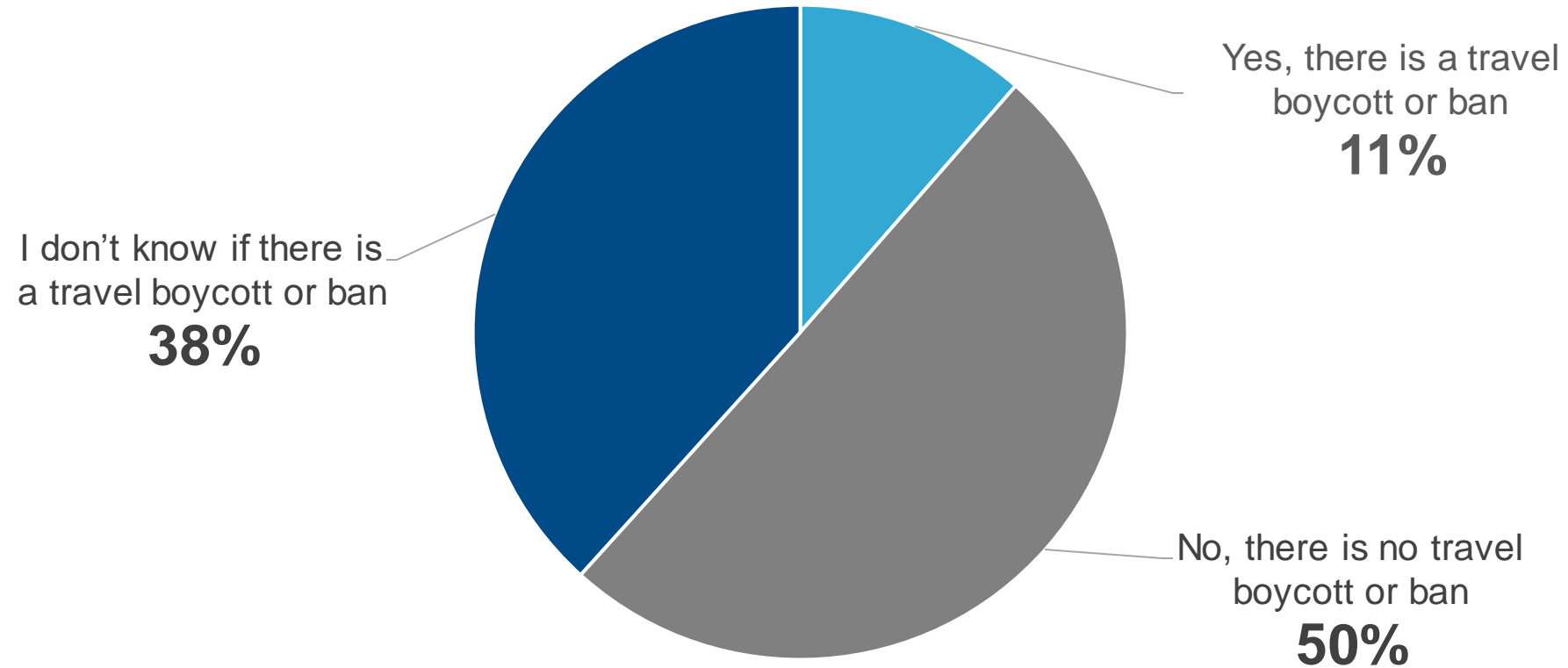
## United States



17 \*Over the last decade, various organizations, governments, and people, including activist groups, municipalities, businesses and even celebrities have announced they are boycotting travel to a destination. Travel boycotts have led to the cancellation, postponement, and relocation of events such as meetings, conferences, concerts, tournaments, and vacations. How familiar are you with the concept of travel boycotts?

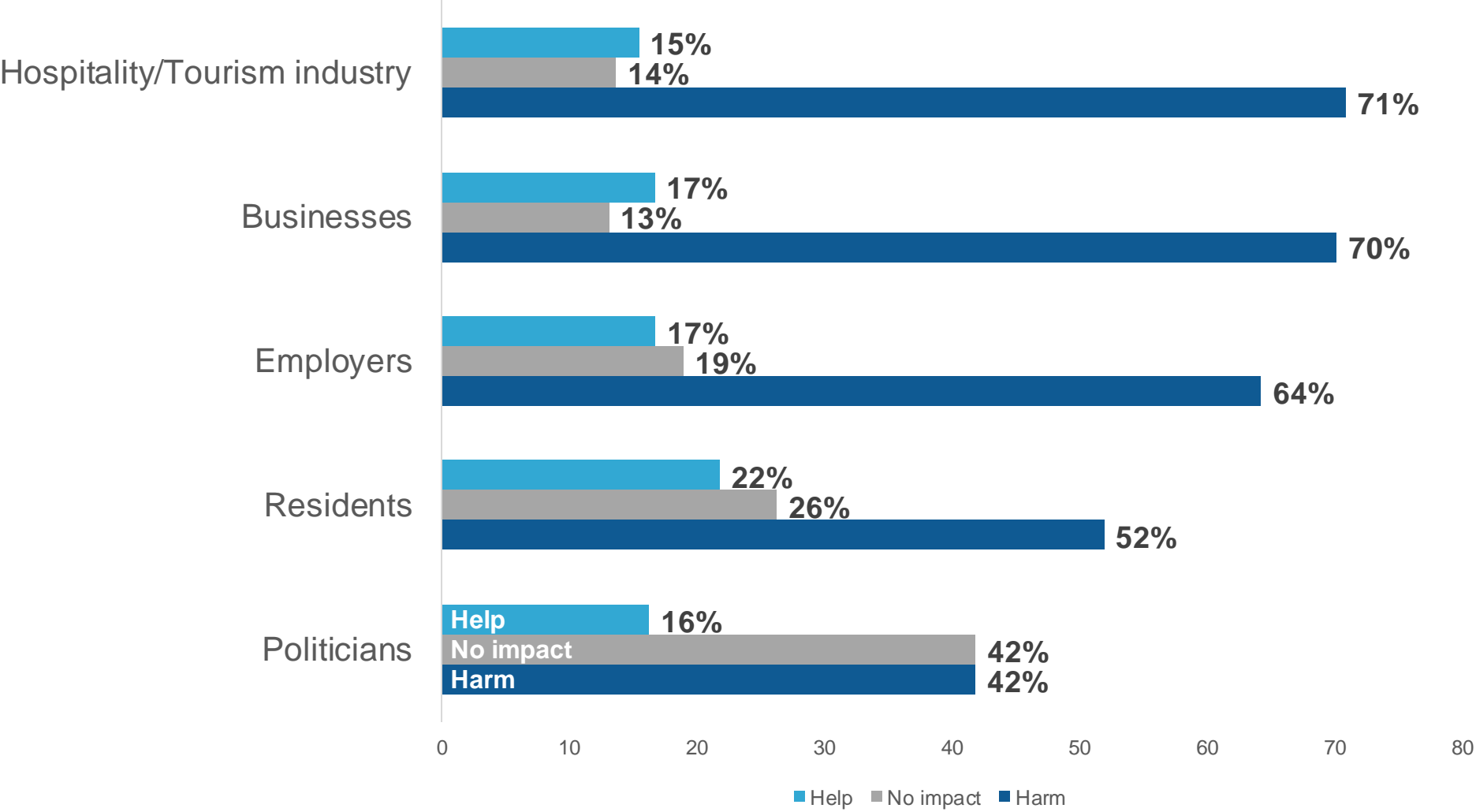
# Awareness of Travel Boycotts

## United States



# Perceived Impacts of Travel Boycotts

## United States







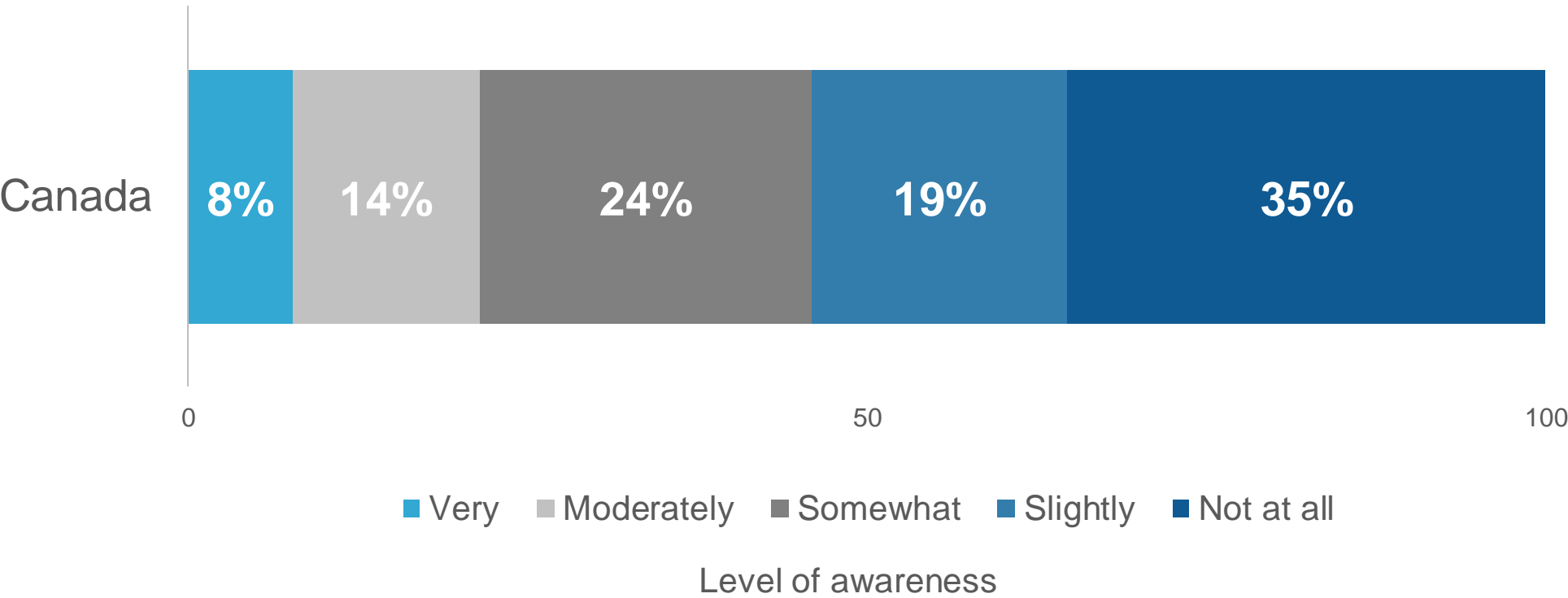
# Travel Boycotts

Canada



# Awareness of Travel Boycotts

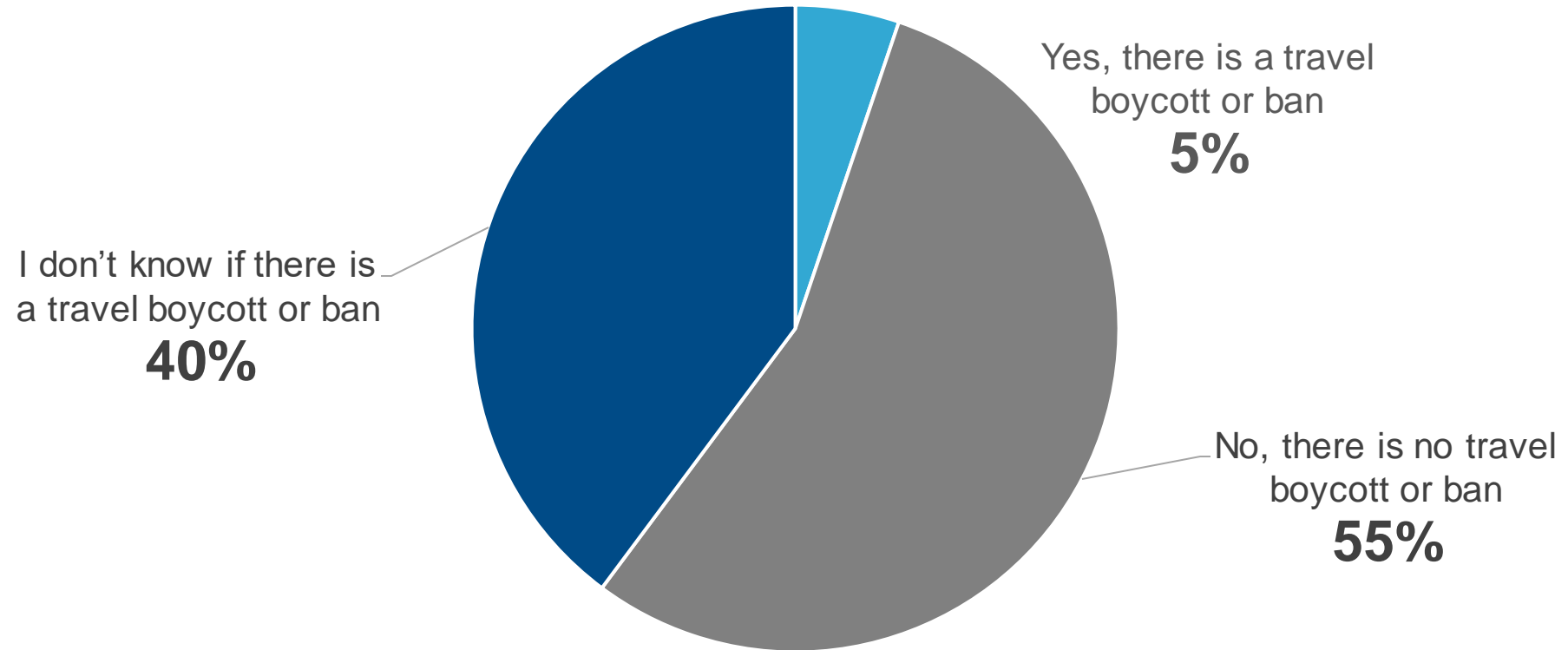
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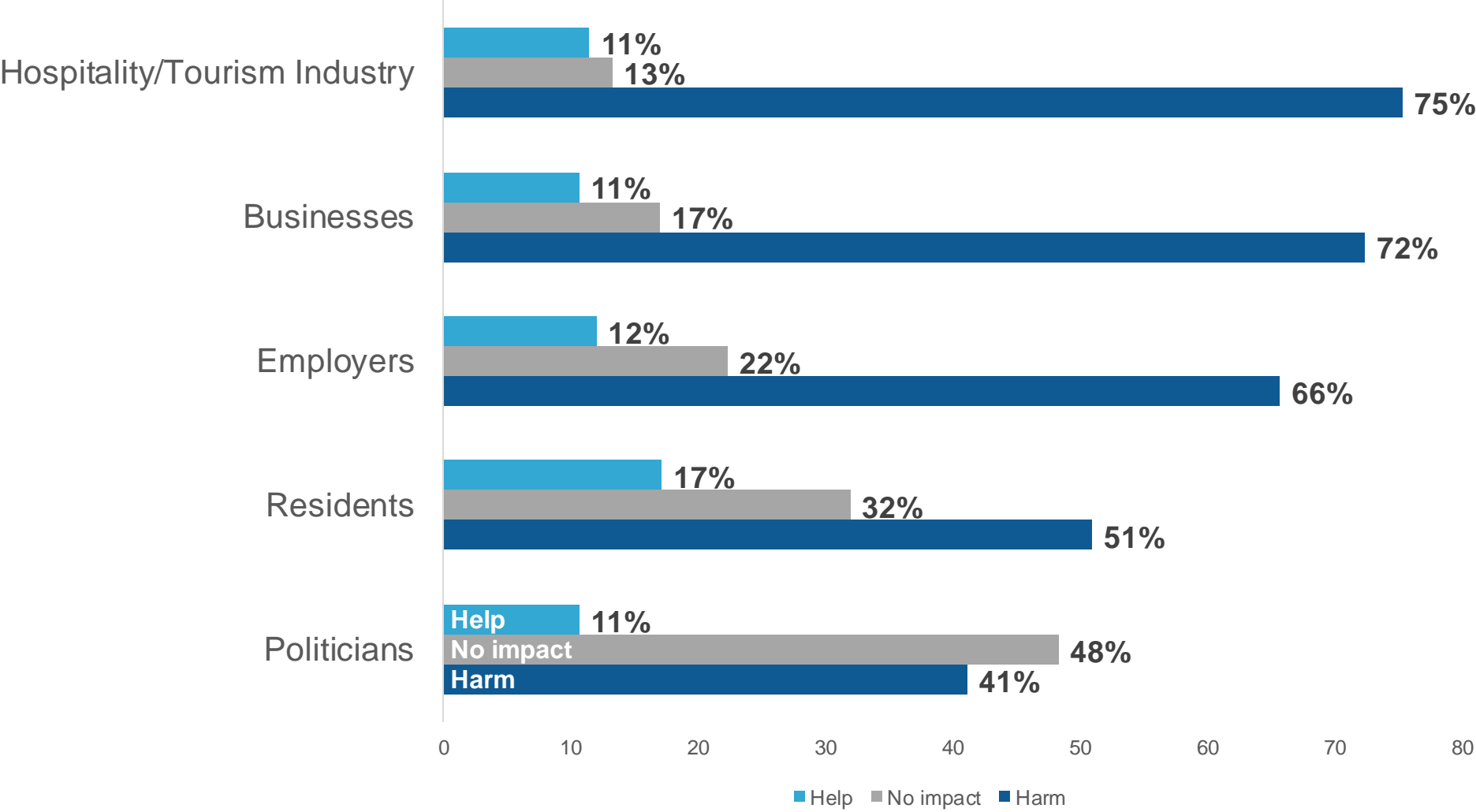
# Awareness of Travel Boycotts

## Canada



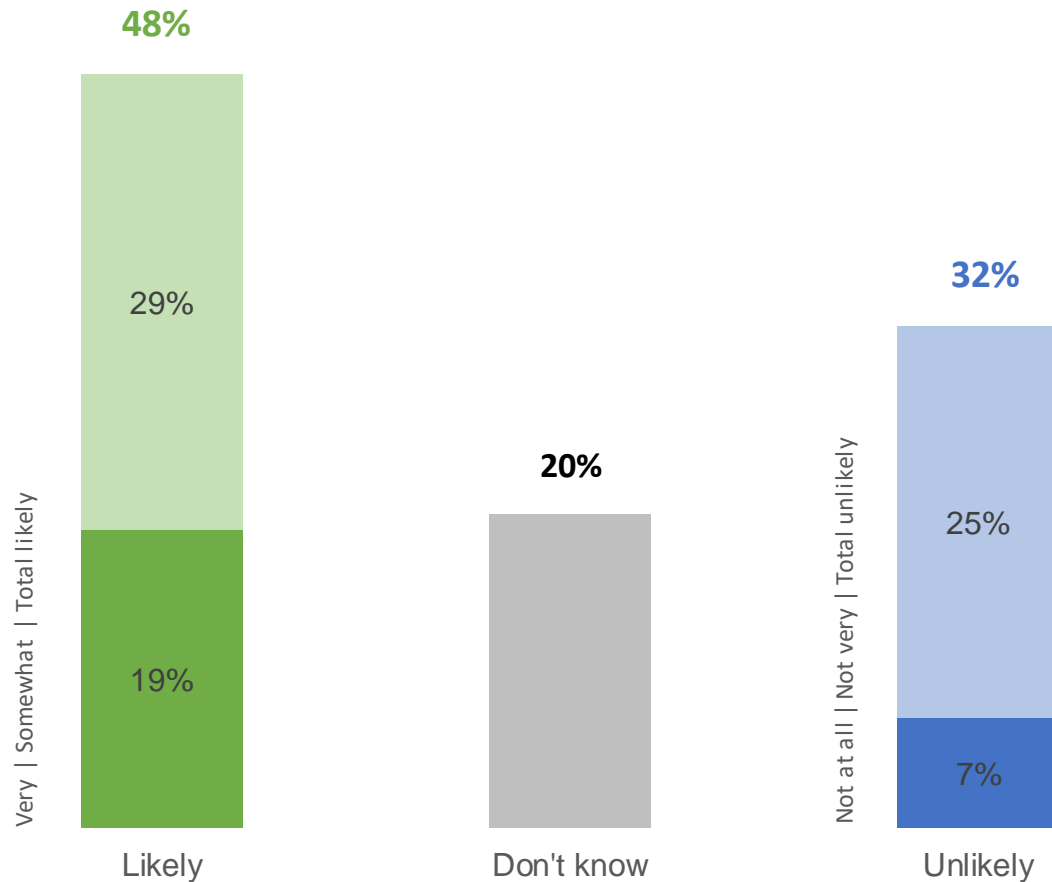
# Perceived Impacts of Travel Boycotts

## Canada



# **2018 Meeting Planners & Venue Managers Survey**

# MEP: Hesitant To Take An Active Role



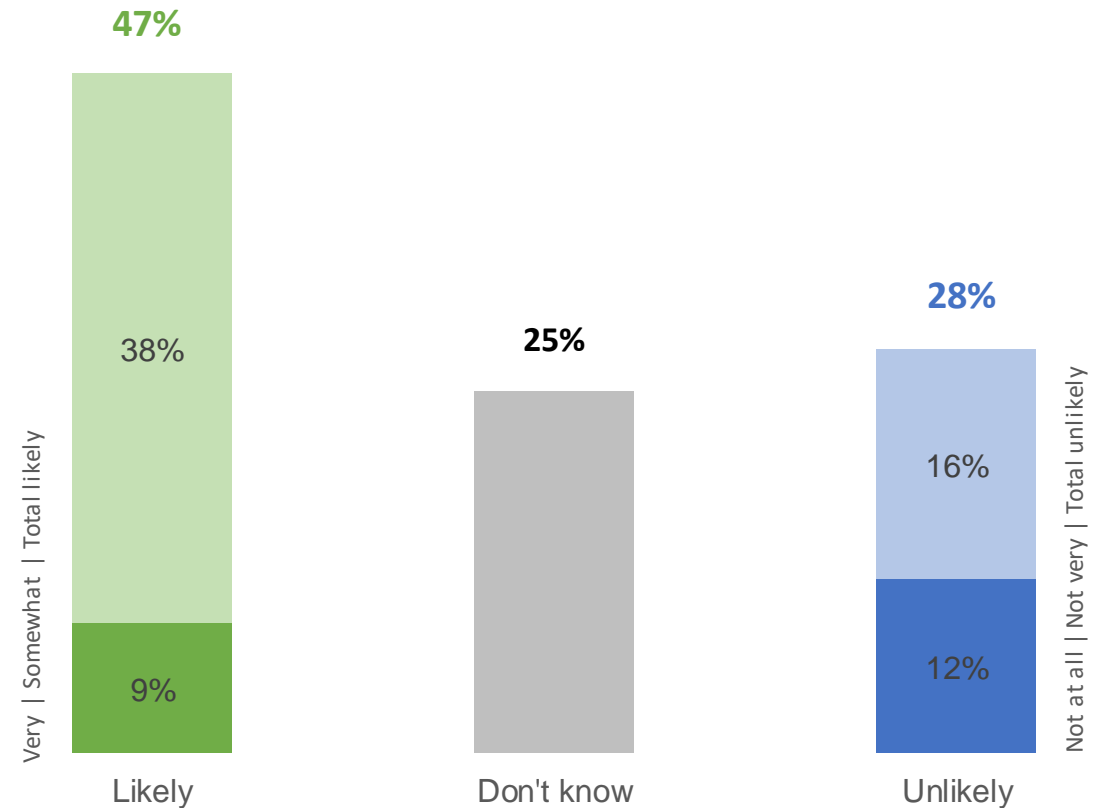
Likelihood to Support  
Keeping a Meeting in Face  
of Boycott

Q19. How likely are you to support keeping a meeting or event you are planning in a boycotted location were one to be declared?

Q24. How likely are you to try and dissuade those who want you to participate in a travel boycott by avoiding a destination when planning an event, or by moving, cancelling or postponing an event?

# MEP: Hesitant To Take An Active Role

Likelihood to Dissuade Others  
from Moving a Meeting in Face of  
Boycott



Q19. How likely are you to support keeping a meeting or event you are planning in a boycotted location were one to be declared?

Q24. How likely are you to try and dissuade those who want you to participate in a travel boycott by avoiding a destination when planning an event, or by moving, cancelling or postponing an event?

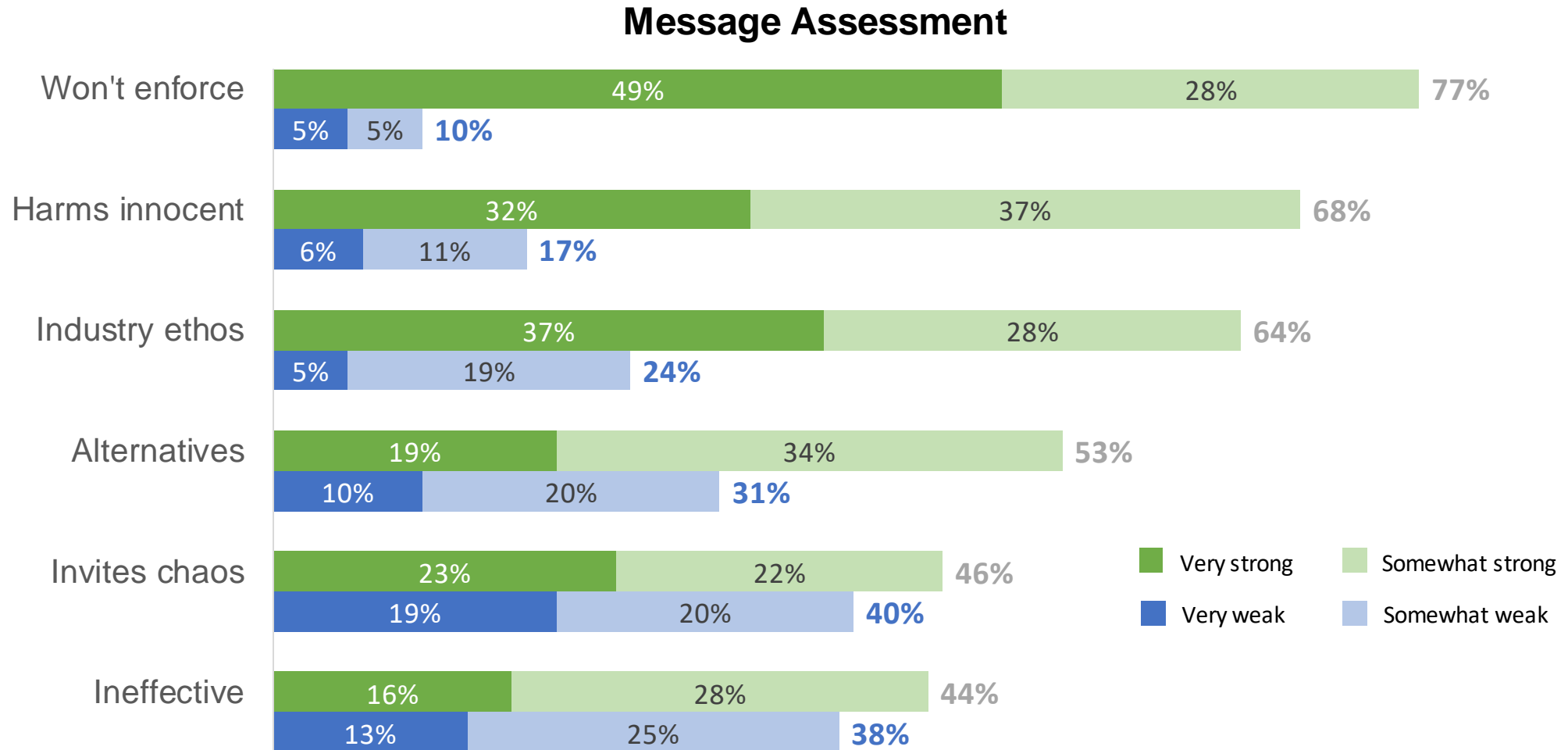


# MEP: Six Statements Tested

- ✓ **[WON'T ENFORCE]** We do not support discriminatory policies nor will we support businesses that enforce them. All businesses and staff hosting event(s) have committed to create spaces where attendees feel welcome and safe.
- ✓ **[HARMS INNOCENT]** Travel boycotts and bans hurt innocent bystanders – local residents and businesses who rely on the meetings and events industry.
- ✓ **[INDUSTRY ETHOS]** Meetings and events are a way to bring people together; our industry is all about hospitality and inclusion.
- ✓ **[ALTERNATIVES]** There are better ways to influence policy that are less harmful and just as, if not more, effective, such as donating to advocacy groups or using a meeting or event as an opportunity to organize advocacy activities.
- ✓ **[INVITES CHAOS]** Politics today are unpredictable. No one knows where the next travel boycott or ban will hit or how long it will last. Engaging in boycotts or bans is risky and it is best to stay apolitical.
- ✓ **[INEFFECTIVE]** While boycotts and bans can help to raise awareness on an issue, results have been mixed in overturning discriminatory policies.

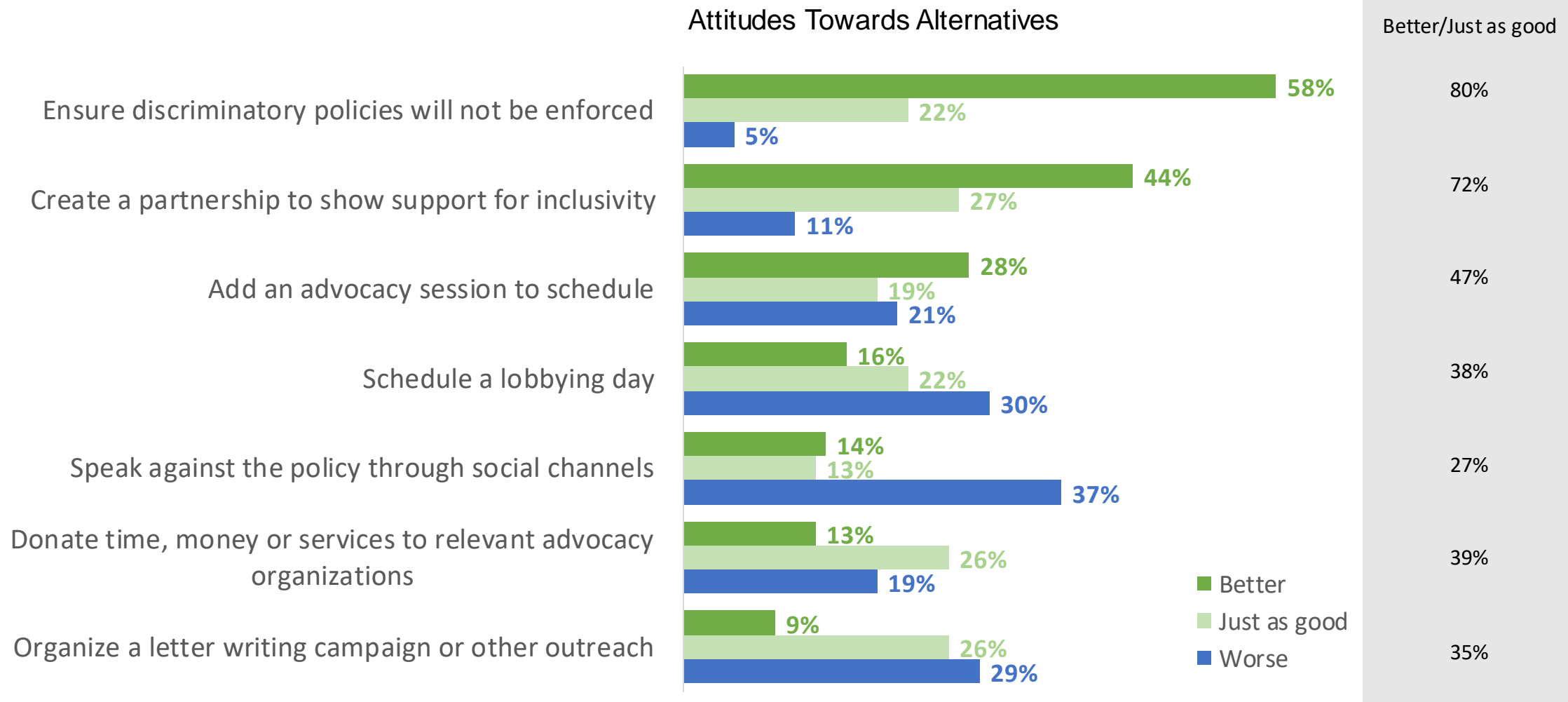
Q25. Here are some statements shared by meeting professionals who oppose engaging in travel boycotts. After you read each one, please select whether you find the statement to be a very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak statement in opposition of travel boycotts. Please select one for each row.

# MEP: The Strongest Message



Q25. Here are some statements shared by meeting professionals who oppose engaging in travel boycotts. After you read each one, please select whether you find the statement to be a very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak statement in opposition of travel boycotts. Please select one for each row.

# MEP: Work With Local Meeting Partners



Q22. Here are some examples of alternatives to participating in a boycott by cancelling, moving or postponing a meeting or event from a destination. In your opinion, is each a better, just as good or worse alternative to participating in the boycott?

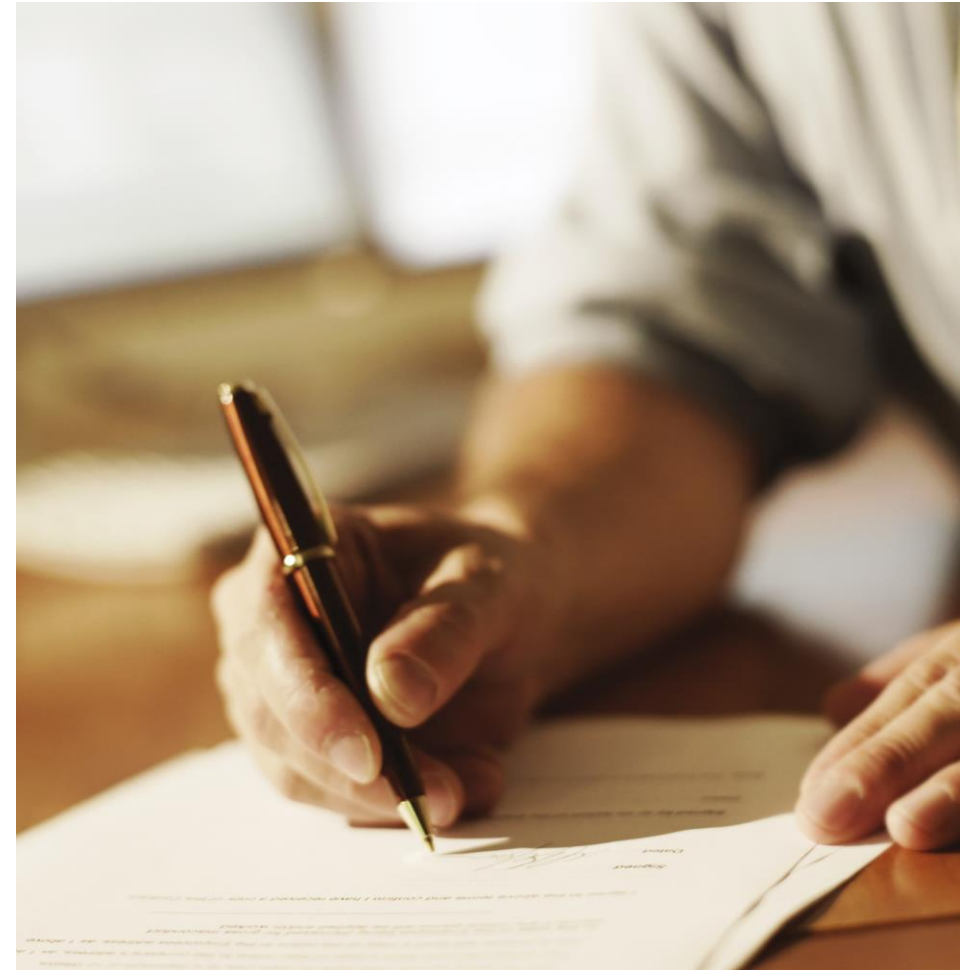
# Note To DW

Beginning our shift in focus

## Note to DW

Travel opens minds – both that of  
the traveler and those that they  
meet.

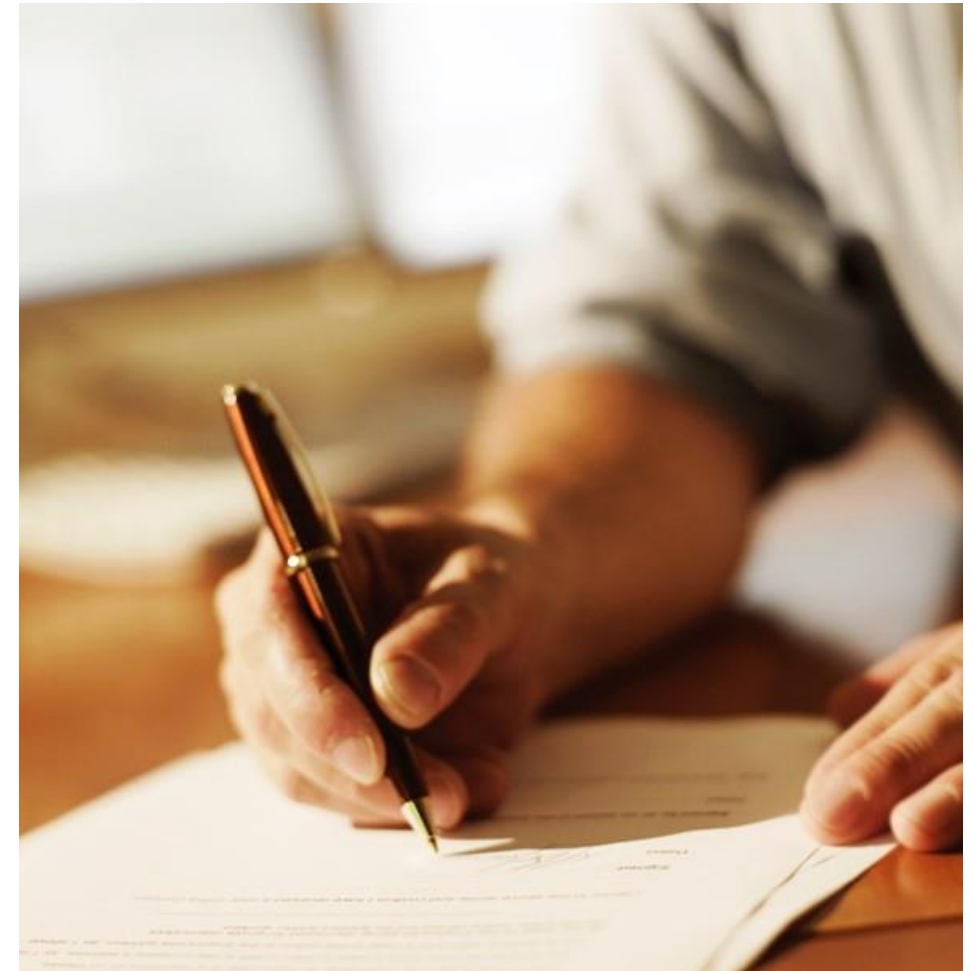
Boycotts and bans are  
counterintuitive to this.



## Note to DW

Boycotts and bans do not directly affect those who can make change – elected officials.

Case in point – during the highly publicized North Carolina boycott over HB2 – despite a travel boycott, visitation numbers and hotel tax revenues went up every year of that boycott.

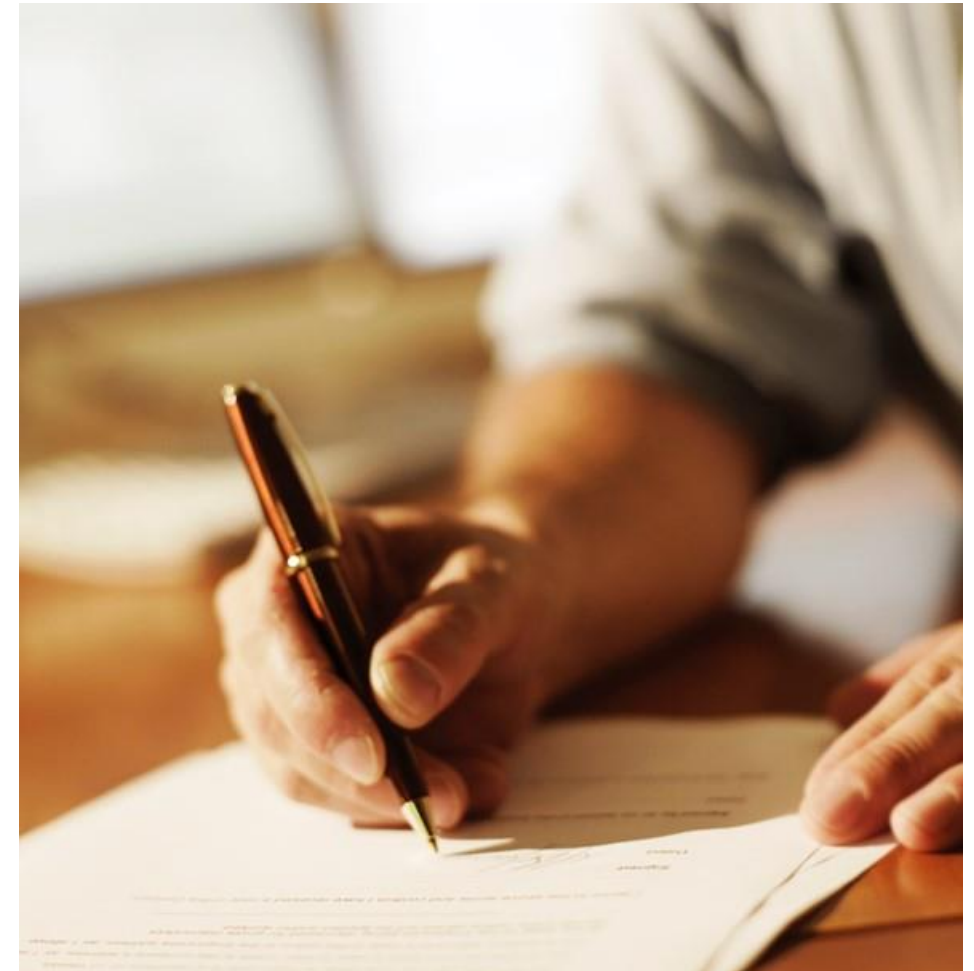




## Note to DW

If the driving force of a boycott is laws that are in opposition to the organization's values, then a boycott is an ineffective means of bringing change (see North Carolina).

Instead, a meeting, tradeshow or event should go to the destination and engage in activities that strengthen those in that location to fight to change that law.



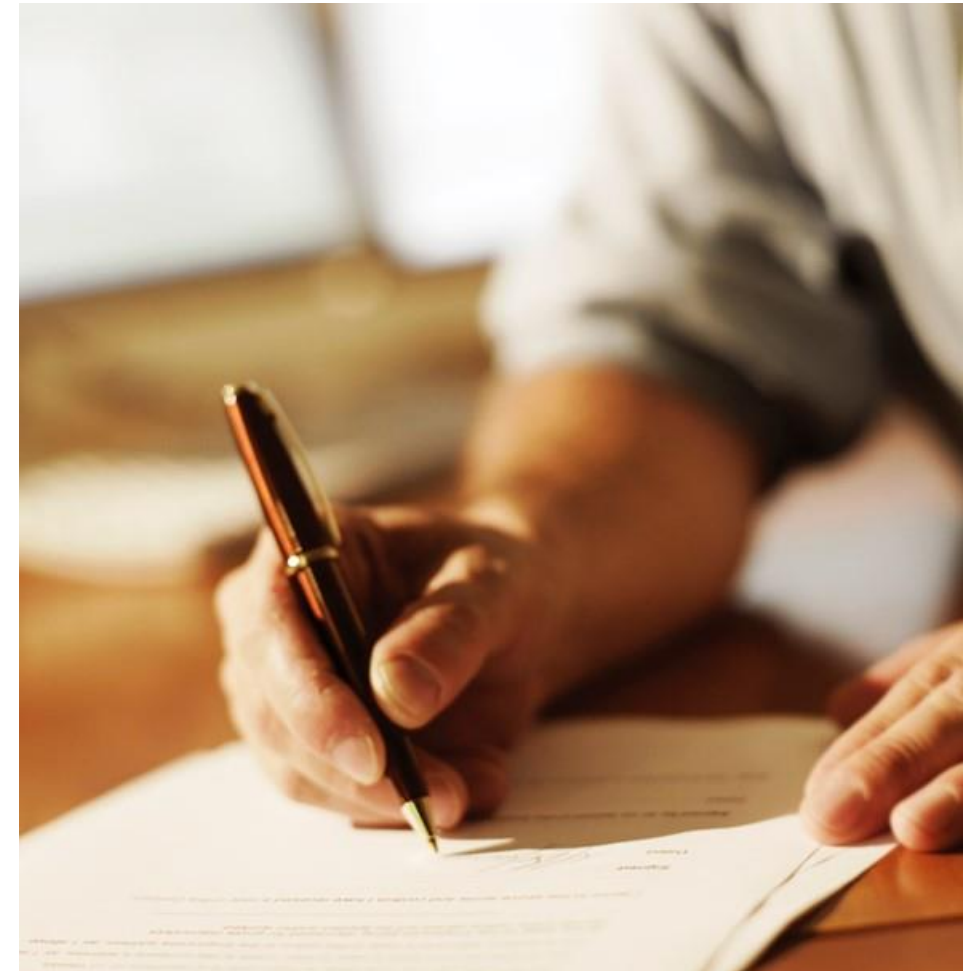
## Note to DW

Fundraisers to support them is an effective action. Helping fill phone banks, stuff envelopes, or engage in other grassroots political efforts that can be effective action.

Assisting in voter registration is an effective action. Supporting those businesses in the destination that are supporting the fight against the legislation is an effective action.

Wearing T-Shirts in support of your values is an effective visibility action. Show up, fight back and take action.

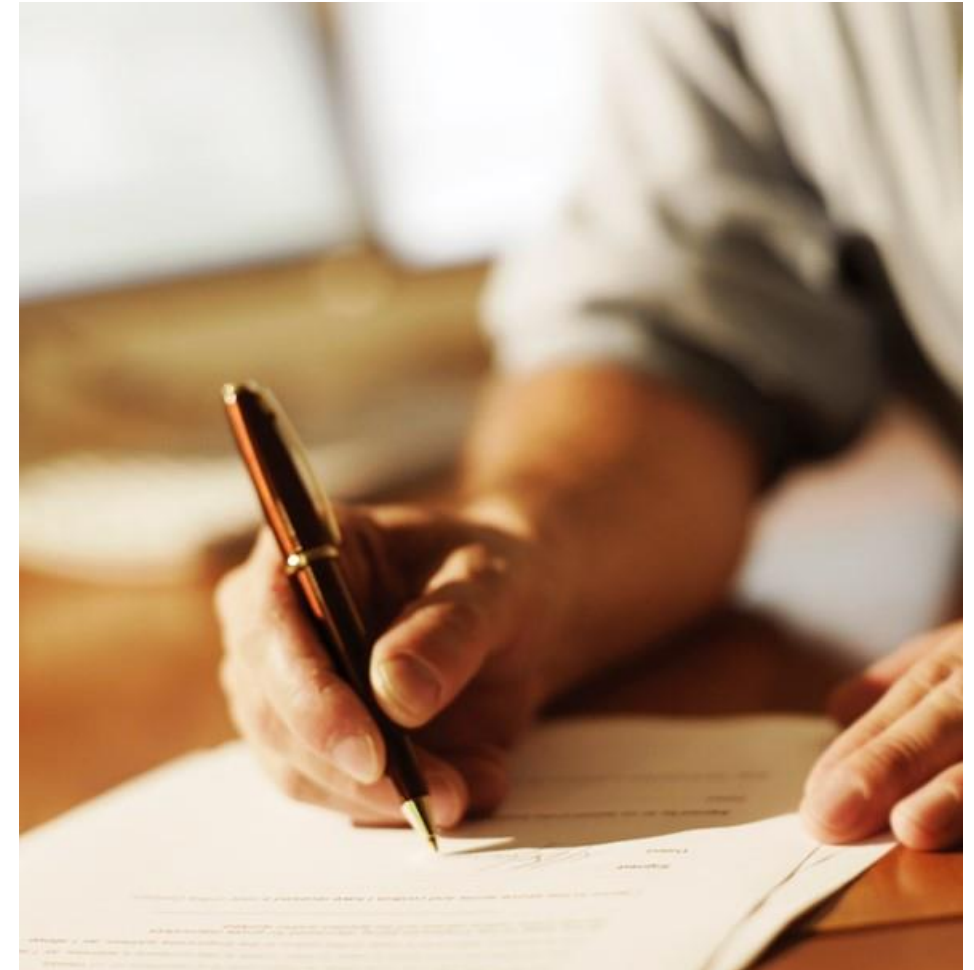
Don't stay away and be invisible leaving no impact.



## Note to DW

Remember – elected officials care  
about voters and funders.

Unless you are one of those or  
aiding one of those, you are being  
ineffective.



## Note to Don

To support an organization's values through actions that make you feel good – I am not spending my money there – doesn't create change. It is political hobbyism.

It hurts our industry and aids those you oppose.

Traveling to that destination can have impact – person by person. Political action in the destination can create change – issue by issue.



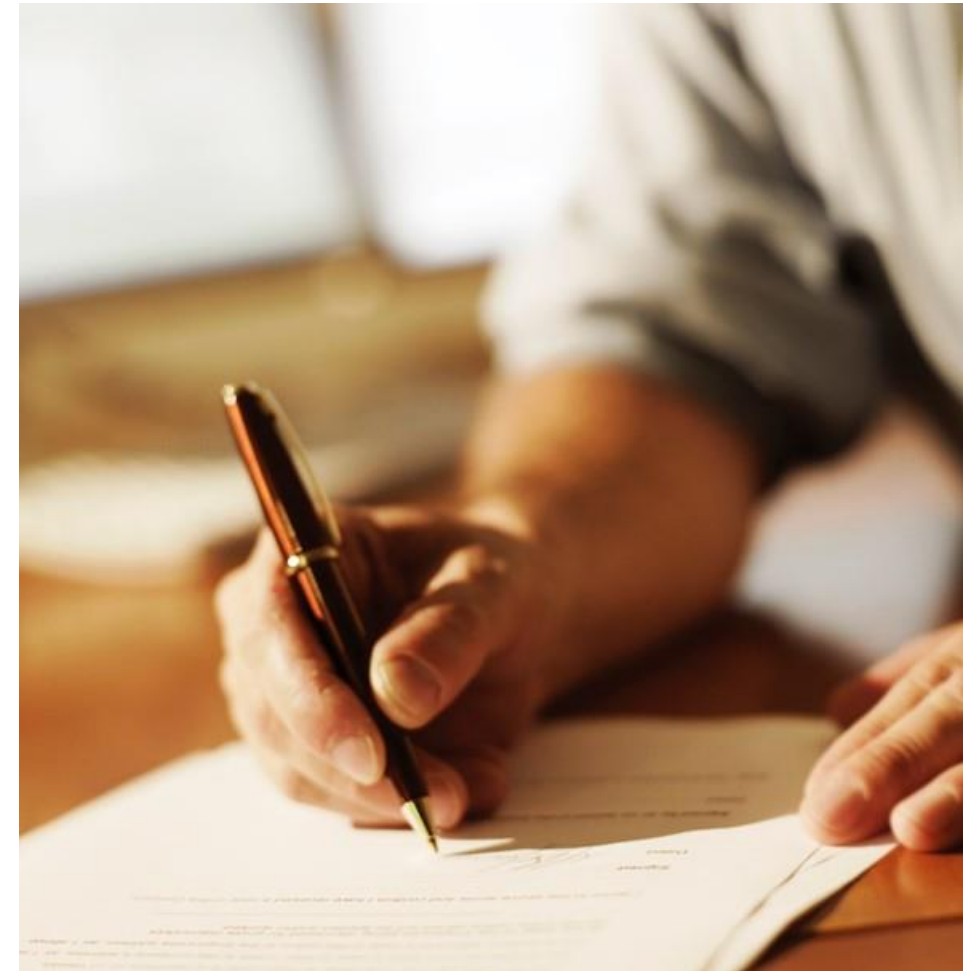
## Note to DW

2019 St. Louis example:

We were approached by members wanted to attend the convention we were holding there but did not want to be support a state that was in the process of passing highly restrictive abortion legislation.

We connected them with Planned Parenthood/St. Louis Chapter. Working with them these women came to St. Louis and every night ate at a restaurant that had publicly supported the efforts against the bill. Every night they told the restaurant that they were there to support them oppose the legislation.

And through that they supported those who were fighting back.

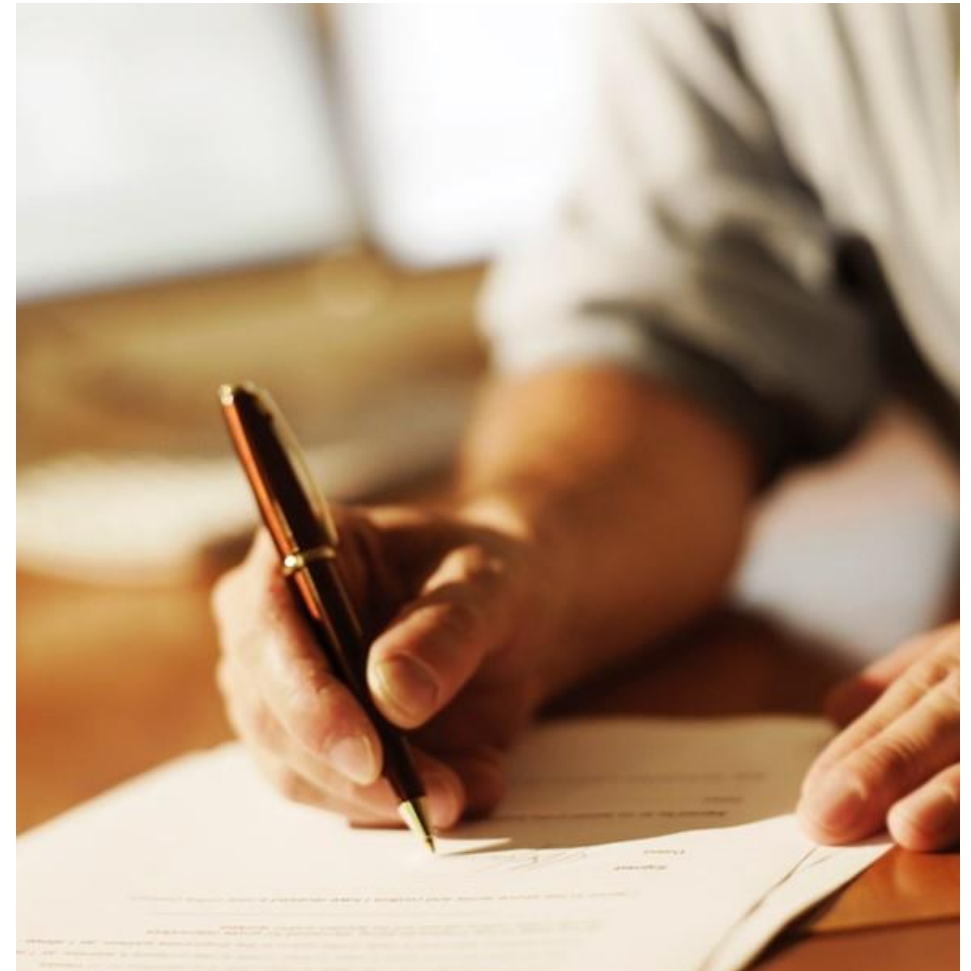




## Note to DW

More actions like that is what is  
needed.

Absenteeism is not.



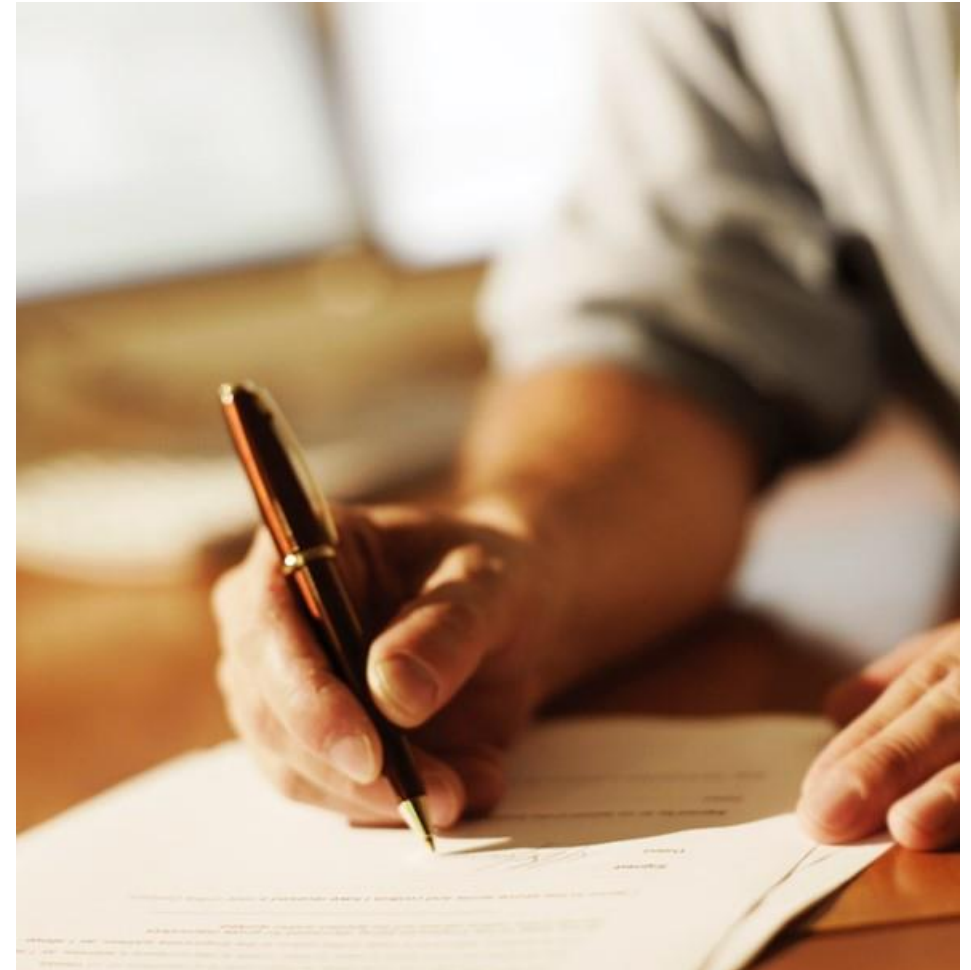
# **Evolving Our Approach**

**Creating the Shift to a Show Up and  
Engage Strategy**

## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

No more talk about the  
weaponization of travel.

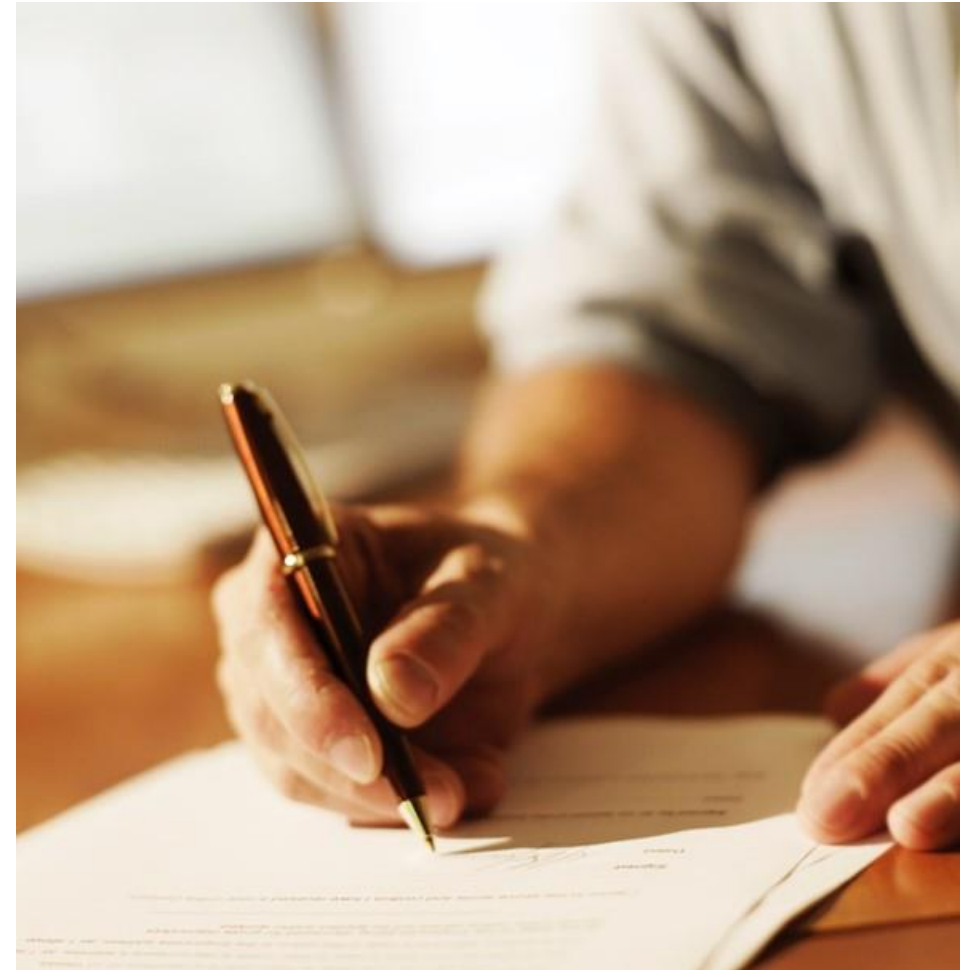
More focus on individuals and their  
motivations.





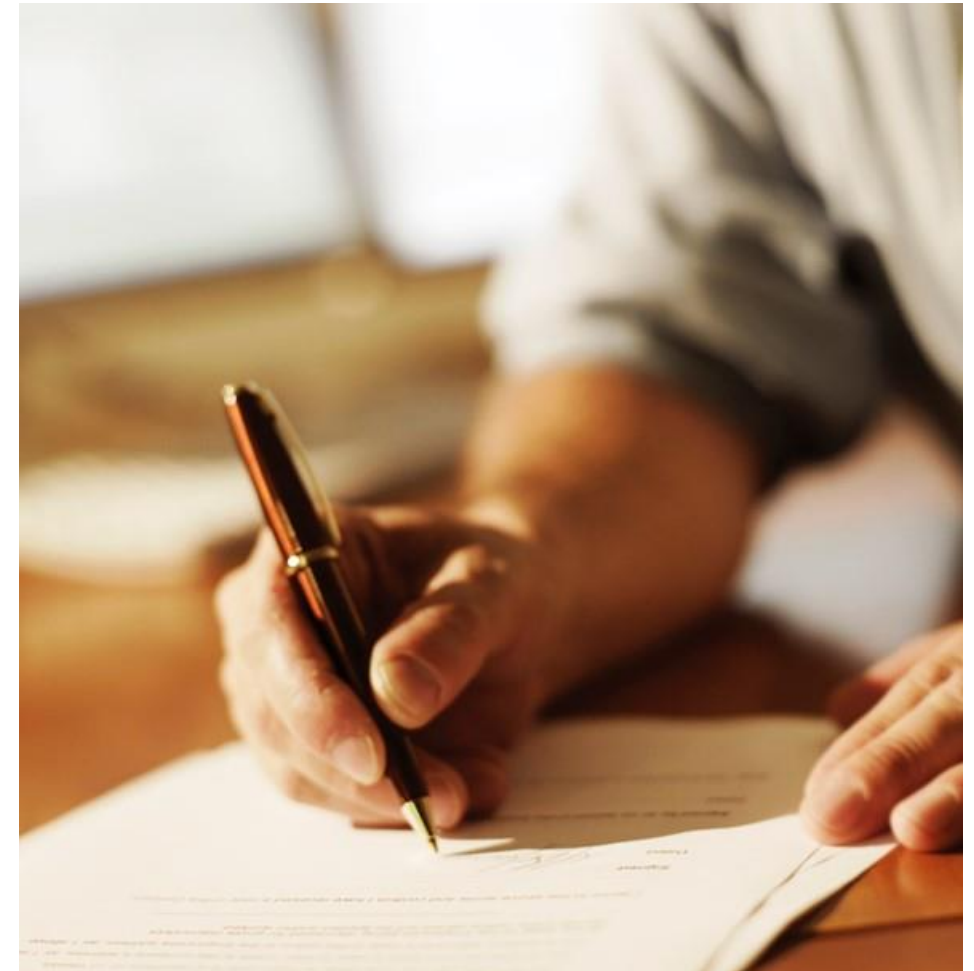
## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

Focus on the power of travel and pairing that to individual's desire to help bring change.



## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

Focus on how one advances a successful agenda in a way that avoids unintended and often counter-productive results.



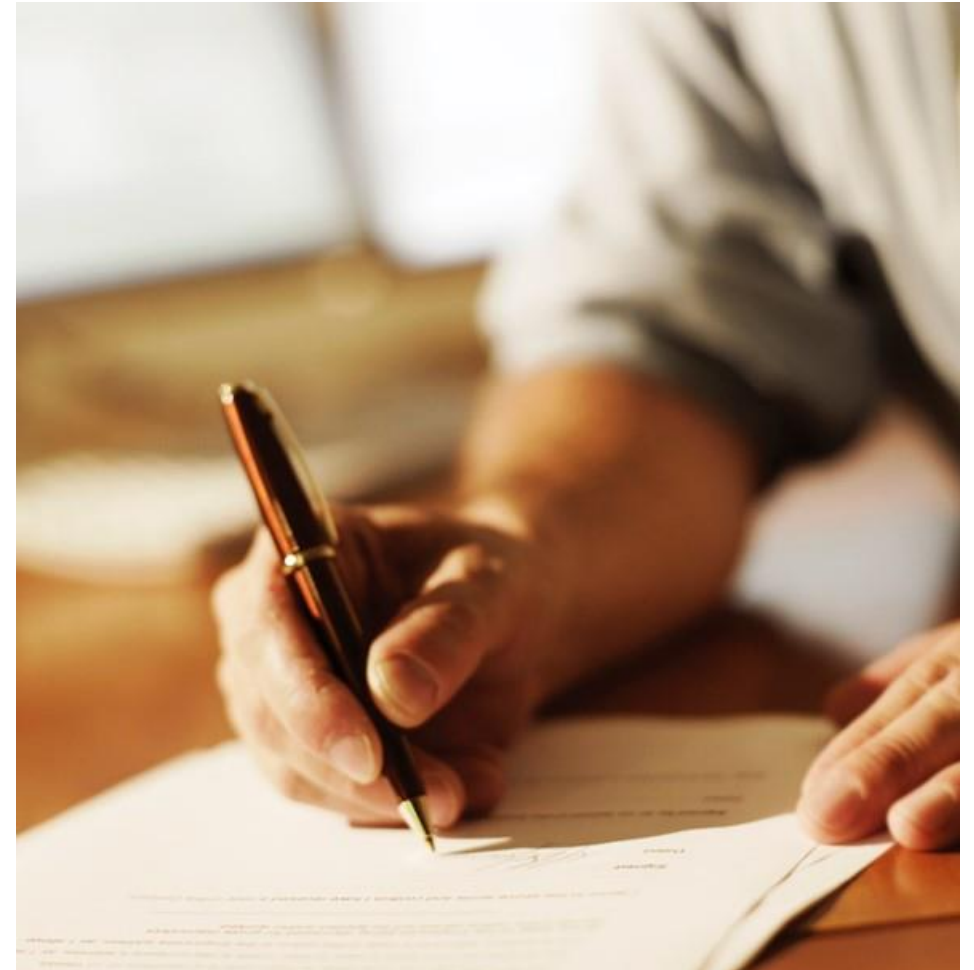
## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

Focus on need to engage, to find  
common ground and help where  
you can.



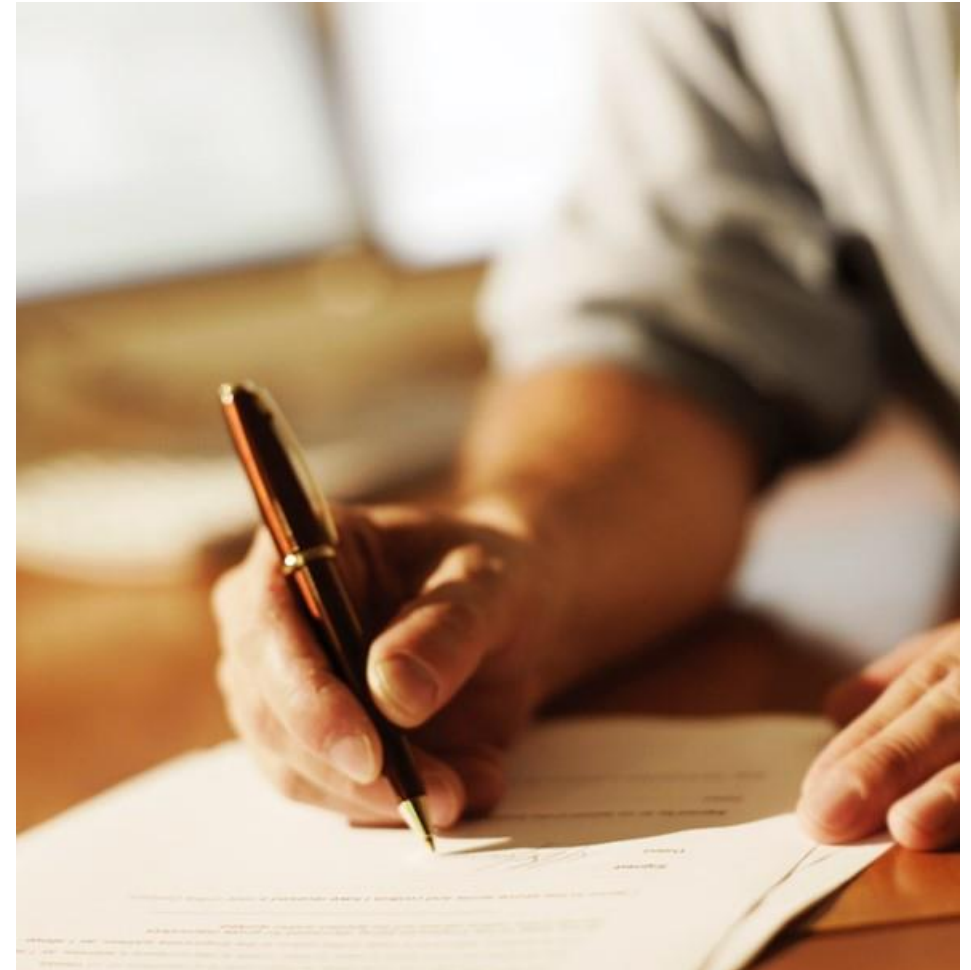
## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

Value and highlight the small victories and show that they build momentum.

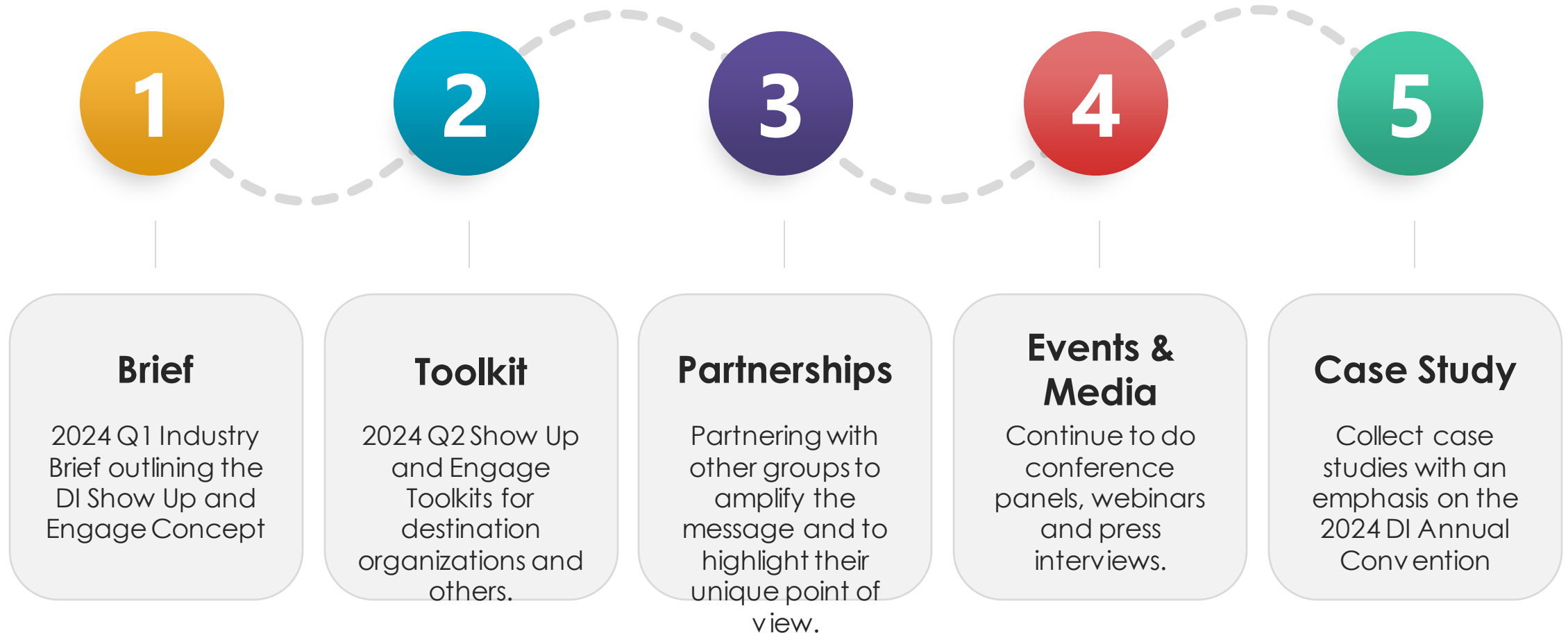


## Shift to a Show Up and Engage Strategy

Build simple strategies and tools  
that individuals and groups can  
replicate.



# 2024 Strategy



# Encouraging Other Voices To Amplify Our Messaging

Partnership with the Global Diversity  
Alliance





## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Wherever we meet, we make a  
difference.

How we meet, we can make a  
difference.





## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Provide meetings ecosystem professionals a wealth of information through a thorough deep dive on how best to do business in a destination with anti-LGBT legislation being tabled or implemented in a particular jurisdiction, be that at a municipal, regional, state or federal level and ensure that it benefits everyone.



## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Address the concerns of all various stakeholders by giving multiple insights in the dialogue.



## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Provide a blueprint for creating long term positive social impact in the communities at destinations where events are being hosted.



## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Present meeting professionals the reasoning to avoid boycotting a destination.



## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Educate the reader into understanding not only the ethical rationale of LGBT human rights but also the business case it presents.





## Partnership with the Global Diversity Alliance



Be more inclusive and  
understanding of the LGBT  
community.



# Thank You For Your Attention

Send Questions Or Ideas To:  
[jjohnson@destinationsinternational.org](mailto:jjohnson@destinationsinternational.org)

