

# How to Hug a Porcupine

*Building Relationships with Lawmakers  
and Why It's Important*



# Agenda

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- Congress 101: Good News & Bad News
- Building Long-Term Relationships with Congress
- Comments from Legislators and Staff

# The Bad News

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# Average Number of Daily Meetings 13





Daily Average of House  
Office “Meetings”  
28



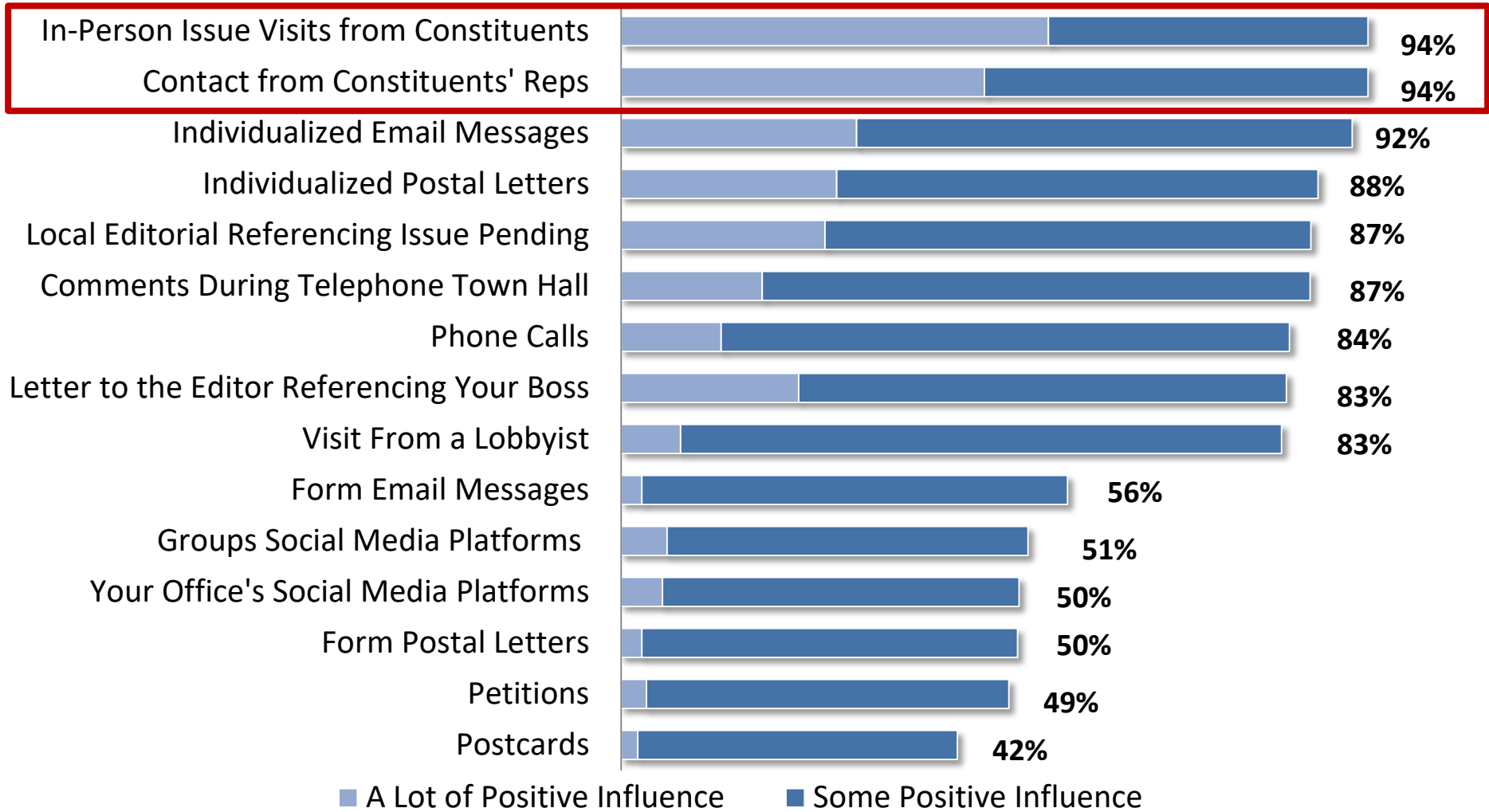
# The Good News

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# Survey Question

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“If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the *Washington office* have on his/her decision?”





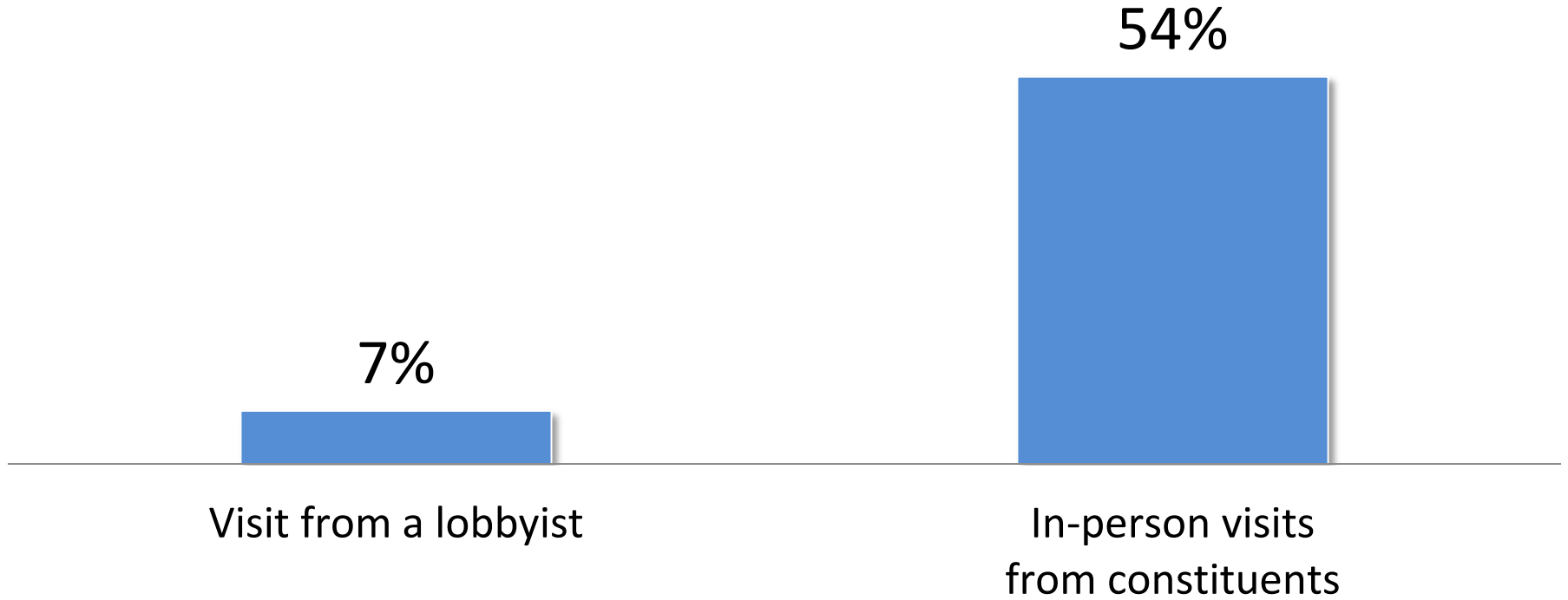
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*“In person meetings are the easiest way for staff to understand an issue because it gives us the chance to ask questions, and put a face with the issue.”*

—House Deputy Chief of Staff



# A Lot of Influence



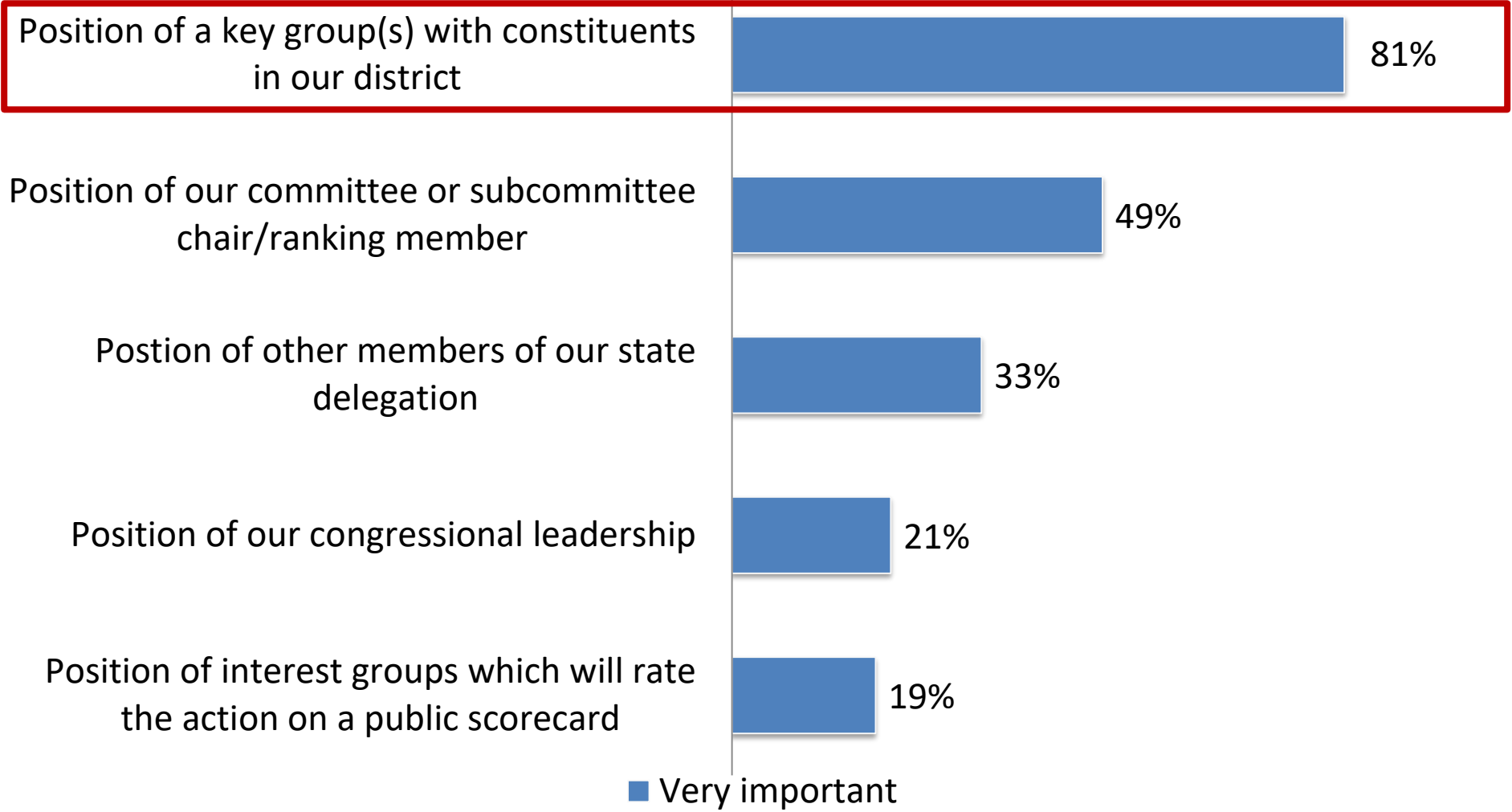
# **Building Long-Term Relationships with Congress**

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# Survey Question

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When making a recommendation to your boss on a vote or co-sponsorship, how important are the following in your decision-making process?



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*“My boss rarely acts if there isn't an impact on his district. Show me a connection as to how your issue directly affects our constituents.”*

—House Legislative Assistant

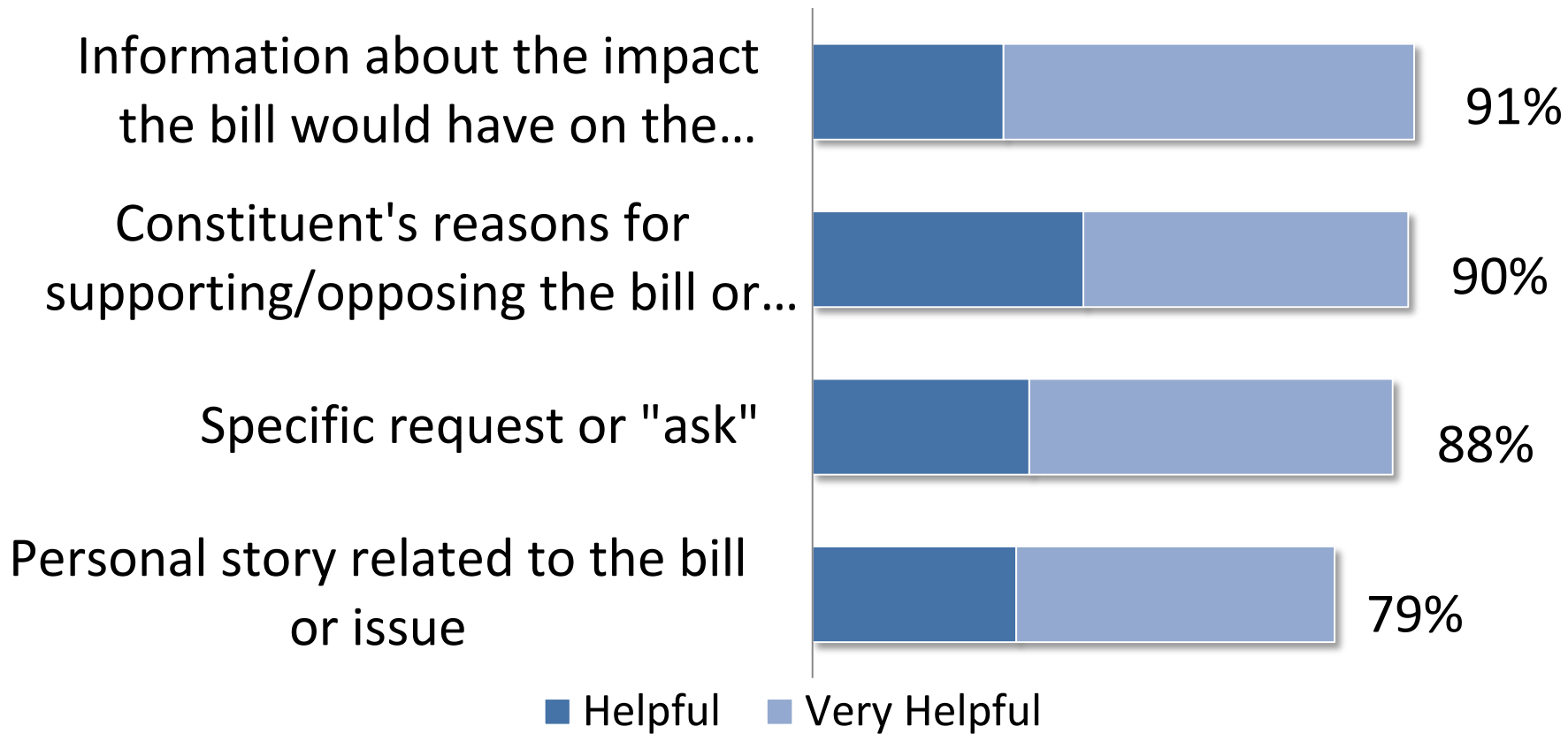
# Survey Question

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“How helpful is it for messages from constituents to include the following?”



### Message Includes...

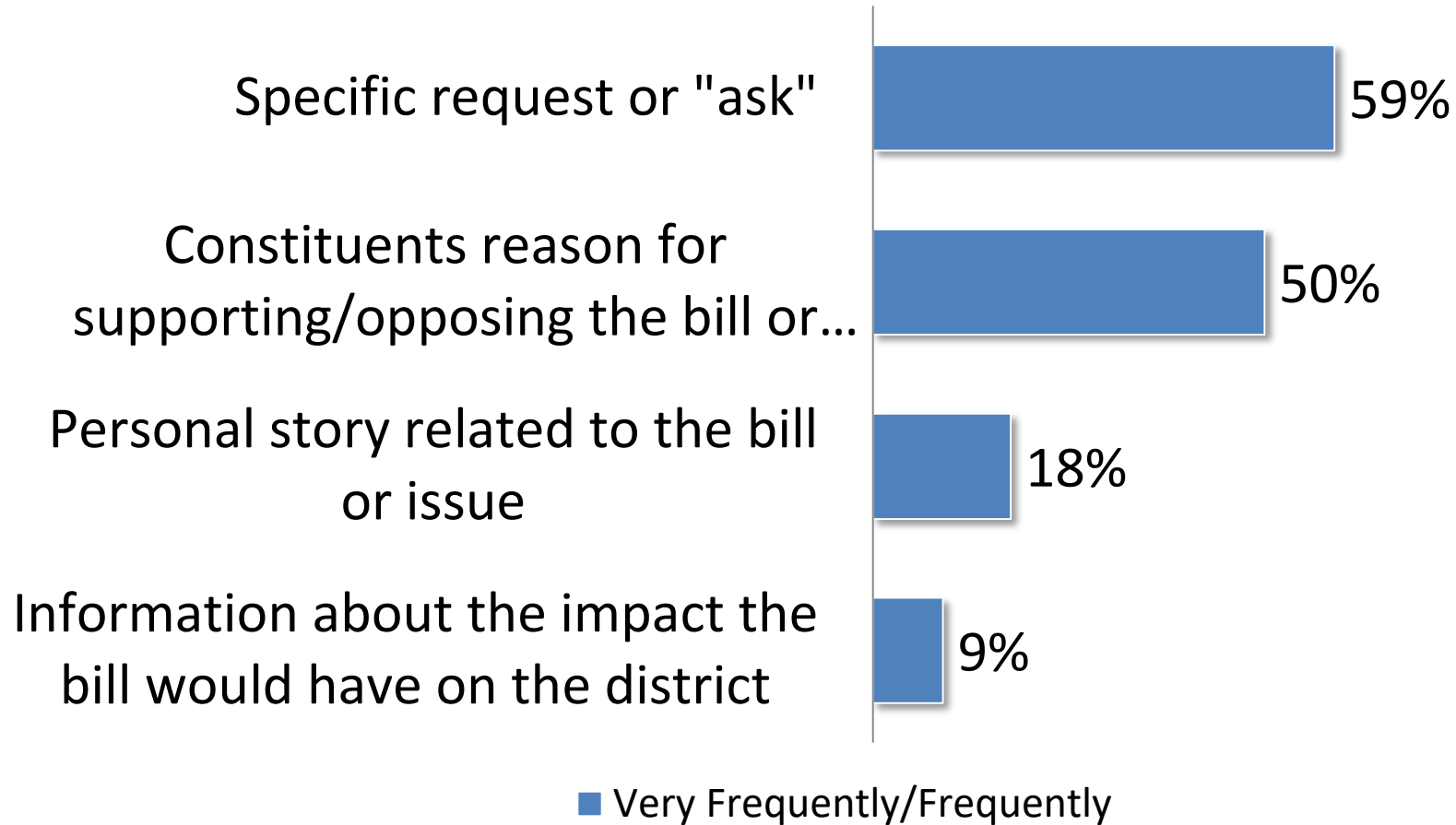


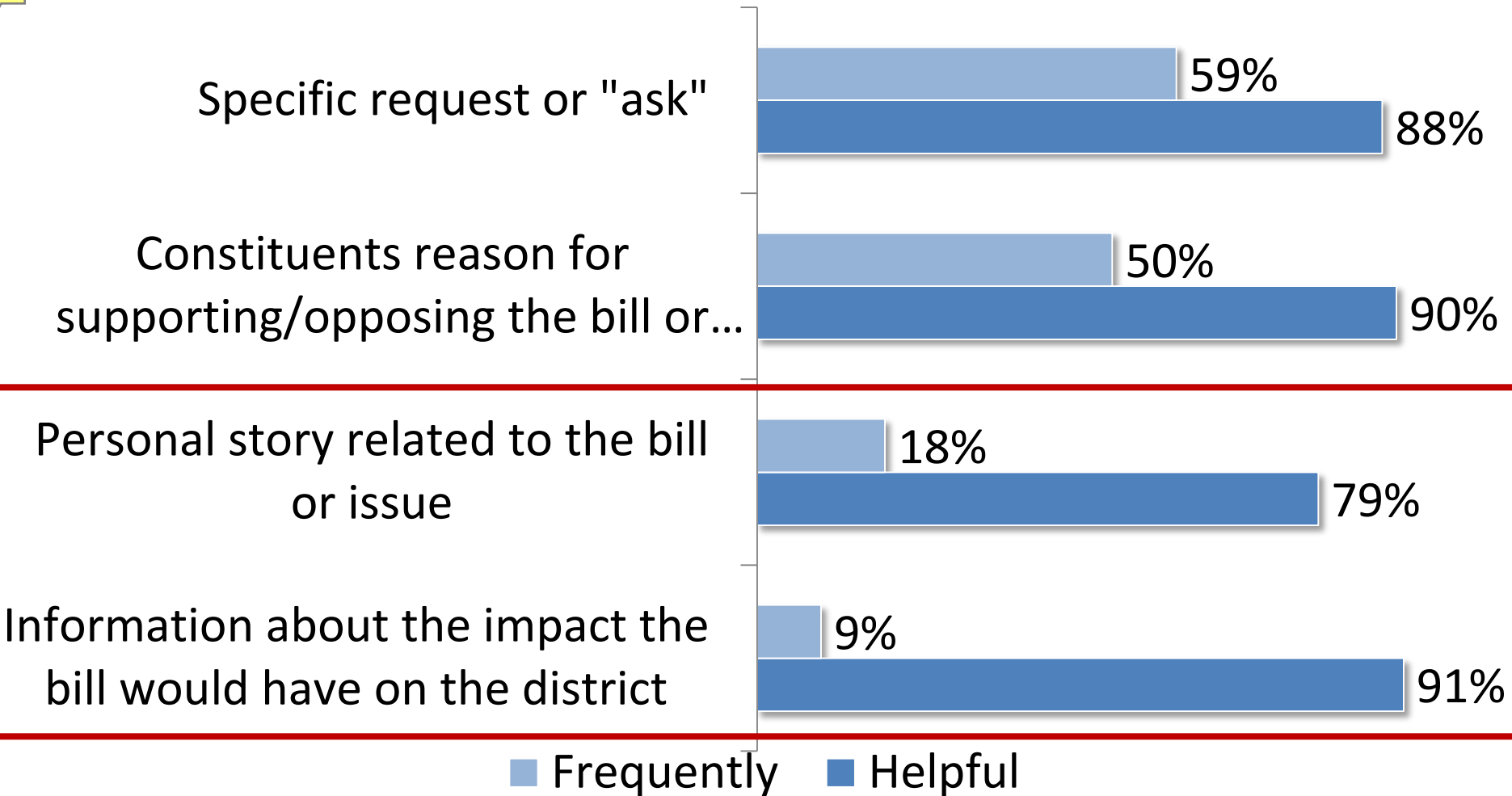


# Survey Question

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“How frequently do messages from constituents include the following?”







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*“I went to a luncheon that was hosted by cancer centers in my state. Instead of having those guys in white coats doing their lobbying they brought in patients -- kids and their parents.*

*They all got up and told their story. When it was done there wasn't a dry eye in the room.”*

House Democratic Member

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## **H.R.2784**

**“No Private Contracts To Be  
Negotiated When the Patient  
Is Buck Naked Act of 1997”**

## **SEC. 3 CERTAIN SITUATIONS WHERE IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO NEGOTIATE A PRIVATE CONTRACT**

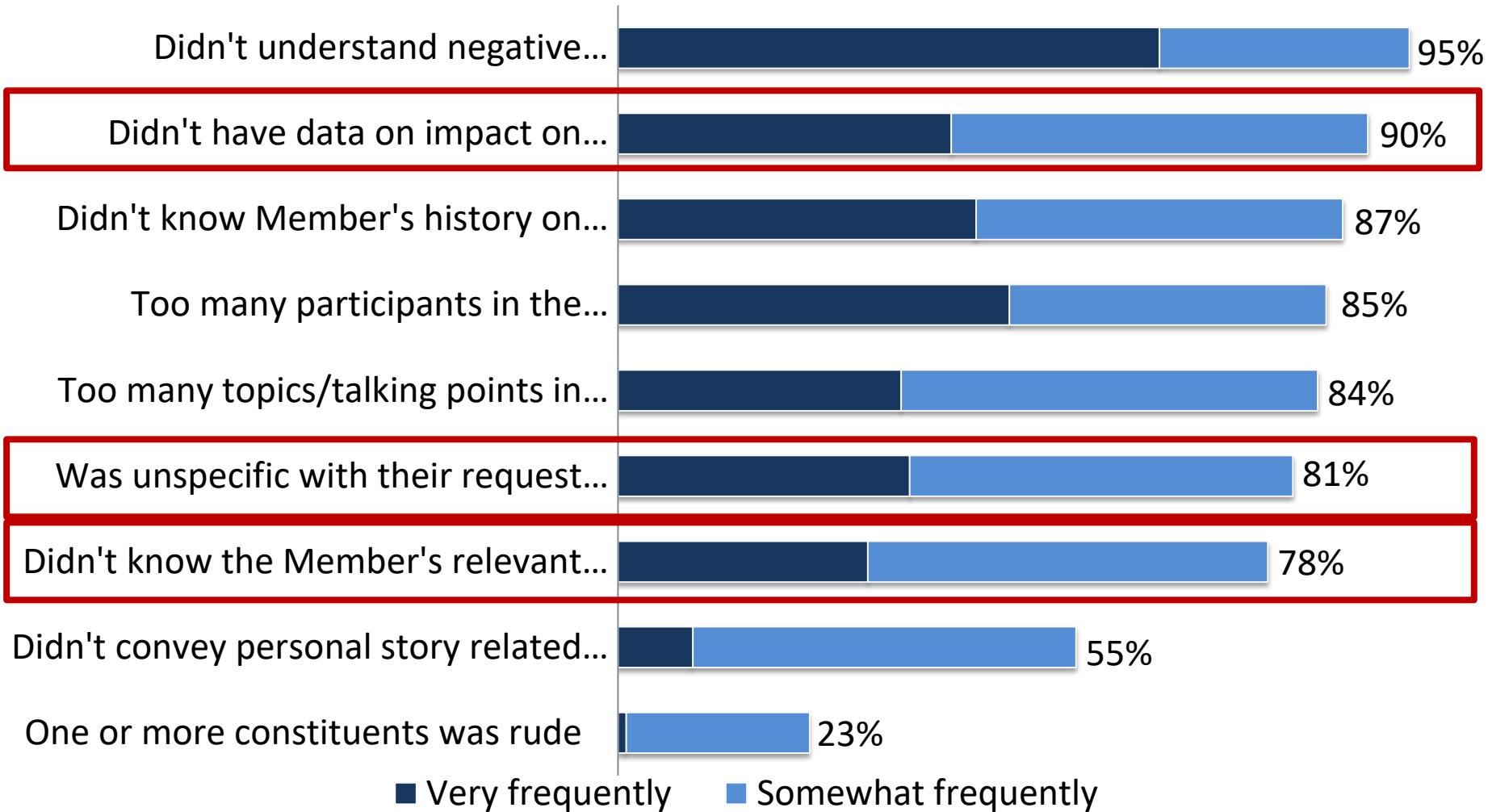
To promote equality in the negotiation of private contracts, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services shall issue regulations prohibiting the discussion or signing of private contracts at any time—

- (a) the patient is buck naked and the doctor is fully clothed (and conversely, to protect the rights of doctors, when the patient is fully clothed and the doctor is naked);
- (b) the patient is wearing one of those short, flimsy little hospital gowns that don't close in the back;
- (c) during any sigmoidoscopic or proctoscopic examination of the gastrointestinal tract or a digital rectal examination of the prostate;

# Survey Question

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How frequently do you experience the following in constituent meetings?





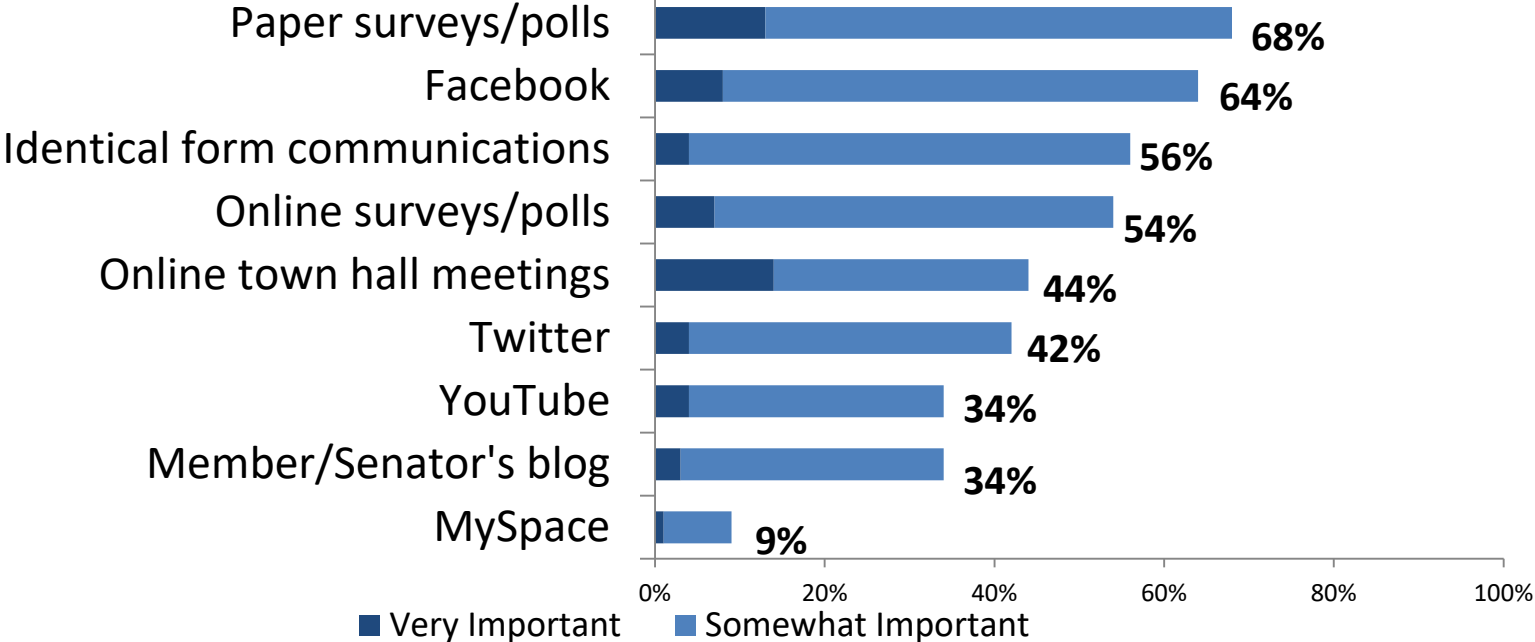
# Average Age of House Legislative Assistant

27



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“In your opinion, how important are the following for understanding constituents' views and opinions?”

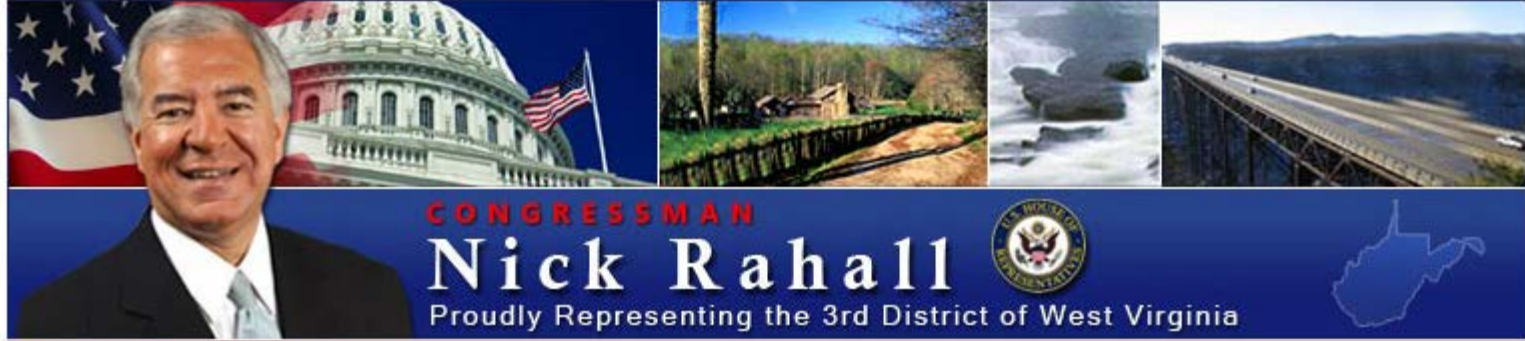


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*“My Member does not like sitting in an office. He prefers to be out in the district meeting with constituents in their own venue. He gains insight to their issues, challenges and needs by being present on the ground.”*

—House District Director

# Meet with the Legislator in the District



**CONGRESSMAN**  
**Nick Rahall**  
Proudly Representing the 3rd District of West Virginia

The banner features a portrait of Congressman Nick Rahall on the left. To his right are four small images: the U.S. Capitol building, a rural landscape with a wooden fence, a rocky coastline with waves, and a long bridge over a river. On the far right is a blue outline map of West Virginia. The text 'CONGRESSMAN Nick Rahall' is in white and red, with 'Proudly Representing the 3rd District of West Virginia' in white below it. The seal of the U.S. House of Representatives is also visible.

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## Health Care



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## Congressman Gerry Connolly

Government Official · Washington, District of Columbia 



**Wall** Congressman Gerry Connolly · Everyone (Top Posts)

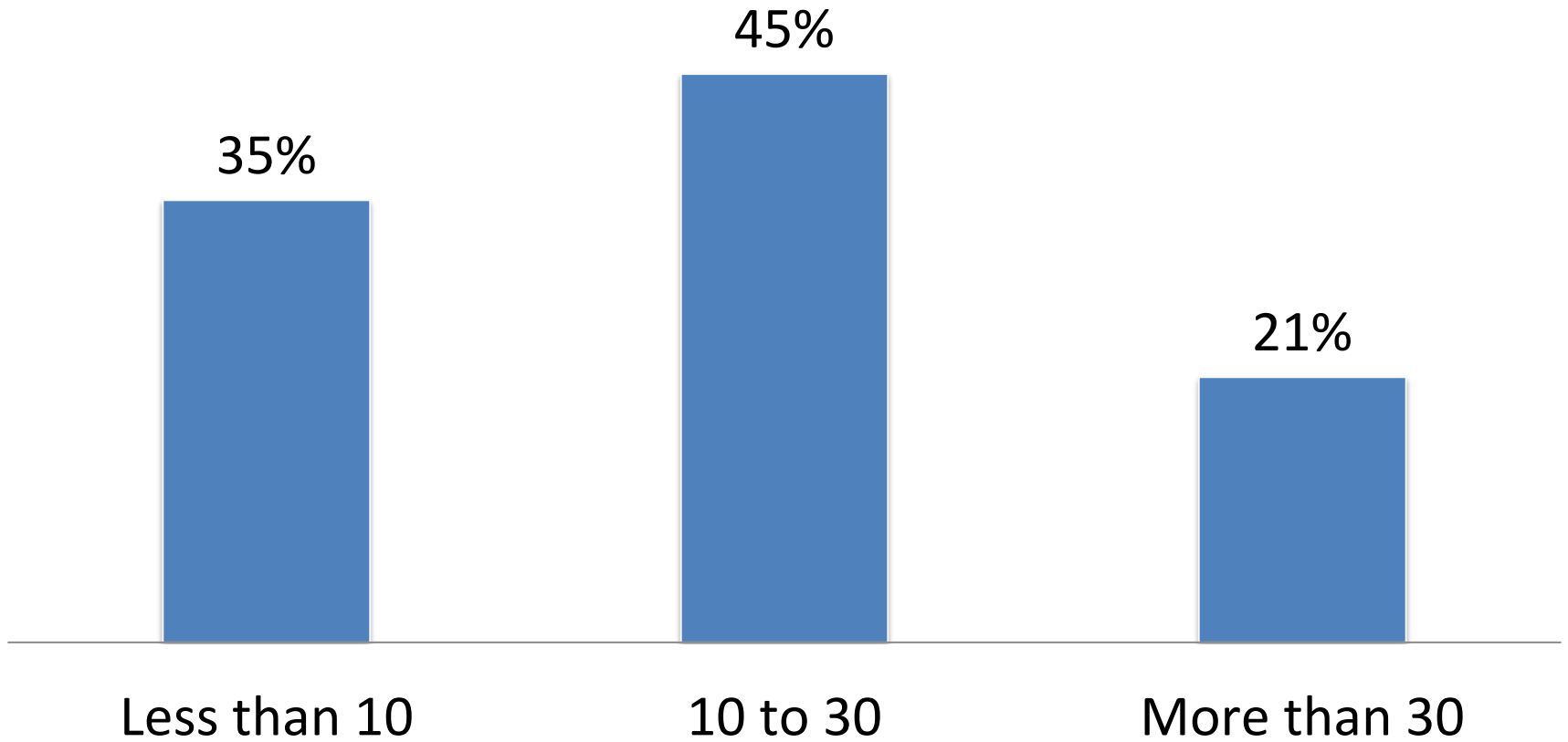
Share:  Post  Photo  Video

Write something...

# Survey Question

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How many similar comments on a social media post is enough for your office to pay attention to?

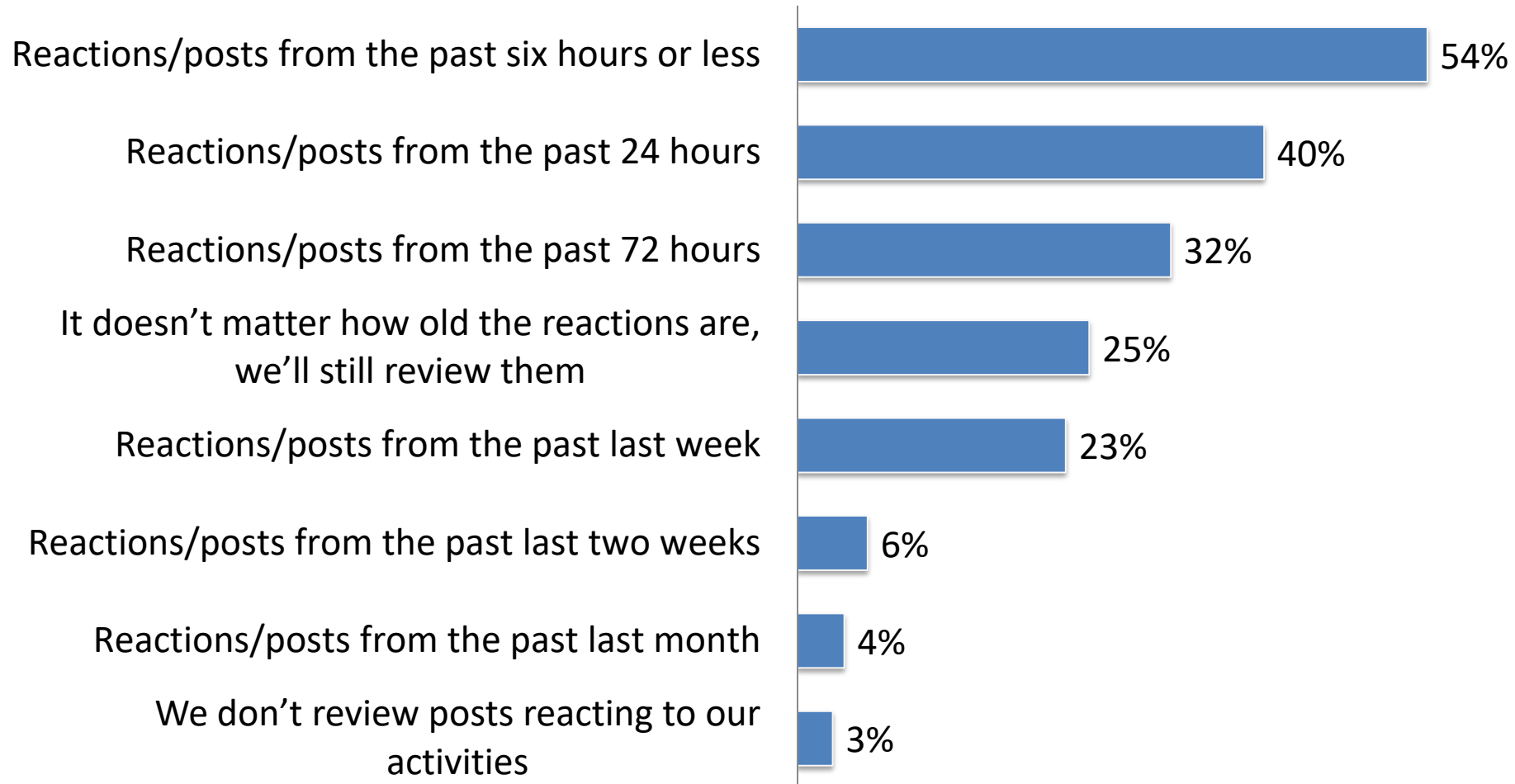


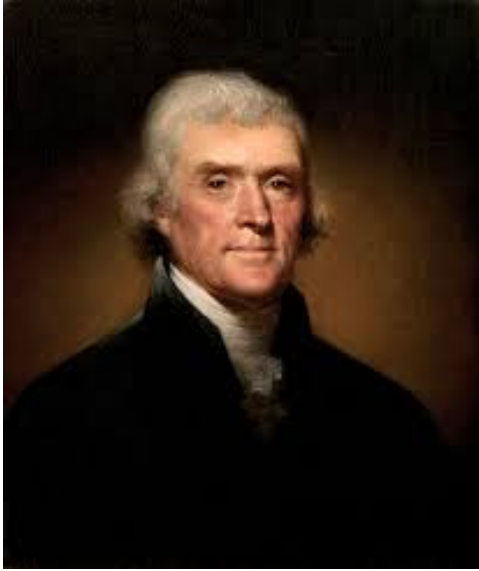


# Survey Question

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How long AFTER posting an office/Member comment will you review reactions?





*“We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.”*

*- Thomas  
Jefferson*

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*A More Perfect Union*



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