June 5, 2025

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

Research Report

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RAINBOW PU$H
COALITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RAINBOW PU$H COALITION

INTRODUCTION

We are conducting a research project for the Rainbow PUSH Coalition to help them better understand how Gen Z consumes social media. Our goal is to provide insights and strategies that will grow their Gen Z following online and, in turn, increase youth participation in the organization's mission for social justice and equity.
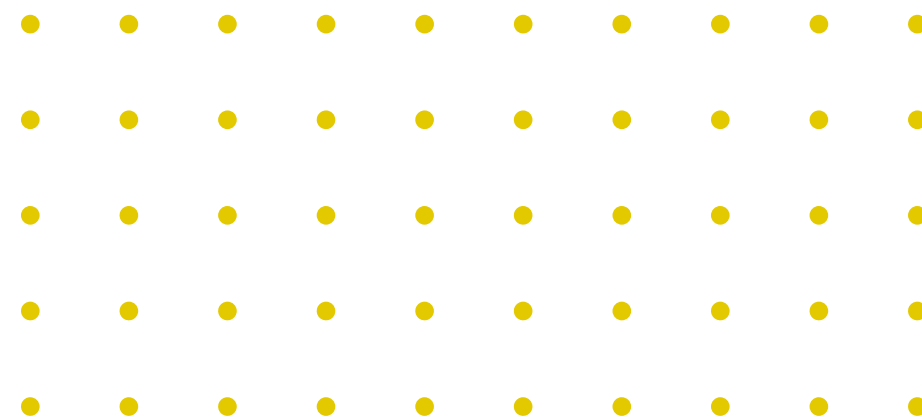
BUSINESS PROBLEM

- **Communication Gaps**: Gen Z is underrepresented in Rainbow PUSH's digital following and content.
- **Platform Fragmentation**: Current social content doesn't align with Gen Z's habits or platforms.
- **Authentic Connection**: Grow awareness, trust, and participation from Gen Z.

RAINBOW PU$H
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Q1:

**Generation Z's reaction to social justice movements:** How do they differ from previous generations? What causes do they care about? How do they show activism?

Q2:

What values, messages, or visual styles most effectively capture Gen Z's attention and drive interaction on social media?

Q3:

How can the Rainbow PUSH Coalition build trust and long-term engagement with Gen Z audiences through its digital presence?
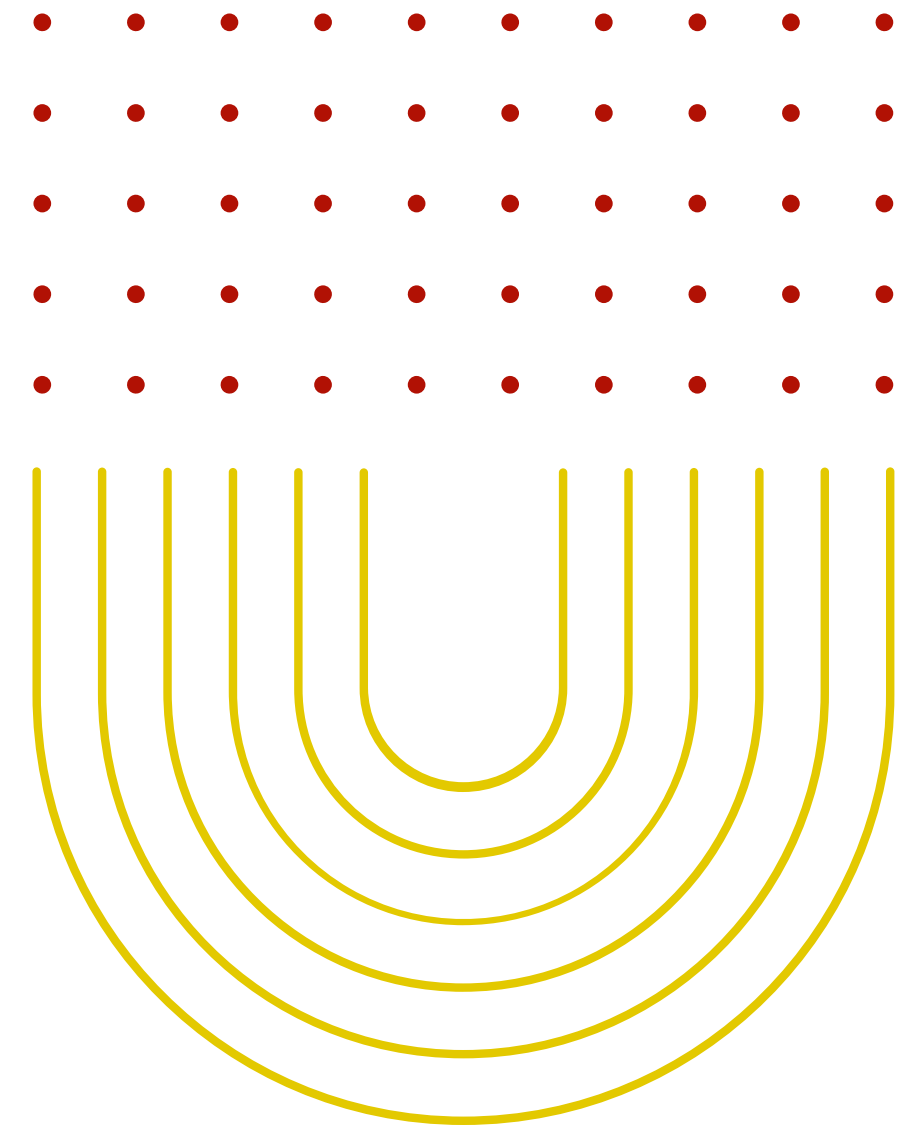
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

METHODS

What we did and how we did it

Secondary Research

1. Pew
2. McKinsey
3. Sprout Social reports
4. Research Journals

Social Audit

Comparative analysis of Rainbow PUSH with orgs like **NAACP & ACLU**
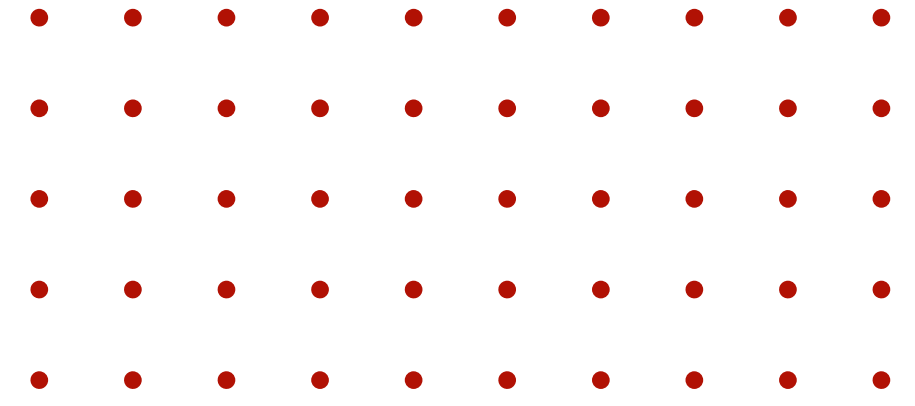
Gen Z Survey

Topics include:
1. Platform usage
2. Content preferences
3. Brand familiarity,
4. Motivations for engagement

RESEARCH FINDINGS

GENERATIONAL SHIFTS IN NON-PROFIT ENGAGEMENT

Most nonprofit donations currently come from Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation (Lewis, 2019).

Gen Z and Millennials are less likely to give financially, often due to limited resources and life stage (Lewis, 2019).

Younger generations prefer to volunteer or support grassroots efforts and individuals directly (Malloy, 2023).

Traditional fundraising tactics may not resonate with Gen Z. Nonprofits must evolve their strategies (Lewis, 2019).

GENERAL GEN-Z ENGAGEMENT

Prioritize transparency and show real impact in communications.

Offer consistent, **meaningful opportunities** for involvement, not just donations.

Use cause-based appeals over organization-based appeals.

Implement **multi-channel outreach** and clear role-based engagement.

Segmented strategies help large orgs tailor messaging; smaller orgs can optimize existing projects (Lewis, 2019).

In calls to action, Gen Z responds better to donating to a "cause" versus donating to an "organization" (Lewis, 2019).

PLATFORM-SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS
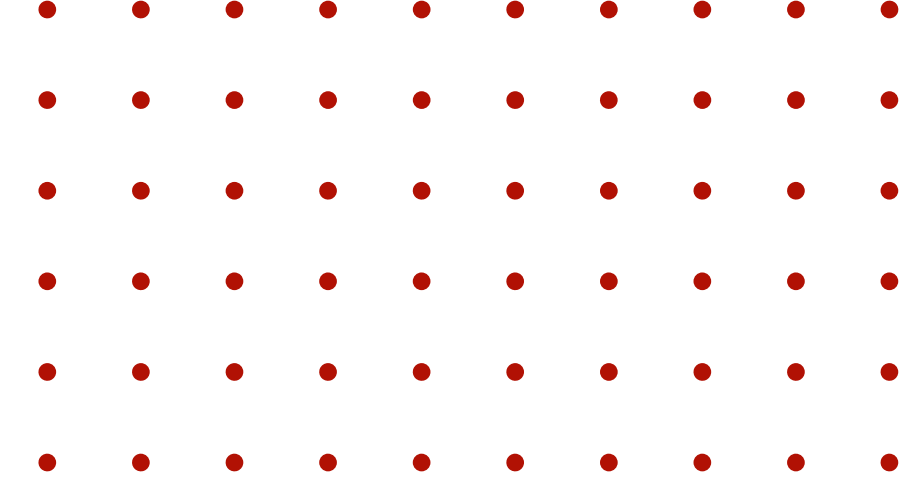
Gen Z engages in activism online **passively rather than actively**, The American Student Assistance study found that larger proportions are doing lighter-touch behaviors (e.g., liking posts, following accounts) than more involved behaviors like signing petitions or donating).

"**51%** of Gen Z are liking/commenting on posts, while 47% are following social media accounts that speak on the issues that are of interest to them, and **44%** are following influencers to hear perspectives and points of view on various issues" (Lammers, n.d).

Nearly **1 in 3** members of Gen Z are taking more active steps to drive action in the issues important to them (Lammers, n.d).

Source:American Student Assistance

CROSS-PLATFORM BEHAVIORS

Gen-Z networks appeared to be more insular, with less interaction between groups. This finding suggests that Gen Z engages more in localized discussions within their circles, potentially influencing brand discourse on social platforms." (Badurak & Jackson, 2024).

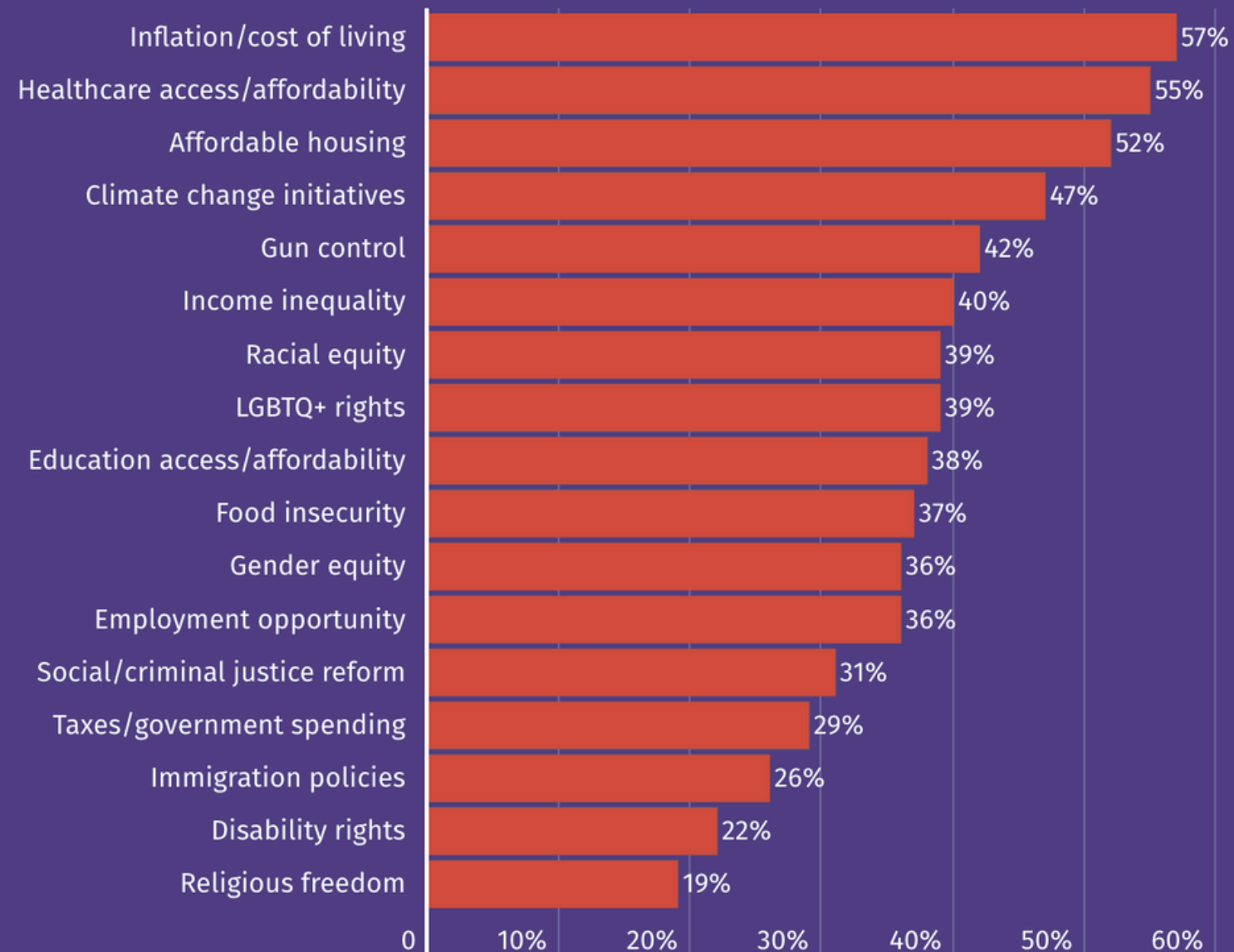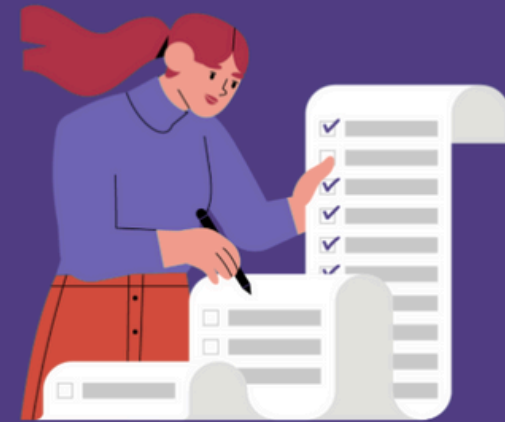Gen Z behaviors on social media: Gen Z typically uses social media for:
- Entertainment & Escapism
- Communication & Convenience
- Social Interaction & Support
- Information Seeking & Sharing

Social media is deeply woven into Gen Z's lives, driven by emotional connection and personal relevance (Buzzetto-Hollywood, Banks, & Hill, 2024).
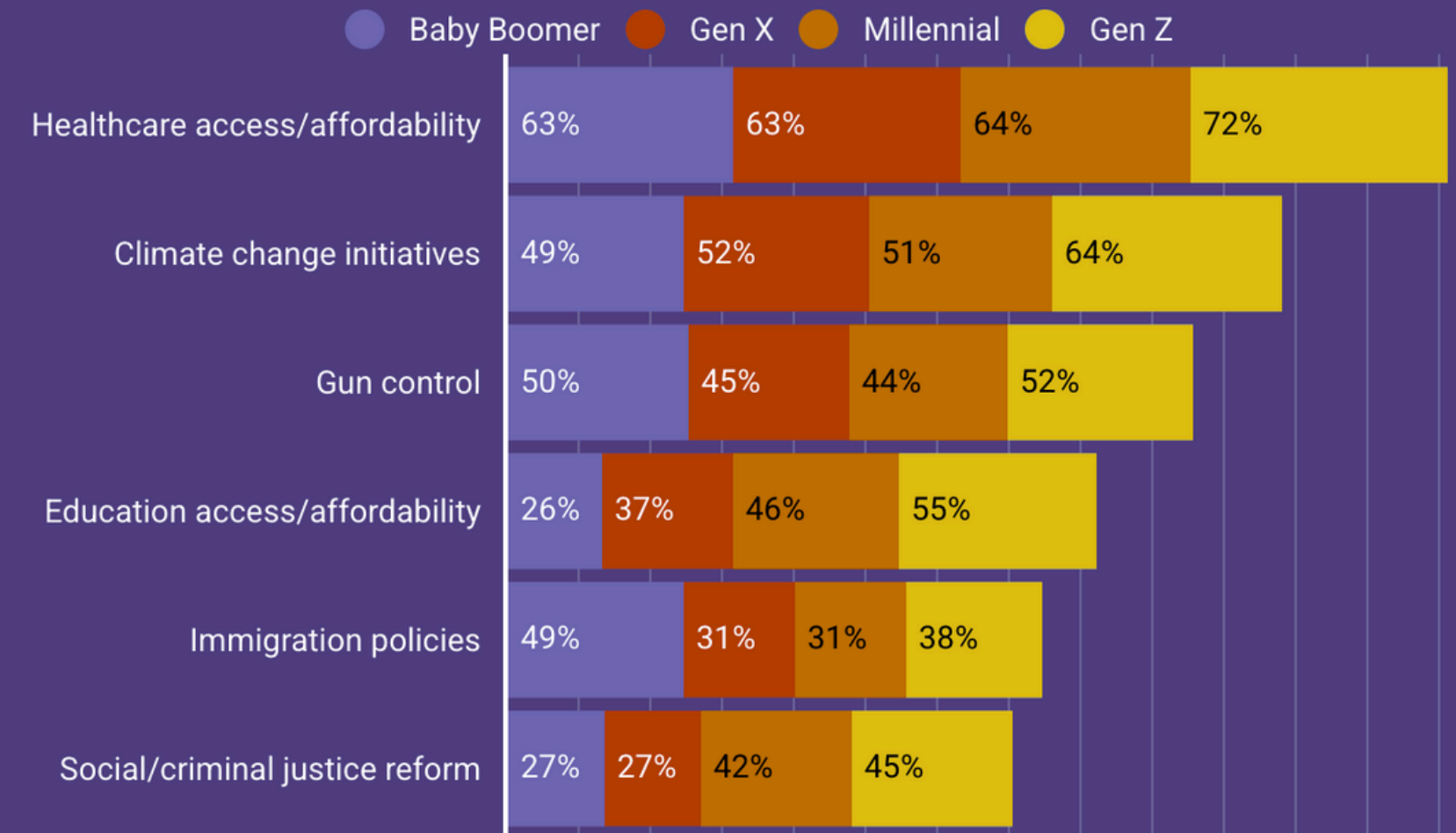
WHICH CAUSES ARE GEN Z MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

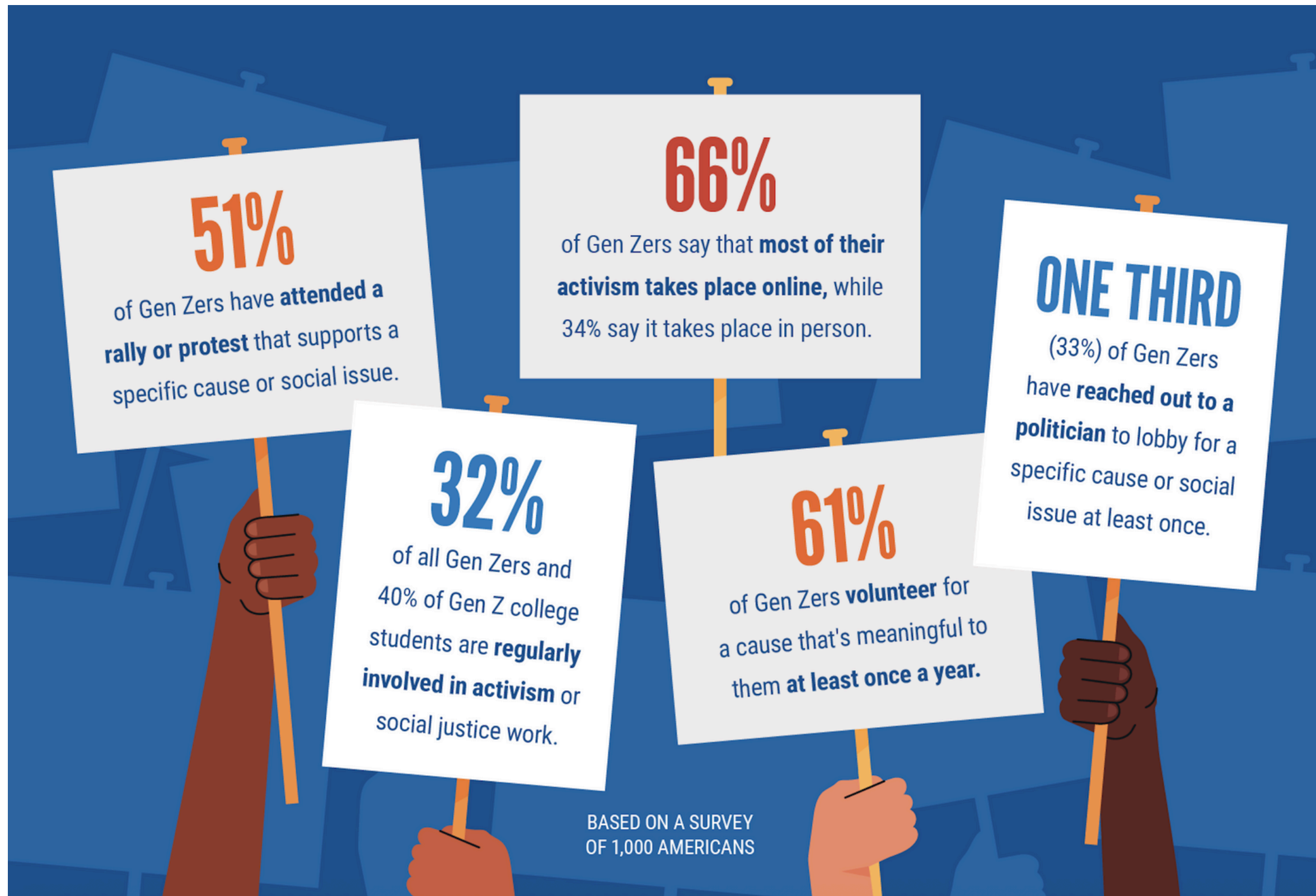**BASED ON A SURVEY OF 1,000 AMERICANS**

Cause	Percentage
Inflation/cost of living	57%
Healthcare access/affordability	55%
Affordable housing	52%
Climate change initiatives	47%
Gun control	42%
Income inequality	40%
Racial equity	39%
LGBTQ+ rights	39%
Education access/affordability	38%
Food insecurity	37%
Gender equity	36%
Employment opportunity	36%
Social/criminal justice reform	31%
Taxes/government spending	29%
Immigration policies	26%
Disability rights	22%
Religious freedom	19%

PREFERENCE FOR PARTICIPATION

Source:UnitedWayNCA.org

SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL

	Baby Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Healthcare access/affordability	63%	63%	64%	72%
Climate change initiatives	49%	52%	51%	64%
Gun control	50%	45%	44%	52%
Education access/affordability	26%	37%	46%	55%
Immigration policies	49%	31%	31%	38%
Social/criminal justice reform	27%	27%	42%	45%

GEN Z & ACTIVISM

51% of Gen Zers have **attended a rally or protest** that supports a specific cause or social issue.

66% of Gen Zers say that **most of their activism takes place online,** while 34% say it takes place in person.

32% of all Gen Zers and 40% of Gen Z college students are **regularly involved in activism** or social justice work.

61% of Gen Zers **volunteer** for a cause that's meaningful to them **at least once a year.**

ONE THIRD (33%) of Gen Zers have **reached out to a politician** to lobby for a specific cause or social issue at least once.

BASED ON A SURVEY OF 1,000 AMERICANS

United Way NCA **Gen Z Activism Survey** from 2024

Digital activism dominates

Gen Z main concerns are...
- Mental Health
- Economic
- Social
- Environmental
- Humanity & Civil Rights focused

Activism = driven by **frustration**

GEN Z & MOTIVATION

← Post

David Hogg 🟧 ✓
@davidhogg111

I'm not powered by hope. I'm powered by the fact that I have no other choice.

9:31 PM · Jun 13, 2022

💬 621   🔁 1.5K   ❤️ 18K   🔖 37   ⬆️

💬 Read 621 replies
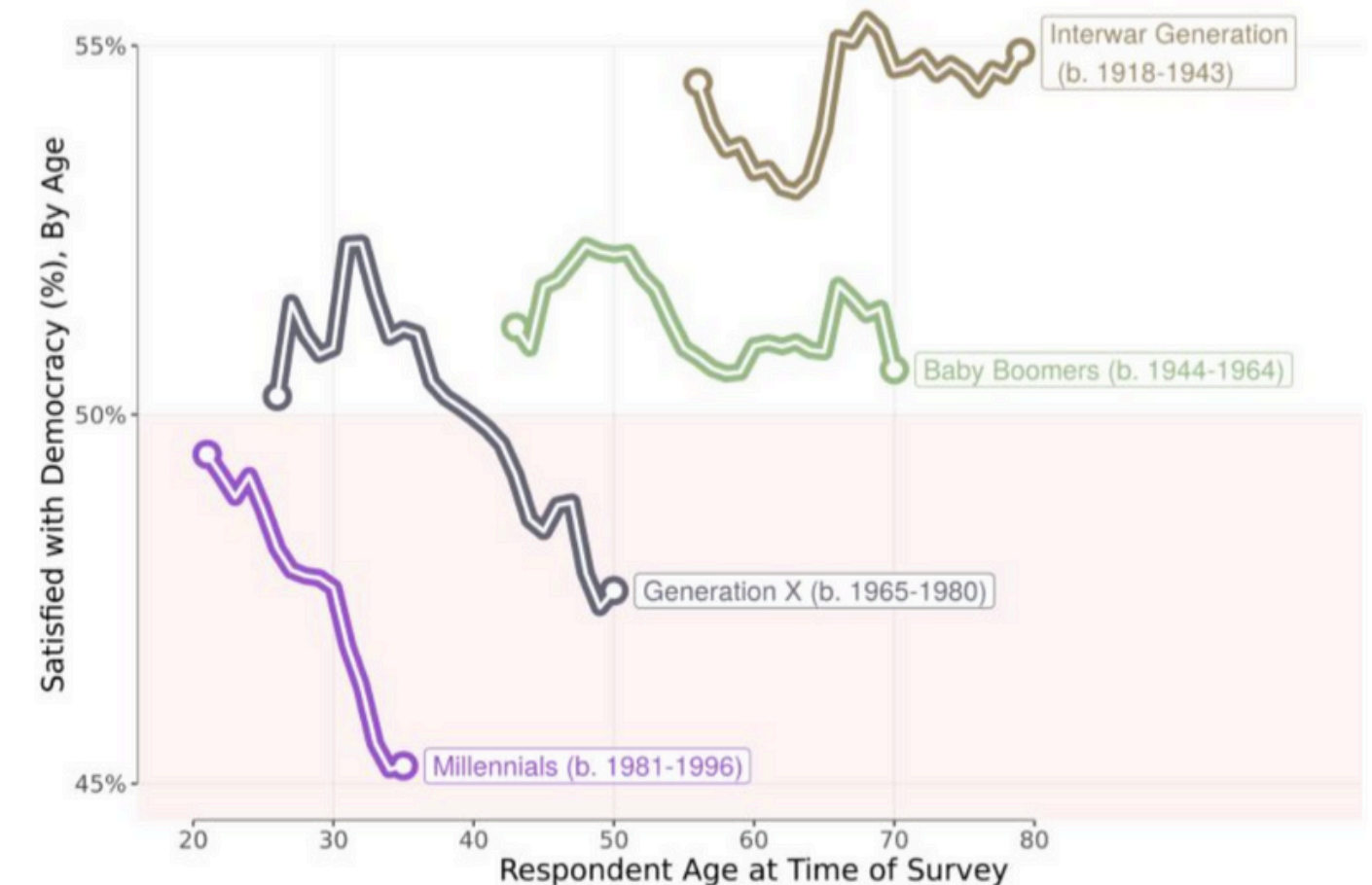
Parkland, Florida mass-shooting survivor

Gen Z = most likely to boycott almost anything...

80% of Gen Z wouldn't work for a company that doesn't share the same values

Democracy is **declining at its steepest rate** for those ages 18-34 years old (BBC, 2022).

Source: BBC & University of Cambridge

TRUST BUILDING WITH GEN Z

Gen Z grew up during major global and national upheavals: 9/11, the Iraq War, the 2008 recession, political division, and a global pandemic. These experiences have shaped their deep skepticism toward institutions, with only 1 in 4 expressing trust in government leaders, according to Pew Research (Malloy 2023).

Transparency, making information easily visible and accessible, especially around organizational practices, is a key priority for this generation, likely influenced by growing up in the digital age (Lewis 2019).

Gen Z's Trust Landscape: Science and Military Soar; Congress Lags

How much do you trust each of the following?

■ % A great deal ■ % Quite a lot ■ % Some ■ % Very little

	% A great deal	% Quite a lot	% Some	% Very little
Science	36	35	22	6
The military	14	26	35	25
The medical system	13	32	36	19
Police	13	25	33	29
The criminal justice system	5	18	39	38
The Supreme Court	5	16	40	38
Information you find on the internet		15	58	22
Large tech companies		13	44	40
The presidency		11	39	46
The news		13	44	40
Congress		9	38	50
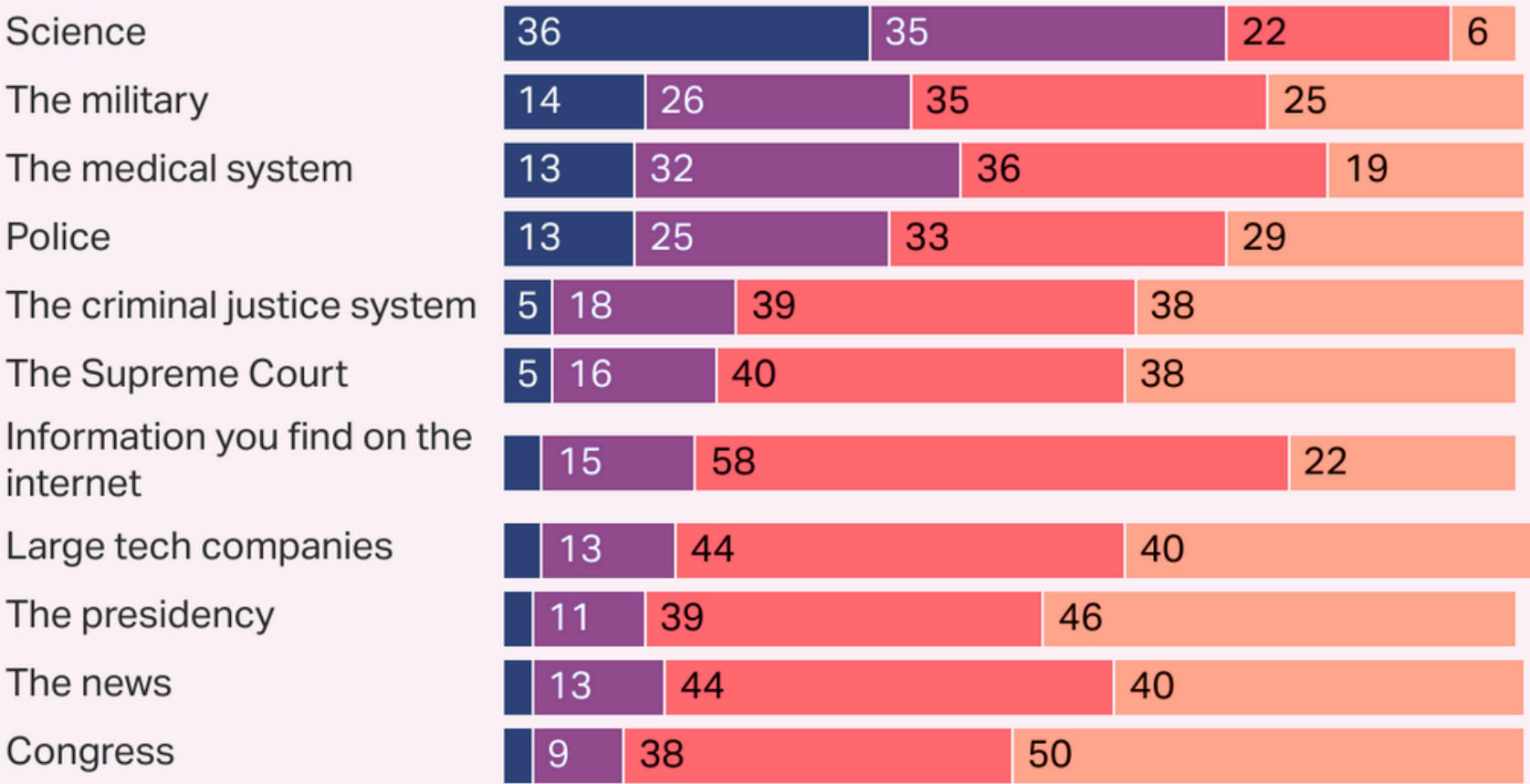
Gallup and Walton Family Foundation-State of American Youth Survey, April 24-May 8, 2023

GALLUP

WHO GEN Z FOLLOWS

Gen Z and a few Millennials are more likely to follow **impact creators**, these individuals use their social platforms to champion causes, raise funds, and inspire others to act (AllegianceGroup, 2025).

1 in 4 of Gen Z say they have been motivated to donate because of an **impact creator** they follow, and half would trust that creator to donate on their behalf.

NADYA OKAMOTO   133K

Nadya is dedicated to erasing period poverty and stigma through service and education. Founder and former Executive Director of the nonprofit organization PERIOD.

GRETA THUNBERG   14.8M

Greta, a Swedish environmental activist, began her activism at the age of 15. She gained international attention for her solo protest outside the Swedish Parliament in 2018, advocating for stronger climate action.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI   2.4M

Malala is known for her educational equality efforts and is one of the most notable Gen Z activist influencers. She is the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in history.

Source: AllegianceGroup

INSIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

Context and Purpose :

- Growing youth apathy has created a need for programs that foster civic engagement.

Gen Z & Civic Engagement :

- Gen Z is more civically active than past generations.
- 40.8 million are eligible to vote in 2024.
- They are socially conscious, tech-savvy, and use social media for activism.

Bridging Passions :

- Encourages mentorship and leadership development.

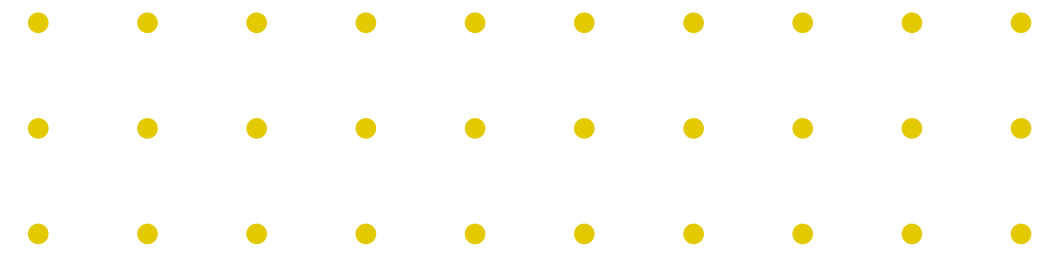## Culture of Service:

- Focused on addressing overlooked community needs.

Modern Civic Leadership:

- A catalyst for social change.
- Connects people and passions.
- Cultivates a lasting culture of service

Source: (Headrick, 2024)

INSIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

Gen Z Is Diverse and Values Diversity

- Over 74 million Gen Z individuals in the U.S.
- Most racially and ethnically diverse generation in U.S. history.
- On track to be the most well-educated generation.
- Will be the last predominantly white generation in the U.S.
- 22% of Gen Zers have at least one immigrant parent (vs. 14% of Millennials).
- Projected to become majority non-white by 2026.

Gen Z and Important Issues

- Generally progressive and pro-government.
- Less likely to believe in xenophobic ideas or American exceptionalism.
- Highly conscious of:
  - Racial justice and equality
  - Climate change
  - Global unrest and geopolitical crises
  - Economic disparities

Gen Z and Technology

- Digital Natives: Grew up with smartphones and online communication.
- Online Lives: Childhood milestones often shared digitally.
- Always Connected: Online multiple times daily.
- Social Media Habits:
  - Top platforms: YouTube, TikTok, Instagram.
  - 35% spend 4+ hours daily on social media.

Themes from Student Perspectives

- Catalyst of Social Change: Requires courage and stepping out of comfort zones to understand community needs.
- Bridging People and Passions: Encourages mentoring and developing future leaders for sustainable impact.
- Culture of Service: Students want to address neglected community issues and create lasting change.

STRATEGIC RECOMENDATIONS

CONTENT THAT *WORKS*

- **Short-form videos (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels)**
  - **Mini Explainers:** 30-second Reels that break down civic terms (like gerrymandering or voter suppression) using fun visuals, music, and Gen Z narrators
  - **Behind-the-Scenes at PUSH Events:** Show organizing, setup, and people's reactions in the moment with trending audios and captions
- **Infographics and carousel posts for educational content**

Brand content Gen Z engages with most: YouTube

Long-form video (>60 seconds)
50%
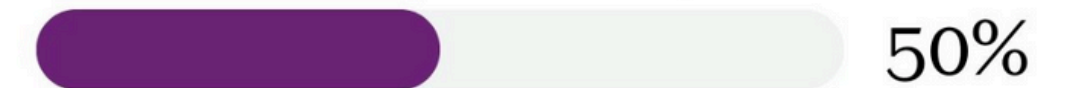
Influencer sponsored content
29%
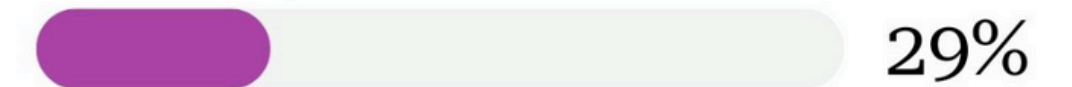
Short-form video (15-30 seconds)
26%

Brand content Gen Z engages with most: Instagram

Short-form video (<15 seconds)
46%
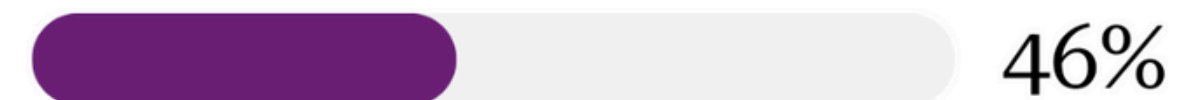
Static images
40%
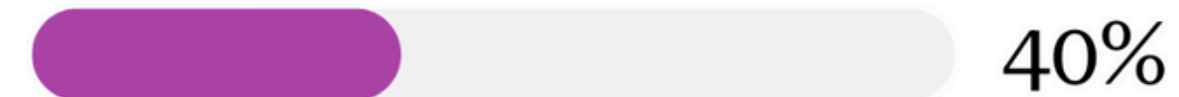
Short-form video (15-30 seconds)
36%
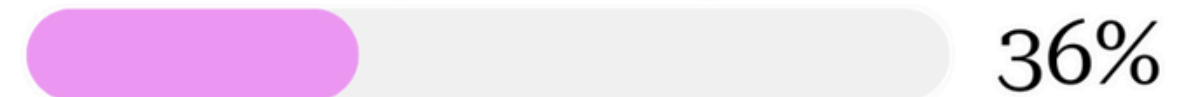
CONTENT THAT *WORKS*

- **Personal stories that humanize messages**
  - **Testimonial Tuesday:** Share stories from students who benefited from PUSH Excel scholarships (Include quotes and photos or video clips)
  - **"Why I Push" Campaign:** Feature community members, interns, or volunteers explaining why they're involved in the organization in 60-second videos
  - **Alumni Spotlights:** Tell stories of those who started with PUSH as youth and are now community leaders, educators, or organizers
- **User-generated content (UGC) for authenticity**
  - **#MyPushMoment Challenge:** Invite young people to post videos or photos of when they first got involved in activism, tagging Rainbow PUSH
  - **Repost & Reshare:** Actively share TikTok explainers about social justice made by Gen Z follower
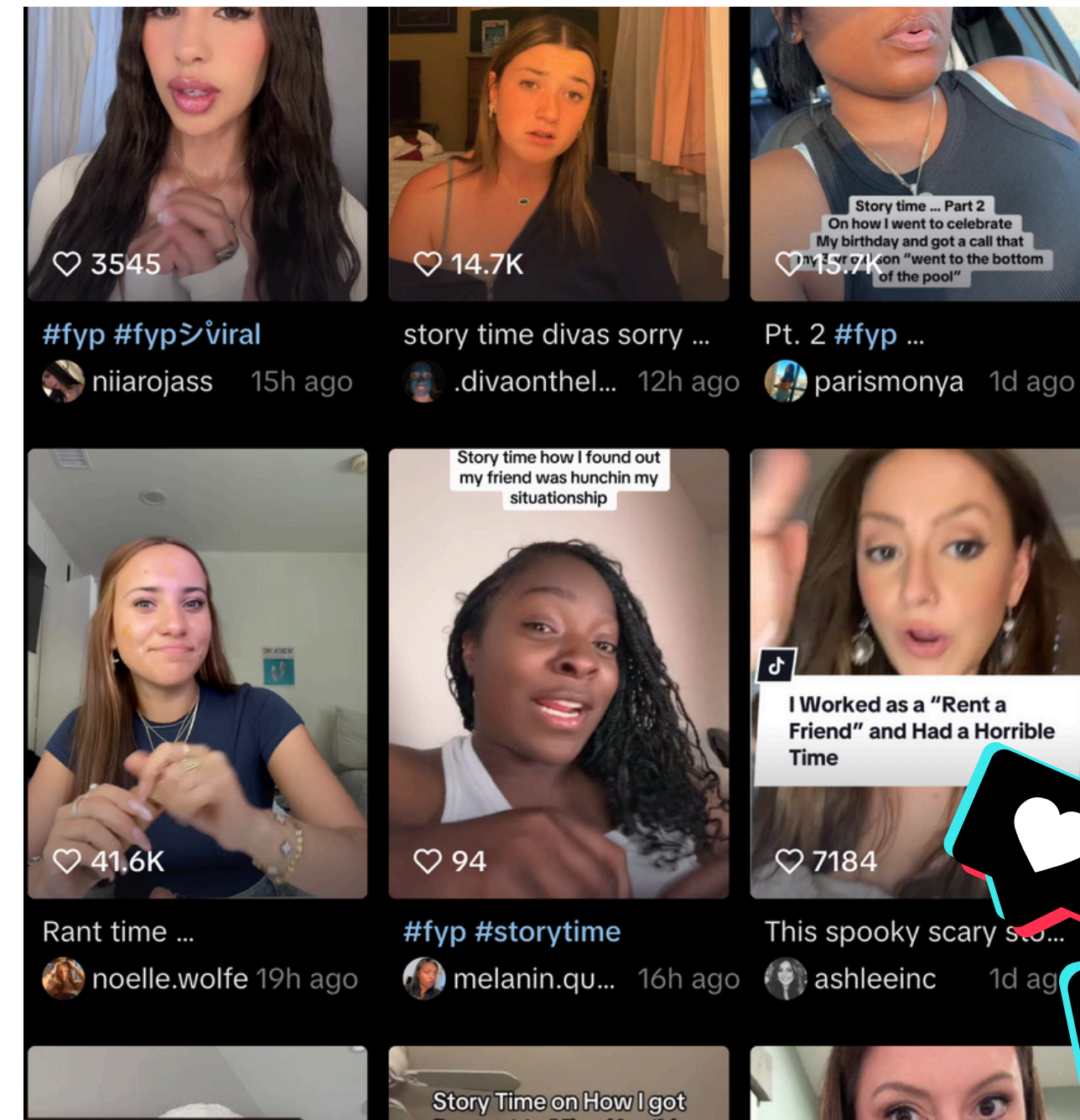
BROADENING THE BROADCAST

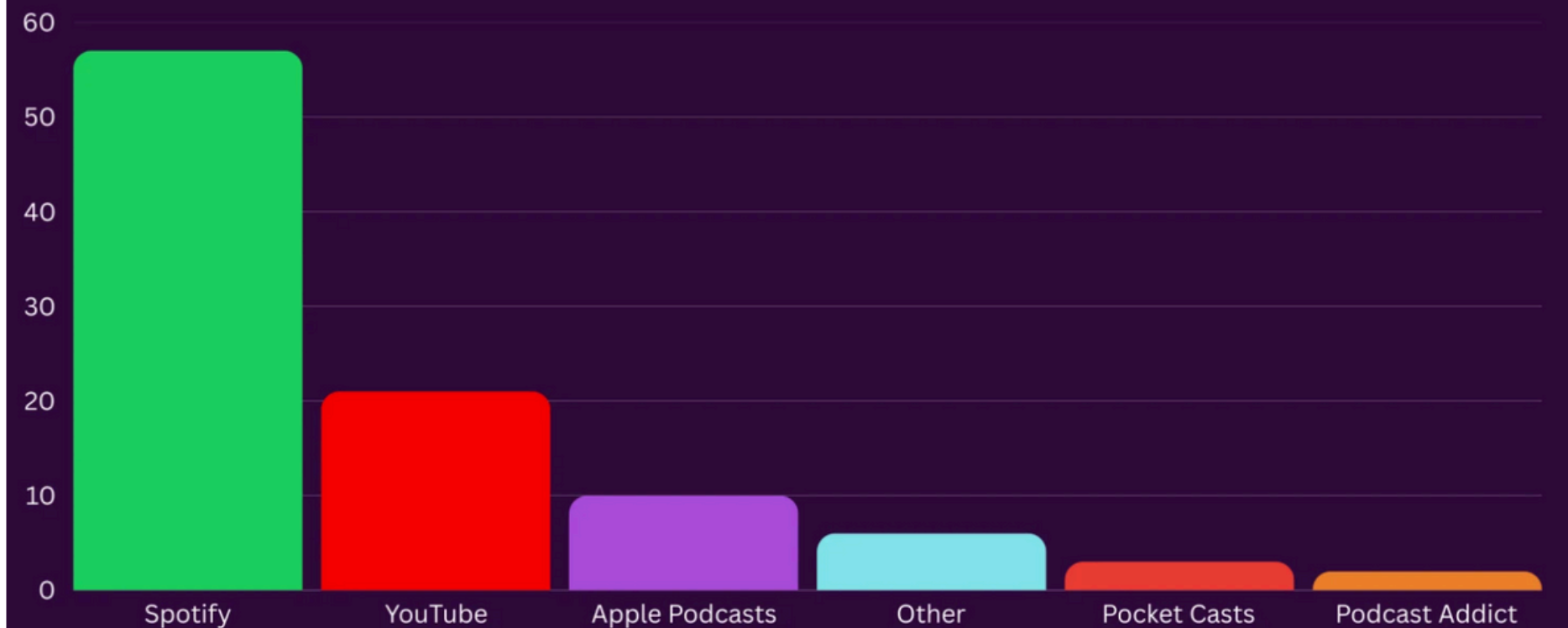Spotify is the most popular platform for podcasts among Gen Z

56%
prefer Spotify over other platforms

88%
of listeners prefer audio-only

MOST POPULAR GEN Z PODCAST APPS

© 2025 Transistor.fm

The Saturday Broadcast: May 10th, 2025

01:10 — 04:10

THE BENEFITS OF CROSS-POSTING

If members of the community are guest speaking with Rainbow PUSH, we recommend coordinating cross-posting opportunities with their social media accounts.

This is mutually beneficial and will help to extend your reach across audiences. It will also help your partners connect with your audience.

Currently, posts with the most engagement are cross-posts with Rev. Jackson's account.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Utilizing the 5-3-1 method to gain new followers:

5
like five posts

3
*comment on three posts*

1
gain one new follower

Along with cross-posting, it's important to engage with your own community.

We'd recommend responding to most, if not all, comments on social media posts. This will work with the algorithm and help boost your posts to your own followers and help you find new ones.

Additionally, reels that are between 60-90 seconds generate 24% more shares.
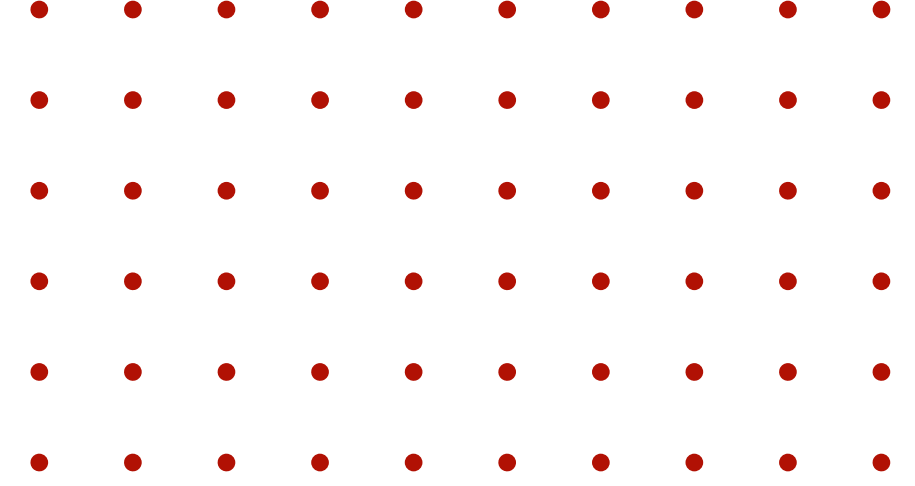.
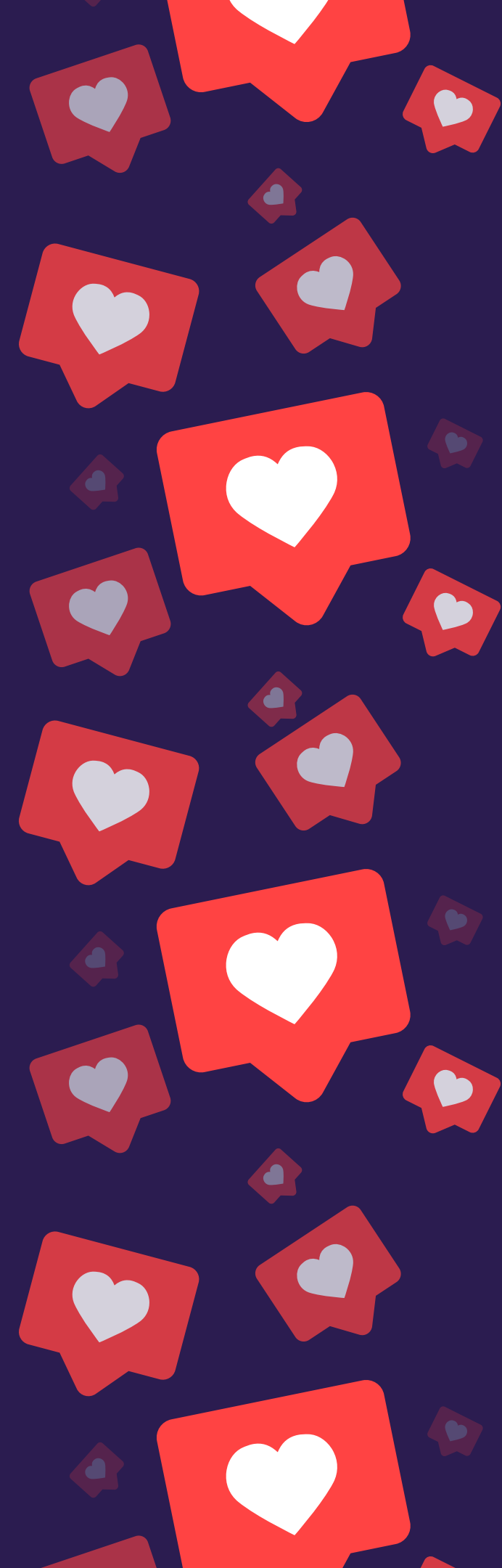
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- Recruit Gen Z students as local/campus ambassadors
- Empower them to create and post content, host events, and facilitate discussions
  - Builds grassroots trust and decentralizes engagement

SURVEY DESIGN RATIONALE

Awareness & Familiarity
- Assess brand awareness with the question: "Have you heard of Rainbow PUSH Coalition?"

Platform Behavior
- Understand where Gen Z spends time online: "Which platforms do you use regularly?"
- Discover where they learn about social causes

Content Preferences
- Identify formats Gen Z enjoys (videos, infographics, etc.)
- Clarify what earns their trust and loyalty

Influence & Motivation
- Pinpoint peer influence and trusted messengers
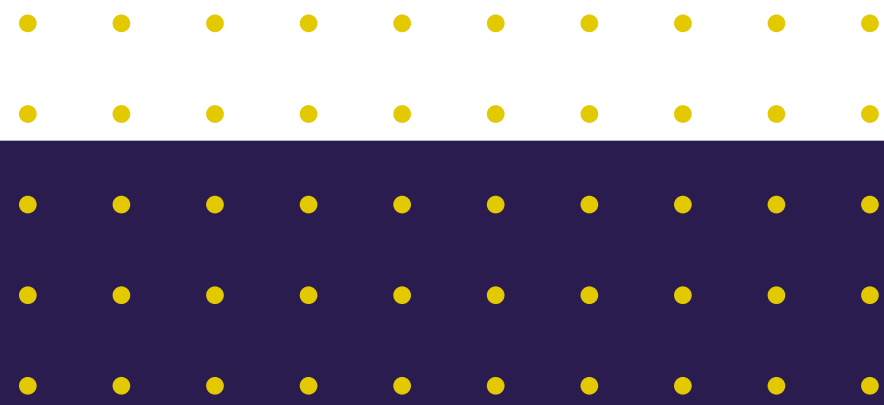- Find what motivates action: event attendance, donations, or sharing

Recommendation:

Rainbow PUSH can deploy this survey via Linktree, Instagram Stories, email newsletters, campus groups, and at in-person events.

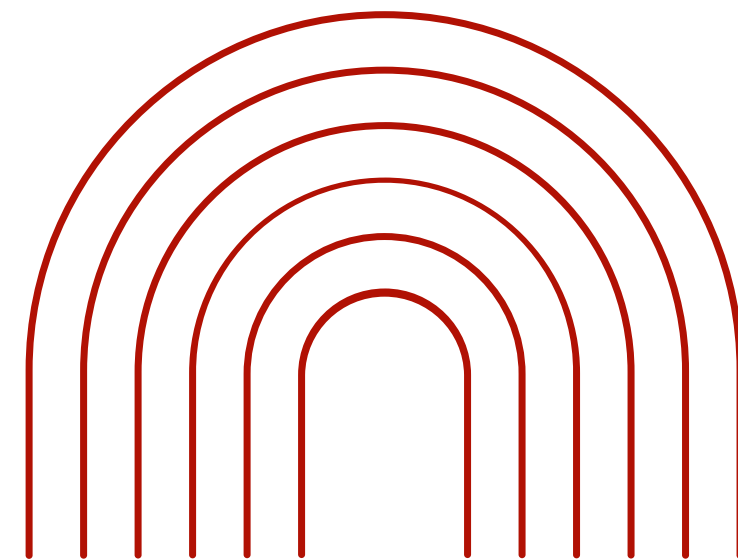# RAINBOW PUSH COALITION COMMUNITY SURVEY

THANK YOU

Do you have any questions?

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