



The Campus Attitudes towards Politics and Public Service (CAPPS) Survey

An Annual Survey by and of College Students

“Are we willing to sacrifice...the present for the future—or must we sacrifice our future in order to enjoy the present? That is the question of the New Frontier. That is the choice our nation must make...between the public interest and private comfort—between national greatness and national decline.”

--John F. Kennedy

Institute of Politics



The Institute of Politics was founded in 1966 at Harvard University by the friends and family of the late President John F. Kennedy. Its mission is two fold: to inspire undergraduates to public service and to bridge the gap between academia and politics.



This report is broken into the following sections:

- **Key Findings**
- **September 11th Aftermath**
- **Civic and Political Engagement**
- **Recommendations**
- **Civic Index Explanation**
- **Methodology**



Key Findings

Key Findings



An Overwhelming majority of college students support air strikes on Afghanistan

- Four out of five, or 79% of college students support U.S. led air strikes
- More than two-thirds, or 68%, of college students favor the use of ground troops
- Support for the military efforts in Afghanistan is, however, slightly lower than among the general population
 - 92% of the general population supports U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan (ABC, 10/9)
 - 80% of the general population supports the use of ground troops (CNN, 10/21)
 - 71% of male college students say that they would serve in the military if drafted, while 26% say they would seek an alternative
 - 34% of college students believe the U.S. should have done more to find a diplomatic solution before attacking Afghanistan as opposed to 14% of the general population (ABC, 10/9)

Key Findings



Trust in national government has increased, state and local remained the same

- **60% trust the federal government to do the right thing all or most of the time as opposed to 36% in 2000**
 - 75% trust the military
 - 69% trust the President
 - 62% trust Congress

Civic Engagement is on the Rise

- **71% of college students have donated blood, given money, or volunteered in relief efforts for the September 11th terrorist attack**
- **92% of college students consider themselves patriotic**
- **68% of college students rate terrorism as the most important issue facing the country. In 2000, terrorism was not rated as an issue that concerned people**
- **86% of college students believe that their generation is ready to lead America in the future**
- **69% have volunteered in community service as opposed to 60% in 2000**
- **77% of students now say politics is relevant to their lives as opposed to 68% in 2000**



September 11th Aftermath



The tragic events of September 11th gave a sense of purpose and new meaning to the concept of public service; a generation already actively engaged in their communities became even more involved.

71% of college students have given blood, volunteered time, or donated money to September 11th relief efforts.

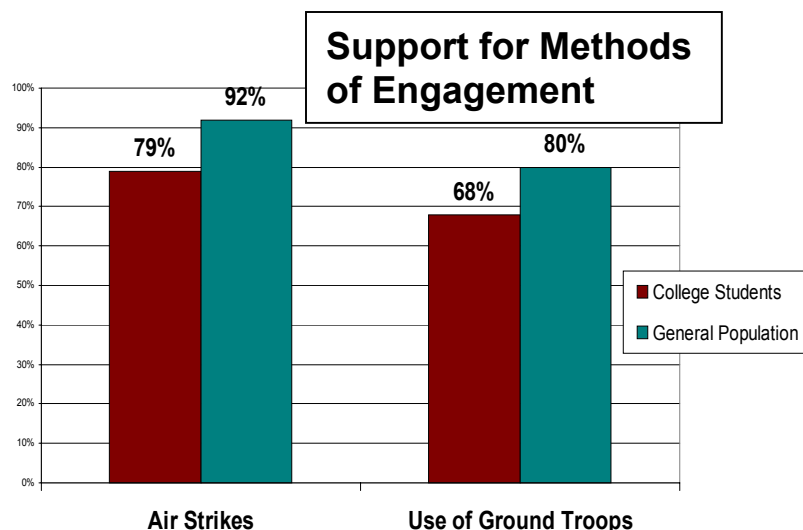
The events were a truly national experience that made politics and government tangible to college students in a way not apparent in the 2000 study.

Nearly 4 out of 5 College Students Support Military Action in Afghanistan

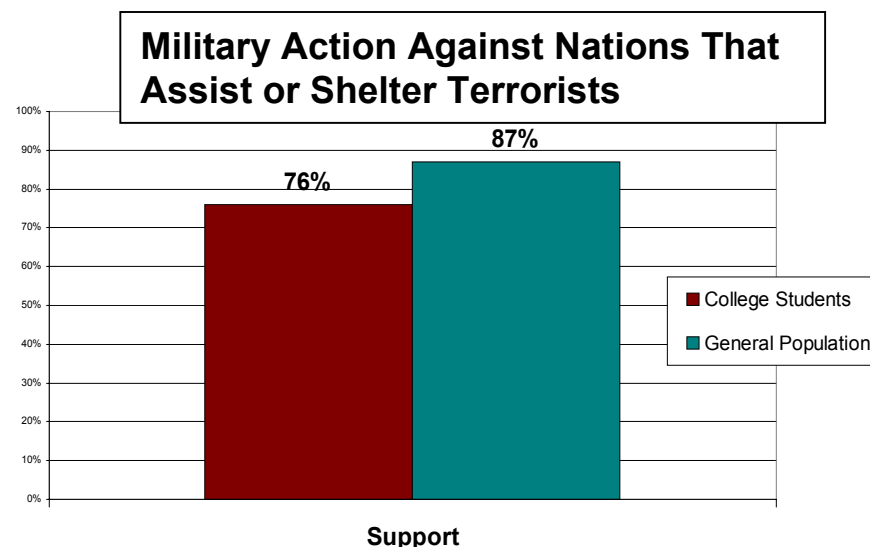
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Yet, support is lower among college students than the general population.

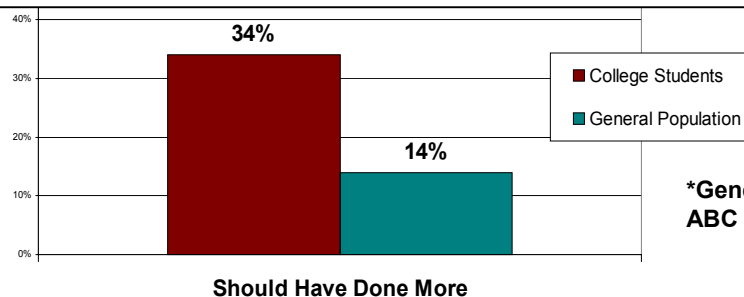


*General population numbers on air strikes taken from ABC News poll 10/9/2001; ground troop numbers from CNN poll 10/21/2001



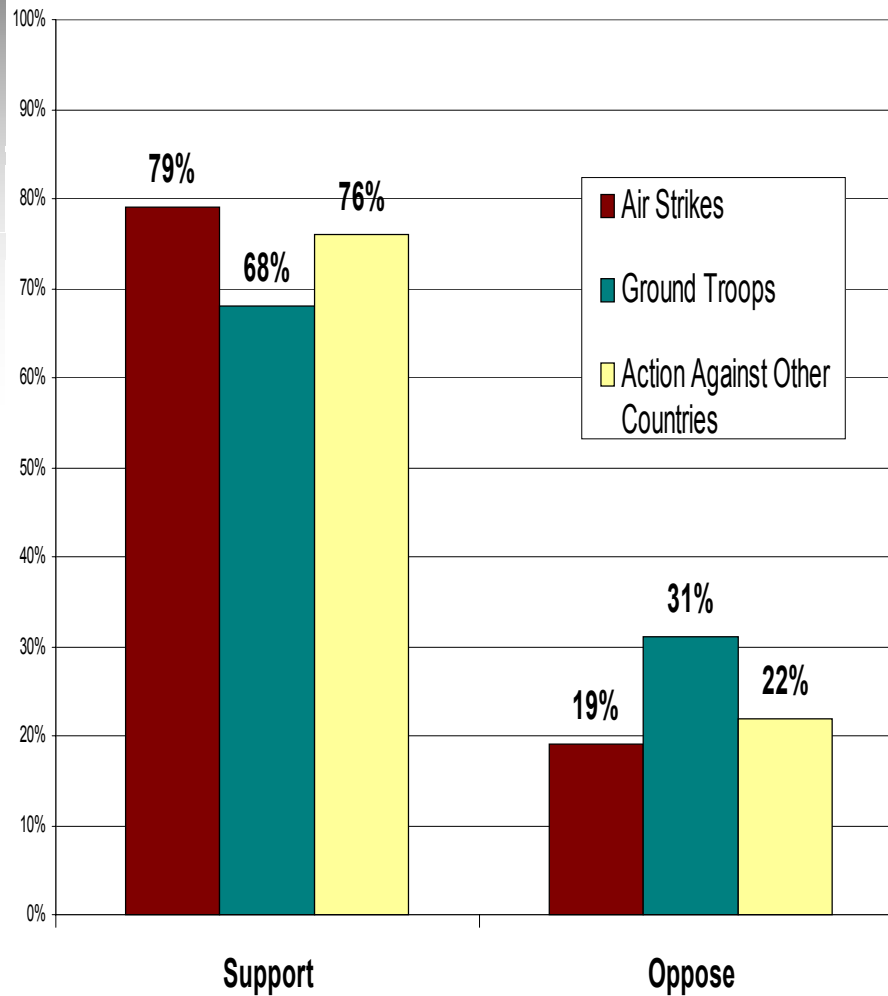
*General population numbers taken from ABC News poll 10/9/2001

Should the U.S. have done more to find a diplomatic solution before attacking Afghanistan?



*General population numbers taken from ABC News poll 10/7/2001

Widespread Support for Military Action



Opposition to Force:

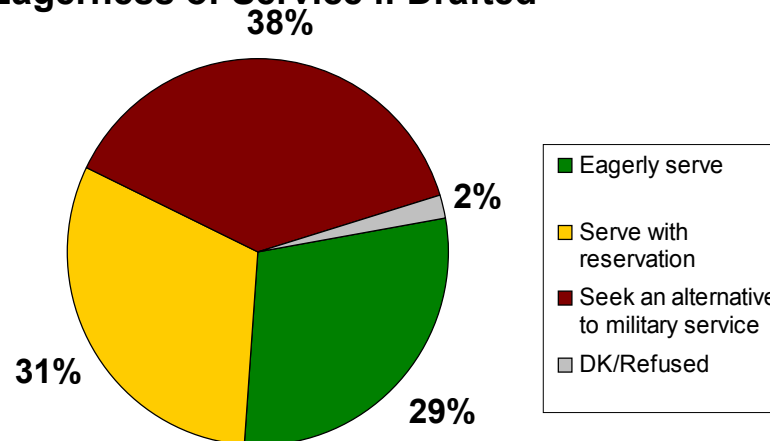
- 46% of those who would avoid military service if drafted oppose the use of ground troops, 35% oppose air strikes, and 36% oppose military action against countries that assist terrorists
- 33% of those under 21 oppose use of ground troops
- 37% of Democrats oppose use of ground troops and 33% oppose military action against countries that assist terrorists
- 46% of East/NE students oppose use of ground troops and 33% oppose military action against countries that assist terrorists
- 35% of those who don't have enough time to be involved oppose use of ground troops
- 47% of African-Americans oppose use of ground troops, 35% oppose air strikes, and 33% oppose military action against countries that assist terrorists

While College Students Trust the Military, Most Are Not Eager to Serve

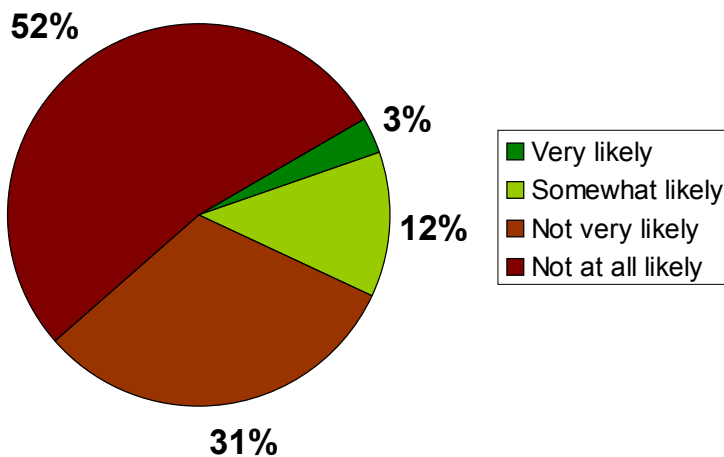


- **75% Trust the military to “do the right thing” all or most of the time**
- **68% Oppose reinstating the draft**

Eagerness of Service if Drafted



Likelihood of Enlisting

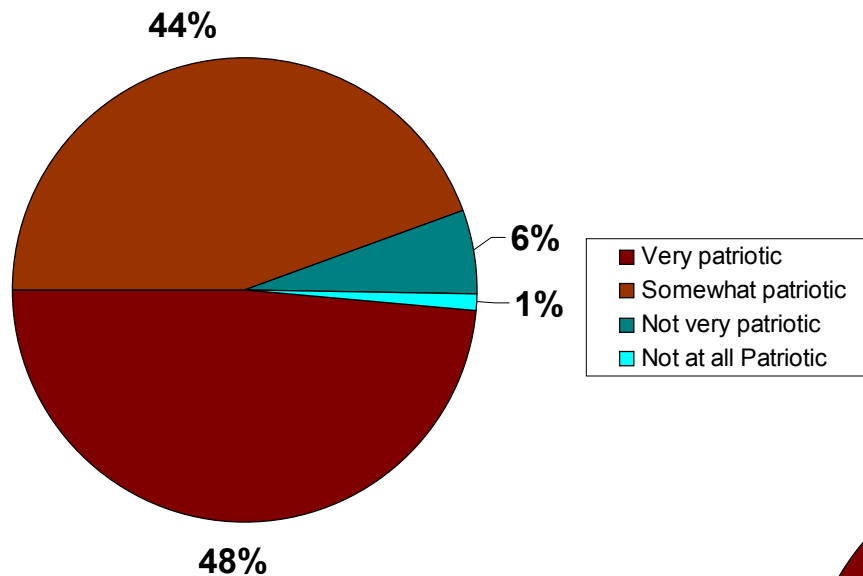


- **71% of men, 49% of women would serve in the military if drafted**
- **26% of men and 49% of women would find an alternative to service if drafted**

Students Believe They Can Be Patriotic Without Being Involved in the Military

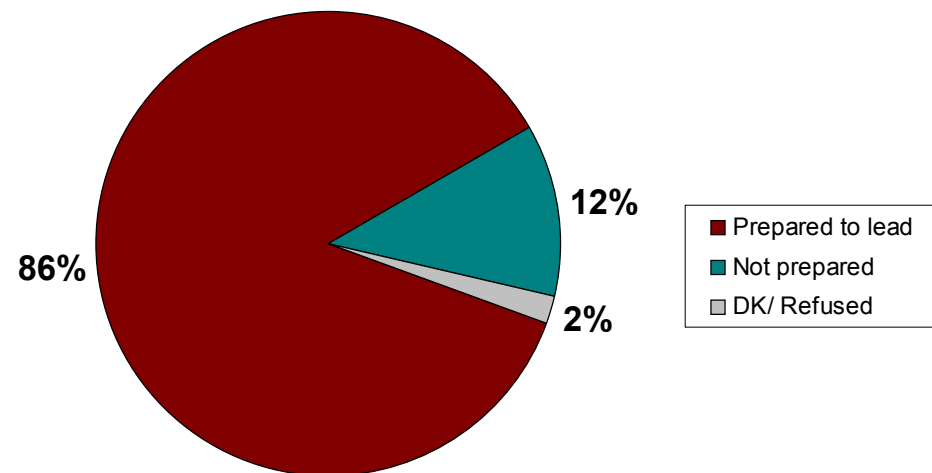


Students consider themselves patriotic and ready to lead America in the future, yet volunteerism is the core of their patriotism, rather than military service.



- 68% of those with a “high” Civic Index rating consider themselves very patriotic, as compared to 30% of those with a “low” Civic Index rating.

- 28% of those who would seriously consider running for public office would “eagerly serve” in the military if drafted.



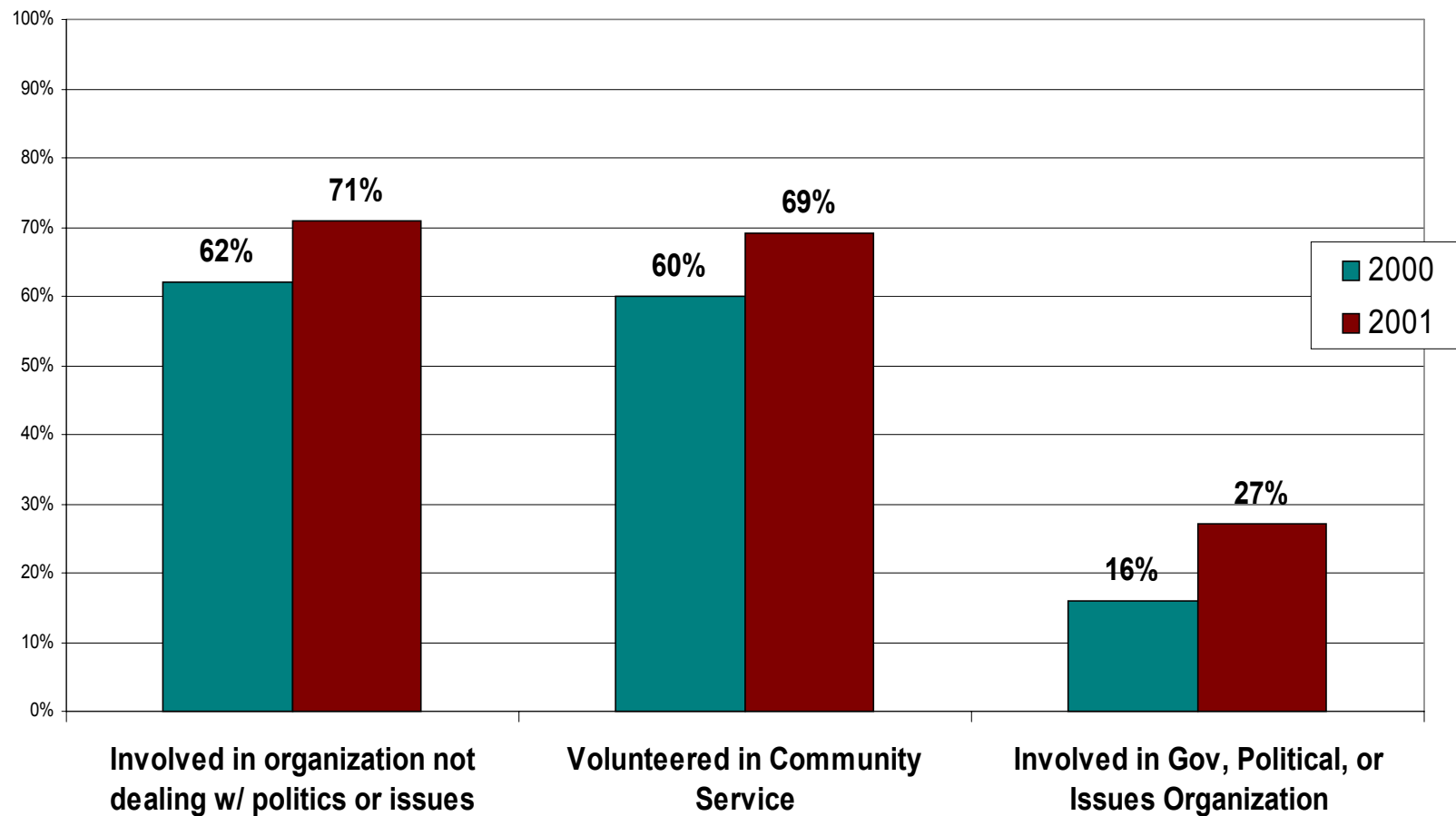


Civic and Political Engagement

Civic Engagement is on the Rise



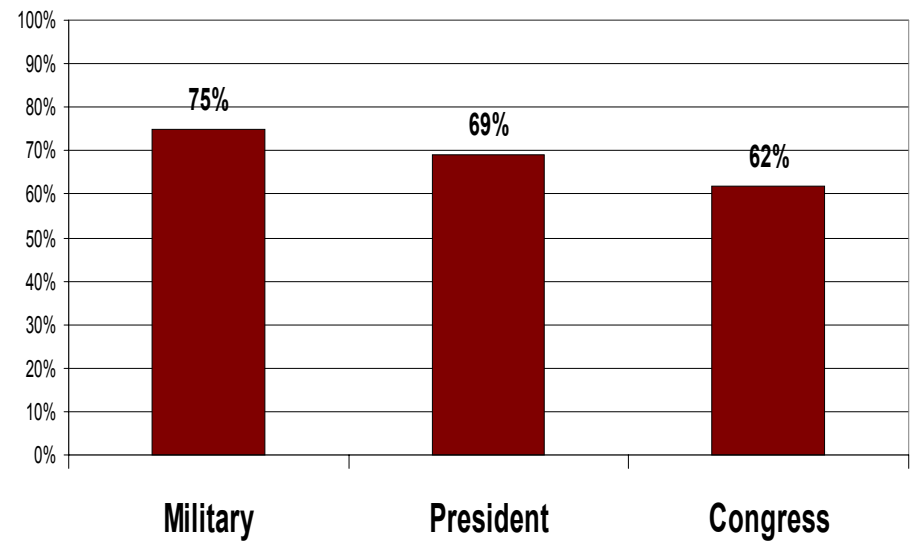
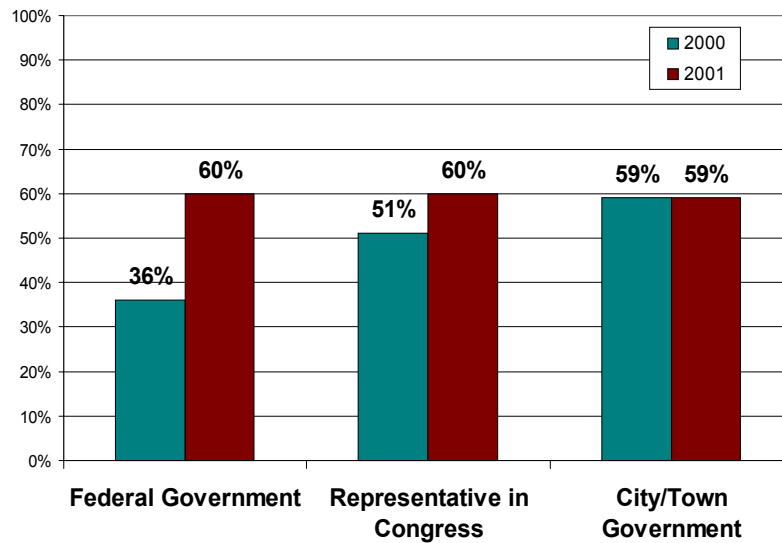
Student involvement in community and campus organizations has risen.



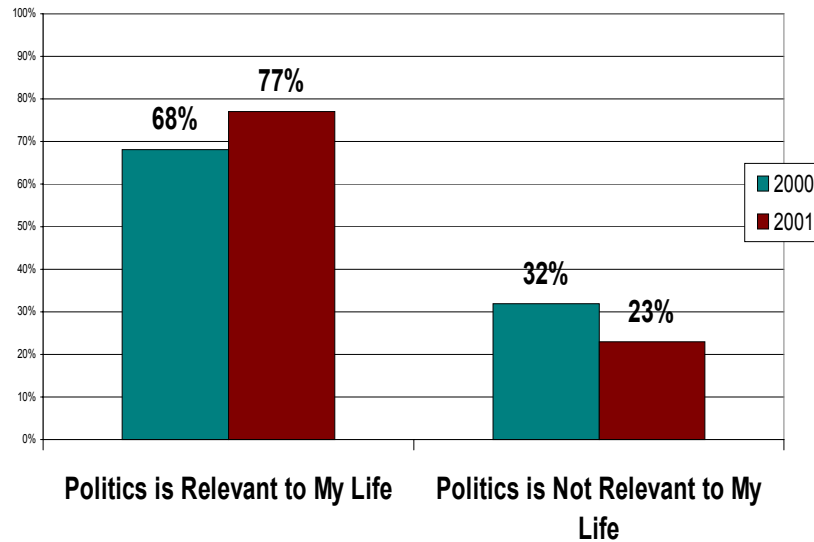
Military Most Trusted Government Institution



Trust in Government Entities to Do the Right Thing All or Most of the Time

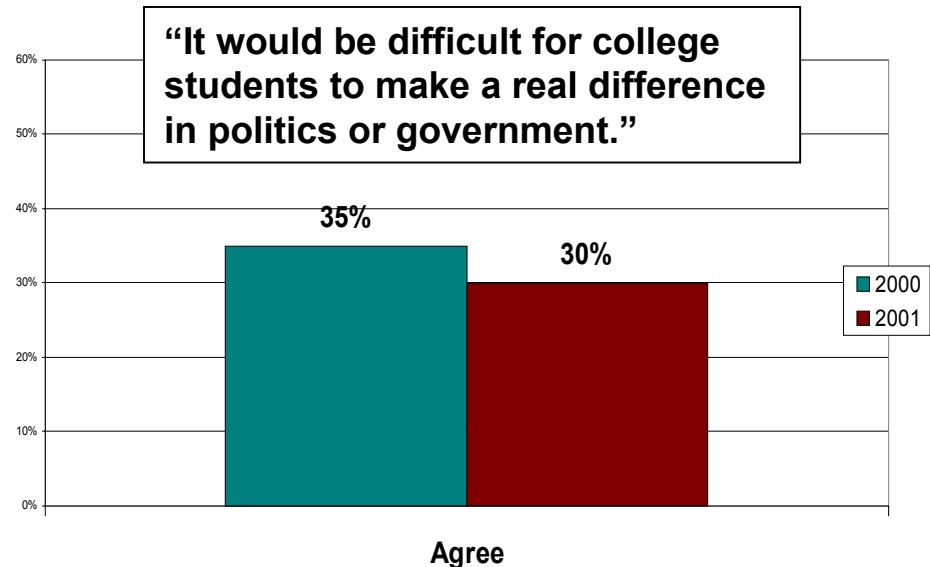


More Students Feel Politics Is a More Relevant, Tangible Force in Their Lives



•77% of students think politics is relevant to their lives

•70% think college students can make a difference in politics or government



“It would be difficult for college students to make a real difference in politics or government.”



Top 3 Issues That Most Concern College Students

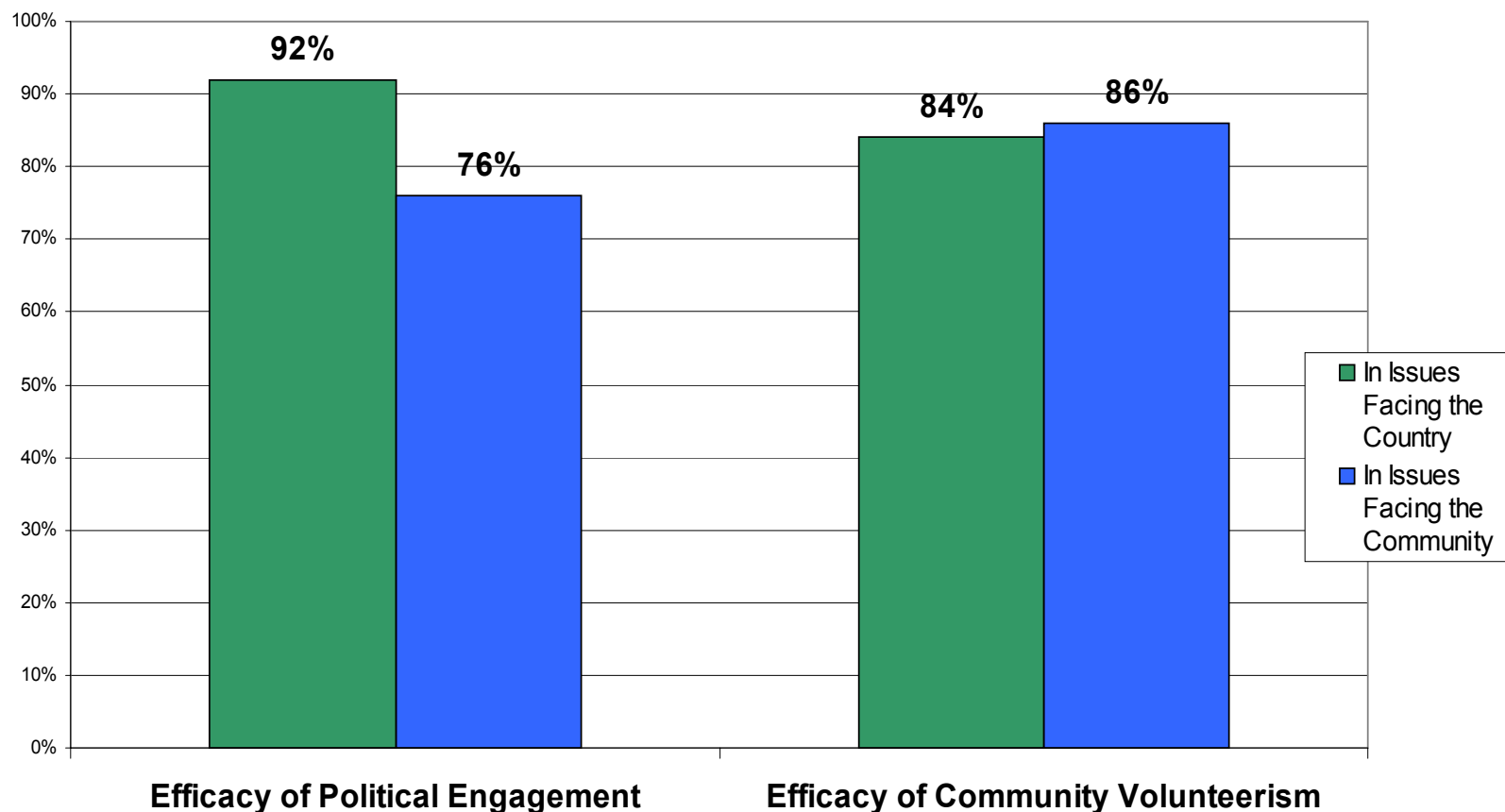
- **Terrorism/ National Security (68%)**
 - Not mentioned in 2000 survey
- **Education (5%)**
 - Education 2000 (15%)
- **Jobs and Economy (4%)**
 - Jobs and Economy 2000 (6%)

Dealing With Important Issues: Political Engagement on the Rise

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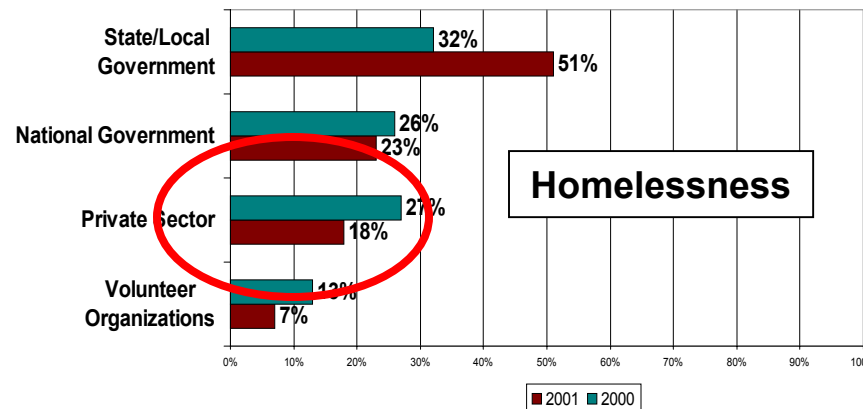
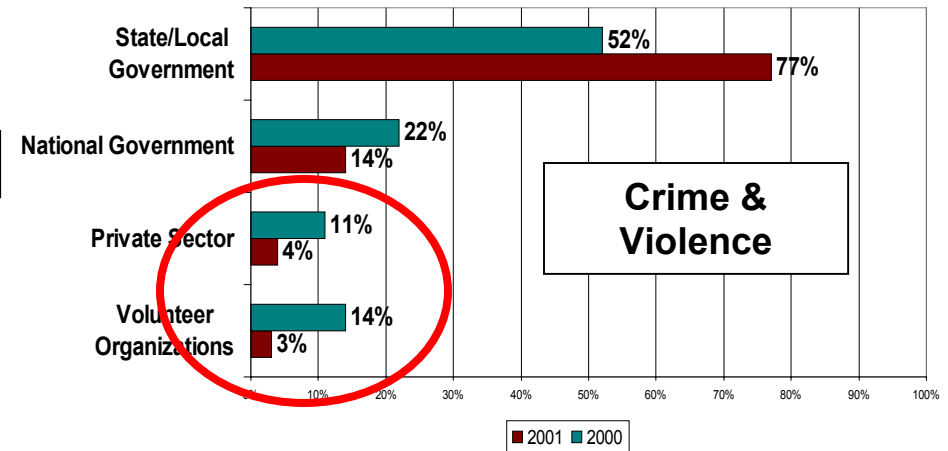
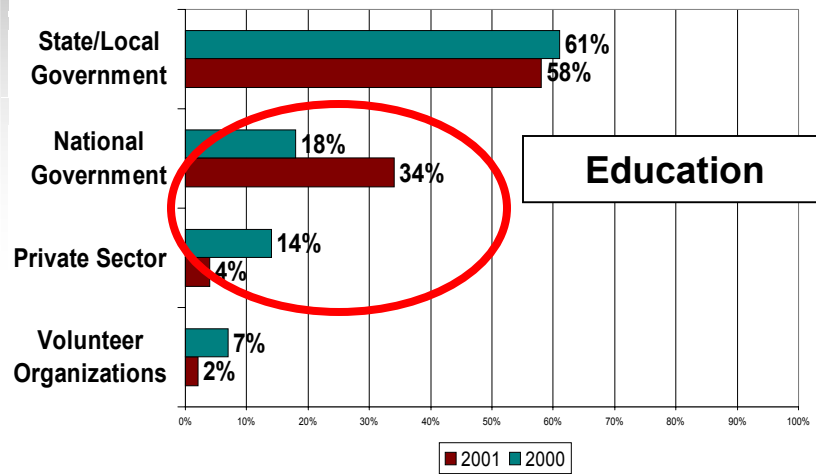
Students think political engagement is more effective than community volunteerism in solving problems facing the nation, and community volunteerism is more effective for solving problems facing their communities.



Dealing With Important Issues: A Shift Away from the Private Sector and Volunteer Organizations

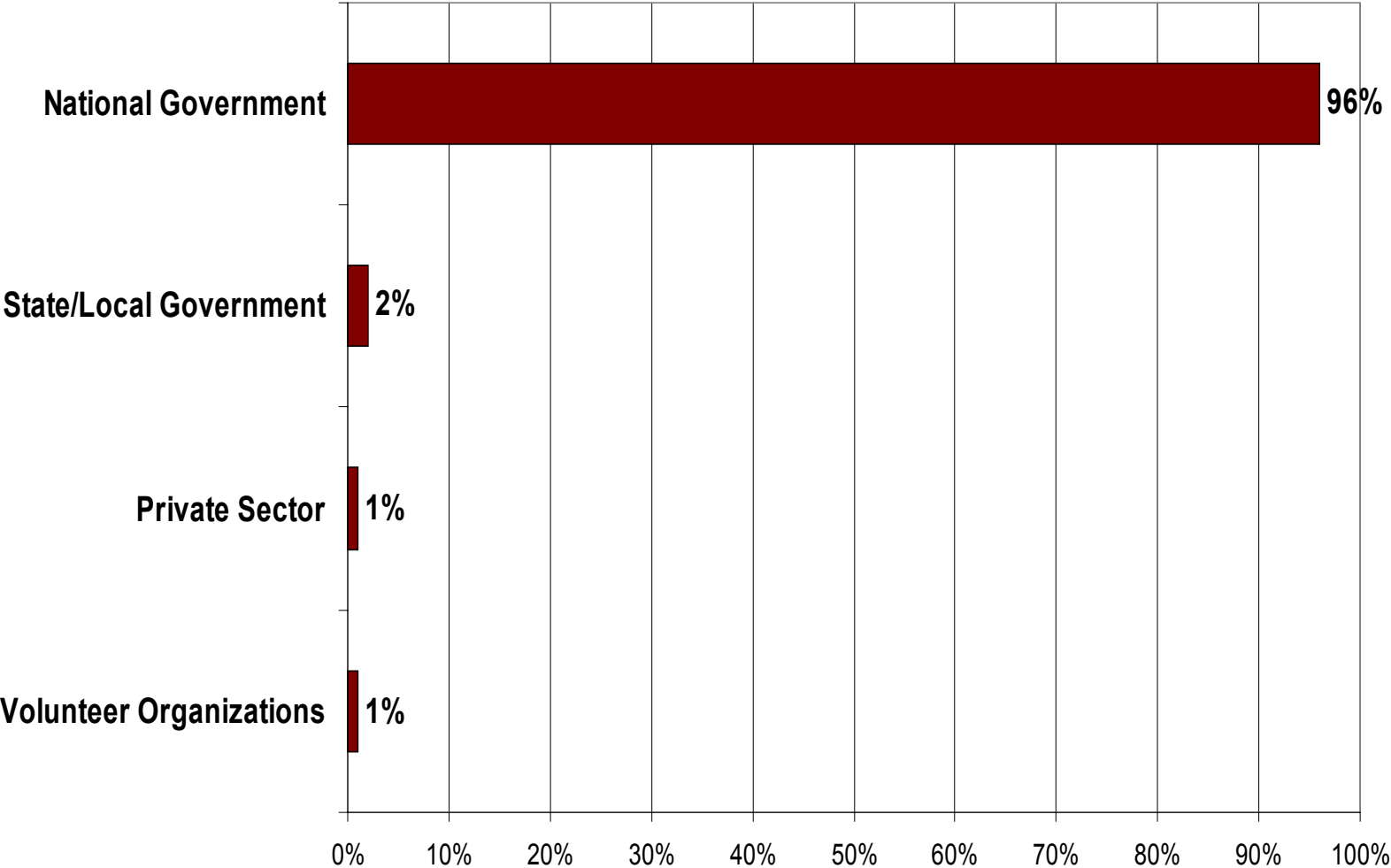


There is a general shift away from the private sector and volunteer organizations towards government as the most effective means of dealing with important issues.

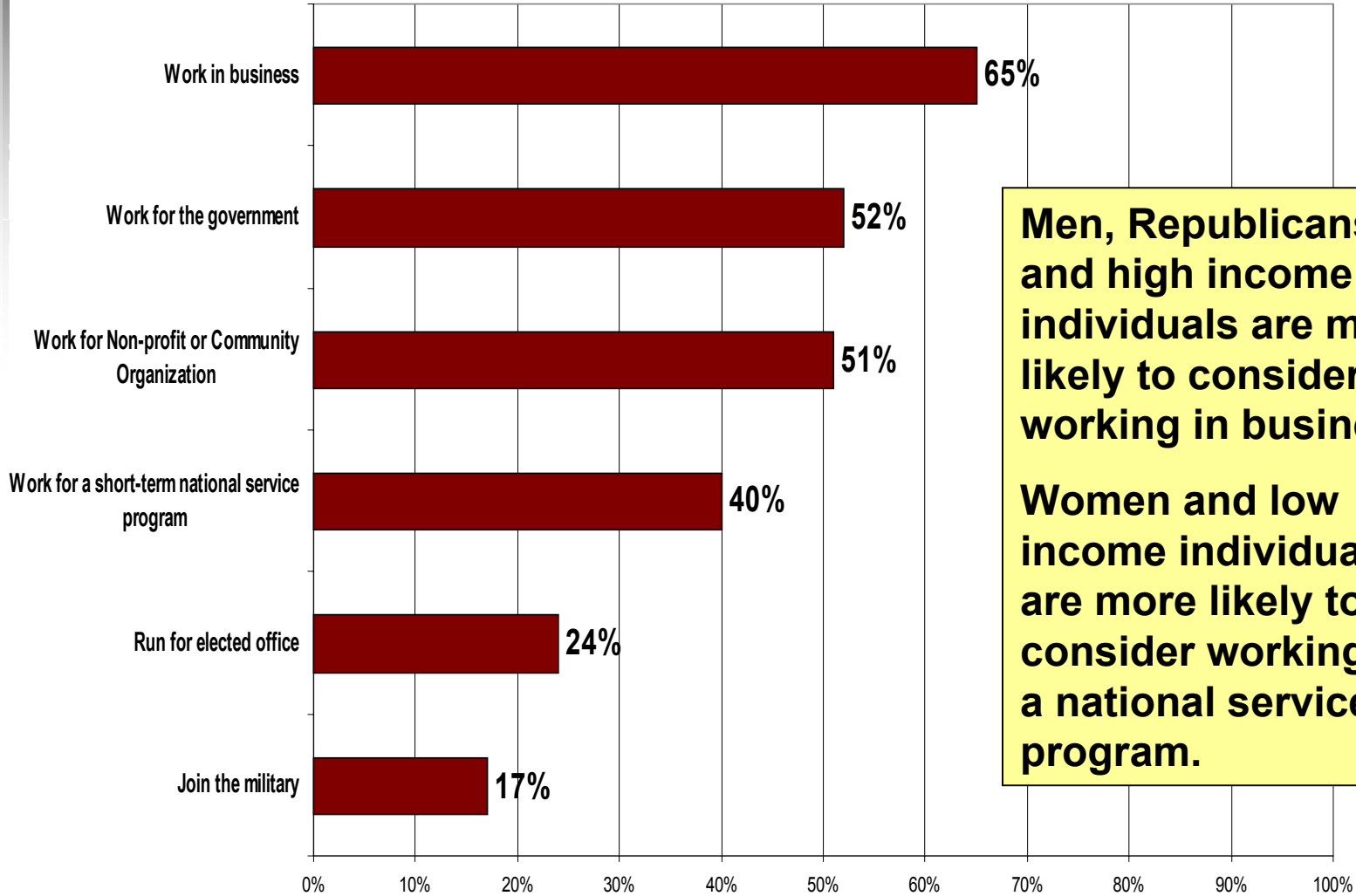


96% Feel that the National Government is Most Effective in Protecting Against Terrorism

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A Majority of Students Consider Working for Government or Non-Profits



Men, Republicans, and high income individuals are more likely to consider working in business.

Women and low income individuals are more likely to consider working for a national service program.



Recommendations

Recommendations Summary



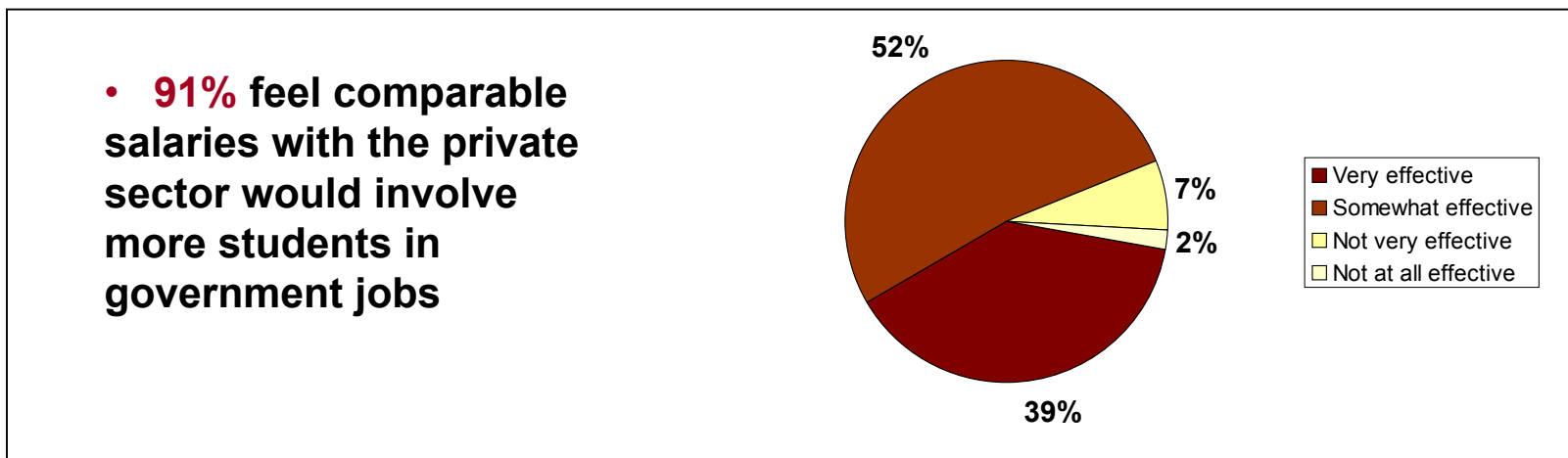
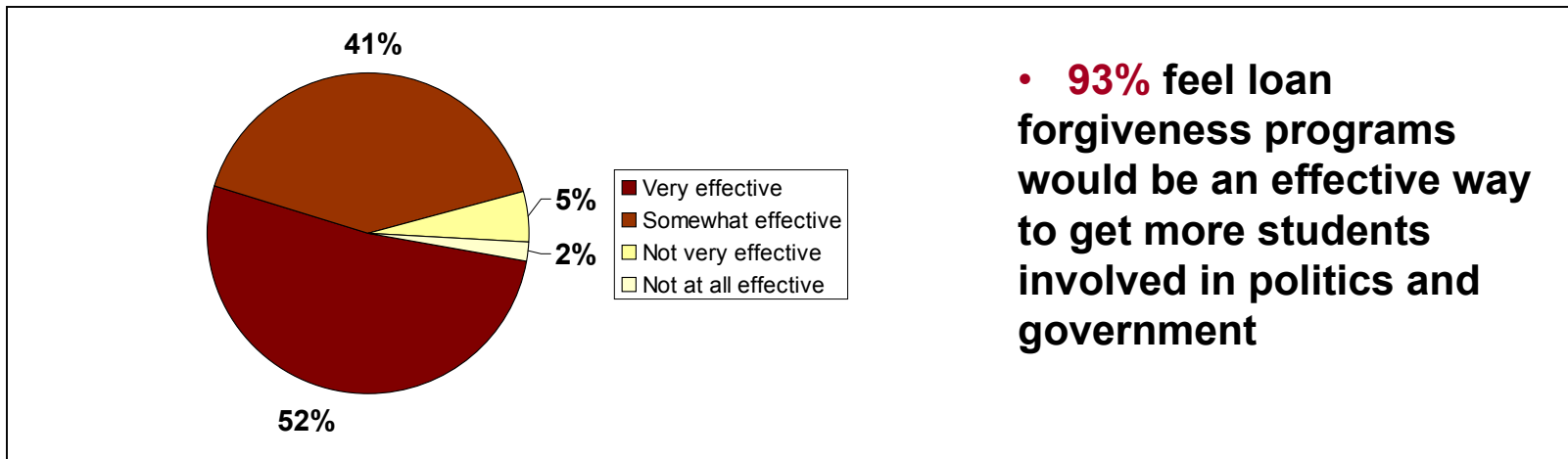
Highest rated recommendations to get students more involved in politics and public service:

- **94%** Academic credit for community service
- **93%** Loan forgiveness/ signing bonuses for government service
- **92%** Increased direct contact with political figures
- **91%** Salary parity between private and public sectors
- **80%** Improved high school civics education
- **79%** Allowing short-term, non-combat military service

Recommendations



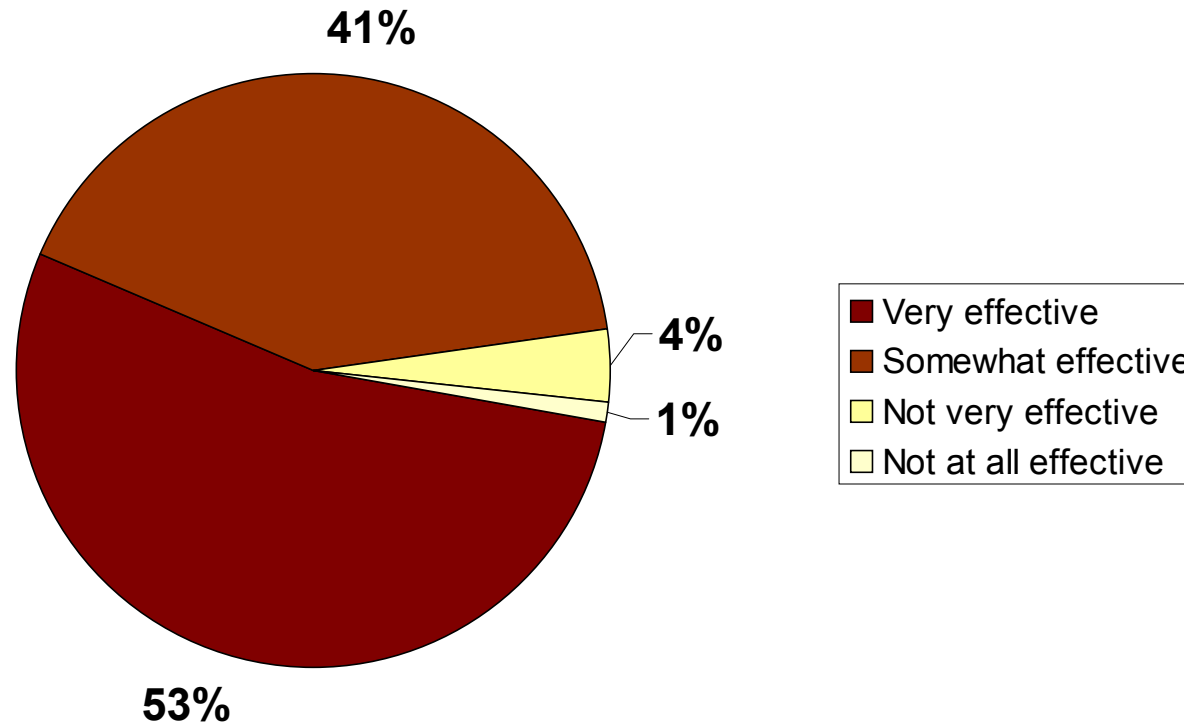
Economic incentives would be very effective in increasing college students' involvement in politics and public service.



Recommendations



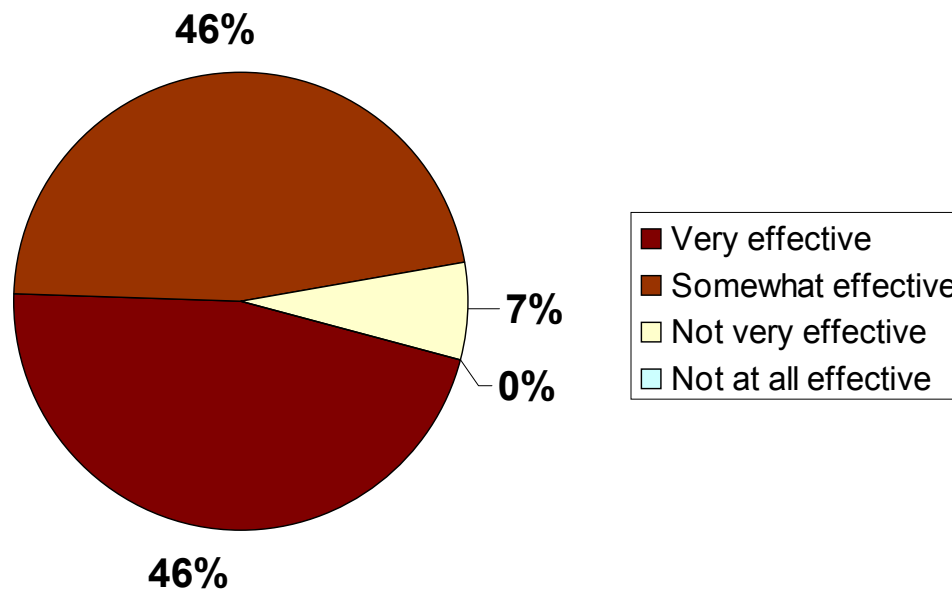
Granting college credit is a highly effective way to involve youth in politics and public service



Recommendations



Direct contact between politicians and students will increase political involvement

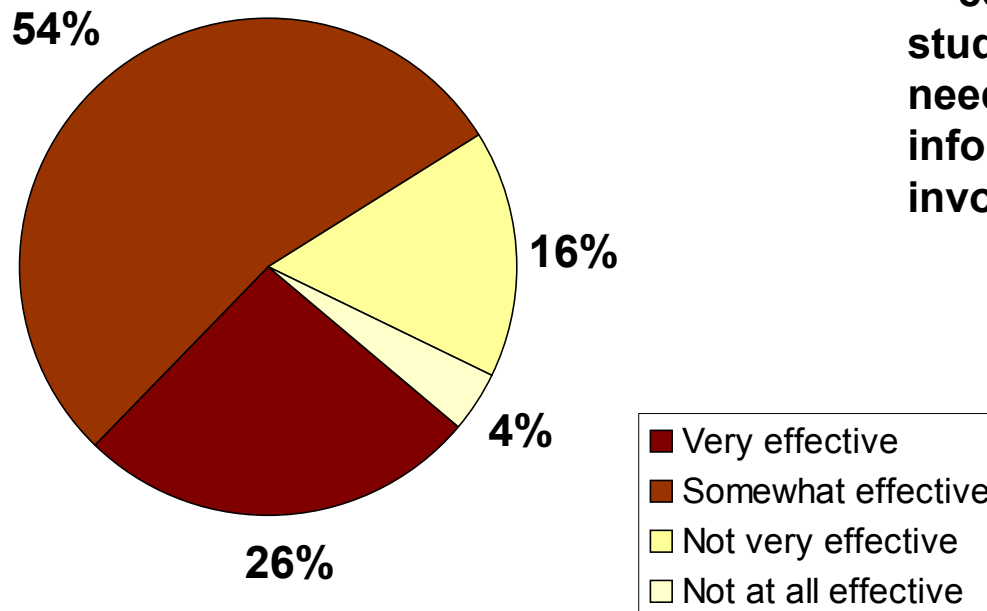


- Students who have met politicians are more likely to believe politics has tangible results (58% vs. 50% who have not met politicians)
- Students who have not met politicians are less likely to think that college students can make a difference in their communities (12%)

Recommendations



Schools should spend more time teaching the basics of political involvement and encouraging activism



- 83% of college students say that they need more practical information to become involved in politics

Recommendations



- **Politics should take a cue from community service. Community service is accessible and encouraged from an early age**
 - Students whose parents are politically engaged, and discuss politics with their children are more likely to be politically engaged
 - Students are often exposed to community service as early as elementary school, yet many educators and practitioners feel that there is little room for political involvement until students are old enough to vote
 - Community service is seen as a written and unwritten requirement for college admission, political involvement is often not



- **Politicians' and the media's pejorative characterizations of government discourage college students from viewing politics as public service**
 - College students have come of age in an era of political scandal and severe criticism of government
 - Nearly half of students believe that politics rarely has any immediate or tangible results
 - Only 6% of college students very seriously consider running for elected office; only 19% very seriously consider working in government; while over a third (34%) very seriously consider business as a career



The IOP Civic Index consists of nine independent measures to quantify civic activity

- Voter registration
- Volunteering for a community service organization
- Membership in a political or issues based organization
- Leadership position in a student group
- Volunteering for a political campaign
- Seriously considering a job in a non-profit organization, military, government or national service program
- Likelihood of volunteering for military service
- Seriously considering running for elected office
- Discuss politics at least once a week with family or friends

Answers to these questions place respondents into categories of “high” “medium” and “low” civic index scores

Civic Index: Who is Likely to be Involved?



More Likely to be Highly Involved:

Parental Income over \$75,000

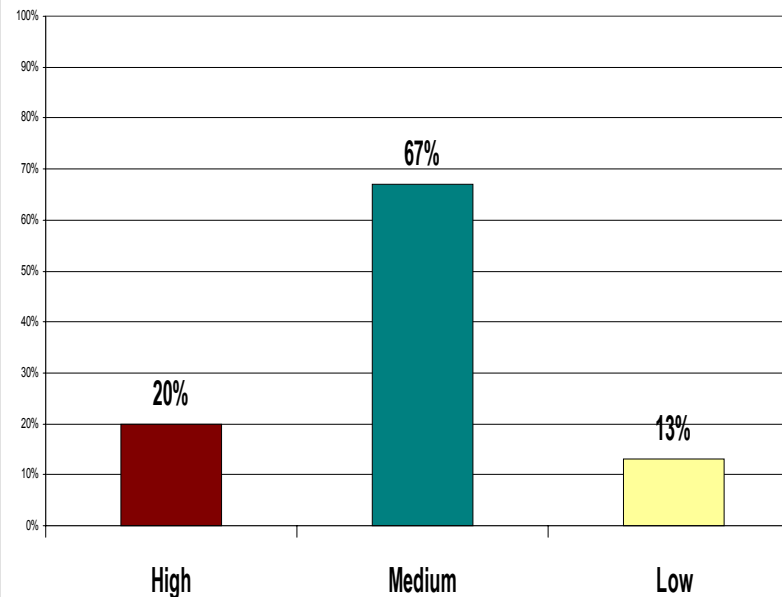
Parents Politically Engaged

Have Time to Be Involved in Activities Outside of School and Work

Older (21-24)

Registered to Vote

Male



Less Likely to be Highly Involved:

Parents Not Politically Engaged

Do Not Have Time to Be Involved in Activities Outside of School and Work

Younger (under 21)

Not Registered to Vote

Attend college located in rural area

Female

Survey Methodology

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- **National survey of college undergraduates**
- **Sample size: 1200**
- **Telephone interviews conducted from October 17-25, 2001**
- **Margin of error: +/- 2.8%**
- **95% Confidence level**
- **Average length of interview: 17.25 minutes**
- **Not all questions in the 2001 study were asked in 2000**
- **This survey was created by college undergraduates**

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For a copy of the 2000 survey, please see: www.iop.harvard.edu/survey