



The Public Context of Science Includes a Political Context

Mary Woolley, President and CEO, Research!America

April 21, 2020

American Physical Society



“You can change the image of things to come. But you can’t do it sitting on your hands...The science community should reach out to Congress and build bridges.”

Research!America Chair Emeritus,
Former Congressman John Edward Porter

Research!America's Mission

The Research!America alliance advocates for science, discovery, and innovation to achieve better health for all.

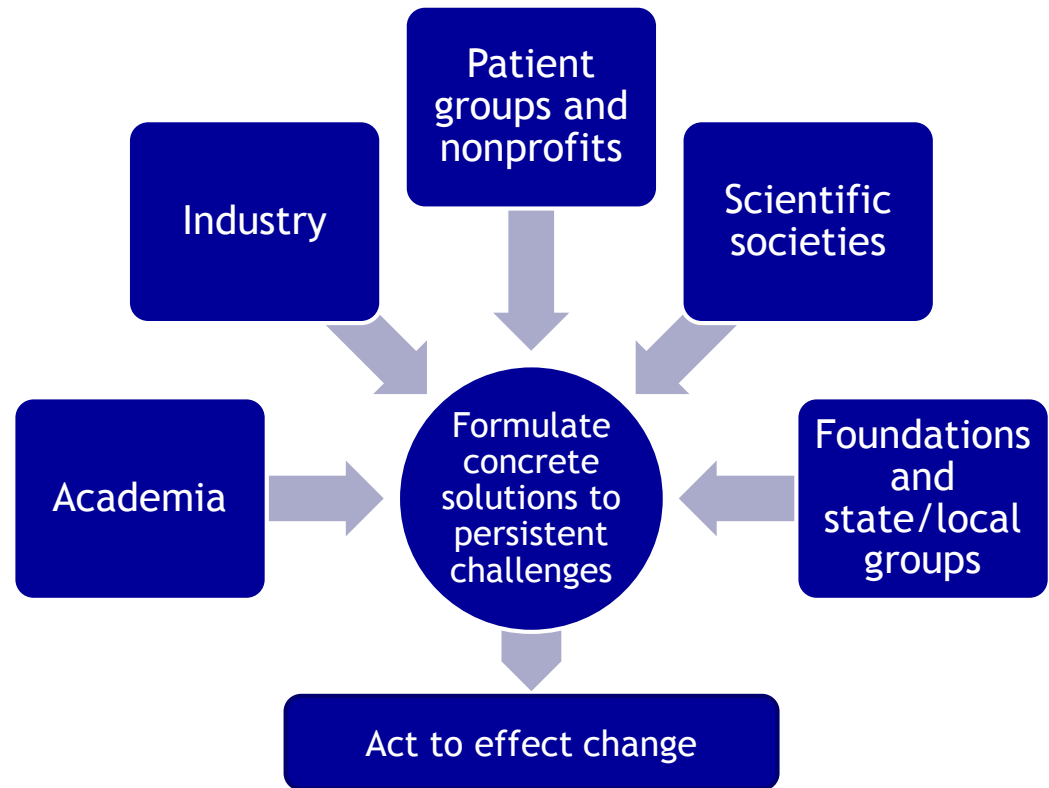
Research!America is an innovator in advocacy for research

Research!America: 31 Years of *Putting Research on the Public Agenda*

- Nonprofit alliance with member organizations drawn from academia, independent research institutes, industry, patient organizations and scientific societies
- Distinguished, all-volunteer board includes former elected and appointed officials, media and public relations leaders, and leaders from alliance member organizations
- Four ‘sister’ organizations in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Sweden

Research! America Alliance

We bring stakeholders together to heighten the priority of research and to help assure scientific progress and the health and vitality of the scientific enterprise.



Research!America Strategies for Success

- Keep a finger on public pulse via public opinion surveys
- Develop and deliver timely messages
- Track investment in research
- Design and trigger grassroots plus grasstops advocacy strategies
- Drive earned and paid media attention
- Empower members of the science community as advocates
- Engage congressional champions

Advocacy Works!

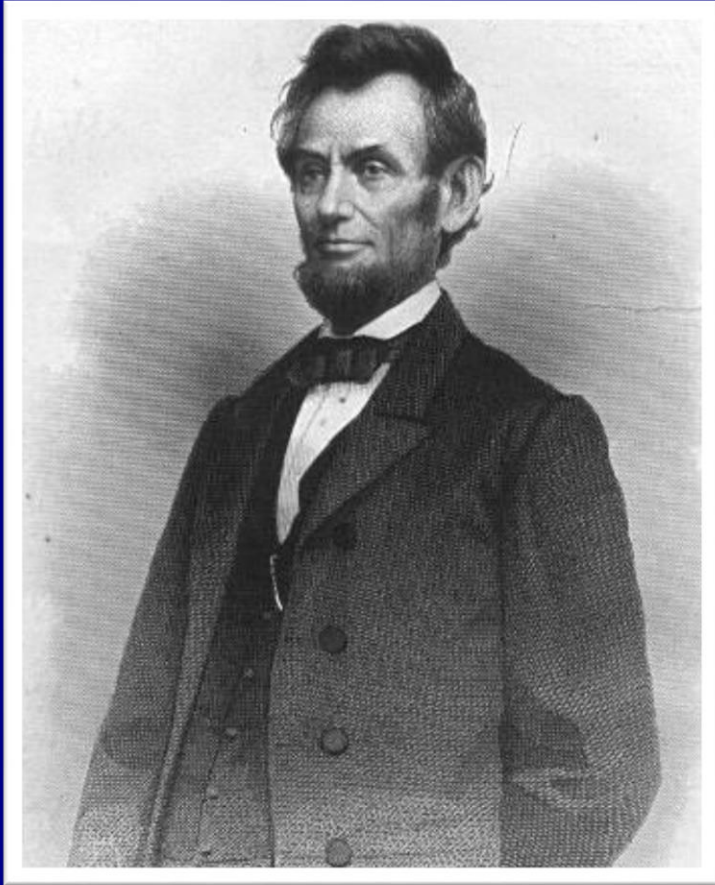
- Doubled the NIH budget in five years, 1999-2003
- Included \$10 billion for NIH and \$3 billion for NSF in “ARRA” (economic stimulus) funding 2009-2010
- Secured \$2 billion increase for NIH in FY16, FY17, and FY19 and \$3 billion increase for NIH in FY18
- Secured passage of 21st Century Cures Act including \$4.8 billion innovation fund for NIH in 2016
- Prevented one-size-fits-all cap on “indirect cost” reimbursement in 2017
- Prevented taxation of graduate tuition waivers from being included in 2017 tax reform bill
- **Raised “sequestration” budget caps in 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2019!**
- Working for passage of emergency COVID supplementals. NIH has received almost \$1.8 billion in supplemental funding to combat the pandemic; CDC has received \$6.5 billion; FDA more than \$141 million; and NSF \$76 million.

State of Play

- Past performance is not a guarantee of future results
- Support research (COVID-19 and beyond)
- We must think and act with both short and long term in mind
- Smart messaging is crucial now



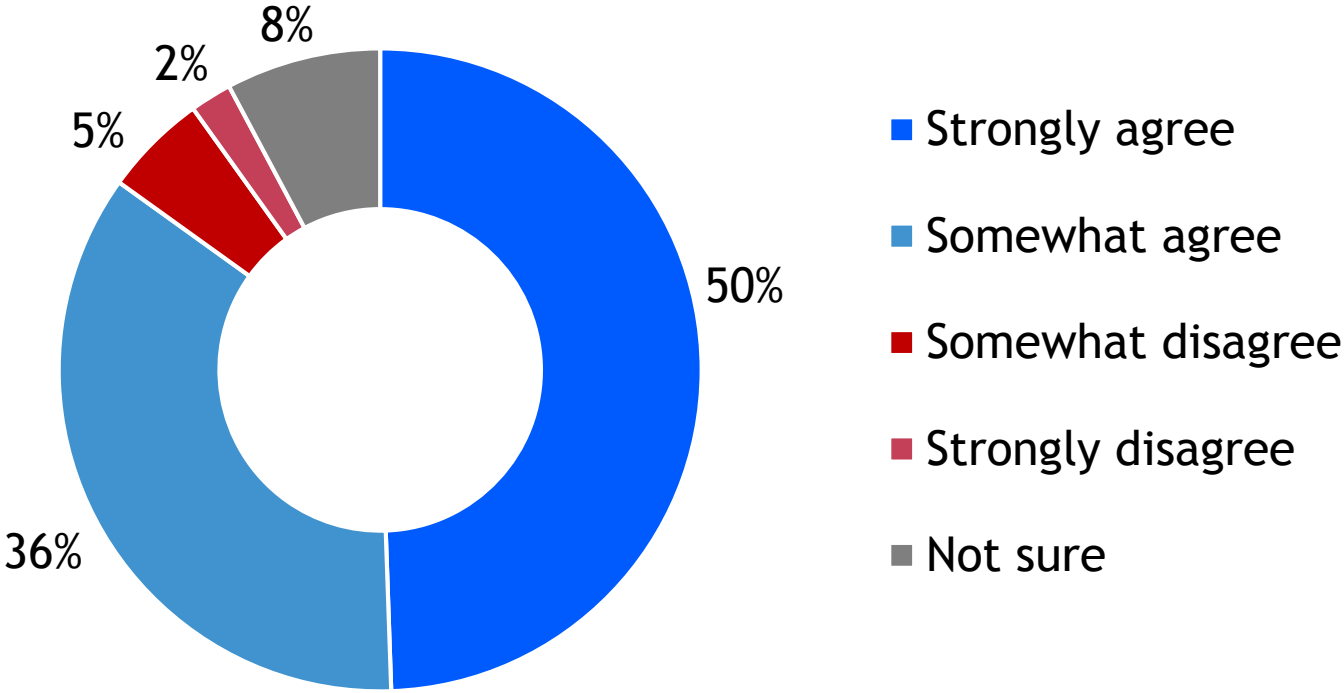
“...public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.”



President Abraham Lincoln

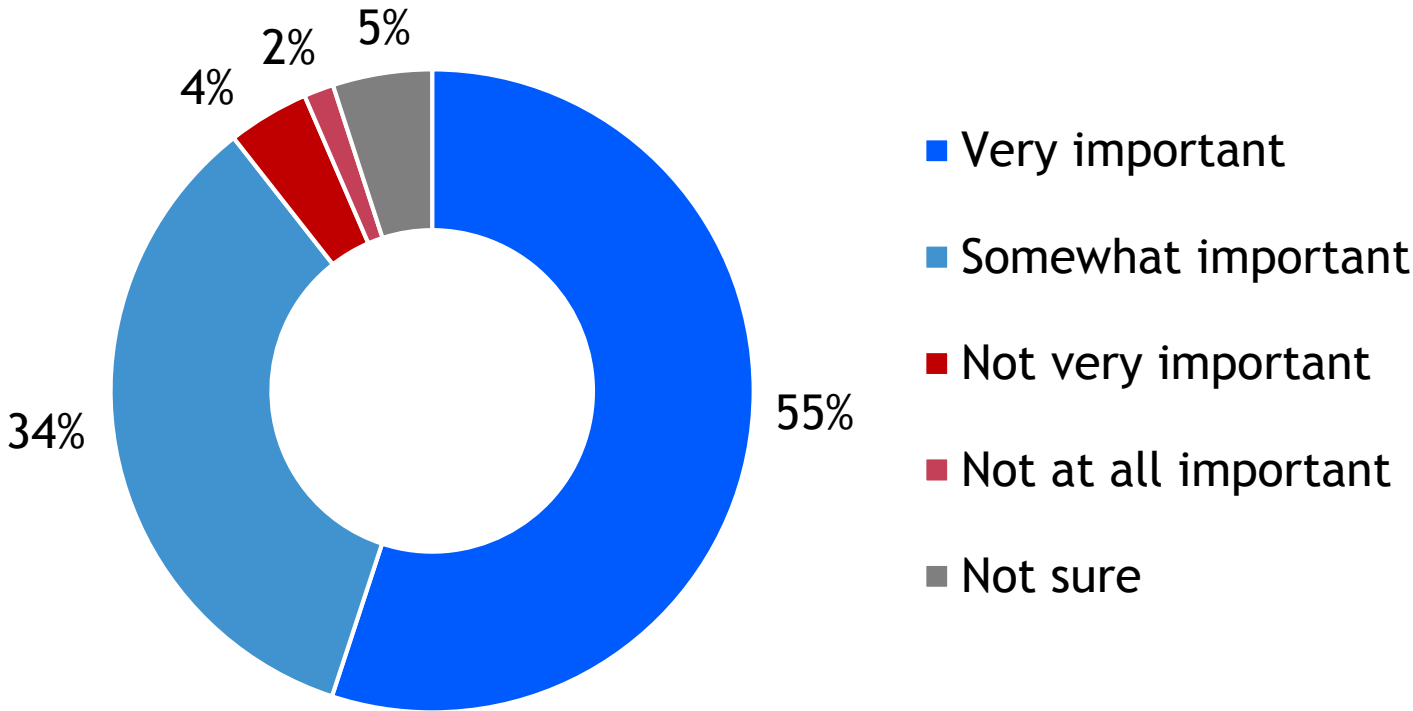
Most Americans Think Basic Research is Necessary and Should be Supported by the Federal Government

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.



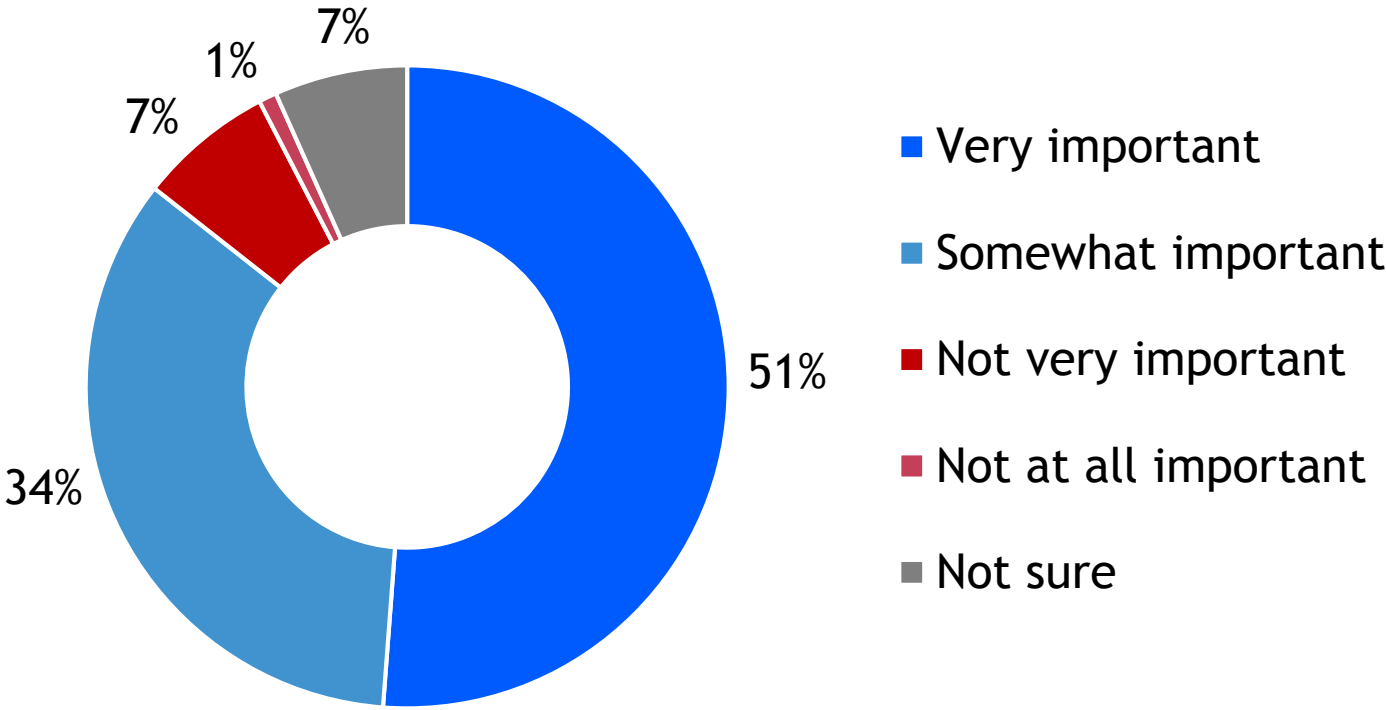
Strong Majority of Americans Think Scientists Should Inform the Public About Their Research

How important is it for scientists to inform the public about their research and its impact on society?



Strong Majority of Americans Think Scientists Should Inform Elected Officials About Their Research

How important is it for scientists to inform elected officials about their research and its impact on society?





Q: What do elected officials and scientists have in common?

A: Serving the public's interest.

You can effectively start a conversation with any elected official by thanking them for serving the public's interest. And then say how you serve the public's interest.

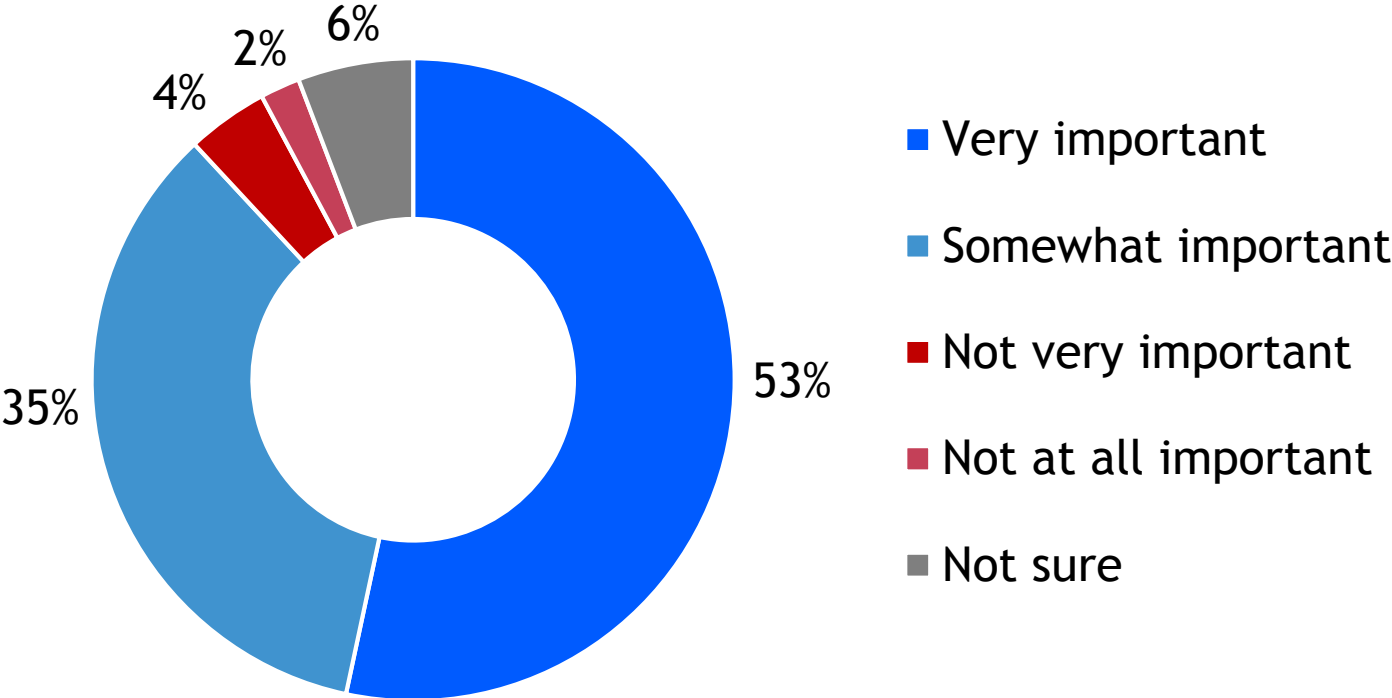


Q: What else do elected officials and scientists have in common?

A: They like data. Just different kinds of data.

Strong Majority Support Faster Medical Progress as a Federal Priority

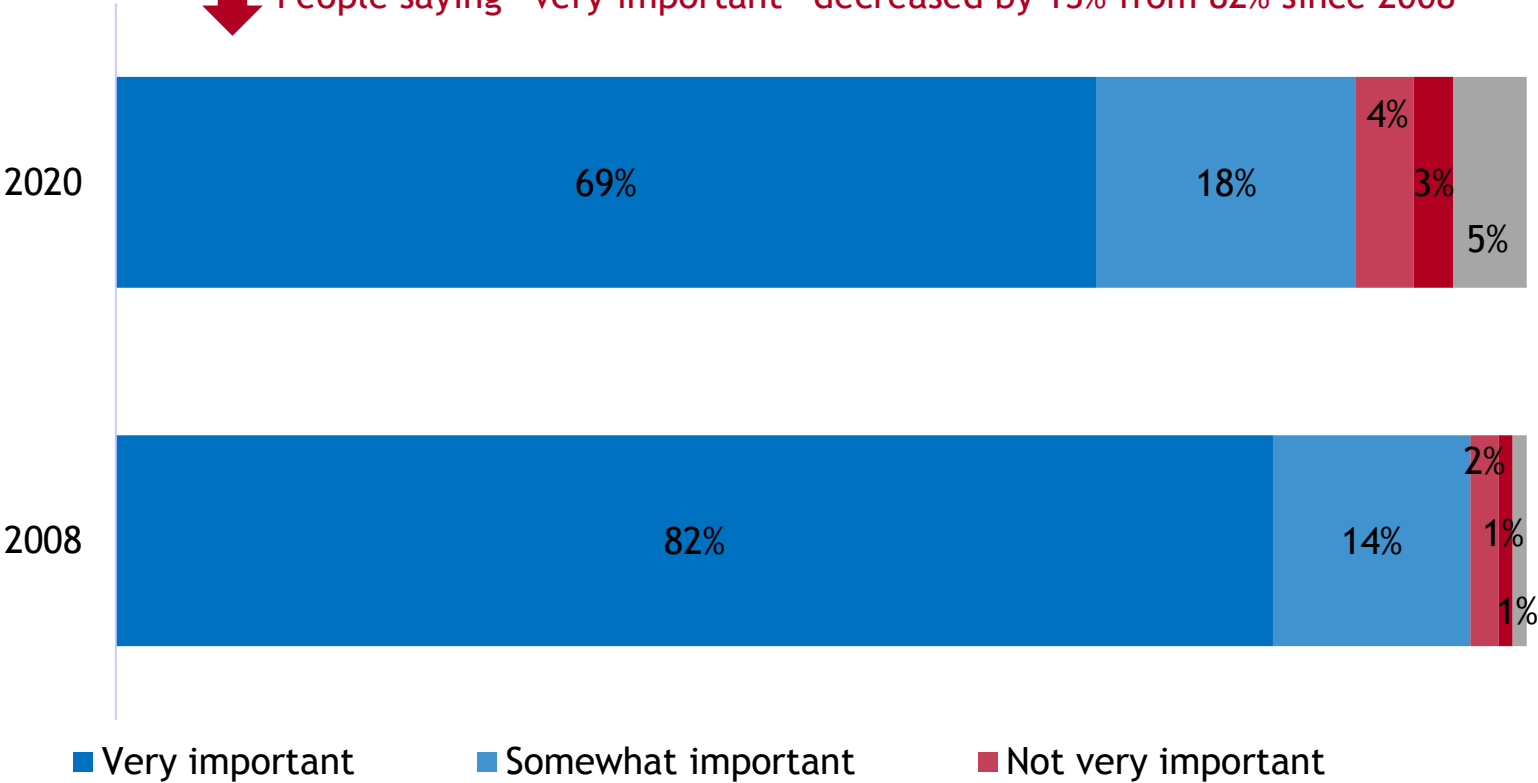
How important is it for the President and Congress to assign a high priority to ensuring faster medical progress?



Strong Majority of Americans Believe it is Important for Parents to Have Their Children Vaccinated

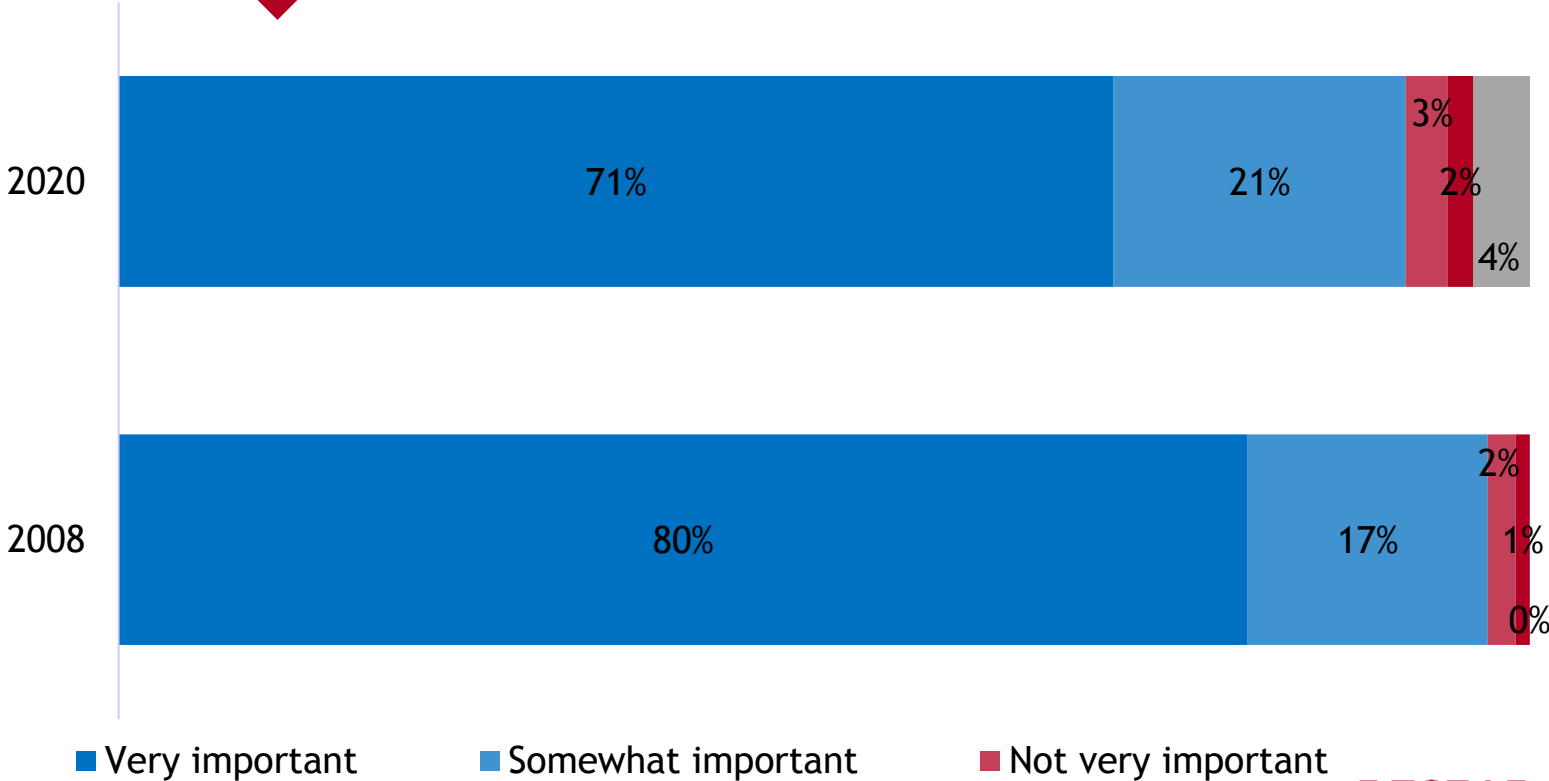
How important do you believe it is for parents to have their children vaccinated?

↓ People saying “very important” decreased by 13% from 82% since 2008



Strong Majority of Americans Believe Vaccines are Important to the Health of Our Society

Thinking about the common vaccines available today such as polio, tetanus, measles, and flu, how important do you believe vaccines are to the health of our society today? **↓ People saying “very important” decreased by 9% from 80% since 2008**



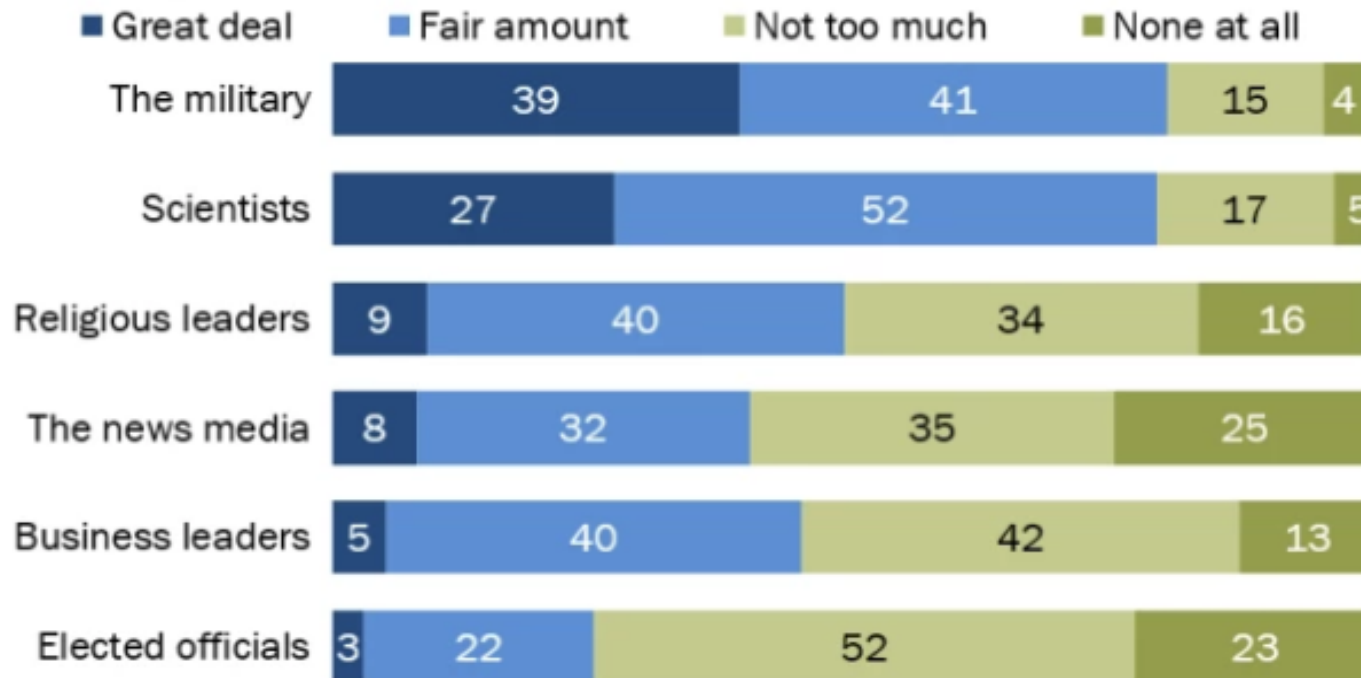
What do researchers think?

- Percentage of researchers concerned about lack of scientific appreciation and literacy among the general public has increased – 38% in 2003, now 49% in 2019
- Welcome news: More than 70% of researchers say they've been involved in some form of outreach during the past 12 months


Americans Express Confidence in Military, Scientists

Americans' trust in military, scientists relatively high; fewer trust media, business leaders, elected officials

% of U.S. adults who say they have _____ of confidence in each of the following groups to act in the best interests of the public



Note: respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey conducted Jan. 29 - Feb. 13, 2018
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

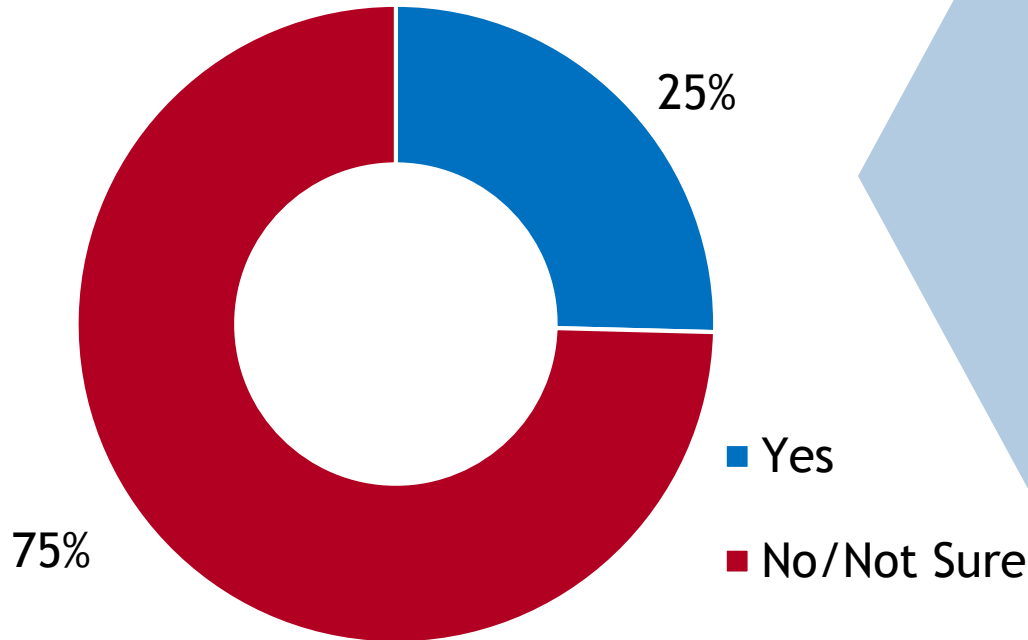


And Yet, Despite High Levels
of Public Confidence,
Scientists are Invisible in Our
Society...

Most Americans Cannot Name a Living Scientist

Can you name a living scientist?

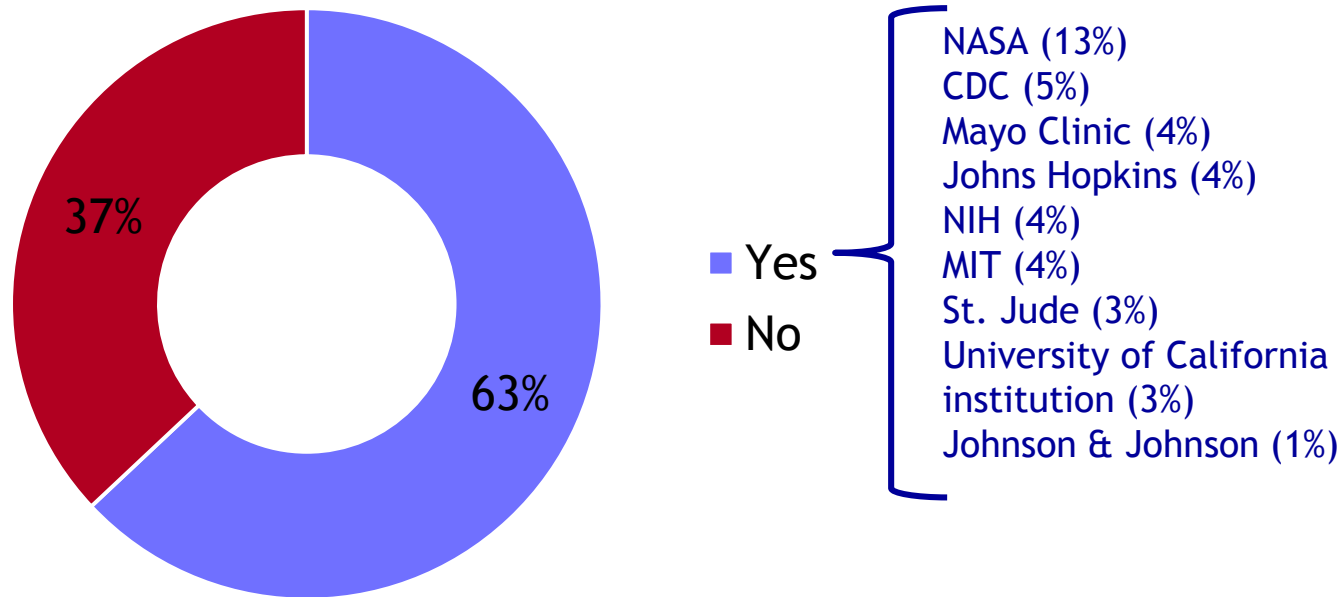
↑ People saying “Yes” up 5% from 20% in 2019



Neil deGrasse Tyson	16%
Bill Nye	13%
Jane Goodall	12%
Timothy Berners-Lee	10%
James Watson	7%
Alan Guth	4%
Richard Dawkins	3%
Other	36%

More Americans Can Name a Scientific Research Institution

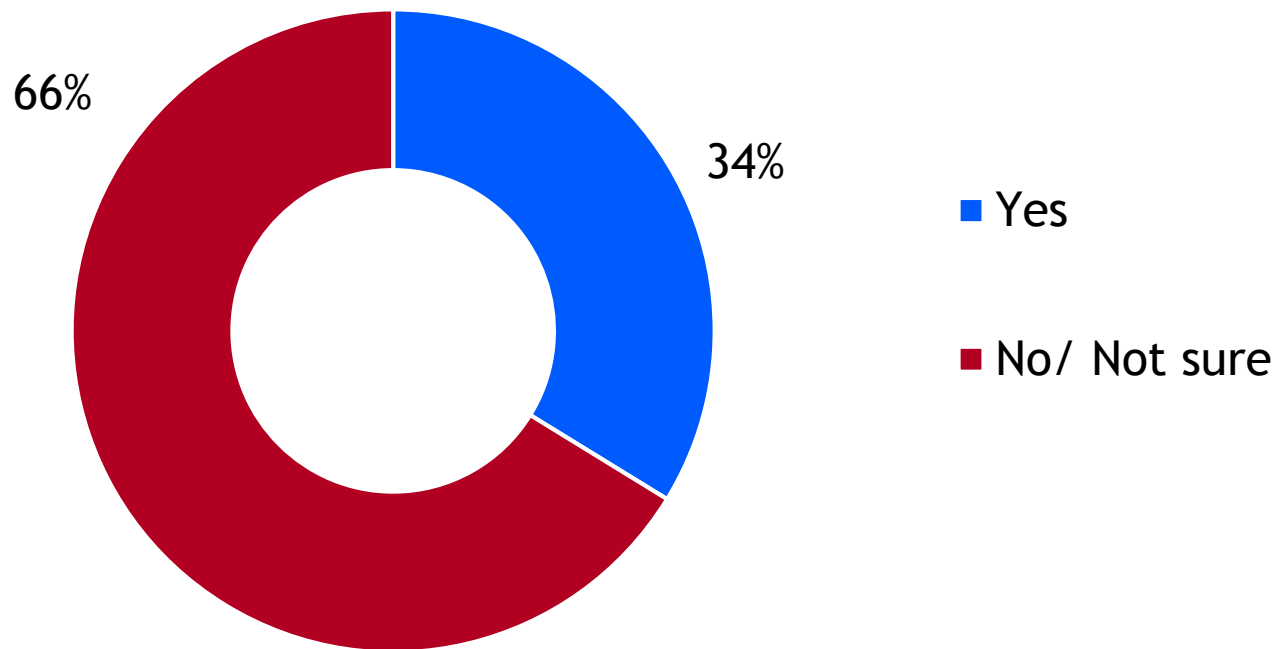
Can you name any institution, company or organization where scientific research is conducted?



Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in October 2018.

Majority of Americans Do Not Know That Research is Conducted in All 50 States

To the best of your knowledge, would you say that medical research in the U.S. is conducted in all 50 states?



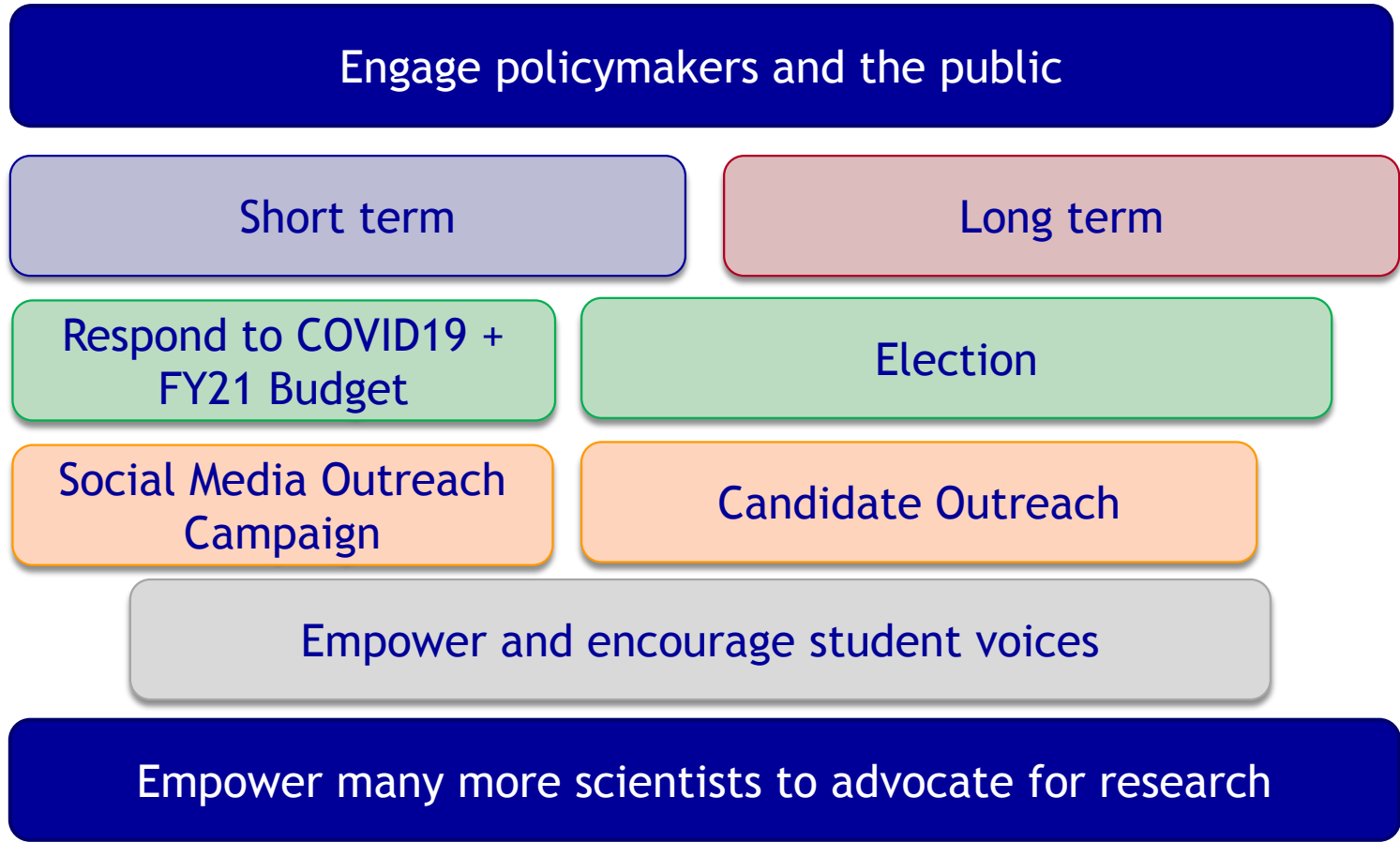
Get Involved

- Email, tweet, or call your member of Congress
- Stay informed – read our Weekly Letter
- Contact your university's science policy group
- Talk to your friends and neighbors
- Engage everyone in your department in public outreach activities







Einstein's desk. Source: Defining Creativity

What We Must Do Together



Re-Cap: How to Think About Talking to Non-Scientists

- Know your audience
- Be visible     
- Use emotion
- Remember — if people are skeptical, they are thinking like scientists!
- Convey your personal commitment/passion: say and convey “I Work for You”

Communicating well demonstrates understanding, sensitivity, and accountability.

Research!America Works for You

Connect with us



www.researchamerica.org/blog



www.facebook.com/researchamerica.org



www.twitter.com/researchamerica



www.youtube.com/researchamerica



www.instagram.com/research_america