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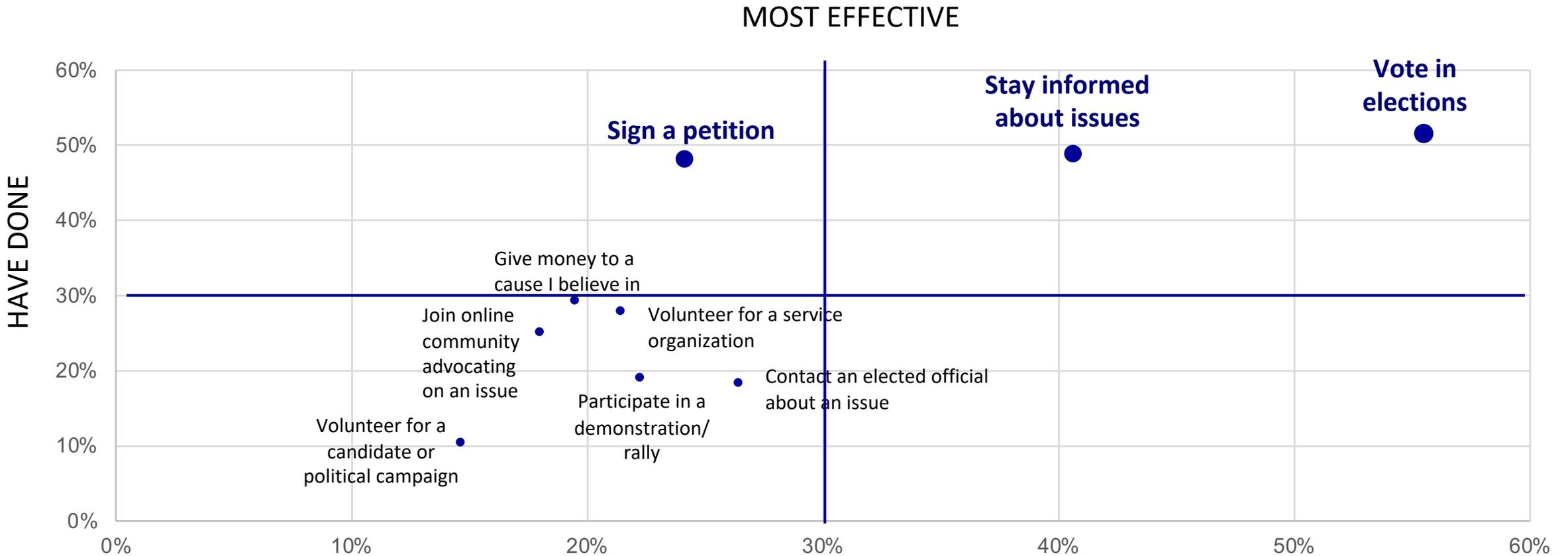
Path to the American Dream: Political Engagement and Redefining Leadership

Key Findings

Given that young Americans consistently describe our current political system as more of an impediment than a resource and that they expect that their experience with democratic representation will be more disappointing for them than it was for their parents, these findings nonetheless offer some encouraging insights about what members of this generation think is relevant and important in their efforts to choose leaders who will help them pursue the American Dream:

- Voting in elections and staying informed about issues are the leading edge of what young Americans report they are doing and what they see as effective in expressing their beliefs. Still, the lack of consensus around a core pattern of engagement suggests they are still looking for ways to participate meaningfully in our political system.
- Young Americans display remarkable sincerity and commitment when they describe their motivation to engage politically - far from looking for easy or convenient ways to get involved, they say they are driven to participate in ways that will truly have an impact, provide direct help to people in real time, and that they will facilitate deeper change in our political and social system.
- Foreshadowing their feelings about the personal relevance of political leaders who often feel distant from their lives, including the President and members of Congress, young Americans instead point to the influence of local figures including teachers, state and local leaders and people in their community. The perceived impact of Supreme Court justices is a notable exception.
- In setting their own agenda for leadership, young Americans value leaders who are intelligent and knowledgeable and wanting to serve others, but also prioritize less traditional traits such as being willing to listen and consider other perspectives, demonstrating compassion, and being authentic.

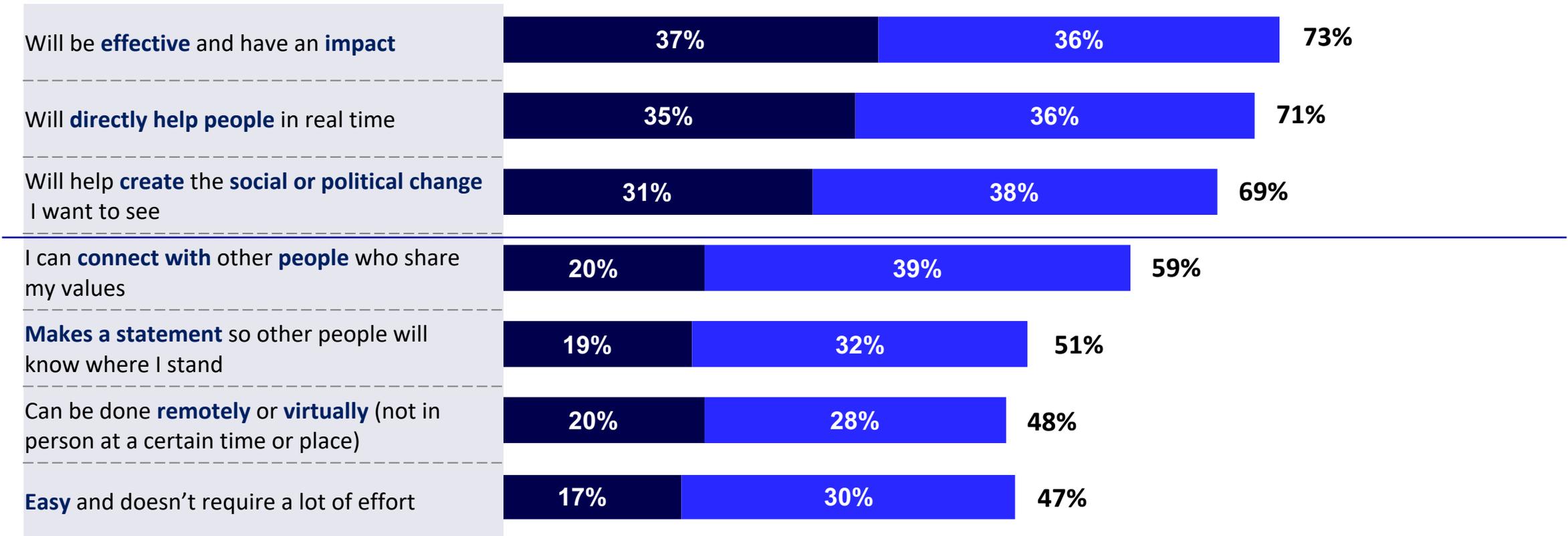
Far from apathetic, young Americans engage in multiple forms of political engagement that track what they think of as the most effective ways to enact change.



Above all, young Americans are seeking genuine engagement and impact when they take political action, not quick and easy solutions.

When you think about doing something or taking action to support your personal beliefs, how important is this?

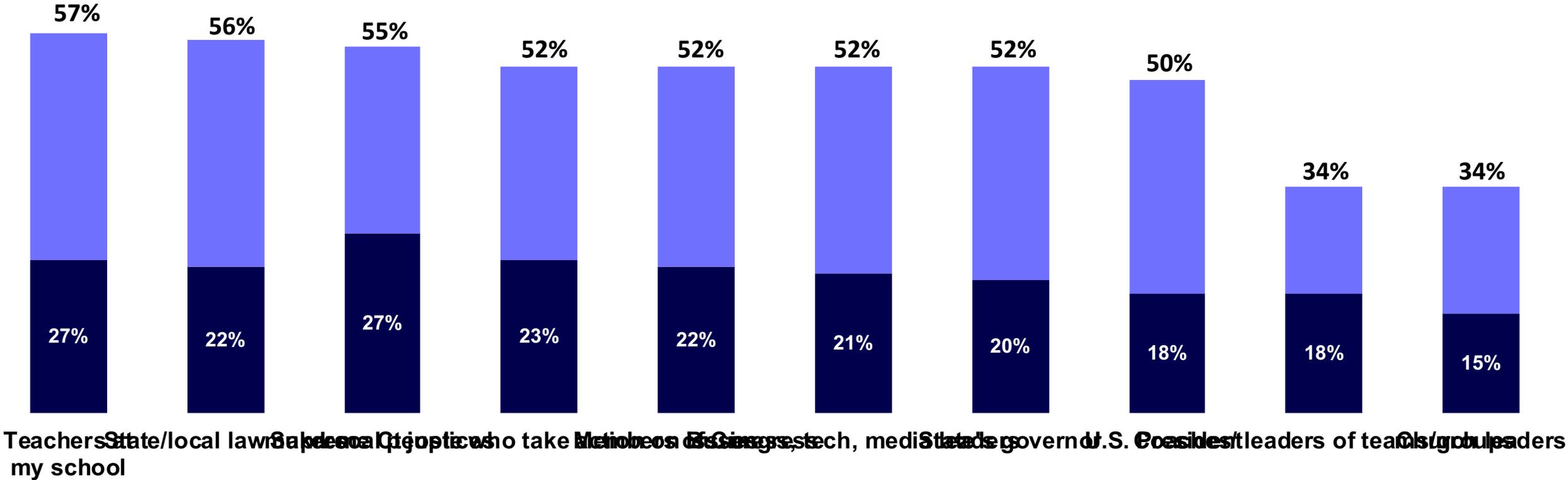
■ Top priority ■ Very important



In the current era, the impact of Supreme Court justices overshadows even the President and Congress, but teachers retain the most influence.

Impact of selected individuals on my life and goals for the future

■ A very significant impact ■ A pretty big impact



Young Americans prioritize intelligence, service, and policy alignment in choosing their leaders, but they also value less traditional political traits, such as listening, compassion and authenticity.

Three most important qualities when I think about supporting a candidate or elected leader

49%	They are intelligent, knowledgeable and have the experience to do the job well
44%	They are motivated to serve others , not their own self interest
40%	They listen and truly consider a variety of perspectives when making decisions
34%	They demonstrate genuine compassion for and kindness to others
31%	They support the same the policies I support
26%	They are authentic and genuine even if it means they make mistakes
13%	They make a genuine effort to understand my life experiences and how I see things
13%	They have core and consistent values , even if I disagree with some of their positions
13%	They share my values
12%	They communicate with me in a language I understand
6%	They share a key identify of mine and some of my life experiences They are motivated to serve others , not their own self interest

Young Americans' spell out a clear agenda for their leaders: a healthy environment, educational opportunities and supports for health care & job training.

How high a priority should this be for elected leaders to focus on?

■ One of the top priorities ■ A high priority

