

INFLUENCING **YOUNG AMERICA** TO ACT

SPRING **2021**

Research By: Cause & Social **Influence**)))

INTRODUCTION

After a year filled with so much activism, the Cause and Social Influence research team ended our 2020 Year in Review research report this way: "Our challenge now is this: Under a new administration, the economic situation created by COVID-19 and the realities of how individuals now see the world, how do we keep this momentum going?"

Cause and Social Influence tracks the behaviors and motivations of young Americans (age 18-30) related to social issues and major moments. With this first report on the social issue actions taken by young Americans in the first part of 2021, momentum is no longer a question.

METHODOLOGY

Cause and Social Influence researchers took a quantitative approach with an online survey fielded March 26-27, 2021, of 1,000 young Americans (ages 18-30) – a nationally representative sample based on census-projected ethnic and demographic composition. With this response rate, the data presented has a 95% confidence interval and 3% margin of error. Visit causeandsocialinfluence.com/spring2021 for more information on the sample.

Note: For demographic data-gathering, researchers asked respondents to self-identify their race/ethnic identity. Write-in answers and non-answers were accepted.

RESEARCH TEAM

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¹Nicola M, Alsafi Z, Sohrabi C, et al. The socio-economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19): A review. *Int J Surg.* 2020;78:185-193.

²News release, The Employment Situation – February 2021, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

³Cause and Social Influence 2020 Year in Review.

SOCIAL ISSUES, MOVEMENTS AND ACTIONS

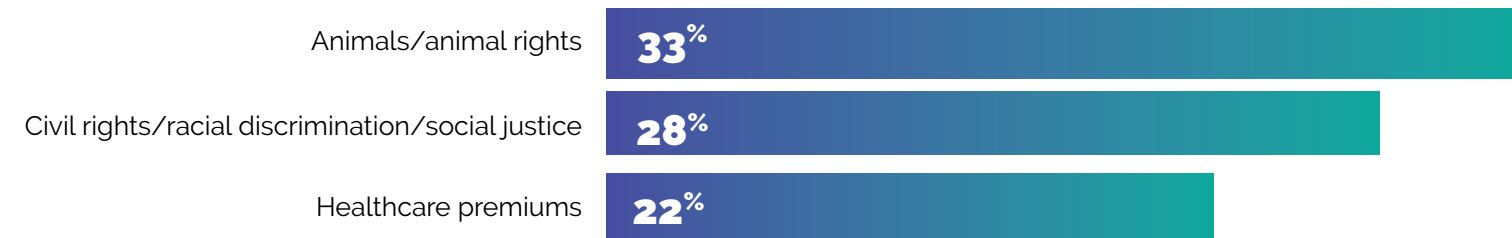
HEALTHCARE PREMIUMS ARE AMONG THE TOP THREE SOCIAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO YOUNG AMERICANS

Healthcare premiums entered the top three social issues of interest to young Americans.

A medical research journal study published last April stated, "COVID-19 has had a detrimental effect on global healthcare systems, with a ripple effect on every aspect of human life as we know it."¹ At the same time, the U.S. unemployment rate remained "well above their pre-pandemic levels."² Our findings seem to indicate that these factors have raised young Americans' awareness of and concern over the economy, healthcare costs and their ability to live within their budget.

The other top two issues remained the same as in our 2020 research: animals/animal rights (33%) and civil rights/racial discrimination/social justice (28%).

Top social issues of March 2021:



YOUNG AMERICANS ARE STILL TAKING ACTIONS TO SUPPORT BLACK AMERICANS

Two of the top three movements for which respondents took action involved supporting Black Americans. This indicates that the importance of racial equity has not waned since demonstrations began last May and was reinforced when nearly two-thirds of young Americans voted for a presidential candidate because of his stance on racial equity. We said then that their votes "may foreshadow ... the commitment of young people to creating systemic change for Black Americans and people of color."³ So far, 2021 research bears this out.

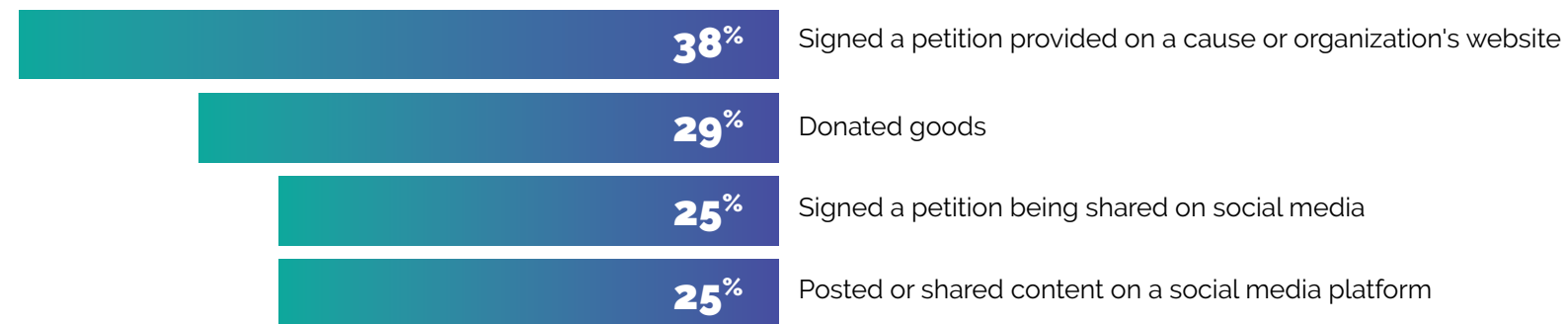
Movements you have acted to support:



THE TOP ACTION TAKEN ON SOCIAL ISSUES IS **SIGNING A PETITION** TO INFLUENCE LEADERS AND LAWMAKERS

As in 2020, respondents in 2021 thought they can most effectively influence leaders and lawmakers on policies by signing a petition. This year shows an even stronger preference for this action; the percentage of those who signed petitions so far in 2021 rivals the percentage who signed a petition immediately following the death of George Floyd in 2020 (39%).

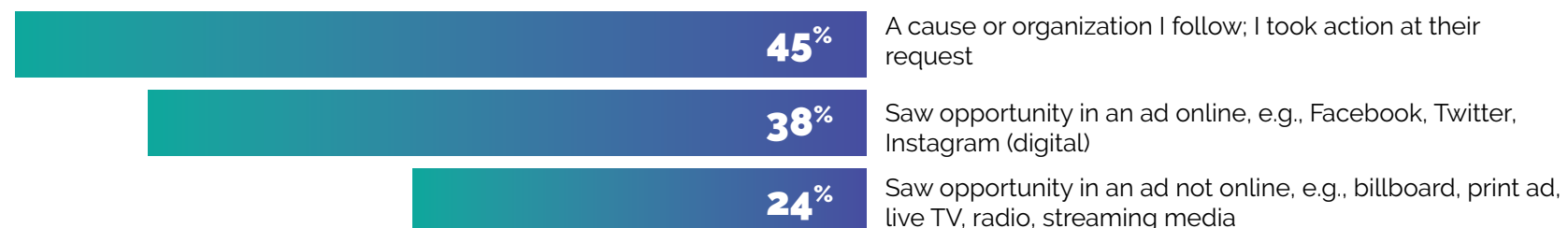
What action have you taken to support a cause?



ACTIONS TAKEN BY YOUNG AMERICANS ARE SPARKED BY **CAUSES AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

Before young Americans can sign petitions, donate goods or take those other top actions (see above), something influences them to do so. Organizations are credited with influencing nearly half (45%) of young Americans to take whatever action they did. More than a third were prompted by a digital ad.

If you took an action, who asked you to do so?



YOUNG AMERICANS GET THEIR INFORMATION ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES FROM **CONTENT CREATORS**

Half (51%) of respondents said online influencers or content creators were a source of information about a social issue they cared about. Throughout 2020, online influencers/content creators always exerted wider influence than celebrities. This is continuing into 2021; regardless of the social issue, many more young Americans got their information from content creators than from celebrities.

Did you get information about the issue for which you acted from:



Terms

- **Online Influencer/Content Creator** – an individual (not a brand or group) who grew their audience/followers by creating content online and now uses their online presence as a primary profession (excludes celebrities).
- **Celebrity** – a musician, athlete or actor whose primary profession does not exist online.

BRANDS AND COMPANIES CAN INFLUENCE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT SOCIAL ISSUES

Our 2020 research revealed that young Americans had begun to believe companies could influence attitudes toward virus prevention, racial equity and fair elections. The belief is continuing in 2021, with a total of 73% indicating they thought companies or brands had a great deal or some influence on people's attitudes toward social issues.

How much influence do you think brands and companies can have on the attitudes and behaviors of individuals related to social issues?



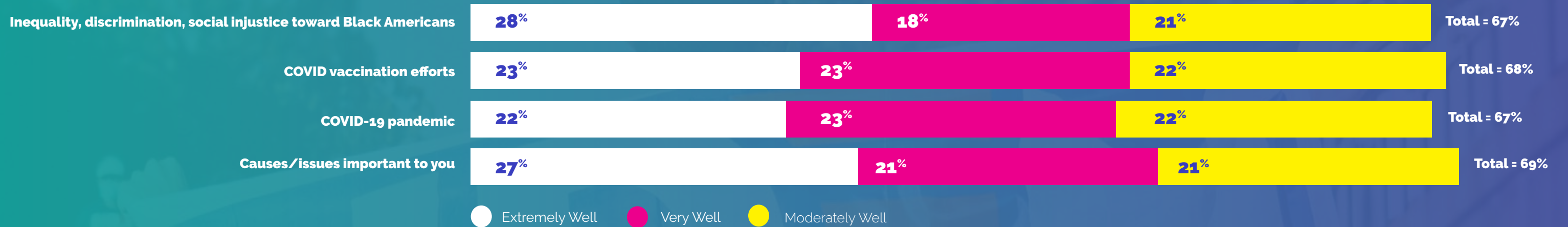
(Influencing Young America to Act Special COVID-19 Research Report - Spring 2020)

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

YOUNG AMERICANS THINK **PRESIDENT BIDEN IS DOING A GOOD JOB** ON RACIAL EQUITY, COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AND OTHER ISSUES THEY FIND IMPORTANT

On March 28, 2021, CNN reported that President Joe Biden's approval rating across the board was 54%. This reflects young Americans' ratings of his job performance on social issues. Two-thirds thought he has handled racial inequality, COVID-19 vaccinations, the pandemic itself and other causes important to them well.

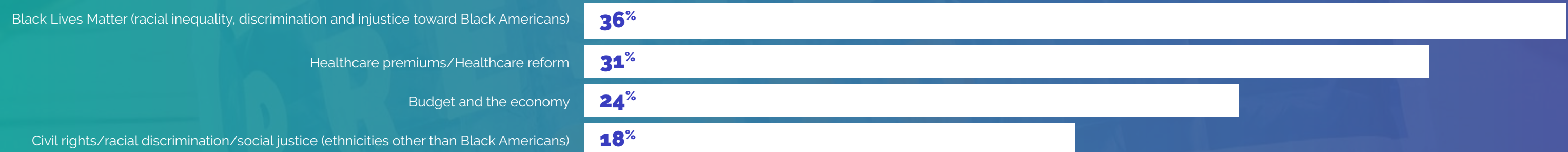
How well do you think President Biden has addressed the following issues:



THE TOP ISSUES BIDEN SHOULD ADDRESS ARE **RACIAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS, HEALTHCARE PREMIUMS AND THE ECONOMY**

The top social issues of importance to young Americans were nearly identical to the issues they thought President Joe Biden should address first. Racial inequality, civil rights and healthcare premiums all need the president's attention, along with the country's budget and economy.

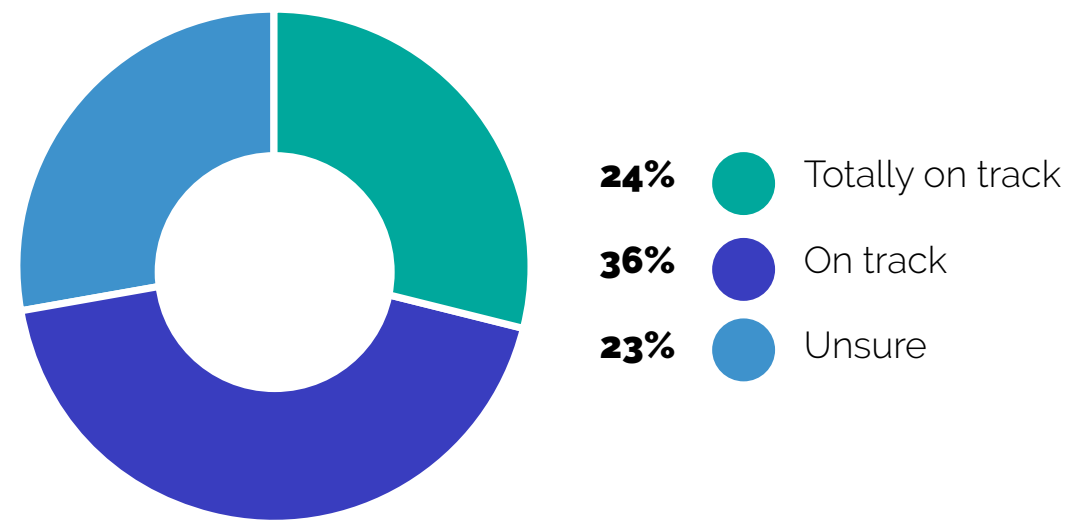
What are the top issues President Biden should address?



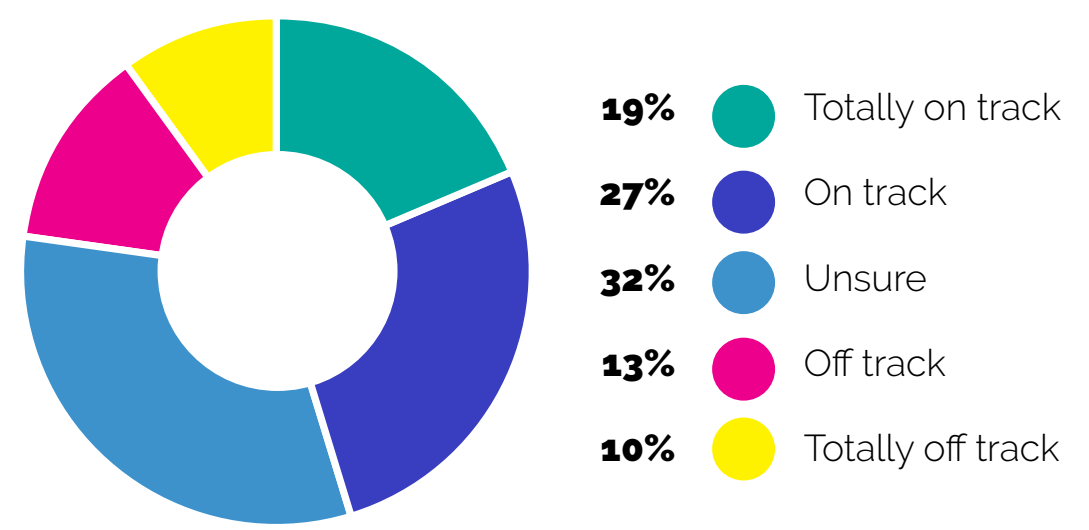
YOUNG AMERICANS THINK **THE COUNTRY IS ON TRACK**

Almost two-thirds (60%) thought the country is either totally on track or on track. This survey was fielded about two weeks after Biden took two major steps: He expanded subsidies for health insurance premiums and increased his initial promise of 100 million vaccinations by his 100th day in office to 200. Respondents seemed less hopeful about the future; less than half thought the country would be totally on track or on track one year from now.

All things considered, how would you rate the state of our country now as compared to where it was before the November 2020 presidential election?



All things considered, where do you think our country will be one year from now?



COVID-19 VACCINATION

YOUNG AMERICANS VIEW COVID-19 VACCINATION AS IMPORTANT, **THOUGH LESS IMPORTANT FOR THEMSELVES**

Nearly three-quarters of young Americans said it's important for them to get the COVID-19 vaccination. However, just over half either have or plan to get the shot when they're eligible, and 1 in 5 is still unsure.

How important is it for you to get the COVID-19 vaccine?



● Extremely Important ● Very Important ● Important

Do you plan to get the vaccine when you're eligible?



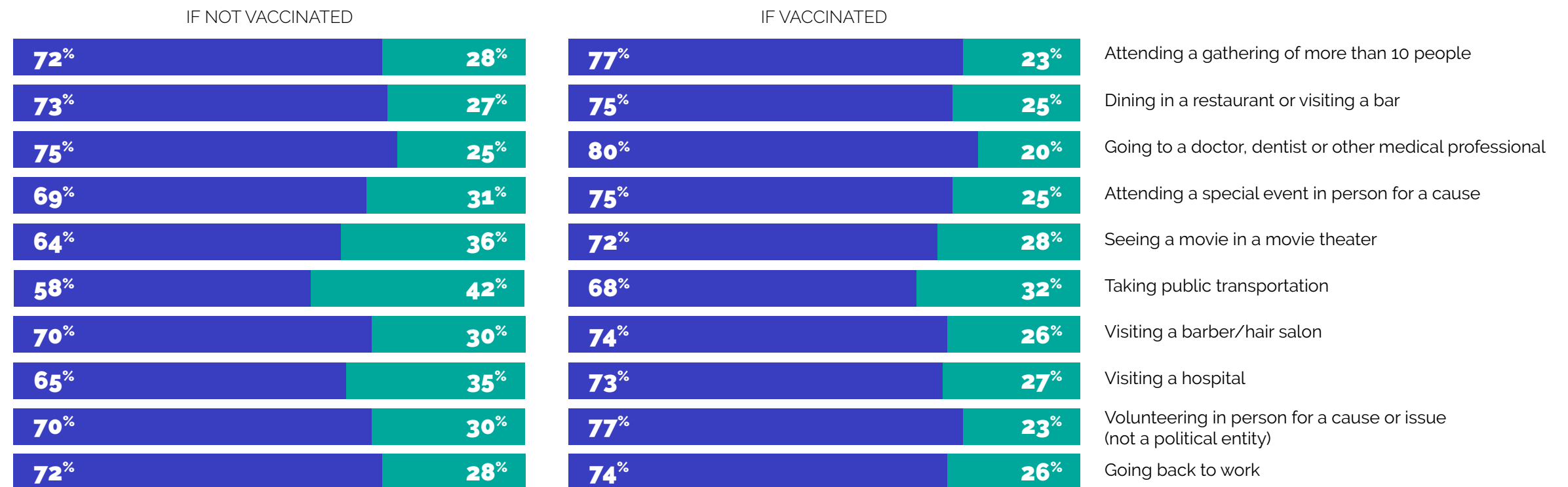
● Yes ● No ● Unsure ● Already Vaccinated

VACCINATED OR NOT, YOUNG AMERICANS ARE MORE **COMFORTABLE BEING AROUND OTHERS**

Since spring 2020, young Americans have gotten much more comfortable getting haircuts, attending movies, volunteering in person for a cause and being in large gatherings. For some activities, they will be even more comfortable after they get the vaccine.

Indicate your level of comfort in resuming the following activities:

● Comfortable ● Uncomfortable



CONCLUSION

As we begin to recover from the pandemic and see the effects of a new administration in the White House, the issues that so many young Americans feel are important affect all of us: health, money and racial equity. Tracking how the current optimism generally reflected in these findings as well as the rising concern over healthcare premiums play out should make 2021 an interesting year for research.