

2024

CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

In 2024, the U.S. will elect 1 president, 33 senators, 435 representatives, 11 governors, and 164 state executives. These elected officials can influence the pace of scientific, medical, and public health progress, whether by championing government funding for research or promoting a policy environment that strengthens U.S. research & development (R&D). Our public-private R&D ecosystem is the largest contributor globally to progress that saves lives by making advances against deadly and debilitating health threats – cancer; diabetes; mental illness; Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias; the rare diseases that collectively affect 20% of the U.S. population and tens of millions across the globe; arthritis; Parkinson’s disease; ALS; and the list goes on. The success and vitality of this ecosystem depend on the actions elected officials take.

And that depends on you.

Engage with your candidates. Ask them to champion the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other research and public health agencies. Ask them to champion responsible policies to strengthen our public-private-sector R&D ecosystem. Medical and public health progress doesn’t just deliver benefits to the American people once– it benefits future generations, and the progress made builds on itself to effectively combat more diseases. Your efforts to educate and engage candidates now can save lives going forward.

Do the homework it takes to reach the candidates in your area from across the political spectrum and bring about impactful medical and public health progress. If you want candidates to make scientific, medical, and public health progress a top national priority, tell them.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Below are sample questions for town halls, meetings with candidates, and other events. The best questions reflect your personal experience and perspective. We hope these examples are useful as a starting point!

Federal Support for Science and Research

- For every \$1 invested in NIH-funded research, \$2.46 is generated in economic activity nationwide. How do you plan to ensure continued, robust funding for the National Institutes of Health and other federal research agencies?
- Research shows that investments in health R&D not only improve public health outcomes, but also stimulate economic growth. Will you support increased funding for NIH to foster innovation and economic growth in the U.S.?
- The U.S. has long been considered a leader in research and development. However, public spending on R&D as a share of our GDP has stagnated, while China continues to invest more to close the spending gap with the United States. In a recent public opinion survey, 78% of adults indicated they are concerned with China surpassing the U.S. as the world's leading science and technology (S&T) power. What will you do to ensure the U.S. maintains its role as the global leader in R&D?
- Patients need solutions, and the National Institutes of Health leads the world in spurring revolutionary new avenues of medical progress. What steps will you take to protect and expand the NIH's budget in the face of potential budget cuts?
- U.S. health research agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), each play a unique and important role in addressing health threats to the health, security, and longevity of the American people. What will you do to ensure robust funding for these agencies?

Supporting Early Career Scientists and STEM Education

- In 2022, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) released its [data analyzing test scores](#) of 15-year-old students from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. The United States ranked 28th in math and 12th in science out of 37 participating countries. How will you work to make education in these areas a higher national priority?
- According to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), in 2020, Black Americans and Latinos comprised only 16% of all doctorates earned in science and engineering. What steps would you take to improve access to STEM education so that our scientific workforce becomes more diverse and representative of our nation as a whole?
- Research professionals play a critical role in advancing medical knowledge and innovation. How will you support policies that provide adequate funding, career stability, and resources for researchers across academia, government, and private sectors?
- Early-career scientists and researchers often rely on NIH grants to establish their careers and contribute to medical research. What policies will you implement to support early-career scientists and researchers through NIH funding and grants?

Importance of Private Sector R&D

- More than 80% of Americans say it's important for the federal government to incentivize private-sector investment in science and technology R&D. How will you support the role of the private sector?

- The private sector is the largest funder and producer of R&D in the U.S. - 75% and 78%, respectively - turning basic science in areas such as genetic sequencing and immunology into tangible medical advances. How will you support the role of the private sector in achieving fast-paced medical and public health progress?
- Public-private partnerships have been instrumental in advancing health R&D, leveraging expertise and resources from both sectors. What strategies will you implement to foster more effective collaborations between federal agencies, private industry, and academic institutions to accelerate research breakthroughs and commercialization?
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Public Health

- 30 million Americans (1 in 10) are impacted by rare diseases, but for most rare diseases, there are no cures and few, if any, proven and effective treatments. How do you plan to address this challenge?
- An estimated 129 million people in the U.S. have at least one major chronic disease. What strategies will you support to fund research into preventive health measures and innovative treatments to reduce the burden of chronic diseases on individuals, lower health care costs, and improve overall population health?
- Public health research has been instrumental in identifying effective interventions to improve population health outcomes. How do you plan to promote funding for public health research to address emerging health threats and promote preventive strategies?
- In the U.S., 1 in 5 adults live with mental illness. How will you support research focused on preventing mental health disorders and promoting early intervention strategies?
- Since 1999, more than 1 million people have died of a drug overdose in the U.S. How will you prioritize funding for research into effective prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies for substance use disorders, particularly in communities hardest hit by the opioid epidemic?

Health Disparities

- In the U.S., racial and ethnic minorities face health disparities, including access to care and higher incidence and mortality rates in many diseases, including asthma, diabetes, and cancer. How do you plan to support research initiatives to address these disparities and promote health equity?
- Access to health care is often limited in rural areas, impacting the health outcomes of rural populations. How will you support expanding access to health care and medical research benefits for rural communities to ensure they receive equitable care?
- Diverse populations' representation in clinical trials is essential for understanding treatment efficacy and safety across different demographic groups. How will you advocate for policies that increase diversity in clinical trial participation and ensure research findings are applicable to all?

Pandemics and Other Global Health Threats

- What role do you see for scientific research and innovation in preparing for and responding to future pandemics?
- Neglected tropical diseases affect more than a billion people worldwide, yet receive limited funding and attention. What steps will you take to raise awareness and allocate resources to combat these diseases, particularly within vulnerable populations?
- In 2023, the first locally acquired cases of malaria in the U.S. in 20 years were reported, and dengue is being increasingly reported in Florida. A public health emergency for dengue has been declared in Puerto Rico. How will you support initiatives to prevent the further spread of these and other diseases in the U.S. and its territories?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an excellent way to join the conversation and spread the word about why science and innovation matter. Below are tips and sample posts for engaging with candidates and your network on social media.

Tips for Engaging with Candidates

1

Know who is running: It can be confusing to keep track of candidates. You can use non-partisan resources like [Ballotpedia](#) or [GovTrack](#) to keep up with the elections that interest you.

2

Find Candidates on social media: You can find social media handles for most candidates on their campaign websites. If a member of Congress is running for re-election, they will have a social media account for their campaign which ends with a .com (rather than .gov).

3

Tag your candidates: Tag them in your posts using the “@” symbol before typing their social media username on the applicable platform. For example, on X, Research!America's handle is @researchamerica, on Facebook, @ResearchAmerica.org. and on LinkedIn, @Research!America: Discovery. Innovation. Health.

One note – If you start your post with the “@” tag, only the candidate will see it. If you want the post to be public, make sure the “@” is not the first character in the post. We recommend adding a period to begin the post in this case.

4

Maximize your reach by using hashtags: Hashtags make it easier to find posts or information with a theme. This way, you are ensuring that others who are sharing their thoughts on the importance of science will see your posts. In addition to popular hashtags like #Election2024, you can use #Science, #FundScience, and #WomeninSTEM to make your content viewable by anyone who has an interest in the hashtags beyond just your own followers.

5

Score more shares with visual content: Visuals like videos and infographics are among the most shared social media content.

Sample Tweets to Candidates

In a recent survey, 84% of respondents said it is important for candidates to promote faster medical progress. **[insert candidate X handle here]**: How will you accelerate progress to save lives?

[start with a period or dot, and then insert candidate X handle here] What will you do to ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in science & technology as other nations rapidly increase their investments?

80% of Americans believe it's important for the federal government to support economic incentives for private-sector investment in science and technology. **[insert candidate X handle here]**: How will you encourage public-private partnerships to speed research discoveries and medical progress?

[start with a period and then insert candidate X handle here]: Did you know that for every \$1 invested in NIH-funded research, \$2.64 is generated in economic activity? Do you support increased funding for NIH?

[start with a period and then insert candidate X handle here]: Did you know that every 3 minutes, another child is diagnosed with cancer? What will you do to bolster the research needed to stop this threat?

One out of every 10 Americans lives with a rare disease. More than 90% of rare diseases are still without an FDA-approved treatment. **[insert candidate X handle here]** What will you do to support research and the patients needing treatment?

[start with period and then insert candidate X handle here]: The percentage of young adults (ages 18-34) who report living with a mental illness grew from 26% in 2019 to 34% in 2023. What do you plan on doing to address this crisis and help patients needing solutions?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death that cuts across gender, race, and ethnicity in the U.S. **[insert candidate X handle here]**. What do you plan to do to address this issue for present and future patients?

Last year, more than 70 million Americans fatally overdosed on Fentanyl. **[insert candidate X handle here]** What will you do to bolster the research needed to save lives?

The first locally acquired malaria cases in the U.S. in 20 years were reported in 2023. Dengue cases are increasing in FL & a public health emergency has been declared in PR. **[insert candidate X handle here]** How will you support initiatives to ensure the U.S. can respond to emerging infectious threats?

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken more than 1 million American lives and cost our nation more than \$4 trillion dollars. **[insert candidate X handle here]** What will you do to ensure the U.S. is better prepared for the next pandemic?



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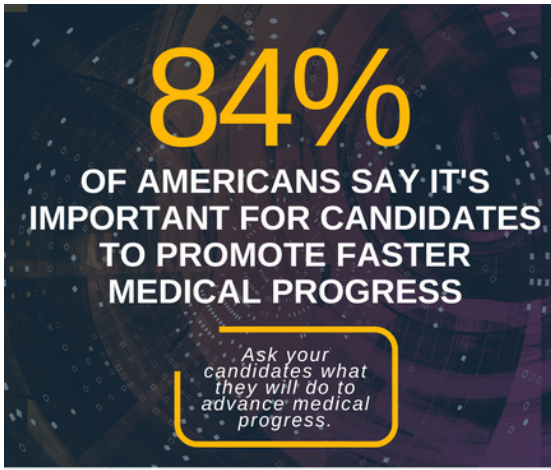
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LinkedIn/Facebook Posts

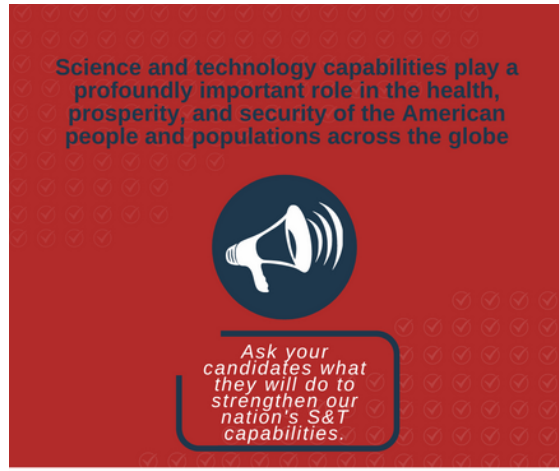
Today, more than ever, S&T play a profoundly important role in the health, prosperity, and security of the American people and populations across the globe. Public sentiment is aligned with robust funding for our nation's research and public health agencies: in fact, national public opinion surveys commissioned by Research!America found that most Americans (90%) say it is important for the U.S. to be a global leader in S&T, and 78% are concerned that China will surpass the U.S. as the world's leading S&T power. What will your candidates for Congress do to strengthen our nation's S&T capabilities?

Our nation's best work comes when the public and private sectors work together. 80% of Americans say it's important for the federal government to incentivize private-sector investment in new treatments and cures. What will your candidates do to support public and private-sector investment in life-saving research & development?

It's time for research and innovation to be a top priority in Washington. Ask your candidates what they will do to advance scientific research and ensure a robust, globally competitive research ecosystem in the United States.



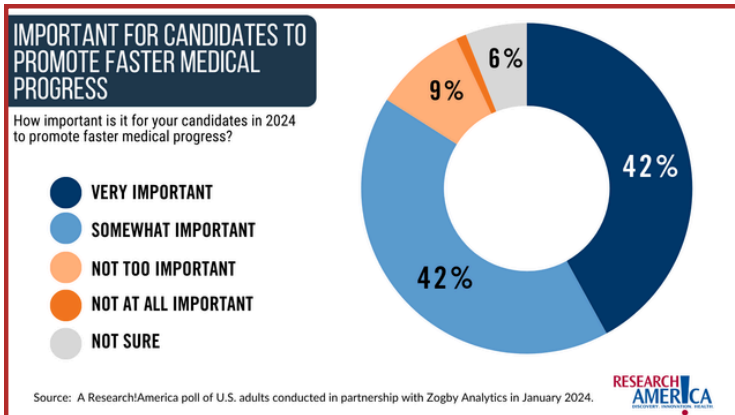
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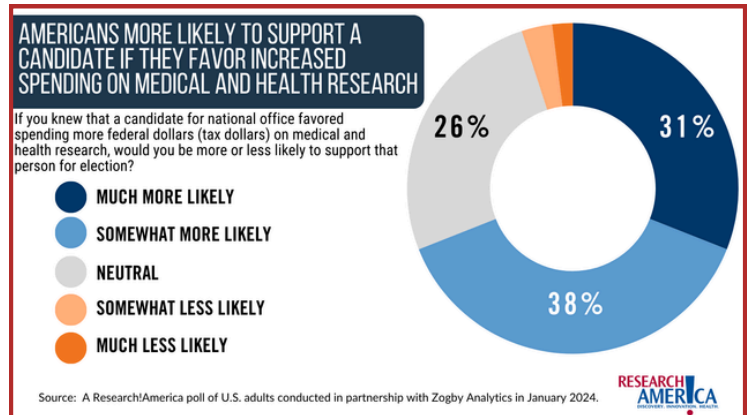
Public Opinion Survey Data to Use

84% of respondents say it is important for candidates to promote faster medical progress.



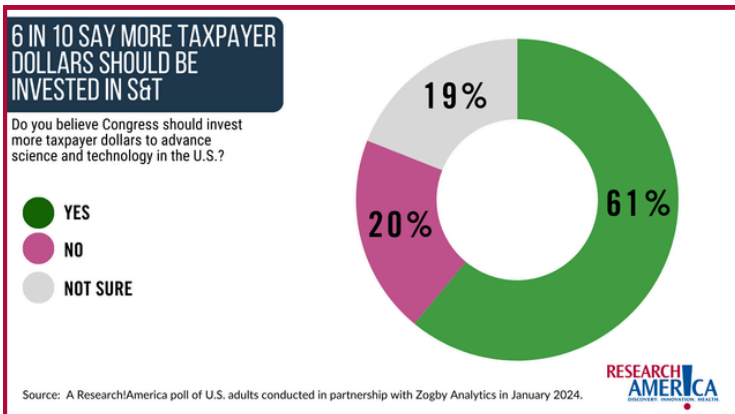
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Nearly 69% of Americans are more likely to support a candidate if they favor increased spending on medical and health research.



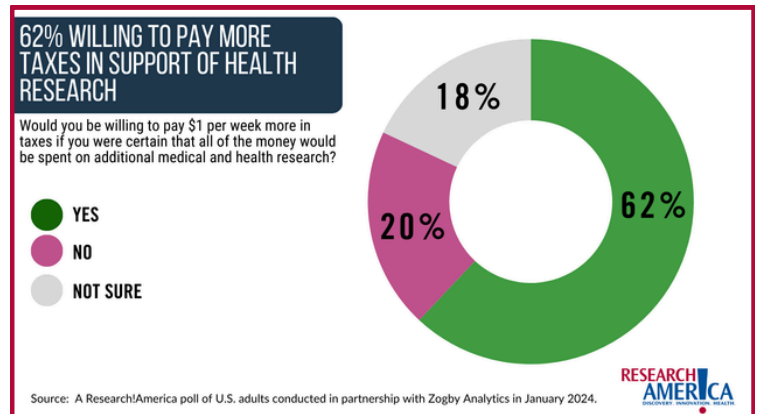
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61% of respondents believe Congress should invest more taxpayer dollars to advance science and technology in the U.S.



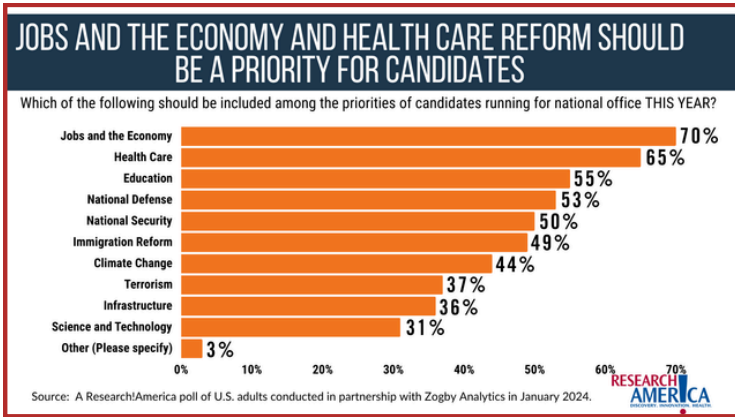
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62% of respondents are willing to pay \$1 per week more in taxes to support additional medical and health research.



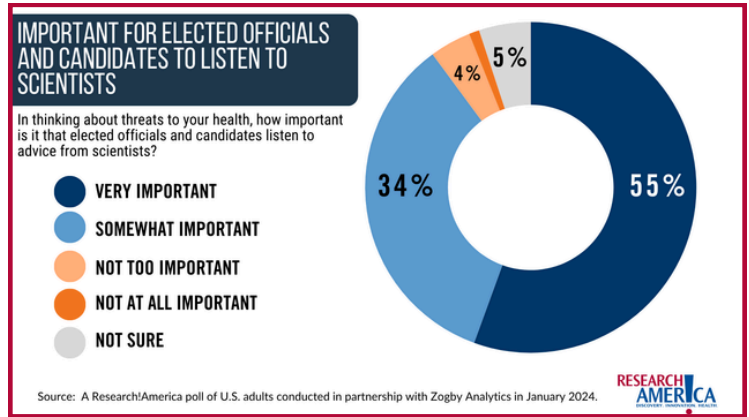
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Respondents say that jobs, the economy, and health care reform should be among the top priorities of candidates running for national office in 2024.



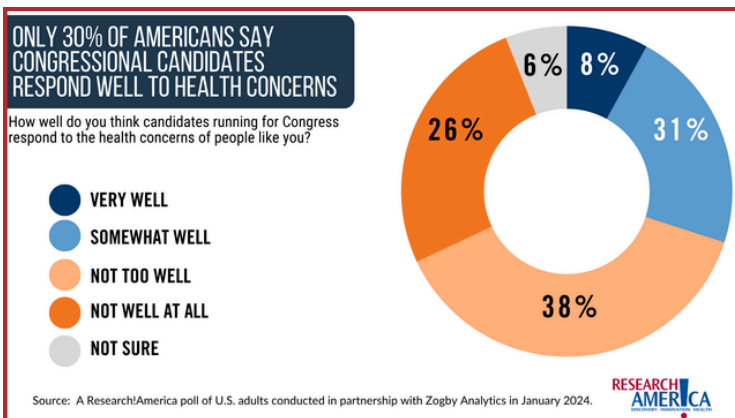
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Nearly 9 in 10 say it's important for elected officials and candidates to listen to advice from scientists.



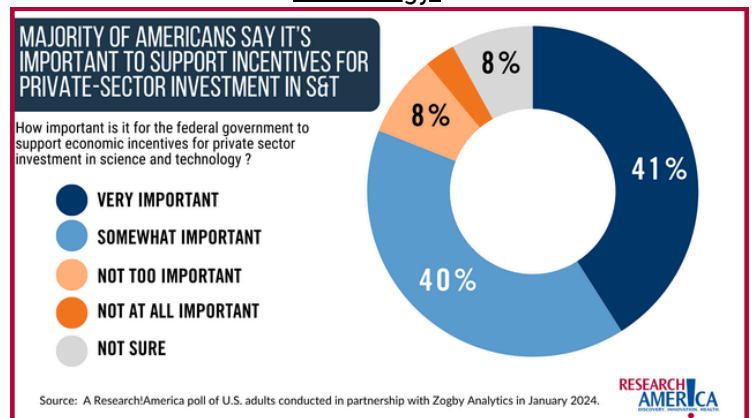
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Only 30% Americans say Congressional candidates respond well to their health concerns.



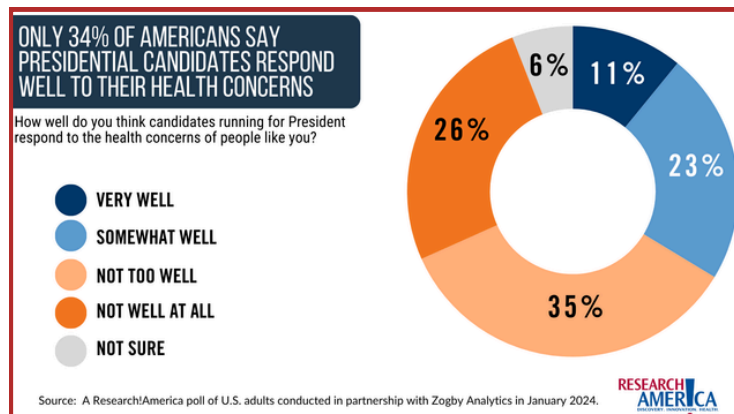
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A strong majority of Americans (81%) say it's important for the federal government to support economic incentives for private-sector investment in science and technology.



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Only 34% of Americans say presidential candidates respond well to their health concerns.



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