

ADVOCACY IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING: EARLY FINDINGS

*How Advocates and Policymakers are Responding
to COVID-19*



OUR METHODOLOGY

For the past five years, Ballast has conducted an annual online study of individuals who work in the DC policy arena. We are publishing early findings from this year's study related to COVID-19 to support partnerships between policymakers and advocates during this difficult time.

OUR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: DC'S SENIOR-MOST POLICYMAKERS



CAPITOL HILL

E.g., Chief of Staff, Committee Staff, Legislative Director



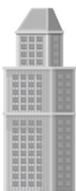
FEDERAL AGENCIES

E.g., Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, Policy Advisor



THE WHITE HOUSE

E.g., Special Assistant, Policy Advisor



POLICY EXPERTS

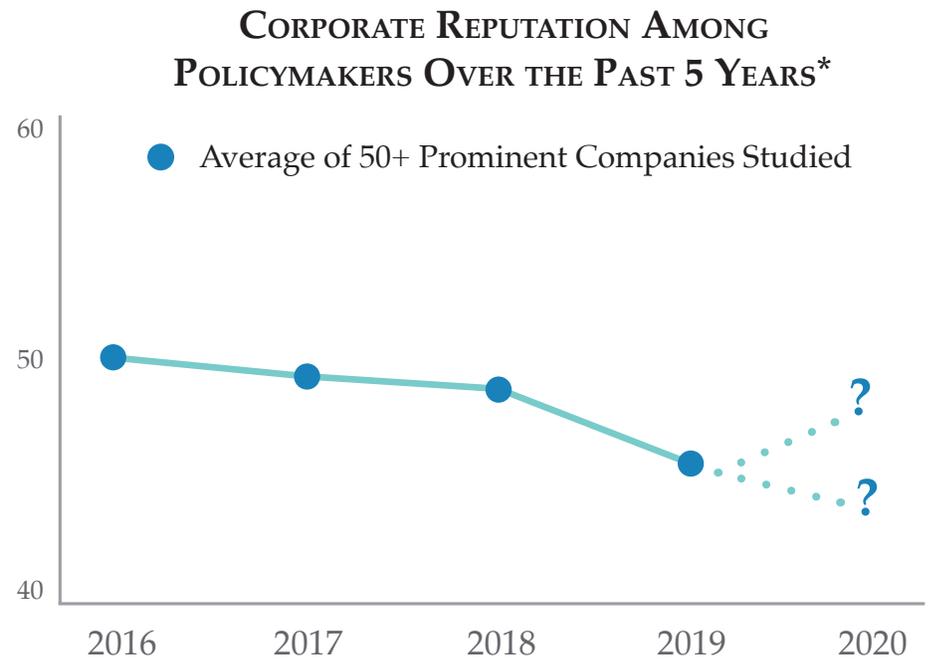
E.g., Senior Fellow, Economic Advisor, Senior VP

Our annual online study asks respondents to rate their familiarity with advocacy efforts of various organizations who advocate in DC and provide perspectives on how effective they find their advocacy. It also asks respondents their views on current advocacy practices.

In this year's study, we included questions about COVID-19 to study how the pandemic has affected advocacy in DC. Over 600 senior-level staff in the legislative and executive branches of government, as well as the private sector, participated in the online study that contributed to the findings within this report.

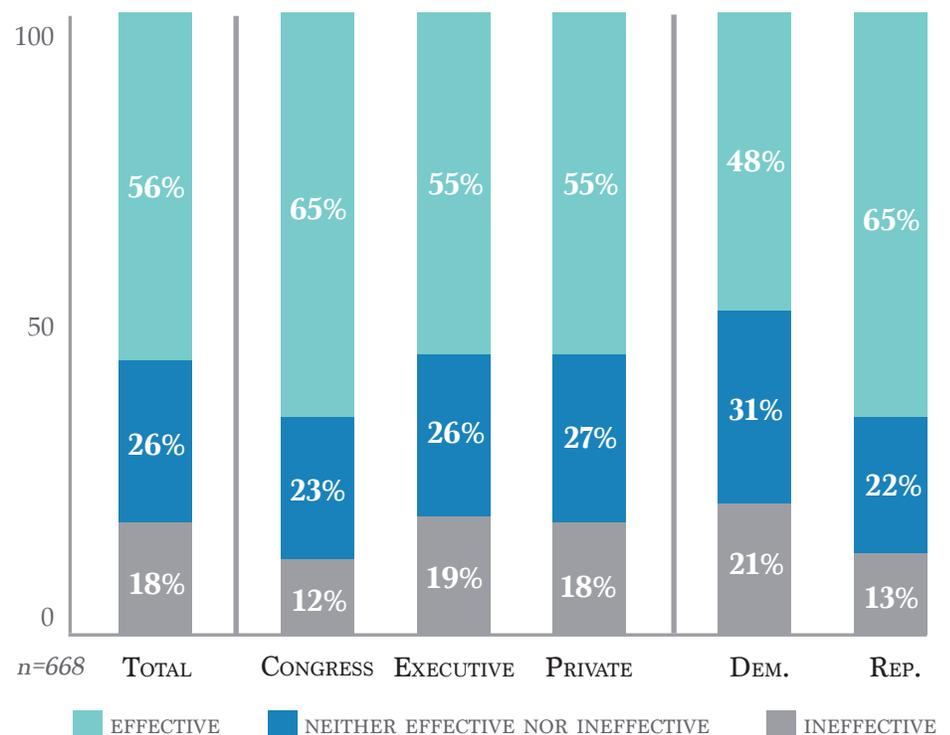
ADVOCACY IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Our previous research found respondents' perceptions of companies decreased every year for the previous four years. Now, government and the private sector must work together to respond to COVID-19.



IN YOUR VIEW, HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S RESPONSE BEEN IN TACKLING COVID-19 CHALLENGES?

To date, our 2020 study has found that the majority of respondents categorize companies' and associations' responses to challenges related to COVID-19 as effective.

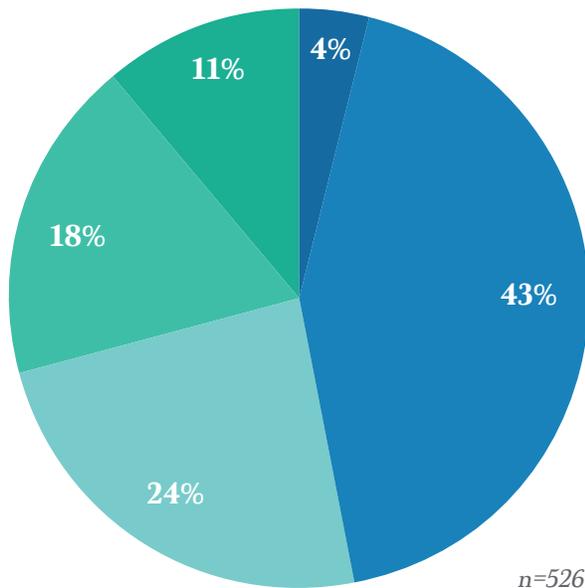


*Policy Brand Index measures policymaker perceptions of organizations' advocacy across a number of critical dimensions like consideration and respect.

POLICYMAKERS WANT TO UNDERSTAND HOW EMPLOYERS ARE CARING FOR EMPLOYEES

Policymakers prefer to hear about measures taken to care for employees during COVID-19.

POLICYMAKERS WANT TO HEAR ABOUT MEASURES TAKEN TO CARE FOR EMPLOYEES



- MEASURES TAKEN TO CARE FOR EMPLOYEES
- UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT ON JOBS AND THE ECONOMY
- MEASURES TAKEN TO CARE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY OPERATE
- MEASURES TAKEN TO CARE FOR CUSTOMERS
- OTHER

Chart depicts percentages of respondents who ranked a topic as most preferred in response to the following question: “What topics do you want to hear more from advocates on? Rank from most preferred topic (1) to least preferred topic (5).”

POLICYMAKERS’ QUESTIONS

- How are organizations addressing the physical and financial security of employees?
- Which steps are organizations taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among employees who continue to work on site (e.g., protective clothing)?
- How are organizations compensating individuals asked not to work during the crisis?

“It’s very important for me to see that groups are taking care of their hourly and lower-level employees who may be concerned about taking sick time or losing hours. I’m more likely to think positively of and work with a group or company that prioritizes employees and encourages others to do the same.”

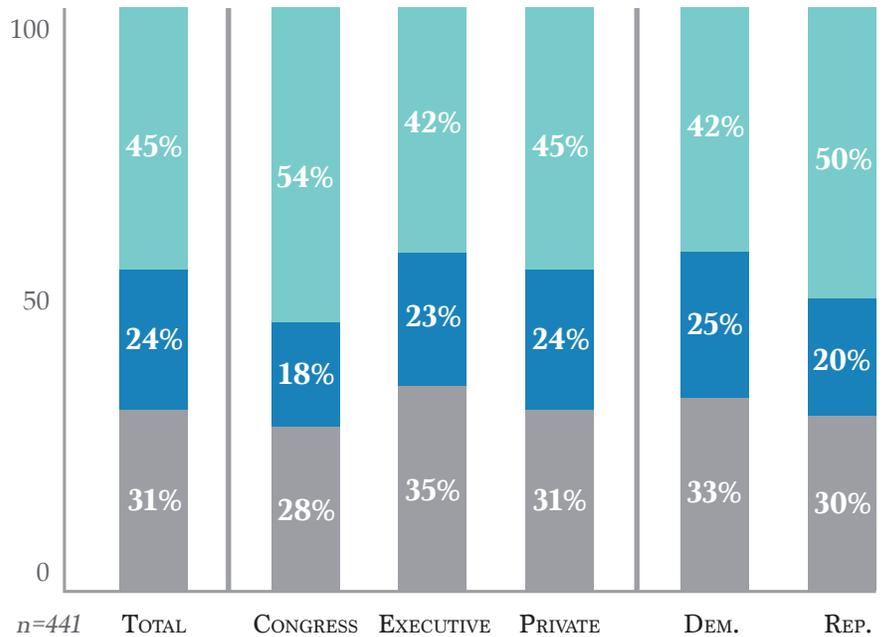
DC IS ADJUSTING TO VIRTUAL POLICYMAKING

Despite social distancing, advocates are increasing their engagement with policymakers.

“To what extent has engagement between government and the business sector increased or decreased as a result of COVID-19?”

45%
of respondents indicated increased engagement from private sector advocates in response to COVID-19.

- INCREASED
- NEITHER INCREASED NOR DECREASED
- DECREASED



POLICYMAKERS SUGGEST MULTIPLE MEDIUMS TO ENGAGE WITH THEM, AND PRESCRIBE FLEXIBILITY AND UNDERSTANDING DURING SOCIAL DISTANCING

“How should advocates best engage with you instead of in-person meetings?”



“Virtual Meetings still count as face-to-face meetings.”

*“Honestly, **patience and flexibility matter more than the medium.** I'm personally a fan of video conferencing, but with the recognition that not everyone can have a fully isolated home office right now with undivided attention.”*

n=403

POLICYMAKERS CITE ORGANIZATIONS THAT DIRECTLY SUPPORT THE CRISIS RESPONSE AS HELPFUL

Respondents mentioned the following organizations in response to the question, *“Which companies and/or associations have been the most helpful to you on issues related to COVID-19?”*

MANUFACTURING

Policymakers cite manufacturers who have shifted production to produce masks and ventilators.



TECHNOLOGY

Policymakers cite technology companies whose products are enabling virtual engagement.



HEALTH

Policymakers cite health organizations and associations representing members on the front lines of the crisis response.



OTHER BUSINESS AND ASSOCIATIONS

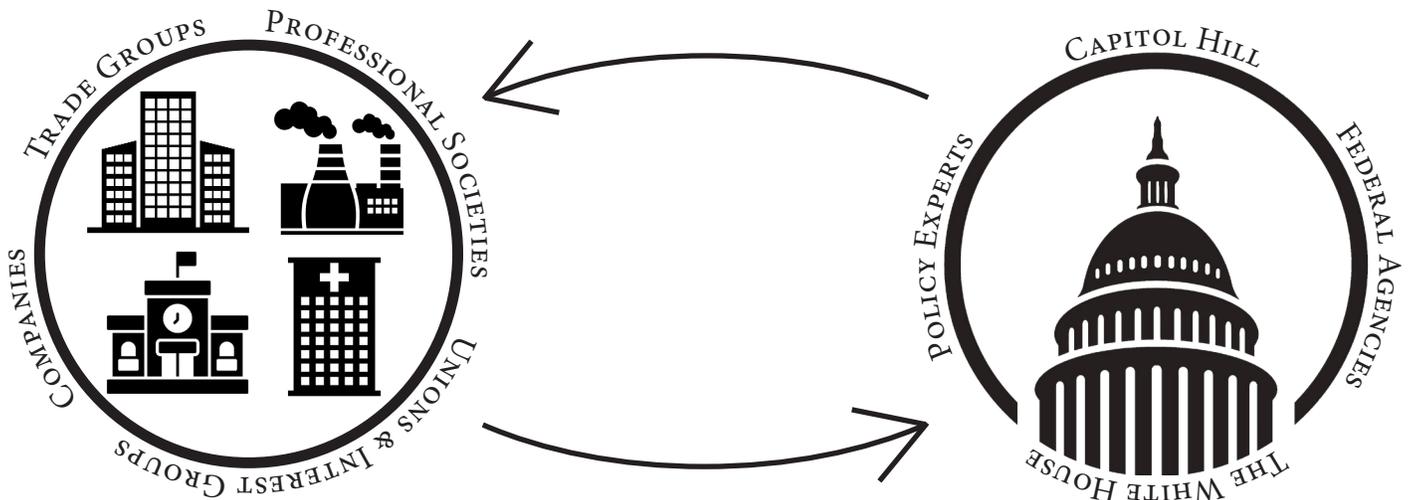
Policymakers cite associations who have been providing helpful guidance and resources for responding to COVID-19.



**ABOUT
BALLAST RESEARCH**

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Ballast Research provides feedback from policymakers directly to government relations professionals, helping advocates (1) make better use of policymakers' time and (2) provide resources and materials most useful to those in government.



OUR CLIENTS

Our clients are Fortune 500 companies, trade associations, and nonprofits looking to forge more productive partnerships with those in government. Each of our clients understands the value of policymakers' time and works with us to optimize every interaction. The result is more productive, mutually beneficial, and efficient engagement.

“This deep-dive, customized research is invaluable for understanding what policymakers think of us and need from us. The insights are another important tool we use to inform our thinking on how to engage, and the data illuminate where we can do better.”

-Head of US Communications, Fortune 10 Company

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All participation in our research is confidential and not for attribution.

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