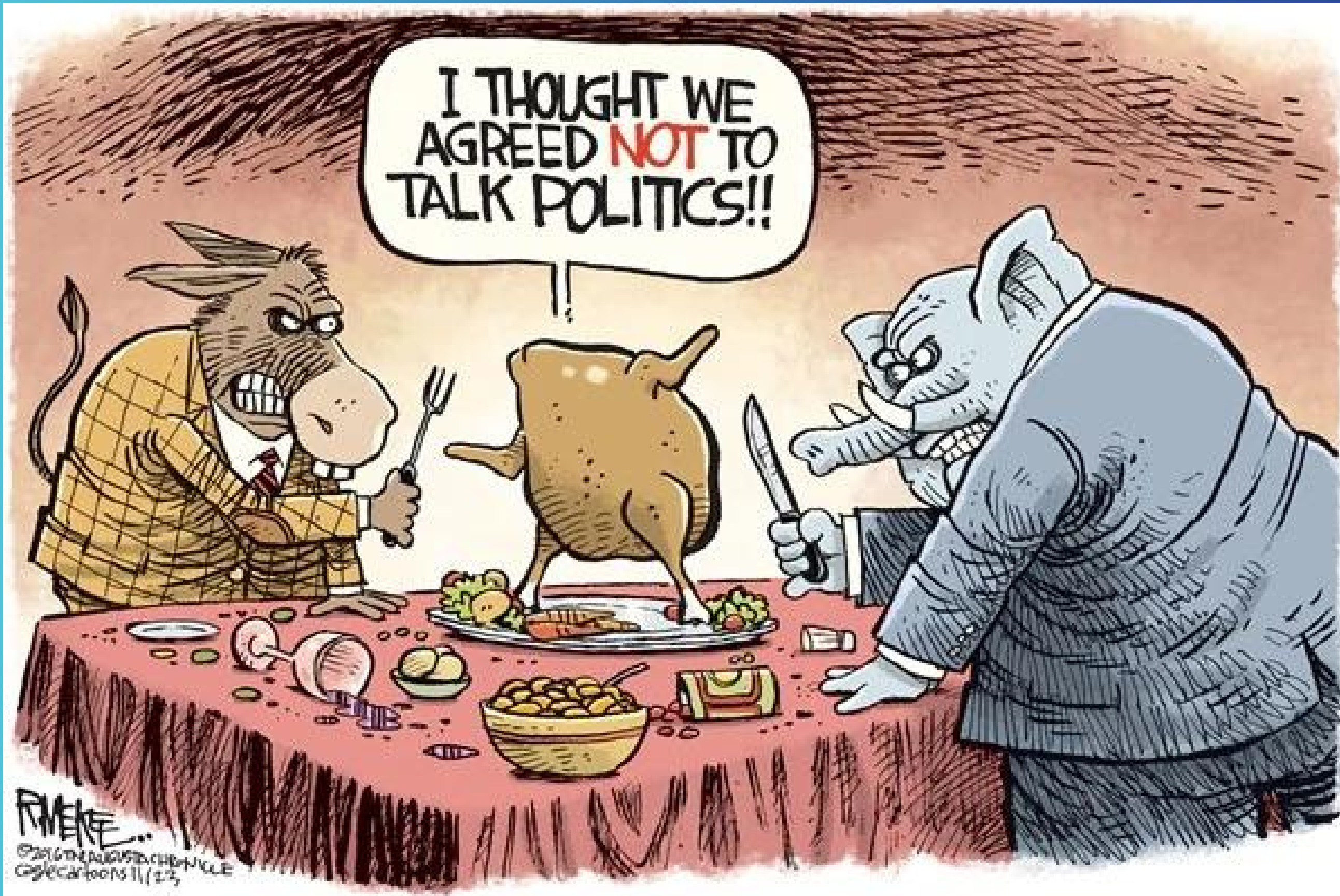


TRANSFORMATIVE CONVERSATIONS

HOW TO TALK
PERSUASIVELY ABOUT
CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES





Source: Los Angeles Daily News





How do [I] respond to people who don't seem to care or give reasons to not make changes?





[I'm challenged by the] seeming lack of interest or a feeling of being overwhelmed by people I encounter. ... I feel I lack sufficient information to engage in meaningful discussion.





"What are the best strategies to respond to climate deniers, and keep the morale strong for people who are committed while engaging those who might be interested?"



THE RESEARCH



"If I just explain the facts, they'll get it, right?" by Global Weirding | PBS





Science

Current Issue First release papers Archive About Submit m

HOME > SCIENCE > VOL. 352, NO. 6282 > DURABLY REDUCING TRANSPHOBIA: A FIELD EXPERIMENT ON DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING

REPORT

f t in r d e

Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing

DAVID BROOCKMAN AND JOSHUA KALLA

SCIENCE · 8 Apr 2016 · Vol 352, Issue 6282 · pp. 220-224 · DOI: 10.1126/science.aad9713

3,688 209 GET ACCESS

Not just turnout, but turnaround matters

In the last several U.S. presidential elections, the campaign mantra has focused on making sure that voters already aligned with one's candidate do get out to vote. There is a long history of unsuccessful efforts to change people's attitudes. Nevertheless, Broockman and Kalla conducted a field experiment showing that Miami voters shifted their attitudes toward transgender individuals and maintained those changed positions for 3 months (see the Perspective by Paluck).

Science, this issue p. [220](#); see also p. [147](#)

The results of a 2016 canvassing study conducted in South Florida found that asking voters to “put themselves in the shoes of trans people – to understand their problems – through a 10-minute, non-confrontational conversation” found that anti-trans attitudes declined and remained lower three months later.

Also, those voters’ support for laws that protect trans people from discrimination increased, even when presented with counterarguments against those laws.

Source: [Vox News](#)



HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION



Don't share fact or statistics.

Do share a personal story about the impact of the issue **and/or** how that issue connects to a deeply held value.



Don't paint a doomsday scenario (however, this doesn't mean to avoid talking about harm).

Do share a way to get involved or share how addressing the issue is a benefit.



HOW TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION



1. Let your interlocutor speak first. They need to feel listened to and their perspective valued.

[Warning: This part requires a lot of patience.]

2. Once they finish speaking, connect with them over something they shared.

3. Once you've made that connection, link what they care about to the issue you want to discuss.





Gustavo [interlocutor] and Virginia [canvasser] go on to discuss how much they love their partners, and how that love helps them overcome adversity. Gustavo tells Virginia that his wife is a disabled person. "God gave me the ability to love a disabled person," he says, and that taking care of one another is why love matters.

"That resonate a lots with me," Virginia responds. "For me, these laws, and including transgender people are about that. They're about how we treat one another."



Only **after** this type of exchange can you ask someone to put themselves in the shoes of a marginalized community.



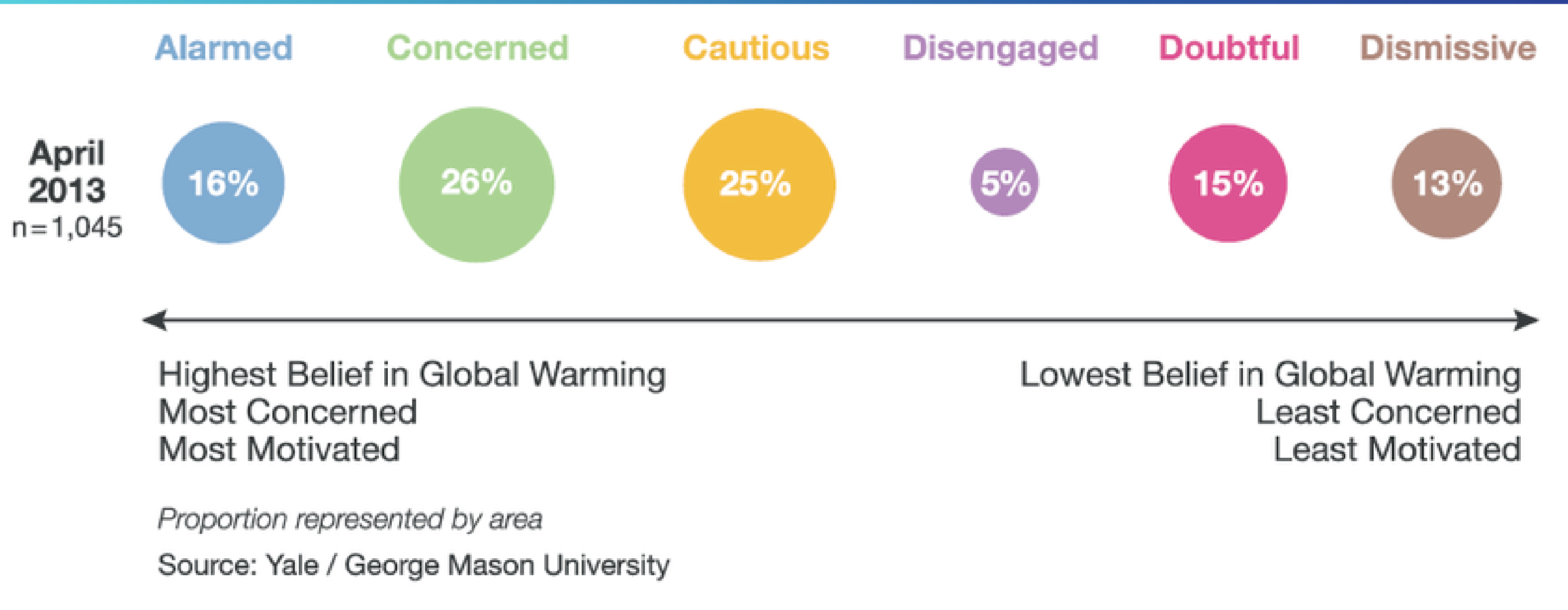


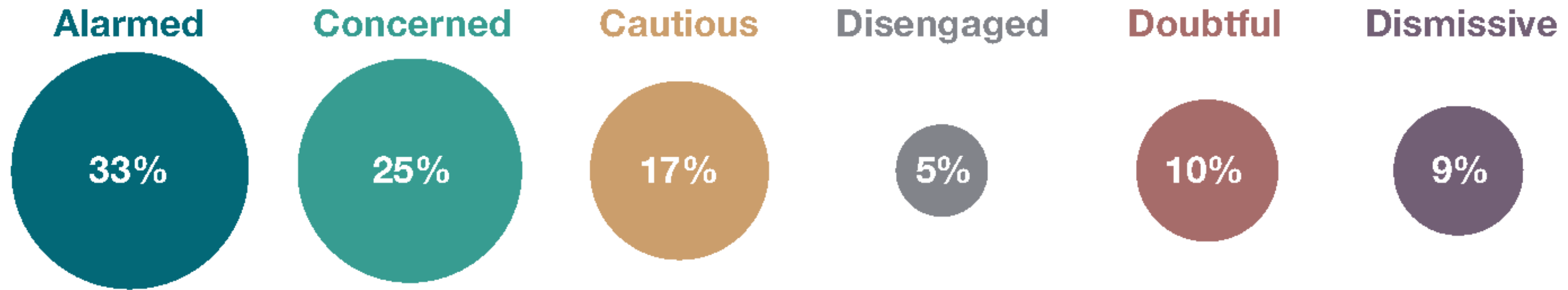
**HOW TO HAVE
THE **RIGHT**
CONVERSATIONS**



You can't persuade **everyone!**
Focus your attention on the **"soft middle."**







Highest Belief in Global Warming
Most Concerned
Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming
Least Concerned
Least Motivated

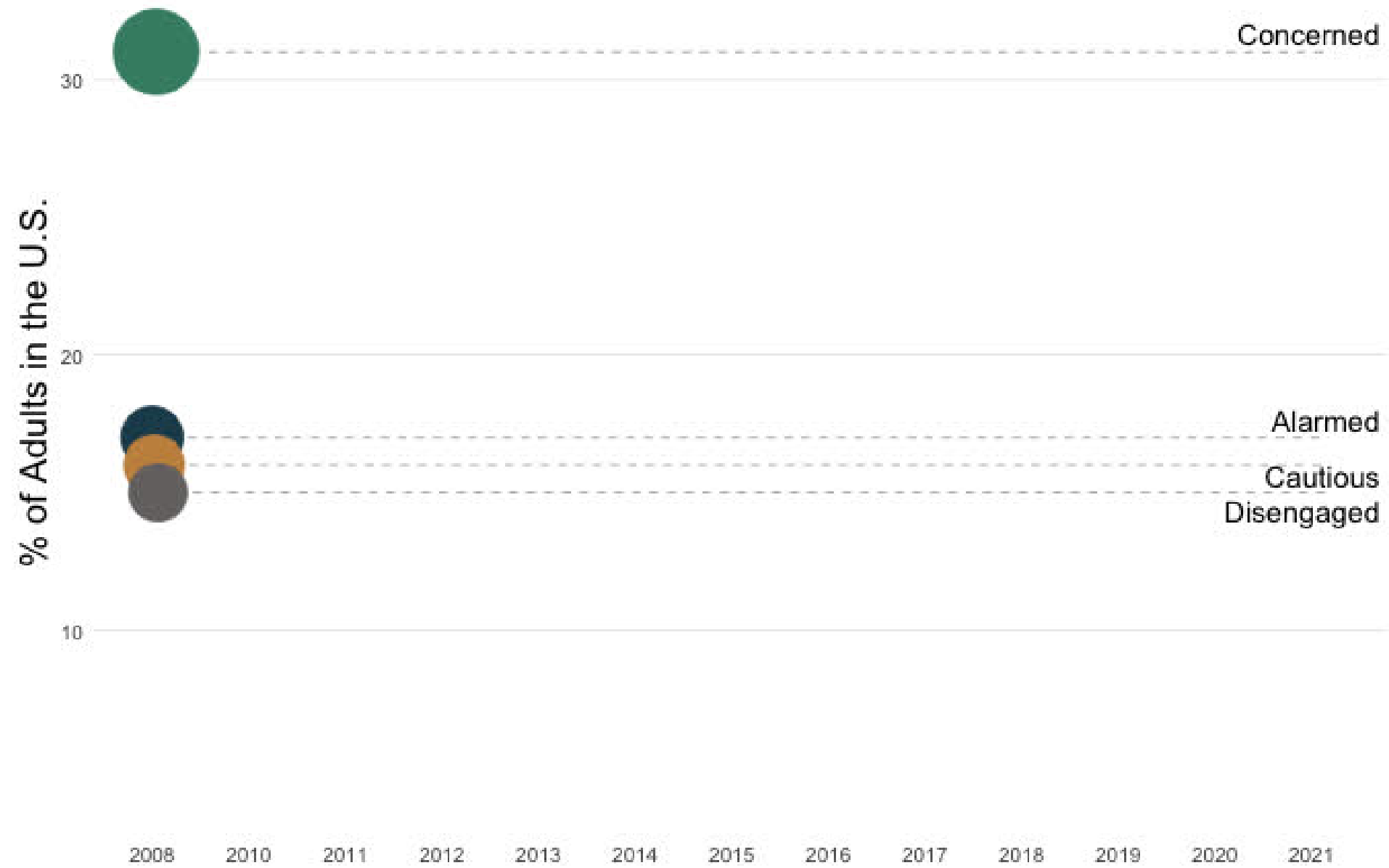
September 2021
(n= 1,006)



"A look back at how the Six Americas have changed over the past decade (see animation) shows that the largest group, the Concerned, grew quickly from 2013 to 2015, but has declined slightly since then. The Alarmed, in contrast, experienced more rapid growth during the past five years than any of the other groups. Meanwhile, the Cautious, Doubtful, and Dismissive have been shrinking in recent years."



Global Warming's Six Americas



OUR FAITH IS A GUIDE



We believe that everyone is made in
the image and likeness of God.

When we talk to people we disagree
with, do we treat them that way?





Know this, my dear brothers: **everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath**, for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. ... **Be doers of the word and not hearers only**, deluding yourselves.

-James 1:19-20, 22



FURTHER READING

- “Research says there are ways to reduce racial bias. Calling people racist isn’t one of them.” (Vox)
- “Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing” (Science Magazine)
- Global Warming’s Six Americas (Yale Program on Climate change Communication)
- “The Science of Equality, Volume 1: Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety, and Stereotype Threat in Education and Health Care” (Perception Institute)
- Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right (Dr. Arlie Russell Hochschild)





THE ADVOCATE'S TOOLBOX

How to influence policy
get your message into the media
and build relationships with your Members of Congress



THANK YOU!

