

The background of the slide features the official seal of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The seal is circular and rendered in a golden-yellow color. It depicts an eagle with its wings spread wide, perched atop a bundle of three arrows. The eagle's head is turned to the left. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY" at the top and "OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE" at the bottom, separated by small decorative elements.

# Civic Health Assessment

Kentucky Secretary of State Michael Adams

# What was the Civic Health Assessment?

- Polled 800 Kentuckians from various political ideologies
- Results divided into three categories: Direct Participation, Social Civics, and Polarization
- Our report went beyond the superficial “voter registration and turnout” and dug deeper to find out the reasons why Kentuckians views are different in various parts of the state
- Overall, Kentucky got a C

## 2023 Civic Health Assessment



### Executive Summary

It is right and appropriate that from time to time we, as a self-governing people, take stock of our civic health. Historically such efforts have focused on superficial indicators. To be sure, voter registration and turnout statistics are informative. But do they really tell us very much about how civically minded and prepared we are?

A doctor's assessment would not consist of asking if you had a gym membership and a record of attendance. At the very least a doctor might ask you what workouts you do and for how long. Are you getting your heartrate up?

Even that is not sufficient. A person's health is comprised of many factors including diet, exercise, stress, and mental health, just to name a few.

We sought to measure civic health in a more comprehensive way. We are not just reviewing whether you are registered to vote, and whether you vote, but reviewing how you vote. This is not a look at for whom you vote, but how informed are you about that choice, whether you know the role of the office being sought, and how you pursue that information.

To that end, we looked at three overarching themes of civic health, **Direct Participation**, **Social Civics**, and **Polarization**.

We used national studies from some of America's top-flight research institutions and universities to understand the national situation. We then used data on Kentucky, and conducted our own survey of 800 Kentucky voters, equally split by party, to ascertain where Kentucky stands relative to the nation, and if we are in fact civically healthy.

### Conclusion

We graded the Commonwealth as having a **C** grade on Direct Participation, a **D+** grade on Social Civics, and a **B** grade on Polarization.

Taken together we give Kentucky an overall grade of **C** for Civic Health.

But we are at a crossroads. We have a lot of opportunity, with minimal work, to raise our Social Civics grade.

We believe this alone will help raise our Direct Participation grade and maintain or even improve our Polarization grade. But if we do nothing and instead continue on the same course, we believe polarization will grow, and as it does it will leave us civically unhealthy.

### Kentucky's Overall Civic Health Grade

# C

**CIVIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT POLL**

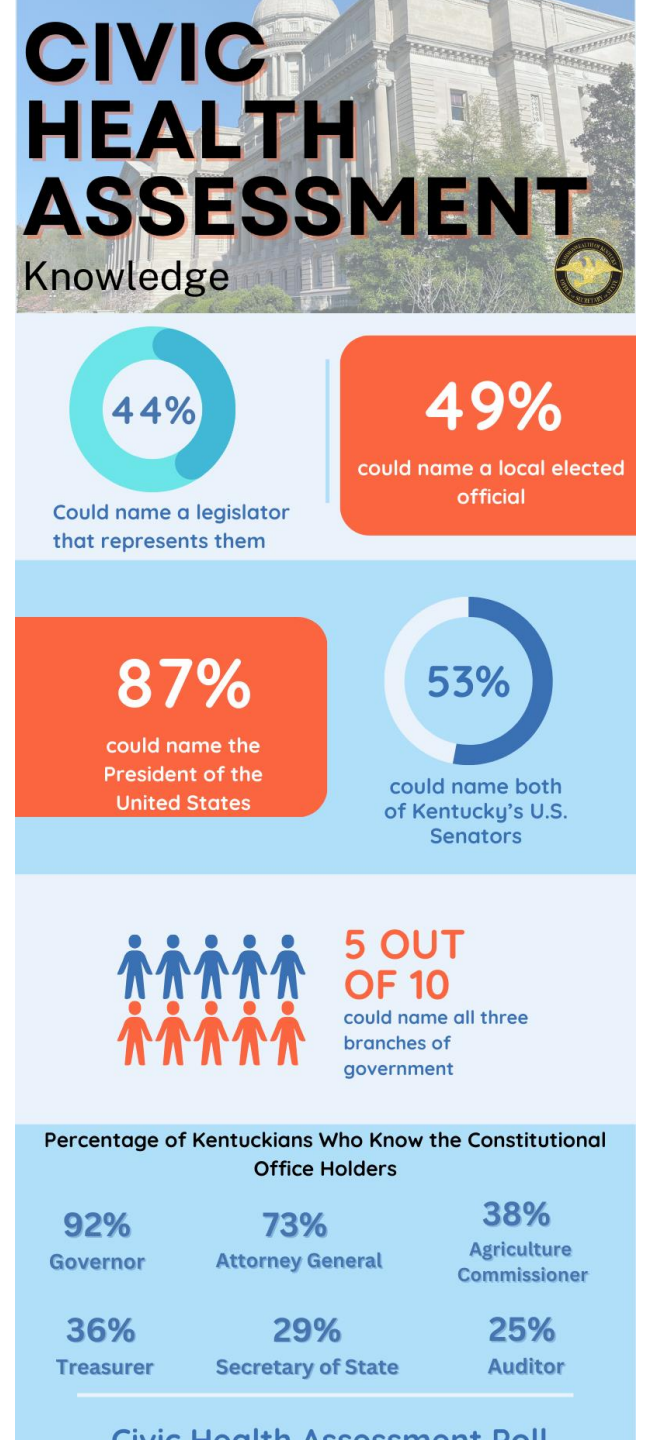
Number of Respondents: 800

Margin of Error: ± 3.46%



# Direct Participation (Knowledge)

- Kentuckians were generally in line with national trends. We found that voter registration was slightly elevated while turnout depressed.
- Kentuckians were generally more knowledgeable about institutions than other Americans.
- The report found that Kentuckians were twice as likely to be able to name the three branches of government than the average American and able to name one of their legislators.

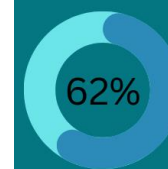
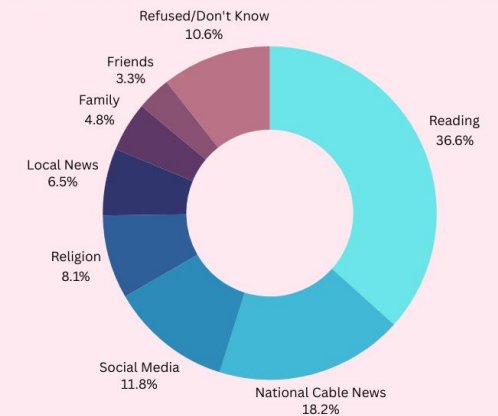


# Social Civics

- Considered the relationship between civic health and social interaction.
- An exceptionally small number of Kentuckians are mixing civics and interpersonal relationships.
- Those that do mix these two are found to be the most knowledgeable and engaged citizens.
- Also looked at where Kentuckians get their political leanings and views.
- Kentuckians who formed political views from media were among the least knowledgeable.



## WHERE KENTUCKIANS GET THEIR POLITICAL LEANINGS AND VIEWS



Trust local TV News



Trust local newspapers



Trust social media

# Polarization

- Kentuckians are less polarized than other parts of the country.
- Self-identified liberals seem to be very resistant to allowing themselves to be exposed to persons with differing points of view.
- Conservatives disproportionately gravitate to news media as their main source of political information, and they are decidedly distrustful of it – more so than even national trends.

## CIVIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT

### Polarization



**60%**

of respondents would be comfortable in a romantic relationship with someone they disagree with politically.

**68%**

of respondents would feel comfortable working for an employer who they disagree with politically.

**80%**

of respondents would not feel ashamed if their child doesn't share their political views.

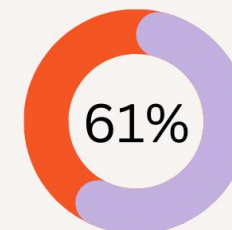
**75%**

of respondents do not think it is important to have friends with the same political views.



**7 OUT OF 10**

of respondents have changed at least one political view over their lifetime



**THINK IT'S BETTER FOR LAWMAKERS TO COMPROMISE**



# CIVIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT

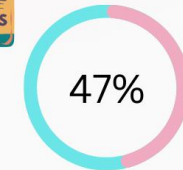
Media Trust



OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE JOURNALISTS ARE BIASED



OF RESPONDENTS DON'T TRUST ANONYMOUS SOURCES



## HOW MUCH DO KENTUCKIANS TRUST THE FOLLOWING NEWS SOURCES?



FOX NEWS



CNN



MSNBC



NEWSMAX



NPR/KET



LOCAL TV NEWS



DIGITAL NEWS



SOCIAL MEDIA



LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

## Media Trust

- We polled Kentuckians on how they view media sources
- We found that Kentuckians are suspecting of journalist biases. With 67 percent saying they are biased.
- We found that they overwhelmingly trust their local TV news over cable news channels.
- Only 19% trust social media for news.

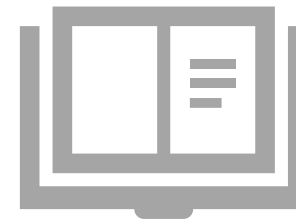
# Recommendations



## Improve Civic Education

Kentucky is one of the few states that does not require civic education. We proposed adding a full year of civic education in high school.

Create a more robust civics exam for high school graduates



## Produce a Blue Book

# Release

- We had various formats. The full 60-page report, an Executive Summary, and downloadable infographics for reporters to use in their stories
- Sent advanced copies to select reporters
- Released videos on social media timed with press release and executive summary
- Created social media graphics with infographics highlighting select figures
- Reached 500,000 people in first 48 hours on broadcast alone

