

# TRANSFORMATIONS THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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A National Evaluation of the Impact of the ENACT Course on  
Student Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behavior

Volume 2: 2024



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“This class was my first opportunity to directly engage with the government and to fully dedicate my ideas into policy changes.”

– ENACT Student



## Overview

The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation (ENACT) is a national, non-partisan program based at Brandeis University that engages undergraduates at colleges and universities in state-level legislative change by teaching them to work with legislators, staffers, and community organizations to advance policy. By engaging young people around the country in civic activism built on knowledge, cooperation, justice and integrity, ENACT is becoming a major voice in addressing challenges to American democracy. In ENACT courses, students learn about participating in the legislative and advocacy process at the state level, with a substantial hands-on component in which they engage directly in that process.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, ENACT courses ran at 15 schools in 14 states. In total, since its inception 12 years ago, ENACT has trained Faculty Fellows (a total of 59) teaching in colleges and universities in all 50 states. Approximately 3230 students have participated in ENACT courses to date.

In 2021, twelve years after ENACT's initial implementation, a group of seasoned ENACT faculty and administrators collaborated to build an evaluation tool to systematically measure the impact of participating in an ENACT course on students' attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills around civic engagement. This is the second volume of "Transformations Through Civic Engagement," describing the impact of the ENACT course on student attitudes, knowledge, and behavior.

## Key Findings

- Consistent with previous findings from the ENACT National Survey, students who complete an ENACT course feel equipped with skills to participate politically and feel that their participation can have an impact on political outcomes. This political efficacy translates to heightened levels of civic engagement.
- Political attitudes of ENACT participants vary by race. Participants of color are less likely to feel understood by government and more likely to see government's primary role to be one of keeping people in line. Despite this, ENACT participants of color experience the same high rates of political efficacy that their white counterparts do.
- ENACT participants are more civically engaged than a national sample of U.S. residents.
  - This includes both voting behavior and other various forms of civic engagement such as attending public rallies and demonstrations and volunteering for political campaigns.
  - Compared to previous ENACT National Survey results, participants who are eligible voted at lower rates in the most recent national presidential, midterm, and primary elections. They voted at similar or higher rates than previous ENACT National Survey participants in state and local elections.
- ENACT courses continue to develop translatable professional skills in students, including effective communication, the ability to work collaboratively with others, and critical evaluation.

# Methods

## Survey

Students who enrolled in ENACT courses between September 2023-May 2024 were surveyed immediately following completion of their course (or as a final course activity). The survey asked about students' attitudes, knowledge, and behavior around civic engagement, as well as their perceptions of the impact the ENACT course had on them. Surveys were completed online through the Qualtrics platform. They were either conducted during class time or sent out in the days and weeks following the conclusion of the course. ENACT Faculty Fellows<sup>1</sup> administered the survey. Faculty Fellows were provided a survey administration script (see Appendix A) as well as a survey link that was unique to their university. During the period that this survey was administered, 15 ENACT courses ran with approximately 230 students enrolled across courses. In total, 101 students (44%) in ENACT classes at seven universities (one university ran two courses) across the country completed the ENACT National Survey. Participating schools include: Brandeis University (MA), Delaware State University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical (A&M) University, Saint Norbert College (WI), Seattle University (WA), the University of Hartford (CT), and the University of Maine.

The ENACT National Survey has been administered to students since January 2022. In 2023, [the first report based on this survey](#)<sup>2</sup> was published. For clarity, data collected between January 2022 through May 2023 is referred to as "Period 1" data. Data collected between September 2023 through May 2024 is referred to as "Period 2" data. In total, between January 2022 and May 2024, 244 students have completed the ENACT National Survey. Additionally, in 2022, the ENACT research team published [the results of a pilot survey of ENACT alumni](#)<sup>3</sup> from the first 10 years (2011-2020) of the course's implementation. These data are referred to, in this report, as "ENACT Alumni" data. All data in this report refer to Period 2 data unless otherwise specified.

In January of 2024, the survey was updated. Both the original survey and the updated version consist of the following sections: 1) Engagement, 2) Knowledge, 3) Efficacy, 4) Civic Action, 5) Voting Behavior, 6) Tolerance/Diversity, 7) Skills/Competencies, 8) College Experience, 9) Values, 10) Demographic questions. On the updated survey, a few questions were reworded (particularly in the Voting Behavior section) and two were added.

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the ENACT model, including the Faculty Fellows, can be found on the ENACT Network Digital Platform: <https://www.enactnetwork.org/about>

<sup>2</sup> Chakoian, Kaitie & Stimell, Melissa (2023). Transformations through Civic Engagement: A National Evaluation of the Impact of the ENACT Course on Student Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behavior. Waltham: Brandeis University International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life.

<sup>3</sup> Chakoian, Kaitie, Powley, Charlotte, & Stimell, Melissa (2022). Transforming the Civic Engagement of Future Generations: A Pilot Evaluation of the Impact of the ENACT Course on Alumni Civic Engagement and Career Trajectories. Waltham: Brandeis University International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life.

In order to include survey results from both before and after the change, the following steps have been taken:

(1) For each question, totals were computed based on the number of participants that completed that given question. For example, the spring 2024 version of the survey asks about feelings of empowerment to participate in the democratic process. For this question, only 72 students responded (none of the fall students were given this question). Results for this question were calculated based on the percentage of the 72 students who responded to the question. Participants who left an individual question blank are not included in analysis (though they are for other questions they did respond to).

(2) Most of the changes to questions concern voting behavior. The fall 2023 survey used wording that identified the specific year of the most recent election (e.g., “Did you vote in the 2023 state election”), whereas the spring 2024 survey omitted the year (e.g., “Did you vote in the most recent state elections”). (See Appendix B for full list of questions included in both versions of the survey). In this report, responses to both versions of the question are reported together, using the text without the year specified.

(3) A change was made to the wording and available multiple choice responses to one question in the “Engagement” section of the survey. In fall 2023, the question appeared as, “Please answer the following question according to how you feel now: I am interested in politics” with options available on a Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. In spring 2024, the question appeared as, “Given the current state of politics today, what is your interest level in participating in politics (as a voter or otherwise)?” with a Likert scale ranging from “strongly interested” to “strongly disinterested”. Results of this question were combined across both versions in this report.

## Course Syllabi

In addition to survey responses from individual students, findings in this report are also based on course syllabi. While all ENACT courses share a commitment to hands-on education about participating in the legislative and advocacy process at the state level, the specific course activities vary by university and faculty. Syllabi for each course included in Period 2 were deposited through the [ENACT Digital Platform](#). Of the eight classes of students who submitted survey responses, six submitted syllabi. The two that did not submit syllabi are not included in any analysis related to course components.

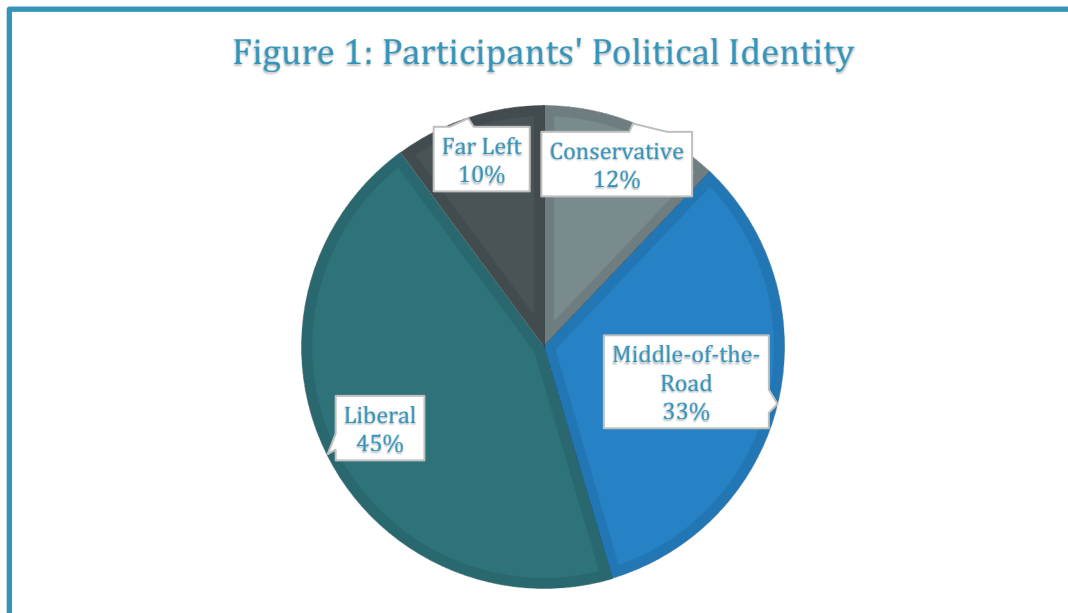
Syllabi were coded according to the different assignments they contained (a research report on current legislation, communication focused assignments, a journal reflecting on legislative work, or a culminating “Present and Defend”) as well as whether or not they require a team component and/or direct lobbying. Communication focused assignments included a speech/elevator pitch, a letter to a legislator, a fact sheet, an op-ed, a social media post, or an oral presentation. For the most part, the courses that submitted syllabi included each of these components. The number of survey participants from classes that did not include each component were too few to allow for cross-

group analysis. The one exception to this was the component of direct lobbying. Three courses contained a requirement of direct lobbying where students interact directly with legislators and advocated for a specific bill. These three courses included a total of 29 survey participants. Any areas in which there was a significant difference between students who engaged in direct lobbying as part of the course and those who did not are noted in this report.

## Results

### Participant Demographics

In Period 2 of the ENACT National Survey, 101 students participated. Students who participated in this phase of the survey identified as Black or African American (46%), White (34%), Asian (8%), Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish (7%), Middle Eastern or North African (2%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1%), and “other race, ethnicity, or origin” (2%). There were approximately twice as many participants who identified as female or women (69%) than as male or men (31%). No students identified as trans or other genders. When asked to consider their family’s access to money and resources as they grew up,<sup>4</sup> 15% indicated that they had less than enough, 55% had enough, and 29% had more than enough. Similarly, when asked about how much of a problem drugs, violence, gangs, and crime were in the neighborhood where they grew up, 34% said they were somewhat or a big problem, 27% said they were not much of a problem, and 39% said they were no problem at all.



<sup>4</sup> These final two questions were taken from the Black Youth Project Survey. Cathy J. Cohen. 2005. “Black Youth Culture Survey.” Chicago, IL: *Black Youth Project*. <http://www.blackyouthproject.com>.

The majority of participants (45%) enrolled in the ENACT course in their senior year. Another 39% took the course as juniors and 11% as sophomores and 3% as first year students. (One graduate student participated in the survey). Social science majors (Anthropology, Economics, Ethnic Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, etc.) made up 81% of survey participants. Students majoring in arts and humanities accounted for 6% of participants, with the remaining students studying biological and life science (4%), health professions (2%), business (2%), and other majors not listed (5%). Over 95% of participants were between the ages of 18-24. Just over a quarter (26%) are the first generation in their family to attend college. Participants self-identify across the political spectrum, but over half (54%) identify as left-leaning.

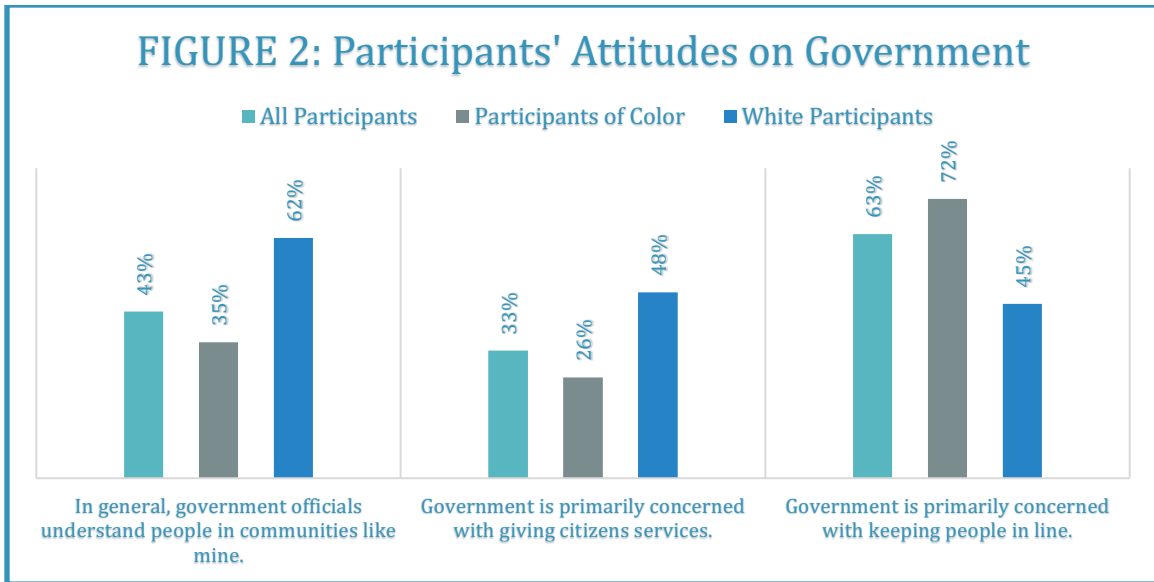
“I think it has been a balance of good and bad interactions with the government. I wouldn’t say overall though I’m pleased with the outcome of how I’m treated being a black woman in this country.”

## Political Attitudes

Participants were asked about some of their attitudes regarding politics. When asked whether government officials understand “people in communities like mine”, 43% indicated that they do. One-third (33%) indicated that they feel the government is primarily concerned with giving citizens services while nearly two-thirds (63%) feel its primary concern is keeping people in line. Importantly, these responses can be disaggregated by race.<sup>5</sup> Only 35% of participants of color indicated that government officials understand people in their communities, while 62% of white respondents expressed this sentiment. White respondents are nearly evenly split on the role of government (“providing services” vs. “keeping people in line”). In contrast, approximately three-quarters (72%) of respondents of color consider the government to be primarily concerned with keeping people in line, while 26% believing its primary concern is giving citizens services.

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<sup>5</sup> There were a substantial number of participants who identified as White and as Black or African American, but no other racial category contained more than 8 participants. To deal with this, racial disaggregation was done by examining participants who identify as only white and participants who identify as any other race. Participants who indicated they were both white and another race/ethnicity were included in the “participants of color subgroup”.



“I think generally the government does not often directly listen to the people’s concern and a lot of [it] is laws and policies [that] are rooted in institutionalized racism.”

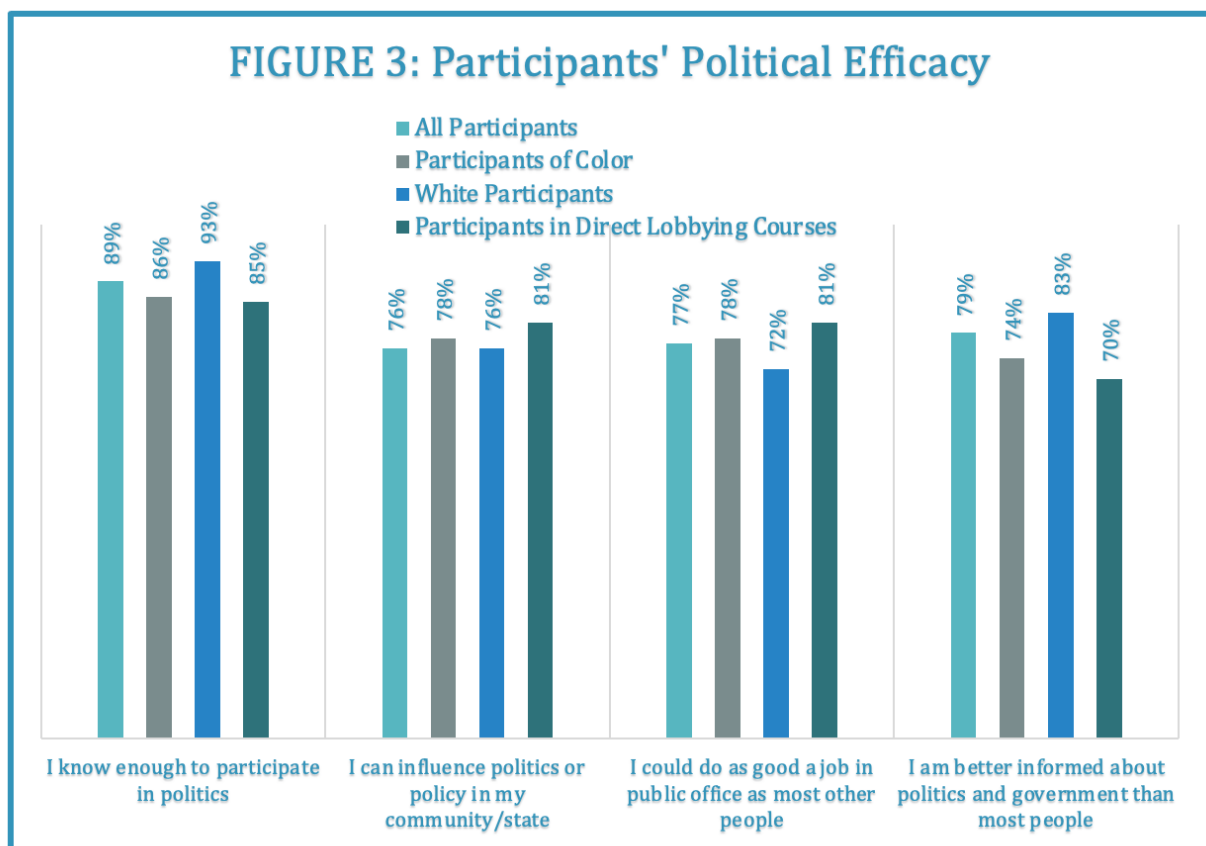
When asked about interactions with government, respondents indicated both positive and negative experiences. Some participants expressed cynicism regarding the government, noting a tendency to prioritize profits over the needs of constituents and not adequately representing the will of all people rather than just the majority. Most commonly, survey respondents with negative interactions with government describe frustration with the slow pace of government action and change. Students who reflected on positive interactions with government shared experiences of interpersonal encounters with legislators saying they were approachable, kind, and open to hearing from the students.

“...Every time I’ve visited an official building or the capital, it is great vibes and a great environment.”



## Political Efficacy

A consistent finding across both Period 1 and Period 2 of the ENACT National Survey, as well as the ENACT Alumni data, is that students who complete an ENACT course express having political efficacy. Nearly all (90%) of Period 2 survey respondents indicated that they know enough to participate in politics. Over three-quarters (76%) believe they can personally influence politics or policy in their communities or states. An even higher percentage, 77%, feel they could do as good a job in public office as most other people, and 79%, indicated that they think they are better informed about politics and government than most people. These results are consistent even when disaggregated by race. Students whose courses included a component of direct lobbying were even more likely to feel they can influence politics or policy in their state (82%) and to feel they could do as good a job in public office as most other people (81%).



When asked about some of the specific elements of political efficacy at the state level, participants responded similarly. The majority of participants believe they have a good understanding of important political issues facing their state (89%), know the steps a bill goes through between proposal and passage at the state level (91%), and know who to contact if they are dissatisfied with a state policy (81%). ENACT courses help students understand the major issues facing their communities. Almost all participants (91%) reported that the ENACT class contributed to their

knowledge of problems facing their community/state and 85% reported the class contributing to their understanding of national issues. This increased understanding, combined with hands-on exposure to the legislative process contributes to the self-efficacy students experience.

“I realized that the government isn’t as ‘far away’ and ‘unapproachable’ as I thought, especially every time I got to the State House and actually talk to and meet people in the legislative offices.”

## Political Engagement

Feelings of political efficacy translate to political and civic engagement.<sup>6</sup> Students who complete an ENACT course are engaged in social, civic, and political activity. Within the past 12 months, 73% of respondents have attended meetings related to politics and 72% have signed a petition. Just under half (40%) have circulated a petition for a candidate or issue. Over 50% attended a political rally or speech and 44% demonstrated or protested for a cause. Looking beyond just the past year, 41% have volunteered for a political campaign (21% in the past year) and 37% have written a letter to a newspaper editor (28% in the past year).

This is consistent with findings from Period 1 and is above the national average. In 2018, the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) and The Atlantic conducted a survey with a random sample of over 1000 adults living in the U.S. about their civic engagement. The PRRI/The Atlantic Civic Engagement Survey found that a minority of participants had attended a rally or demonstration (8%), volunteered with a group or cause (14%), attended a community meeting (12%), donated money to a campaign or cause (19%), posted on social media about an issue that matters to them (23%), or signed an online petition (28%), in the past 12 months.<sup>7</sup>

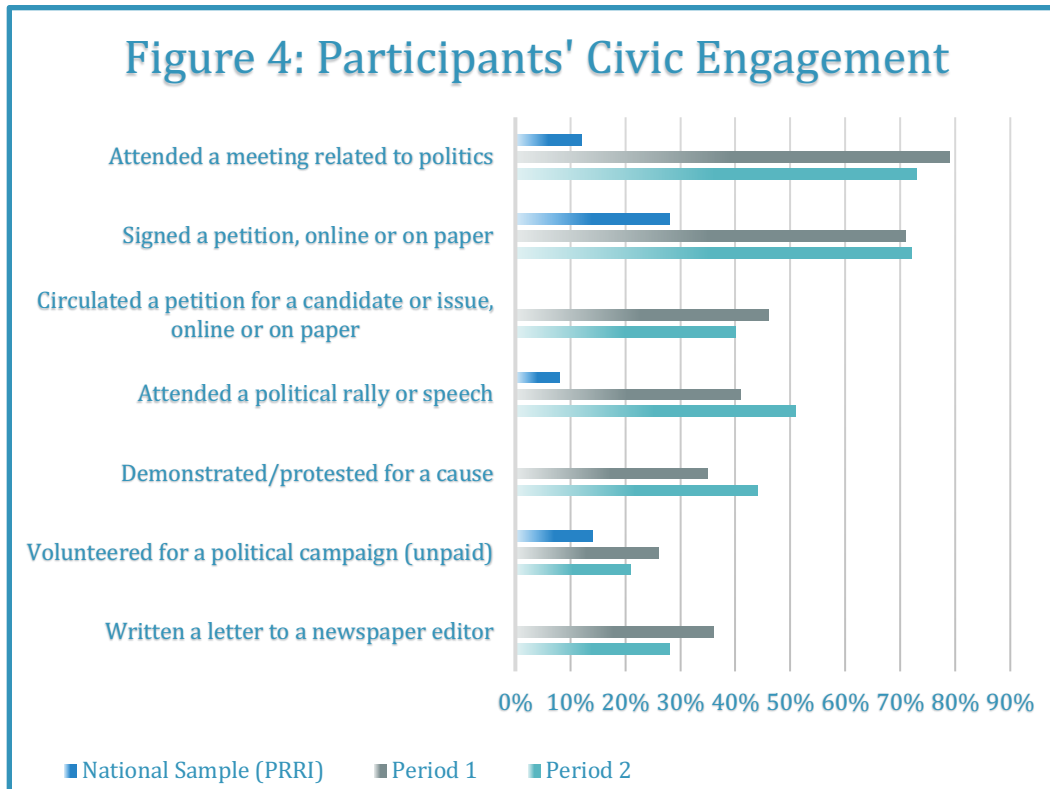
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<sup>6</sup> Almond, G. A., and Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, R., Cox, D., Griffin, R., Najile, M., Fisch-Friedman, M., and Vandermaas-Peeler, A. (2018). *American democracy in crisis: Civic engagement, young adult activism, and the 2018 midterm elections*.

<https://www.ppri.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Civic-Engagement-NovB.pdf>

Note: this survey has not been conducted since 2018



\*No PRRI data is available regarding circulating petitions, demonstrating/prottesting, or writing a letter to the editor.

“I vote, protest, intern, and get involved. I stay as informed as I can.”

### Voting Behavior

ENACT students also consistently indicate a high rate of political engagement through voting. The majority of Period 2 respondents (83%) are registered to vote and 95% of Period 1 respondents were registered. When students complete ENACT courses, they intend to vote at high rates. Period 2 participants intend to vote in the upcoming local (89%), state (89%), and presidential (90%) elections. The majority (79%) of respondents who indicated that they intend to vote in the next presidential election have a plan to do so, whether by absentee ballot (28%), early voting (26%), or in person on election day (46%).

There is, however, a marked difference between Period 2 voting trends and those from both Period 1 and the ENACT Alumni data. Fewer students are voting at the national level (in mid-terms, the presidential election, and presidential primaries). In Period 1, over 80% of students who were

eligible voted in the last presidential election (2020). Only 64% of Period 2 participants who were eligible had voted in the last presidential election.<sup>8</sup>

This trend of lower national voting rates from Period 2 participants was consistent across more recent national elections as well. Only 37% of Period 2 respondents who were eligible voted in the most recent national mid-term election (2022), compared to 49% of Period 1 respondents who were eligible and voted in the 2018 mid-term. Similarly, only 41% of eligible Period 2 respondents voted in the most recent presidential primary (2024), compared to 77% of eligible Period 1 respondents who voted in the 2020 primary. We do not have data for ENACT participants prior to the 2020 presidential election.

The reduction from Period 1 to Period 2 in those who voted in the presidential election and other national elections may be partially attributed to the fact that more of the Period 2 students were likely to be in high school during the 2020 election (though they were still eligible and 18+ years old). During Period 1, a higher number of participants would have been in college at the time of the 2020 election and we know that college student voter turnout is typically greater than high school student voter turnout.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these reduced rates, ENACT students are still voting at rates that are above national voter turnout rates. According to the census bureau, only 46% of 18-24 year olds were registered to vote in November of 2022, and only 26% of this population voted in the national midterm election.<sup>10</sup> The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) found that university-affiliated voters voted at a slightly higher rate (31%) in the 2022 midterm election,<sup>11</sup> but still a lower rate than ENACT participants. According to the Massachusetts' Secretary of State, only 25% of voters in the state voted in the 2024 presidential primary election.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the national trends, Period 2 participants voted in state and local elections at rates that were similarly high to those of Period 1 respondents. Over half of eligible Period 2 participants (57%) voted in the most recent state election (compared to 51% in Period 1) and 45% of Period 2 participants voted in the most recent local elections (compared to 44% of eligible Period 1 participants). These Period 2 rates are higher than the general population. In Massachusetts, only 51% of voters participated in the 2022 state election.<sup>13</sup> According to the Carnegie Corporation of

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<sup>8</sup> This report was published in August 2024. The most recent Presidential election was the 2020 election.

<sup>9</sup> Ahearn, C. E., Brand, J. E., & Zhou, X. (2023). How, and for whom, does higher education increase voting?. *Research in Higher Education*, 64(4), 574-597.

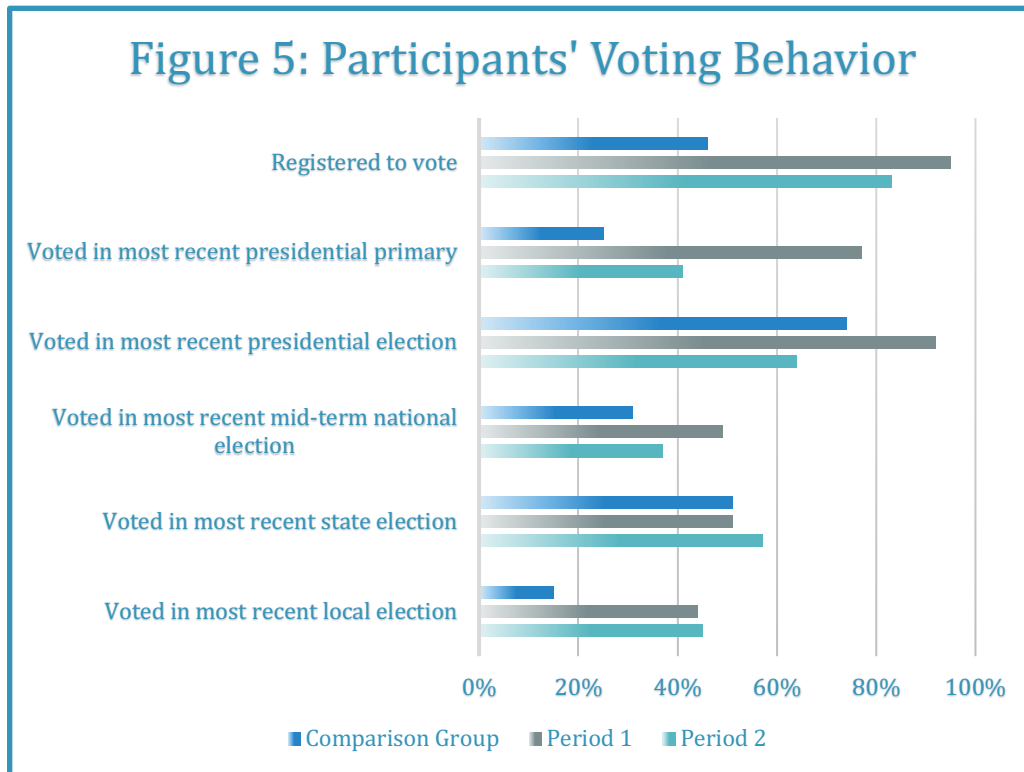
<sup>10</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2023). *Voting and registration in the election of November 2022*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-586.html>

<sup>11</sup> The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. (June 2024). *Student voting rates for Brandeis University: NSLVE campus report*. Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University.

<sup>12</sup> According to <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/research-and-statistics/voter-turnout-statistics.htm>

<sup>13</sup> According to <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/research-and-statistics/voter-turnout-statistics.htm>

New York, turnout rates for local elections are incredibly low - less than 15% in municipal elections and only 5-10% in school board elections.<sup>14</sup>



\*Comparison group sources are detailed in the text above.

## Critical Skills

In addition to impacting students political efficacy and engagement, ENACT courses help students develop critical and translatable professional skills. Participants reflected that their ENACT coursework contributed to their communication skills. The majority (79%) indicated that the course helped to improve their writing skills and 75% indicated it enhanced their ability to speak clearly and effectively.

One of the only areas of the survey that indicated significant differences based on course components was the communication skills students gained. Students in courses that included hands-on direct lobbying indicated higher rates (84%) of positive impact on their speaking skills than students in classes without that component (74%). Interestingly, students in courses without a lobbying component indicated higher rates (84%) of positive impacts on their writing skills than students in classes with it (71%).

<sup>14</sup> Devine, K. (2022). *Visualizing voter turnout in local and school board elections.*  
<https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/visualizing-voter-turnout-local-school-board-elections/>

Aside from communication skills, survey respondents also attribute their ability to work effectively with others (79%) to the coursework. Teamwork is a core component of most ENACT classes. In the flagship course at Brandeis University, for example, students work in pairs all semester to research and advocate for a current bill of their choosing. (See Appendix C for a sample schedule of assignments, including how the team component is incorporated).

Finally, respondents attribute their ability to critically evaluate an issue to ENACT. Well over three-quarters (87%) indicated that their ENACT coursework taught them to evaluate a point of view, decision, or information and 91% reflected that ENACT emphasized using various sources of information to examine a real-world problem. After completing the course, 88% respondents consider their ability to discuss controversial issues to be a strength of theirs and 86% report engaging in discussions with individuals who disagree with their position is another of their strengths.

## Conclusion

ENACT courses are designed to teach undergraduate students to engage in state-level legislative change through hands on engagement with the political process. Based on Period 2 of the ENACT National Survey, this report finds that, consistent with Period 1 and Alumni Survey data, students who complete an ENACT course report high levels of political efficacy. Students feel well-qualified and equipped to engage with the political process. While political attitudes of students vary by race, ENACT participants of color experience the same high rates of political efficacy as their white counterparts. This political efficacy translates to higher-than-average levels of political activity – through both individual actions (attending meetings, rallies, or demonstrations, signing petitions, and volunteering) and voting behavior. Period 2 voting behavior reveals a trend away from participation in national elections and toward engagement in local and state elections. For many students, the ENACT course opened the door to political activity by showing them the access they already had to the political process and providing critical knowledge and skills to build their confidence to engage with the democratic process.

“This semester was the first time I have ever spoken face-to-face with a legislator. I have written emails and called in the past, but this was new and exciting.”

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Survey Administration Script

*(To be read or paraphrased by the course instructor during class time, within the last two weeks of regular class sessions)*

“As we wrap up the semester, we want to learn a little bit more from you about how your experience in this class has impacted you outside of the class, and outside of school. As you know, universities across the country offer ENACT classes similar to this one. Students at many universities are being given this same survey so that we can understand if the ENACT model has an impact outside of academic course outcomes.

We’re going to take the last 15 minutes of class to complete a survey. The survey is not required and if you do not want to participate, this time is your own. For those who do want to participate, the link is on the board. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes.

If you have any questions, I am happy to answer them.

Thank you!”

## Appendix B: ENACT National Survey Questions

\*Questions in blue cells were only asked in the fall 2023 survey and have now been replaced for future versions.

\*\*Questions in purple cells were only asked on the updated Spring 2024 Survey and not the previous version.

Question	Response Choices
Given the current state of politics today, what is your interest level in participating in politics (as a voter or otherwise)?	Strongly interested Interested Neutral Disinterested Strongly disinterested
Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I am interested in politics	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I could do as good a job in public office as most other people	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I am better informed about politics and government than most people	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I am politically active	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Before the semester began, did you post about politics on online social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Snapchat, or other social networks)?	Yes No
During the semester, did you post about politics on online social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Snapchat, or other social networks)?	Yes No
Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I know enough to participate in politics	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



<p>Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing this state</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I know who to contact if I'm dissatisfied with a policy or a piece of legislation in this state</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please answer the following questions according to how you feel now: - I know the steps a bill goes through between being proposed and being passed into law at the state level</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>During the current school year, about how often have you connected your learning in the classroom to societal problems or issues?</p>	<p>Very often Often Sometimes Never Don't know</p>
<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below according to how you feel now: - Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in office.</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below according to how you feel now: - I can influence politics or policy in my community/state.</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below according to how you feel now: - In general, government officials understand people in communities like mine.</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below according to how you feel now: - Government is primarily concerned with giving citizens services.</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below according to how you feel now: - Government is primarily concerned with keeping people in line.</p>	<p>Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know</p>
<p>Thinking about your life experiences to date, how would you describe your interactions with government?</p>	<p>Open Ended</p>

People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Attended a meeting related to politics	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Attended a political rally or speech	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Demonstrated/protected for a cause	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Written a letter to a newspaper editor	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Circulated a petition for a candidate or issue, online or on paper	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Signed a petition, online or on paper	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Volunteered for a political campaign (unpaid)	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Worked for a political campaign (paid)	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
People engage in social, civic, and political activity in different ways. Over the past 12 months, have you done any of the following in support of a group, cause, or campaign you care about? - Contributed money to a political organization or candidate	Yes, within the past 12 months Yes, but not within the last 12 months No, haven't done it Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Are you currently registered to vote?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Did you vote in the 2020 presidential election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Did you vote in the 2022 national election (mid-term)?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know

Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Did you vote in the 2023 state election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Did you vote in the 2023 local election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Did you vote in the 2020 primary election or participate in a caucus for the presidential nomination?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Do you intend to vote in the 2024 presidential election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Do you intend to vote in the next state election (2024)?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Please share some information with us about your voting behavior. - Do you intend to vote in the next local election (2024)?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
If you intend to vote in the 2024 presidential election, how do you plan to do so?	In person on election day In person (early; before election day) Absentee ballot (mail in)
Did you vote in the 2020 presidential election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Did you vote in the most recent state elections?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Did you vote in the most recent local elections?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Are you currently registered to vote in the 2024 presidential election? If not sure, please feel free to visit the following: <a href="https://www.nass.org/can-i-vote/voter-registration-status">https://www.nass.org/can-i-vote/voter-registration-status</a>	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Did you vote in the presidential primary (2024)?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Do you intend to vote in the 2024 presidential election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know

Do you intend to vote in the next state election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
Do you intend to vote in the next local election?	Yes No Not eligible to vote Don't know
How would you rate your ability to see the world from someone else's perspective?	A major strength Somewhat strong Average Somewhat weak A major weakness Don't know
Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. The ENACT class has contributed to my: - Understanding of the problems facing my community/state	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. The ENACT class has contributed to my: - Understanding of national issues	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
How much has your coursework in the ENACT class emphasized the following? - Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	Very much Quite a bit Some Very little Don't know
How much has your coursework in the ENACT class emphasized the following? - Using various sources of information to examine a real-world problem or issue	Very much Quite a bit Some Very little Don't know
How would you rate your ability to discuss controversial issues?	A major strength Somewhat strong Average Somewhat weak A major weakness Don't know
How would you rate your ability to engage in discussion with individuals who disagree with your position?	A major strength Somewhat strong Average Somewhat weak A major weakness Don't know
How much has your experience in this class contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? - Speaking clearly and effectively	Very much Quite a bit Some Very little Don't know

How much has your experience in this class contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? - Writing clearly and effectively	Very much Quite a bit Some Very little Don't know
How much has your experience in this class contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? - Working effectively with others	Very much Quite a bit Some Very little Don't know
Please rate your satisfaction with your ENACT class in each area: - Relevance of coursework to everyday life	Very satisfied Satisfied Neither satisfied or dissatisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied Don't know
Please rate your satisfaction with your ENACT class in each area: - Relevance of coursework to future career plans	Very satisfied Satisfied Neither satisfied or dissatisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied Don't know
After completing this course, I feel empowered to participate in the democratic process.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: - Helping to promote racial understanding	Essential Very important Somewhat important Not important Don't know
Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: - Becoming a community leader	Essential Very important Somewhat important Not important Don't know
Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: - Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	Essential Very important Somewhat important Not important Don't know
When thinking about your career path after college, how important is working for social change?	Essential Very important Somewhat important Not important Don't know
How do you describe your gender identity?	Man Woman Non-binary/gender non-conforming Something else Prefer not to answer Open Ended on the Spring 2024 Instrument*
How do you describe your racial/ethnic identity?	White

	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Black or African American Asian American Indian or Alaska Native Middle Eastern or North African Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Some other race, ethnicity, or origin Don't know
What is your primary undergraduate major?	Arts and humanities (Art, English, History, Music, Philosophy, Theater, Religion, etc.) Biological and life sciences (Biology, Ecology, Environmental Science, Neurobiology, etc.) Business (Accounting, Business Administration, Finance, Management, Marketing, etc.) Education (Elementary, Secondary, Special Education, Music or Art Education, etc.) Engineering (Aerospace, Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Computer, Electronic Engineering, etc.) Health professions (Health Care, Nursing, Pharmacy, Occupational, Physical or Speech Therapy, etc.) Math and computer science (Math, Computer Science, etc.) Physical sciences (Astronomy, Chemistry, Earth Science, Marine Science, Physics, etc.) Social sciences (Anthropology, Economics, Ethnic Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, etc.) Other Don't know/undeclared
What is your academic class level?	First year Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate student Alternative student
I am the first generation in my family to attend college	Yes No Don't know
What is your age?	Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-older
What is your political ideology?	Far left Liberal Middle-of-the-road Conservative Far right Don't know
When you think about your family's access to money and resources, were you raised with:	Less than enough Enough More than enough Don't know
In the neighborhood where you lived most of your life, how much of a problem were things like drugs, violence, gangs, and crime? Would you say they were:	A big problem Somewhat of a problem Not much of a problem No problem at all

## Appendix C: Sample Schedule of Assignments

### A. The Legislative Research Report

#### Team Assignment

The report is a **10-page document** in support of your bill. It should contain detailed arguments and counterarguments with facts, figures, analyses, and relevant studies explaining the rationale and consequences of the bill. It might be helpful to examine similar legislation in other states. Students in other states working on similar bills might be helpful via ENACT. The report should clearly cite relevant research and contain a bibliography. This report is especially helpful to the staff or few legislators who wish to become experts on this bill; or as a training document for coalition staff and grassroots leaders.

Your report will be graded on the following criteria:

- analysis of legislation,
- arguments and research in support of legislation,
- response to counterarguments,
- quality and breath of works cited, and
- quality of writing.

### B. Storybook

#### Team Assignment

For elected and appointed policymakers a book of good stories about a critical mass of constituents with a fixable policy problem, the campaign storybook, is an invitation to be a hero. We all like a good story. There is something about real stories of real people with real problems that makes us want to help-especially when we are in a place with the expertise and the power to fix the problem.

In this assignment, you and your team will create a campaign storybook consisting of, at a minimum, two separate stories. These stories must originate from real people through personal interviews, testimony at hearings that you attended, or informal meetings. The final product should include: a distilled version of the full interview, stating the compelling essence of the story presented in a visually pleasing manner. The storybook also should include the bill's title and number, its essence in layperson's language, the problem it seeks to fix, and your contact info for people who want to get more information. It will be important to ask the participant's name, contact information, the participant's willingness to talk to policymakers, and the participant's willingness to talk to the media. **It also will be important to give yourself adequate time to identify people to include in your storybook, to obtain the story, and to present it in an effective manner.**

Your storybook will be graded on the following criteria:

- relevance of interview, hearing, or meeting;
- quality of substance presented, and
- quality of visual presentation.

## C. Elevator Speech, Letter to Legislator, and Monologue to Chair of House Ways and Means Committee

### Team Assignment

#### 1. Script for the Elevator Speech

All workers on your bill campaign need to handle short telephone or face-to-face conversations about the bill. This 30-second rap, known as the elevator speech, is important in quickly getting the essence of the campaign out to potential recruits, staff, and legislators you “bump into on the elevator.” Write the script for your bill campaign's elevator speech. This script should not be longer than **one page**. **Be prepared to make your elevator speech to the class and to answer brief questions.**

Your elevator speech will be graded on the following criteria:

- engaged the legislator/staffer, with a common value,
- succinctly described the problem,
- illustrated the solution, and
- made a call to action.

#### 2. Letter to the Legislator

A **one-page** personal letter communicating a genuine response to a problem is very effective with policymakers. Write the letter in support of your campaign issue to your State Representative or State Senator. Type in your address at [www.wheredoivotema.com](http://www.wheredoivotema.com) to determine your elected officials, those that represent your current place of residence. Use a standard business letter format.

Your letter will be graded on the following criteria:

- engaged this legislator with a common value and a specific connection,
- succinctly described the problem,
- illustrated the solution,
- addressed counterarguments to the bill, and
- made a specific call to action.

#### 3. Script for in-depth meeting with House Ways and Means Legislative Staff

The Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee and his legislative staff have put you on his meeting schedule. As always, the Chair is concerned about **finances**. You have **5 minutes** to get your points across and to convince the Chair of Ways and Means to vote the way you wish. Write the script for that speech. The script should not be longer than **three pages**. For simplicity, imagine that you have already done the introductions. The script essentially can be written as a monologue of what you and/or your teammates would say during the inform-and-persuade portion of the meeting. **Please be prepared to give your 5-minute speech and to answer brief questions.**



Your script for your meeting with the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee and his staff will be graded on the following criteria:

- engaged this specific legislator with a common value and a specific connection,
- succinctly described the problem,
- illustrated the solution, addressing the Chair's financial concerns,
- made a specific request of the Chair,
- addressed counterarguments to the bill, addressing financial concerns.

## D. Media Advocacy

Create a media advocacy campaign consisting of two media activities.

### 1. The Op-ed for Bill

#### Individual Assignment

Op-ed (literally, opposite the editorial page) represents the views of individual writers. This page is designed to present a broad array of views from members of Greater Boston. The Boston Globe is interested in featuring your perspective in an Op-ed piece. The written piece should contain no more than **750 words**.

Below are some suggestions:

- Focus tightly on one issue or idea in your first paragraph. Be brief.
- Express your opinion, then base it on factual, researched, or first-hand information.
- Be timely, controversial, but not outrageous. Be the voice of reason.
- Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point.
- Be humorous, provided that your topic lends itself to humor.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue. Don't equivocate.
- Provide insight, understanding: educate your reader without being preachy.
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action. Do not philosophize.
- Have verve, and "fire in the gut" indignation to accompany your logical analysis.
- Do not ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay.
- Use clear, powerful, direct language.
- Emphasize active verbs; forget the adjectives and adverbs, which may weaken this writing.
- Avoid clichés and jargon.
- Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.
- Include a brief bio along with your email address at the end.

Your Op-ed will be graded on the following criteria:

- Focused tightly on one issue/idea in first paragraph,
- Clearly stated viewpoint,
- Supported viewpoint,
- Used powerful direct language,
- Used conversational tone,
- Made a call to action, and
- Demonstrated quality writing.

**Extra credit for Op-eds emailed to relevant sites for publishing between date graded Op-ed is returned to student and amended and due date of final written portfolio.**

## **2. The Video for Bill**

### **Team Assignment or Individual Assignment**

Create a brief infomercial on your bill. You might film yourself explaining your bill. You may use tik-tok.

Video is a forum for instant political commentary through such sites as Facebook and YouTube. Such videos can be created through original film or a combination of original film and a remixing of existing video clips into mash-ups-with-messages. They might borrow from the most popular videos on YouTube, marrying serious substance with lighthearted style. While serious in purpose, video activism can draw on the approach pioneered by entertainment-oriented videos. Create your voice in video. Short and powerful can be the best approach.

Your video will be evaluated on its ability to

- engage the audience,
- present the problem,
- illustrate a solution;
- call the audience to action,
- create emotional impact, and
- originality.

If necessary, remember to identify relevant speakers and cite the source of existing video clips.

**Extra credit for Videos emailed to relevant legislators/coalitions between date graded Video is returned to student and amended and due date of final written portfolio.**

## **E. Campaign Advocacy Journal**

### **Individual Assignment**

Attend and reflect on **four** substantive advocacy meetings on your bill. These meetings cannot include the initial meeting with your bill's sponsor scheduled by the professor. These meetings can include additional meetings with legislators or staffers, coalition members, and legislative hearings that you attended.

In an additional paragraph, please describe any problems you have experienced in your group project, how you are dealing with those challenges, and what you would like to see happen.

Use your communications with your bill's sponsor, coalition organizations and your class supervisor to identify meeting and event opportunities. Each "journal entry" should describe the location of the meeting, the people present, the reason for the meeting, a synopsis of the substance of the meeting, the connections made or lack thereof, and your perceptions of what went well and what might have worked even better. If you attend more than the above meetings or events, please include a comprehensive list at the end of the journal. Any additional meetings will be viewed as extra credit towards the grade of the campaign advocacy journal.

**The majority of the journal should be reflective.** Your campaign advocacy journal should **not be more than five pages.**

Your campaign journal will be graded on the following criteria:

- relevance of the meeting,
- your advocacy efforts, and
- lessons learned.

## F. Present and Defend Legislative Advocacy Project

### Team Assignment

#### 1. Final Oral Present and Defend

Each team will have **20 minutes** to convince the audience to support its legislation. The audience will role-play as staff to policymakers and interested citizens. Please be prepared for questions. There are multiple possible approaches to the oral presentation. You might use your elevator speech, pieces of your monologue to the Ways and Means Committee, your storybook, parts of your video clip, or something else. As in the final written Legislative Advocacy Project, the presentation should contain a section on next steps. In other words, if you continued to work on the issue, what would be your focus.

Your oral presentation will be graded on the following criteria:

- level of preparedness;
- evidence of maturation of understanding of legislative process;
- level of understanding of issue;
- ability to handle questions and comments;
- quality of materials presented;
- quality of communication skills;
- teamwork/collaborative effort.

#### 2. Final Written Legislative Advocacy Project

Your final written legislative advocacy project should consist of amended copies of the prior listed assignments, A-E, based on constructive comments and a new-found knowledge of the issues and the process. Include all members' campaign journals. Do not include the reflection on your group dynamics. **Please add a detailed section on next steps.** Depending on where your bill is in the legislative process, you might discuss potential implementation issues, future advocacy collaborations, potential lobbying problems, substantive problems with the bill itself, and others. **The next-steps section should not be more than three pages.** Please include a table of contents.

## Appendix D: About the Authors

### Kaitie Chakoian, PhD Candidate, MA, MEd

Kaitie Chakoian is a current doctoral candidate in Social Policy at the Heller School at Brandeis University. Kaitie was a Teaching Fellow in the ENACT class at Brandeis (“Advocacy for Policy Change”) for five years. Additionally, she has been conducting ENACT evaluation activities since 2021. She also teaches courses to undergraduate and graduate students in gender-based violence, social policy, and qualitative research methods. Outside of academia, Kaitie has worked as the Campus Policy Manager for “End Rape On Campus”, a national organization working end college sexual violence and consulted for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and the Sanar Institute.

### Charlotte Powley, PhD, MPH, MEd

Charlotte completed her PhD in Social Policy in 2020 at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, where her doctoral work focused on menstrual management and students’ experiences of menstruation in US public schools. While at Heller, Charlotte supported research with the Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation (ENACT). Charlotte worked as an Assistant Teaching Professor at Simmons University in their Public Health Department before returning to Brandeis where she now serves as a Lecturer in the Legal Studies Department and as the Assistant Director of Research at ENACT. Charlotte teaches the Brandeis course "Gender, Justice, and Legislation" in addition to other Legal Studies and Sociology courses.

### Melissa Stimell, JD

Melissa Stimell is a Professor of the Practice in the Legal Studies Program at Brandeis University. She is the chair of the Program in Social Justice and Social Policy. She is the Director of ENACT, The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation. She currently teaches Advocacy for Policy Change, Conflict Analysis and Intervention, and Global Justice and Societies in Transition. She also has led Brandeis Summer in The Hague and the seminars accompanying the internship programs. She received her undergraduate degree from Cornell University and her law degree from Boston University School of Law. She has been a public interest attorney for over 30 years, focusing on the representation of vulnerable populations in such areas as criminal law, discrimination of individuals with disabilities, and child welfare.