



2013 Texas Legislator Health Perception Survey: Determining Texas State Legislators' Attitudes and Support for Physical Activity-Focused Policies.

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Background

- Since 2001, Texas has been progressive in implementation of policies for school physical activity (PE) & coordinated school health (CSH)
 - Requirement of 135 min of MVPA PA/week for elementary schools
 - Requirement of 225 min PA/every 2 weeks for middle schools
 - CSH for grades K-8
 - School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)
 - Fitnessgram testing in children with PE

Source: Hoelscher et al., 2011; Ory et al., 2013

Current Political Landscape in Texas

- Texas Legislature
 - 181 members (150 House, 31 Senate)
 - Biannual sessions (140 days)
- Texans are not engaged citizens
 - 51st in voter turnout (2010)
 - 49th in civic engagement
- In 2011, over 50% of Texas Legislators were new or junior
 - Not aware of history of legislation or issues

Source: Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. (2013). *Texas Civic Health Index*. Austin, TX: Lawrence R, Wise D, Einsohn E.





Purpose: to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about obesity prevention and control measures of legislators from the 83rd Texas legislative session (2013).

The purpose of this presentation is to present results for physical activity and related environmental changes.



Methods

- Mixed Methods:
 - Quantitative & qualitative data
- Developed contact list of legislators
 - Includes health aide or chief of staff
 - Also committee membership
- Administered survey
 - Online, hardcopy, interview
 - During session and during 3 special sessions
 - Target: all legislators
- Administered interviews
 - In-person with aide speaking on behalf of legislator
 - Target: legislators with committee appointments, Farm to Table Caucus

Methods

- Developed 17-question survey
 - Adapted from previous surveys (e.g., Tabek et al, 2013; Dodson et al, 2013; Dodson et al, 2011)
 - Policy questions specific to Texas legislature
 - Target: legislator or aide (health or designated)
- Developed Interview Questionnaire
 - Selected legislators based on committee assignments and Advisory Committee suggestions
- Timeline
 - Survey & interviews administered March-August 2013
- Data analysis
 - Frequencies, means
 - T-test for differences by House/Senate
 - Thematic analysis

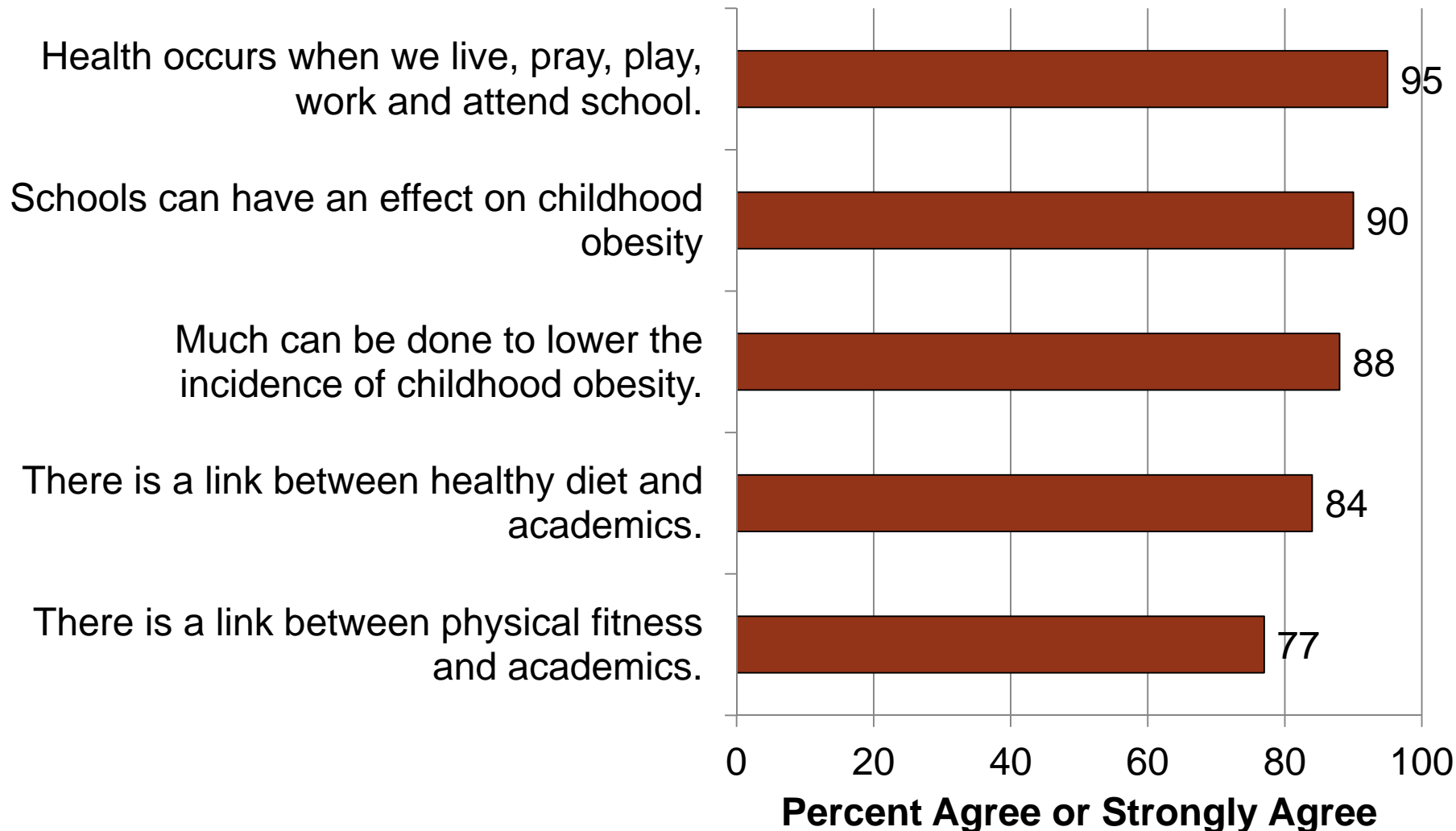
Demographics

	Total	House	Senate	Rep.	Dem.
Surveys n (%)	83	69 (83%)	12 (14%)	39 (47%)	41 (49%)
Age, y mean	50.9	50.1	55.5	53	48.9
# Sessions mean	4.23	3.97	6	3.44	5.02

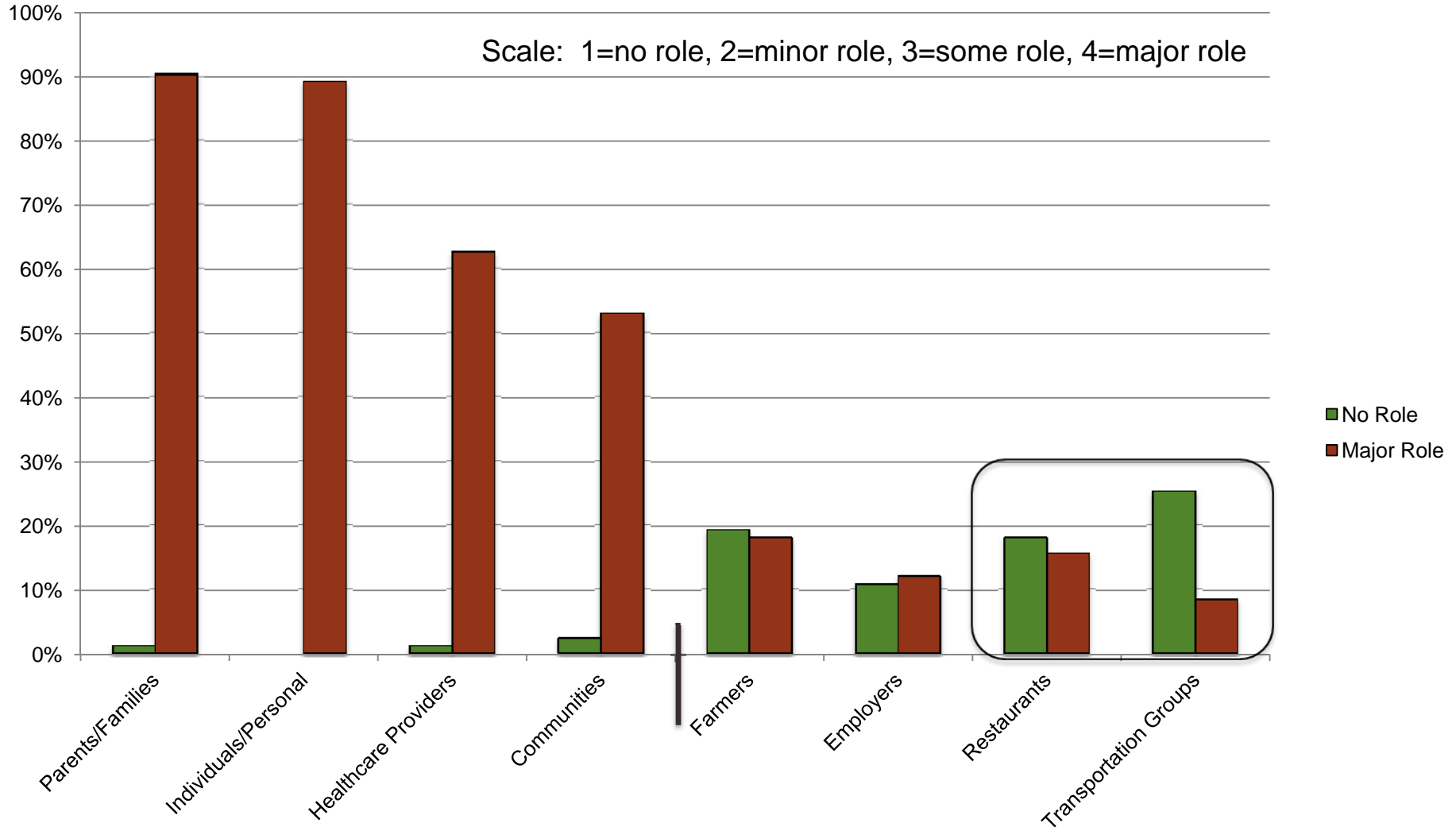
How do you usually think of yourself (1=extremely liberal, 8=extremely conservative)

	Total	House	Senate
Fiscal Issues mean	4.49	4.60	4.18
Social Issues mean	4.27	4.50	3.27

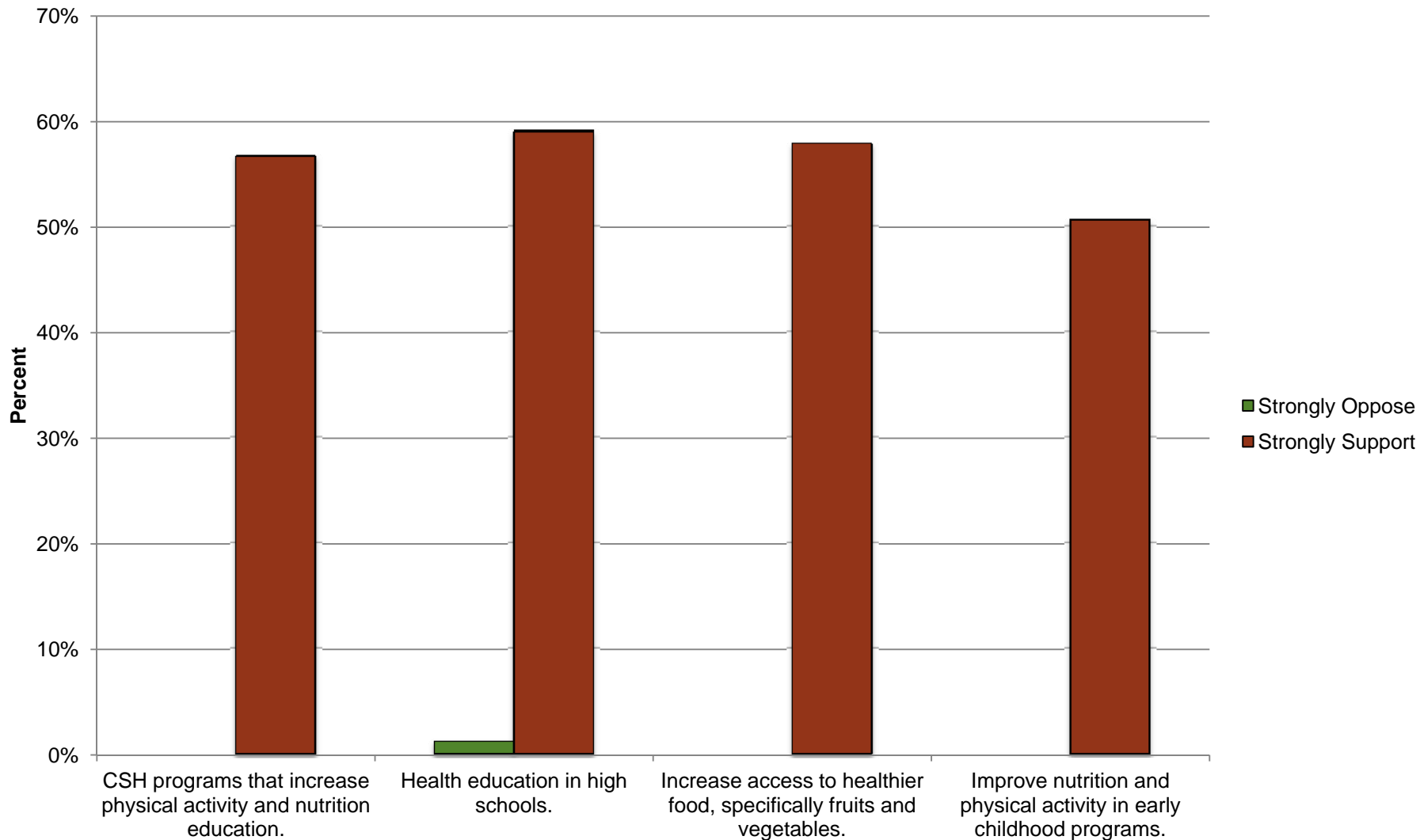
Beliefs about Childhood Obesity



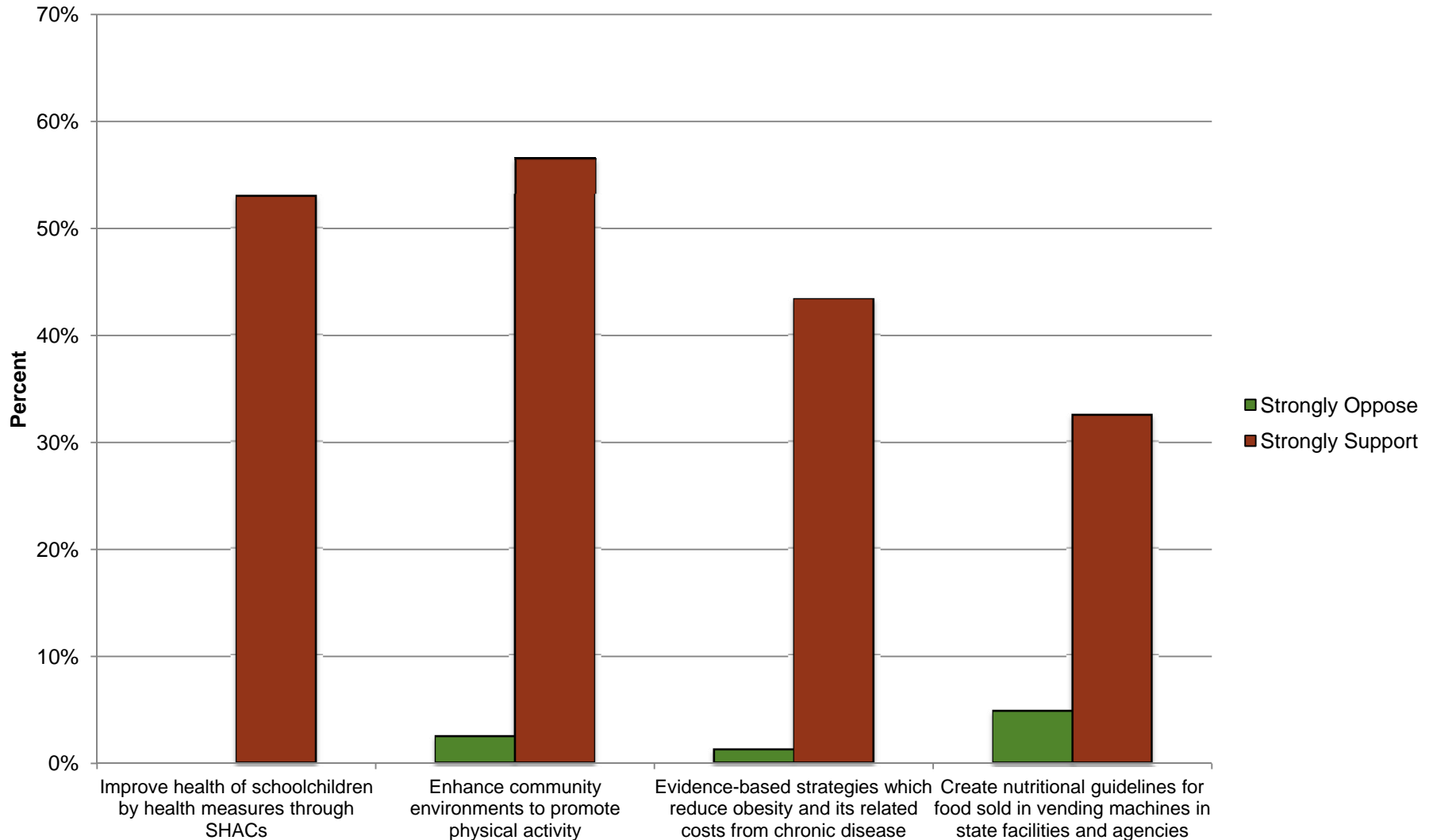
How much of a role should each play in fighting the obesity problem in Texas?



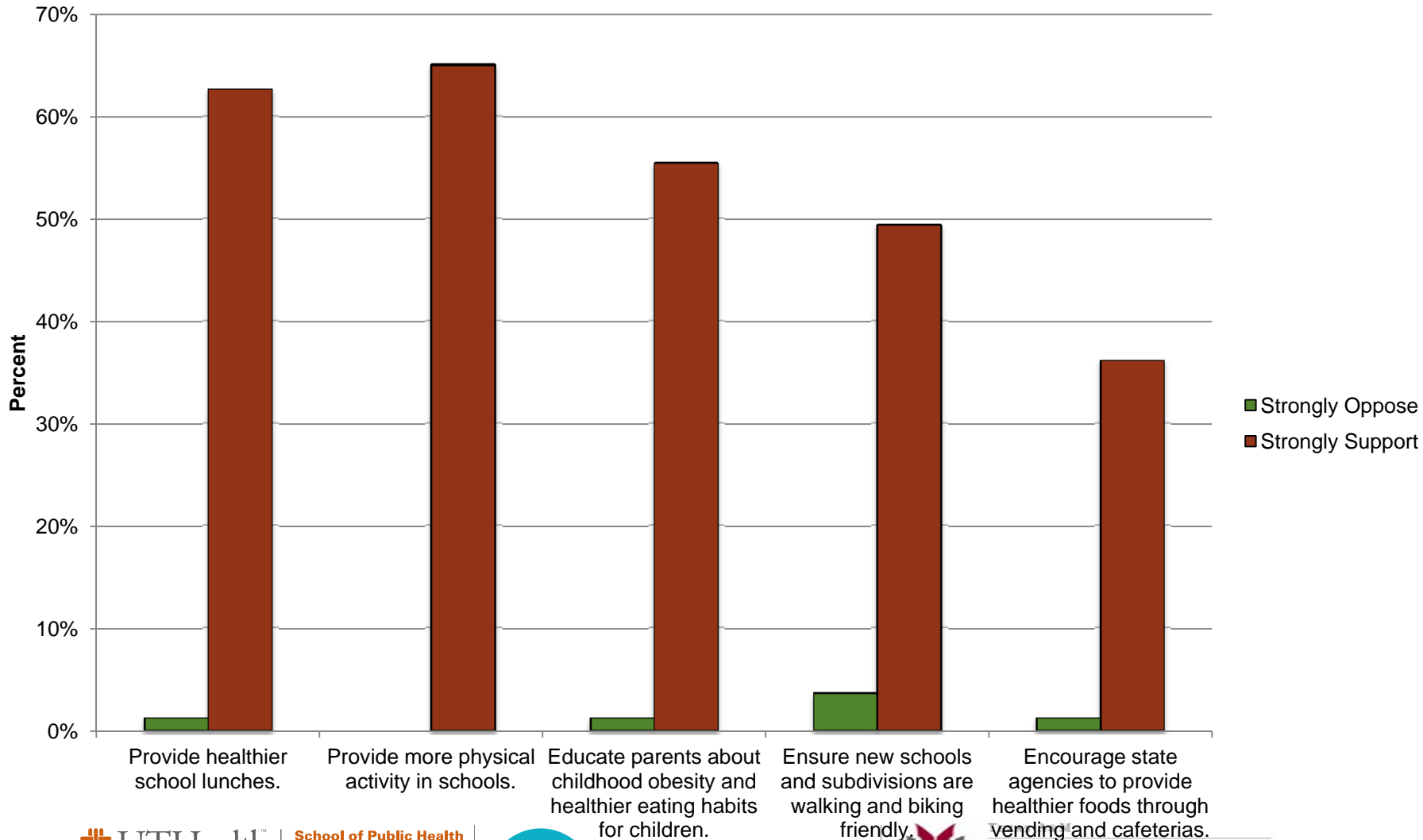
Would you support or oppose the following policy recommendations?



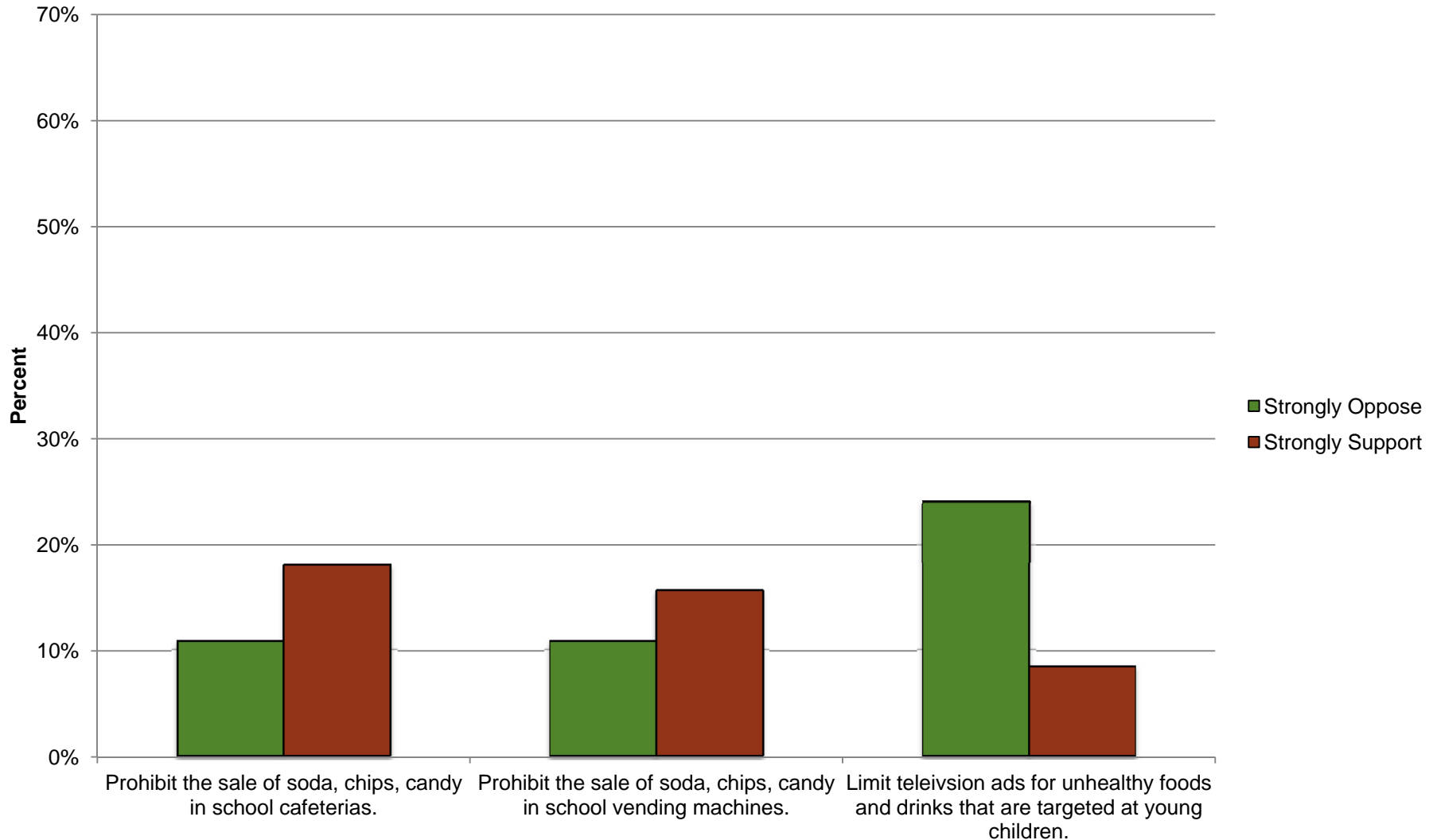
Would you support or oppose the following policy recommendations?



How much do you support or oppose the following environmental standards or practices?

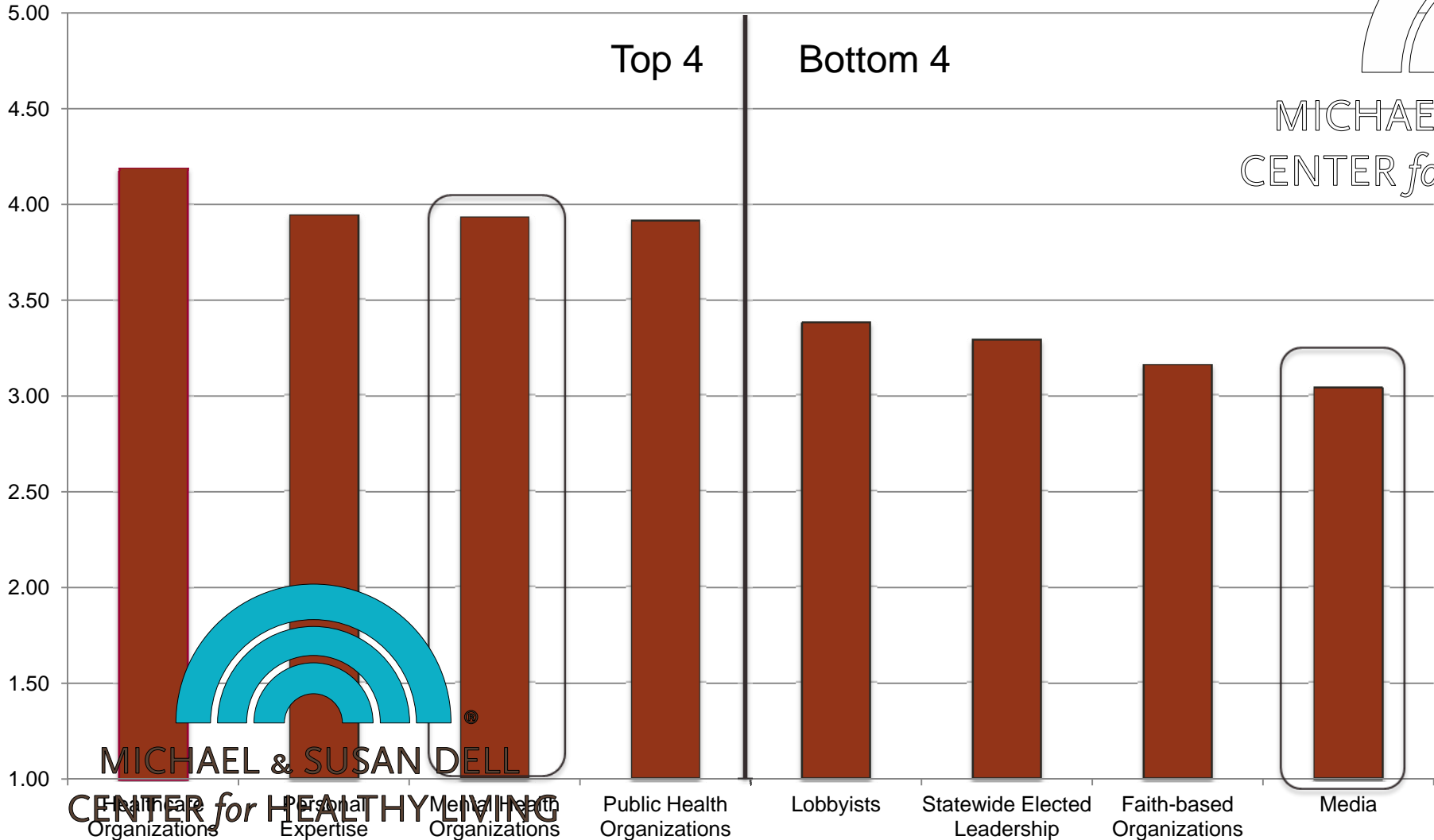


How much do you support or oppose the following environmental standards or practices?



How influential are the following sources of information to you as a state legislator on health issues?

Scale: 1=no influence, 2=little influence, 3=neutral, 4=considerable influence, 5=major influence



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How would you like to receive public health & obesity related information?



	Yes n (%)
Email	65 (79%)
Website	60 (76%)
Written Information	50 (63%)
Personal Communication	38 (49%)
Social Media	37 (47%)
Other	5 (24%)
Flyers	
Phone Calls	

What would make research more useful to legislators?

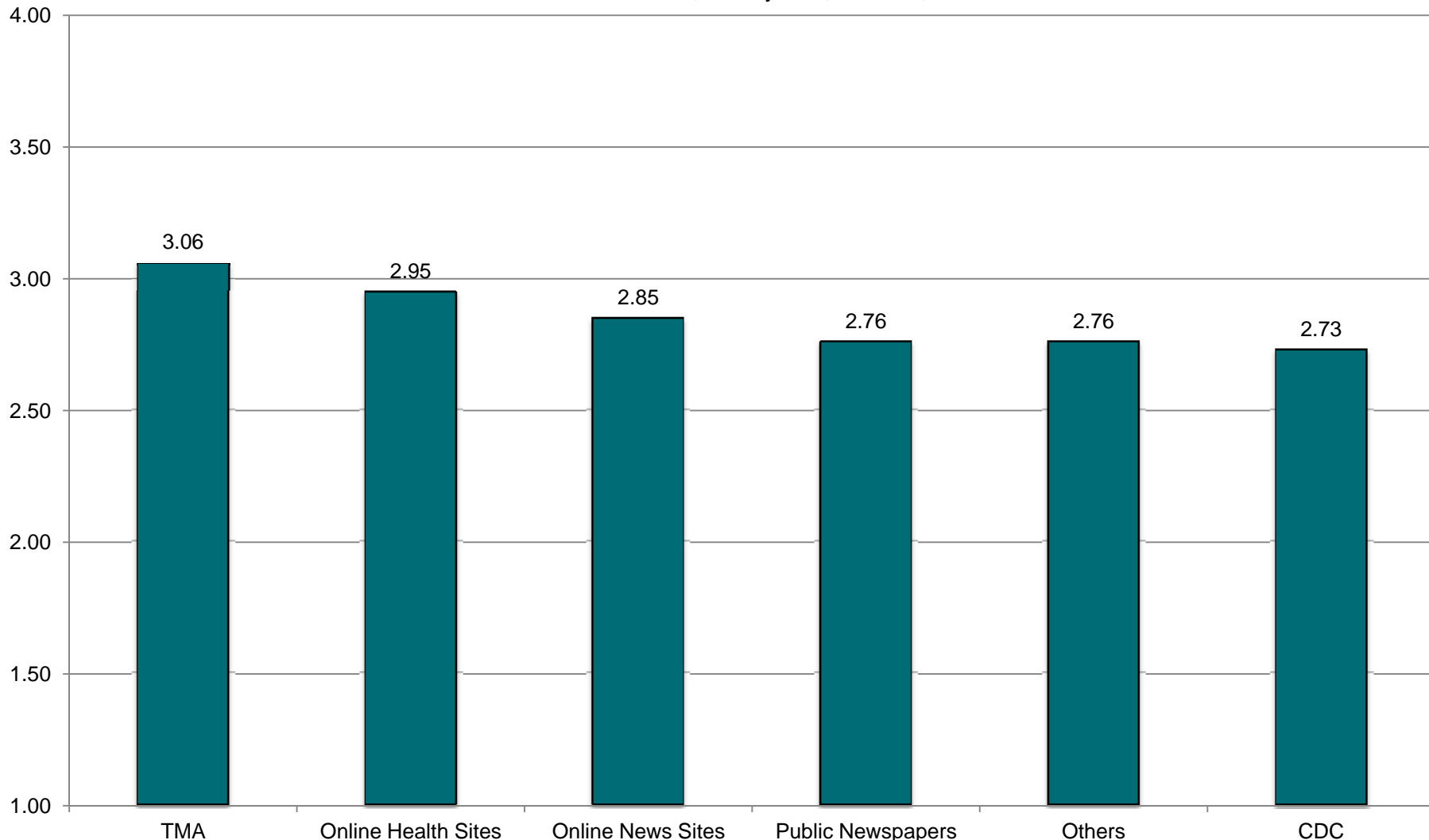
- Providing hard numbers that are specific to Texas
- Communicating frequently with weekly or bi-weekly reports (especially in the interim)
- Providing information in an easily digestible format (Infographics, figures, etc.)
- Providing the information they need to know in the document with links to more information



Do you use any of the following resources for obesity, nutrition and physical activity information and policy?



Scale: 1=not at all, 2=very little, 3=some, 4=a lot



Childhood Obesity Messaging



Who are the most credible messengers on childhood obesity?

- Health professionals, especially pediatricians
- Researchers, especially those in higher education

Which terms resonate more: obesity, childhood obesity, healthy living, or health & wellness?

- Prefer the use of childhood obesity since it is specific to the issue and spells out the problem
- Health and wellness could be viewed as too broad a description of the problem



Study Strengths & Limitations



- Limitations
 - Reliance on legislative aides
 - Short time period
 - Legislators who do not complete surveys
- Strengths
 - Participation rate
 - Advisory Committee participation
 - Interest



Implications for Practice & Policy

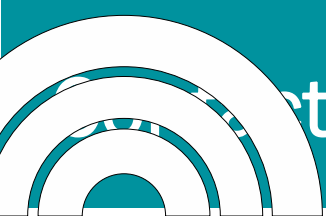


- Communications to address PA policies should address:
 - Funding and
 - Individual-level concerns.
- Efforts should be devoted to educating about:
 - Role of transportation resources &
 - Policies which increase physical activity.
- Resources for legislative action need to be on the Internet
 - Search terms should be optimized.

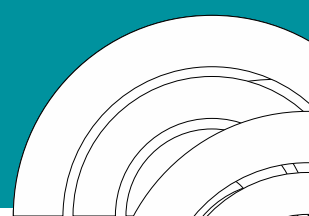


A young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a pink shirt, is smiling and holding a green apple. She is standing in a grassy field with trees in the background. The word "Questions?" is overlaid in large blue text on a semi-transparent grey band across the middle of the image.

Questions?



et Information



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