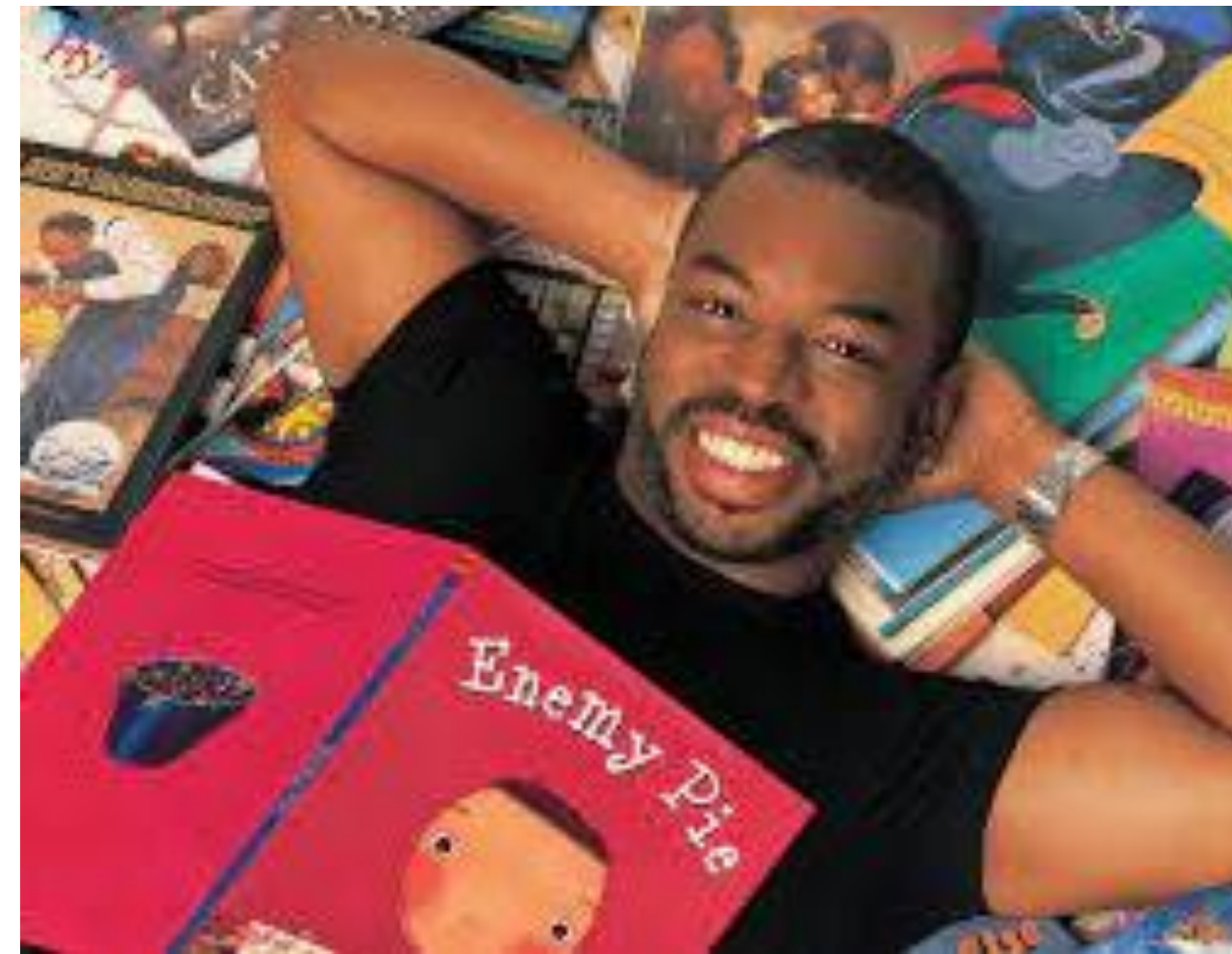


Mastering the Media

*With
Chantal Lovell Fennell*





“We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories.”

–Jonathan Gottschall,
The Storytelling Animal

Remember who you're talking to.

If you try to reach everyone,
you probably will reach no
one.



What's your headline?

- Articles are out. **Headlines are in.**
- You have **less than 26 seconds!**



Core communication tips

- Be **CONCISE**
- Be **CLEAR**
- Be **COMPELLING**
- Be **CANDID**
- Be **COMFORTABLE**





The best way to be boring is to leave nothing out.

- *Voltaire*



Telling your story to the media

- Reporters want a **STORY**.
- Reporters are just like you and me.



KEY MESSAGE

ISSUES

Key Message

PROOF-POINTS

Fact/Statistic

Example/Anecdote



Remember

- **You are the expert** of your story
- Reporters need you
- **Boil down your message.** Be able to say why your story matters to that reporter's audience.
- Reporters are just people.
- There's no such thing as off the record.
- Get **comfortable with silence**

Video interviews

- Forget about the camera
- Avoid busy prints/clothing
- Practice your pleasant face
- Be well-lit
- Breathe
- Keep your feet planted on the floor





Radio interviews

- Remember, no one can see you!
- Use notes, but don't read
- Stand up
- Pamper your voice
- Listen
- Make sure you have a good connection.

Print interviews

- Schedule ahead; have a time length (less usually more)
- Ask questions ahead of time to understand purpose and format
- Use notes but don't read
- Stop talking





At the Statehouse

- Be prepared each day
- Know your top talking point/headline
- Pause, gather yourself.
- Offer a follow-up.
- Staff can help move you along, but there's a cost to that too.

Verbal flagging

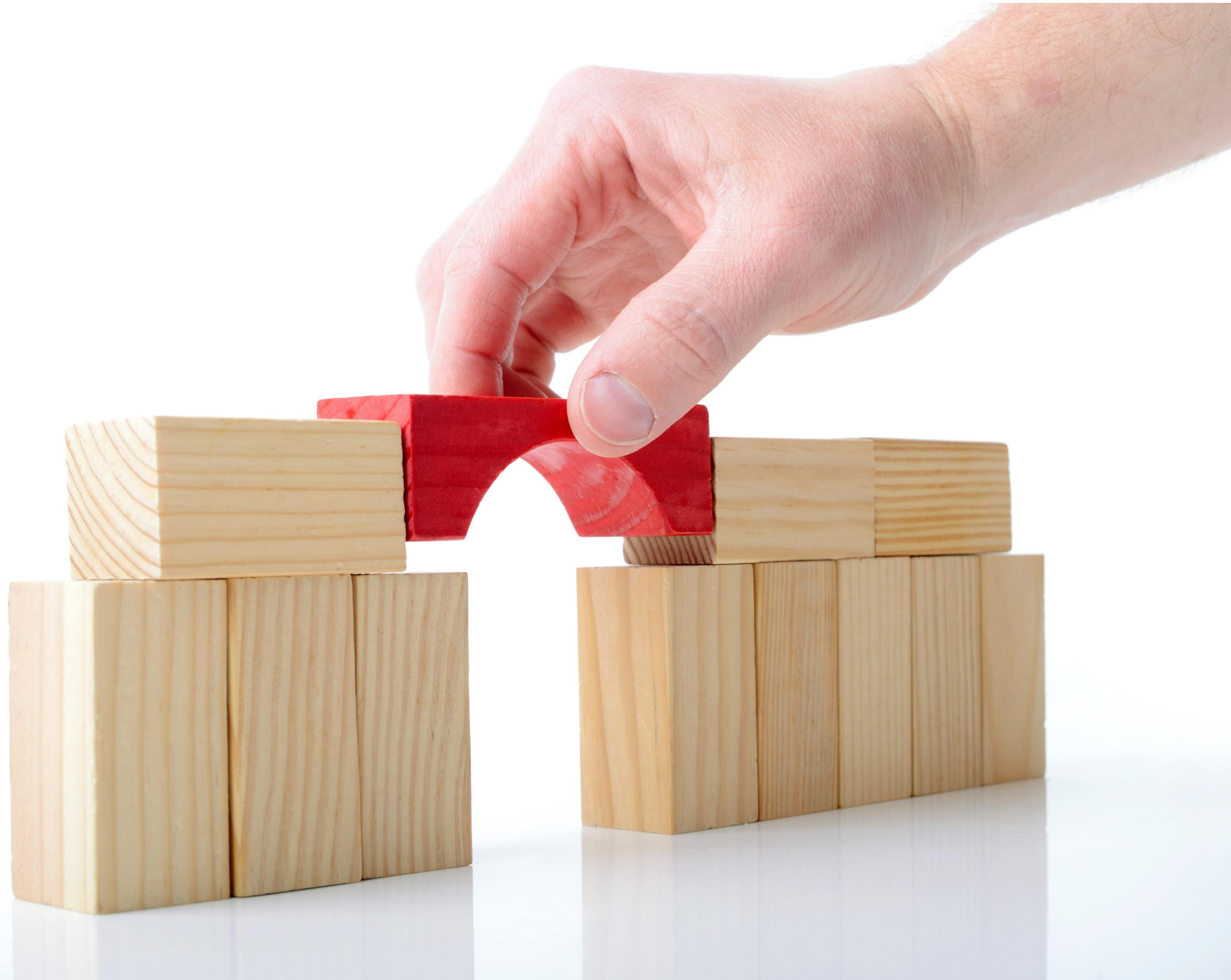
- “What’s new about this is ...”
- “Here’s what is most important ...”
- “The bottom line is ...”





Block and bridge

- Acknowledge the question or statement (but don't say, "That's a great question!")
- Smoothly transition
- Build a bridge back to your core message



- “Thank you for bringing that up, however, it’s also important to emphasize ...”
- That is an important point, and it also speaks to a bigger issue, which is ...”
- “That’s one way to think about it. Another way is ...”
- “That’s not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is ...”

Words that don't work with reporters

BIASED

Try: “All we want is a fair chance to present our view.”

SENSATIONAL

Try: “The more compelling story is about equality, not controversy.”

FAKE

Try: “Accuracy is critical to resolving any public policy debate.”

LAZY

Try: “We know it takes a lot of work to really understand both sides.”

COMBATIVE

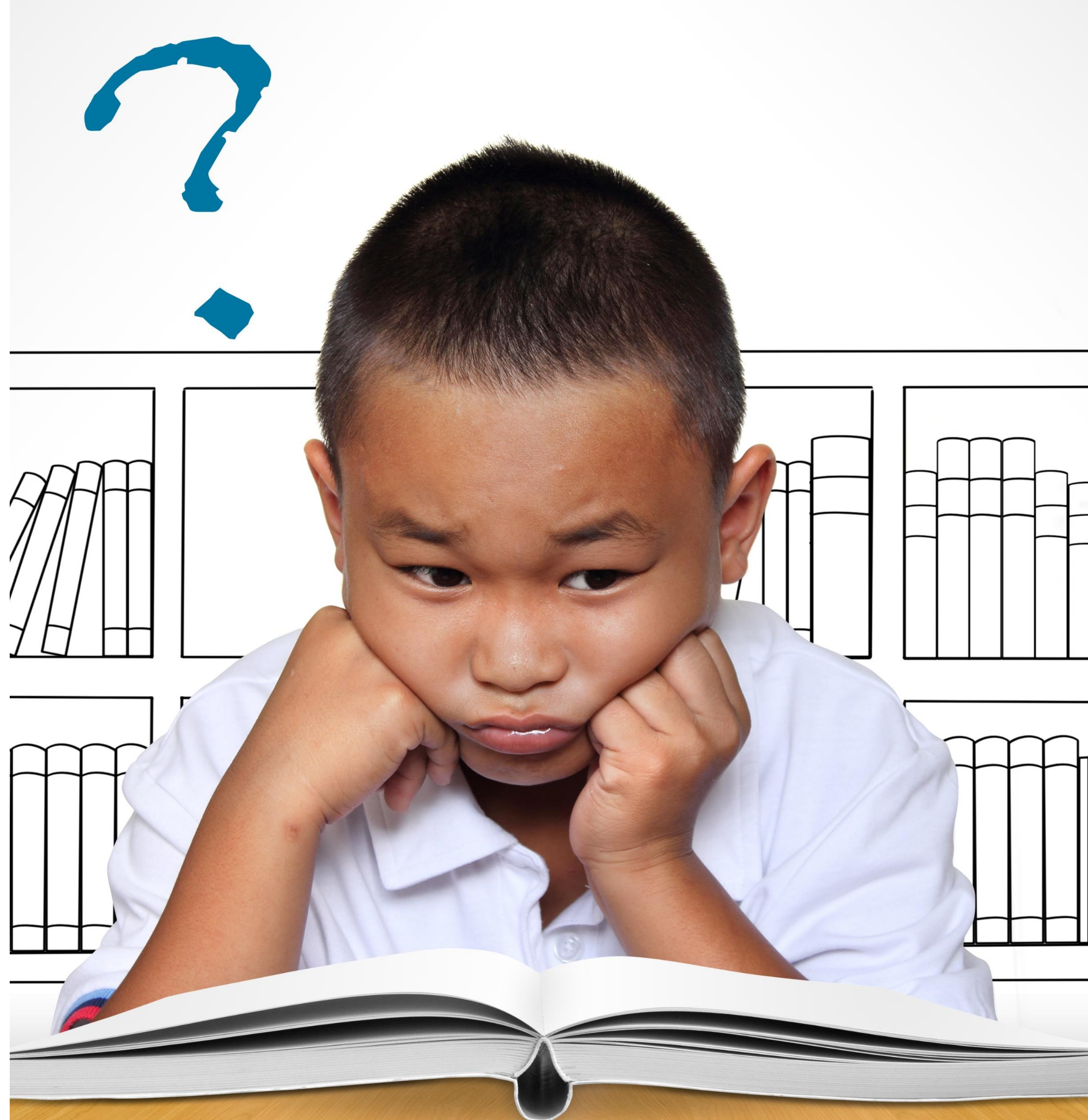
Try: “With so much at stake, we all need the media to objectively explain both points of view.”

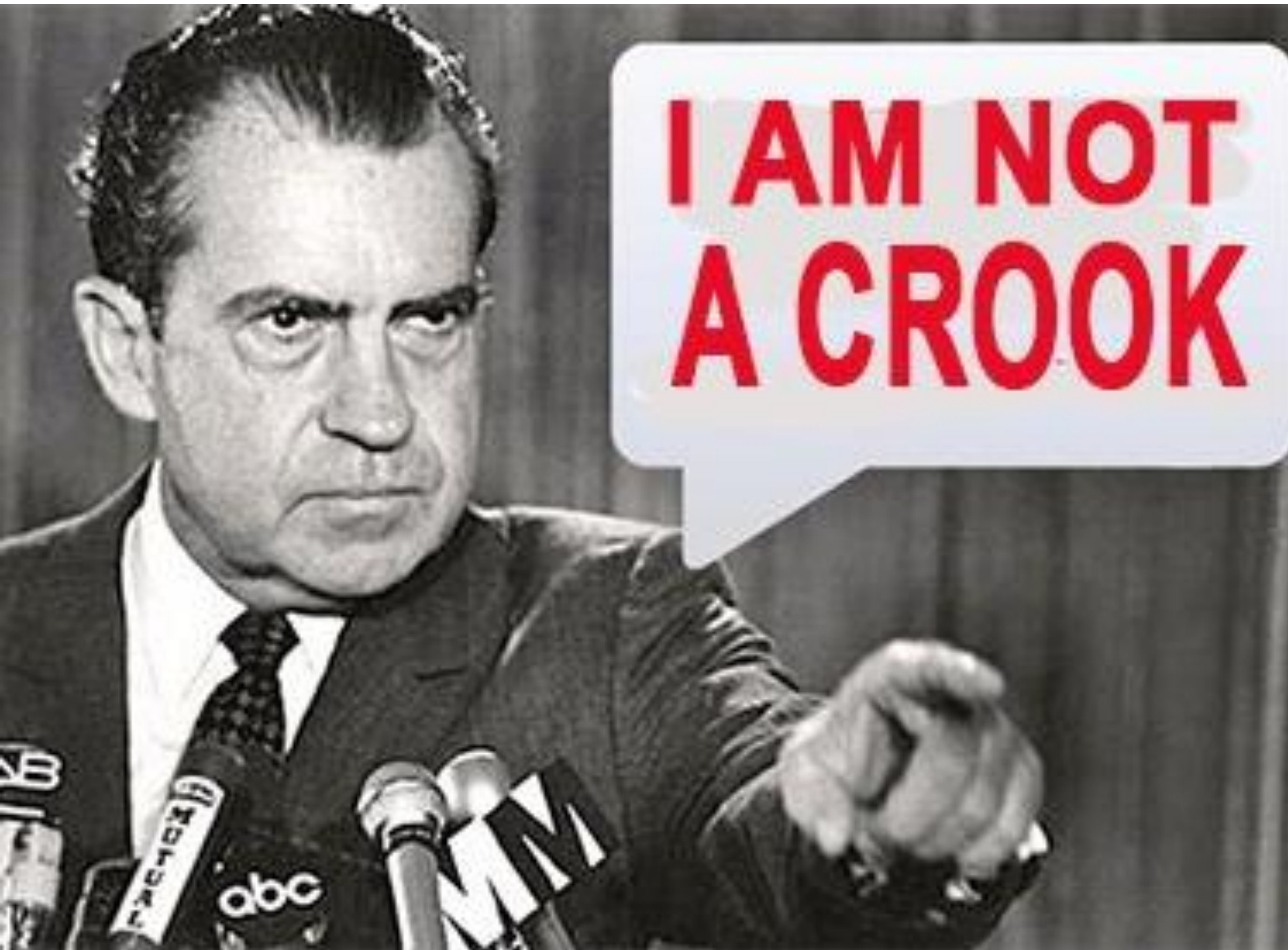
Media traps ... and how to escape



When you don't know the answer

- Don't panic
- Pause
- Be honest
- Pivot back to what you do know





If things go south

- Never repeat an accusation
- Instead, acknowledge and replace.
- “That’s not the case. What we know is ...”
- “Here’s how we see it ...”
- “Not at all.”
- “What’s accurate is ...”

Maintain guardrails

- **Don't speculate.** "I'm reluctant to speculate. What I can say is ..."
- **Reject assumptions.** "I can't accept that assumption. What we know is ..."
- **Don't fall for the phantom attribution.** Instead, say, "That's a common misconception. ..."



Insert interview clip



Writing op-eds

- 600-800 words
- Intro
- Share your story
- What you want to see happen, the solution
- Conclusion



Pitching op-eds

- Many news sites list submission guidelines on their websites- follow them.
- Be able to state in 1 sentence who you are and why the op-ed is important to readers
- Follow up

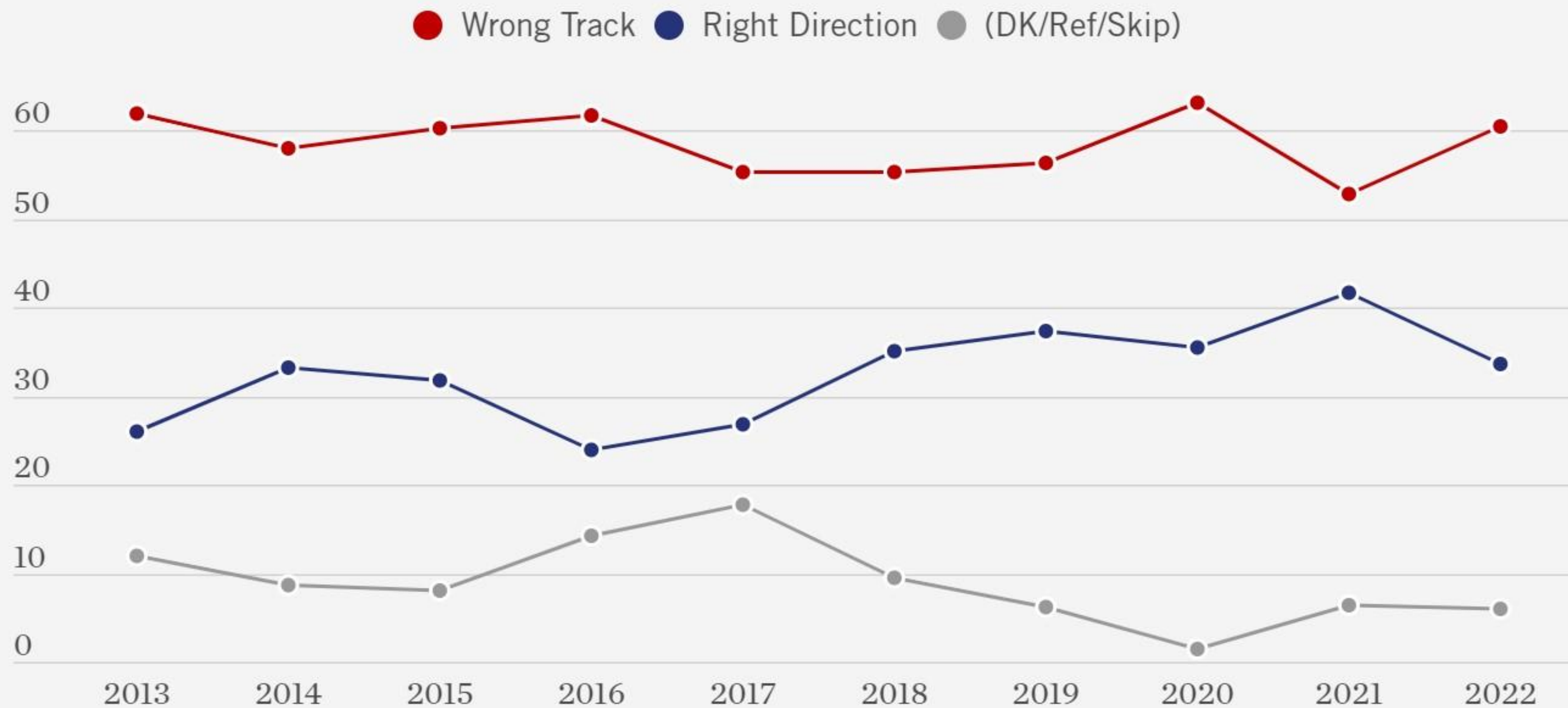
How to talk about educational choice



PUBLIC ON DIRECTION OF K-12 EDUCATION

About one out of three Americans believe K-12 education is heading in the right direction—an 8-point decline since 2021.

% of General Population



Do Americans support school choice policies?

ESAs

School Vouchers

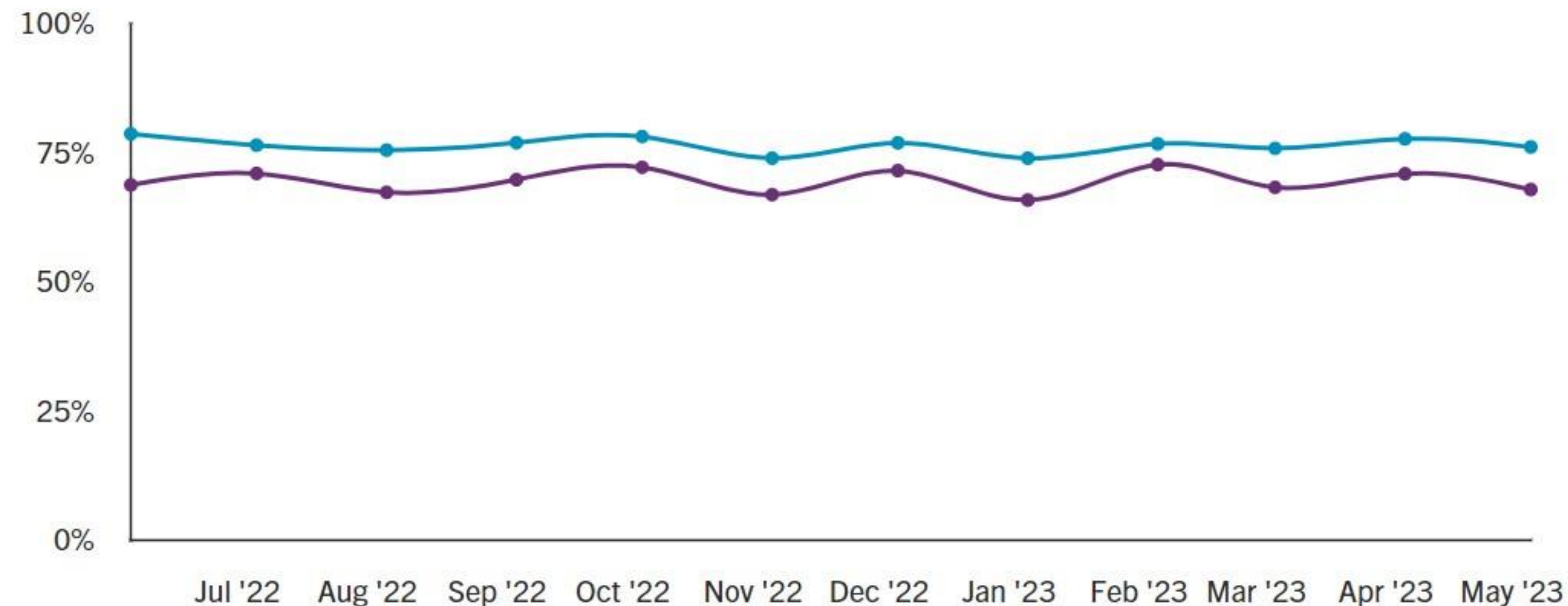
Charter Schools

An "education savings account" in K–12 education – often called an ESA – establishes for parents a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses for educational purposes.

Parents can then use these funds to pay for: school tuition; tutoring; online education programs; therapies for students with special needs; textbooks or other instructional materials; or save for future college expenses.

All Adults School Parents

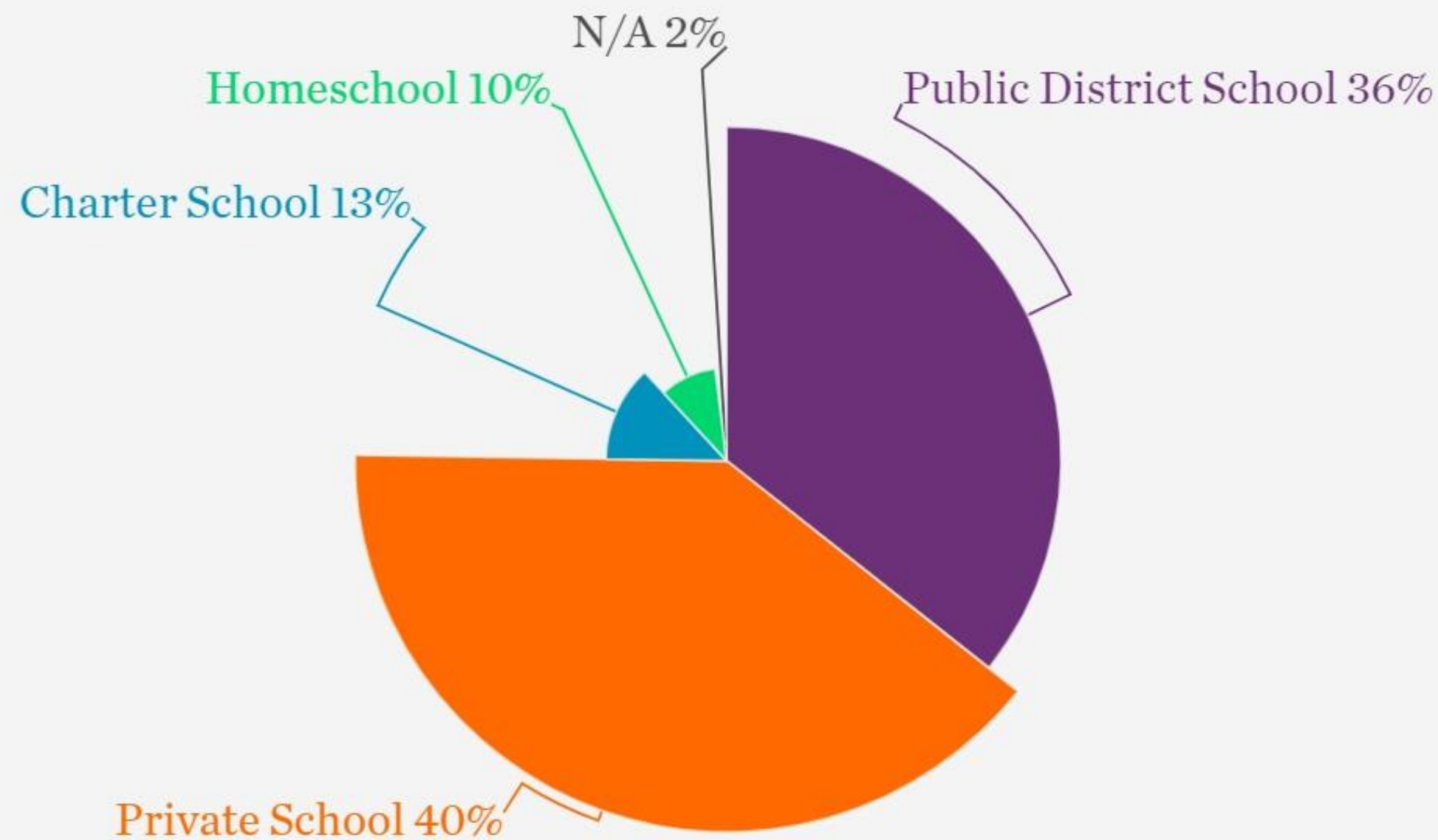
% Total Support (Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



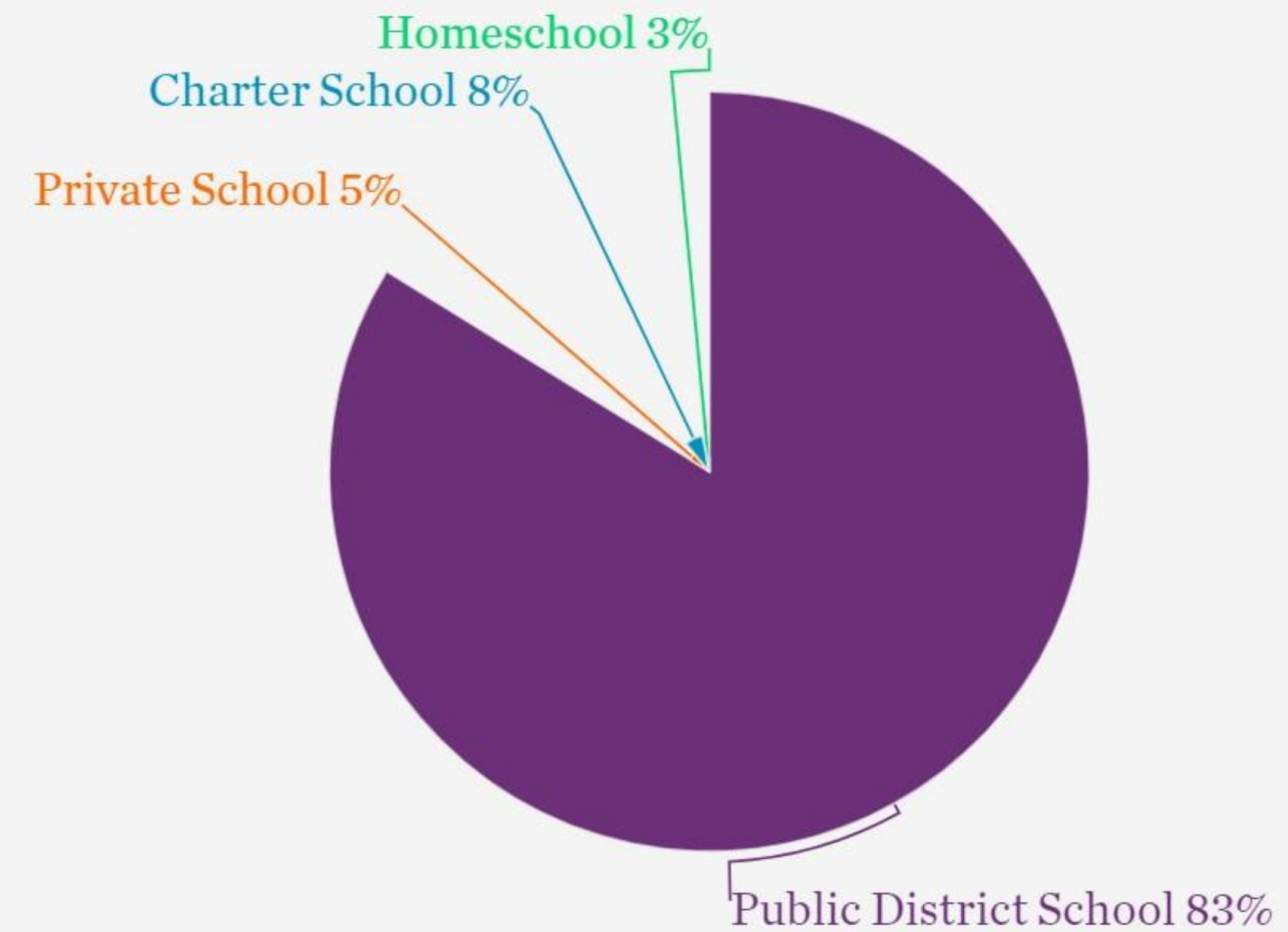
Parents' Schooling Preferences vs. Actual Enrollment

Where parents *want* to send their kids to school and where they *actually* send their kids to school don't match up.

Preferences



Actual Enrollment



NEWS

As Rural Republicans Derail School Vouchers in Texas, Gov. Abbott Vows a Special Legislative Session For His Top Education Priority

With many rural legislators remaining skeptical of private school vouchers to the Lone Star State fails —

EDUCATION ELECTION 2024 GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

'Not in Nebraska': Public school advocates rally against 'opportunity scholarship' bill

If passed, opponents vow to repeal the proposal by a vote of the people

BY: ZACH WENDLING - APRIL 29, 2023 4:53 PM



NEWS > LOCAL NEWS



Kansas Republicans struggle to pass school choice plan



So why haven't more states enacted educational choice programs?



OUR STUDENTS ARE WORTH IT!
INVEST IN OUR FUTURE!

Fund Education Properly!

Parents like they care for your child.
❤️

This is lesson #1? How quickly will you learn?

#RedForEd
Our kids deserve Better!
Better pay will keep and attract highly effective Teachers!

0% Raise

20% RAISE
Can we be your FRIENDS
I Hurtn More Luk

ED ARE

because
It!
AM the FUTURE!
#REDFORED

ARIZONA EDUCATORS UNITED #REDFORED

The Future of Arizona is in my Classroom

All teachers left BEHIND!
#raisesnotlies

For 2

our
TEA
#REDforED

The Congressional Effect

We told people their schools were terrible, but that didn't win us any supporters.





Words that work





OPPORTUNITY

Not competition

ASSIGNED SCHOOLS

Not government schools





EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

Not school choice

SCHOOLING, LEARNING, EDUCATION

Not schools





LOW-INCOME

Not poor

NOT MEETING NEEDS

Instead of failing





PRO-TEACHER

Not anti-union

FAMILY, PARENT EMPOWERMENT





INDIVIDUALIZED, CUSTOMIZED

Not one-size-fits-all



**What's the
biggest asset
we can deploy
in this
conversation?**



**What
questions
do you
have?**

Thanks!

