



PANDEMIC POLITICS:

ASSESSING THE U.S. RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

THE INSEPARABILITY OF POLITICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH



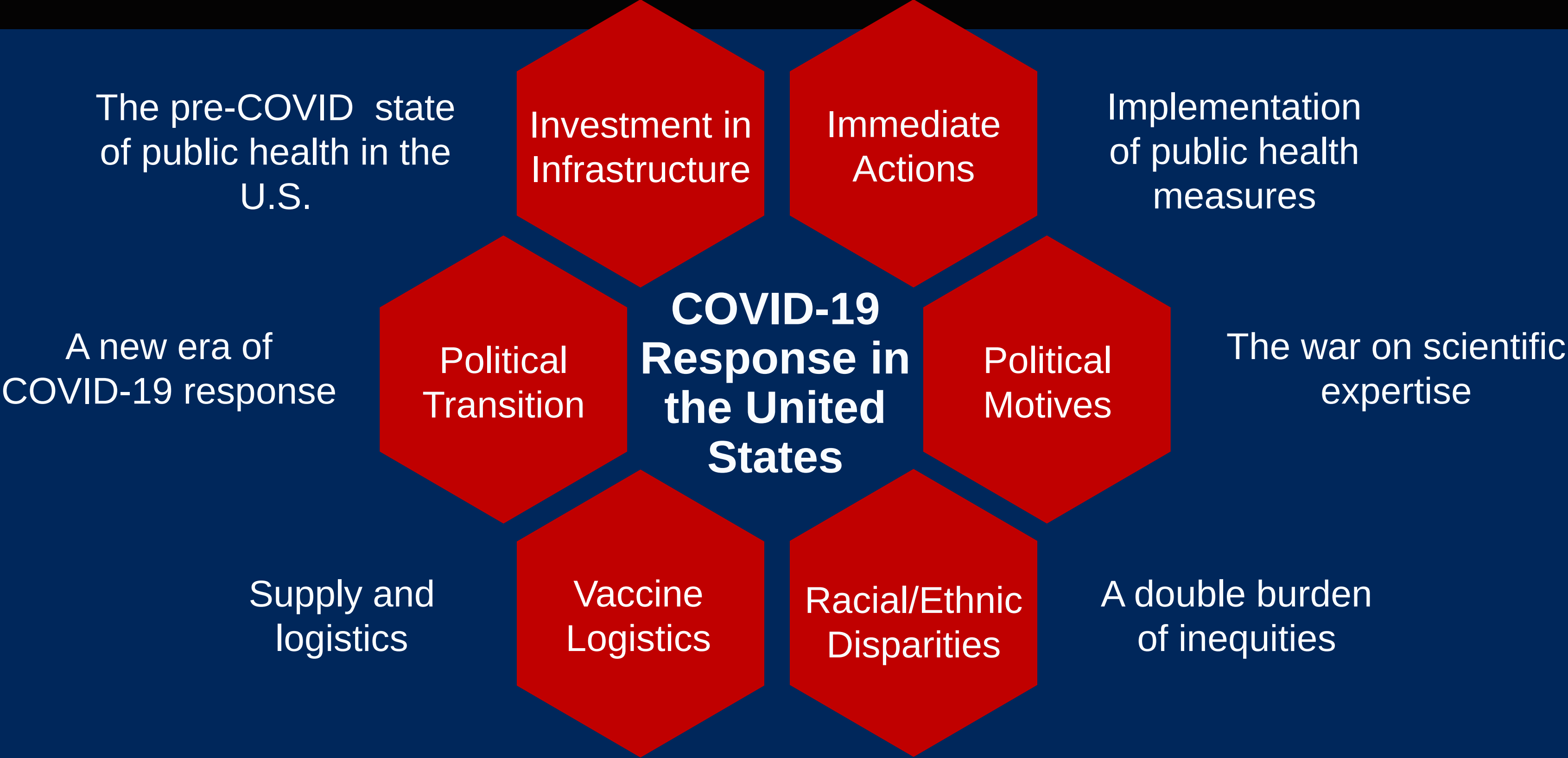
Project Aims



THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE



TOPIC AREAS



DATA COLLECTION

Content for this assessment was derived from:

- White House and Congressional Documents
- World Health Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Food and Drug Administration
- Media Reporting



- Peer-reviewed Literature
- COVID-19 Surveillance Reports



PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE



FUNDING

Systematic underfunding

Personal > Population



GOVERNANCE

Federalist system

Decentralization of authority



PRIORITY

Role of prevention

Public opinion

SETTING THE STAGE



Public Health Under Obama (2009-2016)

- The Affordable Care Act
- Re-emerging priorities

Public Health Under Trump (2017-2020)

- Drastic cuts to federal health agencies
- Diversion of global health initiatives

January

- Formation of the White House Coronavirus Task Force
- Trump suspends foreign nationals from China
- HHS Secretary declares public health emergency

February

- CDC announces flaws in testing reagent
- Administration requests \$2.5 billion in supplemental funding

March

- Trump signs Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act

100 cases

- National Emergency declared

1000 cases

- Defense Production Act invoked

10,000 cases

- CARES Act signed

100,000 cases

- U.S. surpasses all other countries in confirmed cases

IMMEDIATE ACTION

“We have it totally under control. It’s one person coming in from China.
It’s going to be just fine.”

“One day, it’s like a miracle, it will disappear.”

“Just stay calm. It will go away.”

“I don’t take responsibility at all.”

**“...the Federal Government is merely a back-up for
state governments.”**

“This is going to go away without a vaccine. It is going to
go away. We are not going to see it again.”

Political Interference

47 documented
instances related to the
U.S. pandemic response

Rhetoric

The infusion of
partisanship in response
activities

Scientific Expertise

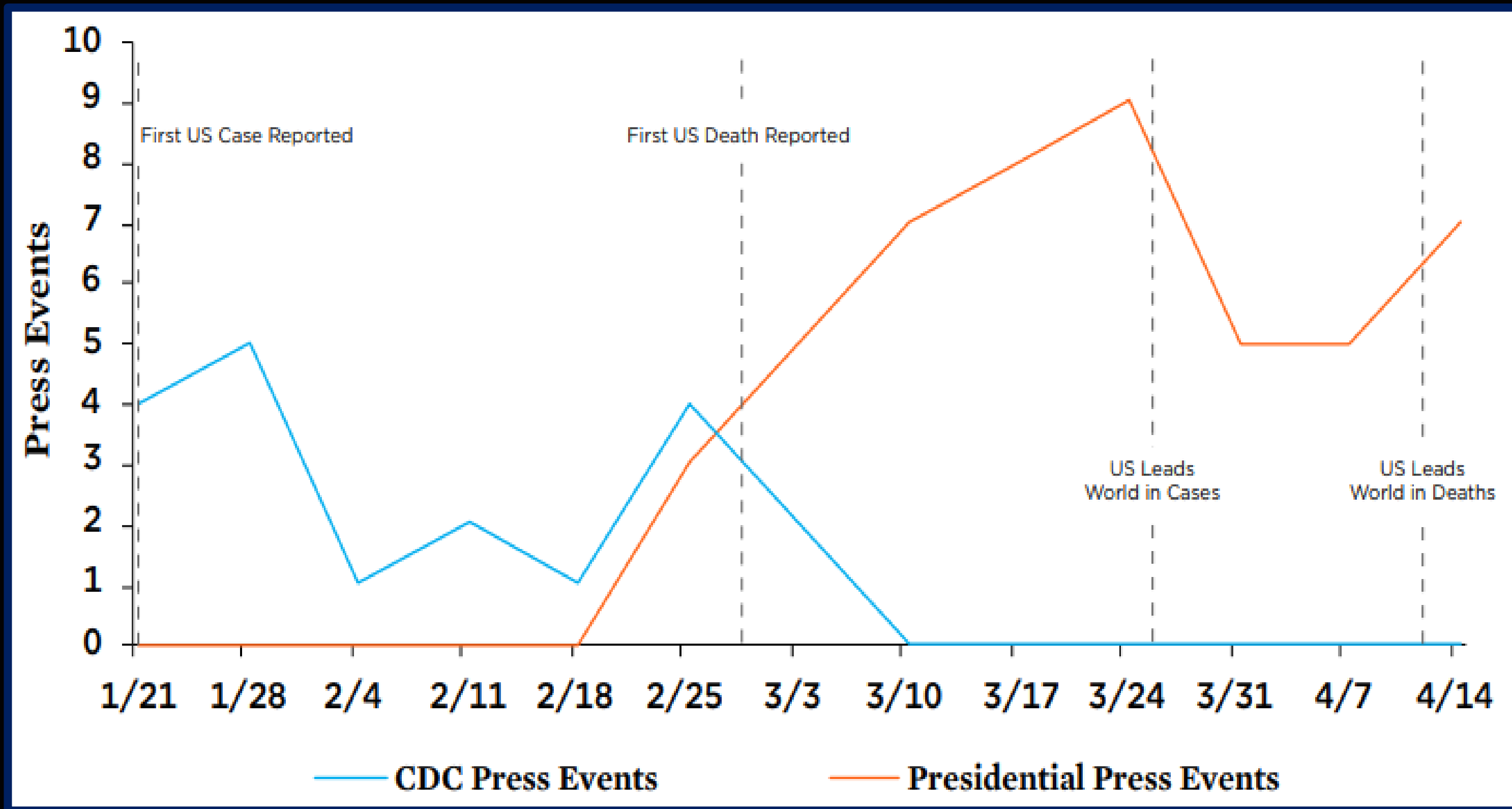
Sidelining and
gatekeeping of guidance

Trust

Public regard for
science and public
health institutions

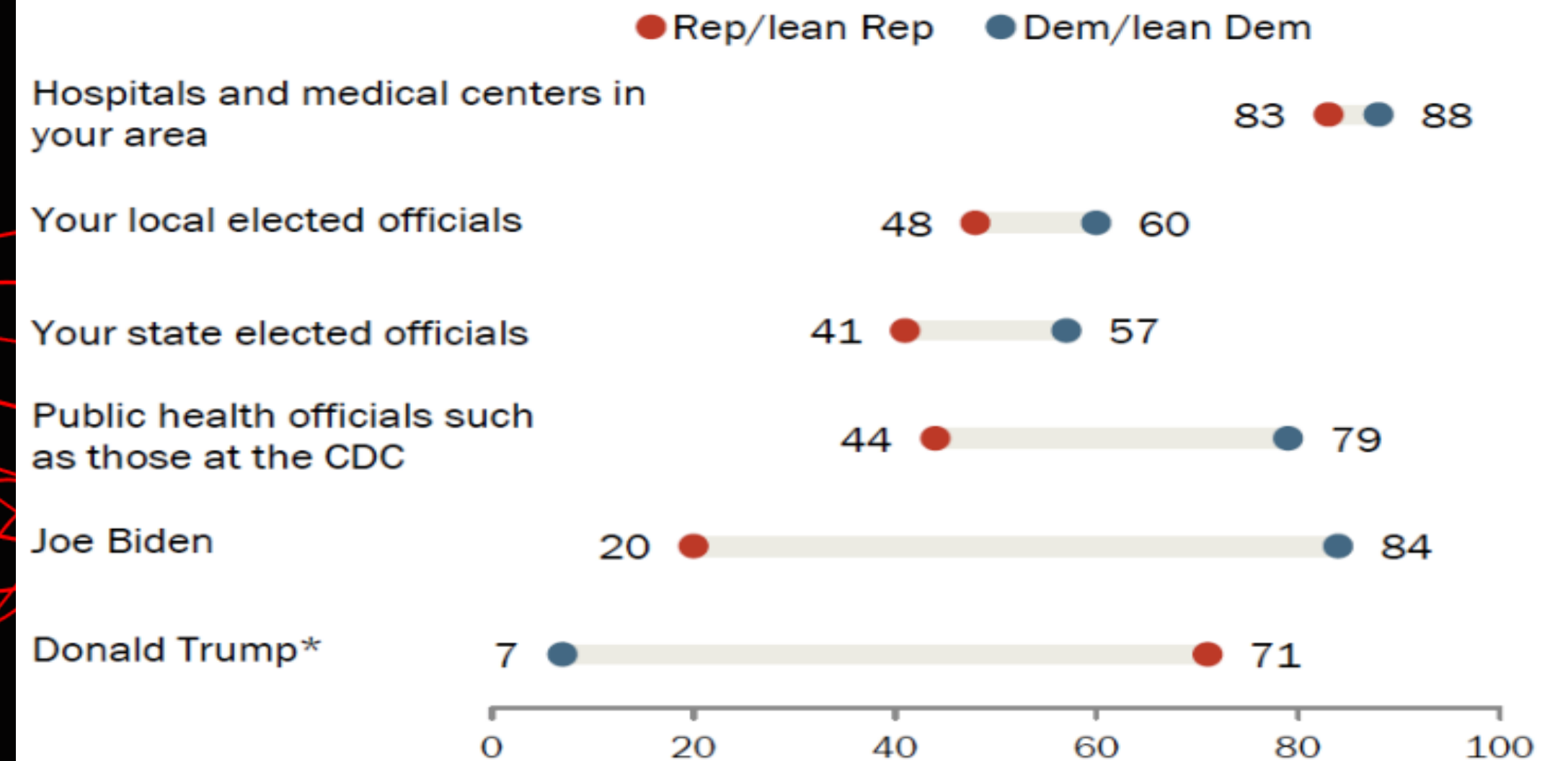


POLITICAL MOTIVES



The rhetoric perpetuated by the 2020 Administration has largely shaped public perception of the COVID-19 response along partisan lines.

*% of U.S. adults who rate ____ as doing an **excellent/good** job responding to the coronavirus outbreak*



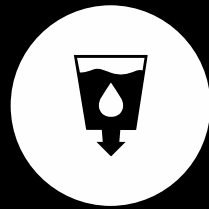
*Ratings of Donald Trump from item on how he responded during his time in office.
Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 16-21, 2021.
“Growing Share of Americans Say They Plan To Get a COVID-19 Vaccine – or Already Have”

ADDRESSING DISPARITIES

- Race-based rhetoric
- Weakening of federal roles in health
- Wide ranging cuts to Medicaid, ACA
- Anti-immigrant sentiment
- Personal blame vs systemic inequity



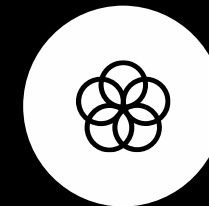
VACCINE LOGISTICS



UNMET PROMISES



LACK OF FEDERAL
SUPPORT



UNDERMINING
OF TRUST

POLITICAL TRANSITION

- Comprehensive national strategy
- Reinvestment in global efforts
- Experts back to the forefront
- Rejection of divisive rhetoric
- Rapidly upscaled vaccination capacity





THE PATH FORWARD

1. Acknowledge and invest in preparedness efforts for emerging epidemic threats.
2. Evaluate the resiliency of our healthcare system to handle disruptive health events.
3. Define a uniform system of public health governance.
4. Invest in the formation or continuation of global health partnerships.
5. Create a systematic process for identifying, documenting, evaluating, and addressing disparities in health.
6. Cultivate working partnerships between local, state, national, and community health organizations.

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THANK YOU

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