

For Discussion - Item 5.1
COGA - Sept. 21-23, 2022

225TH PC(USA) GENERAL ASSEMBLY EVALUATION

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August 2022



**RESEARCH
SERVICES**

OVERVIEW

The General Assembly consists of commissioners elected by presbyteries and has several specific responsibilities outlined in the Book of Order. The Assembly is responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions. The 225th General Assembly included both in-person and online meetings. The committee sessions were held in-person in Louisville, KY, site of the PC(USA) national offices from June 18- July 3, 2022. Plenary sessions were held online July 5-9, 2022.

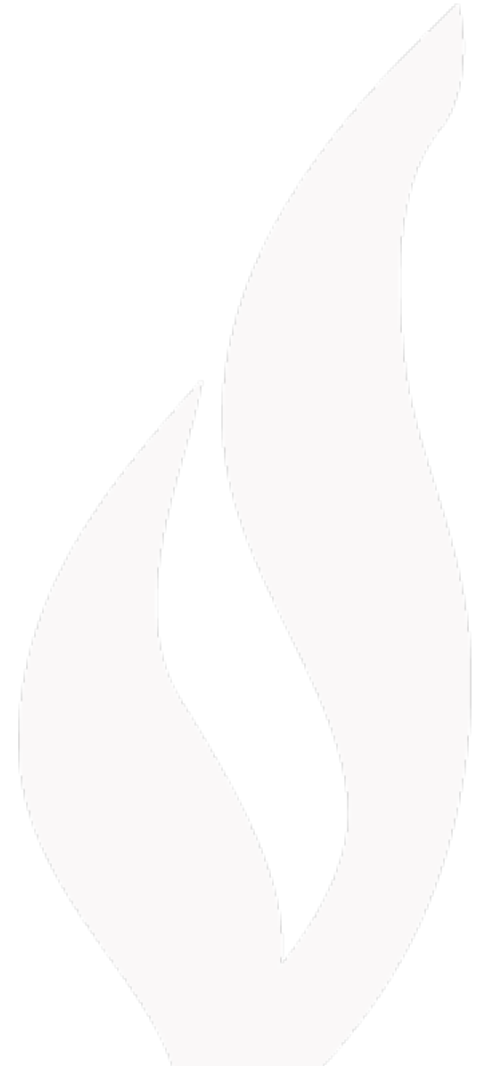
At the conclusion of the General Assembly, an evaluation survey was sent to 566 commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members on July 9, 2022, to gather feedback. The evaluation was in the field for four weeks, and during that time four reminders were sent. 417 attendees responded, of those, 368 (88%) were commissioners. This report represents the opinions and views of the responding participants.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

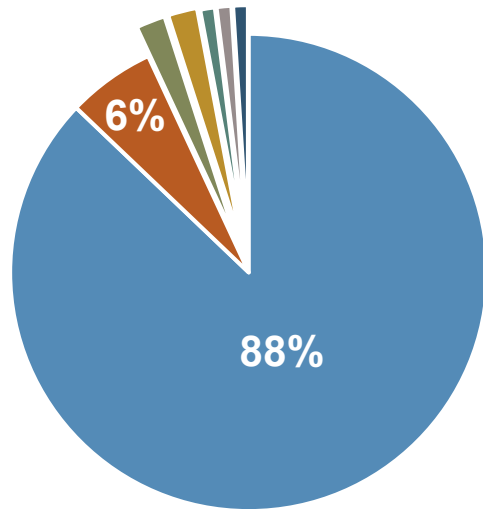
1. 83% report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” overall with the 225th General Assembly.
2. 94% report having enough or more than enough time for committee work.
3. Over 90% report receiving most or all of business and technology related information prior to the Assembly.

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Respondents



- Commissioner
- Youth Adult Advisory Delegate
- Ecumenical Advisory Delegate
- Theological Student Advisory Delegate
- Missionary Advisory Delegate
- Corresponding Member
- Other

Percentages of 2% or less are not labeled

368 Commissioners

23 Young Adult Advisory Delegates

8 Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

7 Theological Student Advisory Delegates

4 Missionary Advisory Delegates

3 Corresponding Member

4 Other

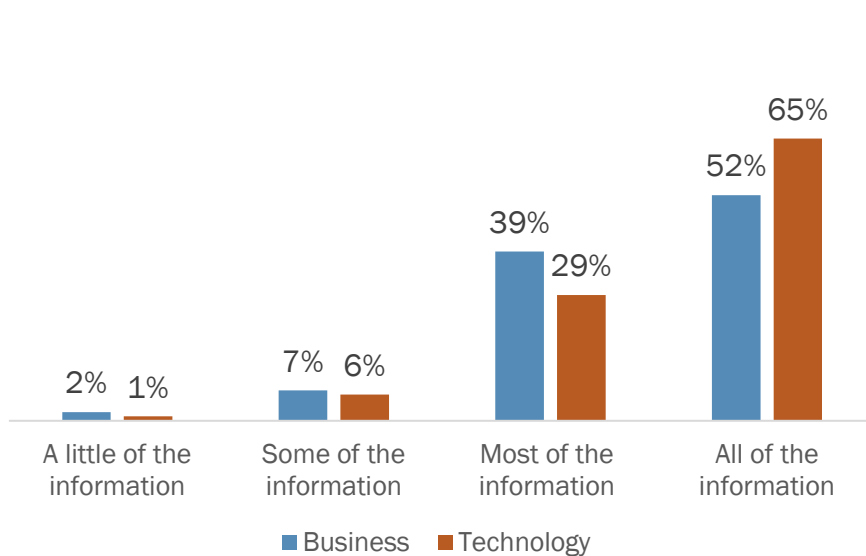
Preparation for General Assembly



Preparation for the General Assembly

Majority of respondents (over 90%) indicate receiving most or all the business and technology related information prior to the Assembly. Most of the preparation received came from OGA via resources and training.

How much of the information that you needed, did you receive prior to the Assembly? n=413



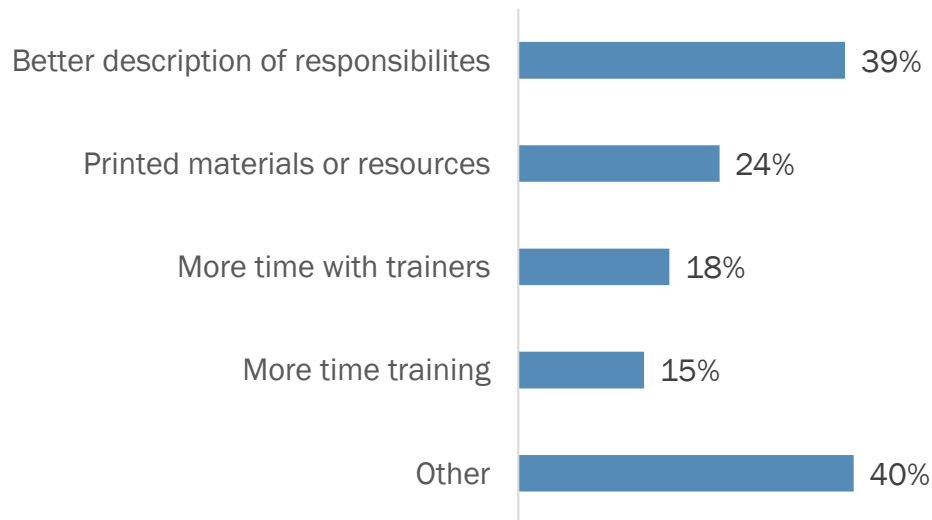
In preparation for the 225th GA, would you say that you received... n=406



Preparation for the General Assembly

While some felt that training was sufficient, others share what was missing from their training. Almost 40% (n=125) indicate that a better description of responsibilities could have better prepared them. Forty percent (n=130) shared “other” things that could have prepared them.

What was missing from your training that could have better prepared you? n=324

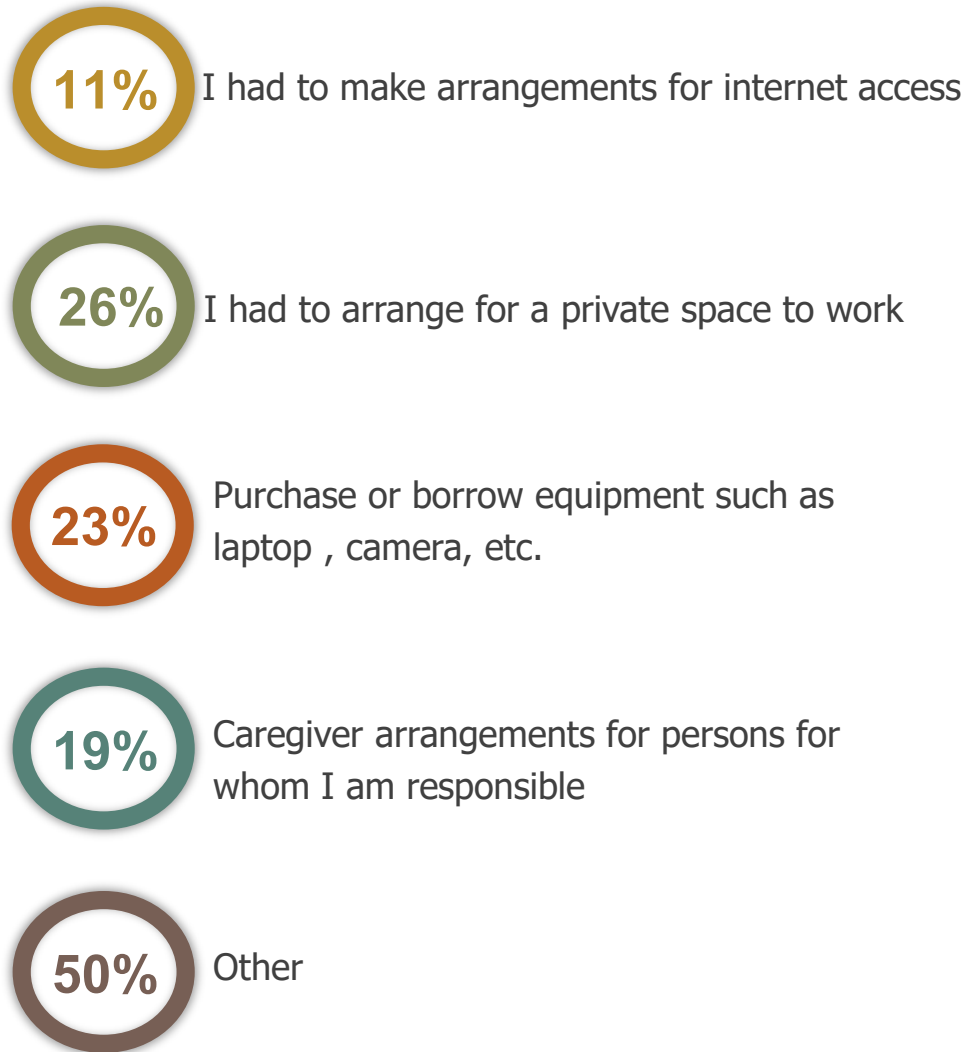


Other missing training includes...

- More of an orientation to the purpose and work of the committee I served
- More communications from the Leadership Team.
- Mock sessions
- Access to a printed guide of how to function in PC-Biz and where to find things on the General Assembly site.
- How to run pc-biz as a moderator
- A document to reference all acronyms used for committees, councils, young adults, etc.

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

Arrangements Made For GA Participation



n=224

Other arrangements include...

“Purchased phone hotspot as backup ISP”

“I had to purchase a streaming device for my hearing aids.....”

“I had to make extensive arrangements with volunteers from our congregation to do the things I normally do each week so I could fully participate in GA.”

“Changing my email was problematic. It slowed my access into My GA by a few weeks. That slowed my training down.”

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

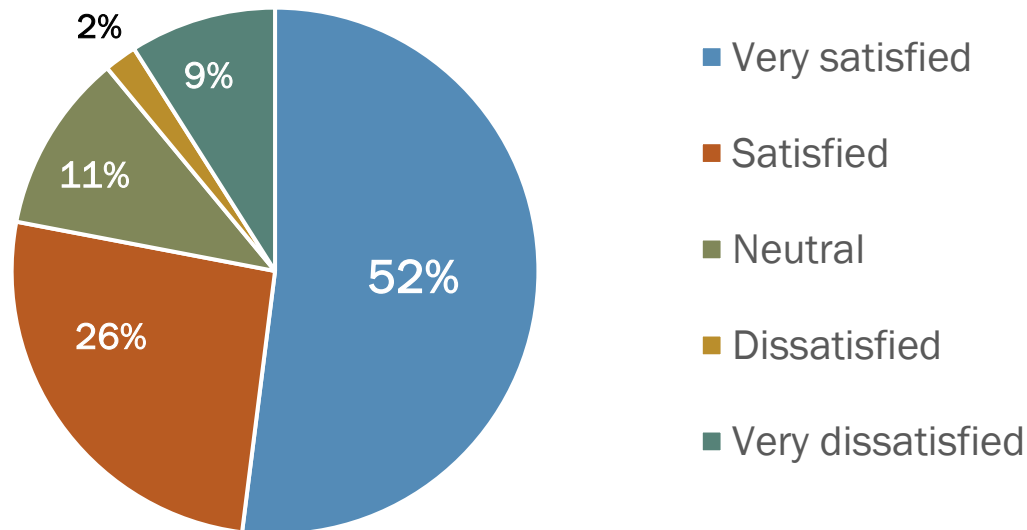
Help Desk & Technology



Help Desk Support

Sixty percent (n=243) of respondents' report utilizing the Help Desk. Of those that used the Help Desk, majority (78%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the report they received.

How satisfied were you with the support?
n=243



225th General Assembly Evaluation

Tell us about your internet access, equipment, and comfort using technology for the 225th General Assembly.



I had to make arrangements to have stable and robust internet access to join the assembly



I had to acquire the appropriate equipment to fully participate in the assembly



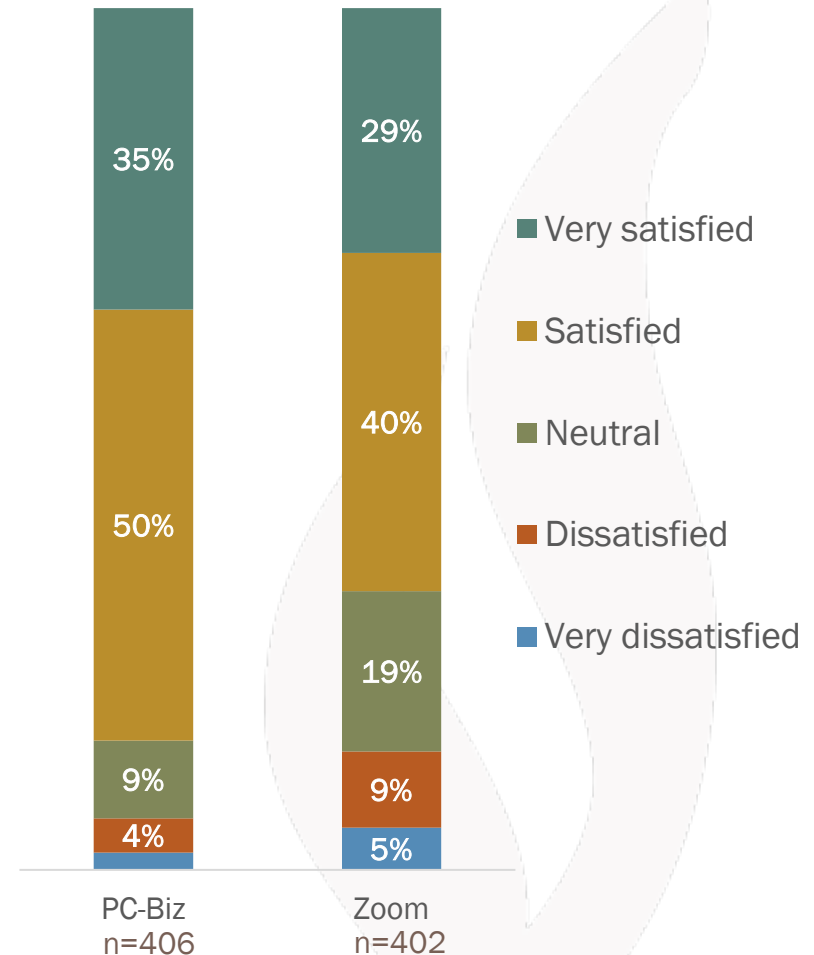
I had anxiety about technology, internet access, or use of the web applications interfering with my ability to fully participate in the assembly



None of these apply to me

n=405

Satisfaction with PC-Biz and Zoom

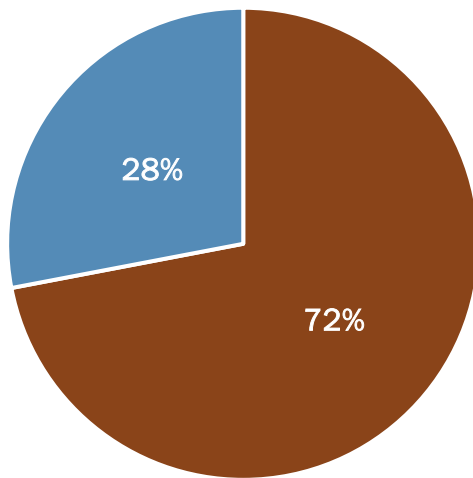


Percentages of 2% or less are not labeled

Languages used with Zoom's Onboard Interpretation Feature

For this Assembly, language interpretation was accessed via Zoom. During committee breakout sessions, interpreters often joined these breakout sessions in-person as there was not a Zoom option. Seventy-two percent (n=291) report using Zoom's Onboard interpreting feature. Majority off those respondents used English exclusively.

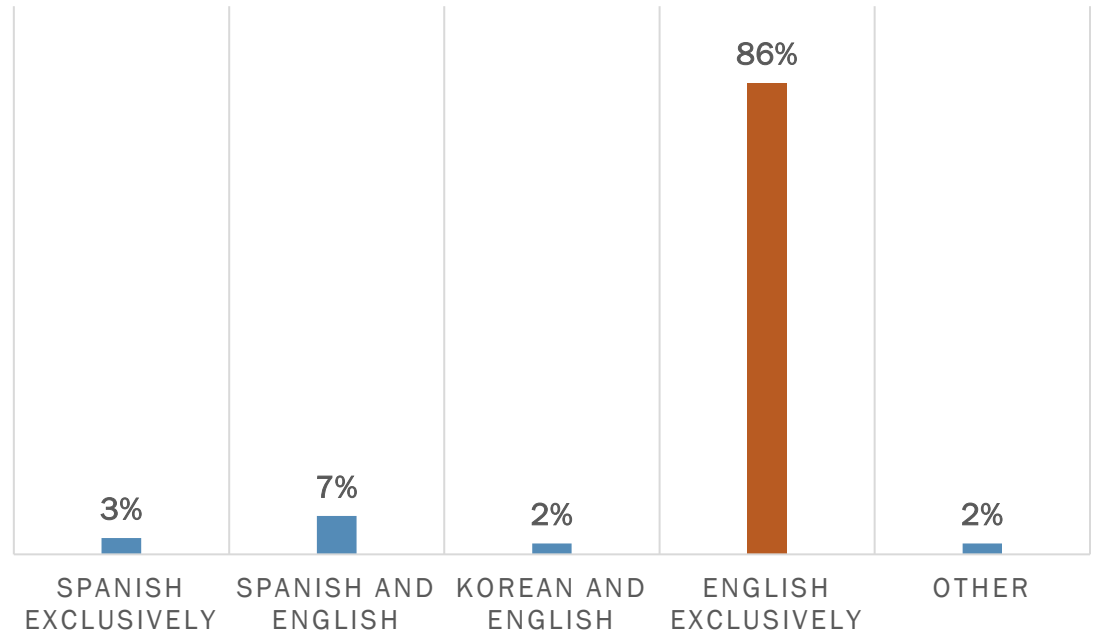
DID YOU USE ZOOM'S ONBOARD FEATURE



■ Yes ■ No

n=405

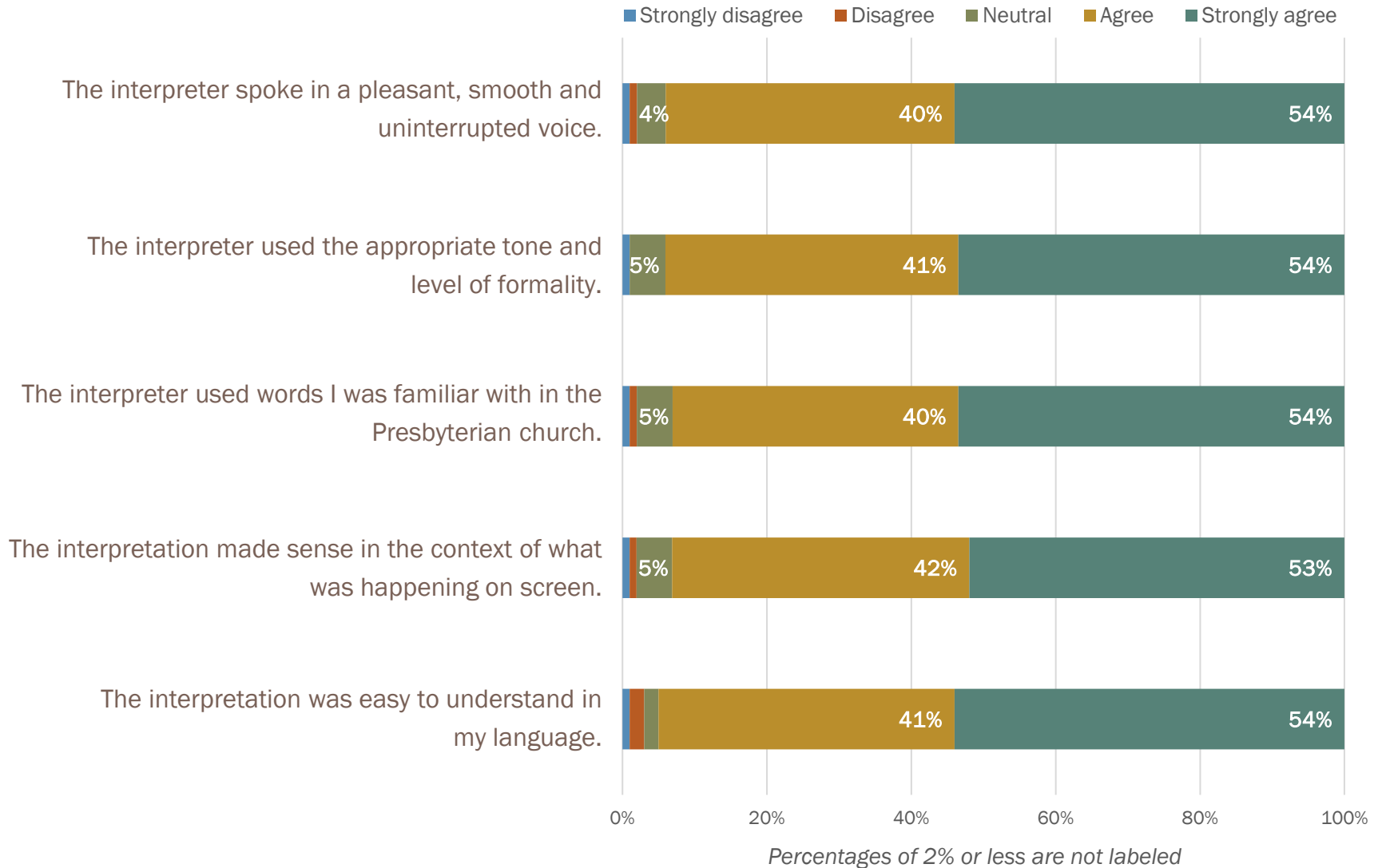
LANGUAGES USED



n=290

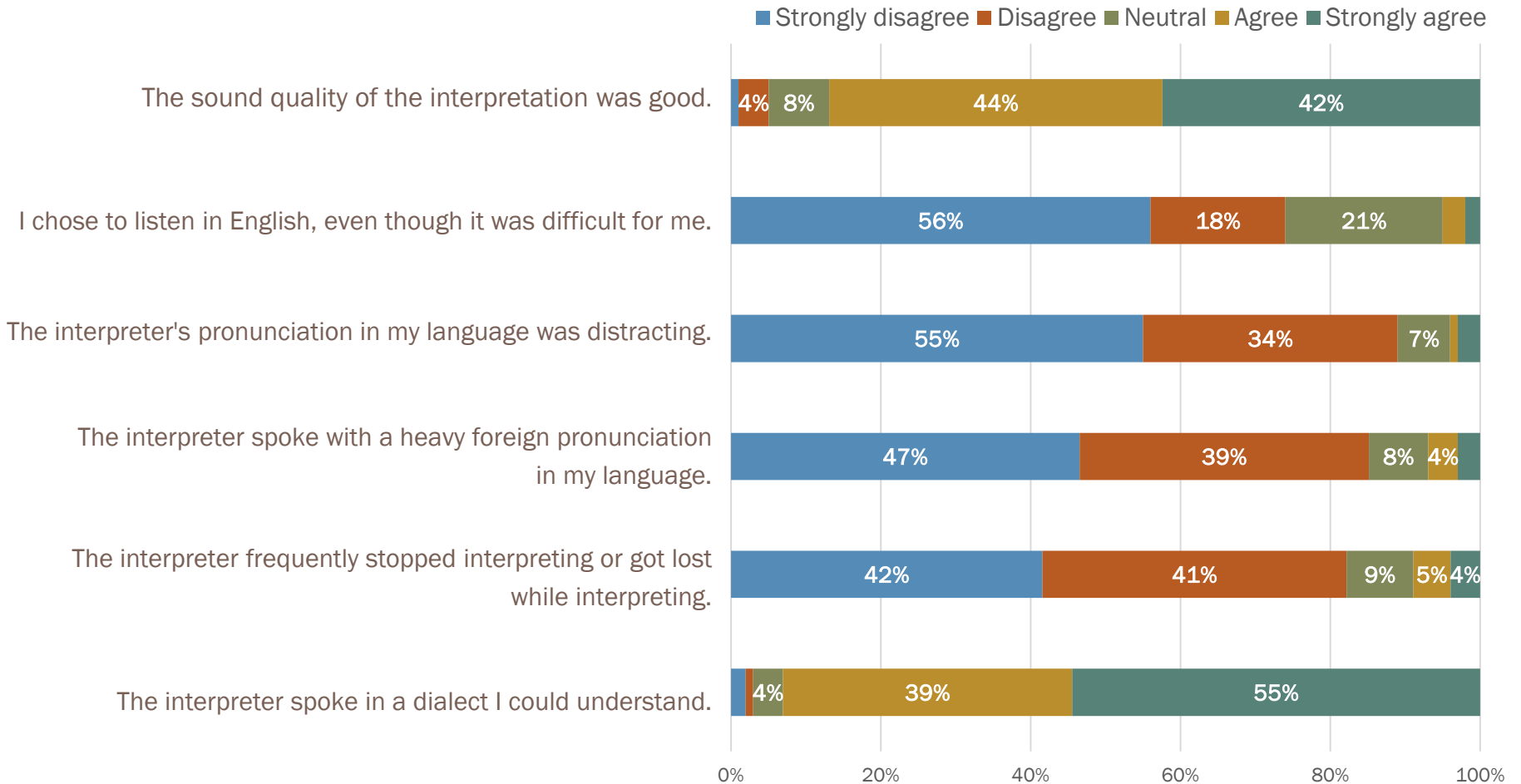
Zoom Onboard Interpreting Feature

Respondents share their experience and satisfaction with live interpretation via Zoom n=286



Zoom Onboard Interpreting Feature

Respondents share their experience and satisfaction with live interpretation via Zoom



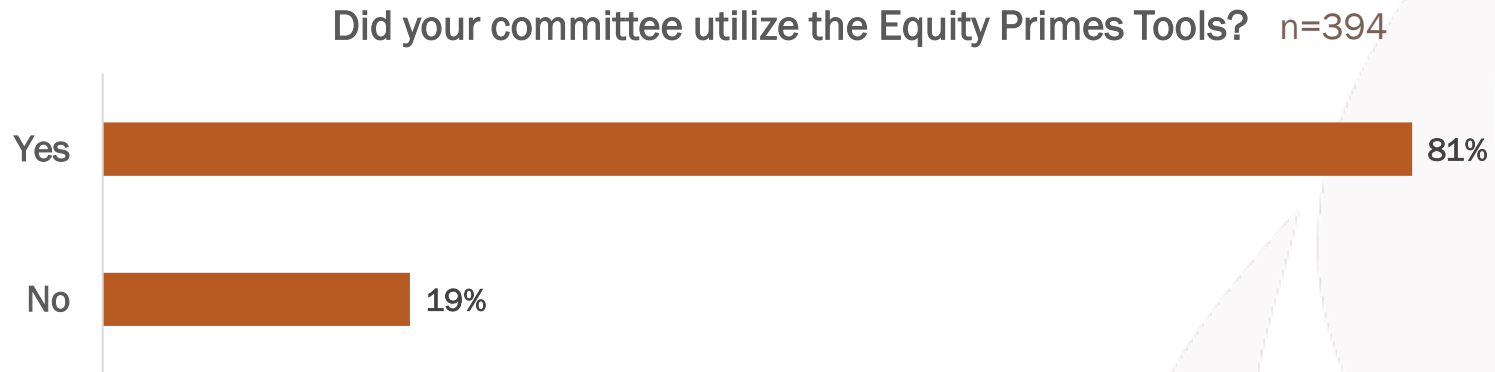
Percentages of 3% or less are not labeled

Equity Primes Tools



Equity Primes Tools

Equity primes are tools, images, and reminders that evoke consciousness to counteract implicit bias. As a part of training, committee members were trained on the usage of these tools. Eighty-one percent (n=320) of respondents report their committee using the Equity Primes Tools.

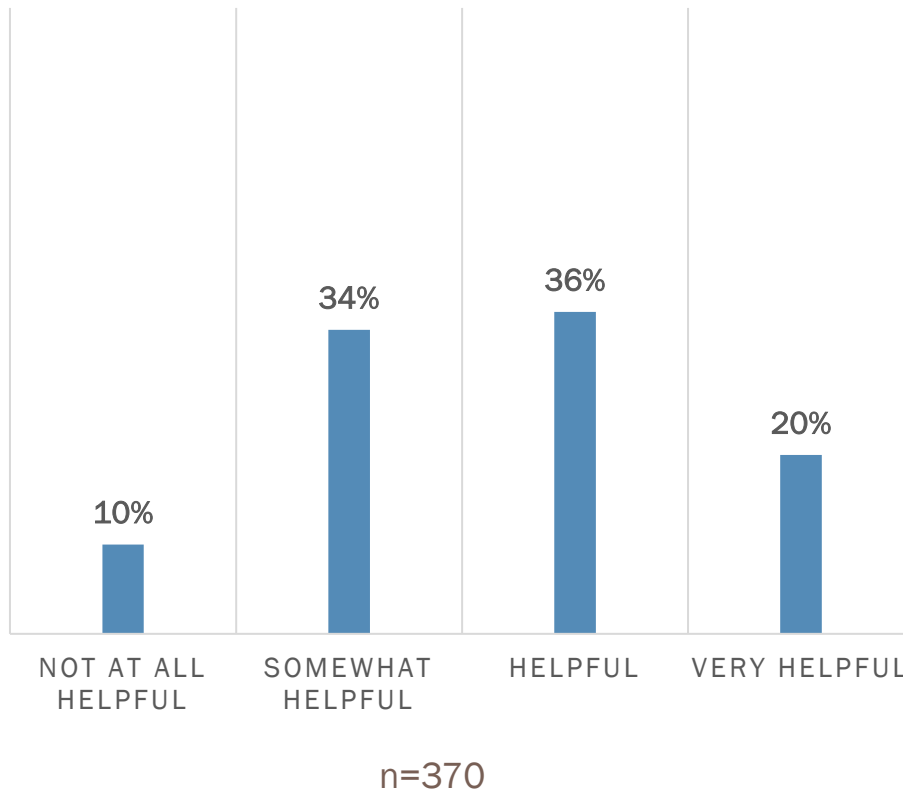


Equity primes were used in both committees and the Assembly. Although not all of respondents report their committee using the Equity Primes Tools, everyone was asked to share their thoughts on them. They were asked their perspective on the helpfulness, ease of understanding and practice, and how training could be improved for the utilization of the tools. The following two slides share those perspectives.

Equity Primes Tools

From an overall perspective, a little over half (56%) found these tools to be “helpful” or “very helpful.”

HOW HELPFUL WERE THESE TOOLS?



How can we help improve the training for the utilization for these tools?

“Provide examples of how they were used at the 225th GA Committee meetings.”

“Expand orientation to others throughout presbyteries, synods and congregations.”

“I think having them displayed where everyone can see (especially given the nature of much of our business) would be a good idea.”

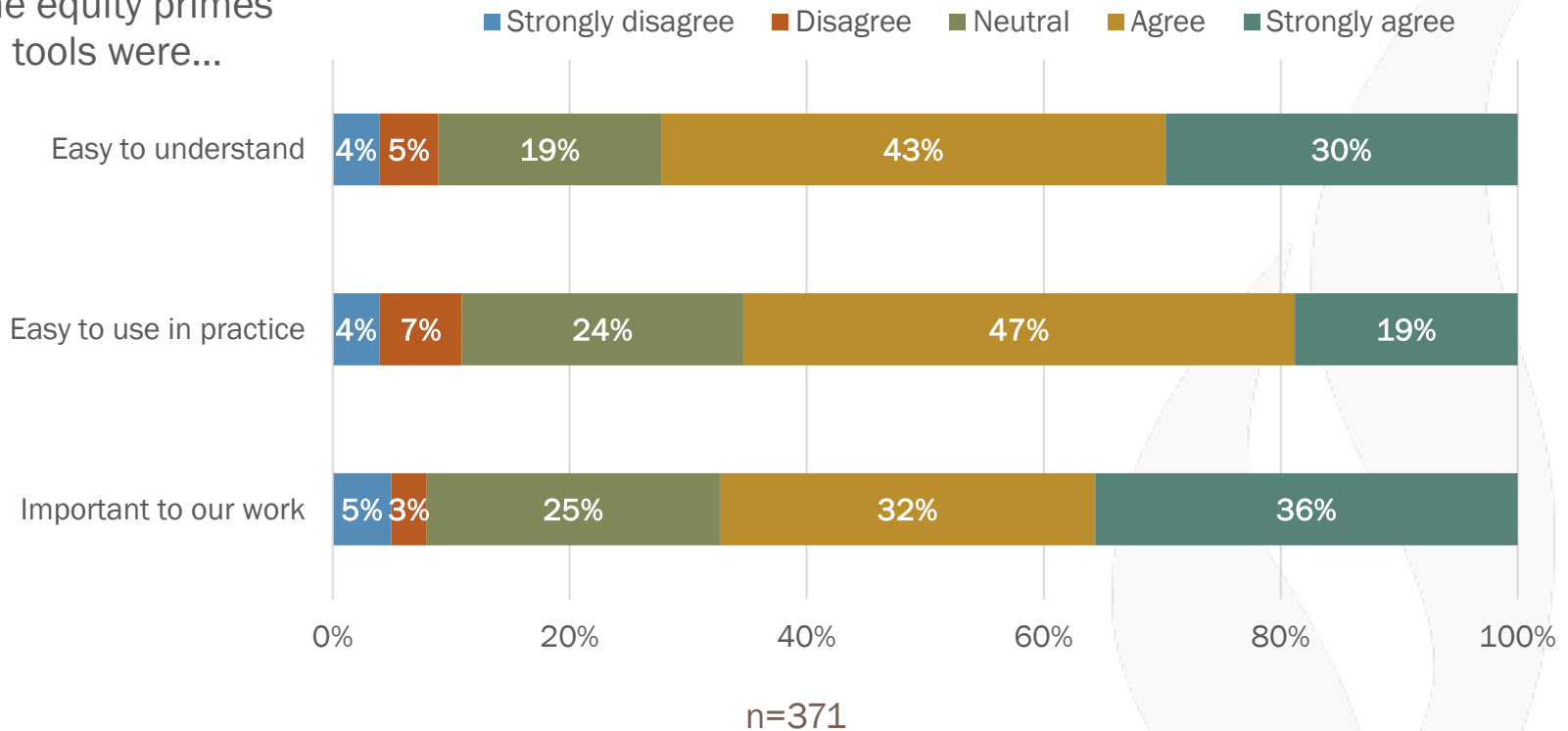
“Require a discussion of equity primes on the first day of business for all committees.”

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

Equity Primes Tools

When asked about the use of Equity Primes Tools, 73% (n=268) “agree” or “strongly agree” that the tools were easy to understand and 68% (n=249) “agree” or “strongly agree” that the tools were important to their work. Just over half (66%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that the tools were easy to use in practice.

The equity primes tools were...

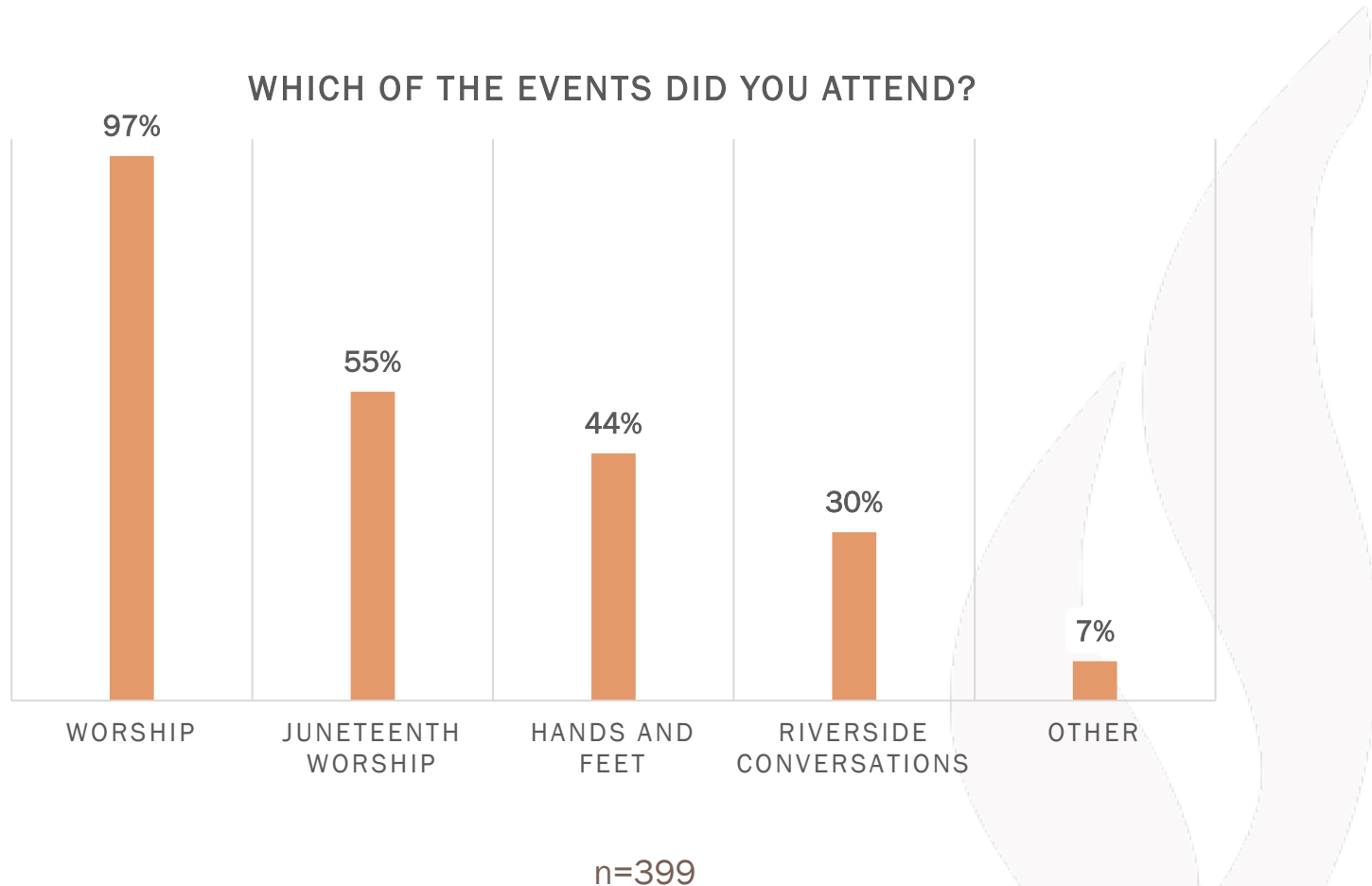


Events and Participation during General Assembly



General Assembly Events

Worship is the most attended event by respondents, with 97% (n=387) reporting to have attended. This is followed by the Juneteenth Worship (55%) and the Hands and Feet (44%) event.



Participation During the course of the 225th General Assembly n=407



31%

Increased over time

“Gained more knowledge. Level of comfort increased.”

“It was a new experience for me. The more I gained confidence and understanding the more my engagement increased.”

“Being surrounded in-person by my committee enhanced the communal aspect of GA and made me feel more motivated to participate, engage, & value committee work...”



20%

Decreased over time

“The zoom became painful in my body- ever time I turned it on my entire body tensed and even spasmed. It was too long for too many days. It was physically agonizing.”

“I was in the first group to be in Louisville. The week off between my time in Louisville and the plenaries caused me to lose momentum... and it was very difficult to get back "on board" when it was time to start plenaries. Frustrating.”



49%

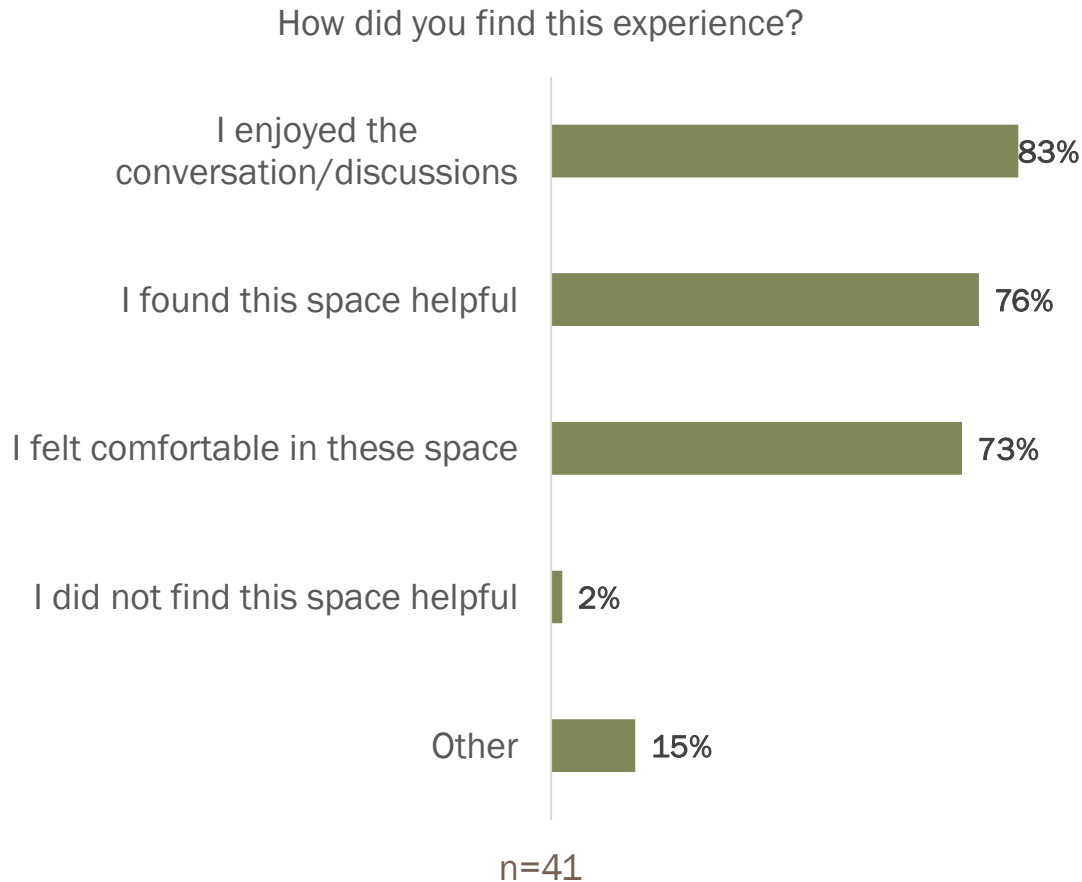
Remained the same

“I felt very engaged throughout the whole experience. That being said, as with all humans, my ability to focus waned in and out, but I stayed fairly consistently engaged. The most difficult part for me, was observing the committee on Zoom as B+O”

“I was interested in the issues presented and I made a commitment to do my best and follow the spirit where it led.”

BIPOC Space Participation

45% (n=41) of qualifying respondents participated in the BIPOC spaces. When asked about the experience, 83% say they enjoyed the conversations and discussions.



Other experiences include...

“It was great to be able to share our concerns/thoughts at the BIPOC meeting during plenary since few of us were recognized to share at the sessions.”

“I looked forward to the daily discussions.”

“It was an encouraging experience.”

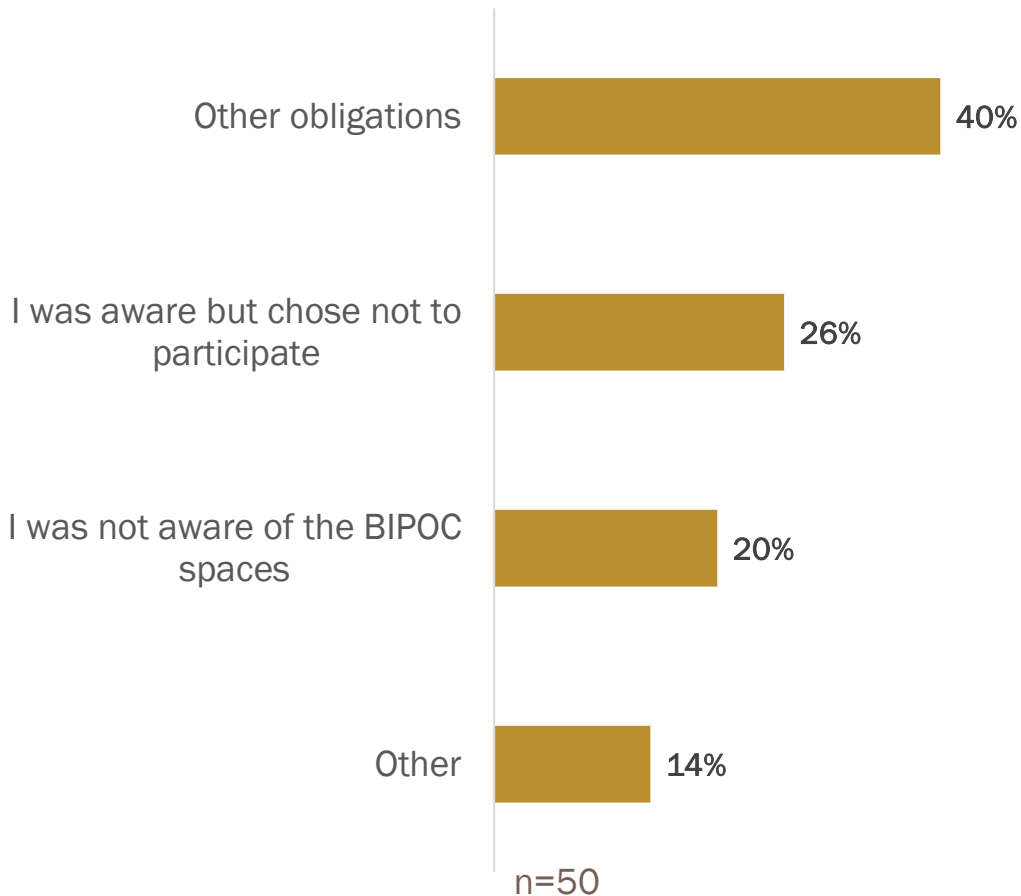
“More of these sessions should be included in future GA meetings.”

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

BIPOC Space Participation

55% (n=50) of qualifying respondents did not participate in the BIPOC spaces. Those respondents were asked reasons for non-participation. The most cited reason for non-participation was “other obligations” (40%.)

Why did you chose not to Participate?



Other reasons for not participating include...

“The sessions occurred during committee meetings.”

“I didn't feel the need to use the BIPOC spaces, but I was SO grateful to have them available if I needed—it was extremely comforting.”

“I simply lost track of time.”

“Although I identify as multiracial, I appear white, so I feel the BIPOC spaces were not for me with my privilege.”

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

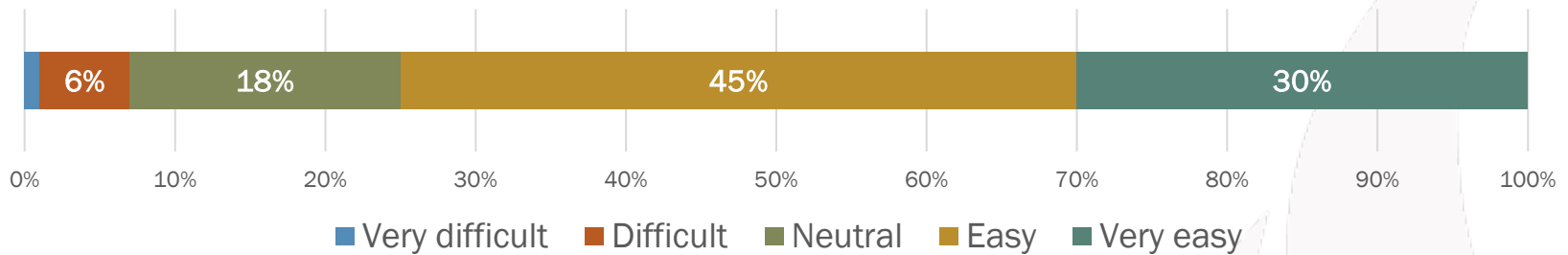
Practicing Language Inclusion



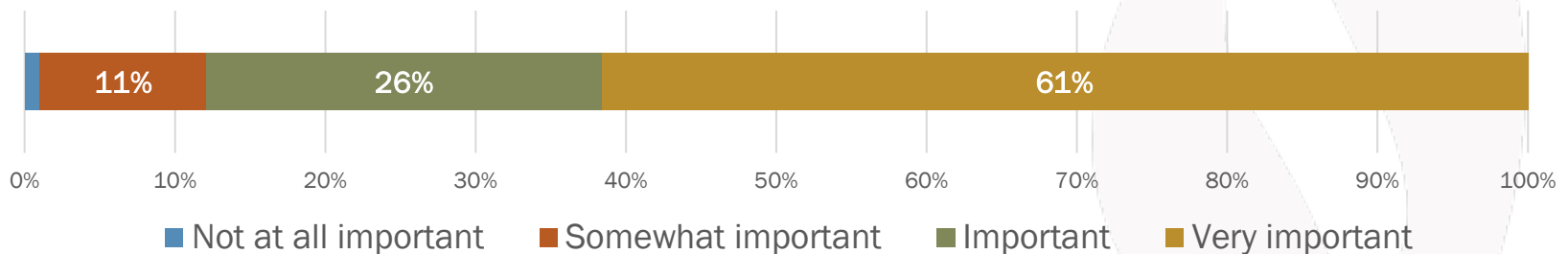
Practicing Language Inclusion 1 of 2

The Assembly Committee on Environmental Concerns was moderated in Spanish. How did respondents whose preferred language *is English* find this experience? Most found it easy to follow and acknowledge that it was an important inclusion for the Assembly.

How easy was it for you to follow along with the interpretation? n=358



How important is this type of inclusion at General Assemblies? n=376



Percentages of 2% or less are not labeled

Practicing Language Inclusion 2 of 2

Participating in a language that is not your first language can be challenging and instructive. Many respondents learned about some of these challenges and would welcome more opportunities like this one.

59%

It helped me to understand challenges of those whose first language is not English

39%

I enjoyed this experience very much

32%

I found it challenging but would welcome the opportunity to do it again

5%

I found it challenging and would prefer not to do it again

2%

I do not think this is necessary

15%

Other

n=353

"I thought it was very inclusive and we should do more of this."

"It broadened our perspectives."

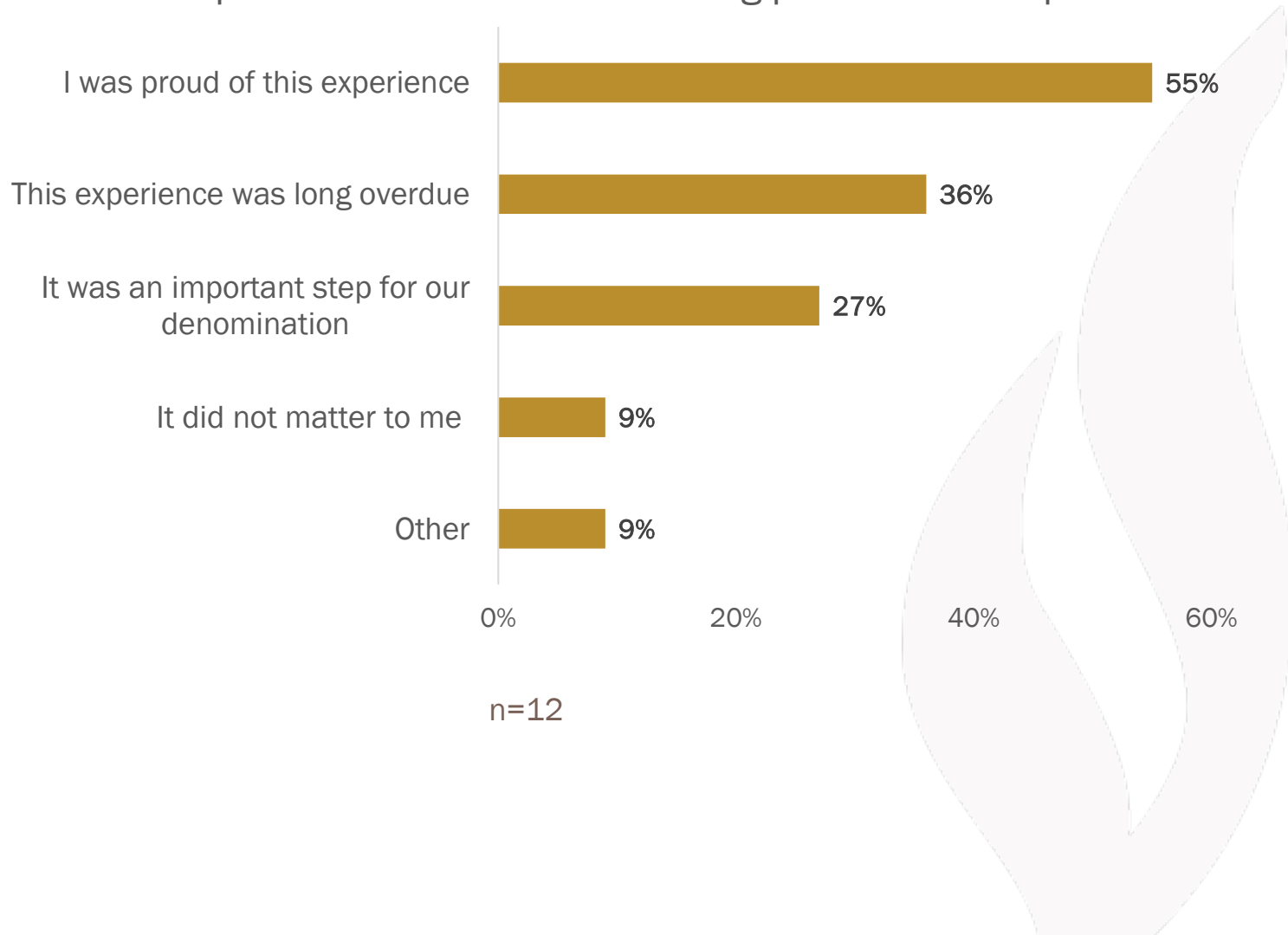
"Felt connected to my heritage."

"This was an incredible way to welcome more diverse voices into leadership."

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

The Assembly Committee on Environmental Concerns was moderated in Spanish.

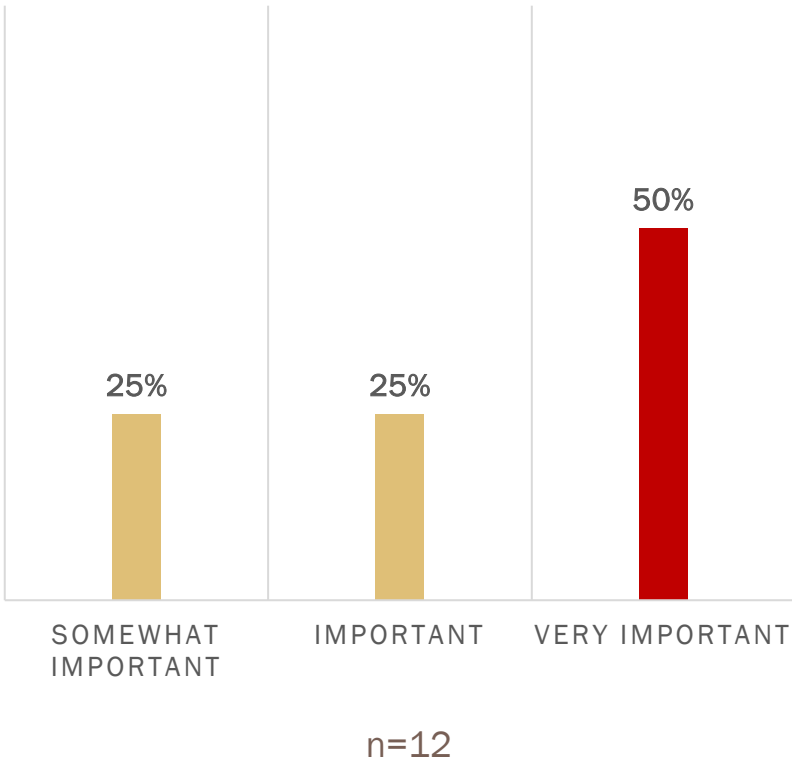
Those respondents whose preferred language *is not English* also shared their thoughts on this experience. Over half share being proud of this experience.



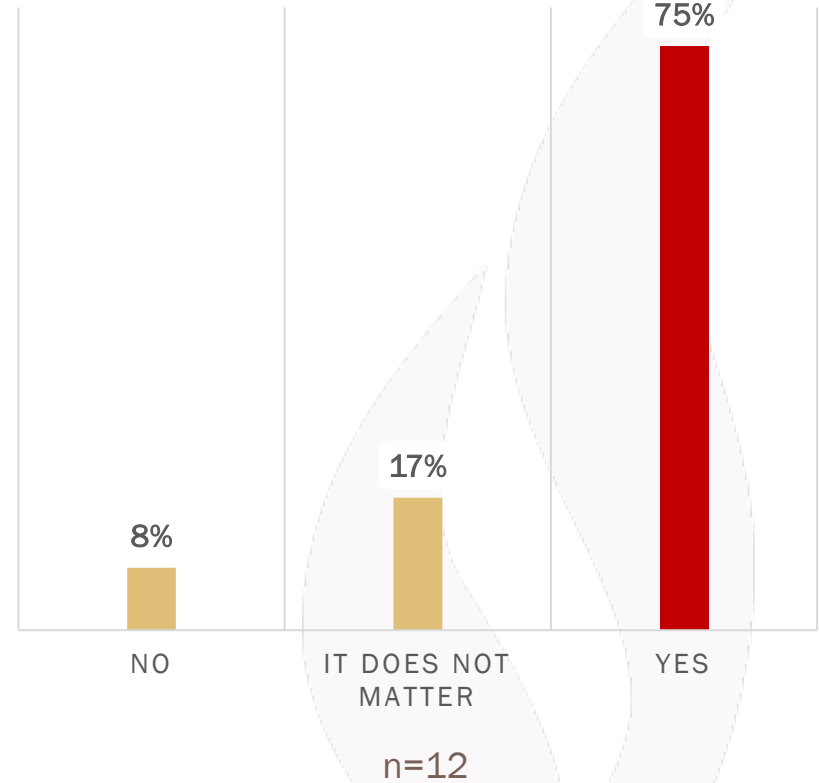
Practicing Inclusion as the Assembly Moves Forward

Respondents whose first language *is not English* say that it is important to continue this practice in future Assemblies.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU TO SEE
OTHER PLENARIES PRESENTED IN
OTHER NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES



WOULD YOU WELCOME MORE SESSIONS
IN NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES

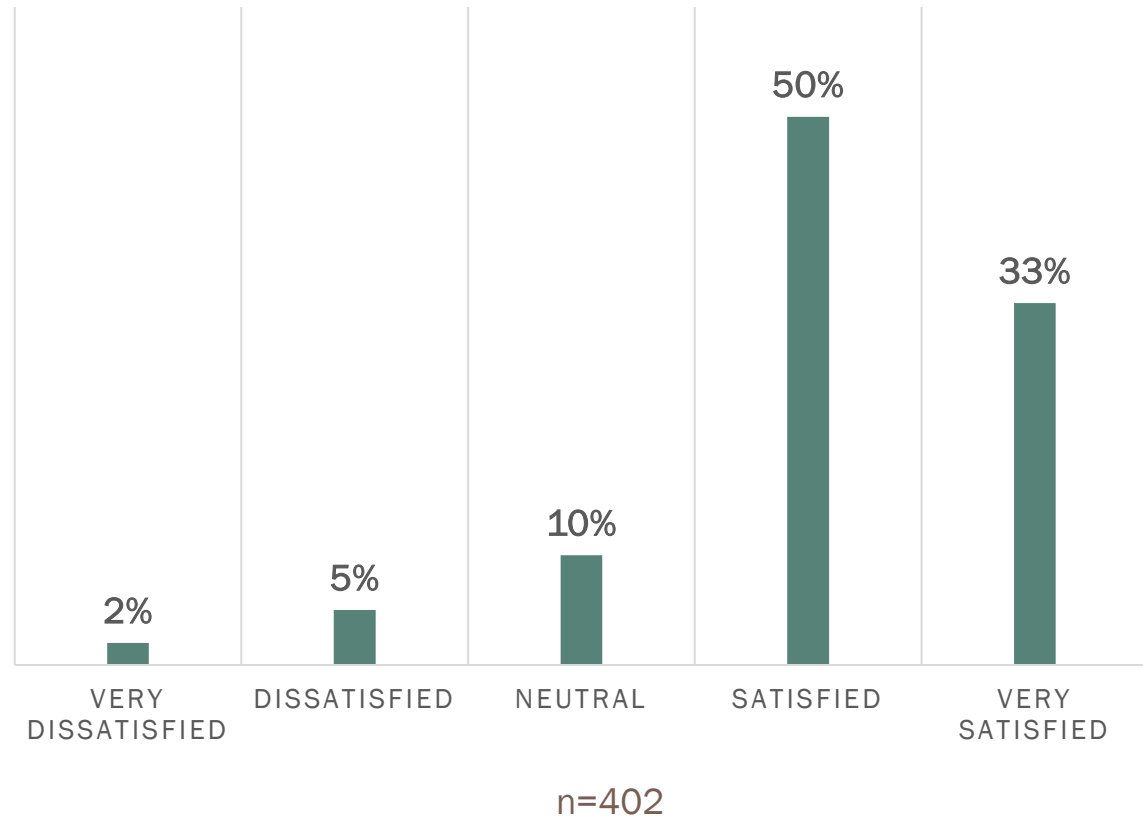


Overall
Satisfaction
with the 225th
General
Assembly



Overall Satisfaction with the 225th General Assembly

Majority of respondents (83%) report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” overall with the 225th General Assembly.



Overall Satisfaction

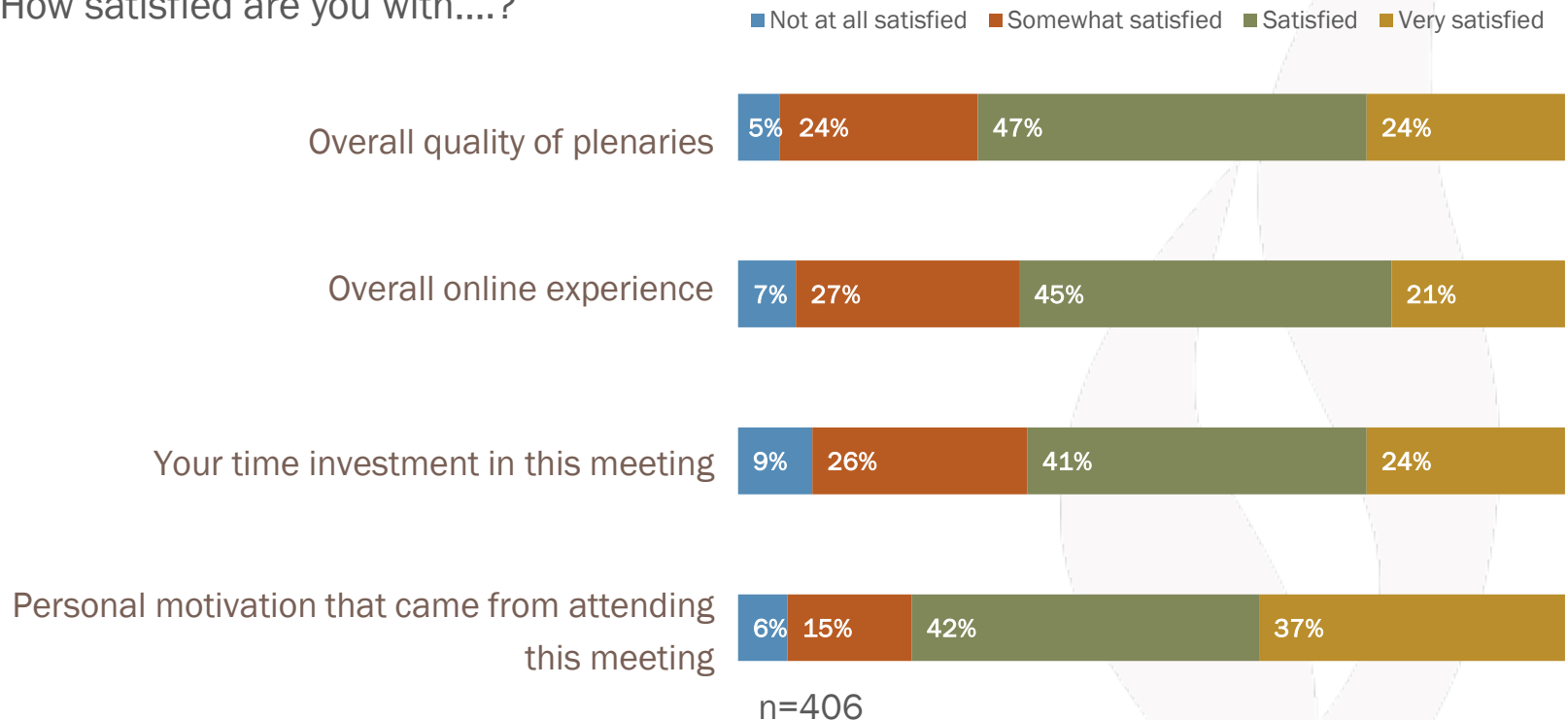
71% of respondents report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of plenaries.

66% report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall online experience

65% report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their time investment

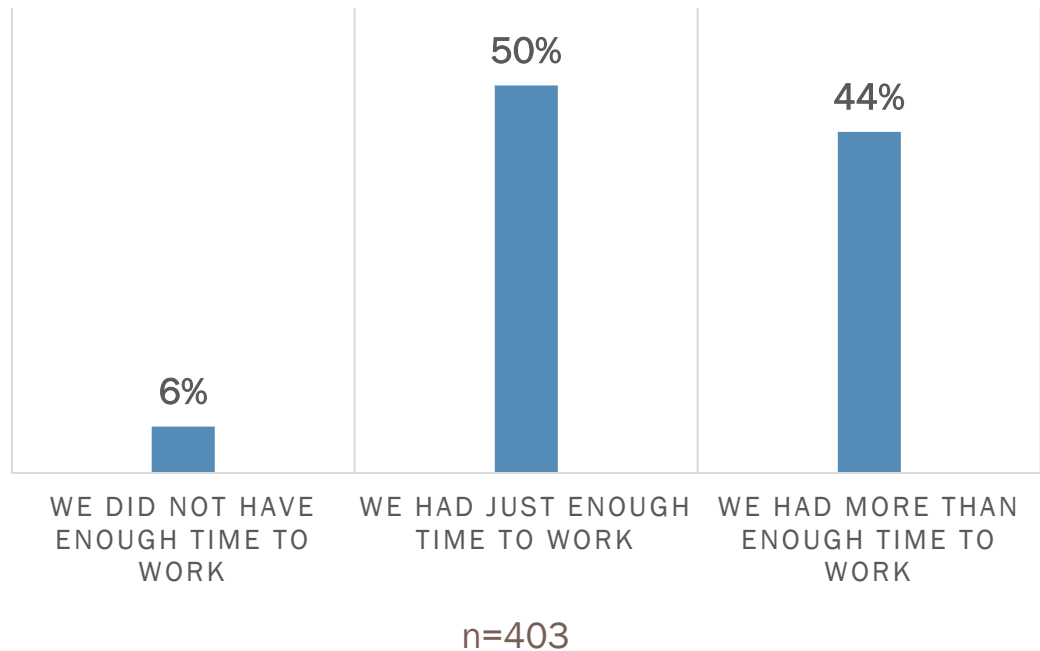
79% are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the personal motivation that came from attending.

How satisfied are you with....?



Committee Work Time

When asked to select the most accurate statement regarding their committee's work time, half of respondents say they had just enough work time. Another 44% (n=178) report having more than enough time for work.

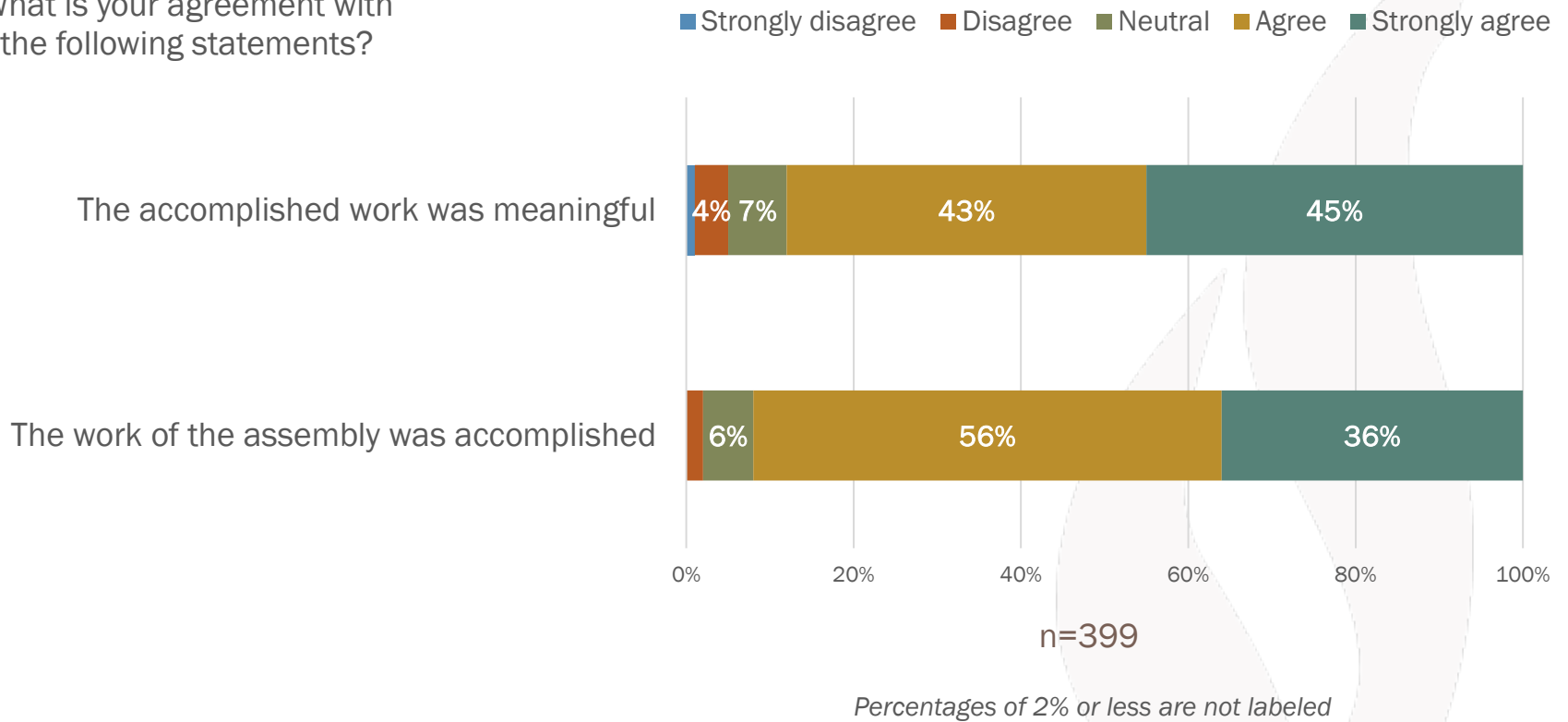


225th General Assembly Evaluation

Views of work of the Assembly

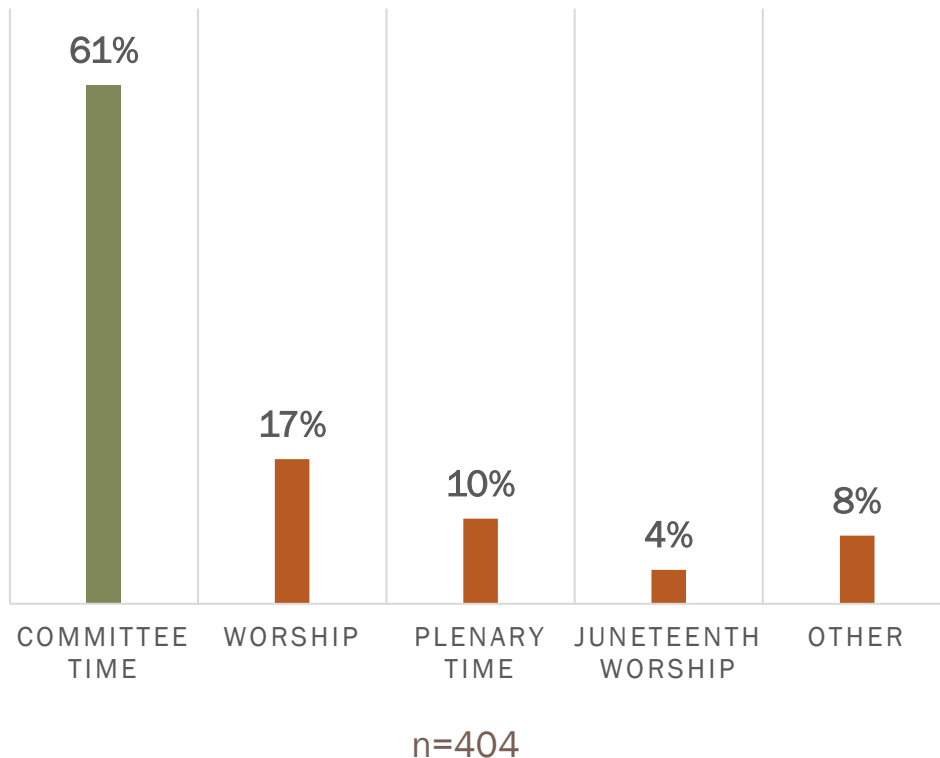
Having finished the work of the 225th General Assembly, majority (92%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that the work of the assembly was accomplished and 88% “agree” or “strongly agree” that the accomplished work was meaningful.

What is your agreement with the following statements?



Most Meaningful Experience

Over half of respondents (61%) share that committee time was their most meaningful experience at the 225th General Assembly. Worship was the most meaningful experience for 17%.



Other meaningful experiences include...

“Meeting with new people in our off time and building relationships”

“BIPOC and YAAD meetings”

“Learning more about what exactly GA is, why it's important and how our National church and local work can be better connected.”

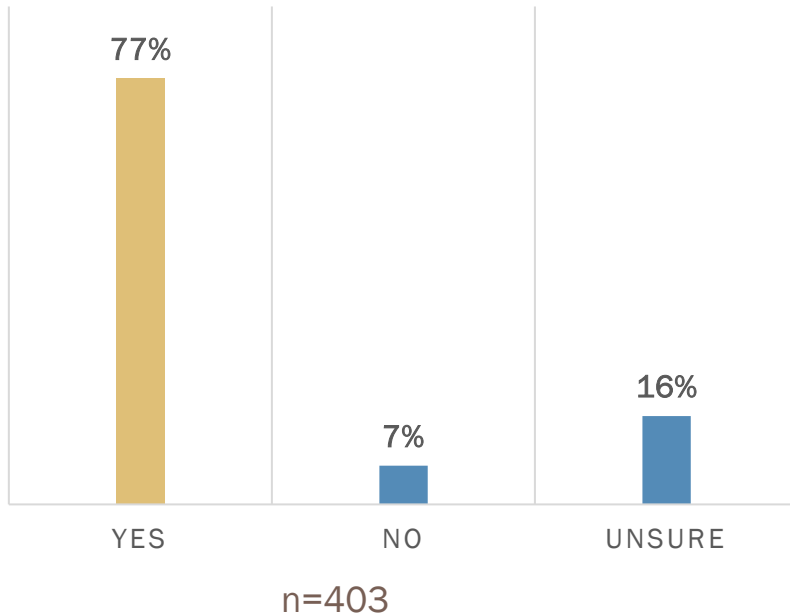
“Having good news to bring back to my congregation and presbytery. Personally, I went from lament to hope.”

Full list of comments can be found in appendix.

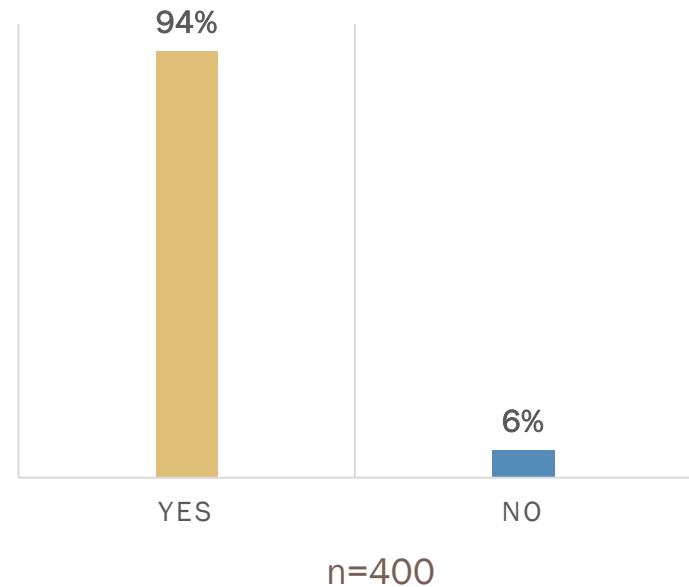
Would You Serve Again? Would you recommend it others?

YES & YES! Respondents would be willing to serve again and would recommend it to others. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicate they would serve as a commissioner or delegate if asked again, while 16% are unsure. However, 94% would recommend serving to other members of the Church.

IF ASKED AGAIN, WOULD YOU SERVE AS
A GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONER
OR ADVISORY DELEGATE?



WOULD YOU RECOMMEND SERVING AS A
COMMISSIONER OR ADVISORY
DELEGATE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH?

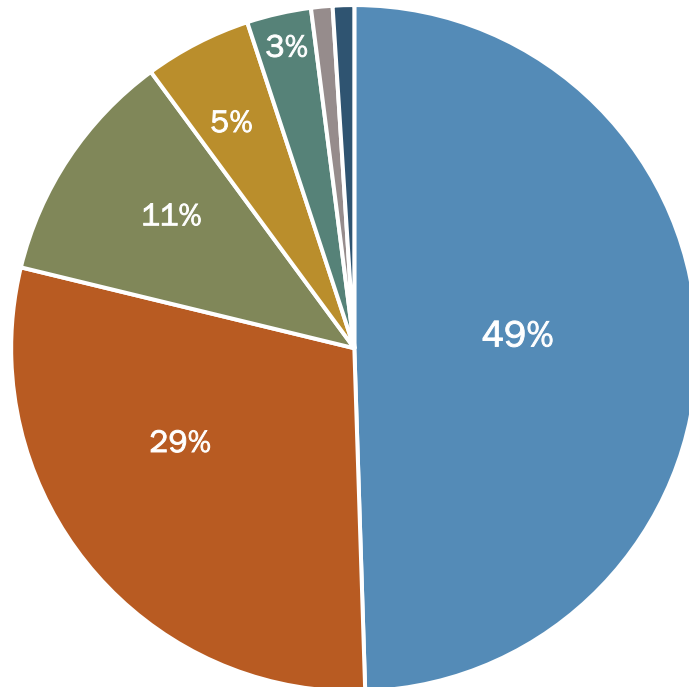


About Those That Served



Commissioners Employment Status and Type

Most respondents are full-time workers (49%) with retirees (29%) being the second largest group.



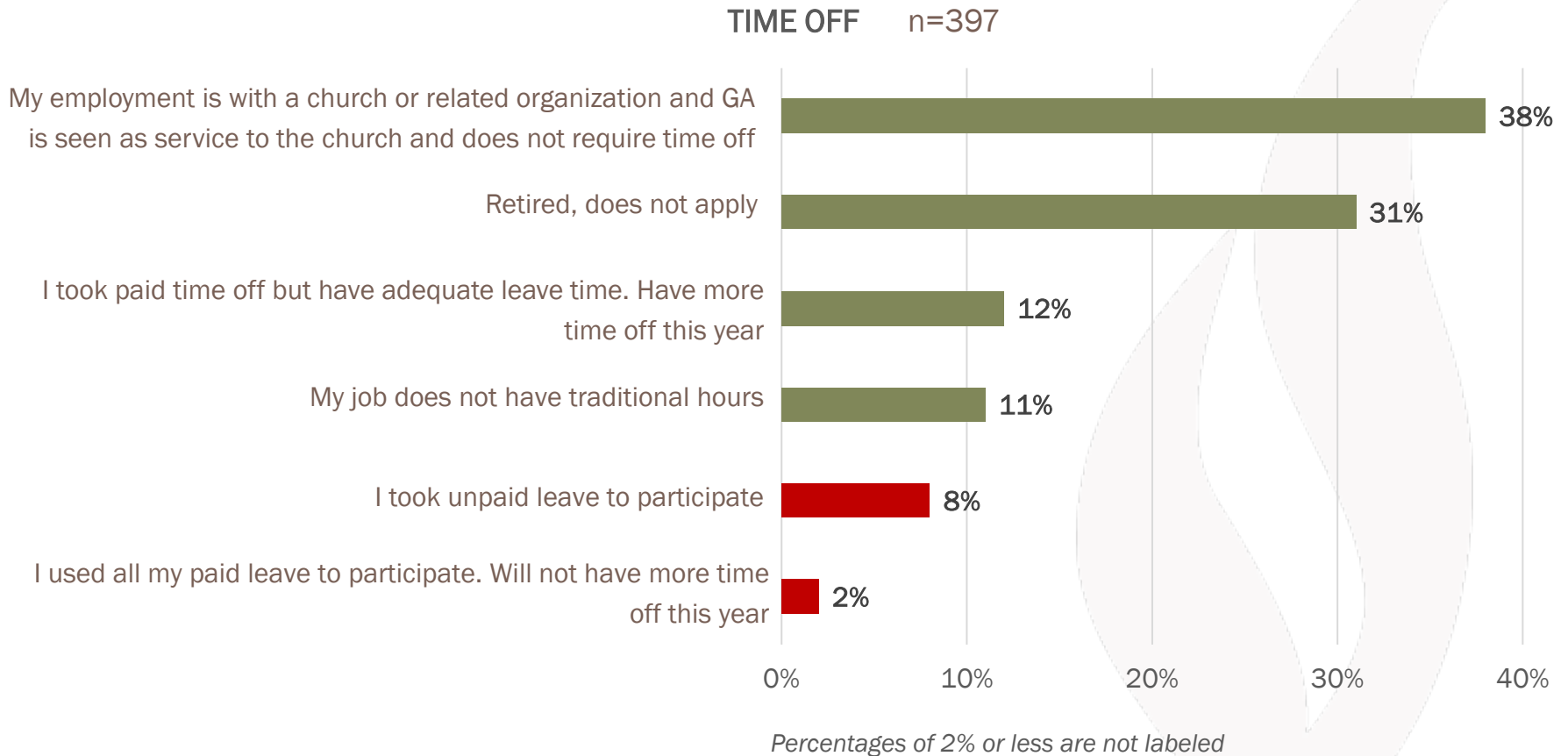
n=407

Percentages of 2% or less are not labeled

- Work full-time
- Retired
- Work part-time
- Student
- Self-employed
- Full-time homemaker/caregiver
- Not working

Employed Commissioners Time Off Taken

Part of the decision-making process for anyone agreeing to serve as a commissioner or committee leader will include questions such as can they be away from work and home responsibilities; will this be paid or unpaid leave, and more. **For 10% of commissioners, their participation was sacrificial.** The decision to participate meant that they attended while losing income or having forfeited any future leave for 2022.

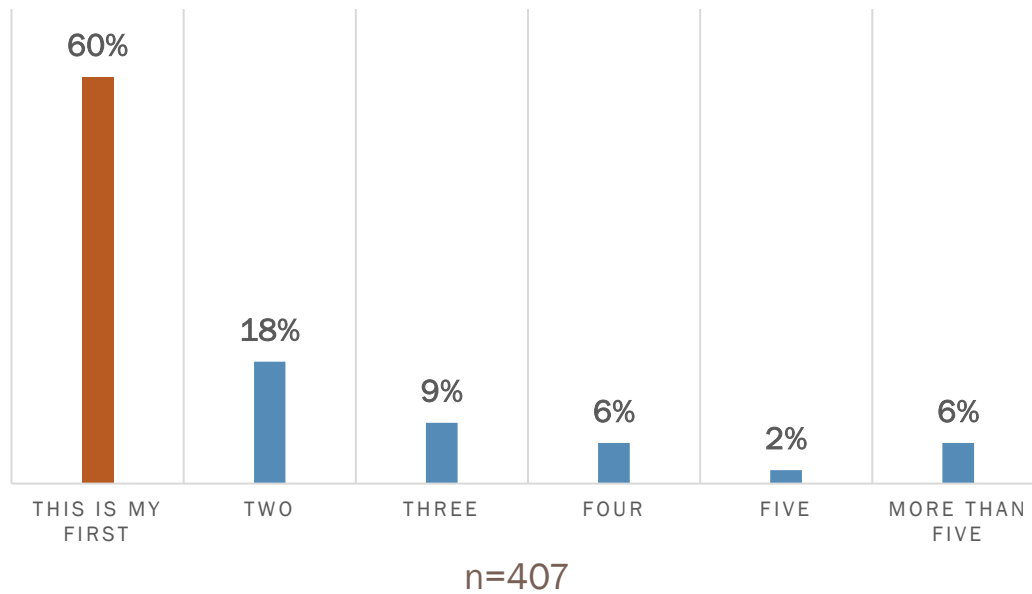


Prior General Assembly Attendance

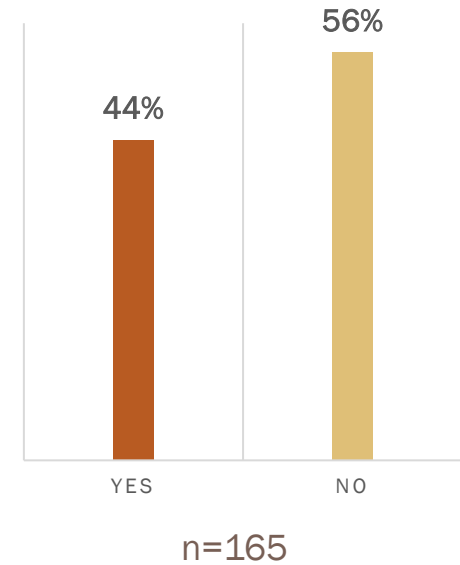
For over half of responding commissioners and delegates (60%), the 225th General Assembly was their first.

For the remaining 40%, 44% of those attended the 224th Assembly.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU ATTENDED GENERAL ASSEMBLY



DID YOU ATTEND THE 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Demographics

WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

Teaching Elder	45%
Ruling Elder	44%
Commissioned Ruling Elder	11%
Christian Educator	4%
Staff of Agency, Presbytery, Synod, Seminary, or Conference Center	4%
Ecumenical Participant	2%
Other	7%

RACE OR ETHNICITY

White, Non-Hispanic	76%
African American/Black/African	12%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	4%
Hispanic of Latino/a/x	5%
Native American/American Indian/Alaskan	2%
Middle Eastern American	1%
International, not permanent	1%

GENDER

Female	59%
Male	40%
Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming/Non-binary	1%

AGE

Minimum Age	17
Maximum Age	87
Average Age	58

Reaching the Wider Church

To give a 360 review of the General Assembly, an evaluation was created to reach the Church at large. The opportunity to engage was found on the website and shared via a news story. Unfortunately, this effort garnered little response. Fourteen people responded to the survey. Of the fourteen that responded, eight were Mid Council Leaders and two were Mid Council staff. The remaining four identified themselves as an interested church member, clergy, committee assistant, and a corresponding member.

Overall Findings

Eleven of the fourteen respondents received most or all the information they needed prior to the Assembly. They all report using the General Assembly website. Half of them found the website user friendly and eleven of the respondents agree that the website provided all the information needed.

The most attended event was Worship, and the most meaningful experience of this year's Assembly was Committee Time. When asked about their overall satisfaction with the 225th General Assembly, four report being "satisfied" or "very satisfied," five report being "neutral," and four report being "dissatisfied."

From the Mid Council Leaders

Five of the eight responding Mid Council Leaders were involved in the selection of commissioners and young advisory delegates for the 225th General Assembly. Four of the five say that the lengthy time commitment is a barrier for those unable to participate. Two of the five say they experience barriers with diverse representation. When asked about the preparation and support provided by their Mid Councils, only one responding Mid Council Leader indicated that they did not have enough information to train this year.

What We've Learned and What's Next?

The average responder is a 58-year-old, white, female, teaching or ruling elder. Most report overall satisfaction with the 225th General Assembly. Nearly all agree that the work of the assembly was accomplished and most agree that the accomplished work was meaningful. They also value committee time as their most meaningful experience of the Assembly.

For 60% of respondents, the 225th General Assembly was their first. Of those reporting this as their first time attending, 75% say they would serve again. We can conclude that they see value in this experience.

Further probing into the needs prior to General Assembly and potential barriers to participation would be beneficial. When asked about arrangements they had to make to participate in General Assembly, respondents shared many types of arrangements. Some were small such as purchasing headphones. Other arrangements were not as small, such as pulpit arrangements and pastoral care during their absence or having spouses change work arrangements so that childcare can be available. Anticipating the needs of committee members could aid Mid Councils in filling committee roles and aiding participants.

It is worth emphasizing for 10% of the those attending, it was sacrificial. They committed all their remaining leave – time to be restored – to conducting the work of the Church. Some lost compensation. The impact of lost compensation on them is unknown.

As we look to 2024, Research Services plans to continue our effort of a 360 review of the 226th General Assembly and look to other ways to promote the at large church engagement.

Research Services helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make data-informed decisions using surveys, focus groups and interviews, demographic analysis, and program evaluations.

We are social scientists with backgrounds in sociology, public policy, and economics. We serve congregations, presbyteries and synods, PC(USA) national agencies, and other PC(USA)-related organizations. Research Services is a ministry of the Administrative Services Group.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of this report, contact us at 502-569-5077 or research@pcusa.org.



**RESEARCH
SERVICES**