



Measuring Political Astuteness of BSN Students: From Patient Advocacy to Political Advocacy

Dale Mueller, EdD, RN, MSN, MS, NEA-BC

Context

- **voting rights** have been established for citizens of the USA through the Constitution and Amendments – a right that has not been secured in many nations today!
- The **19th Amendment** granted women the right to vote in 1920
- the **26th Amendment** established the age of voter eligibility at 18
- voting is the primary means for citizens to **participate** in a democratic society
- civic involvement is a way to **promote change**
- an **educated citizenry** is crucial to contribute diverse views, healthy debate, and prudent choices

Background Nursing Practice , Policy and Advocacy

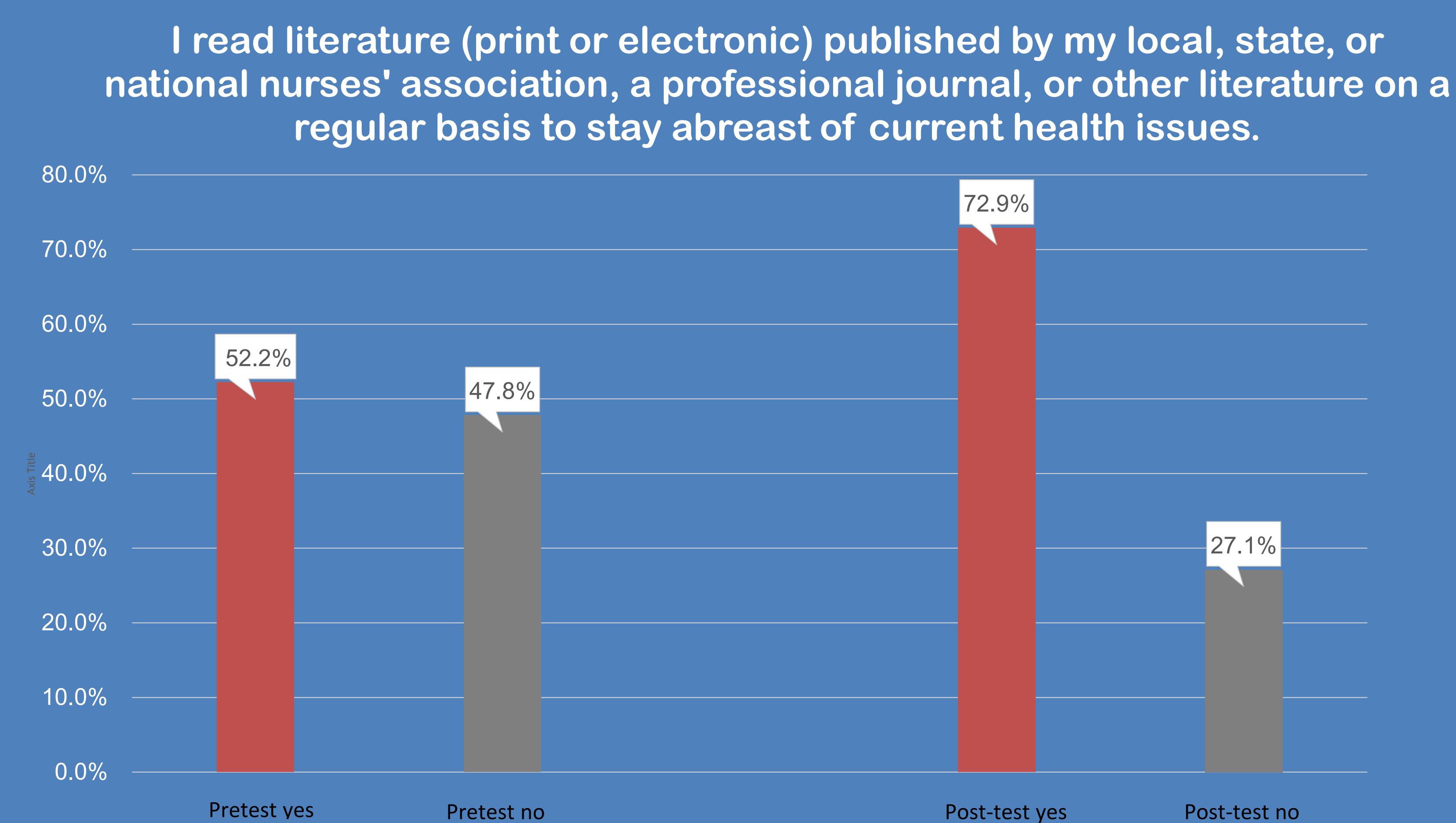
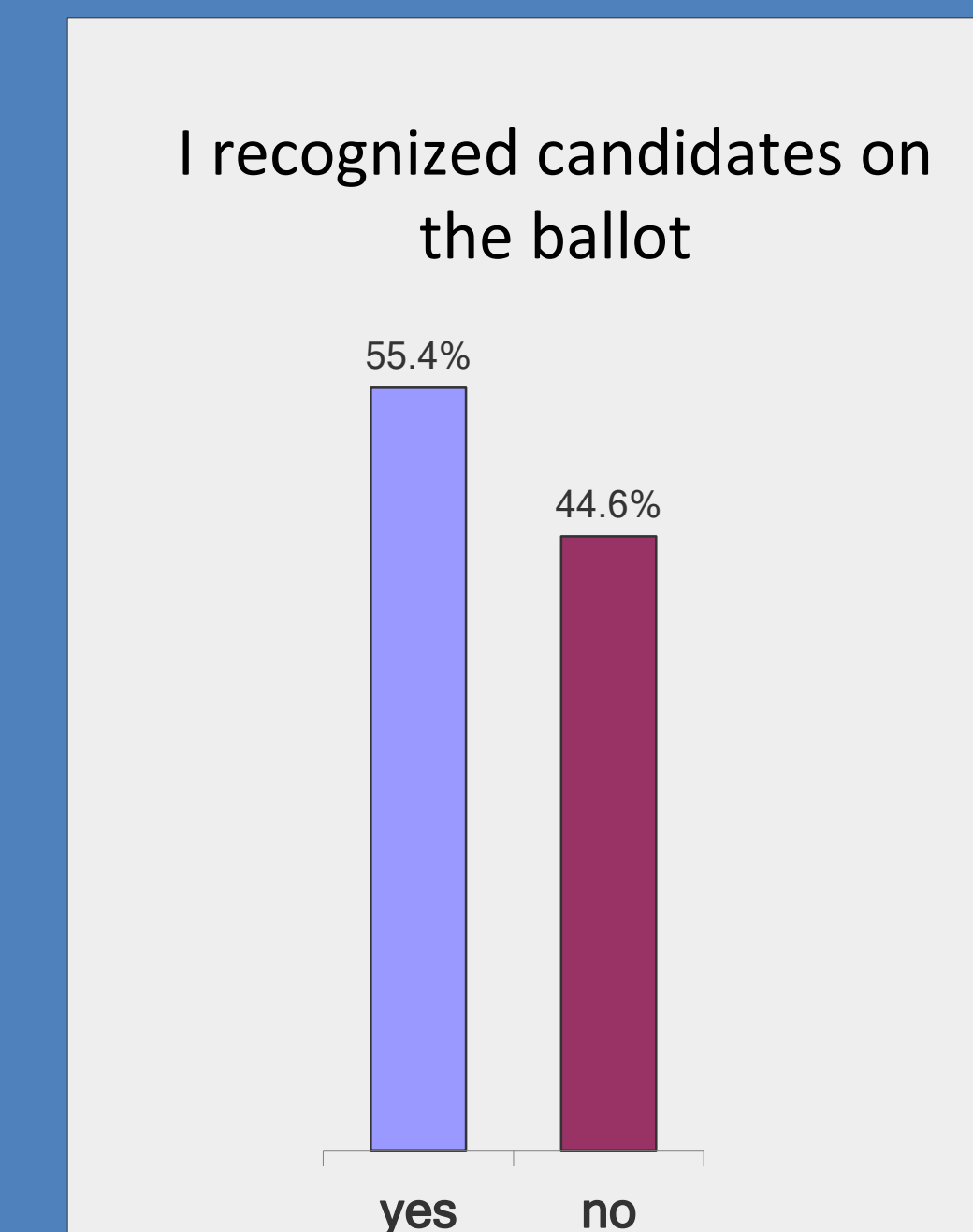
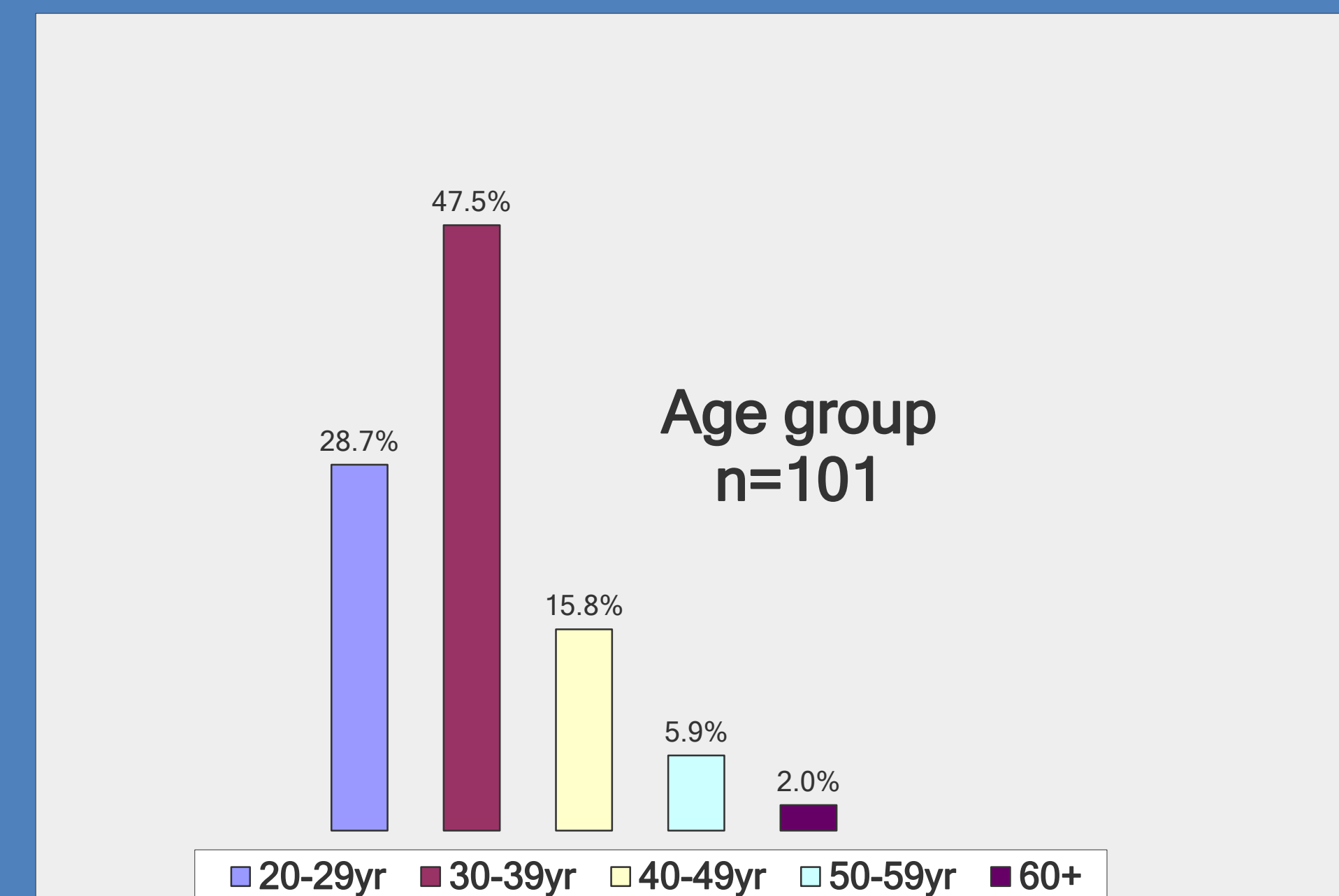
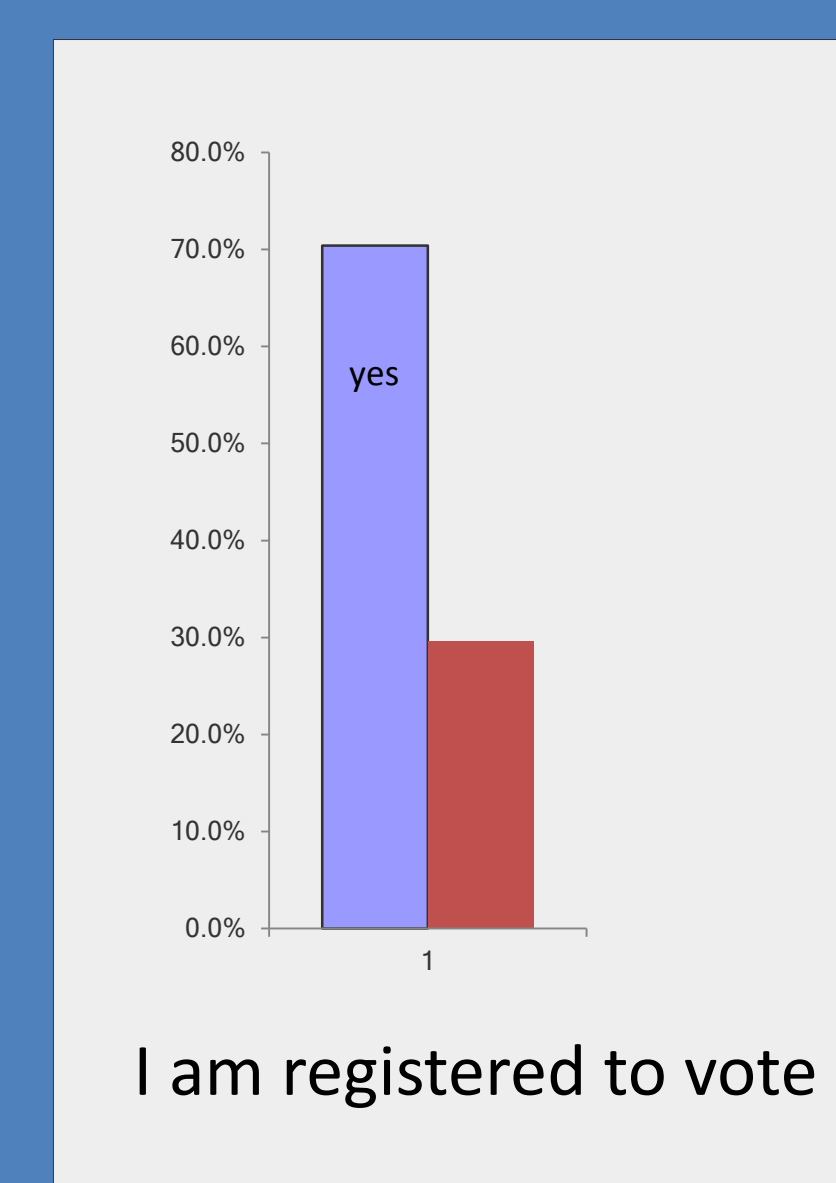
- **Practice Acts** - nurses are patient advocates for care and safety
- **Professional organizations** - advocacy is integral to the nursing role
- **AACN BSN Essentials V and VII** - policy and determinants of health *
- **IOM – Recommendation #7** – nurses to lead and advance health **

* American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). (2008). *The essentials of baccalaureate education for nursing practice*. Washington, D.C.: Author

** IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2011. *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press

Results

Data show that political opportunities are underutilized as methods for advocacy. Adults over the age of 18 who are also eligible to vote have avenues to promote social change but have low levels of awareness or skills. Engagement activities raise awareness and astuteness, as well as a willingness to inform others such as the lay public. Post-test results continue to show modest aggregate increases in some categories of the PAI at the conclusion of the course.



Acknowledgements

Byrd, M., Costello, J., Gremel, K., Schwager, J., Blanchette, L., & Malloy, T. (2012). Political astuteness of baccalaureate nursing students following an active learning experience in health policy. *Public Health Nursing, 29*(5), 433-443

Clark, P. E. (1984). Political astuteness inventory. In M. J. D. Clark (Ed.), *Community nursing: Health care today and tomorrow*. Reston, VA: Reston.

Primomo, J. (2007). Changes in political astuteness after a health systems and policy course. *Nurse Educator, 32*(6), 260-264

Purpose

- to inform curriculum enhancements in a BSN health policy course
- to establish baseline competencies for political advocacy for nurses
- to promote political astuteness that supports advocacy for social change

Method

The Political Astuteness Inventory (Clark, 1984) was embedded in a health policy course in a RN-BSN program (n=468) for three years in a pre- and post test format IRB #014-001. The PAI was also offered to MSN students who did not enroll in the class as a comparative measure of general knowledge among the voting public. In 2012, the pre- and post-tests were drawn from the existing course. In 2013, modifications were made to the curriculum, adding engagement activities such as making contact with a legislator and researching what appointment opportunities for Boards and Commissions were available for qualified applicants.