



ONE COUNTRY

Q2 2022 Quarterly Rural Media Analysis

July 2022

Audience Overview

1

Rural v. National Traditional Media Coverage Analysis

Deep dive into coverage topics in rural outlets and in national top outlets understanding similarities and differences in areas of coverage and the two media landscapes.

2

Rural Traditional Media v. Rural Social Media

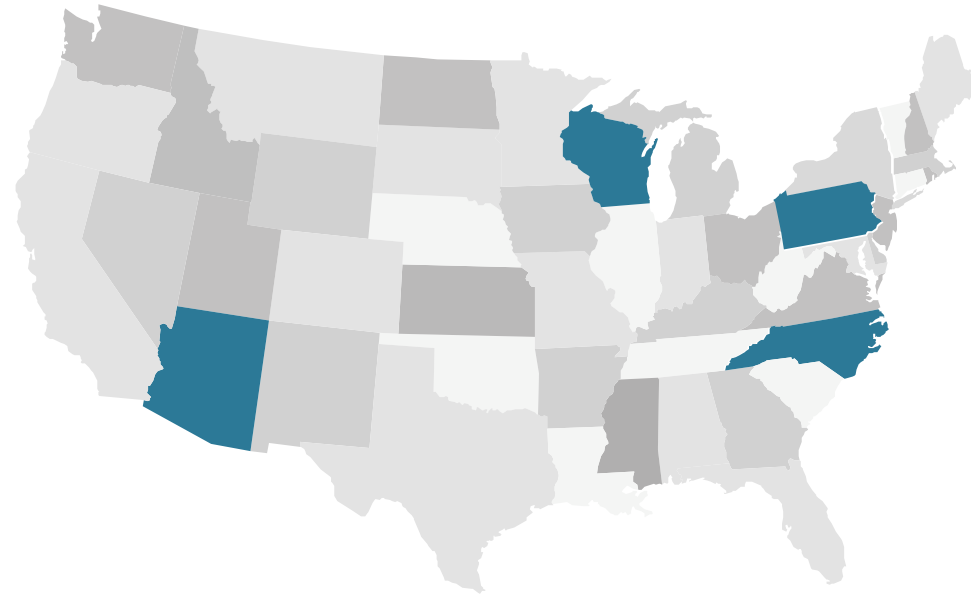
Understanding areas of coverage and how topics translate from one medium to the other and may impact the discourse in rural communities.

3

Rural Social Media Issue Deep Dive

A deep dive into hot topics of the quarter and discussions on social media among rural populations. The Q2 2022 analysis centers around issues of Inflation, Climate and Energy, and Abortion.

Audience Methodology



Traditional Media Rural Outlet Criteria

- Outlet is located within a county that meets the below criteria:
- Population is less than 200,000 residents
 - Won by President Trump in 2020 election
 - Coverage was analyzed from more than 200 newspaper outlets located in key rural counties



Social Media Rural Audience Criteria

- Twitter users that meet the below criteria:
- Geo-tagged in Arizona, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, or Wisconsin
 - Unverified
 - Do not self-describe as members of the media
 - Are not Geo-tagged in major metro areas connected to top 200 U.S. cities



Rural v. National

Traditional Media Coverage Analysis

Media Coverage Key Findings



1

Crime received the highest coverage: national coverage surrounds gun policy, while rural outlets focus on events.

Mass shootings throughout the country invigorated a national discussion around gun policy and the merits of different solutions. Although crime remained a central theme in rural media coverage there was significantly less focus on policy solutions and news stories continued to focus on evolving events. This variance shows evidence that rural populations are timid to enter the policy debate, and are more divided on broader solutions.

2

Coverage of the Dobbs v. Jackson ruling focused on future impacts in both rural and national coverage.

As Roe v. Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court, national outlets featured a variety of opinion pieces and stories covering protests focused on national figures. Rural coverage was more specific to state actions, featuring statements from state level politicians and interpreting laws. The focus of the coverage on future impacts was cohesive in both sets out outlets, paving the way for continued focus in 2022 campaigns.

3

International coverage increased as focus shifted from Russia to a broader set of issues, including immigration.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine remains the top focus, however coverage has shifted from evolving news to the impact of sanctions on the global market, specifically tied to rising gas prices. Immigration gained focus as rural outlets dissected many of the perceived negative effects of Title 42 coming to an end on May 23 and the impact on the border crisis. The abundance of opinion pieces and focus on negative effects further cements immigration as a prominent concern among rural audiences.

4

Coverage of COVID-19 decreased significantly, shifting from evolving news to a historical lens.

Ties from coverage on COVID-19 to other issues covered in both rural and national news outlet have become much looser. This distancing from central news as well as decrease in volume show signs of a shift from focusing on evolving events to learning to live with COVID-19 as a society. This shift shows evidence that COVID-19 has transformed from a central topic of campaign policy to a reality that underlies a variety of work to be done.

5

Rural news coverage of inflation was moderate in volume, and inflation was more central to national coverage.

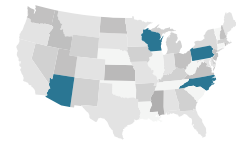
Coverage on inflation was almost exclusively focused on rising gas prices, and a smaller focus on rising interest rates. While national outlets focused on policy solutions and comments on stories debated the merits, the most engaging story in rural outlets highlighted a more hopeful outlook on falling gas prices and comments focusing on outlook and blame. Rural voices are looking for accountability and relief and less focused on policy details.



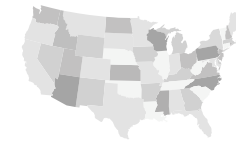


Rural v. Top National Coverage Topics

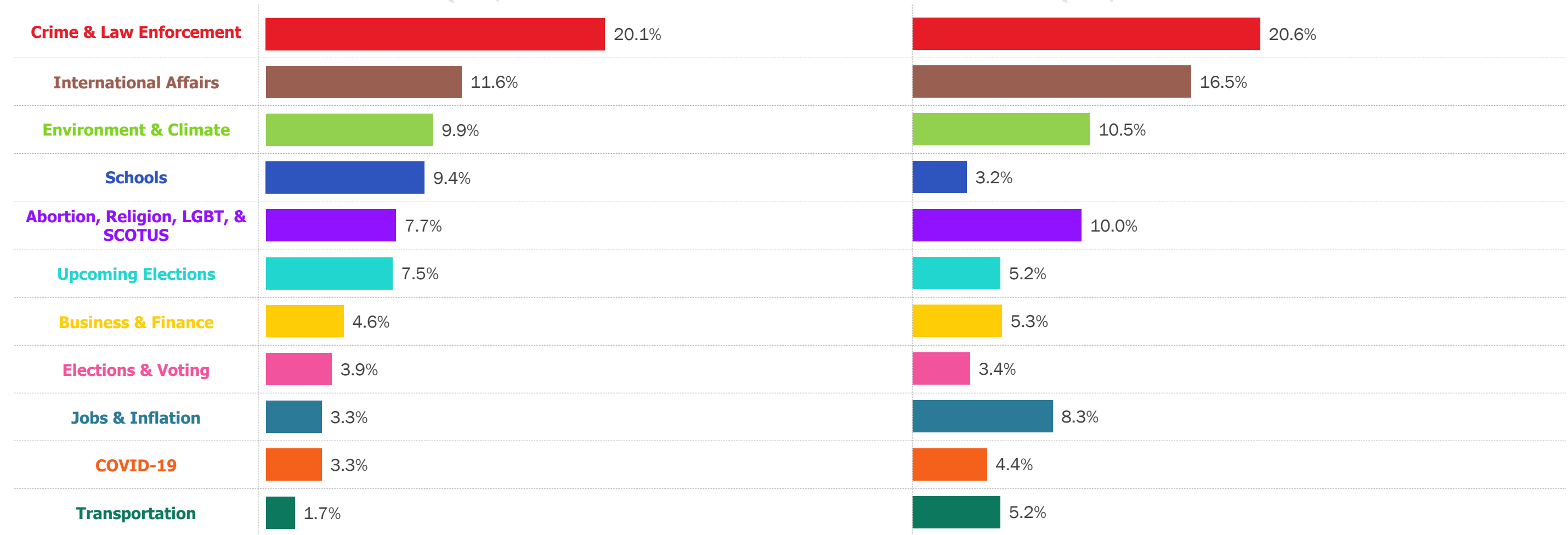
Coverage topic areas largely aligned over Q2 2022. Notable exceptions included a larger focus on schools in rural outlets and a larger focus on inflation in national outlets.



Rural Outlets



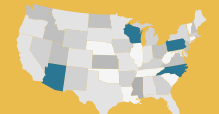
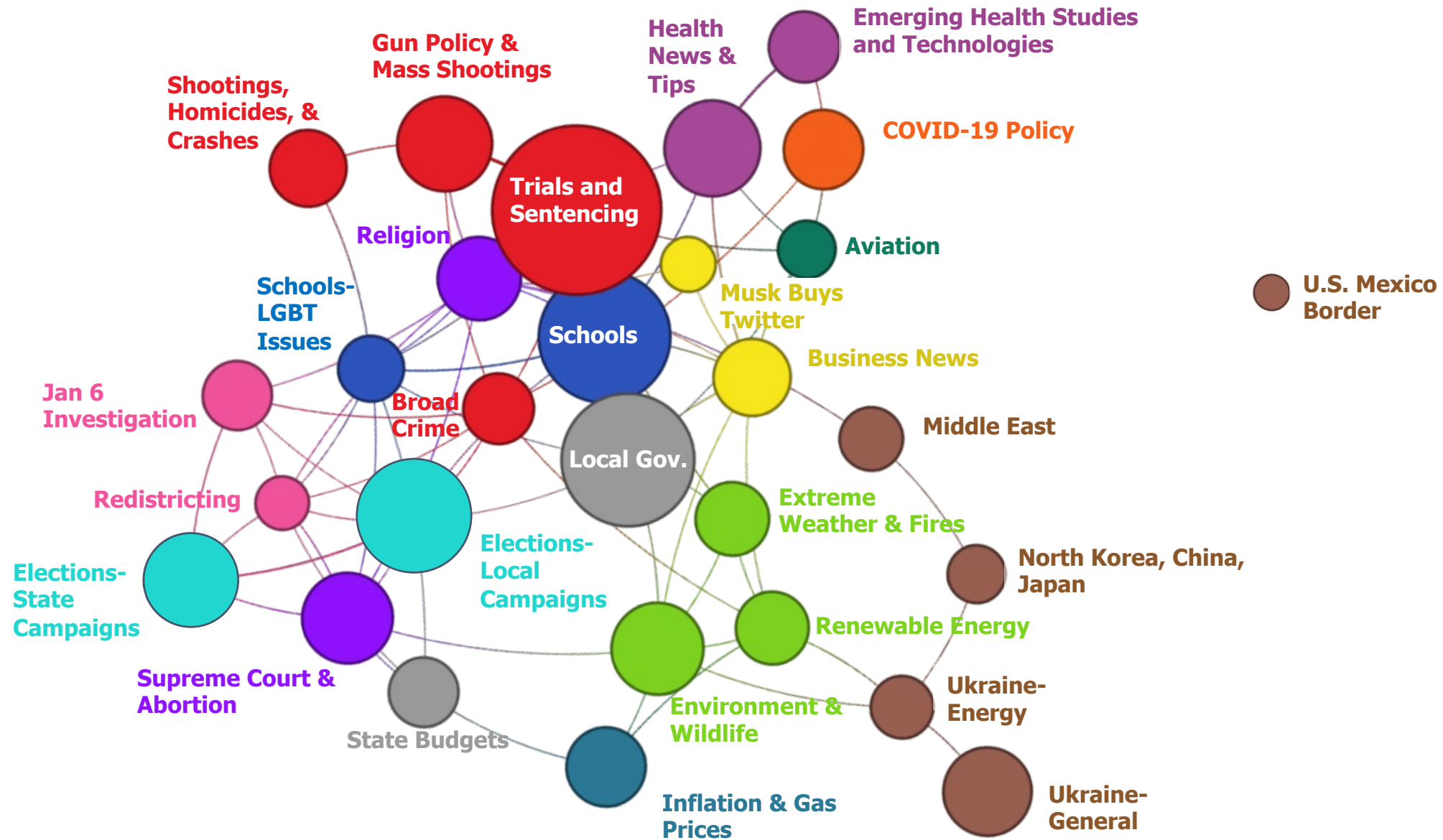
National Top Outlets





Rural Outlet Coverage Map

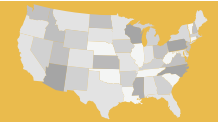
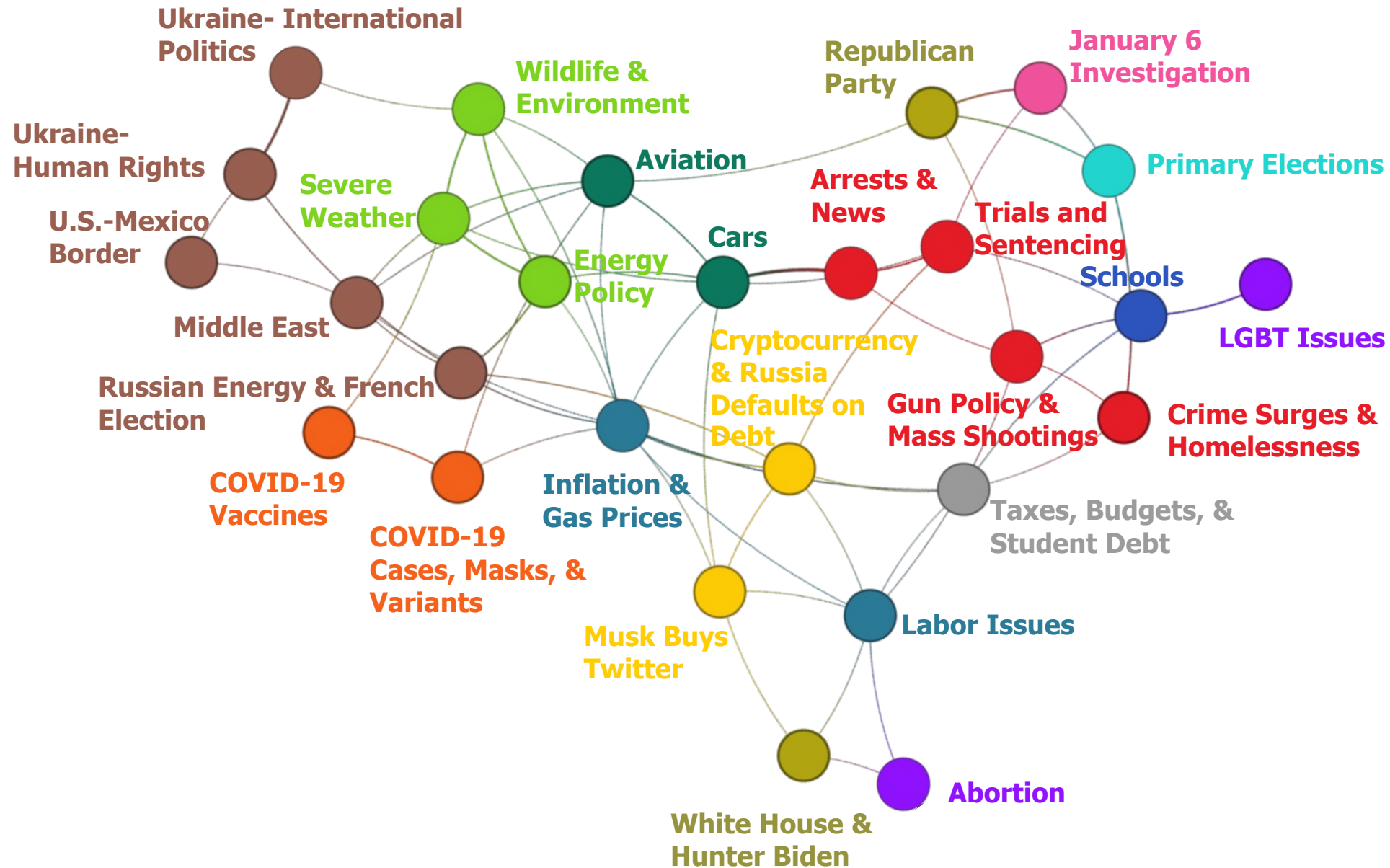
The central locations of Schools and Local Govt news clusters show their importance in rural news coverage.





National Top Outlet Coverage Map

The central location of the Inflation cluster shows high connection to broader national issues.



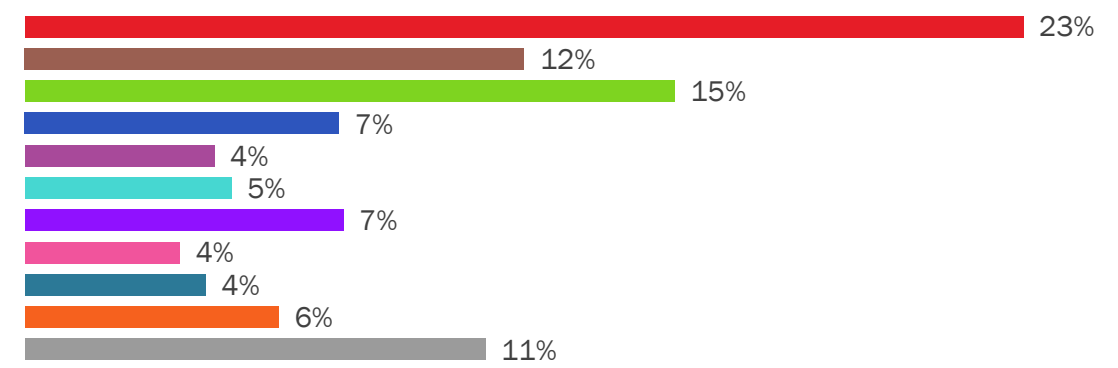


Media Coverage Key Findings

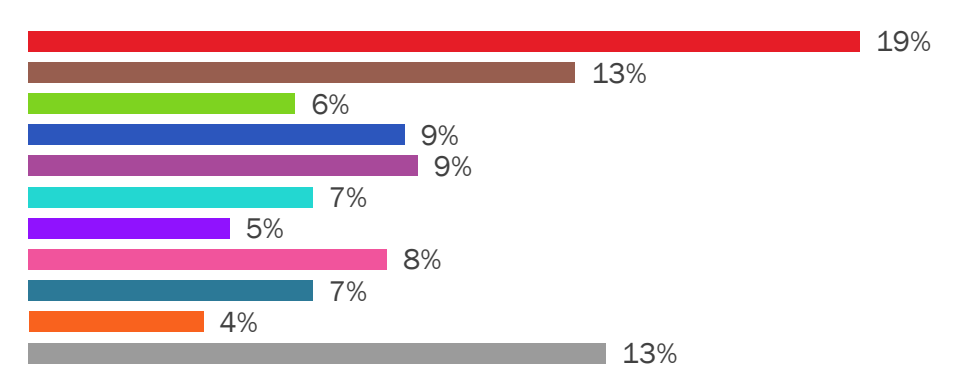
BY STATE

Crime led news coverage across states while climate was an outlier in Arizona as the West faced droughts, fires, and discussions of land preservation.

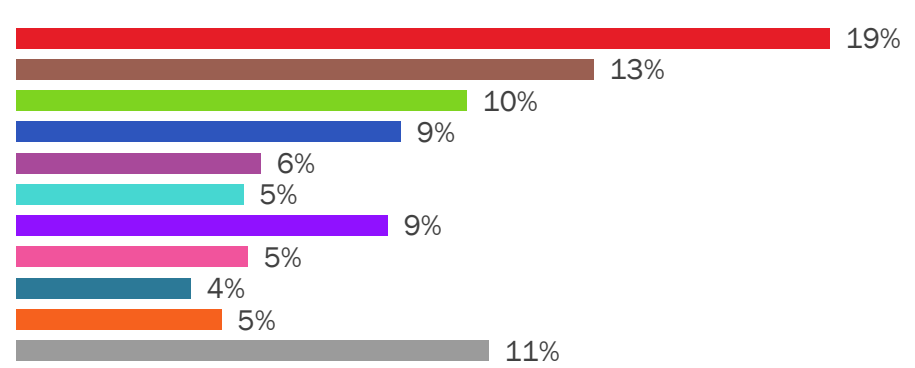
Arizona



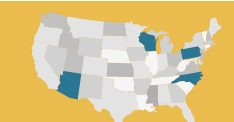
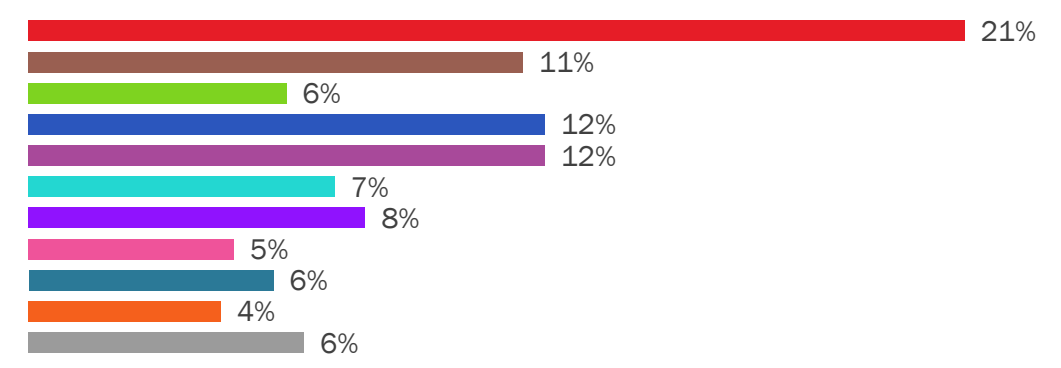
North Carolina



Pennsylvania



Wisconsin





Rural Media Coverage Key Findings

BY STATE

Arizona



- Crime coverage was more likely to focus on guns and relevant policy than other states.
- Indigenous communities were in focus in several topics of coverage including their role in conservation and, offensive terms such as “squaw” in names throughout the state.
- COVID-19 remained a significant part of the conversation in AZ
- Abortion coverage focused on actions of surrounding states.

North Carolina



- Voting was a main issue with information to voters including registration, turnout numbers, and early voting in primaries.
- Current campaign news remained prominent in stories focusing on the impact of Trump endorsements and redistricting in other states.
- Inflation and gas prices were central to overall news coverage and included discussion on personal finance largely absent from other states.

Pennsylvania

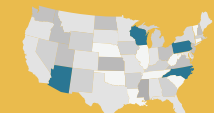


- LGBT issues were in focus with coverage of Biden’s efforts and critical coverage of legislation proposed in the PA senate resembling the “Don’t Say Gay” bill in Florida.
- International affairs were central to coverage, largely focusing on sanctions and its impact on energy prices and availability.
- Coverage of crime included proposed policy on gun reform, and reactions from stakeholders such as teachers’ unions.

Wisconsin

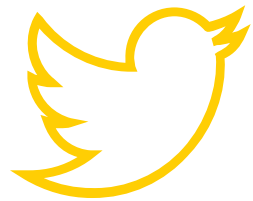


- The ongoing investigation of the 2020 election continued to gain coverage around accusations of deleted records and was tied closely to the Jan 6 investigation.
- Coverage around schools was higher than other states and focuses on topics around LGBT issues, STEM/ STEAM, and alternative education.
- Emerging news around health studies and technologies demonstrates increased concern for health.



Social Media Analysis

Focus on Inflation, Energy & Climate, and Abortion





Social Media Topic Analysis Key Findings

Themes of hypocrisy and finger pointing in a hunt for accountability and prioritization framed the social media discussion among rural audiences.

Inflation

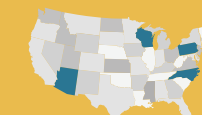
- Attention on corporate greed and the role of companies in driving inflation grew over the course of the quarter, with a focus on Big Oil executives.
- Gas remained the commodity most in focus during discussions of inflation. Discussion of the outsized effect of rising food and gas prices on the middle and underprivileged class drove urgency.
- Support of increasing the minimum wage remains a smaller theme. There is a messaging opportunity as interest rates grow.

Energy & Climate

- Climate activism was the primary topic as celebrations around notable anniversaries and Earth Day were met with skepticism around solutions and urgency.
- Ties of the oil and gas industry to politics including lobbying power, pressure to produce, and pressure to keep profits at bay led some of the most engaging discussions on the topic.
- Skepticism and doubt around renewable energy sources remained and was seen in direct conflict with priorities to keep costs low.

Abortion

- Pro-choice voices led the conversation with strong messaging on hypocrisy of the pro-life movement and the urgency to act.
- There was strong support that focusing on abortion could help the Democrats in midterm elections, though the strength of the impact was debated.
- Future impact and implications of the ruling were highly discussed in days following both the opinion leak and ruling.
- Notably, rural voters were even more highly engaged in the discussion than urban audiences.



Rural Traditional Media v. Rural Social Media

Discussion of emerging events and policy implications around mass shootings and the Dobbs v. Jackson decision emerged as primary focus on social media.



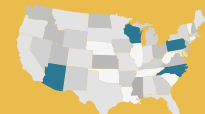
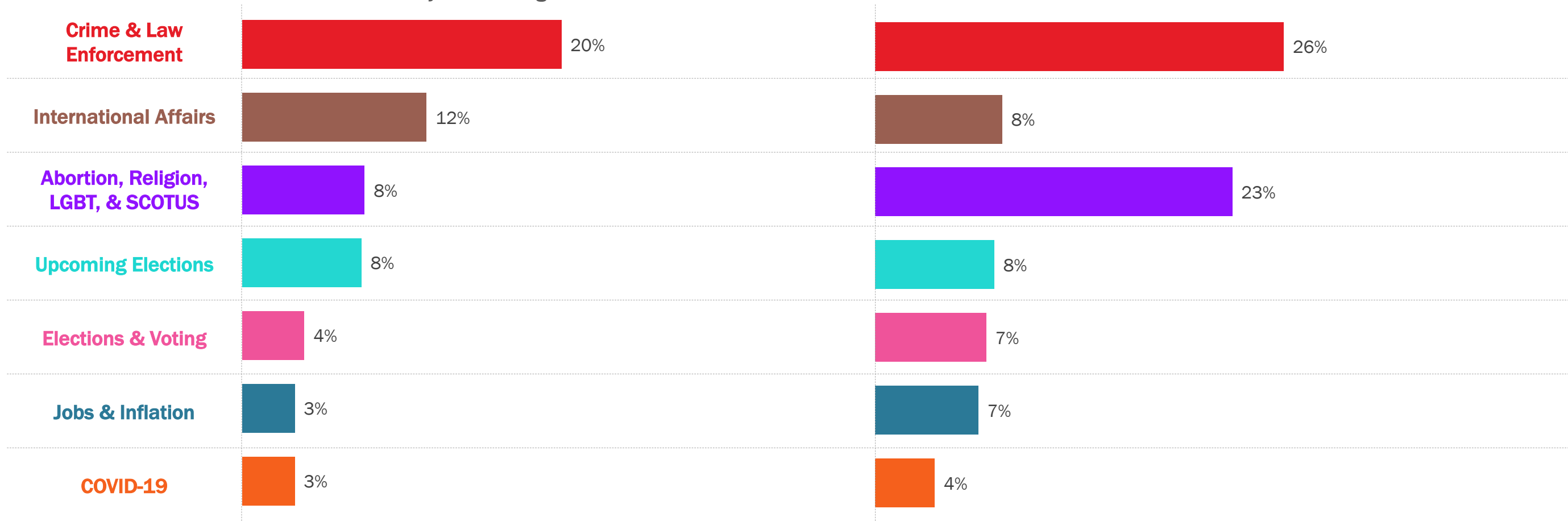
Rural Outlet Media Coverage

Share of overall coverage by topic
Courtesy of FTP Insights

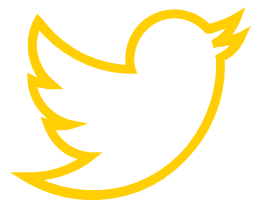


Rural Social Media

Share of political conversation by topic
Courtesy of Impact Social



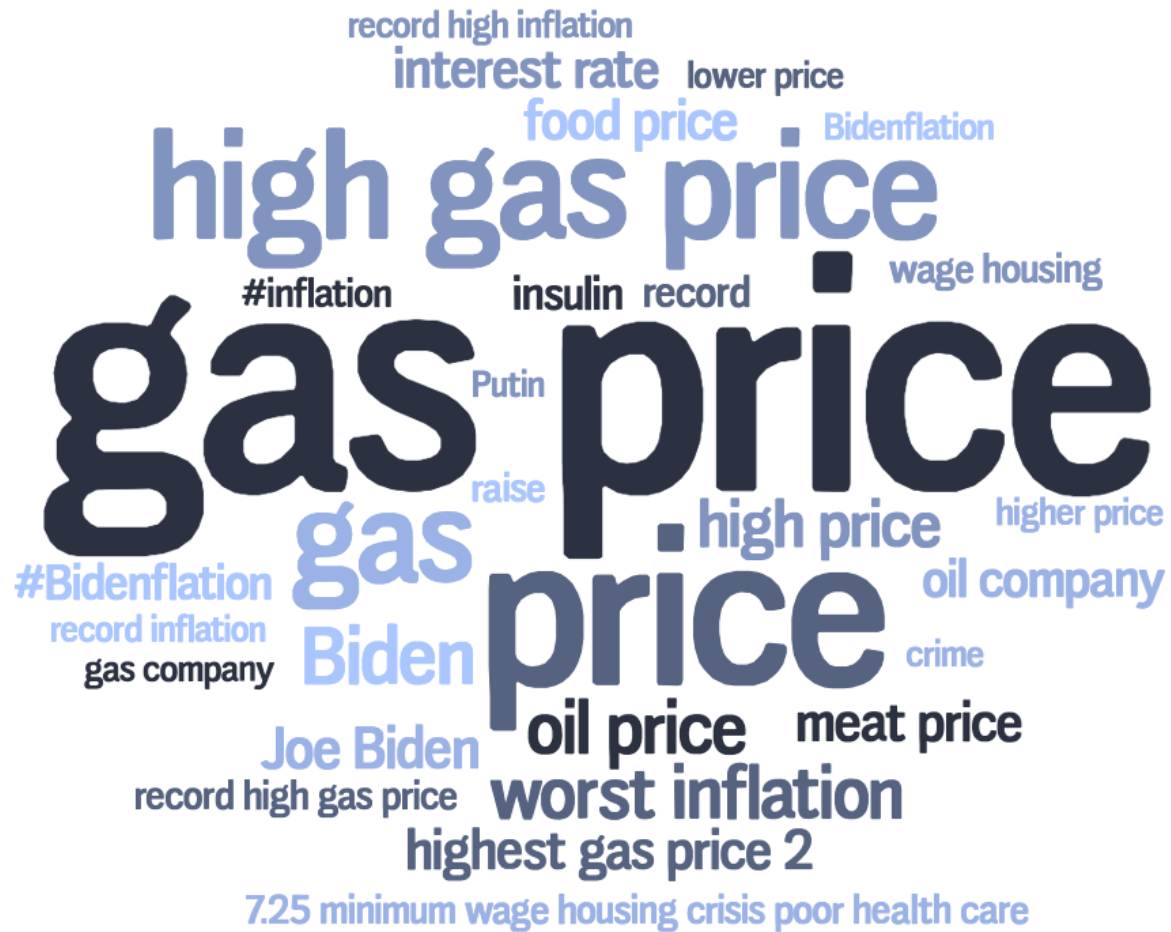
Inflation



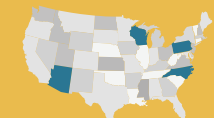


Inflation Highlights

The conversation remains focused on attributing blame for rising prices with Biden playing a central role, but has shifted to focus more seriously on the role of corporate greed as elections loom.



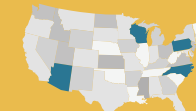
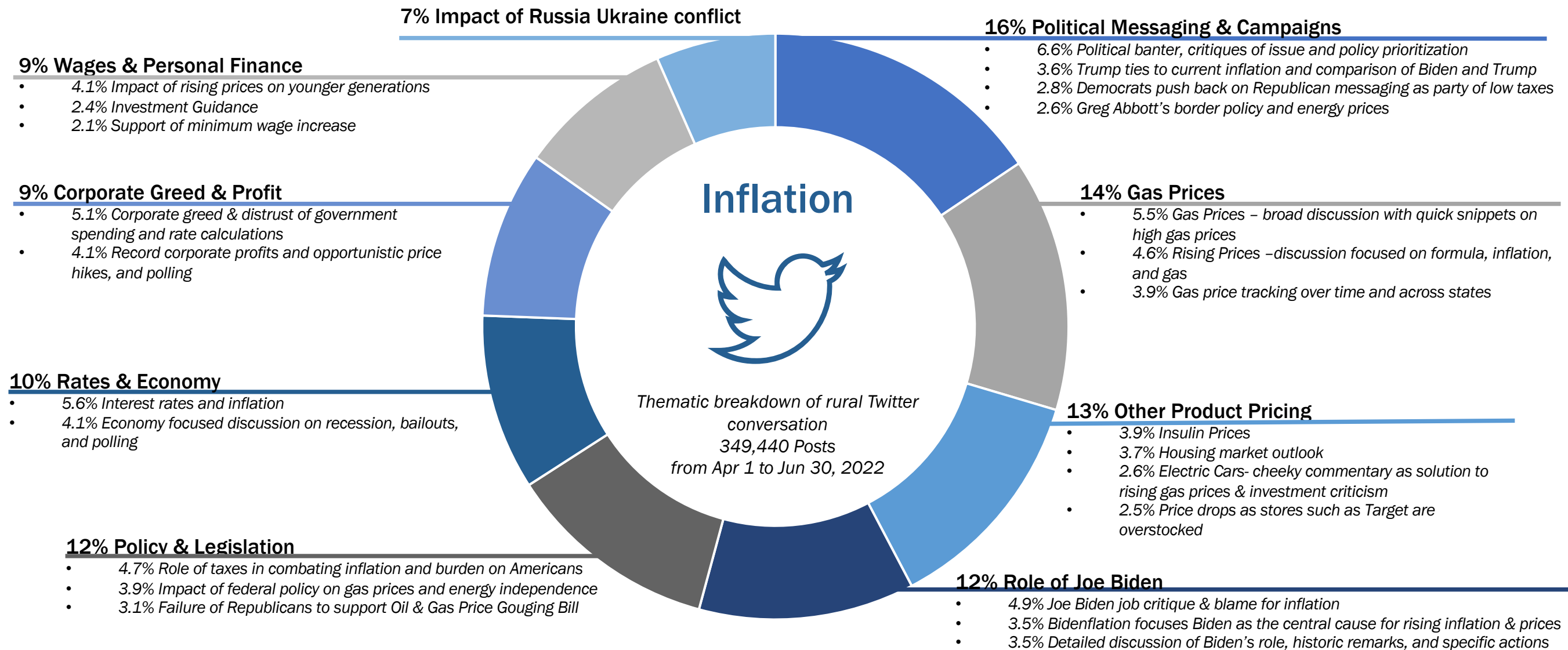
- Campaign messaging has gained traction focusing on calling out “hypocrisy” on both sides of the aisle. The most successful messages emerging for Democrats focus on the hypocrisy of Republicans to vote against the “Price Gouging Bill” as well as emerging messages around Republicans creating economical issues that Democrats come to clean up.
- Corporate greed has grown as a central theme within the overall conversation on inflation and the key moment of political unity. Discussion on record corporate profits and blame to oil CEOs for rising prices is also promoting skepticism around government spending and corporate tax breaks.
- Inflation is more often framed as a “tax on the poor” within the conversation with users pointing out the outsized impact of cost of fuel and food on underprivileged communities and the middle class.
- Republican efforts to place blame on Biden’s shoulders remain effective as the most engaging content often comes from partisan outlets and includes framing around the “Biden recession,” “Biden’s Economy,” and jest around the efforts of “Build Back Better.”
- Concern around rising insulin prices remains as a smaller theme within the conversation, and is discussed primarily as a federal level issue.



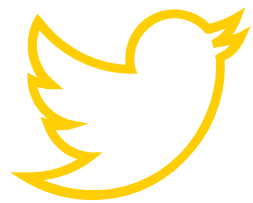


Inflation Subtopics

Campaign messaging and concern of corporate greed are leading the conversation on inflation.



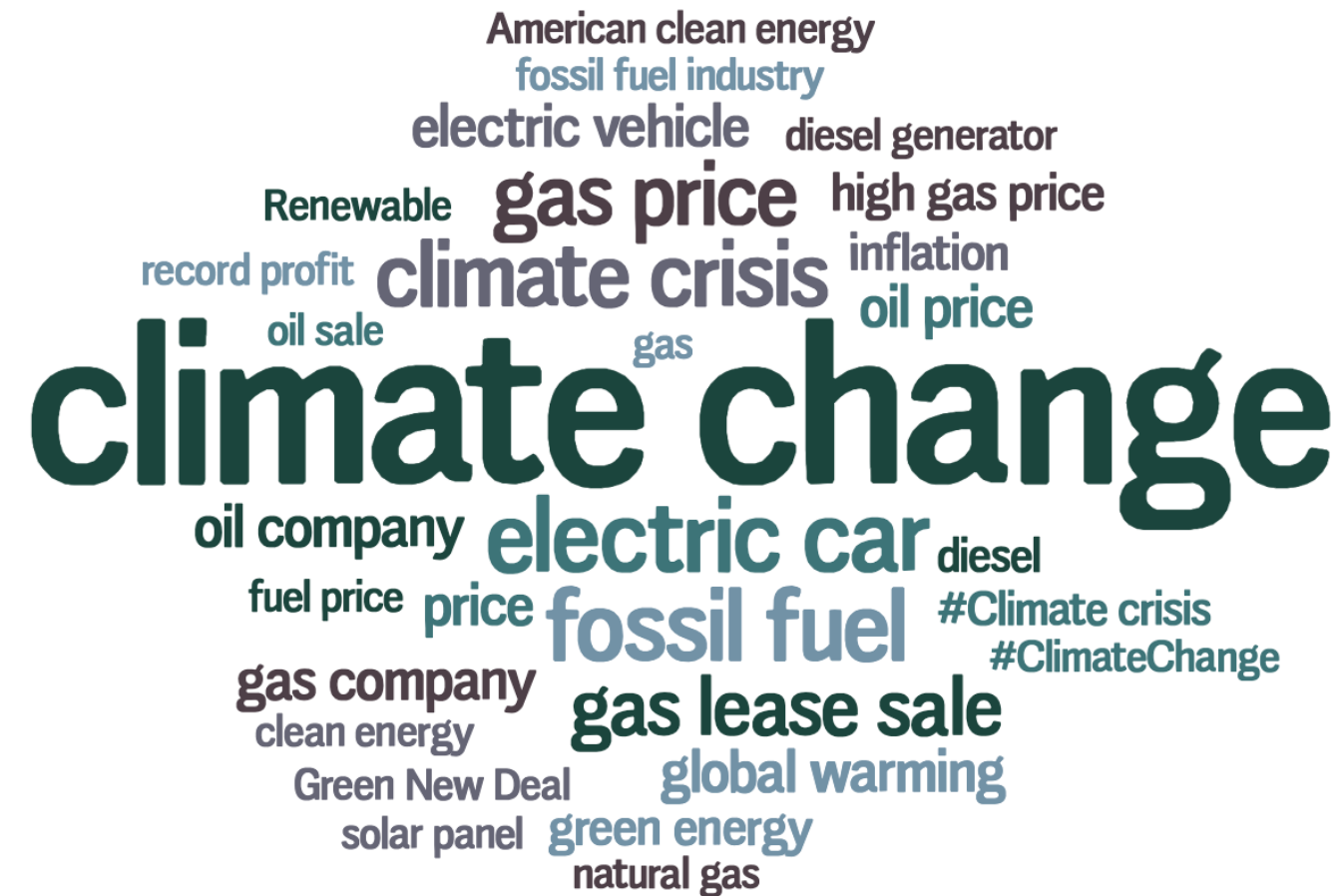
Energy & Climate



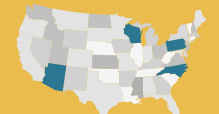


Energy & Climate Highlights

Cost remains the key driver of conversation on energy and climate with an emphasis on specific Biden policy initiatives and cynicism around a renewable energy future.



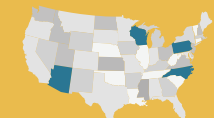
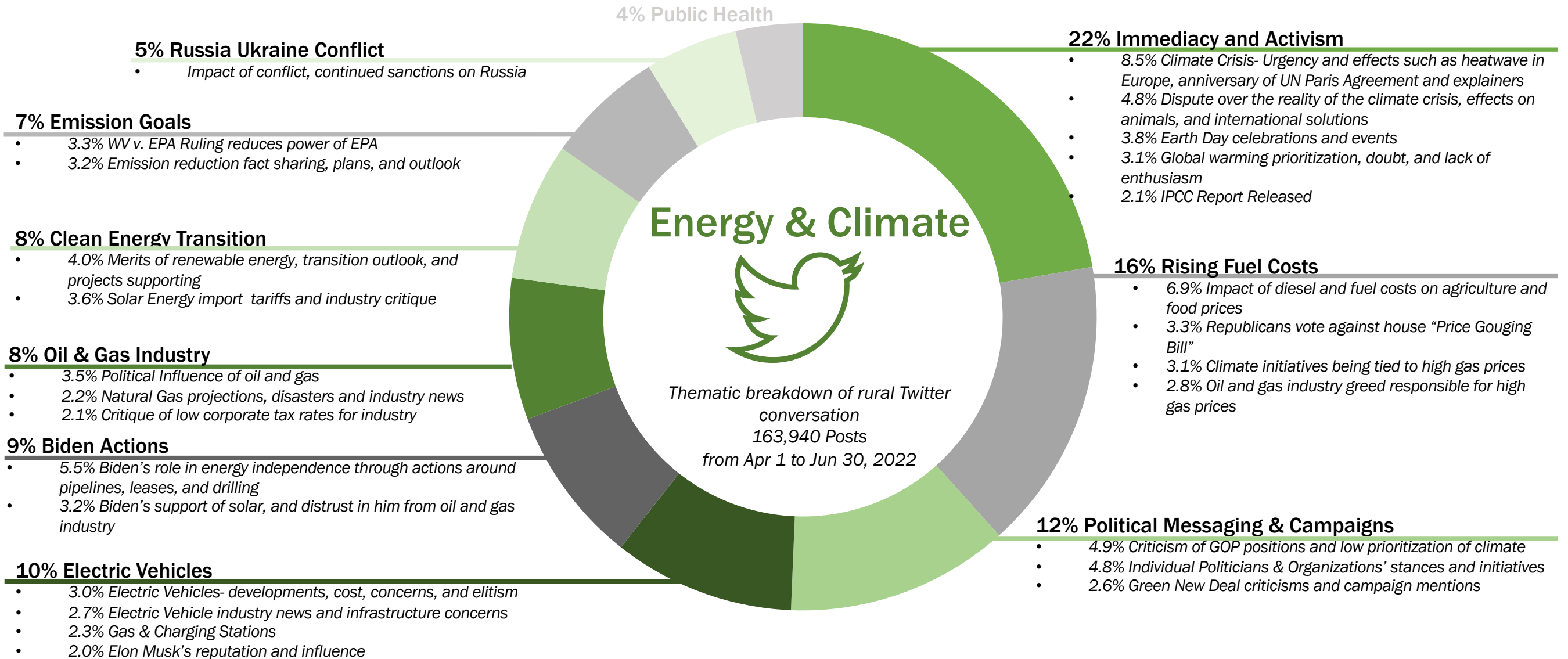
- Discussion of climate activism, celebrations around the anniversary of the Paris Treaty, and Earth Day led conversation. The effects of climate change were discussed as Europe experienced a heat wave and a debate over the urgency of the issue emerged as blame shifted from country to country.
- Cost remains the most significant focus within the conversation around energy, with many users noting that priorities to keep cost down and combat climate change are in direct conflict.
- Specific policy decisions by Biden were discussed in detail and largely criticized in the context of rising gas prices. These policies included decisions over gas leases, canceling the Keystone pipeline, and minimizing oil production. While supportive of more recent decisions to open up gas leases, users were quick to blame his past actions as standing in the way.
- Users were vocal in supporting the importance of energy independence in the wake of Russia and further sanctions being imposed, and weary over discussions with Saudi Arabia.
- Electric vehicles remained in focus as discussion around how to build a proper infrastructure were outlined. Some highlighted the hypocrisy of gas powered grids charging the vehicles and the impact of mining for battery materials.





Energy & Climate Subtopics

Rural audiences focused on costs and were skeptical of renewable energy solutions.



Abortion



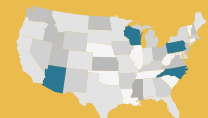


Abortion Highlights

Conversation was largely supportive of pro-choice beliefs among rural audiences, and focused on future impacts of the decision in the upcoming election.



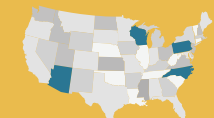
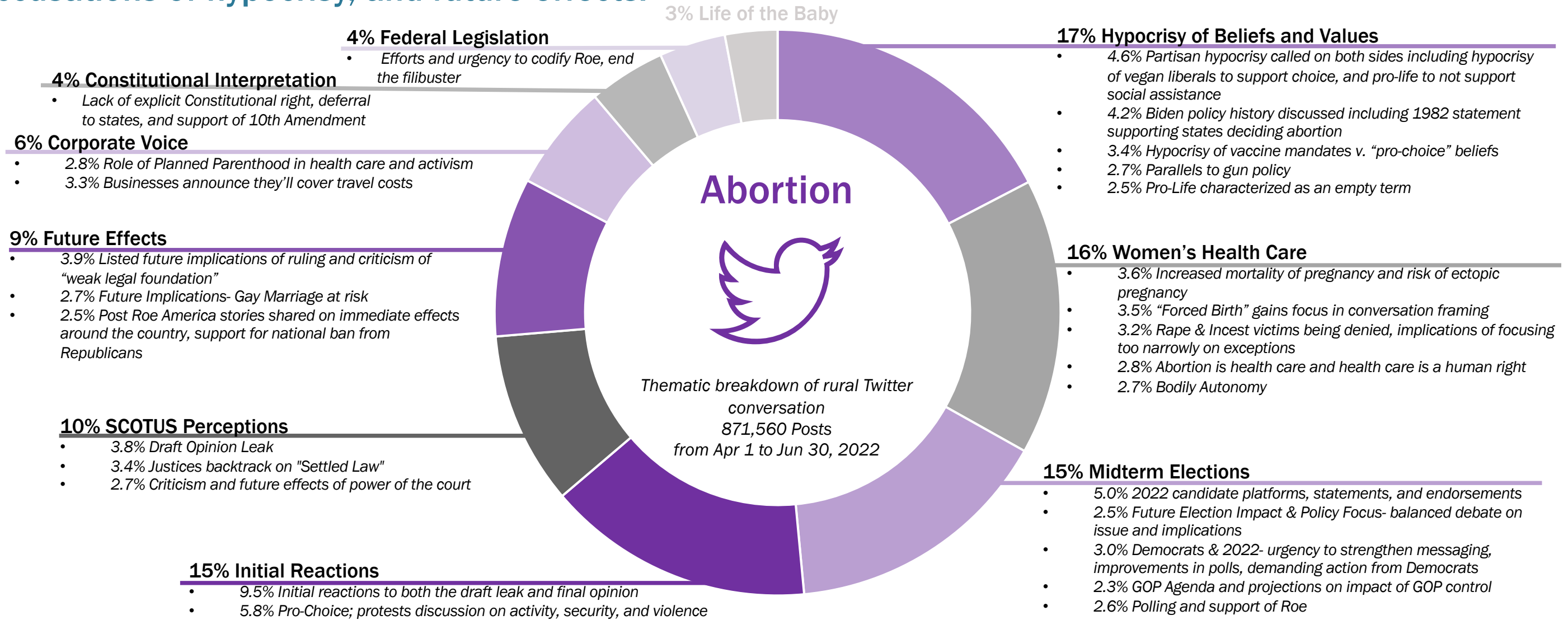
- Partisan divides were highlighted by finger pointing and hypocrisy largely tied to other current events. Pro-life beliefs were framed as hypocritical to pushback on gun reform while pro-choice beliefs were framed as hypocritical to support of vaccine mandates. Themes of hypocrisy continued in linking politicians such as Biden to historical statements that do not align with current ones.
- Pro-choice activists have dominated the online conversation since the initial draft opinion leak. Momentum of volume in the conversation has been sustained through personal stories and focus on the future effects of the ruling including other freedoms and privacy at risk.
- The long-term Republican strategy to overturn Roe v. Wade was woven into various crevices of the conversation, and ties closely to Donald Trump’s lead as the most mentioned individual within the conversation.
- The effect of the ruling on the midterm elections was discussed closely tied to polling and campaign messaging observations. Opinion within conversation supports Democrats leveraging the issue in upcoming elections to drive urgency.





Abortion Subtopics

Abortion discussion is dominated by pro-choice voices and tied closely to the midterm conversation, accusations of hypocrisy, and future effects.



Q1 v. Q2 2022

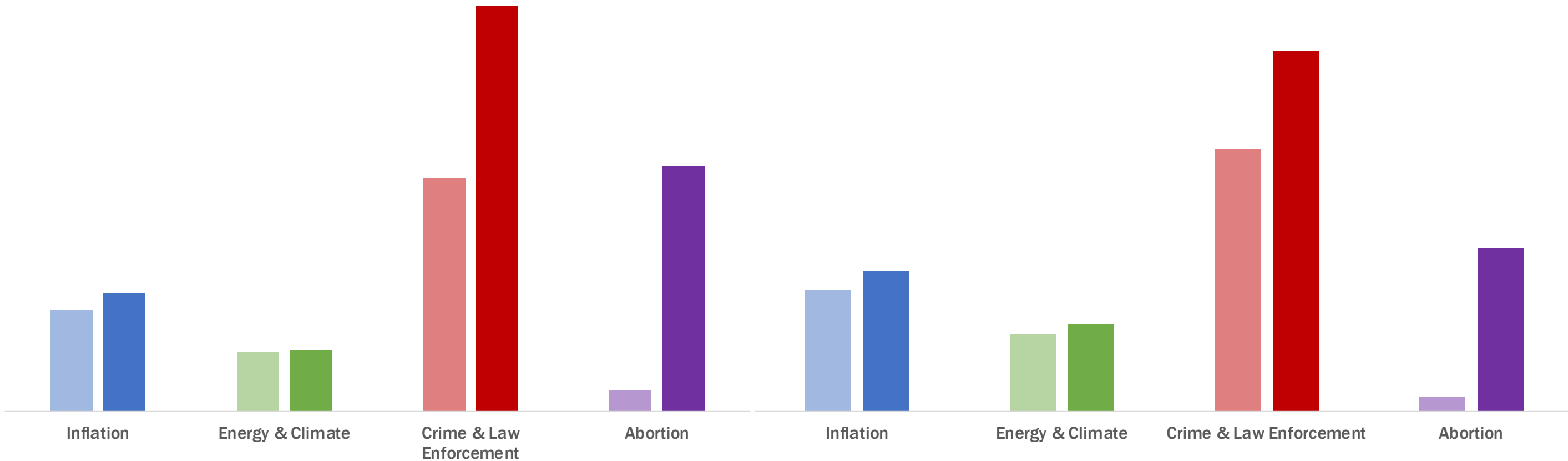


Q1 v. Q2 Issues

Discussion of crime and abortion increased substantially in Q2 for both rural and urban audiences on social media. Rural audiences are even more engaged than urban audiences on these issues.

Rural
Q1 v. Q2 2022
Change in Share of Overall Twitter Conversation by Issue

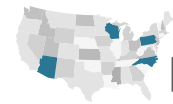
Urban
Q1 v. Q2 2022
Change in Share of Overall Twitter Conversation by Issue





Rural v. Top National Coverage Topics

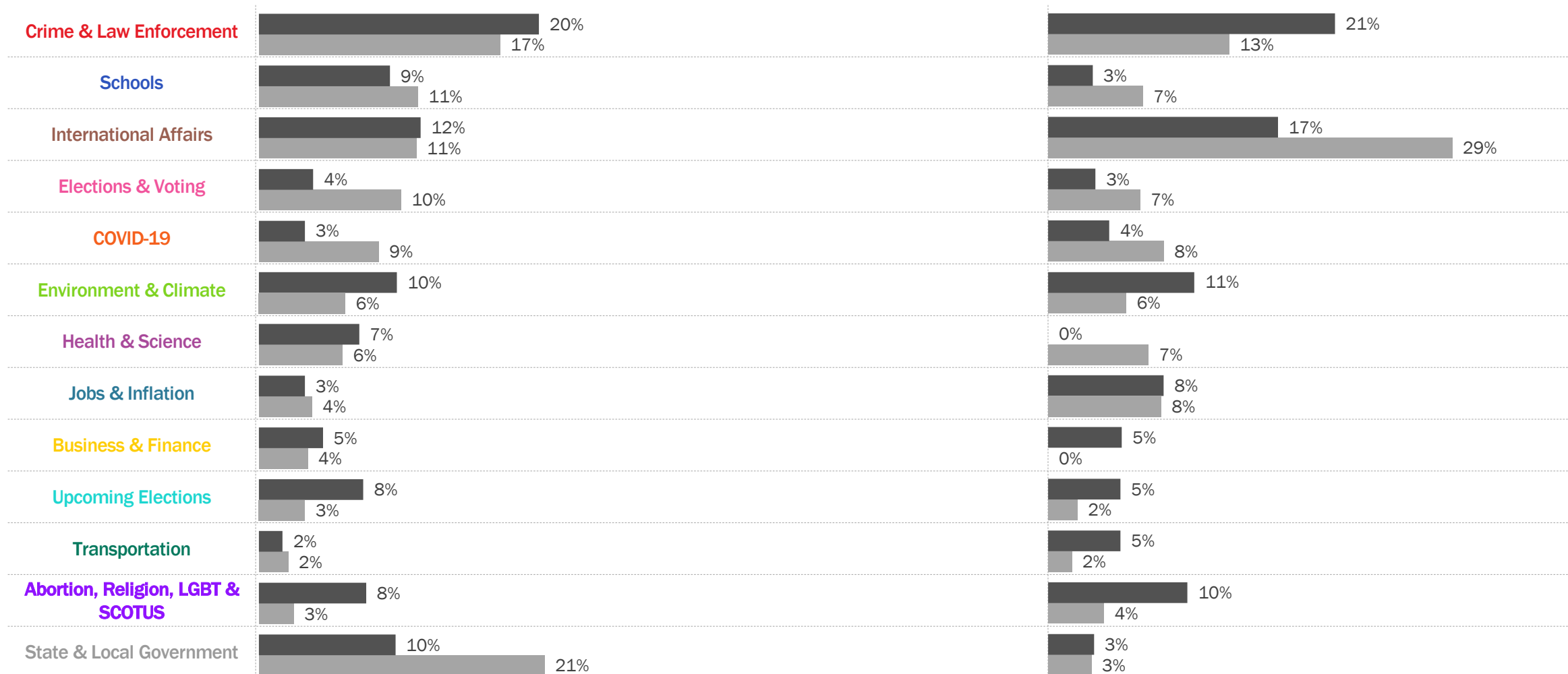
International affairs saw a significant increase in coverage among top outlets in Q2 while COVID-19 dropped in both rural and top national outlet coverage.



Rural Outlets



National Top Outlets



KEY

Q2 2022

Q1 2022

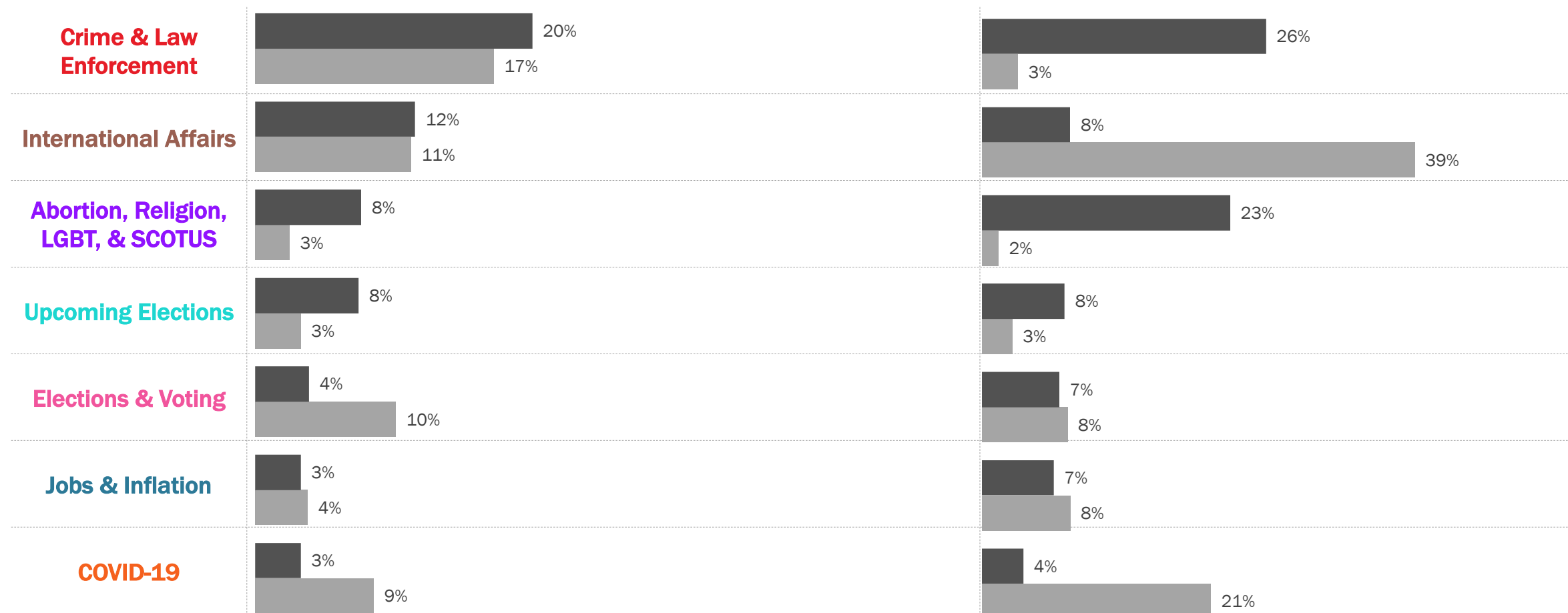


Rural Social Media v. Rural Traditional Media

International affairs saw a significant drop in conversation on social media as time passes from the initial conflict with Russia and Ukraine.

 **Rural Outlet Media Coverage**
Share of overall coverage by topic
Courtesy of FTP Insights

 **Rural Social Media Conversation**
Share of political conversation by topic
Courtesy of Impact Social



Q2 2022

Q1 2022



Appendix

Network Analysis Methodology

Analysis Process



A detailed Boolean search is constructed by an analyst to identify content for analysis



The algorithm reads the content, paragraph by paragraph, to identify keywords, phrases, and entities



The algorithm draws links between content based on similar language



The algorithm then groups articles by theme and arranges clusters based on their interconnectivity, producing a topical map of conversations



Once a network is generated, it is reviewed by an analyst who interprets and names each cluster based on the content within it

Interpreting a Network

Each node represents a news story, each connection represents similar language

Node size indicates the number of times a story was reprinted and its similarity to other stories within the cluster

Connections represent similar language used across nodes

Peripheral stories are not yet connected to the core of the coverage

Centrally located stories are core to the conversation

Greater distance indicates a lack of shared language

Dense clusters contain stories with a large amount of shared language; signaling similarity of source and news

