

## **Survey shows American youth feel today's leaders have a different agenda: They lack skills to lead themselves**

**CHEVY CHASE, MD (April 12, 2016)** – As the presidential election hoists leadership to the forefront of national dialogue, a new survey asks America's youth to weigh in on the topic – finding that today's leaders are believed to have their own agendas and demonstrate weak leadership. Additionally, young people would like better preparation as leaders.

Ninety percent (90%) of young people say they are concerned about the future leadership of America, and two-thirds are more confident in the next generation of leaders than in the leaders they see today. This is according to the 4-H National Youth Survey on Leadership conducted online by Harris Poll among 1,501 9th through 12th grade students.

National 4-H Council released the survey findings at a youth-led rally in Washington, D.C. to kick off the 4-H Grow True Leaders Campaign – giving young people across the country a forum to put their voices into positive action and rally the nation to invest in the next generation of true leaders.

More than 1,500 youth nationwide responded to the survey, which revealed:

- Most youth (81%) think leaders today are more concerned with their own agendas than with achieving the goals of their organizations.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) say leaders are focused on different priorities than what matters most to them.
- Half of youth rate government and political leaders as having weak leadership (51%), among the highest relative to other groups of leaders examined in the survey. Overall, weak leadership is related to not accomplishing what is promised (59%); not working collaboratively (56%); and not offering new solutions (53%).
- Most youth (96%) think leadership is important to addressing the country's most pressing issues; but only one in three young people says they have the skills they need to be prepared to lead.

“America is facing a critical need for more leaders – true leaders – who are prepared with the skills to deal with the problems of today and the challenges of tomorrow,” said Jennifer Sirangelo, president and CEO, National 4-H Council. “A true leader leads by example, works well with others, tackles tough challenges head-on and sticks with a job until it's done. This campaign is giving youth a platform to ask for more support in preparing them to lead and to be recognized for their positive contributions.”

More than 300 youth gathered at the 4-H Grow True Leaders Rally where they identified specific areas they want more support from adults: hands-on experience in leadership roles, programs to build confidence and regular encouragement to lead. They asked adults to offer positive encouragement of young people by participating in the True Leaders Shout Out online – sharing positive messages and photos or videos using #TrueLeaders to shout out a young true leader who exemplifies a positive example of courage, responsibility and resilience.

Youth also shared action platforms for the issues identified in the survey as most important to America's youth: (1) Access to College; (2) Jobs & The Economy; (3) Bullying; and (4) The Environment. They were joined by Grammy award-winning music artist and 4-H National Spokeswoman Jennifer Nettles and 2016 Miss America Betty Cantrell; both are 4-H alumna. Other notable 4-H alumni are participating in activities and voicing their support of the campaign this week, including CNN host Nancy Grace, Facebook executive Andrew Bosworth, U.S. Congresswoman Terri Sewell, and Weekend TODAY host Craig Melvin.

### *4-H Grow True Leaders: Revitalizing a National Brand*

The 4-H Grow True Leaders Campaign is the first of its kind for National 4-H Council – a national, multi-platform initiative that will support the organization's growth goals of empowering 10 million youth by 2025 (a 67 percent increase).

National 4-H Council partnered with Dailey Advertising to develop creative print, digital and broadcast advertisements as part of the Campaign – featuring powerful images of real 4-H'ers in activities that grow life skills. The marketing charge is to break out of the limited view that many still have of 4-H – to show that the organization is still connected to its roots in agriculture, but has also evolved to feature robust youth development programming in areas like STEM, healthy living and citizenship.

“With impact numbers that are second to none, 4-H has been the best kept secret for far too long,” Sirangelo continued. “We want more people to know that 4-H was founded with youth empowerment at our core, and we are still a youth empowerment organization – with 4-H'ers leading all kinds of positive solutions for the diverse issues our country faces today.”

## **About 4-H**

4-H, the nation's largest youth development organization, grows confident young people who are empowered for life today and prepared for career tomorrow. 4-H programs empower nearly six million young people across the U.S. through experiences that develop critical life skills. 4-H is the youth development program of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and USDA, and serves every county and parish in the U.S. through a network of 110 public universities and more than 3000 local Extension offices. Globally, 4-H collaborates with independent programs to empower one million youth in 50 countries. The research-backed 4-H experience grows young people who are four times more likely to contribute to their communities; two times more likely to make healthier choices; two times more likely to be civically active; and two times more likely to participate in STEM programs.

Learn more about 4-H at [www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org), find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/4-H](http://www.facebook.com/4-H) and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/4H>. For information about the Rains 4-H Club contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at [rains.agrilife.org](http://rains.agrilife.org). We are also on Facebook at [facebook.com/Rains4HClub](http://facebook.com/Rains4HClub). Go and “Like” our page to keep up with the latest news, events, and programs offered by the Rains 4-H Club in Rains County.