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Maryland General Assembly 2022 Biennial Workplace Climate Survey

Summary Report



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Schaefer Center for
Public Policy

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Maryland General Assembly
2022 Biennial Workplace Climate Survey

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May 26, 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following Schaefer Center staff members and The University of Baltimore faculty members played key roles in the collection and analysis of the data used for the analysis included in this document:

- Dr. Ann Cotten, Director (Co-Principal Investigator)
- Dr. Sharon Glazer, Professor & Chair, Division of Applied Behavioral Sciences, The University of Baltimore (Co-Principal Investigator)
- Michelle Cantave, Survey Research Manager
- Dr. Sarah V. Ficenec, Research Associate
- Jasmyne Jardot, Schaefer Center Graduate Fellow

The research team is appreciative of the support provided by staff from the Department of Legislative Services who worked with the team on the survey design and communications plan. The team would like to specifically acknowledge:

- Victoria L. Gruber, Executive Director, Department of Legislative Services
- Lori Mathis, Director, Office of Operations and Support Services, Department of Legislative Services
- Bridget M. Wicklein, Manager, Human Resources Office, Department of Legislative Services

The research team would also like to thank the Maryland State Ethics Commission for its support of the research team's work to distribute the survey to registered lobbyists. The team would like to specifically acknowledge:

- Jennifer K. Allgair, Esq., Executive Director, Maryland State Ethics Commission

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Maryland General Assembly 2022 Biennial Workplace Climate Survey

INTRODUCTION

Under contract to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS), the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at The University of Baltimore College of Public Affairs designed and conducted the 2022 Biennial Workplace Climate survey for the Maryland General Assembly (MGA). The survey was designed to 1) assess the MGA workplace climate for diversity, fairness, inclusion, support, and professionalism and 2) assess overall employee satisfaction and engagement. The survey results provide baseline data for the MGA and DLS to assess the need for interventions to mitigate and eradicate harassment, discrimination, and similar concerns and to track changes in the workplace climate over time.

The survey was distributed to over 1,600 individuals who work in various capacities related to the state legislature, including elected officials, DLS and MGA employees, and lobbyists. There were 538 individuals who completed a substantial portion (at least 71%) of the survey, which is a response rate of 32.6%.

Workplace climate refers to a snapshot moment of visible aspects of the organization. It presents the “what” of an organization as evidenced in policies, practices, procedures, and reward systems.

This summary report includes the findings from the survey and the resulting recommendations. This is followed by high-level descriptions of the survey methodology, respondents, and findings. Much fuller information, including descriptions of how various measures of workplace climate were developed and tested, as well as frequencies, means and standard deviations for the responses to many items are available in the Technical Report that accompanies this summary.

It is important to note that the survey asks about respondent experiences in 2020 and 2021. For most of the study period, many members of the surveyed population worked remotely. Remote work and the general global climate resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic likely presented a unique context that may be affecting the responses, which were collected in January 2022. Responses to open-ended comments about the MGA workplace climate also reflect this, with many of those offering more detailed responses to these items noting how different the environments were at that time compared to the environment before COVID-19. Therefore, readers should use caution generalizing these results to the workplace climate during non-pandemic operations.

FINDINGS

Experience with Workplace Harassment and Discrimination

1. **Experience or Witness Harassment or Discrimination.** Few respondents reported having witnessed (10%) harassment or discrimination and fewer (8%) experienced it in their MGA workplaces. Overall, 84% of respondents said they did not personally experience or witness an incident of workplace harassment or discrimination in 2020 or 2021, while 91% said an incident of harassment or discrimination exhibited by someone else did not interfere with their work or activities outside of work during that time.
 - While rare, bullying was the most common form of harassment or discrimination experienced, with 22 incidents reported by respondents; general harassment was the most common incident to witness, with 29 incidents reported.
 - Most who rated the incidents they experienced or witnessed tended to say the incidents were very severe, and the perceived reasons for harassment and discrimination experienced or witnessed varied among the different protected classes.
 - Very few survey respondents indicated that the perpetrators worked as an elected member/legislator, MGA employee, DLS employee, or lobbyist, and even fewer identified the job role of the perpetrator of harassment or discrimination incidents. Incidents were most frequently experienced in the office environment or in the MGA complex, but outside of the office.
 - Respondents were divided as to whether they reported the harassment or discrimination to someone at MGA or DLS. Few respondents who experienced (8) or witnessed (6) harassment or discrimination officially reported the event. Of those who did not report, the most frequent reason was because they did not know the reporting structure or trust in how it would be handled. Of those who did report the incident, most said the quality of help provided by the MGA/DLS or the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics was poor.
 - **Severity of Incidents.** Severity ratings of 6 to 10, by those who reported witnessing or experiencing harassment or discrimination, were nearly twice as frequent as those with severity ratings 5 and under, suggesting either that harassment and discrimination may be more readily detected when sufficiently severe or that training properly enabled people to detect any form of harassment or discrimination as problematic. Additionally, of those who have experienced it, there does not appear to be any consistency as to the form of harassment and the form or reason for discrimination. Where the incidents occurred and general demographic information about perpetrators is even more elusive.

How Complaints Would Be Handled

2. **How Reports will Be Handled.** Most respondents believed that a report to the MGA or to the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics would likely or very likely be taken seriously, kept private, forwarded for criminal investigation, and handled fairly and that actions would be taken to address the workplace mistreatment.
3. **Complainant Treatment by Others.** The majority of respondents felt that others would be unlikely or very unlikely to give the person reporting an incident of harassment or discrimination a hard time or see them as a troublemaker. However, respondents were evenly split on whether or not the alleged offender or their colleagues would try to get back at the person filing a report.

Workplace Climate

4. In terms of the attitudes and perceptions associated with measures of diversity, inclusion, mistreatment, well-being, workplace attitudes and intentions to remain with the organization, findings were generally good, but not excellent. Interestingly, on any variables where there are sex differences, women fared better than men, which is different from what had historically been found in empirical literature in the domain of organizational psychology (e.g., Beehr et al., 2002). It is possible that with women making up 60% of the workforce, their strength in numbers makes them feel more empowered and more comfortable than men feel. Generally, the results show there is room to strengthen a more positive climate in the following areas:
 - a. **Diversity, Inclusion, and Workplace Free of Mistreatment:** Most of the mean scores per item and the variable's grand mean are near to 6.0 on a 7-point scale, indicating the workplace climate regarding these issues is generally; however, the standard deviations are not tight, indicating there were variable experiences of diversity, inclusion, and workplace mistreatment (DIWM). This variability is further evident in the demographic differences whereby lower DIWM was reported by DLS employees compared to MGA employees, younger employees compared to older ones and male employees compared to their female counterparts. This result was particularly apparent among 18–24-year-olds in the MGA and male employees of the MGA. This customized measure was a strong predictor of well-being, attitudes, and turnover intention.
 - b. **Tokenism:** About two-thirds of respondents do not believe that tokenism is a problem for them, but one-third of respondents reported a possible problem with tokenism. Therefore, on the surface, tokenism might not appear to be a problem at the MGA

complex. However, the findings that the experience of tokenism is more frequent for individuals identifying as Black/African American and two or more races over that of individuals identifying as White/Caucasian and that there were only three racial categories with sufficiently sizable populations from which to run group comparison analyses suggest that employers at the MGA complex might want to examine the diversity of employees. Further, the findings on tokenism may be affected by the overrepresentation of employees who identify as White/Caucasian compared to their share of the total MGA/DLS employed population (72% and 68%, respectively) and the underrepresentation of employees who identify as Black/African American compared to their share of total MGA/DLS employment (19% and 25%, respectively).

- c. **Turnover Intention:** Well over one-third of respondents have been considering leaving or quitting their jobs. This was particularly true of male MGA employees, MGA employees under 25 years of age, and DLS employees between ages 25-34 years old. The reasons for wanting to leave varied among the respondents considering the option. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has also seen a great movement of workers, a phenomenon that has become known as “The Great Resignation” (CultureAmp, n.d.).

Although not all departures are bad, it is important to identify when decisions to leave are preventable by the organization. A preventable reason is workplace mistreatment or feeling that one’s skills are not put into good use. A nonpreventable reason is having to deal with unhappy constituents. Unhappy citizens are part of political life. That being said, there are areas that are gray. For example, a concern over having to commute to work after two years of enjoying remote work is one that the MGA/DLS leadership could review carefully. Could the institution establish a policy that would allow workers flexibility about where they work? In some cases, this should be possible, in others the possibilities may be limited, and yet in other cases it is impossible. A deeper assessment through job and work analysis could provide further guidance over where work must be done to be effective in one’s job. Indeed, job applicants’ and incumbents’ desires to work remotely has become a major consideration in management work structures and strategies for many organizations (CultureAmp, 2020). Importantly, managerial practices, such as social support, must align also with decisions of where employees work. Furthermore, statistically, of the factors assessed in the current survey, DIWM and incivility were the strongest statistical predictors of intention to leave one’s work, accounting for over 41.5% of its variance ($p < .001$).

- d. **Supervisor Social Support:** A concerted effort needs to be made within the DLS overall to improve perceived supervisor support, and, within MGA, attention is needed with special attention for employees under the age of 35 years. Although remote work might be a culprit for lower perceived supervisor social support during this two-year period, literature shows that early career workers need to be heard, feel that their opinions are valued, feel that they are part of the process for setting their own goals, and know that their supervisor cares about their well-being (Kram, 1985; Qian et al., 2014).
- e. **Perceived Organizational Support:** MGA and DLS employees reported low levels of organizational support. Younger employees felt less supported by the organization than employees over 44 years of age. Furthermore, male respondents reported significantly less support than female respondents. Since organizational support is experienced through the resources that organizations provide employees (e.g., opportunities to voice thoughts in a public forum) and many resources were inaccessible and not refashioned for the online environment during the work-from-home period of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that younger employees were languishing (i.e., not motivated).¹ While many organizations were scrambling to figure out how best to secure their operations for entire workforces, employee support needs fell to the side. Indeed, there was enormous ambiguity in the efforts to work from home and, later, to effectively return to offices (Rudolph et al., 2021).
- f. **Psychological Safety:** The overall mean for psychological safety is generally high, but there is room to improve given the general spread (i.e., standard deviation) of responses. People are generally not comfortable taking risks, which is probably acceptable given the nature of the work.
- g. **Humor:** Positive humor is moderately used in the workplace and creates a positive work environment. However, negative humor in the workplace is potentially problematic, and there is greater variation in people's experiences of negative humor. Negative humor is often experienced as more adverse by the recipient of the "joke" and more benign or as an attempt to temper difficult communications by the perpetrator. Interestingly, female respondents more frequently reported that positive humor is used in the workplace than male respondents did. However, elected members/legislators reported more negative humor being used in the workplace than MGA and DLS employees did. These findings suggest that while some people report a

¹ Grant, A. (2021). There's a name for the blah you're feeling: It's called languishing. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/19/well/mind/covid-mental-health-languishing.html>.

generally good use of humor in the workplace, elected members/legislators observe that humor is sometimes used as a way of making people feel bad, ridiculed, or intimidated.

- h. **Positive Organizational Attitudes:** Although organizational commitment and satisfaction are on average acceptable, MGA employees under the age of 35 years have the least commitment and satisfaction. Likewise, male employees of the MGA have lower commitment and satisfaction than female MGA employees. Diversity, inclusion, and work environment free of mistreatment, as well as psychological safety, positive humor, organizational support and supervisor support are strong positive correlates of favorable workplace attitudes (defined as affective commitment to the organization and job satisfaction). Low levels of tokenism, cyberbullying, incivility, and negative humor are also important correlates. A *post hoc* regression analysis shows that DIWM, positive humor, and psychological safety (in that order) are most predictive of positive organizational attitudes, accounting for 58% of its variance ($p < .001$). Considering that younger MGA employees and male MGA employees also perceive less diversity and inclusion, as well as lower support from their supervisors and the organization, the research team recommends the MGA and DLS strive to increase diversity of employees and experiences of inclusion through demonstrated support of employees' goals, values, and opinions.
- i. **Well-Being:** Respondents' general well-being was fairly good – better for legislators and MDA employees than DLS employees. However, MGA employees under 25 years of age experience lower well-being than most of the other age categories, whereas lower well-being is felt more among those between 25 and 44 years of age within DLS. Additionally, male MGA employees are generally psychologically less well than female MGA employees. Therefore, there is room to improve general well-being among employees across the MGA complex. Strong correlates of general well-being are climate for DIWM, low incivility, feeling of psychological safety, positive humor, and low negative humor. Additionally, low tokenism and low cyberbullying contribute too. However, a *post hoc* regression analysis shows that DIWM and psychological safety are most predictive of general well-being, accounting for 34% of its variance ($p < .001$).
- j. **Workplace Incivility:** Respondents are experiencing a generally positive workplace environment and a strong and healthy climate for civility – that is, people are behaving with respect and professionally toward one another.

- k. **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is generally not a problem among survey respondents and the standard deviation is fairly tight around the low mean, indicating people are generally behaving appropriately on the internet and emails. Of all the respondents, elected members experience the most cyberbullying. It is not clear if that cyberbullying is from constituents, other elected members, employees of the MGA/DLS, or lobbyists.

Training Participation

- 5. **Training Participation.** Most respondents had completed the Maryland General Assembly Sexual Harassment and Culture Workshop: 7 in 10 MGA employees, 8 in 10 DLS employees, and almost all elected members/legislators had done so. Approximately 23% of lobbyists had also taken the workshop, even though they are not required to attend the training.

Overall, our findings show a generally healthy climate for diversity, fairness, inclusion, support, and professionalism, as well as opportunity areas for improvement. For the most part, a few respondents reported having witnessed harassment or discrimination and fewer experienced it. This does not mean, however, that the work environment is free of such behaviors. The data obtained represent only 32.6% of the total respondent pool. It is not known if nonrespondents experienced or witnessed more harassment or discrimination than the final population of respondents (or vice-versa).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations that derive from the data analysis in the Technical Report and the Key Findings above. It should be noted that many of these recommendations may serve more than one purpose to the workplace climate issues presented here. For example, improvements in diversity, inclusion, and mistreatment in MGA workplaces and in regard to feelings of psychological safety would be particularly helpful to improving employee well-being. Similarly, efforts to improve the workforce climate in general, to strengthen positive organizational attitudes, and to decrease the number of incidents of incivility will likely contribute to decreased turnover intentions.

Experience with Workplace Harassment and Discrimination

1. MGA should consider additional research such as focus group meetings to understand why some employees are unwilling to report incidents of harassment and/or discrimination.
2. MGA should consider conducting focus group meetings with employees at the MGA complex to better understand qualitatively what having a climate for diversity, inclusion, and a mistreatment-free workplace means to employees. This would allow organizational interventions to be tailored to the needs. The Diversity, Inclusion, and Workplace Free of Mistreatment (DIWM) measure should continue to be used in future analyses, and results from this survey should serve as a benchmark.
3. MGA/DLS could consider providing training about the meaning of tokenism and how employees can prevent causing such an experience for colleagues.

Workplace Climate

4. MGA and DLS should consider conducting job and work analyses that could provide guidance on the location (in-office vs. remote) where work must be performed to be effective. Workload analyses are especially important in light of “The Great Resignation” (CultureAmp, n.d.) and young employees’ desires to have remote work options. Improvements in DIWM and with incivility might also help reduce turnover intentions in young and male employees.
5. DLS and MGA should consider offering support training for managers of subordinates under 35 years of age. Such training will improve supervisors’ abilities to ensure that early career workers’ voices are heard and valued and will improve their ability to demonstrate care for their employees’ well-being.

6. MGA should identify ways for reinforcing psychological safety in the workplace, such as a safe platform from which people may raise concerns or difficult matters.
7. MGA should consider offering training on what makes for positive and negative humor. Importantly, the aim is not to eliminate humor of any kind. Positive humor has health benefits. Guidance from professionals may be needed to help people recognize what may constitute negative humor.
8. MGA and DLS may wish to engage in a facilitated internal reflection exercise on the kinds of practices employed to ensure care of employees' well-being and that their goals and values are not merely heard, but also addressed.
9. MGA should educate employees on what constitutes incivility, especially with regard to how different age groups define incivility.
10. MGA should explore the cyberbullying experienced by elected members to determine its source (constituents, other elected members, employees of the MGA/DLS, or lobbyists.) The agency could then develop interventions to help mitigate the source of the problem.

Training Participation

11. MGA should review training documentation to verify that all employees have completed the required Maryland General Assembly Sexual Harassment and Culture Workshop.
12. MGA should continue to provide training on what constitutes harassment and discrimination and how to create a workplace climate free of harassment and discrimination.

Future Research

13. MGA should deploy the Schaefer Center climate survey every two years going forward. While the results from this survey can be used as a baseline, it would also be prudent to consider the next administration of the survey as the baseline for a non-pandemic environment.
14. For future surveys, the research team recommends including an assessment of workplace ostracism. Additionally, input from employees, legislators, and lobbyists should be considered to ensure their concerns about the climate for diversity, fairness, inclusion, support, and professionalism are represented in the survey.

SECTION I: EXPERIENCE WITH WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Survey respondents were asked if they had experienced or witnessed various types of harassment and discrimination in their MGA workplaces during the prior two years (January 1, 2020-December 31, 2021). *Most respondents (84%) indicated that they did not personally experience workplace harassment or discrimination at formal or informal setting related to their work during that time, and a larger share (91%) said that workplace harassment or discrimination exhibited by someone else did not interfere with their work or activities outside of work.*

Table 1 shows the types of harassment and discrimination that respondents indicated they experienced at their MGA workplaces. The most commonly experienced harassment or discrimination was bullying, for which there were 22 reported incidents, while the most commonly witnessed type of incident was discrimination, with 31 witnessed incidents. It is important to note that many individuals reported more than one incident – 42 individuals reported personally experiencing 83 incidents and 55 individuals reported witnessing 131 incidents. Further, one individual may have reported the same incident as both something personally experienced and as something witnessed if, for example, someone is discriminating against the victim as well as another employee or if the respondent does not distinguish carefully between self and witness.

Table 1: Types of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Incidents Experienced or Witnessed

Workplace Harassment/Discrimination	Personally Experienced	Witnessed
Bullying	22	25
Harassment	20	29
Ostracism	17	25
Discrimination	16	31
Sexual Misconduct	6	14
Cyberbullying	0	3
Other (please specify)	2	4

Note: Incidents include those that took place outside of study period of January 1, 2020-December 31, 2021.

Respondents were asked to indicate the severity of the incidents they experienced and witnessed, and the results are shown in Table 2. Note that not all respondents reported the severity of the incidents they experienced or witnessed. Of those that did provide such information, they were most likely to report harassment and bullying as the most severe experienced incidents and discrimination as the most severe witnessed incidents.

Table 2: Types of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Incidents Experienced or Witnessed in 2020-2021 by Level of Severity

	Level of Severity (1 = Least Severe to 10 = Most Severe)										Total Incidents
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Experienced											
Harassment	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	4	2	12
Bullying	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	4	0	11
Ostracism	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	10
Discrimination	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	7
Sexual Misconduct	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Cyberbullying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Witnessed											
Harassment	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	3	12
Bullying	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	3	12
Ostracism	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	10
Discrimination	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	3	3	13
Sexual Misconduct	0	3	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	9
Cyberbullying	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2

Note: "Total incidents" includes incidents for which a respondent did not include a severity rating. Severity ratings for incidents before 2020 or in 2022 or for which a date was not indicated are available in the Technical Report.

Respondents were divided on whether they reported workplace harassment or discrimination, but those who did report said the quality of help was "poor."

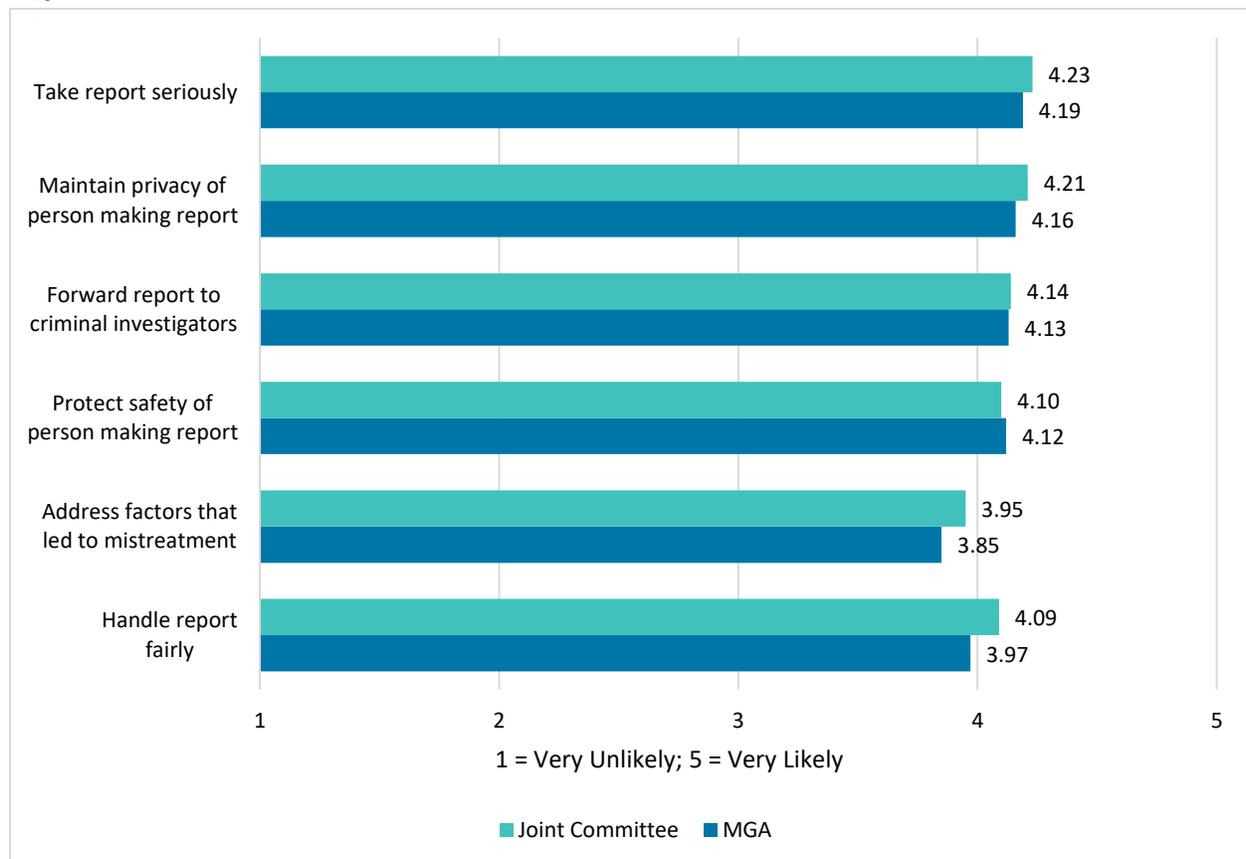
Six (6) respondents who experienced discrimination reported the incident to someone at MGA/DLS, however five (5) respondents did not and four (4) preferred not to say. The most common reason for not reporting was because they did not know the reporting structure or trust in how the report would be handled. Thirteen (13) of the respondents who witnessed discrimination did not report the incident, but eight (8) did and ten (10) preferred not to say. The most common reasons for not reporting witnessed discrimination were because they did not know the reporting structure or trust in how the report would be handled or because they thought the matter was not sufficiently serious. Most who reported the experienced or witnessed incidents said the quality of help provided by MGA/DLS or the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics was poor.

BELIEFS ABOUT COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

Respondents generally thought that reports of harassment and discrimination would be taken seriously by the MGA and the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics.

Respondents on average said the MGA or Joint Committee would be “likely” to take each of the following actions: taking the report seriously; maintaining the privacy of the person making the report; forwarding the report to criminal investigators; protecting the safety of the person making the report; addressing the factors that led to the mistreatment; and handling the report fairly. These results are shown in Figure 1 for how the MGA and the Joint Committee would be expected to handle the report. Overall, most respondents believe that either entity would do the right thing (i.e., taking the report seriously and handling the report fairly); however, within specific demographic groups there is evidence that the study respondents have greater faith in the Joint Committee’s handling of the reporting than the MGA’s.

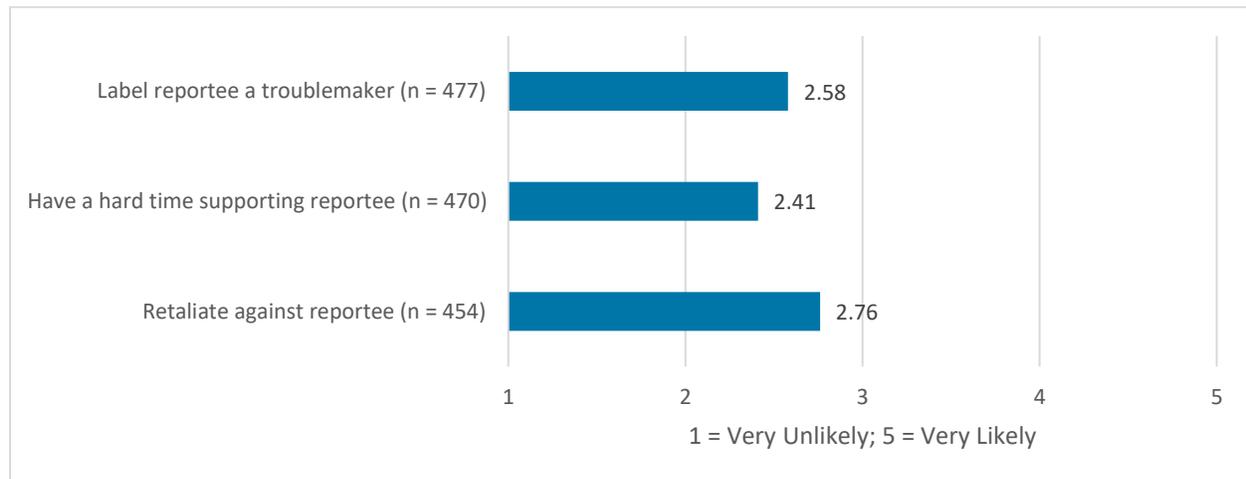
Figure 1: Respondent Expectations about How the MGA and Joint Committee Would Handle Reports of Harassment and/or Discrimination



Respondents felt colleagues would be unlikely to respond negatively to reports of workplace harassment and mistreatment.

When asked how they thought their colleagues would respond to reports of workplace harassment and mistreatment, the largest shares of respondents said their colleagues would be unlikely to: label the complainant a troublemaker, have a hard time supporting the complainant, and retaliate against the complainant (Figure 2). However, there were substantial minorities of respondents who did think their colleagues would demonstrate negative reactions to reports, with over a quarter of respondents indicating there would be retaliation against a complainant.

Figure 2: How Colleagues Would Respond to Reports of Workplace Harassment/Discrimination



EXPERIENCES AT WORK

Respondents generally feel their workplaces are diverse, inclusive, and free from mistreatment.

A measure was developed for this survey to assess the overall workplace climate in the MGA complex. The items for this measure addressed six primary areas: Climate for Inclusion, Climate for Diversity, Climate Free of Sexual Harassment, Climate Free of Bullying, Openness to Concerns and Climate for Fairness. The results suggest that respondents generally feel their workplace is diverse, inclusive, and free from harassment, although there is room to improve.

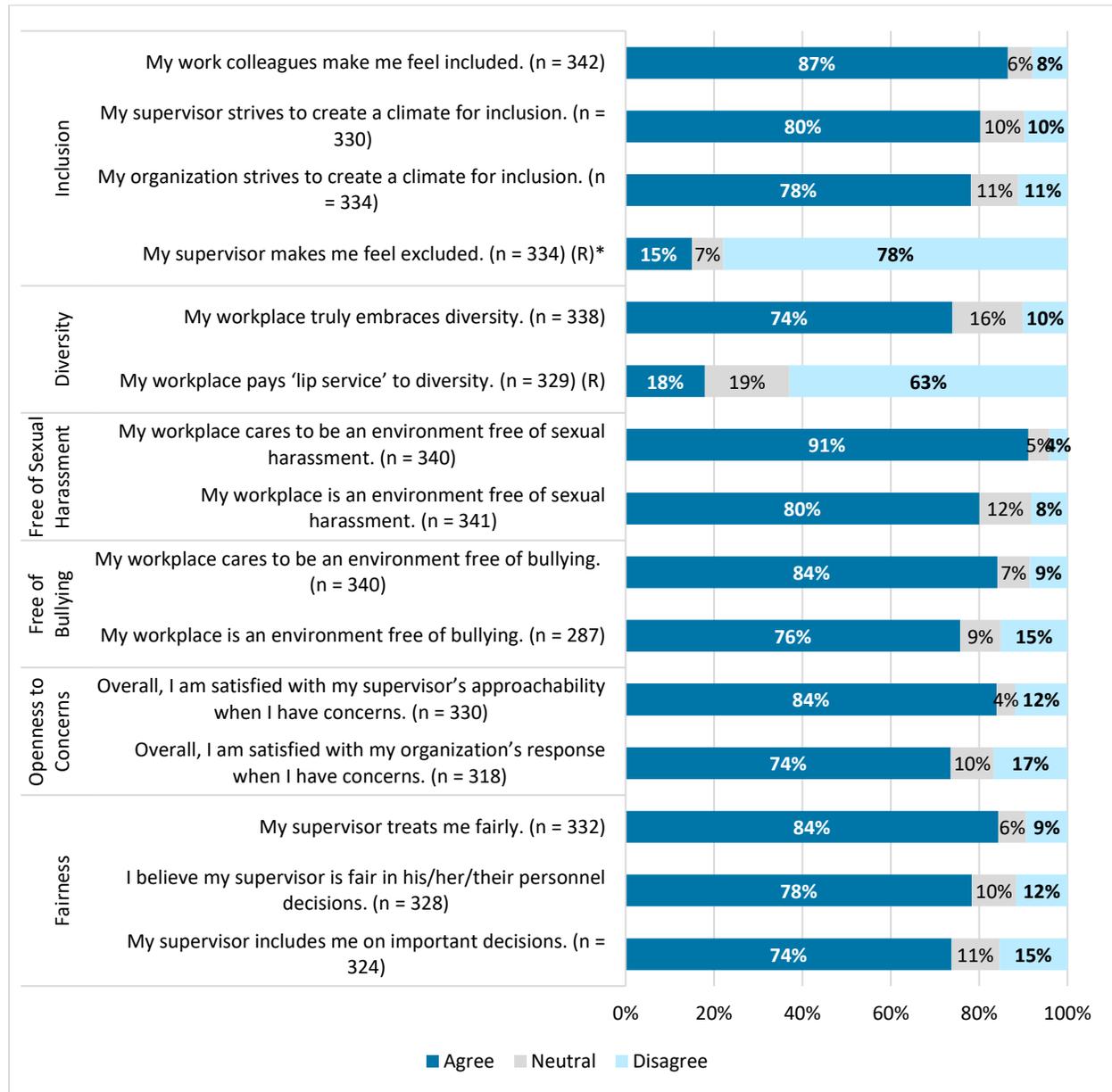
Workplace bullying refers to repeated exposure to unwanted social behaviors that result in humiliation, offense, distress, and the target feeling inferior and victimized.

Figure 3 shows the average response on each item on this measure. DLS employees are generally less positive about their experiences than elected members/legislators and lobbyists, as are

younger employees compared to older workers and male employees compared to female employees.

Recommendation: There is continued room for improving the overall diversity and inclusion at the MGA complex and for more fully developing a workplace that is free of mistreatment., More attention to the experiences of DLS employees over legislators and MGA employees’ experiences may be warranted. This measure should continue to be used in future analyses and results from this survey should serve as a benchmark.

Figure 3: Perceptions on Diversity, Inclusion and Mistreatment in the Workplace



Note: (R) indicates the item was reverse coded for analyses.

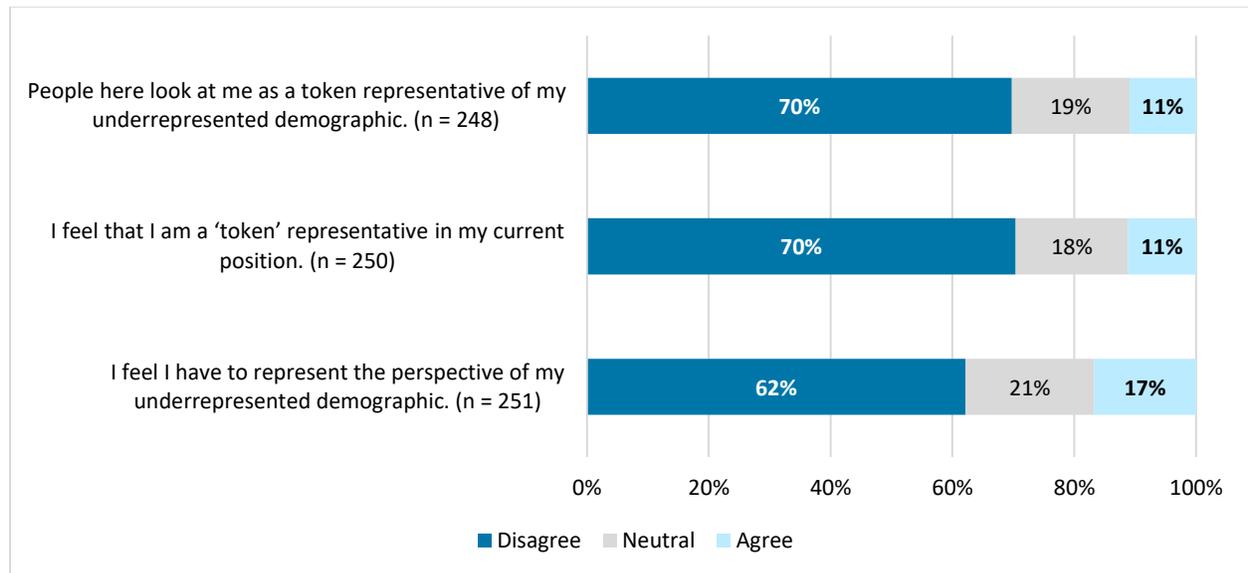
Most respondents did not report a possible problem with tokenism.

One in three respondents reported there is tokenism in MGA workplaces, although there was substantial variability in the responses. Of the demographic variables the research team assessed (e.g., MGA workplace, sex at birth, age, and race), significant differences concerning tokenism were found only in terms of race. Individuals who identified as Black or African American or as two or more races experienced greater tokenism than White or Caucasian respondents.

Tokenism refers to an individual's observation that their social category is underrepresented in a particular context, and, because of this, they experience increased visibility and social isolation.

Recommendation: MGA/DLS may consider training that addresses the meaning of tokenism and how to prevent causing such an experience. In addition, due to underrepresentation of Black and African American individuals as respondents compared to employment records (19% and 25%, respectively), as well as the fact that there were not enough respondents identifying as a race other than White/Caucasian, Black/African American, and more than two races, MGA employers may want to further examine the diversity of employees and hiring practices.

Figure 4: Respondents' Perceptions of Tokenism



SECTION II: WORKPLACE CLIMATE

The findings from the survey indicate that overall the workplace climate at the MGA complex is quite good with respect to harassment and discrimination, although there is room to strengthen the climate in multiple areas. Below is a brief review of respondents' general experiences at work regarding these issues, as well as recommendations to specified issues.

Average responses suggest limited turnover intention, although some demographic groups were more likely to consider leaving. The primary reasons for potentially leaving are career-related.

Although the results suggest that most respondents are not considering leaving their current positions, over one in five respondents did indicate they are potentially contemplating a change (Figure 5). DLS employees were most likely to want to leave, followed closely by MGA employees then, more distantly, elected officials/legislators. The reasons for wanting to leave vary widely, with the most common concerns related to personal issues, such as wanting better pay or the lack of growth potential or promotion opportunities (Figure 6). Workplace climate was also a significant reason for a number of respondents who are considering leaving their current position.

Recommendation: MGA/DLS leadership need to examine the various reasons why individuals are considering leaving their positions to identify those cases in which the decisions to leave are preventable by the organization. A deeper assessment through job and work analysis could provide further guidance. In addition, initiatives to improve the workplace climate for those in the MGA complex – as outlined in the other findings here – should also help decrease turnover plans due to negative workplace climate experiences.

Figure 5: Respondents' Perceptions of Turnover Intention

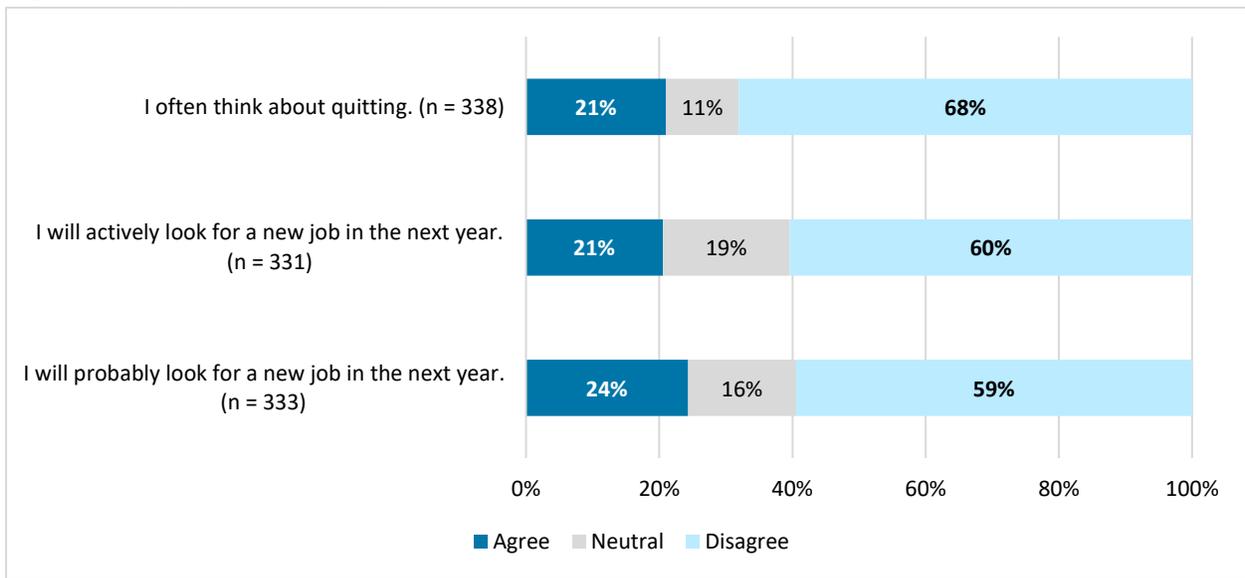
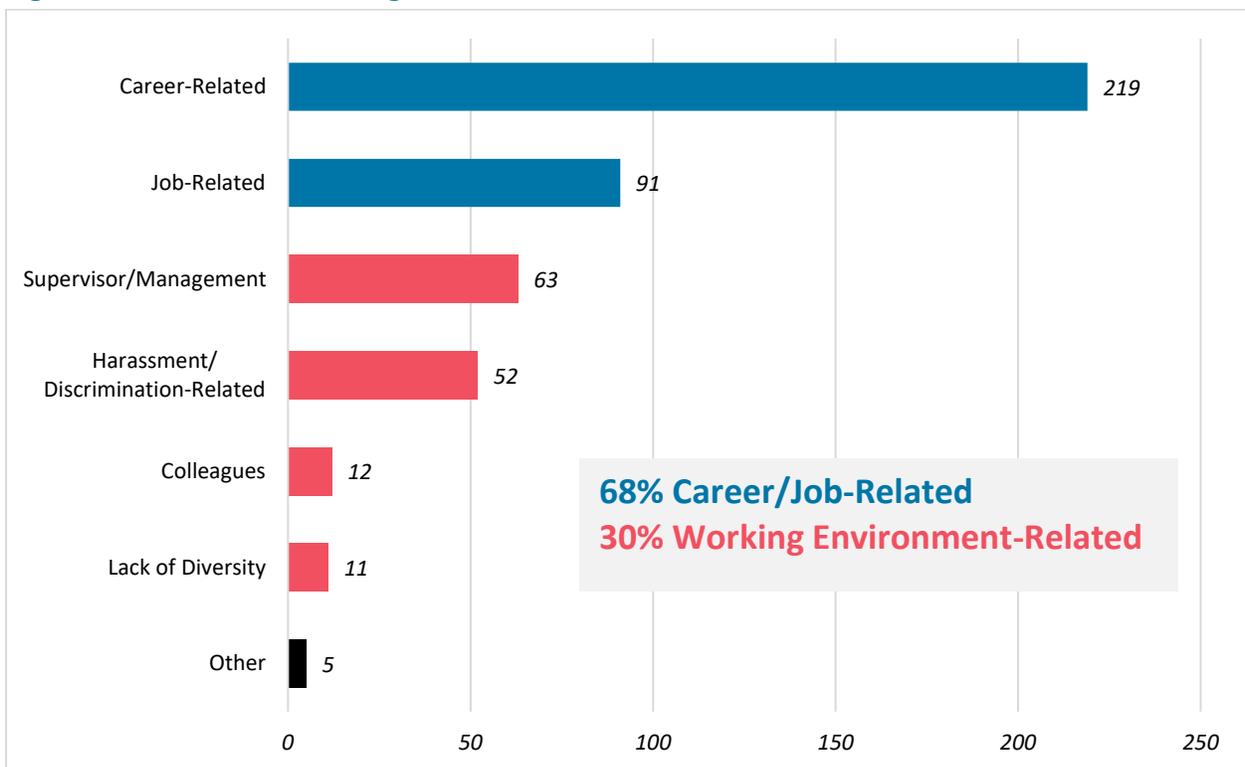


Figure 6: Reasons for Wanting to Leave

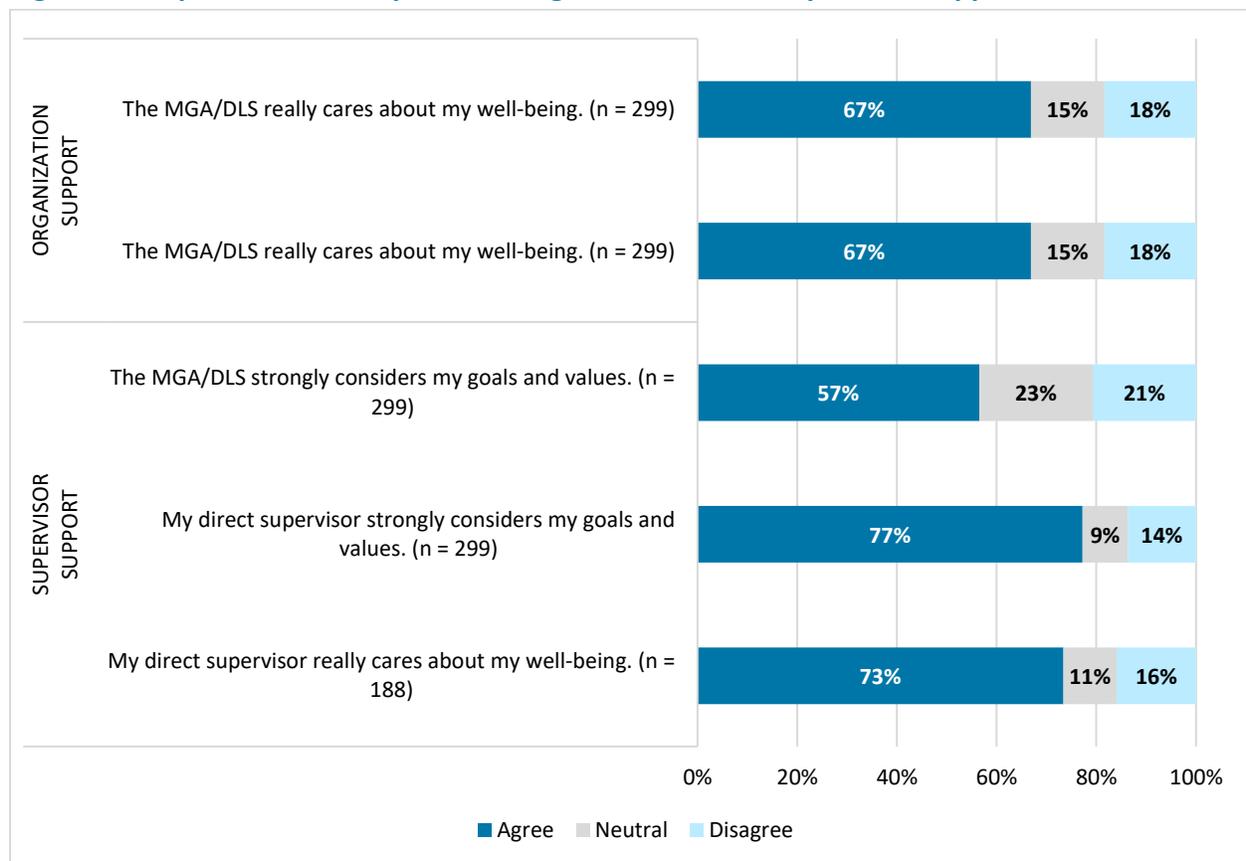


Respondents indicated they received more supervisor support than organizational support.

Only DLS and MGA employees were asked about whether they perceive cultures of organizational and supervisor support in their workplaces. There was a much stronger sense of supervisor support than organizational support, with the average response of 4.69 on a seven-point scale to items of organizational support and an average response of 5.59 to items of supervisor support.

There was no statistically significant difference in MGA and DLS responses to the organizational support items. Both groups indicated that they only “somewhat agreed” that there was organizational support in their respective organization, with no statistically significant difference between their average responses. There was a statistically significant difference in the two groups’ responses on supervisor support, with both groups indicating a much stronger sense of supervisor support than organizational support. Moreover, the average response for older workers was significantly higher than for their younger colleagues.

Figure 7: Respondents’ Perceptions of Organizational and Supervisor Support

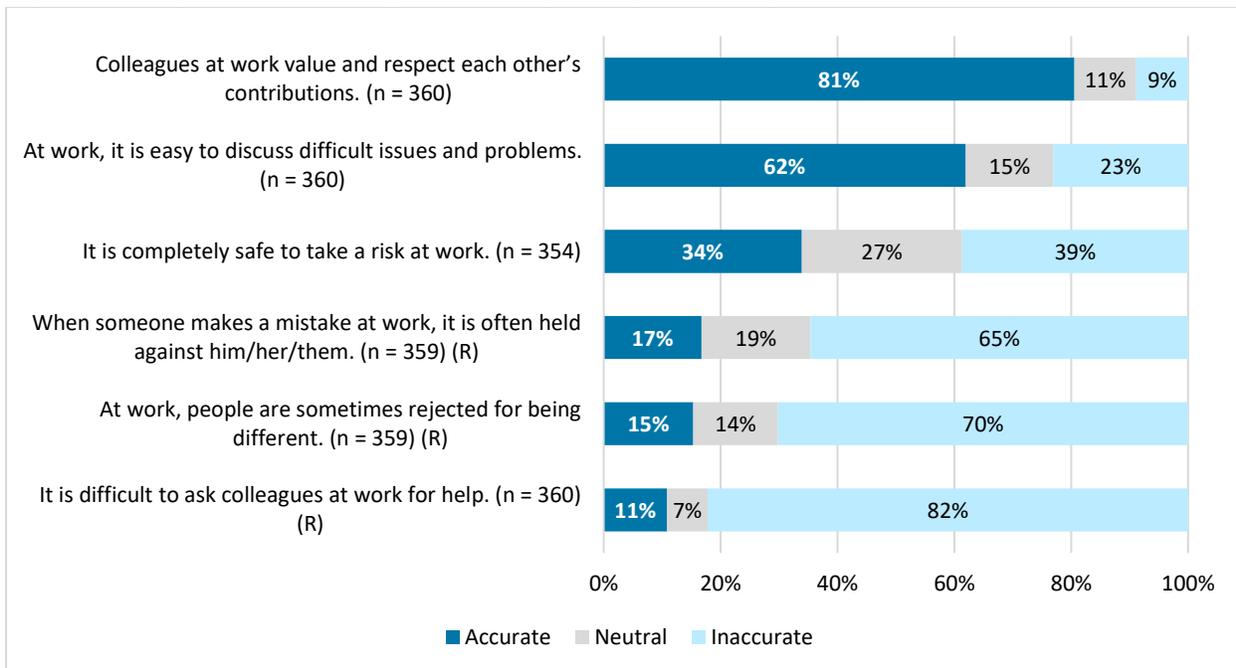


Respondents experience psychological safety but are not comfortable taking risks or communicating about difficult subjects.

The findings on items related to psychological safety suggest that respondents feel, on average, “safe” at work, but the results also suggest room for improvement. For example, respondents indicated they generally were not comfortable taking risks and that there were issues related to communicating about difficult subject matters (Figure 8). There were no significant differences in psychological safety based on job role, age or sex at birth.

Psychological safety reflects workers’ willingness to take risks and ask for help as well as the consequences of mistakes and of being seen as “different.”

Figure 8: Respondents’ Perceptions of Psychological Safety



Note. (R) indicates the item was reverse coded for analyses.

Most respondents report positive uses of humor in MGA workplaces; elected officials and legislators most likely to report experiencing negative humor.

Humor can have both a positive effect on people’s health and well-being, but if used to belittle others, it can have quite adverse outcomes. The survey findings suggest that most respondents report a generally good use of humor in the workplace (Figure 9), although elected members/legislators observed that humor is sometimes used as a way of making people feel bad, ridiculed, or intimidated. Elected members/legislators were significantly more likely to experience negative humor (i.e., humor that belittles others) compared to DLS and MGA

employees, as shown in Figure 10; also of note, female employees were likely than male employees to report the use of positive humor (i.e., humor that cheers people up).

Recommendation: Work may be needed to mitigate negative humor in the workplace.

Figure 9: Respondents’ Experiences with Positive and Negative Humor in the Workplace

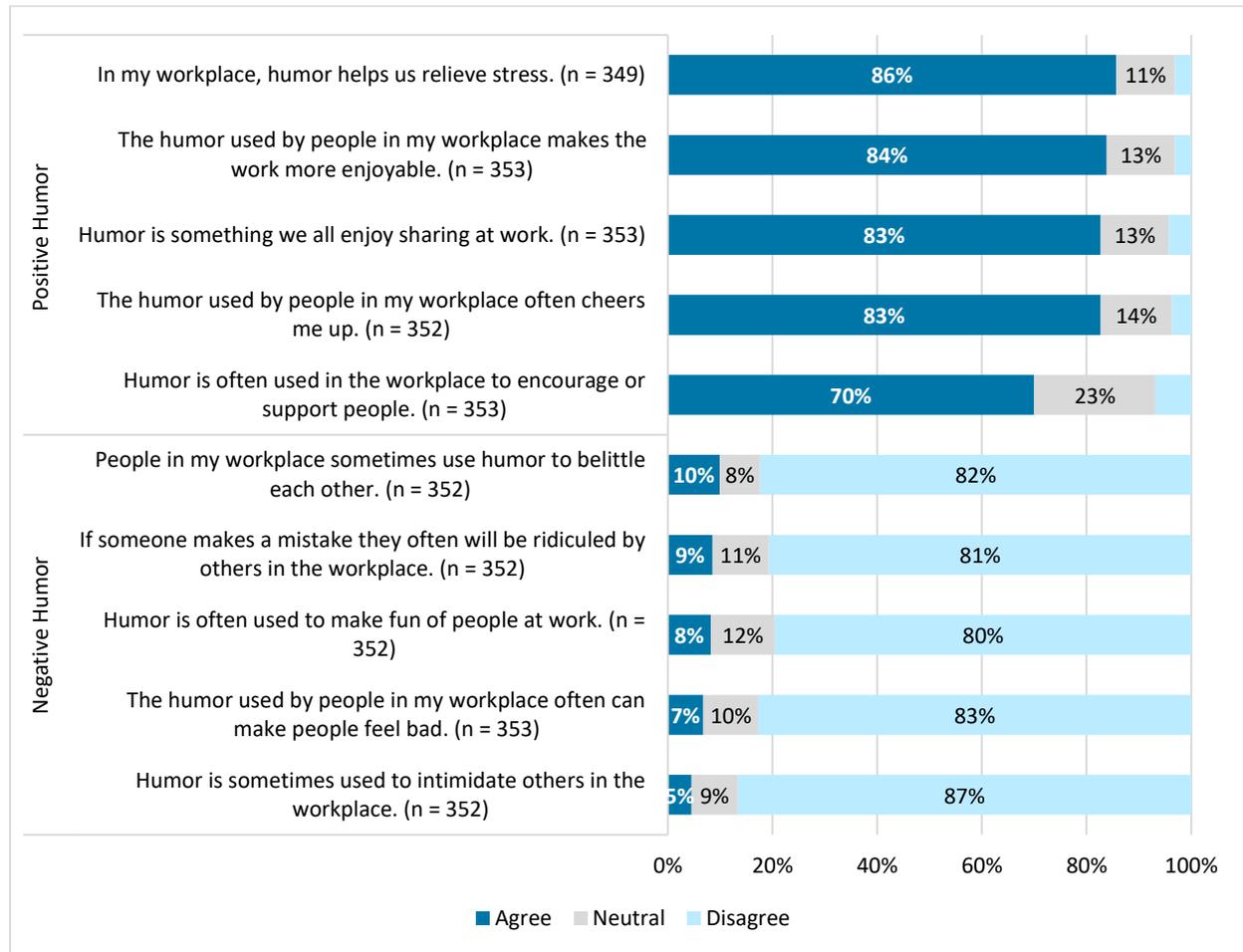
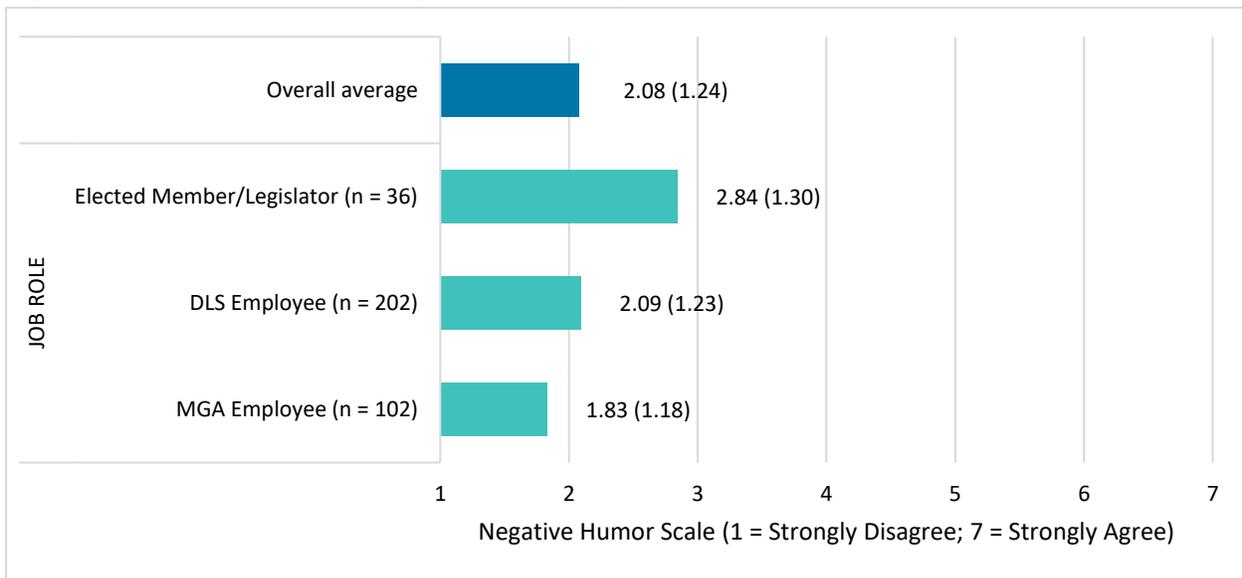


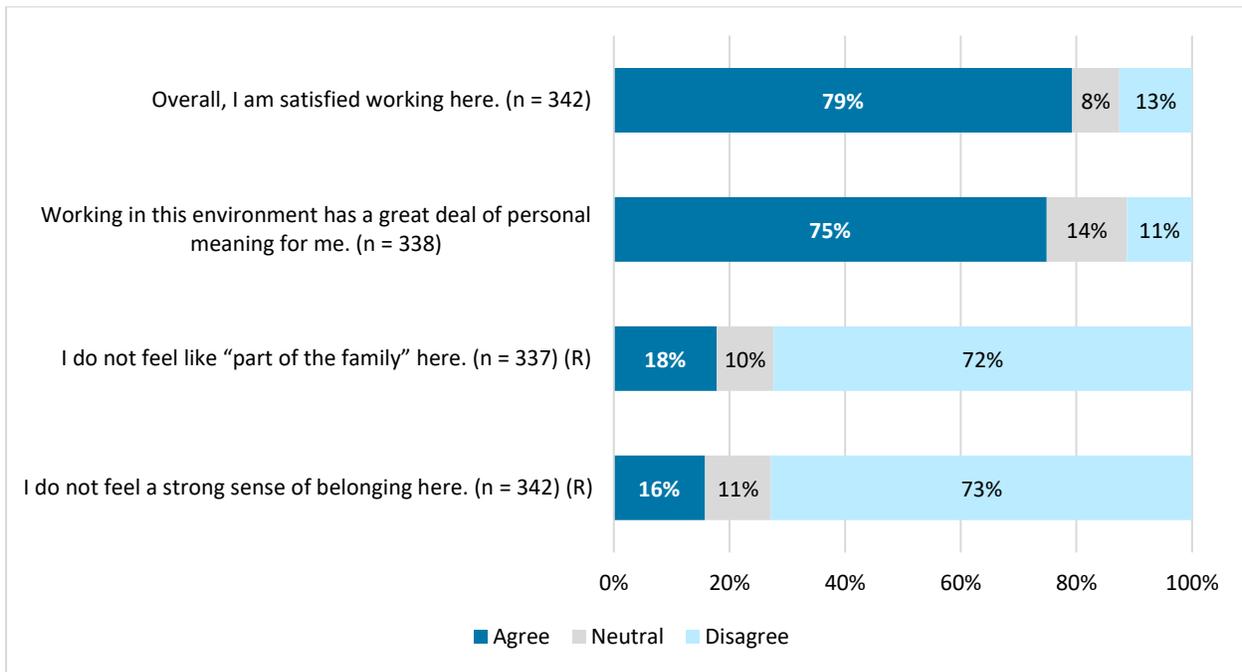
Figure 10: Experiences with Negative Humor by Job Role



Respondents indicated they generally experienced positive organizational attitudes.

Overall, respondents displayed positive organizational attitudes on items concerning issues such as job satisfaction and sense of belonging (Figure 11). Results indicate, however, that DLS employees’ feel less emotionally attached to the organization than MGA employees and legislators (who are most committed and satisfied).

Figure 11: Respondents’ Perceptions of Positive Organizational Attitudes

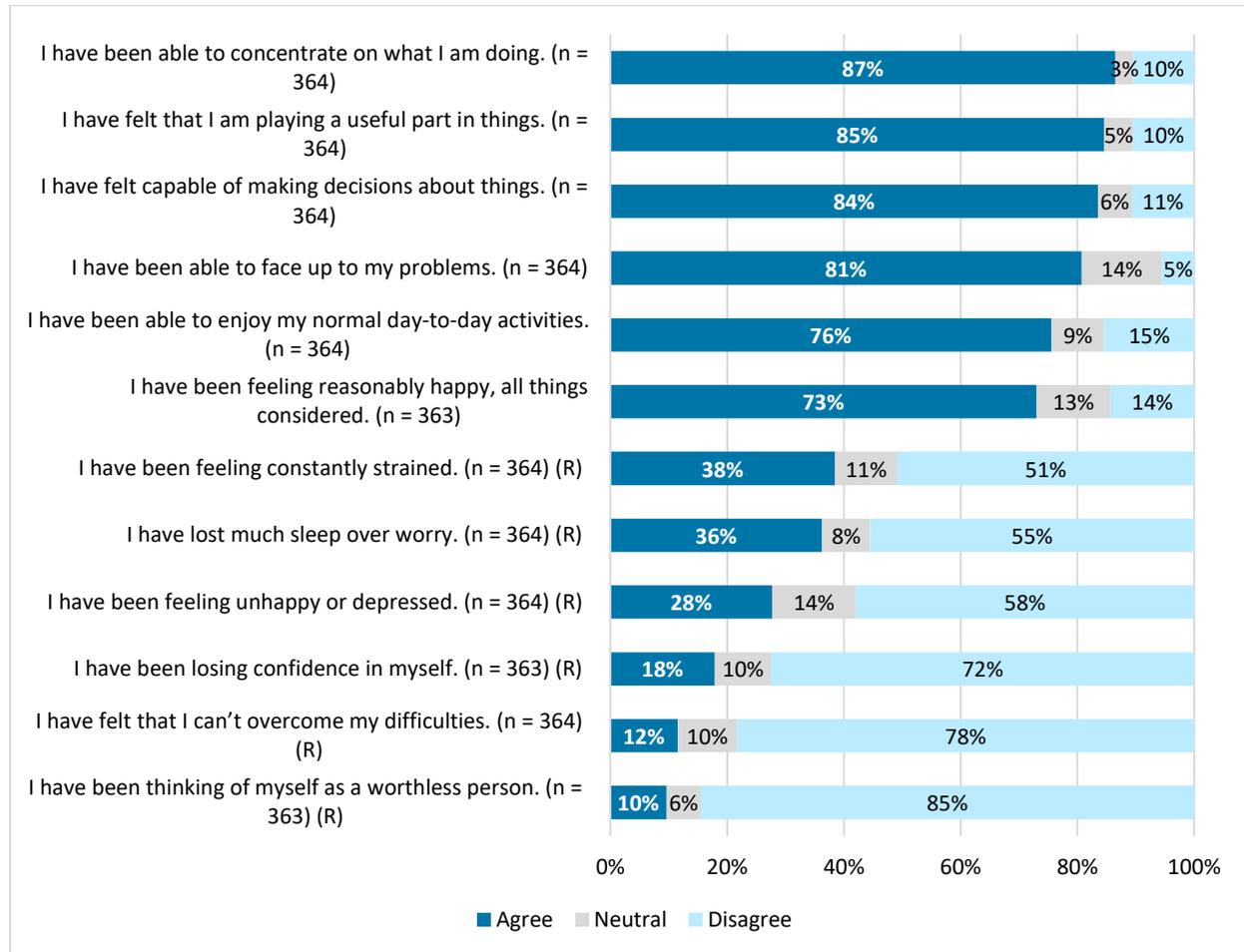


Note. (R) indicates the item was reverse coded for analyses.

Most respondents feel themselves to be generally healthy.

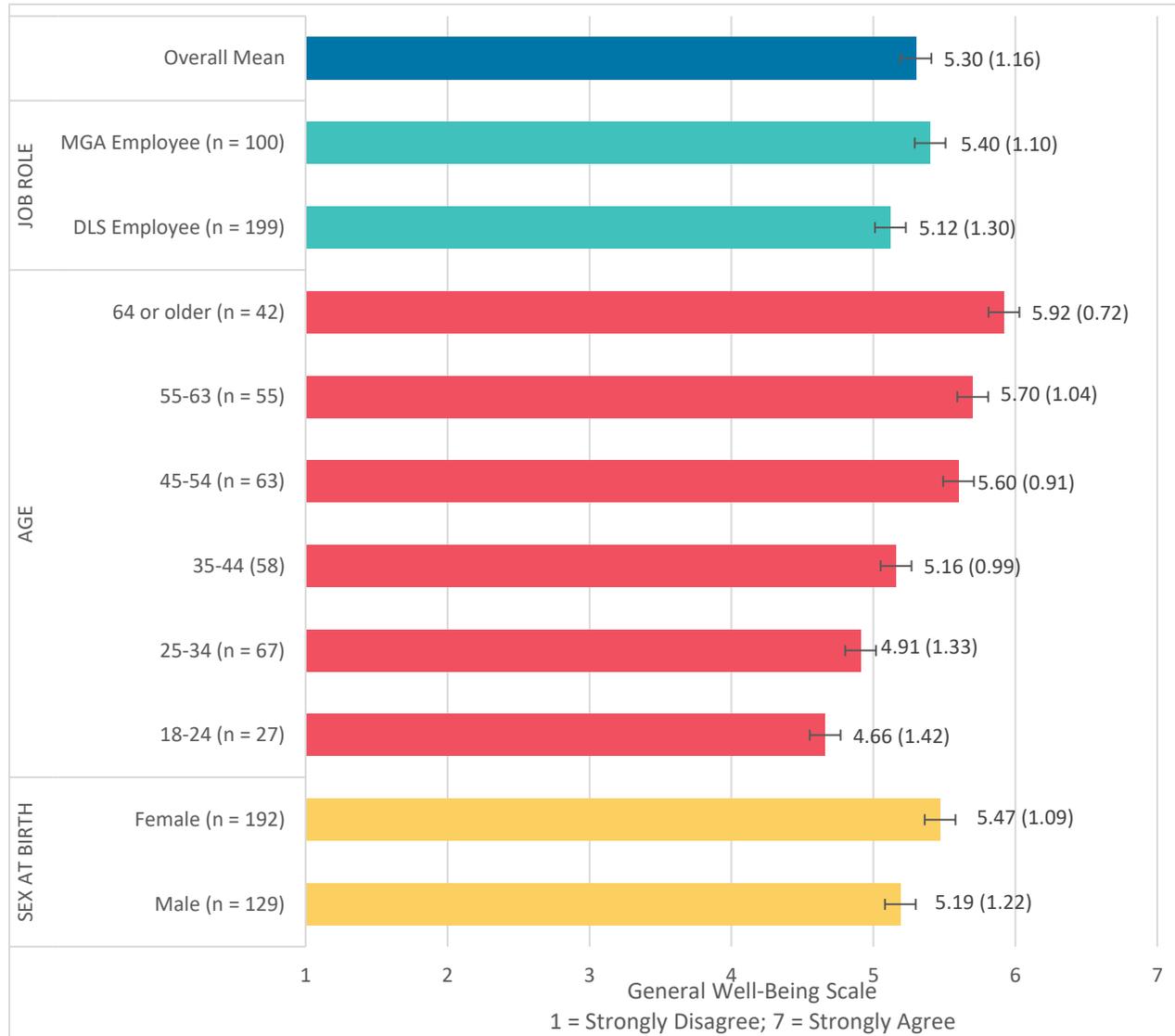
Respondents’ general well-being was fairly good (Figure 12). Elected officials/legislators experienced higher levels of well-being than MGA employees, who themselves had higher levels of well-being than DLS employees. There were also significant differences by age – with younger workers reporting lower well-being than their older colleagues – and by sex at birth – with male respondents reporting lower levels of well-being than female respondents (Figure 13).

Figure 12: Respondents’ General Well-Being in the Workplace



Note. (R) indicates the item was reverse coded for analyses.

Figure 13: Average Differences on Well-Being by Job Role, Age and Sex at Birth



Note. There was not a significant difference found for responses by elected officials/legislators, so the average response for that group is not shown above.

The MGA complex is generally a positive workplace environment, but younger workers more frequently reported greater incivility than older workers.

Respondents generally indicated that their MGA workplaces were a strong and healthy climate for civility, with their responses indicating that people are behaving with respect and professionally toward one another (Figure 14). However, younger employees (ages 18-24 years old) tended to report greater workplace incivility than their older colleagues (64 years or older; Figure 15).

Recommendation: The difference in responses by age suggests a possible need to educate others on what may be viewed as uncivil across age groups.

Figure 14: Respondents' Perceptions of Workplace Incivility

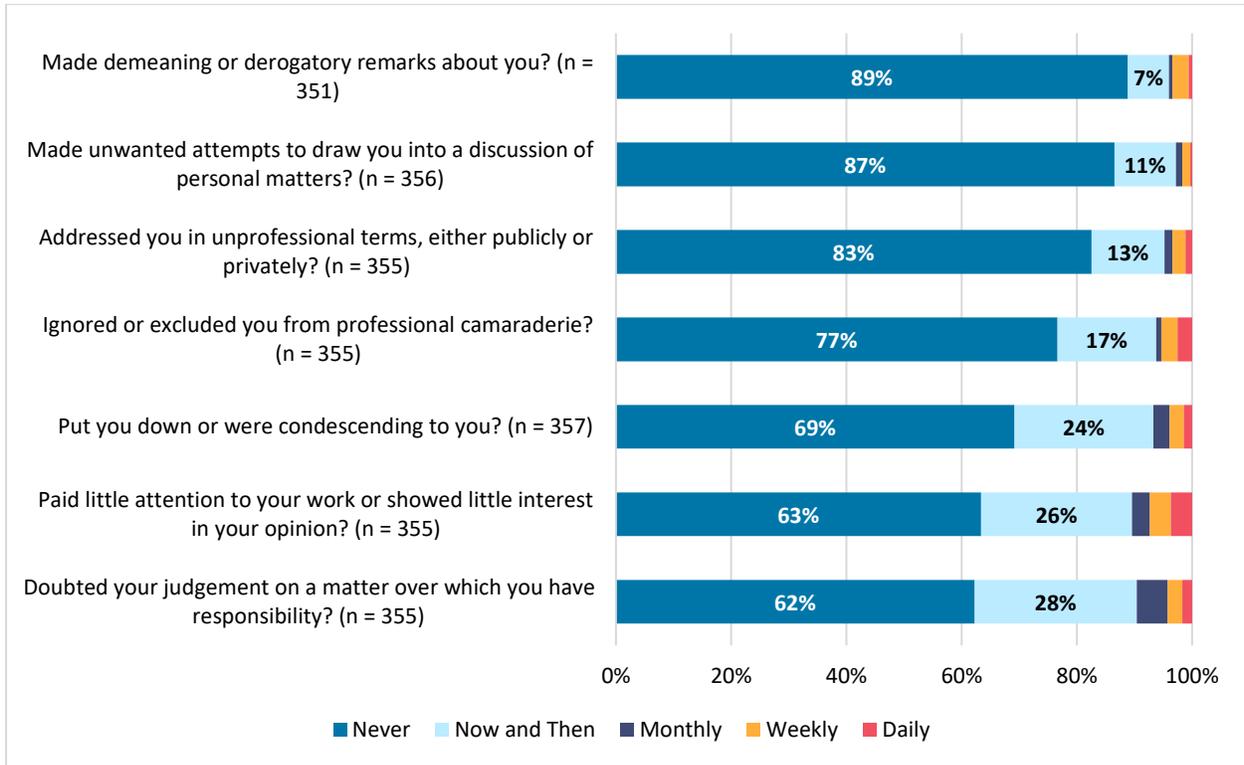
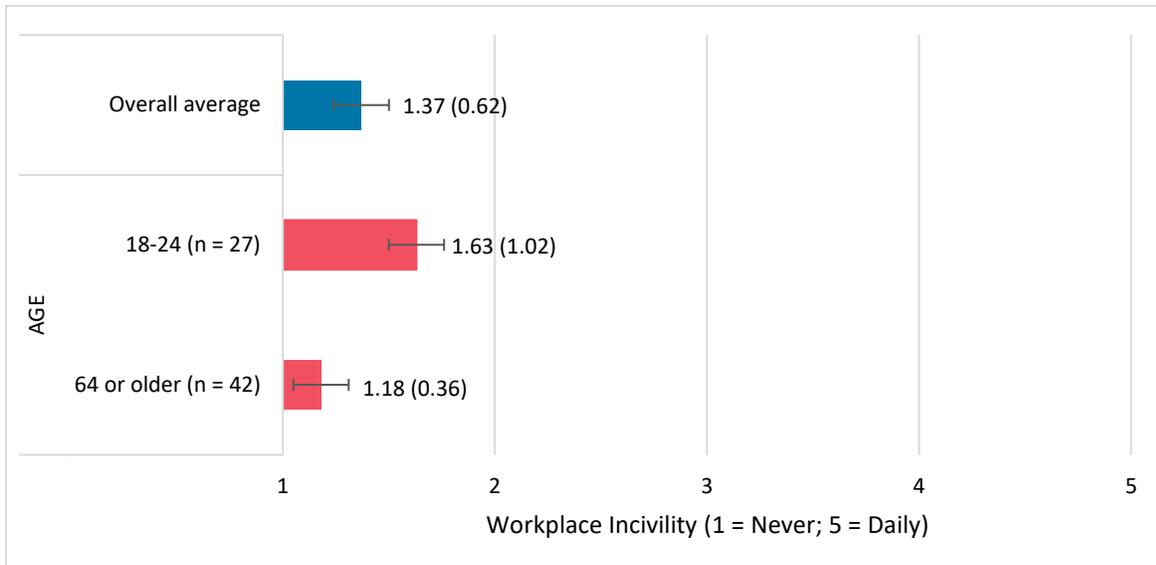


Figure 15: Average Responses on Workplace Incivility for Oldest and Youngest Workers



Respondents did not indicate a problem with cyberbullying.

Overall, survey responses suggest that respondents do not see others behaving inappropriately on the internet and in emails (Figure 16). Elected members/legislators reported experiencing the most cyberbullying of the participants (Figure 17), but it was not clear if cyberbullying is coming from constituents, other elected members, employees of the MGA/DLS, or lobbyists.

Cyberbullying refers to workplace bullying occurring through information and computer technologies.

Recommendation: Additional inquiry into the perpetrators of cyberbullying could help direct interventions for mitigating it.

Figure 16: Respondents’ Perceptions of Cyberbullying

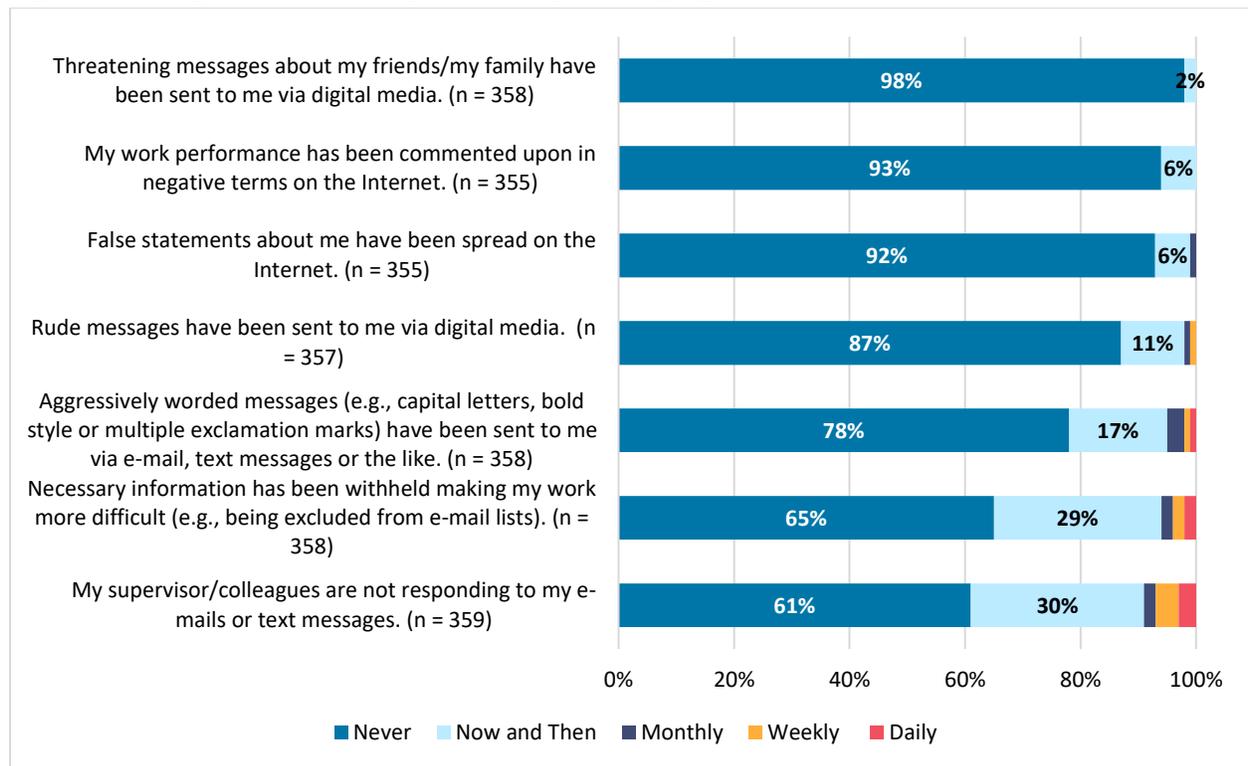
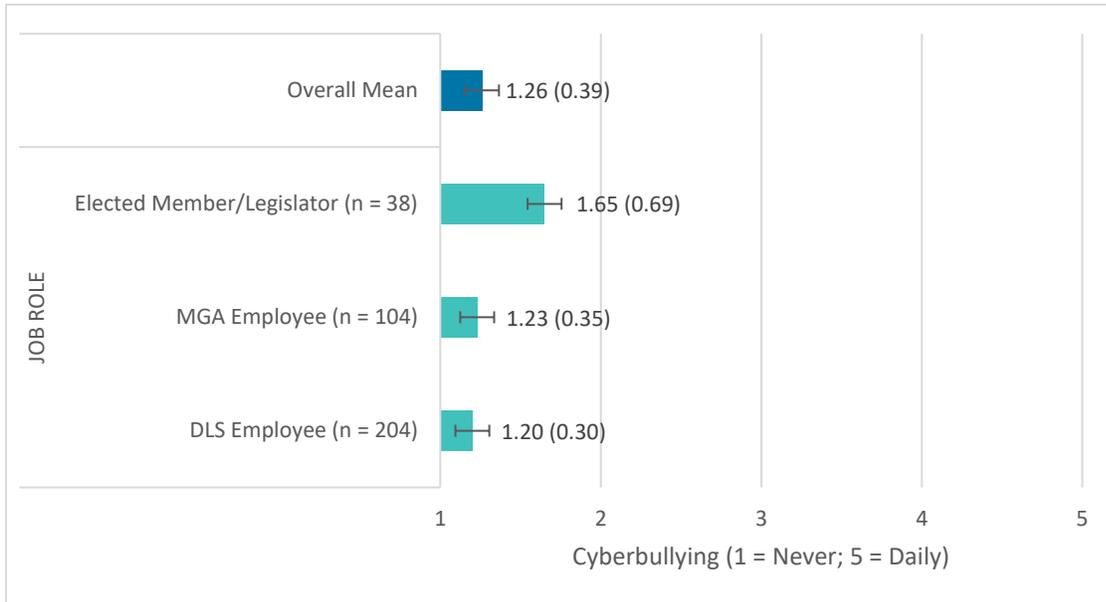


Figure 17: Experiences with Cyberbullying by Job Role



SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENTS

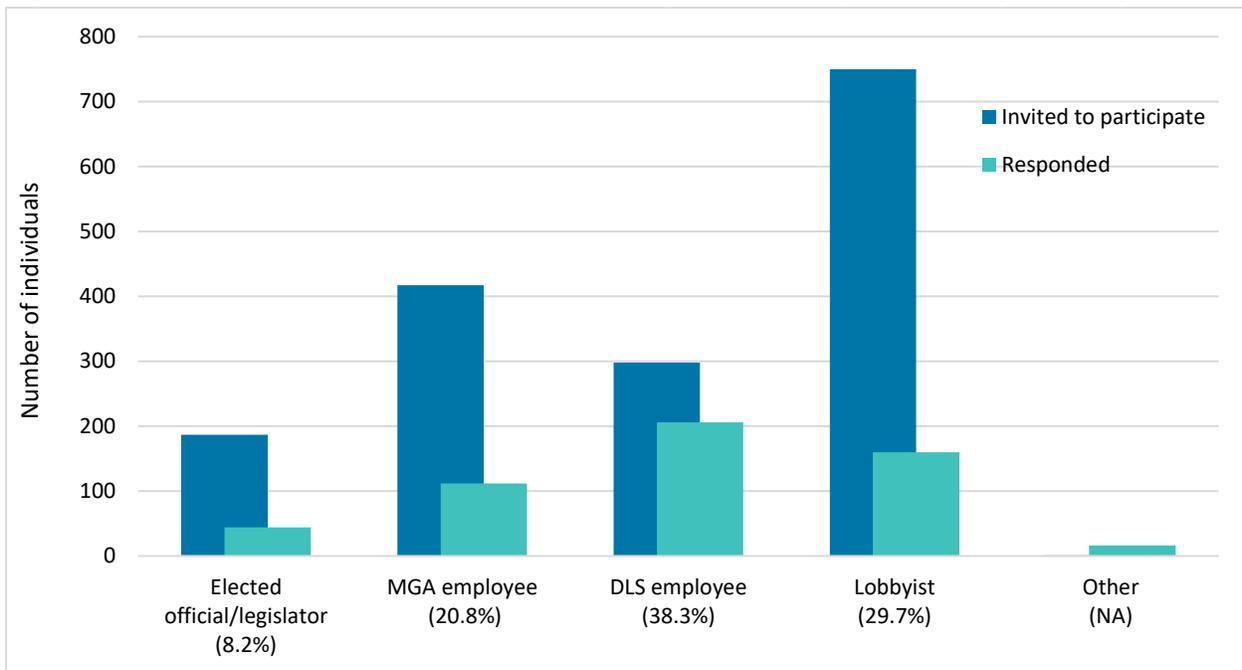
The Workplace Harassment Commission, established in 2018 by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, recommended that DLS conduct a climate survey of MGA and DLS staff and the State Ethics Commission conduct a survey of the lobbyists it regulates. The first such survey was conducted in 2019 and included DLS and MGA staff, elected members/legislators, and lobbyists.

In October 2021, DLS contracted with the Schaefer Center to design and implement an improved workplace climate survey to serve as a benchmark and provide an in-depth understanding of the workplace climate as experienced by elected members/legislators, staff, and lobbyists in their work with the General Assembly. The survey was designed to measure perceptions of diversity, fairness, inclusion, support, and professionalism and to assess overall employee satisfaction and engagement. The results will provide baseline data for the MGA and DLS to plan interventions to mitigate and eradicate harassment, discrimination, and similar concerns and to track changes over time.

The survey was designed by the Schaefer Center in partnership with DLS staff to assess the MGA's climate for diversity, inclusion, fairness, and professionalism. It was systematically developed by drawing on well-validated measures that addressed the concerns raised by DLS in its initial Call for Proposals. The survey was designed so it could be taken on a computer or smart device, such as a smartphone, and it was administered to all working adults within the MGA/DLS complex, including elected members/legislators, MGA and DLS staff, lobbyists, and other nonMGA/nonDLS employees within the complex (except pages and student interns). The number of individuals invited to participate in the survey and who responded to a sufficient number of items to be included in the data analysis are shown in Figure 18, disaggregated by their job roles in the MGA complex.

The survey was open to responses from January 10-31, 2022, and 538 respondents answered a sufficient percentage of the survey (71% or more of the survey) to be included in the data analysis. This produced a response rate of 32.6%; response rates by these job roles are also provided in Figure 18. Throughout this report, the analysis is presented based on the 538 respondents who completed at least 71% of the survey. The number of responses (or "n") for each question differs for many questions because respondents were not required to answer all survey questions and, in some cases, were not shown specific questions based on their answers to other questions.

Figure 18: Number of Individuals Invited to Participate in Survey and of Responses by Job Role



Note: Response rates are shown in parentheses below column labels. “Other” includes one individual who identified as working in a different role than that which DLS specified in their list of survey invitations to be sent, and 16 individuals who identified themselves as working in a different role than elected official/legislator, MGA employee, DLS employee or lobbyist when responding to the survey.

Once the survey was closed, responses were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations. This served as a check that the direction of the relationships on the measures were as expected. Cronbach’s alpha was also used to check internal consistency. Factor analyses were then performed, and the measures identified were constructed from the survey questions and tested using multiple statistical techniques.