



E PLURIBUS UNUM

Survey of the South - 2024

January 2025

METHODOLOGY

On Behalf of E Pluribus Unum, Embold Research conducted a poll of registered voters across the southeastern United States to continue efforts to track the evolving economic, political, and social realities of Southern voters.



Survey n=2,918 white, Black, and Hispanic registered voters in thirteen southern states, from December 6-24, 2024



Respondents were recruited via dynamic online sampling to obtain a sample reflective of the population.



Post-stratification performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2024 presidential vote.



The modeled margin of error is 2.7%

SAMPLE OVERVIEW



53% Women
47% Men
1% Other



62% White
20% Black
15% Hispanic
4% Other



40% Democrat
51% Republican
9% Independent



25% 18-34
23% 35-49
25% 50-64
26% 65+



5% Alabama	4% Kentucky	5% South Carolina	1% West Virginia
2% Arkansas	4% Louisiana	6% Tennessee	
20% Florida	3% Mississippi	22% Texas	
10% Georgia	9% North Carolina	8% Virginia	

KEY FINDINGS

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The newest iteration of the "Survey of the South" continues to prove that the social and political realities of southern voters are deeply complicated, and often tied to generational, partisan, and racial/ethnic identity.

01

Southern voters tend to feel accepted and valued by their communities. At the same time, there is an undercurrent of fear about expressing differing beliefs.

02

Southern voters display high trust in their communities when it comes to information. However, the more intimate these ties, the less likely they are to be with people of other races or ethnicities.

03

Voters across the board continue to express economic stress, either at a personal or communal level, with housing affordability being a focal point for many.

04

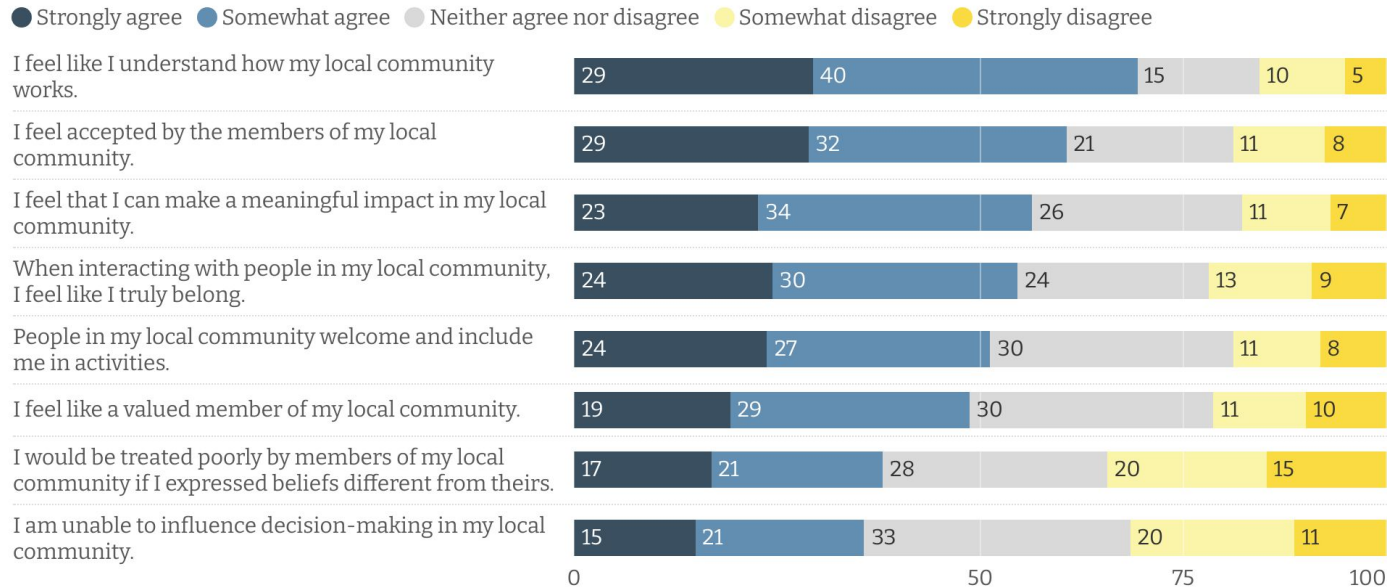
In a highly politicized environment, Trump's reelection is a highly divisive event. The one unifying sentiment is that his second term is likely to create further division.

COMMUNITY AND SENSE OF
BELONGING



While many Southern residents feel positively toward their communities, the relationship between individual and community remains complicated.

Sense of Community



Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your local community.



There are key racial and ethnic differences when it comes to perceptions of a person's value in their community.

Sense of Community by Race/Ethnicity

Total "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree"



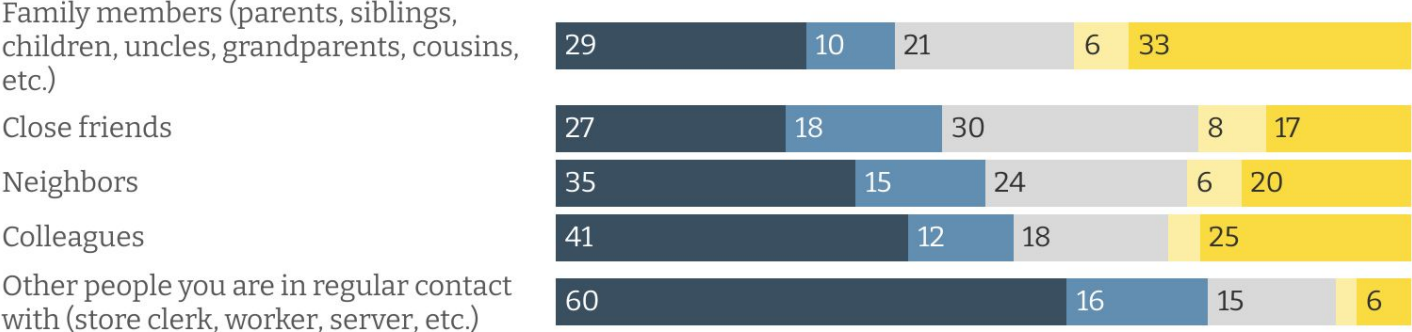
Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your local community.



While wider social circles of Southern voters tend to be diverse, the more intimate the connection, the less likely respondents have multiple connections outside of their race or ethnicity.

Community Connections

● 6 or more ● 4-5 ● 2-3 ● 1 ● None



Q: How many of your family, close friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances are from another race or ethnicity than you?

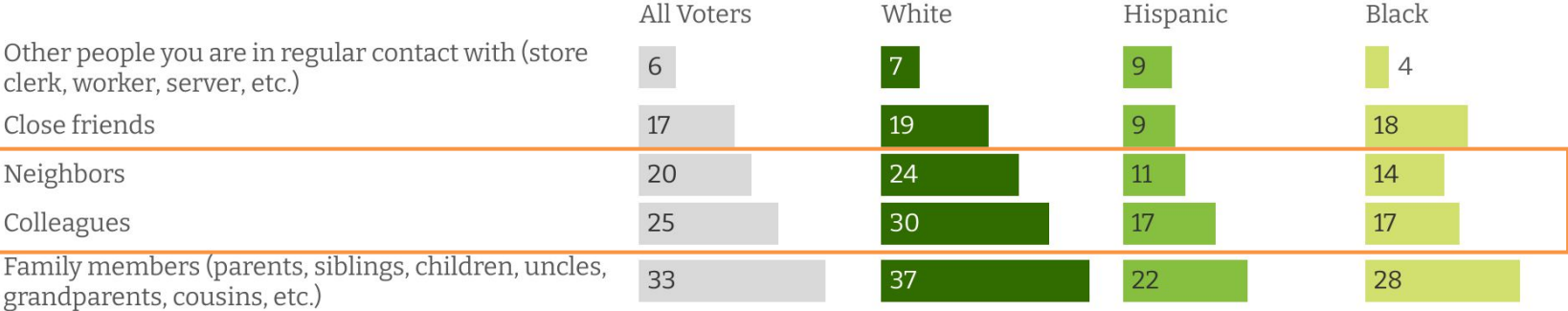


While wider social circles of Southern voters tend to be diverse, the more intimate the connection, the less likely respondents have multiple connections outside of their race or ethnicity.

Community Connections by Race/Ethnicity

Total "None"

● All Voters ● White ● Hispanic ● Black



Q: How many of your family, close friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances are from another race or ethnicity than you?



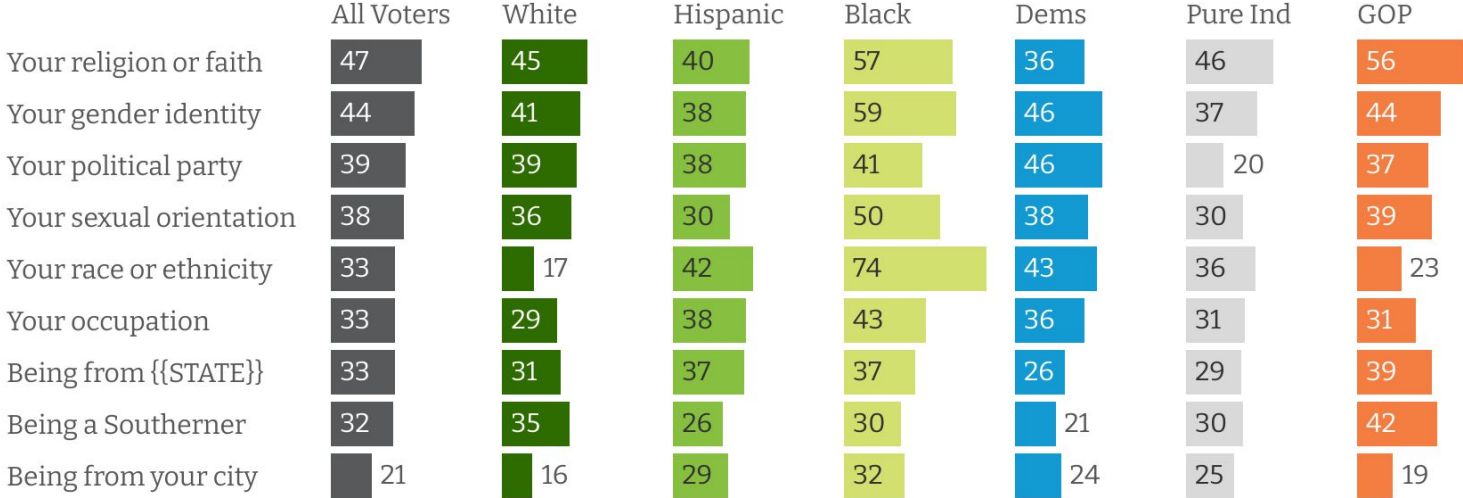
CORE VALUES AND
BELIEFS



Religion, or faith, emerges as a central aspect of the personal identity of Southern voters.

Key Components of Identity

Total "Extremely important" and "Very important"

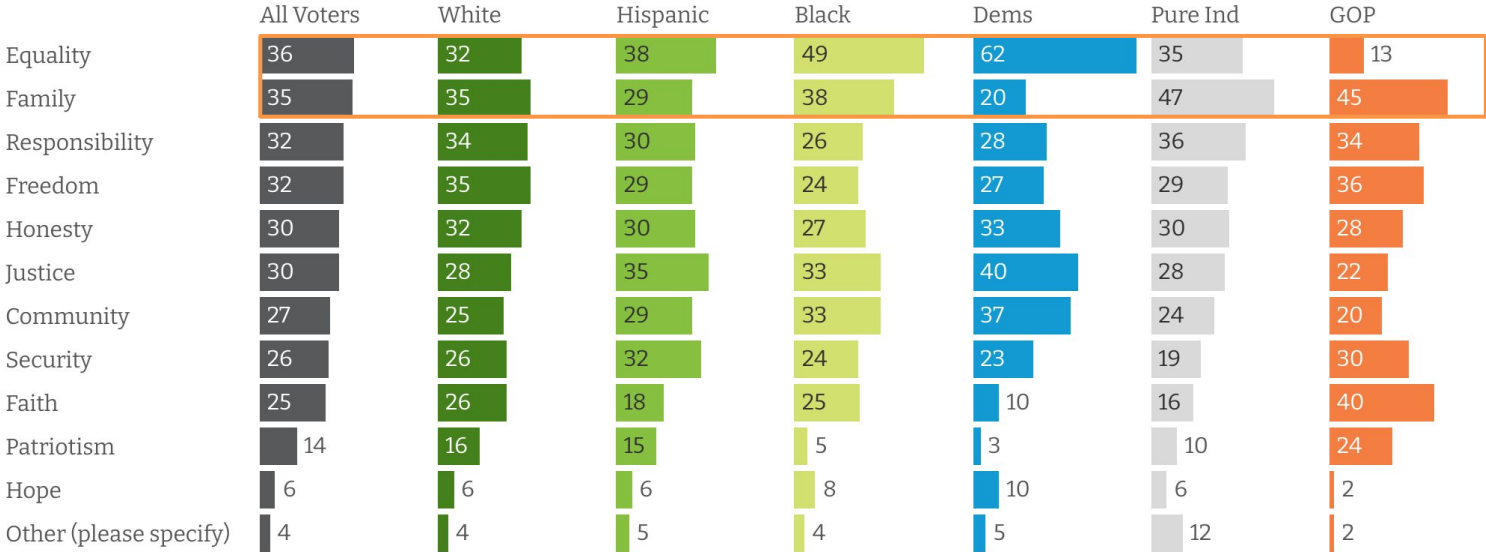


Q: Every person has different roles and group memberships that shape their identity. How important are each of the following aspects in shaping your personal identity?



When it comes to key values, Southerners are divided on which ones are the most important for maintaining strong communities.

Top Community Values



Q: Focus now on yourself. In your opinion, which THREE of the following values are most important for maintaining strong local communities?

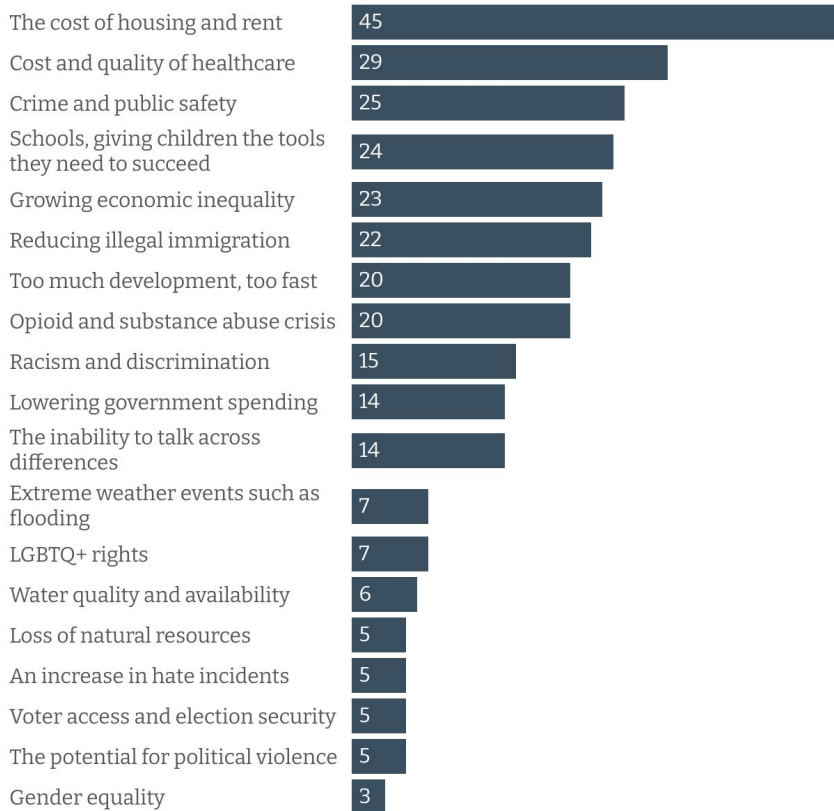


PERCEPTIONS OF SYSTEMIC
BARRIERS



Southern voters consider the cost of housing and rent to be one of the most central challenges facing their communities.

Community Challenges

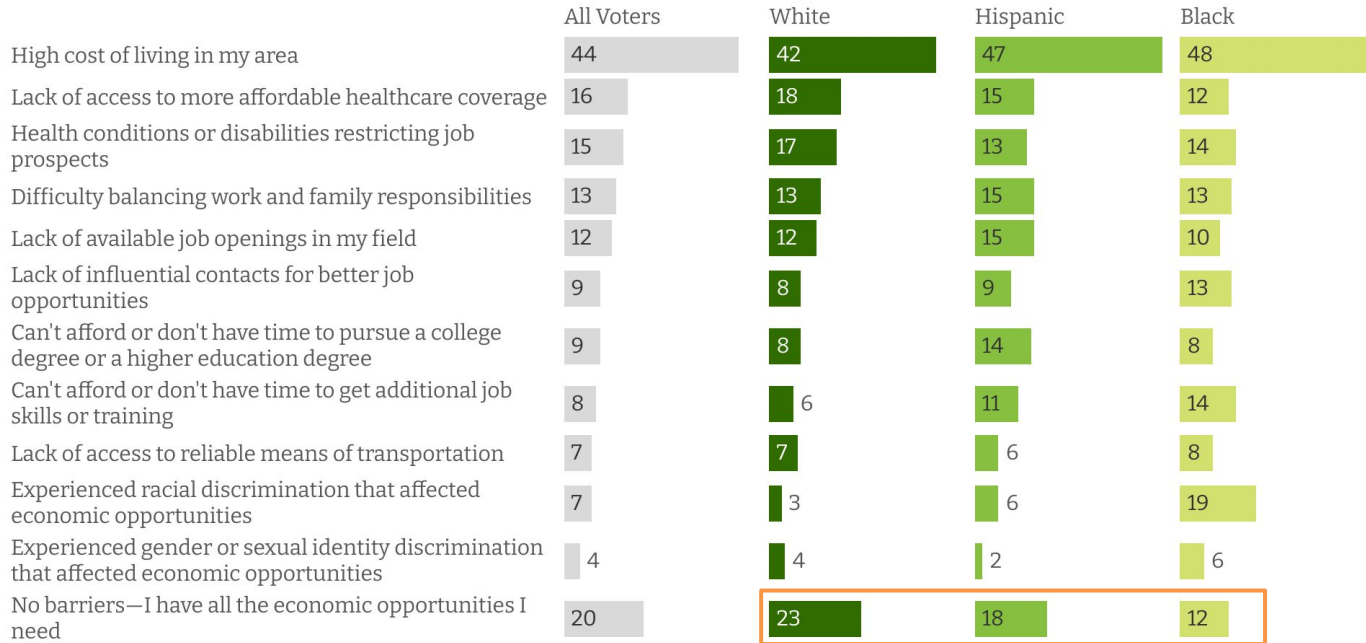


Q: Below is a list of issues that people sometimes consider to be challenges in their communities. In your opinion, what are the THREE biggest challenges in your community? Please select UP TO THREE.



Southerners identify cost of living as the most significant barrier to accessing economic opportunity.

Barriers to economic opportunity



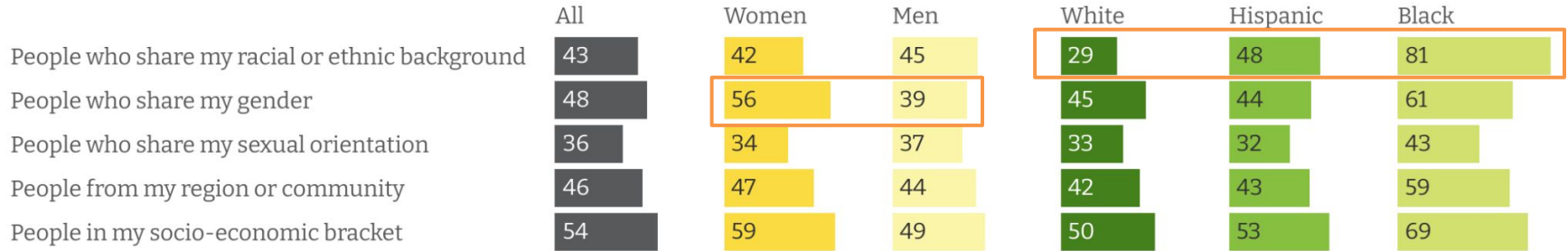
Q: There are different factors that may serve as barriers to economic opportunity. What are the top two hurdles you face when trying to improve your financial situation? Please select TWO.



When assessing the groups of people who are being “left behind,” respondents from marginalized identity groups are most likely to say that their communities are the ones being forgotten.

Perceptions of Who is Being “Left Behind”

Total combined “Yes, strongly feel this way” and “Yes, somewhat feel this way”



Q: In the United States, do you feel that individuals who share the following characteristics with you are being left behind? Please select the option that best represents your viewpoint for each category.



When asked about their personal financial situation, education, and career, Southerners in roughly equal proportions say they are either, better off, worse off, or about the same as those around them on a local, state, and national level.

“I feel that I have made decisions that make me better off in these situations.” - *Woman, 35 to 49, Black, Strong Democrat, SC*

“Based on my community, I think I am doing better financially than others based solely on my employment status and industry. The problem is, I feel like I am barely keeping my head above water.” - *Man, 35-49, Black, Independent lean Democrat, LA*

“I feel better off than many, but living paycheck to paycheck without being able to get ahead like the rich making our laws.” - *Woman, 50 to 64, white, Strong Democrat, WV*

“I'm much worse off because I'm surrounded by baby boomers who 1) have 80% of the wealth, 2) own 90% of the property, 3) refuse to retire and give up higher paying jobs 4) charge out the f[***] a[**] for rent because "they earned it"” - *Man, 35 to 49, white, Strong Democrat, AL*



Majorities of southern voters hold the mindset that some people will be left behind.

Perceptions of Inequality

● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree

Moving forward, some groups will be left behind in the United States.



Creating opportunities for one group of people often occurs at the expense of other groups.



Today in America, it seems that the rights of Americans of color are better protected than the rights of white Americans.



0 50 75 100

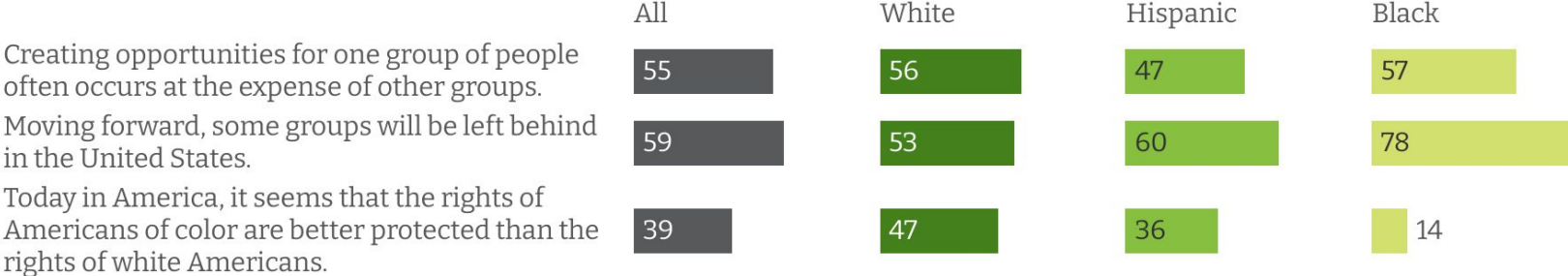
Q: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following:



There exists a clear racial and ethnic division in how voters believe the country works and will work moving forward.

Perceptions of Inequality by Race/Ethnicity

Total "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree"



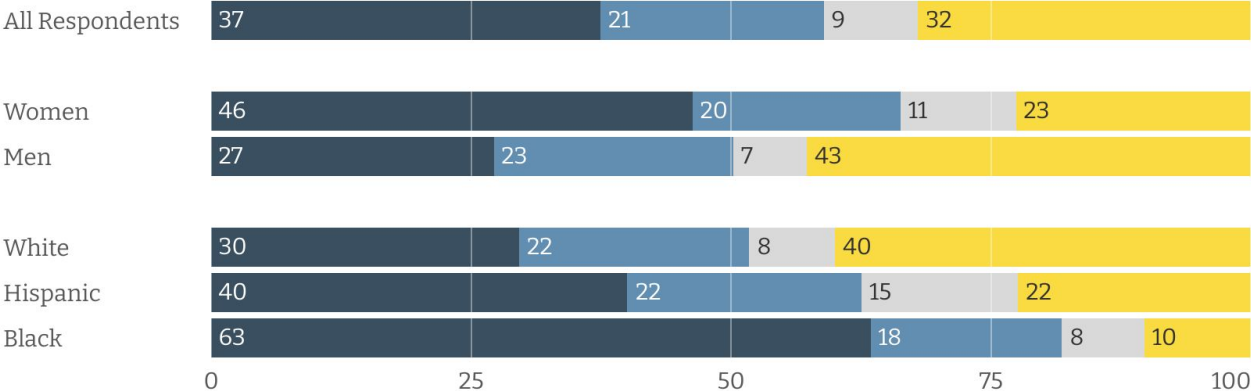
Q: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following:



Southerners are divided on the presence of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in higher education spaces.

Perceptions of DEI Programs in Higher Education

- Diversity and inclusion programs are important for addressing systemic inequalities in education.
- Systemic inequalities need to be addressed, but DEI programs are not the best way to achieve that goal.
- DEI programs go too far and unfairly disadvantage some groups, so fines and penalties are necessary.
- Not sure



Q: Some political leaders, including Donald Trump, have proposed ending diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in colleges and universities. They also want to fine schools that promote DEI and use the money to compensate people who claim these programs have harmed them. Which statement comes closest to your view?

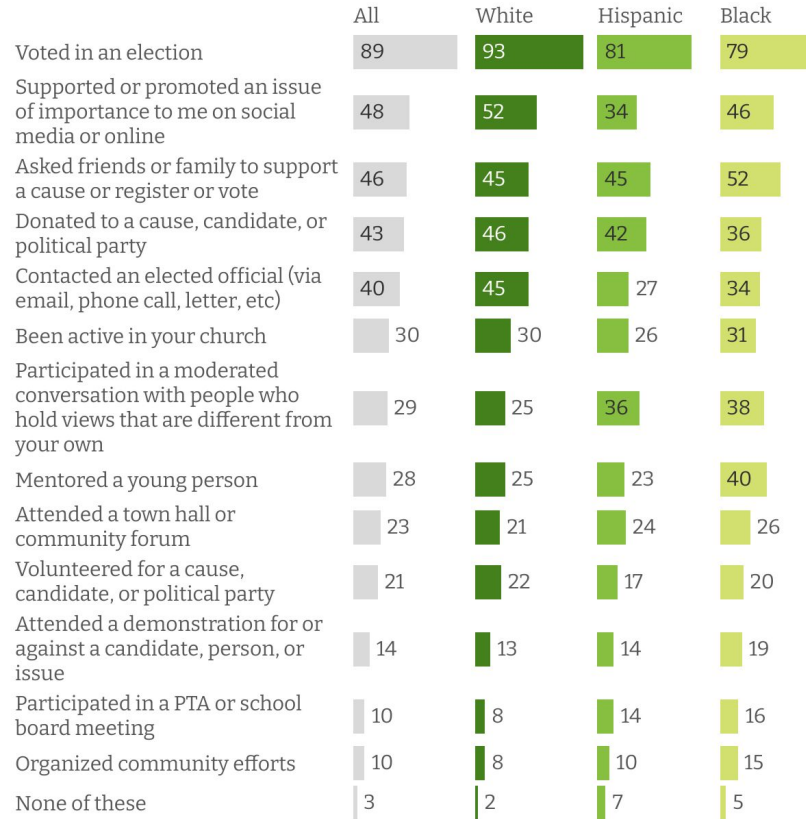


CIVIC AND POLITICAL
ENGAGEMENT



Southerners report high rates of civic engagement in the past year, with the most common civic action being voting.

Common Forms of Civic Engagement



Q: These are some things that some people do to get involved and make changes in their community. Which of the following have you done in the last year? Select all that apply.



Respondents identify two central barriers that prevent individuals from being effective in making change in their communities.

Lack of time or motivation:

“Not having enough time to research things because we have to spend so much time working to afford basic necessities” -*Woman, 35 to 49, Hispanic, Weak Democrat, GA*

“People refuse to get involved. They sit back and want others to do instead.” -*Woman, 50 to 64, white, Independent lean Republican, AL*

Apathy and lack of empathy:

“The idea that what we do on a personal level will not have a big impact [on the] big picture. It feels hopeless. Getting people to care and set time aside from their personal/daily responsibilities” -*Woman, 18 to 34, Hispanic, Strong Democrat, VA*

“Any sense of community we may have had naturally was beaten out of us, replaced with dangerous rugged individualism. people believe they dont [sic] need community and or cannot count on others. people are worked so hard they have no energy to spare.” - *Woman, 50-64, Black, Strong Democrat, FL*



On a systemic level, respondents overwhelmingly point to organizational and government corruption as a central barrier to change.

“Paid for politicians keep individuals out of the process and too many hoops to jump through for organizations to participate.” -*Woman, 65+, white, Weak Republican, GA*

“The federal government, mainstream media pushing agendas that don't agree with 90% of the population” -*Man, 50 to 64, Hispanic, Pure Independent, GA*

“Lack of education in what exactly they are voting for/against. Single issue voters who don't take the time to educate themselves about the candidates or all the issues. Social media allowing foreign interference in our elections, lack of caring on the behalf of the voters and a lack of integrity on behalf of the candidates.” -*Woman, 50 to 64, white, Strong Democrat, TN*

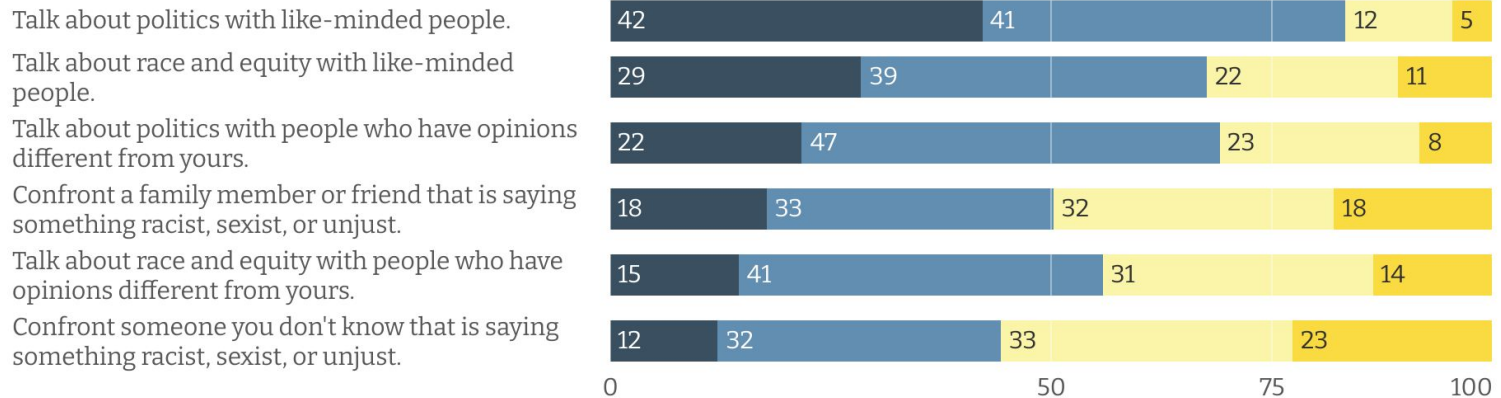
“This country was built on racism. Where one skin color gets you privileges and any other skin color doesn't.” -*Woman, 50-64, Black, Strong Democrat, NC*



A significant portion of Southerners report often discussing politics with like-minded people, but when it comes to approaching more difficult topics or opposing viewpoints, the frequency drops off significantly.

Frequency of Conversations around Race and Politics

● Often ● Sometimes ● Rarely ● Never



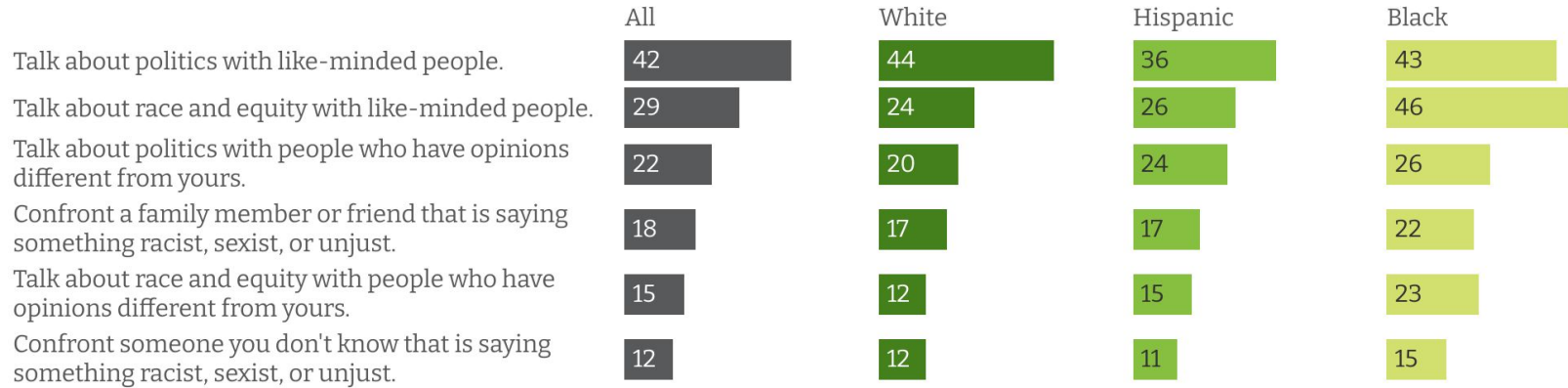
Q: How often do you find yourself doing...?



The frequency of these types of discussions varies significantly across ideological and racial/ethnic lines.

Frequency of Conversations around Race and Politics

Total "Often"



Q: How often do you find yourself doing...?



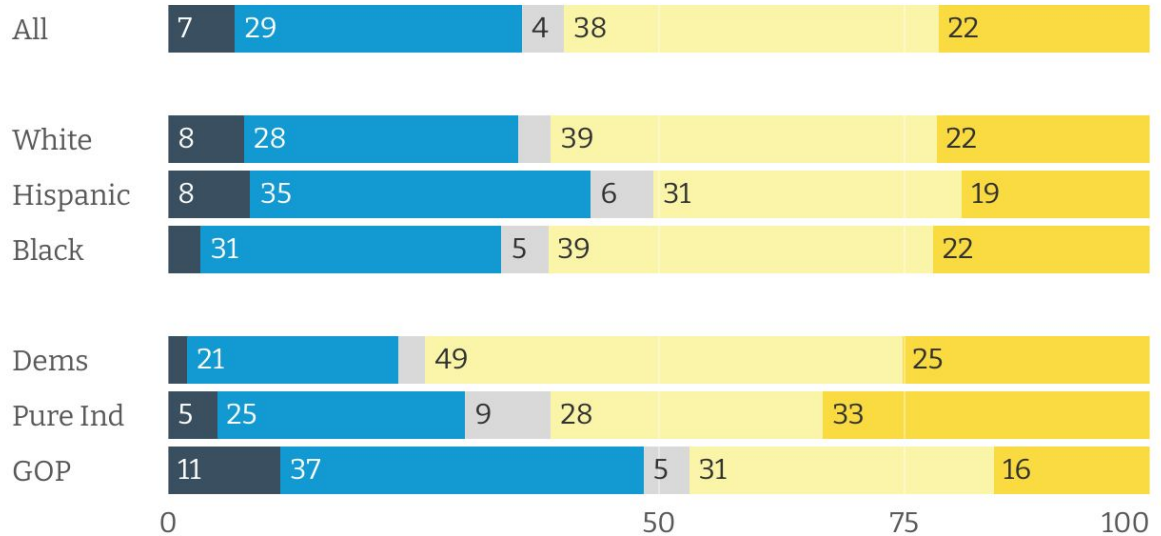
POST-ELECTION PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY
AND POLITICS



Few Southern voters believe that democracy is currently working in the United States.

Health of American Democracy

- Strong and working well
- Facing challenges but still functioning
- Not sure
- In trouble and at risk of failing
- No longer functioning as a democracy



When asked to describe what democracy means, respondents were roughly divided across three central ideas.

Freedom and liberty

“Freedom to do what I want without government interference” - *Man, 65+, Hispanic, Independent lean Republican, TX*

Majority rule and equal representation

“Democracy should mean that each citizen has a voice in matters that affect them. In a Democracy, every citizen should be treated Equally, Equitably and Fairly regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic status.” - *Man, 50-64, Black, Strong Democrat, MS*

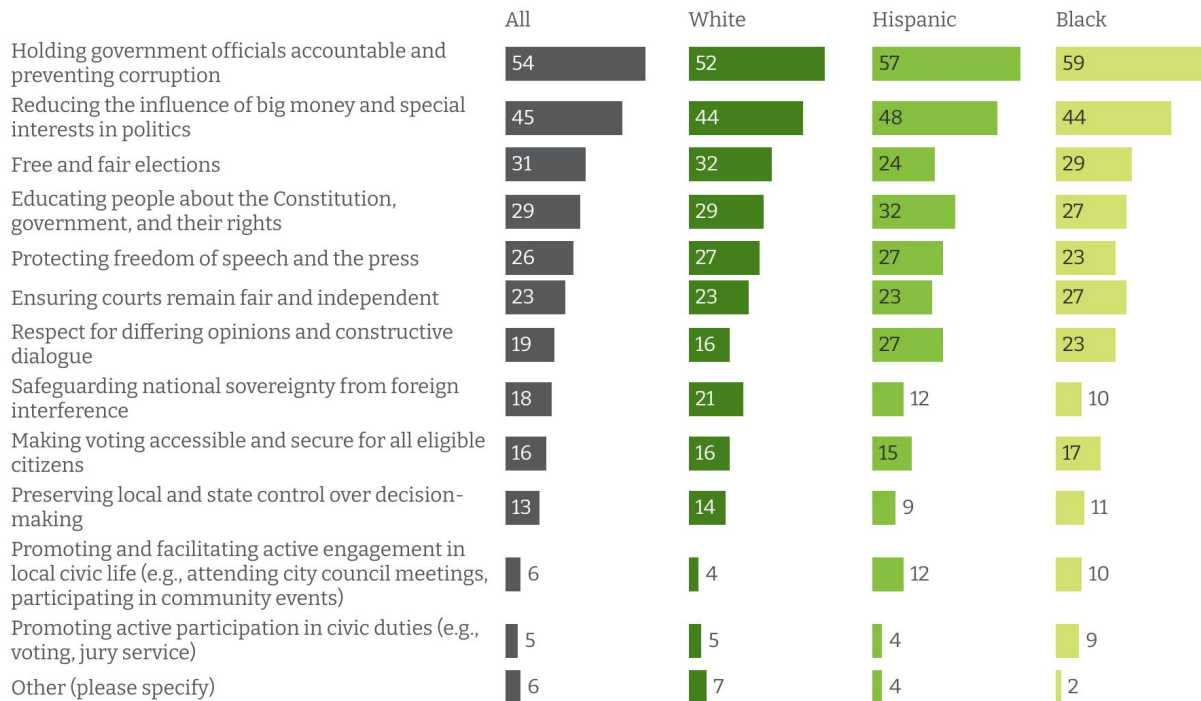
Working for all, not the few

“Democracy to me means Power to the People, not the government. It means We The People are the BOSSES and those we elect are our employees.” - *Man, 65+, white, Strong Republican, SC*



Government accountability and the reduction of special interests in politics rise to the top as the most important aspects of maintaining a healthy democracy.

Key Components of a Healthy Democracy

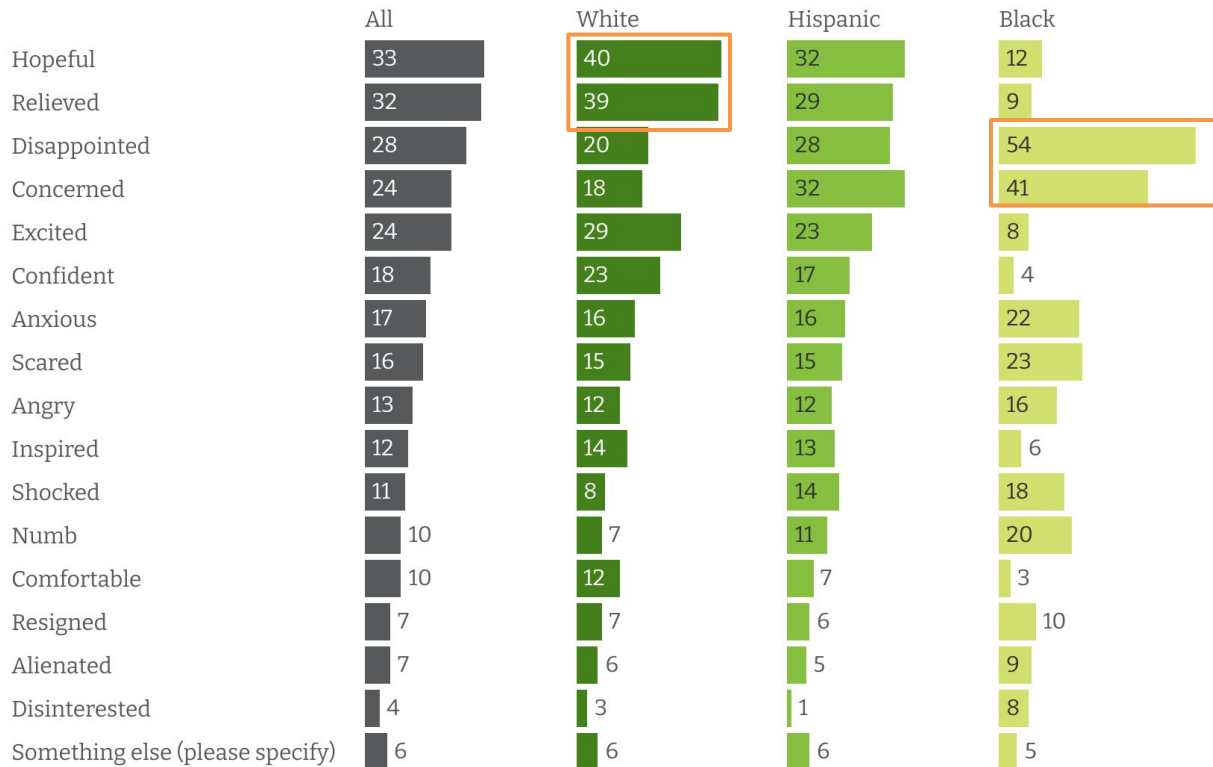


Q: Which of the following do you think is most important to maintaining a healthy democracy? Select up to 3.



Southern voters feel a wide array of emotions in the face of the 2024 presidential election results.

Feelings toward the 2024 Election

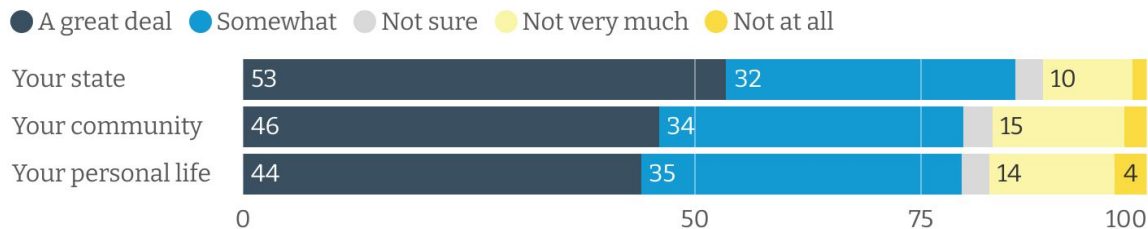


Q: Which of the following best describes how you feel about the 2024 presidential election results? Select up to THREE.



Large portions of Southern voters believe that their personal lives, communities, and states will be at least somewhat – if not largely – affected by the outcome of the 2024 election.

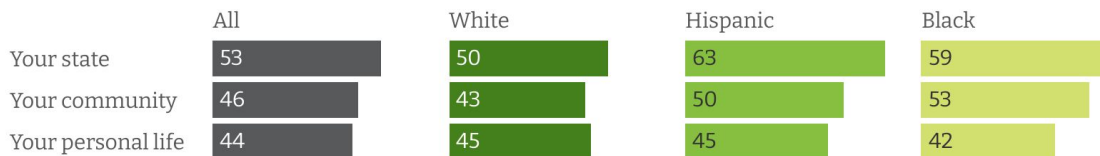
Regional Impacts of Trump's Reelection



Q: How much do you think the outcome of the 2024 Presidential election will affect_____?

Regional Impacts of Trump's Reelection by Race/Ethnicity

Total "A great deal"

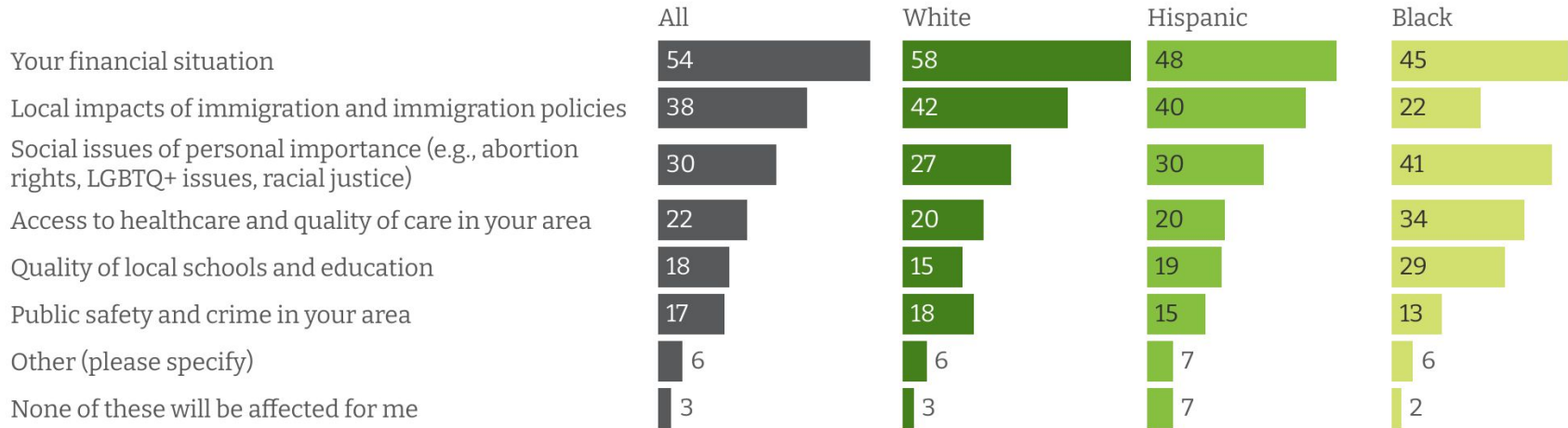


Q: How much do you think the outcome of the 2024 Presidential election will affect_____?



Southerners believe that their financial situation will be one of the top areas in their life most affected by Trump's reelection.

Areas Most Affected by Trump's Reelection

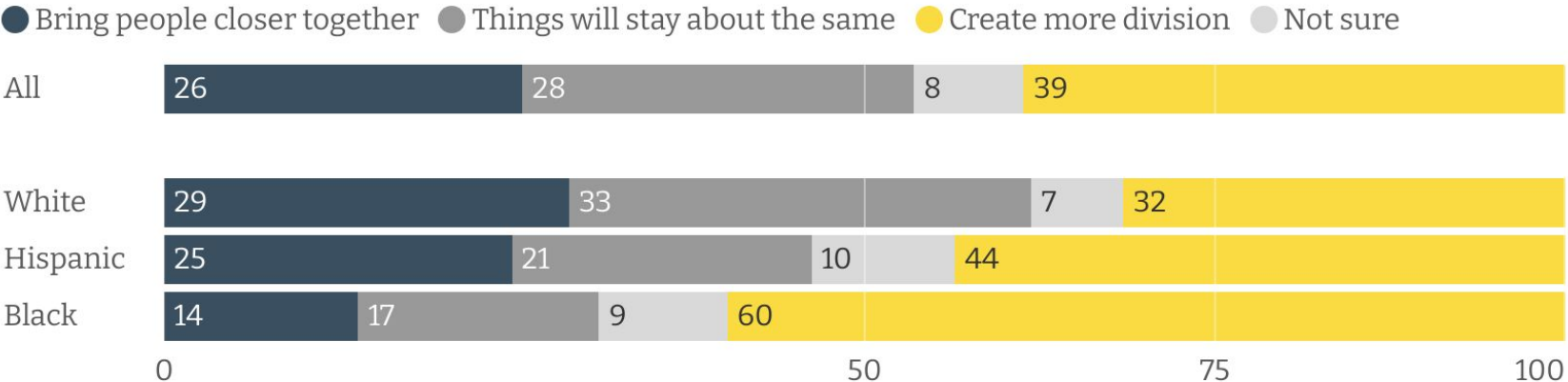


Q: Which of the following areas in your life do you expect to be most affected by Trump's reelection? Select up to TWO.



Despite some positive emotions arising from Trump's reelection, few voters believe that his return to office will bring people together.

Impact of Trump's Reelection on Community



Q: Do you think Trump's reelection will bring people in your community closer together or create more division?

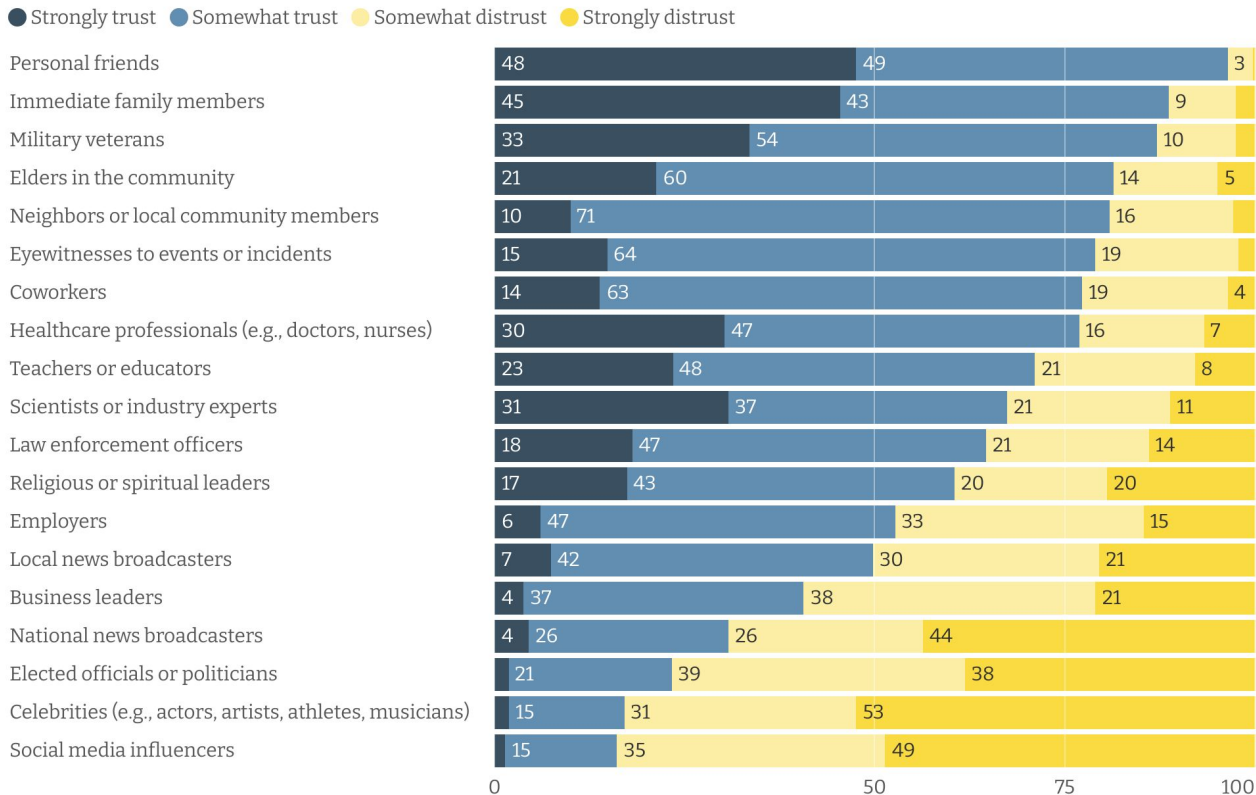


TRUSTED SOURCES AND ACCESS TO
INFORMATION



Southern voters display high trust in their close circles when it comes to providing news and information.

Trusted Information Sources



Q: For each of the following people or groups, please indicate how much you trust the information they provide.



In the case where trusted sources conflict, the most common reaction for Southern voters is to rely on personal research into the topic.

“Whoever has either more details/ stronger information, OR whoever has actual verifiable information that they can back up with sources” - *Woman, 18-34, Hispanic, Pure Independent, TX*

“I research trusted sites, and consider who has a more accurate news history.” - *Woman, 65+, strong Democrat, Hispanic/Latino, TX*

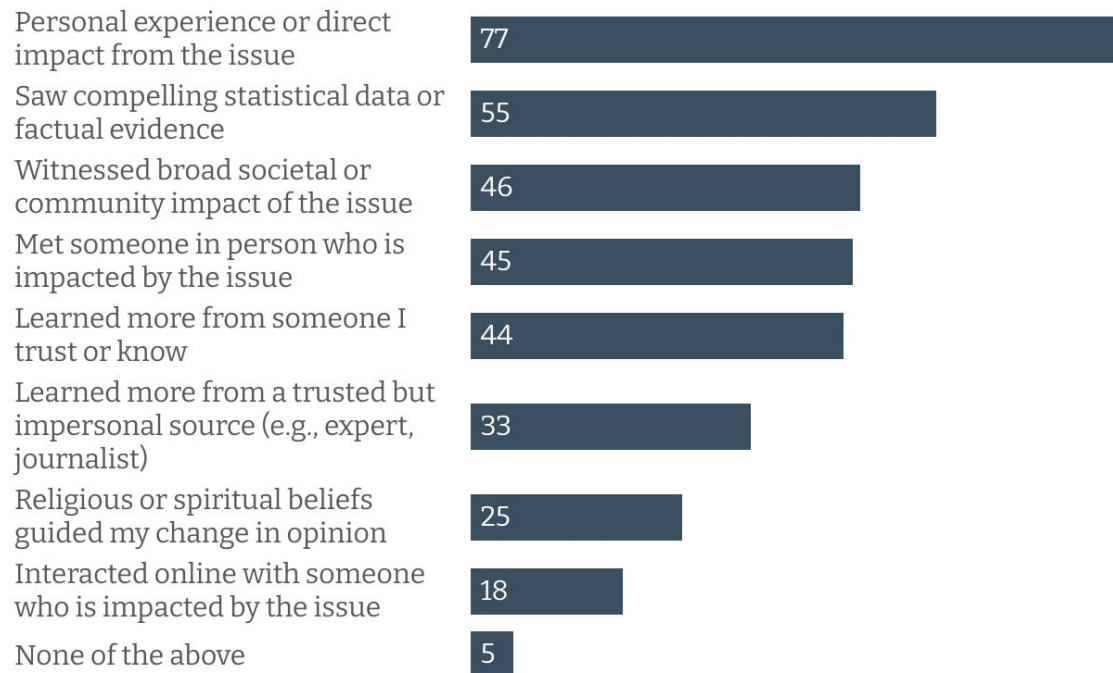
“Intuition” - *Man, 50 to 64, white, Strong Democrat, NC*

“I trust what the Bible says. I am discerning in my news media intake.” - *Woman, 50 to 64, white, Strong Republican, MS*



**Personal
experience
creates the most
profound
influence on
voters' opinions
on social issues.**

Top Influences in a Change of Opinion

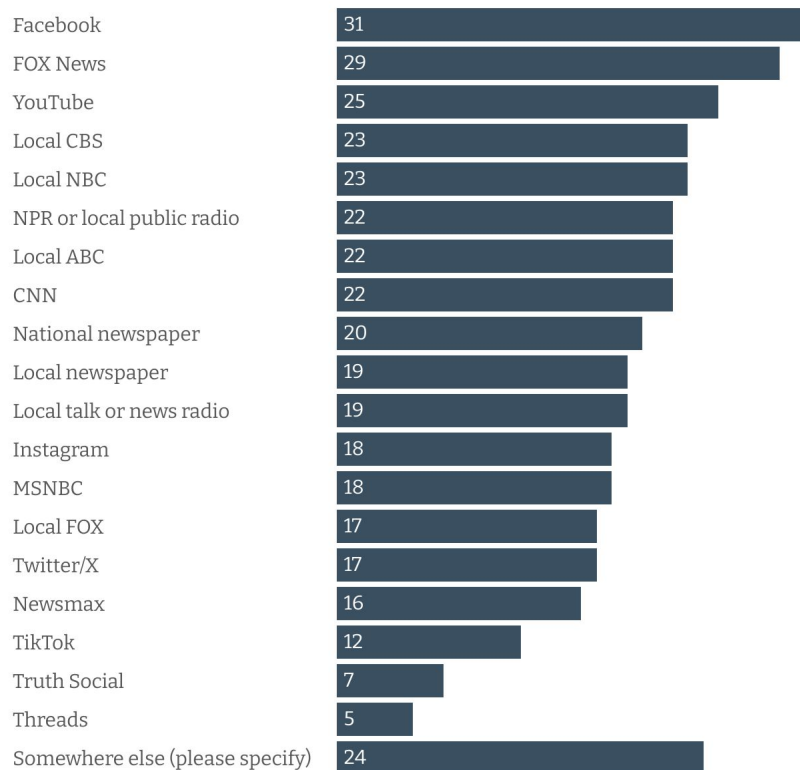


Q: What factors have influenced you to change your stance or opinion on a social issue? Select all that apply.



Southerners get their news from a variety of sources, but significant portions rely on social media and local news outlets.

Top News Sources

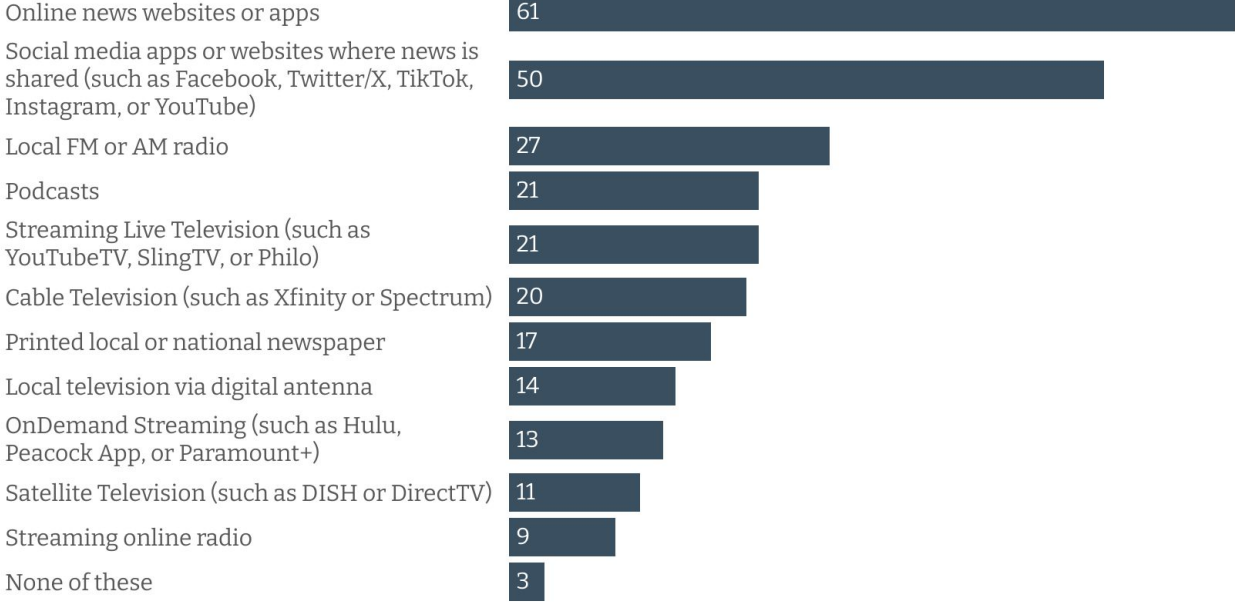


Q: How do you get most of your news about national and local politics and issues? Please select all that apply.



When it comes to the types of channels people use to access news, voters largely rely on online news and social media sources.

Top Information Channels



Q: Where do you primarily watch, read, or hear news about national and local issues? Please select all that apply.



CONCLUSION

This most recent iteration of the Survey of the South seeks to continue to provide rich and relevant data about the realities of Southern Americans. This research has demonstrated that Southern voters continue to perceive and interact with their communities in nuanced ways, and that these perceptions are often connected to voters' racial/ethnic, gender, and partisan identity.

As E Pluribus Unum continues its work to address long standing systemic racial and economic barriers in the South, this research proves instrumental in: 1) revealing how Southern voters perceive and experience these barriers, 2) developing pertinent strategies to further positive community change, especially in diverse communities, and 3) identifying key demographic groups who serve as messengers or catalysts within their communities.

About Embold Research

Fast. Accurate. Affordable.

Who We Are

Embold Research is the nonpartisan unit of Change Research, founded in 2017 with the mission of improving American democracy by making public opinion insights more accessible to forward-thinking leaders in all sectors of society. We are a team of pollsters, engineers, data scientists, and communications professionals. Our team brings expertise in methodological innovation, research design, public opinion, and strategic consulting.



Our Unique Approach

All of our surveys are completed online, but we do **not** use panels! We recruit new participants for every poll using targeted online advertisements on websites and social media platforms, and using SMS text-to-web.



Our Products

In addition to custom polling, we offer:

- **Magnify** AI targeting (custom modeling)
- **Voices** qualitative research (in-depth interviews and text-based chats)
- **ReSpark** Renewable energy project viability and tracking (standardized and cost-effective polling)



MAGNIFY AI TARGETING

Magnify AI Targeting allows you to turn the results from **this poll** into action.

Magnify AI Targeting combines the latest AI and Change's database of 250M data points to build custom targeting scores with as few as 500 survey responses. Magnify achieves better accuracy polling 500 respondents than the industry standard of 1,500 respondents.



Identify

Find the exact individuals who belong to your target audience



Contact

Target your ads, mail and field to your target audience



Maximize Resources

Avoid wasting money and time trying to target the wrong people



In Reach

Target voters in both big and small geographies

VOICES IDIS

Voices IDIs allow you to more *deeply* understand how to communicate with your audience.

On-Target

We recruit directly from your survey, so we ensure we are speaking to precisely the correct audience.

Fast

Since participants are already recruited, we can complete your IDIs in a matter of days.

Dig Deep

IDIs allow us to unpack the *why* and create messages that achieve maximum impact.

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?