

E PLURIBUS UNUM

Survey of the South - 2024

January 2025

METHODOLOGY



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.

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.



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 2% Arkansas 20% Florida 10% Georgia

4% Kentucky 4% Louisiana 3% Mississippi 9% North Carolina 8% Virginia

5% South Carolina 6% Tennessee 22% Texas

1% West Virginia

KEY FINDINGS

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.

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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.

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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

🕒 Strongly agree 🕒 Somewhat agree 🥚 Neither agree nor disagree 🥚 Somewhat disagree 😑 Strongly disagree

I feel like I understand how my local community works.	29	40)		15	10) 5
I feel accepted by the members of my local community.	29	32			21	11	8
I feel that I can make a meaningful impact in my local community.	23	34		26		11	7
When interacting with people in my local community, I feel like I truly belong.	24	30		24		13	9
People in my local community welcome and include me in activities.	24	27		30		11	8
I feel like a valued member of my local community.	19	29		30		11	10
I would be treated poorly by members of my local community if I expressed beliefs different from theirs.	17	21	28		20	1	5
I am unable to influence decision-making in my local community.	15	21	33		20		11
	0			50	75	5	100

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

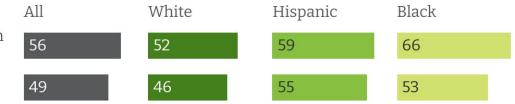
There are key racial and ethnic differences when it comes to perceptions of a person's value in their community.

Sense of Community by Race/Ethnicity

Total "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree"

I feel that I can make a meaningful impact in my local community.

I feel like a valued member of my local community.



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

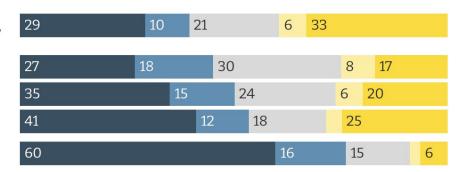
Family members (parents, siblings, children, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc.)

Close friends

Neighbors

Colleagues

Other people you are in regular contact with (store clerk, worker, server, etc.)



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
Other people you are in regular contact with (store clerk, worker, server, etc.)	6	7	9	4
Close friends	17	19	9	18
Neighbors	20	24	11	14
Colleagues	25	30	17	17
Family members (parents, siblings, children, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc.)	33	37	22	28

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

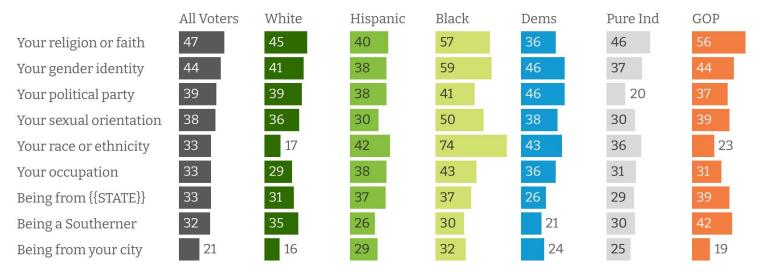


CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

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

	All Voters	White	Hispanic	Black	Dems	Pure Ind	GOP
Equality	36	32	38	49	62	35	13
Family	35	35	29	38	20	47	45
Responsibility	32	34	30	26	28	36	34
Freedom	32	35	29	24	27	29	36
Honesty	30	32	30	27	33	30	28
Justice	30	28	35	33	40	28	22
Community	27	25	29	33	37	24	20
Security	26	26	32	24	23	19	30
Faith	25	26	18	25	10	16	40
Patriotism	14	16	15	5	3	10	24
Норе	6	6	6	8	10	6	2
Other (please specify)	4	4	5	4	5	12	2

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 BARREERS

Community Challenges

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

The cost of housing and rent 45 29 Cost and quality of healthcare 25 Crime and public safety Schools, giving children the tools 24 they need to succeed 23 Growing economic inequality 22 Reducing illegal immigration 20 Too much development, too fast 20 Opioid and substance abuse crisis Racism and discrimination 15 14 Lowering government spending The inability to talk across 14 differences Extreme weather events such as flooding LGBTO+rights Water quality and availability Loss of natural resources An increase in hate incidents Voter access and election security 5 The potential for political violence 5 Gender equality

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.

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

Barriers to economic opportunity

	All Voters	White	Hispanic	Black
High cost of living in my area	44	42	47	48
Lack of access to more affordable healthcare coverage	16	18	15	12
Health conditions or disabilities restricting job prospects	15	17	13	14
Difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities	13	13	15	13
Lack of available job openings in my field	12	12	15	10
Lack of influential contacts for better job opportunities	9	8	9	13
Can't afford or don't have time to pursue a college degree or a higher education degree	9	8	14	8
Can't afford or don't have time to get additional job skills or training	8	6	11	14
Lack of access to reliable means of transportation	7	7	6	8
Experienced racial discrimination that affected economic opportunities	7	3	6	19
Experienced gender or sexual identity discrimination that affected economic opportunities	4	4	2	6
No barriers—I have all the economic opportunities I need	20	23	18	12

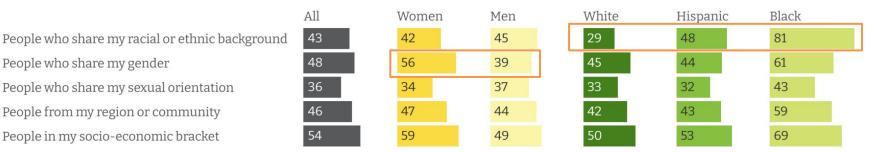


Q: There are different factors that may serve as barriers to economic opportunity. What are the top two hurdles you face when trying to improve your financial situation? Please select TWO.

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.

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

32		27			1	9		9		12	
31		25			16		11		17		
01	10		10		0	77					
21 0	19		15	50	8	37	75				100



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

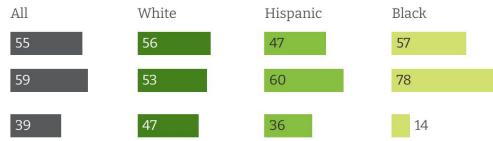
Perceptions of Inequality by Race/Ethnicity

Total "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree"

Creating opportunities for one group of people often occurs at the expense of other groups. Moving forward, some groups will be left behind in the United States.

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

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

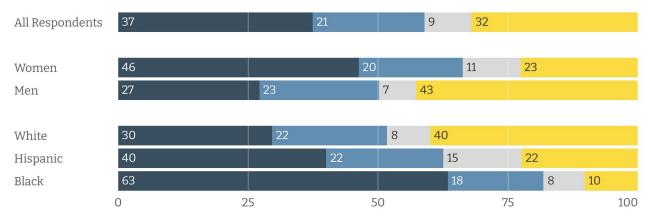




Southerners are divided on the presence of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in higher education spaces.

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

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

	All	White	Hispanic	Black
Voted in an election	89	93	81	79
Supported or promoted an issue of importance to me on social media or online	48	52	34	46
Asked friends or family to support a cause or register or vote	46	45	45	52
Donated to a cause, candidate, or political party	43	46	42	36
Contacted an elected official (via email, phone call, letter, etc)	40	45	27	34
Been active in your church	30	30	26	31
Participated in a moderated conversation with people who hold views that are different from your own	29	25	36	38
Mentored a young person	28	25	23	40
Attended a town hall or community forum	23	21	24	26
Volunteered for a cause, candidate, or political party	21	22	17	20
Attended a demonstration for or against a candidate, person, or issue	14	13	14	19
Participated in a PTA or school board meeting	10	8	14	16
Organized community efforts	10	8	10	15
None of these	3	2	7	5

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

Talk about politics with like-minded people.

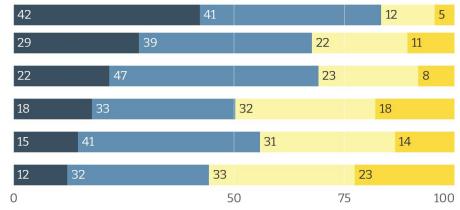
Talk about race and equity with like-minded people.

Talk about politics with people who have opinions different from yours.

Confront a family member or friend that is saying something racist, sexist, or unjust.

Talk about race and equity with people who have opinions different from yours.

Confront someone you don't know that is saying something racist, sexist, or unjust.

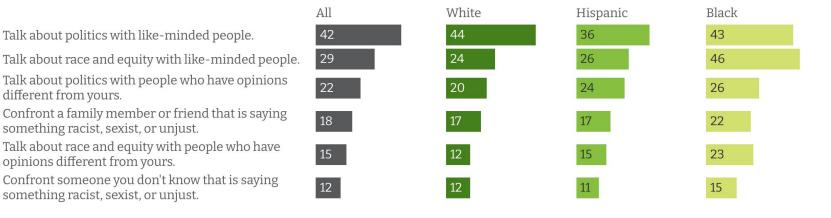


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The frequency of these types of discussions varies significantly across ideological and racial/ethnic lines.

Frequency of Conversations around Race and Politics

Total "Often"



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

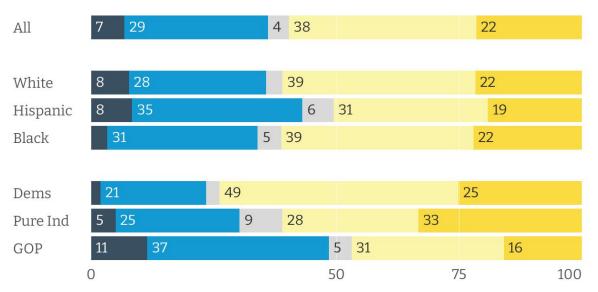
POST-ELECTION PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS

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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*



Key Components of a Healthy Democracy

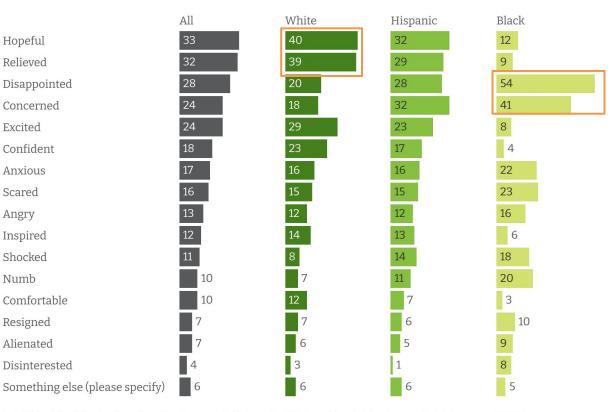
Government accountability and the reduction of special interests in politics rise to the top as the most important aspects of maintaining a healthy democracy.

	All	White	Hispanic	Black
Holding government officials accountable and preventing corruption	54	52	57	59
Reducing the influence of big money and special interests in politics	45	44	48	44
Free and fair elections	31	32	24	29
Educating people about the Constitution, government, and their rights	29	29	32	27
Protecting freedom of speech and the press	26	27	27	23
Ensuring courts remain fair and independent	23	23	23	27
Respect for differing opinions and constructive dialogue	19	16	27	23
Safeguarding national sovereignty from foreign interference	18	21	12	10
Making voting accessible and secure for all eligible citizens	16	16	15	17
Preserving local and state control over decision- making	13	14	9	11
Promoting and facilitating active engagement in local civic life (e.g., attending city council meetings, participating in community events)	6	4	12	10
Promoting active participation in civic duties (e.g., voting, jury service)	5	5	4	9
Other (please specify)	6	7	4	2

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

Feelings toward the 2024 Election

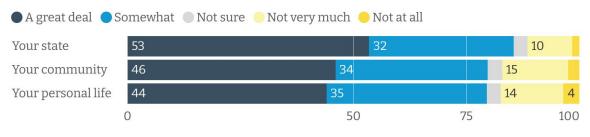
Southern voters feel a wide array of emotions in the face of the 2024 presidential election results.



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

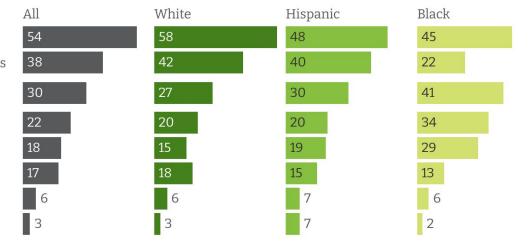
Your financial situation

Local impacts of immigration and immigration policies Social issues of personal importance (e.g., abortion rights, LGBTQ+ issues, racial justice) Access to healthcare and quality of care in your area Quality of local schools and education

Public safety and crime in your area

Other (please specify)

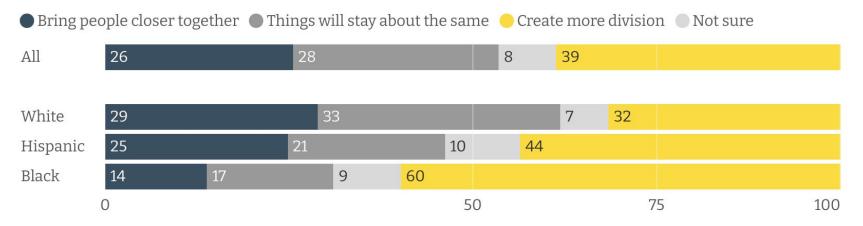
None of these will be affected for me



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

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Trusted Information Sources

Personal friends

• Strongly trust • Somewhat trust • Somewhat distrust • Strongly distrust

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

Personal friends
Immediate family members
Military veterans
Elders in the community
Neighbors or local community members
Eyewitnesses to events or incidents
Coworkers
Healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses)
Teachers or educators
Scientists or industry experts
Law enforcement officers
Religious or spiritual leaders
Employers
Local news broadcasters
Business leaders
National news broadcasters
Elected officials or politicians
Celebrities (e.g., actors, artists, athletes, musicians)
Social media influencers

48				2	9									3
45				43								9		
33			54									10		
21	60	C									14		5	
10 71											16			
15	64									1	9			
14	63									19				4
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18	47							21				14		
17	43						20				20			
6 47					33							15		
7 42					30						21			
4 37				38						2	21			
4 26		26	5			44								
21		39					38	3						
15	31			5	3									
15	35				49									
0				5	50				75	5			10	00

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

Personal experience or direct impact from the issue Saw compelling statistical data c factual evidence Witnessed broad societal or community impact of the issue Met someone in person who is impacted by the issue Learned more from someone I trust or know Learned more from a trusted bu impersonal source (e.g., expert, journalist) Religious or spiritual beliefs guided my change in opinion Interacted online with someone who is impacted by the issue None of the above

	77		
or	55		
	46		
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ıt	33		
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Č.	18		
	5		

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



Top News Sources

Facebook

FOX News

YouTube

Local CBS

Local NBC

Local ABC

Instagram

MSNBC Local FOX

Twitter/X

Newsmax TikTok

Truth Social Threads

CNN

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

31 29 25 23 23 NPR or local public radio 22 22 22 National newspaper 20 19 Local newspaper Local talk or news radio 19 18 18 17 16 12 Somewhere else (please specify) 24

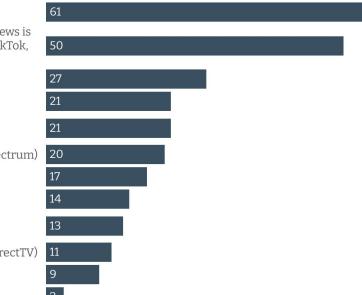
O: How do you get most of your news about national and local politics and issues? Please select all that apply.



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

Online news websites or apps Social media apps or websites where news is shared (such as Facebook, Twitter/X, TikTok, 50 Instagram, or YouTube) Local FM or AM radio 27 21 Podcasts Streaming Live Television (such as 21 YouTubeTV, SlingTV, or Philo) 20 Cable Television (such as Xfinity or Spectrum) Printed local or national newspaper 17 14 Local television via digital antenna OnDemand Streaming (such as Hulu, 13 Peacock App, or Paramount+) Satellite Television (such as DISH or DirectTV) 11 Streaming online radio None of these 3



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

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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.

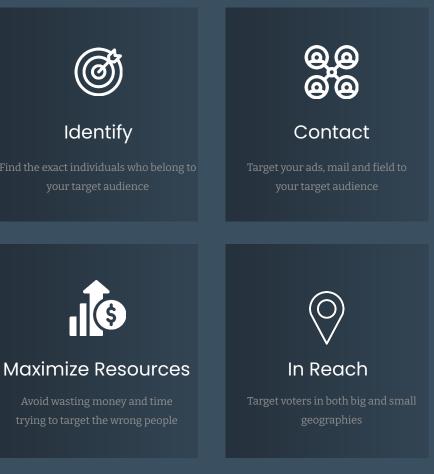
Our Products In addition to custom polling, we offer:

- 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 <u>accuracy</u> polling 500 respondents than the industry standard of 1,500 respondents.



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?