



Black Voter Bulletin:

**Priorities and Satisfaction
in North Carolina, Georgia,
and California**

**December 2022 Results
Executive Summary**



These polls surveyed a total of 1,200 Black voters in Georgia, North Carolina, and California

In December 2022, the [Black to the Future Action Fund](#) and [HIT Strategies](#) collaborated to survey Black communities in three of our priority states – California, Georgia, and North Carolina. The priority states of the Black to the Future Action Fund were selected according to each state’s Black population density, alongside exciting opportunities to build the power of Black voters in the state, and increase the number of Black community members who participate in elections.

These polls surveyed a total of 1,200 Black voters in Georgia, North Carolina, and California, including an oversample of 100 Black rural voters in Georgia and North Carolina. In this new polling project, we are taking a deeper dive into our priority states to learn more about respondents’ top concerns, what motivated them in the 2022 midterm elections, and what needs to be done to keep them engaged moving forward.

Background and Polling Project

As our Temperature Check polls – a series of six bi-monthly surveys of 1,000 Black adults conducted from July 2021 to May 2022 – came to a close, we re-directed our polling work from the national to the state level, to take a closer look at Black voters in our priority states, looking specifically at their attitudes toward the midterm elections of 2022, their top issues and concerns, as well as how recent changes in policies at the state and federal level have impacted them.

In the first set of our three-part series of polls conducted in [August 2022](#), we spoke to 400 Black voters in each state about what is motivating them, what resonates with them, and the ways they are willing to engage themselves and others ahead of the midterm elections.

In the second set of polls conducted in [October 2022](#), we spoke to 400 Black voters in each state about what is motivating them to vote, how powerful they perceive their votes to be, and their understanding of the roles Governors, Secretary of States, United States Senators, and other key positions, have in making the decisions that impact their lives.

In our final poll of the series conducted in December 2022, we spoke to 400 Black voters in each state about the outcomes of their participation in the midterm elections, what motivated them to participate and what were the barriers to their participation, and what kind of engagement they need or want in order to maintain their participation in the electoral process. Below, we examine the key findings of our December poll.





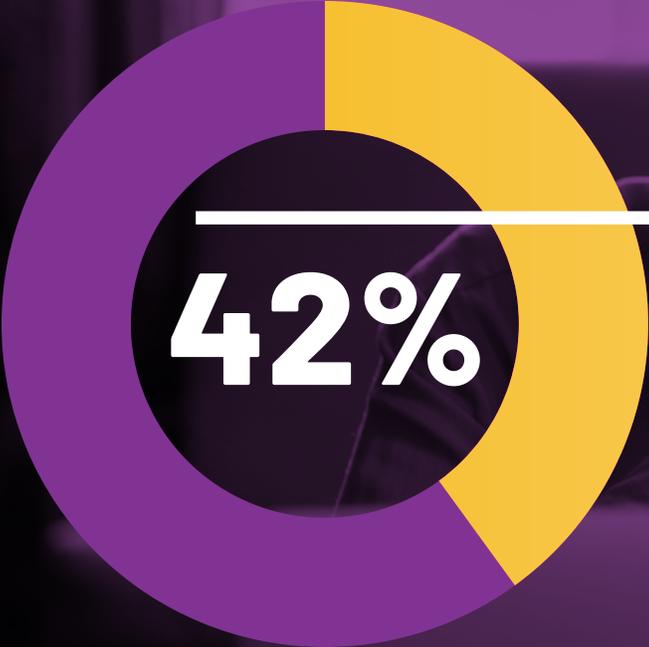
 Yes, my vote is powerful. (North Carolina)	October	December
	68%	63%
 Yes, my vote is powerful. (California)	August	December
	51%	42%

Your Vote, Your Power, And Your Participation

For Black voters in California, Georgia and North Carolina, there was a lot at stake in last year's midterms. Key races for Governor, Secretary of State, and the US Congress were on ballots across our priority states.

In our polling, we asked respondents to rate how much power their vote has to create change in their community, on a scale of 1-10 – a rating of 8-10 indicated a perception their vote was extremely powerful, while a rating of 0-2 indicated a perception that their vote was not powerful at all. In October 2022, Black

voters in all three states felt that their votes were extremely powerful, yet by December 2022, Black voters in California and North Carolina considered their vote to be less powerful, while in Georgia, perceptions of voting power remained the same. In December, 63% of Black voters in North Carolina felt that their votes were extremely powerful, as opposed to 68% in October. California had the largest drop in perception of their votes being extremely powerful, from 51% in August to 42% in December.



42%

of Black voters who did not vote in the 2022 midterms said it was because they felt uninformed about the candidates they were being asked to vote for.

Black voters face significant barriers to being able to participate in elections, from voter suppression and intimidation tactics to rampant misinformation and disinformation. **Another form of voter suppression that is often not considered is the lack of information about elections and the people who are running to represent you.** Of the Black voters who reported they did not vote in the 2022 midterms, 42% cited the primary reason for not getting to the polls was feeling uninformed about the candidates they were being asked to vote for. The greatest information gap existed in California, where 56% reported that they didn't vote because they were uninformed about the candidates. In

Georgia, 35% of the Black voters who reported not voting felt that voting does not change the things that matter to them.

Casting a vote continued to pose a challenge, specifically in Georgia. 41% of Black voters polled in Georgia reported being asked to show identification before voting. 41% of voters between the ages of 35 and 55 reported the same. 15% of Georgia's Black voters reported waiting in lines that were longer than usual, compared to 8% across the three states, and 3% in California.

	 California	 Georgia	 North Carolina
I voted for Democrats.	71%	83%	80%
I voted for a combination across parties.	22%	13%	14%

Black Voter Engagement and Persuasion

A key to success when attempting to get voters to participate in elections is to engage them directly through phone calls and text messages, ads, and doorknocking. A best practice is to prioritize face to face engagement, and supplement that with phones, texts, mail and ads.

Overwhelmingly, Black voters reported voting for Democrats during the midterm elections. 78% of Black voters polled across the three states reported that they voted for Democrats, with 83% reporting the same in Georgia, 80% in North Carolina, and 71% in California. Notably, we saw more Black voters splitting their votes between parties. Across the three states, 16% reported voting for a combination across parties; in Georgia, 13% reported voting across parties, in North Carolina, 14%, and in California, 22%.

Notably, Black voters in Georgia were asked to participate in a runoff election for a United States Senate seat whose outcome was not resolved by the midterm elections. The overwhelming majority of Black voters polled voted for Senator Raphael Warnock, with only 4% reporting a vote for Herschel Walker.

Black voters reported being engaged by political parties and independent organizations that were either liberal or conservative. Despite the best practices identified earlier in this section, Black voters overwhelmingly report seeing television ads from both parties (79% from Democrats or liberal organizations, 77% from Republicans or conservative organizations), and are least likely to report having someone doorknock them to remind them to vote (79% report not having their doors knocked by Democrats

Advertisements

vs.

Door Knocking

I saw a television ad from Democrats or liberal organizations.

79%

No Democrats or liberal organizations knocked on my door.

79%

I saw a television ad from Republicans or conservative organizations.

77%

No Republicans or conservative organizations knocked on my door.

84%

or liberal organizations, 84% report not having their doors knocked by Republicans or conservative organizations).

Overall, Black voters report less engagement across strategies from Republicans and conservative organizations, and more engagement across strategies from Democrats and liberal organizations. However, this varied by state – while Georgia Black voters were more likely to report receiving texts from Democrats than Republicans, California and North Carolina Black voters were only 19 points more likely to say the same.

Had this been different, it's possible that there could have been a different outcome in the Governor's race in North Carolina, where the state was poised to elect its first Black woman to represent it in the United States Senate – where there are currently no Black women.

Instead, Black voters took matters into their own hands. 64% of Black voters we polled reported encouraging more of their family and friends to vote, and 59% said they read, watched or listened to news about politics.

69% of the Black voters we polled in Georgia said they encouraged more of their family and friends to vote, and 64% of Black voters we polled in California said they watched, read or listened to news about politics.

Black voters want to continue to be engaged. 41% of the Black voters we polled wanted to be invited to town halls or local political events, and 30% wanted to be engaged through digital newsletters."

Now that the elections are over in each of these states, Black voters want to continue to be engaged. 41% of the Black voters we polled wanted to be invited to town halls or local political events, and 30% wanted to be engaged through digital newsletters. Black voters in Georgia (43%) had the most desire to be engaged through town hall meetings and local political events post - election, followed by Black voters in North Carolina (42%) and California (39%).



Priority Issues And Concerns

Inflation and the cost of living is the top issue that drove Black voters to the polls (25%), followed by jobs and the economy (23%).

Abortion access, crime and gun violence, and discrimination and racism were tied at 22% each for the third priority issue for the Black voters we talked to.

Black voters are clear about what they think the focus should be for the Biden/Harris Administration - 44% of the Black voters we polled wanted to see gun control legislation passed that includes mandatory background checks, 42% want to make white supremacy

a national security threat and prosecute hate crimes, and 39% want to see tax cuts or tax credits for middle and working class families.

With respect to the economy, Black voters want to see the minimum wage increased to \$15/hour (42%) and increased access to affordable housing (40%). 32% of the Black voters polled wanted to see \$50,000 of student debt canceled for each borrower, and housing vouchers provided to low-income families to cap the cost of rent at 30% of one's income. Raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour was most popular amongst Black voters in North

The Biden Harris Administration's focus should be...



Gun Control Legislation



Making white supremacy a national security threat and prosecuting hate crimes



Tax cuts and/or credits for middle and working class families



Carolina (45%) and Georgia (46%). Increased access to affordable housing was most popular amongst Black voters in North Carolina (44%) and California (41%).

35% want to shift money from police funding to preventative services.

47% of Black people polled said they feel unsafe in this country. 54% of Black women said they felt unsafe, as compared to 36% of Black men who said the same. Despite the rhetoric about crime filled cities that need more funding for police, the Black voters we polled would rather see funding from policing shifted to services and support for our communities than more money invested in policing as a strategy to curb crime. 35% want to shift some police funding to invest in preventative services such as mental health support, social workers or drug rehabilitation – 38% in California, 34% in North Carolina, and 32% in Georgia, and amongst respondents aged 35-55, 35% want to shift money from police funding to preventative services. By contrast, only 20% of the Black voters

we polled wanted to reduce crime through increased police funding – 21% in California, 20% in both North Carolina and Georgia.

By and large, for Black voters crime and violence is best addressed by getting guns off the street and investing money in safety nets and services, and prosecuting hate crimes – not by increasing funding for policing. This should not be confused with Black communities not wanting police – our Black Census 2018 data shows that Black communities (particularly those surveyed who were over the age of 60) believe that relationships between the community and police can be improved, but they want police to be held accountable when they commit crimes in our communities.

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Black voters we polled strongly believed that white supremacists should be removed from federal, local, and state police departments (47%), that white supremacist acts should be declared acts of domestic terrorism (41%) and that anyone who has committed a hate crime should be barred from being able to get a gun (38%). 51% of the Black voters polled said they worry about being the victim of a hate crime. 62% worry about facing racial discrimination in their everyday life.



Conclusion

Black voters were motivated to participate in the midterm elections to make an impact on the issues important to them, and felt that their participation was critical to impacting those issues. However, Black voters faced significant barriers during the midterms – in addition to longer lines than usual, some were motivated not to participate because they felt they didn't have enough information about the candidates, and didn't believe that voting would have any impact on the issues they cared about.

Though both liberal and conservative organizations engaged Black voters through television ads, Black voters were less likely to be directly engaged by these organizations. As such, Black voters engaged each other and their families to participate, and educated themselves and each other about the issues and the candidates.

Black voters want to be engaged post elections on the issues they care about, through town halls, local political events, and digital newsletters.

Economic issues, abortion access, racism and crime and violence are the top concerns driving Black voters to the polls– and Black women specifically reported feeling particularly unsafe. Post election, Black voters want the Biden/Harris administration to pass gun control legislation that makes background checks mandatory; make it so that white supremacist violence is declared a national security threat, and tax cuts or tax credits for working and middle class families. Black voters favor investing money into services as a strategy to prevent crime rather than increasing funding for policing.



Methodology

The Black to the Future Action Fund/HIT Strategies Poll was conducted in English among a sample of 1200 Black voters living in California, Georgia, and North Carolina. The survey was conducted in October 2022. The margin of error overall is $\pm 2.8\%$ among the full sample, and $\pm 4.9\%$ within each state.



About Black to the Future Action Fund

The Black to the Future Action Fund works to make Black communities powerful in politics, so that we can be powerful in the entirety of our lives. We work to enact policies that improve the lives of Black communities and to elect Black and pro-Black legislators with progressive values who move progressive policies. Together we work to ensure that Black people have what all people deserve — dignity, safety, and power.

About HIT Strategies

As Washington's leading millennial and minority-owned public opinion research company, HIT Strategies helps leaders and organizations translate the values of target audiences into real-time insights. We understand America's fastest-growing electorate and consumer groups and specialize in targeting communities under-represented in public opinion data, including Black Americans, Latino Americans, Millennials + Genz, LGBTQ+, Women, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. For more information, visit hitstrat.com and follow @HITStrat on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.