

Results from a Statewide Survey of Black Women Voters in Pennsylvania

The Lives and Voices of Black Women in Pennsylvania

COMMISSIONED BY IN OUR OWN VOICE: NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE AGENDA

CONDUCTED BY PERRYUNDEM

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Introduction.

Black women represent decisive forces in elections, yet surveys among them are rare. Even rarer are state-level surveys among Black women.

For the past few elections, National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda: In Our Own Voice has invested in rigorous and robust national and state-level surveys to better understand the voting and policy priorities, needs, and views among Black adults and women.

In 2017, early in the Trump administration, we explored the attitudinal landscape among Black adults related to race, policy, and reproductive justice. In December 2020, prior to Biden taking office, we went back in the field to listen to Black adults' experiences and views over the past few years. Prior to the 2022 midterm elections, we conducted a national survey and several state surveys to better understand Black women voters' issue priorities, values, and reactions to news dominating the headlines at the time.

Here we are in 2024, near the end of the Biden administration, with the country heading into another consequential election. How are Black women in Pennsylvania feeling about the upcoming election? What voting issues are on their minds? What is motivating them to vote? What are their views on abortion and reproductive issues, given the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*?

These are the questions we set out to answer, with the goal of providing data as a resource for policymakers, the media, and other parties who want to understand the views and lives of Black women in Pennsylvania.

This report provides findings from a statewide survey among n = 528 Black women* registered voters. The survey was conducted January 22 through February 14, 2024 via Ipsos' KnowledgePanel, an online panel constructed from address-based probability sampling. The sample was supplemented by off-panel, opt-in sample. The data are weighted to reflect a representative sample of Black women registered voters in Pennsylvania. The margin of sampling error is ± 5.8 percentage points. Many other types of errors can contribute to overall survey error.

This survey is part of a larger project that includes [national data](#) among all Black adults.

** Our future surveys will use expansive questions around gender identity. This survey used a standard binary variable. Transgender individuals who identify as women and chose it in a binary question are included in the survey. Typically, surveys tend to find about < 1% to 2% of respondents identifying outside of the binary.*

Here is the demographic composition of the survey respondents.

	Weighted %	Unweighted N
Total	100%	528
Black or African American	100%	528
2+ races	19%	90
Hispanic / Latina/o/x	8%	52
18 to 29	19%	134
30 to 44	27%	148
45 to 59	26%	131
60+	27%	115
HS or less	39%	171
Some college	35%	201
College +	27%	156
Democrat	59%	370
Independent	32%	154
Republican	9%	51
Urban	59%	291
Suburban	39%	162
Rural	2%	8

Key findings.

Here are 10 key findings.

1

Young Black women may feel particularly unmotivated to vote in the fall elections.

Just 40% of 18-to 29-year-old respondents say they are “almost certain” to vote this fall, compared to 62% of all respondents.

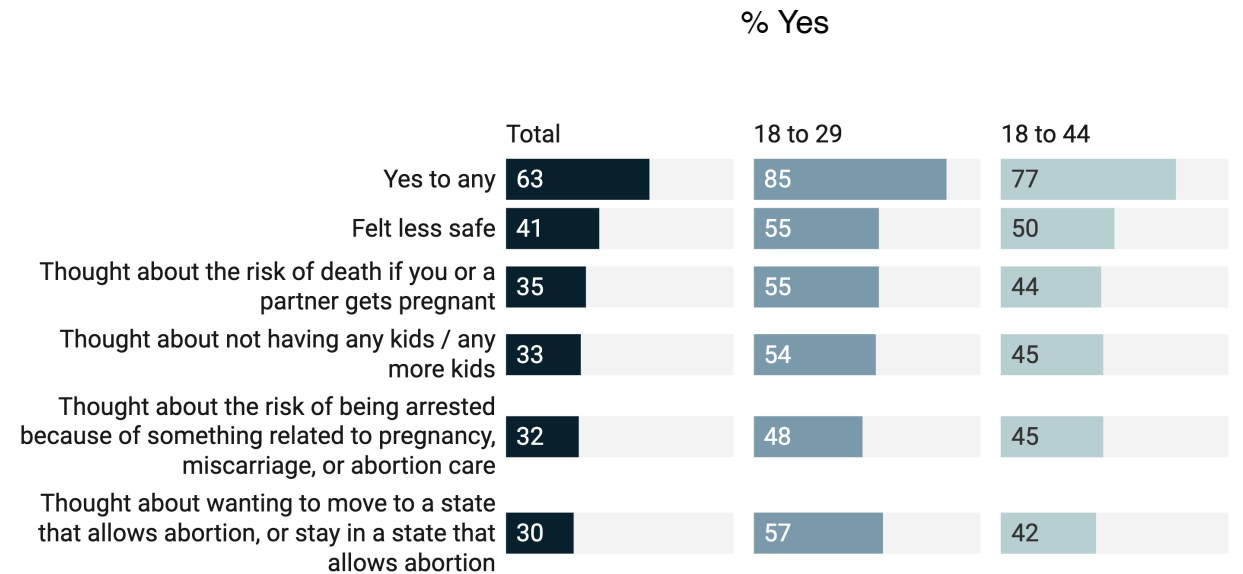
The same proportion (40%) of 18- to 29-year-olds says they’ve thought about not voting in 2024 as a form of protest. Insights from our national data suggest that young people are discouraged by the choice of candidates. In this survey, 79% of 18- to 29-year-olds say it’s extremely or very important that more Black women are elected and nominated to political offices.

2

Abortion bans have affected young people's sense of safety and their thinking about profound life decisions.

More than half of 18- to 29-year-olds says recent abortion bans have made them think about the risk of death if they or a partner were to get pregnant.

As a result of recent abortion bans and restrictions, have you...

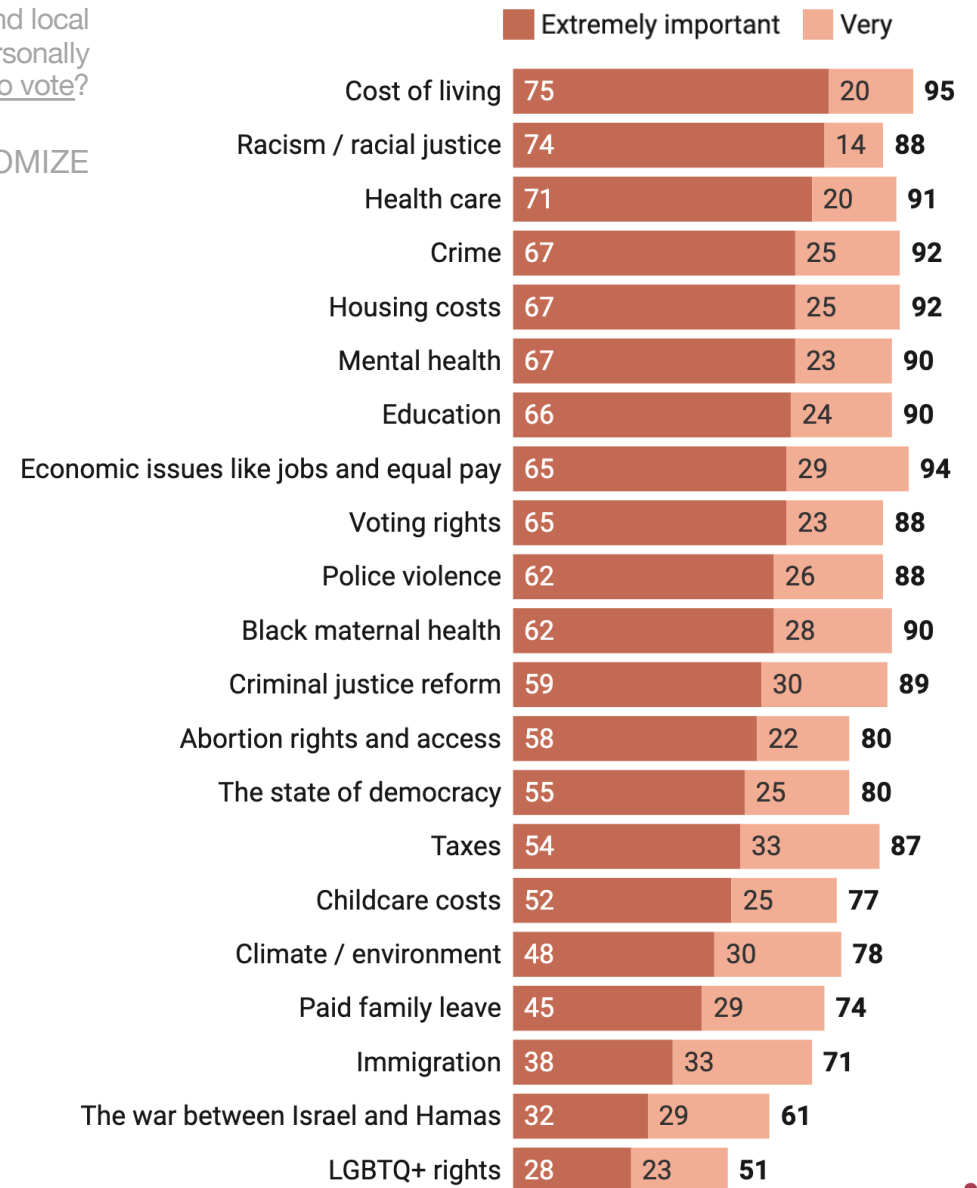


This fall there will be elections for US Congress, state, and local offices. How important is each of these issues to you personally when thinking about getting out to vote?

RANDOMIZE

3
Many issues are on the minds of Black women. Cost of living, racism / racial justice, and health care are among the top.

Abortion access and mental health are high on the list for 18- to 29-year-olds.



4

When asked about 20 discrete policy positions, economic policies are among the most salient.

Mental health, getting rid of abortion bans, and getting rid of restrictions transgender people are also motivating priorities for young respondents.

IMPORTANT POLICY POSITIONS

- Lowering the cost of living and inflation (90% extremely or very important when thinking about getting out to vote this fall)
- Ensuring equal pay for equal work (89%)
- Making sure schools teach children about American history, including the impact of slavery and racism (88%)
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour (88%)
- Lowering taxes for the middle and lower classes (86%)
- Increasing access to mental health care (86%)

5
**In a list of 12 motivations to
vote, these three rise to the top.**

1
Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide who becomes president and whether the US Congress becomes Democratic or Republican. That means my vote will matter more than in most other states.
29% say this is in the top 1 or 2 motivations to vote

2
People's rights and freedoms are at stake
24%

3
People fought and died for the right to vote
22%

These are additional motivating factors among many respondents.

- My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections
- It's a chance to exercise my right to vote
- It gives me a voice in the future
- Voting is the main way I have power in what happens

6
Black women in Pennsylvania are strongly supportive of abortion rights and access.

Large majorities of respondents support abortion rights and access, including those who attend religious services regularly. This tracks with Black women nationally.

82%

Say abortion should be legal in all or most cases

78% of those who attend religious services regularly

80%

Say they'd vote in favor of a state amendment that protects pregnancy and abortion decisions

76%

87%

Agree: Each person should have the right to make their own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with it

86%

83%

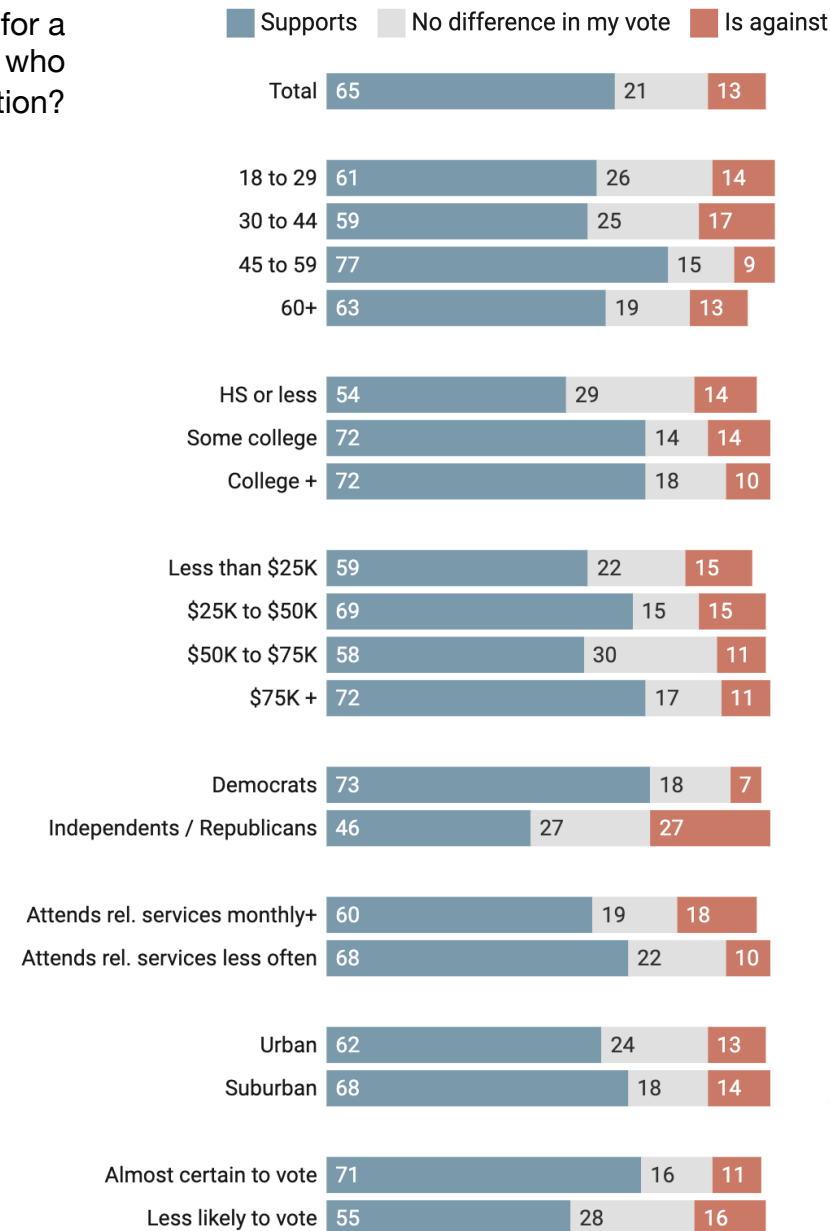
Say having an abortion can be the responsible choice

77%

Are you more likely to vote for a candidate for state legislature who _____ access to abortion?

7
Respondents are five times more likely to vote for a candidate who supports abortion access (65%) than one who opposes it (13%).

A majority of Black women who attend religious services regularly is more mobilized by a candidate who supports abortion access.



Note: The sample size is too small to analyze respondents from rural areas.

8

A majority of Black women of reproductive age is interested in getting birth control pills over the counter.

The retail price, however, is out of reach for 78% of these women.

60%

Of women 18 to 44 say they are interested in accessing birth control pills over-the-counter

78%

Of women 18 to 44 could not afford to pay \$45 or more for a three-month supply

Note: A three-month supply will retail at \$49.99

9
A majority of Black women (56%) says they have felt the effects of racial / gender bias in the health care system.

Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to cite some of these experiences.

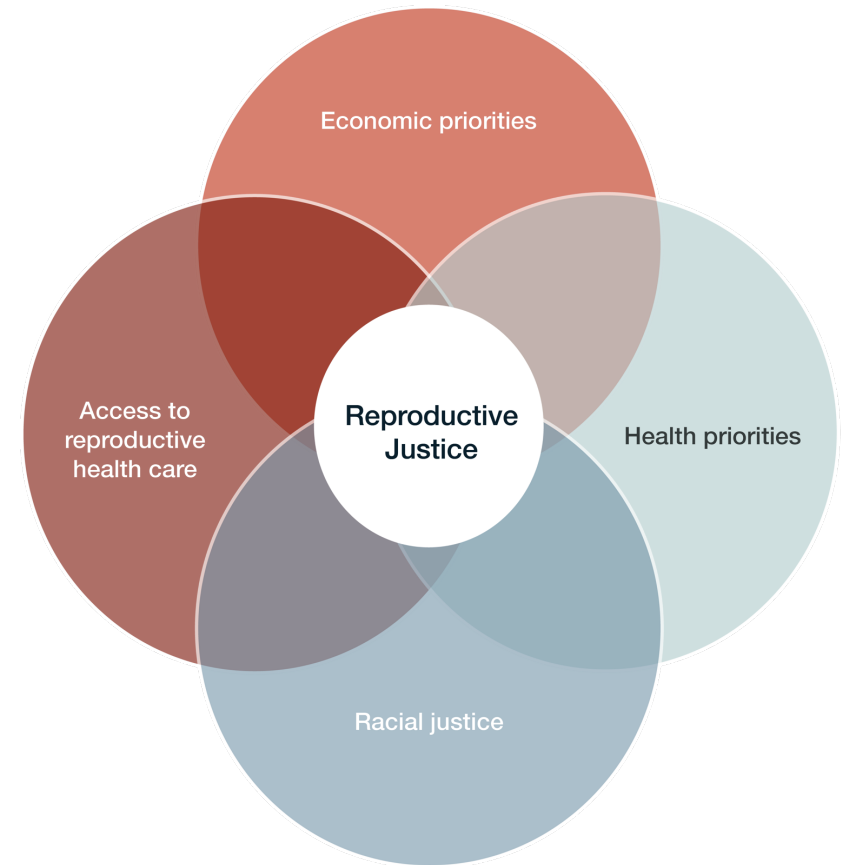
Have you ever felt this way?

% Yes

	Total	18 to 44	45+
Yes to any	56	62	51
I felt worried about the health and safety of Black women in my life during their pregnancy or childbirth because of their race	39	44	35
Have felt a health care provider treat you differently because of your race and/or gender	37	37	36
A health care provider didn't take my health concerns seriously because of my race and / or gender	36	38	34
A health care provider didn't understand how my race and culture affects my health	32	34	30
A health care provider didn't take my pain seriously because of my race and / or gender	29	32	27
I felt worried about my health and safety during pregnancy or childbirth because of my race	28	38	21
A health care provider didn't give me all the available test and treatment options because of my race and / or gender	25	27	24
A health care provider didn't take my pain seriously during pregnancy or childbirth because of my race and / or gender	25	29	23
A health care provider didn't give me all the available options for birth control because of my race and / or gender	20	26	16

10
Reproductive Justice is at the intersection of top priorities and policy preferences among Black women in Pennsylvania.

Many women of reproductive age are profoundly impacted by abortion bans. Getting rid of abortion restrictions and bans is a top voting issue for 18- to 29-year-olds. A majority of women of reproductive age can't afford the price of over-the-counter birth control pills. Large majorities support access to abortion, comprehensive sex ed, and sex-positive communication with health care providers.



Economic issues top the list of voting priorities – including the cost of living, housing costs, and equal pay.

Health care is also a top voting issue. Majorities are mobilized by policies to end Black maternal mortality, to increase access to mental health care, and to expand Medicaid. Mental health is a top issue for 18- to 29-year-olds.

Racial justice is top voting issue. A majority has experienced gender / racial bias in the medical system.

Detailed findings.



SECTIONS

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Voting in the 2024 elections

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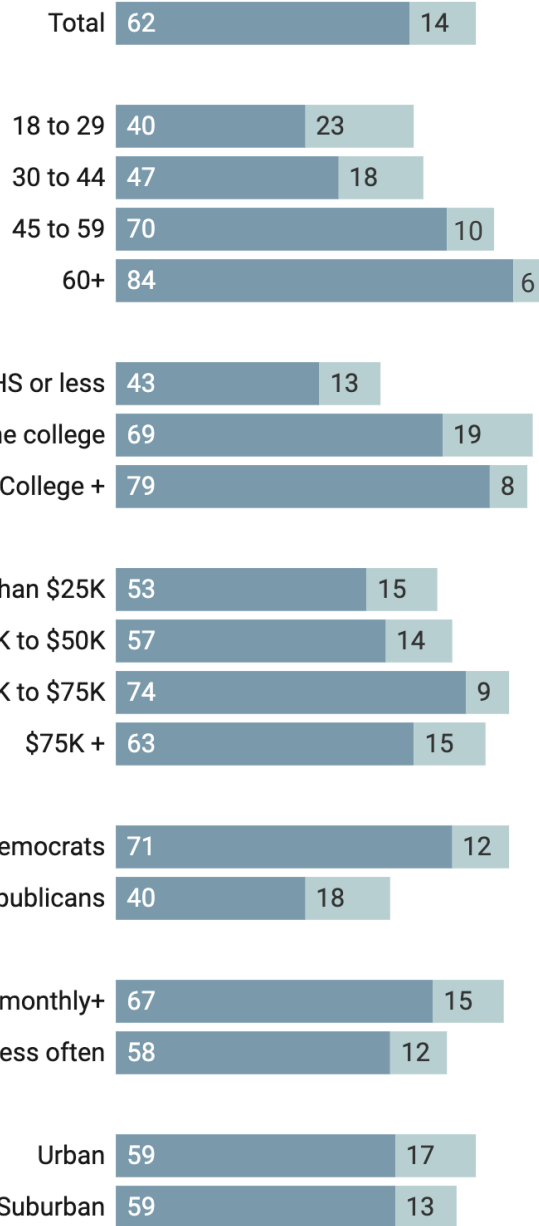
This fall there will be elections for President, U.S. Congress, and other offices. Would you say you are:

■ Almost certain to vote
■ Will probably vote

A majority of women (62%) says they're “almost certain” to vote this fall.

Women who are least certain to vote include:

- 18- to 29-year-olds (40% almost certain)
- Independent / Republican women (40%)
- Those with a high school degree or less (43%)





For you personally, how important is voting in the 2024 elections this fall?

1 to 7 scale
Not at all important to extremely important
Base n = 285

A majority of women says voting in the 2024 elections is “extremely important.”

That said, just half of 18- to 44-year-olds (48%) feels the same.

59%

Rate 7 – extremely important

48% 18 to 44
68% 45+

70% Democrats
32% Inds / Reps

23%

Rate 5 or 6

25% 18 to 44
22% 45+

19% Democrats
34% Inds / Reps

18%

Rate 1 to 4 – toward not important

27% 18 to 44
10% 45+

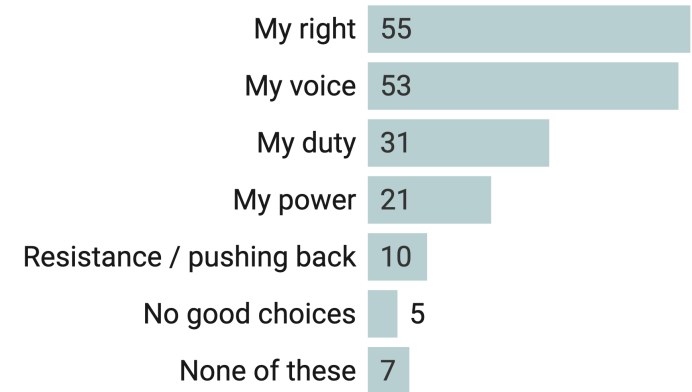
11% Democrats
34% Inds / Reps

Respondents are most likely to say voting in the 2024 elections is about “my right” and “my voice.”

Finish this sentence. For me, voting in this year’s election is about: _____ .

Select up to 3

RANDOMIZE UP TO NO GOOD CHOICES



Nearly eight in ten respondents feel the Black community has the power to change the outcomes of elections.

Do you feel the Black community has the power to change the outcomes of elections, or not?

81%

19%

Yes

No

74% 18 to 29
83% 30 to 44
78% 45 to 59
86% 60+

71% HS or less
84% Some college
91% College+

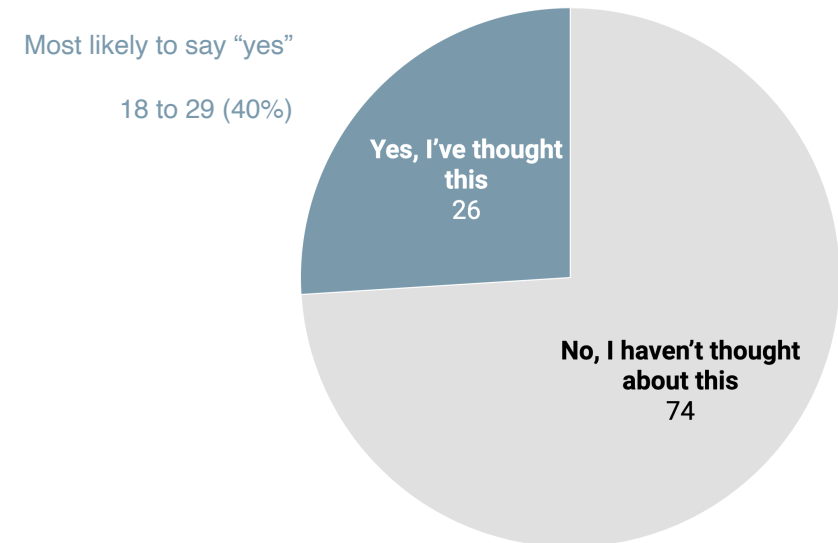
78% Less than \$25K
72% \$25K to \$50K
86% \$50K to \$75K
84% \$75K+

One in four says they've thought about not voting as a form of protest.

What might they be protesting? In our companion national survey, we asked a random subset of respondents to explain in an open-ended question. Here are the main themes:

- Bad candidates, candidates who don't represent their views, Biden / Trump being old white men
- Feeling their vote doesn't count
- Protecting Palestine / protesting what's happening in Gaza

Have you thought about not voting in the 2024 elections as a form of protest?



If the presidential election were held today, a majority (63%) says they'd vote for the Democratic candidate.

Among those most certain to vote, 77% say they'd vote for the Democratic candidate v. 10% for the Republican.

See the next page for breakouts by demographic segments.

If the 2024 presidential election were held today, would you vote for:
Base n = 517

63%

Democratic candidate
77% of women almost certain to vote

12%

Republican candidate
10%

6%

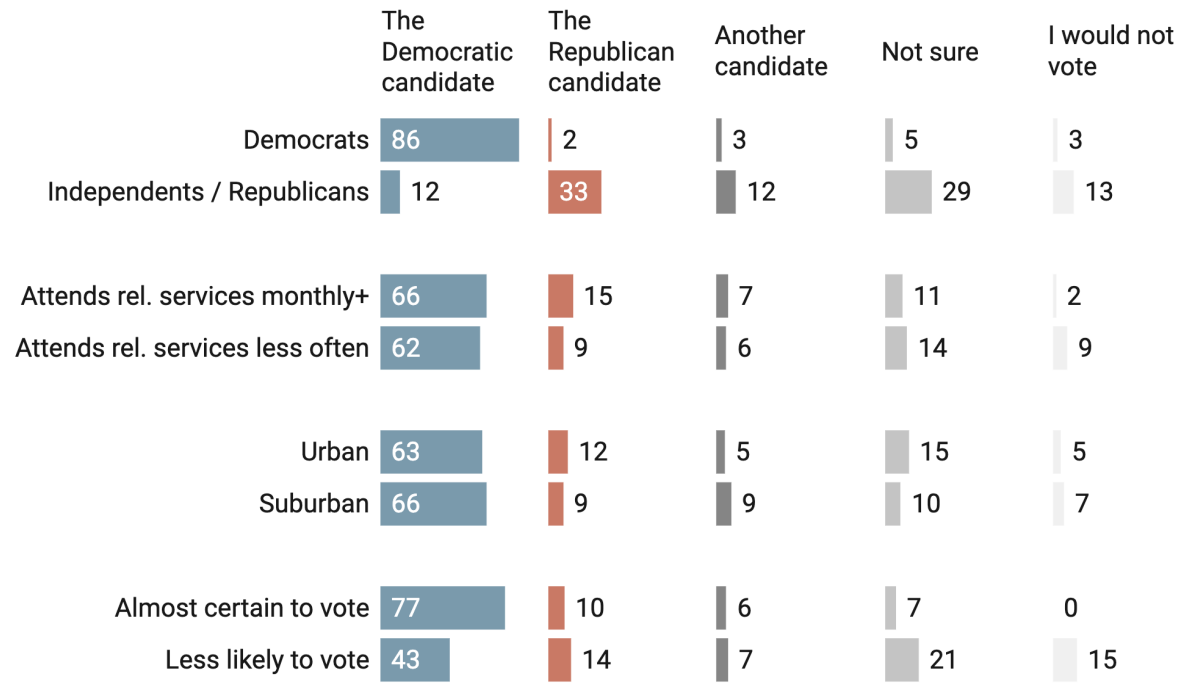
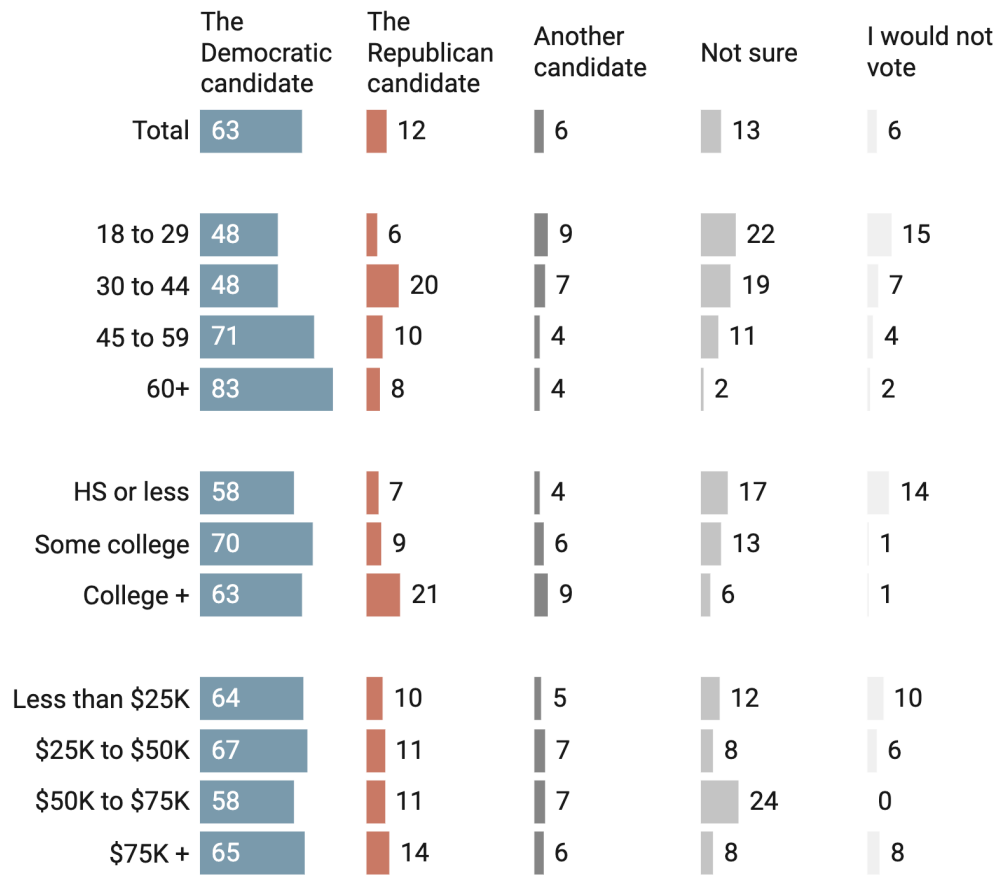
Other
6%

13%

Not sure
7%

6%

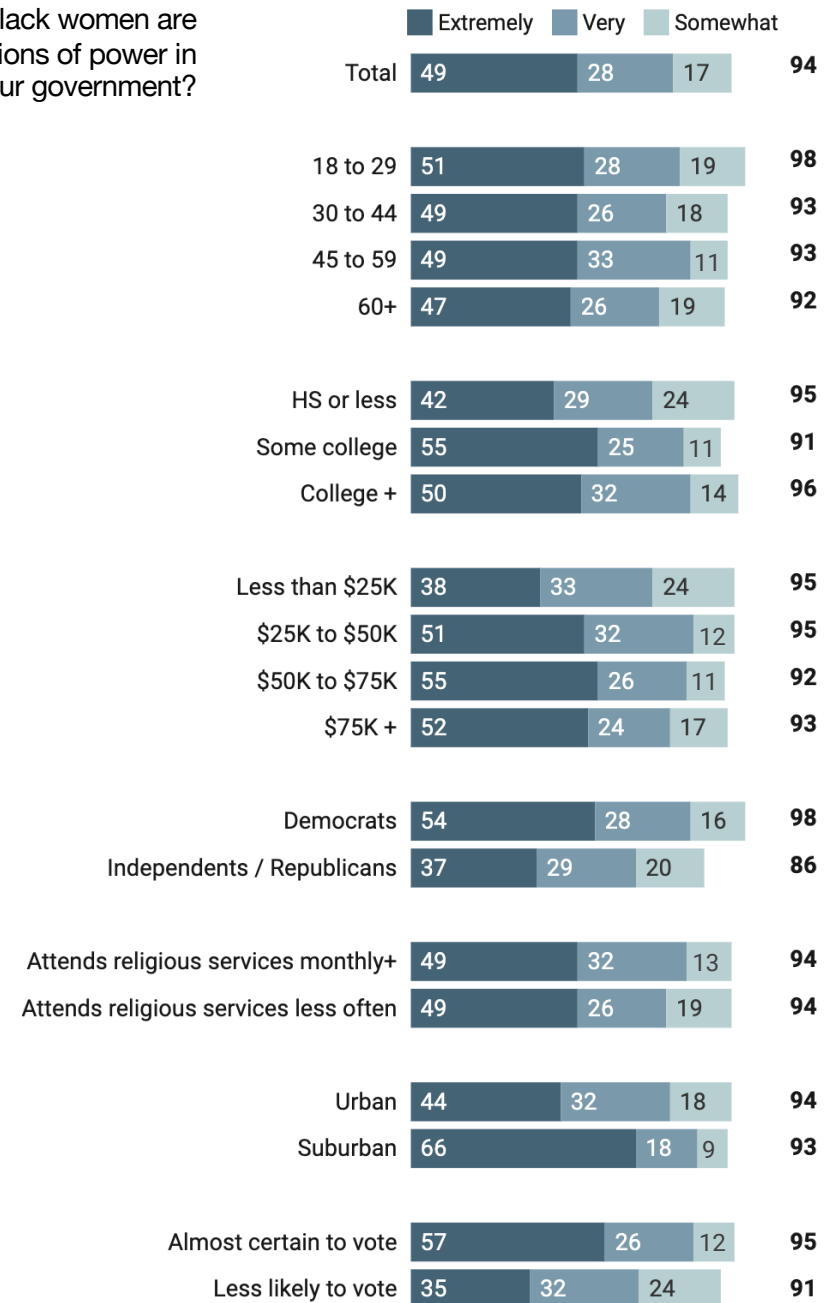
Would not vote
0%



How important is it that more Black women are elected and nominated to positions of power in our government?

More than nine in ten respondents (94%) say it's important that more Black women are elected and nominated to positions of power in government.

This sentiment is particularly strong among suburban women, likely voters, and Democrats.



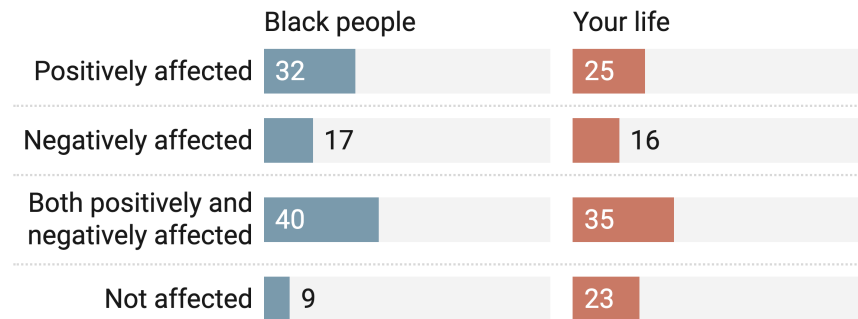


Impact of the Biden administration

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A plurality of respondents feels President Biden's policies have both positively and negatively affected their life.

In general, do you think President Biden's policies have _____:
"Black people" (n = 285) / "your life" (n = 243)

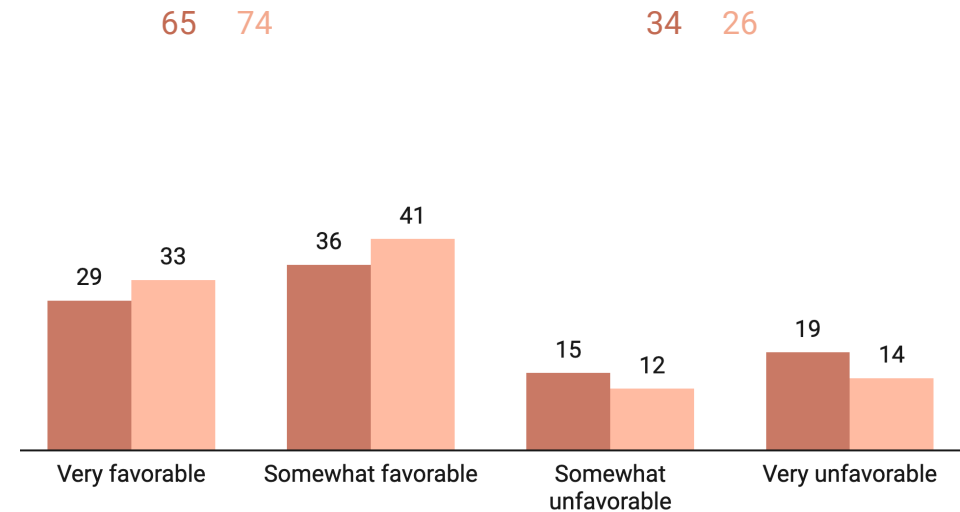


That said, most have favorable impressions of President Biden and Vice President Harris.

Younger respondents and independents / Republicans are more unfavorable toward Biden than Harris.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of:

President Joe Biden Vice President Kamala Harris



Most likely to be favorable:

- Ages 45+ (79% Biden, 80% Harris)
- Democrats (77%, 83%)

Most likely to be unfavorable:

- Independents / Reps (60%, 46%)
- 18 to 44 (50%, 34%)



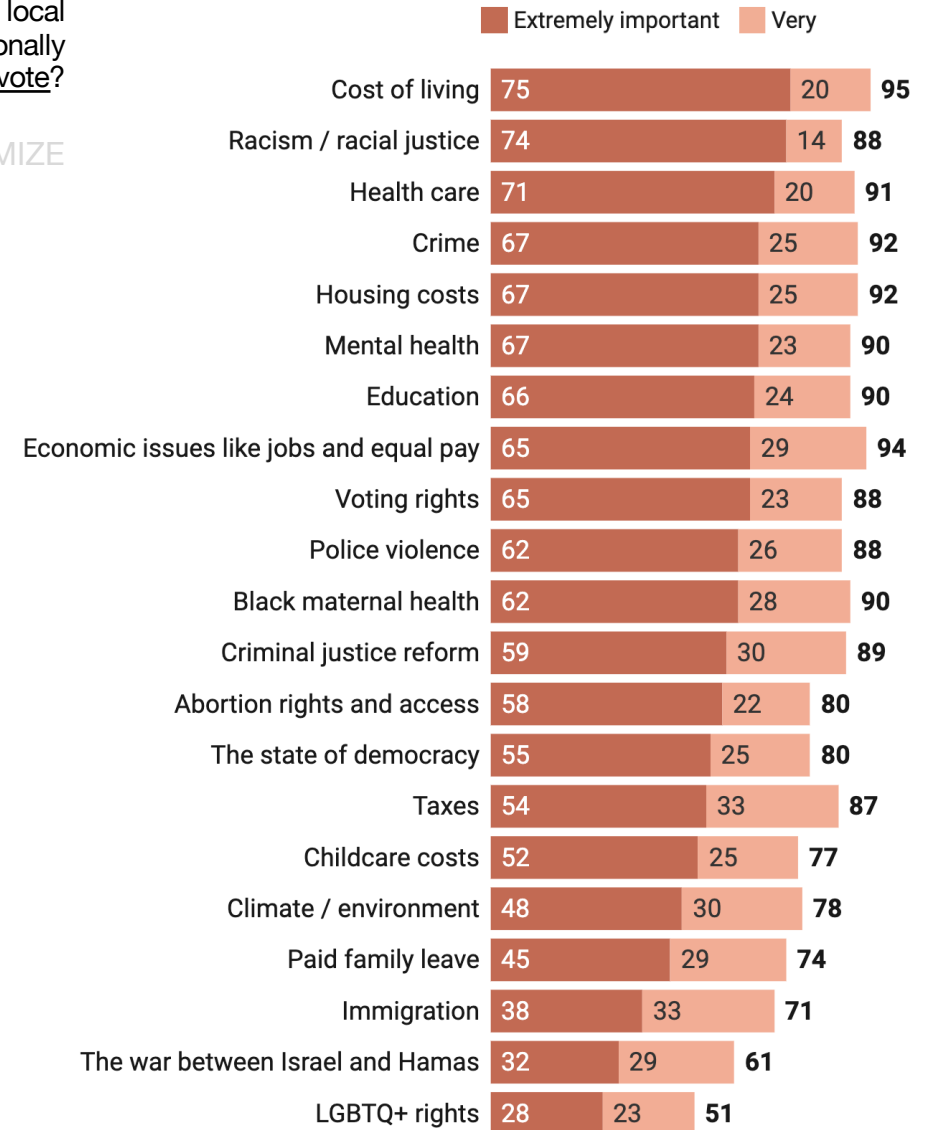
Issue priorities

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This fall there will be elections for US Congress, state, and local offices. How important is each of these issues to you personally when thinking about getting out to vote?

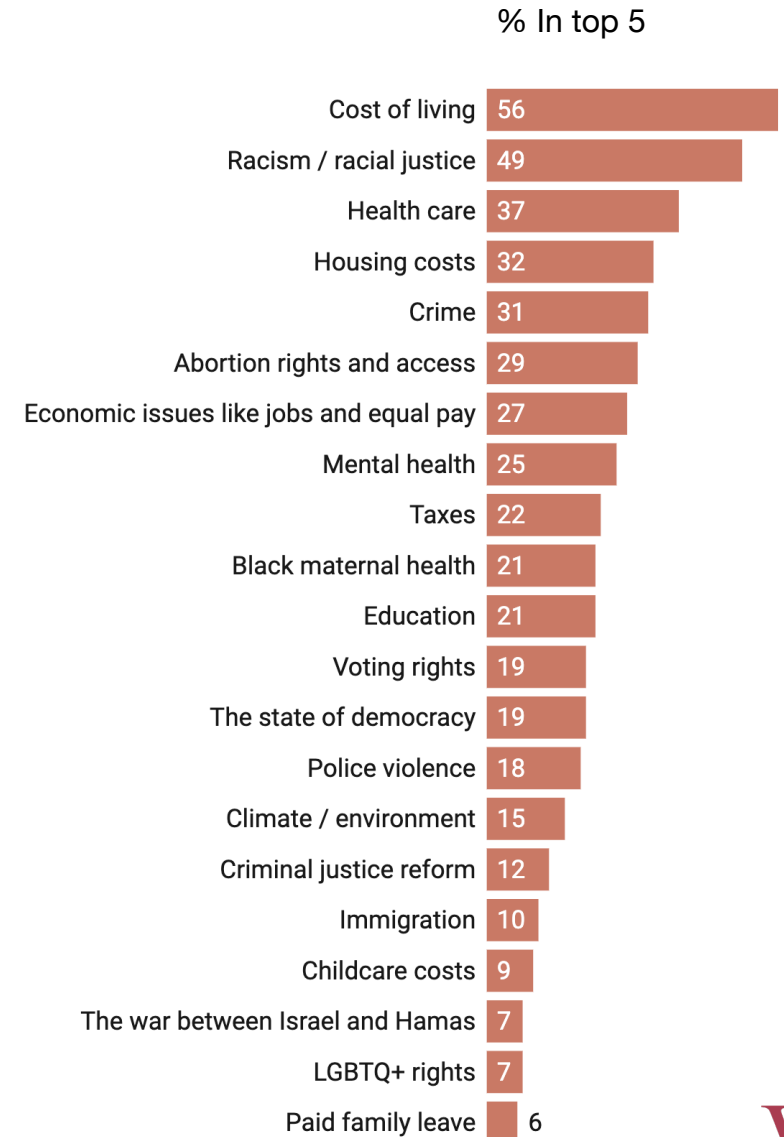
RANDOMIZE

Many issues are on the minds of Black women.

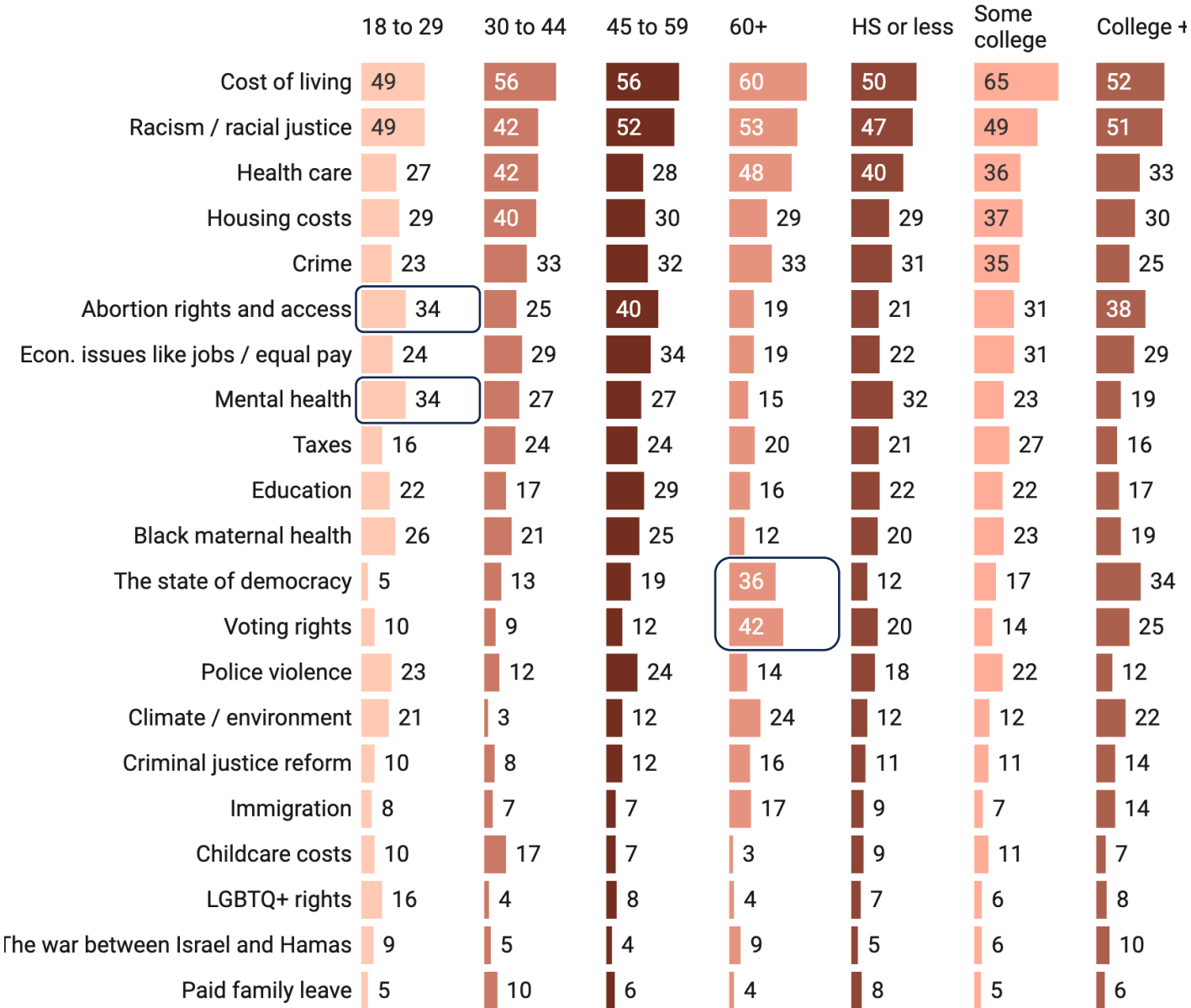


When asked to prioritize their issues, cost of living tops the list.

Choose the top 5 issues that matter most to you when voting in elections.



% Chosen as a top 5 issue

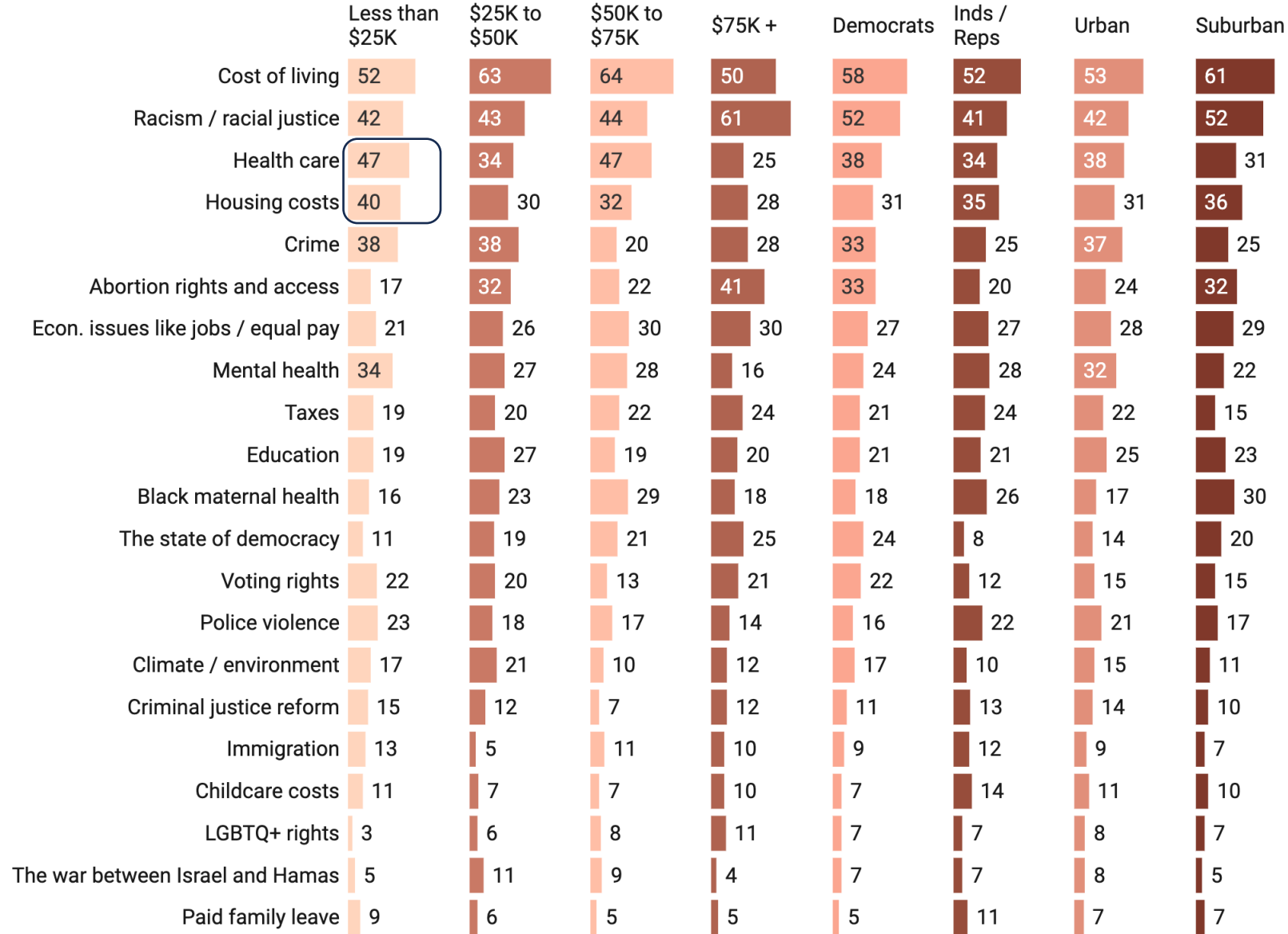


Among 18- to 29-year-olds, abortion access and mental health are top issues after cost of living and racism / racial justice.

Voting rights and the state of democracy are higher priorities for older v. younger respondents.

Health care and housing are particularly important among respondents with the lowest incomes.

% Chosen as a top 5 issue



Do you support or oppose how Israel has responded to the events of October 7th?

We also explored views toward the war between Hamas and Israel.

Respondents are split in their support and opposition of the way Israel has responded to events of October 7th – but nearly half is unsure.

24%

Support

Most likely

- 60+ (35%)
- Attends rel. services monthly+ (34%)

30%

Oppose

Most likely

- College+ (49%)

45%

Not sure

Most likely

- <College (54%)



Do you approve or disapprove of the way
President Biden has dealt with the war
between Israel and Hamas?

Respondents are split on how Biden has dealt with the war.

Older women are among the most likely to
approve.

31%

Approve

Most likely
• 60+ (44%)

35%

Disapprove

Most likely
• 30 to 44 (51%)
• Independents /
Republicans (51%)

33%

Not sure



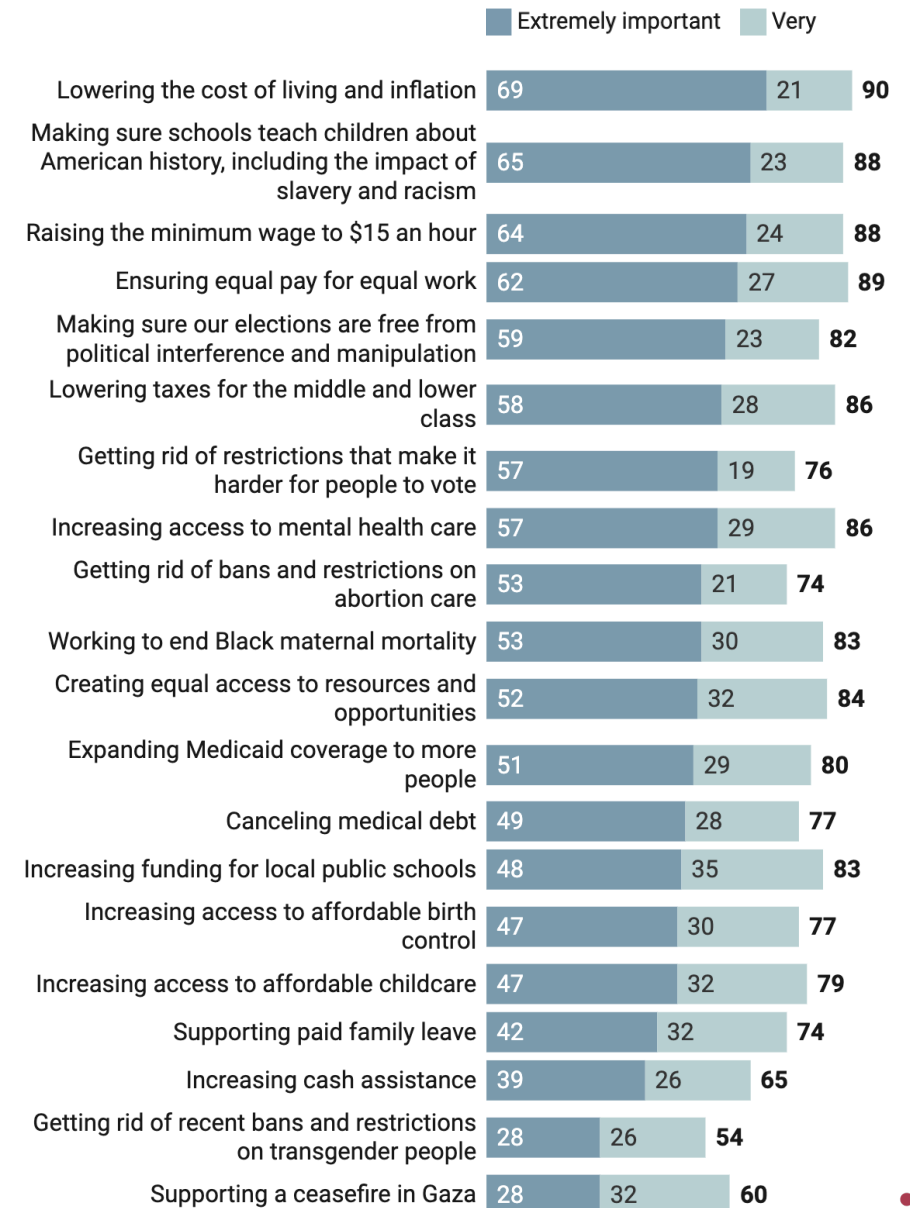
Policy positions

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Here are positions some candidates will take in the November elections. How important would each of these issues be to you personally when thinking about getting out to vote?

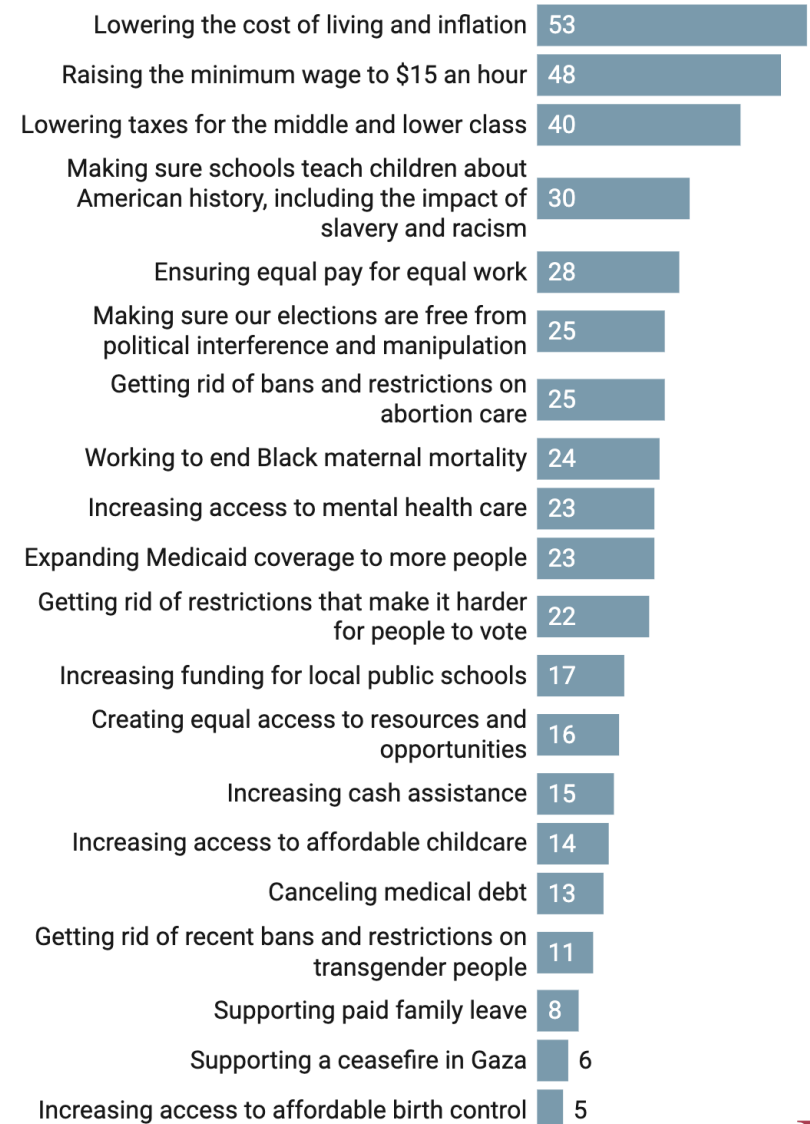
RANDOMIZE

Majorities say candidate policy positions relating to economic factors, education, elections, and health are extremely important.

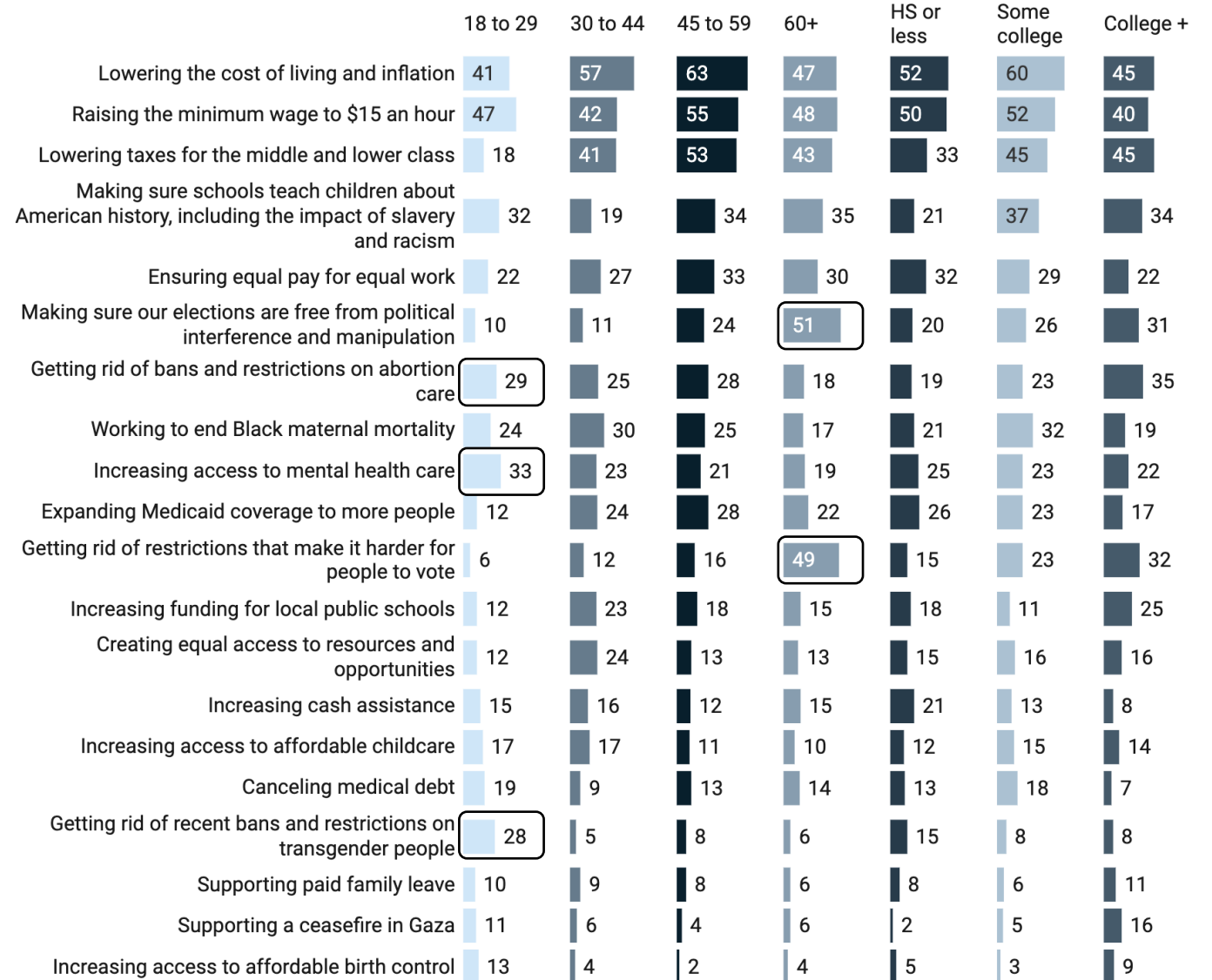


When asked to narrow down to the most important policy positions, economic policies rise to the top.

% Chosen as a top 5 policy position



% Chosen as a top 5 issue

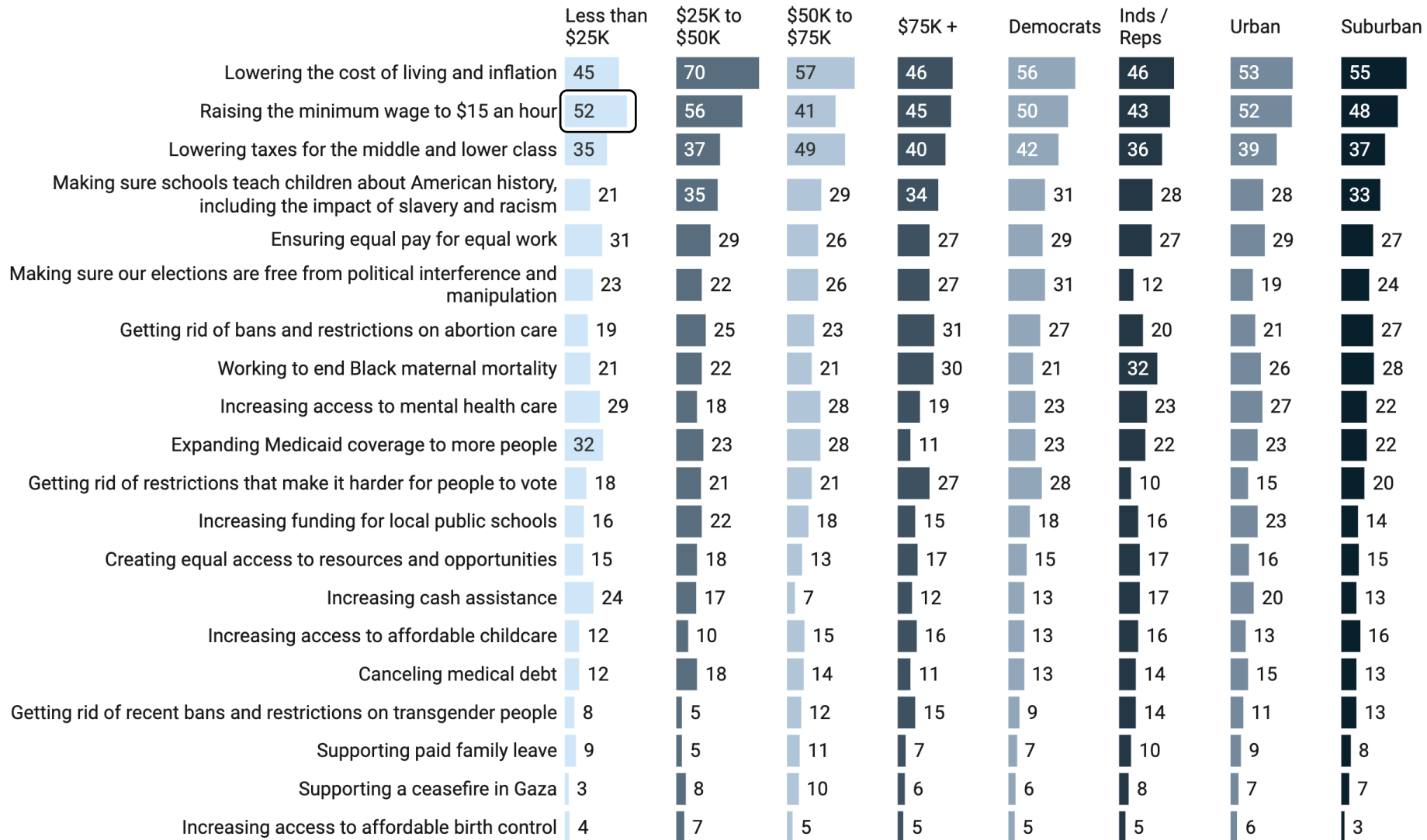


For 18- to 29-year-olds, access to mental health care, getting rid of abortion bans, and getting rid of restrictions on transgender people are among the top policy priorities – after economic policies.

Policies relating to free and fair elections are higher priorities for older v. younger respondents.

Raising the minimum wage is top among those with the lowest incomes.

% Chosen as a top 5 issue





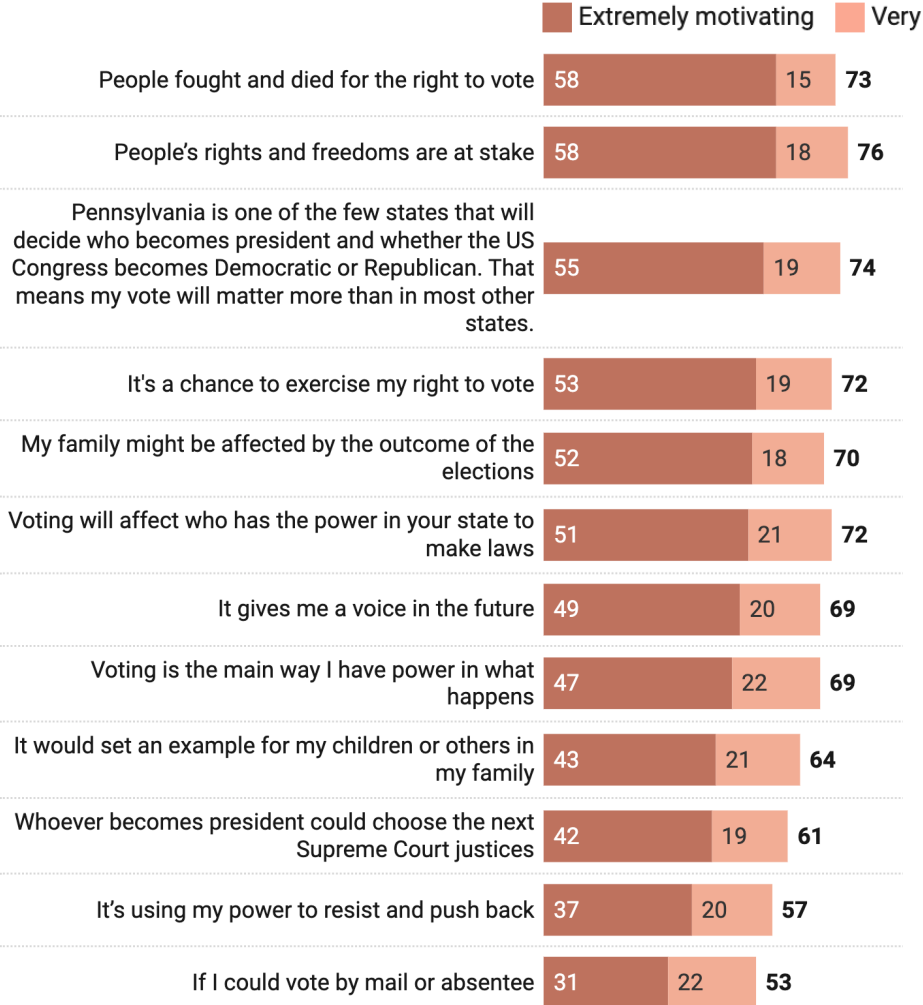
Why vote?

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For you personally, how motivating is each of these to get out and vote in the elections this fall?

We explored several motivations to vote in the elections this fall.

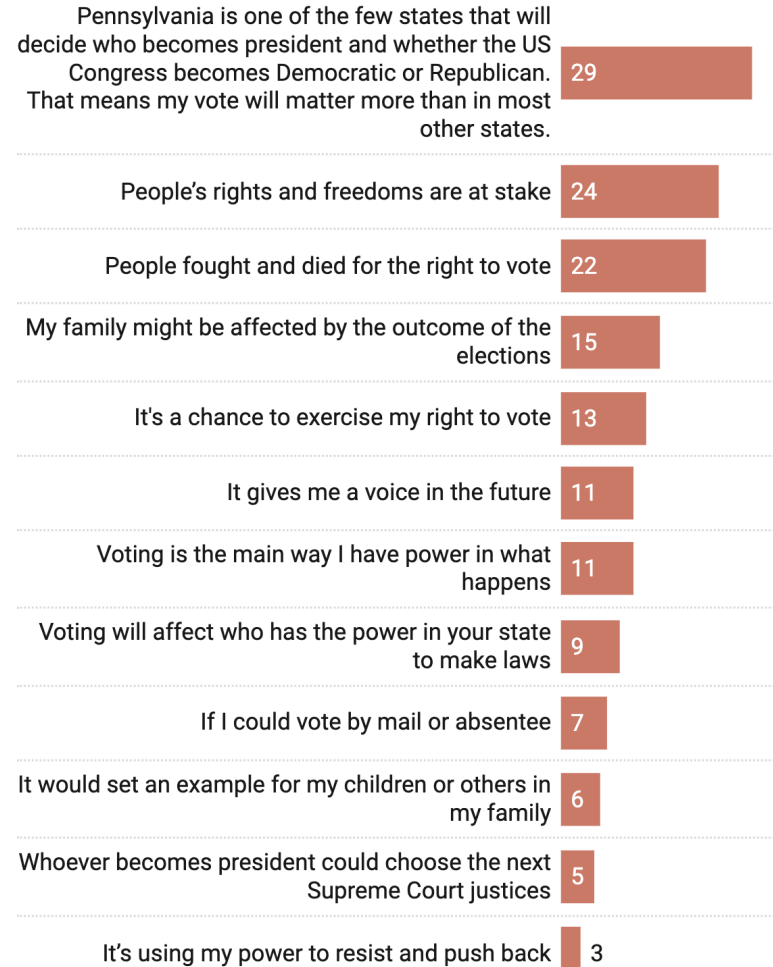
There are many motivations. At the top are people having fought and died for the right to vote, feeling that people’s rights and freedoms are at stake, and Pennsylvania being a swing state.



Here's what they say when forced to choose their top 1 or 2 motivations.

The table on the following page shows the top motivations by demographic group.

Of these, which might be most motivating for you personally to vote this fall?
Choose 1 or 2.



Here are the top 5 motivations by demographic segment.

18 to 29	30 to 44	45 to 59	60+	HS or less	Some college	College +
People fought and died for the right to vote	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	People fought and died for the right to vote	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...
People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People fought and died for the right to vote	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People's rights and freedoms are at stake
Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People fought and died for the right to vote	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People fought and died for the right to vote	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections
Voting will affect who has the power in your state to make laws	It gives me a voice in the future	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	People fought and died for the right to vote
My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	People fought and died for the right to vote	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	It gives me a voice in the future	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	Voting is the main way I have power in what happens

Here are the top 5 motivations by demographic segment.

Less than \$25K	\$25K to \$50K	\$50K to \$75K	\$75K+	Urban	Suburban	Almost certain to vote	Less likely to vote
People fought and died for the right to vote	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	People fought and died for the right to vote	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	People fought and died for the right to vote
People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People fought and died for the right to vote	People fought and died for the right to vote	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People's rights and freedoms are at stake
It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	Voting is the main way I have power in what happens	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	People fought and died for the right to vote	People fought and died for the right to vote	Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...
Pennsylvania is one of the few states that will decide...	It gives me a voice in the future	People's rights and freedoms are at stake	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections
It gives me a voice in the future	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	It's a chance to exercise my right to vote	Voting will affect who has the power in your state to make laws	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	It would set an example for my children or others in my family	My family might be affected by the outcome of the elections	Voting will affect who has the power in your state to make laws



Views toward reproductive policies

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**Four in five respondents
say abortion should be legal
in all or most cases.**

Which comes closest to your view.
Abortion should be:

82%

Legal in all or most
cases

18%

Illegal in all or most
cases

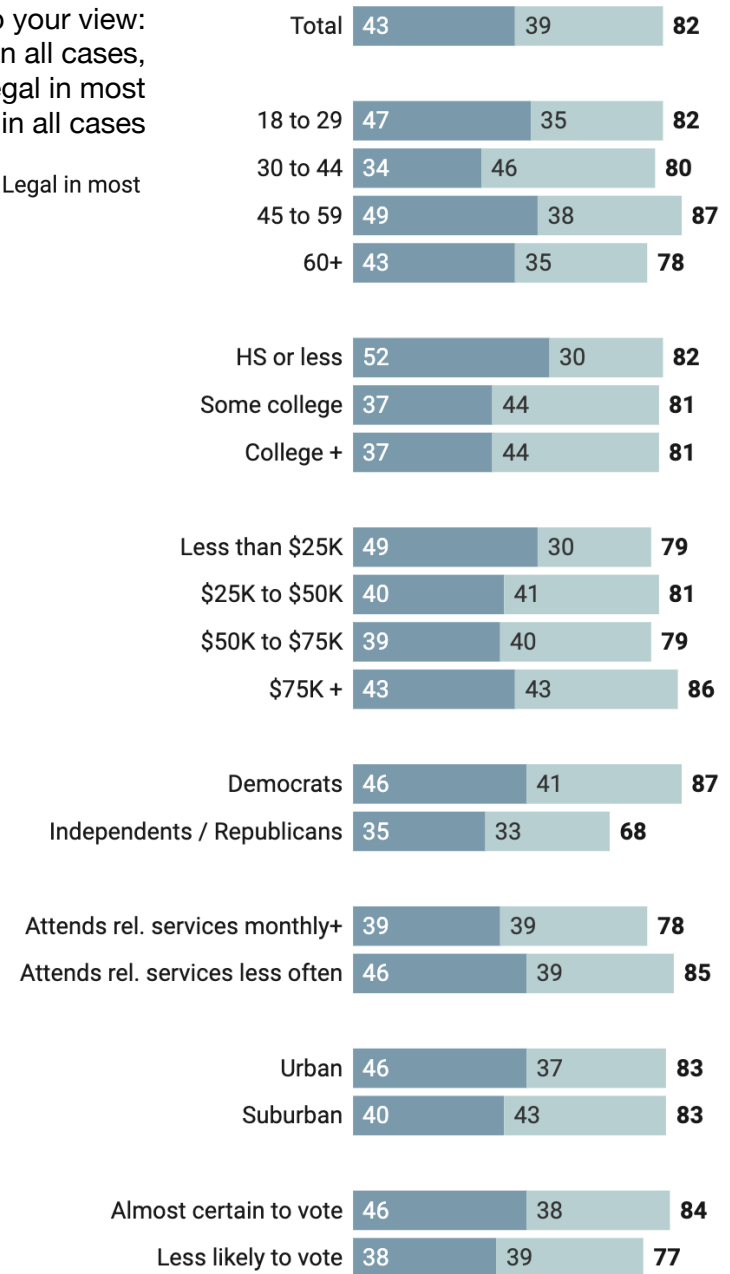
*7% illegal in all
cases*

Which comes closest to your view:
 Abortion should be legal in all cases,
 legal in most cases, illegal in most
 cases, illegal in all cases

Legal in all Legal in most

Majorities across every demographic group think abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Nearly four in five women (78%) who attend religious services regularly say abortion should be legal in all or most cases.



Eight in ten say they'd vote in favor of a state amendment to guarantee the right to make decisions about pregnancy, including abortion.

Let's say there was a proposed amendment to your state constitution. You could vote on it. The amendment would guarantee the right to make all decisions about pregnancy and abortion care, without the state interfering. Would you vote:

ROTATE

80%

20%

In favor of this

Against this

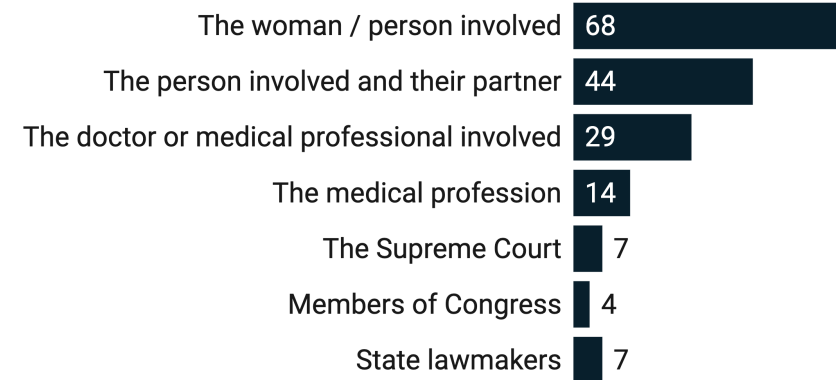
73% 18 to 44
87% 45+

A large majority wants decisions about abortion to rest in the hands of the people involved.

In your view, who should make decisions about when and how someone can get abortion care in your state?

Select any that apply:

RANDOMIZE



Large majorities value each person and circumstance driving decisions, including later in pregnancy.

87%

Agree: Each person should have the right to make their own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with it

72% Strongly agree
15% Somewhat agree

81% 18 to 44
92% 45+

80%

Agree: People should be able to get abortion care as early as possible and as late as necessary. Abortion care provided later in pregnancy occurs under complex and unpredictable circumstances. Medical professionals should be able to care for patients without government interference or fear of punishment

(Base n = 243)

56% Strongly agree
24% Somewhat agree

79% 18 to 44
82% 45+

83%

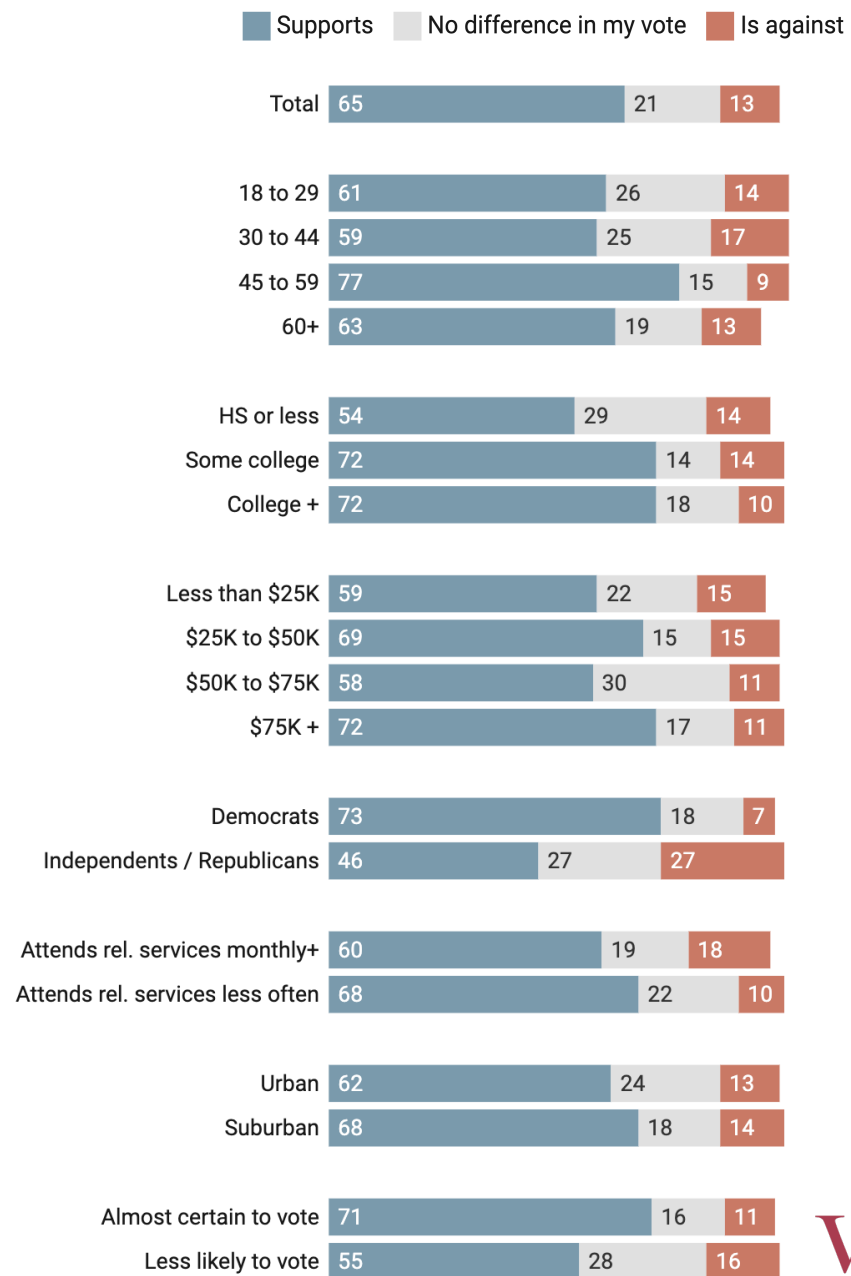
Say having an abortion can be a responsible choice

86% 18 to 44
81% 45+

Are you more likely to vote for a candidate for state legislature who _____ access to abortion:

Respondents are five times more likely to vote for a candidate who supports abortion access (65%) than one who opposes it (13%).

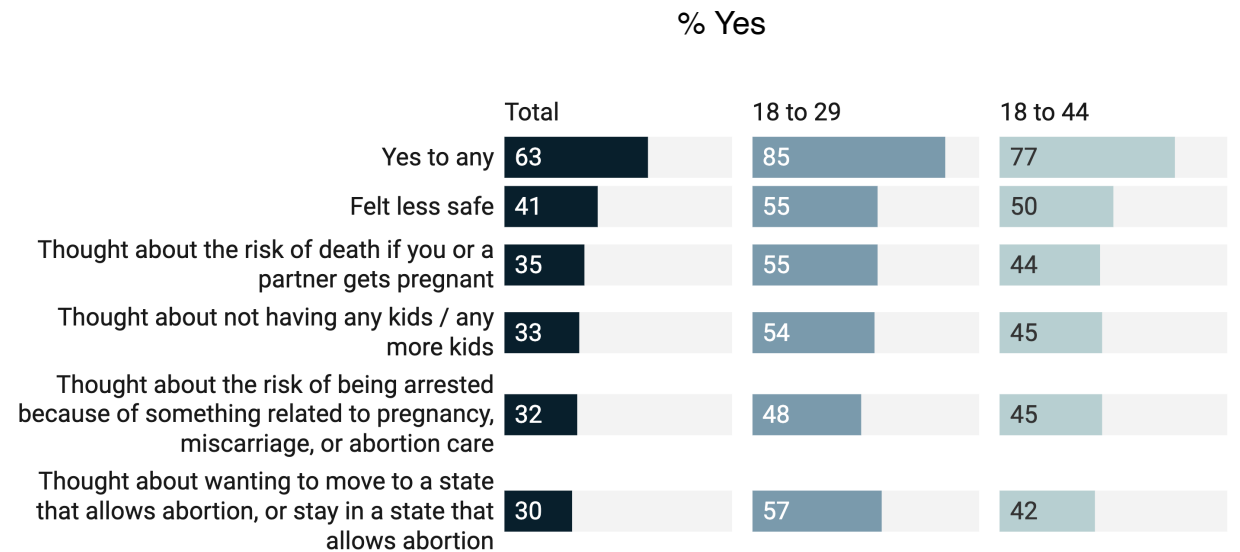
Those most likely to vote are also among the most likely to support a candidate who supports abortion access.



Recent abortion bans are having a personal impact on Black women of reproductive age.

More than half of 18- to 29-year-olds says recent abortion bans have made them think about the risk of death if they or a partner were to get pregnant. A majority also says recent bans made them think about wanting to live in a state that allows abortion.

As a result of recent abortion bans and restrictions, have you...



Half of women of reproductive age knows someone who has tried to have an abortion in the past year or two.

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion or tried to have an abortion in the past year or two?

32%

Of all women say yes

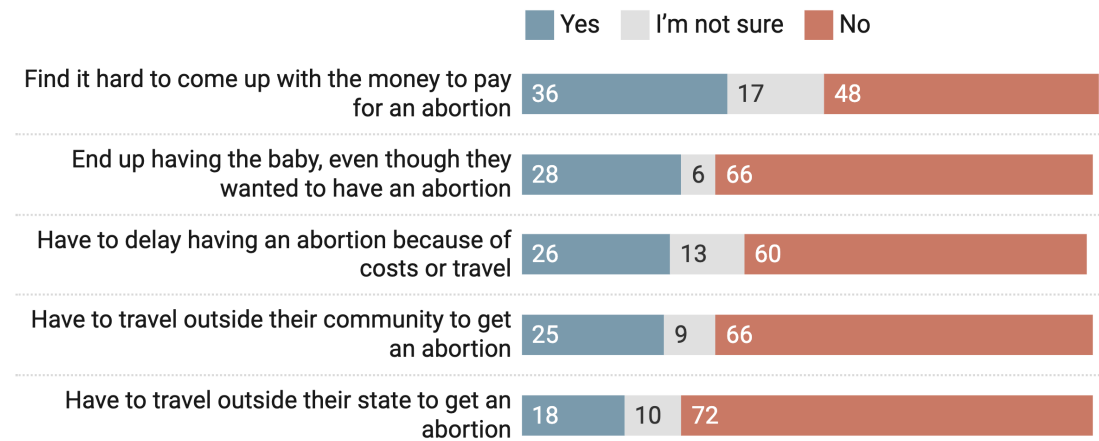
53%

Of women 18 to 44 say yes

**More than half (56%)
says the person(s) they
know faced at least one
of these barriers to care.**

Did [ONE PERSON: that person / MORE THAN ONE: any
of the people you know]:

*Base n = 204 who know someone who has had an abortion or
tried to have an abortion in the past two years*



A large majority of women supports comprehensive sex ed in high school.

Majorities of women who regularly attend religious services also support comprehensive sex ed.

Do you support or oppose comprehensive sex ed in high school that covers topics such as abstinence, birth control, abortion, preventing HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases, different sexual orientations, gender identity, sexual violence, consent, and healthy relationships?

88%

Support

12%

Oppose

85% Attends rel. services monthly+

Close to nine in ten women agree that health care providers should create space for conversations about sexuality, including sexual pleasure.

Do you agree or disagree: Our health care providers should create space for education and non-judgmental conversations about sexuality, including how we can experience pleasure.

86%

Agree

13%

Disagree

85% Attends rel. services monthly+

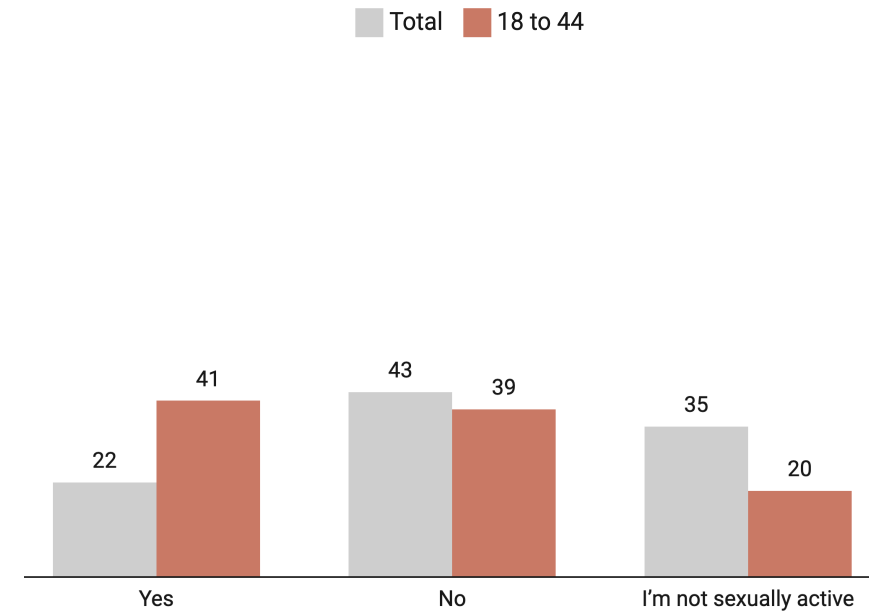


Access to birth control

voice
IN OUR OWN

Roughly four in ten women of reproductive age (41%) say they or a partner are currently using birth control.

Are you or your partner currently using birth control?

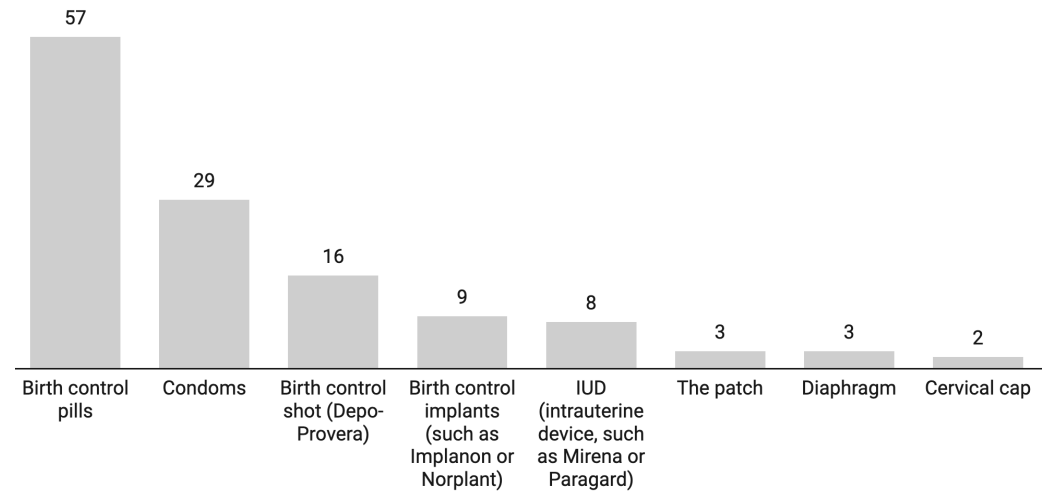




What type(s) of birth control are you or a partner using now? Select any that apply.

Base n = 124 self or partner is currently using birth control

Birth control pills are the most common birth control method.



A majority of women of reproductive age expresses interest in getting birth control over the counter.

Soon people will be able to get birth control pills over-the-counter. They will be available at the drugstore, like condoms and other birth control methods. How interested are you in getting birth control pills over-the-counter for you or a loved one?

% Very or somewhat interested

60%

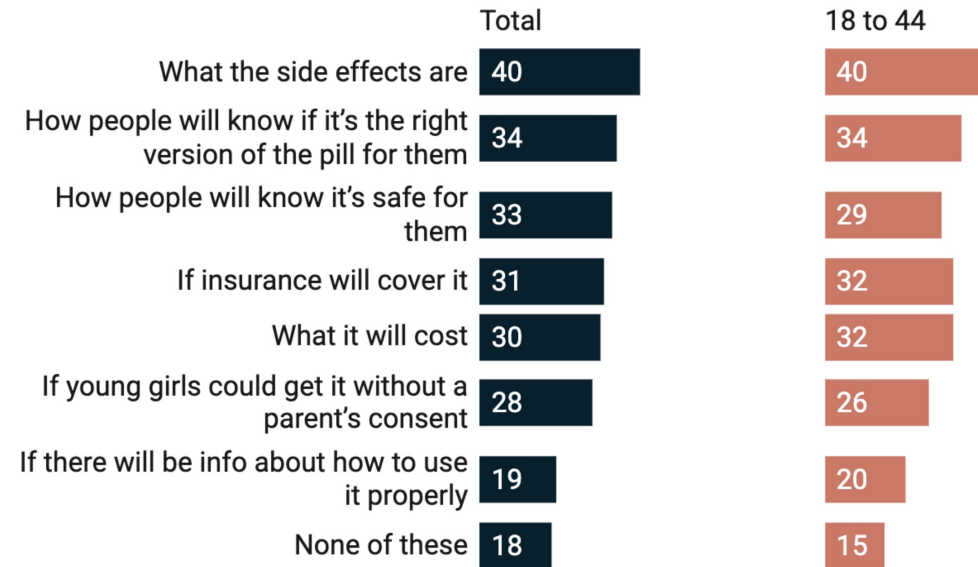
Women 18 to 44

65%

Women 18 to 29

The most common question about over-the-counter pills is around side effects.

What would you want to know about birth control pills being over-the-counter?
Select the top 3 things you'd want to know.
RANDOMIZE



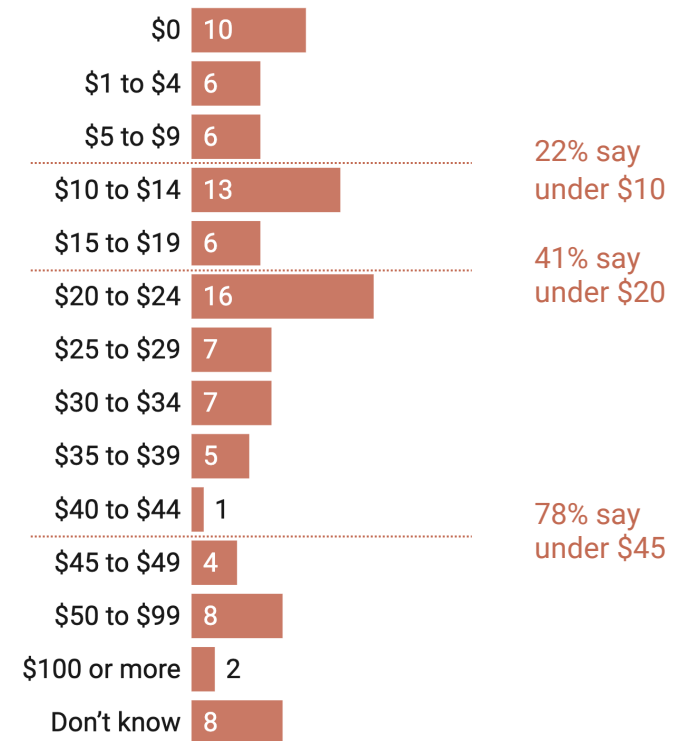
The retail price for over-the-counter birth control (\$49.00) is out of reach for 78% of respondents of reproductive age.

Let's say you or a loved one needed a 3-month supply of birth control pills. How much would you be able to pay for it, out-of-pocket, today?

Even if you don't need birth control pills, please imagine a situation in which you or a loved one does.

Your best guess is fine.

Base n = 282 women 18 to 44

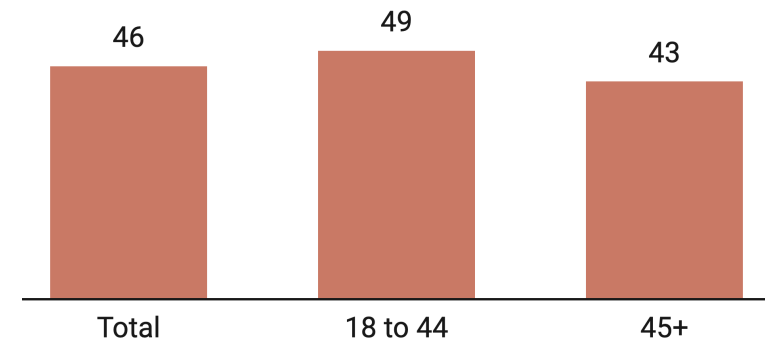




Close to half of respondents (46%) say they are likely to talk with loved ones about over-the-counter access to birth control.

Soon people will be able to get birth control pills over-the-counter. They will be available at the drugstore, like condoms and other birth control methods. Is this something you'd talk about with partners, family, or friends?

% Yes





Experiences with medical bias

voice
IN OUR OWN



A majority of Black women says they have felt the effects of racial / gender bias in the health care system.

Here are things that can happen in the healthcare system due to racial bias or racism. Have you ever felt this way?

RANDOMIZE

% Yes

	Total	18 to 44	45+
Yes to any	56	62	51
I felt worried about the health and safety of Black women in my life during their pregnancy or childbirth because of their race	39	44	35
Have felt a health care provider treat you differently because of your race and/or gender	37	37	36
A health care provider didn't take my health concerns seriously because of my race and / or gender	36	38	34
A health care provider didn't understand how my race and culture affects my health	32	34	30
A health care provider didn't take my pain seriously because of my race and / or gender	29	32	27
I felt worried about my health and safety during pregnancy or childbirth because of my race	28	38	21
A health care provider didn't give me all the available test and treatment options because of my race and / or gender	25	27	24
A health care provider didn't take my pain seriously during pregnancy or childbirth because of my race and / or gender	25	29	23
A health care provider didn't give me all the available options for birth control because of my race and / or gender	20	26	16

voice
IN OUR OWN