



The Lives and Voices of Black Adults in California

RESULTS FROM A SURVEY OF BLACK ADULTS IN CALIFORNIA

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

CONDUCTED BY PERRYUNDEM

SEPTEMBER 2025

voice
IN OUR OWN



CONTENTS

03 **Introduction**

06 **Key findings**

20 **Detailed findings**

Introduction.

Black voters continue to play a decisive role in shaping election outcomes, yet surveys that center their experiences remain rare, especially at the state level.

For several years, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda has invested in rigorous research to better understand the views, needs, and priorities of Black adults across the country.

In 2017, during the early days of the first Trump administration, we explored attitudes among Black adults related to race, policy, and reproductive justice.

After the 2020 election, but just before President Biden took office, we returned to the field to understand how Black communities were experiencing and responding to the policy landscape.

Leading up to the 2022 midterm elections, we conducted national and state surveys among Black women voters to understand their values, policy concerns, and responses to dominant issues in the news, such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

In spring 2024, we surveyed Black women nationally and across nine states to understand their perspectives heading into another high-stakes presidential election year.



Now, several months into the second Trump administration, we're back in the field exploring how Black communities think and feel about the new policy environment. We set out to understand their daily lives, their struggles, and their expectations for American life under the Trump administration. We also delved into the kind of future they imagine for their families and the specific barriers they say are getting in the way.

The goal of this research is to offer insights for policymakers, journalists, advocates, and others seeking to understand Black communities' experiences, values, and priorities at this time.

This report provides findings from a statewide survey among n = 540 Black adults ages 18 and older in California. The survey was conducted June 25 through July 1, 2025. Ipsos administered the survey using a combination of their probability-based KnowledgePanel and off-panel, opt-in sample. The data are weighted to reflect a representative sample of Black adults in California. See the next page for a demographic profile of survey respondents.

This survey is part of a larger project that surveys Black adults in a total of ten states.

Here is the demographic composition of the survey respondents.

	Weighted %	Unweighted N
Total	100%	540
Black or African American	100%	540
2+ races	14%	52
Hispanic / Latina/o/x	11%	49
Women	52%	305
Men	48%	226
Non-binary / transgender	2%	8
Prefer to self-describe	0%	1
Prefer not to say	1%	5
18 to 29	19%	86
30 to 44	31%	148
45 to 64	32%	190
65+	17%	116

	Weighted %	Unweighted N
HS or less	30%	168
Some college	37%	211
College +	32%	161
Less than \$25K	17%	173
\$25K to \$50K	12%	116
\$50K to \$75K	17%	87
\$75K+	54%	163
Democrats	57%	310
Independents	34%	175
Republicans	8%	55
Metro	98%	523
Non-metro	0%	4
Not available	2%	13

Key findings.

Here are 11 key findings.

1

Data suggest nearly half of Black adults in California are struggling with economic insecurity.

Forty-seven percent say they have less than \$500 in savings, and 43% say they don't have enough money to pay for basic needs like food and housing. Economic stress is a near daily reality—54% report worrying about their financial situation every day or several times a week.

The burden is heavier for women of reproductive age. More than half (53%) of women ages 18 to 44 can't afford basic needs right now and 65% feel financial stress every day or several times a week.

2

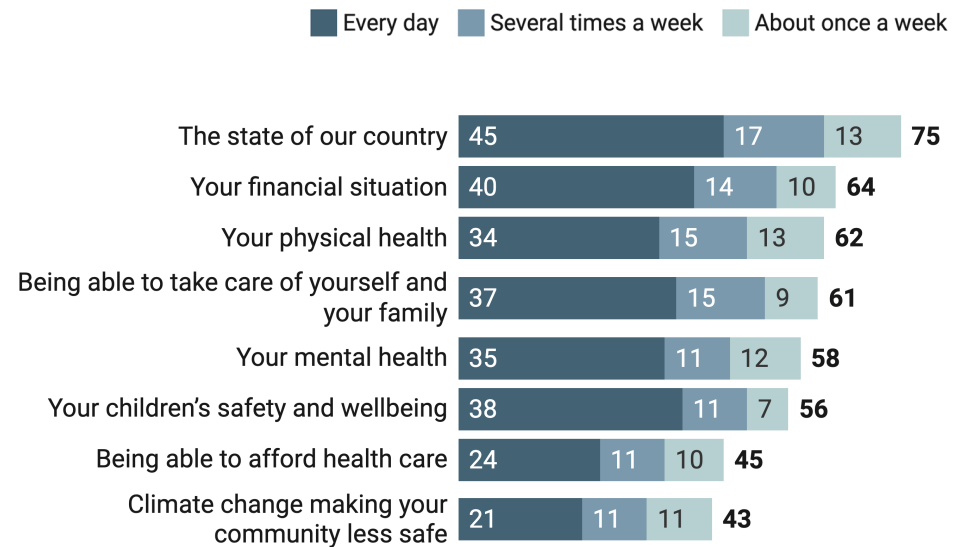
There's a lot of worry.

Majorities of respondents worry at least once a week about the state of our country and various aspects of their families' physical and financial wellbeing.

Seven in ten (70%) say they worry "every day" about at least one of these issues.

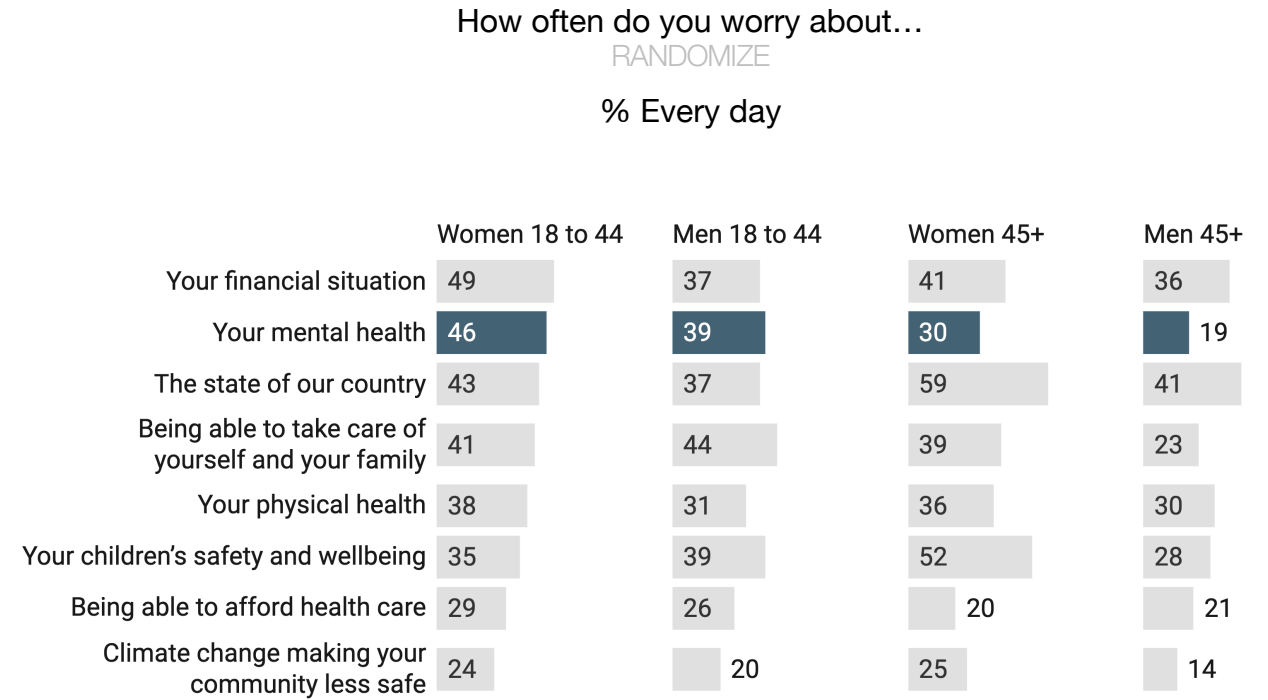
How often do you worry about...

RANDOMIZE



3

**Nearly half of women
ages 18 to 44 worry
about their mental
health *every day*.**



4

Black adults expect things to get a lot worse under the Trump administration.

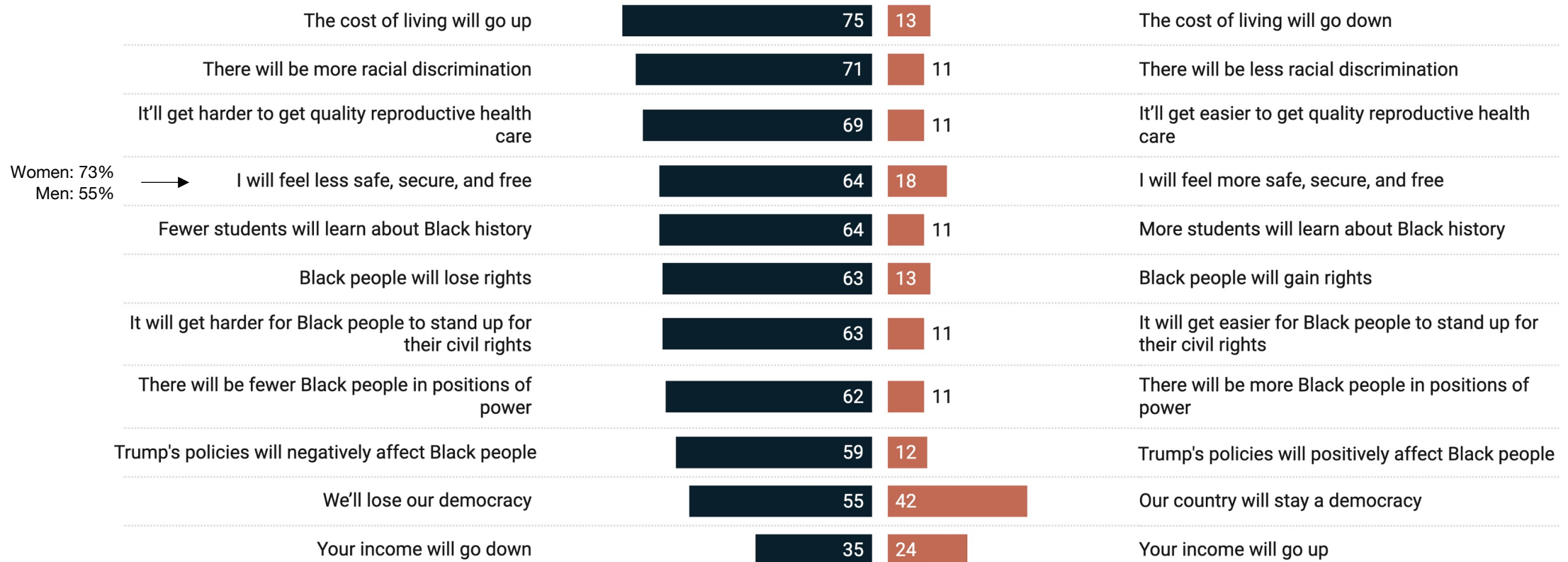
Respondents expect things to get worse on some of the issues they already worry about most—such as economic security. They also think racial injustice, threats to democracy, and access to reproductive care will worsen over the next four years.

Pessimism crosses gender, age, and other demographic lines. That said, women and older Black adults are most likely to anticipate harmful outcomes of the Trump administration, including on their personal lives. Women are +18 points more likely than men to say they expect to feel less safe, secure, and free under Trump (73% vs. 55%).

See next page.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Do you think...



Most of these questions had a third response option, such as "it won't change." (See pages 31 to 35 for full results).



5 Medicaid cuts may disproportionately impact Black adults.

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) say they or a family member has had Medicaid coverage at some point in their lives. For many Black adults in California, it's a vital resource. Nearly all who've received Medicaid (94%) say it's been important to them or their families, including 71% who say it's been "very important." Yet access remains a challenge for some—29% report having had trouble finding a provider who accepts Medicaid.

6

There's a gap between the desire to have children and the intention to do so.

More than half of respondents ages 18 to 44 (56%) say, ideally, they'd want (more) kids in the future. However, only 28% plan to do so (a gap of -28 pts).

The gap between aspirations and reality is wider for women 18 to 44 (-34 pts) than it is for men (-19 pts).

We explored what might be holding back those who want kids. Topping the list is "being able to take care of myself or my family as it is now." Majorities also cite several economic roadblocks as well as their mental health and the state of the country.

TOP DECISION FACTORS FOR WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE A CHILD

- Being able to take care of myself or my family as it is now (73% of 18- to 44-year-olds say this is part of their thinking about whether or not to have a child)
- Housing prices (70%)
- Food prices (69%)
- The state of my mental health (65%)
- The state of our country right now (64%)
- How much money I or my partner makes (63%)
- Health care prices (61%)
- Childcare prices (60%)
- Racism (57%)

7

Systemic racism is a barrier to health, stability, and raising healthy families.

Black adults in California view systemic racism as a force shaping daily life and access to opportunity.

Six in ten (63%) say society's systems are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people (vs. 27% who say systems are set up for equality).

A majority of respondents (57%) report exposure to environmental toxins, such as unsafe water and air, at some point in their lives.

Addressing systemic racism is seen as essential for helping Black families thrive. A large majority of respondents (80%) say dismantling systemic racism is extremely or very important to building a future where Black families are healthy, safe, free, and financially secure.



8

Women of reproductive age face significant barriers to reproductive justice.

Throughout the data, we find that women ages 18 to 44 have the least security, freedom, and opportunity to raise healthy children if they choose. Men also face barriers, but not as many or to the same degree.

The next page summarizes these obstacles. All percentages reflect Black women respondents ages 18 to 44.

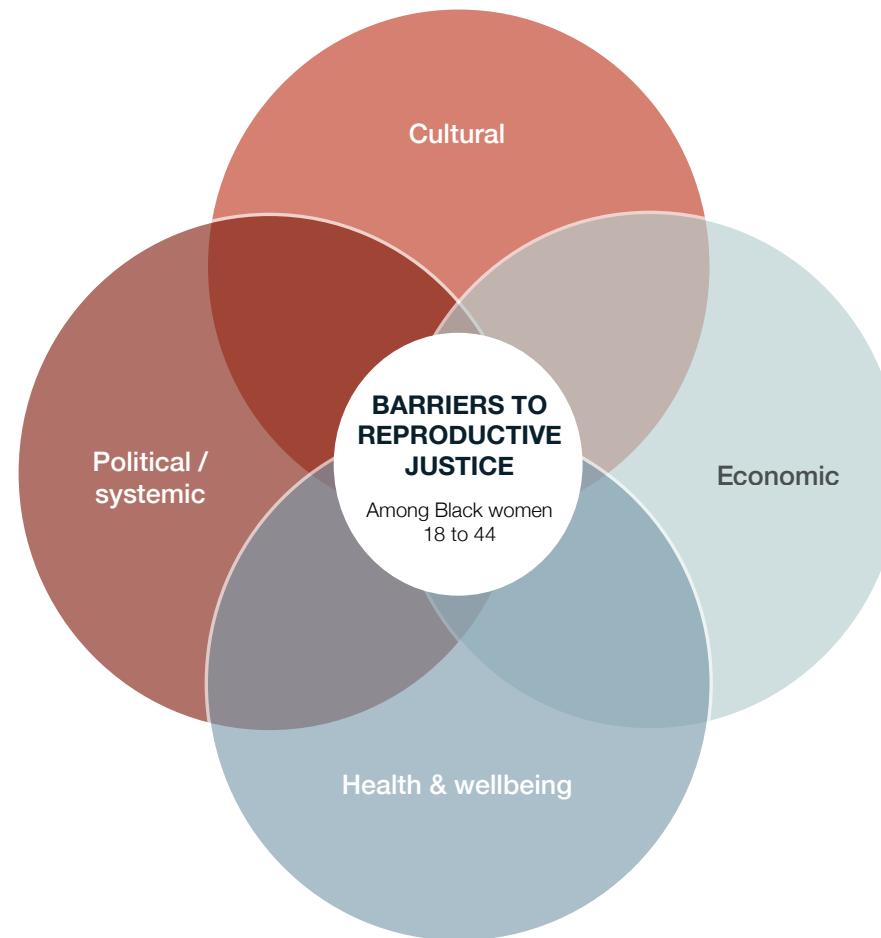
Majorities recognize an adultification (69%) and sexualization (63%) of Black girls in society
 70% say it's very important for Black women to be visible in media and culture
 67% say representation affects how they are treated
 55% expect Black people to lose positions of power during the next four years

70% think they'll feel less safe, secure, and free under President Trump

In the next four years, majorities think:

- Racial discrimination will increase (74%)
- Fewer students will learn Black history (68%)
- Black women will lose rights (65%)
- It'll be harder for Black people to stand up for their civil rights (63%)
- We'll lose our democracy (55%)

63% say systems in US are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people



Half (53%) don't have enough money to pay for basic needs like food and housing

61% have less than \$500 in savings

75% worry about their financial situation at least once a week

75% expect the cost of living to increase in the next four years and they expect their own income will go down (36%) or stay stagnant (29%)

59% want (more) children, but just 25% plan to have them

Top decision factors in whether to have a child:

- Being able to care for self / family as is (74%)
- Food prices (72%)
- Housing prices (71%)
- Salary / wages (63%)
- Health care prices (63%)
- Childcare prices (62%)

69% worry at least once a week about their mental health
 74% think it'll get harder to get quality repro care under the Trump administration
 53% say their risk of death in pregnancy is a decision factor for having kids
 50% have relied on Medicaid at some point
 47% have felt a health care provider(s) didn't take their concerns seriously
 63% have experienced unhealthy water, air, or environmental toxins

9

Black adults see many policy solutions that could help them thrive.

When asked what it would take for Black families to thrive, respondents point to a wide range of policy priorities—but especially clean water, dismantling systemic barriers, and economic concerns.

TOP POLICY NEEDS

Let's say we wanted to create a world where Black people are free to raise healthy children, if they choose. In your opinion, how important is each of these things to creating a world like this?

- Making sure everyone has access to clean water (69% extremely important)
- Improving access to quality public schools (66%)
- Improving access to healthy and affordable food options (64%)
- Getting rid of racial disparities in health care (64%)
- Having equal opportunities to move up in the workplace (63%)
- Increasing job opportunities that pay a livable wage (63%)
- Improving Black maternal health (62%)
- Increasing affordable housing (62%)
- Improving access to quality, affordable health care (62%)
- Protecting the right to vote in future elections, without barriers (61%)
- Improving access to affordable mental health care (61%)
- Having equal pay in the workplace (61%)
- Dismantling systemic racism (60%)

10

Large majorities support abortion rights, access, and personal decisions.

Majorities across demographic groups support abortion rights and access, including those who attend religious services regularly.

Close to four in ten (38%) respondents ages 18 to 44 say they know someone who has had an abortion in the past year or two.

72%

Say abortion should be legal in all or most cases

Including 64% of those who attend religious services regularly

83%

Say the person(s) involved should decide when and how someone can get abortion care

78%

85%

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

83%

80%

Agree: When it comes to abortion, I trust Black women to make the personal decision that's best for themselves

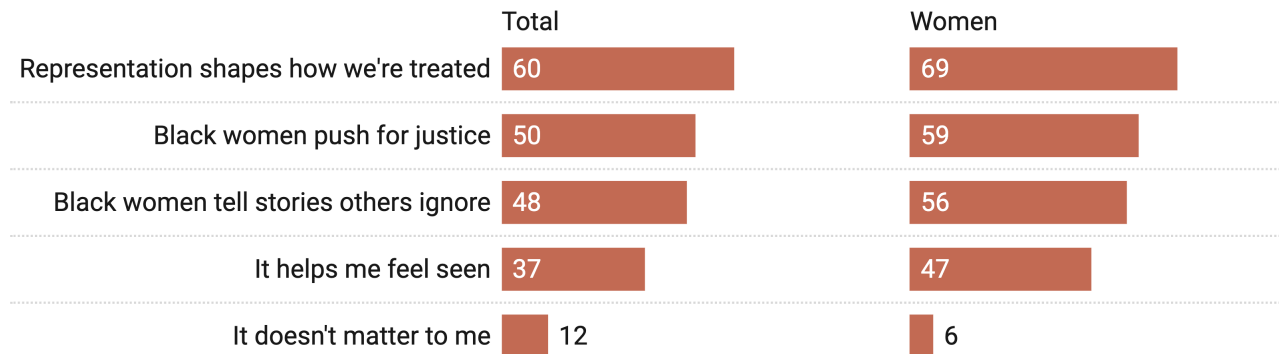
77%

11

Representation of Black women matters.

Nine in ten (90%) respondents say it's important that Black women are visible and positively portrayed in our culture and media. Why does it matter? For many reasons, but particularly because representation shapes how Black people are treated.

Why does having Black women voices in culture and media matter to you?
Select any that apply.
RANDOMIZE UP TO DOESN'T MATTER

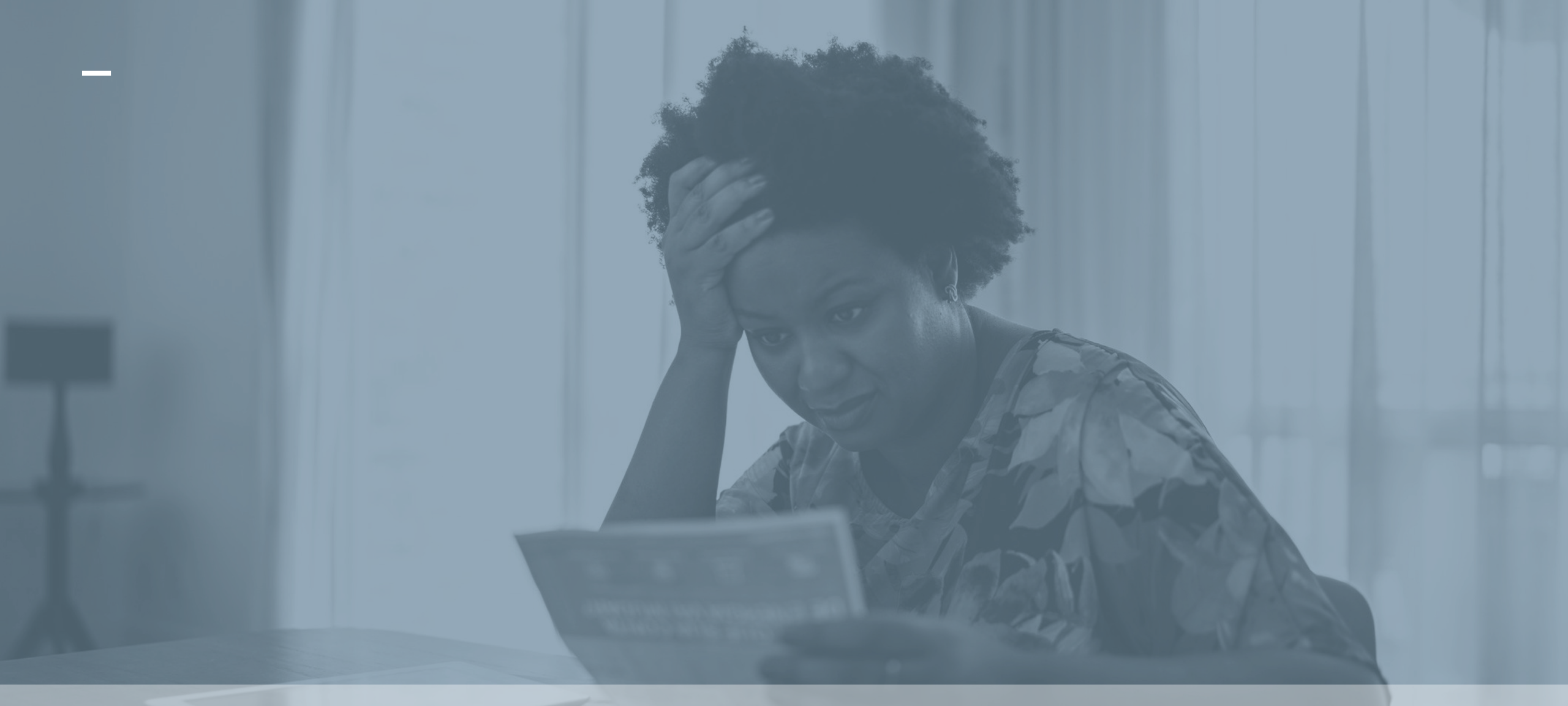


Detailed findings.



SECTIONS

- 22 Daily economic and emotional pressures
- 28 Outlook on life during the second Trump term
- 41 Needs and aspirations for healthy families
- 53 Views on reproductive health policies
- 62 Respect, representation, and changing norms



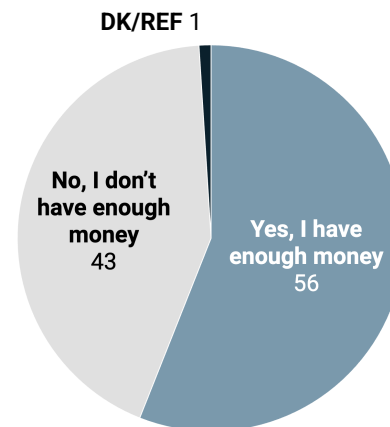
Daily economic and emotional pressures

voice
IN OUR OWN

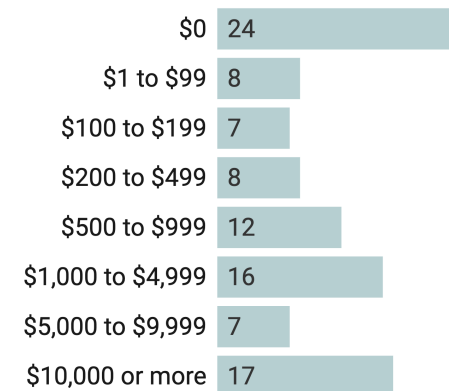
Many respondents are struggling with little to no economic security.

Four in ten (43%) say they don't have enough money to cover basic needs, and nearly half (47%) have less than \$500 available for an emergency expense.

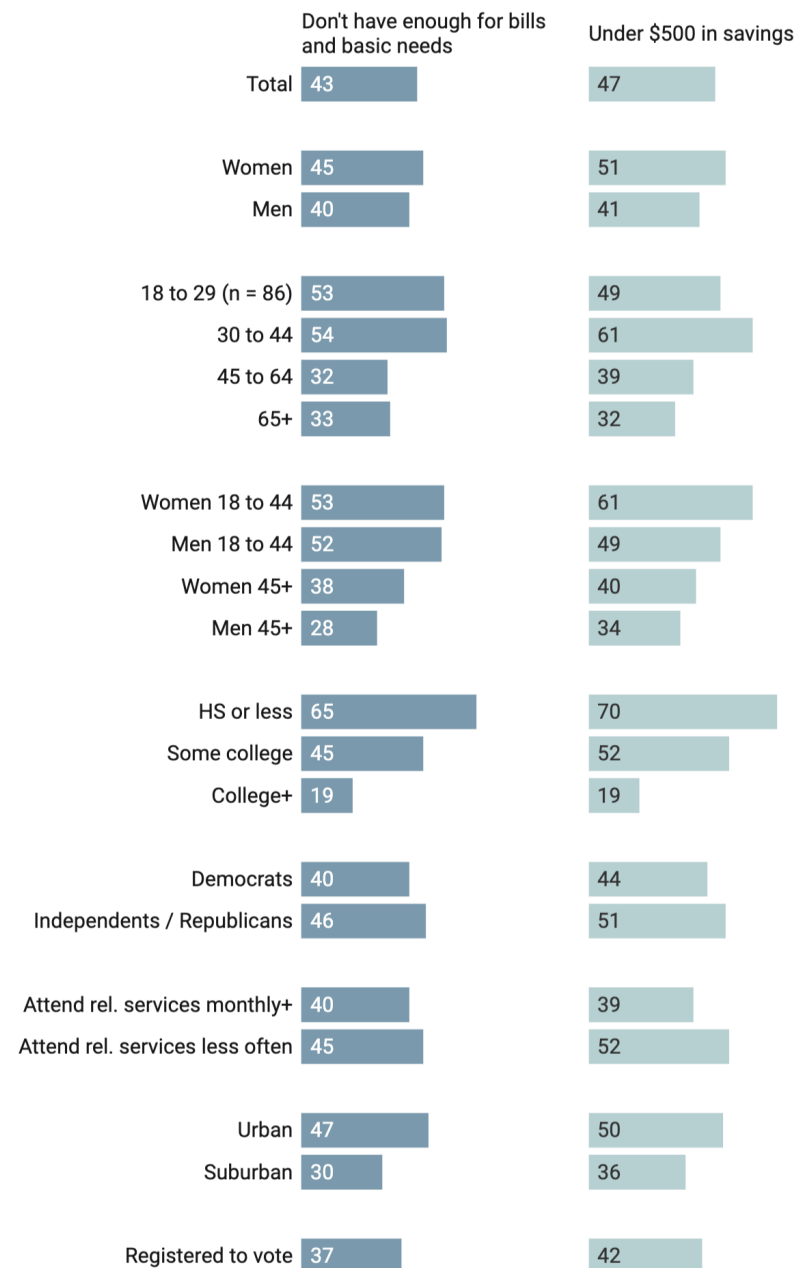
Do you have enough money to pay for all of your bills and basic needs, like food and housing?



How much money do you have set aside that could be used for an emergency?



Women, younger adults, and those without a four-year degree are most likely to be financially insecure.

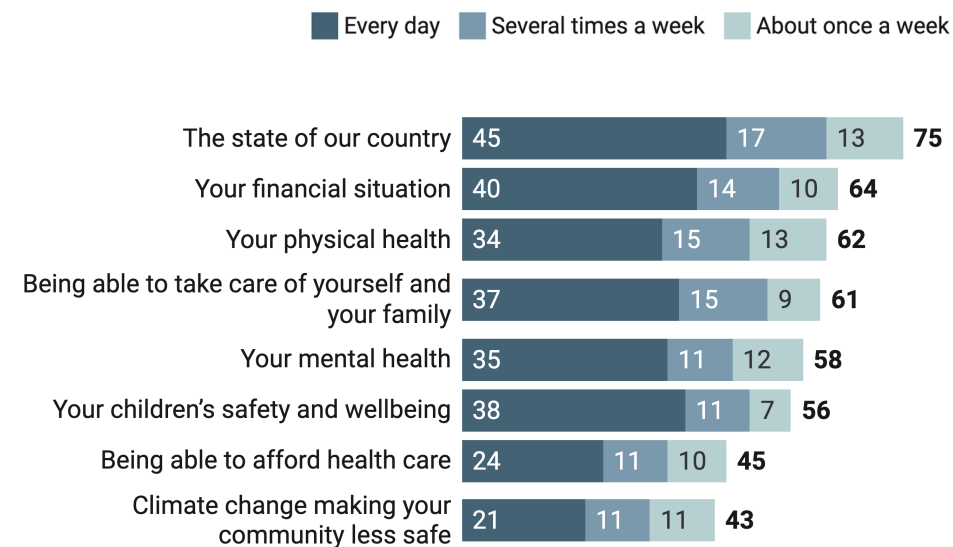


There are many worries on people's minds—including the state of the country.

Majorities worry at least once a week about the state of our country and their families' financial and physical wellbeing.

How often do you worry about...

RANDOMIZE



Majorities across gender and age are worrying regularly about their finances, health, and the state of the country.

Women are more likely than men to worry at least once a week about the state of the country.

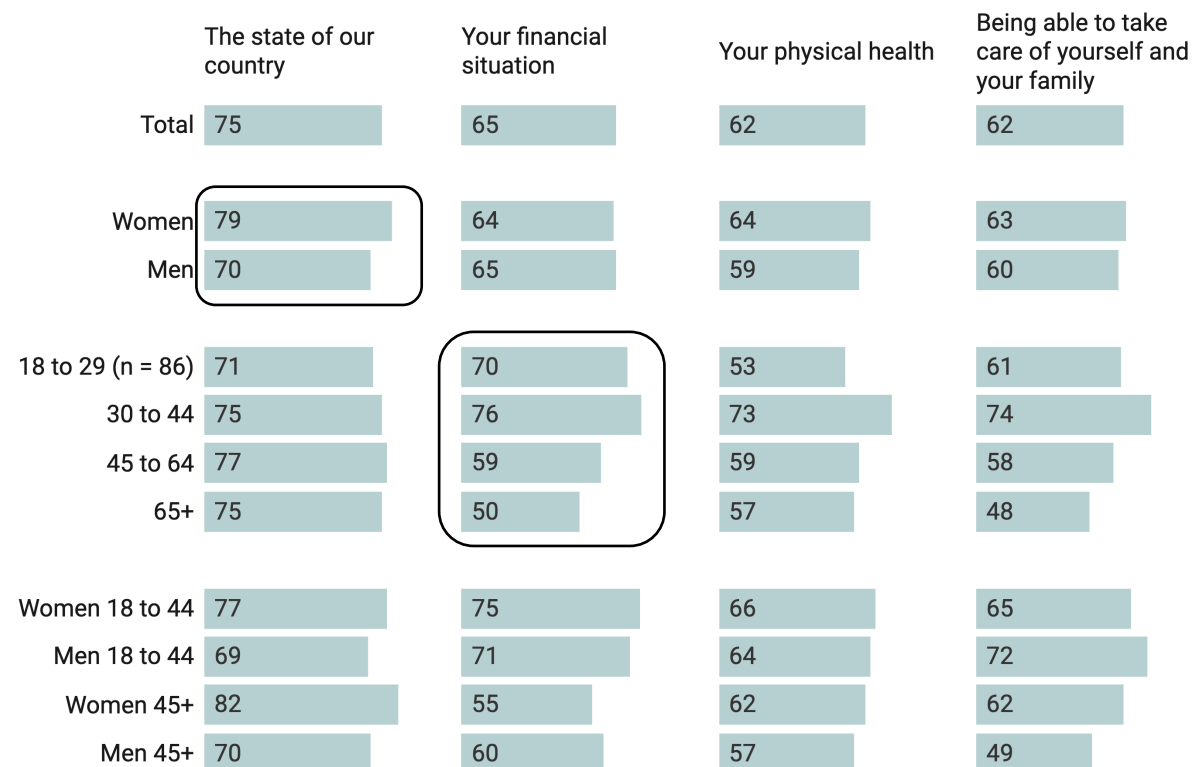
Respondents ages 18 to 44 are more concerned about finances than their older counterparts.

See at right and the next page.

How often do you worry about...

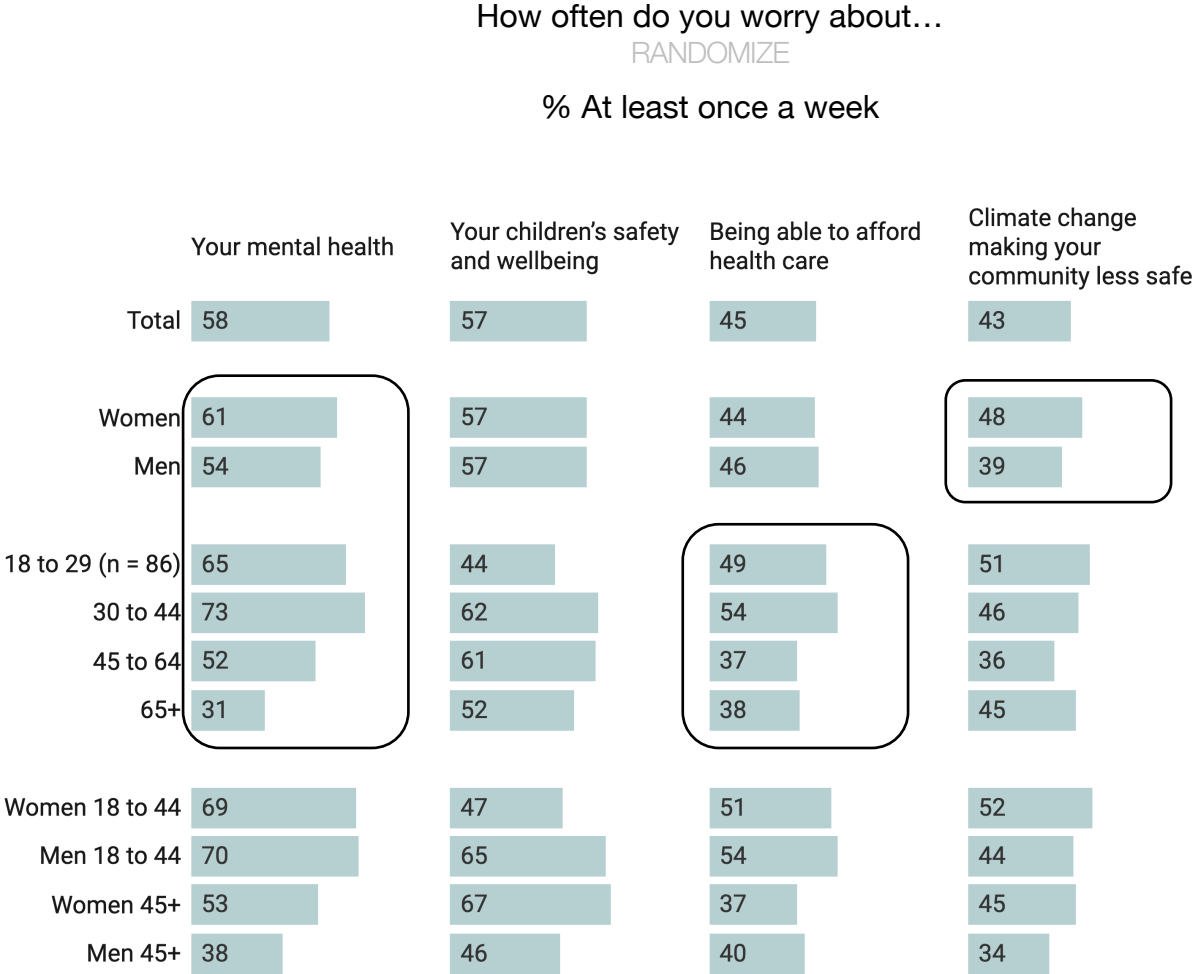
RANDOMIZE

% At least once a week



Women are more frequently grappling with concerns about their mental health and climate change than men.

Respondents ages 18 to 44 are more consistently worried about their mental health and the affordability of health care than older adults.





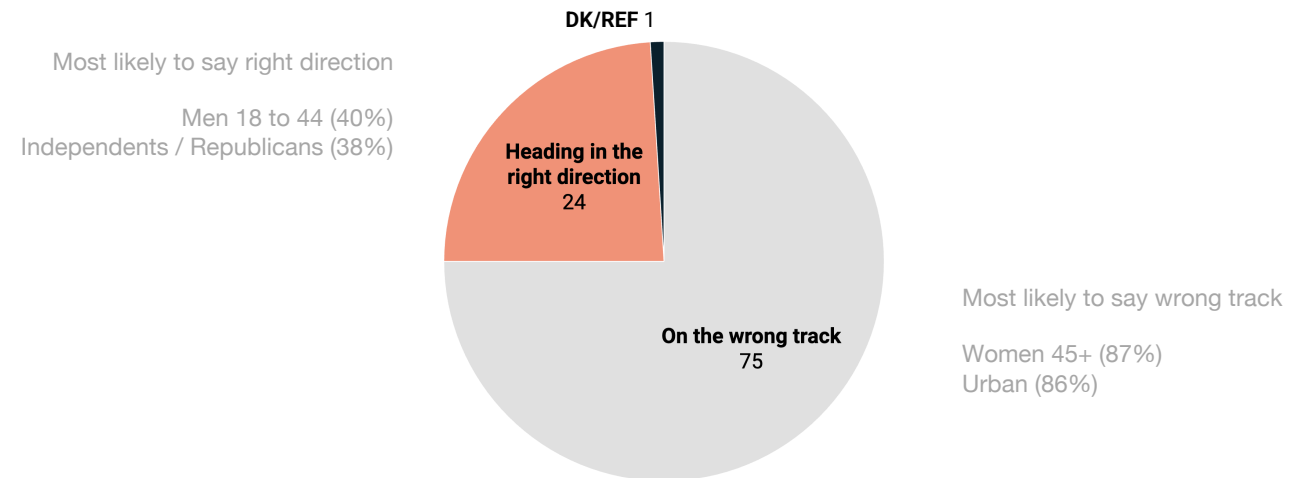
Outlook on life during the second Trump term

voice
IN OUR OWN

Six months into the Trump administration, three in four respondents (75%) say the country is on the wrong track.

Majorities across demographic groups say the country is on the wrong track. Older respondents, particularly women, are most likely to express this view.

Would you say things in the country are:

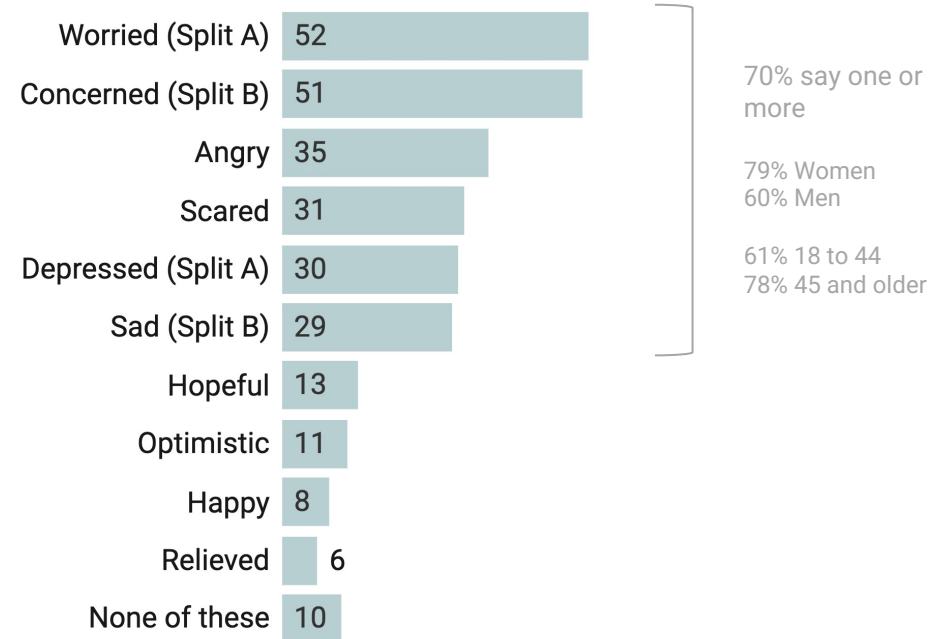


Most respondents (70%) feel negatively about Trump winning the election.

Just about one in five (22%) respondents
express a positive sentiment about the election
outcome.

How do you feel about Donald Trump
winning the election?

RANDOMIZE UP TO NONE



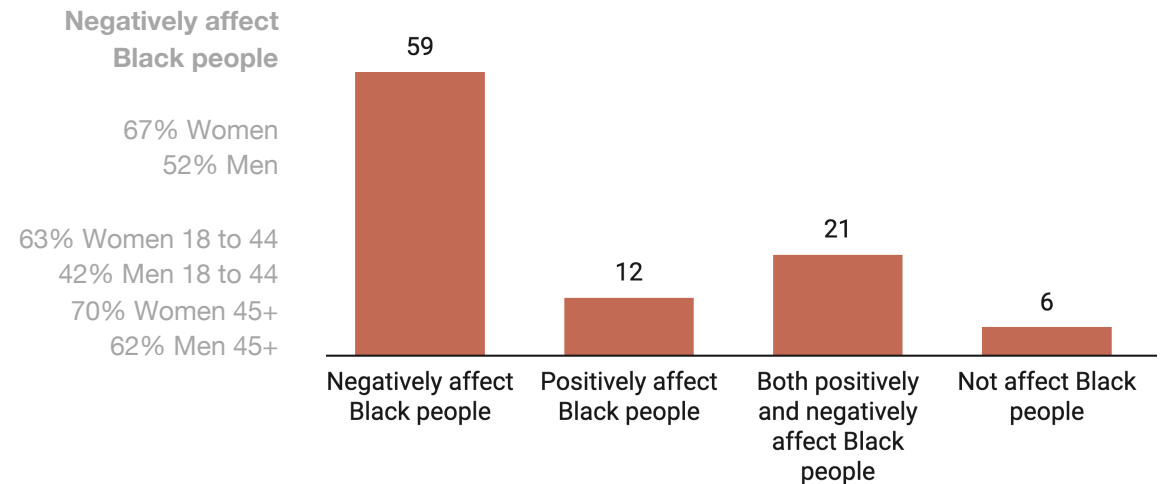
About six in ten (59%) expect Trump's policies to negatively affect Black people.

Just one in eight respondents (12%) think Trump's policies will positively affect Black people, including just 17% of Black men.

Women and older men are most likely to foresee singularly negative effects on Black communities.

About one in five men ages 18 to 44 think Trump's policies will have positive effects (22%), both negative and positive effects (23%), or will not affect Black people (13%).

In general, do you think President Trump's policies will:
ROTATE FIRST TWO



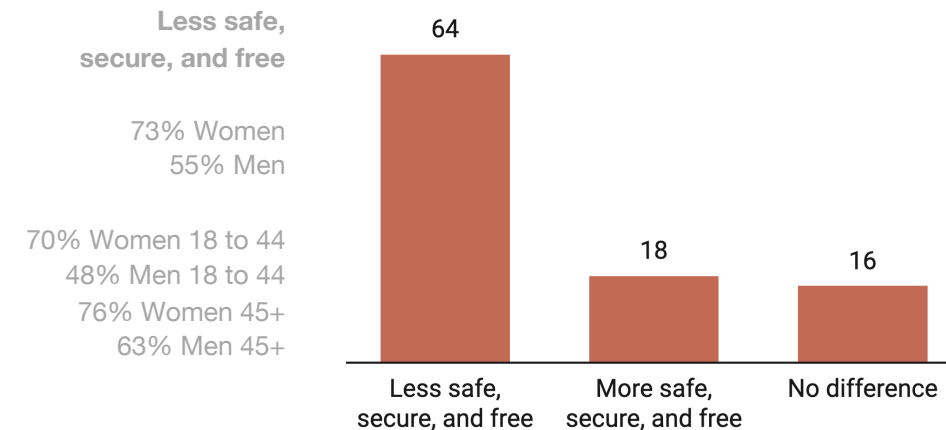
Close to two-thirds (64%) expect to feel less safe, secure, and free under a Trump administration.

Women are more likely than men to expect greater insecurity under President Trump (73% v. 55%).

About half of men ages 18 to 44 think they'll feel less security (48%), with the rest thinking they'll feel more security (32%), or they won't feel a difference (18%).

Think about the next four years under President Trump. Do you think you will feel:

ROTATE FIRST TWO

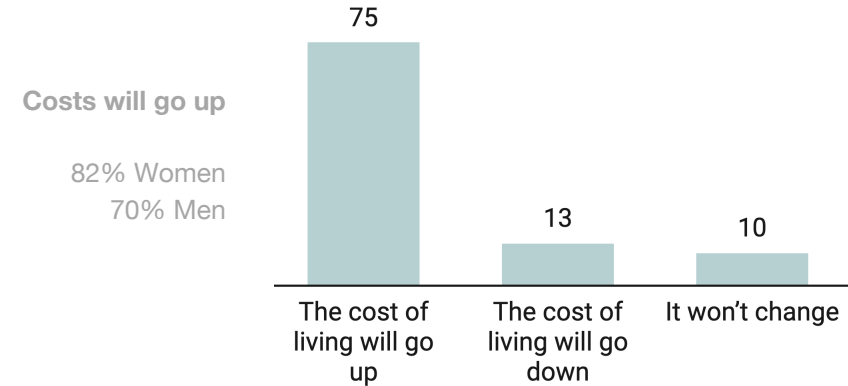


Most (75%) expect the cost of living to rise over the next four years, without an increase in their own incomes.

In fact, about one in three (35%) expect their incomes to go down during the next four years.

In the next four years under President Trump, do you think:
RANDOMIZE PAIRS AND ROTATE WITHIN PAIR

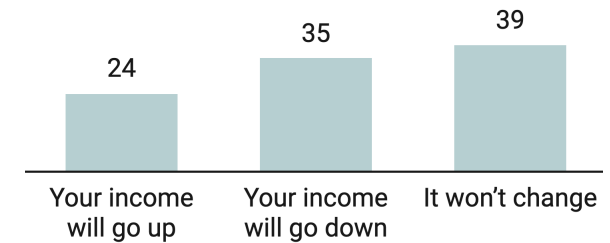
Cost of living



Income

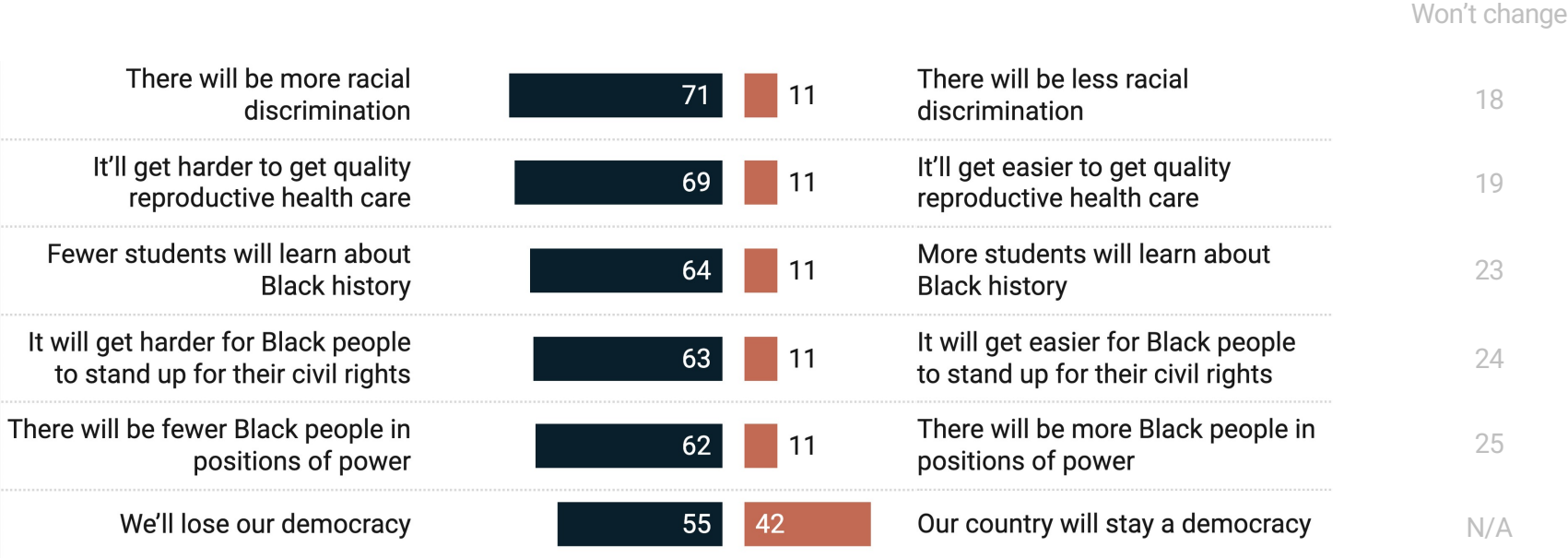
Income will go up

21% Women
28% Men



Majorities also foresee backward trends across health care, civil rights, and democracy.

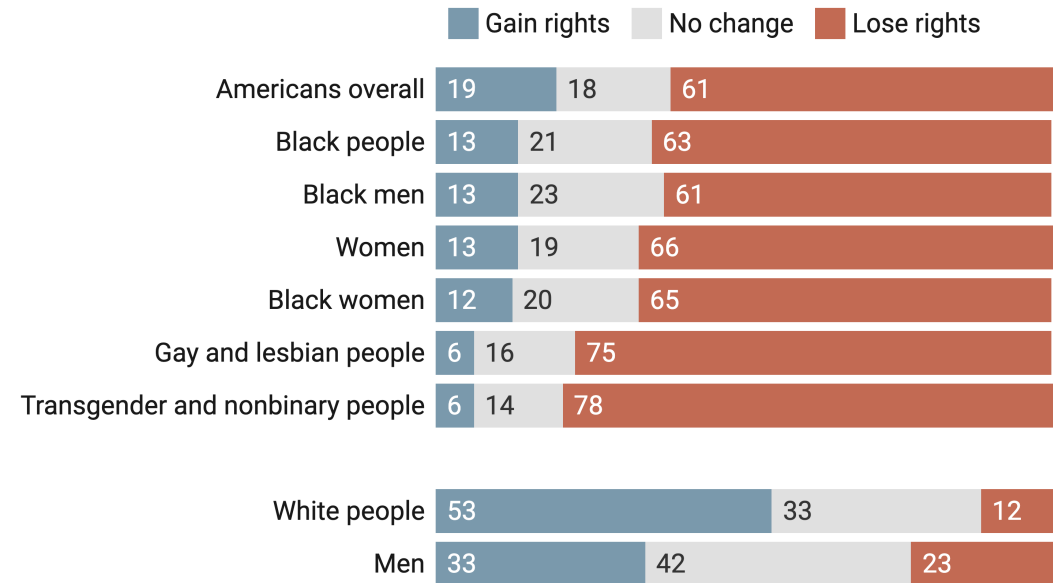
In the next four years under President Trump, do you think:
RANDOMIZE PAIRS AND ROTATE ITEMS WITHIN PAIR



Black adults think many people, including themselves, will lose rights under President Trump.

They see men and white people as likely to keep or gain rights under President Trump.

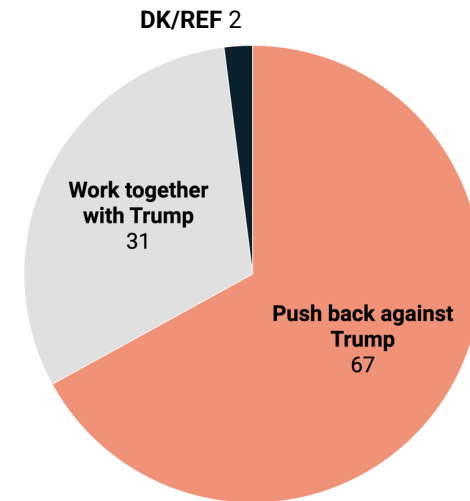
Under President Trump, do you think these people will gain or lose rights?



Two in three (67%) say they'd want their elected officials to push back against President Trump.

In general, do you want your elected officials in Congress to:

ROTATE





Many Black families in California see Medicaid as a vital resource.

The program isn't perfect—nearly three in ten (29%) say they or a loved one has had trouble finding a provider who accepts Medicaid.

67%

Say they or a family member has had Medicaid coverage at some point in their lives (40% self; 42% family member)

94%

Of those with a connection to Medicaid say the program has been important to them or their loved ones—71% say it has been “very important”

Among n = 393 respondents who say they or a family member has had Medicaid

29%

Say they or a family member has had trouble finding a health care provider that takes Medicaid

Among n = 393 respondents who say they or a family member has had Medicaid

Three in ten (30%) say they've worried about themselves or a family member being deported unlawfully.

About four in ten (43%) men 18 to 44 say they've worried about deportation.

As you may know, the Trump administration is deporting undocumented immigrants. Have you worried that you or a family member might be deported unlawfully?

30%

Yes, I've worried about this

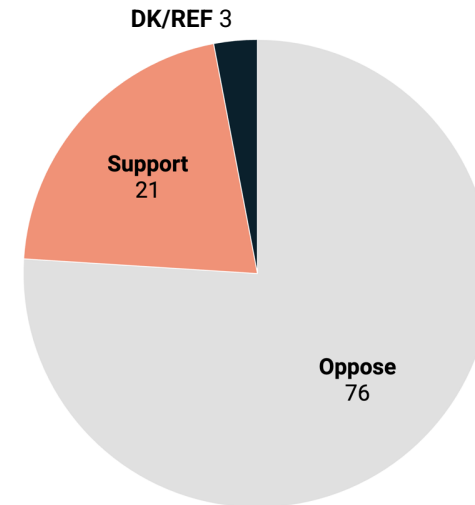
69%

No, I haven't worried about this

30% Women 18 to 44
43% Men 18 to 44
28% Women 45+
20% Men 45+

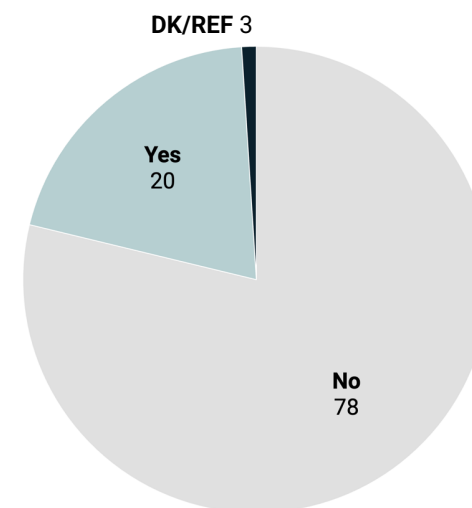
**A majority (76%) opposes
Trump's pardons of people
convicted of January 6th
crimes.**

As you may know, President Trump pardoned
people convicted of crimes related to the
Capitol riot on January 6th.
Do you support or oppose Trump's pardons?



Most (78%) don't think President Trump would handle Black-led protests fairly.

Do you think President Trump would handle Black-led protests fairly?





Needs and aspirations for healthy families

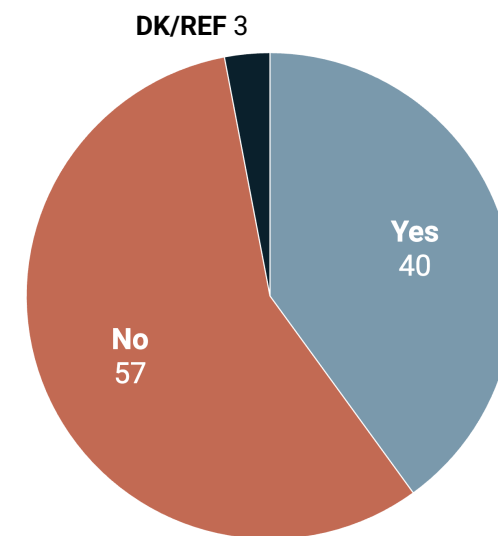
voice
IN OUR OWN

Do Black adults in California have the security, safety, and freedom required to raise healthy families if they choose?

Fewer than half say yes (40%).

Imagine this. You have enough money to pay bills, with plenty left over. You and your family are able to be physically and mentally healthy. You feel safe in your community. You have the freedom to raise healthy families, if you choose to. You feel safe, secure, and free wherever you go.

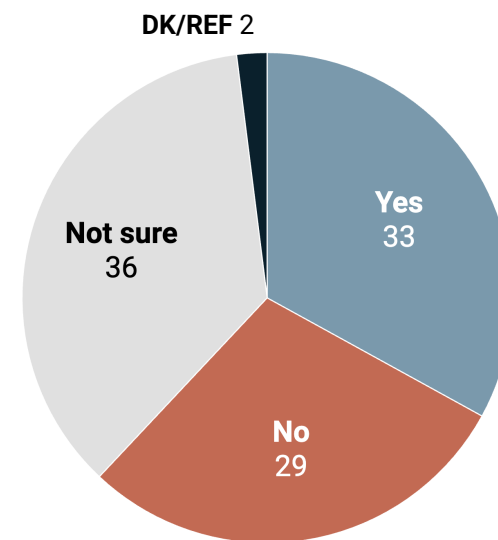
Do you have a life like this now?



**Just one in three (33%)
are convinced their
children will have a life
like this.**

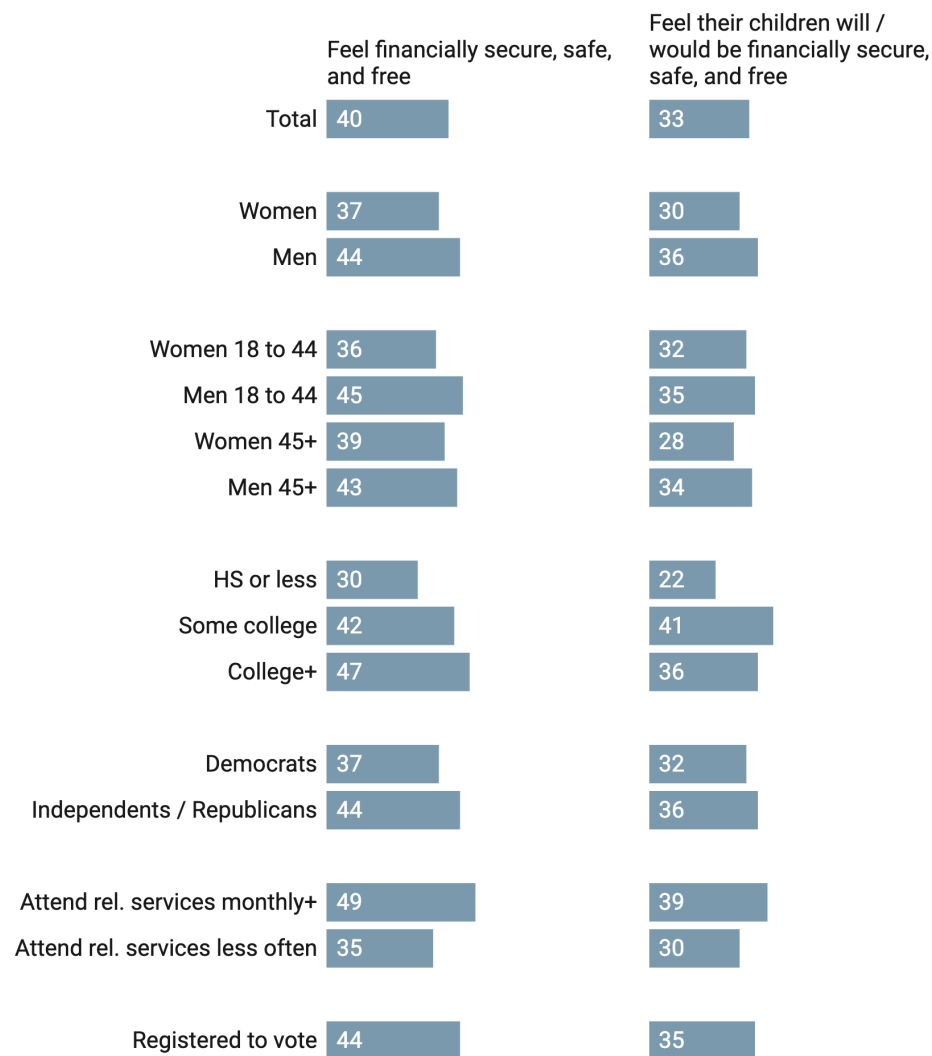
Respondents aren't necessarily pessimistic, however. More than one in three (36%) are not sure.

Do you think your children will have a life like this?
IF NO KIDS: If you were to have children,
do you think they'd have a life like this?



Respondents with a high school degree or less are the least likely to feel financially secure, safe, and free.

Women are also less likely than men to feel secure, safe, and free—or to be optimistic about their children’s futures.



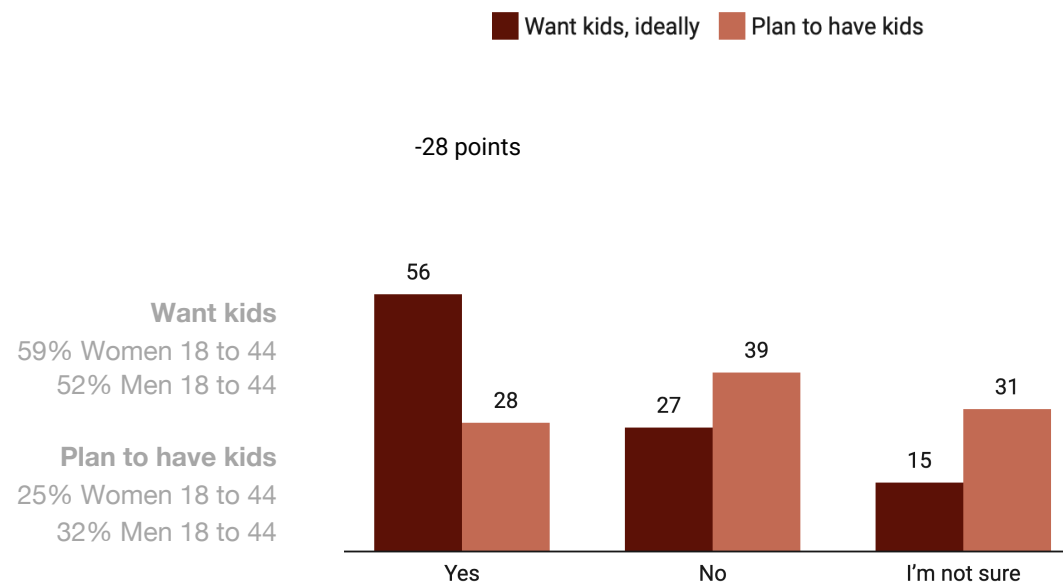
There's a big gap between wanting children and planning to have them.

In an ideal world, 56% of respondents of reproductive age (18 to 44) say they'd want children in the future. But just 28% plan to have them.

The gap between aspirations and reality is wider for women 18 to 44 (-34 pts) than it is for men (-19 pts).

In an ideal world, would you want to have
[any / any more] children in the future?
Do you plan to have [any / any more] children in the future?

Among $n = 234$ respondents ages 18 to 44



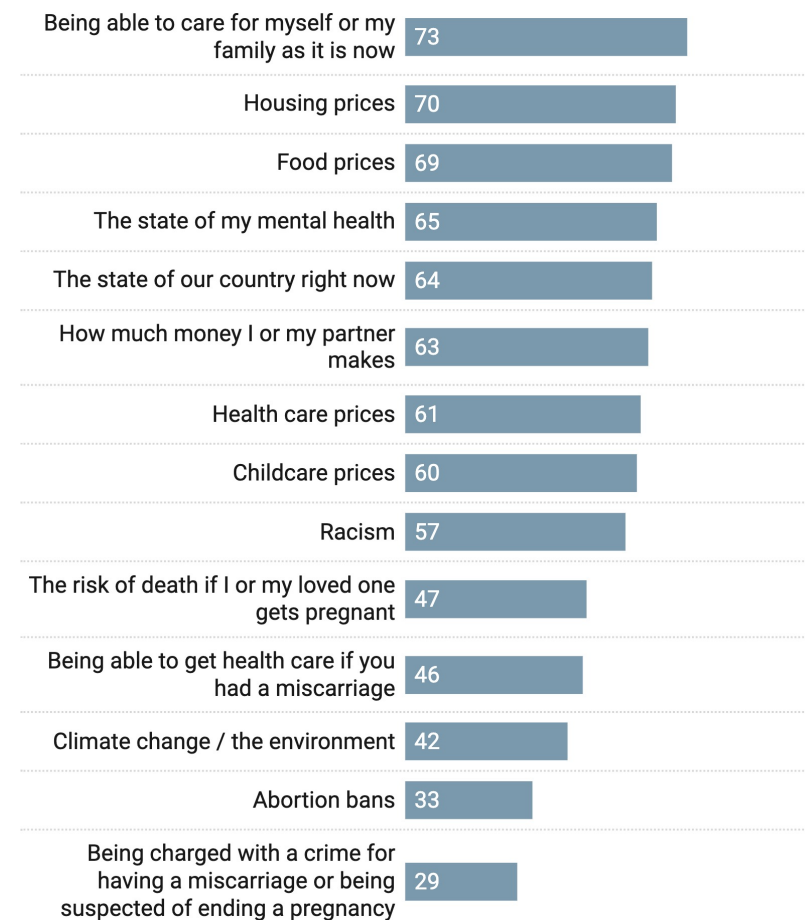
Data suggest there are many barriers holding back people who want kids.

At the top of the list is simply “being able to care for myself or my family as it is now.” Economic barriers, mental health concerns, and the state of the country are also considerations for large majorities of respondents of reproductive age.

Are any of these things part of your thinking about whether or not to have a child?

RANDOMIZE | Among $n = 234$ respondents ages 18 to 44

% Yes, part of my thinking



% Yes, part of my thinking
Ages 18 to 44

Data suggest that millennials (ages 30 to 44) are balancing a broader set of considerations than adults ages 18 to 29—especially financial factors. The one exception is climate change, where adults 18 to 29 are more likely to consider it a factor (48% vs. 39%) in whether or not to have kids.

Women ages 18 to 44 are more likely than men to be weighing the state of the country, climate change, and maternal mortality when deciding whether to have a child.

	Women	Men	18 to 29	30 to 44
Being able to care for myself or my family as it is now	74%	71%	68%	76%
Housing prices	71%	68%	56%	79%
Food prices	72%	65%	53%	79%
The state of my mental health	63%	66%	63%	66%
The state of our country right now	69%	60%	65%	63%
How much money I or my partner makes	63%	61%	52%	70%
Health care prices	63%	61%	54%	66%
Childcare prices	62%	56%	55%	63%
Racism	63%	52%	55%	58%
The risk of death if I or my loved one gets pregnant	53%	41%	39%	52%
Being able to get health care if you had a miscarriage	44%	48%	44%	47%
Climate change / the environment	49%	36%	48%	39%
Abortion bans	32%	34%	35%	31%
Being charged with a crime for having a miscarriage or being suspected of ending a pregnancy	28%	31%	31%	28%

What would it take to create a world where Black families are healthy, safe, free, and financially secure?

We asked respondents to imagine a world where Black people are safe, secure, and have the freedom to raise healthy children, if they choose (see text at right).

We then asked how important various policies are to achieving a world like this.

Respondents rate nearly every policy area as important to building a world where Black families thrive. See next page.

Presented to respondents

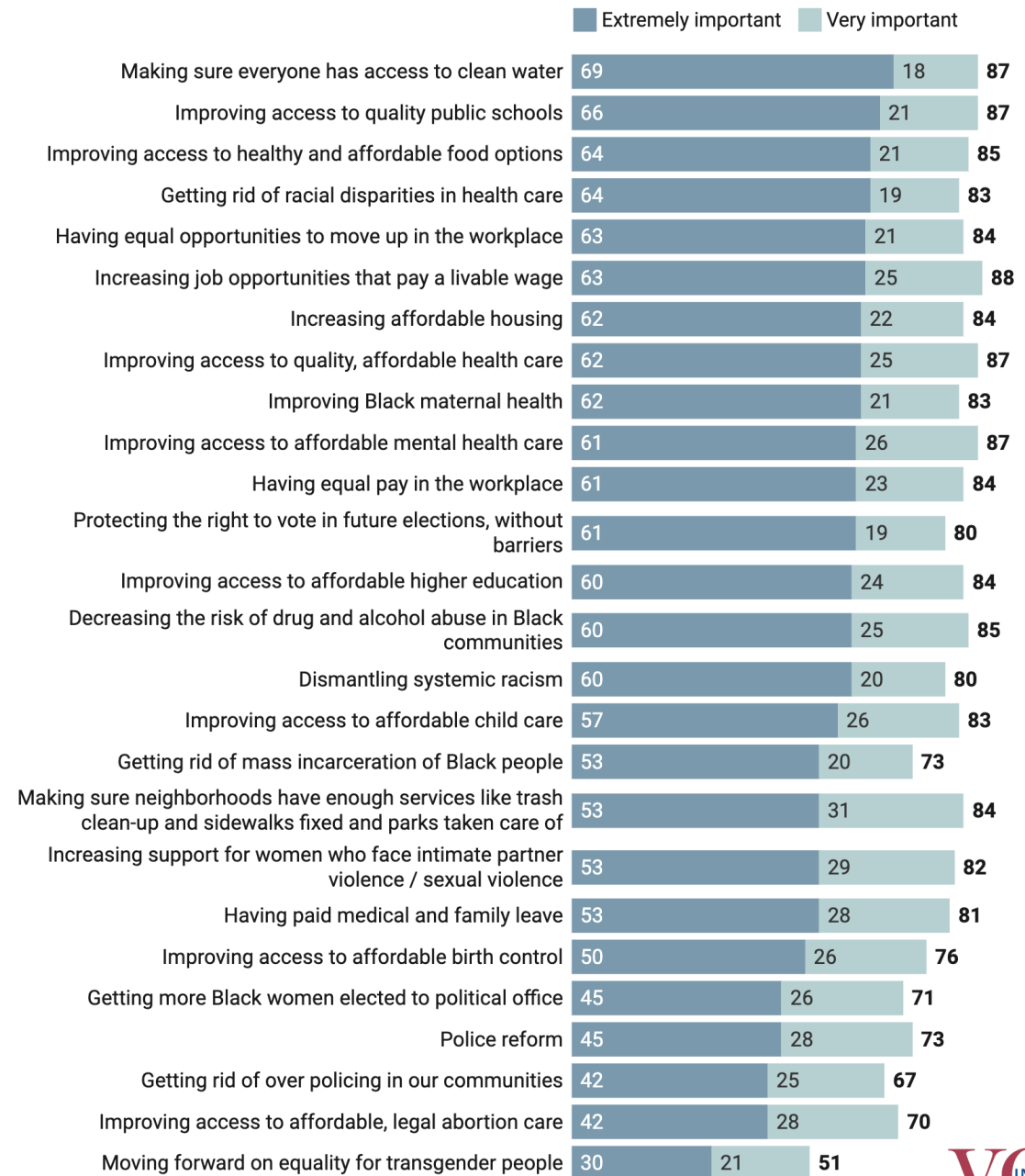
Imagine this. You have enough money to pay bills, with plenty left over. You and your family are able to be physically and mentally healthy. You feel safe in your community. You have the freedom to raise healthy families, if you choose to. You feel safe, secure, and free wherever you go...

Let's say we wanted to create a world like this. We want a world where Black people are free to raise healthy children, if they choose. In your opinion, how important is each of these things to creating a world like this?

See next page....

In your opinion, how important is each of these things to creating a world like this?

Access to quality food and water, education, economic opportunity, and a more equitable society are among the most important.

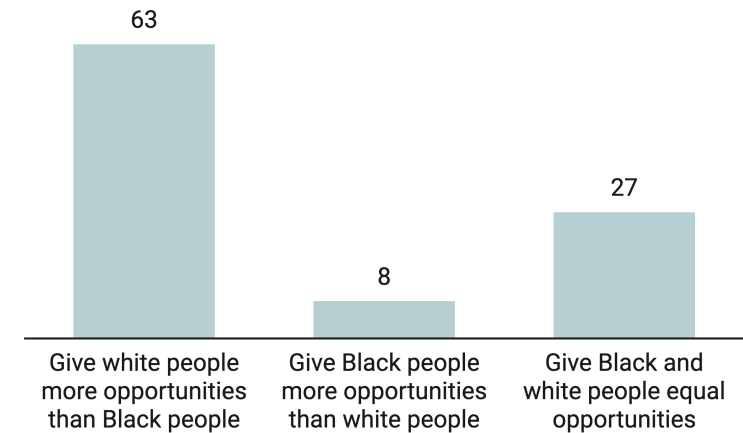


A majority of respondents (63%) say systems in the US—that are critical for raising healthy families—are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people.

Think about the systems in our society, such as school systems, health care, housing, food, banking, and the government.

In general, do you think these systems are set up to:

ROTATE



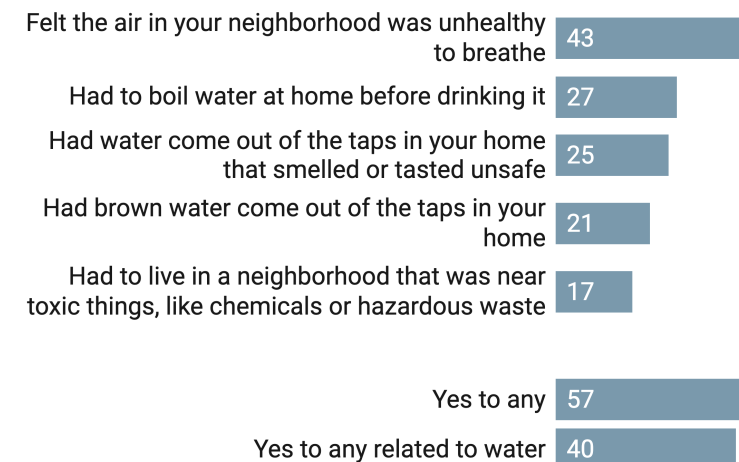
Many have experienced the results of these systems, such as a lack of clean water and air.

A majority (57%) have had at least one experience related to unhealthy water, air, or environmental toxins.

Have you ever:

% Yes

RANDOMIZE



Additionally, more than one in three (36%) say they've felt discrimination in the doctor's office.

Women are +14 pts more likely than men to say a health care provider did not listen to them or take their concerns seriously because of their race.

Have you ever felt that a health care provider did not listen to you or take your concerns seriously because of your race?

36%

Yes

43% Women
29% Men

62%

No



Views on reproductive health policies

voice
IN OUR OWN

More than seven in ten
(72%) say abortion should
be legal in all or most
cases.

Which comes closest to your view.
Abortion should be:

72%

Legal in all or most
cases

35% All cases
37% Most cases

24%

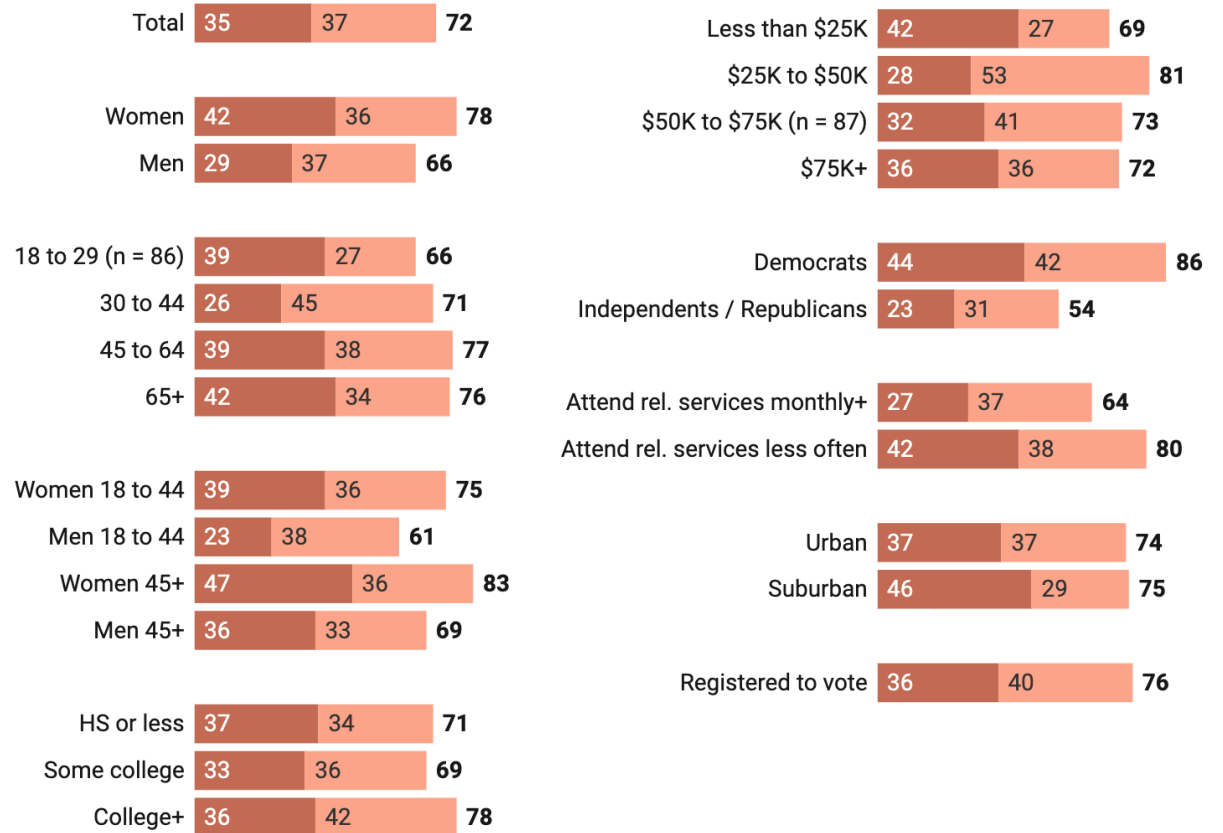
Illegal in all or
most cases

7% All cases
17% Most cases

Majorities across every demographic group think abortion should be legal in all or most cases — including those who attend religious services regularly.

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 cases Legal in most cases

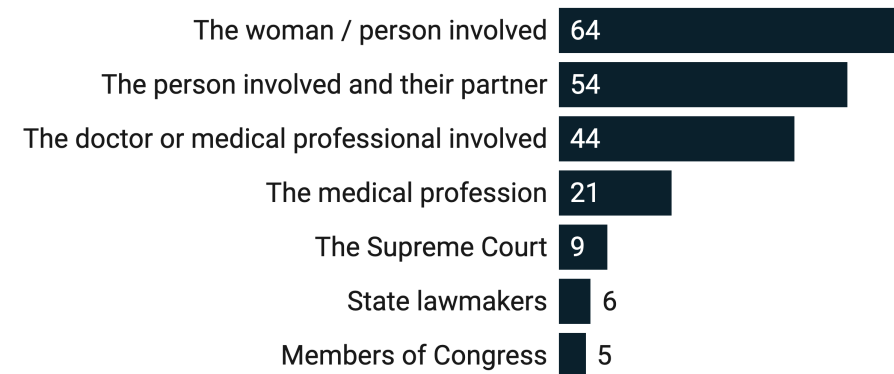


Black adults in California prefer that decisions about abortion rest in the hands of the people involved.

Just six percent think state lawmakers should be making these decisions.

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 want people making their own decisions and agree that health insurance should cover the range of reproductive care.

85%

Agree: Each woman should have the right to make her own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with her decision.

61% Strongly agree
23% Somewhat agree

85% Women
84% Men

81% 18 to 44
88% 45+

80%

Agree: When it comes to abortion, I trust Black women to make the personal decision that's best for themselves.

58% Strongly agree
22% Somewhat agree

84% Women
78% Men

77% 18 to 44
84% 45+

83%

Agree: Whether she has private or government funded health coverage, every woman should have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care, including prenatal care and abortion.

63% Strongly agree
20% Somewhat agree

85% Women
80% Men

82% 18 to 44
83% 45+

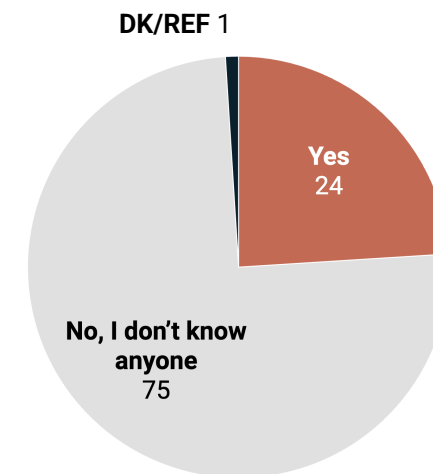
—

One in four (24%) say they know someone who has recently had an abortion.

Nearly four in ten (38%) respondents ages 18 to 44 say they know someone who has had an abortion in the past year or two.

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

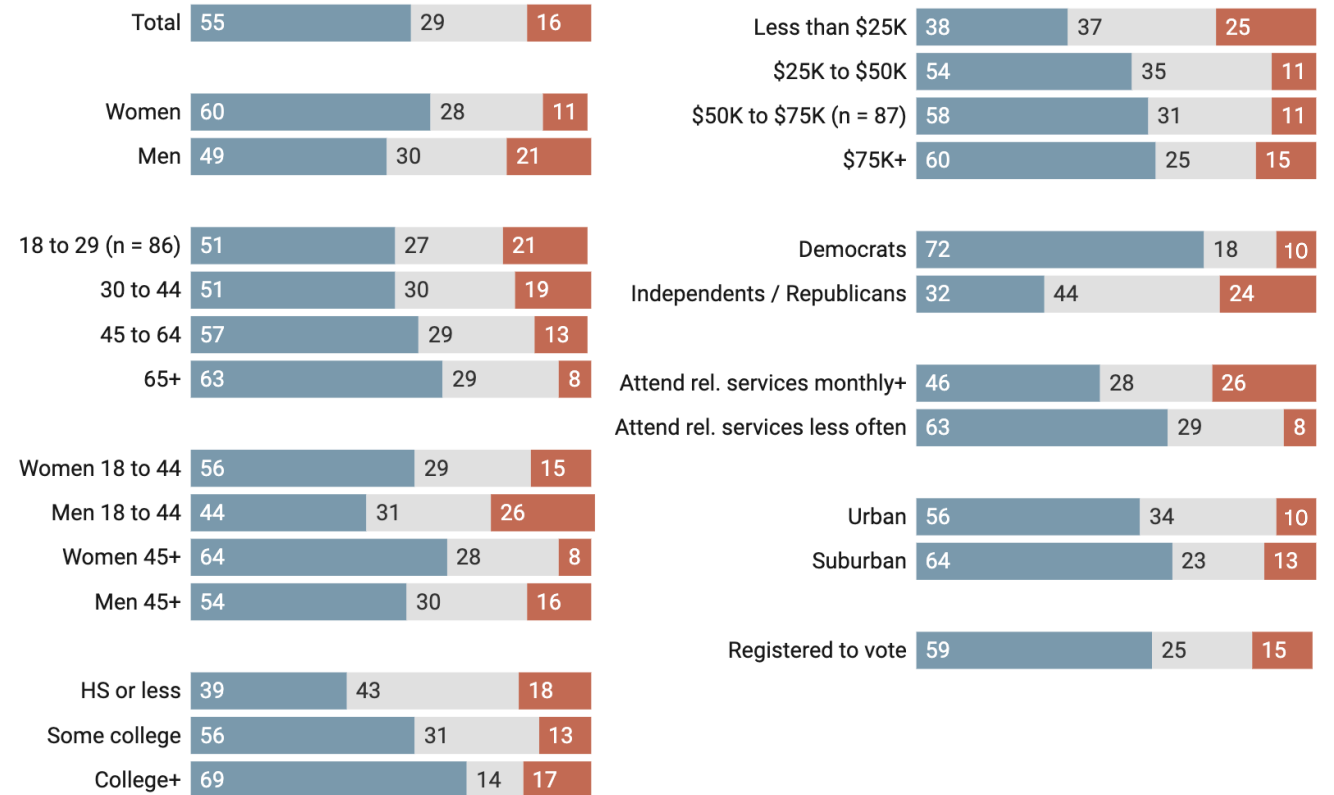
RANDOMIZE



Respondents are much more likely to vote for candidates who support abortion access than those who oppose it.

Are you more likely to vote for a candidate for state legislature who _____ access to abortion:
ROTATE SUPPORTS / IS AGAINST

Supports No difference / REF Is against



**A large majority (83%)
supports comprehensive sex
education in high school.**

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

83%

Support

14%

Oppose

79% Attends rel.
services monthly+

Four in five (82%) 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, gender-affirming care, and sexual expression, including how we can experience pleasure.

82%

Agree

15%

Disagree

81% Attends rel.
services monthly+



Respect, representation, and changing norms

voice
IN OUR OWN

**Two-thirds recognize an
adultification (68%) and
sexualization (64%) of Black
girls in our society.**

Women are more likely than men to recognize these messages.

In a society that centers white people, there can be many false messages about Black people.

Do you think our society _____?

% Yes
ROTATE

68%

Sees Black girls as
more adult-like and less
innocent than white girls

74% Women
61% Men

65% 18 to 44
71% 45+

64%

Assumes more Black
girls are sexually active
than white girls

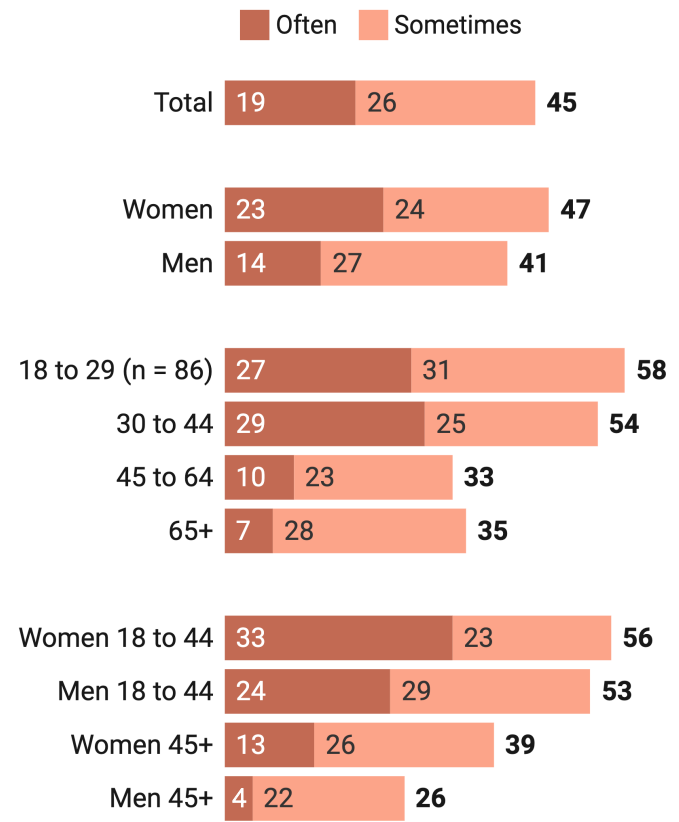
71% Women
57% Men

61% 18 to 44
68% 45+

A majority (56%) of respondents ages 18 to 44 say they were told growing up that they look older for their age.

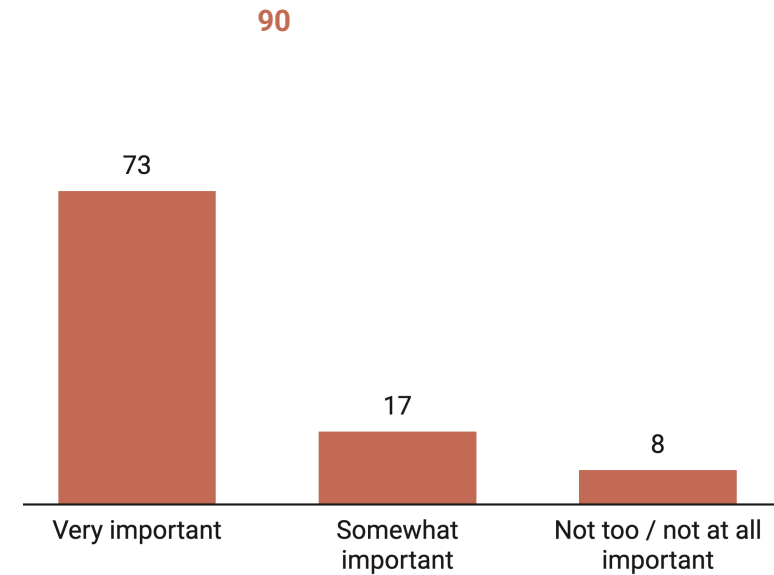
Women ages 18 to 44 are +9 points more likely than men their age to say they were “often” told growing up that they looked old for their age (33% vs. 24%).

When you were growing up, how often were you told that you look older for your age?



Nearly all (90%) say it's important for Black women to be visible and positively portrayed in media.

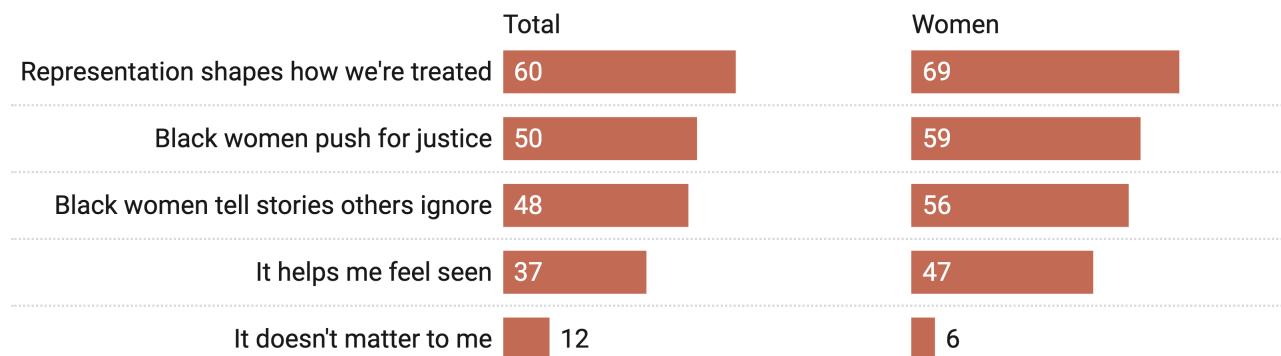
How important is it that Black women are visible and positively portrayed in our culture and media (in entertainment, news, talk shows, etc.)?



Why is representation important?

Many reasons – but especially because it shapes how people are treated.

Why does having Black women voices in culture and media matter to you?
Select any that apply.
RANDOMIZE UP TO DOESN'T MATTER



voice

IN OUR OWN

PERRY
UNDEM