

A photograph of a Black family of four sitting on the steps of a brick house. From left to right: a young man with curly hair, a woman with short hair, a young girl, and a man with a beard. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The house has a brick wall and a wooden door. A window with plants is visible on the left.

The Lives and Voices of Black Adults in Virginia

RESULTS FROM A SURVEY OF BLACK ADULTS IN VIRGINIA

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

CONDUCTED BY PERRYUNDEM

SEPTEMBER 2025

voice
IN OUR OWN



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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 = 533 Black adults ages 18 and older in Virginia. The survey was conducted May 27 through June 17, 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 Virginia. 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%	533
Black or African American	100%	533
2+ races	8%	30
Hispanic / Latina/o/x	4%	18
Women	56%	324
Men	44%	202
Non-binary / transgender	1%	5
Prefer to self-describe	0%	1
Prefer not to say	1%	6
18 to 29	20%	103
30 to 44	30%	153
45 to 64	34%	181
65+	16%	96

	Weighted %	Unweighted N
HS or less	40%	185
Some college	32%	195
College +	28%	153
Less than \$25K	22%	186
\$25K to \$50K	10%	111
\$50K to \$75K	21%	90
\$75K+	47%	146
Democrats	58%	340
Independents	35%	152
Republicans	7%	41
Metro	88%	444
Non-metro	9%	78
Not available	2%	9

Key findings.

Here are 10 key findings.

1

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

Fifty-one percent say they have less than \$500 in savings, and 40% say they don't have enough money to pay for basic needs like food and housing. Economic stress is a near daily reality—50% report worrying about their financial situation every day or several times a week.

2

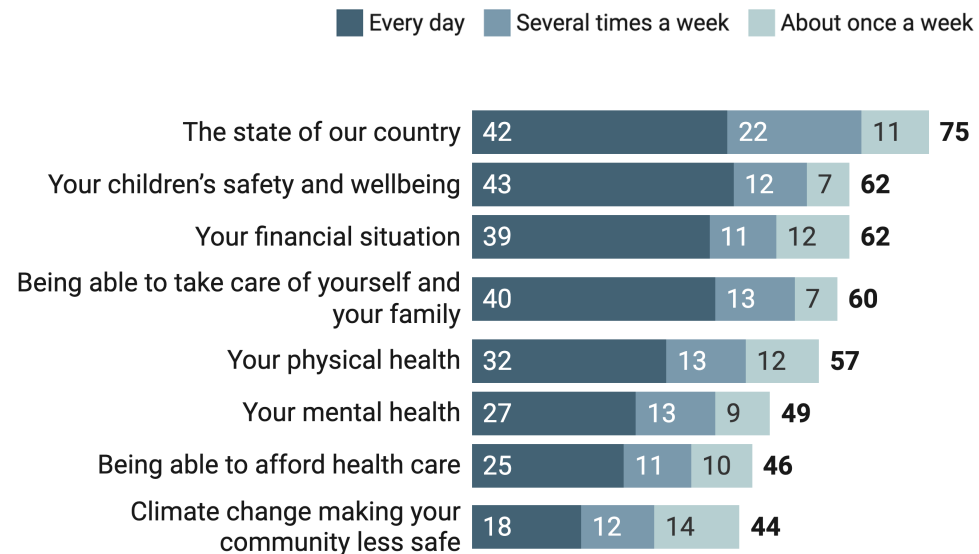
There's a lot of worry.

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 (72%) say they worry "every day" about at least one of these issues.

How often do you worry about...

RANDOMIZE



3

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

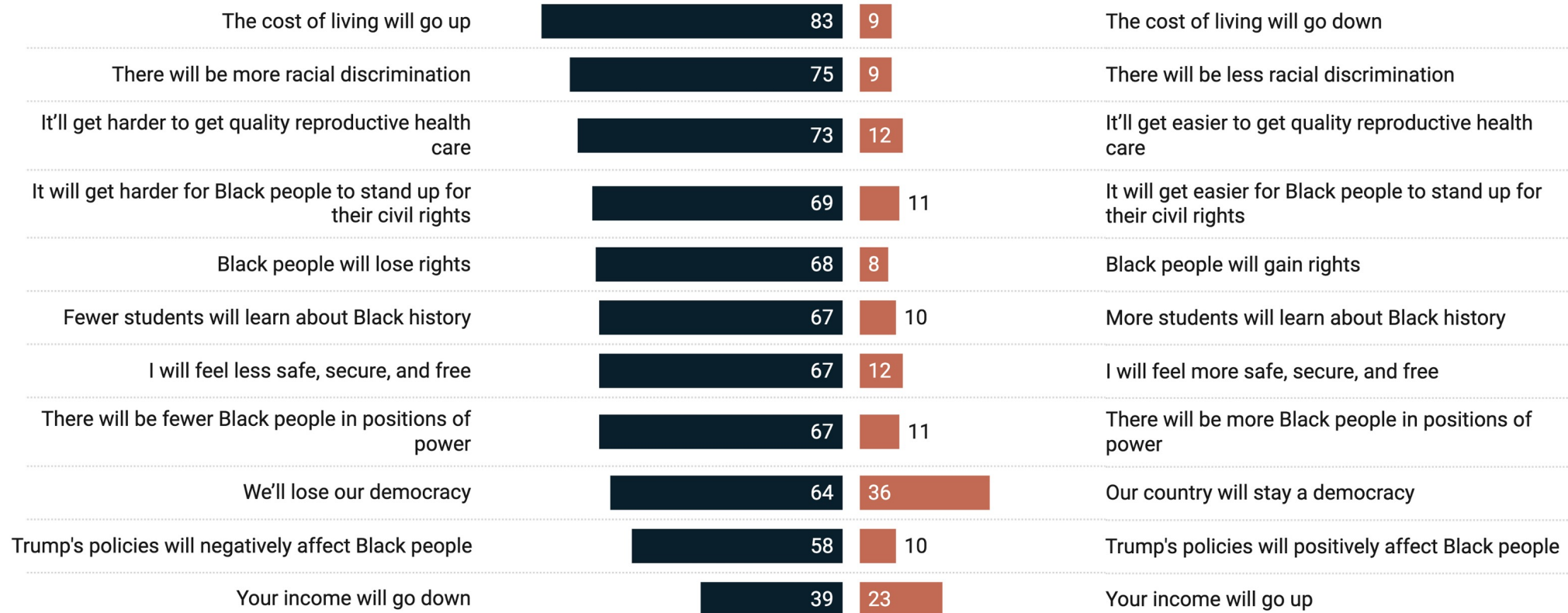
Respondents expect things to get worse on some of the issues they already worry about most—such as economic security. They also think racial injustice, threats to democracy, and access to reproductive care will worsen over the next four years.

Pessimism crosses gender, age, and other demographic lines. That said, older adults and younger women are most likely to anticipate harmful outcomes of the Trump administration.

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 30 to 34 for full results).

4

Medicaid cuts may disproportionately impact Black adults.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) say they or a family member has had Medicaid coverage at some point in their lives. For many Black adults in Virginia, it's a vital resource. Nearly all who've received Medicaid (94%) say it's been important to them or their families, including 72% who say it's been "very important." Yet access remains a challenge for some—33% report having had trouble finding a provider who accepts Medicaid.

Respondents who have enrolled in Medicaid are more likely than others to be under financial pressure right now: 60% say they don't have enough money to cover basic needs like food and housing (vs. 40% among all Black adults in Virginia).

5

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 (54%) say, ideally, they'd want (more) kids in the future. However, just 34% plan to do so.

Interestingly, men are more likely than women to both want children (62% vs. 50%) and plan to have them (43% vs. 27%).

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, racism, and “the state of our country right now.”

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 (77% of 18- to 44-year-olds say this is part of their thinking about whether or not to have a child)
- Housing prices (73%)
- How much money I or my partner makes (72%)
- Food prices (69%)
- Health care prices (68%)
- Childcare prices (67%)
- The state of our country right now (67%)
- The state of my mental health (61%)
- Racism (60%)
- The risk of death if I or my loved one gets pregnant (50%)



6

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

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

More than six in ten (64%) say society's systems are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people (vs. 30% who say systems are set up for equality).

Half of respondents (48%) 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 (86%) say dismantling systemic racism is extremely or very important to building a future where Black families are healthy, safe, free, and financially secure.



7

**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.

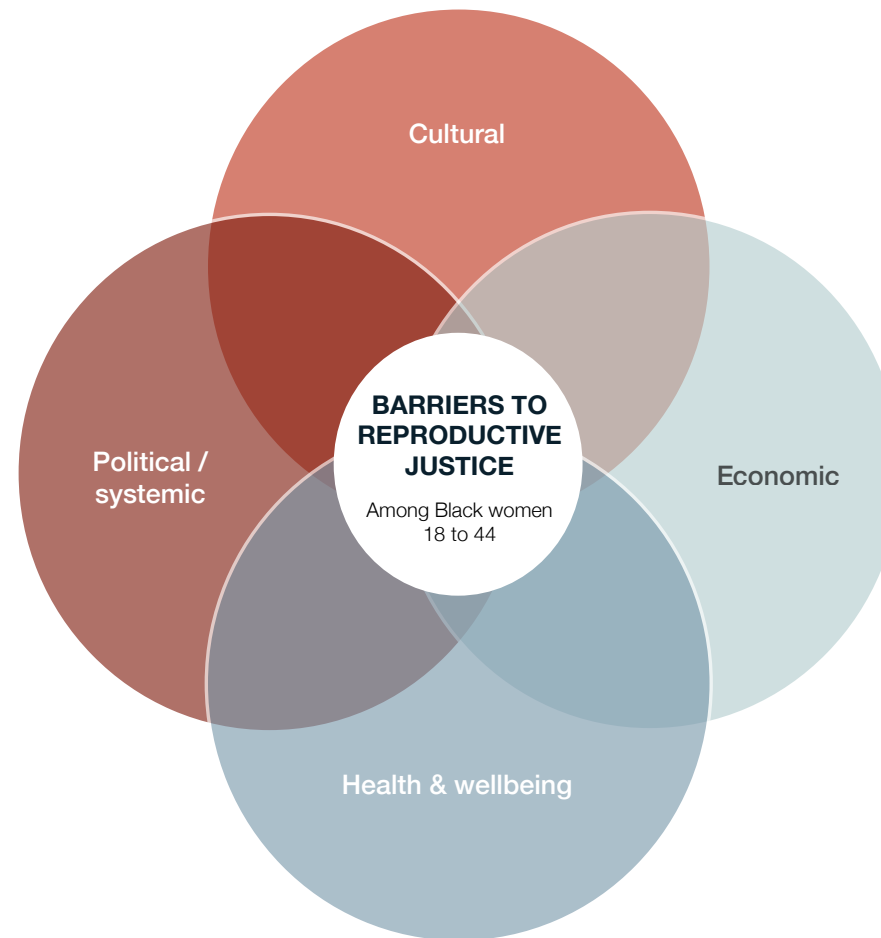
Majorities recognize an adultification (69%) and sexualization (68%) of Black girls in society
 67% say it's very important for Black women to be visible in media and culture
 65% say representation affects how they are treated
 74% expect Black people to lose positions of power during the next four years

74% think they'll feel less safe, secure, and free under President Trump

In the next four years, majorities think:

- Racial discrimination will increase (81%)
- Fewer students will learn Black history (75%)
- Black women will lose rights (73%)
- It'll be harder for Black people to stand up for their civil rights (72%)
- We'll lose our democracy (67%)

68% say systems in US are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people



Half (49%) don't have enough money to pay for basic needs like food and housing

63% have less than \$500 in savings

67% worry about their financial situation at least once a week

89% expect the cost of living to increase in the next four years and they expect their own income will go down (43%) or stay stagnant (39%)

50% want (more) children, but just 27% plan to have them

Top decision factors in whether to have a child:

- Being able to care for self / family as is (74%)
- Housing prices (73%)
- Salary / wages (73%)
- Health care prices (73%)
- Food prices (71%)
- Childcare prices (70%)

66% worry at least once a week about their mental health
 73% think it'll get harder to get quality repro care under the Trump administration
 57% say their risk of death in pregnancy is a decision factor for having kids
 37% say possible criminalization is a decision factor for having kids
 55% have relied on Medicaid at some point
 40% have felt a health care provider(s) didn't take their concerns seriously
 58% have experienced unhealthy water, air, or environmental toxins

8

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 (71% extremely important)
- Dismantling systemic racism (65%)
- Increasing job opportunities that pay a livable wage (65%)
- Getting rid of racial disparities in health care (65%)
- Increasing affordable housing (64%)
- Improving access to quality, affordable health care (63%)
- Decreasing the risk of drug and alcohol abuse in Black communities (63%)
- Improving access to affordable childcare (62%)
- Protecting the right to vote in future elections, without barriers (62%)
- Improving access to healthy and affordable food options (62%)
- Improving Black maternal health (61%)
- Improving access to affordable mental health care (61%)
- Improving access to quality public schools (61%)
- Having equal opportunities to move up in the workplace (61%)

9

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.

Three in ten (31%) women ages 18 to 44 say they know someone who has had an abortion in the past year or two.

78%

Say abortion should be legal in all or most cases

Including 77% of those who attend religious services regularly

81%

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

78%

83%

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

84%

84%

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

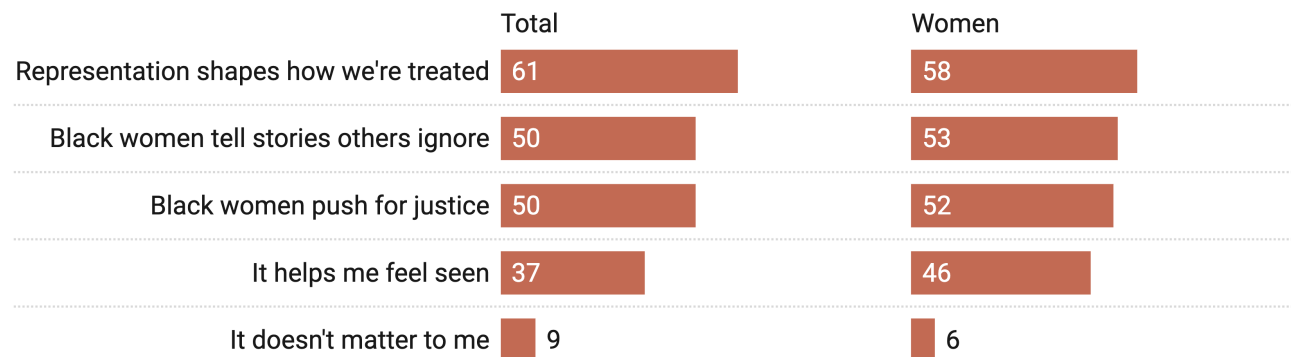
81%

10

Representation of Black women matters.

More than nine in ten (93%) 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

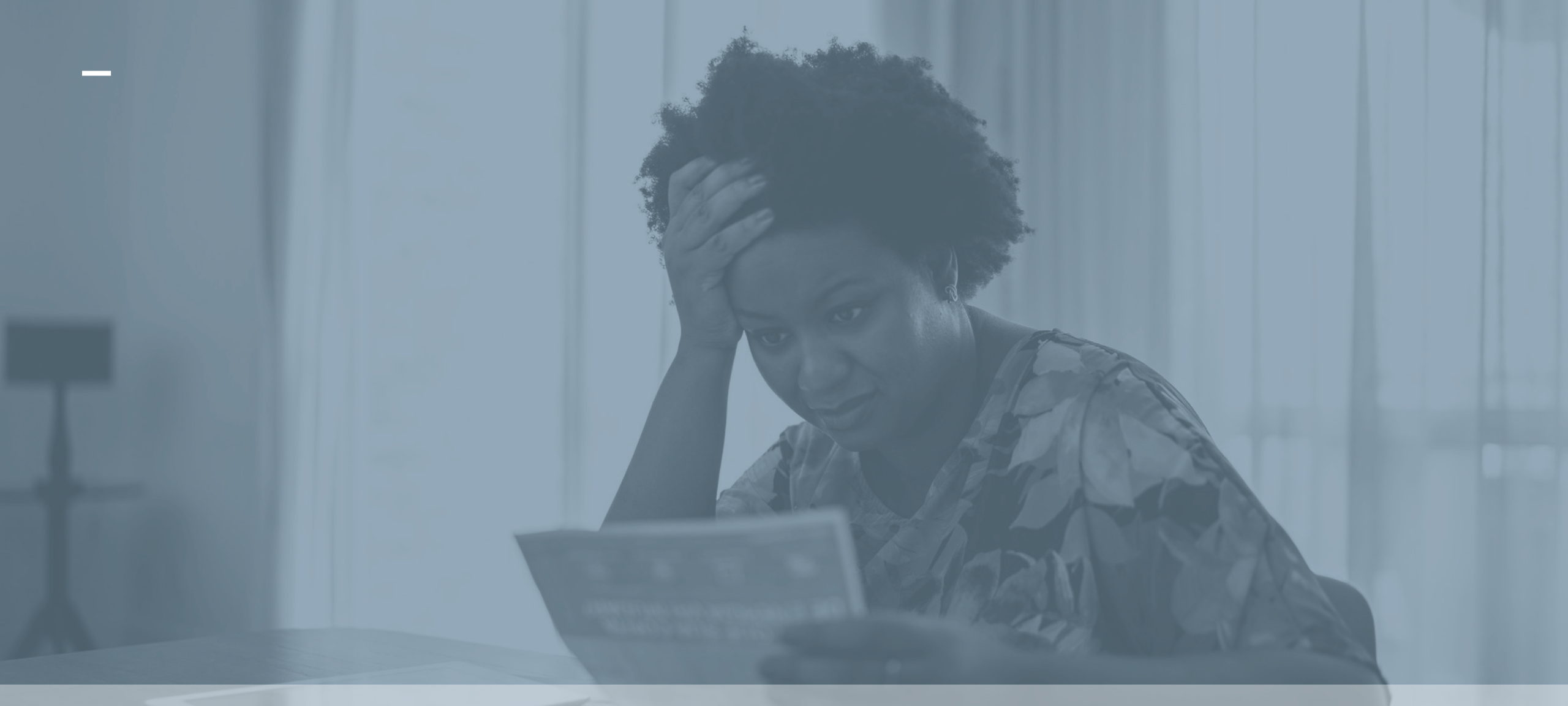


Detailed findings.



SECTIONS

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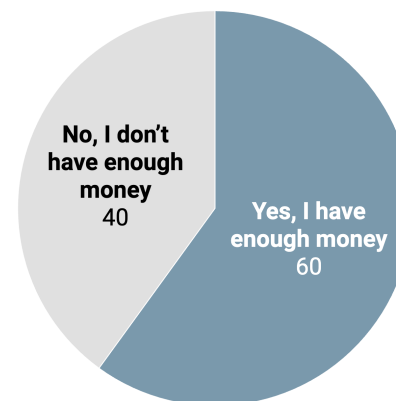
Daily economic and emotional pressures

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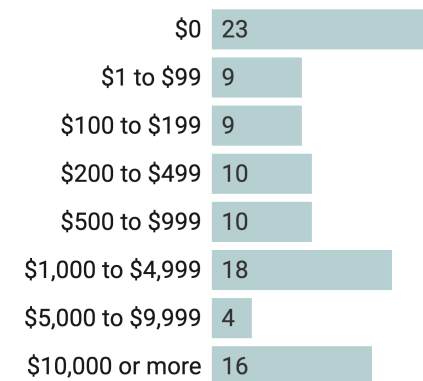
Many respondents are struggling with little to no economic security.

Four in ten (40%) say they don't have enough money to cover basic needs, and half (51%) have less than \$500 available for an emergency expense.

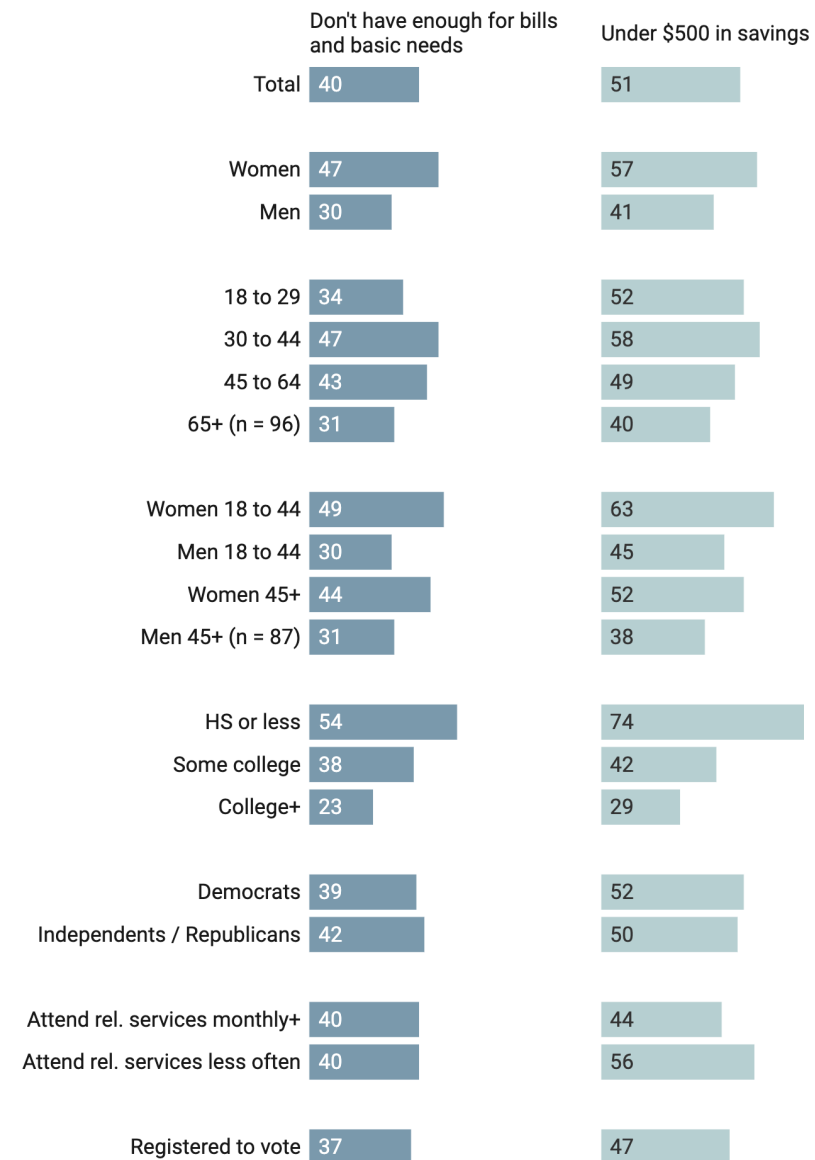
Do you have enough money to pay for all of your bills and basic needs, like food and housing?



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



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

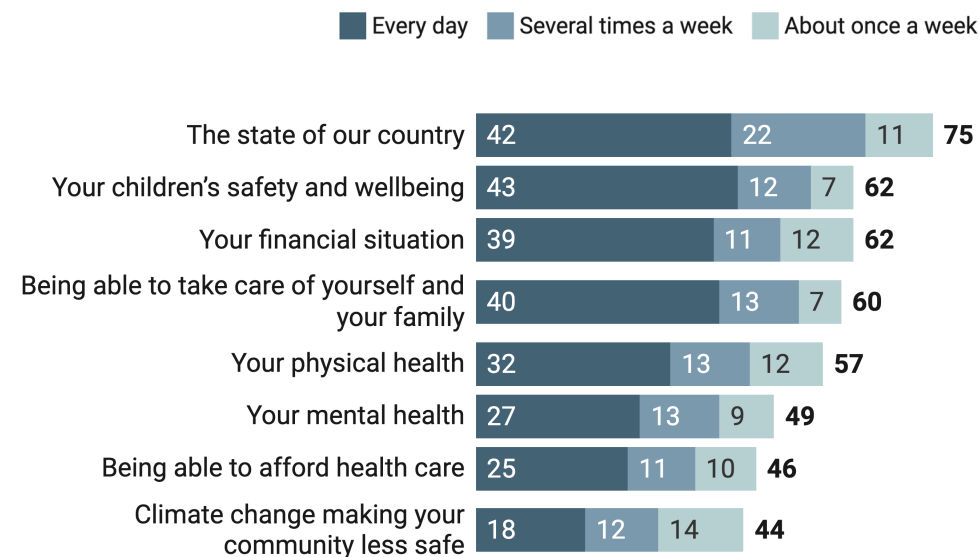


There are many worries on people's minds—including the state of the country.

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

How often do you worry about...

RANDOMIZE



Women are more likely than men to face worries about the wellbeing of themselves and their families.

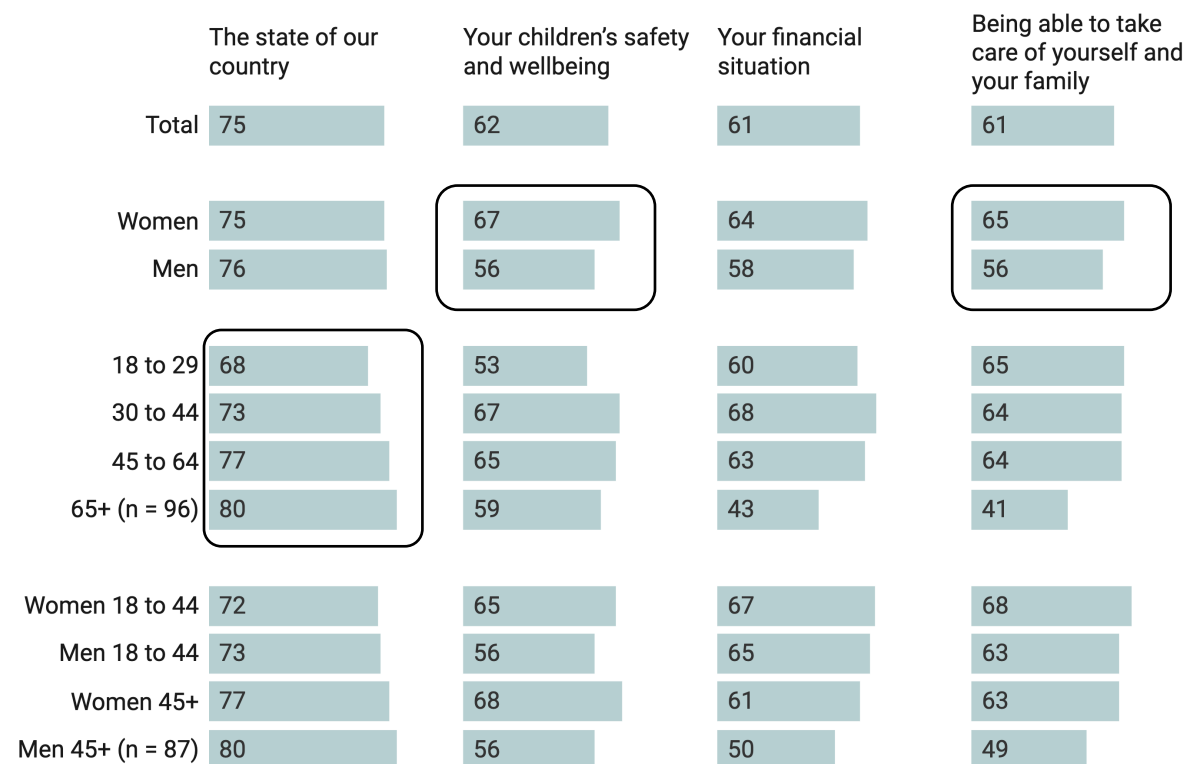
Older adults are more likely than younger respondents to be concerned about the state of the country.

See at right and the next page.

How often do you worry about...

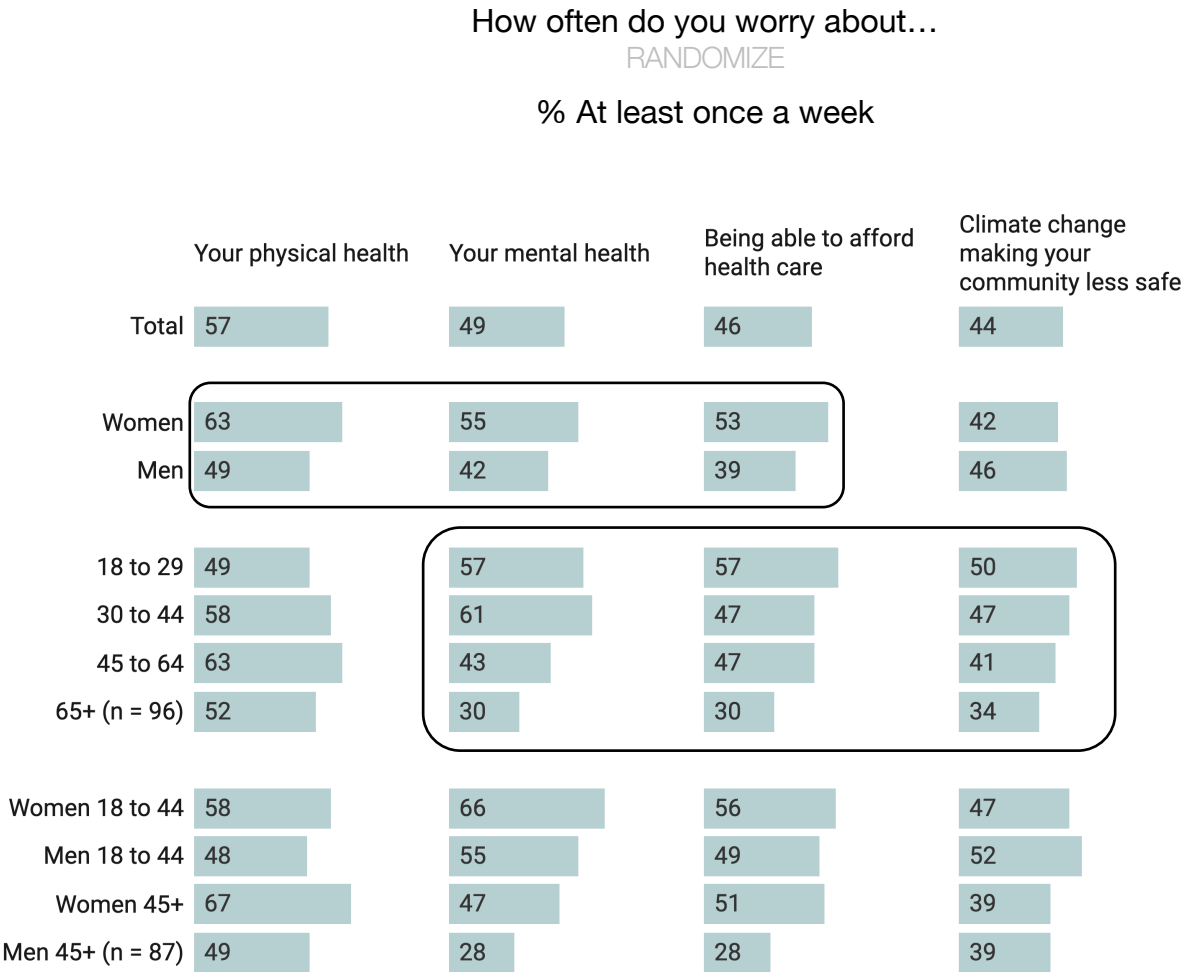
RANDOMIZE

% At least once a week



Women are more likely than men to worry about their physical and mental health and being able to afford care.

Younger adults are more likely than their older counterparts to worry about mental health, affording care, and climate change.





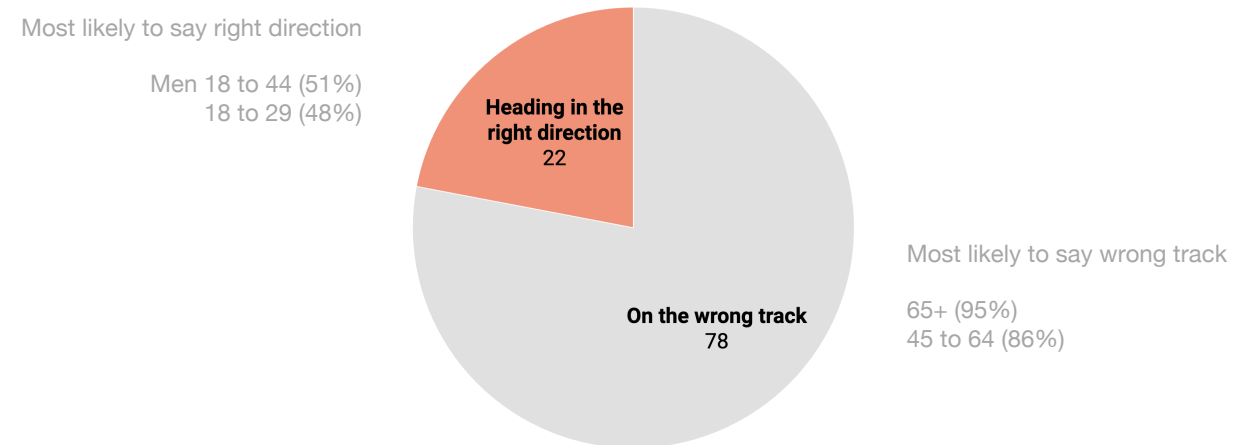
Outlook on life during the second Trump term

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Six months into the Trump administration, roughly three in four respondents (78%) say the country is on the wrong track.

Majorities across demographic groups say the country is on the wrong track, with older respondents most likely to express this view.

Would you say things in the country are:

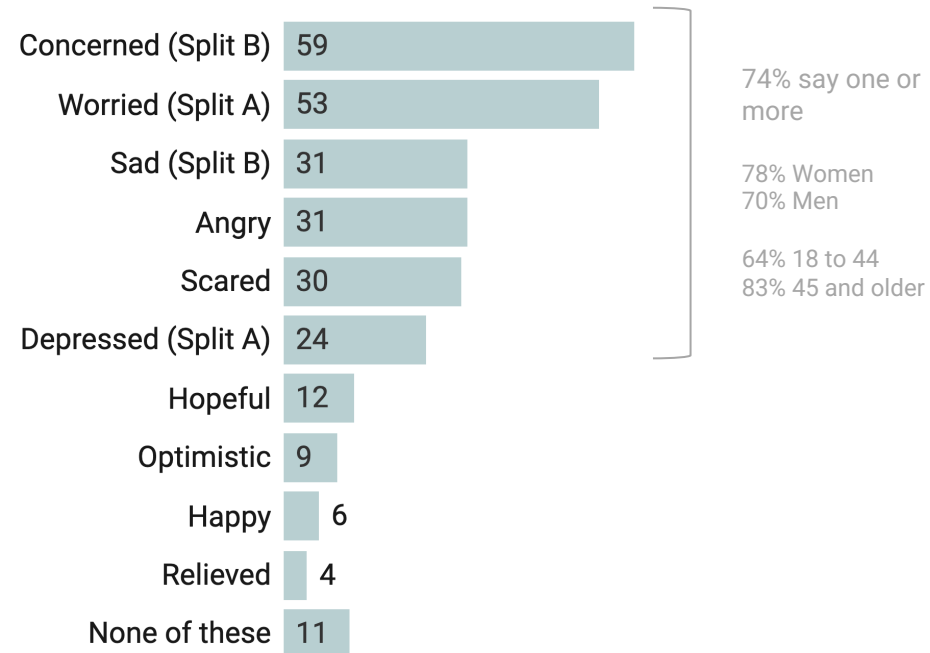


Most respondents (74%) feel negatively about Trump winning the election.

Just one in five (19%) respondents express a positive sentiment about the election outcome.

How do you feel about Donald Trump
winning the election?

RANDOMIZE UP TO NONE



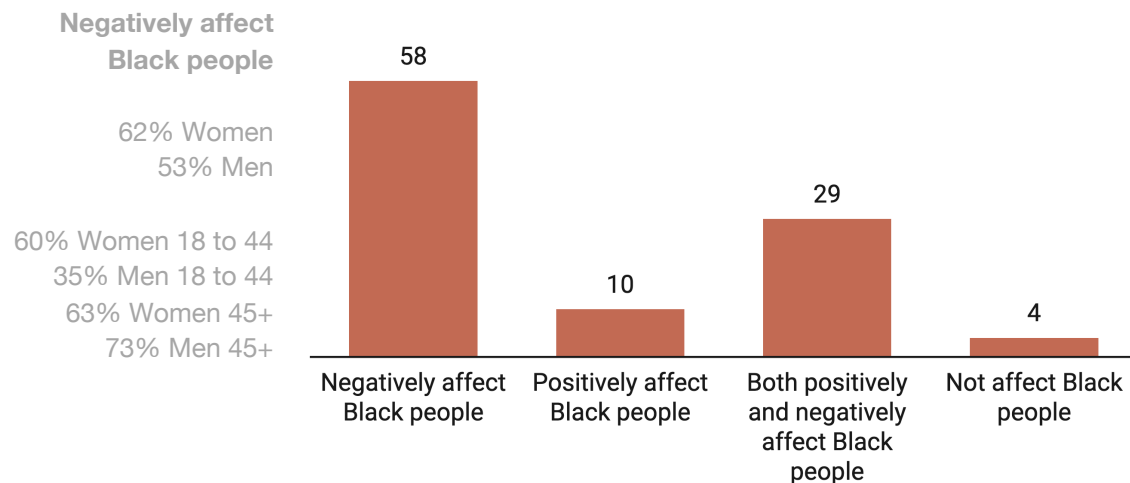
About six in ten (58%) expect Trump's policies to negatively affect Black people.

Just one in ten respondents (10%) think Trump's policies will positively affect Black people, including just 13% of Black men.

Older respondents are most likely to foresee singularly negative effects on Black communities.

Men ages 18 to 44 are more likely to expect a mix of positive and negative effects (39%) than singularly negative effects (35%).

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



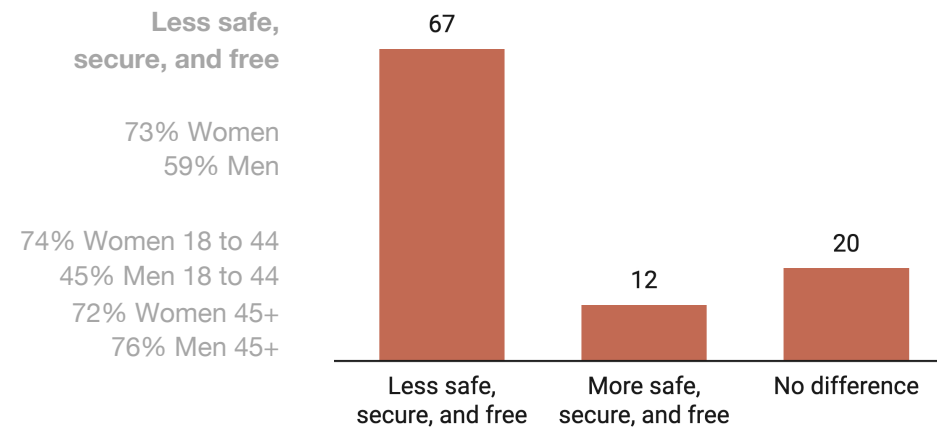
Two thirds (67%) expect to feel less safe, secure, and free under a Trump administration.

Women are more likely than men to expect greater insecurity under President Trump (73% vs. 59%).

Just under half of men ages 18 to 44 think they'll feel less security (45%), with the rest thinking they'll feel more security (35%) or they won't feel a difference (21%).

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

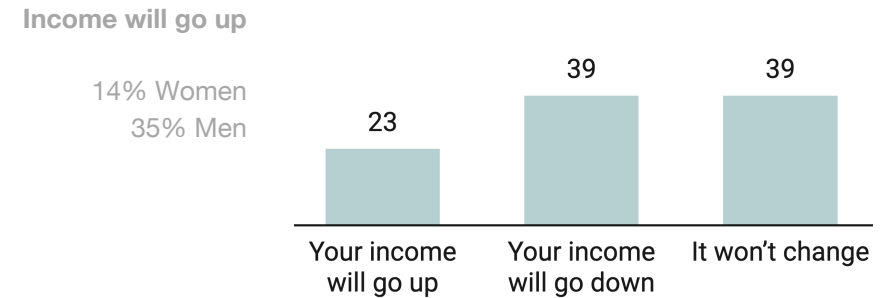
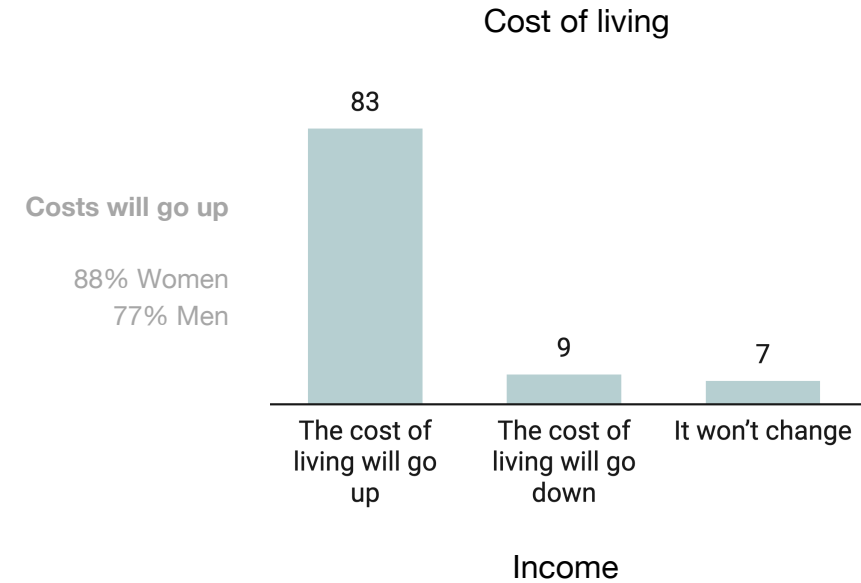
ROTATE FIRST TWO



Most (83%) expect the cost of living to rise over the next four years, without an increase in their own incomes.

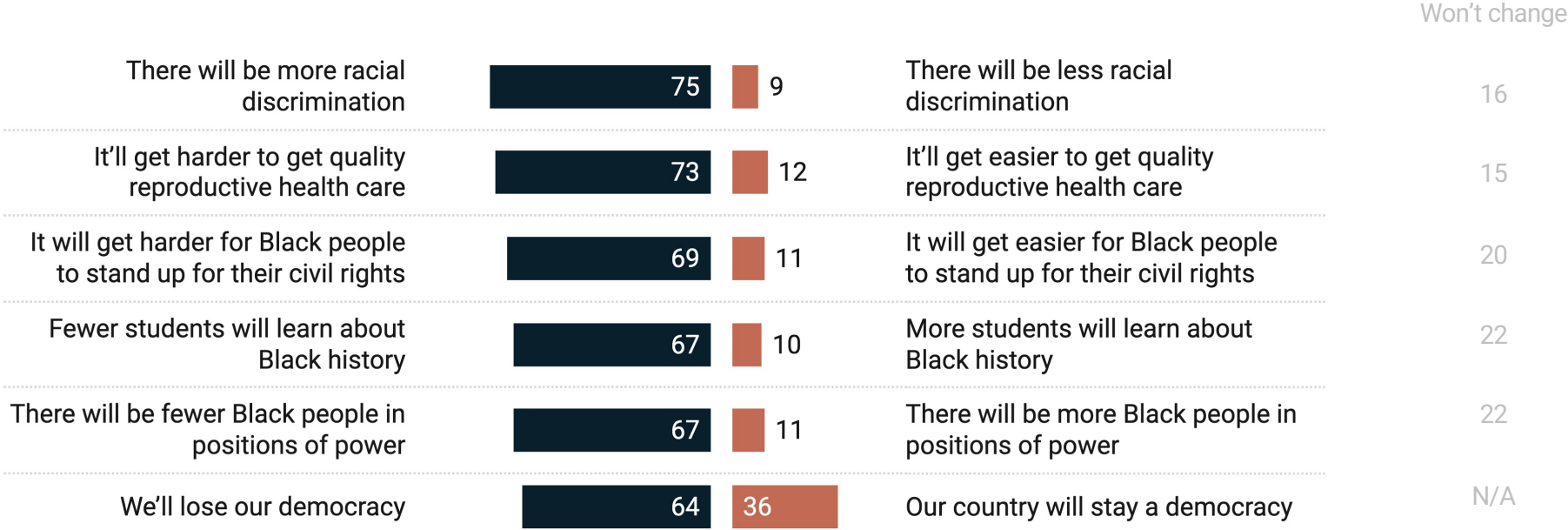
In fact, nearly four in ten (39%) expect their incomes to go down during the next four years.

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



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

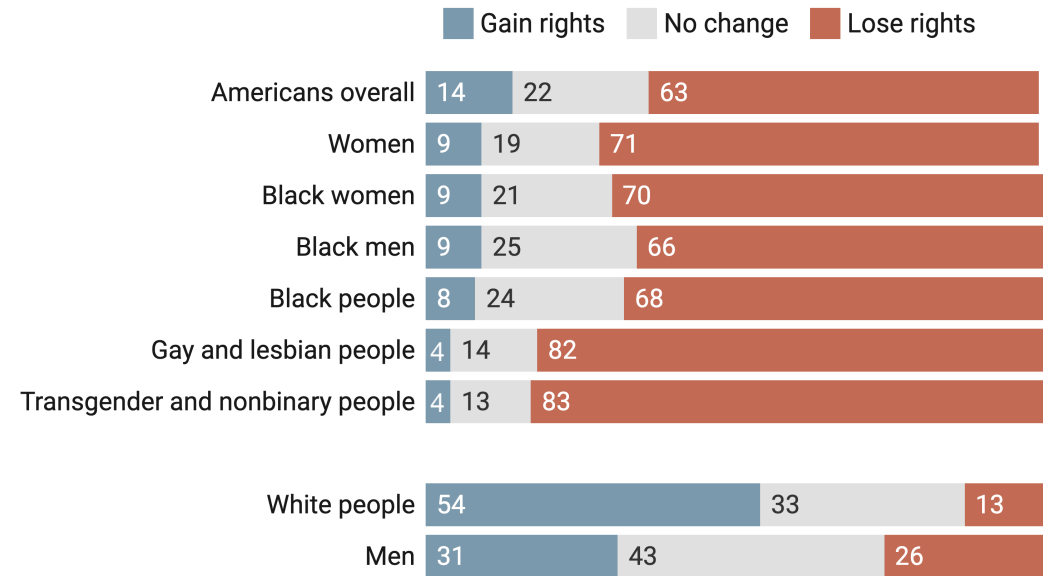
In the next four years under President Trump, do you think:
RANDOMIZE PAIRS AND ROTATE ITEMS WITHIN PAIR



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

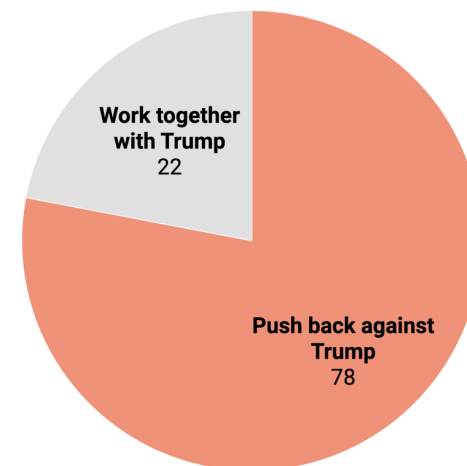
They see men and white people as likely to keep or gain rights under President Trump.

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



**Nearly eight in ten (78%)
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 Virginia see Medicaid as a vital resource.

The program isn't perfect—one in three (33%) say they or a loved one has had trouble finding a provider who accepts Medicaid.

65%

Say they or a family member has had Medicaid coverage at some point in their lives (36% self; 41% family member)

94%

Of those with a connection to Medicaid say the program has been important to them or their loved ones—72% say it has been “very important”

Among n = 379 respondents who say they or a family member has had Medicaid

33%

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

Among n = 379 respondents who say they or a family member has had Medicaid

**More than one in four (26%)
say they've worried about
themselves or a family
member being deported
unlawfully.**

One in three (34%) respondents ages 18 to 29 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?

26%

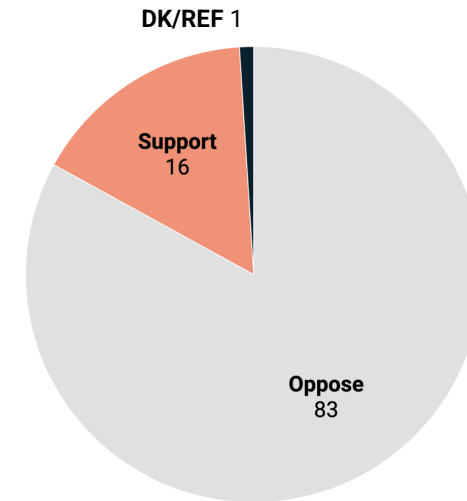
Yes, I've worried about this

74%

No, I haven't worried about this

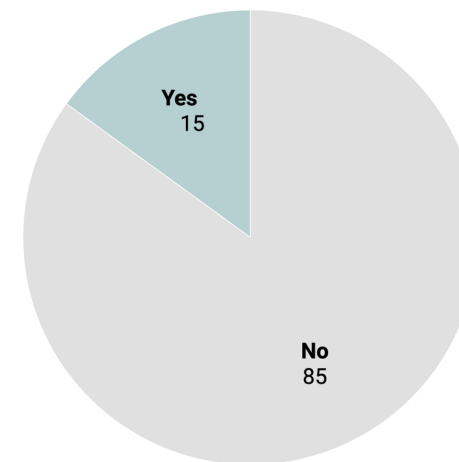
**A majority (83%) opposes
Trump's pardons of people
convicted of January 6th
crimes.**

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 (85%) 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

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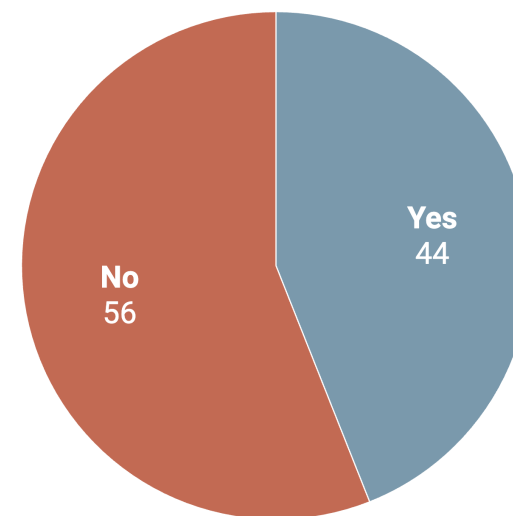
—

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

Fewer than half say yes (44%).

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.

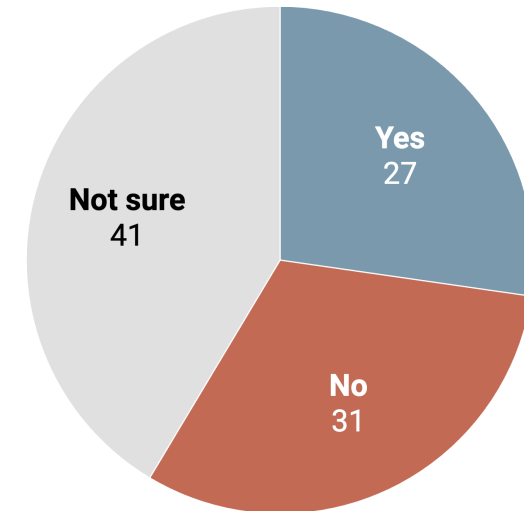
Do you have a life like this now?



**About one in four (27%)
are convinced their
children will have a life
like this.**

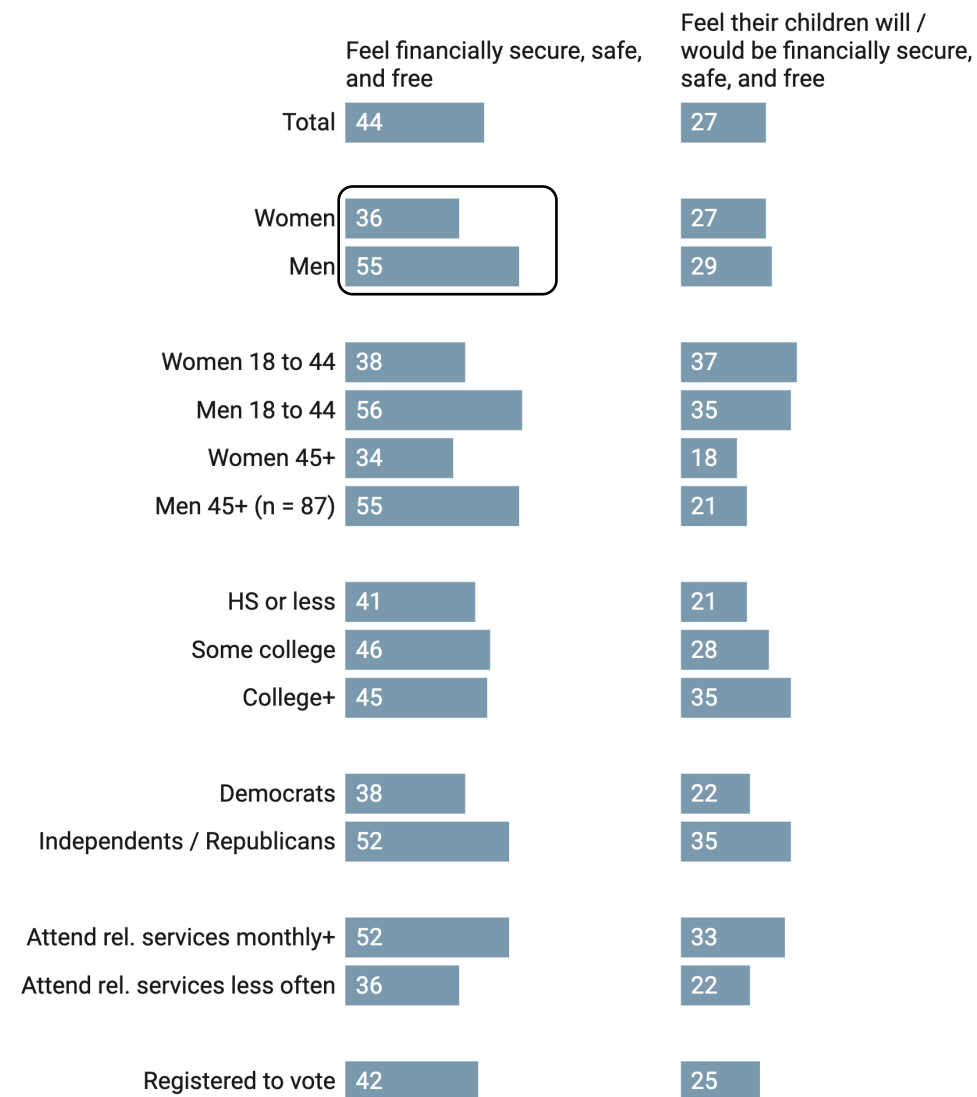
Respondents aren't necessarily pessimistic, however. A plurality (41%) are not sure.

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?



Women are least likely to feel financially secure, safe, and free.

Younger respondents feel more optimistic than older respondents about their children's future.



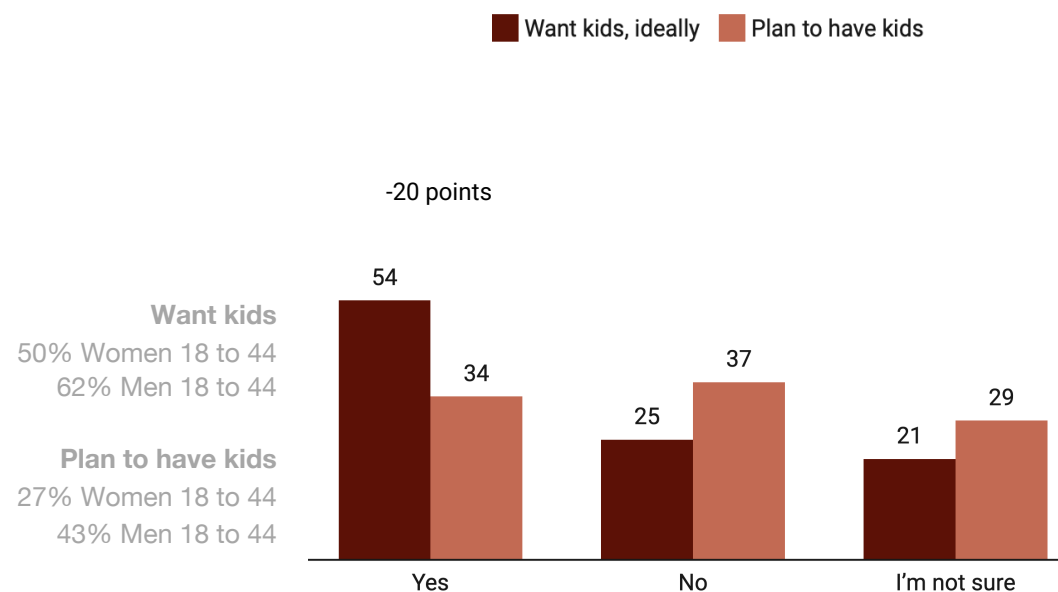
There's a big gap between wanting children and planning to have them.

In an ideal world, 54% of respondents of reproductive age (18 to 44) say they'd want children in the future. But just 34% plan to have them.

Men are more likely than women to both want kids and plan to have them.

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 $n = 256$ respondents ages 18 to 44



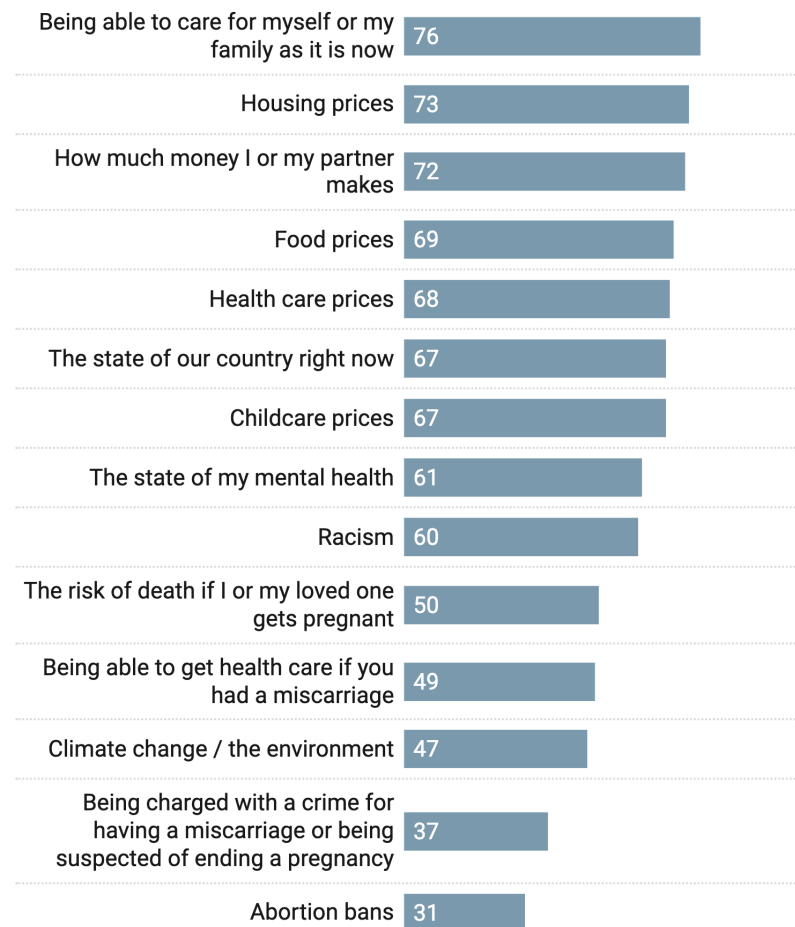
Data suggest there are many barriers holding back people who want kids.

At the top of the list is simply “being able to care for myself or my family as it is now.” Economic barriers and “the state of our country right now” are also among the considerations for a majority 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 = 256 respondents ages 18 to 44

% Yes, part of my thinking



% Yes, part of my thinking
Ages 18 to 44

	Women	Men	18 to 29	30 to 44
Being able to care for myself or my family as it is now	74%	77%	79%	73%
Housing prices	73%	71%	78%	69%
How much money I or my partner makes	73%	72%	69%	75%
Food prices	71%	68%	69%	70%
Health care prices	73%	64%	67%	69%
Childcare prices	70%	64%	67%	67%
The state of our country right now	69%	65%	70%	66%
The state of my mental health	66%	56%	58%	64%
Racism	65%	54%	62%	59%
The risk of death if I or my loved one gets pregnant	57%	41%	54%	47%
Being able to get health care if you had a miscarriage	52%	43%	50%	47%
Climate change / the environment	41%	52%	48%	46%
Being charged with a crime for having a miscarriage or being suspected of ending a pregnancy	37%	35%	44%	32%
Abortion bans	33%	26%	36%	27%

Data show women are more likely than men to consider racism and conditions emerging from abortion bans in their thinking about whether to have children.

For example, two-thirds of women of reproductive age (65%) say racism has been a factor in whether to have kids in the future (vs. 54% of men).

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

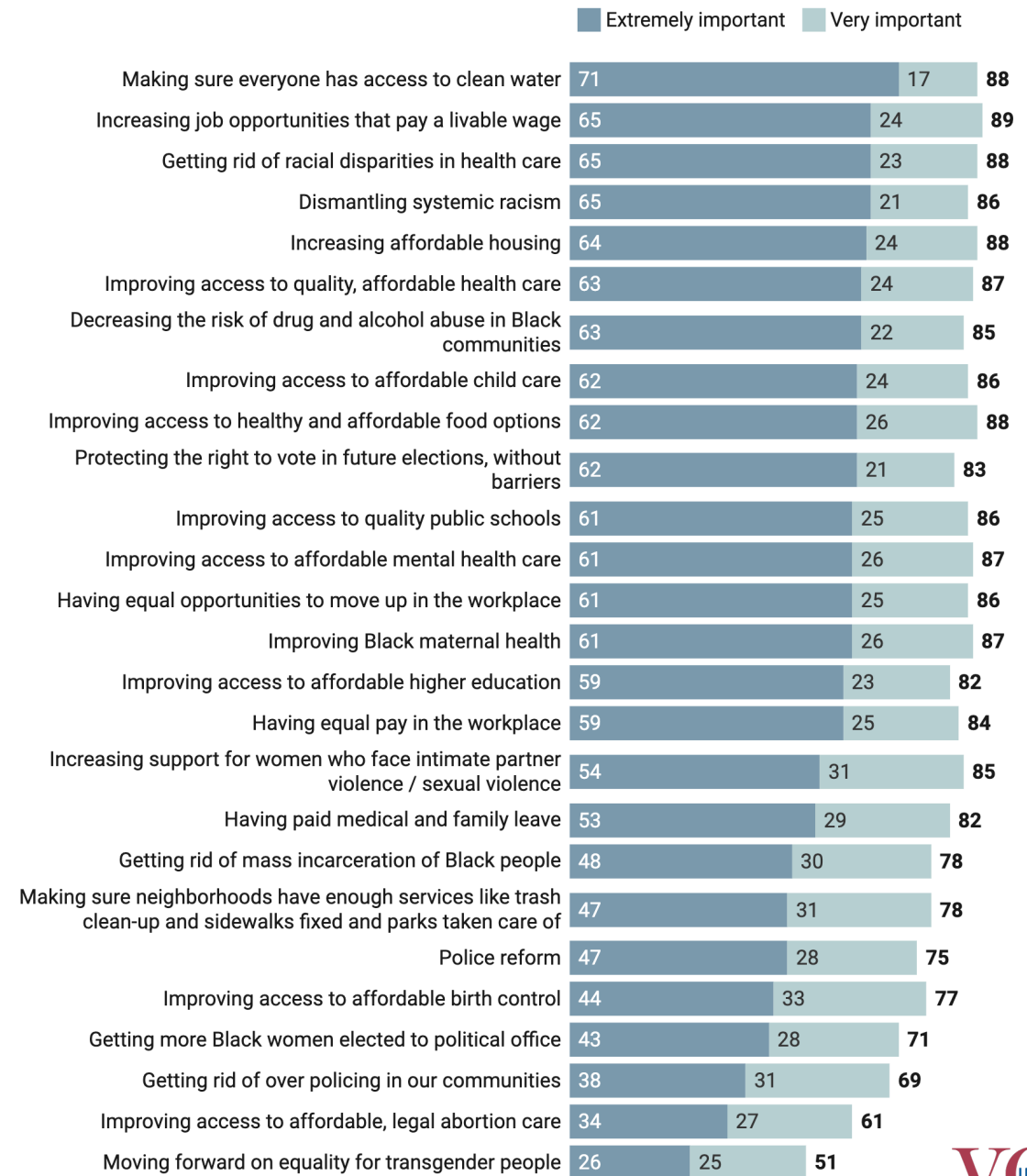
Imagine this. You have enough money to pay bills, with plenty left over. You and your family are able to be physically and mentally healthy. You feel safe in your community. You have the freedom to raise healthy families, if you choose to. You feel safe, secure, and free wherever you go...

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?

Clean water, economic opportunity, and a more equitable society are among the most important.

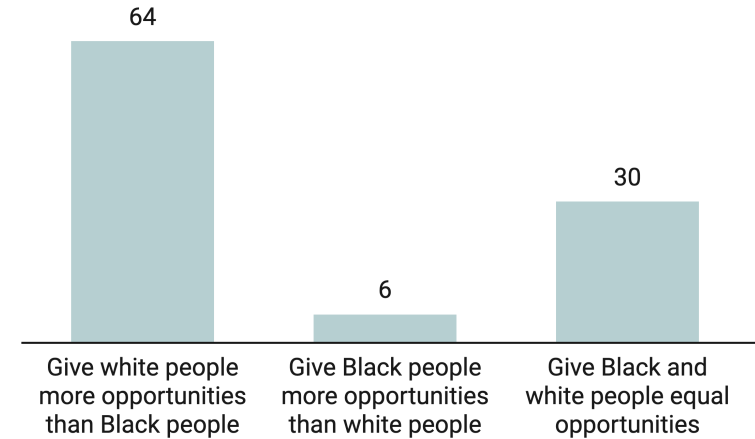


A majority of respondents (64%) say systems in the US—that are critical for raising healthy families—are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people.

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



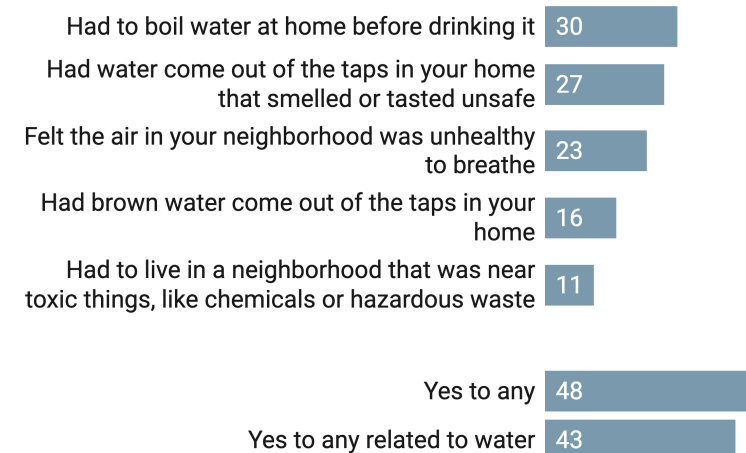
Many have experienced the results of these systems, such as a lack of clean water and air.

Nearly half (48%) have had at least one experience related to unhealthy water, air, or environmental toxins.

Have you ever:

% Yes

RANDOMIZE



Additionally, one in three (32%) say they've felt discrimination in the doctor's office.

Women are +17 points 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?

32%

Yes

40% Women
23% Men

68%

No



Views on reproductive health policies

voice
IN OUR OWN

**Nearly eight in ten (78%)
say abortion should be
legal in all or most cases.**

Which comes closest to your view.
Abortion should be:

78%

Legal in all or most
cases

30% All cases
48% Most cases

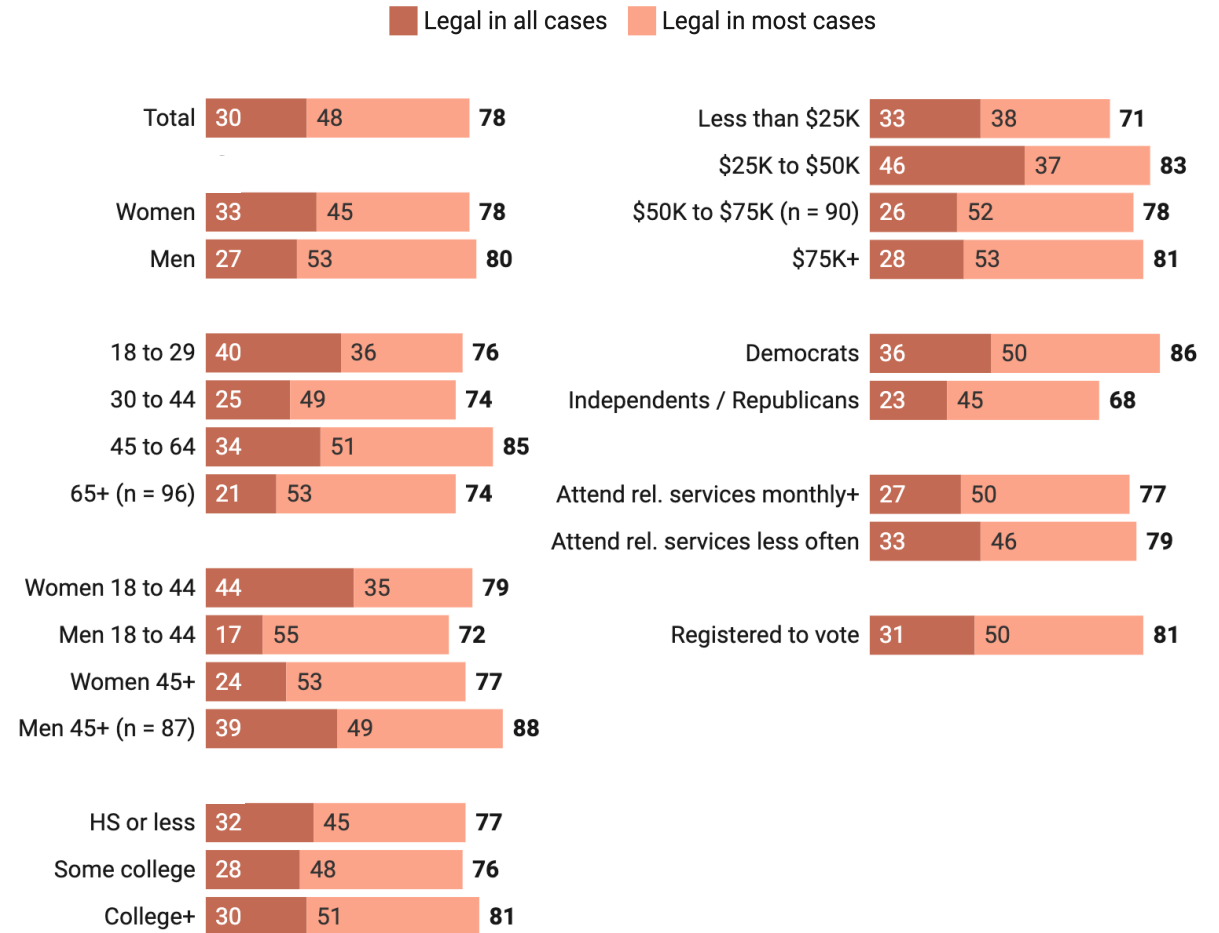
21%

Illegal in all or
most cases

6% All cases
16% 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

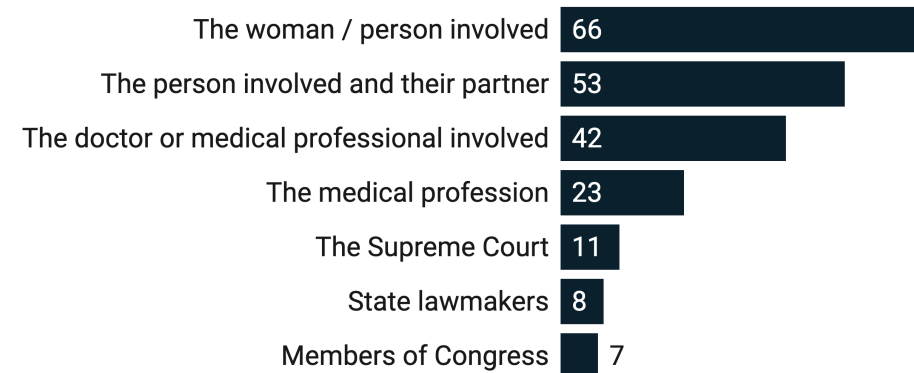


**Black adults in Virginia
prefer that decisions
about abortion rest in the
hands of the people
involved.**

Just eight 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.

83%

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

59% Strongly agree
24% Somewhat agree

87% Women
81% Men

73% 18 to 44
93% 45+

84%

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

57% Strongly agree
26% Somewhat agree

85% Women
83% Men

79% 18 to 44
88% 45+

84%

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.

56% Strongly agree
28% Somewhat agree

88% Women
83% Men

77% 18 to 44
91% 45+

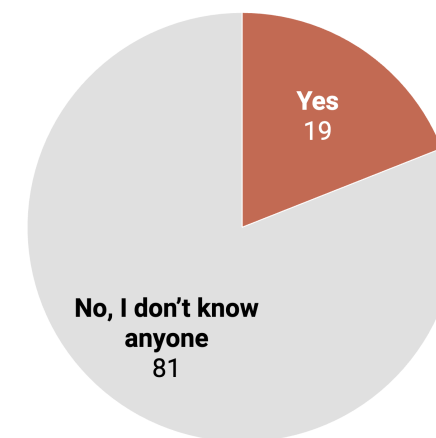
—

One in five (19%) say they know someone who has recently had an abortion.

Three in ten (31%) women 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?

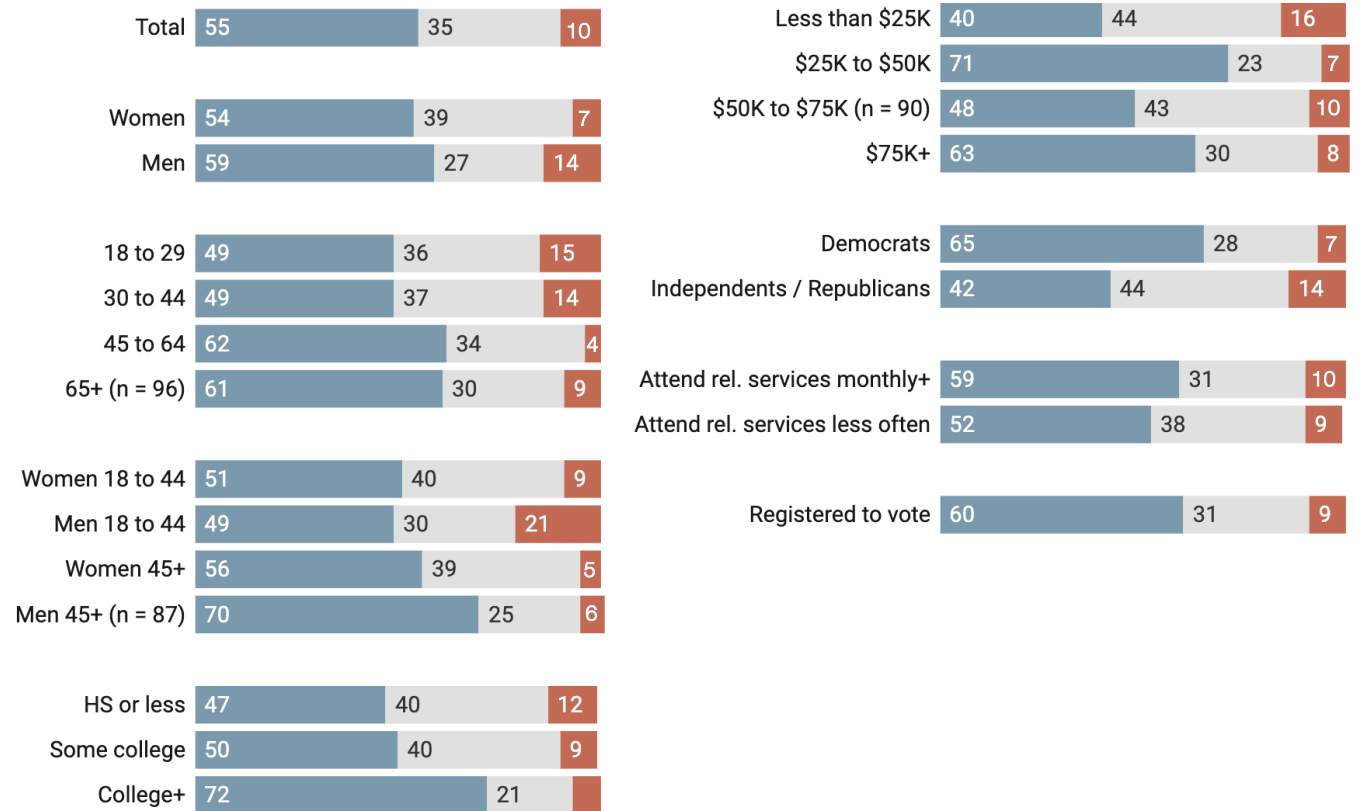
RANDOMIZE



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 (87%)
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?

87%

Support

13%

Oppose

90% Attends rel.
services monthly+

More than eight in ten (83%) 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.

83%

Agree

15%

Disagree

84% Attends rel.
services monthly+



Respect, representation, and changing norms

voice
IN OUR OWN

Most respondents recognize an adultification (65%) and sexualization (64%) of Black girls in our society.

Women and older adults are more likely than others to recognize narratives around sexualization.

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

Do you think our society _____?

% Yes
ROTATE

65%

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

68% Women
62% Men

61% 18 to 44
68% 45+

64%

Assumes more Black girls are sexually active than white girls

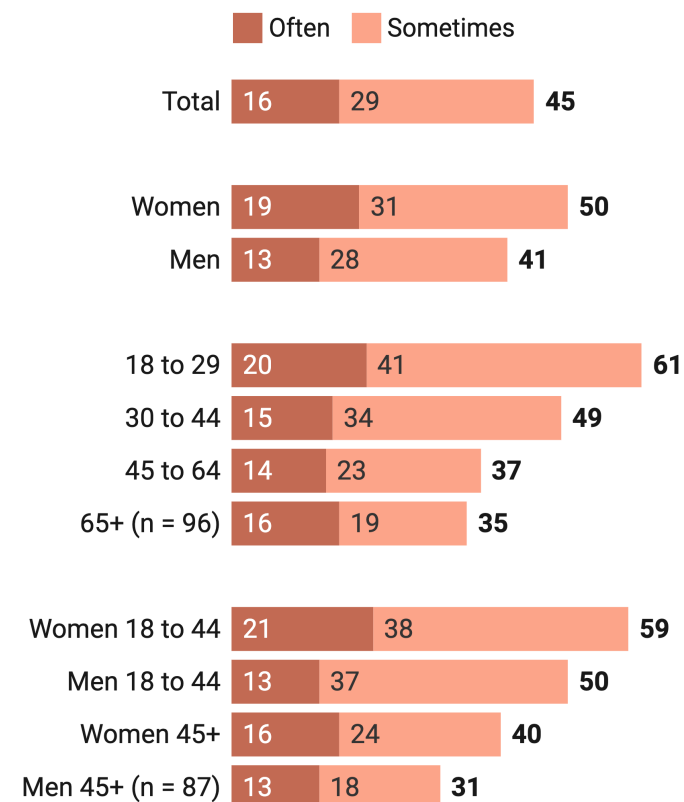
70% Women
57% Men

57% 18 to 44
70% 45+

A majority of respondents ages 18 to 44 (54%) say they were told growing up that they look older for their age.

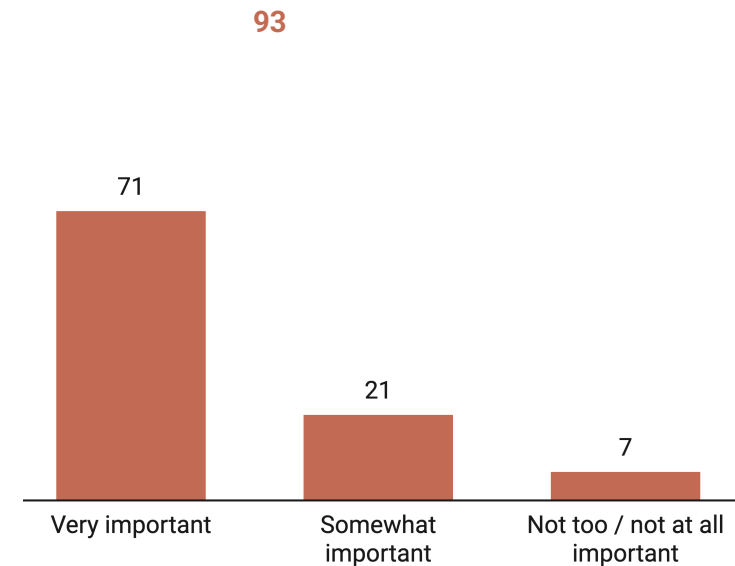
Women are more likely than men to report being told they looked older than their age during childhood.

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



Nearly all (93%) say it's important for Black women to be visible and positively portrayed in media.

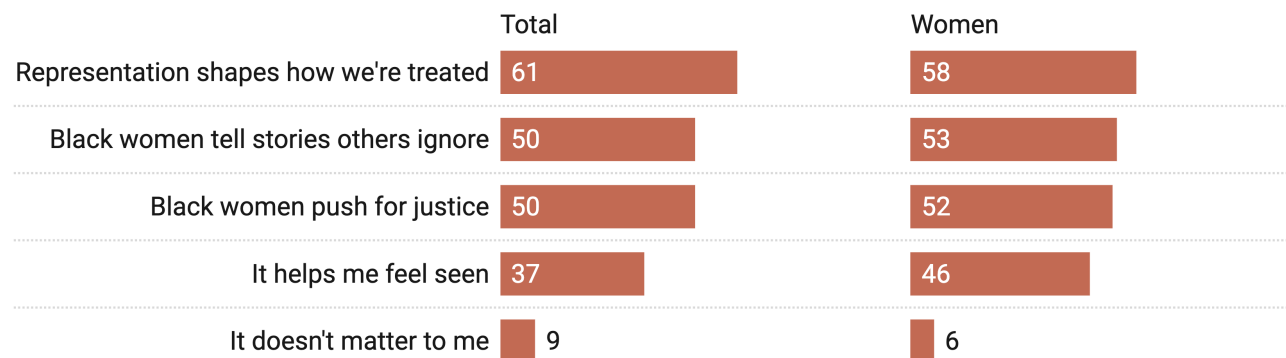
How important is it that Black women are visible and positively portrayed in our culture and media (in entertainment, news, talk shows, etc.)?



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