

BLACK AMERICAN BATTLEGROUND VOTERS POLL REPORT

OCTOBER 2024



Howard Initiative
on Public Opinion



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SUMMARY

As the 2024 general election draws near, the role of Black American voters in battleground states continues to play a pivotal role, as their turnout will significantly influence the trajectory of the presidential campaign. The Howard University Initiative on Public Opinion (HIPO) conducted a series of polls to understand the motivations, shifts in sentiment, and emerging issues among this population.

A review of the poll findings shows that Harris is overwhelmingly viewed as the preferred candidate, even for the much-discussed group in the media – Black men. She has greater favorability than Trump and is deemed more trusted on critical issues. The data also show significant differences along party lines in perceptions of the most important issues in the 2024 election – the economy for Republicans and Democracy for Democrats.

TOP FINDINGS

The following three top findings emerged among the Black American voters in the battleground states:

1. Harris is up by 76% over Trump among Black voters in the battleground states, gaining six percentage points over Trump from 70% in the September poll. Black women show higher support for Harris, at 89%, compared with 78% of Black men.
2. Support for Trump remains low among Black likely voters in the battleground states. He is tremendously unpopular among these voters, with 80% unfavorable. However, Black men show more support for Trump than Black women, 14% to 4% respectively.
3. Harris showed substantial levels of trust on all critical issues from voters. Voters trust Harris more strongly than Trump on the economy, abortion, and immigration.



THE POLL



Following the initial phase of the HIPO's Black American Battleground Voters poll conducted September 4th through September 11th, 2024, this report presents the findings of the second wave of the poll, conducted October 4th - 11th, 2024. Black registered voters were polled in crucial battleground states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin). While the sample was drawn from the noted swing states, most participants were from Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. A total of 981 respondents were polled with a margin of error of ± 3.2 . Over 90% of the sample report they are certain to vote (91 certain, 4% probably, 3% 50-50 chance, and 2% already voted)



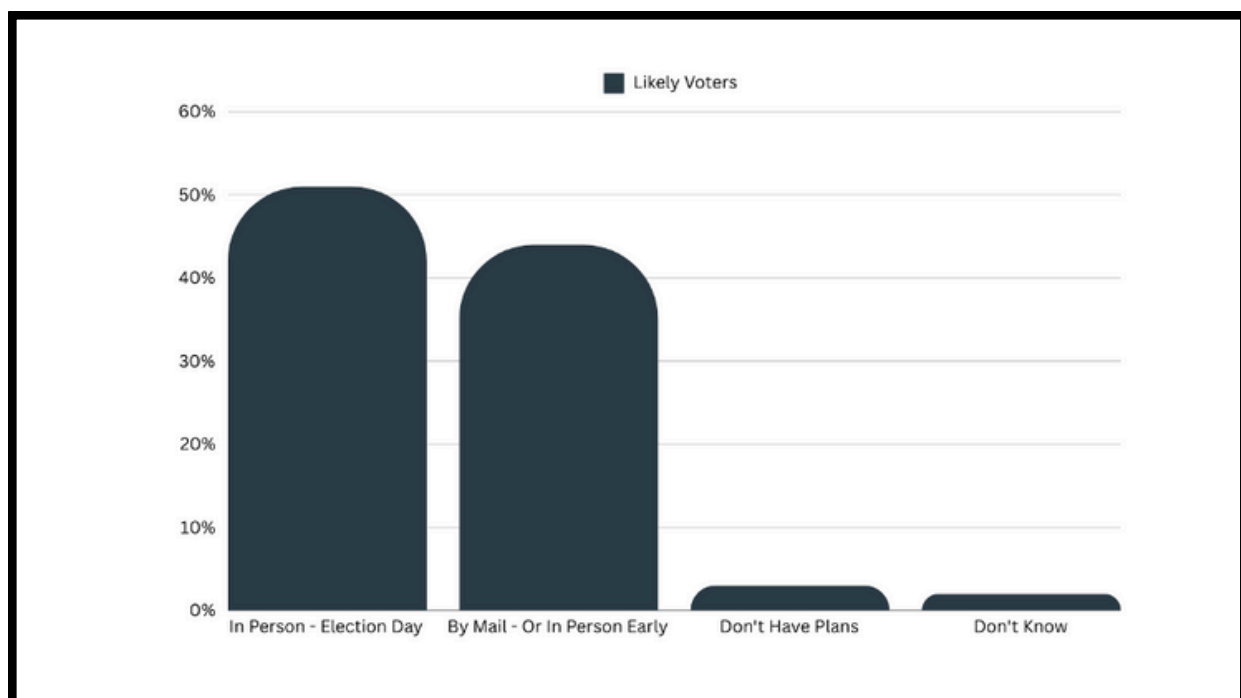
KEY FINDINGS

This report highlights key findings from the most likely voters on their level of support for the candidates and perceptions of the candidates.

Voting Plans

When respondents were polled about their voting intentions, 51% plan to vote on election day, and 44% plan to vote early by mail or in person. Women show higher proportions of planning to vote by mail or in-person early than men (37% compared to 33% respectively). In contrast, men showed a slightly higher preference for voting in person on election day than women (44% and 40%, respectively). Younger voters (ages 18-29) reported the highest rate of voting in person on election day at 58%, with plans to vote on election day increasing with age. Respondents 65+ showed the lowest rates of planning to vote on election day, at 28%, with a more significant proportion of this age group planning to vote by mail or in person ahead of election day (43%).

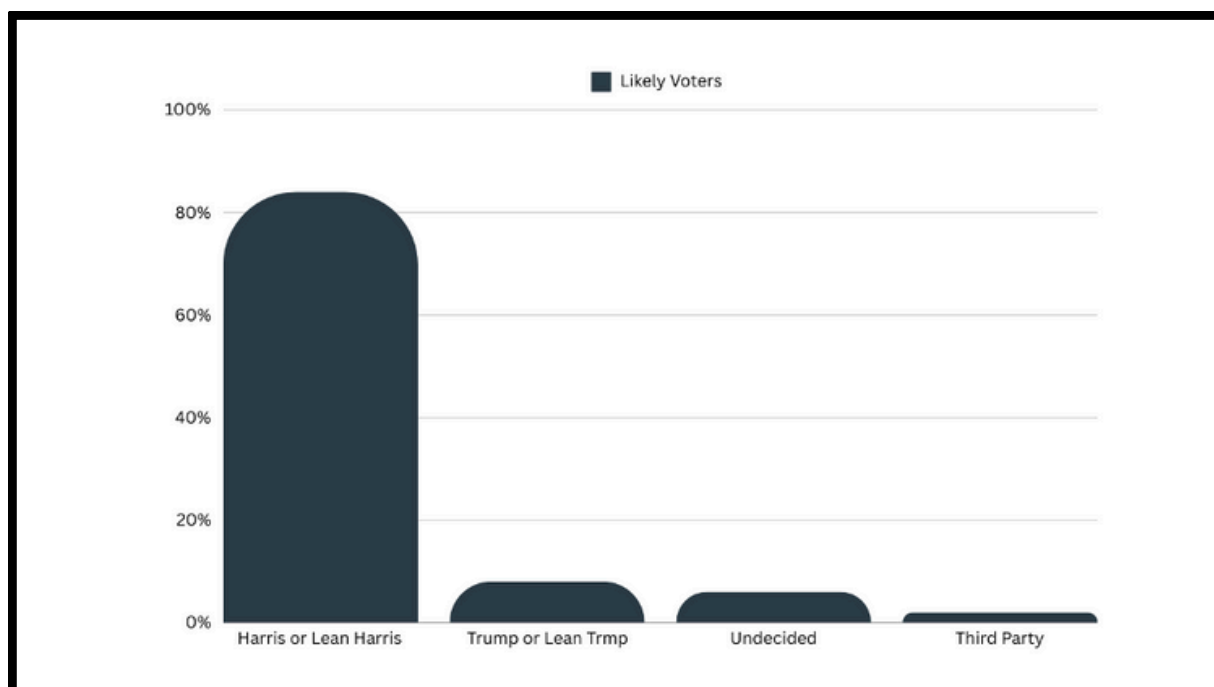
Figure 1. Voting Plans



Most respondents (87%) plan to vote for all the offices and questions on the ballot, while only 3% plan to vote solely for the presidential candidates. Most voters expressed excitement about voting for the presidential candidates (79%) and the other down-ballot candidates (78%). When comparing the results of this poll to the September poll, respondents are slightly more confident that they will vote, at 91% compared to 90%. Those who report being 50-50 on voting decreased from 6% in the September poll to 3% of the sample. Despite small percentage changes, these differences are statistically significant. These changes could be attributed to several factors, including the date of the election nearing and, therefore, plans to vote solidifying, the influence of recent debate, or a result of sampling error.

When asked if the election were held today, who would you vote for, the overwhelming majority of the Black voters in the swing states selected Harris at 84% compared to 8% who selected Trump as their candidate and 6% undecided. Harris is up by 76% over Trump in this poll, gaining six percentage points over Trump from 70% in September. Support for Harris appears to be strong as 91% of those who plan to vote for her say there is no chance, they would vote for the other candidate, while 66% of Trump supporters say there is no chance, they would vote for Harris.

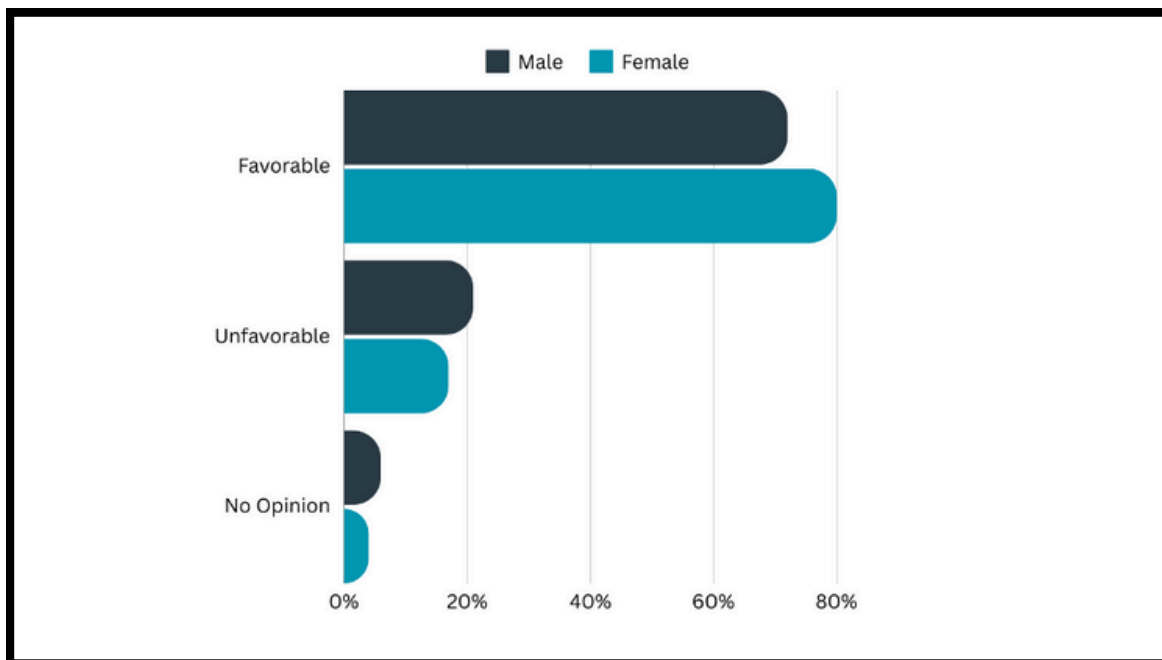
Figure 2. Candidate Selected if the Election was Held Today



Views on the Candidates

Voters in the battleground states appear to have high opinions of the Democratic candidate. Harris has maintained a high favorability among Black voters in the battleground states, at 77%, higher than Biden's favorability at 70% and much higher than Trump's at 15%. Comparing the results of this poll to the September poll, the favorability of Trump decreased slightly, with 15% of likely voters reporting favorable opinions, compared with 17% in September.

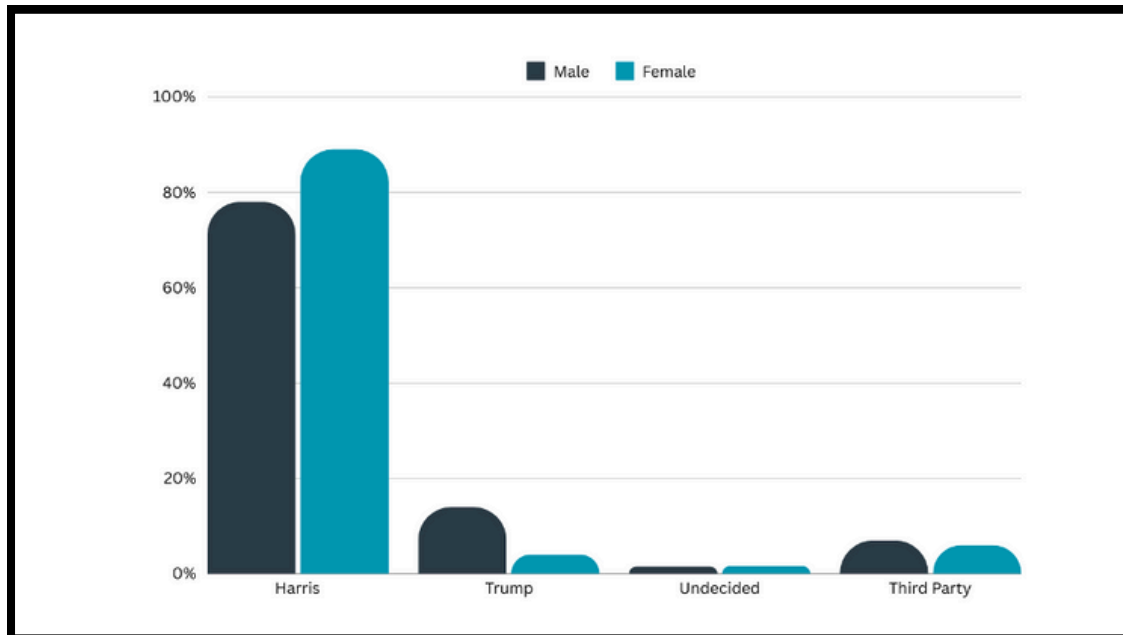
Figure 3. Candidate Favorability



Harris has the most support amongst the oldest age group of voters (65+), with 93% planning to vote for her. The next oldest age group (50-64) supports her at a high rate of 87%, followed by the youngest age group (18-29) at 83% support. The age groups that support her the least are 30-39-year-olds at 78%- and 40-49-year-olds at 75%. Conversely, Trump has the strongest support amongst these age groups, with 13% planning to vote for him in both the 30-39 and 40-49 age ranges. The 40-49 age group has the highest proportion of undecided voters in the sample at 8% and the highest proportion of third-party voters at 4%.

Consistent with previous polls, Black women show higher support for Harris, at 89%, compared with 78% of Black men. Conversely, Black men show more support for Trump than Black women, 14% to 4%, respectively. In this sample, Black men and women show similar levels of support for third-party candidates (1.5% and 1.6%, respectively) and report being undecided (7% and 6%, respectively).

Figure 3. Candidate Support by Gender



When examining gender and age, young Black men show the strongest support for Trump. Seventeen percent of Black men aged 18-29 report plans to vote for Trump, along with 25% of Black men aged 30-39. Support for Trump amongst Black men drops as age increases, with only 4% of Black men aged 65+ reporting plans to vote for the former president. Support for Harris is consistently high for Black women, ranging between 83%-92%, except in the 40-49 age group, which shows slightly lower levels of support at 73%. Amongst this age group, there are the highest levels of support for Trump, at 12%, and higher reports of undecided, at 10%.

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Regarding party affiliation, most are voting along party lines. Ninety-six percent of Democrats plan to vote for Harris, while 68% of Republicans plan to vote for Trump. Among the Independents, 60% plan to vote for Harris, 94% who identify as Independent-leaning Democrats plan to vote for her, but 57% of those who identify as Independent-leaning Republicans plan to vote for Trump.

Considering the historical significance of the church in the Black community, this poll examined the impact of religion on voting plans among Black voters. Support varies by religious affiliation. Black voters who attend Black Protestant denominations have higher levels of support for Harris than Trump (39% and 22%, respectively). Further, Evangelical Protestants have slightly higher levels of support for Trump over Harris (23% to 20%). Harris and Trump show similar proportional support from Catholics (6% to 5%), Mainline Protestants (6% each), Jews (.5% to 1%), Muslims (2% to 3%), and non-religious (16% each) respondents.

Additionally, support for Harris and Trump differed based on how much respondents noted that their religion impacted their voting choices. One-third (33%) of Trump supporters say that their religion strongly impacts their voting, compared to just 13% of Harris voters. By contrast, 52% of Harris voters say that their religion does not affect their voting compared to 43% of Trump voters.



Views of Candidates' Debate Performance

The respondents were also asked questions about the presidential debate between Harris and Trump; 94% of the sample indicated they watched some of the debate content, with 74% claiming to have watched the entire debate. Among those who watched, 75% said the debate motivated them to vote for Harris, compared to only 6% indicating the debate motivated them to vote for Trump. Regarding perceptions of the performance of each candidate, the respondents were asked to use one word to describe their opinions on how each candidate performed. Indicative of the high percentage of people who felt the debate motivated them to vote for Harris, most people used positive words to describe her performance (i.e., 15% excellent/awesome, 14% outstanding, 12% intelligent/informative, 12 % fair). In contrast, they mostly used very negative words to describe Trump's performance (i.e., only 4% thought he did ok or mediocre, 23% general negative poor, 13% unintelligent/unqualified, 11% untrustworthy/liar).

It has been well documented by various media outlets that Trump spread disinformation during his performance in the debate, and respondents were asked their opinion on one of the claims he made, namely his comment on Haitian immigrants eating pets in Springfield, Ohio. Close to 90% (88%) of respondents believed the statement was false, and most were offended by the comment. The respondents used the following words to describe their view of this claim -- 40% racist, 16% offensive, and 15% used a different word to describe it.

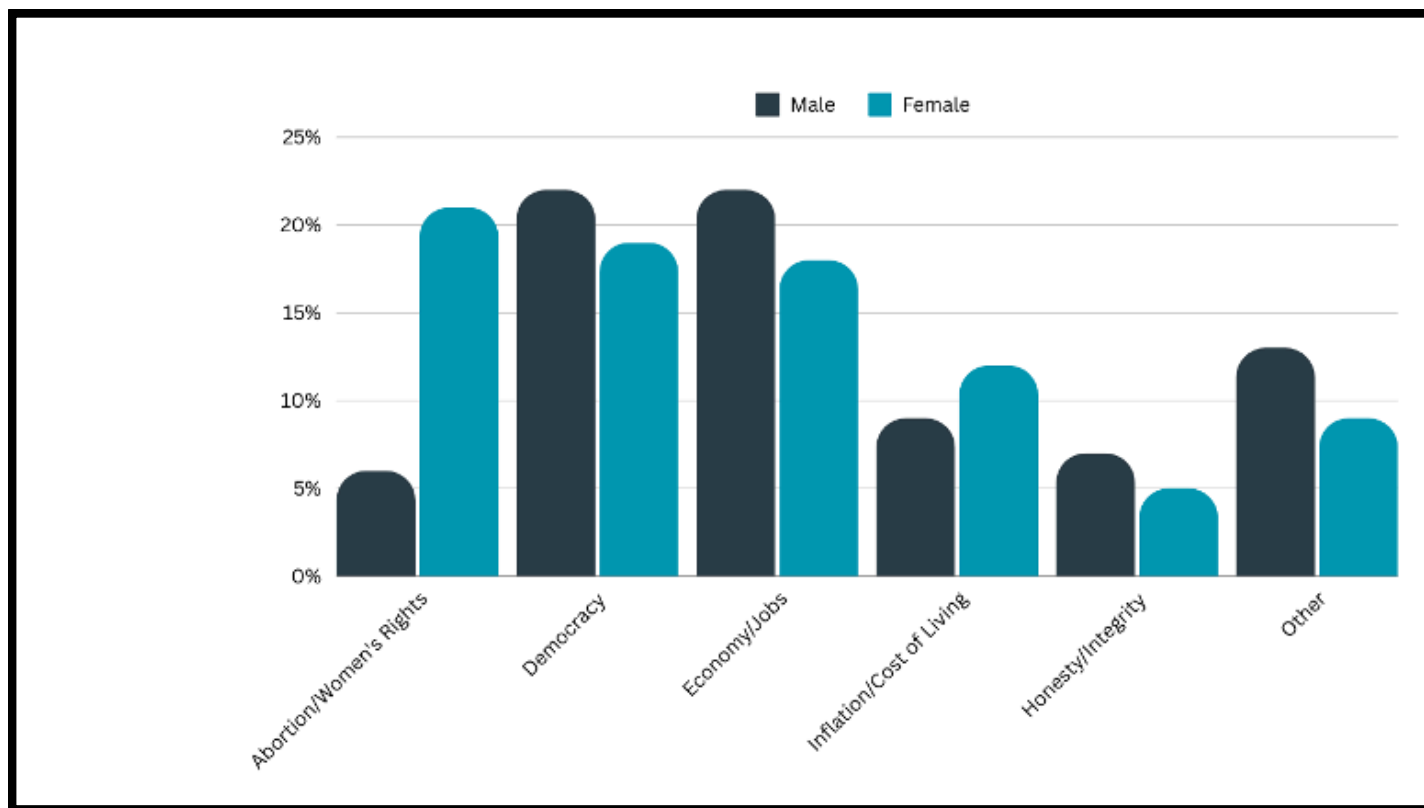
Key Issues

Voters are often drawn to the polls or select a particular candidate based on their stance on issues deemed relevant to them. Respondents were asked to choose one issue that is most important to them as they consider who to vote for as president. The top issues selected were (1) democracy/voting rights at 22%, (2) economy, jobs, and wages at 19%, (3) abortion, women's health and women's rights at 16%, and (4) inflation and "other" were both tied at 10%.

The top issues for men are (1) democracy and voting rights, (2) economy and jobs, (3) other, and (4) honesty/integrity/character. While there are some similarities in the top issues selected by men and women, abortion jumps to top of list for women, while it did not register among the top five of Black men's issues; only 5% of Black men reported it as their top issue. The top issues for women are (1) abortion, women's health and women's rights, (2) democracy, (3) the economy and jobs (4) inflation, cost of living.

The economy and "other" are the top two issues among people who define themselves as strong Democrats, whereas democracy and abortion are the top issues for those that define themselves as strong Republicans.

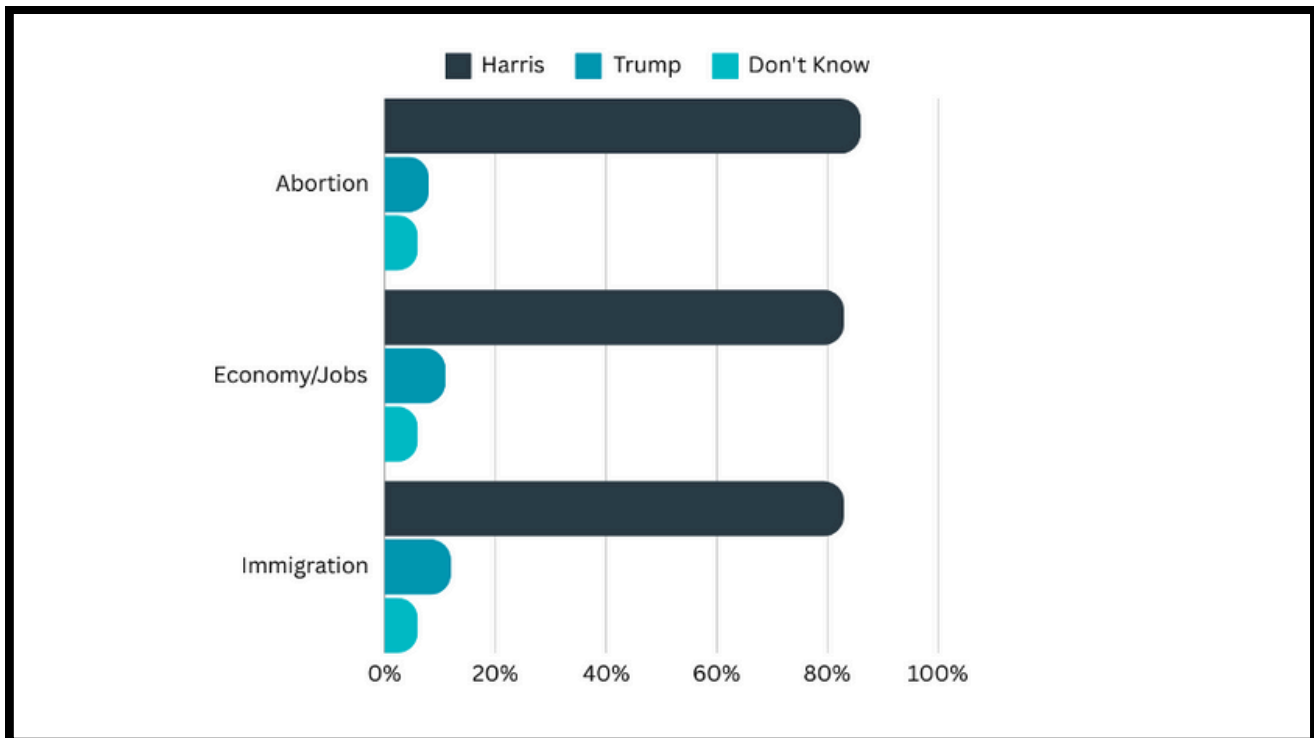
Figure 4. Key Issues by Gender



Trust in Candidates on Key Issues

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding which candidate they trust more on key issues in this election. Harris showed strong levels of trust on all key issues from voters. Voters trust Harris more strongly than Trump on the economy (83% trust in Harris versus 11% trust in Trump), abortion (86% trust in Harris versus 8% trust in Trump), and immigration (83% trust in Harris versus 12% trust in Trump). However, there are some differences along gender lines. Overall Black men trust Harris more on all issues, but a higher percentage show trust in Trump on issues than Black women. Black women illustrate high trust levels for Harris across all issues than their male counterparts, at 87% the economy compared to 77%, 89% abortion compared to 82%, and 86% immigration compared to 78%.

Figure 5. Trust in Candidates by Issues



Impact of Endorsements

Recently, Harris has solicited endorsements from key public figures. We asked respondents how these endorsements have impacted their motivations for supporting Harris in the election. Overall, many respondents report not being influenced by public endorsements, regardless of the source. Of those who were impacted by endorsements, those coming from political and governmental officials had the largest sway. Respondents report the endorsement of former President Barack Obama as the most influential, with 57% of the sample reporting it motivates them to support Harris. Following Obama, the endorsement of over 700 national security official was the next most influential, with 55% reporting it motivates them to vote for Harris. Prominent republicans, like the Cheneys motivate 44% of the sample to vote for Harris. Celebrities have the least sway over people's motivations to vote for Harris, with 37% reporting Black celebrities endorsements influence them, and 33% reporting white celebrity endorsements influence them. While endorsements may not influence or motivate some voters, at the very least it is a source of free publicity for the candidates.



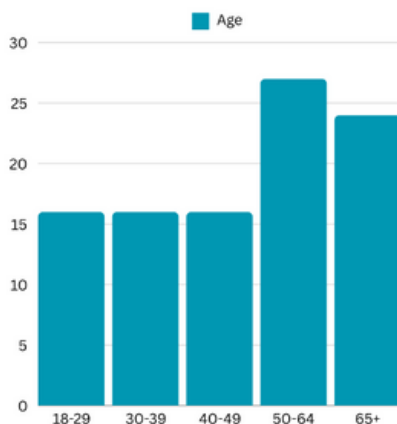
THE SAMPLE

The entire sample of respondents identified as Black American. Close to 60% (59%) of the sample identify as women, 41% as male. A little over half of the sample (51%) have college degrees or more advanced degrees; 49% did not attend college, 37% have an AA degree or attended some college, while 12% of those who did not attend college have high school or less education. Most of the sample are in partnered relationships, 44% married, 6% partnered but not married, 13% separated or divorced, 6% widowed, and 22% single. Most of the sample are employed at 60%, 58% full-time, and 4% part-time, 25% are retired, 5% on disability, while the others were unemployed or students. In regard to age, the sample were almost evenly split between those over and under 50 years of age, with close to a third (27%) are 50-64, 24% 65 and older, 16% are 18-29, 16% 30-39, and 16% age 40-49.

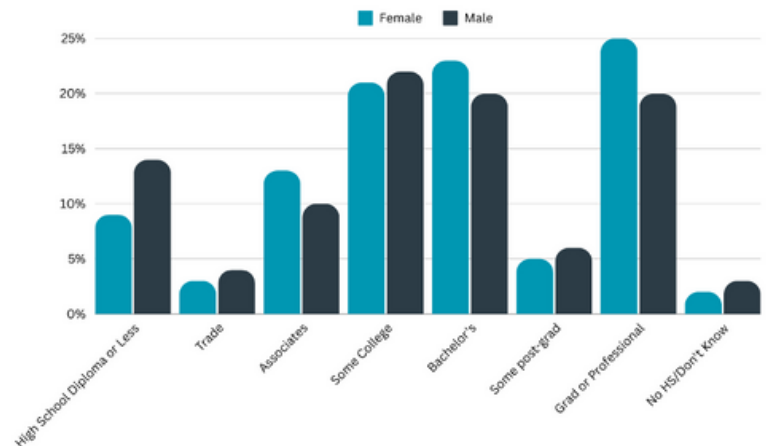
Gender



Age



Education and Gender



Background on HIPO

The Howard University Initiative on Public Opinion (HIPO) brings together the unique expertise and perspectives of scholars across disciplines to conduct national polls on issues of relevance to Black communities. HIPO is made up of an interdisciplinary team of scholars, representing Afro-American Studies, Communication and Media Studies, Economics, English, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Sociology.

