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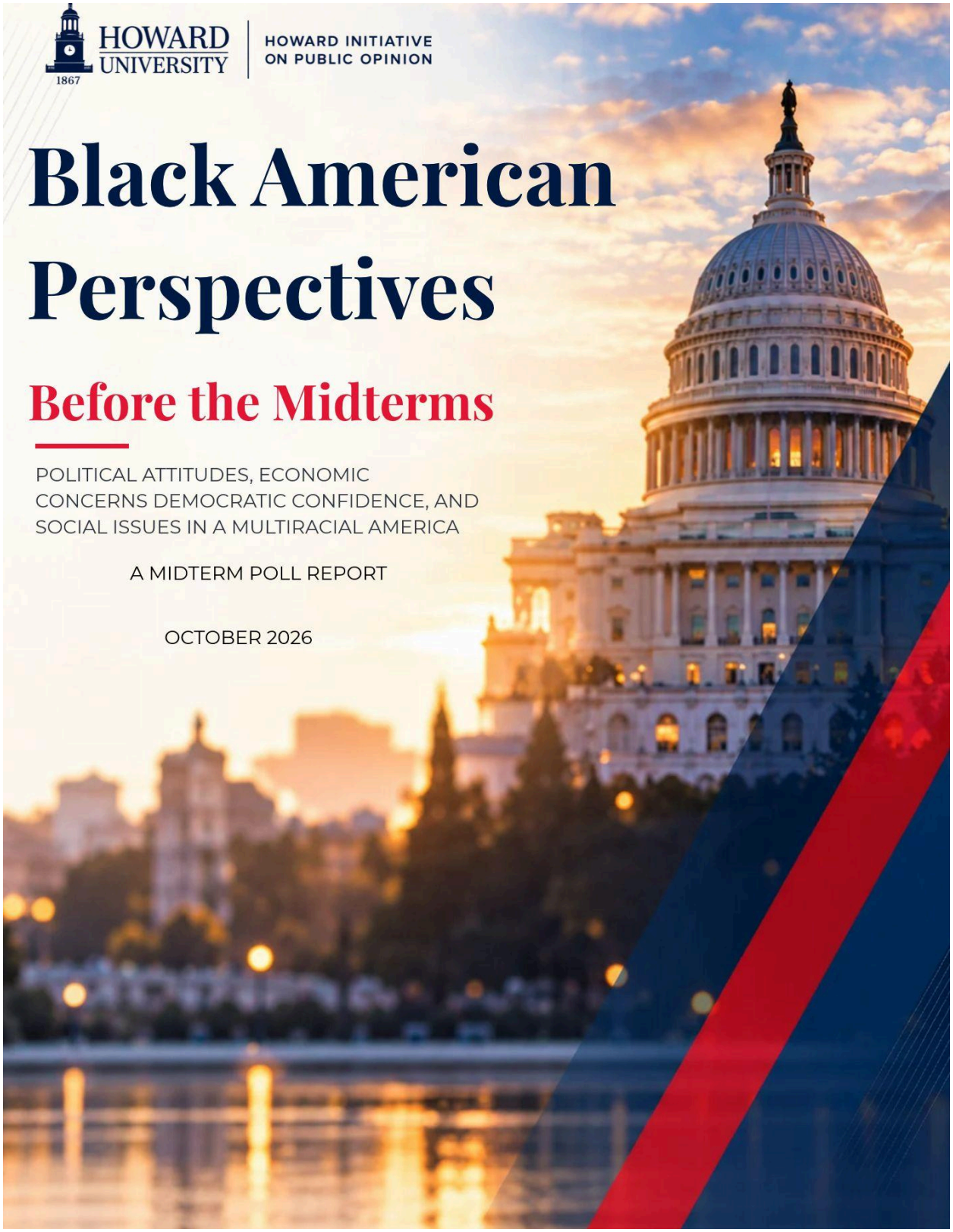
Black American Perspectives

Before the Midterms

POLITICAL ATTITUDES, ECONOMIC CONCERNS DEMOCRATIC CONFIDENCE, AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN A MULTIRACIAL AMERICA

A MIDTERM POLL REPORT

OCTOBER 2026



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Black American Perspectives Before the Midterms

MIDTERM POLL REPORT | OCTOBER 2026

Summary

As the 2026 midterm elections draw near, Black American voters across the country remain heavily engaged in U.S. politics. The Howard University Initiative on Public Opinion (HIPO) conducted a survey to understand this population's voting intentions and concerns.

While the voices of the Black America tend to be underrepresented in national surveys, this survey oversampled this population. The report focuses on findings relevant to this community and also highlights significant trends in the overall sample.

While voters across the political spectrum are concerned about a variety of issues, the rollback of DEI initiatives remains a core political concern for Black voters, and these voters remain the most committed to showing up at the polls this November.

Top Findings

1. **Black Americans are the most committed midterm voters.** Over 75% of Black voters expressed their intent to vote in the midterm elections.
2. **Black Americans are open to nontraditional political candidates.** Fifty-six percent (56%) of Black voters, and about half of all surveyed voters (50%) expressed openness to vote for a self-identified socialist or Democratic Socialist if that candidate's policies matched their priorities.
3. **Race and DEI remain critical issues for Black voters.** The nationwide rollback of DEI programs receives disapproval from a majority of Black voters, who also see racial dynamics as continually important to their political engagement.
4. **Most Black Americans, including Republicans, blame the President for the affordability crisis.** Across racial categories, the president's policies and decisions also receive a widespread bipartisan share of the blame, with 89% of respondents attributing some blame to the war with Iran and 88% of respondents blaming tariffs.

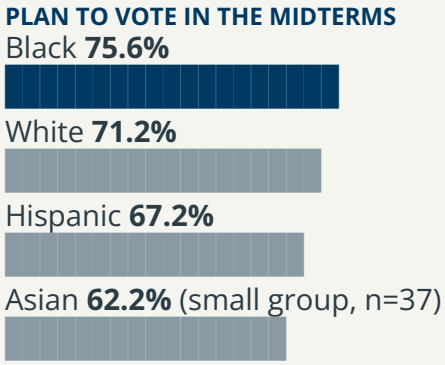
FINDING 1 · THE INTENTION TO VOTE

FINDING 1 · TURNOUT

Black Americans are the most committed midterm voters in the survey

76%

of Black respondents plan to vote; 2.4% already have



Seventy-six percent (75.6%) of Black respondents (n= 405 of 536) say they plan to vote in the midterms, and another 2% (n=13) have already voted. Black Americans expressed a higher commitment to vote than any demographic: 71% of white respondents declared their intention to vote (n=158 of 222), and about two-thirds of Hispanic respondents (67.2%, n=154 of 229) said they intend to vote.

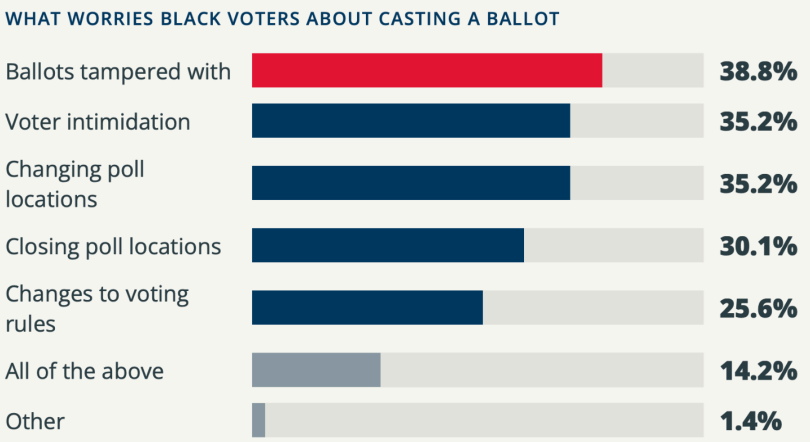
FINDING 2 · CONCERNS ABOUT VOTING ACCESS

FINDING 2 · VOTING ACCESS

Black voters' top worries about voting: Ballot tampering, voter intimidation, and moved polls

39%

of Black respondents name ballot tampering as a concern



Before we even arrive at the results of the election, many Black Americans expressed concerns about their ability to cast a ballot in the first place. Of those who expressed these concerns, 39% (n=85) cited ballot tampering as a concern, making it the most frequently-reported worry. Voter intimidation and changing poll locations also ranked highly, with 35.2% of respondents selecting these as significant concerns (each 35.2%, n=77). Other worries included poll locations closing altogether (30.1%, n=66) and changes to voting rules (25.6%, n=56). Another 14.2% (n=31) indicated that all these concerns weighed on their minds.

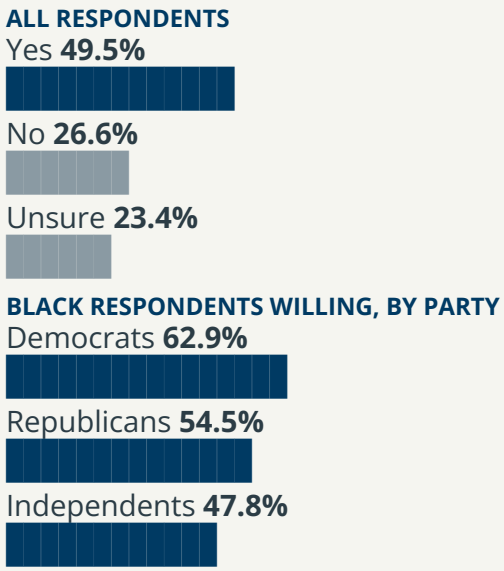
FINDING 3 · SOCIALISTS GAIN GROUND

FINDING 3 · SOCIALIST CANDIDATES

Over half of Black Americans would vote for a self-described socialist if the policies fit their needs

60.0%

of likely voters say yes
(n=464 of 773)



With recent wins across the country, Democratic Socialists have garnered newfound political attention after the election of Donald Trump in 2024. Asked whether they would vote for a candidate who calls themselves a socialist or Democratic Socialist if that candidate backs the policies they care most about, 49.5% of respondents (542 of 1,096) said yes, 27% (296) said no and 23.5% (258) were unsure. Among respondents who plan to vote in the midterms, the numbers were even higher, with 60.0% (464 of 773) saying yes. This includes a majority of Black Republicans (54.5%, 36 of 66)[1].

[1] Due to its relatively small group size caution is required when interpreting this result.

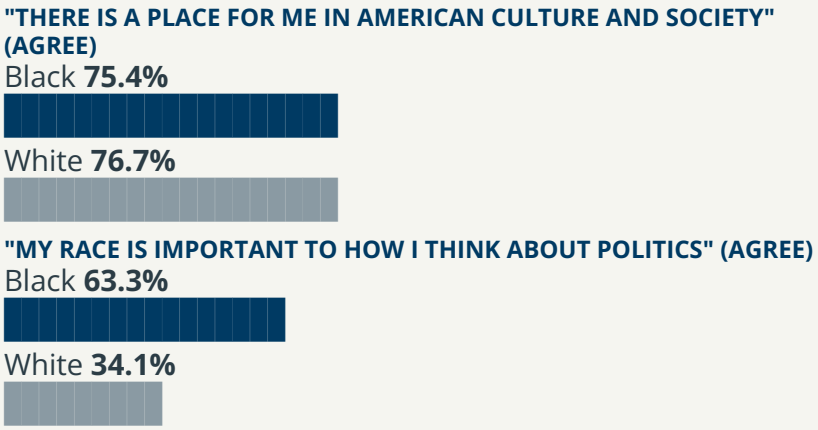
FINDING 4 · REFLECTIONS ON BELONGING AND RACE

FINDING 4 · BELONGING AND RACE

Most Black Americans feel they have a place in the country, but race shapes their politics far more than it does for white Americans

63%

of Black respondents say race is important to their politics, vs 34% of White respondents



Three in four Black respondents agree that there is a place for them in American culture and society (396 of 525), about the same as white respondents (76.7%, n=168). Yet Black and white respondents remain sharply divided about the role of race in their own personal politics, with 63.3% of Black respondents (n=332) identifying race as an important part of their political understanding, compared to only 1 in 3 white respondents (74 of 217).

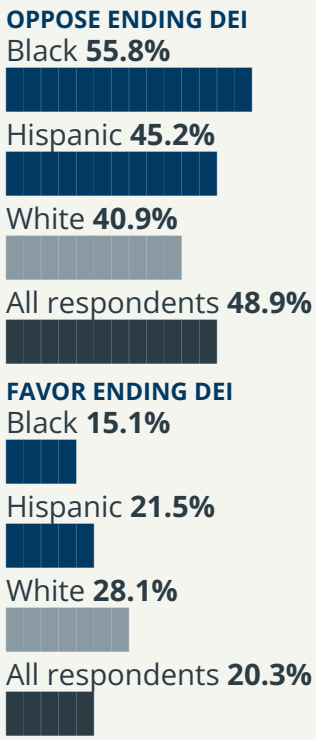
FINDING 5 · DEI POLICIES

FINDING 5 · DEI POLICIES

Black Americans oppose ending DEI policies by nearly 4 to 1

56%

of Black respondents oppose ending DEI; 15% (n=80) favor



The majority of Black respondents (56%, n=296) oppose the president's rollback of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies. By contrast, white respondents felt less opposed (40.9%, n=90), with 1 in 4 white respondents (62 of 221) expressing their approval for these changes. The rest said they neither favor nor oppose the decision.

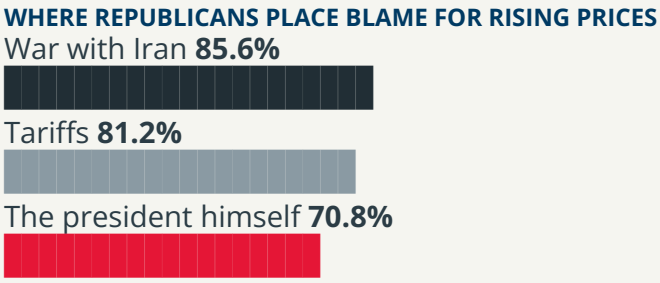
FINDING 6 · BLAME FOR RISING PRICES

FINDING 6 · RISING PRICES

Most Republicans blame the president's policies for rising prices more than they blame the president himself

86%

of Republicans say the war with Iran is at least somewhat to blame for rising prices



Eighty-six percent of surveyed Republicans (85.6%, 179 of 209) say the war with Iran is at least somewhat to blame for rising prices, and 81.2% (168) say the same of tariffs. Fewer, 70.8% (148), say the president himself is to blame. Republicans also place strong blame more often on the war (42.1%, n=88 of 209) and tariffs (37%, n=78) than on the president (23%, n=48). Blame for the president himself splits along party lines: 94.4% of Democrats (n=487 of 516) and 88.5% of Independents (n=184 of 208) hold him at least somewhat responsible. Overall, 88.7% of respondents (n=945 of 1,065) say the war is at least somewhat to blame, and 87.7% (n=938 of 1,069) say the same of the president.

On the whole, respondents placed stronger blame on the president and his policies than on Congress, major corporations, the mainstream media, hospitals, or the Federal Reserve.

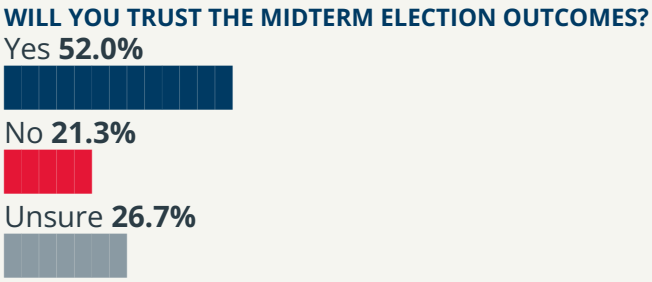
FINDING 7 · CONCERNS FOR DEMOCRACY

FINDING 7 · DEMOCRACY AND THE COUNT

Nearly two in three say democracy is threatened, and only half expect to trust the midterm count

63%

say democracy is somewhat or very threatened



Sixty-three percent of respondents (n=599 of 956) say democracy in the United States today is somewhat or very threatened. Yet this threat does not translate directly to Americans distrusting the outcome of midterm elections. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents (n=561 of 1,079) indicated that they would trust the election results during midterms, while 21.3% (n=230) said no and 26.7% (n=288) remain unsure.

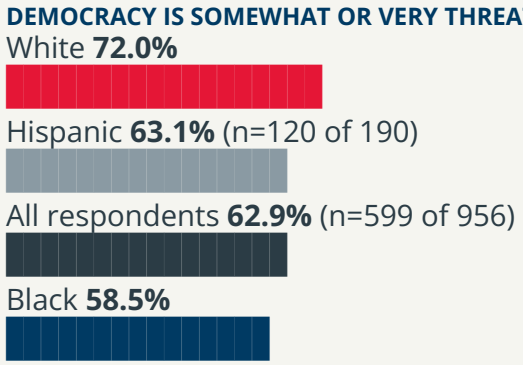
FINDING 8 · DEMOCRACY GAP

FINDING 8 · THE DEMOCRACY GAP

White Americans are the most alarmed about democracy

72%

of White respondents say democracy is threatened, vs 52% of Black respondents



When reflecting on the stability of our society, three out of four white respondents (72.0%, n=139 of 193) say they feel democracy is threatened. Even though Black respondents were the least likely to share that sentiment, the majority (58.5%, n=281 out of 480) still expressed alarm over the state of our democratic system.

The Survey: Methodology

The Howard University Initiative on Public Opinion (HIPO) conducted a voters survey to examine political engagement, economic concerns, democratic confidence, voting intentions, and attitudes toward social issues among a deliberately recruited multiracial panel. The survey was administered through Qualtrics between October 14, 2026, and October 26, 2026, with 1,133 responses included in the analysis. Our recruitment quotas sought approximately 50% Black, 20% Hispanic, 20% white, and 10% other respondents. We intentionally oversampled the Black population to better capture variation within this population.

We have reported results as unweighted percentages according to valid responses to each question. Since the panel was deliberately recruited rather than drawn as a probability sample of the entire national electorate, the findings describe surveyed respondents and should not be interpreted as nationally representative estimates.

We have not reported a conventional margin of sampling error because the sampling design does not support probability-based estimates of sampling precision. Findings involving smaller subgroups, especially Asian and Native American respondents, should be interpreted cautiously.

The Sample

The majority of the sample were Black at 50%, followed by Hispanic and white at 20% each, and 10% other. While we oversampled the Black population, the rest of the sample closely mirrors national demographics. A total of 54% of the sample were women, 44% men, and 1% nonbinary. The sample included largely younger and middle-aged respondents, 71% were between the ages of 18-49.

The most commonly reported educational attainment was a high school diploma (35%), followed by some college (21%), bachelor's degree (15%), advanced degree (6%), and no high school degree (5%). Regarding party affiliation, nearly half of respondents identified as Democrats (48%), 21% Republicans, 19% Independents, and 10% unaffiliated.

ABOUT US

The Howard Initiative on Public Opinion (HIPO) is composed of interdisciplinary scholars, representing Afro-American Studies, Communication and Media Studies, Economics, English, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Sociology. We are able to provide a broad range of expertise in public opinion research.

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