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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Update:
Friday, February 26

Black Americans On The
Capitol Attack, Biden, The
Filibuster, And Vaccines



Key Takeaways:

- Black American focus group respondents call the Capitol Insurrection and its subsequent fallout a demonstration of “white privilege” planned by Trump and his allies.
- Most are “hopeful” for a Biden Administration. He shares most respondents’ priorities, is “changing the tone” and “puts his pants on the same way.”
- Most intend to take the COVID vaccine “eventually,” although others indicate hesitancy driven by multifaceted concerns.

Respondents Almost Universally See The Capitol Attack As A "Showcase Of Privilege"

Atlanta Women



"The whole thing was racist."

"If a Black man had done that they would not have been let go."

"I haven't seen any justice yet. I'd like to see some justice."

Detroit Men



"White privilege at its finest."

"You would've seen some dead Black people up in there."

"If there had been Black people you would've seen helicopters, SWAT teams, National Guard, everybody."



Philadelphia
Woman

"Well, they're getting treated very well... There was the one woman who needed to go on vacation, so they let her go to Mexico. And the other guy who had the hat on, he wanted to be transferred to a prison where he could get organic food. These aren't things that we could have asked for as Black people."

Many Blame Trump And The Republican Party For Inciting The Attack, "Hyping Up" The Crowd, & Deflecting Responsibility

- Most respondents do not see this as an isolated or surprising incident, since they blame Trump for creating a culture allowing many to "broadcast" their racism, as opposed to "keeping it private."
- Others further blame Republican politicians "enabling Trump and supporting the lies" and who are more "concerned about their personal political future and their racist constituents than they are about [doing] the right thing." An Atlanta woman suggests Republican leaders "basically kind of dumb it down as far as Trump steering the riot itself."
- Some respondents specifically cite Senators Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz and Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene as examples of politicians fueling the fire.

Some Show Empathy For The Attackers Who They See As Manipulated & Misled



Detroit
Man

"This is basically the opposite of 2016, if you really think about it. Because a lot of people who voted for Hillary Clinton, and I was one of them, believe that election was stolen, too. The difference is that, while we were mad and upset and believe that Trump stole it, regardless of how he did it, we had to accept it. Swallowed hard and accepted it. Didn't like it. But there was none of the anger, and those types of things that you saw coming out. I didn't hear Hillary claiming the election was stolen over and over and over again.

And so, the people that supported her had to accept it, because she did. And that's kind of what he was alluding to, was that the person at the head of this, if they kind of act and comport themselves in a certain way, their followers have no choice but to go along with it."

"A lot of this information is being fed to individuals, and although I understand that a lot of them are racist, I think a lot of the racial tension was built up over time just from the type of information that they're exposed to, day in and day out to kind of guide their thinking, which ultimately led to what they did that day."



Atlanta
Man

Most Describe The Country Negatively

Although to describe their own situation, many use words reflecting positivity or personal resolve, such as “pretty well,” “hanging in there,” or “trying to stay safe.”

What's one word or phrase to describe how things are going in the country right now?

Terrible **Turbulent** **Bittersweet**
Unpredictable **Bad** **Chaotic**
Scary **Confusing** **Unrest**
Unstable **Hectic** **Unstable**

Black Respondents' Hopes On Biden: "With The New President, Hopefully, Prayerfully, They're Going Up"

While most are hopeful, others do say "not enough time has passed" to assess.



He's "changing the tone of the nation."

"He understands that he's human like we are. He puts his pants on the same way."

"He's taking one step at a time."

He has to "clean house" after "four years of chaos."

"It's too early to tell, but when you contrast it to what we've had and where we're going, obviously it's going in the right direction."

Three online focus groups of Black Americans in the Atlanta, GA, Philadelphia, PA & Detroit, MI markets. Groups conducted February 22, 2021. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://www.navigatorresearch.org)

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Vaccine-Hesitant Respondents Are Largely Open To Getting Vaccinated Eventually

About half of each group showed some hesitancy.



Philadelphia
Woman

“Well, for me, I'm between a rock and a hard place. I kind of want to get it, but I'm leaning more not to get it because it just seems to me, it takes longer to make a vaccine, create a vaccine and I'm just not sure of it yet, you know? Like down the line, maybe five, six months from now, who's to say what kind of reaction and make it... In other words, if this hasn't been out long enough, and I'm just trying to wait to see how it's going to react down the line on the people that have already received it.”

Hesitancy Can Be Multifaceted, Black Respondents Explain

"It seems like the government people that we try to trust or that we want to trust, they're just our biggest enemy right now. You can't trust them. You can't trust anything they say or anything they do... It's like the vaccine, for instance. I wasn't impressed to see them all sitting up there taking the vaccine because my whole thing is they may be getting a real thing. We don't know what we're getting. They're going to give them the real thing. We don't know what they're putting in our arms." – Atlanta woman

"They're continuously coming out with new strands of COVID, so it's like, why are you giving a vaccine if you haven't even figured [it] out?" – Atlanta man

"Even as an educator, it's my time now to get it and I haven't signed up, but I just wanted to see what kind of effect that it's going to have on people in the month to come." – Philadelphia woman

"But I don't know of somebody personally, but I have a lot of friends that went to school with someone from like West Philly who got the vaccine on like a Monday and he passed away on Thursday. And I don't know if the cause of death was the COVID vaccine to be exact, but it was just a little skeptical because he was like... I'm 24. He's the same age as me. Well, he was the same age as me." – Philadelphia woman

"Let's just put it real and raw here. We're all Black men. We know why we're going to wait. I think we know that. History of this country has dictated why we're going to wait." – Detroit man

"I don't know the person personally. One of my friend's fathers knew someone who was perfectly fine, took the vaccine and ended up dying." – Detroit man

"This time last year I went down to New Orleans, had a great time at Mardi Gras. And when I came back, I lost all smell and taste... So I've had antibodies. So I've given blood. The last three times, the last time was in January, I've still got COVID antibodies. Isn't that the result of the vaccine, that you have antibodies?" – Detroit man

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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Andrea Purse, progressive strategist; Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Joel Payne, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Delvone Michael, Working Families; Felicia Wong, Roosevelt Institute; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted online focus groups conducted on February 22, 2021 with Black Americans in three markets: Atlanta, GA (more politically engaged), Philadelphia, PA (less politically engaged women), and Detroit, MI (less politically engaged men). Political engagement was defined by a combination of either educational attainment or a self-reported frequency of following news and current events. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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