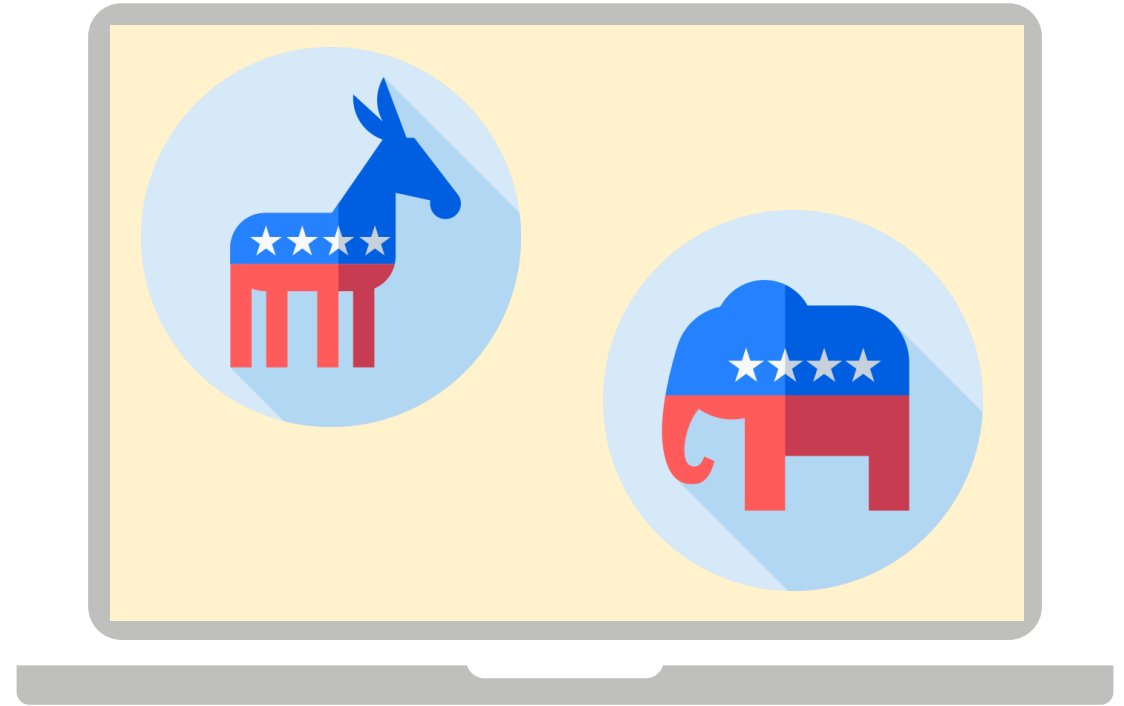


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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Friday, April 22, 2022

Lower Motivation Soft
Partisans And Independents
On The Political Parties And
Ukraine



Methodology

On April 13, 2022, GBAO conducted three focus groups online with lower-motivation respondents who varied across demographics—age, gender, education, and race.



Republican lower-motivation voters in North Carolina



Independent lower-motivation voters in Wisconsin



Democratic lower-motivation voters in Nevada

Key Takeaways

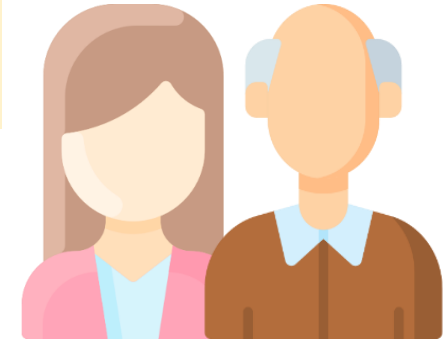
- These low-motivation voters are largely disconnected from the conflict in Ukraine.
- The Democratic Party is defined by tolerance, health care, student loans, or “control” depending on one’s own partisanship.
- The Republican Party is defined by rights—taking them or granting them— and soft Republicans don’t give their own party a pass.
- The phrase “social issues” is not clearly defined.

Participants Are Largely Disconnected From Ukraine Conflict

“I really don't know why it started other than my initial thought was Russia wanted to take over Ukraine and communism and all that [is] involved. But at the same time, I also like to turn off the news and create my own bubble in my own world. I kind of don't know what's going on.” – NC woman

“I have no idea. I even Googled that because I don't understand how it started. And some of the stuff I Googled said Ukraine started it. So I have no idea, I really don't.” – NC woman

“Because it doesn't really affect me, I really don't pay attention that much, but I have heard how much money we've spent as a country going over there. I just don't understand why we do that.” – NC man



“My understanding [is] it's about land. [Moderator: Okay. Who started it? How did it start?] That, I don't know.” – WI woman

“I was told that Putin started it, but I'm not sure [if] that was somebody else's opinion. I'm not sure.” – WI man

“I try not to focus on the negative and everything that's going [on] outside of our country. I try hard not to just get involved or think about it because then I won't sleep at night, honestly. I will not... I do believe Putin started it. Even though I don't watch the news a lot.” – NV woman

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Many Express Empathy Toward Ukraine, Yet Are Wary Of The Economic Cost Of Increasing Aid Or Helping Refugees



"I feel sorry for the people, but at the same time, we can help them, but I don't think we should get heavily involved. I don't think we should proceed [further] to do anything more than what we have been doing, which is possibly give them some weapons or things to fight, because I do feel sorry for the country being attacked." – NC woman

"Well, I have compassion for them, but, again, I don't think we should be there at all. We've sent our weapons over there. Okay. We may need those weapons one day. And then what? Sending food, we've got people here that are hungry. Sending first aid, we've got people here that need hospitalization. I have the compassion for them, but **we are always running to somebody else's aid. Always. But nobody's running to our aid. Our country's in devastation right now. I don't see anybody running this way.** And so, I mean, I think we need to focus on the United States." – NC woman

"For me, it's not about them, it's about us. I feel like we have way too many people that we don't take care of. Before we start taking care of people from other countries and supporting them and giving them the benefits that we have in the United States, we need to take care of our veterans and our elderly. We have to take care of our people first. I think that for far too long we have not done that." – WI woman



"I'm for helping others. I have a humanitarian heart, so I'm willing to help those who are in need. You can knock on my door. I'll give you a plate of food or a place to lay your head. But we have issues here in our country that we have not addressed such as mental illness, homelessness, and we can find a billion-plus dollars to send over to people we've never seen." – NV woman

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Democrats Are The Party Of Benefits And Welcoming Others, Even If This Is Not Universally Positive



“Getting rid of student loan debt.” – NC woman



“Free health care for all. They say better jobs. Free... Not free. Well, not expensive college education.” – WI woman

“I think they're more welcoming to people from Mexico. Part of me, it's like... I do think we should make the US... It's our country, we should be important. **Yes, welcoming people.** But I think they're too welcoming sometimes.” – WI woman

“So yes, Biden has done a fantastic job with assisting us and extending the student loan repayment option because the economy is such trash still. However, if it ends in August, it's still not going to help us. Once August comes, when we're still paying interest, we're still accruing interest. It is absolutely impossible.” – NV woman

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Justice Jackson Is Considered A Top Democratic Success And Biden Accomplishment

“I think that it's really wonderful that we have a new Black woman sitting on the Supreme Court. I think that's really important to continue diversity and bring women into, sorry for the men on this call, but a predominantly old white man role. It's absolutely necessary. I thought it was really ridiculous about what she had to go through being able to be sworn in. Not a little ridiculous, it was absolutely ridiculous.” – NV woman



“We have a Supreme Court Justice that’s [an] African American woman. That's huge.” – NV woman

“Well, a Black woman judge. That’s one. That’s what he said he was going to do.” – WI woman

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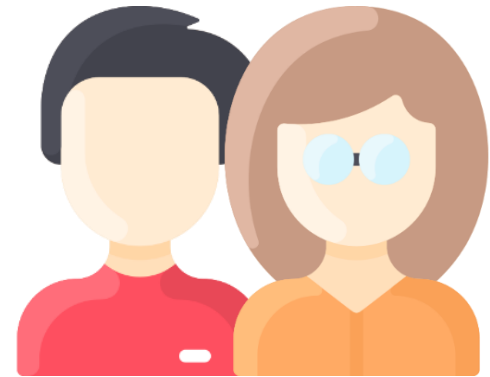
Some See Democrats As Ineffective



“Oh, it just feels like they have somewhat decent intentions, but they're ineffective at accomplishing anything.” – WI man

“Well, I don't think they're as aggressive as [they] used to be.” – NV man

“Troops was going to come home. Everything was going to go, I'm not saying run smoothly. I'm not saying we didn't have problems, but I feel like **everything just got worse and not even because of COVID**. I feel like everything has just gotten worse and worse since Democrats took office. I'm sorry. I'm Democratic. But... I feel let down. So [I'm] not ... feeling like they care about us over here. I don't.” – NV woman



Republicans Are Defined By The Rights They Grant Or Take Away From People And Corporations

“Well, I'm a gay man married to a man. I have two adopted children. We're Jewish. We don't fit anywhere in the Republican vision. So if they were in power, we would be pushed out.” – NV man

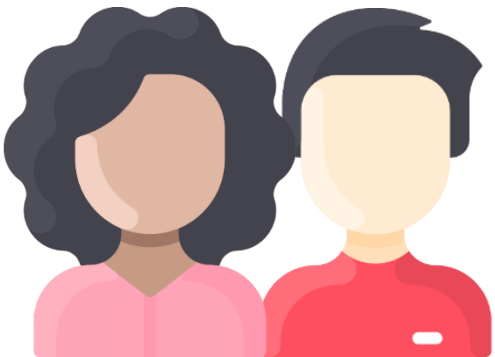
“The word *freedom* comes to mind as a country but [also] as an individual. Also, that I have opinions and rights.” – NC woman

“They wouldn't let too many people in our country, probably. They would try to use only our resources, North America resources maybe. And I don't know, I feel like the richer business owners would get... What do you call that, where it's easier? It'll be easier for them to be successful. Maybe less government, maybe less government control, stuff like that, more loopholes.” – WI woman

“It would just be deregulation for the sole purpose of the rich to get richer.” – WI man

“Way too much emphasis on religion.” – WI man

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Republicans Don't Give Their Own Party A Pass

"I would actually say they are also somewhat disconnected and, in some ways, I feel betrayed. I think they also, in many ways, have neglected the middle class for corporate profits. And I think our own senator here in North Carolina, Thom Tillis, who somehow made amazing stock trades right before COVID hit and seemed to do really well with insider information. That doesn't sound like a senator to me who's looking out for the middle class. So, like I said earlier, I feel like both parties have moved to the extremes... catered to the extremes, and the middle class has suffered." – NC man

"I honestly don't know where their priorities are. I don't know where either... I don't even think they know where their priorities are, but to be honest with you, I just feel like we're constantly reacting to many different fires and wars." – NC woman

"Well, Donald Trump disappointed me. So I mean, that's what I think of when I think of Republicans. I'm not a big fan of him. He just didn't behave the way I would want someone representing my country to behave in a lot of different situations. So I mean, some of the things he's done have been good, but I mean, as a person... So it's hard to support that party as much as I think [I] used to." – NC woman

"I was just going to say, another example for me is Republicans only seem to care about the deficit and government spending when they're not [in] power, that when they're in power, they're doing the same overreaches." – NC man

"I was just thinking just [Republicans stood for] better opportunity, just a better economy is what I was thinking. But then, again, you showed me those numbers earlier." – NC man



“Social Issues” Doesn’t Have A Clear Definition And It Can Be Hard To Calculate Which Party Discusses Them More



“Issues with more like people, the crowds you hang around with, people you communicate with, people on social media, social issues, stuff that's happening every day. It could be a lot of stuff. It could be like stuff you or your friend go socialize [about] at the grocery store. You talk about what just happened on the news or what happened with the president. It could be a lot of times what’s happened at school or the fundraiser or anything. Social issues could be a lot of things.” – WI man

“Schools maybe. Social issues maybe... I don't know, that just is such a broad term. Can you elaborate, I guess, maybe?” – NC woman



“Social issues are health care, crime, the economy, taxes. [Moderator: What’s not a social issue?] The cost of... social issues.” – WI woman

“Gender, gender equality issues, and homelessness, maybe trying to make sure everyone is treated well, treated with dignity, and respect, that kind of thing. Climate change is one too, I think.” – WI woman

“I feel I hear more from the Democrats because Republicans really are not, they're not for helping the gay people at all. They're not. I mean, that's just been a long-running thing over many, many, many years.” – NV man

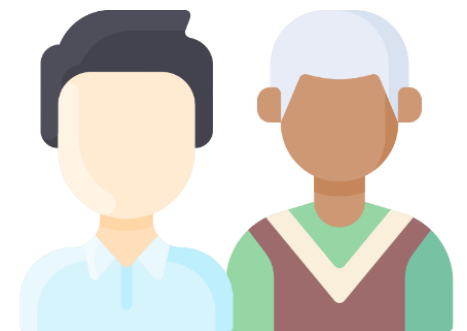
Low-Motivation Voters Will Draw On A Variety Of Issues To Decide How To Vote In The Midterms

“Whatever it takes to get us united again. I mean, I think we need to concentrate on all of our issues here at home and let the rest of the world deal with their own problems while we deal with our own problems. **We need to stamp out hunger. The health care, the student debt, just god, there's an endless list of things.**” – NC woman

“It's not just the Biden administration, but it was the Trump administration is just the divide that this country is now. And I feel like it started with Trump, even though I agree with a lot of his policies and his goals, but I feel like these last two presidents, I feel like **we're just continuing to separate further apart. And whoever it is, is it the Democratic Party or both... Who can bring us back together to where we were united, and that's what's important to me.**” – NC man

“Student loan reform... and legalizing marijuana... **Tax the shit out of the wealthy.**” – NC man

“**Health care for all.**” – NV 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: Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Joel Payne, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; 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 three online focus groups on April 13, 2022 with low-motivation voters in three states: North Carolina (Republican), Wisconsin (independent), and Nevada (Democratic). Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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