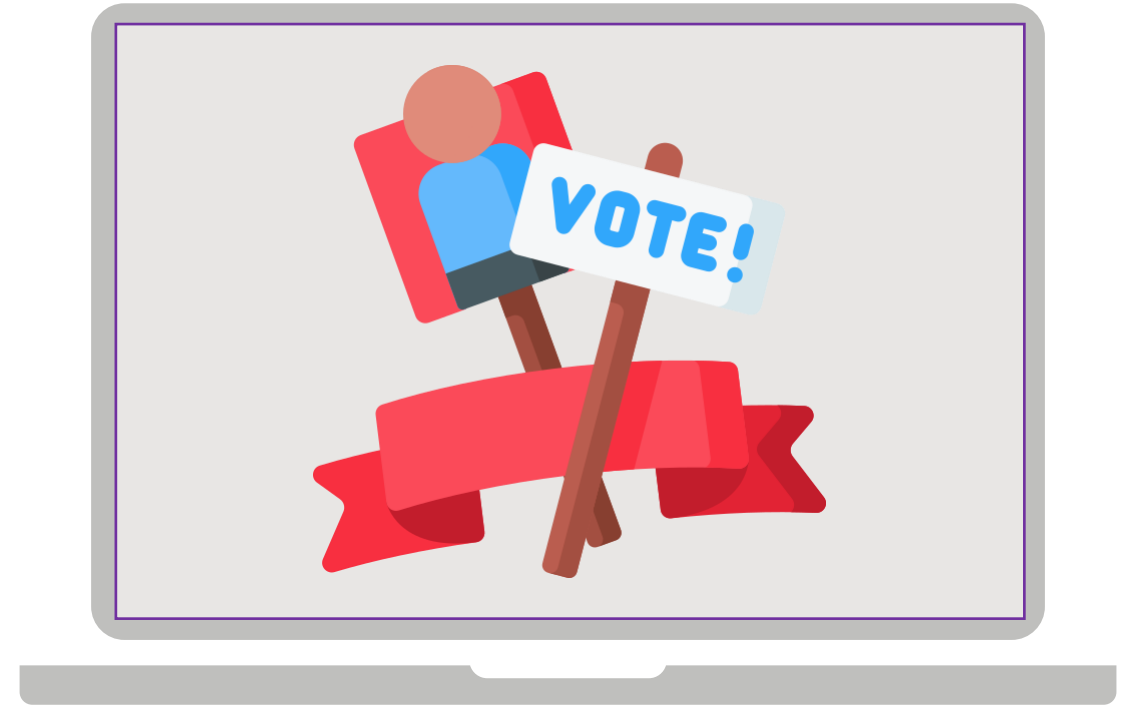


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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

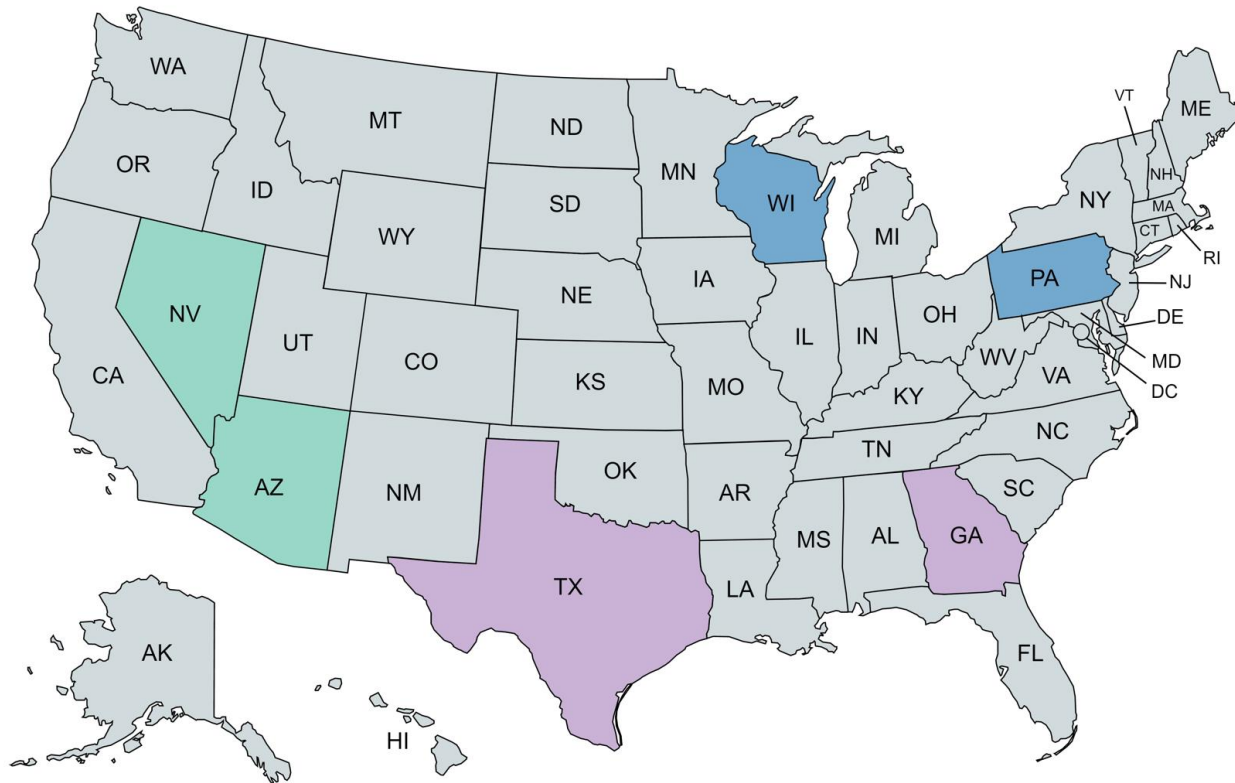
Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Young Black, Hispanic, and
Asian Men on the Political
Climate & Civic Participation



Methodology

On March 21-22, 2023, GBAO conducted six focus groups online with voters 35 and under who varied across race.



- Higher political engagement AAPI men in Georgia
 - Mixed political engagement AAPI men in Texas
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- Higher political engagement Black men in Pennsylvania
 - Mixed political engagement Black voters in Wisconsin*
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- Higher political engagement Hispanic men in Arizona
 - Mixed political engagement Hispanic men in Nevada

Key Takeaways

- Young men generally feel left out of the economy and only see it working for corporations and the wealthy.
- The parties are clearly defined, with Democrats on the right side on abortion, student loans, and race, though there are strong feelings of frustration around ineffectiveness.
- Older voters and electeds viewed with some skepticism, but anyone who “does the work” can be an advocate.
- Civic engagement tends to be more enjoyable than voting, but both are viewed as important actions.
- Trump will motivate these voters to turn out – even if they’re frustrated by their choices.

Participants Unsurprisingly Feel Pessimistic About the Country

"Rent prices are still really high. Fascism is on the rise. Anti-LGBTQ rhetoric is on the rise. **Hate crimes against minorities, Asians, in particular, have been on the rise.** Did I already say rent is really high? Because rent is really high." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"I'd say the recession, and I think that analysts are forecasting the Fed to maybe start lowering rates in the next two quarters, but I think that's what the market is expecting, but that doesn't seem like reality. It seems over optimistic based on the research I've done." – AAPI, TX, Ind lean Dem

"For starters, our economy is plummeting down the drain right now. I feel like transportation and infrastructure as far as getting... supplies within the state as well as across the country has been decreasing... **We're also looking at our prices of agriculture skyrocketing up as well.** Like from poultry to even just grain, everything is going [to] a higher level right now." – Black, Ind, WI



"I think that the partisanship is getting worse. **Everything in the news, whether it be COVID or whether it be Trump getting arrested,** everybody says, 'Oh, it's just the Democrats' or 'It's just the Republicans.' And everything is becoming really polarized." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

"I think most things are going poorly, but for the thing that's affecting most people, I guess [it's] inflation and the economy." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

Most Point to Technological Innovation and Widespread Job Opportunities as Positive Trends

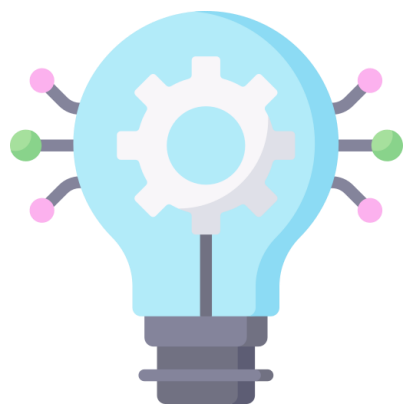
"I think job [opportunities]... I mean, I travel full-time and I feel like... I tend to see places that are hiring more often than when I remember in the past. It seems like every business, or every other business, or maybe every business on the street, however you want to label it, I feel like somebody's always hiring." – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

"Well in the state of Nevada there's always jobs and no matter what, because there's new casinos, new events going on, so [if] you want to work at a strip or different sections, there's always jobs, always a job no matter what." – Hispanic, Dem, NV



"I think for the United States in comparison to other countries, AI machine learning is just the forefront with Chat GPT, augmented reality, and even look into the entertainment business, the US is just top tier at that." – AAPI, Ind, TX

"I think technology is going well in the country today." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA



Corporations and Wealthy Seen as Economy's Winners

"... It's the people who always win. It's the people who are already rich, who don't need to worry about the price of eggs, the price of gas, all those types of things. I think small business owners are struggling. I think workers are struggling, wages are low, so most people are struggling." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

"If you're looking at the economy and anyone who's sitting lower middle class on down, things aren't going well. **We can barely afford the basics**— shelter, food, transportation. But then you start getting into the middle class, upper middle class, and upper class, and things are going well. It's booming. They have the funds and the ability and access to invest where and when and how they want to." – Black, Dem, WI

"I would also say corporations in general. I feel like corporate profits have just gone up and up across the board since the pandemic really, and that really hasn't helped anyone else but the companies, the executives. Prices have gone up, as we've all talked about, and I feel like the biggest winners has been corporations and executives that are in charge of those companies." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"... The top tier companies. You got the Coca-Cola, you got Frito-Lay, all those people are basically the CEOs. **They're getting record profits right now. From COVID time to all the way now the prices increase**, the demand's increased, but the demand and supply aren't there. But yet the CEOs right now, they're making tons of bonuses from previous years." – AAPI, Ind lean Dem, TX

"You got government officials, you got people that's rich that actually are exempt to a lot of things that happen right now with the middle class and... with the low-class economy though. **But the rich is always going to be getting richer.** So they're the ones that's winning right now." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

Student Debt Cancellation Is of Urgent Relevance to Many

How important is student loan debt cancellation to you personally?

“Very [important]. I've always believed in education and the one thing that's held me back is always the cost. My fiancé has \$35,000 in debt. And we'd like to see all of that go away if we could because we've been trying and we just can't save, the interest rates are only going to kill us more... So yeah, very important.” – Hispanic, Dem, NV

“[Student loan debt relief is important] because that directly affects me.” – Hispanic, Dem, AZ



“... It's really important. I'm swimming in college student loan debt. My whole family's swimming in it. What would anybody do with an extra \$300 to \$700 a month? Right? It's obviously a life-changing sum.” – AAPI, Dem, GA

“I feel like that's something that I would put as a high priority for me. But I wish people would keep their word on when they said they want to do certain things.” – Black, Dem, WI

“One of the only things that I admire about the Democratic Party is the unified effort on abolishing student loan debt for those who have them. Because that's one thing that will work in my favor if that happens.” – Black, Dem, PA

To Adapt to the Economy, Many Have Made Life Changes

"I have taken on more debt just moving across town even. And now I feel like I cannot save, I can't even afford to invest in this economy... I feel like it's very rough. I can survive day-to-day. Like I said, that's doing fine. **But surviving and thriving are two very different things in my opinion.** And I cannot seem to plan to get a foothold to even thrive." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"I mean I had to get my own little side gig to make any means, to make extra money at all. **Have not really been able to save.** I've basically ran through my rainy-day fund, and I've also had to move in with more people than I would like because I have to lower the rent somehow." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"Definitely not going out to eat, not spending on food, extra food that I don't necessarily need, or baseball games or football games, things like that. It's definitely cutting down [on] those." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"... I used to go to the Sixers games too, so I just stopped that... Some stuff I just cut back on." – Black, Dem, PA

"Honestly, when COVID had hit... I had to take out more loans to be able to make sure that I could help pay bills, pay credit card bills because we weren't working. So I would say in that aspect, I did have to take on more debt so young. Or **sometimes those loans would be going to being able to help support my family because I was living at home at the time with my family,** so I would say that was something that I had to do." – Black, Dem, WI



Clear Themes Arise When Describing Both Parties

What is one word or phrase you would use to describe the Democratic/Republican Parties?

Democrats

Republicans

Dysfunctional

Flawed

Caucasian

Unpatriotic

Safe

Hypocritical

Decent

Disorganized

Cheaters

Close-minded

Unbalanced

Condescending

Soft

Fractured

Greedy

Very racist

Overtly compassionate

Radicalized

Corrupt

Six online focus groups were conducted March 21-22, 2023 with AAPI men in Georgia and Texas, Black voters in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and Hispanic men in Arizona and Nevada. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

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The Democratic Party Is Viewed as More Empathetic, Albeit not Always Effective

“One thing that I do think they're doing well is while they aren't actively putting up bills to work for the people, **they're doing a good job of blocking harmful laws from the Republicans and from more conservative leaders.**” – Black, Dem, WI

“I think in the public eye, a lot of Democrats like to have a **compassionate rhetoric.** To let people know that they're on their side, to let people who are struggling... know that they're on their side. And **so the message is more towards people who are the losers in the economy, the lower to middle-class income households.**” – Black, Dem, PA

“Democrats are more for the people to try to make everything work and pass laws that's **beneficial to everybody and not just one specific group,** like the upper class... So I'm more on the Democrat side.” – Black, Dem, PA

“[Moderator: Is the Democratic Party working for you at all?] Yeah, a bit, on a slightly surface level. **I remember there were the stimulus checks and student loan debt relief is still on the table. So there's efforts.**” – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

“I think the Democratic Party is well-meaning, but just so bad at their jobs and so ineffective [that] nothing happens... I think if anything, I would say that **the Democrats would like to do better and they would like to say that they're improving our lives more, but I just don't think the results are there. Good intentions can only get you so far or it doesn't actually put food in your belly, put gas in your tank, anything like that.**” – Hispanic, Dem, NV

“... **They try to go for the younger, the elderly, the people that actually need help** is I think more of the Democrats' people instead of how the Republicans respond to people that's not doing anything.” – Hispanic, Dem, NV

Given the Danger Republicans Represent, Connection to Democrats Is Survival Rather Than Fandom



"I said [the Democratic Party is] decent because in this current two-party system, the other party is just not representative of what I stand for. So I do think that it sucks that it has to be binary like that, but when the other party is a non-starter, you kind of start feeling like, okay, well I guess it's decent." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"[Connection to the Democratic Party is] pretty low. I've voted along that party line my entire life, but purely out of the safety for the women in my life. It's not because I love the Democrats, it's because I want my friend to be able to have an abortion." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"It's like who's in your coalition? So if one party is doing all that they can to make sure that they have racial kind of diversity and speaking to compassion and all that stuff, and the other party's doing the exact opposite, you're kind of forced into one box." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

"I voted in all of the elections, all the presidential elections as an adult, and I always voted blue. And I don't think that my allegiance to the [Democratic] Party is like my allegiance to the Philadelphia Eagles, you know what I mean? It's like, I'm willing to switch, but I haven't seen a candidate on the other side that I felt like I could trust with the reins of power, you know what I mean? It is some stuff on the extreme right that's like, that's kind of scary... My allegiance to the Democrats is more so for survival and for just keeping the status quo for better or worse because I feel like the right is pretty radical." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA



One Does not Need to Be From a Community to Fight for it, But for Some it Helps

"I align myself more with people... with anyone who is into the things that I care about. **It doesn't matter to me if they're a man or a woman or if they're Hispanic or not.** My vote will go towards whoever I identify with, regardless of if they are like me." – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

"I don't understand why someone has to be our exact demographics to actually want to invest in us. I think that's a pretty rough view of humanity." – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

"I personally don't care about how they look... I guess as long as they get rid of my student loans, I don't really care about how they look." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"I would prefer to have someone look like us and come from where we come from represent us... It's men making decisions on abortion. We're not having the baby, so we should just let the woman decide that. But I think I would rather have someone that looks like us represent us." – AAPI, Dem, GA

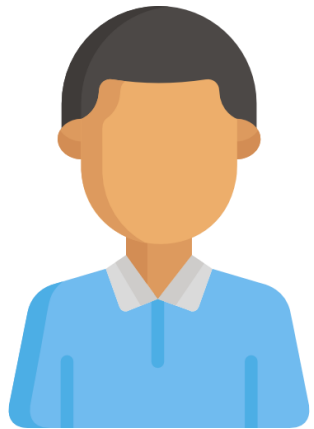
"Just because you're a Black [person] doesn't mean that you resonate with other Black people. Just because you grew up in a specific community doesn't mean that you resonate with those people in that community. **So yeah, if you are white or Asian or whatever and you actually talk to those people in that community and you have conversations, then that will get me over somebody who is Black and just wants a vote because I'm Black.**" – Black, Dem, PA

"I think it is important. I think it has a certain weight to it. **It just gives you the insight that maybe they understand** or their objectives are aligned with yours pretty much. It just kind of gives you that home feeling." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

Older Voters and Electeds Are Viewed With Some Skepticism

"I don't know how you could really tell if someone intentionally cares or not about younger voters, but I do think that in general, there are a lot of older politicians and we need younger people in there." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"[Moderator: Politicians don't understand or care about younger voters like me. How well does that describe how you feel?] Oh, yeah. That's true." – AAPI, Dem, GA



"I don't care about the race or gender, but I care a little bit if they're younger or my age because I've seen a lot of the Senate especially or Congress, they're past 60 and they have no idea what they're talking about with modern laws or technology... So, I feel like younger [politicians], they understand better how we feel and what's really going on... Somebody that can get along well with the modern times and understand what we need at the moment." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"Older people, like generations older than us, they're just so detached from what's it like growing up nowadays." – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

"And [older voters] also have no reason to care about things like climate change, because they're not going to be around for it." – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

Across the Board, Few Have Strong Connections to the Words BIPOC, Latinx, or Even POC

"At least personally as an Asian person, I don't think we are included in people of color. I **honestly hate those terms...** I have never seen any situation where we have been bundled in people of color except for situations where it's like, 'Oh, we just have to do it because they're not white.'" – AAPI, Dem, GA

"I am a person of color, but I've never called myself a POC or a BIPOC..." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"[Moderator: So, for you, when you hear a term like POC or BIPOC, you don't think they are talking about people like you?] I **feel like that's what they're attempting to do, but I don't feel included.**" – Black, Ind, WI

"It depends on I **think very much the network where I'm hearing those terms** because there are times where I very much feel like I could be a part of the conversation, and other times it feels very much more like you just walked in the conversation about yourself that you really didn't want to hear." – Black, Dem, WI

"**Yeah, you could tell that a lot of white people had decided to come up with this name [Latinx] for Hispanics.** You can't even pronounce that in Spanish, my guy." – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

"I **identify more with Latino than person of color or BIPOC,** but I definitely prefer Latino. But at the end of the day, it's just a preference. And both languages are not native to us anyway. So why does it matter?" – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"We're just a part of an **alphabet soup.**" – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

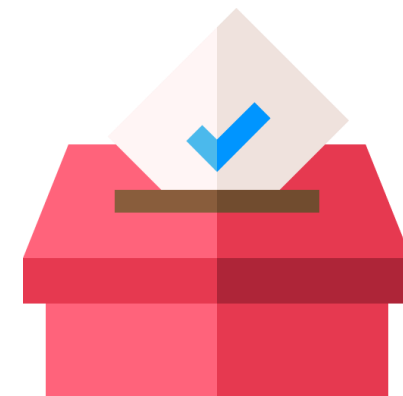
Overall, Participants Feel the Midterm Election Had Consequential Impacts on Key Issues in Their States

“Well, it's definitely shown that Arizona is leaning really heavily blue... we are made up of a lot of Mexicans, I do think it's going to benefit many Mexicans in many different ways, or Hispanic or Latino people. So I definitely am not seeing immediate results of that, but I know other people will. And there's less of, I guess, a more harassing set of individuals in charge of the local office.” – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

“I think it was important actually now I think about it. Because they had the Democratic Senator up and the governorship and that had a lot to do with abortion and that kind of stuff. So I think it was pretty impactful.” – Black, Dem, PA

“Yeah, I think winning the state was really important for those same reasons. Abortion access, taxes, we picked up seats in the house, the Dems did. So I think all of that stuff was good in terms of education funding, allocation to cities like Harrisburg, Philly, and Pittsburgh that aren't necessarily on the radar for Republicans in the State House. So it's good.” – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

“I would say it will have a big impact, honestly, in terms of statewide elections or primary elections. For statewide, it's more so easy to be able to influence how things can change in your state just because it's more centralized. And so when you are voting for your governors, your senators, those are people that are able to submit bills for the specific state. They're able to overturn certain laws and policies.” – Black, Dem, WI



Many See Voting as a Civic Duty and a Means of Making Their Voice Heard

“For me personally, I think it's the right thing to do...” – AAPI, Dem, GA

“For me, it's just making sure that my voice is heard, right. I think I didn't do a good job previously when I turned 18 voting properly, but now that I'm older, I try to take more time to do so and be understanding of what the issues are.” – AAPI, Dem, TX

“Making sure that my voice is heard in some manner, in some way, **because I feel like if you don't vote, if you don't cast your ballot, if you're not doing what you can** in that sense, then it's not really fair for you to then turn around and speak out, ‘Well, I don't like that this is happening,’ when you're not doing anything about it.” – Black, Dem, WI



“I would say for me, just overall and generally, I'm able to voice my concerns as a citizen, but also... as a student and as [an] organizer. But also **be able to hold people accountable for what they said they're going to do for people in the community.** I feel like for me, I'm able to vote for people who have the same beliefs and ideologies as me or something that I want to see as a high priority that is able to be tackled.” – Black, Dem, WI

“I think it's my duty as a citizen to vote, go to jury duty, and do those things.” – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

“[Moderator: What motivated you to vote? Why was it important to you?] Because we have the right to it. And at the same time because I don't want to be the person that complains but didn't vote or didn't do anything about it. So even though my voice is small, I want to put my input or my grain of rice than don't do anything.” – Hispanic, Dem, NV

Participants Understand Constant Voter Contact, Even if it's a Nuisance

"... If you're looking for the information, it's good to have. If you're not looking for it then it could be bothersome, but it's the only way. You have to send it to everybody, I guess to reach the people..." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA



"It was annoying to me because I knew what to do, but also I get it. If there are people that need to be bugged five times to vote, then it's worth it." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"I mean, it reminded me to vote and I did, so I guess it did its job." – AAPI, Ind lean Dem, TX

Civic Participation Is Enjoyable, Varied, and Can Be Motivated by Anything

"[Volunteering] made me feel important. Made me feel in touch and made me feel like I was working to make other people's lives better. So it was a good feeling." – Black, Ind lean Dem, PA

"Volunteering in my community, doing a lot of translations for the elderly... [makes me feel] great." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"I marched for Black Lives Matter. There was this girl I was talking to. She was like, 'I'm about to go march.' But the true core message was very important." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"Well, in college there [were] a lot of cats on campus, like a copious amount. So I just joined PAWS, Pets Are Worth Saving, instead of being a foster cat parent. But the motivation was that these cats need some love." – AAPI, Ind, TX

"I do animal rescuing and fostering. Over the past couple of years, I think I've saved over 100 different animals' lives, so I always try to do that." –Hispanic, Dem, NV

"I've been involved with just advocacy organizing around certain issues, particularly the issue of mass incarceration. That's probably one that I care about the most, and then I'm really involved with my union." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"I'm really into community events, so I really like farmers' markets that are organized... by the city in certain places throughout the state of Arizona. So I really like to know the community that way." – Hispanic, Ind lean Dem, AZ

Men Say Abortion Rights Are a Top-Tier Issue for Them Personally

"I feel like for me, it is important. I have sisters, I have cousins, I have friends who are women. So I feel like for me, it is important. Even though I'm not a woman, I think it's something that I don't think the government should dictate. I think every woman should have the right to choose. And I feel like for me, that is an issue that I really consider when voting for candidates and something that I think is definitely important." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"I think it matters very heavily, at least for me. Even in a Zoom call full of guys, well, I don't need to personally identify as a woman to feel that I have a girlfriend, I live with women, and so I wouldn't want to be on the path of a slippery slope to where I'm affected, but most importantly, people I know have already been directly affected." – AAPI, Dem, TX

"... Abortion rights are incredibly important. This is probably the singular most important example of bodily autonomy, and if we don't have abortion rights, then at any point [the] government or Congress can start making laws affecting our bodily autonomy, the choices that we can make medically with our doctors." – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

"Man, I feel like we got to turn to our women if that's what they want to do. I feel like they got the decision to make, because their body going through it, not ours. So we just got to go with them." – Black, Dem, PA

"I have a daughter. I believe that it's her right to make those decisions. That's her body. So as far as I'm concerned, this should be at the top of the list of certain issues that need be resolved." – Black, Ind, WI

"I think that the governments definitely shouldn't get in between those decisions, personal decisions specifically for women. That would be, honestly, a woman's decision to make at all points. So I think that the government shouldn't get in between the choices that they should be able to make." – Black, Dem, PA

Trump on the Ballot Is Undoubtedly Motivating

"It definitely changes how active I'm going to be in pushing others to get out and vote. The more that there is at risk for myself, for my communities, the bigger drive there is going to be for me to convince other people to get out, cast their ballot, make their voice heard. I know I'll be making mine heard regardless, but it's going to be that drive of how many other people do I feel the need to push to take the same action." – Black, Dem, WI

"Because I don't agree with anything that he does, so I always try to vote him out." – Hispanic, Dem, AZ

"It would be kind of the same as last time. I feel like I would have to vote." – Hispanic, Dem, NV

"I'm motivated either way. I mean, because I disagree with the policies, I vote either way, but Trump being the nominee gives me extra motivation." – AAPI, Ind lean Dem, TX

"I mean, I would vote still, but it would be more of a motivation sort of thing. If it's not Trump, I mean, then it's like, yeah, it's okay. But if it is Trump, I'm more motivated... Because I've seen the history and I don't want history to repeat itself." – AAPI, Ind lean Dem, TX

"[Moderator: If the race is between Biden and Trump, how do you feel about voting?] I'd still vote, but it's not out of love for the candidate." – AAPI, Dem, GA

"Very motivated, yeah [to vote against Trump]." – AAPI, Ind lean Dem, GA

navigator*

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: Jessica Floyd, 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 six online focus groups March 21-22, 2023 with AAPI men in Georgia and Texas, Black voters in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and Hispanic voters in Arizona and Nevada – all 35 years old and under. Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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