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## FOCUS GROUP REPORT

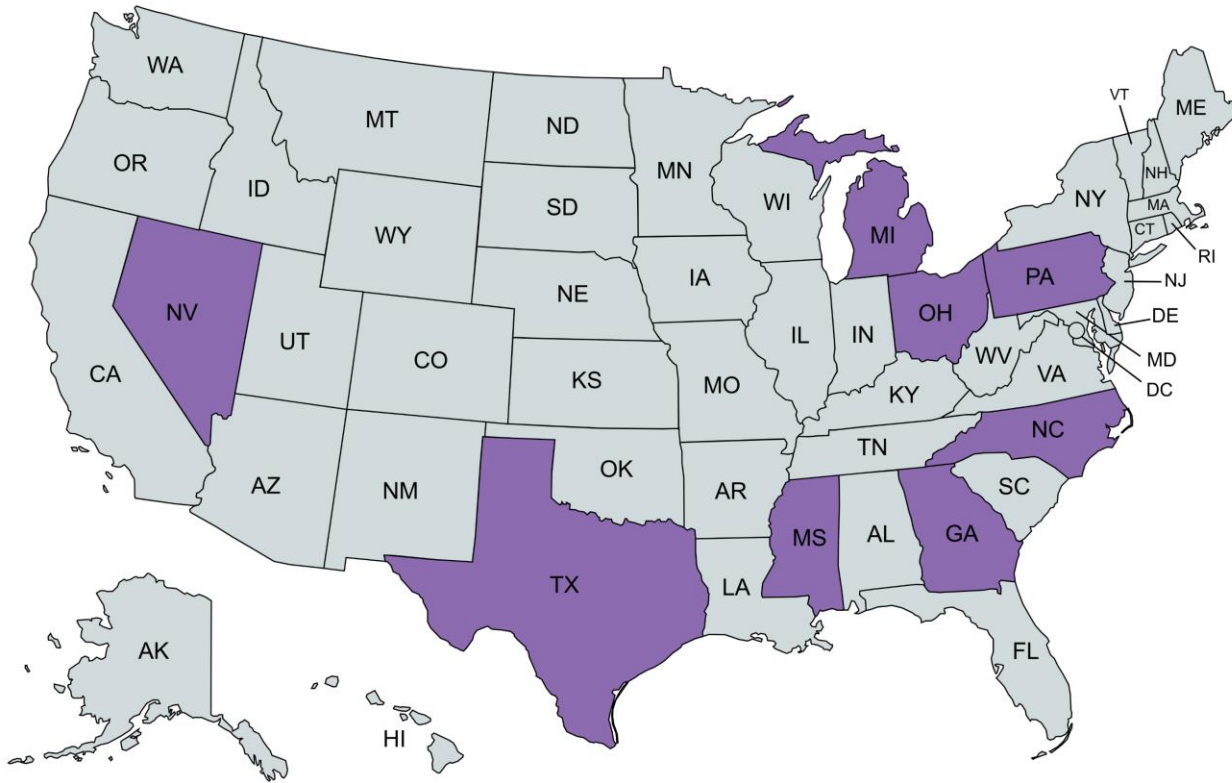
Thursday, May 28, 2026

Black Voters on the State of the  
Country



# Methodology

On May 20, 2026, GBAO conducted three online focus groups in battleground Senate states\* with Black voters who lean Democratic but are not motivated to vote in 2026, and Black voters who switched their vote to Trump in 2024.



- ❖ Group 1: Black women who are Democrats/Dem-leaners and are not motivated to vote in 2026
- ❖ Group 2: Black men who are Democrats/Dem-leaners and are not motivated to vote in 2026
- ❖ Group 3: Black men who voted for Trump in 2024, and either voted for Biden in 2020 or did not vote in 2020 and are Democrats/Dem-leaners

\*GA, MI, MS, NC, NV, OH, PA, TX

# Key Takeaways

- Nearly every participant is pessimistic about the country and the economy
- Few see politicians of any kind focused on them and their community, and so hunger for new leaders and ideas
- News consumption varies, but largely lives online
- Participants see the importance of voting but are disillusioned by the lack of real change
- The Callais decision is worrying, with the focus more on voting rights and gerrymandering writ large

# The Country Is Woefully Off-Track

Moderator: Fill in the blank for me: "I'm feeling BLANK about the direction of the country these days."

**"Me and my husband, we're suffering.** It's two incomes and we're still having a hard time putting food on the table. So I don't know what's going to happen in the next two years." – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

**"The inflation and the cost of living as well as the food, it's just outrageous.** People can't afford basic necessities. Going to the grocery store is just unrealistic." – MI man, less motivated Democrat

**"We the people, the ones who are out there every day working a nine to five, the middle class that literally are probably paying the most in for taxes. There's just no benefit that's coming to us.** And every time there's a tax law change or something that affects us, we just have to go with it. We have no say." – GA woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

**"Government officials and big corporation have been fleecing the little guy** ever since the pandemic, just trying to get what they can get out of us." – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

**"Honestly, for me as a young adult, it's kind of a harsh reality** seeing how bad we're going. Businesses are going out or layoffs are happening. Gas rights are high. Airplanes are shutting down. I've never seen that happen in my lifetime." – MI man, less motivated Democrat



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# Many Freely Cite Trump's Racism As Sending The Country Backwards

"And don't forget, **we got a racist president**. And you got a whole country full of every color that's outnumbering the Caucasians, but yet he still keeps trying to act like they are superior." – GA woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"Someone mentioned a name that makes me cringe. I don't even want to mention this name, but the last name begins with a T....**Instead of helpful, it's being more hateful and more making people's lives miserable** by some of this person's choices." – OH man, less motivated Democrat

"**Our president shouldn't be a felon**. Let's start there. How can the president be a felon when most felons can't even get a job? How can you run our country?" – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

"They're **trying to roll everything back to a point where Blacks don't do anything but just exist**. And it's really sad how where we're at now. And it's almost like we feel like almost like China or one of the other places where it's like a dictator trying to say everything and everybody's going along with what he's saying." – PA woman, less motivated Democrat



"He's just dividing [us]. People think they can say and do what they want to say and do. And it's not fair that people get to go around and say things. And I think they do that because they think that **Trump has been spilling all this stuff out his mouth that's making people think that they can say what they want to say**. They want to send us back to the 50s." – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

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# Most See The Government's Role As To Help People

Moderator: What do you think the role of government should be?

"Well, the government, I would love to pay attention to its citizens...Their job is to put us in a position and wait for us to thrive, basically, just in tune of our needs, basically." – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"So the government could easily say, 'cut these premiums down in half, cut these copays down in half.' Things that make it affordable for us, but they're not doing that. But yet the doctors are getting richer." – GA woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"I think they do have a responsibility to their citizens...We put these people in office. So they definitely... should take a stance in making sure that everybody's taken care of in the end." – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"Take care of us. Just take care of us. We're the people and we shouldn't have to be out here feeling like we don't know what the future holds. We're afraid in some way and unsure about what's going to be in front of us." – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"It should be to support people. I mean, what's the point of having officials that we can vote and elect to represent us if we're not getting support from the things that they're doing?" – NC man, less motivated independent lean Democrat



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# Participants Are Judging Candidates Based On Results And Compassion

Moderator: If you had to create an ideal leader yourself, how would you do it?



“More transparency, more honesty, compassion. Just more into communities, and do what they say, not do what they do, that type of thing.” – PA man, less motivated Democrat

“I need to see results. I need some results...If they haven't already poured into the community and showed and they have proof that they have, I'm not voting for you.” – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“James Baldwin says a quote...he says, ‘I can't believe what you say because I see what you do.’ So all they have to do is show me what you do. It's not like, okay, you can say it all day if you want to, but show me.” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

“An ideal politician, I just would like to see more compassion. I think someone who is trying to fight for the bigger picture, instead of just in the moment or just trying to make it to where you're trying to impress someone.” – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

“Empathy, being genuine, that can really identify not only with the Black community, but communities that need support and understanding, period....Empathy instead of fake sympathy.” – TX man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“Having a track record and not just talking points, showing that you've consistently supported policies for Black people... actually showing things that people can point out to like, ‘yo, he's doing this or he's done this before.’” – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

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# Democrats Viewed As Well-Meaning But Feckless And Unable To Deliver

“Democratic has always been, in my opinion, more for the people. Republican, not as much, more money—they're more money-motivated....Definitely their motives are not as good, in my opinion, as the Democratic, as far as being more for the people.” – OH man, less motivated Democrat

“Democrats, I guess they will be more pro to try to **change everything as quick as it's possible.**” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 did not vote

“**The Democrats, they're kind of limited.** On certain issues, you will hear they're trying to do it. They're trying to put up a wall [against Trump]...but it's like I don't feel like they're doing enough. They're being more like the rollover. Like, ‘Okay, well, just to keep peace, we'll just go along just so it don't affect everybody.’” – MS woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“**Some Democrats are stepping back when they need to step up.** I think they still sometimes focus on the wrong things, where we're out here hurting.” – PA woman, less motivated Democrat

“A Democrat is really **supporting that the government to be involved** when it needs to be involved in term of if you need help, if the mass would need help like disaster and stuff like that, market failures and so forth, protecting the consumer, the people.” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



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# Black Men In Particular Disagreed With The Perception Of Democrats' Focus On Transgender And Immigrant Priorities

"I voted against Democrats because they were not focusing on what was really critical for the American people, in my opinion. For example, just giving you a quick example. Look, I don't really care who you sleep with. **If you want on change from female to male, male to female, I don't really care, really. It's your prerogative. But these are not main topics.**" – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"[During] the pandemic, when a whole lot of Asian people were getting beat up on in New York, or up North and the Democrats right out of the blue just gave them a [hate] crime bill and the Republicans agreed with them to pass the bill—they could have easily put African Americans on there....So for them not to consider African Americans with our history in this country is crazy to me. It's real crazy." – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 did not vote

"You got some Democrats that wants to change society as a whole. And even if it goes against anything to disrupt society too much, it doesn't matter. It need to be changed. They don't live in reality on how people live. **They live in a fictional land, maybe....You can't just push gender ideology or something like that, and expect it be normal.**" – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 did not vote

"When we got Biden in office, **we had the immigrants coming across the border** and I just couldn't see myself voting for Harris." – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



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# News Consumption Varies Widely – But Many Point To Creators Like Joe Rogan And Don Lemon Rather Than Broadcast News

Moderator: Where are you getting your news or information about how things are going?

“I can't remember how you're supposed to get on the TV and watch basic channels, but I really don't watch the news. I never have....But I watch a bunch of different commentators online about certain things.” – OH woman, less motivated Democrat

“I don't even mess with the CNN stuff anymore. The local news, when I come home from work it's on, I watch it then and I scroll on YouTube as well, look at the podcast and watch a lot of reaction videos....Joe Rogan is one, for sure.” – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

“I'm a lemon head, I watch Don Lemon. I like him at CNN, I absolutely am more in like with him now.” – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“I used to watch a lot of cable news....But those stations look like they've been bought out and overturned....So now I tend to go on YouTube and watch a lot of different podcasters....I watch Joe Rogan.” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

“Local news and podcasts, like Joe Rogan or something like that, or just other political theme media, the main ones.” – PA man, less motivated Democrat

“[Don Lemon's] my favorite. I believe everything he reports.... I go straight to his page to see what's going on because he keeps us updated with the current and he's really on it.” – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat



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# Voting Is Recognized As Important, And Rooted In A History Of Advocacy

Moderator: What, if anything, makes voting important to you personally?

“If we go back 50, 60, 70 years, what was the civil rights for? What did they have to go through and endure in order for us to have the freedoms that we have today? So **these people literally gave their lives and livelihoods for future generations.**” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



“I think that if it's not for our generation [to fix], the next group they have to endure because **it's been a struggle for us as Black people**, for probably before my grandmother was alive.” – PA woman, less motivated Democrat

“I think **voting is important when it comes to certain issues in the community**, especially, locally when you're dealing with the construction of the roads and things, certain policies they have, and also different resources going on in the state that potentially could help other areas in, even in the years to come.” – MI man, less motivated Democrat

“Our people **died for that right**. So I feel like it's really important to vote.” – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

“And my ancestors, my parents, grandparents impressed upon me, especially, **being a Black man the importance** of what we had to go through back in the day over the history where we didn't have a right to vote. So, now that we do, yes, I definitely do my part.” – OH man, less motivated Democrat



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# Yet Uninspiring Candidates, And No Political Improvement, Have Turned Off Many

"It's still important. But, over the years...you're seeing other people get catered to. So it's been a little stressful you voting all the time and seeing other people getting taken care of and you get put on the back burner." – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



"I don't think voting is actually seen anymore as a means to an end. I think it's just more of a popularity contest. It feels like how you vote for the president in high school or something like that." – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

"It feels a little bit pointless, because what's actually going to change? You feel me? Or that's how I feel about it. What's actually going to change during this midterm election?" – MI man, less motivated Democrat

"[Voting has] changed for me, real talk. I used to be a die hard, 'let's go vote,' especially during the presidential election. It was important. Our people died and fought and did so much for us to have the ability to vote. So it was really important to me. But now...I feel like my votes don't mean nothing....I don't even know if it's worth it." – GA woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"It's about the candidates that's running, the amount of people that don't vote or feel like they don't want to vote anymore, that kind of discourages everything also." – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

"For me, my motivation issues were—we need a change of the guard....It just felt very lackluster. Like, here's the same guy that's been here a thousand years, and we still have the same problems we had." – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

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# While Even Trump Voters Have Soured On Trump, Almost No One Would Go Back In Time To Change Their Vote

“When you have terrible leadership at the top, it just trickles down. All departments, all people, factions, areas are affected. At this point in time, **all Americans are being affected by this current administration negatively.**” – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



“No, I wouldn't change [my vote]. [Democrats were] basically just giving billions and billions of dollars to people that don't belong in this country and things are rough as it is financially for people that are trying to make a living in the United States. And they're just throwing money to a war—we ain't got no interest in any Ukraine. So I want it to stop, personally.” – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



“The administration is horrible...[but] I really don't know [about the Democrats] because like I said, Kamala didn't do anything to the border and everything took place. So I'm not sure what the agenda is.” – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

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# Large Numbers Are Aware Of Callais And Note Its Impact On Voting Rights

Moderator: What, if anything, have you heard recently about the Supreme Court? Any big recent decisions?

"They're basically saying that they can redraw all the maps to basically give themselves advantages and basically all of the Black representation will basically be non-existent. So basically, **it's rigging the game and basically we're rolling back the clock.**" – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"If it goes through, **it makes me wonder if my vote even counts.** So if I go out and waste my time voting and it doesn't even go through then...And then how would you know if it counts or not?" – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"Just to even know that this is how we are going backwards. **Are you trying to take us back?** My grandmother's family died and we are going back now in 2026?" – PA woman, less motivated Democrat

"The slashing for the Voting Rights Act, and the redistricting that they have allowed to set off while people are voting...is wild for me. **Like, you, basically, are drawing us off the map.**" – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"That right there was just **heartbreaking when I heard about what they were trying to...**not just to Blacks, but people of color...that we have fought so long for our rights to vote..." – OH man, less motivated Democrat

"Them shutting down Democrat gerrymanderings in certain Black-dominated voting areas throughout the country. They pretty much shut that down in the Supreme Court. So **they pretty much gave the Republicans a huge advantage** this November." – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



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# The Impact On Black Representation Is Less Clear, And Voters Value Results For The Black Community Over Representation

"I definitely think the **representation matters**. However, definitely just on a basic general scale, it definitely just matters what that person is repping for, because to address that elephant in the room, **some Black people in Congress aren't really for our people.**" – MI man, less motivated Democrat

"**Color doesn't matter anymore....**They can be Indian, Chinese, Blue, as long as they are having results and proving something that they can change for us to make it better and affordable for us to live." – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"I think they're cheating because I **believe that if a majority of people live in a certain area, then they should be represented by people who look like them** that are in their area that they choose....I feel like they are disenfranchising us specifically because we can be displaced all over the place, and with that, they're trying to dilute our votes." – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"Depending on who they replace [with redistricting, if] **they're replacing with some other Black people with knowledge on what they can do for that district, then absolutely [it could be good].**" – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"It's more important for the people in the community to have people that look like them in politics because we need to be heard. **We can't tell somebody that don't look like us our problems that need to be taken care of.**" – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"Well, it depends on what their morals are and what they stand for, because **just because they're Black don't mean they stand for the same thing.** That's the main thing." – OH woman, less motivated Democrat

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# Many Are Craving Fresh, New Ideas From Their Elected Leaders

“The older you get, you might be out of touch with society nowadays and what's going on. So I agree. Get a fresh set of eyes in there, especially somebody who's been through the struggle and knows what those people want.” – MI man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

“Where is the new young, vibrant, fresh idea people? Where are they at? We're at this point we're just coddling all these old folks, but there's nobody stepping up with young, fresh ideas to even take their place.” – GA woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“[We need something] **Brand-new, something fresh**, motivated, positive....Ideas and motivation, things that are positive, not necessarily the people themselves, because anybody can be fresh.” – TX man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

“You have these older politicians that are remaining in office because they've done something for their city or state previously. And so, **they get to serve all these terms back to back to back to back.**” – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

“We need fresh blood in there. [Jim Clyburn's] been there too long. He needs some fresh blood, fresh ideals, fresh policies that going to benefit his compatriots in his state.” – NC man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter



“[We need] **term limits**. I'm tired of seeing the same people....New people. Fresh blood. Younger people, bigger voices, smarter voices. Just more different people.” – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

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# Partisan Gerrymandering Is Roundly Seen As Negative, Beyond VRA States

"They did it in Texas first...they started their redistricting down here first in Texas, and they did it overnight and took over most of our Democratic areas." – TX woman, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"You can't move the football post during the game, and that's basically what [they're doing]. They move the goal during the game and the refs are just letting it happen in the Supreme Court." – GA man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

"I've been hearing about this gerrymandering thing that both of these parties been trying to be pushing for the last, what, six years they've been trying to do....I feel like we need to stop that gerrymandering. Nobody should be able to do any of that." – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 did not vote



"It's like they're trying to control the vote in a way, essentially...that means you may not get the representation that your district actually deserves if it was otherwise that line not drawn there....It just seems like it's a way to control the vote." – MI woman, less motivated Democrat

"It's not a good thing at all. Redistricting really, I think it should really not even exist because if Republicans feel like, okay, we're going to lose this, we want to get a seat, or let's go and do this, redraw the map." – GA man, 2024 Trump voter, 2020 Biden voter

"They're cheating. It's almost like they're trying to mirror what the Electoral College would do in reference to districting.... They want to cheat a little bit to keep themselves in power." – TX man, less motivated independent lean Democrat

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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.

## About the Study

On May 20, 2026, GBAO conducted three online focus groups in battleground Senate states\* with Black voters who lean Democratic but are not motivated to vote in 2026, and Black voters who switched their vote to Trump in 2024.

\*GA, MI, MS, NC, NV, OH, PA, TX

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