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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

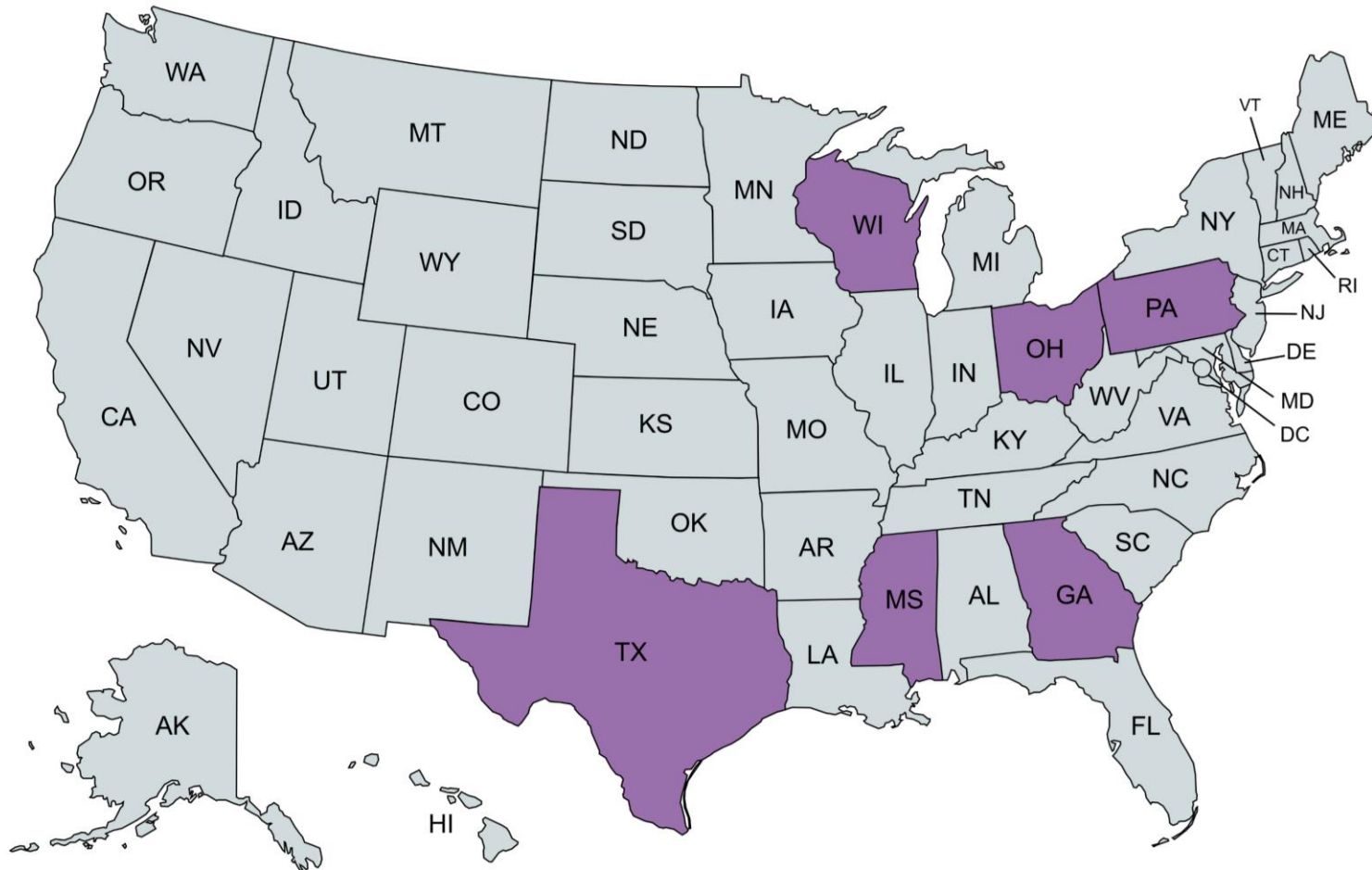
Thursday, June 18, 2026

Black and Latino Voters on America
at 250



Methodology

On June 2, 2026, GBAO conducted one online focus group with Black and Latino voters in battleground presidential and Senate states* as part of Navigator's exploration of America at 250.



*GA, MS, OH, PA, TX, WI

Key Takeaways

- Most see freedom of speech, religion, and equality as core to American identity, but there is agreement America is not or has never lived up to its values
- Some feel their American identity is judged or found wanting because of their ethnicity or political views
- Economic opportunity represents the promise of America, but many see the American Dream as threatened or dead
- Many are nonetheless hopeful, and believe deeply in the idea of America

Individual Freedoms, Tolerance Toward Others, And Voting Are Central To American Identity

Moderator: What does it mean to be an American?



"Being an American means just **sharing a certain set of values like freedom** and wanting to have the best kind of life you can live....Sharing ideals as opposed to any specific heritage or language or this or that. We just all want to be the best we can be and enjoy the land that allows that to happen." – WI woman, Latino independent

"Experiencing freedom as an American citizen, **being able to have the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, just exercising our free right to vote**, to have the right to education. Those are the things that I think about when it comes to being an American." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"The shared values would be **the freedom to express, whether it's religion, your speech**, anything of that sort....And also I would say the **diversity**. It's a country that is based on accepting people." – TX woman, Latino strong Republican

"It's my heritage. It's my **right to be able to vote** because people that came before me, they died trying to get the right to vote. And to me, it's very important...having that right, being a US citizen." – GA man, Black strong Democrat



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But Some See These Values As Gravely Threatened And Others Feel They Never Really Existed

"They're stripping away all our voting rights for the African American....Trump has gerrymandered these maps and **these states are taking away all the Black voting rights.** They killed the 1965 Voting Rights Act." – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"We people that's from the United States of America or this continent, **we don't see that diversity because we've been here so long that we don't get those benefits.**...We people that been here, we don't even get along with the next people. We don't see that. We don't get that." – OH woman, Black independent

"By being an African American, I can come in and be a convicted felon and get an X amount of years, but someone else comes in with a different color and may be charged with the same crime but **get a different sentence based on the color of their skin.** And that's not justice." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"Growing up we were told we're free. We were told, 'you can do anything you wanted to if you put your mind to it.' And **in this current climate, it feels like we're so restricted** and those opportunities are almost very limited to us now." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

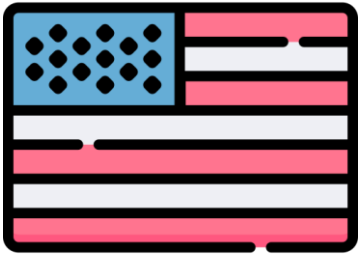
"If somebody doing something to me, why I got to go to jail because I'm defending myself? That's the part where we don't feel so free in this country because...you don't even believe me because I'm a victim telling you what's going on, but **some people will really lie on you and the state will believe them over you.**" – OH woman, Black independent



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Some Are Feeling A Loss Of Belonging

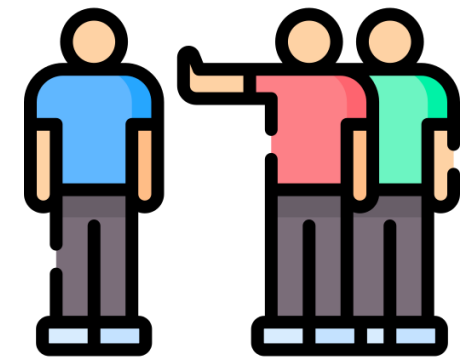
"Being American, it's almost negative sometimes because if you don't agree with this current administration, then you're not American....So I feel like I'm not 100% American anymore because I don't agree 100% with these values that are being presented by this current administration." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat



"My own people don't accept me at all....They think that I act like I'm better than them because I moved out the hood. I live over here with White people....When I explain my views or how I see stuff, the first thing they hit me with is, 'oh, you mentally ill.'...So that's why I don't fit in with my own people." – OH woman, Black independent

"I can't be openly gay at school....I have to watch what I say and how I say it because I can't say, 'Yes, I have a husband.' I don't even tell my kids that I'm married. I just don't admit to that at school because I don't want them asking questions. So I don't feel like I fit in." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

"I don't feel welcome in the Hispanic community because I'm not Hispanic enough....I don't feel like I'm just your standard white American that people might have a stereotype of, but I'm not your standard Hispanic that people might have a stereotype of. I kind of feel like I don't fit in anywhere." – WI woman, Latino independent



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The American Dream Is Defined As The Ability To Achieve Economic Freedom

Moderator: What does the American Dream mean to you?



"The American Dream is **earning a decent amount of income**, having a nice house, having a nice family, raising your family in a Christian-centered home." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"I bought a house about eight years ago. I have a job. I have a career....I have a family. I have two sons. I have a spouse. I have two dogs. I think I have my Dream." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

"To get money fast....Everybody working really fast, fast, fast, fast....Everybody want money fast, fast, fast in America." – PA man, Black independent

"The American Dream means **being able to make a decent living** and being able to have the rights, which everyone else has. And I mean, just to be free to do...and live in a democracy that's for everyone." – GA man, Black strong Democrat



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But Many See That Dream As Dead—And With It, A Core Piece Of America

"If you a felon...you can't even vote. Then some of us, we could try to work and we work, that background going to hold you back. The background holds you back from the housing....**This supposed to be the land of the opportunities, but the opportunities get snatched away** for something petty." – OH woman, Black independent

"Growing up, you work hard and you just get....at least middle class or whatever or something, but **now you work hard for nothing**...because everything is so high, inflation and all that." – PA man, Black independent

"We kind of **peaked 30 years ago maybe or something when...that American Dream that we kind of talked about was a little bit more achievable**, economically speaking. Racial tensions were very low compared to the past." – WI woman, Latino independent

"It used to be where you could work hard and accomplish your goal of bettering your life and **bettering your financial situation**. With today it's unknown territory now with that because of all this restructuring of government and they just dismantling government principles." – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"Work hard and you're supposed to live good afterwards....**Now you just working hard**. Everybody got to have two jobs...I have a job and a hustle." – PA man, Black independent



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Holidays, Historic Events, And Even "Sales" Bring Out Feelings Of Americanness

Moderator: Tell me about times or a time you celebrated being American

"When I was able to marry...I felt that we were being seen as a person and not as a sin anymore. And so yeah, being given the right to marry made me celebrate being American." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

"When Obama came, so it seemed like it was diversity or something, then you had the two females....And then you had the Black female, then it was even more diversity. So then that's when it seemed kind of different or to be a little bit worth celebrating." – PA man, Black independent

"The part I like being American is **where they be having sales and everybody get to the store**. Everybody trying to get the same thing at the same time. That's the only time you'll see everybody together. Only time you see people together is when it's something exciting happen." – OH woman, Black independent

"During the whole 9/11 stuff going on, how there was this big resurgence of American pride among everyone and I felt like at that time there was a lot of unity among Americans just feeling American....That whole song, 'Proud to Be American' was a big thing at that time." – WI woman, Latino independent



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Racism, COVID, Bad Policy Decisions Make People Less Proud Of Being American

Moderator: When did you feel less proud to be an American?

"COVID-19 times....We got whooped on. People died. So many people died....Then if they found out you had COVID-19, they treated you like you had AIDS." – OH woman, Black independent

"The administration going to certain states that he knows are pro Trump asking them to redo their voting districts, in the middle of a census period....He's gone to his deep red states where he dominated in the last election to have their voting districts redrawn so that the minority vote is dismantled." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

"At one time we wasn't even looked at as a whole human being. We were one third of a human. I mean, **we have people that go over and fight wars for this country and come back and can't even get a job, can't even get benefits.**" – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"There's been a time where I felt less than an American. For the first time in my life, I had experienced racism. I was in Alabama at the time....I went inside that store, I bought a gospel CD and I gave it to the lady at the counter and she took it from me and I gave her my money. But when it came time for me to get my change back, she didn't place the change in my hand. She slammed it on the counter....I was very offended and it just really belittled me." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"Those times where they were **trying to really push the different genders in the restrooms** and things like that. And also they were trying to push mandates during COVID to shut down religious services and things like that." – TX woman, Latino strong Republican

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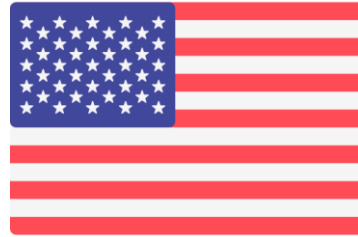
To Some, The Flag And Pledge Of Allegiance Represent America's Promise, To Others They Represent "White People"

Moderator: Thinking about the [American flag/pledge of allegiance] – what does it symbolize to you?

"I personally like the flag, but I do not like that it's become a **political thing** that people associate if you display a flag or if you say you like the flag, that it automatically means something political about you....People associate the flag with MAGA or with right wing extremists or with White people. It has a stigma attached to it now." – WI woman, Latino independent

"How could you pledge allegiance to a flag that **doesn't even protect you?**...I have no disrespect for the flag, but I just don't have any allegiance for it because it doesn't represent my people like it should....It's just representing...mostly I would say White people." – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"When I think about the American flag, I think about the Pledge of Allegiance. At the end of the Allegiance, it says...justice for all, but **everybody doesn't receive equal justice**....The criminal system is totally rigged." – MS man, Black strong Republican



"[The flag represents] **pride, freedom, privilege**....Privilege to be born in a country that accepted me...gave me the opportunity to grow, not only spiritually, but also financially. And our culture from my background from Mexico and the American culture. Just a blend of culture and it's a really beautiful mix." – TX woman, Latino strong Republican

"I don't put up a flag because I feel like if I **can't display a gay pride flag at my house because I'll be targeted**, then I shouldn't put up an American flag....I don't feel that putting up the flag is fair to me." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

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To Some, America's Identity As A "Christian Nation" Is Critical, While Others Emphasize Separation Of Church And State

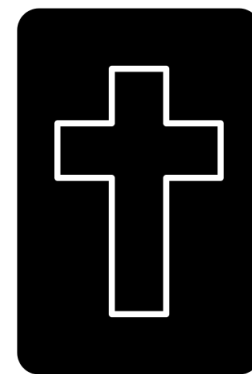
"The United States used to be the greatest country because this country was once founded on Christian principles. At that time, our founding fathers went by the Bible, went by the book to pass laws that would agree with Christian principles, but now we're so far from being a Christian country. It's really embarrassing. It's shameful." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"I thought we had a separation of church and state and putting [the flag and the Bible] together violates separation of church and state." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat

"The flag is supposed to be going by the Bible principles, but it's not." – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"I don't feel like it's justice with that Bible or that flag. When it's together, they remind me of the same thing together." – OH woman, Black independent

"I find it difficult to push a Christian nation upon these kids because not everyone is Christian in my classroom." – TX man, Latino strong Democrat



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Despite Its Deep Flaws, Many Still Express Pride And Optimism About America

"We come to realize that **we actually are blessed to be able to even vote, to have a voice.** Whether our voice comes across or not, we have that privilege to express what we feel....I think that there's not a day that in this country we can go hungry as in other countries there's people that are really suffering and don't have anything on their tables. So I do think that we're very privileged." – TX woman, Latino strong Republican

"[Americans] are very optimistic. We hope for better things. **We strive for better things. I think we have a fighting spirit in America....**We know we have the power to make change, and not everyone feels that way where they live, that they can make a real difference." – WI woman, Latino independent

"Being Black in America, I was always raised to have the notion that you should take pride in your heritage and your race. So I've never been ashamed of my race or my heritage. **I know my people have been through lots of struggles in this country, but I'm always proud to be an African American.** I always have been and I always will be." – GA man, Black strong Democrat

"I do **appreciate the right to exercise my religion in my country.** I consider that to be a great privilege, but I know other countries, especially Third World countries. You are persecuted, you are killed, you are thrown in jail just for proclaiming the word of God." – MS man, Black strong Republican

"I think if you're inviting America [to] a party, you would have everyone there. You would have nationalities, you'd have genders, you'd have different types of beliefs there and everyone would be welcoming and embracing each other instead of taking each other apart." – TX man, Latino strong 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 June 2, 2026, GBAO conducted one online focus group with Black and Latino voters in battleground presidential and Senate states* as part of Navigator's exploration of America at 250.

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To learn more about Navigator:

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