

Not Another Box to Check

A National Survey of Black Women Voters
June 2022



THE HIGHLAND PROJECT
COMMUNITY, CAPITAL, LEGACY

brilliant
corners
Research & Strategies



Introduction

In 2021, we commissioned “Our Power, Our Legacy” with brilliant corners Research & Strategies, a nonpartisan national poll centering the very real experiences of Black women in America. It was our hope that the research would rally policymakers, politicians, and practitioners around a set of solutions and priorities that would result in multi-generational opportunity with Black women at the core.

One year since our first poll, Black women feel more left behind than before – and the issues that affect us continue to compound. “Not Another Box to Check,” our second nonpartisan national poll of over 700 Black women with brilliant corners Research & Strategies, demonstrates that urgent action across the nation is needed now more than ever to address our well-being.

Black women are the driving force behind our communities, institutions, and systems; it is past time for our power to be met with actions that enable us to thrive. In fact, Black women are already driving the solutions we need, but we also need sustained investment in our visions.

Truthfully, we are not another box to check. We are tired of waiting for people to accept more than one of us in leadership roles and positions of power. We have been and will continue to be beyond qualified, beyond talented and beyond ready for the challenge. But we also face oppression across systems. We need leaders who can truly create a multi-system, multi-level approach to addressing the structural barriers we face.

The Highland Project was created to center and invest in Black women’s leadership across systems to create multi-generational wealth and change. But we need today’s leaders to move beyond rhetoric and stop treating us as a single-issue, monolithic community. Leaders must move beyond box checking, and explicitly develop and build solutions that truly enable us to thrive.

Gabrielle Wyatt
Founder, The Highland Project

Key Groups and Methodology

These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by brilliant corners Research & Strategies on behalf of The Highland Project. This is a survey of 766 African American women at least 18 years of age and registered to vote. The survey was conducted by phone, using professional interviewers starting on May 2nd 2022 and ending on May 12th 2022.

The survey's sample was drawn randomly from voter file and geographically stratified for proportional representation. The margin of error overall is +/- 3.5%, with a 95% confidence interval. Notably, the margin of error for sub-groups will be higher depending on the size of the sub-group sample and the size of the actual response to any given question.

Breakout	% of Total	Definition
Less motivated	24%	Those who rate their motivation to vote 7 or below (scale of 0-10)
Up for Grabs	24%	Those who, in the generic congressional midterm ballot, are not voting Democrat or Republican
Non-college	54%	Black women without college degrees
College grad	44%	Black women with college degrees
Moms under 40	15%	Black women under 40 with children under the age of 18 in their household
Liberal	36%	Black women identifying as liberal or somewhat liberal
Moderate	31%	Black women identifying as moderate
Conservative	28%	Black women identifying as conservative or somewhat conservative

Summary of Key Takeaways

Political and Issue Environment

- **In just one year since our last national poll, Black women not only feel left out but falling behind in the economy writ large.**
- Black women continue to recognize their tremendous political power: 8 in 10 Black women will definitely vote in the 2022 midterms. However, their votes cannot be taken for granted and they shouldn't be considered single issue voters.

Leaders We Need

- **Black women absolutely still care about racism and discrimination, in line with our 2021 findings. Leaders must lean into addressing systemic racism explicitly.**
- Black women overwhelmingly support leaders who will not erase or ban the truth of their history in schools.

Economic Landscape

- **Black women are not just worried about present day economic conditions; they are worried about how today impacts their futures and the futures of their communities.**
- Black women are not seeing educational attainment as a means to thrive economically. College degrees are not protecting economic anxieties.

Protecting Reproductive Justice

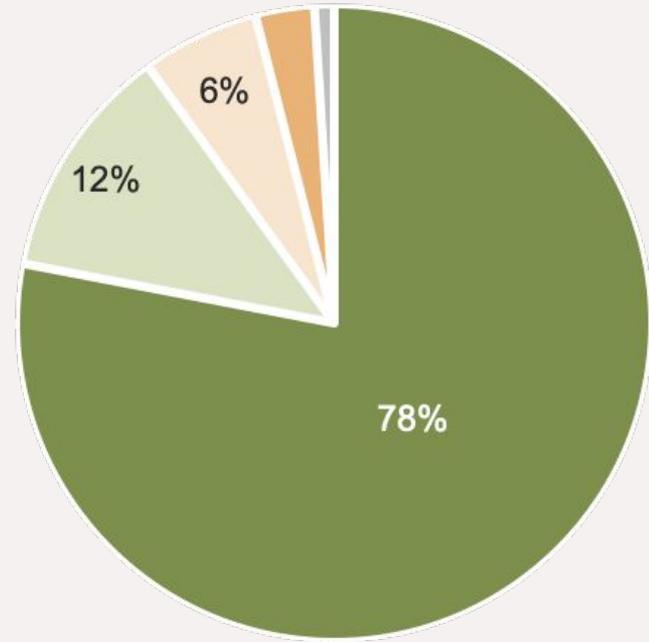
- **The potential of the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade is overwhelmingly driving Black women to vote in upcoming elections.**
- There is an information gap issue on Roe v. Wade, particularly in the South and among Black women who are least likely to vote.
- When Black women were more informed about the repercussions of overturning Roe v. Wade in interviews, they indicated higher motivations to vote.

Political & Issue Environment

Political & Issue Environment: Key Takeaways

- In just one year since our last national poll, **Black women not only feel left out but falling behind in the economy writ large.**
- Black women continue to recognize their tremendous political power: **8 in 10 Black women will definitely vote in the 2022 midterms.**
- However, their votes cannot be taken for granted and they shouldn't be considered single issue voters.
- **Black women are eager to see rhetoric move to action**, as evidenced by approval ratings of the current President.
- Elected officials, candidates, and leaders across sectors must center the very lived and real experiences of Black women today in their agendas *and* move to action.

**Nearly 8 in 10 say
they will definitely
vote...**



- Definitely vote
- Probably vote
- 50-50
- Will not vote
- Don't know / refused

... but younger women show some reluctance to voting in 2022 midterms.

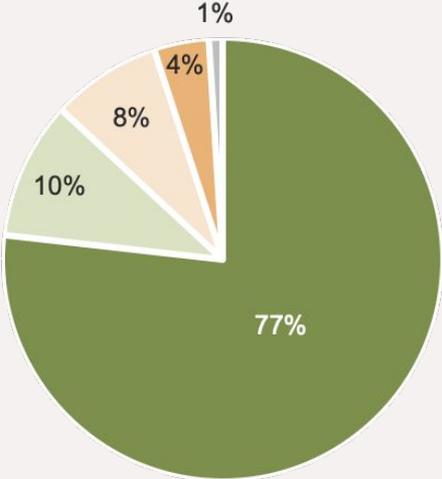
	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Definitely vote	78%	39%	63%	76%	82%	64%	83%	75%	75%
Probably vote	12%	25%	12%	14%	9%	16%	11%	13%	12%
50-50	6%	22%	14%	8%	4%	13%	3%	6%	10%
Will not vote	3%	10%	8%	1%	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%
Dk/R	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%

About two thirds of Black women are extremely motivated to vote in the midterms.

Motivation to Vote in Midterms

Scale 1 - 10

- Very motivated (8-10)
- Somewhat motivated (6-7)
- Not very motivated (5-6)
- Not motivated at all (0-4)
- Don't know / refused



	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Mean	8.5	4.7	7.4	8.5	8.6	8.3	9.0	8.3	8.2
Extremely motivated (8-10)	76%	0%	64%	76%	78%	71%	86%	73%	71%
Somewhat motivated (6-7)	10%	41%	9%	10%	10%	16%	8%	11%	9%
Not very motivated (3-5)	8%	35%	13%	9%	7%	12%	4%	9%	13%
Do at all motivated (0-2)	4%	19%	12%	4%	5%	2%	2%	6%	6%
DK/Ref	1%	5%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%

Mirror images: higher and lower vote motivation by age and economic status.

Most likely to rate their motivation to vote 7 or below



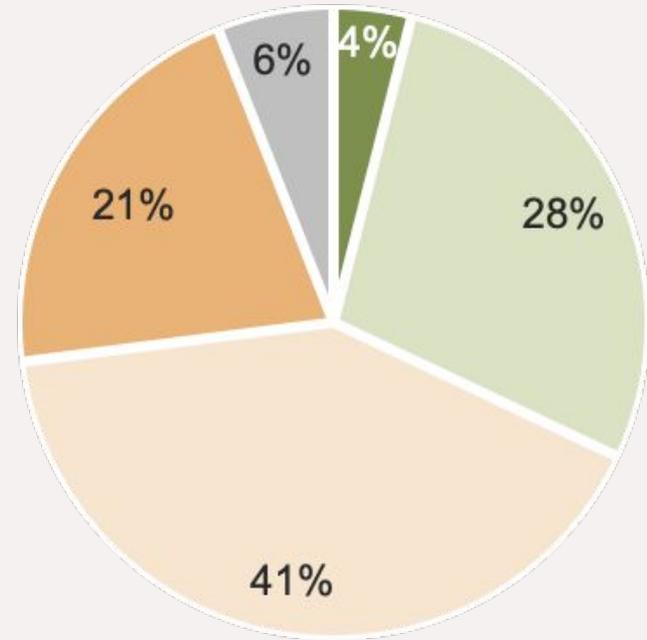
Disapprove of Biden	36%
Haven't heard about Roe	36%
Wages falling behind cost of living	30%
< \$50k, under 50	30%
Parents making less than \$50k	30%
Single	30%
Conservative	29%
Millennials / Gen Z (18-40)	29%
< \$50k, non college	29%
Urban parents	28%
Dissatisfied with direction of the country	28%
Disapprove of Congress	27%
Moderate	27%
Midwest	27%
Northeast	26%
Parents	26%
Total	24%

Most likely to rate their motivation to vote 8 or above



Economic conditions getting better	96%
Married / with partner over 50	90%
Approve of Biden	86%
College grad 50+	85%
Heard a lot about Roe	85%
Satisfied with direction of the country	85%
\$50k or more, non college	84%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	83%
65+	82%
No kids over 40	82%
Post grads	82%
More motivated to vote by Roe	82%
Facebook in the past 2 days	82%
Retired, disabled	81%
Some college	81%
Total	76%

Satisfaction with the direction of the country is wholly underwater.

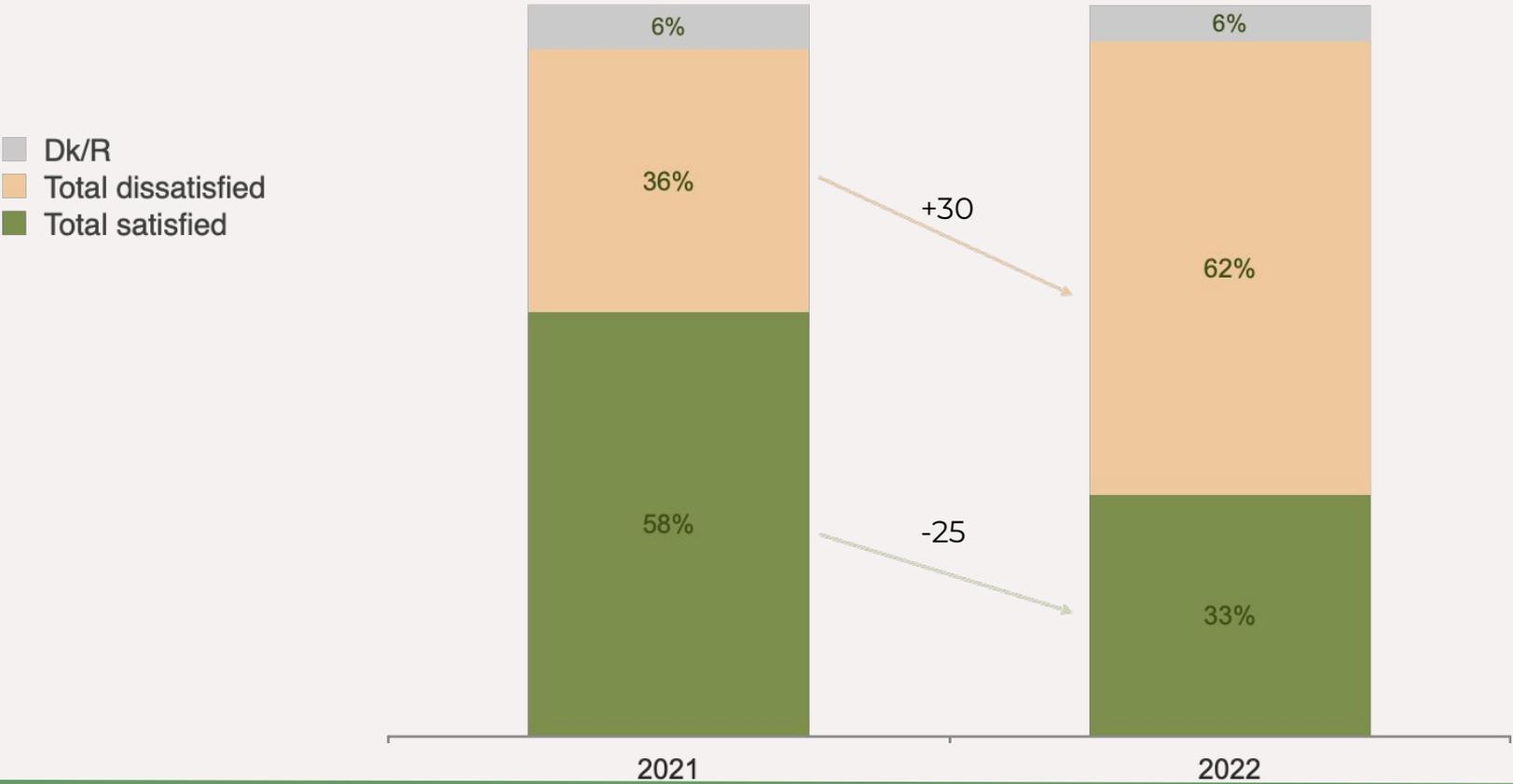


- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know / refused

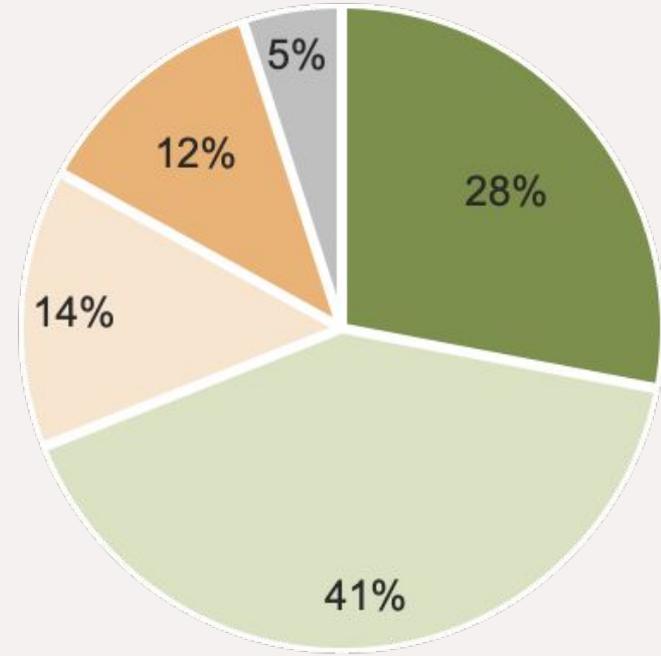
Satisfaction with the country is net negative across key groups.

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
*****Net satisfied	-29%	-51%	-55%	-40%	-17%	-52%	-30%	-32%	-26%
Total satisfied	33%	21%	19%	27%	39%	21%	33%	31%	34%
Total dissatisfied	62%	72%	73%	67%	56%	73%	63%	63%	60%
Very satisfied	4%	1%	2%	4%	4%	1%	5%	3%	4%
Satisfied	28%	21%	17%	24%	34%	21%	28%	28%	30%
Dissatisfied	41%	47%	40%	48%	33%	55%	41%	46%	36%
Very dissatisfied	21%	26%	34%	19%	23%	18%	22%	17%	25%
Dk/R	6%	7%	8%	5%	6%	5%	3%	6%	6%

Satisfaction with the direction of the country has absolutely plummeted since March 2021.



Just 28% of Black women strongly approve of President Biden's job performance.



- Strongly approve
- Somewhat approve
- Somewhat disapprove
- Strongly disapprove
- Don't know / refused

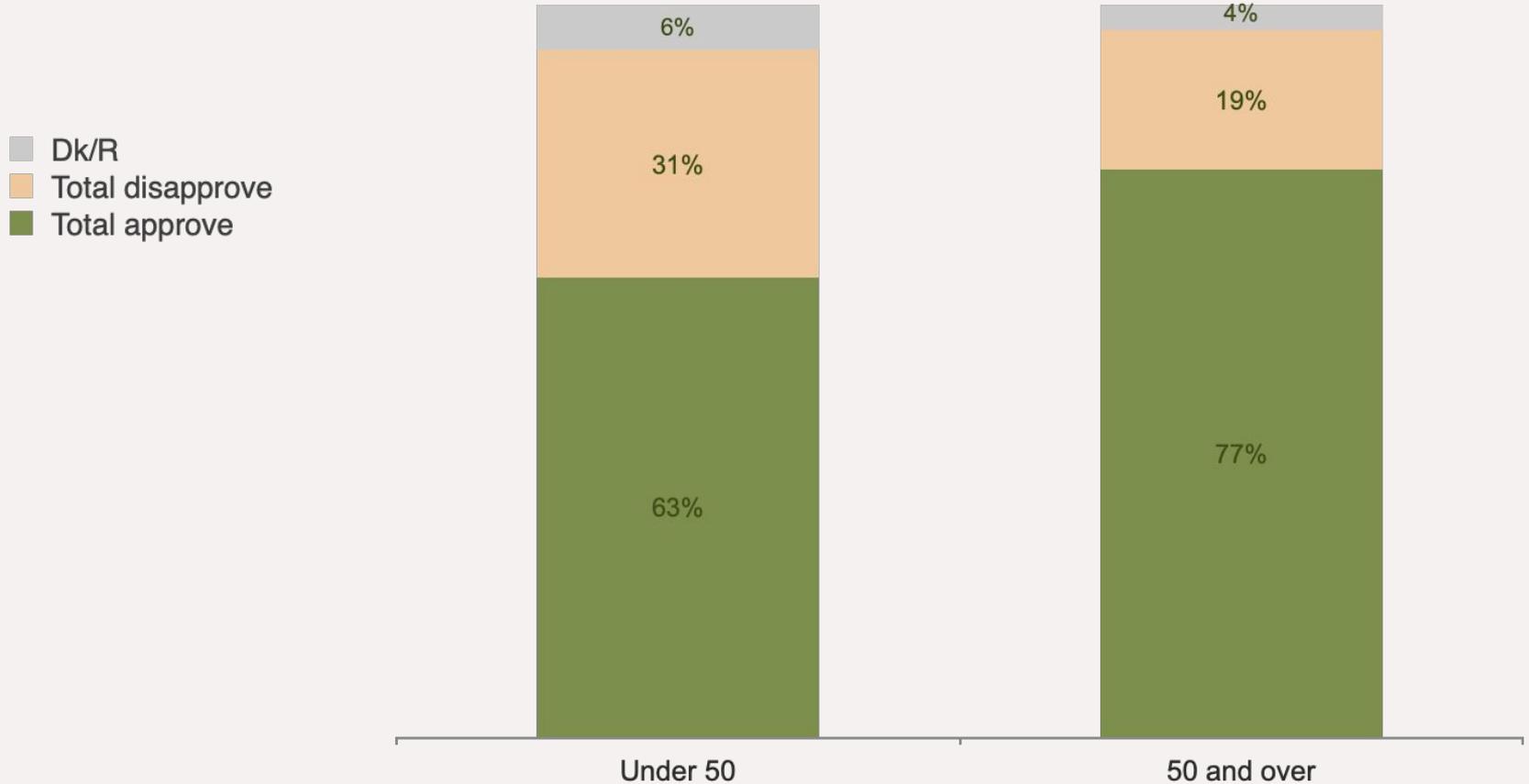
Less motivated and Up for Grabs voters will make the difference in voter turnout and are just narrowly approving of the President's job performance.

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
****Net approve	43%	1%	3%	42%	45%	23%	53%	52%	27%
Total approve	69%	44%	46%	69%	70%	58%	74%	73%	62%
Total disapprove	26%	43%	43%	27%	25%	34%	21%	21%	35%
Strongly approve	28%	19%	9%	22%	36%	3%	30%	24%	31%
Somewhat approve	41%	26%	37%	46%	34%	55%	44%	49%	30%
Somewhat disapprove	14%	26%	23%	14%	13%	17%	16%	13%	13%
Strongly disapprove	12%	17%	20%	13%	11%	17%	5%	9%	22%
Dk/R	5%	12%	11%	4%	6%	8%	5%	5%	4%

Generic Congressional ballot:

- 70% Democrat
- 6% Republican
- 24% Und / Dk / Wouldn't vote

President Biden's Approval: Under vs. Over 50



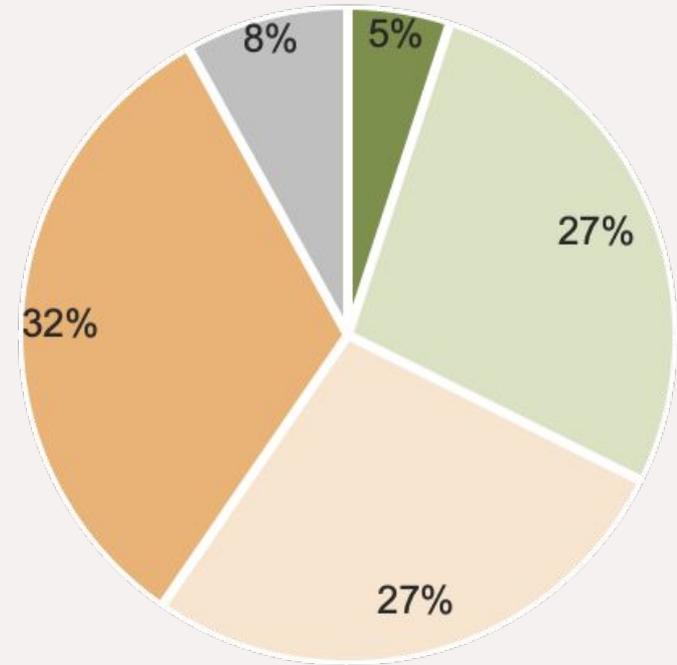
Most likely to be Up for Grabs:

Most likely to be Up for Grabs to voting for either party (will not vote, undecided, or independent)

Disapprove of President Biden	38%
Less Motivated (0-7)	35%
Probably / 50/50	33%
Midwest	33%
Economic conditions getting worse	30%
Cost of living getting ahead of wages	30%
College grads	30%
Parents, college grads	30%
Under 50	29%
Single parents	29%
Conservative	28%
Disapprove of Congress	27%
Not Facebook users	27%
Parents making less than \$50k	27%
Rural	27%
<\$50k, college grad	26%
Parents	26%
Total	23%



Black women are intensely dissatisfied with Congress.



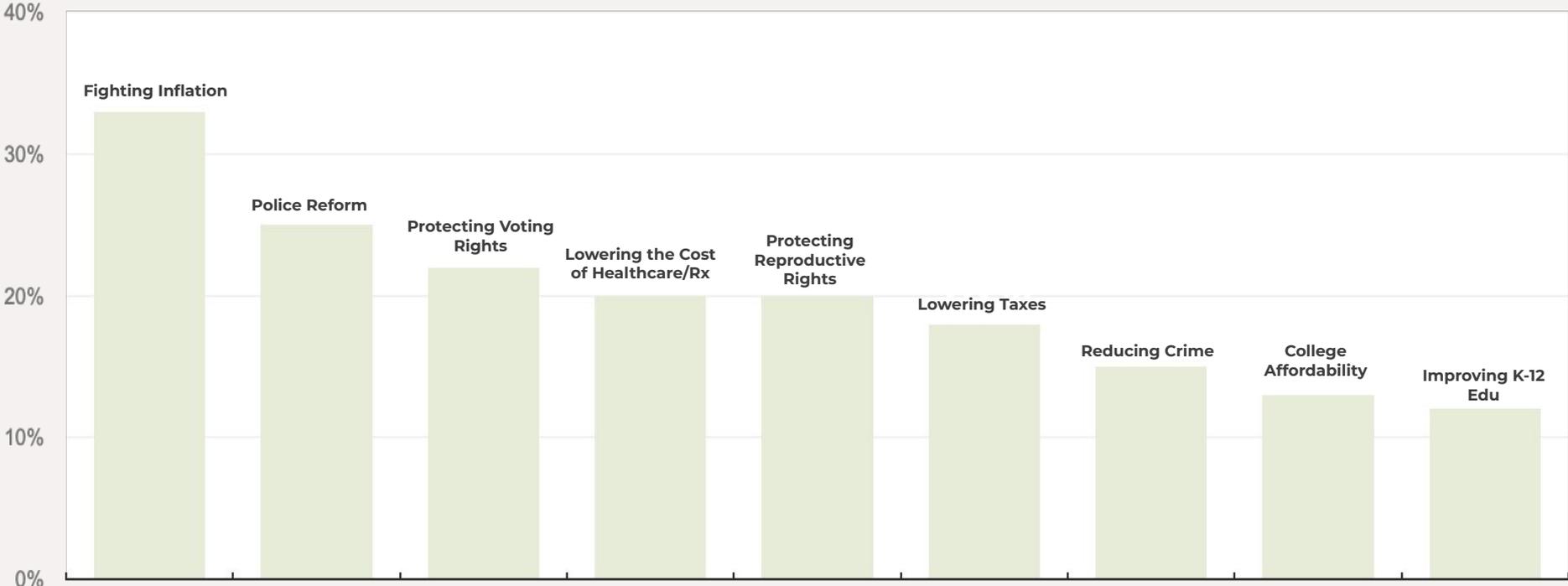
- Strongly approve
- Somewhat approve
- Somewhat disapprove
- Strongly disapprove
- Don't know / refused

Across key groups, Black women are extremely dissatisfied with Congress, including a plurality of Up for Grabs midterm voters and college graduates.

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
****Net approve	-27%	-41%	-49%	-19%	-36%	-40%	-31%	-13%	-34%
Total approve	33%	21%	20%	36%	29%	25%	31%	40%	28%
Total disapprove	59%	63%	69%	55%	65%	65%	63%	53%	61%
Strongly approve	5%	2%	3%	5%	6%	0%	7%	2%	7%
Somewhat approve	27%	19%	17%	32%	23%	25%	24%	38%	21%
Somewhat disapprove	27%	33%	27%	29%	27%	35%	28%	28%	29%
Strongly disapprove	32%	29%	42%	26%	39%	29%	35%	26%	33%
Dk/R	8%	16%	11%	10%	6%	10%	6%	7%	11%

From inflation to police reform to voting rights... there is an overwhelming plate of issue angst.

Congress should be most focused on...



Beyond the Kitchen Table: Issues by Key Groups

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Fighting inflation and lowering the cost of goods	33%	40%	38%	36%	29%	25%	21%	46%	39%
Police reforms that stop racial profiling and holds bad cops accountable	25%	26%	23%	27%	23%	27%	26%	25%	22%
Protecting our voting rights	22%	9%	13%	15%	31%	16%	34%	18%	12%
Lowering the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs	20%	21%	14%	26%	13%	19%	23%	17%	22%
Protecting women's reproductive health choices	20%	13%	14%	13%	28%	19%	31%	17%	11%
Lowering taxes	18%	13%	16%	23%	12%	27%	16%	23%	17%
Reducing crime	15%	21%	21%	17%	14%	17%	13%	17%	16%
Making college more affordable	13%	14%	19%	11%	15%	19%	12%	11%	14%
Improving K-12 education	12%	16%	19%	8%	17%	17%	10%	9%	16%
Securing our borders	10%	9%	9%	14%	6%	11%	5%	8%	19%
Climate change and protecting the environment	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	0%	3%	2%	7%

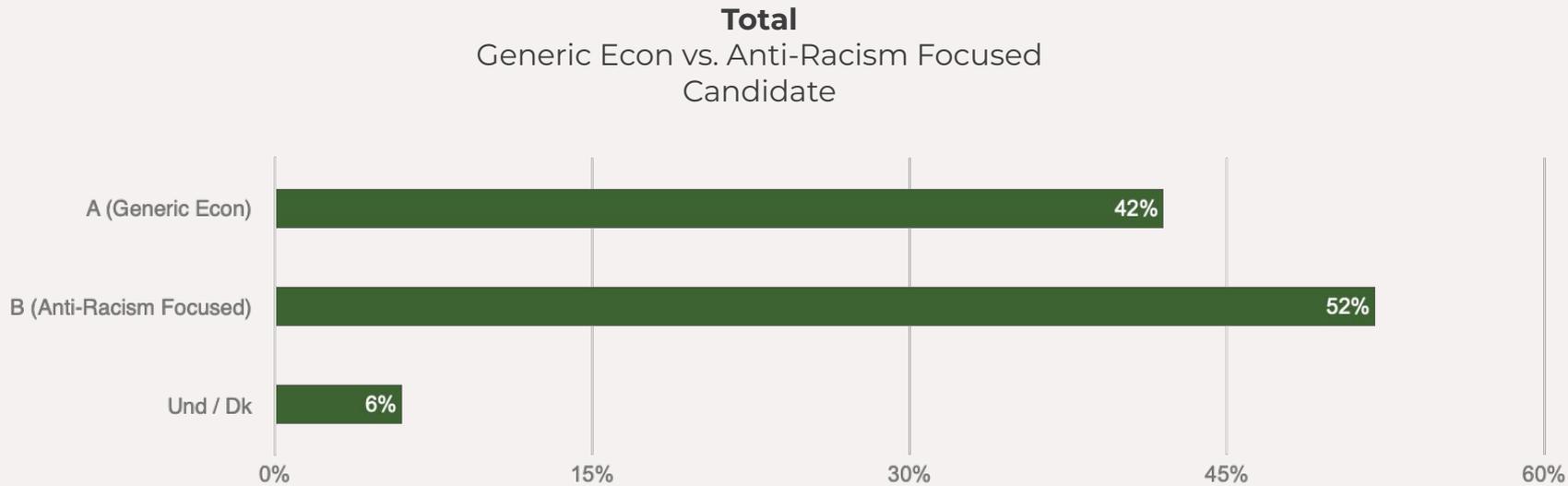
The Types of Leaders

Black Women Need

Leaders We Need: Key Takeaways

- Black women absolutely still care about racism and discrimination, in line with our 2021 findings. **Leaders must lean into addressing systemic racism explicitly.**
- Black women **overwhelmingly support leaders who will not erase or ban the truth of their history in schools.**
- For both political parties, Black women have a low positive association for the economy, police reform, and crime.

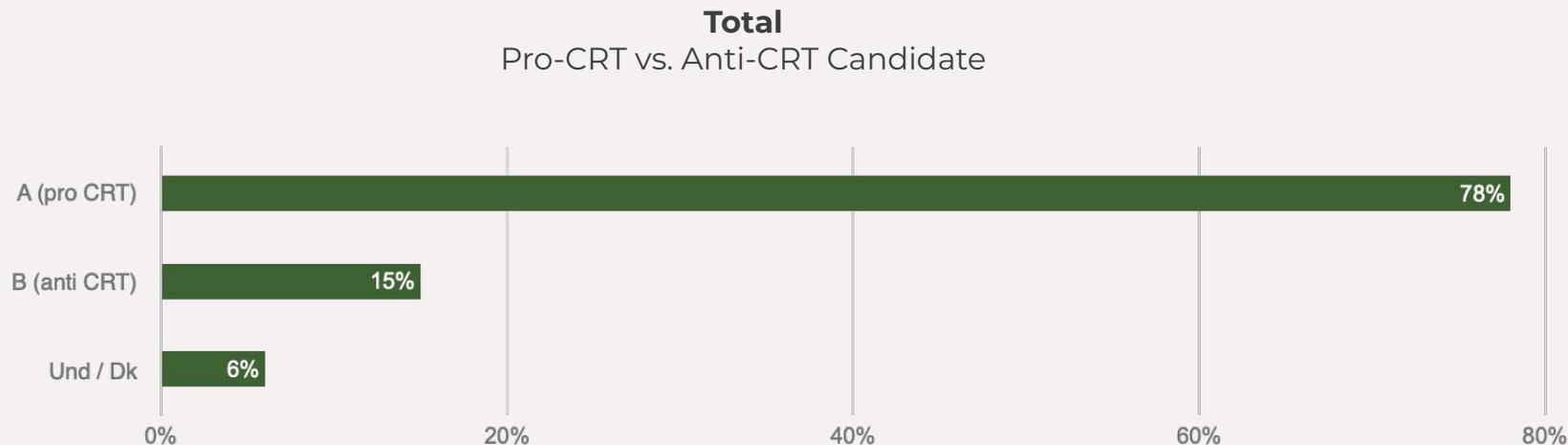
A majority of Black women would prefer a candidate who focuses on issues of racism and discrimination over a general economic-focused generic candidate.



Candidate A (Generic Econ): says that, if elected to Congress, they will fight to make healthcare more affordable, relieve student debt, invest in our infrastructure by fixing roads and expanding broadband, create jobs, and grow the economy.

Candidate B (Anti-Racism): says that, if elected to Congress, they will fight against racism and discrimination in America, protect voting rights, stop Republicans from trying to rig elections, and reform policing to outlaw racial profiling and hold bad cops accountable

Black women overwhelmingly support a candidate who would advocate for teaching the history of racism, including Critical Race Theory, in schools.

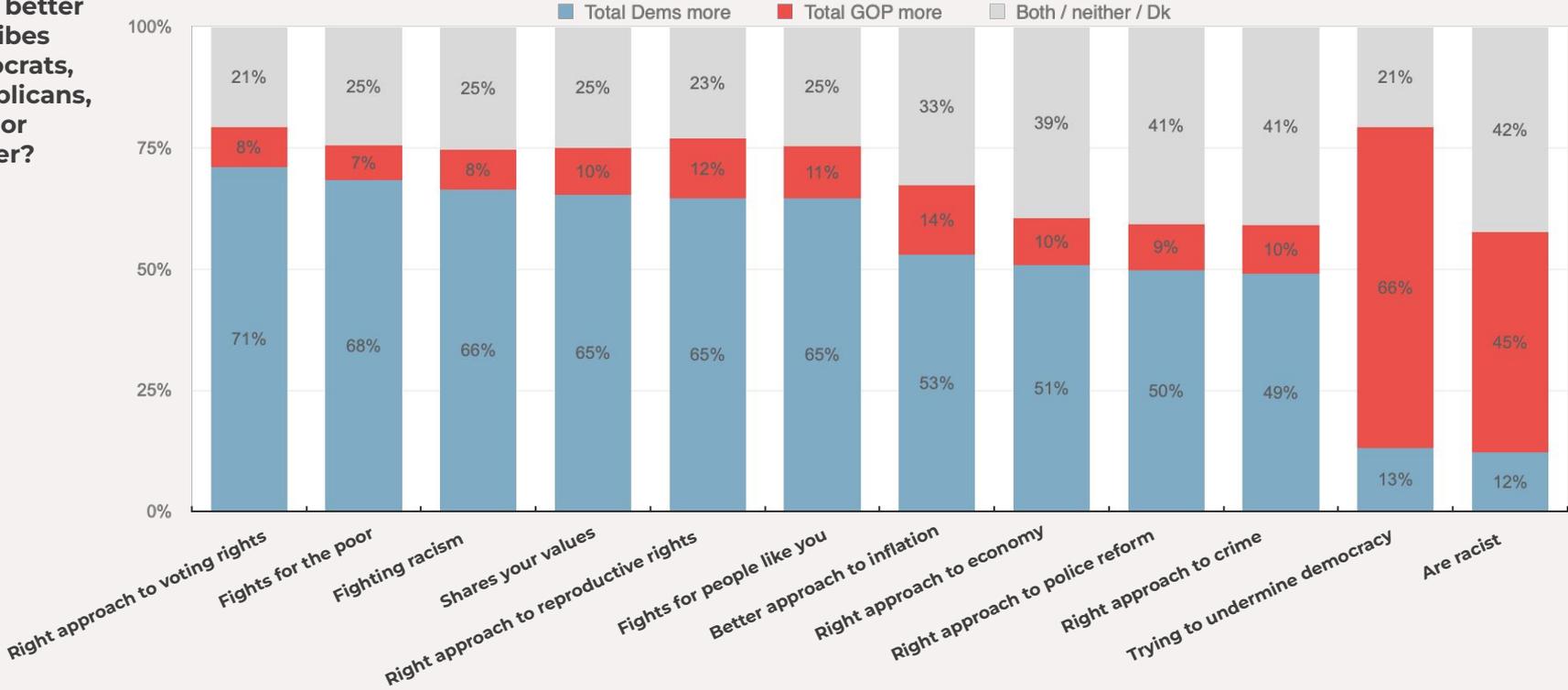


Candidate A (Pro-CRT): says that it's important to trust educators to teach the honest and complete truth about American history, including Critical Race theory without being censored by politicians because that's how we lessen discrimination in the future and bring Americans together.

Candidate B (Anti-CRT): who says that it's important to teach the truth about American history, but Critical Race Theory is political indoctrination not history, and further, the topic of racism being taught in our schools will further divide the country and make some white students uncomfortable.

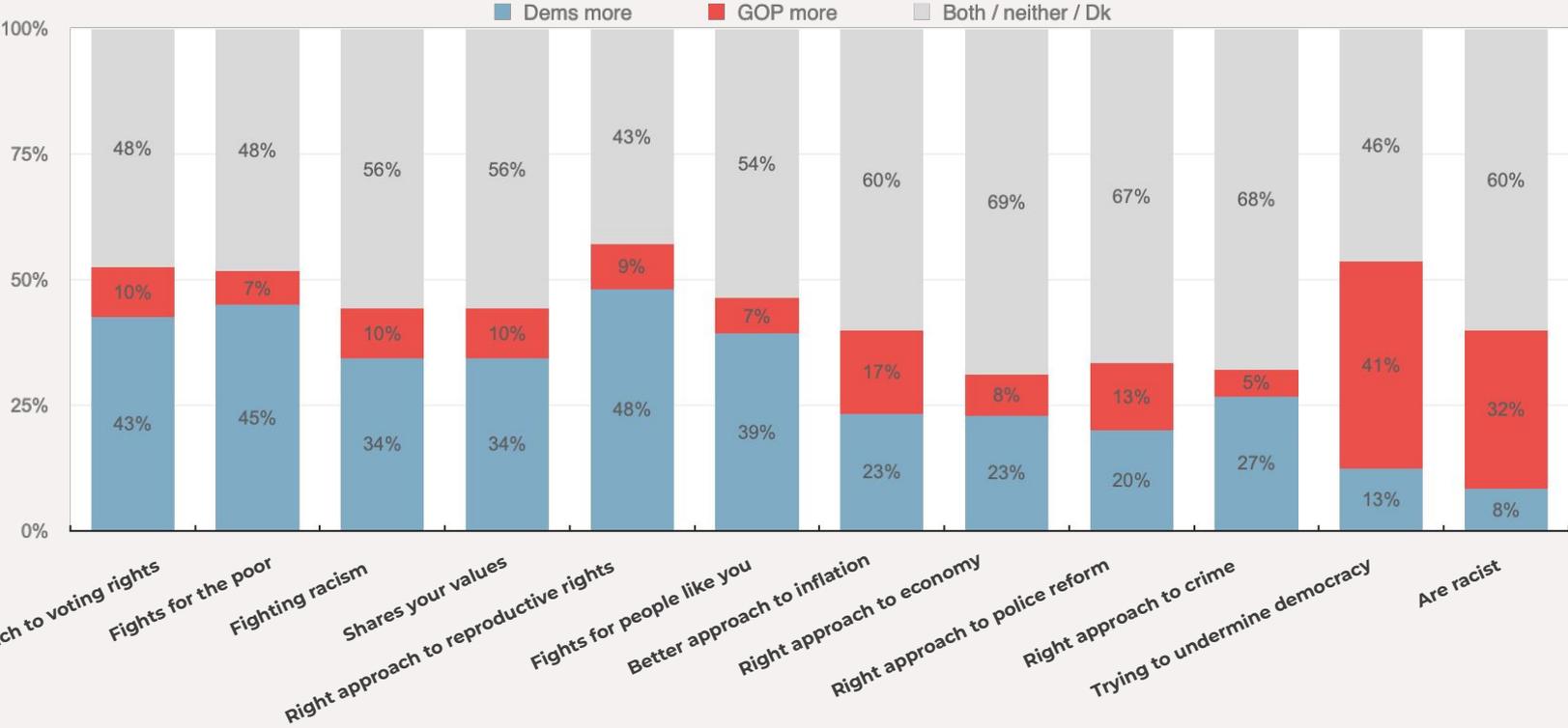
For both major parties, there is low positive association with the economy, police reform, and crime.

What better describes Democrats, Republicans, both, or neither?

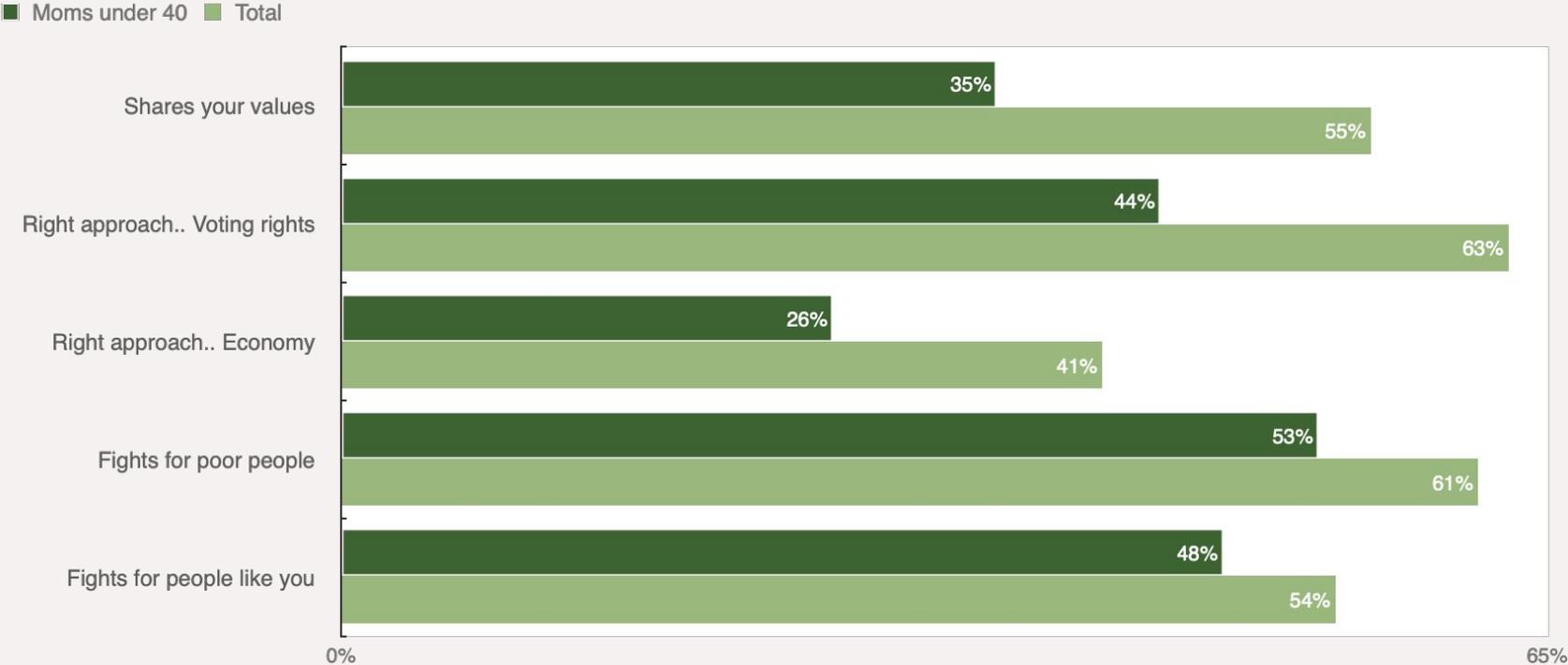


Across the board, Up for Grabs voters have an overwhelmingly lower positive association compared to Black women as a whole.

Among Up for Grabs Voters:
 What better describes Democrats, Republicans, both, or neither?



Moms under 40 are disconnected from leaders, particularly on shared values and the economy.



Economic Landscape

Economic Landscape: Key Takeaways

- In just 24 months since our last poll, Black women not only feel like they are left out - **but left behind.**
- This trend is the most pronounced among Millennials/Gen Z and women without a college graduate degree.
- Black women are not just worried about present day economic conditions; **they are worried about how today impacts their futures and the futures of their communities.**
- Moms under 40 are particularly hard hit by this reality.
- Black women are not seeing educational attainment as a means to thrive economically. **College degrees are not protecting economic anxieties.**

Optimism about the economy has imploded over the past 14 months.

Economic Conditions

May 2022 vs. March 2021

- Don't know/ refused
- Getting worse
- Staying the same
- Getting better



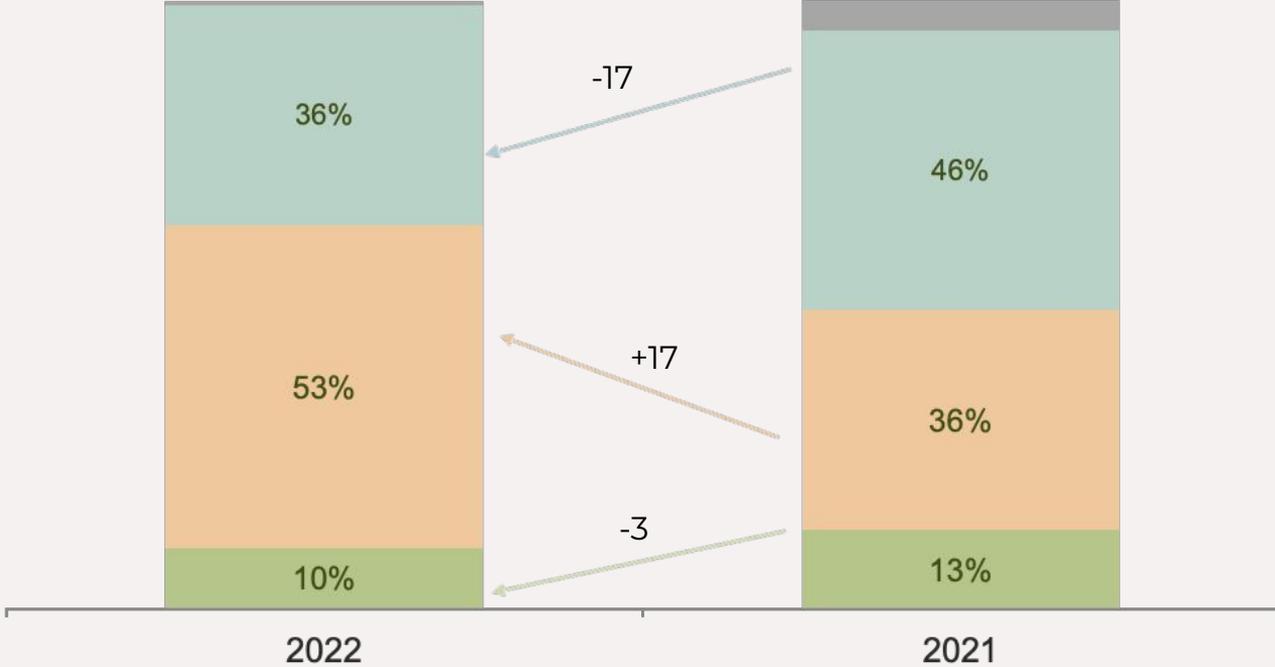
Optimism about the Economy: Key Groups

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Getting better	14%	3%	6%	9%	20%	5%	12%	17%	13%
Staying the same	26%	28%	21%	32%	21%	24%	24%	30%	27%
Getting worse	57%	67%	69%	58%	55%	69%	61%	51%	57%
Dk/R	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%

A majority of Black women now say that wages are not keeping up with cost of living.

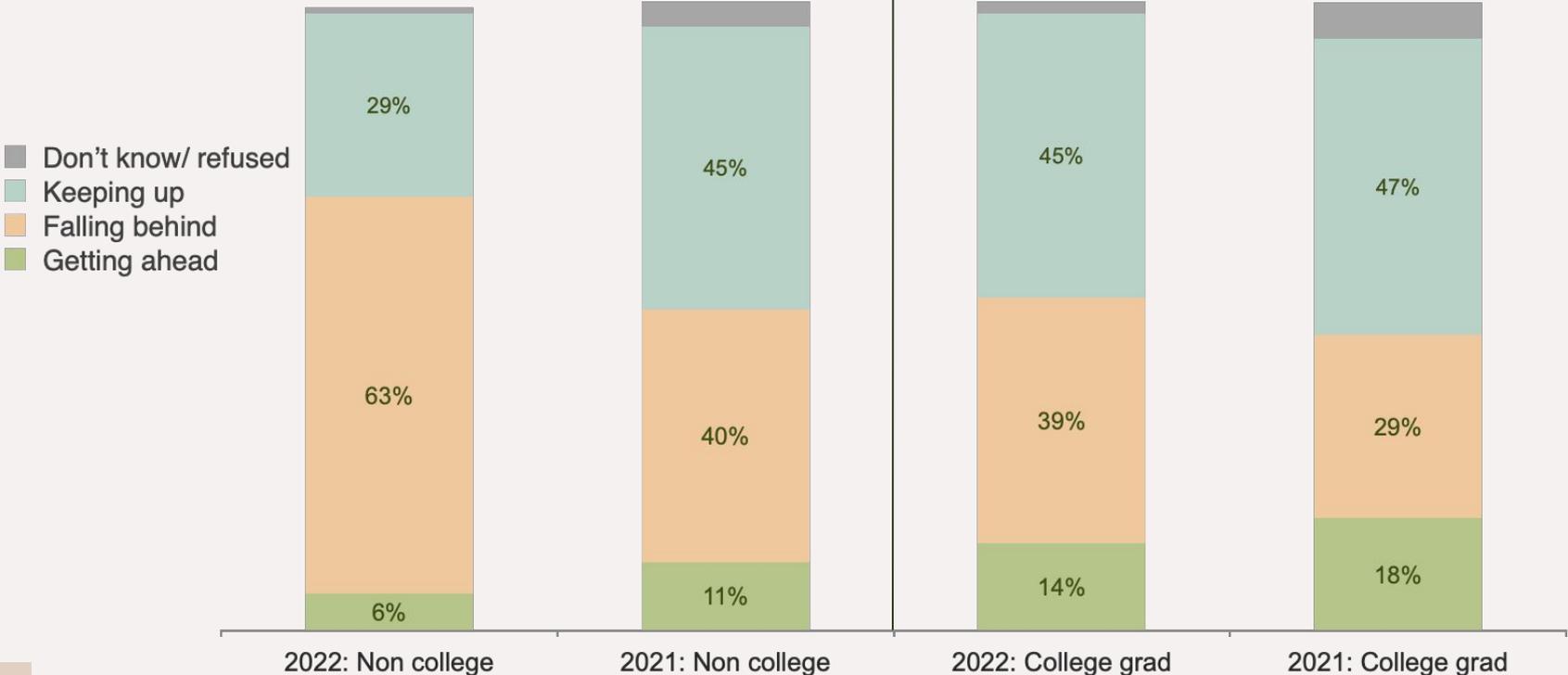
Wages and Cost of Living
May 2022 vs. March 2021

- Don't know/ refused
- Keeping up
- Falling behind
- Getting ahead



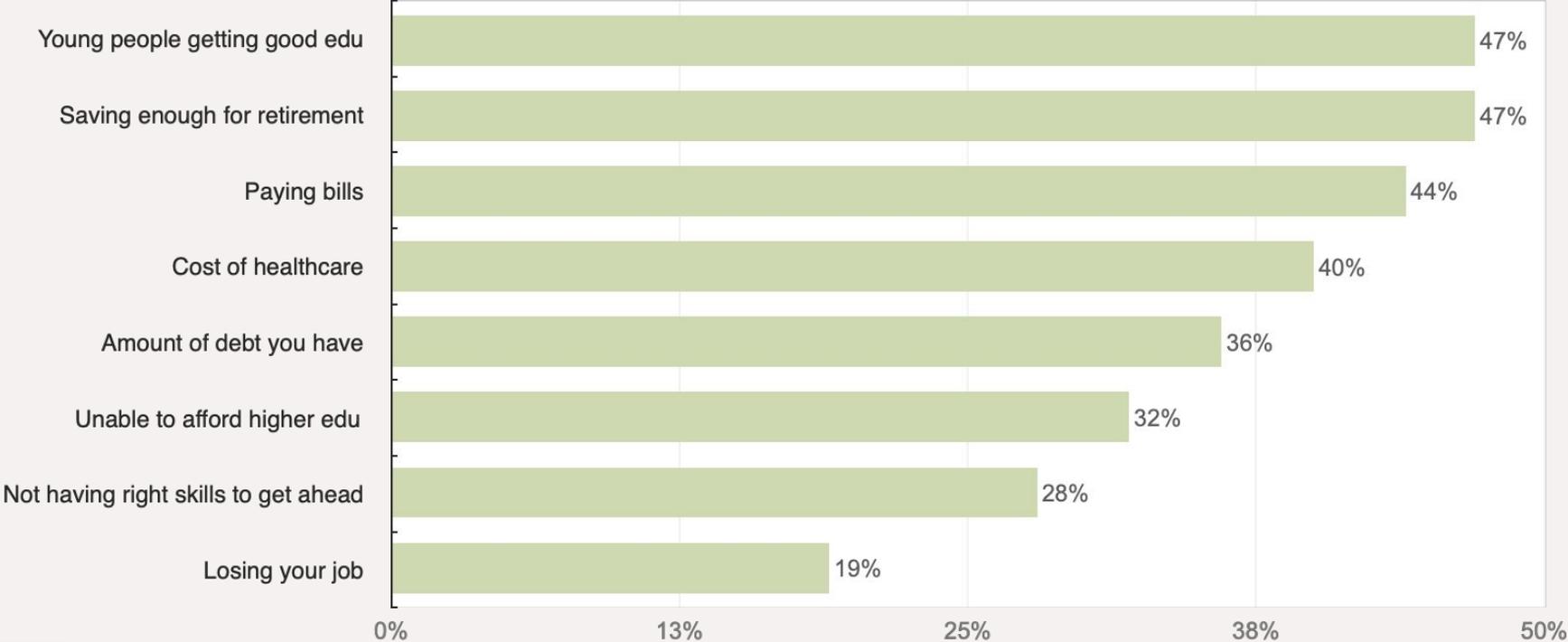
The drop in wage and cost of living outlook is most pronounced in Black women without college degrees.

Wages and Cost of Living
2022 vs. 2021 by Education



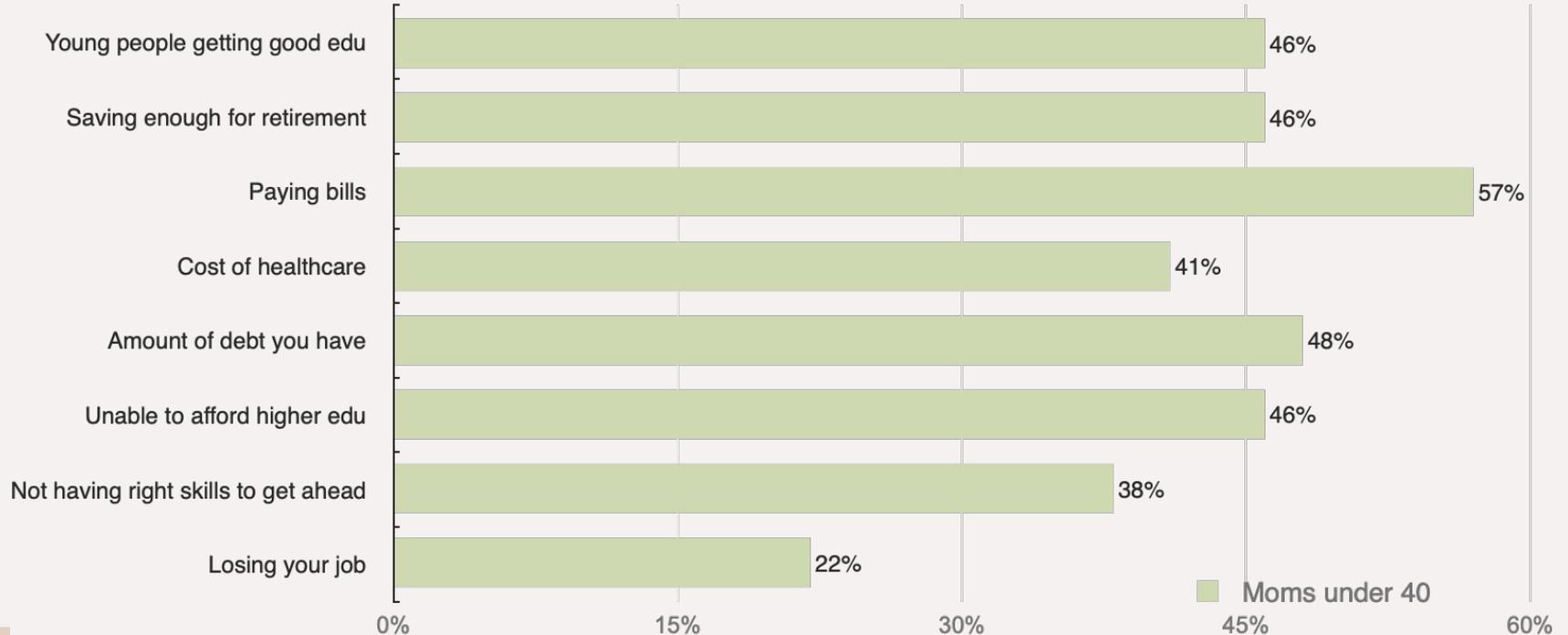
Black women are most worried about education and the future.

Total: Economic Anxiety
Worry almost everyday (% Top Box 8-10)



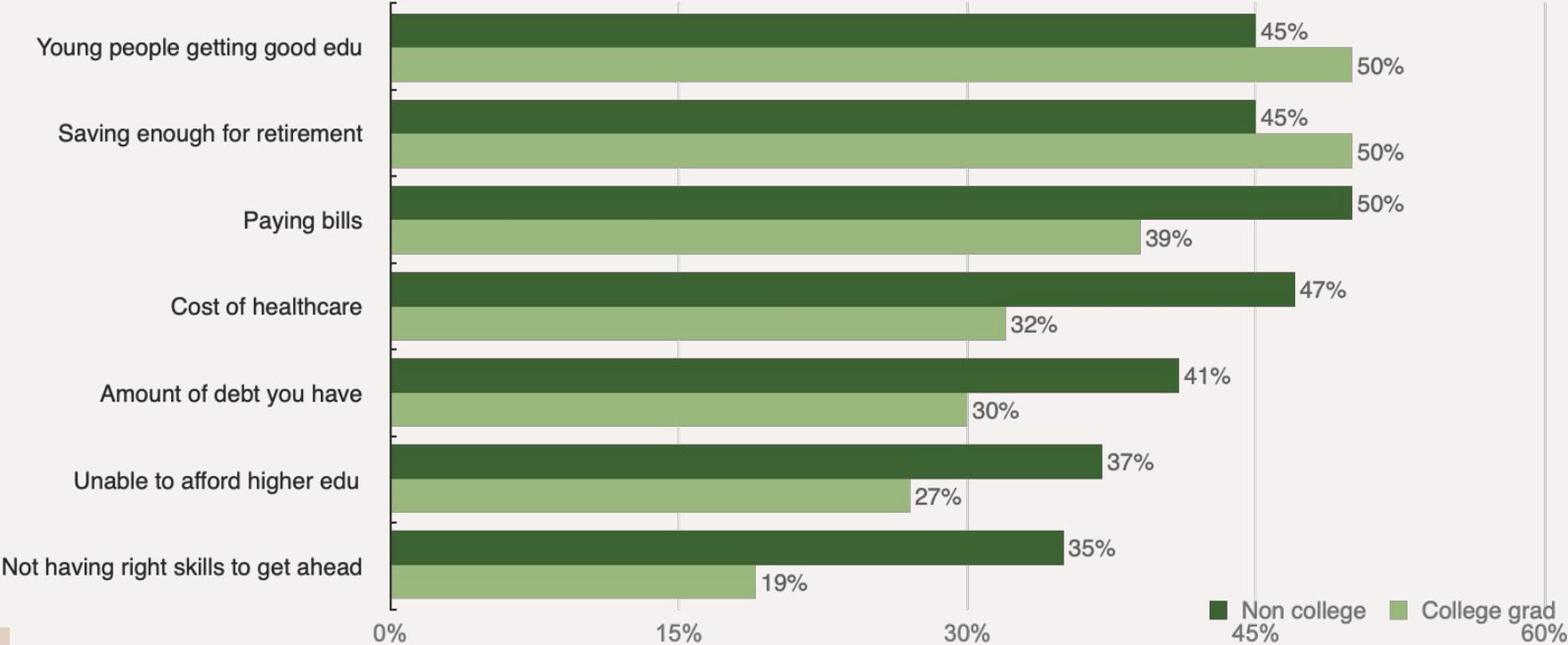
Moms under 40 are being hit hard by day-to-day living expenses.

Moms Under 40: Economic Anxiety
Worry almost everyday (% Top Box 8-10)



When it comes to their future and future generations, a college degree does not insulate Black women from economic anxiety.

College vs. Non-College: Economic Anxiety
Worry almost everyday (% Top Box 8-10)



Economic anxiety by Key Groups: Up for Grabs voters show higher angst than overall electorate

	Mean (0-10)	Total Top Box (8-10)	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Democrat	Republican	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Young people getting good education	6.4	47%	35%	51%	46%	42%	45%	50%	46%	42%	48%	48%
Saving enough for retirement	6.2	47%	47%	56%	46%	27%	45%	50%	46%	45%	51%	44%
Paying bills	6.1	44%	46%	49%	44%	35%	50%	39%	57%	42%	48%	45%
Cost of healthcare	5.9	40%	40%	41%	41%	30%	47%	32%	41%	38%	45%	37%
Amount of debt you have	5.4	36%	39%	37%	36%	30%	41%	30%	48%	32%	43%	35%
Unable to afford higher education for self or family	5.2	32%	21%	43%	30%	15%	37%	27%	46%	27%	37%	34%
Not having right skills / training to get ahead	4.5	28%	30%	20%	30%	30%	35%	19%	38%	25%	31%	27%
Losing your job	3.4	19%	22%	23%	17%	19%	22%	15%	22%	15%	21%	21%

Protecting Reproductive Rights

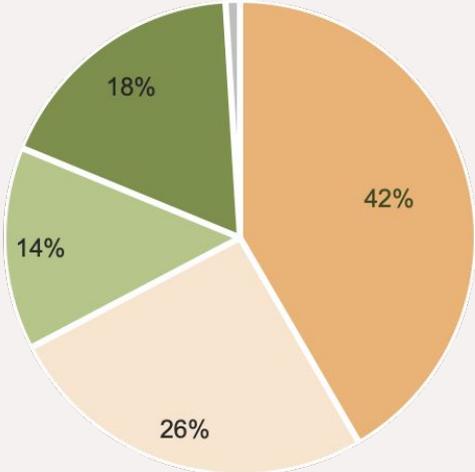
Protecting Reproductive Rights: Key Takeaways

- **The potential of the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade is overwhelmingly driving Black women to vote in upcoming elections.** There were no significant variations across demographic groups, including political party affiliation.
- **There is an information gap issue on Roe v. Wade, particularly in the South** and among Black women who are least likely to vote.
- However, **when Black women were more informed** about the repercussions of overturning Roe v. Wade in interviews, **they indicated higher motivations to vote.**

Less than one-third of less motivated and non-college Black women have heard a lot about the Roe draft opinion.

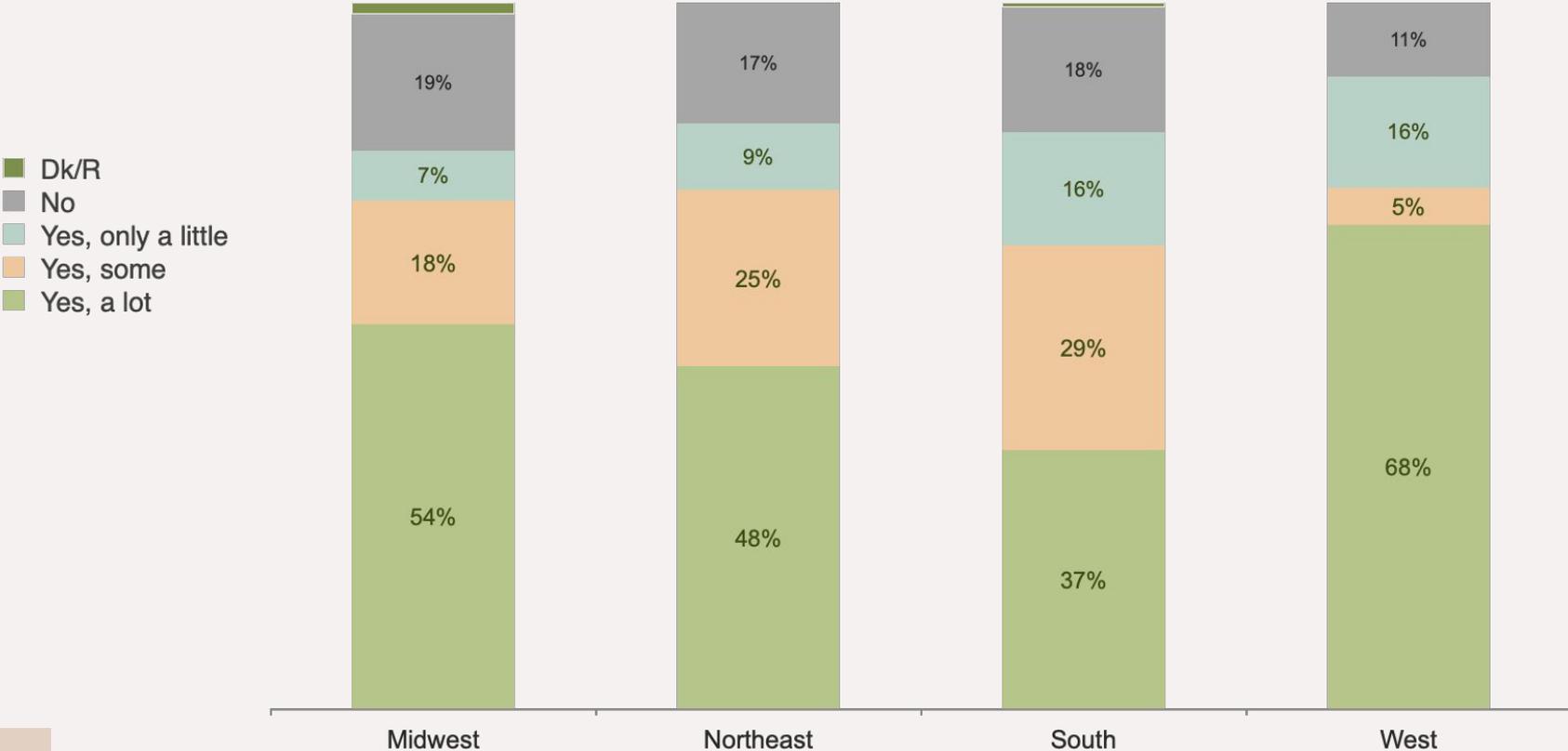
Familiarity with Roe v. Wade Draft Opinion

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, some
- Yes, only a little
- No
- Don't know/ refused



	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Yes, a lot	42%	26%	37%	31%	56%	26%	51%	26%	44%
Yes, some	26%	27%	26%	26%	26%	25%	26%	32%	22%
Yes, only a little	14%	20%	15%	17%	8%	22%	10%	23%	9%
No	18%	25%	19%	24%	10%	26%	13%	18%	23%
Dk/R	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%

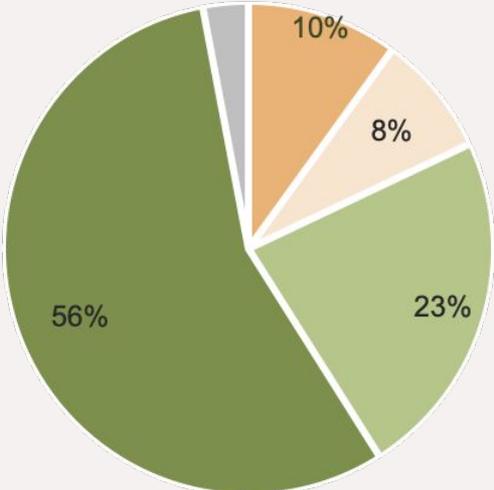
Fewer Black women in the South have heard “a lot” about the Roe draft, despite being in states where the fall of Roe will all but outlaw abortion.



An overwhelming majority of Black women oppose overturning Roe v. Wade.

Opposition to Overturning Roe v. Wade

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know/ refused

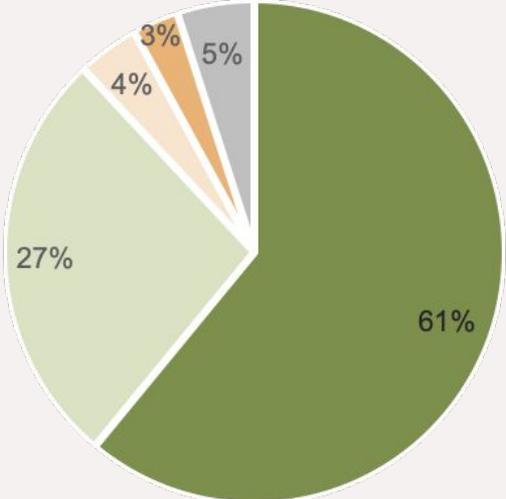


	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
****Net support	-61%	-56%	-63%	-48%	-76%	-47%	-70%	-64%	-43%
Total support	18%	18%	14%	24%	10%	25%	15%	16%	25%
Total oppose	79%	74%	77%	72%	86%	72%	85%	80%	68%
Strongly support	10%	8%	10%	11%	8%	12%	7%	3%	19%
Somewhat support	8%	10%	4%	13%	3%	12%	8%	13%	6%
Somewhat oppose	23%	18%	11%	28%	17%	28%	20%	32%	18%
Strongly oppose	56%	56%	66%	45%	69%	43%	65%	49%	50%
Dk/R	3%	8%	9%	3%	4%	4%	1%	3%	7%

Nearly half of less motivated voters say striking down Roe would make them much more motivated to vote.

Roe Decision and Motivation to Vote

- Much more motivated
- Somewhat more motivated
- Somewhat less motivated
- Much less motivated
- Don't know/refused

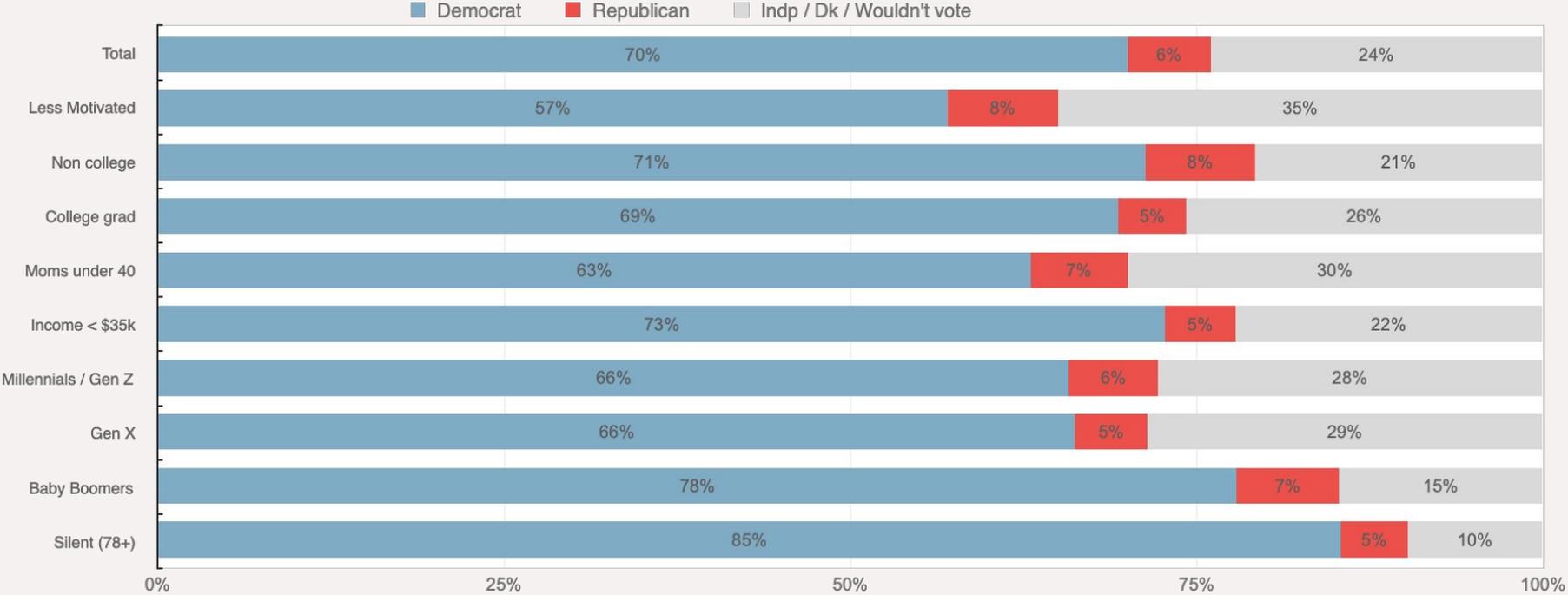


	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
****Net more motivated	81%	48%	54%	83%	80%	80%	-70%	-64%	-43%
Total more motivated	88%	66%	70%	90%	86%	89%	15%	16%	25%
Total less motivated	7%	19%	16%	7%	6%	9%	85%	80%	68%
Much more motivated	61%	45%	53%	53%	72%	48%	69%	56%	57%
Smwht more motivated	27%	22%	18%	37%	14%	41%	21%	37%	26%
Smwht less motivated	4%	10%	11%	4%	4%	7%	3%	3%	6%
Much less motivated	3%	9%	5%	3%	2%	1%	3%	0%	6%
Dk/R	5%	15%	13%	2%	8%	2%	4%	5%	5%

Appendix

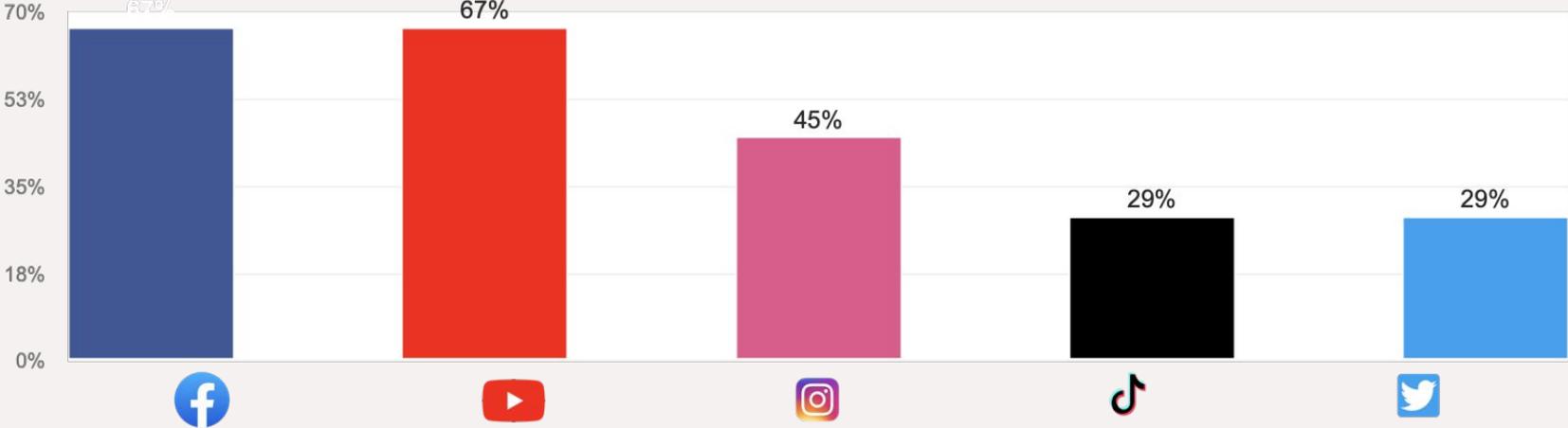
Younger voters and less motivated are disproportionately holding back on their vote.

Generic Congressional Ballot by Key Groups



Moms under 40 are some of the gloomiest about the economic and political climate and by far the most avid social media consumers.

Social media platforms
(% used in past 2 days)



	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Facebook	67%	66%	63%	65%	70%	84%	70%	65%	67%
Youtube	67%	52%	62%	63%	72%	82%	68%	72%	64%
Instagram	45%	44%	45%	43%	47%	75%	49%	52%	36%
Tiktok	29%	28%	28%	28%	30%	46%	34%	28%	25%
Twitter	23%	14%	15%	26%	19%	41%	27%	30%	12%

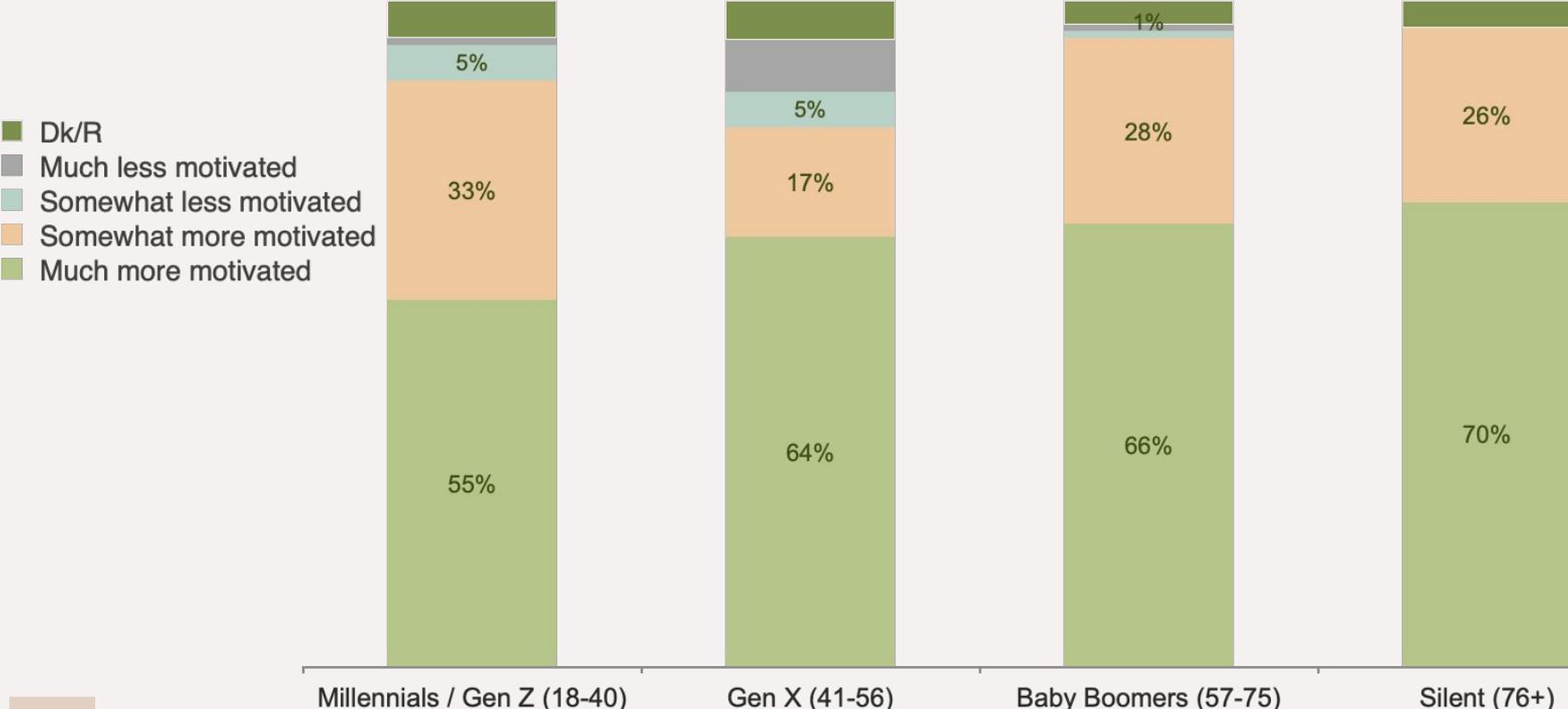
Generic Econ vs. Anti-Racism Focused Candidate: Key Groups

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Total more A (Generic Econ)	42%	42%	51%	43%	39%	43%	36%	48%	42%
Total more B (Anti-Racism)	52%	50%	39%	51%	55%	49%	58%	51%	49%
Much more A (Generic Econ)	23%	23%	27%	24%	21%	19%	17%	21%	32%
Somewhat more A (Generic Econ)	19%	19%	24%	19%	18%	25%	19%	27%	10%
Somewhat more B (Anti-Racism)	22%	17%	13%	25%	20%	23%	27%	27%	12%
Much more B (Anti-Racism)	30%	33%	26%	26%	36%	26%	31%	24%	37%
Dk/R	6%	8%	10%	6%	5%	8%	6%	1%	9%

Pro-CRT vs. Anti-CRT Candidate: Key Groups

	Total	Less motivated	Up for Grabs	Non-college	College grad	Moms under 40	Liberal	Moderate	Cons
Total more A (pro CRT)	78%	72%	71%	76%	82%	78%	81%	77%	76%
Total more B (anti CRT)	15%	16%	16%	17%	12%	20%	14%	14%	18%
Much more A (pro CRT)	62%	59%	60%	53%	72%	59%	72%	49%	61%
Somewhat more A (pro CRT)	17%	13%	11%	22%	10%	19%	9%	29%	16%
Somewhat more B (anti CRT)	7%	8%	7%	9%	4%	14%	8%	6%	8%
Much more B (anti CRT)	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%	10%
Dk/R	7%	12%	13%	7%	6%	2%	5%	9%	6%

Women who came of age after Roe are more motivated to vote in the face of its dissolution.





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COMMUNITY, CAPITAL, LEGACY

