



DEMOCRACY & POWER
INNOVATION FUND

UNDERSTANDING BLACK VALUES:

NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL SURVEY FINDINGS

October 2025

RESEARCH PARTNERS



HIT STRATEGIES

“HIT is the leading millennial and minority-owned public opinion research firm in Washington, DC with an innovative and unconventional approach to research.”¹



SOJOURN STRATEGIES

“Sojourn Strategies is a Black woman owned social impact consulting firm that brings a people-centered approach to research, advocacy campaigns, and philanthropic advising. They support clients in driving measurable impact by designing campaigns and research grounded in both values and strategy.”²

This report reflects state-level research conducted by Detroit Action, Florida Rising, Faith in Florida, POWER Interfaith, the New Georgia Project, and HIT Strategies in 2024. It also reflects learnings from the 2024 National Black Values survey conducted by the Democracy & Power Innovation Fund, HIT Strategies, and Sojourn Strategies.

This report was written by Martina Smith of Ariel Research Partners and edited by Dr. Katrina Gamble and Destinye Golden of Sojourn Strategies.

¹ HIT Strategies. *Home*.

² Sojourn Strategies.

STATE PARTNERS



DETROIT ACTION

"Our mission is to build the power of individuals and families to challenge the root cause of poverty, advance justice, and promote human development through neighborhood-driven community organizing and civic engagement. We believe in creating a just world where everyone has housing, healthcare, quality education, and a live-able environment."³



FLORIDA RISING

"We build independent political power that centers historically marginalized communities so everyday Floridians shape the future. We organize multi-racial movements to win elections, change laws, and create a state where everyone can be safe, happy, healthy and whole. We're a people-powered organization made up of members advancing economic and racial justice across Florida. Every individual has power but we have more power together."⁴



FAITH IN FLORIDA

"The mission of Faith in Florida (FIF) is to build a powerful, multicultural, nonpartisan network of congregation community organizations in Florida that will address systemic racial and economic issues that cause poverty for our families."⁵



POWER INTERFAITH

"POWER Interfaith represents over 50 unique congregations in Southeastern and Central Pennsylvania. With four Regional Chapters, we are people of faith committed to the work of bringing about justice here and now. We believe that faith can bring us together more than it can divide us and that our varied faith traditions call on us to act to make our communities and our nation better places to live."⁶



NEW GEORGIA PROJECT

"New Georgia Project (NGP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic engagement organization [that] believes in the inherent power of Georgians that have been ignored for too long: Black Georgians, brown Georgians, young people, LGBTQ+ folks, rural Georgians, and others who have the power to move our state forward. We are leading a state-wide, multi-racial, multi-generational, cross-class movement that works all year, every year to build a new Georgia that works for everyone."⁷

³ Detroit Action. *About Us*.

⁴ Florida Rising. *Home*.

⁵ Faith in Florida. *About Us*.

⁶ POWER Interfaith. *About*.

⁷ New Georgia Project. *About*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis of cross-state and national research provides a comprehensive examination of the values, identities, and civic motivations that shaped Black voters' political engagement in 2024. Drawing on original surveys and focus group data from Georgia, Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — supported by the 2024 national Black values survey and segmentation analysis — our research identified five distinct clusters of Black voters that reflect a wide range of political attitudes and beliefs, levels of institutional trust, and levels of civic engagement. The state-level Black Values research was done in collaboration with Detroit Action, Faith in Florida, Florida Rising, POWER Interfaith, and the New Georgia Project, and the research builds on four years of work in partnership with these same organizations. DPI partner organizations serve as essential collaborators, bringing their insights from on-the-ground organizing into the research design and analysis. Furthermore, the research findings suggest that organizations working regularly in communities and with established trust are best positioned to utilize this research learning in organizing programs.

The report identifies key findings and recommendations for organizations that organize and engage the Black electorate.

The findings in this report represent a fundamental truth: Black voters are not disengaged — they are cautious and perceptive. Reaching them will require moving beyond mass appeals and toward a strategic approach rooted in community values, trust, and relevance.

This report is designed to support organizers and institutions seeking to deepen engagement of Black people in democratic practice through strategies grounded in rigorous data and deep community listening.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Black voters are not a monolith — values, not just demographics, drive political behavior.
- There are five distinct values clusters among Black people in the United States: Legacy Civil Rights, Secular Progressives, NextGen Traditionalists, Rightfully Cynical, and Race-Neutral Conservatives.
- Perceptions of power are predictive: When asked about how much power Black voters felt that their vote had to make a change on issues that mattered to them, we found that Black voters who believe their vote matters are more likely to participate in elections.
- Disillusionment does not equal complete disengagement — Rightfully Cynical and NextGen Traditionalists are open to influence through the right messengers and message frames.
- Cluster-informed messaging can increase trust, turnout, and overall engagement when tailored to local dynamics.
- Collective identity, lived experience, and practical outcomes matter more than abstract appeals to partisanship or ideology.

1. Introduction

For decades, campaigns and political institutions have treated Black voters as a reliable but homogenous voting bloc. Political campaigns often assume Black voters' preferences, treating them as a monolith rather than a diverse group with varied values and beliefs. This approach yields inadequate organizing tactics and strategies that fail to effectively engage Black voters, because it overlooks the complexity of their political behavior and attitudes.⁸ Traditional engagement strategies have emphasized voter turnout over insight, often failing to address the deeper forces that shape how Black people interpret power, community, identity, and civic action. Over the past five years, DPI's research has found that perceptions of Black civic power are directly correlated with civic participation. The less powerful that Black people feel, the less likely they are to turn out and vote. To maintain perceptions of power, it is critical to engage with Black people beyond voting and elections.

In reality, Black voters hold a broad spectrum of beliefs about politics, faith, race, and progress. Their motivations to vote — or not vote — are rooted in complex social, emotional, and historical frameworks.⁹ Examining ideological differences and nuances within the Black community is crucial for a better understanding of what motivates this community. Recognizing this, the Black Voter Values and Clusters Project offered a new model for understanding and engaging Black voters in 2024 and beyond.

Through a multimethod research effort including national survey data, cluster analysis, and focus groups in four states, we identified five distinct clusters of the Black electorate:

- Legacy Civil Rights
- Secular Progressives
- NextGen Traditionalists
- Rightfully Cynical
- Race-Neutral Conservatives

These clusters transcend demographic segments — they are values-based groupings that capture how Black voters perceive their power, trust institutions, process community needs, and imagine progress. By mapping these clusters across four states — Georgia, Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — we offer a nuanced understanding of regional variation, messaging resonance, and strategic opportunity.

This report synthesizes what we learned: where clusters are concentrated, what they care about, how they view their civic power individually and collectively, and which messages move them. The report also offers recommendations for organizers and strategists seeking to activate not just Black voter turnout but Black civic power.

⁸ Cohen, C. J. (2010). *Democracy Remixed*. Oxford University Press.

⁹ Slaughter, C. (2025). Black agency and Black political attitudes: examining major questions with contemporary data. *Politics Groups and Identities*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2025.2466548>

2. Methodology

This research employed a multimethod approach that combined quantitative and qualitative data collection, including national and state-level surveys, cluster analysis, and focus groups. The design was developed to capture both behavioral and attitudinal patterns among the Black electorate, with a particular focus on values, political efficacy, and trust in institutions.

HIT Strategies conducted this research in collaboration with Sojourn Strategies and the Democracy & Power Innovation Fund state partners — Florida Rising (Florida), The New Georgia Project (Georgia), Detroit Action (Michigan), and POWER Interfaith (Pennsylvania). Across the four state-level research projects, including surveys and focus groups, as well as the national survey, this report reflects data from over 7,200 Black participants, making this one of the largest studies of Black people in the United States. For a full breakdown of the surveys' sample sizes, focus group demographics, dates, and other details, please refer to the Appendix.

The 2024 Black Values Survey was a nationally representative sample conducted among 2,034 Black registered voters and 918 eligible but unregistered Black voters. Cases were matched down, and some lower-quality cases were removed, resulting in a final sample size of 2,952. Samples for four state surveys were drawn from the Catalist voter file based on the distribution of Black voters in each state.

The five values clusters were identified through a segmentation analysis of the national dataset using variables such as vote power (individual and collective), trust in government, religiosity, partisanship, Black identity, and political ideology. Cluster assignments were validated across state datasets. They are used throughout this report to compare across geographic and demographic contexts.

Focus groups explored community issues, perceptions of power, motivations, and barriers to civic participation as well as different message frameworks. The messages tested were designed

to include specific information from the organizing programs of the state organizations leading this research. In each state, we also worked to test messages that reflected different power frameworks: progress, obstruction, accountability, negotiating, and punitive. Progress messages focus on policy gains or momentum and draw attention to the wins individuals have gained through civic action. Obstruction messages highlight instances in which politicians have blocked or prevented important policy gains and the impact of that obstruction on communities, whereas accountability messages point directly to the power individuals have to ensure their elected officials are responsive to them. Negotiating power is when constituents use various actions to move elected officials closer toward their position. And finally, punitive power is when individuals organize to punish or remove from office politicians who have failed to deliver results to the communities they represent.¹⁰

This methodological approach ensured that both macro-level trends and community-level nuance were captured in the research.

¹⁰ The cycle of power of framework is one that HIT Strategies designed. See the Appendix for a visual of the framework.

3. National Cluster Framework

The segmentation analysis identified five distinct clusters of Black voters based on their values, political identity, trust in institutions, and perceptions of political power. These clusters are not solely demographic profiles; they rely heavily on values, efficacy, trust, attitudes, and behavior. Understanding these groups — and their distribution across geographies — is key to crafting resonant messages, selecting trusted messengers, and organizing effectively.

CLUSTER SUMMARY

Legacy Civil Rights (41%): Older, civically engaged, religious, have a strong Black identity, highly Democratic

Secular Progressives (12%): Highly educated, liberal, secular, value systemic reform and harm prevention

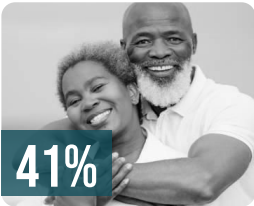
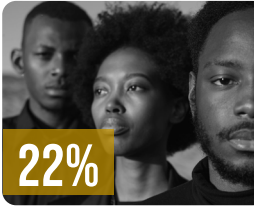
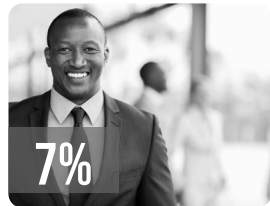
NextGen Traditionalists (18%): Younger, religious, community- and family-oriented, have lower income, and have lower education

Rightfully Cynical (22%): Younger, have low institutional trust, disaffected, have low registration and turnout, identify as more moderate

Race-Neutral Conservatives (7%): Have high income and education, fiscally focused, least likely to emphasize race

These clusters exist across all four states and the national sample but in different proportions. Some states, such as Florida and Pennsylvania, have a higher concentration of Legacy Civil Rights voters, while Michigan and Georgia exhibit greater diversity across segments. Subsequent sections provide detailed breakdowns by cluster and state, including issue priorities, perceptions of power, and message resonance.

The personas below outline the defining characteristics of each cluster in terms of civic participation, issue saliency, and primary motivations.

LEGACY CIVIL RIGHTS	SECULAR PROGRESSIVES	NEXTGEN TRADITIONALIST	RIGHTFULLY CYNICAL	RACE-NEUTRAL CONSERVATIVE
				
41%	12%	18%	22%	7%
"My ancestors sacrificed too much for me not to vote, so I'll wait in line as long as it takes."	"Black votes can only matter after Black lives matter."	"I think voting matters, but I'm more focused on what's happening right here in my community."	"My hood ain't get no better under Obama and no worse under Trump. So why vote?"	"Democrats just want to keep us distracted with racism so we're not paying attention to the serious stuff."
• Oldest cohort; Has the most Boomers • Vote Power: 7-10 (highest vote power) • Strong Black identity • Strong Democrats • High vote likelihood (highest) • Majority women • Vote Motivations: To protect or defend democracy and civic duty	• Largely Gen X & millennials • Vote Power: 6-10 • Most educated • Majority women • Strong Black identity • Democrats • High vote likelihood • Believes systemic racism is a barrier for Black people • Values equality & fairness	• Largely young people; (millennials & Gen Z) • Vote Power: 6-10 • Strong Black identity • Lowest income • Lowest education • Independent, lean Democrat • Low vote likelihood • High religiosity	• Youngest cohort; the most Gen Z • Vote Power: 5-10 • Majority men • Independent • Disapprove of Democrats and Republicans • Lowest vote likelihood • Low social trust	• Mostly Gen X and millennials • Vote Power: 4-10 (lowest vote power) • Majority men • Low Black identity • Independents, lean Republican • Highest income
2024 Top Issue: Racism and discrimination	2024 Top Issue: Healthcare	2024 Top Issue: Healthcare	2024 Top Issue: Inflation and cost of living	2024 Top Issue: Inflation and cost of living

CLUSTER PERSONAS



41%

Legacy Civil Rights

"My ancestors sacrificed too much for me not to vote."

- Baby Boomers and older Generation X
- Strongest belief in perceptions of vote power and community efficacy
- Consistently high participation

Top issues: racism, health care, voting rights, and inflation

Primary motivations: civic duty and defense of democracy



12%

Secular Progressives

"Black votes only matter after Black lives matter."

- Most educated; many are Generation Xers
- Liberal values; highly skeptical of institutions
- Low church attendance but strong community focus

Top issues: health care, systemic racism, and the cost of living

Primary motivations: preventing harm and defending rights



18%

NextGen Traditionalists

"I care about my people, but I need to know how voting helps us."

- High religiosity and a belief in traditional gender roles
- Low education and income; high Black identity
- Moderate political ideology; many identify as Independents

Top issues: health care, racism, jobs, and crime

Primary motivations: faith, family, and tangible community change



22%

Rightfully Cynical

"My hood didn't get better under Obama or worse under Trump."

- Majority Generation Z and younger Millennials
- Lowest trust in government and political parties
- Low voter registration and participation

Top issues: inflation, health care, and jobs

Primary barrier: deep political apathy and cynicism



7%

Race-Neutral Conservatives

"We focus too much on racism and not enough on the economy."

- High income and education levels
- Weak racial identity; emphasize individual responsibility
- Identify as Republican and Republican-leaning Independents

Top issues: inflation, crime, and jobs

Primary motivations: economic stability and personal agency

To interpret these clusters effectively, it is important to consider how various values — and not just demographics — drive engagement and skepticism. These cluster personas offer a snapshot of each cluster's key traits, including political trust, identity salience, and historical turnout patterns. For example, Legacy Civil Rights voters exhibit high levels of participation and strong beliefs in vote power. In contrast, Rightfully Cynical voters — despite their numbers — remain less engaged due to distrust and disillusionment rooted in their lived experience. This framework is not intended to create political shorthand. It is designed to support organizing and communication strategies that are informed by emotional and cultural factors as well as an appreciation for the complexity of the Black political experience in the US.

Taken together, these cluster characteristics underscore the diversity of Black voter experiences and orientations toward power, politics, and progress. While Legacy Civil Rights voters are the civic backbone of the Black electorate, NextGen Traditionalists and Rightfully Cynical voters represent both a challenge and an opportunity for long-term power-building. Secular Progressives may be smaller in number, but they are ideologically aligned with structural change, and Race-Neutral Conservatives — though less likely to engage — cannot be ignored in messaging designed to appeal to economic pragmatism and personal responsibility.

Understanding these segments is crucial for applying the values cluster framework across states, where demographic concentrations, historical context, and localized concerns shape Black voters' attitudes and behaviors. The following section explores these dynamics in greater detail by state.



4. State Profiles

GEORGIA OVERVIEW

In 2024, more than half (54%) of Black voters in Georgia expressed dissatisfaction with the direction of the country. However, most still reported strong perceptions of both individual and collective political power – a trend that varied across clusters. In other words, despite high levels of disillusionment, many Georgia voters continued to believe in their own capacity to effect change through civic engagement.

In Georgia, focus group participants expressed widespread skepticism about national politics but showed more hope in their local communities. As one focus group participant shared:

“I feel highly optimistic about our community ... I feel optimistic that my county just elected the first African-American female [CEO]. So I feel optimistic that she’s going to lead and put the county on the right direction.”
— Woman, focus group 3

While participants were cynical about national politics, local-level wins provided tangible demonstration of their vote power.

CLUSTER DISTRIBUTION

The Legacy Civil Rights cluster makes up the largest share of the Black electorate in Georgia (63%), anchoring civic engagement across the state. However, there is also a meaningful share of NextGen Traditionalists (11%) and Rightfully Cynical (10%) voters who reflect younger and less institutionally connected segments of the electorate.

Table 4.1 Georgia’s Cluster Distribution	
Legacy Civil Rights ¹¹	63%
Secular Progressives	9%
NextGen Traditionalists	11%
Rightfully Cynical	10%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	6%

¹¹ It is important to note that the state-level segmentations include only registered voters and the surveys were conducted during a high salience election; therefore they should not be used as a direct comparison to the 2024 national survey, which included registered and unregistered voters and was conducted much earlier in the 2024 election cycle.

SALIENT ISSUES

Overall, the most important issues for Black Georgians were health care (mean 9.2)¹², followed closely by K-12 education and the cost of living (mean 9.1). Within the clusters, we observed

differences in the levels of intensity at which each segment placed its priorities. Table 4.2 reveals that health care and economic anxiety are salient across clusters.

Figure 4.1 Issue Salience in Georgia

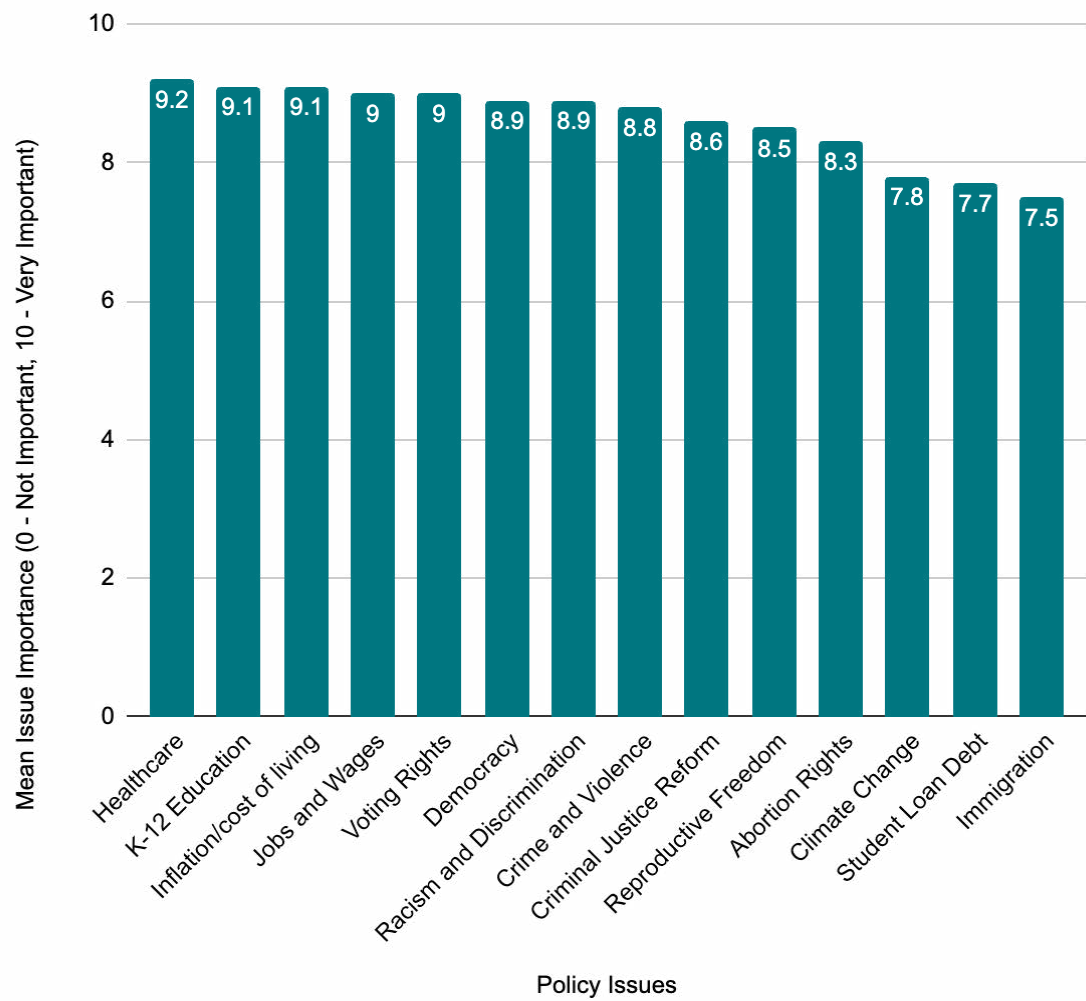


Table 4.2 Salient Issues Rated “Very Important” ¹³				
Legacy Civil Rights ⁹	Secular Progressives	NextGen Traditionalists	Rightfully Cynical	Race-Neutral Conservatives
Health care (94%)	Voting rights (89%)	Health care (87%)	Inflation/cost of living (83%)	Inflation/cost of living (90%)

¹² The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important

¹³ Percent of respondents by cluster who rated the importance of an issue an 8, 9, or 10



PERCEPTIONS OF POWER

Across clusters in Georgia, perceptions of power were generally strong. Fifty-seven percent of Georgia respondents believed their individual vote had “a lot of power,”¹⁴ and 54% thought the Black community had “a lot of power.” While overall voter power was high among Georgians, there was significant variation across clusters, with Legacy Civil Rights and Secular Progressives clusters having the highest sense of vote power and noticeably lower perceptions of power among the Rightfully Cynical and NextGen Traditionalists clusters.

Focus group discussions reinforced these findings. Participants often expressed that voting was a necessary form of action, even if it was not a transformative one. For many, the act of voting was framed less as a hopeful gesture and

more as a form of harm reduction — especially in a context where policy threats felt personal and urgent. For example, one participant shared:

“Just overall for the presidential election, it’s looking at the two candidates we have to choose from. I think that’s reflective of what we have to deal with, with navigating help and aid from the government, ‘I asked for this, but these are the two subpar options we’re going to give you.’ So it’s just hoping for change, knowing it may not happen necessarily in our lifetime, but wanting to, at least from a conscious standpoint, vote in this election, vote in all coming elections to be like, I have access to this. I need to exercise my civic duty.”
— Man, Georgia

Table 4.3 Percent of Respondents with High Perceptions of Power ¹⁵		
	Individual Power	Collective Power
Legacy Civil Rights	66%	60%
Secular Progressives	61%	59%
NextGen Traditionalists	39%	39%
Rightfully Cynical	27%	30%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	44%	50%

*Note: Green indicates a statistically significant difference higher than the mean, and red indicates a statistically significant difference lower than the mean.

¹⁴ Respondents who rated their power and the collective power of the Black community an 8, 9, or 10
¹⁵ Percent of respondents by cluster who rated their power and the collective power of the Black community an 8, 9, or 10



MESSAGE RESONANCE

The most motivating message frames in Georgia centered on the obstruction of affordable housing for former foster care youth and progress on criminal justice reform.¹⁶ Specifically, 71% of respondents believed the message highlighting how local politicians blocked a policy that focused on addressing the affordable housing issue for foster care youth who have aged out of the system would be a “very motivating” message to encourage voting. Within the clusters, Legacy Civil Rights (77%), Secular Progressives (72%), NextGen Traditionalists (66%), Rightfully Cynical (49%), and Race-Neutral Conservatives (48%) thought the same.

On the other hand, the most motivating message about progress highlighted criminal justice reforms in terms of banning chokeholds and mandating police body cameras. Indeed, 72% of respondents thought this was a “very motivating” message to encourage voting. Following closely to criminal justice reform was progress on removing medical debt from credit reports for over 15 million Americans, which 70% of respondents found “very motivating.” Within the clusters, progress on criminal justice reform was most motivating for Legacy Civil Rights (81%), Rightfully Cynical (62%), and Race-Neutral Conservatives (32%). The removal of medical debt from credit reports was the most motivating for Secular Progressives (79%) and NextGen Traditionalists (64%). Table 4.4 presents the text of each message.

Table 4.4 Message Text		
Obstruction Message	Progress Message	Progress Message
[HOUSING] The 2019 Foster Youth to Independence program offers 3-5 years of housing aid for those aging out of foster care. Georgia can request 500 vouchers but has only requested 8. More action is needed as Black youth 18-24 are disproportionately affected by homelessness.	[CRIMINAL JUSTICE] Because we protested together, this administration has banned no-knock warrants and chokeholds and mandated body cameras for all officers. When state prosecutors failed, federal hate crime laws were used to convict the murderers of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor.	[MEDICAL DEBT] Because we voted, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau announced a major initiative to remove medical debt from credit reports for over 15 million Americans. This policy change is projected to boost credit scores by an average of 20 points, providing significant financial relief and improving access to credit for millions of individuals.

¹⁶ Progress messages are ones that focus on policy gains or momentum. Obstruction messages highlight instances in which politicians have blocked or prevented important policy gains.



FLORIDA OVERVIEW

Black voters in Florida expressed a deep and multilayered understanding of the stakes of the 2024 presidential election. Although 55% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the country’s direction, they also reported the highest perceptions of political power among the four states surveyed. Many Black Floridians saw voting as the most important way to effect meaningful change in the Black community – 79% of Black Floridians said that “voting makes a difference” in what happens, with 57% sharing that it makes a big difference.¹⁷ Furthermore, 68% believe that electoral power is very important for the Black community to achieve change. While there is frustration with the state of the country, many see voting and engaging in elections as an important pathway for the Black community to make change.

CLUSTER DISTRIBUTION

Across all four states, Florida had the highest share of Legacy Civil Rights voters (65%), followed by NextGen Traditionalists (12%) and Rightfully Cynical (12%). The cluster landscape reflects a strong foundation of older, civically engaged voters but also reveals a significant presence of younger and more skeptical individuals. Table 4.5 highlights Florida’s cluster distribution.

Table 4.5 Florida’s Cluster Distribution	
Legacy Civil Rights ¹⁸	65%
Secular Progressives	8%
NextGen Traditionalists	12%
Rightfully Cynical	12%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	Not enough cases within the cluster to analyze

¹⁷ Question: “Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won’t make a difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens. In your mind, does voting make no difference, a small difference, a moderate difference, or a big difference?”

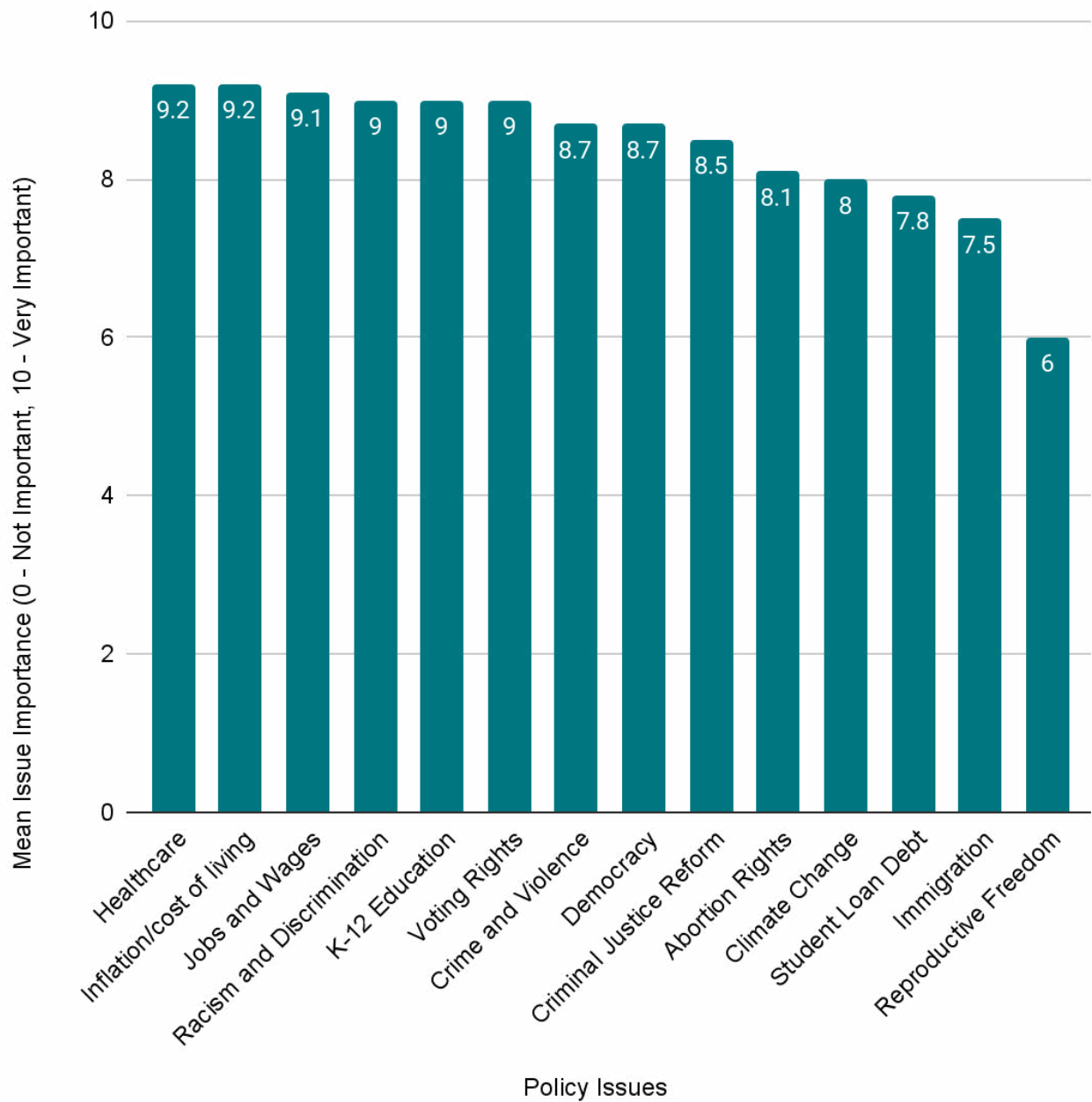
¹⁸ It is important to note that the state-level segmentations include only registered voters and the surveys were conducted during a high salience election; therefore they should not be used as a direct comparison to the 2024 national survey, which included registered and unregistered voters and was conducted much earlier in the 2024 election cycle.

SALIENT ISSUES

Health care and inflation/cost of living (mean 9.2)¹⁹ were top of mind for Black Floridians, which is not surprising given Black people in Florida experience the lowest health system performance in the state. For example, Black

people experience the most deaths before age 75 from preventable causes and have the second-highest uninsured rate (17%) in the state, further emphasizing Black residents’ health care struggles.²⁰

Figure 4.2 Issue Salience in Florida



¹⁹ The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important

²⁰ Radley, D., Shah, A., Collins, S., Powe, N., & Zephyrin, L. (2024). *The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Health Disparities Report Review of The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Health Disparities Report*. www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2024/apr/advancing-racial-equity-us-health-care.



Within the clusters, there were important variations. While the Legacy Civil Rights and Secular Progressive segments ranked systemic issues highest (e.g., racism and discrimination and voting rights), the segments that reflect young people and those with lower levels of participation ranked inflation and cost of living as the most salient. Table 4.6 shows the salience and intensity of issues by cluster.

Table 4.6 Salient Issues Rated “Very Important” ²¹				
Legacy Civil Rights ²²	Secular Progressives	NextGen Traditionalists	Rightfully Cynical	Race-Neutral Conservatives
Racism and discrimination (92%)	Voting rights (88%)	Inflation/cost of living (92%)	Inflation/cost of living (78%)	Not enough cases within the cluster to analyze

PERCEPTIONS OF POWER

Black Floridians have more of a sense of individual power than they have of the Black community’s collective power. Apart from the Legacy Civil Rights cluster, where the majority of respondents report a high sense of both individual and collective power, all other clusters exhibit a low sense of both individual and collective power. Table 4.7a highlights these differences.

Table 4.7 Percent of Respondents with High Perceptions of Power ²²		
	Individual Power	Collective Power
Legacy Civil Rights	68%	53%
Secular Progressives	45%	39%
NextGen Traditionalists	48%	47%
Rightfully Cynical	32%	26%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	Not enough cases within the cluster	Not enough cases within the cluster

*Note: Green indicates a statistically significant difference higher than the mean, and red indicates a statistically significant difference lower than the mean.

Notably, these numbers increased after exposure to certain message frames, particularly among the Rightfully Cynical voters, *suggesting a pathway to building civic engagement through issue-based narratives.*

²¹ Percent of respondents by cluster who rated the importance of an issue an 8, 9, or 10

²² Respondents who rated their power and the Black community’s collective power an 8, 9, or 10

Figure 4.3 Individual Power: Pre- and Post-Message Test Comparison²³

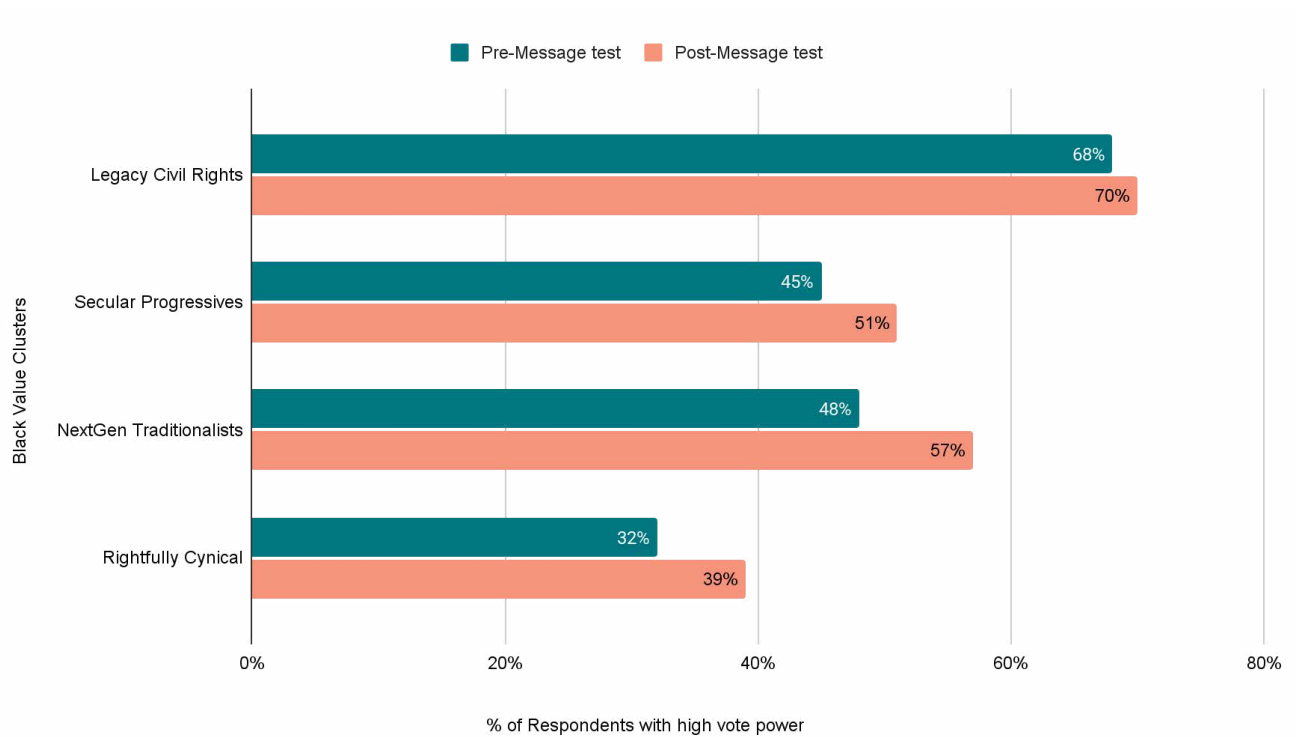
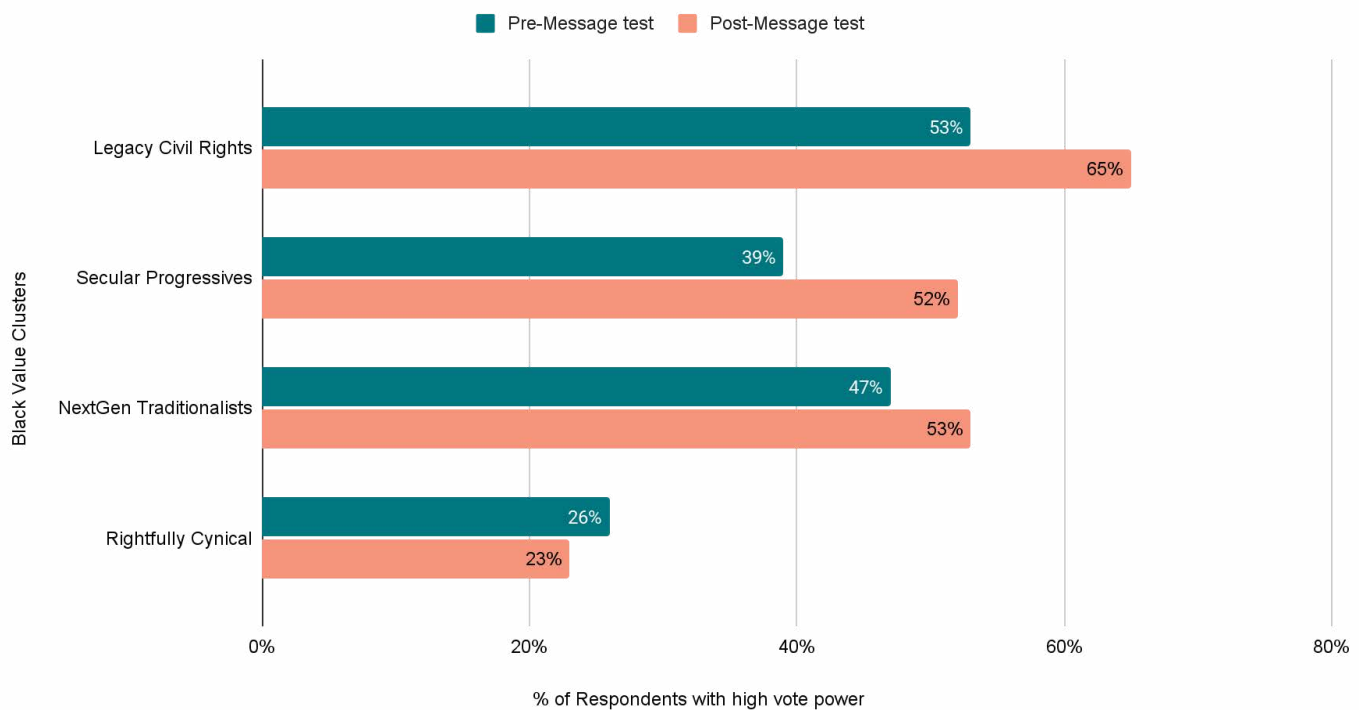


Figure 4.4 Collective Power: Pre- and Post-Message Test Comparison²⁴



²³ Race-Neutral Conservatives were not included because there were not enough cases within the cluster

²⁴ Race-Neutral Conservatives were not included because there were not enough cases within the cluster

MESSAGE RESONANCE

The most effective message frames in Florida centered on protest, obstruction, and community protection.

- The message referencing the Stop WOKE Act (Accountability) and Florida’s broader assault on truth-telling resonated across clusters — especially among the Legacy Civil Rights voters, with 71% reporting that this message was “very motivating” and 64% of Secular Progressives reporting the same.
- The message highlighting oversight boards and local democracy (Negotiating) performed well, with 67% of respondents reporting that it was a “very motivating” reason to vote, especially when paired with examples of policy wins or community resilience.
- Redistricting and anti-democratic obstruction messaging (punitive) served as an effective motivator for turnout when they were localized and concrete — 67% found this message “very motivating.”

Table 4.8 Message Text		
Accountability Message	Negotiating Message	Punitive Message
[PROTEST] Black voters in Florida have the power to stand up and demand accountability. When the Stop WOKE Act was passed to silence discussions about our history and experiences, it was our protests and a judge appointed by President Obama that blocked parts of the law. We’ve shown that when we push back, we can protect our rights. But the fight isn’t over. By voting, we can hold our leaders accountable and ensure they hear us loud and clear.	[POLICE REFORM] The voting power of Black voters in Florida is unmatched, and it’s time to remind these politicians who they work for. In April 2024, state leaders passed two bills (HB 601 and SB 184) trying to strip us of our ability to hold the police accountable. They think they can silence us by taking away our oversight boards, but we know the assignment. It’s time to push these officials to restore what’s ours and make sure our votes keep making our lives better.	[REDISTRICTING] Black voters in Florida have the power to demand fair representation. A new map, backed by certain political leaders, splits our communities into two districts, diluting our influence by connecting us to mostly white areas. Crafted with help from those in power, this map reduces the districts where we can choose our candidates from four to two while giving more seats to their side. By using our power, we can hold these officials accountable, remove those who support unfair maps, and elect leaders who are committed to ensuring our voices are heard.

PENNSYLVANIA OVERVIEW

As the 2024 general election drew near, six in 10 (58%) Black Pennsylvanians were dissatisfied with the direction of the country. Even more, Black voters were more skeptical than their peers in other states about the power of their individual vote, but they still expressed relatively high levels of civic engagement. This tension between skepticism and action reveals an important truth: Trust and turnout are not always aligned.

Many voters are participating despite their doubts — not because they feel fully represented but because they feel obligated to defend what's left of their power.

As one participant shared their fears around the upcoming election:

“This country. This country can change. This country could go not to Jim Crow, but like a sociological Jim Crow. It can really stop that melting pot. They can stop immigrants from coming in. And even though they say, “Oh, that might be a good thing, well, it’s not a good thing.” Then you can say, okay, they’re going to stop teaching Black history. That’s a big deal. So there’s a lot on [the line] this next election that is just besides somebody being old or somebody being racist or somebody being fake or whatever the case may be.”
— Man, Pennsylvania

Focus group participants, particularly in Philadelphia, articulated deep concern about political gamesmanship and obstruction. There was a widespread sense that leaders were more concerned with optics than outcomes. At the same time, participants expressed strong alignment with policies aimed at racial and economic justice, especially when framed through tangible community impact. For example, one respondent shared:

“I feel like maybe my point is hyperlocal, but it’s not unique. But we’ve identified a lot of issues within the community, specifically Philadelphia, and the higher-ups that people in power, the people that can change things, are worried about other stuff, that it’s not necessarily directly impacting our day-to-day lives. For instance, I just feel like, the new shift to the new mayor, I haven’t seen anything positive come out of that, despite the big talk that got that person elected. So I’m just, it’s frustrating.” — Woman, Philadelphia

CLUSTER DISTRIBUTION

Pennsylvania’s Black electorate was heavily concentrated in the Legacy Civil Rights cluster (64%), with smaller but significant segments of NextGen Traditionalists (11%), Rightfully Cynical (10%), Secular Progressives (9%), and Race-Neutral Conservatives (6%). This cluster composition suggests a voter base anchored in tradition, civic duty, and institutional alignment — but with growing ideological diversity that can’t be ignored. Table 4.9 shows this distribution.

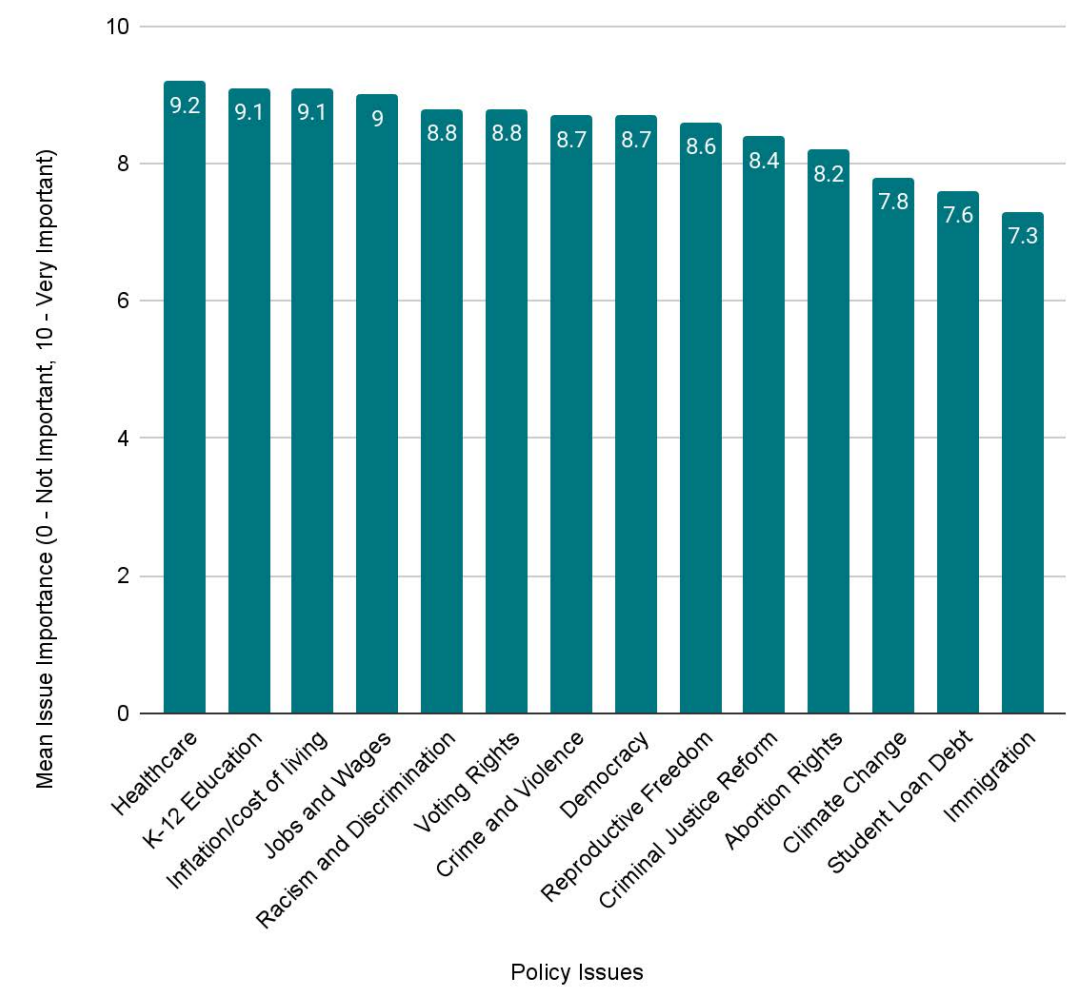
Table 4.9 Pennsylvania's Cluster Distribution	
Legacy Civil Rights ²⁵	64%
Secular Progressives	9%
NextGen Traditionalists	11%
Rightfully Cynical	10%
Race-Neutral Conservative	6%

SALIENT ISSUES

For Black voters in Pennsylvania, health care was the most important issue (mean 9.2).²⁶ However, inflation/cost of living and K-12 education followed closely behind (mean 9.1).²⁷

On the other hand, focus group participants thought crime and violence were the most salient, followed by inflation/cost of living and affordable housing. Within the clusters, respondents noted the same concerns with the economy, access to health care, and quality public education issues. Table 4.10 below highlights these findings.

Figure 4.5 Issue Salience in Pennsylvania



²⁵ It is important to note that the state-level segmentations include only registered voters and the surveys were conducted during a high salience election; therefore they should not be used as a direct comparison to the 2024 national survey, which included registered and unregistered voters and was conducted much earlier in the 2024 election cycle.

²⁶ The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important

²⁷ The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important



Table 4.10 Salient Issues Rated “Very Important” ²⁸				
Legacy Civil Rights	Secular Progressives	NextGen Traditionalists	Rightfully Cynical	Race-Neutral Conservatives
Health care (92%)	K-12 education (84%)	Inflation/cost of living and jobs and wages (92%)	Health care (82%)	Inflation/cost of living (93%)

PERCEPTIONS OF POWER

While lower than other states, the majority of Black Pennsylvanians still had a strong sense of individual power (67%) and a slightly lower sense of the collective power (64%) of the Black community.²⁹ Individual power was highest among the Legacy Civil Rights cluster and lowest among the Rightfully Cynical. Perceptions of collective power are lowest among the Rightfully Cynical, Race-Neutral Conservatives, and Secular Progressives in Pennsylvania. Collective power is highest among the Legacy Civil Rights and NextGen Traditionalists. Table 4.11 represents the distribution of power.

Table 4.11 Percent of Respondents with High Perceptions of Power ³⁰		
	Individual Power	Collective Power
Legacy Civil Rights	68%	53%
Secular Progressives	45%	39%
NextGen Traditionalists	48%	47%
Rightfully Cynical	32%	26%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	Not enough cases within the cluster	Not enough cases within the cluster

*Note: Green indicates a statistically significant difference higher than the mean, and red indicates a statistically significant difference lower than the mean.

Notably, the perception of collective power increased after exposure to message tests, particularly among the Secular Progressives and Rightfully Cynical voters. Interestingly, there was basically no shift in perception of individual vote power across clusters and a decline in a sense of collective power among NextGen Traditionalists after the message testing battery. Even if it is difficult to increase individual vote power the Rightfully Cynical seem particularly persuadable on collective power in Pennsylvania.

²⁸ Percent of respondents by cluster who rated the importance of an issue an 8, 9, or 10

²⁹ Respondents who rated their power and the collective power of the Black community an 8, 9, or 10

³⁰ Respondents who rated their power and the collective power of the Black community an 8, 9, or 10

Figure 4.6 Individual Power: Pre- and Post-Message Test Comparison

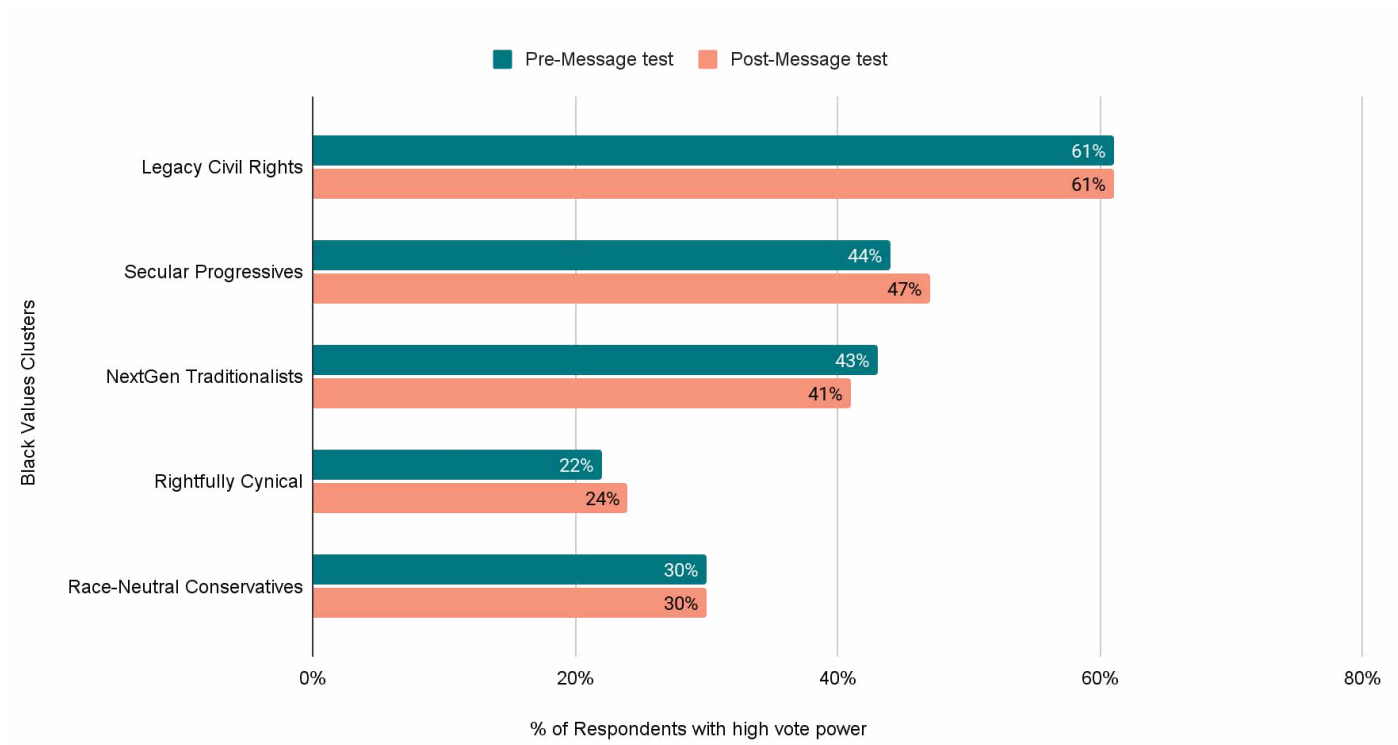
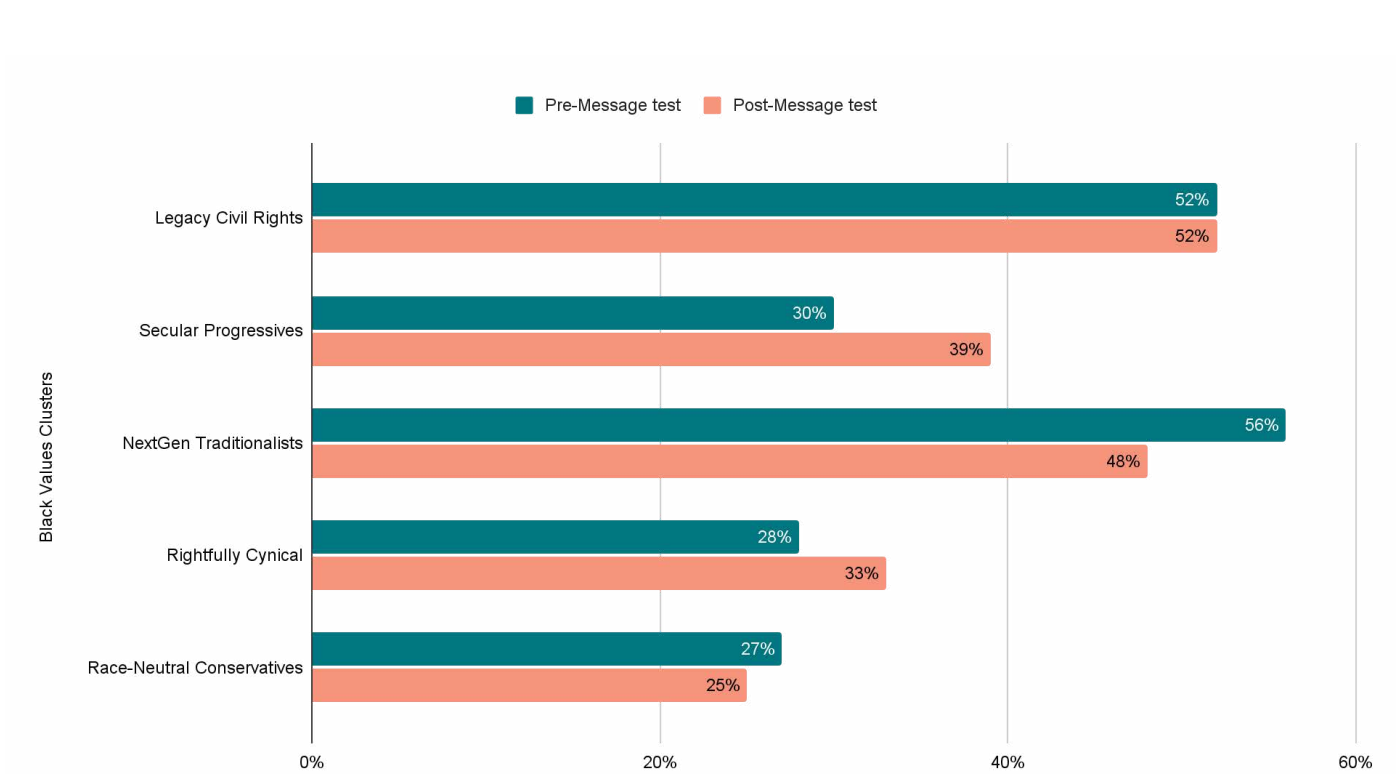


Figure 4.7 Collective Power: Pre- and Post-Message Test Comparison



MESSAGE RESONANCE

Of all the messages that highlighted progress across Pennsylvania, the message on gains in public education funding was the most motivating reason to vote, with 71% of respondents rating it “very motivating.” This contrasts with focus group findings, where messages about progress were met with skepticism unless participants personally felt the benefits.

Indeed, abstract appeals — such as “fighting for our future” or “protecting democracy” — were less resonant when not paired with local context. Voters wanted to know how change would happen, who would benefit, and why it mattered.

Respondents found localized messages about accountability and keeping promises, and about police reform, the most motivating. In fact, six out of 10 respondents (63%) found these two messages “very motivating” reasons to vote. Table 4.12 represents the message text.



Table 4.12 Message Text		
Progress Message	Progress Message	Progress Message
[PUBLIC EDUCATION] Because Black Pennsylvanians voted for the right elected officials, a bill in the Pennsylvania Senate is being discussed that will give \$526 million in grants to schools in 2025. The money will go to schools with more students living in poverty, making sure that schools in areas with lower property values get the funds they need. Our votes are making our communities.	[ENVIRONMENT] Sometimes it feels like politicians make promises they never keep, but we hold the power to demand accountability and push for change in our communities. Mayor Cherelle Parker’s \$6.3 billion budget is a step forward, funding more police officers, better streets, improved public transit, and cleaner neighborhoods. We’re not just voting, we’re keeping receipts. If politicians don’t follow through, we’ll show them the door.	[POLICE REFORM] They want us to believe nothing gets better so we don’t vote, but we can hold our leaders accountable and demand real changes. This year, the Pennsylvania Senate Democrats took a big step forward passing key police reform bills. Senate Bill 459 requires police to maintain detailed records of use-of-force incidents. Our community’s future is at stake. If they don’t step up, we’ll vote them out and find someone who will.



MICHIGAN OVERVIEW
(DETROIT FOCUS)

As observed in other states, the majority of Black voters in Detroit were dissatisfied with the direction of the country (60%), and this was more salient among the Race-Neutral Conservatives (82%), Rightfully Cynical (68%), and the NextGen Traditionalists (63%). Undoubtedly, Black voters expressed a sharp awareness of both systemic failure and the limits of electoral politics. Yet, despite widespread cynicism, many participants articulated a persistent belief in community-based change.

That tension — between distrust in systems and hope in people — was central to how power, progress, and participation were understood.

Focus group participants, especially men, were more cynical and had little confidence that the presidential election would have a direct impact on their lives. Economic anxiety was palpable among participants, yet they remained hopeful that real change would emerge from the ground up, more so than from the government.

As one respondent shared:

*“I think the economy, how much gas costs, how much food costs, all that s&*t has a dramatic impact, no matter if I was making more money or not ...”* — Man, Detroit

Another respondent shared:

“It’s just too much going on, and no one is doing anything about it. And if they are, it’s taking forever. Like food inflation, the cost to live now ... it’s like when are we going to step up and do something about this?” — Woman, Detroit

In addition, focus group participants were newly introduced to Detroit Action, and many expressed excitement and curiosity about the organization’s work once it was tied to specific local policy wins.

CLUSTER DISTRIBUTION

Michigan has a more balanced distribution across four clusters that are closely similar to the national clusters. This spread reveals opportunities — and challenges — for both mobilization and persuasion. With a substantial portion of the electorate holding moderate, skeptical, or nontraditional views, there is no one-size-fits-all narrative that will activate voter turnout. Table 4.13 highlights the distribution.

Table 4.13 Michigan’s Cluster Distribution	
Legacy Civil Rights ³¹	54%
Secular Progressives	Not enough cases in the cluster to analyze
NextGen Traditionalists	16%
Rightfully Cynical	14%
Race-Neutral Conservative	10%

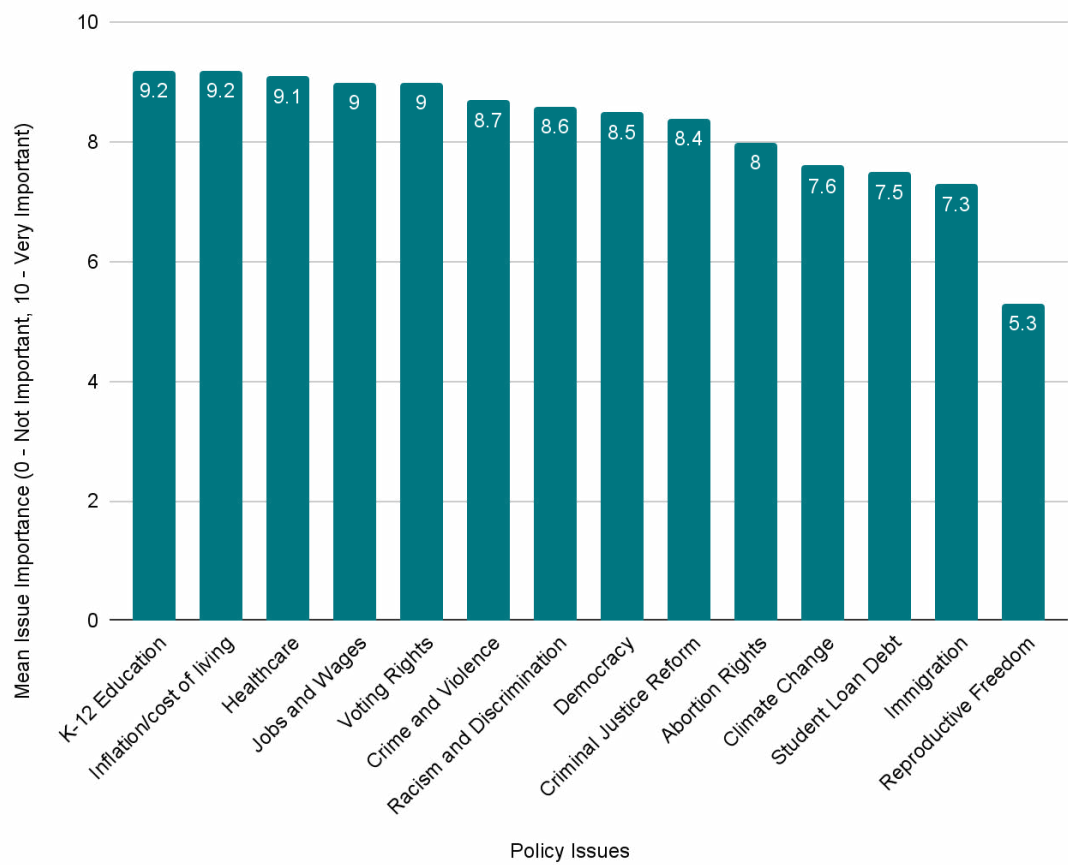
³¹ It is important to note that the state-level segmentations include only registered voters and the surveys were conducted during a high salience election; therefore they should not be used as a direct comparison to the 2024 national survey, which included registered and unregistered voters and was conducted much earlier in the 2024 election cycle.

SALIENT ISSUES

For Black voters in Detroit, K-12 education and inflation/cost of living emerged as the most important issues facing the community (mean 9.2).³² Education is top of mind for Black voters and for good reason: Michigan ranks among the bottom 10 states for education,³³ reflecting systemic challenges in the education system. Although the cost of living in Michigan is below the national average,³⁴ the median household income for Black people in Michigan is \$44,133, which is the lowest among racial groups in the state.³⁵

Health care closely followed education and cost of living as a top issue in Detroit (mean 9.1).³⁶ On the other hand, focus group participants identified inflation/cost of living as the most salient issue, followed by crime and violence. Within the clusters, there was variance across priorities with both similarities and differences. Table 4.14 highlights these issue priorities.

Figure 4.8 Issue Salience in Michigan



³² The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important

³³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2024). *2024 Kids Count Data Profile* [Review of *2024 Kids Count Data Profile*].

³⁴ ERI Economic Research Institute. (2025). *Cost of Living in Michigan | Cost of Living Index*. <https://www.eri-eri.com/cost-of-living/>

³⁵ Neilsberg. (n.d.). *Michigan Median Household Income By Race – 2024 Update*. [www.neilsberg.com. https://www.neilsberg.com/insights/michigan-median-household-income-by-race/](https://www.neilsberg.com/insights/michigan-median-household-income-by-race/)

³⁶ The average total of respondents who rated issues on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important



Table 4.10 Salient Issues Rated “Very Important” ³⁷				
Legacy Civil Rights	Secular Progressives	NextGen Traditionalists	Rightfully Cynical	Race-Neutral Conservatives
Voting rights (95%)	Not enough cases in the cluster to analyze	K-12 education (94%)	Health care (81%)	Inflation/cost of living (77%)

PERCEPTIONS OF POWER

While overall perceptions of individual and collective power are strong among Black voters, only those in the Legacy Civil Rights cluster feel the most individual and collective power. For all other clusters, there is a sense of low individual and collective power. These numbers were slightly above the Pennsylvania average but lower than Georgia and Florida, suggesting that trust-building remains essential, particularly among younger and male voters. Table 4.15 highlights the distribution of power.

Table 4.15 Percent of Respondents with High Perceptions of Power ³⁸		
	Individual Power	Collective Power
Legacy Civil Rights	68%	62%
Secular Progressives	Not enough cases in the cluster	Not enough cases in the cluster
NextGen Traditionalists	53%	53%
Rightfully Cynical	44%	41%
Race-Neutral Conservatives	37%	38%

*Note: Green indicates a statistically significant difference higher than the mean, and red indicates a statistically significant difference lower than the mean.

³⁷ Percent of respondents by cluster who rated the importance of an issue an 8, 9, or 10

³⁸ Respondents who rated their power and the collective power of the Black community an 8, 9, or 10

MESSAGE RESONANCE

As with Black voters from other states, there was emphasis that narratives need to reflect lived reality. Grand visions of progress fall flat unless grounded in tangible, place-based results that feel relevant.

Respondents found the messages about the victories that Detroit Action had won to be the most motivating. Specifically, winning legal support for those facing evictions was a “very motivating” reason to vote for 69% of respondents as well as a bill of rights for renters

that ensures they can live in safe housing was a “very motivating” reason to vote for 68% of respondents.

Race-Neutral Conservatives were less receptive to moral or equity-driven arguments but responded to concrete examples of financial relief and neighborhood improvements. Rightfully Cynical voters showed increased interest when messaging was short; candid; and led by trusted, community-based voices. Table 4.16 highlights the message text.

Table 4.16 Message Text	
Progress Message	Progress Message
[RIGHT TO COUNSEL] The Right to Counsel (RTC) is a hard-won policy that Detroit Action fought to achieve, increasing housing security and reducing the number of unjust evictions driving Black Detroiters out of the city. RTC provides legal support to households facing eviction or foreclosure who lack the resources for legal representation, ensuring they do not suffer unjust or illegal evictions and foreclosures.	[HOUSING RIGHTS] Michigan legislators have introduced a Renter’s Bill of Rights to protect renters from exploitation, aligning with Detroit Action’s mission to fight for the community. Senate Bill 902, the “Right to Repair” bill, requires landlords to address serious hazards within 24 hours, fix broken appliances within 72 hours, and complete other repairs within a week after written notice. Tenants can withhold rent or deduct repair costs if these timelines aren’t met.

5. Cross-State Comparative Analysis

The data from Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Michigan reveal both shared patterns and sharp distinctions in how Black voters perceive their power, prioritize issues, and respond to power-based messaging.

These findings underscore the importance of a values-based, locally grounded approach to engagement — one that takes into account regional context, generational divides, and ideological diversity within the Black electorate.

CLUSTER DISTRIBUTION

While there are many similarities between the national and state clusters, such as the Legacy Civil Rights cluster being the largest, there are also marked differences. On the one hand, Florida and Pennsylvania are anchored by Legacy Civil Rights voters, while Michigan has a more even distribution across clusters, including a higher share of the skeptical groups. Georgia's electorate reflects a mix of Legacy Civil Rights strength with a broader base of Progressives and Cynics than Pennsylvania or Florida. Table 5.1 highlights the cluster distributions.

Table 5.1 Cluster Distribution Comparison					
	Legacy Civil Rights	Secular Progressives	NextGen Traditionalists	Rightfully Cynical	Race-Neutral Conservatives
National	41%	12%	18%	22%	7%
Georgia	63%	9%	11%	10%	6%
Florida	65%	8%	12%	12%	Not enough cases to analyze
Pennsylvania	64%	9%	11%	10%	6%
Michigan	54%	Not enough cases to analyze	16%	14%	10%

SALIENT ISSUES ACROSS STATES

When we examine some of the shared issue priorities across states, we find that health care, inflation/cost of living, jobs and wages, and K-12 education are the most pressing concerns. These localized priorities are critical for crafting resonant messages that connect values to lived experiences. Table 5.2 reflects these comparisons.

Table 5.2 Important Issues Across States and Nationally³⁹

	Health Care	Inflation/Cost of Living	Jobs and Wages	K-12 Education
National	86%	86%	81%	68%
Georgia	89%	86%	85%	86%
Florida	87%	87%	86%	84%
Pennsylvania	88%	86%	86%	85%
Michigan	87%	87%	85%	89%

PERCEPTIONS OF POWER

While perception of power is relatively strong across all states, Pennsylvania's lower perceptions of vote power and the Black Community's collective power highlight a need for trust-building and empowerment messaging. Florida leads in the perception of individual power, reflecting a high-stakes political context that fosters awareness and urgency. Georgia and Michigan lead with the strongest perceptions of the Black community's collective power. Table 5.3 highlights these comparisons.

Table 5.3 Percent of Respondents with High Perceptions of Across States and Nationally⁴⁰

	Individual Power	Inflation/Cost of Living
National	36%	32%
Georgia	57%	54%
Florida	58%	49%
Pennsylvania	52%	46%
Michigan	58%	55%

³⁹ Percentages are based on "very importance" or respondents who rated the issue with an 8-10 on importance on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was not important and 10 was very important.

⁴⁰ Percentages of respondents who rated their power and the Black community's collective power as "very powerful" with a score of 8-10 on power on a scale of zero to 10, where zero was no power at all and 10 was very powerful.

CLUSTER-SPECIFIC PATTERNS ACROSS STATES

We observed cluster-specific patterns:

Legacy Civil Rights:

This is an older cluster, often motivated by a duty to honor and protect the gains of the civil rights era; these individuals are more likely to be motivated by democracy, racial justice, and faith than the other clusters.

Secular Progressives:

These individuals tend to be policy-first thinkers who value protest and structural equity.

NextGen Traditionalists:

This is a faith-driven cluster that values tangible community outcomes such as affordable housing and jobs.

Rightfully Cynical:

This cluster is marked by deep skepticism. However, these individuals can be motivated to vote or participate by real and tangible policy wins that have impacted their lives.

Race-Neutral Conservatives:

More prevalent in Michigan and Pennsylvania, members in this cluster value fiscal policy and clarity and not identity politics.

We also observed some shared themes across states:

Collective power is key: Across most clusters, “we” resonates more than “I” language.

“Basically, it could help us [if we vote] on actually what we want. So, the things that we want to see, the change in the community, we actually go out and advocate for that and vote on it and make sure that it passes through by [us] voting for it.” — Man, Georgia

Local wins build trust: Black people want to hear about real progress in their communities that is personal, visible, and accessible.

“Yeah, it was cool [the POWER Interfaith “Meeting the Moment” video]. Showing a historical Black church in the Philadelphia area and a person who seems like he’s out there actually doing something to better our circumstances. That’s cool. Yeah, that was a good video. They got to do a better job advertising, though, because I’ve never heard of [POWER Interfaith].” — Muslim man, Pennsylvania

Skepticism is not apathy: Black people have a historical right to be cynical, but that does not mean they won’t engage with messages that are authentic and honest.

Trust in messengers matters: Peers, local organizers, and everyday people with similar lived experiences carry more weight than politicians or party affiliation.

6. Message Targeting Framework

To effectively mobilize Black voters in 2024 and beyond, message frames must align not only with their values and beliefs but also with the underlying sentiments of each cluster. This framework offers strategic guidance on how to mobilize or organize each segment beyond passive

interest to active engagement. To be sure, each cluster requires distinct tones, messengers, and issue frames — not just in content but in delivery and trustworthiness. Table 6.1 is a matrix that provides an overview of a message framework specifically focused on each cluster.

Table 6.1 Message Framework Matrix				
	What Works	What to Avoid	Recommended Tone/Format	Trusted Messengers
Legacy Civil Rights	Messages that emphasize civic duty, protecting democracy, and policy wins via protest, along with faith-based framing	Cynical and nihilistic messaging	Inspirational, moral clarity	Faith leaders, elders, and long-time activists
Secular Progressives	Messages that emphasize systemic change, social and racial justice, harm reduction, and anti-racism	Patriotic framing and hollow optimism	Values-driven and issue-based	Movement organizations, policy experts, and peers
NextGen Traditionalists	Messages that emphasize family stability with a focus on jobs, housing, and faith	Policy jargon, academic appeals, fancy language, and ideological purity	Relatable, aspirational, and authentic	Local leaders, parents, clergy, and neighbors
Rightfully Cynical	Messages that emphasize local wins coupled with how to access resources, blunt truths, and real-life stakes	Political party slogans and empty promises	Short; direct; not preachy; and, most importantly, authentic	Peers, community organizers, formerly disengaged but still cynical voters
Race-Neutral Conservatives	Messages that emphasize economic stability, personal and neighborhood safety, and individual agency	Moral/racial appeals and progressive identity language	Rational, clear, and efficient	Financial experts, veterans, like-minded civic organizations, and business leaders

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE PRINCIPLES FOR CLUSTERS

Use real-world examples and localize how policies have impacted lives.

Where appropriate, clearly name the problem and define the opposition.

Emphasize how specific policies help people (not just what they promise to do) and the Black community's collective power.

Offer Black people a role in shaping their future, “Here’s what WE can do,” instead of “what’s at stake.”

Let trusted messengers lead the conversation on messages that are hopeful and encourage civic action.

This framework is not only a messaging tool — it’s also a strategy for building trust and affirming agency. Each cluster brings its own motivations and barriers, and respecting those differences is key to mobilizing them with integrity and effectiveness.



7. Strategic Recommendations

Below are six recommendations based on the survey findings and qualitative data from over 7,200 Black respondents across four states and a national survey in 2024.

1. LEAD WITH POWER, NOT PANIC

Many voters — especially the Rightfully Cynical — reject fear-based messaging. Instead of warning them about what's at stake, show them what's possible when they act collectively.

- Emphasize the power of collective action within Black communities and how collective action has produced historical wins and can do so again.
- Reinforce how Black voters, due to the historical gains they have achieved, can grow their influence and power.
- Highlight policy wins with clear, everyday impact (e.g., a lawyer can go with you to eviction court; our schools just got more funding). Show people the power that others like them have had.
- Use community stories and testimonials.
- Help people visualize outcomes.

2. UNDERSTAND VALUES TO ACTIVATE MOTIVATION

Different issues, tones, and trust signals motivate and activate each cluster. The more customized the approach, the higher the potential to convert disengagement into action.

- **Legacy Civil Rights:** Affirm civic duty and legacy.
- **NextGen Traditionalists:** Emphasize family, faith, and everyday solutions.
- **Secular Progressives:** Focus on justice, equity, and harm prevention.
- **Rightfully Cynical:** Acknowledge pain and frustration, and then focus on real results.
- **Race-Neutral Conservatives:** Highlight financial pragmatism and local safety.

3. INVEST IN MORE ORGANIZING—NOT JUST MOBILIZING

Rightfully Cynical and NextGen Traditionalists are not unreachable — they are under-engaged. They respond best to relational outreach, not last-minute get-out-the-vote scripts. Go where they are (online and offline), and speak the language they are speaking.

- Rightfully Cynical and NextGen Traditionalists need relational organizing (rooted in shared experiences), not transactional outreach.
- Both clusters need to see real change in their communities and lives to believe that power is possible for them and people like them.
- Build networks through shared identity, geography, and values — not just partisanship.
- Support more authentic local community leaders, not just political surrogates.

4. PRIORITIZE TRUSTED MESSENGERS

Across every state, trust in politicians and institutions was low — even among frequent voters. But trust in peers, community voices, and spiritual leaders remains high.

- Invest in grassroots and community messenger training.
- Engage barbers, faith leaders, youth leaders, and parents as the local leaders of campaigns.
- Let lived experiences lead the narrative.

5. CENTER BLACK VALUES—NOT JUST BLACK IDENTITY

Identity-based appeals alone are not enough. Black voters respond to messages that affirm their worldview: respect, dignity, fairness, family, and legacy.

- Build messages around values that Black people hold — not just racial urgency or fear.
- Connect the dots between policy goals and cultural values, especially for NextGen Traditionalists.
- Use language that is easy to understand and that reaffirms dignity and agency.

8. Conclusion

Now, more than ever, it is essential to understand the complexity and affirm the spectrum on which the Black electorate exists. The goal is not only to boost voter turnout among Black communities but also to strengthen civic power, helping Black communities feel they have a say in democratic processes. For too long, the political industry has treated Black people as transactional targets, only useful to achieve specific outcomes. Rarely does the political industry take the time to understand the underlying motivators, like Black values and beliefs, that show the diversity within the Black electorate, which ultimately help inform how to organize within the Black community in ways that build toward shared power.

Appendix

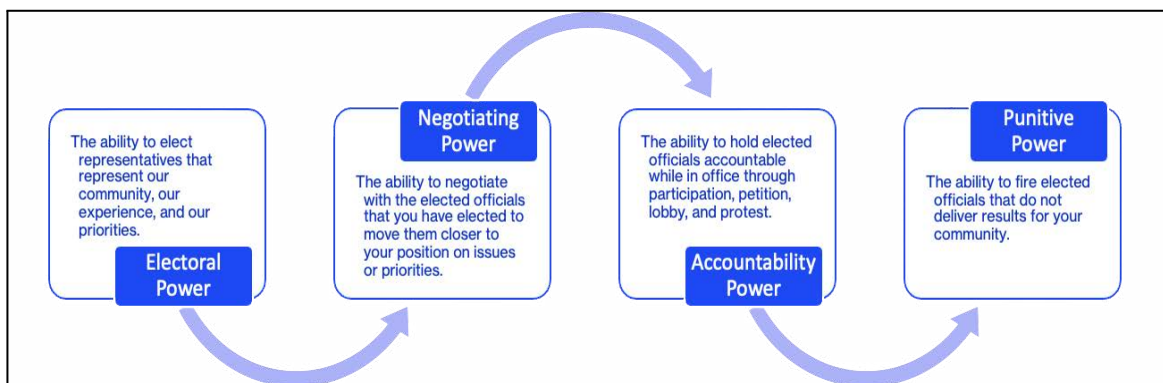
Table A.1 Surveys					
Geography	Demographics	Mode	Time Frame	Sample Size	Margin of Error
National	Black registered voters and eligible but not registered voters	Online	March 18–April 3, 2024	n=2952	
Georgia	Black registered voters and eligible but not registered voters	Phone and text-to-web	August 14–23, 2024	n=1000 rv	+/-3.24% rv
Florida	Black registered voters	Phone and text-to-web	August 15–21, 2024	n=1200	+/-3%
Pennsylvania	Black registered voters and oversample of age 18–39 Black registered voters	Phone and text-to-web	August 15–22, 2024	n=800 rv n=100 oversample 18-39 rv	+/-3.6%
Michigan	Black registered voters	Phone and text-to-web	September 3–10, 2024	n=700	+/-3.94%

Table A.2 Georgia			
Geography	Demographics Description	Mode	Time Frame
Rural Georgia	Rural women 18–50	Online	June 20, 2024
Georgia	Statewide men 18–50	Online	June 20, 2024
Atlanta Metro	Atlanta Mixed gender and age	In-person	June 24, 2024
Atlanta Metro	Atlanta Mixed gender 18–50	In-person	June 24, 2024
Atlanta Metro	Atlanta Mixed gender 18–50	In-person	June 25, 2024
Atlanta Metro	Atlanta Mixed gender and age Pro-Trump	In-person	June 25, 2024

Table A.3 Michigan			
Geography	Demographics Description	Mode	Time Frame
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black Mixed gender 18-30 College educated Low likelihood voter	In-person	August 5, 2024
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black men 18-40 Non-college educated Low likelihood voter	In-person	August 5, 2024
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black women 18-40 College educated Low likelihood voter	In-person	August 6, 2024
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black women 30-60 College educated Low likelihood voter	In-person	August 6, 2024
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black Mixed gender Mixed age Mixed education Uncommitted voter or Palestine sympathizer	In-person	August 7, 2024
Detroit (MI-12 and MI-13)	Black men 21-39 Mixed education Low likelihood voter	In-person	August 7, 2024
Michigan	Black Mixed gender Under 50 Non-college educated Trump sympathizer Low propensity/High Opportunity Voter	In-person	August 8, 2024
Michigan	Black men Muslim Over 30 Mixed education Low turnout or Low power	In-person	August 13, 2024

Table A.4 Pennsylvania			
Geography	Demographics Description	Mode	Time Frame
Pennsylvania Metro	Black registered voters Mixed gender College grad Cynical Mixed perceptions of power18+ 18-50	In-person and online	July 16-30, 2024
Pennsylvania Metro	Black registered voters Mixed gender Non-college grad Cynical Low perceptions of power 18-50	In-person	July 16, 2024
Pennsylvania Metro	Black registered voters Men Non-college grad Cynical Low perceptions of power Under 50	In-person	July 17, 2024
Pennsylvania Metro	Black registered voters Mixed gender Non-college grad Cynical Low perceptions of power 18-50	In-person	July 17, 2024
Pennsylvania Metro	Black registered voters Mixed gender Believes in at least one conspiracy theory 40+	In-person	July 18, 2024
Pennsylvania (statewide)	Black registered voters Mixed gender Believes in at least one conspiracy theory 40+	Online	July 22, 2024
Pennsylvania (statewide)	Black registered voters 30-55 Men Muslim faith	Online	July 30, 2024

Figure A.1: HIT Strategies Cycle of Power Framework





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