

## 2024 Survey of Young People of Color in the South's Attitudes Toward Political Participation

In January 2024, on behalf of the Southern Poverty Law Center, HIT Strategies conducted a poll of 1,625 non-white adults ages 18-40 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The poll found that respondents, who are high-potential voters, felt largely apathetic toward politics, unrepresented by the government and disengaged from the upcoming election. However, recent legislative and judicial actions limiting freedoms have sparked political action by young people of color across the five states surveyed and they see voting as an easy and effective way to create change.

### Key Findings

# 56%

**Despite low motivation to vote and low perceived vote power, a majority of young people of color in the South see voting as an easy and effective way to create change.**

- A bare majority (56%) of respondents said they felt motivated to vote in the 2024 elections. Motivation is lower for young women and Gen Z people of color in the South.
- Similarly, 56% of respondents said that their vote had a lot or some power to make a positive impact on issues they care about. However, respondents felt that voting in elections, both at the local and national levels, was the most effective way for them to create change in their communities.

**This lack of enthusiasm to vote is driven by a combination of attitudinal and structural voting barriers.**

- Respondents generally believe attitudinal issues are bigger problems for voting, rather than structural barriers.
- When asked about the biggest problems related to voting, “I don’t feel like candidates represent people like me and my beliefs” and “nothing changes after elections” rose to the top – 35% and 33% respectively.
- Young people of color in the South want to see better representation in candidates (27%), more information about candidates (26%) and proof of progress from candidates (23%) to solve these problems around voting.



**“I don’t feel like candidates represent people like me and my beliefs”**

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## Key Findings

# 59%

**Voter suppression tactics are a real concern for young people in the South today.**

- 59% of respondents said that laws restricting voting are intended to silence certain voices and block specific communities from voting compared to 41% of respondents who said laws restricting access to voting are meant to prevent voter fraud and are not intended to silence any specific voter.

# 53%

- When shown a series of statements about voter suppression at the state level, majorities of respondents were extremely concerned about passing laws to close polling places in predominantly Black neighborhoods (53%) and denying language translation services at voting locations (52%).

# 64%

**Messaging around the importance of voting and showing up to protect the right to vote on Election Day moves young people of color.**

- 64% of respondents said that the fact that people of color have fought long and hard for the right to vote and now they must fight back against efforts to roll back those rights was a convincing reason to vote. Similarly, 64% of respondents said that using or losing the constitutional right to vote was a convincing reason to vote.
- After receiving information and messaging about the importance of voting and civic engagement, respondents felt more motivated to vote in 2024 (56% motivated in the initial ask to 64% motivated in the final ask, +7 shift). While we saw increases across generation and race, the biggest increases were with women (+9), AAPI adults (+14) and Gen Zers (+9).
- Perceived vote power also increased (56% total power in the initial ask to 66% total power in the final ask, +10 shift). The most significant increases in perceived power were with women (+13), AAPI adults (+17), and Gen Zers (+12).

