

To: Interested Parties
From: Henry Fernandez & Ray Block, African American Research Collaborative
Date: January 6, 2023
Re: December 2022 Poll for the Nevada Black Legislative Caucus and the State Innovation Exchange

About This Survey:

On behalf of the Nevada Black Legislative Caucus and the State Innovation Exchange, the African American Research Collaborative (AARC) polled 400 Black adult Nevadans. 87% of those surveyed were self-reported as registered to vote with 13% either not registered or uncertain as to their registration status. The blended phone and online poll was in the field from December 19 to December 25, 2022. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.9%.

Findings Overview:

- Just over half of African American Nevadans are hopeful about how things are going in the state, but 4 out of 10 say they are worried. Small numbers say they are either angry or proud.
- Black college professors and Black elected officials are the most trusted messengers on issues of importance to Black Nevadans.
- The price of housing/rents and inflation are the top two issues Black Nevadans want state legislators to tackle in the 2023 legislative session. These are followed by jobs/wages, racism/discrimination, improving K-12 schools, addressing gun violence, and protecting a woman's right to choose.
- A majority of Black Nevadans consider homelessness in the state to be a crisis, with almost 9 out of 10 considering it either a crisis or major problem.
- Black Nevadans strongly support several possible legislative issues we tested, including stricter gun laws, sending social workers instead of police to calls related to mental health or drug crises, and making it easier for citizens in jail to vote.
- On K-12 public education matters, it is evident that more education of adults is needed. Most Black Nevadans have not heard of or do not know what the Community-Based School District Initiative would do. Once informed, they prefer a tested message in opposition to the initiative.
- No matter their personal opinion on abortion, a striking 95% of Black Nevadans support a woman's right to choose without government interference. Only 5% of Black Nevadans believe abortion is wrong and should be illegal.
- Consistent with these views on abortion, almost three quarters of Black Nevadans support the legislature taking steps in 2023 to increase access to abortion in their state.
- Requiring out of state companies selling online to collect sales tax and an inheritance tax on wealthy people garnered more than 60% support among Black Nevadans.

How Black Nevadans Feel About Their State

Black Nevadans are both hopeful and worried about the direction of their state. We asked, “How are you feeling about how things are going, and the direction we are on, here in the state of Nevada?” We provided four options, Proud, Hopeful, Worried, and Angry, allowing respondents to choose all that apply. The most common response was Hopeful (52%), followed by Worried (42%). Black men (56%) are more hopeful than Black women (47%). Frequent voters are the most hopeful group overall (57%) and when compared to infrequent voters (49%). This may reflect the idea that “voting is a sign of hope” as those who vote are demonstrating a belief in the future.

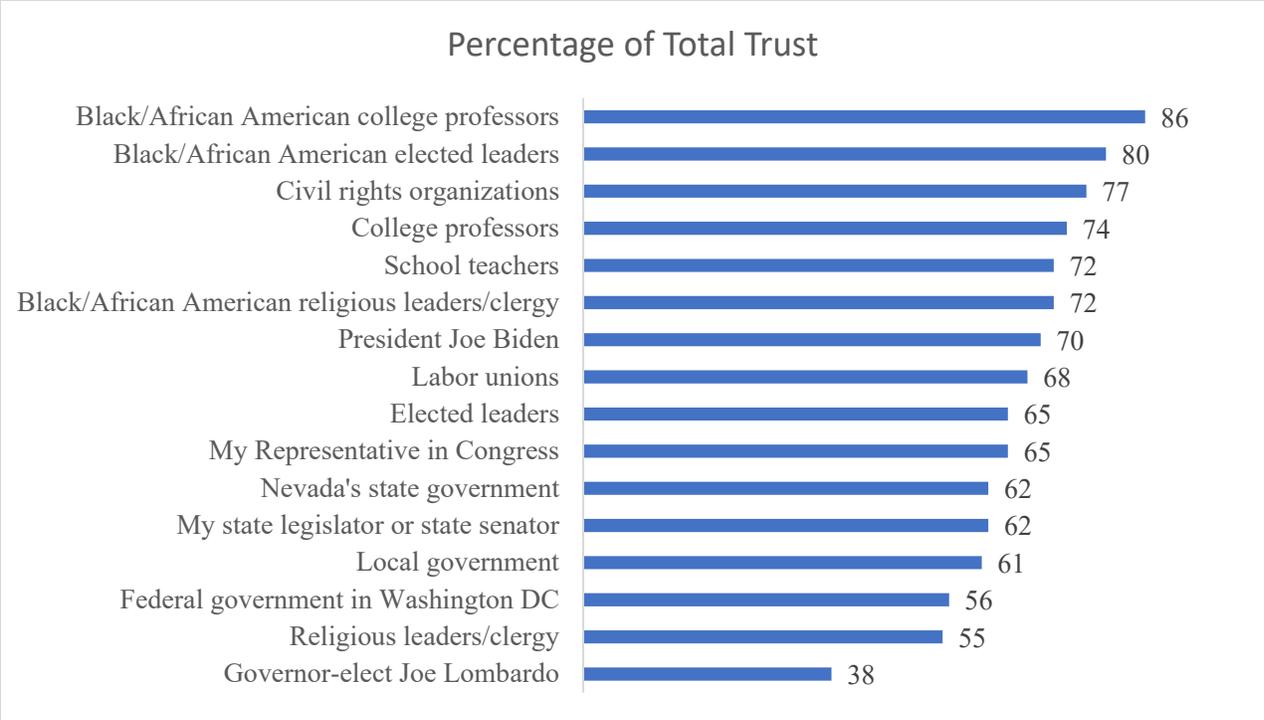
Black women (44%) are somewhat more worried about Nevada’s direction than Black men (39%). But we only see a large difference in worry among those who identify as Democrats (38% worried) and those who do not identify as Democrats (51% worried).

Black Nevadans are much less likely to say they are Proud (7%) of the state’s direction or Angry (8%) about it.

Trust & Messengers

Black Nevadans most trust Black college professors and Black elected officials among the 16 people and organizations we offered. This is important because well trusted messengers can be powerful when looking to educate the public on policy matters. We asked, “How much do you trust each of the following people or groups to do what is right on policy issues that matter to you?” Black college professors are most trusted (40% trust strongly + 46% trust somewhat = 86% total trust) followed by Black elected leaders (80% total trust). Trust is associated with expertise for Black Nevadans – they want to hear from those who know what they are talking about: Black college professors, Black elected officials, civil rights organizations and school teachers. Notably, college professors (as opposed to Black college professors) score 74% total trust and elected leaders (as opposed to Black elected leaders) score at 65% total trust. Thus, for Black Nevadans there is a significant boost in trust when the messengers are African American experts.

The following chart lists messengers with their corresponding percentage of total trust for African American Nevadans.



Issues

Inflation and housing affordability/cost of rents are solidly the two most important issues for Black Nevadans when asked what they want Nevada legislators to address in the 2023 session. We offered 18 issue options with the opportunity for respondents to choose up to 3. The top 4 issues are: inflation/cost of living (38%), housing affordability/cost of rents (37%), jobs/wages (26%), and racism/discrimination (21%). Improve K-12 schools, gun violence/mass shootings, and protect a woman’s right to an abortion are next up, all tied at 18%.

There is some variation among issues for different demographic groups within the Black community. For younger Black Nevadans, under age 35, crime (22%) is a top 5 issue. For Black Nevadans with immigrant roots, gun violence/mass shootings is the number two issue at 32% compared to those African American Nevadans who trace their ancestry going back many generations in the United States for whom crime is only at 12%.

Criminal justice and police reform (7%) and the COVID-19 pandemic (6%) which were top issues in polling we completed in the state just a couple of years ago, no longer score as high among Black Nevadans.

More than 85% of Black Nevadans consider homelessness and housing affordability in the state to be a crisis or major problem. On housing affordability/cost of rents and homelessness, we asked respondents whether they felt each was either: a crisis; a major problem but not a crisis; not a major issue, a minor problem; or not a problem at all. A majority of respondents feel that homelessness is a crisis (52%) with more than a third calling it a major problem (37%). Thus, 89% consider it either a crisis or

major problem. Those most concerned are respondents with roots going back generations in the US (93% crisis or major problem, with 55% crisis) and frequent voters (94% crisis or major problem, with 59% crisis). Homelessness clearly registers as an important issue for those who most frequently turn out to vote.

On cost and affordability of housing, 86% of Black Nevadans consider it either a crisis (36%) or a major issue (49%)¹. Higher percentages of Black women (40%) than Black men (32%) consider housing affordability to be a crisis. Fully 52% of Black Nevadans with children under 18 consider housing affordability to be a crisis – much larger than any other group we tested. This may be worthy of further study as it may reflect unique policy needs for Black families with children regarding housing costs.

African American Nevadans support stronger gun laws. We asked whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Nevada should enact stricter gun laws.” Respondents could strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. Half of Black Nevadans strongly agree (50%) with about one-fifth somewhat agreeing (21%) for a total agreement of 71%. Total disagree is 14%, with 12% neither agree nor disagree. Frequent Black voters have the highest level of strongly agree at 61% making this a particularly important issue for those who almost always vote. The highest level of total oppose is among those Black Nevadans who do not identify as Democrats (25% total oppose), but even this group had more than half in support (57%).

Stricter gun laws have majority total agreement across all groups of Black Nevadans tested but has greatest support among women (75%), those 35 and older (74%), those with immigrant roots (75%), frequent voters (78%), and those who identify as Democrats (76%).

African American Nevadans support sending social workers instead of police to respond to mental health and drug crises. We asked whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Nevada should send social workers and mental health professionals instead of police to respond to issues involving mental health or drug crises. This will get better services to people in need and free up police officers to address serious crimes and violence.” Respondents could strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. 39% of Black Nevadans strongly agree and 31% somewhat agree with this approach, for total agree of 70%. Only 16% disagree with 11% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

This proposal has majority agreement across all groups tested but has highest total agreement with those under 35 (75%), Liberals (77%), Moderates (75%), and especially those with children under 18 (80%).

We note that the message we tested does not pit police against social workers nor suggest moving money from police to other services. Based on prior research we have found such messages to be less effective with most Black voters. Instead, the message offered indicates that this approach both helps address the actual problems faced by those in crisis and allows police to focus on serious crimes.

African American Nevadans support making it easier for citizens in jail to vote. We asked “You may be aware that in Nevada, people who are in jail because they cannot afford bail or are serving time for a

¹ Sub-totals on an issue may not exactly equal the issue total due to rounding.

misdemeanor, are legally allowed to vote. But in reality, it is very hard for them to actually vote. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Nevada should pass a law to make sure that people in jail who are legally allowed to vote, are informed of their voting rights and provided an easy way to vote, similar to all other citizens.” 72% of Black Nevadans agree, with 44% strongly agree and 28% somewhat agree. Only 10% disagree, with 18% neither agree nor disagree. A majority of all groups tested are in agreement with highest agreement among people who identify as Democrats (78%), those with kids under 18 (80%), and frequent voters (77%).

In encouraging support for making it easier for citizens in jail to vote, Black Nevadans prefer a patriotic message over one highlighting disparities in the criminal justice system. We provided two options and asked which is more powerful or convincing to get your support for a state law to make it easier for eligible people in jail to vote. We also provided a third option for those who did not like the idea of such a law.

| Option 1 - Disparities message (chosen by 26%) | Option 2 – Patriotic message (chosen by 56%) | Option 3 – Don’t like (chosen by 17%) |
|---|--|--|
| “Making it hard for people in jail to vote hurts poor people and people of color because that is who winds up in these situations.” | “If people in jail want to do their patriotic duty and vote, then we should make it easy to vote, like we do for everyone else in Nevada.” | “Neither, I do not support this kind of law” |

The patriotic message (56%) works best by more than 2 to 1 over the disparities message (26%). It is the preferred choice across the board with at least 50% of each demographic groups we tested choosing it as their top preference. The patriotic message is most effective with women (62%), frequent voters (60%), self-identified moderates (60%) and conservatives (60%), as well as those with kids under 18 (63%).

Voter education is needed on the Community-Based School District Initiative. On the initiative, we first asked whether respondents had ever heard of it, and if so, did they know what it would do. 60% of Black Nevadans have never heard of it, and another 24% say they have heard of it but do not know what it would do. Only 17% say they have heard of it and know what it would do.

We then provided a brief description of the initiative: “Nevadans would vote on whether cities and towns can choose to leave their county school districts, and instead create new, smaller school districts only for that city or town.” Following this, we provided two possible reactions and asked respondents to choose which was closer to their opinion: “Nevada public schools are struggling. Smaller school districts will create more local control and improve student outcomes” OR “Nevada public schools are already struggling. Letting cities and towns leave county districts will lead to wealthier and whiter communities creating new school districts only for their children. This will mean less money for low-income school districts, and worse student outcomes for Black children and other children of color.” Black Nevadans, once informed about the issue, prefer the message against the initiative by 62% to 38% over the pro-initiative message. Here voter education appears to be needed, first in explaining what the initiative would do, and then in discussing its most likely impacts vis-à-vis African American students.

Abortion Rights

No matter their personal opinion on abortion, a striking 95% of Black Nevadans support a woman’s right to choose without government interference. We offered respondents 3 options in response to the question “Which of the following comes closest to your own personal view on abortion?”

| Option 1 Chosen by 53% | Option 2 Chosen by 42% | Option 3 Chosen by 5% |
|--|---|---|
| I personally support a woman's right to abortion and believe it should be legal and available. | I am personally against abortion, but I do not believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself. | I personally believe abortion is wrong and should be illegal. |

We have found that this question is much more effective in understanding the politics of abortion than a traditional question that asks if a respondent is pro or anti-abortion. What elected officials tend to care about is what role government should play. Here the answer is clear, Black Nevadans want a woman’s right to make these decisions to be her own. To demonstrate how strongly this view is held among Black Nevadans, only 12% of Black Nevadans who identify as conservative answered that abortion is wrong and should be illegal.

Almost three quarters of Black Nevadans support the legislature in 2023 increasing access to abortion and protections for abortion rights in the state. 43% strongly support increased access and protections and 31% somewhat support while 11% somewhat oppose and 8% strongly oppose. Support is highest among women (77%), those with at least some college (77%), frequent voters (79%), and those who identify as Democrats (82%) and Liberals (84%).

We tested five specific expanding abortion access/protection for abortion rights policies that the legislature could undertake in 2023 and found the following levels of support among Black voters.

| Policy proposal | Total Support (strongly support + somewhat support) | Total Oppose (strongly oppose + somewhat oppose) | Don’t Know |
|--|--|---|------------|
| Tuition reimbursement for students studying to become medical professionals working on women’s health, including reproductive health and abortion | 70% | 21% | 10% |
| Nevada not enforcing any legal or criminal action taken by another state against women who have had abortions or medical professionals that provide abortion services | 69% | 19% | 12% |
| Requiring health insurance companies to cover the cost of abortion | 66% | 24% | 10% |
| Nevada helping to pay medical costs for abortion that are not covered by insurance | 58% | 33% | 9% |
| Putting limits on “Crisis Pregnancy Centers” that try to convince women to not have abortions, often without letting women know that they are not actual medical facilities. | 56% | 31% | 14% |

Revenue Generation

To generate new state revenue, two-thirds of Black Nevadans support requiring out-of-state companies selling online to collect sales tax, the same as in-state companies must do. Requiring out-of-state companies selling online to collect sales tax may have been popular in part because we made clear that in-state companies already have to do so. 66% of Black Nevadans support this as a way to raise state revenue with 28% strongly supporting and 37% somewhat supporting. 15% oppose with 10% somewhat oppose and 5% strongly oppose. Another 10% say they don't know. Support is strongest among men (70%), those with at least some college education (70%), and frequent voters (76%). Opposition is highest among those who identify as Conservative (35% oppose), those without any college education (30% oppose), and those who do not identify as Democrats (30% oppose).

Six out of 10 Black Nevadans support an inheritance tax on wealthy Nevadans. 61% of Black Nevadans support (32% strongly support, 30% somewhat support) a tax on “wealthy individuals when they pass on their wealth through an inheritance or estate.” 28% oppose (16% somewhat oppose, 10% strongly oppose) an inheritance tax, with 10% saying they don't know. Support is strongest for those with long roots in the US (66%), frequent voters (65%), self-identified moderates (67%), and especially those with children 18 and younger (71%).

For African American Nevadans, a capital gains tax has majority support. A capital gains tax garnered 53% support and 30% opposition among Black Nevadans. Strongest support for the capital gains tax was among those under 35 (possibly because they are less likely to own stock).