A photograph of a Black male worker wearing a blue cap, a black face mask, and a grey jacket. He is loading a truck with cases of Monster Energy. The truck's cargo area is filled with stacks of Monster Energy cases. The worker is using a metal frame to move the cases. The entire image has a purple tint.

# Temperature Check Poll Year In Review:

**A Look at Black Voter Sentiment  
Ahead of the 2022 Midterms**

# Introduction

A lot can change in one year – and for Black voters, change is imperative if we are to make progress in this country. To better understand the changes that Black communities want to see, and the policies they want their government to prioritize, **Black to the Future Action Fund (B2F)** and **Socioanalítica Research** collaborated on the Temperature Check Polls – a series of bi-monthly polls that surveyed a total of 6,000 Black adults across the United States. These polls asked respondents what their greatest needs were and whether their elected officials have been responsive to those needs.

Overwhelmingly, our respondents' needs showed that economic recovery is their top priority. The top two policy priorities of Black adults, in every poll over this entire series, were consistent: \$2,000 monthly relief checks until the economy recovers and increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. The economic hardship Black communities are facing are the result of ongoing discrimination, an economy made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising costs with little to no relief from our elected representatives.

As we head into the midterm elections, Black communities want bold policy change that will produce a fair, stable economy. We also want to see progressive policies that

secure our rights: 73 percent of respondents supporting the now-overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a majority want more money for technology that protects our environment, and nearly a third list voting rights as their top priority. This report will highlight some of the trends we have seen over the year with the Temperature Check Poll (TCP), looking at the direction of our nation, white supremacy, and economic recovery – illustrating what policies are most important to Black communities.

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# Evaluation of the Country & Its Leaders

**On average, 48 percent of Black people are dissatisfied with the direction the country is headed.**

President Biden and Vice-President Harris both received high approval ratings from Black people over the course of the series – each received an average of a 71 percent approval rating. However, their approval ratings declined over the course of the series. Although Biden started with a 79 percent job approval rating in July 2021, that approval rating dipped to 65 percent during the last wave in May 2022. Similarly, Harris’ approval rating declined from 77 percent to 66 percent over the same time period.

## Biden/Harris Approval Ratings



At the state level, a majority of Black people approve of the job their governors are doing (58 percent). However, there are significant differences in job approval depending on the party of the governor. Among Black residents in states with Democratic Party governors, 73 percent of respondents approve of the job their governor is doing. In states with Republican Party governors, that number drops to only 45 percent.

It is clear that elected officials with more policies that address the needs of Black voters receive higher approval ratings from Black people; what needs to become more clear, however, is how those elected officials will move those policies to support Black households and communities.

# Finances and the Economy

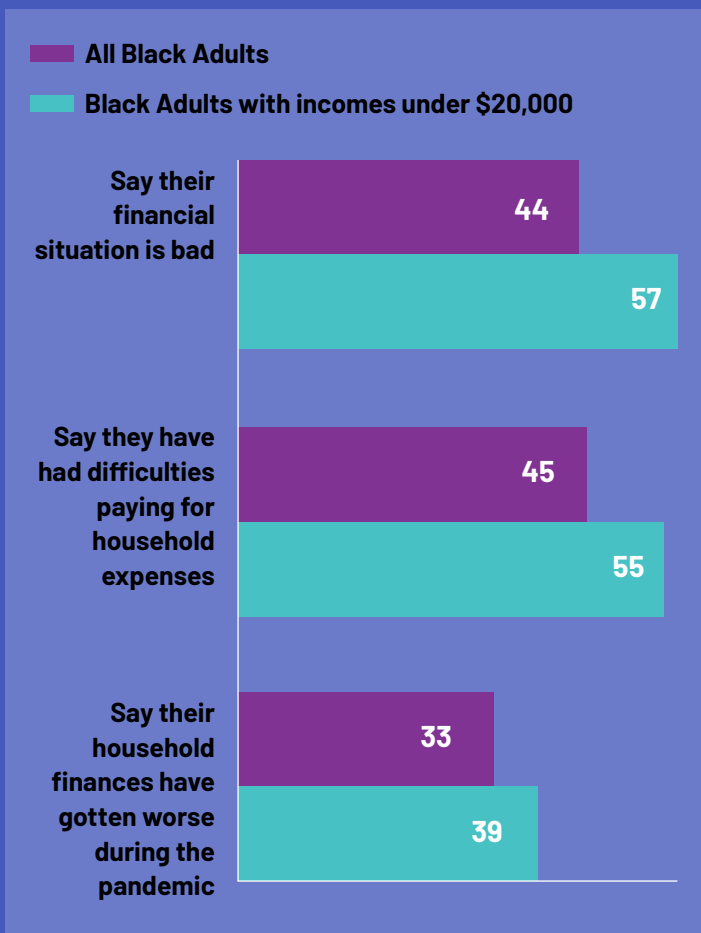
Consistently, a majority of our respondents were dissatisfied with the direction of the economy. The highest approval rating for the economy was in July 2021 – our very first TCP. That month, Black people gave the economy a 57 percent approval rating. Yet, in every other poll, a majority of respondents reported dissatisfaction – including a high of 60 percent expressing dissatisfaction in May 2022, a time where Black communities were dealing with soaring gas prices and ongoing supply chain issues.

While a majority of respondents reported being in a good financial situation (55 percent), a large percentage consider their personal finances to be bad (44 percent). Similarly, 45 percent of respondents reported that it has been difficult for their households to pay for usual expenses. Finally, while nearly half of Black people reported that their finances have remained the same during the pandemic (49 percent), the percentage of those who say they have gotten worse (33 percent) is nearly twice of those who say their finances have gotten better (18 percent).

The economy is not getting better for the people who need it the most. When asked what they would use stimulus money for, Black people with a household income under \$20,000 said utilities (63 percent), food (62 percent), household supplies/

personal care products (50 percent), and rent/mortgage (45 percent).

The cost of childcare also influenced responses. 25 percent of families with children in the home would spend the money on childcare, and parents were the most likely to report needing to spend on clothing (37 percent), compared to 31 percent of Black people overall. Additionally, 84 percent of Black respondents favor the supplemental cash payments of the expanded Child Tax Credit that were distributed between July and December 2021 – and 70 percent of Black adults think that those payments should have been continued for the next five years rather than allowing them to expire.





# The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on Black communities. Nearly one in five respondents reported that they had tested positive for COVID-19 at some point during the pandemic, and 41 percent of Black people reported that someone they knew died of COVID-19. The significant loss of life throughout our communities has been compounded by devastating economic challenges as a direct result of the pandemic.

In addition to the human toll, our respondents reported more financial hardship due to COVID-19, especially around housing. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of respondents lost a job or had hours cut. Both Black renters (32 percent) and Black mortgage holders (22 percent) reported that they were behind on their housing payments. Among those behind on their payments, a majority of both mortgage holders and renters reported that they are not confident in making their next payment, or that their payment is deferred. Black communities are struggling to make ends meet and experiencing a housing crisis, so it is not surprising that our respondents overwhelmingly support an eviction and foreclosure ban (72 percent) and rent and mortgage cancellations (77 percent).

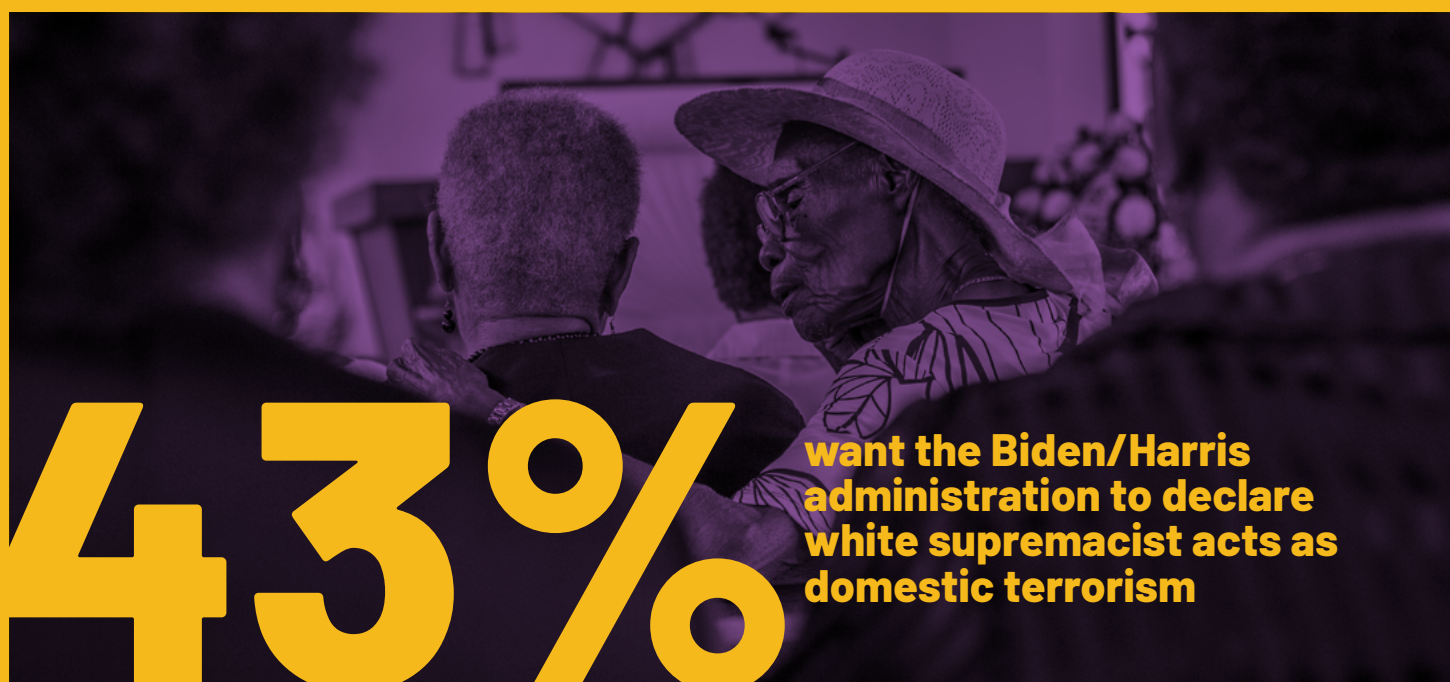
In households with children, the pandemic has been particularly hard. In response to nearly all questions about the impact of COVID on their lives, Black people in households with children reported more adversities than those in households without children. For example, Black people with children were twice as likely to report needing to leave a job due to lack of childcare (19 percent) than the Black population at large (11 percent). Nearly three in ten (28 percent) of Black households with children reported losing a job or hours, and an additional 21 percent reported someone in the household losing their job or having their hours cut.



# White Supremacy

Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, Black communities are also facing violence at the hands of white nationalist extremism, and our respondents have called for bold policies that address white nationalist extremism.

Four in ten Black adults want the Biden/Harris administration to declare white supremacist acts as domestic terrorism (43 percent) and to remove white supremacists from federal, state, and local police departments (40 percent). More than a third also want to prevent those who have committed hate crimes from getting firearms (37 percent) and one-third want to declare white supremacy a national security threat (33 percent).



The recent string of mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas, and Highland Park, Illinois, among others, clearly demonstrates the need for stronger gun control and safety protections. From targeted anti-Black violence against Black people by a white supremacist in Buffalo, NY to the Supreme Court's decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn., Inc v. Bruen*, it is clear that the safety of our communities is under serious attack, and the demands of our communities must be heeded.

**The recent string of mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas, and Highland Park, Illinois, among others, clearly demonstrates the need for stronger gun control and safety protections.**



## Closing

Black people in this country want bold, progressive policies that support an equal society. The ongoing impact of the economy on Black communities has led to growing dissatisfaction with both the White House and the direction of the nation in general. The additional influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, white nationalist extremism, and a rollback of progressive policies have led to a critical moment for Black communities and those who wish to represent us. Candidates and elected officials cannot be responsive to their communities without being responsive to the demands of their Black constituents.

Here at the Black to the Future Action Fund, we will continue to conduct polling to support progressive policies and candidates who are genuinely invested in our people. As we dive deeper into the communities within our priority states - California, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Wisconsin - we will continue to amplify the demands coming from Black communities.

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# Methodology

The Black to the Future Action Fund/Socioanalítica Research Temperature Check Poll Pool is comprised of 6 surveys conducted online in English among a sample of 5,999 Black adults (18 years and older) respondents living in the United States.

The data were weighted by region, age, gender, and education using the 2020 American Community Survey 5-year dataset. The margin of error is +/- 1.3 percent at the 95% confidence level and the design effect is 1.3. The margin of error accounting for the design effect is +/- 1.4. See below for wave dates and sample information.

Wave	Dates	Sample (MOE/DEFF)
1 (July 2021)	July 7-17, 2021	1,002 (3.1/1.6)
2 (September 2021)	September 6-14, 2021	1,001 (3.1/1.5)
3 (November 2021)	November 8-9, 2021	1,001 (3.1/1.3)
4 (January 2022)	January 28-31, 2022	998 (3.1/1.1)
5 (March 2022)	March 17-18, 2022	1,002 (3.1/1.2)
6 (May 2022)	May 17-19, 2022	995 (3.1/1.3)

## About Black to the Future Action Fund

The Black to the Future Action Fund works to make Black communities powerful in politics, so that we can be powerful in the entirety of our lives. We work to enact policies that improve the lives of Black communities, and to elect Black and pro-Black legislators with progressive values who move progressive policies. Together we work to ensure that Black people have what all people deserve —dignity, safety, and power.

## About Socioanalítica Research

Socioanalítica Research was born out of a belief that research and knowledge are universal tools that should be accessible to everyone and anyone. We strive to design high quality research products that are simple in their execution yet powerful in their content and analysis. Our firm, headquartered in the nation's capital, brings a critical and analytical eye to issues of religious belief and identity, in addition to supporting ongoing research at major nonprofit and academic organizations around the world.