



THE CLEAR PATH

Public Opinion Research

TO: Interested Parties

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RE: Key Findings – Fall 2018 California African American Policy Priorities Survey

From September 4-14, 2018, EVITARUS completed a California statewide survey of 1,200 African Americans likely voters to assess attitudes toward key election issues and ballot measures leading up to the November 2018 General election.

The survey is the third installment of the California African American Policy Priorities Survey (CAAPS), a series of statewide surveys among Black voters conducted on behalf of the African American Voter Registration, Education, and Participation (AAVREP) Project. The first and second installments were conducted ahead of the June 2016 and June 2018 Statewide Primary Elections.

KEY FINDINGS

The following are among the survey's key findings:

1. **Proposition 10—the measure to expand local governments' authority to enact rent control on residential property—garners the support of nearly two-thirds (65%) of Black voters.** This includes a full 44% of voters who say they will “definitely” vote yes in favor of the measure.

Support for Proposition 10 is consistent with the high priority Black voters place on increasing the availability of affordable housing. The May 2018 CAAPPS found that more than seven in ten Black voters (72%) identify making housing more affordable as an “extremely high priority” for their elected officials to address.

2. **Proposition 6—the measure to repeal the gas tax increase that currently generates revenue to pay for transportation improvements—garners majority support among Black voters.** This includes nearly three-in-ten voters (29%) who say they will “definitely” vote yes in favor of the measure.
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More marginal support for Proposition 6 may be linked to lower levels of consensus among Black voters regarding the utility of lowering taxes relative to providing additional funding for transportation improvements. For example, **the May 2016 survey revealed that only 43% of Black voters identified “lowering taxes” as an “extremely high priority,” a percentage that fell far below the percentage of voters who identified issues such as the quality of education (78%), affordable housing (72%) and access to quality healthcare (63%), each as an “extremely high priority.”**

3. **In California, Black voters will likely determine the margin of victory in highly competitive local races that, in turn, will determine whether Democrats are successful in their efforts to take back the House. These races include the match-up between Republican incumbent Steve Knight and Democrat Katie Hill in Congressional District 25.**

Since the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Black voters have demonstrated their commitment to participating in elections at rates that are among the highest of any demographic subgroup. Most recently, in the 2018 election cycle, Black voters have played a highly visible and pivotal role in electing Democratic candidates in Alabama, Virginia, New Jersey, and other jurisdictions—turning elected seats from red to blue in the process, and demonstrating that Black turnout and votes determine the margin of victory in competitive races nationwide.

The political salience of Black voters—and the pivotal role they have played in helping Democrats win in Districts across the nation—cannot be understated.

In the hotly contested 25th Congressional District election between Knight and Hill, there are just under 10,000 African American registered voters. According to *The New York Times*, this targeted congressional seat in the Palmdale/Lancaster area is considered a toss-up.¹ If African American voters are sufficiently targeted in this election they can play a pivotal role in determining not only the winner of this election, but also play a significant role in determining which political party controls the House of Representatives after the upcoming mid-term elections.

4. **Anti-Trump sentiment runs high among Black voters.** A significant portion of the impetus for high levels of turnout among Black voters, and their support for Democratic candidates, has been fueled by resistance to the current presidential administration. According to the survey, eighty-four percent (84%) of Black voters express an unfavorable view of President Trump, including 80% of voters who say they have a “very unfavorable” view of the President.

However, according to the May 2018 survey, “opposing the Trump Administration” ranks as a much lower priority than advancing specific policy priorities that will serve to expand opportunity and improve the quality of life for Black Californians.

¹ *New York Times* Upshot. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/upshot/elections-poll-ca25-1.html#crosstabs>

While 53% of Black voters rate opposing the Trump Administration as an “extremely high priority,” this falls far short of the imperative that Black voters assign to advancing policies that will improve public education (78%), eliminate racial profiling (75%), hold law enforcement agencies accountable for police violence (74%), fight discrimination and institutional racism (71%), expand access to mental health services (63%), and reduce homelessness (61%).

Collectively, the results to-date of the CAAPPS series reveal that **candidates, ballot measure campaigns, and the Democratic Party must move beyond Anti-Trump messaging and speak directly to African Americans’ policy priorities** if they are to mobilize and garner the levels of support among Black voters that will be vital to achieving electoral success in key local, statewide, and Congressional races.

As such, candidates and parties that elect to employ a strategy of merely opposing Trump will find that approach to be insufficient to mobilize and garner high levels of support among Black voters in pivotal Congressional Districts.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

From September 4-14, 2018, EVITARUS completed a survey of 1,200 Black voters in California likely to participate in the November 2018 General Election. The survey sample was drawn at random from the California Secretary of State’s file of registered voters based on their participation in prior statewide elections.

Voters within the sample were contacted by telephone (cell phone and landline) and invited by email to take the survey online. Overall, 82% of survey respondents completed the survey online, 12% via cell phone, and 6% via landline telephone.

The Margin of Sampling Error (MOE) for the full sample is $\pm 2.83\%$ at the 95% confidence level. The margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be higher. The survey results are weighted to match the age, partisanship, gender, and geographic distribution of the population of registered voters from which the sample was drawn.

The survey is the third installment of the California African American Policy Priorities Survey (CAAPS), a series of statewide surveys among Black voters conducted on behalf of the African American Voter Registration, Education, and Participation (AAVREP) Project. The first and second installments were conducted ahead of the June 2016 and June 2018 Statewide Primary Elections, in May of each respective year.

The May 2016 CAAPPS was conducted from May 5-17, 2016 among 800 African American likely voters. The MOE for that survey is $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level. The May 2018 CAAPPS was conducted April 28-May 14, 2018 among 1,350 African American likely voters. The MOE for that survey is $\pm 2.67\%$ at the 95% confidence level.