

To: Interested Parties

From: Heart+Mind Strategies

Date: December 11, 2020

Subject: Summary of Findings – Heart+Mind Strategies FirstViewSM Presidential Election Post-Election Research 2020 – African-Americans

In the days leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election, there was speculation that President Trump would do significantly better among African-Americans than he had four years prior. An analysis of Heart+Mind Strategies’ post-election FirstView studies in both 2016 and 2020 show that to be the case. Our data shows the percentage of African-Americans voting for Trump jumps from 4% in 2016 to 15% in 2020. Major news media outlet exit polls show a smaller increase (for example, CNN shows an increase from 8% to 12%¹) but still a sizeable jump for a President that was widely portrayed as being unliked by racial minorities.

Voting Patterns

African-Americans defected from the Democratic ticket in 2020, although Joe Biden still won the demographic group by significant margins. Biden won 81% of the African-American vote compared to Trump’s 15%. However, Biden underperformed Hilary Clinton’s 2016 vote proportion among this group by 13 points, with nearly all of that loss going to President Trump (+11 among the group).

Table 1: Reported Vote of African-Americans, 2016 and 2020

	All African-Americans		Difference
	2016	2020	
Republican (Trump)	4%	15%	+11
Democrat (Clinton/Biden)	94%	81%	-13
Other	3%	5%	+2
<i>Net Trump (Republican - Democrat)</i>	<i>-90</i>	<i>-66</i>	<i>+24</i>

African-Americans under the age of 35 are more likely than their counterparts of other ages to have cast a ballot for Trump, with nearly one-quarter (22%) favoring the President. African-American men are much more likely than women to have supported the President in the 2020 Election.

¹ These differences are within an expected margin of error.

Table 2: Detailed Breakdown of 2020 African-American Vote

		Age			Gender	
	All African-Americans	18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
Republican (Trump)	15%	22%	9%	7%	20%	10%
Democrat (Biden)	81%	72%	87%	89%	76%	85%
Other	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%
<i>Net Trump (Republican-Democrat)</i>	-66	-50	-78	-82	-56	-75

Some have suggested that Trump’s personality and unique approach to politics has attracted voters that are not otherwise open to Republicans or conservative ideas. However, it appears that Republican policy does as well, if not better, than Trump’s electoral performance. While 15% of African-Americans voted for Trump in 2020, 19% have a positive opinion of Republican programs and policies. In all age and gender groupings, favorability for Republican programs and policies is higher than positive ratings for Trump.

Although African-American women were more likely to have voted for Joe Biden than men, (+9), they are actually *less* positive towards Joe Biden’s programs and policies. Just 69% of Black women have a positive view of his agenda despite 85% having cast a ballot for up. African-American men’s views of Biden’s policy (79% positive), line up more closely with their vote for him (76%). African-American women are also less positive towards Democrats (70%) compared to the percentage who voted for Biden. These women have a clear partisan preference for Democrats but they still have some qualms with parts of the Democratic platform.

Progressivism is a term that is largely undefined among African-Americans with four-in-ten neutral to the term. Democratic Socialist policies are seen as much more favorable among the African-American community. It is more popular among African-American men (63% compared to 52% of women) and those ages 35-54 (70%).

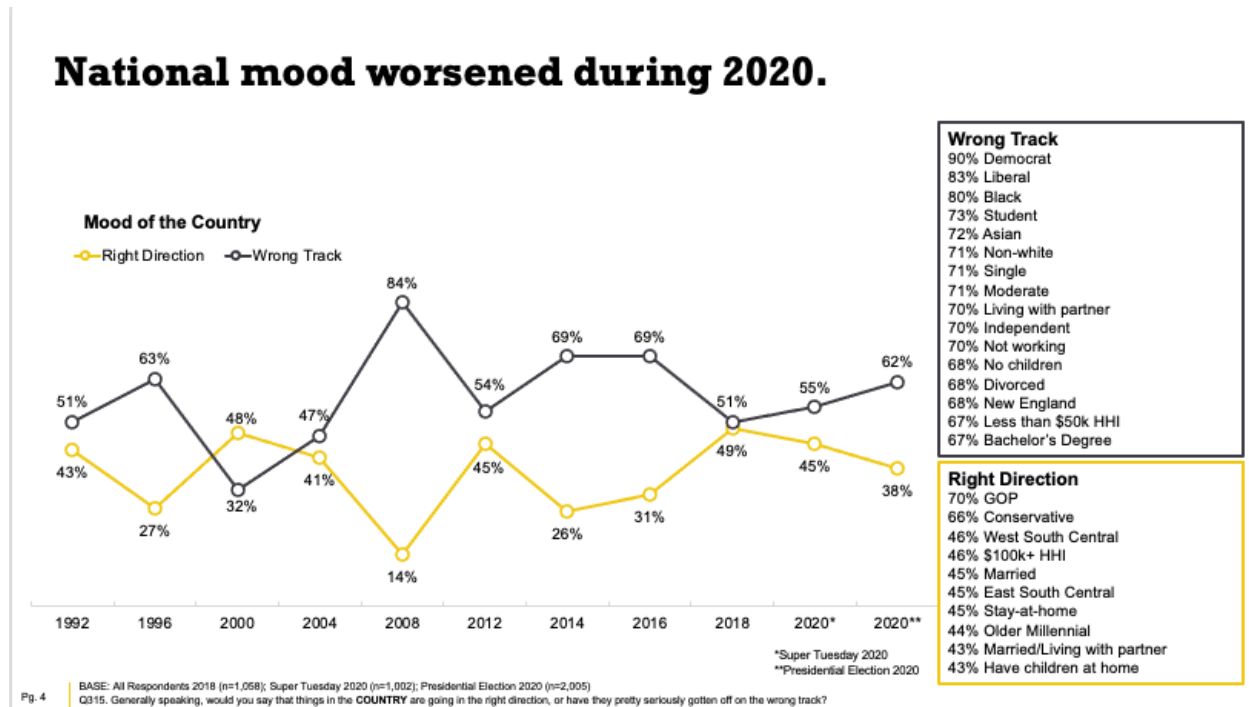
Table 3: Policy and Program Favorability Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
Donald Trump						
Positive	18%	24%	15%	9%	24%	12%
Negative	74%	65%	78%	86%	70%	78%
Net	-56	-41	-63	-77	-46	-66
Joe Biden						
Positive	74%	65%	78%	86%	79%	69%
Negative	16%	21%	12%	10%	15%	17%
Net	58	44	66	76	64	52
Republican						
Positive	19%	24%	13%	18%	26%	12%
Negative	72%	65%	79%	76%	68%	75%
Net	-53	-41	-66	-58	-42	-63
Democrat						
Positive	72%	64%	76%	83%	74%	70%
Negative	12%	12%	16%	6%	14%	11%
Net	60	52	60	77	60	59
Progressives						
Positive	31%	27%	35%	35%	44%	20%
Negative	28%	32%	31%	15%	25%	31%
Net	3	-5	4	20	19	-11
Democratic Socialists						
Positive	57%	53%	70%	48%	63%	52%
Negative	19%	23%	14%	18%	18%	20%
Net	38	30	56	30	45	32

Motivations to Vote

While nationally those feeling the country is on the wrong track decreased compared to 2016 (69% to 62%), the overall net sentiment (right direction – wrong track) improved from -38 points to -24 points, though is still negative. However, among African-Americans, the number who think the country is on the wrong track *increased* 33 points to 80%, with a net change of -66.

Chart 1 – National Mood 1992-2020



A majority of all age and gender groups within African-Americans believe the country is on the wrong track, numbers are slightly more positive among African-Americans ages 18-34 (70% Wrong Track).

Table 4: Country Direction – African-American Compared to All Voters, 2016 and 2020

	All Voters		All African-Americans	
	2016	2020	2016	2020
Right Direction	31%	38%	53%	20%
Wrong Track	69%	62%	47%	80%
<i>Net Right Direction</i>	-38	-24	6	-60

A plurality of African-Americans (40%) cast their 2020 Presidential vote as one for a particular candidate, rather than one against the other candidate. The number of African-Americans voting based on issues rather than candidates is also an important motivator with 35% saying they overlooked candidate flaws to focus on issues. This was especially true among the youngest voters where issues are the clear top driver (42%).

Table 5: Detailed Breakdown of Reasons for 2020 African-American Vote

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
I am voting FOR a particular candidate because I truly like the candidate and the policies they stand for.	40%	29%	41%	64%	39%	42%
I care deeply about an issue or set of issues and am voting for the candidate who best supports my issues even if there are flaws in that candidate	35%	42%	36%	20%	35%	36%
To be honest, my vote is a vote against one of the candidates rather than a vote for a candidate.	24%	29%	23%	16%	26%	23%

Top Voter Issues

In 2020, the top issue driving African-American voters is Racial Issues. This issue was not listed in the 2016 survey but voters may have interpreted “social/moral issues” as including race given the high 2016 figures and subsequent drop off in 2020.

Growing the economy is less important by half in 2020 compared to 2016 (8% vs. 15%) with much of the focus shifting to the government’s response to the pandemic.

Racial issues were the top concern for African-Americans ages 18-34 (16%) and 35-54 (34%) but less important to the 55+ set (12%) who were more concerned with the government’s response to COVID-19 (26%) and ensuring the long-term viability of Social Security and Medicare (17%).

Table 6: Top Issue Driving African-American Vote, 2016 and 2020

% Top Issue	All African-Americans	
	2016	2020
Racial issues	N/A	20%
Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic	N/A	16%
Restoring honesty and trust to government and government officials	10%	9%
Growing the economy	15%	8%
Ensuring long-term Medicare and Social Security	6%	8%
Keeping U.S. secure from terrorist threats	9%	7%
Creating more jobs	9%	4%
Ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare	7%	4%
Social or moral issues	22%	2%

Key Issues Facing America Today

On the topic of jobs and the economy, African-Americans are evenly divided between three different approaches. African-American Males are more likely than their female counterparts to want regulatory reform over guaranteed jobs to grow the economy. Despite being the most liberal age group within African-Americans (56% liberal), those ages 35-54 are the most likely to favor regulatory reform and a free-market economy over guaranteed jobs.

Table 7: Views on Jobs/Economy Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
We should have a guaranteed job with benefits for every American making millions of Americans employees of the federal government	33%	35%	32%	28%	28%	37%
We should establish a Federal Jobs Corps that focuses employment through public works projects, expanded bargaining, and racial equity.	33%	35%	30%	35%	33%	34%
We should focus on regulatory reform and eliminating crony capitalism. In that environment, the free-market is the best way to grow our economy and create good jobs for Americans	34%	30%	38%	37%	39%	29%

Concerning healthcare, half of African-Americans want to see the Affordable Care Act protected and used as a base for change to healthcare policy. This policy is a clear favorite among all age and gender groups, particularly those over 55 years old.

Table 8: Views on Healthcare Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
We need universal single-payer government healthcare for all Americans.	23%	24%	29%	13%	25%	21%
We need to protect the Affordable Care Act and build on it to make healthcare more affordable and less complex.	50%	42%	46%	73%	42%	57%
We need to replace the Affordable Care Act with a system that prioritizes transparency, freedom of choice and cost-efficient care.	27%	34%	25%	14%	32%	21%

The most popular tax policy among African-American voters is raising the top marginal tax rate to record high levels and instituting a wealth tax. African-Americans under 35 are the exception with the group split between this policy and embracing the recent tax code changes.

Table 9: Views on Taxes Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
We should raise the top marginal tax rate to 70 and institute a wealth tax on Americans with high net worths.	41%	36%	45%	48%	38%	45%
We should undo the recent tax cuts , raising taxes on individuals, reinstating the Alternative Minimum Tax and bringing our corporate tax rate to the highest levels in the world.	26%	28%	21%	29%	29%	24%
The recent changes to the tax code were smart and we should extend those provisions that will otherwise expire in 2022.	32%	36%	34%	23%	33%	31%

African-Americans are equally split over the best way to address racial inequalities in America with equal numbers believing we need “anti-racist” approaches and a completely racially blind equality of opportunity. African-Americans over 55 year old, the group most likely to have memories of the initial rollout of a national Affirmative Action policy, are the *least* favorable to government specific policies that provide additional support and resources to racial minorities. Instead, a majority favor a racially blind approach that provides true equality of opportunity.

Table 10: Views on Race Issues Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
American society elevates white culture above all others. It is not enough to be “not-racist.” Individuals and government policies need to reflect specifically “anti-racist” attitudes and goals.	34%	34%	37%	29%	39%	29%
We need specific government policies that provide additional support, resources and opportunities to racial minorities.	32%	34%	39%	19%	30%	34%
Racial equality will come when we have racial blind equality of opportunity , giving every individual the chance to grow, achieve and succeed on their merits, skills and drive.	34%	31%	24%	51%	31%	36%

Views of Government

There has been little change over the last four years in the degree to which African-Americans trust Washington. Just 22% have a high level of trust in our federal government with one-third (33%) saying they have little to no trust.

Table 11: Trust in Government Among African-Americans, 2016 and 2020

	All African-Americans	
	2016	2020
No Trust in Washington (1-3)	30%	33%
Moderate (4-7)	46%	45%
Total Trust in Washington (8-10)	24%	22%

There is a significant split on trust in Washington among African-Americans by age with those under 35 being much more trusting (31%) than those over 55 (8%). African-American men and women also differ in their trust of Washington with 30% of men feeling confident about our government in Washington while half the number of African-American women feel the same way.

Table 12: Detailed Breakdown of Trust in Government Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
No Trust in Washington (1-3)	33%	17%	47%	46%	28%	37%
Total Trust in Washington (8-10)	22%	31%	20%	8%	30%	16%

Although the number of African-Americans who trust Washington remained steady over the last four years, the number who believe the government is broken has increased significantly. In 2020, nearly three-quarters (72%) of African-Americans think our government is broken, up 17 points from 2016. Men and women are in agreement about the broken state of government. Younger African-Americans are more likely to believe government is working (27%), but this is still a minority view.

Table 13: View of Government Functioning Among African-Americans, 2016 and 2020

	All African-Americans	
	2016	2020
WORKING (NET)	28%	20%
Definitely “government is working like it is supposed to”	7%	10%
Somewhat “government is working like it is supposed to”	20%	10%
BROKEN (NET)	55%	72%
Somewhat “government is broken”	30%	26%
Definitely “government is broken”	25%	46%
Not sure	17%	8%

Table 14: Detailed Breakdown of View of Government Functioning Among African-Americans, 2020

	All African-Americans	Age			Gender	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
WORKING (NET)	20%	27%	17%	11%	21%	19%
Definitely “government is working like it is supposed to”	10%	13%	6%	11%	12%	9%
Somewhat “government is working like it is supposed to”	10%	13%	11%	-	10%	9%
BROKEN (NET)	72%	65%	77%	80%	73%	71%
Somewhat “government is broken”	26%	26%	24%	29%	32%	20%
Definitely “government is broken”	46%	39%	53%	51%	41%	51%
Not sure	8%	9%	6%	9%	5%	10%

Methodology

Heart+Mind Strategies’ FirstViewSM Presidential Post-Election survey fielded November 3-4, 2020 using an online, opt-in panel. The survey was in field for 18 hours, from 1PM November 3rd to 7AM November 4th. In total, a sample of n=2,005 interviews were conducted among voters 18+ who voted in the 2020 Presidential election. The sample included a total of n=201 African-Americans. Quotas were used to ensure a representative population of voters 18+ on age, gender, and region. Following fielding the data was weighted by ethnicity and income. The full sample was balanced on age, gender, and region in line with U.S. Census figures for registered voters using quotas during fielding.

All respondents were shown the core question sections (Introduction and Screening; FirstViewSM questions; and Demographics). Respondents were then shown a random selection of additional questions on a variety of topics.

This was an online quantitative survey. If we were to estimate a margin of error, it would be +/-2.2% at 95% confidence and the margin of error for subgroups would be higher. All polls have varying degrees of error that should always be considered when interpreting results.