



Survey of the South | Toplines

2616 Interviews, November 3-13, 2023, Modeled Margin of Error: 2.8%

Q1. How did you vote in the 2020 election for President, or for some reason were you unable to vote?

43%	Joe Biden, the Democrat
46	Donald Trump, the Republican
3	Jo Jorgensen, the Libertarian
2	Not registered/Too young/Ineligible
6	Did not vote

Q2. How long have you lived in the South?

0%	Less than a year
5	1-5 years
6	6-10 years
4	11-15 years
27	15+ years
57	I have lived in the South my whole life

Q3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your local community. (Sorted descending by *Strongly Agree*)

	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Neither agree nor disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	
	<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Smwt</u>		<u>Smwt</u>	<u>Strongly</u>
I feel accepted by the members of my local community.	31	34	21	9	4
I feel that I can make a meaningful impact in my local community.	27	33	25	10	5
I feel like a valued member of my local community.	24	29	31	11	6
I would be treated poorly by members of my local community if I expressed beliefs different from theirs.	19	25	25	17	14

Q4. In the United States, do you feel that individuals who share the following characteristics with you are being left behind? Please select the option that best represents your viewpoint for each category. (Sorted descending by *Yes, Strongly*)

	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		
	<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Smwt</u>	<u>Not really</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
People in my socio-economic bracket	30	30	22	14	3

Polling was conducted online from November 3-13, 2023. Using Dynamic Online Sampling to attain a representative sample, Embold Research polled 2616 registered voters in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2020 presidential vote. You can see a full methodology statement [here](#), which complies with the requirements of AAPOR's Transparency Initiative. Members of the Transparency Initiative disclose all relevant details about our research, with the principle that the public should be able to evaluate and understand research-based findings, in order to instill and restore public confidence in survey results.

	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		
	Strongly	Smwt	Not really	Not at all	Not sure
People who share my gender	26	24	26	20	4
People who share my racial or ethnic background	24	21	25	27	3
People who share my sexual orientation	23	17	27	27	5
People from my region or community	20	30	31	15	5

Q5. When considering the various individuals you interact with or have relationships with, how frequently do you engage with people who differ from you in the following ways? (Sorted descending by *Very often*)

	Very often	Somewhat often	Not very often	Never
Work colleagues from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds	42	32	18	8
Work colleagues with different religious or spiritual beliefs	41	34	17	8
Friends from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds	39	36	21	4
Friends with different religious or spiritual beliefs	39	40	18	4
Work colleagues who belong to a different political party than you	38	35	19	9
Work colleagues from various socioeconomic statuses	33	38	21	8
Friends from different socioeconomic statuses	32	45	19	4
Friends who belong to a different political party than you	32	37	25	5

Q6. In terms of your financial situation, education, and career, do you feel you are better or worse off than others in your local community, state, or nationally? Could you specify any groups of people you have in mind when making these comparisons? [[See Appendix A](#)]

Q7. Every person has different roles and group memberships that shape their identity. How important are each of the following aspects in shaping your personal identity? (Sorted descending by *Extremely important*)

	<u>Importance</u>				
	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Somewhat	Not at all
Your religion or faith	31	16	17	11	26
Your gender identity	26	19	17	8	30
Your sexual orientation	24	17	17	9	32
Your race or ethnicity	18	16	19	14	33
Being a Southerner	17	16	17	13	37

	<u>Importance</u>				
	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Somewhat	Not at all
Being from {{ STATE }}	17	17	19	15	32
Your political party	15	21	25	15	24
Your occupation	13	21	24	13	29
Being from your city	9	13	22	16	41

Q8. Turning to a different topic, in your opinion, which THREE of the following do you value the most?

- 43% Family
- 36 Freedom
- 31 Honesty
- 30 Faith
- 27 Integrity
- 23 Justice
- 22 Equality
- 21 Respect
- 20 Compassion
- 15 Responsibility
- 14 Security
- 14 Hard work
- 12 Patriotism
- 6 Community
- 5 Hope
- 3 Achievement
- 4 Other (please specify)

Q9. There are many different people who we can go to for information. In general, how much do you trust or distrust information from each of the following sources? (Sorted descending by *Strongly trust*)

	<u>Trust</u>		Neither trust nor distrust	<u>Disrust</u>	
	Strongly	Smwt		Smwt	Strongly
Immediate family members	37	39	19	5	1
Personal friends	36	50	13	1	0
Healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses)	25	44	16	10	5
Scientists or industry experts	25	30	19	14	11
Military veterans	21	40	32	5	2
Individuals directly affected by crime (victims or survivors)	19	41	35	4	2
Teachers or educators	16	37	25	13	9
Law enforcement officers	15	34	22	15	14
Elders in the community	13	45	30	8	3
Eyewitnesses to events or incidents	12	50	30	7	2
Religious or spiritual leaders	11	32	22	14	20

	<u>Trust</u>		Neither trust nor distrust	<u>Disrust</u>	
	Strongly	Smwt		Smwt	Strongly
Neighbors or local community members	7	42	41	7	3
Coworkers	6	37	47	6	3
Employers	4	22	42	20	13
Local news broadcasters	4	27	28	21	20
National news broadcasters	3	18	20	21	38
Business leaders	2	16	36	26	19
Celebrities (e.g., actors, artists, athletes, musicians)	1	4	30	22	43
Elected officials or politicians	1	8	20	28	43
Social media influencers	1	4	23	25	47

Q10. [SHOW TRUSTED MESSENGERS] For each of the sources you trust, what kinds of news or information do you find most credible? [See Appendix B]

Q11. In a situation where information from two or more of these sources conflict, how do you decide which one to trust? [See Appendix C]

Q12. What factors have influenced you to change your stance or opinion on a social issue? Select all that apply.

- 70% Personal experience or direct impact from the issue
- 64 Saw compelling statistical data or factual evidence
- 47 Witnessed broad societal or community impact of the issue
- 44 Learned more from someone I trust or know
- 40 Met someone in person who is impacted by the issue
- 36 Learned more from a trusted but impersonal source (e.g., expert, journalist)
- 27 Religious or spiritual beliefs guided my change in opinion
- 16 Interacted online with someone who is impacted by the issue
- 6 None of the above

Q13. If a politician who shares your views is voted into office, how confident are you that they will bring about the changes you want?

- 7% Very confident
- 42 Somewhat confident
- 33 Not too confident
- 16 Not confident at all
- 2 Not sure
- 49 **Total confident**
- 49 **Total not confident**

Q14. How concerned are you about the serious impact of climate change on your local community?

- 36% Very concerned
- 18 Somewhat concerned
- 15 Not very concerned

29 Not concerned at all
 1 Not sure
 55 **Total concerned**
 44 **Total not concerned**

Q15. How well do you think your community is prepared for extreme weather events linked to climate change, like hurricanes, wildfires, or floods?

12% Very well prepared
 36 Somewhat prepared
 21 Somewhat unprepared
 26 Very unprepared
 5 Not sure
 48 **Total prepared**
 47 **Total unprepared**

Q16. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing {{ STATE }}? Please choose no more than three.

42% The cost of housing and rent
 35 Political extremism
 31 Having a well-educated workforce and giving children the tools they need to succeed
 29 Reducing illegal immigration
 28 Crime and public safety
 25 Affordable healthcare options
 24 The growing income and wealth differences
 23 Racism and discrimination
 19 Opioid and substance abuse crisis
 19 Voter access and election security
 18 Too much development
 18 Preservation of natural resources and addressing climate change
 16 Gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights
 15 Lowering spending and more fiscal responsibility
 13 Attracting new jobs and industries
 11 Loss of rural character
 11 Extreme weather events such as flooding and wildfires
 11 Water quality and availability
 4 Keeping {{ STATE }}'s children in the state once they graduate

Q17. There are different factors that may serve as barriers to economic opportunity. What are the top two hurdles you face when trying to improve your financial situation? Please select TWO.

38% High cost of living in my area
 16 Difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities
 16 Health conditions or disabilities restricting job prospects
 15 Lack of access to more affordable healthcare coverage
 14 Can't afford or don't have time to get additional education
 14 Lack of available job openings in my field
 11 Lack of influential contacts for better job opportunities
 10 Can't afford or don't have time to get additional job skills or training
 7 Experienced racial discrimination that affected economic opportunities
 4 Lack of access to reliable means of transportation
 3 Experienced gender or sexual identity discrimination that affected economic opportunities
 25 No barriers—I have all the economic opportunities I need

Q18. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following: (Sorted descending by *Strongly agree*)

	<u>Agree</u>		Neither agree nor disagree	<u>Disagree</u>	
	Strongly	Smwt		Smwt	Strongly
Moving forward, some groups will be left behind in the United States.	31	35	16	8	9
Creating opportunities for one group of people often occurs at the expense of other groups.	31	24	16	13	16

Q19. These are some things that some people do to get involved and make changes in their community. Which of the following have you done in the last year? Select all that apply.

- 83% Voted in an election
- 52 Supported or promoted an issue of importance to me on social media or online
- 47 Asked friends or family to support a cause or register to vote
- 47 Donated to a cause, candidate, or political party
- 45 Contacted an elected official (via email, phone call, letter, etc)
- 28 Been active in your church
- 28 Mentored a young person
- 28 Participated in a moderated conversation with people who hold views that are different from your own
- 22 Volunteered for a cause, candidate, or political party
- 20 Attended a town hall or community forum
- 15 Attended a demonstration for or against a candidate, person, or issue
- 11 Organized community efforts
- 10 Participated in a PTA or school board meeting
- 4 None of these

Q20. To what extent do you believe that you can make valuable contributions to conversations about race?

- 22% I believe that I can make extremely valuable contributions to conversations about race
- 37 I believe that I can make somewhat valuable contributions to conversations about race
- 16 I do not believe that I can make valuable contributions to conversations about race
- 25 I choose not to engage in conversations about race

Q21. Please indicate your level of comfort discussing issues of race with people of varying views:
(Sorted descending by *Extremely comfortable*)

	<u>Comfortable</u>		<u>Uncomfortable</u>		Avoid discussing
	Extremely	Smwt	Smwt	Extremely	
Discussing issues of race with people whose views are similar to yours	47	35	7	2	9
Discussing issues of race with people whose views are dissimilar to yours	23	37	20	6	14

Q22A. [50% saw version A] Which of the following should the United States offer to African Americans as a way to address the lasting harm caused by slavery and other forms of racial discrimination? Select all that apply.

- 42% Preservation of Black sacred sites and monuments
- 42 Investments in predominantly Black community infrastructure (e.g. education, healthcare) harm caused by slavery and racial discrimination
- 35 Restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated persons
- 34 Educational grants and/or scholarships
- 30 National apology for slavery and subsequent discrimination
- 30 Business grants and/or loans
- 27 Homeownership grants and/or loans
- 26 Agricultural grants and/or loans
- 22 Student loan forgiveness
- 17 Free college tuition
- 15 Lower interest rates
- 10 Direct cash payments to individuals
- 15 Other (please specify)
- 36 The United States should not offer anything to African Americans as a way to address the lasting harm caused by slavery and racial discrimination

Q22B. [50% saw version B] In the past, the U.S. has given money to Japanese Americans and Indigenous Americans as a way to make up for wrongs done to them. Which of the following should the United States offer to African Americans as a way to address the lasting harm caused by slavery and other forms of racial discrimination? Select all that apply.

- 43% Investments in predominantly Black community infrastructure (e.g. education, healthcare)
- 43 Preservation of Black sacred sites and monuments
- 37 Educational grants and/or scholarships
- 34 National apology for slavery and subsequent discrimination
- 33 Restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated persons
- 28 Business grants and/or loans
- 26 Homeownership grants and/or loans
- 23 Agricultural grants and/or loans
- 22 Student loan forgiveness
- 17 Free college tuition
- 16 Lower interest rates
- 12 Direct cash payments to individuals
- 11 Other (please specify)
- 31 The United States should not offer anything to African Americans as a way to address the lasting harm caused by slavery and racial discrimination

Q23. How important is it to you that schools in your community teach an accurate account of America's history, including difficult topics like slavery and racial discrimination?

- 80% Very important
- 12 Somewhat important
- 3 Not too important
- 3 Not important at all
- 3 Not sure
- 91 **Total important**
- 6 **Total not important**

Q24. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about education in your community? (Sorted descending by Total agree)

	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		Total agree	Total disagree
	Strongly	Smwt	Smwt	Strongly		
A complete American history should be taught in schools. Teachers should teach children the complete facts about historical topics like slavery and civil rights. This helps us understand the present and work toward a more equitable future.	77	16	3	4	93	7
Attempts to ban books and history lessons on sensitive topics like slavery and racism are often blown out of proportion to scare parents. Teaching a full and accurate history is not just good for some, but it benefits everyone by helping us understand the whole picture of who we are as a nation.	66	19	5	10	85	15
It's more important that we focus on raising teacher pay, reducing classroom size, and attracting and retaining more good teachers in our schools and focus less on telling kids what bathroom to use and outlawing critical race theory.	67	14	9	10	81	19
Those who want to teach critical race theory in our schools are trying to further divide us and make white students feel like they are inherently racist. Schools should teach about how far the country has come instead of focusing on what makes us different from each other.	48	9	8	35	57	43

Q25. Which of the following best matches your religious affiliation?

- 10% Evangelical
- 24 Protestant, Non-Evangelical
- 0 Mormon
- 8 Observant Catholic
- 8 Non-observant Catholic
- 1 Mormon / Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- 2 Jewish
- 0 Muslim
- 24 Non-religious
- 23 Other (please specify)

Q26. How do you get most of your news about national and local politics and issues? Please select all that apply.

- 29 NPR or local public radio
- 26 FOX News
- 24 Local NBC
- 24 Facebook
- 23 CNN

- 23 Local newspaper
- 23 National newspaper (like The Washington Post or New York Times)
- 23 Local ABC
- 20 YouTube
- 20 Local CBS
- 18 MSNBC
- 17 Local talk or news radio
- 17 Local FOX
- 15 Instagram
- 15 Twitter/X
- 15 Newsmax
- 10 TikTok
- 5 Threads
- 5 Truth Social
- 30% Somewhere else (please specify)

Q27. Where do you primarily watch, read, or hear news about national and local issues? Please select all that apply.

- 53% Online news websites or apps
- 41 Social media apps or websites where news is shared (such as Facebook, Twitter/X, TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube)
- 25 Local FM or AM radio
- 21 Podcasts
- 19 Cable Television (such as Xfinity or Spectrum)
- 18 Streaming Live Television (such as YouTubeTV, SlingTV, or Philo)
- 17 Printed local or national newspaper
- 14 Local television via digital antenna
- 12 Satellite Television (such as DISH or DirectTV)
- 10 OnDemand Streaming (such as Hulu, Peacock App, or Paramount+)
- 6 Streaming online radio
- 5 None of these

D1. Are you:

- 46% Male
- 52 Female
- 2 Other

D2. Age

- 25% 18 to 34
- 24 35 to 49
- 25 50 to 64
- 26 65+

D3. What is your race?

- 64% White / Caucasian
- 18 Black or African American
- 13 Hispanic or Latino/a
- 0 Asian / Pacific Islander
- 0 American Indian or Alaska Native
- 3 Other

D4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 13% High school diploma or less
- 33 Some college, but no degree

- 18 Associate's degree, or two-year college degree
- 21 Bachelor's degree, or four-year college degree
- 15 Graduate degree

D5. Party Identification

- 24% Strong Democrats
- 9 Weak Democrats
- 10 Independent lean Democrats
- 13 Pure independents
- 12 Independent lean Republicans
- 7 Weak Republicans
- 25 Strong Republicans

Party Identification

- 33% Base Democrats
- 34 Independents + Leaners
- 33 Base Republicans

Party Identification

- 43% Democrats
- 13 Pure independents
- 44 Republicans

D6. State

- 6% AL
- 4 AR
- 21 FL
- 6 GA
- 3 KY
- 5 LA
- 1 MS
- 11 NC
- 4 SC
- 8 TN
- 22 TX
- 9 VA
- 1 WV

Appendix A: In terms of your financial situation, education, and career, do you feel you are better or worse off than others in your local community, state, or nationally? Could you specify any groups of people you have in mind when making these comparisons?

The responses to the open-ended question about financial situations in the southern United States paint a vivid picture of the diverse economic realities faced by individuals across this region. Analyzing these responses reveals a tapestry of financial experiences, deeply influenced by a variety of demographic factors such as age, ethnicity, and state of residence. Notably, the sentiment of financial strain or stagnation emerges as a common thread, yet the specifics of these challenges are as varied as the backgrounds of the respondents.

Older adults, especially those over 65, frequently voice concerns about fixed incomes and the escalating costs of living, highlighting the unique financial pressures facing retirees. In contrast, younger respondents grapple with low wages and high living costs, pointing to the challenges in establishing financial stability early in their careers. Ethnicity further colors these financial narratives. Black or African American respondents often focus on systemic challenges like disparities in education and employment, whereas White respondents tend to emphasize the impact of national economic policies on their personal finances. Hispanic respondents, meanwhile, underscore the importance of community and family support, alongside concerns about education access and job security.

The responses also highlight distinct regional nuances. For instance, the economic climate in Texas, with its focus on the energy sector, presents different opportunities and challenges compared to Florida, where tourism and real estate dominate. These state-specific conditions, alongside varying urban and rural economic landscapes, play a significant role in shaping individual financial situations. Additionally, the intersection of political affiliation with financial perspectives cannot be overlooked, as it significantly influences how respondents perceive and discuss their economic well-being.

In summary, the financial situations of individuals in the southern United States are complex and multifaceted, deeply intertwined with their demographic backgrounds and the specific characteristics of the regions they inhabit. This diversity underscores the need for nuanced understanding and approaches when addressing the economic challenges and opportunities in this part of the country.

Appendix B: For each of the sources you trust, what kinds of news or information do you find most credible?

- Business Leaders: Respondents often trust business leaders for insights into economic conditions, workplace issues, and industry-specific information.
- Celebrities: Trust in celebrities is generally low, with credibility given mainly to personal experiences or advocacy in specific causes they are known for.
- Coworkers: Information about workplace or industry-specific news is trusted from coworkers.
- Employers: Similar to coworkers, employers are trusted for workplace-related information.
- Religious or Spiritual Leaders: Respondents trust these leaders for guidance on spiritual matters, moral issues, and personal struggles.
- Immediate Family Members: Trust is high for personal advice, family matters, and experiences.
- Personal Friends: Friends are trusted for personal experiences, opinions, and shared interests.
- Local News Broadcasters: Local news is trusted for regional updates and local events.
- National News Broadcasters: Trust varies, often depending on the perceived bias of the news outlet.
- Elected Officials or Politicians: There's a mixed trust, often influenced by political affiliations.
- Social Media Influencers: Trust is generally low, with some reliance on influencers known for specific topics.
- Teachers or Educators: Trusted for educational content, expertise in their subject matter, and insights into current educational issues.
- Military Veterans: Trusted for insights into military experiences, security issues, and occasionally political views.
- Law Enforcement Officers: Trusted for safety and local law enforcement information.
- Healthcare Professionals: Highly trusted for medical and health-related information.
- Neighbors or Local Community Members: Trusted for local news, community events, and personal experiences.
- Scientists or Industry Experts: Highly trusted for their expertise in specific scientific or industrial domains.
- Elders in the Community: Trusted for wisdom, historical perspective, and life experiences.
- Eyewitnesses to Events or Incidents: Trust varies, with some skepticism due to the unreliability of memory.

Appendix C: In a situation where information from two or more of these sources conflict, how do you decide which one to trust?

The analysis of the responses to the open-ended question regarding trust in conflicting information sources from White, Black, and Hispanic voters in the South reveals a multifaceted approach to media consumption. These responses, reflecting the rich diversity of the region, underline the complex interplay between cultural, social, and political factors in shaping individual perspectives on credibility and trust.

A key insight from the responses is the emphasis on historical reliability and familiarity, particularly among older White respondents and those with conservative leanings. This group often trusts long-established media, valuing consistency and a proven track record. In contrast, Black voters across age groups prioritize sources that resonate with their community's experiences, especially around racial and social justice issues. Their preference leans towards media outlets that accurately represent and address African-American communities' perspectives. Hispanic respondents, similarly, show a tendency towards sources that align with their cultural and linguistic identity, often preferring Spanish-language media and content relevant to immigration and labor issues.

Another notable trend is the importance of educational and intellectual credibility, particularly among Hispanic respondents. This demographic values sources that are perceived as more intelligent and educated, indicating a preference for expert analysis and informed perspectives. Across all groups, there's a growing inclination, especially among younger voters, towards digital media and modern platforms. This shift suggests an adaptation to more immediate and accessible forms of information consumption, marking a departure from traditional media reliance.

In summary, the responses from these diverse voter groups in the South highlight an intricate and varied approach to determining trust in media sources. The preferences and criteria vary significantly across ethnic, age, and cultural lines, demonstrating the nuanced ways in which individuals navigate the complex information landscape.