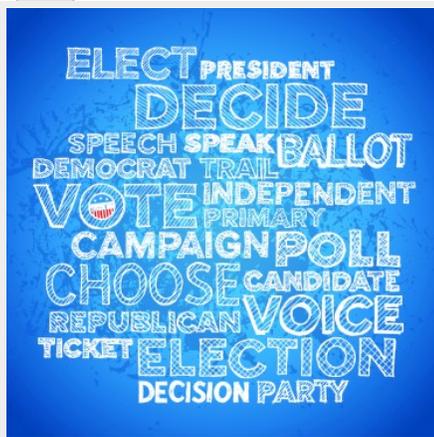


Poll: African-American Voters Feel Democratic Party Takes Them for Granted

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(CBM) – A recent poll revealed many Black voters in California strongly identify with the Democratic Party, although 58 percent feel the establishment takes them for granted.

Commissioned by the African American Voter Registration, Education and Participation (AAVREP) Project, The California African American Policy Priorities Survey sampled 800 potential African-American voters in Los Angeles, Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The May 5-17 poll was conducted by telephone. Pollsters targeted registered voters who

participated in either of the last two primary or general elections. They asked the survey participants questions on a range of topics, including state ballot initiatives, policy priorities and federal and state election candidates.

Nearly half of the respondents were ages 65 and older, reflecting a higher voter turnout in past elections. The participants were also Californians who are more likely to vote this election year.

During a telephone press conference, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said this recent poll is a follow-up to others conducted in the past.

“This is a following on some of the polling that we’ve done in the past, measuring the outcome of the African-American voters in the City of Los Angeles and then one in the county of Los Angeles,” he said.

The survey revealed voters over 40 invariably favor Hillary Clinton as the Democratic Presidential nominee. On the other hand, a sizable generational gap reveals Bernie Sanders leads by 16 percent among voters under 40.

A majority of the voters had an unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump, and two-thirds are motivated to vote specifically to keep him from being elected.

The census also explored general perceptions of other leading political candidates on the June 7 Presidential Primary Election ballot. California Attorney General Kamala Harris is viewed favorably by 53 percent of Black voters. Thirty percent of the voters are in favor of U.S. Representative Loretta Sanchez, however, many say they are unfamiliar with her or do not know enough about her to offer an opinion.

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On November ballot initiatives, participants strongly supported proposed education bond and gun control measures.. Nearly four-in-five said they would support a \$9 billion bond measure to fund improvement and new construction for K-12 schools and community colleges. Over three-quarters supported gun control initiatives that would outlaw large-capacity bullet magazines and require background checks for ammunition purchases.

The marijuana legalization measure was favored by a small margin. Statewide, 52 percent of respondents were for legalizing the recreational use of cannabis.

When asked about policy priorities, Black voters in all of the three major regions in the state identified homelessness as a serious problem. Ninety-three percent recognized it as a high priority for elected officials to address the ongoing epidemic.

Over half of the respondents believe law enforcement agencies should be held accountable for excessive use of force. Other high priority policies included making housing more affordable, improving access to quality health care, and fighting discrimination and institutional racism. However, climate change and illegal immigration – two issues that poll high with the general population – did not factor as top priorities among Black voters.

Ridley-Thomas said polling is a fundamental feature of the democratic process.

“The right to vote was hard fought, and continues to be, in terms of every round of debate pertaining to the voting rights,” he said. “And so this is yet another tool to make sure the promises of democracy are properly fulfilled.”

By Madlen Grgodjaian

California Black Media

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