



**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Garin-Hart-Yang Research, AAPI Victory Alliance, AAPI Victory Fund, AAPI Power Fund, Asian American Power Network, NARAL Pro-Choice America, EMILY’s List, National Education Association, Priorities USA, and SEIU.

**DATE:** October 17, 2022

**RE:** [NEW POLL] Democrats Must Invest More to Persuade AAPI Voters

AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) voters are a critical component of the electorate, particularly in crucial battleground states and districts that will determine control of Congress. A coalition of progressive organizations combined resources to center AAPI communities, their interests and policy preferences, and to gain a better understanding of the political opinions of a group that is often stereotyped and ignored by political outreach efforts. Our findings indicate that kitchen-table issues like inflation and the economy resonate highly with AAPI voters. This trend is consistent with polling of every other group that Priorities has surveyed, demonstrating that a majority of voters are most motivated by issues that affect the cost of living of their families and communities.

Despite Democrats’ relative strength among AAPI voters, this poll indicated a slight drop off in support for Democratic candidates and a slight uptick in support for Republican candidates among this community. On the generic ballot, this poll shows that support for Democrats dropped from 56% in 2020 to 51% and support for Republicans climbed by two points from 34% in 2020 to 36%. **It is imperative that Democrats invest in meaningful persuasion and GOTV efforts to earn the trust and support of AAPI voters.**

**AAPI voters are motivated to vote this November.**

Democrats have the foundation to make a compelling case to AAPI voters. Overall, **AAPI voters trust Democrats more than Republicans** by wide margins in areas of traditional Democratic strength like environmental conservation, abortion, and gun control. However, AAPI voters trust Republicans more than Democrats by a small margin on specific issues such as immigration, the economy, and the cost of living, despite the Republican Party’s broad unpopularity among AAPI voters.

This poll indicates that the AAPI community is a highly engaged electorate, presenting a clear opportunity for Democrats to increase outreach efforts to these voters. AAPI voter enthusiasm is

high — **four in five** are extremely or very motivated to vote in 2022. In comparison to a similar survey from 2020, engagement with some age demographics is higher than in 2020.

However, in order to mobilize AAPI voters, **Democrats must acknowledge how the preferences of this community have shifted.** Compared to 2020, there is a notable change in AAPI voters' preferred vote method. **Over half (53%) of AAPI voters now plan to vote in person on Election Day** with key populations like young voters aged 18-34 (**60%**), and people who didn't vote in 2020 (**61%**) more likely to vote in person. Democrats must invest in robust and consistent voter education programs that provide AAPI voters with trustworthy information on how, when, and where to vote as misinformation campaigns continue to target communities of color and Republicans create more barriers to voting. Additionally, **investment in voter communication in native languages is critical.** Barriers to voting were felt most acutely by voters who primarily spoke a language other than English.

### **A strong social safety net, affordable health care, and investments in infrastructure resonate with AAPI voters.**

Like all voters, AAPI voters prioritize issues that affect the cost of living of their families and communities. Expanded access to health care, guaranteed Social Security, paid sick and family leave, and universal child and elder care are all popular initiatives with AAPI voters and almost half of AAPI voters believe that their economic stability would be greatly improved by expanded access to health care (**49%**). This provides Democrats with a messaging opportunity to demonstrate the progress that we have already made to secure the future of working families while making a case for future progress that Democrats are committed to while Republicans will gut existing programs.

Additionally, despite conventional wisdom that drug pricing reform resonates more with older voters, President Biden's plan to cap insulin at \$35 per month and allow Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies was popular with **79%** of AAPI voters between the ages of 18-34 and **73%** of AAPI voters ages 50-64. Meanwhile, President Biden's bipartisan effort to revitalize American infrastructure by rebuilding roads and bridges, replacing lead water pipes, creating one million well-paying jobs also had broad appeal with AAPI voters (**71%**) and particularly independents (**70%**).

Third only to concerns around cost of living and jobs, **23%** of AAPI voters ranked gun control as their most important issue, proving that this is a pressing issue for the community. Democrats can leverage their common-sense position on gun violence prevention and Joe Biden's commitment to keeping Americans safe by pointing to the recently passed gun safety bill, which overcame significant conservative opposition to reach a consensus and make Americans safer.

Abortion access is another critical contrast Democrats can lean on when communicating with AAPI voters as **69%** prefer a candidate who supports abortion rights. While Republicans are promoting a national ban on abortion, only **18%** of AAPI voters say that they support these restrictive policies.

Roughly **three in four** AAPI respondents opposed Republican plans to ban books from school libraries and indicated that they favored giving their children “an honest and accurate education so that they are prepared to succeed in a diverse society.” It is clear that Republican attacks on school curricula are not moving swing voters toward the GOP and are, in fact, making AAPI voters less likely to support their candidates.

**There are distinct differences on issues within the AAPI community, proving the community cannot be treated as a monolith.**

Due to a wealth of ethnic diversity within the AAPI community, there is a sizable difference of opinion between different AAPI ethnic groups. To be most effective, Democrats must acknowledge that the AAPI community is not monolithic and deserves personalized, thoughtful outreach. **The same level of effort and long-term engagement must be extended to all voters of color, recognizing that no demographic group is a monolith and deserves to have a diverse set of priorities reflected in the political process.**

To achieve this, Democrats can draw from a well of support from key demographics within the AAPI community. The Democratic Party’s strongest support comes from AAPI voters aged 18-34, women aged 18-49, South Asians, and those who identify as Persian. There is still room to solidify support among these groups and Democrats have an additional opportunity to grow party support among the Southeast Asian community. Enthusiasm levels also differ across ethnicities: East Asians and those who completed the survey in an Asian language are the least motivated groups to vote overall, presenting an opportunity for targeted, language-specific outreach to increase voter enthusiasm among this group.

Overall, health care and prescription drug prices were shared concerns across East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian voters surveyed, giving Democrats a unifying issue to rally AAPI voters across ethnic groups.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Ultimately, Democrats need to show AAPI voters that they are a priority and have a home in the Democratic Party. As an influential and rapidly growing demographic, Democrats should empower AAPI communities with resources to help overcome barriers to voting and messaging that highlights how Democrats are fighting for their interests to build AAPI political power, engagement and support.

To win the trust and support of AAPI voters, Democrats must understand what AAPI voters' top concerns are and show that they are committed to defending the interests of working families from the economy to gun control through long-term consistent outreach. Democrats must also leverage their victories on infrastructure and inflation while marketing themselves as the antidote to GOP obstruction, inaction and voter suppression.

*Garin-Hart-Yang Research conducted phone, text-to-web, and online surveys among 1,955 AAPI registered voters in battleground states and districts in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, Texas, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, and California Congressional Districts 9, 13, 22, 27, 45, 47, 49. Interviews were conducted from July 25 to September 1, 2022, 1,832 in English and 123 in an Asian language.*