



Using Qualitative & Quantitative Research to Understand Rural Communities of Color

September 30, 2022

NRP Theory of Change & Research



WHO

Engage young and marginalized residents in rural communities, amplifying their voices through increased civic and electoral engagement.



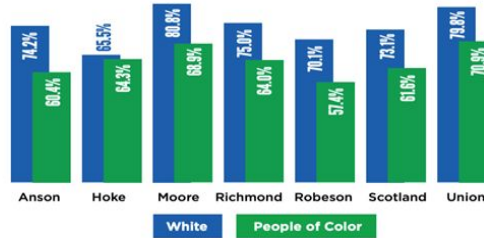
Eliminate barriers to engagement by listening to rural stakeholders and developing community-driven solutions.

WHY

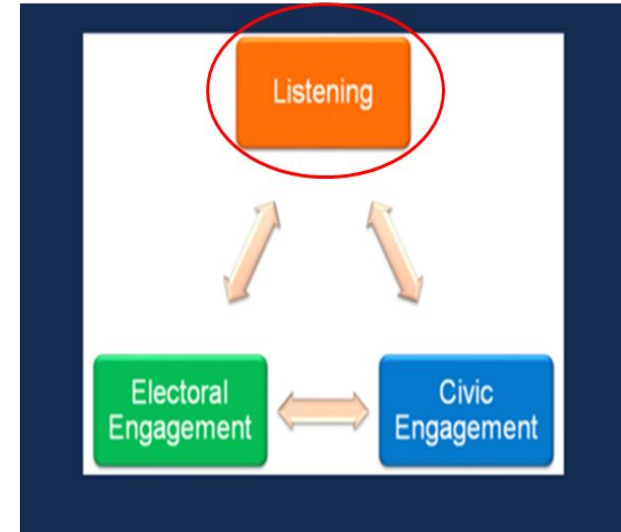
PEOPLE OF COLOR

People of color represent 38% of registered voters in our focus counties, and they are the majority of registered voters in Anson, Hoke, Robeson and Scotland Counties. In 2020, people of color made up only 33% of the total vote, because almost 55,000 people of color did not vote.

2020 General Election Turnout Rate



HOW



2020 Supreme Court Judge Race decided by 401 votes out of 5 million cast

Research Design



Qualitative Research

- 2 Focus Groups with Black non-2018 voters, majority under 40
 - 8 in-depth interviews with Lumbee voters
 - 8 in-depth interviews with Latinx voters
- } Aug. 31, 2021
- } Aug. 24 - Sept. 14, 2021

Quantitative Research

Change Research surveyed 538 registered voters of color in Anson, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland, Union from June 2-13, 2022. The margin of error as traditionally calculated is 5.2%.

Change Research reaches voters via targeted online ads & text messages that point people to an online survey instrument. Our Dynamic Online Sampling establishes and continuously rebalances advertising targets across region, age, gender, race, and partisanship to dynamically deliver large samples that accurately reflect the demographics of a population. Post stratification was done on subregion, gender, age, race, education, and 2020 presidential vote.

It is hard to earn enough to support a family

The jobs here make it impossible to afford rent & support a family, so many commute to better jobs.

*The second issue is the pay wage here, like **most of the pay wage here is literally under, I would say for most jobs, it's under \$12 and not good enough because prices and tax goes up every day, it's not enough to afford, so even if wages go up, [you're] still under a poverty line.***

(Latinx man)

*It just has to do with like the location where I'm from. A lot of **people don't have money and that's just like a generational curse** that a lot of families can't break it. Just where we live too. **It's not a place that has like a high minimum wage or a lot of ways to make money.***

(Lumbee woman)

***There's no industry here.** It's like they got Purdue chicken and from what I hear, they had NASCAR and that's it.*

(Black man)

***Being paid a livable wage here is almost impossible.** And you know, we have to deal with so many things for, you know, some people \$7.25, \$10, some places you may be as lucky as to get paid \$13, but it's very rare to find those things.*

(Black woman)

Drugs & crime

There is a cycle of poverty that can lead to drug use and crime.

Violence is everywhere [and] you know, house break-ins.
(Black man)

Every day I can turn on the news and there's **someone else that has been either shot or they have found another body. And they're saying that it was a drug overdose.**
(Black woman)

The safety of our community, our neighborhood, of our kids. We've been having a couple of issues. I've been here for five years. This is my third year hearing about the break-ins in the car. **If you don't feel safe at your home, house, where are you going to go and feel safe?**
(Latinx woman)

It's terrible [...] in this small town here because people don't have no jobs. [...] People seem like they don't have nothing. They have to do something in order to do maintain their financial situation. So **they turned to drugs and selling drugs, and then you got a bunch of people on drugs and people selling drugs, and now the drugs they have now is killing them.**

(Lumbee man)



Racism a major concern in Black community



Racism -- a stand-alone issue for Black women that compounds/explains other top issues.

[Racism] also ties into the wages like you work with some people work for tips as well. So if you have a table, they automatically don't like Black people. It reflects in how they treat you. It reflects in the amount of money that you may make with them.

(Black woman)

*You get profiled a lot that goes back to the racism by different areas. Like when I was living in Carthage on any given day, **you would be pulled over just for the color of your skin.** Not because you were doing anything wrong.*

(Black woman)

*The city of **Southern Pines will not turn on the lights for the basketball courts, but the tennis courts stay open all night.** Long after our governor lifted our mask mandate they kept this. I believe **they don't appreciate the large and joyous gathering of people, mostly African Americans,** that just want to play basketball.*

(Black man)

Lumbee Focus on Tribal Leaders & Resources



Issue #1) Lack of good leadership within the tribe.



*I love my race, but **there's just no control of the way the situation is here....The ones that do control the money in Pembroke, that's where more the tribal councils are.***
(Lumbee man)



*We need to get the right people into the Lumbee tribe. I don't think we have that set. You know, **I think all the people that's in there now, they're not helping the elderly, like they should, the community, like they should, you know, to me, it's like a money thing. They're just there for the money. Not the people.***

(Lumbee woman)

Issue #2) Struggle to get resources from the tribe and then nowhere to turn.



*So say you need help with housing. You can't go through the county organizations, **you have to go through the tribe [...] that's the only help that there is for Lumbees.** You may not get approved with Lumbee Tribe.*
(Lumbee man)



*They turned so many people down and it's like right now, I need help with my light bill is \$485 for one month, **I can't go to the house program or DSS because I'm a Lumbee tribal member. But when I go to the Lumbee tribe, they tell me my crisis is not big enough.** [...] that was embarrassing for them to tell me it wasn't a crisis. And I got three kids living here, it is a crisis to sleep in the heat.*

(Lumbee woman)

Federal recognition does **not** come up organically as a top issue for the Lumbee community, but all say it is important to them when asked. It would mean more political influence and funding for resources, though several interviewees don't necessarily trust tribal leaders to fairly allocate funds and operate honestly.

Hispanic/Latinx Community

You know, here I'm not as well tapped into the Hispanic community as I was back home. You know, especially, well in our community where we live is, is pretty diverse, but we are a middle class neighborhood. And so I don't really get to get the feeling of, you know, I see Hispanics in the neighborhood you know, usually in construction and lawn maintenance and, you know, I don't know about those communities and how they are coping with things.

(Latinx woman)

For us, not really, we're pretty, insulated and safe. And here in North Carolina, I don't see a lot of strife for them. So I mean within my community, no, I don't. I'm sure there is, but I haven't obviously because of COVID too, I'm not really involved in the actual community itself.

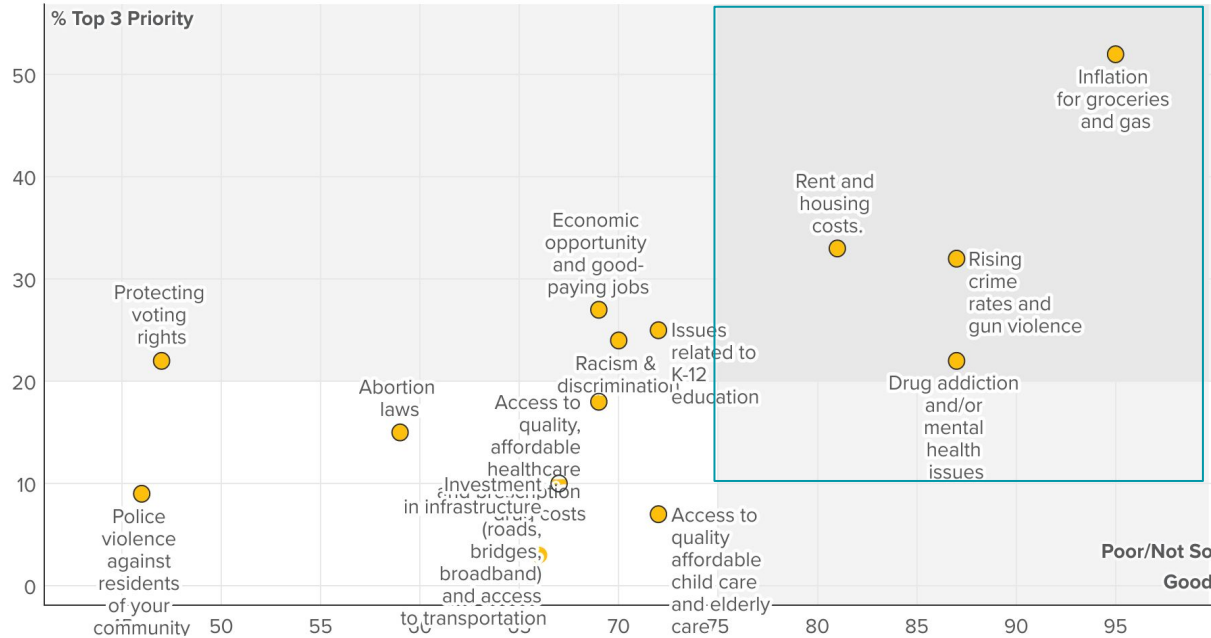
(Latinx woman)

- Not a strong sense of Hispanic/Latinx identity or community.
- Many have moved to NC for a job/their spouse's job.
 - 21% of Hispanic/Latinx voters in the region are born in NC on the voter-file
- Cannot identify any local Hispanic/Latinx community leaders.
- Few identify issues facing the *local* Hispanic/Latinx community.

Salient Issues



The rising cost of gas and groceries, rent and housing costs, crime rates and gun violence, and drug addiction/mental health issues rise as top salient issues for voters of color.



Which THREE of the following issues are the most important issues facing this part of North Carolina?

	Black	Lumbee
Inflation for groceries and gas	43	67
Rent and housing costs are too high	38	15
Rising crime rates and gun violence	29	41
Lack of economic opportunity and good-paying jobs	26	28
Issues related to K-12 public education	24	25
Racism & discrimination	33	12
Protecting voting rights	23	14
Drug addiction and/or mental health issues	15	42
Access to quality, affordable health care and prescription drug costs	22	18
Protecting abortion rights	17	9
Lack of investment in infrastructure (roads, bridges, broadband) and access to transportation	9	11
Police violence against residents of your community	12	8
Access to quality affordable child care and elderly care	8	7
Climate change	2	3

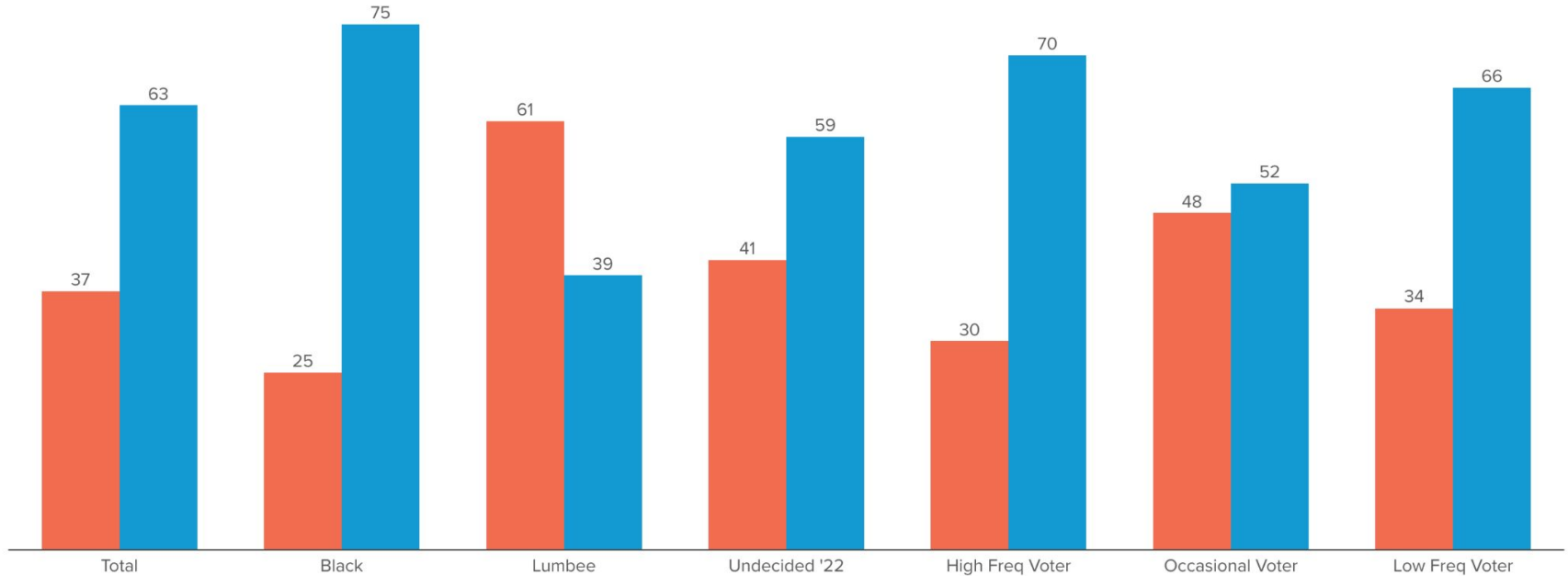
Abortion



63% feel abortion should be legal in all (34%) or most (30%) cases. But only 15% said it was a top three priority.

Abortion should be:

● Illegal All/Most Cases ● Legal All/Most Cases



Political Process & Government

Partisan Landscape



A 62% majority report they typically vote for Democrats; 26% typically vote Republican. But only 43% view the Democratic Party in NC favorably.

Party ID	All	Black	Lumbee
Base Democrats	49	62	27
Independent lean Democrat	7	7	7
Pure independents	19	20	18
Independent lean Republican	5	4	10
Base Republicans	19	7	38
Total Democrat	56	69	34
Total Republican	24	11	49

Vote Preference	All	Black	Lumbee
Always vote for Democrats	33	46	14
Usually vote Democrat, sometimes GOP	28	34	23
Split my votes evenly	12	8	11
Usually vote GOP, sometimes Democrat	10	6	21
Always GOP	15	6	30
Typically Vote Democrat	62	80	37
Typically Vote Republican	26	12	51

How favorable are your feelings about each of the following public figures and groups?

● Very favorable
 ● Somewhat favorable
 ● Neutral/DK
 ● Somewhat unfavorable
 ● Very unfavorable



GOP Brand = All About Money & the Status Quo



What does the GOP care about? “Money” & power

What does to GOP do? Protect the status quo, keep the rich rich & poor poor, support “Christian” values



They're not really for the people.

*Um, for me personally, it's **more like they're more into big businesses and things of that nature versus the small people who helped build America** and get it to where it is.*

(Black woman)



***Concentration of their wealth and power, retaining the status quo, and tax breaks.** Oh, and court packing and gerrymandering.*

(Latinx woman)



They want to keep people in their lanes. The low income people stay where they're at, don't try to come where we're at. Or the middle class, don't try to get where we're at even. But the high class people, the people who have a lot of money, a lot of clout, that's where we're at.

(Black man)



*Not willing to change. **Always old way of thinking and not looking forward to how we are changing, how society is changing, how the people in our society have changed.** We're not we're not old grumpy, old men, even though we might be that age.*

(Latinx man)

The GOP is better at pushing their agenda -- more willing to obstruct in order to avoid compromising -- and more unified.

Democratic Brand = Less Defined; They Try To Help



What do Democrats care about?



Concerns about Democrats:

- A couple Latinx (Trump voter & independent) dislike the far left (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, loan forgiveness, CRT)
- A couple Lumbee oppose abortion, but it wasn't a reason not to support Democrats.
- Primary issue is they don't fight hard enough and aren't as unified as the GOP

Half don't feel connected to Democratic Party



I find the Republicans morally bankrupt, and yet they claim to be the Christian party. I'm disconnected from the Democrats or more disconnected than I've ever been from the Democrats, because they fail to step up and do what needs to be done. (Lumbee man)

Frustrated Democrats Fail to Pass an Agenda

Democrats are seen as less intent on getting their agenda passed and less unified compared to the GOP. Strong desire for the Democrats to stop fighting amongst themselves and pass their agenda.



They need to quit bickering amongst themselves. I mean that's not good. [...] They need to come together as a group and make their decision.

(Lumbee man)



Enough with this bipartisan and just go ahead and get it through. [...] We got the votes, go ahead and put the stuff through and stop playing with people lives. It's just too much up and down with both parties. You can't win whether you got a Republican or Democrat in office.

(Black woman)



Also within themselves, stop fractionizing so much and try to get like more legislation passed, as I mentioned, to protect voting rights. I just feel like they kind of go off in so many directions and there's a lot of infighting.

(Latinx woman)



I can say they're trying, but to me they're not trying hard enough. It seems like when they go against Republicans, it's like, they crack under the pressure.

(Black man)

Trust in Political Parties



Three-in-four voters of color agree that “Democrats will make promises to people of color to get their votes, but then they leave our communities behind when they take office”

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

● Total Agree ● Total Disagree

Democrats will make promises to people of color to get their votes, but then they leave our communities behind when they take office.



Democrats think people of color will vote for them no matter what.



Democrats increasingly do not represent people like me.



Republicans only care about rich people and big corporations.



Republicans are beholden to the insurrectionists and racists in their party.



Motivating Rural Voters of Color

The Decision to Vote



Why some people **HAVE** voted:

- Negative partisanship → Stop GOP/Trump
- Positive partisanship → To elect Democrats
- Desire for change
- Habit/civic duty

Why some people have **NOT** voted:

- They don't see their local leaders/feel they care
- Nothing changes no matter who wins
- It won't make a difference to the outcome
- Logistics/too much going on in their lives



*I just feel like **my opinion doesn't matter and that regardless of whoever I pick**, at the end of the day, whatever needs to really be done, **it's out of our hands and they're going to push their agendas.***

(Black woman)



*They don't actually like really do anything. Like it was like little things that make us feel good, but they don't, **they don't make any real change.** Either party.*

(Black man)



*I just feel like in a broad sense that [local leaders] don't really have much power over what happens. Like **it really just depends on like bigger elections or it just depends on like who's giving money to who.***

(Latinx man)

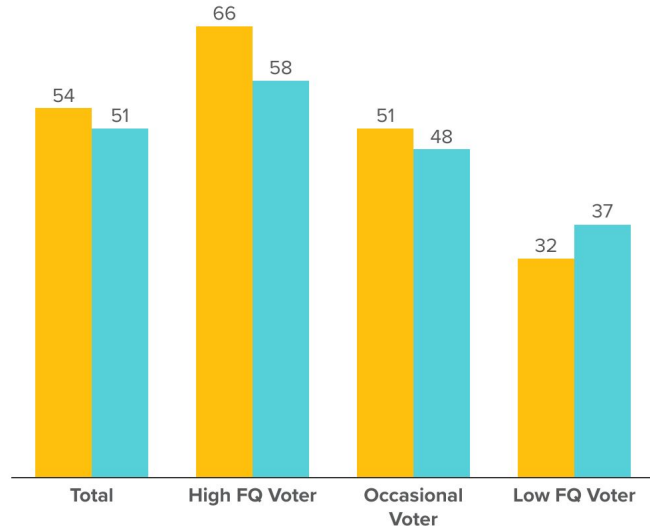
Trust in Electoral Process & Making Change



Low frequency voters are less likely to trust the electoral process to make change, but still engage in other ways

% Trust the electoral process a lot/some to:

- To produce POSITIVE CHANGE in your community.
- To PREVENT NEGATIVE things from happening in your community.



These are some things that some people do to get involved and make changes in their community. Which of the following have you done recently?

	High FQ Voter	Occasional Voter	Low FQ Voter
Voted in an election	97	79	42
Changed my behavior to make a change I want to see – like recycling or not supporting unethical companies.	54	58	49
Taken care of an elderly family member or neighbor	52	63	43
Donated to a charity	56	49	37
Mentored a young person	46	50	37
Been active in my church	50	48	27
Posted on social media about an issue of importance to me	39	34	41
Volunteered for cause	46	31	24
Attended a town hall, community forum, or rally	30	10	18
Participated in a PTA meeting	18	11	4

Motivating Messaging



Does hearing each of the following statements make you more or less likely to vote in 2022?

% more likely to vote in November		Black	Lumbee	Undecided	High Freq Voters	Occasional Voters	Low Freq Voters
★	Change starts here at the local level. If we don't care about our community, why would the leaders at the top pay attention to us? Let's focus on growing our power and participation in local government so we can build the changes we want to see from the bottom up.	90	70	85	85	83	85
	You must vote no matter what because we aren't electing a friend. We are electing the person with the best policies. If you don't cast a ballot, you are responsible when people who disagree with your values win elections.	85	77	70	89	82	64
★	People of color who live in the country are the backbone of America. We farm our nation's food, create our energy, and are caretakers of our elderly populations. Our hard work has value and our opinions matter too. Let's vote and ensure people like us get the respect we deserve.	87	66	76	82	71	87
	White Republicans wouldn't be trying to make it harder for us to cast our ballot if they thought the votes of people of color here don't make a difference. They know that when Black and Brown and Native Americans go to the polls we can win elections and make changes, as we did when we elected Barack Obama.	81	52	68	75	62	67

Where to Reach Them



Low frequency voters are most likely to report getting their news about politics and current events on social media (59%)

Which of the following are your main sources of news about politics and current events? Select all that apply.

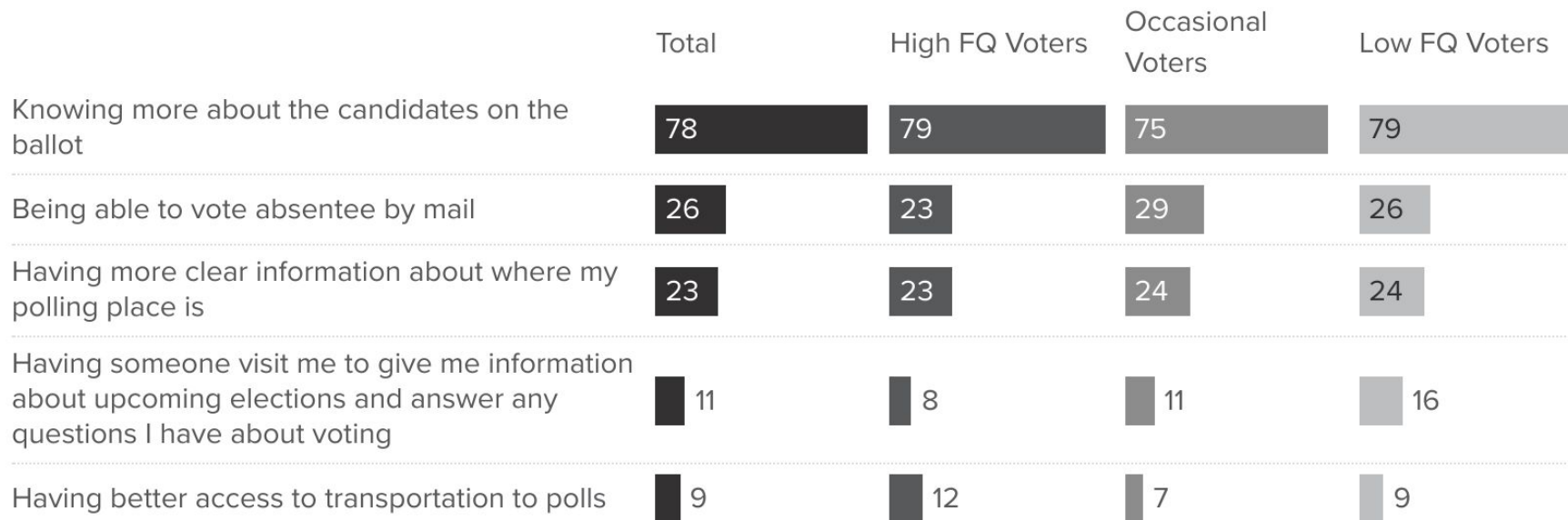
Main sources of news about politics & current events	Total	Black	Lumbee	Under 50	Undecided '22	High FQ Voters	Occasional Voters	Low FQ Voters
Broadcast television news (CBS, NBC, ABC)	51	55	47	44	54	58	46	44
Local television	48	48	47	42	59	49	52	36
Social media & websites where news is shared (Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube)	44	49	39	59	50	42	38	59
Radio	37	46	31	43	37	35	42	35
CNN	37	39	34	36	32	47	29	26
Online news websites	36	35	32	43	44	34	35	45
Fox News	31	24	42	33	30	34	28	29
Local newspapers	30	34	28	28	40	36	32	15
MSNBC	26	29	20	21	19	33	22	18
TV shows (The Daily Show, Late Night News shows, etc.)	21	24	24	28	19	21	27	14
Podcasts	19	18	16	27	19	19	12	33
National newspapers (NYT, WSJ, WaPo)	18	19	18	22	17	19	19	13
Other (please specify)	9	9	9	11	4	9	8	11

Making it Easier to Vote



Voters across the board most want to know more about the candidates on the ballot (78%)

Which of the following would make it easier for you to vote in November? Select all that apply.



Recommendations

1. They need to see and hear from their local elected officials and candidates often, and not just before an election.
2. They aren't looking for pie in the sky plans; they want leaders to execute and to see results.
3. When leaders deliver on priorities, it needs to be clear *who* delivered to get credit and build trust in the electoral process to make change.
4. Unbiased, accessible candidate guides may empower these voters to participate.
5. Motivating messages should reinforce their power to change things at the local level and reinforce community pride and the value of their opinions.
6. We are not reaching these voters if we are not on social media and radio.

POLLING for the PEOPLE



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