

Virginia Media Study

On the Road to the Election





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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our voters want someone who works for them, not Trump.

Leaning into kitchen table issues from COVID (let's kick it to the curb already, while not shutting down the economy) to the cost of living (higher wages), instead of conservative talking points and inaction that do nothing for the people of Virginia is essential for McAuliffe. Democrats have delivered for Virginia in the form of the American Rescue Plan and in partnership with voters, will end the pandemic and raise wages. (NOTE - McAuliffe's "Hard Work" ad knocked it out of the park, speaking to both raising higher wages, sharing a positive plan forward and making voters the hero of the story, not Trump)

Remind voters that a better future is possible with

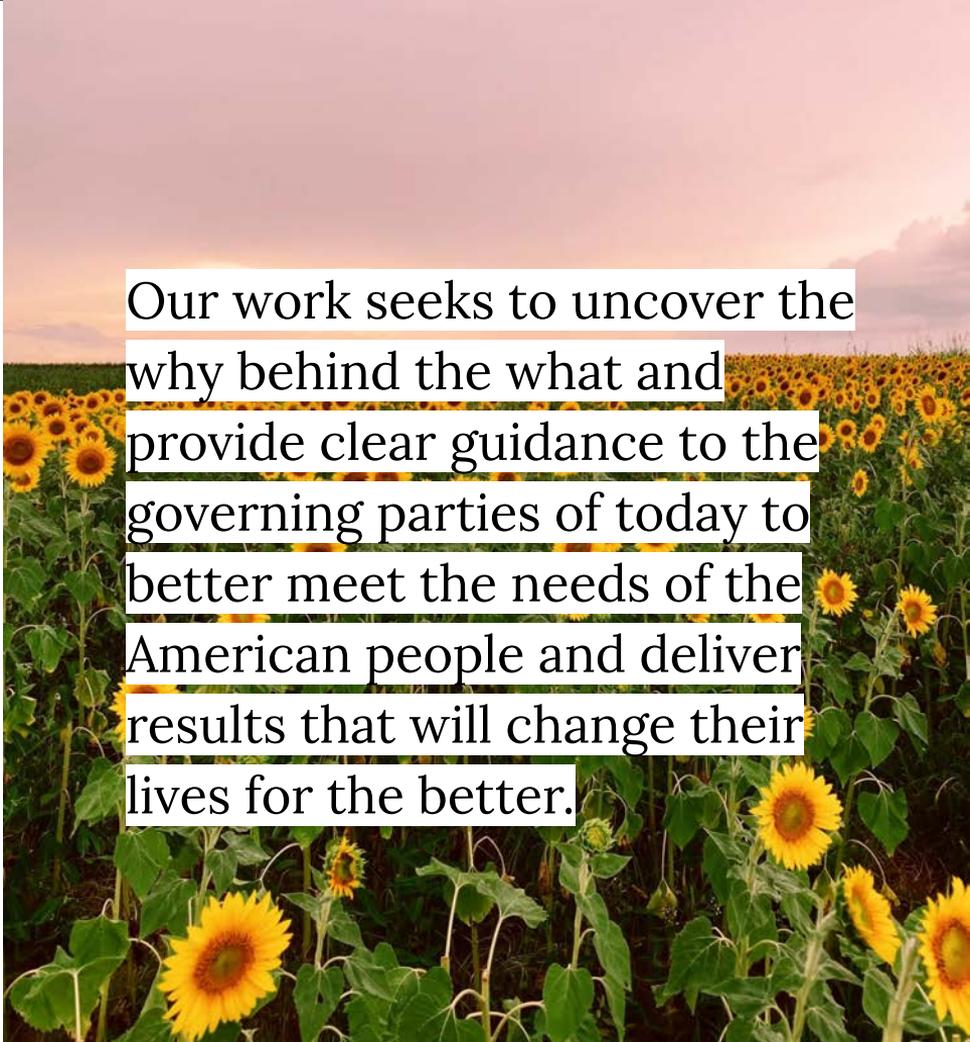
McAuliffe. They've gone through a tough time and they're not feeling safe, prosperous, and free. McAuliffe needs to remind voters of his plan to keep everyone safe (from COVID to gun safety to racism), his plan to create prosperity (by investing in our kids, raising wages and being a good steward of Virginia's natural resources, and his plan to keep everyone free (protecting women's freedom over their own bodies).

Lastly, remind voters what we have to lose. The radical right is anti vax, anti women, anti climate - and Virginians, both now and into the future, deserve better than that. Together, voters of all backgrounds and races, can create a better Virginia for everyone.

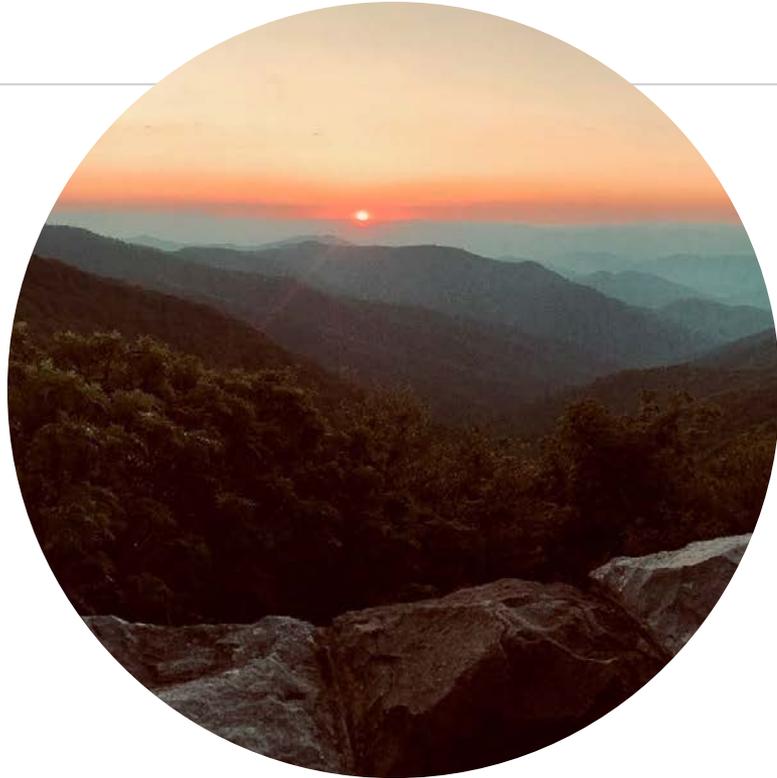
With an uncomfortably close margin in the 2020 presidential election and key races unfolding in 2022, Way to Win and Future Majority have joined forces to uncover a deeper understanding of the electorate. We will be looking at key states together to share research, data and analysis as the midterms and 2024 approach.

In this effort, we took a look at Virginia, studying likely voters for the Virginia Gubernatorial election to find out what's going on below the surface in the build up to the election, to uncover how voters are processing election-related messaging, and to unearth how Democrats can meet them where they live.

In this study, we explored how a diverse group of Virginia voters see the world, how they are looking into the future, what matters to them, how they think about issues and how they are responding to what's happening in Virginia. What follows is a revealing look into what voters are thinking, weeks out from the 2021 Virginia election.



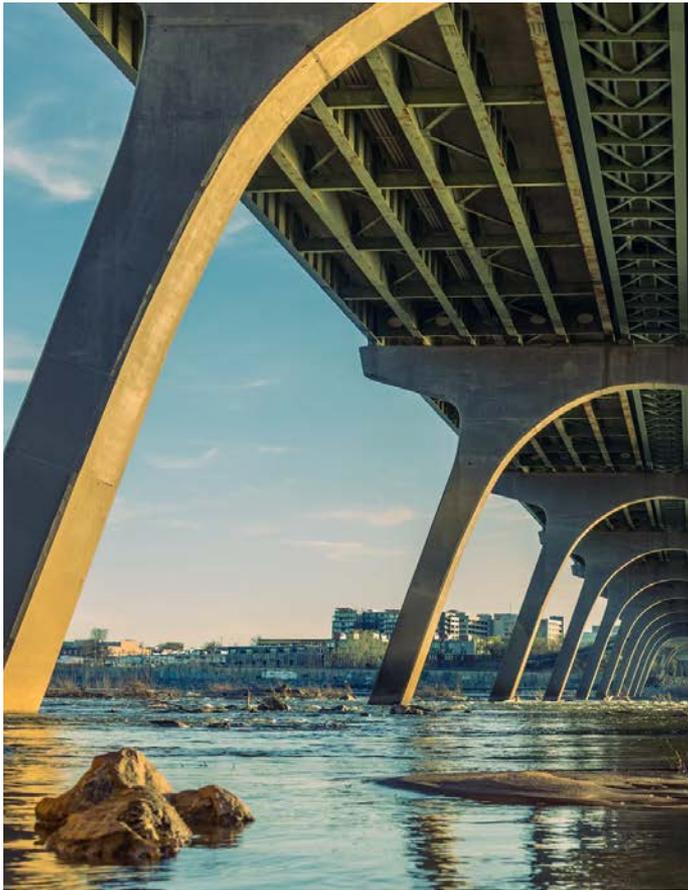
Our work seeks to uncover the why behind the what and provide clear guidance to the governing parties of today to better meet the needs of the American people and deliver results that will change their lives for the better.



THE RESEARCH APPROACH

We used an online ethnographic approach in this research, prompting participants over a series of days to answer questions online through open text responses and metaphorical image gathering, with songs, creative exercises, and more in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how people truly think and feel.

This approach, using metaphor as well as a variety of sensory exercises, was designed around the way that people think and the way thought is structured, leveraging best practices from the world of psychology and neuroscience in order to give participants the time and the space to share what matters most to them in an unfiltered manner.



The Participants

Who: We worked with a diverse group of **50 Democratic and Independent registered, likely voters in Virginia holding** very liberal to moderately conservative views and who intended to vote in the November 2021 Governor's race in Virginia.

Our sample included a representative mix of backgrounds including voters who identified as:

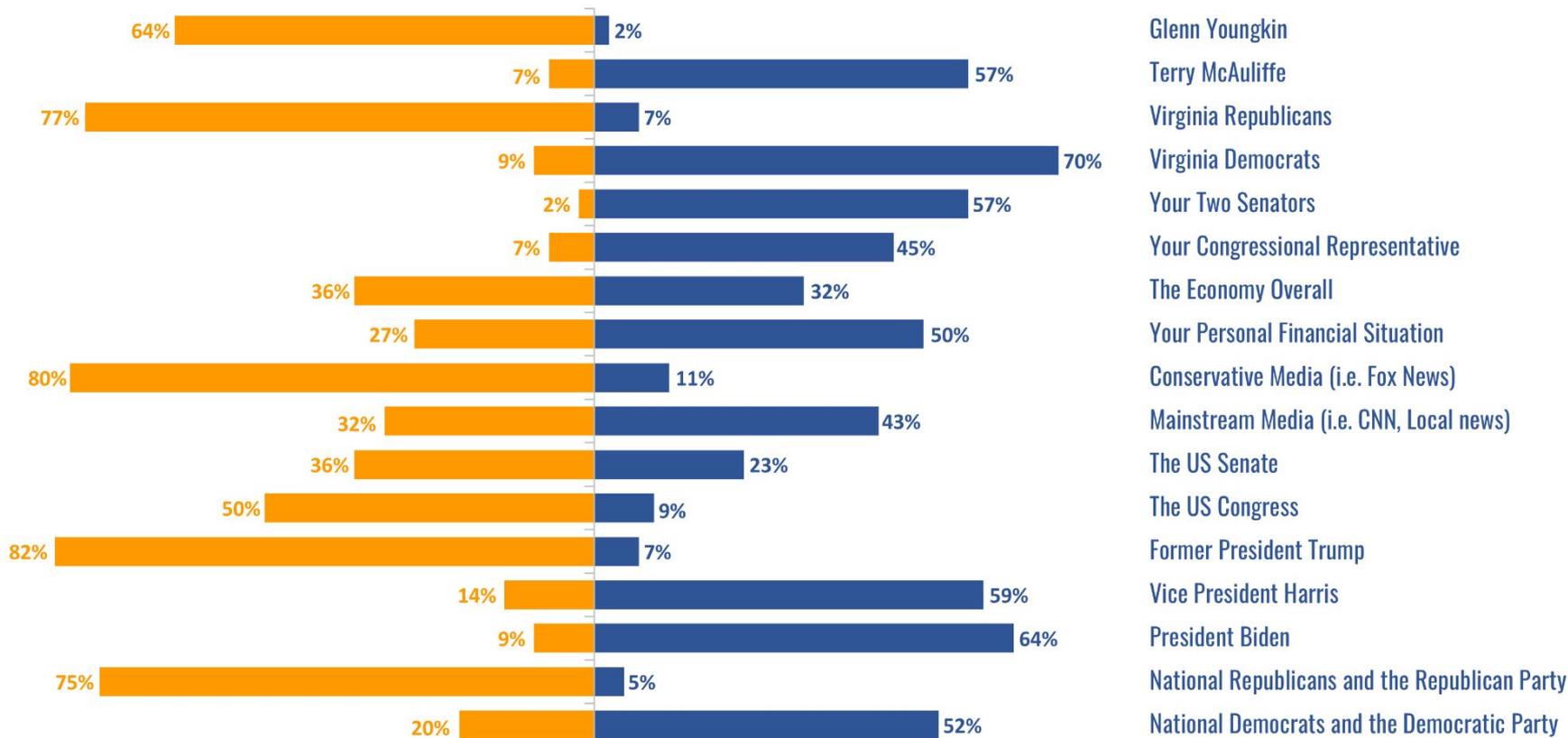
- Hispanic/Latino/a/ Voters
- Asian-American/Pacific-Islander/AAPI Voters
- African-American/Black Voters
- Caucasian/White Voters

Where: Our voters came from all across Virginia and were a roughly equal mix of genders and background.

All imagery that follows, unless otherwise indicated, was provided by the research subjects.

TEMPERATURE CHECK

If your temperature were taken on the following, how **NEGATIVELY** or **POSITIVELY** would you feel?



PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATS

While many indicated that Democrats represented

Hope, Inclusion,
& the Possibility of a
Brighter day...



PERCEPTIONS OF REPUBLICANS

For our voters, the perception of
Republicans among our voters
was that of:

Chaos,
Anarchy &
Rule Breaking...



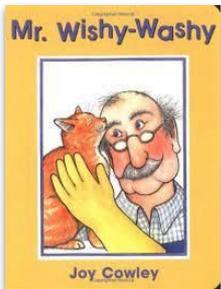


PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATS

At the same, for the vast majority of our voters, Democrats represented



Weakness,
Inaction, &
Broken promises.



They longed for a party that could deliver, and could come together to do something - anything.

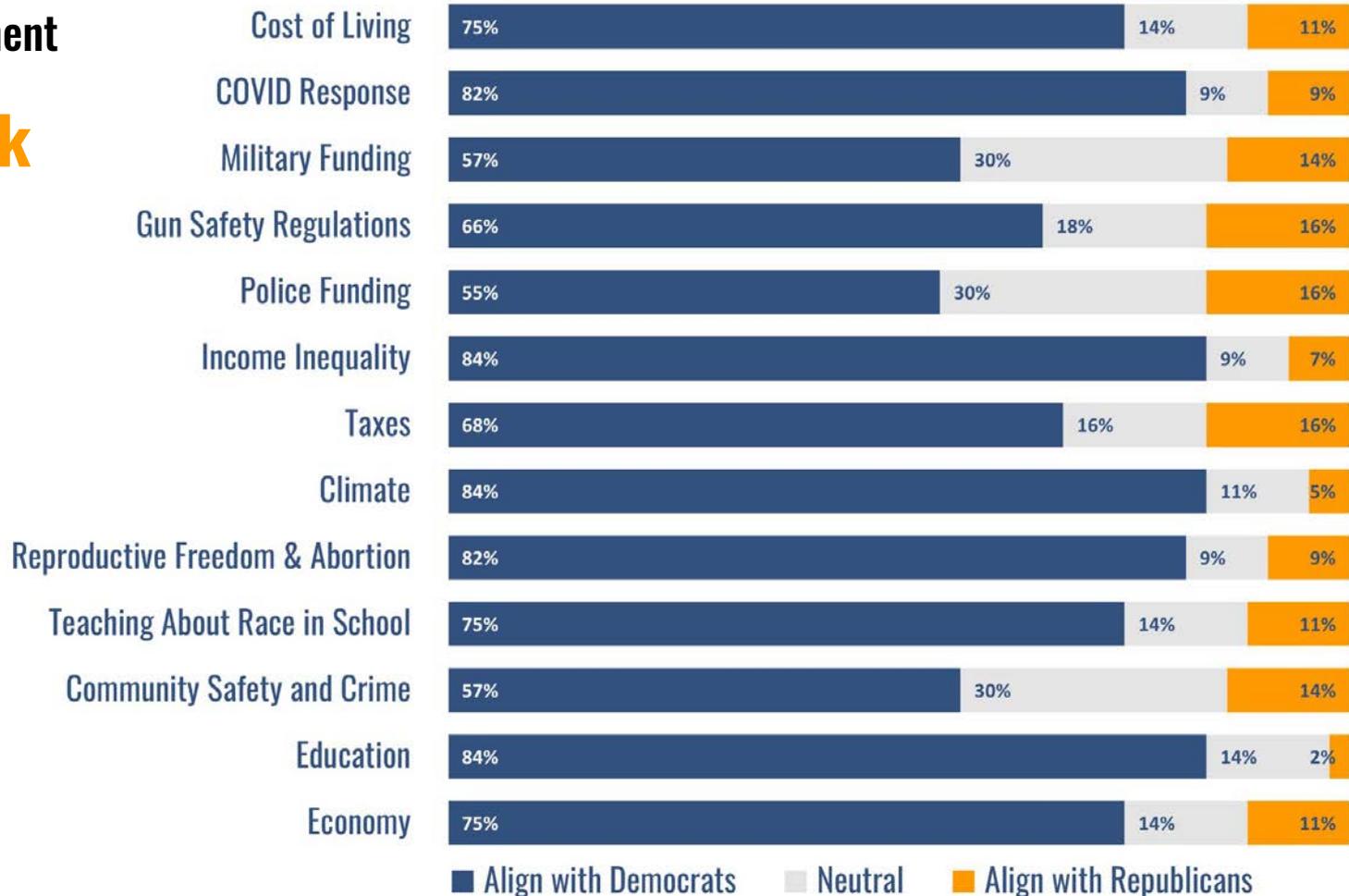
PERCEPTIONS OF REPUBLICANS

Republicans were also perceived as the party of income inequality, of wealth (but only for themselves), of bending and twisting the rules - financial and otherwise - in their favor, and lastly, for being regressive on the economy, sliding everyone backwards into ruin...



Issues & Party Alignment

When you think about issues and different political parties, which party aligns more closely with your beliefs?



FOLLOWING THE NEWS

Where do you usually get your news?

- **National TV News** - CNN, NBC, MSNBC, CBS, Fox, AP, Reuters, UPI
- **National Newspapers** - Washington Post, NY Times, Wall Street Journal
- **Foreign News** - RT, BBC, CCTV, NHK, Al Jazeera
- **Local News** - The Virginian Pilot, Roanoke Times, Harrisonburg
- **Daily News**- Record, Harrisburg Citizen
- **Local TV News** - NBC4, WTOP, WAMU, DCist
- **Social Media** - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
- **Radio** - NPR, Local Radio - WDBJ7 and WSLS
- **Other** - YouTube, The Young Turks, Podcasts, Apple News, Bing News, My friends

How closely do you follow politics, generally?

63% of participants answered **pretty closely** or **very closely**.

Has the amount you pay attention to politics changed recently?

51% of participants answered “**no, I pay the same amount of attention.**”

How closely have you been following the Virginia elections for Governor, Lt Gov and State Senate and the House of Delegates?

44% of participants answered **pretty closely**.

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

VALUING THE PRESENT

Our voters value family, and **the ability to stay safe and healthy and calm** in a world that feels chaotic. They also value their faith, their finances and the opportunity to succeed - free of discrimination or any other impingement from outside forces.



WHAT REALLY MATTERS

ENSURING THE FUTURE

Looking to the future, our voters long for **a world in which everyone can thrive** - where things calm down from the chaos they see today, where they can live to a nice long age, free of violent threats, and where their children are safer, happier and more prosperous than them.



WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

Their Finances

“The economy and inflation and having sufficient resources to take care of my family keep me up at night. With the fast rising cost in everything and the decreased value in our dollar, I am worry that I am not working toward financial success for my family and my own retirement.” - Hong, AAPI

“The idea of bills, a mortgage, car insurance, pet insurance, gasoline, etc. runs and runs through my mind when I have finished a busy day. It tends to cause stress if I think too much about it.” - Pamela, Latino

“Where money will come from worries me. The economy is twitchy at best. I am disabled and cannot work. My husband is trying his best, but things just keep getting worse and worse.”- Gwynn, White



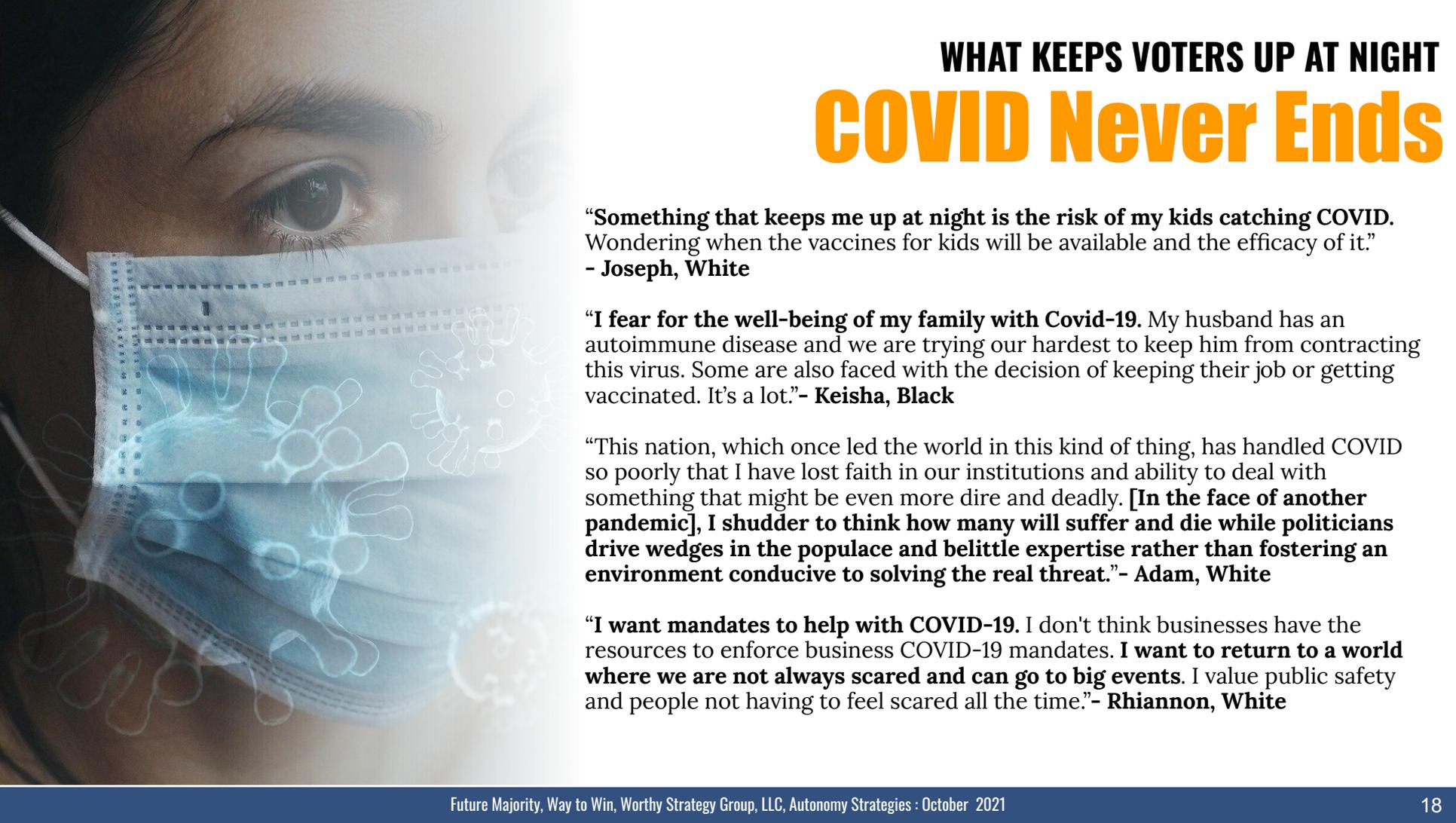
TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...FOCUS ON JOBS & THE ECONOMY

["With these stimulus checks], **it is important to create long term jobs rather than providing short term aid.**" - Pamela, Latino

"Try to get jobs and money into the hands of the community so that people can get back on their feet. People are still struggling during this pandemic and we appreciate all that you're doing." - Sonia, Black

"Improve the Virginia economy, school system, and **create jobs and incentives for people to work hard.**" - Hong, AAPI





WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

COVID Never Ends

“Something that keeps me up at night is the risk of my kids catching COVID. Wondering when the vaccines for kids will be available and the efficacy of it.”
- Joseph, White

“I fear for the well-being of my family with Covid-19. My husband has an autoimmune disease and we are trying our hardest to keep him from contracting this virus. Some are also faced with the decision of keeping their job or getting vaccinated. It’s a lot.”- Keisha, Black

“This nation, which once led the world in this kind of thing, has handled COVID so poorly that I have lost faith in our institutions and ability to deal with something that might be even more dire and deadly. [In the face of another pandemic], I shudder to think how many will suffer and die while politicians drive wedges in the populace and belittle expertise rather than fostering an environment conducive to solving the real threat.”- Adam, White

“I want mandates to help with COVID-19. I don’t think businesses have the resources to enforce business COVID-19 mandates. I want to return to a world where we are not always scared and can go to big events. I value public safety and people not having to feel scared all the time.”- Rhiannon, White

TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...GET COVID UNDER CONTROL



“Focus your ideas on bringing back up the economy from the hard COVID hits.”

- **Pamela, Latino**

“Ensure that the economy is safe for people to work and there's enough vaccinations for people who need them against the COVID virus and not just for important people.”

- **Joe, Black**

“Make mask mandates mandatory until we have this COVID and Delta variant under control.”

- **Granice, White**

WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

Democracy (NOT) Delivering (AND UNDER ATTACK)

“Democracy is in danger! - **Bill, AAPI**

“The Democratic party is breaking down while the Republicans are embracing their crazy conspiracy theorist. This concerns me.”- **Jamel, Black**

“Democrats are acting too meek. **Democracy itself is under attack by Republicans.** Too many Republicans are pushing for a totalitarian state with the Orange man as its head.” - **Michael, White**

“Democrats...the party feels soft and eager to please. They seem poorly equipped and relatively unwilling to fight back against extreme stances from across the aisle and, as a result, they have been ineffectual in getting things done when they have the chance.” -**Adam, White**



TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...DELIVER SOLUTIONS

"I wish that you would be able to negotiate between the two parties and work together to bring solutions to problems."

- Bill, AAPI

"Stop the finger-pointing, the name-calling, and the fighting. Poor and middle class Americans, who form the backbone of this country, are suffering greatly, and need help now. **Talk about the issues - YOUR stances - not your opponent and his supporters.** Show me you know how to strengthen my state's economy, improve its educational system, rely on expertise to vanquish biological and actual criminal threats, and resuscitate our infrastructure. **I don't want hyperbole and hysteria, I want solutions that make my life better."**

- Adam, White



Lack of Gun Control



“Thinking about gun violence keeps me up at night. **Gun violence is a reason why I am leaning towards not having children** - I can't imagine the risk of having a child in today's society.” - **Margot, White**

“Gun safety hit[s] close to home. **It's scary to raise kids in an environment where their wellbeing is dependent on if anyone decides to go on a shooting rampage.** Mass shootings are so prominent that I'm always alert if any could happen in my surroundings.” - **Joseph, Latino**

“**Gun Control has literally gotten out of control.** Yes, there are rights to have it, but being able to provide ID means nothing if mental health can't be managed or trust the individuals with access are capable of being in control of their items.” -**Anna, AAPI**

“**The gun violence must go.** Two years ago my home got shot up and no one has been found.” -**Sonia, Black**

“Whenever I see a politician with a gun, I get very angry. America's love of guns is an international joke. **I wish we had the guts to regulate guns like the rest of the world does.**” - **Michael, White**

TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...TAKE ACTION ON GUNS



“McAuliffe: I am particularly concerned about gun control so **I really want you to push really hard to help pass strict gun laws.**”
-Margot, White

“**Give me Gun reform. I'm terrified of public shootings.**”
-Mick, Black

“**Actually take action on the epidemic of gun violence.** The 2nd amendment was created in a much different time. If people want guns, they can have the type of guns that existed when the 2nd amendment was created—muskets, not semi-automatic and automatic weapons.”
-Yiming, AAPI

WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

The Climate Crisis

“I want [our] leaders to take decisive action to ensure we have a livable climate and world. People and the planet should be valued more than corporations and billionaires. **Time is running out.** We need to cut carbon emissions. We need decisive action to reduce consumption and rapidly move off fossil fuels to renewable energy.”- **Yiming, AAPI**

“Please work on prioritizing climate change and science. I work with astronomers, and am reminded regularly how special Planet Earth is. **I don't want to live on a spaceship - I want to step out of my home and breathe in fresh air,** not from a space suit.” - **Allison, White**

“I still have many years to live on this planet and I want it to be comfortable. **I want you to do something to help reduce global warming.**” - **Charlie, AAPI**



TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

“Don’t deny the science. Climate change and severe weather events are real.”

- **Billy, AAPI**

“Work on prioritizing climate change and science.”

- **Allison, White**

“Take decisive action on climate. Invest in public transportation systems and renewable energy.”

- **Yiming, AAPI**



WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

Racism



“The Georgia Spa shootings and anti-Asian attacks keep me up at night. **I don’t feel safe in my own neighborhood because some of my neighbors are racist. I’ve had complete strangers glare at me with total hatred like they wanted to murder me** when I offered to help them at the store I work at. It’s really sad that it took a mass shooting for people to pretend to care.” - **Yiming, AAPI**

“I am sick and tired of the racism. **I'm scared a cop will pull my son or nephews over and kill them for no reason.**” - **Sonia, Black**

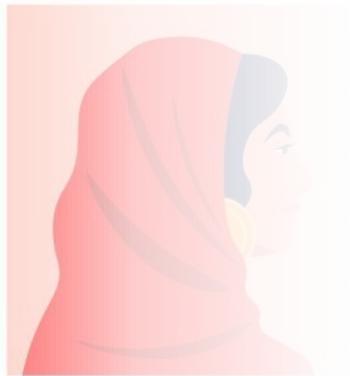
“**There are lots of racist undertones in the corporate work environment. It is stressful** and unwelcoming to work in this type of environment.”- **Christopher, Black**

TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION



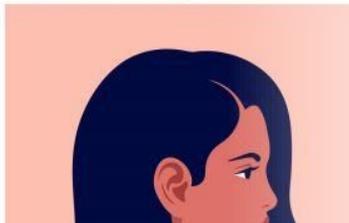
“Continue to focus on racism that is affecting the African-American community in Virginia.”

- **Christopher, Black**



“Racism and ethnicity should not separate the people of Virginia. I would like them to ensure equality among all Americans and teach love to the people of Virginia.”- **Juan, Latino**

“The LGBTQ+ community needs all the support it can get.” - **Gwynn, White**



“Work together to bring solutions to problems. I hate extremism and racism. No more talk of Confederate statues.” - **Billy, AAPI**

WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

Will the kids be all right?

“School safety is very important to me. I want my grandchildren to get a great education in a safe environment.”

- **Sonia, Black**

“Access to quality education concerns me. Testing scores are low, Teachers are underpaid and more and more challenges are presented to more impoverished students.” - **Jamel, Black**

“Black children are less likely to have access to educational and economic resources than their white counterparts.”

- **Stacey, Black**

“We need mandatory parental leave so that parents can stay with their babies for at least 6 months after birth.”

- **Yiming, AAPI**

“We really need to offer more affordable childcare. This is important to parents.” -**Yvonne, White**



TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...INVEST IN KIDS

“Do something about the rising cost of childcare.”
-**Yiming, AAPI**

“Offer more affordable childcare.”- **Yvonne B, Latino**

“Do something that promotes prosperity among growing youths.” - **Phil, Black**

“Provide quality education for our children.” - **Gerald, Black**

“Make sure that our children and grandchildren, get a great education and are safe in schools.” - **Sonia, Black**

“I'd like to think you would become more persistent in efforts to improve the lives of all racial minorities and impoverished people (particularly children) in the Commonwealth through broad measures in spending, including housing, education, healthcare, etc.” - **Stacey, Black**





WHAT KEEPS VOTERS UP AT NIGHT

Abortion and the Codifying of Roe v Wade

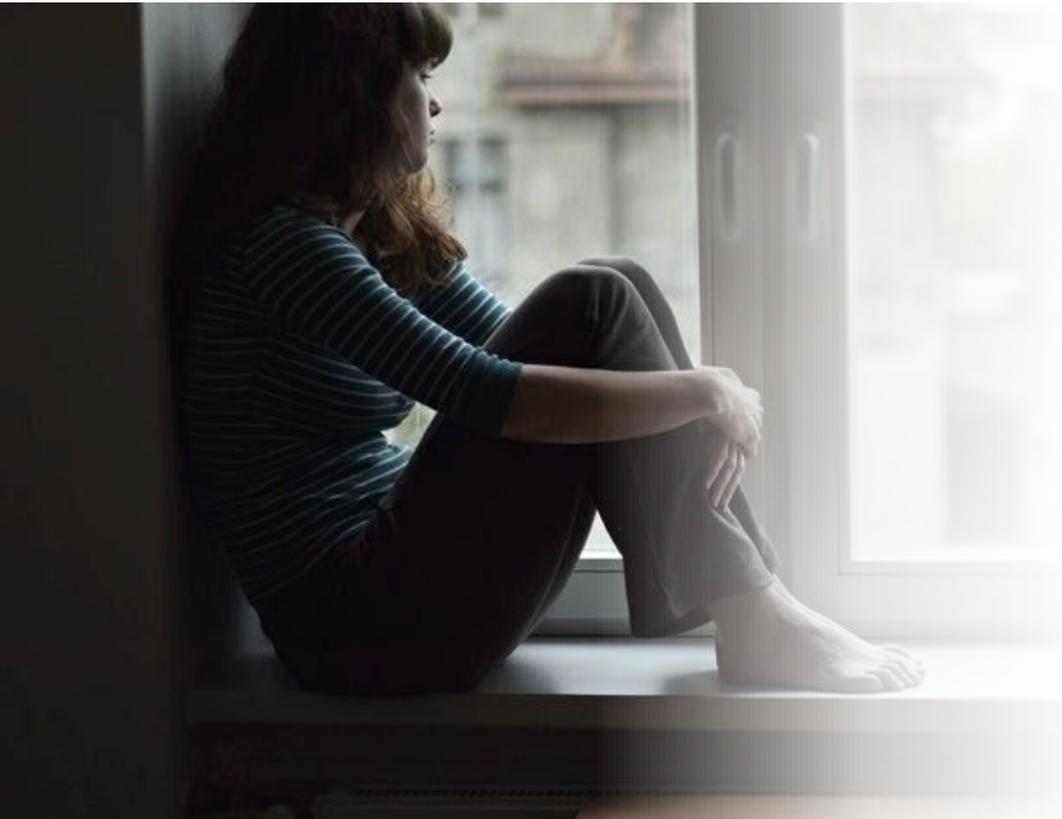
“Republicans taking away rights from women keeps me up at night. Specifically with abortion and rape. How could I not be concerned about this - I am a woman.” - **Margot, White**

“With the current Texas abortion bounty hunting and early abortion restrictions in many states, I cannot help but think of people dying from home abortions/back alley abortions in those states. **I ask that you codify Roe V. Wade into law (as you have promised to do.) I do not want people to die** from trying back alley abortions or to throw more unwanted babies into the foster care system.”- **Rhiannon, White**

“**Abortion should be a woman's choice** to do what she wants with her body.” - **Chris, Black**

“**Abortion is a woman's right** especially in cases of rape, incest or life threatening cases.” -**Sonia, Black**

TO WIN MY VOTE, PLEASE...SUPPORT ABORTION RIGHTS

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, is sitting on a windowsill. She is looking out a window to her right. The window is bright, and the view outside is slightly blurred. The lighting is soft, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light coming from the window.

“[Support] abortion rights for women.”
- **Margot, White**

“**Do not take away the right of choice.** Codify Roe v. Wade. No one should live as an incubator against their will. Abortion is healthcare.”
- **Rhiannon, White**

“Don’t be an extremist, but have a good balance in various issues that impact Virginians, including mandates of masks and proof of vaccination, abortion rights.”
- **Hong, AAPI**

YOUR VALUES AND THE GOVERNOR'S RACE

Why McAuliffe?

He supports broadly held Democratic beliefs that I believe in, too (and I appreciate his stance on abortion and the pandemic).

“Terry really resonates with me right now re abortion rights and the way that he takes the pandemic seriously. Youngkin has forgotten we are still in the midst of a huge pandemic and thinks that election integrity is something we need to focus on. I would NEVER vote for someone who supports Trump or who thinks that the election was unfair.” - **Margot, White**

“Terry McAuliffe more closely aligns with my values as a Virginia voter. Glen Youngkin diverges in the most important way to me, in regards to taking an aggressive stance on abortion rights. Women's health decisions remain firmly between a doctor and the patient without input from politics. **Terry McAuliffe wants to move forward with the liberal direction the state has grown in over the years.** A conservative view wouldn't largely represent the direction the state has gone.”- **Jameel, Black**

He also supports jobs, the economy, and the middle class!

“ Terry McAuliffe matches some of my values based on handling of covid, economy, job creations and abortion rights.” - Hong, AAPI

“I vote based on my stance on the issues that are the most important in my life. Economically, this means a stronger economy, job growth, and a robust middle class, all of which would benefit me and my quality of life. Socially, this means shoring up Social Security and strengthening our institutions, particularly those which protect us from outside threats and biological pandemics, and paying attention to strengthening our educational system.” - Jason, White

[For a deeper look into vote choice, please click here.](#)



"I like candidates who are grounded in reality. I'm not electing someone to "mix things up" in DC or Richmond -

I want someone who knows they are getting a job in legislating and lawmaking.

If I want a bridge built - what agencies do that? What role does the private sector have? What is the impact on the community? How will it be funded and how can we do it without wasting money? How will we make sure it is built well and who will inspect it through the years?

I need someone who knows that stuff or cares enough to learn about it. Saying "government is bad" and running for office is like a doctor who is scared of blood - you are in the wrong world.

I want to know how do we make government run better?

A well run government bureaucracy that tries its best to work for people isn't "socialism."

Terry McAuliffe isn't a flamethrower. He obviously knows how the system works.

He's pretty darn moderate and looks like he will keep the ship going in the right direction. Virginia has great economic growth. My interactions with state agencies have gone as well as can be expected. I see good projects around the state. Why mess things up.

Youngkin is running on that "I'm an outsider businessman who will shake things up." What needs shaking up?"

- Bryan, White

YOUR VALUES AND THE GOVERNOR'S RACE

Why McAuliffe?

He's experienced and I feel like he wants to work for me, not represent other interests.

"I already did an early vote for Terry McAuliffe. He has been in office before and has done a good job. He has served Virginia well as well as the Democratic Party. Yunkin is a Trump believer. ANYONE that follows Trump is a NO for me."

- Nina, Black

"Now Terry McAuliffe is not the perfect candidate, compared him to Glenn Youngkin he is an easy choice. Glenn does not care at all about people like me. He is a businessman and they do things to serve their own interests and the interests of those (wealthy) people around them. As far as his values we seem to see pretty much eye to eye on most things."

- Jason, White

I'm not exactly enthusiastic about my choices, but he's the lesser of two evils.

"As usual, I find myself, like many Black voters and other voters of color, houghtied into voting for the Democrat on the ticket. I cannot say that I am choosing Terry McAuliffe, but I will vote for him because the alternatives (voting for Youngkin or not voting at all) are slightly more unbearable. I support Princess Blanding, but I cannot help but acknowledge that if Stacey Abrams couldn't win Georgia, she can't win Virginia."

- Stacey, Black

"I want Youngkin to lose this election due to his views on abortion, his views of mask mandates, and his anti-LGBTQ political backers. I support McAuliffe because I think he is the lesser of two bad candidates in this case. The Republican party basically became the Trump party when he was in office, and has become pretty extreme."

- Rhiannon, White

YOUR VALUES AND THE GOVERNOR'S RACE

Why (NOT) McAuliffe?

Why I'm Voting for Youngkin

"I am still considering Glenn Youngkin, **he seems to be passionate about this position with the interest of the citizens abreast.**"

- Phil, Black

"[I'm] closer to Youngkin but not fully aligned with him or McAuliffe."

- Patti, White

"I vote for someone who **values the people and who is trying to ensure that things are easier and employment is available and vaccination [is] made easy for the people.** And Glenn Youngkin is the right man I stand with."

- Samuel, Black

Not Sure Who I'm Voting For

"**I'm not sure either candidate matches my values. I am still researching.** I believe that once a person gets into office, they do not deliver on the things that they promised. I know that I am looking forward to new leadership instead of Ralph Northam."

- Megan, Black

"**I tend to vote for one I feel is competent enough for the position** probably through their manifesto and previous works though **I've yet to make a choice** for the next election."

- Josh, Black

"**I honestly don't know anything about the candidates. If I vote, I'll vote for the democrat but I really don't care bc it makes no difference.** Neither party really represents me."

- Yiming, AAPI

PERCEPTION OF THE LT. GOVERNOR'S RACE

EXTREMISM

When asked if they saw extremism in the upcoming election or with any candidate, **broadly speaking, most voters felt that none of the candidates in the current VA race - gubernatorial, Lt. Governor, otherwise, were extreme or extremist.**

Some, however, identified the Republican Lt. Governor candidate as extreme giving her views on guns and abortion, while others - a very few - pinned Youngkin and his policies as extremist considering his position on abortion.

“The Republican Lt. Governor candidate is an extreme right wing person and I wouldn't vote for her.” - John, White

“I don't think anyone is extreme. I do question their sincerity to run Virginia.” -Megan, Black

“None of the candidates are extreme in any way that I am aware of; however, I am certain that Ms. Blanding is likely perceived is more radical simply for being an independent candidate who is a Black woman.”
-Stacey, Black

“The Republican candidates are insane. The woman running for Lt. Governor is a black woman wielding a giant gun in one of her photos.”
-Mick, Black

Virginia Concept Testing: Creative Tracking

We asked participants to watch eight concepts and indicate in real-time their emotional response to the concept, and share their thoughts about how they felt about the concept, if they connected with it, and if they'd share it. What follows are the results of those tests.



CONCEPT 1

Groceries “Common Cents” - Youngkin Ad

While some voters questioned Youngkin’s proposal to eliminate the grocery tax, characterizing Youngkin’s message as “pandering,” and wondering where the money to replace the tax would come from, **a large majority of voters strongly connected with the concept**, sharing that in this economy, every cent counts and that eliminating the grocery tax **should be embraced by Republicans and Democrats across the board, though they did feel it was important to have a replacement for the lost revenue in cancelling the tax.** Overall, the ad was viewed positively by our voters, who indicated that the ad had both a concrete proposal and was largely positive in tone, which they liked.



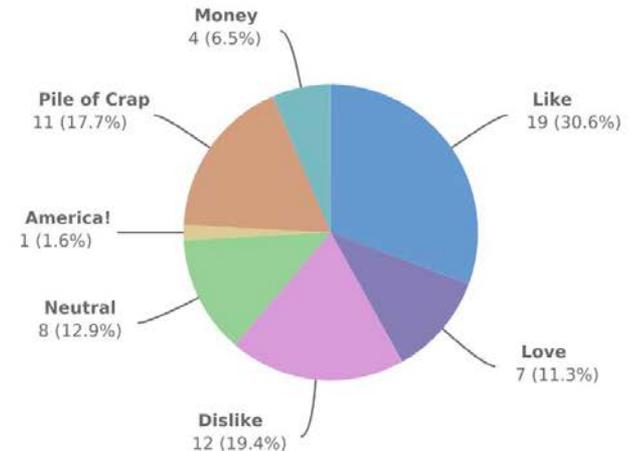
“I think it is a good idea to get rid of the state tax as it will relieve some of the financial burdens of taxpayers in Virginia.” - **Gerald, Black**

“Food is expensive, so I like the idea of cutting tax. But what are we defunding to account for lost revenue?” - **Michael, White**

“This concept shows that this person really cares about the people and how to remove taxes from us, which is of greater value to the people.” - **Joe, Black**

“Absolutely. Given that inflation and everything are so expensive these days, any savings regardless of how small they are can add up and make a huge difference.” - **Hong, AAPI**

“I agree. Things such a food, a necessity to survival, should not be taxed.” - **Gwynn, White**



CONCEPT 2

“Honest Education” - Way to Win Ad

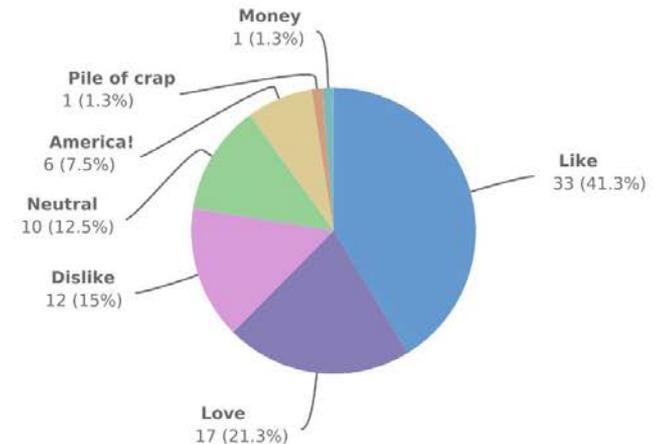
This pro-CRT ad connected with a majority of our Black and Latino voters, yet produced a more lukewarm response in our white and AAPI voters, and in opinion-lift testing, showed a strong backlash effect among conservatives. Many felt that it was time to provide comprehensive education for our children, embracing the fullness of how far America has come in the hope of creating a better future, while giving parents resources to better educate their children. Those who were less enthusiastic about the ad expressed concern that talking about racism and race increased racism, while others felt that the ad was just lip service by the left, using convenient buzzwords that felt good, but ultimately did nothing.

“It aligns with my views of educating others on the struggles this country has gone through hoping to create a better future.” - Joseph, Latino

“I connect with it. There has been a lot of misinformation that has lead to racism. I believe education is one of the best ways to combat that.” - Meeran, AAPI

“I welcome the concept of providing Virginia's students with a more complete history from multiple perspectives. The Commonwealth is the mother of presidents, most of whom were slaveholders and/or supported chattel slavery.” - Stacey, Black

“I do connect because as a mother, I had to fill in the blanks or tell my child whole parts of events etc that were left out.” - Gwynn, White



CONCEPT 3

“Education” - Youngkin Ad

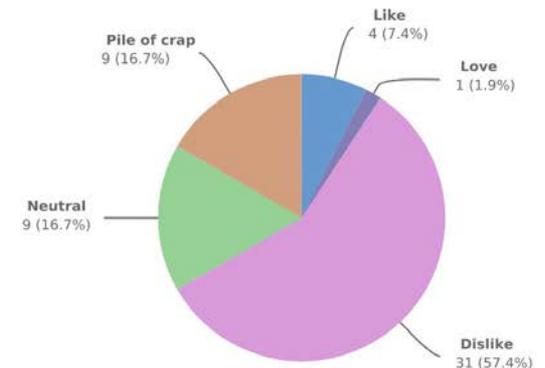
This ad from Youngkin about the right for parents to have a say in how their kids are educated was met with near universal dislike, with many of our voters indicating that they felt the ad left out a significant amount of context and was not giving all of the facts. Regarding the notion of parental engagement, voters appreciated inclusion of voters, but didn't appreciate the notion that the Republican Party was trying to sneak in and influence curriculum under the guise of parental input.

*“As a former educator, I welcome parental involvement in determining curriculum, but underserved populations are the ones who should be given a seat at the table, not racists or historical and scientific revisionists.” - **Stacey, Black***

*“No, I do not connect with this video. Could be because I do not have children in school, but I feel like there was information taken out of content in order to get this video made.” - **Pamela, Latino***

*“I don't connect. It's talking down to voters and clearly leaving out important context.” - **Yiming, AAPI***

*“Absolutely not! As I said in the comment on the video parents are not teachers and should not be in charge of the curriculum! If anything Glenn is making this political not Terry! This is so dumb I can't even accurately describe the level of stupidity going on here!” - **Jason, White***



CONCEPT 4

“Hard Work” - McAuliffe Ad

Many reacted super positively to the hard work ad from McAuliffe, indicating their support for raising the minimum wage and creating good-paying jobs. While a few indicated that they connected less with the ad because they were employed and it didn't impact them, the vast majority reacted with enthusiasm to the “forward-thinking, positive and concrete plan” shared in the concept, indicating that the ad was “easily digestible and not condescending” and that the plan “highly reasonable” and “showed respect for what people are concerned with.” The big thing was that voters wanted to hear more. **This was a winner.**

“I connect with this. I'm looking forward to seeing what changes can be made to help Virginians get back on their feet.”

- **Meeran, AAPI**

“I do not connect with this video because I am currently employed, but it is important that people know the goals this democratic candidate has.”

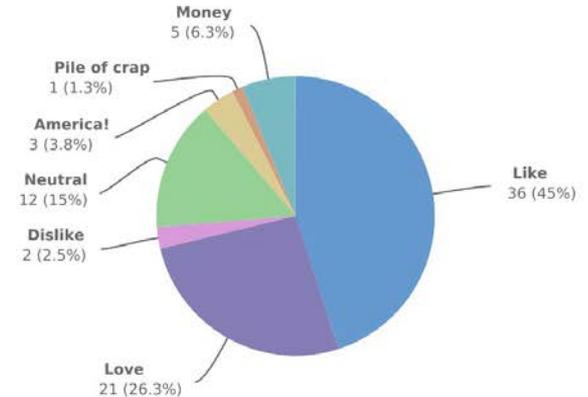
- **Pamela, Latino**

“I connect with this very much! When I was able to work I worked very hard and I didn't care that I was a cashier at CVS, I worked just as hard as I would have if I was the CEO. Paying someone anything less than \$15 an hour is absolutely unacceptable!”

- **Jason, White**

“I like the idea. I'd like to hear more about the follow through.”

- **Mick, Black**



CONCEPT 5

“Doctors” - Youngkin Ad

For supporters of Youngkin, this ad was a winner, with many expressing relief that he had doctors backing him and his policies. However, for many others, this ad had them feeling “confused” and “irritated,” with many indicating that they felt it was “a bunch of lies” and “slimy,” introducing mistrust into the relationship people had with doctors and expressing frustration that the vaccine had ever become politicized. Many pointed out the lack of diversity in the ad, with all the doctors being white, and many wondered how it would be received by a Republican audience.

“I do not connect with this video. I believe it is a bunch of lies. Especially when the doctors are saying Youngkin is the only candidate who believes in vaccinations for Virginians.”

- Gerald, Black

“Not sure if I can connect since a few of the doctors provided their endorsement of Youngkins but I don't know if these are actual doctors and what their backgrounds are or they actors for the commercial.”

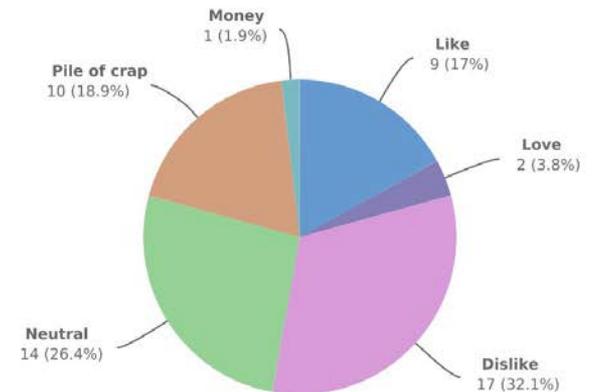
-Hong, AAPI

“I like that doctors are invited to add their views, though this is not the voice of all doctors in Virginia. They did say don't bring politics into medicine, but they just did using that ad.”

-Alison, White

“I did not connect with this video because it is a Republican ad.”

- Joseph, Latino



CONCEPT 6

“Wall Street” - McAuliffe Ad

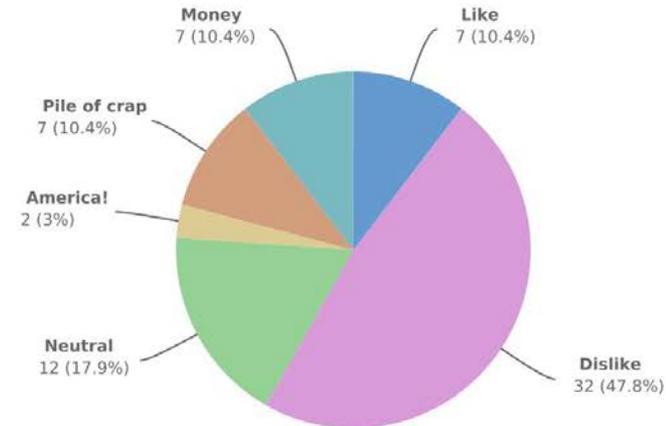
Voters, even those who were supporters of McAuliffe, deeply disliked this ad, indicating that it felt “more Republican,” and “made them upset.” Many indicated that they felt the messaging “wasn’t productive” and reminded them that two rich guys - Youngkin and McAuliffe - were running against each other and likely both had skeletons in their closets. While many were angry and frustrated after the viewing the ad, a good portion did indicate that the ad made them want to research Youngkin further to found out if the claim in the ad had merit.

“[Youngkin] made millions while lives was ruined, but he wasn’t the reason it happened. Just another Propaganda targeted at the opposition without concerns for what we need.” -**David, Black**

“I do not agree with any ad meant to bash the others to make the other candidate look better.”
- **Anna, AAPI**

“It resonated because [Youngkin] is a corporate rat.” - **Melissa, Latino**

“I understand that to run for an office of the magnitude of the governor of Virginia, you have to have a lot of money to start with. So Youngkin’s a successful businessman who has a boatload of money. Ok. But that just means I want to know more about who McAuliffe screwed over to get his wealth. Nobody makes that much money without being ruthless occasionally. Do I like that in a person? No. Do I accept that rich people are running the country? Yes, sadly. So I just have to hope we vote for the rich guy who actually gives a crap about helping people. Not that that actually happens anymore, even if the candidate has good intentions. Our two-party system precludes getting anything of consequence done, really. Tell me how you’ll try to help me, not why the other candidate is the devil incarnate.”
- **Adam, White**



CONCEPT 7

“Bio” - Youngkin Ad

In this ad, Youngkin outlines his plan for Virginia, and more specifically, Hampton roads. While some voters expressed enthusiasm for his upbringing and the fact that he showed that he was a Virginian through and through, many felt that the ad was too specific, sharing that they didn't live in Hampton Roads and were curious what he would do in other parts of the state. Many were turned off in the latter part of the ad, when Youngkin talked about funding for the police, with many saying, “the police do not need more money,” though some AAPI voters indicated that they had personally experience crime and longed to be more safe, so his plans had some resonance for them.

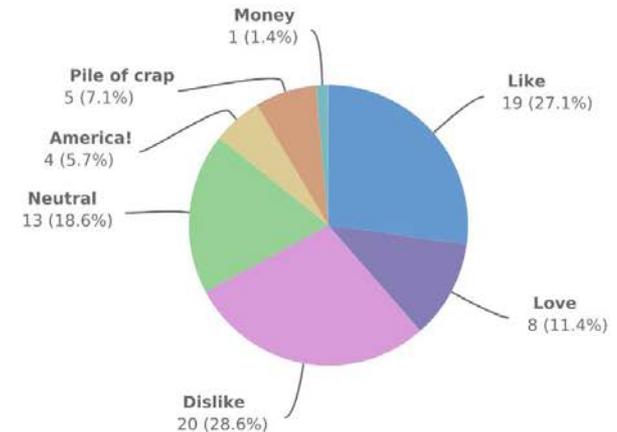


“I don't care about Hampton roads honestly. I care about northern Virginia bc that's where I live.” - Yiming, AAPI

“Yes, a lot of his priorities connect with me such as creating more better and higher paying jobs and supporting our law enforcement to keep crimes down.” -Hong, AAPI

“I resonate with him growing up in Hampton Roads will help him understand its challenges. Do not resonate with fully funding the police unless they will get trained on dealing with people with mental illnesses.” - Keisha, Black

“Nope. 99% of my friends and family are not interested in increased police funding.” -Stacey, Black



CONCEPT 8

“Guns/Repro” - Hala Ayala Ad

This ad elicited strong feelings from our voters, with many indicating that it made them feel “shocked,” “angry,” and “disgusted.” For many, the notion of taking away a woman’s right to her own body and reproductive choices was “inhumane.” While our voters indicated that abortion is “a very sensitive topic,” a significant number of our voters felt that wresting away control about one’s own medical choices “restricted freedom” and was beyond the pale. A few of our voters indicated that they didn’t like the negative nature of the ad, but if the claims in the ad were true - which many voters indicated they’d research - they would certainly be against Winsom Sears’ candidacy.



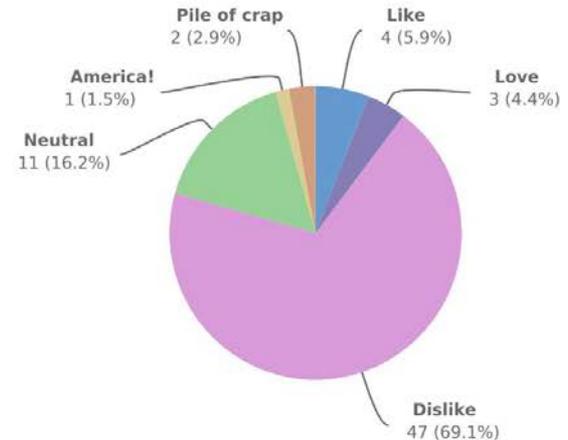
“Yes, I connect. It is important for women to have the right to their own reproductive organs. Sad to see what is happening in Texas.” - **Meeran, AAPI**

“This ad makes me upset with both candidates honestly. I am over the smear ads. But if Sears does believe in banning abortions no matter what, I am disgusted.” - **Keisha, Black**

“I don’t like trying to make people look bad. I wonder if this was photoshopped. I can’t see a black woman in a suit with a rifle in her hand. It was just silly.” - **Megan, Black**

“Not personally, but would like to see what her real comments have been on the subject.”
- **Joseph, Latino**

“Messing with Roe vs Wade is disgusting. Banning abortions should be considered a federal crime against women.” - **Gwynn, White**



THE RESEARCH TEAM



GRETCHEN BARTON is the Research Director for Future Majority and Principal at Worthy Strategy Group, LLC. With a special interest in the psychology underpinning behavior change, Gretchen has designed and delivered a number of initiatives in the policy space, including hazing behavior and how to stop it, and most recently, poverty in America for the Gates Foundation.

She has led research and served as a behavioral science strategist for major organizations and campaigns (e.g. the NFL, NextGen, New Moral Majority, Ideas 42, Way to Win and others), uncovering key messaging insights to turn out the youth vote, revealing voters' deepest hopes and dreams for presidential campaigns, and unearthing deep insights for key organizers in the build up to the 2020 election. She recently researched and released "Winning the Future: A Deep Dive into the Unconscious Minds of Voters" in partnership with Wide Angle Research to help understand this strategic moment in American history for the Democratic Party.

Gretchen holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and Planning Campaigns with distinction in research from Cornell University. She has written for the Journal of College Student Development and the American Journal of Health Behavior, and co-authored, "Prevalence and Profiling: Hazing Among College Students and Points of Intervention." She recently co-authored "The Science of Winning with Stories: Using Agency, Urgency, and Community," a reflection on the most effective messaging to engage and move a populace.

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