



RACE-FORWARD MESSAGING PROJECT

Messaging Guidance

OVERVIEW: The most important takeaway from our study is that Black voters, as well as the multiracial cohort we have identified as “racial justice voters,” are extremely clear that they want politicians to directly address and prioritize eliminating racism. Just under half of Black registered voters (RVs) can be characterized as the strongest Racial Justice Voters, who will be most motivated by candidates who are race-forward. Almost half, or 45% of Black voters fall into the Racial Justice voter category based on responses to a series of three questions about race in America. While racial justice issues are important to nearly everyone surveyed, these are voters for whom racial justice is of extreme importance. A majority of Black women and voters 50+ fall into this category, making them the strongest Racial Justice Voters overall. That number dips for men and younger voters, with only 15% of Black Gen Z Men falling into the category. This important insight about the central concern about race and racism for racial justice voters runs counter to conventional political wisdom that urges a focus only on “universal issues” such as the economy. However this race-blind and “blind to racism” approach, without more, risks failing to ensure turnout of the most dedicated racial justice voters and Black registered voters. Therefore, our overall guidance is to identify the most effective, racially robust messages in order to motivate Black eligible and racial justice voters. We found that voters’ motivation in our study increased when given information about the threat of Project 2025 and its inherent racial harms. When talking about Project 2025, our focus should not only be on extremist policies, but also on how this conservative mandate would reverse hard-won civil rights advances.

THREE IMPLICATIONS OF RACE-FORWARD MESSAGING PROJECT (RFMP): Turnout in swing states is key in this nationwide fight for a multiracial democracy. Our study shows that race-forward messaging moves 17% of Black registered voters in these swing states to “strong motivation” to vote—a significant increase that can make a real difference. Therefore, our messaging guidance here focuses on that 17% — with purpose-built messages to increase Black voters’ (and racial justice voters’) motivation to exercise their right to vote. There are three main components to this strategy:

- [Lean into Project 2025’s real threats to racial justice](#)
- [Focus on race-forward messages to drive turnout among specific constituencies](#)
- [Understand what racial justice issues increase voter motivation in swing states](#)

LEAN INTO PROJECT 2025'S THREATS TO RACIAL JUSTICE

Once voters surveyed in our study hear about how Project 2025 negatively impacts racial justice concerns, 72% are more likely to vote. Our study also identified a 13% increase to “strong motivation” to go to the polls after hearing about Project 2025’s race-specific negative impacts as opposed to those who had heard about Project 2025 previously from any other source. For Black registered voters 50+ years old, this strong motivation to vote increased to 15% after hearing of Project 2025’s racial threats. Overall, there is a 7% increase to “strong motivation” to vote among registered Black voters between those who had heard previously about Project 2025 and those who learned of Project 2025’s race-specific impacts through our study. Of the information provided in our survey about Project 2025, voters are most concerned about the dismantling of the Department of Justice, increasing police immunity, and eliminating the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Education. Messaging about how Project 2025 uses the threat of “equity” and “Critical Race Theory” to attack civil rights is similarly helpful in providing strong motivation to vote, especially for the harder to reach group of Black Gen Z. **Bottom line: to increase turnout among racial justice voters, messaging should focus on how Project 2025 will push back the clock on a racial justice agenda.**

SAMPLE MESSAGES RE: PROJECT 2025'S LEADING THREATS TO RACIAL JUSTICE VOTERS

Eliminating the Role of the Department of Justice and other federal agencies to Protect Civil Rights: *While we have made notable racial justice advances in this country due to the sacrifices made by courageous leaders in the civil rights movement, the authors of Project 2025 would like to turn back the clock to push us backwards. We cannot allow extremist politicians to eliminate the Department of Justice’s historic role of protecting the civil rights of Black people and other People of Color. Nor can we allow them to remove protections for People of Color against discrimination in housing and employment policies by eliminating the Office of Civil Rights. We must harness our power to ensure that the nightmare scenario of Project 2025 never becomes a reality.*

Providing Blanket Immunity for Abusive Police: *We must create a world where everyone is free from racist police violence. However Project 2025 advocates intend to provide blanket immunity for police that abuse their power or break the law in the line of duty, allowing police violence against Black people and other People of Color to continue unchecked and with impunity. We must reject this discriminatory approach to policing and exercise our power to defeat Project 2025. We must vote like our lives depend on it, because they do.*

Sowing Racial Division by Demonizing “Equity” & “Critical Race Theory”: *Project 2025 singles out “equity” and “Critical Race Theory” for attack over one hundred times in its plan to roll back the gains of the civil rights era and remake government to benefit the wealthy elite. CRT explains how practices that appear to be race-neutral can operate in racially discriminatory ways. By attacking equity and CRT – and by mislabeling any and all discussion of race or attempts to address racial inequity as “CRT” – Project 2025 uses racial fear mongering to distract voters from its self-serving agenda. We must show up this election day to reject cynical tactics that seek to sow racial division.*

SPECIFICALLY FOR BLACK GEN Z | Outlawing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policies: *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policies have helped America make progress in opening opportunities for Black and other Americans in government, civil service, health care, law firms, construction, fire and police departments, and other arenas; yet there is still work to be done to make sure everyone has an equal shot. We have to vote to oppose efforts like Project 2025 that seek to outlaw the work that we still have to do and to excise the words "diversity, equity, and inclusion" from all government laws and regulations, putting Black employees and minority-owned businesses at risk. We need to show up and vote for those candidates who stand up and defend equity and opportunity.*

FOCUS ON RACE-FORWARD MESSAGES TO DRIVE TURNOUT BY CONSTITUENCY

Black Men and Black Gen Z are two of the cross-segment constituencies among Black registered voters in our study who have the most room to be further motivated to vote. To enhance turnout for Black men, avoid messages that seek to “scold” or scare Black men. Instead, speak the truth about racism and the unfinished work of racial justice, and highlight how Black men can use their power to support racial justice policies that enhance their ability to provide for and protect their families and communities. For Black Gen Z voters, although this cross-segment is relatively less concerned about racial justice than others in the Black registered voters category, the vast majority of Black Gen Z (81%) believe it is important to vote for a candidate that cares about and fights for racial justice. When engaging Black Gen Z, discuss the racial justice issues that matter to them most according to our study—reducing racial violence and racist policing, protecting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts for People of Color, and ensuring that true and accurate history about race in America is taught in school.

SAMPLE MESSAGES

Most Popular Message for All Constituencies Surveyed (in top 3 for each group):

Select Leaders based on their Qualifications, not Personal Attacks Focused on their Race + Gender. *Our leaders should be determined by their character, experience and qualifications, not by their race or their gender. Just like the birther movement was used to discredit the first Black male President, women leaders have been mocked and discredited, despite their superior qualifications. Our daughters deserve more. We all deserve more. Leadership starts at the top. That’s why we must vote to ensure a democracy in which people of all genders have an equal chance at opportunity and are treated with dignity and respect.*

A Popular Sample Message for both Black Men and Black Gen Z:

Fight for Civil Rights and Democracy for our Community’s Well-being: *The fight for a racially inclusive democracy is an ongoing battle, yet conservatives would reverse the gains of the civil rights movement by attacking our right to vote and by undermining the agencies meant to educate our children equitably, stop racialized police violence, advance small minority-owned businesses, and ensure everyone has access to clean air and water. We must use our power this election to protect our hard-fought civil rights advances. We cannot allow anyone to compromise the well-being of our communities or to undermine the gains we’ve made as a nation.*

An Additional Sample Message for Black Men:

Protect Our Young People’s Future: *The future of young people is at stake in this election, as conservatives seek to take away their power by controlling their minds, bodies, political voices, and futures. We must register our opposition to banning books, Black history, and Critical Race Theory, criminalizing abortion, and eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programs. We need leadership to elevate, rather than extinguish, freedom for the next generation.*

Another Sample Messages for Black Gen Z:

Protect Teaching True and Accurate History and Our Freedom to Learn: *Despite the continued racial inequalities in education, the proposed conservative agenda seeks to bring us back to the last century. It would abolish the Department of Education, take away federal funding for our schools, eliminate Black and civil rights history, and ban books in every state in the nation. We must demand leaders who will stand up to bullies and build a nation where people can learn about all history in order to prepare our children for a fairer and more inclusive future.*

ADOPT SPECIFIC RACE-FORWARD MESSAGES FOR SWING STATES

GEORGIA VOTER TAKEAWAYS:

Black registered voters (RV) in Georgia are very engaged this election season, with 86% likely to vote, and 73% very motivated to vote. Racial Justice is a very important issue to these GA voters, with 91% saying it is important to vote for a candidate who fights for racial justice. Nearly three-quarters of Black RV's in GA surveyed say details about Project 2025 make them more likely to vote. Additionally, messaging around "Black Women," "Anti-Blackness" and "Health" are the most likely to motivate GA voters. Throughout the survey, 17% shift upwards to an 8, 9, or 10 on the vote motivation metric.

Sample Messages for Black registered voters in GA:

Black Women & Health: *Extremist politicians want to remove the protections we have put in place to make sure Black women have the same quality access to health care as white women. In GA and across the country, no one should die because of the exclusionary and discriminatory policies in Project 2025. By demanding leaders who are committed to addressing racism head on, we can ensure better health outcomes for our mothers, our daughters, and ourselves.*

Anti-Blackness, Project 2025 and Black Women's Health: *"Project 2025 would limit diversity, equity, and inclusion measures in medical education that improve health outcomes for Black women in Georgia. We need to protect equal access to health care by demanding that our political leaders fight anti-blackness in medical education and health care."*

NORTH CAROLINA VOTER TAKEAWAYS:

Black registered voters in North Carolina are very engaged this election season, with 85% likely to vote, and 66% very motivated to vote. Racial Justice is a very important issue to North Carolina voters, with 89% saying it is important to vote for a candidate who fights for racial justice. Nearly 70% of Black RV's in NC voters say details about Project 2025 make them more likely to vote. Additionally, messaging around "Black Women," "Health" and "DEI" are the most likely to motivate NC voters. Throughout the survey, 17% shift upwards to an 8, 9, or 10 on the vote motivation metric.

Sample Messages for Black registered voters in NC:

In addition to GA-specific messages on Black Women & Health, Add Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as Pathway to Progress: *Diversity, equity and inclusion policies have helped America make progress in opening opportunities for Black and other Americans in government civil service, health care, law firms, construction, fire and police departments and other arenas, yet there is still work to be done. Project 2025 would eliminate legal protections around diversity, equity, and inclusion. In order to protect these vital reforms, we demand leaders willing to name and fight racism.*

MICHIGAN VOTER TAKEAWAYS:

Black registered voters in Michigan are very engaged this election season, with 90% likely to vote, and 71% very motivated to vote. Racial Justice is a very important issue to Michigan voters, with 94% saying it is important to vote for a candidate who fights for racial justice. Over three quarters of Black RV's in MI say details about Project 2025 make them more likely to vote. Additionally, messaging around "Future for Young People," "Democracy + Civil Rights" and "Race + Gender" are the most likely to motivate GA voters. Throughout the survey, 18% shift upwards to an 8, 9, or 10 on the vote motivation metric.

Sample Messages for Black registered voters in MI:

Young People's Future in Michigan: *The future of young people in Michigan is at stake in this election! Extremists are trying to control their minds and bodies by banning books, Black history, and abortion. Project 2025 would eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the country. We must demand political leaders who will protect our freedoms for the next generation.*

Democracy & Civil Rights: *Extremists are trying to reverse the progress of the civil rights movement by attacking our right to vote and by undermining the government agencies that help make education equitable, stop racialized police violence, advance small minority-owned businesses, and ensure everyone has access to clean air and water. Use your vote to make it clear that we won't go back on democracy and civil rights!*

Pennsylvania Voter Takeaways:

Black registered voters in Pennsylvania are very engaged this election season, with 87% likely to vote, and 65% very motivated to vote. Racial Justice is a very important issue to Pennsylvania voters, with 94% saying it is important to vote for a candidate who fights for racial justice. Nearly three quarters of Black RV's in PA say details about Project 2025 make them more likely to vote. Additionally, messaging around "Health," "DEI" and "Race + Gender" are the most likely to motivate PA voters. Throughout the survey, 19% shift upwards to an 8, 9, or 10 on the vote motivation metric.

Sample Messages for Black registered voters in PA:

See GA-specific messages on Black Women & Health and NC-specific message on DEI.

CLOSING ARGUMENT

Racial justice is an extremely important issue to this coalition, and nearly all voters surveyed believe there is still more work to be done. For example, by a 4-to-1 ratio, Black registered voters prefer a candidate who believes "the best way to overcome racism is to acknowledge it" as opposed to a belief that "the best way to overcome racism is to stop talking about it." Race-forward messaging data, insights, and messages can make the difference to enact the policies necessary in support of a truly multiracial democracy.



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