2026 Civil Rights Monitor

Americans want their votes counted and their rights left alone.

Key findings from The Leadership Conference's annual survey of American voters, released September 2026.

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OVERVIEW

More than 8 in 10 voters fear their rights and freedoms are being taken away.

Voters are more worried about their rights and democracy than at any point in five years of Civil Rights Monitor tracking, and they are ready to vote to protect them.

SHARED VALUES

92%

of voters, including most Republicans, say diversity makes America stronger.

America is stronger because people of every background call it home, and most Americans agree. Despite the story we keep hearing of a divided country, core civil rights values are broadly shared across parties.

ELECTIONS

In America, voters choose their leaders, politicians don't choose their voters. Voters believe that election results should be respected. Heading into the midterms, **many voters fear political leaders will lean on election officials to overturn the will of the people.**

77%

worry political leaders will pressure election officials to change the results.

65%

fear the federal government will try to stop the elections by declaring a state of emergency.

62%

worry ICE will show up at polling places to intimidate voters.

ELECTIONS

Every eligible voter deserves to cast a ballot freely and have it counted, and voters are ready to make sure that happens. **Voters want steady leadership, not chaos, and civil rights organizations will hold the line to protect every vote.**

84%

plan to definitely vote.

56%

say they want leaders who lower the temperature.

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ELECTIONS

Protecting the freedom to vote is a top civil rights priority for every racial and partisan group.

White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian American voters, Democrats and Republicans alike, ranked it highest. Among all issues, 14% of voters named voting rights their **top concern**.

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58%

disapprove of ICE's job performance

48% strongly disapprove

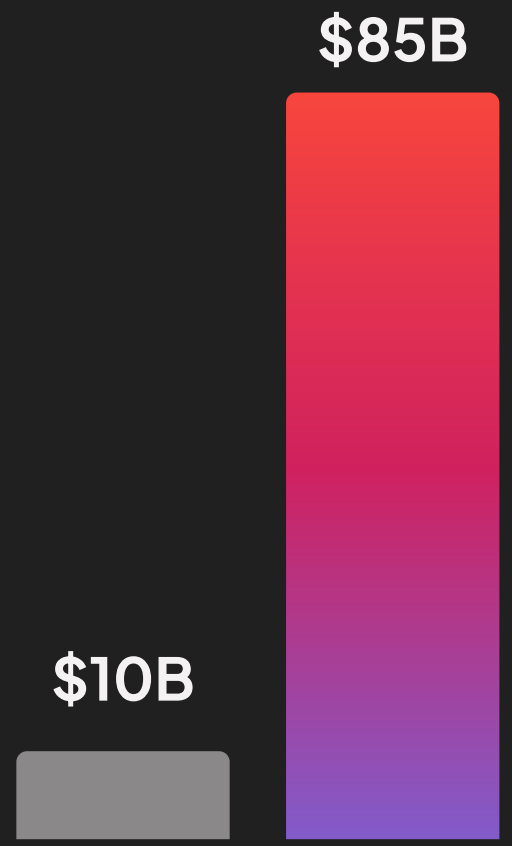
Voters have watched ICE grow, and most don't like what they see. The people who oppose ICE feel strongly.

ICE AND IMMIGRATION

71%

of voters oppose cutting Medicare and SNAP to fund ICE's budget jump from $10 billion to $85 billion.

61% strongly oppose it.



ICE's budget, before and after July 2025

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Ask people how things are going between Americans of different races, and most will tell you it's getting harder. **Voters see it in the headlines, at work, and in their own neighborhoods.**

53%

say race relations are getting worse,

14%

say they are getting better.

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57%

of voters disapprove of the Supreme Court.

Year after year, voters have watched the Court strip away protections they took for granted, while hate groups grow bolder. Their trust in the Court keeps eroding.

For years, some politicians told white Americans they were the real victims of discrimination. **Today, only a third of voters accept those claims.**

37%

believe reverse discrimination is a big problem,

32%

believe forced diversity and inclusion programs amount to racism against white people.

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BLACK VOTERS

Black voters have lived through voter purges, poll taxes, and courts that turned their backs on them, so they recognize the warning signs first. **This year they are the most alarmed group in the country, and the most determined to vote.**

88%

are extremely motivated to vote.

83%

are concerned about losing their rights.

81%

say their heritage is under attack.

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BLACK VOTERS

Black voters see ICE as a threat to their communities and their votes.

70%

are very concerned ICE will show up at polling places to intimidate voters.

74%

agree ICE is a political tool meant to reduce the number of Black and Brown people in the country.

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HISPANIC VOTERS

Hispanic voters are the strongest defenders of immigrants and free speech.

88%

say immigrants contribute more to America than they take.

87%

say our freedom of speech is being eroded.

88%

back raising the minimum wage to match the cost of living.

Subgroup results carry a higher margin of error than the full sample.

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ASIAN AMERICAN VOTERS

Asian American voters are the most alarmed about racism and intimidation.

88%

say racism against Black people is a big problem in today's society.

77%

are worried about the rise of white supremacy, up 24 points since 2025.

80%

agree the growth and use of ICE is designed to intimidate people of color.

Subgroup results carry a higher margin of error than the full sample.

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Hispanic and Asian American voters place the highest value on protecting the freedom to vote.

Share rating protecting the freedom to vote 8 or higher on a 10-point importance scale.

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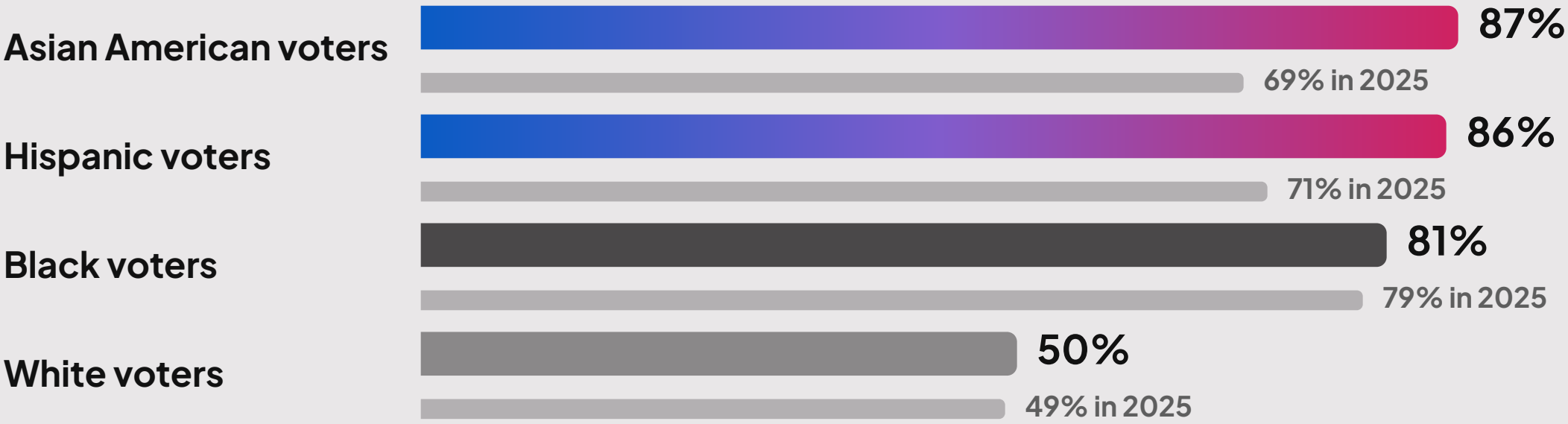
ICE AND VOTERS OF COLOR

Hispanic and Asian American voters have turned sharply against ICE in the past year.



Share who disapprove of ICE, 2026 (dark bar) vs. 2025 (light bar). Subgroup results carry a higher margin of error than the full sample.

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ECONOMY

Parents who did everything right are watching rent, groceries, and child care outrun their paychecks, and wondering whether their kids will do better than they did. **Voters want wages that keep up and health care that doesn't depend on their job.**

71%

say the American Dream is slipping out of reach.

74%

back a cost-of-living minimum wage.

71%

back universal health care.

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TECHNOLOGY

Every app, every smart device, and every free service quietly collects more personal details about our lives, and voters are fed up. **Now voters worry AI will take their jobs and flood their elections with fakes.**

66%

view artificial intelligence as a threat to jobs.

66%

see AI as a threat to democracy and elections.

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83%

say Americans give up too much privacy to Big Tech.

Voters want their personal data back.

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TECHNOLOGY

Towns are waking up to find giant data centers going up next door, straining the power grid and driving up utility bills. **Voters want rules in place before data centers go up in their towns.**

50% want construction paused or banned until better regulations are in place.

11% are fine with data center construction as is.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Voters are ready to rebuild American democracy for a third time.

After the Civil War and again in the civil rights era, America rebuilt its democracy to include more people. Voters want secure voting rights, a Supreme Court with term limits, and an economy that works for everyone.

54%

back a systemic, constitutional, and cultural overhaul to secure a multiracial democracy. 32% strongly support it.

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METHODOLOGY

About the Civil Rights Monitor

The Leadership Conference's Civil Rights Monitor has tracked voters' views on civil rights and democracy for five years.

Detail	Value
Conducted by	brilliant corners Research & Strategies
Field dates	August 23 to September 6, 2026
Sample	1,000 likely voters nationwide
Margin of error	±3.1 percentage points at a 95% confidence rate

Learn more about our findings:

civilrights.org/2026/09/30/civil-rights-monitor-poll

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights