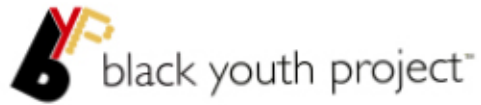


# gen FORWARD



## GenForward July 2016 Survey Report:

Topics covered include the 2016 Campaign, Attitudes toward the Political Parties, Perceptions of Race and the Criminal Justice System, Gun Control, Terrorism, and LGBT Policy Attitudes

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**The first-of-its-kind monthly survey of racially and ethnically diverse young adults**

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GenForward is a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

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All reference to our report and data need to be cited. Here is the preferred citation: GenForward: a survey of the Black Youth Project with the AP-NORC center for Public Affairs Research

Reports and topline of the GenForward Surveys by the Black Youth Project are available at [GenForwardSurvey.com](http://GenForwardSurvey.com)

## **Black Youth Project and GenForward Survey**

For over 10 years, the Black Youth Project, housed at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago, has dedicated its work to understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by young people of color in the contemporary United States. We continue this mission with our GenForward surveys. GenForward is a survey of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The GenForward Survey is the first of its kind—a nationally representative survey of over 1750 young adults ages 18-30 conducted monthly that pays special attention to how race and ethnicity shape how respondents experience and think about the world.

In this report, we document what young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans and whites are thinking about: the 2016 presidential election, the two major parties, attitudes toward the police and the criminal justice system, terrorism, gun violence, and LGBT policy issues. The report reflects the Black Youth Project's sustained commitment to *knowledge*, *voice* and *action* among young people, in particular young people of color. We create *knowledge* by detailing the real-life experiences of young people and how their perspectives and preferences differ based on their race and ethnicity. We help amplify their *voices* by providing platforms and opportunities for young people to weigh in on the issues most important to them. We present our data in an accessible form to multiple constituencies with the hope that our findings will contribute to a call to *action* to bring about change rooted in the ways young people of color experience contemporary America.

## Introduction

The summer of 2016 has been a turbulent time for this country. The shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando left 49 people dead – most of them young, Latino/a, and gay – and renewed worries about gun violence and terrorism. Police killings of two Black men, one in Baton Rouge and the other in St. Paul, and the shootings of police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge raised questions about how well police officers *protect and serve* the neighborhoods they patrol and if officers are under increased threat. Thousands of people have since participated in demonstrations across the country, many of them organized by groups affiliated with the Black Lives Matter movement. Young African Americans in particular were at the center of these episodes and the political movements that have followed. Ironically, as these events were unfolding, the two major parties' national conventions were also on display. Given all that is happening at this political moment, we wanted to know young people's attitudes on a number of critical subjects, including the Democratic and Republican Parties, how best to reduce gun violence, as well as what is more of a problem, violence by the police against civilians or violence against the police.

Based on data from our GenForward survey, in this report we document what young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans<sup>1</sup> and whites are thinking about: the 2016 presidential election, the two major parties, attitudes toward the police and the criminal justice system, terrorism and gun violence, and LGBT policy issues.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The GenForward Survey is the first of its kind—a nationally representative survey of over 1750 young adults ages 18-30 conducted monthly that pays special attention to how race and ethnicity shape how respondents experience and think about the world. Given the importance of race and ethnicity for shaping the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of young people, we believe researchers make a mistake when they present data on young adults in a manner that assumes a monolithic young adult vote. We are committed to disaggregating the larger category often labeled Millennials because our previous research has shown important differences in lived experiences and political attitudes among young adults of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We have limited coverage of the Asian American population because our surveys were conducted only in English and Spanish. Our sample of Asian Americans is therefore not fully representative of that community. For a report on the challenges of polling Asian Americans, see: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/11/the-challenges-of-polling-asian-americans/>.

<sup>2</sup> We understand there are other groups such as Native American young adults who also deserve to be included in this survey. Unfortunately, the cost of trying to sample this group and a few others are prohibitive at the moment. We will continue to identify funding that will allow us to expand the groups represented in our panel of young adults.

<sup>3</sup> See our previous report, *Black Millennials in America* (available at [http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP\\_ReportDesign04b\\_Dec03\\_HiRes.pdf](http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP_ReportDesign04b_Dec03_HiRes.pdf)).

Young adults now represent the largest generation of Americans, and they are by far the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the country.<sup>4</sup> About 19 percent of millennials identify as Latino or Hispanic, 13 percent as Black or African American, and 6 percent as Asian American. Thus, to fully understand how young people think about the upcoming election, issues such as terrorism or gun violence, as well as their economic futures, we have to pay attention to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Our mission is to document the political views of young people, especially young people of color.

## Key Findings

- ❖ Young African Americans, Latino/as, and Asian Americans continue to overwhelmingly prefer Clinton to Trump, while young whites are evenly split between the two.
- ❖ Third party candidates Gary Johnson and Jill Stein are unknown by most young people and currently have a limited base of support.
- ❖ Young people differ in their assessments of Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server as Secretary of State: A majority of young white adults (54%) believe that Clinton intentionally broke the law. Only 21% of African American, 29% of Asian American, and 32% of Latino/a young adults agree.
- ❖ Young people of color provide favorable evaluations of the Democratic Party. Large majorities of African American (66%), Asian American (65%), and Latino/a (58%) young adults believe the Democratic Party cares about people like them.
- ❖ The Republican Party is viewed far less favorably, especially among young people of color. A majority of African Americans (61%), Asian Americans (65%), Latino/as (60%), and whites (52%) think the Republican Party is too extreme.
- ❖ Reactions to police-related killings vary tremendously across racial and ethnic groups. More than 90% of young African American adults believe police killings of Black people is an extremely serious or a very serious problem, compared with 76% of Latino/as, 67% of Asian Americans, and just 48% of white young adults.
- ❖ Two-thirds (66%) of young African American adults reported that either themselves or someone they know have been the victims of police harassment or violence, compared with 29% of Asian American, 40% of Latino/a, and 30% of white young adults.
- ❖ Majorities of young adults of color prioritize gun control over gun rights: 63% of African American, 76% of Asian American, and 60% of Latino/a young adults believe it is more important to control gun ownership than it is to protect the right to own guns, while a majority (53%) of white young adults believe it is more important to protect gun ownership rights.

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/31/10-demographic-trends-that-are-shaping-the-u-s-and-the-world/>

- ❖ Race shapes how young people interpret mass shootings. Many Asian American (44%), Latino/a (40%), and white (58%) young adults considered the Pulse nightclub shooting an act of terrorism, but fewer (32% of Asian Americans, 27% of Latino/as, and 29% of whites) of the same individuals viewed the June 2015 Charleston AME church shooting an act of terrorism. Only about 30% of African American respondents believe either shooting was an act of terrorism.
- ❖ Young African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans, and whites are strongly supportive of a number of policies granting LGBT individuals rights and protections. Many young adults have even grown more progressive on these issues over the past two years, particularly among whites. For example, support for allowing gays and lesbians to legally adopt children has increased from 69% in 2014 to 84% in 2016 among young whites.

### The Youth Vote in the 2016 General Elections

One of the major findings from our first survey in June was that young adults are not a monolithic group when it comes to their political preferences. For example, African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans 18-30 were far more supportive of Hillary Clinton than Donald Trump, while young whites were equally divided in their support for the two candidates. Our data this month continue to indicate substantial variation among young adults in their candidate preferences. As Table 1 shows, if the election were today, support for Hillary Clinton would be strongest among African American (57%) and Asian American (50%) young adults, majorities of whom said they would vote for Clinton. Support for Clinton was somewhat lower among Latino/as, with 43% reporting they would vote for Clinton. Only a quarter (25%) of white young adults, in contrast, said they would vote for her.

**Table 1: Support for the 2016 Presidential Candidates**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>	<b>All Adults 18-30</b>
Hillary Clinton	57	50	43	25	35
Donald Trump	2	9	11	27	19
Gary Johnson	3	4	5	11	8
Jill Stein	3	4	3	4	4
Someone else	8	3	9	9	8
Will probably not vote	16	12	17	14	15
Undecided	11	18	13	10	11
N=	514	301	500	577	1,940

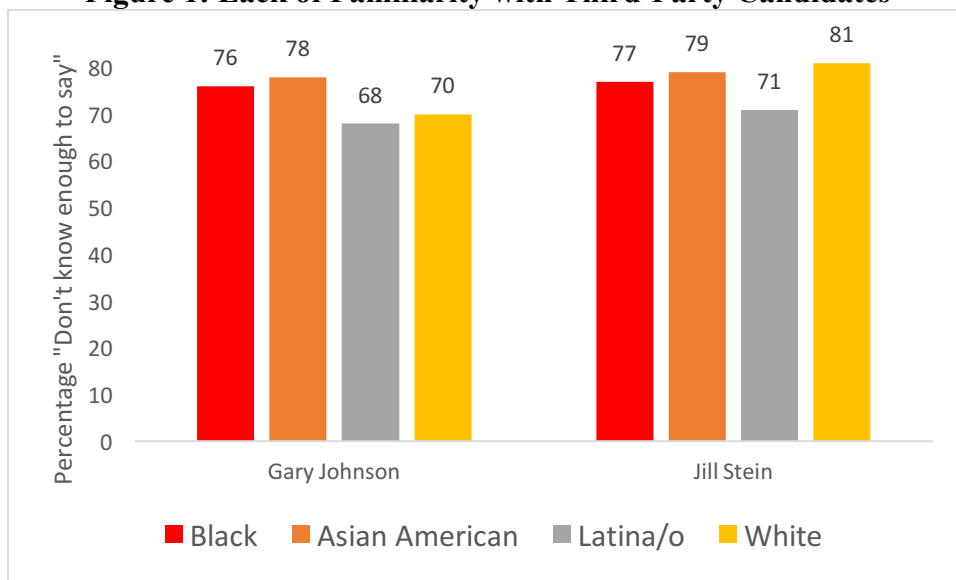
*Question:* If the 2016 presidential election were between Hillary Clinton for the Democrats and Donald Trump for the Republicans, would you vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, someone else, or probably not vote? N = 1,940. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

To the extent young people support for Donald Trump, this support is found mostly among whites, 27% of whom said they would vote for Trump. In contrast, only 2% of African Americans, 11% of Latino/as, and 9% of Asian Americans say they would vote for Trump. Hillary Clinton’s overall advantage among all young adults (35%) over Donald Trump (19%) is rooted in support among African American, Asian American, and Latino/a young adults.

Though commentators in the media suggest that third party candidates may do well among young people, the data (presented in Table 1) do not bear this out. Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson receives 11% support among young whites, but support for Johnson is in the single digits among African American (3%), Asian American (4%), and Latino/a (5%) young adults. Similarly, Green Party candidate Jill Stein receives less than five percent support from young adults of all racial and ethnic groups. Though much could change between now and the November election, third party candidates do not appear poised to receive meaningful levels of support from young people, especially young people of color.

One difficulty third-party candidates will have to overcome is the lack of knowledge young adults have about their candidates. While it is too early to know for sure whether young people will eventually support third party candidates like the Libertarian and Green Party nominees, the data in Figure 1 suggest these candidates suffer from extremely high levels of unfamiliarity among young people. Large majorities of young adults across all racial and ethnic groups said they did not know enough about Gary Johnson and Jill Stein to say whether they held favorable or unfavorable views of them. Most young adults do not appear to have taken even a casual look at third-party candidates.

**Figure 1: Lack of Familiarity with Third-Party Candidates**



Data show the percentages of young people who reported not knowing enough about Gary Johnson and Jill Stein to provide a favorability rating. *N* = 1,892.

Despite the lack of knowledge young adults have about third party candidates, there remain considerable opportunities for all candidates to make in-roads into how young adults will vote. Again, Table 1 indicates that significant numbers of young adults of all races and ethnicities continue to say that they will probably not vote in the 2016 general election, and more than 10% of young adults within each racial and ethnic group suggest that they are currently undecided.

Significant numbers of Bernie Sanders supporters also seem to be undecided about whether they will vote for Hillary Clinton in the fall. Across race and ethnicity less than a majority of all young people who supported Bernie Sanders say they will vote for Hillary Clinton. As we show in Table 2, **only 40% of Latino/a, 43% of white, 48% of African American, and 48% of Asian American young adults who supported Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary say that they would vote for Hillary Clinton if the election were today.** The remaining respondents say that they will vote for someone else, stay home, or are still undecided. Very few Sanders supporters say they will support Donald Trump in the fall. **Only 1% of African American, 2% of Asian American, 3% of white, and 6% of Latino/a Sanders supporters say they will vote for Donald Trump.** Sanders supporters have not yet fully embraced Hillary Clinton, but there appears to be very little potential that this critical group of young voters will vote for Donald Trump.

**Table 2: Support for the 2016 Presidential Candidates among Bernie Sanders Supporters**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Hillary Clinton	48	48	40	43
Donald Trump	1	2	6	3
Gary Johnson	2	4	7	7
Jill Stein	3	7	4	11
Someone else	13	5	14	11
Will probably not vote	19	14	20	15
Undecided	13	19	9	12
<i>N</i> =	248	178	297	227

*Question:* If the 2016 presidential election were between Hillary Clinton for the Democrats and Donald Trump for the Republicans, would you vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, someone else, or probably not vote? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As Table 3 demonstrates, differences in vote intention for the two major party candidates seem to be closely aligned with perceptions of the candidates' character traits. For example, substantially larger percentages of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as believe that Hillary Clinton is more trustworthy and more qualified to be president than Donald Trump. In contrast, larger percentages of young white adults view Donald Trump as more trustworthy than Hillary Clinton, yet they also believe that Clinton is more qualified to be president than Trump.

These perceptions of the candidates translate into **very low favorability ratings** for Trump, especially among young people of color. Only 8% of African Americans, 13% of Asian Americans, and 12% of Latino/as have favorable impressions of Donald Trump, while 30% of young whites view Donald Trump as either very or somewhat favorable. By comparison, 62% of African Americans, 52% of Asian Americans, and 53% of Latino/as view Hillary Clinton as either very or somewhat **favorable**. In comparison, only about a quarter (26%) of young whites have a favorable impression of Hillary Clinton.

**Table 3. Evaluations of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton**

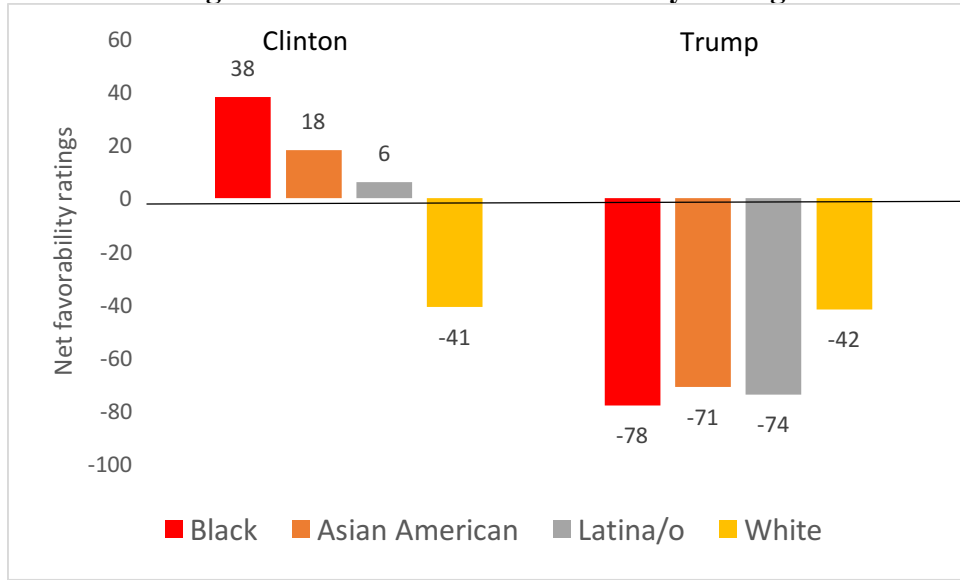
	African American adults 18-30		Asian American adults 18-30		Latino/a adults 18-30		Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	
	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton
Percent who view candidate as Honest and Trustworthy	8	46	18	30	10	38	30	16
Percent who view candidate as Qualified to be President	14	71	20	69	13	58	30	40
Percent who view candidate favorably	8	62	13	52	12	53	30	25
N=	514		301		500		577	

*Question:* See toplines for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In Figure 2, we plot the two candidates’ net favorability rating by subtracting the percentage of respondents with favorable views from the percentage of respondents with unfavorable views of the two major party candidates. Hillary Clinton continues to enjoy positive net favorability ratings among young African Americans (38%), Latinos (6%) and Asian Americans (18%). Clinton’s greater advantage is especially clear among African Americans. Trump, by contrast, has extremely negative net favorability ratings, with respondents from all groups—especially young adults of color—who view him as more unfavorable than favorable. Our data continue to indicate that the media narrative that both Clinton and Trump have record levels of negative favorability is true only for young white adults. Hillary Clinton has positive favorability ratings among African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino/as.



**Figure 2: Candidate Net Favorability Ratings**



Data show the percentages of young people with favorable views of the candidates minus the percentages of young people with unfavorable views of the candidates. Positive numbers indicate overall positive views and negative numbers indicate overall negative views. *N* = 1,892.

Some analysts have suggested that the release of the FBI report on Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server while Secretary of State resulted in one of the most damaging weeks of her campaign, heightening Clinton’s already high unfavorable rating. In Table 4 we find that young adults from different racial and ethnic groups reach very different assessments of Clinton’s behavior. A majority of young white adults (54%) believe Hillary Clinton intentionally broke the law by using the private server, while considerably smaller percentages of African American (21%), Asian American (29%), and Latino/a (32%) young adults believe Clinton intentionally broke the law. To the extent that the FBI report is likely to have any effect on young people’s support for Clinton, it is most like to effect young whites, who already register high unfavorable views about her candidacy.

**Table 4: Opinions on Hillary Clinton’s Use of Private Email Server**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
She did nothing wrong	17	11	9	5
She showed poor judgment but didn’t do anything illegal	36	33	31	22
She broke the law, but it wasn’t intentional	29	25	24	17
She intentionally broke the law	21	29	32	54
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Which comes closer to your opinion on Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email address and personal server while she was Secretary of State? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## Is The Party Over? How Young People Feel about the Political Parties

The limited appeal of both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump among the electorate writ large has been accompanied by claims in the media that the two major political parties today are outdated, do not represent the political priorities of most Americans, and are incapable of meeting the challenges of today's social, political, and economic environment. As our data was fielded on the eve of the two parties' nominating conventions, we examine how young people feel toward the two major parties.

Like feelings toward the two candidates, our data show that young adults are not a monolithic group. There are huge differences in how young people evaluate the two major parties based on race and ethnicity. As we show in Table 5, majorities of African American, Latino and Asian-American young adults view the Democratic Party as moderate, diverse, and concerned about people like them. By contrast, young people of color view the Republican Party as extreme, closed to different perspectives, and uncaring. Young whites are more evenly divided in their evaluations of the two parties.

The Democratic Party is viewed most favorably by African Americans, only a minority of whom view the party as extreme (20%), and majorities of whom view the Democratic Party as inclusive of people with different perspectives (71%), caring about people like them (66%), and have overall favorable evaluations of the Democratic Party (69%). Asian Americans and Latino/as have similar feelings toward the Democratic Party, and majorities of young whites too say that the Democratic Party is moderate, diverse, and cares about people like them. Unlike young African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans, whites do not have overall favorable feelings toward the Democratic Party, as only a minority (40%) view the Democratic Party favorably.

Again, Table 5 indicates that feelings toward the Republican Party are generally much more negative, but there is a larger gap between young adults of color and young whites in evaluations of the Republican Party. For example, among African Americans, who have the most negative views of the Republican Party, 61% say the party is too extreme, 69% say the party does not include people with different perspectives, 83% say the party does not care about people like them, and only 14% give favorable evaluations to the Republican Party. Thus, **it is not just Donald Trump who is viewed negatively by young adults of color. The Republican Party in general is at a major disadvantage in appealing to this critical and growing group of potential voters.** Young whites are more ambivalent about the Republican Party: 52% view the Republican Party as too extreme, 42% view it as inclusive, 41% as caring about people like them, and 34% have overall favorable views towards the Republican Party.

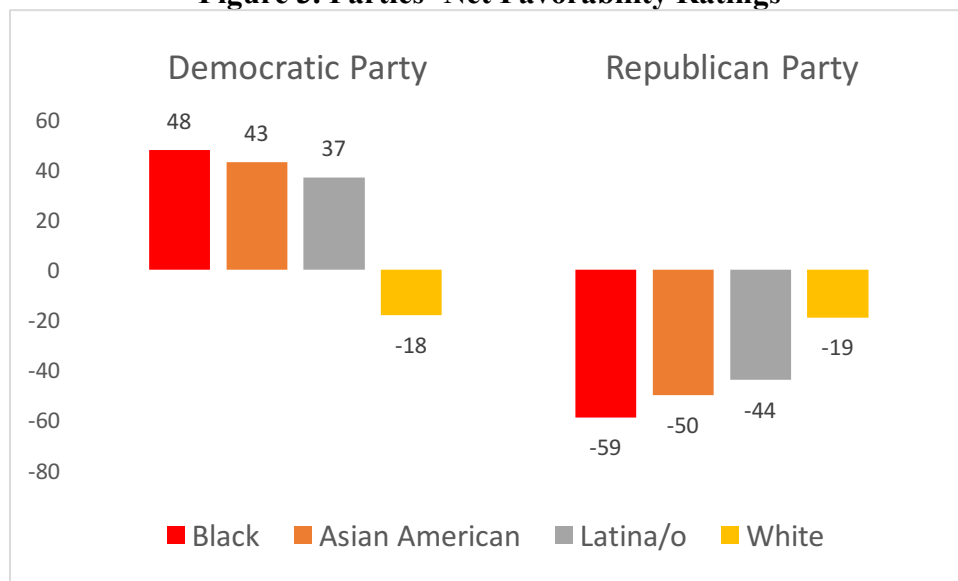
**Table 5: Evaluations of the Republican and Democratic Parties**

	African American adults 18-30		Asian American adults 18-30		Latino/a adults 18-30		Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	
	Rep. Party	Dem. Party	Rep. Party	Dem. Party	Rep. Party	Dem. Party	Rep. Party	Dem. Party
Is too extreme	61	20	65	25	60	29	52	41
Includes a variety of people with different perspectives	29	71	37	66	36	68	42	60
Cares about people like you	15	66	27	65	23	58	41	47
View favorably	14	69	19	67	20	60	34	40
<i>N</i> =	514		301		500		577	

*Question:* See topline for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As Figure 3 shows, young adults of color have overall positive net favorable evaluations of the Democratic Party and very negative net favorable evaluations of the Republican Party. White young adults, on the other hand, have net negative feelings towards both parties.

**Figure 3. Parties' Net Favorability Ratings**



Data show the percentages of young people with favorable views of the parties minus the percentages of young people with unfavorable views of the parties. Positive numbers indicate overall positive views and negative numbers indicate overall negative views. *N* = 1,892.

Our data also show that young people of all races and ethnicities perceive fairly large differences between the parties. As Table 6 shows, 52% of African Americans, 54% of Asian Americans, 50% of Latino/as, and 61% of whites perceive either “a great deal” or “a good deal” of differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties. Only a small minority of people from all racial and ethnic groups report that there are “no differences” between the two parties.

**Table 6: How Different are the Major Parties?**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
A great deal	26	23	24	27
A good deal	26	31	26	34
A fair amount	29	33	26	26
A tiny amount	8	7	12	8
No difference	10	5	13	5
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Thinking about the Democratic and Republican parties, would you say there is a great deal of difference in what they stand for, a good deal of difference, a fair amount of difference, a tiny amount of difference, or no difference at all? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Interestingly, sharp perceptions of differences between the two parties has not translated into general satisfaction with the two-party system. As shown in Table 7, substantial majorities of African Americans (66%), Asian Americans (71%), Latino/as (68%), and whites (73%) 18-30 believe that **a third party is needed** because the Republican and Democratic parties do not do an adequate job representing the American people. Thus the Democratic Party, in particular, cannot take the support of young adults of color for granted, since there is a strong desire for an alternative party among all young adults in the country.

**Table 7: Support for a Third Party**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Republican and Democratic Parties do an adequate job of representing the American people	31	26	31	26
Third party is needed	66	71	68	73
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job of representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## What Issues Are Young Adults Most Concerned About?

In order to expand their support from young adults, both the candidates and the political parties often try to highlight those issues they believe that young people are most concerned about. We find that young adults from different racial and ethnic backgrounds have widely different opinions on the most important issues facing America. In Table 8 below we list the three most important problems identified by young African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/as, and whites.

**Table 8: The Three Most Important Problems, by Race and Ethnicity**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Most cited problem	Racism (49%)	Racism (32%)	Racism (31%)	Terrorism and Homeland Security (30%)
Second most cited problem	Police Brutality (45%)	Gun Control (30%)	Immigration (28%)	Education (25%)
Third most cited problem	Gun Control (25%)	Income Inequality (24%)	Police Brutality (27%)	National Debt (23%)
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* What do you think are the three most important problems facing this country today? Respondents select three from a list of 22 issues (see the topline). *N* = 1,892. The percentage of respondents listing each issue as one of the three most important problems is listed in parentheses.

Nearly 50% of African Americans list racism as one of the three most important problems facing America today. Asian Americans (32%) and Latino/as (31%) are also more likely to cite racism more than any other issue as the most important problem in this country, much more than the percentage of young whites who list racism as one of the three most important problems in America (20%).

While there is some agreement among Latino/as, Asian Americans and African Americans that racism is one of the most important problems in America today, there is less agreement about other issues. Asian Americans identify gun control (30%) and income inequality (24%) as the second and third most cited problems in America, while Latino/as list immigration (28%) and police brutality (27%). Following racism, African Americans indicate that police brutality (45%) and gun control (25%) are the issues most important to them.

Young adult whites list completely different issues as being the most important problems in America. The most frequently cited issue among white young adults is terrorism and homeland security (30%), followed by education (25%) and the national debt (23%). In short, young adults have widely different perspectives about the problems that are most important in America today

based on their race and ethnicity. These differences would be largely missed by treating young adults as a monolithic group. Only by disaggregating their preferences can one understand how best to address young adults' varying needs and concerns.

### Race, Policing, and the Criminal Justice System

Police killings of African Americans Philando Castile and Anton Sterling as well as others across the country have again raised questions about institutional racism in policing and the relationship between police and local communities. As Table 9 shows, young adults have very different assessments of the seriousness of police killings of Black people. **Nearly three-quarters (73%) of young African American adults believe that the killing of Black people by the police is an extremely serious problem, compared with 35% of Asian American, 45% of Latino/a, and 24% of white young adults** who share this view. Despite too frequent news of African American civilians being shot and killed by police, young adults from other racial and ethnic groups do not consider this issue nearly as serious an issue as young African Americans do.

Indeed, when we asked our respondents to list three issues that they think are the most important problems currently facing this country, we find that **45% of African American young adults list police brutality as one of the three most important problems in America**, compared to just 13% of Asian Americans, 27% of Latino/as, and 16% of whites.

Yet while African Americans stand out in their belief that the killing of Black people by police is extremely serious, when we take into account those who indicate that the killing of Black people by the police is a very serious problem we find that majorities of African Americans (92%), Asian Americans (67%) and Latino/as (76%) agree that this problem is either extremely or very serious, as indicated in Table 9. A near majority of young whites (48%) feel similarly that the killing of black people by the police is an extremely or very serious problem.

**Table 9: How Serious a Problem is the Killing of Black People by the Police?**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Extremely serious	73	35	45	24
Very serious	19	32	31	24
Moderately serious	5	22	13	28
Not too serious	< 1	9	7	14
Not at all serious	2	3	3	9
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* How serious a problem do you think the killing of Black people by the police is in the United States? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In contrast to the divided views about the seriousness of the killing of Black people by the police, our data in Table 10 indicate that majorities of young people across races and ethnicities view the recent attacks on police officers as an extremely or very serious problem. Specifically, 53% of

African American, 59% of Asian American, 66% of Latino/a, and 60% of white young adults report that violence against the police is an extremely or very serious problem.

There is thus a divide based on race and ethnicity in how young people view the recent debate over race and policing in America. Among young adults of color, majorities believe that **both** the killing of Black people by police and violence against police are extremely or very serious problems. Among young whites, on the other hand, more believed that attacks against police are an extremely or very serious a problem than believe the same about the killing of Black people by the police.

**Table 10: How Serious a Problem is Violence Against Police?**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Extremely serious	30	25	38	28
Very serious	23	34	28	32
Moderately serious	21	26	19	26
Not too serious	16	13	8	10
Not at all serious	11	3	7	4
<i>N</i> =	<i>514</i>	<i>301</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>577</i>

*Question:* How serious a problem do you think violence against the police is in the United States? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

These differences in views towards police killings of African Americans may partly stem from the distinct personal experiences young adults have with police based on their race and ethnicity. Statistics on rates of violence and harassment by the police are in short supply. We asked our respondents whether they or someone they know have experienced violence or harassment from police. As Table 11 shows, there are substantial differences across racial groups. Young African American (22%) and Latino/a (18%) adults reported the highest rates of personal experiences with police violence or harassment, while Asian American (6%) and white (11%) young adults reported significantly less personal experiences with police violence or harassment.

Just as strikingly, almost half (44%) of young African American adults said that someone they knew had experienced violence or harassment from the police, while the figures are consistently lower among Asian American (23%), Latino/a (22%), and white (19%) young adults. While these figures are based on self-reports and therefore should be interpreted with some degree of caution, they do provide another set of data points to show that experiences with the police vary significantly across racial and ethnic groups. **Young people of color, and African American young adults in particular, experience the police in entirely different, often negative, ways compared to young white adults.** These experiential differences are likely to shape young peoples' orientations toward the police.

**Table 11: Experiences with Violence/Harassment from Police**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Me	22	6	18	11
Someone I know	44	23	22	19
No	34	71	60	70
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Have you or anyone you know experienced harassment or violence at the hands of the police? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Though stories of police violence have been prominent in the news in recent years, the absence of police accountability has also been a consistent theme in terms of outcomes. For example, every officer that was tried in Freddie Gray’s death in Baltimore was found not guilty, including an acquittal of one of the police officers involved that occurred just days before our survey was in the field. We asked young people how these verdicts in the Freddie Gray case affected their views of the criminal justice system. The results are shown in Table 12.

Majorities of young people, and particularly young adults of color, reported that the failure to convict any of the police officers involved in Freddie Gray’s death **gave them less faith in the criminal justice system**. More than half (57%) of white young adults said the lack of convictions reduced their faith in the criminal justice system, compared with 76% of African American, 66% of Asian American, and 73% of Latino/a young adults.

**Table 12: Freddie Gray and Evaluations of the Criminal Justice System**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Gives me more faith in the criminal justice system	4	4	5	10
Gives me less faith in the criminal justice system	76	66	73	57
Doesn’t change how I feel about the criminal justice system	19	29	20	33
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* To date all of the police officers tried for the killing of Freddie Gray—a 25-year-old African American man who died from injuries suffered while being transported in a police van in Baltimore—have been found not guilty. How does that make you feel about the criminal justice system? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.



## Gun Violence and Attitudes toward Gun Control

In the wake of mass shootings like Orlando, FL and continuing gun violence in cities like Chicago, the issue of gun control has risen to the top of the political agenda for many Americans. **Young adults of all races and ethnicities identify gun control as an important problem.** Twenty-five percent of African Americans, 30% of Asian Americans, 23% of Latino/as, and 18% of whites identify gun control as one of the three most important problems facing America today.

But young adults' personal experience with guns and gun violence varies substantially based on their race and ethnicity. As we document in Table 13, more African Americans (37%), and to a slightly lesser extent Latino/as (24%), report experiencing gun violence in the last year, compared to just 12% of Asian American and white young adults. Despite their lower levels of experiencing gun violence, young whites are far more likely to report owning a gun (29%) than the 10-11% of young adults of color who say they own a gun. We also know from previous research that young African Americans and Latino/as are more susceptible to homicides from firearms than young adult whites. In recent years, gun-related homicides were 17 times higher for African American than for white youth, and nearly four times higher for young Latinos than young whites.<sup>5</sup> Young people of color, and African Americans in particular, have very different life experiences with guns and gun violence than white youth. These different experiences are likely to translate into distinct political preferences on the issue of gun control.

**Table 13: Experiences with Guns and Gun Violence**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Own a gun	11	10	10	29
Experienced gun violence in the last year	37	12	24	12
<i>N</i> =	<i>514</i>	<i>301</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>577</i>

See toplines for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Indeed, as Table 14 shows, majorities of African Americans (63%), Asian Americans (76%), and Latino/as (60%) say that it is more important to control gun ownership than to protect the right to own guns. A majority of young whites take the opposite stance with 53% saying it is more important to protect the right to own guns than to control gun ownership.

<sup>5</sup> See the *Black Millennials in America report* (available at [http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP\\_ReportDesign04b\\_Dec03\\_HiRes.pdf](http://blackyouthproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BYP_ReportDesign04b_Dec03_HiRes.pdf)).

**Table 14: Priorities for Gun Control**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Protect right to own guns	37	22	40	53
Control gun ownership	63	76	60	46
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* What do you think is more important – to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Although young whites differ from African Americans, Asian Americans and Latino/as on the broad issue of gun control, there seems to be extensive support across race and ethnicity for specific policies aimed at reducing gun violence. Table 15 presents data on a variety of specific policy proposals that have been at the forefront of recent debates about gun control. We find general support for a range of measures that have been proposed to reduce gun violence. The policy with the most limited support, but that is still favored by a majority of all young adults, is a nationwide ban on semi-automatic weapons: 55% of African Americans and Latino/as, 56% of whites, and 74% of Asian Americans support a ban on semiautomatic weapons.

The policy with the greatest support is criminal background checks for all gun sales: 90% of African American, 94% of Asian American, 90% of Latino/a, and 95% of white young adults support this proposal. There is also widespread support among young people across races and ethnicities for more police and security in public places and for stricter penalties for people convicted of violating existing gun laws. **Young adults support a range of policy proposals designed to reduce gun violence in America.**

**Table 15: Support for Policies to Address Gun Violence**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Support nationwide ban on semi-automatic weapons that rapidly fire a high number of rounds	55	74	55	56
Support criminal background checks for all gun sales	90	94	90	95
Support more police or armed security guards in public places like schools, movie theaters, and malls	68	61	71	68
Support stiffer penalties for people convicted of violating existing gun laws	80	92	88	92
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* See topline for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Contributing to support for gun control is the widespread belief among young adults that laws limiting gun ownership do not violate the second amendment. As we show in Table 16, majorities of African Americans (57%), Asian Americans (61%), Latino/as (52%) and whites (52%) believe that laws limiting gun ownership do not infringe on the public’s right to bear arms.

**Table 16: Attitudes toward Second Amendment Rights and Gun Policies**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Laws limiting gun ownership infringe on the public’s right to bear arms	40	37	44	47
Laws limiting gun ownership do not infringe on the public’s right to bear arms	57	61	52	52
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Do you think that laws limiting gun ownership infringe on the public’s right to bear arms under the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or do you think they do not infringe on the public’s right to bear arms? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Even while young adults support various gun control policies and perceive gun control as being consistent with the public’s right to bear arms, many young adults also believe that gun ownership contributes more to gun safety than believe that owning a gun puts an individual’s safety at risk. Fifty-one percent of African Americans, 57% of Latinos, and 65% of whites take this stance, shown in Table 17 below. Interestingly, a majority of Asian Americans (62%) take the opposing position, and state that gun ownership is more likely to put an individual’s safety at risk than to protect people from being a victim of crime. An AP-GfK July 2016 poll of the general adult population found that 62% of the general American public believes that gun ownership is more likely to protect people than put their safety at risk.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 17: Beliefs about Whether Guns Keep Owners Safe or Put their Safety at Risk**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>	<b>AP-GfK Poll General Pop. July 2016</b>
Protect people from becoming victims of crime	51	38	57	65	62
Put their safety at risk	46	62	39	34	35
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577	1,009

*Question:* Do you think that owning a gun does more to protect a person from being a victim of a crime or more to put their safety at risk? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Finally, we asked our respondents whether they think the National Rifle Association (NRA) has too much, too little, or about the right amount of influence on Congress. This same question was also asked in the July 2016 AP-GfK poll of the general population. As presented in Table 18, we find that young adults of all races and ethnicities are fairly evenly divided in their view of the NRA’s influence on Congress. Their views are similar to those held by the general American population. The most common position is that the NRA has too much influence: 37% of African American, 50% of Asian American, 36% of Latino/a, and 40% of white young adults 18-30 took this position, compared to 42% of the general American population. But many young adults across races and ethnicities take the position that the NRA has about the right amount, or even too little, influence on Congress.

<sup>6</sup> The July AP-GfK poll is a survey of 1,009 individuals from the general American population (18+). For the poll’s topline, see: [http://ap-gfkipoll.com/main/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/July-2016-AP-GfK-Poll-Posted-Topline\\_guns.pdf](http://ap-gfkipoll.com/main/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/July-2016-AP-GfK-Poll-Posted-Topline_guns.pdf)

**Table 18: Perceptions of the National Rifle Association’s Influence**

	<b>African American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18-30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>	<b>AP-GfK Poll General Pop. July 2016</b>
Too much	37	50	36	40	42
Too little	30	20	22	22	17
About the right amount	27	29	38	36	38
N=	514	301	500	577	1,009

*Question:* Based on what you’ve heard, do you think the National Rifle Association (NRA) has too much influence, too little influence, or about the right amount of influence on Congress? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In sum, we find that young adults have very different experiences with guns and gun violence based on race and ethnicity. That said, we also found that young African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/as, and even many whites strongly support a range of initiatives designed to reduce gun violence, including tighter restrictions on gun ownership. The future for many of these young adults depends on our success in making their voices a more important part of the political debate about how to reduce gun violence in the United States.

### **Terrorism**

Continued attacks by ISIS-inspired individuals in France and elsewhere and mass shootings in the United States like those in Orlando, Florida, San Bernardino, California, and Charleston, South Carolina have made the issue of terrorism and threats of violence central to the concerns of many young Americans. Indeed, 30% of white, 22% of Latino/a, 20% of Asian American, and 12% of African American young adults list terrorism and homeland security as one of the three most important problems facing the country.

Even though there seems to be general agreement about the importance to terrorism to the population, we also found that concern about the threat of violence from different sources varies by race and ethnicity. As Table 19 shows, there is substantial concern across racial and ethnic groups about violence against Americans that comes from people currently living in the United States who are inspired by foreign extremists, and from individuals and groups from outside the U.S. Young adults regardless of race and ethnicity are currently on edge and concerned about the threat of violence from these sources.

One area where we find large differences across race and ethnicity is concern about violence from white extremists. Eighty-one percent of African Americans 18-30 are very or somewhat concerned about violence committed by white extremists, a number that is essentially identical to their concern about violence from other sources. Asian Americans (83%) and Latino/as (80%) share these concerns. But while nearly two-thirds of young white adults (68%) are concerned about violence from white extremists, their level of concern is significantly less than that recorded among young adults of color. For youth adults of color, violence by white extremists like the killing of nine African Americans in Charleston is just as concerning a threat as violence from those inspired by foreign extremists and from groups from outside the United States.

**Table 19: Concern about the Threat of Violence from Various Groups**

(% Very or Somewhat Concerned)	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
U.S. residents inspired by foreign extremists	81	88	89	89
Non-U.S. residents	77	81	86	80
White Extremists	81	83	80	68
N=	514	301	500	577

See toplines for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Beyond differences in perceived threats, we also observe stark racial and ethnic differences in how people describe different episodes of gun violence. We asked people to describe the nature of both the shooting in Orlando, Florida that left 49 people dead, most of them LGBT and Latino/a, and the shooting in Charleston, South Carolina that left 9 people dead, all African American Christians.

As presented in Tables 20 and 21, we found that the shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida was much more likely to be described as a terrorist act than the shooting in Charleston, South Carolina. This difference in description of the two attacks is especially sharp among all groups except African Americans. Many Asian Americans (44%) and Latino/as (40%), and a majority of whites (58%) describe the shooting in Orlando, Florida as a terrorist act. But far fewer Asian American (32%), Latino/a (27%), and white (29%) young adults describe the shooting in Charleston, South Carolina as an act of terrorism. Interestingly, few African American young adults describe either shooting as a terrorist act.

**Table 20: Descriptions of the Shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Terrorist Act	32	44	40	58
Hate crime against LGBT individuals	67	68	69	69
Hate Crime against Latinos/Hispanics	13	15	23	16
None of the above	12	8	6	4
Don't Know	8	13	7	6
N=	514	301	500	577

*Question:* You may recall that last month, 49 people were shot and killed (and 53 people were injured) by 29-year-old Omar Mateen at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. From what you remember, do you think they shooting at the nightclub in Orlando, Florida was a terrorist act, a hate crime against people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, a hate crime against Latinos/Hispanics, or none of the above? Please select all that apply. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Table 21: Descriptions of the Shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina**

	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Terrorist Act	29	32	27	29
Hate crime against Christians	31	18	29	26
Hate Crime against African Americans	68	55	56	59
None of the above	9	5	10	8
Don't Know	11	25	16	20
N=	514	301	500	577

*Question:* You may recall that last June, nine people were shot and killed (and a tenth person was seriously wounded) by 21-year-old Dylann Roof at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. From what you remember, do you think the shooting at the church in Charleston, South Carolina was a terrorist act, a hate crime against Christians, a hate crime against African Americans, or none of the above? Please select all that apply. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

These differences in terminology describing different mass shootings are meaningful. They reflect a tendency by some politicians, journalists and individuals to equate terrorism only with violence committed by Muslims, shaping the public debate over solutions to different episodes of gun violence. Thus, the designation of an attack as a hate crime shifts the blame onto the individual perpetrator while failing to recognize the broader ideological and political motivations behind an attack. In the case of Charleston, the failure to recognize the attack as an act of domestic terrorism contributes to a decreased recognition of the threat African Americans continue to feel from white extremists, a threat we documented above in Table 19.

Finally, we asked respondents their attitudes toward a Muslim ban, one of the more controversial policy proposals offered by Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign for addressing terrorism. We also asked their views about whether or not it is necessary to sacrifice some rights and freedoms in order to successfully fight terrorism. Table 22 shows **widespread opposition among young adults to banning Muslims** who are not U.S. citizens from entering the United States. At least two-thirds of all young adults oppose this proposal. Opposition is especially strong among African Americans (79%) and Asian Americans (79%), while Latino/as (66%) and whites (68%) are also opposed to this policy proposal in significant numbers. Despite widespread concern about terrorism, there is little appetite among young adults for banning Muslims from entering the United States.

**Table 22: Attitudes toward a Muslim Ban**

	<b>African American adults 18- 30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18- 30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Strongly Favor	9	7	14	14
Somewhat Favor	10	12	19	18
Somewhat Oppose	29	26	28	27
Strongly Oppose	50	53	38	41
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Do you favor or oppose temporarily banning all Muslims who are not U.S. citizens from entering the United States? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In spite of their opposition to Donald Trump’s proposal to ban all Muslims from immigrating to the U.S., many young adults do say that it is sometimes or always necessary for the government to sacrifice some rights and freedoms in order to fight terrorism, as shown in Table 23. Majorities of African Americans (61%), Asian Americans (71%), Latino/as (65%), and whites (66%) say that freedoms must at least sometimes be sacrificed in the name of greater security. So while young people may currently oppose a Muslim ban, they do appear willing to consider other governmental restrictions on rights and freedoms in order to prevent terrorism.

**Table 23: Views about the Balance Freedom and Security**

	<b>African American adults 18- 30</b>	<b>Asian American adults 18- 30</b>	<b>Latino/a adults 18-30</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic white adults 18-30</b>
Always necessary to sacrifice some rights and freedoms	16	11	11	10
Sometimes necessary to sacrifice some rights and freedoms	45	60	54	56
Never necessary to sacrifice some rights and freedoms	37	28	34	32
<i>N</i> =	514	301	500	577

*Question:* Do you think it is necessary for the government to sacrifice some rights and freedoms to fight terrorism, or is it never necessary to sacrifice rights and freedoms to prevent against terrorism? *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.



## SUPPORT FOR LGBT POLICIES

It has been widely documented that public sentiment in support of policies that advance LGBT rights like same sex marriage has evolved rapidly over the past few decades. Much of the reporting on this shift has focused on the overwhelming support for LGBT rights among young adults.<sup>7</sup> But rarely has past research broken down support for LGBT policies by race and ethnicity. Previous research conducted in 2014 by the Black Youth Project reported that large majorities of young African Americans, Latina/os, and whites support a range of policies extending rights and benefits to LGBT individuals.<sup>8</sup>

On our July survey we asked four identical questions to those used in our 2014 survey to assess how public opinion among young adults has changed over the past few years on this rapidly evolving policy agenda. As we document in Table 23, **young adults, particularly young whites and Latino/as, have become even more progressive in their support for a range of LGBT policies over the past two years.** For example, support for allowing gays and lesbians to legally adopt children increased by 5 percentage points between 2014 and 2016 among African Americans, 10 percentage points among Latino/as, and 15 percentage points among whites. While the 2014 survey did not contain sufficient numbers of Asian Americans to confidently measure their opinions in 2014, we find that in 2016 large numbers of Asian American young adults (84%) also support allowing gays and lesbians to legally adopt children.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, see the generational breakdown of support for same-sex marriage provided by Pew: <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/05/12/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>

<sup>8</sup> See our 2014 report here: <http://blackyouthproject.com/byp-memo-moving-beyond-marriage-what-young-people-of-color-think-about-the-lgbt-agenda/>

**Table 24: Support for LGBT Policies, 2014-2016**

(% Favor)	African American adults 18-30		Asian American adults 18-30		Latino/a adults 18-30		Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30	
	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016
Allow gays and lesbians to legally adopt children.	64	69	N/A	84	65	75	69	84
Equal employment rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.	85	82	N/A	83	82	88	84	92
More efforts aimed at prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS	86	87	N/A	95	85	93	85	92
Sensitivity training of police around the issues of transgender individuals	78	74	N/A	81	73	76	66	74
Government support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth	N/A	73	N/A	77	N/A	76	N/A	68
<i>N</i> =	514		301		500		577	

See topline for specific question wordings. *N* = 1,892. Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

This increase in support for LGBT rights between our 2014 and 2016 surveys is apparent on other issues as well. When it comes to equal employment rights for LGBT individuals, Latino/as are 6 percentage points more supportive in 2016 than in 2014, while whites are 8 percentage points more supportive. With respect to efforts aimed at prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, Latino/as’ support increased 8 percentage points between 2014 and 2016, while whites’ support has increased 7 percentage points. Finally, support for sensitivity training for police around issues of transgender individuals has increased 3 percentage points among Latino/as, and 8 percentage points among whites. In many ways, the increase in support mirrors the changing legal and political status of LGBT individuals and communities.

We also asked our sample in 2016 whether they favored or opposed government support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth: 73% of African Americans, 77% of Asian Americans, 76% of Latino/as, and 68% of whites support this policy initiative. In short, large majorities of young adults across race and ethnicity groups support a range of LGBT policy issues. It seems that this generation of young adults have grown even more supportive of LGBT rights over the past two years.

One area where the move toward acceptance and support is a bit more complicated is the issue of transgender rights, including whether health insurance companies should provide coverage of health issues that affect the transgender community like hormone treatments or sexual reassignment surgery. We examine public support for this policy through an experiment designed to examine the conditions under which people are more or less supportive of health insurance coverage of issues that affect transgender individuals.

We speculated that support for transgender rights might be greater in the abstract than when specific details were provided. This follows from longstanding public opinion research showing that public support for political equality is greater in the abstract than when individuals are asked to support specific policies.<sup>9</sup> For example, whites’ support for equal treatment among African Americans has long been shown to be greater in the abstract than when asked to endorse specific policies like Affirmative Action that would help to achieve that goal. Our data, presented in Table 25, indicates a similar pattern of support for transgender issues, particularly among young adults of color.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 25: Support for Health Insurance Coverage of Transgender Issues Greater in the Abstract than in Specifics**

(% Favor)	African American adults 18-30	Asian American adults 18-30	Latino/a adults 18-30	Non-Hispanic white adults 18-30
Abstract	69	83	74	62
Specific	57	63	57	62
N=	514	301	500	577

See topline for specific question wordings.  $N = 1,892$ . Column entries may not equal 100% due to rounding.

When asked whether they support “coverage of transgender health issues by health insurance,” 69% of African Americans, 83% of Asian Americans, 74% of Latino/as, and 62% of whites express favorable opinions. **However, support for transgender health insurance drops substantially—though a majority are still in favor—when we ask people to express their support for “coverage of transgender health issues, such as hormone treatments and sexual reassignment surgery, by health insurance.”** This is an identical policy that varies only by providing more specific information to respondents about what health insurance coverage of

<sup>9</sup> For example, see: McCloskey, Herbert. 1964. “Consensus and Ideology in American Politics.” *American Political Science Review*.

<sup>10</sup> Differences across experimental conditions are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  for African Americans and Latino/as, and at  $p < 0.10$  for Asian Americans.

transgender individuals entails. Again as Table 24 indicates, when more specific information is provided the level of support drops to 57% of African Americans, 63% of Asian Americans, 57% of Latino/as, and 62% of whites.

In sum, young adults of all races and ethnicities continue to support equality for LGBT individuals, as large majorities of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/as, and Whites support a range of policies affecting the LGBT community. Indeed, we find that even in the short period of the past two years that young adults have become even more supportive of LGBT policy issues. But as transgender rights has recently become a focal point of the political debate over LGBT issues, it is important to realize that even young adults' opinions towards these issues are not immutable. Like public opinion towards marginalized groups generally, support for transgender issues among young adults (particularly young adults of color) is greater when such issues are framed in terms of general abstract principles like equal treatment than when specific details that are less familiar are made salient.

### **Conclusion**

The GenForward July survey provides yet a second set of rigorous, systematic and comprehensive data that characterizes young people's attitudes as we approach the 2016 presidential election. As we noted early in this document, we are especially committed to exploring how the attitudes of young adults vary by race and ethnicity. Our findings challenge many of the dominant narratives that have emerged from speculation about how young people view the important issues of our day and the role they will play in November's election. As we found in our June survey, young African Americans, Asian Americans and Latino/as are much more supportive of Hillary Clinton than Donald Trump, while young whites are more evenly divided in their support for the two candidates. At the same time, Hillary Clinton still has important work to do to convince Bernie Sanders' large and diverse coalition of voters to support her in November, at least as of the time our data was collected prior to the start of the Democratic National Convention.

The inability of the two nominated candidates to address the issues and concerns that young adults of color care about has contributed to a desire for a third party in American politics. Yet the current third party candidates are unknown to most young adults, and both Gary Johnson and Jill Stein currently have limited electoral support. In terms of the two major parties, we find that young adults, particularly African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans, continue to have positive evaluations of the Democratic Party, even as they remain somewhat tepid in their support for Hillary Clinton. The Republican Party, by contrast, faces a large deficit in support from young people, and young people of color in particular.

In this report we also provide important and timely data on views about the police, racism, and gun violence in America. We note that there are stark differences across race and ethnicity in how young people experience and feel about these issues. Young African Americans, in particular, are concerned about the killing of Black people by police, the threat of violence by white extremists, and are more likely both to experience harassment by police and gun violence in the past year. Too often these personal experiences are ignored in the debate over police

brutality, gun control, and terrorism. We hope to amplify these marginalized voices and make them a more central part of our political debates.

Finally, we document a growing trend among young people in support for LGBT rights. Young adults have widely been noted to be at the forefront of the growing public support for LGBT issues, and we find that young adults across races and ethnicities are supportive of LGBT policy proposals. But we also note that young adults' support for these issues is greater in the abstract than when specific information is provided, at least when it comes to transgender rights. On these issues, young adults' support is greatest when they draw on more general principles of equality and tolerance than specific policy information.

Each month we will be issuing a new report that will both continue tracking young adults' attitudes on this election as well as numerous other topics of the day. We hope that our work to each month report on the attitudes of young people, especially young people of color, will expand the political discourse, helping to include the preferences and positions of too often marginalized members of our political community.

## Study Methodology

The July GenForward survey is a project of the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Interviews were conducted with a representative sample from GenForward®, a nationally representative survey panel of adults ages 18-30 recruited and administered by NORC at the University of Chicago and funded in part by grants to the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

A total of 1,940 interviews were conducted between July 9 and 20, 2016 with adults ages 18-30 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including completed interviews with 514 African American young adults, 301 Asian American young adults, 500 Hispanic young adults, 577 non-Hispanic white young adults, and 48 young adults with other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The survey was offered in English and Spanish and via telephone and web modes.

The GenForward survey was built from two sample sources:

- Forty seven percent of the completed interviews are sourced from NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel. AmeriSpeak is a probability based panel that also uses address-based sample but sourced from the NORC National Frame with enhanced sample coverage. During the initial recruitment phase of the AmeriSpeak panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face).
- Fifty three percent of the completed interviews are sourced from the Black Youth Project (BYP) panel of young adults custom built by NORC. The BYP sample is from a probability-based household panel that uses an address-based sample from a registered voter database of the entire U.S. Households were selected using stratified random sampling to support over-sampling of households with African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians ages 18-30. NORC contacted sampled households by U.S. mail and by telephone, inviting them to register and participate in public opinion surveys twice a month.

Panelists on both the Black Youth Project and AmeriSpeak panels are invited to register for the panel via the web or by telephone to participate in public opinion surveys.

Of the 1,940 completed interviews in the June GenForward survey, 83% were completed by web and 17% by telephone. The survey completion rate is 40.5 percent. The weighted household panel recruitment rate is 10.7 percent and the weighted household panel retention rate is 93.3 percent, for a cumulative AAPOR Response Rate 3 of 4.0 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. Among subgroups, the margin of sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 6.6 percentage points for African Americans, +/- 8.1 percentage points for Asian Americans, +/- 6.6 percentage points for Hispanics, and +/- 5.9 percentage points for non-Hispanic whites.

To encourage cooperation, respondents were offered incentives for completing the survey that ranged from the cash-equivalent of \$3 to the cash-equivalent of \$10.

The interviews from the two probability-based sample sources were combined for statistical weighting and analysis. The combined panel samples provide sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. The statistical weights incorporate the appropriate probability of selection for the Black Youth Project and AmeriSpeak samples, nonresponse adjustments, and also, raking ratio adjustments to population benchmarks for 18-30 year old adults. A poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under- and over-sampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. The poststratification process was done separately for each racial/ethnic group and involved the following variables: age, gender, education, and census region. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults ages 18-30, and the 18-30 year-old populations for African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and non-Hispanic whites, were used for all analyses.

A topline with complete question wordings is available at <http://www.genforwardsurvey.com/>. For additional information about this GenForward survey, contact [info@blackyouthproject.com](mailto:info@blackyouthproject.com) or [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).