



Los Angeles
Urban League

PRESS RELEASE

MULTIETHNIC COALITION'S STATEWIDE POLL SHOWS CALIFORNIANS BELIEVE PROTESTS HAVE BROUGHT PEOPLE CLOSER TOGETHER, BUT EXPRESS CONCERN ON RACE RELATIONS IN STATE, NATION

Poll Results Show Communities of Color Agree on Policing, Schools and COVID-19

LOS ANGELES, CA, July 14, 2020 — As California confronts the unprecedented threat of COVID-19 and historic civil unrest, statewide polling conducted by a coalition of diverse non-profits demonstrates that the state's most prominent racial and ethnic groups are coalescing on paths forward for both police reform and for the re-opening of the state.

The historic survey, co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Urban League, HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality), and CAUSE (Center for Asian American United for Self-Empowerment), showed that Californians believe race relations in the state and nationally have worsened since earlier this year, but do not blame recent protests for that skepticism and credit the protests for bringing people of different races closer together and raising awareness as to the extent of racial discrimination. The poll is the second in a series that began in February of this year, and surveyed 1,184 adults statewide with over-samples of Latinos, African Americans and Asian Pacific Americans (APA) to allow more detailed analysis.

RACE RELATIONS HAVE SUFFERED THIS YEAR, BUT PROTESTS HAVE BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER

Compared to an earlier poll taken in February, the number of people to rate race relations in the state as excellent or good has fallen 13 points, from 57% to 44%. Latinos and Asians' positive opinion on race relations in California dropped by 16 percentage points, a slightly larger difference than for Black (-10), and White (-11) Californians. A smaller drop had occurred at the national level, where those who rated race relations in the United States as excellent or good had fallen from 32 to 26 percent.

"This series of polls gives us an unparalleled opportunity to track changes in Californians' attitudes toward some of the most important issues of our time," said CAUSE Board Chair Charlie Woo. "Because we were able to get a clearer picture of the feelings of the state's communities of color, we can now outline a path forward that allows us to work together toward common goals and solutions."

"The poll shows us that all groups agree that race matters," said Helen Torres, CEO of HOPE. Even though there are slight differences in perception and how each demographic group might

approach each of these pressing issues, an increase in the awareness every single ethnic/racial group has had on discrimination and race relations goes to show how the protest movement has already been successful in many ways.”

“We stand shoulder to shoulder with leaders of other communities who have protested in support of racial justice and social equity,” said Michael Lawson, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Urban League. “This poll is evidence of the broad support for necessary and meaningful change.”

A majority say recent protests have brought California closer together (55%) rather than farther apart (29%); and have brought people of different races closer together (56%) rather than farther apart (31%). African Americans and Latinos are most likely to say the protests have brought the state and different races closer together.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR POLICE REFORM, BUT CALIFORNIANS REJECT DRAMATIC STEPS

In the wake of the death of George Floyd and subsequent national protests, Californians of all racial and ethnic backgrounds largely agreed as to the need for significant police reform. However, larger numbers of respondents preferred more measured changes such as additional training and accountability measures to shifting significant amounts of funding from police to other agencies. A 45% plurality of Californians support increased accountability and training of the police, and 32% would go further to shift significant funding and responsibilities away from them.

“The majority of Californians and especially communities of color recognize police use of force as a sign of racism and want to see some type of reform in police departments. It’s less of a divisive issue than it is a unifying one,” said Torres.

Latinos, Asians and White Californians align most closely on these questions, while Black Californians (46%) are most likely to favor shifting funding and responsibilities away from police. White Californians (28%) are least likely to endorse such reforms. Few people fell on the extremes; only 6% would abolish the police entirely and shift their funding and responsibilities to other agencies, and 12% would leave their duties and funding intact.

A broad majority believe the police use of force against African Americans and communities of color are signs of systemic racism (58%), not isolated incidents (33%).

“The people of California have made it clear that they seek justice and police accountability which have been deficient for decades in law enforcement,” said Lawson. “Our political leaders must be courageous in seeking the changes our communities are advocating for. They need to know what we know — that the time for change is long overdue.”

In addition to the protests in the wake of Floyd’s death in late May, the American public’s reaction to the spread of COVID-19 also led to an increase in racially charged incidents and race-

based invective. Woo noted that the percentage of members of the APA community who felt they had personally faced discrimination had grown significantly since the pre-COVID February poll and the precipitous drop in the number of Californians of Asian descent who felt positively about the state of race relations here.

“Each of our communities has endured discrimination at different times and in different ways,” said Woo, who also cited data that demonstrated the rise in Californians’ perception of discrimination against members of the state’s APA community. “The challenge of overcoming this hatred may present itself in the form of the coronavirus or immigration policy or police reform, but it is critical that our communities stand together in the face of such prejudice.”

CALIFORNIANS CAUTIOUS ON ECONOMY, SCHOOL REOPENINGS

When it comes to re-opening the state’s economy and schools, the vast majority of Californians are more concerned about lifting COVID-19 restrictions too quickly, and only 12% of people of color support a full re-opening of schools. A slight majority of Latinos 46% believe public schools should have a partial re-opening that limits the number of students in school at any one time, 37% believe schools should continue with full-time distance learning until the risk from COVID-19 is significantly reduced with African American (42%) and APA (47%) residents leaning towards full-time distance learning. Only 11% of Asian Americans, 12% of Latinos and 13% of African Americans support a full re-opening, compared to 21% of White people.

Latinos report that their financial situation has become worse since the COVID-19 outbreak at a slightly higher rate (42%) than other groups. Latinas have fared worse with 45% saying their financial situation has worsened, compared to 39% White women, 31% Black women, 38% Asian women.

“Latinos are disproportionately vulnerable to this economic downturn and in the face of this disease, and yet we do not want to go back to business as usual,” said Torres. “Overall what we can see from the poll is that diverse ethnic and racial groups in California are coming to the same conclusions on some of these issues and coalescing on how we need to respond to police reform and to the pandemic. Communities of color are the majority in California, and state leadership should take heed of the issues we are coming together on.”

The poll was conducted online by Strategies 360, a Seattle-based polling and research firm. The full questions and poll results can be [accessed on the firm’s website](#) and Los Angeles Times coverage of the results can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

Center for Asian Americans United for Self-Empowerment (CAUSE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization with a mission to advance the political and civic empowerment of the Asian Pacific American (APA) community through nonpartisan voter outreach, training, and education as well as leadership development.

Hispanas Organized for Political Equality - HOPE® is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has focused on empowering our communities through advocacy, Latina leadership training, and increasing knowledge on the contributions Latinas have made to advance the status of women for the past 30 years. To date, HOPE's innovative programming has directly served 57,000 Latinas statewide and touched the lives of several thousand more through HOPE's advocacy agenda.

Los Angeles Urban League serves, educates and empowers African Americans and other minorities to secure economic self-reliance and civil rights by providing targeted social programs and advocating for issues that benefit our communities.