

**To:** Power California and interested parties  
**From:** Claudia Rodriguez, Matt Barreto, Latino Decisions  
**Re:** California Youth of Color Poll Summary Results

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## ➤ Project Overview

On behalf of Power California, Latino Decisions conducted a survey to assess the priorities of young people of color in California and understand the context behind patterns of civic engagement, along with gaining a deeper understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on California youth. The 1,509-person survey is representative of young eligible voters (18-29) in the state of California, and includes robust samples of 573 Latino, 399 Asian American and Pacific Islander, and 329 African American youth. The survey also includes a sample of 208 young white voters as well as regional oversamples in Orange County and counties within the San Joaquin valley to accurately reflect the opinions and attitudes of young people statewide. The survey was conducted between June 23 and July 9, 2020 and contains an overall margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percent.

The survey builds on research conducted in 2018 about youth of color that explored the opinions of youth of color in California. In the 2018 poll, in partnership with a different research firm, Power California found deep commitment to social movements and to voting. In the intervening years, those commitments have deepened. Overall, our research finds that young people are confronting the triple crises of Covid-19, the economic fallout, and social unrest in response to police violence. These events are deepening their support for a more responsive and inclusive role of government and for racial and economic justice, especially for Black Americans.

➤ Among the findings, Latino Decisions identified three key themes:

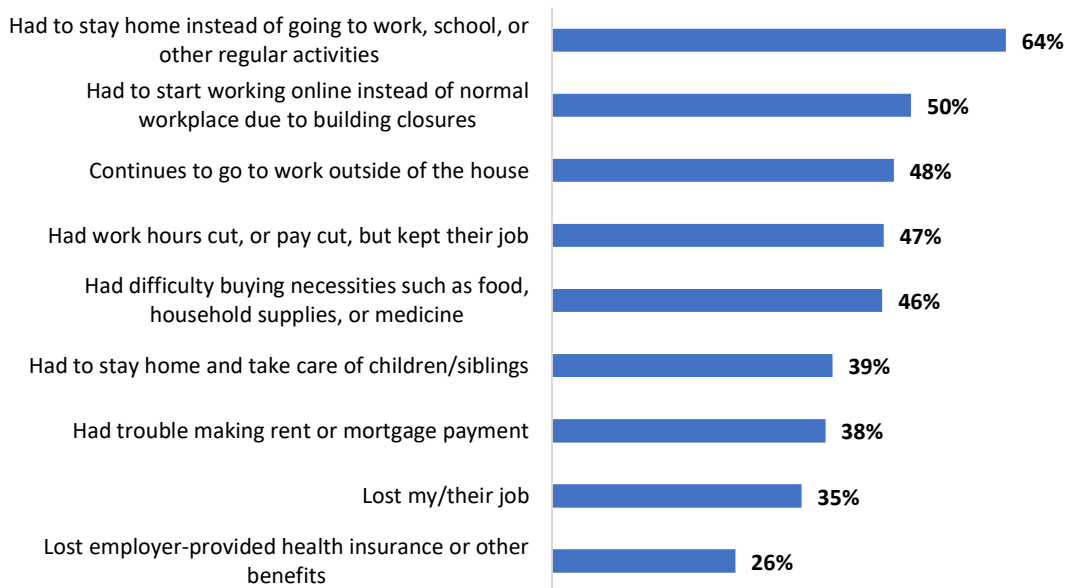
- 1. Covid-19 has deeply impacted California youth.** Young people and their families are experiencing intense social and economic stress and have immediate needs that call for a much more involved government response, including economic relief and access to health care.
- 2. Young people of color are highly engaged in the most salient social issues.** Young people are particularly supportive of diverse social issues driven by an intersectional lens, including support for the Black Lives Matter protests and reparations for Black Americans.
- 3. California youth are committed to civic engagement.** Young people identify with social movements and value voting and direct action as tools for change. They are committed to voting in the November election and share positive attitudes toward vote by mail.

➤ **Top Takeaways**

- 1. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated economic difficulties for young people and their families, especially for people of color. Young people and their families are experiencing intense social and economic stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These negative impacts have been especially difficult on Black, Latino, and AAPI youth.**

The results paint a harsh reality for young people in the Golden State. Overall, nearly 1 in 2 young people have experienced reduced work hours or pay cuts and 1 in 3 live in households where someone has lost their job altogether due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has translated to difficulty meeting basic necessities, as 46% of young people indicate that they live in households that are struggling to buy food, medicine, and household supplies along with difficulties in meeting housing costs.

**Which of these circumstances are true for you/household due to coronavirus outbreak?**



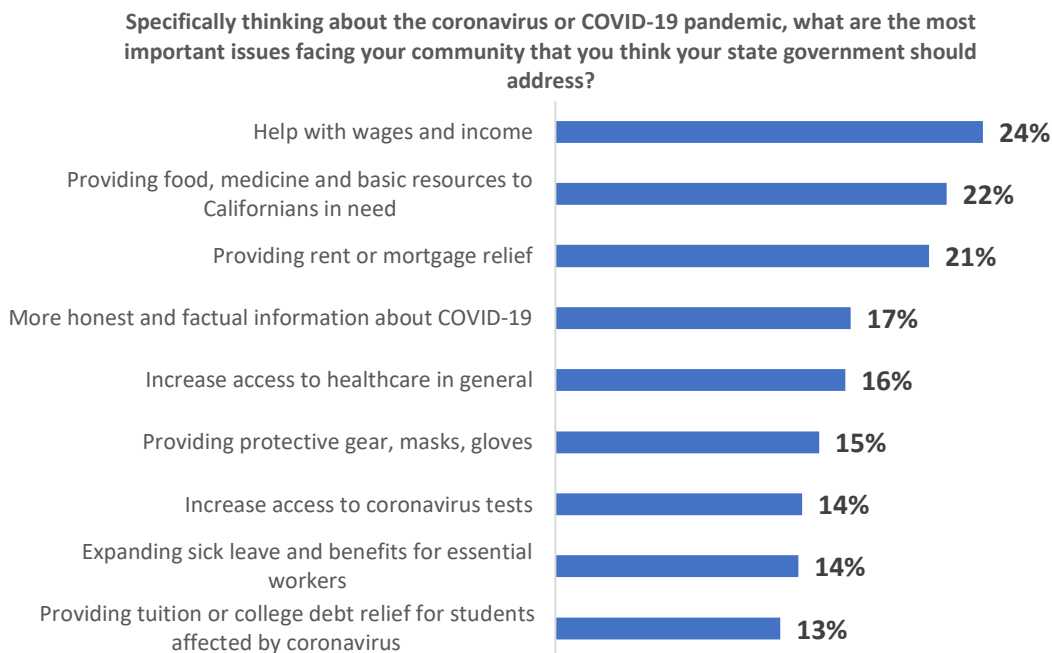
Source: PoCA Youth of Color Survey June 23 – July 9, 2020 9 (N=1,509) MoE +/- 2.5%

At the same time, nearly half of young people reported having to continue to work outside the house indicating a high level of participation in the essential workforce. Health risks from outside exposure are also compounded with lack of access to health care resources. An additional 26% of young Californians report they have lost employer-provided health coverage. This is especially true for Black (31%) and Latino (29%) youth, whose economic and health outcomes are closely interwoven.

**The current health crisis has generated specific community economic and health needs.** Despite the need for economic aid, federal aid has been inaccessible to many. When asked about qualification and receipt of a stimulus check, as part of the federal CARES Act, which began rollout in late April, only 1 in 3 reported they qualified and had received the full amount of stimulus support. Of those who did not receive stimulus aid (67%), the hardest hit groups include AAPIs (45%) and younger adults ages 18-24 (40%) who said they did not qualify to receive aid in the first place followed by 34% of Black youth who said they did qualify but have not received any payment whatsoever.

Nearly 2 in 3 young people believe the state government is not doing enough to address the needs of young people in its recovery plan. Once again, we see the impact of the pandemic concentrated on communities of color, where 68% of Latinos and 72% of African Americans feel that the state government lacks support for young Californians.

The severity of economic concerns for young people is also indicated in the top concerns they identified that they wanted their state government to address when it came to Covid-19. The top three were help with wages and income, providing food and basic necessities and help with rent and mortgage.



Source: PoCA Youth of Color Survey June 23 – July 9, 2020 9 (N=1,509) MoE +/- 2.5%

In response to the economic crisis, young people want to see their local and state government do more to help address economic needs, including requiring more from wealthy corporations and landlords. Three in four (74%) young people would prefer that the government find new sources of revenues instead of further cuts (27%) to health and education in order to address budget shortfalls. Along the same lines, 80% of young people support increasing commercial property taxes on large corporations to find new sources of revenue for schools and public services, and 82% support local governments enacting various forms of rent control and limits.

**2. The survey paints a picture of a generation that is civically engaged and invested in social movements and who are being catalyzed to action by national unrest surrounding the murder of George Floyd; the Trump Administration’s efforts to repeal DACA; and coronavirus pandemic response.** They see social justice issues through an intersectional lens with strong cross-racial support across a number of social movements including Black Lives Matter, DREAMers, LGBTQ+ equality, and more.

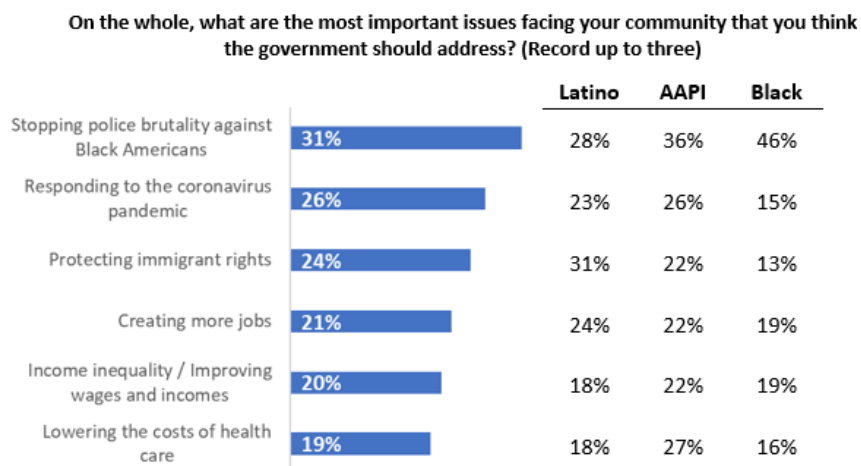
Capturing the impact of the current sociopolitical climate, young people statewide, show remarkable support for the Black Lives Matter Movement with nearly 80% indicating they either strongly (38%) or somewhat (32%) align with the group. Majority support cuts across racial group, geography, and educational attainment. Other prominent social movements of which young people consider themselves members, followers, or supporters include:

- Climate or environmental justice – 70%
- LGBTQ+ Equality – 68%
- Free College 4 All – 69%
- Undocumented and Unafraid / DREAMers – 67%
- Gun law reform / March for Our Lives – 66%
- #MeToo – 66%

Not only are young people engaging in self-education and once again highlighting the importance of voting, they are also engaging in direct action. Nearly 40% of California youth have taken part of a march, rally, or protest during the past year, especially Black (49%) and Latino (42%) youth.

Amid the protests against police brutality that have taken place across the country, this move for social change has actively captured the attention of young people throughout the state. Young people’s issue priorities show that ending police brutality against Black Americans ranks the highest in importance (31%), above the government response to Covid-19 (26%).

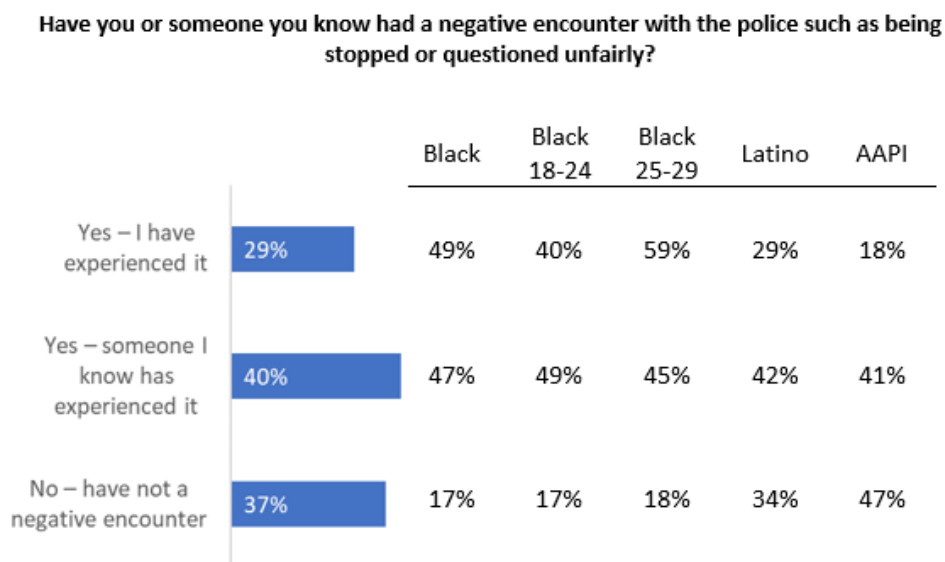
Understandably, this issue priority is strongest among Black youth (46%), but AAPI (36%), Latino (28%) and white youth (29%) also place this as a high issue priority. Looking at Latino youth specifically, immigration continues to be a deeply personal issue. Protecting immigrants’ rights is the highest issue priority for young Latinos (31%), but this is followed closely by the need to stop police brutality against Black Americans (28%). Both issues are well ahead of the need to respond to the COVID crisis.



Source: PoCA Youth of Color Survey June 23 – July 9, 2020 (N=1,509) MoE +/- 2.5%

In connection to the protests against police brutality and treatment of Black people in the country, there is strong support for reparations across all ethnic groups. Nearly 3 in 4 young people support such reparations for Black Americans (73%), with especially high support from AAPI youth (83%) and Latinos (76%).

Black youth have an extremely personal experience with social issues that are top of mind for many young voters at this time. When addressing negative encounters with police as an individual issue, nearly 70% of young people say they have either personally experienced (29%) or witnessed someone they know (40%) experience a negative encounter with police such as being stopped or questioned unfairly. This is especially worse for young Black people – 49% of Black youth have personally experienced a negative encounter with police and 47% know someone who has experienced it.



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One common denominator across these groups is knowing someone who has personally experienced a negative police encounter. With added context around personal experiences, views on reparations, importance of addressing police brutality as an issue priority, and engagement with actions that serve to promote social justice, young people in California show incredible solidarity for Black Lives and are committed to uplift communities that come under attack.

**3. Not only are California youth highly engaged in diverse activities and identify deeply with social movements, young people in California are also committed to participating in the November election and are willing to adapt to new possible voting norms and protocols that may be brought on as a result of the pandemic.**

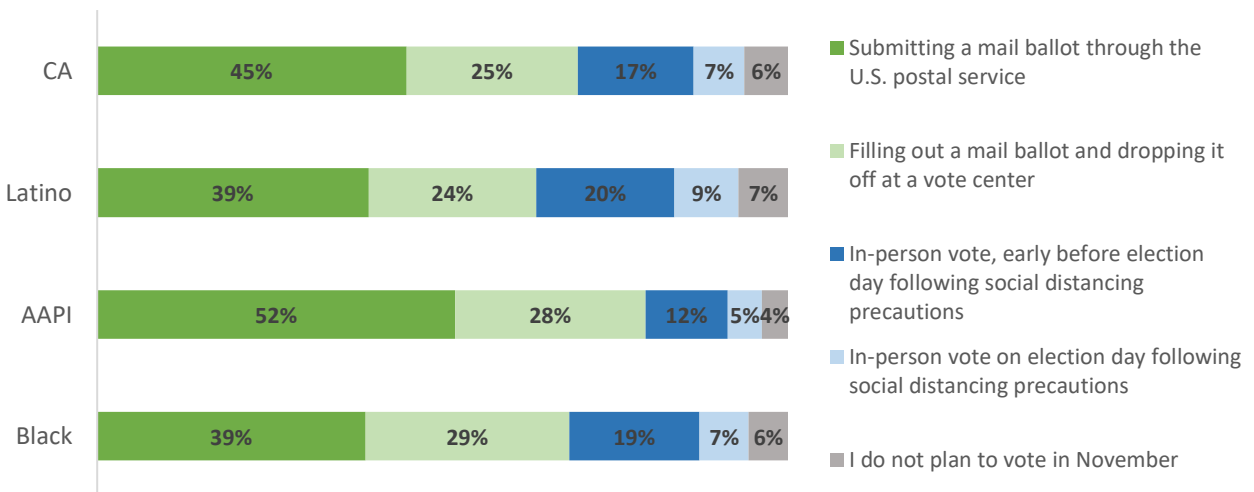
Nearly 2 in 3 young voters indicate they will be voting in the presidential election and other state offices, largely driven by the 47% who indicate they are certain they will be voting. The election carries high importance, as 80% of young people said it was more important to vote this year than it was in 2016.

Vote intention correlates with educational attainment, as college educated young people indicate a higher certainty of voting (58% certain) compared to voters with some college education (50%) and those with a high school education (33%). Age also correlates with vote certainty among young people, with 52% of 25-29 year-olds indicating they are certain to vote. Absolute certainty to vote is similar across Latino (44%), Black (45%), AAPI (50%), and white (50%) voters, although Latino and Black youth show much more variance in preferred voting options.

Young people are confident in mail ballots. A robust 45% of California youth overall indicate they will be submitting a mail ballot through the U.S. postal service. AAPI (52%) and white (51%) young people indicate this is their preferred voting method, though Latino (39%) and Black (39%) youth are comparatively less likely to prefer this method.

Black and Latino youth show a greater appreciation for safe in-person voting options, whether it be dropping off ballots in person or voting before election day or on election day itself with social distancing precautions. But a less than half of AAPI and white voters also preferred safe in person voting, pointing to the importance of having safe in-person and vote by mail options to support robust youth voter turnout.

**Given these options, which would you prefer?**



Young voters also support expanding voting access:

- Nearly 2 in 3 young respondents agree that more cities should consider allowing currently excluded groups to vote in local elections, such as those in prison or on probation for certain crimes who currently cannot vote. This sentiment is particularly high among Latino (71%) and Black youth (73%).
- A similar share also highly favor expanding voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds in the community so that they can vote in certain local elections, especially Latino (64%), Black (68%) and AAPI youth (67%), compared to young white voters (57%).