

## 2024 Youth Poll: Caretaker Identity Profile

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Power California (PoCA) and partners seek to mobilize young voters of color in their political campaigns in 2024. PoCA's research has found that young Californians have salient community or role-based identities that have the potential to be politically mobilizing. In this memo, we profile one of those top identities: **The Caretaker**.

Caretakers are people who have an identity organized around being the primary money maker or having caretaking responsibilities. They perceive this identity as important and politically salient. Caretakers are more likely to live in the communities in which they grew up and are experiencing economic insecurity. Caretakers are civically engaged and more likely to perceive voting, running for office, and volunteering as effective relative to Hustlers. They are also more likely to perceive education, friends and family networks as important for achieving their goals compared to Hustlers. Gentrification is blamed as a key cause of the housing crisis, which aligns with their perception that corporate landlords are responsible. This evidence tells us that Caretakers have coherent policy beliefs, demonstrating awareness of housing issues. We interpret these findings as evidence that Caretakers can be mobilized through a housing-focused campaign.

### TOP ISSUES AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

PoCA's research shows that the Caretaker identity is likely linked to young Californians' experiences with economic insecurity due to the housing crisis. Caretakers perceive housing issues as top issues the government should address.

- **47% want government to address homelessness.**
- **27% want government to address housing affordability.**

Caretakers are experiencing economic insecurity due to the housing crisis in California. These lived experiences are likely a contributing factor that shapes their identification as Caretakers.

- **60% of Caretakers blamed high rents as a barrier to finding housing.**
- **40% of Caretakers do not have enough money for a down payment.**
- **37% of Caretakers are living paycheck-to-paycheck.**

Caretakers are most likely to blame corporate landlords (42%), low wages (37%), and gentrification (34%) as the causes of the housing crisis when allowed to choose multiple factors. When asked to choose just one, Caretakers named corporate landlords, election officials, and low wages.

- **27% of Caretakers blamed corporate landlords.**
- **17% of Caretakers blamed election wages.**
- **16% of Caretakers blamed low wages.**

Many Caretakers have been displaced from their homes, considered leaving the state of California, or moved back in with family.

- **31% of Caretakers have considered leaving the state.**
- **31% of Caretakers have moved for better pay/work opportunities.**
- **26% of Caretakers moved in the last twelve months to find more affordable housing.**
- **22% of Caretakers moved back home with family.**

## SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS

Caretakers strongly support policies to make housing affordable and help those at risk.

- **89% support laws making housing affordable and protecting those at risk.**
- **80% support local rent control laws that would limit rent increases by landlords.**

## IDENTITY IMPORTANCE AND SALIENCE

Caretakers are most likely to perceive this role identity as important and politically salient.

- **27% rated their role-identity as most central to them.**
- **28% rated their racial identity as most central to them.**
- **87% perceive their central identity as also politically salient.**

## RACE, PARTISANSHIP, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Caretakers are disproportionately Young Hispanic and Latino and AAPI Californians, relative to the state's demographics. 45% of Caretakers are Latino and 23% are AAPI Young Californians.

- **45% of Caretakers are Hispanic and Latino.**
- **28% of Caretakers are White.**
- **23% of Caretakers are AAPI.**
- **4% of Caretakers are Black.**

Caretakers are more likely to be registered as DTS than partisans. 44% identified as DTS, 33% identified as Democratic, and 20% identified as Republican.

Power California's research also found that Caretakers are especially likely to live in the communities where they grew up. We would reasonably expect this if Caretakers are supporting family members, such as their parents.

- **56% reported living where they grew up, while 40% chose to move and 4% were forced to move.**

This group likely has stronger attachments and a desire to stay and make things work in their communities. These findings are also consistent with the finding that gentrification was the second highest rated cause of the housing crisis (34%). Based on this evidence, campaign messages about community that speak to people's local ties may be especially powerful.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUTURE

Caretakers have a stronger turnout record and are more civically engaged than Hustlers across multiple participatory measures, including voting, running for office, and volunteering. 76% reported that they voted in the 2020 presidential election, compared to 34% who voted in the 2018 midterms.

68% of Caretakers report that voting makes a huge difference, while 28% were neutral about whether voting made a difference in their community. 54% perceive running for office as a way to improve their community and 29% were neutral.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

PoCA's research suggests that Caretakers are a group that will need to be targeted with tailored messages about their local communities, the relationship between housing and their economic insecurity, and how institutional structures have shaped the housing crisis. Caretakers can be mobilized due to their high levels of efficacy in voting, running for office, and volunteering. We recommend using a positive messaging campaign since Caretakers are optimistic about the future.