

BLACK ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Findings from focus groups and an online dial survey of registered voters nationwide, including a sample of Black voters

September 2024

Main Takeaways

- Economic issues are the **top 4 issues** for Black male voters, above immigration, abortion, and national security.
- Black voters and Black men want elected leaders to **prioritize affordable housing, creating jobs, lowering health and prescription costs, and closing the class and racial wealth gap.**
- Black men and women would **most** trust **Black business leaders** to talk about economic issues.

Black Economic Alliance

Survey Findings



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Methodology

Lake Research Partners designed an online survey that was administered and conducted from August 7-19, 2024. The survey reached a total of 1,700 registered voters nationwide including a sample of 800 registered voters in the base, a sample of 800 Black registered voters, and an oversample of 100 Latino/a registered voters nationwide. Survey respondents were drawn from an online panel.

The data is statistically weighted to ensure the sample's demographic and political composition reflects that of the voter population nationwide. The base sample was weighted by region, gender by region, race, gender by race, age, party identification, and education. The Black registered voter sample was weighted by region, gender by region, age, and education. The Latino/a oversample was weighted by gender, age, and education.

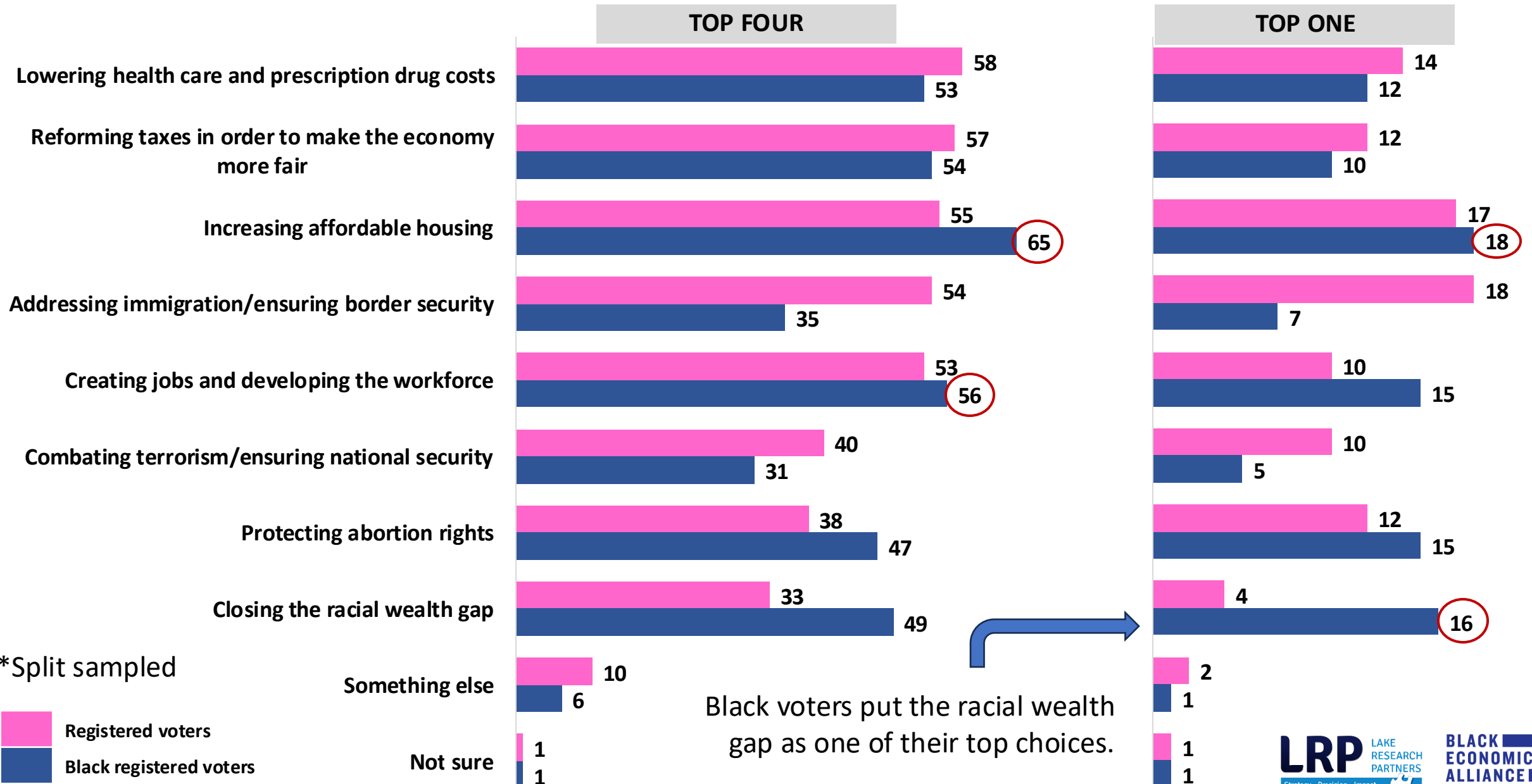
Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation in a panel rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to, sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error. If this poll were conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; the margin of error is higher among subgroups.

Summary

- Black voters and Black men want elected leaders to **prioritize affordable housing, creating jobs, lowering health and prescription costs, and closing the class and racial wealth gap.**
- **The top phrases that would make Black men and voters want to hear from an elected official are:**
 - Creating financial resources for Black and brown Americans
 - Lowering costs and raising income
 - Creating pathways to economic opportunity
 - Strengthening financial opportunities for Black Americans
- **The top policies for Black voters and Black men focus on:**
 - Increasing wages for low-paid workers
 - Limiting inflation and bringing down prices
 - Lowering taxes for working-class families
- The top messages for Black men and Black voters **focus on freedom, housing affordability, and investing in Black small businesses.** Black voters prioritize increasing affordable housing, creating jobs, and developing the workforce.
- **Black men and women would most trust Black business leaders to talk about economic issues.** Black men would then turn to federal elected officials, small business leaders, and local elected officials, while women turn to federal elected officials, state elected officials, and women business leaders.

Voters want elected officials' top priorities to be lowering health care and prescription drug costs, followed by reforming taxes in order to make the economy more fair. Black voters prioritize increasing affordable housing and creating jobs and developing the workforce.

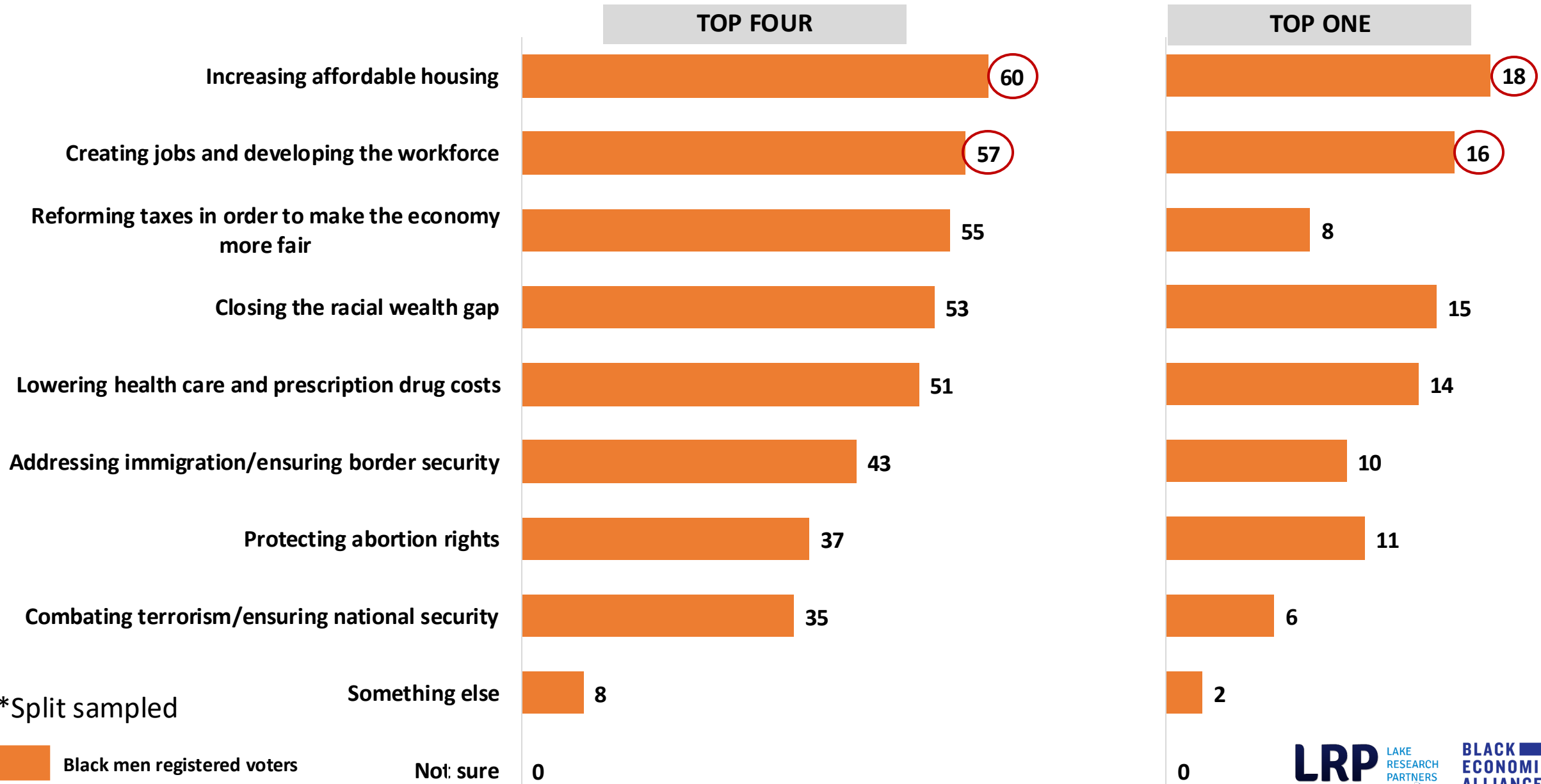
Please rank the four that you think should be elected leaders' top priorities.*



Registered voters
Black registered voters

Black men’s top one and top four priorities are the same – increasing affordable housing and creating jobs and developing the workforce.

Please rank the four that you think should be elected leaders’ top priorities.*



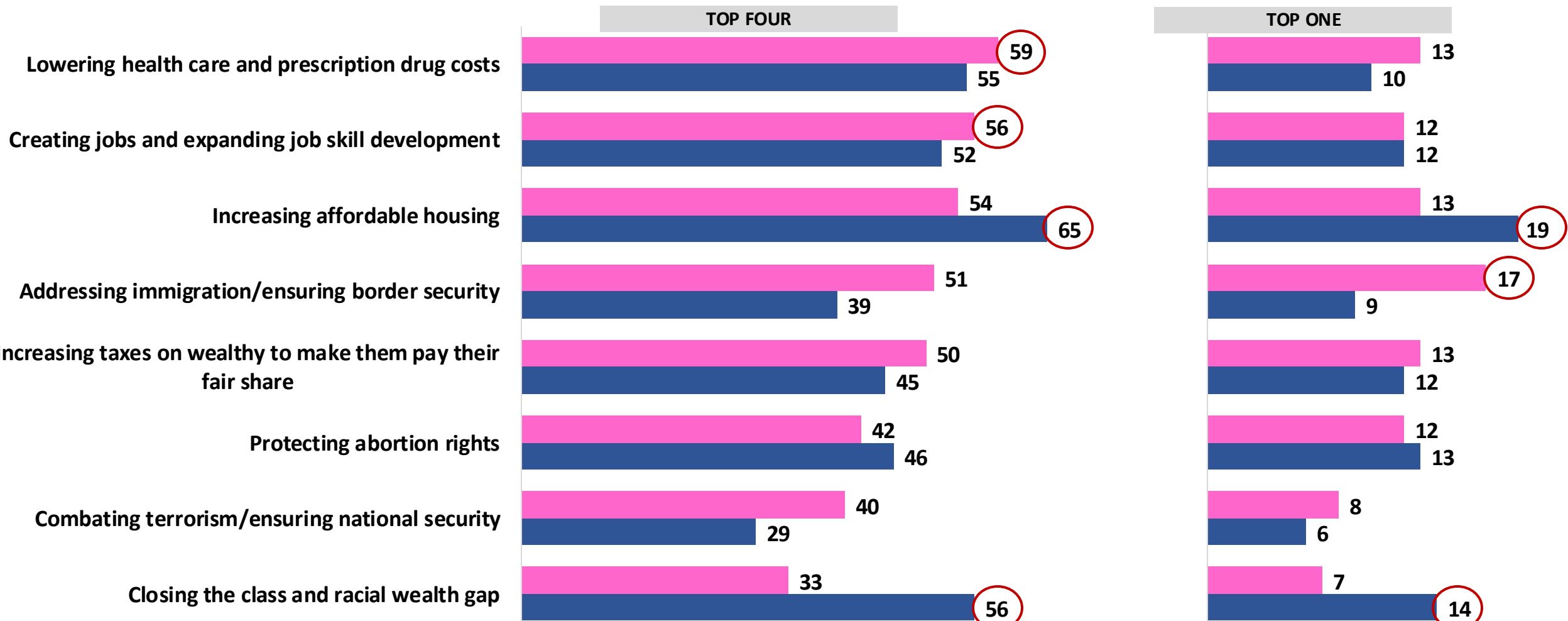
*Split sampled

Black men registered voters

Not: sure

Asked with slightly different options, lowering health care and prescription drug costs remains the top priority, followed by creating jobs and expanding job skills development. Among Black voters, the top priorities are increasing affordable housing and closing the class and racial wealth gap.

Please rank the four that you think should be elected leaders' top priorities.* TOP FOUR



*Split sampled

Registered voters
Black registered voters

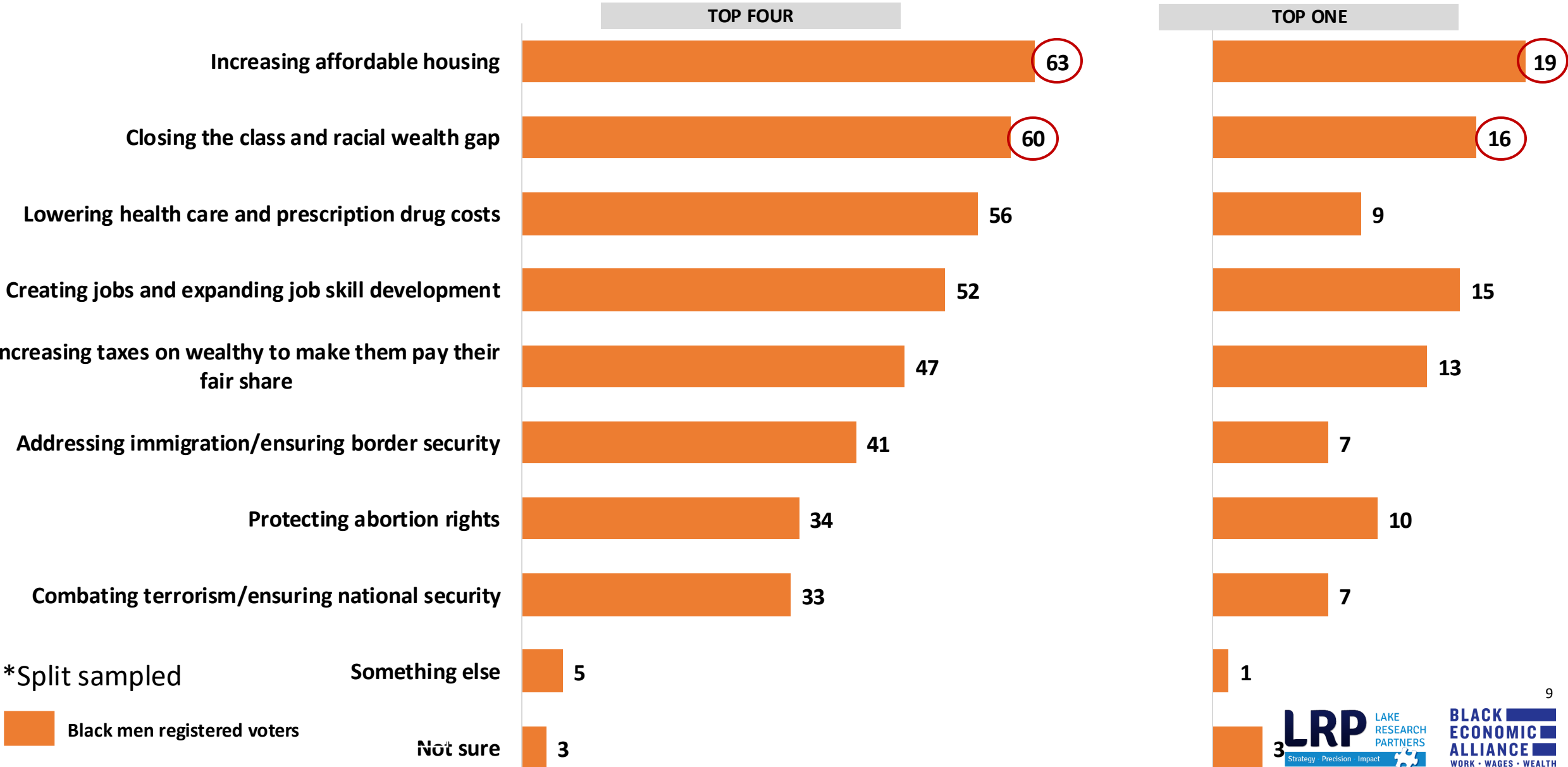
Something else

Not: sure

Addressing immigration/ensuring border security is a top priority for voters, but less so among the top four.

Black men's top priority and top four priorities are also the same: increasing affordable housing and closing the class and racial wealth gap.

Please rank the four that you think should be elected leaders' top priorities.* TOP FOUR



Black subgroups have strong favorability for all of the policies, ranging from 41 -81%. Black men place limiting inflation, lowering taxes, and increasing wages at the top.

Here are some policies that leaders have supported. For each, rate if you favor or oppose it. [TOP TIER]

% Strongly favor (Top Tier)	Total Black voters	Gender and age				Party ID			BPO		
		Men	Women	Under 50	50+	Dem	Ind^	Rep^	Base	Oppo^	Pers
Increase wages for low-paid workers	70	65	75	63	80	75	58	54	80	61	67
Limit inflation and bring down prices	69	65	73	60	81	72	60	60	78	62	66
Lower taxes for working-class families	69	65	71	62	77	71	63	59	75	60	67
Ensure every person has access to paid family and medical leave	66	60	71	57	77	72	51	49	79	54	62
Funding to build more housing to lower rental and housing costs for American families	62	56	66	53	73	67	52	41	71	50	60
Provide student debt relief	61	56	64	56	67	65	53	43	69	48	60
No taxes on tips	59	57	61	54	64	60	56	54	64	53	58

*Split sampled ^small n size

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ A strong unifying start across groups.
- ✓ Works very well for Black voters across subgroups.
- ✓ “Freedom” causes a slight increase across groups, especially freedom from unfair policies.
- ✓ No difference by income.

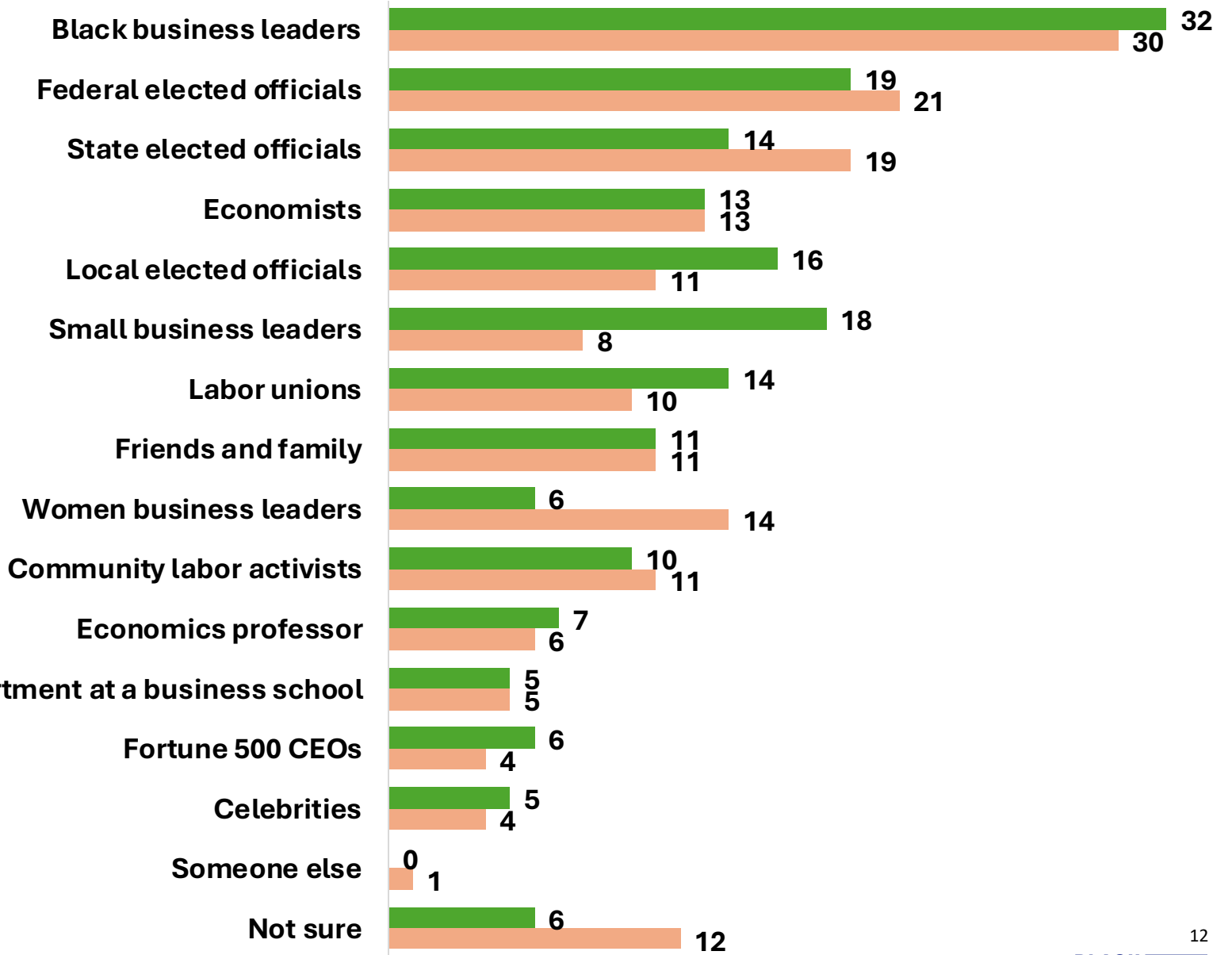
{**FREEDOM FROM MESSAGE**} Most of us are doing our best to build a good life for our families and we all deserve to be free from financial burdens like high interest rates or the inability to afford a high-quality education. But centuries of discriminatory policies and practices have prevented Black families from having the same economic freedom as others. Black families deserve freedom from outdated, unfair policies that hold us back from building generational wealth. We need to ensure all people -- Black and white, young and old -- can have economic opportunities to build wealth for themselves and future generations to come.

{**HOUSING MESSAGE**} Everyone deserves to have a roof over their heads and to provide a safe home for their children, but for Black Americans, high housing costs and discriminatory lending policies have made it more difficult to find or afford a house. In order to make sure all Americans have the opportunity for homeownership and to pass along their wealth to their children and grandchildren and set up future generations for financial success, we need to increase the supply of affordable rental and for-sale housing and equip Black homeowners with the tools they need to achieve the American dream of owning their own home.

{**BUSINESS MESSAGE**} When we invest in Black small businesses, we invest in all small businesses and our whole community, regardless of our race, class, or zip code. We can create jobs, strengthen the local economy and put more money back into our communities by ensuring Black business leaders have the opportunities they need to create thriving businesses -- like receiving the same interest rates and loans as white entrepreneurs. By making sure banks and other institutions fairly invest in Black entrepreneurs and provide them with the tools they need to succeed, we can ensure we all have the same opportunities to financially thrive.

Which one or two of these people or organizations would you trust most to talk about removing barriers to economic issues?

Black men and women would most trust Black business leaders to talk about economic issues. Black men would then turn to federal elected officials, small business leaders, and local elected officials, while women turn to federal elected officials, state elected officials, and women business leaders.



■ Black men registered voters
■ Black women registered voters

Language Recommendations for Black Voters

Say This...	Rather than...	Why it works...
Rent/mortgage costs	Rent costs	Lumping them together works better than separately; housing costs like mortgages are not as large of a financial problem as rent
Closing the class and racial wealth gap	Closing the racial wealth gap	Is more inclusive and brings more people in
Creating jobs and developing the workforce	Creating jobs and expanding job skill development	Ranks higher as voters' top four priorities for elected officials to address
Creating financial resources for Black and brown Americans	Shifting financial resources to Black and brown Americans	14 points higher intensity with creating over shifting
Rebuilding generational wealth for Black Americans	Rebuilding generational wealth	Feels more inclusive and provides higher intensity and overall desire to hear more
Strengthening financial opportunities for Black Americans	Strengthening economic opportunities for Black Americans	Higher intensity, especially for Black women and older Black voters
Addressing economic and racial disparities between Black and white people	Addressing economic disparities between Black and white people	Works better with women and younger voters, and is about the same for older voters and men.
Remove barriers or take action to close the racial wealth gap		Test about the same overall and among subgroups in importance and how much they want to hear about it from an elected official
FREEDOM FROM MESSAGE -- Most of us are doing our best to build a good life for our families and we all deserve to be free from financial burdens like high interest rates or the inability to afford a high-quality education. But centuries of discriminatory policies and practices have prevented Black families from having the same economic freedom as others. Black families deserve freedom from outdated, unfair policies that hold us back from building generational wealth. We need to ensure all people -- Black and white, young and old -- can have economic opportunities to build wealth for themselves and future generations to come.		This message does particularly well, though we have strong messages for Black voters across the board.

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Focus Group Key Findings



This memo outlines the key preliminary findings from focus groups conducted between June 26, 2024, and July 1, 2024. The participants in these groups were all registered voters from battleground states (**Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Nevada and Wisconsin**)

The six groups were:

- Black Women, Registered Voters, Age 18-29
- Black Men, Registered Voters, Age 18-29
- Black Women, Registered Voters, Ages 45-65, Income >\$85k
- Black Men, Registered Voters, Ages 45-65, Income < \$85k
- Latino, Mixed Gender, Registered Voters, Age 18-29
- White, Mixed Gender, Registered Voters, Non-College, Mix of Ages



1

The size of the racial wealth gap makes a big impact on participants, and they demand change.

Participants are generally aware of the concept of a racial wealth gap, but they are shocked when they learn the true size. This information prompts them to think about the **systemic causes** of such a large gap, and pushes them to demand change on a **policy level** to reduce or eliminate the gap.

2

People need language around “economic opportunity” to be specific and measurable.

Participants don't resonate with broad language like “economic opportunities for all” or “creating pathways to economic opportunities.” But they do think creating economic opportunities is an important tool for building wealth – they just want those opportunities to be detailed and measurable.

3

People think wealth building is affected by both individual and systemic factors.

Across groups, participants talk first about individual factors that determine wealth, including hard work and financial literacy. But they also have an understanding of how systemic forces can help or hinder wealth creation, especially when it comes to the racial wealth gap. They want a solution that addresses both individual and systemic needs.

4

Leaning into systemic causes, Black participants see a strong need for policy changes in the housing, finance, and workforce areas.

Black participants think that certain policies would help move barriers that are blocking wealth creation, including rent control, affordable housing development, and stronger anti-discrimination laws with regards to lending, investments, and job hiring.



“Household wealth” means two things to Black participants – relief from financial struggle, and the ability to make purchases, both for recreation and investment

I’ll know Black people have household wealth when...

Black people’s perception of wealth in their communities can largely be separated into two conceptual categories: the “freedom from” and the “freedom to.”

Freedom From:



Freedom from struggle: *“When we aren't the largest group that are struggling with credit and getting... I shouldn't say getting credit. Just too many things financed basically that we can't pay. We are doing better than our parents and parents' parents. Our children do better than us.” – Black Woman, Group 3*



Freedom from struggle: *“When there's no struggle. I'm going to just put it like this, ‘When I can get what I want, when I want it’, type thing, stuff like that. Or, when other people can get what they want when they want it.” – Black Woman, Group 1*

Freedom To:



Freedom to invest: *“I was going to say more investments.” – Black Man, Group 2*



Freedom to buy nice things: *“I'm smiling because for me, RVs, the big decked out RVs. I don't know. You're doing good if you have RVs and nice cars out front or a tractor trailer or some land.” – Black Woman, Group 1*



Freedom to own and control: *“More control over cities or communities. For instance, like Atlanta or Detroit where majority of the business owners, doctors, lawyers, judges, almost everybody is black. So just control, the freedom to take control.” – Black Man, Group 2*

Getting the people-to-government relationship just right: Hard work, removing barriers and “tools” performed well with participants because of their conceptual throughline. Each concept increases agency and autonomy by positioning government in a supporting role

	Hard Work	Tools and Opportunities	Removing Barriers
WHAT IT IS ABOUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It’s a value It’s an adjective they use to describe themselves Agency and autonomy in their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People being autonomous builders of their own lives Giving all people the same chances to deliver on their potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government having a responsibility to overcome systemic obstacles that individuals cannot on their own Creating a system where effort and hard work yield the results they should
WHAT IT IS NOT ABOUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glorification of labor Competitive individualism Bootstrap-ism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vague or generic promises Additional work required for Black people Prescribed actions that people will need to take 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual powerlessness Government assuming a parental role
HOW TO USE IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When talking about the gap: Black folk are hardworking people, discriminatory policies make it twice as hard for us to get half as far, discouraging and disrespecting the hard work we put in to support our families and build our communities When talking about economic opportunity: These are just the opportunities that our hard work deserves When talking about policy: These are the polices that, respect, reward and ENCOURAGE hard work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When talking about the gap: Black people are not being given the same opportunities to grow wealth as others. With these tools, the hard work Black people are putting in will yield the results it should, reducing the wealth gap. When talking about economic opportunity: Tools will be an equalizer in a system that currently is not even. When talking about policy: Updated economic policies will give people financial tools that they can use to build wealth in the way that works best for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When talking about the gap: Black people have faced racism and discriminatory policies that have created and perpetuated the racial wealth gap. It is the government’s responsibility to fix those barriers.. When talking about economic opportunity: So that we can have the same economic opportunities as everybody else. When talking about policy: Since racist policies helped create the wealth gap, we need updated policies to remove the barriers in place and undo it.



The housing message that resonates : Homeownership is a main source of wealth creation – Proof that Black Americans are systematically excluded from this source of wealth – Black Americans deserve to be part of the communities they build – Elected leaders need to enact policies that reduce barriers to homeownership

Housing Statement – What stood out to you the most?

“Homeownership is a principal source of wealth creation for Americans”



“They always say the way to create wealth is by either land ownership or by owning land or owning resources. That's how you do that. So that's how you create generational wealth for your family.” – Black Woman, Group 1

“Only 46% of Black households own their homes, compared to 74% of White households, representing a racial homeownership gap that is parallel to the Jim Crow era when racist housing policies were legal”



“That shows me that they know that there's a big gap between black and white people or white households owning their home. If they're comparing that to a Jim Crow era back then, that's something that's very significant and it's got to be changed.” – Black Man, Group 2



“It just shows some big form of injustice... the comparison between 46 and 74 is crazy. It is just a boggling stat.” – Black Man, Group 2

“Black Americans deserve to put down roots in the communities they work hard to build.”



“It stood out because it kind of just highlights that it's something that's a long time coming and we should be able to have that. These are our communities, so it doesn't make sense for us to be in these communities, building up these communities, occupying these communities, and we are unable to put down roots. It just doesn't make sense.” – Black Woman, Group 1

“Our elected leaders should increase the supply of affordable rental and for sale units and reduce the cost”



“A big problem is that a lot of black people are priced out of their neighborhood. So if you're able to build more housing and more opportunities for black people to own their own homes or even something simple, if you're able to just have your own condo or a studio apartment, I think it would help a lot.” – Black Man, Group 2



“Because it's the truth. Everything is so expensive. Like a condo with 1200 square feet is \$400,000. The rent in the city is 18 to \$2,000 for whatever. It's ridiculous.” – Black Woman, Group 3