

Who are Black Republicans?

Since 1940 African American voters across the nation have shifted en masse from the GOP to the democratic.¹ This shift was driven by African Americans' (AA) support for Democratic party programs including the New Deal, The Great Society, and Lyndon Johnson's critical support for the civil rights movement of the 1960s.² Once home to relatively liberal African Americans during the reconstruction era the GOP lost Black membership due to the disenfranchisement of Black voters in the south after the end of reconstruction in 1877 and because of the segregationist "lily-white" movement within the party. More recently, the "southern strategy" of appealing to Wallace and Thurmond voters that the GOP has pursued since the Goldwater era has left many feeling that the Republican Party does not care about Black America.

African American political behavior is shaped by a concept that political scientists refer to as "shared fate" which means black americans feel they gain when representatives of the African American community succeed and this leads to favoritism towards African American candidates in many races and leads to most African Americans voting for left wing candidates regardless of their other demographic characteristics. This does not mean that African Americans are uniformly liberal, indeed roughly a third of them identify as conservative when surveyed as of the 2020 primary, a massive increase since 1972 when ten percent did even as the 2010s have seen a slight increase in the number of African Americans identifying as liberal or moderate.³ Nonetheless most African Americans (90-95%) vote Democratic because of a belief that Democrats support the AA community and because of intense pressure within this community to vote the Democratic ticket.⁴ Further under certain circumstances African American can be convinced to vote for conservative candidates and Gen Z AAs express much skepticism about the Democratic party.⁵ Black Republicans share a sense of shared fate with other African Americans, have strong connections to the African American community, have a strong sense of Black identity, and take a variety of perspectives on whether public policies should be examined using a race-conscious lens.

¹ In his first run Roosevelt received only 25% of the AA vote in the north but managed to get 52% in Chicago eight years later

² Eisenhower performed particularly well among middle class AAs during his time in office and attempted to solidify a Republican foothold with AA voters by passing the Civil Rights act of 1957. Desperate to win the critical Black vote in 1960 (which he knew would make the difference in 8 states) Kennedy appealed to African Americans by reaching out to Corretta Scott King and playing up his own catholic faith.

³ As noted by Philpot Black voter tend to use religious and social welfare issues when deciding to label themselves as liberal or conservative, whereas whites use a broader range of issues including both the aforementioned along with morality and the role of government

⁴ 84% of Black voters support spending more on fighting crime and a majority support school choice in some polls

⁵ Trump and HW Bush both enjoyed double digit support among Black men at certain points in their administrations

Across the years a number of Black conservative pundits including Larry Elder, Carol Swain, Jason Riley, and Candence Owens Herman Cain and Ben Carson have argued that African Americans should vote for the GOP and that the Democratic party would collapse if the Republicans could get 20-30% of the AA vote.⁶ These pundits repeat a familiar set of talking points regarding the Democrats' historical affinity for the Klan and slavery, the supposedly negative effects of the welfare state on African American families, the disproportionate impact of abortion on black women and the apparent disconnect between the views of everyday AAs and Black political leadership on a variety of issues such as school choice.⁷ These talking heads challenge the notion that African Americans are racially targeted in police killings and argue that democratic policies promote a victim mentality and dependence on government. Previous research on AA Republicans suggests that these voters are widely representative of the AA community on a variety of demographic factors and are actually less church attending than AA Democrats.

Methodology

This paper aims to examine African Americans Republicans (roughly 5-10% of the Black community and 2% of all republicans) who vote for the republican party taking advantage of states where voters register by both party and race (NC, FL, and LA) and using data from L2's voter file to build demographic profiles of AA GOP registrants (about 8% of all African Americans in the USA). This methodology produces a sample of 136,460 Black GOP voters. The findings cut against those of Corey Fields in *Black Elephants*. The analysis shows that Black Republicans are male, richer, and less likely to vote than most African Americans. Further, HatstaqDNA's voter targeting models offer several insights on how this segment of the electorate might be reached, 56% of our Black Republicans use Fox News as their primary TV news source, and our models suggest that a supermajority (73%) oppose former president Trump.⁸

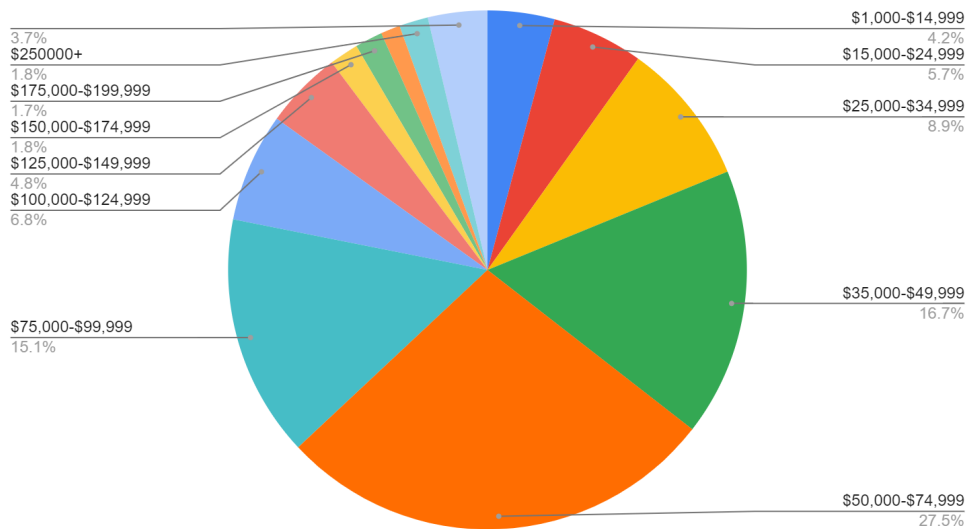
- The African American population in the US is 48% male, whereas our sample is 55% male, and nearly 70% of our Black Republicans are unmarried compared to 59% of all voters nationwide

⁶ A plurality of Americans have right-leaning psychological dispositions (42%) and more American identify as conservative (33.6%) than liberal (28.2%)

⁷ The documentary *Uncle Tom*

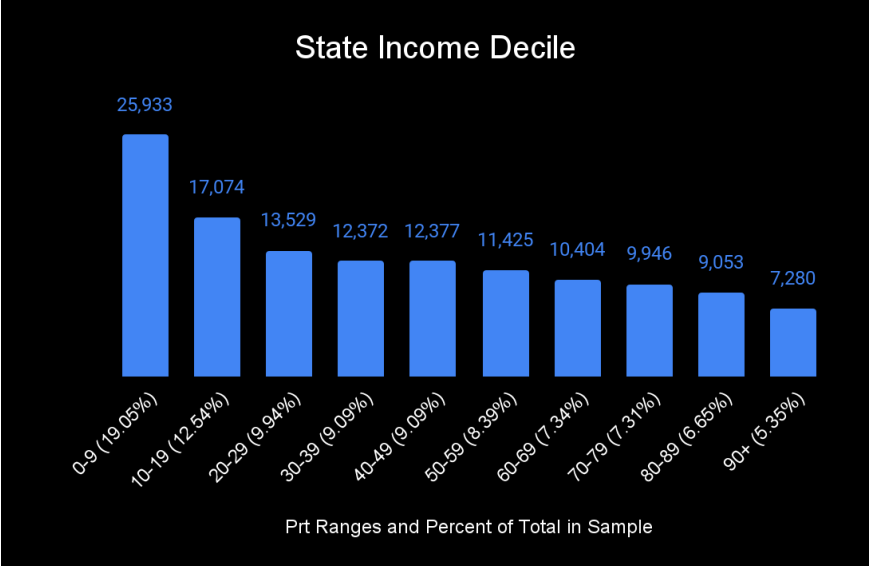
⁸ One must be skeptical of this result, given that Trump's vote share of the Black electorate in each of these states exceeded the share of Blacks that are registered republicans

Black GOP Voters By Income Bracket

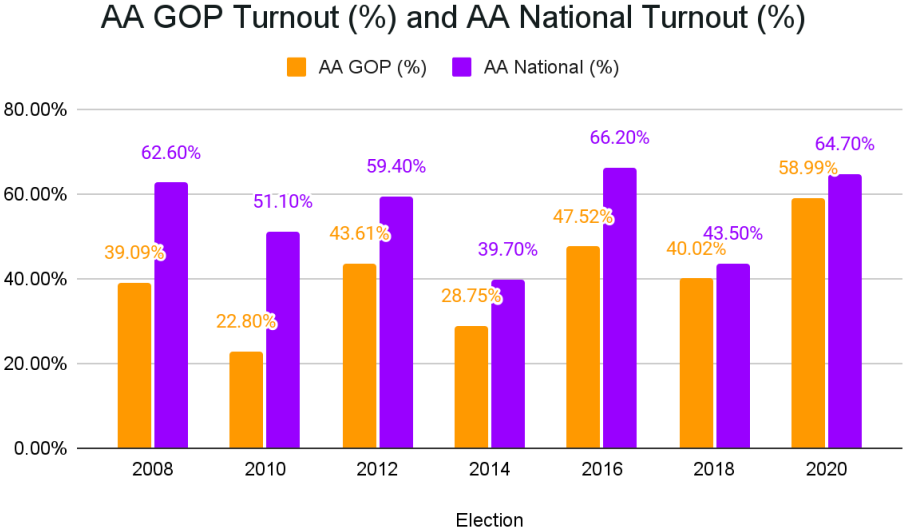


- African American Republican voters appear to be skewed more middle-class than AAs nationwide in 2019
 - Nationwide 56% of all native-born African Americans have incomes lower than 50,000\$ in our sample the number is 35.52%
 - Nationwide 27% of all native-born African Americans have between \$50,000 and \$99,999 in our sample the number is 42.61%
 - Nationwide 17% of native-born African Americans have incomes above 100,000\$ in our sample the number is 18.18%
- Almost half of these voters (47.99%) live in politically mixed households
This compares to 25.25% of all Americans nationwide⁹
- Despite their relative wealth compared to other African Americans, Black Republicans are still poor compared to the average citizen in their state and disproportionately concentrated in the bottom 20% of the income distribution.

⁹ This is not a direct comparison however because the states we are studying have partisan registration and many states in the US don't, forcing us to rely on modeled scores

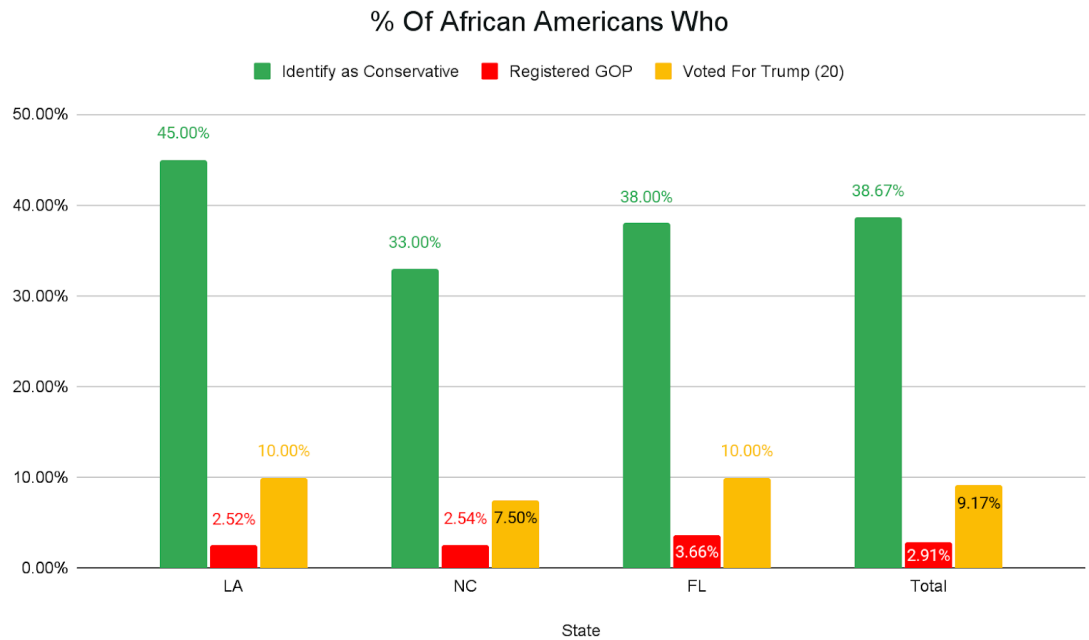


- Compared to other African Americans nationwide who are citizens and eligible to vote, our Black republicans have far lower turnout in some elections and slightly lower turnout in others. This is the opposite of what we would expect because the former is a sample of all Black Americans and not those registered to vote.



- While a significant number of African Americans in each state consider themselves conservative (33-45%), at most, between 6-10% of conservative Blacks are registered Republicans, and in most states, less than a quarter of them

voted for Trump.



- This is in keeping with previous research, which demonstrates that African Americans who consider themselves conservative are more likely to be
 - Young
 - Female
 - Southern
 - Economically disadvantaged
 - Unmarried
 - Uneducated

As compared to blacks who consider themselves Republicans suggesting that for African American men being older and better off produces an alignment between conservative views and party id.

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