



Election 2008 and Beyond, Wave 3

FACT SHEET: POLITICAL EFFICACY

Key Findings Include:

- Whites appear to be the most skeptical concerning the ability of the government to work in their interest.
- Blacks and Latinos appear to be the most skeptical about the general fairness of America.
- While Blacks, Latinos and Asians stand in strong support of the idea of the US apologizing for putting Asians in internment camps during WWII, only Blacks stand out in strong support of America apologizing for slavery.
- Although Blacks and Latinos are least likely to believe that America is fair, they are most likely to believe that their own actions can be very effective in making a difference in society.

External Political Efficacy: “Is the government working for you?”

Whites are the most likely to be in agreement with the idea that the leaders in government care very little about “people like me.”¹

- 54% of White respondents
- 32% of Black respondents
- 40% of Latino respondents
- 39% of Asian respondents

Whites are the most likely to be in agreement with the idea that the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and their friends.

- 67% of White respondents

¹ We use the phrase “be in agreement” to reflect the combination of the two response options “agree” and “strongly agree.”

- 44% of Black respondents
- 48% of Latino respondents
- 60% of Asian respondents

Whites are the most likely to report that they can almost never trust the government in Washington to do the right thing.

- 25% of White respondents
- 11% of Black respondents
- 19% of Latino respondents
- 10% of Asian respondents

Blacks are the most likely to be in disagreement with the idea that everyone has an equal chance to succeed in America.

- 35% of White respondents
- 41% of Black respondents
- 28% of Latino respondents
- 26% of Asian respondents

Blacks are most likely to be in disagreement with the idea that the American legal system treats all groups equally.

- 42% of White respondents
- 59% of Black respondents
- 43% of Latino respondents
- 34% of Asian respondents

Blacks are the most likely to be in disagreement with the idea that in the American economic system, everyone has a fair chance.

- 38% of White respondents
- 52% of Black respondents
- 44% of Latino respondents
- 33% of Asian respondents

Blacks and Latinos are the most likely not to believe in the fundamentals of our political system like the constitution.

- 8% of White respondents
- 16% of Black respondents
- 16% of Latino respondents
- 6% of Asian respondents

Latinos are the most likely to be in disagreement with the idea that they are a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have.

- 9% of White respondents
- 23% of Black respondents
- 33% of Latino respondents
- 7% of Asian respondents

Black respondents are the most likely to be in disagreement with the idea that in the United States each person's vote is counted and valued equally.

- 23% of White respondents
- 26% of Black respondents
- 20% of Latino respondents
- 21% of Asian respondents

Blacks are most likely to be in agreement with that idea that the government treats most immigrants better than it treats most Black people born in this country.

- 30% of White respondents
- 52% of Black respondents
- 12% of Latino respondents
- 15% of Asian respondents

Blacks are the most likely to be in agreement with the idea that in the U.S. poor people are treated as second-class citizens.

- 59% of White respondents
- 70% of Black respondents
- 54% of Latino respondents
- 47% of Asian respondents

Blacks and Latinos are more likely than Whites and Asians to think that we need a "big change" to solve the country's problems.

- 52% of White respondents
- 69% of Black respondents
- 62% of Latino respondents
- 50% of Asian respondents

Internal Political Efficacy: "Can you make a difference?"

All groups are nearly equal to be in agreement with the belief that by participating in politics they can make a difference (the question referenced the individual respondent).

- 45% of White respondents
- 46% of Black respondents
- 42% of Latino respondents
- 40 % of Asian respondents

Whites and Blacks are most likely to be in agreement with the idea that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in politics.

- 35% of White respondents
- 32% of Black respondents
- 24% of Latino respondents
- 28% of Asian respondents

Latinos are most likely to feel like their individual efforts can be very effective in producing real change in the country.

- 3% of White respondents
- 11% of Black respondents
- 13% of Latino respondents
- 5% of Asian respondents

Latinos and Blacks are most likely to think that the efforts of organizations and groups working in communities can be very effective in producing real change in the country.

- 7% of White respondents
- 17% of Black respondents
- 18% of Latino respondents
- 8% of Asian respondents

Latinos and Blacks are most likely to believe that elections are very effective in producing real change in the country.

- 6% of White respondents
- 14% of Black respondents
- 16% of Latino respondents
- 5% of Asian respondents