



## 2020 Poll of Women and LGBTQ Likely Voters in SC

On behalf of WREN and in partnership with the National Women's Law Center, Change Research surveyed 1,450 South Carolina women of various sexual orientations and LGBTQ people representing a range of gender identities who are likely to vote in the 2020 election. The purpose of this survey was to understand the lives, issues, and policy priorities of women and LGBTQ people in South Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

### Concerns about Economic Mobility and Affordability of Essential Expenses

Many South Carolina voters are struggling financially and worry about the future.

- Half of those surveyed say their family's income is "falling behind the cost of living" (49%), and 7% say their income is "going up faster than the cost of living." The struggle is especially acute among Black/African American respondents (65% falling behind), unmarried respondents (60%), working class respondents (52%), and those with children (59% of those with kids under 5, 53% of those with kids 6-18).
- Just 34% of respondents say they are "better off" than their parents, and 31% say they are "worse off." Just 32% believe the next generation will be "better off," while 38% believe it will be "worse off." Respondents with children 5 or younger are particularly worried, with 52% saying the next generation will be worse off.

Most respondents state that essential services are unaffordable and inaccessible.

- Health care is the most unaffordable essential service, with 78% saying it is expensive, 54% saying it is very expensive, and just 17% saying it is affordable. The health care affordability crisis crosses the education and race divides. LGBTQ voters are particularly likely to say health care is unaffordable (83% expensive, 67% very expensive), as are voters between 35 and 64 years old (81% expensive for 35-49 year olds, 83% for 50-64 year olds).
- The second most unaffordable expense is child care, with more than two-thirds saying that it is expensive and 49% saying it is very expensive.
- Majorities say paid family leave and child care are inaccessible (50% difficult/13% easy to obtain and 51% difficult/15% easy, respectively) and pluralities say the same of health care (42% difficult/33% easy).

### Concerns about Representation and Leadership

While most respondents are more positive than negative in their ratings of South Carolina as a place for women, there are significant disparities by race, marital status, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

- A 42% plurality of voters of color and a majority of the LGBTQ voters surveyed give South Carolina a negative rating as a place for women.
- Majorities say their leaders don't "prioritize low-income people" (64%) and "are out of touch with the needs of working women and families" (53%). Majorities also don't believe state lawmakers "care about people like me" (64%) or "share my values" (53%).
- Half of respondents also say lawmakers don't "respect women and girls."

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<sup>1</sup> Post-stratification was performed on region, age, race, education, and 2016 vote. The margin of error as traditionally calculated is  $\pm 2.57$  for the full sample and is greater for sub-groups.



- Only 6% offer positive reviews of lawmakers' job helping to make high-quality child care affordable and accessible.
- A majority (51%) say lawmakers are doing a poor or very bad job of protecting women against violence.
- A 61% majority believes that there are too few women in elected office, with nearly as many saying there are too few women in business (57%), and a plurality say women are under-represented in civic and community groups (46%).

## Policy Priorities

Large, bi-partisan majorities strongly support policies that provide greater equity and support to women and LGBTQ people, including:

- Pay equity for women (94% support)
- Increased access to contraception (90% support)
- Paid family leave (90% support)
- Break time and private spaces for pumping milk (87% support)
- Quality affordable child care (80% support)
- Equal Rights Amendment (84% support)
- Laws to protect LGBTQ people from workplace discrimination (75% support)

When asked how important these policy proposals were, equal pay for women ranked as “very important” to 81% of respondents, including 97% of Democrats, 83% of independents, and 64% of Republicans. Equal pay is especially important to unmarried respondents (89% “very important” compared to 74% among married respondents), younger voters (87% among 18-34 year olds), and Black/African American voters (98% “very important” compared to 75% of white voters).

Access to high-quality affordable child care and paid family leave are “very important” to nearly 6-in-10 of these voters and are particularly important to parents. Access to paid family leave is “very important” to 77% of respondents with kids under 5, compared to 57% with older children and 54% without minor children. 73% of respondents with kids under 5 say access to high-quality affordable child care is “very important” to them.

Among LGBTQ voters, 78% say laws protecting LGBTQ people from discrimination are “very important,” compared to 51% among non-LGBTQ people.

The majority of women and LGBTQ voters surveyed believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Three-quarters of those surveyed believe that electing more women is important, with 53% saying it is “very important” to them.

Support for these policies is high and bipartisan. Among Republicans, over 90% support equal pay, over 8-in-10 support greater access to birth control, paid family leave, and break time and spaces for pumping, over 7-in-10 support the ERA, two-thirds support increased funding for child care, and a majority support laws to protect LGBTQ people against workplace discrimination.

Thinking about the changes they would like to see in state leadership, three-quarters of those surveyed believe that electing more women is important, with 53% saying it is very important to them. A 61% majority believes that there are too few women in elected office, with nearly as many saying there are too few women in business (57%), and a plurality say women are under-represented in civic and community groups (46%).