



MARCH 2020 | FACT SHEET

# Our Vote Matters: Addressing the Issues Important to Black Women in Michigan

## Methodology

On behalf of Mothering Justice (MJ) and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), Vision Strategy and Insights surveyed 525 Michigan Black women who are likely and eligible voters in the November 2020 election. This poll was fielded from February 6-20, 2020. Of these respondents 69 percent were registered voters whereas 31 percent were eligible but not registered. According to Census data from 2016, 60 percent of Black people in Michigan are eligible to vote and 45 percent of them voted in the last presidential election.

## Overview

Black women are an incredibly powerful, steadfast and consequential voting bloc, having proven in past elections that they are the margin of victory. And yet, there is very little research and polling centering Black women. On behalf of Mothering Justice (MJ) and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), Vision Strategy and Insights surveyed 525 Michigan Black women who are likely and eligible voters in the November 2020 election. The purpose of this survey was to understand the lived experiences and priorities of this important, but under-researched demographic. Our results show that Black women have a lot to say about how ignored and devalued they feel by presidential candidates, in policymaking, in the health care system, and in workplaces and schools. And they have even more to say about what a policy agenda to help their families and millions of others would look like.

Following Super Tuesday, it is critical that political candidates and party leadership pay attention to Black women – especially in the battleground state of Michigan.

## Key Findings:

- **Black women in Michigan are highly skeptical of and feel ignored by political candidates.** The significant majority (83 percent) of respondents say that political candidates are not present in or engaged with their community, almost eight in 10 (78 percent) say that politicians are ignoring their concerns, and over seven in 10 (74 percent) say that political candidates are not working to address issues most important to them.

- **Even though they're skeptical and feel invisible and unheard by political candidates, Black women will still show up at the polls. However, candidates have a lot of work to do inspiring younger voters.** Overall, 72 percent of respondents said that they will definitely vote in the primary, and 81 percent state they will definitely vote in the general election. However, only 58 percent of registered voters 18-34 said that they will definitely vote in the primary whereas 69 percent state they will definitely vote in the general election. In open-ended responses, the key reason stated for not voting among 18- to 34-year-olds is *"My vote doesn't matter."*
- **Michigan's Black women are driven by an essential need to survive.** Asked about what issues are priorities during this election year, 90 percent said it's important to ensure everyone can meet their families' basic needs and 91 percent said it's important to create better jobs and wages for all, especially working women and families. Additionally, 74 percent of respondents said access to quality affordable health care is *"extremely important."* It is important to note that 74 percent of respondents also cite preventing and responding to sexual harassment and assault as *"extremely important,"* and 68 percent of parents cite increasing access to quality affordable child care as *"extremely important."*
- **Nearly all Black mothers have experienced difficulty finding and affording child care. And a strong majority of them support increasing funding to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care.** With nearly all women with parenting responsibilities (94 percent) reporting challenges in finding and affording child care, there are clear and profound economic implications for Black mothers in Michigan. A strong majority of Black mothers (84 percent) support increasing government funding to improve access to high-quality, affordable child care, and 81 percent agree that the government should provide funding to help child care providers pay their workers fairly and provide high-quality care. Moreover, 84 percent of Black mothers in Michigan support a proposal that would increase minimum pay for caregivers.
- **The significant majority of Michigan's Black women support critical assistance programs and making the tax code more fair.** Overall, 83 percent of respondents agree that food assistance, Medicaid, and housing assistance provide important assistance that helps women and families. It is also important to note that 72 percent of registered voters strongly agree these basic needs programs are beneficial to all Michigan families. Moreover, there is overwhelming support for making the tax code more fair—73 percent of respondents agree that Michigan should make its tax code more progressive by increasing taxes on the wealthy, 75 percent said they support increasing the maximum amount of Michigan's earned income tax credit.
- **Most Black women report a negative experience with a health care provider.** Over eight in 10 respondents (81 percent) report having at least one adverse interaction with a medical professional, including experiencing medical professionals ignoring reports of pain, dismissing patients' input, misdiagnosis and delayed diagnosis, and being talked down to and/or disrespected. Many respondents submitted multiple responses noting that they have experienced multiple and simultaneous issues of disrespect, dismissal, and/or misdiagnosis by health care providers. Moreover, nearly half of respondents (43 percent) said they do not believe that Black women in Michigan have access to quality health care. Respondents defined quality health care as *"affordable, accessible, flexible, or more than the bare minimum."*
- **Black women in Michigan strongly support access to pregnancy-related services and reproductive health care.** Eight in 10 respondents (79 percent) agree that elected officials should ensure access to safe and supportive pregnancy-related services, including post-partum care, doulas, midwives, home visiting and other supports. Seven in 10 (70 percent) agree that elected officials should protect access to quality, affordable reproductive health care, including abortion and birth control.

- **Black women in Michigan overwhelmingly support a higher minimum wage to improve quality of life for working people – including raising the minimum wage for tipped workers.** Eight in 10 (81 percent) believe that Michigan should have a higher minimum wage that makes it easier for people to make ends meet. The desire for a higher minimum wage is even greater among respondents aged 35-49 (91 percent), households with children (87 percent), residents outside the Detroit area (86 percent), and registered voters in the state (83 percent). Seven in 10 respondents (69 percent) agree that employers should be required to pay tipped workers the same minimum wage as other workers, with tips as additional income.
- **Most Black women in Michigan do not have paid family and medical leave but would strongly support the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act for Michigan mothers and families.** Only 23 percent of respondents said their employers provide both paid family and medical leave. Among respondents whose employers do not offer either paid family leave or paid medical leave, more than two thirds (68 percent) report they are “extremely interested” in a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in the state of Michigan. Interest was particularly strong among families with children (81 percent) and respondents aged 35-49 (74 percent). Overall, eight in 10 respondents (79 percent) report they would support the FAMILY Act for Michigan. Again, support for the FAMILY Act for Michigan is particularly strong among households with children (82 percent) and respondents aged 35-49 (86 percent), but also among residents of Detroit (81 percent) compared to those in the rest of Michigan (75 percent).
- **Black women value safety in work, in schools, and in communities throughout Michigan. An overwhelming majority prioritize protecting against sexual harassment, including sexual assault, in the workplace and in schools.** Nearly nine in 10 (87 percent) Black women said it is important to strengthen protections against sexual harassment, including sexual and assault, in the workplace; and nine in 10 (89 percent) said it is important to strengthen protections against sexual harassment, including sexual and assault, in schools.