In April 2017 the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis enlisted the polling firm Consumer Research International to conduct a public opinion poll among registered Texas voters. The sample design included an oversampling of Black people to generate more reliable estimates by race. This design strategy makes IUPRA’s poll unique in that it situates the analysis within a Black Studies context and focuses on Black voters as the point of comparison on public opinion.

A total of 210 registered voters were surveyed. Forty-six percent of the respondents identified as White, 31 percent as Black, 15 percent as Latino, and 8 percent either identified as another race or declined to say. In terms of annual household income, 27 percent of the respondents earned less than $50,000; 37 percent earned between $50,000 and $100,000; 29 percent earned greater than $100,000; and 7 percent declined to say. The sample included geographic representation from Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Waco, Rio Grande Border, East Texas, and West Texas.

A number of topics were covered by the poll questions including criminal justice, education, health care, and racial climate. This numbers brief will focus on voters’ attitudes regarding their own health care experiences and their understanding of the Family and Medical Leave Act. To note, overall sample results and results stratified by income are weighted to correct for the oversampling of Black voters, using the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey estimates of registered voters in Texas.

**Figure 12.** In the past 12 months, has there been a time when someone in your household needed to see a doctor or go to a hospital but didn’t? If yes, give a reason why.
In the past 12 months, 19% of voters did not go to the doctor or hospital when someone in their household needed to. A substantially larger share of Black voters (34%) did not seek care, compared to Latino (22%) and White (15%) voters. Disparities were also apparent between income groups, seeing as 33% of voters in the lowest income group did not seek care, compared to 16% of the middle income group and only 10% of the highest income group. The largest share (43%) of voters cited lack of insurance coverage as the primary reason they did not go to the doctor or hospital. The majority (59%) of Black voters indicated lack of insurance as the reason, compared to 43% of Latino voters and 33% of White voters.

Figure 13. In the past 12 months, has there been a time when someone in your household needed to see a mental health provider but didn’t go? If yes, give a reason why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t afford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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In the past 12 months, 4% of voters did not see a mental health provider when someone in their household needed to. A slightly larger proportion of Black (8%) and Latino (6%) voters did not see a provider, compared to White (3%) voters. Wider disparities were observed amongst the income groups. Ten percent of voters from the lowest income group did not see a mental health provider, compared to 3% of each of the other two income groups. The overwhelming majority (73%) of voters cited affordability issues as the primary reason they didn’t see a mental health provider. This was also the case for Black and White voters. However, Latino voters were equally divided between affordability issues and lack of insurance coverage.
In the past 12 months, 26% of voters did not see a dentist when someone in their household needed to. Markedly larger shares of Latino (38%) and Black (35%) voters did not seek care, compared to White (19%) voters. Even larger disparities were apparent across income groups, seeing as half of the voters in the lowest income group did not seek care, compared to 15% of the middle income group and 19% of the highest income group. The largest share (45%) of voters cited lack of insurance coverage as the primary reason they did not see a dentist. The vast majority (70%) of Black voters indicated lack of insurance as their primary reason, compared to 43% of Latino and 44% of White voters.
Half of the voters were less than 15 minutes away from the health care facility they most often use. The majorities of Latino (56%) and White (52%) voters were also less than 15 minutes away compared to only 37% of Black voters. Almost half of the voters in the lowest income group (47%) and in the middle income group (46%) were less than 15 minutes away, compared to 59% of voters in the highest income group.

The overwhelming majority (74%) of voters were either very or somewhat aware of FMLA. Specifically, 31% were very aware and 43% were somewhat aware of the Act. Similar proportions of awareness were observed across racial groups. Conversely, disparities were evident between income groups. Only 57% of voters in the lowest income group were either very or somewhat aware of FMLA compared to 84% of the middle income group and 83% of the highest income group.
Individuals are only eligible for FMLA after 12 months of working for their current employer. Of the voters who had any awareness of FMLA, just over half (51%) knew about this requirement. The majorities of Black (58%) and Latino (55%) voters were aware of the 12-month eligibility requirement, compared to 47% of White voters. Voters were almost equally divided between their support for (47%) and opposition to (46%) the time component of the policy. Black and White voters followed this pattern. However, Latino voters were generally more in support for the policy rather in opposition to it.
Of the voters who had any awareness of FMLA, the majority (58%) knew that the policy only applies to companies with more than 50 employees. This was the case across racial groups. The majority (53%) of voters were in opposition to this criteria, a sentiment largely shared across racial groups. The largest share of opposition came from Black voters, given that 65% opposed the requirement.
Of the voters who had any awareness of FMLA, the majority (62%) did not think FMLA applied to full-time and part-time employees. Sixty-one percent of Black voters, 66% of Latino voters, and 62% of White voters believed this. The majority (56%) of voters supported the requirement that FMLA apply to part-time workers. We observed graded levels of support amongst racial groups. White voters (52%) were least in support, Black voters (58%) were more in support, and Latino voters (63%) were most in support of the requirement. Larger disparities in support were observed between income groups. Sixty percent of voters from the lowest income group and 59% from the middle income group were in support of the requirement, compared to only 44% of the highest income group.