



GEN Z VOTING & POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT

2023

iGNiTE

POLITICAL POWER IN EVERY YOUNG WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

Since our founding in 2010, IGNITE has proudly become the leading nonpartisan organization training young women to become the next generation of political leaders. IGNITE began conducting research in 2019 to measure our impact and shape our training approach, and over the years we have provided valuable insights from this work with our partners and allies as we work towards our shared goal of empowering young women to embrace their political power.

IGNITE's Research Hub now conducts annual research in partnership with leading political scientists and researchers to better understand Gen Z's political participation, behaviors and mindset. Our approach stresses the importance of gender disaggregated data to spotlight how young women and girls approach political and civic engagement differently and help drive strategies that respond to their specific needs and experiences.

We are proud to release the results of our 2023 study that includes insights on Gen Z voting attitudes and behaviors, party identification, top priority issues and policies, and their preferred sources for political education and news. We have included findings from our parallel study on IGNITE program participants to showcase how the IGNITE community engages politically in comparison to their peers, and highlighted areas of opportunity for maximizing our impact.



KEY FINDINGS

Gen Z continues to be driven by issues when it comes to their political and civic engagement. When it comes to the critical issues for Gen Z there is a clear gender gap in how these issues are addressed policy-wise.

Abortion access continues to be a top issue for Gen Z women: Gen Z's political engagement and passions are driven by issues more than candidates. Mass shootings, climate change, racial inequity, mental health and abortion are the top five issues amongst Gen Z. 65% of Gen Z women-identifying and nonbinary people said that abortion is a critical issue. Among IGNITE participants, 82% consider it a critical issue with 93% believing that Roe v Wade should not have been overturned. As we head into 2024, we can expect abortion access to continue to play a key role galvanizing young women to the polls.

Gen Z Voter Turnout - Overall Gen Z exhibited large levels of voter registration with young men at 77% and young women at 73%. Looking at the 2024 election, 62% of Gen Z reported that they would absolutely vote or are very likely to.

Gen Z needs more women, more diverse, younger candidates who speak to their issues. Roughly 70% of Gen Z women-identifying and non-binary people say they would be more likely to vote if there were more women candidates, racial minority candidates, younger candidates and candidates that speak to the issues of young people on the ballot. Gen Z cis men reported looking for younger candidates that speak to the issues they care about.

Social media has transformed how young people engage in politics and has become the primary way that Gen Z gets their political news. 47% of Gen Z are likely to use social media to bring awareness to issues while 51% rely primarily on social media for political information. This creates vast opportunities for greater engagement with their peers and candidates around issues, but presents challenges as misinformation continues to spread across social media platforms. If candidates and parties wish to engage with young voters, they will have to invest in their social media communities. At the same time, policies that tackle misinformation should continue to be prioritized.

IGNITE participants take political leadership and civic engagement to the next level. IGNITE Gen Zers vote 15% higher and engage in political actions 25-40% more than their peers. They are modeling what political and civic engagement looks like for their peers.

RESEARCHERS AND METHODOLOGY

IGNITE worked with Dr. Jared McDonald (University of Mary Washington) to collect and analyze a survey of Gen Z Americans aged 18 to 25. The survey included a cross-section of 1,298 respondents from 49 states and the District of Columbia. All respondents were members of Gen Z (defined as Americans born after 1996) and sampled from Qualtrics managed panels. Although not a probability sample, data are weighted to match the 2019 Pew Analysis of the 2018 US Census Current Population Survey benchmarks for race, ethnicity, gender, and income. Survey was fielded from April 28-May 31, 2023. To complement the Gen Z samples, IGNITE also administered the survey with a sample of 508 respondents. Of the 508, 368 were identified as Gen Z women and is the primary sample that is used for comparative findings.

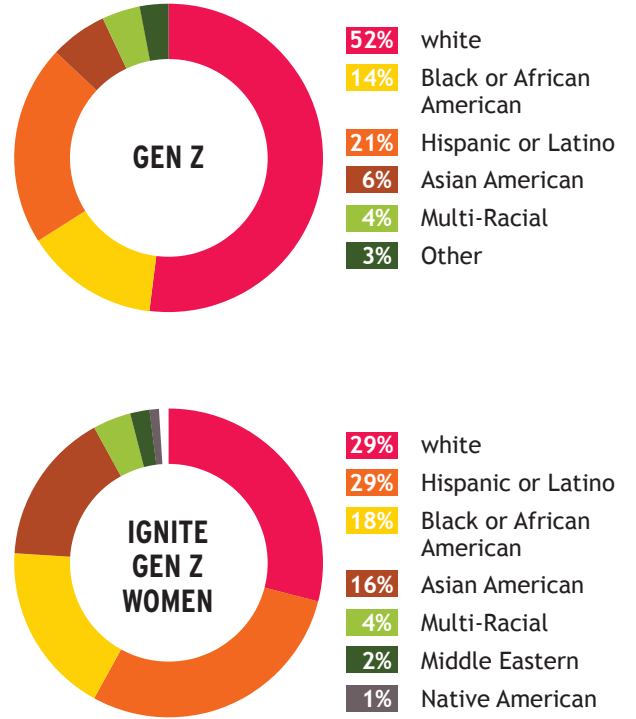
Important! Throughout the study, we refer to populations studied as “Gen Z Women” and “IGNITE Women”. Throughout this study, the word “Women” refers to all cis and trans women and non-binary respondents. Gen Z Men refers to all cis men respondents.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

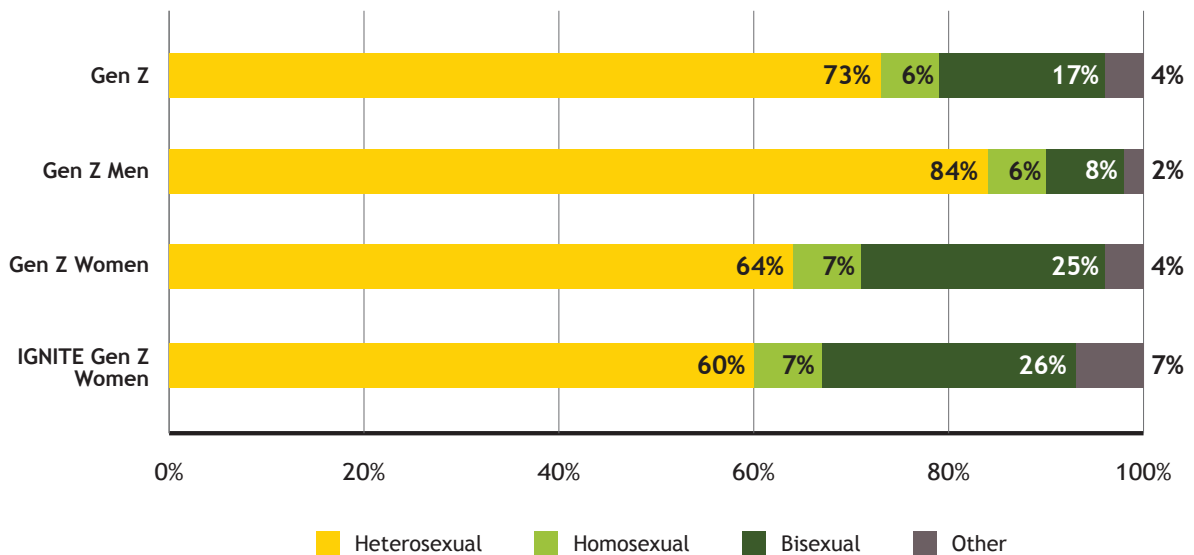
Gen Z represents the most diverse generation across race and gender identities. Only 52% of respondents in our sample identified as white, aligning to the same percentage point with [Pew Research](#). Looking at LGBT identification, 27% of Gen Z respondents self-identified as homosexual, bisexual, transgender or something other than heterosexual, supporting [2022 findings by a Gallup](#) that 1 in 5 Gen Zers self-identify as LGBT, driving the uptick in national LGBTQ identification. Our study looked specifically at gender by sexuality, showing that women-identifying and non-binary people disproportionately identified as an LGBTQ at 36%.

Looking specifically at our IGNITE sample population, our research re-confirmed what we have seen year after year - that our participants continue to be incredibly diverse. Among respondents 71% identified as a category other than White, while 40% identified as LGBTQ+.

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS



LGBTQ+ BY GENDER





GEN Z PARTISANSHIP

AND POLITICAL

IDEOLOGY



**KEEP CALM &
RUN FOR OFFICE**



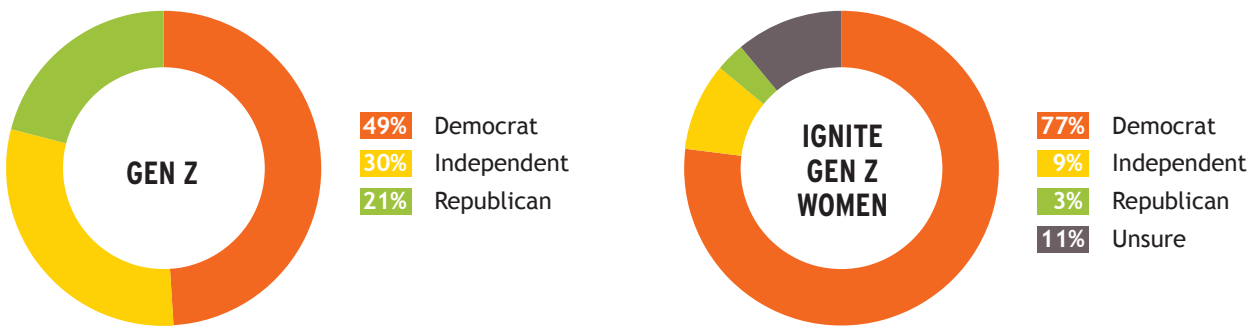
THE GENDER GAP IN PARTISANSHIP

Our data found that Gen Z approaches partisanship and political ideology with more reservation, rejecting partisan labels at a higher rate than the general population.

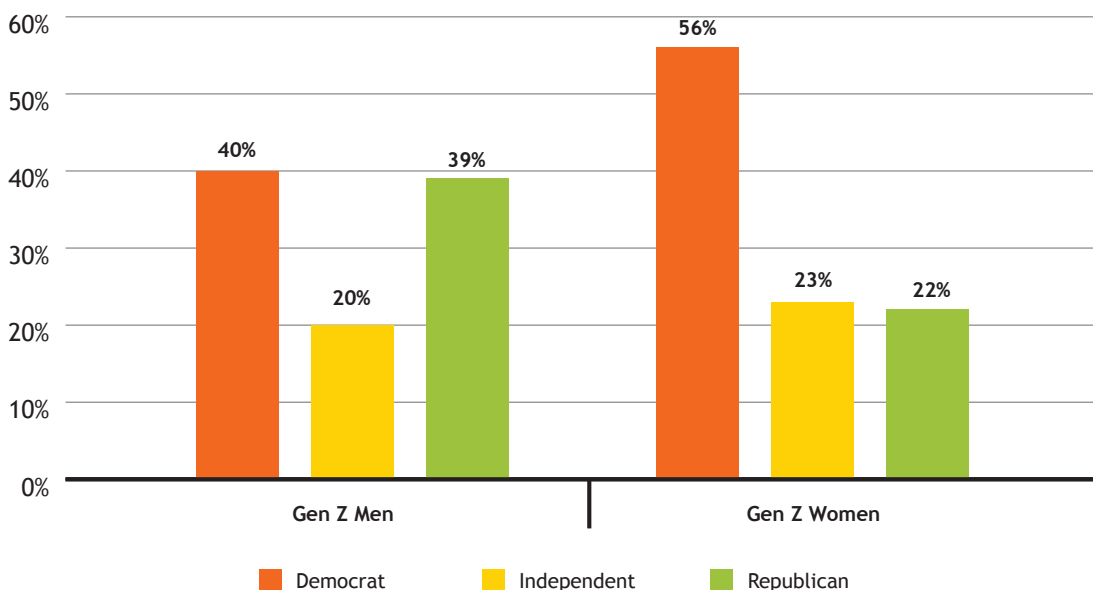
Among respondents 30% identified as Independent. And when looking at ideology, Gen Z overall landed towards the middle of the ideological spectrum.

Analyzing partisanship data across gender and race, the data revealed an important difference with both white and men-identifying respondents appearing evenly split among the Democratic and Republican parties, but Gen Zers of color and women-identifying and non-binary respondents clearly favor the Democratic party. When it comes to ideology, white and Black men reported more likely to be extremely conservative while white and hispanic women reported more likely to be extremely liberal.

PARTISANSHIP



THE GENDER GAP IN PARTISANSHIP

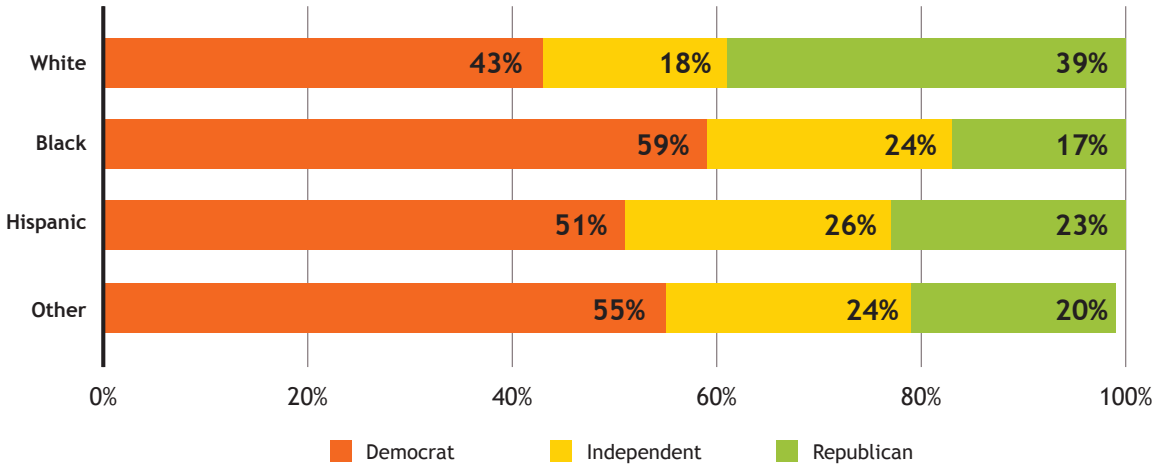




GEN Z PARTY AFFILIATIONS

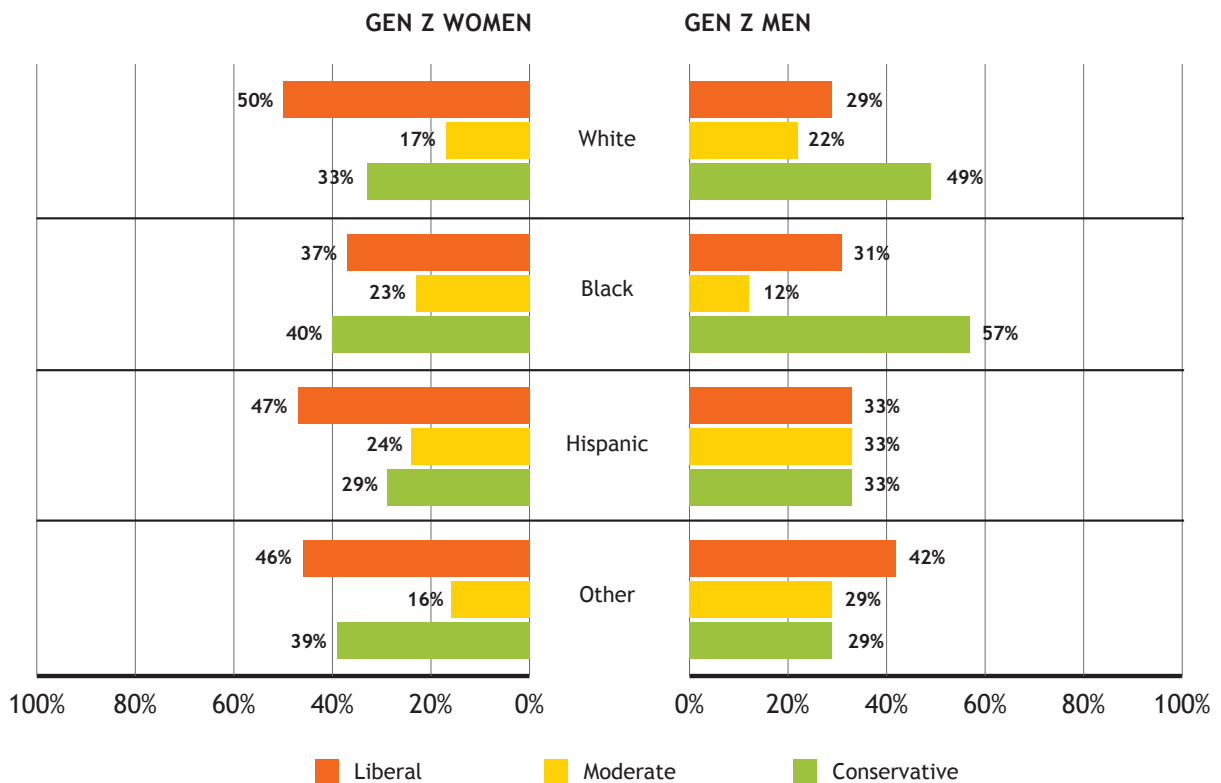
- White Gen Zers are evenly divided between the Democratic and Republican party.
- Gen Zers of color skew more heavily for the Democratic Party. 59% of Black Gen Zers identify as Democrats compared to 51% of Hispanics and 55% of the remaining racial minority groups.

GEN Z PARTY AFFILIATION:



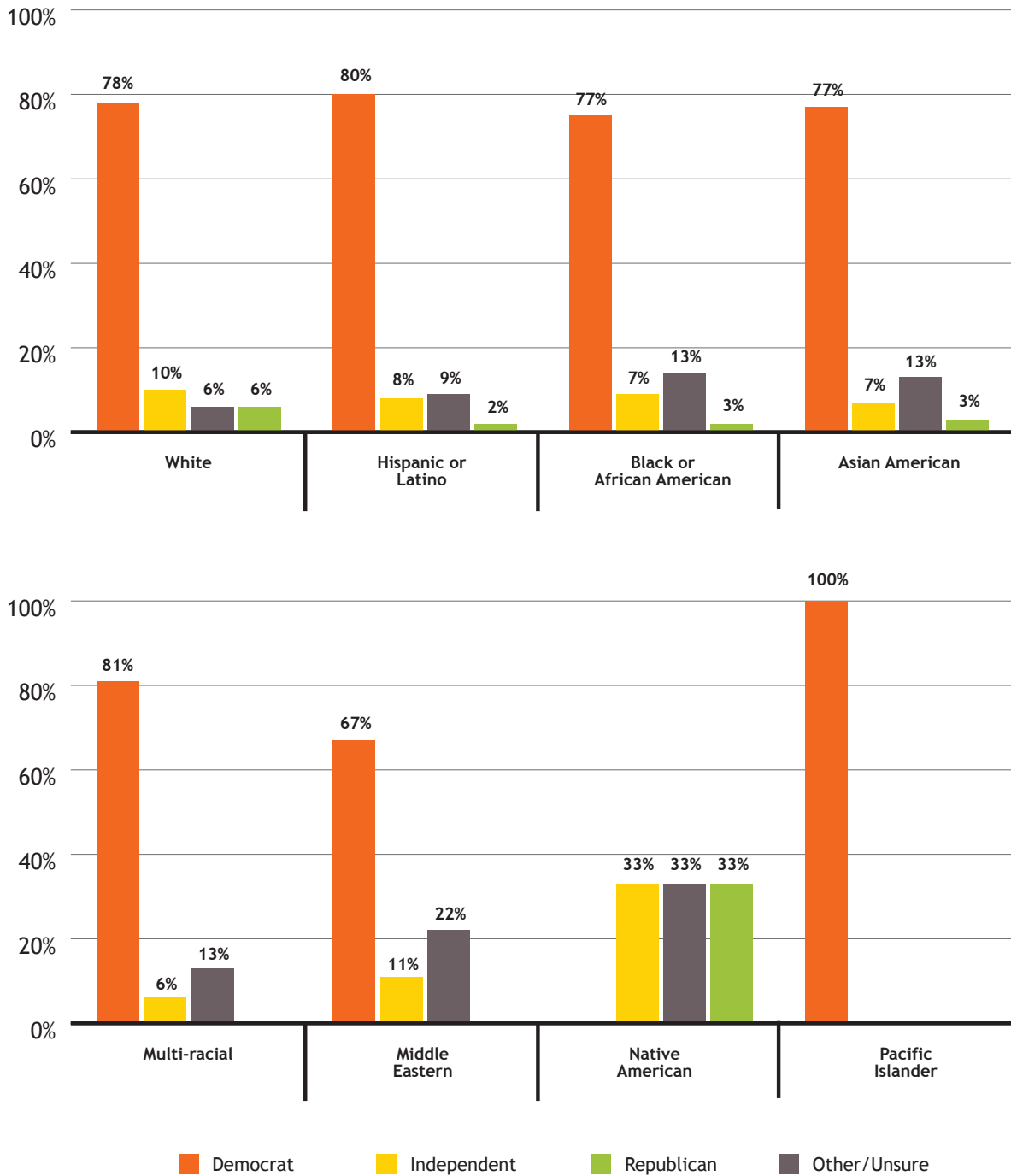
White and Hispanic women are the most likely to identify as liberal

White and Black Gen Z men are the most likely to identify as conservative





IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN PARTY AFFILIATION



Key Takeaway: IGNITE women lean more democratic along all racial groups.

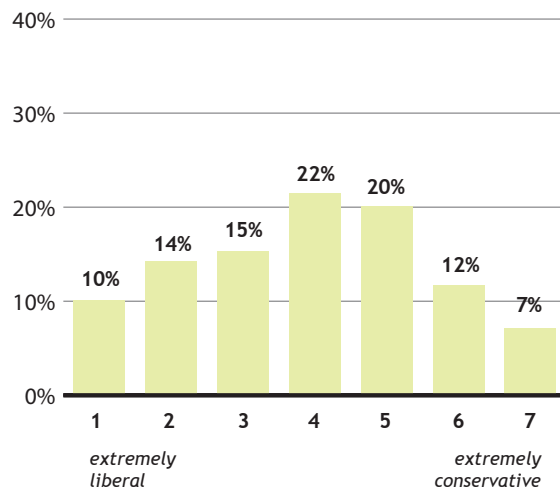


THE GENDER GAP IN IDEOLOGY

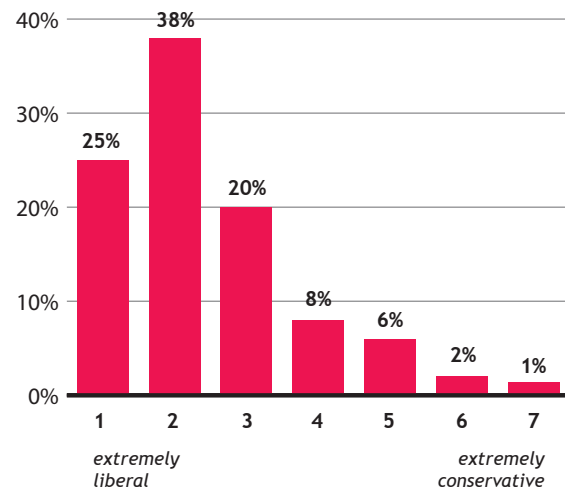
The survey asked respondents on their viewpoints across the ideological spectrum:

- Both Gen Z men and women cluster toward the middle of the ideological spectrum.
- Gen Z women (11%) are more likely than men (8%) to say they are extremely liberal.
- Gen Z men (9%) are more likely than women (6%) to say they are extremely conservative.
- IGNITE Gen Zers identify (83%) as extremely liberal or liberal compared to (40%) of Gen Z women.

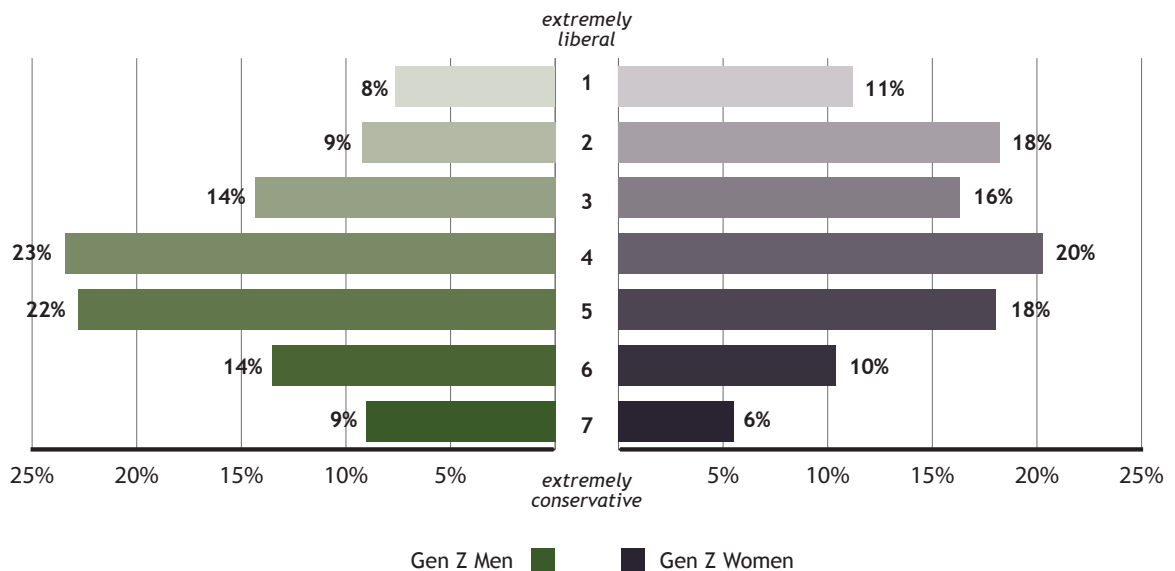
GEN Z IDEOLOGY



IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN IDEOLOGY



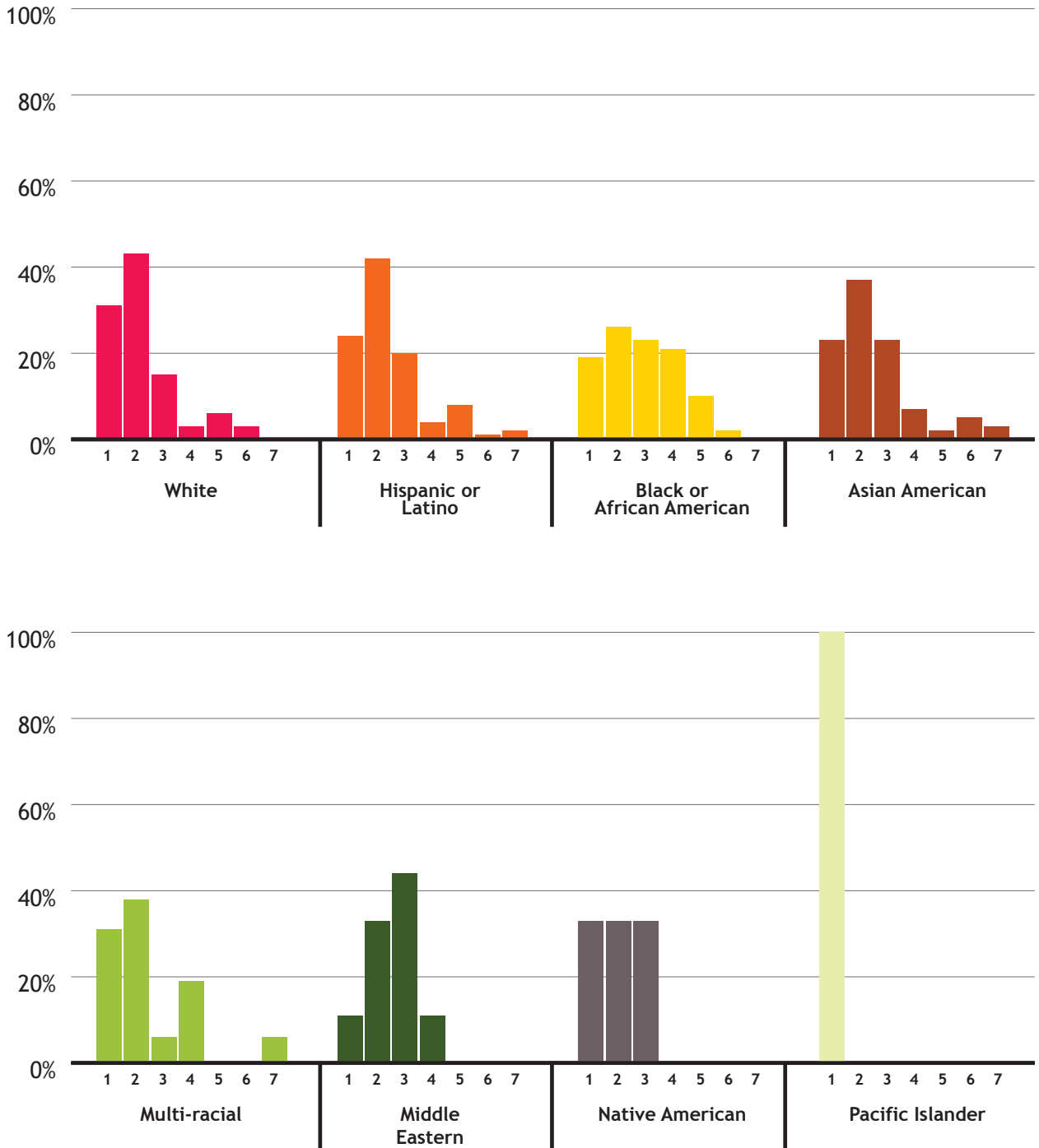
THE GENDER GAP IN IDEOLOGY





IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN IDEOLOGY BY RACE

Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). Where would you place yourself on this scale?

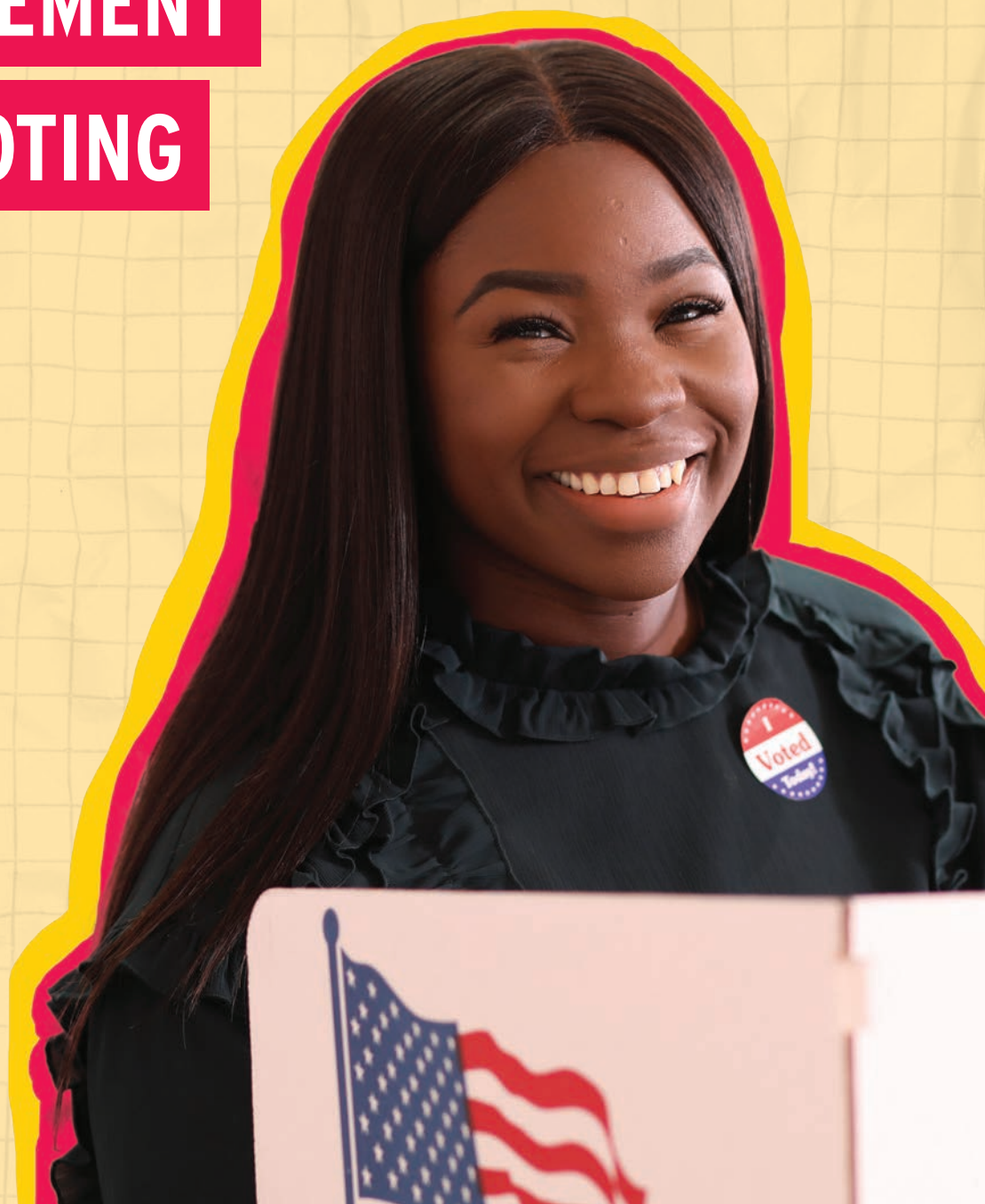




GEN Z POLITICAL

ENGAGEMENT

AND VOTING

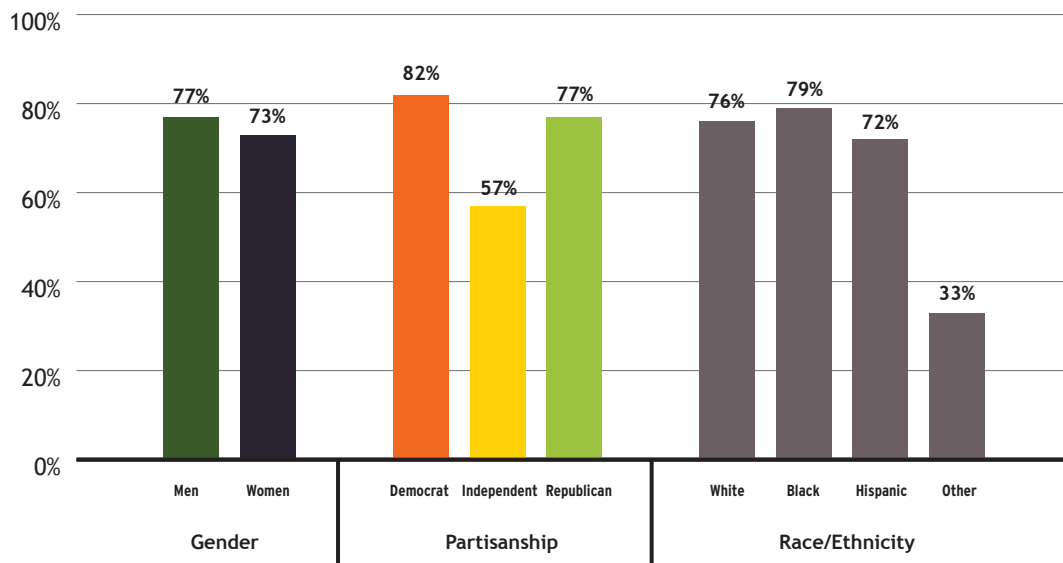




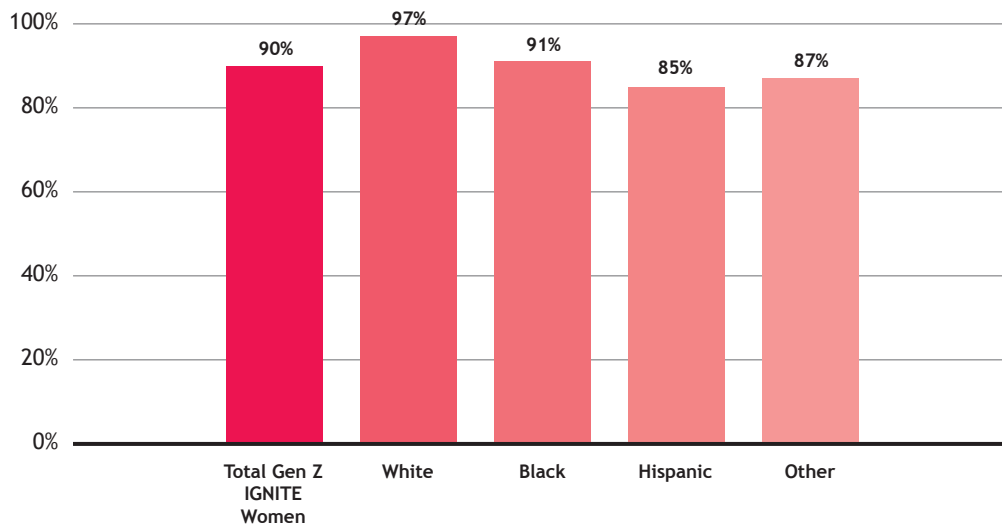
At this time, Gen Z voter registration (ages 18-25) is the highest we have seen. Overall, Gen Z respondents exhibited high levels of voter registration (Gen Z men at 77% and Gen Z women at 73%). There were few major differences in registration rates among Gen Z women and men. A key finding when looking at the IGNITE community revealed that IGNITE Gen Z women are 17% more registered to vote than their peers.

- *Partisanship and Registration:* democratic Gen Zers exhibited the highest levels of registration (82%), Republicans at 77% and Independents at 57%
- *Race and Registration:* Black Gen Z respondents show highest levels of registration (79%), white respondents at 76% and Hispanic respondents at 72%

GEN Z VOTER REGISTRATION



IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN VOTER REGISTRATION BREAKDOWN



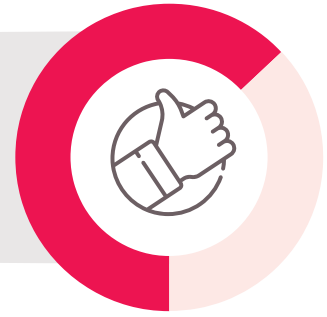


GEN Z PLANS TO BE ENGAGED IN THE 2024 ELECTIONS

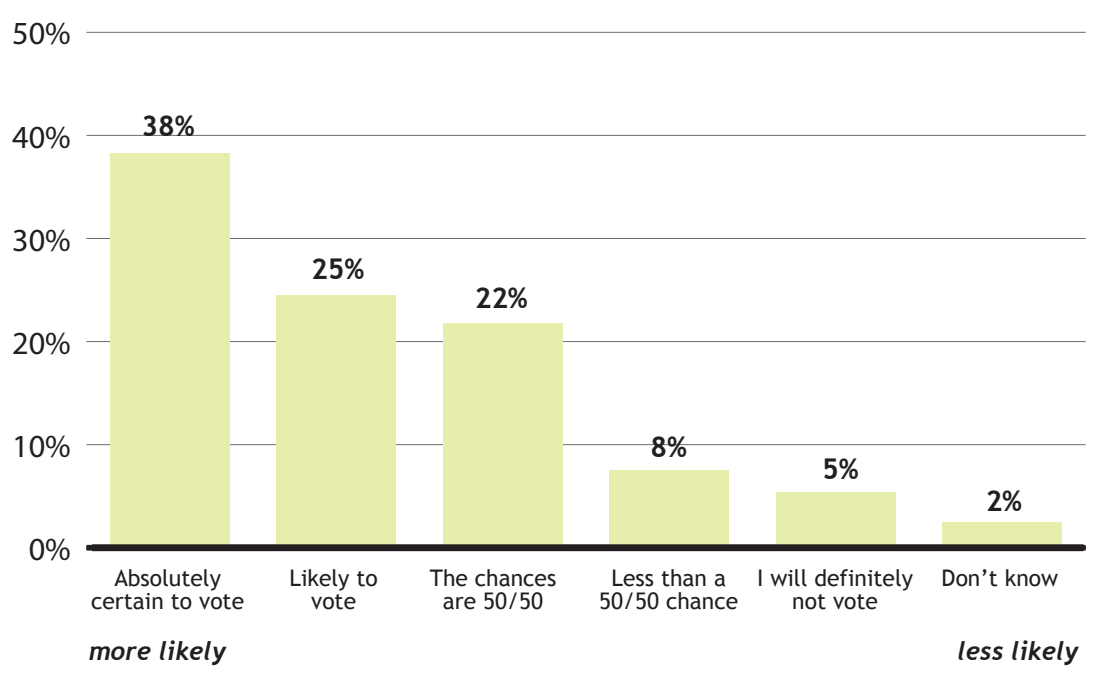
Gen Zers will play a big role in the upcoming 2024 elections. The most likely activities they will engage in are: encouraging people to vote, discussing politics and following political news channels. Gen Z women plan to participate in a protest or rally more than Gen Z men. Gen Z women also plan to leverage social media to bring awareness to issues they care about. The study also found that when comparing them with their Gen Z peers, IGNITE participants are significantly more politically active.

63% of respondents reported they were “absolutely certain” or “likely” to vote in 2024.

IGNITE Gen Zers are 77% more likely and are absolutely certain that they will vote in 2024. (15% higher than their peers)

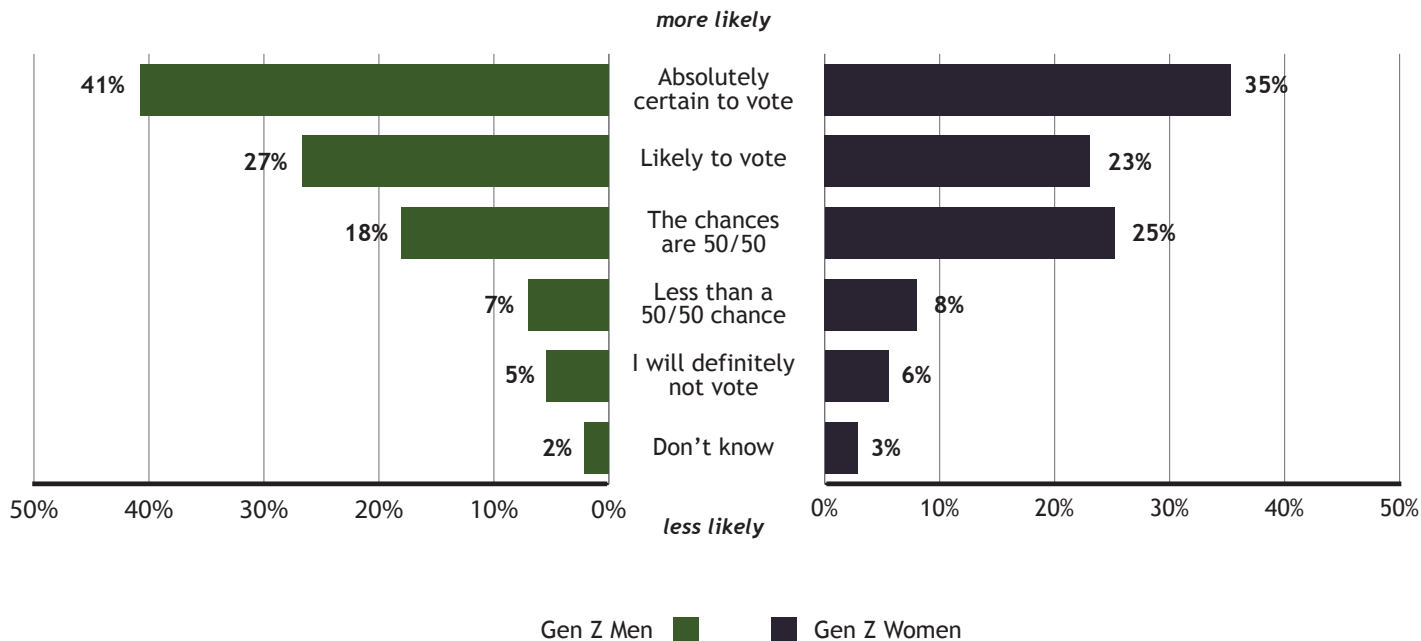


GEN Z 2024 VOTING TURNOUT

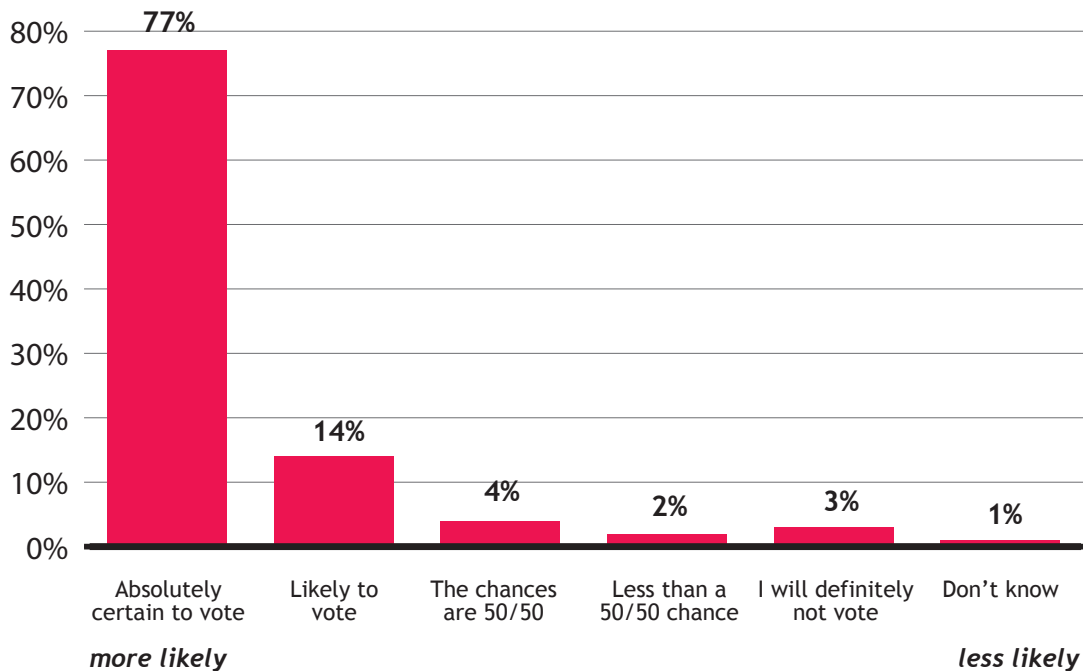




GEN Z 2024 VOTING TURNOUT BY GENDER:

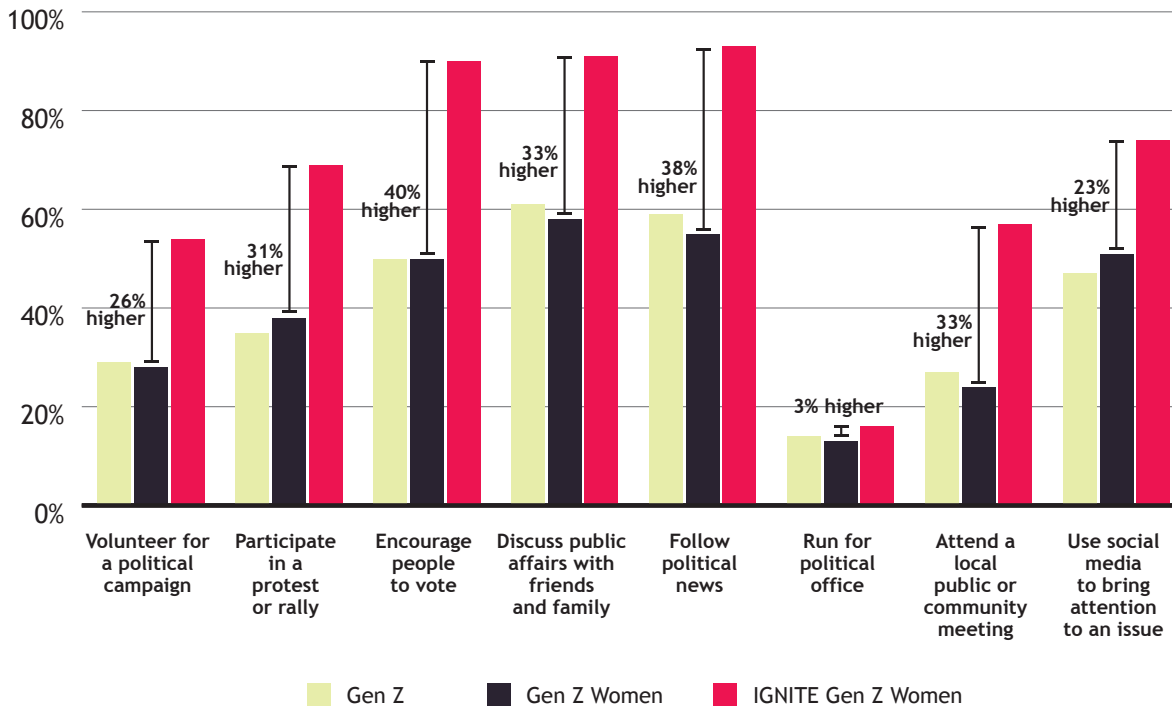


IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN 2024 VOTING TURNOUT:

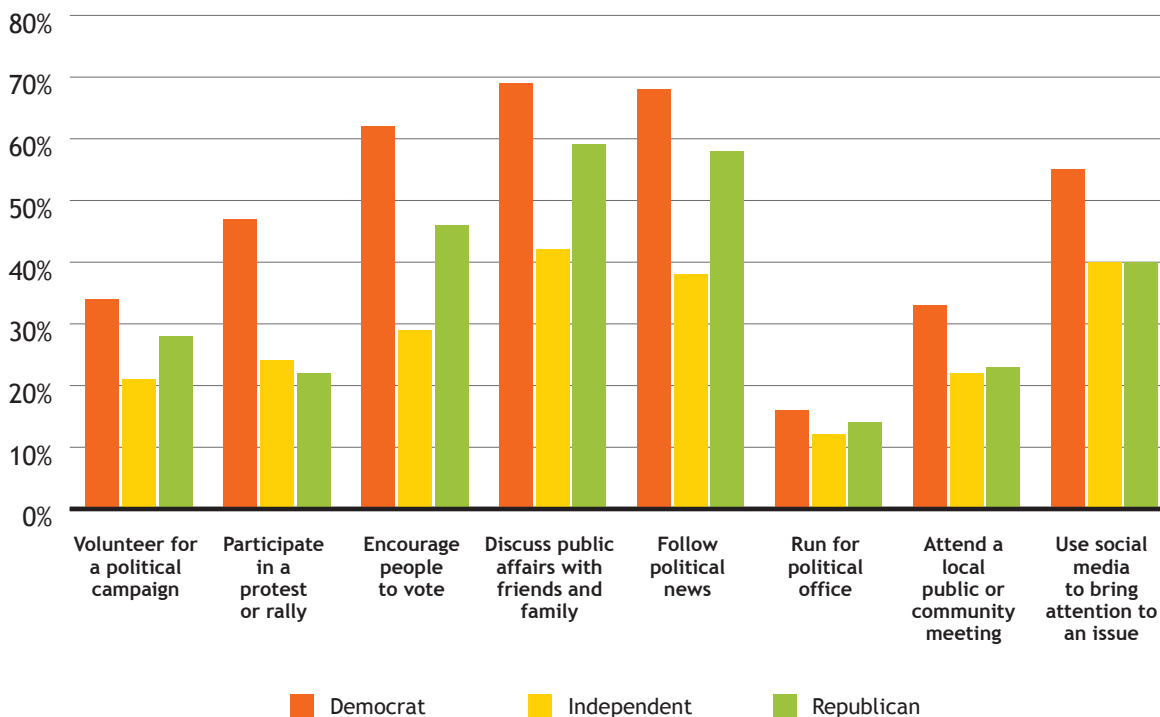




GEN Z POLITICAL ACTION AT A GLANCE:



GEN Z ENGAGEMENT BY PARTISANSHIP:



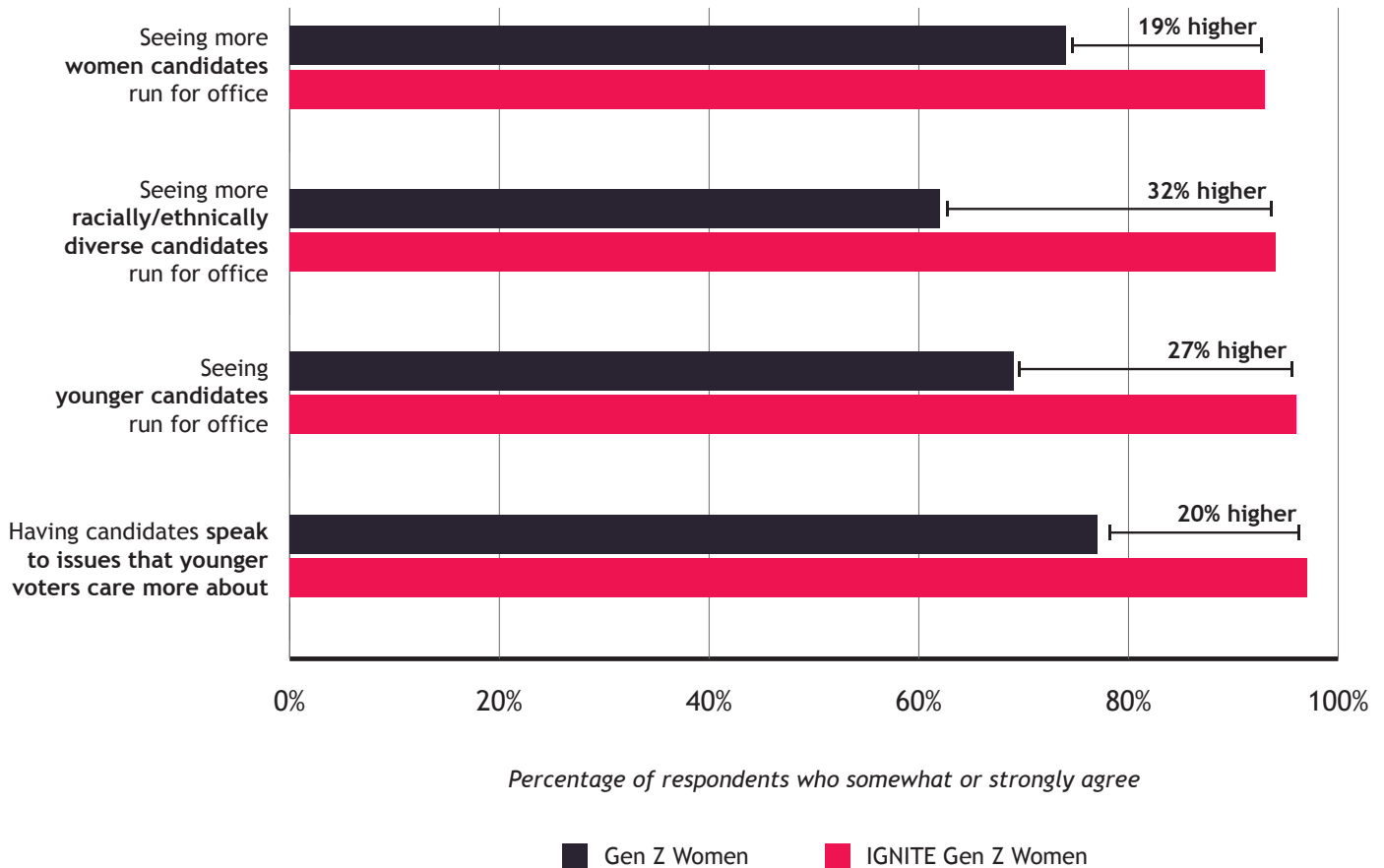
Key Insight: Gen Z Democrats are more likely than Gen Z Independents and Republicans to say that they will engage in political action.



GEN Z WANTS TO SEE DIVERSE CANDIDATES

Gen Zers need more women, more diverse, younger candidates who speak to their issues. Roughly 70% of Gen Z women-identifying and non-binary people reported they would be more likely to vote if there were more women candidates, racial minority candidates, younger candidates and candidates that speak to the issues of young people on the ballot. Gen Z men are looking for younger candidates that speak to the issues they care about.

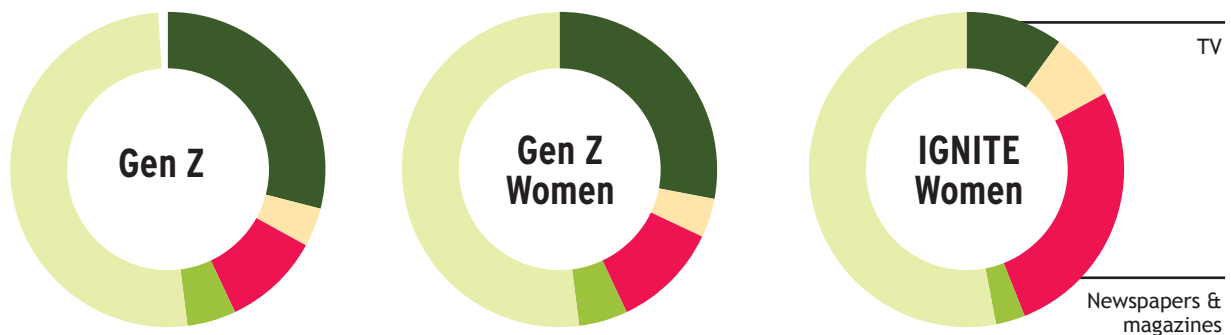
Among the IGNITE participants, over 90% reported wanting more racially and age diverse candidates, surpassing their women-identifying and non-binary peers in the broader study. Across the Board IGNITE Gen Zers need to see more women, more racially/ethnically diverse/younger and candidates that speak to the issues they care about. And if they vote 15% higher and engage in political actions 25-40% more than their peers, this is critical to getting and keeping them engaged.



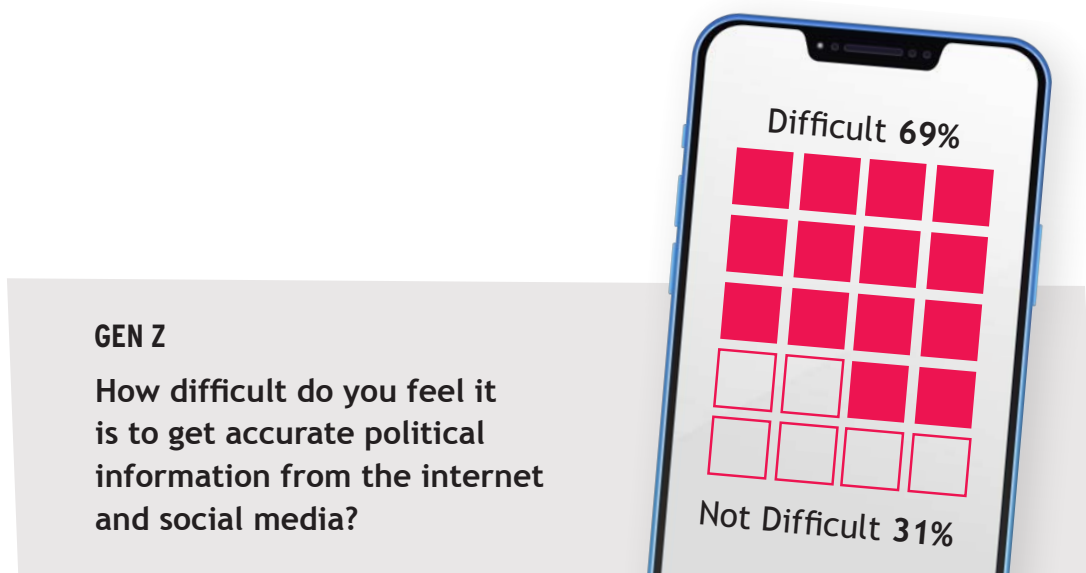


How Gen Zers get their Political News: Over 50% of respondents reported social media as the primary way they get their political news. Gen Z women-identifying and non-binary respondents slightly prefer social media more than their cis-men counterparts. Nearly 30% tap into television. Across all partisan groups, radio, newspapers and blogs are the more unpopular sources of political news. Among democrats and independents, social media continues to be the most popular.

IGNITE participants aligned with their peers on where they get their political news with a marked difference in their greater tendency to rely on newspapers and magazines versus TV.



By watching TV	29%	28%	10%
By listening to the radio	4%	4%	7%
By reading newspapers or magazines in print or online	10%	11%	27%
By reading blogs that are exclusively online	5%	5%	3%
Through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)	51%	52%	53%





**THE TOP ISSUES DRIVING
GEN Z POLITICAL ACTION
AND INTEREST**



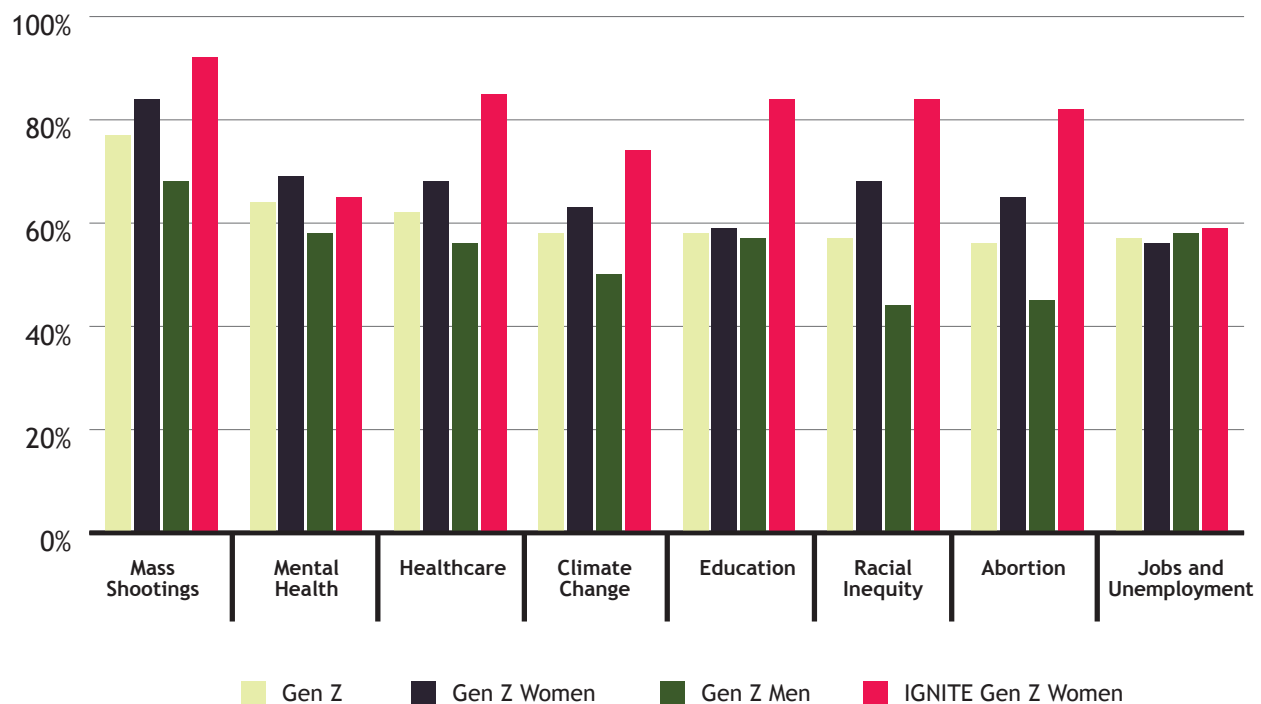


GEN Z'S CRITICAL ISSUES

Gen Z's political and civic engagement stems from a passion for issues rather than parties. Mass shootings, climate change, racial inequity, mental health and abortion are the top five issues amongst members of Gen Z, while Gen Z women-identifying and non-binary respondents showed marked issues like abortion access and racial inequity as critical in comparison to their men-identifying peers.

In addition to the differing levels of urgency for the issues, the data also showed differences by gender in how Gen Zers approach their top issues. For example, Gen Z cis men respondents prefer addressing mental health in tackling mass shootings, while their women-identifying and non-binary peers reported a preference for gun control measures.

	GEN Z	GEN Z WOMEN	GEN Z MEN	IGNITE GEN Z WOMEN
1	Mass Shootings 77%	Mass Shootings 84%	Mass Shootings 68%	Mass Shootings 92%
2	Mental Health 64%	Mental Health 69%	Jobs and Unemployment 58%	Healthcare 85%
3	Healthcare 62%	Healthcare 68%	Mental Health 58%	Education 84%
4	Climate Change 58%	Racial Inequality 68%	Education 57%	Racial Inequality 84%
5	Education 58%	Abortion 65%	Healthcare 56%	Abortion 82%

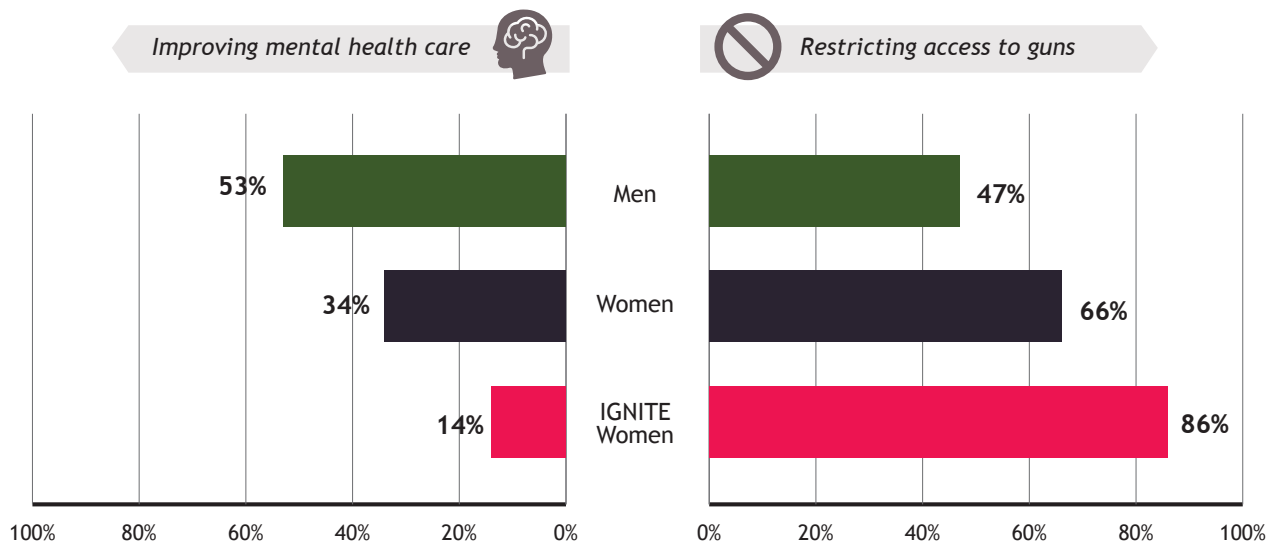




A majority of Gen Z supports legal abortion under all circumstances.

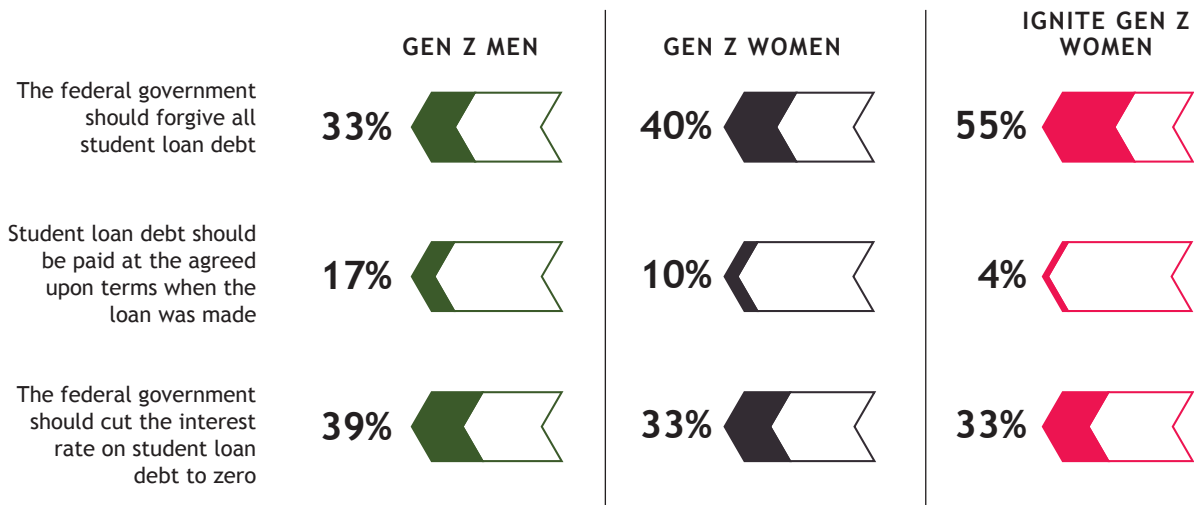
Gender gaps exist among attitudes towards legalizing abortion, with women-identifying and non-binary respondents being 12 points more likely to support abortion “for any reason”.

Gen Zers split on how to Prevent Gun Violence. Gen Z women and men disagree on the best approach to curb gun violence in America. Gen Z cis men, by a narrow margin, say improving mental health care should be the priority to prevent gun violence. Gen Z women-identifying and non-binary respondents by a 2 to 1 margin prefer restricting access to guns as the primary method to combat gun violence.



Gen Zers overwhelmingly support forgiving or restructuring student loans.

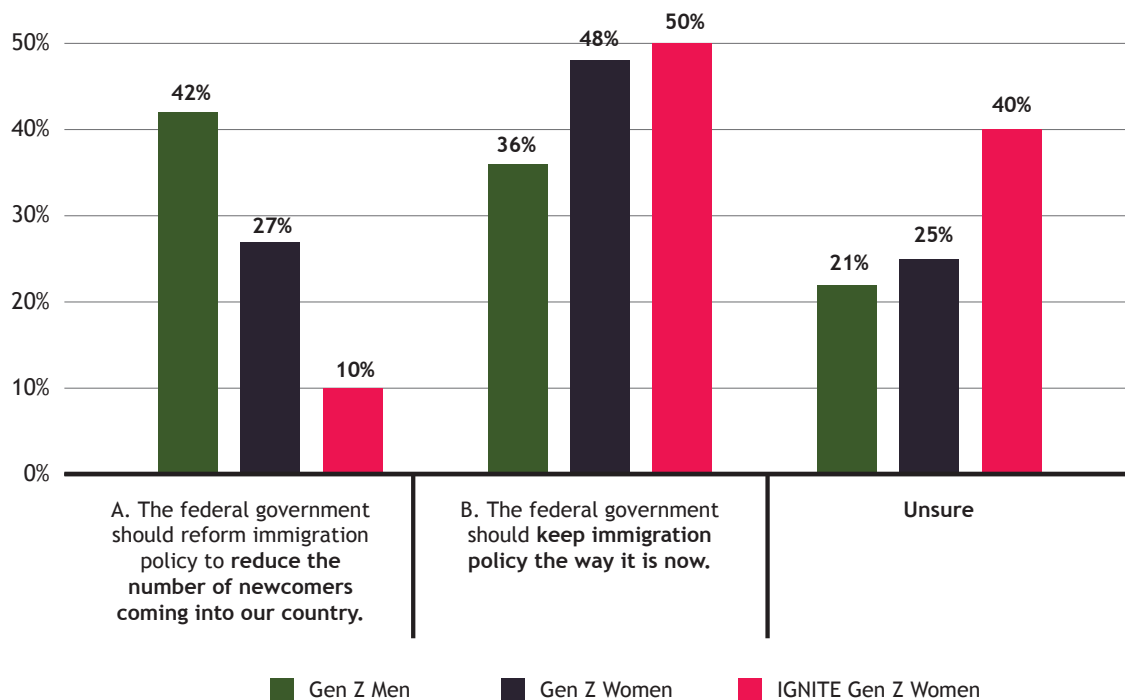
“Which of the following statements comes closest to your position on student loan debt?”



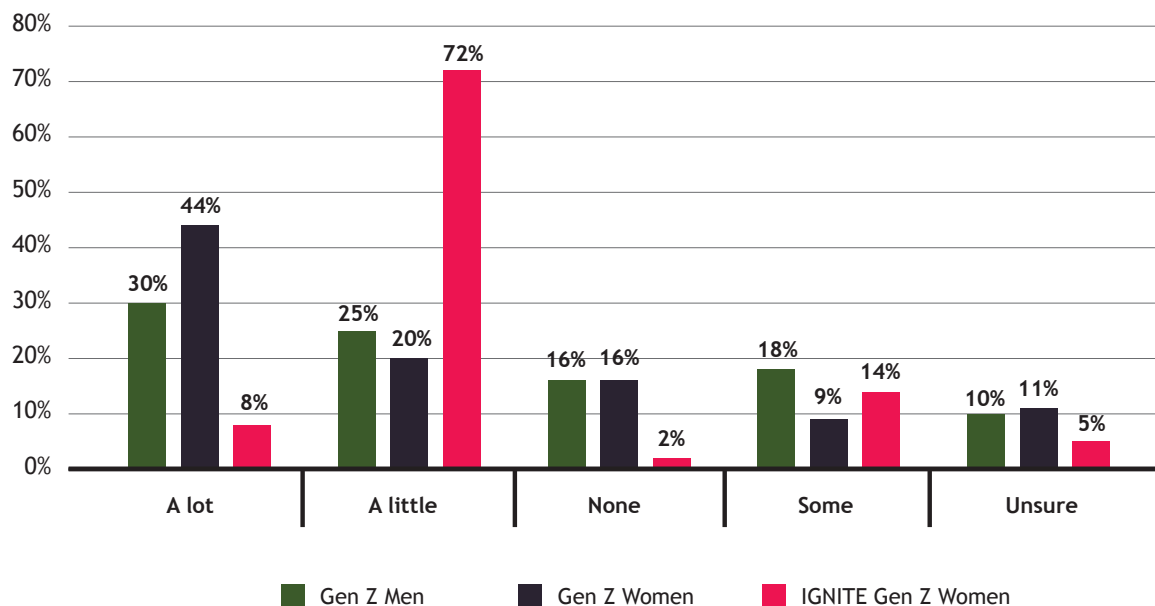


There is a wide gender gap among Gen Z in how to approach immigration in the U.S.

For the following 5 pairs of statements, select the one that most closely aligns (agrees) with your personal opinion: A or B

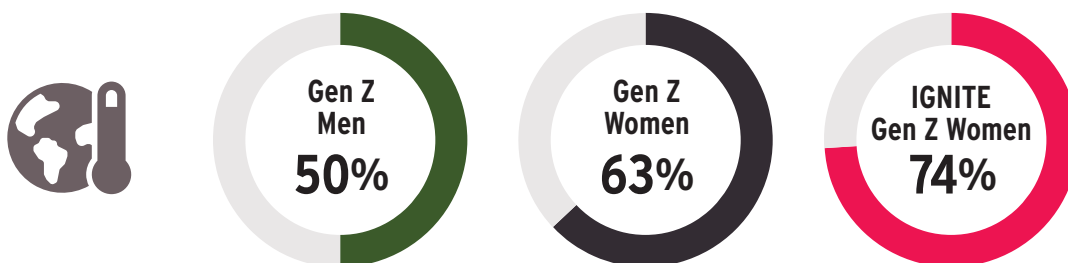


Do you support the following proposed government policies a lot, some, a little, none or are you unsure? Undocumented Immigrant Tuition: Allow all undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children to qualify for in-state tuition and fees at state colleges and universities

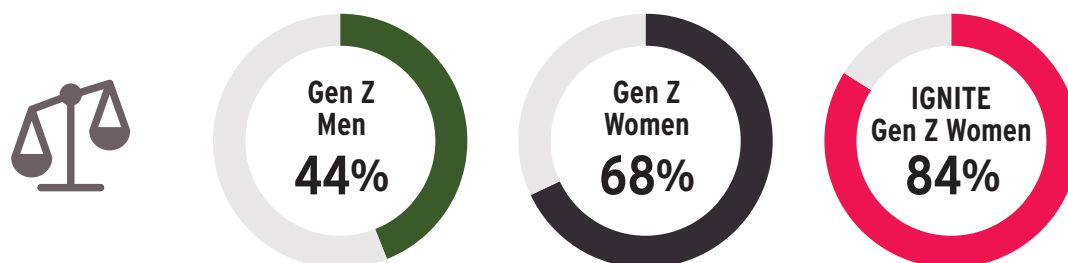




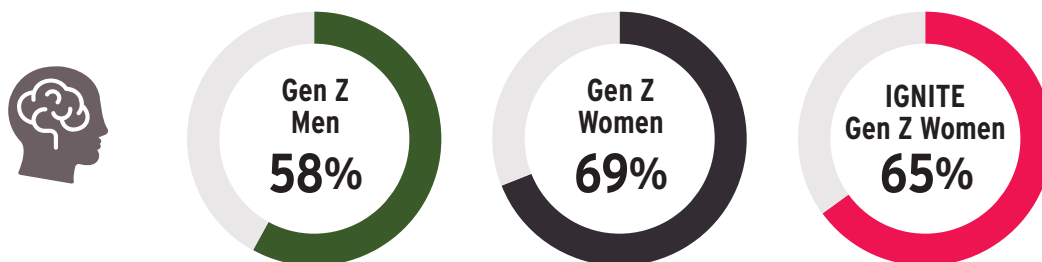
Climate change is the top 4th most critical issue across Gen Zers.



Racial inequality has been a critical issue for Gen Z for the past three years we have been collecting data. There has always been a gender difference, with young women overwhelmingly rating racial inequality 25 points higher than Gen Z men.



Gen Z have increasingly rated mental health as a critical issue especially since the start and end of the pandemic. There is about an 11 point difference between gen z men and women, women rating mental health as a critical issue.





KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Gen Z political power is growing, and their voices matter. Bring them to the table, listen and make sure they are at the front and center of policy solutions.
- 2** Invest in organizations that support Gen Z organizing, voter registration, education and overall political and civic engagement.



A special thank you to Grantmakers for Girls of Color for funding this research, and for their continued support of IGNITE's mission.

IGNITE experts are available to discuss the data and insights. To request an interview or for any other media inquiries, please contact Sofia Huizar, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, IGNITE (sofia@ignitenational.org).

<https://ignitenational.org/gen-z-research>