• **Black voters tend to hold higher education in higher esteem.** 81% of Black registered voters view public community colleges favorably in comparison to 76% of all registered voters surveyed. This pattern also exists with public four-year college, four-year private colleges, and the higher education system at large. Black voters likely assess higher education more favorably given the perception that it is a ladder to socioeconomic success and that Black families and households are less likely to inherit wealth.

• **Black voters have become quite pessimistic about the value proposition of college, yet believe the country would be better off if more people went to college.** With tuition rising faster than wages for decades now, 90% of Black voters believe rising student loan debt is a major problem, and 89% believe it constitutes a national crisis. Another 91% agree the cost of higher education makes college impossible for many Americans. Yet 91% of Black voters believe the country would be better if more people went to college.

• **Only half of the public is aware debt cancellation is even on the table.** Despite becoming a more prominent political issue in recent years, just 47% of Black voters have heard “a lot” or “some” about debt cancellation. This suggests there is a large opportunity to build support as the issue receives more media attention during the Biden administration.

• **Black voters prefer “eliminating” debt to “canceling” it.** This survey included a split language test between “eliminating” and “canceling” student loan debt—two-thirds (67%) of Black voters strongly support “eliminating” student loan debt while fewer Black voters strongly support “canceling” it (59%).
KEY FINDINGS:

• **More than half of Black voters hold or held student loan debt.** 56% of Black voters held or hold student loan debt. More than a third (34%) of Black voters currently have between $15,000-$50,000 of debt and another 45% hold $15,000 or less in student loan debt. These student debt loads are likely cutting into consumer spending and dimming the prospects for a rapid economic recovery, and have an outsized impact on Black Americans due to the historic exclusion of Black people from wealth creation.

• **Many are deferring major life events due to their student loan debts.** Black voters with student loan debt say they would be significantly more likely to move forward with major life events if they weren't carrying these balances. For instance, 73% said they would save for retirement, 53% would buy a home instead of renting, 49% would live in a different neighborhood, and 48% would leave a job where they’re facing discrimination.

• **A large minority of Black voters are willing to stay home unless student loan debt is canceled.** Joe Biden’s general election win and the landmark Democratic victories in Georgia’s runoff elections have reminded the country of Black voters’ political power. In this context, the new Biden administration will need to heed the fact that 40% of Black voters and 37% of Democrats broadly say they would never vote for a candidate who opposes eliminating student loan debt.

...48% would leave a job where they're facing discrimination.
Black voters are more likely to consider themselves **moderate** on the ideological spectrum.
Black voters are very favorable towards President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Democrats in Congress.
In this past general election, Black voters overwhelmingly supported President Biden and Vice President Harris.

 البعض الآخرين
Black voters hold higher education in higher esteem than the public at-large.
40% of Black voters are unwilling to vote for a candidate who opposes eliminating student loan debt.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>ALL VOTERS</th>
<th>BLACK VOTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating student loan debt.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase police funding.</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting access to abortion.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing military spending.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the minimum wage to $15 per hour.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding access to Medicare to all citizens. (Medicare for All)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending mass incarceration for low-level, nonviolent drug offenses.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A federal jobs guarantee for anyone willing to work.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making college tuition-free at public colleges and universities.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurring monthly cash payments to all.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I agree with this position, and would never vote for a candidate with whom I disagreed on this position.”

RESEARCH FINDINGS PREPARED BY GLOBAL STRATEGY GROUP | PAGE 12
Three-in-four Black voters believe college is unaffordable, as do 82% of all voters with some college experience.
82% of Black voters believe **the cost of higher ed makes college unattainable** AND 82% of Black voters also believe the country would be better off if more people could afford to go to college.
Rising student loan debt is a major problem.
The cost of higher education, even at public institutions, makes college impossible for many Americans.
Higher education institutions are mostly looking out for their bottom lines rather than for their students.
The country would be better off if more people could afford to go to college.
Rising student loan debt is a national crisis.
Higher education is no longer worth the cost for most students.
More than half of Black voters either currently hold student loan debt, or have paid off their student loan debts.

Have you ever had, or do you currently have, student loan debt?
- 34% Have Never Had Student Loan Debt
- 22% Paid Off Student Loan Debt
- 44% Currently Have Student Debt
- 2% Prefer Not to Say

How much student loan debt do you currently have?
- 34% $0 - $15K
- 45% $15K - $50K
- 24% $50K+
- 2% Prefer Not to Say

As of today, how much student loan debt have you paid off?
- 64% $0 - $15K
- 24% $15K - $50K
- 10% $50K+
- 2% Prefer Not to Say

More than half of Black voters either currently hold student loan debt, or have paid off their student loan debts.
One-in-five Black parents have taken on student loan debt to put their children through college.

**Have you ever had, or do you currently have, student loan debt that you acquired for the purposes of paying for your child's higher education?**

- 83% have never had student loan debt for my child’s education.
- 13% have paid off student loan debt for my child’s education.
- 5% currently have student debt for my child’s education.

**Debt Levels of Black Parents**

- $0 - $15K: 61%
- $15K - $50K: 24%
- $50K+: 15%
- Prefer not to say: 10%

**How much student loan debt do you currently have as a result of paying for your child’s higher education?**

- As of today, how much student loan debt have you paid off for your child?
Two-in-five Black parents also report their child has independently taken on student loan debt, and more than half say their child still owes more than $15,000.
The pandemic has forced a majority of Black voters with student loan debt to defer payments, especially those who didn’t complete their degrees.
IMPACT OF DEBT

STUDENT DEBT ELIMINATION
Without the burden of student loan debt, many Black voters would save for retirement, buy a home, or leave a job where they faced discrimination.
MORE LIKELY TO... IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE STUDENT LOAN DEBT.

- Save for retirement: 60% (ALL VOTERS), 73% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Go on a nice vacation: 59% (ALL VOTERS), 62% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Buy a home instead of renting: 53% (ALL VOTERS), 53% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Donate to charity: 47% (ALL VOTERS), 52% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Buy a car: 44% (ALL VOTERS), 46% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Live in a different neighborhood: 39% (ALL VOTERS), 49% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Leave a job where I faced discrimination: 39% (ALL VOTERS), 48% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Start a business: 31% (ALL VOTERS), 41% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Have children: 24% (ALL VOTERS), 28% (BLACK VOTERS)
- Get married: 17% (ALL VOTERS), 23% (BLACK VOTERS)
Most Black college graduates would have considered an advanced degree if higher education were more affordable.
If higher education were more affordable, I would have earned an advanced degree.

If I didn’t have to consider my student loan debt, I would have pursued a career I’m more passionate about.

My college education and post-college job opportunities were not worth the debt I incurred.

If I didn’t have to consider my student loan debt, I would have pursued a more modestly paid career.

The cost of higher education makes me regret pursuing a college degree.

My student loan debt forced me to pick a career or take a job I’m not passionate about.

I regret pursuing higher education because of the student loan debt I had to take on.

Taking on student loan debt has limited my career options.

I have stayed in an unhealthy or unhappy job situation because of my student loan debt.

If I had known then what I know now about college, I would not have pursued a college degree.
The cost of a degree is a major reason why many Black voters did not complete their four-year degrees; not having a degree has limited the career prospects of most non-graduates.

VOTERS WHO AGREE

- Not having a 4-year college degree has limited my career options.
- Not having a 4-year college degree has lowered my earning potential.
- The cost of higher education was a major reason I did not finish my college education.
- I regret pursuing higher education because of the student loan debt I had to take on.
- Taking on student loan debt has limited my career options.
Many Black voters who never attended a post-secondary institution decided against college because of the cost.

**High school graduates who agree**

- Not having a college degree has lowered my earning potential. (61% all voters, 67% Black voters)
- I’m glad I didn’t attend college because I avoided taking on student loan debt. (66% all voters, 67% Black voters)
- The cost of higher education was a major reason I decided not to attend college. (58% all voters, 64% Black voters)
- Not having a college degree has limited my career options. (60% all voters, 64% Black voters)
- Not having student loan debt has increased my options when choosing a job. (52% all voters, 60% Black voters)
POLICY EXPECTATIONS
STUDENT DEBT ELIMINATION
Nearly 9 in 10 Black women & 8 in 10 Black men support canceling a portion of student loan debt.
Half of Black men and women support canceling all student loan debt.
Nearly 40% of Black voters want the Biden administration to ensure that any student admitted into a public college can graduate without taking on any student loan debt.

Ensuring that any student that is accepted into a public college or university will be able to graduate without taking on more than $50,000 in student loan debt—most important to more than a quarter (27%) of Black voters.

Ensuring that any student that is accepted into a public college or university will be able to graduate without any student loan debt—most important to four in ten (39%) Black voters.

Ensuring that any student that is accepted into a public college or university will be able to graduate without paying any tuition or fees—most important to a third (33%) of Black voters.
• **National awareness of the issue is increasing, and support is high.** Support for debt cancellation is already high—but only half of voters are aware it’s an option for the Biden administration. As the issue gains prominence and media attention, it is likely that both support and pressure will grow.

• **Black voters will abandon candidates who oppose elimination.** Biden is President, in large part due to the faith Black voters placed in him. At the same time, 40% of Black voters will not vote for a candidate who does not support eliminating student loan debt. It is critical that Biden shores up this core constituency as he looks to marshal support for future policy battles.

• **Eliminate all student loan debt and ensure that future college enrollees are able to obtain a college education without debt.** A large majority of all voters (65%) support either full debt cancellation (28%) or partial debt cancellation (37%) and forming a coalition among these two groups would give the new administration stronger incentive to act on the issue. An even larger proportion of Black voters (84%) support either full cancellation (49%) or partial cancellation (35%).

• **Both student loan debt elimination and cancellation are racial justice issues.** Canceling student loan debt is an equitable, race-forward solution, out of the many that exist, to address and repair the centuries of systemic exclusion Black Americans have faced. Further, canceling student loan debt will aid Black Americans in the midst of an anemic job market. Helping those early in their career, in particular, will also have the added benefit of stimulating a sagging economy.
METHODOLOGY:

**VOTERS**
Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 803 nationwide registered voters, with an additional oversample of 120 Black registered voters, between January 6th and January 10th, 2021.

**MARGIN OF ERROR**
The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval is +/- 3.5% for the base of nationwide registered voters. The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval is +/- 8.9% for the oversample of Black registered voters. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.