

## **New Results** from the **December 2018** Winthrop Poll Southern Focus Survey

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – New data released from December’s Winthrop Poll Southern Focus Survey of 11 southern states show that while attitudes of white and African-American Southerners on racial issues show some congruence, deep divides still exist. **New Results begin at Table 17**

What the poll uncovers is that whites and blacks have very different experiences living in the South. More than half of African Americans in the region report that they have been discriminated against in the last year because of their race or ethnicity, while 18% of whites report such discrimination.

Nearly identical numbers of whites and blacks in the South, 30% and 28% respectively, feel that America should preserve its “white European heritage.” According to poll director, Professor Scott Huffmon, “We’re not sure what resulted in this common outlook; it could be something as simple as the realization that we sprung from the colonies of a European power. We do know, however, that the phrase “white European heritage” clearly held distinct meaning for some. Nearly half of those who viewed the Confederate Flag favorably agreed with the preservation of white European heritage.”

In two examples of changing attitudes, black and white Southerners generally agreed that people of different races should be allowed to live wherever they please and marry whomever they please, as well as believe that all races should be treated equally.

Differences arose when asking whether whites or racial minorities were “under attack in this country.” Thirty-eight percent of whites and 11% of blacks agreed that whites were under attack while 51% of whites and 89% of blacks agreed that racial minorities were under attack. Among respondents who view the Confederate Flag favorably, 48% agreed that whites are under attack while 42% reported the same for racial minorities. According to Huffmon, “Confederate Flag supporters in the South are notably more likely than others to view whites as the victims in today’s political environment.”

African Americans and whites in the South are nearly mirror images of each other when asked what holds blacks back in today’s society. Over half of African American respondents said that racial discrimination is the main reason blacks can’t get ahead, while over half of whites said that African Americans are responsible for their own condition. Once Again, Confederate Flag supporters showed a stronger trend, with 16% blaming racial discrimination and 72% saying black people who can’t get ahead are responsible for their own condition.

Also released for the first time are the results of a survey based experiment. Half of the respondents were asked whether they believed that whites in America have “privileges” that non-whites do not have, while the other half were asked if they believed that non-whites in America experience “barriers.”

Among those who heard the “privilege” version, 92% of blacks, 50% of whites, and only 36% of Confederate Flag supporters believed whites have privilege. However, among those asked about non-whites facing “barriers,” those agreeing among whites and Confederate Flag supporters increased by about 20 points over the “privilege” wording while slightly fewer African Americans agreed.

Huffman noted, “This is a classic ‘framing effect.’ Whether differences are attributed to one group having ‘privilege’ or the other group facing ‘barriers,’ the end result is the same; however, by changing the way we talk about a situation, we see that attitudes can shift. Market researchers have known this for decades. People may recall decades ago the upcharge for paying with a credit card at a gas station came to be called a ‘cash discount’ and suddenly people were much more accepting. Same result, different frame.”

The Southern respondents contacted for this poll reside in: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. The sample size does not allow for breakdowns by individual states.

Previous results in December released dealt with the concept of Christian nationalism, Confederate monuments and the flag, the cause of the Civil War, race relations, the economy and opportunity. **New Results begin at Table 17.**

## **METHODOLOGY**

For this latest Winthrop Poll, callers surveyed 969 residents in 11 Southern states by landline and cell phones between Nov. 10-20 and Nov. 26-Dec. 2. See full methodology statement for a note on the odd array of dates. The Southern states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Results which use all respondents have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.15 at the 95% confidence level. Subgroups have higher margins of error. Margins of error are based on weighted sample size.

## **POLL FUNDING AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**The Winthrop Poll** is funded by Winthrop University. For additional information, or to set up an interview with **Poll Director Scott Huffman**, please contact **Judy Longshaw** at [longshawj@winthrop.edu](mailto:longshawj@winthrop.edu) or 803-323-2404 (office) or 803-984-0586 (cell).

**Poll Demographics for December 2018 Winthrop Poll of the South v. Census Data on the South**

(Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia)

	Census	December Winthrop Poll
18 to 29 years	21.5881	19.0
30 to 44 years	24.1393	24.5
45 to 64 years	33.8867	34.5
65 years and over	20.3859	22.0
Male	48.0769	48.0
Female	51.9231	52.0
Not Sure	--	0.1
White alone	73.7545	71.7
Black or African American alone	20.0113	20.1
Other	6.2342	5.9
Refused	--	2.3

**Cell entries represent percent responding as indicated. Columns may not sum to 100 due to rounding**

Table 1: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Donald Trump** is handling his job as President of the United States?

	All	GOP (incl Leanners)	Democrats (incl Leanners)	National Approval 11/25 (while this poll was

				in the field) from Gallup
Approve	44	80	4	38
Disapprove	48	13	91	60
Not Sure	6	6	3	
Refused	2	2	1	

Table 2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Congress** is handling its job?

	All
Approve	18
Disapprove	70
Not Sure	10
Refused	3

Table 3: Thinking about the current path that our nation is taking, do you think our country is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction?

	All	GOP (incl Leaners)	Democrats (incl Leaners)
Right Track	35	57	9
Wrong Direction	56	33	87
Don't Know/ Refused	9	10	4

Table 4: **What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States of America today?**

TOP FIVE

	All
Immigration	13.1
Politicians/ Government	7.4
Racism	5.8
Healthcare (people not having it)	5.5
Economy	5.2

Table 5: How would you rate the condition of the economy of the country as a whole these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

	All
Very good	20
Fairly good	57
Fairly bad	15
Very bad	5
Not Sure	2
Refused	1

Table 6: Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

	All
Getting Better	56
Getting Worse	33
Not Sure [volunteered]	9
Refused	2

Table 7: Which of the following comes closest to your opinion about what to do with **monuments or memorials to Confederate soldiers who died during the Civil War?**

[CALLER: Randomize options]

Leave them just as they are.

Leave them, **but** add a plaque or marker for context and historical interpretation

Move them to a museum

Remove them completely

	All	White	Black
Leave	42	47	26
Leave BUT add marker	28	31	16
Museum	23	17	42
Remove	5	3	13
Not sure/ Don't know	2	1	3
Refused	1	0	1

Table 8: Which of the following comes closest to your opinion about what to do with **statues honoring leaders and politicians who SUPPORTED racial segregation?**

[CALLER: Randomize options]

Leave them just as they are.

Leave them, **but** add a plaque or marker for context and historical interpretation

Move them to a museum

Remove them completely

	All	White	Black
Leave	30	34	18

Leave BUT add marker	26	30	16
Museum	26	23	37
Remove	13	10	25
Not Sure/ Don't Know	2	2	2
Refused	2	2	3

Table 9: Is your view of the Confederate Flag favorable or unfavorable?

Would you say that is Very or Somewhat?

[CALLER: if someone asks "Which Confederate flag," Respond: "The one commonly referred to as the Confederate Battle Flag."]

	All	White	Black
Very Favorable	20	24	8
Somewhat Favorable	17	20	7
Somewhat Unfavorable	18	18	15
Very Unfavorable	28	20	58
Not Sure/ Don't Know	14	15	11
Refused	4	4	2

Table 10: Do you think the Confederate flag is more a symbol of racial conflict or of Southern pride?

	All	White	Black
Racial Conflict	38	31	64

Southern Pride	47	55	21
Don't Know	12	11	13
Refused	3	3	2

Table 11: What's your impression of the main cause of the Civil War? Was the Civil War mainly about slavery, mainly about states' rights, or about both equally?

	All	White	Black
Slavery	25	23	30
States' Rights	21	26	8
Both Equally	49	46	58
Not Sure/ Don't Know	4	5	3
Refused	1	1	1

Table 12: Now, we're going to talk about matters of race and race relations for a bit.

How would you rate race relations in the UNITED STATES today? Excellent, Good, Only Fair, or Poor

	All	White	Black
Excellent	2	2	1
Good	18	21	8
Only Fair	38	41	32
Poor	41	35	59
Don't Know/ Not sure	1	1	0
Refused	1	1	1



Table 13: Do you feel race relations in the UNITED STATES are getting better or getting worse?

	All	White	Black
Better	31	36	15
Worse	61	56	76
Not changing// staying same [volunteered]	6	6	5
Refused	3	3	3

Table 14: 'Political correctness' threatens our liberty as Americans to speak our minds.

	All	GOP (incl Leaners)	Democrats (incl Leaners)
Strongly Agree	31	47	14
Agree	37	37	35
Neither agree nor disagree	5	2	7

Disagree	17	10	29
Strongly disagree	7	2	11
Don't Know/ Refused	3	2	3

Table 15: America was founded as an explicitly Christian nation.

	All	GOP (incl Leaners)	Democrats (incl Leaners)	White Evangelicals
Strongly Agree	18	29	9	34
Agree	33	38	29	42
Neither agree nor disagree	8	7	6	4
Disagree	21	18	24	14

Strongly disagree	16	5	28	5
Don't Know/ Refused	4	3	4	1

Table 16: Do you believe all people in the United States do or do not have an equal chance to *succeed* if they work equally hard?

	All	GOP (incl Leaners)	Democrats (incl Leaners)
Do	49	72	22
Do NOT	47	25	74
Not Sure [volunteered]	3	2	4
Refused	1	0	--

Table 17: In the past year, do you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your race or ethnicity?

	All	White	Black
Yes	27	18	52
No	72	80	46
Not Sure	1	1	2
Refused	0	0	--

**NOTE: The Question seen in Table 18 was ONLY asked of those who reported that they have experienced racial discrimination in the last year.**

Table 18: How often would you say you have been discriminated against in the last year because of your race or ethnicity? Frequently, Occasionally, or Rarely?

	All (27% of all resp)	White (18% of whites)	Black 52% of blacks)
Frequently	19	19	15
Occasionally	43	36	51
Rarely	38	45	33
Don't Know/Refused	1	--	1

**NOTE: For the tables below “View Confederate Flag Favorably” means those who responded that their view of the Confederate Flag was “Very Favorable” or “Somewhat Favorable”**

Table 19: America must protect and preserve its White European heritage.

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	8	9	6	15
Agree	21	21	22	32
Neither agree nor disagree	12	13	8	11
Disagree	25	25	25	24
Strongly disagree	29	28	33	14
Don't Know/Refused	5	4	7	5

Table 20: Marriage should only be allowed between people of the same race.

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	3	4	3	6
Agree	4	4	5	6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	4	3	7
Disagree	28	27	32	35
Strongly disagree	60	60	58	44
Don't Know/Refused	1	2	--	1

Table 21: People of different races should be free to live wherever they choose

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	67	68	64	55
Agree	28	26	32	37
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1	1	2
Disagree	2	2	1	3
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	1
Don't Know/ Refused	2	1	2	1

Table 22: White people are currently under attack in this country

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	8	10	1	14
Agree	23	28	10	34
Neither agree nor disagree	10	11	6	9
Disagree	29	26	37	27
Strongly disagree	29	24	45	14

Don't Know/ Refused	1	1	2	1
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Table 23: All races should be treated equally.

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	74	75	72	64
Agree	25	24	27	35
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	--	0
Disagree	0	1	--	0
Strongly disagree	0	--	1	--
Don't Know/ Refused	0	0	--	1

Note: Every category with a zero had respondents, but since each was below 0.5, they were rounded to zero

Table 24: Racial minorities are currently under attack in this country.

[CALLER: Prompt as necessary, “Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with that statement?”]

	All	White	Black	View Confederate
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				Flag Favorably
Strongly Agree	23	17	45	10
Agree	36	34	44	32
Neither agree nor disagree	6	7	2	6
Disagree	23	28	6	32
Strongly disagree	10	12	2	17
Don't Know/ Refused	3	3	2	3

Table 25: Do you feel that generations of slavery and discrimination do or do not make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class?

Do you feel that way Strongly or Somewhat?

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly DO make it difficult	28	20	53	12
Somewhat DO make it difficult	25	27	22	22
Somewhat do NOT make it difficult	12	14	11	14
Strongly do NOT make it difficult	28	33	10	50
Don't Know/ Not Sure	4	5	2	2
Refused	2	1	3	1



Table 26: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

[CALLER: Rotate answers]

Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days

OR

Black people who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Racial Discrimination	33	29	53	16
Responsible own condition	47	51	32	72
Don't Know/ Not Sure	13	13	12	6
Refused	7	7	3	5

Table 27: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

[CALLER: Rotate answers]

Our country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites

OR

Our country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Has Made Changes	41	50	9	61
Needs to Continue	54	44	89	34
Don't Know/ Not Sure	3	3	1	2
Refused	3	3	1	2

**NOTE: Tables 28 & 29 represent a survey based experiment. Half of the respondents were randomly selected to hear the version seen in Table 28 while the other half saw the version seen in Table 29**

Table 28: Do you believe whites in America experience **privileges** that non-whites do not experience?

[CALLER: If they ask what kind of privileges, respond, “Just an easier time with some things, in general”]

Do you feel that way Strongly or Somewhat

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly have privilege	35	23	71	15
Somewhat have privileges	25	27	21	21
Somewhat do NOT have privilege	11	14	3	16
Strongly do NOT have privilege	25	32	4	46

Don't Know/ Not Sure	3	3	1	2
Refused	1	1	--	1

Table 29: Do you believe non-whites in America experience **barriers** that whites do not experience?

[CALLER: If they ask what kind of barriers, respond, “Just a harder time with some things, in general”]

Do you feel that way Strongly or Somewhat

	All	White	Black	View Confederate Flag Favorably
Strongly have barriers	41	36	65	20
Somewhat have barriers	31	35	20	35
Somewhat do NOT have barriers	8	8	10	12
Strongly do NOT have barriers	14	17	4	30
Don't Know/ Not Sure	4	4	1	3
Refused	1	1	--	1

Table 30: Framing effects of question wording: Belief that ‘Whites have Privilege’ or ‘Non-whites Face Barriers’ (strongly & somewhat combined) by Race and Favorable View of the Confederate Flag (strongly & somewhat combined)

	Question Wording / Version	
	Whites have Privilege	Non-whites face Barriers

Whites	50	71
Blacks	92	85
Those Who View Confederate Flag Favorably	36	55

For methodological questions please read the full [Methodology Statement](#)

#### ORIGINAL DECEMBER PRESS RELEASE

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Half of residents in 11 Southern states either agree or strongly agree that America was founded as an explicitly Christian nation, according to the results in the Winthrop Poll Southern Focus Survey.

This viewpoint, a crux of “Christian Nationalism,” is particularly prevalent among white evangelicals. Those who espouse Christian Nationalist beliefs want the United States to be governed as an explicitly Christian nation (for more explanation of Christian Nationalism, see: Whitehead, Andrew L., Samuel L. Perry, and Joseph O. Baker. 2018. “Make America Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election.” *Sociology of Religion* 79(2):147-171).

In this latest poll, three-fourths of white evangelical respondents agree or strongly agree with this belief on how the nation was founded. According to poll director, Dr. Scott Huffmon, “Research has shown that increases in Christian Nationalist beliefs lead to more exclusionary views on immigration and more negative views of multi-culturalism in America, those who hold these views care more about whether they have a strong leader who will protect their religious and cultural values than whether a leader is individually pious.”

More than 80% of evangelicals voted for Trump in 2016. The poll found that 80% of Republican (or Republican Leaning) Southerners approve of Trump, while only 4% of Democrats do.

Trump has a 44% approval rating among all respondents and a 48% disapproval rating. This is slightly higher than his national approval ratings. According to Huffmon, “Trump’s approval is still soaring among his base in the South and his overall approval ratings in the region remain slightly higher than his national numbers.”

Meanwhile, Congress has a 70% disapproval rating.

The Southern respondents contacted for this poll reside in: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. The sample size does not allow for breakdowns by individual states.

## **SEE BELOW FOR QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

### **CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS AND FLAG**

As some Southern communities and universities ponder what to do with monuments that celebrate Civil War era figures, the Winthrop Poll asked residents what should be done with the statues that commemorate Confederate soldiers who died during the Civil War.

Forty-two percent of Southerners said to leave those memorials alone, while 28% said to add a plaque for context and historical interpretation. Nearly one-fourth want to move the statues to a museum. Huffmon notes, "All told, 56% want to do something other than simply leave the monuments and statues as they are, but these folks are very divided on what should be done. A strong plurality advocate leaving them as they are."

As far as statues honoring leaders and politicians who supported racial segregation, 30% said to leave the statues in public spaces. One-fourth said to add a marker, another fourth said to put them in a museum, while 13% said to remove them. Thirty-seven percent of black respondents said to put them in a museum, while a fourth said to remove them.

According to Huffmon, "Statues to avowed segregationists are more controversial than monuments to the confederate fallen. A much slimmer plurality advocate leaving them as is while nearly as many would like to add a marker for historical context or move them to museums. While only 13% wish to remove them entirely, it is notable that this is more than twice as many people who want Confederate memorials wholly removed."

Concerning the Confederate flag, 46% of Southern residents view it as somewhat or very unfavorable. Only one in five Southerners view it as very favorable. Breaking down the viewpoints by race, there were 44% of whites who view the flag as favorable or very favorable, while 58% of blacks view it as very unfavorable.

This Winthrop Poll sought to find out what Southerners believe the flag stands for. It is viewed by nearly half of all respondents as a symbol of Southern pride. Yet 64% of black respondents view it as a symbol of racial conflict.

### **CAUSE OF THE CIVIL WAR AND RACE RELATIONS**

Even though the American Civil War ended in 1865, the causes of the war continue to be debated. A fourth of all respondents said it was caused by slavery; 21% said states' rights; and half said both were equal causes. Thirty percent of black respondents said slavery was the cause, while 58% said both slavery and states' rights were the cause.

It only follows that race and race relations continue to be a controversial subject among Americans. Forty percent of all respondents said race relations are poor in this country, and another 38 percent called them only fair. A majority of black residents – 59% – said relations are poor, while 35% of white residents agreed.

A majority of residents, black and white, said race relations are growing worse.

## **ECONOMY AND OPPORTUNITY**

More than half of Southerners said our country is headed in the wrong direction. This was mostly a Democratic viewpoint because 57% Republicans surveyed said the country is moving on the right track. Still, 77% of Southern residents said our country's economy as a whole is very good or fairly good and a majority said it is getting better.

The most important problem facing our country, according to those surveyed, is immigration, followed by politicians/government, racism, lack of healthcare and the economy.

Southern Republicans and Democrats are polar opposites in whether all people in the United States have an equal chance to succeed if they work equally hard. Nearly three fourths of Republicans agree while three fourths of Democrats did not agree.

Concerning "political correctness," more than two thirds of residents agree or strongly agree that it threatens our liberty. Political correctness seems to be much more worrisome to Republicans, as nearly half strongly agreed that it was a threat, while only 14% of Democrats strongly agreed. Overall, however, nearly half of Democrats saw political correctness as a threat to liberty at some level while an overwhelming 84% of Republicans responded that they saw it as a threat at some level.

## **Survey Methodology**

### **December 2018 Winthrop Poll of the South**

This is a General Population poll of **969** adult residents of VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, TN, AR, AL, MS, LA, and TX. Results which use **All Respondents** have a **margin of error of approximately +/- 3.15%** at the 95% confidence level. Any subset will have a larger margin of error. Margins of error are based on weighted sample size and account for design effects.

Phone calls were made during weekday evenings, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon and evening. Weekday daytime calls are not made to avoid oversampling those who are more likely to be at home during the day (e.g. retirees, stay-at-home-parents, etc.). Conducting weekend calls is important to avoid systematically excluding

certain populations (such as those who may work 2nd or 3rd shift during the week). This poll was in the field from November 10 - 20 and November 26 - December 2, 2018. The prolonged, and odd, dates are due to the fact that the Center was converting from regular phonelines to VOIP and only half of our phone were working for the first leg of the survey. We also took a break over the Thanksgiving holiday.

The survey used **(1)** Random Digit Dialing (RDD) and **(2)** Wireless phone number sampling. Both RDD and wireless samples are crucial to ensure no adult in the geographical area of interest is systematically excluded from the sample. All samples were purchased from Survey Sampling International (SSI).

Data are weighted based on age, sex, and race using Census Bureau data.

Phone numbers selected for the survey were re-dialed up to 5 times in an attempt to reach a respondent. Once a household was reached, we also employed procedures to randomize within households for RDD sample. Surveys were conducted in English.

Computerized autodialers were not used in order to ensure the survey of wireless phones complied with the Telephone Consumers Protection Act and all FCC rules regarding contacting wireless telephones. 76% of the completions came from the wireless sample.

The Winthrop Poll is paid for by Winthrop University.

**Additional Explanation of RDD Methodology** : (with descriptions taken from SSI website)

Samples are generated using a database of "working blocks." A block (also known as a 100-bank or a bank) is a set of 100 contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four digits of a telephone number. For example, in the telephone number 203-567-7200, "72" is the block. A block is termed to be working if some specified number of listed telephone numbers are found in that block.

Samples of random numbers distributed across all eligible blocks in proportion to their density of listed telephone households are selected. All blocks within a county are organized in ascending order by area code, exchange, and block number. Once the quota has been allocated to all counties in the frame, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in eligible blocks within the county and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the county. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are systematically selected in proportion to their density of listed households. Once a block has been selected, a two-digit number is systematically selected in the range 00-99 and is appended to the exchange and block to form a 10-digit telephone number.