



**VOTE
DAY**

ISSUE BRIEF

DETROITERS' POLICY PRIORITIES: WHAT MATTERS TO DETROITERS LEADING UP TO THE NOVEMBER 2022 ELECTIONS

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This report is part of a series of reports highlighting findings from the [most recent survey of the Detroit Metro Area Communities Study](#) (DMACS) and supported by the [Center for Racial Justice](#). The survey was fielded between June 16 and Aug. 26, 2022, and captures the views of a representative sample of 2,339 Detroit residents. The report highlights Detroiters' policy priorities leading up to the November 2022 elections. Results have been weighted to reflect the population of the City of Detroit.

[See full results from DMACS surveys here.](#)

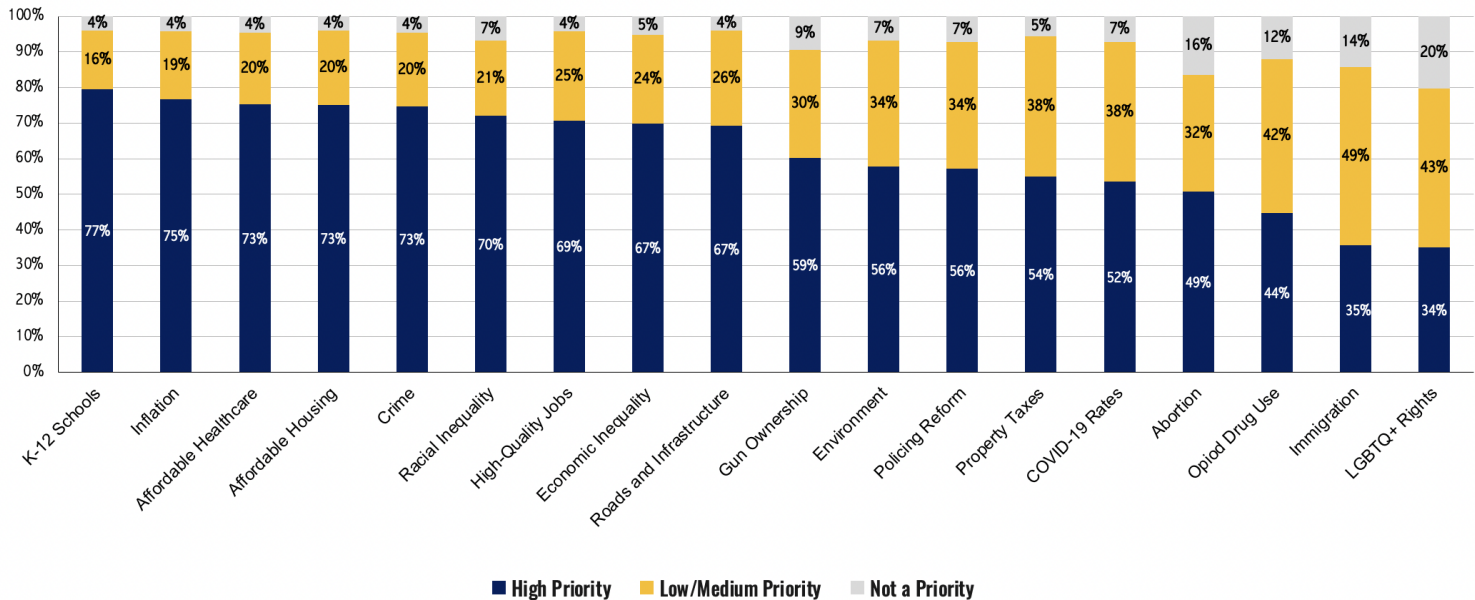
KEY FINDINGS

- While national attention has focused on the importance of inflation and crime in the November 2022 elections, the quality of K-12 schools is at least as likely to be considered a high priority among Detroit residents. Seventy-seven percent of Detroit residents indicate the quality of K-12 schools should be a high priority for elected officials.
- Nearly one out of every three eligible voters living in Detroit indicate some level of uncertainty about whether they will vote. These uncertain voters are most likely to list the quality of K-12 schools (78%), inflation (76%), affordable health care (74%), affordable housing (72%), and crime (71%) as a high priority.
- Black and White Detroiters diverge in the degree to which they feel elected officials should prioritize a number of issues. This divergence is most evident on the issues of rates of COVID-19, crime, the accessibility of high quality jobs, and policing reform, which Black Detroiters were far more likely to consider a top priority relative to White Detroiters.



THE QUALITY OF K-12 SCHOOLS IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR DETROITERS, ALONGSIDE HOUSING, HEALTH CARE, INFLATION, AND CRIME

Figure 1: Detroiters' Policy Priorities



- When asked “How much of a priority do you think each of the following issues should be for your elected government officials?” Detroiters most frequently cite the quality of K-12 schools as a high priority. Over three out of four (77%) Detroit residents indicate the quality of K-12 schools should be a high priority.
- The quality of K-12 schools is viewed as a high priority across demographic groups.
- Large majorities of Black (81%), Latino (68%), and White (73%) Detroiters indicate the quality of K-12 schools should be a high priority for elected officials.
- Parents/guardians of children under 18 (83%) and adults who don't live with children (78%) both believe the quality of K-12 schools should be a high priority for elected officials.
- Among Detroiters, both women (83%) and men (75%) cited the quality of K-12 schools as the top priority for elected officials.
- In addition to school quality, Detroiters cite inflation, affordable housing, affordable health care, and crime as top policy priorities. Seventy-five percent of Detroiters indicate inflation should be a high priority for elected government officials. A similar number of Detroiters think affordable housing (73%), affordable health care (73%), and crime (73%) should be prioritized.

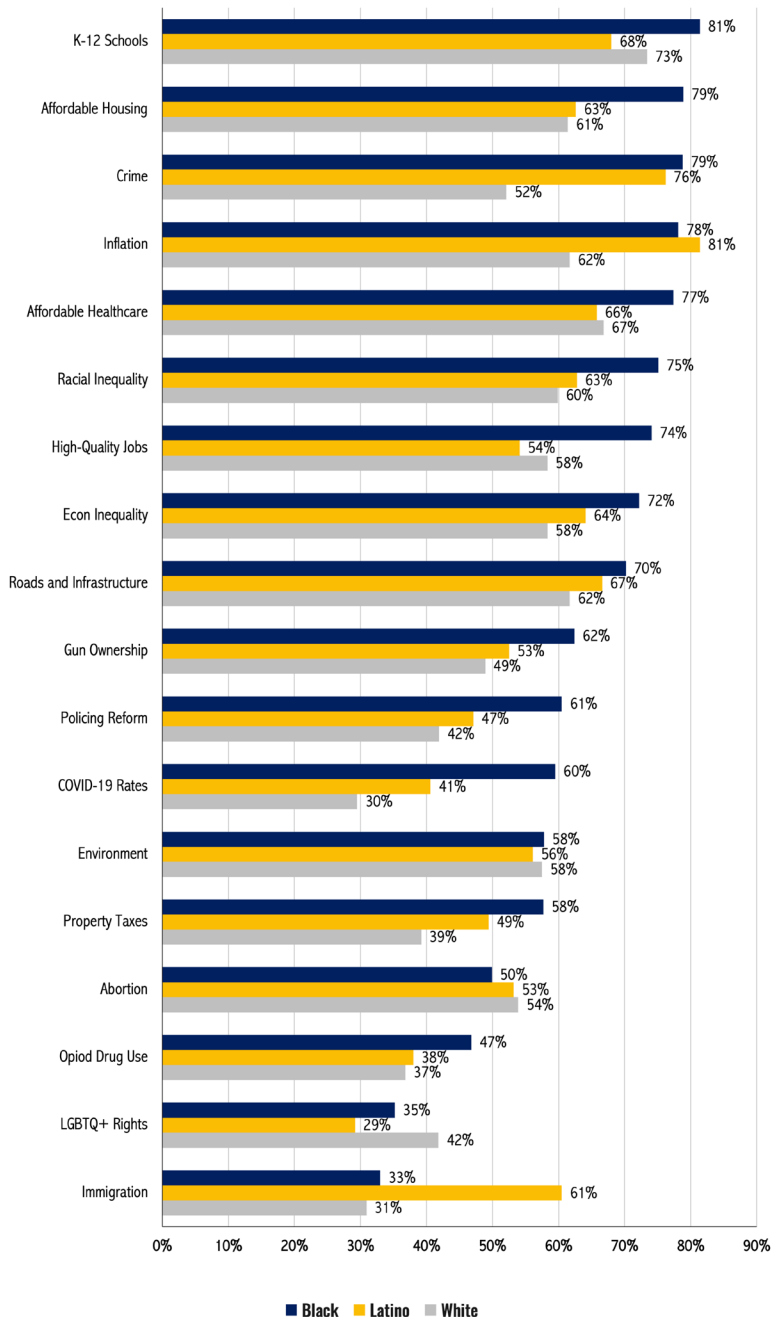
FOCUS ON COVID-19 IS WANING, BUT BLACK DETROITERS AND SENIORS STILL EXPRESS HEIGHTENED CONCERN

- Among the priorities asked about, rates of COVID-19 ranked in the bottom third. Just over half (52%) of Detroiters say rates of COVID-19 should be a high priority for elected officials.
- Despite this waning attention generally, Black Detroiters are twice as likely (60%) as White Detroiters (29%) and 1.5 times as likely as Latino Detroiters (41%) to say COVID-19 rates should be a high priority for elected officials.
- Seniors (those over the age of 65) are the most likely to want elected officials to prioritize COVID-19 rates. Seventy percent of seniors say COVID-19 rates are a high policy priority, compared to 59% of Detroiters aged 40-64 and 40% of Detroiters under 40.

CONCERNS AROUND INFLATION ARE HIGHEST AMONG SENIORS AND NON-COLLEGE EDUCATED DETROITERS

- While Detroiters are generally concerned about inflation and the costs of goods and services, seniors and non-college educated residents are the most likely to emphasize inflation as a high policy priority.
- Eighty-three percent of seniors cite inflation as a high policy priority, compared to 77% of Detroiters age 40-64 and 73% of Detroiters under 40.
- Detroiters without a college degree place significantly more emphasis on inflation than those with a college degree. Nearly eight out of 10 (79%) Detroiters without a college degree expressed concern about inflation, compared to 68% of Detroiters with at least a bachelor's degree.

Figure 2: High Priority Policies for Elected Officials by Race



BLACK DETROITERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VIEW CRIME AND POLICE REFORM AS HIGH POLICY PRIORITIES

- Black (79%) and Latino (76%) Detroiters are significantly more likely than White Detroiters (52%) to indicate crime should be a high priority for government officials.
- Black Detroiters (61%) are also significantly more likely to say police reform should be a high priority for elected officials than Latino (45%) or White (42%) Detroiters.

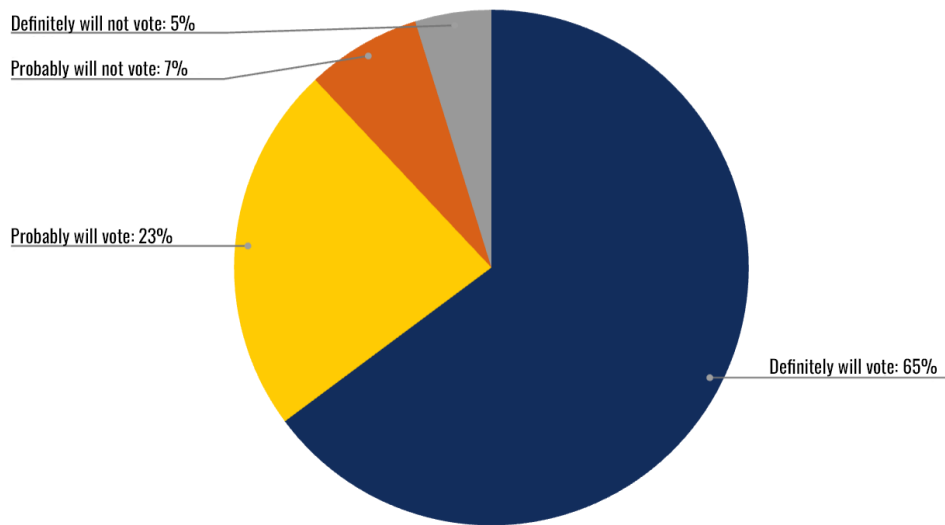
LATINOS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VIEW IMMIGRATION AS A HIGH PRIORITY BUT RANK INFLATION AND CRIME AS MORE PRESSING ISSUES

- Compared to Black (33%) and White (31%) Detroiters, Latino Detroiters (61%) are nearly twice as likely to indicate immigration is a top policy priority.
- Despite this emphasis on immigration, Latinos express greater support for public officials' attention toward inflation (81%) and crime (76%).

BIGGEST GENDER GAP IN ISSUE PRIORITIES IS ON GUN CONTROL POLICIES

- For every policy issue we asked about, women are more likely than men to say elected officials should consider it to be a high priority.
- The largest gender gap in issue priorities is on gun ownership and use. Women (68%) are significantly more likely to view policies on gun ownership and use as a high priority for elected officials than men (50%).

Figure 3: Detroiters' Likelihood of Voting Among Eligible Voters



MOST DETROITERS WILL VOTE, BUT NEARLY ONE IN THREE DETROITERS ARE UNCERTAIN IF THEY WILL CAST A BALLOT IN THIS ELECTION

- The majority of Detroit's eligible voters (65%) indicate that they will definitely vote in the upcoming elections.
- More than two out of 10 (23%) of eligible Detroiters are uncertain voters and say they will probably cast a vote in the Nov. 8th election.
- Twelve percent of eligible Detroit voters say they probably or definitely will not vote in the upcoming election.

DETROIT VOTERS AGREE ON TOP ISSUES, REGARDLESS OF VOTING INTENTION

- Despite their varying intention of voting, there is consensus among Detroit's eligible voters that quality of K-12 schools, inflation, affordable housing and health care, and crime are top policy priorities.

- Definite voters emphasize the quality of K-12 schools (82%), affordable housing (77%), affordable health care (77%), inflation (77%), and crime (77%) as high priorities.
- Uncertain voters are most likely to list the quality of K-12 schools (78%), inflation (76%), affordable health care (74%), affordable housing (72%), and crime (71%) as a high priority.
- The top five priorities among unlikely voters are inflation (75%), affordable housing (73%), crime (69%), the quality of K-12 schools (68%), and affordable health care (66%).
- Compared to Detroiters who say they will definitely vote, uncertain and unlikely voters list fewer policy issues as high priorities.
- The greatest differences in issue priorities between definite voters and unlikely voters are on the environment; abortion; racial inequality; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ rights. Definite voters were far more likely to see these issues as high priorities for elected officials than unlikely voters.
- Sixty-three percent of definite voters viewed the environment as a high priority compared to 44% of unlikely voters.
- Fifty-six percent of definite voters viewed abortion as a high priority compared to 38% of unlikely voters.
- Seventy-seven percent of definite voters viewed racial and ethnic inequality as a high priority compared to 60% of unlikely voters.
- Forty percent of definite voters viewed LGBTQ+ rights as a high priority compared to 24% of unlikely voters.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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