

# Stockton Poll: Racism a Problem But N.J. Residents Divided on How Serious

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**Galloway, N.J.** \_ Majorities of New Jersey adults see racism as a major problem and believe police treat people of color more harshly than white people, but opinions vary widely across political, racial, and socioeconomic lines, according to a Stockton University Poll.

The poll of 721 adult New Jersey residents found that 65% see racism and racial inequality as a major problem and 24% said it is a minor problem. Seven percent do not think racism is a problem at all.

Regarding policing, 61% said they believe police generally treat people of color more harshly than they do white people, whereas 28% think they treat them the same, and 4% said police treat people of color less harshly than they treat white people.

A slim majority of 52% said police violence is a major problem, while 33% identified it as a minor problem and 13% said police violence is not a problem.

Young people especially expressed concern about racism, with 81 percent calling it a major problem. Among those age 50 and older, 61% said it is a major problem.

However, the results showed strong divisions of opinion based on partisanship, racial background and household income levels. Democrats, Blacks, and lower-income respondents overwhelming saw racism as a major problem.

<b>Racism is:</b>	<b>A major problem</b>	<b>A minor problem</b>	<b>Not a problem</b>
<b>Democrats</b>	96%	4%	0%
<b>Republicans</b>	27%	49%	16%
<b>Whites</b>	57%	30%	8%
<b>Blacks</b>	97%	2%	1%
<b>Income &lt;\$50,000</b>	82%	11%	5%
<b>Income &gt;\$100,000</b>	57%	30%	9%

Similar differences were found when respondents rated how much of an issue they consider police violence to be. Among Democrats, 83% called it a major problem, while only 14% of Republicans think the same. Just more than half of Republicans consider police violence to be a minor problem and 17% said it is not a problem.

Eighty-six percent of Black respondents said police violence is major problem, while 44% of white respondents agreed. Three-quarters (74%) in households with less than \$50,000 in income called police violence a major problem, while 45% in households making more than 100,000 think the same.

“Overall, majorities of New Jersey residents recognize racism as a serious problem,” said John Froomjian, executive director of the Hughes Center. “But as issues of policing and racism were debated in the presidential election, some partisan views hardened.”

This is especially evident on the question of how police treat people of color. While the majority of Democrats (86%) said police treat people of color more harshly than they treat white people, the majority of Republicans (56%) said people of color get the same treatment. A majority of whites (55%) also thought people of color are treated more harshly by police, but 96% of Black respondents said so.

The Stockton Poll of New Jersey adults screened as likely voters was conducted Oct. 7-13, 2020. The poll, conducted by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy of Stockton University, has a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points for the entire sample although it is larger for subgroups.

Over the summer and into the fall, police violence spurred Black Lives Matter protests that sometimes turned to vandalism and looting. President Donald Trump adopted a law-and-order theme and campaigned against the protest movement. The Stockton Poll did not cite specific incidents involving police and racial minorities, such as the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May, and it framed the questions generally.

**Full poll results are at [www.stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling](http://www.stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling).**

### **Methodology**

The poll of New Jersey adults screened as likely voters was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy Oct. 7-13. Live interviewers who are mostly Stockton University students called cell phones and landlines from the Stockton University campus. Opinion Services supplemented the field work by completing 250 telephone interviews. Overall, 93 percent of interviews were conducted on cell phones and 7 percent on landline phones. A total of 721 registered voters were interviewed who were screened as likely voters on criteria including self-professed intention to vote on a scale of 1 to 10, having voted in New Jersey’s 2018 election, and how closely voters are following the election. Both cell and landline samples included a mix of voter list and random digit dialing (RDD) sample. Data are weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data for New Jersey on variables of age, ethnicity, education level, sex and region. The poll’s margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets.

### **About the Hughes Center**

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy ([www.stockton.edu/hughescenter](http://www.stockton.edu/hughescenter)) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for the late William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found on [YouTube](#), and can be followed on Facebook [@StocktonHughesCenter](#), Twitter [@hughescenter](#) and Instagram [@stockton\\_hughes\\_center](#).

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