

Methodology: The Citadel Poll

October 17 – 25, 2024

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October 31, 2024

Survey description

The Citadel Poll has surveyed registered voters in South Carolina and Georgia. A sample of 2,459 registered voters in both states were contacted to take the survey between Thursday October 17 and Friday October 25, 2024. A total of 1,241 respondents in South Carolina and 1,218 respondents in Georgia were interviewed by Promark Research or contacted through SMS messages by Verasight, as well as emails to some eligible respondents in Verasight’s national panel. In total 759 surveys were completed with live telephone interviews (30.9%), 1,470 respondents responded to an SMS invitation (59.8%), and 230 respondents were from the Verasight Community (9.4%).¹

The margin of sampling error is +/- 3.6% for the full sample in South Carolina and 3.8% for the full sample in Georgia. These number are slightly larger than the margin of error of 2.8% for both states, because we account for the difference between who was invited to take the survey and who responded. The likely voter subsample has a size of 1,136 likely voters in South Carolina and 1,126 likely voters in Georgia. These respondents said they would “definitely vote” in this year’s election or had already voted. The margin of sampling error for this smaller population is 3.7% in SC and 3.9% in GA, again a bit larger than its 2.9% margin of error.

The survey was also designed to include 466 additional registered voters who are Black. Therefore, we have a larger sample of 976 Black voters to better understand differences within the population of Black voters in Georgia. The sample is adjusted with weights to ensure the over-sample does not bias any data. The additional interviews are most meaningful for the specific columns that are reported. In each state the margin of sampling error is 5.7% for results from this oversample of Black voters, to estimate any additional uncertainty beyond the 4% margin of error.

The sample is weighted to reflect demographic and geographic parameters known from state voter files (link to [scvotes.gov](https://www.scvotes.gov) and sos.ga.gov). These include gender, race, age, residence in a media market (Nielsen), and 2020 presidential vote choice. Weights also allow the sample to reflect the education attainment of registered voters in South Carolina and Georgia as reported by the Associated Press (link to apnorc.org/projects/ap-votecast-2022/).

¹ Verasight’s online respondents are recruited via random address-based sampling, random person-to-person text messaging, and dynamic online targeting. All Verasight community members are verified via multi-step authentication, including providing an SMS response from a mobile phone registered with a major U.S. carrier (e.g., no VOIP or internet phones) as well as within-survey technology, including verifying the absence of non-human responses with technologies such as Google reCAPTCHA v3. Those who exhibit low-quality response behaviors over time, such as straight-lining or speeding, are also removed and prohibited from further participation in the community. Verasight Community members receive points for taking surveys that can be redeemed for Venmo or PayPal payments, gift cards, or charitable donations. Respondents are never routed from one survey to another and receive compensation for every invited survey, so there is never an incentive to respond strategically to survey qualification screener questions.

Individuals were included in the poll's target population if they were registered to vote in South Carolina or Georgia. The sampling approach allowed voters in the state to be randomly contacted to ensure a representative sample and probability-based design.

Live telephone interviews:

Our list of registered voters was drawn from L2, a company which consistently updates its file (September 20, 2024) and provides accurate matches of telephone numbers to the registered voter. We reached the named voter 59% or another registered voter in the home 41% of the time in Georgia. We reached the named voter 54% or another registered voter in the home 46% of the time in Georgia. All numbers of the telephone sample were dialed a maximum of three times. Cell phone numbers that were not reached on the first attempt received a text introducing the survey after before the second call.

Verasight Panel:

Additional respondents received a link to take the survey through Qualtrics via SMS messages and emails. These respondents were verified as registered voters by Catalyst, another firm that provides up-to-date contact information for verified registered voters. In addition to verifying the identity of a person taking the survey, Verasight is also committed to the data quality of surveys from its platform. Respondents who exhibit low-quality response behaviors over time, such as straight-lining or speeding, are removed and prohibited from further participation in the community. Verasight Community members receive points for taking surveys that can be redeemed for Venmo or PayPal payments, gift cards, or charitable donations. Respondents are never routed from one survey to another and receive compensation for every invited survey, so there is never an incentive to respond strategically to survey qualification screener questions. To further ensure data quality, the Verasight data team implements several post-data collection quality assurance procedures, including confirming that all responses correspond with U.S. IP addresses, confirming no duplicate respondents, verifying the absence of non-human responses, and removing any respondents who failed in-survey attention and/or straight-lining checks. Respondents that completed the survey in less than 30% of the median completion time were removed.

AAPOR Transparency Initiative Information:

The Citadel Poll follows the guidelines for disclosure of the American Association for Public Opinion research Transparency Initiative. Details from this inaugural poll will be used to apply for certification.

1. The poll is sponsored by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina.
2. The Citadel Poll, under the direction of Profs. DuBose Kapeluck and Mark Owens, designed the survey instrument and performed all statistical analyses and writing. The data collection was administered by Promark Research and Verasight based on instructions sent by The Citadel.
3. Funding for this study was provided by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences as an initiative to enhance public conversations about civics participation and leadership.
4. The full survey instrument and accompanying information is available at poll.citadel.edu.

5. The population surveyed includes registered voters in the state of South Carolina and the state of Georgia.
6. The sampling frame is a blend of a registration based sample (90.6%) and Verasight’s panel of respondents (9.4%).
7. Details of design and response rates of this blended method survey are given below.

Tally of Surveys by mode, with response rate (rr)

	Georgia (rr)	South Carolina (rr)
Telephone	368 (1%)	391 (1%)
Text	688 (0.5%)	782 (1%)
Online community	162 (9%)	68 (10%)
Total Sample	1,218	1,241

8. The SC sample was designed to mirror registered voters in South Carolina. The sample size is 1,241. This included an over-sample of Black registered voters in South Carolina (n=222). The margin of sampling error is +/- 3.6% for the full sample. The margin of sampling error for the 448 Black voters in South Carolina is 5.7%. The likely voter subsample in South Carolina has 1,136 respondents who said they had voted or would “definitely vote” in this year’s election. The margin of sampling error for the likely primary voters is 3.7%.

The GA sample was designed to mirror registered voters in Georgia. The sample size is 1,218. This included an over-sample of Black registered voters in South Carolina (n=244). The margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8% for the full sample. The margin of sampling error for the 448 Black voters in South Carolina is 5.7%. The likely voter subsample in South Carolina has 1,136 respondents who said they had voted or would “definitely vote” in this year’s election. The margin of sampling error for the likely primary voters is 3.9%.

9. The design effect for this survey is 1.66 in South Carolina and 1.8 in Georgia, which is incorporated into the margin of sampling error reported above.
10. The survey was administered in English only on the phone and text-to-web.
11. Results for all items in the survey, including the full instrument, topline results, and cross-tabs are available at poll.citadel.edu.
12. For more information about how the survey was conducted contact Mark Owens at mowens6@citadel.edu.

Comparison of population and sample parameters (South Carolina)

* The percentages below reflect all surveys taken, including the over-sample counts in the unweighted columns.

	SC Voters	Phone	Text	Phone (WGT)	Text (WGT)	WGT
Female	55.2	42.2	56.6	55.2	55.3	55.2
Male	44.8	57.8	42.7	44.6	44.5	44.6
Black	24.4	34.8	36.7	24.2	24.5	24.4
White	71.0	56.8	54.7	71.0	70.9	70.9
All Other	4.6	8.4	8.6	4.8	4.6	4.7
18-24	8.2	3.8	2.9	8.2	9.1	8.8
25-44	30.3	23.8	24.7	30.4	33.5	32.6
45-64	32.7	35.6	47.8	32.5	30.3	31.0
65 and over	28.9	36.8	24.6	28.9	27.1	27.7
No college degree	67.0	51.2	51.8	67.0	67.5	67.3
College degree	33.0	48.9	48.2	33.0	32.5	32.7
Media Markets						
Charleston	18.2	18.7	17.5	18.1	18.3	18.2
Columbia	21.0	23.8	22.7	20.9	20.9	20.9
Myrtle Beach-Florence	13.2	11.3	13.8	13.1	13.2	13.2
Upstate	27.9	24.8	26.6	28.1	28.0	28.1
Others (Aug/Char/Sav)	19.7	21.5	20.0	19.6	19.6	19.6
Joe Biden in 2020	43.4	49.9	49.8	38.4	39.8	39.4
Donald Trump in 2020	55.1	36.6	38	49.0	50.1	49.8
Cannot recall/Did not vote/Refused	1.5	13.5	12.2	12.5	10.1	10.8

Percentages for education attainment for the state of South Carolina reflect the American Community Survey's 5-year estimates for the state's adult population (Source: U.S. Census Bureau). Percentages for all other estimates come from the South Carolina Election Commission.

