Methodology: The Citadel Poll

October 14 – 25, 2026

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Survey description

The Citadel Poll has surveyed registered voters in South Carolina. A sample of 1,009 registered voters were contacted to take the survey between Wednesday October 14 and Sunday October 25, 2026. Respondents were interviewed over the phone by Promark Research, contacted through SMS messages by Verasight. In total 409 surveys were completed with live telephone interviews (41%), 600 respondents responded to an SMS invitation (59%).

The margin of sampling error is +/- 4% for the full sample in South Carolina. These numbers are slightly larger than the margin of error of 3.4%, 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 890 likely voters in South Carolina's general election. 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 4%, again a bit larger than the margins of error of 3.4%.

The sample is weighted to reflect demographic and geographic parameters known from state voter files (link to scvotes.gov). These include gender, race, age, residence in a media market (Neilsen), and 2024 presidential vote choice. Weights also allow the sample to reflect the education attainment of registered voters in South Carolina as reported by the Associated Press (link to apnorc.org/projects/ap-votecast-2022/). Weights were calculated for the likely voter samples using the same population statistics.

Individuals were included in the poll's target population if they were registered to vote in South Carolina. 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 23, 2026) and provides accurate matches of telephone numbers to the registered voter. All numbers of the telephone sample were dialed a maximum of three times. The 409 phone interviews came from mobile numbers (390) and landline numbers (19) calling 44,545 phone numbers

Verasight SMS messages:

Additional respondents received a link to take the survey through Qualtrics via SMS messages to a list of registered voters provided by L2. 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. 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.
6. The sampling frame is a random sample of a registration based sample.
7. The sampling frame blends two sampling techniques across two modes.
    a. A probability-based methodology, that sampled a random list of registered voters with telephone calls from Promark Research (41%). A probability-based sampling approach was used SMS invitations to sample a random list of registered voters, to take an online version of the survey using the Verasight platform (49%).
    b. Quotas were not used to guide how respondents were recruited into the sample.
8. CATI surveys for phone calls and web surveys for text and email invitations were used for collecting the answers of the respondents.
9. The survey began on Wednesday October 14 and ended Sunday October 25, 2026.
10. Details of design and response rates of this blended method survey are given below.

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

	South Carolina
Telephone	409 (1.9%)
Text	600 (0.7%)
Total Sample	1,009

11. The SC sample was designed to mirror registered voters in South Carolina. The sample size is 1,009. One likely voter subsample in South Carolina has 890 respondents who said they had voted or would be “very likely”, “certain to vote,” or already voted in this year’s general election. The margin of sampling error for the likely voters is 4%.

12. Tally of Surveys by mode (pct), across voter group

	South Carolina Registered Voters	South Carolina Likely Voters
Telephone (cell)	390 (39%)	352 (40%)
Telephone (landline)	19 (2%)	19 (2%)
Text	600 (59%)	519 (58%)
Total Sample	1,009	890

13. The design effect for this survey of registered voters is 1.79 in South Carolina, 1.59 for likely voters, which is incorporated into the margin of sampling error reported above.
14. The survey was administered in English only on the phone and text-to-web.
15. The percentages in this poll reflect a representative snapshot of the population at one time. The reality is that there are more than 3 million registered voters in South Carolina who react to the changing political environment around them. Also, respondents to this poll may understand a question differently than the rest of the population or differently based on the time they were asked to share their opinion. For these reasons, it is important to evaluate other factors that impact voters in the state especially at the time of an election.
16. Results for all items in the survey, including the full instrument, topline results, and cross-tabs are available at poll.citadel.edu.
17. 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.

		Unweighted, by frame		Weighted, by frame		
	SC Voters	Phone	Text	Phone (WGT)	Web (WGT)	WGT
Female	55.2	45.0	52.0	55.0	52.6	53.0
Male	44.8	53.6	48.0	44.7	47.9	46.6
Black	23.6	16.9	16.7	233.6	23.6	23.6
White, College degree	32.0	39.4	27.8	32.0	32.0	32.0
White, No college degree	39.2	34.0	50.0	39.2	39.2	39.2
All Other	5.2	9.8	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.2
18-24	7.6	5.4	3.3	7.6	7.7	7.7
25-44	30.1	14.4	21.0	30.0	30.1	30.1
45-64	32.1	40.1	39.2	32.1	32.1	32.1
65 and over	30.2	39.4	36.5	30.2	30.2	30.2
Media Markets						
Charleston	18.6	20.1	15.3	18.6	19.2	19.0
Charlotte	9.0	8.1	8.5	9.5	9.2	9.3
Columbia	12.5	23.7	18.0	13.2	12.9	13.0
Myrtle Beach-Florence	20.7	14.4	14.3	19.9	19.8	19.8
Upstate	28.5	22.7	34.4	27.2	29.1	28.3
Others (Aug/Sav)	10.7	11.0	9.5	11.5	9.9	10.5
Kamala Harris in 2024	40.4	44.3	31.9	37.4	37.7	37.6
Donald Trump in 2024	58.2	45.0	55.8	54.0	53.7	53.2
Cannot recall/Did not vote/Refused	1.4	3.4	4.5	8.6	9.6	9.2
Total Count		409	600			
Total Count, LV		371	519			

Percentages for education attainment for the state of South Carolina reflect the AP VoteCast Survey of SC Voters (Source: AP). Percentages for all other estimates come from the South Carolina Election Commission.