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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8t92t5k1>

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Publication Date

2020-08-06



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Release #2020-13

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Big disparity in the coronavirus' impact on the lives of Californians across major racial and ethnic subgroups

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Results of the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll*, completed among a large sample of over 8,000 California registered voters, uncover large racial and ethnic disparities in the coronavirus' impact on the lives of Californians. The most significant relates to the impact the virus is having on people of color, and especially Latinos who are Spanish speakers.

According to the poll, a majority of the state's registered voters (56%) reports that the virus is posing a major threat to their own or their family's health and another 42% say it poses a major threat to their family's financial situation.

Yet, significantly larger proportions of people of color than whites report on the negative impact of the virus on their lives. For example, 66% of both Latinos and Blacks describe the virus as a major threat to their own or their family's health, as do 62% of Asians or Pacific Islanders. By comparison, fewer than half of the state's white voters (48%) report this.

People of color are also more likely than whites to say the virus is posing a major threat to their family's financial situation, with Latinos more likely than others to say their lives are being negatively impacted. Moreover, communities of color are significantly more likely to say the coronavirus has seriously impacted their ability to meet their family's basic needs, and express greater concerns about the risks that family members take when working outside the home during the pandemic.

"Overall, the findings show the disproportionate burden that communities of color in California shoulder as they and their families face serious health threats, as they in large part form the skeleton crews that keep the state's service sector economy going during the pandemic," observed Associate Professor Cristina Mora, co-director of the University of California, Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies, which conducted the Poll.

When results from the Poll's large sample of over 2,000 Latino voters are further examined among those who are Spanish speakers, the virus' impact is even more dire. Among this

segment eight in ten say the virus is both posing a major threat to their family's health and to their family's financial situation. In addition, greater than seven in ten report it is creating a very serious problem in their family's ability to pay for basic necessities and get needed medical care.

Large disparities in the virus's threat to the health of Californians across the state's major racial and ethnic subgroups

A majority of the registered voters surveyed (56%) say the coronavirus is posing a major threat to their own or their family's health. Another one in three (33%) think it poses a minor threat, while just 9% feel the virus does not pose a threat.

In addition, the reported impact of the virus on voters' personal and family health is significantly greater among the state's ethnic voters than to its whites. For example, 66% of both Latinos and Blacks describe the virus as a major threat to their or their family's health, as do 62% of Asians or Pacific Islanders. The health threat is particularly acute among Spanish-dominant Latinos, 84% of whom describe the virus as a major health threat. By comparison, less than half of whites (48%) say this.

The survey also documents the direct relationship between household income and the prevalence of the health threat. For example, among voters with incomes of less than \$20,000 two in three say the virus poses a major threat to themselves and their family's health while fewer than half of upper-income voters report this.

Table 1
The threat posed by the coronavirus to your personal and family health
(among California registered voters)

	Major <u>threat</u> %	Minor <u>threat</u> %	No <u>threat</u> %	No <u>opinion</u> %
Total statewide	56	33	9	2
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	48	40	10	2
Latino (total)	66	23	9	2
English dominant	58	29	12	1
Spanish dominant	84	10	3	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	62	31	6	1
Black	66	28	4	2
Annual household income				
Less than \$20,000	66	25	7	2
\$20,000-\$39,999	63	28	7	2
\$40,000-\$59,999	61	27	9	3
\$60,000-\$99,999	56	33	9	2
\$100,000-\$199,999	50	38	10	2
\$200,000 or more	45	45	9	1

Similarly, large disparities in the virus' impact on Californians' financial situation

Greater than four in ten California voters (42%) also consider the coronavirus as a major threat to their own or their family's financial situation. Another 37% say it poses a minor threat, while just 18% feel it does not pose a threat.

Communities of color are also more likely than whites to describe the virus as posing a major threat to their family's finances. Among Latino voters 59% feel this way, and this increases to 79% among Spanish-dominant Latinos. About half of Blacks (49%) and 45% of Asians or Pacific Islanders also report this. By comparison, fewer than one in three whites (31%) say the virus is posing a major threat to their family's financial situation.

Not surprisingly, the threat the virus poses to a family's financial situation is directly related to voters' household income. Among low-income voters earning less than \$20,000 per year, nearly two in three (62%) say the virus is posing a major threat to their family's financial situation. This compares to fewer than one in four voters (24%) in the highest income segment reporting this.

Table 2				
The threat posed by the coronavirus to your personal and family financial situation (among California registered voters)				
	<u>Major threat</u> %	<u>Minor threat</u> %	<u>No threat</u> %	<u>No opinion</u> %
Total statewide	42	37	18	3
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	31	44	22	3
Latino (total)	59	28	10	3
English dominant	50	34	13	3
Spanish dominant	79	13	4	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	45	37	16	2
Black	49	30	18	3
Annual household income				
Less than \$20,000	62	23	9	6
\$20,000-\$39,999	57	26	13	4
\$40,000-\$59,999	46	34	17	3
\$60,000-\$99,999	41	40	16	3
\$100,000-\$199,999	33	43	22	2
\$200,000 or more	24	47	28	1

One in four say the virus is creating a “very serious problem” in their ability to pay for basic necessities

About a quarter of the state’s registered voters (26%) reports that the virus is creating a very serious problem in their ability to pay for basic necessities such as food, medication, rent or mortgage.

Latinos are far more likely to report this than others and the problem is particularly acute among Spanish-dominant Latinos, 72% of whom say paying for basic necessities has become a very serious problem for them. Slightly more than one in four Blacks and Asian/Pacific Islanders also report this, while among whites just 16% say this.

Nearly half of voters living in households with annual incomes of less than \$40,000 report that the virus is creating a very serious problem for their family’s ability to pay for basic necessities, while very few upper-income voters say this.

Table 3
Seriousness of the problems that you/your immediate family face due to the coronavirus – “Not being able to pay for basic necessities, i.e., food, medication, rent/mortgage”
(among California registered voters)

	Very serious <u>problem</u> %	Somewhat serious <u>problem</u> %	Not much of a <u>problem</u> %	Not a problem <u>at all</u> %
Total statewide	26	17	23	32
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	16	15	26	42
Latino (total)	45	20	17	16
English dominant	33	20	22	22
Spanish dominant	72	20	5	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	26	18	26	29
Black	28	17	24	31
Annual household income				
Less than \$20,000	44	23	16	14
\$20,000-\$39,999	46	20	16	16
\$40,000-\$59,999	34	20	22	22
\$60,000-\$99,999	25	19	26	29
\$100,000-\$199,999	15	14	26	45
\$200,000 or more	9	9	26	55

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row represents the proportion of voters with no opinion.

One in four say the virus is creating a very serious problem in their family's ability to get needed medical care

One in four voters also say the virus is creating a very serious problem in their family's ability to get needed medical care.

Responses to this question closely mirror those relating to the paying of basic necessities. Latinos, particularly Spanish-dominant Latinos, is the racial and ethnic subgroup most likely to report this, while whites are the least likely.

Voters living in lower-income households are also far more likely to report this than voters in upper-income households.

Table 4
Seriousness of the problems that you/your immediate family face due to the coronavirus
“Not being able to get needed medical care”
(among California registered voters)

	Very serious <u>problem</u> %	Somewhat serious <u>problem</u> %	Not much of a <u>problem</u> %	Not a problem <u>at all</u> %
Total statewide	25	21	26	26
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	16	23	29	30
Latino (total)	43	19	17	17
English dominant	30	20	23	23
Spanish dominant	72	17	4	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	28	19	29	22
Black	24	20	22	31
Annual household income				
Less than \$20,000	42	20	18	14
\$20,000-\$39,999	41	22	18	14
\$40,000-\$59,999	30	20	27	22
\$60,000-\$99,999	25	23	26	24
\$100,000-\$199,999	16	20	29	33
\$200,000 or more	11	16	32	38

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row represents the proportion of voters with no opinion.

Big concerns about the risks family members face when working outside the home

Californians also express a high degree of concern about the risks that they or other family members face when working outside the home during the pandemic. Statewide 43% of voters say they are extremely concerned about this, and another 40% are somewhat concerned.

Communities of color are again more likely to express great concern than whites. Majorities of Latinos, Blacks and Asian American voters say they are extremely concerned about this, compared to about one in three whites. Spanish-speaking Latinos are again the segment of voters expressing the greatest concern, with 61% saying they are extremely concerned about the risks they or their immediate family members are facing when working outside the home during the pandemic.

Table 5				
Concerns about the risks that you and your immediate family members face from working outside the home during the pandemic (among California registered voters)				
	<u>Extremely concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not at all concerned</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
	%	%	%	%
Total statewide	43	40	13	4
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	36	44	16	4
Latino (total)	52	37	10	1
English dominant	48	38	13	1
Spanish dominant	61	35	3	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	52	38	8	2
Black	55	31	10	4
Annual household income				
Less than \$20,000	53	35	9	3
\$20,000-\$39,999	51	36	10	3
\$40,000-\$59,999	50	37	11	2
\$60,000-\$99,999	43	41	14	2
\$100,000-\$199,999	38	44	15	3
\$200,000 or more	34	46	17	3

The poll also finds that Latinos are less likely than Blacks to believe that the virus is causing greater inequality in the U.S. or that it is affecting Blacks and Latinos disproportionately.

Detailed results related to those presented above as well as a complete summary of all Poll questions asked about the virus can be found in the survey tabulations at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish July 21-27, 2020 among 8,328 California registered voters.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California and were derived from information contained on the state's official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters responding to the survey to population characteristics of the state's registered voters.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of California registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

To what extent is the coronavirus a threat to your personal/family health? (1) a major threat, (2) a minor threat, (3) no threat.

To what extent is the coronavirus a threat to your personal/family financial situation? (1) a major threat, (2) a minor threat, (3) no threat.

How concerned are you about the risks that you and your immediate family members face from working outside the home during the coronavirus pandemic? (1) not at all concerned, (2) somewhat concerned, (3) extremely concerned.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Coronavirus impacts Latino and Black people more than other groups? (1) agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Coronavirus is increasing inequality in the United States? (1) agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

For each of the following, please indicate the degree to which each is a problem that you or your immediate family expect to face – or are already facing – as a result of the coronavirus:

- Not being able to pay for basic necessities (i.e., food, medication rent/mortgage)
- Not being able to get medical care

(1) very serious problem, (2) somewhat serious problem, (3) not much of a problem, (4) not a problem at all.

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora are IGS's co-directors.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.