



January 10, 2019

To: Southern Poverty Law Center
From: Ben Tulchin and Corey O'Neil; Tulchin Research
Re: **Poll Finds Strong Support for Voting Rights in Mississippi**

A recent Tulchin Research survey conducted on behalf of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) from December 17-21, 2018, among voters in Mississippi finds overwhelmingly support for voting rights broadly and for specific proposals to expand voting rights for those who have been disenfranchised. Specifically, the poll found strong support for making voting more accessible and convenient for eligible voters in general terms as well as for restoring voting rights to people formerly incarcerated. This memo lays out the survey findings in more detail below.

Voting Rights Access

Given recent efforts in some states to restrict access to voting, this survey wanted to gauge voter sentiments toward this issue in Mississippi. **Voters across every demographic group overwhelmingly support making voting more accessible and convenient (90% support), including nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) who strongly support the notion.** Conversely, a mere three percent (3%) of voters opposes these efforts while another six percent (6%) are undecided.

<u>Mississippi Voting Rights Access</u>	
<i>“Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose efforts to make voting accessible and convenient for eligible voters?”</i>	
Total Support	90%
Strong Support	63%
Somewhat Support	28%
Total Oppose	3%
Strong Oppose	1%
Somewhat Oppose	3%
Undecided	6%
Support - Oppose	+87

Furthermore, the survey also wanted to measure public perception in Mississippi of restoring the voting rights for people formerly incarcerated who have served their full sentence and were not convicted of murder or sexual offense, similar to what was recently passed in Florida by a wide margin (64.55% voting yes). The poll found strong support for this reform proposal among Mississippi voters as over two-thirds (68% support) support restoring these voting rights, including a plurality of voters (41%) who *strongly* support this effort. Conversely, less than a quarter of voters (23%) oppose restoring voting rights to these individuals and another nine percent (9%) remain undecided.

Mississippi Formerly Incarcerated Voting Rights Restoration	
<i>“Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose restoring the voting rights of people with felony convictions after they complete their full sentence and who were not convicted of murder or sexual offenses?”</i>	
Total Support	68%
Strong Support	41%
Somewhat Support	28%
Total Oppose	23%
Strong Oppose	13%
Somewhat Oppose	10%
Undecided	9%
Support - Oppose	+45

Support for restoring voting rights to people formerly incarcerated who have served their time crosses partisan, gender and ethnic lines as majorities of all demographic and political sub-groups support the proposal. Below we highlight some key groups to better illustrate this point.

Mississippi Formerly Incarcerated Voting Rights Restoration (Demographics)				
<i>“Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose restoring the voting rights of people with felony convictions after they complete their full sentence and who were not convicted of murder or sexual offenses?”</i>				
	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Und.</u>	<u>Supp- Opp</u>
<u>Gender</u>				
Men	68%	27%	5%	+41
Women	69%	19%	12%	+50
<u>Party</u>				
Democrat	82%	9%	8%	+73
Republican	60%	31%	10%	+29
Independent	63%	29%	8%	+34
<u>Age</u>				
18-54	71%	19%	11%	+52
Over 55	65%	28%	7%	+37
<u>Race</u>				
White	63%	29%	8%	+34
Black	79%	11%	10%	+68

Conclusion

In conclusion, our poll finds voters in Mississippi overwhelmingly support efforts to make voting more accessible and convenient for voters. Specifically, voters want to restore voting rights to people who were formerly incarcerated who have completed their sentences if they were not convicted of murder or sexual offenses. The strong majorities the poll found in support of broad and general voting rights access as well as a specific policy such as ending the lifetime ban on voting for people formerly incarcerated indicates just how deep and bipartisan support is in Mississippi for protecting and expanding voting rights.

Survey Methodology: *From December 17-21, 2018, Tulchin Research conducted an online survey among 200 registered voters in Mississippi. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 6.93 percentage points.*