

# VOTING AND POLICY PRIORITIES OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER WOMEN 50 AND OLDER

Brief - August 2021



## Overview

Turnout of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters reached historic levels in the 2020 election, increasing more than 47 percent in 2020 compared with 2016, according to an analysis by TargetSmart. Key states such as Texas and Georgia saw upwards of 71 percent and 84 percent increases, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

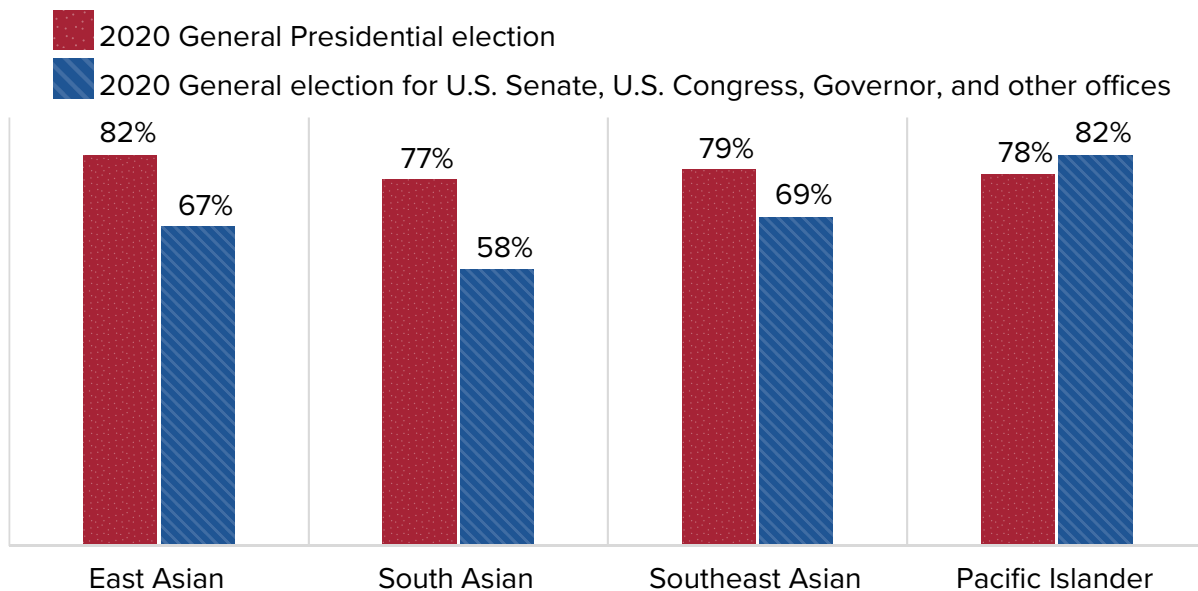
The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) sponsored a nationwide survey of AAPI women to understand what motivated them to vote and the issues they care about most. This wide-ranging study is the largest survey of AAPI women ever conducted and provides valuable insights into the unique priorities and perspectives of AAPI women. The 3,500+ sample size of this survey also allowed researchers to conduct analyses disaggregated by characteristics such as ethnic subgroups and age.

This brief sheds light on the voting patterns, policy priorities, and experiences with anti-AAPI hate among AAPI women 50 years of age and older to better understand their experiences at the polls as well as the issues they care about the most.

## Findings

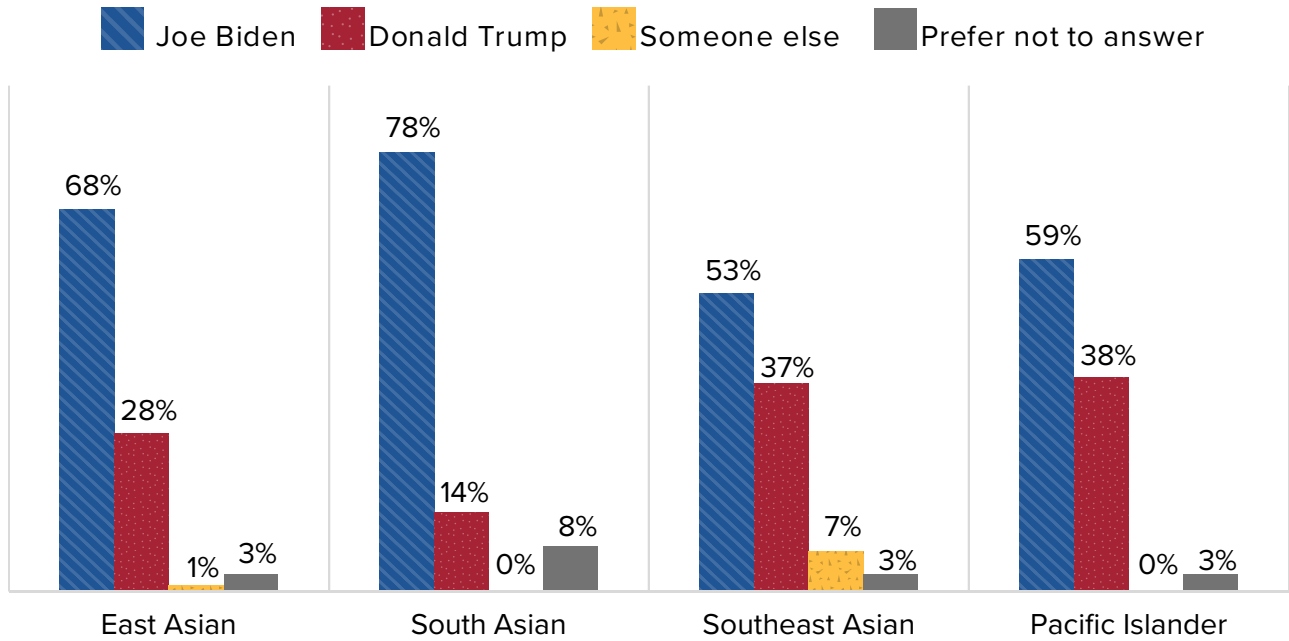
Nearly 80 percent of AAPI women 50 years and older reported voting in the 2020 Presidential election, and a majority also reported voting in the 2020 Senate, Congress, Governor, and other office elections. It is important to highlight that a majority of these votes were cast early by mail or ballot drop box.

**Figure 1. Voter Turnout Among AAPI Women 50+**



<sup>1</sup> TargetSmart defines the audience as Asian, but doesn't provide further insights on what ethnicities that includes.

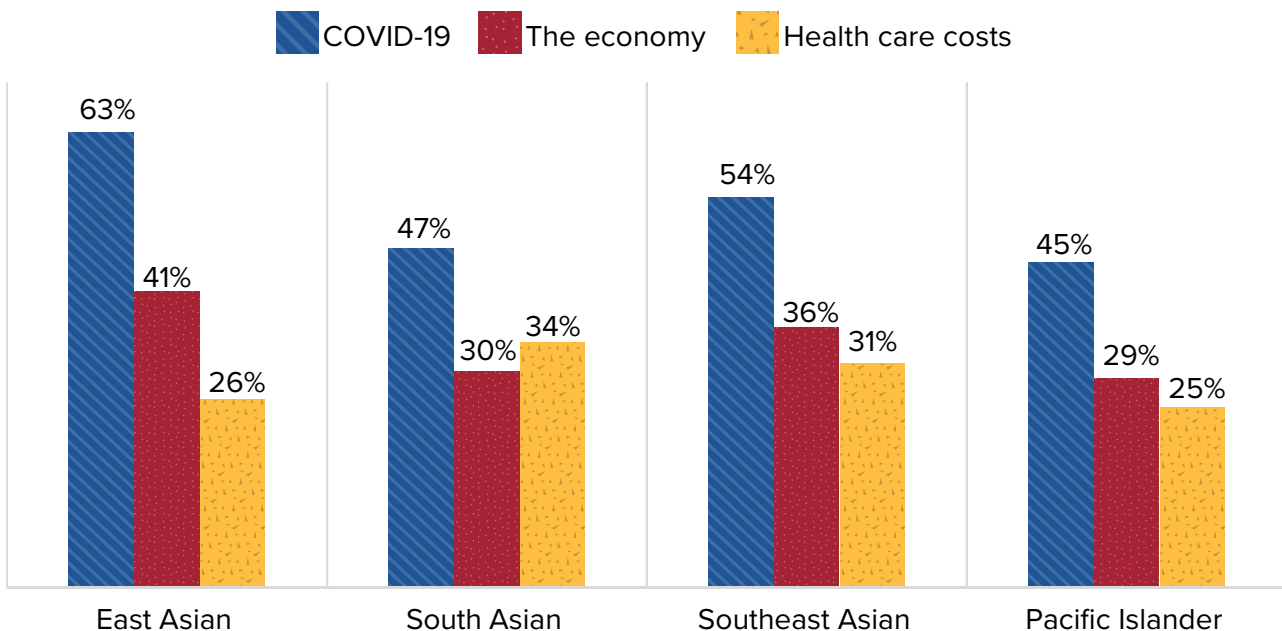
**Figure 2. Voting Pattern Among AAPI Women 50+**



A vast majority of AAPI women voters 50 years and older voted for Joe Biden with most casting their votes in favor of their candidate of choice as opposed to against a particular candidate.

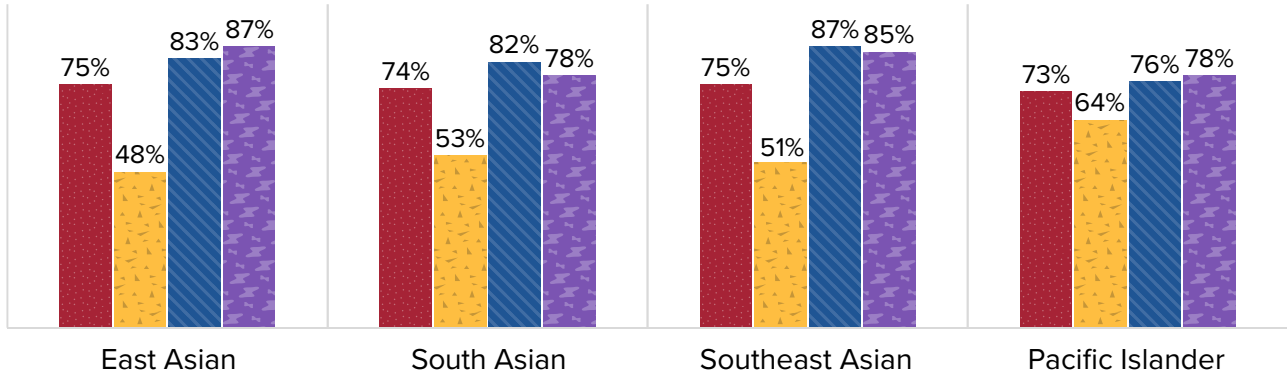
Across all AAPI women 50 and older, COVID-19 was the most important issue for the federal government to address. For East Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islanders, the economy was the second most important issue whereas for South Asians, health care costs were the second most important. More than 70 percent of AAPI women 50 and older think that it is important for the Biden administration to work towards ensuring everyone gets the same level of healthcare no matter their race, ethnicity, language, immigration status, or culture.

**Figure 3. Most Important Priorities for AAPI Women 50+**



### Figure 4. Issues of Importance for AAPI Women 50+

- End discrimination against people because of their race, ethnicity, immigration status, or sexual orientation, or gender identity
- Provide an accessible, timely path to citizenship to immigrants
- Would like to see more women candidates running for office
- Would like to see more Asian American and Pacific Islander representation in government and politics

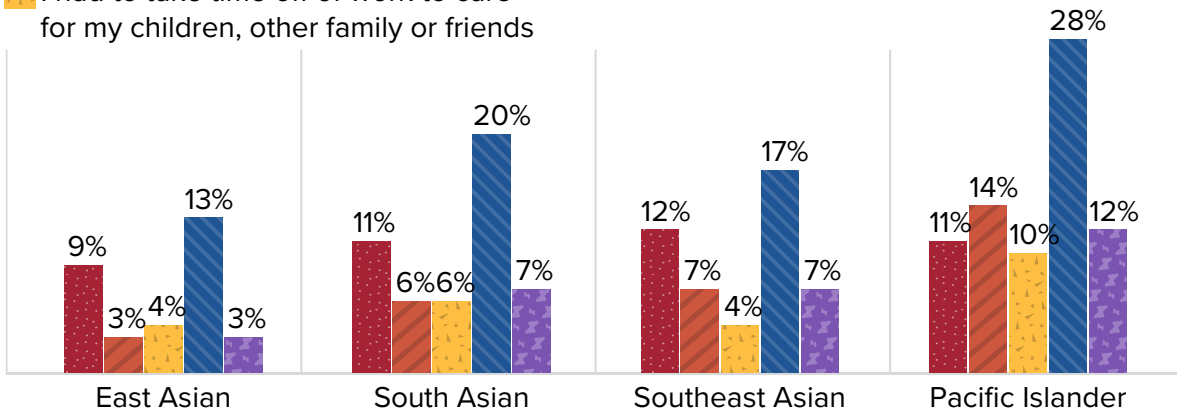


Over 70 percent of AAPI women 50 and older think that it is important for the Biden administration to work towards ending discrimination against people because of their race, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and work towards improving the criminal justice system with an eye toward racism. A majority of AAPI women 50 and older also think that it is important for the Biden administration to work towards providing an accessible and timely path to citizenship for immigrants.

Over 75 percent of AAPI women 50 and older would like to see more women candidates running for office and would like to see more AAPI representation in government and politics. Over 70 percent of AAPI women 50 and older agree that they want elected officials to understand how their values and priorities differ from their white women counterparts.

### Figure 5. The Impact of COVID-19 on AAPI Women 50+

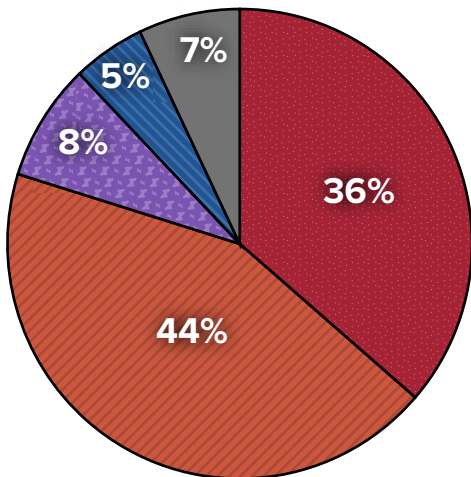
- I lost my job and/or a member of my household lost their job
- I got COVID-19
- I had to take time off of work to care for my children, other family or friends
- A close family member or friend died
- I missed a bill payment, had trouble paying bills, or was evicted



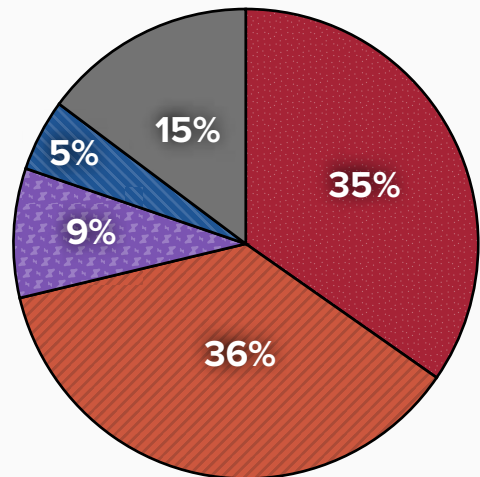
**Figure 6. Participant responses to the statement: “I want my elected officials to understand how my priorities differ from their white women constituents.”**



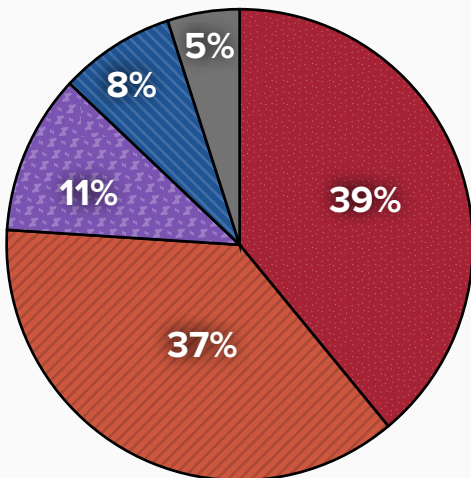
**East Asian Women 50+**



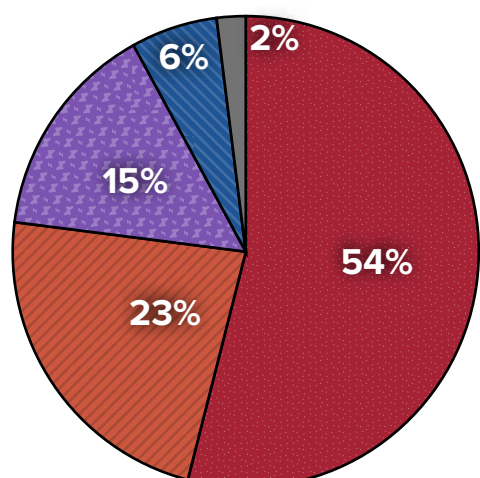
**South Asian Women 50+**



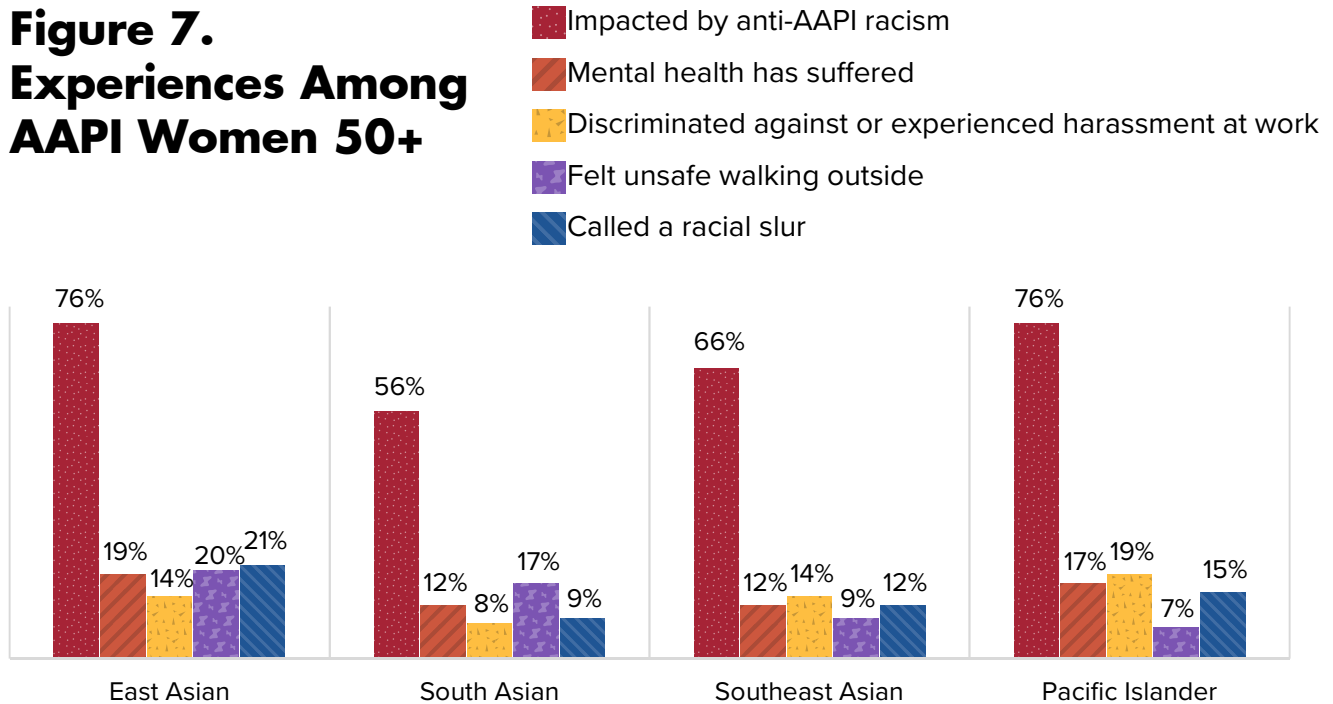
**Southeast Asian Women 50+**



**Pacific Islander Women 50+**



**Figure 7.**  
**Experiences Among**  
**AAPI Women 50+**



**A staggering 70 percent of AAPI women 50 and older reported that anti-AAPI hate and racism had impacted their lives in some way;** these experiences included more than 20 percent of Pacific Islander women 50 and older facing harassment or discrimination at work, almost 20 percent of East and South Asian women 50 and older feeling unsafe walking outside, and over 20 percent of East Asian women 50 and older being called a racial slur. A significant proportion of AAPI women 50 and older also reported that their mental health had suffered as a result of COVID-19.

**Conclusion**

AAPI women 50 years and older form a powerful and fast-growing voter bloc whose top priorities for the government include the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy, and health care. This community wants the current administration to work towards ending all forms of discrimination, improving the immigration system, and wants to see more women and AAPI candidates holding positions of office. NAPAWF’s poll also revealed that AAPI women 50 and older are increasingly becoming targets of anti-AAPI hate with a vast majority reporting that their lives had been impacted by anti-AAPI racism. There must be a systemic and holistic effort to ensure that the unique priorities and needs of older AAPI women are seen, heard, and addressed.

## About the Poll

This poll, which was conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of NAPAWF, is the largest survey of AAPI women ever conducted. The study interviewed over 3,537 adult AAPI women across the nation on a fully representative sample, allowing for a deep analysis of key demographics. Respondents either self-identified as Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) or of any ethnicity/national origin recognized in the Asian race category by the U.S. Census Bureau. Interviews were conducted online and via telephone from February 1 to March 2, 2021, and respondents were given the option to complete the survey in English, Mandarin, Korean, or Vietnamese.

## Suggested Citation

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## About NAPAWF

*The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) is the only multi-issue, progressive, community organizing and policy advocacy organization for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls in the U.S. NAPAWF's mission is to build collective power so that all AAPI women and girls can have full agency over our lives, our families, and our communities.*