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## The Native American Vote in the 2024 Presidential Election

[The 2024 American Electorate Voter Poll](#), conducted by the African American Research Collaborative (AARC) and BSP Research, has a nationally representative sample of Native American voters (n=500) that ensures Native American voters' voices are included in the discussion of this historic election. This oversample was supported by [First Nations Development Institute](#) and is designed to be representative of the Native American electorate. This post summarizes the main findings from the poll specific to Native American voters.

Native American voters continued to be consequential across the presidential election and several other races this cycle. Both presidential candidates targeted Native American voters in crucial battleground states, including Arizona, North Carolina, Michigan, and Nevada.

Despite the continued importance of the Native American vote, these Native American voters remained largely absent in the pre-election discussions by election experts and pundits due to nearly no credible data available for the Native American electorate. Furthermore, the data that is [available for Native American voters was often flawed](#), leading to dangerous conclusions about the Native American vote. This includes the National Exit Poll conducted by Edison Research that suggests 65% percent of Native Americans voted for Donald Trump based on [a small and non-representative sample of Native American voters](#) that did not include interviewing locations on any tribal lands across the country.

The heavy reliance on this questionable poll by the national media is misleading, as the support for Trump in the [poll does not follow the patterns observed among Native Americans in the past](#) and is generating a lot of critique from tribal communities across the country.

This poll provides a fresh perspective to the discussion of Native American voters in the 2024 election. [The 2024 American Electorate Voter Poll](#) helps address this limitation by providing a nationally representative sample of Native American voters within a larger national sample of voters to compare Native American voting behavior to that of other racial and ethnic groups. Similar to



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other surveys AARC and BSP Research have conducted among Native Americans nationally, the survey relies on a self-identified/opt-in sampling design.

However, the survey took important steps to ensure that the data was representative of Native American voters. This included screening out potential respondents whose connection to their Native American ancestry was only through a distant relative, and ensuring the study was limited to only Native Americans who live in urban areas and who have some connection to their tribes' Native language. In fact, 21% of self-identified Native American respondents in the sample reported that they live on a reservation/tribal lands, and another 37% near a reservation/tribal lands. This is an important nuance to account for, as [Native Americans who live on tribal lands face challenges accessing the ballot box](#) that could impact how they view electoral politics and policies aimed at voting access. Conversely, 42% reported that they do not live on or near tribal lands or a reservation. Similarly, 45% of respondents reported that they speak a Native American language in their home. This is another important factor to consider when designing survey samples, as language is an important contributor to ethnic identity and connections to one's community.

The poll's researchers believe strongly that pollsters should take similar steps to collect and report out on these important demographics for Native American respondents as this leads to more reliable and representative data. Consequently, this summary of national Native American voting data provides a much more balanced discussion of how and why Native American voters participated in the 2024 election.

### **Native American Voters Favored Harris and Democrats Over Trump and Republicans**

The presence of a Native American sample of voters provides the ability to compare the voting behavior of Native American voters to the other major racial groups in the United States. As reflected in the figure below, 57% of Native American voters supported Vice President Harris in the Presidential race in 2024, compared to 39% for former President Trump. Another 4% cast their ballot for another candidate. Results from the survey across all racial groups indicate that Native American voters were more likely to vote for former President Trump than Black, Asian American or Latino voters. However, they were +17% more likely to vote for Harris than white voters.



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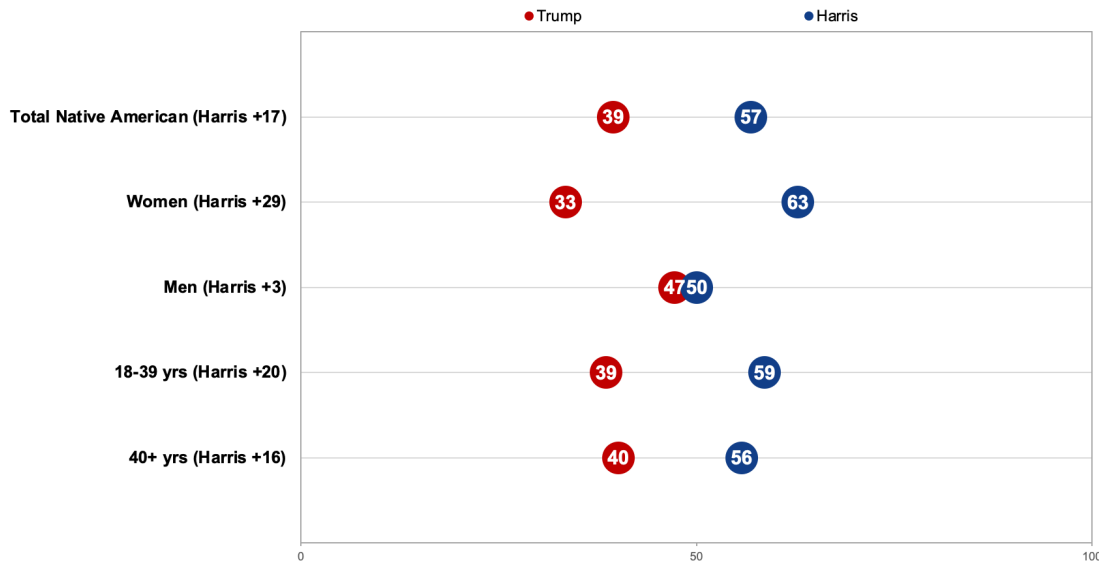
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One of the major themes of the post-election analysis has been the apparent improvement for Trump and Republicans among males of color. As reflected in the figure below, there was a significant gender difference among Native American voters in 2024, with a 13% difference between Native American men and women – 63% of Native American women reported voting for Harris relative to 50% among Native American men. This suggests that Democrats will need to include Native American men in their post-election deliberations on improving their standing with men of color, including Native American men. There was also a small difference in voting behavior based on age. Native American voters under the age of 40 were more likely to vote for Vice President Harris than those over the age of 40.

### Presidential Vote – Gender and Age Group Totals

In the election for President, did you vote for the Democratic candidate Kamala Harris, Republican candidate Donald Trump, or someone else?



2024 American Electorate Voter Poll | Oct 18-Nov 4, 2024 Native American N=500 (+/- 4.4%) | 2024electionpoll.us

Providing evidence that including demographic questions specific to tribal communities is important for discussions of Native American voting and policy, there is a significant difference in voting among Native Americans based on a connection to their tribes' Native language. While, a robust 63% of respondents who do speak a Native language at home reported voting for Harris, only 52% of those who do not speak a Native language in their home cast their ballot for Harris.



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Native American voters were also more likely to vote for a Democrat in their congressional races across the country, with 57% indicating they voted for a Democrat compared to 38% who cast their ballot for a Republican congressional candidate. This is slightly higher than in 2022, when 56% of Native Americans reported that they voted for a Democrat relative to 40% for Republicans in the [AARC/BSP Research 2022 Election Eve Poll](#).

### **The Policy Agenda of the Native American Electorate**

The 2024 American Electorate Voter Poll included two policy questions that were asked only of Native American respondents. This included if respondents consider tribal issues when voting. Nearly eight in ten (78%) Native American respondents said that they considered tribal issues when they voted in the 2024 national election. Native American respondents who live on or near a reservation were 10% more likely to report that they considered tribal issues when they voted compared to those who do not live on or near a reservation – 82% to 72%.

Respondents who said that they do consider tribal issues when they vote were asked to identify the issues that were most important to them when they voted. As reflected in the figure below, Tribal Sovereignty/right to govern and land rights are the most salient tribal issues that influenced Native Americans voting behavior in 2024 at 59% and 58% respectively. This was followed closely by preserving culture and language, also high on the priority list for Native Americans at 49%. Economic development was next among priorities at 40%, with perseverance of Native American history also a significant issue at 31%. Concern for the environment rounds out the top four priorities at 40%, with concerns about Native American history fifth at 30%.



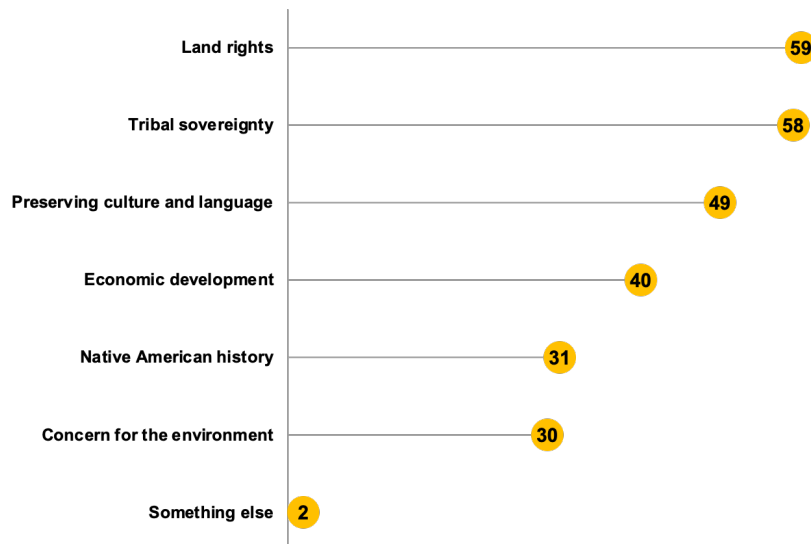
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## Land rights and tribal sovereignty are top tribal issues for Native American voters

Which tribal issues are most important to you when voting? (Select up to 3. Sorted highest to lowest)



2024 American Electorate Voter Poll | Oct 18-Nov 4, 2024 Native American N=500 (+/- 4.4%) | 2024electionpoll.us

The poll also included several items on climate change and energy policy. Native Americans are supportive of expanding the nation's investment in clean energy, as well as protecting families against the negative impacts of climate change.

- Expanding clean energy investments to create more manufacturing jobs in the US – 88%
- Expanding clean energy investments to lower electricity bills and energy costs – 87%
- Providing more resources to protect families against the impacts of climate change and to prepare for and recover from future hurricanes, wildfires, extreme heat, and other climate disasters – 89%

Respondents were also asked to identify the most important issues that they want Congress and the President to address. The state of the economy, including jobs and inflation, were top concerns for Native American voters, similar to the electorate overall, and Native Americans support policy reforms that will address these concerns. Among the top federal policy priorities identified among Native American voters included the cost of living/inflation, which was identified as a top priority that respondents wanted Congress and the President to address (55% chose this as one of their top



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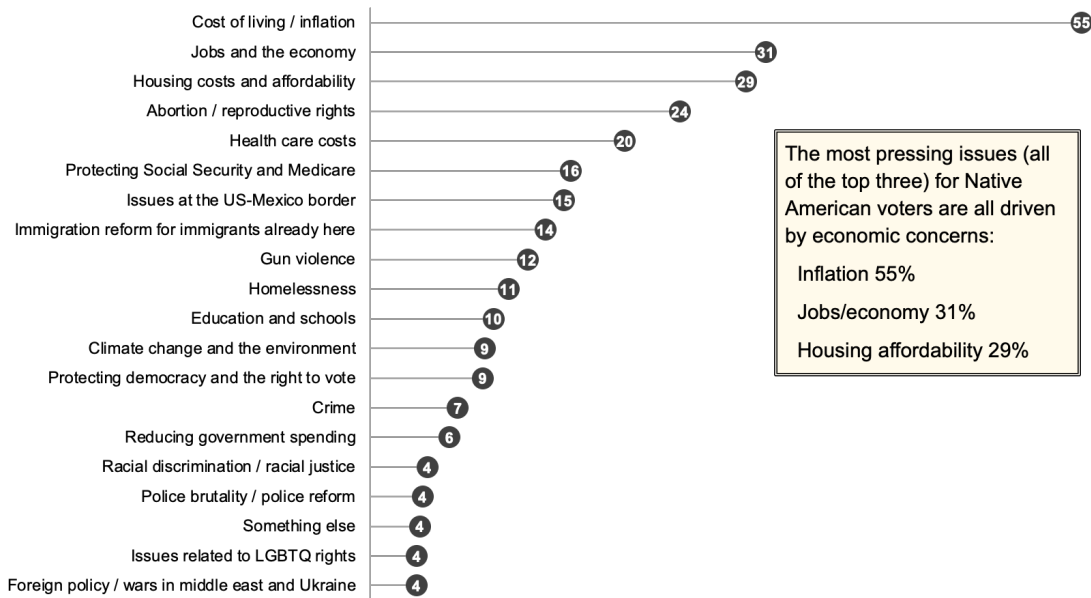
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three priorities). Native Americans overwhelmingly support (88%) “a law or regulation that bans price gouging and prevents corporations from artificially raising prices.”

### Economic concerns are top priorities for Native American voters

On the whole, what are the most important issues that you want Congress and the President to address? (Select up to three. Sorted highest to lowest)



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Jobs and the economy more broadly came in second among Native Americans at 31% followed by housing costs/affordability of housing at 29%. Three in four Native Americans (77%) in the poll support the “building of 3 million new homes and providing \$25,000 in down payment assistance” to help address access to affordable housing.

The fourth priority among Native American voters was abortion/reproductive health, an issue that was also a top priority of Native American voters in 2022 (24%). Abortion was a higher priority among Native American women, with 30% of women identifying reproductive health as a top policy priority compared to 17% of Native American men. Just under 80% of Native Americans in the poll support “a federal law to guarantee access to abortion and give women control over their own private medical decisions.” Finally, among the top four priorities of Native American respondents, the cost of healthcare was identified by 20% of respondents. Nearly all (over 90%) of Native Americans



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support “allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices on prescription drugs” to help address the rising costs of healthcare.

### **Mobilization and Outreach to Native Americans in 2024**

Native Americans continue to face challenges to exercise their right to vote. A [recent report by the Brennan Center](#) found that Native Americans often live far away from the nearest voting location and often lack a physical address required in some states to cast a ballot. These challenges help explain lower turnout found in this report for Native Americans in recent election cycles. This poll identifies that Native Americans overwhelmingly support election reform to address these challenges. In fact, nearly all (87%) of Native Americans in the poll support the “passing of a new voting rights act to ensure that all eligible American citizens can vote without barriers.”

Both the Democratic and Republican candidates in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election made symbolic efforts to mobilize Native American voters. The Harris-Waltz campaign made significant investments in outreach, [launching a \\$370 million ad campaign targeted specifically at Native American communities](#) between Labor Day and Election Day focusing on important Native issues, such as treaty rights and Tribal Sovereignty. In addition to media efforts, the campaign emphasized direct engagement by meeting with tribal leaders and holding rallies in the Gila River Indian Community in the battleground state of Arizona. This outreach [was further strengthened by President Joe Biden’s federal apology](#) for the U.S. government’s historical role in Native American boarding schools, given in Arizona.

In contrast, the Trump-Vance campaign also focused on key swing states but placed less emphasis on direct outreach to Native American communities. The support of U.S. Senator Markwayne Mullin, a Cherokee Nation member, for the Trump-Vance campaign highlighted [Trump’s promise to grant federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe](#), a longstanding issue for the tribe, in the battleground state of North Carolina resonating with some Native American voters.

Despite these outreach efforts, the survey reveals that both parties can improve their outreach to tribal communities to improve contact rates for Native Americans. When asked if anyone from a political party, campaign, or other organization contacted them to ask them to register and/or vote in



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this election, 50% of Native American voters in 2024 indicated that they had not been contacted by anyone in 2024.

Among those who were contacted, Native Americans were more likely to be contacted by Democrats than Republicans (31% to 21%). Another 10% of Native Americans reported that they were contacted by someone from a non-partisan, civic, or other organization, and 9% from someone representing a ballot initiative or referendum.

### **Conclusions**

Native Americans are a unique and complex electorate. This unique data from the 2024 American Electorate Poll notes that a large majority of Native Americans remain Democratic in their voting preferences. But both parties can improve their standing with Native Americans, a critical sub-group of the national electorate who can have marked impact on election outcomes across the country. Native Americans were motivated to vote by some of the same issues that Americans overall were concerned with, including inflation, jobs and the cost of health care, abortion and reproductive health.

However, the poll identifies that most Native American voters across the country also consider a range of issues that are specific to tribal communities when they vote. Tribal Sovereignty, land rights, and the preservation of Native American culture and language are high priorities for Native American voters, yet they received inadequate attention by the political campaigns this cycle. The survey provides the ability to speak to the nuances associated with policy attitudes and voting behavior among the Native American electorate, a population that is often mis-characterized in mainstream polling. While this poll relies on self-identified Native Americans, the survey's inclusion of measures aimed at ensuring that respondents have more than a limited connection to their Native American ancestry provides a clearer picture of how Native American voters participated in the 2024 election. First Nations, AARC, and BSP Research suggest that pollsters consider the inclusion of measures similar to those used in this poll in their work with this population, and they look for partnerships within tribal communities to inform their work.