

# Philadelphia Issues and Landscape Poll

**August 2025**

Black Leadership Pennsylvania commissioned a public opinion poll conducted by Brilliant Corners Research & Strategies from August 6-12, 2025. The survey was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The sample was drawn randomly from the voter file and geographically stratified for proportional representation.

## Top Level Findings

1. **Wide-Open Primary Race:** The 3rd District Democratic primary remains highly competitive with no clear frontrunner. High undecided rates, especially among white voters, suggest significant campaign activity could reshape the race.
2. **Biographical Impact:** Candidate biographies can significantly influence voter preferences.
3. **Trump-Focused Priorities:** Despite local challenges, voters prioritize congressional action against Trump over traditional economic and safety concerns, suggesting nationalized political priorities even in local races.
4. **Demographic Coalitions:** Early candidate support shows clear demographic patterns, with Street building a base among older Black voters, Rabb appealing to white liberals, and Stanford attracting broader but still distinct coalition support focused on federal healthcare experience.
5. **Declining Satisfaction:** Philadelphia voters show significantly decreased satisfaction with city direction compared to 2024, with the steepest declines among Black voters under 50. Crime remains the dominant concern driving dissatisfaction.

## City Satisfaction and Direction

Philadelphia voters express dissatisfaction with the city's direction, with 58% dissatisfied compared to 36% satisfied. This represents a significant decline from August 2024, when 55% were satisfied. The dissatisfaction has increased most dramatically among Black voters, particularly Black men and women under 50. Crime emerges as the reason they gave for dissatisfaction (25%), followed by poor leadership from public officials (14%) and budget concerns (12%).

Regarding city services, 44% say services have stayed about the same over the past couple years, while 35% believe they have worsened and only 16% see improvement. Younger women, younger African Americans, non-college educated voters, and independents are most likely to report declining city services.

## Congressional Priorities and Issues

When asked about congressional priorities, Philadelphia voters want their representatives to focus on "standing up to Donald Trump and his MAGA agenda" (31%), which overshadows traditional pocketbook issues. This is followed by protecting Social Security and Medicare (23%) and reducing crime and violence (23%). Creating affordable housing (21%) and improving K-12 public schools (20%) round out the top five priorities. There are modest differences between racial groups, with Black voters slightly more focused on education and white voters more interested in infrastructure improvements.

Public satisfaction with local institutions remains low. Only 14% rate Philadelphia public schools as excellent or good, with 71% rating them as fair or poor. Similarly, 42% rate the police department as excellent or good, while 55% give them fair or poor ratings. Younger Black voters are particularly critical of police performance.

## Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District Democratic Primary

The 2026 Democratic primary race remains highly fluid, with 51% of likely primary voters undecided. In the initial horserace, Sharif Street leads with 15%, followed by Isaiah Thomas and Dr. Ala Stanford at 7% each, Chris Rabb at 6%, and Katherine Gilmore Richardson at 5%. Among decided voters, Street performs best with Black voters (22% support vs. 4% among white voters), while the vast majority of white voters (63%) remain undecided.

Candidate biography tests reveal significant movement potential. Dr. Ala Stanford's biography tested most positively, with 82% of voters saying they were more likely to support her after learning about her role in the Biden administration and COVID response work. Chris Rabb (81% more likely), Morgan Cephas (78%), and Sharif Street (74%) also received positive responses, though Street's biography performed notably worse among white voters.

After exposure to candidate biographies, the race tightened considerably. Stanford moved into a three-way tie for the lead at 18%, joined by Street (17%) and Rabb (17%). However, 25% of voters remained undecided even after learning more about the candidates, indicating the race remains wide open.

The candidate coalitions show distinct patterns. Street's supporters tend to be older, Black, long-term Philadelphia residents who prioritize affordable housing. Rabb appeals to younger, white, college-educated liberals focused on education issues. Stanford draws more balanced support across demographic lines but particularly appeals to men, LGBTQ+ voters, and Black homeowners who prioritize opposition to<sup>1</sup> Trump.

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<sup>1</sup> The poll consisted of a total sample size of 584 likely registered voters in Philadelphia. It measured responses from among 381 likely 2026 voters in Philadelphia, with an additional oversample of 203 likely 2026 voters in Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District. The survey was conducted by phone using professional interviewers from August 6-12, 2025. The sample was drawn randomly from the voter file and geographically stratified for proportional representation. Data was weighted to adhere to population demographics of voters in the voter file. The margin of error is  $\pm 5.0\%$  overall and  $\pm 4.8\%$  for the 3rd Congressional District, with a 95% confidence interval.