

# ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE 2022 MIDTERM ELECTIONS:

FINDINGS FROM THE 2022 NATIONAL POLL OF  
ASIAN AMERICAN NON-VOTERS AND VOTERS



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May 31, 2023

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the topline results of the 2022 National Poll of Asian American Non-Voters and Voters, a survey commissioned by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC and fielded in the weeks following the 2022 midterm elections. The poll interviewed 2,100 Asian American voters and 700 non-voters (i.e., registered but did not vote and eligible but not registered) and asked respondents about their views on and experiences during the election.

The key findings from the survey of Asian American voters are the following:

- Asian Americans who voted in 2022 overwhelmingly felt confident that votes were properly counted, believed that the elections were well run, and reported that voting was easy. However, more research is needed to know which groups found voting easy and whether this was true across the board. For example, did certain subgroups—such as LEP Asian Americans—find voting more difficult? Or did they find it easy once they were able to understand the process?
- Voters relied on a variety of sources for election news; more than two-thirds cited mainstream media and one-in-two cited social media sources. About 80% of voters trusted the news sources they relied on at least “a fair amount.”
- More than one-in-two voters reported encountering what they thought to be election-related misinformation at least “somewhat often.” Perceived misinformation concerning the voting process itself occurred in one-in-five cases. Voters reported encountering stories that warned about threats of violence or rioting on Election Day in one-in-five cases.
- Two-in-three Asian Americans chose to vote absentee or early. The most common reasons cited for voting absentee or early were long lines and limited hours on Election Day, COVID concerns, scheduling conflicts, and the convenience of absentee or early voting.
- One-in-six Asian American voters in 2022 reported feeling threatened while voting.
- Voting assistance was widely used but not always available. One-in-two voters said in-language assistance was available and two-in-five used that assistance.
- Two-in-five voters were contacted by parties and campaigns and one-in-four were contacted by non-partisan community-based organizations.

From the survey of Asian American non-voters, the key findings are the following:

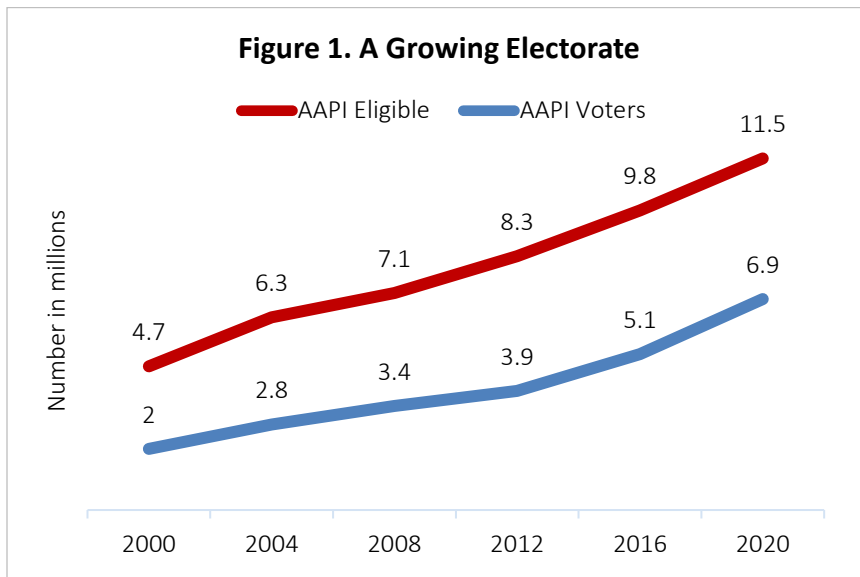
- Non-voters were also confident that every ballot was counted in their state, but less so than voters. They were also less confident and trusting in election news coverage. Additional research could help to determine the extent of non-voters’ confidence and the motivations behind their concerns.
- Like voters, non-voters relied on a variety of mainstream and social media sources for their news. They also generally trust their news sources, although less so than voters. Like voters, a majority reported encountering what they thought was misinformation in the 2022 elections. Those who were registered to vote but did not turnout were much likelier to

encounter what they believed to be made-up stories than non-voters who were not registered to vote.

- Non-voters were less likely to be contacted about the election, especially from campaigns and parties.
- Non-voters stated that keys to their turnout next time were better information on the candidates and better candidates.

## INTRODUCTION

Asian Americans are the fastest growing electorate in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Between 2000 and 2020, the Asian American citizen voting age population (CVAP) grew roughly 245%, with a nearly 300% increase in those registered to vote, and a roughly 345% growth in turnout.<sup>2</sup> In total numbers, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration data estimates that there are roughly 11.5 million Asian American citizens of voting age, 7.4 million who are registered to vote, and 6.9 million who voted in 2020.<sup>3</sup> The 2022 CPS Voting and Registration data estimates 13.6 million voting age citizens, 8.4 million who are registered to vote, and 5.7 million of whom voted in 2022—a record number for Asian Americans in a midterm election.



Source: Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Supplement.<sup>4</sup> AAPI stands for “Asian American Pacific Islander.”

<sup>1</sup> See Abby Budiman, “Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S. electorate,” Pew Research Center (May 7, 2020) <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/05/07/asian-americans-are-the-fastest-growing-racial-or-ethnic-group-in-the-u-s-electorate/>.

<sup>2</sup> Author’s calculations. See <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/voting-rights/cvap.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Author’s calculations. See <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.census.gov/topics/public-sector/voting.html>.

This dramatic growth has slowly but surely generated greater interest in the Asian American electorate. Much of the attention, as with campaign coverage generally, has focused on whether Asian Americans will remain as solidly Democratic as they have been in recent elections.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, there is burgeoning interest in the possibility that Asian American voters will be the margin of victory in competitive races.<sup>6</sup> This possibility has always been real in states with highly concentrated Asian American populations like California and Hawaii. Today, it is also real in states with rapidly growing Asian American populations and elections with razor-thin margins, such as recent elections in Georgia and Virginia.<sup>7</sup>

Against this backdrop of the demographic growth and rising electoral salience of Asian Americans, the 2022 election was one of the most closely watched, fiercely contested, and actively participated in midterm campaigns in recent history. Following on the heels of record turnout rates in the 2018 midterms, an estimated 45% of the eligible electorate voted in 2022.<sup>8</sup> The nation closely watched the election because the outcome would dictate the balance of power in both houses of Congress. Figure 2 shows that, in a midterm election where most groups saw turnout levels that remained essentially the same or decreased, the proportion of Asian American citizens who voted increased, from 40.6% in 2018 to 41.5% in 2022.

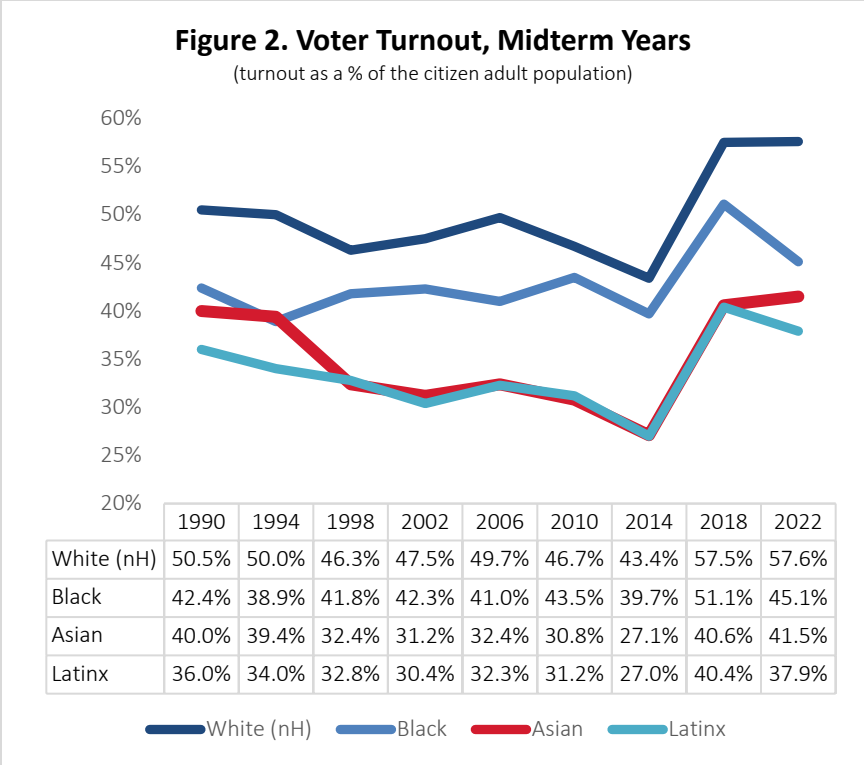
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<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Kimmy Yam, “Asian Americans favored Democratic candidates in midterms, exit polls say,” *NBC News* (November 10, 2022) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-favored-democratic-candidates-midterms-exit-polls-say-rcna56659>; David Leonhardt, “Asian Americans, shifting right,” *New York Times* (March 6, 2023) <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/briefing/asian-americans-conservative-republican.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Amy Yee, “Asian Americans set to play decisive role in midterm elections,” *Bloomberg* (November 4, 2022), [https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-04/asian-americans-could-take-decisive-role-in-us-midterm-elections?utm\\_source=website&utm\\_medium=share&utm\\_campaign=copy](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-04/asian-americans-could-take-decisive-role-in-us-midterm-elections?utm_source=website&utm_medium=share&utm_campaign=copy); and Jonati Mehta, Christopher Intagliata, and Ailsa Chang, “In some tight House races, Asian-American voters could determine the winner,” *NPR All Things Considered* (November 2, 2022) <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/02/1133667477/in-some-tight-house-races-asian-american-voters-could-determine-the-winner>.

<sup>7</sup> See Varun Nikore, “Asian voters could decide the Virginia governor’s election. And many other races.” *NBC News* (November 2, 2021), <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/politics-policy/virginia-election-2021-asian-voters-impact-results-rcna4348>; Li Zhou, “Georgia is a perfect example of the growing power of Asian American voters.” *Vox* (December 28, 2022), <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/12/28/23519123/georgia-asian-american-voters-turnout-warnock>.

<sup>8</sup> Pew Research Center, <https://pewrsr.ch/3ZEzw9N>.



Source: Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Supplement. “(nH)” means “Non-Hispanic.”

This higher midterm turnout was achieved amid a politicized and racialized political context in the wake of the Trump Presidency, its campaign of election denialism, and the ensuing January 6th, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. This was a climate rife with unfounded claims of voter fraud and election tampering. Such unfounded claims galvanized many state legislatures to enact new laws that set further requirements on voter registration and voting, seemingly aimed at targeting and threatening the voting rights and electoral participation of racial and ethnic minorities.<sup>9</sup> Such claims further fueled efforts in multiple states to stop the certification of the election.<sup>10</sup> Importantly, anti-Asian tropes featured prominently in several instances, such as the proliferation of conspiracy theories about “bamboo fibers” in paper ballots manufactured in China.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “Voting Laws Roundup: October 2022,” Brennan Center for Justice, (October 6, 2022) <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-october-2022>.

<sup>10</sup> Hansi Lo Wong, “Why elections are not over until the votes are certified,” *NPR* (November 14, 2022) <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/14/1135756108/2022-election-results-certification-process>.

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Kamarck and Norman Eisen, “Democracy on the ballot—what do election deniers want?” *Brookings* (October 20, 2022), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/10/20/democracy-on-the-ballot-what-do-election-deniers-want/>.

The 2022 elections were also conducted amid intensified harassment and hate directed at Asian Americans since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>12</sup> This anti-Asian hostility found its way into campaign rhetoric, with President Trump's references to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus” and as “Kung flu.”<sup>13</sup> In surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center, 45% of Asian Americans reported that they experienced at least one of the following five hateful incidents since the pandemic began: fearing that someone would threaten or physically harm them because they are Asian American; having people act uncomfortable around them because they are Asian American; being subject to racial slurs and jokes because they are Asian American; being told by someone to go back to their home country; and being told by someone that they are responsible for COVID-19.<sup>14</sup>

Given this context for the 2022 midterm elections, this report presents the results of a unique study on Asian Americans’ experiences with and views on the 2022 midterm elections. While Figure 2 shows the increase in the proportion of Asian Americans who voted between the 2018 and the 2022 midterms, it also shows what has been true of the Asian American electorate for as long as data have been available on Asian Americans: namely, that turnout rates for the citizen voting age population (CVAP) of Asian Americans lags significantly behind the rates for non-Hispanic whites. While Asian Americans have closed the gap somewhat, in 2022, there remained a 16% gap between the 57.6% of the non-Hispanic white CVAP who voted and the 41.5% of the Asian American CVAP who voted. There also remains a conspicuous turnout gap for presidential election years: Figure 3 shows that as recently as the 2016 election, there was more than a 16% gap between a 65.3% non-Hispanic white CVAP turnout rate and a 49% Asian American CVAP turnout rate. In the 2020 election, Asian Americans’ CVAP turnout rate surged to 59.7%, but that remained more than 11% behind turnout for the non-Hispanic white CVAP.

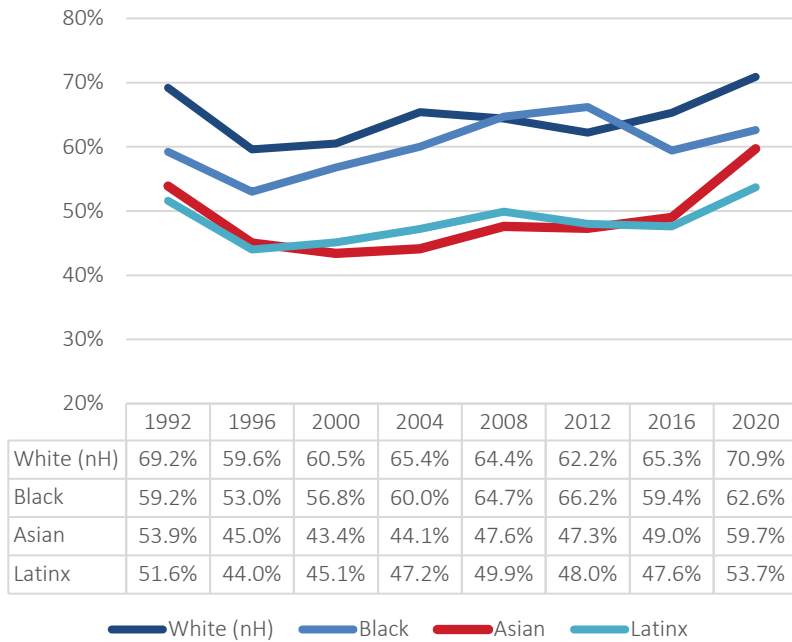
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<sup>12</sup> While the COVID-19 pandemic brought renewed attention to anti-Asian hate, the United States has a long history of violence and harassment of Asian Americans. See Liz Mineo, “The scapegoating of Asian Americans,” *The Harvard Gazette* (March 24, 2021) <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/03/a-long-history-of-bigotry-against-asian-americans/>.

<sup>13</sup> Sabrina Tavernese and Richard Opiel, Jr., “Spit on, yelled At: Chinese-Americans fear for their safety,” *NY Times* (March 23, 2020). Colby Itkowitz, “Trump again uses racially insensitive term to describe coronavirus,” *Washington Post* (June 23, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Neil Ruiz, Khadijah Edwards, and Mark Hugo Lopez. 2021. “One-third of Asian Americans fear threats, physical attacks and most say violence against them is rising.” Pew Research Center (April 21), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/21/one-third-of-asian-americans-fear-threats-physical-attacks-and-most-say-violence-against-them-is-rising/>.

**Figure 3. Voting, Presidential Years**  
(turnout as a % of the citizen adult population)



To better understand the current challenges and opportunities facing the Asian American electorate, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC commissioned the 2022 National Poll of Asian American Non-Voters and Voters (NPAANV). The NPAANV was fielded in the weeks following the 2022 midterm elections, with representative samples of both voters and non-voters. The NPAANV interviewed 2,100 Asian American voters and 700 Asian American non-voters, with targeted sub-samples of roughly 350 voters from each of the six largest Asian American subgroups (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Americans). Topics ranged from how Asian Americans voted, how they rated their experience of voting, what their news sources were, whether they encountered what they thought to be misinformation, and their access to in-language and other voter assistance.

Full details on the sample design and survey methodology used for this study are provided at the end of the report. The findings from the NPAANV in this report, for the most part, focus on overall responses and disaggregated responses where there are interesting and important differences between subgroups. While the sample sizes for the ethnic communities in the voter sample are large enough to report out separately, ethnic subgroup percentages are reported only when there are interesting and important differences. Findings based on data from the NPAANV present the sample sizes and margins of error for the data used in the analysis.

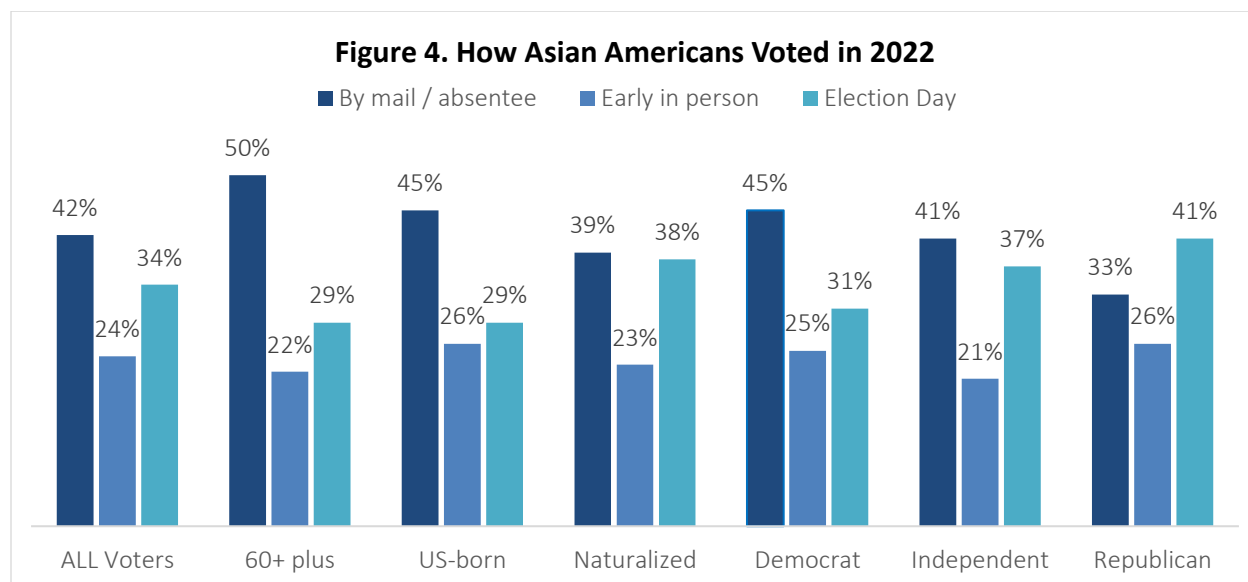
**VOTING IN 2022**

In an election marked by widespread concerns about voter suppression, voter intimidation, and continuing worry about the spread of COVID-19, a key unknown was not just whether Asian



Americans would vote, but also how they would vote in 2022. To assess this question, survey participants were asked, “Many people vote early before election day, through an absentee ballot, a mail ballot, or at an early voting location. Others prefer voting in-person on Election Day. How about you? How did you vote in this last election?”

Absentee voting and early voting are alternatives to Election Day turnout designed to improve voter accessibility and electoral participation in America. Increasingly, states are reforming their election laws to lower the costs of voting, with a large majority of states allowing early in-person voting and no-excuse absentee voting. Many states are introducing vote centers, and four states plus the District of Columbia opted for universal vote-by-mail in the 2022 midterms.<sup>15</sup> These reforms recognize the many demands on time and effort voting imposes on voters in terms of transportation needs, long lines in some polling places, and the inconvenient or changing location of polling places, among other costs to voting. While Americans overall are choosing to vote absentee more frequently, Asian Americans are by far the group likeliest to vote by mail. The 2020 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement data show that by race, 43% of whites, 35% of Blacks, and 49% of Latinos vote by mail compared with 64% of Asian Americans. Only 19% of Asian Americans voted in person on Election Day in 2020.

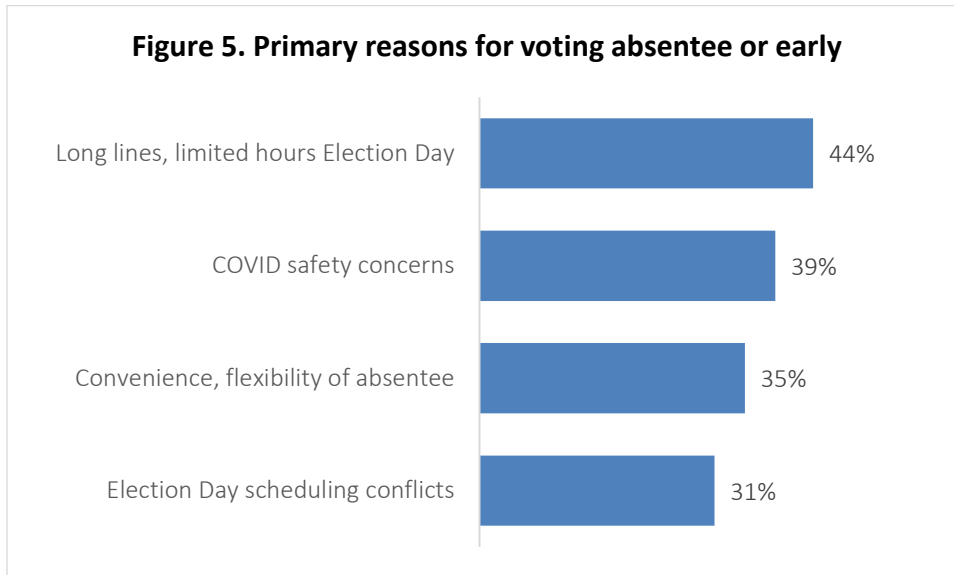


Note: asked of 2,100 respondents in the voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

Figure Four shows that Asian Americans continued to favor alternatives to Election Day voting, with near two-in-five voting absentee, one-in-four voting early in person, and only one-in-three voting on Election Day. Older voters were especially likely to vote absentee, and naturalized voters were slightly likelier to vote in-person on Election Day. In terms of partisanship, Democrats were especially likely to vote absentee, while Republicans favored voting in-person on Election Day.

<sup>15</sup> As of the date of this report, there are now seven states (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington) plus the District of Columbia that require or allow their counties to mail ballots to all vote-registered citizens for their elections.

This question was followed up by asking voters about their primary reasons for voting early. Respondents were asked, “There are many reasons why someone might choose to vote early or absentee rather than voting on Election Day. Which of the following are reasons why you chose to vote early and not on Election Day?” Ten possible reasons were given to this question and respondents were asked to select all the answers that applied to them. Respondents were also allowed to identify some reason other than the ten options given to them, which three percent of the sample chose to do. The most commonly chosen reasons are shown in Figure Five below.



Note: asked of the 1,403 respondents who voted absentee or early in-person, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.6\%$ .

Four reasons were dominant among voters surveyed in the NPAANV: Asian Americans preferred to vote absentee or early in order to avoid long lines and limited hours on Election Day (44%); they had COVID-related safety concerns with voting in-person Election Tuesday (39%); they preferred the convenience and flexibility of absentee voting (35%); and/or they had scheduling conflicts related to work, school, or caregiving (31%). An additional one-in-eight voters also checked off that they were concerned about being harassed or intimidated at the polls.

Table One presents some of the breakdowns in which groups were especially likely or less likely to choose these top four reasons for voting early or absentee. The main results here are:

- Younger voters are especially likely to choose to vote absentee or early due to scheduling conflicts and less likely to see convenience and flexibility as a key reason. By contrast, older voters are less likely to note scheduling conflicts but are particularly likely to select the convenience and flexibility of voting absentee or early. Older voters also seek to avoid the long lines and limited hours of voting in-person on Election Day.
- High income voters (those earning more than \$100,000 a year) are especially likely to favor voting absentee or early because of the convenience and flexibility it affords. Those

falling below \$40,000 a year by contrast were more likely to cite COVID-safety as a reason to vote absentee or early.

- There is a similar pattern by education, where voters with a college degree or higher are more likely to appreciate convenience and flexibility while voters with a high school-level education or less note scheduling conflicts and COVID-safety as reasons to vote absentee or early.
- In terms of nativity and language, naturalized citizens and voters who primarily speak an Asian language at home were more likely to cite COVID-safety concerns as a reason to vote absentee or early.
- Differences by party affiliation were modest, mainly found in Democrats' greater likelihood than Republicans of voting absentee or early because of convenience and flexibility and because of scheduling conflicts due to work, school, or caretaking.

**Table 1. Primary reasons for voting absentee or early**

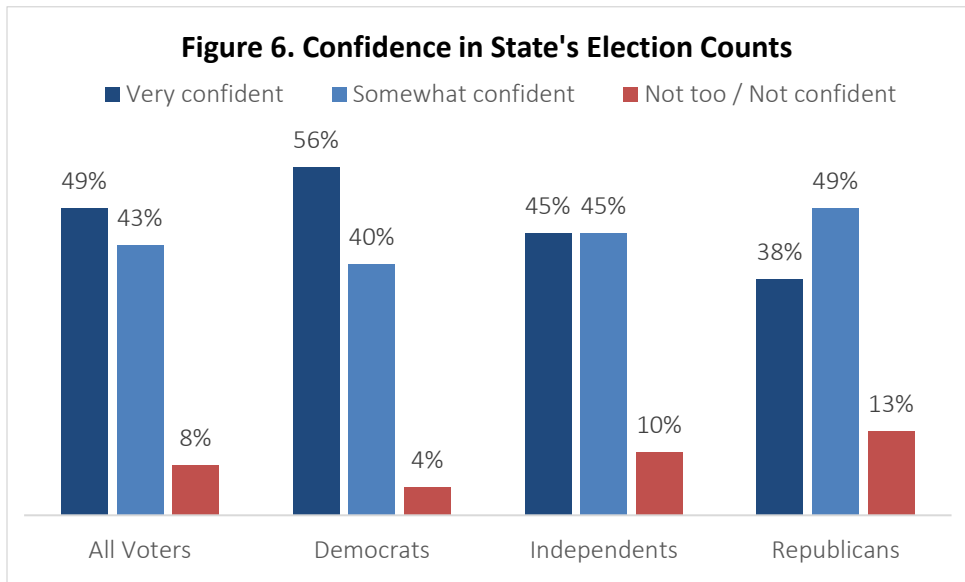
	Long lines, limited hours	COVID safety concerns	Convenience, Flexibility	Work, School, Care Conflicts
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>31%</b>
18-30 year olds	42%	38%	27%	39%
60 years plus	49%	43%	49%	18%
<\$40K / year	44%	45%	28%	31%
>\$100K / year	49%	32%	48%	27%
GED or less	42%	49%	22%	38%
College or more	44%	37%	39%	28%
Naturalized	47%	43%	36%	31%
US-born	40%	35%	34%	32%
Asian lang speaker	42%	46%	37%	35%
English speaker	46%	34%	33%	28%
Democrat	46%	39%	37%	34%
Independent	40%	43%	35%	28%
Republican	43%	38%	30%	25%

Note: asked of the 1,403 respondents who voted absentee or early in-person, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.6\%$ .

## **EVALUATING THE ELECTIONS**

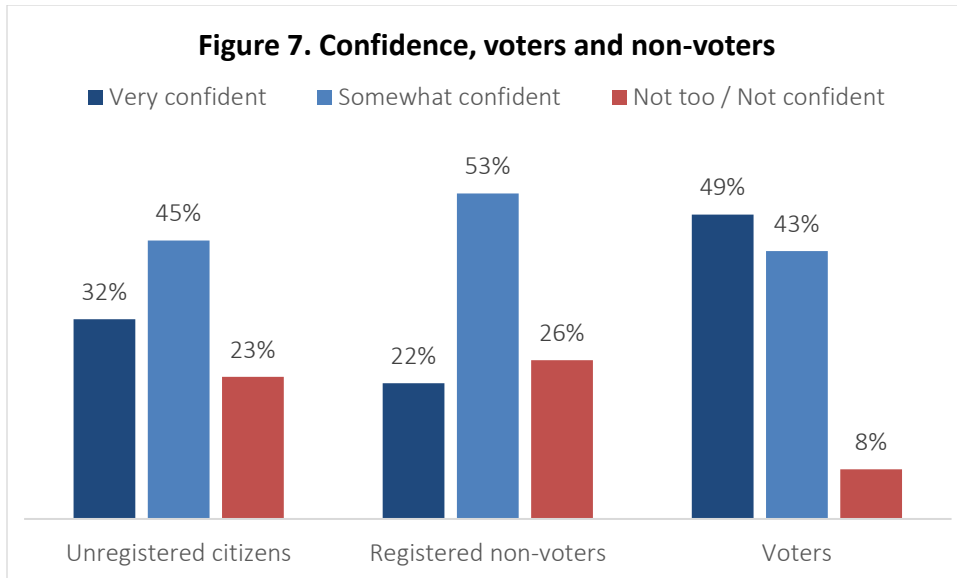
One of the main sources of controversy in the 2022 midterm elections centered on the question of whether the election itself would be administered fairly, whether votes would be fully and accurately counted, and whether the declared outcome of the elections would be accepted as legitimate. Given this highly charged consideration the NPAANV polled Asian American voters and non-voters about their views on the election. To assess confidence in the election results, survey participants who reported voting in 2022 were asked, "How confident are you that every voter's ballot was counted in your state in this year's election?"

The results, shown in Figure Six, are that Asian American voters were quite confident in the 2022 election counts in their state. Nearly half (49%) were very confident that every vote was counted and an additional 43% were somewhat confident. Put in other terms, only a very small segment of Asian American voters had little or no confidence in the 2022 midterm elections—additional studies are needed to assess whether such voters have doubts about their votes being fully and accurately counted, or whether lack of confidence is due to some other concern. Only 8% of voters said they were “not too confident” or “not confident at all.” Even among Asian American Republicans, low confidence rises modestly to 13%, a relatively low figure given the extent to which Republican candidates in many 2022 campaigns stoked fear and distrust in whether votes would be fully and accurately counted. On the same theme, Republicans were less likely to be very confident than Democrats (38% to 56%).



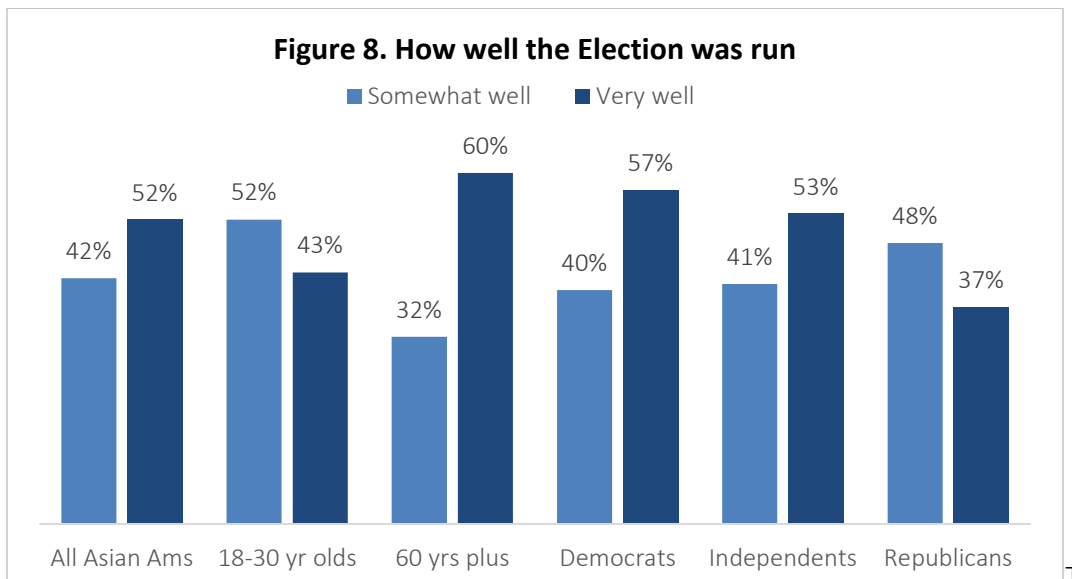
Note: asked of 2,100 respondents in the voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

When the same question was put to non-voters (shown in Figure Seven), the NPAANV found that while a majority of non-voters were at least somewhat confident in election counts, the levels of confidence were measurably lower than among voters. While only 8% of voters felt “not too” or “not at all” confident, 23% of citizens who remained unregistered and 26% of those who were registered but did not vote felt the same. These two groups of non-voters were also substantially less likely to be “very confident” that every ballot in their state would be counted; instead, the most common answer among both the unregistered and the registered non-voters was that they were “somewhat” confident (45% and 53%, respectively).



Note: there were 350 respondents for each non-voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$ .

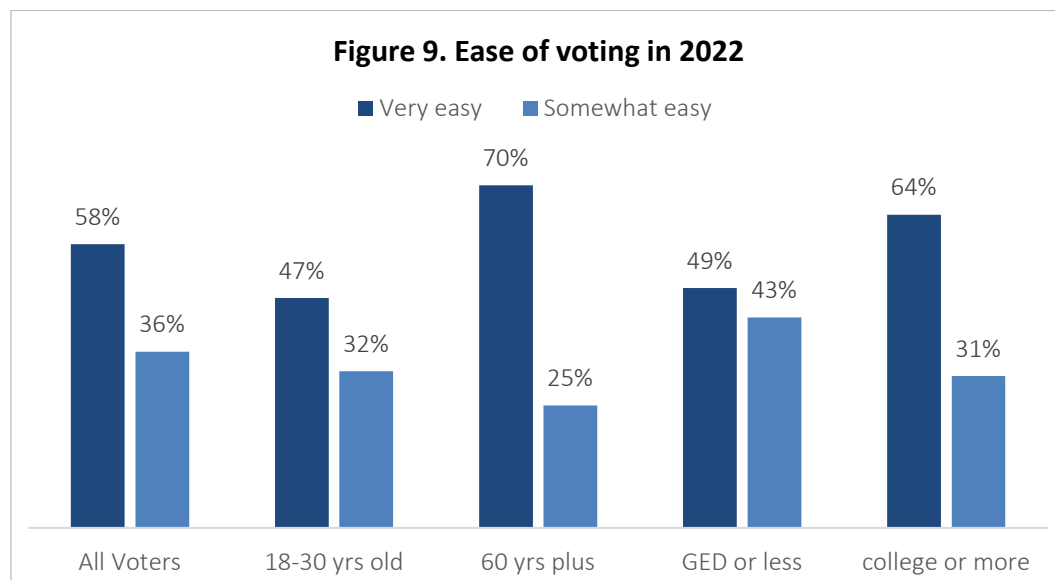
This high degree of confidence among voters that every ballot in their states was counted is mirrored in the very positive evaluation of how the 2022 midterm elections were administered. Here, survey participants who voted were asked, “Overall, how well do you think the elections this November in your community were run?” Respondents are prompted to reflect about the administration of elections where they lived, which focuses their answers more on their direct experience of how elections were run, rather than partisan claims and media accounts of how the elections were administered.



Note: asked of 2,100 respondents in the voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

Per this question, Figure Eight shows that 52% said the 2022 elections in their community were "very well" run. Another 42% thought they were "somewhat well" run. Combined, then, 94% of

Asian American voters thought the election was at least somewhat well run, and only 6% said "not that well" or "not well at all." Those 60 years and older were likelier than those 18 to 30 years to say "very well" (60% to 43%). Republicans were far less likely than Democrats to say the elections were run very well. Yet even among Republicans, 37% reported that the elections in their community were very well run and an additional 48% said they were somewhat well run. There were no significant differences by ethnicity, nativity, or language use.



Note: asked of 2,100 respondents in the voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

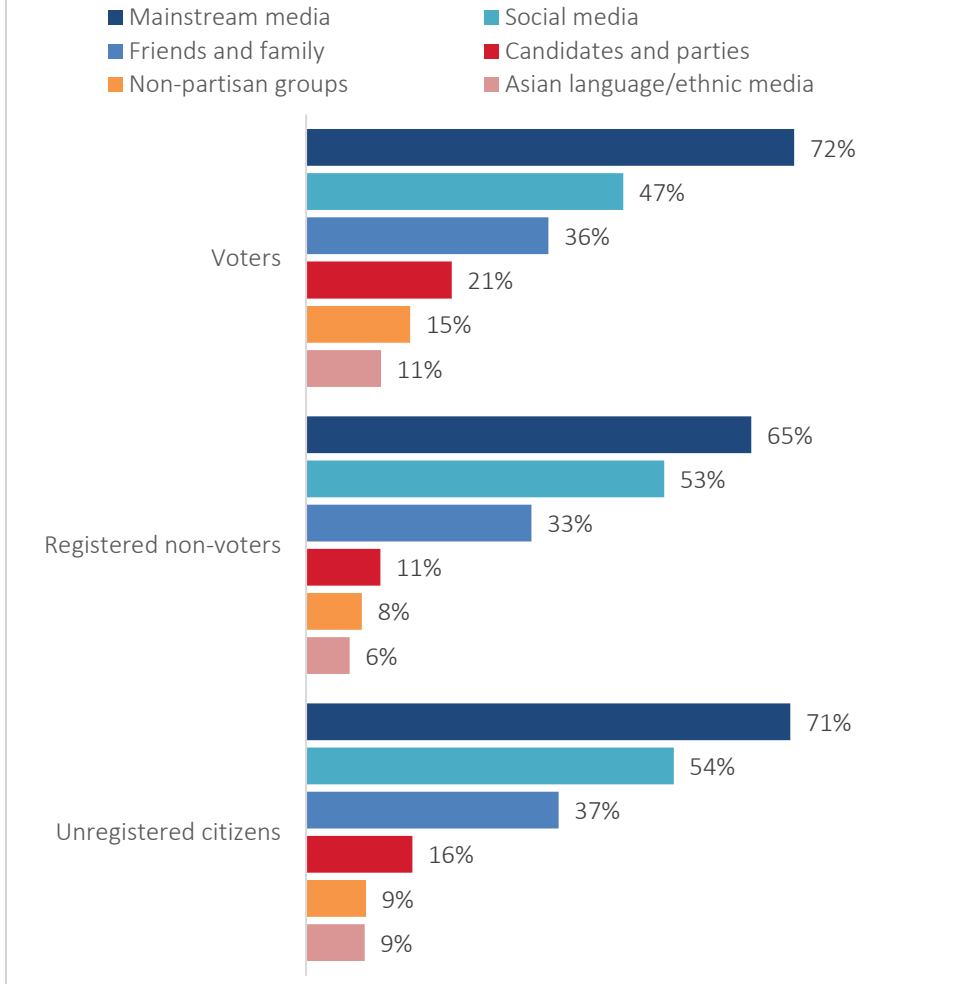
Turning more directly to voters' first-hand experiences in 2022, NPAANV respondents were asked, "Overall, how easy or difficult was voting in this year's elections for you personally?" Paralleling the pattern of responses to the questions regarding confidence in ballot counts and how well elections were run, Figure Nine shows that 94% of Asian American voters in 2022 indicated that voting was either "somewhat" or "very" easy; less than 6 percent said voting was "somewhat" difficult and almost no one indicated that voting was "very" difficult for them in 2022. The overwhelming sentiment that voting was not difficult held irrespective of various demographic markers. The most significant differences were by age and education. Younger voters in 2022 were substantially less likely to report that voting was easy; 47% stated that voting was very easy and 79% combined stated that voting was at least "somewhat" easy. By contrast, fully 70% of voters aged 60 and older saw voting as very easy and 95% said it was at least somewhat easy. Similarly, voters with a high school level education or less were not as likely to say that voting was very easy compared to voters with a college degree or higher. Additional research is needed to assess whether these findings apply equally across LEP Asian American voters, as well as whether these findings change when assistance is offered and utilized. More research is needed to know which groups found voting easy and whether this was true across the board. For example, did certain subgroups—such as LEP Asian Americans—find voting more difficult? Or did they find it easy once they were able to understand the process?

While the overall evaluation of voting in the 2022 elections from the NPAANV is positive, there are also more cautionary findings from the poll. The NPAANV also asked its respondents the following: “There have been news stories about efforts to intimidate voters at vote centers, drop boxes and polling places this election year. Did you feel threatened either at your polling place, by your drop box or outside your polling place this year?” To this question, 16% of all voters reported feeling threatened; 8% who felt threatened at their polling place or vote center; 6% who felt threatened outside their polling place or vote center; and 2% who felt threatened when they mailed-in an absentee ballot. Perceived threats were especially common among younger voters (29% of 18 to 30 year olds), voters with a high school level education or less (25%), and Asian Indians (21%).

### ***SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ELECTIONS***

The 2022 midterms were also conducted in an environment of widespread mistrust in media coverage, polemic accusations of “fake news,” and the continued spread of conspiratorial beliefs about candidates, campaigns, and our political system. In this context, the NPAANV asked its respondents a series of questions about where Asian Americans went for information about the elections, whether they trusted media coverage on the elections, whether they encountered election misinformation, and what kind of misinformation they encountered.

**Figure 10. Sources of election information**



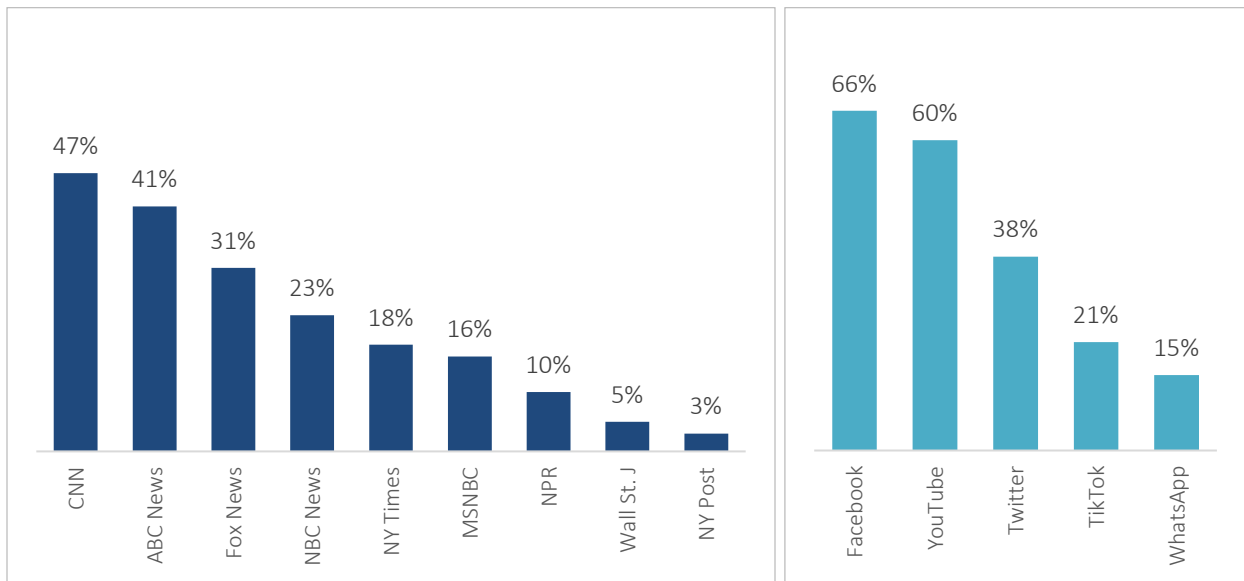
Note: there were 2,100 respondents in the voter sample, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; there were 350 respondents in each of the two non-voter samples, with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$ .

On news sources, survey participants were asked, “In general, where did you go for news and information about the elections?” Respondents were directed to check all sources that applied to them. Figure Ten shows that Asian American voters were most likely (71%) to get their news about the election from mainstream media sources (defined for respondents as “TV, radio, and newspapers”), followed by social media (48%) and friends and family (35%). A significant minority also reported getting informed by candidates and parties, non-partisan groups, and Asian language/ethnic media. In terms of differences between subgroups, the most conspicuous gap was by age: 18 to 30 year olds were much likelier to use social media for their election information than those 60 years and older (79% to 21%). While the media environment in 2022 was highly polarized along partisan lines, the partisan differences in news sources for Asian American voters were relatively modest: Democrats were slightly more likely to rely on mainstream media than Republicans (76% to 66%).



Figure Ten also compares voters to both groups of non-voters in their information sources. The first of two notable differences is that non-voters are less likely to get their election-related news and information from candidates and parties. While 21% of voters reported candidates and parties as their source; only 11% of those who were registered to vote but did not turn out said the same. The other difference is in reliance on social media: both registered non-voters and citizens who were not registered were somewhat more likely to say they used social media sources to stay informed about the elections. Registered non-voters were also less likely to report using mainstream media sources than either voters or unregistered non-voters.

**Figure 11. Mainstream and social media outlets, voters**



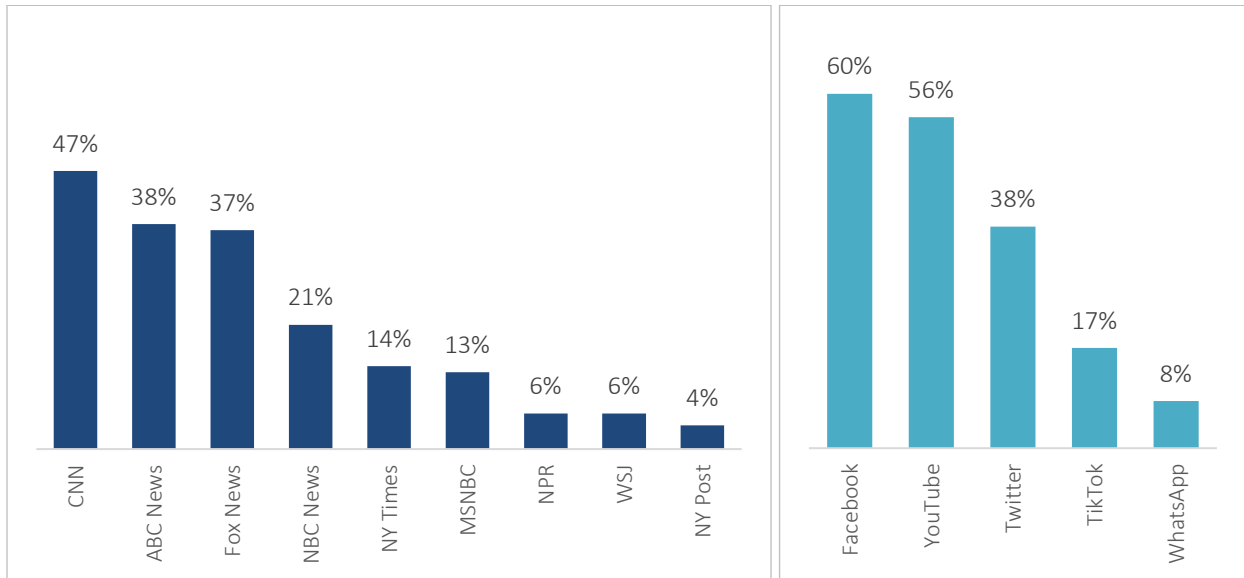
Note: asked of 1,497 voters who said they got their news from mainstream media and the 972 voters who said they got their news from social media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5\%$  and  $\pm 3.1\%$ , respectively.

Survey respondents who indicated that they were informed via mainstream media or social media sources were then asked what their main sources of news and information were from mainstream and from social media outlets. Respondents were directed to select up to three specific media sources. Figure Eleven shows the most commonly selected mainstream media and social sources for voters.

One key takeaway from the findings to this question is that Asian American voters rely on a fairly diverse range of mainstream media outlets, with graduated differences in media consumption between CNN at 47% and MSNBC at 16%. By contrast, voters who got their news and information from social media outlets were most likely to rely on Facebook (66%) or YouTube (60%), followed by Twitter (38%). A much smaller, but still significant number also relied on TikTok and WhatsApp. Figure Twelve shows the results for the same question asked of non-voters. The main finding from comparing voters to non-voters in terms of the specific media outlets they rely on for information is the resounding similarity between the two groups. The rank-order for both mainstream media outlets and social media outlets is essentially the same between the two groups. Within the margin of error, non-voters are slightly more likely to say they rely on Fox News than voters; non-voters

are also less likely to say they rely on the *New York Times*, MSNBC, and NPR, but those differences fall within the margin of error. In terms of social media outlets, non-voters are slightly less likely to say they rely on Facebook and WhatsApp.

**Figure 12. Mainstream and social media outlets, non-voters**



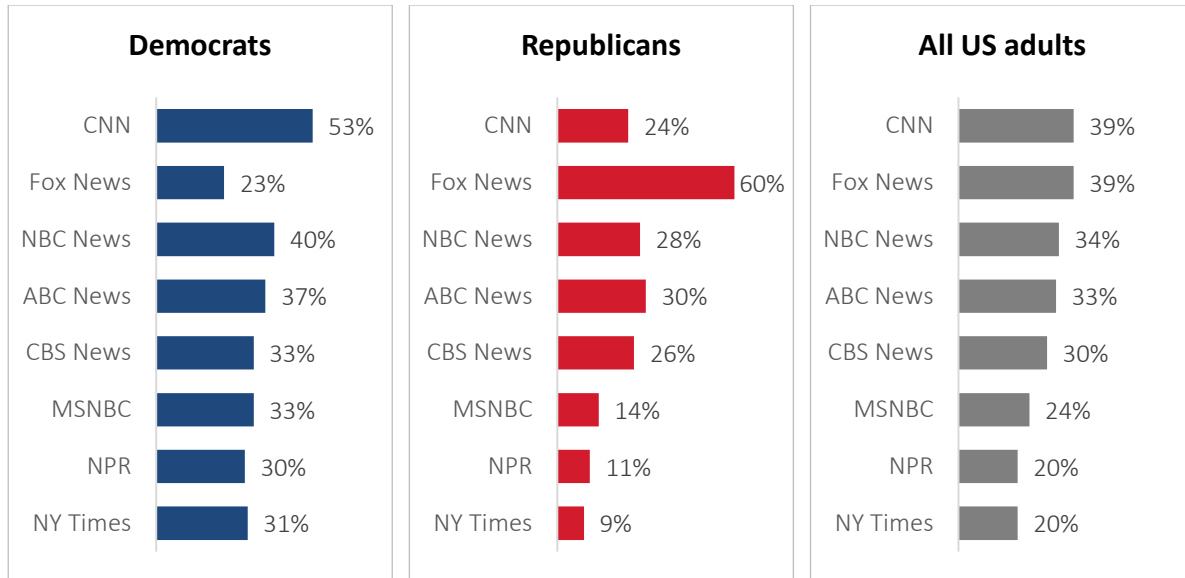
Note: asked of 483 non-voters who said they got their news from mainstream media and the 368 non-voters who said they got their news from social media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 4.5\%$  and  $\pm 5.1\%$ , respectively.

### MAINSTREAM MEDIA USAGE

As has increasingly been the case, the news and information environment surrounding the 2022 election was a highly partisan and polarized one. Studies show over and over again that Americans are increasingly self-segregating in the media outlets they go to for news and that there are pronounced partisan biases between media outlets.<sup>16</sup> Figure Thirteen results from a Pew Research Center study conducted in 2019 on the share of Americans who rely on different mainstream media outlets. The generally partisan and polarized media environment in the United States is most clearly shown in the contrast between Democrats and Republicans in their reliance on CNN and Fox News. While 53% of Democrats said they got their political news from CNN, only 24% of Republicans watched CNN for their news. Similarly, 60% of Republicans in the Pew study said they relied on Fox News for their political information compared to only 23% of Democrats. The Pew study also finds conspicuous partisan differences in reliance on other media outlets that are often regarded as more liberal or left-leaning, such as MSNBC, NPR, and the *New York Times*.

**Figure 13. Pew study on mainstream media outlets, all adult Americans**

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Eunji Kim, Yphtach Lelkes, and Joshua McCrain. 2022. "Measuring dynamic media bias." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119(32). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2202197119>; Eli Finkel, et al. 2020. "Political sectarianism in America." *Science* 370(6516): 533-536.

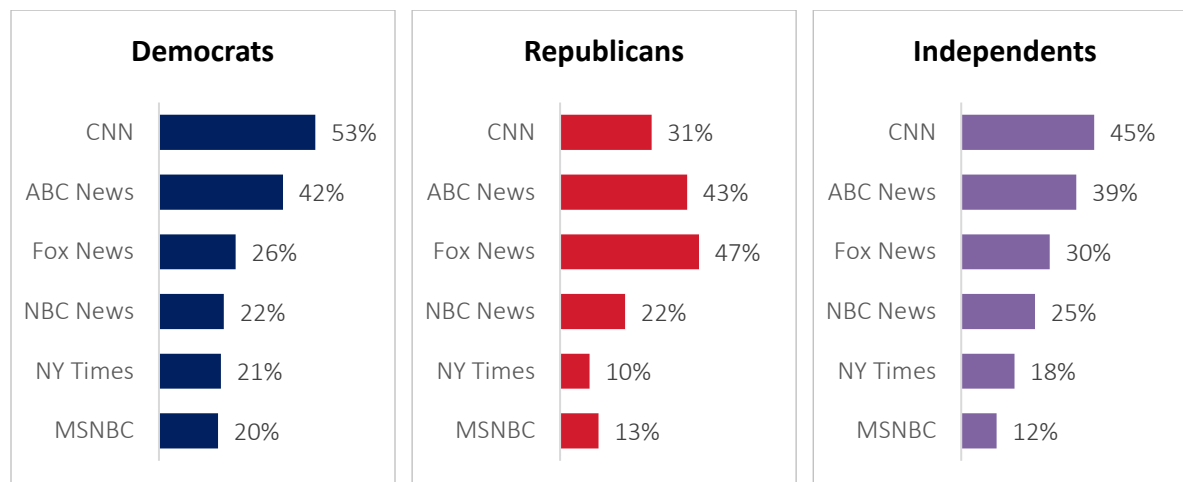


Source: Pew Research Center (January 24, 2020)<sup>17</sup>

The PNAANV finds that, while these partisan differences also exist for Asian American voters, they are considerably narrower. To assess the degree to which media consumption among Asian American voters might be similarly partisan, Figure Fourteen compares Democrats, Independents, and Republicans in the mainstream media outlets they relied on for their news and information. The findings from the PNAANV show that partisan differences in mainstream media outlets are discernible for Asian American voters, but they are not as pronounced as they are in the general electorate. Democrats are somewhat more likely to identify CNN as their main media outlet of choice (53%), but 26% of Asian American Democrats still list Fox News as a source of news and information. Similarly, Republicans are far more likely to identify Fox News as their main media outlet of choice (47%), but 31% still list CNN and 13% list MSNBC as outlets they rely on for their election-related news and information.

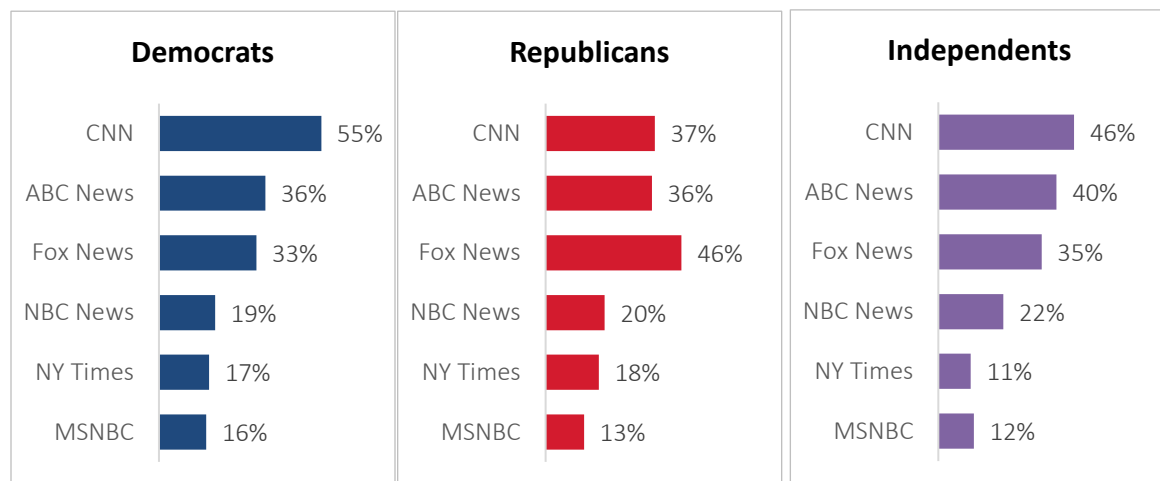
<sup>17</sup> From the Pew Research Center’s report, “U.S. Media Polarization and the 2020 Election,” <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2020/01/24/americans-are-divided-by-party-in-the-sources-they-turn-to-for-political-news/>. The Pew study interviewed 12,043 adult Americans between October 29 and November 11, 2019. The results for Democrats in Figure 10 includes those who “lean” Democrat; Republicans includes those who “lean” Republican.

**Figure 14. Mainstream news outlets by partisanship, voters**



Note: asked of 1,497 voters who said they got their news from mainstream media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5\%$ .

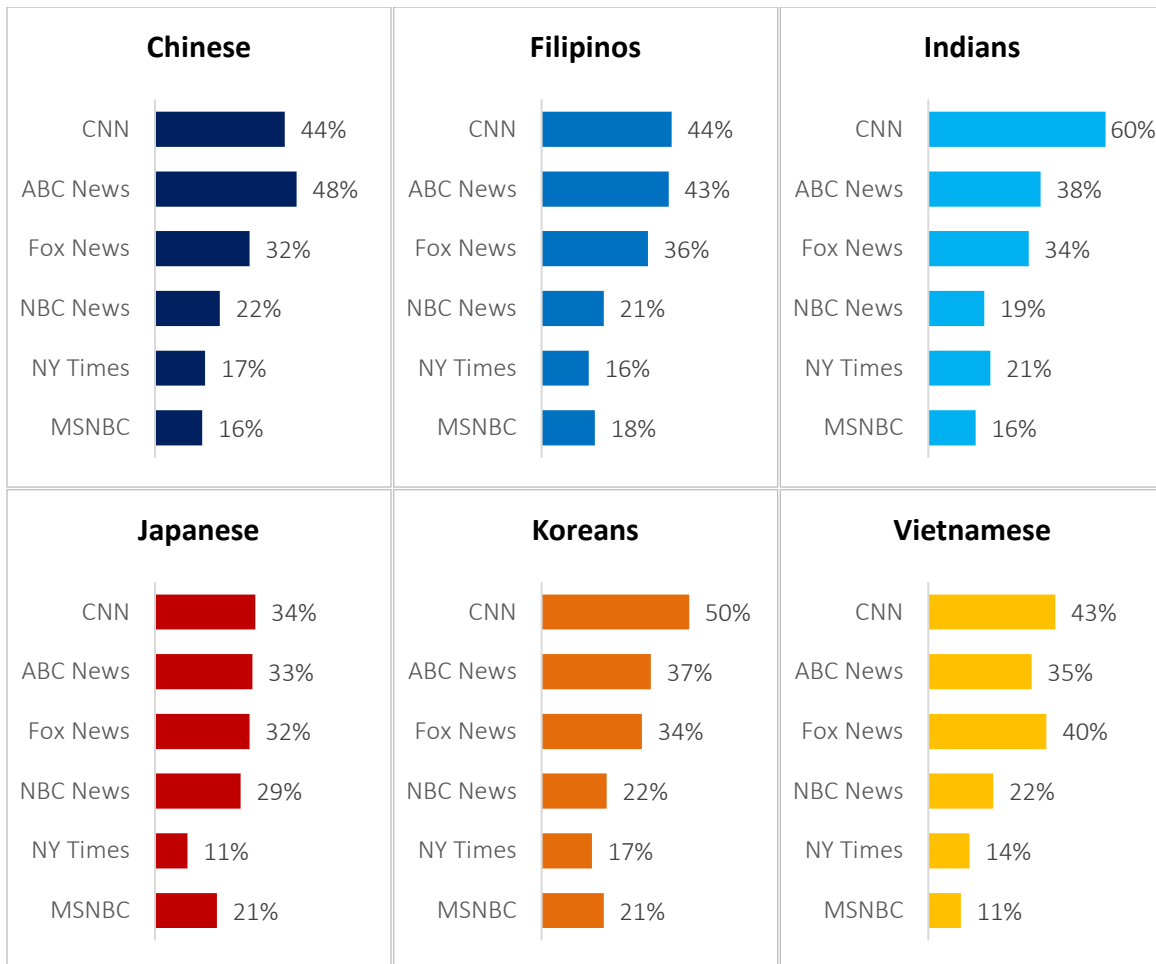
**Figure 15. Mainstream news outlets by partisanship, non-voters**



Note: asked of 483 non-voters who said they got their news from mainstream media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 4.5\%$ .

Figure Fifteen shows the results to the same question for Asian American non-voters. As with Asian American voters, the PNAANV finds that reliance on different outlets varies by partisanship but not as much as it does for adult Americans in general. While Asian American non-voters who identify as Democrats are likelier to go to CNN for their election news and Asian American non-voters who identify as Republicans are likelier to go to Fox News, one-in-three non-voting Democrats still go to Fox News and one-in-three non-voting Republicans still go to CNN. Comparing Figure Fourteen to Figure Fifteen, the difference in reliance on CNN and Fox for news are 22% and 21% between Democratic voters and Republican voters, respectively. For Democratic non-voters and Republican non-voters, those differences are 18% and 13%.

**Figure 16. Mainstream news outlets by ethnic community**



Note: asked of 1,980 voters and non-voters who said they got their news from mainstream media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.2\%$ .

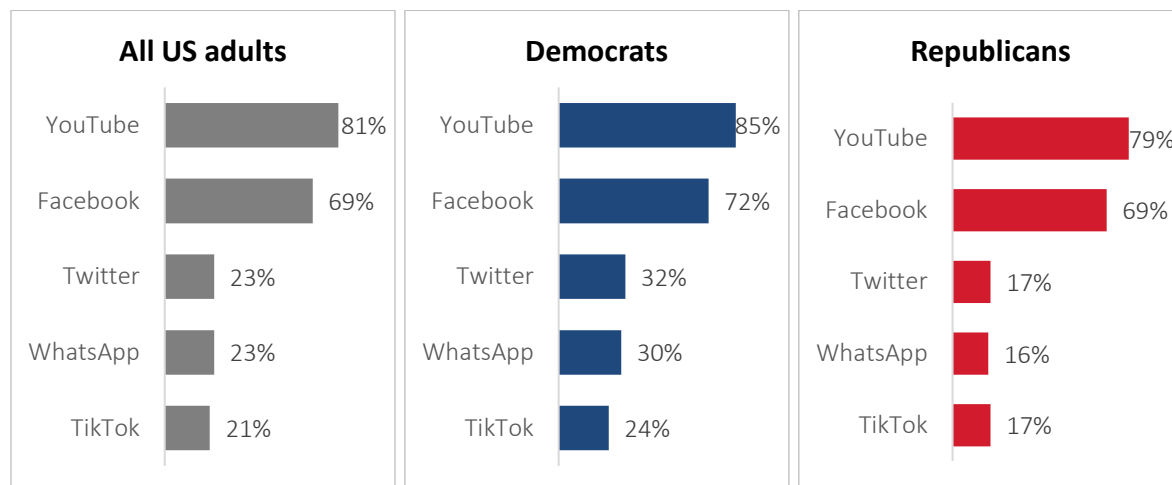
Finally, Figure Sixteen shows which mainstream media sources Asian Americans go to for their election-related news, disaggregated by ethnic subgroup. Some of the interesting differences between groups are: a higher percentage of Asian Indians rely on CNN for their news (60%) than any other ethnic community; Chinese Americans are most likely to rely on ABC News (48%) and tied for least likely to watch Fox News along with Japanese Americans (32%); Vietnamese Americans are most likely to rely on Fox News (40%); Japanese Americans are most likely to rely on NBC News (29%); and Vietnamese Americans were less likely than all other groups to rely on MSNBC (11%). Notably, even among Asian Indians, the group that is likeliest to say they go to CNN for their election-related news, 34% say they visit Fox News. And among Vietnamese Americans, the group that is likeliest to say they go to Fox News, 43% say they visit CNN.

#### *SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE*

A longstanding concern about how voters are increasingly self-selecting into particular mainstream media outlets like Fox News and CNN is intensified for self-selecting into specific social

media outlets. The particular worry is that social media platforms may invite and nurture echo chambers and filter bubbles as well as provide an outlet for election-related misinformation.<sup>18</sup> As with mainstream media use, the Pew Research Center provides some general statistics for social media use in the United States.

**Figure 17. Pew study on social media outlets, all adult Americans**



Source: Pew Research Center (April 7, 2021)

Where Pew’s data on mainstream media outlets is focused on sources of political news, their data on social media shown in Figure Eighteen is on reliance on social media outlets *in general*, not specifically for their news and information about politics and elections.<sup>19</sup> The main finding from the Pew data are that the lion’s share of Americans, Democrat or Republican, rely on YouTube and Facebook for their social media. In addition, a substantial number of adult Americans also go to Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok. Finally, Democrats are more likely to say they go to any particular social media outlet than Republicans, especially for Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok.

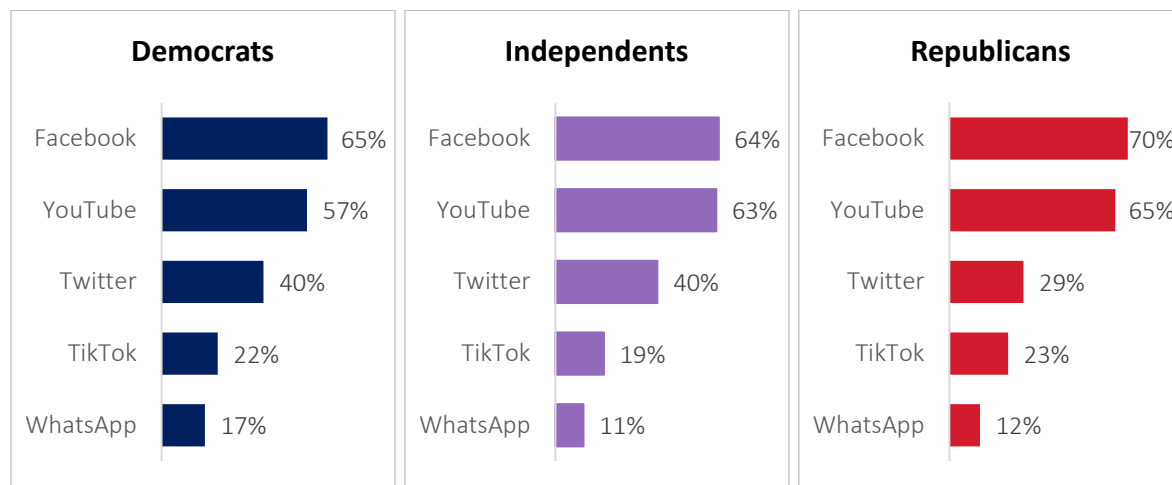
The general pattern from the Pew data are mirrored in the PNAANV findings for Asian Americans. Keeping in mind that the PNAANV asks specifically about social media use for news and information (unlike Pew), Figure Eighteen shows that Asian American voters who identify as Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are especially likely to use Facebook and YouTube. Unlike the Pew data, Facebook is more commonly used among Asian American voters than YouTube. The proportion of Asian American voters who go on Twitter for their news and

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., James Flaminio, et al. 2023. “Political polarization of news media and influencers on Twitter in the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections,” *Nature*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01550-8>; Daniel Muise et al. 2022. “Quantifying Partisan News Diets in Web and TV Audiences.” *Science* 8(28): DOI: [10.1126/sciadv.abn0083](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abn0083).

<sup>19</sup> Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/07/partisan-differences-in-social-media-use-show-up-for-some-platforms-but-not-facebook/>. One consequence of the broader scope of Pew’s survey on social media use generally is that social media outlets like Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Snapchat that do not generally post political content feature prominently in their popularity. To more directly compare social media outlets between the Pew Study and PNAANV, these outlets that do not regularly post political content are excluded from Figure Seventeen. Note also that Pew results combine partisan identifiers with partisan leaners in Figure Seventeen.

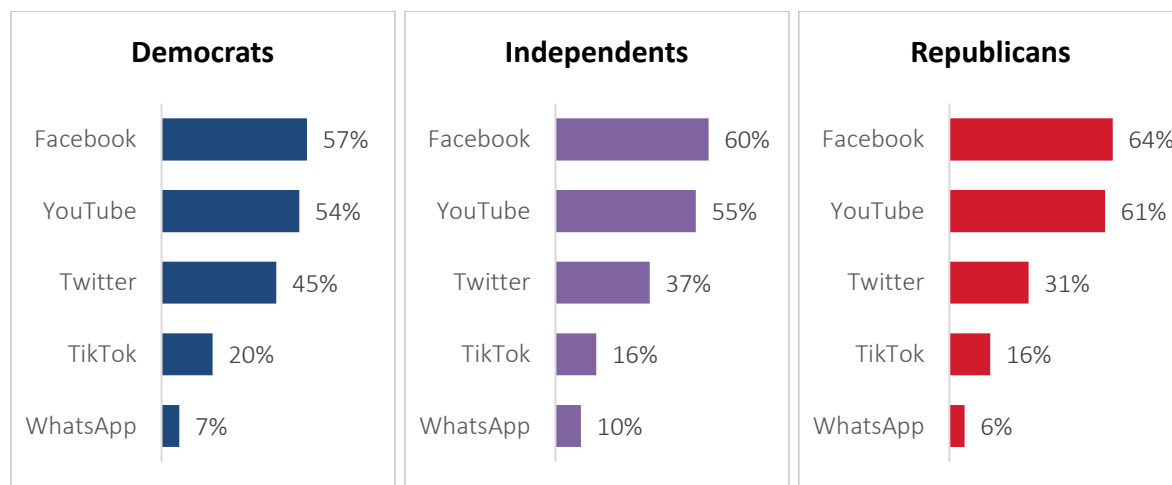
information is also much higher than for adult Americans from the Pew study. Overall, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans are more similar than different in the social media outlets they use for the news; the main exception to this is that Asian American voters who are Republicans are less likely to use Twitter than are Democrats or Independents.

**Figure 18. Social media news outlets by partisanship, voters**



Note: asked of 972 voters who said they got their news from social media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

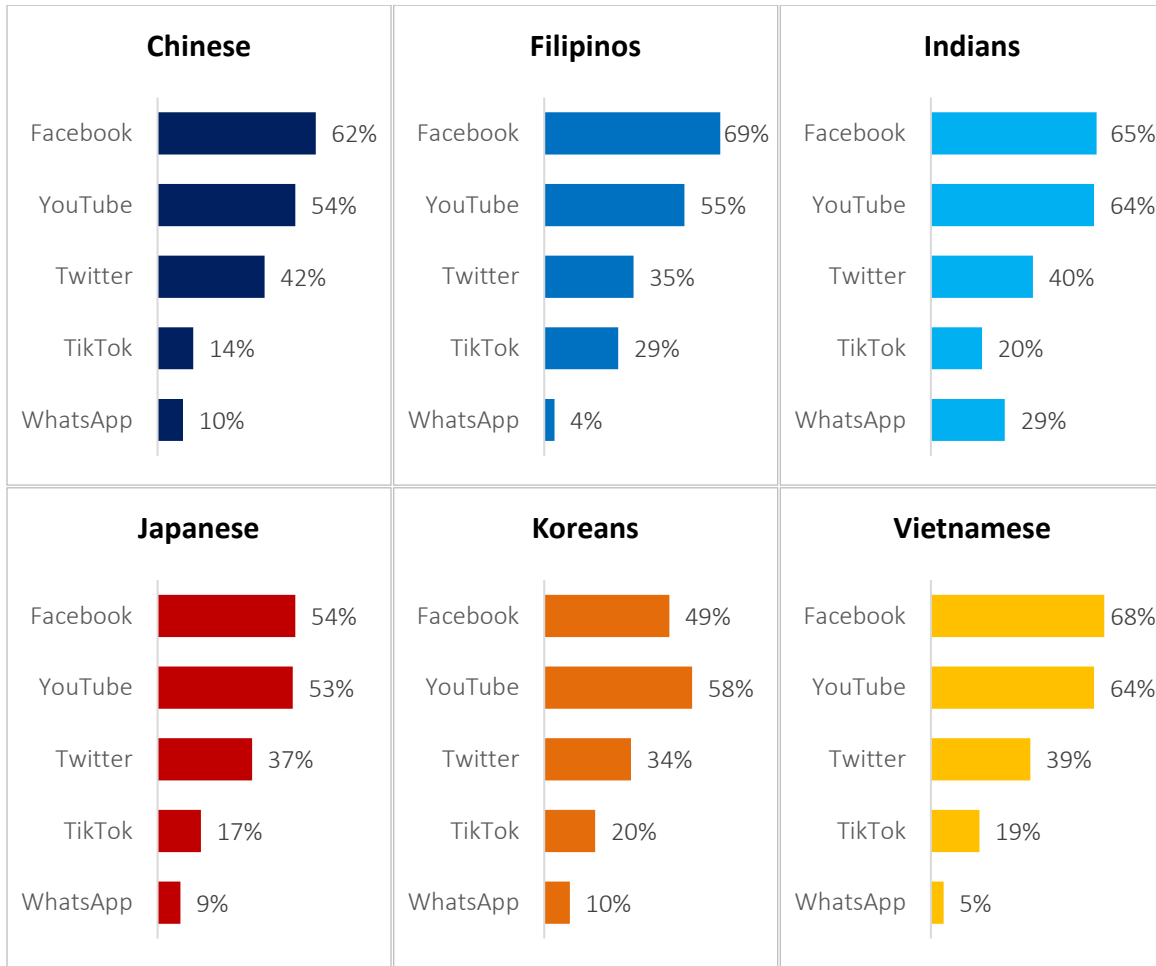
**Figure 19. Social news outlets by partisanship, non-voters**



Note: asked of 368 non-voters who said they got their news from social media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.1\%$ .

Finally, Figure Nineteen shows findings for the same question asked of Asian American non-voters. Asian American non-voters are largely similar to Asian American voters in terms of the social media outlets that they rely on for their election-related news. Facebook and YouTube are dominant for non-voting Democrats, Independents, and Republicans alike. As with voters, Asian American non-voters who identify as Republican appear slightly more reliant on Facebook and YouTube than their Democratic counterparts and slightly less reliant on Twitter.

**Figure 20. Social media news outlets by ethnic community**



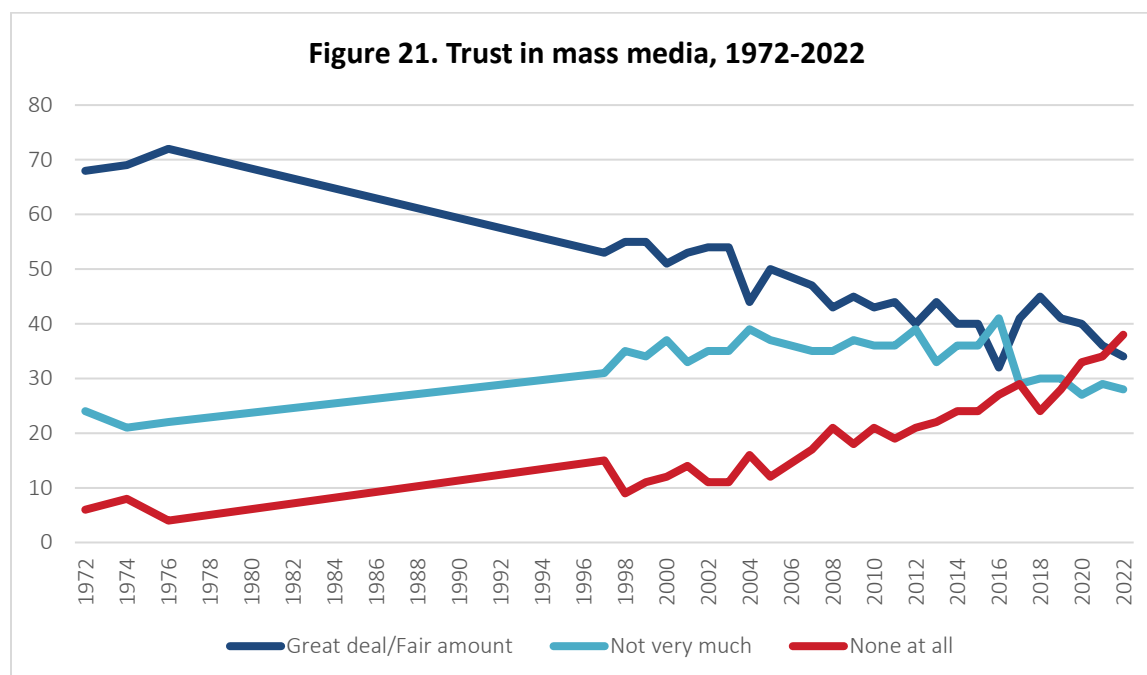
Note: asked of 1,340 voters and non-voters who said they got their news from mainstream media, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.7\%$ . This figure only includes the top five social media news outlets used by ethnic community.

As with mainstream media sources, the social media sources that Asian Americans go to for their election-related news is disaggregated by ethnic subgroup in Figure Twenty. There are again some interesting differences between groups: Filipino Americans and Vietnamese Americans are most likely to go to Facebook for their news (69% and 68%), while Korean Americans are the least likely (49%); YouTube is most popular for election-related news among Asian Indians and Vietnamese Americans (64%); Twitter is especially popular for Chinese Americans (42%); WhatsApp is most popular for Asian Indians (29%); and Filipino Americans are especially likely to go to TikTok for their election-related news (29%).

**TRUST IN ELECTION INFORMATION**



Representative democracies like the United States depend critically on an independent press to inform citizens with full, fair, and accurate information about the candidates, issues, and stakes in a given election. This value is inscribed into the First Amendment of our Bill of Rights. Yet a grave reality is that Americans’ trust in their media sources has nosedived in the last half century. Figure Twenty-One shows the trend in trust in mass media from Gallup polls asked since 1972. In 2022, 38% of Gallup respondents said they had no trust that mass media reported the news fully, fairly, and accurately, while an additional 28% had “not very much” trust and only 34% said they trusted mass media at least a “fair amount.” A recent Pew Research Center report on media polarization further finds that there are pronounced partisan and ideological filters on which media sources Americans trust and which they distrust.<sup>20</sup>



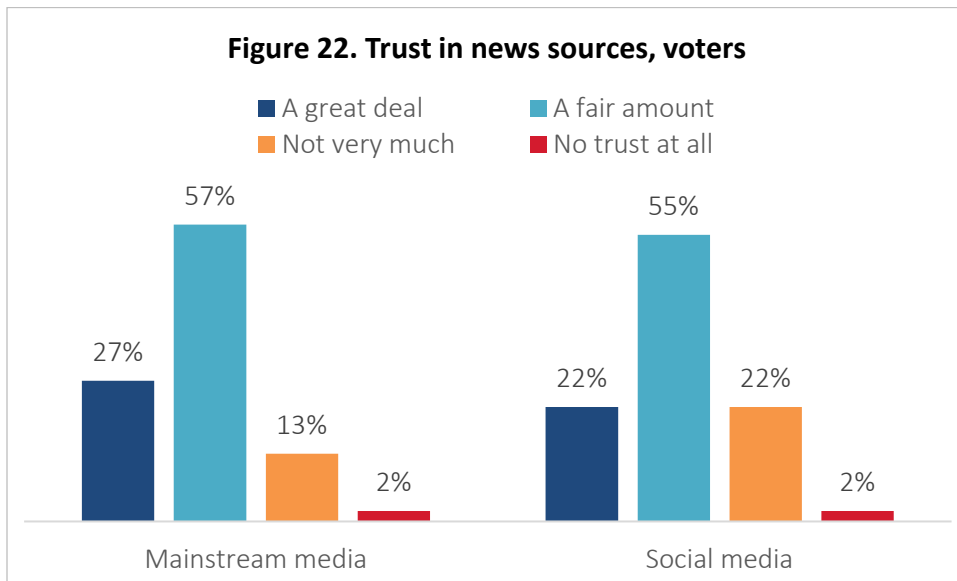
Source: Gallup<sup>21</sup>

The NPAANV assessed Asian Americans’ views on their trust in mass media as well. Rather than asking about voters’ and non-voters’ views on the mass media in general, however, the NPAANV asked specifically about the media sources that its survey participants reported using for their news and information about the election. That is, participants were asked, “Thinking about your sources of news about the election from [mainstream/social] media, how much trust and

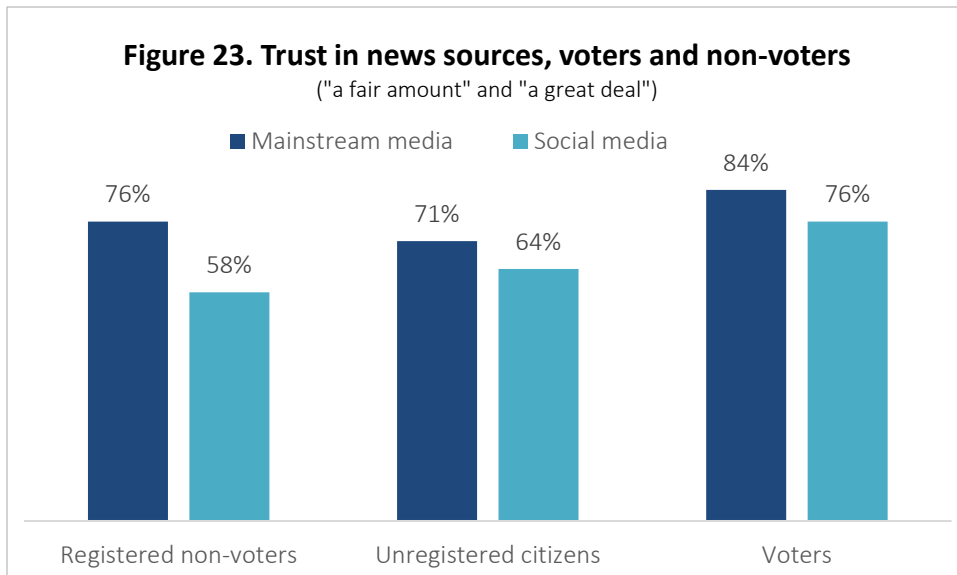
<sup>20</sup> Mark Jurkowitz, Amy Mitchell, Elisa Shearer, and Mason Walker. 2020. “U.S. media polarization and the 2020 election.” Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2020/01/24/u-s-media-polarization-and-the-2020-election-a-nation-divided/>

<sup>21</sup> From Megan Brenan, “Americans’ trust in media remains near record low,” Gallup (October 18, 2022) <https://news.gallup.com/poll/403166/americans-trust-media-remains-near-record-low.aspx>. Gallup asks its survey respondents, “In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media – such as newspapers, TV, and radio – when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly – a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?”

confidence do you have that the information is full, fair, and accurate?" While distrust in mass media in the United States in general is widespread, most Asian American voters trust *their* sources of news. Figure Twenty-Two shows 84% of Asian American voters trust their mainstream media sources, combining those who trust their sources of news "a fair amount" and "a great deal." In addition, 77% trust their social media sources also at least "somewhat." Only 2% of Asian American voters say they have "no trust at all" in their media sources. At the same time, only about one-in-four voters say they trust their sources "a great deal."

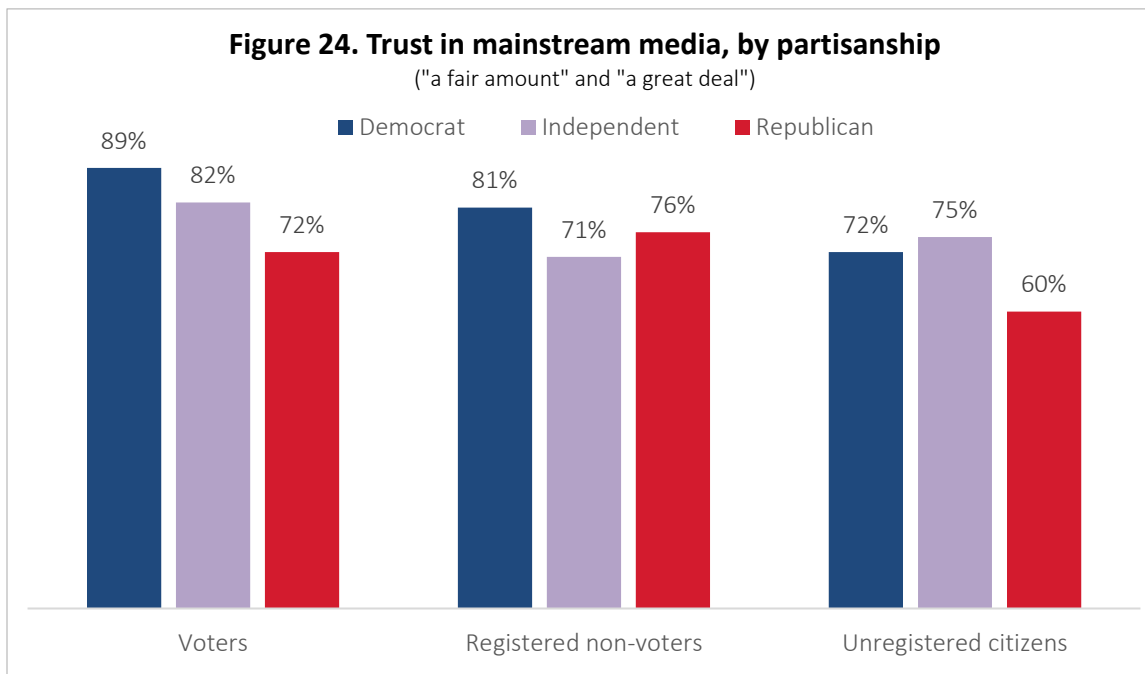


Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample.

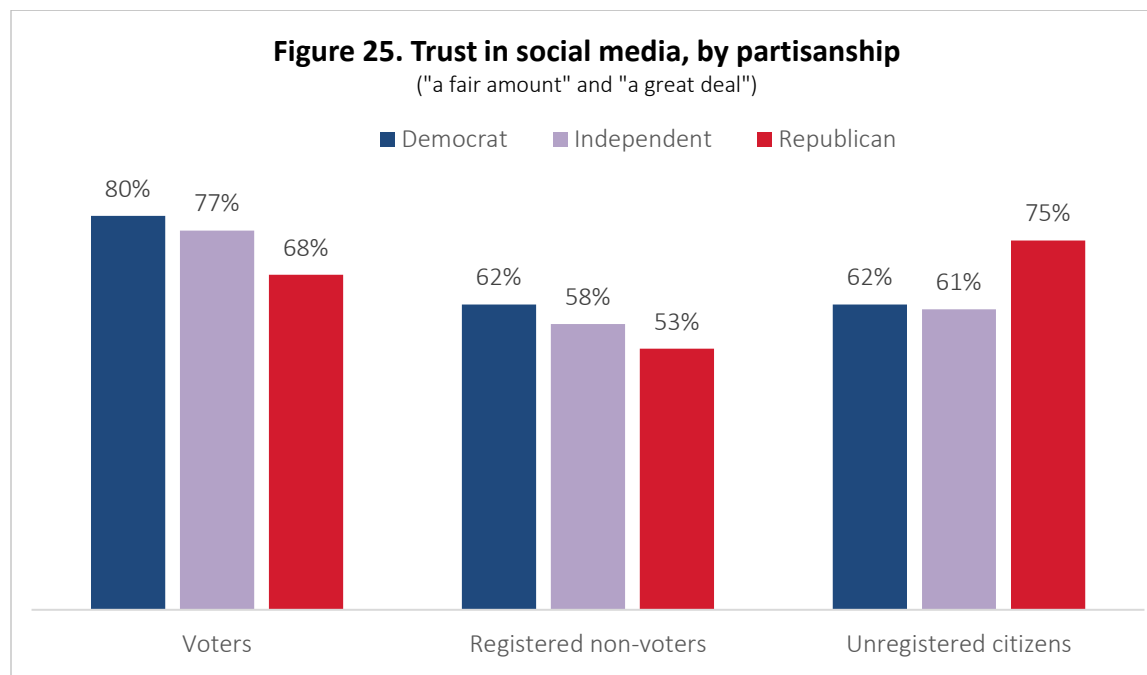
In Figure Twenty-Three the views of non-voters are compared to voters on media trust. Large majorities of non-voters (both registered and not registered) trust their sources of news about the election "a great deal" or "a fair amount" (76% and 71%). While large majorities trust their sources, the levels are lower than the trust that Asian American voters have in their media sources. The lower trust levels are especially large between voters and non-voters for their social media sources. While 76% of voters trust the social media sources they rely on a fair amount to a great deal, only 58% of registered non-voters do the same. Non-voters (both registered and not registered) were much less likely to say they trusted mainstream media election news "a great deal" than voters in 2022. While 27% of voters said they trusted the information from their mainstream media sources "a great deal"; only 14% of non-voters said the same. The gap is even greater with information from social media: 22% of voters trusted the information from their social media sources "a great deal," but only 7% of non-voters said the same.



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample.

Finally, on trust that the information from their mainstream and social media sources is full, fair, and accurate, there are some differences by partisanship shown in Figure Twenty-Four and Figure Twenty-Five. Among voters, trust in both mainstream and social media sources varies from high to low between Democrats (high), Independents (middle), and Republicans (low). This pattern does not hold for either group of non-voters. Among non-voters, the most visible difference is in the trust levels of citizens who are not registered to vote: Asian Americans in this group exhibit relatively low levels of trust in mainstream media sources (only 60% trust *their* mainstream media sources at least "a fair amount") and their relatively high levels of trust in their social media sources (75% trust their social media sources at least "a fair amount"). Unregistered citizens are

the only group in these figures for whom trust in social media sources is greater than trust in mainstream media sources.



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample.

The findings from the PNAANV on trust in media present a somewhat more cautiously optimistic view of the news and information environment than the standard account of declining public trust in media institutions. While trust in the mass media in general may be alarmingly low, people make choices about which outlets to rely on for their news and an overwhelming majority of Asian Americans trust the media sources they rely on. Asian American voters have more confidence and trust than non-voters and, among voters, Democrats are the most trusting of both the mainstream and social media sources they rely on.

### ***MISINFORMATION IN THE ELECTIONS***

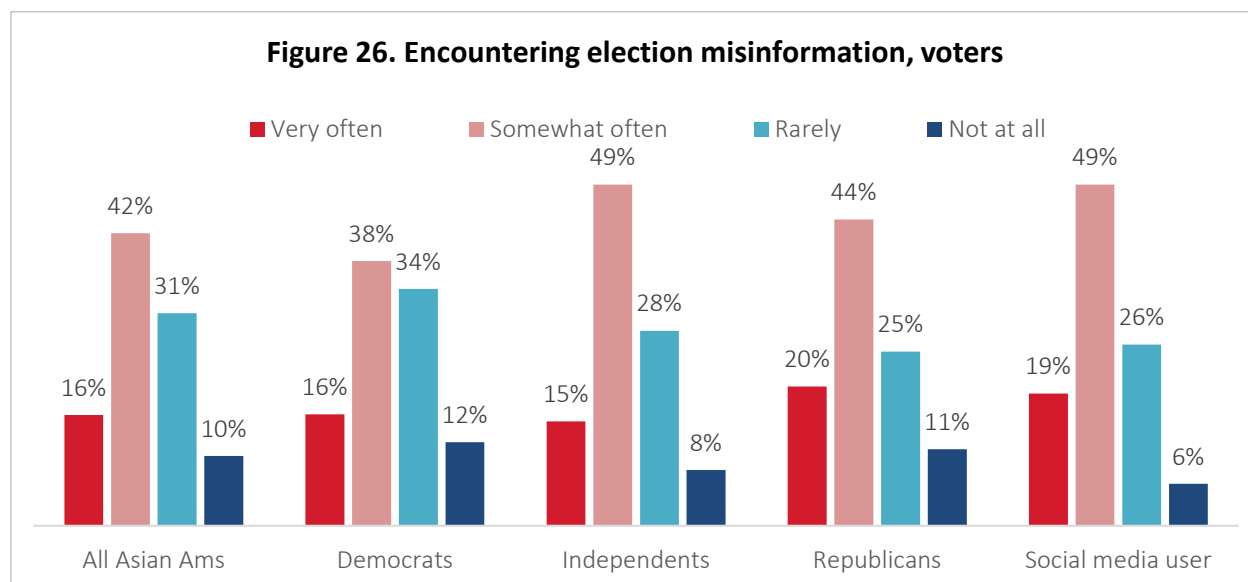
While it is reassuring that most Asian Americans have at least a moderate degree of trust in the mainstream and social media outlets they rely on for news and information about the elections, the 2022 election was saturated with content that raised alarms about misinformation and disinformation.<sup>22</sup> Some of the misinformation continued to feature unfounded allegations of voter

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<sup>22</sup> Conceptually, there is an important difference between “misinformation” – information that is false or inaccurate or out of context – and “disinformation” – information that is false or inaccurate or out of context created and communicated specifically in order to deceive and mislead. Since surveys can only ask about exposure to and consequences of information biases on the part of voters (the “demand” side) and cannot know about the intentions behind on the part of those creating and circulating the information (the “supply” side), this report uses the term

fraud and election tampering in the 2020 election, and election misinformation in 2022 also included false or misleading claims about the process of voting itself; about whether votes would be fully and accurately counted; about the policy positions of candidates and their parties; and about the possibility of Election Day or post-election violence.<sup>23</sup> This list is, of course, only partial and does not include the details of more lurid, bizarre, and far-fetched conspiracy theories about the 2022 election.

To assess the extent to which Asian American voters and non-voters encountered election-related misinformation, the NPAAVN asked survey participants, “Thinking about news and information you have seen about this year's elections, how often would you say that you encountered a story that you thought might have been made-up or that included misinformation?”



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; for social media users, the sample is 972 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

Figure Twenty-Six shows the distribution of responses to this question for all Asian American voters and for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Overall, a solid majority of Asian American voters in 2022 (59%)<sup>24</sup> said they encountered misinformation in election news coverage

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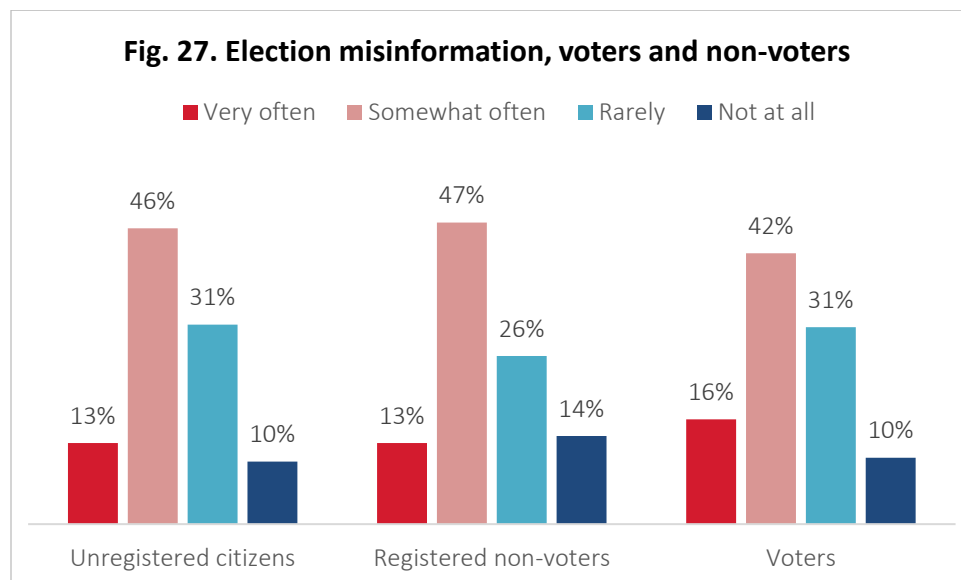
“misinformation” throughout even though, in cases like information about the likelihood of Election Day violence and rioting, such information is likely to be disinformation.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., David Klepper, “Misinformation and the midterm elections: What to expect,” *AP News* (November 3, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-misinformation-219762637bacf49bf7ec723546b46fb3>; Cecilia Kang, “5 Unfounded claims about voting in the midterm elections,” *New York Times* (November 2, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/technology/midterm-elections-misinformation.html?smid=url-share>; Isaac Stanley-Becker and Drew Harwell, “Misinformation floods the midterms, at times urging violence,” *Washington Post* (November 8, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2022/11/08/election-day-disinformation/>.

<sup>24</sup> The difference between the 59% figure here and the sum of the percentages in Figure Twenty-Six is due to rounding error.

either "very often" or "somewhat often." Of this 59%, only 16% said they saw misinformation "very often." The differences between Democrats, Independents, and Republicans in terms of exposure to misinformation are modest, even on the question of whether misinformation is rare or widespread. While 54% of Democrats reported encountering what they believed to be made-up news, 64% of Republicans and Independents said they were exposed to misinformation in 2022.

Figure Twenty-Six further shows that 68% of Asian American voters who relied on social media outlets for their news and information encountered election misinformation "somewhat" or "very" often. Among voters who relied on social media outlets *but did not rely on mainstream media outlets as well*, the numbers go up to an even higher 75%, with 26% reporting that they saw misinformation "very" often. Other notable subgroup differences of Asian American voters who relied on social media outlets were by age and nativity. A combined 75% of voters aged 18 to 30 years old reported encountering misinformation "somewhat" or "very" often; among participants who were 60 years and older, only 42% said they countered election misinformation in 2022. By nativity, 66% of US-born voters reported encountering what they believed to be made-up news while only 54% of naturalized voters reported doing so.<sup>25</sup> More research could be conducted to determine the correlation between age, social media usage, and perceived exposure to misinformation.



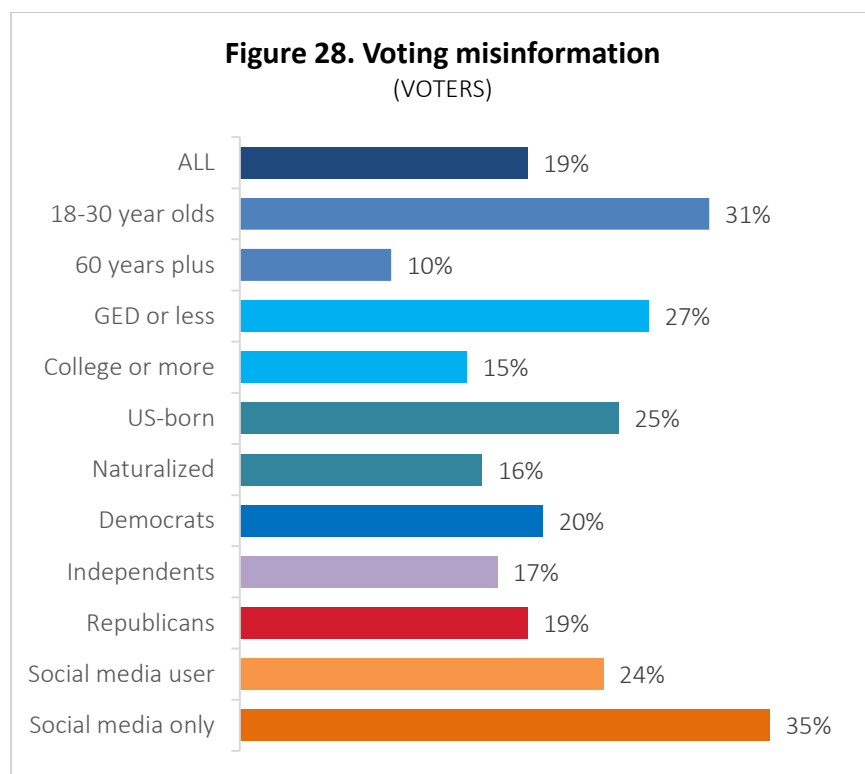
Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample.

Figure Twenty-Seven compares exposure to election misinformation between voters, registered non-voters, and unregistered citizens. The main result from this comparison is that there is very

<sup>25</sup> These age and nativity effects may be the result of many possible factors that the PNAANV cannot definitively confirm or disconfirm: for instance, younger Asian American voters may be more inclined to suspect stories as misinformation, or they may be better at spotting misinformation, or they may rely on news sources (e.g., social media outlets) that are more likely to expose them to misinformation.

little difference between voters and non-voters in terms of perceived exposure to misinformation. Among non-voters, Republicans were slightly more likely than their Democratic or Independent counterparts to report seeing misinformation in 2022: 66% of Republican non-voters indicated that they had been exposed to what they believed to be made-up election stories, compared to 60% of non-voting Democrats and 56% of non-voting Independents.

The NPAAVN further delved into the information environment in the 2022 election by asking voters and non-voters alike whether they encountered particular kinds of misinformation. Survey participants were asked, “As best as you can recall, did you encounter any of the following in this election? ... Incorrect information about the voting process in this election. For instance, misinformation about voting dates and deadlines, voting locations, qualifications to vote, voting early or absentee, and so on?” To this question, 19% of Asian American voters reported that they had encountered such information. Figure Twenty-Eight shows some large differences in exposure to what voters perceived to be election-related misinformation by demographic background. Young voters aged 18 to 30 years old were more than three times more likely to believe they encountered incorrect information about voting. In addition, voters with a high school degree level education or less and voters born in the United States were also likelier to encounter what they perceived to be voting-related election misinformation.

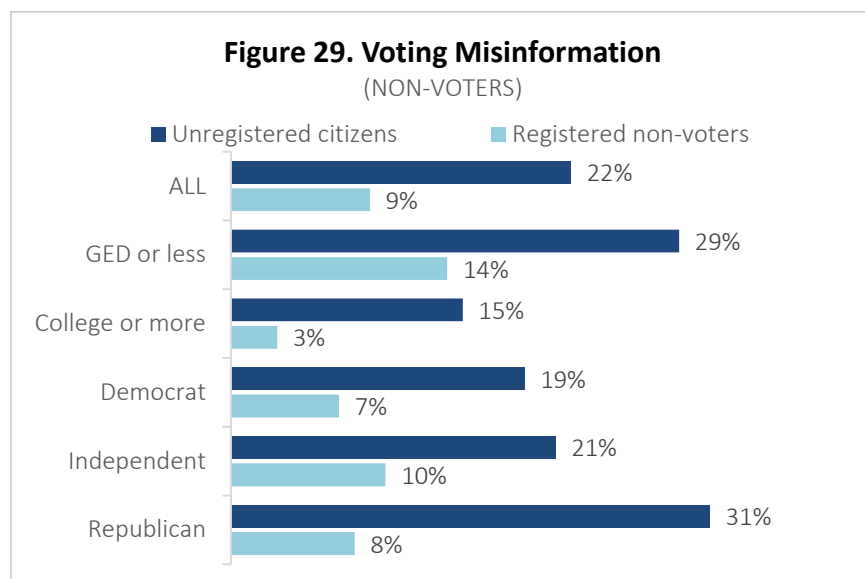


Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; for social media users, the sample is 972 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

Notably, there were no statistically significant differences in encountering such perceived misinformation by partisanship. As with exposure to election misinformation generally, voters who

rely on social media for their election-related news and information are more likely to have seen dubious or bad information about the voting process. Among those who say they get their information from social media, 24% say they have seen voting misinformation. Of those who use social media for their information and not mainstream media, that figure increases to 35% who say they have seen voting misinformation.

Since one of the dangers of election misinformation is concern about disinformation designed to suppress voter registration and voter turnout, it is important to examine whether non-voters are especially likely to encounter perceived misinformation about the voting process, such as relevant dates and deadlines, where to vote, and qualifications to vote, among other details. In the PNAANV, exposure to such perceived voting misinformation appears to vary quite a bit between Asian Americans who did not register to vote and those who were registered but did not vote. Figure Twenty-Nine shows that citizens who were unregistered were more than twice as likely to report encountering such misinformation: 22% to 9%. Similar to voters, there is a near two-fold greater chance that someone with a high school level education or less is exposed to such perceived misinformation than someone with a college degree or higher. Among the unregistered, self-identified Republicans were likelier to encounter what they believed to be incorrect information about the voting process than both Democrats and Independents. Interestingly, among non-voters, those who relied on social media for their election news and information were *not* more likely to encounter misinformation about the voting process itself.

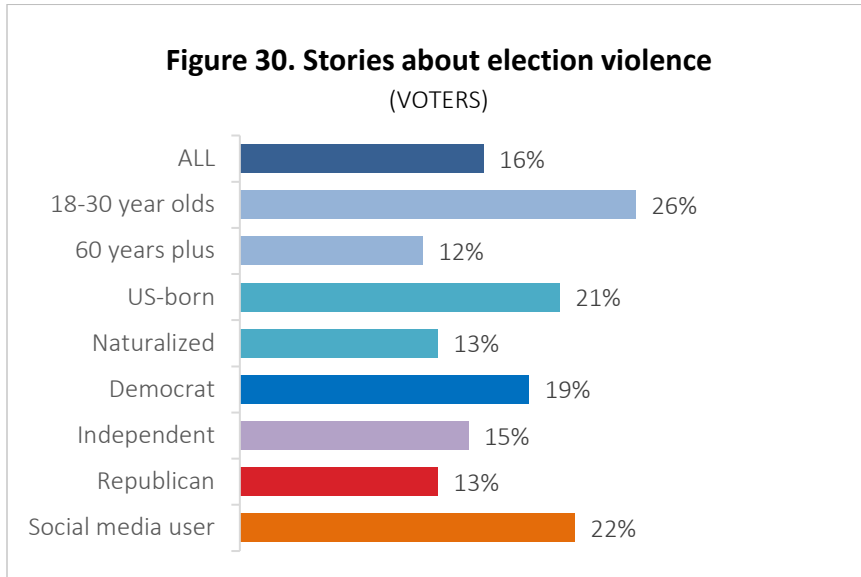


Note: asked of 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters, with a margin of error of +/-5.2% for each non-voter sample

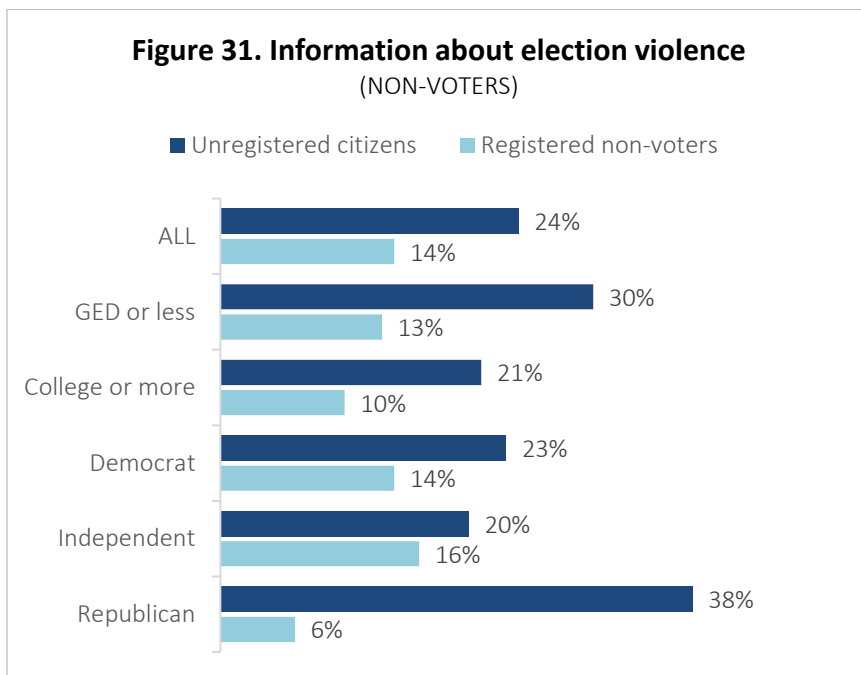
The 2022 election information environment also included stories about threats of violence or riots on Election Day that might affect voter turnout and registration. The PNAANV thus also asked its survey participants if they encountered “Online stories or leaflets and flyers warning about the threat of riots or violence on Election Day.” Figure Thirty shows that, among all Asian American voters, 16% saw stories warning about riots or violence on Election Day. Younger voters were more



than twice as likely to encounter such warnings about Election Day than older voters. US-born voters are more likely than naturalized voters to see such stories. Democrats were only slightly more likely to see warnings about Election Day riots or violence than Republicans. Finally, voters who relied on social media outlets for the election news and information were also more likely to see such warnings about Election Day unrest.

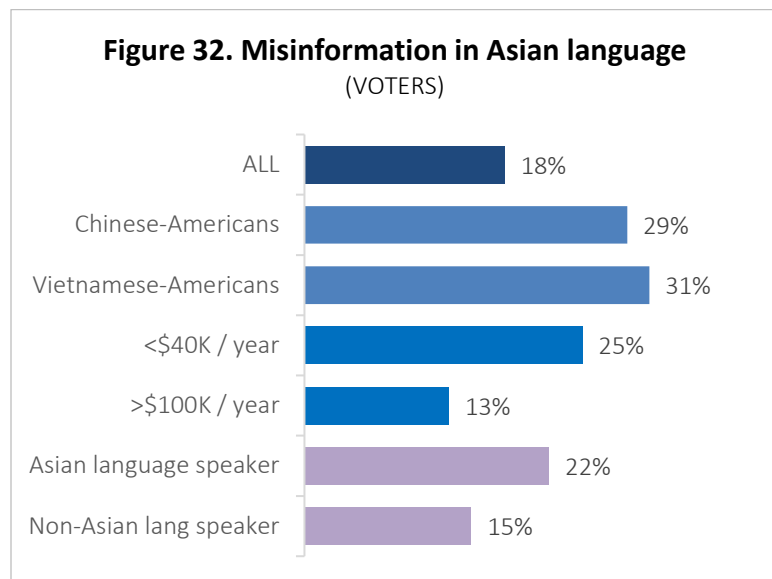


Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ . ; for social media users, the sample is 972 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .



Note: asked of 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters, with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample

As with misinformation about the voting process, it is also important to assess if non-voters were more likely to encounter stories about threats of violence or rioting on Election Day. Figure Thirty-One shows that, as with voting misinformation, Asian Americans who did not register to vote were more vulnerable to seeing stories about Election Day riots and violence than voters and non-voters who were registered to vote. Non-voters who were not registered and who had a high school education or less were especially likely to see such stories; so too were unregistered non-voters who identified as Republicans. Unlike voting misinformation, Asian American non-voters were not more likely to encounter stories about Election Day unrest than Asian American voters.



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

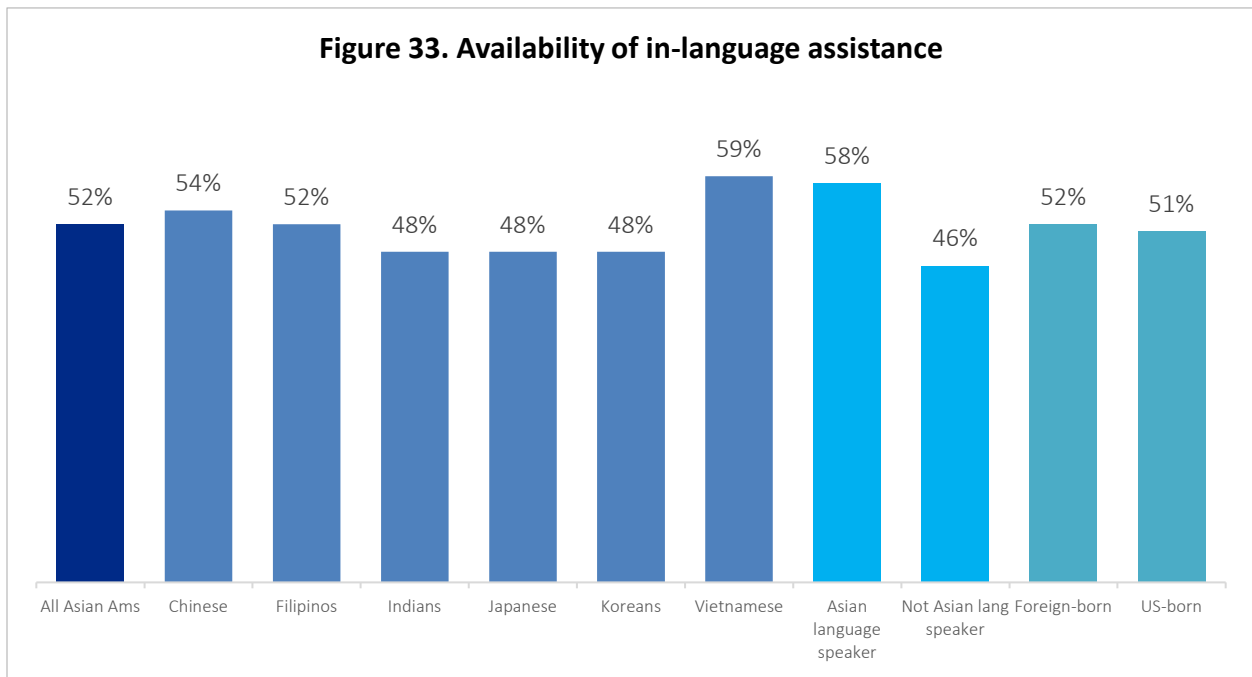
The final aspect of election misinformation that the NPAANV examined is whether election misinformation was especially likely to be communicated in an Asian language. Survey participants who indicated that they had encountered misinformation were asked whether the content was in English or in an Asian language to their best recollection. Figure Thirty-Two shows that roughly one-in-five voters reported that the misinformation they encountered was in an Asian language. Chinese Americans and Vietnamese Americans were especially likely to encounter what they believed to be made-up news in an Asian language, as were voters earning relatively less income and voters who regularly spoke an Asian language at home. Non-voters were roughly equally likely to report encountering election misinformation in an Asian language (one-in-six did so). Among non-voters, older Asian Americans, naturalized citizens, and those who regularly spoke an Asian language at home were particularly likely to report encountering Asian language misinformation.

### **LANGUAGE AND OTHER VOTER ASSISTANCE**

Different kinds of voter assistance – from voter guides and other materials on the process of voting to Election Day poll workers – are especially important for the Asian American electorate. Because the Asian American population is majority foreign-born, many are first-time registrants and first-

time voters and many have limited English proficiency and would benefit from in-language assistance. To assess both the availability and use of language assistance for Asian Americans in 2022, the PNAANV asked, “In-language assistance - such as ballots and other written election materials that are translated to an Asian language and having someone who speaks Asian languages available at polling places and vote centers - are sometimes available to voters. Was Asian in-language assistance available to you in this year's election?”

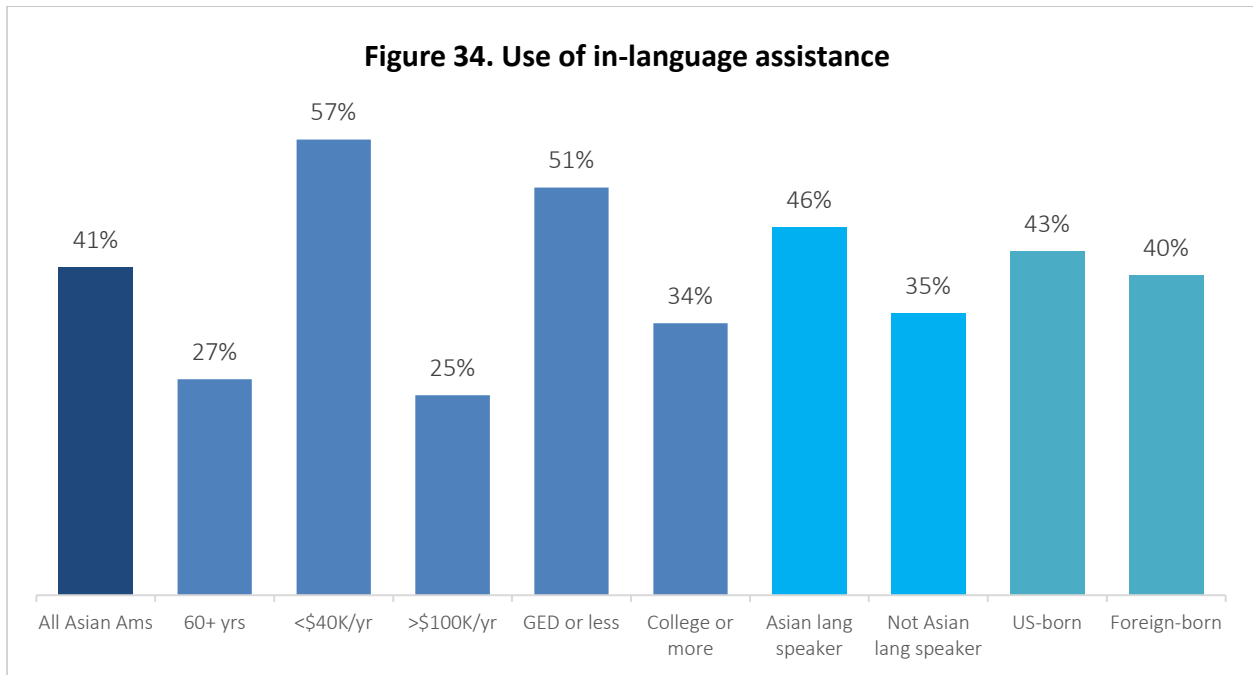
Figure Thirty-Three shows that among all Asian American voters, roughly half (52%) indicated that in-language assistance was available to them in 2022. The differences between ethnic subgroups is mostly small, except for Vietnamese Americans, who are likelier to report that Vietnamese language assistance was available. The NPAANV found that survey respondents who regularly spoke an Asian language at home were 12% more likely to say language assistance was available to them than those who regularly spoke English. There were no real differences, however, between US-born and naturalized voters.



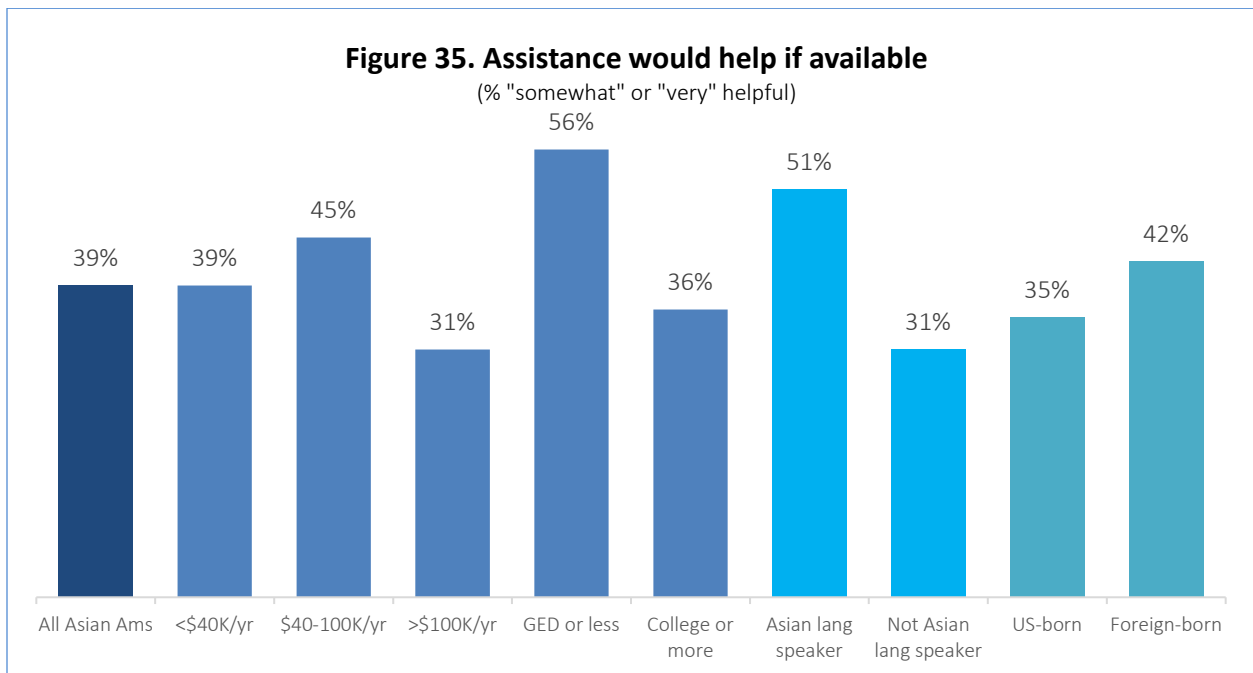
Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

For respondents who indicated that Asian in-language assistance was available, the NPAANV next asked if they used that assistance when they voted in 2022. Overall, Figure Thirty-Four shows that 41% of voters who reported that in-language assistance was available to them in 2022 used that assistance. Asian Americans with a high school degree or less were likelier to use in-language assistance than those with a college degree or more (51% to 34%). Asian Americans who earned less than \$40,000 in annual household income were much likelier to use in-language assistance than those earning more than \$100,000 (57% to 25%). In addition, voters born in the US are roughly equally likely to use in-language assistance as naturalized citizens. Voters who primarily speak an Asian language at home were likelier to use in-language assistance than those who did

not (46% to 35%). Voters who chose to be interviewed in an Asian language were much likelier to use in-language assistance than those interviewed in English (62% to 34%).



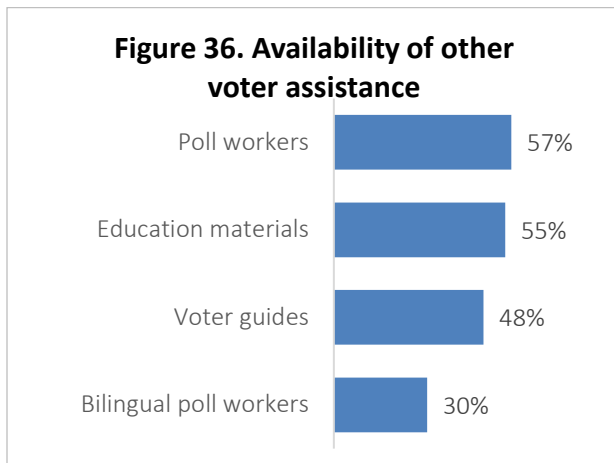
Note: asked of 1,019 voters who reported in-language assistance available; margin of error = ± 3.1%.



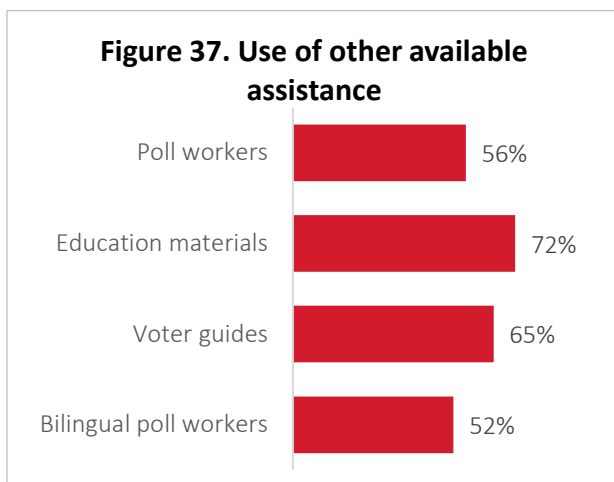
Note: asked of 1,081 voters who reported in-language assistance was not available; margin of error = ± 3.0%.

For respondents who indicated that Asian in-language assistance was *not* available, the NPAANV next asked if such assistance would have been helpful to them in the 2022 elections. Figure Thirty-Five shows that overall, 39% indicated that such language assistance would have been

"somewhat" or "very" helpful. Those earning more than \$100,000 in annual household income were less likely to say language assistance would be helpful. Those with a high school degree or less were much likelier to see language assistance as helpful than those with a college degree or higher (56% to 36%). In addition, naturalized voters were slightly likelier than US-born voters to say language assistance would have been helpful. A majority of those who spoke an Asian language at home every day said that language assistance would have been helpful. Voters who chose to be interviewed in an Asian language were much likelier to say assistance would have been helpful than those interviewed in English.



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .



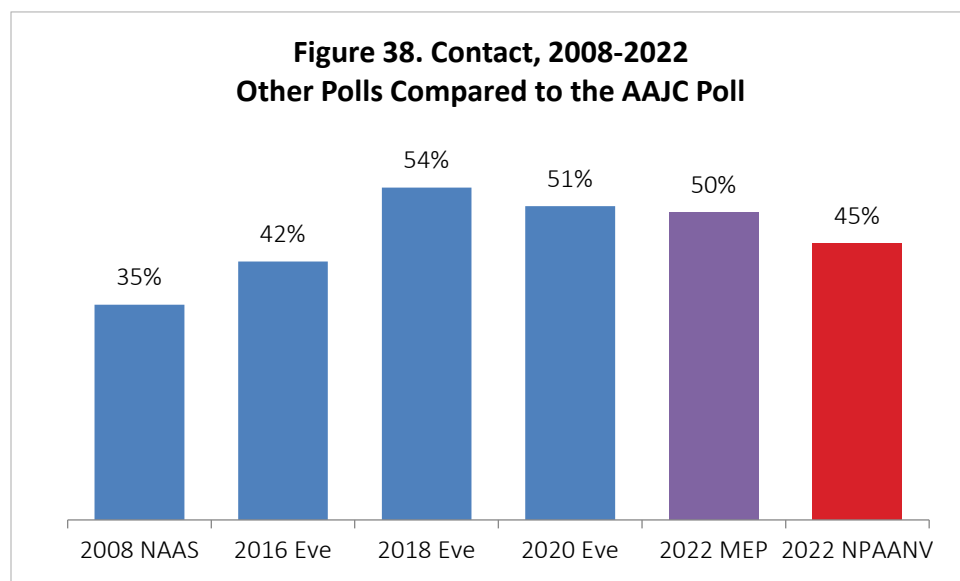
Note: asked of between 555 and 1,120 voters who reported available voter assistance in Figure Thirty Six; margin of error is between  $\pm 2.9\%$  and  $\pm 4.2\%$ .

Finally, the NPAANV asked, "Were any of the following forms of voter assistance available to you when you voted? Voters guides from a non-profit organization? Voter education materials provided by state and local governments? Poll workers? Bilingual poll workers who spoke an Asian language?" Figure Thirty-Six shows the availability of these other kinds of voter assistance and Figure Thirty-Seven shows the percentage of Asian American voters who indicated that they used these other kinds of voter assistance when available. More than half of voters reported that poll

workers and education materials were available to them; nearly half said voter guides were available. Less than one-in-three (30%) reported that bilingual poll workers were available when they voted. Even among those who spoke an Asian language at home every day, only 35% said that bilingual poll workers were available. Across the board, a majority of voters reported using voter assistance if available. Education materials and voter guides were especially likely to be used.

### **CONTACT AND MOBILIZATION**

Mobilization is one of the keys to turnout in any given election. This is especially true for first-time registrants and voters.<sup>26</sup> Because of Asian Americans’ high numbers of foreign-born and naturalized citizens, in any given election, a disproportionately high number of Asian Americans are registering to vote and voting for their first time. In the earliest surveys of Asian American voters, there was a substantial gap in the share of white voters who were contacted about registering to vote and voting and the share of Asian Americans who were mobilized.



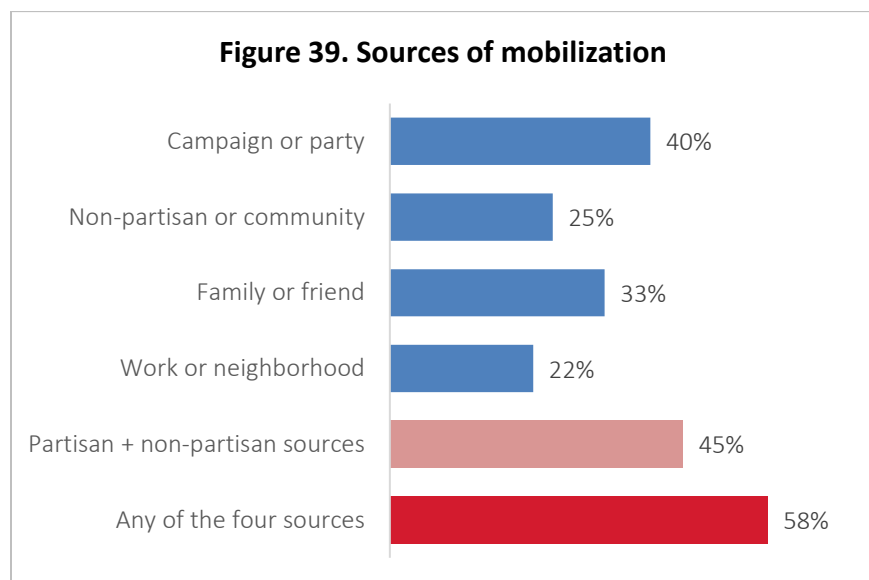
Source: 2008 National Asian American Survey; 2016, 2018, 2020 Asian American Election Eve Poll. 2022 Midterm Election Voter Poll.

Figure Thirty-Eight shows an encouraging trend measured across several different polls of Asian Americans on the eve of federal elections. Since 2008, there has been an increase in Asian Americans who report being contacted by campaigns, parties, or non-partisan organizations, from a low of 35% in the 2008 National Asian American Survey to more than 50% reporting contact in the Asian American Eve poll fielded in 2018. Contact rates for Asian Americans have remained at or above 50% according to polls in 2020 and 2022 as well. In the NPAANV, the reported rate of

<sup>26</sup> Dan Simmons and Michael Wines, “Young voters helped Democrats. But experts differ on just how much.” NYTimes (November 12, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/12/us/young-voter-turnout-election-democrats.html>. See also [https://circle.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/2020-02/young\\_voters\\_mobilization\\_tactics.pdf](https://circle.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/2020-02/young_voters_mobilization_tactics.pdf) and <https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472099132-ch4.pdf>.

contact by campaigns, parties, or non-partisan organizations is slightly lower, at 45%.<sup>27</sup> The NPAANV asked survey participants about contact “about registering to vote” only, while the other polls shown in Figure Thirty-Eight asked its participants about contact related to both voter registration and voter turnout.

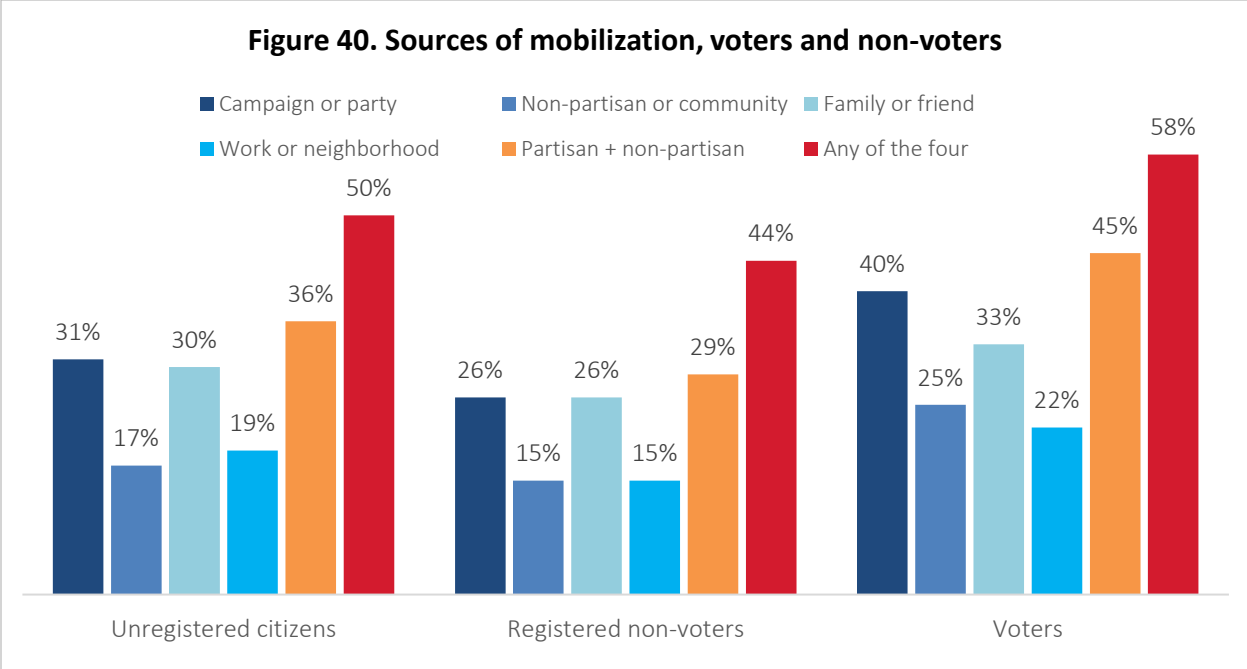
The PNAANV also differs from other polls in asking about mobilization from both organizational sources, like campaigns, parties, and non-partisan community groups, and non-organizational and informal sources of mobilization. Specifically, respondents were asked, “Thinking back on the 2022 election, did any of the following people or organizations contact you about registering to vote? Someone from a campaign or political party? ... from a non-partisan or community-based organization? ... in your family or a friend? ... from work or your neighborhood?” Figure Thirty-Nine shows that, as with other polls, contact from campaigns and parties is more frequent than any of the other sources of contact (40%). At the same time, 25% of voters also reported contact from non-partisan organizations; 33% were contacted with a friend or family member; and 22% had been contacted by a co-worker or neighbor about registering to vote. Combining both organizations and informal sources of mobilization, 58% of voters had been contacted in the 2022 election about registering to vote.



Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ .

In terms of subgroup differences, PNAANV finds that Asian Indians were the likeliest among ethnic subgroups to have been contacted by campaigns or parties (47%) while Japanese Americans were least likely to have been so contacted (32%). Younger voters (aged 18-29 years old) were also twice as likely as those 60 years and older to be contacted. Finally, US-born voters were much likelier to be contacted by a campaign or party than naturalized voters (47% to 35%).

<sup>27</sup> In general, the differences between polls can result from sampling error and differences in question wording, question order, field dates, sample design, and interview mode, among other contextual factors.

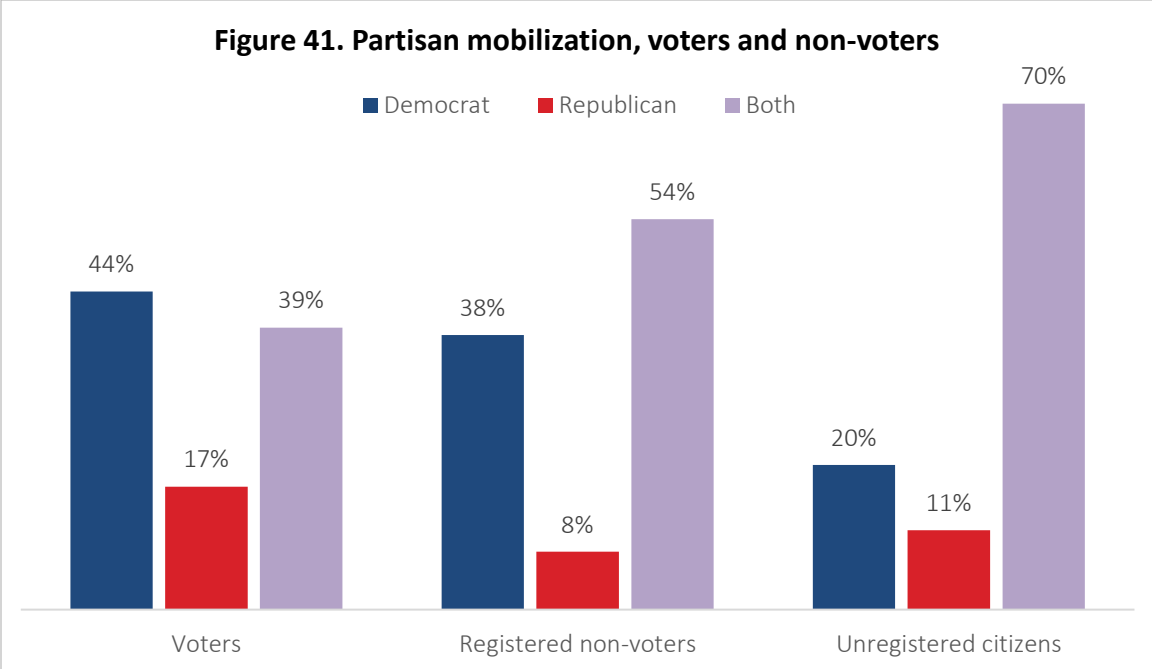


Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 2.1\%$ ; 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$  for each non-voter sample.

Figure Forty compared the different sources of contact encountered by voters and non-voters. Overall, non-voters were less likely to be contacted from each of the four sources. While 40% of voters were contacted by campaigns and parties, only 31% of unregistered citizens and 26% of registered non-voters were contacted. Combining partisan contact with contact from non-partisan or community organizations, 45% of voters were mobilized by organizations but only 36% of unregistered citizens and 29% of registered non-voters were so mobilized. Finally, adding contact from family and friends and contact from neighbors and co-workers, 58% of voters were contacted from any of the four sources. By contrast, 50% of unregistered citizens and 44% of registered non-voters were mobilized from any of the four sources.

In terms of partisan differences in contact by a campaign or party, Figure Forty-One shows that Asian American voters were most likely to be mobilized by Democrats (44%), followed by contact from both parties (39%). Non-voters were far more likely than voters to report having been contacted by both a candidate or campaign from both the Democratic and Republican parties: 54% of registered non-voters and 70% of unregistered citizens were contacted by both parties. For voters and non-voters, if only one party contacted a non-voter, it was likely to be the Democratic party. This is especially so for registered non-voters: 38% were only mobilized by a Democratic campaign or party while only 8% were contacted just by Republicans. For voters, only one-in-six were contacted just by Republicans while 44% were contacted just by Democrats.





Note: asked of 2,100 voters with a margin of error of ± 2.1%.

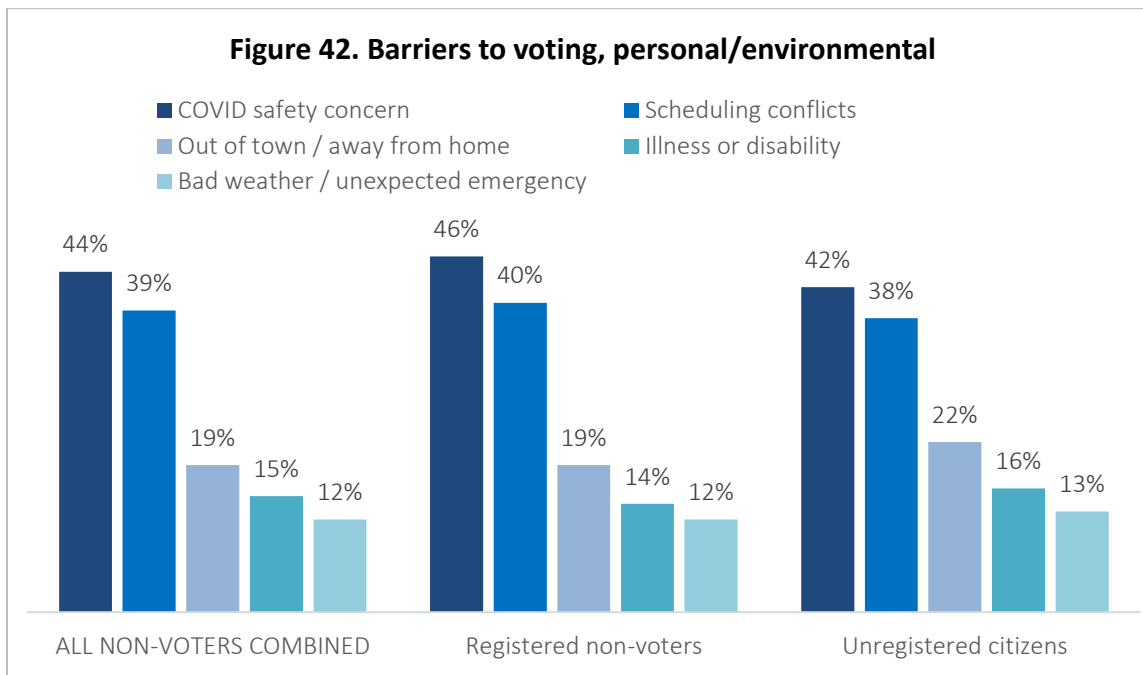
One other pattern to note regarding contact: mobilization from campaigns and partisans is often quite targeted. 60% of Democratic identifiers were only contacted by a candidate or campaign from their party. Similarly, 52% of Republican identifiers were only contacted by Republican candidates or campaigns. For Independents, the majority were contacted by both parties (56%).

**TURNOUT IN THE NEXT ELECTION**

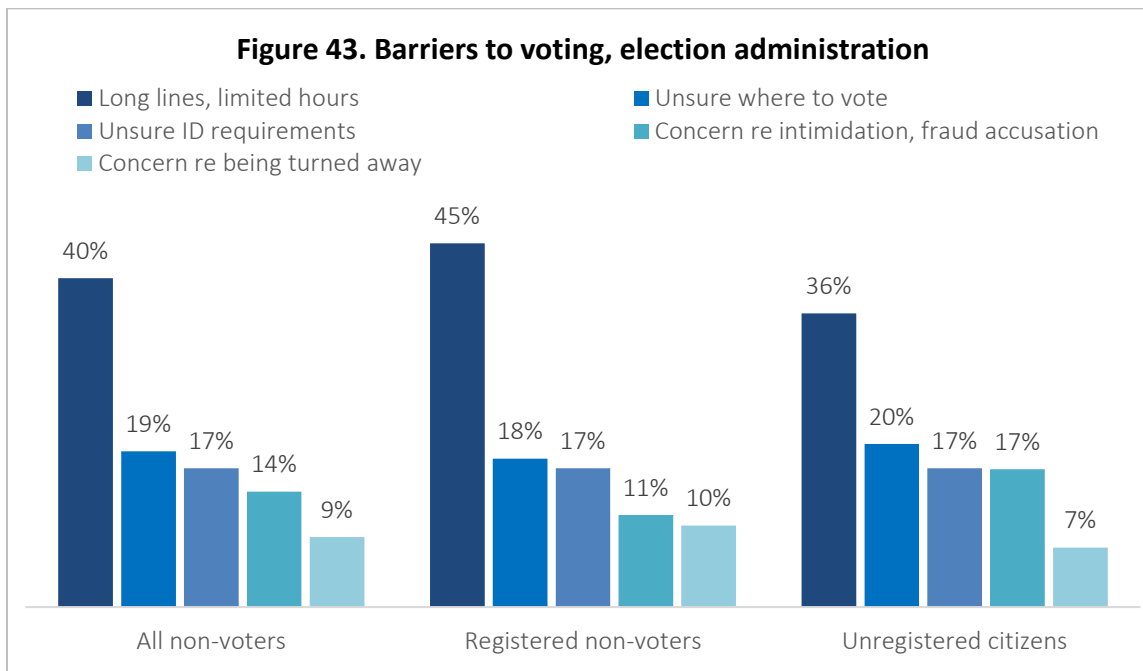
While turnout in the 2022 election remained high for a midterm election, maintaining high turnout rates will continue to be a challenge. Many states continue to enact laws that make it harder for voters to register, for registered voters to remain registered, for voters who would like to vote absentee or early to do so, among many other restrictive provisions. Potential voters in 2024 will likely also confront another polarized election overrun by rampant misinformation. Sustaining hard won gains in increased turnout will thus be a challenge in future elections. Furthermore, as we saw in Figure Two, while turnout rates for Asian Americans have been increasing in recent elections, they remain well below turnout rates for non-Hispanic whites.

To assess the reasons why some Asian American citizens do not turnout to vote, even those who are already registered to vote, the PNAANV gave respondents a lengthy set of potential reasons why someone may not vote. Specifically, respondents were asked, “There are many reasons why someone might not vote in a given election. Thinking back on this last election, are any of the following important reasons to you personally?” Then, they were given a second set and a third set of reasons and asked to select those that applied to them. There were nineteen given reasons

in total; respondents were directed to check all that apply to them and were also allowed to offer some reason other than one of the nineteen.<sup>28</sup>

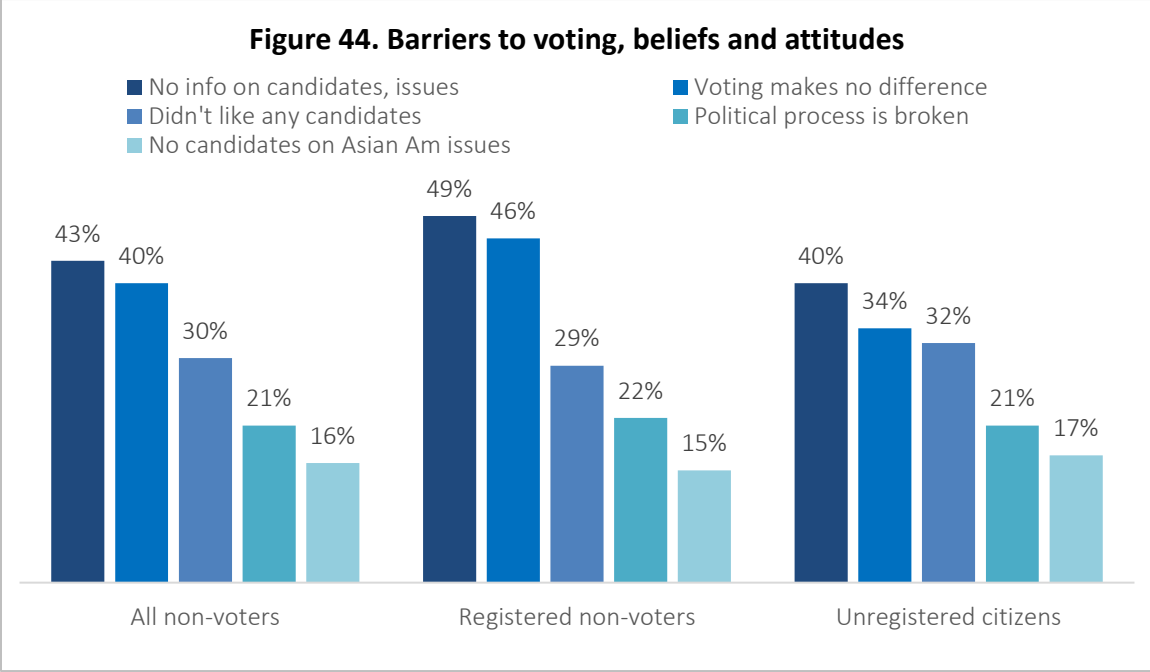


Note: asked of 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of +/-5.2% for each non-voter sample.



Note: asked of 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of +/-5.2% for each non-voter sample.

<sup>28</sup> 17% of respondents specified another reason, which was not coded for the purposes of this report.



Note: asked of 350 unregistered citizens and 350 registered non-voters with a margin of error of +/-5.2% for each non-voter sample.

The most commonly chosen reasons are grouped into three kinds of responses in Figures Forty-Two, Forty-Three, and Forty-Four: some reasons related to personal and environmental circumstances; others are barriers related to how elections are conducted; finally, some reasons are rooted in beliefs and attitudes about candidates, issues, and elections. Reasons like “did not feel my vote would make a difference” and “did not believe the political process works anymore” are left up to the interpretation of the survey respondents and additional research is need to determine what specific circumstances contribute to these beliefs and what election administrators can do to address these concerns.

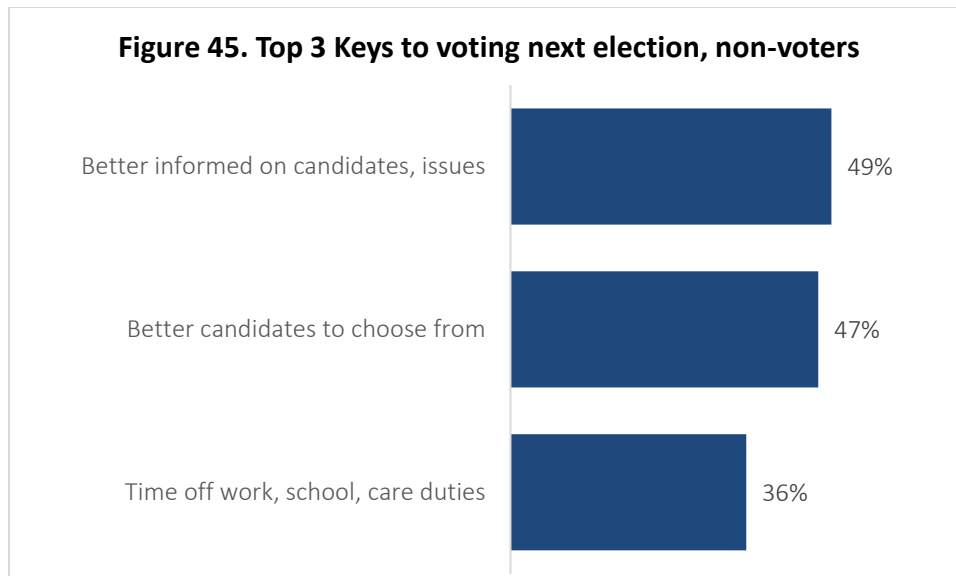
On personal and environmental circumstances that prevented someone from voting, Figure Forty-Two shows that the most commonly mentioned barrier in 2022 for Asian Americans was COVID safety concerns (44%), followed closely by conflicting work, school, or caregiving schedules (39%). An additional 19% noted that being out of town or away from home negatively affected their ability to vote and a small but significant number of non-voters mentioned an illness or disability (15%) and bad weather or an unexpected emergency (12%). The differences between registered non-voters and unregistered citizens on how commonly these reasons were chosen are non-significant.

On some aspect of how the election was conducted affecting one’s ability to vote, Figure Forty-Three shows that the most commonly mentioned reason by far was long lines and limited hours on Election Day, chosen by 40% of Asian American non-voters in the PNAANV. Registered non-voters were likelier to note this as a reason for not voting than were those who were not registered to vote (45% to 36%). The second most common reason related to election administration that

was chosen was uncertainty about where to vote (19%), followed by uncertainty about identification requirements to vote (17%), concern about being harassed or intimidated or accused of voter fraud (14%), and concern about being turned away at a polling place or vote center (9%).

Finally, on reasons related to beliefs and attitudes about candidates, campaigns, and politics itself, Figure Forty-Four shows that the most commonly mentioned barriers were insufficient information about candidates and issues (43%) and the belief that their vote would not “make a difference” (40%). Registered non-voters were especially likely to cite these reasons for not voting in 2022. In addition to these top two reasons, 30% of non-voters also noted that they did not vote because they did not like any candidates or did not like their views on the issues; 21% mentioned that they no longer believed that the political process works; 16% said they did not see any candidates who represented Asian Americans or who spoke to AAPI issues. Reasons like “belief that their vote would not make a difference” and “no longer believed that the political process works” are open to interpretation by the respondent and additional research is needed to determine what specific circumstances contribute to these beliefs and what election administrators can do to address these concerns.

These findings make a compelling case that many Asian Americans are deterred from voting for a complex set of reasons ranging from continued concerns about COVID safety to scheduling conflicts; the constraints of long lines and limited hours on Election Day; information gaps about candidates and issues, as well as about where to vote and whether identification requirements are met; belief gaps about the difference that voting makes and whether political process still work in America, however citizens decide whether their vote makes a difference and whether politics works. Some of these salient reasons are unlikely to be as prominent in the next election (e.g., COVID safety concerns) and the PNAANV also wanted to give non-voters in the study an opportunity to think about their participation in future elections. Here, respondents were asked, “Looking ahead to the next election, which of the following are most important in enabling you to vote next time?” They were then given twelve reasons that might allow them to vote next time and directed to select up to three from this list.



N=700, M.O.E., +/-3.7% for all non-voters, 350 +/-5.2% for each non-voter sub-sample (Nov 23-Dec 16, 2022)

To this question, Figure Forty-Five shows the most commonly chosen keys to voting in the next election. The most commonly agreed to resource that would help Asian American non-voters turn out next time was “getting accurate, credible information about the issues and candidates,” selected by 49% of respondents. Another 47% said that “having better candidates to choose from” would get them out next time and 36% indicated that getting time off from work or school or their caretaking duties would be helpful. A sizeable number of non-voters also mentioned changes in beliefs that would be key to their active participation in the next election: 26% said “having renewed belief that my vote makes a difference”; 23% said “having renewed belief in our political system”; 23% said “having trust that my votes are accurately counted.” Additional research into how non-voters define and understand the meaning of “making a difference,” “belief in our political system,” and “trust that my votes are accurately counted” is important as different drivers could be motivating these concerns such as the increase in efforts to suppress votes by communities of color. A smaller, but still significant share of non-voters noted that greater access to voting methods and places would help, as would Asian American candidates on ballots, less anti-Asian hostility, and getting in-language assistance to register and to vote.

### **KEY FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS**

The 2022 National Poll of Asian American Non-Voters and Voters presents a unique and uncommon look into the beliefs and experiences of the Asian American electorate in the 2022 midterm elections. The NPAANV interviewed a representative sample of both voters and non-voters. Among the key findings from the data were the following:

- A large majority of both voters and non-voters were confident that all ballots were fully counted in their state; voters were somewhat more confident than non-voters in this regard.

- A large majority of Asian Americans continue to opt for alternatives to voting on Election Day. Two-in-three reported that they voted early or absentee.
- Most voters felt that the elections in their community were well run and that voting was somewhat or very easy for them personally.
- Voters and non-voters alike relied on a variety of mainstream media and social media outlets for their news and information about the 2022 elections. Both groups trusted their news sources at least “a fair amount”; voters were somewhat more likely to trust their news sources than non-voters.
- At the same time, a majority of voters believed that they had encountered election-related misinformation at least “somewhat often.” Perceived misinformation concerning the voting process itself occurred in one-in-five cases. Voters reported encountering stories that warned about threats of violence or rioting on Election Day in one-in-five cases.
- Voting assistance was widely used by voters but not always available to them. One-in-two reported that in-language assistance was available and two-in-five reported using that assistance if available.
- Contact and mobilization continues to be an important part of the story of turnout for Asian Americans. Two-in-five voters were contacted about voter registration by parties and campaigns and one-in-four voters were contacted by non-partisan community-based organizations. Non-voters were significantly less likely to have been contacted.
- For non-voters, among the most commonly cited barriers to voting were scheduling conflicts, long lines and limited hours for Election Day voting, insufficient information about the candidates and the issues, and the belief that their vote would not make a difference in the election.
- For non-voters, the most commonly cited keys to voting in the next election were getting accurate, credible information on the issues and candidates; having better candidates to choose from; getting time off from work or school or their caretaking duties.

These findings are critical to consider for efforts to turnout the Asian American electorate in the next election. While an overwhelming majority of Asian American voters overall view elections positively – they are confident that all votes are counted in their state and that elections were well run in their community; and they reported voting was easy for them personally – there are also important constraints and challenges. The constraints of time and scheduling are a high priority for Asian Americans – both for non-voters as barriers to voting and for voters, most of whom value the flexibility of absentee and early voting as options on Election Day. The challenges of an information environment that many Asian Americans perceived to be rife with misinformation are also daunting. Many non-voters cite access to accurate, credible information as vital while many voters report encountering what they believe to be misinformation about the voting process itself – such as dates and deadlines, qualifications for voter eligibility, voting locations, and so on. Finally, language access and other kinds of voting assistance continue to be crucial to the Asian American

electorate. In-language and other voting assistance remains unavailable to many, even as Asian American voters use such assistance when it is available.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The 2022 National Poll of Asian American Non-Voters and Voters interviewed 2,800 Asian American citizens about their views and their reported behaviors regarding the mid-term elections. There were three targeted samples in the poll, each sampled and weighted to be nationally representative: a survey of 2,100 Asian American registered voters who reported voting in the 2022 mid-term elections; a survey of 350 Asian Americans who were registered but did not vote in 2022; and 350 Asian Americans who were citizens but not registered in 2022. The voter sample targeted the six largest Asian American subgroups, with 351 Chinese, 351 Filipino, 350 Indian, 351 Japanese, 351 Korean, and 346 Vietnamese American participants.

Polling used a mixed mode of interviewing, with 75% of the interviews conducted online and 25% conducted via live telephone interviewing. Participants were recruited at random from sample lists of Asian Americans nationwide. Telephone numbers were purchased of individuals identified as highly likely to be Asian Americans using imputation methods based on name and/or census block density. Phone numbers from these lists were used for live calls and text message invitations. Online participants were recruited using large nationally representative online panel vendors. All data collection was managed by BSP Research. Participants were interviewed in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, or Vietnamese, according to their preferences. Interviews were fielded between November 23 and December 16, 2022. Post-stratification weights were constructed using gender, education, and state data from the most recent American Community Survey and Current Population Survey estimates.