

# Black Americans express fear, resolve

## But some believe Trump will improve economy

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REUTERS

ATLANTA – Donald Trump's presidential election victory has sent shock waves through Black American communities, which voted overwhelmingly for Democratic candidate Kamala Harris despite a campaign by her Republican rival to court Black men.

While Trump made gains among Black Americans in North Carolina and some in the community celebrated his win, nationally his vote share among Black voters was unchanged in the Tuesday vote from 2020, according to an exit poll conducted by Edison Research, which showed a much larger swing toward Trump among Hispanic voters.

Black voters were important to President Joe Biden's victory over Trump in 2020, when Harris was also elected as the first Black and first Asian American vice president. Had she won on Tuesday, Harris would have become the United States' first woman president.

A majority of the two dozen Black Americans who spoke to Reuters said they feared a second Trump term, including a rollback of civil rights after his pledge to end federal diversity and inclusion programs.

Many said his rhetoric, including racist and sexist language, proved he does not have the best interests of Black Americans at heart.

Mary Spencer, 72, a retired nurse and educator in Oak Creek, in swing state Wisconsin, was dismayed by Trump's victory. She said Trump's opinion of Black people was condescending.

"Because that's what he thinks of us – that we only strive to do the jobs that (illegal) immigrants come to do – which he identifies as housekeeping or working on landscape projects. Things that don't require much skill or education."

At an event with Black journalists in July, Trump said immigrants were taking "Black jobs," reinforcing racist stereotypes about the kinds of work Black Americans do.

Trump denies he is racist. He says his economic agenda will lower taxes, housing costs, and boost job creation for all Americans, including Black Americans. His campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Katrena Holmes, 51, a Black entrepreneur from Riverdale, Georgia, voted for Harris, hoping she would unify the



Attendees react to early results at Vice President Kamala Harris' election night rally at Howard University in Washington on Tuesday. KEVIN MOHATT/REUTERS

country and reduce racial inequities. A Trump victory threatens to arrest progress on closing those gaps, given his policy agenda and rhetoric, she said.

"There's a spirit of divisiveness," she said.

Nadia Brown, director of the women's and gender studies program at Georgetown University, said Trump's victory has likely dealt "a blow psychologically" to many Black Americans, who had been excited by the prospect of having the nation's first woman president and its second Black commander-in-chief who could usher in policy change for their communities.

"His rhetoric, and all of the race baiting and racist remarks, it's just going to be more of a distraction," Brown said, adding people will feel dejected after spending months organizing on the ground for Harris.

However, civil and voting rights groups said the result will galvanize them to fight even harder for racial equality.

"We're going to mobilize at every angle to try to stop the continued progression of the rollback of all of our fundamental rights and freedoms. We won't be quiet," said Jotaka Eaddy, the founder of the Win With Black Women group, which kicked off a ground swell of organizing for Harris and raised mil-

lions of dollars in the early hours after she rose to the top of the ticket in July.

Trump has said immigrants in the U.S. illegally are "poisoning the blood of our country." He has promised to fight what he called "anti-white feeling."

At the event with journalists in July, Trump falsely claimed Harris previously downplayed her Black heritage.

Harris won 86% of the Black vote, compared to 12% for Trump, according to Edison Research, the same share of support Biden received in 2020.

Throughout his campaign, Trump tried to make inroads with Black men, but he only received 20% of their vote, a one percentage point increase from 2020, according to Edison Research. Harris won 92% of Black women voters nationwide, up two points from 2020. Black voters accounted for 11% of the share of voters nationwide.

### Trump swing

In some parts of the country, Trump's message, including the promise to keep a lid on inflation, did lead to gains among the Black community.

In North Carolina, an Edison Research exit poll showed Trump boosting his share of the Black vote to 12%, from 7% in 2020. He garnered the support of 20% of Black male voters, in line with

the national average, according to the poll.

Trump won North Carolina with about 51% of the vote.

In another of the states that decided Trump's win, Georgia, Trump's share of the Black vote rose by one percentage point to 12%, according to Edison Research. Shedrick Carter, 38, a Black man and a small business owner in Atlanta, was celebrating the former president's victory.

He believes Trump will improve the lives of Black Americans by boosting jobs, lowering prices and keeping America out of foreign wars.

"He's going to be amazing for Black people," said Carter, who voted early for Trump, also his choice in the previous two elections.

At a roller skating rink in Atlanta, Bryson Goodbeir, 32, who works in demolition on construction sites, said his financial situation was better under Trump's presidency.

"I like his assertiveness. I like the way he carries himself," Goodbeir said, adding he believes Trump will improve the economy and reduce the cost of living.

Goodbeir said he supported Trump's tough stance on people entering the U.S. illegally, because he believes it helps Black workers. "Trump is trying to protect us," Goodbeir said.