Critical Issues Facing the Country

Like Americans overall, college-age Millennials (age 18-24) are most likely to cite jobs and unemployment as a critical issue facing the country. More than three-quarters (76%) say that jobs and unemployment are a critical issue, and majorities also report that the federal deficit (55%) and education (54%) are critical issues facing the nation. Four-in-ten say that the growing gap between the rich and poor is a critical issue. Roughly one-third of Millennials name the environment (35%), immigration (34%), and national security (34%) as critical issues. Approximately 1-in-5 say that abortion (22%) and same-sex marriage (22%) are critical issues.

Millennials’ issue priorities differ substantially by race, ethnicity, and political affiliation. Black Millennials (63%) are more likely than white (53%) Millennials to say that education is a critical issue. In contrast, Hispanic Millennials (49%) are significantly more likely than white (32%) and black (23%) Millennials to say that immigration is a critical issue. Meanwhile, white Millennials (62%) are more likely than black (50%) or Hispanic (41%) Millennials to say that the federal deficit is a critical issue.

There are also dramatic differences between Democratic and Republican Millennials. Millennial Democrats are nearly twice as likely as Republicans to say that the environment is a critical issue (43% vs. 22% respectively) and much more likely to say that the growing gap between the rich and poor is a critical issue (45% vs. 29% respectively). In contrast, Republican Millennials are more likely than Democratic Millennials to prioritize immigration (47% vs. 29% respectively) and the federal deficit (66% vs. 56% respectively).