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## Millennial Attitudes on LGBT Issues: Race, Identity, and Experience

A summary of key findings from the first-of-its-kind bimonthly survey of racially and ethnically diverse young adults 18-34

Cathy J. Cohen, Matthew Fowler, Vladimir E. Medenica  
and Jon C. Rogowski

<http://www.genforwardsurvey.com/>

genFORWARD

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**Media Inquiries:**

Geoffrey Knox & Associates | 917-414-1749 | [info@geoffreyknox.com](mailto:info@geoffreyknox.com)

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# About GenForward

## > *The Survey*

The GenForward Survey is the first of its kind—a nationally representative survey of over 1,750 young adults ages 18-34 conducted bimonthly that pays special attention to the ways race and ethnicity influence how young adults or Millennials experience and think about the world. Given the importance of race and ethnicity for shaping the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of young people, we believe researchers make a mistake when they present data on young adults in a manner that assumes a monolithic Millennial generation and young adult vote.

Millennials now represent the largest generation of Americans, and they are by far the most racially and ethnically [diverse generation](#)<sup>1</sup> in the country. About 21% of Millennials identify as Latinx, Latina/o or Hispanic, 14% as Black or African American, 7% as Asian American, and 56% as white. They also comprise the largest share of the workforce and eligible voters. Thus, to fully understand how young adults think about politics and public policy we apply an intersectional lens and pay attention to identity characteristics such as race and ethnicity.

In this report, we present an empirical overview of Millennials' connection to the LGBT community, whether they identify as LGBT, perceptions of discrimination against LGBT persons, as well their attitudes toward policy and larger questions of morality. The data presented were collected between May 17<sup>th</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

## > *The GenForward Team*

Cathy J. Cohen, Principal Investigator/Founder  
Jon Rogowski, Research Director  
Matthew Fowler, Postdoctoral Scholar  
Vladimir E. Medenica, Postdoctoral Scholar  
Margaret Brower, Graduate Research Assistant  
Jordie Davies, Graduate Research Assistant  
Alfredo Gonzalez, Graduate Research Assistant  
Jenn M. Jackson, Graduate Research Assistant  
David J. Knight, Graduate Research Assistant

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<sup>1</sup> Hyperlinks are used throughout this report as citations. Click on the linked text to view and learn more about each citation.

## Key Findings

- > **Identifying as LGBTQ.** Approximately 14% of Millennials identify as LGBTQ. Larger percentages of Latinx Millennials (22%) identify as LGBTQ compared with African Americans (14%), whites (13%), and Asian Americans (9%).
- > **Knowing LGBT.** Large majorities of Millennials across race/ethnicity report knowing someone who is gay or lesbian while somewhat smaller numbers report knowing someone who is transgender. Whites Millennials are the most likely to report knowing a transgender person (36%) compared to other racial/ethnic groups (~22%).
- > **Discrimination in the Country.** Large majorities of Millennials across race/ethnicity report they believe there is “some” or “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians, gays, and transgender people in the United States. Millennials are more likely to say there is a lot of discrimination against transgender people compared to lesbians and gays (46% vs. 34%).
- > **Discrimination against Lesbians and Gays in Racial Communities.** Majorities of Asian Americans (53%) and Latinxs (61%) say there is “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians and gays in their racial community, compared to 43% of African Americans and 27% of whites.
- > **Discrimination against Transgender People in Racial Communities** Majorities of African Americans (58%) and Asian Americans (64%) and pluralities of Latinxs (49%) and whites (47%) say there is “a lot” of discrimination against transgender people in their racial community.
- > **Racial Tensions in LGBT Movement.** Majorities of African American (53%) and Latinx (50%) Millennials believe that the issues confronting LGBT individuals in communities of color are very different than the issues being promoted by mainstream organizations. In contrast, the majority of Asian American (54%) and white (58%) Millennials believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for basic rights.

- > **Views of the LGBT Movement.** Millennials who identify as LGBT are also more likely (52%) to believe that issues confronting people of color who are LGBT are very different from those that are promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations.
- > **Policy Priorities.** Across racial and ethnic groups, pluralities of Millennials say the two most important issues facing the LGBT community are reducing hate crime violence against LGBT people and ending bullying against LGBT youth.
- > **Adoption.** Majorities across racial and ethnic groups support adoption by LGBT individuals, though African American (+4%), Latinx (+9%), and white Millennials (+13%) are more likely to support adoption by lesbians and gays than by transgender parents.
- > **Accepting Transgender People.** Majorities of Asian American (69%) and white (52%) Millennials and pluralities of African American (49%) and Latinx (47%) young adults say our society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender.
- > **Accepting LGBT Children.** Large majorities of Millennials say they could accept their son or daughter being LGBT. White Millennials (80%) expressed the greatest confidence that they could accept a child that identified as LGBT, followed by Asian American (76%), Latinx (75%), and African American (68%) Millennials.
- > **Anti-LGBT Attitudes:** Despite general support for more liberal policies supporting LGBT communities, a significant percentage of African American (45%), Latinx (42%), white (34%), and Asian American (28%) young adults believe the increasing acceptance of homosexuality is causing a deterioration of morality in society.
- > **Anti-LGBT Attitudes and LGBT Respondents.** Of Millennials who identify as LGBT, over one fifth, or 21%, believe that homosexuality is a moral detriment, while among Millennials who identify as straight, 40% agree that homosexuality is damaging to society's moral values.

# I. Introduction

Few issues have witnessed such dramatic [change](#) in public opinion as same-sex marriage in recent decades. Public support for marriage equality, among the most visible issues of the contemporary LGBT<sup>2</sup> rights movement, has [increased](#) from roughly a quarter of the U.S. population in 1996 to over sixty percent in recent years. In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case that same-sex couples had a fundamental right to marriage. Throughout this evolution in opinion, [Millennials](#) have stood out as being especially supportive of marriage equality.

However, as activists and organizers reminded the public through the social media campaign [#morethanmarriage](#), marriage is only [one of many](#) issues that are important to the LGBT community. Indeed, the Supreme Court continues to adjudicate cases about the treatment of same-sex couples. As recently as the month of the writing of this report, June 2018, the Court ruled in favor of a Colorado baker who refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.<sup>3</sup>

Despite exhibiting some of the highest levels of support for marriage equality and being the most [diverse](#) generation in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity, little is known about the attitudes of Millennials on other important LGBT issues. The few [studies](#) that have focused on Millennials typically do not explore variation within the Millennial generation, especially by race even though research has consistently [shown](#) important racial differences in attitudes toward LGBT issues. For example, African Americans and other minority groups have historically [demonstrated](#) lower levels of support for issues like same-sex marriage among the general population.

We wanted to know whether such racial and ethnic differences in opinions are evident among Millennials in their support for LGBT issues. Moreover, what do Millennials think about issues that affect the LGBT community beyond marriage? This GenForward report provides a window into what young adults—particularly young adults of color—think about issues that impact the LGBT community.

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<sup>2</sup> We use the acronym LGBT to reference individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.

<sup>3</sup> Though the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the baker's decision to discriminate against the same-sex couple, the basis of the ruling was specific to the particular case. The Court's decision left undecided whether a business owner's religious beliefs or free speech rights can justify refusing some services to gay people more generally.

In addition to exploring these issues through the lens of race and ethnicity, we are also interested in how young adults who identify as LGBT think about such topics compared to Millennials who identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual or straight.<sup>4</sup> To provide such insight, when possible we will also compare the attitudes of LGBT respondents to heterosexual and straight respondents. We do not include a separate analysis of those who identify as transgender because the numbers of such respondents in the sample is too small for careful statistical analysis.

We begin this report by providing an overview of Millennials' connection to LGBT identities, both by exploring whether Millennials themselves identify as LGBT as well as whether they know anyone who identifies as LGBT. We then survey Millennial attitudes of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transgender people in society and their communities before exploring Millennials' policy preferences on issues that affect the LGBT community. We conclude by exploring Millennials' perceptions of societal norms and moral evaluations related to LGBT issues and communities. Throughout the report, we pay special attention to how the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of Millennials differ by race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

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<sup>4</sup> While we recognize that transgender is a gender identity and not a sexual orientation, we define the groups "LGBT" and "straight/heterosexual" as political communities rather than strictly as sexual preference and include transgender individuals with those that identify as lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual.

## II. Identity & Connection

### Key Findings:

- > **Identifying as LGBTQ.** Approximately 14% of Millennials identify as LGBTQ. Larger percentages of Latinx Millennials (22%) identify as LGBTQ compared with African Americans (14%), whites (13%), and Asian Americans (9%).
- > **LGBT Linked Fate:** Millennials who identify as LGBT, independent of race and ethnic group, express higher levels of group solidarity, or linked fate, with other LGBT people compared to the linked fate Millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual feel toward other straight/heterosexual young adults.
- > **Know LGBT.** Large majorities of Millennials across race/ethnicity know someone who is gay or lesbian. Fewer, though still substantial, know someone who is transgender. Whites are the group most likely to know a transgender person (36%) compared to other racial/ethnic groups (~22%).

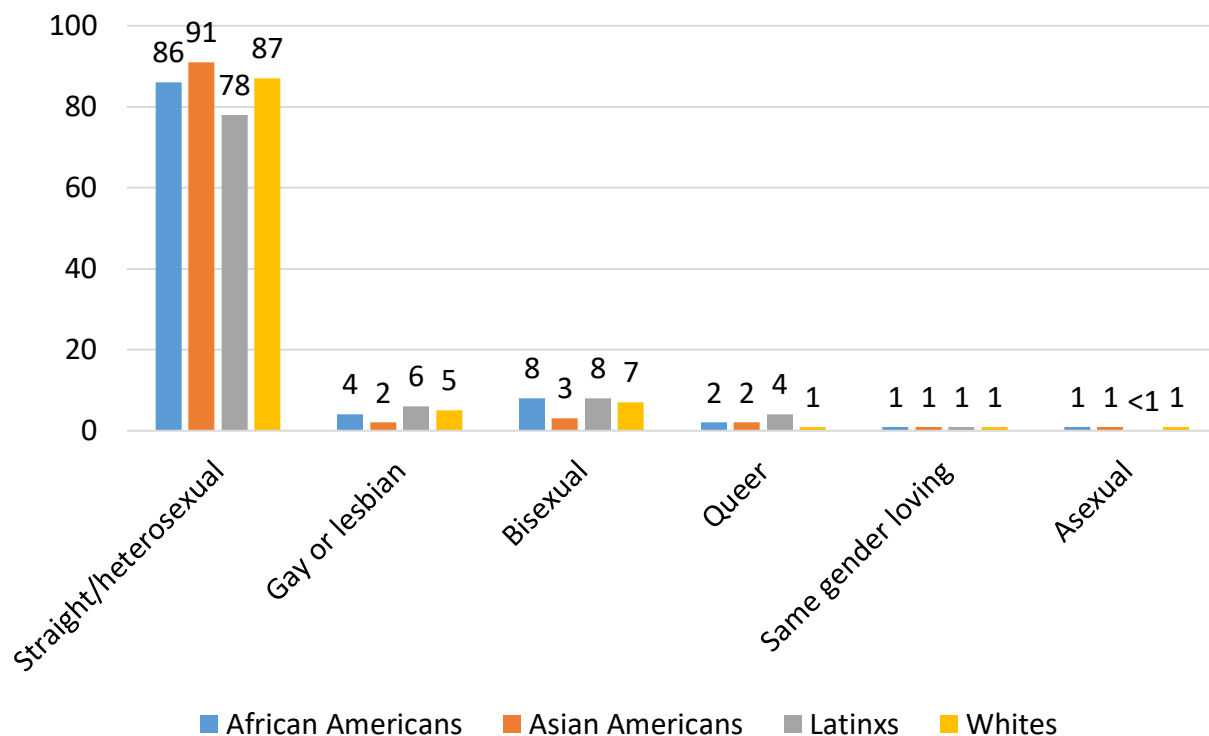
In recent years, Millennials have been on the liberal frontier of public opinion, often being one of the most supportive groups of LGBT rights. Perhaps due to expanding levels of acceptance and shrinking stigma surrounding LGBT identity, a [greater](#) number of adults are identifying as LGBT. Extant surveys also suggest that [Millennials](#) identify as LGBT at higher levels than the general public.

To explore differences in LGBT identity across race and ethnicity, we asked GenForward respondents to indicate their sexual orientation from a list of options. Overall, we find that approximately 14% of Millennials identify as something other than straight/heterosexual. There are, however, some important differences by race and ethnicity.

As shown in Figure 1, Latinx Millennials are the least likely to identify as straight/heterosexual (78%) compared to African Americans (86%), whites (87%), and Asian Americans (91%). While the numbers are very small, and thus are not robust, we find that Latinx Millennials are the most likely to identify as queer and slightly more likely to identify as gay or lesbian when compared to their peers.

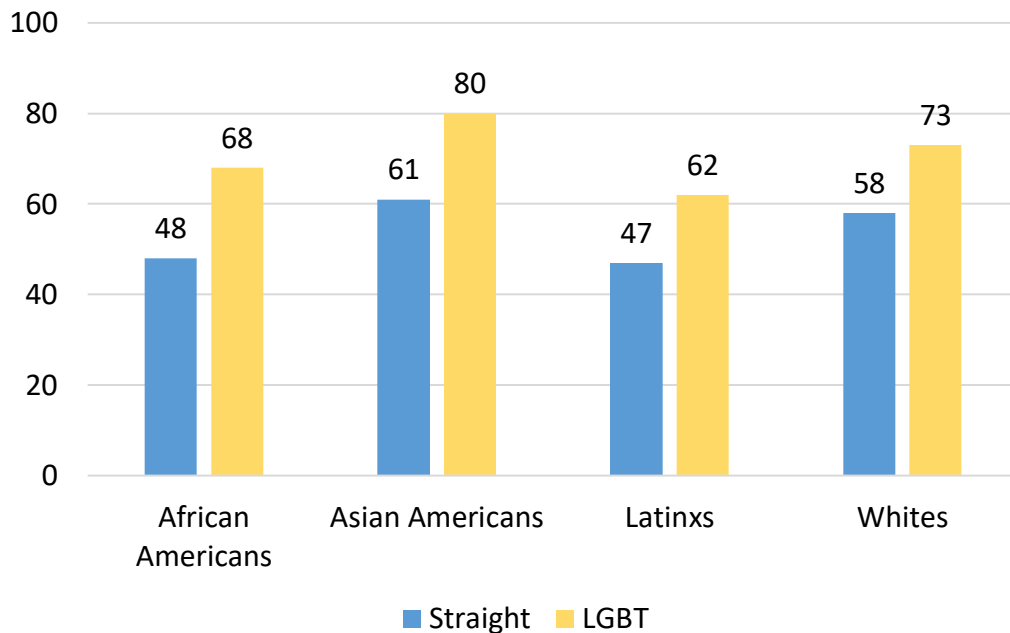


**Figure 1: Do you think of yourself as...**



Millennials who identify as LGBT report a stronger sense of group identity/solidarity based on sexual orientation compared with Millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual. Specifically, we asked our sample whether they believe that what happens to others who share their sexual orientation has an impact on what happens in their own lives, which is commonly used as a measure of linked group fate. As illustrated in Figure 2, the difference in linked group fate between Millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual and Millennials who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender is approximately 15 to 20 percentage points across racial and ethnic groups. These data indicate that sexual orientation is a stronger and more salient group identity for Millennials who identify as LGBT than for Millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual.

**Figure 2: Do you think that what happens to [straight/LGBT] people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?**

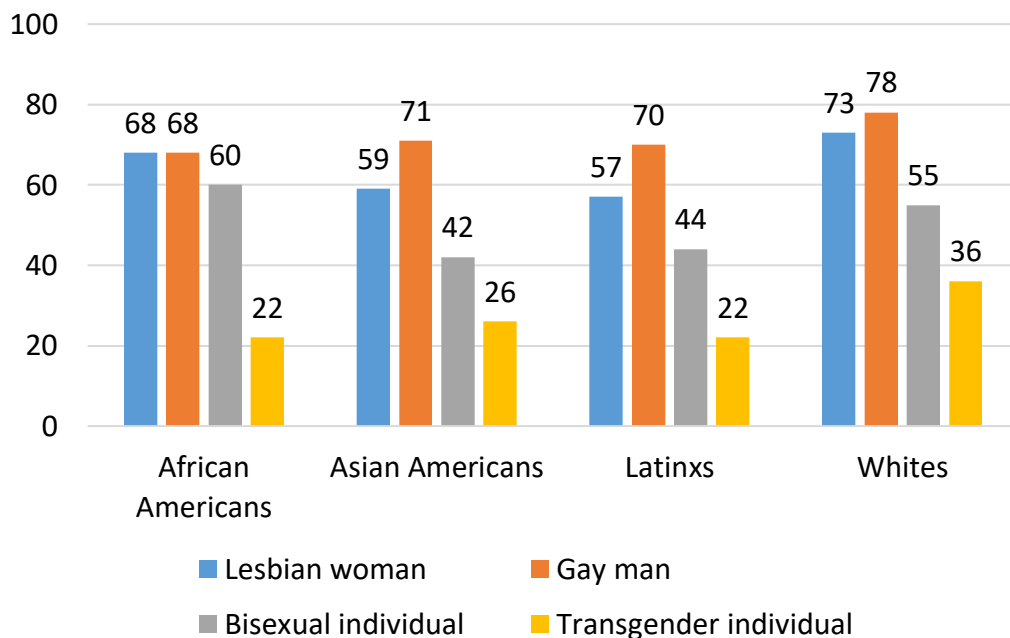


[Existing](#) research has pointed to the importance of group contact for changing attitudes about marginalized groups. Moreover, [emerging](#) research on the rapid change of attitudes toward LGBT issues suggests that increased visibility and contact with LGBT people may have played an important role in facilitating such change. Thus, in addition to whether they personally identify as an LGBT person, we also asked respondents whether they knew somebody who identifies as LGBT.

As shown in Figure 3, many Millennials of all racial and ethnic backgrounds report knowing somebody who identifies as LGBT. Of those that know someone who is LGBT, most say that they personally know a gay man with somewhat fewer Millennials saying they know a lesbian woman. The exception here are African American Millennials; equivalent percentages of these respondents say they know a gay man and a lesbian woman. This gap in the number of people who report knowing a gay man and those that report knowing a lesbian woman is also smaller among white Millennials (5 pts) than among Asian American Millennials (12 pts) or Latinx Millennials (13 pts).

While majorities of African Americans and whites say they know someone who is bisexual, approximately 42% of Asian Americans and 44% of Latinxs know someone who identifies as bisexual. Somewhat fewer of our respondents reported knowing a transgender individual. Approximately 22% of African American and Latinx Millennials, 26% of Asian American Millennials, and 36% of white Millennials say they personally know someone who is transgender.

**Figure 3: Do you know someone personally who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?**



The data from our survey corroborate those of past [studies](#) in finding relatively high rates of LGBT identification among Millennials. Importantly, however, and what is often missing in these discussions of Millennial identity, is that how Millennials identify and their relationship to the LGBT community often varies by race. This not only has implications for how they think about different policy proposals, as we discuss in Section IV, but also shapes how Millennials understand the issues facing the LGBT community, particularly discrimination, which is the focus of the next section.

## III. Discrimination

### Key Findings:

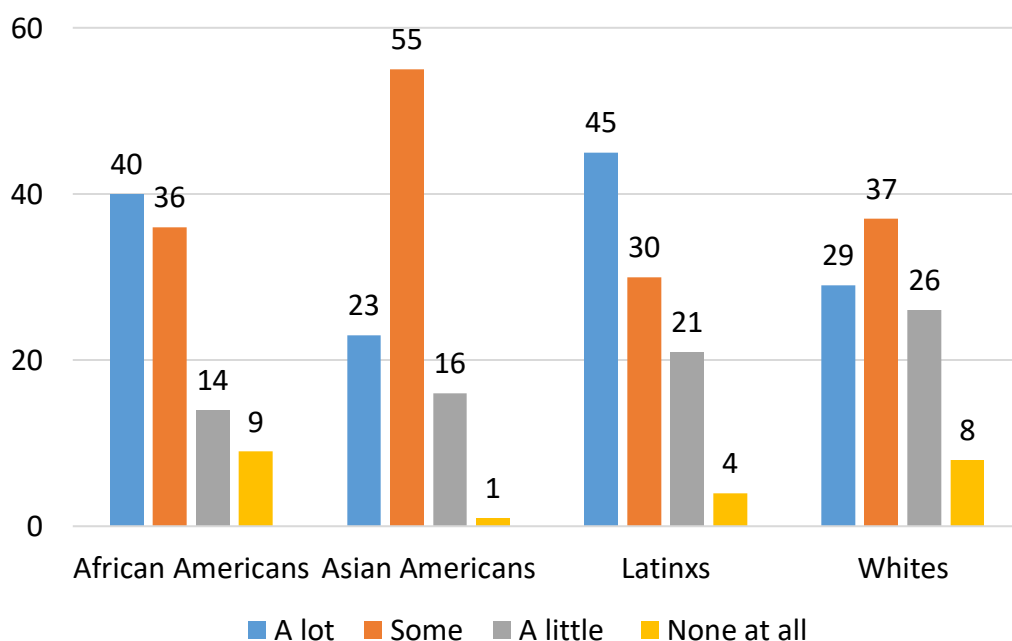
- > **Discrimination in the Country against Lesbians & Gays.** Large majorities of Millennials across race/ethnicity believe there is “some” or “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians and gays in the United States.
- > **Discrimination in the Country against Transgender Individuals.** Millennials are more likely to say there is a lot of discrimination against transgender people compared to lesbians and gays (46% vs. 34%).
- > **Discrimination in Racial Communities against Lesbians and Gays.** Majorities of Asian Americans (53%) and Latinxs (61%) say there is a lot of discrimination against lesbians and gays in their racial community, compared to 43% of African Americans and 27% of whites.
- > **Discrimination in Racial Communities against Transgender Individuals.** Majorities of African Americans (58%) and Asian Americans (64%) and large pluralities of Latinxs (49%) and whites (47%) say there is a lot of discrimination against transgender people in their racial community.
- > **Racial Tensions in the LGBT Movement.** Majorities of African American (53%) and Latinx (50%) Millennials believe that the issues confronting LGBT individuals in communities of color are very different than the issues being promoted by mainstream organizations. In contrast, the majority of Asian American (54%) and white (58%) Millennials believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for basic rights.
- > **LGBT Views of the Movement.** Millennials who identify as LGBT are also more likely (52%) to believe that issues confronting people of color who are LGBT are very different from those that are promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations.

Whether private individuals and businesses can legally discriminate against LGBT individuals, how much, and what that looks like, is still being litigated in the judicial

system. To assess Millennial views of discrimination against LGBT people, we asked for their perceptions of the level of discrimination both in the country as well as within their respective racial and ethnic communities. The results are displayed in Figures 4 and 5 below.

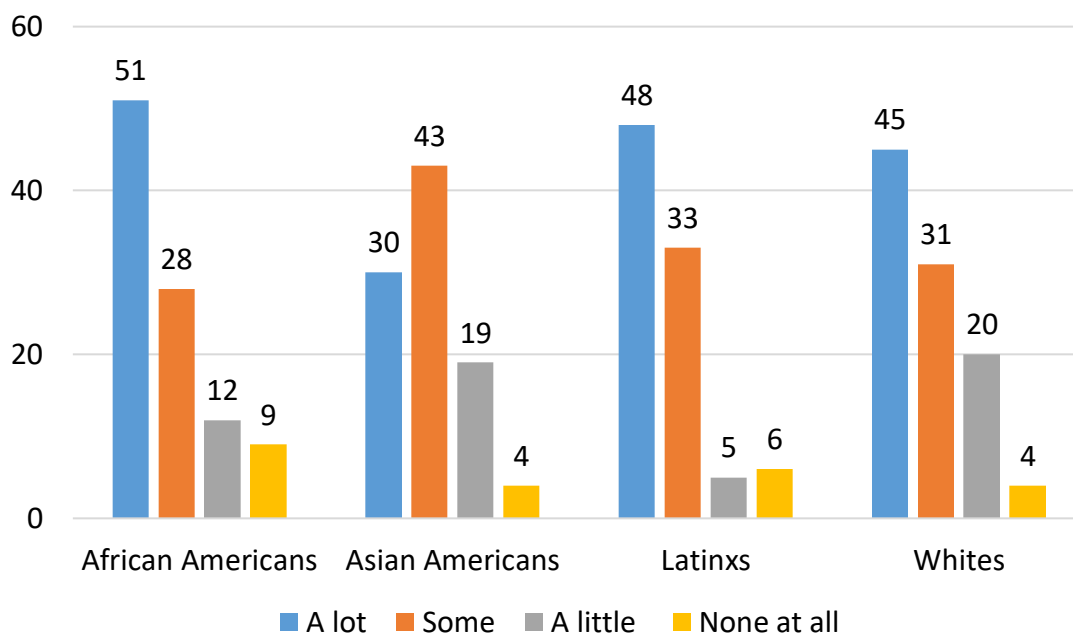
Generally, Millennials agree that there is discrimination against gays and lesbians, with majorities across race and ethnicity saying that there is “some” or “a lot” of discrimination. Pluralities of African American (40%) and Latinx (45%) Millennials believe there is “a lot” of discrimination against gays and lesbians compared to 29% of Asian Americans and 23% of whites. Despite the relatively low numbers of whites and Asian Americans that believe there is “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians, and gays, the majority of Asian Americans (55%) and a plurality of whites (37%) say there is “some” discrimination. In contrast, approximately one in four Millennials of color and one in three white Millennials say there is little or no discrimination against lesbian and gays in the country.

**Figure 4: In this country, how much discrimination is there against lesbians and gays? Would you say...**



Responses to the question of discrimination change slightly when asked about transgender people instead of lesbians and gays, as can be seen in Figure 5. Instead of being spread out somewhat more evenly between the “some” and “a lot” categories, we find that responses skew more heavily toward “a lot.” Indeed, a majority of African Americans (51%) and pluralities of Latinxs (48%), and whites (45%) believe that there is a lot of discrimination against transgender people. Asian American Millennials (30%) are the least likely to say there is a lot of discrimination against transgender individuals in the country. Instead, a plurality of Asian Americans (43%) believe there is “some” discrimination against transgender people.

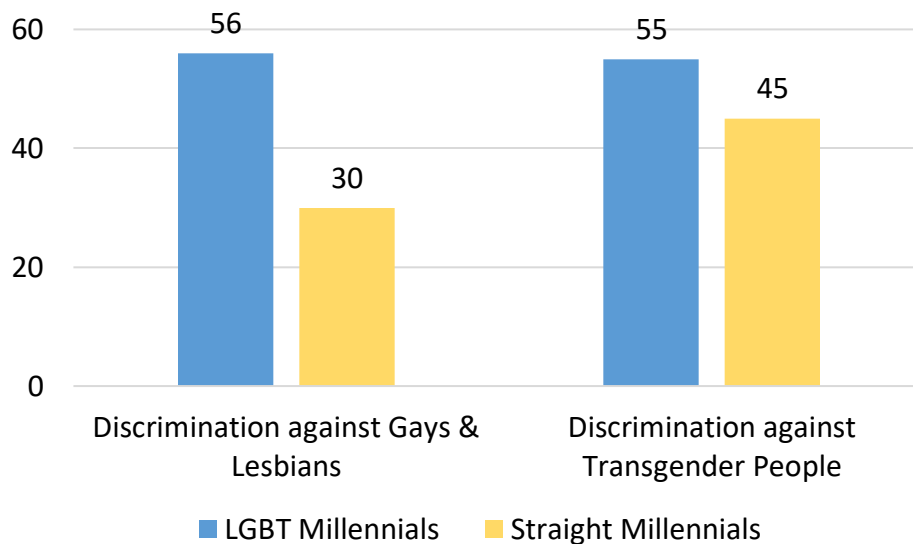
**Figure 5: In this country, how much discrimination is there against transgender people? Would you say...**



Perceptions of discrimination also vary based on whether Millennials identify as LGBT or straight/heterosexual, as is evident in Figure 6. Interestingly, we find that the perceptions of greater discrimination against transgender people relative to lesbians and gays is driven primarily by Millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual. Among these respondents, 45% reported that transgender people encounter “a lot” of discrimination while only 30% believe there is “a lot” of discrimination against gays and lesbians. On the other hand, roughly equivalent percentages of Millennials who

identify as LGBT report perceiving “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians and gays (56%) and transgender people (55%).

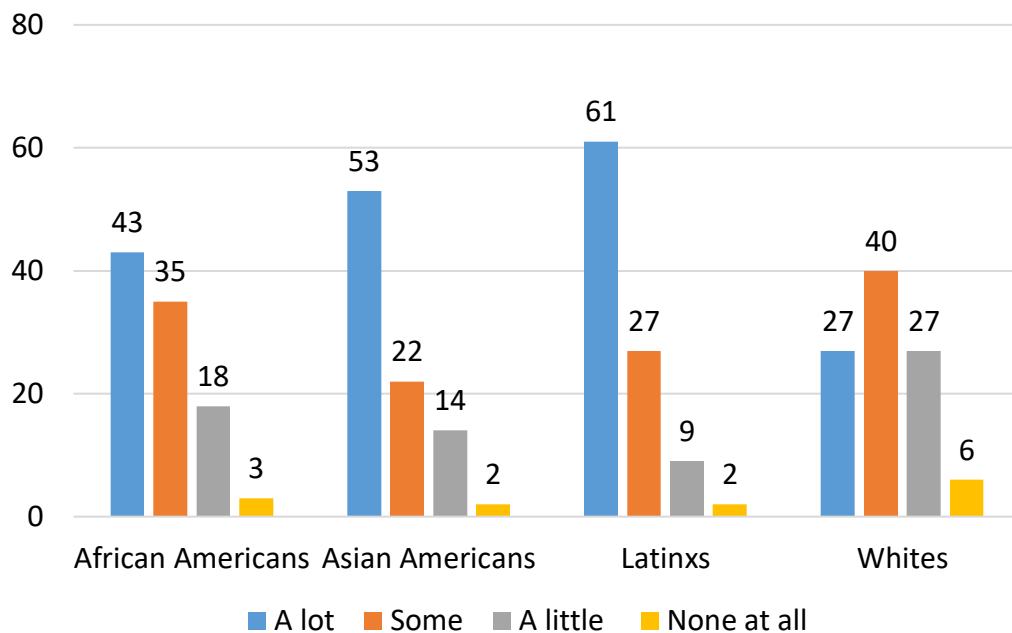
**Figure 6: Perceptions of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transgender people in the country by LGBT/straight (% who respond “a lot”)**



Given that research has consistently [shown](#) important differences in attitudes toward LGBT issues by race, we also asked respondents about their perceptions of discrimination against LGBT people within their own racial and ethnic communities.

When asked about lesbians and gays, we find again that large majorities of Millennials in each racial/ethnic group believe there to be “a lot” or “some” discrimination in their racial communities (Figure 7). White Millennials consider their racial community the most tolerant with 33% saying there is little or no discrimination against lesbians and gays in their racial community, compared to 21% of African American, 16% of Asian American and 11% of Latinx Millennials. In contrast to feelings of tolerance, the most common response among Millennials of color is that there is “a lot” of discrimination against lesbians and gays in their respective communities. Majorities of Asian American (53%) and Latinx (61%) Millennials and a plurality of African American (43%) Millennials say that there is a lot of discrimination against lesbians and gays in their racial group, compared to just 27% of white Millennials.

**Figure 7: In the [White/Black/Hispanic/Asian] community, how much discrimination is there against [White/Black/Hispanic/Asian] lesbians and gays? Would you say...**

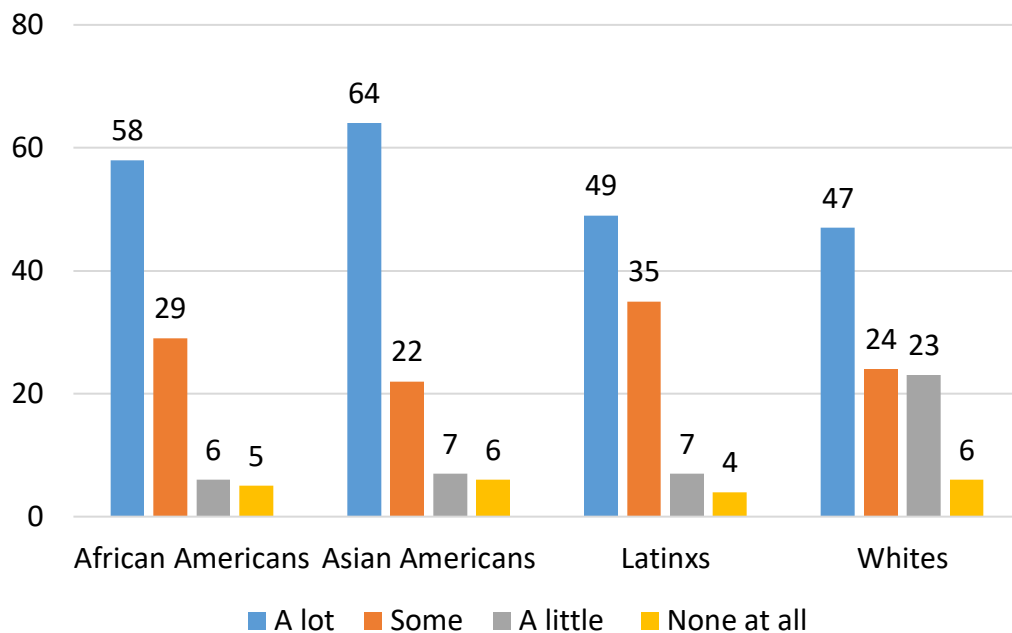


Once again, responses shift slightly when asked about transgender people instead of gays and lesbians (Figure 8). When asking about discrimination against transgender individuals, the most frequently cited response category for all racial and ethnic groups is “a lot,” with majorities of African American (58%) and Asian American (61%) Millennials and pluralities of Latinx (49%) and white (47%) Millennials indicating that people who identify as transgender face “a lot” of discrimination in their racial and ethnic communities. Millennials perceive greater discrimination against transgender people than gays and lesbians both in the country generally as well as within their own racial and ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [Data](#) supports this general perception as the killing of transgender people in particular has been increasing every year.

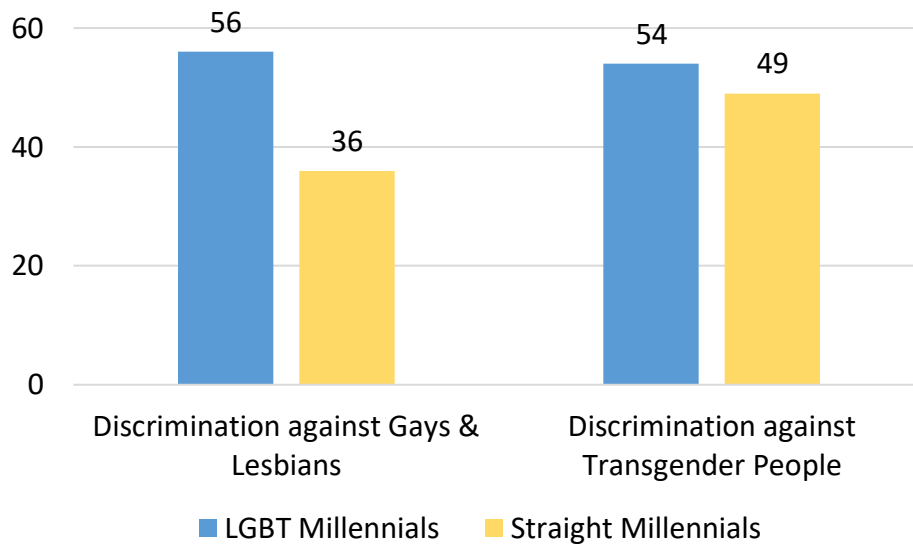


**Figure 8: In the [White/Black/Hispanic/Asian] community, how much discrimination is there against [White/Black/Hispanic/Asian] transgender people? Would you say...**



As shown in Figure 9, the percentage of LGBT Millennials who believe there is a lot of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transgender people in one’s own racial/ethnic community are once again relatively equivalent. Comparable majorities of LGBT Millennials believe that there is “a lot” of discrimination against both gays and lesbians (56%) and transgender people (54%) in their respective racial communities. Millennials who identify as straight, on the other hand, believe discrimination in their communities against transgender people (49%) to be more prevalent than discrimination against lesbians and gays (36%) in those same communities.

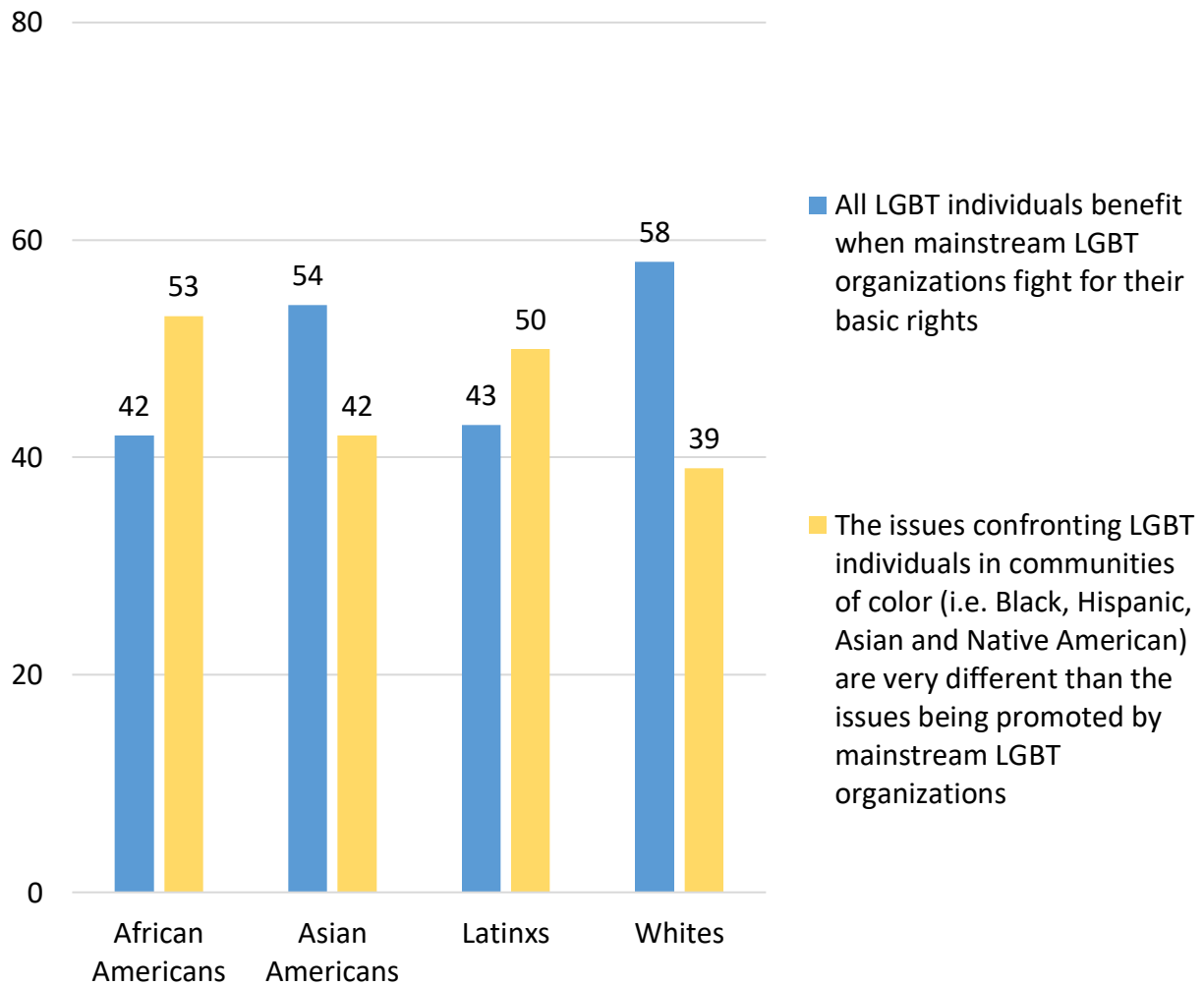
**Figure 9: Perceptions of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transgender people in one's racial/ethnic community by LGBT/straight (% who respond "a lot")**



Despite exhibiting relative agreement about the existence of discrimination against LGBT people in the country as well as within racial and ethnic communities, Millennials are somewhat divided on how to best address this discrimination.

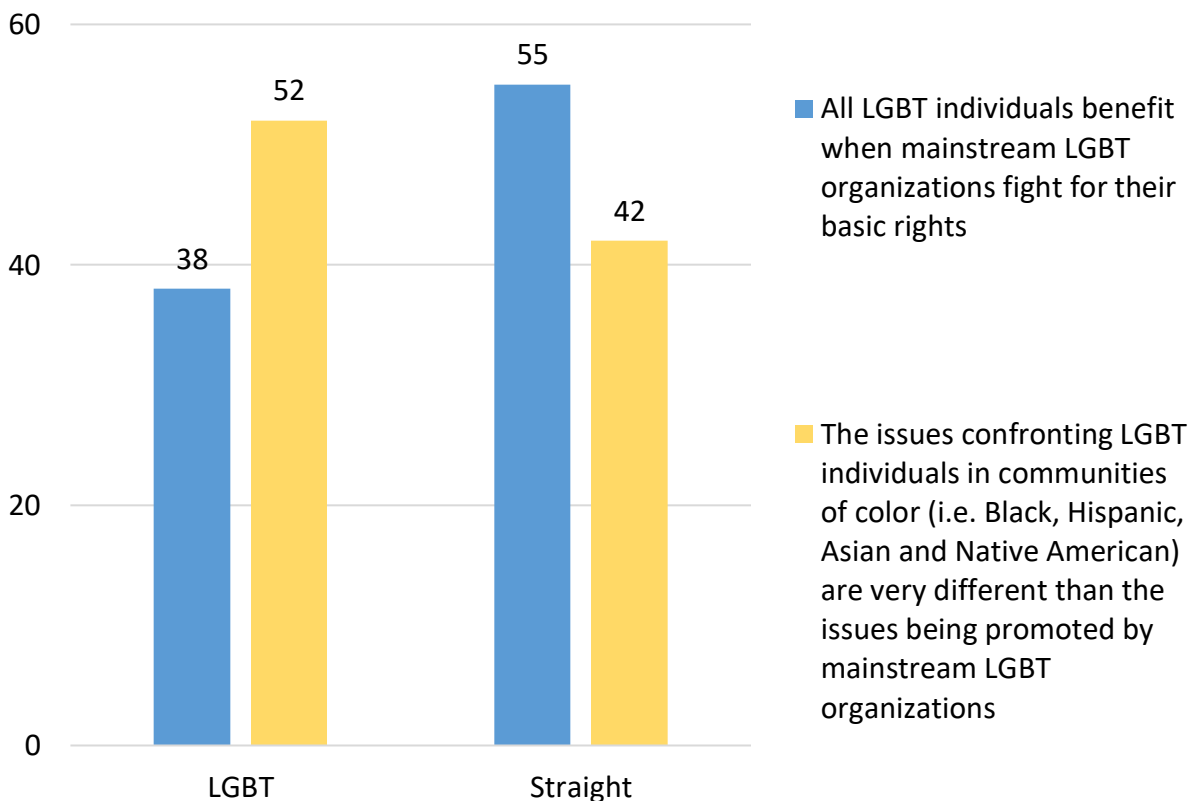
As displayed in Figures 10 and 11, majorities of African American (53%) and Latinx (50%) Millennials believe that the issues confronting LGBT individuals in communities of color are very different than the issues being promoted by mainstream organizations. In contrast, the majority of Asian American (54%) and white (58%) Millennials believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for basic rights.

**Figure 10: Which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is completely right? (By Race)**



As we show in Figure 11, LGBT Millennials have very different perceptions from straight/heterosexual Millennials about the role of mainstream LGBT groups in advancing LGBT causes. A majority (52%) of LGBT Millennials believe that the issues confronting LGBT people of color are very different from those that are promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations. These data provide evidence that LGBT individuals believe that advancing the cause of LGBT rights requires attentiveness to how LGBT identity intersects with racial identity. In contrast, a majority (55%) of straight/heterosexual Millennials believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream organizations fight for LGBT rights.

**Figure 11: Which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is completely right? (By LGBT/Straight)**



Despite some important progress made in the fight for LGBT rights in recent years, much work remains to be pursued in both the cultural and legal arenas. Many millennials across race and ethnicity as well as those that identify as LGBT and

straight/heterosexual recognize and acknowledge the persistence of discrimination against LGBT individuals in the country and their specific racial/ethnic communities. Many also believe, with important variation by race/ethnicity and LGBT/straight identity, that the challenges facing the LGBT community are not equivalent for all members. In many cases, transgender people and people of color who identify as LGBT face different obstacles than lesbian and gays and white LGBT individuals. These different positions relative to power and discrimination lead to divergent beliefs about how best to tackle the issues confronting LGBT people and communities, shaping the policy preferences of Millennials, as we will see in the next section.

## IV. Policy Preferences

### Key Findings:

- > **Policy Priorities.** Across racial and ethnic groups, Millennials say the two most important issues facing the LGBT community are reducing hate crime violence against LGBT people and ending bullying against LGBT youth.
- > **Adoption.** Majorities across racial and ethnic groups support adoption by LGBT parents, though African American (+4%), Latinx (+9%), and white Millennials (+13%) are more likely to support adoption by lesbians and gays than by transgender parents.
- > **Least Supported LGBT Policies.** While all the policy proposals had substantial majority support, accepting LGBT immigrants is the least supported policy among white, Latinx, and Asian American Millennials. However, among African Americans, the least supported policies are those that allow LGBT people to adopt children.

Beyond marriage, other important issues affecting the LGBT community are starting to garner public attention. For example, debates about whether or not transgender individuals are allowed to serve in the military and whether immigrants persecuted for their gender and/or sexual identity in their countries of origin, often punishable by death, are prioritized for, or even allowed to apply for, asylum in the United States have entered the public discourse. We asked Millennials for their thoughts on these and other policy issues relevant to the LGBT community.

First, we asked Millennials what they thought is the most important issue facing LGBT individuals today. The results are displayed in Table 1. Of the fourteen potential response options, pluralities of African American (32%), Asian American (20%), Latinx (28%), and white (23%) Millennials chose reducing hate crime violence as the most important problem facing LGBT people today. The second-most agreed upon policy issue is also related to violence, ending bullying against LGBT youth.

**Table 1: What do you think is the MOST important problem facing, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people today? (By Race)**

	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinxs	Whites
Equal employment rights for LGBT people	6	7	10	8
Adoption rights for same-sex couples	2	2	8	7
Increased funding for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS	7	3	8	6
Support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth	3	7	3	5
Services for homeless LGBT youth	2	4	6	4
Decriminalization of LGBT youth	4	7	4	2
Coverage of transgender health issues by health insurance	6	3	2	5
Accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality	3	1	2	1
Promote inclusive learning environments and curriculum that addresses LGBT issues in schools	5	9	5	5
Ending bullying against LGBT youth	11	17	12	20
Ensure LGBT government employees are afforded the same rights and protections as straight employees, such as paid leave	5	11	4	6
Reduce hate crime violence against LGBT people	32	20	28	23
Provide services to reduce drug addiction for LGBT people	1	2	1	3
Ending police harassment of LGBT individuals	2	2	1	<1
N	525	256	502	553

A similar pattern emerged among Millennials who identify as LGBT as well as those that identify as straight, as shown in Table 2. Reducing hate crime violence against LGBT people is the top policy priority for Millennials regardless of race, ethnicity and sexual identity. The second-most cited policy issue was, again, ending bullying against LGBT youth. Importantly, however, Millennials who identify as heterosexual/straight are more likely to believe bullying is a problem than Millennials who identify as LGBT. LGBT Millennials, while clearly concerned with bullying, are concerned with equal employment rights to almost the same degree.

**Table 2: What do you think is the MOST important problem facing, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people today? (By LGBT/Straight)**

	LGBT	Straight
Equal employment rights for LGBT people	10	7
Adoption rights for same-sex couples	5	6
Increased funding for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS	3	7
Support for organizations that provide services to LGBT youth	4	4
Services for homeless LGBT youth	6	4
Decriminalization of LGBT youth	3	3
Coverage of transgender health issues by health insurance	1	5
Accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality	1	2
Promote inclusive learning environments and curriculum that addresses LGBT issues in schools	9	4
Ending bullying against LGBT youth	11	17
Ensure LGBT government employees are afforded the same rights and protections as straight employees, such as paid leave	7	6
Reduce hate crime violence against LGBT people	26	25
Provide services to reduce drug addiction for LGBT people	2	2
Ending police harassment of LGBT individuals	1	1
N	2	*

Despite not selecting issues like housing services and adoption rights as their top issues, Millennials are largely supportive of policies aimed at supporting the LGBT community and promoting equality (Table 3). Majorities of Millennials across race and



ethnicity “somewhat” or “strongly” favor allowing LGBT people to adopt children, establishing laws to protect LGBT people from job discrimination, allowing transgender people to serve in the military, increasing government funding for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, and accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality.

While support is generally high across all policy proposals, there is somewhat more support for increased government funding for the prevention and treatment of AIDS as well as establishing laws to protect LGBT individuals from job discrimination. Support for allowing transgender people to continue serving in the military is also very high, with over 71% of respondents across race and ethnicity favoring such a policy. Interestingly, support is generally the lowest (though still over a majority) for accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality. Indeed, accepting LGBT immigrants is the least supported policy among white, Latinx, and Asian American Millennials. However, among African Americans, the least supported policies are those that allow LGBT people to adopt children.

**Table 3: Policy Preferences by Race  
(% that somewhat/strongly favor)**

	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinxs	Whites
Allowing lesbians and gays to adopt children	62	76	71	74
Allowing transgender people to adopt children	60	81	65	67
Laws to protect lesbians and gays against job discrimination	82	91	87	78
Laws to protect transgender people against job discrimination	66	84	81	82
Allow transgender people to continue serving in the military	71	85	76	72
Increased government funding for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS	82	85	89	78
Accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality	65	75	63	65

There is much less variation in policy support when looking at the preferences of Millennials who identify as LGB, as shown in Table 4. Approximately 80% of LGBT Millennials somewhat or strongly favor all seven policy issues that were included in our survey.

We observe somewhat more variation in support for these policy proposals among Millennials who identify as heterosexual or straight, though in every case majorities of straight/heterosexual individuals expressed support. LGBT and straight/heterosexual Millennials exhibit the largest amount of disagreement over the issues of adoption by transgender people, where LGBT Millennials are 18 percentage points more supportive. Similarly, LGBT respondents are 15 percentage points more supportive than straight/heterosexual Millennials of policies to accept more LGBT immigrants from countries where their sexuality is criminalized.

**Table 4: Policy Preferences by LGBT/Straight  
(% that somewhat/strongly favor)**

	LGBT	Straight
Allowing lesbians and gays to adopt children	79	69
Allowing transgender people to adopt children	83	65
Laws to protect lesbians and gays against job discrimination	86	80
Laws to protect transgender people against job discrimination	79	81
Allow transgender people to continue serving in the military	81	73
Increased government funding for the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS	81	82
Accepting more LGBT immigrants from countries that criminalize sexuality	78	63

In the fight to secure equal marriage rights, Millennials emerged both as members and reliable allies of the LGBT community. According to our latest findings, Millennials' support for equality for LGBT people extends well beyond marriage. Though there are important differences by race/ethnicity and LGBT/straight identity, Millennials largely support policies that promote equal treatment and access in areas such as the workplace, the military, health care research and treatment, adoption, and immigration.

## V. Norms & Morality

### Key Findings:

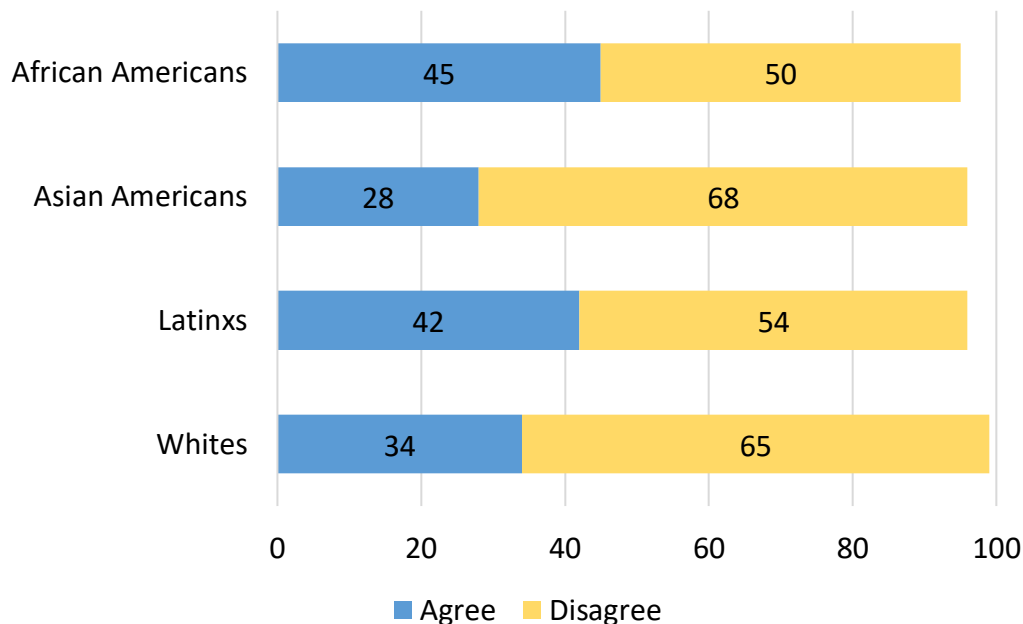
- > **Need to do More to Accept Transgender People.** Majorities of Asian American (69%) and white (52%) Millennials and pluralities of African American (49%) and Latinx (47%) young adults say our society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender.
- > **Accepting LGBT Children.** Majorities of Millennials say they could accept their son or daughter being LGBT. White Millennials (80%) expressed the greatest acceptance toward having a child that identified as LGBT, followed by Asian American (76%), Latinx (75%), and finally African American (68%) Millennials.
- > **Anti-LGBT Attitudes.** Despite their general support of policies promoting the equality of LGBT individuals and communities, a significant percentage of African American (45%), Latinx (42%), white (34%), and Asian American (28%) Millennials also say increasing acceptance of homosexuality is causing a deterioration of morality.
- > **Anti-LGBT Attitudes and LGBT Respondents.** Of Millennials who identify as LGBT, over one fifth, or 21%, believe that homosexuality is a moral detriment, while among Millennials who identify as straight, 40% agree that homosexuality is damaging to society's moral values.

LGBT identities have often been linked to discussions of morality. As the [debate](#) goes, some argue that individuals who identify as LGBT threaten the institution of the traditional family and endanger both American society and its moral values. Others contend that LGBT families both solidify the importance of family in the fabric of our society and provide another model for how a loving family might be structured. Given the role of ostensible moral considerations associated with attitudes toward LGBT people, we explore whether what might be considered to be the liberal bent in Millennials' views on LGBT issues are evident in the opinions about morality and social norms.

We find substantial variation by race/ethnicity when examining Millennial attitudes on morality and “homosexuality.” Using a question that has been previously asked by [researchers](#), we asked our respondents if they agree with the statement, “the increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society is causing a deterioration of morality.” As illustrated in Figure 12, African American (45%) and Latinx (42%) Millennials reported the highest levels of agreement with the statement, while somewhat smaller percentages of white (34%) and Asian American (28%) Millennials also agreed.

While many may see this finding as disturbing, viewed somewhat differently, the data suggest that substantial numbers of Millennials *disagree* that “homosexuality” is causing a deterioration of morality in American society. Disagreement is highest among Asian American and white Millennials whereas African American and Latinx are somewhat more divided in their views.

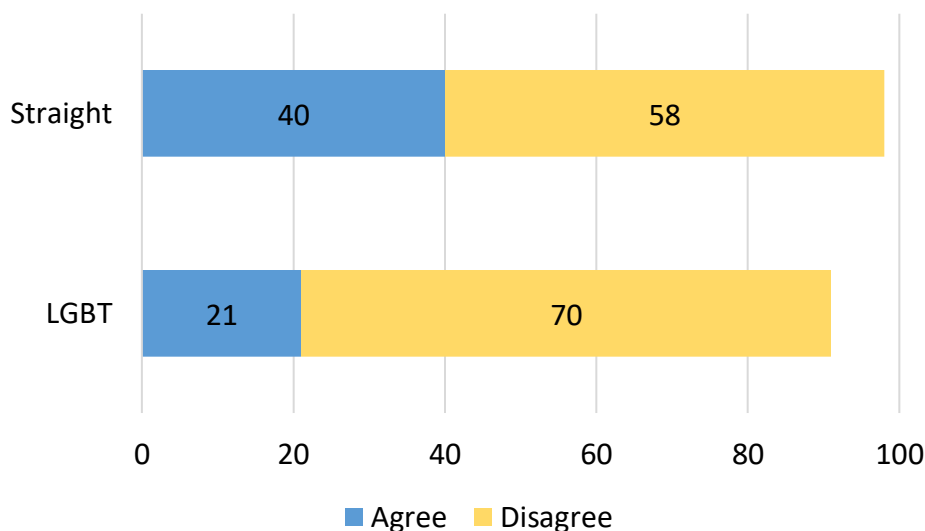
**Figure 12: The increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society is causing a deterioration of morality. Do you... (By Race)**



In addition to variation by race, we also observe important differences by LGBT/straight identity, as displayed in Figure 13. While most Millennials disagree that the increasing

acceptance of homosexuality in American society is causing a deterioration of morality, there remain substantial proportions of people, both straight and LGBT, that believe homosexuality is indeed causing a deterioration of morality. Among Millennials who identify as straight, 40% agree that homosexuality is damaging to society's moral values. And possibly even more surprising is the finding that among Millennials who identify as LGBT, over one fifth, or 21%, believe that homosexuality is a moral detriment.

**Figure 13: The increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society is causing a deterioration of morality. Do you... (By LGBT/Straight)**

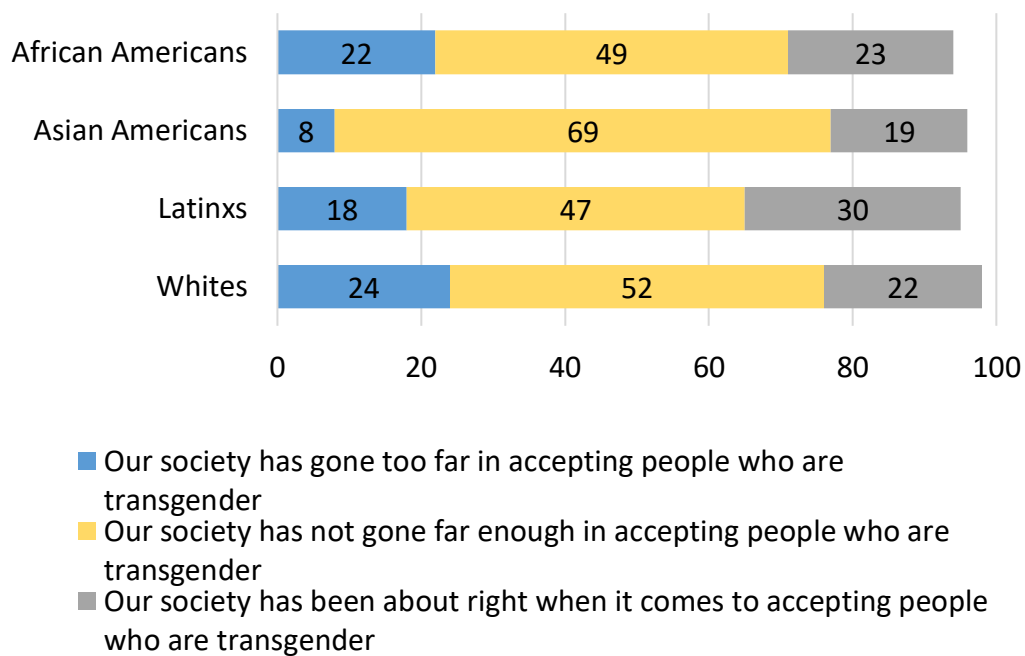


Despite substantial percentages of Millennials believing that homosexuality is a moral detriment to society, this is not the majority opinion. Indeed, not only do most Millennials generally disagree that homosexuality is causing a deterioration of American moral values, they also believe that society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender (Figures 14 and 15).

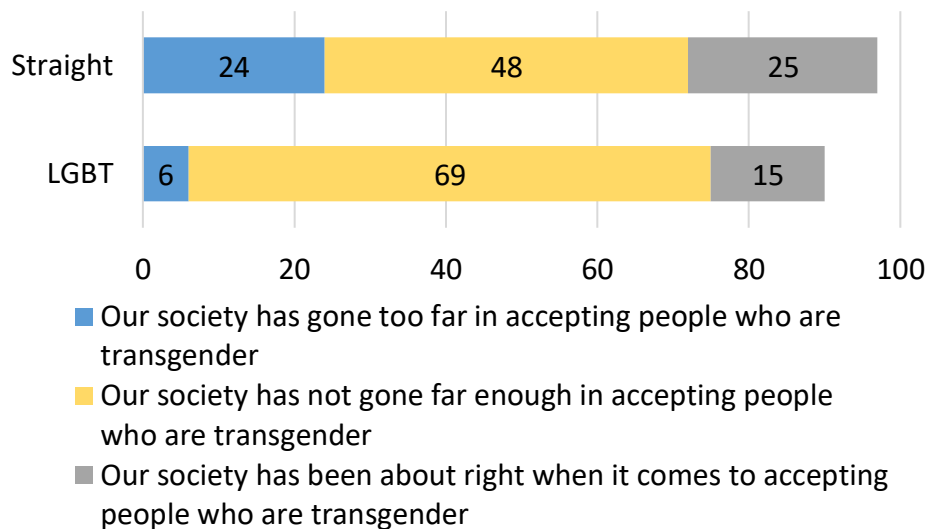
This is especially true among Asian American Millennials, 69% of whom believe that society should do more to accept transgender people. A majority of white Millennials (52%) and pluralities of African American (49%) and Latinx (47%) also believe that society has not gone far enough in accepting transgender people.

Millennials who identify as LGBT are also much more likely to hold the opinion that society has not gone far enough in accepting transgender people. Indeed, only 6% of LGBT Millennials believe that society has gone too far in its acceptance of transgender individuals compared to nearly a quarter, or 24%, of Millennials who identify as heterosexual or straight.

**Figure 14: Which of the following statements comes closer to your feelings?**



**Figure 15: Which of the following statements comes closer to your feelings?**

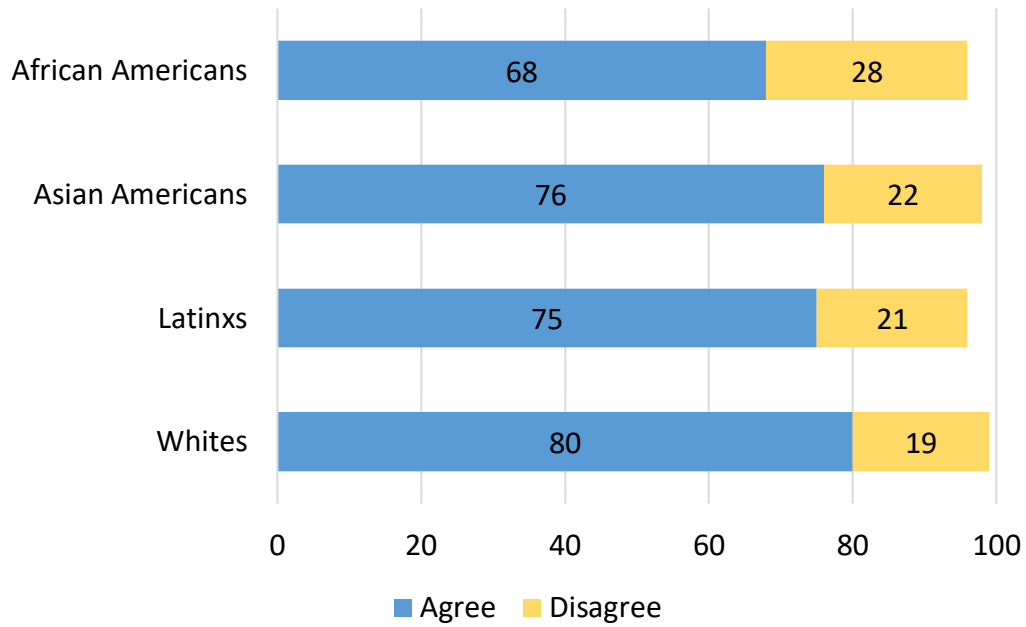


Millennials' acceptance of LGBT people extends into their personal lives as well. When asked if they were a parent could they accept if their child were LGBT, large majorities of Millennials, regardless of race or ethnic background, indicated that they would be accepting, as is seen in Figure 16.

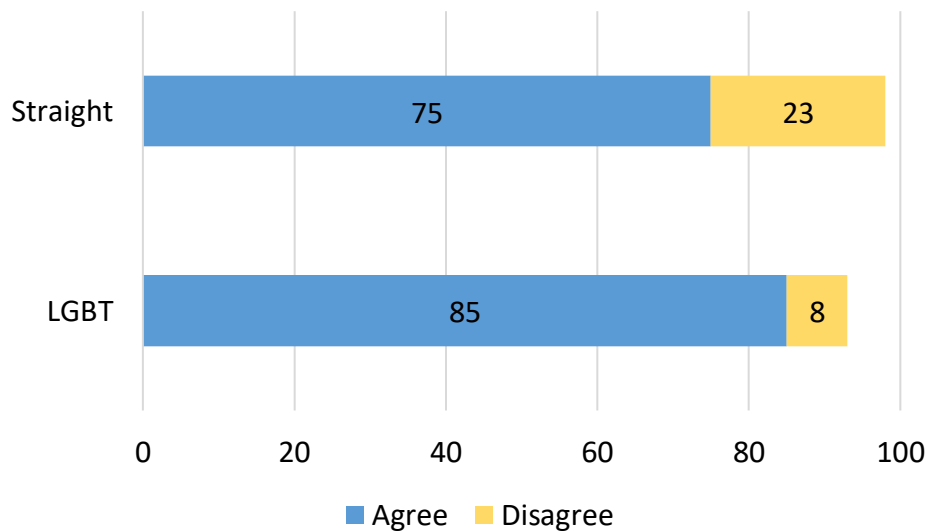
There was, however, some variation by race. When thinking of their own children, white Millennials (80%) expressed the greatest acceptance toward having a child that identified as LGBT, followed by Asian American (76%), Latinx (75%), and finally African American (68%) Millennials.

Once again, there was also slight variation by LGBT/straight identity as well (Figure 17). While overwhelming majorities of both straight/heterosexual and LGBT Millennials expressed that they would accept their child if they identified as LGBT, Millennials who identified as LGBT were, possibly not surprising, approximately 10 percentage points more likely to say that would be accepting. Moreover, Millennials who reported being straight/heterosexual were almost three times as likely to indicate they would not be accepting of their child if they were LGBT (23% vs. 8%).

**Figure 16: If I were a parent, I could accept my son or daughter being LGBT. Do you... (By Race)**



**Figure 17: If I were a parent, I could accept my son or daughter being LGBT. Do you... (By LGBT/Straight)**





These data do not allow us to identify whether the moral positions of Millennials are determined by or determinative of their generally liberal attitudes toward LGBT issues. The relationship between the two is unclear. Indeed, given the findings of previous research, we expect that factors such as religion and religiosity as well as contact with LGBT individuals and communities play an important role in shaping attitudes about LGBT issues and communities. Nevertheless, there are important differences by both race/ethnicity as well as LGBT/straight identity in the moral considerations of Millennials as they relate to LGBT issues and the acceptance of LGBT individuals.

## VI. Conclusion

In this report, we delve more deeply into the attitudes of Millennials on issues important to the LGBT community. In addition to exploring attitudes on specific issues or policies, we have also provided an important window into Millennials' own sexual identities, their connection or linked fate to LGBT people more generally, their perceptions of discrimination against LGBT people both within their country and their respective racial and ethnic communities, and their moral evaluations of LGBT relationships.

While in each of these areas Millennials are generally supportive and hold predominantly liberal attitudes, we have found variation by race and ethnicity that is important for a fuller understanding of Millennials and their attitudes. Our data also suggest that even though on most issues Millennials are ready to support a progressive agenda of equality, significant numbers of young adults also believe that "the increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society is causing a deterioration of morality."

We expect that many will see this last finding as contradicting much of the support for more liberal policies we have recorded. We know from the [research](#) on public opinion that individuals often, for some too often, hold what might be perceived as contradictory positions. In this case, it may be that a small but significant group of Millennials believe in the general pursuit of equality for all groups, while also believing that the society's continued acceptance of homosexuality (not individual LGBT people) is deteriorating the morality of the nation. We would remind readers troubled by this finding that majorities of Millennials across race, ethnicity and sexual identity disagreed with this position, and believe that there is more to do in terms of supporting the equality of LGBT individuals and communities.

## VII. Survey Methodology

The GenForward June survey is a project of Professor Cathy J. Cohen at the University of Chicago. The survey was designed and analysis was conducted by the GenForward team. NORC at the University of Chicago was contracted to field the GenForward survey and interviews were conducted with a representative sample from GenForward<sup>SM</sup>, a nationally representative survey panel of adults ages 18-34 recruited and administered by NORC at the University of Chicago.

A total of 1,886 interviews were conducted between May 17 and June 3, 2018 with adults ages 18-34 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including completed interviews with 525 African American young adults, 256 Asian American young adults, 502 Latinx young adults, 553 white young adults, and 50 young adults with other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The survey was offered in English and Spanish and via telephone and web modes.

The GenForward survey was built from two sample sources: Sixty-four percent of the completed interviews are sourced from NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel. AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel that also uses address-based sample but sourced from the NORC National Frame with enhanced sample coverage. During the initial recruitment phase of the AmeriSpeak panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). Thirty-seven percent of the completed interviews are sourced from the Black Youth Project (BYP) panel of young adults recruited by NORC. The BYP sample is from a probability-based household panel that uses an address-based sample from a registered voter database of the entire U.S. Households were selected using stratified random sampling to support over-sampling of households with African Americans, Latinxs, and Asian Americans ages 18-34. NORC contacted sampled households by U.S. mail and by telephone, inviting them to register and participate in public opinion surveys twice a month.

Panelists on both the BYP and AmeriSpeak panels are invited to register for the panel via the web or by telephone to participate in public opinion surveys.

Of the 1,886 completed interviews in the GenForward March survey, 93 percent were completed by web and 7 percent by telephone. The survey completion rate is 26 percent. The weighted AAPOR RR3 panel recruitment rate is 21.3 percent and the weighted household panel retention rate is 88.9 percent, for a cumulative AAPOR

Response Rate 3 of 4.9 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.78 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. Among subgroups, the margin of sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 6.06 percentage points for African Americans, +/- 7.08 percentage points for Asian Americans, +/- 7.43 percentage points for Latinxs, and +/- 5.76 percentage points for whites.

To encourage cooperation, respondents were offered incentives for completing the survey that ranged from the cash-equivalent of \$3 to the cash-equivalent of \$10.

The interviews from the two probability-based sample sources were combined for statistical weighting and analysis. The combined panel samples provide sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. The statistical weights incorporate the appropriate probability of selection for the BYP and AmeriSpeak samples, nonresponse adjustments, and also, raking ratio adjustments to population benchmarks for 18-34-year-old adults. A poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under- and over-sampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. The poststratification process was done separately for each racial/ethnic group and involved the following variables: age, gender, education, and census region. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults ages 18-34, and the 18-34-year-old populations for African Americans, Latinxs, Asian Americans, and non-Latinx whites, were used for all analyses.