

# South Carolina Republican Primary Survey

N=406 Likely 2026 Republican Primary Voters | MoE = +/- 4.86%  
58% Text-To-Web, 42% Online

July 18-21, 2025

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## Key Findings

*South Carolina Republican primary voters are highly focused on education, with overwhelming support for school choice and the state's scholarship program. GOP candidates who prioritize education freedom stand to gain, as the gubernatorial field remains unsettled and voters see improving K–12 schools as a top priority.*

### Overall Views of K–12 Education

Education is a top priority: 77% of Republican primary voters believe it is extremely or very important for the next governor to improve K–12 education; they give South Carolina's K–12 system mixed marks.

- 37% say education is heading in the wrong direction
- 31% say it is heading in the right direction
- 32% are unsure

### Strong Support for School Choice

Support for school choice is overwhelming among likely Republican primary voters.

- 87% support school choice, including 66% who support it strongly
- 86% say families should have more flexibility and options in how children are educated
- 73% say they would be more likely to vote for a gubernatorial candidate who prioritizes giving families more choices

### Republicans Back the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program

South Carolina's Education Scholarship Trust Fund enjoys wide approval.

- 79% support the program
- Nearly half (46%) say they support it strongly

### Republican Gubernatorial Primary Unsettled

The contest for the 2026 GOP gubernatorial nomination remains unsettled (*data was collected before Representative Mace officially entered the race*).

- Alan Wilson (20%) and Nancy Mace (19%) lead the field
- 37% of Republican primary voters remain undecided

### Republican Presidential Primary: Vance holds dominant lead

Vice President JD Vance is the early frontrunner for the 2026 South Carolina GOP presidential primary.

- Vance: 46%
- Nikki Haley: 12%
- Donald Trump, Jr.: 8%

## Methodology

yes. every kid. foundation. conducted a multi-modal survey of n=406 likely 2026 Republican primary voters in South Carolina from July 18-21, 2025. The survey was stratified based on the known demographic composition of the South Carolina Republican primary voter population. Results for the entire population have a margin of error of +/- 4.86%.

## Survey Data

*\* denotes result less than 0.5%, while -- denotes no response.*

*Due to rounding, some figures may be higher or lower by less than one-half of one percent.*

### 1. In which state do you live?

100% South Carolina

### 2. In which county in South Carolina do you live? [DMA SHOWN]

5% Augusta-Aiken  
16% Charleston  
8% Charlotte  
18% Columbia  
34% Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson  
15% Myrtle Beach-Florence  
4% Savannah

### 3. Are you registered to vote in South Carolina?

100% Yes

### 4. In politics today, do you consider yourself... a Republican, a Democrat, or something else?

**94% TOTAL REPUBLICAN**

**1% TOTAL DEMOCRAT**

73% Strong Republican  
11% Not-so-strong Republican  
10% Lean Republican  
5% Something else  
1% Lean Democrat  
1% Not-so-strong Democrat  
\* Strong Democrat

1% Don't know

5. Thinking about 2026, how likely are you to vote in next year's election for Governor, Congress, state legislature, and other various offices in South Carolina?

**99%    TOTAL WILL VOTE**  
**1%    TOTAL WILL NOT VOTE**

90%    Definitely will vote  
7%    Probably will vote  
2%    It's fifty-fifty  
\*    Probably will not vote  
1%    Definitely will not vote  
  
--    Don't know

6. And, how likely are you to vote in next year's primary election for Governor, Congress, state legislature, and other various offices in South Carolina?

**100%    TOTAL WILL VOTE**

88%    Definitely will vote  
9%    Probably will vote  
3%    It's fifty-fifty  
--    Probably will not vote  
--    Definitely will not vote  
  
--    Don't know

7. Do you plan to vote in the Republican or Democratic primary for Governor, Congress, state legislature, and other various offices in South Carolina?

100%    Republican primary  
--    Democratic primary  
--    Other  
  
--    Don't know

Thinking about yourself some more...

8. In which age range do you fall?

8%    18-34  
11%    35-44  
13%    45-54  
19%    55-64  
49%    65 or older

9. What do you consider to be your gender?

50%	Male
50%	Female
--	Other

10. Which of the following *best* describes your racial or ethnic identity? *Select all that apply.*

90%	White
3%	Black or African American
1%	Hispanic or Latino
1%	Asian
1%	Native American or Alaska Native
--	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
2%	Other
4%	Prefer not to say

Moving on...

11. In general, do you think things in South Carolina are heading in the right direction, or do you think things are off on the wrong track?

73%	Right direction
17%	Wrong track
9%	Don't know

12. Which one of the following state issues do you believe should be the top priority for the next Governor of South Carolina?

25%	Improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure
19%	Eliminating the state income tax
16%	Bolstering the economy and creating jobs
12%	Fighting crime and increasing safety
8%	Improving K-12 education and giving families more choices
6%	Cracking down on illegal drugs and drug abuse
5%	Expanding access to affordable healthcare
7%	Other (Please specify: ____)
2%	Don't know

The following are a few names of people in South Carolina and nationally. For each one, please indicate if you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of that person. If you have never heard of that person or don't have an opinion, please indicate that.

	<b><i>TOTAL FAVORABLE</i></b>	<b><i>TOTAL UNFAVORABLE</i></b>	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion	Never heard of
<b>13.</b> Donald Trump	<b>90%</b>	<b>9%</b>	70%	20%	2%	7%	1%	--
<b>14.</b> JD Vance	<b>85%</b>	<b>10%</b>	67%	19%	3%	8%	3%	1%
<b>15.</b> Tim Scott	<b>83%</b>	<b>13%</b>	56%	27%	7%	6%	3%	2%
<b>16.</b> Nancy Mace	<b>50%</b>	<b>18%</b>	21%	30%	10%	9%	15%	16%
<b>17.</b> Ralph Norman	<b>30%</b>	<b>10%</b>	11%	19%	7%	3%	27%	33%
<b>18.</b> Nikki Haley	<b>62%</b>	<b>32%</b>	31%	31%	15%	17%	5%	1%
<b>19.</b> Henry McMaster	<b>80%</b>	<b>15%</b>	44%	36%	9%	6%	4%	1%
<b>20.</b> Pamela Evette	<b>28%</b>	<b>7%</b>	10%	18%	4%	3%	29%	36%
<b>21.</b> Alan Wilson	<b>47%</b>	<b>9%</b>	19%	27%	5%	5%	23%	21%
<b>22.</b> Ellen Weaver	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	8%	17%	6%	3%	30%	37%
<b>23.</b> Josh Kimbrell	<b>17%</b>	<b>7%</b>	5%	12%	4%	3%	33%	43%
<b>24.</b> Sean Bennett	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>	3%	8%	2%	2%	34%	52%

**25.** Thinking about the country, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as President of the United States?

**92% TOTAL APPROVE**  
**8% TOTAL DISAPPROVE**

67% Strongly approve  
25% Somewhat approve  
4% Somewhat disapprove  
4% Strongly disapprove

\* Don't know

**26.** And thinking about South Carolina, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job Henry McMaster is doing as Governor of South Carolina?

**88% TOTAL APPROVE**  
**11% TOTAL DISAPPROVE**

46% Strongly approve  
41% Somewhat approve  
7% Somewhat disapprove  
4% Strongly disapprove

1% Don't know

**27.** Although it's a few years away, if the 2028 Republican primary election for President were being held today, which candidate would you vote for if the candidates were:

- 46% JD Vance
- 12% Nikki Haley
- 8% Donald Trump, Jr.
- 6% Ron Desantis
- 5% Tim Scott
- 4% Marco Rubio
- 2% Sarah Huckabee Sanders
- 2% Vivek Ramaswamy
- 2% Rand Paul
- 1% Glenn Youngkin
- 1% Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
- 1% Ted Cruz
- \* Kristi Noem
  
- 2% Someone else/Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_)
  
- 7% Undecided/Don't know

28. Thinking again about next year's Republican primary election for Governor of South Carolina, if the election were being held today, which candidate would you vote for if the candidates were:

**20% TOTAL WILSON**  
**19% TOTAL MACE**  
**9% TOTAL EVETTE**  
**8% TOTAL NORMAN**  
**3% TOTAL KIMBRELL**  
**2% TOTAL BENNETT**

8% Definitely Alan Wilson  
 12% Probably Alan Wilson

6% Definitely Nancy Mace  
 12% Probably Nancy Mace

4% Definitely Pamela Evette  
 5% Probably Pamela Evette

3% Definitely Ralph Norman  
 5% Probably Ralph Norman

1% Definitely Josh Kimbrell  
 2% Probably Josh Kimbrell

\* Definitely Sean Bennett  
 2% Probably Sean Bennett

2% Someone else/Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_)

37% Undecided/Don't know

29. Still thinking about next year's Republican primary elections here in South Carolina, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate if the candidate were endorsed by President Trump?

**59% TOTAL MORE LIKELY**  
**7% TOTAL LESS LIKELY**

33% Much more likely  
 26% Somewhat more likely  
 1% Somewhat less likely  
 5% Much less likely  
 29% No difference in likelihood

5% Don't know



Now thinking some more about issues facing South Carolina...

**30.** In general, do you think K-12 education in South Carolina is heading in the right or wrong direction?

31%	Right direction
37%	Wrong direction
32%	Don't know

**31.** How important is it that our next Governor in South Carolina work to improve K-12 education in the state?

<b>77%</b>	<b>TOTAL EXTREMELY/VERY</b>
<b>17%</b>	<b>TOTAL SOMEWHAT/NOT THAT/NOT AT ALL</b>
38%	Extremely important
39%	Very important
15%	Somewhat important
1%	Not that important
1%	Not at all important
6%	Don't know

**32.** Do you support or oppose parents, instead of the government, choosing the best school for their child(ren)?

<b>87%</b>	<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>
<b>8%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>
67%	Strongly support
20%	Somewhat support
5%	Somewhat oppose
3%	Strongly oppose
5%	Don't know

- 33.** Some states have started to allow for more flexibility in K-12 education and giving families more choices in how they can educate their children, such as the schools the children can attend and the financial resources to help pay for those schools and related expenses. In general, do you support or oppose making K-12 education more flexible for families?

**86%    TOTAL SUPPORT**  
**8%    TOTAL OPPOSE**

57%    Strongly support  
28%    Somewhat support  
4%    Somewhat oppose  
4%    Strongly oppose  
  
6%    Don't know

- 34.** Thinking again about the upcoming primary election for Governor, would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate if the candidate prioritized giving K-12 families more choices in how they can educate their children?

**73%    TOTAL MORE LIKELY**  
**6%    TOTAL LESS LIKELY**

35%    Much more likely  
37%    Somewhat more likely  
3%    Somewhat less likely  
3%    Much less likely  
12%    No difference in likelihood  
  
9%    Don't know

- 35.** As you may know, President Trump said, "It is the policy of my Administration to support parents in choosing and directing the upbringing and education of their children." Does President Trump's position on K-12 education make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate for Governor if the candidate prioritized giving K-12 families more choices in how they can educate their children?

**72%    TOTAL MORE LIKELY**  
**4%    TOTAL LESS LIKELY**

43%    Much more likely  
29%    Somewhat more likely  
1%    Somewhat less likely  
3%    Much less likely  
19%    No difference in likelihood  
  
5%    Don't know

- 36.** As you may know, lawmakers in South Carolina recently passed an education savings account (ESA) program that allows K-12 families to use the funding that the state would have spent on their child to attend public school to instead access an education that better meets their child's needs. Based on what you know, do you support or oppose this program to give K-12 families more choices in how they can educate their child(ren)?

**79%    TOTAL SUPPORT**  
**9%    TOTAL OPPOSE**

46%    Strongly support  
33%    Somewhat support  
4%    Somewhat oppose  
6%    Strongly oppose  
  
12%    Don't know

- 37.** The following are two statements you could hear from a candidate running for Governor of South Carolina on this issue. Even if neither is exactly right, which one comes closer to what you believe?

55%    Candidate A says that parents know best what is right for their children, and we should give them the ability to find the education that best works for their families, regardless of what that is. This isn't an issue of supporting our schools or not. This is an issue of putting our families first and preparing our children as best as possible to be successful in life.

34%    Candidate B says that we can give families more options, but we must make sure we are still prioritizing our public schools as that is where the majority of our children go. We also need a system of oversight on what families spend their education money to make sure we are being accountable to taxpayers.

11%    Don't know

Thinking about another issue here in South Carolina...

- 38.** As you may know, lawmakers in South Carolina further reduced the top income tax rate this year from 6.2% to 6%. Now, some folks in the state are calling to eliminate completely the state income tax. Based on what you know, would you support or oppose eliminating the state income tax here in South Carolina?

**74% TOTAL SUPPORT**

**15% TOTAL OPPOSE**

49% Strongly support  
25% Somewhat support  
10% Somewhat oppose  
5% Strongly oppose

11% Don't know

- 39.** The following are two statements you could hear from a candidate running for Governor of South Carolina on this issue. Even if neither is exactly right, which one comes closer to what you believe?

47% Candidate B says that while we should lower the state income tax for all, we can't eliminate it outright because it helps pay for important state services like our schools and teachers, roads and bridges, Medicaid, and our police and first responders.

43% Candidate A says that we should eliminate the state income tax as quickly as possible to provide South Carolina residents relief from years of inflation and to encourage economic growth and business development.

10% Don't know

Now, just a few more questions for demographic purposes only...

- 40.** Are you the parent or legal guardian of a child in your household in any of the following groups?  
*Select all that apply.*

5% A young child not yet in kindergarten  
19% A child in kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
35% A child who has already completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade

47% I do not have any children

1% Don't know

**41.** What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- 1% No high school diploma
- 22% High school diploma or equivalent
- 25% Some college but no degree
- 6% Technical or vocational degree/credential
- 12% Associate's degree
- 20% Bachelor's degree
- 13% Advanced degree (such as Master's, Professional, or Doctorate)
  
- 1% Prefer not to say

**42.** What is your household's total annual income before taxes?

- 5% Under \$25,000
- 16% \$25,000 - \$49,999
- 18% \$50,000 - \$74,999
- 16% \$75,000 - \$99,999
- 11% \$100,000 - \$124,999
- 6% \$125,000 - \$149,999
- 17% \$150,000 or more
  
- 11% Prefer not to say

**43.** How would you describe the area where you live?

- 11% An urban area or city
- 42% A suburban area
- 24% A small town
- 22% A rural area
  
- 1% Don't know

**44.** Overall, would you describe your views as...?

<b>84%</b>	<b><i>TOTAL CONSERVATIVE</i></b>
<b>2%</b>	<b><i>TOTAL LIBERAL</i></b>
50%	Very conservative
34%	Somewhat conservative
10%	Moderate
2%	Somewhat liberal
*	Very liberal
2%	Other/Something else
2%	Don't know

**[N=380 REPUBLICANS]**

**45.** And, would you say you are more a supporter of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement or Republican Party?

49%	Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement
44%	Republican Party
7%	Don't know