

# SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC OPINION POLLING ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND POLICY IN AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

The Opportunity Starts at Home campaign commissioned a statewide public opinion poll in South Carolina through Hart Research Associates to assess voters' opinions and perspectives on issues related to housing affordability and potential policy responses. The poll surveyed 400 registered voters statewide between August 22 and August 26. To see a press release on the poll, [click here](#). To see the survey topline, [click here](#).

## POLL FINDINGS:

Strong majorities of voters support policy proposals related to renter protections, economic mobility, emergency crisis assistance, affordable housing construction in well-resourced neighborhoods, and other crucial issues related to affordable housing.

- **90% support policies** that protect renters from excessive rent increases, unfair evictions, harassment, and discrimination by landlords.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 98% of Democrats, 84% of Independents, and 87% of Republicans.
- **90% support policies** that provide emergency assistance to help cover rent if low-income households face an unexpected hardship, such as losing a job or a medical emergency.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 97% of Democrats, 88% of Independents, and 86% of Republicans.
- **89% support policies** that expand stability services to help households in a crisis avoid eviction and homelessness.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 96% of Democrats, 88% of Independents, and 85% of Republicans.
- **89% support policies** that ensure affordable rental homes are located in neighborhoods that are safe, have good schools, and have good job opportunities.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 98% of Democrats, 80% of Independents, and 87% of Republicans.
- **88% support policies** that ensure families with young children who receive rental assistance can afford to live in neighborhoods that are safe, have good schools, and have job opportunities.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 97% of Democrats, 80% of Independents, and 86% of Republicans.

- **86% support policies** that expand rental assistance to help households with the lowest incomes afford housing.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 94% of Democrats, 85% of Independents, and 82% of Republicans.
- **84% support policies** that expand investments to build more rental homes that are affordable for the lowest-income people.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 91% of Democrats, 84% of Independents, and 79% of Republicans.
- **84% support policies** that expand rental assistance to help the 17 million households who currently qualify for assistance but are not receiving it.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 93% of Democrats, 82% of Independents, and 79% of Republicans.
- **80% support policies** that give renters a tax break, similar to the federal tax break homeowners currently receive.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 91% of Democrats, 81% of Independents, and 73% of Republicans.
- **77% support policies** that allow counties and cities in South Carolina to require that new housing developments (both multi-family or single-family) set aside up to 25% of their units as affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 95% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 67% of Republicans.

When asked to prioritize policies, voters rank protecting renters and low-income households as the most important priorities for elected leaders to address.

Strong majorities of people recognize the urgent importance of dealing with the affordable housing crisis in South Carolina:

- **80% agree** that the government has an important role to play in making sure there are enough affordable places for people to live.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 96% of Democrats, 82% of Independents, and 70% of Republicans.
- **87% believe** it's important for South Carolina's elected leaders to address problems related to housing affordability and people's ability to buy or rent housing that meets their needs.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 96% of Democrats, 84% of Independents, and 83% of Republicans.
- **74% believe** that the government is doing too little to make sure people can continue to cover their housing costs.
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: 85% of Democrats, 74% of Independents, and 66% of Republicans.

- **79% favor an elected official from South Carolina** who has a detailed plan for making housing more affordable.

Low wages, a lack of affordable housing, and poverty are viewed as the top causes of homelessness.

While renters are more directly impacted, homeowners also recognize the growing need for affordable rental housing. The perception that finding affordable, quality rental housing is becoming more difficult is shared by both homeowners and renters alike.

- **As the cost of living becomes the dominant issue for South Carolina voters, housing affordability stands out as a critical challenge.** Four in five voters say housing costs are a problem in their communities, with 64% reporting they have had to make sacrifices—such as cutting back on nutritious food or going into debt—just to cover rent or mortgage.
- **93% of South Carolina voters believe** that having stable affordable housing is important to people’s security and well-being.
- **94% of South Carolina voters believe** it’s important for communities to have affordable, quality rental housing.
- **More than three in five South Carolinians**, including nearly four in five renters, have had to make significant sacrifices to cover their housing costs in the past three years, including:
  - Cutting back on healthy, nutritious food (30%)
  - Accumulating credit card debt (29%)
  - Borrowing money (28%)
  - Stopping saving for retirement (26%)
  - Taking on an additional job or more hours at work (23%)
  - Cutting back on activities, learning materials, out-of-school activities that support their child’s learning (22%)
  - Skipping an important bill, like utilities or insurance (19%)
- **The overwhelming majority (87%) of South Carolina voters believe** it is harder today than five years ago for people to find stable, affordable housing in South Carolina. Many worry about evictions. This is the majority opinion across urban (81%), suburban (93%), and rural (83%) areas.