



The Citadel Poll has conducted a statewide survey ahead of the 2026 party primary elections. The purpose of this poll is to be able to understand the attitudes and opinions of South Carolinians.

Press Contact Information:

Mark Owens, Ph.D
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Email: mowens6@citadel.edu

Zach Watson
Director of Communications
Phone: (843) 953-3722
Email: zwatson2@citadel.edu

About The Citadel's Primary Election Poll

The Citadel Poll surveyed 1,505 registered voters in South Carolina between May 21, 2026 and May 31, 2026. No interviews occurred on Monday May 25. The sample includes survey responses from registered voters in the state invited to take the survey through live-telephone calls, text messages, and a small portion were invited by email to eligible participants in Verasight's panel.

The questions asked in the survey covered four broad themes.

- 1) Migration to the state and time of residence, with Q2.
- 2) The elections for who will be the Republican nominee for governor and senator, including candidate preference (Q13R as well as Q17R), reason for preference (Q14RE-Q14RW), vote plan (Q11), and anticipated competitiveness of the campaign (Q15R1, Q15R2 and Q18R).
 - a. Lt. Governor Pamela Evette received President Trump's endorsement on Friday afternoon, May 29. The endorsement occurred during the time of this poll, which collected 1,306 surveys before the endorsement and 199 after the news. Among those 199 post-endorsement interviews, 78 were likely voters in the Republican primary (13% of the likely voter sample).
- 3) The elections for who will be the Democratic nominee for governor and senator, including candidate preference (Q13D as well as Q16D), vote plan (Q11), and anticipated competitiveness of the campaign (Q14D1 - Q15D2 and Q17D1 - Q17D2).
- 4) Policy debates in the state, specifically: trust in the upcoming election (Q8), attitudes about a closed primary (Q19), reactions to redistricting Q20-Q20B), reactions to using toll roads to reduce congestion (Q21), and temporary relief of the gas tax.
 - a. A vote on the proposed map was defeated in the South Carolina Senate on Tuesday May 26. The sample includes 362 interviews before the decision and 1,143 interviews after the vote.

Details on Each State Sample

The Citadel Poll surveyed 1,505 registered voters in South Carolina between May 21, 2026 and May 31, 2026. A margin of sampling error of the South Carolina Sample is 3.2%. This accounts for differences in the sample and estimates of the population. The sample includes 427 likely voters in the Democratic Primary (+/- 6.3%), as well as 600 likely voters in the Republican Primary (+/- 4.5%).

South Carolina Sample			
	Registered	Likely Rep	Likely Dem
Total	1,505	600	427
MOSE	3.2	4.5	6.3
MOE	2.5	4	4.7

Please reference the methodology statement at poll.citadel.edu for a description of how the data were collected, demographics of the sample, and how weights were calculated. The Citadel is a contributing member to iPoll at the Roper Center at Cornell University, which is where data from the survey is available to the public.

Tally of Surveys by mode (pct), across voter group			
	South Carolina	South Carolina Rep LV	South Carolina Dem LV
Telephone	605 (40%)	224 (37%)	192 (45%)
Text	830 (55%)	354 (59%)	216 (51%)
Online community	70 (5%)	22 (4%)	19 (4%)
Total Sample	1,505	600	427

Topline Results for South Carolina

Q2	Were you born in South Carolina? (Q3) Have you always lived in South Carolina or did you move back to South Carolina after living somewhere else? (Q4) Or how long have you lived in South Carolina?	RV	Likely Voter (Rep)	Likely Voter (Dem)
	Born in South Carolina, always lived in South Carolina	32%	28%	36%
	Born in SC, moved back in past 5 years	2	0	2
	Born in SC, moved back between 5 and 10 years ago	2	2	2
	Born in SC, moved back more than 10 years ago	7	6	14
	Not born in SC, moved to SC in past 5 years	13	15	8
	Not born in SC, moved to SC between 5 and 10 years ago	10	11	5
	Not born in SC, moved to SC more than 10 years ago	34	38	33
Q5	Would you say you follow what's going on in politics most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Most of the time	63%	75%	72%
	Some of the time	24	20	21
	Only now and then	9	4	5
	Hardly at all	4	1	1
Q8	How confident are you that South Carolina and its counties will run a fair and accurate election this June?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Very confident	27%	42%	20%
	Somewhat confident	41	41	36
	Not too confident	16	10	21
	Not confident at all	11	4	21
	Do not know enough to say	5	2	2
Q10	If the party primaries for governor were held today, would you vote in the Democratic primary, Republican primary, or not vote?			RV
	Probably would not vote			13%
	Democratic primary			34
	Republican primary			53
Q11	Do you plan to cast a ballot in-person early, on Election Day, or by absentee by mail?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	In-person early (voted)	7%	3%	18%
(if voting)	In-person early	31	23	32
	In-person on Election Day	51	68	42
	Absentee by mail (voted)	1	1	1
	Absentee by mail	2	1	4
	Not sure/Refused	8	4	3

Republican Primary Questions

Q12R	There are a total of six candidates competing for the Republican nomination for governor, how much have you been hearing about the differences among these candidates?	LV (Rep)
	Nothing at all	3%
	A little	29
	A moderate amount	36
	A lot	18
	A great deal	13
Q13R	Of the potential candidates for governor, do you support Pamela Evette, Josh Kimbrell, Nancy Mace, Ralph Norman, Rom Reddy or Alan Wilson?	LV (Rep)
	Pamela Evette	17%
	Josh Kimbrell	1
	Nancy Mace	16
	Ralph Norman	13
	Rom Reddy	14
	Alan Wilson	16
	Not sure	23
Q14RE	What is the reason you most prefer Pamela Evette to be governor? Is it because:	LV (Rep)
	Evette has been successful as lieutenant governor	40%
	Evette's success in business	11
	Evette is focused on the issues you care about the most	38
	Something else	10
	(v) Refused	1
	Total respondents	101
Q14RM	What is the reason you most prefer Nancy Mace to be governor? Is it because:	LV (Rep)
	Mace has been an effective US congresswoman	27%
	Mace fights for people like me	9
	Mace is focused on the issues you care about the most	45
	Something else	19
	Total	94
Q14RN	What is the reason you most prefer Ralph Norman to be governor? Is it because:	LV (Rep)
	Norman has been an effective US congressman	28%
	Norman fights for people like me	3
	Norman is focused on the issues you care about the most	52
	Something else	16
	Total	89

Q14RR	What is the reason you most prefer Rom Reddy to be governor? Is it because:	LV (Rep)		
	Reddy is completely independent	28%		
	Reddy's success in business	11		
	Reddy is focused on the issues you care about the most	40		
	Something else	21		
	Total	89		
Q14RW	What is the reason you most prefer Alan Wilson to be governor? Is it because:	LV (Rep)		
	Wilson has been an effective Attorney General	46%		
	Wilson fights for people like me	7		
	Wilson is focused on the issues you care about the most	26		
	Something else	21		
	Total	97		
Q15R1	Do you believe the Republican primary for South Carolina Governor will be a close election or not a close election?	LV (Rep)	Before May 29	After May 29
	a close election	63%	61%	73%
	a non-close election	15	15	15
	not sure	22	24	12
Q15R2	Who do you believe will win Republican primary for South Carolina Governor?	LV (Rep)	Close	Non- Close
	Pamela Evette	23%	20%	29%
	Josh Kimbrell	1	0	2
	Nancy Mace	18	19	17
	Ralph Norman	16	16	13
	Rom Reddy	9	11	5
	Alan Wilson	25	25	26
	Not sure	8	8	8
Q16R	Lindsey Graham and Mark Lynch are both competing for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate, how much have you been hearing about the differences among these candidates?	LV (Rep)		
	Nothing at all			12%
	A little			23
	A moderate amount			27
	A lot			21
	A great deal			18

Q17R	Of the potential candidates for senator, do you support Lindsey Graham or Mark Lynch?	LV (Rep)		
	Lindsey Graham	46%		
	Mark Lynch	36		
	Not sure	18		
Q18R1	Do you believe the Republican primary for the US Senator from South Carolina will be a close election or not a close election?	LV (Rep)		
	a close election	36%		
	a non-close election	47		
	not sure	17		
Q18R2	Who do you believe will win Republican primary for US Senator from South Carolina?	LV (Rep)	Close	Non-Close
	Lindsey Graham	73%	60%	84%
	Mark Lynch	26	38	16
	Not sure	1	2	1

Democratic Primary Questions

Q12D	Jermaine Johnson, Mullins McLeod, and Billy Webster are competing for the Democratic nomination for governor, how much have you been hearing about the differences among these candidates?	LV (Dem)		
	Nothing at all	18%		
	A little	38		
	A moderate amount	28		
	A lot	10		
	A great deal	6		
Q13D	Of the potential candidates for governor in the Democratic primary, do you support Jermaine Johnson, Mullins McLeod, or Billy Webster?	LV (Dem)		
	Jermaine Johnson	33%		
	Mullins McLeod	6		
	Billy Webster	18		
	Not sure	43		
Q14R1	Do you believe the Democratic primary for South Carolina Governor will be a close election or not a close election?	LV (Dem)		
	a close election	47%		
	a non-close election	27		
	not sure	27		
Q14R2	Who do you believe will win Democratic primary for South Carolina Governor?	LV (Dem)	Close	Non-Close
	Jermaine Johnson	40%	37%	41%
	Mullins McLeod	14	14	16
	Billy Webster	26	27	21
	Not sure	19	22	22
Q15D	Annie Andrews, Brandon Brown, and Kyle Freeman are competing for the Democratic nomination for US Senator, how much have you been hearing about the differences among these candidates?	LV (Dem)		
	Nothing at all	28%		
	A little	35		
	A moderate amount	26		
	A lot	6		
	A great deal	5		

Q16D	Of the potential candidates for US Senate in the Democratic primary, do you support Annie Andrews, Brandon Brown, or Kyle Freeman?	LV (Dem)
	Annie Andrews	45%
	Brandon Brown	14
	Kyle Freeman	5
	Not sure	36

Q17D1	Do you believe the Democratic primary for the US Senator from South Carolina will be a close election or not a close election?	LV (Dem)
	a close election	42%
	a non-close election	29
	not sure	28

Q17D2	Who do you believe will win Democratic primary for US Senator from South Carolina?	LV (Dem)	Close	Non-Close
	Annie Andrews	50%	54%	47%
	Brandon Brown	25	22	27
	Kyle Freeman	11	13	8
	Not sure	14	11	17

Policies

Q19	Do you believe South Carolina should keep the open primary where registered voters can vote in any party primary without formally registering with a party or should primaries be closed to only voters who register as a member of a political party?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Keep the open primary	63%	48%	83%
	Close primaries to only voters who register with a party	27	42	11
	I don't know enough to say	10	10	6
Q20	A proposed map in South Carolina would make the one House district held by Democrats more likely to be won by Republicans. Do you support or oppose the current proposal to redraw South Carolina's congressional districts?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly support	24%	45%	3%
	Somewhat support	11	13	4
	Neither support nor oppose	17	15	8
	Somewhat oppose	8	9	4
	Strongly oppose	36	15	79
	Refused	3	3	1
Q20B	As you may know, the Supreme Court ruled in April that Louisiana should not draw congressional districts to match the share of a race in the state. Since then, Alabama and Tennessee have adopted new districts. Do you believe South Carolina should adopt a new map for this election before early voting begins in the June primary, wait for the 2028 election, or wait for Census data in 2031?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	For this election	23%	38%	5%
	Wait for the 2028 election	16	20	10
	Wait for Census data in 2031	43	29	71
	I don't know enough to say	18	13	14
Q21	Do you support or oppose adding optional toll lanes in your local area to bypass traffic?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly support	15%	15%	17%
	Somewhat support	18	15	18
	Neither support nor oppose	14	13	15
	Somewhat oppose	12	14	10
	Strongly oppose	40	42	40
	Refused	1	0	1

Q22	At a time when gas prices are unusually high, do you support a short-term suspension of the state's gasoline tax of 28 cents per gallon or believe it is important to collect these funds as usual to pay for future road maintenance?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	A short-term suspension is needed	64%	63%	56%
	Keep collecting the tax so the state can improve roads later	35	37	42
	Refused	1	0	2
Q23	Thinking of life in your town or city in the next 30 years, how concerned are you about more severe hurricanes?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not concerned at all	16%	20%	9%
	Not too concerned	26	28	14
	Neither concerned no unconcerned	23	26	21
	Somewhat concerned	22	18	28
	Extremely concerned	13	8	28
Q24	Thinking of life in your town or city in the next 30 years, how concerned are you about prolonged droughts?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not concerned at all	12%	12%	7%
	Not too concerned	20	23	15
	Neither concerned no unconcerned	23	27	17
	Somewhat concerned	29	25	34
	Extremely concerned	16	13	27
Q25	Thinking of life in your town or city in the next 30 years, how concerned are you about more frequent heatwaves?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not concerned at all	15%	18%	5%
	Not too concerned	18	27	8
	Neither concerned no unconcerned	19	24	12
	Somewhat concerned	29	22	40
	Extremely concerned	19	10	35
Do you believe the following actions are effective ways to mitigate climate change?				
Q26	Reduce travel to work or driving by yourself	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not effective at all	32%	50%	12%
	Not too effective	20	23	12
	Somewhat effective	30	18	44
	Very effective	10	4	20
	Not sure	8	6	11

Q27	Drive an electric vehicle (or hybrid)	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not effective at all	37%	58%	9%
	Not too effective	15	15	14
	Somewhat effective	28	19	36
	Very effective	14	4	29
	Not sure	6	3	11
Q28	Upgrade to smart home appliances	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Not effective at all	30%	45%	10%
	Not too effective	17	18	15
	Somewhat effective	33	27	40
	Very effective	13	6	24
	Not sure	7	4	11
Q30	Have you considered reducing travel to work or driving by yourself?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Never	43%	56%	30%
	Not too often	14	14	13
	Sometimes	19	15	26
	Always	13	9	16
	I did this recently	9	6	13
	Refused	1	1	2
Q31	Have you considered driving an electric vehicle (or hybrid)?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Never	56%	68%	44%
	Not too often	11	12	11
	Sometimes	22	13	31
	Always	7	3	9
	I did this recently	4	4	5
Q32	Have you considered upgrading to smart home appliances?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Never	32%	42%	24%
	Not too often	16	14	16
	Sometimes	32	30	36
	Always	12	9	14
	I did this recently	7	5	9

Q33	In general do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly approve	30%	60%	1%
	Somewhat approve	17	21	1
	Somewhat disapprove	7	5	5
	Strongly disapprove	44	13	91
	Neither	2	1	1
Q34	In general do you approve or disapprove of the way Lindsey Graham is handling his job as Senator?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly approve	11%	22%	2%
	Somewhat approve	19	30	1
	Somewhat disapprove	15	19	6
	Strongly disapprove	27	17	47
	Neither	26	12	45
	Refused	1	1	0
Q35	In general do you approve or disapprove of the way Tim Scott is handling his job as Senator?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly approve	24%	49%	1%
	Somewhat approve	20	25	3
	Somewhat disapprove	7	6	8
	Strongly disapprove	19	7	41
	Neither	27	12	47
	Refused	2	1	0
Q36	In general do you approve or disapprove of the way Henry McMaster is handling his job as Governor?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Strongly approve	17%	33%	2%
	Somewhat approve	24	34	5
	Somewhat disapprove	12	10	15
	Strongly disapprove	19	8	34
	Neither	26	13	44
	Refused	1	1	1
D10	Thinking about your family's financial situation, would you say you are living comfortably, just getting by, or struggling to make ends meet?	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
	Living comfortably	48	58	44
	Just getting by	38	32	38
	Struggling to make ends meet	14	10	17

Measure	RV	LV (Rep)	LV (Dem)
Female	53%	53%	63%
Male	46	48	36
Non-Hispanic White	71	94	31
Black	24	2	68
All other	5	3	1
18-24	7	1	2
25-44	30	19	13
45-64	32	33	39
65 plus	31	47	47
No college degree	58	56	43
College degree	42	44	57
Harris in 2024	38	6	93
Trump in 2024	54	87	3
Did not vote/Someone else '24	8	7	4
Strong Democrat	18	1	60
Not strong Democrat	9	1	19
Leans Democratic	8	2	12
Independent	10	4	8
Leans Republican	11	14	1
Not strong Republican	11	12	0
Strong Republican	33	66	0
Extremely Liberal/Progressive	5	1	9
Liberal/Progressive	6	1	14
Slightly Liberal/Progressive	8	3	14
Moderate	19	9	25
Slightly conservative	15	14	17
Conservative	23	39	6
Extremely conservative	16	28	9
Not sure	8	5	7
Active duty	2	1	1
Veteran	14	16	14
Parent	32	26	23
Born-again Christian	46	50	50
Protestant	35	49	28
Roman Catholic	12	17	8
Mormon	1	1	0
Orthodox (Greek or Russian)	1	1	0
Jewish	1	1	1
Muslim	1	0	1
Buddhist	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0
Atheist	2	1	3
Agnostic	5	1	5
Something else	27	20	39
Nothing in Particular	15	9	14