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Commonwealth of Contrasts

A Political Typology of the Virginia Electorate



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UNDERSTANDING THE VIRGINIA ELECTORATE

Virginia is poised to play a pivotal role in selecting the next president. To carry this battleground state in 2016, the contenders must build a winning coalition from the seven voter groups identified in this report, which sorts voters into cohesive typology groups based upon their attitudes and values.

So who are the Virginia voters?

On a continuum from liberal to conservative, two groups of partisan warriors anchor each wing: **Solid Liberals** and **Suburban Liberals** on the left, and **Staunch Conservatives** and **Working Class Conservatives** on the right. In the less-partisan middle are **Libertarians, Disaffecteds,** and **Disengaged Liberals.**

Not so long ago, the Commonwealth was a predictably Republican state in presidential elections. But it grew politically competitive as the population steadily became younger and much more racially and ethnically diverse, and shifted dramatically from the rural southern and western parts of the state to Northern Virginia and the more urban and suburban eastern half.

In 2008, Barack Obama became the first Democratic presidential nominee to carry Virginia since 1964, when Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in a national landslide. In 2008 and for Obama's repeat victory in 2012, turnout was higher than it had been in decades in Virginia, and exit polls suggested that Democrats had forged a new coalition of liberal voters in the Old Dominion.

The Democrats' 2016 presidential candidate will have to either re-create the Obama coalition or create a new one altogether. The Republicans' 2016 nominee will need to put together a new coalition of voters large enough and energized enough to overcome the Democrats' recent record of success.

To segment the electorate into this political typology, registered voters were asked to choose from pairs of statements on social and political topics. Based on their answers, voters were assigned to one of seven groups. A full account of the survey and methodology is included at the end of this report. Below are capsule summaries of the seven groups, followed by a detailed descriptive analysis of each.

Solid Liberals are to the left what Staunch Conservatives are to the right, in some ways with even greater intensity. Solid Liberals reject completely the idea that everyone has the power to succeed or that most people who want to get ahead can. They agree completely that the country should do what is needed to protect the environment and that government should do more to help the needy.

Suburban Liberals hold views on most issues similar to Solid Liberals, but with less intensity. However, they differ in their views on individual responsibility and self-determination.

Disengaged Liberals are the only majority-minority group of the seven, and they lean younger and female. They are conservative on God and morality, but have more liberal views on most other issues.

Disaffecteds are younger voters who are the least partisan and least ideological of the groups. They are critical of government effectiveness and see larger forces shaping and limiting an individual's ability to succeed.

Libertarians are a younger group with strong views in support of individual self-determination and responsibility and strong opposition to government intervention in most ways.

Working Class Conservatives are not as influenced by the Tea Party and are thus more moderate cousins of the Staunch Conservatives, with similarly conservative but less intense views on many of the same issues.

Staunch Conservatives are dominated by the Tea Party, and take extremely conservative views on most issues, opposing environmental protection, rejecting the contributions of newcomers as threats to traditional American values and customs, and rejecting the need for government regulation of business and the need for further efforts to protect equal rights.

The Virginia Political Typology

The Partisan Warriors

- Solid Liberals – 6%
- Suburban Liberals – 19%
- Staunch Conservatives – 23%
- Working Class Conservatives – 12%

The Less-Partisan Middle

- Libertarians – 19%
- Disaffecteds – 7%
- Disengaged Liberals – 14%

SOLID LIBERALS

6% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Solid Liberals are the smallest of the seven groups, at 6% of registered voters. They are a highly partisan group of Democrats with strong liberal views. They are the second-most engaged group, behind Staunch Conservatives. Along with the Disaffecteds, they include the largest segment of 18-24 voters at 17%, and are racially diverse, with 43% minority voters. They pay attention to the news (57%), follow what's going on in government and public affairs (72%), and vote (69%) at rates above those of registered voters generally. In 2012 they voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama (74%) over Mitt Romney (4%).

KEY BELIEFS: Solid Liberals have very intense views on most issues, but fundamentally differ with Suburban Liberals on their views on individual responsibility and self-determination. They are strikingly of one mind, with none (0%) of them saying that everyone has it in their power to succeed in life and none (0%) saying that most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard. They all (100%) agree that the U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment, and they all (100%) agree that the government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt. They are very suspicious of large corporations, with 98% saying that too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large corporations, and they are very skeptical of the way the military has been used in the fight against terrorism, with 89% agreeing that relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism. They view immigration as good, with 94% saying immigrants strengthen our country, and 88% agree that the growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society.

KEY BELIEFS (Percent agree with)	All Registered Voters	Solid Liberals
Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents	65	94
The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthen American society	59	88
Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism	46	89
The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment	72	100
Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	61	92
Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard	70	0
Everyone has it in their power to succeed in life	80	0
The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt	45	100
Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large corporations	73	98

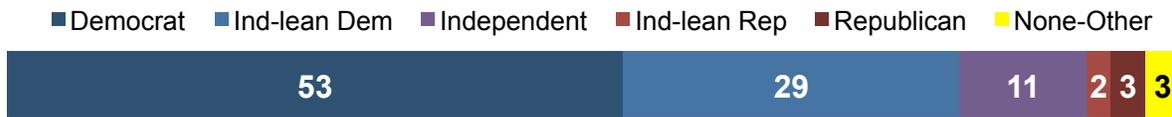
WHO THEY ARE: Solid Liberals lean slightly younger, with the largest proportion of voters between the ages of 18-35 (30%) of any of the seven groups. They are highly partisan Democrats (80%) who identify as liberal or leaning liberal (82%). They are slightly more male than female, and slightly more white than non-white. Religiously, 48% identify their religious affiliation as Other or None. They are a highly educated group, with 72% having a college education or higher. A third (34%) report a family income of \$100,000 or higher, and they are heavily over-represented in Northern Virginia (43%) and Richmond-Central (29%).

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Solid Liberals are happy with the direction of the country (63%) and approve of the job President Obama is doing (88%). They are the only group with a majority (55%) who are OK if the next president is named Bush or Clinton, but they are the least optimistic of the groups that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (26%).

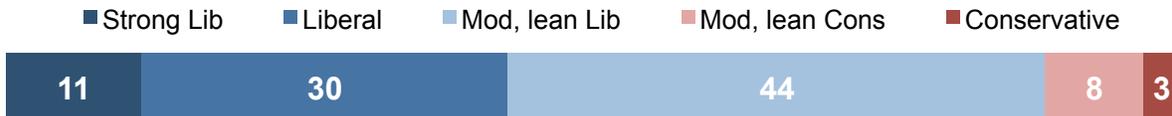
SUBURBAN LIBERALS

19% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Suburban Liberals make up 19% of registered voters in Virginia. They are highly partisan Democrats with strong ideologically liberal views. Suburban Liberals are a highly engaged, middle-aged and older group of racially diverse voters. They have very liberal views on most issues, but conservative views on individual responsibility and self-determination. They pay attention to the news (64%), follow what's going on in government and public affairs (61%), and vote (64%) at rates slightly above those of registered voters overall. In 2012 they voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama (84%) over Mitt Romney (2%).

KEY BELIEFS: Suburban Liberals have very intense views on most issues, but fundamentally differ with Solid Liberals on their views on individual responsibility and self-determination, with 87% saying that everyone has it in their power to succeed in life and 67% saying that most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard. They are very supportive of environmental protection (98%) and stricter environmental laws and regulations despite their costs (98%). They strongly defend government, with 70% saying government often does a better job than people give it credit for doing and 92% saying government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest. They think poor people have hard lives because government does not support them enough (90%), and believe that the U.S. needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites (91%). They are strongly of the view that immigrants strengthen the country (96%) and that the growing number of newcomers strengthen American society (95%). They view diplomacy as the best way to ensure peace (82%).

KEY BELIEFS (Percent agree with)	All Registered Voters	Suburban Liberals
Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents	65	96
The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthen American society	59	95
Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace	54	82
The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment	72	98
Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	61	98
Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard	70	67
Everyone has it in their power to succeed in life	80	87
Government often does a better job than people give it credit for doing	36	70
Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest	50	92
Poor people today have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently	44	90
Our country needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites	45	91

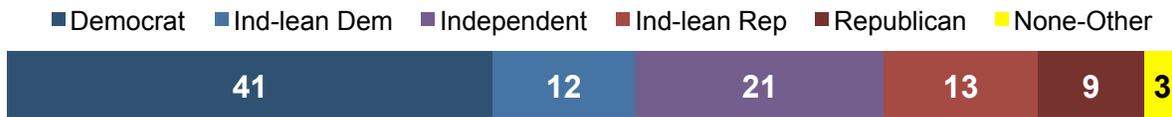
WHO THEY ARE: Suburban Liberals are older than both Disengaged Liberals and Solid Liberals, with 70% of them being 45 or older. They are highly partisan Democrats who identify as liberal or leaning liberal. They are nearly evenly split between males and females, and about a third minority. They are the least religious of any of the groups, with a third saying they have no religious affiliation. They are the most educated of the groups, with 79% having a college education or higher. Just over a third (37%) report a family income of \$100,000 or higher, and they are heavily overrepresented in Northern Virginia (47%).

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Suburban Liberals are happy with the direction of the country (63%) and approve of the job President Obama is doing (90%). They are evenly divided about whether the country would be better off if the next president was not named Bush or Clinton, and are not optimistic that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (38%).

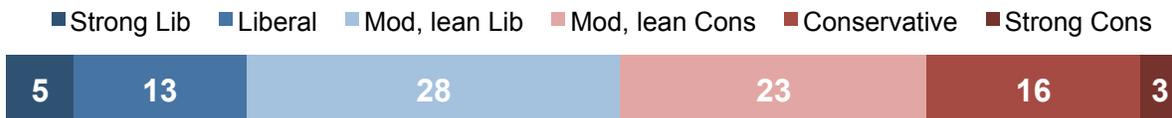
DISENGAGED LIBERALS

14% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Disengaged Liberals make up 14% of registered voters in Virginia. They are the only majority-minority group of the seven groups, and they lean younger and female. Their intensity of views on key issues and level of partisanship is lower than the two other liberal groups. They pay attention to the news (50%), follow what is going on in government and public affairs (51%), and vote (57%) at the lowest rates of the three liberal groups. They have conservative views on faith, but liberal views on immigrants and immigration, race and equal rights, the environment and the effects of environmental protection, and the use of the military generally and the use of the military in the fight against terrorism specifically. In 2012 they voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama over Mitt Romney, but as with Disaffecteds and Working Class Conservatives, almost a quarter report that they did not vote.

KEY BELIEFS: Disengaged Liberals are strongly supportive of immigration, viewing immigrants as strengthening the country because of their hard work and talents (73%) and strengthening American society (68%). They are also very supportive of environmental protection (80%) and think stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost (69%). They view racial discrimination as an impediment to African American progress (53%) and think the country needs to continue to make changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites (83%). They view diplomacy as a better tool than military strength in ensuring peace around the world (79%), and think using the military too much in the fight against terrorism is counter-productive (68%). They are very religious, with 87% saying religious faith is an important part of their lives, and 61% saying belief in God is necessary to be a moral person with good values.

KEY BELIEFS (Percent agree with)	All Registered Voters	Disengaged Liberals
Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents	65	73
The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthen American society	59	68
Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace	54	79
Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism	46	68
The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment	72	80
Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	61	69
Racial discrimination is the main reason why many African Americans can't get ahead these days	32	53
Our country needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites	51	83
Religious faith is a very important part of my life	72	87

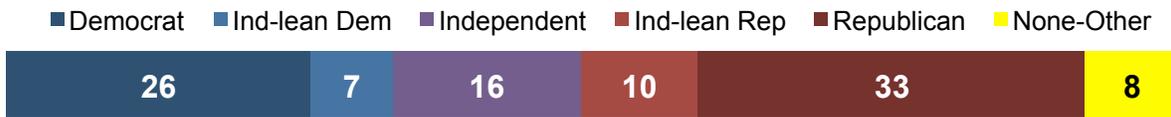
WHO THEY ARE: Disengaged Liberals are slightly younger than registered voters overall (29% are younger than 35). They are far more female (62%) than male (38%), and the only majority-minority group, with 58% African American or other minority and 42% white. They are mostly college-educated, with 58% having a college education or more. Just over a quarter (27%) report a family income of \$50,000 or less, and 47% report a family income of \$75,000 or less.

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Disengaged Liberals are nearly as unhappy with the direction of the country as Staunch Conservatives, with only 11% saying things in the U.S. are going in the right direction, and they are largely disappointed with President Obama's performance, with only 29% approving of the job he is doing. They mostly think the country would be better off if the next president was not named Bush or Clinton (55%), and are not optimistic that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (40%).

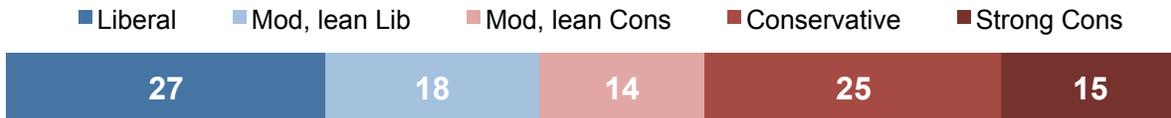
DISSAFFECTEDS

7% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Disaffecteds make up 7% of registered voters in Virginia. They are similar to Libertarians in that they do not have a strong partisan or ideological lean to either the right or the left. They are critical of government effectiveness, see forces larger than themselves as shaping an individual's ability to succeed, are critical of environmental regulation out of fear that it will cost jobs and hurt the economy, and are critical of immigration as a burden on jobs, housing, and health care. They pay attention to the news (50%), follow what's going on in government and public affairs (58%), and vote (58%) at rates just below registered voters overall. They are less supportive of the Tea Party (16%) than registered voters overall. In 2012 they voted slightly more for Mitt Romney than Barack Obama, but a quarter did not vote.

KEY BELIEFS: Disaffecteds have perhaps been battered the most in the economic downturn of the last decade, and have fewer resources to withstand the larger forces they see acting upon them. Their views reflect these struggles. They are highly critical of government effectiveness, with 79% agreeing that government is usually wasteful and ineffective. They see success in life as determined by forces outside of their control (75%), and say that hard work is no guarantee of success for most people (90%). They view stricter environmental laws and regulations as costing too many jobs and hurting the economy (57%), and see immigration as a burden on the country because immigrants take jobs, housing, and health care (62%). They are also concerned that the growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values (60%). They support military strength as the best way to ensure peace (66%), and view military force as the best way to defeat terrorism (65%).

KEY BELIEFS

(Percent agree with)

	All Registered Voters	Disaffecteds
The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values	37	60
Immigrants are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care	30	62
The best way to ensure peace is through military strength	40	66
Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world	46	65
Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy	34	57
Hard work is no guarantee of success for most people	27	90
Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control	14	75
Government is usually wasteful and inefficient	62	79

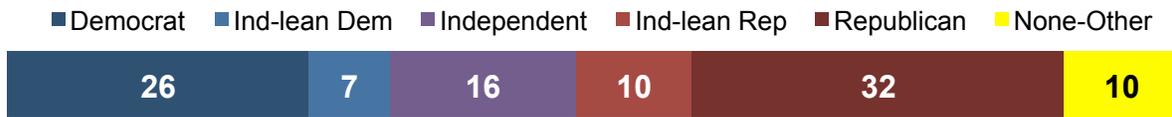
WHO THEY ARE: Disaffecteds are younger than registered voters generally (40% are younger than 45), but not younger on the whole than Libertarians. Their racial makeup is similar to the population of registered voters as a whole. Nearly two-thirds (59%) have some college education or less, while 41% have a college education or more. Just under a quarter (24%) report a family income of \$50,000 or less, and 59% report a family income of \$75,000 or less. They are over-represented in Southside and Southwest and slightly under-represented in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads.

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Disaffecteds are unhappy with the direction of the country, with only 28% saying things in the U.S. are going in the right direction, and mostly disapproving of the job President Obama is doing, with 61% saying they disapprove. They mostly think the country would be better off if the next president was not named Bush or Clinton (64%), but are surprisingly optimistic that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (53%).

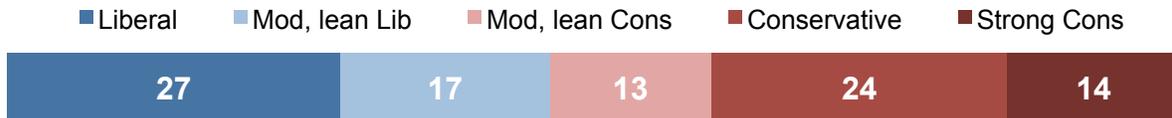
LIBERTARIANS

19% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Libertarians make up 19% of registered voters in Virginia. They are broadly represented on the partisan scale, with a slight Republican lean and with the highest percentage of “independent” and “none-other” identifiers of any group. They are also broadly represented on the ideology scale. They are far younger and far less religious than the rest of the seven groups. Their strong libertarian streak is represented in their views on individual self-determination, the poor and government aid to the poor, racial discrimination, and equal rights. They have very liberal views, on the other hand, on immigration and the environment. They pay attention to the news (46%), follow what’s going on in government and public affairs (46%), and vote (48%) at rates less than the other groups. They are far less supportive of the Tea Party (17%) than Staunch Conservatives. In 2012 they voted slightly more for Mitt Romney than Barack Obama, but 25% did not vote or voted for another candidate.

KEY BELIEFS: Libertarians display their ideological orientation in the intensity of their views, strongly believing in individual self-determination (98%), and that hard work will help a person get ahead (93%). They view poor people today as having it easy because of government handouts (68%) and that the government cannot afford to do more to help the poor (71%). They view African Americans who can’t get ahead as mostly responsible for their own condition (84%) and feel the country has made the changes needed to give African Americans equal rights (70%). On the other hand, they are strongly supportive of immigration and think immigrants are good for the country. They are also strongly supportive of environmental protection. They are not personally very religious (51%) and do not view belief in God as a prerequisite to morality or good living (9%).

KEY BELIEFS (Percent agree with)	All Registered Voters	Libertarians
The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society	59	81
Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents	65	85
The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment	72	82
Religious faith is a very important part of my life	72	51
It IS necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values	40	9
Everyone has it in their power to succeed in life	70	98
Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard	70	93
Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return	48	68
The government today can't afford to do much more to help the poor	50	71
African Americans who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition	60	84
Our country has made the changes needed to give African Americans equal rights with whites	46	70

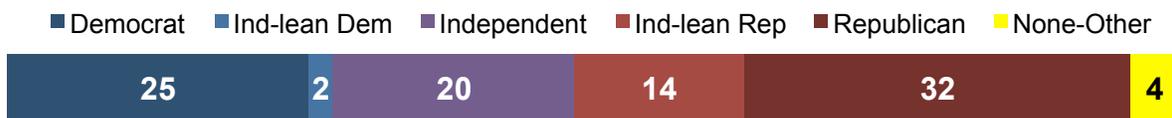
WHO THEY ARE: Libertarians are younger (51% are younger than 45) than the other two conservative groups or voters as a whole. They are mostly white (88%), and not as religious as the other conservative groups (40% identify as “None” or “Other” in their religious identification). They are well educated, with 66% having a college education or higher. Just over a third (34%) report a family income of \$100,000 or more. They are not over- or under-represented in any part of the Commonwealth.

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Libertarians are as unhappy with the direction of the country as Working Class Conservatives, with only 24% saying things in the U.S. are going in the right direction, and as critical of the job President Obama is doing, with 60% saying they disapprove. They mostly think the country would be better off if the next president was not named Bush or Clinton (54%), and are very pessimistic that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (45%).

WORKING CLASS CONSERVATIVES

12% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Working Class Conservatives make up 12% of registered voters in Virginia. They differ from Staunch Conservatives in the extent to which they are influenced by the Tea Party, their level of partisanship, and in the intensity of their ideology and views on issues. They have very conservative views on immigration, God and morality, race, and individual self-determination, but more liberal views on the environment and helping the poor. They pay attention to the news (61%), follow what's going on in government and public affairs (57%), and vote (62%) at about the same rate as registered voters generally. They are far less supportive of the Tea Party (14%) than Staunch Conservatives. In 2012 they voted slightly more for Mitt Romney than Barack Obama, but almost a quarter report that they did not vote.

KEY BELIEFS: Working Class Conservatives have less intense views on most issues, compared to Staunch Conservatives. But they have stronger conservative views on immigration, viewing immigrants as a burden on the country (75%) and a threat to traditional customs and values (74%). They are very religious, with 92% saying religious faith is an important part of their lives, and 83% saying belief in God is necessary to be a moral person with good values. They strongly believe in individual self-determination, that hard work will help a person get ahead (90%), and that African Americans who can't get ahead are mostly responsible for their own condition (78%). They are far more interested in helping the poor (57%) than are Staunch Conservatives, and depart from Staunch Conservatives in their concern about the environment, with strong majorities believing that the U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment (92%) and that environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost (82%).

KEY BELIEFS

(Percent agree with)

	All Registered Voters	Working Class Conservatives
Growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values	37	74
Immigrants are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care	30	75
Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	61	82
The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment	72	92
Religious faith is a very important part of my life	72	92
It IS necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values	40	83
Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard	70	90
African Americans who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition	60	78
The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt	45	57

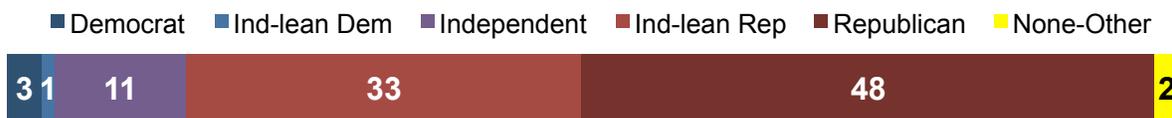
WHO THEY ARE: Working Class Conservatives are older (87% are 45 or older) and more female (62%). Racially, they look like the population of registered voters generally, with 71% white and 24% black. Just under two in five (39%) identify as Protestant or non-specific Christian, but 37% identify as “Other” in their religious identification. They are less educated than registered voters generally, with 33% having a high school education or less. Just over a third (35%) report a family income of \$50,000 or less, and 59% report a family income of \$75,000 or less. They are over-represented in Hampton Roads and Southside-Southwest, and under-represented in Northern Virginia.

TODAY, 2016 AND BEYOND: Working Class Conservatives are not happy with the direction of the country, with 65% saying things in the U.S. are going in the wrong direction, and they are mostly critical of the job President Obama is doing, with 62% saying they disapprove. They mostly think the country would be better off if the next president was not named Bush or Clinton (61%), but are more hopeful than Staunch Conservatives that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current ones (63%).

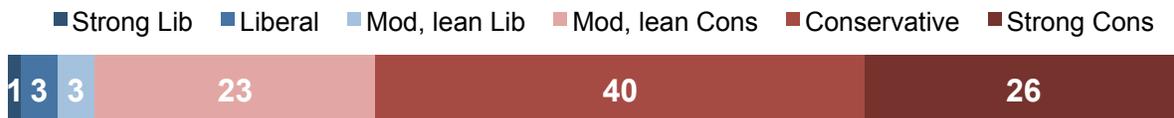
STAUNCH CONSERVATIVES

23% of Registered Voters

Group Party Identification



Group Ideology



GROUP DESCRIPTION: Staunch Conservatives make up 23% of registered voters in Virginia. They are a highly partisan group of Tea Party-influenced Republicans who have strongly conservative ideological views on most issues. They are the most engaged of the seven groups. A very high proportion of them keep up with the news (72%) and follow government and public affairs (75%). They report a high rate of voting, with 79% saying they always vote. They are older, whiter, more male, and more Protestant Christian than the population of registered Virginia voters, but their education and income levels are similar to that of registered voters generally. They are distributed proportionally across the state, not over- or under-represented in any geographic region of the Commonwealth, as compared to registered voters generally. They strongly support the Tea Party (52%), and in 2012 voted overwhelmingly for Mitt Romney (80%).

KEY BELIEFS: Staunch Conservatives have among the highest levels of intensity in their views. They are exceedingly suspicious of the government's ability to do much right and are opposed to government regulations in nearly every way. They strongly support the use of the military as a projection of American power, especially in the fight against terrorism. They strongly oppose stricter environmental laws, with only 8% believing they are worth the cost. They believe government regulation of business does more harm than good (80%), believe that the government cannot afford to do much more to help the needy (83%), and strongly believe in individual self-determination (93%). They view the growing number of newcomers as a threat to traditional American customs and values (68%), and do not believe that the country needs to continue to make changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites (17%).

KEY BELIEFS (Percent agree with)	All Registered Voters	Staunch Conservatives
Growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values	37	68
Best way to ensure peace is through military strength	40	82
Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	61	8
The U.S. has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment	25	78
Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good	46	86
Poor people today have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently	44	10
Our country needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites	51	17

WHO THEY ARE: Staunch Conservatives are more male (58%) and older than the population of registered voters, with over half being older than 55, and over 80% being older than 45. They are whiter (87%) than the population of registered voters generally: only 3% are African American compared to 19% of registered voters. Almost two-thirds (60%) religiously identify as Protestant or non-specific Christian. In terms of education and income levels, Staunch Conservatives look like the population of registered Virginia voters generally.

TODAY, 2016, AND BEYOND: Staunch Conservatives are very unhappy with the direction of the country, with 5% saying things in the U.S. are going in the right direction and 90% saying they are going in the wrong direction. They give President Obama very poor marks, with 95% disapproving of the job he is doing. They are not excited about the prospect of the next president being named Bush or Clinton, with 64% saying the country would be better off if the next president were not named Bush or Clinton. Staunch Conservatives are only somewhat optimistic that the next president and Congress will work together better than the current president and Congress, with 52% saying they are very hopeful and 47% saying they are only somewhat or not very hopeful.

A FURTHER DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

- Solid Liberals
- Suburban Liberals
- Disengaged Liberals
- Disaffecteds
- Libertarians
- Working Class Conservatives
- Staunch Conservatives

COMMONWEALTH (100% of registered voters):



NORTHERN VIRGINIA (about 33% of registered voters):



RICHMOND-CENTRAL (about 21% of registered voters):



HAMPTON ROADS (about 23% of registered voters):



SOUTHSIDE-SOUTHWEST (about 23% of registered voters):



- Solid Liberals
- Suburban Liberals
- Disengaged Liberals
- Disaffecteds
- Libertarians
- Working Class Conservatives
- Staunch Conservatives

18-44:



45 & older:



Black:



White:



Male:



Female:



HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The inspiration for this study comes from the very valuable and informative political typology studies conducted by the Pew Research Center since 1987. Pew's political typology studies are national in focus. Seeking a better understanding of the Virginia electorate specifically, we have used much of the Pew methodology in conducting this study of the typology of the Virginia electorate.

Our study divides the Virginia electorate (our population is all registered voters) into one of seven typology groups based upon their answers to eighteen questions focusing on social and political topics. Questions were asked in a balanced alternative format where the respondent chose which answer came closest to their views even if neither one was exactly their view. Based upon the answers to these questions, scales were created and tested with factor analysis and reliability tests (see below). Initially nine scales were tested, but based upon the factor analysis and reliability tests, one scale was dropped and not included in the creation of typology groups.

The typology groups were created using the statistical procedure called cluster analysis, which groups individual respondents based upon their answers to the questions that made up each scale. We did not include an individual's party identification or political ideology in the cluster analysis so as to have the clusters (or ultimately, the typology groups) created purely based upon answers to the social and political questions: we wanted a sense of what the Virginia electorate looks like on the issues. In describing the results of our analysis, we overlaid party identification and political ideology to help us better understand each individual cluster. Each of the scales, the questions that made up the scales, and the correlations and tests of reliability of each scale are included below.

Many different cluster options were evaluated in the analytic process. With an eye toward the statistical strength of the clusters and soundness of the groups created, we ultimately settled on seven clusters. These seven clusters represent distinct groups within the Virginia electorate that we can understand and explain. They are also the strongest from a statistical perspective.

Scales Used in Creating the Typology

Government Performance

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .51 inter-item correlation = .35

Q3a:

“Government is usually wasteful and inefficient.”

or

“Government often does a better job than people give it credit for doing.”

Q3b:

“Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest.”

or

“Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.”

Government Aid to the Poor

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .56 inter-item correlation = .39

Q5a:

“Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return.”

or

“Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.”

Q5b:

“The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt.”

or

“The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy.”

Racial Equality

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .60 inter-item correlation = .43

Q7a:

“Racial discrimination is the main reason many African Americans can't get ahead these days.”

or

“African Americans who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition.”

Q7b:

“Our country has made the changes needed to give African Americans equal rights with whites.”

or

“Our country needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites.”

Immigration

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .65 inter-item correlation = .51

Q11a:

“Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.”

or

“Immigrants are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care.”

Q11b:

“The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values.”

or

“The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society.”

Military and Foreign Policy

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .62 inter-item correlation = .45

Q13a:

“The best way to ensure peace is through military strength.”

or

“Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace.”

Q13b:

“Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world.”

or

“Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism.”

Environment

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .70 inter-item correlation = .54

Q19a:

“The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment.”

or

“The U.S. has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment.”

Q19b:

“Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too much jobs and hurt the economy.”

or

“Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.”

Morality and Religion

Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .52 inter-item correlation = .36

Q21a:

“Religious faith is a very important part of my life.”

or

“Religious faith is not that important to me.”

Q21b:

“It is NOT necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values.”

or

“It IS necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values.”

The Individual and Society

Scale reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) = .60

inter-item correlation = .44

Q23a:

“Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard.”

or

“Hard work is no guarantee of success for most people.”

Q23b:

“Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control.”

or

“Everyone has it in their power to succeed in life.”

The Survey Methodology

The results of this survey are based on 1,026 interviews of registered Virginia voters using a dual frame landline and cell phone telephone sample, including 636 interviews conducted on landline and 390 interviews conducted on cell phone from March 17-30, 2015. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the whole survey is +/- 3.2% at the 95% level of confidence. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.06. The design effect is a factor representing the survey's deviation from a simple random sample, and takes into account decreases in precision due to sample design and weighting procedures. The margin of error for each group is listed below. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 21%. Five callbacks were employed in the fielding process. Live calling was conducted by trained interviewers at the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab at Christopher Newport University. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on sex, age, race, region of residence, and share of cell phone only/landline only/dual service households to reflect as closely as possible the demographic composition of the Virginia population. The survey was designed by Dr. Quentin Kidd of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University.

<u>Group Breakdown by Response</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>MoE</u>
Total Sample	1,026	3.2
Staunch Conservatives	237	6.7
Working Class Conservatives	125	9.2
Libertarians	199	7.3
Disaffecteds	69	12.4
Disengaged Liberals	147	8.5
Suburban Liberals	190	7.5
Solid Liberals	59	13.5

Survey Questionnaire and Toplines

(Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding)

Q1: Overall, would you say things in the UNITED STATES are heading more in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Right	29
Mixed (vol)	8
Wrong	60
Dk/ref (vol)	3

Q2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE (“DON’T KNOW”, “DEPENDS”, “NOT SURE”, ETC.)

PROBE ONCE WITH: OVERALL do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? IF STILL UNSURE ENTER AS DON’T KNOW]

Approve	43
Disapprove	52
Dk/ref (vol)	5

I'm going to read you some pairs of statements and for each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views - even if neither is exactly right. Ok, here is the first pair....

[Q3A-Q7B RANDOMIZED]

Q3A: "Government is usually wasteful and inefficient" OR "Government often does a better job than people give it credit for doing"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	62
Statement #2	36
Neither/Dk (vol)	2

Q3B: "Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest" OR "Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	50
Statement #2	46
Neither/Dk (vol)	4

Q5A: "Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return" OR "Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	48
Statement #2	44
Neither/Dk (vol)	8

Q5B: "The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt" OR
"The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	45
Statement #2	50
Neither/Dk (vol)	4

Q7A” "Racial discrimination is the main reason why many African Americans can't get ahead these days" OR
"African Americans who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	32
Statement #2	60
Neither/Dk (vol)	8

Q7B: "Our country has made the changes needed to give African Americans equal rights with whites" OR "Our country needs to continue making changes to give African Americans equal rights with whites"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	46
Statement #2	51
Neither/Dk (vol)	3

Q9: Ok, thanks. Thinking about your typical week, how much do you keep up with the news, would you say...]

A lot	59
Some	32
Not much	8
Not at all	2

Q10: Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs...]

Most of the time	60
Some of the time	29
Only now and then	9
Hardly at all	2

Ok, I'm going to read a few more pairs of statements and for each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views - even if neither is exactly right. Ok, here is the first pair....

[Q11A-Q15B RANDOMIZED]

Q11A: "Immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents" OR "Immigrants are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	65
Statement #2	30
Neither/Dk (vol)	5

Q11B: "The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values" OR "The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	37
Statement #2	59
Neither/Dk (vol)	4

Q13A: "The best way to ensure peace is through military strength" OR "Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	40
Statement #2	54
Neither/Dk (vol)	5

Q13B: "Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world" OR "Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	46
Statement #2	46
Neither/Dk (vol)	7

Q15A: "Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies" OR "The largest companies do NOT have too much power"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	73
Statement #2	22
Neither/Dk (vol)	4

Q15B: "Business corporations make too much profit" OR "Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	50
Statement #2	45
Neither/Dk (vol)	5

Q17: Ok, thanks. About how often would you say you vote, would you say...

Always	63
Nearly always	22
Some of the time	4
Very seldom	3
Never	7
Dk/ref (vol)	1

Q18: In the 2012 presidential election between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, did things come up that kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote? [If respondent voted, ask:] Did you vote for Obama, Romney, or someone else?

Obama	42
Romney	36
Other candidate	5
Did not vote	10
Don't remember (vol)	2
Dk/ref (vol)	5

Ok, thanks. I'm going to read just a few more pairs of statements and for each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views - even if neither is exactly right. Ok, here is the first pair....

[Q19A-Q23B RANDOMIZED]

Q19A: "The U.S. should do whatever it takes to protect the environment" OR "The U.S. has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	72
Statement #2	25
Neither/Dk (vol)	4

Q19B: "Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy" OR "Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	34
Statement #2	61
Neither/Dk (vol)	5

Q21A: "Religious faith is a very important part of my life" OR "Religious faith is not that important to me"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	72
Statement #2	27
Neither/Dk (vol)	1

Q21B: "It is NOT necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values" OR "It IS necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	59
Statement #2	40
Neither/Dk (vol)	1

Q23A: "Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard" OR "Hard work is no guarantee of success for most people"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	70
Statement #2	27
Neither/Dk (vol)	3

Q23B: "Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control" OR "Everyone has it in their power to succeed in life"

Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither one is exact? **[ENCOURAGE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE OF THE CHOICES...]**

Statement #1	14
Statement #2	80
Neither/Dk (vol)	6

Q24: Ok, thanks. Just a few more questions and we'll be done! Looking ahead to 2016, do you think it's ok that the next president may be named Bush or Clinton, or do you think the country would be better off if the next president isn't named Bush or Clinton?

Bush or Clinton ok	36
Better if not Bush or Clinton	64

Q25: And how hopeful are you that the next president and congress will work together better than the current president and congress, would you say...]

Very hopeful	47
Somewhat hopeful	32
Not very hopeful	21

Demographics

EDUC:

High school or less	15
Some college	21
Vocational or technical training	3
College graduate	34
Graduate study or more	26
Dk/ref (vol)	1

HISPANIC:

Yes	4
No	96

RACE:

Black or African American	19
White	72
Other	9

RELIG:

Protestant	29
Christian (non-specific) (vol)	17
Catholic	13
Jewish	1
Other	19
None	17
Dk/ref (vol)	4

IDEOL:

Strong liberal	5
Liberal	14
Moderate, leaning liberal	23
Moderate, leaning conservative	19
Conservative	21
Strong Conservative	11
Dk/ref (vol)	7

PARTYID:

Republican	23
Independent lean Republican	16
Independent	17
Independent lean Democrat	12
Democrat	27
No preference (vol)	2
Other party (vol)	1
Dk/ref (vol)	2

TEAPARTY:

Support	20
Oppose	37
No view either way	41
Dk/ref (vol)	2

AGE:

18-24	8
25-34	11
35-44	14
45-54	24
55 & older	43

REGION:

Northern Virginia	33
Richmond/Central	21
Hampton Roads	23
South/Southwest	23

INCOME:

Under \$25,000	9
\$25-\$49,999	13
\$50-\$74,999	21
\$75-\$99,999	16
\$100,000-\$149,999	12
Over \$150,000	17
Dk/ref (vol)	13

SEX:

Male	49
Female	51