



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2023

**STATEMENT BY DR. GAIL CHRISTOPHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE FOR HEALTH EQUITY**

**A NEW POLL SHOWS AMERICANS SUPPORT RACIAL HEALING,
LESS DIVISIVE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, AND AN ACCURATE
PORTRAYAL OF RACISM IN SCHOOLS**

Comprehensive results from NCHE's Heart of America Poll can be found [HERE](#)

WASHINGTON - "In our nation's history, at times, a fraction of the population and public officials have banded together to defy the aspirational principles upon which America was founded. Through each occurrence, the people, the heart of America, have united to preserve the hope of our democracy and nation governed of, by, and for the people.

"The National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE) has sponsored research demonstrating that the American public cares far more about unity and racial healing than is commonly recognized or discussed in the public discourse. The Benenson Strategy Group, a premier strategic market research firm, conducted a survey using a nationally representative sample. The Heart of America Poll surveyed 1304 people online from June 16-24, 2023, with respondents showing support for racial healing, concerns about the divisive political environment, and a strong desire to work towards overcoming these challenges.

"Most Americans want to continue with the progress made toward achieving racial equity. This sentiment contrasts sharply with the Supreme Court ruling restricting affirmative action in education and related legislative and executive actions in state governments to ban books and narrowing the opportunities for people of color to vote. Regardless of their political party, Americans want a country that runs efficiently and is fair to all its citizens.

"Our poll found that Democrats and Republicans are surprisingly close on the importance of educating children about racism, promoting diversity in the workplace, and celebrating other cultures. Despite pessimism over disunity, nearly 70 percent of Americans are hopeful we can find common ground in the future. More specifically, the poll found:

- 8 in 10 respondents, including 3 in 4 Republicans, believe diversity should be promoted in the workplace so people of all races are working together, and educating our children on the history of race and racism in America is an essential first step for our nation to begin the process of racial healing.
- Americans across the political spectrum, including 3 in 4 Republicans, say educating our children on the history of racism and promoting diversity in the workplace is important for racial healing.
- 88% would support a leader who aims to unite everyone in our country, even when people have disagreements, and 47% strongly agree with that statement.
- Nearly three-quarters of the population (74%) agrees there is a renewed urgency for fighting racism and hate in America.
- There is a strong appetite for unity, with a significant majority taking pride in their American identity and two in three (67%) saying they are hopeful Americans can work through differences and find lasting common ground in the future.
- 77% of those surveyed agree with the statement, “I don’t care about my neighbors’ political views as long as they are good people.”

“For more results from this groundbreaking poll, click [HERE](#).

“In unveiling what’s truly in the hearts of Americans, the poll results should motivate us to no longer accept misguided, spiritually bereft, selfish acts that harm millions in the name of ideology to be taken as normal or conflated with public service.

“In each era of turmoil and unrest, various emerging forms of media have played a critical role in shaping the public consciousness. Indeed, freedom of the press is core to the viability of our democracy. However, in this age of high-tech communication, artificial intelligence, social media, and algorithms driven solely by the profit motive, the media has a heightened responsibility. Too often, media technology is wielded to spread hate and divisiveness, a potent weapon for the totalitarian forces attacking our norms.

“Today, coverage in responsible media outlets, truthful thought leaders, and commentators must demonstrate a new performance level that helps unify rather than divide our nation. The viability of our democracy depends on this transformation.

“The broader public sentiment expressed in this poll must spur action. We cannot allow the commitment expressed and galvanized by the brutal murder of George Floyd to lose its energy or be hijacked by the loud voices of a small percentage of Americans.

“Part of the urgency is that a democracy requires a full expression of the power of the majority of the people in its policy and governance decisions. The poll shows how most Americans feel, but now those sentiments must be acted on.”

(For broadcast or print interviews with Dr. Christopher, please contact Michael K. Frisby at Mike@frisbyassociates.com or 202-625-4328.)

(Dr. Gail C. Christopher is the Executive Director of the [National Collaborative for Health Equity](#), Senior Scholar at the Center for Advancement of Well-Being at George Mason University, and former Senior Advisor and Vice President of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Her new book, *RX-Racial Healing*, is available [HERE](#).)

About NCHE

Founded in 2014, NCHE was established to promote health equity through action, leadership, inclusion, and collaboration. We work to create environments that foster the best possible health outcomes for all populations, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or nativity. NCHE also works to improve conditions for health and well-being, including housing, education, income and wealth, and the physical and social environment. Further, it is imperative that we address historical and contemporary structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism, which fuels inequities in our society.