

## Race Relations in Alabama Media Release Points Volume 2, No. 5

### Ask-Alabama Poll, Winter 2005

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### Significant Findings

**1. Most Alabamians believe that race relations in Alabama are not much different than other Southern states.**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
Better than Other Southern States	20%	24%	19%
Same as Other Southern States	70%	59%	72%
Worse than Other Southern States	10%	17%	9%
Better than Rest of the Country	22%	16%	23%
Same as Rest of the Country	55%	52%	56%
Worse than Rest of the Country	23%	32%	22%

*The purpose of this question was to learn whether or not Alabama's progress towards race relations has kept up with other Southern states and the rest of the country as a whole. The high percentage of Blacks and Whites reporting that race relations here are at least comparable to the rest of the South and the rest of the country reveals that Alabama is not perceived as lagging behind, even if there is still work to do.*

**2. Almost two-thirds of both minority and non-minority respondents agree that race relations in Alabama have at least improved somewhat during the past five years. Alabamians, however, are divided in their opinions about the perceived changes that have occurred within their local communities – almost half report improvements in their local community, while a similar percentage have observed no change.**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
State has Improved	62%	63%	62%
State has not Improved	38%	37%	38%
Hometown has Improved	46%	48%	46%
Hometown has not Improved	54%	52%	54%

*Both Blacks and Whites are more likely to have noticed a five-year improvement in race relations in the State of Alabama. Within their local communities, however,*

*divided opinions on the progress of race relations are more likely to have been influenced by personal experiences or exposure to the experiences of friends and family members.*

- 3. 70% of both minorities and non-minorities believe that public officials should pay more attention to improving race relations in their local communities and public schools. In the workplace, however, opinions differ by race: 74% of Black Alabamians believe there is a need for more attention, but only 33% of White Alabamians take this perspective.**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
More Attention to Communities	74%	86%	71%
More Attention to Public Schools	69%	95%	64%
More Attention to the Workplace	41%	74%	33%

*While Alabama may be keeping up with its neighbors in improving race relations, Alabamians have also sent a clear message that public officials need to do more to improve race relations within communities and the public schools. Blacks and Whites are essentially polarized on the question of whether increased government attention should be given to race relations in the workplace, a setting in which groups continue to see themselves in competition for limited resources.*

- 4. Minority respondents are more likely to report having witnessed repeated instances of unfair treatment or harassment towards other groups than non-minorities. This is particularly strong with respect to unfair treatment towards African-Americans.**

<b>Witnessed unfair treatment toward . . .</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
African-Americans	18%	53%	10%
Hispanics	16%	26%	14%
Women	22%	30%	20%
Elderly Persons	19%	27%	18%

*African-Americans are far more likely than Whites to report having witnessed repeated instances of harassment or unfair treatment towards other African-Americans. The findings also demonstrate that individuals who have historically been the targets of racial discrimination may be more sensitive to the harassment of other minority groups or individuals who are vulnerable when compared to what is observed by non-minorities.*

## **Poll Facts**

Dates of Survey: January 24 – February 3, 2005  
 Sample Size: 578 Alabama residents, 101 Black and 477 White  
 Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 4%  
 Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older