Most Important Issue Codebook
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Using your best judgment, assign each entry in the field, $imp.open.text, to up to three of the following categories. If the respondent named more than three issues, encode just the first three.

Cost of housing (1)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the high cost or difficulty of affording rent, mortgage payments, the price of a new house, property taxes, home insurance or other costs of shelter.

Abortion (2)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to abortion services, restrictions on abortion rights, problems of too many abortions, or another topic about abortion.

Availability or quality of jobs (3)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about employment opportunities, working conditions, or wages.

Inflation (4)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the rising cost of goods and services generally, or about the rising cost of two or more types of goods or services. (Do not choose this category if the respondent complained about the price of just one type of good or service.)

Crime (5)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about crime, social disorder, illegal drugs, violence, etc. Statements demanding “gun control” are also coded in this category.

Education (6)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to education, quality of education, cost of education, or content of education—anything from college debt to complaints about “woke” instruction.

Environment (7)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about nature, climate change, global warming, endangered species, pollution, etc.

Taxes (8)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about reducing or increasing taxes.

Health care (9)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about access to health care, quality of care, cost of health care, etc.

Immigration (10)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about immigration, border walls, visas, sanctuary cities, or another topic bearing on whether persons who were not born in the United States are able to live or work here.

Racism (11)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about racial justice, discrimination, reparations for slavery or past discrimination, race relations, or bias against any group defined by race or ethnicity (including whites). Explicitly racist statements are also coded in this category, as expressions of concern about race relations.

Homelessness (12)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote about the homeless, people camping on streets/sidewalks, or non-criminal behaviors by people who are commonly thought to be homeless (e.g., panhandling, sleeping on park benches, urinating in public, leaving trash behind). Do not assign responses to this category if the respondent wrote about the cost or affordability of housing without mentioning homelessness.

Other (13)

- Choose this category if the respondent named a political issue that doesn't fit into any of the above categories. (Generic statements about the economy should be coded as "other" b/c we can't infer from them whether the respondent is concerned about inflation, jobs or something else.)

None (14)

- Choose this category if the respondent wrote that there isn't a political issue that they care about more than most others.

Nonresponsive(15)

- Choose this category if the respondent gave a nonresponsive or flippant answer, e.g., a a string of gibberish or "what I ate for breakfast"