Are Black voters in a totally different place than the mainstream of Americans?

By WILLIAM REED

The wealthiest Americans live in gated communities that protect them from the masses. A new poll reveals that many Americans are questioning their prospects for “upward mobility.” The high level of pessimism is reflected among respondents in a recent poll conducted by *The Hill* newspaper that found half [47 percent] of likely voters believe it’s impossible for them to become wealthy during the course of their lifetime.

The survey, conducted as the heated political presidential campaign becomes more acrimonious over the interests of the haves and the have-nots, found that fewer than 2 in 5 likely voters [37 percent] think they can ever become rich.

This presidential election will have more to do with the economy and voters personal well-being than ever before. *The Hill* newspaper’s survey findings suggest pessimism about the possibility of upward mobility as economic growth remains weak and jobs scarce.

The national debate over wealth is intensifying as it creates economic divisions across the country’s population segments. Although the economy will improve a bit in the second half of 2012, it will be another disappointing year of slow growth capping the worst three years of economic growth, outside of a recession.

Between 2005 and 2010, the median net worth of Americans under 35 fell 37 percent and the wealth gap between the young and the old inAmericais wider than it’s ever been. The percentage of the workforce under age 25 has dropped 13.2 percent since 2008, and theU.S.unemployment rate is 12 percent for those age 18 to 29 because this age group’s parents aren't retiring.

The wealth – more specifically, the median net worth – of households in the United States is varied in relation to race, education, geographic location and gender. Wealth in theU.S.is unevenly distributed, with the wealthiest 25 percent ofU.S.households owning 87 percent of the total wealth.

The median wealth of White households is 20 times that of Black households.

And, Blacks vote more on emotion than economic well-being. For Black Americans, the annual median household income in 2010 was $29,328. It was $35,856 among all races. While Blacks make 62 cents of every dollar of income that Whites make, they only have 10 cents for every dollar of wealth that Whites have.

In *The Hill* poll almost 40 percent of people said that the threshold to being wealthy was a $500,000 annual income. Twenty percent put the bar above $1 million. Thirty-one percent of people said a family earning $250,000 a year is wealthy. And, 9 percent said $100,000 was the threshold.

Each day,Americais comprised more and more of economic haves and have-nots.

Since the 2007 recession, the share of total wealth owned by the nation’s wealthiest one percent grew to 37.1 percent and that owned by the top 20 percent grew to 87.7 percent. The 2007 recession, and aftermath, also increased the wealth gap between the 1 percent and the 99 percent.

According to a CBS News/New York Times poll, a majority of registered voters believe that Mitt Romney’s policies favor the rich. Fifty-three percent say Romney’s policies favor the wealthy. Eleven percent says his policies favor the middle class, while two percent say they favor the poor. Thirty percent say Romney’s policies treat all groups equally.

Of the social segments that favor President Barack Obama’s policies, 21 percent say his policies favor the rich, while 22 percent say they favor the middle class and 24 percent say they favor the poor. Twenty-five percent say Obama’s policies treat all groups equally.

What are your views?

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The Hill poll’s respondents’ views differed based on income levels, with voters earning between $40,000 and $75,000 strongly preferring Romney over Obama. Among people earning between $40,000 and $60,000, 48 percent trust Romney more compared to 39 percent for Obama. People earning between $60,000 and $75,000 trust Romney more than Obama by a 34-point margin, 61 percent to 27 percent.