QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES: HART RESEARCH

Every survey is subject to potential sources of bias, whether it's who is invited to participate, who responds, how questions are asked, or how results are analyzed. We use a multi-step process to minimize bias at every stage. How we address bias in our polls:

1. **Sampling and Representation**
    - All respondents are matched to the national voter file to ensure they are registered voters and to confirm their identity.
    - We set quotas during data collection to reflect key demographic, geographic, and political characteristics based on Census data, voter file benchmarks, and past election outcomes (including vote history and presidential vote choice). Quotas are set for overall totals and within subgroups.
    - We monitor fielding in real time to identify and correct imbalances in who is responding, with special attention to reaching underrepresented groups like younger voters, high school less, voters of color, and lower-income voters.
2. **Response Quality Controls**
    - We embed several layers of quality checks in the survey itself, including:
        - Open-ended response validation
        - Speeding and straightlining checks
        - Attention filters and logic traps
        - Detection of “yay-saying” or acquiescence bias
    - Respondents who fail these checks are excluded before analysis.
    - AI/bot checks
3. **Question Design and Testing**
    - We conduct pretesting to ensure that survey questions are working as intended—clear, unbiased, and understood consistently across respondents.
    - Where needed, we revise wording based on pilot feedback and best practices in public opinion research.
4. **Post-Field Weighting**
    - Once data collection ends, we apply weights to bring the sample in line with trusted third-party benchmarks from the Census, national voter file, Catalist, and Votecast.
    - These weights are applied both overall and within key subgroups (e.g., young voters, men without a college degree) to reduce the risk of bias in smaller or lower-response subgroups
5. **Cross-Checks and Consistency**
    - When possible (such as for benchmark qs or trend questions), we compare our findings to historical data and high-quality public surveys to flag any anomalies.
    - We examine item nonresponse, dropout patterns, and design effects to ensure results aren’t skewed by who completed the survey or how questions were ordered.

No poll is completely immune from bias. But we use best-in-class techniques and trusted external benchmarks to produce results in which we are confident.