FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2022

TEXAS REPUBLICAN, DEMOCRATIC VOTERS AGREE ON KEY ISSUES GOING INTO MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Texas voters across party lines support a roadmap for future state action in fundamental areas including education, workforce, health care, and public safety

AUSTIN, TX – Texas voters are increasingly concerned about the state's future, but their support for solutions on core-governance issues offers leaders a roadmap for strengthening voter confidence and moving Texas forward.

That's the far-reaching conclusion of Texas 2036's fifth Texas Voter Poll, which the nonpartisan policy organization released Thursday.

In the survey, 93% of Texas voters expressed some level of concern about the state's future — with 38% "extremely concerned," 29% "very concerned" and 26% "somewhat concerned." At this time last year, 25% of voters said they were "extremely concerned" about the future of our state. Today, that number has risen to 38%. These concerns about our future are shared across political parties, with Republicans (96%), Independents (88%) and Democrats (93%) expressing concern.

But Texas voters also broadly support bold actions and sensible investments across an array of critical policy areas, including education and workforce development, infrastructure, public safety, and health care affordability. This widespread support offers a direct pathway for state leaders to strengthen voter confidence when the Texas Legislature convenes in about three months.

"When seven out of 10 Texas voters tell us that they are exceedingly concerned about the state's future, they are sending a clear message that we need to direct our focus on the policies that matter most to their lives and livelihoods," Texas 2036 President and CEO Margaret Spellings said. "Across party lines, there is clear civic demand for state

action on crucial issues. This poll presents a clear roadmap for addressing the priorities we all share — a roadmap to a bright future for all Texans."

Fortunately, Texas has resources necessary to take action.

Earlier this year, the Texas Comptroller estimated that the state will have a $27 billion general revenue surplus for the current biennium. How the state invests those funds will be a critical decision in next year's Legislative session — and a defining, generational opportunity for Texas policymakers.

When asked how they want that record surplus to be spent, Texas voters identified public education as the top priority, followed by the electric grid, property tax reduction, and water infrastructure.

"This poll offers a vital perspective on what really matters to Texans as we approach the state's historic budget surplus," said A.J. Rodriguez, executive vice president of Texas 2036. "Leaders on all sides have an opportunity to come together and address the challenges voters see — and pursue widely supported solutions — in ways that help Texans in every part of this great state."

Key findings in the Texas Voter Poll include:

- 87% of Texas voters support the use of annual reading and math tests to provide "apples-to-apples comparisons" of how local schools are performing relative to others in the state.
- Nearly 90% of Texas voters believe it is important for the state to focus on increasing the number of post-secondary credentials while students are still in high school to ensure they graduate college- and career-ready.
- While 68% of Texas voters said they trust their local law enforcement, 83% say it would increase their confidence in law enforcement if lawmakers made it harder to rehire law enforcement officers who were previously fired for poor conduct. 57% said it would increase their confidence "a lot."
- 82% of Texas voters agreed that the state should increase investments to expand our water supplies and 84% supported the Texas Legislature creating a fund to help update the aging infrastructure.
- By a 2-to-1 margin, Texas voters support increasing pay to attract talent for all state government positions.

"The latest Texas Voter Poll shows that while Texans remain fiercely independent in their thinking, they are united around solutions that address the issues that will most

impact our future," Texas 2036's Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy John Hryhorchuk said. "Texas voters strongly support common-sense actions and sustainable investments to improve water infrastructure, workforce, education, and public safety, leaving future generations a legacy of good governance and opportunity for success."

The survey, conducted by Baselice & Associates, Inc. polled 1,000 registered Texas voters from Sept. 6–11. It has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points. The interviews were conducted via phone (49%), SMS (17%), and online (34%). To view the complete poll results, and drill down into the data, please visit www.texas2036.org/poll.

A breakdown of key issue findings in the poll by policy area include:

Education and Workforce
- On quality of public education, 34% of Texas voters rated the state's efforts as good or excellent, versus 32% rating it as poor.
- Texas voters are roughly as split about the state's response to COVID learning loss as they are about the education system generally: 30% of voters rated the state's performance in this area as excellent (8%) or good (22%), while 30% said it was poor. Parents of children under 19 were more likely to give the state's response high ratings (37%) than non-parents (27%) were.
- There's widespread support — 87% — for the use of annual reading and math tests to provide "apples-to-apples comparisons" of how local schools are performing relative to others in the state. Only 7% of voters opposed the use of such tests.
- Voters strongly support increasing teacher pay — both across-the-board (79%) and targeting Texas' best teachers, prioritizing those who serve higher-need students (65%).
- Nearly 90% of Texas voters believe it is extremely (34%), very (32%) or somewhat (23%) important for the state to focus on increasing the number of post-secondary credentials while students are still in high school to ensure they graduate college- and career-ready. Currently, while 90% of students are graduating from Texas high schools, only about 60% are considered college- and career-ready, and less than 30% go on to receive a post-secondary credential within six years of graduating.
- Two-thirds of Texans (66%) do not think young people currently graduating from high school are prepared to get a good job and earn a self-sufficient wage without additional education. 63% said Texas public high schools' main goal should be to ensure that students are prepared for both college and to be able to get a good-paying job.

- Tutoring programs are very popular: 82% of Texas voters support increasing access to high-quality tutoring in reading and math; only 6% oppose it.
- 81% of Texas voters support increasing access to consumer information and apprenticeship opportunities aligned with high-wage, high-demand occupations. The same percentage supports providing financial incentives to community colleges to help them focus on courses in career fields where students can earn a self-sustaining wage.

Health and Health Care
- Nearly a third of Texas voters (31%) — and almost half of mothers with kids (49%) — said they or someone in their household had postponed or skipped medical treatment in recent years because they didn't know what the costs might be. The figure was also high among Texans under 55 (41%).
- The lower their incomes, the more likely voters were to report skipping treatments or surgeries: 39% of voters making less than $35,000 a year said they had skipped this health care.
- The overall responses on this question were generally slightly lower than they were in January 2021. Then, 34% of voters reported skipping treatments or surgeries over cost concerns; it was 31% in September.

Justice and Safety
- There's widespread support for reforms that would increase transparency into police hiring and address the rehiring of officers fired from other jurisdictions:
    - 79% support improving transparency to make information available about whether a law enforcement officer was fired for serious misconduct, untruthfulness or insubordination; just 13% oppose taking this step.
    - 83% of voters said it would increase their confidence in law enforcement if lawmakers made it harder to rehire law enforcement officers who were previously fired for poor conduct; 57% said it would increase their confidence "a lot."
    - 82% of voters said it would increase their confidence in law enforcement if lawmakers improved transparency regarding officer employment history; 40% said it would increase their confidence "a lot."
    - 79% of voters said it would increase their confidence in law enforcement if there were more law enforcement officers in voters' communities; 37% said it would increase their confidence "a lot."
    - 73% support giving the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (the state agency overseeing police, sheriff officers, and constables) more authority to collect information and enforce disciplinary actions in cases of serious misconduct from licensed peace officers; just 14% oppose this policy.

Natural Resources and Infrastructure

- 84% of Texas voters support the creation of a fund to support the state's aging infrastructure.
- 82% of Texans agree that the state should increase investments to expand water supplies.
- Support for water investment cuts across geographic lines: percentages were just as high among men and women in both rural and urban-suburban areas.
- More than half of voters said they were "not at all confident" (24%) or "not that confident" (28%) in the reliability of Texas' electric grid.
- Uncertainty about the electricity system slightly increased in recent months, even though the state made it through the summer without experiencing widespread blackouts. In the January 2022 poll — taken shortly before the one-year anniversary of Winter Storm Uri — 49% of voters total expressed concern about the grid (25% not at all confident, 24% not that confident).

About Texas 2036

Texas 2036 is a nonprofit organization building long-term, data-driven strategies to secure Texas' prosperity through our state's bicentennial and beyond. We offer non-partisan ideas and modern solutions that are grounded in research and data on issues that matter most to all Texans. For more information, visit www.texas2036.org.

Media Contacts:

Email media@Texas2036.org or contact the following:

Merrill Davis, Vice President of Communications, Texas 2036
Ph: 713-213-7297
Email: Merrill.Davis@Texas2036.org

Seth Oldmixon, Senior Director of Communications, Texas 2036
Ph: 202-299-4109
Email: Seth.Oldmixon@Texas2036.org

Steve Scheibal, New West Communications
Ph: 512-762-8808
Email: Steve@NewWestComms.com

Gary Susswein, New West Communications
Ph: 512-694-7909
Email: Gary@NewWestComms.com