



# Texas 2036 and the 89th Legislature

**John Hryhorchuk**  
Senior Vice President, Policy and Advocacy

TEXAS **2036**



# Who We Are

**Texas 2036 is a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy organization**

focused on advancing data-driven strategies and policies that will advance the prosperity and opportunities for all Texans and make it the best environment for its people and enterprises as we approach Texas' bicentennial.



# Who We Are

Our staff comes from every corner of Texas, urban and rural, and includes PhDs, lawyers, educators, policy analysts, data scientists and public affairs communicators who bring to our work nearly:

**160 years**

of combined legislative and political experience

**76 years**

of teaching experience



# The **Six Areas** of Our Strategic Framework



Education and  
Workforce



Health and  
Healthcare



Natural  
Resources



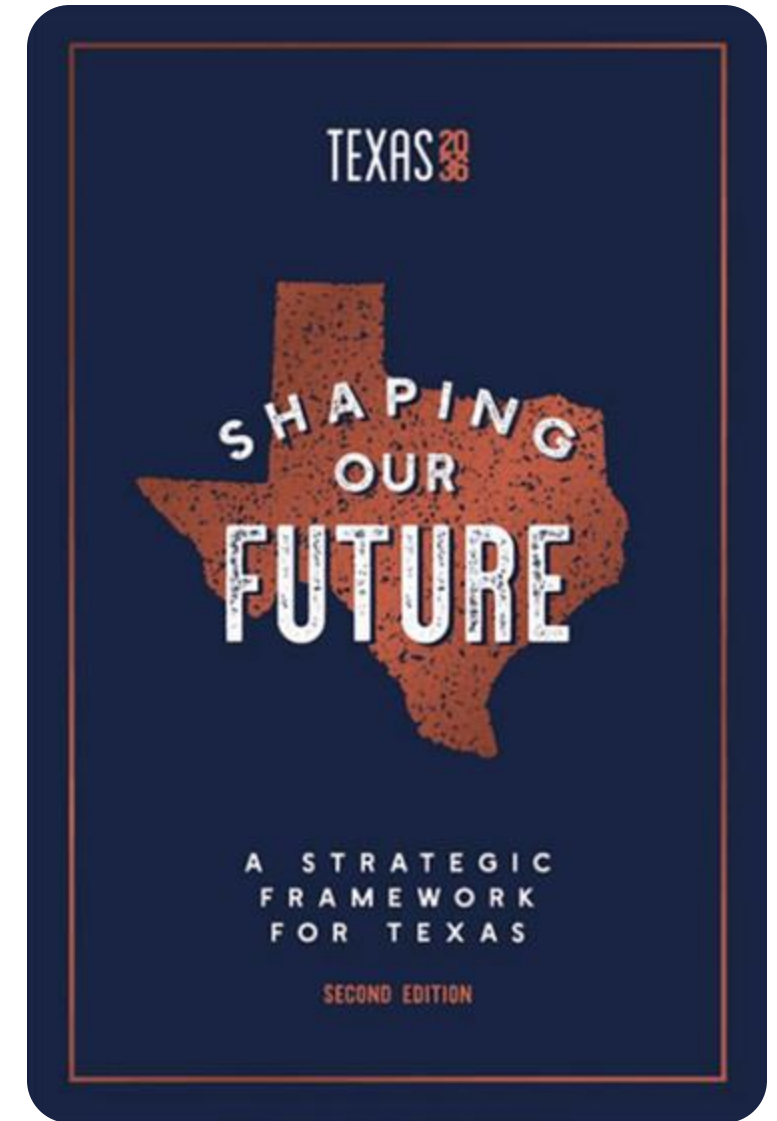
Justice and  
Safety



Government  
Performance



Infrastructure



# 2025 Legislative Session: Areas of Focus

- Water Infrastructure
- **College and Career Readiness**
- **Health Care Affordability**
- **Improving Correctional Education, Workforce Readiness**
- Housing Supply and Affordability

## Other areas of engagement include:

- Childcare
- Energy Expansion
- Emerging Technologies



Water Infrastructure			
Reality for Texans Today		Policy Opportunity	
Texas faces a long-term water supply deficit if it does not develop enough new water supplies and is hit with another long, severe drought. In addition, aging water systems in need of repairs place a significant strain on our state's resources.	American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) grades for Texas:	Create a dedicated revenue stream to address long-term economic needs for continuous, adequate water supplies and reliable infrastructure.	
	 drinking water infrastructure		
	 wastewater infrastructure		
	 will need to be spent on water needs over the next 50 years		

College and Career Readiness			
Reality for Texans Today		Policy Opportunity	
Recent changes to the K-12 and community college funding systems have the potential to dramatically accelerate the number of Texas students earning a postsecondary degree or credential. However, these updates have not yet been fully aligned for maximum impact.	 high school graduation rate	Ensure the K-12 system is aligned with workforce demands and incentivizing opportunities for students to earn a family-sustaining wage upon high school graduation.	
	 of graduates achieve college or career readiness benchmarks		
	 actually go on to earn a postsecondary degree	Improve the quality of mathematics instruction to prepare students with the math skills needed to be successful and competitive in the 21st century.	





# College and Career Readiness

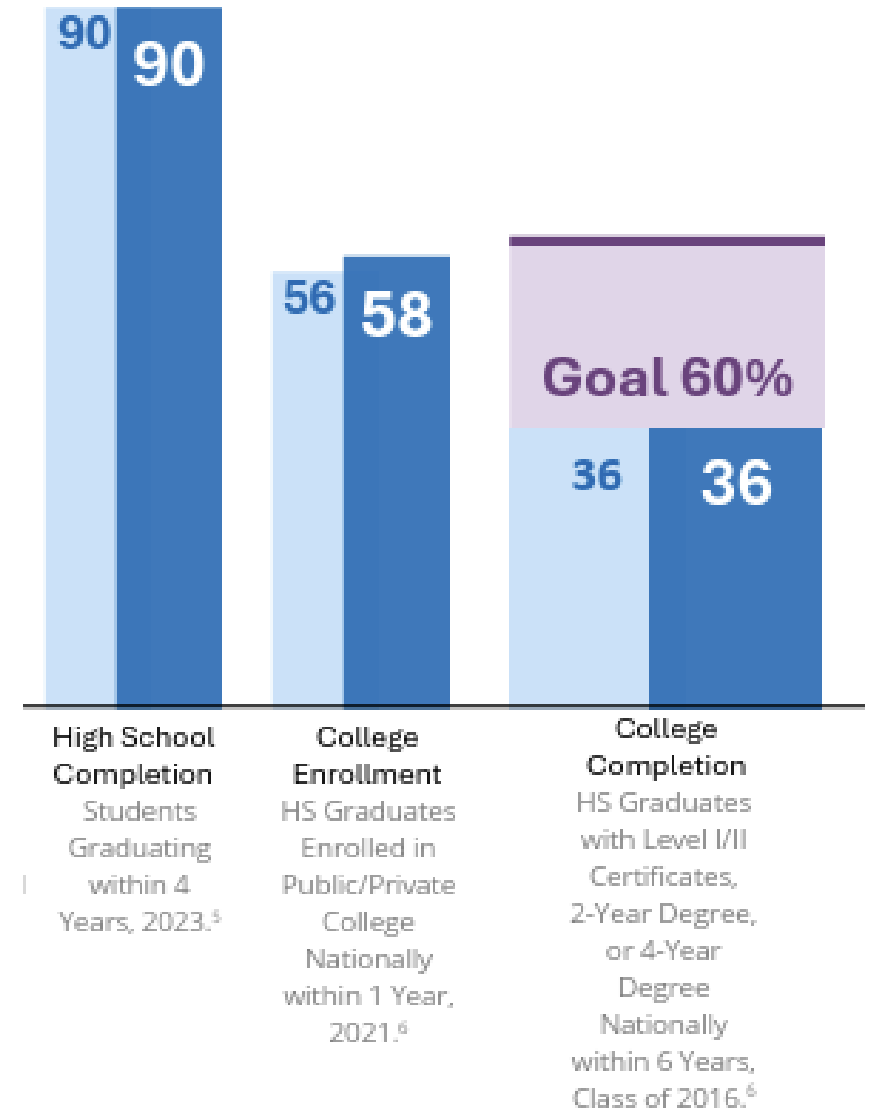
**Mary Lynn Pruneda**

Director, Education and Workforce Policy

TEXAS **2036**

# College and Career Readiness

- **The problem:** Too few students enroll in postsecondary education (58%), and too **few Texas students are earning a postsecondary credential (36%)**. Labor market projections anticipate 60+% of students will need postsecondary credentials by the 2030s.
- **The goal:** Every Texas High School student should have the opportunity to earn a **career-aligned, postsecondary credential of value** before they graduate



# College and Career Readiness

- Ensure the K-12 system is aligned with workforce demands and incentivizing opportunities for students to earn a family-sustaining wage upon high school graduation

## How will we do this?



01

### Dual Readiness Financial Simulator:

Develop a cutting-edge financial simulator to inform school and community decision makers about the financial incentives and funding tied to career-aligned course work and credential of value attainment in high school.



02

### Dual Readiness Data Dashboard:

Provide actionable information on current access to credentials of value for all Texas high school students in a publicly available and easily accessible website.



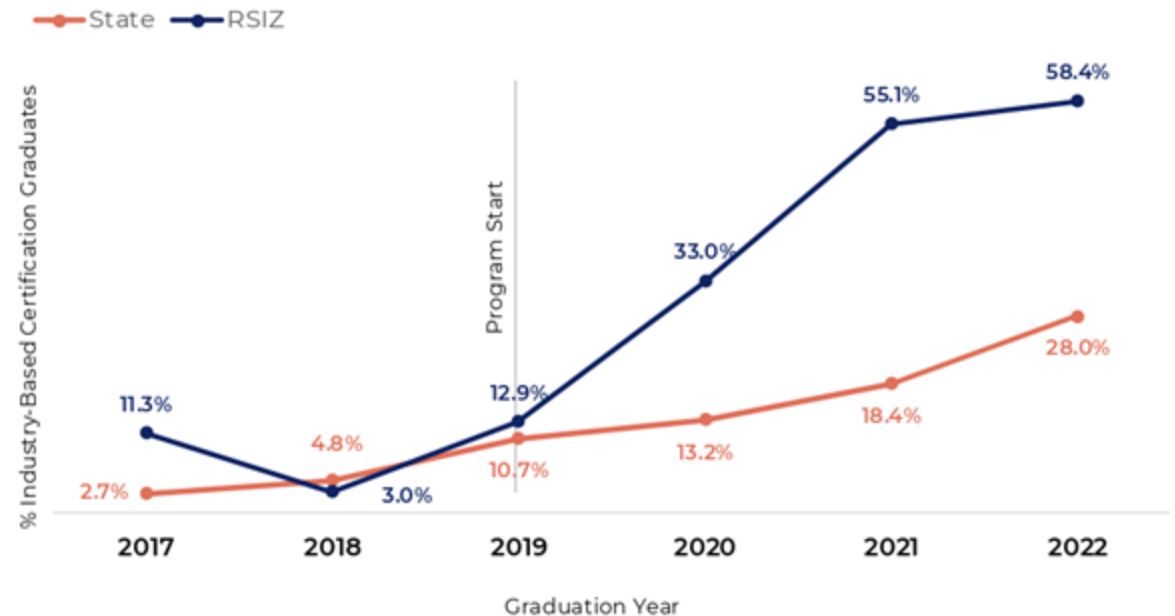
# Expanding Workforce Programming & Career Training

## High School Initiatives

Support for expanding workforce programming and career training in Texas high schools.

Focus on initiatives like **Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH)** and the **Rural Postsecondary Education Program (R-PEP)**.

In the state's first R-PEP program (known as the RSIZ) students saw a rapid increase in Industry-Based Credential attainment



# Expanding Workforce Programming & Career Training

## Community Colleges Support

**House Bill 8:** Fully fund and enhance outcomes-based funding model to help community colleges align with local job market needs.

**Goal:** Ensure students graduate with credentials of value, driving economic mobility.

### Workforce Alignment

Texas faces an urgent need for a skilled workforce,



**54%**

**of jobs requiring postsecondary education or training**

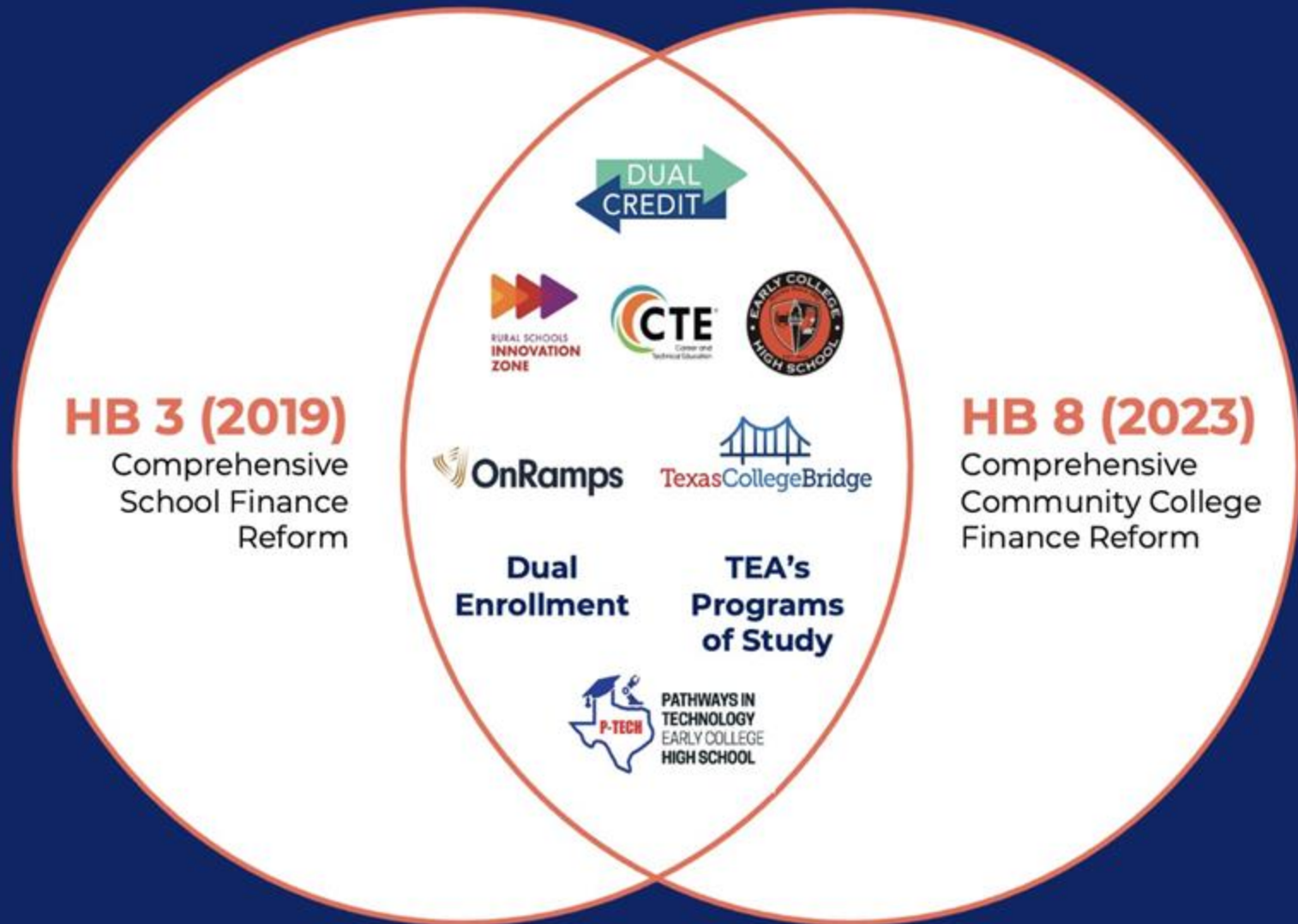


**Only 45%**

**of Texans meet these qualifications**

There are already many programs that span the gaps between House Bill 3 and House Bill 8.

But, these programs need to be **scaled, synchronized to workforce need, and improve more students' outcomes** in order to make lasting change.







# Health Care

**Charles Miller**

Director, Health and Economic Mobility Policy

TEXAS **2036**

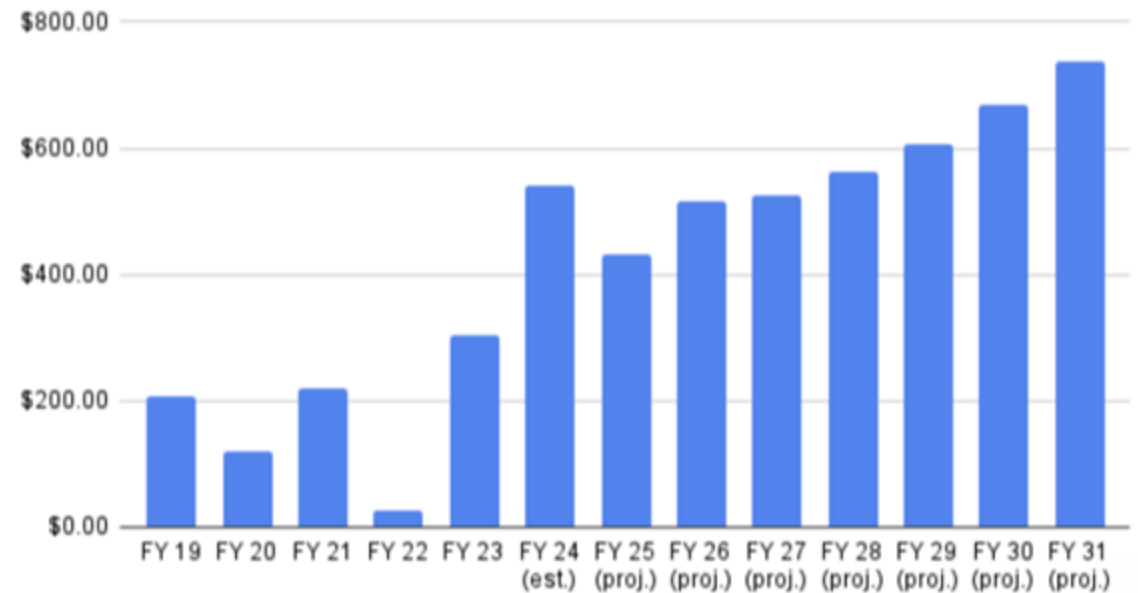
# Health Care: Rising Health Care Expenses

## ERS and TRS Health Care Expenses Continue to Rise:

- For state employees, ERS health care expenditures are growing by about \$500 million annually, putting the agency trust fund on track to be **depleted by 2029**.
- For those enrolled in TRS-Active Care, health insurance costs are rising so quickly that the state must allocate \$450 million next biennium just to **limit premium increases to 10% per years**.

### Annual Increase in ERS Health Expenditures

(Amounts are in millions of dollars)



Source: ERS Health Trends

# Health Care: All-Payor Claims Database

Established in 2021 and housed at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, the APCD allows researchers, policymakers and budget writers to:

- Control rising health care expenses by **improving price transparency**
- Identify market inefficiencies
- Identify and **incentivize the use of high-value care**

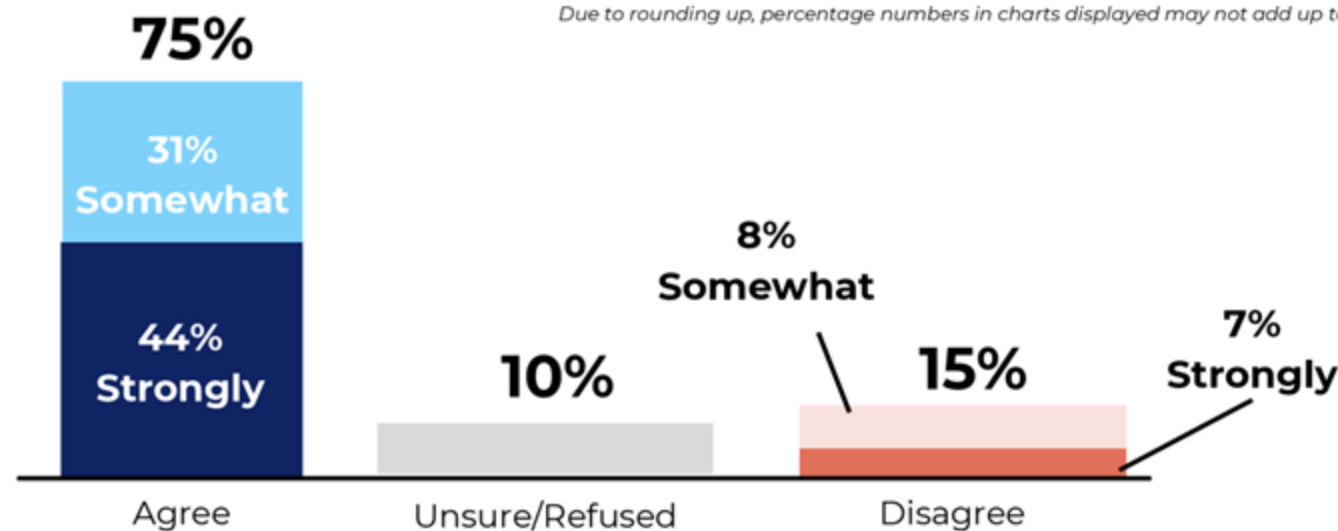


**With the threat of persistent cost growth and program shortfalls, leveraging the APCD to evaluate potential solutions could generate significant savings and ease the pressure of the state budget.**



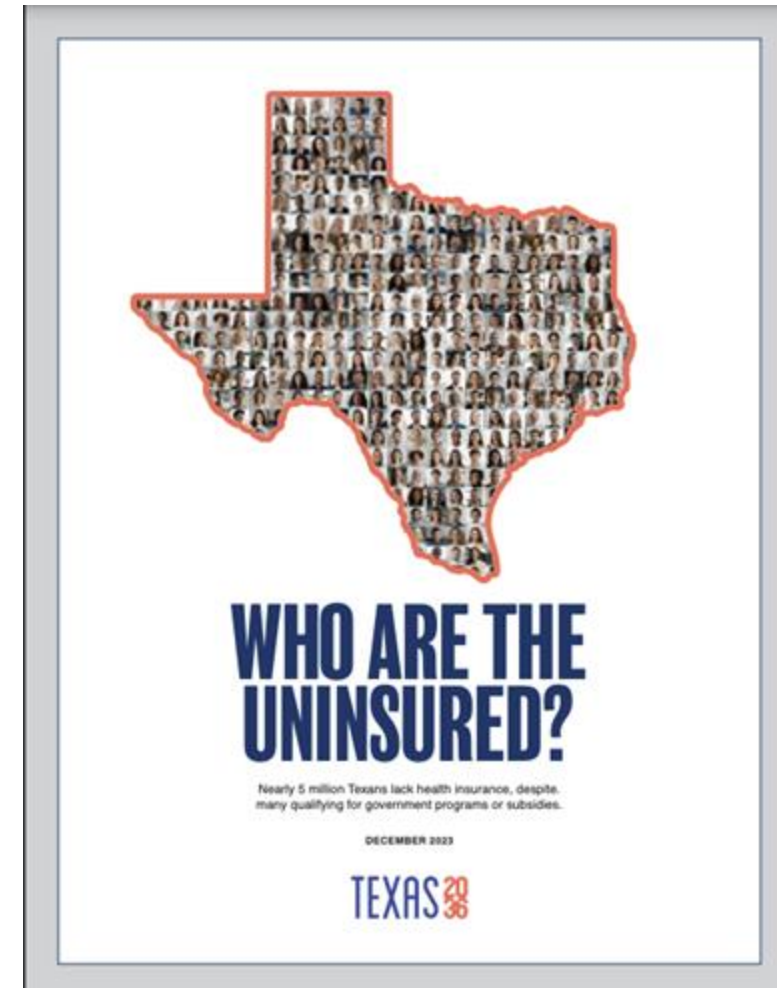
# Health Care: Market Consolidation

- One of the biggest drivers of high health care prices is **market consolidation**. This has big implications for Texas, where **over 60% of the population** lives in highly-concentrated hospital markets.
- **75% of Texas voters agreed** that the state government should **more actively regulate** health care mergers to ensure the market remains sufficiently competitive.



# Health Care: Policy Opportunities

- Improve **transparency** through clearer information on prices and ownership to help the state ensure a healthy market for medical services
- Create express lane eligibility, streamline advertising regulations, and evaluate a state-based exchange to **address eligible but uninsured Texans.**





# Justice & Safety

**Luis Soberon**

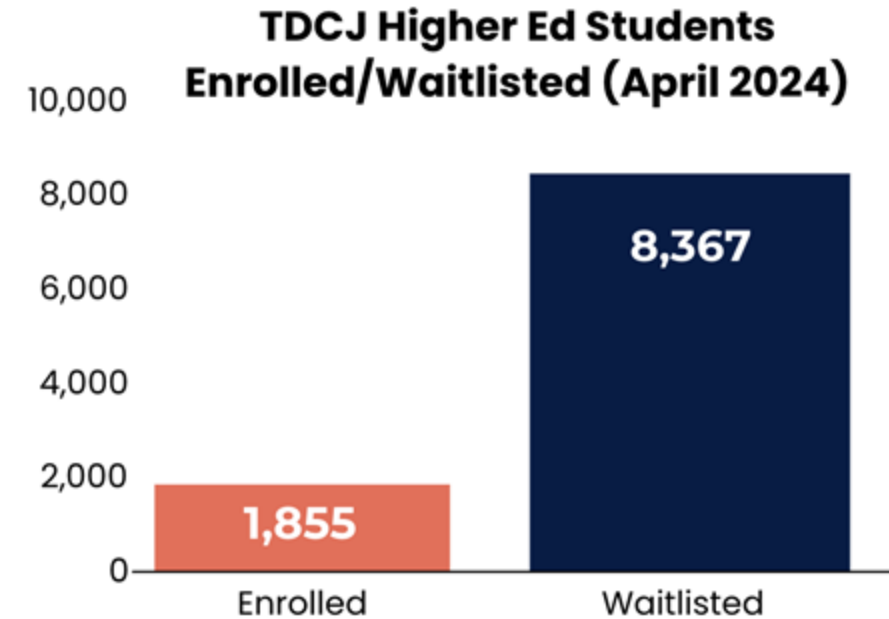
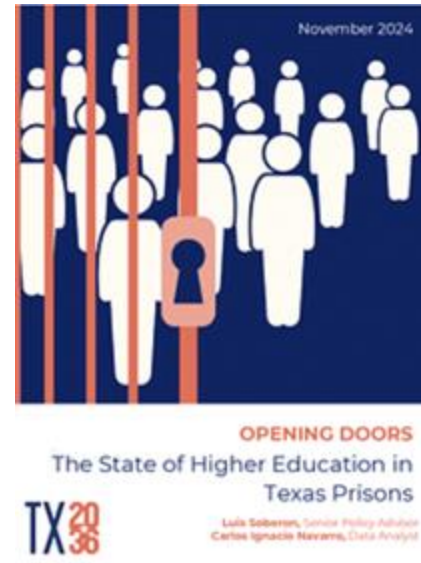
Policy Advisor, Justice & Safety

TEXAS **20**  
**36**



# Correctional Education and Workforce Readiness

- Expand **access to workforce aligned credentials** to help incarcerated adults find jobs post release.
- Improve **state data integration** between TDCJ, Windham School District, and THECB to better evaluate outcomes and improve programmatic offerings.



Source: Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice via public information request

# Extreme Heat in Texas Prisons

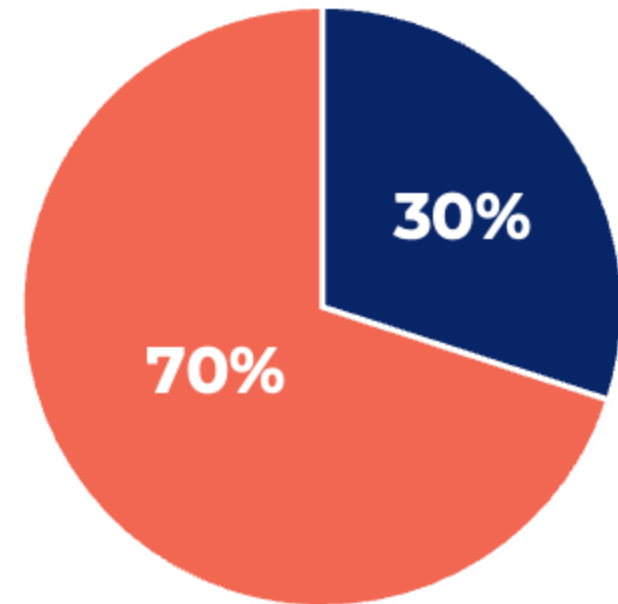
**The majority of Texas' roughly 100 prison facilities in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) don't have air conditioning in all inmate-housing areas.**

The 89th Texas Legislature has already put significant resources in the base budget towards climate control projects. It can set TDCJ on a path to comprehensively addressing extreme heat in remaining state prisons by:

1. Giving TDCJ additional resources to install more climate control systems
2. Setting temperature standards for prisons
3. Improving measurement and transparency of data on indoor temperature and humidity

## TDCJ Units with Climate Control in Inmate-Housing Areas

- Units with Full Climate Control
- Units with No or Partial Climate Control



## Texas voters support reasonable temperature standards

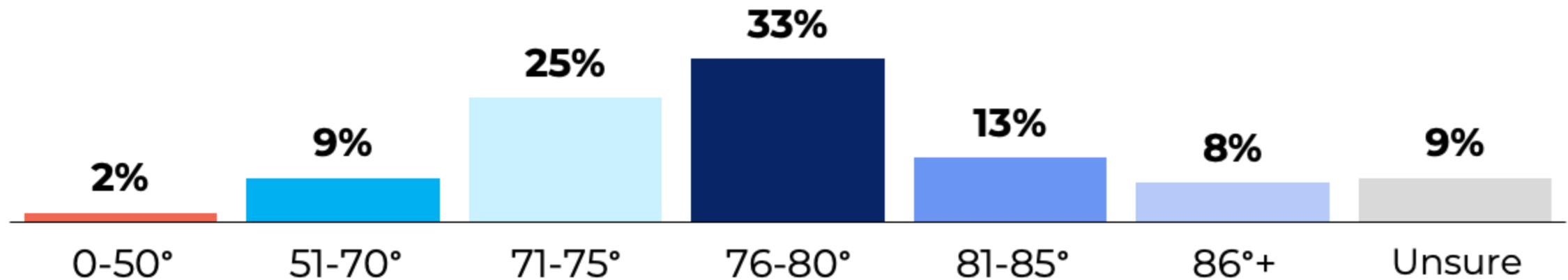
"Many Texas prisons do not have air conditioning and can reach high temperatures during the summer, impacting both prison guards and incarcerated Texans. **What do you believe the maximum indoor temperature should be in Texas prisons?**"

Mean Response: 77.5°

Median Response: 78.0°



say the max  
temperature should be  
**no higher than 85°**



Source: Texas 2036, "8th Texas Voter Poll," Dec. 11, 2024, <https://texas2036.org/poll/>.



# Justice & Safety Data Infrastructure

The following questions are unanswerable without over 330 public information requests

## Grand Jury Cases

How many felony cases before grand juries in Texas were true-billed, and how many were no-billed?

## Case Acceptance

How many cases brought by law enforcement are accepted, returned, or rejected, and why?

## Staffing and Caseloads

How many cases are handled by the average prosecuting attorney? What are vacancy rates in offices?

## Vehicle Stop Data Challenges

**6.8**  
Million

Motor vehicle stops conducted by Texas law enforcement agencies in 2021.

**4,893**

Stops in 2021 where physical force led to any bodily injury

≠

**4,897**

Stops in 2021 where officer & suspect were both injured by force

# Questions?

TEXAS 20  
36