

TX 20
36

10th

Texas Voter Poll

Fall 2026



Executive Summary

Texas Voters: Decisive on Policy Preferences, But Undecided on Political Candidates

Weeks before the November election, Texas voters are more worried about the state's future than at any point since Texas 2036 began polling in 2020. They appear less committed to voting a single party's ticket than Texas voters have been in two decades. And when asked what would earn their vote, they answer with remarkable agreement across party lines: schools that teach children to read and do math, healthcare they can afford, electricity bills they can pay and water they can count on. This report describes that electorate. It does not predict who will win. It describes what Texas voters want from whoever does.

A record level of concern about where Texas is headed

Two-thirds of Texas voters (67.7%) say they are extremely or very concerned about the future of Texas, the highest reading in the 10 waves of this poll. The rise is not confined to one party. Democrats register the highest concern of any group at 85%, and Republican concern jumped 15 points in a single year, from 43% to 58%. Fewer than half of voters believe the state is taking the proper actions now to be the best state, or even one of the best states, to live, work and raise a family 20 years from now. When Texas 2036 asked a nearly identical question in January 2020, 53% and 59% said yes. Today those figures are 38.8% and 43.1%.

67.7%
RECORD CONCERN

67.7% of Texas voters are extremely or very concerned about the state's future — the highest level in 10 waves of our poll. Democrats lead at 85% while Republican concern rose 15 points in one year.

This concern coexists with confidence. A majority (56.7%) still expect the Texas economy to outperform the rest of the country over the next four years, and 59.4% are confident there will be good opportunities for people like them. Texans are not pessimistic about Texas, but they understand that a better future is not guaranteed.

A large share of the electorate is still up for grabs

Just over one-third of registered voters (34.1%) have fully made up their minds, while one in five (21.0%) describe themselves as mostly or fully undecided. Only half (50.3%) report an intent to vote a straight ticket. In 2018, the last election with verifiable straight-ticket data, a *Texas Monthly* analysis found that about 67% of ballots in the state's 40 most populous counties were straight-ticket votes.

50.3%

PLAN TO VOTE A STRAIGHT TICKET

Down from about 67% of ballots in 2018, and closer to the 1998-2002 elections.

1 in 6

UNAFFILIATED AND UNDECIDED

16.7% of voters are not committed partisans and are mostly or fully undecided on their vote.

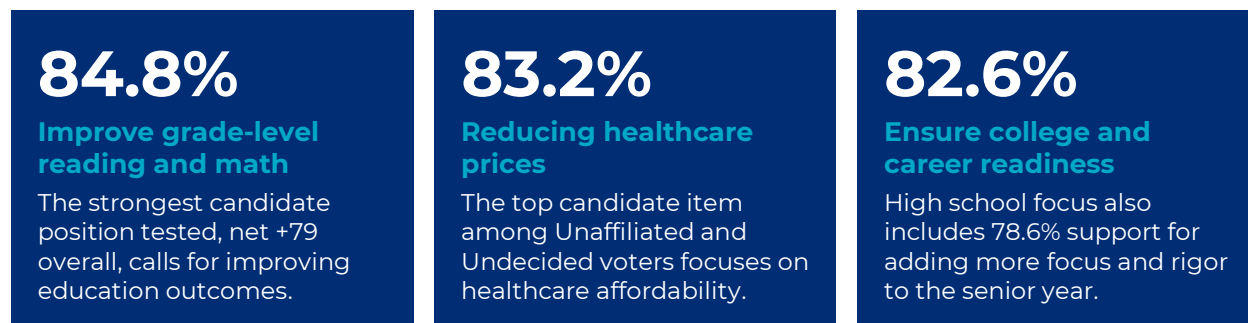
Within that electorate, this report identifies a group we call Unaffiliated and Undecided voters: 16.7% of the sample, roughly one in six, who are not committed partisans of either party and who describe their November choice as mostly or fully undecided. They lean younger than the electorate (26.6% are under 35), are somewhat more likely to be parents of children under 18 and are less likely to own a home.

Policies that move voters

Texas 2036 tested 13 positions a candidate might take. Eleven of the 13 would make more than two-thirds of voters more likely to support that candidate, most with wide bipartisan agreement on issues like improving reading and math outcomes for Texas students, reducing healthcare prices and building needed water infrastructure. Asked an open-ended question about the top issue the state needs to address to be successful in the future, the top responses focused on governance and civility (16.7%); education (16.4%); the economy and jobs (14.5%); immigration and border security (13.5%); and spending and tax issues (10.1%). As a top issue, immigration and border security has decreased since our November 2024 poll, when it was named unprompted by 29% of voters. Data centers are named by 2.8% in this poll.

Education outcomes and affordability dominate the list of what voters want from candidates. Ensuring all Texas students can read and do math at grade level would make 84.8% of voters more likely to support a candidate, the strongest response of any position tested, with nearly two-thirds (63.9%) saying it would make them much more likely. Reducing healthcare prices follows at 83.2%, and preparing high school graduates for college or a career comes next at 82.6%. Lower electricity bills (81.8%),

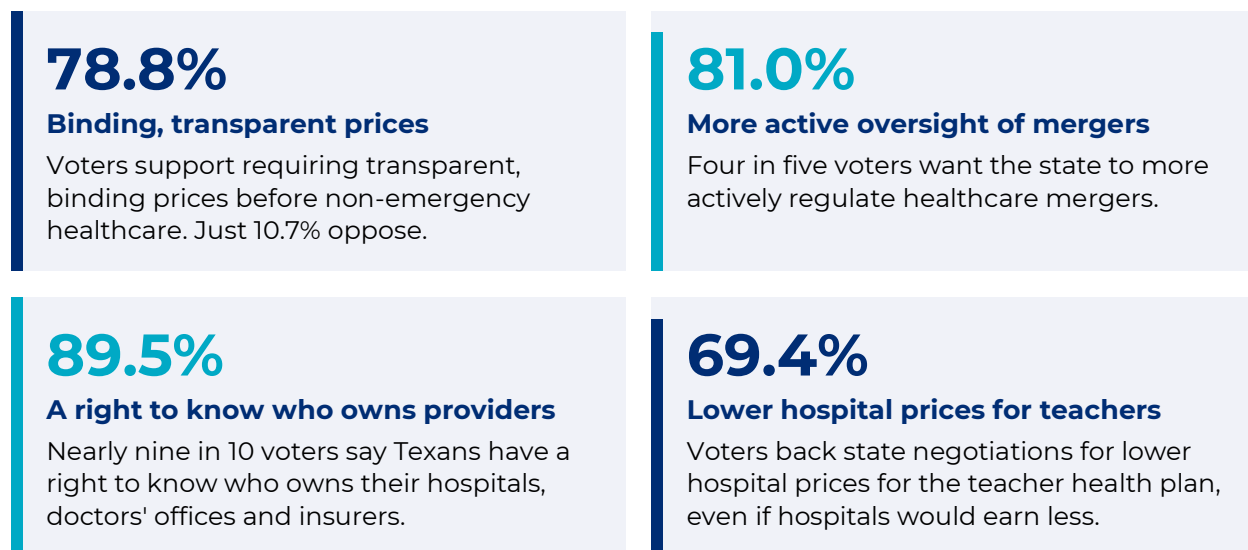
water infrastructure (81.4%) and homeowner's insurance costs (79.0%) round out the top tier. Support for water infrastructure has grown 6.4 points since October 2025, the largest gain of any repeated item.



The Unaffiliated and Undecided voters who may decide close races want largely the same things as everyone else. Their top priorities are healthcare prices, electricity bills and grade-level reading and math, generally aligning with the same items that lead among all voters. The Unaffiliated and Undecided run ahead of the electorate on making the state's childcare system more parent friendly (75.0% compared to 69.3%) and on increasing public education funding (73.1% against 69.9%), though both differences fall within the margin of error.

Voters align on pragmatic policies and desire for action

Across healthcare, education, childcare, energy and water, Texas voters speak in a consistent voice supporting policies that take action to address core quality of life issues. Healthcare affordability sets the pace, with voters clearly rejecting the way things are today. Just 17.5% favor doing nothing about healthcare costs and maintaining the status quo, by far the least popular option tested. Action to improve affordability, transparency and market competition are widely supported:



This call for action shows longitudinal movement: Three years ago, voters were split on breaking up existing healthcare companies, 42% to 44%. They now favor it, 59% to 23%, a 38-point swing.

17.5%

THE STATUS QUO

17.5% of voters favor doing nothing about healthcare costs and maintaining the status quo. It is by far the least popular of eight options tested.

The sections that follow detail these findings, along with voters' views on education and artificial intelligence, childcare and family friendliness and water and energy. The pattern holds throughout. On the issues that shape daily life in Texas, Republicans, Democrats and Independents are asking for the same things, often aligning on policy priorities across major issues. Voters want action, and in their words, they're prepared to vote for candidates this November who will deliver.

85%

Education and workforce transparency

Voters support requiring the state to report whether \$100 billion-plus in annual education and job-training spending leads to good jobs.

84.5%

AI in schools: protect students first

Voters say protecting student data and privacy is extremely or very important. They also express concerns about too much screen time.

69.3%

Parent-friendly childcare

Voters are more likely to support a candidate committed to a more parent-friendly childcare system. This reaches 75.0% among the Unaffiliated and Undecided.

79.1%

Water projects are a priority

Voters say prioritizing water projects is extremely or very important. Support for water-focused candidates rose from 75% to 81.4% in a year.

81.0%

Grid reliability comes first

Voters name reliability as a first or second priority for grid reforms. 73% name lower prices and 30.6% name emissions.

74.2%

Funding community college outcomes

Voters are more likely to support a candidate who funds community colleges to meet workforce needs.

SECTION 1

Weeks from the Election: Voters Are Often Undecided and Less Likely to Vote Straight Ticket

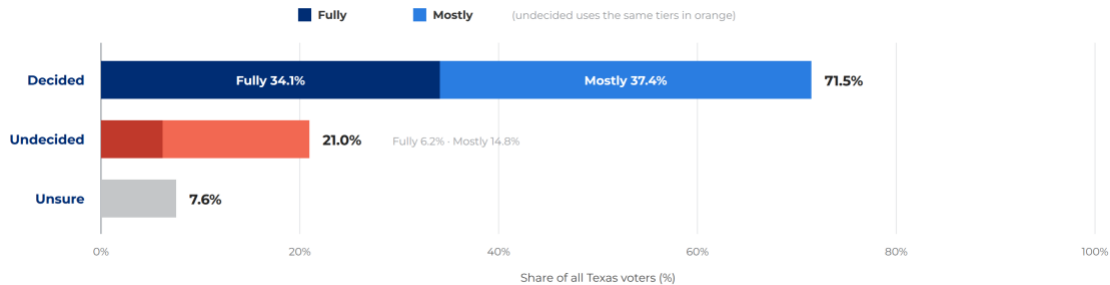
Key Takeaways

- **Substantial Percentages of Texas Voters Remain Undecided:** Nearly two-thirds of Texas voters are still evaluating candidates for one or more races, with 21% of voters describing themselves as “mostly undecided” or “fully undecided.”
- **Voters Report Lower Likelihood of Straight Ticket Voting:** Half of Texas voters report that they intend to vote straight ticket, with 25.8% planning to vote for all Republicans and 24.4% planning to vote for all Democrats. In 2018, the last year for which verifiable data is available, about 67% of votes cast in the state's 40 most populous counties were straight-ticket ballots.
- **Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters Can Dictate November's Election:** One in six Texas voters (16.7%) is both unaffiliated — not a committed partisan of either party by past voting behavior and party image — and mostly or fully undecided about November. Six in 10 plan to vote something other than a straight ticket.

With weeks separating data collection from early voting, a large percentage of Texas voters remain open to the messages of political candidates, with many reporting an intent to split their votes between multiple political parties. This section will analyze self-reported voter intentions and model the undecided voters likely to shape the election's home stretch.

Undecided Texans

Q: "Would you describe your choice of candidates in this November's election as?"

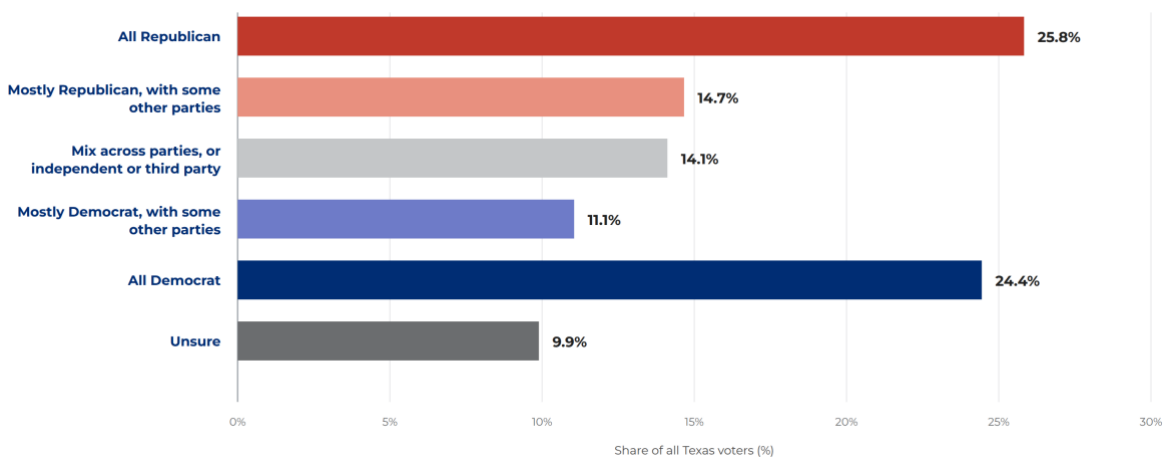


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Just over one-third of Texas registered voters (34.1%) have fully made up their minds on how they intend to vote in November's election. The largest share of voters (37.4%) report being mostly decided. More than one in five voters will have to make many decisions during the closing weeks of the election: 14.8% are mostly undecided, and another 6.2% report being fully undecided.

Lower Reported Plans for Straight Ticket Voting

Q: "In this year's November election, do you intend to vote: all Republican, mostly Republican, a mix across parties (independent/third party), mostly Democrat, or all Democrat?"



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (Weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

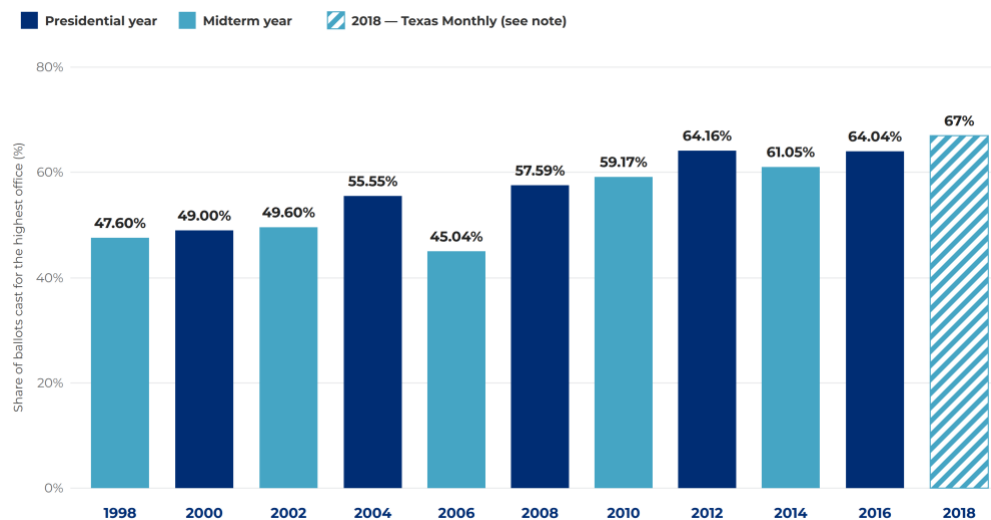
Just over half of Texas voters (50.3%) intend to vote a straight ticket. If that holds through November, it would be a marked change from recent elections.

Texas has not had formal straight-ticket voting since the 2018 election,¹ creating data limitations for comparison against the past three statewide election cycles. While the 2018 election comparison is not precise (some of the differences can be attributed to the removal of the one-punch mechanism and the data comparison is limited to official returns from large counties), it is still instructive. The 2018 election featured a hard-fought U.S. Senate battle and most major statewide offices, including the incumbent Texas Governor, on the ballot. All of this is happening against the backdrop of the current U.S. President in office and control of Congress on the line. A *Texas Monthly* analysis of the state's 40 most populous counties — covering 83% of the statewide vote — found that 67% of voters in 2018 utilized the one-punch straight-ticket option.² This exceeded the 64.2% estimated for 2012, which was the previous record.³

The 50.3% reported in the Texas 2036 sample more closely reflects percentages from 1998, 2000 and 2002 — the last years of divided government in Texas state government. In the 2002 election, Republicans took control of the Texas House of Representatives for the first time since 1870. Since that election, Republicans have held the “Big Three” offices (Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House) for 24 years.

Straight-ticket voting trended up, right up to its abolition

Straight-ticket ballots as a share of the vote cast for the highest office on the ballot, in the largest Texas counties (80–83% of all votes cast) — not statewide.



Source: 1998–2016: Austin Community College, Center for Public Policy and Political Studies, “Studies of Political Statistics: Straight-ticket Voting in Texas 1998–2016” (Report #11, December 2016), Table 1. 2018: Robert Moore, “Straight Ticket Voting Says Farewell to Texas in a Big Way,” *Texas Monthly*, November 26, 2018. Note: The 2018 figure is Texas Monthly’s whole-number estimate from returns in the largest counties; it is not part of the ACC CPPS 1998–2016 series and is drawn hatched for that reason.

¹ House Bill 25 (85-R, 2017) abolished one-punch, straight-ticket voting in Texas, with an effective date of September 1, 2020. This resulted in the 2020 presidential election being the first without straight ticket voting.

² Robert Moore, “Straight Ticket Voting Says Farewell to Texas in a Big Way,” *Texas Monthly*, November 26, 2018.

³ Stefan Haag, Studies of Political Statistics: Straight-ticket Voting in Texas 1998–2016, Report #11, ACC Center for Public Policy and Political Studies, Austin Community College, December 2016.

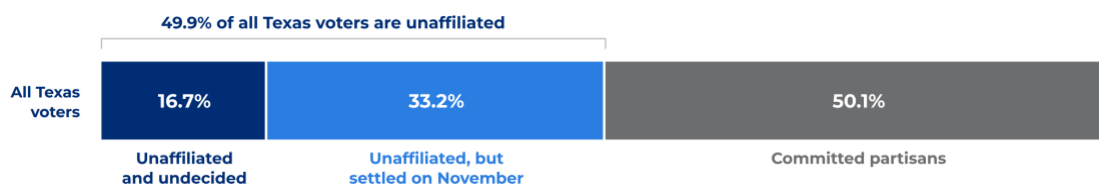
The 2006 election, with just 45.0% straight-ticket voting, was anomalous. That year's gubernatorial election featured four candidates receiving more than 10% of the vote: incumbent Republican Gov. Rick Perry (39.0%), Democratic candidate Chris Bell (29.8%), independent candidate Carole Keeton Strayhorn (18.1%), and independent candidate Kinky Friedman (12.4%).

Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters

The Texas 2036 poll does not seek to determine who a voter will ultimately choose at the ballot box, but it does seek to understand the priorities and experiences of Texas voters. Within the sample of registered voters, a subset emerges who may ultimately determine November's election outcomes. In many contexts, these are called swing, target or persuadable voters. Here, we refer to these voters in our sample as the Unaffiliated and Undecided.

This report uses a two-part definition to identify this key population: First, a voter is unaffiliated — not a committed partisan of either party — and, second, undecided about who they will vote for in November. A committed partisan is a voter who has tended to vote for one party's candidates in past November elections, holds a positive image of that party and a negative image of the other. Roughly half of Texas voters (49.9%) do not fit the definition of a committed partisan and are unaffiliated in this sense. This group includes soft Republicans, soft Democrats, self-described independents and voters who named no party. Undecided means the voter describes his or her choice of candidates this November as mostly or fully undecided. The 16.7% of voters who meet both conditions are referred to throughout this report as Unaffiliated and Undecided voters

How This Report Identifies the Undecided and Unaffiliated Voters



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Who are they? In their own words, 40% say they have voted independent of party in past November elections, 29% have tended to vote Republican, 15% Democratic and 15% were unsure. About seven in 10 (71%) describe themselves as mostly undecided and three in 10 (29%) fully undecided. Nearly four in 10 (37.9%) plan to vote for a mix across parties, and another 23.7% cannot yet say how they will vote. Only about one in seven (14.7%) plans to vote a straight ticket. The balance plan to split their ticket, leaning either mostly Republican (13.6%) or mostly Democrat (10.1%). They skew younger than the electorate — 26.6% are under 35, against 19.1% of all voters, and 19.6% are 65 or older, against 28.8%. They are also somewhat more racially diverse and are somewhat more likely to be parents of children under the age of 18 (38.8% within this group, versus 32.3%

within the overall sample). Their gender, education and income track the electorate closely, but they are less likely to own a home.

Self Reported Voting Histories of This Year's Undecided and Unaffiliated Voters

Past November voting tendency among the 16.7% of Texas voters who are unaffiliated and undecided



■ Have tended to vote independent of party ■ Have tended to vote Republican
■ Have tended to vote Democratic ■ Named no party

Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Base: the unaffiliated-and-undecided group only — 16.7% of Texas voters, 201 unweighted interviews.

Two cautions apply to the comparisons involving this group in the sections that follow. A group of 201 interviews carries a margin of error of roughly ± 7 percentage points, so differences between these voters and the electorate smaller than that should be read as directional rather than as a difference. And because the poll's weighting includes party shares, this group's size moves with that weighting choice.⁴

This population's general sentiments and policy preferences will be discussed more thoroughly through the report.

How to read the margins of error in this report.

Generally, margins in this report use a simple random sample calculation at the 95% confidence level (non-design effect adjusted) to describe thresholds for which differences can be observed, these include:

- A change in the same statewide item between two waves of the poll must be at least 4 points to be treated as meaningful. Anything inside ± 4 points is described as directional rather than as a difference.
- Subgroup comparisons (e.g., the Unaffiliated and Undecided group of 201 interviews) carry larger margins of ± 7 points and geographic comparisons and other smaller subgroups are even larger still (e.g., Rural vs. Urban voters ± 9 points).
- Because respondents are weighted, true margins are somewhat wider than this simple calculation. However, no comparison in this report changes its interpretation under a wider (design-effect adjusted) threshold, so the simpler figure is used for consistency with the headline margin of ± 3.1 points.

⁴ Weighting is a routine survey adjustment that brings a sample's composition into line with the population it represents. Baseline weights this poll so that its shares on several characteristics, including gender, age, race, education and party, match the Texas electorate. All percentages in this report are weighted. Because party is one of those characteristics, a group defined partly by party is a somewhat different size in the weighted results than in the unweighted interviews. The appendix describes the method in full.

SECTION 2

What Texas Voters Want: Policies that Deliver Votes

Key Takeaways

- **Affordability and Education Issues Top Voters' Wish Lists:** Ensuring students read and do math at grade level (84.8%), reducing healthcare prices (83.2%) and preparing high school graduates for college or a career (82.6%) top the list of positions that would make voters more likely to vote for a candidate. Reducing electricity bills, building water infrastructure and cutting homeowner's insurance costs all clear 79%.
- **Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters Generally Want the Same Things:** The priorities of Unaffiliated and Undecided voters largely mirror those of the electorate, with only modest directional differences. The largest deviation — making the childcare system more parent-friendly (+5.7 points) — runs ahead of the broader electorate but remains within the margin of error for a group of this size.
- **Border Security and Data Center Issues Register Below Bread-and-Butter Issues:** Border security and evaluating data centers ranked at the bottom of issues that could help a candidate earn a vote — though border security and immigration remain among the most oft-cited responses for open-ended questions that seek to identify voters' top priorities, with intensity declining in recent years.

Far from the polarizing issues that often get the most attention, our Fall 2026 poll suggests that Texas voters — Republicans, Democrats, Independents and undecideds — generally share many of the same priorities when prompted about the importance of addressing quality of life and affordability issues. Intensity differs when forced to prioritize a top issue for the state's future success.

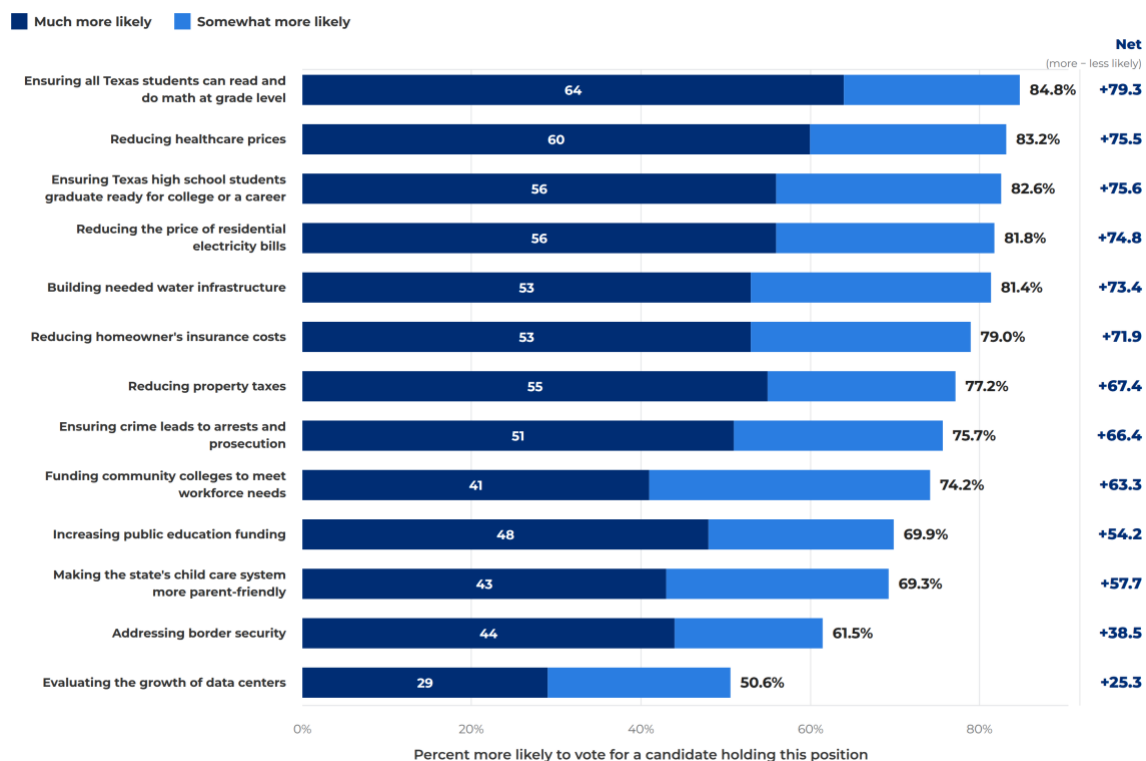
Texas Voters Largely Agree on Their Top-Level Priorities

Texas voters were prompted with 13 positions a candidate might hold and asked whether each would make them more or less likely to vote for that candidate. Eleven of the 13 would make more than two-thirds of voters more likely to support a candidate, often with a large bipartisan response.

Education outcomes and affordability issues dominate the top of the battery. Ensuring all Texas students can read and do math at grade level would make 84.8% of voters more likely to support a candidate. Reducing healthcare prices would make 83.2% of voters more likely to support a candidate. Preparing high school graduates for college or a career would make 82.6% more likely to support a candidate. Addressing residential electricity bills (81.8%), water infrastructure (81.4%) and homeowner's insurance costs (79.0%) follow close behind. These also generate high intensity: On eight of the 13 positions, more than half of all voters say the position would make them much more likely to vote for a candidate. On grade-level reading and math, nearly two-thirds do — 63.9%, which was the highest intensity in the battery.

Eleven of thirteen positions draw more than two-thirds of Texas voters

Share saying a candidate holding each position would make them much or somewhat more likely to vote for that candidate.

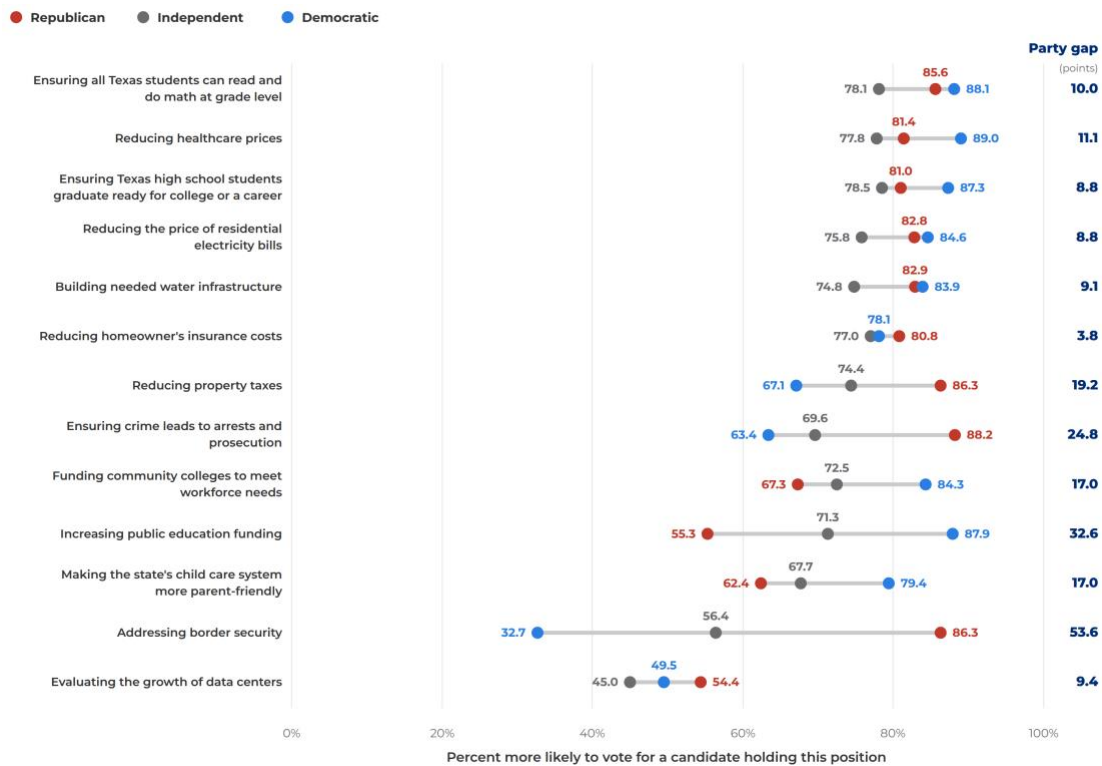


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Items are Q10-Q22: “How much more or less likely would you be to vote for a candidate who supports [each position]?” The base is all voters; the remainder of each row said the position would make them less likely to vote for the candidate, makes no difference, or that they were unsure.

Items at the top of the policy battery draw wide positive responses across party lines. Toward the bottom half, differences emerge based on party. Border security is the most polarizing item in the battery: 86.3% of Republicans reported being more likely to vote for a candidate who prioritized the issue compared to 32.7% of Democrats, a 53.6-point spread. Furthermore, 45.5% of Democrats say it would make them less likely to back a candidate. Increasing public education funding likewise draws a large partisan gap (32.6 percentage points), as does ensuring crime leads to arrest and prosecution (24.8 percentage points).

Voter priorities generally align across parties

Share saying a candidate holding each position would make them much or somewhat more likely to vote for that candidate, by party tendency. Positions are ordered by support among all voters, from most to least popular. On seven of the thirteen the parties sit within twelve points.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Party tendency is the vendor's combined partisan-tendency measure, the grouping used on every Texas 2036 poll banner since 2020: 550 Republican interviews, 269 Independent, 550 Democratic.

Defining Metropolitan and Rural Splits

To compare voters in Texas' largest metropolitan areas with those in mid-size and smaller metropolitan areas and those outside any metropolitan area, we sort all 254 Texas counties into three groups. We then assign each respondent to the category of county they gave as their residence.

The three categories follow the 2023 National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties (more details in the Appendix):

- Large metropolitan: every county in a metropolitan area of one million residents or more. 34 counties, 916 interviews, *68.1 percent of the weighted sample*.
- Small and medium metropolitan: every county in a metropolitan area of fewer than one million residents. 52 counties, 300 interviews, *comprises 21.1 percent of the weighted sample*.
- Rural: every county outside any metropolitan area. 168 counties, 150 interviews, *10.5 percent of the weighted sample*.

Data centers appear to be a weak motivator across party lines, relative to other issues. For the overall population, 50.6% reported being more likely to vote for a candidate who would evaluate the growth of data centers. Among rural Texans, this rose modestly to 56.3%.

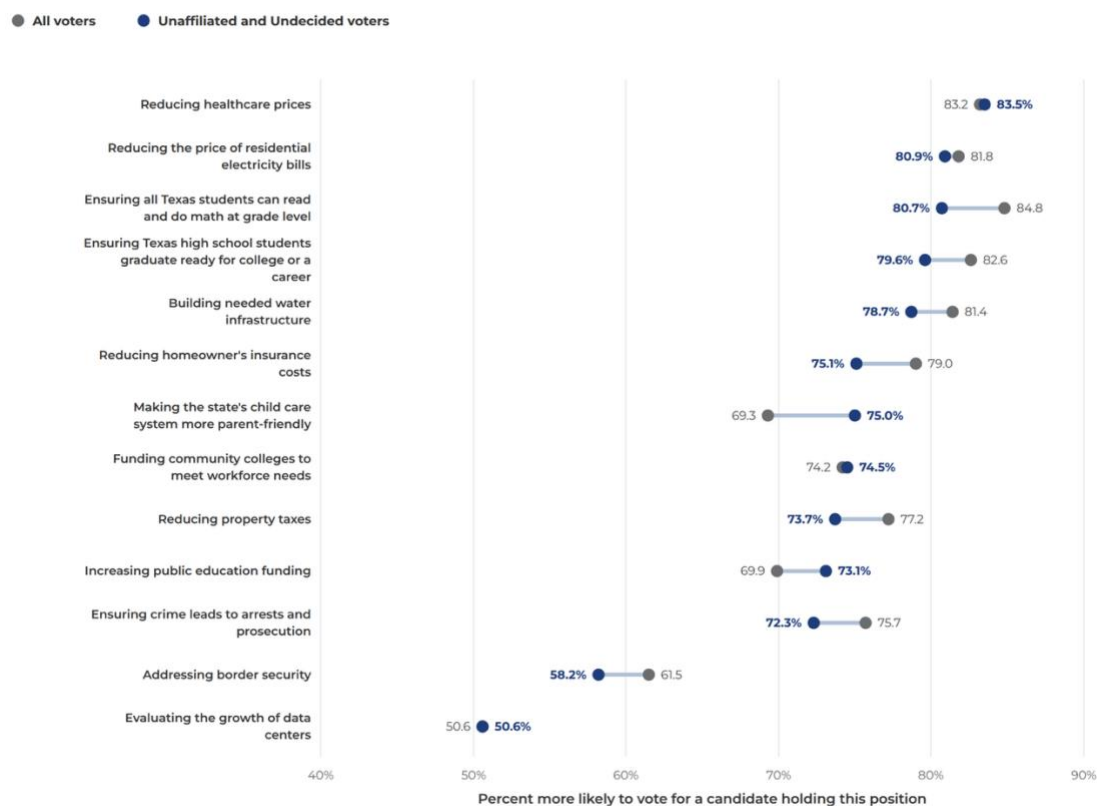
Detailed response distributions for all candidate-position questions are included in appendix 1.

Unaffiliated and Undecided Have Similar Priorities

The state's Unaffiliated and Undecided voters — those 16.7% defined in Section 1 — largely prioritize the same items as the overall electorate: healthcare prices, electricity bills and grade-level reading and math.

Unaffiliated and Undecided voters rank the issues much as everyone else does

Share saying a candidate holding each position would make them much or somewhat more likely to vote for that candidate. Positions are ordered by the unaffiliated and undecided reading, highest to lowest.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Unaffiliated and undecided voters are the group defined in Section 1: not a committed partisan of either party and mostly or fully undecided about November — 16.7% of Texas voters, 201 unweighted interviews.

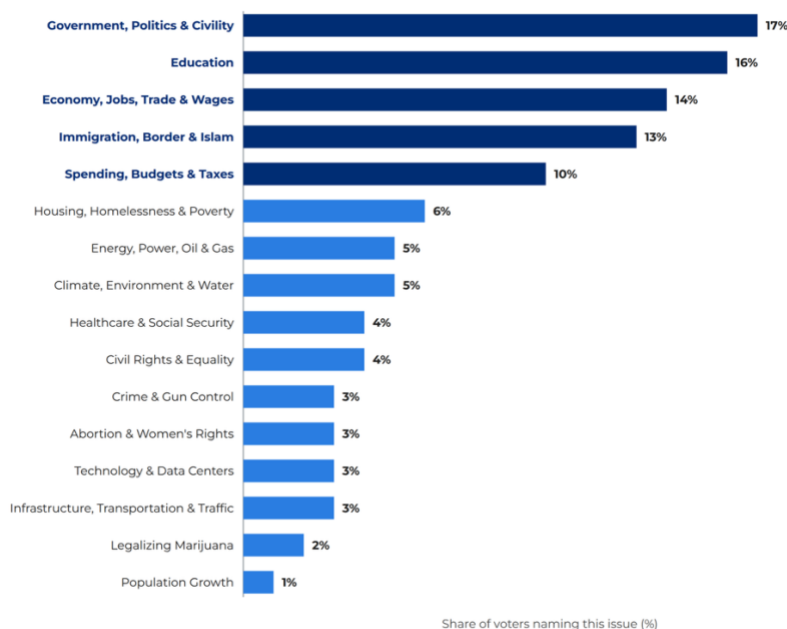
While the relative positions may shift slightly — healthcare affordability now tops ensuring all students can read and do math — the shifts are within the margin of error

for a sample of this size. The two items on which these voters run ahead of the overall electorate are making the childcare system more parent-friendly (75.0% against 69.3%, +5.7) and increasing public education funding (73.1% against 69.9%, +3.3), both of which remain within the margin of error.

What Voters Name Without Being Prompted

The candidate-position battery above asks voters to react to a list focused on the upcoming November election. In our poll, Texas 2036 asked voters a separate open-ended question to name, in their own words, the one issue Texas needs to address to be successful in the future.

The one issue Texas needs to address, in voters' own words



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Q8, asked open-ended: the one issue Texas needs to address to be successful in the future. Voters named an issue without being shown a list; responses were grouped by Baseline & Associates. Shares are rounded whole numbers on the vendor's weighted base; before rounding, the top five are 16.7%, 16.4%, 14.5%, 13.5% and 10.1%, and technology & data centers is 2.8%. Because answers touching two topics are counted in both categories, shares sum to more than 100%.

Government and political leadership draw the largest share of unprompted mentions (16.7%), with voter answers largely consisting of providing statements regarding their support or opposition to our current national and state leaders or general statements about the need to improve civility. This is followed closely by education (16.4%), with responses largely focused on school funding, student outcomes, curriculum and teacher pay. Broad answers regarding the economy, jobs and inflation drew 14.5%. Responses involving immigration, border security and Islam drew 13.5%. Spending, budgets and taxes — largely property taxes, when specified — follow at 10.1%.

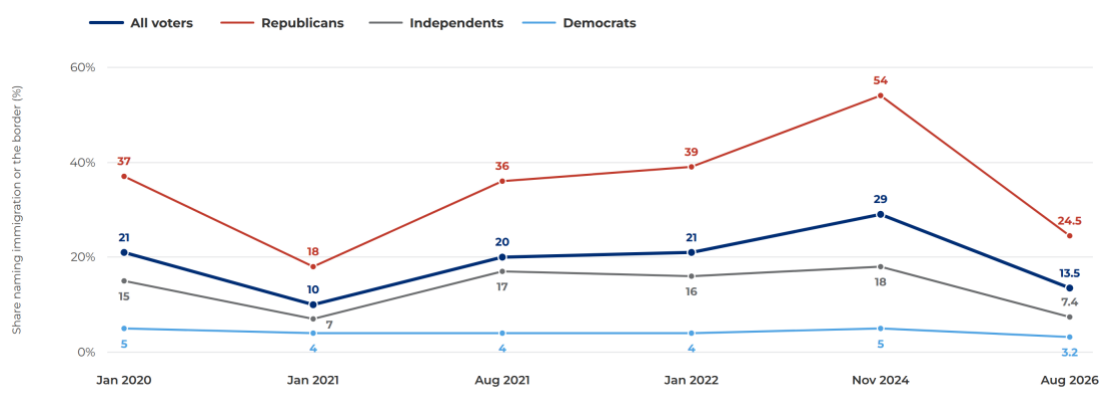
Data centers have drawn public and political attention throughout the fall election cycle, but only 2.8% of voters named them as the top issue for Texas to address. LGBTQ issues, including policies regarding transgender Texans, were named by less than 1% of respondents.

Immigration Has Faded as the Issue Named First

Texas 2036 has asked a version of the open-ended question since January 2020, which allows the salience of immigration to be tracked over six waves. The trend is the sharpest movement across our 10 prior Texas Voter Poll waves.

Immigration fell sharply as the issue Texans name first

Share of voters naming immigration or the border when asked, unprompted, for the one issue Texas needs to address.



Source: Texas Voter Poll, 2020–2026, conducted by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. The 2020–2024 waves are as published in the Baseline banner workbooks; August 2026 is from the crosstabs for this wave, which use the same coding scheme. Party groups use the vendor's combined partisan-tendency measure, the same grouping the archive banners use. August 2026 party figures are derived from the published banner (row percentages × row base = party base) and are accurate to roughly ±0.3 points.

Immigration and the border peaked in November 2024, when 29% of Texas voters named it unprompted — including 54% of Republicans. That meant a clear majority of the party's voters volunteered the same issue. By August 2026, the overall share had fallen to 13.5% and the Republican share to about 24.5%, a drop of more than half in both cases. Independents fell furthest in proportional terms, from 18% to about 7%.

Two features of the series are worth keeping in view. First, the decline returns immigration to roughly its January 2021 level rather than to a new low. Second, the issue never had comparable weight across parties: Democratic mentions have sat between 3% and 5% in every wave measured, so the entire trend line is a story about Republican and Independent attention.

Read alongside the prompted results, the two measures agree. Border security still moves Republican voters — 86.3% say a candidate's position on it would make them more likely to vote for that candidate — but far fewer now raise it on their own. Intensity among those who care has not disappeared, but the frequency of it being the top issue on a voter's mind in unprompted answers has declined.

At the same time, the contents of the immigration and border security open-ended response have shifted. Historically, this category was dominated by references to the security of the southern border. That has largely faded: just 3.6% of the sample cited issues involving border security specifically, with most of the responses within this category articulating broader immigration issues. In addition, 4.4% of the overall responses — roughly one-third of the responses bundled with immigration and border security — specifically cited concerns about Islam or Shariah law. References to H-1B visas also emerged to a lesser degree.

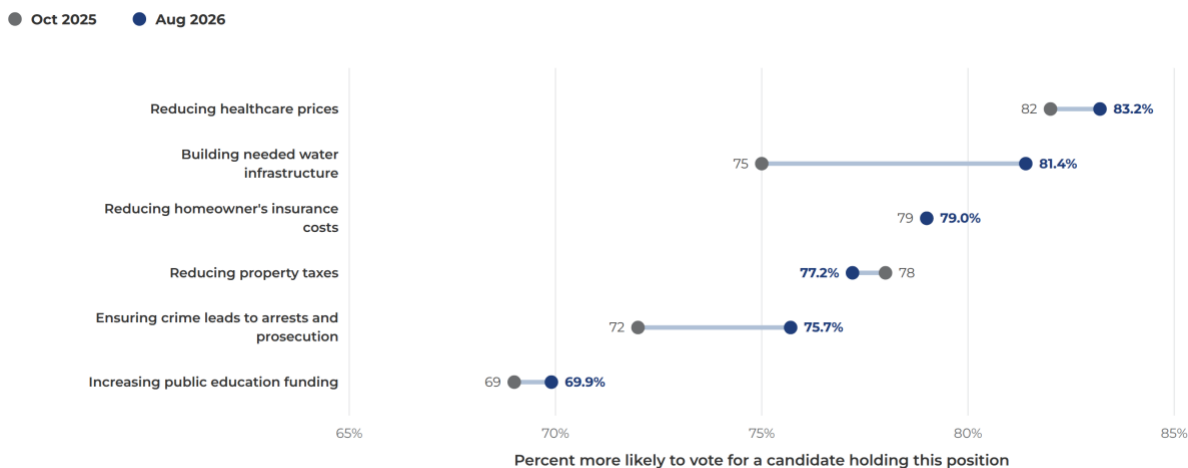
Voter Priorities Over Time

The candidate-position battery was first fielded in October 2025, in the context of whether it would lead to support during the March 2026 primary. Between poll administrations, Texas 2036 modified many of the options to reflect emerging issues, but six of the options remain unchanged except for the context of which election it would impact (primary versus general).

Over the past year, all six repeated items have either drawn a stronger positive response or declined within the margin of error. The largest gains were observed for building water infrastructure (+6.4 percentage points) and ensuring crime leads to arrest and prosecution (+3.7 percentage points). Reducing healthcare prices continues to lead, up 1.2 points year over year.

Growing support for water infrastructure leads year-over-year changes

Change in the share saying a candidate holding each position would make them more likely to vote for that candidate. Only the six positions worded identically in both waves are shown, ordered by their August 2026 reading.

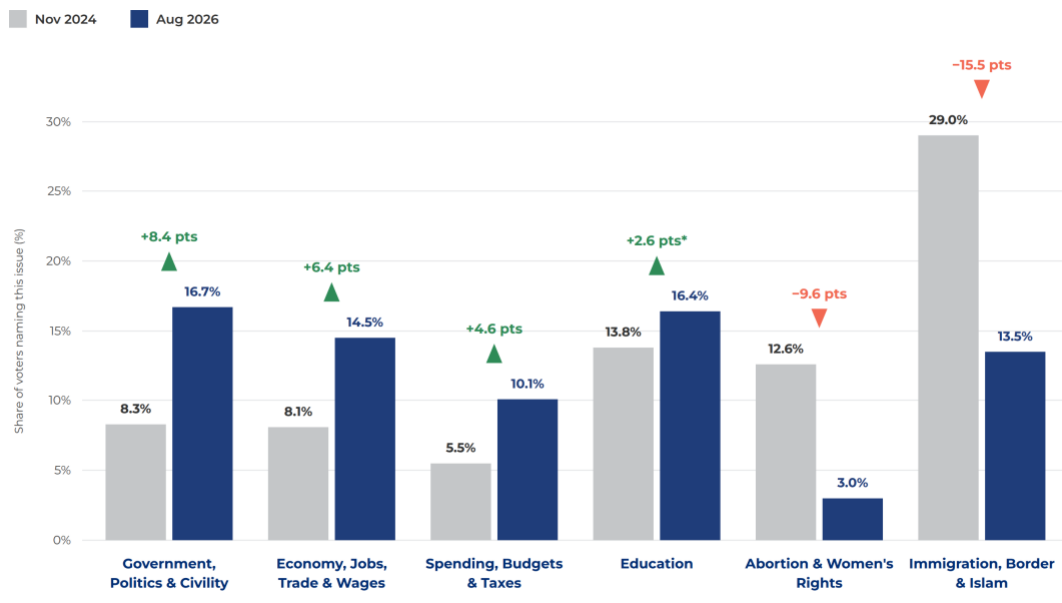


Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll. October 2025 as published in the Baseline banner workbook (whole percentages); August 2026 from this wave's crosstabs, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Within open-ended response, the largest swings since November 2024 involved border security and immigration (-15.5 percentage points); government, politics, and civility (+8.4 percentage points); and issues related to abortion and women's rights (-9.6 percentage points).

Immigration falls sharply as government and affordability concerns rise

The one issue Texas needs to address, in voters' own words: six categories, November 2024 against August 2026.



Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll. November 2024 as published in the Baseline banner workbook; August 2026 from this wave's crosstabs (Q8), conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. *Education change (2.6 percentage points) falls within the margin of error and should not be interpreted as a meaningful difference.

SECTION 3

Deep Dive: Healthcare Affordability

Key Takeaways

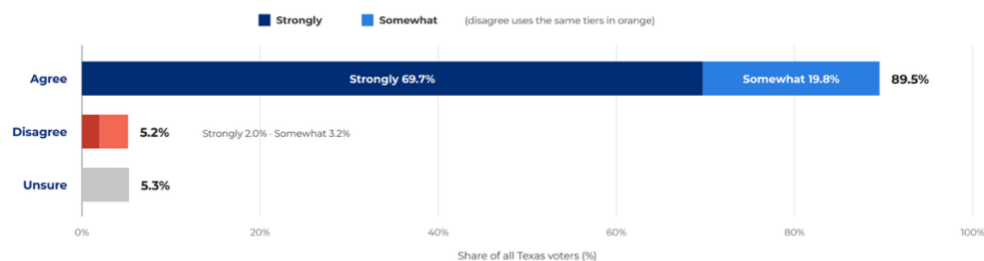
- **Market-Based Healthcare Reforms Have Strong Support Across All Texas Voters:** Requiring transparent, binding prices before non-emergency care drew 78.8% support and just 10.7% opposition — a +68.1 percentage point margin. Four in five voters (81.0%) want the state to take a more active role in keeping healthcare markets competitive as companies consolidate. Nearly nine in 10 (89.5%) voters agree that Texans should know who owns their hospitals and insurers.
- **Voters Strongly Oppose the Healthcare Status Quo:** In a battery of proposals that address healthcare reform from all ends of the political spectrum, the least popular option — by far — was doing nothing. Just 17.5% of voters supported maintaining the current healthcare status quo.
- **In Recent Years, Texas Voters Have Strengthened Their Support for Reform:** Compared against similar questions from 2023 and 2024 poll administrations, support for market-based reforms that utilize government intervention to increase competition has increased significantly. This is paired with a substantial decrease in voter opposition to government engagement to address shortcomings in healthcare markets.
- **Voters Want Action to Lower Teacher Health Insurance Premiums, Even If It Costs Hospitals:** Nearly seven in 10 voters (69.4%) support state action to negotiate lower hospital prices for the healthcare plan covering most Texas teachers, even if it would reduce hospital earnings. Just 16.4% of Texas voters oppose.
- **Voters Are Open to Innovative Insurance Coverage Structures That Give Them More Control:** Generally, when a Texan receives employer-sponsored health insurance, the employer selects the plan options for their workers. Just 22.7% of Texas voters prefer this status quo over proposals that would give them a set amount of money to pick options of their choosing. These strategies, often called Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangements, or ICHRAs, were preferred by 66.3% of voters.

Texas voters answer the healthcare affordability questions with consistency, including a broad agreement that something is wrong, broad agreement on market-based remedies that increase transparency and competition, and consensus toward action. As discussed in Section 2, voters' support for candidates who prioritize reducing healthcare prices exceeded 80% among all voters and was the top policy item among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters. This section details voter sentiments on specific healthcare policy issues.

Consolidation Within Healthcare Draws Concern and Calls for Action

In recent years, consolidation within the healthcare industry has increased, creating more complex patterns of vertical and horizontal integration across hospitals, physician practices and insurers. Nearly all Texas voters agree that, at a minimum, more transparency is needed. Just under nine in 10 Texas voters (89.5%) agree that Texans should have a right to know who owns their hospitals, doctor's offices and health insurers. This is a strongly held view among 69.7% of Texas voters.

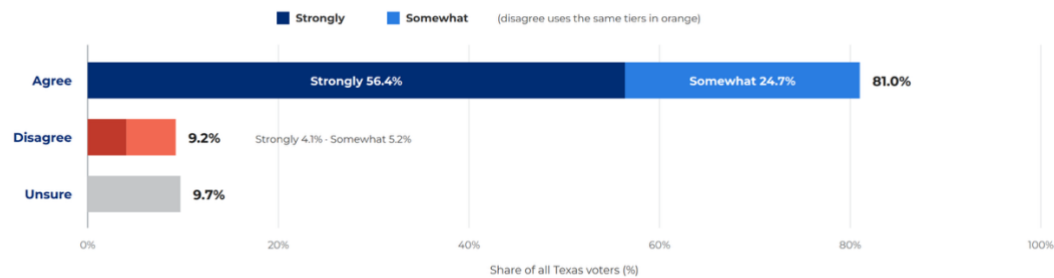
Q: “Do you agree or disagree that, as the pace of corporate healthcare mergers has increased, Texans should have a right to know who owns their hospitals, doctor's offices, and health insurers?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Beyond transparency, Texas voters express a clear desire for the state government to take a more active role in addressing consolidation and maintaining competition. Four in five voters (81.0%) agree the Texas state government should more actively regulate healthcare mergers.

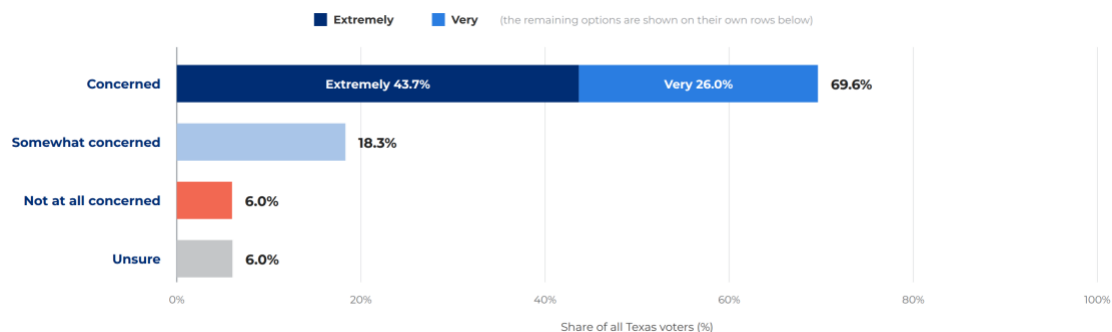
Q: “Do you agree or disagree that the Texas state government should more actively regulate healthcare mergers to ensure the market remains sufficiently competitive?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

As private equity ownership of medical practices continues to grow, seven in 10 Texas voters (69.6%) report being extremely or very concerned about investment groups and financial entities influencing medical decisions in practices they own — with 88% of Texans being at least somewhat concerned.

Q: “In recent years, large investment companies called private equity firms have purchased ownership stakes in doctors' offices and hospitals. Which best describes your level of concern regarding investment groups and financial entities influencing medical decision making in the doctor's offices, pharmacies, and hospitals in which they have an ownership stake?”

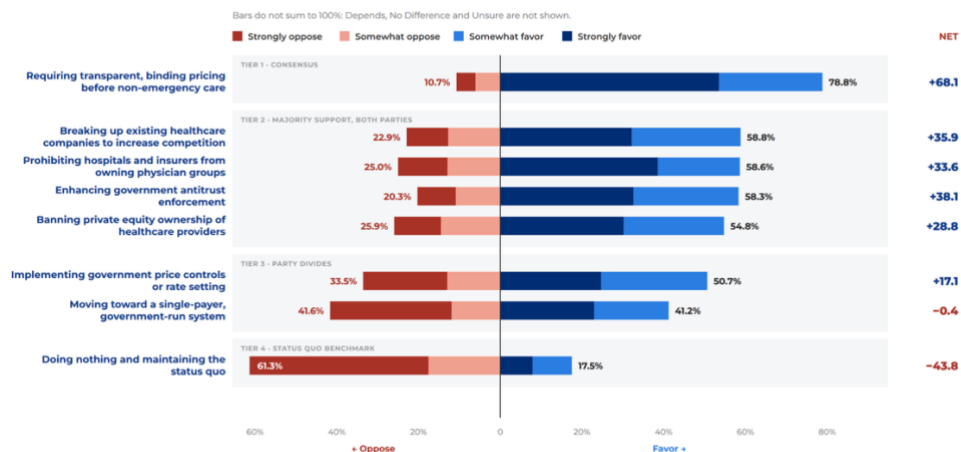


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding. Two ways to count “concerned.” The 69.6% figure counts only the top two tiers, “extremely” and “very concerned.” Adding “somewhat concerned” gives 88.0%. Figures elsewhere are not comparable unless they use the same cut.

Affordability Strategies Draw Large Margins — With Notable Exceptions

Texas 2036 asked voters whether they favor or oppose eight approaches to address healthcare affordability, including the option of doing nothing. The results separate into four tiers.

Q: Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following potential policy proposals designed to address healthcare affordability.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Net is total favor minus total oppose, computed from unrounded shares. The status quo option is included as a benchmark, not a policy proposal: 61.3% oppose doing nothing, the strongest opposition recorded on any item in the poll.

At the top: requiring binding price transparency for non-emergency care stands alone, favored by 78.8% and opposed by just 10.7%, producing a +68.1 net favorability margin.

A second tier emerges where policies are supported by more than half of voters and with strong net favorability margins, ranging from 28.8 percentage points to 38.1 percentage points. These include:

- Enhancing government antitrust enforcement (+38.1 point margin);
- Breaking up existing healthcare companies to increase competition (+35.9 point margin);
- Prohibiting hospitals and insurers from owning physician groups (+33.6 point margin); and
- Banning private equity ownership of healthcare providers (+28.8 point margin).

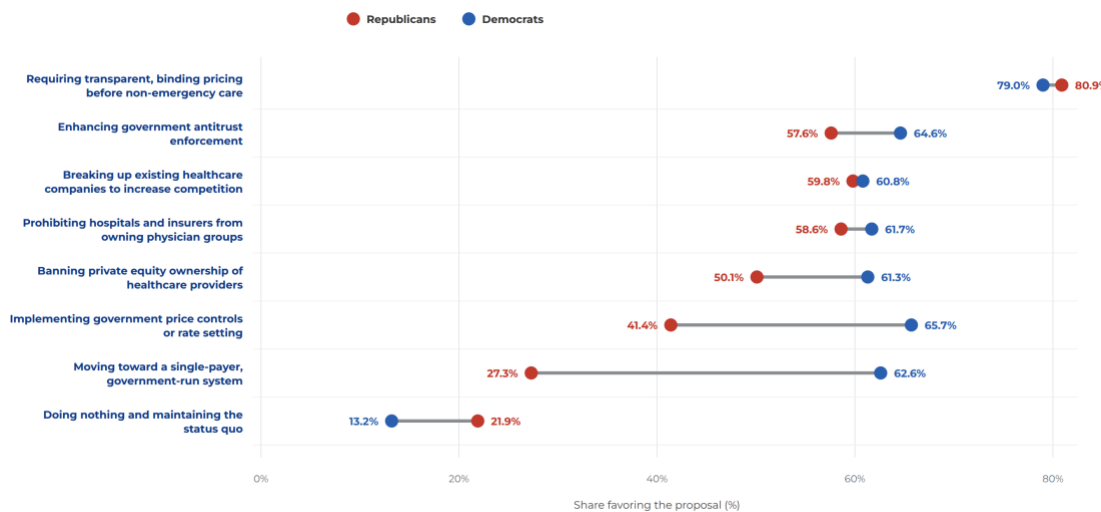
The first three are structural remedies aimed at market concentration, and they attract Republicans and Democrats at similar rates. Banning private equity ownership is the exception. It clears a majority overall, but Republicans divide 50.1% favor to 29.9% oppose, against 61.3% to 22.4% among Democrats — an 11-point partisan gap, roughly double that of the other three items in this tier. Seven in 10 voters (69.6%) are extremely or very concerned about private equity ownership of medical practices, but support for banning it is a separate and narrower proposition.

In the third tier, party preferences divide more starkly. Government price controls draw 50.7% support overall, but this includes support from 41.4% of Republicans compared to

65.7% of Democrats. Moving toward a single-payer healthcare system, like Medicare for all, fails to reach a plurality (41.2% favor and 41.6% oppose), and it produces the widest partisan gap in the section with support from 27.3% of Republicans compared to 62.6% of Democrats.

Partisan gaps present for some healthcare policy options

Share of Republicans and Democrats who strongly or somewhat favor each proposal. Bars do not sum to 100%; Depends, No Difference and Unsure are not shown.

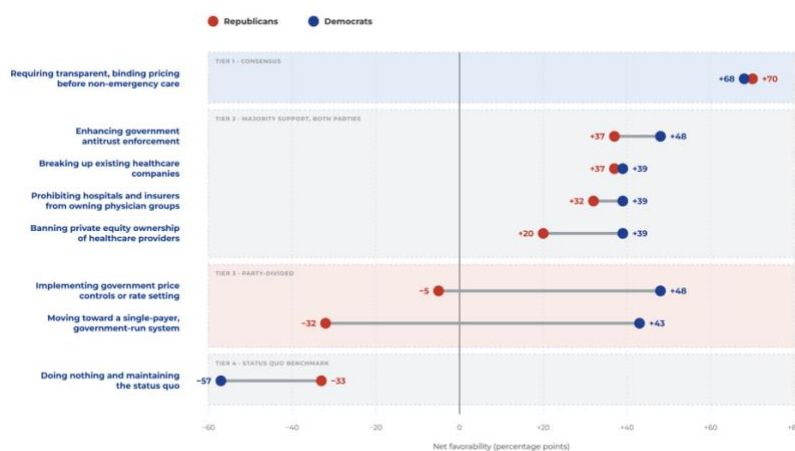


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Party groups use the vendor's combined partisan-tendency measure.

The partisan arithmetic on net favorability within the third tier is stark. Government price controls are net -5 percentage points among Republicans (41.4% favor, 46.0% oppose) and net +48 among Democrats. A single-payer system is net -32 percentage points among Republicans and +43 among Democrats.

Net Favorability by Party, Tier by Tier

Net favorability is the share favoring each proposal minus the share opposing it, within each party.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Party groups use the vendor's combined partisan-tendency measure. Net is computed from unrounded shares within each party.

In its own bottom tier, doing nothing and maintaining the status quo draws little support. Just 17.5% of voters favor inaction, while 61.3% oppose it. This is, by far, the least popular option for voters.

Voter Sentiment Over Time: Same Direction with Growing Intensity

Our Fall 2026 voter poll repeats three items from Texas 2036's November 2024 poll and five nearly identical items from our September 2023 poll. Across these windows, general sentiments have remained consistent but often with a growing intensity regarding those positions.

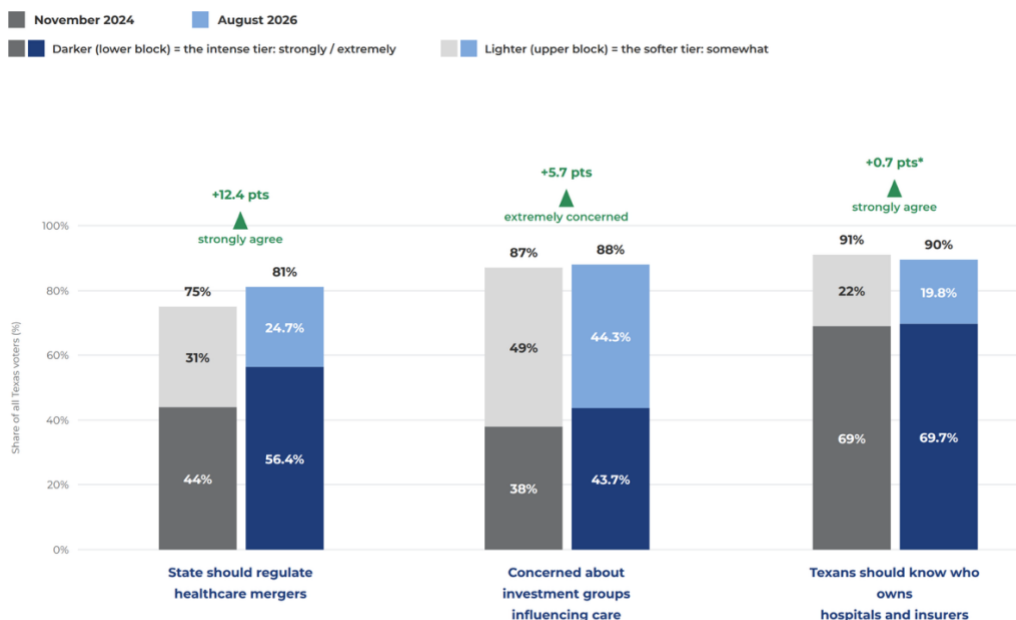
Two-Year Lookback: November 2024 to August 2026

Overall concern about investment groups influencing medical decisions is essentially unchanged (87% expressing at least some concern in 2024, compared to 88% now), but the share of voters who reported that they were extremely concerned rose from 38% to 44%.

Support for a more active state role in overseeing healthcare consolidation has also grown. The belief among Texas voters that the state government should more actively regulate mergers rose from 75% to 81%, with strong agreement jumping from 44% to 56% and disagreement falling from 15% to 9%.

Two years on: same direction, sharper intensity

Three healthcare questions repeated from Texas 2036's November 2024 poll. Each bar shows the full share holding the position, split into the intensely held tier and the softer tier. The figure above each pair is the change in the intense tier alone.



Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll. November 2024 as published in the Baseline banner workbook (whole percentages); August 2026 from this wave's crosstabs, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. *Ownership transparency change (0.7 percentage points) falls within the margin of error and should not be interpreted as a meaningful difference.

Agreement that Texans should be able to find out who owns their hospitals and insurers held at about nine in 10 (91% then, 90% now).

Three-Year Lookback: September 2023 to August 2026

Support for state action on healthcare consolidation has increased between poll administrations, while opposition has continued to harden around more aggressive measures like government price controls and moving toward a single-payer, government run system. An important caveat: The questions were not exactly identical. The 2023 battery followed a preamble describing industry consolidation that the current battery does not carry, and the 2023 physician-group item also covered pharmacies. Both differences make these directional readings rather than exact trends.⁵

Three years ago, Texas voters were split on breaking up existing healthcare companies, 42% in favor to 44% opposed. This has changed dramatically: Texas voters now favor breaking up existing healthcare companies by a 59% to 23% margin — a 38-point swing in just three years. Two other policy solutions have experienced notable longitudinal growth in their support margins: enhancing antitrust enforcement moved from +21 to +38, and prohibiting hospitals and insurers from owning physician groups moved from +17 to +34. In each case opposition, has fallen noticeably:

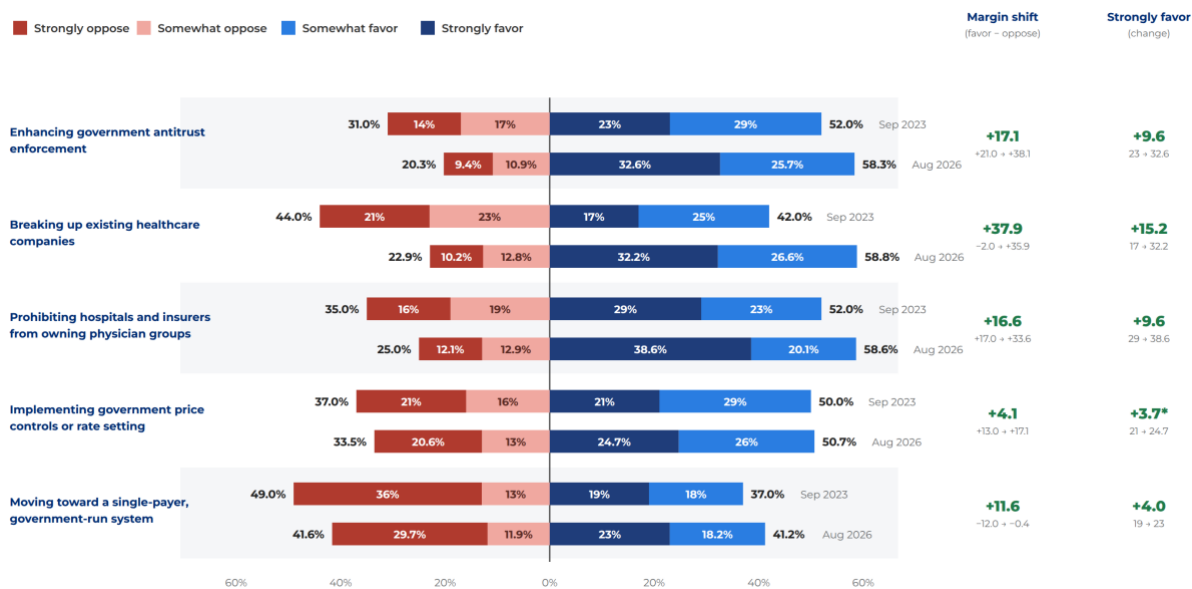
- Opposition to breakups dropped from 44% to 22.9% (-21.1 points). Strong opposition fell from 21% to 10.2% (-10.8 points).
- Opposition to antitrust enforcement fell from 31% to 20.3% (-10.7 points). Strong opposition fell from 14% to 9.4% (-4.6 points).
- Opposition to hospitals and insurers owning physician groups fell from 35% to 25% (-10 points).

Alongside decreasing opposition, these measures have observed a growth in the intensity of their support. Strong support for breaking up healthcare companies nearly doubled, from 17% to 32%. Strong support for antitrust enforcement rose from 23% to 33% and from 29% to 39% for prohibiting physician-group ownership by hospitals and insurers.

⁵ The 2023 question battery began with the preamble: “To address healthcare consolidation, please indicate if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following potential policy ideas.” The 2026 question battery begins with the preamble: “Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following potential policy proposals designed to address healthcare affordability.”

Three years on: positions on healthcare remedies have strengthened

Favor and oppose shares for the five consolidation remedies repeated from Texas 2036's September 2023 poll, each split into its strongly and somewhat tiers. The columns at right give the change in the favor-minus-oppose margin and the change in strong support.



Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll. September 2023 as published in the Baseline banner workbook (whole percentages); August 2026 from this wave's crosstabs, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. *Strong-support change for government price controls or rate setting (3.7 percentage points) falls within the margin of error and should not be interpreted as a meaningful difference.

Moving to a single-payer system gained ground — from 12 points net opposition to an even split — but retains the largest committed opposition of action-oriented policies in the battery at 29.7% strongly opposed, down from 36%. Support for government price controls is statistically unchanged at 50.7%, but its committed core grew from 21% to 25% as the somewhat-favor tier shrank. Price controls likewise hold an intense opposition bloc that has not moved, at roughly 21% strongly opposed in both waves. These are the two items where intensity grew for both support and opposition, which is a different phenomenon from the consensus forming around the first three structural remedies.

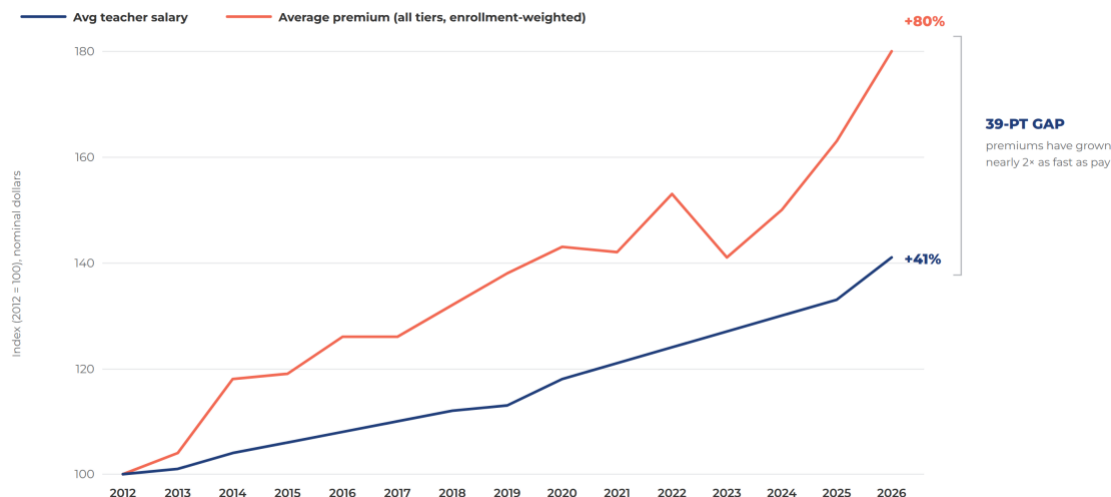
Of note: The share of voters answering "unsure" rose on every item, so some of the decline in opposition reflects voters moving into uncertainty rather than into support.

A Concrete Test Case: The Teacher Health Insurance Plan

In recent years, Texas teachers served by the TRS-ActiveCare plan — the state's largest health insurance program for Texas teachers — have seen their annual health insurance premiums grow at nearly twice the rate of their pay.

Texas teachers' health premiums are outpacing their pay

Since 2012, average TRS ActiveCare premiums have risen 80% — nearly twice the 41% growth in average Texas teacher salaries.

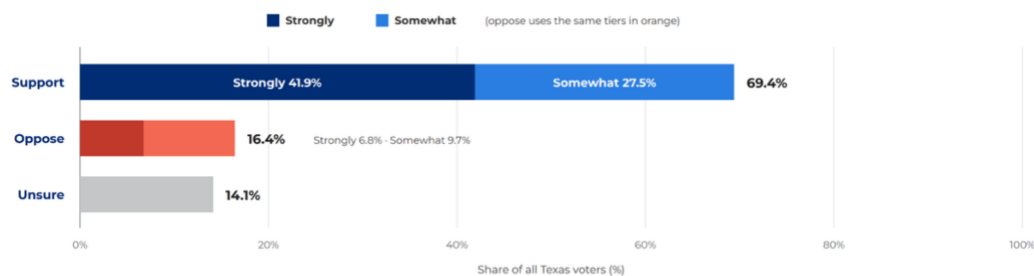


Source: TRS ActiveCare premium schedules (all tiers, enrollment-weighted) and Texas Education Agency average teacher salary data, indexed to 2012 = 100. This series is external to the Texas Voter Poll and reproduces the trend as previously compiled by Texas 2036; intermediate-year values are approximate.

Texas voters broadly support the state taking a more aggressive negotiating posture on hospital prices. Asked specifically whether the state should negotiate lower hospital prices for the health plan covering Texas teachers, 69.4% of voters were supportive, including 66.4% of Republicans, 65.6% of Independents and 75.8% of Democrats. This broad support came despite the question providing voters the tradeoff that hospitals would earn less if the state took a more aggressive negotiating posture.

The pattern matches the section's broader finding: when a proposal is specific, bounded and framed around addressing healthcare prices and affordability, support rises and the partisan gap narrows to single digits. Support held even after voters were told hospitals would earn less — the financial tradeoff did not suppress majority backing in any party group.

Q: “The state could negotiate lower hospital prices for the health plan covering Texas teachers. This would lower the premiums teachers pay and save taxpayers' money, but hospitals would earn less. Would you support or oppose it?”



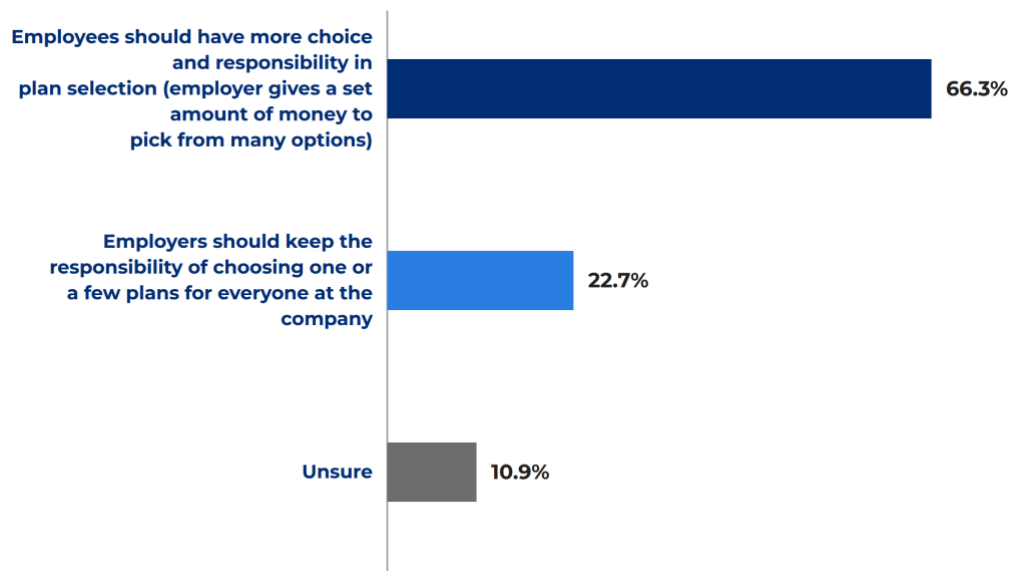
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

An Emerging Issue: ICHRAs and Employee Control Over Health Plan Choices

Most working Texans receive their health insurance through employer-sponsored arrangements where their employer selects a set of health plans and helps subsidize the costs of those selected plans. The employee then chooses from the options provided by their employer. Alternative plan selection processes exist where an employer gives a set amount of money to an employee to allow them to shop for health insurance. These are often called Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangements, or ICHRAs.

Within this context, two in three voters (66.3%) said employees should have more choice and responsibility in selecting their own health insurance plans, with the employer contributing a set amount, rather than the employer choosing one or a few health insurance plans for everyone (22.7% support). Support for that view did not meaningfully differ across party groups.

Q: “When it comes to health insurance offered through work, which comes closer to your view? Employees should have more choice and responsibility in plan selection, and employers should give each employee a set amount of money to pick the insurance plan that best fits their family from many options. OR Employers should keep the responsibility of choosing one or a few plans they believe are best for everyone at the company, so employees have less to sort through.”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

SECTION 4

Deep Dive: Education and AI

Key Takeaways

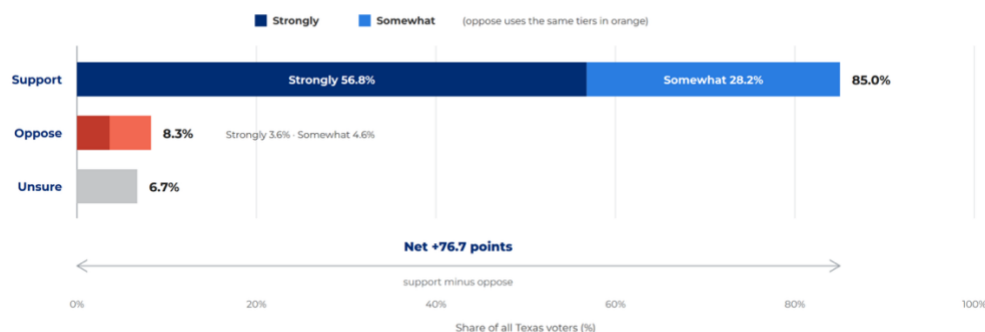
- **Transparency for Students' Career Outcomes Widely Supported by Texas Voters:** Requiring the state to track whether its education and job-training spending actually leads to good jobs draws 85.0% support, with no meaningful partisan gap (86.1% of Republicans, 84.8% of Democrats, 83.3% of Independents).
- **On AI in Schools, Voters Prioritize Student Protection First:** Protecting student data and privacy is rated extremely or very important by 84.5% of voters. Setting safety and quality standards follows close behind at 76.1%. Ensuring AI-driven instruction is effective is rated extremely or very important by 54.7% of voters.
- **Voters Are Ready to Rethink the Senior Year:** Nearly four in five (78.6%) say Texas should adjust the senior year of high school to better prepare students for college and careers, given changes in technology and the workforce, with majorities in every party group and among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters (82.7%).
- **Outcomes-Focused Positions Draw Stronger Voter Response Than Funding:** Measured by net likelihood to vote for a candidate, ensuring students read and do math at grade level (+79) and graduating students ready for college or a career (+76) rank atop the 13 candidate positions tested, while increasing public education funding (+54) ranks 11th. Increasing public education funding also produces one of the most partisan gaps in the battery: Republicans are net +29 and Democrats net +84, a 55-point split exceeded only by border security.

Education policy has some of the strongest agreement areas among Republicans and Democrats, but also areas of meaningful differentiation between parties. This section covers what voters want from schools, how they want results measured and where they draw lines around artificial intelligence.

85% of Voters Support Transparency for Education and Workforce Outcomes

When informed that Texas invests more than \$100 billion a year in education and job-training programs, 85% of voters support requiring the state to track and publicly report whether that spending leads to good jobs. Support is essentially identical across parties and stands at 84.3% among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters, essentially the same as the electorate.

Q: “Texas invests more than \$100 billion a year on education and job-training programs. Do you support or oppose requiring the state to track and publicly report whether these programs lead to good-paying jobs?”



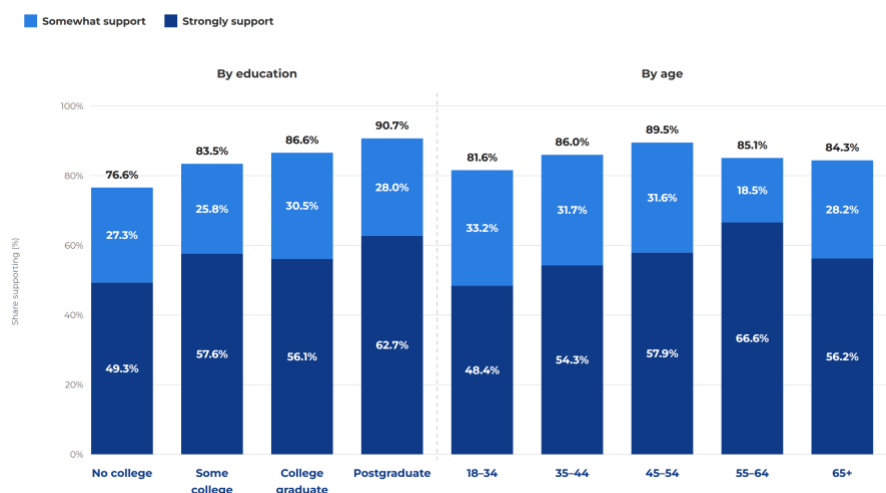
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

This proposal draws little resistance, with just 8.3% opposition.

Support is strong across party, region, income and age, with two populations worth noting.

1. Support rises with education, from 76.6% among voters with no college (with 10.8% opposed) to 90.7% among postgraduates (5.7% opposed), climbing at each step.
2. Intensity varies with age: Total support sits between 82% and 90% in every age band, but strong support climbs from 48.4% among voters under 35 to a peak of 66.6% among those 55 to 64 before falling back to 56.2% among voters 65 and over.

Q: “Texas invests more than \$100 billion a year on education and job-training programs. Do you support or oppose requiring the state to track and publicly report whether these programs lead to good-paying jobs?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Policy Context: Texas Workforce Commission Sunset

This year, the Texas Workforce Commission is going through the state's Sunset review process and receiving added attention for its data systems, which help policymakers understand whether the state's educational pipeline and career training programs are connecting students to good-paying jobs and economic mobility. Upgrades to this system would provide policymakers, educators and the public with the information needed to scale up programs that deliver results while addressing those that come short.

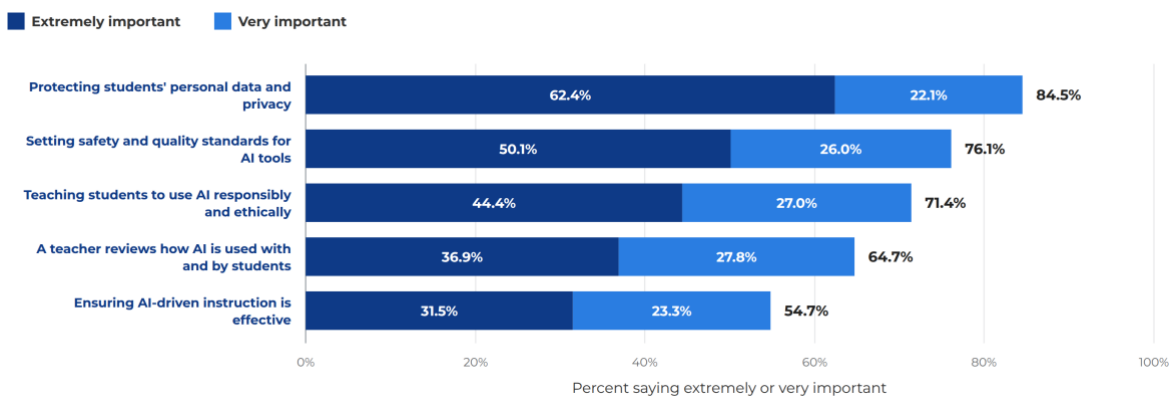
The poll's finding bears directly on the case for modernizing and integrating the state's workforce and education data systems. Across partisan lines, regions, income brackets and ages, Texas voters want to know whether the state's roughly \$100+ billion annual investment in education and workforce programs is or is not leading to good-paying jobs.

Artificial Intelligence: Student Protections Outrank Instructional Effectiveness

Voters were asked how important five safeguards would be if Texas public schools were to use artificial intelligence. While all items received strong support — including majorities stating that the tested items were extremely or very important — voters heavily prioritized student safety.

On AI in schools, privacy outranks performance

Share rating each safeguard extremely or very important, if Texas public schools use artificial intelligence, split into the two tiers.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Protecting student data and privacy ranks first with 84.5% of voters stating that it was extremely or very important, including nearly two-thirds of voters stating that these protections were extremely important. This is followed by 76.1% of voters stating that it was very or extremely important to set safety and quality standards for AI in education. Teaching students to use AI ethically and responsibly places third at 71.4%. Teachers

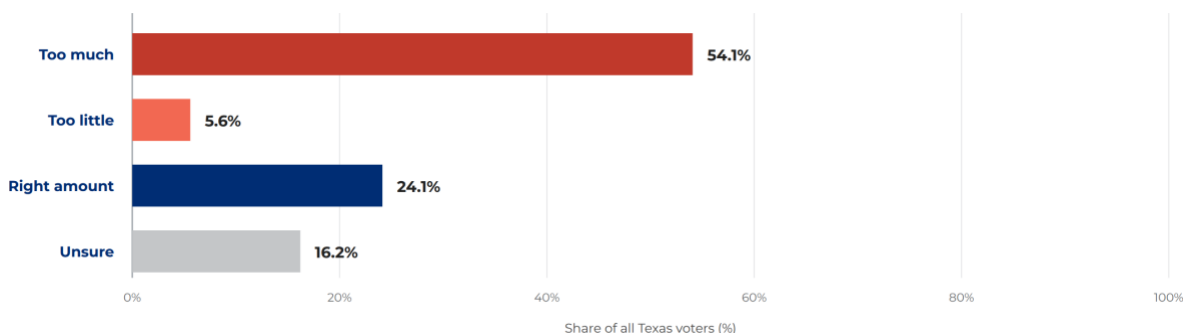
playing a role in reviewing how AI is used by students comes in at fourth with 64.7%. And in fifth, ensuring AI-driven instruction is effective draws 54.7% support. This ranking suggests voters may be more focused on preventing potential harms from AI before recognizing the upside potential. Voters are not indifferent to whether AI works; they simply rate it below student protection.

Notably, this battery lacks meaningful gaps between Republicans and Democrats. AI in schools is, for now, more of a consensus issue than a partisan one.

Too Much Screen Time?

A majority of voters (54.1%) believe Texas students get too much screen time during school hours. Republicans (60.5%) say so more often than Democrats (47.2%). About a quarter (24.1%) say the amount is right, with 5.6% saying students get too little and 16.2% unsure. Parents and non-parents answer similarly, with 52.2% and 54.6% saying students get too much screen time.

Q: “Regarding the use of computers, tablets and other devices during school hours, do you believe Texas students have too much, too little, or about the right amount of screen time?”

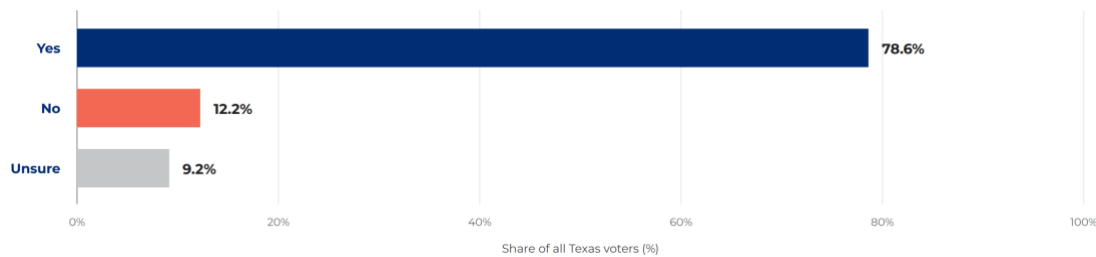


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Voters Want More Rigor for High School Senior Year

Nearly eight in 10 voters (78.6%) say Texas should change its approach to the senior year of high school, adding more focus and rigor to prepare students for postsecondary study and an evolving workforce. This is one of the broadest consensus positions in the survey, with virtually no partisan gaps (77.3% of Republicans, 79.0% of Independents and 80.1% of Democrats).

Q: “Given the rapid changes in technology and the workforce, should Texas change its approach to senior year of high school, making it more focused and demanding with the goal of better preparing students for college and careers?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Just 12.2% of voters oppose the idea outright. These responses run in the same direction as recent legislative action: In 2025, the Texas Legislature redefined the goals of public high schools in House Bills 2 and 120⁶, orienting around a new focus for all students to graduate with the skills and credentials necessary to find a job or pursue postsecondary education without the need for remediation. In the second special session's House Bill 8,⁷ the Legislature also modified the state's A-F system to reward schools more points in the accountability system when students achieve more rigorous college and career metrics. These 2025 efforts built on earlier 2023 initiatives to improve community college funding incentives, positioning credential attainment via dual credit in high school as one of the most valuable outcomes.

In Selecting Candidates, Voters Prioritize Educational Outcomes

As discussed in Section 2, education-related positions rank among the highest in the candidate battery: 84.8% of voters say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate committed to ensuring all Texas students can read and do math at grade level, the highest response of any position tested. That response is broadly shared across parties, including Democrats (88.1%), Republicans (85.6%) and Independents (78.1%). Preparing high school students for college or a career follows at 82.6%, with a similarly narrow partisan spread. On the other hand, increasing public education funding draws 69.9% overall support but ranges from 55.3% of Republicans to 87.9% of Democrats — a 32.6-point gap.

Measured by net margins (the share more likely to support a candidate minus the share less likely), the contrast is sharper still. Grade-level reading and math is the strongest item in the poll at net +79 (84.8% more likely, 5.5% less likely), and college and career readiness is second at +76, narrowly ahead of reducing healthcare prices (+75.5) and electricity bills (+75). Increasing public education funding comes in at net +54, 11th of 13,

⁶ House Bill 2, 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2025).

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=HB2>

House Bill 120, 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2025).

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=HB120>

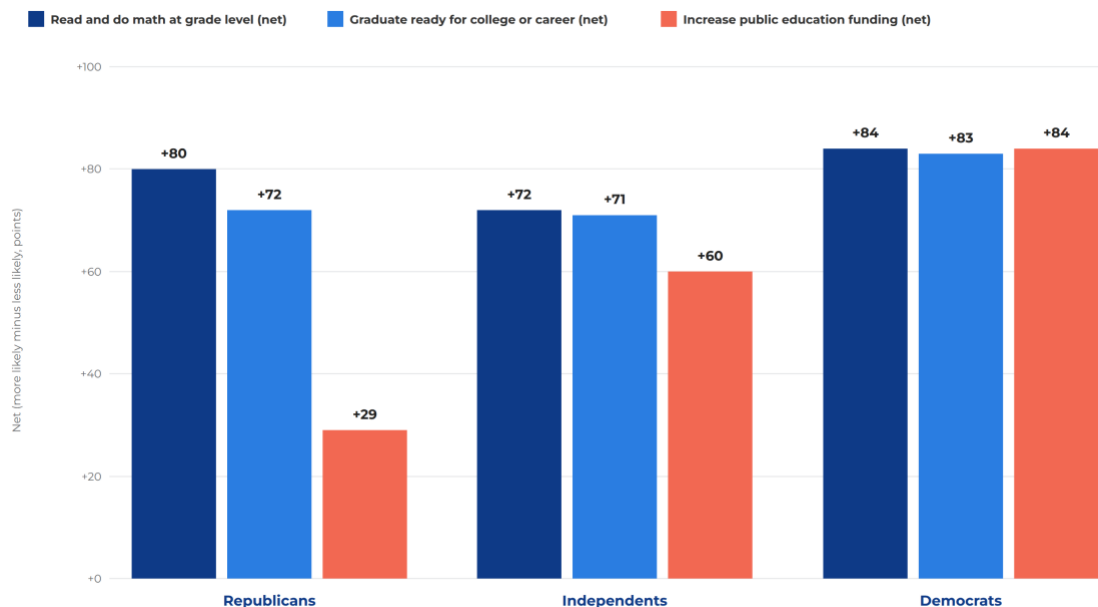
⁷ House Bill 8, 89th Texas Legislature, Second Called Session (2025).

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=892&Bill=HB8>

ahead of only border security (+38) and data centers (+25). It also produces the second-largest partisan gap in the battery: Republicans are net +29 and Democrats are net +84, a 55-point split exceeded only by border security (92 points).

Outcomes command consensus; funding splits the parties

Net support for each candidate position: share more likely to vote for the candidate minus share less likely.



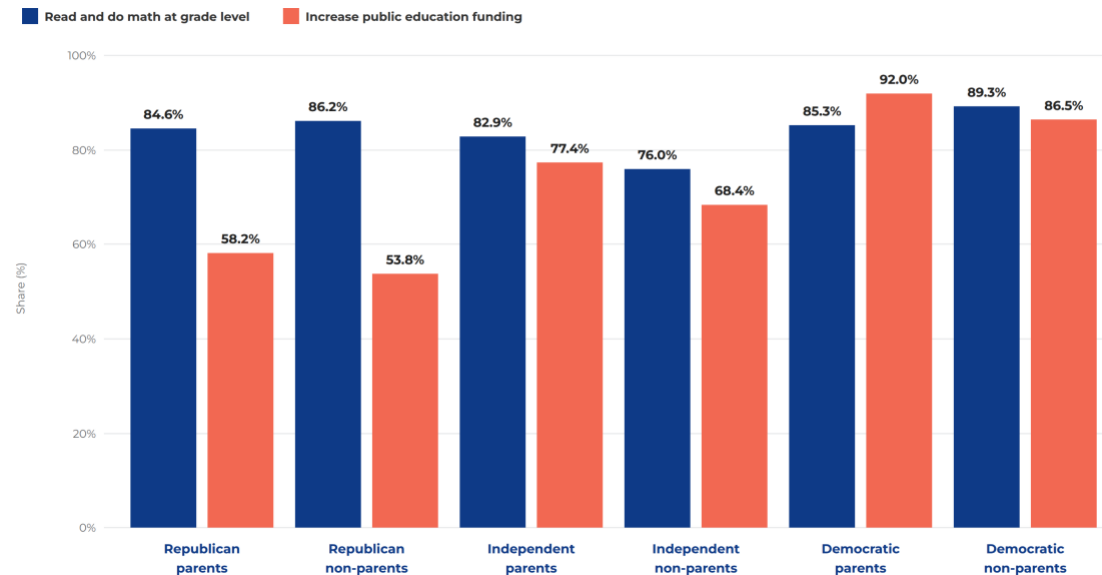
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Support for funding also reflects respondent age and family status in a way that outcomes do not. Voters under 35 are more likely than voters 65 and older to say a candidate's commitment to increasing public education funding would make them more likely to vote for that candidate (76.1% to 65.3%), as are parents of children 18 or younger compared to non-parents (73.3% to 68.4%). This distinction doesn't arise with support for grade-level outcomes, which draw between 79.5% and 86.2% across every age group and among both parents and non-parents, and the oldest and youngest voters answer within about two points of each other.

Parents are warmer to funding than non-parents in every party group, though the difference isn't statistically significant given the smaller sample sizes involved.

Parents are warmer to school funding in every party; outcomes draw everyone

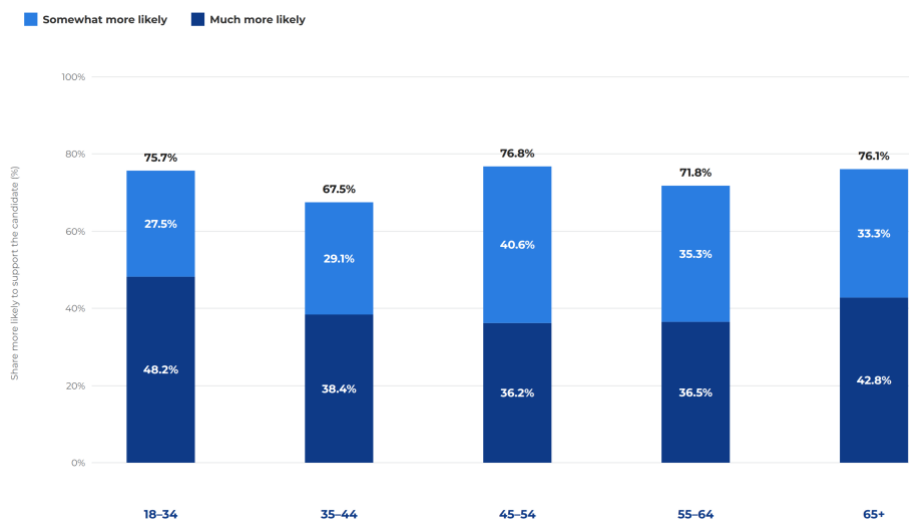
Share more likely to vote for a candidate holding each position, by party group and whether the voter has children 18 or younger.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Funding community colleges to meet workforce needs shows broad support, with 74.2% of voters more likely to vote for a candidate who takes the position. The intensity of this support peaks among the youngest voters, with 48.2% of voters under 35 saying that they are much more likely to support a candidate. The position also reached Unaffiliated and Undecided voters with little downside: 74.5% of Unaffiliated and Undecided voters are more likely to support a candidate with this position, with only 11.6% less likely.

Q: “Would a candidate committed to funding community colleges to meet workforce needs make you more or less likely to vote for that candidate?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Statewide: 74.2% more likely, 41.4% much more likely, 10.9% less likely. Among unaffiliated and undecided voters: 74.5% more likely and 11.6% less likely, indistinguishable from everyone else (74.2% and 10.8%)

SECTION 5

Deep Dive: Childcare and Family Friendliness

Key Takeaways

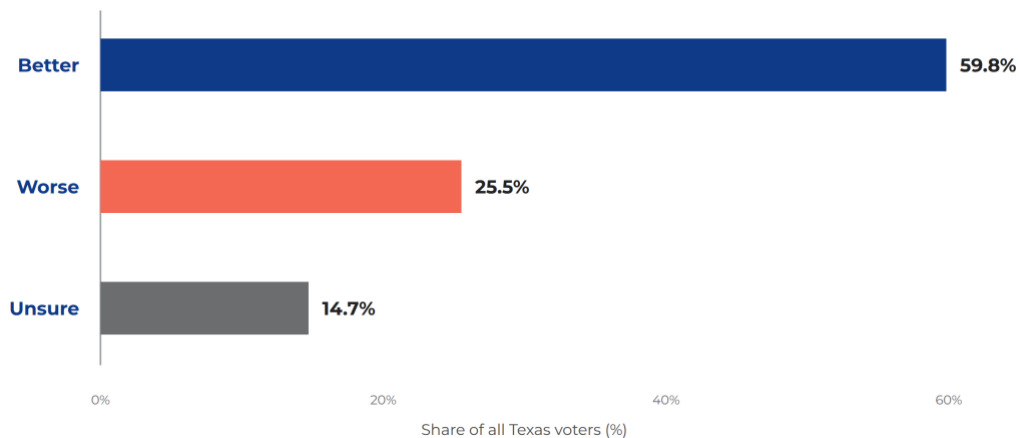
- **Most Texans Believe Texas Is a Better Place to Raise a Family — But Not Everyone:** Six in 10 voters (59.8%) call Texas a better place than the rest of the country to raise a family, against 25.5% who call it worse. The judgment differs by party: 83% of Republicans say better, while a narrow majority of Democrats (50.6%) say worse.
- **Texas Voters Say It's a Problem that Families Are Having Fewer Children Than Desired:** A recent Texas 2036 childcare report found that 56.7% of parents with a child under six say childcare costs have affected their decision about whether to have more children. In this voter poll, respondents were asked whether it is a problem that many Texas families report having fewer children than they want. A majority of voters (58.1%) said it is a problem, including more than two-thirds of Republicans.
- **Voters Lean Toward Childcare Quality Over Serving More Children:** Asked how the state should prioritize childcare dollars for children under the age of six, 44.7% would prioritize higher-quality education even if fewer families are served, against 34.8% who would serve more families at lower quality. One in five (20.5%) were unsure.
- **Voters Place Emphasis on Parent-Friendly Childcare:** Making the state's childcare system more parent-friendly would make 69.3% of voters more likely to support a candidate. Unaffiliated and Undecided voters are directionally higher still, at 75.0%.

Texas 2036's mission statement identifies a component of our organizational goal as ensuring that Texas is the best state to raise a family. This section examines how voters judge that status, how they're viewing state childcare policy and to what extent they're concerned that Texas parents are having fewer children than desired.

Is Texas a Better Place to Raise a Family?

Asked to compare Texas with the rest of the U.S., 59.8% of voters say Texas is the better place to raise a family and 25.5% say it is worse. That is a 34-point margin, with what initially appears to be a strong pro-Texas consensus.

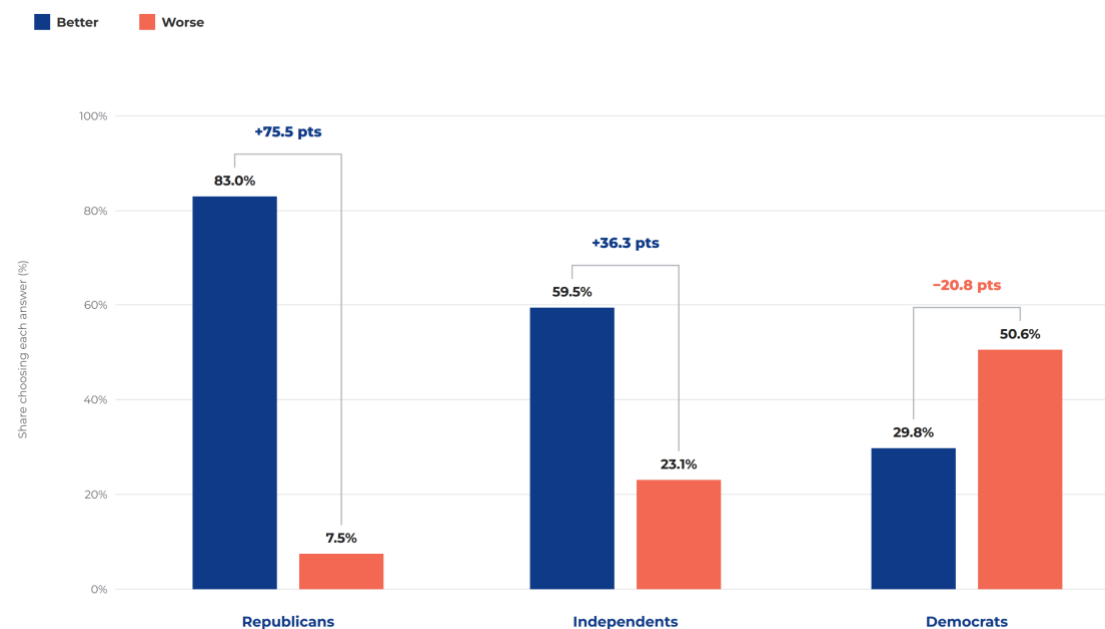
Q: “When comparing Texas to the rest of the United States, do you believe Texas is a better or worse place to raise a family?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

The topline conceals an unusually wide split. Republicans answer better over worse by 83.0% to 7.5%, a margin of more than 75 points. Democrats reverse it, 29.8% to 50.6% — a margin of 20.8 percentage points in the opposite direction. Independents align almost exactly with statewide figures, with 59.5% responding better and 23.1% stating worse. Unaffiliated and Undecided voters answer “better” at almost exactly the statewide rate (59.2%), but fewer of them answer “worse” (20.9% against 25.5%), with the remainder moving into unsure (19.9% against 14.7%).

Q: “When comparing Texas to the rest of the United States, do you believe Texas is a better or worse place to raise a family?”



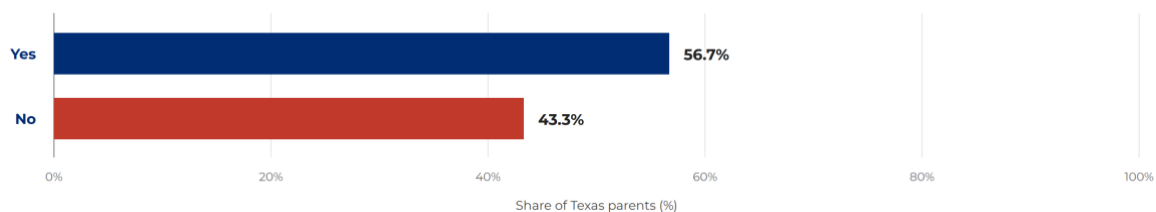
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Shares choosing “Unsure” are not shown, so each pair sums to less than 100%. Party groups use the vendor’s past-vote grouping, which counts voters unsure of their past vote with the independents.

Fewer Children Than Families Want

In early 2026, during the research for a recent report on the state of childcare in Texas, Texas 2036 surveyed 975 Texas parents and conducted 11 focus groups across the state to learn more about the experience of raising children in Texas.⁸ The research identified some stark challenges regarding affordability, family tradeoffs and economic impacts. Among the more surprising findings from that research: a majority of Texas parents (56.7%) with at least one child under six reported that the price of childcare has impacted their decision to have more children. These affordability challenges are real: the Texas Workforce Commission has recently projected that the cost per child per month for childcare supported by that agency would double from 2021 (\$517) to 2029 (\$1,065).⁹

FLASHBACK: TEXAS 2036 PARENT POLL

Q: “Have childcare-related costs impacted your family planning and decision to have more children in the future?”



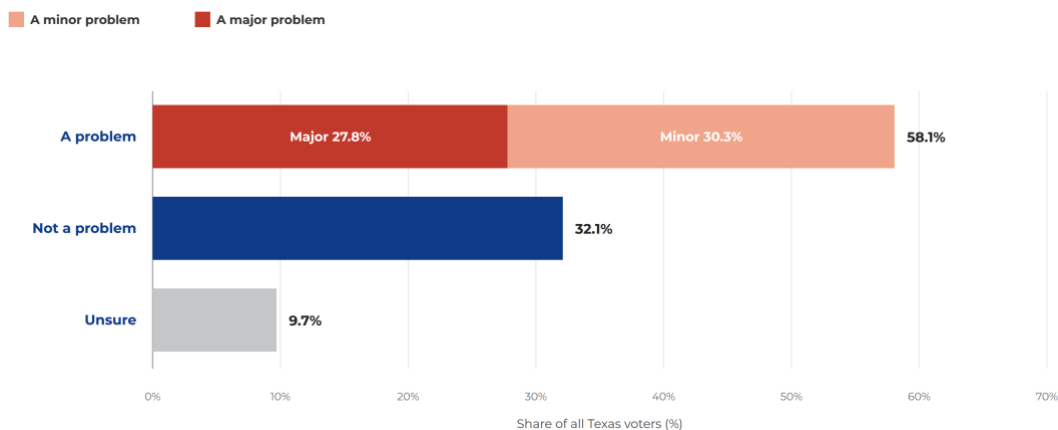
Source: Texas 2036 State of Child Care Survey, fielded January-March 2026. All respondents Texas parents with children under age 6. Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

In this voter poll, we tested voter sentiments regarding whether they viewed it as a problem that Texas parents were indicating that they were having fewer children than they wanted. The responses suggest an emerging policy concern: 27.8% of voters called this a major problem and another 30.3% a minor one. About a third (32.1%) said it is not a problem at all.

⁸ Texas 2036 Statewide Child Care Survey, conducted Jan. 14–Mar. 2, 2026 by DARO for Texas 2036; 975 parents, 286 child care providers and 138 employers.

⁹ Texas Workforce Commission, *Legislative Appropriations Request Performance Measures, Fiscal Years 2023–2025* (2022), reporting a 2021 actual average cost per child per month of \$517.33; and *Legislative Appropriations Request Performance Measures, Fiscal Years 2028–2029* (Aug. 18, 2026), projecting an average cost per child per month of \$1,065 in 2029.

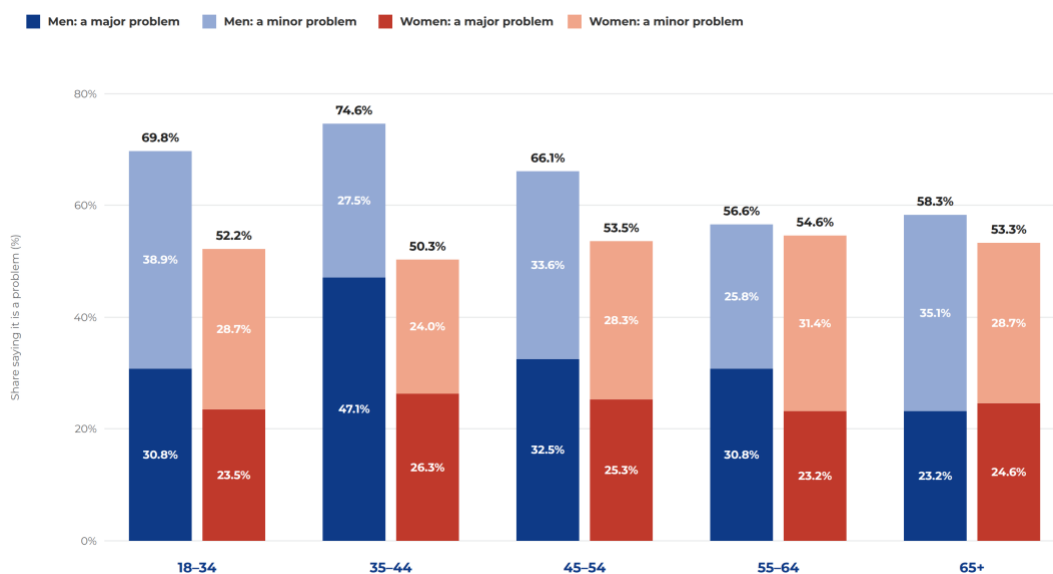
Q: “Many Texas families report having fewer children than they say they want. Do you consider this to be: a major problem, a minor problem, not a problem, or are you unsure?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

Men are more likely than women to call this a major problem (31.5% to 24.6%). The intensity peaks among men aged 35 to 44, nearly half of whom (47.1%) describe it as a major problem — more than double the rate among men 65 and over (23.2%).

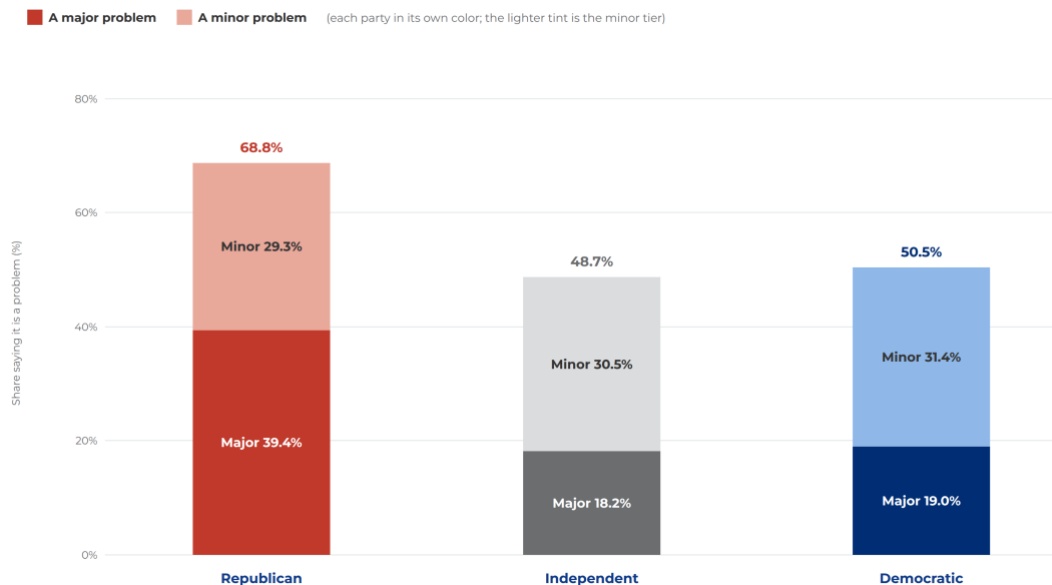
Q: “Many Texas families report having fewer children than they say they want. Do you consider this to be: a major problem, a minor problem, not a problem, or are you unsure?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Unweighted interviews across the five age bands. Men: 143, 123, 127, 108, 165. Women: 146, 112, 124, 124, 181. Smaller cells carry wider margins of error.

Republican voters call this a major problem at more than twice the rate of Democrats or Independents (39.4% against 19.0% and 18.2%), and more than two-thirds of Republicans (68.8%) call it a problem at all, against just over half of Democrats (50.5%).

Q: “Many Texas families report having fewer children than they say they want. Do you consider this to be: a major problem, a minor problem, not a problem, or are you unsure?”



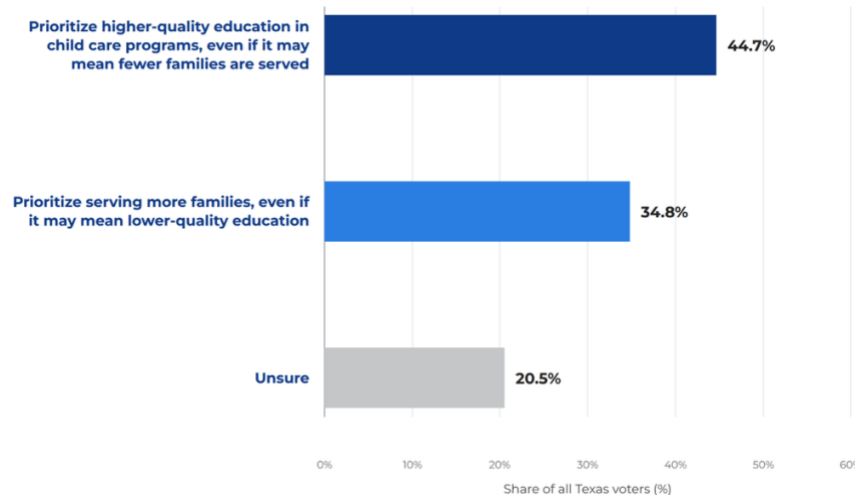
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Party groups use the vendor's combined partisan-tendency measure. Unweighted interviews: Republican 550, independent 269, Democratic 550.

Childcare Funding Trade-Offs: A Choice Many Voters Decline to Make

In childcare policy, the state government must navigate a difficult marginal dollar question: with limited resources, should the state prioritize (a) ensuring that the children served in state-financed programs receive the highest quality education possible, or (b) serving more children, even if the state can't ensure the same level of quality.

The results among voters were directional, but not decisive. Quality wins narrowly, 44.7% to 34.8%, with 20.5% unsure.

Q: “When the state invests tax dollars in child care for children under the age of six, how should it prioritize those state funds? Prioritizing higher quality education in child care programs, even if it may mean fewer families are served. OR Prioritizing serving more families, even if it may mean lower quality education.”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

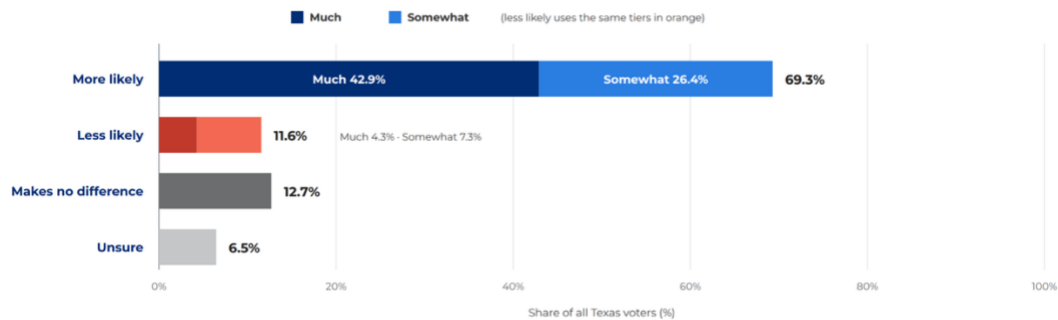
Republicans prioritize quality by a wider margin (50.8% to 29.3%) while Democrats tilt the other way, leaning slightly toward access (37.0% to 42.7%). Unaffiliated and Undecided voters lean toward quality a little more than the electorate as a whole (48.2% to 32.4%).

The unsure share here — one voter in five — is the largest of any question in this section and among the largest in the poll. Many voters are declining to resolve this difficult question, leaving both options — neither of which is perfect — below the majority threshold.

Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters Emphasize Parent-Friendly Childcare Policies

By a large margin (+57.7 percentage points), Texas voters express a preference for candidates who seek to make the state's childcare system more parent friendly. Overall, more than two-thirds of voters (69.3%) reported that they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate this November promoting this parent-centric approach.

Q: “This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?” — Making the state's child care system more parent-friendly.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Three-quarters of Unaffiliated and Undecided voters (75.0%) say a candidate committed to making the state's childcare system more parent friendly would be more likely to get their vote, against 69.3% of all voters. That 5.7-point difference is the largest for this group on any of the 13 candidate positions, though it does not clear the margin of error at this sample size.

This framing faces minimal voter pushback. Just 11.6% of voters said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate with this position. The risk on this issue is indifference rather than opposition. About one voter in five says it makes no difference or is unsure.

SECTION 6

Deep Dive: Infrastructure, Water and Energy

Key Takeaways

- **Water Investment Achieves Near-Universal Consensus:** Prioritizing state water projects toward achieving specific outcomes is extremely or very important to nearly 80% of voters. Building needed water infrastructure would make 81.4% more likely to vote for a candidate.
- **On the Grid, Reliability Comes First, Price Second and Environmental Impact Third:** When asked to rank priorities when considering grid and electricity reforms, Texans named grid reliability (53.5%) and electricity prices (33.0%) at the top of their list. Combining first and second choices, 81% name reliability, 73% name price and 30.6% choose emissions reduction.
- **Data Center Issues Draw Limited Enthusiasm:** Evaluating the growth of data centers finished last of 13 candidate positions at 50.6%. Fewer than 3% of respondents answering an open-ended question about the state's top issue named data centers.

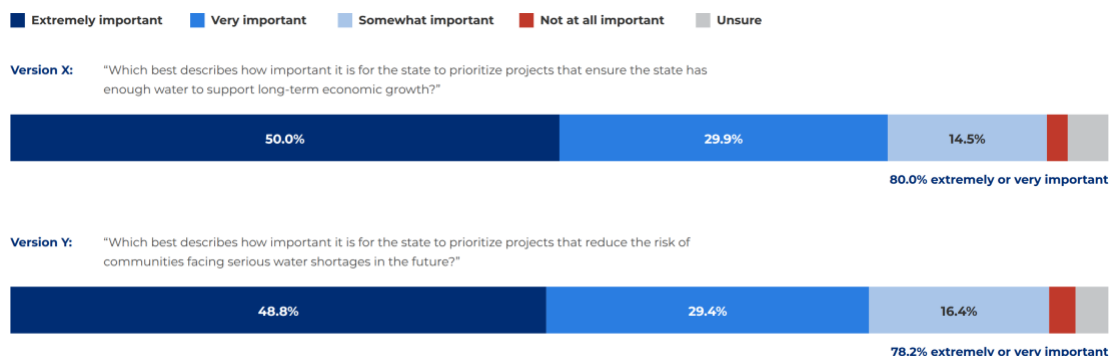
Texas cannot grow without water and power, and voters' views on both shows limited partisan division. This section covers voters' priorities for water infrastructure, how they would have the Legislature weigh grid reliability against price and emissions and how the fastest-moving infrastructure story of the year — data centers — has yet to register with them.

Water: Agreement Without a Partisan Edge

Nearly four in five voters (79.1%) say it is extremely or very important for the state to prioritize water projects. The question was split-sampled between two framings: prioritizing water projects to ensure enough water to support long-term economic growth and reducing the risk of communities facing serious shortages. Both produced similar results, indicating the support is not a product of issue framing.

Texans support prioritization of water projects

Split sampled question yields comparable levels of support among Texas voters



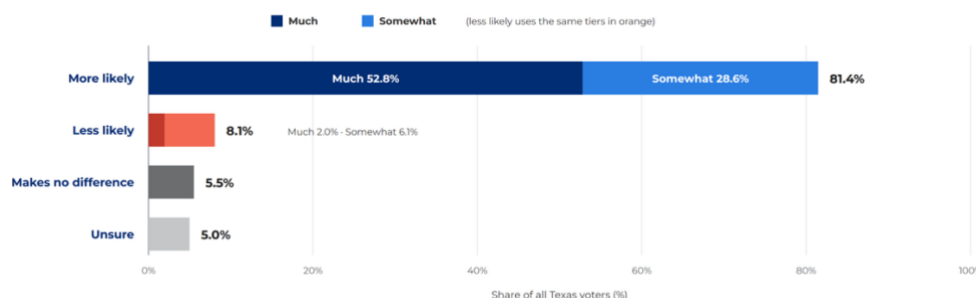
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100%. Q25 was split-sampled: each respondent saw one version only. Combining extremely and very important gives 80.0% on Version X and 78.2% on Version Y, a 1.8-point difference that is well inside the margin of error for half-samples of this size. Pooled across both versions, 79.1% of voters say extremely or very important.

The two bars above show the split-sample halves. Framing water infrastructure development and investment as economic growth capacity and framing it as shortage risk produce nearly the same result. In both versions, “extremely important” is the single largest response.

Water infrastructure development achieves bipartisan consensus. When the split samples are merged, Democrats (82.5%), Republicans (77.5%) and Independents (77.2%), all expressed a preference for prioritizing water projects that achieve specific benefits. Paired with the 81.4% who say a candidate's commitment to water infrastructure would make them more likely to vote for that candidate, these point to support that holds across party lines.

Notably, support for political action on water-related issues appears to be increasing. In our October 2025 poll, we asked voters whether building water infrastructure would make them more likely to support a candidate in the upcoming primary elections. At that time, 75% of voters responded affirmatively, which was a sizable level of support but ranked eighth of the 13 positions tested. In this poll, less than a year later, support now stands at 81.4%, with voters ranking it fifth among the 13 positions tested.

Q: “This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, then would you be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?” — Building needed water infrastructure.



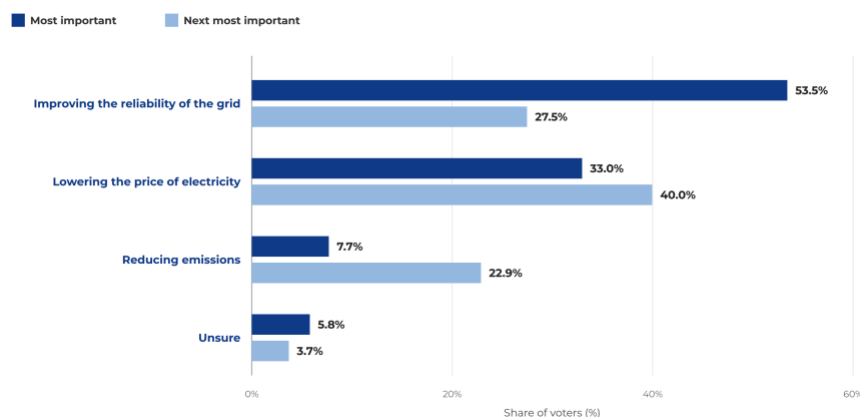
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

The Grid: Keep It On, Then Make It Cheaper

In this poll, Texas 2036 asked voters how they would want the Legislature to prioritize certain factors when evaluating electricity and grid reforms. The response was clear: voters prioritized grid reliability first, affordability second, and environmental factors third.

Improving the reliability of the grid is the clear leader, named as the highest priority by 53.5% and as the second highest by another 27.5%, combining for 81.0%. Lowering the cost of electricity was the top priority for 33.0% and the next priority for 40.0%, combining for 73.0%. In a distant third, 7.7% named reducing emissions first and 22.9% named it second, combining for 30.6%.

Q: “As the Texas Legislature considers electricity and grid reforms, which one of the following is the most important to address?” — and “And which is the next most important issue?”



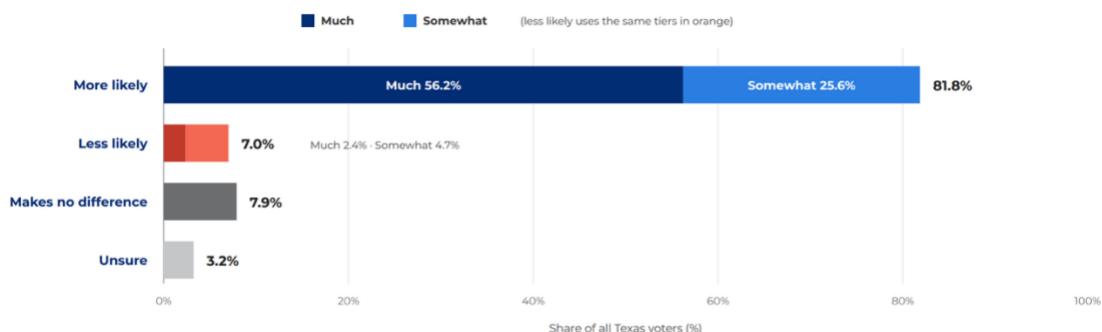
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages.

Party shapes the second choice more than the first. Republicans name price as their second priority at 51.9% against 32.8% of Democrats, while Democrats are more than twice as likely as Republicans to name emissions (34.1% to 14.3%). On the first choice, however, every party group puts reliability at the top.

Lower Electricity Bills Carry Broad Voter Appeal

While reliability leads when voters are asked to choose among grid priorities, electricity affordability also ranks near the top when tested as a candidate position. Reducing the price of residential electricity bills would make 81.8% of voters more likely to vote for a candidate, ranking fourth among the 13 positions tested and producing a net +74.8 margin. The response is also among the least partisan in the battery: Republicans are net +76 and Democrats net +78.4, a 2.4-point gap tied for the smallest among the 13 positions. Independents respond somewhat less strongly, with 75.8% saying the position would make them more likely to support a candidate, while 80.9% of Unaffiliated and Undecided voters say the same. More than half of all voters (56.2%) say it would make them much more likely to support a candidate, the third-highest intensity in the battery.

Q: “This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, then would you be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?” — Reducing the price of residential electricity bills.

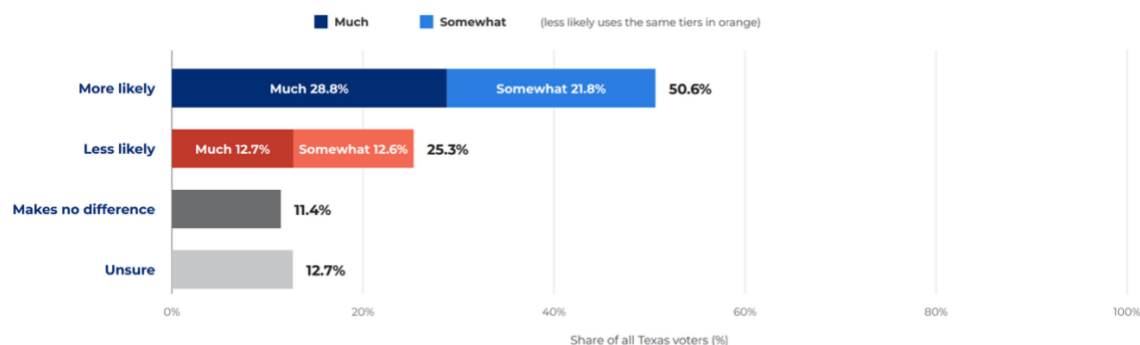


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Data Centers: An Issue Still Forming

Evaluating the growth of data centers ranks last of the 13 candidate positions tested, with 50.6% more likely to support. Unlike border security, which finishes low because it splits the electorate, data centers finish low because no group reacts strongly to the position, as framed: Republicans reach 54.4%, Democrats 49.5% and Independents 45%.

Q: “This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, then would you be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?” — Evaluating the growth of data centers.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

This item draws the largest combined “makes no difference” and “unsure” share of any of the 13 candidate positions tested, and the much-more-likely share is roughly half what water or electricity attracts.

The item is a little stronger among college graduates (55.8% responding they’re much or somewhat more likely) than among voters with no college (42.5%). Geographically, 56.3% of voters in rural counties responded that they were much more likely or somewhat more likely to support a candidate committing to evaluate data center growth, which is higher than those in small and medium metropolitan communities (45.8%). Large metropolitan communities fall between the two (51.1%) but are not meaningfully distinguishable from either.

The narrow gap between support and opposition, paired with the highest “unsure” share of any position tested, suggests voters may still be forming an opinion on this issue or that the question’s framing — asking about “evaluating the growth of data centers” rather than a more direct “banning data centers” or “promoting data centers” — left voters unsure on how to answer even if they had strong opinions.¹⁰

Notably, however, data centers largely failed to register on the open-ended question that asked voters to identify the most important issue for Texas to address to be successful in the future. Despite the public attention on this issue, it registered as the top issue in the minds of just 2.8% of Texas voters.

¹⁰ It is also unclear from this poll whether question delivery shaped responses. Voters who heard the question read aloud were nearly twice as likely to respond negatively as those who read it on a screen (33% vs. 18% less likely to support). That 15-point gap is the largest of the 13 items in this battery, and the median (or typical) item in this group shows a gap of about 7 points between hearing and reading.

SECTION 7

The Optimism Divide: Texans' Views of Their State Differ Sharply by Party

Key Takeaways

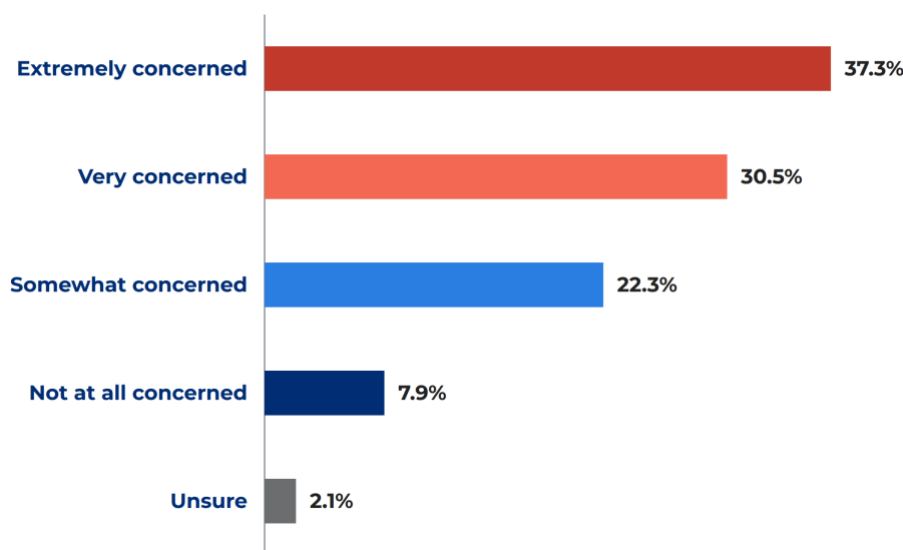
- **Concern About Texas' Future Reaches All-Time High Across Our Poll's 10 Waves:** Nearly 68% of Texas voters reported being “extremely” or “very” concerned about the future of Texas, the highest level recorded across 10 waves of the Texas Voter Poll. This includes a record high 85% among Democrats and a 15 percentage point year-over-year increase among Republicans (to 58%).
- **Economic Optimism Remains, but Views Differ Sharply by Party:** A majority of voters believe Texas will have a stronger economy than the rest of the U.S. over the next four years, and a narrow margin say the state's economic growth has benefited them personally. Republicans offer considerably more positive assessments than Democrats in both measures.
- **The Party Gap Is Wider on Future Opportunity Than on Personal Control:** Nearly six in 10 voters are confident there will be good opportunities for people like them to use their skills and get ahead, while 55% say they mostly feel able to shape their own path. Among Republicans, 72.0% are confident there will be good opportunities for people like them to use their skills and get ahead, versus 46.1% of Democrats, a 26-point gap. The two are closer on personal agency: 64.9% of Republicans and 48.1% of Democrats say they mostly feel able to shape their own path, a 17-point gap.
- **Fewer Than Half Say Texas Is Taking the Proper Actions for Its Future:** Just 38.8% say Texas is taking the proper actions to be *the best state* 20 years from now to live, work and raise a family, while voters are essentially split when asked whether it is taking the proper actions to be *one of the best states*, 43.1% said yes to 41.0% no. Both versions are well below the 53% (best) and 59% (one of the best) recorded when a very similar question was last asked in January 2020.¹¹

¹¹ January 2020, Texas 2036 Voter Poll. The 2020 item asked whether Texas was taking proper actions to ensure it “remains” the best state (or one of the best states) and used a four-point scale plus “depends.” The 2026 item asks whether it “will be,” on a yes/no scale with an unsure option. This data provides a direction, but inexact, comparison.

While Texas' economy continues to outpace the nation on job creation and economic growth, Texas voters are deeply concerned about the state's future. That concern coexists with generally positive views of the Texas economy and their own prospects. Across these questions, views differ sharply by party: Republicans consistently offer more positive assessments than Democrats, while Independents often fall somewhere between the two. The result is a more complicated picture than what concern alone might suggest. Texans can be worried about where the state is headed while still expressing confidence in its economy, their own opportunities and their ability to shape their futures.

Concern About the Future of Texas Reaches Record Level

Q: "Which best describes your level of concern regarding the future of Texas?"

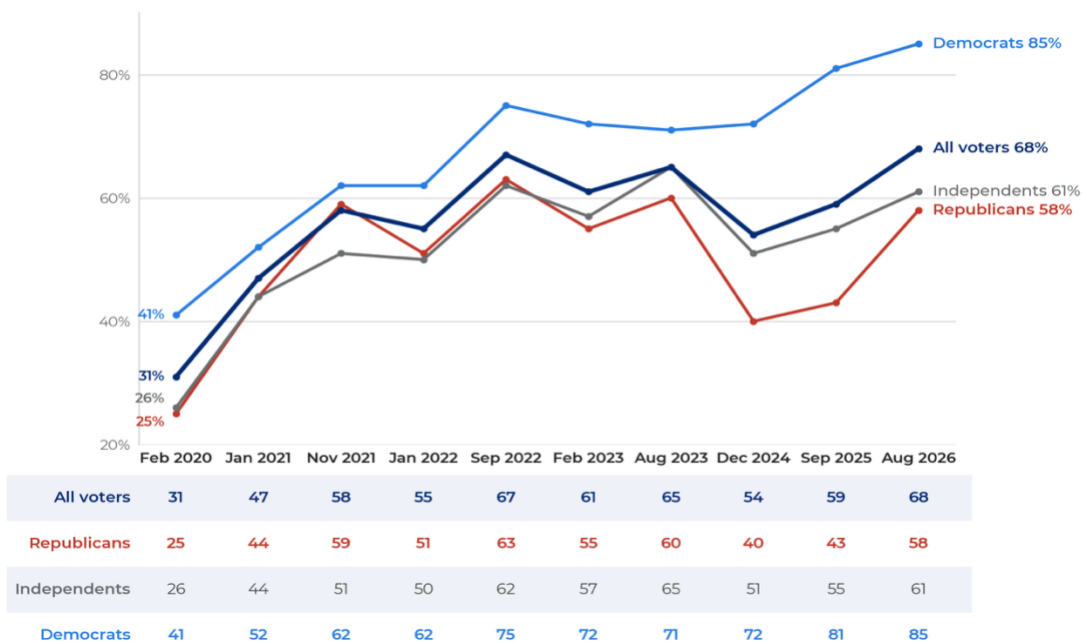


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Concern about the state's future is at its highest reading in the 10 waves of this poll. Two-thirds of Texas voters (67.7%) describe themselves as extremely or very concerned.

Concern is high across party groups, although the level and trends differ. Democrats register the highest concern of any party group, at nearly 85% in this year's poll. Their concern has more than doubled from 41% in the first poll in 2020 and has risen more over the full series than among other party groups. Over the past year, however, the largest movement came from Republicans, whose reports of being extremely or very concerned rose 15.1 points (to 58.1%) versus 6.2 points among Independents and 3.6 points among Democrats.

Q: "Which best describes your level of concern regarding the future of Texas?"



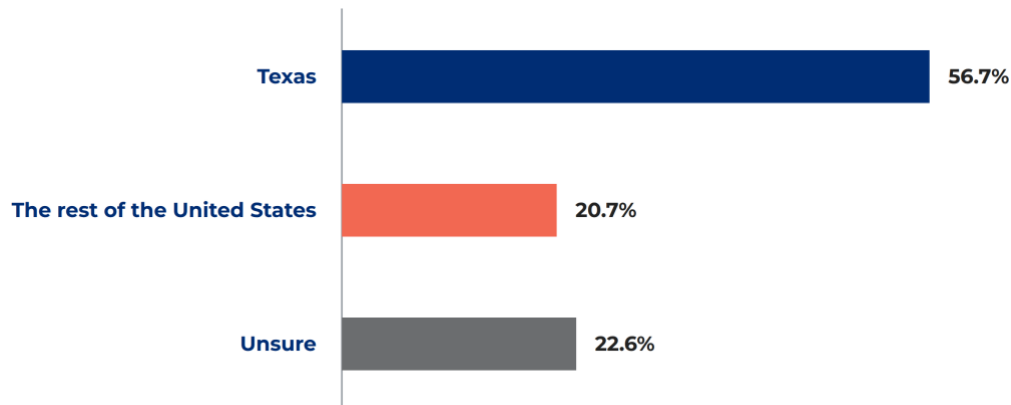
Source: Texas 2036 Texas Voter Poll, ten waves, February 2020-August 2026, conducted by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. Fall 2026 wave conducted August 22-26, 2026 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Lines show the "Extremely concerned" and "Very concerned" shares combined, rounded to whole numbers.

Among Republicans, concern levels have jumped over the past year, from 43% in 2025 to 58% today. Despite this jump, levels of Republican concern remain below previous highs, which reached into the low-60s in both September 2022 and August 2023. Among Democrats, levels of concern increased 4 percentage points over the past year to 85%, which is the highest level of any party group registered across the series. Among Independents, levels of concern increased 6 percentage points over the past year to 61% but remain below the previous high of 65% recorded in August 2023.

Yet concern about Texas' future does not translate neatly into pessimism about the state's economy or voters' own prospects. On several measures that follow, majorities continue to offer positive assessments, even as substantial differences by party remain.

Economic Optimism Remains a Majority Position

Q: “When comparing Texas to the rest of the United States, which do you believe will have the stronger economy over the next four years?”

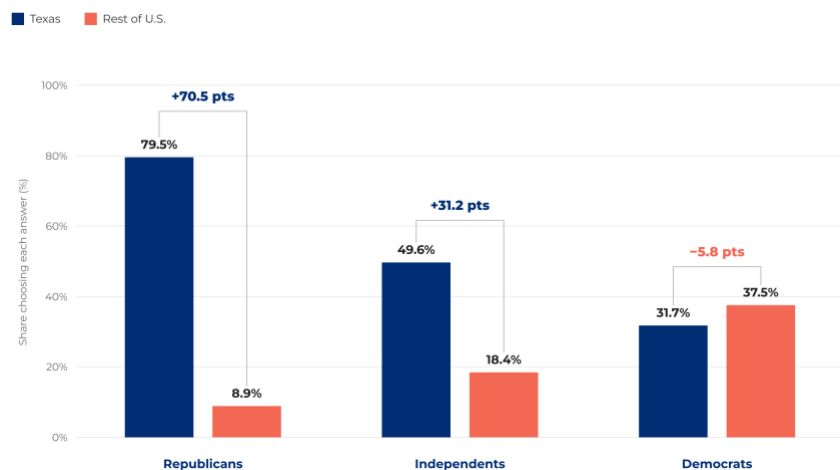


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

Despite record high levels of concern, a majority of Texas voters (56.7%) believe that the Texas economy will outperform the rest of the U.S. economy over the next four years. Just 20.7% of Texas voters felt that the rest of the U.S. would outperform Texas, with a larger share — 22.6% — unsure.

State economic optimism was noticeably higher among Republicans than Democrats. Among Republicans, 79.5% believed Texas would have the stronger economy, versus 8.9% believing the rest of the U.S. would. Among Democrats, the plurality (37.5%) felt the rest of the U.S. would have the stronger economy, versus 31.7% selecting Texas and 30.7% unsure. Independents fall between the two groups, with 49.6% selecting Texas and 18.4% the rest of the U.S.

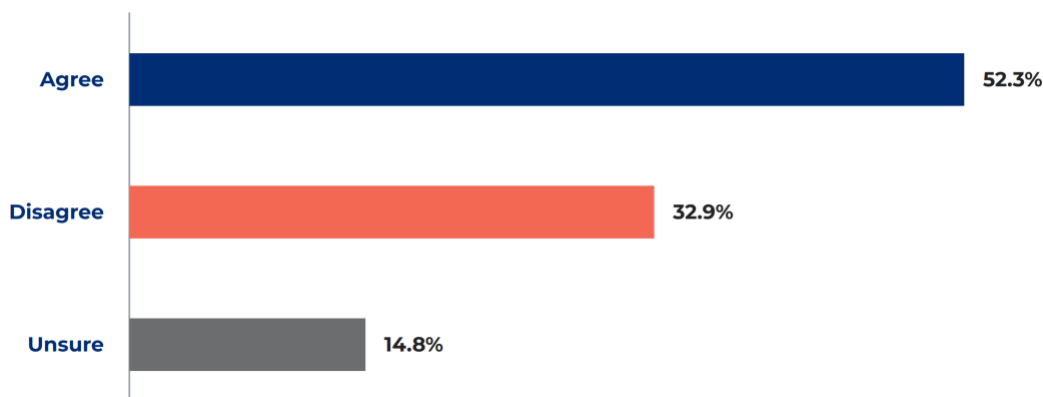
Q: “When comparing Texas to the rest of the United States, which do you believe will have the stronger economy over the next four years?”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Shares choosing “Unsure” are not shown, so each pair sums to less than 100%. Party groups use the vendor’s past-vote grouping, which counts voters unsure of their past vote with the independents.

Narrow Majority of Texas Voters Believe They Benefit from the State's Economic Growth

Q: "Do you agree or disagree with the statement: Texas' economic growth has benefited me?"



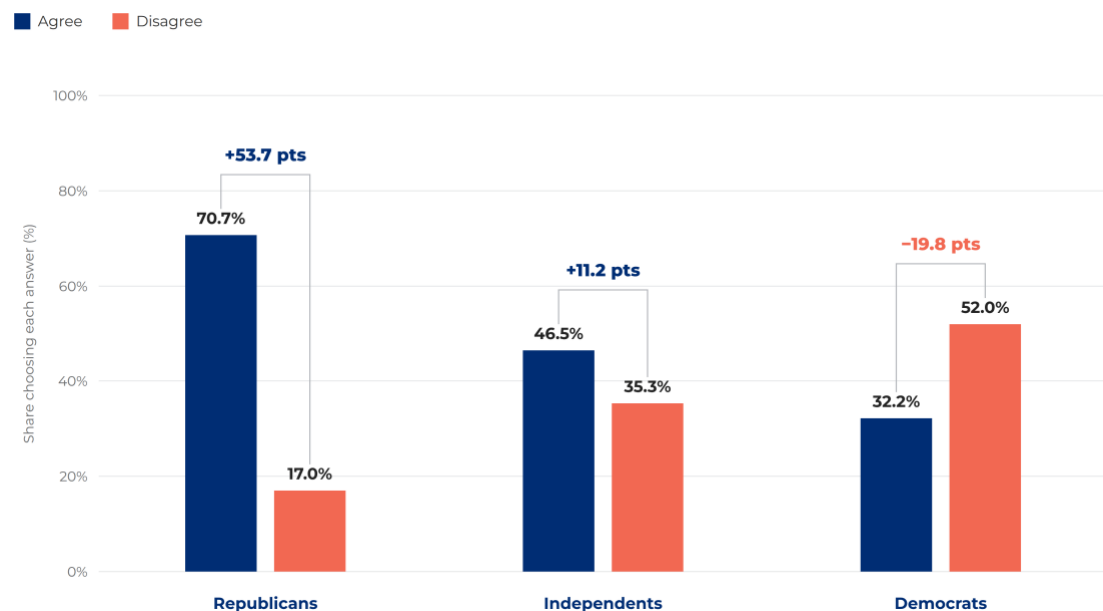
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

Over the past quarter century, the Texas economy has grown faster than all other large state economies while expanding its share of the U.S. economy.¹² This growth has made Texas the nation's second largest state economy and, if Texas were its own country, the world's eighth largest economy.

When asked whether that growth has benefited them personally, however, voters offer a more measured assessment. A slim majority of Texans (52.3%) reported that they felt that the state's economic growth had benefited them. In contrast, 32.9% felt that they had not benefited from the state's growth, with another 14.8% unsure.

¹² Jeremy B. Mazur, The Texas Economic Miracle, Texas 2036, June 2026, <https://texas2036.org/texasmiracle/>. The growth comparison uses U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis real GDP by state, 2000 to 2025. "Large state economies" here means the 10 largest by GDP. State ranking from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Domestic Product by State and Personal Income by State, 4th Quarter and Year 2025," released April 9, 2026, current-dollar GDP for 2025. World ranking compares that Texas figure, about \$2.9 trillion, with International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2026 edition, GDP at current prices in U.S. dollars for 2025; Texas ranks eighth, behind the U.S., China, Germany, Japan, India, the United Kingdom and France.

Q: "Do you agree or disagree with the statement: Texas' economic growth has benefited me?"



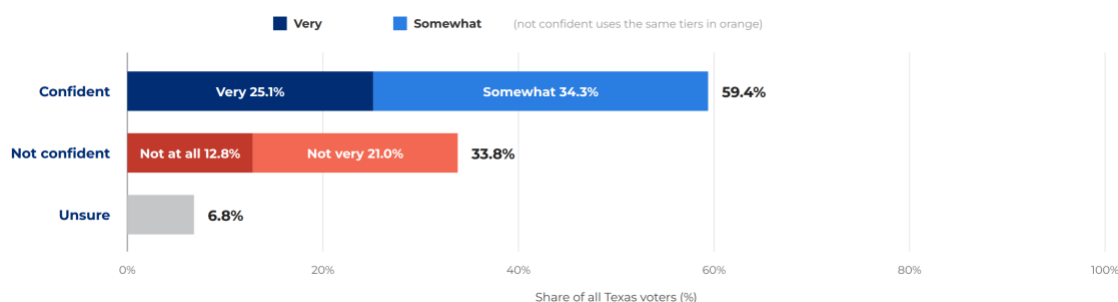
Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Shares choosing "Unsure" are not shown, so each pair sums to less than 100%. Party groups use the vendor's past-vote grouping, which counts voters unsure of their past vote with the independents.

Here, again, the same partisan pattern emerges. Republican voters report they have personally benefited from the state's economic growth at a net +53.7 percentage points (agree minus disagree). Likewise, Independents leaned positive, by a +11.2 percentage point margin. However, just under one-in-three Texas Democrats (32.2%) felt similarly, with more than half (52.0%) disagreeing with the sentiments, a net –19.8 percentage point margin.

Together, the two economic measures show majority confidence overall alongside substantial differences in how Republicans and Democrats view both the state's economic outlook and their own place in its growth.

Most Texas Voters Are Confident in the Ability to Get a Good Job

Q: "Thinking about the economy and job market over the next few years, how confident are you that there will be good opportunities for people like you to use your skills, earn a living, and get ahead?"

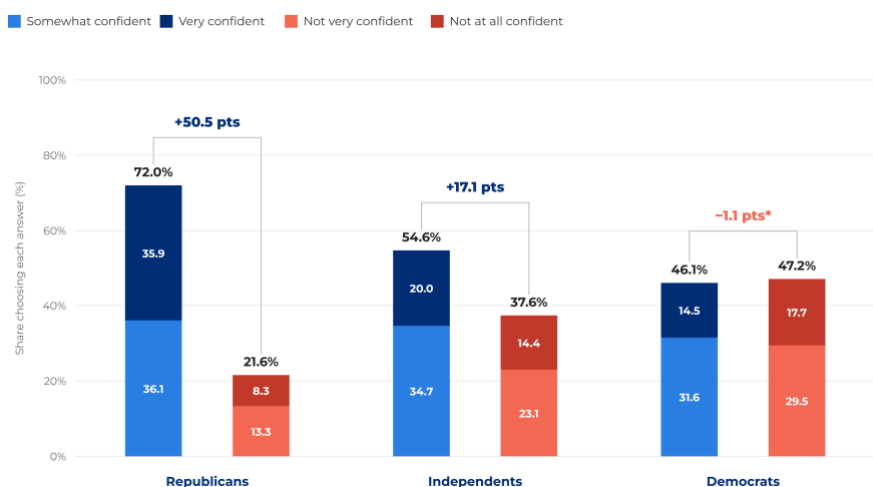


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100% within rounding.

Most Texas voters are optimistic about their own prospects in the state's future economy. Six in 10, or 59.4%, are confident that there will be good opportunities for people like them to use their skills, earn a good paycheck and advance their careers in the state's future economy. That confidence has caveats: the plurality of voters (34.3%) were "somewhat confident," while 25.1% were "very confident."

Party differences are again substantial. Among Republicans, 72% are confident that such opportunities will be available. On the other end of the spectrum, Texas Democrats are effectively split between those who lack this confidence (47.2%) and those who possess it (46.1%). A majority of Independents (54.6%) express confidence in their ability to find a good career that allows them to get ahead.

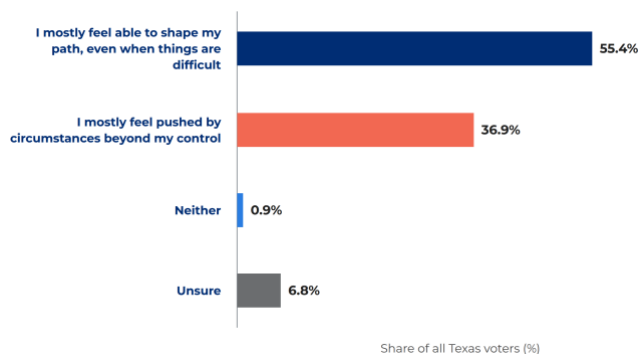
Q: "Thinking about the economy and job market over the next few years, how confident are you that there will be good opportunities for people like you to use your skills, earn a living, and get ahead?"



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Shares choosing "Unsure" are not shown, so each party's two stacks sum to less than 100%. Party groups use the vendor's past-vote grouping, which counts voters unsure of their past vote with the independents. *Democrat gap (1.1 percentage points) falls within the margin of error and should not be interpreted as a meaningful difference.

Most Voters Feel a Sense of Control Over Their Lives

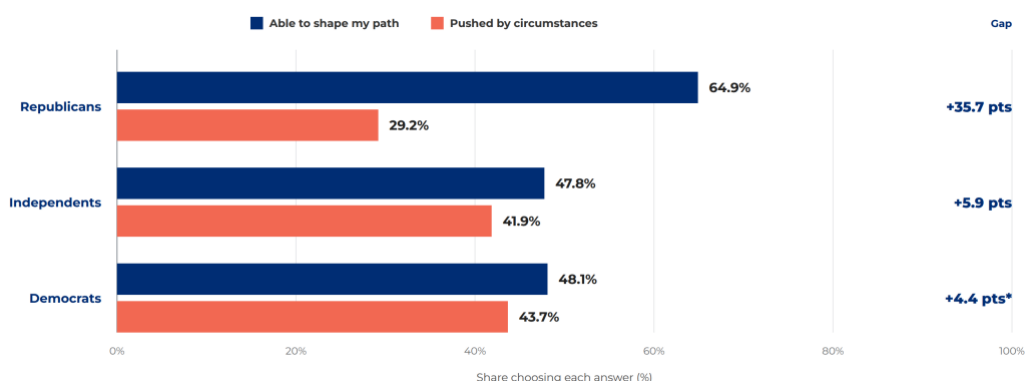
Q: “Which comes closer to how you feel right now? I mostly feel able to shape my path, even when things are difficult. OR I mostly feel pushed by circumstances beyond my control.”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so the bars sum to 100%.

A majority of Texas voters — 55.4% — reported a sense of personal agency regarding their future, while more than a third (36.9%) reported that they felt pushed by circumstances outside of their control.

Q: “Which comes closer to how you feel right now? I mostly feel able to shape my path, even when things are difficult. OR I mostly feel pushed by circumstances beyond my control.”



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Shares choosing “Neither” or “Unsure” are not shown, so each pair sums to less than 100%. Party groups use the vendor’s past-vote grouping, which counts voters unsure of their past vote with the independents. *Democrat gap (4.4 percentage points) falls within the margin of error and should not be interpreted as a meaningful difference.

Within each political affiliation, more Texans felt in control of their future than didn’t, though margins differed. Republicans lean clearly toward a sense of personal control, reporting that they feel able to shape their own path by more than two to one, 64.9% versus 29.2%. Democrats and Independents divide much more evenly. Among Democrats, 48.1% feel able to shape their own path and 43.7% feel pushed by circumstances beyond their control. Among Independents, it is 47.8% against 41.9%. Neither gap is large enough to measure at this sample size, so the poll cannot distinguish which answer is more common among Democrats or among Independents.

Texas Voters Report Lower Levels of Control than Americans

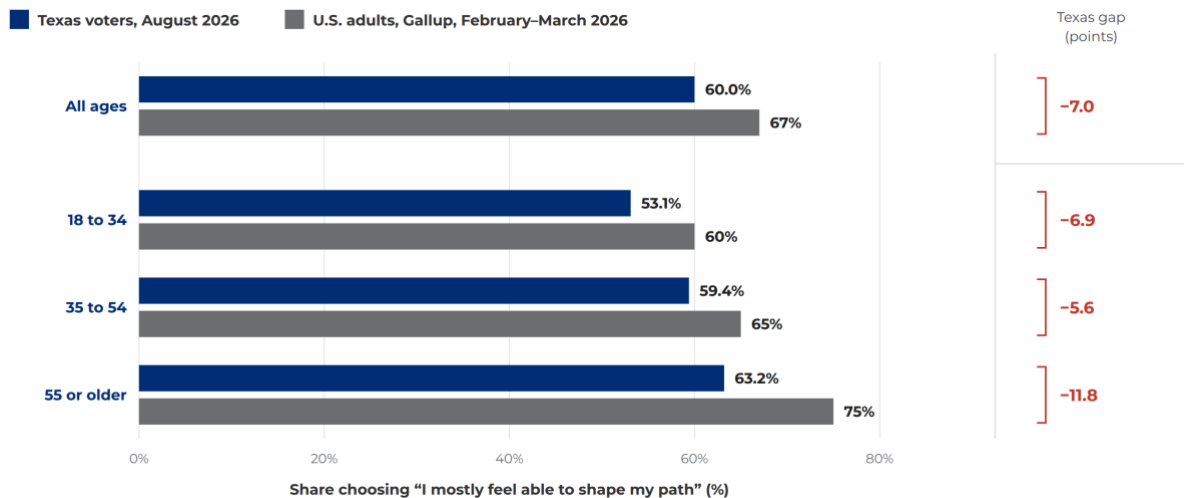
This question replicated a Walton Family Foundation-Gallup study fielded in February and March 2026, which put the same choice to 6,732 U.S. adults: whether they mostly feel able to shape their own path, even when things are difficult, or mostly feel pushed by circumstances beyond their control.¹³ Texas voters report lower levels of personal agency in each age group examined.

Overall, 60.0% of Texas voters say they mostly feel able to shape their own path, versus 67.0% of U.S. adults, a gap of 7.0 points. Gallup offered only the two statements, while this poll also allowed neither and unsure; the 7.7% of Texas voters who chose those answers are excluded here so that both surveys are measured the same way.

The shortfall is not uniform. Texas voters aged 18 to 34 trail their national counterparts on a sense of control by 6.9 percentage points and those 35 to 54 trail by 5.6 points. Texans 55 and older trail by 11.8 percentage points. Nationally, a sense of control rises steadily with age. In Texas, it rises and then flattens: voters 55 to 64 (62.9%) and 65 and older (63.4%) report almost the same level of sense of control.

The agency gap is widest among older Texans

Texas voters trail U.S. adults at every age, but the shortfall nearly doubles after 55 — the one group where a national majority of three in four is not matched in Texas.



Source: Texas — Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2026; weighted base: 1,001; mixed mode (phone, text, web), weighted. National — Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation, "How Opportunity Takes Root," fielded February 26–March 6, 2026; web survey of a random sample of 6,732 adults across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, weighted.

¹³ Walton Family Foundation and Gallup, How Opportunity Takes Root, fielded February 26 to March 6, 2026; 6,732 U.S. adults aged 18 and over. Weighted Web-only survey. The Gallup results are a useful benchmark, though the two surveys are not directly equivalent. Gallup interviewed U.S. adults, while this poll interviewed Texas registered voters likely to vote, a group that is older, higher-income and more likely to own a home than the adult population. Those traits are all associated with a greater sense of control, so the shortfall among Texas voters is likely a conservative estimate, and a survey of all Texas adults might show a wider gap. The two surveys were also fielded about six months apart and in different modes, which makes this a directional comparison rather than a precise Texas-against-nation measurement. <https://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/how-opportunity-takes-root>

Fewer Than Half Say Texas Is Taking the Proper Actions for Its Future

Texans are concerned about whether today's actions will lead to a better tomorrow

Split sampled question yields different results depending on the wording

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

Version X: "Do you think Texas is taking the proper actions now to ensure it will be **the best state** 20 years from now to live, work and raise a family?"



Version Y: "Do you think Texas is taking the proper actions now to ensure it will be **one of the best states** 20 years from now to live, work and raise a family?"



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100%. Q50 was split-sampled: each respondent saw one version only — Version X was asked of 672 respondents and Version Y of 697. Softening the standard from “the best state” to “one of the best states” moves yes from 38.8% to 43.1% and flips the balance, from no leading by 6.8 points on Version X to yes leading by 2.1 points on Version Y.

The tension between concern about Texas’ future and optimism on several economic and personal measures also appears when voters assess the state’s long-term direction. At Texas 2036, we research and advance policies to make Texas the best place to live, work and raise a family. Here, Texas 2036 asked a split sample whether Texas is taking the proper actions now to be either **the best state** or **one of the best states** 20 years from now to live, work and raise a family.

Neither crested above 50%. On the “best state” version, 38.8% say Texas is taking the proper actions, while 45.6% say it is not. On the “one of the best states” version, voters are essentially split: 43.1% say yes and 41.0% say no.

Party differences remain pronounced. More than half of Texas Republicans (53.4%) believe Texas is doing what it needs to do to be the best state, versus just 23.1% of Democrats. As for being among the best states, 61.7% of Republicans felt Texas was taking the steps, while only 20.2% of Democrats shared the opinion. Only about a third of Independents (33.4%) felt Texas was on a path toward being the best.

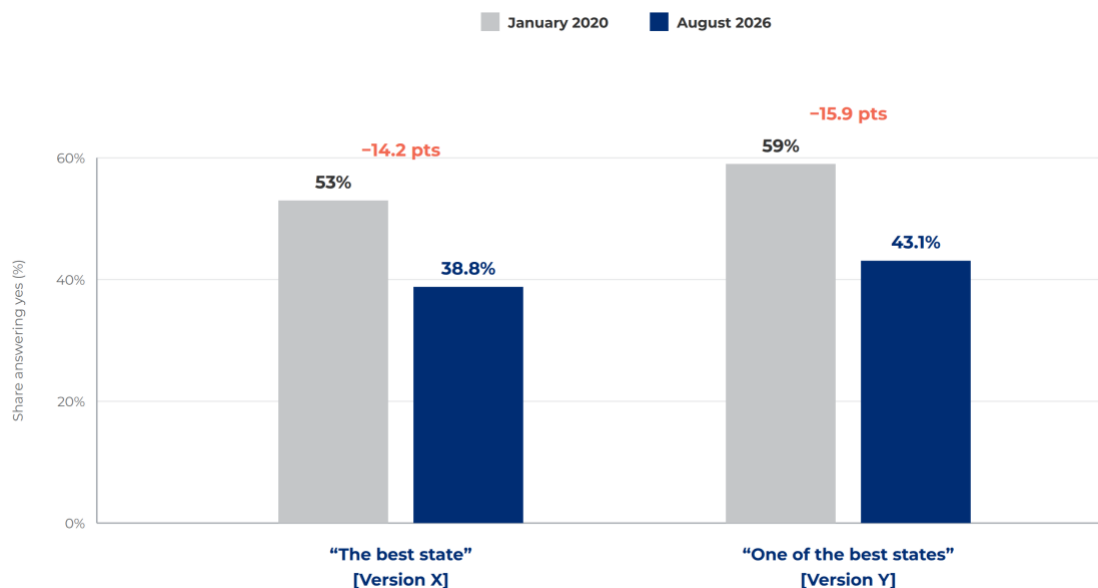
Assessments of the state's direction also vary by age. Among voters under 35, 31.5% say Texas is taking the proper actions and 54.6% say it is not. That gap narrows with each older age group and eventually reverses: among voters 65 and older (46.7% say yes and 35.7% say no). The rise with age holds in both versions of the question.

Texas 2036 asked a nearly identical split-sample version of this question in January 2020. Then, 53% of Texas voters said the state was taking the proper actions to remain the best state and 59% said the state was taking the proper actions to remain one of the best states. The shift shows up in both split-sample halves — the “best state” version fell from 53% to 38.8%, and the “one of the best states” version from 59% to 43.1%. Differences in the question wording and response scales make this an inexact comparison, but the

direction is clear: fewer voters in 2026 say Texas is taking the proper actions now to secure its long-term future.

Q: “Do you think Texas is taking the proper actions now to ensure it will be [Ver X: the best state / Ver Y: one of the best states] 20 years from now to live, work and raise a family?”

The January 2020 question was identical except that it asked whether Texas was taking proper actions to ensure it “remains” the best state, or one of the best states.



Source: January 2020 Texas Voter Poll (n=1,000; split sample of 498 and 502) and Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, August 22–26, 2026 (n=1,369; split sample of 672 and 697). See footnote 4 on wording and scale differences.

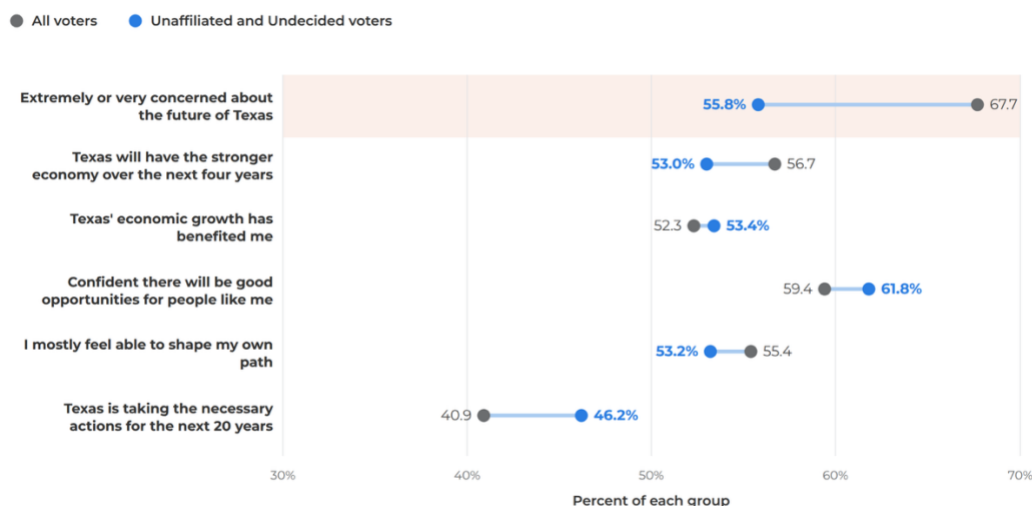
Perceptions Among Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters

Unaffiliated and Undecided voters — the group defined in Section 1 — share many of the broader electorate’s views on the issues examined in this section. The clearest distinction is the intensity of their concern about Texas’ future.

Among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters, 55.9% are extremely or very concerned about the future of Texas, compared to 67.7% of all voters. At the same time, a third of them (33.4%) describe themselves as only somewhat concerned, compared to 22.3% of all voters. About nine in 10 register some level of concern about the state's future, the same proportion as the electorate, but with lower levels of overall intensity. This suggests that concern is similarly widespread, but less intense among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters.

Unaffiliated and Undecided voters are less concerned about the state's direction

Share of each group giving the indicated answer on the Section 7 outlook measures. Concern about the state's future is the only measure where the two groups differ by more than the margin of error.



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036 (weighted base: 1,001). Weighted percentages. Unaffiliated and undecided voters are the group defined in Section 1: not a committed partisan of either party and mostly or fully undecided about November — 16.7% of Texas voters, 201 unweighted interviews.

On the other measures explored in this section, Unaffiliated and Undecided voters generally resemble the electorate overall. Their responses are somewhat more positive on some questions and somewhat less positive on others, but those differences are too small to distinguish clearly at this sample size.

The Unaffiliated and Undecided voters are directionally more likely to say Texas is taking the necessary actions for the next 20 years (46.2% against 40.9%) and less likely to say it is not (36.5% against 43.4%). Those responses are directionally more positive than those of voters overall, though the difference is not large enough to treat as a clear distinction between the groups.

Their views of economic opportunity and personal agency likewise track fairly closely with the electorate as a whole:

- 53.4% say the state's growth has benefited them personally, compared to 52.3% of all voters;
- 61.8% are confident there will be good opportunities for people like them to use their skills and get ahead, compared to 59.4%; and
- 53.2% say they mostly feel able to shape their own path, compared to 55.4% of all voters.

Taken together, the results do not point to a fundamentally different economic or personal outlook among Unaffiliated and Undecided voters. Where they stand apart most clearly is in the intensity of their concern about Texas' future.

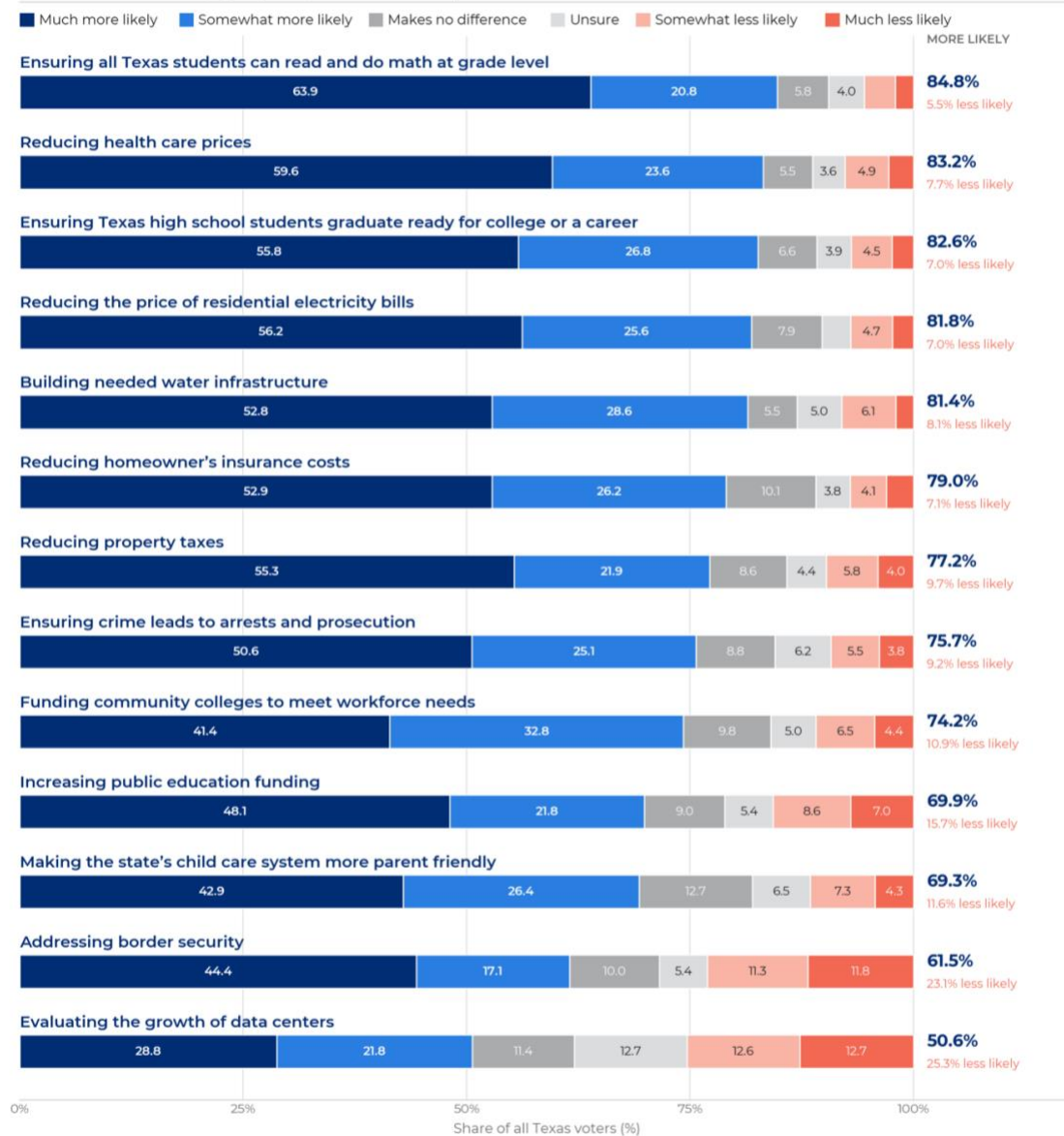
Appendix 1

The Candidate Battery

All Voters

Q: "This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?"

Share of all Texas voters, by response, for each of the 13 positions tested

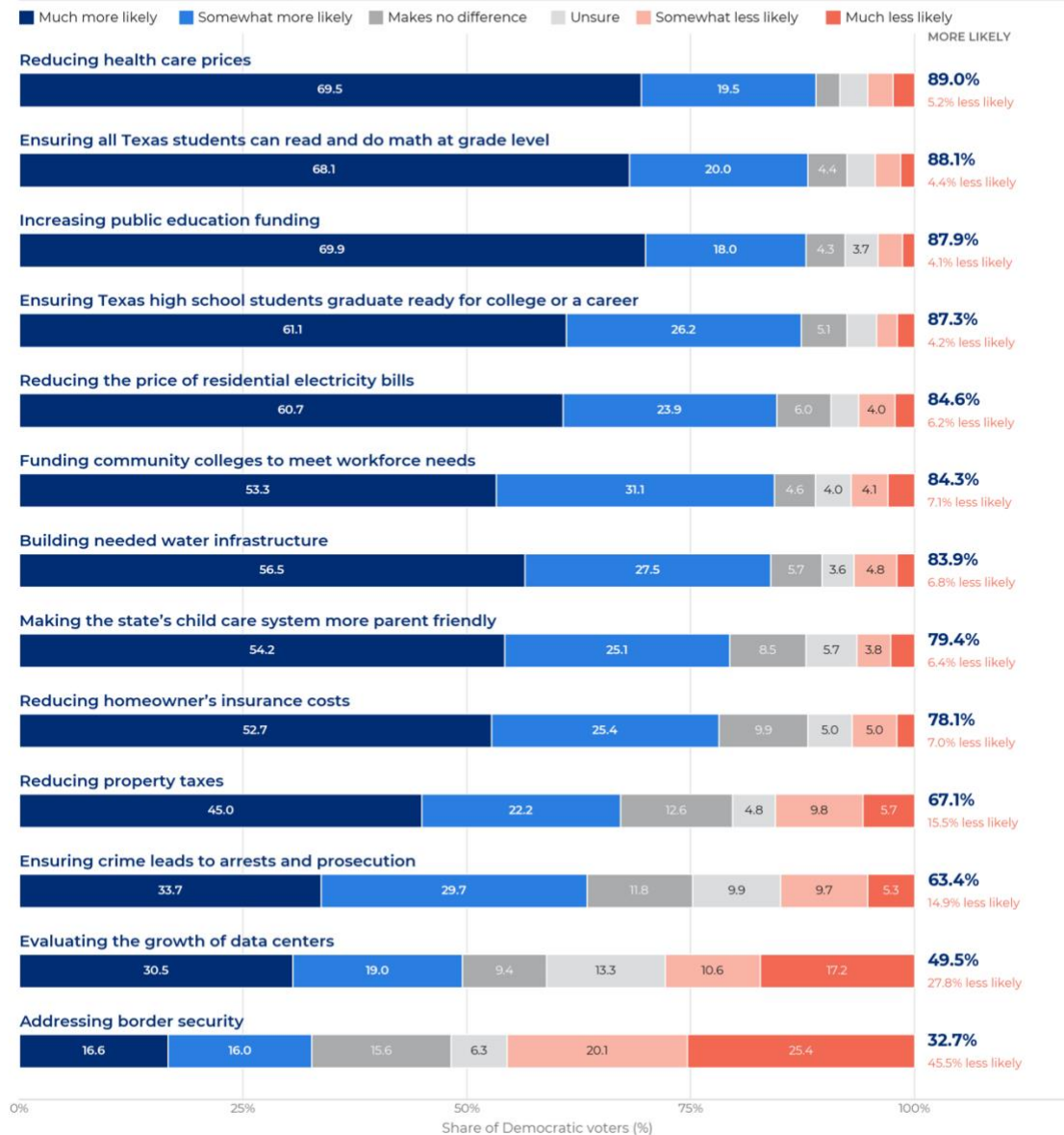


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22–26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. 1,369 interviews with Texas registered voters; results reported on a weighted base of 1,001 (margin of error ±3.1 points). Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100% within rounding; combined figures are computed from unrounded shares. Positions were asked in random order and are listed from highest to lowest share "more likely."

Candidate Battery: Democratic Voters

Q: "This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?"

Share of Democratic voters, by response, for each of the 13 positions tested

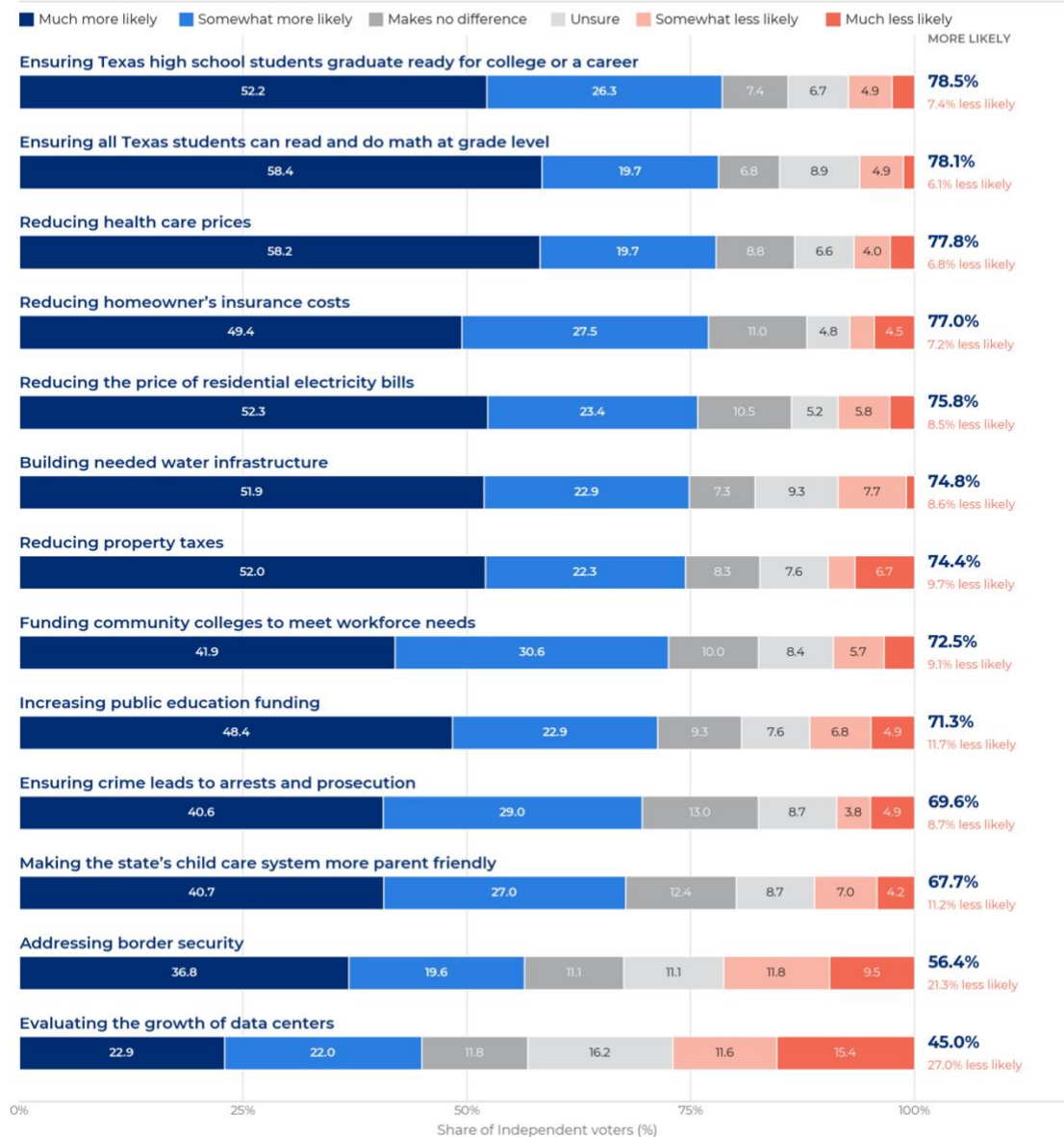


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22-26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. Democrats (voters who have tended to vote Democratic in past November elections); 550 interviews; margin of error roughly ± 4 points, so differences smaller than that should be read as directional. Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100% within rounding; combined figures are computed from unrounded shares. Positions were asked in random order and are listed from highest to lowest share "more likely."

Candidate Battery: Independent Voters

Q: "This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?"

Share of Independent voters, by response, for each of the 13 positions tested

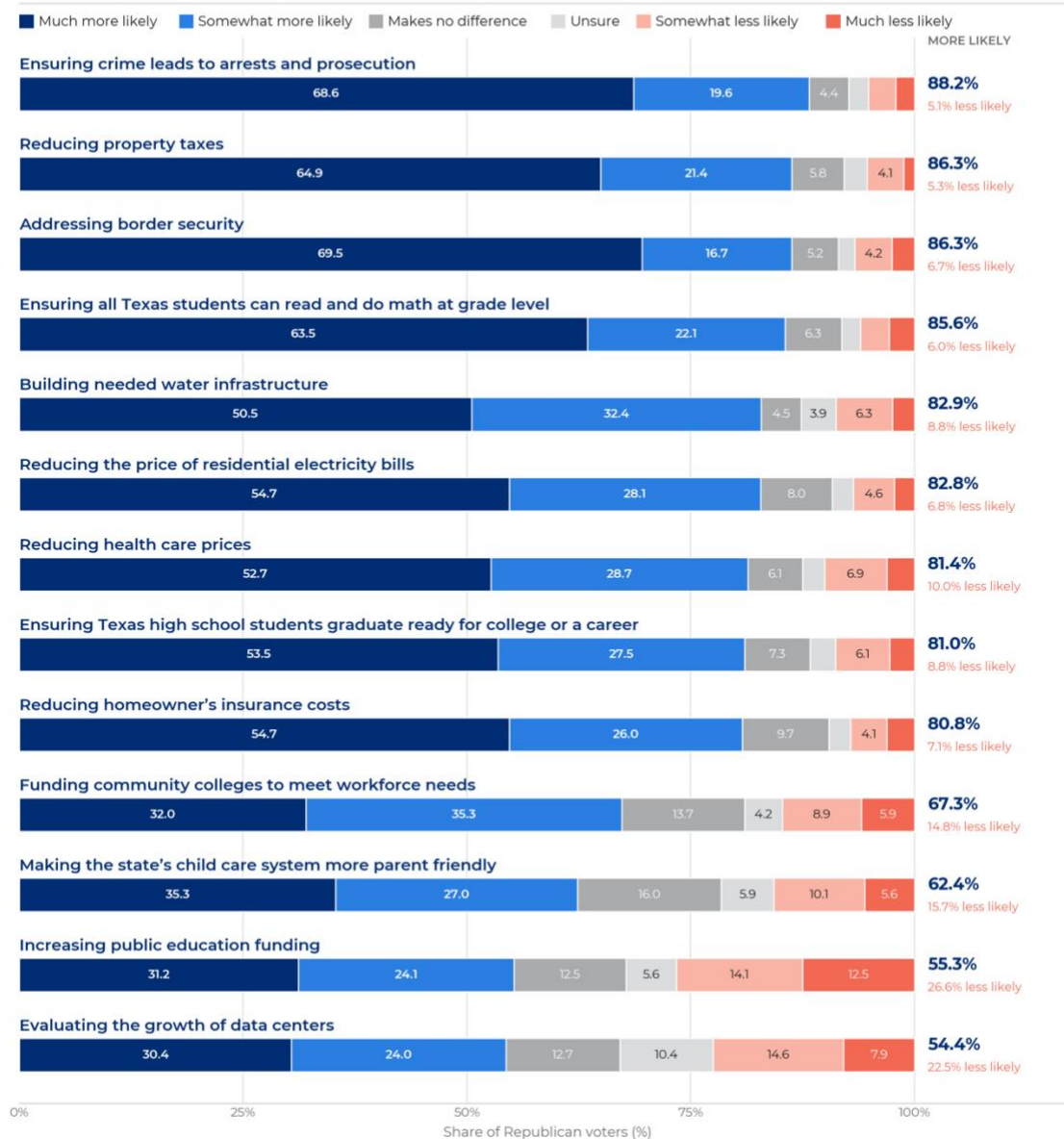


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22-26, 2026 by Basellie & Associates for Texas 2036. Independents (voters who vote independent of party or were unsure of their past vote); 269 interviews; margin of error roughly ± 6 points, so differences smaller than that should be read as directional. Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100% within rounding; combined figures are computed from unrounded shares. Positions were asked in random order and are listed from highest to lowest share "more likely."

Candidate Battery: Republican Voters

Q: "This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?"

Share of Republican voters, by response, for each of the 13 positions tested

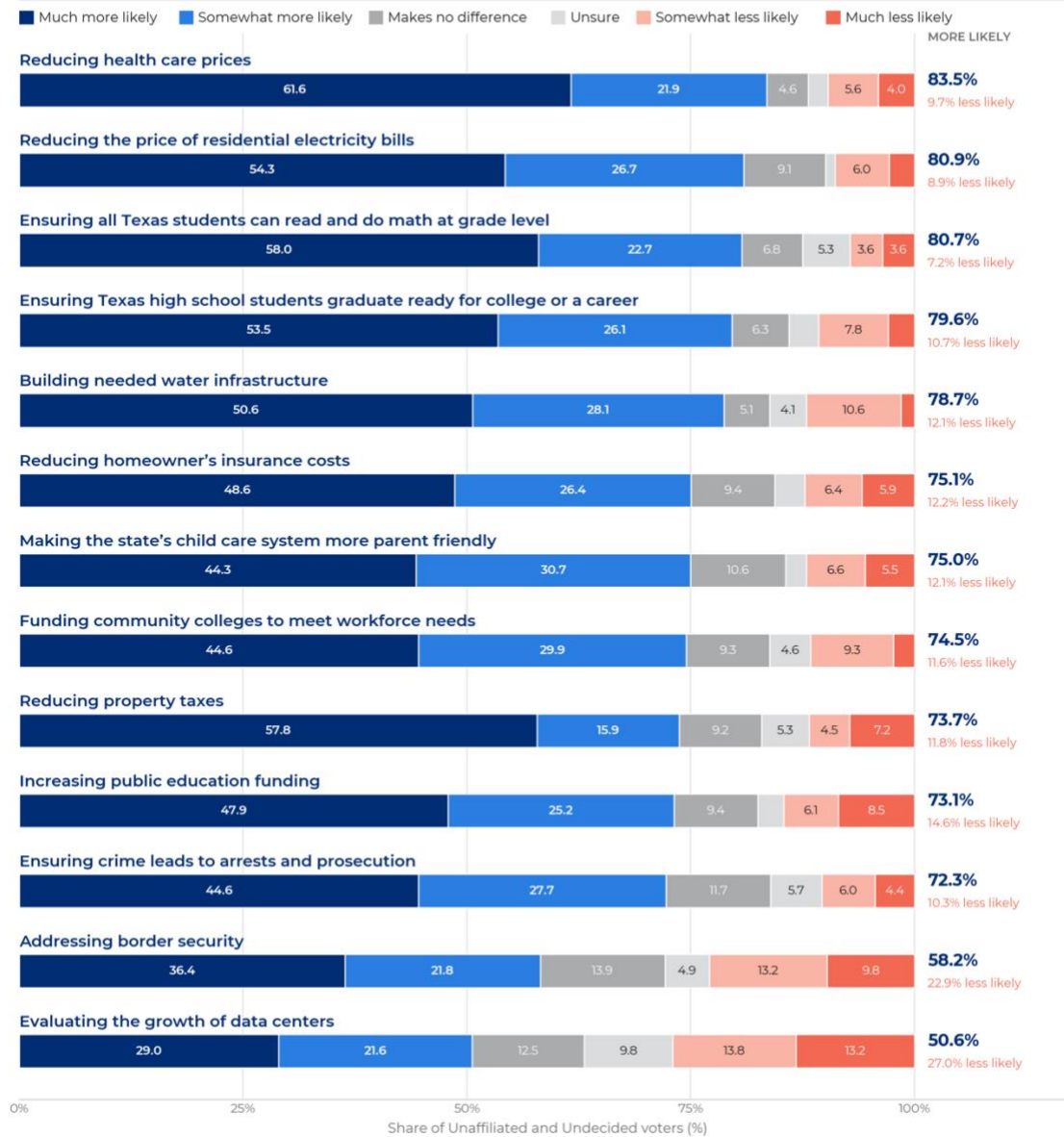


Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22-26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. Republicans (voters who have tended to vote Republican in past November elections); 550 interviews; margin of error roughly ± 4 points, so differences smaller than that should be read as directional. Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100% within rounding; combined figures are computed from unrounded shares. Positions were asked in random order and are listed from highest to lowest share "more likely."

Candidate Battery: Unaffiliated and Undecided Voters

Q: "This November, Texans will vote on state elected offices, including the governor and members of the state legislature. If a candidate expressed the following position, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the general election?"

Share of Unaffiliated and Undecided voters, by response, for each of the 13 positions tested



Source: Fall 2026 Texas Voter Poll, conducted August 22-26, 2026 by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036. Unaffiliated and Undecided voters (not committed partisans of either party, and mostly or fully undecided about November); 201 interviews; margin of error roughly ± 7 points, so differences smaller than that should be read as directional. Weighted percentages. Every response option is shown, so each bar sums to 100% within rounding; combined figures are computed from unrounded shares. Positions were asked in random order and are listed from highest to lowest share "more likely."

Appendix 2

Survey Methodology

1. Survey sampling and weighting

Baselice & Associates, Inc. (*Baselice*) conducted the 10th wave of the Texas Voter Poll from Aug. 22-26, 2026, completing 1,369 interviews with Texas registered voters and reporting results on a weighted base of 1,001 interviews. The report refers to these respondents as Texas voters or registered voters.¹⁴ Interviewers screened out anyone who was not a registered Texas voter, as well as anyone who works in the news media, in market research, in elected office or on a political campaign. Baselice created interview quotas by media market (and, in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Travis and Bexar counties, by ZIP code) and then weighted the completed sample. The completed interviews by market were: Dallas-Fort Worth, 433 interviews (30.4% of the weighted sample); Houston, 341 (24.5%); San Antonio, South Texas and El Paso, 247 (19.1%); Austin, Waco and Bryan, 164 (13.9%); East Texas, 98 (5.6%); and West Texas, 86 (6.6%). The weighted distribution across the six markets falls within about one point of each market's share of the ballots cast in the November 2024 general election.

Baselice drew the sample from two sources. Of the 1,369 respondents, 675 came from a registered-voter file and were reached by cell phone (458 interviews), text message (184) or landline (33). Those records include each voter's history of turnout, and 86% of the 675 had voted in at least one November general election since 2020. The remaining 694 interviews came from an online panel (for which no prior voting records are available). Any analysis that uses turnout history therefore covers the 675 file-matched interviews only. All interviews were conducted in English. Median interview length was about 22 minutes by phone, 13 minutes by text message and 11 minutes on the online panel.

Baselice weighted the sample within 12 cells, formed by crossing the two interview sources with the six media-market regions. Within each cell, the sample was raked¹⁵ to population targets on gender, party, race and age, plus education for the online panel only. Baselice reported a margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points for the weighted base of 1,001 interviews. Statistical weighting makes some interviews count for more than others. When a few weights grow very large, the results begin to lean on a handful of respondents. That is not the case here. About nine in 10 interviews count no more than about twice as much as the average interview, and only one counts more than four times as much — a narrow range, common for polls this size. Because party is one of the weighting targets, the weighted size of any group defined partly by party, including the Unaffiliated and Undecided voters, moves with that weighting choice.

¹⁴ Baselice describes the weighted profile of the sample as representative of the Texas voters who turn out in even-year general elections, so the estimates describe registered voters weighted to resemble that electorate.

¹⁵ A statistical technique to balance the survey sample by adjusting on key factors to make the sample more closely match the breakdown of respondents in the survey population of interest.

Baselice randomized (or rotated) the order of the questions or answer choices on several questions, so that the order in which they appeared would not influence subsequent response (e.g., priming or influencing their later answers). This included the 13 candidate-position statements, the two party-image questions, the vote-intention question and the race question.

For two questions, Baselice asked one wording of half the sample and the other wording of the other half (672 and 697 interviews). On the water question, the two wordings drew answers within 2 points of each other, with 80.0% and 78.2% rating the projects "extremely" or "very" important, so we pool them. On whether Texas is taking the proper actions to be "the best state" or "one of the best states," we report the two wordings separately wherever the percentage itself is the result. Where we compare subgroups on that question, we use the pooled figure because the wording reached each subgroup in roughly equal proportions.

We report percentages to one decimal place except when comparing to external surveys or published sources with other reporting formats. Combined categories, such as "extremely" plus "very" concerned or "much" plus "somewhat" more likely, are computed from the unrounded weighted shares, so a combined figure can differ by a tenth of a point from the sum of the rounded values shown in a chart.

Describing differences in this report: Throughout this report we call a difference a difference only when it is larger than the variation the sample itself can produce. Generally, the margins in this report use a simple-random-sample calculation at the 95% confidence level (non-design effect adjusted) to describe thresholds for which differences can be observed. These include:

- A change in the same statewide item between two waves of the poll must be at least 4 points to be treated as meaningful. Anything inside ± 4 points is described as directional rather than as a difference.
- Subgroup comparisons (e.g., the Unaffiliated and Undecided group of 201 interviews) carry larger margins of ± 7 points, and geographic comparisons and other smaller subgroups are even larger still (e.g., Rural vs. Urban voters ± 9 points).
- Because respondents are weighted, true margins are somewhat wider than this simple calculation. However, no comparison in this report changes its interpretation under a wider (design-effect adjusted) threshold, so the simpler figure is used for consistency with the headline margin of ± 3.1 points.

2. Identifying Unaffiliated and Undecided voters

We wanted to better understand the perspectives and preferences of Texas voters who had not settled on a choice for the November election when we interviewed them in late August 2026. The report calls them *Unaffiliated and Undecided* voters. In other contexts, voters like these are called swing, target or persuadable voters.

How we define an Unaffiliated and Undecided voter

To create this category, we combine two pieces of information: 1) party grouping based on each respondent's self-reported voting history and party image, and 2) the survey question that asks how settled or decided the respondent's November choice is:

1. The party grouping separates committed partisans from everyone else. A committed partisan, in this context, is a voter who has tended to vote for one party's candidates in past November elections and holds both a positive image of that party and a negative image of the other. We call a voter who does not fit that description unaffiliated. Roughly half of Texas voters (49.9% of the weighted sample) are unaffiliated in this sense; the group includes soft Republicans, soft Democrats, self-described Independents and voters who named no party.
2. The decision question offers five answers: fully decided, mostly decided, mostly undecided, fully undecided, and unsure. We label a voter *undecided* when the answer is mostly undecided or fully undecided.

We count a respondent as *Unaffiliated and Undecided* when both of the following are true: the respondent is unaffiliated, falling outside the two committed partisan groups, and answered either mostly undecided or fully undecided. We do not count committed partisans — whatever they said about their decision — and we do not count unaffiliated voters who said they were fully or mostly decided, or unsure. On this definition, 201 of the 1,369 respondents are Unaffiliated and Undecided, or 16.7% of the weighted sample. We exclude from the Unaffiliated and Undecided group 83 respondents (5.9% of the weighted sample) who are unaffiliated but answered "unsure" when interviewers asked how decided they are about their November choice.

3. Sorting voters into urban, suburban and rural groups

To compare voters in Texas' largest metropolitan areas to those in mid-size and smaller metropolitan areas and those outside any metropolitan area, we sort all 254 Texas counties into three groups and assign each respondent the group of the county they gave as their residence.

The three categories follow the 2023 National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties¹⁶, which the Centers for Disease Control and

¹⁶ Danielle M. Ely, "Trends and Differences in Infant Mortality Rates in Rural and Metropolitan Counties in the United States, 2021 to 2023," NCHS Data Brief no. 534 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 2025); Danielle M. Ely, Anne K. Driscoll, and T. J. Mathews, "Infant Mortality Rates in Rural and Urban Areas in the United States, 2014," NCHS Data Brief no. 285 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, September 2017). County assignments come from National Center for Health Statistics, "2023 NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties" (January 2025). Asha Z. Ivey-Stephenson et al., "Suicide Trends Among and Within Urbanization Levels by Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Age Group, and Mechanism of Death, United States, 2001 to 2015," MMWR Surveillance Summaries 66, no. SS-18 (2017); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables, appendix A, "Key Definitions."

Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also follow:¹⁷

- Large metropolitan: every county in a metropolitan area of one million residents or more: 34 counties, 916 interviews, 68.1% of the weighted sample.
- Small and medium metropolitan: every county in a metropolitan area of fewer than one million residents: 52 counties, 300 interviews, 21.1%.
- Rural: every county outside any metropolitan area: 168 counties, 150 interviews, 10.5%.

¹⁷ Three respondents whose county code could not be resolved are left out of the three categories.

TEXAS 2036



info@texas2036.org



206 E 9th Street, STE 1500
Austin, Texas 78701



texas2036.org/pollingdata