

2023

# TEXAS LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Abortion, Gun Safety, Immigration &  
Election Reform



Hobby School of Public Affairs  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



**Texas Legislative Issues 2023**  
**Abortion, Gun Safety, Immigration & Election Reform**

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey of Texans ages 18 and older to assess their preferences and opinions regarding legislation that will be considered by the Texas Legislature during the 2023 legislative session. The survey was fielded between January 9 and January 19, 2023, in English and Spanish, with 1,200 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.8%. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education and are representative of the population of Texas adults.

This is the sixth of seven reports. The first report examined the saving and spending preferences of Texans related to the state's current \$33 billion budget surplus, support for legislation to reimburse universities and colleges for tuition benefits provided and expand Medicaid's postpartum coverage, and support for a series of proposed sales tax exemption bills. The second report focused on support for gambling legislation presently under consideration in the Texas Legislature. The third report addressed support for two forms of proposed school choice legislation, vouchers and tax incentives for donations to support attendance at private schools. The fourth report analyzed support for a set of bills considered to be part of the broader "cultural war" currently taking place in Texas, covering issues such as the gender identity of children, instruction on sexuality in public schools, the Texas Constitution's definition of marriage, and Confederate Heroes Day. The fifth report examined support for legislation regulating marijuana in Texas. This report examines support for legislation regarding abortion, gun safety, immigration, and election reform. The final report will examine support for energy legislation and preferences regarding energy sources in the United States.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Abortion**

84% of Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place in the event of a lethal fetal anomaly, including 59% who strongly support this legislation.

82% of Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the mother's physical health is at risk, including 61% who strongly support this legislation.

81% of Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy was the result of incest, including 61% who strongly support this legislation.

77% of Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy was the result of rape, including 56% who strongly support this legislation.

Current Texas law prohibits abortion unless the mother's life is at risk. When asked if they could, would they make it easier or harder to obtain an abortion in Texas, or not change the current Texas law:

52% of Texans said they would make it easier to obtain an abortion.

- This is the position of 76% of Democrats but of only 25% of Republicans.

33% of Texans said they would keep Texas abortion legislation the same as it is now.

- This is the position of 50% of Republicans but of only 17% of Democrats.

15% of Texans said they would make it harder to obtain an abortion.

- This is the position of 25% of Republicans but of only 7% of Democrats.

The 52% of Texans who would make it easier to obtain an abortion are distributed as follows:

- 30% want abortion to be legal for any reason through 23 weeks.
- 9% want abortion to be legal for any reason through 15 weeks.
- 8% want abortion to be legal for any reason through 6 weeks.
- 5% want abortion to be legal only in the case of rape or incest.

The median Texan wants abortion to be legal in Texas only in the case of rape, incest or if the mother's life is at risk.

51% of Texans support (and 49% oppose) legislation that would prohibit cities and counties from paying for travel by women out of state to obtain an abortion.

- 76% of born-again Christians support (50% strongly) this legislation compared to 42% of non-born-again Christians.
- 68% of Republicans support (52% strongly) this legislation compared to 33% of Democrats.

46% of Texans support (and 54% oppose) legislation that would prevent businesses which receive tax incentives or benefits from providing funding to their employees to travel out of state to obtain an abortion.

- 72% of born-again Christians support (47% strongly) this legislation compared to 36% of non-born-again Christians.
- 66% of Republicans support (47% strongly) this legislation compared to 27% of Democrats.

## **Gun Safety**

90% of Texans support (67% strongly) legislation that would ban the possession or purchase of a gun by any individual with a restraining order filed against them for stalking or domestic violence.

86% of Texans support (66% strongly) legislation that would require criminal background checks on all gun buyers, including those buying at gun shows and private sales.

85% of Texans support (61% strongly) legislation that would create a 10 year minimum prison sentence if a firearm is used to commit a crime.

83% of Texans support (59% strongly) legislation that would allow judges to take guns away from people shown to be a danger to themselves or others (red flag laws).

81% of Texans support (61% strongly) legislation that would require a three-day mandatory waiting period between the purchase of a firearm and when a person can take possession of it.

80% of Texans support (62% strongly) legislation that would raise the age to purchase an assault rifle (such as AR-15s) from 18 to 21.

76% of Texans support (60% strongly) legislation that would raise the age to purchase any firearm from 18 to 21.

73% of Texans support (51% strongly) legislation that would make it a crime to display a firearm while attending or within 500 feet of a public demonstration.

69% of Texans support (50% strongly) legislation that would allow public institutions of higher education to ban the carry of handguns on their campuses.

63% of Texans support (48% strongly) legislation that would ban the sale of high-capacity magazines.

More than three out of four Democratic women support all 10 proposals, with a median level of support of 93%.

More than three out of four Democratic men support all 10 proposals, with a median level of support of 87%.

More than three out of four Republican women support 7 of the 10 proposals, with a median level of support of 85%

More than three out of four Republican men support 2 of the 10 proposals, with a median level of support of 61%.

## **Immigration**

65% of Texans support the deployment of Texas National Guard troops to patrol the border.

- 95% of Republicans support (73% strongly) this deployment compared to 69% of Independents and 35% of Democrats.

61% of Texans support the State of Texas spending \$2 billion a year on border security.

- 88% of Republicans support (64% strongly) this expenditure compared to 59% of Independents and 40% of Democrats.



58% of Texans support the State of Texas paying to bus asylum seekers to northern cities.

- 86% of Republicans support (60% strongly) this busing policy compared to 59% of Independents and 31% of Democrats.

## Election Reform

71% of Texans support legislation increasing the punishment for illegal voting to a state jail felony.

- 88% of Republicans support (61% strongly) this legislation compared to 69% of Independents and 58% of Democrats.

71% of Texans support legislation to allow every eligible Texan to register to vote online.

- 89% of Democrats support (67% strongly) this legislation compared to 72% of Independents and 51% of Republicans.

65% of Texans support legislation to create universal no-excuse absentee voting in Texas.

- 90% of Democrats support (65% strongly) this legislation compared to 65% of Independents and 39% of Republicans.

## Survey Population Demographics

Whites account for 45% of this survey population of Texans 18 and older, Latinos 37%, Blacks 12%, and others 6%. Women account for 51% of the population and men for 49%. Regarding generations, 29% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort, 25% to Generation X (Gen-X, 1965-1980), 30% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation and 16% to the Generation Z (Gen-Z, 1997-2014) cohort. The highest educational attainment of 40% of the population is a high school degree or less, while 29% have either a two-year degree or have attended some college, and 31% have a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. One in four (25%) of these Texans is a born-again Christian while 75% are not. Two-fifths (39%) of the population identifies as Democrat, 36% as Republican, 20% as Independent and 5% are unsure about their partisan identification.

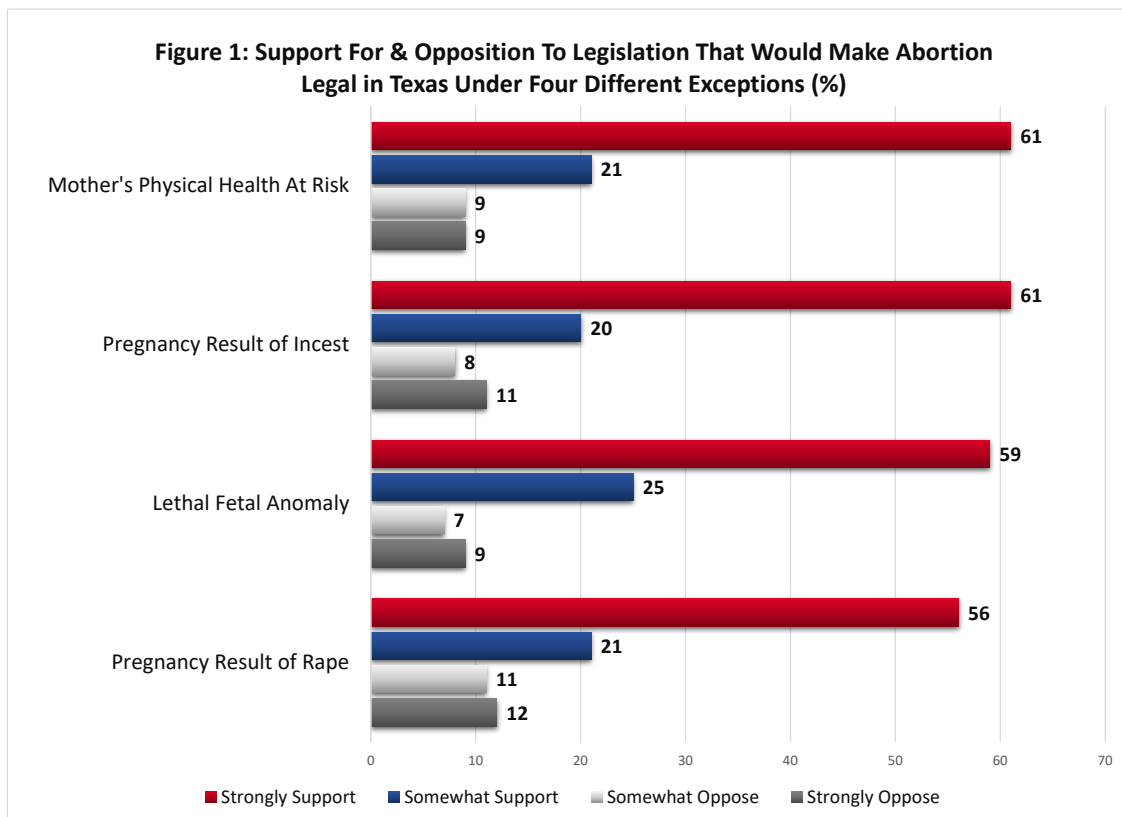
## Support for Four Proposed Exceptions to Texas’s Current Abortion Legislation

Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Dobbs* decision in 2022, all abortions are prohibited in Texas unless the mother’s life is at risk. The respondents were asked four questions related to proposed legislation that would permit abortions in Texas respectively if the mother’s physical health is at risk, in the case of lethal fetal abnormalities or other fetal conditions that are incompatible with life, if the pregnancy was the result of rape, and if the pregnancy was the result of incest. The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, along with don’t know. “Don’t know” responses are excluded from the analysis below.

The exact question wording employed was: “The Texas Legislature will consider multiple bills related to abortion during the 2023 legislative session. Presently all abortions are prohibited in Texas unless the mother’s life is at risk. Do you support or oppose the following legislative proposals which would:

- Permit abortions if the mother’s physical health is at risk.
- Permit abortions in the case of lethal fetal anomalies or other fetal conditions that are incompatible with life.
- Permit abortions when the pregnancy was the result of rape.
- Permit abortions when the pregnancy was the result of incest.”

Figure 1 provides the proportion of Texans that strongly supports, somewhat supports, somewhat opposes, and strongly opposes legislation that would add each one of the four exceptions to the existing legislation regulating abortion in Texas.



More than four out of five (82%) Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the mother’s physical health is at risk, including 61% who strongly support this legislation. In contrast, 18% of Texans oppose this legislation, 9% strongly.

More than four out of five (81%) Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy were the result of incest, including 61% who strongly support this legislation. In contrast, 19% of Texans oppose this legislation, 11% strongly.

More than four out of five (84%) Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place in the case of a lethal fetal anomaly, including 59% who strongly support this legislation. In contrast, 16% of Texans oppose this legislation, 9% strongly.

More than three out of four (77%) Texans support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy were the result of rape, including 56% who strongly support this legislation. In contrast, 23% of Texans oppose this legislation, 12% strongly.

Table 1 provides the proportion of the members of Texas socio-demographic sub-groups (ethnic/racial, gender, generation, partisan, religious, education) who support (strongly and somewhat) each one of the four pieces of abortion exception legislation.

**Table 1: Support for Four Exceptions to the Current Texas Abortion Legislation Among Sociodemographic Groups (%)**

Group	Sub-Group	Mother’s Physical Health At Risk	Pregnancy Result of Incest	Lethal Fetal Anomaly	Pregnancy Result of Rape
Overall	Overall	82 (61)	81 (61)	84 (59)	77 (56)
Ethnicity/Race	White	80 (58)	80 (59)	82 (56)	75 (51)
	Latino	84 (66)	79 (60)	86 (63)	76 (59)
	Black	80 (57)	83 (63)	83 (60)	80 (62)
Gender	Women	86 (64)	85 (65)	86 (62)	79 (60)
	Men	78 (57)	77 (56)	82 (56)	75 (52)
Generation	Silent/Boomers	90 (67)	84 (68)	85 (61)	79 (60)
	Generation X	87 (67)	83 (64)	88 (66)	80 (63)
	Millennials	79 (56)	78 (57)	82 (58)	77 (54)
	Generation Z	64 (47)	77 (48)	82 (50)	67 (43)
Partisan ID	Democrat	86 (73)	91 (79)	92 (78)	90 (75)
	Independent	83 (58)	81 (54)	88 (58)	76 (54)
	Republican	79 (48)	70 (44)	76 (40)	63 (37)
Religion	Born-Again Christian	73 (40)	68 (42)	76 (40)	59 (30)
	Not Born-Again Christian	86 (67)	84 (67)	87 (66)	82 (64)
Educational Attainment	High School or Less	79 (53)	75 (51)	82 (53)	70 (50)
	Some College/2-Yr Degree	82 (65)	84 (68)	84 (62)	77 (61)
	4-Yr Degree/Postgrad	85 (64)	85 (65)	87 (64)	83 (59)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

The most prominent differences in support for these four exceptions revolve around partisanship and religion, and, to a lesser extent, gender.

Democrats are more likely to support all four pieces of legislation than Republicans, with these differences significant for legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy was the result of incest (91% vs. 70%), if the pregnancy was the result of rape (90% vs. 63%), or if there was a lethal fetal anomaly (92% vs. 76%).

Born-again Christians are significantly less likely to support all four pieces of legislation than non-born-again Christians, with the differences especially sharp in regard to legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy was the result of incest (68% vs. 84%) or of rape (59% vs. 82%).

Finally, women are more likely than men to support all four pieces of legislation, with these differences significant for legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the mother's physical health was at risk (86% vs. 78%) and if the pregnancy was the result of incest (85% vs. 77%).

Overall, there do not exist any noteworthy differences in support for these four pieces of legislation based on ethnicity/race, generation, or level of educational attainment (with two minor exceptions). The first exception is the significantly higher proportion of members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (90%) and Generation X (87%) than of Generation Z (64%) who support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the mother's physical health is at risk. The second exception is a significantly higher proportion of Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a four year or postgraduate degree (83%) than of Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less (70%) who support legislation that would allow an abortion to take place if the pregnancy were the result of rape.

### **Preferred Policy Regulating Abortion in Texas**

The survey then asked a distinct two-part question to first assess the position of Texans vis-à-vis the state's current abortion legislation, and for those who wished to make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, a second question was asked which provided the respondents with four potential options which are presently being considered by the Texas Legislature this session.

"Abortion is now illegal in Texas, except if the life of the mother is at risk. If you were able, would you modify Texas law to make it easier or make it harder for a woman to obtain an abortion, or would you leave the law as it is now?" The response options included: make it easier, leave the law as it is now, make it harder, and don't know. The "don't know" responses are excluded from the analysis below.

Respondents who answered that they would make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas were then asked this question: "Which of the following laws governing abortion is closest to your own personal view of what Texas law should be regarding abortion?" The four response options included:

- Illegal unless the mother's life or physical health is at risk or in the case of rape or incest.
- Legal through 6 weeks for any reason, and after only if the mother's life or physical health is at risk or in the case of rape or incest.
- Legal through 15 weeks for any reason, and after only if the mother's life is at risk.
- Legal through 23 weeks for any reason, and after only if the mother's life is at risk.



Figure 2 includes the 15% of Texans who said they would make it harder to obtain an abortion in Texas, the 33% who would leave the state’s abortion legislation as it is now, and the 52% who would make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, with the latter broken down among the four options provided for new abortion legislation: 5% prefer legislation that would expand abortion coverage in Texas to include pregnancies that were the result of rape or incest, 8% prefer legislation that would allow abortions through six weeks of pregnancy for any reason (or in the case of rape or incest), 9% prefer legislation that would allow abortions through 15 weeks of pregnancy for any reason, and 30% prefer legislation that would allow abortions through 23 weeks of pregnancy for any reason (i.e., the national standard prior to the *Dobbs* decision).

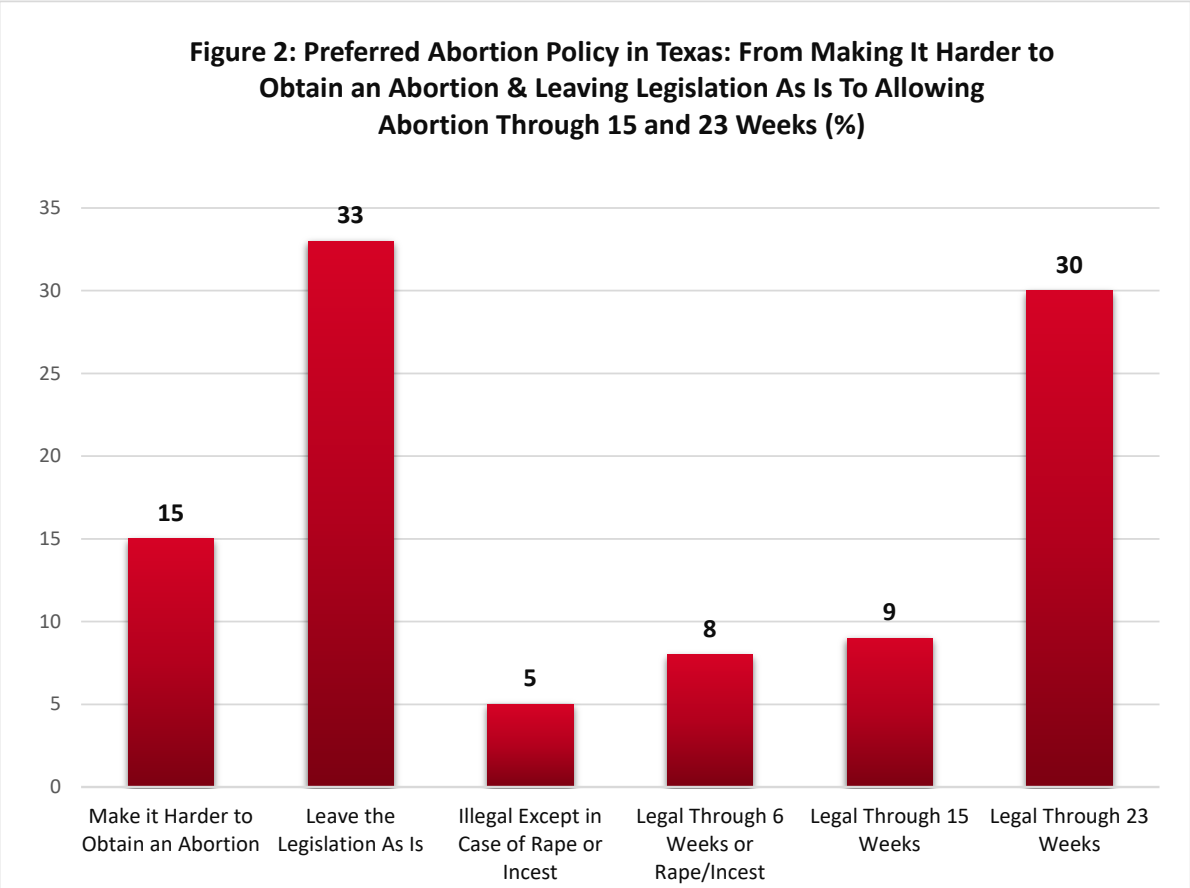


Table 2 provides the proportion of the members of Texas socio-demographic sub-groups (ethnic/racial, gender, generation, partisan, religious, education) who, if they could, would make it easier or harder to obtain an abortion in Texas, or would maintain the state’s current policy regulating abortion.

**Table 2: Preference Vis-à-Vis Current Texas Abortion Policy: Make It Harder or Easier to Obtain An Abortion, or Keep the Policy As Is (%)**

Group	Sub-Group	Make It Harder	Keep Policy As Is	Make It Easier
Overall	Overall	15	33	52
Ethnicity/Race	White	19	34	47
	Latino	12	32	56
	Black	12	25	63
Gender	Women	15	27	58
	Men	15	38	47
Generation	Silent/Boomers	14	32	54
	Generation X	14	33	53
	Millennials	19	32	49
	Generation Z	10	33	57
Partisan ID	Democrat	7	17	76
	Independent	14	34	52
	Republican	25	50	25
Religion	Born-Again Christian	25	48	27
	Not Born-Again Christian	11	27	62
Educational Attainment	High School or Less	15	38	47
	Some College/2-Yr Degree	15	29	56
	4-Yr Degree/Postgrad	14	30	56

The principal differences in preferences for these three options revolve around partisanship and religion, and to a lesser extent, gender.

Democrats (76%) are significantly more likely than Independents (52%) and Republicans (25%) to want to make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, with Independents also significantly more likely than Republicans and significantly less likely than Democrats to want to make it easier.

Republicans (50%) are significantly more likely than Independents (34%) and Democrats (17%) to want to maintain the state’s abortion policy as is, that is allowing an abortion to take place only if the mother’s life is at risk. Independents are also significantly more likely than Democrats to want to maintain the status quo.

Republicans (25%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (7%) to want to make it harder to obtain an abortion in Texas.

Born-again Christians (27%) are significantly less likely than non-born-again Christians (62%) to want to make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, and conversely are significantly more likely to both want to keep the state’s abortion policy as is (48% vs. 27%) and to make it harder to obtain an abortion in Texas (25% vs. 11%).

Women (58%) are significantly more likely than men (47%) to want to make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, while men (38%) are significantly more likely than women (27%) to want to maintain the status quo.

There are no salient preference differences based on generation or educational attainment, and only one noteworthy difference based on ethnicity/race. This latter difference is the significantly greater proportion of Black Texans (63%) than white Texans (47%) who would make it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas.

In sum, while there is strong support for legislation that would expand abortion access if the mother's physical health is at risk, and in the case of lethal fetal anomalies, rape and incest, when Texans are given the option of maintaining the status quo (abortion only if the mother's life is at risk), and not opening the Pandora's Box of reform making it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas, or making it harder to obtain an abortion in Texas, they are split right down the middle. Half of Texans (48%) are content with not making it easier to obtain an abortion in Texas while 52% would like to see the state's regulation of abortion become more flexible, with the median Texan favoring a policy under which abortion is illegal except if the mother's life is at risk or if the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest.

### **Support for Legislation to Restrict Support for Funding Out of State Abortion Travel**

The survey asked about the support for or opposition to legislation that would restrict the ability of Texas cities and counties to fund travel by pregnant women out of state in order to obtain an abortion and which would restrict the ability of any business receiving tax benefits from the state from providing financial assistance to an employee to travel out of state to obtain an abortion. The survey asked: "The Texas Legislature will consider multiple bills related to abortion during the 2023 legislative session. Presently all abortions are prohibited in Texas unless the mother's life is at risk. Do you support or oppose the following legislative proposals which would:

- Prohibit Texas cities and counties from providing any logistical support to women to obtain an out of state abortion such as paying for travel, lodging, meals or childcare.
- Prohibit businesses that provide financial assistance to their employees to obtain an abortion out of state from receiving any tax incentives such as exemption from tax, limitation on appraised value, or tax credit."

The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, along with don't know. "Don't know" responses are excluded from the analysis.

Figure 3 provides the proportion of Texans who support (strongly and somewhat) and oppose (strongly and somewhat) each of the proposed bills. The Texas public is roughly split evenly between those who support (51%) and oppose (49%) legislation that would prohibit cities and counties from paying for out of state travel to obtain an abortion and those who support (46%) and oppose (54%) legislation that would prohibit businesses that receive tax incentives of any type from paying for out of state travel to obtain an abortion.

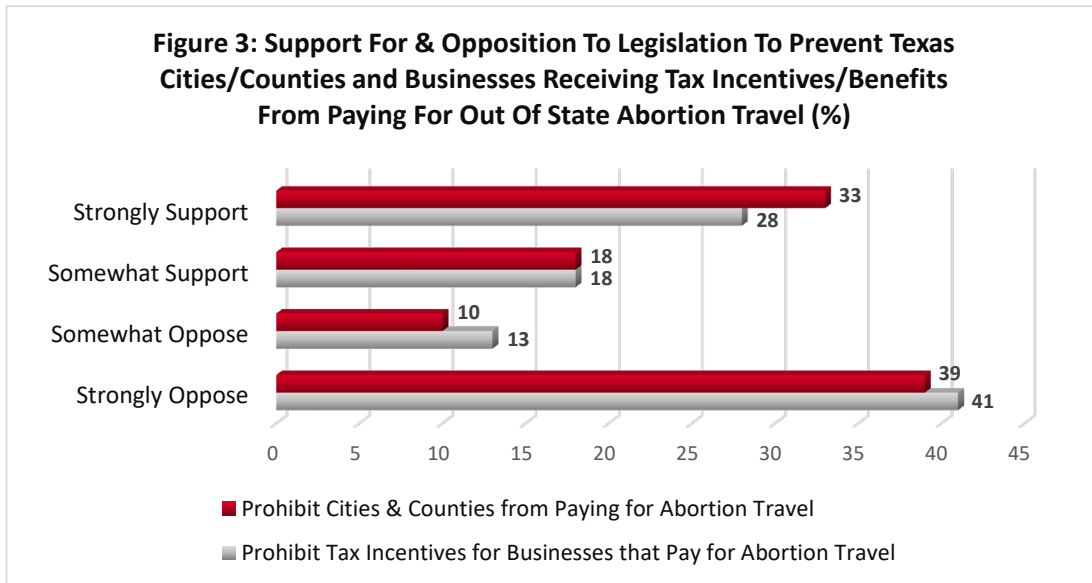


Table 3 provides the proportion of the members of Texas socio-demographic sub-groups (ethnic/racial, gender, generation, partisan, religious, education) who support (strongly and somewhat) each of the pieces of legislation designed to restrict funding for out of state travel by women to obtain an abortion.

**Table 3: Support for Legislation To Restrict Funding for Out of State Abortion Travel Among Demographic Sub-Groups (%)**

Group	Sub-Group	Prohibit Cities & Counties from Paying for Abortion Travel	Prohibit Tax Incentives for Businesses that Pay for Abortion Travel
Overall	Overall	51 (33)	46 (28)
Ethnicity/Race	White	56 (40)	50 (34)
	Latino	46 (30)	40 (22)
	Black	44 (21)	43 (18)
Gender	Women	45 (29)	44 (25)
	Men	57 (38)	49 (31)
Generation	Silent/Boomers	45 (35)	42 (32)
	Generation X	51 (34)	46 (29)
	Millennials	54 (34)	51 (30)
	Generation Z	57 (27)	46 (17)
Partisan ID	Democrat	33 (19)	27 (13)
	Independent	59 (30)	50 (27)
	Republican	68 (52)	66 (47)
Religion	Born-Again Christian	76 (50)	72 (47)
	Not Born-Again Christian	42 (26)	36 (21)
Educational Attainment	High School or Less	57 (38)	50 (32)
	Some College/2-Yr Degree	46 (31)	43 (24)
	4-Yr Degree/Postgrad	50 (30)	45 (28)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

The most prominent differences in support for these two pieces of legislation among Texans revolve around their partisanship and religion.

Republicans (68%) and Independents (59%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (33%) to support legislation that would prohibit Texas cities and counties from providing travel and logistical support to women seeking an abortion out of state. More than half of Republicans (52%) strongly support this legislation. Republicans (66%) and Independents (59%) are also significantly more likely than Democrats (27%) to support legislation that would bar businesses from receiving any tax incentives if they provide funding to their employees to assist them in obtaining an abortion out of state.

Born-again Christians (76%) are significantly more likely than non-born-again Christians (42%) to support legislation that would bar Texas cities and counties from providing travel and logistical support to women seeking an abortion out of state. Half of born-again Christians (50%) strongly support this legislation. Born-again Christians (72%) are also significantly more likely than non-born-again Christians (36%) to support legislation that would prohibit businesses from receiving any tax incentives if they provide funding to their employees to assist them in obtaining an abortion out of state.

Ethnic/racial, gender, generational and educational differences in support for these two pieces of legislation are modest, with only three worthy of mention. First, white Texans (56%) are significantly more likely than Latino (46%) and Black (44%) Texans to support legislation that would prohibit cities from paying for travel out of state to obtain an abortion. Second, white Texans (50%) are significantly more likely than Latino Texans (40%) to support legislation that would bar businesses from receiving any tax incentives if they pay for their employees to obtain abortions out of state. Third, men (57%) are significantly more likely than women (45%) to support legislation that would prohibit cities from paying for travel out of state to obtain an abortion.

## **Support for Legislation to Reduce Gun Violence in Texas**

The survey asked Texans about their support for 10 proposed pieces of legislation designed to reduce gun violence in Texas. They were asked the following question: “To what extent do you support or oppose the following legislation proposed to reduce gun violence?”

- Raise the age to purchase an assault rifle (such as AR-15s) from 18 to 21.
- Raise the age to purchase any firearm from 18 to 21.
- Allow public institutions of higher education to ban the carry of handguns on their campuses.
- Make it a crime to display a firearm while attending or within 500 feet of a public demonstration.
- Allow judges to take guns away from people shown to be a danger to themselves or others.
- Require criminal background checks on all gun buyers, including those buying at gun shows and private sales.
- Ban the sale of high-capacity magazines.



- Ban the possession or purchase of a gun by any individual with a restraining order filed against them for stalking or domestic violence.
- Require a three-day mandatory waiting period between the purchase of a firearm and when a person can take possession of it.
- Create a 10 year minimum prison sentence if a firearm is used to commit a crime.”

The response options for each proposed piece of legislation were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, as well as don’t know. “Don’t know” responses are excluded from the analysis below.

Table 4 provides the proportion of Texans who strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose the respective legislation while Figure 4 provides the proportion of Texans who support (strongly and somewhat) each one of the 10 proposed pieces of legislation.

**Table 4: Support For & Opposition To Proposed Legislation to Reduce Gun Violence in Texas (%)**

Proposed Legislation	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	67	23	6	4
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	66	20	7	7
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	62	18	9	11
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	61	24	9	6
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	61	20	8	11
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	60	16	10	14
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	59	24	8	9
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	51	22	14	13
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	50	19	11	20
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	48	15	14	23

Three-quarters or more of Texans support seven of these proposals: 90% support banning possession or purchase of a gun by anyone with a restraining order for domestic violence (67% strongly support this legislation), 86% of Texans support requiring criminal background checks for all gun buyers (66% strongly support), 85% of Texans support a minimum 10 year sentence for anyone who uses a firearm in the commission of a crime (61% strongly support), 83% of Texans support red flag laws (59% strongly support), 81% of Texans support a mandatory three day waiting period for the purchase of an assault rifle (61% strongly support), 80% of Texans support raising the age to purchase an assault rifle from 18 to 21 (62% strongly support), and 76% of Texans support raising the age to purchase any firearm from 18 to 21 (60% strongly support).

More than two-thirds of Texans support legislation that would prohibit the display of firearms at public demonstrations (73%, 51% strongly support) and support legislation that would allow public colleges and universities to ban handguns from campus (69%, 50% strongly support). Finally, 63% of Texans support legislation that would ban the sale of high capacity magazines, with 48% strongly supporting this legislation.

Table 5 provides the support for the 10 pieces of legislation among women and men. Women are significantly more likely than men to support all 10 legislative proposals, with gender gaps that range from 19% (raising the age to purchase any firearm from 18 to 21) to 6% (banning the possession or purchase of a firearm by anyone with a restraining order for domestic abuse or stalking).

**Table 5: Gender and Support for 10 Legislative Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence (%)**

Proposed Legislation	Women	Men
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	93 (75)	87 (58)
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	91 (73)	79 (59)
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	88 (71)	71 (52)
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	89 (65)	80 (58)
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	89 (70)	73 (52)
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	85 (69)	66 (50)
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	89 (68)	77 (50)
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	80 (62)	66 (40)
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	75 (55)	63 (44)
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	64 (59)	53 (36)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

Table 6 provides the support for the 10 pieces of legislation among white, Latino and Black Texans. There are highly significant ethnic/racial differences in support for three proposals, and moderately significant ethnic racial differences in support of a fourth proposal, and no significant ethnic/racial support for the remaining six proposals.

**Table 6: Ethnicity/Race and Support for 10 Legislative Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence (%)**

Proposed Legislation	White	Latino	Black
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	91 (65)	92 (69)	84 (67)
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	80 (59)	91 (73)	89 (72)
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	77 (55)	82 (68)	86 (71)
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	86 (57)	83 (67)	82 (61)
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	86 (54)	86 (69)	84 (62)
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	80 (52)	81 (68)	80 (67)
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	81 (52)	86 (67)	84 (64)
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	66 (47)	79 (56)	83 (54)
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	61 (42)	72 (54)	85 (62)
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	54 (41)	71 (54)	75 (55)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

Black and Latino Texans are significantly more likely than white Texans to support four legislative proposals designed to reduce gun violence in Texas: allowing public colleges and universities to ban handguns from campus (85% and 72% vs. 61%), banning the sale of high capacity magazines (85% and

72% vs. 61%), and barring the display of any firearm within 500 feet of a public demonstration (83% and 79% vs. 66%).

Latino Texans are also significantly more likely than white Texans to support legislation requiring a criminal background check on all gun purchases (91% vs. 80%).

Table 7 underscores the dearth of salient generational differences for these 10 legislative proposals to reduce gun violence in Texas, with consistently significant differences only present in support for one proposal. Significantly more members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (95%) than of Generation Z (73%) or Millennials (71%) support legislation that would impose a 10 year minimum sentence for any crime involving a firearm. Nearly three out of four (73%) members of this older generational cohort strongly support the legislation.

**Table 7: Generation and Support for 10 Legislative Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence (%)**

Proposed Legislation	Silent/Boomers	Gen-X	Millennials	Gen-Z
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	94 (80)	91 (67)	89 (62)	84 (50)
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	88 (72)	85 (66)	87 (64)	79 (57)
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	84 (71)	89 (59)	80 (60)	73 (50)
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	95 (73)	85 (62)	71 (55)	73 (50)
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	83 (68)	79 (59)	83 (62)	77 (49)
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	78 (67)	75 (60)	78 (59)	68 (49)
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	84 (64)	85 (62)	83 (58)	80 (51)
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	74 (56)	71 (54)	76 (49)	70 (44)
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	64 (51)	63 (44)	76 (53)	73 (50)
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	63 (55)	59 (46)	70 (50)	58 (31)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

Table 8 provides the proportion of Democrats, Independents and Republicans who support each one of the 10 respective legislative proposals to reduce gun violence in Texas. Democrats are significantly more likely than Republicans to support seven of these 10 proposals: 94% of Democrats support requiring criminal background checks for all gun buyers (including private sales and gun shows) compared to 82% of Republicans, 93% of Democrats support red flag laws compared to 76% of Republicans, 91% of Democrats support a ban on firearms within 500 feet of a public demonstration compared to 57% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats support raising the age to purchase an assault rifle from 18 to 21 compared to 72% of Republicans, 88% of Democrats support raising the age to purchase any firearm from 18 to 21 compared to 67% of Republicans, 88% of Democrats support allowing public colleges and universities to ban handguns from campus compared to 51% of Republicans, and 85% of Democrats support banning the sale of high capacity magazines compared to 44% of Republicans.

**Table 8: Partisan ID and Support for 10 Legislative Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence (%)**

Proposed Legislation	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	94 (79)	85 (59)	90 (59)
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	94 (84)	77 (53)	82 (54)
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	90 (79)	74 (55)	72 (47)
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	87 (68)	74 (54)	89 (60)
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	92 (79)	70 (46)	86 (51)
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	88 (77)	67 (50)	67 (48)
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	93 (77)	78 (52)	76 (44)
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	91 (72)	65 (42)	57 (34)
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	88 (74)	62 (37)	51 (29)
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	85 (71)	54 (38)	44 (29)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to support banning the possession or purchase of firearms by anyone with a restraining order for domestic violence (94% to 90%) and requiring a mandatory waiting period for the purchase of assault rifles (92% vs. 86%), while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to support a 10 year minimum sentence for the use of a firearm to commit a crime (89% vs. 87%), but in none of these three instances is the difference statistically significant.

Table 9 examines the support for the 10 legislative proposals to reduce gun violence among four distinct groups: Democratic women, Democratic men, Republican women, and Republican men.

**Table 9: Gender, Partisan ID and Support for 10 Legislative Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence (%)**

Proposed Legislation	Democratic Women	Democratic Men	Republican Women	Republican Men
Ban Gun Possession/Purchase if Restraining Order	95 (84)	84 (74)	93 (68)	86 (50)
Criminal Background Checks on All Gun Buyers	96 (88)	91 (79)	90 (63)	73 (45)
Raise Age to Purchase Assault Rifle to 21	93 (84)	88 (74)	87 (61)	57 (34)
10 Yr Minimum Sentence if Firearm Used in a Crime	90 (71)	82 (63)	93 (63)	86 (57)
Mandatory Waiting Period for Assault Rifles	95 (85)	88 (72)	87 (61)	66 (42)
Raise Age to Purchase Any Firearm to 21	92 (82)	83 (71)	81 (62)	55 (35)
Allow Judges to Take Guns (Red Flag)	94 (83)	91 (70)	83 (56)	69 (33)
Ban Display of Firearms at Public Demonstrations	93 (78)	88 (64)	66 (44)	50 (25)
Allow Colleges to Ban Handguns from Campus	89 (76)	86 (71)	56 (31)	45 (26)
Ban Sale of High Capacity Magazines	91 (78)	78 (63)	56 (43)	33 (16)

Proportion strongly in support in parentheses.

More than three out of four Democratic women and Democratic men support all 10 proposals designed to reduce gun violence while more than three out of four Republican women support 7 of the 10 proposals. In sharp contrast, more than three out of four Republican men support only two of the 10 proposals (the ban on the gun possession or purchase by anyone with a restraining order for domestic violence and a 10 year minimum sentence from crimes committed with an assault rifle).

And, while Democratic men are significantly more likely than Republican women to support only three legislative proposals (ban on display of firearms at a public demonstration, allowing colleges to ban handguns, a ban on the sale of high capacity magazines), Democratic men are significantly more likely than Republican men to support eight legislative proposals (all but the 10 year minimum sentence for crimes using a firearm and the ban on firearm possession by anyone with a restraining order for domestic violence).

With one exception (the 10 year minimum sentence for crimes where firearms were used), a higher proportion of Democratic women than any other group support all of these proposals, with at least nine out of 10 Democratic women supporting all but one proposal (89% support the ban on handguns on college campuses). And, with the exception of the 10 year minimum sentence proposal for gun crimes, a lower proportion of Republican men than any other group support these proposals.



## Support for State of Texas Immigration & Border Security Policies

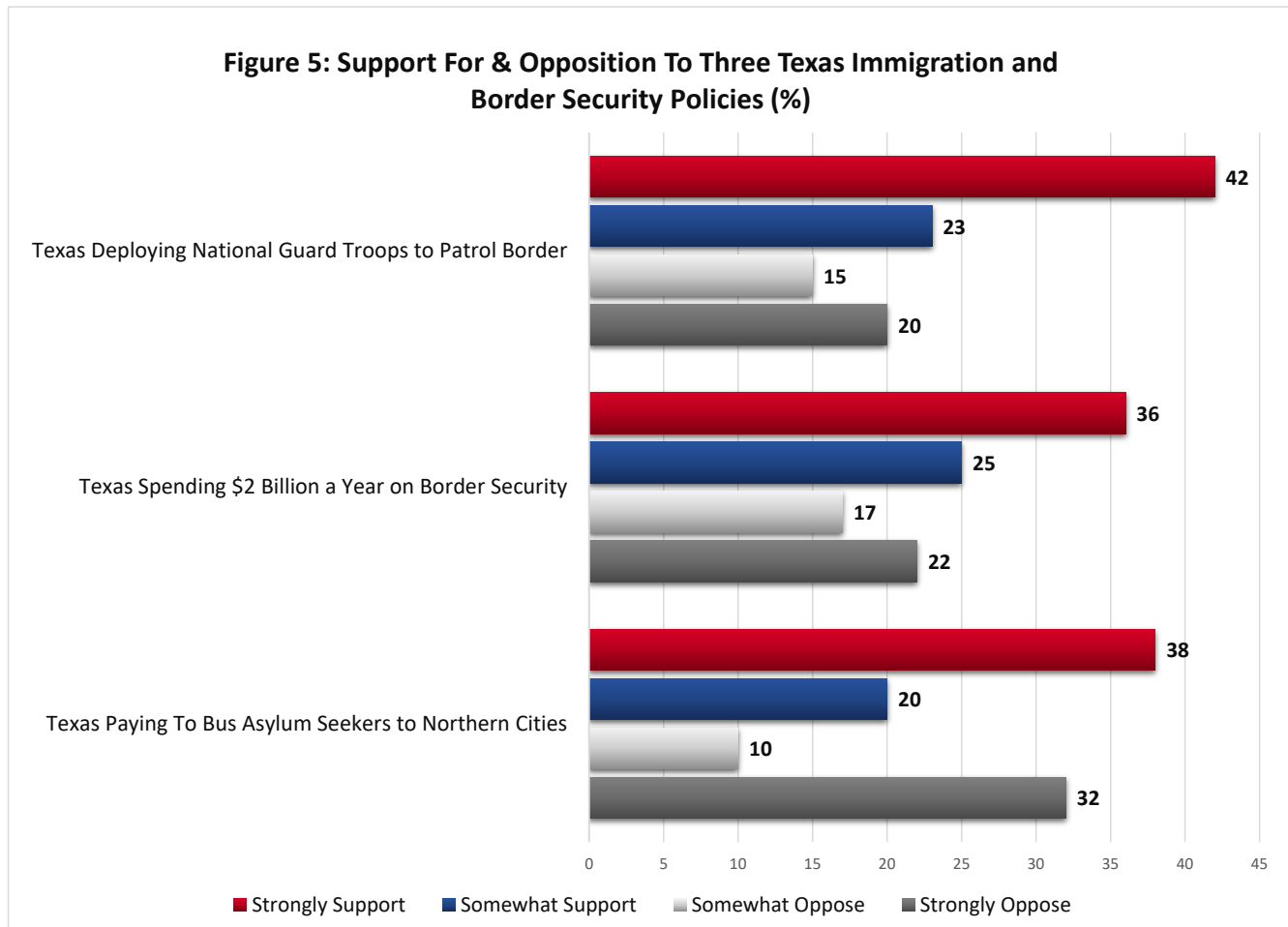
The survey examined the opinion of Texans regarding three distinct immigration and border security policies that the State of Texas has had in place over the past few years and that are expected to continue in at least the immediate future: deploying the Texas National Guard to the U.S.-Mexico border, spending approximately \$2 billion a year on border security, and paying to send asylum seekers by bus to northern cities.

Specifically, the survey asked: “How much do you support or oppose the following:

- Texas deploying National Guard soldiers to patrol along the border with Mexico.
- Texas spending \$2 billion dollars every year on border security.
- Texas paying to send asylum seekers by bus to Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C.”

The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, as well as don’t know. “Don’t know” responses are excluded from the analysis below.

Figure 5 provides the proportion of Texans who strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose each of the three policies.



Two-thirds (65%) of Texans support deploying the Texas National Guard to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border, with 42% strongly supporting this policy and 23% somewhat supporting it. One-third (35%) of Texans oppose this policy, 20% strongly and 15% somewhat.

Three-fifths (61%) of Texans support the state spending \$2 billion dollars a year on border security, with 36% strongly supporting and 25% somewhat supporting this expenditure. Two-fifths (39%) of Texans oppose the state spending \$2 billion annually on border security, 22% strongly and 17% somewhat.

Three-fifths (58%) of Texans support the policy under which the state pays to send asylum seekers by bus to northern cities, with 38% strongly supporting and 25% somewhat supporting this policy. Two-fifths (42%) of Texans oppose this busing policy, 32% strongly and 10% somewhat.

Table 10 provides the level of support for these three immigration and border security policies among different Texas ethnic/racial, gender, generational, partisan, and educational sub-groups.

**Table 10: Support For Three Texas Immigration & Border Security Policies Among Texas Demographic Sub-Groups (%)**

Group	Sub-Group	Deploy TX Guard to Border	Spend \$2B on Border Security	Bus Asylum Seekers North
Overall	Overall	65 (42)	61 (36)	58 (38)
Ethnicity/Race	White	73 (52)	72 (47)	67 (46)
	Latino	58 (37)	53 (30)	52 (34)
	Black	51 (21)	45 (16)	39 (22)
Gender	Women	64 (40)	58 (33)	54 (34)
	Men	66 (45)	65 (39)	62 (41)
Generation	Silent/Boomers	71 (57)	72 (51)	58 (45)
	Generation X	67 (47)	63 (40)	53 (38)
	Millennials	67 (35)	59 (31)	60 (36)
	Generation Z	44 (16)	44 (13)	61 (25)
Partisan ID	Democrat	35 (14)	40 (15)	31 (16)
	Independent	69 (42)	59 (32)	59 (42)
	Republican	95 (73)	88 (64)	86 (60)
Educational Attainment	High School or Less	66 (43)	65 (39)	61 (39)
	Some College/2-Yr Degree	63 (43)	55 (35)	55 (38)
	4-Yr Degree/Postgrad	65 (40)	63 (34)	57 (37)

Percentage strongly in support in parentheses.

The principal differences in support are primarily partisan and ethnic/racial in nature. Republicans are significantly more likely than Democrats and Independents to support all three policies. While 95% of Republicans support (73% strongly) deploying the Texas National Guard to the U.S.-Mexico border, the same is true for 69% of Independents and for only 35% of Democrats. While 88% of Republicans support (64% strongly) the state of Texas spending \$2 billion dollars annually on border security, the same is true for 59% of Independents and for only 40% of Democrats. While 86% of Republicans support (60% strongly) Texas paying to bus asylum seekers to northern cities, the same is true for 59% of Independents and for only 31% of Democrats. Independents are also significantly more likely to support all three policies than Democrats.

White Texans are significantly more likely than both Latino and Black Texans to support all three policies. While 73% of white Texans support (52% strongly) deploying the Texas National Guard to the U.S.-Mexico border, the same is true for 58% of Latino and 51% of Black Texans. While 72% of white Texans support (47% strongly) the state spending \$2 billion dollars annually on border security, the same is true for 53% of Latino and 45% of Black Texans. While 67% of white Texans support (46% strongly) the state paying to bus asylum seekers to northern cities, the same is true for 52% of Latino and 39% of Black Texans, with this latter policy the only one where Latino and Black Texans' support for these immigration and border security policies differs significantly.

Men are more likely to support all three policies than women, with the differences modest, but still significant in the case of the \$2 billion border security expenditure (65% vs. 58%) and busing asylum seekers north (62% vs. 54%). There are no salient educational differences and only two salient generational cases, with members of Generation Z significantly less likely than the members of the three older generational cohorts to support deploying the Texas National Guard to the border (44% vs. 67%, 67% and 71%, respectively) and spending \$2 billion a year on border security (44% vs. 59%, 63% and 72%, respectively).

### **Support for Election Reform Legislation**

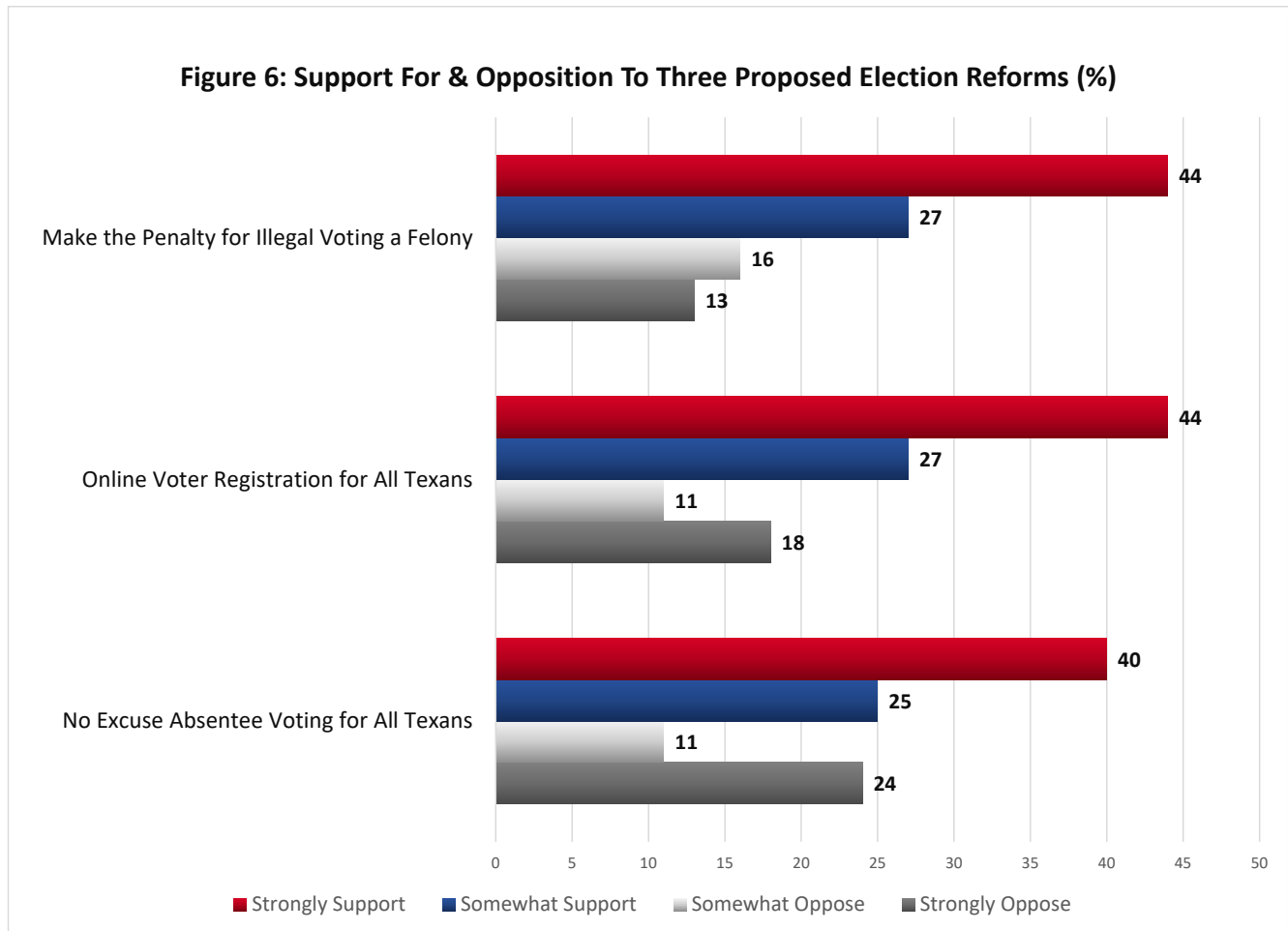
The respondents were asked about their support for or opposition to three legislative proposals in the area of election reform: expanding no-excuse absentee voting to all Texans, allowing all eligible Texans to register to vote online, and changing the penalty for the crime of illegal voting to a felony.

The survey asked the following three questions:

- “At present, Texans who are 65 and older are eligible to vote by mail for any reason, while those under 65 can only vote by mail if they are out of their county during the entire voting period, are disabled or are in jail. Do you support or oppose legislation that would allow Texans who are under 65 to vote by mail for any reason?”
- “Most states allow all eligible voters to register to vote online in addition to being able to register to vote in-person. Do you support or oppose legislation that would allow every eligible Texan to register to vote online?”
- “Do you support or oppose an increase in the punishment for attempting to vote illegally in Texas from a Class A Misdemeanor (the current penalty) to a state jail felony (the proposed penalty)?”

The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, as well as don't know. “Don't know” responses are excluded from the analysis.

Figure 6 provides the proportion of Texans who strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose each of the three legislative proposals.



More than two-thirds (71%) of Texans support making the penalty for the crime of illegal voting a felony, with 44% strongly supporting this legislation and 27% somewhat supporting it. More than one-quarter (29%) of Texans oppose this legislation, 13% strongly and 16% somewhat.

More than two-thirds (71%) of Texans support legislation that would allow all eligible Texans to register to vote online, with 44% strongly in support of this legislation and 27% somewhat in support of it. More than one-quarter (29%) of Texans oppose this legislation, 18% strongly and 11% somewhat.

Two-thirds (65%) of Texans support legislation that would allow all Texans (rather than only those age 65 and older) to vote absentee (i.e., by mail) for any reason, with 40% strongly supporting and 25% somewhat supporting this legislation. More than one-third of Texans (35%) oppose this legislation, 24% strongly and 11% somewhat.

Table 11 provides the level of support for these three election reform proposals among different Texas ethnic/racial, gender, generational, partisan, and educational sub-groups.

**Table 11: Support for Three Proposed Election Reforms in Texas Among Texas Demographic Sub-Groups (%)**

Group	Sub-Group	Illegal Voting a Felony	Online Voter Registration	Universal No Excuse Absentee Voting
Overall	Overall	71 (44)	71 (44)	65 (40)
Ethnicity/Race	White	74 (48)	64 (40)	54 (36)
	Latino	71 (43)	75 (46)	73 (43)
	Black	58 (26)	81 (49)	81 (50)
Gender	Women	68 (41)	71 (46)	66 (41)
	Men	75 (47)	71 (41)	64 (40)
Generation	Silent/Boomers	75 (56)	59 (41)	51 (36)
	Generation X	77 (47)	73 (41)	60 (38)
	Millennials	69 (40)	79 (47)	78 (48)
	Generation Z	58 (23)	77 (47)	79 (39)
Partisan ID	Democrat	58 (28)	89 (67)	90 (65)
	Independent	69 (44)	72 (34)	65 (31)
	Republican	88 (61)	51 (23)	39 (19)
Educational Attainment	High School or Less	75 (47)	69 (38)	66 (40)
	Some College/2-Yr Degree	68 (42)	68 (44)	64 (37)
	4-Yr Degree/Postgrad	70 (42)	76 (49)	65 (44)

Percentage strongly in support in parentheses.

Among the five distinct demographic categories, differences in support for these three election reform proposals are most salient within the partisan dimension. Democrats are significantly more likely than Independents and Republicans to support universal no-excuse absentee voting (90% vs. 65% and 39%) and online voter registration for everyone (89% vs. 72% and 51%). Independents are also significantly more likely than Republicans to support these two legislative proposals. In contrast, Republicans are significantly more likely than Independents and Democrats to support making illegal voting a felony (88% vs. 69% and 58%).

There are only a small number of other salient differences in support for these three election reform proposals, with two sets most worthy of note. First, white Texans (64% and 54%) are significantly less likely to support online voter registration and universal non-excuse absentee voting than Latino (75% and 73%) and Black (81% and 81%) Texans, but significantly more likely to support (74%) making illegal voting a felony than Black Texans (58%). Second, members of Generation Z (58%) are significantly less likely to support making illegal voting a felony than the members of the other generational cohorts (69%, 77% and 75%, respectively) and members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort are significantly less likely to support the online voter registration (59%) and no-excuse absentee voting (51%) reform proposals than Millennials (79% and 78%) and members of Generation Z (77% and 79%).

Educational attainment and gender differences in support are virtually non-existent, with one partial exception. Men (75%) are modestly more likely than women (68%) to support legislation that would make the crime of illegal voting a felony.



## **Report Authors**

Renée Cross, Senior Executive Director & Researcher, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Mark P. Jones, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Fellow in Political Science, Rice University;  
Senior Research Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs

## **Research Team**

Maria P. Perez Argüelles, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Savannah Sipole, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Agustín Vallejo, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs