



Texas Policy & Politics 2021

A Comparison of
Harris County and Texas

HOBBY
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Introduction

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey among Texans 18 and older to better understand their preferences regarding proposed legislation being considered during the 2021 regular session of the Texas Legislature, their opinions related to the COVID-19 vaccine, and their evaluations of leading political figures. The survey was fielded between January 12 and January 20 in English and Spanish, with 1,329 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.7. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, ethnicity/race, and education and are representative of the Texas adult population. A representative oversample of Harris County residents was also collected, with 468 cases (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.5%) utilized in the penultimate two reports that focus on the state's most populous county and the nation's third most populous county with a population of 4.8 million larger than that of 26 states.

The results of this survey will be presented in six separate reports: Legislative Issues, State Budget, Texans and the COVID-19 Vaccine, Political Attitudes and Evaluations, Issue Priorities and Evaluations in Harris County, and Texas vs. Harris County: A Comparison of Policy Preferences.

This sixth report compares the opinions, attitudes, preferences and evaluations of residents of a representative sample of Harris County residents to a representative sample of residents of the state of Texas's 253 other counties. For detailed analysis of each of topics, please consult the relevant report detailed in the preceding paragraph.

The Harris County sample population of 468 has slightly more women (51%) than men (49%). The ethnic/racial composition of the sample population is Anglos (37%), Latinos (35%), African Americans (20%), and All Others (8%). The sample population is distributed across three aggregate generational categories in the following way: Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) at 33%, Generation X (1965-1980) at 22%, and Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2003) at 45%. The highest educational attainment of two-fifths of the sample population (41%) is high school or lower, while 29% have attended some college or obtained a two-year degree, with the remaining 30% having either a four-year degree or a post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Democrats account for 39% of the respondents, Republicans for 20% and Independents for 29%. The remaining 12% of respondents are either unsure about their partisanship (10%) or identify with another party or group (2%).

The population for the rest of Texas (hereafter referred to as Texas) consists of 861 cases (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.3%). This sample has an equal proportion of women (50%) and men (50%). The ethnic/racial composition of the sample population is Anglos (47%), Latinos (36%), African Americans (12%), and All Others (5%). The sample population is distributed across three aggregate generational categories in the following way: Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) at 33%, Generation X (1965-1980) at 25%, and Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2003) at 42%. The highest educational attainment of two-fifths of the sample population (41%) is high school or lower, while 31% have attended some college or

obtained a two-year degree, with the remaining 28% having either a four-year degree or a post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Democrats account for 31% of the respondents, Republicans for 27% and Independents for 30%. The remaining 12% of respondents are either unsure about their partisanship (7%) or identify with another party or group (5%).

Executive Summary

This study compares the attitudes, opinions and evaluations of residents of Harris County to those of the residents of the 253 other Texas counties. By and large residents of Harris County do not possess attitudes, opinions and evaluations that are statistically distinct from those of other Texans, with only a few exceptions.

Harris County residents (65%) are significantly more likely than other Texans (55%) to strongly support a ban on the use of chokeholds by police officers.

Harris County residents (80%) are significantly more likely than other Texans (68%) to support the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in Texas.

Harris County residents (60%) are significantly less likely than other Texans (72%) to strongly oppose the adoption of a state income tax.

Harris County residents (58%) are significantly more likely than other Texans (47%) to believe that Texas counties and cities should have more autonomy than they presently possess to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are no significant differences between Harris County residents and those living in the 253 Texas counties in regard to their preferences about the 10 different sources of U.S. energy. While Houston is considered the fossil fuel energy capital of the world and its economy is substantially driven by fossil fuel production, Harris County residents' opinions about energy sources do not differ greatly from other Texans.

Harris County residents are significantly more likely to have a very favorable view of President Joe Biden (41%) and Vice President Kamala Harris (42%) than residents of the other 253 counties (24% and 21%, respectively).

Voting, Election & Political Reform Proposals

The respondents were queried on their support for five distinct political-related reforms: the adoption of online voter registration, the expansion of no-excuse mail voting to Texans under the age of 65, the creation of an Independent Redistricting Commission, the continued use of partisan elections to select state judges, and a ban on taxpayer funded lobbyists.

In the survey, respondents were presented with the following questions (in italics) to assess their opinion on these five reforms. Their responses options were Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose, and Don't Know.

Adopt Online Voter Registration

Most states allow residents 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?

Adopt No-Excuse Mail Voting for Texans under 65

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?

Independent Redistricting Commission

In Texas, the Texas Legislature draws the single-member districts used to elect members of the Texas House and Senate and the Texas members of the U.S. House. Some states however give an Independent Redistricting Commission this power in an attempt to reduce the role of partisanship and politics in the drawing of the district boundaries.

Do you support or oppose legislation to establish an Independent Redistricting Commission in Texas that would be responsible for creating the districts used for the Texas House and Senate and for the state's U.S. House seats?

Retain Partisan Election of Judges

Texas is one of fewer than a dozen states that use partisan elections to select judges. Other states use a variety of methods ranging from nonpartisan elections to gubernatorial and legislative appointment to select their judges.

Do you support or oppose the continued use of partisan judicial selection in Texas?

Ban Taxpayer Funded Lobbyists

Some Texans believe public funds should not be spent by counties, cities, school districts, transit authorities and other local government institutions to hire lobbyists to lobby members of the Texas legislative and executive branches. Other Texans however believe the hiring of lobbyists with public funds is necessary in order to best protect and advocate

for the interests of the constituents of these local government institutions. (the first and second sentences were rotated).

Do you support or oppose legislation that would forbid counties, cities, school districts, transit authorities and other local governments from using public funds to hire lobbyists?

Table 1 provides the distribution of the responses to these questions (excluding Don't Know responses) for Harris County residents and for Texas residents (i.e., all Texans living in a Texas county other than Harris County). The level of support for and opposition to these reforms among residents of Harris County and among other Texans is very similar.

Table 1: Support for and Opposition to Political Reforms

Political Reform	Harris & Texas	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
		Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Online Voter Registration for All Eligible Voters	Harris	50	22	6	22
	Texas	45	21	10	24
No Excuse Mail Ballots for Voters Under the Age of 65	Harris	47	19	10	24
	Texas	41	13	10	35
Create an Independent Redistricting Commission	Harris	46	27	12	15
	Texas	41	28	15	16
Retain Partisan Elections for Judicial Selection	Harris	22	30	20	28
	Texas	24	30	22	24
Ban Taxpayer Funding of Lobbyists	Harris	43	25	16	16
	Texas	49	20	16	15

The George Floyd Act and Criminal Justice Reform

The highest profile piece of criminal justice legislation being considering during the 2021 legislative session is the Texas George Floyd Act, authored by Representative Senfronia Thompson (House Bill 88) and Senator Royce West (Senate Bill 161). In the survey, respondents were given a brief description of the George Floyd Act and then queried on their level of support for it (strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose, don't know). They were then asked for their level of support for five main provisions of the George Floyd Act individually as well as their support for four other related criminal justice reforms. The questions used for these 10 items are below.

The George Floyd Act

A bill being called the George Floyd Act has been presented in the Texas Legislature this year. This legislation would prevent the use of lethal force by police officers if a lesser level of force could have worked, ban officer use of chokeholds, require officers to intervene and render aid if another officer is using excessive force, limit the immunity of police officers from civil lawsuits, and end arrests for fine-only offenses?

Do you support or oppose the George Floyd Act?

Individual Provisions and Other Related Proposals

Now, thinking about the individual provisions within the George Floyd Act as well as other related legislative proposals, do you support or oppose separate stand-alone legislation implementing each one of the provisions below?

Ban Lethal Force if Lesser Option Available

Prevent the use of lethal force by officers if a lesser level of force could have worked.

Ban Use of Chokeholds

Ban the use of chokeholds by officers.

Limit Police Immunity from Civil Lawsuits

Limit the immunity of police officers from civil lawsuits.

Intervene if Officer Using Excessive Force

Require officers to intervene and render aid if another office is using excessive force.

End Arrests for Fine Only Offenses

End arrests for fine-only offenses like minor traffic violations & disorderly conduct

More Police Training on Use of Force

Strengthen required law enforcement training related to conflict de-escalation and use of force.

Ban “No Knock” Warrants

Ban “No Knock Warrants” under which officers can break into homes without warning.

No-Cash Bond for Misdemeanors

Allow most people charged with misdemeanor crimes to be automatically released from jail on no-cash bonds (where defendants promise to return to court on their scheduled trial date).

De-Criminalize Marijuana-\$250 Fine Only

The current maximum penalty in Texas for possession of small amounts of marijuana can include up to 180 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,000.

Do you support or oppose reducing punishment for possession of small amounts of marijuana to a citation (similar to a traffic ticket) and a fine of \$250?

Tables 2a and 2b provide the distribution of support for and opposition to the George Floyd Act’s main provisions, and other related reforms. The differences between Harris County residents and other Texas residents in regard to support for and opposition to the George Floyd Act, its main provisions, and other criminal justice reforms are minimal and not

statistically significant, with a modest exception of Harris County residents being more likely than other Texans to strongly support a ban on the use of chokeholds, 65% to 55%.

Table 2a: Support and Opposition to the George Floyd Act, Its Main Provisions, and Related Reforms in Harris County

Criminal Justice Reforms (% Don't Know)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
George Floyd Act	56	24	5	15
Intervene if Officer Using Excessive Force	68	19	8	5
Ban Lethal Force if Lesser Option Available	60	25	5	10
Ban Use of Chokeholds	65	16	8	11
End Arrests for Fine-Only Offenses	50	27	16	7
Limit Police Immunity From Civil Lawsuits	55	22	8	15
More Police Training on Use of Force	64	24	7	5
Decriminalize Marijuana-\$250 Fine Only	58	19	13	10
Ban "No Knock" Warrants	57	23	11	9
No-Cash Bond for Misdemeanors	42	29	16	13

Table 2b: Support and Opposition to the George Floyd Act, Its Main Provisions, and Related Reforms in the State of Texas

Criminal Justice Reforms (% Don't Know)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
George Floyd Act	51	20	11	18
Intervene if Officer Using Excessive Force	69	22	4	5
Ban Lethal Force if Lesser Option Available	60	23	7	9
Ban Use of Chokeholds	55	21	13	11
End Arrests for Fine-Only Offenses	45	28	16	11
Limit Police Immunity From Civil Lawsuits	50	21	12	17
More Police Training on Use of Force	66	25	6	3
Decriminalize Marijuana-\$250 Fine Only	58	19	7	16
Ban "No Knock" Warrants	55	19	14	12
No-Cash Bond for Misdemeanors	40	29	15	16

Marijuana Possession & Casino Gambling Reforms

The respondents were also queried in two separate questions on their opinions regarding what the optimal policies in Texas should be pursuant to legislation regulating the possession of marijuana and gambling. The questions utilized for each item are provided below ahead of the discussion of the responses to the question.

Marijuana Possession

What is your opinion on the legalization of marijuana possession in Texas?

The five response options were as follows:

1. *Marijuana possession should not be legal under any circumstances.*
2. *Marijuana possession should only be legal for medical purposes with a prescription.*
3. *Possession of small amounts of marijuana for any purpose should be legal.*
4. *Possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal.*
5. *Don't Know*

Casino Gambling

This spring the Texas Legislature will be discussing state policy on gambling in Texas as a potential way to raise revenue. Which of the following gambling policy proposals do you most support for Texas? At the present time the principal forms of legal gambling in Texas include the Texas Lottery, charitable bingo and horse racing,

The five response options were as follows:

1. *Ban all gambling and gaming.*
2. *Leave current gambling laws unchanged.*
3. *Allow a limited expansion of gambling, but only at existing horse and dog tracks and on the state's three Indian reservations.*
4. *Allow full casino gambling like in states such as Louisiana and Nevada.*
5. *Don't Know*

Table 3 contains the distribution of the responses of Harris County and Texas residents related to the legalization of marijuana while Table 4 contains the distribution of the responses related to gambling options in the Lone Star State. The results in both tables reveal no substantive differences between Harris County residents and other residents of Texas in regard to either their preferences related to marijuana legalization or to gambling options.

Table 3: Public Opinion on Marijuana Possession in Texas

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Marijuana Possession Should Not Be Legal Under Any Circumstances	15	14
Marijuana Possession Should Only Be Legal For Medical Purposes With A Prescription	25	25
Possession of Small Amounts of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	31	28
Possession of Any Amount of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	29	33

Table 4: Public Preferences on Gambling Options for Texas

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Ban All Gambling and Gaming	11	6
Leave Current Gambling Laws Unchanged	15	18
Limited Expansion of Gambling on 3 Indian Reservations and Existing Horse and Dog Tracks	21	17
Allow Full Casino Gambling Like in Nevada & Louisiana	53	59

Medicaid Expansion

The respondents were also queried about their support for or opposition to expanding Medicaid under the 2010 Affordable Care Act (often referred to as Obamacare). The question utilized to gauge this support/opposition is provided below.

Medicaid Expansion

Texas is one of 12 states that have not expanded Medicaid coverage as provided for in the 2010 Affordable Care Act. Were Texas to raise the income limit under which people were eligible to receive Medicaid to 138% of the poverty level income, Medicaid coverage would be expanded to approximately 1.6 million Texans. The federal government would pay for 90% of the total cost of this program while Texas would pay for 10%, with the Texas share covered either by increasing taxes or cutting spending on education, social services and/or public safety.

Overall, do you support or oppose legislation that would expand Medicaid coverage in Texas under the Affordable Care Act?

Table 5 provides the distribution of the support for and opposition to the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act among Harris County residents and the residents of the other 253 Texas counties. Harris County residents (80%) are significantly more likely than the residents of Texas's other 253 counties (68%) to support (strongly or somewhat) the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in the Lone Star State.

Table 5: Support for and Opposition to Medicaid Expansion

Policy	Harris County or Texas	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
		Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Medicaid Expansion Under the Affordable Care Act	Harris	53	27	7	13
	Texas	46	22	12	20

Future Sources of Energy in the United States

With the arrival of the Biden Administration and a more robust discussion of transitioning the United States’ energy sources from fossil fuels to renewables, we asked the residents of the country’s largest producer of oil and natural gas the extent to which they favor expanding, reducing or maintaining at the present level ten distinct sources of energy in the United States in the future. The question utilized is below:

Sources of Energy

Do you favor expanding, reducing, or maintaining at the present level the following sources of energy in the United States?

1. *Offshore conventional oil and natural gas*
2. *Nuclear power plants*
3. *Coal mining*
4. *Solar power plants*
5. *Onshore conventional oil and natural gas*
6. *Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for oil and natural gas production*
7. *Wind turbine “farms”*
8. *Ethanol and other types of Biomass*
9. *Hydroelectric dams*
10. *Geothermal power plants*

Table 6a and 6b display the responses of Harris County residents and the residents of the other Texas counties to this question. It reveals no significant differences between the two populations in regard to their preferences about expanding, reducing or maintaining the 10 different sources of U.S. energy. That is, residents of the fossil fuel energy capital of the world (Houston) are not significantly more supportive of expanding or maintaining at the present level the principal fossil fuel sources (offshore conventional, onshore conventional, fracking) that drive much of the Houston area economy.

Table 6a: Harris County Support for Expanding, Reducing or Maintaining at the Present Level 10 Sources of Energy in the United States

Energy Source	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)		
	Expand	Maintain	Reduce
Solar Power Plants	70	18	12
Wind Turbine Farms	65	19	16
Geothermal Power Plants	61	28	11
Hydroelectric Dams	57	32	11
Nuclear Power Plants	31	34	35
Onshore Conv. Oil & Gas	34	36	30
Ethanol & Other Biomass	35	39	26
Offshore Conv. Oil & Gas	32	30	38
Fracking for Oil & Gas	30	31	39
Coal Mining	22	27	51

Table 6b: Texas Support for Expanding, Reducing or Maintaining at the Present Level 10 Sources of Energy in the United States

Energy Source	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)		
	Expand	Maintain	Reduce
Solar Power Plants	69	20	11
Wind Turbine Farms	64	20	16
Geothermal Power Plants	58	30	12
Hydroelectric Dams	56	33	11
Nuclear Power Plants	36	31	33
Onshore Conv. Oil & Gas	36	34	30
Ethanol & Other Biomass	31	39	30
Offshore Conv. Oil & Gas	30	34	36
Fracking for Oil & Gas	27	30	43
Coal Mining	19	31	50

Support for & Opposition to Options to Increase State Revenue

The survey respondents were presented with two separate questions related to a wide variety of options in order to boost state revenue during the next (2021-23) biennium and beyond.

The first question (in italics) focused on options (in italics) that involved increasing one of seven existing state taxes.

*Below are options to boost state revenue by increasing existing taxes.
Do you support or oppose the option as a way to raise additional revenue to fund the operations of the Texas state government?*

Increase Alcohol Tax. *Increase the State Alcohol Tax on beer, wine and hard liquor.*

Increase Gasoline Tax. *Increase the State Gasoline Tax by 2 cents from 20 cents per gallon to 22 cents per gallon.*

Increase Sales Tax. *Increase the State Sales Tax Rate by one-half cent from 6.25% per dollar to 6.75%.*

Increase Cigarette Tax. *Increase the State Tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products.*

Increase Franchise Tax. *Increase the State Tax Rate on large businesses (the 'Franchise Tax').*

Increase Oil & Natural Gas Tax. *Increase the State's Oil and Natural Gas Severance Tax.*

A second question focused on 14 revenue options involving the creation of a new tax or fee or ending an existing tax exemption.

*Below are options to increase state revenue by creating new taxes or ending current tax exemptions.
Do you support or oppose the option as a way to increase revenue to fund the operations of the Texas state government?*

Tax Vaping & E-Cigarettes. *Adopt a State Tax on e-cigarettes and vaping products similar to the one that currently exists for cigarettes.*

Electric Vehicle Fee. *Adopt an additional Registration and Annual Renewal Fee for all electric (\$200) and hybrid (\$100) vehicles.*

Adopt State Income Tax. *Adopt a State Income Tax.*

Adopt State Millionaire Tax. *Adopt a State Income Tax only for taxpayers with an income of more than \$1 million.*

Legalize & Tax Casino Gambling. *Legalize Casino Gambling and Tax gambling activities.*

Legalize & Tax Marijuana. *Legalize Marijuana for personal consumption and Tax its sale.*

White Collar Profession Fee. *Adopt an Annual Licensing Fee for white collar professionals such as doctors, lawyers, architects and accountants.*

End State Sales Tax Holidays. *End State Sales Tax Holidays (Back to School, Emergency Preparedness, Energy Efficiency).*

Close Property Tax Loopholes

Close the Loopholes that allow large companies to lower their property taxes.

Non-Natural Gas KW Tax. *Adopt a one cent Tax on each kilowatt of electricity generated from a source other than natural gas (that is from: coal, wind, nuclear, solar).*

Tax Bottled Water. *Apply the State Sales Tax to bottled water (which is presently tax exempt).*

Create More Toll Roads. *Encourage the creation of toll roads so that those using the highways pay for their construction and maintenance.*

Table 7 displays the responses regarding these 20 sources of revenue for Harris County residents and the residents of the other 253 Texas counties. Across the 20 revenue enhancement options, there exist no significant differences between those of Harris County residents and their fellow Texans, with the modest exception that Harris County residents (60%) were significantly less likely than other Texans (72%) to strongly oppose a state income tax, although three-fifths of them did strongly oppose it.

Table 7a: Support for and Opposition To Revenue Generation Options in Harris County

Revenue Generation Option (DK%)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Tax Vaping & E-Cigarettes	66	16	8	10
Close Property Tax Loopholes	56	23	13	8
Increase Cigarette Tax	52	19	10	19
Increase Franchise Tax	43	27	11	19
Legalize & Tax Casino Gambling	39	30	13	18
Legalize & Tax Marijuana	50	17	14	19
Increase Alcohol Tax	37	26	16	21
Adopt State Millionaire Tax	45	21	12	22
White Collar Profession Fee	22	27	23	28
Increase Oil & Gas Tax	25	24	23	28
Increase Sales Tax-0.5%	14	23	22	41
Electric Vehicle Fee	17	23	23	37
Create More Toll Roads	16	25	26	33
Increase Gasoline Tax-2cts	17	17	25	41
End Sales Tax Holidays	14	23	17	46
Tax Bottled Water	14	16	21	49
Non-Natural Gas KW Tax-1ct	12	16	23	49
Adopt State Income Tax	10	12	18	60

Table 7b: Support for and Opposition To Revenue Generation Options in the State of Texas

Revenue Generation Option (DK%)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Tax Vaping & E-Cigarettes	65	19	7	9
Close Property Tax Loopholes	59	24	9	8
Increase Cigarette Tax	55	17	11	17
Increase Franchise Tax	42	27	12	19
Legalize & Tax Casino Gambling	41	29	10	20
Legalize & Tax Marijuana	50	16	9	25
Increase Alcohol Tax	39	25	13	25
Adopt State Millionaire Tax	43	18	11	28
White Collar Profession Fee	26	27	20	27
Increase Oil & Gas Tax	21	22	24	33
Increase Sales Tax-0.5%	13	24	20	43
Electric Vehicle Fee	19	17	22	42
Create More Toll Roads	11	23	23	43
Increase Gasoline Tax-2cts	13	18	23	46
End Sales Tax Holidays	15	16	21	48
Tax Bottled Water	14	16	16	54
Non-Natural Gas KW Tax-1ct	10	17	22	51
Adopt State Income Tax	5	12	11	72

Support for & Opposition to Tax Exemption Proposals

The survey respondents were also queried on their level of support for or opposition to six bills under consideration during the 2021 regular session of the Texas Legislature that would exempt specific items from the state sales tax.

The following question and response options (both in italics) below were utilized to gauge popular support for the six distinct tax exemption legislative proposals.

Legislation has been submitted this session in the Texas Legislature that if passed would result in the elimination of the state sales tax for certain items. Do you support or oppose legislation that would:

Feminine Hygiene Products. *Exempt feminine hygiene products from the State Sales Tax.*

Child & Adult Diapers. *Exempt child and adult diapers from the State Sales Tax.*

Animals Adopted from Rescue Groups. *Exempt animals adopted from or sold by animal rescue groups from the State Sales Tax.*

Firearm Safety Supplies & Equipment. *Exempt firearm safety supplies & equipment from the State Sales Tax.*

College Textbooks for 2 Weeks a Year. *Exempt textbooks purchased or rented by university and college students from the State Sales Tax for one week in August and one week in January.*

Internet Access. *Exempt Internet access service from the State Sales Tax*

Table 8 displays the response of the Harris County and other Texas residents. There do not exist any significant differences between the two groups in regard to their support for, or opposition to, these six tax exemptions.

Table 8: Table: Support for and Opposition to Sales Tax Exemption Proposals

Tax Exception (DK%)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Harris County				
College Textbooks for 2 Weeks	62	26	7	5
Child & Adult Diapers	54	26	10	10
Animals Adopted From Rescue Groups	56	29	9	6
Feminine Hygiene Products	55	23	10	12
Internet Access	51	24	14	11
Firearm Safety Supplies & Equipment	31	18	18	33
Texas				
College Textbooks for 2 Weeks	64	25	6	5
Child & Adult Diapers	63	22	7	8
Animals Adopted From Rescue Groups	57	27	10	6
Feminine Hygiene Products	55	22	13	10
Internet Access	52	25	15	8
Firearm Safety Supplies & Equipment	33	18	19	30

The 2019-2021 \$1 Billion Deficit and the Rainy Day Fund

On January 11, 2021, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar delivered his biennial revenue estimate and concluded that the current biennium budget stretching from September 1, 2019 through August 30, 2021 was projected to end with a balance of an approximate \$1 billion dollar deficit.

The survey respondents were asked how much of this deficit they believed should be covered by tapping the state’s \$10 billion dollar Rainy Day Fund (formally known as the Economic Stabilization Fund).

The respondents were presented with the following question and response options (in italics).

The Texas Economic Stabilization Fund (more commonly known as the Rainy Day Fund) presently has a balance of approximately \$10 billion dollars. Texas is facing a budget deficit for the current budget cycle of approximately \$1 billion dollars. To cover the \$1 billion gap in the current biennial budget (September 2019 to August 2021), which of the values below comes closest to the amount of the Rainy Day Fund that you believe should be withdrawn to help with this shortfall.

1. *\$0 (nothing).*
2. *\$250 million.*
3. *\$500 million.*
4. *\$750 million.*
5. *\$1 billion.*

Table 9 displays the preferences of Harris County and other Texas residents on how much of the Rainy Day Fund to tap in order to pay for the current fiscal cycle’s \$1 billion dollar deficit. While fewer Harris County residents (33%) than other Texas residents (40%) would like to use the Rainy Day Fund to cover the entirety of this deficit, this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 9: Amount of Money That Should Be Withdrawn from the Rainy Day Fund

Withdrawn Amount	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
\$0 (nothing)	21	17
\$250 Million	18	17
\$500 Million	22	20
\$750 Million	6	6
\$1 Billion	33	40

Texan Attitudes Toward Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

The survey respondents were asked the following question (in italics) in regard to the likelihood that they would get vaccinated against COVID-19, with six possible response options (also in italics).

Thinking about the COVID-19 vaccine, if it were free and available to you today, would you:

- 1. Definitely get it.*
- 2. Probably get it.*
- 3. Probably not get it.*
- 4. Definitely not get it.*
- 5. Already have gotten the vaccine.*
- 6. Don't know.*

Table 10 provides the responses of Harris County residents and the residents of the other Texas counties to this question. There do not exist any significant differences between Harris County residents in their propensity to be vaccinated.

Table 10: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Already Got It	5	3
Definitely Get It	37	38
Probably Get It	18	18
Probably Not Get It	13	10
Definitely Not Get It	17	22
Don't Know	11	9

Why Texans May Not Get Vaccinated

All respondents who did not state that they either definitely would get vaccinated or had already been vaccinated were presented with eight possible reasons why they might not get vaccinated using the question and response options below in italics.

Which of the below represents a major reason, a minor reason or is not a reason why you might not get vaccinated?

1. *Worried about possible side effects.*
2. *Don't trust the government to make sure the vaccine is safe.*
3. *Don't trust the pharmaceutical companies to make sure the vaccine is safe.*
4. *The risks of COVID-19 are being exaggerated.*
5. *Don't trust vaccines in general.*
6. *Don't consider self at risk of getting sick from COVID-19.*
7. *Worried about getting COVID-19 from the vaccine.*
8. *Vaccine is too new and want to wait and see how it works for other people.*

Table 11 compares the responses of Harris County residents who were uncertain about getting vaccinated (i.e., everyone from Table 10 except those who said they definitely were going to get vaccinated or that they had already been vaccinated) to those of Texas residents regarding the potential reasons for their reluctance to get vaccinated. With two exceptions, there exist no significant difference between the two populations in regard to the extent to which these eight potential reasons were a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason for why they might not get vaccinated. Harris County residents uncertain about getting vaccinated are significantly less likely to list a worry about possible side effects as a major reason they might not get vaccinated than other Texans (49% vs. 61%) and significantly more likely than other Texans to state that the risks of COVID-19 being exaggerated are not a reason why they might not get vaccinated (61% vs. 51%).

Table 11: Reasons For Not Getting Vaccinated

Reasons	Distribution of Population (%)		
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not A Reason
Harris County			
Vaccine Too New, Wait & See How It Works	57	27	16
Worried About Possible Side Effects	49	24	27
Don't Trust Government to Make Sure Safe	43	23	34
Don't Trust Big Pharma to Make Sure Safe	43	23	34
Don't Trust Vaccines in General	27	17	56
Risks of COVID-19 Being Exaggerated	20	19	61
Don't Consider Self at Risk of COVID-19	25	27	48
Worried About Getting COVID-19 From Vaccine	20	30	50
Texas			
Vaccine Too New, Wait & See How It Works	62	21	17
Worried About Possible Side Effects	61	26	13
Don't Trust Government to Make Sure Safe	47	22	31
Don't Trust Big Pharma to Make Sure Safe	46	24	30
Don't Trust Vaccines in General	32	23	45
Risks of COVID-19 Being Exaggerated	32	17	51
Don't Consider Self at Risk of COVID-19	25	23	51
Worried About Getting COVID-19 From Vaccine	23	24	53

COVID-19 Vaccination: Personal Choice or Collective Responsibility?

The respondents were queried on their position on whether getting vaccinated was a personal choice or a collective responsibility. The question below and three response options (in italics) below were utilized.

Which comes closer to your view? Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is:

- 1. A personal choice.*
- 2. Part of everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others.*
- 3. Don't Know*

Table 12 provides the responses to this question. While Harris County residents (55%) are more likely than residents of other Texas counties (49%) to believe that getting vaccinated is a collective responsibility, and, conversely less likely to view getting vaccinated as a personal choice (45% vs. 51%), these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 12: Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Personal Choice	45	51
Everyone's Responsibility	55	49

City and County Autonomy to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

The respondents were asked about what they considered the optimal level of autonomy of Texas counties and cities should be to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The question and four responses below (in italics) were utilized to this end.

Many politicians have complained that Texas counties and cities have not been allowed enough autonomy in adopting county and city specific measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, while many other politicians have complained that Texas counties and cities have had too much autonomy in adopting county and city specific measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Which of the following most closely matches your

position on the amount of autonomy Texas counties and cities should have to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?

1. *Counties and cities should have more autonomy than they presently have.*
2. *Counties and cities should have less autonomy than they presently have.*
3. *Counties and cities presently have the right amount of autonomy.*
4. *Don't Know*

Table 13 provides the distribution of the responses to this question. Harris County residents (58%) are significantly more likely than other Texas residents (47%) to believe that county and city officials should have more autonomy than they presently possess in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 13: Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
More Than Presently Have	58	47
Presently Have Right Amount	20	35
Less Than Presently Have	22	17

The Evaluation of National & Texas Political Leaders

The respondents were questioned about their opinion of a select number of national and Texas political leaders using the question and response options (in italics) below.

For the following individuals, please indicate if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of them, or if you don't know enough about them to have an opinion

1. *Very Favorable.*
2. *Somewhat Favorable.*
3. *Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable.*
4. *Somewhat Unfavorable.*
5. *Very Unfavorable*
6. *Don't Know Enough.*

Table 14 provides the extent to which the residents of Harris County and the residents of the other 253 Texas counties have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of a dozen national and Texas politicians, as well as indicating the proportion of each population that does not know enough about the politician to have an opinion about them. The predisposition of Harris County and other Texas residents toward ten of these 12

politicians is not significantly different. The two exceptions are President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris who are each viewed very favorably by a significantly larger proportion of Harris County residents (41% and 42% respectively) than by the residents of the other 253 Texas counties (24% and 21% respectively).

Table 14: Texas and National Politician Favorability Ratings

Politician	Distribution of Population (%)					
	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Don't Know Enough
Harris County						
Greg Abbott	15	19	15	9	31	11
Joe Biden	41	16	11	4	23	5
Joaquín Castro	19	12	15	6	15	33
Julián Castro	19	15	16	8	14	29
Dan Crenshaw	14	12	16	11	24	23
John Cornyn	9	12	20	14	25	20
Ted Cruz	17	9	12	6	43	13
Kamala Harris	42	11	9	5	23	10
Beto O'Rourke	29	15	14	5	21	16
Dan Patrick	12	13	16	8	31	20
Dade Phelan	6	9	19	5	11	50
Texas						
Donald Trump	30	10	5	5	46	5
Greg Abbott	22	18	11	16	24	9
Joe Biden	24	15	11	6	38	6
Joaquín Castro	17	11	13	5	22	32
Julián Castro	17	12	14	4	24	29
Dan Crenshaw	15	10	17	6	16	36
John Cornyn	9	14	14	16	29	18
Ted Cruz	28	10	6	7	40	8
Kamala Harris	23	15	8	6	38	10
Beto O'Rourke	20	14	11	6	36	13
Dan Patrick	14	13	14	6	29	24
Dade Phelan	3	6	21	5	8	57
Donald Trump	30	10	5	5	46	5

The Existence of Widespread Voter Fraud in the 2020 Presidential Election

Texans were queried about their opinion regarding the existence of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election. They were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement (in italics) below.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement that there was widespread fraud in the 2020 presidential election?

1. *Strongly Agree*
2. *Agree*
3. *Disagree*
4. *Strongly Disagree*
5. *Don't know*

Table 15 provides the results to this question for Harris County residents and for the residents of the other Texas counties. While Harris County residents (22%) are less likely than other Texans (35%) to strongly agree with the statement that there was widespread voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election, the difference is not significant, due in large part to the limited sample size for the Harris County population

Table 15: There Was Widespread Voter Fraud in the 2020 Presidential Election

Response	Agreement with Statement (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Strongly Agree	22	35
Agree	14	11
Disagree	12	10
Strongly Disagree	52	44

Support for and Opposition to the Storming of the U.S. Capitol

The survey was fielded between January 12 and January 20 in the immediate aftermath of the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6 by supporters of then President Donald Trump in protest of the certification of President Joe Biden’s Electoral College victory that was taking place inside at the time. The question below (in italics) was utilized.

On January 6, supporters of President Trump stormed the US Capitol to protest lawmakers certifying Joe Biden’s election victory. Based on what you have read or heard about this, do you support or oppose these actions?

1. *Strongly Support*
2. *Somewhat Support*
3. *Somewhat Oppose*
4. *Strongly Oppose*
5. *Don’t Know*

Table 16 provides the responses to this question. There do not exist any salient differences between Harris County residents and other Texans in the extent to which they either support or oppose the storming of the U.S. Capitol that took place on January 6, 2021.

Table 16: Support for the Protest and Storming of the Capitol on January 6

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	Harris	Texas
Strongly Support	8	10
Somewhat Support	8	7
Somewhat Oppose	10	10
Strongly Oppose	74	73