



**Lifting the COVID-19  
Restrictions in Texas**

**HOBBY**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

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## Introduction

Winter Storm Uri began to hit parts of Texas on February 13, 2021 and its onslaught left close to 4.5 million homes and businesses without power at its peak. The preliminary number of deaths attributed to the storm now totals 57, including 25 in Harris County alone, and the storm's economic toll is estimated to be as high as \$295 billion. And all the while, people continued to live under pandemic conditions wrought by COVID-19.

In order to study Winter Storm Uri's impact on Texas, the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey of residents 18 and older who live in the 213 counties (91.5% of the state population) served by the Texas Electrical Grid, which is managed by the Electrical Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). The survey documents Texans' experiences during the storm and explores preferences among potential changes in policies regarding electricity. The survey also examines opinions about the lifting of statewide COVID-19 restrictions. The survey was fielded by YouGov between March 9-19, 2021 with 1,500 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.5. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, ethnicity/race, and education and are representative of the adult population in these 213 counties.

The results of this survey will be presented in two individual reports: The Lifting the COVID-19 Restrictions and the Winter Storm of 2021. An oversample of Harris County residents was also collected, with the findings included in each report.

## Executive Summary: Lifting the COVID-19 Restrictions

On March 2, 2021, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order GA-34, which lifted statewide COVID-19 restrictions. The order rescinded, beginning on March 10, the governor's previous mandate (GA-29) that Texans wear face coverings (masks) and allowed all businesses to operate at 100% capacity as long as the area in which the businesses are located does not surpass a high hospitalization threshold. This threshold is defined by an area where COVID-19 patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15% for seven consecutive days.

The survey respondents were asked five questions related to Governor Abbott's executive order regarding the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, and the responses were cross-tabulated with ethnicity/race, age, gender, education, and partisanship.

37% of Texans support Governor Abbott's decision to end the statewide mask mandate while 56% oppose the decision. The remaining 7% neither support nor oppose the decision.

42% of Texans support Governor Abbott's decision to allow all businesses to operate at 100% capacity and 49% oppose it. The remaining 9% neither support nor oppose the decision.

When provided with the following information, “According to recent data, the daily counts of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths in Texas are trending downward, although the rates remain relatively high. The head of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other medical experts say that while caseloads are flattening out, variants of the coronavirus could bring another wave of the pandemic and that mask and business capacity restrictions should stay in place at this point in time,” 37% support Governor Abbott’s decision to end Texas’s statewide mask mandate and to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity in light of the recommendations of medical experts while 51% oppose the decision. The remaining 12% neither support nor oppose the decision.

Slightly more than one-half of Anglos (52%) support the ending of the mask mandate, double the proportion of Latinos (26%) and five times the proportion of African Americans (10%).

The Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945)/Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort more strongly supports Governor Abbott’s decisions than Generation X (1965-1980) or the Millennial (1981-1996)/Generation Z (1997-2003) cohort.

Men (44%) are significantly more likely than women (29%) to support Governor Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate.

Men (50%) are significantly more likely than women (35%) to support Governor Abbott’s decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity.

Ten times as many Republicans (70%) than Democrats (7%) support Governor Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate.

Republicans (77%) also are significantly more likely than Democrats (12%) to support Governor Abbott’s decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity.

When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s ending the mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will help restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives, 44% of Texans agree with the statement and 37% disagree. The remaining one-fifth (19%) neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement.

Three-fifths (60%) of Anglos agree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives compared to only 33% of Latinos and 21% of African Americans.

Men (50%) are significantly more likely than women (39%) to agree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives.

Republicans (75%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (19%) to agree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives.

When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott's ending the statewide mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will result in an increase in the number of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and fatalities in Texas, a slight majority (51%) of the respondents agree with the statement compared to slightly less than a third (30%) who disagree with it. The remaining one-fifth (19%) neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement.

Democrats (74%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (28%) to agree with the statement that Governor Abbott's decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

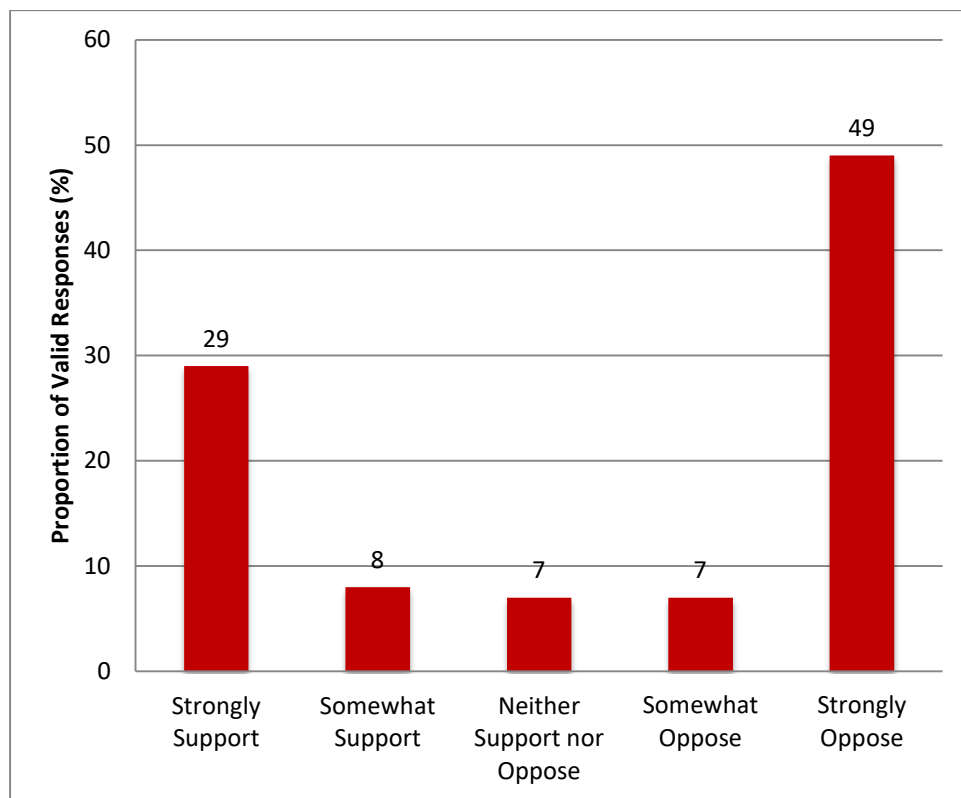
Respondents with a 4-year degree or advanced degree (59%) are significantly more likely to agree with the statement that Governor Abbott's decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths than those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less (43%).

When comparing the views of Harris County residents and other Texans, a higher level of support for Governor Abbott's decisions lifting COVID-19 restrictions are found outside of the state's largest county. For example, 37% of Texans support Governor Abbott's decision to end the mask mandate while 26% of Harris County residents support it. Regarding the revocation of the business occupancy limit, 42% of Texans support this decision in contrast to the 33% support found among Harris County residents.

## Public Opinion on the Ending of the Mask Mandate & Business Capacity Restrictions

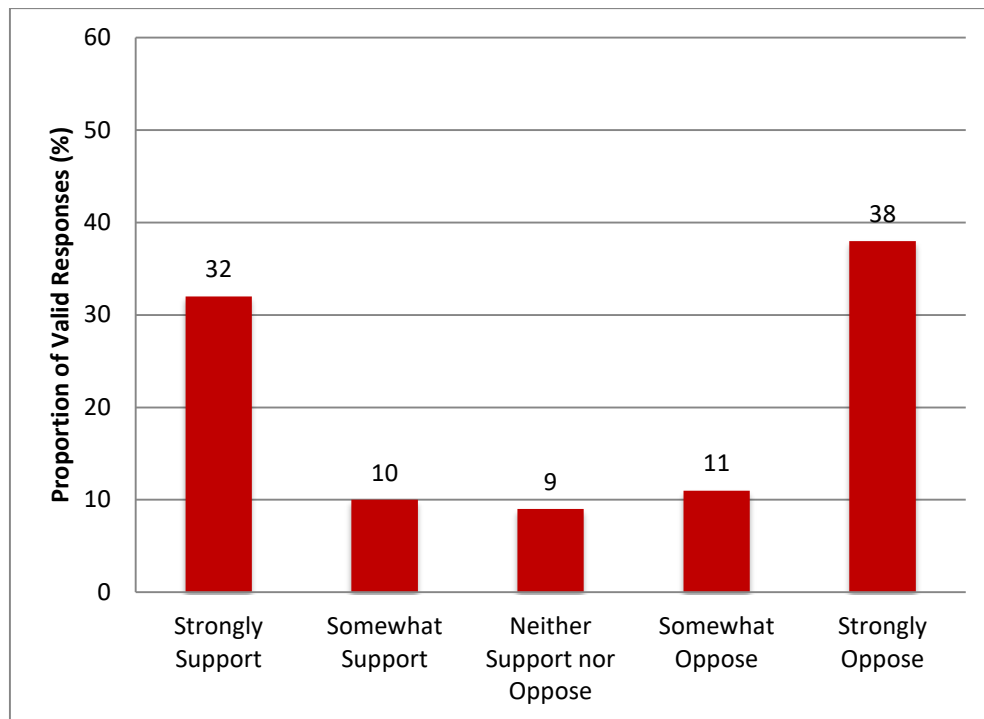
The survey respondents (henceforth referred to as Texans when discussing the statewide results) were informed that Governor Greg Abbott has announced he is ending Texas’s statewide mask mandate. They were then asked, “Do you support or oppose Governor Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate?” Figure 1 displays the results, with 37% of Texans supporting Abbott’s decision (29% strongly and 8% somewhat) and 56% of Texans opposing Abbott’s decision (49% strongly and 7% somewhat). The remaining 7% neither support nor oppose the decision.

**Figure 1. Support for and Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**



The respondents also were told that Governor Abbott declared that all Texas businesses would be allowed to operate at 100% capacity (an increase from 75% capacity in most cases). They were then asked, “Do you support or oppose Abbott’s decision to allow all businesses to operate at 100% capacity?” Figure 2 displays the results, with 42% of Texans supporting Abbott’s decision (32% strongly and 10% somewhat) and 49% opposing Abbott’s decision (38% strongly and 11% somewhat). The remaining 9% neither support nor oppose the decision.

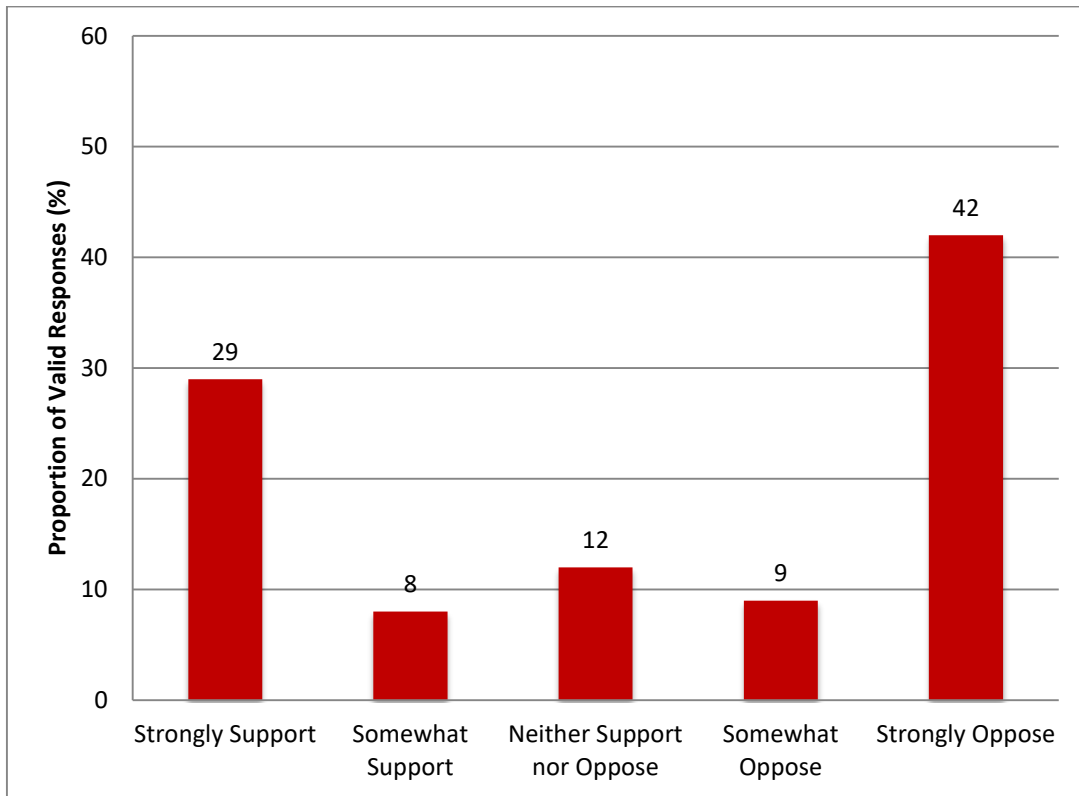
**Figure 2. Support for and Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**



Additionally, the respondents were presented with the following information in the last survey question: “According to recent data, the daily counts of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths in Texas are trending downward, although the rates remain relatively high. The head of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other medical experts say that while caseloads are flattening out, variants of the coronavirus could bring another wave of the pandemic and that mask and business capacity restrictions should stay in place at this point in time.” They were then asked, “To what extent do you support or oppose the decision to end Texas’s statewide mask mandate and to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity in light of the recommendations of medical experts?”

Figure 3 displays the results, with 37% supporting Abbott’s decision (29% strongly and 8% somewhat), and 51% opposing Abbott’s decision (42% strongly and 9% somewhat). The remaining 12% neither support nor oppose the decision.

**Figure 3. Support for and Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to End the Mask Mandate and Allow 100% Capacity Contrary to Medical Expert Advice**



**Ethnicity/Race & Support for Governor Abbott’s Decisions**

The distribution of the ethnic/racial self-identification of the survey respondents is Anglo (44%), Latino (37%), African American (12%), and Others (7%).

Table 1 displays the distribution of the support (strongly support plus somewhat support) for and opposition (strongly oppose plus somewhat oppose) to Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate for both the total population and for the state’s three principal ethnic/racial groups. The ethnic/racial differences in regard to the decision to end the mask mandate are very stark. Slightly more than one-half of Anglos (52%) support the ending of the mask mandate, double the proportion of Latinos (26%) and five times the proportion of African Americans (10%). In sharp contrast, three-quarters of African Americans (75%), and two-thirds of Latinos (66%) oppose the governor’s decision to end the mask mandate, compared to slightly more than two-fifths of Anglos (43%).

**Table 1. Ethnicity/Race and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Support	37	52	26	10
Neither Support nor Oppose	7	5	8	14
Oppose	56	43	66	75

Similar, albeit not as stark, ethnic/racial differences exist in regard to the governor’s decision to allow all businesses to operate at 100% capacity (see Table 2). This decision is supported by almost three-fifths of Anglos (57%), but by only close to a third of Latinos (32%) and slightly more than a fifth of African Americans (22%). In contrast, this decision is opposed by close to three-fifths of Latinos (58%) and African Americans (59%), but only by close to two-fifths (38%) of Anglos.

**Table 2. Ethnicity/Race and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Support	42	57	32	22
Neither Support nor Oppose	9	5	10	19
Oppose	49	38	58	59



In addition, a similar ethnic/racial cleavage exists in regard to support for or opposition to the dual decisions by the governor to end the mask mandate and to lift the capacity restrictions on businesses, all within the context that these decisions are in conflict with the advice of medical experts (see Table 3). A majority of Anglos (52%) continued to support the governor’s decisions compared to little more than a quarter of Latinos (28%) and close to a fifth (17%) of African Americans. And, almost two-thirds of African Americans (65%) and close to three-fifths of Latinos (56%) continued to oppose the governor’s decisions, compared to only a little more than two-fifths of Anglos (42%).

**Table 3. Ethnicity/Race and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Mask and Capacity Decisions in Spite of Contrary Medical Expert Advice**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Support	38	52	28	17
Neither Support nor Oppose	12	6	8	18
Oppose	50	42	56	65

### Generation & Support for Governor Abbott’s Decisions

The 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 32%, Generation X (1965-1980) at 26%, and Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2003) at 42%.

Table 4 underscores a moderately greater level of support for Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate among the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (45%) than among the members of Generation X (36%), and notably more support than that observed among the members of the Millennial/Generation Z cohort (30%). Conversely, generational differences in regard to opposition to Abbott’s decisions are more attenuated, with the largest gap between two generational groups under 10%.

**Table 4. Generation and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials & Generation Z
Support	37	45	36	30
Neither Support nor Oppose	7	5	7	11
Oppose	56	50	57	59

Table 5 provides a set of generational results similar to those in Table 4, but, as was the case with the ethnic/racial differences, modestly more subdued. A narrow majority of the members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (51%) support the decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity, compared to the modestly lower proportions of Generation X (40%) and the Millennial/Generation Z cohort (37%) that support this decision. There do not however exist any noteworthy generational differences in regard to opposition to the governor’s decision, with only 4% separating the generational groups.

**Table 5. Generation and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials & Generation Z
Support	42	51	40	37
Neither Support nor Oppose	9	3	10	13
Oppose	49	46	50	50

In Table 6 the pattern displayed in the prior two tables is largely repeated, with members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (48%) notably more likely to support Governor Abbott’s dual decisions, in spite of their conflict with the advice of medical experts, than either the members of Generation X (33%) or the members of the Millennial/Generation Z cohort (33%). And, similar to the case above, the generational differences in regard to opposition to the decisions are modest, with the largest gap between the generational groups remaining in the single digits.

**Table 6. Generation and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Mask and Capacity Decisions in Spite of Contrary Medical Expert Advice**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials & Generation Z
Support	38	48	33	33
Neither Support nor Oppose	12	7	13	15
Oppose	50	45	54	52

**Gender & Support for Governor Abbott’s Decisions**

The survey population is almost equally split in regard to gender, with women constituting 51% of the respondents and men 49%.

Table 7 reveals that men (44%) are significantly more likely than women (29%) to support Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate, while women (65%) are significantly more likely than men (47%) to oppose the decision.

**Table 7. Gender and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)		
	All	Women	Men
Support	37	29	44
Neither Support nor Oppose	7	6	9
Oppose	56	65	47

Table 8 shows that men (50%) are significantly more likely than women (35%) to support Abbott’s decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity, while women (57%) are significantly more likely than men (40%) to oppose this decision.

**Table 8. Gender and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)		
	All	Women	Men
Support	42	35	50
Neither Support nor Oppose	9	8	10
Oppose	49	57	40

In Table 9, men (45%) are significantly more likely than women (31%) to support Abbott’s two decisions, in spite of the decisions being contrary to the advice of medical experts, while women (58%) are significantly more likely than men (42%) to oppose the decisions of ending the mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity

**Table 9. Gender and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Mask and Capacity Decisions in Spite of Contrary Medical Expert Advice**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)		
	All	Women	Men
Support	38	31	45
Neither Support nor Oppose	12	11	13
Oppose	50	58	42

### Education & Support for Governor Abbott’s Decisions

The distribution of the survey population in regard to the individual’s highest level of educational attainment is high school degree or less (40%), some college or a two-year degree (30%), and a four-year degree or an advanced degree (30%).

Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12 follow the presentation pattern of the three preceding sections. In sharp contrast to those sections however, they reveal no notable educational differences in support for Governor Abbott’s COVID-19 related decisions, with one partial exception. In Table 12 Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is either a four-year degree or an advanced degree are notably more likely to oppose Governor Abbott’s decisions that were contrary to the advice of experts than were those Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less, 58% to 44%.

**Table 10. Education and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	High School or Less	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year Degree or Advanced Degree
Support	37	37	37	36
Neither Support nor Oppose				
Oppose	7	10	7	5
Oppose	56	53	56	59

**Table 11. Education and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	High School or Less	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year Degree or Advanced Degree
Support	42	42	41	44
Neither Support nor Oppose	9	13	8	5
Oppose	49	45	51	51

**Table 12. Education and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Mask and Capacity Decisions in Spite of Contrary Medical Expert Advice**

Support/Oppose	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	High School or Less	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year Degree or Advanced Degree
Support	38	37	39	37
Neither Support nor Oppose	12	19	10	5
Oppose	50	44	51	58

### Partisanship & Support for Governor Abbott’s Decisions

The distribution of the members of the survey population in regard to their partisan identification (or partisanship) is as follows: Democrat (32%), Independent (30%), and Republican (25%). A total of 13% of the population either answered that they did not know what their partisan identification is (7%) or identified with another party, grouping or movement (6%). Here the analysis is restricted to the former three principal partisan groups among which the Texas population is primarily divided.

Table 13 underscores the profound partisan chasm that divides Texans in regard to their support for Governor Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate. Ten times as many Republicans (70%) than Democrats (7%) support this decision. A similarly significant, but less profound, split also separates Democrats (87%) from Republicans (23%) in regard to their opposition to Abbott’s decision to end the mask mandate. Also of note, is that while 12 times as many Democrats oppose the decision (87%) as support it (7%), only 3 times as many Republicans support the decision (70%) as oppose it (23%), with slightly more than one-fifth of his fellow Republicans opposing Abbott’s decision. Independents occupy a middle ground between these two partisan extremes, with more though opposing (53%) than supporting (40%) Abbott’s decision to end the statewide mask mandate.

**Table 13. Partisanship and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

<b>Support/Oppose</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution (%)</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Republican</b>
Support	37	7	40	70
Neither Support nor Oppose	7	6	7	7
Oppose	56	87	53	23

Table 14 tells a similar story of a large partisan divide in regard to Abbott’s decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity. Republicans (77%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (12%) to support this decision while Democrats (79%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (20%) to oppose this decision. Once again, a fifth (20%) of Republicans oppose Abbott’s COVID-19 related decision. Independents again occupy a middle ground, with a narrow majority of 46% supporting the decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity compared to the 44% of Independents opposing it.

**Table 14. Partisanship and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

<b>Support/Oppose</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution (%)</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Republican</b>
Support	42	12	46	77
Neither Support nor Oppose	9	9	10	3
Oppose	49	79	44	20

As was the case in most of the previous sections, Table 15 tends to constitute a blend of the two preceding tables. Republicans continued to support Abbott’s dual decisions in spite of medical expert advice to the contrary by a significantly larger margin than Democrats, 70% to 12%, while Democrats continued to oppose Abbott’s decisions in spite of medical expert advice to the contrary by a significantly larger margin than Republicans, 80% to 21%. Independents again occupy a middle ground with 48% opposing and 39% supporting the decisions.

**Table 15. Partisanship and Support for Gov. Abbott’s Mask and Capacity Decisions in Spite of Contrary Medical Expert Advice**

<b>Support/Oppose</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution (%)</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Republican</b>
Support	38	12	39	70
Neither Support nor Oppose	12	8	13	9
Oppose	50	80	48	21

## Abbott’s Decisions: Restoring Jobs & A Return to Normalcy or More Infections, Hospitalizations & Deaths

The survey respondents were asked two questions that contained the two main respective Republican and Democratic talking points related to Abbott’s decisions to end the mask mandate and allow businesses to return to 100% capacity.

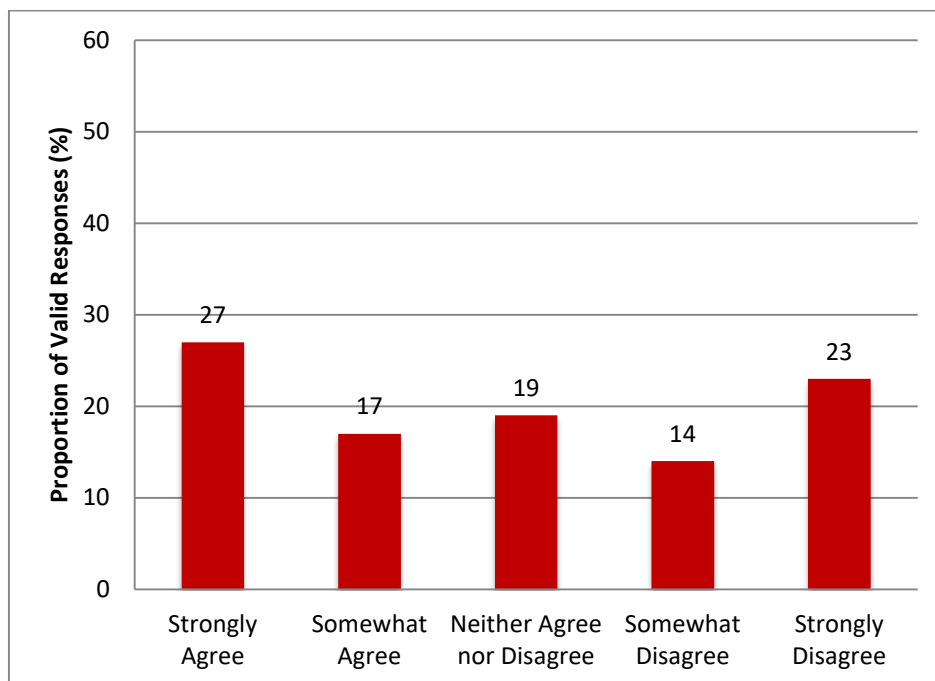
One question (the Republican talking point) asked, “Do you agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s ending the mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will help restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives?”

Another question (the Democratic talking point) asked, “Do you agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s ending the statewide mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will result in an increase in the number of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and fatalities in Texas?”

Half of the respondents randomly received the former talking point question first followed by the latter talking point question, while half of the respondents randomly received the latter talking point question first followed by the former talking point question.

Figure 4 displays the extent to which Texans agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s ending the mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will help restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives.

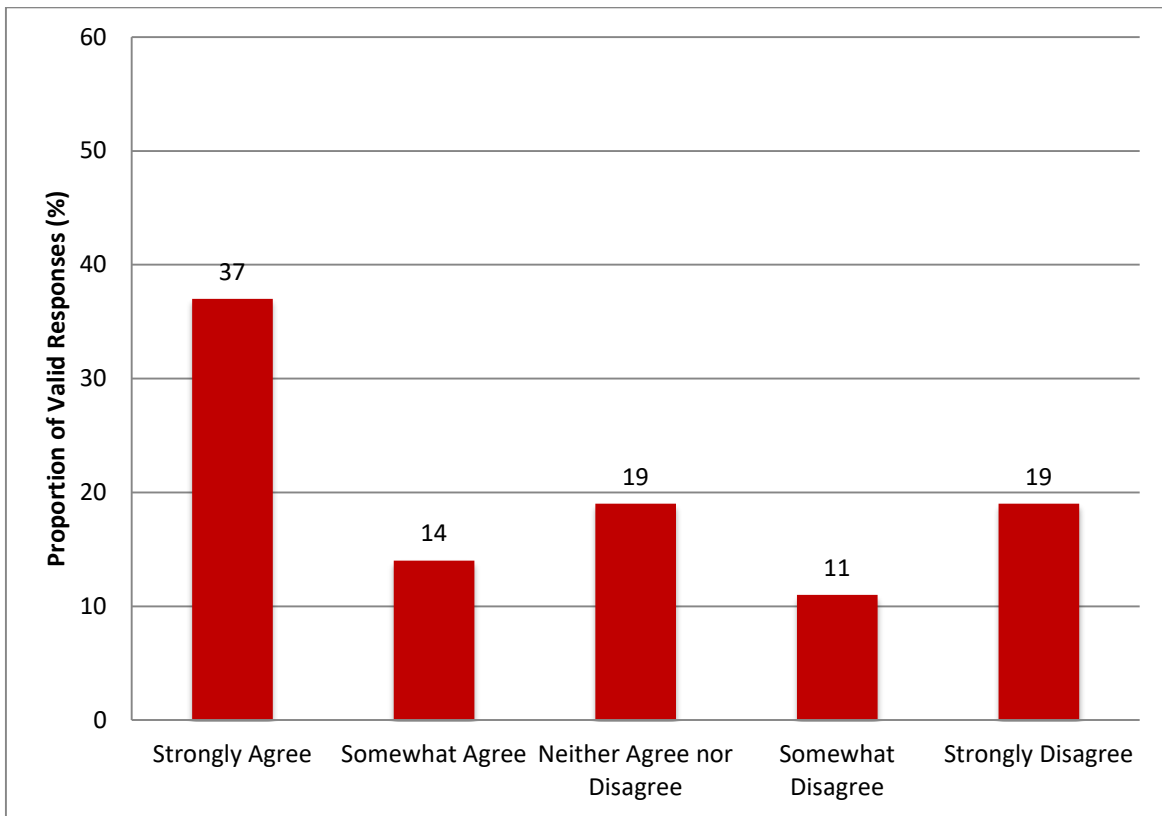
**Figure 4. Agreement/Disagreement that Ending Mask Mandate & Allowing 100% Capacity Will Restore Jobs & Normalcy to Texans' Lives**



The population is closely split between those who agree and disagree with the statement. Slightly more than two-fifths (44%) of Texans agree with the statement (27% strongly and 17% somewhat) and slightly less than two-fifths (37%) of Texans disagree with the statement (23% strongly and 14% somewhat). The remaining one-fifth (19%) neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement.

Figure 5 displays the extent to which Texans agree or disagree with the statement that Governor Abbott’s ending the statewide mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will result in an increase in the number of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and fatalities in Texas than would have been the case had the mask mandate and business capacity restrictions been maintained for a little while longer.

**Figure 5. Agreement/Disagreement that Ending Mask Mandate and Allowing 100% Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations, and Fatalities**



Significantly more Texans agree with this statement than disagree with it. A slight absolute majority (51%) agrees with the statement (37% strongly and 14% somewhat) compared to slightly less than a third (30%) who disagree with it (19% strongly and 11% somewhat). The remaining one-fifth (19%) neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement.



**Ethnicity/Race & Talking Point Agreement**

Table 16 underscores a strong ethnic/racial split in regard to agreement with the statement that Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives. Three-fifths (60%) of Anglos agree with this statement compared to only 33% of Latinos and 21% of African Americans. Conversely African Americans (29%) and Latinos (27%) are significantly more likely than Anglos (10%) to neither agree nor disagree with this statement. African Americans (50%) and, to a lesser extent Latinos (40%), are significantly more likely to disagree with this statement than Anglos (30%).

**Table 16. End of Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs and Return a Sense of Normalcy to Texans’ Lives**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Agree	44	60	33	21
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	10	27	29
Disagree	37	30	40	50

Table 17 reveals less salient ethnic/racial differences in regard to the statement that Abbott’s decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. African Americans (60%) are significantly more likely than Anglos (47%) to agree with this statement, but the gap is smaller than for the preceding question, and Latinos do not hold positions vis-à-vis this statement that are significantly different from Anglos or African Americans in any way. Anglos (35%) are moderately more likely than African Americans (24%) to disagree with this statement.

**Table 17. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations and Deaths**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Agree	51	47	53	60
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	18	20	16
Disagree	30	35	27	24

## Generation & Talking Point Agreement

Table 18 reveals a modest generational divide in regard to agreement with the statement that Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives. More than half (55%) of the members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort agree with this statement compared to 42% of Generation X and 38% of the Millennial/Generation Z cohort. The reverse is true in regard to opposition to the statement, a position held by 41% of the Millennial/Generation Z cohort, 39% of Generation X, and 28% of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort.

**Table 18. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs and Return a Sense of Normalcy to Texans’ Lives**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials & Generation Z
Agree	44	55	42	38
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	17	19	21
Disagree	37	28	39	41

Table 19 reveals narrower generational differences in regard to the statement that Abbott’s decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Members of the Millennial/Generation Z cohort (57%) are notably more likely than members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (45%) to agree with the statement, just as members of the latter cohort are significantly more likely than the members of the former cohort to disagree with the statement, 39% to 23%.

**Table 19. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations and Deaths**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials & Generation Z
Agree	51	45	50	57
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	16	20	20
Disagree	30	39	30	23

## Gender & Talking Point Agreement

Table 20 highlights a modest gender gap in agreement with the statement that Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives. Men (50%) are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than women (39%). Conversely, women (41%) are notably more likely than men (32%) to disagree with the statement.

**Table 20. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs and Return a Sense of Normalcy to Texans’ Lives**

<b>Agree/Disagree</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution (%)</b>		
	<b>All</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Agree	44	39	50
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	20	18
Disagree	37	41	32

Table 21 underscores that there do not exist any noteworthy gender differences in regard to the statement that Abbott’s decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Roughly half of both women (54%) and men (49%) agree with the statement and slightly less than a third of both men (31%) and women (29%) disagree with the statement.

**Table 21. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations and Deaths**

<b>Agree/Disagree</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution (%)</b>		
	<b>All</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Agree	51	54	49
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	17	20
Disagree	30	29	31

## Education & Talking Point Agreement

Table 22 provides relatively few noteworthy education related differences in regard to agreement with the statement that Abbott’s decisions will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives. There exist no significant differences in regard to agreement with the statement, and only one notable difference in regard to disagreement, that between those with a four-year degree or an advanced degree, 45% of whom disagree with the statement, and those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less, 31% of whom disagree with the statement. Members of the latter group are also significantly more likely than those from the former higher education group to neither agree nor disagree with the statement, 28% to 9%.

**Table 22. End of Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs and Return a Sense of Normalcy to Texans’ Lives**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	High School or Primary	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year Degree or Advanced Degree
Agree	44	41	38	46
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	28	16	9
Disagree	37	31	36	45

In regard to the statement that Abbott’s decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, Table 23 shows that those with a four-year degree or an advanced degree are significantly more likely to agree with the statement than are those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less, respectively 59% to 43%. A similar, albeit not as noteworthy, difference exists between those whose highest level of educational attainment is some college or a two-year degree (53%) and those with only a high school degree or less (43%).

**Table 23. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations and Deaths**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	High School or Primary	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year Degree or Advanced Degree
Agree	51	43	53	59
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	24	18	13
Disagree	30	23	29	28

## Partisanship & Talking Point Agreement

Table 24 highlights that Republicans (75%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (19%) to agree with the statement that Abbott’s decision will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives, while Democrats (61%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (11%) to disagree with this statement. Independents are more likely to agree with the statement than to disagree with it by a 48% to 36% margin.

**Table 24. End of the Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs and Return a Sense of Normalcy to Texans’ Lives**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Agree	44	19	48	75
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	21	16	14
Disagree	37	61	36	11

Table 25 highlights that Democrats (74%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (28%) to agree with the statement that Abbott’s decision will increase COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths, while Republicans (49%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (16%) to disagree with the statement. Independents are more likely to agree with the statement than to disagree with it by a substantial 52% to 29% margin.

**Table 25. End of Mask Mandate and 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations and Deaths**

Agree/Disagree	Percentage Distribution (%)			
	All	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Agree	51	74	52	28
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	10	19	23
Disagree	30	16	29	49

## Harris County Public Opinion on the Ending of the Mask Mandate & Business Capacity Restrictions

Embedded within the representative sample of the 213 counties located within the Texas electrical grid managed by ERCOT was a representative sample of 513 residents of Harris County, the most populous county in Texas, with a population of 4.8 million exceeding that of 26 U.S. states. This section parallels the data found in Figures 1, 2 and 3, with the focus here being solely on the opinion of Harris County residents.

Figure 6 reveals that more than three-fifths (63%) of Harris County residents oppose Governor Abbott's decision to end the statewide mask mandate, with 55% strongly opposing the decision and 8% somewhat opposing it. In contrast, only a quarter (26%) of Harris County residents support the decision, 18% strongly and 8% somewhat. The remaining 11% of the population neither supports nor opposes the decision.

**Figure 6. Harris County Support for & Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to End the Statewide Mask Mandate**

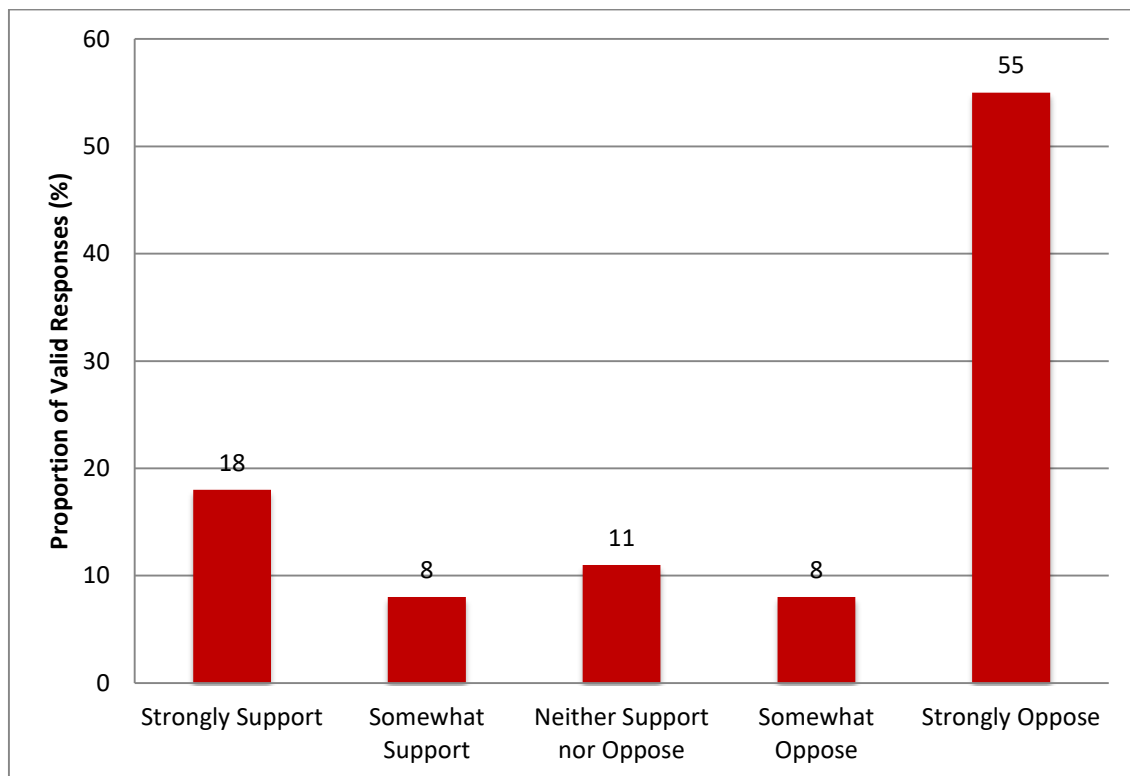


Figure 7 underscores that a more reduced majority (53%) of Harris County residents oppose Governor Abbott’s decision to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity, 46% strongly and 7% somewhat. One-third (33%) of Harris County adults support this decision, while 14% neither support nor oppose it.

**Figure 7. Harris County Support for & Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to Allow Businesses to Operate at 100% Capacity**

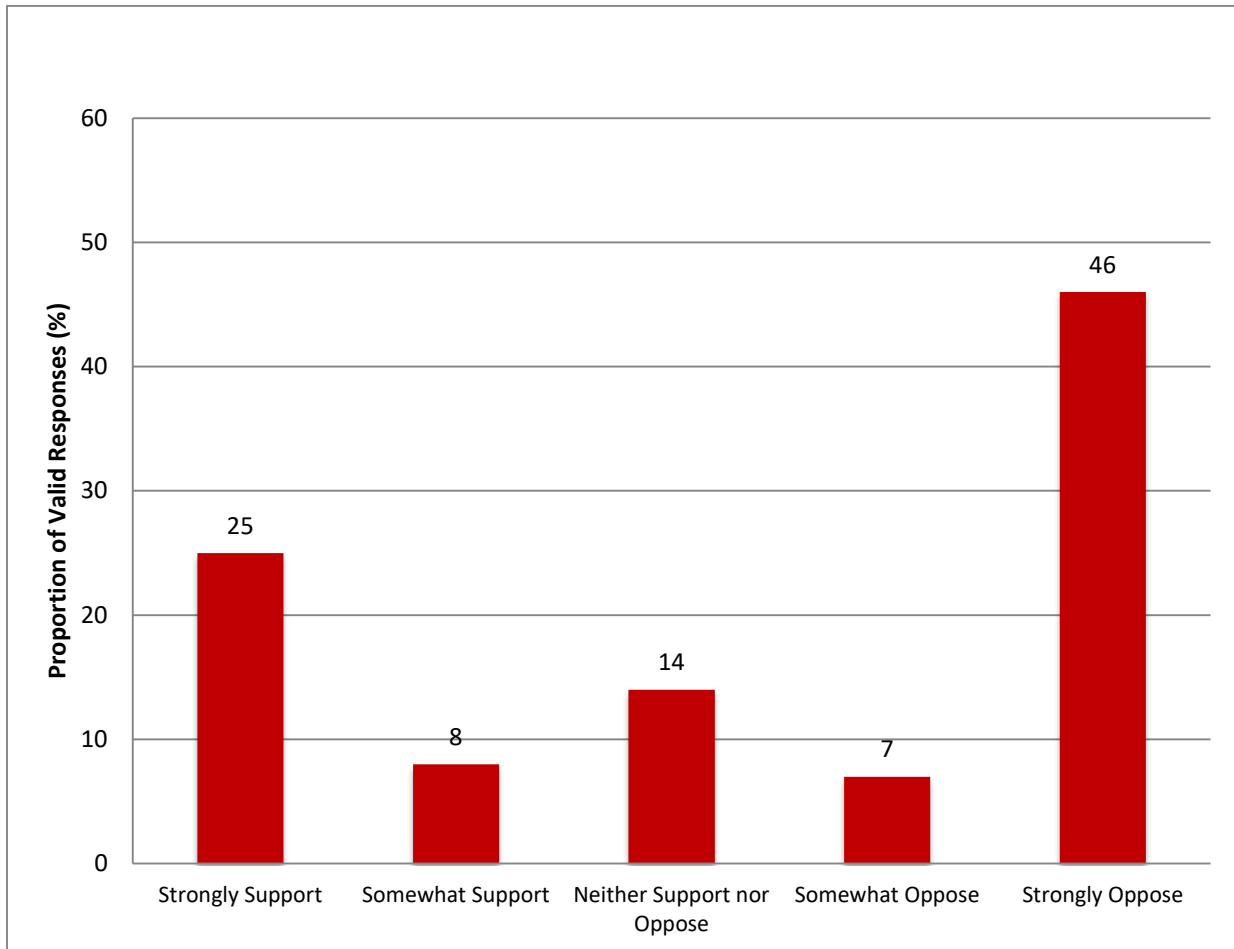
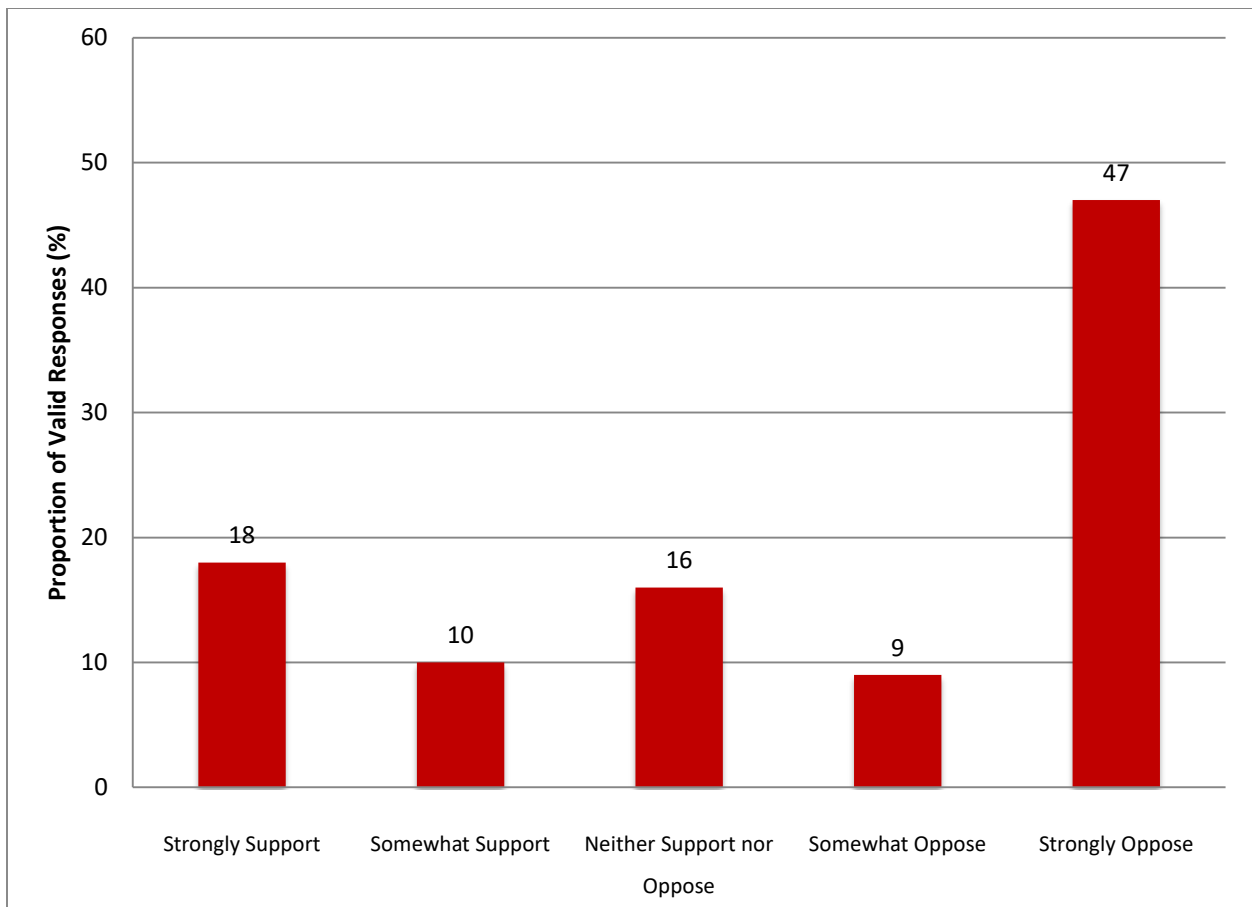


Figure 8 splits the difference between the preceding two figures, with a majority of 56% (47% strongly and 9% somewhat) opposing Abbott’s decisions to end the statewide mask mandate and to allow businesses to operate at 100% capacity, in spite of medical experts’ recommendations. Slightly more than one-quarter (28%) of Harris County residents support these decisions (18% strongly and 10% somewhat), while a little less than one in six (16%) Harris County residents neither support nor oppose the decision.

**Figure 8. Harris County Support for and Opposition to Gov. Abbott's Decision to End the Mask Mandate and Allow 100% Capacity Contrary to Medical Experts' Advice**





## Harris County & Governor Abbott’s Decisions: Restoring Jobs & A Return to Normalcy or More Infections, Hospitalizations & Deaths

This section parallels the data found in Figures 4 and 5, with the focus here being solely on the opinion of the residents of Harris County.

Figure 9 displays the level of agreement and disagreement with the statement that ending the statewide mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will restore jobs and return a sense of normalcy to Texans’ lives. More Harris County residents disagree (45%) than agree (33%) with this statement, with a fifth (22%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

**Figure 9. Harris County Agreement/Disagreement that Ending Mask Mandate and Allowing 100% Business Capacity Will Restore Jobs & Normalcy to Texans' Lives**

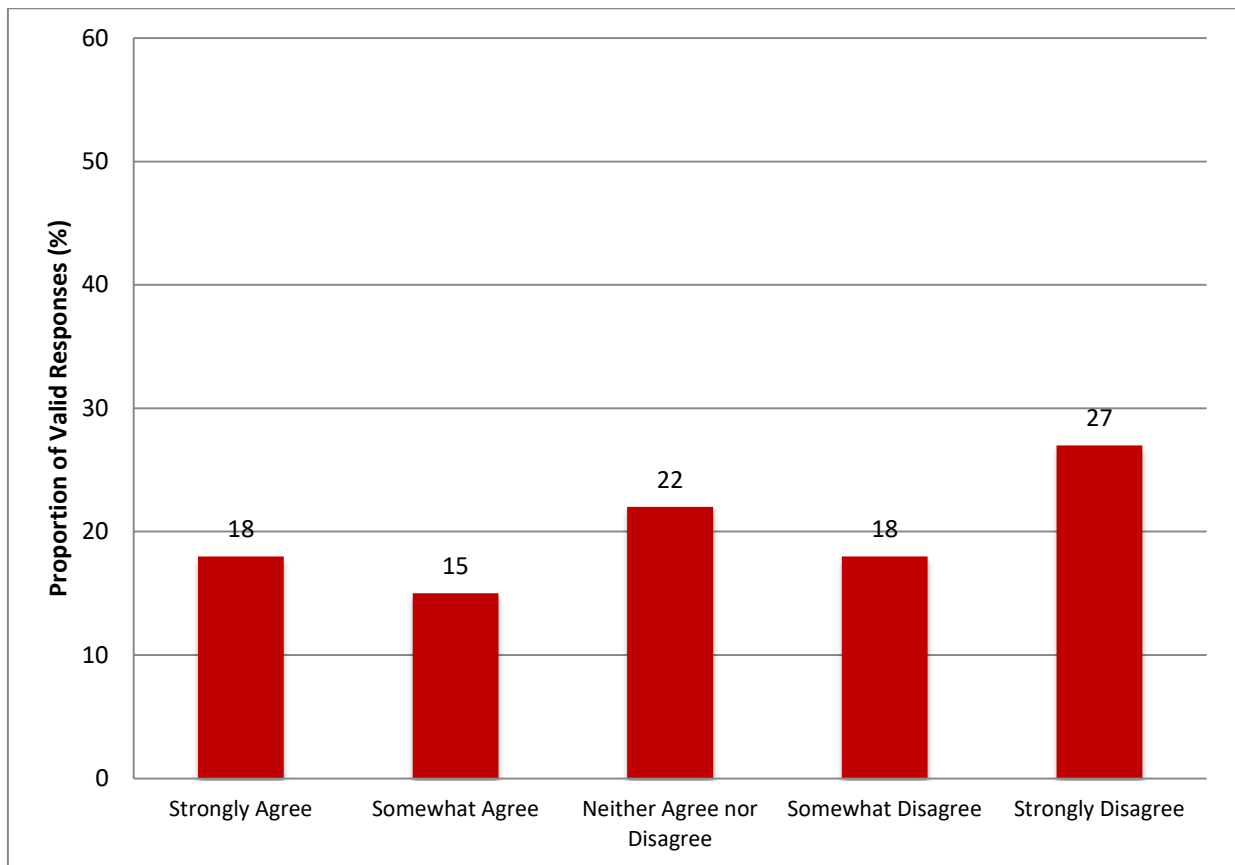
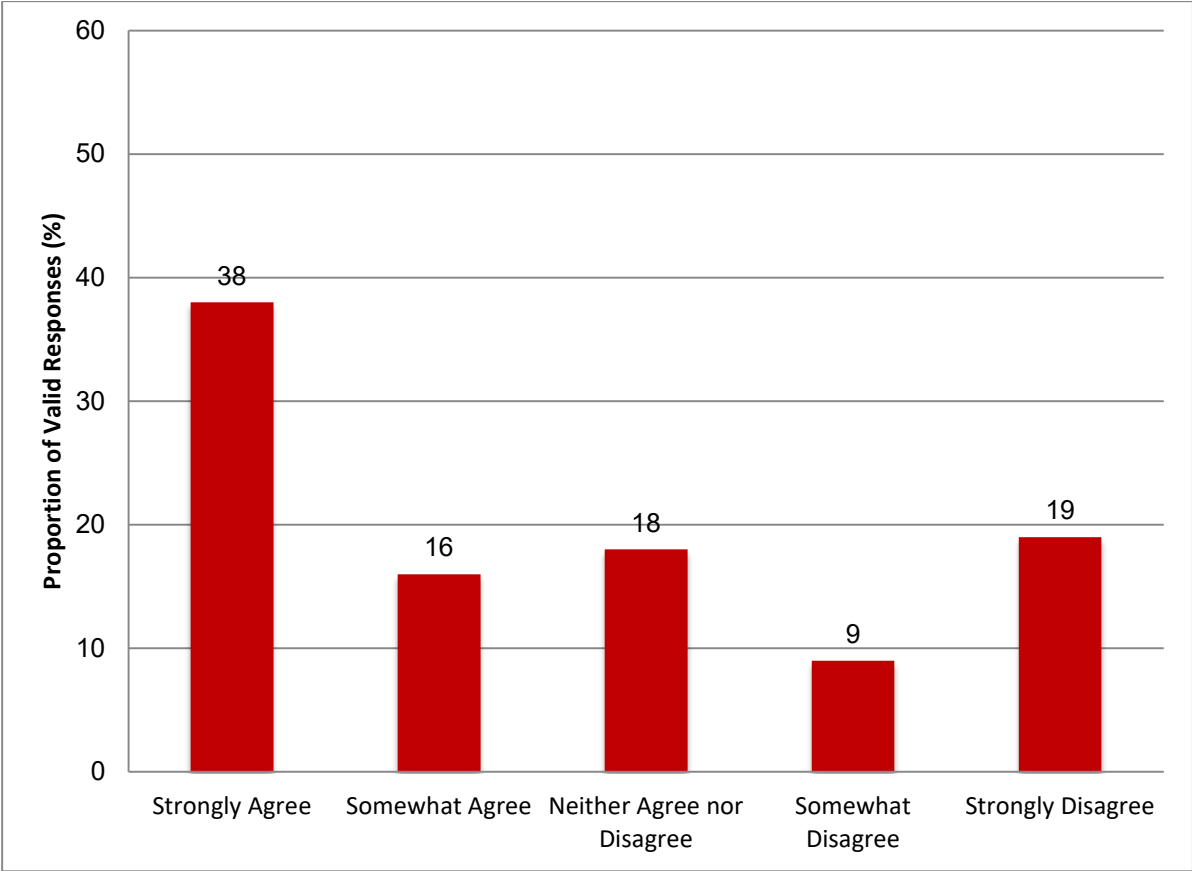


Figure 10 displays the level of agreement and disagreement with the statement that ending the mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity will cause an increase in the number of COVID-19 infections, hospitalization, and fatalities compared to what would have been the case had the mask mandate and business capacity restrictions been maintained for a little while longer. Substantially more Harris County residents agree (54%) than disagree (28%) with this statement.

**Figure 10. Harris County Agreement/Disagreement that Ending the Mask Mandate and Allowing 100% Business Capacity Will Increase COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalizations, and Fatalities**



## Research Team

### Principal Investigators

Kirk P. Watson, Founding Dean, Hobby School of Public Affairs

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

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

### Researchers

Gail Buttorff, Instructional Assistant Professor, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Jim Granato, Associate Dean, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Pablo Pinto, Director, Center for Public Policy & Associate Professor, Hobby School of Public  
Affairs

Savannah L. Sipole, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

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