



*The Texas Lyceum*

## **2011 Texas Lyceum Poll - 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

***Texans remain 'bullish' on the state's economy***

***but unenthusiastic about national economy, their own pocketbooks  
and their children's economic future***

**EDUCATION – most important problem facing Texas**

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(AUSTIN) For the past three years, Texans have remained positive about their state's economy, but less thrilled about the nation's economy, their personal finances, and their children's economic future according to a recent independent poll conducted by the Texas Lyceum, a non-partisan, non-profit statewide leadership group.

The poll, which was conducted May 24th through May 31st, with a 3.69% +/- margin of error, shows 60% of Texans feel that the state economy is better off than the rest of the country with only 10% feeling that Texas is worse off. Likely voters are slightly more positive, with 63% agreeing that the state economy is better off.

"Most Texans remain relatively upbeat about the state's economy, which makes some sense given the state's job situation, housing market, and tax rates," said UT Austin Professor Daron Shaw who has conducted the Texas Lyceum Poll for five years in a row.

Yet, on the national economy, Texans remain less optimistic. Perhaps one reason is the current debt ceiling debate going on in Washington. When asked about their views on the issue, 66% of Texans indicated that Congress must not raise the debt limit even if it hurts the economy in the short term or limits our ability to fund military operations.

“Only twenty-three percent of adult Texans (and 29% of likely voters) expressed the view that Congress does not have a choice – that it has to raise the debt limit to fund the government in times of a bad economy and multiple wars,” added Professor Shaw.

However, on a positive front, the poll’s five-year trend shows that Texans’ attitudes about the nation’s economy have steadily improved. In June 2008, only 4% of adult Texans felt that the economy was better off than a year ago, while today 35% agree.

### **EDUCATION - Most Important Problem in Texas**

Rather than choosing the economy or immigration as our most pressing problem, as they have in the past, Texans identified education as the most pressing issue facing the state. Poll results reveal that 33% of likely voters (and 23% of adult Texans) named education as the most important problem. “The fact that education was named as the most important problem facing Texas is a major shift from last fall’s Lyceum poll numbers,” said University of Texas at San Antonio Professor Amy Jaspersen, who assisted with the poll. “This peak in concern for education is not surprising given the debate over state budget cuts in Austin.”

In a related finding, state education cuts could be affecting Texas voters’ perceptions of their children’s future. Results show that 41% of likely voters feel their children will be worse off than them financially.

### **Rising Gasoline Prices Affects Summer Plans**

The poll also asked about the impact of rising gas prices on Texans’ personal budgetary and spending decisions. Sixty percent of Texans indicated that they have cut down on driving because of the price of gas and 50% of all adult Texans have considered changing their summer travel plans because of the price of gasoline. Close to half (48%) of Texans reported considering buying a more fuel-efficient car because of the price of gas. A smaller percentage, 40% of Texans, said that they had given up necessities to be able to afford gas.

“For five consecutive years, the Texas Lyceum, a non-partisan group of community leaders who care deeply about our state and its future, has been proud to produce the Texas Lyceum Poll as a public service,” said 2011 Texas Lyceum President Dathan Voelter. “We believe these data, which now track five year trends, will allow the public to be more informed and help our state’s leaders make better decisions.”

**2011 Texas Lyceum Poll Questions Related to June 14<sup>th</sup> Rollout**  
**Charts and more details in June 14<sup>th</sup> Executive Summary**

***Thinking about the country, do you think things are moving in the right direction or are we off on the wrong track?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Right direction.	33%	31%
Off on the wrong track.	58%	65%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	8%	4%

***Thinking about the national economy, do you think the country is better off, worse off, or about the same compared to a year ago?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Better off.	35%	35%
Worse off.	36%	40%
About the same.	28%	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	1%	1%

***Now thinking about you and your family's economic situation, would you say that you are better off, worse off, or about the same economically compared to a year ago?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Better off.	21%	20%
Worse off.	31%	34%
About the same.	48%	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	0%	0%

***Looking ahead to the future, do you think your children will be better off than you are, worse off, or about the same economically?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Better off.	39%	26%
Worse off.	26%	41%
About the same.	28%	23%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	1%	10%

***Thinking about the condition of the national economy, do you think the worst is over or is the worst yet to come?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Worst is over.	38%	35%
Worst is yet to come.	53%	57%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	9%	9%

***Do you think Texas's economy is better off, worse off, or about the same as the rest of the country?***

	All Texans:	Likely Voters:
Better off.	60%	63%
Worse off.	10%	7%
About the same.	28%	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	2%	1%

***As you may know, the U.S. Congress is currently debating whether to raise the nation's debt ceiling, which establishes how much money the country can borrow. Which of the following comes closest to your view on this issue?***

*All Texans:*

- 23% In times of a bad economy and multiple wars, there isn't a choice -- Congress has to raise the debt limit to fund the government and to cover the country's commitments /OR/
- 66% Federal spending is out of control -- Congress must send a message to the world that the U.S. is serious about getting its financial house in order and not raise the debt limit, even if that hurts the economy in the short term or limits our ability to fund military operations.
- 2% DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA

*Likely Voters:*

- 29% In times of a bad economy and multiple wars, there isn't a choice... /OR/
- 68% Federal spending is out of control...
- 4% DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA

*Next I would like to ask you some questions about the price of gasoline. I'm going to ask you a list of actions – for each one, please tell me if you have taken that action because of the price of gas.*

All Texans:

	<b>Have Taken that Action</b>	<b>Have Not Taken that Action</b>	<b>Don't Know/NA /Refused</b>
<b>Have you cut down on driving because of the price of gasoline?</b>	60%	39%	1%
<b>Have you given up necessities to be able to afford gas because of the price of gasoline?</b>	40%	60%	1%
<b>Have you considered buying a more fuel-efficient car because of gasoline prices?</b>	48%	49%	3%
<b>Have you considered changing your summer travel plans because of the price of gasoline?</b>	50%	47%	3%

*What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today?*

All Texans:

- 32% The economy
- 12% Unemployment/jobs
- 9% National debt
- 8% Federal spending/budget deficit
- 8% Political corruption/leadership
- 7% Health care
- 3% Education
- 3% Immigration
- 2% Moral decline
- 2% National security/terrorism
- 1% Border security
- 1% Gas prices
- 1% Energy
- 1% Social welfare programs
- 1% Afghanistan/Pakistan
- 1% Iran/nuclear weapons

Likely Voters:

- 35% The economy
- 11% Unemployment/jobs
- 11% National debt
- 9% Federal spending/budget deficit
- 9% Political corruption/leadership
- 6% Health care

- 4% Immigration
- 3% National security/terrorism
- 2% Moral decline
- 2% Border security
- 1% Taxes
- 1% Energy
- 3% Education
- 1% Iran/nuclear weapons

***What do you think is the most important issue facing the state of Texas today?***

All Texans:

- 23% Education
- 13% Immigration
- 8% Unemployment/jobs
- 8% The economy
- 7% State budget deficit/budget shortfall
- 6% Border security
- 2% Gas prices
- 2% Health care
- 2% Water supply
- 1% Crime and drugs
- 1% State government spending
- 1% Taxes
- 1% Social welfare programs
- 1% Energy
- 1% Transportation/roads/traffic
- 1% Abortion

Likely Voters:

- 33% Education
- 11% State budget deficit/budget shortfall
- 11% Immigration
- 8% Unemployment/jobs
- 6% The economy
- 6% Border security
- 6% Political corruption/leadership
- 1% Health care
- 1% Gas prices
- 1% State government spending
- 1% Taxes
- 1% Social welfare programs
- 2% Water supply
- 1% Energy
- 1% Transportation/roads/traffic

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