

2012 Texas Lyceum Poll

Executive Summary of Policy Attitudes

A September 10-26, 2012 survey of registered voters from the state of Texas reveals that opinion on a range of public policy issues is more nuanced and balanced than one might assume. Although Texans continue to rate the economy and jobs as the most important issues facing both the nation and the state, education has re-emerged as an important priority. And while Lone Star registrants give our higher education system strong marks, there are concerns about standardized tests and a willingness to spend more tax dollars on school-related improvements so long as the money isn't targeted for administration. The Affordable Health Care Act of 2010 ("Obama-care") remains unpopular, while opinion remains split over the 2011 Sonogram Law. And there is some evidence that water issues and water rights might be a flash-point for politics in the not too distant future. Finally, childhood obesity is seen as real, and Texans blame bad parenting, modern technology, and fast food.

Summary of Findings:

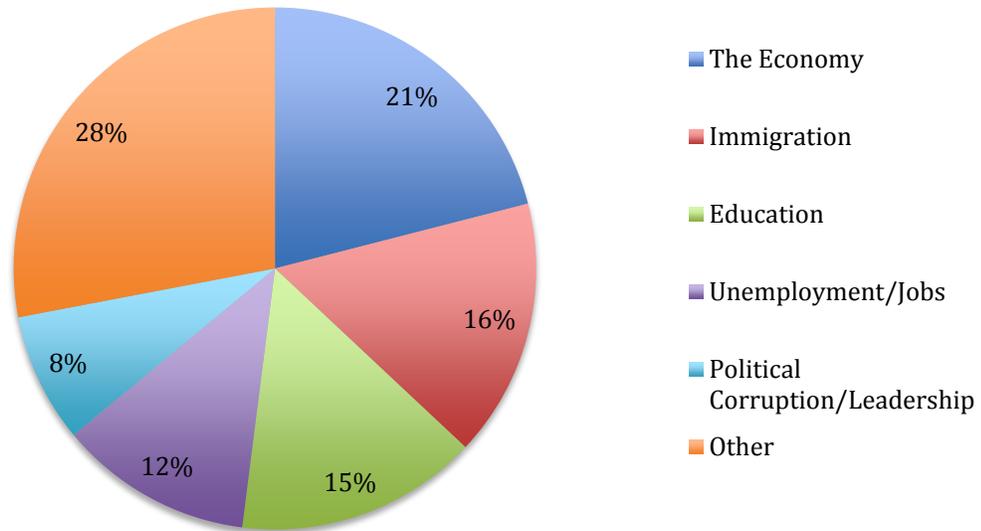
Most Important Problem:

Among Texans, the most important problem facing the country today is still overwhelmingly the economy. Thirty-seven percent of registered voters and 41% of likely voters responded that the economy was the most important problem facing the country today. When combining those respondents who said unemployment or jobs was the most important problem to those mentioning the economy, a majority of Texans (52% of registered voters and 55% of likely voters) think that economic concerns are still the most important problems facing this country.

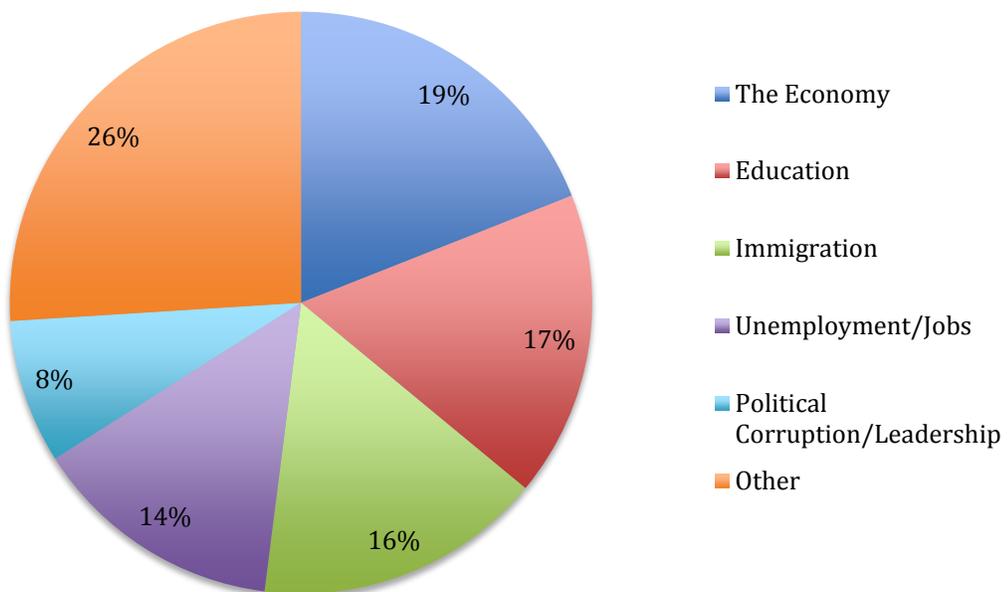
At the state level, Texans are somewhat more diverse in their assessments of the most important problem. While the economy is still the most important problem for 19% of registered voters and 21% of likely voters, education comes in a close second among registered voters at 17%, and in third behind immigration (16%) at 15% for likely voters.

However, these results differ from previous Lyceum polls in which one or two major issues dominated responses to the most important problem facing the state. In 2011, among likely voters, education was by far the most important problem cited (33%). In 2010, immigration was cited as the most important problem by a plurality of respondents, and in 2009 – not surprisingly – it was the economy and jobs. In 2012, it appears as if likely voters are split on what the most important problem facing the state actually is, with relatively even numbers indicating the economy (21%), immigration (16%), education (15%), unemployment and jobs (12%), and political corruption and leadership (8%) are in fact the most important problem facing the state.

What do you think is the most important problem facing the state of Texas today? 2012 - Likely Voters

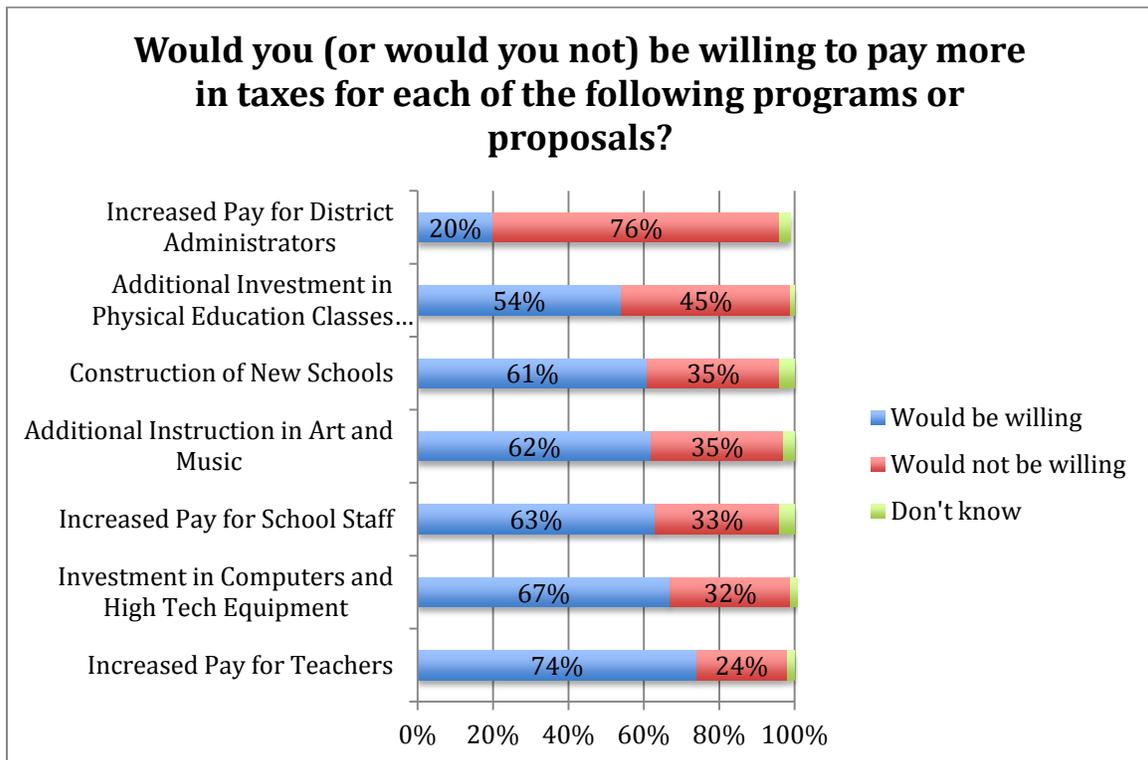


What do you think is the most important problem facing the state of Texas today? 2012 - Registered Voters



Education:

Given the prominence of education in the most important problem responses of Texans in both the 2011 and 2012 surveys, we asked a battery of questions about K through 12 and higher education in Texas. An interesting dichotomy emerges in the results. While 60% of registered voters and 62% of likely voters believe that individual families are most responsible for educating children in Texas (not the local, state, or national government), we also found that respondents broadly supported paying more in taxes for a host of programs or proposals that would presumably improve education.



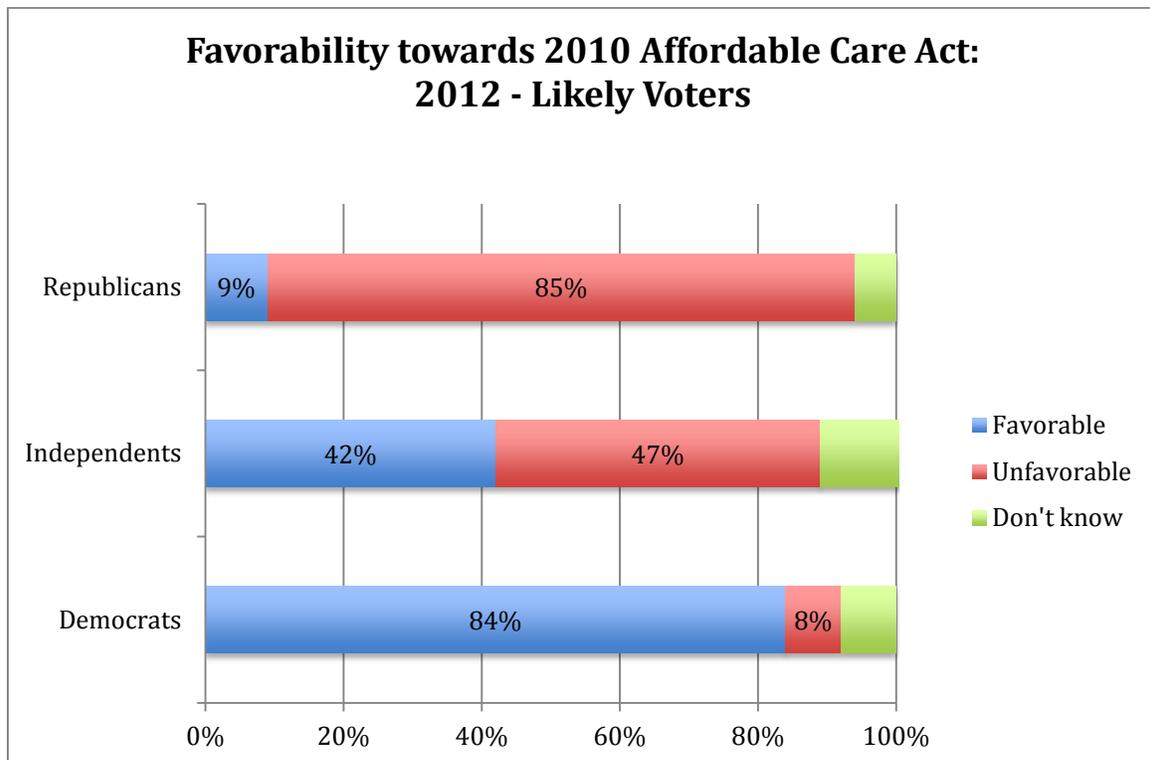
Majorities of registered voters would be willing to pay more for investments in physical education, new school construction, arts and music, and even for increased pay for school staff and teachers. In fact, nearly three quarters of respondents (74%) indicated that they would be willing to pay more in taxes in order to increase pay for teachers. The only proposal that we presented respondents with that did not receive majority support was increasing pay for district administrators (only 20% indicated that they would be willing to pay more in taxes for this).

In line with these responses, respondents also overwhelmingly agreed (60%) that local schools should be given more flexibility in assessing their students instead of relying on standardized tests such TAKS and STAAR. Additionally, 57% of registered voters in Texas agreed that greater attention should be paid to educational achievement gaps between Anglo and minority students.

Turning to higher education, 77% of registered voters believe that public universities in Texas (e.g. The University of Texas, Texas A&M, and Texas Tech) are either among the very best in the nation or at least good, but not among the best. Despite this overwhelming approval of higher education in the state, respondents were split on whether they believed that students get their money's worth for attending college. Forty-three percent believe that students get a fair return on their investment, but 42% believe they don't. Finally, turning to the cost of higher education, we asked respondents about tuition rate regulation. Forty-six percent of respondents think that Texas should re-regulate tuition rates, 30% believe that we should keep tuition rates de-regulated, but offset the cost for low income students, and only 18% believe that we should simply keep tuition rates de-regulated.

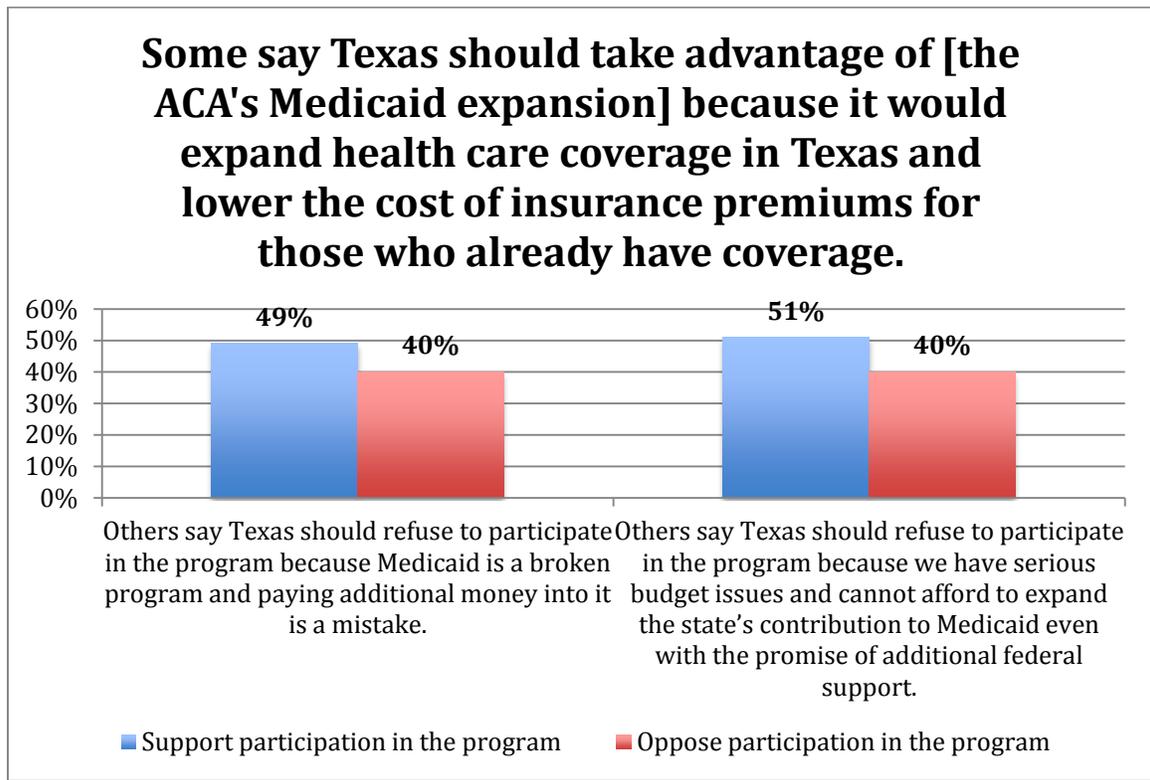
Health Policy:

Just like most of the country, Texans too are divided on how they feel about the 2010 health care reform law, the Affordable Care Act. While opinion is split among registered voters, with 45% expressing an extremely or somewhat favorable opinion of the law and 46% expressing an extremely or somewhat unfavorable opinion of the law, that split widens when we focus on likely voters, with 50% expressing an unfavorable view compared with 42% expressing a favorable view. Not surprisingly, the differences are starkest when looked at through the lens of party identification.



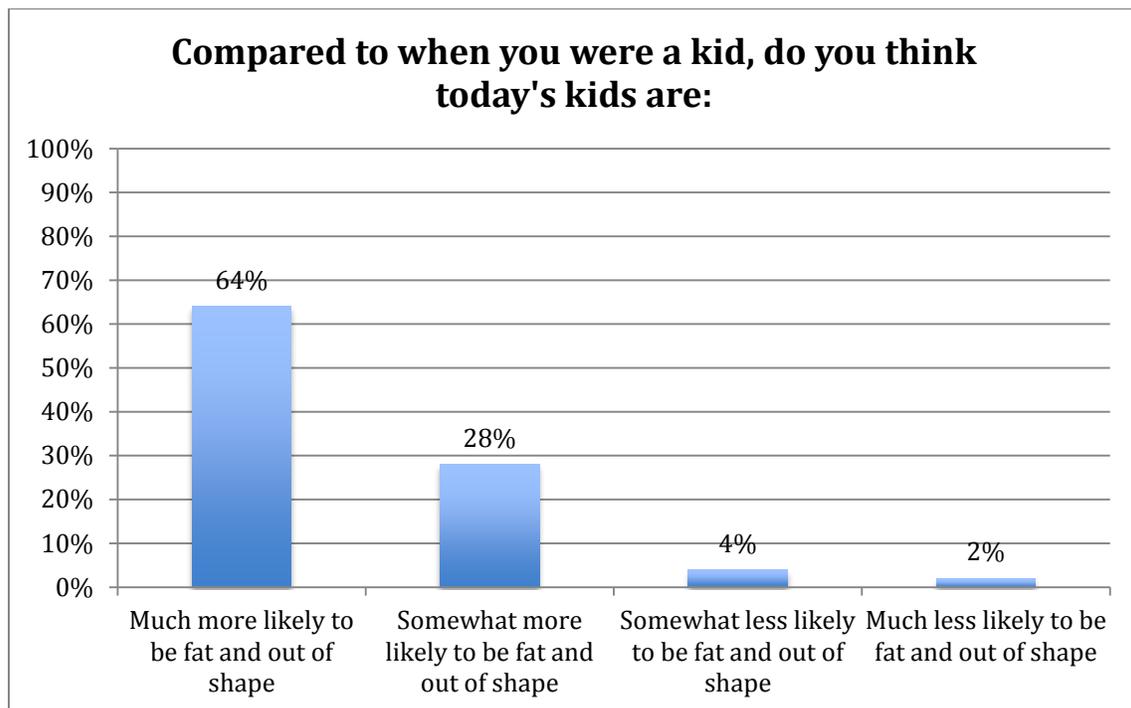
Democrats and Republicans are mirror images of each other with respect to their opinions toward the law. While 84% of Democratic likely voters express extremely or somewhat favorable opinions of the law, 85% of Republican likely voters have extremely or somewhat unfavorable opinions of the law.

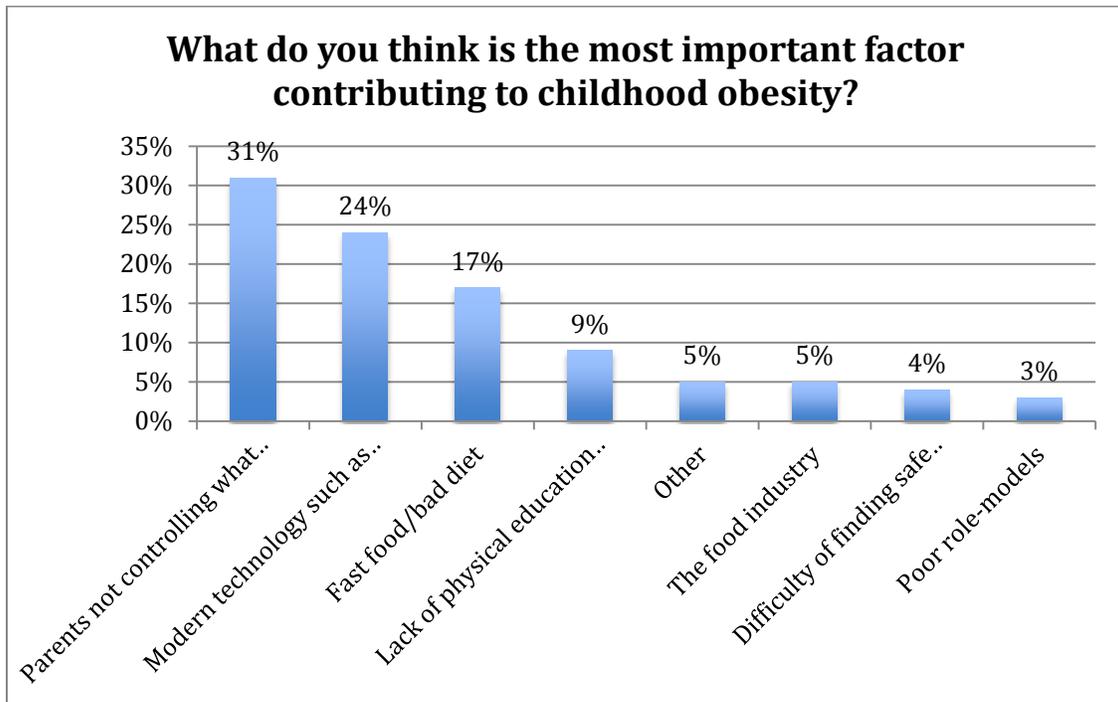
An issue related to the Affordable Care Act that is pertinent to Texas is the law's expansion of Medicaid access. Governor Perry indicated that he would not expand the program despite the Federal government's paying for the vast majority of the cost. We asked all respondents which of two opinions was closest to their own view. Both sets of respondents received the same argument for why the state should participate in the program (because it will expand access and lower costs for those Texans already insured). But because there were two arguments being presented for why Texas should not participate in the Medicaid expansion, half of the respondents received one alternative argument while the other half received the other. It turns out that it did not matter which argument was presented, registered voters appear evenly split on the Medicaid expansion issue. The first counter-argument presented was that the Medicaid system is broken and therefore we shouldn't pay more money into it, while the second counter-argument was that we simply can't afford the cost of expanding the program. Half of our respondents received the first counter-argument while the other half received the second. In the broken system version, 49% of registered voters and 44% of likely voters supported participation in the program and 40% and 47% respectively opposed participation. In the cost version, 51% of registered voters and 47% of likely voters supported participation in the program, and 40% and 44% respectively opposed participation.



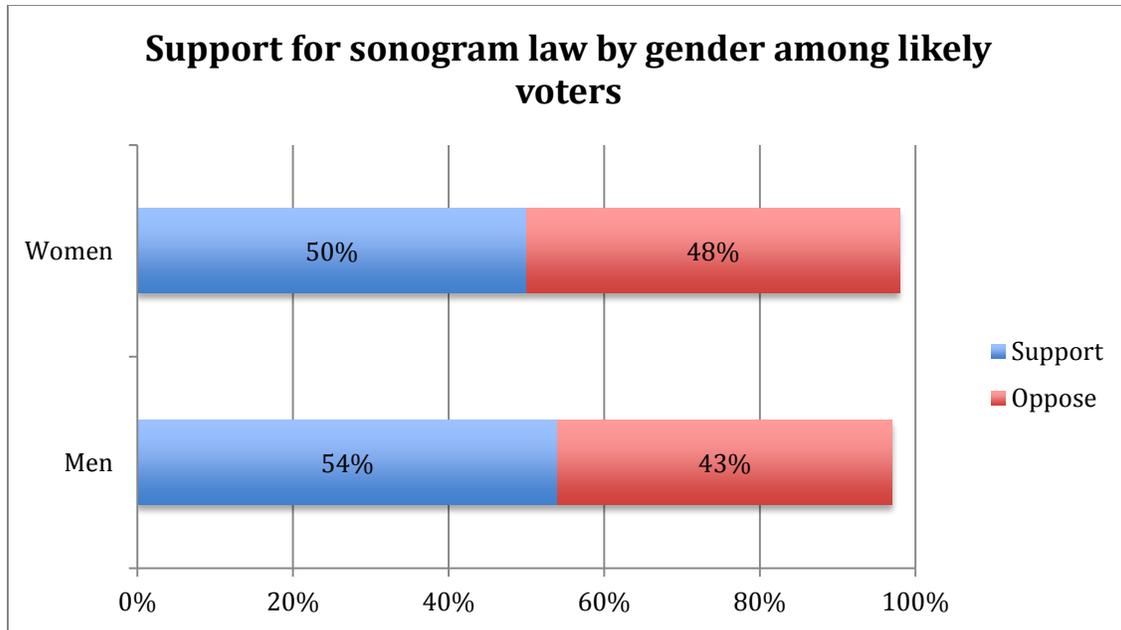
Keeping in line with this focus on the costs of health care, we asked respondents about the costs and benefits of health care research. Respondents were asked to select which of two statements was closest to their own view. All respondents were given the statement, “health care research results in innovations that significantly reduce costs later on”, while half were given the contrary statement, “spending on health care research is a luxury that we can’t afford when the economy is bad” and the other half received the contrary statement, “spending on health care research simply creates more expensive drugs and procedures.” Again, regardless of the frame, respondents overwhelmingly supported health care research. In the luxury frame, 74% of registered voters agreed that benefits accrue from health care research; and in the expensive drugs and procedures frame, 71% agreed that health care research results in benefits and reduces costs later on.

Given this focus on health, we also asked respondents about their attitudes towards childhood obesity. First, we asked how respondents feel kids today compare to when they were children with respect to obesity. Sixty-four percent of respondents believe that kids today are much more likely to be fat and out of shape. In fact, when combining those who say that kids today are much more likely to be out of shape with those who believe that kids are somewhat more likely to be fat and out of shape, 92% of respondents agreed that kids today are more likely to be obese. We then asked respondents what they thought was the most important factor contributing to the epidemic of childhood obesity. The number one reason selected for the childhood obesity epidemic is parents not controlling what their kids eat, followed by modern technology like television and video games.





Finally, given the attention paid to women’s issues in general, and women’s health in particular, at the two party conventions, we asked our respondents whether they supported or opposed the law passed by the Texas Legislature requiring doctors to perform sonograms prior to an abortion. Amongst registered voters, 50% support the measure and 44% oppose the measure. When focusing just on likely voters, 52% support the measure and 45% oppose the measure. Interestingly, there isn’t much of a gender gap in opinion on this issue. Focusing on likely voters, 54% of men support the sonogram law compared with 50% of women, while 47% of women oppose the law compared with 43% of men.



Water Rights and Water Needs:

With respect to water, 54% of registered voters believe that water rights should be owned by the public and not by individuals, while 29% support the individual ownership of water rights. Additionally, 64% of registered voters claim that they would be willing to pay more in water tap fees to ensure that the state's water needs are met.

Methodology

From September 10-26, 2012, The Texas Lyceum conducted a statewide telephone survey of registered voters. The survey utilized a stratified probability sample design, with respondents being randomly selected at the level of the household. The survey also employed a randomized cell phone supplement, with approximately 16% of completed interviews being conducted among cell phone only or cell phone dominant households. A Spanish-language instrument was developed and bilingual interviewers offered respondents a chance to participate in English or Spanish. On average, respondents completed the interview in 19 minutes. Approximately 6,500 records were drawn to yield 1,175 completed interviews. The final data set is weighted by race/ethnicity, age and gender to achieve representativeness as defined by the Texas specifications from the 2010 Current Population Study. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points.

The ballot questions were asked of a random subset of the overall sample. All told, 666 registrants were asked the ballot question (margin of error = +/- 3.80 percentage points).

Some numbers and analysis—including the ballot items—were produced with a screen for likely voters. Voters were deemed “likely” if they indicated that they were registered to vote, indicated that they were “somewhat” or “extremely” interested in politics, and indicated that they had voted in “almost every” or “every” election in the last 2-3 years. Overall, this screen produced 805 likely voters out of 1,175 registrants, 68.5% of registered voter sample. The overall margin of error for the survey of likely voters is +/- 3.45 percentage points. For the ballot items, 443 respondents out of the 666 were likely voters, creating a margin of error of +/- 4.66 percentage points.

The Texas Lyceum

The Texas Lyceum has committed to annual probability samples of the state of Texas to bolster its understanding of public opinion on crucial policy issues. The professional rationale for the Texas Lyceum Poll is straightforward: a non-partisan, high quality, scientific survey designed to provide (1) specific data points on issues of interest, and (2) a time series of key demographics, attitudes, and opinions. Towards this end, the trademark of the Texas Lyceum Poll is transparency. Top-line and detailed cross-tabular results of each poll will be made available on the Texas Lyceum website at **www.texaslyceum.org**.

The Texas Lyceum, now 32 years strong, is a non-profit, non-partisan statewide leadership organization focused on identifying the next generation of Texas leaders. The Texas Lyceum consists of 96 men and women from throughout the state. Directors begin their service while under the age of 46 and have demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas.

The Lyceum has an impressive list of former members who are serving or have served in public office, including: Former President George W. Bush, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Governor Rick Perry, State Attorney General Greg Abbott, former Texas Comptroller John Sharp, Texas State Senators Rodney Ellis and Kirk Watson, Texas State Representatives Dawnna Dukes, Jose Menendez, David Farabee, Tommy Merritt, Pete Gallego, Garnet Coleman, Veronica Gonzales and Allen Vaught, Houston Mayor Bill White, Galveston Mayor Joe Jaworski, Texas Supreme Court Justices Don Willett and Dale Wainwright, U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore, former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, former Congressman Chris Bell and Congressmen Pete Olson, Henry Cuellar and Jim Turner. Marc Veasey is a current Lyceum Director serving in the Texas House.

The Texas Lyceum acts as a catalyst to bring together diverse opinions and expertise to focus on national and state issues, and seeks to emphasize constructive private sector, public sector, and individual responses to the issues.

To accomplish these purposes, the Lyceum conducts periodic public forums, publishes the Lyceum *Journal*, commissions The Texas Lyceum Poll, and convenes programs for the Directors to explore and discuss key economic and social issues of the state and nation.

Poll Questions

Are you registered to vote in the state of Texas?

- | | |
|---------------------|------|
| 1. Yes, registered. | 100% |
|---------------------|------|

Generally speaking, would you say that you are extremely interested in politics and public affairs, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Extremely interested. | 43% |
| 2. Somewhat interested. | 48% |
| 3. Not very interested. | 5% |
| 4. Not at all interested. | 3% |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 0% |

There are many elections in the state of Texas. Furthermore, many people intend to vote in a given election, but sometimes personal and professional circumstances keep them from the polls. Thinking back over the past two or three years, would you say that you voted in all elections, almost all, about half, one or two, or none at all?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Every election. | 35% |
| 2. Almost every election. | 36% |
| 3. About half. | 12% |
| 4. One or two. | 12% |
| 5. None at all. | 5% |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Right direction. | 42% |
| 2. Off on the wrong track. | 51% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 7% |

What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today? [Open-ended]

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. The economy | 37% |
| 2. Unemployment/jobs | 15% |
| 3. Health care | 7% |
| 4. Federal spending/budget deficit | 4% |
| 5. Education | 4% |
| 6. National debt | 3% |
| 7. Moral decline | 2% |
| 8. Environment | 2% |
| 9. Middle East unrest | 2% |
| 10. Political corruption/leadership | 1% |
| 11. National security/terrorism | 1% |
| 12. Abortion | 1% |
| 13. Crime and drugs | 1% |
| 14. Foreign trade | 1% |
| 15. Polarization/Gridlock/Partisanship | 1% |

What do you think is the most important issue facing the state of Texas today? [Open-Ended]

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. The economy | 19% |
| 2. Education | 17% |
| 3. Immigration | 16% |
| 4. Unemployment/jobs | 14% |
| 5. Political corruption/leadership | 8% |
| 6. Border security | 5% |
| 7. Health care | 4% |
| 8. Moral decline | 3% |
| 9. Gas prices | 2% |
| 10. Crime and drugs | 2% |
| 11. State government spending (i.e. too much spending) | 2% |
| 12. Taxes | 2% |
| 13. State government spending cuts | 1% |
| 14. Social welfare programs | 1% |
| 15. Water supply | 1% |
| 16. Environment | 1% |
| 17. Voting system | 1% |
| 18. State budget deficit/budget shortfall | 1% |

ISSUES & POLICY

Now we'd like to know what you think about education and education policy in Texas. Thinking about Kindergarten through 12th grade...

Who is most responsible for ensuring that our children are educated?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Individual families | 60% |
| 2. Local government | 9% |
| 3. State government | 19% |
| 4. National government | 8% |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

Would you (or would you NOT) be willing to pay more in taxes for each of the following programs or proposals?

	Would be willing	Would NOT be willing	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED/ NA
Q24. Increased pay for teachers	74%	24%	2%
Q25. Increased pay for school staff	63%	33%	4%
Q26. Increased pay for district administrators	20%	76%	3%
Q27. Construction of new schools	61%	35%	4%
Q28. Additional instruction in music and art	62%	35%	3%
Q29. Investment in computers and high tech equipment	67%	32%	2%
Q30. Additional investment in physical education classes and sports	54%	45%	1%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Greater attention should be paid to educational achievement gaps between Anglo and minority students.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Agree | 57% |
| 2. Disagree | 36% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 7% |

Some say that standardized tests, such as the TAKS and STAR, are essential for ensuring that students are learning what they need to learn, and that students should not be promoted if they fail these exams. Others say that local schools should have more flexibility in assessing students, and that some students who fail the exams should be promoted anyway. Which of these is closer to your own view?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Standardized tests are essential | 34% |
| 2. Local schools should have more flexibility | 60% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 5% |

Turning to higher education in Texas...

Please rate the quality of public universities—such as the University of Texas, Texas A&M, and Texas Tech—in Texas.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Among the very best in the nation | 40% |
| 2. Good, but not among the best | 37% |
| 3. Average | 14% |
| 4. Not so good, but not among the worst | 2% |
| 5. Among the worst in the nation | 0% |
| 6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 7% |

Currently, tuition rates at Texas colleges are not regulated by the state. Which of the following is closest to your own position:

We should cap tuition at Texas public universities so that college remains affordable for all qualified Texans.

We should allow public universities to adjust tuition rates so that they have the necessary flexibility to meet budgets and remain competitive.

We should allow universities to maintain or increase their budgets with de-regulation, but help low-income students offset the costs.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Re-regulate tuition. | 46% |
| 2. Keep tuition de-regulation, or | 18% |
| 3. Keep tuition de-regulation but help low income students offset costs | 30% |
| 4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 6% |

Do you think that students attending college get their money's worth for what they spend on higher education, or do they not receive a fair return on their investment?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Students get their money's worth. | 43% |
| 2. Students do not receive a fair return on their investment. | 42% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 15% |

Another issue that has been in the news lately is health policy.

As you may know, in 2010 the Affordable Care Act was signed into law. Do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of this health care law? Would that be extremely or just somewhat favorable/unfavorable?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Extremely favorable | 22% |
| 2. Somewhat favorable | 23% |
| 3. Somewhat unfavorable | 14% |
| 4. Extremely unfavorable | 32% |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 9% |

- A. As you may know, the federal health care law, known as the Affordable Care Act, allows the state to expand Medicaid access to more Texans, with the federal government covering the vast majority of the costs. Some say Texas should take advantage of this program because it would expand health care coverage in Texas and lower the cost of insurance premiums for those who already have coverage. Others say Texas should refuse to participate in the program because Medicaid is a broken program and paying additional money into it is a mistake.

Which of these comes closer to your view? (MOE +/- 4.12%)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Support participation in program | 49% |
| 2. Oppose participation in program | 40% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 10% |

- B. As you may know, the federal health care law, known as the Affordable Care Act, allows the state to expand Medicaid access to more Texans, with the federal government covering the vast majority of the costs. Some say Texas should take advantage of this program because it would expand health care coverage in Texas and lower the cost of insurance premiums for those who already have coverage. Others say Texas should refuse to participate in the program because we have serious budget issues and cannot afford to expand the state's contribution to Medicaid even with the promise of additional federal support.

Which of these comes closer to your view? (MOE +/- 3.98%)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Support participation in program | 51% |
| 2. Oppose participation in program | 40% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 9% |

- A. Which of the following statements is closer to your own view:
 "Health care research results in innovation that significantly reduces costs later on."
 "Spending on health care research is a luxury that we can't afford when the economy is bad."

(MOE +/- 4.12%)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Health care research results in innovation that reduces costs later on. | 74% |
| 2. Health care research is a luxury | 21% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 5% |

- B. Which of the following statements is closer to your own view:
 Health care research results in innovation that significantly reduces costs later on."
 "Spending on health care research simply creates more expensive drugs and procedures."

(MOE +/- 3.98%)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Health care research results in innovation that reduces costs later on. | 71% |
| 2. Health care research creates more expensive drugs and procedures. | 19% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 11% |

Compared to when you were a kid, do you think that today's kids are:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Much more likely to be fat and out of shape | 64% |
| 2. Somewhat more likely to be fat and out of shape | 28% |
| 3. Somewhat less likely to be fat and out of shape | 4% |
| 4. Much less likely to be fat and out of shape | 2% |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 2% |

What is the MOST important factor contributing to childhood obesity?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Modern technology, such as televisions and computers | 24% |
| 2. Lack of physical education classes in school | 9% |
| 3. Difficulty of finding safe places to play outdoors | 4% |
| 4. Fast food/Bad diet | 17% |
| 5. The food industry | 5% |
| 6. Poor role-models | 3% |
| 7. Parents not controlling what their kids eat | 31% |
| 8. Other | 5% |
| 9. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 3% |

These last few issue questions are about water.

Do you think that water rights should be owned by individuals or should they be public?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Individuals | 29% |
| 2. Public | 54% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 17% |

Would you be willing to pay more in water tap fees to ensure that the state's water needs are met?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 64% |
| 2. No | 30% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 7% |

The Texas Legislature passed into law a measure that requires doctors to conduct a sonogram prior to an abortion, and then show and discuss the picture with the woman. Do you support or oppose this measure?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Support | 50% |
| 2. Oppose | 44% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. | 5% |