



2015 Texas Lyceum Poll Executive Summary – Hot Issues

A September 8-21, 2015 survey of adult Texans reveals that Texans remain concerned about border security and illegal immigration, maintain an intense love of football, and support decriminalization of marijuana, among other issues. Visit www.TexasLyceum.org for full results.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Most Important Issues Facing the State & Nation

For the eighth straight year, Texans stated that the economy is the most important issue facing the country. Though slightly more Texans cite the economy in this year's poll than in the 2014 Texas Lyceum Poll (16% versus 15%), these results represent a sharp decline from previous Lyceum surveys in which 25%, 37%, 32%, 34%, and 62% mentioned the economy as the most important issue facing the country (in 2013, 2012, 2010, 2009, and 2008 respectively). Second on the list of most important problems this year was immigration, cited by 10% of Texans, followed by unemployment/jobs (7%), national security/terrorism (7%), and rounding out the top five, healthcare (4%).

Immigration was again cited as the number one issue facing the state, mentioned by 24% of adult Texans. This issue was also the number one issue cited in the 2014 survey (18%), replacing education, which was the number one issue in 2013 (13%). Given that respondents are provided the opportunity to offer any issue in response to this question, it is notable that almost a quarter of adult Texans mentioned one issue, but it is also worth noting that partisanship shapes these responses. Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to cite immigration as the number one issue facing the state (40% of Republicans compared to only 15% of Democrats), though immigration is still the number one issue for Democrats (followed by education at 14%).

Immigration / Border Security

Immigration and/or border security is the issue regularly cited by Texans as the most important facing the state. In the 2015 Lyceum poll, we attempted to dig deeper into Texans' attitudes toward immigration and border security by not only gauging their attitudes toward two notable immigration policies, but also their feelings about the effectiveness or impact of those policies.

The first of the policies that we queried asked Texans about the recent approval by the Texas Legislature to spend \$800 million on border security operations over the next two years. Overall, 62% of Texas adults supported this increased spending by the legislature, with only 31% opposing it. Republicans were overwhelmingly in favor of the measure (84%) while Democrats were more mixed, with 45% expressing support and 48% expressing opposition. And while Anglo Texans were the most likely to support this increase in funding (71%), 54% of black and 50% of Hispanic respondents also expressed support.

As a follow-up to this question, we then asked respondents, “*Regardless of whether or not you support the additional spending, do you think it will be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective in securing the Texas border?*” Similar to the first question, 61% of Texans said that the spending would be “very” or “somewhat” effective, but the majority of that opinion was made up of those who said that it would be only “somewhat effective” (47%). Among those who support the spending, 20% say that it would be “very effective”, 63% say that it would be “somewhat effective”, and 12% say that it would be “not very” or “not at all” effective.” Among those in opposition, 24% say that the increased spending will be effective, while 73% say that it won’t be effective.

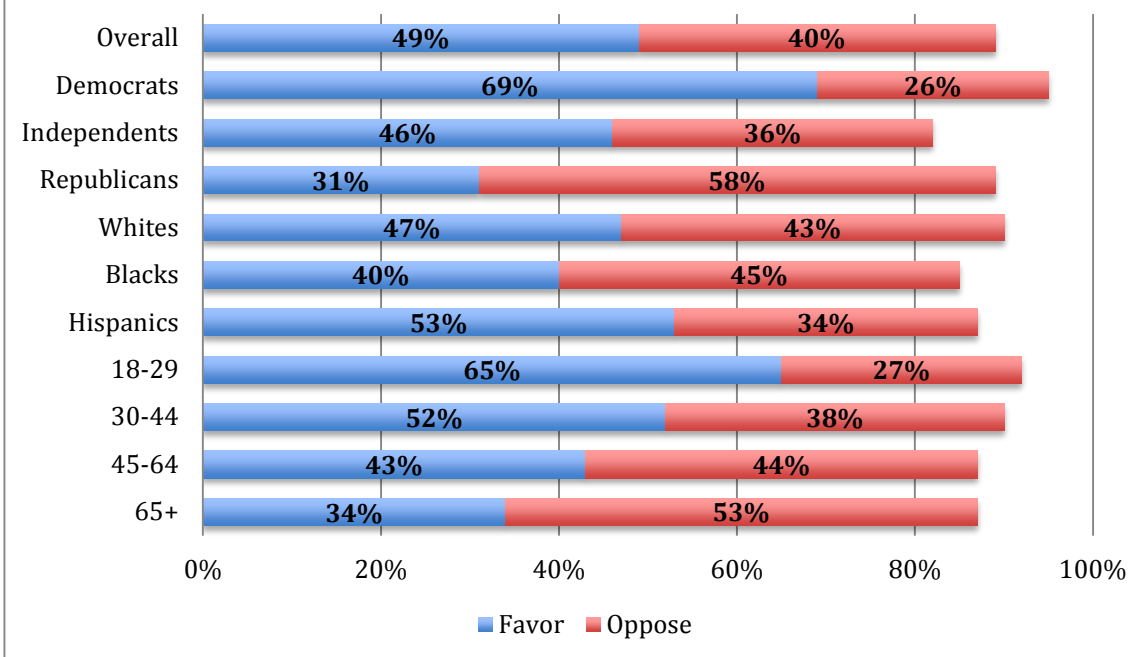
The second policy that we queried asked respondents to evaluate the policy by which the Department of Justice stops the deportation of any undocumented immigrant youth who attends college or serves in the military and provides them with a legal work permit that is renewable. Despite the perception that Texans have particularly harsh attitudes on illegal immigration, 65% of Texas adults said that they supported this policy with only 28% expressing opposition. Majorities of Democrats (81%), Republicans (54%), and independents (62%) expressed support, as did majorities of Anglos (58%), blacks (63%), and Hispanics (75%).

As a follow-up to this question, we asked respondents, “*Regardless of whether or not you support this policy, do you think it does a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to encourage people to enter the United States illegally?*” Overall, 20% of Texas adults said that this policy did “a lot” to encourage people to enter the U.S. illegally, 24% said that it did “some,” 22% said that it doesn’t do very much, and 24% say that the policy does “nothing at all” to encourage illegal immigration. Among those who opposed the policy, 49% said that it did “a lot” or “some” to encourage illegal immigration, while 43% said that it did “not very much” or “nothing at all.”

Gay Marriage

In 2015 the Supreme Court granted gay and lesbian couples the right to marry in all 50 states under the authority of the U.S. Constitution. In the 2015 Lyceum Poll, we asked Texans whether or not they favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples the right to marry legally. Overall, 49% said that they favored allowing gay marriage while 40% said that they opposed the practice (11% expressed no opinion).

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples the right to marry legally?



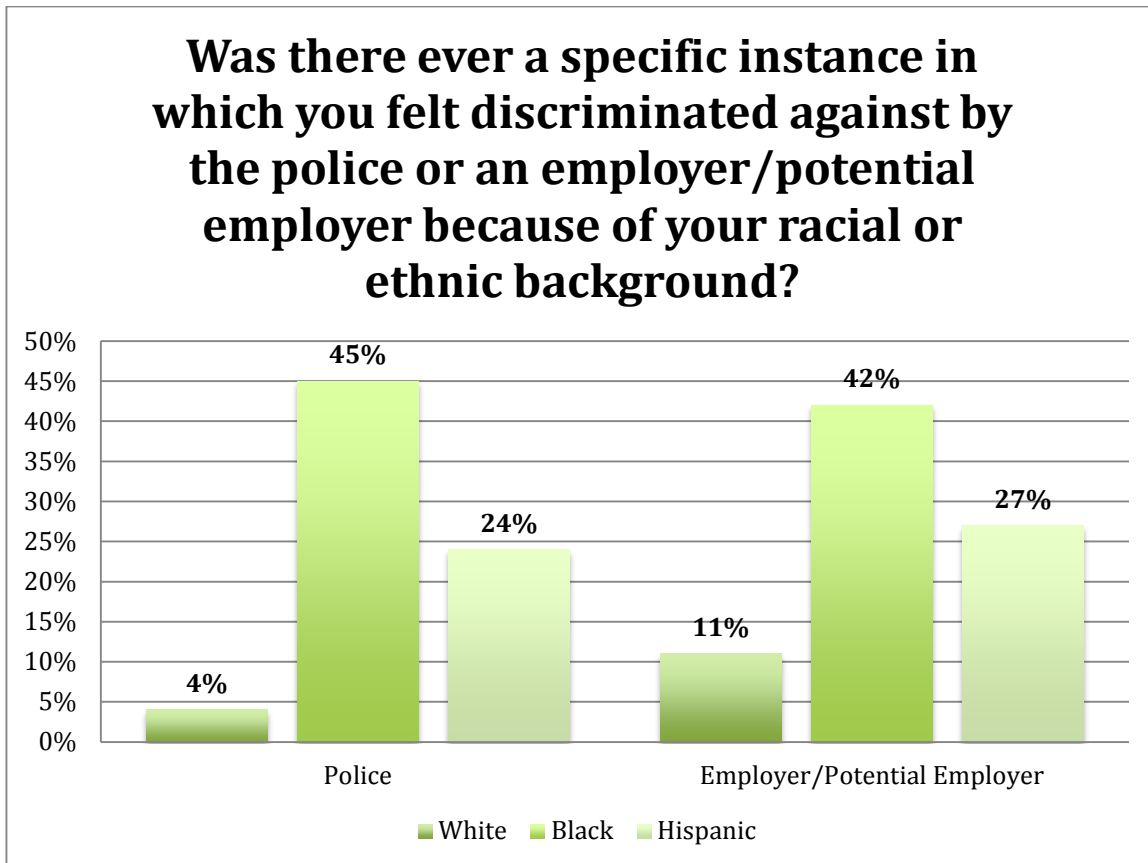
Majorities of Democrats (69%), Hispanics (53%), and Texans 18 to 29 years old (65%) and 30 to 44 years old (52%) said that they favored allowing gay marriage; pluralities of independents (46%) and Anglos (47%) also said that they favored allowing gay marriage. A majority of Republicans (58%) and a plurality of black respondents (45%) said that they oppose allowing gay marriage.

Race-Based Discrimination

As of the 2010 Census, Texas was one of four states in which a majority of the population is made up of minority groups. We asked Texans two questions about their own experiences with discrimination in America. Specifically, we asked whether “*there ever [was] a specific instance in which you felt discriminated against by the police because of your racial or ethnic background?*” And whether “*there ever [was] a specific instance in which you felt discriminated against by an employer or a potential employer because of your racial or ethnic background?*”

Overall, 17% of Texans said that they had felt discriminated against by police because of their racial or ethnic background, while 22% said that they had felt discriminated against by an employer or potential employer for the same reasons.

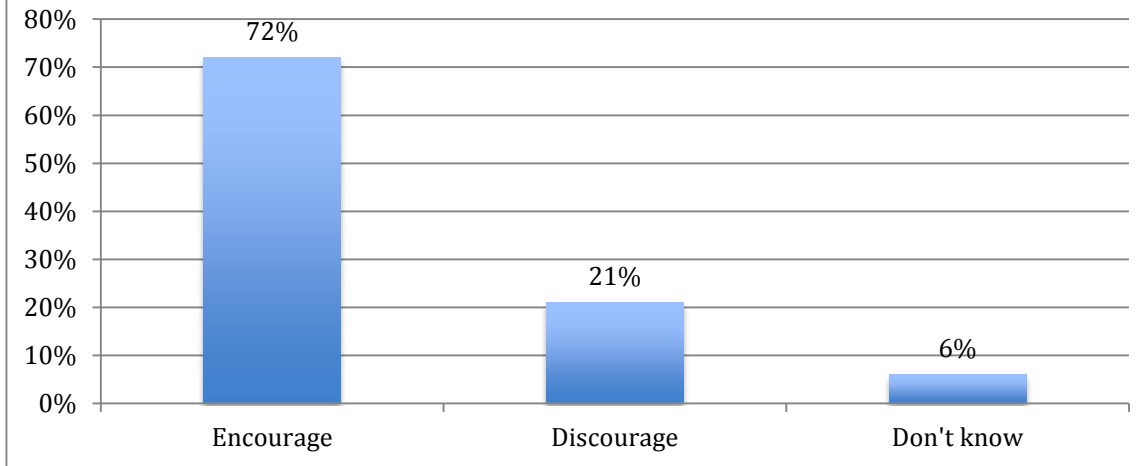
However, these results are heavily influenced by the race of the respondent. Whereas only 4% of white respondents said that they have ever felt discriminated against by the police, 24% of Hispanics and 45% of black respondents said that they had. This same pattern held for feelings about discrimination by an employer or potential employer. Among whites, only 11% indicated that they had felt discriminated against by an employer at some point in their life because of their racial or ethnic background, but 27% of Hispanics and 42% of black Texans have felt this form of discrimination.



Football

A 2014 [NBC/Wall Street Journal](#) poll found that 40% of Americans would steer their children away from playing football due to concerns over concussions – but this is Texas. When asked, “*Would you encourage children to play youth or high school football, or would you discourage them from it,*” 72% of Texas adults said that they would encourage children to play football while only 21% said that they would discourage it.

Would you encourage children to play youth or high school football, or would you discourage them from it?



Among the reasons for encouraging children to play football, a plurality (38%) said that it “builds character and discipline”, followed by football keeping them out of trouble (19%), the importance of team sports in general (15%), and exercise (13%). Among the reasons for discouraging children from playing the sport, the “chance of injury” was the number one reason, cited by 71% of respondents.

Interestingly, these results weren’t skewed by the responses of non-parents. Among Texas adults with one or more child currently living in their home, 77% said that they would encourage their children to play youth or high school football, while only 20% said that they would discourage it.

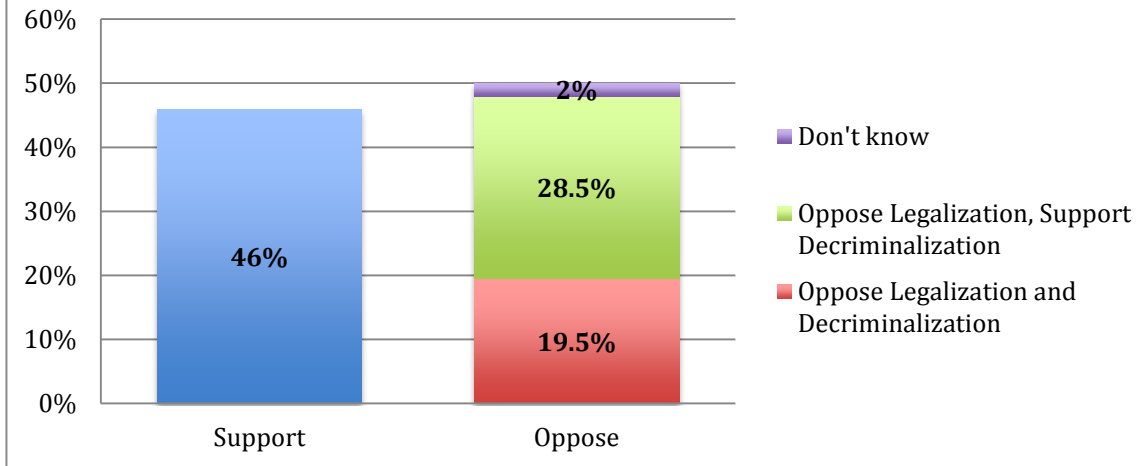
Marijuana Legalization and Decriminalization

As more states either decriminalize or legalize marijuana within their borders, the Texas Lyceum asked a two-part question to gauge people’s attitudes toward such a move for Texas. First, Texans were asked whether they would “support or oppose legalizing the use of marijuana in the state of Texas?” Overall, 46% of Texas adults said that they would support legalizing marijuana use while 50% said that they would oppose legalization. Among those who said that they would oppose legalization, we provided the following question:

You said that you opposed legalizing the use of marijuana in Texas, would you support or oppose reducing the maximum punishment for possessing small amounts of marijuana to a citation and a fine?

Among those who originally opposed legalizing marijuana, 57% said that they would support decriminalizing the drug while 39% said they would also oppose decriminalization. This means that among Texas adults, only 19.5% expressed opposition to both the legalization and/or the decriminalization of marijuana.

Would you support or oppose legalizing the use of marijuana in the state of Texas?

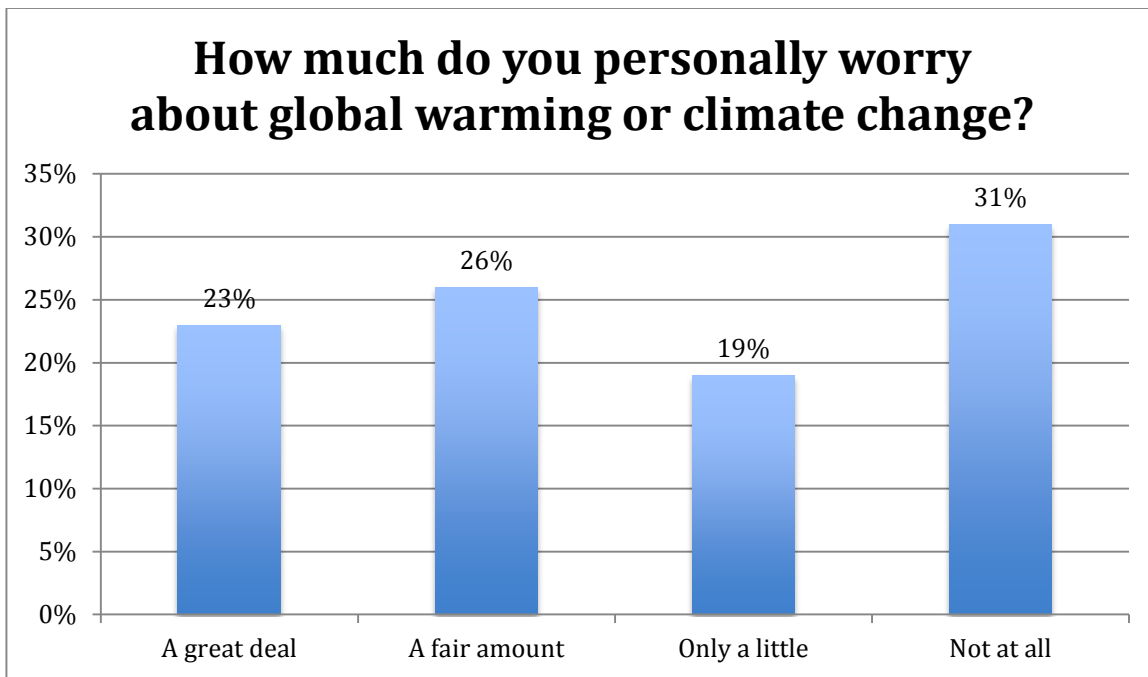


A majority of Democrats support legalization (54% support; 42% oppose) while a majority of Republicans oppose legalization (37% support; 61% oppose). Fifty percent of whites support legalization while 51% of blacks and 56% of Hispanics stand in opposition. Eighteen to 29 year olds are the only age group in which a majority supports legalization (66%).

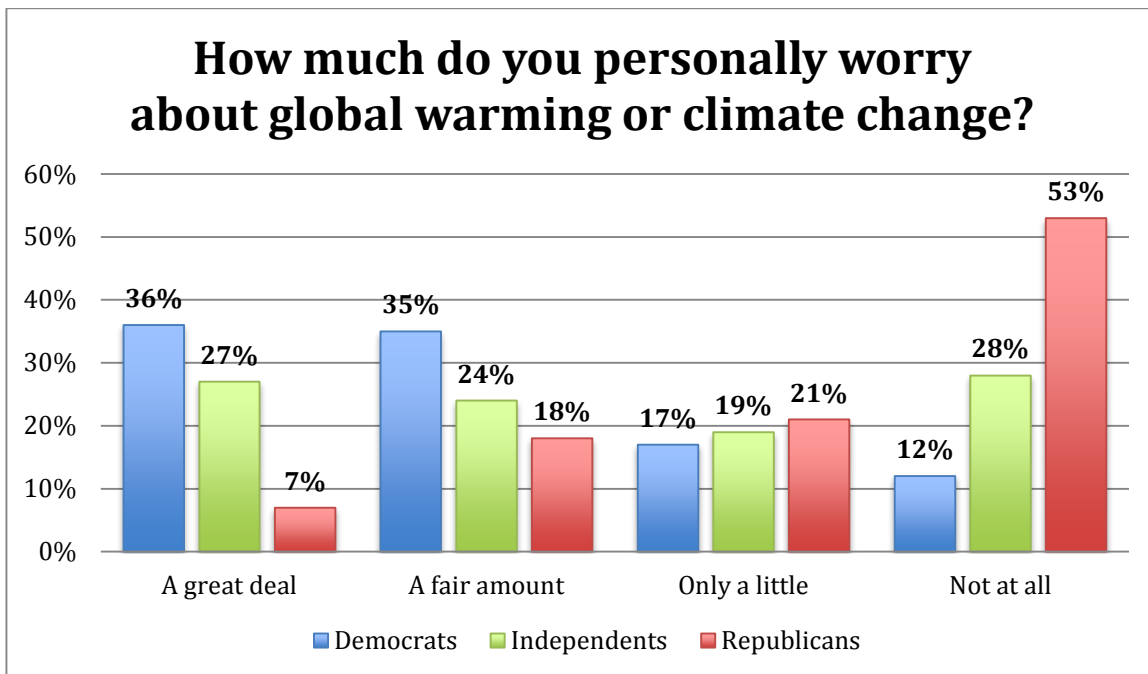
Interestingly, when it comes to Democrats and Republicans in opposition to legalization, both groups favor decriminalization (60% of Democrats and 59% of Republicans). Majorities of whites (59%), blacks (52%), and Hispanics (56%) initially opposed to legalization are supportive of decriminalization, as are all age groups.

Global Climate Change

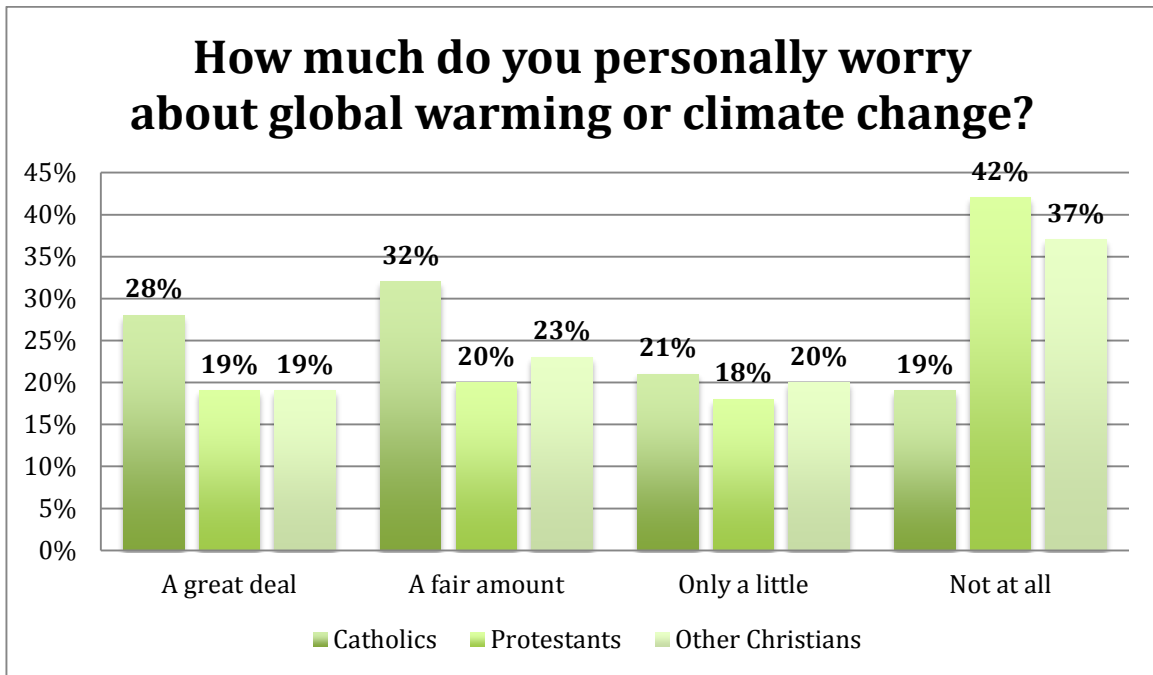
With climate change consistently in the news recently, we wanted to gauge the salience of this issue so we asked respondents how much they personally worry about global climate change. Texans expressed an ambivalence towards the threats of climate change in their own personal concerns, with 50% saying that they worry about it “only a little” or “not at all”, and 49% saying that they worry about it “a fair amount” or “a great deal.” A plurality of Texans (31%) say that they spend no time worrying about global climate change.



The issue of global climate change has a known partisan dimension, and this was also reflected in the survey results. While 71% of Democrats said that they worry “a great deal” or “a fair amount” about climate change, a clear majority of Republicans (53%) say that they don’t worry about it at all.



With the Pope recently weighing in on global climate change, it’s also worth pointing out that among Christians, Catholics were the most likely to express their own concerns about global climate change. While only 39% of Protestants and 42% of other Christians say that they worry “a great deal” or “a fair amount” about climate change, 60% of Texas Catholics express the same view.



Given this stated ambivalence towards climate change, it is interesting the poll also found that when asked whether or not they would “support or oppose Congress passing new legislation that would regulate energy output from private companies in an attempt to reduce global warming,” a majority of Texans (67%) said that they would support such regulation. This result was particularly surprising given that Texans’ tend to have a reflexively negative response toward polling questions that ask whether or not they support any kind of regulation.

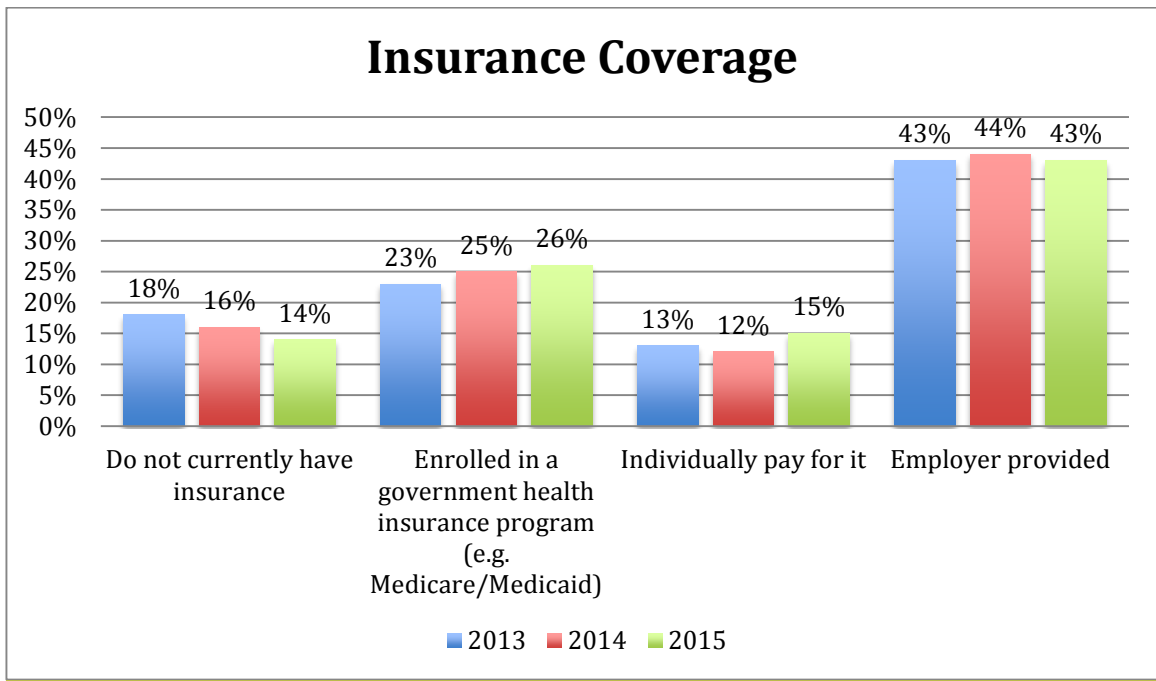
Not surprisingly, given the partisan dimensions of this issue, 84% of Democrats said that they would support such regulations (60% said that they would strongly support them), while 45% of Republicans said that they would support such regulations, with 48% saying that they would be opposed. These results still display a rather surprising willingness among Texas Republicans to consider regulation to combat global climate change.

Health and Healthcare

In 2015, a slightly higher percentage of Texans expressed a favorable attitude toward the Affordable Care Act (ACA) than did those in 2014 (37% favorable in the 2015 survey compared with 33% in 2014). In conjunction with this slight increase in positive opinions towards the ACA, negative opinions also decreased from 52% in the 2014 survey to 47% in the 2015 survey.

Like in past polling, Democrats held a much more positive attitude toward the ACA than did Republicans. While 63% of the former hold a positive view of the ACA (up from 58% in 2014), 76% of the latter hold a negative opinion (down slightly from 80%). Whites continue to hold negative opinions towards the healthcare law with only 26% expressing a favorable opinion, while a majority of blacks hold a positive view (65%). Hispanics were evenly divided in their opinions of the ACA, with 42% holding a favorable opinion and 39% holding an unfavorable opinion.

Texas is known for having the highest percentage of uninsured citizens in the country. We've asked in 2013, 2014 and again this year what type of health insurance Texas adults currently have.



Results to this question indicate a slight downward trajectory in the percentage of Texans stating that they currently do not have health insurance. The percentage of Texans enrolled in a government health insurance program appears to be increasing slightly, as is the percentage of Texans who individually pay for it, while those with employer provided coverage has remained essentially unchanged.

METHODOLOGY

From September 8-21, 2015, The Texas Lyceum conducted a statewide telephone survey of adult citizens. 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 40 percent 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 6,100 records were drawn to yield 1,000 completed interviews. The final data set is weighted by race/ethnicity, age and gender to achieve representativeness as defined by the Texas Department State Health Services 2015 population projections. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 3.1 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. Toward 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 in its 35th year, 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 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, 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.

SURVEY QUESTIONS – HOT ISSUES

N=1,000 ADULTS
MOE=+/-3.1 PERCENTAGE POINTS
CELL PHONE SUPPLEMENT
BILINGUAL INSTRUMENT/INTERVIEWERS
September 8-21, 2015

GENERAL

- Q. Are you registered to vote in the state of Texas?
1. Yes, registered. 80%
 2. No, not registered. 20
 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. 0
- Q. 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. 31%
 2. Somewhat interested. 41
 3. Not very interested. 13
 4. Not at all interested. 14
 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA. 1
- Q. What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today?
1. *The economy* 16%
 2. Immigration 10
 3. *Unemployment/jobs* 7
 4. National security/terrorism 7
 5. Health care 4
 6. Education 4
 7. Race relations/racial issues 3
 8. *Federal spending/budget deficit* 2
 9. *National debt* 2
 10. Moral decline 2
 11. Moving away from Christianity/God 2
 12. War 2
 13. The presidential race 2
 14. Political corruption/leadership 1
 15. Border security 1
 16. Gay marriage 1
 17. Social welfare programs 1
 18. Abortion 1
 19. Crime and drugs 1
 20. Iran/nuclear weapons 1
 21. Middle East unrest 1
 22. Polarization/Gridlock/Partisanship 1
 23. Gun violence/gun control 1
 24. Barack Obama 1
 25. Other 10
 26. Don't know/No opinion 9

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

1. Immigration	24%
2. Education	9
3. <i>Unemployment/jobs</i>	7
4. Border security	5
5. <i>The economy</i>	4
6. Health care	3
7. Political corruption/leadership	2
8. Crime and drugs	2
9. Social welfare programs	2
10. Transportation/roads/traffic	2
11. Gun violence/gun control	2
12. Low wages/poverty/cost of living	2
13. Low oil price	2
14. <i>Gas prices</i>	1
15. Moral decline	1
16. <i>Taxes</i>	1
17. Water supply	1
18. Gay marriage	1
19. Energy	1
20. Abortion	1
21. <i>Housing</i>	1
22. Voting system	1
23. Racism	1
24. Legalization of Marijuana	1
25. Republicans/the right wing	1
26. Nothing	1
27. Other	7
28. Don't know/No opinion	16

ISSUES & POLICY

Q. Please tell us whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act.

1. Very favorable	14%
2. Somewhat favorable	23
3. Neither favorable nor unfavorable	15
4. Somewhat unfavorable	14
5. Very unfavorable	33
6. Don't know/No opinion	11

Q. What type of health insurance do you currently have?

1. Employer provided	43%
2. Individually pay for it	5
3. Enrolled in a government health insurance program (for example, Medicare or Medicaid)	26
4. Do not currently have health insurance	14
5. Don't know/Refused	2

Q. Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples the right to marry legally?

1. Favor	49%
2. Oppose	40
3. Don't know/Refused	11

Q. As you may know, the Texas Legislature recently approved spending 800 million dollars on border security operations over the next two years. Do you support or oppose this increase in funding for border security? Would that be strongly or somewhat?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly support | 42% |
| 2. Somewhat support | 20 |
| 3. Somewhat oppose | 13 |
| 4. Strongly oppose | 18 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 7 |

Q. Regardless of whether or not you support the additional spending, do you think it will be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective in securing the Texas border?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very effective | 14% |
| 2. Somewhat effective | 47 |
| 3. Not very effective | 20 |
| 4. Not at all effective | 12 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 6 |

Q. As you may know, the Department of Justice was recently ordered to stop the deportation of any undocumented immigrant youth who attends college or serves in the military and to provide them with a legal work permit that is renewable. Do you support or oppose this policy? Would that be strongly or somewhat?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly support | 42% |
| 2. Somewhat support | 23 |
| 3. Somewhat oppose | 9 |
| 4. Strongly oppose | 19 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 7 |

Q. Regardless of whether or not you support this policy, do you think it does a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to encourage people to enter the United States illegally?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. A lot | 20% |
| 2. Some | 24 |
| 3. Not very much | 22 |
| 4. Nothing at all | 24 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 10 |

Q. How much do you personally worry about global warming or climate change? A great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. A great deal | 23% |
| 2. A fair amount | 26 |
| 3. Only a little | 19 |
| 4. Not at all | 31 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 1 |

Q. Would you support or oppose Congress passing new legislation that would regulate energy output from private companies in an attempt to reduce global warming? Would that be strongly or somewhat?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly support | 40% |
| 2. Somewhat support | 27 |
| 3. Somewhat oppose | 11 |
| 4. Strongly oppose | 16 |
| 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA | 6 |

Q. Was there ever a specific instance in which you felt discriminated against by the police because of your racial or ethnic background?

- 1. Yes 17%
- 2. No 83
- 3. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 0

Q. Was there ever a specific instance in which you felt discriminated against by an employer or a potential employer because of your racial or ethnic background?

- 1. Yes 22%
- 2. No 78
- 3. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 0

Q. Would you encourage children to play youth or high school football, or would you discourage them from it?

- 1. Encourage 72%
- 2. Discourage 21
- 3. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 6

Q. **[ASK IF PREVIOUS Q EQ 1]** What's the main reason why you would encourage children to play youth or high school football? Is it because you like the sport, because team sports are important, because of the culture, because of the exercise, because it builds character and discipline, because it keeps them out of trouble, or some other reason?

- 1. Like the sport 5%
- 2. Team sports are important 15
- 3. The culture 1
- 4. Exercise 13
- 5. Builds character and discipline 38
- 6. Keeps them out of trouble 19
- 7. Other 8
- 8. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 2

Q. **[ASK IF PREVIOUS Q EQ 2]** What's the main reason why you would discourage children from playing youth or high school football? Is it because of the chance of injury, because of the culture, because you would prefer they do other things, or some other reason?

- 1. Chance of injury 71%
- 2. The culture 4
- 3. Prefer they do other things 12
- 4. Other 11
- 5. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 1

Q. Would you support or oppose legalizing the use of marijuana in the state of Texas?

- 1. Support 46%
- 2. Oppose 50
- 3. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 4

[ASK IF PREVIOUS Q EQ 2]

Q. You said that you opposed legalizing the use of marijuana in Texas, would you support or oppose reducing the maximum punishment for possessing small amounts of marijuana to a citation and a fine?

- 1. Support 57%
- 2. Oppose 39
- 3. DON'T KNOW / REFUSED / NA 4

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGEG.

1. 18-29	20%
2. 30-44	29
3. 45-64	34
4. 65+	16

LOCATE. Would you say you live in an urban area, a suburban area, a small town, or rural area?

1. Urban	27%
2. Suburban	32
3. Small town	21
4. Rural	16
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4

MARRIED. What is your current marital status?

1. Never married	23%
2. Married	51
3. Divorced	12
4. Widowed	7
5. Separated	4
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2

CHILD. How many children are currently living with you?

1. One	16%
2. Two	14
3. Three	8
4. Four or more	6
5. None	53

CHILDGEN. [ASK IF CHILD EQ 1-4] Of the children currently living with you, are they boys, girls, or both?

1. Boys	29%
2. Girls	28%
3. Both	41%
4. DK/Refused	2%

INCOME. What was your total household income for 2012? **[READ CATEGORIES]**

1. Less than \$15,000	10%
2. \$15,000-\$25,000	12
3. \$25,000-\$40,000	13
4. \$40,000-\$75,000	20
5. \$75,000-\$150,000	19
6. More than \$150,000	9
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	16

EDOFR. What is the highest level of education you completed? **[READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]**

1. Less than high school	5%
2. High school	27
3. Some college	26
4. College degree	26
5. Post-graduate degree (MA, LLD, PhD)	13
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA.	4

RELIGION. What is your religious denomination?

1. Protestant	25%
2. Catholic	26
3. Other Christian	28
4. Jewish	1
5. Muslim, Buddhist, or other non-Christian	2
6. Agnostic/Atheist	7
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	11

FUND. **[IF RELIGION EQ 1]** Would you say that you are evangelical, fundamentalist, or born-again?

1. Yes	69%
2. No	26

RACE. Would you say that you are...

1. White/Anglo-Saxon	47%
2. African American	11
3. Hispanic	36
4. Asian/Pacific Islander.	2
5. Native American, or	1
6. Multi-racial	3

LIBCON. Generally speaking, would you say that you are...

1. Liberal	18%
2. Moderate, or	29
3. Conservative	43
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	10

PID7.

1. Strong Democrat	17%
2. Weak Democrat	9
3. Lean Democrat	11
4. Independent	27
5. Lean Republican	10
6. Weak Republican	8
7. Strong Republican	18

GENDER. (BY OBSERVATION)

1. MALE	50%
2. FEMALE	50