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**MEDIA CONTACT**

Lindsey Campbell

[lindsey@theedberrrygroup.com](mailto:lindsey@theedberrrygroup.com)

210-998-9000

**Comprehensive Poll Results:<https://www.texaslyceum.org/lyceum-poll>**

## **The Texas Lyceum Poll Measures Evolving Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic**

**AUSTIN** - The Texas Lyceum's annual poll, published today, unearthed new insights about the statewide impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The 2021 poll returned the most negative evaluations of Texas' and the nation's economies since the Great Recession of 2008, and found that while 88 percent of Texans expressed at least some concern about the raging pandemic, only 45 percent of adults say that they will get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available to them.

"From our previous polls, we know that Texans are pretty positive about their state," said Daron Shaw, founder of the poll and a Lyceum alum. "But the 2021 survey shows the toll the virus has taken; two-thirds say the economy is worse off than a year ago, and more think the state is worse off economically than the country as a whole."

The coronavirus pandemic is the most important issue facing both the country (29 percent) and the state (37 percent) according to Texas adults. The sheer reach of the pandemic's impact is hard to overstate as 4 in 5 Texans report personally knowing someone who has been infected with the coronavirus while 1 in 2 know someone who has succumbed to the virus. Additionally, the majority of respondents reported having their finances (52 percent), their careers (36 percent), their relationships with friends (54 percent) and their relationships with family members (46 percent) negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The 2021 Lyceum Poll demonstrates the extensive damage the coronavirus pandemic continues to exert on Texans' professional and personal lives, from their financial situations and career prospects to their relationships with family and friends," said Joshua Blank, PhD, Texas Lyceum Research Director. "And yet, half of Texans remain weary or unwilling to get vaccinated

as soon as possible, with significant concerns about vaccine safety posing real challenges to the state's recovery."

### **Pandemic Supplants Previous Concerns**

- The coronavirus pandemic supplanted immigration and border security as Texans' top concerns — those issues topped the list in 2020 (28 percent) and 2019 (26 percent) but fell outside of the top five concerns (5 percent) this year
- Political corruption and/or leadership was identified as the second most important issue facing both the country (14 percent) and the state (10 percent) — a reflection of the riots that took place at the U.S. Capitol just days prior to the survey field dates

### **Racial Disparities in Pandemic Experience**

- Hispanic (72 percent either extremely or very concerned) and Black Texans (67 percent) display higher levels of concern about the coronavirus pandemic than white Texans (62 percent)
- Hispanics (60 percent) were more likely than white (40 percent) or Black (41 percent) Texans to know someone who has died from the coronavirus
- Similarly, Hispanic (53 percent) and Black (50 percent) Texans were more likely than white Texans (43 percent) to have a family member whose health has been negatively impacted by the coronavirus
- While 57 percent of white Texans are very confident that they will be employed at year's end, this is true of only 42 percent of Hispanic, and 36 percent of Black Texans
- Black (61 percent), Hispanic (56 percent) and white (45 percent) Texans have had their finances negatively impacted by the coronavirus to varying degrees
- More Hispanic (49 percent) and Black (48 percent) Texans reported cutting back on food expenses compared to white Texans (38 percent)
- Despite these issues, Texans of color displayed more positive expectations about their future economic prospects than white Texans — 34 percent of Hispanic and 30 percent of Black adults said that they expected better economic times in 2021; white Texans were more likely to expect bad times economically, with 33 percent saying that the next 12 months will be bad
- In addition, Black (42 percent) and Hispanic Texans (40 percent) expressed more optimism that their children will be better off than themselves economically, compared to white Texans (27 percent)

### **Texans Hopeful for Containment within 6 Months Despite Limited Confidence in Vaccine**

- The majority of Texans (72 percent) are either "very hopeful" or "somewhat hopeful" that the United States will get the coronavirus under control within the next 6 months
- A plurality of Texans (45 percent) say they intend to get vaccinated as soon as a COVID vaccine becomes available to them, with 5 percent of respondents having already received a vaccine

- Half of all Texans either will not get a COVID vaccine as soon as it becomes available to them (26 percent), or are unsure whether or not they will (24 percent)
- Among those respondents who said that they either would not get a COVID vaccine or were unsure if they would, safety concerns were the overwhelming reason given for their trepidation - concerns were specific to the COVID vaccine (52 percent), with less concern about the safety of vaccines in general (28 percent)
- Another 10 percent of Texas adults who said that they would not get a vaccine immediately cited a belief that COVID-19 does not pose a serious health risk
- Texans felt that employers (43 percent), educational institutions (46 percent) and large events (42 percent) should be allowed to require vaccinations

#### **Confidence in the Safe Operation of Businesses and Institutions Low**

- Texans displayed the most confidence in the ability of healthcare providers to operate safely during the pandemic, with 40 percent of Texas adults saying that they have “a lot” of confidence and 38 percent expressing “some” confidence
- After healthcare providers, one’s own employer was the next most trusted (27 percent saying that they have “a lot” of confidence)
- No other business or institution received “a lot” of confidence from more than a quarter of Texans, including grocery stores (25 percent), churches (23 percent), K-12 public schools (22 percent), big box stores, local merchants, and airports and airlines (20 percent each, respectively)

#### **Texans with Children Under 18 Face Additional Challenges**

- Half of respondents (50 percent) with children under 18 said that their caregiving responsibilities had increased and a majority (47 percent) expressed that having children at home during the pandemic has been a difficult experience as opposed to an easy (27 percent) or neutral one (26 percent)
- Despite the challenges, only 32 percent of Texans with children at home say that they feel safe sending their child to a public school today, compared with a majority (53 percent) who don’t feel safe
- Feelings of safety in sending children to school vary demographically with white parents/caregivers feeling safest (44 percent), seconded by Black (27 percent) and then Hispanic (23 percent) parents/caregivers

The Texas Lyceum poll surveyed 1,200 adult citizens from the state of Texas between January 8-17, 2021. The annual poll enlists the latest in techniques, using live interviewers and contacting respondents primarily by telephone (landline and cell phones) with the use of English and Spanish instrumentation and interviewing. A supplement of 200 interviews of Texas adults confirmed as unregistered was completed online to ensure an appropriate sub-sample of unregistered citizens. Of the total sample of 1,200 adults, 835 were registered voters according

to self reports. The poll was overseen by Daron Shaw, Ph.D., Professor at The University of Texas at Austin and Joshua Blank, Ph.D., Texas Lyceum Research Director.

### **About The Texas Lyceum**

The Texas Lyceum is the only nonprofit, nonpartisan, stateside leadership organization focused on identifying the state's next generation of leaders and providing a forum for civil discourse. The Texas Lyceum hosts meetings and conferences, publishes a nationally-acclaimed annual poll, and offers scholarship and fellowship programs all focused on bringing together diverse opinions and expertise to emphasize constructive private-sector, public-sector and individual responses to the issues facing the state and the nation.

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