



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Texas Lyceum Poll: Texans Want a Shift in Political Discourse, Preservation of Strong Culture, Express Uncertainty About Immigration's Impact**

*New poll reveals Texans blame elected officials for divisions among Americans, are embracing Texas culture in overwhelming numbers, but are uncertain about the impact of immigration and mass deportations on the Texas economy*

**AUSTIN – April 29, 2025** – The 2025 [Texas Lyceum](#) Poll was released today, revealing Texans' attitudes and opinions on crucial issues, including what they consider the most pressing challenges facing America, responses to mass deportation efforts, sentiments on artificial intelligence, the scope and salience of Texas culture in 2025 and Texans' desire for a return to civility in politics.

The annual, nonpartisan, mixed-mode survey of 1,200 Texas adults explores some of the most pressing issues facing the state, while providing the public with a long time series of data.

#### **Return of Civility and Trust in Leadership, Institutions**

The 2025 Lyceum poll points to a widespread desire among Texans for a shift in politics – or at least how elected officials interact. A plurality (42%) of Texans blame elected officials for the current divisions among Americans, with Texans overwhelmingly endorsing more compromise and less standoff. Overall, more than two-thirds of Texans, 68%, say they would rather their political leaders find middle ground on key issues instead of standing their ground and fighting hard to put in place the ideas they're championing.

Despite the persistent state of polarization in America and the overheated political landscape, most Texans (69%) believe that people *can* disagree about politics respectfully – with only one in five, 20%, saying that “nasty exchanges are unavoidable.”

“Bitter partisanship has become normal. But our leaders in both political parties set the tone for all Americans and all Texans,” said President of The Texas Lyceum Crayton Webb. “Earlier this year, The Texas Lyceum launched the Campaign for Civility as a call to all Texans and

especially our elected leaders to model the art of listening, understanding and engaging to find solutions. The poll gives us evidence – this is how Texans want politics to take shape. It's time to rededicate ourselves to the timeless Texas traditions of civility and respect, even when we disagree.”

When asked about their trust in national and state leadership, as well as classic American institutions, Texans reported high trust in the military, and more approval on individual leadership than on bodies such as Congress or the state legislature:

- 54% felt **President Trump** was doing either a very good job or somewhat good job, while 46% rated his performance as somewhat poor or very poor.
- 55% approve of the job **Gov. Greg Abbott** is doing, while 46% disapprove.
- 46% approve of the job the **Texas State Legislature** is doing and 40% disapprove.
- Among American institutions, Texans have the highest trust in the **military** (31% “a great deal of confidence,” and 31% who have “quite a lot of confidence”).
- Among American institutions, Texans expressed the most distrust for **Congress** (39% “very little confidence”) and **the presidency** (39% “very little confidence”), followed closely by their distrust of **news media** (38% “very little confidence”).

### **Keeping the “Texasness” of Texas**

While Texans appear ready to change the script on political discourse in America, they do so while maintaining a strong Texas identity and culture. Even with one of the highest rates of inter-state migration in the country over the last few decades, a resounding 81% of Texas adults consider themselves to be “Texan.” The vast majority (72%) agreed that despite its problems, Texas is the best place to live in America, and 65% agreed America would be better if more states were like Texas.

In 2025, Texas culture remains vital to residents and a key part of their identity. Texan attitudes remain strong, including an embrace of religion, support for the death penalty, and a love of football – even though support for each of these has declined in the past decade. For example, while majorities of Texans expressed support for religious displays, like having the Ten Commandments on government grounds, both total support (82% in 2007, 69% in 2025) and intensity of support (60% strongly supportive in 2007, 41% in 2025) have declined. Similarly, while total support for the death penalty of those convicted of violent crimes has remained high in Texas (70% support in 2007, 74% support in 2025), those strongly supporting the death penalty has dropped from 49% in 2007 to 37% today. And while 64% of Texans would encourage youth to play football today, that represents a decline from 2015, when 72% said the same.

“Texas culture is alive and well,” said Joshua Blank, PhD, research director for The Texas Lyceum. “Despite decades of migration and a fundamentally shifting culture demographically, Texans’ embrace of their state remains a core feature of Texas identity through the first quarter of the twenty-first century – even if there are signs of shifts underfoot.”

## **Shaping the Future: Economic Outlook, Immigration and AI**

After years of negative assessments following the coronavirus pandemic, Texans' economic evaluations have improved slightly. Texans reported the economy as the number one challenge facing America today, but economic concerns (the economy and inflation combined) trailed immigration and border security as the most important issues facing the state.

In 2024, nearly half of Texans said their family's economic situation had deteriorated over the course of the year. This year saw a drop to 41% – the first year of improvement on this measure in five years. But when asked to consider their children's future, Texans continue to express uncertainty, with equal shares believing their children will be better off and worse off economically.

"It always gets back to kitchen table issues. Texans care deeply about how the economy is affecting their families and their futures," said Frank Ward, the chair of this year's Texas Lyceum poll. "And while it is clear that immigration and border security concerns remain at the forefront for many Texans, those policy matters are also being seen through the lens of the economic impact."

Given Texas's border with Mexico and the constant media spotlight on the immigration debate, the poll aimed to explore perceptions of the impact migration has on the Texas economy. The poll found that although 58% of Texans approve of the way President Trump is handling the issue of immigration and border security (up significantly from only 38% during the first year of his first term in 2017), and although 44% want him to succeed in deporting millions of undocumented immigrants (up from 31% in 2017), Texans mostly agreed that undocumented immigrants primarily fill jobs that Texans don't want (63%, compared to 37% who believe they fill jobs that American citizens would like to have). Additionally, 74% of Texans said that legal immigrants either have a "very positive" (40%) or "somewhat positive" (34%) impact on the Texas economy.

Given this picture of opinion, Texans expressed ambivalence about the impact of President Trump's mass deportation efforts, with 33% saying it will make life better for people like them, 24% saying it will make life worse, and 30% saying it will make no difference.

Lastly, the poll found 39% of Texans expressing positive feelings toward AI, with 30% expressing negative feelings. Texans with college degrees and higher annual incomes held more positive views about the technology and reported using it more frequently in their daily lives.

The Texas Lyceum's 19<sup>th</sup> annual poll was conducted March 28 to April 4, 2025. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points.

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## **ABOUT THE TEXAS LYCEUM**

The Texas Lyceum is the premier non-profit, non-partisan, statewide leadership organization focused on identifying the next generation of top Texas leaders. The organization has 96 active Directors from around the state, and alumni go on to serve our communities, state, and nation in significant ways. Texas Lyceum alumni have served as president of the United States, White House staff, U.S. Senators & House Members, ambassadors, in the Governor's Mansion, the Texas Legislature, and in corporate leadership. Throughout its 45-year history, the Lyceum has explored topics ranging from education to energy, and criminal justice to banking. The goal of the Lyceum is to inform, engage, and spark debate among Texans about the important issues facing our state. To learn more, visit [texaslyceum.org](https://texaslyceum.org).

## **POLL METHODOLOGY**

From May 28 to April 4, 2025, The Texas Lyceum conducted a 1000-person telephone survey of adult citizens from the state of Texas. The survey utilized a stratified probability sample design, with respondents being randomly selected at the level of the household and questioned by live interviewers. The survey also employed a randomized cell phone supplement, with 60 percent of completed telephone 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 12 minutes. To ensure an appropriate sub-sample of unregistered citizens, a supplement of 200 interviews among Texas adults confirmed as unregistered was completed online. This yields a total statewide sample of 1,200 adults, 926 of whom are registered voters according to self-reports. The final data set is weighted to the joint distribution of race/ethnicity, age and gender to achieve representativeness as defined by the Texas Demographic Center 2023 population projections. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points, with a larger margin of error for sub-samples.