

## Texas Lyceum Executive Summary

### Quality of Life in Texas and the Mood in 2026

The 2025 Texas Lyceum Poll found nearly three in four Texans, 72%, agreeing with the sentiment that “despite its problems, Texas is the best place to live in America.” The 2026 Lyceum Poll unpacks those results further by taking a deep and nuanced look at a number of factors likely influencing how Texans’ rate their own quality of life in the Lone Star State; and given the Lyceum’s long history surveying the attitudes of Texans, how those opinions of the state are changing — for the better, or for the worse.

While polling in recent years has consistently registered negative economic evaluations in light of persistently high prices, the 2026 Lyceum Poll uncovers the myriad challenges facing the lone star state. From high housing costs and deteriorating roads, to insufficient career opportunities; from declining access to child and health care, to ongoing concerns about the safety of the water and food supplies, Texans are concerned about their own and their children’s futures.

While the Lyceum Poll still finds a majority of Texans, both Democrats and Republicans, endorsing Democracy as our system of government, it also finds a significant minority, one in four Texans, disassociating themselves from Democracy as a structure of government, and a clear majority in favor of major changes to the governing structures and institutions of the country. Given this, it’s unsurprising to find that the majority of Texans express the opinion that the country is on the wrong track.

The 2026 Lyceum poll provides a clarion call for Texans who care about the future of the state to engage in difficult conversations about how Texas can continue to provide access to the necessary infrastructure and opportunities that Texans expect in order to continue Texas’ role as the premier destination in America to start a family or a business.

The 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll is a mixed method survey of Texas adults conducted from April 3 to 13, 2026. 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 methods described herein provided a total statewide sample of 1,200 adults. 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 2024 population projections. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points, with a larger margin of error for sub-samples.

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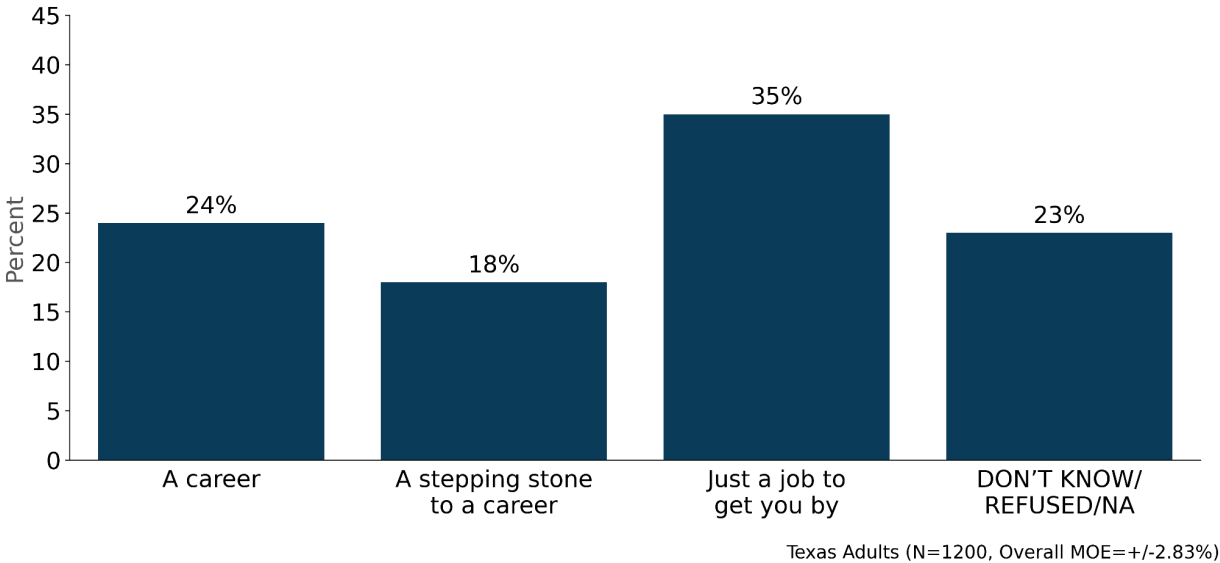
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# Quality of life in Texas

## Jobs, Housing, and Traffic

Despite Texas’ consistent, robust economic growth in recent decades along with a near steady stream of transplants looking to set roots in the state, just under one in four Texans (24%) say that they see their current employment as a career; while a majority, 53%, say that their current employment is either “a stepping stone to a career” (18%) or merely “just a job” to get them by (35%).

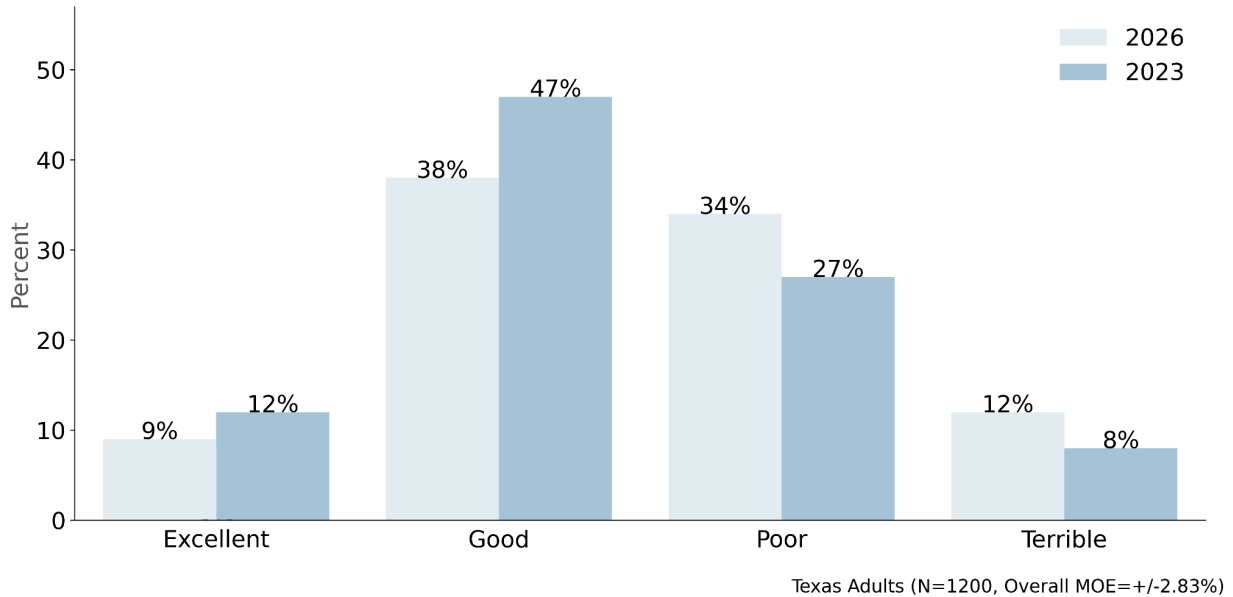
2026 Texas Lyceum Poll:  
How do you view your current job?



Among the majority of Texans who say that they are not currently in a career, a majority, 51%, say that they need more education and training to get the kind of job or career that they want, resulting in approximately one in four Texas adults who say that they are in need of education or training in order to advance in their career aspirations.

Asked, however, about the availability of good jobs in the area where they live, only 9% of Texans rated job availability as “excellent” in their communities, with another 38% rating it as “good,” and 46% rating the availability of good jobs as either “poor” (34%) or “terrible” (12%).

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Local Availability of Good Jobs.

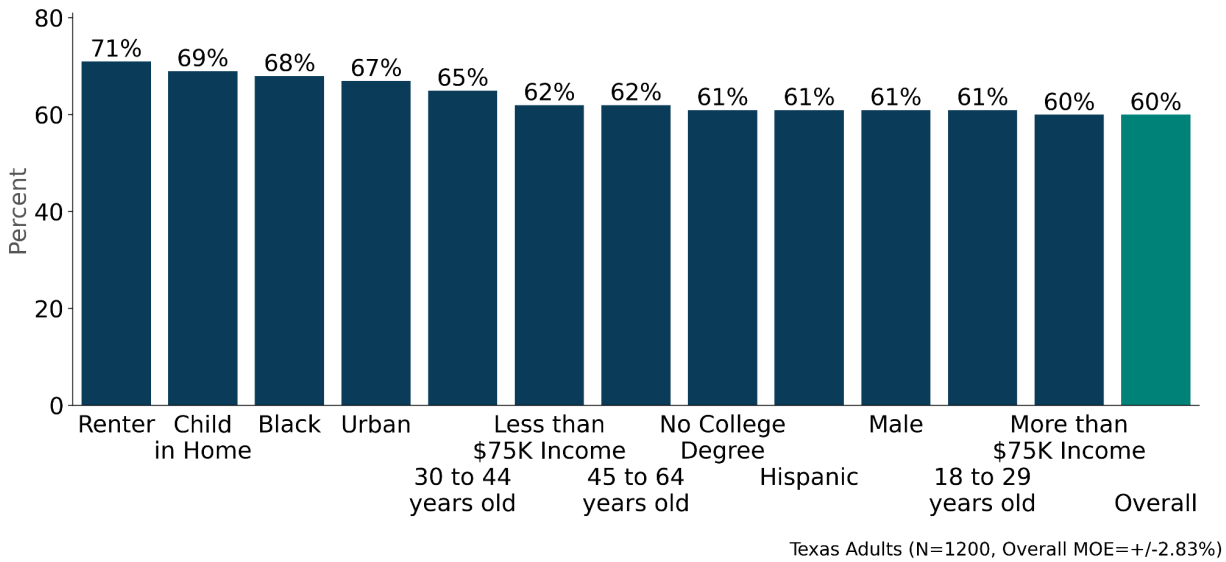


While this *might* paint a picture of ambivalence (47% saying the job market is excellent or good, 46% saying that its poor or terrible), the share of Texans giving a positive evaluation of the local job market is actually 12 points lower than when the same question was asked in 2023 by the Texas Lyceum. In that survey, 59% of Texans rated the local job market as either excellent (12%) or good (47%), with only 35% rating it as poor (27%) or terrible (8%).

In an oft-repeated question on the Lyceum poll, Texans were asked if they think that they're currently spending too much of their income on housing, and while slightly improved over 2024 results when 63% of Texans reported spending too much on housing, the 2026 poll finds largely unchanged levels of concern over the amount of their income that goes to housing (60%). The share who disagreed increased only slightly, from 27% to 32%, over the same period.

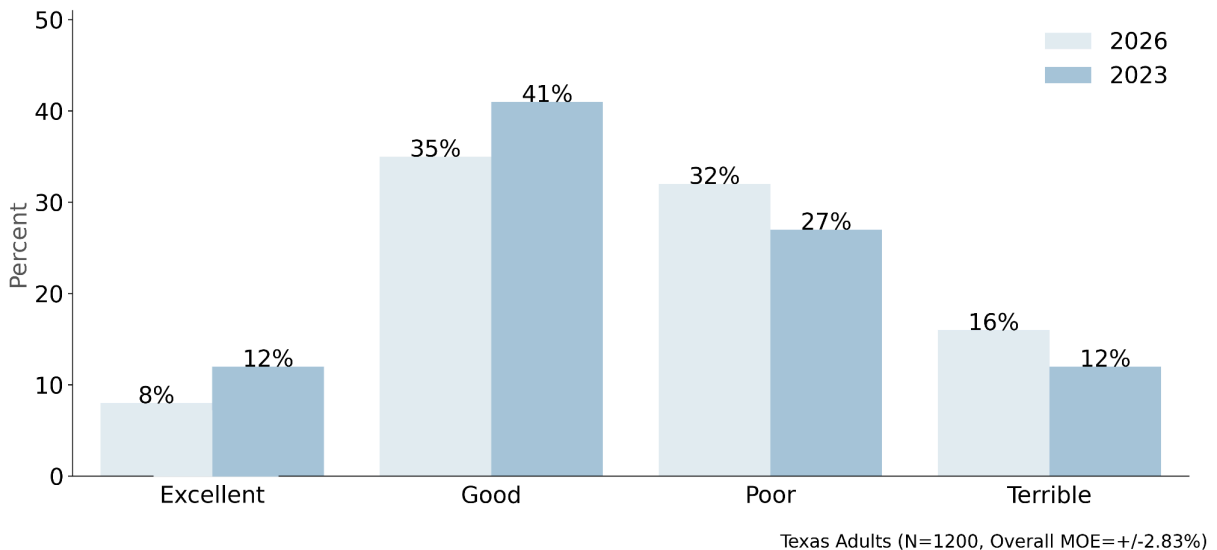
As recently as 2020, a majority of Texans, 55%, felt that they *weren't* spending too much of their income on housing, while 44% believed that they were. With conversations about costs and access to housing increasing dramatically in recent years, only 8% of Texans rated opportunities for home ownership in their local community as "excellent", while 11% said the same about the general availability of housing in their local communities (as opposed to home ownership specifically).

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: "I spend too much of my income on housing."



Like evaluations of local job markets, positive evaluations of local housing stocks have also declined in recent years. In 2023 Lyceum polling, a majority of Texans, 53%, said that opportunities for homeownership were either “excellent” (12%) or “good” (41%), while 2026 polling finds a 10-point decline in the share of Texans who express similar sentiments (8% and 35%, respectively). Views of the general availability of housing declined by a similar, though slightly smaller share, seven points, between 2022 and 2026 polling (57% in 2022, 50% in 2026).

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Local Opportunities for Home Ownership.



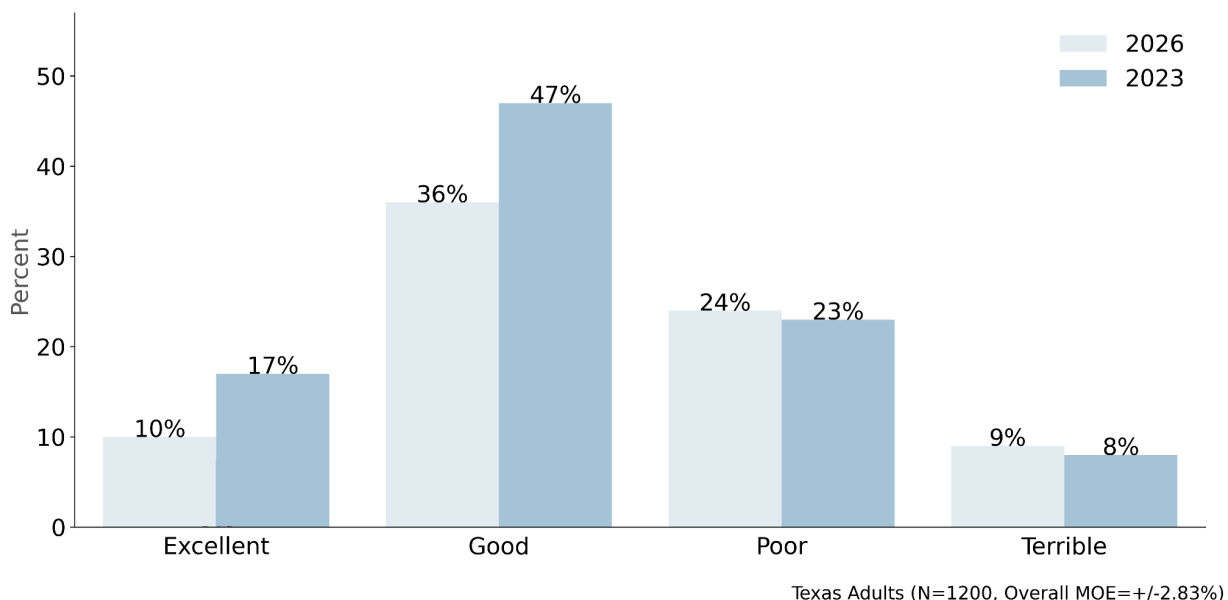
In between their homes and their jobs, most Texans will make use of some, or many, of Texas’ roads and highways. Overall satisfaction with the system of roads and highways in Texas remains in a state of slow decline. In 2013 Texas Lyceum polling, 52% of Texas adults said that they were either “somewhat” or “very” satisfied with the quality of roads and highways in the state. Since then, 51% expressed satisfaction in 2022, 47% in 2023, and in 2026, 43%.

Asked to consider the quality of roads locally, the survey found a similar, if slightly smaller decline in evaluations, with 57% of Texans rating the quality of their local roads as “excellent” (8%) or “good” (49%) in 2022, compared to 52% today (10% and 42%, respectively).

### Childcare and Healthcare

Texans’ views about the availability of childcare in their communities has significantly deteriorated in recent years. Asked about access to childcare in their local communities in 2023, 64% rated it as either “excellent” (17%) or “good” (47%) — today, only 46% rate access similarly (10% excellent, 36% good), an 18-point decline in just three years.

2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Local Access to Childcare.



Views about local access to healthcare have also declined significantly over a similar time period. In 2022 Lyceum polling, 74% of Texans rated their local access to healthcare as either “excellent” (23%) or “good” (51%) — today, only 59% provide a similar rating, a 15-point decline (14% excellent, 45% good).

## Water, Food, and Safety

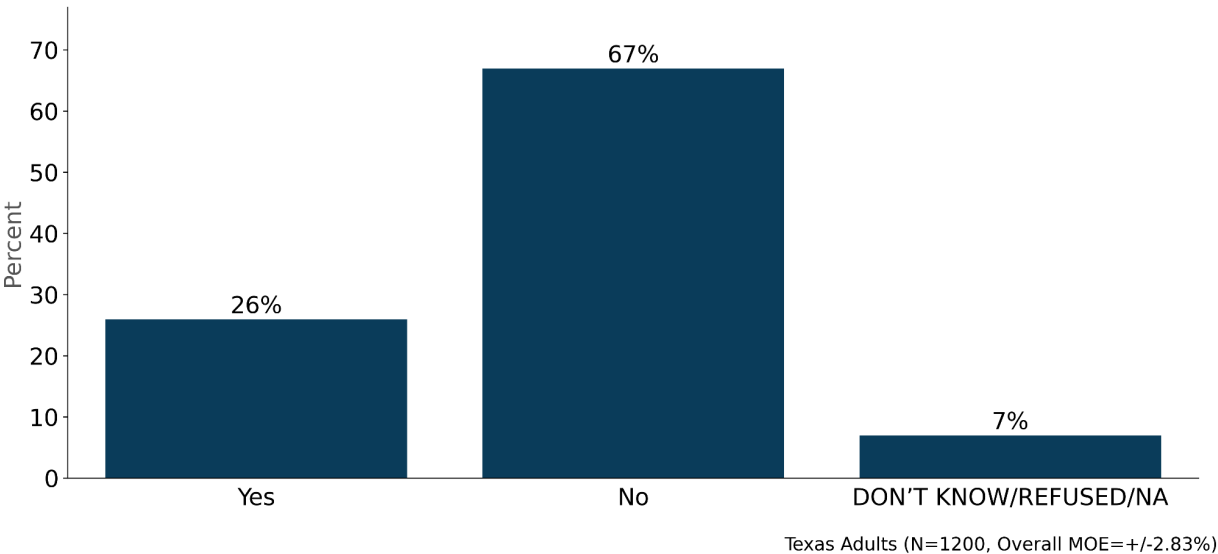
Water has been in the news a lot in Texas over the last decade, ramping up with recent attention to the water supply crisis facing Corpus Christi amidst larger, long-term issues of supply and demand in a fast growing, water thirsty state.

Asked about the supply of water in their own part of the state, a slight majority, 50%, said water is either a “big problem” (16%) or “somewhat of a problem” (34%), with 43% offering that the water supply isn’t much of a problem where they live. These results were largely unchanged from when the question was last asked in 2024.

Looked at over a slightly longer time horizon, however, the survey finds more axes of concern. Asked to rate the cost and reliability of their local water supply, 64% rated it as either “excellent” (14%) or “good” (49%), which, while positive on balance, represents a 10 point decline from when the question was last asked in 2022 (15% excellent, 59% good).

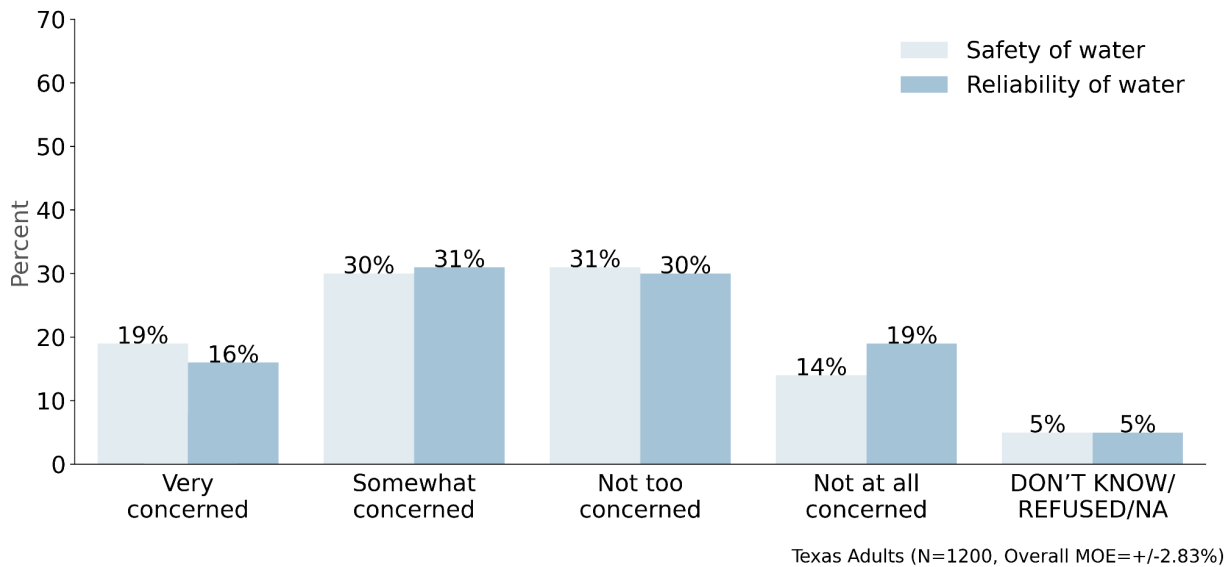
At the same time, it appears as though consistent attention by local and statewide leaders might be having some impact, with the share of Texans reporting boil water notices or otherwise given notification of a problem with their tap water over the last year dropping from 33% in 2024 to 26% in 2026. *At the same time, one in four Texans still said that they were required to boil, or otherwise abstain from using their tap water, during the last year.*

### 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Have you experienced a boil water notice or notification of unsafe tap water in the last year?



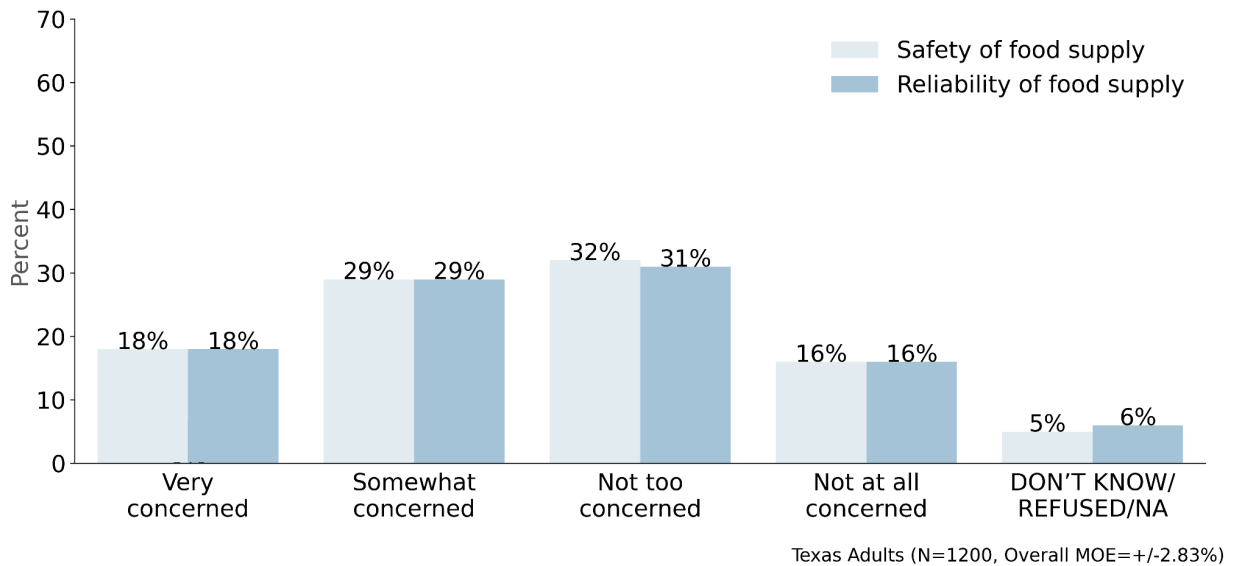
Along with this slight decline in water safety events, the poll finds a slight decrease in concern over the safety and reliability of the water supply — although with significant concern still apparent. While concern over the *safety* and *reliability* of the water supply declined 9 and 11 points, respectively, 49% of Texans still said that they were either “very concerned” (19%) or “somewhat concerned” (30%) about the safety of the water supply; while 47% were either “very concerned” (16%) or “somewhat concerned” (31%) about the reliability of the water supply.

### 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Concern about local water supply



Concern about the reliability of the food supply is another issue that has come up more and more in recent years. While not as salient as water issues, the poll found similar levels of concern about the food supply compared to concerns about water, which, given the latter’s persistent presence in state news, is somewhat surprising. Overall, 47% of Texans said that they were either “very” (18%) or “somewhat concerned” (29%) about both the safety *and* the reliability of the food supply in Texas.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Concern about the food supply



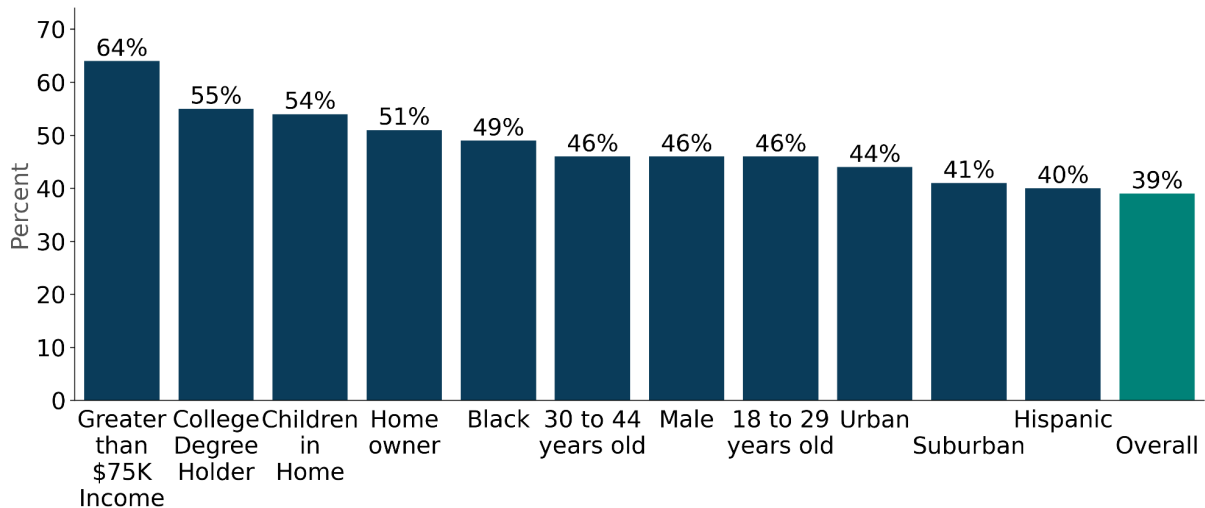
Access to electricity and the state’s response to emergencies like natural disasters have been persistent issues in the state since at least Winter Storm Uri in 2021. Overall, a majority of Texans, 58%, say that they believe the state is either “very prepared” (15%) or “somewhat prepared” (43%) to respond to natural disasters, with 34% saying the state is unprepared.

After significant effort to shore up the reliability of the state’s electric grid, a majority, 58%, rate the cost and reliability of their electricity as either “excellent” (14%) or “good” (44%). But in a familiar pattern, these positive evaluations are 9 points lower than when the question was last asked in 2022, when 67% rated the cost and reliability of their electricity as “excellent” (13%) or “good” (54%) — a year after Winter Storm Uri.

### Vacations and Dining

Transitioning from the basics of jobs, housing, water, and transit to the leisure that Texans might enjoy, the 2026 poll finds only 39% of Texans expecting to take a vacation this upcoming summer, with a majority, 52%, saying that they won’t be taking time off when Spring ends. National polling in 2025 found a majority of Americans planning summer travel.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Texans Planning to take a Vacation this Summer



Texas Adults (N=1200, Overall MOE= +/-2.83%)

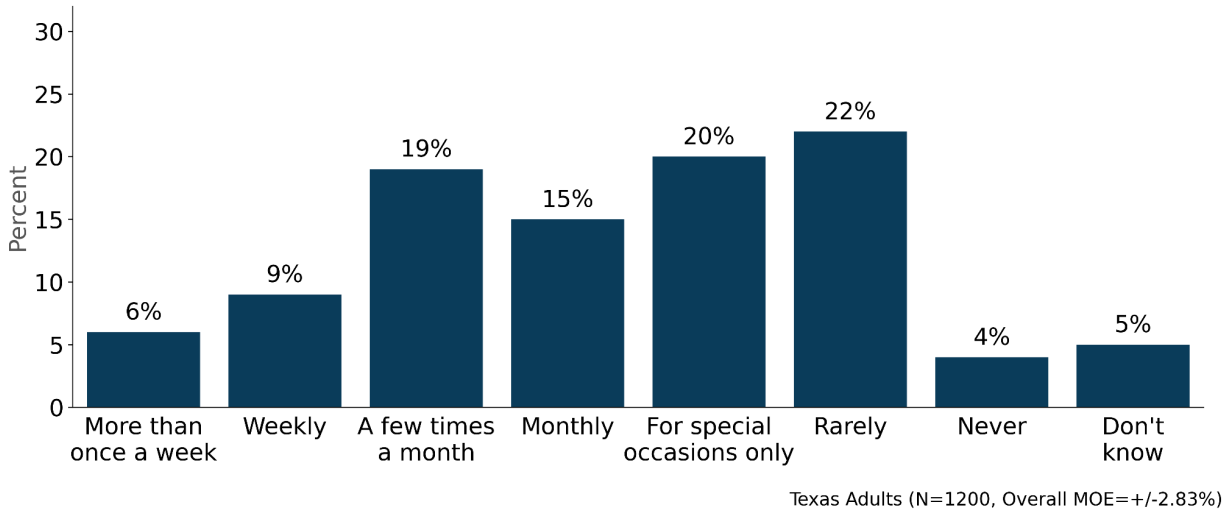
Among the majority of Texans who won't be vacationing, cost is the prohibitive factor. Overall, 51% say that costs will keep them from taking a vacation this summer, with 5% saying the time is the problem, and 26% offering that it's a matter of both time and money. In total, this equates to roughly four in five Texans who won't be taking a vacation this summer — a majority of all Texans — due to cost concerns.

For those Texans lucky enough to enjoy a summer break of any length, the majority plan to vacation outside of Texas (54%), while 28% plan to vacation inside the state — an additional 16% plan trips both inside and outside the state.

For those staying or vacationing in Texas this summer, the state provides dining experiences that can rival anywhere in the world, from food trucks and taquerias to BBQ and the finest cuisine, Texas remains a persistent contributor to national and international dining.

And while Texans themselves remain committed to the state's culinary traditions, the poll finds a narrow, though likely growing, food culture in the state. Asked how often they seek out new dining experiences, 15% of Texans said either weekly (9%) or even more than once a week (6%). At the other end, 46% of Texans said that they only seek out new dining experiences for special occasions (20%), rarely (22%), or even never (4%).

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: How often would you say you seek out new dining experiences?



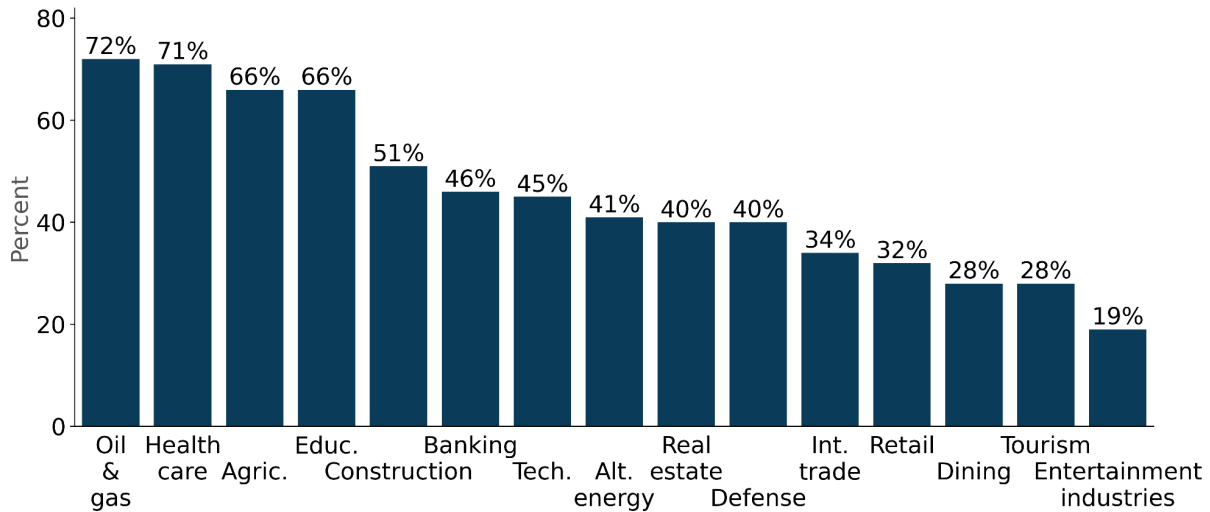
Demand for these experiences is greater in urban, as opposed to rural parts of the state, and among the state's younger, and more diverse population.

### Texas Business and Industry

Despite significant growth in areas like technology and finance, Texans' views of the state's economy remain focused on traditional sectors.

Asked to rate the importance of each of 15 different industries or business sectors to the Texas economy, four stood out above the rest. Overall, 72% of Texans said that oil and gas is "very important" to the Texas economy, with only healthcare registering a near equal share at 71%. Following these, two-thirds of Texans, 66%, said that farming and agriculture and education are "very important" to the state economy.

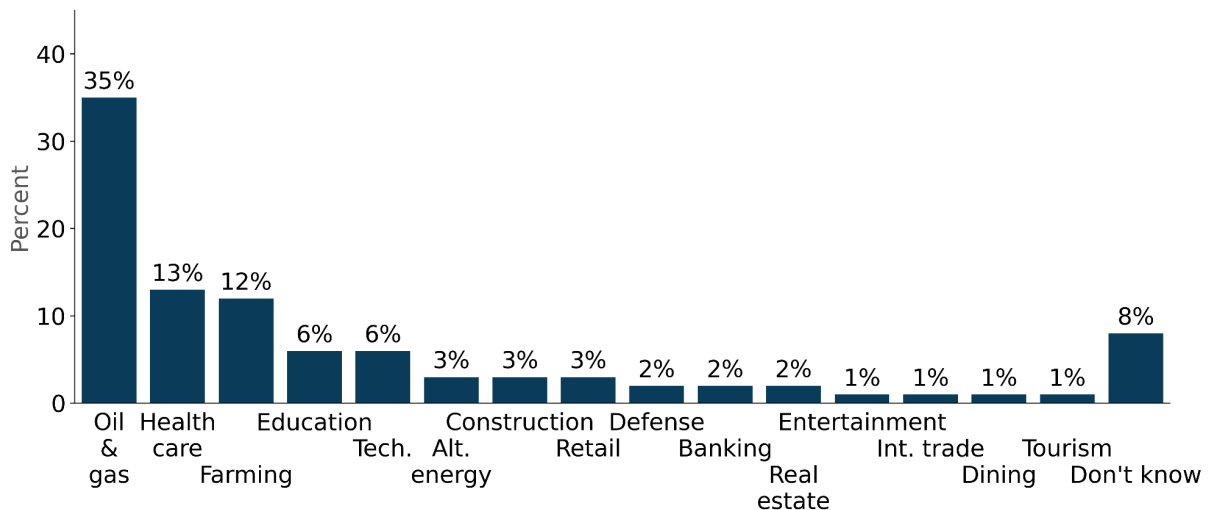
## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Share of Texans saying each is "very important" to the Texas economy



Texas Adults (N=1200, Overall MOE=+/-2.83%)

When asked which business sector or industry is *most important* to the Texas economy, these four accounted for two-thirds (66%) of all responses, with oil and gas leading the way (35%), followed by healthcare (13%), farming and agriculture (12%), and education (6%) — technology also received 6%.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Which Industry is Most Important to the Texas Economy?

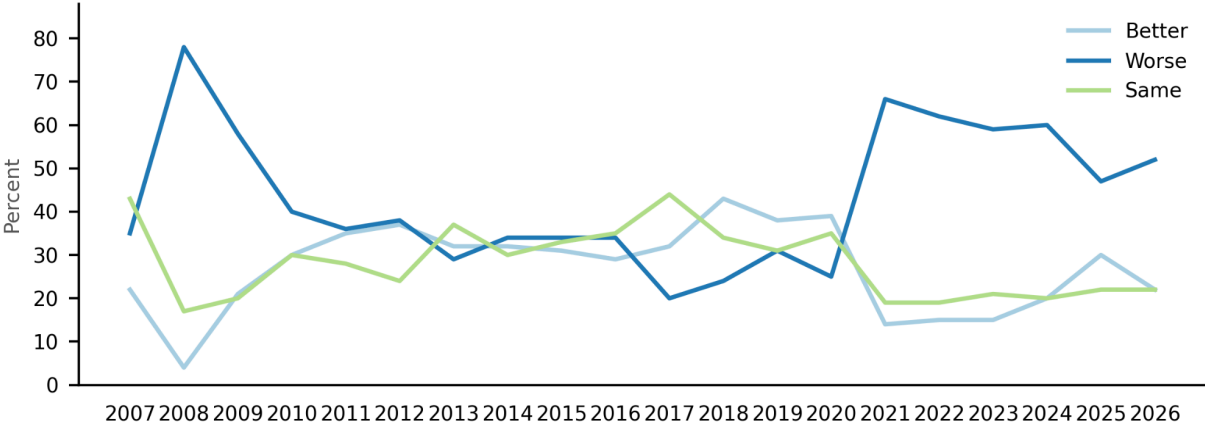


Texas Adults (N=1200, Overall MOE=+/-2.83%)

# Economic Evaluations

More Texans believe that the national economy is doing worse compared to last year than say it's doing better for the sixth consecutive year, with the 2026 results demonstrating a slight deterioration from the 2025 survey. Overall, 22% of Texans said that the national economy is performing better this year compared to last (an 8 point decrease over 2025), while 52% say the national economy is performing worse compared to last year, an increase of five points over 2025 Lyceum polling.

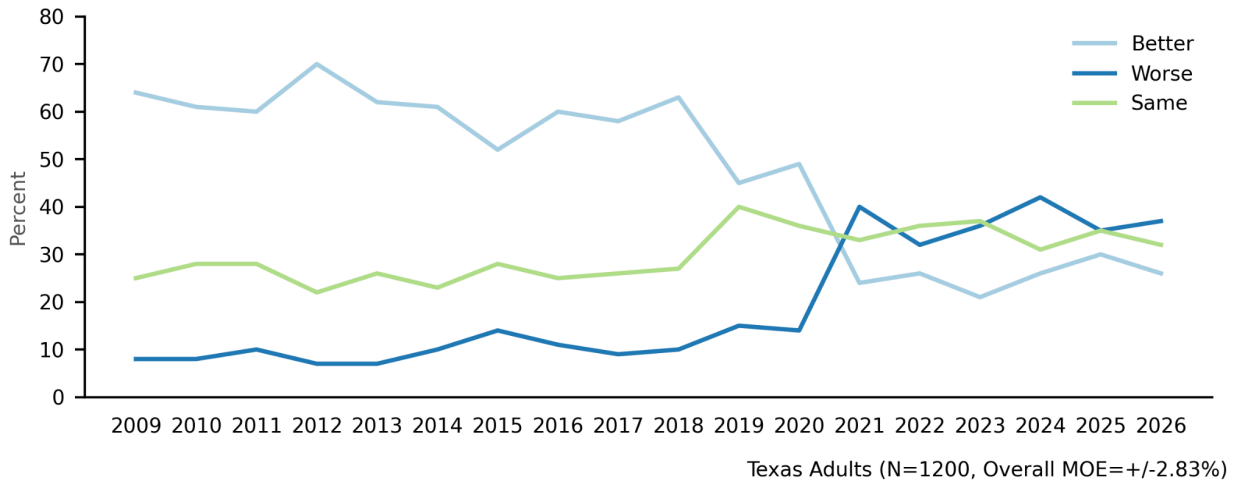
## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: National Economic Conditions Compared to One Year Ago



Texas Adults (N=1200, Overall MOE= +/-2.83%)

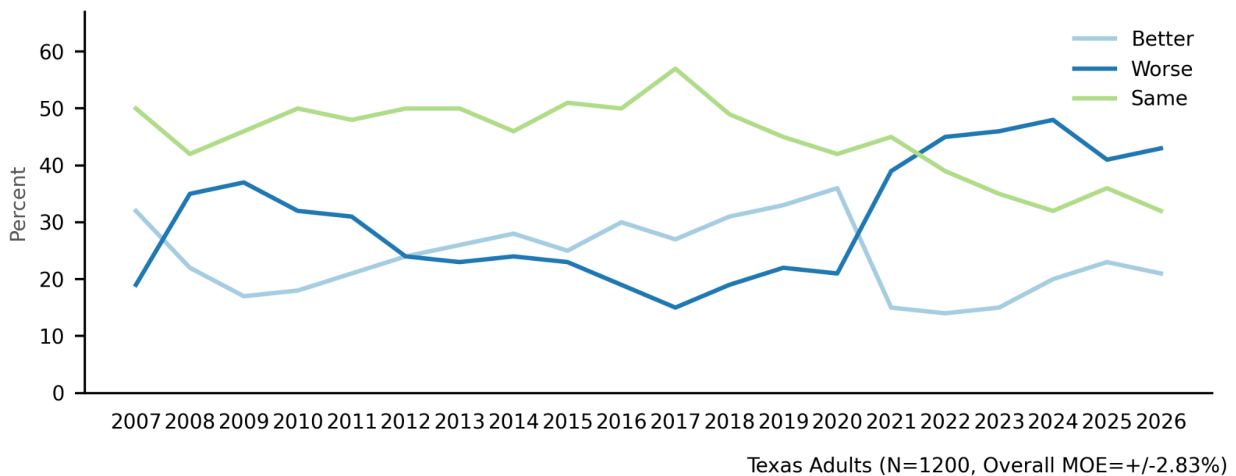
Views of the Texas economy remain more nuanced, with a plurality, 37%, saying the Texas economy is worse compared to last year, 32% saying it's about the same, and just over a quarter, 26%, saying that the economy is performing better than last year. This ambivalence has been hard-wired in recent years, and represents a significant shift from the overwhelmingly positive views that Texans held towards their own economy for the 10 year period between 2009 and 2019.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Texas' Economy Compared to the Rest of the Country



Given the prevalence of negative economic attitudes and persistent attention paid to the economy's performance in recent years, the 2026 Lyceum poll finds the plurality of Texans, 43%, saying that their family's economic situation has deteriorated compared to last year — representing the fourth most negative rating in the time series going back to 2009. This result continues a trend of negative evaluations since 2021, though with mild abatement in the 2025 survey.

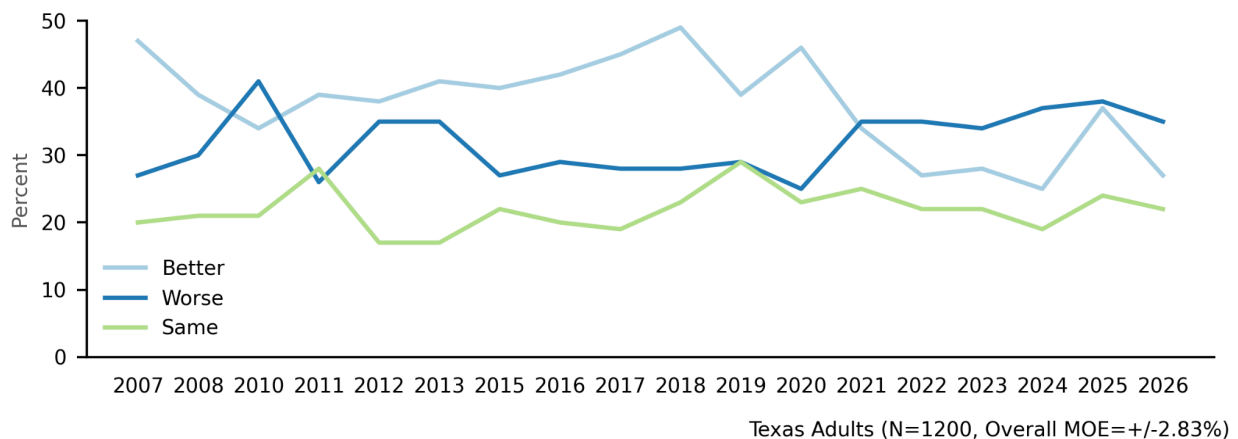
## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Personal Economic Conditions Compared to One Year Ago



Maybe most troubling, the 2026 survey finds Texans holding dour assessments about their children's economic futures. Only 27% of Texans expect their children to be better off

economically than they are, tied for the lowest share of Texans expressing such a sentiment in a time series going back to 2007. Even in 2008 and 2009, during the peak of the housing collapse, 39% and 40% of Texans, respectively, expected their children to be better off, at least 12-points higher than today. The plurality of Texans, 43%, expect their children to be worse off than they are economically — the fourth highest rating in the time series.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Do you think your children will be better off than you are, worse off, or about the same economically?



Despite these negative views, when asked about the economy in the area where they live, 62% of Texans offered that it was “excellent” (11%) or “good” (51%). However, once again, these results represent a 5 point decline from 2023 (67% excellent or good) and a 6 point decline from 2022 (68% excellent or good). One in three Texans, 33%, now say that their local economy is either “poor” (27%) or “terrible” (6%), up 7 points since 2023.

## Political Evaluations and the Mood in 2026

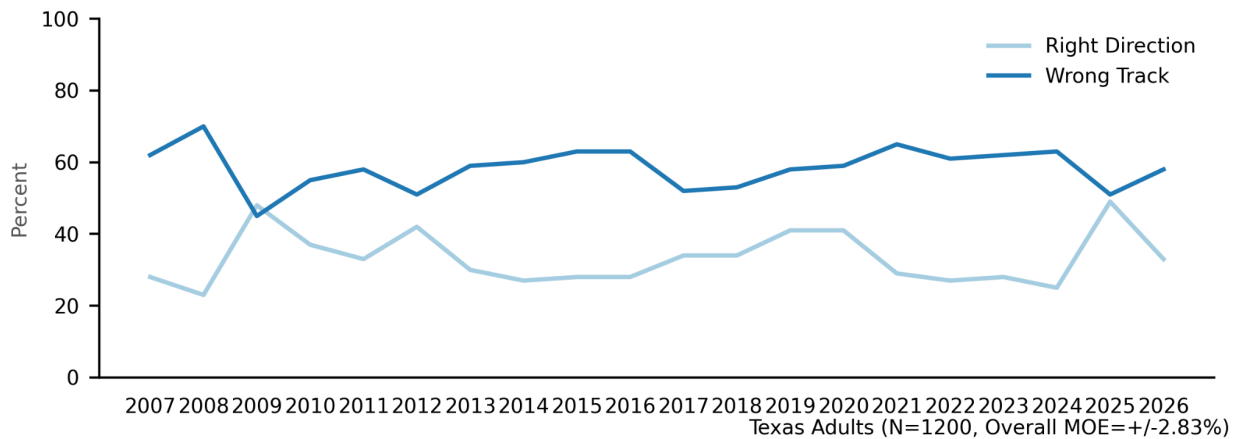
### Direction of the Country and Texans’ Most Important Issues

While the 2025 Lyceum Poll found a significant increase in the share of Texans saying that the country is headed in the right direction after years of overwhelming pessimism, the most recent survey finds Texans reverting back to negativity, with 58% saying that the country is headed on the wrong track, a 7-point increase since last year, while the share saying the country is headed in the right direction, at 33%, reflects a 16 point decline over just last year.

While the decline in pessimism in 2025 was almost certainly in response to a change in the partisan control of the White House based on the underlying data, it’s also the case that the

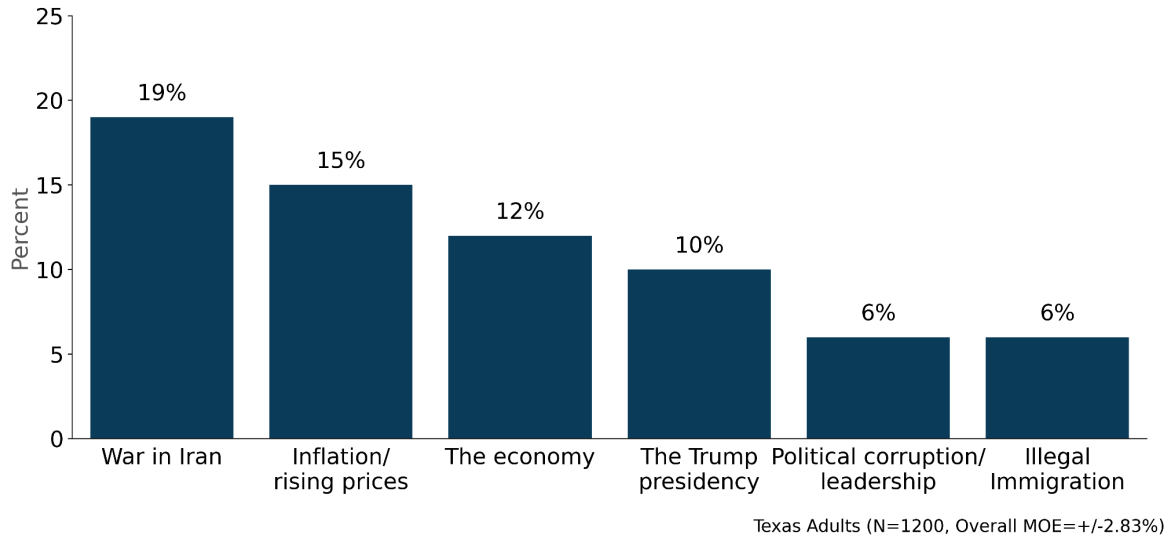
challenges inherent in a year of governing, regardless of the specifics, has dented some of that goodwill. The share of Republican adults who say the country is headed in the right direction decreased by 16 points since 2025, from 79% to 63%. Overall, 85% of Democrats believe that the country is on the wrong track, along with 65% of independents, among whom only 17% say the country is headed in the right direction.

### 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Thinking about the country, do you think things are moving in the right direction or are we off on the wrong track?



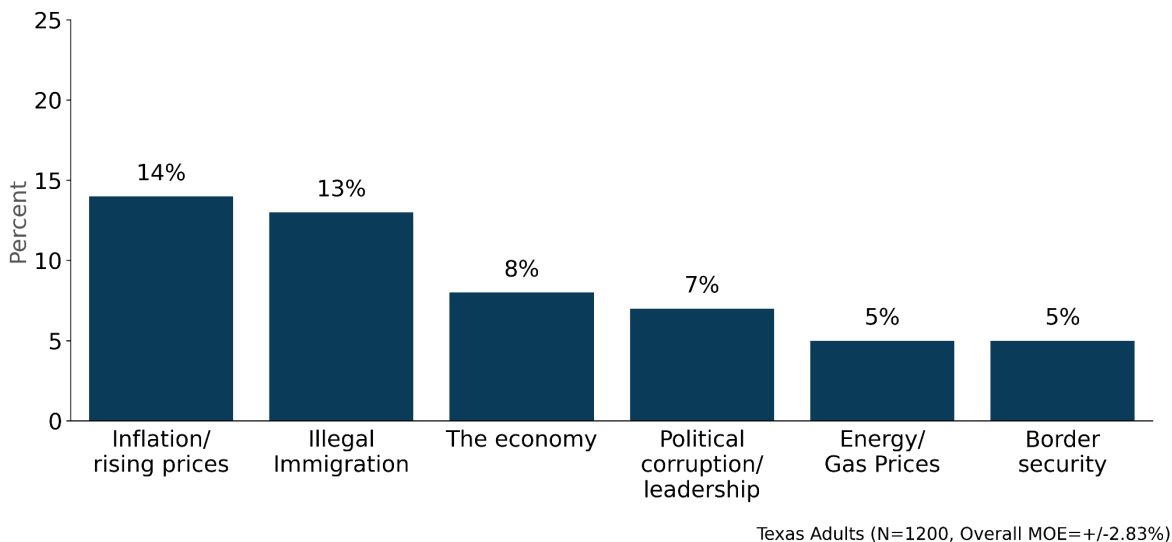
Asked to name the most important problem facing the country in an open-ended question, the war in Iran was the issue cited as the most important issue facing the country by the largest share of Texans (19%), followed by inflation (15%) and the economy (12%), the Trump Presidency (10%), and political corruption and leadership (6%). In total, these top 5 issues account for 62% of the issues mentioned.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Most Important Problem Facing the Country (Top-6 Mentions)



State level concerns remain focused on the economy, with 22% saying that either inflation (14%) or the economy (8%) are the number one issue facing the state. One could add to this list, concerns about energy/gas prices (5%) and note that at least one in four Texans is focused on economic issues facing the state. The state’s consistent focus on immigration and the border has abated somewhat with the Trump presidency, with only 18% citing illegal immigration (13%) or border security (5%) as the state’s top issue — an 8-point decline over 2025 when 26% said the same.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Most Important Problem Facing Texas (Top-6 Mentions)

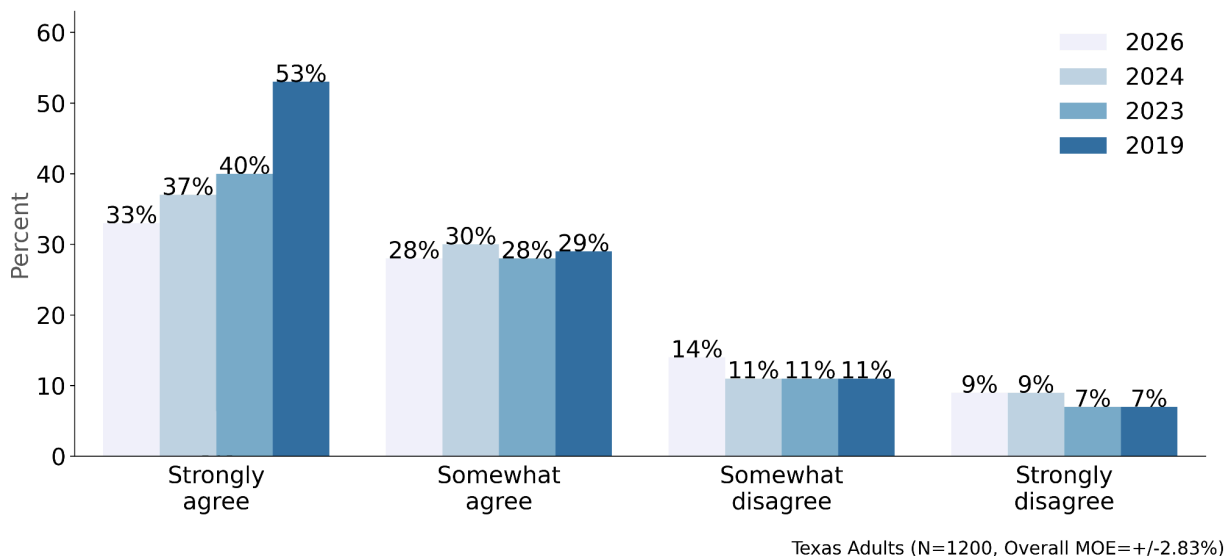


## Views of Democratic Governance

Amidst ongoing concerns about the direction of the country, the economy, and even fundamental opportunities including the chance at a good job, home ownership, and time for leisure, the 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll finds continued cracks in Texans' fundamental views about the systems governing our country.

Overall, nearly one in four Texans, 23%, disagrees with the statement "Democracy is the best form of government." The 61% who agree with the statement represents a consistent, and notable, decline, from 68% in 2024, and 82% as recently as 2019, when an outright majority of Texans (53%) agreed strongly (today, only 33% strongly agree that Democracy is the best form of government).

### 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Democracy is the best form of government.



Given this, it's not surprising that 57% of Texans think that "significant changes to the design and structure" of American government are needed, statistically indistinguishable from the 61% who said the same in 2019. At the same time, the share of Texans who think the design and structure of our governing system works *well enough*, and does not need significant change, has dropped over that same time span from 38% to 30%.

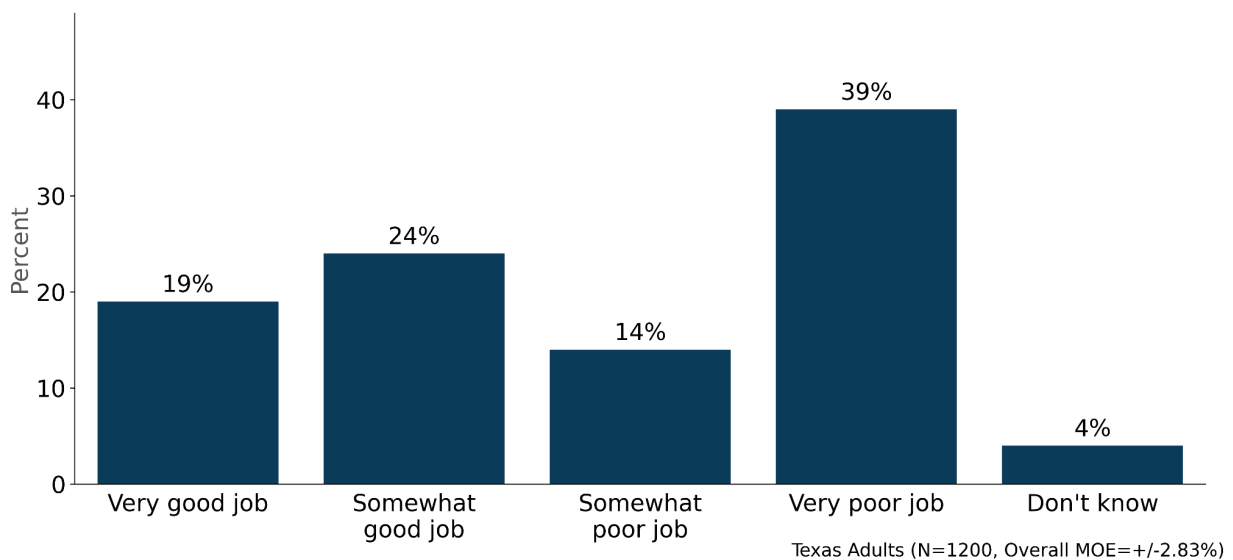
## Evaluations of the President and Immigration Attitudes

Overall, a majority of Texas adults, 53%, disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president, a significant shift from last year, when 54% of Texas adults said that they thought the president was doing a good job. While not as negative as the evaluation recorded at the

end of President Trump’s first term in office, the share currently approving and disapproving (43% and 55%, respectively) is only slightly better than assessments recorded in 2019, when 41% approved and 56% disapproved.

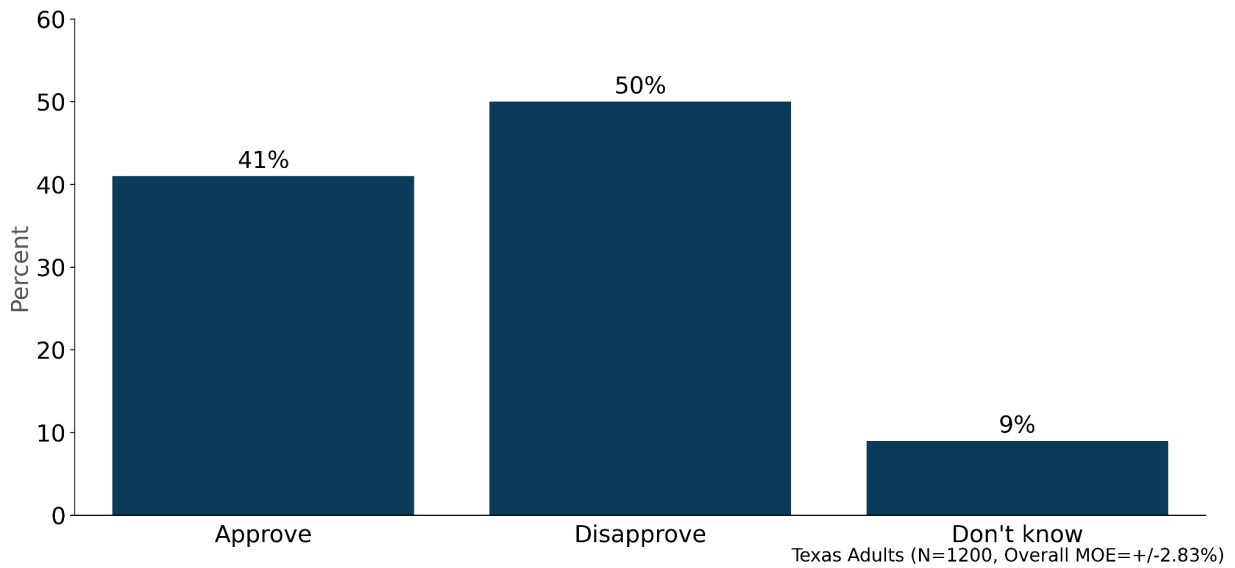
Republicans continue to support the president in large numbers, but the 80% who say they approve of the job Trump is doing today represents a 10-point decline from 2025, with 19% of Republicans, nearly one in five, saying that he’s doing either a somewhat, or very poor, job in 2026.

### 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: How do you think Donald Trump is handling his job as president?



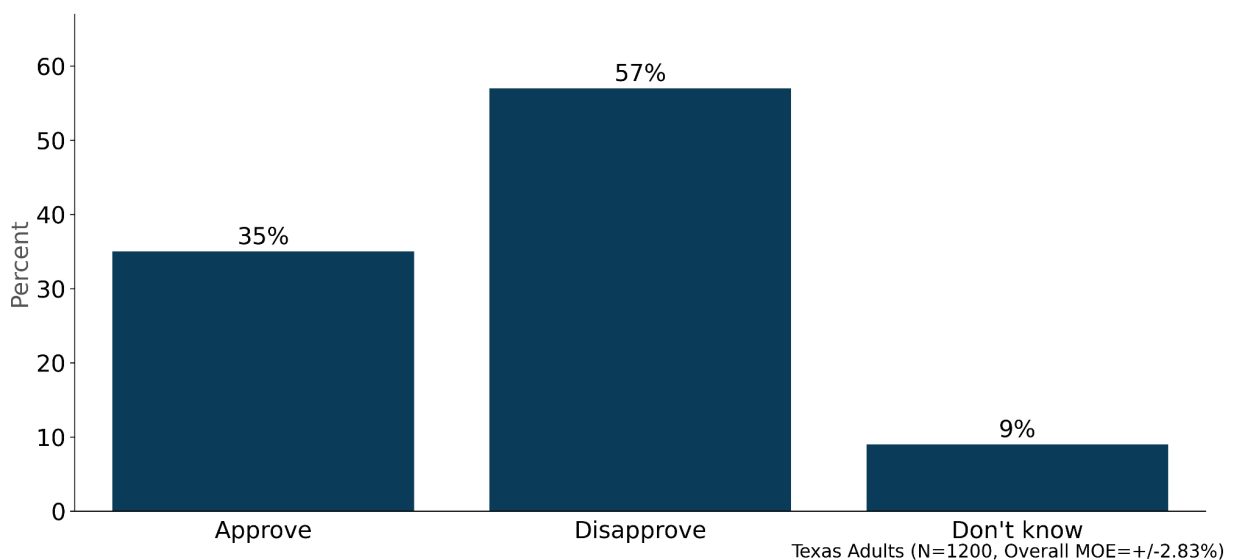
Given the centrality of immigration and border enforcement to President Trump’s political brand, it’s notable that the share approving of his handling of immigration and border security has declined 17 points since last year when 58% of Texans approved of his job performance and only 42% disapproved. Today, 41% approve of how Trump is handling immigration and the border with a slight majority, 50%.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: How do you think Donald Trump is handling immigration and border security?



Given Texans' focus on the economy, perceptions of Trump's job performance here are likely contributing to his overall dip in approval. Overall, a majority of Texans, 57% ,said that they disapprove of the job Trump is doing handling the economy, with only 35% expressing approval.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: How do you think Donald Trump is handling the economy?

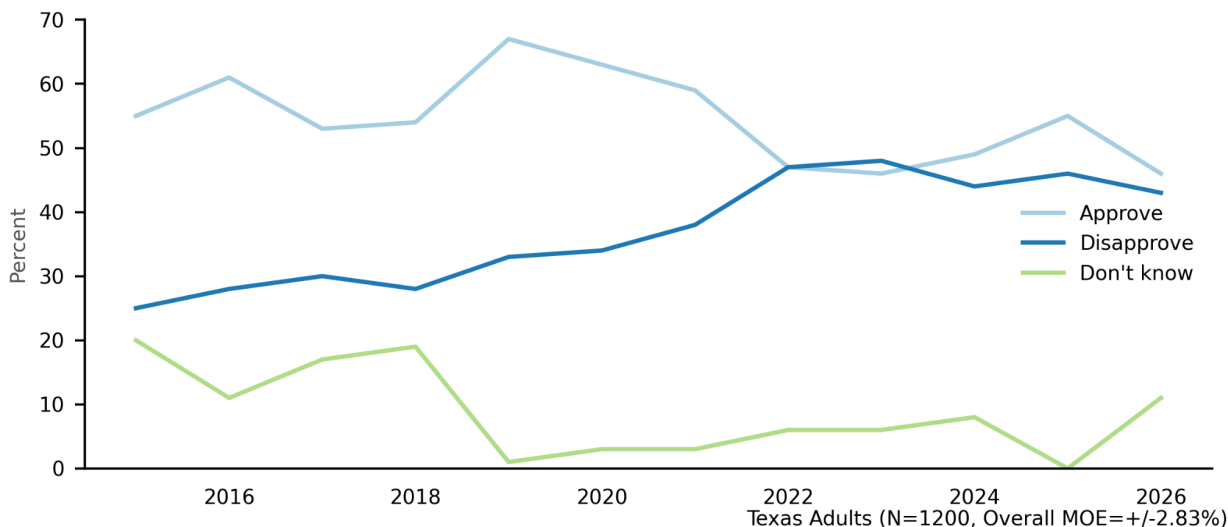


Overall, Texans were split in response to a question that asked them to assess their own views about the impact of immigration on the United States. Thirty percent of Texans said that immigration *helps the U.S. more than it hurts it*; 31% said it *hurts more than it helps*; while 31% are split between the two. While these results remain largely unchanged from 2025, they do affirm a significant decline in people’s perceptions of the positive impact of immigration. In 2016 and 2017 Lyceum polling, 54% and 62% of Texans, respectively, offered the opinion that immigration helps the U.S. more than it hurts.

## Political Evaluations of Statewide Leaders

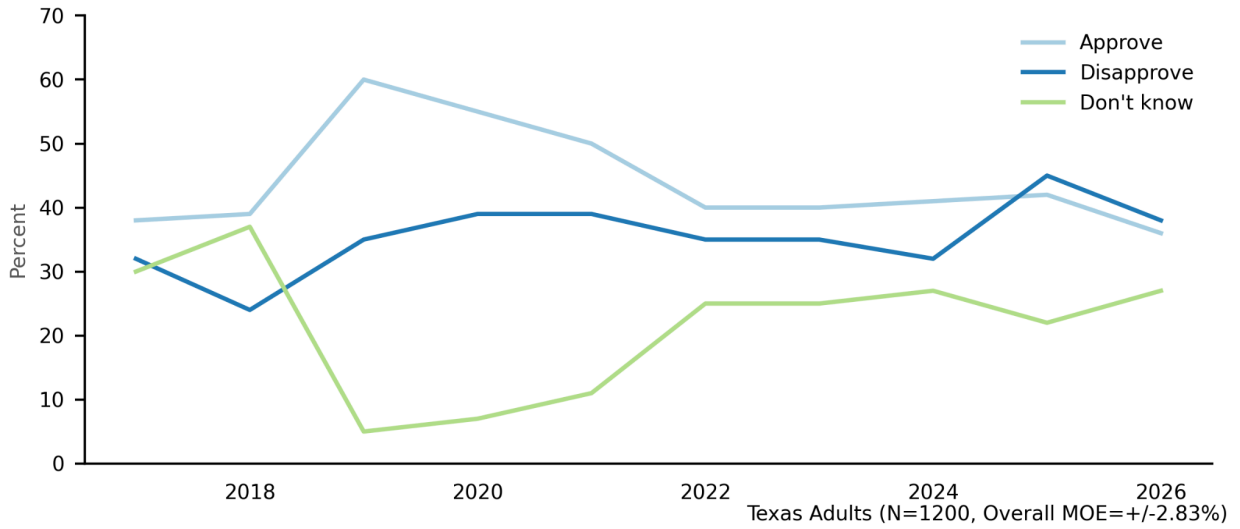
Asked to evaluate the job Greg Abbott is doing as Texas governor, 46% of Texas adults said that they approve while 43% disapprove. While more Texans approved than disapproved of the governor’s job performance, the results represented a significant decline from 2025 when 55% approved and 46% disapproved of Abbott’s job performance.

Texas Lyceum Polling: Greg Abbott Job Approval



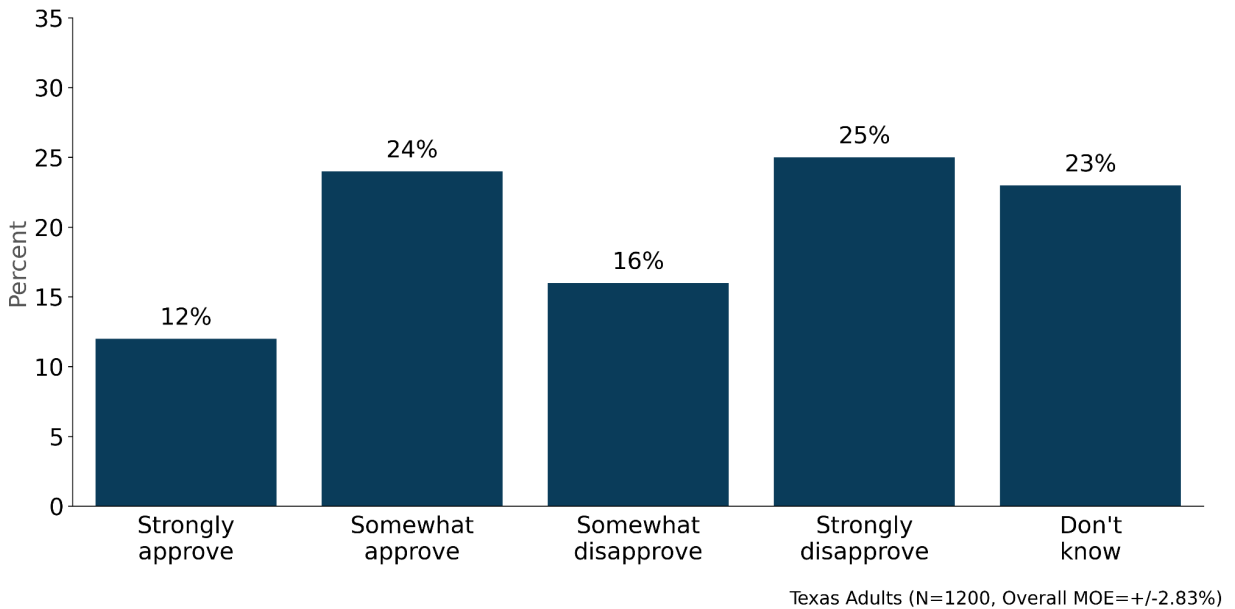
Asked to rate the job Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick is doing, 36% of Texas adults expressed approval while 38% registered disapproval, with the remainder unable to offer an opinion.

## Texas Lyceum Polling: Dan Patrick Job Approval



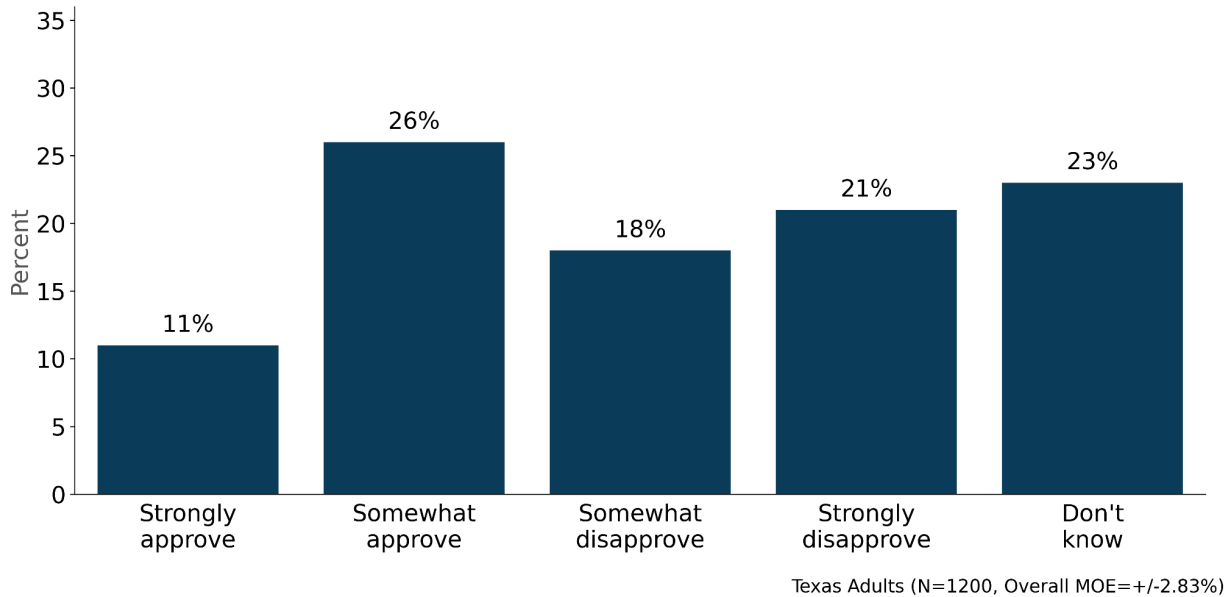
Attorney General Ken Paxton received approving marks from 36% of Texans disapproval from 41% when asked to consider the job he's doing as Attorney General.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: Ken Paxton Job Approval



Incumbent U.S. Senator John Cornyn received positive marks for his job performance from 37% of Texans and negative marks from 39%.

## 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll: John Cornyn Job Approval



Despite the overwhelming attention paid to the race for the GOP nomination between Cornyn and Paxton, it remains the case that the Republican Primary electorate, and the likely run-off electorate are composed of only small fractions of the Republican Party in Texas. Among Texas adults who identify as Republicans, 60% approve of the job Paxton is doing, the same share as approve of Cornyn's performance as U.S. Senator; 24% of Republicans disapprove of Paxton's job performance, 23% disapprove of Cornyn's job performance. Outside of the tiny slices of the population who participate in party primaries, both candidates appear equally acceptable to a broader, potential Republican electorate that has likely cast votes for each many times in the past.

# Methodology

From April 3 to 13, 2026, 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, 900 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 2024 population projections. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points, with a larger margin of error for sub-samples.

# About 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](http://www.texaslyceum.org).

The Texas Lyceum, now 40 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 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.