



THE TEXAS LYCEUM

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

CONTACT: Megan Willman, Sunwest
Communications
mwillman@sunwestpr.com or
817.908.5344

POLL: TEXANS REPORT DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN JOBS, HOUSING, CHILDCARE AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The 2026 Texas Lyceum Poll reveals what Texans think about the state's most pressing issues, including career development, housing accessibility, infrastructure, democracy and more

SAN ANTONIO — April 22, 2026 — [The Texas Lyceum](#) 2026 Poll was released today, revealing Texans' attitudes and opinions on crucial issues. Among the most significant findings were evidence that Texans believe their quality of life in the Lone Star State is starting to fray, the economic outlook for future generations is at a concerning low and an increasing share of Texans doubt whether democracy is truly the best form of government.

"The Texas Lyceum Poll has long served as a trusted snapshot of public opinion, and this year's results underscore the importance of listening closely to the experiences of Texans across the state," said President of The Texas Lyceum JR Treviño. "This is valuable insight for leaders and communities working to better understand and respond to Texas' evolving needs—and they are evolving fast."

Quality of Life Decline? Workforce, Housing, Childcare and Infrastructure

In a state that has long been labeled a place where economic mobility is accessible and opportunities abound, the 2026 Lyceum poll shows a shifting narrative for Texas based on responses to questions assessing attitudes towards work, housing accessibility, childcare and more.

Currently, only 24% of Texans describe their current job as a career, while 35% say they are working "just to get by." Among those not in career-track roles, 51% report needing additional education or training in order to advance to the career they want.

"When Texans tell us they don't see a path to a career—only a job to get by—that is a signal we cannot ignore. Financial security starts with meaningful work, and meaningful work starts with access to education, training and opportunity to get there," said Laura Cabanilla, vice president of this year's Texas Lyceum poll. "Understanding workforce challenges is the first step toward building solutions that empower our communities and keep Texas strong."

Simultaneously, housing costs are straining household budgets. Sixty percent of Texans say they spend too much of their income on housing, a sharp increase from 44% in 2020. Renters are particularly affected, with 71% saying housing costs are eating up too much of their incomes.

Among households with children, childcare stands out as the most pressing quality-of-life issue, with the steepest declines reported in rural and lower-income communities. The poll shows 46% of Texans rated access to childcare as “excellent or “good,” representing an 18-point decline over just three years.

More broadly, 57% of Texans rate the cost of everyday necessities as “poor” or “terrible,” underscoring widespread affordability concerns. As a result of these pressures, only 39% of Texans plan to take a summer vacation, with 77% of those who won’t citing cost as a primary reason.

Texans also report ongoing concerns about infrastructure: less than half of Texans report being satisfied with the quality of roads and highways in the state, while nearly 50% express concerns about the safety of their water supply. A majority of Texans expressed concerns about the cost and reliability of electricity, and 47% are concerned about the safety and reliability of the food supply.

Economic Outlook

Economically, an air of pessimism persisted in Texans’ outlooks. Most notable among the results: only 27% of Texans expect their children to be better off economically than they are, tied for the lowest level recorded in nearly 20 years of Texas Lyceum polling.

Additionally, 43% report their own family’s financial situation has declined over the last year.

“Overall, the data uncovers the difficulties brought on by Texas’ continued success. Everyday Texans are wrestling with the challenges resulting from Texas’ longstanding reputation as an economic powerhouse, one that draws people and businesses in from all over the country,” said Joshua Blank, PhD, research director for The Texas Lyceum. “This massive growth requires private and public infrastructure to keep up with the demand, and it’s going to be very interesting to see how well the state meets the challenge over the next few years because the era of ‘The Texas Miracle’ may be at stake.”

Public and National Sentiment

Beyond economic concerns, when surveyed about national leadership and institutions, Texans expressed frustration with the current environment. Half of respondents (50%)

disapprove of the handling of immigration and border security, and 58% feel the country is on the wrong track.

Furthermore, nearly 1 in 4 Texans (23%) expressed doubts about democracy as the best form of government, highlighting a broader trend of declining trust in traditional institutions, down from 82% who agreed as recently as 2019. These findings are consistent across partisan lines and suggest a broad concern about institutional effectiveness rather than satisfaction with any single party or ticket.

The Texas Lyceum's 20th annual poll was conducted from April 3 to April 13, 2026. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points.

###

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, Governor's Mansion staff, the Texas Legislature and in corporate leadership. Throughout its 45-year history, the Lyceum has explored topics ranging from education and energy to criminal justice and 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.

POLL METHODOLOGY

From April 3 to April 13, 2026, The Texas Lyceum conducted a 1,000-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.