



THE TEXAS LYCEUM

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Contact: Margaret Justus  
281-250-8253  
Email: margaretjustus@att.net

## **2012 Texas Lyceum Poll - Day One Shows Texans:**

- **74% willing to pay more in taxes to raise teacher pay, invest in arts, music and computers - but not spend more on administration**
- **The Affordable Care Act remains unpopular among likely voters, despite a plurality of support for expanding Medicaid to help uninsured Texans**
- **64% believe kids are much more likely to be fat and out of shape - blame parents, modern technology and fast food**
- **54% believe water rights should be owned by the public and 64% willing to pay fees to improve the state's water supply**

(AUSTIN) Despite a barrage of media attention on the state and national economies, education re-emerges as a priority issue among Texans according to a recent independent poll conducted September 10 – 26, 2012 by the Texas Lyceum, the premier non-partisan, non-profit statewide leadership group focused on public policy.

Up to 74 percent of Texans appear willing to spend more tax dollars on programs aimed at improving education such as teachers' pay raises, investment in new computers, instruction in music and art and construction of new schools as long as the dollars don't go to pay administrators more.

Also when it comes to public schools, Texans overwhelmingly agreed (60 percent) that local schools should be given more flexibility in assessing their students instead of relying solely on standardized tests such TAKS and STAAR.

When it comes to higher education, Texans are split on re-regulating tuition rates at all of our major universities. The University of Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech University all get high marks, but the poll is split on whether students get their money's worth for attending a university.

"Although jobs and the economy dominate the national issue agenda, one in six Texans cites education as the top issue in the state," said University of Texas Professor Daron Shaw, who conducted the poll on behalf of the Texas Lyceum.

He continued, "The mix of attitudes on education is intriguing. On the one hand, Texans are proud of their flagship universities and support spending additional tax dollars to promote specific educational improvements. On the other hand, they prefer greater local control and are skeptical about the return they are getting for increased tuition."

Like much of the nation, Texans are divided on how they feel about the 2010 Affordable Care Act. Not surprisingly, the differences are starkest when looked at through the lens of party identification. However, Texans appear to slightly favor the expansion of Medicaid by at least nine percent.

The Lyceum poll healthcare focus led to some new questions this year about childhood obesity. Sixty-four percent of Texans believe that kids today are much more likely to be "fat and out of shape." In fact, when combining those who say that kids today are much more likely to be out of shape with those who believe that kids are somewhat more likely to be fat and out of shape, 92 percent of respondents agreed that kids today are more likely to be obese. When asked the cause for this problem, the poll shows parents are to blame for not controlling what their children eat, followed by modern technology like television and video games.

With respect to water rights, a topic this past summer at the Lyceum's public conference in Amarillo, 54 percent of registered voters believe water rights should be owned by the public - not by individuals, while 29 percent support the individual ownership of water rights. Additionally, 64 percent of registered voters claim that they would be willing to pay more in water tap fees to ensure that the state's water needs are met.

Since 2006, University of Texas Professor Daron Shaw, who is a Texas Lyceum alumnus, has conducted the poll of 1,175 Texans, which has a +/- 2.83 percent margin of error. Lyceum Director and Rhodes College Professor Amy Jasperson assisted in the survey. The pollsters used the latest poll data collection techniques utilizing a combination of landline and cell phone samples plus Spanish language interviewers.

"For six consecutive years, the Texas Lyceum, a non-partisan group of community leaders who care deeply about our state and its future, has been proud to provide this important public service – the independent, fair and transparent Texas Lyceum Poll," said 2011 Texas Lyceum President John Dickson. "We believe these data, will allow the public to be more informed and help our state's leaders make better decisions."

### **About the Texas Lyceum**

The Texas Lyceum, a non-profit, non-partisan group, is the premier statewide leadership organization focused on identifying the next generation of top Texas leaders. The Lyceum consists of [96 men and women from throughout the state](#) who begin their six-year term while under the age of 46, and have demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas. For more information, please visit [www.texaslyceum.org](http://www.texaslyceum.org).

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