

Texas Lyceum Day 1 Executive Summary

Executive Summary of Texans' Attitudes towards Democracy

Texans in overwhelming margins see democracy as the best form of government, but a far smaller share are satisfied with the way democracy is working in the U.S. today. Not surprisingly then, a majority express a preference for significant changes to the design and structure of the American government over keeping things largely unchanged.

Texans under 30 are most open to change, but significantly lacking in feelings of efficacy compared to older Texans. Under Texas' current partisan political system, Democrats feel their votes have less of an impact on the operation of government than do their Republican counterparts.

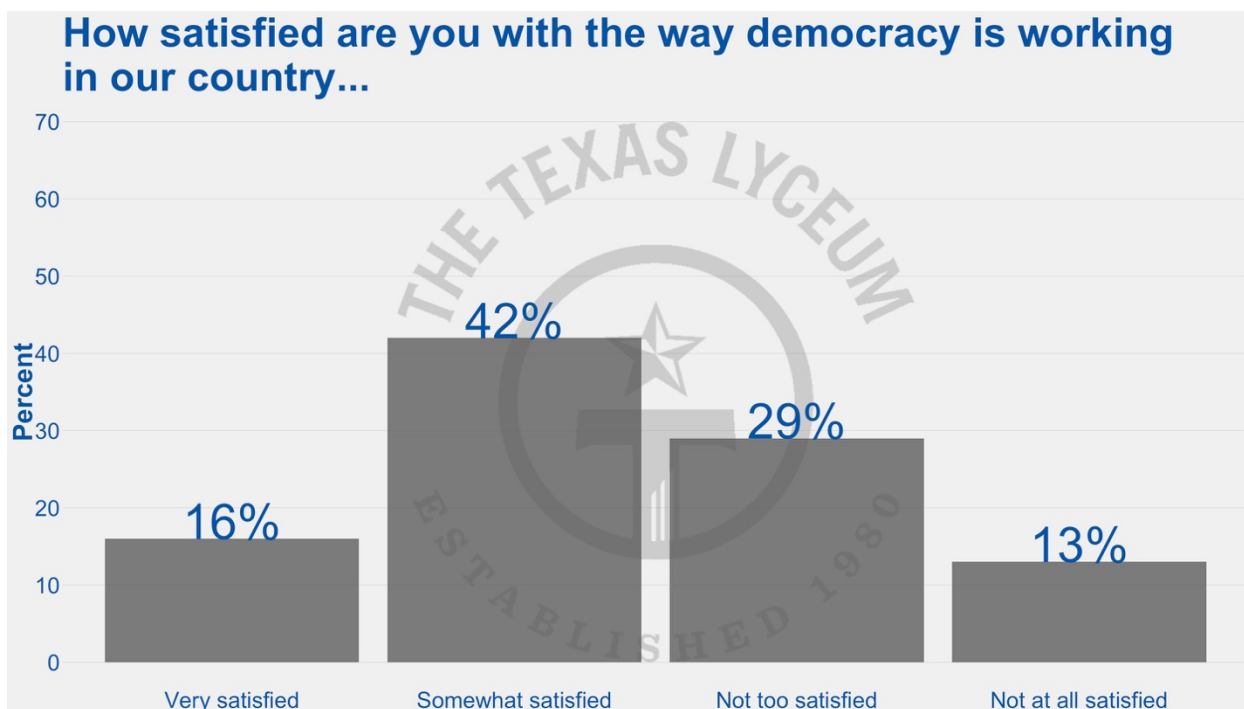
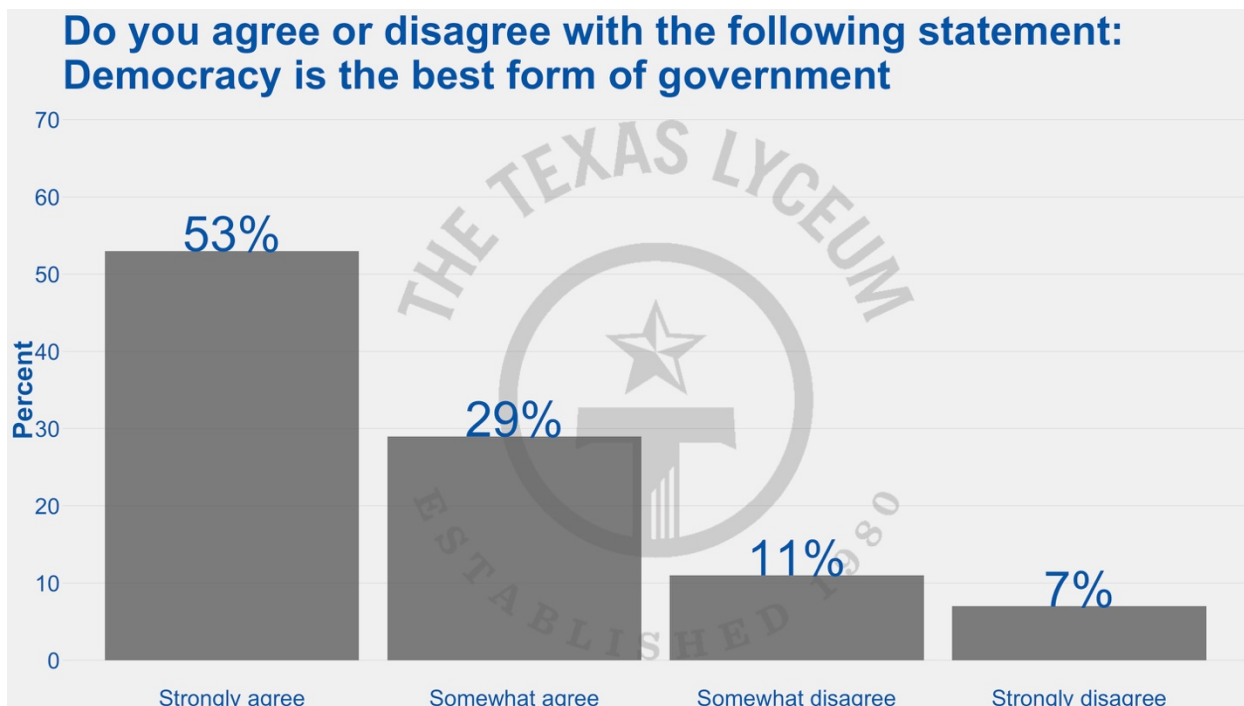
When asked to assess the importance of numerous components of democracy to the United States, Texans largely agreed on the importance of things like open and fair elections, the right to non-violent protest, and a system of checks and balances, to name a few, but were also significantly less likely to feel that these components describe the United States well.

Texans see domestic forces as a larger threat to democracy than foreign countries, and first among those domestic threats is money in politics. A near majority of Texans said that foreign countries meddling in presidential elections is a major problem, with Republicans significantly less likely than Democrats to express concern. At the same time, a small share of Texans is 'very confident' *that the election systems in Texas are secure from hacking and other technological threats.*

Texans' openness to election reform falls into three categories: Large majorities support reforms that would increase ballot and registration integrity; smaller, though still large, majorities, favor reforms that would increase the ease of access to the ballot box; and significantly smaller shares of Texans favor changing the process of how elections are conducted, e.g. online, or mail voting.

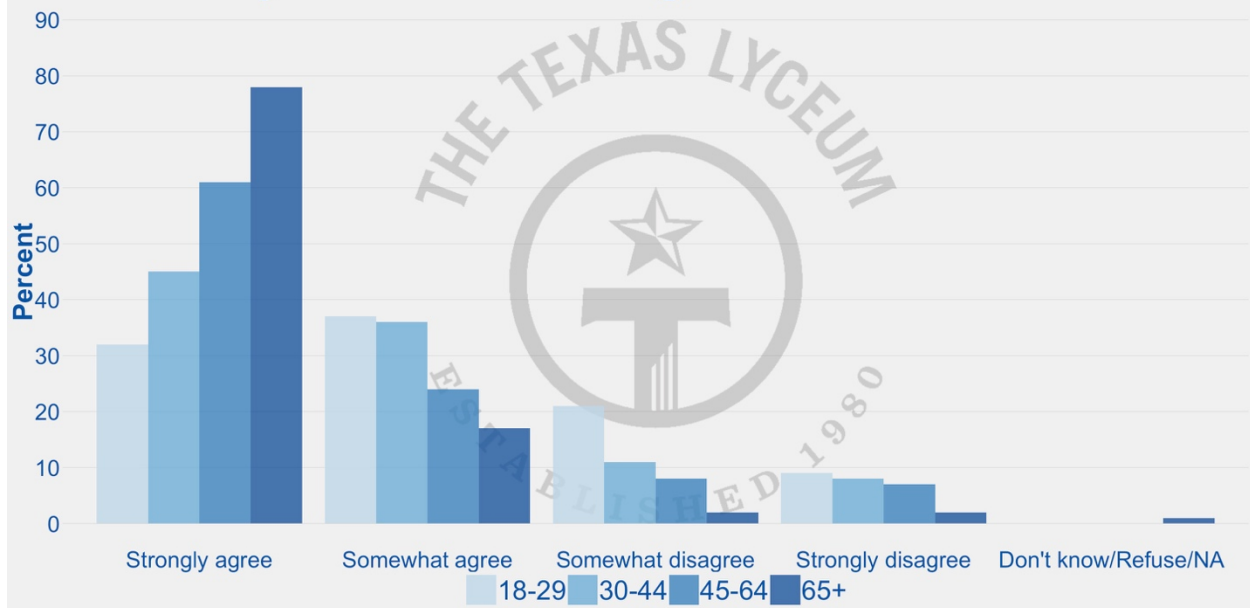
Overall Evaluations

Most Texas Adults (82%) agree that *democracy is the best form of government*, with a bare majority (53%) agreeing strongly. But at the same time, a far smaller share (16%) are 'very satisfied' with *the way democracy is working in our country*, with another 42% saying that they are 'somewhat satisfied,' and 42% saying that they are either 'not too' or 'not at all satisfied.' This difference between abstract evaluations and the practice of democracy informs many of the results in the 2019 Texas Lyceum Poll.



Younger Texans are far less likely to view democracy positively than are older cohorts, with only 32% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 strongly agreeing that democracy is the best form of government, compared with 45% of those between the ages of 30 and 44, 61% of those between the ages of 45 and 64, and 78% of Texans over the age of 65.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Democracy is the best form of government



Texans with a college or post-graduate degree believe strongly in the primacy of democracy over other governing systems (65% and 63% respectively), but only half of those with some college, and 39% of those with only a high school diploma, agreed.

Self-identified liberals and conservatives strongly agreed that democracy is the best form of government in equal shares (55% and 56% respectively).

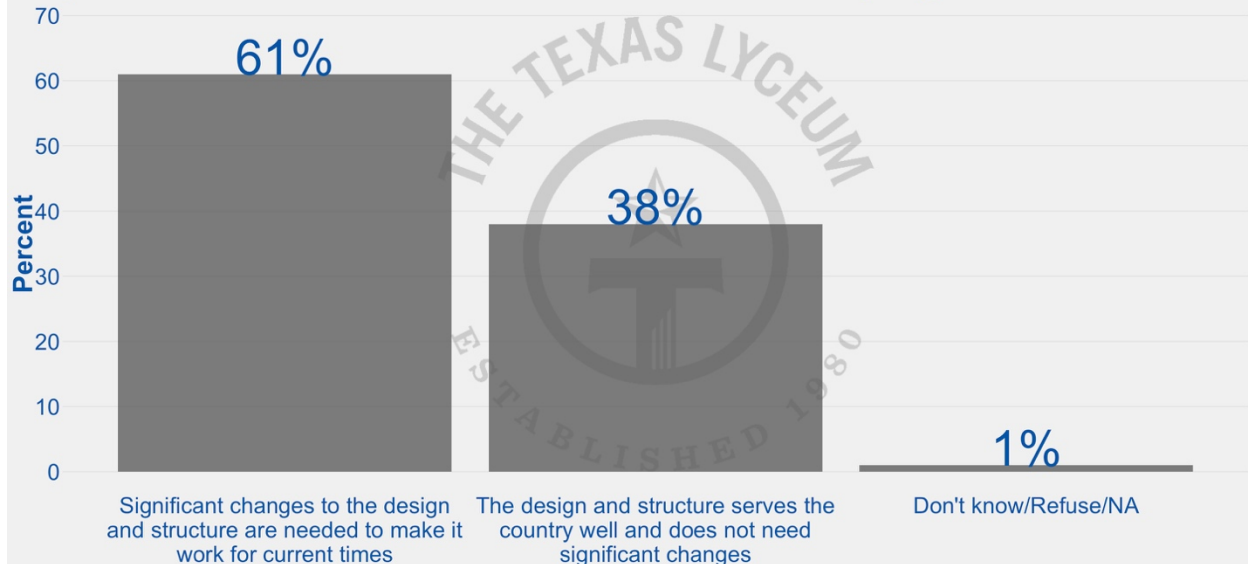
Satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, with democracy in America spans ethnicity and age group, with approximately equal shares expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

While Republicans and conservatives are slightly more likely to view the current practice of democracy positively relative to Democrats and liberals, the differences aren't overwhelming. Eighteen percent of Republicans are 'very satisfied' with democracy as practiced in America, compared to 13% of Democrats.

Democratic dissatisfaction (the combined responses of those who said 'not too satisfied' and 'not at all satisfied') measured 49%, compared to 35% for Republican identifiers. But most of this difference came from the 'not too satisfied' response, where Democrats outnumbered Republicans 34% to 25%. Likewise, only 23% of conservatives expressed moderate dissatisfaction with democratic practices compared to 37% of liberals.

Maybe unsurprisingly then, a majority of Texans (61%) said that *significant changes to the design and structure are needed to make it work for current times*, compared to 38% who said that *the design and structure serves the country well and does not need significant changes*.

Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right?



Citizen Efficacy in Texas

Despite mixed reviews of the overall practice of democracy, a majority of Texans say that *ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington* (58%), and that *voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things* (68%). At the same time, 41% of Texans feel that *there's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Washington*, while 31% say that *voting by people like me doesn't really affect how government runs things*.

Those over the age of 65 are the most efficacious, especially compared to those Texans under the age of 30. Texans over 65 years of age were 17-points more likely than Texans under 30 (68% to 51%) to say that ordinary citizens can influence government. And likewise, by a margin of 78% to 62%, older Texans (compared to those Texans under 30) said that voting gives people like them a say in how government runs things.

Ethnicity had little impact on feelings of efficacy, with Hispanic Texans expressing slightly more efficacious attitudes than their Anglo or African American peers.

Texas Republicans, likely as a result of their party's continued success in statewide, state house, state senate, and congressional races, are significantly more likely than Texas Democrats to feel that voting gives people like them say over how government runs things, by a margin of 76% to 61%.

Components of Democracy

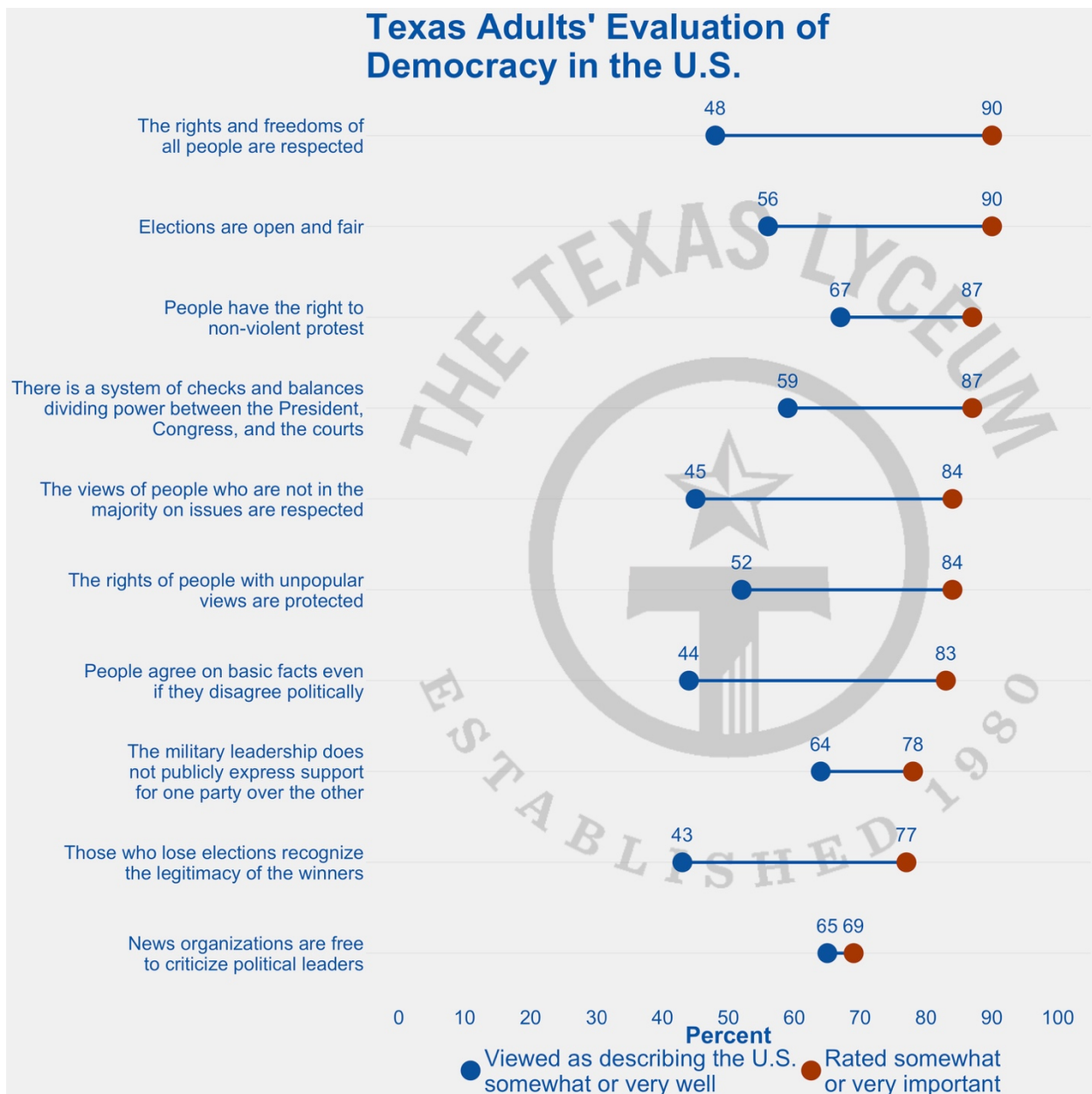
Asked to assess the importance to our country of ten different aspects of democracy, that *elections are open and fair* and the *rights and freedoms of all people being respected* were viewed as the most important, with 90%, respectively, saying that each was either 'very' or 'somewhat important'.

Following these in importance was a *system of checks and balances between the president, the congress, and the courts* and *people having the right to non-violent protest*, with 87% of Texans respectively saying that each of these are either 'very' or 'somewhat important'.

More than 80% of Texans also expressed their belief in the importance of respecting the views of people who are not in the majority (84%), protecting the rights of people with unpopular views (84%), and people agreeing on basic facts even when disagreeing politically (83%).

Viewed as less important, but still exceeding 70% of Texans were the principles that military leadership not express public support for one party over another (78%) and that those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners (77%).

That news organizations are free to criticize political leaders was seen as the least important among those items tested, with only 69% saying that this is 'somewhat' or 'very important' – including less than a majority of Texans, 45 percent, saying 'very important.'



At the same time, however, there is a wide gap between the importance that Texans attach to these different elements of democracy and their views of how well these features describe the United States today.

The survey found a 42-point gap between the share of Texans who said that *the rights and freedoms of all people are respected* is important for the country (90%) and those who said that this statement describes the U.S. either 'very' or 'somewhat well' (48%). Similarly, a 34-point gap emerges between people's views of the importance of open and fair elections to the country compared with how well elections being open and fair actually describes the United States.

Other large gaps between importance and accurate description includes respecting the views of people who are not in the majority, seen as important by 84% of Texans, but seen as describing the U.S. well by only 45% – a 39-point gap. Also a 39-point gap, the share of Texans who say it's important for people to agree on basic facts even if they don't agree politically (83%), and the share of people who say that this describes the U.S. well (44%).

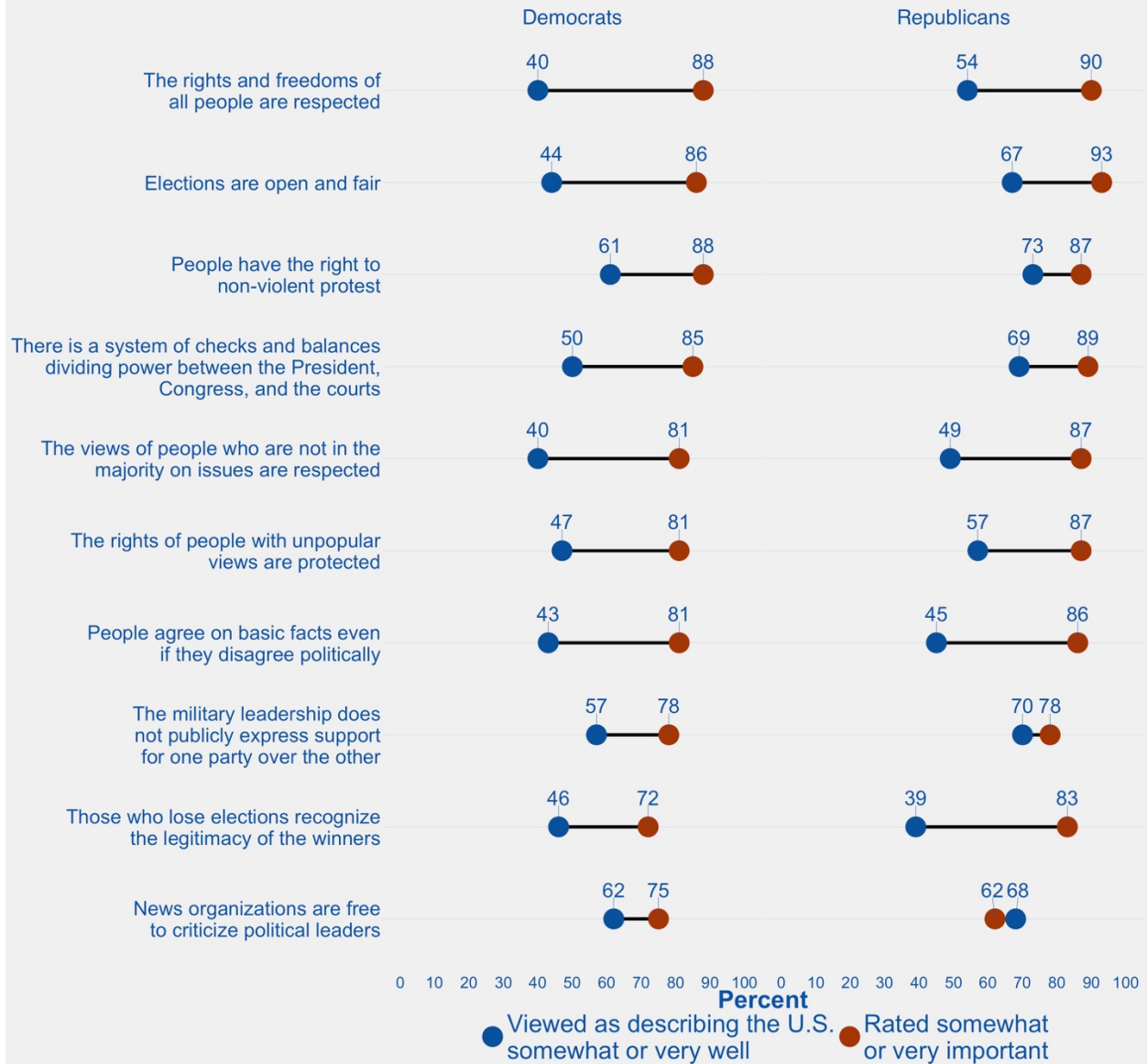
In fact, the only feature of democracy lacking a significant gap between the share of Texans who rate it as important and the share of Texans who say that it describes the U.S. well: that news organizations are free to criticize political leaders, a 4-point gap.

Among partisans, the gap in perceived importance across the measured democratic features was rather modest – no more than 7-points in all but two items. The largest gaps occurred for the statements: *news organizations are free to criticize political leaders* (13-point gap), endorsed by 75% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans; and *those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners* (11-point gap), endorsed by 83% of Republicans and 72% of Democrats.

The largest gaps between ratings of importance and how well a feature describes democracy varied both in magnitude and rank order among Democrats and Republicans. The largest gaps between stated importance and current practice, among Republicans, were: *those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winner* (44-point gap); *people agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically* (41-point gap); *the views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected* (38-point gap); and *the rights and freedoms of people are respected* (36-point gap).

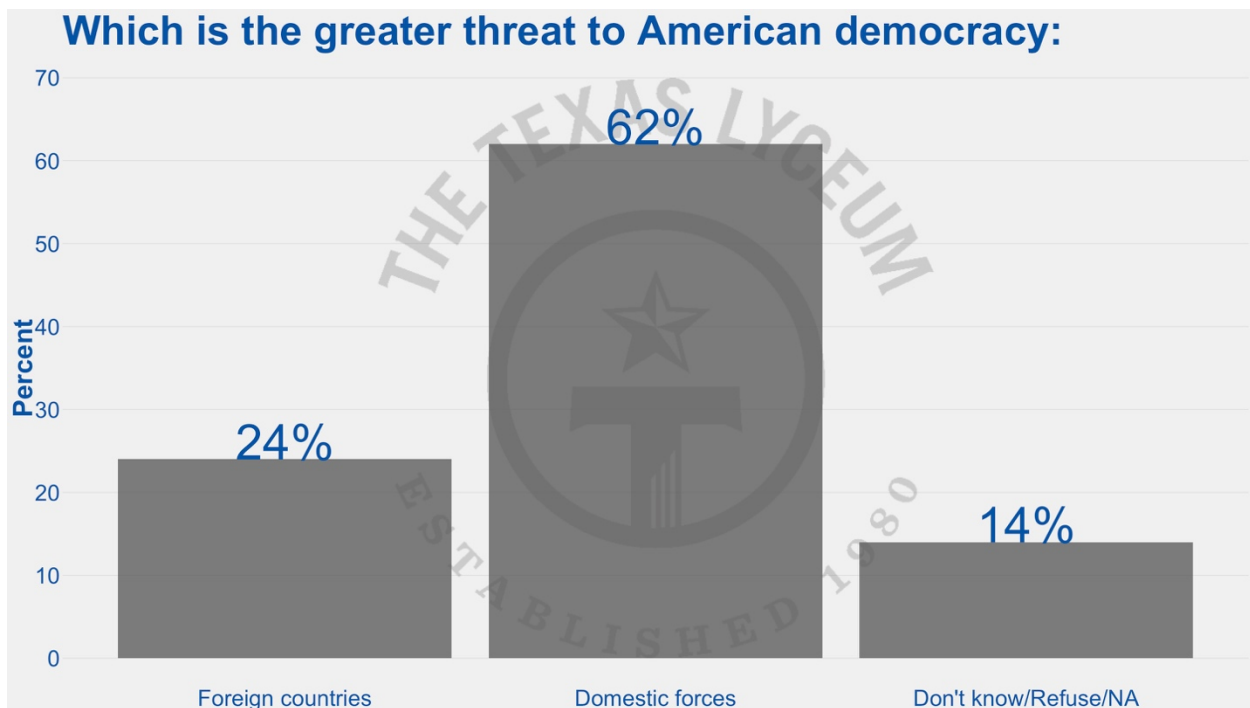
Among Democrats, the largest gaps in expectations and perceived reality included: *the rights and freedoms of people are respected* (48-point gap); *elections are open and fair* (42-point gap); *the views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected* (41-point gap); and *people agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically* (38-point gap).

Partisan Evaluations of Democracy in the U.S.

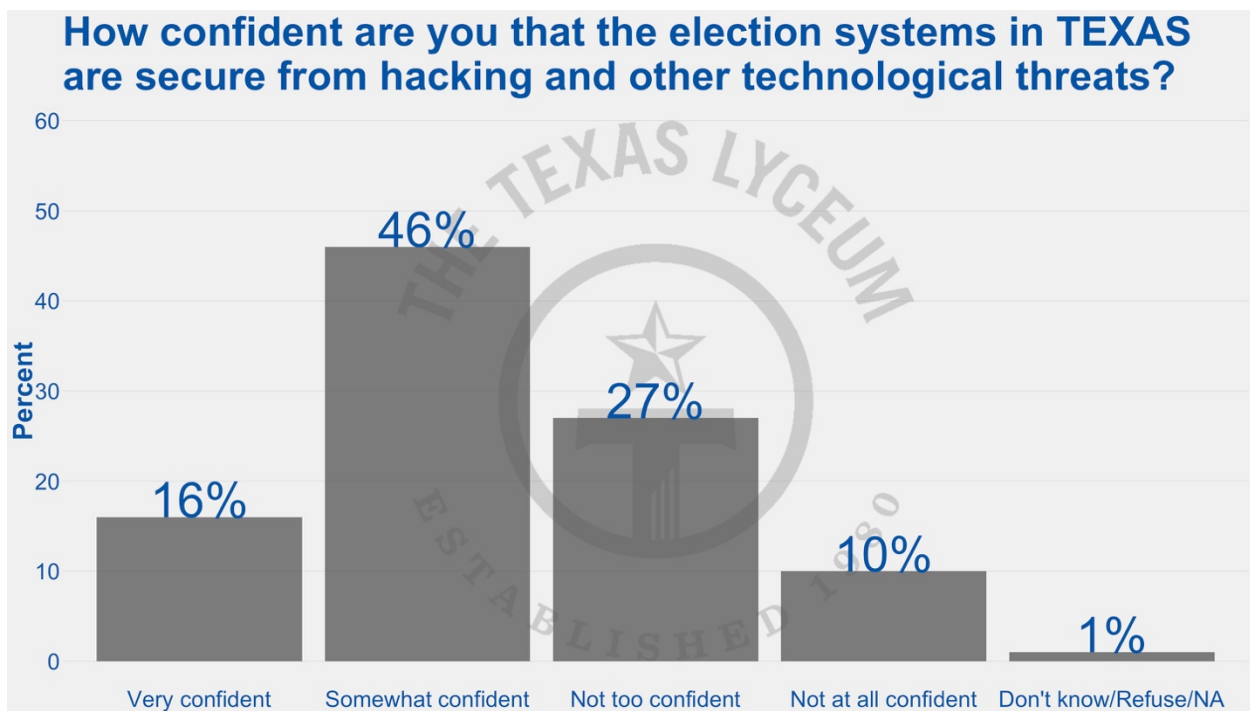


Threats to Democracy

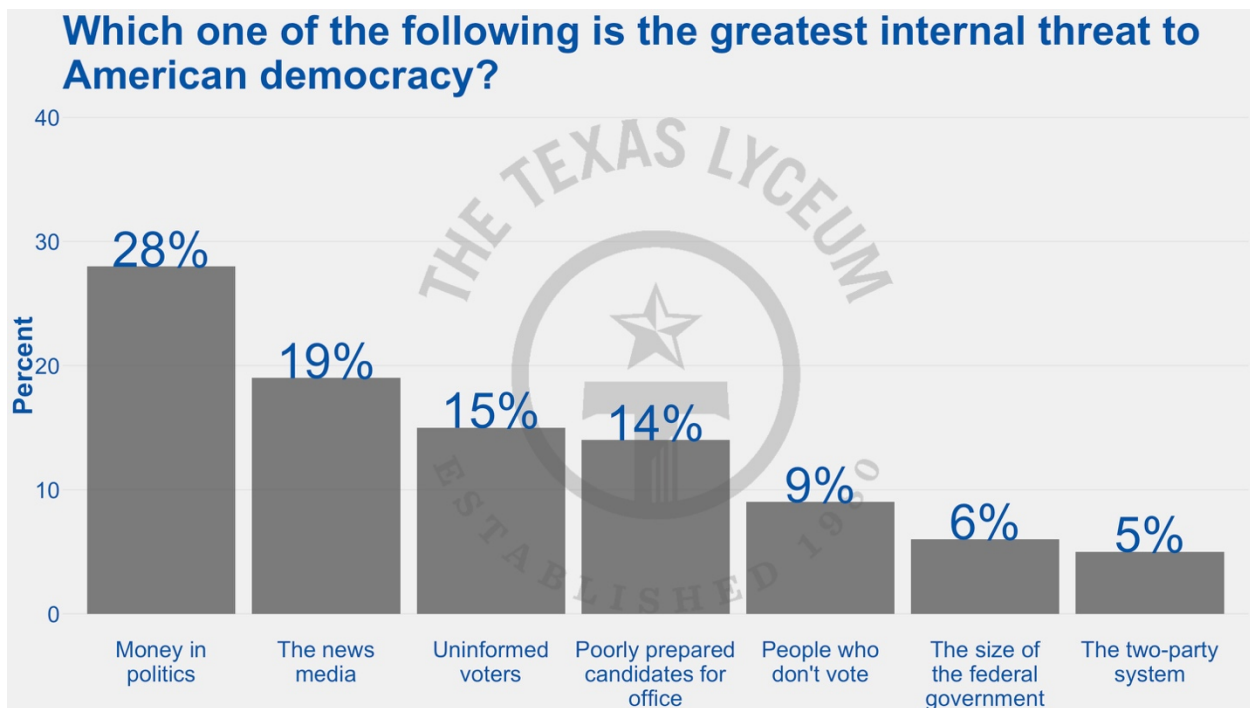
While Texans, as a whole, see domestic forces (62%) as a greater threat to democracy than foreign countries (24%), a near majority (49%) say that *the attempts by Russia or other foreign countries to influence the U.S. presidential election* are a 'major problem,' with another 30% saying that it is a 'minor problem,' and only 21% saying that it's 'not much of a problem.'



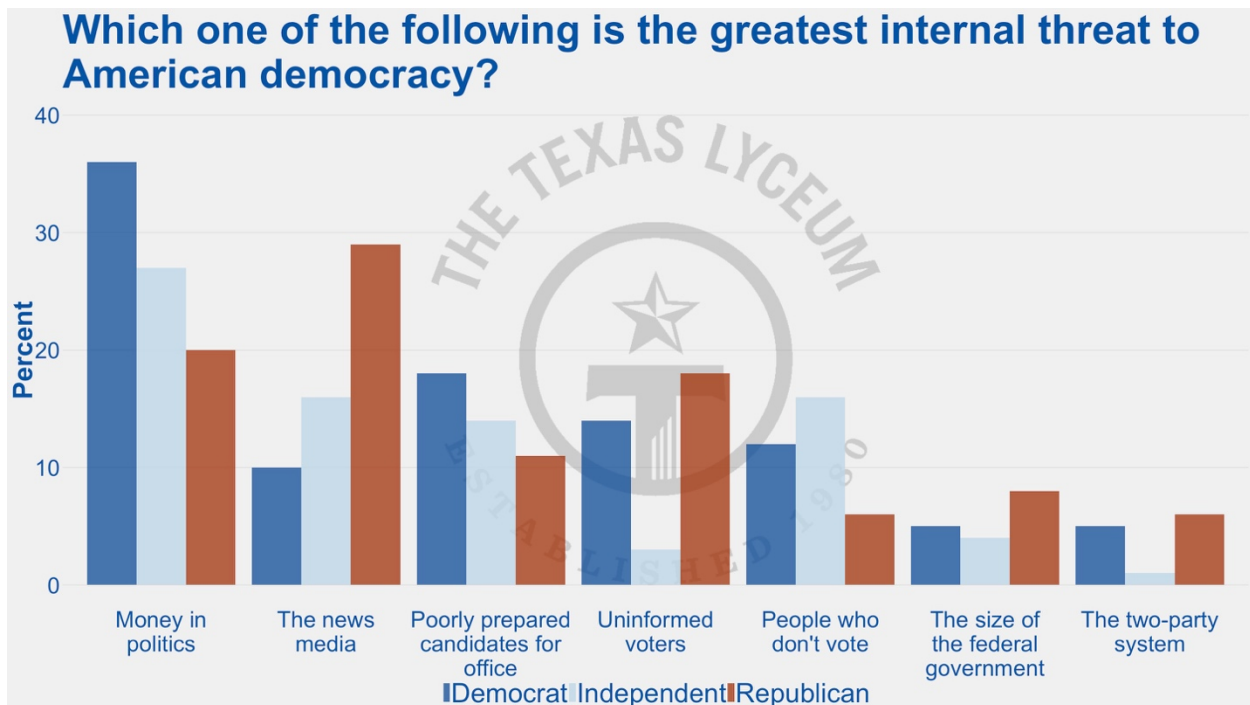
At the same time, only 16% of Texas adults say that they are ‘very confident’ that the election systems in TEXAS are secure from hacking and other technological threats, with another 46% ‘somewhat confident,’ and 37% either ‘not too confident’ (27%) or ‘not at all confident’ (10%).



Domestically, Texans see money in politics as the *greatest internal threat to American democracy*, selected by 28% of adults. This was followed by *the news media* (19%), *uninformed voters* (15%), *poorly prepared candidates for office* (14%), *people who don't vote* (9%), *the size of the federal government* (6%), and *the two-party system* (5%).

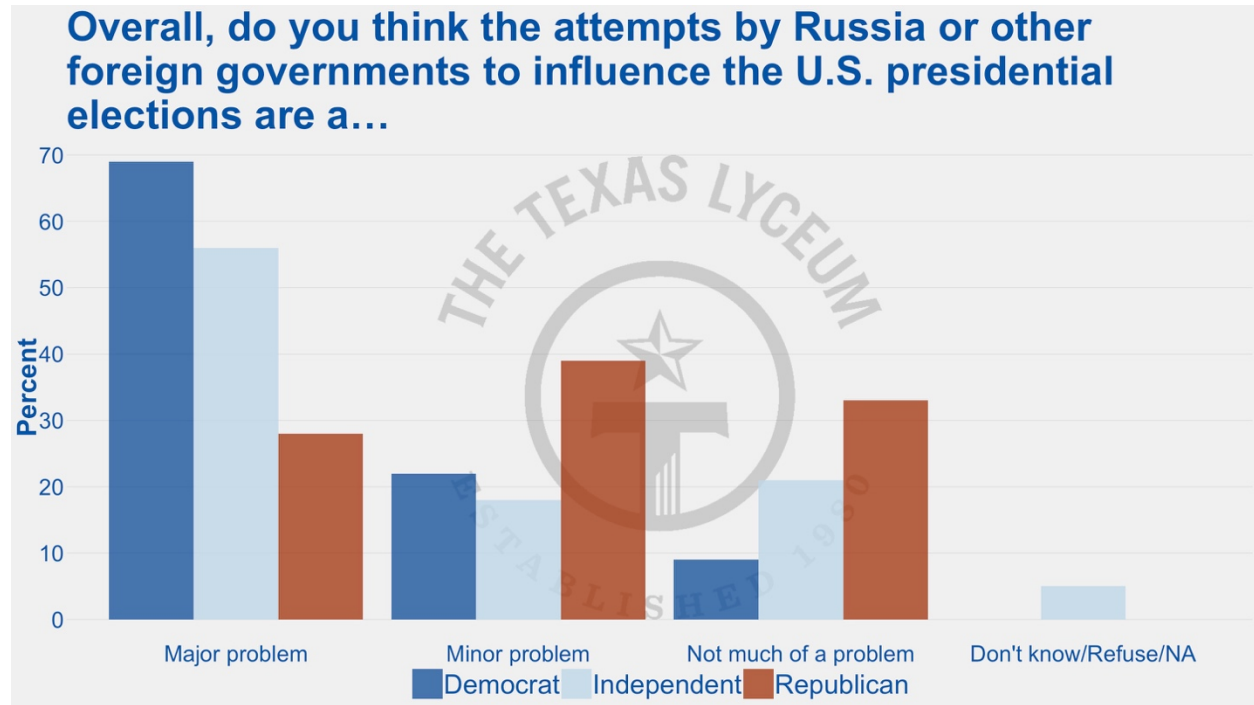


Republican identifiers were far more likely to site *the news media* as the greatest internal threat, chosen by 29%, followed by *money in politics* (20%) and *uninformed voters* (18%). Among Democrats, *money in politics* was seen as the greatest threat, selected by 36% of respondents, followed by *poorly prepared candidates for office* (18%) and *uninformed voters* (14%).



Turning back to external threats, Democrats were significantly more likely to view *attempts by Russia or other foreign countries to influence the U.S. presidential election* as a major problem than were Republicans, 69% to 28%. This corresponded with a similar difference in confidence that *the election systems in TEXAS are secure from hacking and other*

technological threats. While 74% of Republicans were either ‘somewhat’ (53%) or ‘very confident’ (21%) in the security of Texas’ election system, among Democrats, only 50% were ‘somewhat’ (39%) or ‘very confident’ (11%).

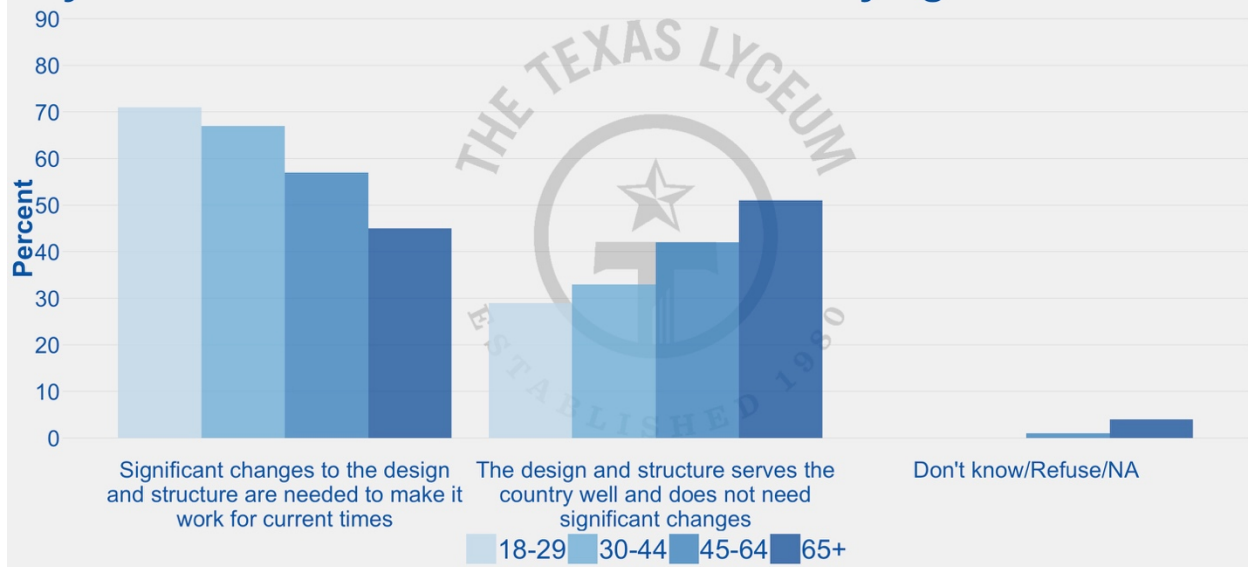


Democratic Reforms

When asked about the fundamental design and structure of American government, a majority of Texans (61%) say that *significant changes to the design and structure are needed to make it work for current times*, compared to 38% who say that *the design and structure serves the country well and does not need significant changes*.

This item garnered significant differences in opinion by age, education, race, and partisanship. For example, among Texas adults under 30, 71% supported significant change to our governing system, while among those over the age of 65, only 45% agreed (along with 67% of those between the ages of 30 and 44, and 57% of those between the ages of 45 and 64).

Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right?



Texans with less education were more inclined to support change than were those with more education. Fifty-five percent and 53% of those with a college or post-graduate degree expressed support for change to the system compared with 65% of those with some college, and 66% of those with only a high school degree.

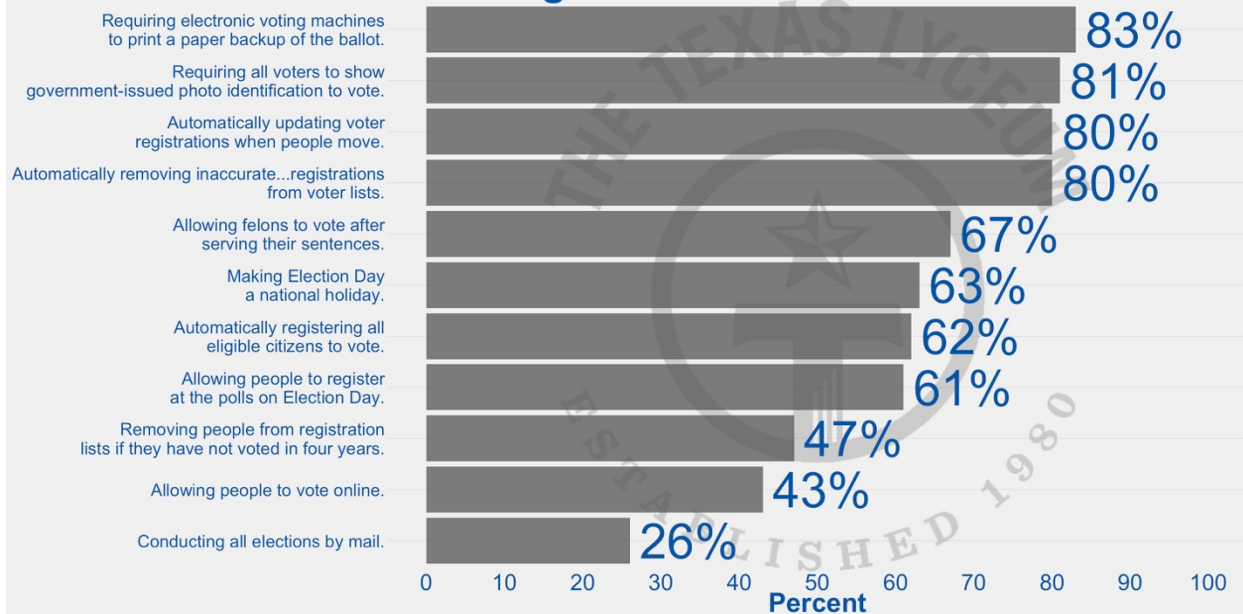
African Americans were much more likely than white and Hispanic respondents respectively, to support significant change. Seventy-nine percent of African Americans supported significant changes, compared with 60% of Hispanic, and 57% of White Texans.

When asked whether or not they would favor or oppose specific reforms to the country's electoral system, a large majority expressed support for *requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper backup of the ballot* (83%), *requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote* (81%), *automatically updating voter registrations when people move* (80%), and *automatically removing inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists* (80%).

A not-quite-as-large majority also expressed support for *allowing people convicted of felonies to vote after serving their sentences* (67%), *making Election Day a national holiday* (63%), *automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote* (62%), and *allowing people to register at the polls on Election Day* (61%).

Proposals that received support from less than a majority of Texans included *removing people from registration lists if they have not voted or confirmed their registration in four years* (47%), *allowing people to vote online* (43%), and *conducting all elections by mail* (26%).

Would you favor or oppose the following ideas about elections?

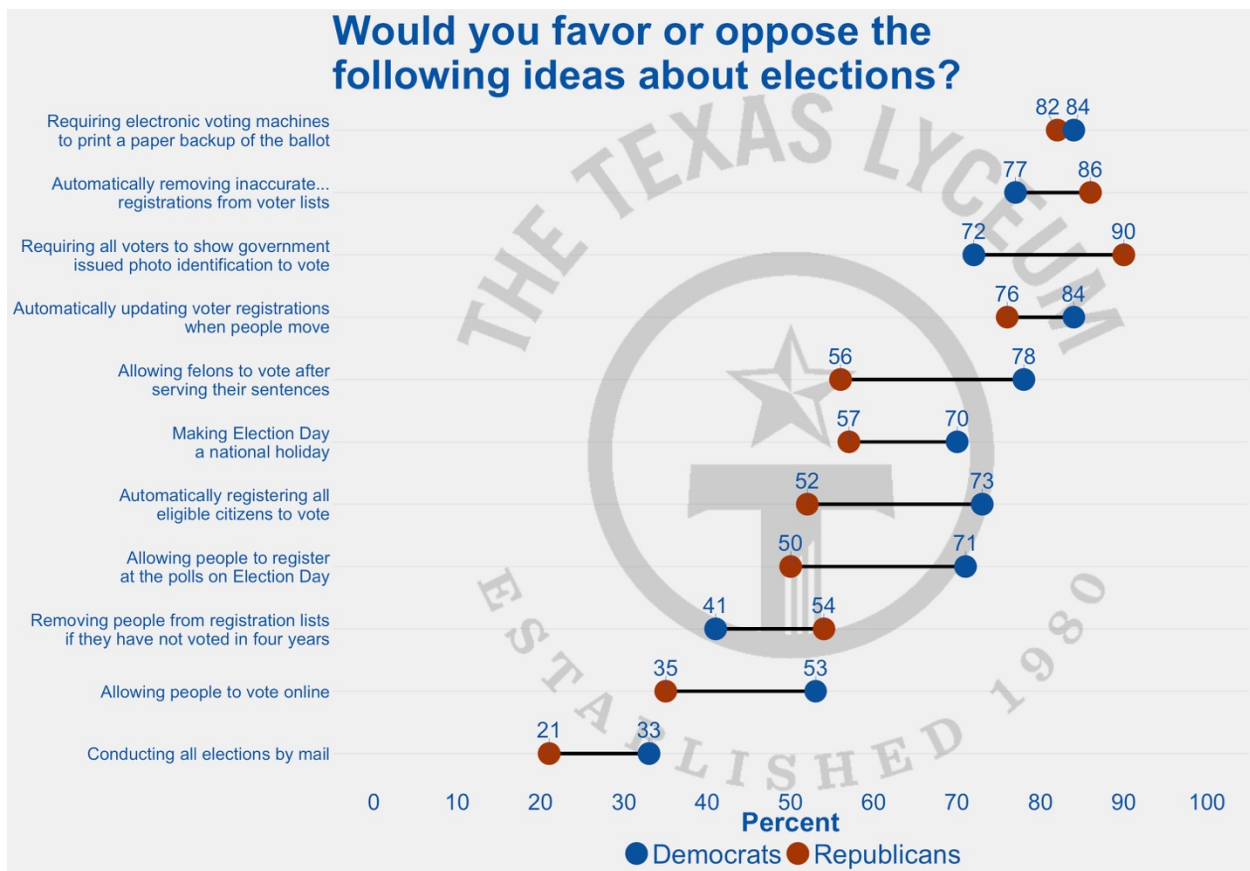


Support for election reforms varied by partisanship in predictable ways. More than 70% of Republicans expressed support for *automatically updating voter registrations when people move* (76%); *requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper backup of the ballot* (82%); *automatically removing inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists* (86%); and *requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote* (90%).

Democrats expressed greater than 70% support for all of the ideas presented except for *allowing people to vote online* (53%); *removing people from registration lists if they have not voted or confirmed their registration in four years* (41%); and *conducting all elections by mail* (33%). The most popular reforms among Democrats were *automatically updating voter registrations when people move* (84%); *requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote* (72%); *allowing people convicted of felonies to vote after serving their sentences* (78%); and *automatically removing inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists* (77%).

Republicans and Democrats expressed greater than 70% support for four of the ideas presented: *requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper backup of the ballot* (82% of Republicans, 84% of Democrats); *automatically removing inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists* (86% of Republicans, 77% of Democrats); *requiring all voters to show a government-issued photo identification to vote* (90% of Republicans, 72% of Democrats); and *automatically updating voter registrations when people move* (76% of Republicans, 84% of Democrats).

Support goes down but stays at or above 50% for both Republicans and Democrats for the following ideas: *allowing people convicted of felonies to voter after serving their sentences* (56% of Republicans, 78% of Democrats); *making Election Day a national holiday* (57% of Republicans, 70% of Democrats); *automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote* (52% of Republicans, 73% of Democrats); and *allowing people to register at the polls on Election Day* (50% of Republicans, 71% of Democrats).



When asked how important it is to ensure that *ineligible voters are prevented from voting*, 84% of Texans said that it was either ‘somewhat’ (21%) or ‘very important’ (63%). Comparatively, only 53% of Texans said that the statement, *ineligible voters are prevented from voting*, describes the United States either ‘somewhat’ (30%) or ‘very well’ (23%) – a 31-point gap.

Similarly, when asked how important it is to ensure that *all eligible voters are permitted to vote*, 92% of Texans said that this was either ‘somewhat’ (14%) or ‘very important’ (78%). More optimistically, 74% of Texans said that the statement, *all eligible voters are permitted to vote*, describes the United States either ‘somewhat’ (32%) or ‘very well’ (42%).

While 93% of Republicans expressed that it was either ‘somewhat’ or ‘very important’ that all eligible voters are permitted to vote, and 90% that all ineligible voters are prevented from voting, their attitudes on the relative success of these goals in the U.S. is quite mixed. While 84% say that all eligible voters are permitted to vote, only 45% say that ineligible voters are prevented from voting – a 45-point gap.

When it comes to redistricting, 86% of Texans believe it is important that *the way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable*, but only 53% say that this statement describes the U.S. either ‘somewhat’ (34%) or ‘very well’ (19%).

Methodology

From August 16-25, 2019, 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 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 17 minutes. To insure 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, 996 of whom are registered voters according to self-reports. The final data set is weighted by race/ethnicity, age and gender to achieve representativeness as defined by the Texas Department State Health Services 2019 population projections. The overall margin of error for the poll is +/- 2.83 percentage points for the full sample, with a larger margin of error for sub-samples.

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.

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.

TEXAS LYCEUM POLL

2019 Texas Statewide Survey

N=1,200 ADULTS

MOE=+/-2.83 PERCENTAGE POINTS (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

CELL PHONE SUPPLEMENT (n=600)

ONLINE SUPPLEMENT (n=200)

BILINGUAL INSTRUMENT/INTERVIEWERS

FIELDDED AUGUST 16-25, 2019

Results may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Now, turning to the issue of democracy in America...

Q16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *Democracy is the best form of government. Would that be strongly [agree/disagree], or somewhat [agree/disagree]?*

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly agree | 53% |
| 2. Somewhat agree | 29 |
| 3. Somewhat disagree | 11 |
| 4. Strongly disagree | 7 |
| 5. Don't know/No opinion | 0 |

Q17. How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in our country...

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very satisfied | 16% |
| 2. Somewhat satisfied | 42 |
| 3. Not too satisfied, or | 29 |
| 4. Not at all satisfied | 13 |
| 5. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 0 |

Q18. Which is the greater threat to American democracy: [RANDOMIZE: "foreign countries or domestic forces" AND "domestic forces or foreign countries"]?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Foreign countries | 24% |
| 2. Domestic forces | 62 |
| 3. Don't know [DON'T READ] | 14 |

Q19. Which one of the following is the greatest internal threat to American democracy? [RANDOMIZE 1-7]

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Money in politics | 28% |
| 2. The news media | 19 |
| 3. Uninformed voters | 15 |
| 4. Poorly prepared candidates for office | 14 |
| 5. People who don't vote | 9 |
| 6. The size of the federal government | 6 |
| 7. The two-party system | 5 |
| 8. Other [DON'T READ] | 1 |
| 9. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 1 |

Q20. Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Significant changes to the design and structure are needed to make it work for current times | 61% |
| 2. The design and structure serves the country well and does not need significant changes | 38 |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 1 |

Q21. And which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington | 58% |
| 2. There's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Washington | 41 |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 1 |

Q22. And which of the following statements comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things | 68% |
| 2. Voting by people like me doesn't really affect how government runs things | 31 |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 1 |

Q23A. Now thinking again about the importance of a number of things for the United States. For each of the following, is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important for the country that... [RANDOMIZE A-J]

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not very important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>Don't know / Refuse / NA</i>
A. The rights and freedoms of all people are respected	76	14	5	2	4
B. The views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected	56	28	8	3	5
C. The military leadership does not publicly express support for one party over the other	56	22	11	3	8
D. People agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically	54	29	8	3	6
E. People have the right to non-violent protest	66	21	7	2	4
F. News organizations are free to criticize political leaders	44	25	16	8	7
G. There is a system of checks and balances dividing power between the President, Congress, and the courts	72	15	5	2	5
H. The rights of people with unpopular views are protected	55	29	9	2	5
I. Elections are open and fair	77	13	4	2	4
J. Those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners	55	22	13	4	6

Q23B. Now thinking about how things actually are in the U.S. today...Does each of the following describe the country very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all? **[RANDOMIZE A-J]**

	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Somewhat well</i>	<i>Not very well</i>	<i>Not at all well</i>	<i>Don't know / Refuse / NA</i>
A. The rights and freedoms of all people are respected	21	27	28	20	5
B. The views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected	19	26	30	19	6
C. The military leadership does not publicly express support for one party over the other	29	35	18	7	12
D. People agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically	17	27	29	21	5
E. People have the right to non-violent protest	30	37	19	8	5
F. News organizations are free to criticize political leaders	34	31	17	11	7
G. There is a system of checks and balances dividing power between the President, Congress, and the courts	26	33	22	12	7
H. The rights of people with unpopular views are protected	21	31	27	15	6
I. Elections are open and fair	26	30	24	14	6
J. Those who lose elections recognize the legitimacy of the winners	17	26	29	21	7

Q24. Please indicate whether you would [RANDOMLY CHOOSE ONE OF: “favor or oppose”, “oppose or favor”] the following ideas about elections. [RANDOMIZE A-K]

	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't know / Refuse / NA</i>
A. Automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote	62	37	1
B. Making Election Day a national holiday	63	36	1
C. Automatically removing inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists	80	19	1
D. Conducting all elections by mail	26	73	1
E. Allowing people convicted of felonies to vote after serving their sentences	67	31	1
F. Automatically updating voter registrations when people move	80	20	1
G. Allowing people to register at the polls on Election Day	61	39	1
H. Removing people from registration lists if they have not voted or confirmed their registration in four years	47	52	1
I. Requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote	81	18	1
J. Requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper backup of the ballot	83	16	1
K. Allowing people to vote online	43	56	1

Q25. Overall, do you think the attempts by Russia or other foreign governments to influence the U.S. presidential elections are a...

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Major problem | 49% |
| 2. Minor problem, or | 30 |
| 3. Not much of a problem | 21 |
| 4. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 0 |

Q26. How confident are you that the election systems in TEXAS are secure from hacking and other technological threats?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very confident | 16% |
| 2. Somewhat confident | 46 |
| 3. Not too confident, or | 27 |
| 4. Not at all confident | 10 |
| 5. Don't know/No opinion [DON'T READ] | 1 |

Q27A. Thinking about elections in the United States, how important is it that [RANDOM SELECTION FROM A-C]? Very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not very important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>Don't know /</i>

					<i>Refuse / NA</i>
A. INELIGIBLE voters are prevented from voting	63	21	7	3	6
B. All ELIGIBLE voters are permitted to vote	78	14	4	1	3
C. The way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable	62	24	5	4	6

Q27B. Next, how well do each of the following describe elections in the United States? Very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all? [RANDOMIZE A-C]

	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Somewhat well</i>	<i>Not very well</i>	<i>Not at all well</i>	<i>Don't know / Refuse / NA</i>
A. INELIGIBLE voters are prevented from voting	23	30	25	13	10
B. All ELIGIBLE voters are permitted to vote	42	32	15	6	6
C. The way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable	19	34	23	14	9