

POLICY PREFERENCES OF TEXAS DEMOCRATIC & REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS:

ABORTION, MARIJUANA, GUNS, TRANSGENDER SPORTS, DEPORTATION & BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

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Executive Summary

The Barbara Jordan Public Policy Research and Survey Center at Texas Southern University conducted a representative survey of 1,500 likely 2026 Texas Republican primary voters (margin of error of +/- 2.53%) and of 1,500 likely 2026 Texas Democratic primary voters (margin of error of +/- 2.53%) between August 6 and August 12, 2025.

84% of Democratic primary voters would like abortion to always be legal in Texas with either no restrictions (42%) or with only minor restrictions such as a ban on late-term abortions (42%), a position shared by only 17% of Republican primary voters.

68% of Republican primary voters believe abortion should only be legal if the woman's life is at risk or the pregnancy was the result of rape (31%) or if the woman's life is at risk (23%), or believe that abortion should always be illegal with no exceptions (14%). Only 10% of Democratic primary voters have a preference for one of these three policy options.

70% of Democratic primary voters think that it should be legal to use marijuana for medical and recreational purposes in Texas, with 23% in favor of medical marijuana only and 7% opposed to the legalization of marijuana for any use.

34% of Republican primary voters think that it should be legal to use marijuana for medical and recreational purposes in Texas, with 45% in favor of medical marijuana only and 21% opposed to the legalization of marijuana for any use.

92% of Democratic primary voters would like to see the Texas Legislature make Texas gun laws more strict and 1% less strict, while 7% would like to see gun laws kept as they are now.

24% of Republican primary voters would like to see the Texas Legislature make Texas gun laws more strict and 18% less strict, while 58% would like to see gun laws kept as they are now.

80% of Republican primary voters support a ban on transgender girls and women participating in female sports events in Texas high schools and universities, while 20% oppose a ban.

33% of Democratic primary voters support a ban on transgender girls and women participating in female sports events in Texas high schools and universities, while 67% oppose a ban.

47% of Republican primary voters, but only 3% of Democratic primary voters, believe that all undocumented immigrants should be deported, without exception.

70% of Democratic primary voters, but only 20% of Republican primary voters, believe that only undocumented immigrants who have committed felonies should be deported.

76% of Republican primary voters oppose birthright citizenship for children born in the U.S. to parents who immigrated illegally, a position shared by only 13% of Democratic primary voters.

The Barbara Jordan Public Policy Research and Survey Center at Texas Southern University conducted a representative survey of 1,500 likely 2026 Texas Republican primary voters (margin of error of +/- 2.53%) and of 1,500 likely 2026 Texas Democratic primary voters (margin of error of +/- 2.53%). The survey was fielded between August 6 and August 12, 2025 by contacting registered voters via SMS text messages through which the respondents were directed to an online survey platform with the option to complete the survey in English or in Spanish. The probability of a respondent voting in the respective Republican and Democratic primaries was determined using a likely voter screen and information on past primary participation.

This report examines the preferences of likely 2026 Texas Democratic and Republican primary voters for policies in Texas governing a wide range of policy areas, including the regulation of abortion, the use of marijuana, the sale of firearms and transgender sports participation as well as their positions on the deportation of undocumented immigrants and on birthright citizenship.

SURVEY POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Republican Primary Likely Voter Population. Men account for 52% of these likely Republican primary voters and women for 48%. White Texans represent 82% of these likely Republican primary voters, Latino Texans 13% and Black Texans 3%, with Texans identifying with other ethnic/racial groups or having a mixed identity representing 2% of this population. A little less than one-tenth (8%) of the population is between the ages of 18 and 34, 25% is between the ages of 35 and 54, and 67% is age 55 and older. More than half (58%) of the respondents have a fouryear college degree while 42% do not have a four-year college degree. The distribution of partisan identifiers among these likely Republican primary voters is 72% Republican, 15% Independent but leaning toward the Republican Party, 10% Independent, and 3% either identifying as Democratic, something else or unsure. A little more than one-fourth (28%) of these likely 2026 Republican primary voters live in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro statistical area, 23% live in the Houston metro area, 9% live in the San Antonio metro area, 6% live in the Austin metro area, and 34% live in other regions of the state. A little more than two-fifths (41%) of these likely Republican primary voters identify as born-again Protestant Christians, 19% identify as Protestants who are not born-again Christians, 19% identify as Catholic, 14% identify with another Christian denomination or as Christian more generally, and 7% identify as something else.

Democratic Primary Likely Voter Population. Women account for 58% of these likely Democratic primary voters, men for 41%, and those whose gender identity is something else for 1%. White Texans represent 45% of these likely Democratic primary voters, Latino Texans 32% and Black Texans 19%, with Texans identifying with other ethnic/racial groups or having a mixed identity representing 4% of the population. A little more than one-tenth (13%) of the population is between the ages of 18 and 34, 27% is between the ages of 35 and 54, and 60% is age 55 and older. Just over one-half (52%) of the respondents have a four-year college degree while 48% do not have a four-year college degree. The distribution of partisan identifiers among these likely Democratic primary voters is 79% Democrat, 16% Independent but leaning toward the Democratic Party, 3% Independent, and 2% either identifying as Republican, something else or unsure. A little more than one-fourth (26%) of these likely 2026 Democratic primary voters live

in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro statistical area, 25% live in the Houston metro area, 15% live in the Austin metro area, 14% live in the San Antonio metro area, 8% live in the U.S.-Mexico border counties, and 12% live in other regions of the state.

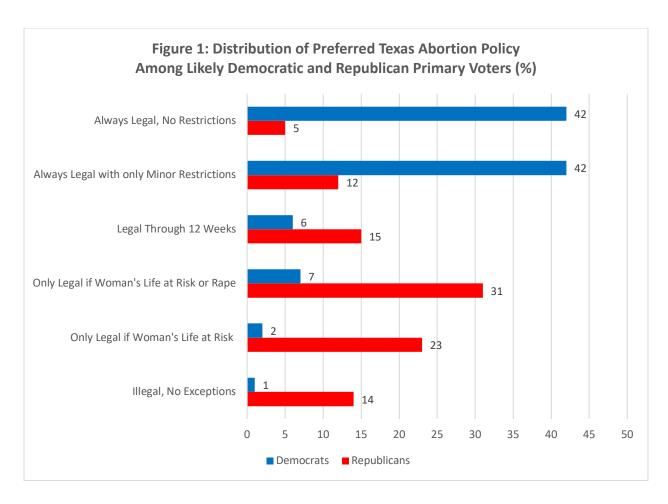
POLICY PREFERENCES AMONG TEXAS PRIMARY VOTERS FOR TEXAS POLICY IN FOUR KEY AREAS

Abortion Policy. Since the Dobbs decision in 2022, abortion is only legal in Texas if the pregnant woman's life is at risk. In the survey the respondents were asked: "Which comes closest to when you think abortion should be legal in Texas?" The six options provided were:

- Abortion should always be legal. There should be no restrictions on abortion.
- Abortion should be legal, but with some minor restrictions (such as for late-term abortions).
- Abortion should be legal without restrictions, but only through the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- Abortion should only be legal if the pregnancy is the result of rape or the woman's life is at risk.
- Abortion should only be legal if the woman's life is at risk.
- Abortion should be illegal. It should never be allowed.

Figure 1 underscores that more than eight out of ten (84%) likely Democratic primary voters believe abortion should always be legal in Texas, either with no restrictions (42%) or with only minor restrictions (42%). The remaining 16% are split among those whose preferred policy is that abortion be legal through 12 weeks of pregnancy for any reason (6%), be legal only if either the woman's life is at risk or the pregnancy is the result of rape (7%) or be legal only if the woman's life is at risk (2%), with 1% of the opinion that abortion should always be illegal with no exceptions. In sum, 84% of Democratic primary voters would like to return to something akin to, or more permissive than, the de facto status quo at the end of the last decade when abortion through 20 weeks was legal for any reason in Texas. And, 97% of likely Democratic primary voters believe that the current Texas abortion legislation is too restrictive.

Figure 1 also highlights that more than two-thirds (68%) of likely Republican primary voters believe that abortion should at the very most only be legal if the woman's life is at risk or if the pregnancy was the result of rape (31%), only be legal if the woman's life is at risk (23%) or, always be illegal (14%). That is, an overwhelming majority of likely Republican primary voters are not in favor of making Texas abortion regulations more permissive than they are today, with the minor exception of allowing abortions in the rare cases where the pregnancy was the result of rape. The remaining one-third (32%) of likely Republican primary voters are primarily split between those who believe abortion should be legal in Texas through 12 weeks of pregnancy (15%) and those who believe abortion should always be legal with only minor restrictions (12%), with, only 5% of the opinion that abortion should always be legal with no restrictions.

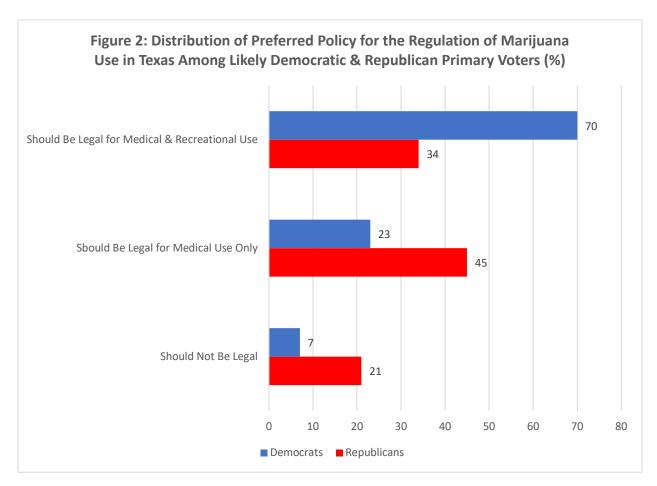


While 84% of likely Democratic primary voters would like to see legislation adopted in Texas under which abortion would always be legal with either no or only minor restrictions, less than one-fifth (17%) of Republican primary voters share this opinion. And, while 68% of Republican primary voters would like abortion to be legal at the very most if the woman's life is at risk or if the abortion was the result of rape, only 10% of Democratic primary voters share this opinion.

In sum, the survey data suggest that the only abortion related legislative reform in Texas likely to resonate positively with Texas Republican primary voters would be to permit an abortion if it was the result of rape, a policy that 63% of Republican primary voters agree with, but, at the same time a substantial minority (37%) disagree with.

Marijuana Policy. In Texas neither recreational nor medical marijuana use is legal, although, Texas does have the Texas Compassionate Use Program (TCUP) that provides limited access to marijuana for medical purposes and a loophole created by a 2019 law that has opened the door to a limited form of recreational marijuana via a largely unregulated retail industry selling products containing less than 0.3% THC (in theory) and containing synthetic delta-8-THC, among other things. In the survey, the respondents were asked which of the following three policies comes closest to their view about the use of marijuana by adults in Texas: it should be legal for medical and recreational use, it should be legal for medical use only, and it shouldn't be legal.

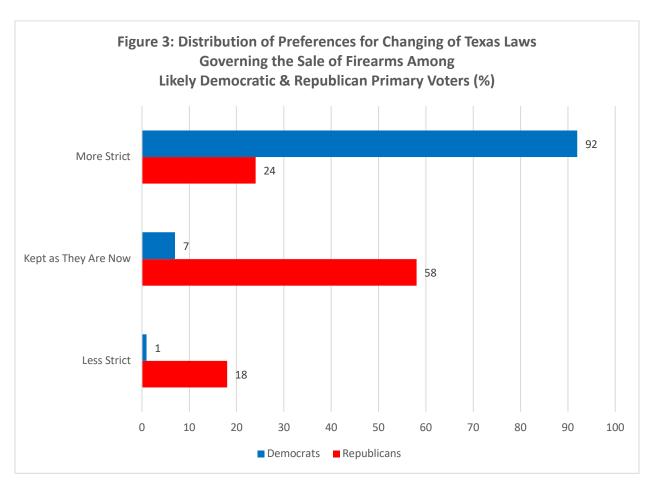
Figure 2 shows that more than two-thirds (70%) of likely Democratic primary voters support recreational and medical marijuana and would like to see Texas follow the lead the nearly one-half of U.S. states which have legalized the sale and use of recreational marijuana. Another 23% support medical marijuana only, while 7% believe that marijuana should be illegal for both recreational and medical use. The modal position among Republican primary voters is that medical marijuana should be legal in Texas (45%), with one-third (34%) of the opinion that both recreational and medical marijuana should be legal in the Lone Star State, and with one-fifth (21%) opposed to any form of marijuana legalization in Texas, medical or recreational.



In regard to the current debate in Texas over THC regulation legislation which would ban the sale of products containing THC and synthetic delta-8-THC, these results suggest that to the extent to which this ban is seen as primarily targeting recreational marijuana use it would appear to enjoy the support of two-thirds of Republican primary voters, but, to the extent to which this ban is seen as primarily targeting medical marijuana use it would appear to enjoy the support of only one-fifth of Republican primary voters.

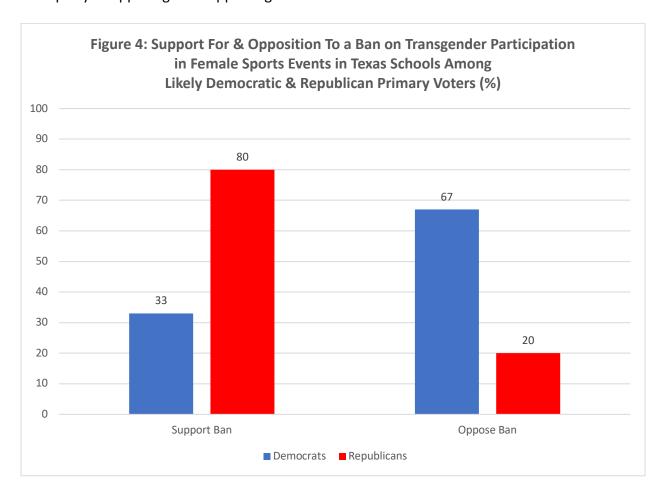
Firearms Policy. The left-leaning Giffords Law Center's Annual Gun Law Scorecard gives Texas a grade of F. In the survey, the respondents were asked if they felt that the laws covering the sale of firearms in Texas should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now.

Figure 3 underscores that an overwhelming majority (92%) of Democratic primary voters would like to see the Texas Legislature pass legislation to make gun laws in Texas more strict, while 7% are content with the status quo and 1% would like to see less strict laws. In sharp contrast, an absolute majority (58%) of Texas Republican primary voters are happy with the status quo, with the remainder roughly split between those would like to see the laws governing the sale of firearms in Texas become more strict (24%) and less strict (18%).



Transgender Sports Policy. Texas law currently bans transgender girls and women from participating in female sports events in Texas high schools and colleges. In the survey, the respondents were asked if they support or oppose a ban on transgender girls and women participating in female sports events in Texas high schools and colleges.

Figure 4 reveals that an overwhelming majority of likely Republican primary voters (80%) support the ban while an overwhelming majority of Democratic primary voters oppose the ban (67%), with 20% of Republicans and 33% of Democrats holding the respective minority positions within their party of opposing and supporting the ban.

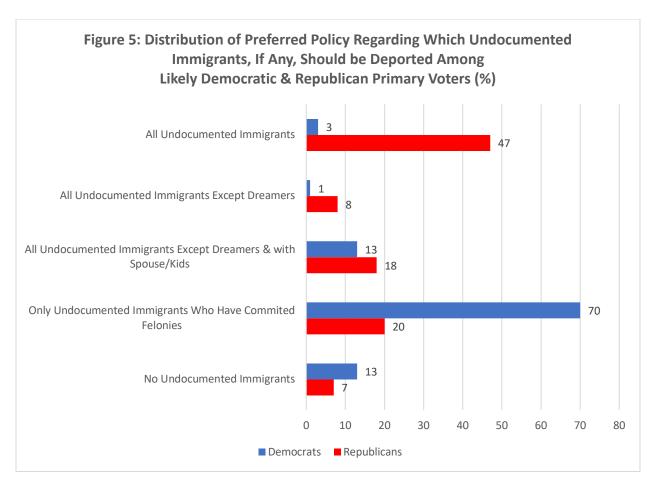


DEPORTATION & CITIZENSHIP POLICY PREFERENCES AMONG TEXAS PRIMARY VOTERS

Deportation Policy. In the survey, the respondents were asked which of five immigration policy options came closest to their view about which, if any, undocumented immigrants presently living in the United States should be deported. The five options were: all undocumented immigrants, all undocumented immigrants except those brought to the U.S. as children, all undocumented immigrants except those brought to the U.S. as children and those with a child or spouse who is a U.S. citizen, only undocumented immigrants who have committed felonies, and no undocumented immigrants.

Figure 5 highlights a substantial consensus among Democratic primary voters regarding the deportation of undocumented immigrants, with 70% only supportive of the deportation of those undocumented immigrants who have committed felonies. Equal proportions of Democratic primary voters hold the opinion that no undocumented immigrants should be deported (13%) and that all undocumented immigrants should be deported except those brought to the U.S. as children (i.e., Dreamers) or who have a spouse of child who is a U.S. citizen (13%), with 3% supportive of the deportation of all undocumented immigrants and 1% of all undocumented immigrants except for dreamers.

Nearly half of Republican primary voters (47%) support the deportation of all undocumented immigrants, with 8% supporting the deportation of all undocumented immigrants except for Dreamers and 18% supporting the deportation of all undocumented immigrants except for Dreamers and those with a spouse or a child who is a U.S. citizen. Finally, one in five (20%) Republican primary voters concur with the Democratic consensus preference of only deporting undocumented immigrants who have committed felonies, and 7% of Republican primary voters believe that no undocumented immigrants should be deported.



Birthright Citizenship Policy. In the survey, the respondents were asked if they believed that people born in the U.S. to parents who immigrated legally should be considered U.S. citizens and if they believed that people born in the U.S. to parents who immigrated illegally should be considered U.S. citizens.

Figure 6 reveals a strong consensus among both likely Democratic (98%) and Republican (92%) primary voters that people born in the U.S. to parents who immigrated legally should be considered U.S. citizens. In contrast, likely Democratic and Republican primary voters are sharply divided on whether children born in the U.S. to parents who immigrated illegally should be considered U.S. citizens. While 87% of Democratic primary voters hold the position that birthright citizenship should be extended to children of immigrants who immigrated illegally, only 24% of Republicans share this opinion, with more than three-fourths (76%) of Republican primary voters opposing birthright citizenship for children of parents who immigrated illegally (compared to 13% of Democratic primary voters).

