

# TEXASPULSE



October 2020

## About the Crosswind Texas Pulse

We are pleased to provide you with results from this year's Texas Pulse Poll, Crosswind's public-facing instrument for regularly measuring the attitudes and beliefs of our fellow Texans. As part of our agency's ongoing effort to bring clients greater data-driven information and insights, this year's contribution to the Texas Pulse series of surveys is likely our most robust effort to date. We have painstakingly analyzed responses from 1000 likely voters in the Lone Star State on a bevy of topics ranging from the 2020 election cycle, evaluations of Donald Trump and Greg Abbott's leadership amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Texans' confidence in the integrity of the election results, Black Lives Matter, the confirmation process to fill Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat and more.

The mission of the Crosswind Texas Pulse is to establish baseline awareness of Texan attitudes on a regular series of questions as well as identify innovative or urgent topics occurring within the state and nationally. Our core question items capture changes in how Texans rank issue importance and evaluate the performance of elected officials.

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## Key Findings

1. Republican candidates Donald Trump and John Cornyn enjoy significant leads over Democratic challengers Joe Biden and MJ Hegar. These leads are bolstered by strong Republican support from self-reported male and white Texans.
2. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a hotly contested election and deep unrest over social justice, 1 in 3 Texans rated the economy and jobs as the most important issue facing the state in 2020. This is a significant shift from Texas Pulse results in 2018 and 2016 which found that immigration and border security rated highest. 22% of Texans also rated health care as the top issue, the largest proportion to date.
3. Texas Democrats and Republicans are sharply divided in their evaluations of Donald Trump's and Greg Abbott's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Party affiliation also drives disagreement over the confirmation process to replace the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
5. Half of Texans say that they have either a strongly or somewhat favorable opinion of the social movement Black Lives Matter (BLM). Younger voters between the ages of 18 and 39 are more likely to view the BLM movement as favorable compared to their older fellow Texans.

## Texas Pulse Methodology

In this survey of 1000 likely voters in Texas, there is a +/- 3% margin of error assuming a 95 percent confidence interval. Demographics in this sample are based on self-reported responses.

53 percent of respondents identified as female and 47 percent identified as male. For age, 37 percent of the sample is between 18-39 years old, 48 percent is between 40-64, and 15 percent is 65 years or older. By ethnicity, 24 percent of the sample identified as Hispanic/Latino, 12 percent identified as Black, 56 percent identified as white, and 8 percent represent other groups. By political party affiliation, the sample is 38 percent Republican, 32 percent Democrat and 30 percent chose neither major party.

The survey was conducted by Crosswind and Pulse Opinion Research on October 5-6, 2020. Pulse Opinion Research, LLC is an independent public opinion research firm using automated polling methodology and procedures licensed from Rasmussen Reports, LLC. 70% of the sample calls were placed to randomly selected phone numbers through a process that ensures appropriate geographic and age representation. 30% of the sample was conducted via online surveys of individuals who use a cell phone as their primary telephone. After the calls and online surveys are completed, the raw data is processed through a weighting program to ensure that the sample reflects the overall population in terms of age, race, gender, political party, and other factors.

For more information or for a copy of the poll's crosstabs, please send a request to [media@crosswindpr.com](mailto:media@crosswindpr.com).

### About Crosswind Media & PR

Crosswind Media & Public Relations is one of the leading firms in the U.S., ranking in the top 100 nationally. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, Crosswind's roots are in Texas and serves clients around the world. The agency specializes in brand management, crisis communication, thought leadership and event planning and serves clients in the energy, infrastructure, entertainment, education, technology, banking & finance, and health care sectors. For more information, go to [crosswindpr.com](http://crosswindpr.com) or email [media@crosswindpr.com](mailto:media@crosswindpr.com).

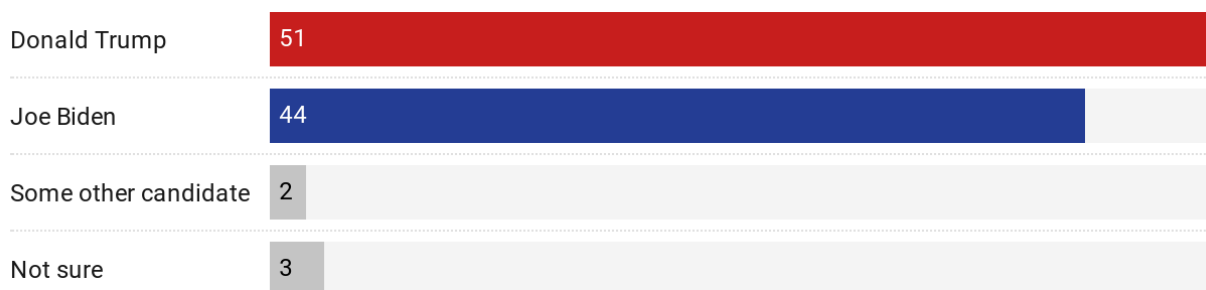
## 1.1 Republicans Ahead in 2020

We asked likely voters in Texas to tell us who they intend to vote for in this year's presidential race between incumbent Republican President Donald Trump and Democrat challenger and former Vice President Joe Biden. Our result is the most optimistic result for Trump among all polls conducted in Texas this election cycle so far, showing Trump leading Biden +7% (MoE +/-3%). The closest figure, from a Texas

Tribune/University of Texas poll, found Trump leading by +5% (MoE +/-3.25%) during the same time period we collected our sample. Most other polls suggest the race is much closer. Republicans are likely encouraged by the margin reported by the Texas Pulse given results from other recent polls, though the news is not exclusively positive for Trump and his supporters.

**Figure 1. Donald Trump leads Joe Biden among Texans +7%**

**If the 2020 presidential election were held today, would you vote for Republican Donald Trump or Democrat Joe Biden?**



*Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3)*

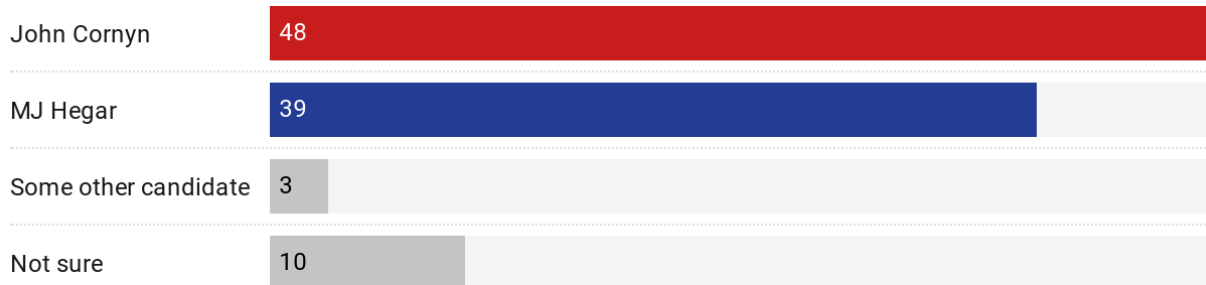
Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations

While Donald Trump enjoys a comfortable lead according to the Texas Pulse, our result should be interpreted in the context of other polls as well as in contrast to results from 2016. Readers may recall that in 2016 Donald Trump's margin of victory over Hillary Clinton was +9%, the lowest margin among Republican victories in Texas since 1996. Consequently, although Donald

Trump is likely to win the state this cycle according to our analysis, even the most optimistic assessments of the president's chances in the Lone Star State indicate he has lost ground in the intervening four years since his inauguration. Nevertheless, the Texas Pulse results show Trump/Pence with a comfortable lead over the Biden/Harris ticket this year.

**Figure 2. John Cornyn leads MJ Hegar among Texans +9%**

## If the 2020 election for US Senate were held today, would you vote for Republican John Cornyn or Democrat MJ Hegar?



*Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3)*

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations

Crosswind also asked Texans to tell us who they intend to vote for in this year's race for the U.S. Senate. After a close competition in the 2018 mid-terms between Sen. Ted Cruz-R and then Rep. Beto O'Rourke-D (in which Cruz won 51-48%), many analysts looked to Texas for another close cycle between incumbent senior Senator John Cornyn and Democrat candidate and U.S. Air Force veteran MJ Hegar. Instead, this year's race appears to map more closely with ordinary expectations for Republicans running for national office in Texas.

The Crosswind Texas Pulse shows Cornyn leading Hegar +9% among likely voters with

10% remaining unsure of how they will cast their vote.

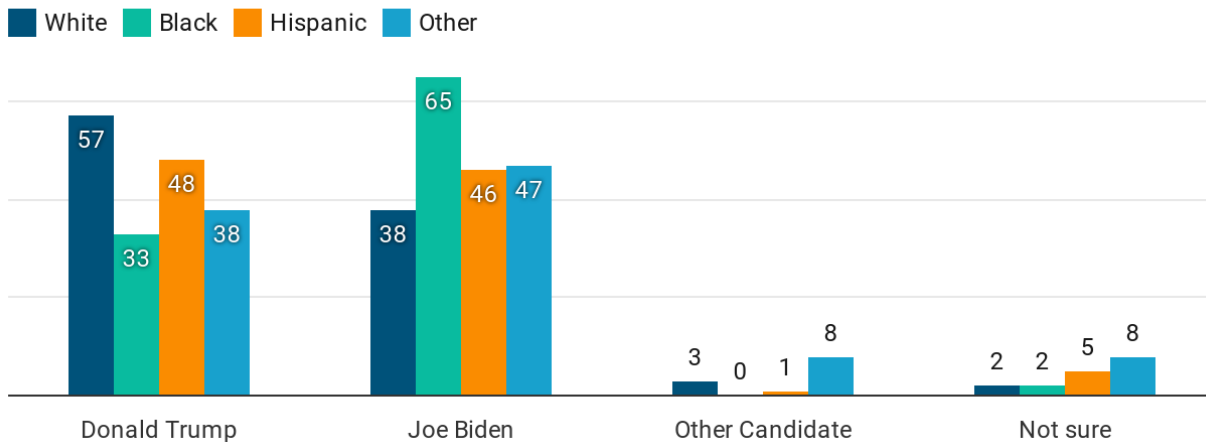
Unlike the 2018 contest between Cruz and O'Rourke, both Cornyn and Hegar struggle with low name recognition among Texans. A Dallas Morning News/UT Tyler poll conducted in August of this year found that 1 in 4 respondents did not know enough about Cornyn to form a voting opinion. For the challenger MJ Hegar, that number increased to 1 in 2 respondents. If Hegar wishes to achieve a surprise upset this fall, her campaign will likely need to make strong appeals to undecided and first-time voters.

## 1.2 Election Ethnicity

**Figure 3. Trump leads among white and Hispanic voters**

### If the 2020 presidential election were held today, would you vote for Republican Donald Trump or Democrat Joe Biden?

% of respondents indicating support by ethnicity



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)

Source: Crosswind Media & Public Relations

An analysis of voting intention by self-reported ethnicity reveals unexpectedly high levels of support for Donald Trump among non-white Texans. Crosswind's results show Trump leading among Texas Hispanic voters by +2 points, a difference that is within the poll's margin of error. Margins of error increase as group comparisons rely on smaller components of the total sample. 24% of the 2020 Texas Pulse sample self-identified as Hispanic/Latino.

Along with our results showing 33% of Black voters supporting Trump, this level of Hispanic support for the president is perhaps our most unexpected finding. Why? By contrast, in 2018 Hispanic Texans

voted in favor of Democrat candidate Beto O'Rourke 64-34% over Republican Senator Ted Cruz. In 2016, exit polls showed 34% of Hispanic voters and just 11% of Black voters casting ballots for Trump. For a more complete diagnosis of why this difference is surprising, see Section 6 of this document, "Limitations of this report."

Regardless of the Texas Pulse methodological limitations, however, Texas Republicans can be encouraged by this margin of support among Hispanic voters. If that number holds, it will be the highest support Hispanic voters in Texas have shown for a Republican candidate [since George W. Bush won 49% in 2004](#).

## 1.3 Election Gender Gap

Gaps between the attitudes of female and male respondents are a consistent theme in this year's Texas Pulse poll.

In the presidential race, our results find that Donald Trump leads Joe Biden among male Texans 58-37% but trailing Joe Biden among female Texans 49-45%. Such a margin is not unheard of in recent years. In 2016, Trump won among males by a similar margin, 57-38%, while Democrat Hillary Clinton led

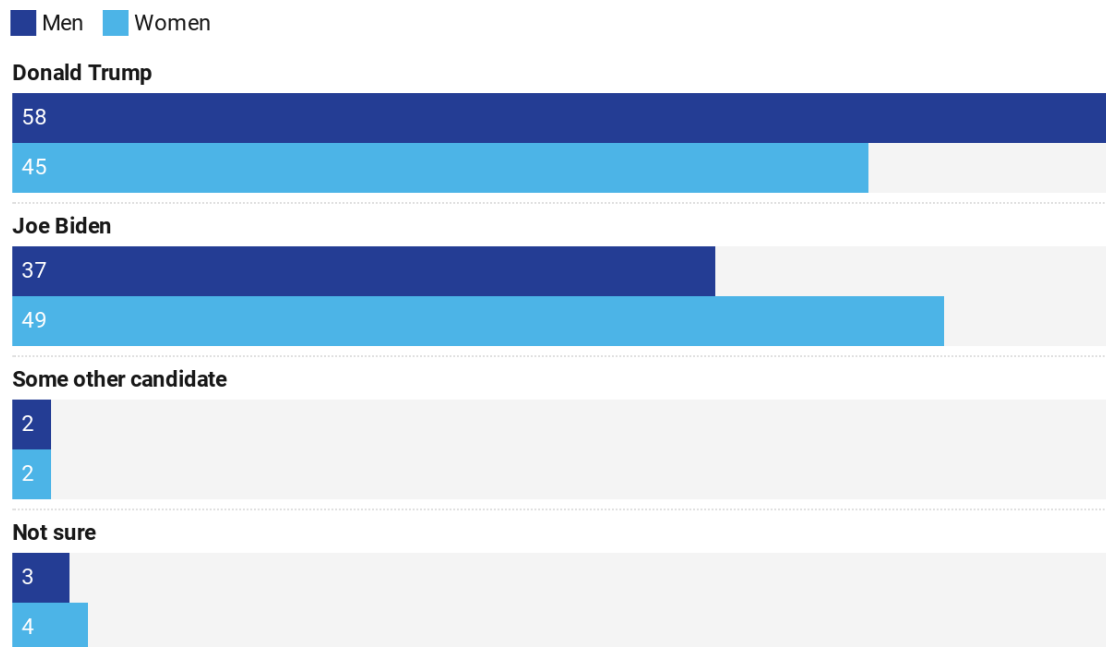
among female voters by a slim margin of 49-47%.

Our results suggest the gap between male and female voters in Texas has increased slightly in the past four years. This gap continues to appear when we examine the Senate contest between John Cornyn and MJ Hegar. This year's Texas Pulse finds John Cornyn leading his Democrat challenger among men 56-34%, but trails Hegar 43-41% among women voters.

**Figure 4. Trump leads among men, Biden among women**

### Presidential Vote by Gender

If the 2020 presidential election were held today, would you vote for Republican Donald Trump or Democrat Joe Biden?



Survey among 1000 Texas likely voters (+/-3%)

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations



## 1.4 Confidence in Election Accuracy

**Figure 5. Just 58 percent of Texans are confident votes will be counted accurately**

### Texans' confidence in election integrity

How confident are you that every vote will be counted accurately in the upcoming 2020 election for president?



*Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)*

Source: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

Texans are divided by party affiliation over confidence that every vote will be counted accurately in the 2020 election for president. Results from the survey show 58% of Texans overall report being either very confident or somewhat confident in the accuracy of vote counting. Concerningly, 2 in 5, or 41% of Texans surveyed report being either not very or not at all confident that votes will be counted accurately.

Democrats in Texas appear more confident in vote counting accuracy compared to their Republican counterparts. Results from the Crosswind Texas Pulse show 70% of Democrats report being either very confident or somewhat confident that all

votes will be counted accurately compared to 50% of Republicans.

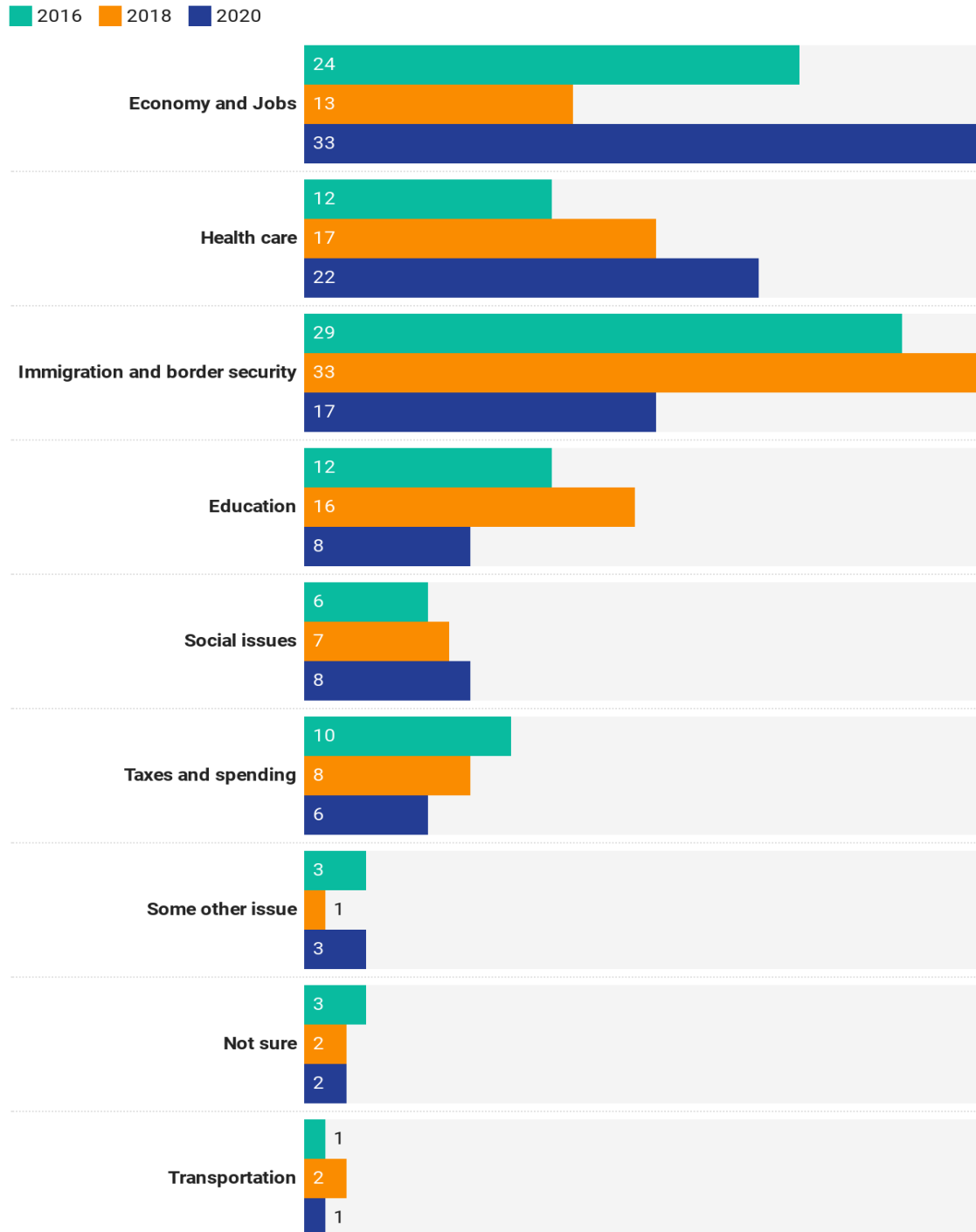
“We’ve seen national debate over the integrity of our election process and it’s clear this debate is reflected in the degree of confidence Texans express in the ballot counting process,” said Crosswind analyst Dr. Brian Watson. “Our numbers in Texas match closely with recent national polling showing the lack of confidence highest among Republicans.”

54% of Texans unaffiliated with either major party report being either very confident or somewhat confident every vote will be counted accurately.

## 2.1 Texans Identify the Most Important Issues

### What is the most important issue facing Texas today?

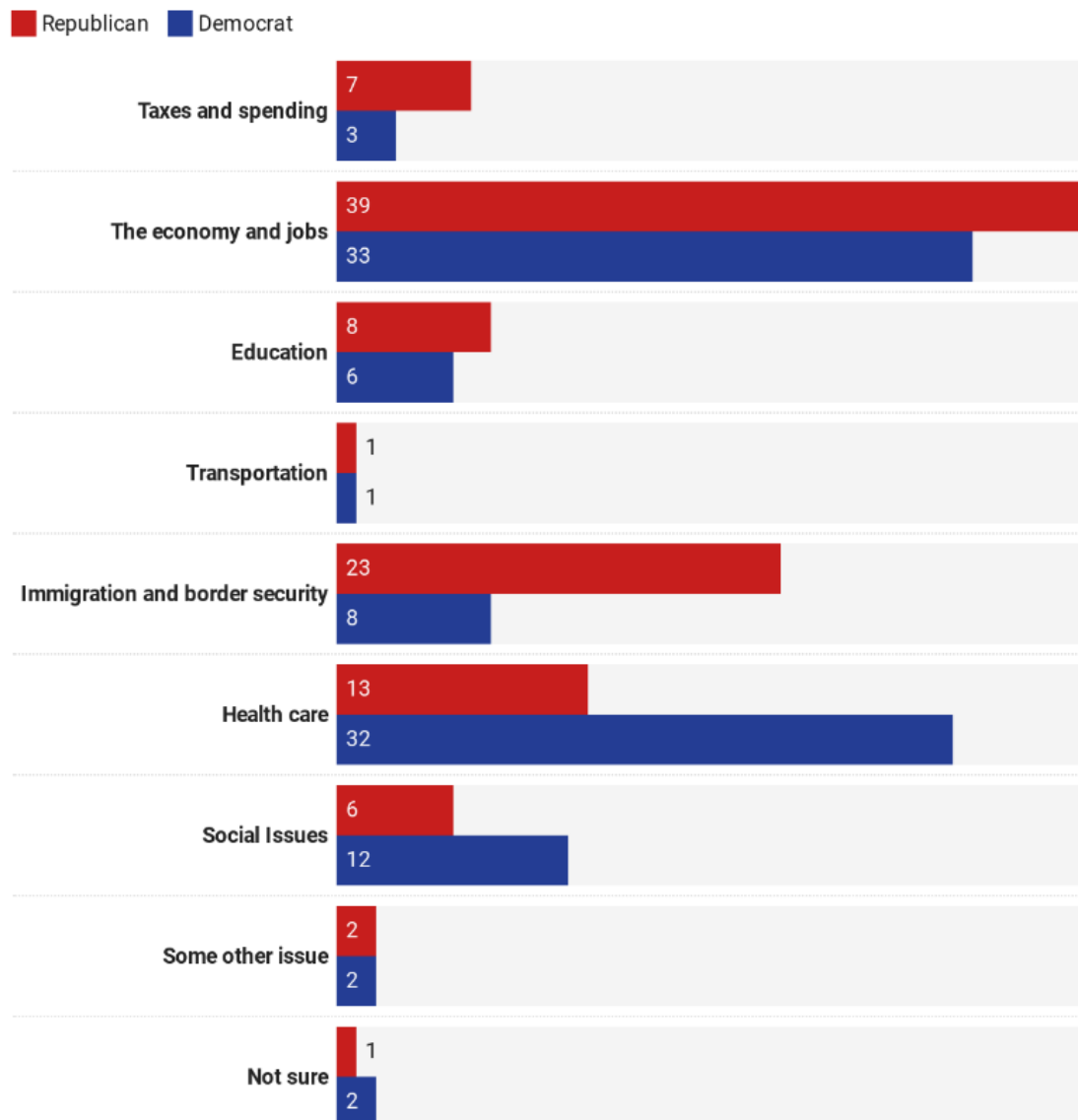
% of respondents selecting the most important issue



Results combine responses from Crosswind Texas Pulse polls collected in Sept 2016, Sept 2018, and Oct 2020

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations

## What is the most important issue facing Texas today?



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3)

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

Since the inception of Crosswind's Texas Pulse, we have asked Texans to identify the most important issue facing the state. In each of the previous three election cycles (2016, 2018 and 2020), we have monitored shifts in issue importance among Texans, and particularly differences between Republicans and Democrats.

Crosswind asked Texans to identify the most important issue facing the state in 2020. Among a list of eight choices included in our previous Texas Pulse polls, this year 33% of Texans selected the economy and jobs as the top issue. 22% pointed to health care as the most important issue and 17% chose immigration and border security. This is a noticeable shift from the 2018 and 2016

polls in which immigration and border security was rated as the top issue overall (33% and 29% respectively).

Texans are placing increasing importance on the economy and jobs and less importance on immigration and border security compared to 2018 and 2016. “Compared to our polling in previous election cycles, we have seen a dramatic shift in the issues that Texans care most

about, with the economy and jobs displacing immigration and border security as the top issue on the minds of Texas voters,” said Crosswind CEO and President Thomas Graham.

The importance of health care is growing for Texans. Our poll shows a 5% increase in health care as the most important issue in 2020 compared to Crosswind’s poll during the 2018 mid-terms.

### 3.1 Evaluations of COVID-19 leadership

A global outbreak of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 has affected all areas of life for Texans and Americans beyond. Crosswind asked likely Texas voters to evaluate the leadership of our elected officials during the crisis by asking respondents to rate both Donald Trump’s and Greg Abbott’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results show mixed opinions, with slight majorities describing the response of both leaders as either “fair” or “poor.”

For President Trump, results show 47% of likely voters rate the president’s response

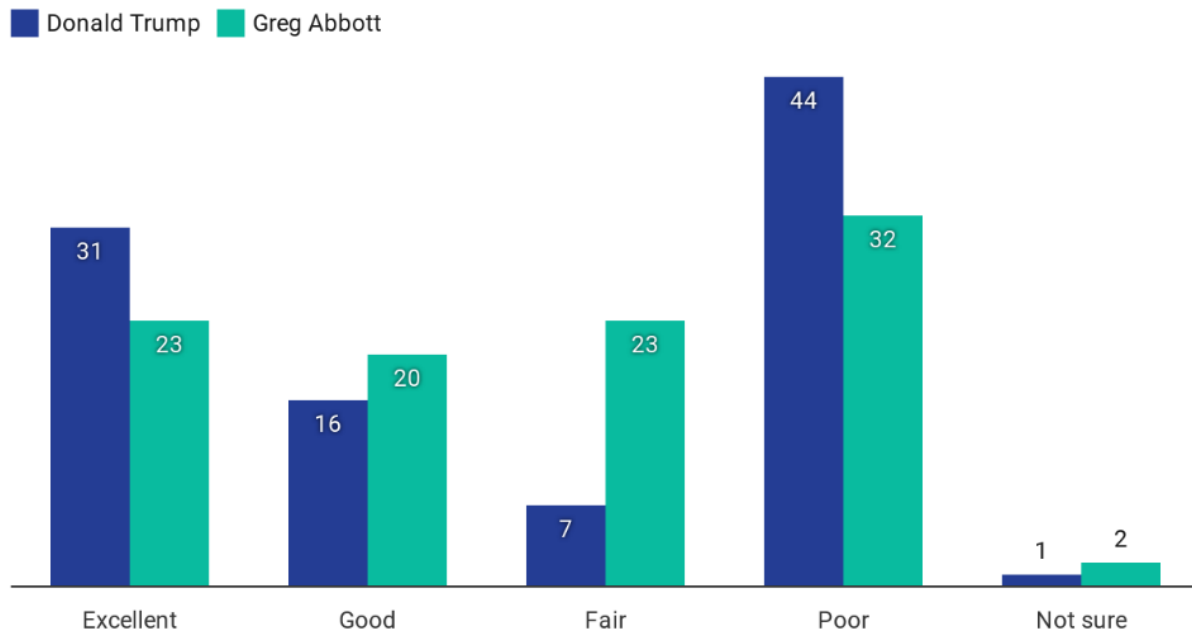
as either “excellent” or “good.” By contrast, 44% of Texans rate the president’s response as “poor,” the lowest option available on the Crosswind questionnaire. When asked to evaluate the performance of Governor Greg Abbot’s response to the pandemic, 43% of likely voters rate Abbott’s response as either “excellent” or “good,” while 55% rate his response as either “fair” or “poor.”

Figure 9 shows the distribution of responses among Texans rating the pandemic response of both Trump and Abbott.

**Figure 9. A slight majority of Texans are dissatisfied with Trump’s and Abbott’s pandemic response**

## Rating response to the COVID-19 pandemic

How would you rate President Donald Trump’s/Governor Greg Abbott’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic?



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

Differences by party affiliation often provide the sharpest contrasts in the attitudes of Texans, and the gaps between how Texas Democrats and Republicans evaluate the pandemic response of Donald Trump and Greg Abbott are significant. Responses to President Trump’s COVID-19 response are especially polarized.

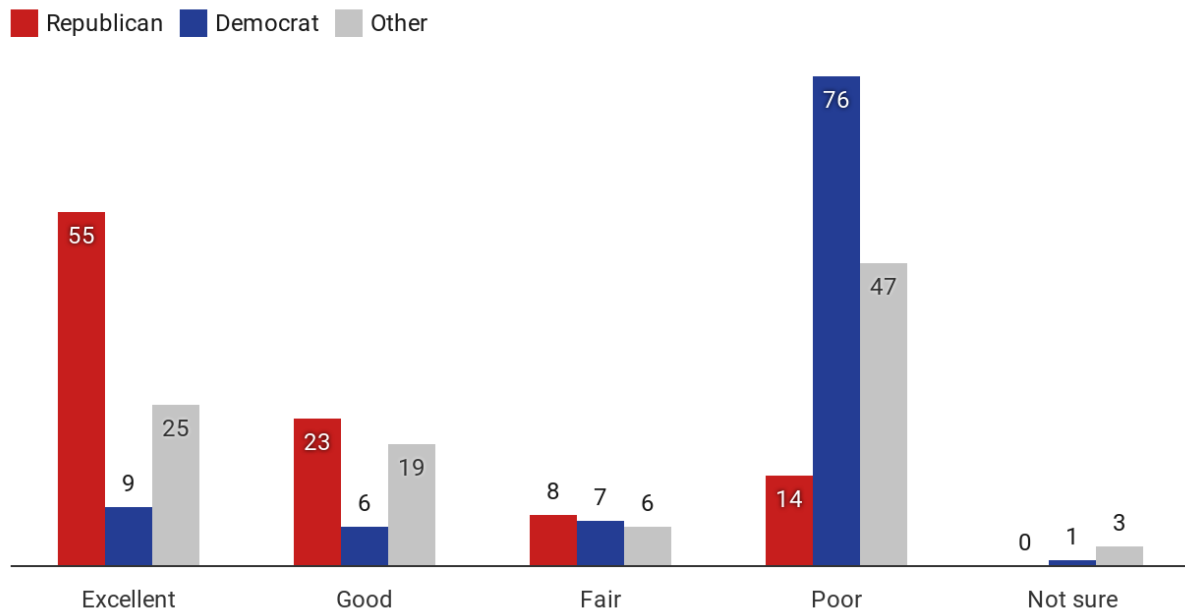
While 55% of Republican likely voters rate Trump’s pandemic response as “excellent,” 76% of Democrats and 47% of unaffiliated

voters rate his response as “poor,” the largest response for both groups by far. The dissatisfaction with President Trump’s response among unaffiliated Texans is likely alarming to Republican supporters, although this dissatisfaction does not appear to be penalizing Trump’s reelection chances in the Lone Star State. Despite a majority of likely voters holding a critical view of Trump’s response to the pandemic, he nonetheless leads comfortably in his bid for Texas’ 38 electoral college votes.

**Figure 10. Texas Republicans and Democrats are sharply divided over Trump's pandemic response**

## How would you rate President Donald Trump's response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

% of likely voters in Texas



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

The Texas Pulse results find that ratings of Governor Abbott's response to the pandemic are not equally polarized by party affiliation as ratings of the president, but the gap between Republicans and Democrats remains noticeable. 68% of likely Republican voters rated Abbott's response to the pandemic as either "excellent" or "good," compared to 78% of Democrats who rate the governor's response as either "fair" or "poor." Interestingly, the number of Republican Texans likely to disapprove of Abbot's handling of the pandemic is larger than Democrats who are likely to approve of the response. 32% of Republicans, or

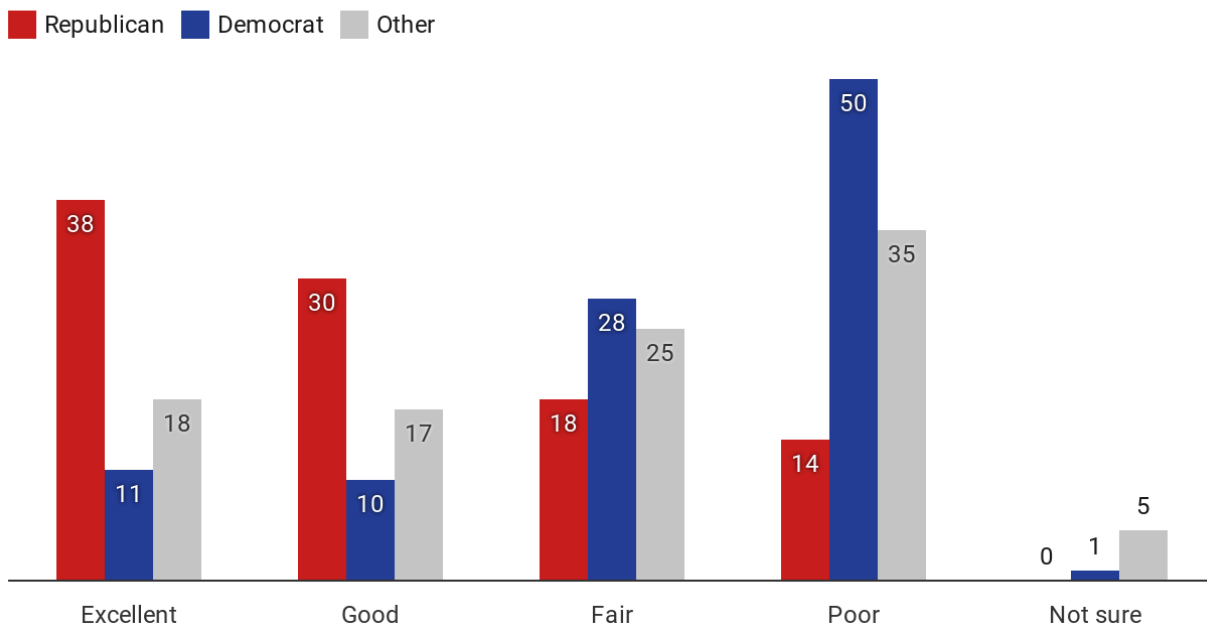
nearly 1 in 3, rate the governor's response as "fair" or "poor," compared to 21%, or 1 in 5, Texas Democrats who approve of Abbott's response by rating it either "excellent" or "good."

A solid majority of unaffiliated Texans also disapprove of Abbot's response to the pandemic. 60% of Texans who do not identify with either major political party rated Abbott's response to the pandemic as either "fair" or "poor," compared to 35% who rated his response as either "excellent" or "good."

**Figure 11. Texas Republicans and Democrats are sharply divided over Abbott's pandemic response**

## How would you rate Governor Greg Abbott's response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

% of likely voters in Texas



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)

Chart: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

### 4.1 Replacing Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Texans are divided by party affiliation over the question of when the United States Senate should act on the Supreme Court nomination to replace the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, according to the latest Crosswind Media & Public Relations Texas Pulse Poll.

In the lead up to Senate hearings in Washington D.C. to confirm Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, debate between Democrats and Republicans on how to conduct the

confirmation process also raged in the Lone Star State. In Texas, voters affiliated with both parties appear just as divided over the confirmation process as their elected officials in Washington.

Results from the Crosswind Texas Pulse survey shows Texans disagreeing along party lines over the confirmation process to replace the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. 79% of Texas Republicans say that the U.S. Senate should confirm “as soon as possible before the 2020 election”

the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett. 71% of Texas Democrats want the winner of the election to appoint a new Justice after the election.

Texans preferring neither major party were split 42% to 42% between those same options. A small minority of all three groups prefer confirming the nominee between election day and the inauguration in January, regardless of the victor between Trump and Biden.

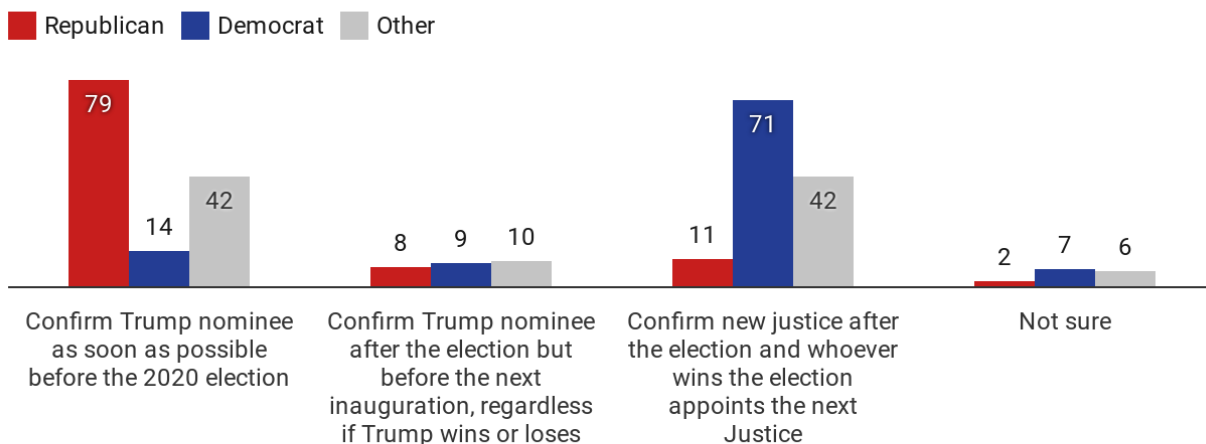
“Texans are as divided as we presume the nation is on the question of when to confirm the nomination to the Supreme Court,” said Crosswind CEO Thomas Graham.

“Nationwide in 2016, two-thirds of Republicans and only 1 in 5 Democrats wanted to wait for the November election results before confirming Obama nominee Merrick Garland,” said Crosswind analyst Dr. Brian Watson. “Those views have flipped completely among Texas Republicans and Democrats in 2020.

**Figure 12. Republican and Democrat voters are deeply divided on Supreme Court nomination**

## When should the United States Senate vote to confirm a new Justice to the Supreme Court to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg?

% statement agreement among likely Texas voters



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters, Oct 5 - 6 (+/-3%)

Source: Crosswind Media & Public Relations

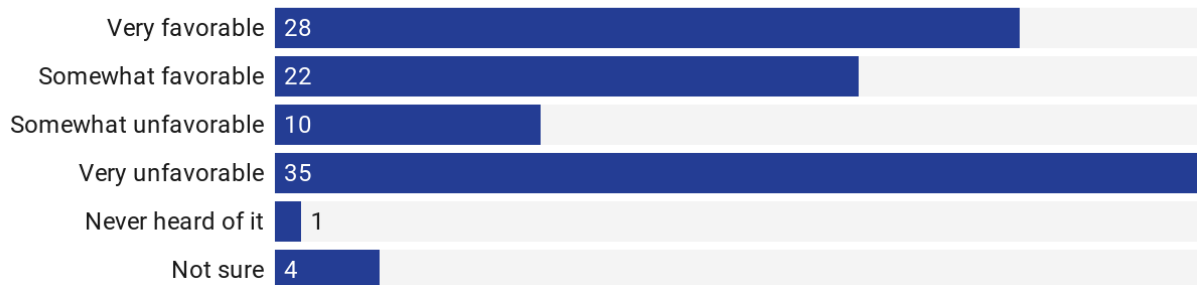


## 5.1 Black Lives Matter

**Figure 13. Half of Texans have a favorable opinion of Black Lives Matter**

### Percent support for Black Lives Matter among likely Texas voters

Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the social movement Black Lives Matter?



Survey among 1000 likely Texas voters (+/-3%)

Source: Crosswind Media & Public Relations • Created with Datawrapper

This year, the Texas Pulse for the first-time asked Texans to share their overall opinion of the social movement called Black Lives Matter (BLM). We chose to characterize BLM as a “social movement” rather than any specific organization given the geographic and rhetorical diversity of beliefs and behaviors associated with the BLM movement that is not explicitly tied to the official Black Lives Matter organization. Overall, upon hearing BLM described as a social movement, 50% of likely voters in our sample report having either a very favorable or somewhat *favorable* opinion of BLM. 45% of respondents report having a somewhat or very *unfavorable* opinion.

Results from the 2020 Crosswind Texas Pulse also identified some variation between age groups in evaluating BLM. A plurality of young Texans, or 39%, between the ages of 18 and 39 years old report having a very favorable opinion of BLM. Opposition to the movement tends to be more extreme. Pluralities of Texans aged 40-64 and 65+ report holding a very unfavorable opinion of BLM (39% and 35% respectively).

Breaking the results down by age group shows that slight majorities of all three age segments report having either a very or somewhat favorable opinion of Black Lives Matter.

## 6.1 Limitations of this report

In the interest of transparency and to highlight Crosswind’s commitment to

improving the quality of our research, it is appropriate to describe in detail what we

see as the core limitations of this year's Texas Pulse. Our agency relies on a variety of methodologies and research partners to serve the needs of our clients. While we are confident in the findings of this report, every project wields methods specific to the questions required.

One surprising result from this year's Texas Pulse is the level of non-white voters held by Donald Trump. Our final likely voter result in 2018 (47-44 for Cruz +/- 4%) was close to the final margin (50.9-48.3% for Cruz); Crosswind observed a 3-point difference, and that margin stayed the same even as undecideds picked a candidate in November. Our result also masked some internal numbers that are troubling.

Looking at the breakdown by ethnic groups, for Hispanic voters Crosswind's poll saw 55-37% in favor of O'Rourke while final exit polls showed 64-35% in favor of Beto. We saw Beto leading 57-34% among Black voters, the final was 89-11%. Among

whites, we saw a 52-41% advantage for Cruz; the final was 66-34%.

In other words, we were way off in observing how polarized by ethnicity the 2018 mid-term election was going to be. Those are pretty large mis-estimations of how ethnic groups are going to vote. The errors were headed in opposite directions: white voters for Cruz cancelled out non-white voters for O'Rourke. It's highly unlikely *that many* people changed their voting intentions between September and November. 83% of folks had made up their minds at least a month before Election Day. One possible explanation is that there was high turnout among "unlikely" voters. Pulse Opinion's likely voter model self-reports as an indicator of "likely" voting, which doesn't always do a good job of predicting first-time voters.

For additional inquiries about the results of methodology employed in this study, please contact us at [media@crosswindpr.com](mailto:media@crosswindpr.com).

## 7.1 Appendix

### Questionnaire wording & percent response

1\* If the 2020 presidential election were held today, would you vote for Republican Donald Trump or Democrat Joe Biden?

51% Donald Trump  
44% Joe Biden  
2% Some other candidate  
3% Not sure

2\* If the 2020 election for US Senate were held today, would you vote for Republican John Cornyn or Democrat MJ Hegar?

48% John Cornyn  
39% MJ Hegar  
3% Some other candidate  
10% Not sure

3\* How would you rate President Donald Trump's response to the Covid-19 pandemic – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

31% Excellent  
16% Good  
7% Fair  
44% Poor  
1% Not sure

4\* How would you rate Governor Greg Abbott's response to the Covid-19 pandemic – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

23% Excellent  
20% Good  
23% Fair  
32% Poor  
2% Not sure

5\* What is the most important issue facing Texas today, taxes and spending, the economy and jobs, education, transportation, immigration and border security, health care, or social issues?

6% Taxes and spending  
33% The economy and jobs  
8% Education  
1% Transportation

17% Immigration and border security  
22% Health care  
8% Social issues  
3% Some other issue  
2% Not sure

6\* How confident are you that every vote will be counted accurately in the upcoming 2020 election for president? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident that votes will be counted accurately.

27% Very confident  
31% Somewhat confident  
25% Not very confident  
16% Not at all confident  
2% Not sure

7\* When should the United States Senate vote to confirm a new Justice to the Supreme Court to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg? Should the Senate confirm the Trump nominee as soon as possible before the 2020 election, should they confirm the Trump nominee after the 2020 election but before the inauguration regardless if President Trump wins or loses, or should a new Justice be confirmed after the election and whoever wins the election would appoint the next Justice?

47% Confirm Trump nominee as soon as possible before the 2020 election  
9% Confirm Trump nominee after the 2020 election but before the next inauguration, regardless if President Trump wins or loses  
39% Confirm new justice after the election and whoever wins the election appoints the next Justice  
5% Not sure

8\* Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the social movement Black Lives Matter?

28% Very favorable  
22% Somewhat favorable  
10% Somewhat unfavorable  
35% Very unfavorable  
1% You have never heard of it  
4% Not sure

9\* How would you rate the job Donald Trump has been doing as President... do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job he's been doing?

42% Strongly approve  
11% Somewhat approve  
7% Somewhat disapprove  
39% Strongly disapprove  
1% Not sure