A Generalized Survey Analysis of Public Opinion Polls in Texas: Issues, Challenges, and Policy Implications Beyond 2022

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Abstract
Houston, Texas—A recent public opinion poll developed by Michael O. Adams, Ph.D.conducted by YouGov asked Texans their views on the overall performance of the state and a number of issues of importance including; cost of living, taxes on goods and services, support for immigration and support for diversity in the public and private sectors. The survey results provide valuable insights on what issues are most important across various demographic markers including age, race/ethnicity and party identification. As Texas gears up for the May 24, 2022 runoff election, these results help bring a deeper understanding to what Texans believe the candidates should focus on during the remainder of the campaign trail and what issues might need more attention and/or communication effort towards Texans to better understand how the state is actually approaching said issues. The 9-question public opinion poll surveyed 434 respondents between February 16-18, 2022. The survey margin of error is ±4.7%.
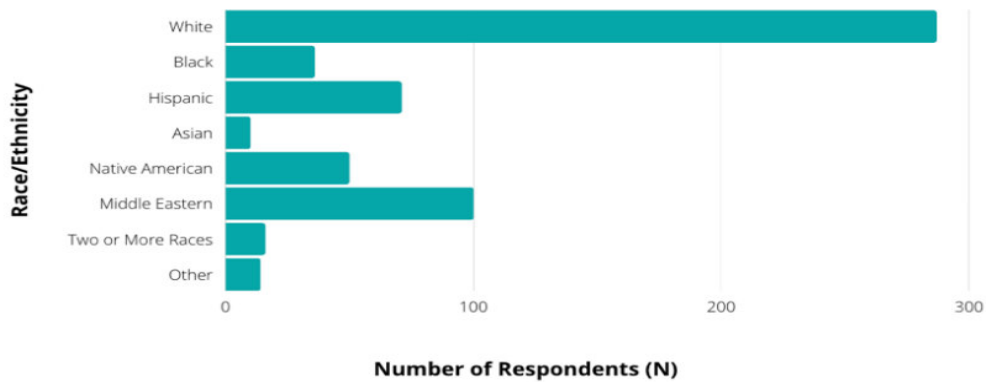
Introduction

Houston, Texas remains one of the fastest growing cities in population size and racial/ethnic diversity in the United States. Though public opinion polls on national elections are frequent, there remains a dearth of data collection focused on understanding public opinion at the local level and more specifically an examination of views based on key demographic markers that include gender, age, political identification and race. The survey was conducted through the YouGov platform and designed by Michael O. Adams, Ph.D. The survey asked Texans their views on the overall performance of the state and a number of issues of importance including; cost of living, taxes on goods and services, support for immigration and support for diversity in the public and private sectors. The 9-question public opinion poll surveyed 434 respondents between February 16-18, 2022. The survey margin of error is ±4.7%. Key findings from the survey reveal that younger respondents, Black respondents, and respondents who identify as Democrat hold more progressive views in support for increased diversity across sectors and support to increase government intervention. This public opinion poll can help to build upon the needs for primary research that can contribute to public policy research and development required for more thoughtful decision making around issues impacting voters and residents across the state of Texas.

Demographic

Among respondents, 66% [N=287] identify as White, 16% [N=71] as Hispanic, 8% [N=36] as Black, 2% [N=10] as Asian, and 4% [N=16] identify as being of Two or More Races. Racial/ethnic groups with 10 respondents or less are combined to form a new Other category 3% [N=14] inclusive of Native American 0.92% [N=4], Middle Eastern 0.46% [N=2], and Other 1% [N=8] of total respondents.[1]
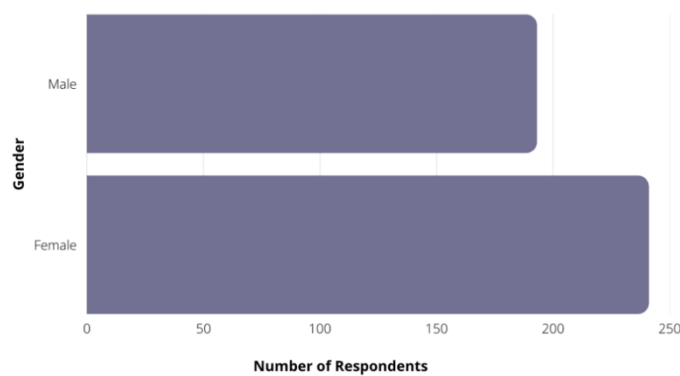
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[1] Right now, Yougov does not ask a branching question for respondents who identify as Other. Therefore, additional information on racial breakdown in this category include some limitations.

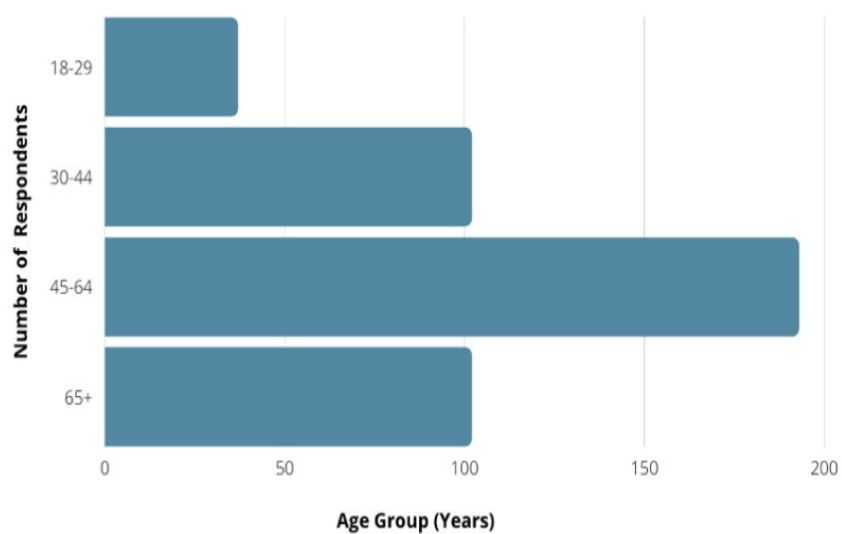Figure 1.1: Race/Ethnicity of Poll Respondents

In terms of gender split, 44% [N=193] identify as male respondents while 56% [N=241] identify as female respondents.

Figure 1.2: Gender of Poll Respondents

In the survey, respondents are categorized by a series of age groups 18-29 (9%) [N=37], 30-44 (24%) [N=102], 45-64 (44%) [N=193], 65+ (24%) [N=102]
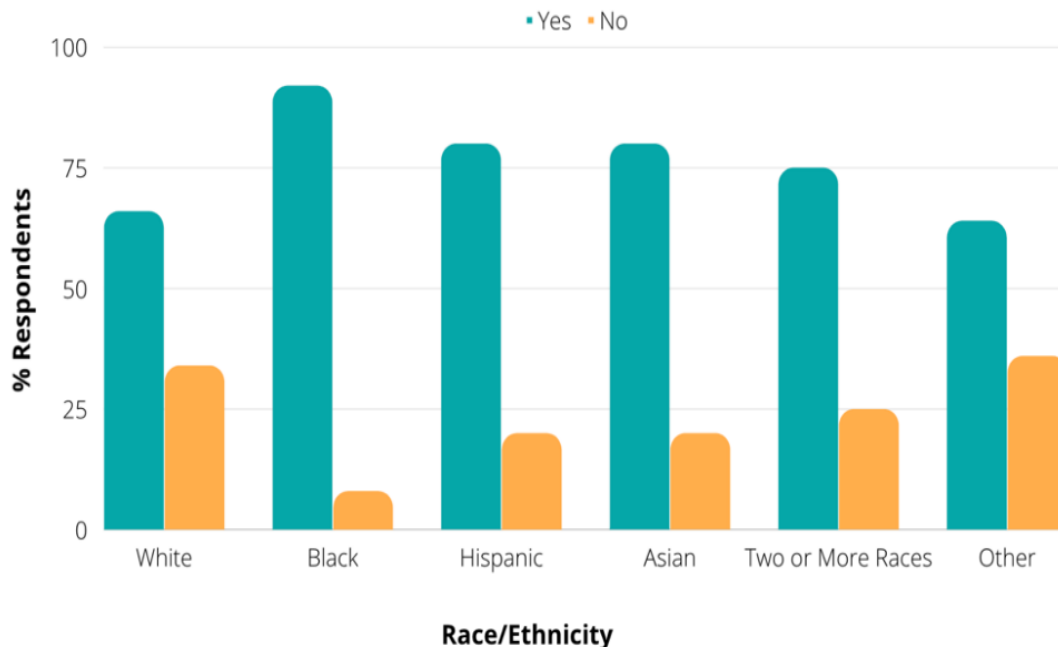
Figure 1.3: Age Group(s) of Poll Respondents

Cost of Utilities

The survey finds that a majority of respondents (71%) say that the Texas Legislature should be called back into a special session to lower the cost of utilities. Among racial groups, Black (92%) respondents are overwhelmingly
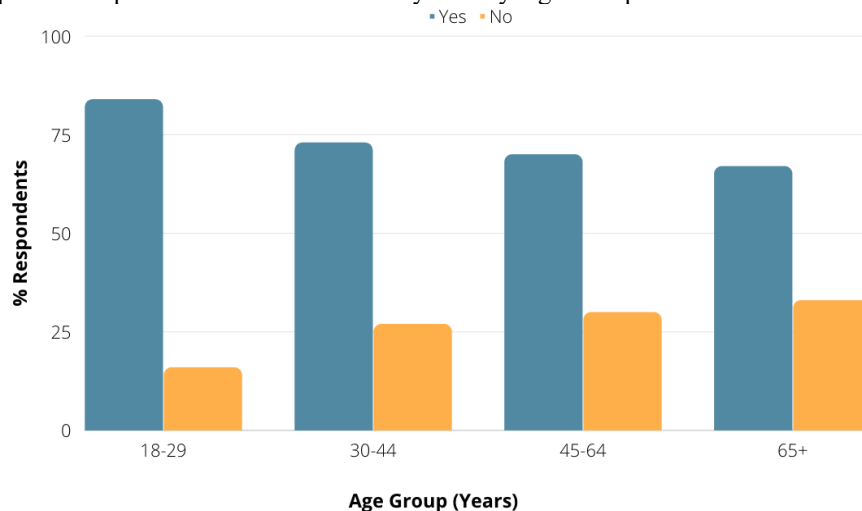
in favor of calling a special session to lower the cost of utilities followed by those identifying as being of Two or More Races (75%). White respondents (66%) and those who identify as Other (64%) are least likely to support calling a special session to address reducing the cost of utilities (Figure 1.1). Overall, when race/ethnicity is considered, most groups support calling a special session to lower the cost of utilities.

Figure 1.4: Should the legislature be called back into special session to lower monthly electric utility bills? (Race/Ethnicity)
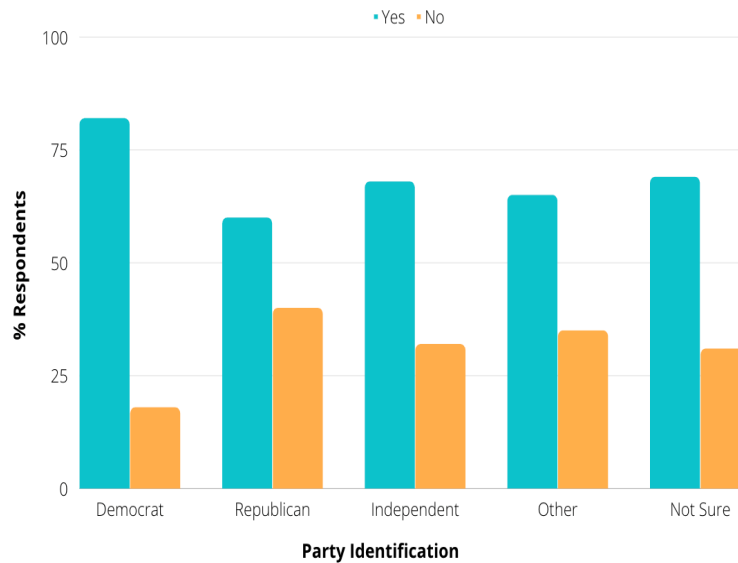

Race/Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 1.2, a significant majority of younger respondents (84%) are more likely than older respondents to support calling a special session while respondents 65+ (67%) are the least likely among all age groups to support calling a special session. Respondents ages 30–44 (73%) and respondents 45–64 (70%) are but a few points off from older respondents in their support (Figure 1.2). Support for a special session to lower utility bills decreases as the age of respondents increases—suggesting an inverse relationship between age and support for a special session to address this issue.

Figure 1.5: Support for a special session to lower utility bills by Age Group

Age Group (Years)

In considering political party affiliation, a large majority of Democrat (82%) respondents support calling a special session while Republican (60%) respondents are the least likely to favor calling a special session to lower utility bills. Respondents who identify as Independent (68%), Other (65%), and Not Sure (69%) are less likely to support calling a special session but only slightly more than Republican respondents (Figure 1.3). The data suggest that respondents who identify as Democrat hold the more diverging view on calling a special session than respondents who belong to other political parties.
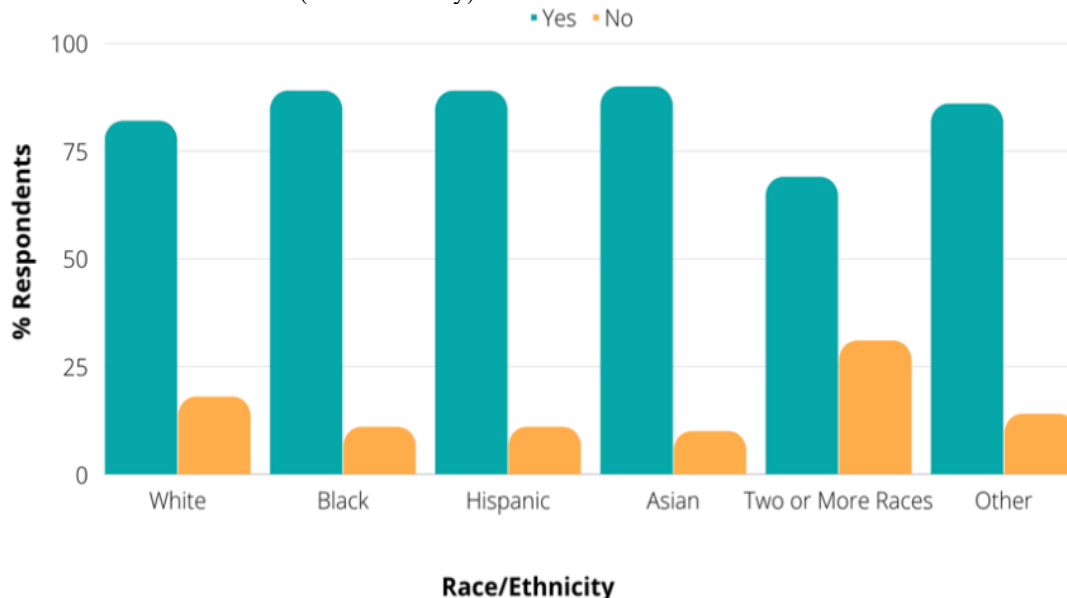
Figure 1.6: Support for a special session to lower utility bills by Party Identification
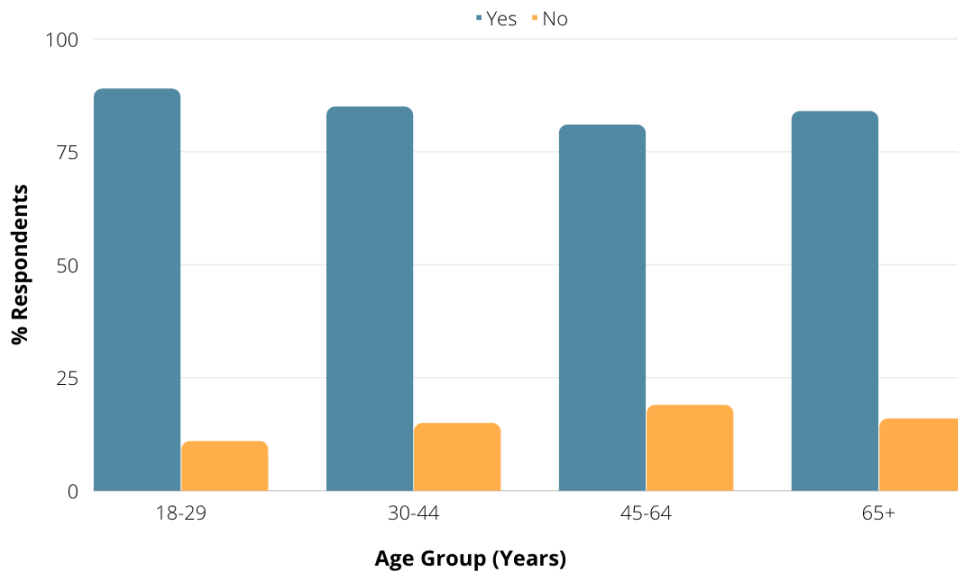

Sales Taxes

The survey finds that 71% of respondents believe the Texas Legislature should eliminate sales tax on all groceries and medical services and equipment to reduce the cost for Texas consumers. When examining views across racial/ethnic groups on the issue, Asian (90%) respondents are most likely to support eliminating sales taxes followed by Black (89%), Hispanic (89%), and those who identify as Other (86%). White (82%) respondents were slightly less likely to support the intervention of the legislature to address sales taxes but respondents who identify as being of Two or More Races (69%) are the least likely to support eliminating sales tax (Figure 1.4). At least 2/3 of all respondents by racial and ethnic group, support suspending the sales tax for consumers and his suggest that sales tax is an issue of importance for most racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 1.7: Should the legislature eliminate sales taxes on all groceries and medical services and equipment to reduce cost for Texas consumers? (Race/Ethnicity)
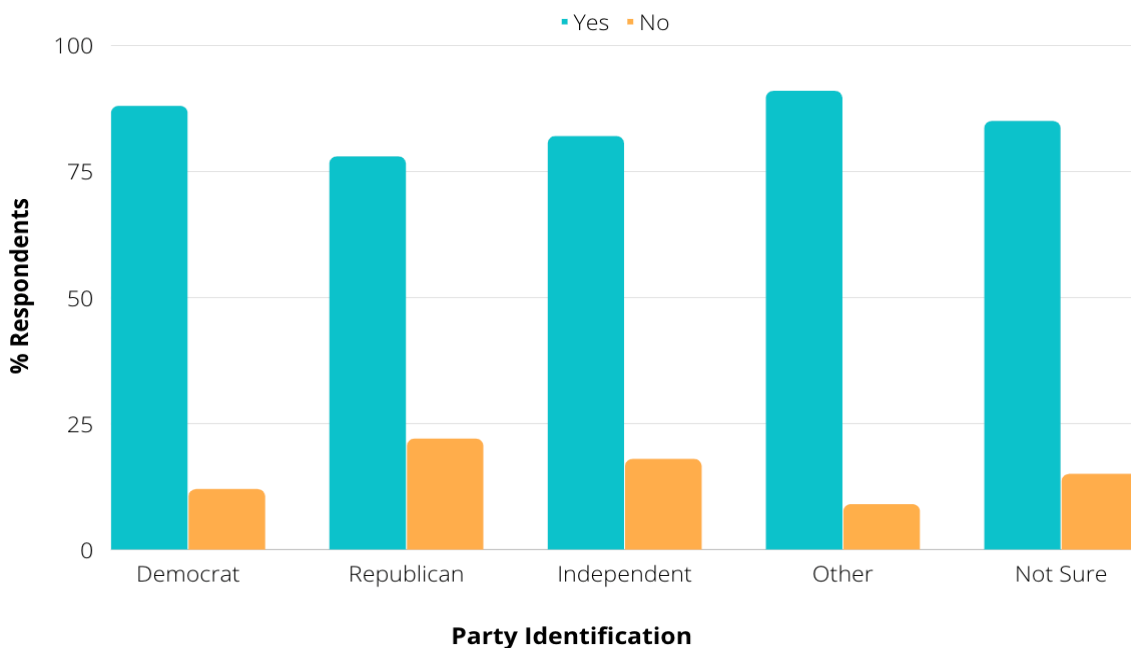

Across age groups, there is no more than an eight-point difference between respondents in support of a government intervention to eliminate sales tax. Younger respondents 18-29 (89%), are most likely to support foregoing an intervention by the legislature to remove sales taxes followed by respondents ages 30-44 (85%) and respondents 65+ (84%). Though least likely to support removing sales tax, respondents ages 45-64 (81%) the difference is minimal (Figure 1.5). The data suggests that age is not a significant factor in determining support to eliminate sales tax.

Figure 1.8: Support legislature eliminate sales taxes on all groceries and medical services and equipment to reduce cost for Texas consumers by Age Group

The survey finds that those who do not identify with a specific political party—Other (91%) widely support eliminating sales tax followed by Democrat (88%), Not Sure (85%) and Independent (82%)respondents while Republicans (78%) are the least likely to support an intervention from the Texas Legislature on doing away with sales tax (Figure 1.6).
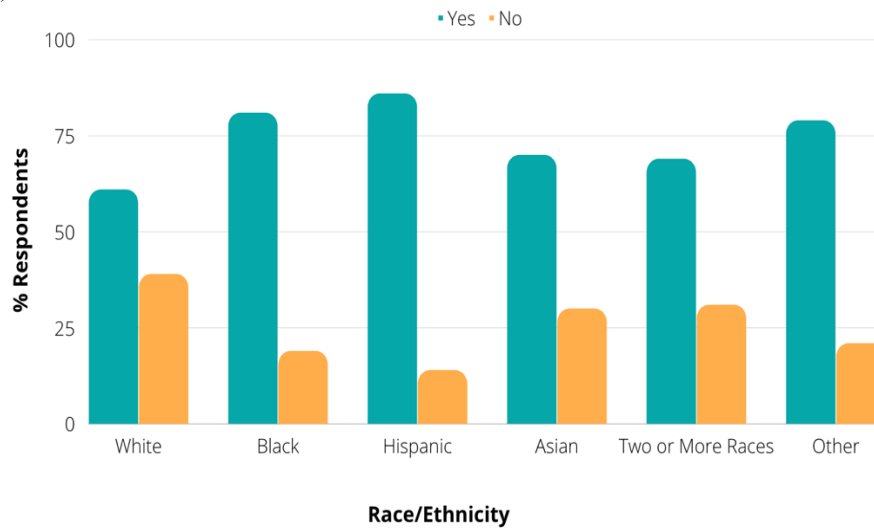
Figure 1.9: Support for the Texas Legislature to eliminate sales taxes by Party Identification
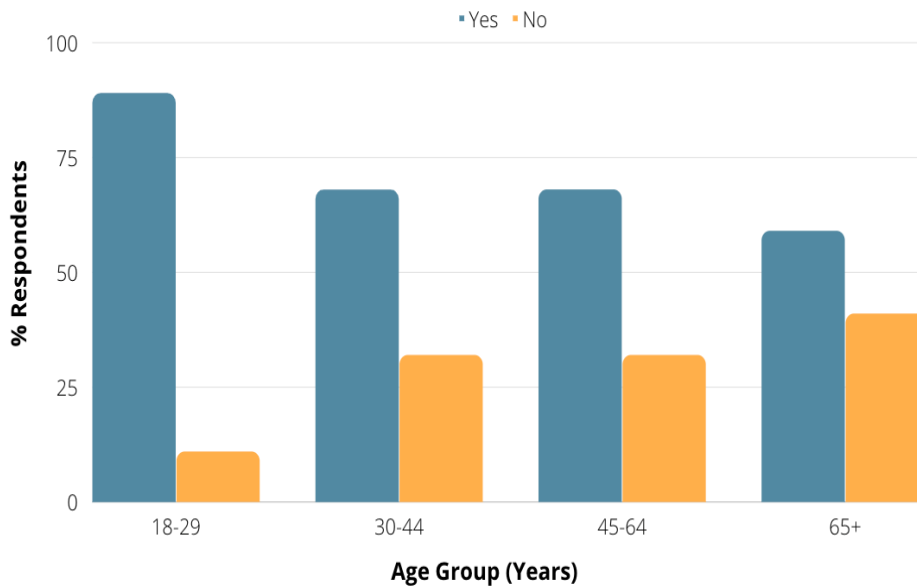

Gas Tax

When asked whether the state of Texas and Congress should intervene and suspend the gasoline tax to make it cheaper at the pump for Texans, a small majority (68%) are in favor of imposing one. Among racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic (86%) respondents are most likely to agree that the state of Texas and Congress should remove the gas tax followed by those identifying as Black (81%), and Asian (70%).   White (61%) respondents and those identifying as being of Two or More Races (69%) are least likely to support an intervention from the state of Texas and Congress to suspend the gasoline tax (Figure 1.7). With the exception of White respondents, at least 2/3 of all respondents by racial and ethnic group, support suspending the sales tax to reduce the cost of goods and services for consumers.

Figure 2.0: Should the state and Congress suspend the gas tax to make gasoline at the pump cheaper to buy? (Race/Ethnicity)
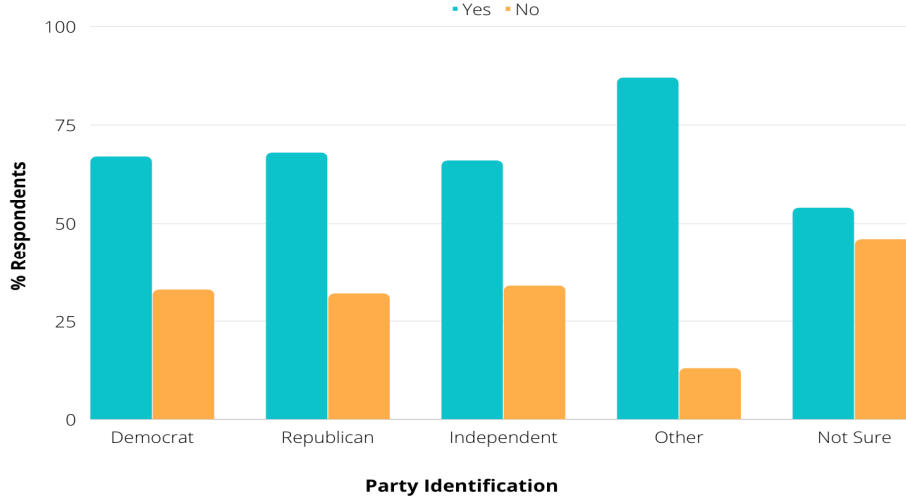

Examining support to lower gas by age group reveals that respondents ages 18–29 (89%), are most likely to believe the state and Congress should intervene to make the price of gas cheaper at the pump followed by respondents 30-44 (68%) and 45-64 (68%). Respondents ages 65+ (59%) are least likely to support a government intervention on gas taxes (Figure 1.8). Young people are noticeably more concerned with the price of gas than all older groups by a minimum 21-point gap.

Figure 2.1: Support to suspend the gas tax in Texas by Age Group

The data suggests that respondents who do not identify with a specific political party—Other (87%) are very likely to support suspending the gas tax to lower the price of gas. Democrats (67%), Republicans (68%), and Independents (66%), share a similar sentiment in being less likely to support suspending the current tax on gasoline in Texas. Respondents who selected Not Sure (54%) when indicating their political party identification are the least likely to support a temporary removal of the gas tax (Figure 1.9).

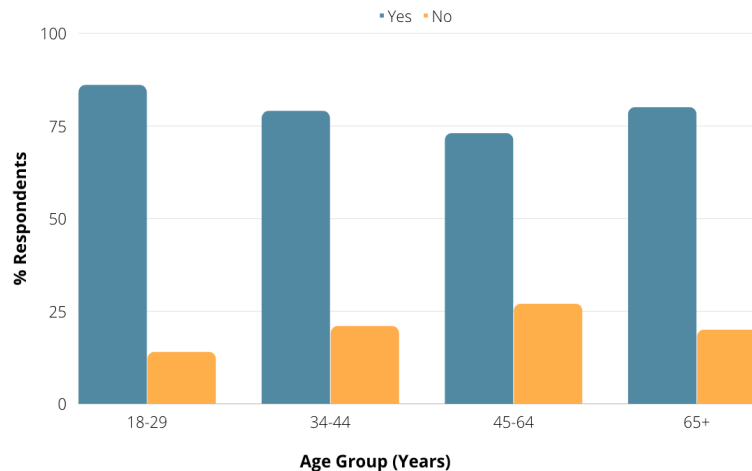Figure 2.2: Support to suspend the gas tax in Texas by Party Identification

Property Tax

Looking at housing costs, more than two-thirds (77%) of all respondents support getting rid of the annual appraise value property tax increase in Texas.
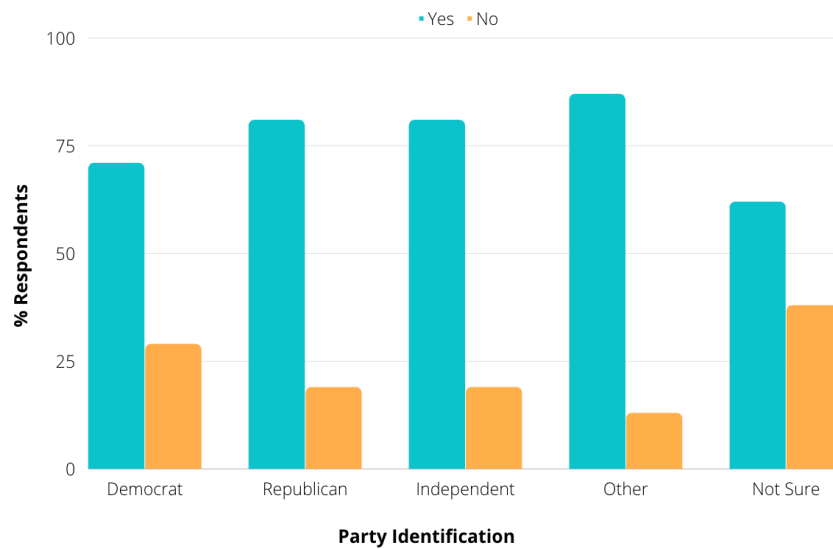
Across age groups, the majority of respondents shared similar views in their support for removing the annual increase. Younger respondents; however, are most likely 18-29 (86%) to support suspending the property tax followed by respondents 65+ (80%) and respondents 34-44 (79%) years of age while respondents ages 45-64 (73%) are least likely to support suspending the property tax. There is no more than a 6-point difference between respondents suggesting that the issue of property taxes is a shared concern for all age groups.

Figure 2.3: Should annual increases in property taxes from appraised value increases be eliminated? (Age Group/Years)

The data suggest that respondents who identify as Other (87%), in terms of party affiliation, are most likely to agree that the annual increase in property taxes from appraise value be eliminated. There was little difference in sentiment when looking at respondents who identify as Republican (81%), Independence (81%), and Democrat (71%). Respondents who identify as Not Sure (62%) are the least likely to support getting rid of the annual increase for property taxes based on appraise value. With the exception of those unsure of their party, the cost of property taxes as an issue of importance transcends party lines.

Figure 2.4: Support to eliminate appraised value increases on property taxes by Party Identification

Overall, respondents across ethnic/racial groups share similar views on support for eliminating the property tax increase. Respondents who identify as Other (100%) are most likely to support the removal of the increase followed by respondents who identify as being of Two or More Races (88%), Hispanic (85%), Asian (80%), and White (75%). Black respondents were the least likely to support eliminating the appraised value increase but respondents from all racial/ethnic groups have a response rate of two-thirds majority or higher in support of doing away with this method of increasing property taxes. The data then suggests that property taxes is an issue of importance across racial/ethnic lines.

Figure 2.5: Support to eliminate appraised value increases on property taxes by Race/Ethnicity
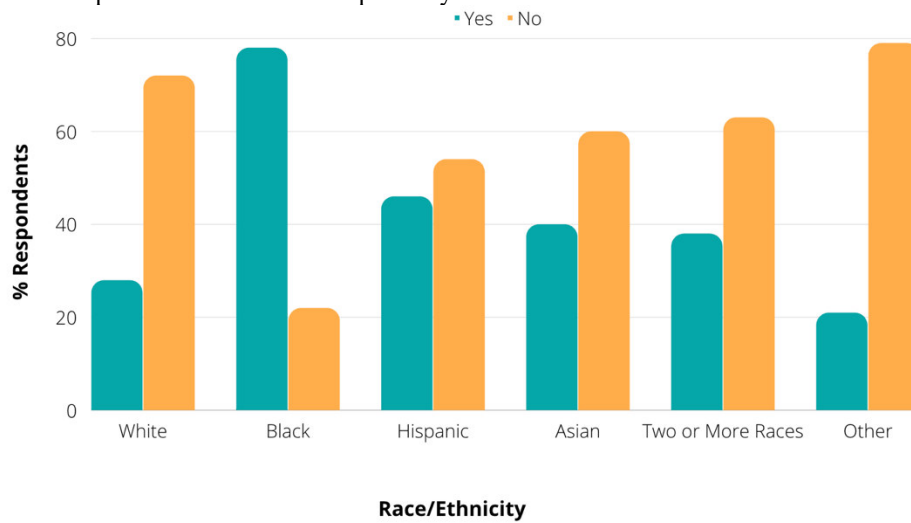

Diversity Quotas in the Private Sector

Overall, respondents are not in favor of a law that requires private corporation to have a black member on their board of directors--only 36% of respondents support this move.
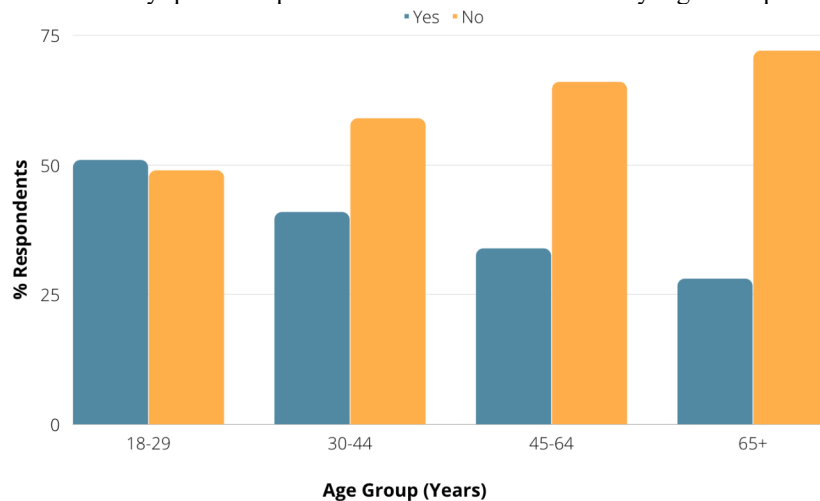
The data reveals that Black (78%) respondents are most likely to support this type of quota followed by Hispanic (46%), Asian (40%), and respondents identifying as having Two or More Races (38%). White (28%) respondents and those who identify as Other are least likely to support private sector board of director quotas for black members. With the exception of Black respondents, all racial groups have a response rate of 50% or less in support of a black private sector quota. This suggests that generally little support exists for a private sector quota of this nature among most racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 2.6: Should corporations in Texas be required by law to have Black members on their board of directors?
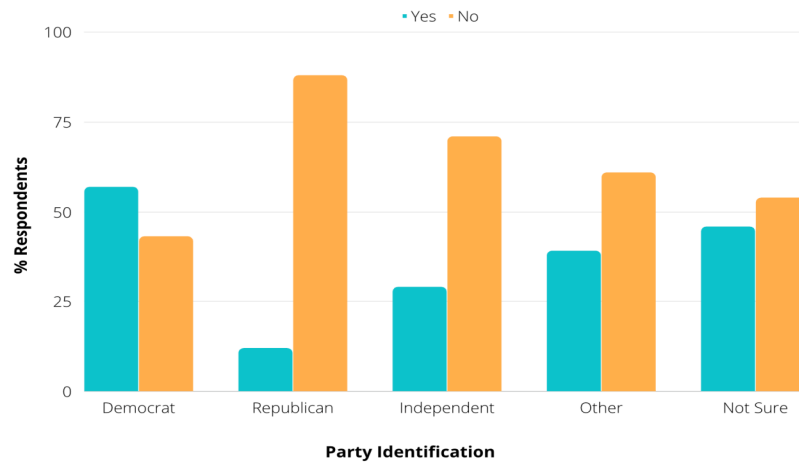

According to younger respondents 18-29 (51%), they are more inclined to support a private sector quota for black board members than any other age group followed by 30-44 (41%) and respondents 45-64 (34%). Respondents 65+ (28%) are overwhelmingly opposed to private sector quota. The data reveals an inverse relationship with age and support—as age groups increase support for a quota decreases.

Figure 2.7: Support for diversity quotas on private sector board of directors by Age Group

Looking at respondents by political affiliation, Democrat (57%) respondents tend to be most in favor by a very small majority followed by those who identify as Not Sure (46%), and Independent (29%) respondents. Republican (12%) respondents tend to be the least supportive of a private sector board quota. Overall, support across party lines is extremely low as respondents by party are more likely to not support a quota than to support a quota—with only respondents who identify as Democrat demonstrating a majority support by just seven points.

Figure 2.8: Support for diversity quotas on private sector board of directors by Party Identification
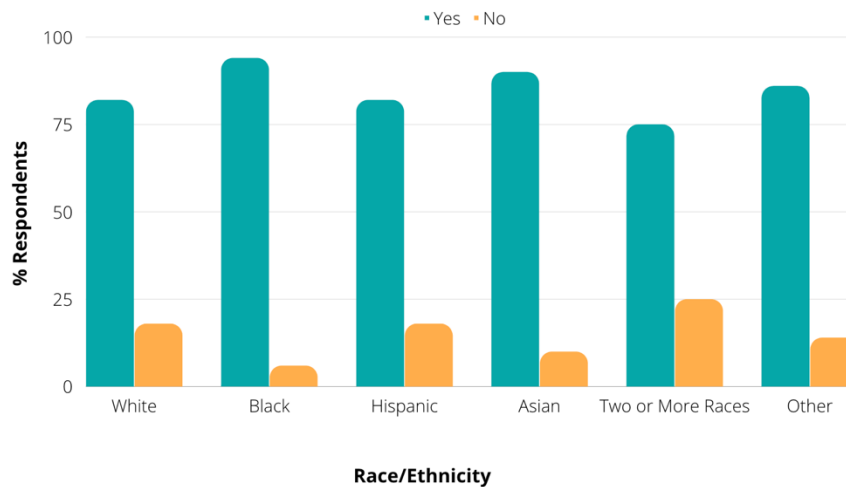
Support for A Black Female Supreme Court Appointment
A majority (83%) of respondents indicate support for appointing a black woman to the United States Supreme Court.
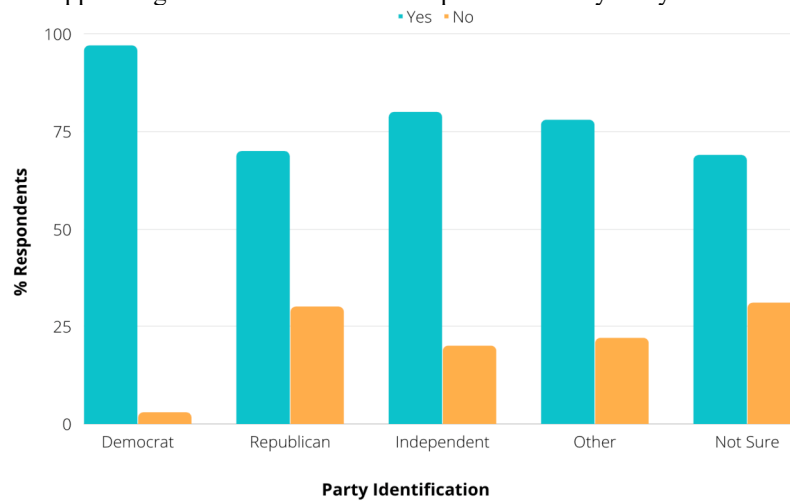
Across racial/ethnic groups, Black (94%), Asian (90%), Other (86%), White (82%), and Hispanic (82%) respondents are among those most in support of electing a black woman to the Supreme Court while those who identify as being of Two or More Races (75%) are the least likely to support a black female appointment. At least three-fourths of respondents from each racial group indicate support for the appointment of a black woman to the Supreme Court--suggesting that race is not a significant factor in determining support.

Figure 2.9: Do you support a Black woman being appointed to the United States Supreme Court? (Race/Ethnicity)
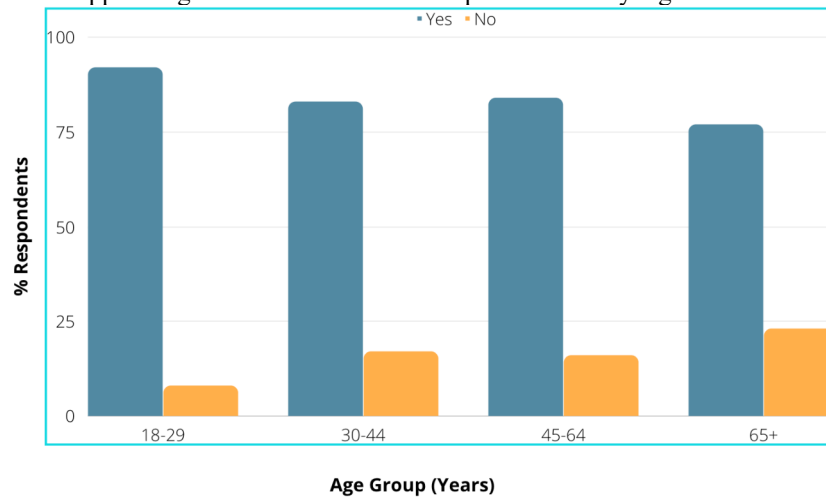

Respondents who identify as Democrat (97%) are most likely among party affiliates to support the appointment of a black woman to the highest court in the United States followed by Independent (80%) and Other (78%) respondents while Republican (70%) respondents and those identifying as Not Sure (69%) are least likely to support the appointment of a black woman to this position with just a one-point difference. The data suggests that political affiliation is a factor when support is considered but not a widely significant one as all party identifying groups have support that exceeds two-thirds in support across the board.

Figure 3.0: Support for appointing a Black woman to the Supreme Court by Party Identification

Younger respondents 18–29 (92%) are most likely among age groups to support the appointment of a black woman to the Supreme Court followed by respondents ages 45-64 (84%) and 30-44 (83%) while respondents 65+ (77%) are least likely to support the appointment of a black woman to the Supreme Court. The data suggests a slight inverse relationship between support and age. As age increases support decreases but only by a maximum of 9-points between groups. Also, each age group indicates, at least a, three-fourth majority support for the appointment.

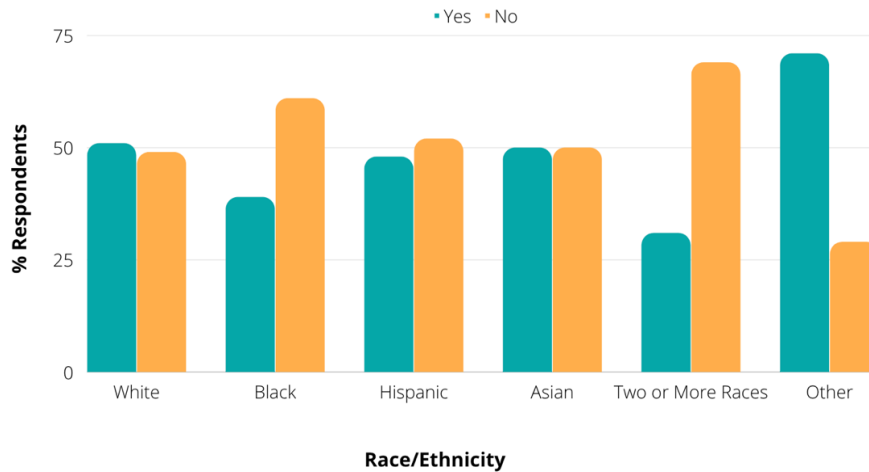Figure 3.1: Support for appointing a Black woman to the Supreme Court by Age

General State of Texas

Respondents were asked generally whether they believe the state of Texas is headed in the right direction. The data suggests that the majority of respondents (49%) do not believe the state is headed in the right direction.
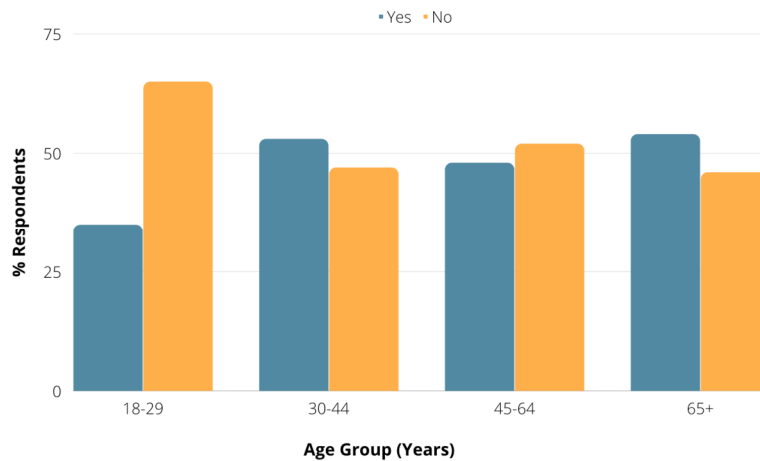
Among racial/ethnic groups, those who identify as Other (75%) are most likely to believe the state is heading in the right direction followed by White (51%), Asian (50%), and Hispanic (48%) respondents. Black respondents (39%) and those identify as being of Two or More Races (31%) are least likely to agree with the direction the state is heading in. The data suggests that overall, most/racial groups with the exception of those who identify as Other are not satisfied with the direction of the state.

Figure 3.2: Do you believe the State of Texas is moving in the right direction? (Race/Ethnicity)
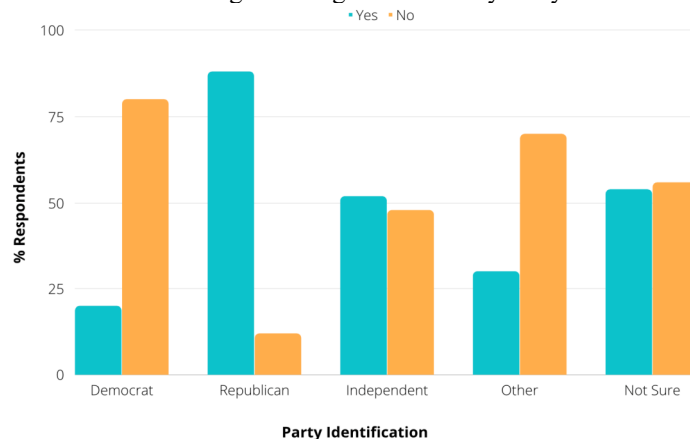

Respondents 65+ (54%) are the most satisfied with the direction of the state of Texas while respondents ages 30-44 (53%) and 45-64 (48%) show only a 6-points difference or less in sentiment to older respondents. Younger respondents are least satisfied with the direction the state is heading in 18-29 (35%) with just over a third of respondents in this group satisfied with the direct of the state.

Figure 3.3: View on whether Texas is moving in the right direction by Age Group

Among party groups, Republican respondents 88% are most likely to agree the direction of the state followed by those identifying as Not Sure (54%)—indicating a 34-point difference among the top two most satisfied party identifiers. Independent (52%), Other (30%) while respondents identifying as Democrat (20%) are the least likely to agree.

Figure 3.4: View on whether Texas is moving in the right direction by Party Identification
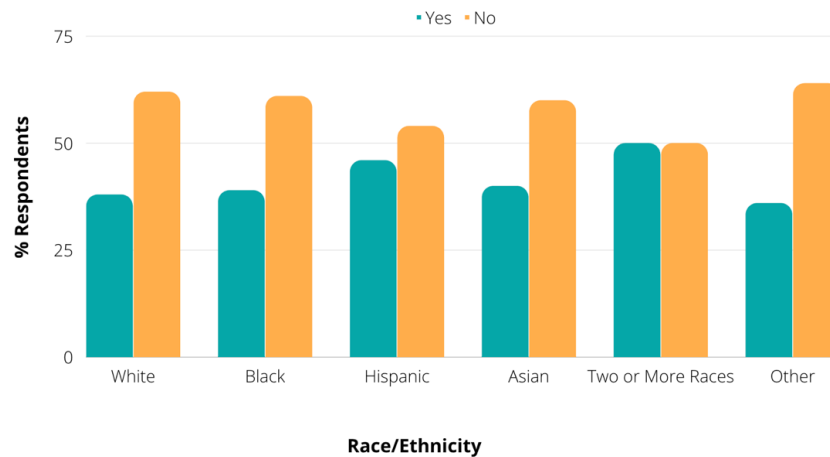
Support for Immigration

When asked about supporting a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, only 49% of respondents indicate support.
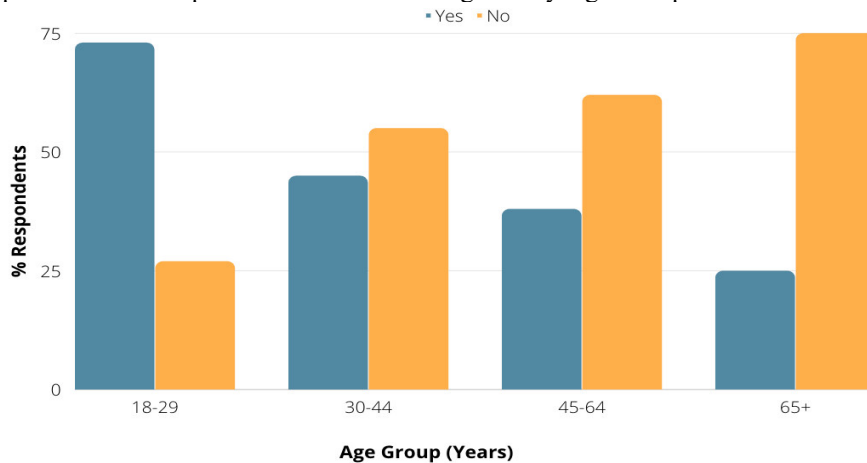
Across racial/ethnic groups, there is little support across the board. Those who identify as being of Two or More Races (50%) are most likely to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants followed by Hispanic (46%), Asian (40%), Black (39%), and White (38%) respondents. Respondents who identify as Other are least likely to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants but no group indicates a percent majority support.

Figure 3.5: Do you support citizenship for immigrants who entered the country without going through the proper process? (Race/Ethnicity)
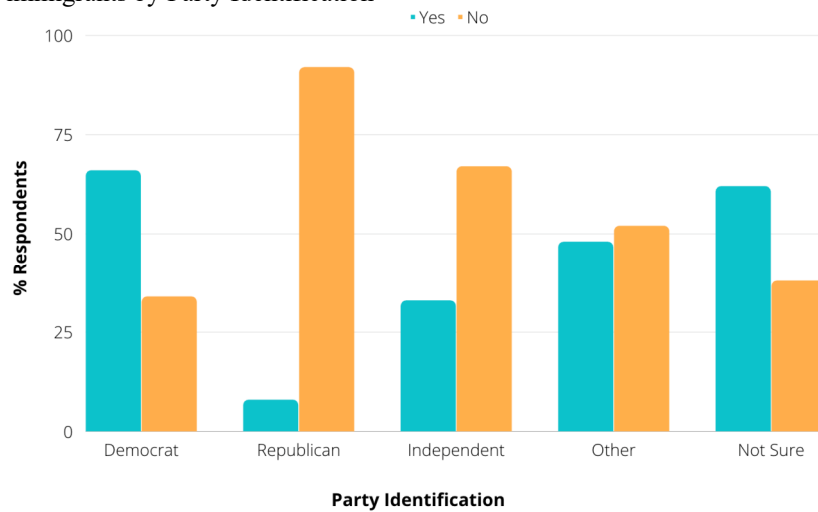

Younger respondents 18–29 (73%) are most likely to support a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who enter the country without going through the proper process followed by respondents ages 30-44 (45%) and 45-64 (38%) while respondents 65+ (25%) and older are the least likely to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Figure 3.6: Support for citizenship of undocumented immigrants by Age Group

When considering party affiliation, those who identify as Democrat (66%) are most likely to support immigration for undocumented immigrants followed by respondents who selected Not Sure (62%), and those who identify as Other (48%), and Independent (33%) respondents while those identifying as Republican (8%) are least likely to support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
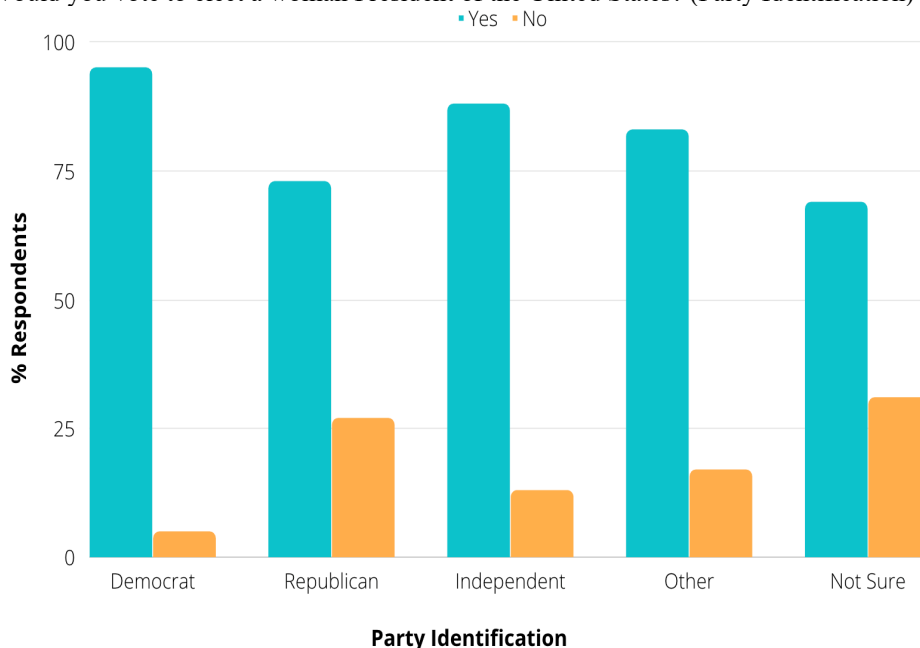
Figure 3.7 Support for citizenship of undocumented immigrants by party identification: Support for citizenship of undocumented immigrants by Party Identification

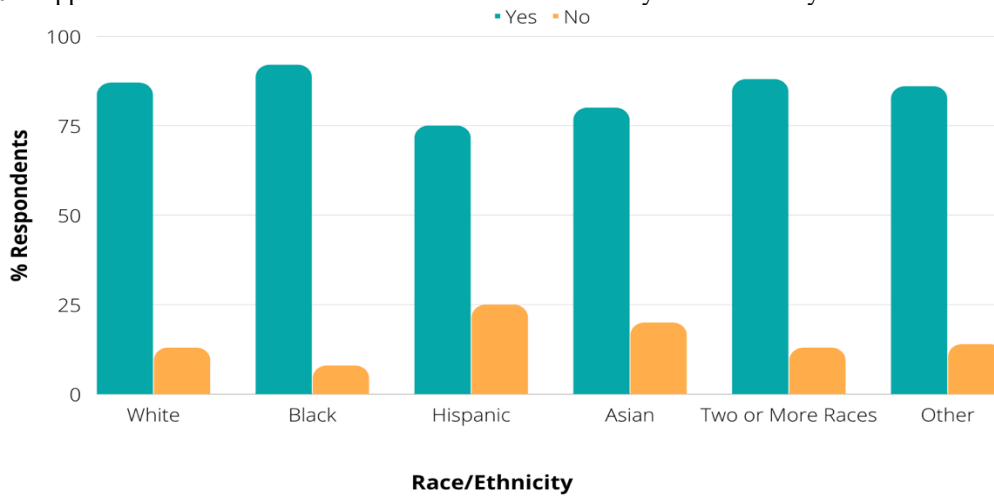**Support for A Female President**

When asked about views on supporting a woman for president, a large majority (85%) expressed support. When examining results by party affiliation, respondents who identify as Democrat (95%), are most like to support a woman candidate for president followed by Independent (88%) respondents, Other (83%) respondents, and Republican (73%) respondents while respondents unsure of their political affiliation (69%) are least likely to support a woman candidate for President.

Figure 3.8: Would you vote to elect a woman President of the United States? (Party Identification)
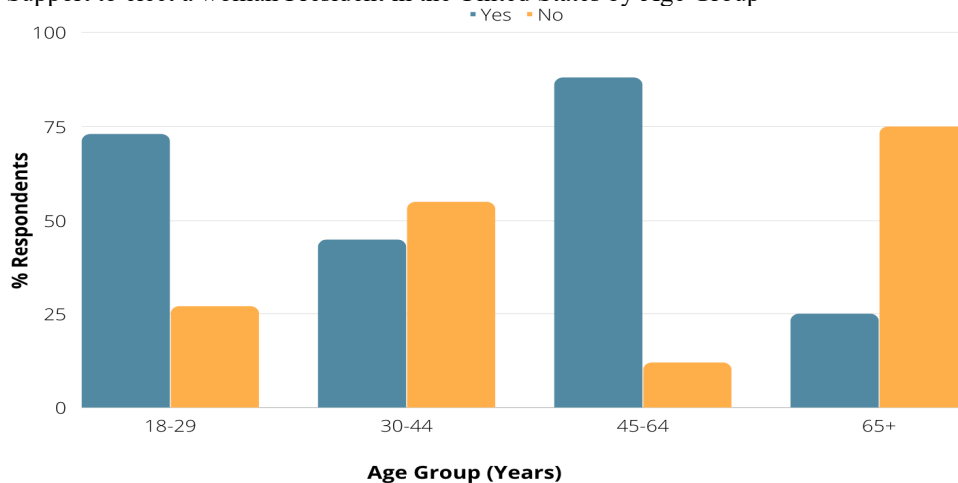

When examining responses by racial group, Black (92%) respondents are most likely to support a woman candidate for president followed by respondents identifying as being of Two or More Races (88%), White (87%), respondents and those who identify as being of Two or More Races. Asian (80%) and Hispanic (75%) respondents are least likely to support a female candidate for president.

Figure 3.9: Support to elect a woman President in the United States by Race/Ethnicity

Respondents age 45-64 (88%) are most likely to support a female candidate followed by respondents ages 18-29 (73%) and respondents 30-44 (45%). Respondents 65+ (25%) are the least likely to support a female candidate for president.

Figure 4.0: Support to elect a woman President in the United States by Age Group

Conclusion

In Texas, there are many issues of importance. Understanding the views residents hold on these issues can ultimately prove meaningful to how public policy and advocacy is approached in the state and how accurate the needs of all Texans are examined, interpreted and met. Race/ethnicity, gender, age, and political identification are factors that can impact public opinion on issues that arise in public discourse. Key findings from the poll reveal that younger respondents, Black respondents, and respondents who identify as Democrat tend to be most in favor of eliminating sales and gas taxes and revising how property taxes are determined. While respondents across all demographic groups share fewer progressive views when asked about support for private sector quotas for black board of directors and pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Equally, there was varying levels of support for race-based quotas, across demographic markers, to appoint a Black woman to the Supreme Court; while, age and race did not appear as significant factors in determining likelihood of support for a female candidate for President of the United States. In terms of the general performance of the state, with the exception of Republican respondents, all groups across demographic markers indicated dissatisfaction with the direction the state is headed in. Future research should examine these issues of importance overtime and incorporate other indicators such as household income, and geographic location. Following the 2020 census, Texas gained two additional congressional districts making it the second largest state by number of congressional representatives. As the state grows in population size, it is important to continue to think more critically about how the voices and perspectives of all Texans can be better prioritized in a manner that leads to a more democratic and representative society for all.