



**TEXAS
DEMOCRATIC
PRIMARY
ELECTION
SURVEY
2020**

**Opinions on
Public Policy Issues**

HOBBY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON



Texas Democratic Primary Election Survey 2020 Opinions on Public Policy Issues

The University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs conducted an online survey among likely Democratic primary voters in Texas to identify the leading candidates for the Democratic nominees for president and U.S. senator, opinions of salient policies and approval ratings of key national and state politicians. The survey was fielded between February 6 and February 18 with 1,352 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.7%. The results of this survey will be presented in four separate reports. The first report found at uh.edu/hobby/texasprimary2020/ focuses principally on the vote intention in the Texas Democratic presidential primary election. The second report (also available via the link above) focused on the vote intention in the Texas Democratic senate primary election. This report examines the position of Texas Democratic primary voters on a range of public policies, especially related to health care and the Green New Deal. A final report will provide Texas Democratic primary voters' evaluations of leading national and state politicians.

Most Important Policy Issue for Vote Decision in the Democratic Primary

The likely Democratic primary voters were asked which of 10 policy issues was the most important in deciding who to support in the 2020 Democratic primary election. Table 1 provides the percentage each was named as the most important issue, with one issue standing alone as the most important issue for Texas Democratic primary voters this cycle: Health Care (36.0%). The proportion listing Health Care as the most important issue was more than double that of the second and third issues, Economic Inequality (15.5%) and Climate Change (14.6%), which were the only other two issues to reach into the double-digits.

Table 1: Most Important Policy Issue in Deciding Who to Vote for in the Democratic Presidential Primary

Most Important Policy Issue	
Policy Issue	Percentage Naming Issue
Health Care	36.0
Economic Inequality	15.5
Climate Change	14.6
Immigration	7.8
Gun Control	5.5
Economic Growth	4.8
Education	4.5
Racial Inequality	4.3
Budget Deficit	3.6
Foreign Policy	3.4

Most Important Policy Issue and Presidential Vote Intention

Table 2 displays the proportion of the voters for each Democratic presidential candidate who listed one of the three highest ranked policy issues (Health Care, Economic Inequality, Climate Change) as the most important policy issue influencing their vote choice. Health Care is a high priority issue for all of the first and second tier candidates' supporters, ranging from a low of 29.4% (Amy Klobuchar) to a high of 43.0% (Pete Buttigieg). Similarly, on average there do not exist significant differences among the first and second tier candidates in the extent of importance of Climate Change among their supporters, varying from a low of 12.8% (Biden) to a high of 20.9% (Klobuchar). The one issue where there does exist a significant difference among the first and second tier candidates is on the issue of Economic Inequality. This issue is considered to be the most important issue by a significantly higher number of Bernie Sanders (27.4%) and Elizabeth Warren (22.9%) supporters than is the case for Joe Biden (8.9%) and, to a lesser extent, Michael Bloomberg (11.0%). While Tulsi Gabbard's modest number of supporters makes it difficult to make strong conclusions about the importance of specific issues to her voters, what is clear from the table (and other analysis) is that their policy preferences are notably distinct from those of the supporters of the other seven candidates.

Table 2: Proportion of Candidates' Primary Voters Listing a Top Three Policy Issue as Most Important

Percentage of Candidate Supporters Listing One of These Top Three Issues			
Candidate	Health Care	Economic Inequality	Climate Change
Joe Biden	39.6	8.9	12.8
Bernie Sanders	35.5	27.4	14.2
Elizabeth Warren	32.5	22.9	20.0
Michael Bloomberg	41.8	11.0	13.9
Pete Buttigieg	43.0	12.9	18.9
Amy Klobuchar	29.4	12.3	20.9
Tulsi Gabbard	7.6	2.0	2.7
Tom Steyer	42.3	9.4	8.8
No One/None	13.9	9.2	3.6
Don't Know/No Opinion	50.0	3.4	7.6
Total	36.0	15.5	14.6

Most Important Policy Issue and Ethnicity/Race

Table 3 provides the distribution of the most important policy issue within the four principal ethnic/racial groups in Texas: Anglos, Latinos, African Americans and Others (principally Asian Americans and those with multiple ethnic identities). Health Care is the top priority issue for all four groups, with Latinos (40.4%) the most likely to list it as the most important issue and Others (24.3%) the least. Climate Change is the most important issue for a significantly higher proportion of Anglos (20.4%) than Latinos (7.2%) and, to a lesser extent, African Americans (10.5%). Immigration is the second most important topic for Latinos, with significantly more Latinos (12.4%) listing it as the most important issue than African Americans (3.7%) and, to a lesser extent, Anglos (6.1%). Finally, Gun Control and Racial Inequality are the second and fourth most important issues for African Americans (14.1% and 12.6%), but the ninth and tenth (i.e., least) important issues for Anglos (2.8% and 0.9%).

Table 3: Ethnicity/Race and the Most Important Policy Issue

Distribution of the Most Important Policy Issue Within Group (%)					
Policy Issue	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans	Others	Total
Health Care	35.5	40.4	33.7	24.3	36.0
Economic Inequality	18.9	12.3	13.0	13.6	15.5
Climate Change	20.4	7.2	10.5	22.5	14.6
Immigration	6.1	12.6	3.7	13.4	7.8
Gun Control	2.8	3.8	14.1	2.3	5.5
Economic Growth	4.7	4.9	4.1	9.3	4.8
Education	3.2	7.3	4.1	2.4	4.5
Racial Inequality	0.9	4.1	12.4	2.1	4.3
Budget Deficit	4.2	3.1	2.6	5.3	3.6
Foreign Policy	3.4	4.2	1.8	4.7	3.4
Total	100.1	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0

Most Important Policy Issue and Gender

Table 4 provides the distribution for the most important policy issue among women and men. The results underscore that there do not exist any noteworthy gender differences in the proportion of Democratic primary voters listing the 10 issues as the most important.

Table 4: Gender and the Most Important Policy Issue

Distribution of the Most Important Policy Issue by Gender (%)			
Policy Issue	Women	Men	Total
Health Care	37.2	34.2	36.0
Economic Inequality	14.3	17.3	15.5
Climate Change	14.1	15.5	14.6
Immigration	7.8	7.9	7.8
Gun Control	5.8	5.0	5.5
Economic Growth	4.7	5.0	4.8
Education	5.3	3.3	4.5
Racial Inequality	4.4	4.2	4.3
Budget Deficit	2.9	4.7	3.6
Foreign Policy	3.6	3.0	3.4
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0

Most Important Policy Issue and Generation

Table 5 provides the distribution of the most important policy issue among the five main generations present in the Texas electorate: The Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1980-1996), and Generation Z (1997-). Health Care is a notably more important policy issue for Democratic primary voters 40 and over (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X) than for those under 40 (Millennials, Generation Z), with 40.5% of the former group rating it as the most important policy issue influencing their vote choice, compared to 23.8% of the latter group. In a similar vein, Education, while not a top priority issue for either group, is a more salient issue for Democratic primary voters under 40 (10.9%) than for voters 40 and over (2.2%).

Table 5: Generation and the Most Important Policy Issue

Distribution of the Most Important Policy Issue by Generation (%)						
Policy Issue	Silent Generation (1928-1945)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Generation Z (1997-)	Total
Health Care	39.3	42.2	38.4	24.0	22.4	36.0
Economic Inequality	13.5	12.5	16.9	19.4	16.2	15.5
Climate Change	14.1	15.3	11.6	14.7	28.9	14.6
Immigration	16.0	7.4	4.8	10.1	4.4	7.8
Gun Control	3.2	7.8	4.9	3.8	0.0	5.5
Economic Growth	4.2	4.0	5.6	5.9	2.1	4.8
Education	1.9	1.8	2.8	10.6	12.2	4.5
Racial Inequality	1.6	2.8	7.5	4.8	0.0	4.3
Budget Deficit	3.6	4.1	3.6	3.4	0.0	3.6
Foreign Policy	2.7	2.2	3.9	3.2	13.8	3.4
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0

Most Important Policy Issue and Metro Area/Region

Table 6 displays the distribution of the most important policy issue in the state's four largest metropolitan areas (Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Austin), in the Border (U.S.-Mexico) counties stretching from Cameron County on the Gulf Coast to El Paso on the New Mexico border, and in the remaining counties of the state not included in any of the prior five categories. There do not exist any significant regional differences in the prioritization of these policy issues, with the modest exception of Climate Change being chosen as the most important issue by a significantly higher number of Austin voters (24.3%) than Houston (10.5%) and Border (7.3%) voters.

Table 6: Metro Area/Region and the Most Important Policy Issue

Distribution of the Most Important Policy Issue by Metro Area/Region (%)							
Policy Issue	DFW	Houston	San Antonio	Austin	Border	Other	Total
Health Care	35.3	40.3	35.2	27.0	36.1	37.8	36.0
Economic Inequality	15.5	13.2	16.7	23.0	9.5	15.2	15.5
Climate Change	15.1	10.5	19.5	24.3	7.3	12.9	14.6
Immigration	5.6	7.6	6.0	5.0	17.2	10.3	7.8
Gun Control	4.0	8.1	1.0	4.7	8.4	6.2	5.5
Economic Growth	7.1	2.7	6.1	4.2	5.1	3.6	4.8
Education	3.8	4.9	1.4	4.2	8.4	5.6	4.5
Racial Inequality	7.4	3.8	3.8	2.5	2.5	2.8	4.3
Budget Deficit	2.0	3.8	8.9	2.0	3.8	3.2	3.6
Foreign Policy	4.2	5.1	1.4	3.0	1.6	2.3	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	99.9	100.0

Democratic Primary Voters and Health Care

In the survey likely Democratic primary voters were asked if they strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose the following three options for health care in the country: 1) A national health care plan, sometimes called Medicare For All, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan (Medicare For All), 2) A government-administered health plan, sometimes called a public option, that would compete with private health insurance plans and be available to all Americans (Public Option), 3) No changes made to the current way health care is provided to all Americans (No Changes). Table 7 displays the results and underscores the strong support for a change to the status quo in U.S. health care among Texas Democratic primary voters, with only 22.7% supporting no changes to the current system, and 84.5% in support of the public option and 71.4% in support of Medicare For All.

Table 7: Democratic Primary Voter Support for Three Health Care Options

Support/Opposition Among Voters With a Preference (%)				
Health Care Options	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Medicare for All	38.9	32.5	16.6	12.1
Public Option	37.9	46.6	8.9	6.6
No Changes	7.3	15.4	32.9	44.4

Health Care System Support and Presidential Vote Intention

Table 8 provides the level of support for Medicare For All among the voters of the seven leading Democratic presidential candidates. Nearly two-thirds (65.3%) of Sanders voters strongly support Medicare For All, with over a quarter in support (25.5%), and only 9.3% in opposition. The other candidate whose voters strongly support Medicare For All in large numbers is Warren (56.7%), with even fewer Warren than Sanders voters in opposition (7.7%). Conversely only 17.0%, 26.0%, and 28.6% of Klobuchar, Biden and Buttigieg voters strongly

support Medicare For All, while 46.3%, 39.4%, and 36.9% of their respective voters either oppose or strongly oppose Medicare For All.

Table 8: Support For and Opposition to Medicare For All and Candidate Preference

Distribution Among the Presidential Candidates' Supporters (%)					
Candidate	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total
Joe Biden	26.0	34.5	26.5	12.9	99.9
Bernie Sanders	65.3	25.5	6.2	3.1	100.1
Elizabeth Warren	56.7	35.6	7.3	0.4	100.0
Michael Bloomberg	32.5	38.2	20.2	9.1	100.0
Pete Buttigieg	28.6	34.6	26.6	10.3	100.1
Amy Klobuchar	17.0	36.8	26.2	20.1	100.1
Tulsi Gabbard	10.2	15.3	11.3	63.2	100.0
Total	38.9	32.5	16.6	12.1	

Note: Tom Steyer is excluded due to an insufficient number of cases.

Table 9 provides the level of support for a government-administered public option among the voters of the seven leading presidential candidates. Noteworthy is that only one in five (20.4%) Sanders voters strongly support a public option, but 58.5% are located in the next column of “support”, underscoring that while these Sanders voters prefer Medicare For All, if that is not possible they are supportive of the more gradual approach for reform offered by the public option. More than four-fifths of the voters of every candidate other than Sanders and Gabbard either strongly support or support the public option, with Sanders coming close to this level as 78.9% of his voters are supportive of the public option.

Table 9: Support For and Opposition to a Government Administered Public Option

Distribution Among the Presidential Candidates' Supporters (%)					
Candidate	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total
Joe Biden	45.0	47.4	4.6	3.1	100.1
Bernie Sanders	20.4	58.5	14.2	6.9	100.0
Elizabeth Warren	37.1	52.2	9.8	0.9	100.0
Michael Bloomberg	46.1	43.0	7.2	3.8	100.1
Pete Buttigieg	48.9	42.5	5.4	3.2	100.0
Amy Klobuchar	57.3	30.8	6.3	5.7	100.1
Tulsi Gabbard	5.2	19.5	23.5	51.8	100.0
Total	37.9	46.6	8.9	6.6	100.0

Note: Tom Steyer is excluded due to an insufficient number of cases.

Table 10 provides the level of support for no change to the way health care is provided to Americans among the voters of the seven leading presidential candidates. In no case do a majority of voters of any candidate support maintaining the health care status quo. However, significantly more supporters of Biden (32.2%) and Bloomberg (29.9%) support maintaining the status quo than is the case for supporters of Buttigieg (13.9%) and, especially,

Warren (12.2%). Sanders voters are the most strongly opposed to retaining the status quo, with more than two-thirds (69.1%) strongly opposed.

Table 10: Support For and Opposition to Not Making Any Health Care Changes

Distribution Among the Presidential Candidates' Supporters (%)					
Candidate	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total
Joe Biden	12.7	19.5	42.3	25.5	100.0
Bernie Sanders	8.3	9.6	13.0	69.1	100.0
Elizabeth Warren	3.4	8.8	37.2	50.7	100.1
Michael Bloomberg	4.4	25.0	35.1	35.5	100.0
Pete Buttigieg	5.7	8.2	42.2	43.9	100.0
Amy Klobuchar	3.6	17.1	33.7	45.6	100.0
Tulsi Gabbard	13.8	19.6	32.1	34.6	100.1
Total	7.3	15.4	32.9	44.4	100.0

Note: Tom Steyer is excluded due to an insufficient number of cases.

Democratic Primary Voter Evaluation of the Effect of Medicare For All

The survey asked voters if a national health Medicare For All plan was put into place, whether they thought they personally would be better off, worse off, or if it would not have much of an impact on them. Table 11 indicates that 45.5% of Democratic primary voters believe they would be better off, 18.0% believe they would be worse off, and 36.4% believe that if Medicare For All was implemented, it would not have much of an impact on them. Among the candidates' voters, more than two-thirds (69.3%) of Sanders voters and more than one-half (58.9%) of Warren voters believe they would be better off under Medicare For All, compared to only a third of Klobuchar (31.5%) and Biden (34.1%) voters. Conversely, a quarter of Biden (26.3%) and Klobuchar (24.8%) voters believe they would be worse off, compared to less than one tenth of Warren (9.8%) and Sanders (7.8%) voters.

Table 11: Would You Be Better or Worse Off Financially Under Medicare For All

Distribution Among the Presidential Candidates' Supporters and Overall (%)				
Candidate	Better Off	Worse Off	Not Much of an Impact	Total
Joe Biden	34.1	26.3	39.6	100.0
Bernie Sanders	69.3	7.8	22.9	100.0
Elizabeth Warren	58.9	9.8	31.3	100.0
Michael Bloomberg	38.3	17.7	44.0	100.0
Pete Buttigieg	45.0	9.5	45.5	100.0
Amy Klobuchar	31.5	24.8	43.7	100.0
Tulsi Gabbard	24.8	45.2	30.0	100.0

Note: Tom Steyer is excluded due to an insufficient number of cases.

Democratic Primary Voters and the Green New Deal

The survey asked voters if they would strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal called the Green New Deal that has been put forward to address climate change if they knew it would do the following:

1. Set a goal for 100% of U.S. power coming from zero-emission energy sources by 2035.
2. Upgrade all buildings in the U.S. to increase energy efficiency.
3. Result in widespread layoffs in Texas's oil, natural gas and petrochemical industries.
4. End most oil and natural gas drilling and production in Texas and the rest of the U.S. by 2035.
5. Increase federal spending by trillions of dollars.
6. Increase federal spending on infrastructure to help communities prepare for climate change-related disasters.
7. Increase federal spending to clean up hazardous waste sites.
8. Increase federal spending on new economic development and job training in communities that currently rely on jobs in fossil fuel industries.
9. Increase the federal debt burden by trillions of dollars.
10. Provide federal funds to build and operate high speed rail between Texas's major population centers.

The results for these 10 elements of the Green New Deal are contained in Table 12 on page 9. Seven elements of the Green New Deal (see the first seven Green New Deal elements in Table 12) would result in more than four-fifths of Texas Democratic primary voters being supportive of the Green New Deal, ranging from 90.3% in regard to the plank that would increase federal spending to clean up hazardous waste sites to 83.7% in regard to the plank that would provide federal funds to build and operate high speed rail between Texas's major population centers.

Table 12: Texas Democratic Primary Voter Support for Green New Deal Components and Consequences

Causes Voter to Be More or Less Supportive of the Green New Deal (%)					
Green New Deal Elements	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total
100% US Energy from Zero-Emission by 2035	46.6	39.9	7.7	5.7	99.9
Increase Spending on Infrastructure to Help Communities Prepare for Natural Disasters	45.9	42.4	6.1	5.6	100.0
Increase Spending to Create New Jobs for Displaced Fossil Fuel Energy Workers	44.7	41.4	5.9	7.9	99.9
Increase Spending to Clean Up Hazardous Waste Sites	43.9	46.4	5.2	4.6	100.1
Provide Federal Funds for High Speed Rail Between Major Texas Population Centers	43.7	40.0	9.7	6.6	100.0
Upgrade All Buildings to Increase Energy Efficiency	40.1	47.0	7.3	5.7	100.1
End Most Oil & Gas Drilling in Texas & US by 2035	34.1	33.4	19.2	13.3	100.0
Increase Federal Government Spending by Trillions of Dollars	16.5	29.0	30.0	24.5	100.0
Results in Widespread Layoffs in Texas Energy Industry	14.8	33.0	31.0	21.2	100.0
Increase the Federal Government Debt Burden by Trillions of Dollars	12.8	26.4	30.6	30.2	100.0

In contrast, a majority of Texas Democratic primary voters indicate they would oppose the Green New Deal if it would increase federal government spending by trillions of dollars (54.5%) or increase the federal government debt burden by trillions of dollars (60.8%).

And, when informed that the Green New Deal would result in widespread layoffs in Texas’s oil, natural gas, and petrochemical industries, slightly more than half of Texas Democratic primary voters indicated they would oppose the Green New Deal (52.2%) while slightly less than half indicated they would support the Green New Deal (47.8%).

The one intermediate element of the Green New Deal was the end to most oil and natural gas drilling and production in Texas and the rest of the U.S. by 2035. Two-thirds (67.5%) of Democratic primary voters indicated that knowing the Green New Deal would have this impact would cause them to support the Green New Deal while one-third 32.5% indicated it would cause them to oppose the Green New Deal.

Democratic Voter Opinion on The Green New Deal and Texas Energy Sector by Metro Area/Region

Table 13 drills down into the impact of the two fossil fuel energy related aspects of the Green New Deal on support for the initiative across the states’ major metropolitan areas/regions. In two regions, a majority of Democratic primary voters indicate that knowing that the Green New Deal would result in widespread layoffs in the oil, natural gas in petrochemical industries (Energy Industry) would lead them to oppose the Green New Deal: Houston (62.8%) and the Border (64.4%). The former result is not all that surprising, given Houston’s status as the energy capital of the world. In sharp contrast, only one-third (32.6%) of Austin voters have the same negative reaction to the Green New Deal when informed about its impact on energy industry jobs.

In a similar vein, learning that the Green New Deal would result in the end of most oil and natural gas drilling and production in Texas and the rest of the U.S. by 2035 results in two-fifths (41.1%) of Houston Democratic primary voters opposing the Green New Deal compared to only one-fifth (19.9%) of Austin Democratic primary voters.

Table 13: Democratic Primary Voters & the Green New Deal's Impact on the Texas Energy Industry

Distribution of Democratic Primary Voters by Metro Area/Region (%)								
Impact	Voter Position	DFW	Houston	San Antonio	Austin	Border	Other	Total
If Green New Deal Results in Widespread Layoffs in the Texas Energy Industry	Strongly Support	15.0	15.1	17.6	21.7	9.5	10.2	14.8
	Support	37.3	22.1	39.6	45.8	26.1	31.7	33.0
	Oppose	27.0	38.6	29.2	24.2	48.0	25.1	31.0
	Strongly Oppose	20.7	24.2	13.6	8.4	16.4	33.0	21.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
If Green New Deal Ends Most Oil & Natural Gas Drilling in U.S. & Texas	Strongly Support	38.4	25.7	35.1	48.9	29.0	29.7	34.1
	Support	34.4	33.2	39.8	31.2	33.0	30.4	33.4
	Oppose	17.0	26.9	16.7	12.3	26.1	16.1	19.2
	Strongly Oppose	10.3	14.2	8.4	7.6	11.9	23.9	13.3
	Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0