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**Texans and the
COVID-19 Vaccine**

HOBBY
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Introduction

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey among Texans 18 and older to better understand their preferences regarding proposed legislation being considered during the 2021 regular session of the Texas Legislature, their opinions related to the COVID-19 vaccine, and their evaluations of leading political figures. The survey was fielded between January 12 and January 20, with 1,329 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.7. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, ethnicity/race, and education and are representative of the Texas adult population. An oversample of Harris County residents was also collected, and will be used in the penultimate two reports that focus on the state's most populous county, Harris County, whose population of 4.8 million is larger than that of 26 states.

The results of this survey will be presented in six separate reports: Legislative Issues, State Budget, Texans and the COVID-19 Vaccine, Political Attitudes and Evaluations, Issue Priorities and Evaluations in Harris County, and Texas vs. Harris County: A Comparison of Policy Preferences.

This report examines the attitudes and preferences of Texans related to COVID-19. It explores their views regarding the vaccine, and reasons of concern among those uncertain about getting vaccinated. Also included is the extent to which Texans view the vaccination process as either a personal choice or a societal obligation, and their opinions on the autonomy of Texas county and city governments to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive Summary

More than two-fifths of Texans are near certain to be vaccinated when they have the opportunity to do so, including those who have already been vaccinated (3%) along with those who definitely plan on getting vaccinated (38%). However, three-fifths of Texans are not certain about getting vaccinated, including nearly a third who say they either will definitely not get vaccinated (22%) or probably will not get vaccinated (10%). Democrats (53%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (33%) to report they definitely would get vaccinated while Republicans (28%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (11%) to state they would definitely not get vaccinated.

Among those who might not get vaccinated, the most common major reasons provided for their reticence are that the vaccine is too new and the respondent wants to wait and see how it works for other people (with 61% listing this as a major reason) combined with the related reason that they are worried about possible side effects (60%). The next two most prominent

major reasons why Texans might not get vaccinated are both linked to a lack of trust in the government and pharmaceutical companies to make sure the vaccine is safe. Close to half of all Texans who were not certain to get vaccinated listed a lack of trust in the government (47%) and pharmaceutical companies (46%) as major reasons, while more than half of those who either definitely or probably would not get vaccinated listed a lack of trust in the government (58%) and pharmaceutical companies (57%).

Texans are nearly evenly split between those who believe getting vaccinated is a matter of personal choice (51%) and those who believe that getting vaccinated is part of everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others (49%). Republicans (71%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (28%) to believe getting vaccinated is an issue of personal choice while Democrats (55%) are conversely significantly more likely than Republicans (29%) to believe that getting vaccinated is a collective responsibility.

Close to half of Texans (48%) assert that Texas counties and cities should have a greater amount of autonomy to combat the COVID-19 pandemic than they presently have. One-third of Texans (33%) believe cities and counties presently have the right amount of autonomy to combat COVID-19, while 19% believe counties and cities should have less autonomy. Democrats (59%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (38%) to believe counties and cities should have more autonomy to respond to the pandemic while Republicans (45%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (25%) to believe counties and cities presently have the right amount of autonomy.

Texan Attitudes Toward Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

In the survey the respondents were asked the following question (in italics) in regard to the likelihood that they would get vaccinated against COVID-19, with six possible response options (also in italics).

Thinking about the COVID-19 vaccine, if it were free and available to you today, would you:

- 1. Definitely get it.*
- 2. Probably get it.*
- 3. Probably not get it.*
- 4. Definitely not get it.*
- 5. Already have gotten the vaccine.*
- 6. Don't know.*

Figure 1 summarizes the responses. Almost two in five Texans (38%) would definitely get vaccinated, with an additional 3% already having been vaccinated. Another 18% of Texans report they probably would get vaccinated. In contrast to this group of 41%, a little more than a fifth of Texans (22%) say they definitely would not get the vaccine, with another 10% saying they probably would not get vaccinated, and 9% responding that they did not know if they would get vaccinated or not.

Figure 1: If the COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available To You Today, Would You?

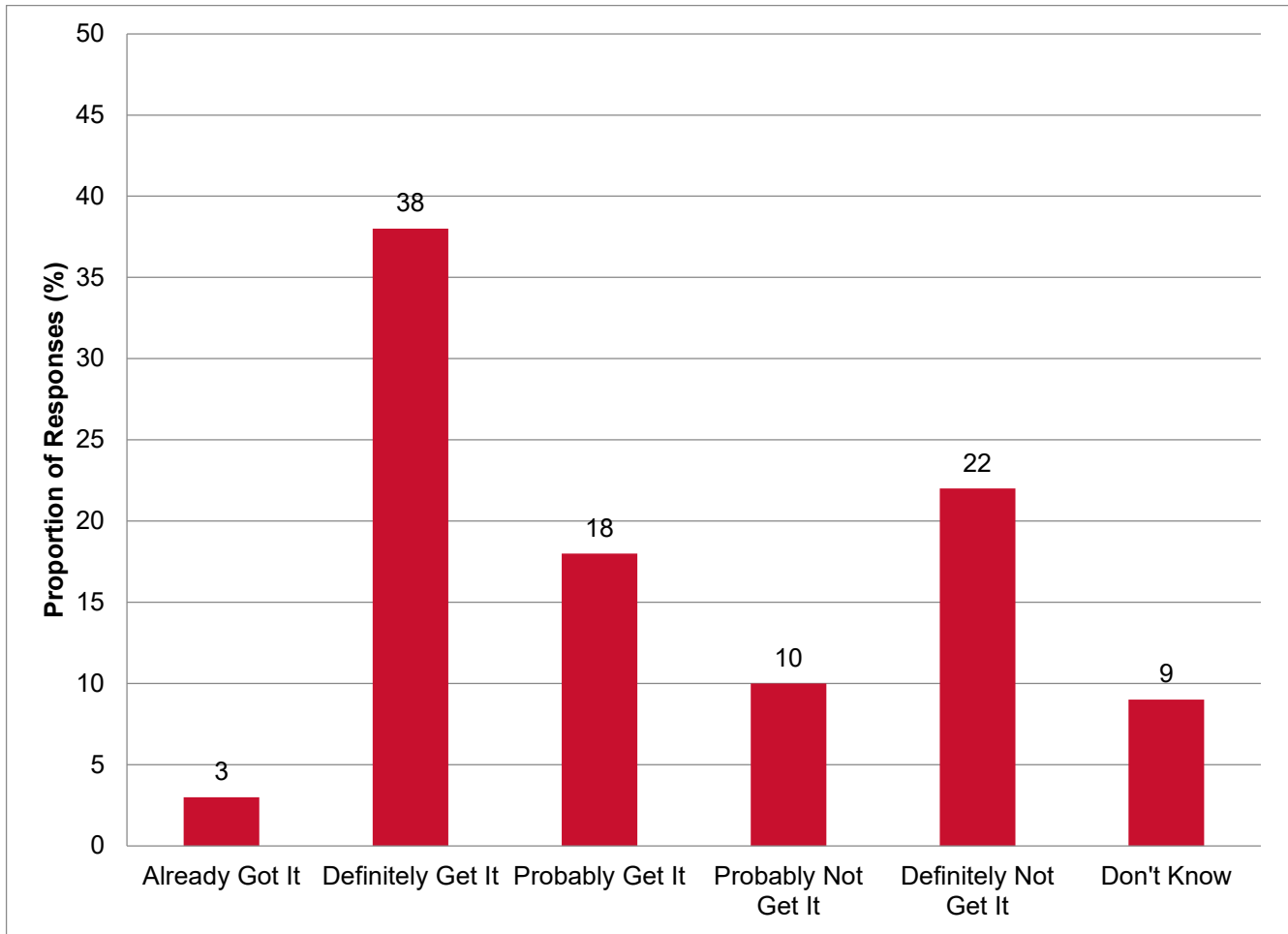


Table 1 provides the distribution of the responses to the vaccination question by gender. The sample population has slightly more women (51%) than men (49%). Men (41%) are significantly more likely than women (34%) to state they would definitely get vaccinated. Conversely, women (26%) are significantly more likely than men (18%) to respond that they would definitely not get vaccinated.

Table 2 provides the distribution of the responses to the vaccination question by ethnicity/race. The ethnic/racial composition of the sample population is: Anglos (47%), Latinos (35%), African Americans (13%), All Others (5%). The only significant ethnic/racial difference present in the data is that Anglos (42%) are significantly more likely to say they would definitely get vaccinated than African Americans (28%). Other than that, there exist no salient ethnic/racial differences related to a respondent’s disposition to get vaccinated.

Table 1: Gender & Response To: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)		
	All	Men	Women
Already Got It	3	2	3
Definitely Get It	38	41	34
Probably Get It	18	17	18
Probably Not Get It	10	13	9
Definitely Not Get It	22	18	26
Don't Know	9	9	10

Table 2: Ethnicity/Race & Response To: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Already Got It	3	2	3	3
Definitely Get It	38	42	36	28
Probably Get It	18	15	21	17
Probably Not Get It	10	10	11	14
Definitely Not Get It	22	24	19	23
Already Got It	3	2	3	3
Don't Know	9	7	10	15

Table 3 provides the distribution of the responses to the vaccination question by generation. The sample population is distributed across three aggregate generational categories in the following way: Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) at 33%, Generation X (1965-1980) at 25%, and Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2003) at 42%. The principal generational differences exist between members of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers (54% of whom are 65 or older) and the members of Generation X. The members of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are significantly more likely to say they definitely would get vaccinated (44%) than members of Generation X (33%). By the same token, a significantly higher proportion of Generation X (30%) state they definitely would not be getting vaccinated compared to the combined Silent Generation/Baby Boomer group (18%).

Table 3: Generation & Response To: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Gen-X	Millennials & Generation Z
Already Got It	3	5	1	2
Definitely Get It	38	44	33	36
Probably Get It	18	20	16	18
Probably Not Get It	10	8	10	13
Definitely Not Get It	22	18	30	21
Don't Know	9	6	10	10

Table 4 provides the distribution of the responses to the vaccination question by level of educational attainment. The highest educational attainment of two-fifths of the sample population (41%) is high school or lower, while 31% attended some college or obtained a two-year degree, with the remaining 28% having either a four-year degree or a post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. The most striking difference based on education is Texans with a four-year degree or post-graduate degree are significantly more likely to be planning to definitely get vaccinated (51%) than the members of the high school or lower education level group (32%) or the attended some college or two-year degree group (33%). Those with a four-year or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment (16%) are also significantly less likely than those whose highest educational attainment is a two-year degree or some college (27%) to state that they would definitely not get vaccinated.

Table 4: Education & Response To: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Primary School or High School	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year College or Advanced Degree
Already Got It	3	2	2	5
Definitely Get It	38	32	33	51
Probably Get It	18	18	20	14
Probably Not Get It	10	12	10	9
Definitely Not Get It	22	23	27	16
Don't Know	9	13	8	4

Table 5 provides the distribution of the responses to the vaccination question by partisan identification. Democrats account for 31% of the respondents, Republicans for 27% and Independents for 30%. The remaining 12% of respondents are either unsure about their partisanship (8%) or identify with another party or group (4%). Democrats (53%) are significantly more likely than either Republicans (33%) or Independents (33%) to report that they would definitely get vaccinated. Conversely, Republicans (28%) and Independents (27%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (11%) to state that they would definitely not get vaccinated.

Table 5: Party ID & Response To: If A COVID-19 Vaccine Were Free & Available Today Would You?

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Already Got It	3	4	2	3
Definitely Get It	38	53	33	33
Probably Get It	18	18	18	18
Probably Not Get It	10	8	14	10
Definitely Not Get It	22	11	28	27
Don't Know	9	6	5	9

Why Texans May Not Get Vaccinated

All respondents who did not state that they either definitely would get vaccinated or had already been vaccinated were presented with eight possible reasons for why they might not get vaccinated using the question and response options below in italics.

Which of the below represents a major reason, a minor reason or is not a reason why you might not get vaccinated?

1. *Worried about possible side effects.*
2. *Don't trust the government to make sure the vaccine is safe.*
3. *Don't trust the pharmaceutical companies to make sure the vaccine is safe.*
4. *The risks of COVID-19 are being exaggerated.*
5. *Don't trust vaccines in general.*
6. *Don't consider self at risk of getting sick from COVID-19.*
7. *Worried about getting COVID-19 from the vaccine.*
8. *Vaccine is too new and want to wait and see how it works for other people.*

Table 6 provides the distribution of responses for all respondents who did not indicate they would definitely get vaccinated or that they had already been vaccinated. **Table 7** provides similar information, but it is limited to those individuals who indicated that they either definitely would not get vaccinated or probably would not get vaccinated.

Four responses stand out in terms of the proportion of respondents in the two populations who list it as a major reason why they might not get the COVID-19 vaccine. The two most common of these major reasons are that the vaccine is too new and the respondent wanted to wait and see how it works for other people (61% in **Table 6** and 65% in **Table 7**) and the related reason of the respondent being worried about possible side effects (60% in **Table 6** and 66% in **Table 7**). The second two most common responses are both linked to a lack of trust in the government (47% in **Table 6** and 58% in **Table 7**) and in the pharmaceutical companies (46% in **Table 6** and 57% in **Table 7**) to insure that the vaccine is safe.

**Table 6: Reasons Why Would Not Get Vaccinated:
All Uncertain**

Reasons	Distribution of Population (%)		
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not A Reason
Vaccine Too New, Wait & See How It Works	61	21	18
Worried About Possible Side Effects	60	26	14
Don't Trust Government to Make Sure Safe	47	22	31
Don't Trust Big Pharma to Make Sure Safe	46	24	30
Don't Trust Vaccines in General	32	23	45
Risks of COVID-19 Being Exaggerated	31	17	52
Don't Consider Self at Risk of COVID-19	26	23	51
Worried About Getting COVID-19 From Vaccine	23	24	53

**Table 7: Reasons Why Would Not Get Vaccinated:
Definitely & Probably Will Not Get**

Reasons	Distribution of Population (%)		
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not A Reason
Worried About Possible Side Effects	66	23	11
Vaccine Too New, Wait & See How It Works	65	17	18
Don't Trust Government to Make Sure Safe	58	22	20
Don't Trust Big Pharma to Make Sure Safe	57	23	20
Risks of COVID-19 Being Exaggerated	44	17	33
Don't Trust Vaccines in General	41	25	34
Don't Consider Self at Risk of COVID-19	33	25	54
Worried About Getting COVID-19 From Vaccine	21	25	54

The respondents who indicated they would definitely or probably not get vaccinated were significantly more likely than those who indicated they probably would get vaccinated or did not know to list the following four reasons as a major reason why they might not get vaccinated: a lack of trust in the government and pharmaceutical companies to make sure the vaccine is safe, a general distrust in vaccines, and the belief that the risks of COVID-19 are being exaggerated.

The COVID-19 Vaccination: Personal Choice or Collective Responsibility?

The respondents were queried on their position on whether getting vaccinated was a personal choice or a collective responsibility. The question below and three response options (in italics) below were utilized.

Which comes closer to your view? Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is:

- 1. A personal choice.*
- 2. Part of everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others.*
- 3. Don't Know*

Table 8 provides the distribution of Texans' responses to this question, with and without the "Don't Know" responses. The data reveal a nearly even split among Texans, with a razor thin majority of 51% believing that getting vaccinated is a personal choice compared to 49% who believe that getting vaccinated is everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others.

Table 8: Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	All	All (Valid)
Personal Choice	48	51
Everyone's Responsibility	46	49
Don't Know	6	

Table 9 provides the distribution of the responses to this question broken down by gender, **Table 10** by ethnicity/race, **Table 11** by generation, **Table 12** by educational attainment, and **Table 13** by partisan identification. The data highlight the absence of any significant gender or generational differences for this item.

Table 9: Gender & Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)		
	All	Men	Women
Personal Choice	51	50	51
Everyone's Responsibility	49	50	49

However, Latinos are significantly more likely than Anglos to believe that getting vaccinated is everyone's responsibility (**Table 10**), just as Republicans are significantly more likely than Independents and especially Democrats to believe that getting vaccinated is a personal choice (**Table 13**). Finally, respondents with a four-year college or post-graduate degree are significantly more likely than those with lower levels of educational attainment to believe getting vaccinated is everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others (**Table 12**).

Table 10: Ethnicity/Race & Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
Personal Choice	51	54	45	54
Everyone's Responsibility	49	46	55	46

Table 11: Generation & Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Gen-X	Millennials & Generation Z
Personal Choice	51	50	56	48
Everyone's Responsibility	49	50	44	52

Table 12: Education & Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Primary School or High School	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year College or Advanced Degree
Personal Choice	51	54	57	40
Everyone's Responsibility	49	46	43	60

Table 13: Partisanship & Getting Vaccinated, A Personal Choice or Everyone's Responsibility

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Personal Choice	51	28	71	55
Everyone's Responsibility	49	55	29	45

City and County Autonomy to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

The respondents were asked about what they considered the optimal level of autonomy of Texas counties and cities should be to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The question and four responses below (in italics) were utilized to this end.

Many politicians have complained that Texas counties and cities have not been allowed enough autonomy in adopting county and city specific measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, while many other politicians have complained that Texas counties and cities have had too much autonomy in adopting county and city specific measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Which of the following most closely matches your position on the amount of autonomy Texas counties and cities should have to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?

- 1. Counties and cities should have more autonomy than they presently have.*
- 2. Counties and cities should have less autonomy than they presently have.*
- 3. Counties and cities presently have the right amount of autonomy.*
- 4. Don't Know*

Table 14 provides the distribution of Texans’ responses to this question, with and without the “Don’t Know” responses. One quarter (25%) of the respondents answered “Don’t Know” to this question. A near-majority (48%) of those who did provide an affirmative response state that they believe Texas cities and counties should have more autonomy to combat the COVID-19 pandemic than they presently have. A third of respondents (33%) believe the counties and cities presently have the right amount of autonomy, while slightly less than a fifth (19%) believe the counties and cities should have less autonomy.

Table 14: Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)	
	All	All (Valid)
More Than Presently Have	36	48
Presently Have Right Amount	26	33
Less Than Presently Have	14	19
Don't Know	25	

Table 15 provides the distribution of the responses to this question broken down by gender, **Table 16** by ethnicity/race, **Table 17** by generation, **Table 18** by educational attainment, and **Table 19** by partisan identification. There do not exist any significant gender, ethnic/racial, or generational differences in support for the three county and city COVID-19 autonomy options.

Table 15: Gender & the Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)		
	All	Men	Women
More Than Presently Have	48	47	50
Presently Have Right Amount	33	34	32
Less Than Presently Have	19	19	18

Table 16: Ethnicity/Race & the Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Anglos	Latinos	African Americans
More Than Presently Have	48	48	49	51
Presently Have Right Amount	33	34	34	26
Less Than Presently Have	19	18	17	23

Table 17: Generation & the Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Silent Generation & Baby Boomers	Gen-X	Millennials & Generation Z
More Than Presently Have	48	46	47	51
Presently Have Right Amount	33	37	35	29
Less Than Presently Have	19	17	18	20

Table 18: Education & the Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Primary School or High School	Some College or 2 Year Degree	4 Year College or Advanced Degree
More Than Presently Have	48	44	51	51
Presently Have Right Amount	33	38	29	32
Less Than Presently Have	19	18	20	18

Table 19: Party ID & the Level of Autonomy Texas Counties and Cities Should Have to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic

Response	Distribution of Population (%)			
	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
More Than Presently Have	48	59	38	45
Presently Have Right Amount	33	25	45	34
Less Than Presently Have	19	16	17	21

Substantial partisan differences are however present, with significantly more Democrats (59%) than Independents (45%) and, especially, Republicans (38%) believing that Texas counties and cities should have more autonomy to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant partisan differences are also found among those believing that counties and cities presently have the right amount of autonomy with which to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, with 45% of Republicans, but only 25% of Democrats, content with the counties and cities' current level of autonomy.