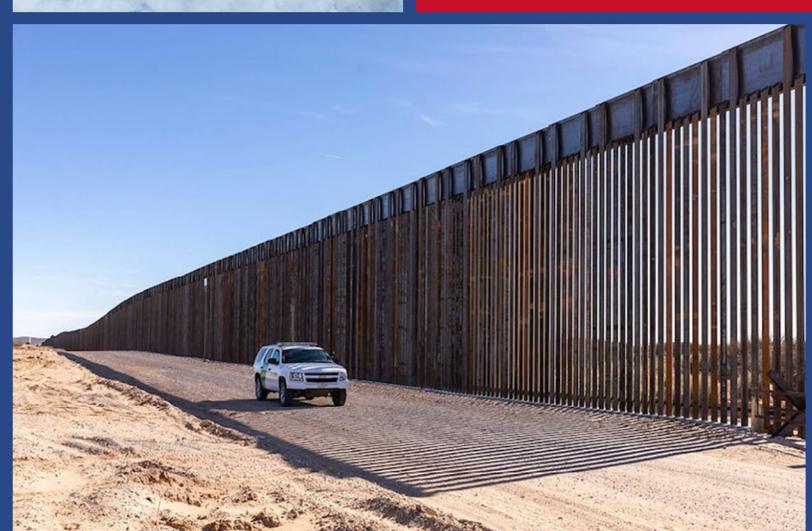




Texas 2022  
Elections & Issues

Proposed Voting and  
Election Reforms

**HOBBY**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON



## Texas 2022 Elections & Issues Proposed Voting and Election Reforms

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey of Texas registered voters to identify their preferences and opinions regarding 2022 primary candidates and policy issues. The survey was fielded between January 14 and 24, 2022 in English and Spanish, with 1,400 YouGov respondents who are registered to vote in Texas, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.2%. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race/ethnicity, presidential vote history, and education and are representative of the population of Texas registered voters.

The results of the survey will be presented in a series of reports found at [www.uh.edu/hobby/tx2022](http://www.uh.edu/hobby/tx2022). The [first report](#) examined the vote intention of Texans for the 2022 Republican and Democratic primaries and for the 2022 general election for governor. The [second report](#) examined the opinions of Texans regarding the response by the Texas state government over the past year to the Winter Storm of 2021 and related topics of the reliability of the Texas energy grid and the political impact of power outages. The [third report](#) examined the opinions of Texans on the following: the current direction of the United States and of Texas; the most important issue for them in deciding how to vote in the 2022 gubernatorial election; abortion policy; candidate favorability; and the 2021 storming of the Capitol. This report examines support for and opposition to 18 different voting and election related reforms contained in the federal Freedom to Vote Act.

### Executive Summary

1,400 registered voters in Texas were queried on their support for and opposition to 18 voting and election reforms contained in the federal Freedom to Vote Act.

There exists a strong consensus among Texans in support of 11 out of 18 voting and election reforms.

Anti-fraud reforms are supported by more than four out of every five Texans, with 87% supporting a reform that would require states to conduct transparent post-election audits that adhere to clearly defined rules and procedures, 85% supporting a reform that would require all electronic voting machines to provide voter-verified paper records, and 80% supporting a national standard for voter photo identification for those states that require voters to provide a photo ID when voting in person. More than three out of four Texas Republicans and Democrats support these three anti-fraud reforms.

Campaign finance reforms are backed by more than four out of every five Texans, with 88% supporting a reform that would tighten campaign finance rules to keep Super PACs from coordinating their federal campaign activities with candidates and 84% supporting a reform that would require any entity (such as a dark money PAC) that spends more than \$10,000 in a federal election to disclose the names of its major donors. More than three out of four Texas Democrats and Republicans support these two campaign finance reforms.

More than four out of five (84%) Texans support a reform that would ban partisan gerrymandering for congressional elections and require congressional districts to be drawn using clear and neutral standards. Support for this ban ranges from a high of 93% among Texas Democrats to a low of 76% (still more than three-fourths) of Republicans.

More than two-thirds of Texans favor two reforms related to Election Day. More than three-quarters (76%) support a reform that would require the state to insure that wait times for in-person voting do not exceed 30 minutes while 71% support making Election Day a public holiday. These reforms are supported by nine out of ten Democrats (90%, 89%, respectively) and by a majority of Republicans (63%, 55%, respectively), albeit at a substantially lower level.

Texans are very supportive of early voting reforms (which are all already in force in the case of Texas election law). More than four out of five Texans support requiring a state's early voting period to begin at least two weeks before election day (84%), requiring at least 10 hours early voting each weekday (82%), and requiring early voting to be held on weekends for at least eight hours a day (81%). More than nine out of 10 Democrats support these three early voting reforms, as do more than two out of three Republicans.

Texans are much more divided in regard to their support for seven voting and election reforms, with fewer than three in five Texans supporting a trio of reforms.

Only one-half (50%) of Texans support (and 50% oppose) no-excuse mail voting under which all voters are eligible to vote by mail without having to provide a reason. While this reform enjoys very strong support among Texas Democrats (87%), fewer than one in five (17%) Texas Republicans support it. Three out of four (76%) Black Texans support this reform compared to 59% of Latino and 38% of white Texans.

Texans are sharply divided on a reform that would allow former felons to vote immediately upon their release from prison, which 55% of Texans support and 45% oppose. While this reform enjoys the support of 80% of Texas Democrats, only 29% of Texas Republicans support it. More than three out of four (78%) Black Texans support this reform compared to 63% of Latino and 46% of white Texans.

Texans are also relatively evenly split on a reform that would allow voters to register to vote at the polling location where they cast their ballot (same day voter registration), with 58% supporting this reform and 42% opposing it. While 86% of Democrats support this reform, that position is shared by only 32% of Republicans. Four out of five (82%) Black Texans support this reform compared to 66% and 49% of Latino and white Texans, respectively.

## **Survey Population Demographics**

Whites account for 52% of the survey population of registered voters, Latinos 32%, Blacks 12%, and others 4%. Women account for 53% of the population and men for 47%. In regard to generations, 36% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) cohort, 26% to Generation X (Gen X) (1965-1980), and 38% to the combined Millennial (1981-1996) generation and Generation Z (1997-2012) cohort. The highest level of educational attainment of the respondents ranges from high school or less (29%), to some college or a two-year degree (32%) to a four-year degree or postgraduate degree (39%). Slightly more than two-fifths of the

population identifies as Republican (42%) and as Democrat (42%), with 16% identifying as Independent. In the 2020 presidential election, 46% of the respondents voted for Donald Trump, 41% voted for Joe Biden, 2% voted for other candidates, and 12% did not vote. Among those who cast a ballot in 2020, 52% voted for Trump, 46% for Biden and 2% for other candidates.

## Voting Rights and Election Reforms

The survey respondents were queried in three separate multi-faceted questions on the extent to which they support (strongly or somewhat) or oppose (strongly or somewhat) 18 distinct voting and election reforms contained in the federal Freedom to Vote Act. They also could answer “don’t know”.

1. To what extent do you support or oppose the following election reforms related to requirements for states related to Early Voting and Election Day?

- Require the Early Voting period to begin at least two weeks prior to Election Day.
- Require at least 10 hours of Early Voting each weekday (except in counties with less than 3,000 voters) during the early voting period.
- Require Early Voting on weekends (at least 8 hours on one Saturday and 8 hours on one Sunday during the early voting period).
- Require the state to ensure that wait times to vote in-person do not exceed 30 minutes.
- Make Election Day a legal public holiday.
- Create a national standard for voter photo-identification for those states with a photo-ID requirement for in-person voting.

2. To what extent do you support or oppose the following election reforms related to requirements for states related to Mail (absentee) Voting and Voter Registration?

- Adopt no-excuse mail voting (everyone can vote by mail without providing a reason).
- Allow voters to apply online to receive a mail (absentee) ballot.
- Require the state count any ballot postmarked on Election Day (or earlier) that is received by the election authority within seven days of Election Day.
- Automatically register eligible voters to vote whenever they provide information to a government agency (such as when getting a driver’s license) unless they explicitly opt out.
- Allow eligible voters to register to vote online.
- Allow eligible voters to register to vote on Election Day at the polling location where they cast their ballot (same day voter registration).

3. To what extent do you support or oppose the following election reforms regarding a variety of requirements and rules?

- Ban partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts and require congressional districts to be drawn using clear and neutral standards.
- Require all voting machines to provide voter-verified paper records (prohibiting paperless electronic voting machines).
- Allow all former felons to vote upon their release from prison.

- Require the state to conduct transparent post-election audits that adhere to clearly defined rules and procedures.
- Require any entity that spends more than \$10,000 in a federal election to disclose the names of all major donors.
- Tighten rules to keep Super PACs from coordinating their federal campaign activities with candidates.

These 18 reforms can in turn be subdivided into eight discrete groups based on their substantive focus: mail voting (three reforms), voter registration (three), election day (two), early voting (three), campaign finance (two), anti-fraud (three), gerrymandering (one), and former felon voting (one).

## Overall Support for & Opposition to the 18 Voting and Election Reforms

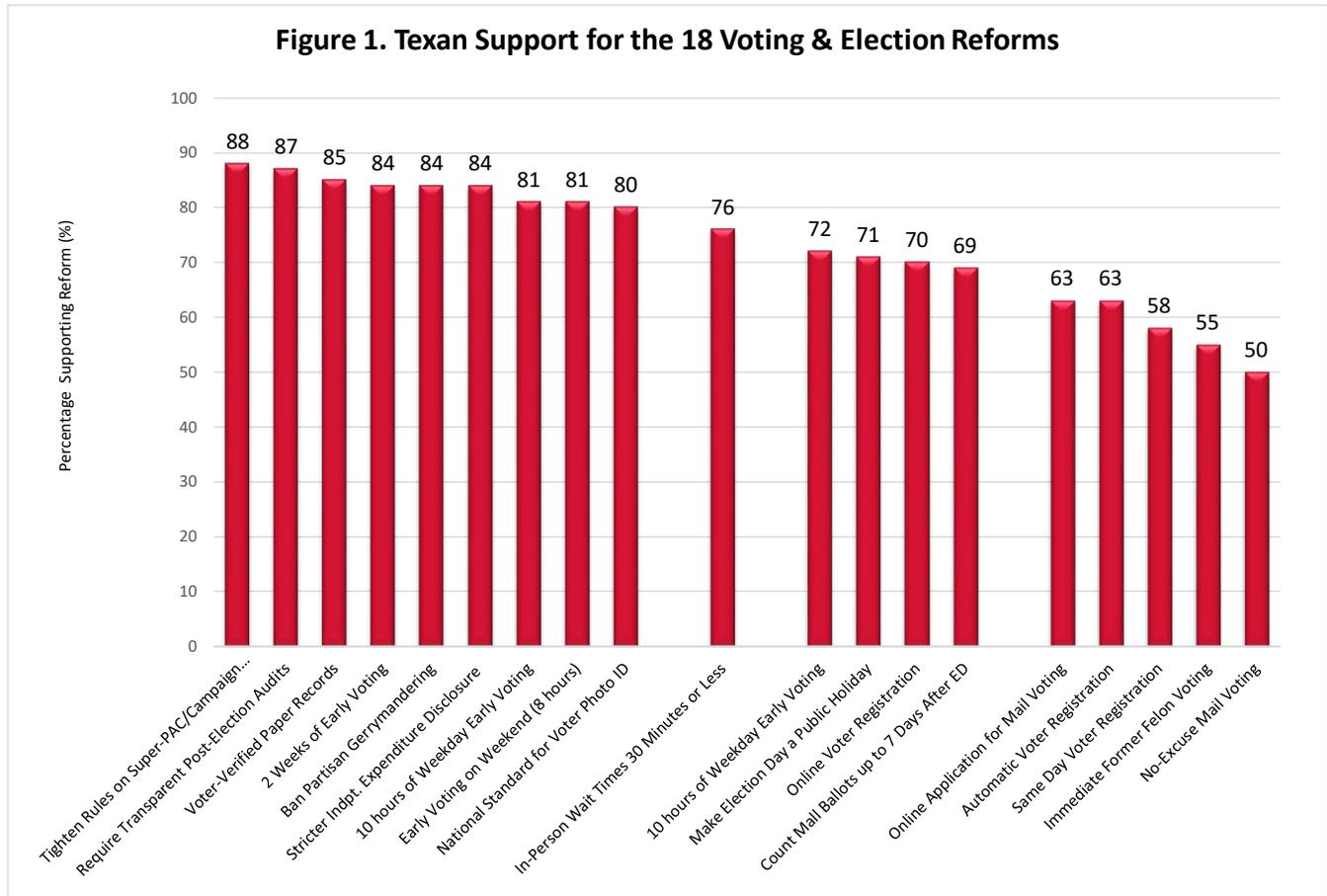
Table 1 displays the proportion of Texas registered voters (henceforth referred to as Texans) who strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the 18 proposed reforms, along with the proportion who opted to answer “don’t know”.

**Table 1. Texan Support for & Opposition to 18 Voting and Election Reforms - Percentage of Respondents (%)**

Election & Voting Reforms	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't Know
Stricter Independent Expenditure Disclosure	56	15	8	6	15
Require Transparent Post-Election Audits	51	23	7	4	15
Tighten Rules on Super-PAC/Campaign Coordination	51	19	6	4	20
2 Weeks of Early Voting	48	27	8	6	11
Voter-Verified Paper Records	48	23	9	4	16
National Standard for Voter Photo ID	48	20	8	9	15
Ban Partisan Gerrymandering	45	21	6	6	22
10 hours of Weekday Early Voting	43	28	10	6	13
In-Person Wait Times 30 Minutes or Less	43	23	11	9	14
Early Voting on Weekend (8 hours)	42	29	8	9	12
Make Election Day a Public Holiday	42	21	12	13	12
Online Voter Registration	41	22	8	18	11
Count Mail Ballots up to 7 Days After Election Day	39	20	10	16	15
Automatic Voter Registration	37	19	11	22	11
Online Application for Mail Voting	35	21	11	22	11
Same Day Voter Registration	35	16	12	25	12
No-Excuse Mail Voting	29	16	9	36	10
Immediate Former Felon Voting	26	21	14	25	14

The proportion of Texans who strongly support the reforms ranges from highs of 56% (stricter independent disclosure requirements for all PACs, especially dark money PACs), 51% (transparent state post-election audits) and 51% (tighter rules governing Super PAC coordination with candidate campaigns) to lows of 26% (allow former felons to vote immediately upon release from prison), 29% (no-excuse mail voting) and 35% (online applications for mail ballots and same day voter registration). The proportion of Texans who answered “don’t know” (who will be excluded from the subsequent analysis) ranges from a low of 11% to a high of 22%, with a mean of 14%.

Figure 1 provides the proportion of Texans who support (strongly or somewhat) the respective voting or election reform (excluding “don’t know” responses). The level of support ranges from a high of 88% of Texans to a low of 50%.



More than four-fifths of Texans support ten reforms: tightening the rules to keep Super PACS from coordinating their federal campaign activities with candidates (88%), requiring states to conduct transparent post-election audits that adhere to clearly defined rules and procedures (87%), requiring all electronic voting machines to provide voter-verified paper records (85%), requiring a state’s early voting period to begin at least two weeks before election day (84%), banning partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts and requiring the districts be drawn using clear and neutral standards (84%), requiring any entity that spends more than \$10,000 in a federal election to disclose the names of its major donors (84%), requiring at least 10 hours of voting each weekday during the early voting period (82%), requiring states to provide at least 10 hours of early voting each weekday during the early voting period except in small counties (81%), requiring states to conduct early voting during at least one weekend (81%), and creating a national standard for voter photo ID for those states that require it (80%).

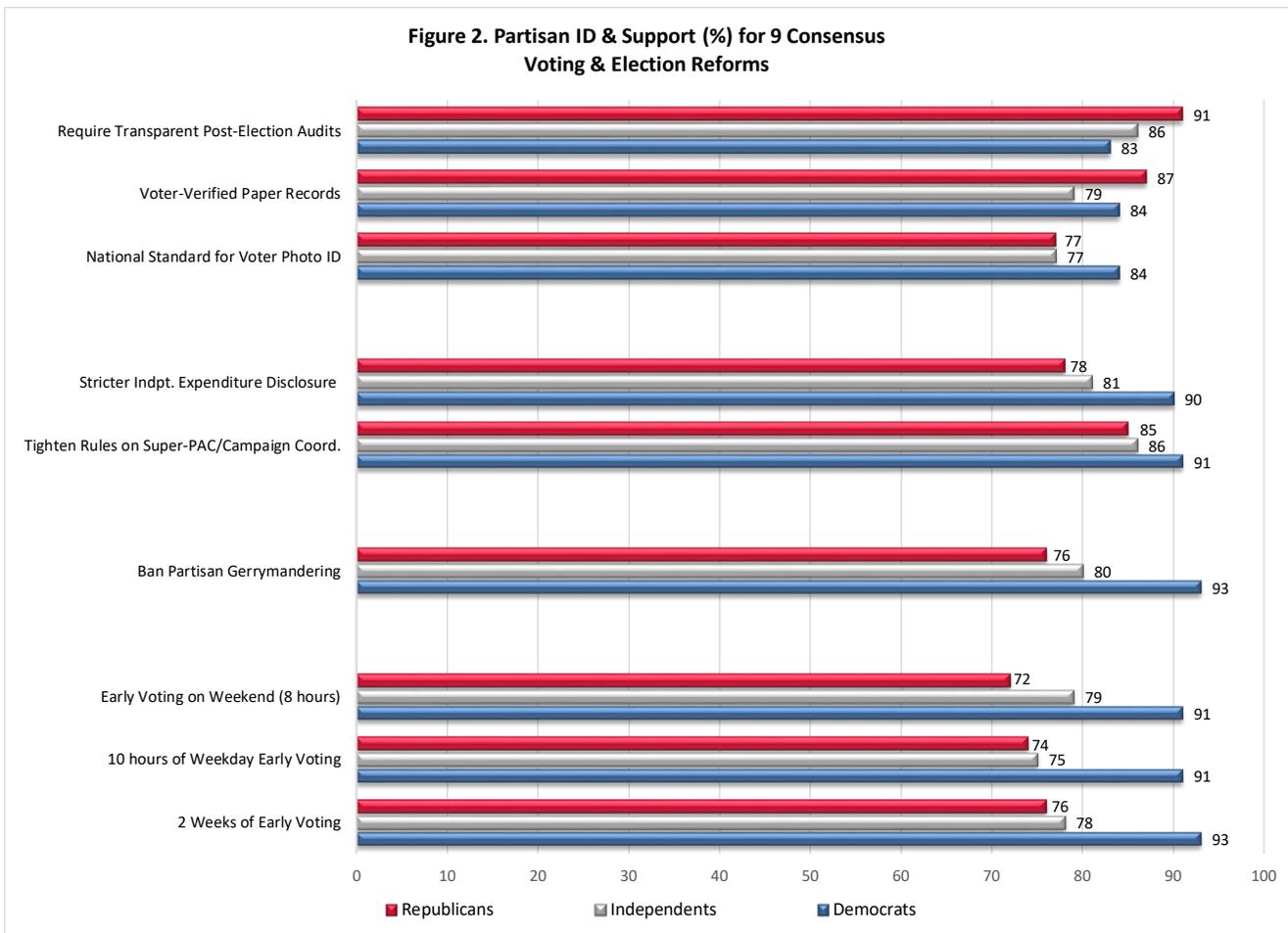
More than three-quarters of Texans support a reform requiring states to insure that wait times to vote in-person do not exceed 30 minutes (76%).

More than two-thirds of Texans support three reforms: making Election Day a legal public holiday (71%), allowing eligible voters to register to vote online (70%), and requiring states to count mail ballots that arrive up to seven days after election day (69%).

Between one-half and less than two-thirds of Texans support five reforms: allowing eligible voters to apply for a mail ballot online (63%), automatically registering eligible voters to vote whenever they interact with a government agency (63%), allowing eligible voters to register to vote on Election Day at the polling place (58%), allowing former felons to vote immediately upon their release from prison (55%), and allowing all eligible voters to vote by mail without having to provide an excuse (50%).

## Partisan ID and Consensus Support for 9 Voting & Election Reforms

There exists a strong bipartisan consensus in support of nine voting and election reforms spanning four different thematic categories (anti-fraud, campaign finance, gerrymandering, early voting). Support for these nine reforms (see Figure 2) among Texas Republicans, Independents and Democrats ranges from a low of 72% to a high of 93%. More than two-thirds of every partisan group supports each one of these nine reforms.



Republicans are more supportive than Democrats of only two of the 18 voting and election reforms, both of which are located in the anti-fraud thematic category. Approximately nine out of ten Texas Republicans support requiring states to conduct a transparent post-election audit (91%) and requiring states to provide voter-verified paper ballots (87%), compared to 83% and 84% of Democrats and 86% and 79% of Independents, respectively.

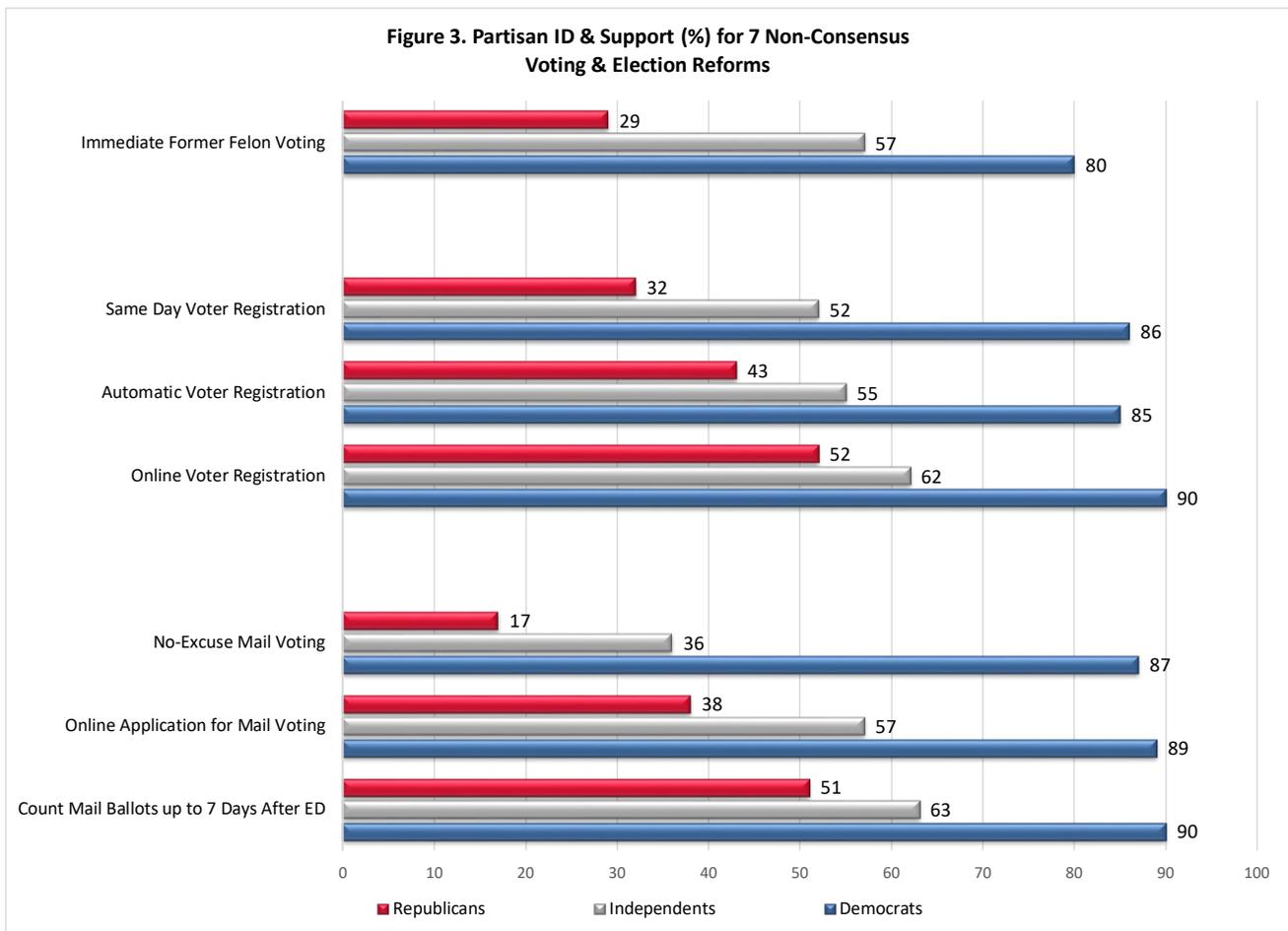
More than nine out of 10 Democrats (91%) and more than eight out of ten Republicans (85%) and Independents (86%) support a reform that would limit the ability of Super PACs to coordinate with federal campaigns, while nine out of ten Democrats (90%) and more than three out of four Republicans (78%) and Independents (81%) support a reform that would require dark money groups that are active in federal campaigns to disclose the names of their large donors.

Similar super-majorities, nine of ten Democrats (93%), eight out of ten Independents (80%) and three out of four Republicans (76%), support a reform that would ban partisan gerrymandering for congressional districts and require that districts be drawn using neutral and transparent methods.

Finally, there also exists a strong level of support across Democratic, Republican and Independent Texans in support of a variety of reforms related to early voting. Nine out of ten Democrats (93%, 91%, 91%), three-quarters of Independents (78%, 75%, 79%), and approximately three-quarters of Republicans (76%, 74%, 72%) support the respective early voting reforms that would require early voting to begin at least two weeks before election day, would require at least 10 hours of weekday voting during the early voting period, and would require early voting on at least one weekend for a minimum of eight hours both days.

### Partisan ID & Lack of Consensus Support for 7 Voting & Election Reforms

From a partisan perspective, Texans lack a consensus in support for seven reforms in the three thematic categories of former felon voting, voter registration, and mail voting (see Figure 3).



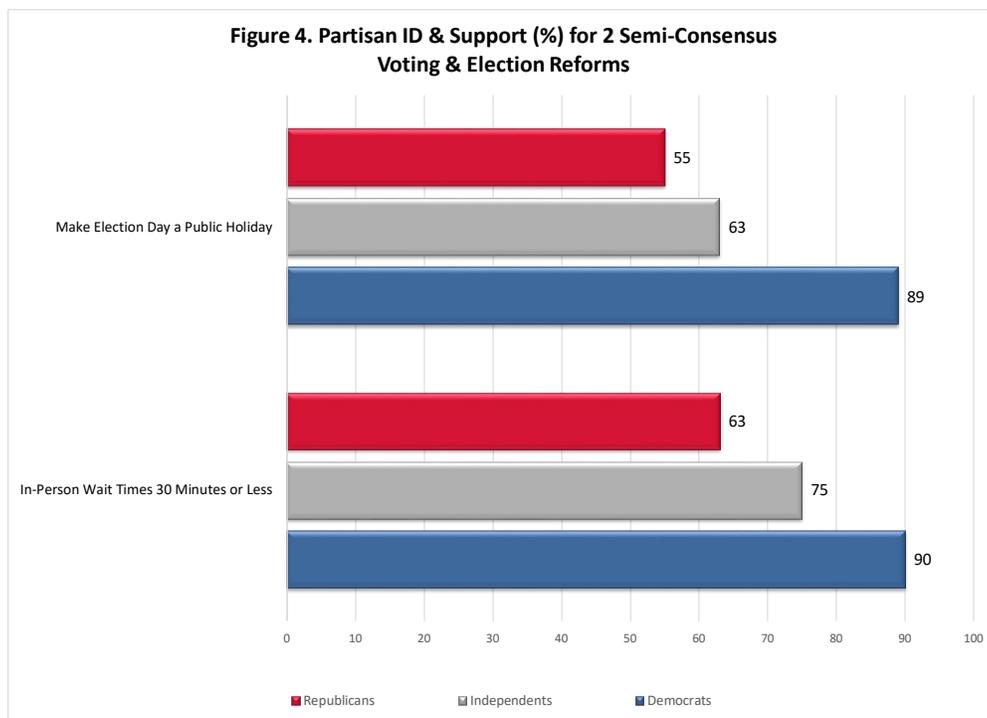
Eight out of ten Democrats (80%) support allowing former felons to vote immediately after being released from prison, compared to only 29% of Republicans and 57% of Independents.

There is also a profound chasm separating Democrats and Republicans in regard to their support for the three voter-registration related reforms. While 86% of Democrats support same day voter registration, this position is shared by only 32% of Republicans. And, while 85% of Democrats support the automatic registration of voters whenever they interact with a government agency (with an opt-out option), only 43% of Republicans share that position. Finally, while nine of ten (90%) of Democrats support the adoption of online voter registration, this reform is supported by only half (52%) of Republicans.

One last area of considerable disagreement between Texas Democrats and Republicans is in the thematic area of reforms related to mail voting. Five times as many Democrats (87%) as Republicans (17%) support no-excuse mail (absentee) voting, with only 36% of Independents in favor of this reform. By the same token, 89% of Democrats support a reform that would allow voters to register to vote online, more than twice the proportion of Republicans (38%). While a bare majority of Republicans (51%) support requiring states to count all mail ballots that arrive up to seven days after Election Day, this is 39 percentage points less than the proportion of Democrats (90%) supporting this reform.

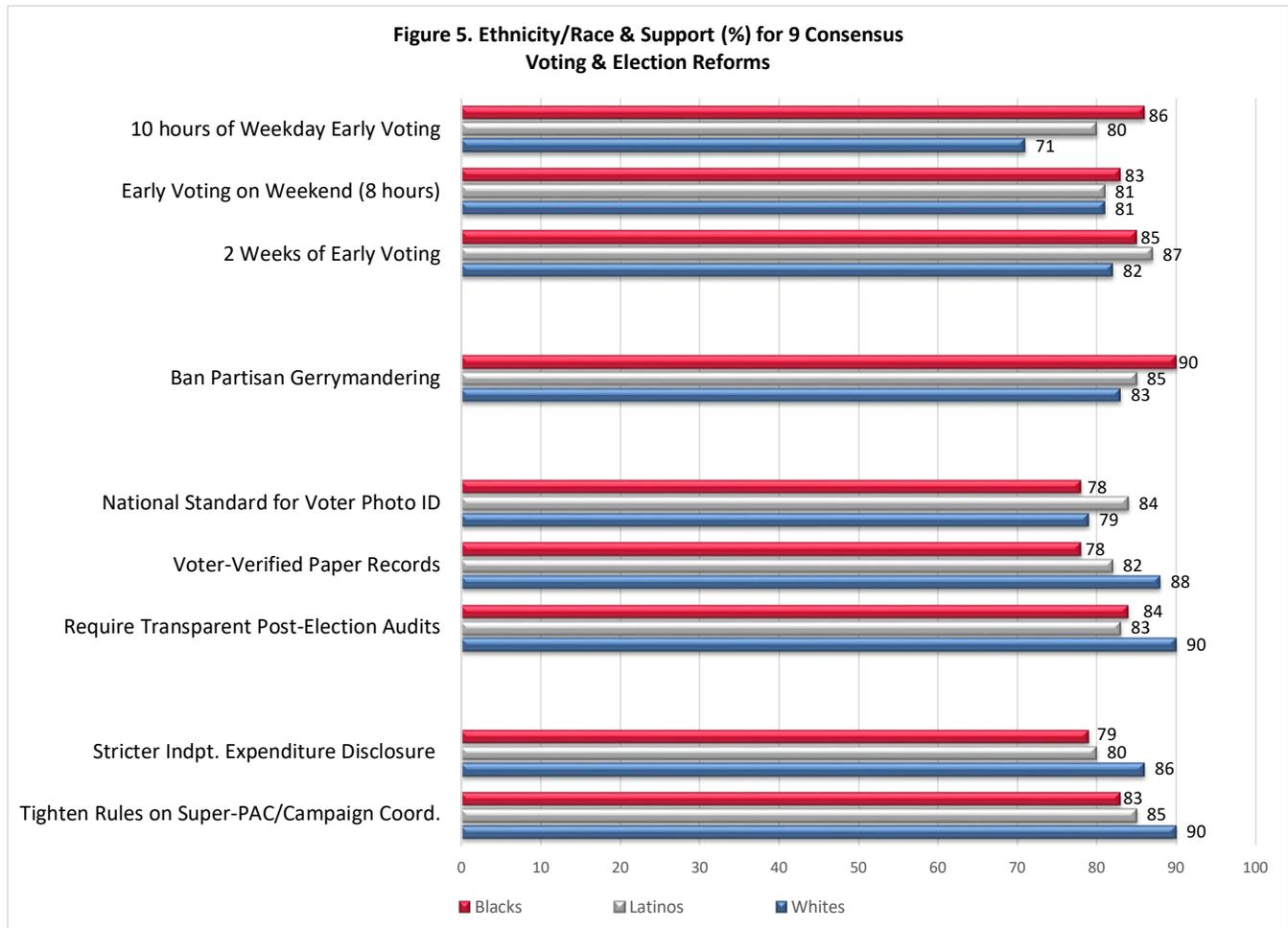
## Partisan ID & Semi-Consensus Support for 2 Voting & Election Reforms

Intermediate between the two prior categories are a pair of reforms located within the thematic election day category (see Figure 4). Majorities of both Democrats and Republicans (as well as Independents) support both reforms. However, support by Democrats (89%) for making Election Day a public holiday is substantially greater than that among Republicans (55%), just as support by Democrats (90%) for requiring states to insure that in-person voters do not have to wait longer than 30 minutes to vote is substantially greater than by Republicans (63%), although more than three out of five Republicans and three-quarters of Independents do support this latter reform.



## Ethnicity/Race and Consensus Support for 9 Voting & Election Reforms

There exists a strong inter-group consensus among the members of the state’s three principal ethnic/racial groups (white, Latino, Black) in support of nine reforms spanning four different thematic categories (anti-fraud, campaign finance, gerrymandering, early voting). Support for these nine reforms (see Figure 5) among white, Latino and Black Texans ranges from a low of 71% to a high of 90%, with more than two-thirds of each ethnic/racial group in support of each one of these nine reforms.



In the thematic area of early voting, there do not exist significant ethnic/racial differences in regard to support for either early voting on at least one weekend or in regard to requiring early voting to begin at least two weeks before election day. More than four-fifths of white (81%), Latino (81%) and Black (83%) Texans support the weekend early voting reform while 82%, 87% and 85% respectively support the two weeks of early voting reform. However, while more than two-thirds of white Texans (71%) support requiring a minimum of 10 hours of early voting on weekdays, this proportion is significantly lower than the level of support for this reform among Black Texans (86%).

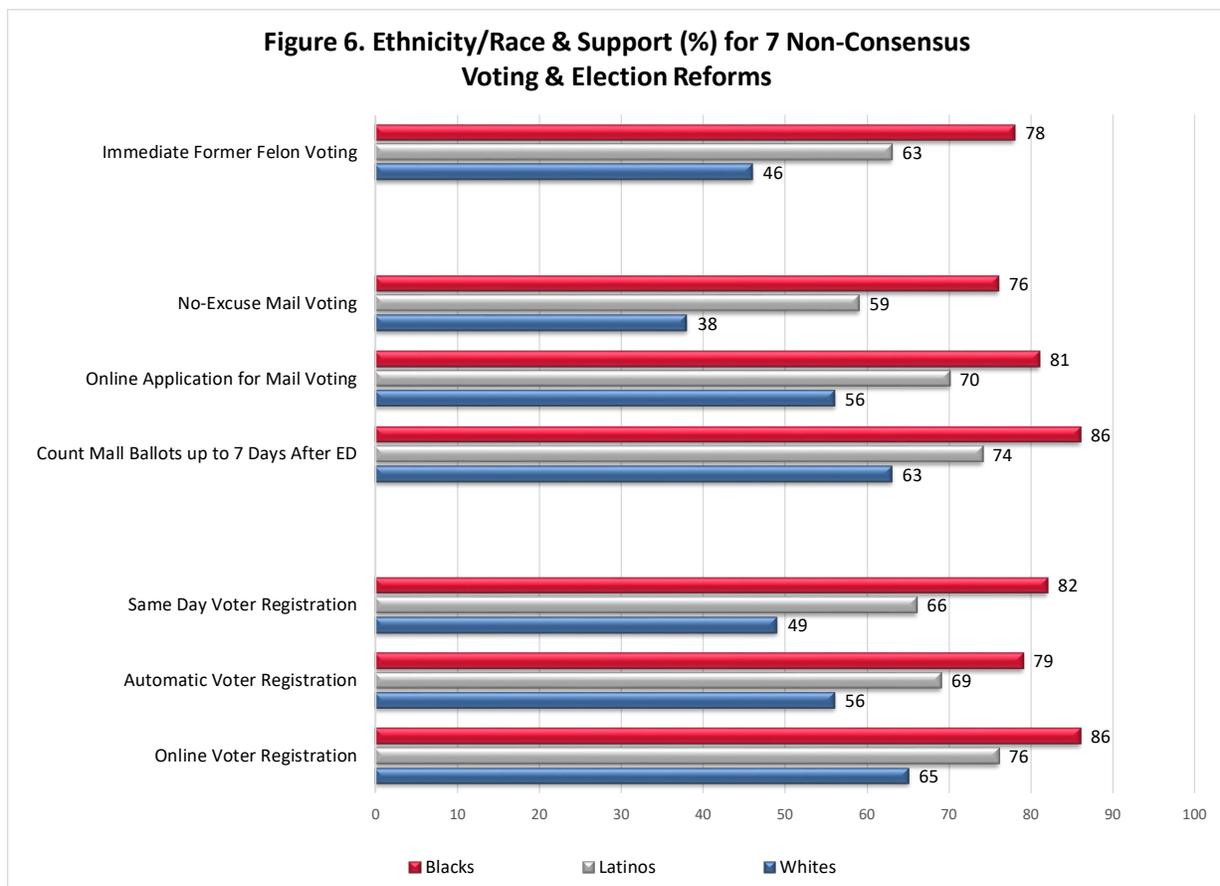
There do not exist any noteworthy ethnic/racial differences in regard to support for a ban on partisan gerrymandering for congressional elections, with 83% of white Texans, 85% of Latino Texans and 90% of Black Texans in favor of this reform.

In the thematic area of anti-fraud reforms, in only one instance is there a case where there exists a significant ethnic/racial difference in regard to support for the one of the three reforms. There is strong inter-ethnic/racial agreement in support of establishing a national standard for voter photo ID requirements in those states that require that a voter provide a photo ID in order to be able to cast a ballot. More than three-quarters of Black (78%), white (79%) and Latino (84%) Texans support this reform. Similarly, there also exists strong inter-ethnic/racial agreement in support of requiring states to carry out transparent post-election audits. More than four-fifths of Latino (83%), Black (84%) and white (90%) Texans support this reform. Finally, while more than three-quarters of Black (78%), Latino (82%) and white (88%) Texans support requiring voter-verified paper records for voting machines, white Texans are moderately more likely to support this reform than are Black Texans.

In the thematic area of campaign finance reform, there do not exist significant ethnic/racial differences in regard to support for either of the two reforms. More than three-quarters of white (86%), Latino (80%) and Black (79%) Texans support stricter disclosure requirements for dark money PACS, just as more than four-fifths (90%, 85% and 83%, respectively) support tightening the rules to prevent Super PACs from coordinating with federal candidates whom they are supporting.

### Ethnicity/Race & Lack of Consensus Support for 7 Voting & Election Reforms

There exist significant inter-group ethnic/racial differences in regard to seven reforms (see Figure 6). In all cases, white Texans are significantly less likely than Latino Texans and, especially, Black Texans to support the reform, just as Latino Texans are significantly more likely than white Texans and less likely than Black Texans to support the reform.



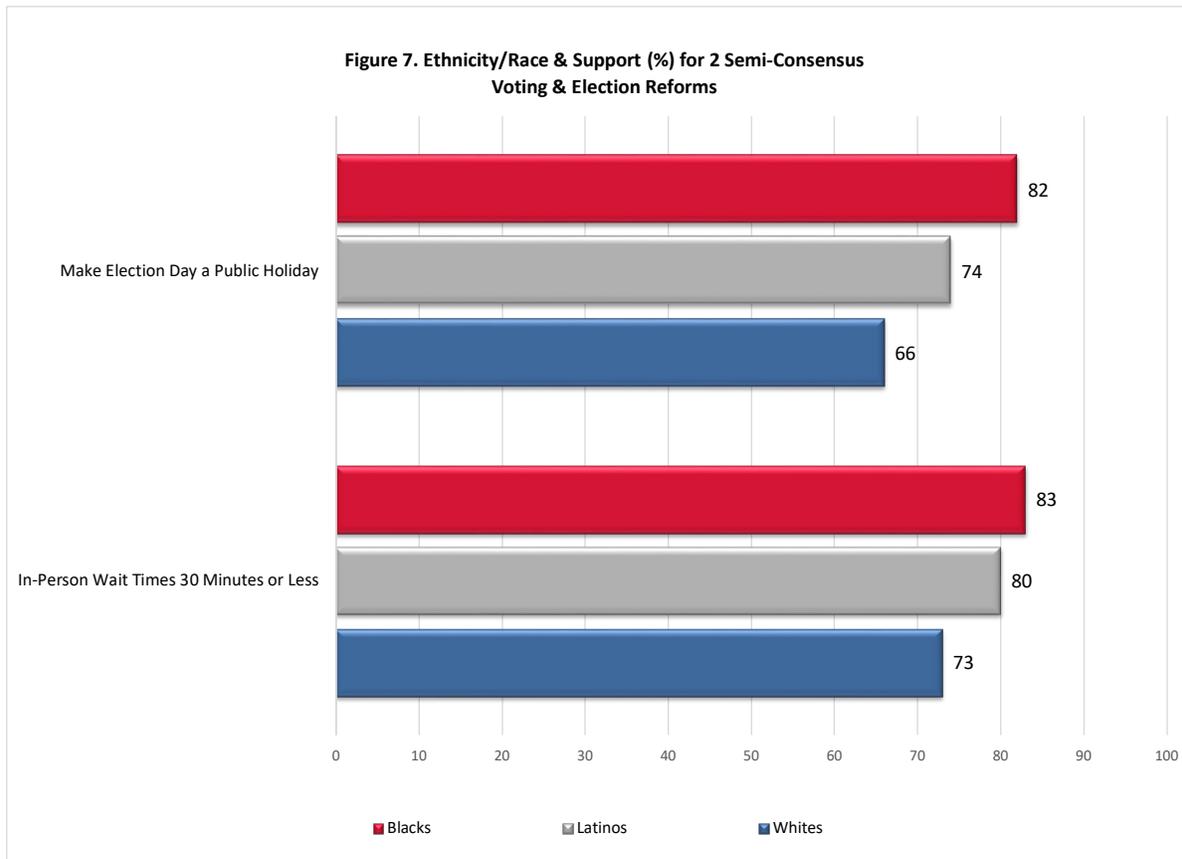
While more than three out of four Black Texans (78%) and more than three-fifths of Latino Texans (63%) support a reform which would allow former felons to vote upon their release from prison, less than half (46%) of white Texans share this opinion.

Black Texans are significantly more likely than Latino and white Texans to support reforms in the thematic area of mail voting that would provide for no-excuse mail voting (76% vs. 59% and 38%, respectively), that would allow voters to apply for a mail ballot online (81% vs. 70% and 56%, respectively), and that would require states to count any mail ballot, postmarked by election day, that arrives within seven days after Election Day (86% vs. 74% and 63%, respectively). It should be noted though that while professing levels of support that were significantly lower than those of Black Texans, majorities of Latino Texans (59%, 70% and 74%) support all three of these reforms. Similarly, a majority of white Texans support the latter two reforms, 56% and 63%, respectively.

Black Texans are significantly more likely than Latino and white Texans to support reforms in the thematic area of voter registration that would provide for same day voter registration (82% vs. 66% and 49%, respectively), automatic voter registration when interacting with a government agency (79% vs. 69% and 56%, respectively), and which would allow eligible voters to register to vote online (86% vs. 76% and 65%, respectively). As was the case in regard to mail voting, substantial majorities of Latino Texans support all three reforms (66%, 69% and 76%), while a majority of white Texans support the latter two reforms, while effectively being evenly divided (49% support) on same day voter registration.

## Ethnicity/Race & Semi-Consensus Support for 2 Voting & Election Reforms

Intermediate between the two prior consensus and non-consensus categories are two reforms located within the thematic election day category (see Figure 7). While Black Texans are significantly more likely than white Texans to support these reforms, substantial majorities of white Texans are nevertheless supportive of both reforms. In regard to the reform that would make election day a public holiday, 82% of Black Texans support this reform compared to 66% of white Texans, with Latino Texans in between at 74%. In regard to the reform that would require the state to insure that in-person voting wait times are 30 minutes or less, 83% of Black Texans support the reform compared to 73% of white Texans, with four out of five (80%) Latino Texans in favor of this reform.



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