

Extra hour for early voting an easy win in Texas, but some election reform measures draw mild support

October 29 2021, by Sally Strong



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The majority of Texans support, at varying intensities, the newly enacted state laws aimed at reshaping elections in the state, according to a new

five-year survey project from the University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs and Texas Southern University Jordan-Leland School of Public Affairs.

In this second release of findings, Texas Trends Survey takes a look at several hotly debated election-reform issues – including bans on drive-through voting and 24-hour voting – as well as redistricting that made frequent fuel for headlines during the regular state legislative session and the three special sessions this year.

"Elections are the gateway to making our democracy work, and the opinions of the people on how their election system is working is important information for our elected representatives to know. The data and insights in this inaugural annual survey will help Texans and our elected officials build the best election system possible for our state," Carroll Robinson, associate professor with the TSU Jordan-Leland School of Public Affairs.

To the survey's question about adding one hour to every day of early voting, responses were clear: 86% supported the measure, only 14% opposed. But some topics drew varied support:

Drive-through voting: A ban on drive-through voting (exceptions for voters physically unable to enter the polling place) was supported by 59% of respondents and opposed by 31%.

24-hour voting: Requiring early-voting polls to open no earlier than 6 a.m. and close no later than 10 p.m. drew support from 63%, opposition from 37%.

Partisan drawing of voting districts: One [political party](#) having control of the redistricting process drew general disfavor. Among Democrat respondents, 76% considered the scenario a problem; 45% of

Republican respondents agreed (providing a plurality of the Republican respondents, though not a majority).

The survey's responses on these issues, and the others included in the Texas Trends Survey project, were subdivided according to gender, generation, race/ethnicity and education, and are representative of the Texas adult population.

"While almost nine out of 10 Texans support the extension of the minimum number of daily early voting hours from eight to nine, slightly fewer than six out of 10 support the ban on drive-through voting and the ban on 24-hour voting. When we looked deeper into the survey, we recognized the majority of Democrat and Black respondents oppose both bans," said Mark Jones, a research associate at the UH Hobby School and a political science professor at Rice University.

The issue of having the Republican-held governorship, State Senate and State House of Representatives forming the state's redistricting drew divided responses.

"During a period of great political polarization, people on both sides of the aisle generally agree on one aspect of redistricting. A majority of Texans consider it a problem when one political party controls the governorship and the state legislature, and those same officials have the power to draw legislative districts favoring their majority party," Renée Cross, senior director of the Hobby School, said.

The 2021 survey was fielded between Oct. 4 and Oct. 21 in English and Spanish, with 2,067 YouGov participants 18 and older. [Click to learn more about the five-year Texas Trends Survey research project, jointly undertaken by UH and TSU.](#)

More information: Full report:

uh.edu/hobby/txrends/txrends2021_report2.pdf

Provided by University of Houston

Citation: Extra hour for early voting an easy win in Texas, but some election reform measures draw mild support (2021, October 29) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-10-extra-hour-early-voting-easy.html>

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