

Vera Institute TX Bail Project

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Sample Online sample of 800 voters fielded from August 24 to August 30, 2026.
Margin of Error $\pm 4.3\%$

1. If the election for U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, who would you vote for in the district where you live?

The Republican candidate	46%
The Democratic candidate	43%
Other candidate	1%
Undecided	11%
Totals	101%
N	800

2. Even though you are undecided, toward whom would you lean?

Lean the Republican candidate	30%
Lean the Democratic candidate	11%
Lean other candidate	0%
Undecided	59%
Totals	100%
N	86

3. 2026 U.S. House Vote (Combined)

The Republican candidate	46%
Lean the Republican candidate	3%
The Democratic candidate	43%
Lean the Democratic candidate	1%
Other candidate	1%
Lean other candidate	0%
Undecided	6%
Totals	100%
N	800

4. If the election for U.S. Senate were being held today, who would you vote for?

Ken Paxton (Republican)	42%
James Talarico (Democrat)	46%
Other candidate	0%
Undecided	11%

Totals	99%
N	800

5. Even though you are undecided, toward whom would you lean?

Lean Ken Paxton (Republican)	18%
Lean James Talarico (Democrat)	24%
Lean other candidate	0%
Undecided	57%
Totals	99%
N	90

6. 2026 U.S. Senate Vote (Combined)

Ken Paxton (Republican)	42%
Lean Ken Paxton (Republican)	2%
James Talarico (Democrat)	46%
Lean James Talarico (Democrat)	3%
Other candidate	0%
Lean other candidate	0%
Undecided	6%
Totals	99%
N	800

7. If the election for Governor of Texas were being held today, who would you vote for?

Greg Abbott (Republican)	48%
Gina Hinojosa (Democrat)	44%
Other candidate	1%
Undecided	8%
Totals	101%
N	800

8. Even though you are undecided, toward whom would you lean?

Lean Greg Abbott (Republican)	15%
Lean Gina Hinojosa (Democrat)	7%
Lean other candidate	6%

Undecided	72%
Totals	100%
N	61

9. 2026 TX Governor Vote (Combined)

Greg Abbott (Republican)	48%
Lean Greg Abbott (Republican)	1%
Gina Hinojosa (Democrat)	44%
Lean Gina Hinojosa (Democrat)	1%
Other candidate	1%
Lean other candidate	0%
Undecided	6%
Totals	101%
N	800

10. How [favorably or unfavorably] do you regard the following people or groups?

	Have not heard of this person or group	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Neither favorable nor unfav- orable	Somewhat unfavor- able	Very unfav- orable
Donald Trump	0%	26%	17%	5%	8%	43%
JD Vance	3%	29%	14%	9%	8%	38%
Democrats in Congress	2%	16%	19%	12%	17%	34%
Republicans in Congress	1%	15%	26%	9%	15%	34%
Gina Hinojosa	7%	21%	18%	24%	10%	20%
Greg Abbott	2%	29%	19%	8%	6%	36%
James Talarico	4%	28%	19%	13%	6%	30%
Ken Paxton	4%	18%	18%	15%	10%	35%

11. Generally speaking, when it comes to crime in Texas, would you say...

Crime in Texas has gone up in the past year	29%
Crime in Texas has stayed about the same in the past year	36%
Crime in Texas has gone down in the past year	20%
Not sure	15%
Totals	100%

N800

12. Generally speaking, when it comes to crime in your community, would you say...

Crime in my community has gone up in the past year 20%
Crime in my community has stayed about the same in the past year 45%
Crime in my community has gone down in the past year 21%
Not sure 14%
Totals 100%
N800

13. What is your biggest crime concern today?

Gun violence 29%
Random street crime (i.e., robbery, assault) 16%
Opioids and fentanyl 7%
Domestic violence 6%
Theft 7%
Homelessness 8%
Migrant crime 16%
Other 6%
Not sure 5%
Totals 100%
N800

14. For each of the following issues, please say if you view that issue to be [a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not too serious problem, not a problem at all,] or if you are unsure.

	Very serious problem	Somewhat serious problem	Not too serious problem	Not a problem at all	Not sure
Crime in the United States	50%	39%	7%	1%	3%
Crime in Texas overall	35%	43%	16%	2%	4%
Crime in big cities in Texas	49%	37%	9%	1%	4%
Crime in your community	21%	30%	39%	6%	6%
The fentanyl and overdose crisis in Texas	42%	35%	10%	2%	11%
The fentanyl and overdose crisis in your community	22%	27%	26%	10%	15%

15. Below is a list of public officials and institutions. For each, please indicate how responsible you think each is for improving safety and reducing crime in Texas.

	Very re- sponsible	Somewhat responsi- ble	Not too re- sponsible	Not at all responsi- ble	Not sure
District Attorneys (DAs) and local prosecutors	46%	34%	9%	4%	8%
The Governor	46%	31%	7%	8%	7%
The Texas Attorney General	43%	34%	8%	8%	8%
County sheriffs	51%	32%	6%	3%	7%
State elected officials	36%	42%	10%	4%	8%
Local elected officials, like your mayor or city council	39%	39%	11%	4%	6%
The Texas Supreme Court	36%	35%	14%	4%	10%
Texas' members of Congress	36%	38%	12%	5%	9%

16. Next, you will see a short list of issues. On each issue, do you [trust Republicans more, trust Democrats more,] trust both equally, trust neither, or are you unsure.

	Trust Re- publicans more	Trust Democrats more	Trust both equally	Trust neither	Not sure
Reducing gun violence	34%	35%	7%	18%	7%
Being tough on crime	43%	22%	13%	15%	7%
Making communities safer	36%	30%	13%	15%	6%
Addressing the opioid and fentanyl crisis	33%	28%	12%	18%	9%
Ensuring nobody is above the law	34%	31%	9%	21%	6%
Investing in crime prevention	37%	30%	12%	15%	6%
Holding people who commit crimes accountable	39%	27%	11%	18%	6%
Dealing with immigration - Party Trust Split A	49%	27%	8%	12%	4%
Dealing with illegal immigration - Party Trust Split B	43%	33%	7%	12%	4%

17. Even if none of them is exactly right, which of the following is closest to your personal view? The best way to improve public safety in our communities would be to...

Support the police who put their lives on the line for us and hold them accountable when they use excessive force or abuse their power 34%

Build strong bonds and trust between police and the community	23%
Take the burden off police officers to solve every social problem so they can focus on serious crime	17%
Put more police on the streets	4%
Hire more police officers	4%
Increase funding for police	9%
Support officer recruitment, retention, and wellness	9%
Totals	100%
N	800

18. Next, you will see a list of policies that some people say could reduce crime and make communities safer. For each policy, say whether you think it would [improve public safety a lot, improve public safety a little, not improve public safety at all, decrease public safety,] or if you are not sure.

	Improve public safety a lot	Improve public safety a little	Not improve public safety at all	Decrease public safety	Not sure
Increasing access to mental health care	64%	26%	5%	1%	4%
Expanding access to addiction treatment and recovery programs	50%	34%	8%	1%	7%
Getting illegal guns off the streets	59%	25%	10%	1%	4%
Passing common sense gun safety laws	52%	22%	13%	5%	8%
Improving schools and programs for young people	59%	29%	5%	1%	6%
Sending a trained crisis specialist to some mental health 9-1-1 calls	50%	28%	10%	3%	9%
Building trust between police and the communities they serve	60%	29%	5%	1%	4%
Supporting police and holding them accountable when they abuse their power	56%	29%	8%	2%	5%
Supporting police and holding them accountable when they break the law	63%	25%	5%	1%	6%
Hiring more police officers	47%	30%	11%	4%	8%
Putting more police on the streets	44%	29%	13%	8%	6%
Investing in job training and employment programs for people leaving prison	50%	34%	8%	1%	8%
Making housing, food, and other basic needs more affordable	60%	21%	12%	1%	6%
Improving public infrastructure like street lighting in neighborhoods	50%	38%	6%	1%	5%

Increasing funding for police	43%	31%	13%	5%	7%
Increasing the length of prison and jail sentences	43%	22%	15%	5%	14%
Launching violence prevention programs to reduce gun deaths and shootings	46%	33%	12%	2%	8%
Expanding access to life-saving interventions like fentanyl test strips and Narcan	45%	31%	12%	2%	10%

19. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

We should do more to get tough on crime — like having tougher sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws, and providing police with more support and resources.	42%
We should fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities — like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing — and help prevent crime and break its cycle by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction and by getting illegal guns off the street.	58%
Totals	100%
N	800

20. Next, consider different statements by hypothetical [Republican and Democratic] candidates running for office here in Texas. Which candidate would you trust more to keep your community safe?

Asked only of respondents in Serious/Tough Wording Split A

The Republican candidate says: "I stand on the side of law and order. That means having longer sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people behind bars, and providing police with more support and resources." .	44%
The Democratic candidate says: "I am serious about safety. That means fully funding things that are proven to create safe communities, like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing; supporting police to solve serious cases; getting illegal guns off the street; and preventing crime by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction."	56%
Totals	100%
N	409

21. Next, consider different statements by hypothetical [Republican and Democratic] candidates running for office here in Texas. Which candidate would you trust more to keep your community safe?

Asked only of respondents in Serious/Tough Wording Split B

The Republican candidate says: "I stand on the side of law and order. That means having longer sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people behind bars, and providing police with more support and resources." .	62%
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The Democratic candidate says: "I am tough on crime. That means more cops on the beat and tough action against hardened criminals and gang members. I believe we should increase police funding and invest in new technologies like predictive policing, not defunding the police."

..... 38%
 Totals 100%
N391

22. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

The Republican candidate says: "To make communities safe, people who break the law must be held accountable. This means seeing the harm they've done, accepting the consequences, learning from mistakes, and changing their behavior. Harsh punishment and long sentences alone lead to more violence. We need to provide people with programs that work to turn their lives around and prevent future crime." 56%

The Democratic candidate says: "We need to make sure that people who break the law are held accountable by enforcing strict punishment. If you do the crime, you should do the time, and that means serving the full sentence. Offenders shouldn't be able to get out of jail or prison early simply because they complete programs or have a good track record behind bars." 44%

Totals 100%
N800

23. Next, consider different statements by hypothetical [Republican and Democratic] candidates running for office here in Texas. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Defund Wording Split A

The Republican candidate says: "The Left has allowed a culture built on hating the police to drive decisions surrounding law enforcement. The Defund the Police movement is without a doubt one of the greatest dangers to public safety in our nation's history, and Democrats are responsible for it. The hostile climate for police has discouraged proactive police work. We can't expect the police to keep us safe if we aren't willing to keep them safe." 49%

The Democratic candidate says: "I'm not about scare tactics or slogans, and I'm not afraid to have an honest conversation. We keep expecting police to solve every social problem—from addiction to mental illness to homelessness and gun violence. No one profession can do all of that. We should let police focus on serious crime and invest in other proven solutions that prevent crime and break its cycle. It's time for support and change, not blame." 51%

Totals 100%
N398

24. Next, consider different statements by hypothetical [Republican and Democratic] candidates running for office here in Texas. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Defund Wording Split B

The Republican candidate says: "The Left has allowed a culture built on hating the police to drive decisions surrounding law enforcement. The Defund the Police movement is without a doubt one of the greatest dangers to public safety in our nation's history, and Democrats are responsible for it. The hostile climate for police has discouraged proactive police work. We can't expect the police to keep us safe if we aren't willing to keep them safe." 47%

The Democratic candidate says: "I am not for defunding the police. The police play an important role and I will work with them to make our neighborhoods safer. But we can't ask the police to do everything and take their focus away from solving serious crime. I will also invest in mental health crisis response, community violence prevention, and programs that prevent crime and break and its cycle. If police abuse their power or break the law, I will hold them accountable. I'm serious about safety and this proven approach is driving historic crime declines across the country." 53%

Totals 100%

N 402

25. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

The Republican candidate says: "All people who commit a crime—no matter how minor—should face arrest and punishment. Open drug use, weapons, housing encampments, and trash litter our streets while rogue district attorneys and "progressive prosecutors" refuse to enforce the law. We need to keep repeat offenders where they belong, which is behind bars. Protect Texans. Prosecute criminals." 46%

The Democratic candidate says: "People in mental health crisis or struggling with addiction need treatment, not jail time. By sending a trained crisis specialist instead of police to respond to nonviolent situations, we can break the cycle of arrest and connect people in crisis to the services they need to prevent future crime." 54%

Totals 100%

N 800

26. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Overdose Wording Split A

The Republican candidate says: "The opioid and fentanyl crisis is out of control, and Texas families are paying the price. We need to confront this crisis head-on by cracking down on drug dealers, shutting down trafficking networks, and imposing tough prison sentences for criminals fueling Texas's opioid epidemic. Republicans are working to hold perpetrators and traffickers accountable to the fullest extent of the law." 54%

The Democratic candidate says: "The opioid and fentanyl crisis is connected to the same problems families are dealing with every day – the high cost of housing, rising prices, and a mental health system that's failed too many people. To fix what's actually driving addiction and overdoses, we need to lower costs, expand access to mental health care, and get people into treatment so families can get their loved ones back." 46%

Totals	100%
N	376

27. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Overdose Wording Split B

The Republican candidate says: "The opioid and fentanyl crisis is out of control, and Texas families are paying the price. We need to confront this crisis head-on by cracking down on drug dealers, shutting down trafficking networks, and imposing tough prison sentences for criminals fueling Texas's opioid epidemic. Republicans are working to hold perpetrators and traffickers accountable to the fullest extent of the law."	55%
The Democratic candidate says: "The opioid and fentanyl crisis is devastating communities across Texas, and for many families who have lost or experienced a loved one struggle with addiction, it's deeply personal. We need real solutions. Preventing overdoses and saving lives requires expanding access to treatment, Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and proven services that help people recover and rebuild their lives."	45%
Totals	100%
N	424

28. Do you [support or oppose] providing a government-funded attorney for everyone who cannot afford one in a court of law, including people in immigration court?

Strongly support	45%
Somewhat support	24%
Somewhat oppose	12%
Strongly oppose	10%
Not sure	9%
Totals	100%
N	800

29. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Immigration Wording Split A

The Republican candidate says: "Sanctuary city politicians put illegal immigrants ahead of public safety. They block local police from working with immigration authorities and let dangerous criminals back into our communities, making it harder to keep Texas families safe. It's time to end sanctuary policies and give law enforcement and ICE every tool they need to restore law and order."	45%
The Democratic candidate says: "We should secure the border and deport people who commit violent crimes or belong to gangs. But right now, ICE is going after small business owners and hardworking families instead of cartels and human traffickers. Immigration enforcement should focus on real threats to public safety – not people who are contributing to our communities."	55%

Totals 100%
N **391**

30. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Asked only of respondents in Immigration Wording Split B

The Republican candidate says: "Sanctuary city politicians put illegal immigrants ahead of public safety. They block local police from working with immigration authorities and let dangerous criminals back into our communities, making it harder to keep Texas families safe. It's time to end sanctuary policies and give law enforcement and ICE every tool they need to restore law and order." 52%

The Democratic candidate says: "Everyone deserves to feel safe, no matter where they were born. Local police should focus on preventing violence, solving serious crimes, and responding when people call for help – not acting as immigration agents or sweeping up workers and parents from our communities. We can manage immigration fairly and hold people accountable, while keeping our families and communities together." 48%

Totals 100%
N **409**

31. Next, you will see statements about James Talarico, the U.S. Senate candidate for Texas. Regardless of who you may support in this race, which of the following statements do you consider to be more persuasive?

Asked only of respondents in Talarico Wording Split A

James Talarico backed activists who pushed to cut police funding and voted to put cashless bail policies in place that prioritize criminals over victims. Texas can't afford a senator who sides with the far left on public safety and makes it easier for dangerous offenders to get back on the streets. 39%

James Talarico does not support defunding the police. He has voted to fund law enforcement and supported stronger bail laws for people who pose a real threat to public safety. He says Texans can support police, hold people accountable, and invest in preventing crime at the same time. 61%

Totals 100%
N **402**

32. Next, you will see statements about James Talarico, the U.S. Senate candidate for Texas. Regardless of who you may support in this race, which of the following statements do you consider to be more persuasive?

Asked only of respondents in Talarico Wording Split B

James Talarico backed activists who pushed to cut police funding and voted to put cashless bail policies in place that prioritize criminals over victims. Texas can't afford a senator who sides with the far left on public safety and makes it easier for dangerous offenders to get back on the streets. 33%

James Talarico says every Texan deserves to feel safe. He wants police focused on solving serious crimes, getting illegal guns off the street, and protecting victims. He also supports mental health care, addiction treatment, schools, and youth programs that can prevent crime and break its cycle. 67%

Totals 100%

N398

33. Some people choose to follow news about what's happening in their state government these days, while many do not. How much have you heard about how Texas decides whether a person accused of a crime is detained or released before trial?

Heard a lot 12%

Heard some 26%

Heard a little 23%

Have not heard much at all 29%

Not sure 10%

Totals 100%

N800

34. Money bail is a system where a person accused of a crime must pay a certain amount of money to be released from jail before trial. If the person cannot afford the amount, they remain in jail until their case is decided. If the person can afford it, they are released to await trial at home rather than in jail. Which of the following statements comes closer to your own point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

We need to maintain strong bail laws to keep dangerous people in jail. Cashless-bail policies let dangerous and repeat offenders walk free and make communities less safe. 40%

Public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail before trial. Judges should decide who poses a real threat after an individualized hearing based on evidence and risk — not whether someone can afford to pay. 60%

Totals 100%

N800

35. Which of the following comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

When someone is accused of a serious crime, Texas should automatically jail them before trial. Judges should not be allowed to release someone who could be dangerous. 33%

Judges should be able to keep someone in jail if the state shows at a hearing that they pose a real danger or are likely to flee. But an accusation alone should not automatically take away someone's freedom. 67%

Totals 100%

N800

36. Some Texas lawmakers have proposed requiring people who are not U.S. citizens and are accused of a felony to be held in jail before trial without the possibility of bail. Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

Immigration status alone should not decide whether someone is jailed before trial. A judge should look at the facts of the case and decide whether the person actually poses a danger. 49%

Jailing people before trial is justified to keep criminals off our streets and keep American citizens safe. It is also necessary to send a message and deter more people from breaking our county's immigration laws and coming here illegally. 51%

Totals 100%

N800

37. Some Texas lawmakers have proposed automatically denying bail to people accused of committing a repeat offense, or committing a new offense while out on bond. Which of the following comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

People accused of repeat offenses should automatically be detained pretrial. Getting dangerous criminals off the streets is what matters most to me, no matter the circumstance. 61%

A new accusation should be taken seriously, but it should not automatically mean jail. A judge should hold a hearing and decide whether the person actually poses a danger. 39%

Totals 100%

N800

38. Below are some statements some have said when talking about bail and pretrial detention. For each, please say how much you [agree or disagree] with each.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
"Public safety, not, wealth, should determine who stays in jail before trial."	73%	19%	2%	2%	4%
"Judges should decide who poses a real threat based on evidence, not ability to pay."	69%	21%	4%	3%	4%
"I believe in the presumption of innocence and the importance of liberty before trial."	47%	33%	9%	3%	7%
"No one should be jailed simply because they cannot afford to pay bail."	38%	25%	14%	12%	12%
"Jails are sites of harm, not help."	19%	28%	23%	18%	12%
"Wealth should never buy your way out of jail if you are dangerous."	86%	10%	1%	0%	3%
"Every person deserves a hearing before they are jailed."	51%	27%	8%	6%	8%

"Strong bail laws keep dangerous people off the streets."	46%	30%	9%	7%	8%
"Cashless-bail policies let dangerous people walk free."	45%	26%	10%	6%	13%
"Judges need stronger tools to keep dangerous defendants behind bars."	53%	27%	9%	3%	7%
"Victims should come before criminals when bail decisions are made."	59%	24%	7%	3%	8%
"People who repeatedly come into contact with the justice system because of addiction or mental illness should be connected to treatment and supervision that can prevent future harm."	57%	32%	3%	2%	5%

39. Considering what you've read in this survey, if the election for U.S. Senate were held today, would you vote for...

Ken Paxton (Republican)	42%
James Talarico (Democrat)	46%
Other candidate	1%
Undecided	11%
Totals	100%
N	800

40. Considering what you've read in this survey, if the election for Texas Governor were held today, would you vote for...

Greg Abbott (Republican)	46%
Gina Hinojosa (Democrat)	45%
Other candidate	1%
Undecided	8%
Totals	100%
N	800

This survey is based on 800 interviews conducted by YouGov on the internet of Texas registered voters. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and Texas region based on voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote and approximate 2024 Presidential vote based on available results, and party identification estimates based on Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Survey. Respondents were selected from YouGov to be representative of registered voters. The weights range from 0.11 to 6.01 with a mean of 1 and a standard deviation of 0.73.

The margin of error (a 95% confidence interval) for a sample percentage p based upon the subsetted sample is approximately 4.3%. It is calculated using the formula:

$$\hat{p} \pm 100 \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + CV^2}{n}}$$

where CV is the coefficient of variation of the sample weights and n is the sample size used to compute the proportion. This is a measure of sampling error (the average of all estimates obtained using the same sample selection and weighting procedures repeatedly). The sample estimate should differ from its expected value by less than margin of error in 95 percent of all samples. It does not reflect non-sampling errors, including potential selection bias in panel participation or in response to a particular survey.