



Texas Policy & Politics 2021

Legislative
Issues

HOBBY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Research Team

Principal Investigators

Kirk Watson, Founding Dean, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Renée Cross, Senior Director & Researcher, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Mark P. Jones, Senior Research Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs; James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Fellow in Political Science, Rice University

Researchers

Pablo Pinto, Director, Center for Public Policy & Associate Professor, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Savannah L. Sipole, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Agustín Vallejo, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs

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 Issue Priorities, the 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.

Executive Summary

This report examines the views of Texans on five different types of legislation that are presently being debated in the Texas Legislature: political reforms, criminal justice reforms, marijuana and casino legalization, and Medicaid expansion. It also explores the preferences of the residents of the nation's largest producer of oil and natural gas regarding the directions they believe the nation should go in terms of future sources of energy.

Two-thirds or more of Texans support reforms that would create an Independent Redistricting Commission (70%), ban the use of public funds by local governments to hire lobbyists (69%), and adopt online voter registration (66%). Texans are equally divided in support for and

opposition to extending no-excuse absentee voting to Texas voters under 65 (55% to 45%) and retaining partisan elections to select judges (54% to 46%). For these latter two reforms, there exist sharp partisan divides: 86% of Democrats support the extension of no-excuse absentee voting compared to 20% of Republicans, and 78% of Republicans support the retention of partisan judicial elections compared to 43% of Democrats.

The George Floyd Act criminal justice reform is supported by 72% of Texans, with 52% strongly supporting it. The Act enjoys broad majority support across gender, racial/ethnic, and generational sub-groups, with only one of 11 sub-groups not supporting it by a substantial majority. The exception is Republicans, among whom however 43% support the passage of the Act. All of the main provisions of the George Floyd Act individually enjoy support that is equal to or (more commonly) greater than that of the Act as a complete package.

Only one in seven Texans (14%) supports the state's current policy governing the possession of marijuana. More than three-fifths (61%) support reforms that would either make the possession of small amounts (28%) or any amount (33%) of marijuana legal for any purpose. The remaining 25% support legalizing the possession of marijuana for medical purposes alone. More than three quarters (76%) of Democrats support the legalization of marijuana compared to 65% of Independents and 36% of Republicans.

More than half of Texans (58%) favor allowing casino gambling in Texas similar to that which exists in Nevada and Louisiana. There is majority support for casino gambling among all three partisan groups: Democrats (65%), Independents (60%), and Republicans (53%).

More than two-thirds (69%) of Texans support the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Greater than nine out of ten Democrats (91%) support Medicaid expansion compared to 67% of Independents and 45% of Republicans.

Texans overwhelmingly favor the expansion of solar power plants (69%) and wind turbine farms (63%) as sources of energy in the United States. Conversely, a substantial plurality wants to reduce coal mining (50%) and fracking (42%), with only 19% and 27% favoring an expansion of coal mining and fracking respectively.

Voting, Election and Political Reform Proposals

The respondents were queried on their support for five distinct political-related reforms: the adoption of online voter registration, the expansion of no-excuse mail voting to Texans under the age of 65, the creation of an Independent Redistricting Commission, a ban on taxpayer funded lobbyists, and the continued use of partisan elections to select state judges.

In the survey, respondents were presented with the following questions (in italics) to assess their opinion on these five reforms. Their response options were Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose, and Don't Know.

Adopt Online Voter Registration

Most states allow residents to register to vote online in addition to being able to register to vote in-person.

Do you support or oppose legislation that would allow every eligible Texan to register to vote online?

Adopt No-Excuse Mail Voting for Texans under 65

At present, Texans who are 65 and older are eligible to vote by mail for any reason, while those under 65 can only vote by mail if they are out of their county during the entire voting period, are disabled or are in jail.

Do you support or oppose legislation that would allow Texans who are under 65 to vote by mail for any reason?

Independent Redistricting Commission

In Texas, the Texas Legislature draws the single-member districts used to elect members of the Texas House and Senate and the Texas members of the U.S. House. Some states however give an Independent Redistricting Commission this power in an attempt to reduce the role of partisanship and politics in the drawing of the district boundaries.

Do you support or oppose legislation to establish an Independent Redistricting Commission in Texas that would be responsible for creating the districts used for the Texas House and Senate and for the state’s U.S. House seats?

Retain Partisan Election of Judges

Texas is one of fewer than a dozen states that use partisan elections to select judges. Other states use a variety of methods ranging from nonpartisan elections to gubernatorial and legislative appointment to select their judges.

Do you support or oppose the continued use of partisan judicial selection in Texas?

Ban Taxpayer Funded Lobbyists

Some Texans believe public funds should not be spent by counties, cities, school districts, transit authorities and other local government institutions to hire lobbyists to lobby members of the Texas legislative and executive branches. Other Texans however believe the hiring of lobbyists with public funds is necessary in order to best protect and advocate for the interests of the constituents of these local government institutions. (The core portions of the first and second sentences were rotated).

Do you support or oppose legislation that would forbid counties, cities, school districts, transit authorities and other local governments from using public funds to hire lobbyists.”

Table 1 provides the level of support for and opposition to these five political reform among Texans, with **Figure 1** summarizing those findings by combining the two support (strongly support and somewhat support) and two oppose (somewhat oppose and strongly oppose) options respectively into composite support and oppose categories.

Three political reforms enjoy the support of a significant majority of Texans. Below the percentage values are based on the affirmative responses (i.e., other than “Don’t Know”) to the questions.

The reform with the highest level of support is that which would create an Independent Redistricting Commission, which enjoys the support of 70% of Texans, with 42% strongly supporting it and 28% somewhat supporting it. It is worth noting however that this reform is the one for which the largest proportion of the respondents answered “Don’t Know” (33%), suggesting a more limited level of public awareness of this reform option and what it would entail compared to many of the other reforms.

**Table 1: Support for and Opposition to Political Reforms:
With & Without “Don't Know” Responses**

Political Reform	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)				
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't Know
Online Voter Registration for	40	18	8	21	13
All Eligible Voters	45	21	10	24	
No Excuse Mail Ballots for Voters	37	12	9	30	12
Under the Age of 65	42	13	11	34	
Create an Independent Redistricting Commission	28	19	9	11	33
Retain Partisan Elections for	42	28	14	16	
Judicial Selection	17	22	16	18	27
Ban Taxpayer Funding of Lobbyists	24	30	22	24	
	38	16	12	12	22
	49	20	16	15	

The reform with the second highest level of support is that which would ban taxpayer-funded lobbyists, which enjoys the support of 69% of Texans, with 49% strongly supporting it and 20% somewhat supporting it. One in five of the respondents (22%) answered “Don't Know” to this question.

The reform with the third highest level of support is that under which Texas would adopt online voter registration, which enjoys the support of 66% of Texans, with 45% strongly supporting it and 21% somewhat supporting it.

Texans are relatively equally divided in their support for and opposition to the final two reforms. A narrow majority of 55% favors (42% strongly and 13% somewhat) the adoption of no-excuse mail (absentee) ballots for Texans under 65, just as a narrow majority of 54% favors (24% strongly and 30% somewhat) the retention of partisan elections to select Texas judges. After the question on the creation of an independent redistricting commission, the item on judicial selection has the largest proportion of respondents answering “Don't Know” (27%).

Figure 1: Support For & Opposition to Five Political Reforms in Texas

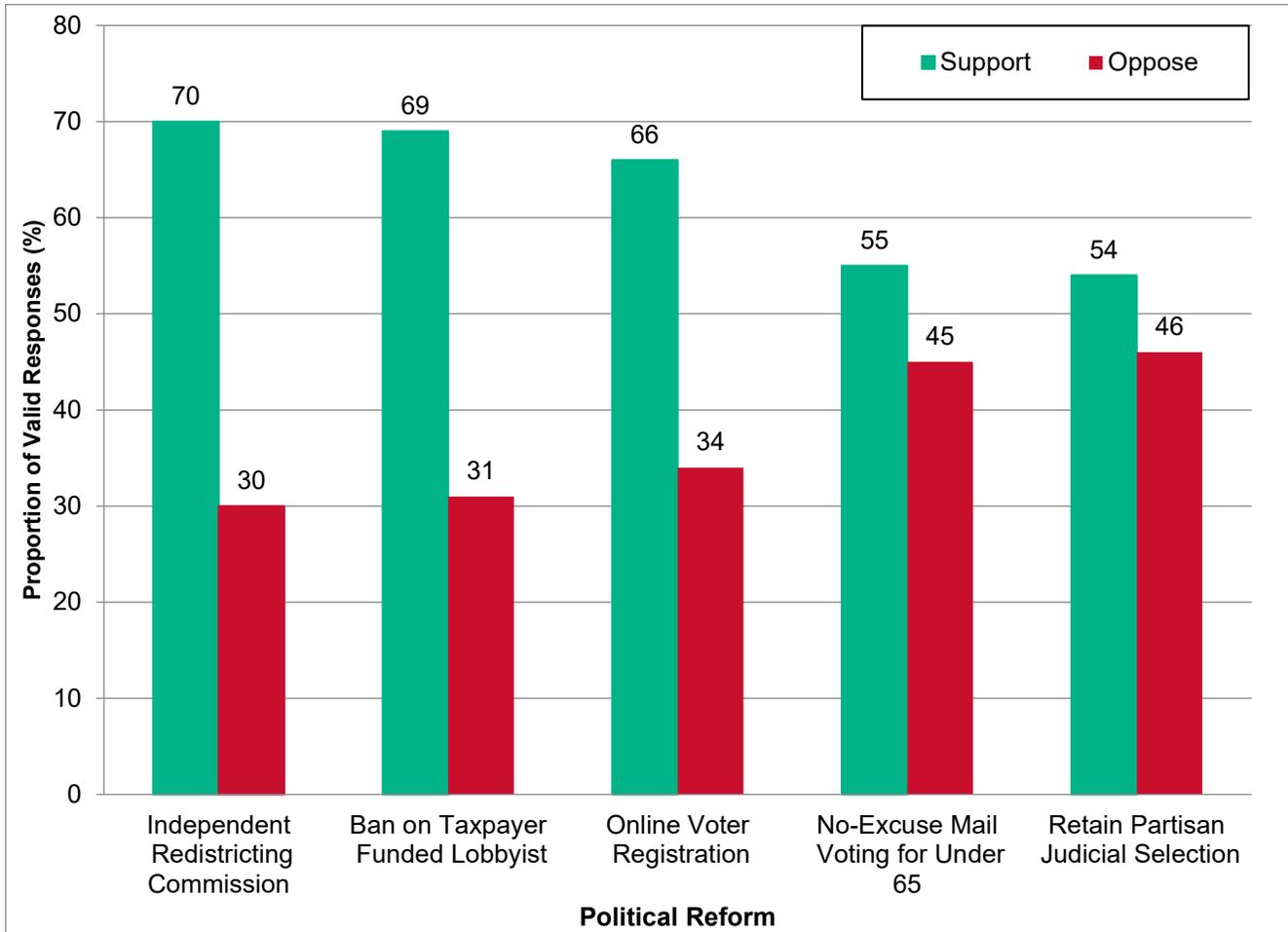
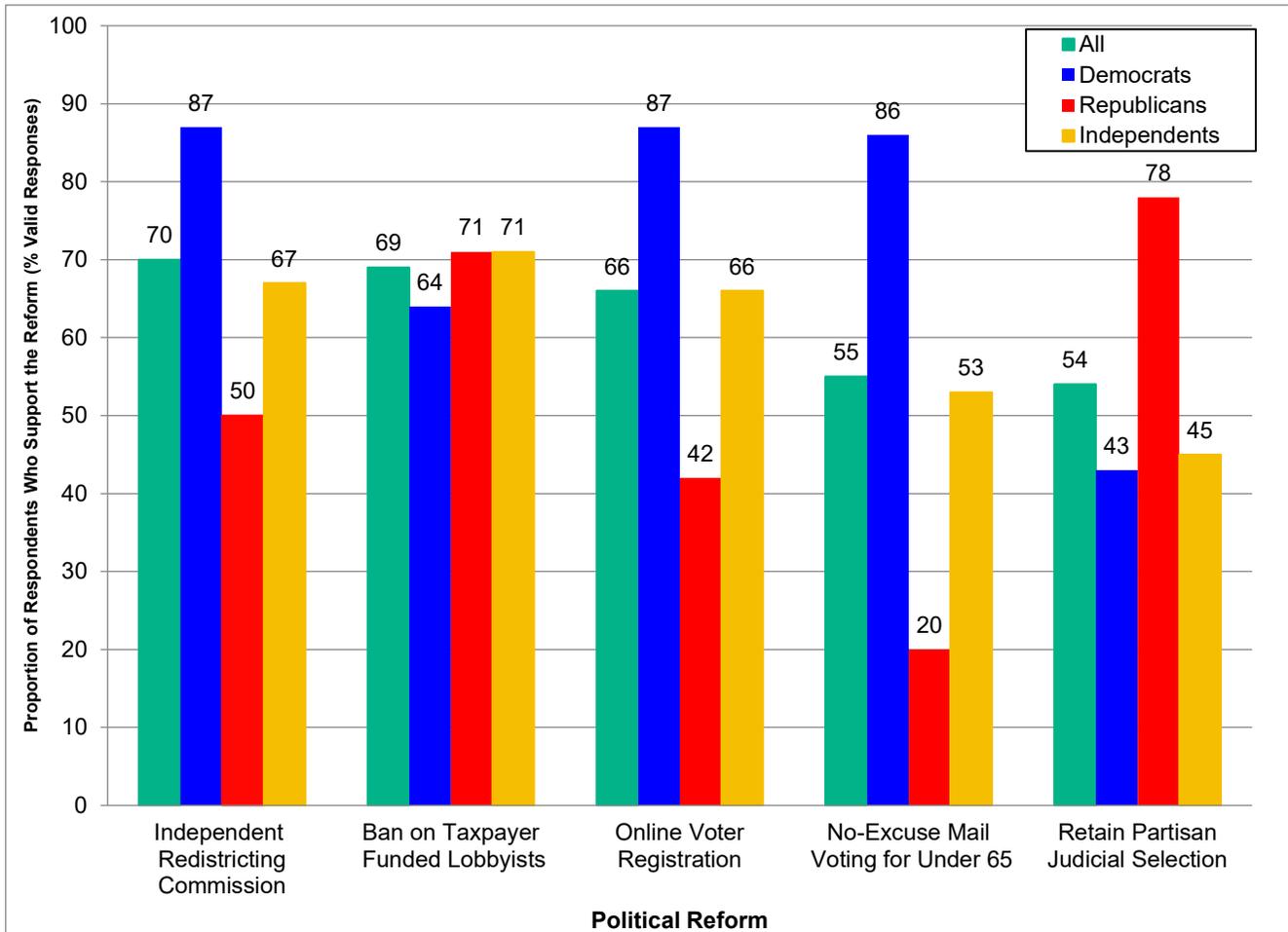


Figure 2 provides the level of support for the five political reforms based on the respondent’s partisan identification (Party ID): Democrat (31% of respondents), Republican (27%), and Independent (30%). The remaining 12% of respondents were either unsure about their Party ID (8%) or said they identify with another party or group (4%). Also included is the proportion of the entire population (All) that supports the reform.

Figure 2: Support for 5 Political Reforms by Political Party Identification



Only one reform does not exhibit a significant partisan split between Democrats and Republicans. A relatively equal proportion of Democrats (64%) and Republicans (71%) support a ban on taxpayer funded lobbyists, with Independents (71%) possessing a similar level of support for the measure.

Democrats are in contrast significantly more likely than Republicans to support no-excuse mail voting for those under 65 (86% vs. 20%), the adoption of online voter registration (87% to 42%), and the creation of an independent redistricting commission (87% to 50%). Independents possess a position that is relatively equidistant between Democrats and Republicans in their support for these three respective reforms (53%, 66%, 67%). Finally, Republicans (78%) are significantly more likely than both Democrats (43%) and Independents (45%) to support retaining the state’s current use of partisan elections to select judges.

The George Floyd Act and Criminal Justice Reform

The highest profile piece of criminal justice legislation being considering during the 2021 legislative session is the Texas George Floyd Act, authored by Representative Senfronia Thompson (House Bill 88) and Senator Royce West (Senate Bill 161). In the survey, respondents were given a brief description of the George Floyd Act and then queried on their level of support for it (Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose, Don't Know). They were then asked for their level of support for five main provisions of the George Floyd Act individually as well as their support for four other related criminal justice reforms. The questions used for these 10 items are below.

The George Floyd Act

A bill being called the George Floyd Act has been presented in the Texas Legislature this year. This legislation would prevent the use of lethal force by police officers if a lesser level of force could have worked, ban officer use of chokeholds, require officers to intervene and render aid if another officer is using excessive force, limit the immunity of police officers from civil lawsuits, and end arrests for fine-only offenses?

Do you support or oppose the George Floyd Act?

Individual Provisions and Other Related Proposals

Now, thinking about the individual provisions within the George Floyd Act as well as other related legislative proposals, do you support or oppose separate stand-alone legislation implementing each one of the provisions below?

Ban Lethal Force if Lesser Option Available

Prevent the use of lethal force by officers if a lesser level of force could have worked.

Ban Use of Chokeholds

Ban the use of chokeholds by officers.

Limit Police Immunity from Civil Lawsuits

Limit the immunity of police officers from civil lawsuits.

Intervene if Officer Using Excessive Force

Require officers to intervene and render aid if another officer is using excessive force.

End Arrests for Fine Only Offenses

End arrests for fine-only offenses like minor traffic violations & disorderly conduct

More Police Training on Use of Force

Strengthen required law enforcement training related to conflict de-escalation and use of force.

Ban “No Knock” Warrants

Ban “No Knock Warrants” under which officers can break into homes without warning.

No-Cash Bond for Misdemeanors

Allow most people charged with misdemeanor crimes to be automatically released from jail on no-cash bonds (where defendants promise to return to court on their scheduled trial date).

De-Criminalize Marijuana-\$250 Fine Only

The current maximum penalty in Texas for possession of small amounts of marijuana can include up to 180 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,000.

Do you support or oppose reducing punishment for possession of small amounts of marijuana to a citation (similar to a traffic ticket) and a fine of \$250?

Table 2 details the level of support for and opposition to the George Floyd Act, to its five main provisions, and to four other related criminal justice reforms under consideration during the 2021 legislative session. **Figure 3** summarizes these results by combining the strongly support and somewhat support (Support) and somewhat oppose and strongly oppose (Oppose) responses respectively.

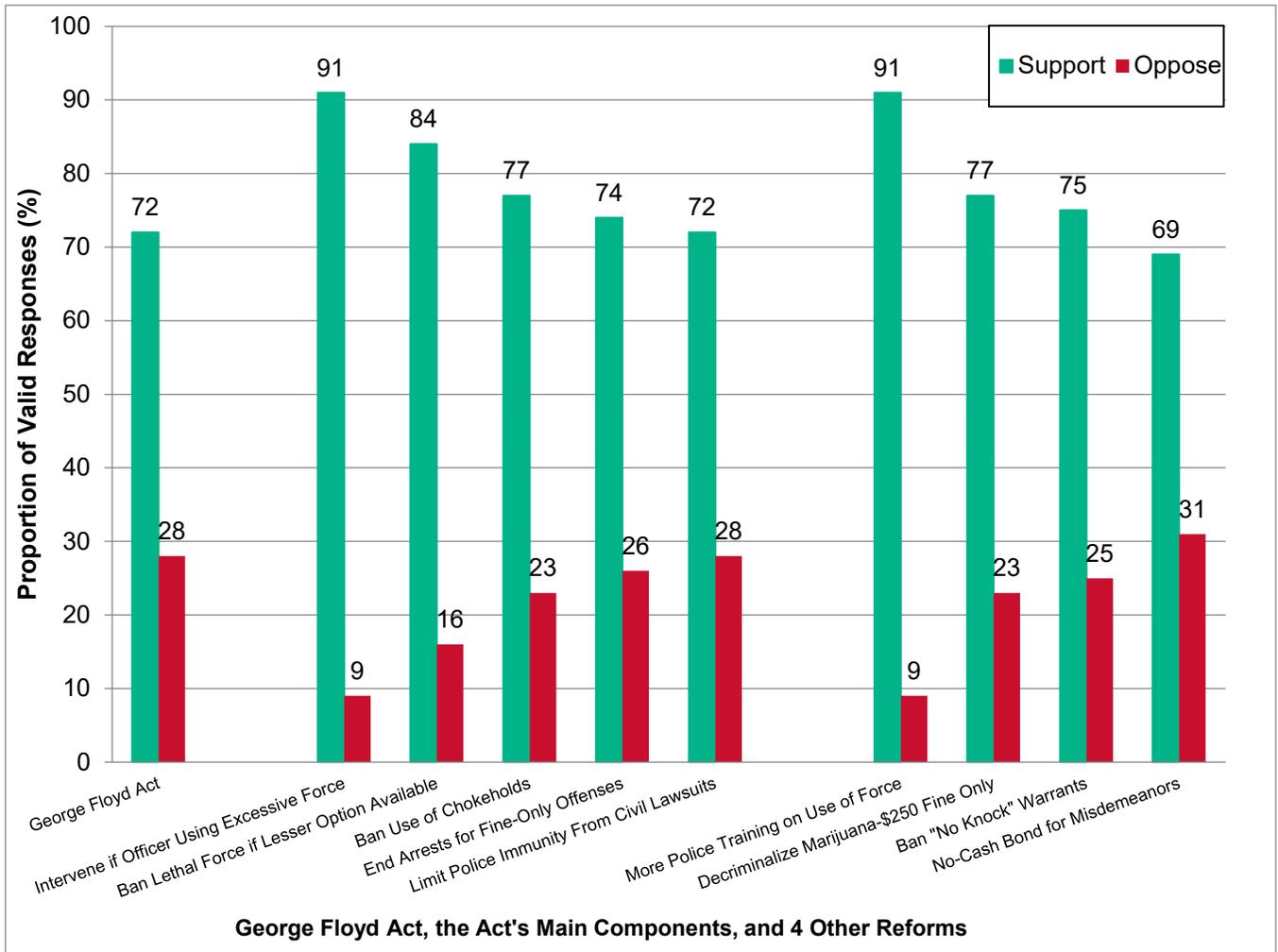
Table 2: Support for and Opposition to the George Floyd Act, Its Main Components, and Related Reforms

Criminal Justice Reforms (% Don't Know)	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
George Floyd Act (10%)	52	20	10	18
Intervene if Officer Using Excessive Force (7%)	69	22	4	5
Ban Lethal Force if Lesser Option Available (7%)	60	24	7	9
Ban Use of Chokeholds (9%)	57	20	12	11
End Arrests for Fine-Only Offenses (9%)	46	28	15	11
Limit Police Immunity From Civil Lawsuits (11%)	51	21	11	17
More Police Training on Use of Force (9%)	66	25	6	3
Decriminalize Marijuana-\$250 Fine Only (11%)	58	19	7	15
Ban "No Knock" Warrants (9%)	55	20	13	12
No-Cash Bond for Misdemeanors (12%)	40	29	15	16

The George Floyd Act as a whole enjoys the support of 72% of Texans, with an absolute majority (52%) strongly supporting the Act, and another 20% somewhat supporting it. Only 18% of Texans strongly oppose the George Floyd Act.

The individual provisions of the George Floyd Act all earn a level of support greater than or at least equal to the Act altogether.

Figure 3: Public Support & Opposition to the George Floyd Act, Its Main Provisions, and Four Related Reforms



The highest level of support for an individual provision of the George Floyd Act is for the requirement that officers intervene and render aid if another officer is using excessive force. More than nine out of ten Texans (91%) support this provision, with more than two-thirds (69%) strongly supporting it. The other individual provision with a notably higher level of support than the Act as a whole is the ban on the use of lethal force by officers if a lesser level of force could have worked, which is supported by more than eight of ten Texans (84%), with three-fifths (60%) strongly supporting it.

The remaining three provisions have levels of support modestly higher than the Act or equal to it. Slightly more Texans support a ban on the use of chokeholds by officers (77%) and the ending of arrests for fine-only offenses like traffic violations and disorderly conduct (74%). The individual provision with the least amount of support is that which would limit the

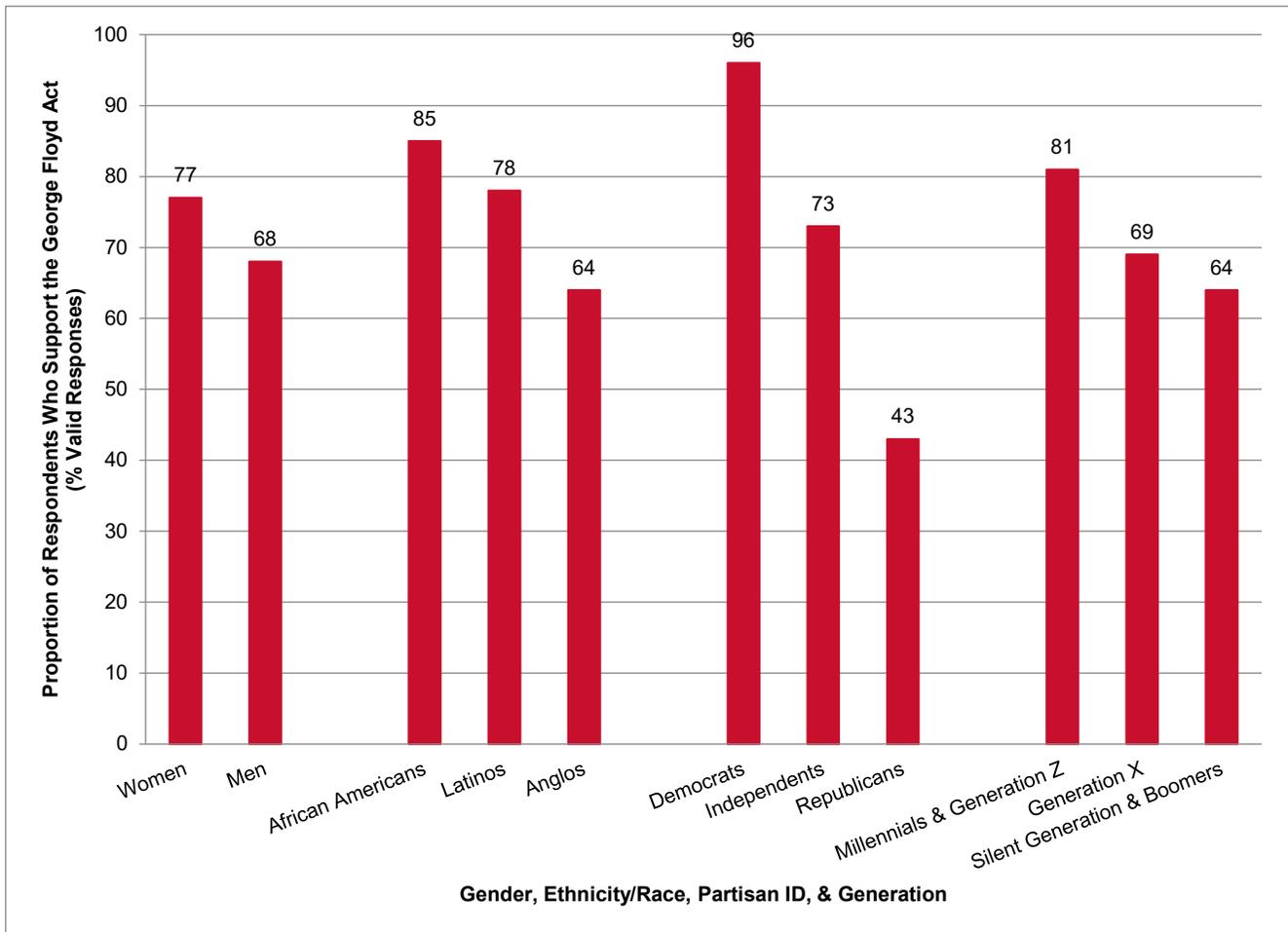
immunity of police officers from civil lawsuits, which though still enjoys the support of 72% of Texans, with more than half (51%) strongly supporting this component of the George Floyd Act.

The four other criminal justice reforms examined all garner the support of more than two-thirds of Texans. The highest level of support exists for a proposal to strengthen required law enforcement training related to conflict de-escalation and use of force. More than nine out of ten (91%) Texans support this reform, with two-thirds (66%) strongly supporting it.

The next highest level of support exists for a reform that would reduce the punishment for possession of small amounts of marijuana (presently up to 180 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,000) to a citation (similar to a traffic ticket) and a fine of \$250. More than three out of four Texans (77%) support this reform, including more than half (58%) of whom strongly support it. Three out of four Texans (75%) also support a ban on “No Knock” warrants under which law enforcement can break into homes without warning, with more than half (55%) strongly supporting this ban. The lowest level of support for any of the criminal justice reforms, which still is greater than two-thirds (69%), is for a reform that would allow most people charged with misdemeanor crimes to be automatically released from jail on no-cash bonds (where defendants promise to return to court on their scheduled trial date).

Figure 4 details the level of support (strongly and somewhat combined) for the George Floyd Act by gender, ethnicity/race, partisan identification, and generation. In the sample population, women and men account for 51% and 49% of the population, respectively. In terms of ethnicity and race, the population distribution is Anglos (47%), Latinos (35%), African Americans (13%), and All Others (5%). As mentioned previously, the partisan identification of the population is 31% Democrat, 27% Republican, 30% Independent, and 12% Other/Unsure. Finally, the population is distributed across three aggregate generational categories in the following way: Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) 33%, Generation X (1965-1980) 25%, and Millennials (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2003) 42%.

Figure 4: Gender, Ethnicity/Race, Partisan Identification, Generation and Support for the Texas George Floyd Act



Among the 11 sub-categories in **Figure 4**, a majority of respondents support the George Floyd Act in 10 groups, with support levels ranging from 64% to 96%. Only the members of one sub-category, Republicans, do not provide majority support for the George Floyd Act, although, the Act is supported by more than two-fifths (43%) of Republicans, 24% of whom strongly support it.

Women (77%) are significantly more likely to support the Act than men (68%), while African Americans (85%) are significantly more likely to support it than Anglos (64%). Democrats (96%) are significantly more likely to support it than both Independents (73%) and Republicans (43%), while Millennials and members of Generation Z (81%) are significantly more likely to support the Act than the members of either Generation X (69%) or the combined group of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers (64%).

Marijuana Possession & Casino Gambling Reforms

The respondents were also queried in two separate questions on their opinions regarding what the optimal policies in Texas should be pursuant to legislation regulating the possession of marijuana and gambling. The questions utilized for each item are provided below ahead of the discussion of the responses to the question.

Marijuana Possession

What is your opinion on the legalization of marijuana possession in Texas?

The five response options were as follows:

- 1. Marijuana possession should not be legal under any circumstances.*
- 2. Marijuana possession should only be legal for medical purposes with a prescription.*
- 3. Possession of small amounts of marijuana for any purpose should be legal.*
- 4. Possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal.*
- 5. Don't Know*

Table 3 contains the distribution of responses related to marijuana possession, including and excluding (valid) the “Don’t Know” responses. The most common response was that the possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal (33% of valid responses), followed by 28% who believe that the possession of small amounts of marijuana for any purpose should be legal. Combined, these two responses underscore that a substantial majority of Texans (61%) support legalizing the possession of at least small amounts of marijuana. Another quarter of the population (25%) supports the midway position of legalizing the possession of marijuana solely for medical purposes. Only one in seven Texans (14%) supports the current policy of the possession of marijuana not being legal under any circumstances.

Table 3: Public Opinion on Marijuana Possession in Texas

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)	
	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Marijuana Possession Should Not Be Legal Under Any Circumstances	13	14
Marijuana Possession Should Only Be Legal For Medical Purposes With A Prescription	23	25
Possession of Small Amounts of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	26	28
Possession of Any Amount of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	30	33
Don't Know	8	

Table 4 displays the support for the different policies related to marijuana possession broken down by partisan identification. More than three-quarters of Democrats (76%) either believe the possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal (42%) or that the possession of small amounts should be legal (34%). Almost two-thirds of Independents (65%) also believe the possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal (38%) or that the possession of small amounts should be legal (27%). This contrasts with only a little more than a third (36%) of Republicans who believe the possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal (13%) or that the possession of small amounts should be legal (23%). And while only 7% of Democrats and 10% of Independents support the status quo policies regarding marijuana possession, 28% of Republicans support them. In sum, while the median Democrat and Independent supports the legalization of the possession of small amounts of marijuana for any purpose, the median Republican is only willing to support the legalization of the possession of marijuana for medical purposes.

Table 4: Partisan Identification and Marijuana Possession Preferences

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)		
	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Marijuana Possession Should Not Be Legal Under Any Circumstances	7	28	10
Marijuana Possession Should Only Be Legal For Medical Purposes With A Prescription	16	36	25
Possession of Small Amounts of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	34	23	27
Possession of Any Amount of Marijuana For Any Purpose Should Be Legal	42	13	38

Casino Gambling

This spring the Texas Legislature will be discussing state policy on gambling in Texas as a potential way to raise revenue. Which of the following gambling policy proposals do you most support for Texas? At the present time the principal forms of legal gambling in Texas include the Texas Lottery, charitable bingo and horse racing,

The five response options were as follows:

1. *Ban all gambling and gaming.*
2. *Leave current gambling laws unchanged.*
3. *Allow a limited expansion of gambling, but only at existing horse and dog tracks and on the state's three Indian reservations.*
4. *Allow full casino gambling like in states such as Louisiana and Nevada.*
5. *Don't Know*

Table 5 details the preferences of the Texas public in regard to gambling. Among the valid responses, an absolute majority of Texans (58%) favors allowing full casino gambling in Texas as found in states such as Nevada and Louisiana. Another 18% favor an expansion of gambling in Texas, but would limit it to the state's three Indian reservations and its existing horse racing and dog racing tracks. Only 17% of Texans support maintaining the state's status quo gambling legislation, while 7% of Texans would like to ban all gambling and gaming in Texas such as the Texas Lottery, charitable bingo, and horse racing.

Table 5: Public Preferences on Gambling Options for Texas

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)	
	Percentage	Percentage (valid)
Ban All Gambling and Gaming	6	7
Leave Current Gambling Laws Unchanged	15	17
Limited Expansion of Gambling on 3 Indian Reservations and Existing Horse and Dog Tracks	15	18
Allow Full Casino Gambling Like in Nevada & Louisiana	50	58
Don't Know	14	

Table 6 details the support for the different gambling options among the three main partisan groups: Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. An absolute majority of the members of

all three groups support the adoption of Nevada/Louisiana-like casino gambling in Texas ranging from a high of 65% among Democrats to a low of 53% among Republicans, with Independents in between at 60%. The strongest support for the combined position of either leaving the current gambling rules unchanged or banning gambling and gaming is found among Republicans where almost one in three (31%) hold these positions, compared to 18% of Democrats and 21% of Independents.

Table 6: Partisanship Identification and Gambling Preferences

Response Option	Distribution of the Survey Population (%)			
	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Ban All Gambling and Gaming	7	5	9	6
Leave Current Gambling Laws Unchanged	17	13	22	15
Limited Expansion of Gambling on 3 Indian Reservations and Existing Horse and Dog Tracks	18	17	16	19
Allow Full Casino Gambling Like in Nevada & Louisiana	58	65	53	60

Medicaid Expansion

The respondents were also queried about their support for or opposition to expanding Medicaid under the 2010 Affordable Care Act (often referred to as Obamacare). The question utilized to gauge this support/opposition is provided below.

Medicaid Expansion

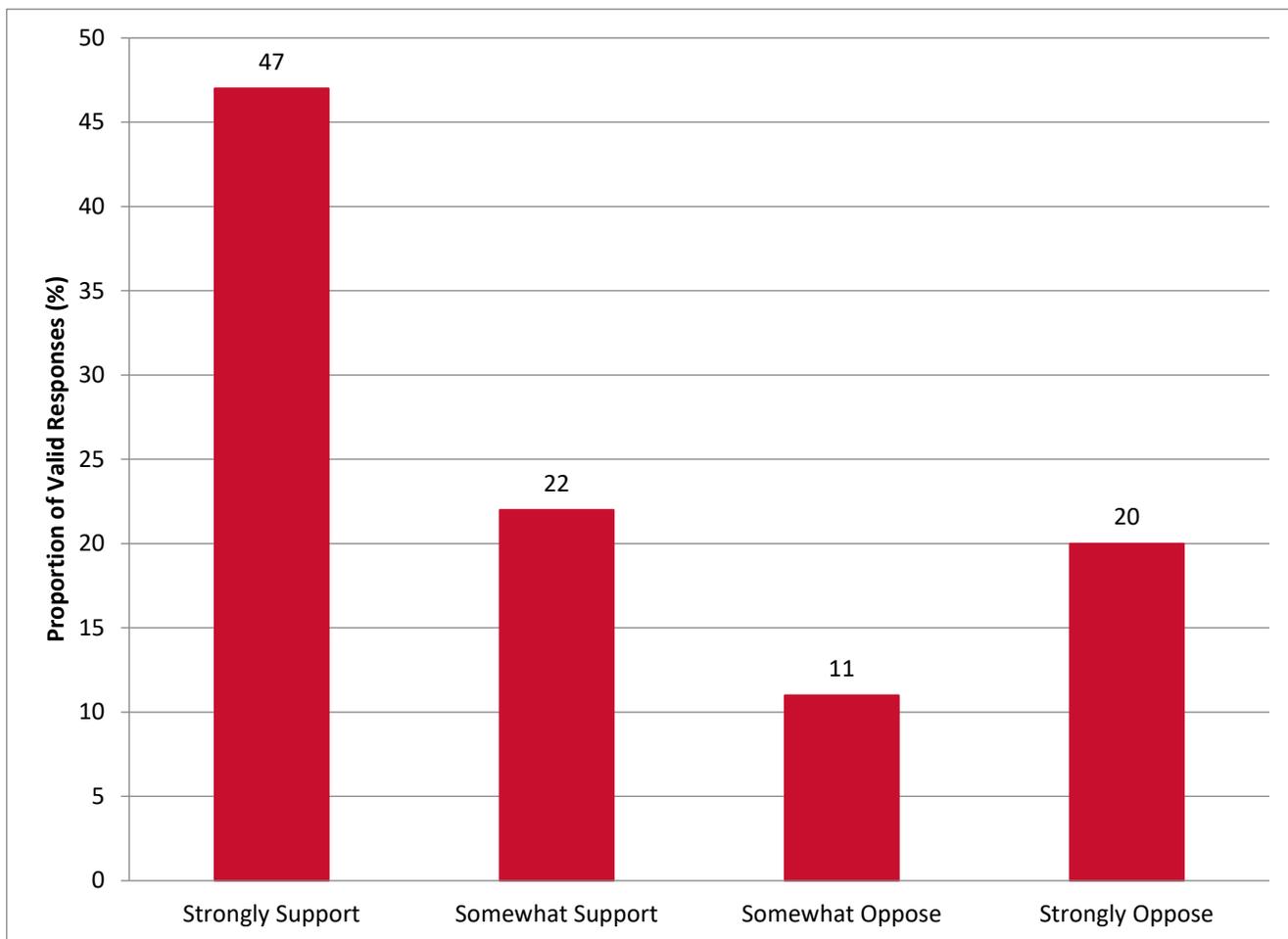
Texas is one of 12 states that have not expanded Medicaid coverage as provided for in the 2010 Affordable Care Act. Were Texas to raise the income limit under which people were eligible to receive Medicaid to 138% of the poverty level income, Medicaid coverage would be expanded to approximately 1.6 million Texans. The federal government would pay for 90% of the total cost of this program while Texas would pay for 10%, with the Texas share covered either by increasing taxes or cutting spending on education, social services and/or public safety.

Overall, do you support or oppose legislation that would expand Medicaid coverage in Texas under the Affordable Care Act?

Figure 5 displays the level of support for expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in Texas (the 14% of Texans who responded “Don’t Know” are excluded from the calculations).

More than two-thirds of Texans (69%) support the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. This includes 47% who strongly support this expansion and 22% who somewhat support this expansion. Support is strongest among Democrats, 91% of whom support expansion (72% strongly) compared to 9% who oppose expansion (3% strongly), and weakest among Republicans, 55% of whom oppose Medicaid expansion (36% strongly) compared to 45% who support it (23% strongly). Two-thirds of Independents (67%) support expansion (42% strongly) while one-third (33%) opposes it (25% strongly).

Figure 5: Support for and Opposition to the Expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in Texas



Future Sources of Energy in the United States

With the arrival of the Biden Administration and a more robust discussion of transitioning the United States' energy sources from fossil fuels to renewables, we asked the residents of the country's largest producer of oil and natural gas the extent to which they favor expanding, reducing, or maintaining at the present level ten distinct sources of energy in the United States in the future. The question utilized is below:

Sources of Energy

Do you favor expanding, reducing, or maintaining at the present level the following sources of energy in the United States?

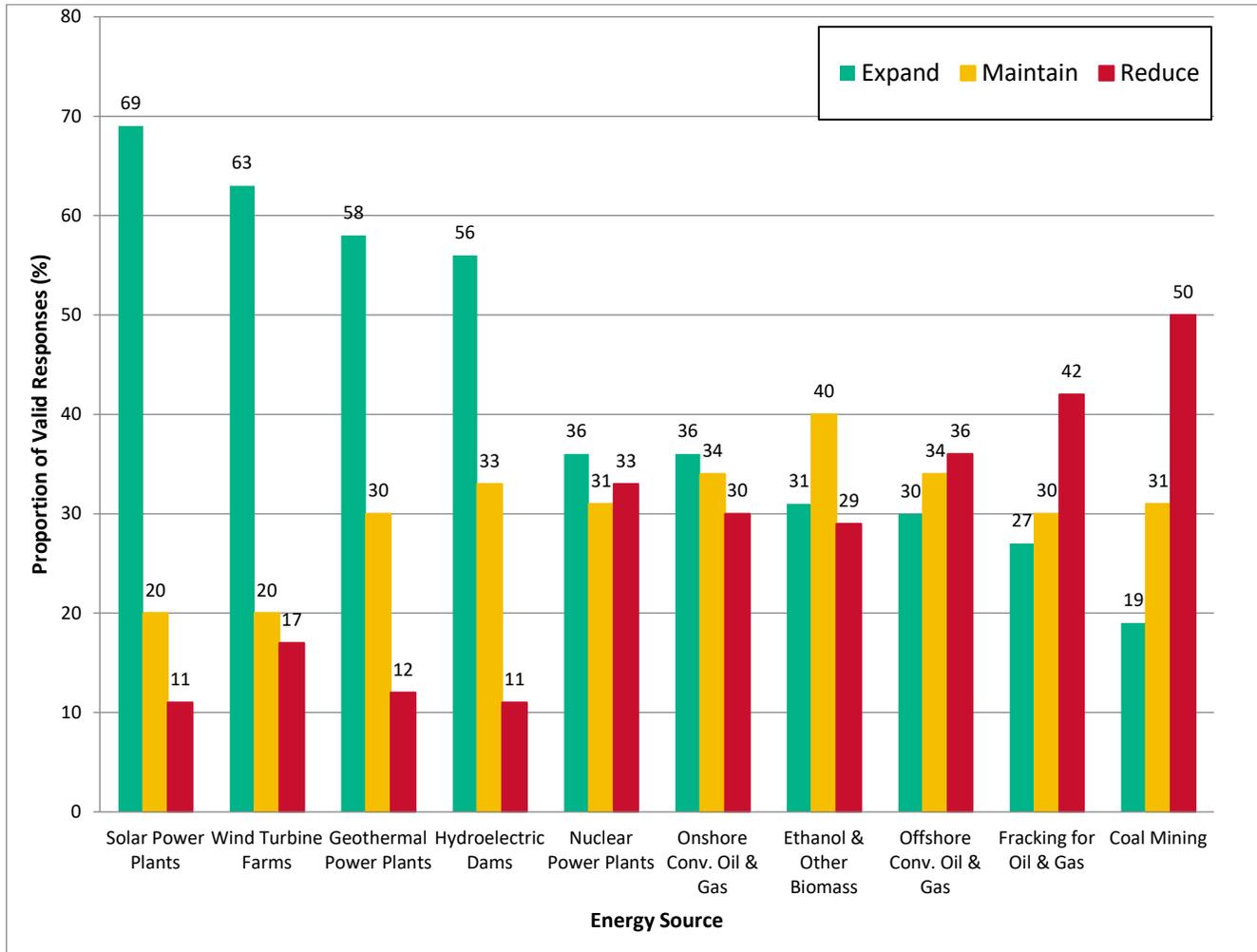
1. *Offshore conventional oil and natural gas*
2. *Nuclear power plants*
3. *Coal mining*
4. *Solar power plants*
5. *Onshore conventional oil and natural gas*
6. *Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for oil and natural gas production*
7. *Wind turbine "farms"*
8. *Ethanol and other types of Biomass*
9. *Hydroelectric dams*
10. *Geothermal power plants*

Figure 6 displays the distribution of the population that favors expanding (Expand), maintaining at the present level (Maintain), and reducing (Reduce) the energy source. The "Don't Know" responses are excluded. They range from highs of 31% (geothermal power plants), 29% (ethanol and other types of biomass), 25% (hydroelectric dams) and 19% (nuclear power plants) to lows of 12% (solar power plants), 14% (wind turbine farms), and 16% (fracking for oil and natural gas; coal mining; onshore conventional oil and natural gas).

An absolute majority of Texans favor expanding four sources of energy in the United States: solar power plants (69%), wind turbine farms (63%), geothermal power plants (58%), and

hydroelectric dams (56%). Fewer than one in five Texans support reducing these four sources, ranging from lows of 11% for solar power plants and hydroelectric dams to a high of 17% for wind turbine farms, with geothermal power plants in between at 12%.

Figure 6: Support for Expanding, Reducing or Maintaining at the Present Level 10 Sources of Energy in the United States



A significant plurality of Texans favor reducing two sources of energy in the United States: coal mining (50%) and fracking for oil and natural gas (42%). Less than a third of Texans favor expanding these two sources, ranging from a high of 27% for fracking to a low of 19% for coal mining.

There exists a relatively equal distribution of Texans spread across the three options of expanding, reducing, or maintaining the present level for the remaining four energy sources. The three (expand, maintain, reduce) values are especially similar for nuclear power plants

(36% expand, 31% maintain, 33% reduce), onshore conventional oil and natural gas (36%, 34%, 30%), and offshore conventional oil and natural gas (30%, 34%, 36%).

In sum, in spite of Texas being the country's largest producer of oil and natural gas as well as the location of the energy (fossil fuel) capital of the world in Houston, more Texans favor reducing U.S. reliance on fracking for oil and natural gas and offshore conventional oil and natural gas than increasing it, while overwhelming majorities favor expanding reliance on renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal.