

# **The Texas Electorate on Abortion**

## **Results from a Statewide Survey**

To: Interested Parties  
From: PerryUndem  
Date: September 1, 2022  
Re: Results from a statewide survey

One year ago, the most restrictive abortion ban in the country, Texas' SB 8, went into effect. Since then, the landscape of abortion rights and access has shifted dramatically in Texas and nationwide. A coalition of organizations<sup>1</sup> in Texas commissioned PerryUndem to conduct a robust survey of Texas voters to better understand the impact of SB 8, the current landscape of opinion on abortion, and the degree to which abortion is motivating voters in the upcoming elections. PerryUndem is a national leader in understanding public opinion on abortion.

The survey was conducted using YouGov's online panel among n = 2,000 registered voters in Texas from June 15 through 24, 2022 (the day *Roe v. Wade* was overturned). The sample includes n = 510 Latina/o/x voters, n = 265 Black voters, and n = 150 Asian American / Pacific Islander voters.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Freedom Network, Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, AVOW, ACLU of Texas, Progress Texas, and Deeds Action Fund.

The key findings include:

- Data suggest a majority of Texas voters (60%) are now in support of abortion being available in all or most cases. Eleven percent of Texas voters say they want abortion unavailable in all cases.
- SB 8 likely laid the groundwork for a surge in prioritizing abortion as a voting issue and a shift in opinion. SB 8 affected many people at a personal level. Half of Texas voters (49%) say SB 8 made them feel concerned about the state of their own rights in Texas. Similar proportions say SB 8 motivated them “a lot” to make sure they vote this fall (53%) and to make sure candidates represent their views on abortion (56%).
- Additionally, Quinnipiac data suggest the Texas electorate has become more supportive of abortion over the past year. Last [September](#), 51% of voters said they wanted abortion legal in all or most cases v. 59% saying the same this [June](#).
- Latina/o/x voters are +16 points more likely than white voters to support abortion access (67% v. 51%) – a trend we are also seeing nationally.
- Contrary to conventional wisdom, most Texas voters do not struggle with their views on abortion (72%), nor do they think of abortion as a religious issue personally (60%).
- Texas voters are likely underinformed about the state of abortion access right now. By late June, just 36% had heard that the state legislature passed a trigger ban.
- Abortion access is a top-tier motivating issue among several segments of the electorate, including O’Rourke voters, independent women who support abortion access, Democratic women, women of reproductive age (18 to 44), and Democratic surge voters (voted for Biden in 2020 but did not vote in 2016).
- Protecting the unborn is not a top-tier issue among most Republicans.

Following are more detailed findings.

# Detailed Findings

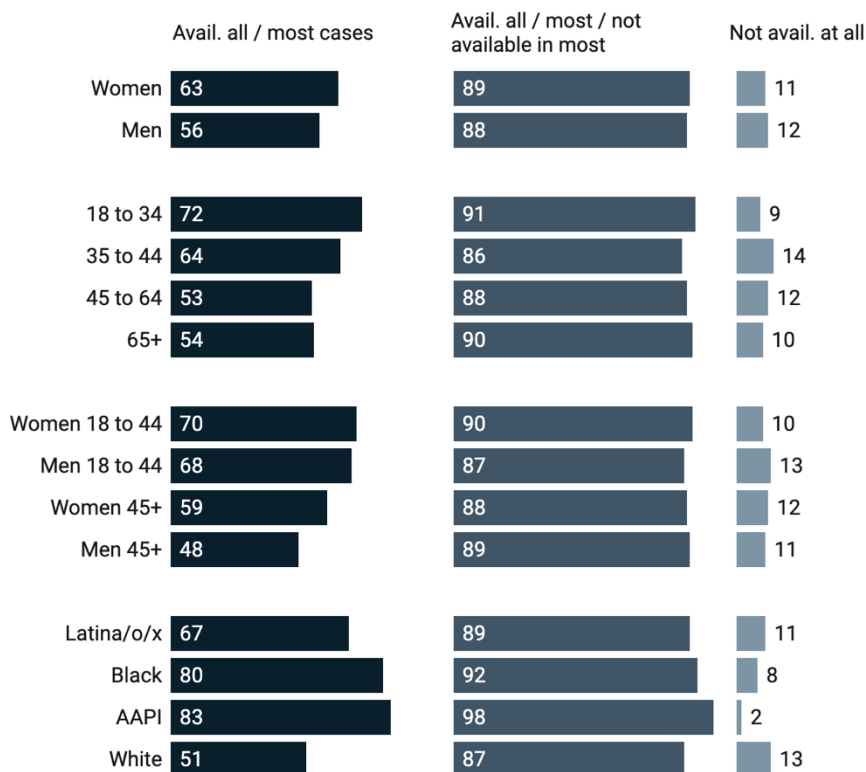
## Landscape of views on abortion

1. Data suggest a majority of Texas voters (60%) now wants abortion available in all (28%) or most (32%) cases. Twenty-nine percent say abortion should not be available in most cases, and 11% say abortion shouldn't be available in any cases.

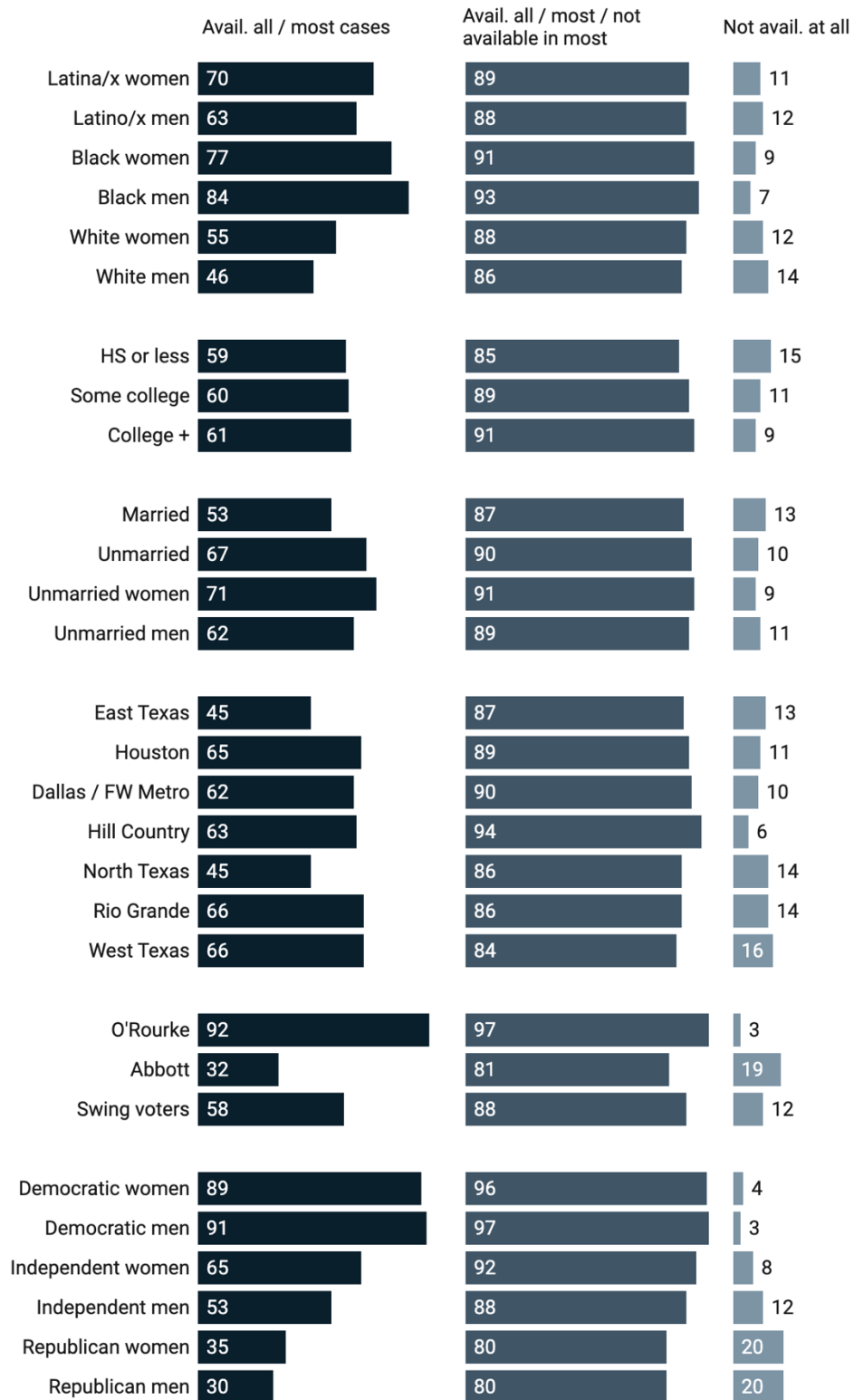
Majorities of most demographic segments say they want abortion available in all or most cases. Additionally, one in three Abbott voters (32%) says they want abortion available in all or most cases.

2. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Latina/o/x voters are significantly more likely than white voters to support abortion rights and access. Two-thirds of Latina/o/x Texas voters (67%) say abortion should be available in all or most cases v. 51% of white voters. Eight in ten Black (80%) and Asian American / Pacific Islander voters (83%) say the same.

Which comes closest to your view? Do you think abortion should be:

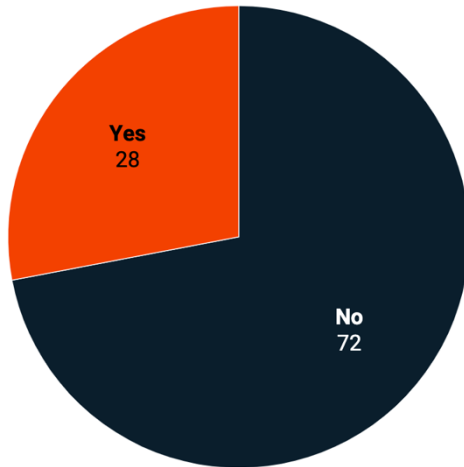


Which comes closest to your view? Do you think abortion should be:

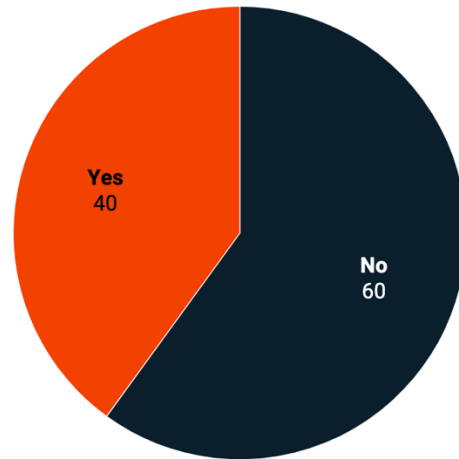


3. Most Texas voters say they don't struggle with views on abortion (72%) – nor is it a religious issue for them personally (60%).

Do you struggle with your feelings on abortion – for example, are you torn about how you feel on the issue, or not?



For you personally, is abortion a religious issue, or not?



Data suggest abortion is not a religious issue for many Texans, including:

- 63% of Latina/o/x voters (including 59% of Catholic Latina/o/x voters)
- 63% of Black voters
- 57% of Catholic voters
- 44% of Abbott voters
- 34% of voters who attend religious services weekly
- 33% of born-again / evangelical voters

4. **What drives attitudes toward abortion?** At least two key factors. First, freedom from government overreach or interference: 67% of respondents agree that “people should be able to make their own decisions on abortion without the government interfering,” including 49% who strongly agree. In another question, 60% say they prefer that individuals make decisions about abortion v. being regulated by law (40%).

Second, for voters of reproductive age, abortion is not just about a political stance. Two-thirds of voters ages 18 to 44 (68%) say they can envision a scenario in which abortion might be the best option for them or a partner, including:

- 81% of O’Rourke voters
- 73% of women
- 70% of Latina/o/x voters
- 64% of Catholic voters
- 62% of men
- 56% of evangelical / born-again voters
- 50% of Abbott voters

### **Voters may be underinformed of the state of abortion access**

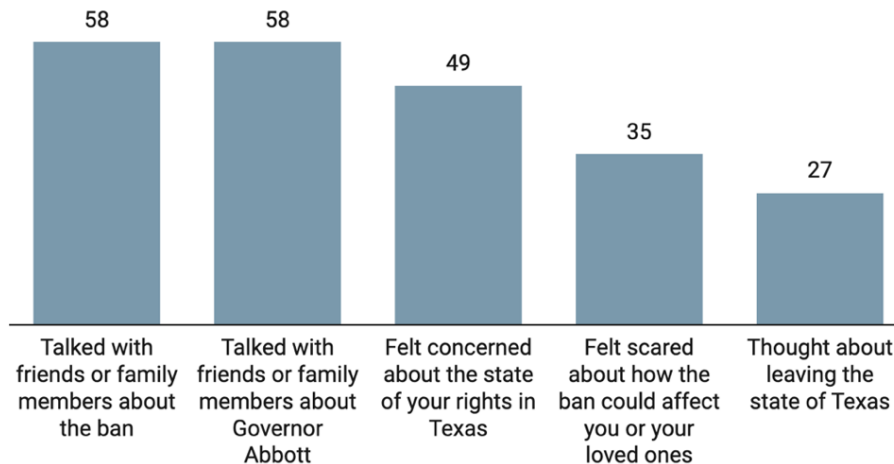
5. In June, just 36% of respondents say they had heard about lawmakers passing a **trigger ban** to make abortions illegal in Texas if *Roe* is overturned. Qualitative data suggest many are unsure of the status of abortion in Texas or they think the six-week ban is still in place.

## SB 8 likely shifted opinion

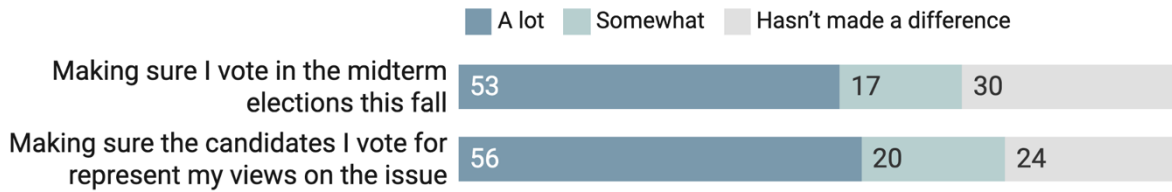
6. Data suggest SB 8 had an impact on many voters. Half of Texas voters (49%) say SB 8 made them feel concerned about the state of their own rights in Texas. Similar proportions say SB 8 motivated them “a lot” to make sure they vote this fall (53%) and to make sure candidates represent their views on abortion (56%). Four in ten (40%) women of reproductive age (18 to 44) and 35% of men of reproductive age say SB 8 made them think about leaving the state.

Have you done any of these things as a result of  
Governor Abbott and the state legislature passing a 6-  
week abortion ban in Texas?

RANDOMIZE



Has the abortion ban in Texas motivated you in any of these ways or has it not really made a difference?



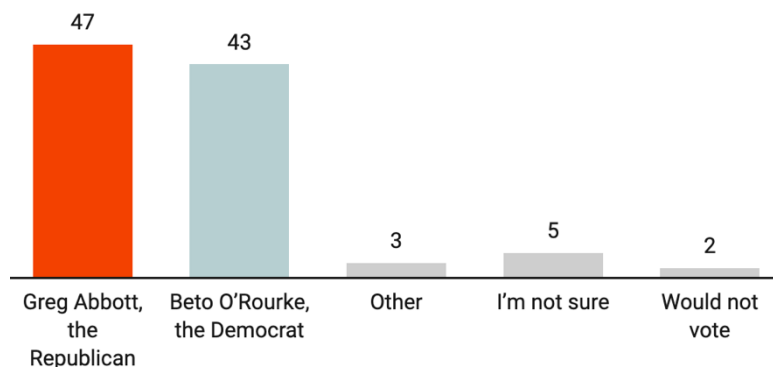
Voters most likely to say SB 8 motivated them “a lot” to vote include:

- Democratic women (75%)
- Democratic men (68%)
- Black women (64%)
- Latina/x women (60%)
- Suburban women (59%)
- Women 18 to 44 (58%)
- All women (57%)
- Independent women who want abortion available in all or most cases (55%)

## The governor's race

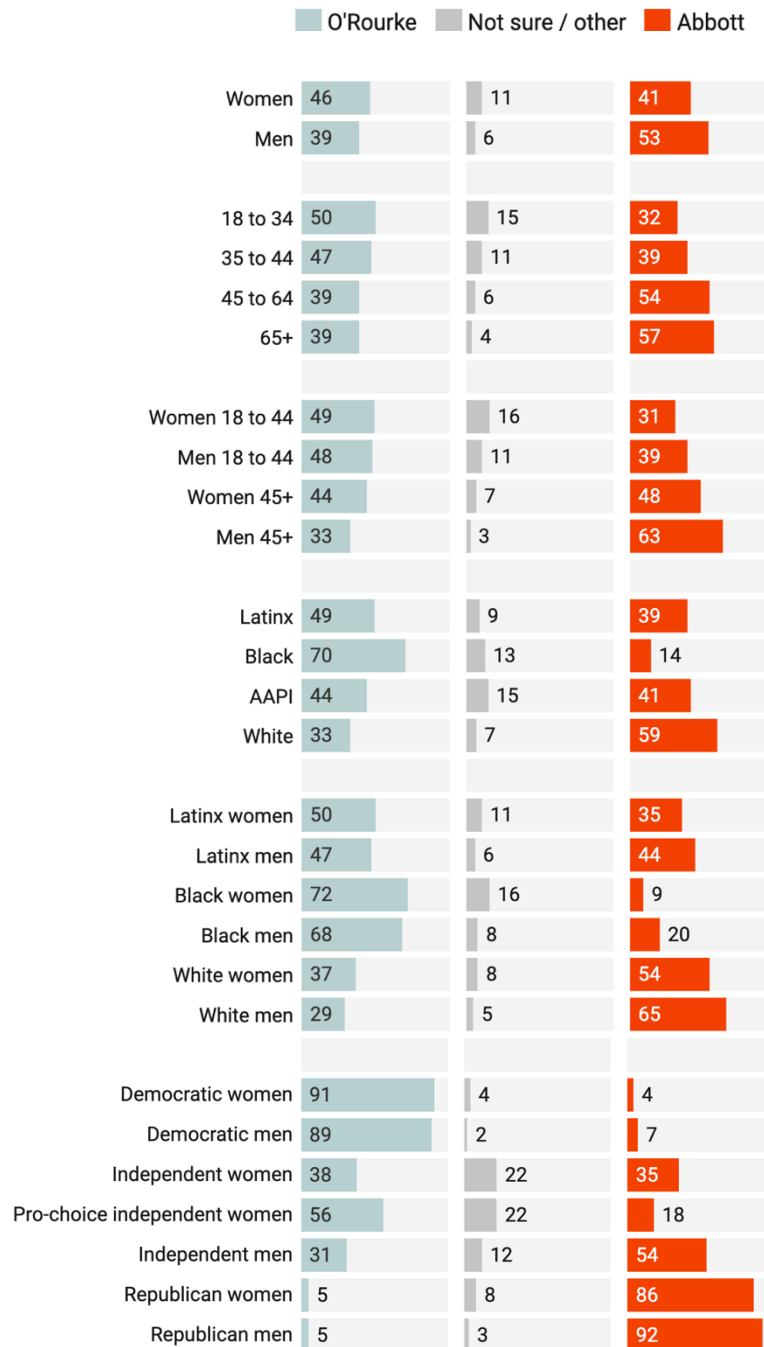
7. In mid to late June, our data suggest that Abbott led O'Rourke by four points. In December 2021, a Quinnipiac [poll](#) had Abbott up 15 points.

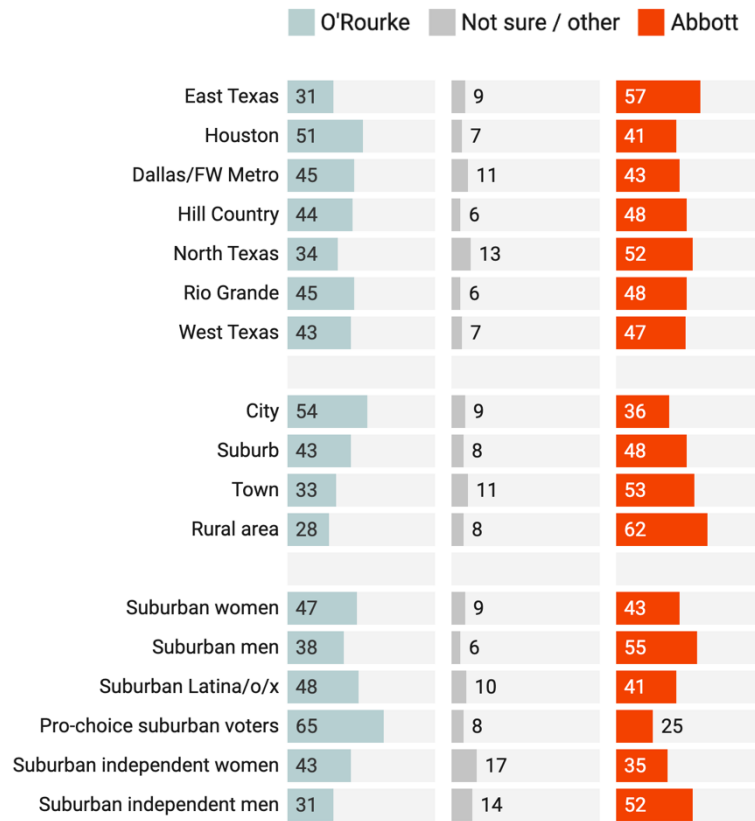
Thinking about the upcoming elections for governor... if the elections were held today, would you vote for [ROTATE: Greg Abbott, the Republican or / Beto O'Rourke, the Democrat?]





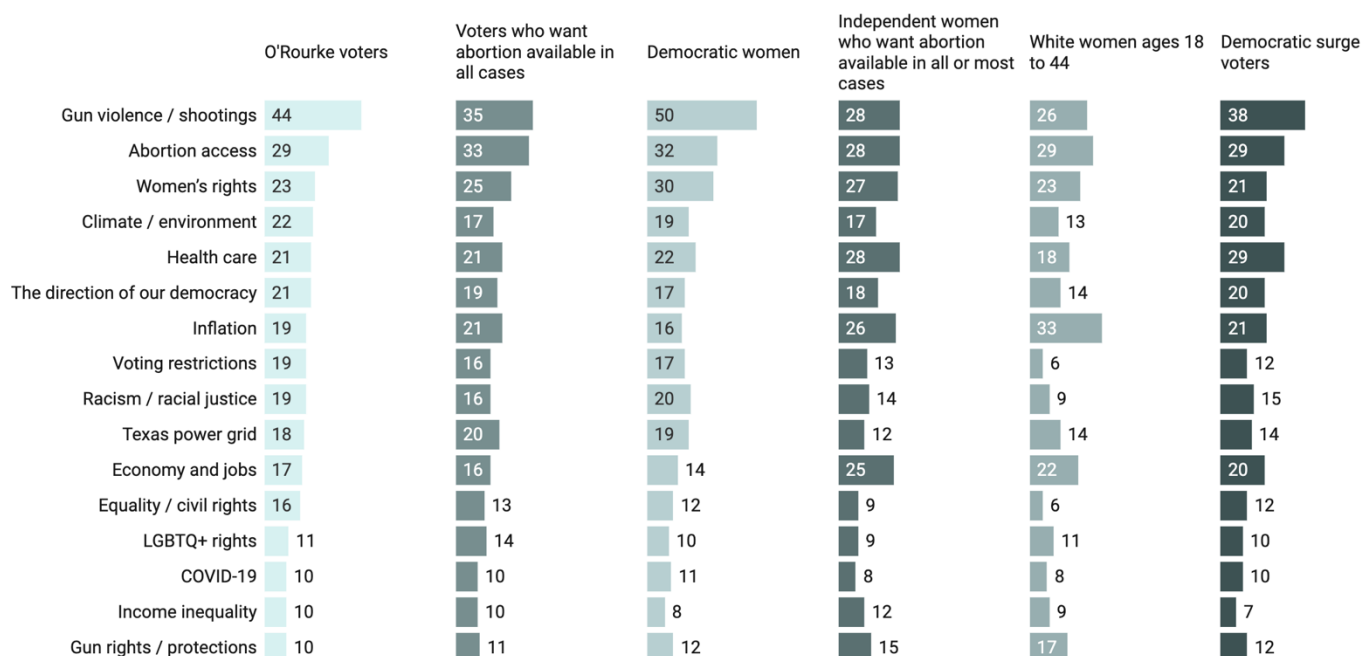
As of June, Abbott maintained healthy leads among white voters, older men, independent men, and voters in more rural areas. O'Rourke had an edge among young voters, Latina/o/x voters, Black voters, young women, city residents, and suburban women.





8. In June, prior to the *Roe* decision, abortion access was in the top two tiers of motivating issues for several segments of the Texas electorate:

- O'Rourke voters (43% of the electorate)
- Voters who want abortion available in all cases (28%)
- Democratic women (20%)
- Independent women who want abortion available in all or most cases (10%)
- White women ages 18 to 44 (10%)
- Democratic surge voters<sup>2</sup> (9%)



Protecting the unborn is not a top issue for Abbott voters (56% border security, 44% inflation, 33% economy, and 28% gun rights v. 19% protecting the unborn).

<sup>2</sup> Voted for Biden in 2020, but did not vote in 2016

## Conclusion

With the new trigger ban, elected officials in Texas have stepped out of touch with nine in ten constituents, including most Republican voters. Our hunch is leaders are still operating from outdated conventional wisdom that Texans are against abortion, that Latina/o/x voters skew anti-abortion, and that many voters view abortion through a religious lens. These assumptions are inaccurate. In fact, we see evidence that abortion bans are likely moving the Texas electorate toward more support for abortion access.

As rights and access get eliminated for Texans, voters of reproductive age are the most likely to feel the real-life effects. For others, data suggest abortion may be an important proxy for the overreach of government in personal decisions.

All of the data we've seen suggest that banning abortion is more likely to benefit Democratic candidates than Republicans, particularly if voters become more informed of the state of abortion rights and access in Texas. Analysis suggests the issue is important to base Democratic audiences as well as mobilization segments, such as young voters, independent women, and suburban women. At the same time, data suggest that protecting the unborn is not a driving issue for most Republican voters in the upcoming elections.