

2014 Texas Judicial Survey



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Department of Political Science

Earl Survey Research Lab

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I. Introduction

Political Science students and Earl Survey Research Lab (ESRL) employees administered an election survey to the citizens of the state of Texas. Each semester, students in the upper-level Political Science classes conduct a survey for class credit. This fall semester the students asked respondents several questions about Texas' judicial election process. This report will summarize the results of those questions surveyed. As such, it is a summary of basic findings, which can be augmented with further analysis if so desired.

II. Demographic Profile

Texas Demographics of Voting Age Population

Population	19,062,851
Total Female	9,369,204
Total Male	9,693,647
Population by Race/Ethnicity	
White	9,219,879
African-American	2,177,717
Hispanic	6,601,168
Other	1,064,087

*Based 2012 Census Estimates

III. Summary of Results

Political Science students and Earl Survey Research Lab (ESRL) employees administered an election survey to the citizens of the state of Texas that included several questions about Texas' judicial election process. The results of the questions are summarized in this section of the report.

Data for this report were derived from a survey that was administered in both English and Spanish¹. The average length for an interviewer to complete a survey for land numbers is 13.10 minutes, followed by 13.32 minutes for cell numbers, and 20.75 minutes for Spanish cell numbers. In accordance with standard survey practices, data have been weighted by age, gender, and race. The response rate was 6% for landline numbers, 9% for cell numbers, and 5% for Spanish cell numbers. The cooperation rate was 62% for landline numbers, 46% for cell numbers, and 15% for Spanish cell numbers. The response rates and cooperation rates are based the calculations from the American Association for Public Opinion Research. The margin of error was $\pm 7.19\%$ for land numbers and ± 5.29 for cell numbers. Please note that the response rate, cooperation rate, and margin of error are calculated separately for random digit dialing (RDD) telephone numbers and cell phone numbers. Due to the dual frame sample, the selection process is varies causing a validity issue. This issue is a result of using the number of people interviewed. After weighting the data, there were 536 completed surveys.²

Respondent information was purchased from Marketing Systems Group, Inc. The sample consisted of landline and cell telephone numbers. The sampling interval size is based on the number of completed interviews needed and the population within the specified zip codes. Once the equal size intervals are set, a random Nth telephone number per interval is selected. This procedure is repeated until all of the telephone numbers are selected.

Each telephone number was called up to five times, depending on the day and time to ensure many opportunities to contact possible respondents. The sampling interval size is based on the number of completed interviews needed and the population within state of Texas.

A summary of results in tabular and graphic forms follows.³

¹ Spanish cell numbers were dialed only when the ESRL's Spanish-speaking interviewers were available to work, so there were some numbers that had not been dialed. Spanish land was not dialed due to the employee availability as well. Therefore the margin of error was ± 37.045 for cell Spanish.

² The breakdown of the completed surveys is as follows: 186 landline completes, 343 cell completes, 7 cell Spanish completes.

³ Our question on the governor's race compares favorably with the overall final results of the governor's race. The ESRL reported Greg Abbott as the winner at 57% with Wendy Davis at 37%, and the Libertarian candidate at 4%. Those who answered "don't know" to the governor's race question were excluded in the percentages just noted.

Table 1: Tabulation of Question 2

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections or nonpartisan elections?

IF THE RESPONDENT ASKS WHAT A NONPARTISAN ELECTION IS, DEFINE

A nonpartisan election for judge means that no party label will appear on the ballot.

	Frequency	Percent
Partisan elections	189	36%
Non-partisan elections	300	58%
Refuse	27	5%
Total	516	99%

Table 2: Tabulation of Question 3

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

	Frequency	Percent
Selecting our judges in partisan elections	297	58%
Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate	181	35%
Refuse	34	7%
Total	512	100%⁴

⁴ The final percentage of 99% is due to rounding as are the some totals of the proceeding tables.

Table 3: Tabulation of Question 4

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election?

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

	Frequency	Percent
Selecting our judges in partisan elections	264	51%
A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election	204	40%
Refuse	45	9%
Total	513	100%

Table 4: Tabulation of Question 5

Would you prefer selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election.

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

	Frequency	Percent
Selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections	278	54%
A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election	182	36%
Refuse	53	10%
Total	513	100%

Table 5: Tabulation of Question 6

Would you prefer selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

	Frequency	Percent
Selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections	330	64%
Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate	158	31%
Refuse	25	5%
Total	513	100%

Table 6: Tabulation of Question 7

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election.

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

	Frequency	Percent
Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate	170	34%
A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election	284	57%
Refuse	47	9%
Total	501	100%

Table 7: Tabulation of Question 11

Who is the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court?	Frequency	Percent
Greg Abbott	94	17%
Nathan Hecht	87	16%
Anthony Kennedy	51	10%
Refuse	303	57%
Total	535	100%

Table 8: Tabulation of Question 12

Which political party controls the Texas House of Representatives in Austin?	Frequency	Percent
Democrats	73	14%
Republicans	396	74%
Refuse	67	13%
Total	536	101%

Table 9: Tabulation of Question 13

Which court in Texas is the highest court for criminal cases?	Frequency	Percent
Texas Supreme Court	346	65%
Texas Court of Criminal Appeals	130	24%
Texas Court of Chancery	1	<1%
Refuse	59	11%
Total	536	100%

IV. Survey Procedure

Interviewing began on October 13 and concluded on November 3rd. Calls were placed between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm Sunday through Thursday, and between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm on Saturday.

At least one supervisor was on duty at all times to ensure data quality and study protocol. Residents of Texas, ages 18 years old or older, were interviewed via telephone by trained students and ESRL staff interviewers. Students and interviewers are trained thoroughly prior to working on any particular survey according to lab policies. Each question is to be read exactly as written. No interpretations are offered by the interviewer for the respondent. Re-wording of the survey is not tolerated because the results would not be reliable and the respondents would not be receiving the same, consistent questions that are necessary for comparison and statistical purposes. This helps to eliminate bias in the respondent's responses. The

interviewers are also taught not to record any answer that the respondent does not say. Only clear responses are to be recorded after clarification or re-reading of the survey questions. Interviewers are trained to provide neutral feedback. Again, this is to help eliminate possible persuasion and bias.

The ESRL's computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system administered the survey instrument. The computer program introduces survey questions one at a time to the interviewer. Responses are entered directly by the interviewer and the CATI program controls all skipping according to the respondent's answers. In addition, the CATI system handles the sample records, distributing them to interviewers based on scheduled attempt times and the previous disposition of each record.

Appendix A: Codebook

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a student at Texas Tech University, and we are conducting a short research survey about issues facing Texas for a political science class. I would like to speak with an adult living in this household who has had the most recent birthday.

- 1 The person who had the most recent birthday is on the phone
- 2 Respondent not available now

- 6 Language barrier
- 7 Too ill, hearing impaired, no adults live in household

- 9 Refused

Your number was selected at random and your answers will be completely confidential. If I ask a question you do not want to answer, just let me know and I'll go on to the next one. This survey has been approved by the university's research review board, and it should only take less than 10 minutes. This study is being overseen by the Texas Tech Earl Survey Research Lab and the information we collect may be used for research at the University.

- 1 CONTINUE
- 2 REFUSE

Q: Q1

If the election for Texas Governor was held today, would you vote for:

DO NOT READ THE ANSWER OPTION BELOW.

- 1 Democrat Wendy Davis
- 2 Republican Greg Abbott
- 3 Libertarian Kathie Glass
- 4 Green Party Brandon Parmer

- 8 DK
- 9 REF

Q: reform

In the upcoming state legislative session, the members of the Texas legislature are investigating whether we should reform the way we select our state judges or keep the system as it is.

In the next series of questions, we will present you with two possible choices for selecting judges, and in each question we'd like you to tell us which of the two choices you prefer most. When giving an answer, consider only the two options provided to you in each question.

PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE

Q: Q2

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections or nonpartisan elections?

IF THE RESPONDENT ASKS WHAT A NONPARTISAN ELECTION IS, DEFINE

A nonpartisan election for judge means that no party label will appear on the ballot.

1 Partisan elections

2 Non-partisan elections

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q3

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

1 Selecting our judges in partisan elections

2 Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q4

Would you prefer selecting our judges in partisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election?

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

1 Selecting our judges in partisan elections

2 A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q5

Would you prefer selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election.

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

1 Selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections

2 A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q6

Would you prefer selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections?

OR

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

1 Selecting our judges in nonpartisan elections

2 Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q7

Would you prefer that our judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate?

OR

Would you prefer a system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election.

A retention election is where a judge runs against herself without an opponent, and if voters give the judge an approval rating of higher than 50 percent, the judge remains in office.

1 Judges be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate

2 A system where our judges are selected by a state commission, after which the judge is subject to a retention election

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q8

I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence:

The Scientific Community
Texas Courts
The News Media

- 1 A great deal of confidence
- 2 Only some confidence
- 3 Hardly any confidence

8 DK

9 REF

Q: experi

T: 5

PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE

Q:Q9

More and more scientific research is showing that biological factors affect people's beliefs and behaviors, including in areas like their politics. For example, several studies have shown that a person's genes play an important role in whether the person is a political conservative or liberal.

How much knowledge do you have about biology? Would you say you have a:

- 1 A great deal of knowledge
- 2 Only some knowledge
- 3 Hardly knowledge at all

8 DK

9 REF

Q:Q10

How much knowledge do you have about biology? Would you say you have:

1 A great deal of knowledge

2 Only some knowledge

3 Hardly knowledge at all

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q11

Who is the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court:

1 Greg Abbott

2 Nathan Hecht

3 Anthony Kennedy

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q12

Which political party controls the Texas House of Representatives in Austin:

1 Democrats

2 Republicans

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q13

Which court in Texas is the highest court for criminal cases?

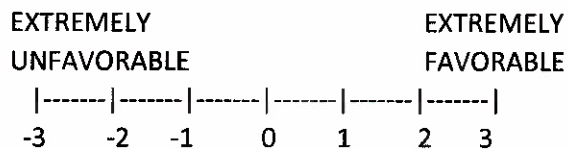
- 1 Texas Supreme Court
- 2 Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
- 3 Texas Court of Chancery

8 DK
9 REF

Q: Q14

We'd like to get your feelings about some people and groups in American society. When I read a name, we'd like you to rate the person or group by imagining a scale of -3 to 3, where -3 means you feel extremely unfavorable toward that person or group and 3 means you feel extremely favorable toward that person or group. If we come to a name you don't know much about, just tell me and we'll move on to the next one. Using the -3 to 3 scale, how would you rate:

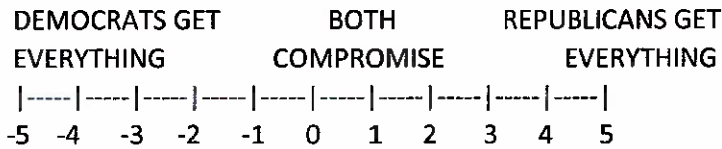
- The Democratic Party
- The Republican Party
- Liberals
- Conservatives
- President Barak Obama
- Texas Governor Rick Perry



8 DK
9 REF

Q: Q15

Think about how Democratic and Republican leaders should address the most important issues facing the country. Imagine a scale of -5 to 5, where -5 means Democratic leaders get everything they want, 0 means both sides fully compromise, and 5 means Republican leaders get everything they want. Where on this scale from -5 to 5 do you think they should end up?

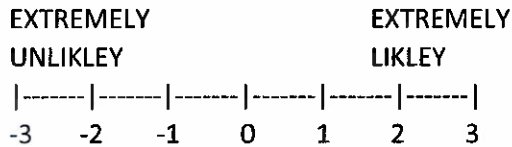


8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q16

Imagine a scale of -3 to 3, where -3 means extremely unlikely and 3 means extremely likely, how unlikely or likely are you to vote for a Democratic candidate in the future?

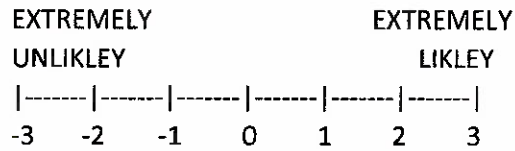


8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q17

Imagine a scale of -3 to 3, where -3 means extremely unlikely and 3 means extremely likely, how unlikely or likely are you to vote for a Republican candidate in the future?



8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q18

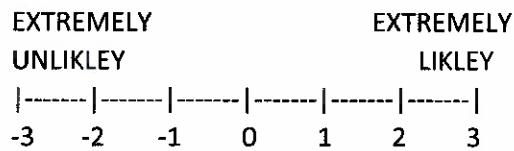
Think about seeing a TV ad for a Democratic candidate. Imagine a scale of -3 to 3, where -3 means extremely unlikely and 3 means extremely likely, how unlikely or likely would the Democratic TV ad be to make you:

Hopeful.

Angry.

Proud.

Afraid.



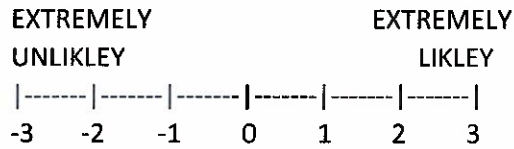
8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q19

Think about seeing a TV ad for a Republican candidate. Imagine a scale of -3 to 3, where -3 means extremely unlikely and 3 means extremely likely, how unlikely or likely would the Republican TV ad be to make you:

- Hopeful.
- Angry.
- Proud.
- Afraid.



8 DK
9 REF

Q: Q20

Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with this statement: Several scientific studies have shown that a person's genes play an important role in whether the person is a political conservative or liberal. Do you:

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

8 DK
9 REF

Q: Q21

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- 1 Republican
- 2 Democrat
- 3 Independent
- 4 Something else

- 8 DK
- 9 REF

Q: Q22a

Do you consider yourself to be a strong or not so strong Republican?

- 1 Strong
- 2 Not so strong

- 8 DK
- 9 REF

IF (ANSWER >=1) SKP Q23

Q: Q22b

Do you consider yourself to be a strong or not so strong Democrat?

- 1 Strong
- 2 Not so strong

- 8 DK
- 9 REF

IF (ANSWER >=1) SKP Q23

Q: Q22c

Do you lean more toward the Republican Party or Democratic Party or Neither?

1 Republican

2 Democrat

3 NEITHER

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q23

In terms of social and cultural issues (for example, abortion, separation of church and state, and affirmative action), where would you place yourself on a scale where 1 means you are extremely liberal, 4 means you are moderate or middle of the road, and 7 means you are extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this?

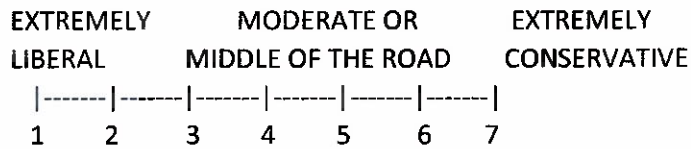
EXTREMELY												EXTREMELY
LIBERAL												CONSERVATIVE
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1	2	3	4	5	6	7						

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q24

In terms of economic issues (for example, taxation, welfare, and privatization of social security), where would you place yourself on a scale where 1 means you are extremely liberal , 4 means you are moderate or middle of the road, and 7 means you are extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this?



8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q25

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 1 Less than high school
- 2 High school diploma/GED
- 3 Some college, no degree
- 4 Two-year degree (Associate's degree)
- 5 Four-year degree (Bachelor's degree)
- 6 Graduate or professional degree (Master's, Doctorate)

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q26

What is your current marital status?

- 1 Single/never married
- 2 Not married but living with partner
- 3 Married
- 4 Separated
- 5 Widowed
- 6 Divorced

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q27

In what year were you born?

ENTER YEAR 19__

99 DK/REF

Q: Q28

Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

1 Yes

2 No

8 DK

9 REF

Q: Q29

What race do you consider yourself to be?

- 1 White
- 2 African-American
- 3 Asian/Pacific Islander
- 4 Native American
- 5 Multi-racial
- 6 Other

8 DK

9 REF

IF (ANS < 6) SKIP TO Q30

IF (ANS = 6) SKIP TO Q29a

IF (ANS = 8) SKIP TO Q30

IF (ANS = 9) SKIP TO Q30

Q:Q29a

Please specify what race you consider yourself to be.

88 DK

99 REF

Q: Q30

What is your residential zip code?

ENTER CAREFULLY!

9999 DK/REF

Q: Qcomp

Those are all of the questions that I have. Thank you very much for participating. If you have any questions, you may call Dr. Sara Norman at the survey lab at 806-834-7364. Texas Tech also has a Board that protects the rights of people who participate in research. You can call to ask them questions at 806-742-2064.

PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE

Q: Q31

RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER

1 MALE

2 FEMALE

I:

NUM 1 2 2 0 8 9