TEXAS GUBERNATORIAL POLL: GREG ABBOTT LEADS ALLEN WEST; DONALD TRUMP MAINTAINS INFLUENCE

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Poll conducted July 22-24, 2021 via IVR among 400 registered Republicans in Texas, with a margin of error of 4.9%.

VICTORY INSIGHTS

Executive Summary

In 2022, Texas will hold elections for many federal and statewide positions, but few have garnered nearly as much attention as the race for Governor. Incumbent Republican Greg Abbott is seeking a third term, after first being elected in 2014 and since being re-elected in 2018. Despite various controversies over his tenure as Governor, he has already secured the endorsement of President Trump.

Nevertheless, five Republicans have already filed to challenge Abbott in the Republican Primary in the spring of 2022. Among these include Don Huffines, a fiscally conservative former state senator with the endorsement of US Senator Rand Paul, and Chad Prather, a talk show host for BlazeTV and a sensational Twitter personality.
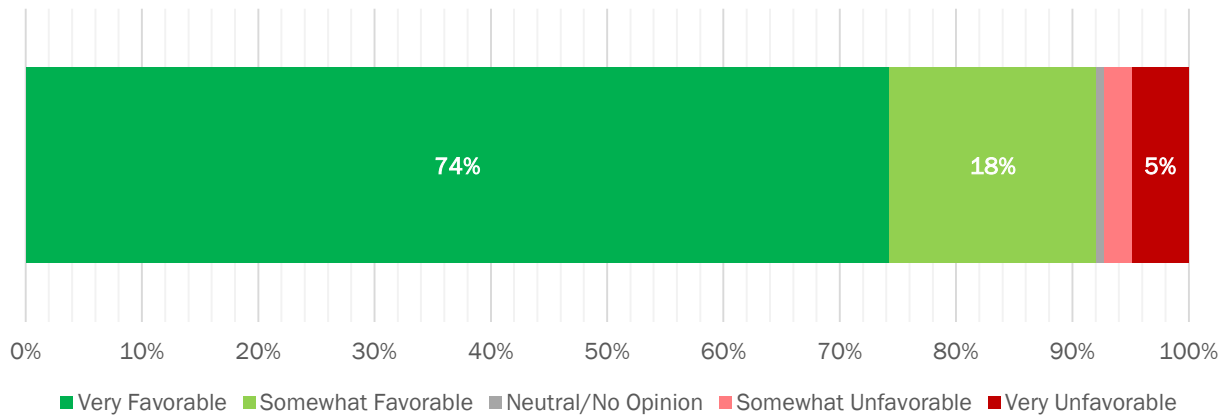
Abbott's most high-profile opponent, however, is Allen West. West is a veteran, a former Congressman from Florida, and most recently, the former Chairman of the Republican Party of Texas. In this role, West drew intense criticism (and support) for his firebrand persona, unwavering support for former President Trump, and harsh criticisms of Governor Abbott's response to COVID-19. West advocated for less restrictive COVID-19 policies, even attending a "Free Texas" rally outside the Governor's Mansion.

On June 4th, 2021, West announced his impending resignation as the state party chairman, and one month later, announced his run for Governor. West will face Abbott – and a host of other candidates – in a crowded Republican Primary this upcoming spring. If no candidate earns more than 50% of the vote, the top two candidates will advance to a runoff election during the summer. The winner of the runoff will face the Democratic Party nominee in November. This poll examines the matchup between Abbott, the incumbent, and West, the high-profile challenger. It also dives deep into a number of other questions, including support for former President Trump, the 2024 Presidential election, and even Texas secession.

While it is certainly worthwhile to read through each page of this report, we can summarize some of the most notable results in just a couple sentences. Support for former President Trump remains high among Texas Republicans, as 92% hold a favorable opinion of him, and 78% want him as the Republican nominee for President in 2024. Abbott holds a Name ID advantage over West, and currently leads him 73% to 17% in the polls, with 10% of the electorate undecided. After asking undecided voters who they favor, we modeled the race to be split 80%-20% in Abbott's favor. Finally, support for secession has reached 50% among Texas Republicans, potentially a good sign for West. **Read on to learn more.**
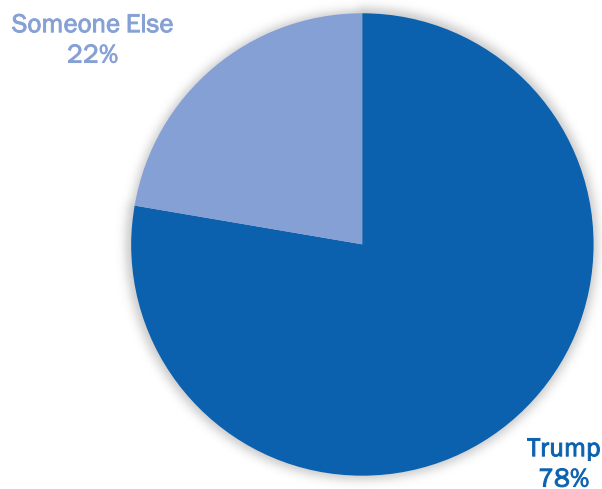
Donald Trump Favorability

Texas Republicans maintain extremely positive opinions of former President Donald Trump. 92% of respondents held a favorable opinion of Donald Trump, while only 7% held an unfavorable opinion of him. Among those with a favorable opinion, 81% had a "Very Favorable" opinion, signaling intense (not just broad) support.

74% | 18% | 5%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Very Favorable ■ Somewhat Favorable ■ Neutral/No Opinion ■ Somewhat Unfavorable ■ Very Unfavorable

2024 Presidential Preference

When asked whether they would prefer Donald Trump or someone else as the 2024 Republican nominee for President, Texas Republicans overwhelmingly chose Donald Trump. Coupled with Trump's strong favorability numbers, we can conclude that Trump maintains strong support, and thus influence, among Republicans in Texas.
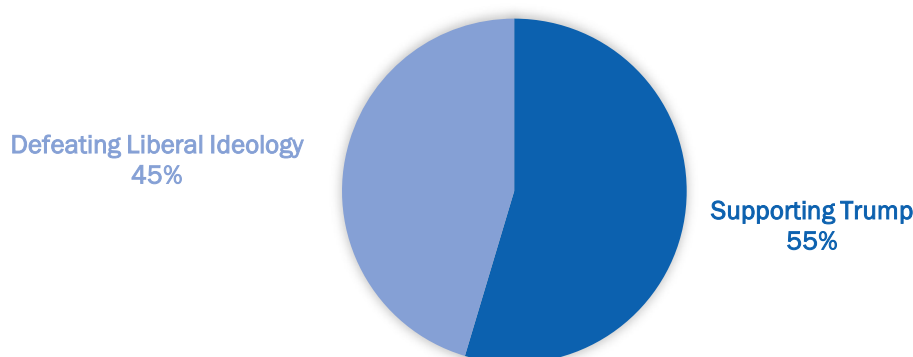

Someone Else
22%

Trump
78%

Prioritization: Identifying Die-Hard Trump Supporters

With such broad Republican support for Trump in Texas, we included one more question to identify voters who are most strongly devoted to Trump. Identifying these voters allows us to cross-analyze questions and determine how die-hard Trump supporters' answers differ from other Republicans' answers.
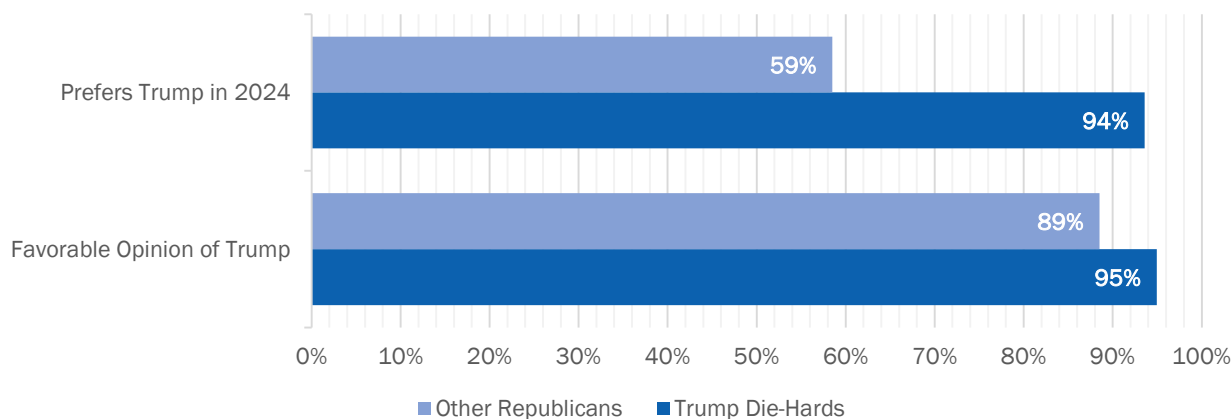
The Question

Which would you consider a higher priority when thinking about Texas's future: defeating liberal ideology or supporting President Trump?
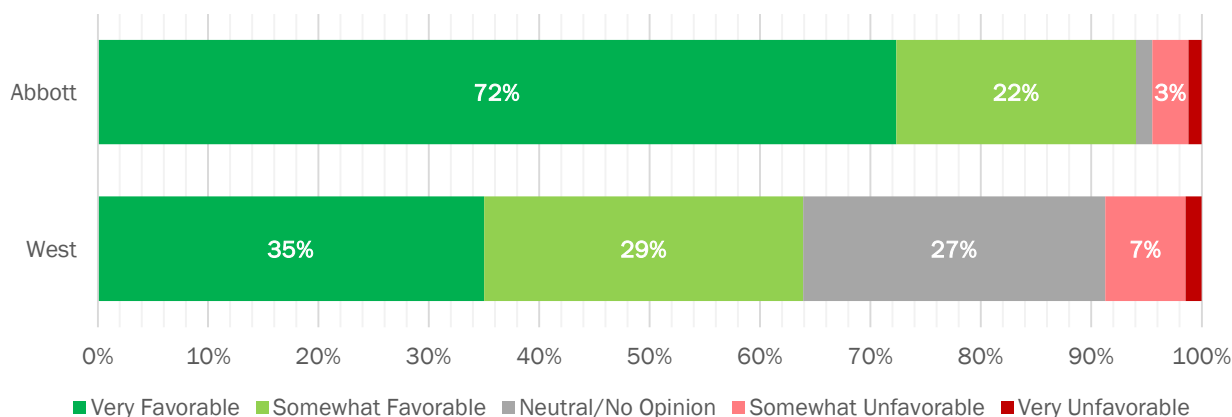
Defeating Liberal Ideology
45%

Supporting Trump
55%

The Correlation

The following chart demonstrates how the voters identified as "Trump Die-Hards" by answering "Supporting Trump" in the last question differ from other voters on key Trump-related questions: favorability and 2024 preference. 95% of Trump Die-Hards have a favorable opinion of Trump, compared to 89% of other voters. More notably, 94% of Trump Die-Hards would prefer Trump as the Republican nominee in 2024, compared to 59% of other voters. This demonstrates the effectiveness of using this question to separate Trump "die-hards" from other voters.

Prefers Trump in 2024: 59% (Other Republicans), 94% (Trump Die-Hards)

Favorable Opinion of Trump: 89% (Other Republicans), 95% (Trump Die-Hards)

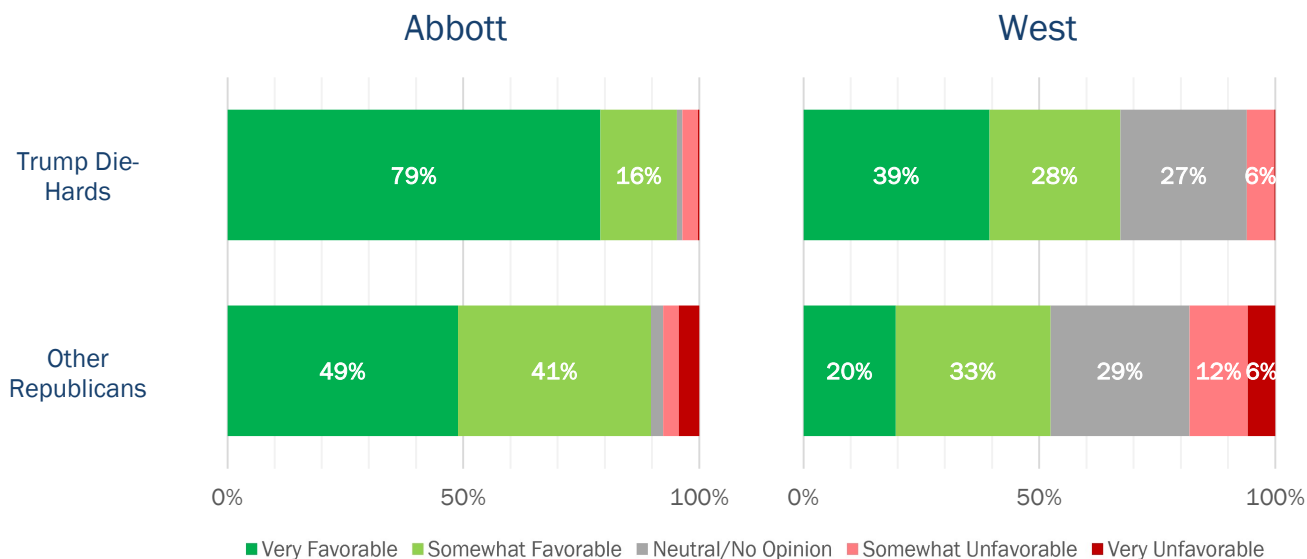■ Other Republicans ■ Trump Die-Hards

Candidate Favorability

Poll respondents were asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Abbott and West. Abbott had higher favorability numbers (94% to 64%) and higher Total Name ID (73% to 99%) than West. However, these metrics will change as West's presence grows, as 27% of Republican voters have yet to gain any opinion of him at all.

Legend: ■ Very Favorable ■ Somewhat Favorable ■ Neutral/No Opinion ■ Somewhat Unfavorable ■ Very Unfavorable
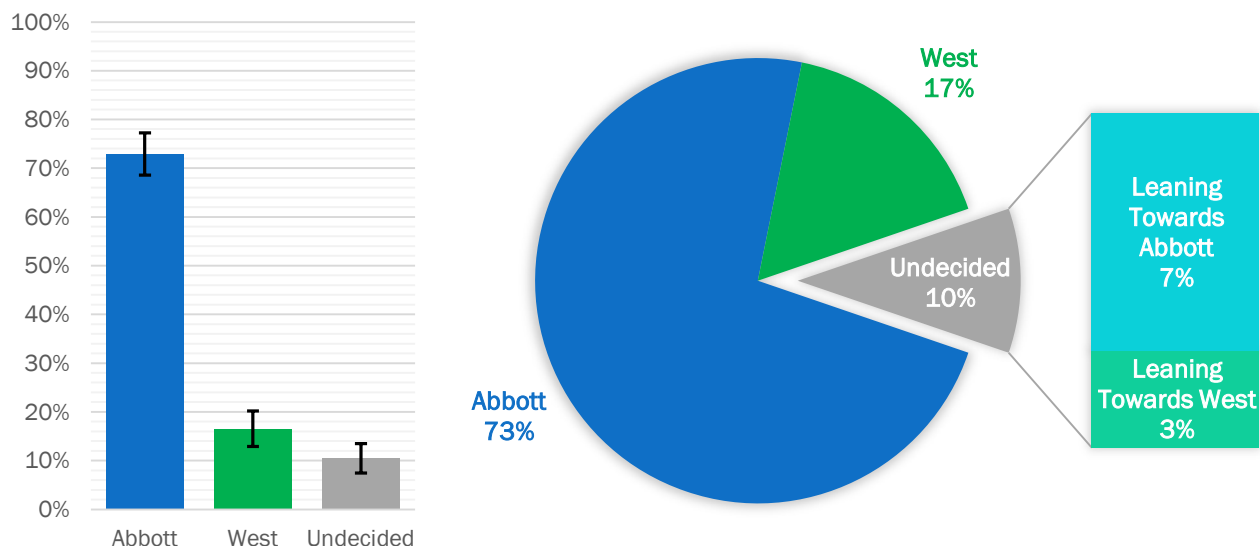
Abbott: 72%, 22%, 3%
West: 35%, 29%, 27%, 7%

Candidate Favorability vs. Trump Die-Hard

When the candidate favorability questions are cross-tabulated with the Trump Die-Hard identification question, some interesting patterns arise. First of all, both Abbott and West perform better among Trump Die-Hards than other voters, which makes sense since both candidates are markedly pro-Trump. Additionally, 18% of non-Trump Die-Hards have an *unfavorable* opinion of West, suggesting that his brazen support for Trump may go too far for some voters.

Abbott

Trump Die-Hards: 79%, 16%
Other Republicans: 49%, 41%

West

Trump Die-Hards: 39%, 28%, 27%, 6%
Other Republicans: 20%, 33%, 29%, 12%, 6%

Legend: ■ Very Favorable ■ Somewhat Favorable ■ Neutral/No Opinion ■ Somewhat Unfavorable ■ Very Unfavorable
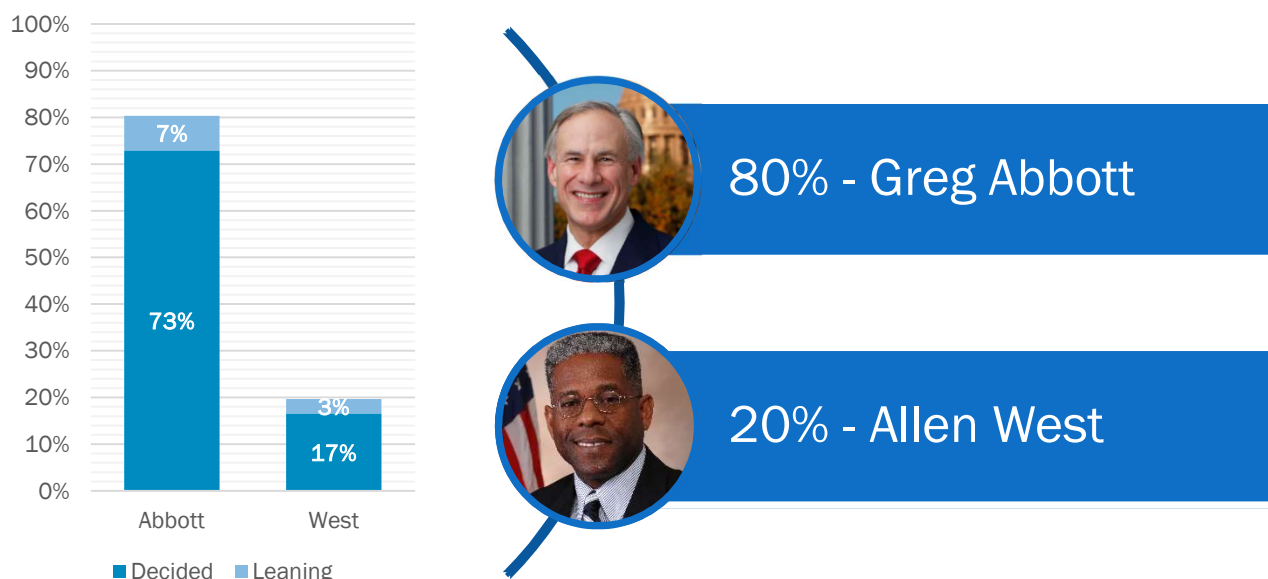
Republican Primary: Greg Abbott vs. Allen West

Poll respondents were asked who they would vote for in a hypothetical Republican Primary election for Governor of Texas, if the options were Greg Abbott and Allen West. A majority of voters chose Abbott (73%), while approximately 1 in 6 chose West (17%), and an even smaller portion stated that they are still undecided (10%).

West
17%

Leaning Towards Abbott
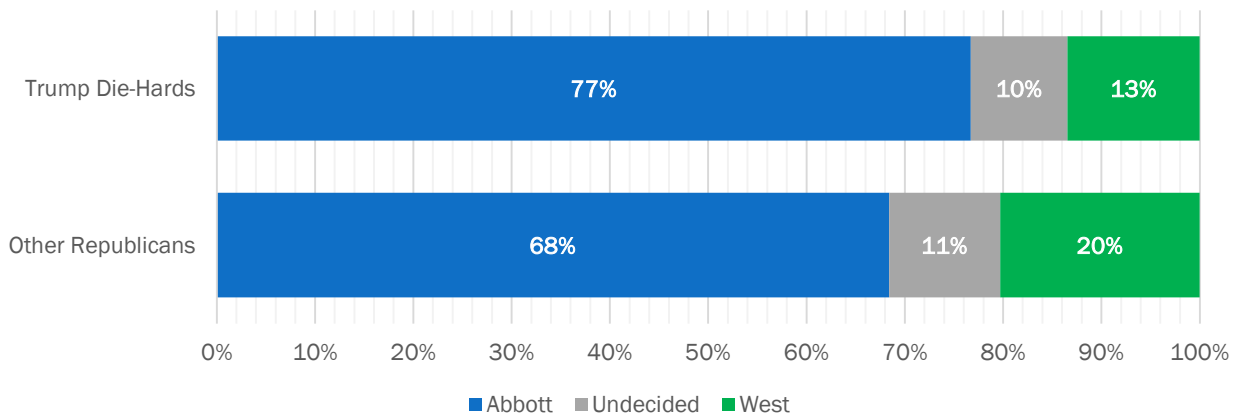7%

Undecided
10%

Abbott
73%

Leaning Towards West
3%

As shown above, approximately 71% of undecided voters leaned in favor of Abbott over West. While still high, this number is 10% lower than among decided voters, in which 81% chose Abbott. Incorporating all of this data, our modeling predicts that – if the election were held today – Abbott would earn approximately 80% of the vote and defeat West in a heads-up Republican Primary (or, in practicality, a runoff).
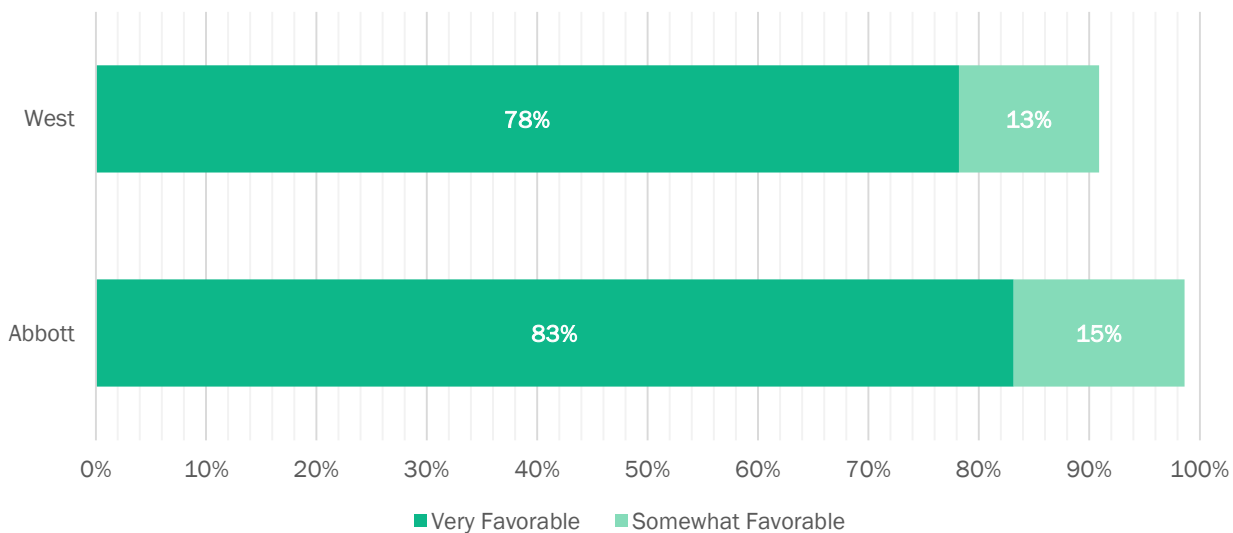

80% - Greg Abbott

20% - Allen West

■ Decided ■ Leaning

Republican Primary vs. Trump Die-Hard

As shown below, voters identified as "Trump Die-Hards" are more likely to support Abbott than other voters. This is likely due in part to Donald Trump's endorsement of Abbott. However, West is certainly pro-Trump as well, so as his Name ID grows, he could start to narrow the gap.

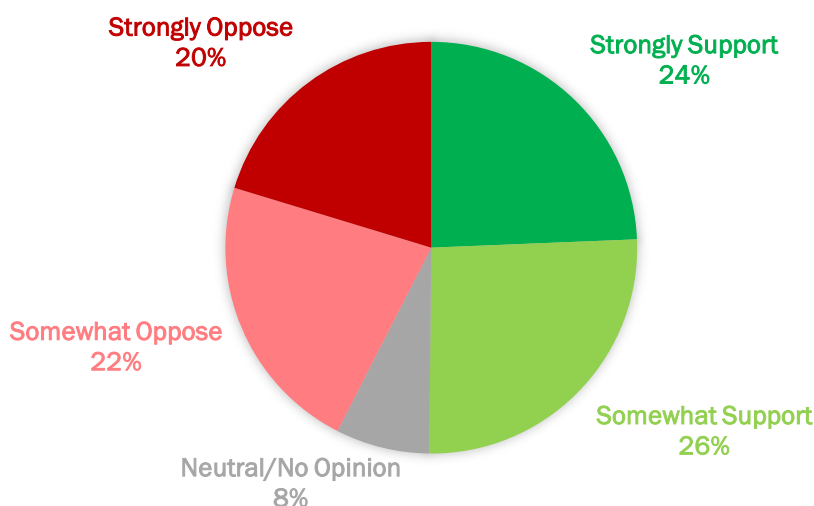|	Abbott	Undecided	West
Trump Die-Hards	77%	10%	13%
Other Republicans	68%	11%	20%

Legend: ■ Abbott ■ Undecided ■ West

Ballot Intensity

Ballot intensity refers to how enthusiastically voters for a certain candidate support that same candidate. Specifically, we measure it by determining opinions held about a candidate by the respondents who voted for that candidate. 98% of Abbott's supporters held a favorable opinion of Abbott, while only 91% of West's voters held a favorable opinion of West. This suggests that some of West's voters selected him not because they *want* to vote for West, but rather because they *do not want* to vote for Abbott. This is not necessarily a bad thing for West; after all, Biden's 2020 victory can be attributed more to voters *disliking* Trump than *liking* Biden.

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable
West	78%	13%
Abbott	83%	15%

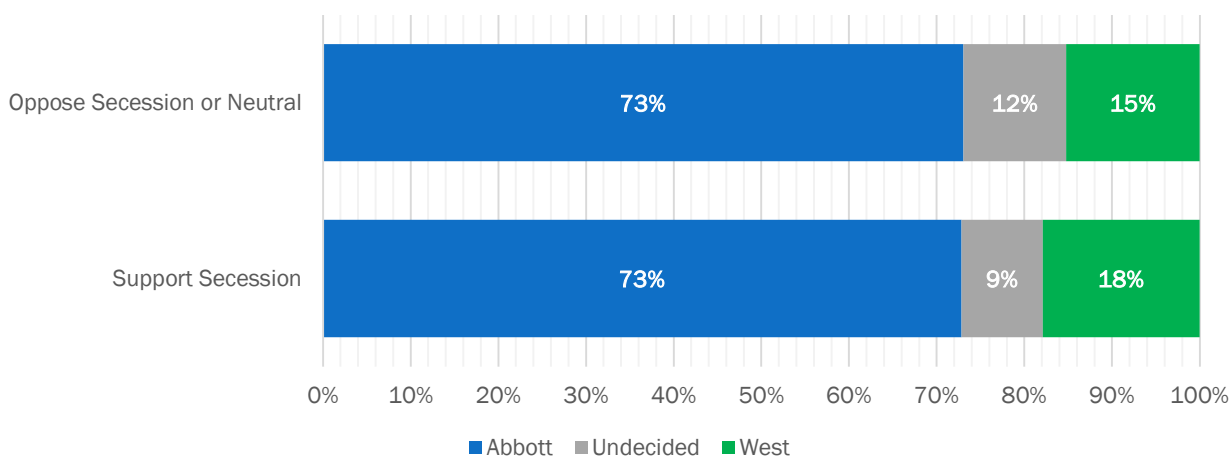Legend: ■ Very Favorable ■ Somewhat Favorable

Bonus Question: Texas Secession

Poll respondents were asked one more question: Do they support the state of Texas seceding from the United States to start its own nation? While this may seem like a surprising question at first, Allen West hinted at supporting secession in a December 2020 press release in response to the 2020 Presidential election results. In this release, West stated: "Perhaps law-abiding states should bond together and form a Union of states that will abide by the constitution." Approximately 50% of Texas Republicans would, in theory, support such a measure.

To gauge if West performs better among voters who support secession, we cross-tabulated the ballot question with the secession question. What we found is that while Abbott consistently earns 73% of the vote, West's share of the vote jumps 3% among those who support secession. While not a huge boost, this does indicate that West's comments about secession may have earned him some traction among those in support of such a measure.

Poll-Electorate Demographic Comparison

This section demonstrates how well the poll mirrors the actual demographics of the Republican electorate in Texas. Two variables are measured: Geographic Region and Age. Each of Texas' 36 congressional districts were placed into one of six Geographic Regions. The numbers of these congressional districts are listed next to each Geographic Region's name in the table below.

Geographic Region	Poll	Electorate	Margin
Dallas-Fort Worth (3, 6, 12, 24, 26, 30, 32, 33)	25.2%	24.3%	+0.9%
Central Texas (10, 17, 20, 21, 25, 31, 35)	20.6%	21.3%	-0.7%
East Texas (1, 4, 5, 8, 36)	22.2%	20.1%	+2.1%
West Texas and El Paso (11, 13, 16, 19, 23)	13.0%	13.8%	-0.8%
Houston (2, 7, 9, 18, 22, 29)	11.6%	11.6%	0.0%
Southeast Texas (14, 15, 27, 28, 34)	7.4%	8.8%	-1.4%

Age	Poll	Electorate	Margin
18-35	13.5%	13.3%	+0.2%
36-50	23.3%	23.7%	-0.4%
51-65	32.8%	32.2%	+0.6%
66+	30.5%	30.8%	-0.3%

VICTORY
INSIGHTS

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