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NBC News/Marist Poll

Age & Gender Are Key Factors for Texas Mids... Cruz Edges O'Rourke in Senate Race... Abbott with Double-Digit Lead in Reelection Bid

For Immediate Release

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

A distinct age divide and gender gap underscore the political discourse in Texas. While many Texas voters (73%), regardless of demographic group, agree that November's midterm elections are very important, those 45 years of age or older and men are more likely to support a Congress controlled by Republicans and the Republican candidate on the generic ballot. Younger voters and women are more likely to align with the Democrats.

By seven points, registered voters in Texas prefer a Congress controlled by Republicans (47%) to one that has the Democrats in power (40%). While a majority of Texans 45 years of age and older (53%) want the Republicans in control a plurality of younger voters (46%) prefer Democratic control. Also of note, a majority of men (53%) would like the GOP to stay in control of Congress while a plurality of women (47%) want the Democrats in charge.

When it comes to the generic ballot question, Texas voters overall divide about whether they plan to support the Republican in their district (46%) or the Democrat (43%). Among those 45 and older, a majority (51%) back the Republican candidate. 50% of voters under the age of 45 support the Democrat. A 30-point gender gap exists on this question. Men (53%) are more likely to support the Republican in their district. Women (50%) are more likely to support the Democrat.

"At this point, a national blue wave would not include Texas," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Unlike many other states where more Democrats than Republicans view the midterm elections as very important, Texas Republicans

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are just as energized about the mids as Democrats. Also, Texas is not a state where President Trump's approval rating is upside down among voters.”

While Texas voters divide on the generic ballot question, nearly half the electorate (49%) says their vote will send a message that more Democrats are needed to be a check and balance on President Donald Trump's power. 42% report their vote will signal more Republicans are needed to help Trump pass his agenda. Again, majorities of those under 45 years old (56%) and women (56%) plan to send a message that more Democrats are needed to balance the Executive Branch. Voters over 45 divide. 48% report more members of the GOP are needed to push through President Trump's agenda, and 45% say more Democrats are needed to check Trump's power. Nearly half of men (49%) say their vote will signify that more Republicans are required to help advance the Trump agenda.

Lone Star state residents divide about President Trump's job performance. 43% approve including 30% who strongly approve, and 46% disapprove including 36% who strongly disapprove. Among registered voters though, the job the president is doing is viewed positively by more Texans (47%) than negatively (45%). 51% of Texans have an unfavorable opinion of Trump. 40% have a favorable one.

In the contest for U.S. Senate in Texas, Republican incumbent Ted Cruz (49%) edges his Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke (45%) among registered voters statewide including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Six percent are undecided.

64% of voters with a candidate preference for U.S. Senate say they strongly support their choice of candidate. 65% of Cruz's backers and 63% of O'Rourke's supporters express a strong level of commitment to their candidate.

A plurality of Texans (45%) perceive Cruz favorably. 39% have an unfavorable view of him, and 17% have either never heard of him or are unsure how to rate him. O'Rourke has low name recognition in the state. A plurality of residents (44%) report they have either never heard of O'Rourke or are unsure how to rate him. 36% have a favorable view of him while 21% have a negative opinion of O'Rourke.

In the gubernatorial contest, Republican incumbent Greg Abbott (56%) has a 19-point lead over his Democratic challenger Lupe Valdez (37%) among registered voters in Texas including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Six percent are undecided. 64% of voters with a candidate preference in the governor's race say they strongly support their choice of candidate. 71% of Abbott's supporters, compared with 53% of Valdez's backers, report a firm commitment to their candidate selection.

Governor Abbott is well liked in Texas. 53% of Texans have a favorable view of him, 30% have

an unfavorable one, and 18% have either never heard of Abbott or are unsure how to rate him. Valdez is not well known in Texas. Half of residents (50%) have either never heard of Valdez or are unsure how to rate her. 28% think favorably of Valdez and 22% have a negative view of her.

“History is on the side of Republican candidates for U.S. Senate and governor,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “It’s been roughly three decades since a Democrat has been successful in contests for these offices in Texas. Yet O’Rourke is on the radar screen for many Texans.”

The number one voting issue among Texas voters is jobs and the economy (22%) closely followed by health care (20%) and immigration (18%). Federal taxes and spending (8%), foreign policy and terrorism (7%), abortion (6%), and guns (6%) each receives single digit support. Jobs and the economy is the number one issue for Republicans (27%) and independents (26%) while more than one in three Democrats (35%) cite health care as their top concern.

When asked the second most important factor in deciding their vote 19% of voters who expressed a first choice mention immigration, 18% note jobs and the economy, 17% say federal taxes and spending, 15% cite health care, 13% mention foreign policy and terrorism, and 11% say guns. Seven percent report abortion is the second most important factor in determining their vote.

41% of Texans think raising tariffs and barriers to imports from other countries will do more to raise the costs of consumer goods and hurt the U.S. economy. 30% believe it will protect American jobs and help the U.S. economy, and 16% report it will not impact the U.S. economy.