



To: Interested parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: February 18, 2020
Re: New Survey Shows Gun Violence Prevention Key to Winning Texas

For years, pundits have cautioned that gun violence prevention measures are a non-starter in Texas. However, a recent poll of Texas voters conducted by Global Strategy Group and Everytown for Gun Safety demonstrates that Texans support stronger gun laws and are ready to vote on this issue come 2020. Key findings from the poll include:

Texans support gun violence prevention

Texas voters – a majority of whom are gun owners – agree we must pass stronger gun laws. In recent years, voters across party lines have increasingly demanded common-sense solutions to reduce gun violence. And even in this traditionally conservative state (25% liberal/44% conservative), where Republicans enjoy a double-digit party identification advantage (39% Democrat/50% Republican) and a majority of voters (52%) own a gun, voters:

- support stronger gun laws by a 5:1 margin (51% stronger/9% less strong). And in battleground State House districts, voters support stronger gun laws by an even larger margin (54% stronger/10% less strong).
- broadly agree that it is possible to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and other dangerous people while also protecting the rights of gun owners (70% possible/30% not possible statewide).

Support for specific gun violence prevention policies is even higher. Critical swing groups all overwhelmingly want their elected officials to pass gun safety legislation. Further, majorities of independents, suburban women, Latino voters, and undecided voters *strongly* support preventing domestic abusers from owning guns, requiring background checks on all gun sales, and enacting red flag laws.

Total support (strong support) for...	Total	Independents	Latino	Suburban women	Gun owners	Undecided voters	Battleground districts
Blocking domestic abusers from owning guns	91 (71)	88 (66)	88 (74)	95 (79)	89 (65)	91 (70)	89 (71)
Requiring background checks on all gun sales	87 (68)	84 (61)	80 (60)	94 (78)	83 (58)	88 (67)	82 (71)
Enacting red flag laws, which give family or law enforcement a way to remove guns from someone who is exhibiting violent or unstable behavior	80 (55)	72 (54)	87 (75)	91 (63)	72 (45)	79 (51)	77 (58)

The politics of gun safety have shifted in the Lone Star State

The battle for the Texas State House runs directly through the suburbs. When asked to describe where they live, 67% of voters in battleground districts say they live in the suburbs, compared to 52% of Texans statewide. In total, 97% of voters in battleground districts say they live in suburban or urban areas.

% identify living in urban/suburban/rural area	Total	Battleground districts
Urban	26	30
Suburban	52	67
Rural	22	3

Gun safety is a key issue in 2020, and importantly, there is a significant enthusiasm gap on the side of gun violence prevention advocates. Over three-quarters of Texas voters (78% statewide; 86% of battleground voters) consider a candidate’s position on guns “very important” to their vote in 2020. There is also a significant enthusiasm gap on the side of gun safety supporters, with 84% of voters who support stronger gun laws viewing a candidate’s position on guns as “very important,” compared to 71% of Texans who want weaker gun laws — a 13-point difference.

The Gun Lobby is underwater. Texans have more unfavorable than favorable views of the Gun Lobby (39% unfavorable/35% favorable), and voters in battleground districts feel particularly negative about it (46% unfavorable/37% favorable). The Gun Lobby is especially underwater with Latino voters (43% unfavorable/26% favorable) and suburban women (40% unfavorable/26% favorable).

Gun Safety is essential to winning in key Texas 2020 elections

Opposition to background checks is a completely disqualifying position to most voters, especially swing constituencies. Sixty percent of voters, including a majority of Republican women (57%) and battleground voters (58%), would never vote for a candidate who doesn’t support background checks. This puts the issue on par with health care and national security in Texans’ minds as a determining factor in their vote. In fact, background checks are the TOP issue among suburban women by a nine-point margin and are tied as the top issue among Latino voters.

% who say “I agree with _____ and would never vote for a candidate with whom I disagreed on this position”	Total	Independents	Latino	Suburban women	Gun owners	Undecided voters	Battleground districts
Protecting America’s national security interests	63	48	55	59	67	63	63
Reducing health care costs	60	56	62	58	55	59	60
Requiring background checks on all gun sales	60	52	67	68	51	61	58
Creating new jobs	55	46	67	48	52	54	52
Protecting borders from illegal immigration	53	42	53	41	59	51	51
Reducing taxes	52	43	64	44	52	52	40
Investing in our education system	48	41	59	52	42	46	52
Protecting children at the border	46	37	59	49	35	43	47
Lowering our national debt and budget deficit	46	41	53	37	46	47	38
Making the criminal justice system fairer	46	44	56	51	38	47	46
Taking money out of politics	44	44	51	40	39	40	32
Protecting the environment	42	39	55	46	31	40	42
Protecting access to abortion	39	36	45	48	30	38	42

Gun violence prevention will play a pivotal role in key 2020 Texas elections

There is a clear window of opportunity to make sure voters know who is on their side when it comes to stronger gun laws.

The race for the State House is wide open. Voters in battleground districts are split 35%-35% between replacing or re-electing their State House representative, with 30% of the electorate still completely undecided.

Battleground voters don’t know where their state representative stands on background checks on all gun sales. Voters in battleground districts (61%) are overwhelmingly unsure of how their State House representative feels about background checks on all gun sales. Even a majority of voters statewide do not know where their representatives stand on background checks (52%), including majorities of independents (52%) and Latino voters (54%).

A majority of Texans prefer a candidate running on gun safety. Fifty-nine percent of battleground voters prefer a candidate for State House representative who supports stronger gun laws over a candidate who opposes gun restrictions, as do nearly three-quarters of Latino voters (70%) and suburban women (74%).

Texas voters are overwhelmingly troubled by a candidate's opposition to common-sense gun safety policies, in the face of ongoing gun deaths in Texas. Seventy-eight percent of voters statewide, including 88% of suburban women, 79% of independents, and 75% of battleground district voters said that the below description raises doubts for them in terms of voting for an unnamed candidate:

3,100 people in Texas are shot and killed every year, but the candidate for elected office opposed even common-sense, bipartisan gun safety measures like background checks on all gun sales and a red flag law, which would give family members or law enforcement a way to temporarily remove guns from someone who is exhibiting violent or unstable behavior.

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 604 likely November 2020 voters in Texas from January 31st to February 11th, 2020, with an oversample of 280 voters from battleground districts. The survey has a confidence interval of +/- 4.0%.