

Harris County Poll 2020: Democratic Voter Message Research

Overview

A survey of 1,100 Harris County voters was conducted August 12-19, 2020 by Frederick Polls. The survey was commissioned by First Tuesday PAC in collaboration with the Lone Star Project. The purpose of the project was to measure the current electoral environment, to help determine effective messages to encourage Democratic voter turnout, and to convince Democratic voters to complete the entire ballot and support Democratic candidates in every contest. While Republican and independent voters were included in the survey to allow an accurate measure of the overall environment, particular attention was paid to the oversample of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Anglo women voters.

Political Climate, Head to Head Races

Based on a representative sample of likely voters countywide

- **President** Biden 48, Trump 38, Undecided/Refused 14
- **U.S. Senate** Hegar 45, Cornyn 40, Undecided/Refused 15
- **Generic Cong/Tx Legislature** Dem. 49, Repub. 40, Undecided/Refused 11

Strategic Note: While Joe Biden and Democrats generically hold significant leads, both are under 50 percent. It is important that Democrats who are less-than-certain to vote receive messaging and direction to achieve the turnout levels needed to assure judicial and other down ballot candidate success.

Trusted Messengers

As expected, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have high positive ratings among base and expanded base voters of all ethnicities. It is notable that County Judge Lina Hidalgo, along with Commissioners Rodney Ellis and Adrian Garcia are also trusted messengers who run as down ballot candidates.

Judge Lina Hidalgo is a particularly attractive messenger across the board – with 75% favorable vs 7% unfavorable among all voters, 88% favorable vs 2% unfavorable among Hard Base Hispanic voters, and 76% favorable vs 2% unfavorable among Expanded Base Hispanic voters.

Likelihood to Vote/Voting for Every Democrat

- 93% of base voters say they are certain to vote this year, with Anglo women and African Americans most certain.
- After messaging, 79% of base voters say they will go through the ballot and vote for every Democrat, again led by a higher percentage of Anglo women and African Americans.

Barriers to Voting

- By far, the most serious concern about voting is fear of exposure to the coronavirus. 39 % of African Americans and 40% of Hispanics say this is a very strong barrier to voting.

Voting by Mail and Voting Early to overcome barriers to voting

- 62% of base voters age 65 and older plan to vote by mail, ranging from 47% of African Americans to 76% of Anglo women
- 86% of base voters plan to take advantage of extended early voting days and hours.

The potential increase in Vote by Mail and Early Voting should be incorporated into voter contact timelines.

The Overarching Message Frame – Stop Trump and his followers in Texas

84% of base voters view Trump unfavorably and only 10% view him favorably. More than 90% of African Americans, Anglo women and Asian Americans view him unfavorably.

Framing the Motivational Issues

- Stop Trump and his followers in Texas
- Keep us safe, protect our lives (strongest reason to vote for every Democrat)
- Racial and economic justice
- This is our moment to make real progress

Top 5 Issues across all groups as *strongest* motivators to vote for every Democrat.

- Send message that when it comes to protecting our health and protecting our lives, listen to doctors and scientists, not self-serving politicians
- Stop Trump and his followers in Texas
- Get rid of racist bad cops who see the color of skin as a crime
- Electing a Texas State House majority will protect our civil and voting rights, health care, and our neighborhood schools
- This is our moment to make real progress

Top Issues by Group - *strongest* motivators to vote for every Democrat

African Americans

- This is our moment to gain power and make real progress
- Send message that when it comes to protecting our health and protecting our lives, listen to doctors and scientists, not self-serving politicians
- Get rid of racist bad cops who see the color of skin as a crime
- Electing a Texas State House majority will protect our civil and voting rights, health care, and our neighborhood schools

Hispanics

- Send message that when it comes to protecting our health and protecting our lives, listen to doctors and scientists, not self-serving politicians
- Support working people. Increase the minimum wage and provide paid sick leave
- Electing a Texas State House majority will protect our civil and voting rights, health care, and our neighborhood schools

Asian Americans

- Send message that when it comes to protecting our health and protecting our lives, listen to doctors and scientists, not self-serving politicians
- Stop Trump and his followers in Texas

Anglo women

- Send message that when it comes to protecting our health and protecting our lives, listen to doctors and scientists, not self-serving politicians
- Stop Trump and his followers in Texas
- Vote for Democrats in every race to protect kids, teachers, and health care workers from coronavirus