

TEXAS 2024

PRIMARY ELECTION

Democratic Candidates for the U.S. Senate



Hobby School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON





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The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey of Texas registered voters to assess their preferences and opinions regarding the 2024 election cycle. The survey was fielded between January 11 and January 24, 2024, in English and Spanish, with 1,500 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.5%. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education and are representative of the population of Texas registered voters.

This is the second of four reports. The first report examined vote intention in the March 2024 Texas Republican and Democratic presidential primaries, vote intention in the November 2024 presidential election in Texas, Texan opinions regarding the major candidates' fitness to serve due to their advanced age, and favorability evaluations of leading national political figures among Texans. This second report examines vote intention in the March 2024 Texas Democratic U.S. Senate primary election and vote intention in the November 2024 Texas U.S. Senate election. The third report explores factors influencing Texas House Republican primaries, ranging from the voting record of incumbent legislators to the endorsements of high-profile Republicans, with additional examination of the GOP Texas Court of Criminal Appeals primary elections. The fourth report analyzes public opinion regarding school choice/school vouchers and the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton.

Executive Summary

Among likely voters in the 2024 Texas Democratic Party U.S. Senate election, Congressman Colin Allred holds a 40% to 12% lead over Texas State Senator Roland Gutierrez, who is followed by Meri Gomez (4%), Mark Gonzalez (2%), Carl Sherman (1%), A. "Robert" Hassan (1%), Steven Keough (1%), Heli Rodriguez Prilliman (1%) and Thierry Tchenko (0%). 38% of likely voters remain undecided.

46% of likely Democratic primary voters report they definitely would consider voting for Allred, with 23% reporting they might consider voting for Allred.

21% of likely Democratic primary voters report they definitely would consider voting for Gutierrez, with 33% reporting they might consider voting for Gutierrez.

28% of likely Democratic primary voters do not know enough about Allred to have an opinion about voting for him.

43% of likely Democratic primary voters do not know enough about Gutierrez to have an opinion about voting for him.

63% of likely Democratic primary voters do not know enough about Texas State Representative Carl Sherman to have an opinion about voting for him.

70% of likely Democratic primary voters do not know enough about former Nueces County District Attorney Mark Gonzalez to have an opinion about voting for him.

In a hypothetical Democratic primary runoff election, Allred's vote intention (46%) is 20 percentage points greater than that of Gutierrez (26%), with 28% undecided.

In this hypothetical runoff, Allred enjoys a substantial lead over Gutierrez among white (57% to 16%) and Black (54% to 19%) likely voters, while Gutierrez leads among Latinos (41% to 25%).

In this hypothetical runoff, Allred enjoys a substantial lead over Gutierrez among Silent Generation/Baby Boomer (56% to 18%) and Gen-X (49% to 21%) likely voters, while Gutierrez leads among Millennials/Gen-Z (42% to 28%).

In a November 2024 U.S. Senate election where Allred is the Democratic candidate, Republican U.S. Senator Ted Cruz leads Allred by 9 points, 48% to 39%, with Libertarian Ted Brown with 4% and 9% undecided.

In a November 2024 U.S. Senate election where Gutierrez is the Democratic candidate, Republican U.S. Senator Ted Cruz leads Gutierrez by 10 points, 48% to 38%, with Libertarian Ted Brown with 4% and 10% undecided.

Cruz holds a substantial lead over Allred among men (52% to 36%) while the two are effectively tied among women (44% to 42%).

Cruz enjoys a 58% to 32% lead over Allred among white likely voters and a narrow 41% to 37% lead among Latino likely voters, while Allred leads Cruz among Black likely voters 75% to 10%.

Cruz possesses a 54% to 38% advantage over Allred among likely voters whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less, while the two are tied at 43% among likely voters with a four-year or post-graduate degree.

48% of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Ted Cruz and 49% an unfavorable opinion.

41% of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Beto O'Rourke and 53% an unfavorable opinion.

31% of likely voters have a favorable opinion of John Cornyn and 51% an unfavorable opinion.

30% of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Colin Allred and 19% an unfavorable opinion.

23% of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Roland Gutierrez and 14% an unfavorable opinion.

While only 3% and 6% of likely voters do not know enough about Cruz and O'Rourke to have an opinion, more than half do not know enough about Allred (51%), Gutierrez (63%), Gonzalez (76%) and Sherman (81%) to have an opinion of them.

Survey Population Demographics

Whites account for 55% of this survey population of Texas registered voters, Latinos 26%, Blacks 13%, and others 6% (3% of whom are Asian American). Women account for 53% of the population and men for 47%. Regarding generations, 36% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort, 26% to Generation X (Gen-X, 1965-1980), 26% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation and 12% to Generation Z (Gen-Z, 1997-2014). The highest educational attainment of 29% of the population is a high school degree or less, while 32% have either a two-year degree or have attended some college, and 39% have a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Republicans account for 46% of the population, Democrats for 40% and Independents for 14%.

The 2024 Democratic U.S. Senate Primary

Vote intention and other Democratic primary voter preferences were analyzed using two distinct populations, one of 534 cases (confidence interval of +/- 4.2%) and another of 372 cases (confidence interval of +/- 5.1%), which moving forward will be referred to respectively as the higher and lower turnout scenario populations. Most of the Democratic primary analysis will focus on the lower turnout population.

Figure 1 provides the vote intention among likely voters in the March 2024 Democratic U.S. Senate primary (using the lower turnout population). Leading the field is Dallas Congressman Colin Allred with a vote intention of 40%, followed at a considerable distance by San Antonio Texas State Senator Roland Gutierrez who has a vote intention of 12%. The remaining seven candidates have a vote intention ranging from 4% (Meri Gomez) to 0% (Thierry Tchenko), with almost two-fifths (38%) of Democratic primary voters still undecided a month before early voting begins on February 20. In the higher turnout scenario, Allred's vote intention drops to 30% and Gutierrez's to 10%, with the proportion who are undecided rising to 44%.

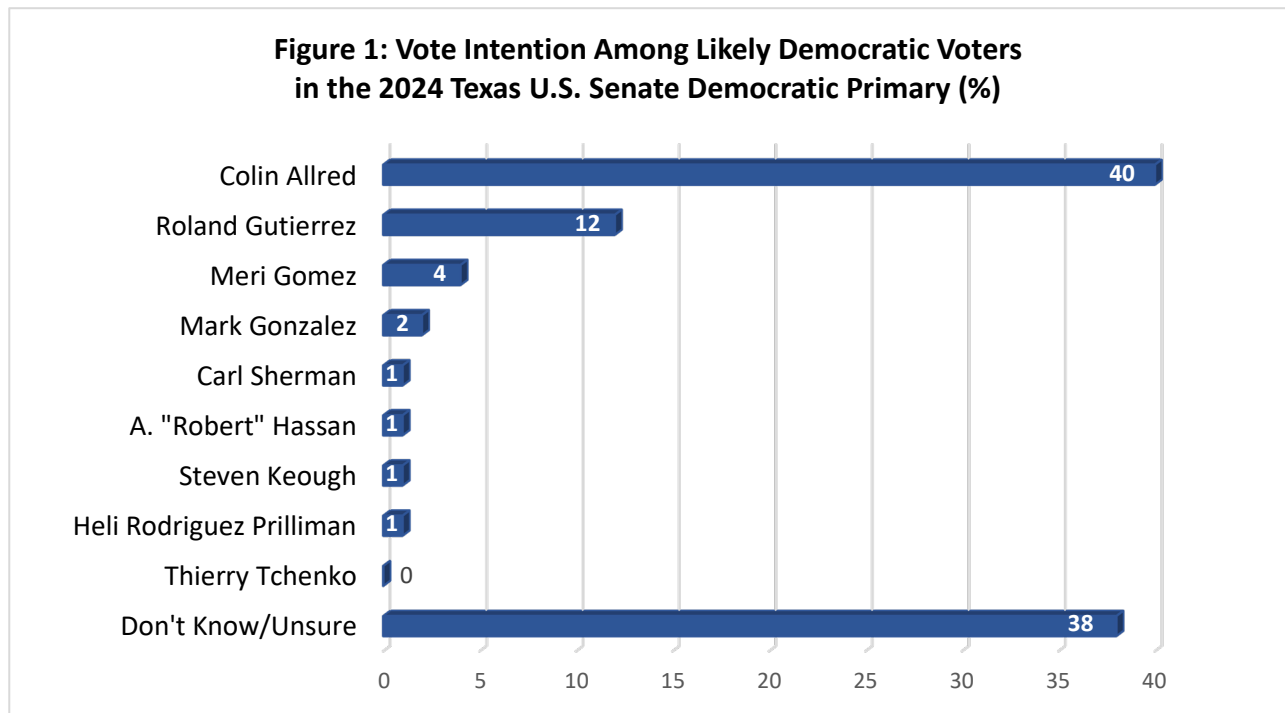
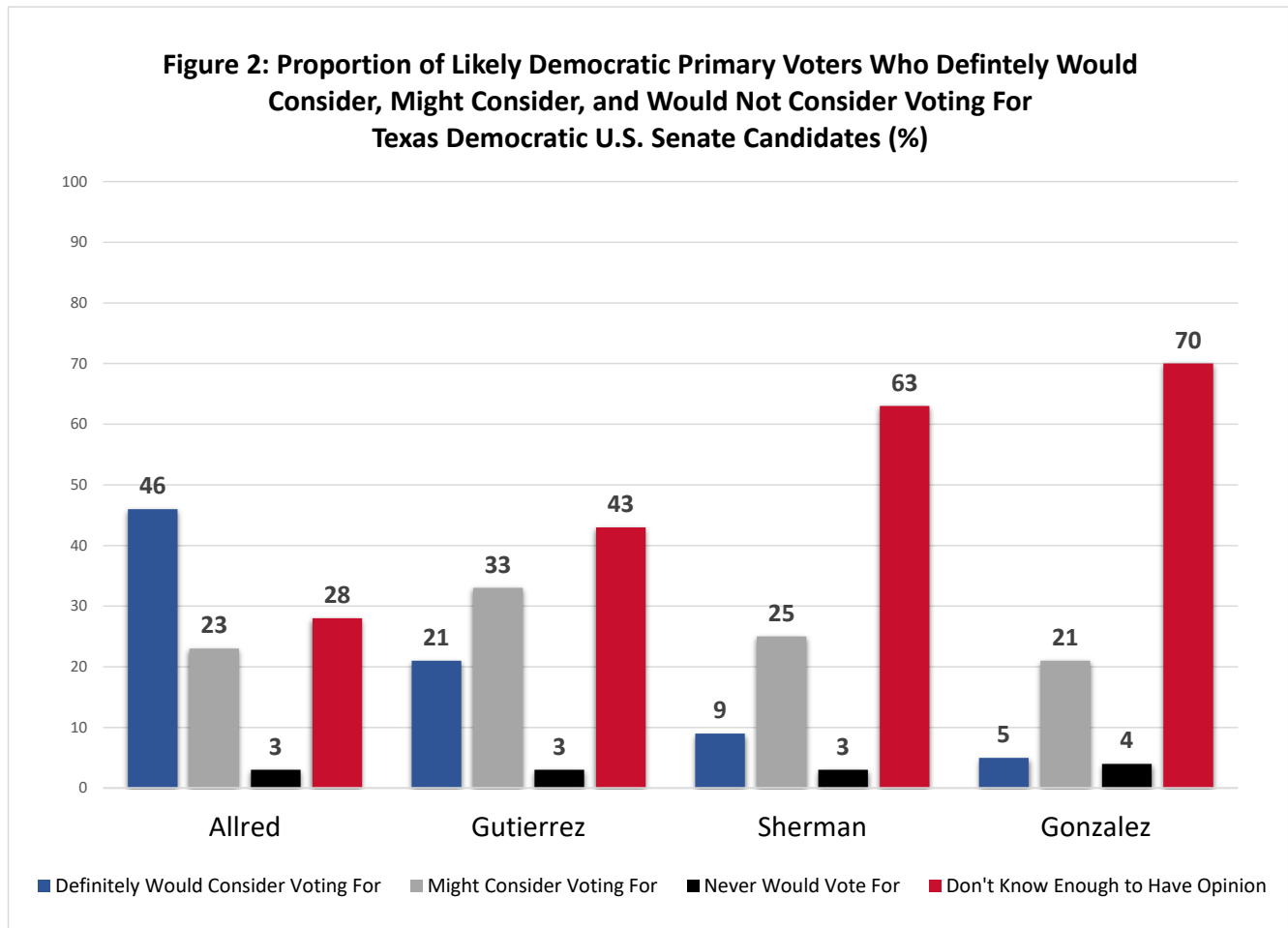


Figure 2 provides the proportion of likely Democratic primary voters (low turnout scenario) who indicated that (independent of who else is running) they definitely would consider voting for, might consider voting for, or never would vote for Allred and Gutierrez, along with Texas State Representative Carl Sherman and former Nueces County District Attorney Mark Gonzalez, in the Democratic primary election. The figure also provides the proportion of likely Democratic primary voters who indicated that they did not know enough about the candidate to be able to say if would consider voting for them or not. The numbers in Figure 2 do not vary notably if the population is shifted to the higher turnout population.



Almost half (46%) of likely Democratic primary voters indicate that they definitely would consider voting for Allred, with another 23% saying they might consider voting for him. Only 3% responded that they never would vote for Allred, while 28% did not know enough about Allred to have an opinion about voting for him.

Slightly more than one-fifth (21%) of likely Democratic primary voters indicate that they definitely would consider voting for Gutierrez, with another 33% saying they might consider voting for him. Only 3% responded that they would never vote for Gutierrez, while 43% did not know enough about Gutierrez to have an opinion about voting for him.

Sherman and Gonzalez are unknowns for a substantial majority of likely Texas Democratic primary voters, with 63% and 70%, respectively, not knowing enough about each to have an opinion about voting for them. The proportion indicating they definitely would consider voting for Sherman (9%) and Gonzalez (5%) is in the single digits, while 25% and 21%, respectively, might consider voting for the two. Only 3% and 4% said they never would vote for Sherman and Gonzalez.

Figure 3 provides the vote intention of likely Democratic primary voters (lower turnout population) in a hypothetical May runoff between Allred and Gutierrez, which would only take place if no candidate is able to surpass the 50% threshold needed to avoid a runoff on March 5. Allred’s vote intention is 46% while that of Gutierrez is 26%, with more than one-in-four (28%) likely primary voters undecided.

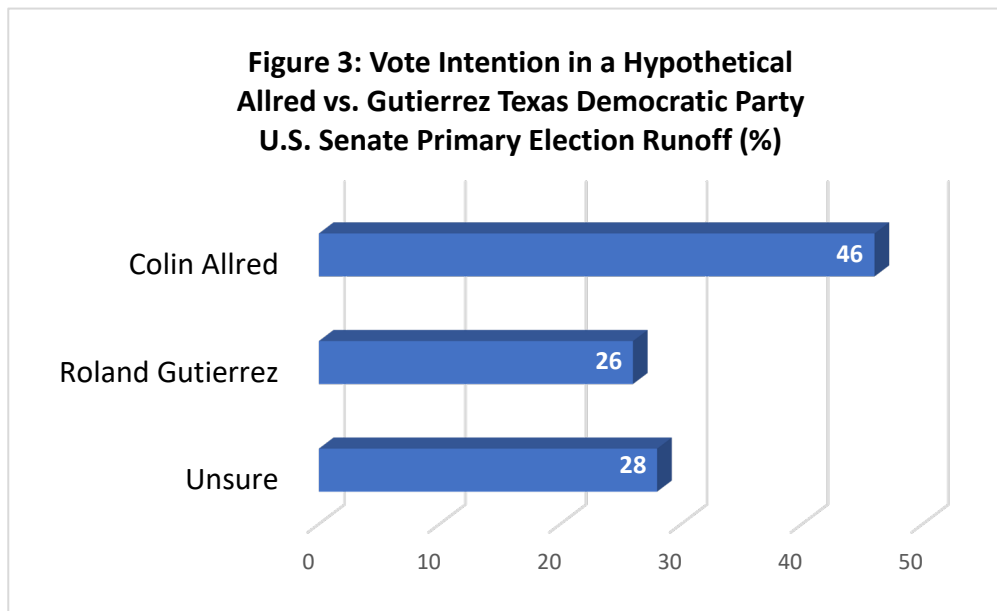


Table 1 provides the vote intention for Allred, Gutierrez and those who remain unsure about their vote choice across four socio-demographic group categories: gender, ethnicity/race, generation, and education.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Groups and Vote Intention in Possible Democratic U.S. Senate Primary Runoff (%)

Socio-Demographic	Sub-Group	Allred	Gutierrez	Unsure
Gender	Women	44	22	34
	Men	49	30	21
Ethnicity/Race	White	57	16	27
	Latino	25	41	34
	Black	54	19	27
Generation	Silent/Boomer	56	18	26
	Gen-X	49	21	30
	Millennial/Gen-Z	28	42	30
Education	High School or Less	35	37	28
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	41	26	33
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	56	19	25
Overall		46	26	28

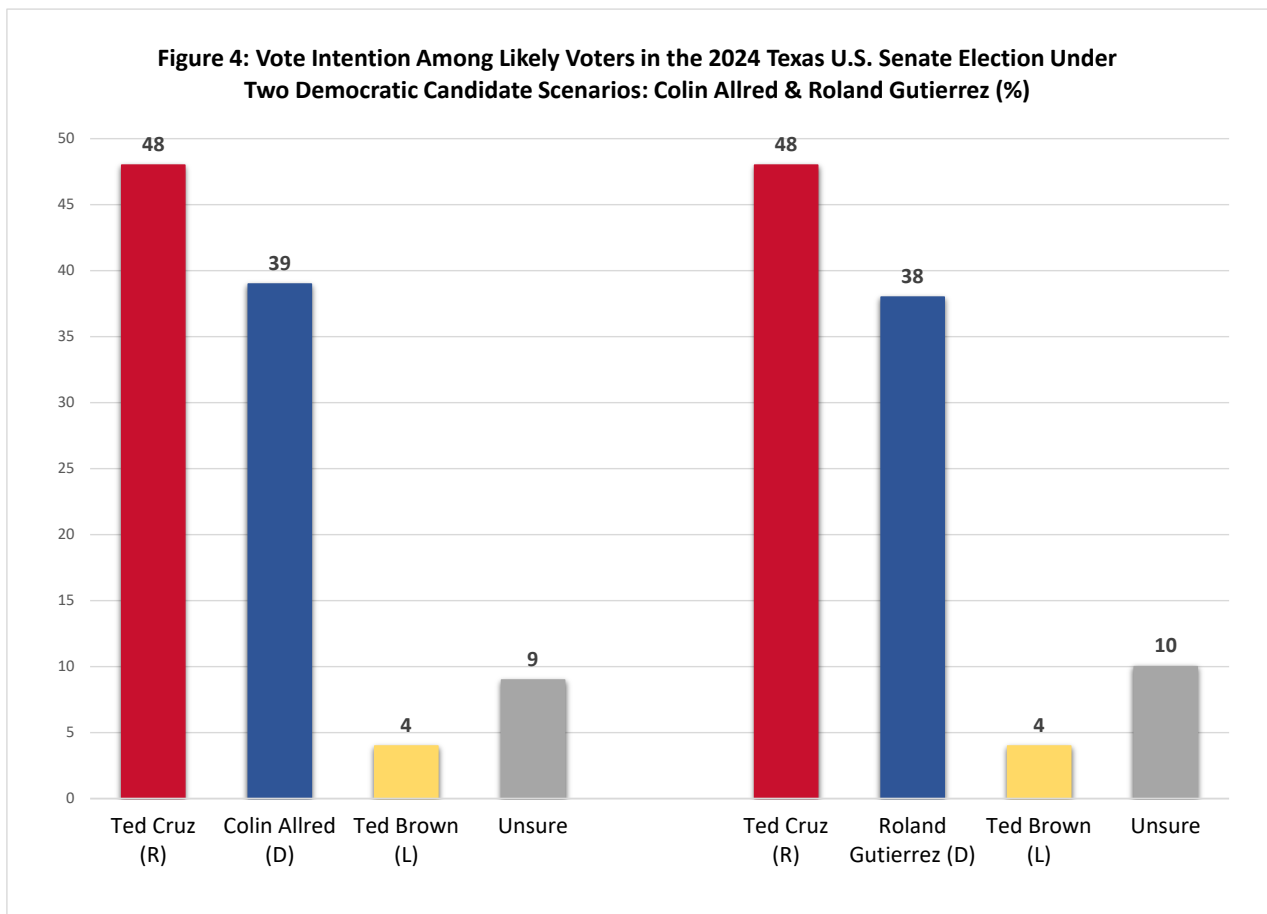
Allred enjoys a substantial advantage over Gutierrez among white (57% to 16%) and Black (54% to 19%) primary voters while Gutierrez enjoys a substantial advantage over Allred among Latino primary voters (41% to 25%). Of note, 34% of Latino likely voters remain undecided compared to 27% of white and Black likely voters.

Allred enjoys a substantial advantage over Gutierrez among members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (56% to 18%) and Gen-X (49% to 21%), while Gutierrez holds an advantage over Allred among members of the combined Millennial/Gen-Z cohort (42% to 28%).

Allred and Gutierrez are effectively tied among likely voters whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less (35% to 37%), while Allred holds a nearly three-to-one advantage over Gutierrez among likely voters whose highest level of educational attainment is a four-year or postgraduate degree (56% to 19%).

The 2024 Texas U.S. Senate Election

Figure 4 provides the vote intention among likely voters for the November 2024 Texas U.S. Senate election under two scenarios: one where Colin Allred is the Democratic nominee and the other where Roland Gutierrez is the Democratic nominee. The Republican and Libertarian candidates under both scenarios are U.S. Senator Ted Cruz and Ted Brown, respectively. No other U.S. Senate candidates are expected to be on the ballot in November.



In the first scenario, Cruz holds a 48% to 39% advantage over Allred, with 4% intending to vote for Brown and 9% undecided. In the second scenario, Cruz holds a 48% to 38% advantage over Gutierrez, with 4% intending to vote for Brown and 10% undecided.

Table 2 provides the vote intention for Cruz and Allred along with the unsure proportion across five socio-demographic group categories: gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, and partisan ID.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Groups and 2024 U.S. Senate Vote Intention: Cruz vs. Allred (%)

Socio-Demographic Group	Sub-Group	Cruz	Allred	Unsure
Gender	Women	44	42	10
	Men	52	36	9
Ethnicity/Race	White	58	32	8
	Latino	41	37	14
	Black	10	75	10
Generation	Silent/Boomer	54	39	5
	Gen-X	47	42	7
	Millennial	41	33	20
	Gen-Z	35	38	16
Education	High School or Less	56	30	11
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	47	40	8
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	43	43	10
Partisan ID	Democratic	1	89	10
	Independent	46	19	23
	Republican	85	4	6
Overall		48	39	9

Cruz holds a substantial 16 percentage point lead in vote intention over Allred among men, 52% to 36%, while the two are effectively deadlocked among women, 44% to 42%.

Cruz enjoys an almost two-to-one lead over Allred among white likely voters, 58% to 32%, while Allred holds a more than seven-to-one lead over Cruz among Black likely voters, 75% to 10%. Cruz and Allred enjoy comparable support among Latino likely voters, with Cruz possessing a narrow lead over Allred (41% to 37%), with 14% undecided.

In regard to generational support, the largest generational gap is among members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort, where Cruz leads Allred 54% to 39%. Cruz holds more modest advantages over Allred among Gen-X (47% to 42%) and Millennials (41% to 33%). Allred holds a modest advantage over Cruz among Gen-Z (38% to 35%). Of note, 20% of Millennials and 16% of Gen-Z remain undecided in this race.

Likely voters whose highest level of educational achievement is a high school degree or less favor Cruz over Allred 56% to 30%, while the two are more evenly matched among those whose highest level of

educational attainment is a two-year degree or some college (47% to 40%) and a four-year degree or post-graduate degree (43% to 43%).

Nine out of ten Democrats (89%) and Republicans (85%) intend to vote for Allred and Cruz, respectively, compared to 1% and 4% who intend to cross-over. Almost half (46%) of Independents intend to vote for Cruz and almost one-fifth (19%) for Allred, with 23% undecided (compared to 6% of Republicans and 10% of Democrats who are undecided).

Table 3 provides the vote intention for Cruz and Gutierrez along with the unsure proportion across five socio-demographic group categories: gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, and partisan ID.

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Groups and 2024 U.S. Senate Vote Intention: Cruz vs. Gutierrez (%)

Socio-Demographic Group	Sub-Group	Cruz	Gutierrez	Unsure
Gender	Women	44	40	11
	Men	51	37	9
Ethnicity/Race	White	58	31	9
	Latino	40	40	13
	Black	10	72	13
Generation	Silent/Boomer	54	38	6
	Gen-X	47	40	9
	Millennial	41	35	20
	Gen-Z	35	44	11
Education	High School or Less	56	29	12
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	47	41	7
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	42	43	12
Partisan ID	Democratic	2	88	9
	Independent	43	21	23
	Republican	85	3	8
Overall		48	38	10

Cruz holds a substantial 14 percentage point lead in vote intention over Gutierrez among men, 51% to 37%, while the two are effectively even among women, 44% to 40%.

Cruz enjoys an almost two-to-one lead over Gutierrez among white likely voters, 58% to 31%, while Gutierrez holds a more than seven-to-one lead over Cruz among Black likely voters, 72% to 10%. Cruz and Gutierrez have the same vote intention (40%) among Latino likely voters.

In regard to generational support, the largest generational gap is among members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort, where Cruz leads Gutierrez 54% to 38%. Cruz holds more modest advantages over Gutierrez among Gen-X (47% to 40%) and among Millennials (41% to 35%). Gutierrez enjoys a significant advantage over Cruz among Gen-Z (44% to 35%). Of note, 20% of Millennials remain undecided in this race.

Likely voters whose highest level of educational achievement is a high school degree or less favor Cruz over Gutierrez 56% to 29%, while the two are more evenly matched among those whose highest level of educational attainment is a two-year degree or some college (47% to 41%) and a four-year degree or post-graduate degree (42% to 43%).

Nine out of ten Democrats (88%) and Republicans (85%) intend to vote for Gutierrez and Cruz, respectively, compared to 2% and 3% who intend to cross-over. More than two-fifths (43%) of Independents intend to vote for Cruz and one-fifth (21%) for Gutierrez, with 23% undecided (compared to 8% of Republicans and 9% of Democrats who are undecided).

Likely Voter Evaluations of Current and Recent Texas U.S. Senate Candidates

Table 4 provides the proportion of likely Texas voters with a favorable (very and somewhat) and unfavorable (very and somewhat) opinion of seven recent Texas U.S. Senate candidates as well as the proportion of likely voters who don't know enough about the political figure to have an opinion about them. Two of the seven candidates are Republican U.S. Senator John Cornyn (who was most recently re-elected in 2020) and Republican U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (who is running for re-election this year). Four of the five remaining political figures are competing in the Texas Democratic U.S. Senate primary election this year: Congressman Colin Allred, former Nueces County District Attorney Mark Gonzalez, Texas State Senator Roland Gutierrez, and Texas State Representative Carl Sherman. The final political figure is former Congressman Beto O'Rourke, who was the Texas Democratic Party's U.S. Senate candidate in 2018 as well as the party's gubernatorial candidate in 2022.

Table 4. Favorable and Unfavorable Evaluations of Current and Recent U.S. Senate Candidates (%)

Candidates	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know
Ted Cruz	48 (30)	49 (43)	3
Beto O'Rourke	41 (26)	53 (46)	6
John Cornyn	31 (9)	51 (31)	18
Colin Allred	30 (15)	19 (12)	51
Roland Gutierrez	23 (9)	14 (7)	63
Mark Gonzalez	12 (4)	12 (6)	76
Carl Sherman	8 (3)	11 (5)	81

Strongly Favorable and Strongly Unfavorable in parentheses.

More than half of likely voters do not know enough about the four candidates who are competing in the March 2024 Democratic Party primary election to have an opinion about them. The proportions who don't know enough about the candidate to have an opinion range from lows of 51% (Allred) and 63% (Gutierrez) to highs of 76% (Gonzalez) and 81% (Sherman).

In contrast, more than nine out of ten Texas likely voters have an opinion about Cruz and O'Rourke, with 48% and 41% having a favorable opinion and 49% and 53% an unfavorable opinion respectively.

The political figures with the highest net favorability scores (percentage favorable minus percentage unfavorable) are Allred (+11%), Gutierrez (+9%) and Gonzalez (0%). The political figures with the lowest net favorability scores are Cornyn (-20%), O'Rourke (-12%), Sherman (-3%) and Cruz (-1).

Report Authors

Renée Cross, Senior Executive Director & Researcher, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Mark P. Jones, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Fellow in Political Science, Rice University;
Senior Research Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Research Team

Maria P. Perez Argüelles, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Savannah Sipole, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Agustín Vallejo, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs