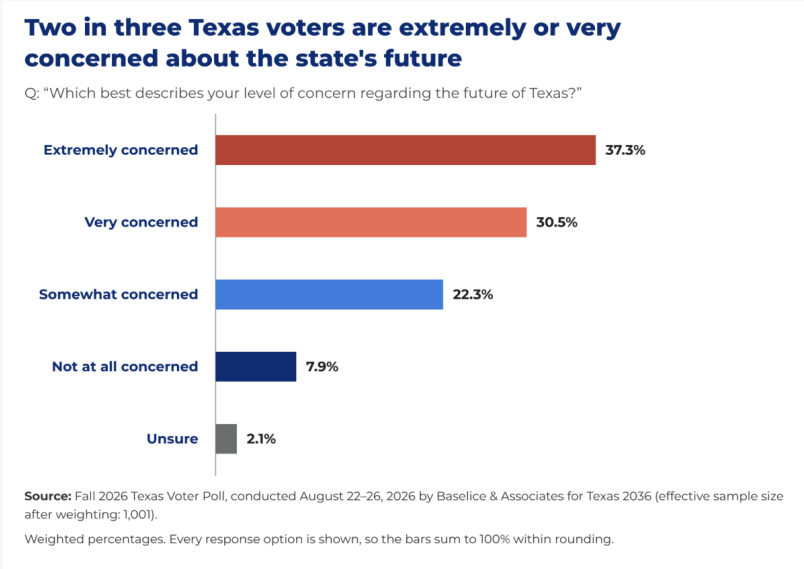
Texas Voters Confident in State's Economic Future as Employment Growth Varies Across the State

New Texas 2036 poll finds voters expect Texas' economy to outperform the nation's, while federal labor data shows economic growth varies widely across the state



Q: "Which best describes your level of concern regarding the future of Texas?"

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Texas voters are concerned about the future, but they remain bullish on the Texas economy. A new Texas 2036 statewide voter poll finds two-thirds (68%) of Texas voters are extremely or very concerned about the future of the state. Yet by nearly three to one, voters say Texas will have the stronger economy over the next four years, with 57% choosing Texas and just 21% choosing the rest of the United States.

That confidence is somewhat more qualified when voters assess their own economic experience. 52% say Texas' economic growth has benefited them personally, compared with 33% who say it has not. Looking ahead, 59% are confident there will be good opportunities for people like them to use their skills, earn a living and get ahead, compared with 34% who are not confident.

"The Texas economy continues to do something remarkable: add jobs and workers while much of the country is growing more slowly," said Tracy Ayrhart, Ph.D., vice president of data and analytics at Texas 2036. "But strong statewide numbers tells only part of the story. Some communities are adding people and jobs rapidly, while others are seeing employment stall or decline."

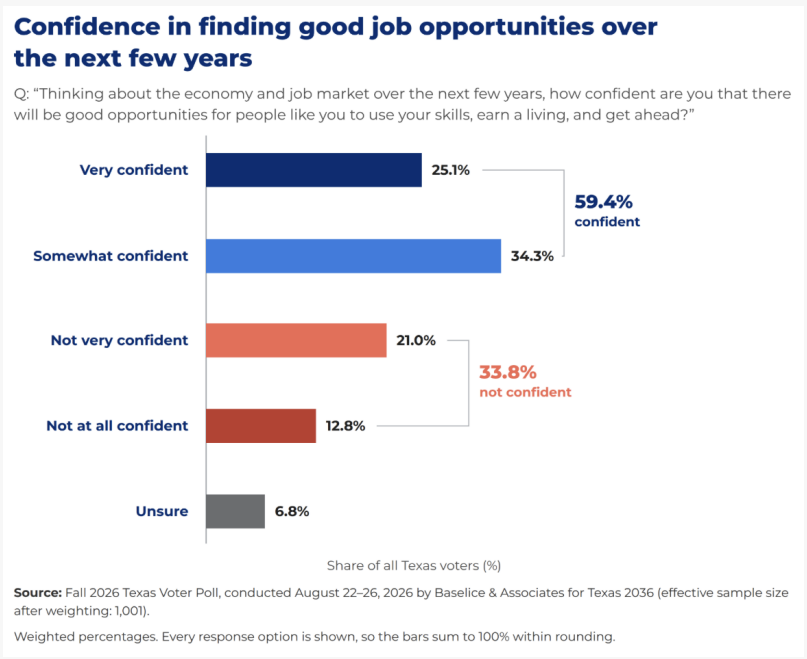
Texas 2036's latest analysis of federal labor data shows Texas continuing to outperform the nation in job creation. But that growth is not reaching every part of the state equally.

More than half of Texans, 52%, lived in a county where employment either declined or remained essentially flat over the previous year.

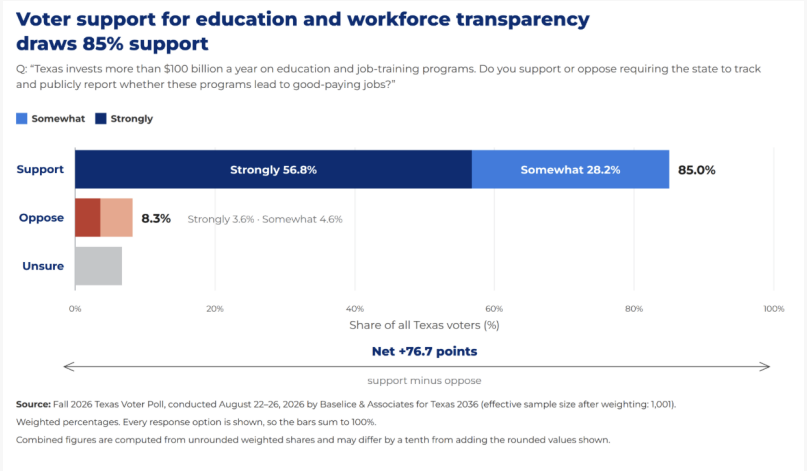
The contrasts are significant. Kaufman County, on the southeastern edge of Dallas-Fort Worth, saw employment grow 41% over five years amid extraordinary population growth. Over the same period, Harrison County in East Texas lost 5% of its employment and Hutchinson County in the Panhandle remained essentially flat. Calhoun County on the Gulf Coast experienced a sharp employment decline over the past year.

The findings help explain an apparent contradiction in the poll: Texans can be optimistic about the state's economic future while still concerned about whether its growth and opportunity will reach their own communities.

"Texas enters the years ahead with enormous economic strengths, but statewide growth does not guarantee the same opportunities everywhere," said John Hryhorchuk, senior vice president of policy and advocacy at Texas 2036. "The challenge now is to connect more Texans, in more parts of the state, with the skills and opportunities to help families thrive in our growing economy."



Q: "Thinking about the economy and job market over the next few years, how confident are you that there will be good opportunities for people like you to use your skills, earn a living, and get ahead?"



Q: "Texas invests more than $100 billion a year on education and job-training programs. Do you support or oppose requiring the state to track and publicly report whether these programs lead to good-paying jobs?"

The poll also finds broad support for two approaches aimed at strengthening the connection between education and workforce outcomes.

Nearly eight in 10 voters, 79%, say Texas should change its approach to senior year of high school, adding more focus and rigor to better prepare students for college and careers. And 85% support requiring the state to track and publicly report whether the more than $100 billion Texas

invests annually in education and job-training programs leads to good-paying jobs.

Texas has already begun moving in the direction of connecting higher education funding and programs with workforce outcomes.

In 2023, state leaders transformed the way Texas funds community colleges through House Bill 8, shifting funding toward student outcomes, including credentials of value, successful transfers and dual-credit completion.

Lawmakers strengthened those reforms in 2025 through Senate Bill 1786, adding regional labor-demand analysis and more detailed employer wage reporting, including information on occupation, industry and county of employment, intended to help colleges and school districts better align programs with workforce needs in their local communities.

Early results are encouraging. A recent Texas 2036 analysis found a 22.3% increase in credentials awarded during the first two years of the new funding system, including a 26% increase in credentials in high-demand fields.

“Voters are telling us they want education and workforce investments judged by whether they lead to good jobs,” Hryhorchuk said. “While Texas has moved toward a more outcomes-focused system, the next step is continuing to measure whether those investments are creating stronger pathways into the workforce and economically prosperous families."

The 10th Texas Voter Poll was conducted Aug. 22–26, 2026, by Baselice & Associates for Texas 2036, consisting of 1,369 completed interviews with registered Texas voters. Results were weighted to represent registered Texas voters statewide with an effective sample size after weighting of 1,001. Margin of sampling error is ±3.1 percentage points.

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