

## Texas Senate Tip Sheet: What Will It Take For Republicans To Hold?

With Ken Paxton's victory in the Texas GOP runoff, this week's Discussion Points looks at the vote history in the state and what it will take for Republicans to hold this Senate seat. The chart below shows exit poll data from past elections going back to 2016.

Texas Vote History (source: Edison exit polls)	2016 Presidential Trump-HRC	2018 Governor Abbott-Valdez	2018 Senate Cruz-O'Rourke	2020 Presidential Trump-Biden	2020 Senate Cornyn-Hegar	2022 Governor Abbott-O'Rourke	2024 Presidential Trump-Harris	2024 Senate Cruz-Allred
<b>Party ID</b>								
Dem	29	34	34	30	30	30	26	26
GOP	38	39	38	41	41	41	38	38
Indep	33	27	27	29	29	29	36	36
<b>Ideology</b>								
Lib	20	22	22	17	17	22	18	18
Mod	36	35	35	38	38	36	38	38
Cons	44	43	43	45	45	42	44	44
<b>Vote among key groups</b>								
Actual Margin	+9.0	+13.3	+2.6	+5.6	+9.6	+10.9	+13.7	+8.5
Indep R-D	+14	+15	-3	-6	-1	-2	+1	-5
GOP Hispanic Vote	34%	42%	35%	41%	42%	40%	55%	50%
Women R-D	-2	+3	-8	-3	+1	+3	+1	-3

### Vote History

- Republicans maintain a party ID advantage over Democrats (+12) but with independents being a close second (36%) to Republicans (38%). Independents increased from 29% in 2020 to 36% in 2024.
- In 2024, independents (36%) outnumbered Democrats (26%), reflecting the national trend of Democrats being a third party. Republicans lead on party ID, but the 2024 percentage of Republicans (38%) is lower than in 2020/2 (41%), with independents now a very close second.
- While party ID in the state has evolved, ideological makeup has remained generally consistent. Conservatives are the largest group (44%) with moderates being over a third of the electorate (38%).

### Key Voter Groups

- **Independents:** For Republicans to hold this Senate seat, there must be a majority coalition going beyond the Republican base. Among independents, the vote has been generally split, with the best recent GOP performances being almost a decade ago: 2018 (+15 Abbott) and 2016 (+14 Trump). Since then, there have been close margins in single digits.
- **Hispanics:** Not surprisingly, Hispanics comprise over 20% of the state's electorate. Over time, Republican candidates have won increasing percentages of the Hispanic vote, with Trump winning over half (55%) of TX Hispanics in 2024 and Cruz winning 50%. In his previous election in 2020, Cornyn won 42% of Hispanics in TX, outperforming Republicans nationally (32% Trump, 36% at the House level). Ted Cruz did the same in 2024 winning 50% of TX Hispanics, outperforming national Republicans (46% Trump, 45% at the House level). A Republican Senate hold in the state means Paxton must win similar shares of the Hispanic vote.
- **Women:** Republican candidates have been able to break even or keep the vote margin among women to low single digits, with the exception of Cruz who lost women by 8 in 2018 and had the closest winning margin among the eight races listed above. For Republicans to hold this seat, Paxton must have a close vote margin among women voters, as a large gender gap could be problematic.

Have a good weekend.

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