TEXAS 2024
PRIMARY ELECTION

School Vouchers & the
Attorney General Impeachment Trial

Hobby School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Texas Primary Election 2024
School Vouchers & the Attorney General Impeachment Trial

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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 fourth 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. The second report examined 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 explored 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. This fourth report analyzes the opinions of Republican and Democratic primary voters regarding the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and school choice/school voucher legislation.

Executive Summary

56% of Republican primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton would have voted to acquit Paxton if they had served as jurors at his trial.

26% of Republican primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton would have voted to convict Paxton if they had served as jurors at his trial.

18% of Republican primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton are unsure how they would have voted if they had served as jurors at his trial.

14% of Democratic primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton would have voted to acquit Paxton if they had served as jurors at his trial.

77% of Democratic primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton would have voted to convict Paxton if they had served as jurors at his trial.

9% of Democratic primary voters familiar with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton are unsure how they would have voted if they had served as jurors at his trial.

Republican primary voters with a four-year or postgraduate degree (31%) are significantly more likely to vote to convict Paxton than are those with a high school degree or less (19%).

White Democratic primary voters (84%) are significantly more likely to vote to convict Paxton than are Black Democratic primary voters (67%).

53% of Republican primary voters disagree with the 2023 majority decision in the Texas House to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation.

26% of Republican primary voters agree with the 2023 majority decision in the Texas House to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation.

27% of Democratic primary voters disagree with the 2023 majority decision in the Texas House to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation.

59% of Democratic primary voters agree with the 2023 majority decision in the Texas House to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation.

Male Republican primary voters (60%) are significantly more likely to disagree with the decision to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation than are women (47%).

Male Democratic primary voters (70%) are significantly more likely to agree with the decision to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation than are women (52%).

White Democratic primary voters (75%) are significantly more likely to agree with the decision to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation than are Latino (49%) and Black (48%) Democratic primary voters.

Among the 53% of Republican primary voters who disagree with the blocking of school choice/voucher legislation during the 2023 legislative session, 58% believe that Republican legislators should make passing school choice/voucher legislation either a top (12%) or high (46%) priority during the 2025 legislative session of the Texas Legislature.

Among the 59% of Democratic primary voters who agree with the blocking of school choice/voucher legislation during the 2023 legislative session, 68% believe that Democratic legislators should make blocking school choice/voucher legislation either a top (17%) or high (51%) priority during the 2025 legislative session of the Texas Legislature.

Among the 26% of Republican primary voters who agree with the blocking of school choice/voucher legislation during the 2023 legislative session, 50% believe that Republican legislators should make blocking school choice/voucher legislation either a top (17%) or high (33%) priority during the 2025 legislative session of the Texas Legislature.

Among the 27% of Democratic primary voters who disagree with the blocking of school choice/voucher legislation during the 2023 legislative session, 53% believe that Democratic legislators should make passing school choice/voucher legislation either a top (9%) or high (44%) priority during the 2025 legislative session of the Texas Legislature.

Survey Population Demographics

In the full survey of Texas registered voters, whites account for 55% of the survey population, 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%.

Republican primary likely voter preferences and opinions in this report were analyzed using two distinct populations, one of 608 cases (confidence interval of +/- 3.8%) and another of 508 cases (confidence interval of +/- 4.4%), which moving forward will be referred to, respectively, as the higher and lower turnout scenario populations.

In the Republican primary survey (using the higher turnout scenario), whites account for 69% of the population, Latinos 23%, Blacks 4%, and others 4% (2% of whom are Asian American). Women account for 51% of the population and men for 49%. Regarding generations, 40% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort, 25% to Generation X (Gen-X, 1965-1980), 26% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation, and 9% to Generation Z (Gen-Z, 1997-2014). The highest educational attainment of 30% of the population is a high school degree or less, while 30% have either a two-year degree or have attended some college, and 40% have a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Republicans account for 85% of the population, Independents for 10% and Democrats for 5%.

Two other socio-demographic categories examined in this report for Republican primary voters are related to religion and region. Almost one-half (48%) of the likely Republican primary voters are born-again Christians and 52% are not. Nearly two-fifths (39%) of the Republican primary voters live in the state's large urban counties (Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, Travis), 25% live in the state's larger suburban counties adjacent to the large urban counties (e.g., Collin, Denton, Fort Bend, Hays, Montgomery, Williamson), 12% live in regional hub counties (e.g., Cameron, Jefferson, Lubbock, McClennan, Nueces, Smith), and 24% live in rural and semi-rural counties.
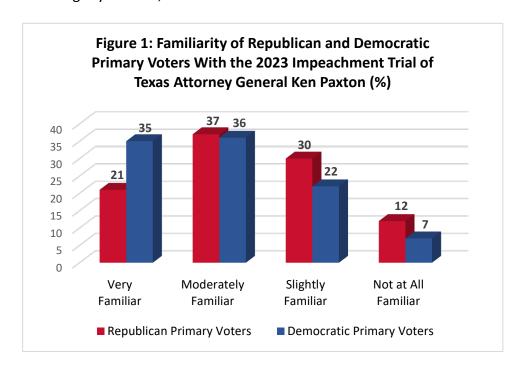
Vote intention and other Democratic primary voter preferences were analyzed using two distinct populations, one of 534 cases (confidence interval of +/- 4.2%) and another of 372 (confidence interval of +/- 5.1%), which moving forward will be referred to respectively as the higher and lower turnout scenario populations.

In the Democratic primary survey (using the higher turnout scenario), whites account for 42% of the population, Latinos 26%, Blacks 25%, and others 7% (4% of whom are Asian American). Women account for 59% of the population and men for 41%. Regarding generations, 33% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort, 27% to Generation X (Gen-X, 1965-1980), 27% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation, and 13% to Generation Z (Gen-Z, 1997-2014). The highest educational attainment of 26% of the population is a high school degree or less, while 33% have either a two-year degree or have attended some college, and 41% have a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Democrats account for 93% of the population, Independents for 5% and Republicans for 2%.

One additional socio-demographic category examined in this report for Democratic primary voters is related to region. Three-fifths (60%) of the Democratic primary voters live in the state's large urban counties (Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, Travis), 17% live in the state's larger suburban counties adjacent to the large urban counties (e.g., Collin, Denton, Fort Bend, Hays, Montgomery, Williamson), 12% live in regional hub counties (e.g., Cameron, Jefferson, Lubbock, McClennan, Nueces, Smith), and 11% live in rural and semi-rural counties.

The Impeachment Trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton

The survey respondents were asked how familiar they were with the 2023 impeachment trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. Figure 1 reveals that 21% of Republican primary voters and 35% of Democratic primary voters were very familiar with the trial, 37% and 36% were moderately familiar, 30% and 22% were slightly familiar, and 12% and 7% were not at all familiar.

Figure 1: Familiarity of Republican and Democratic Primary Voters With the 2023 Impeachment Trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (%)
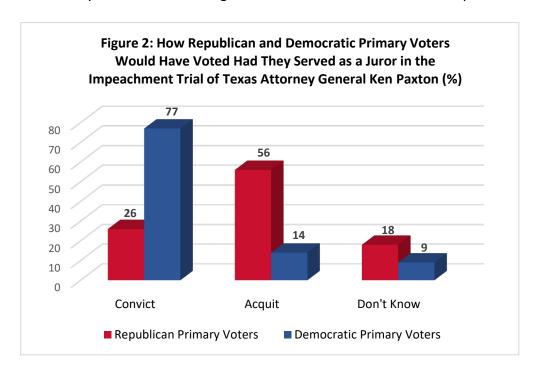
Respondents who were very, moderately or slightly familiar with the Paxton impeachment trial were then presented with the following question and response options:

In September of 2023, the Texas Senate acquitted Attorney General Ken Paxton on all 20 Articles of Impeachment that had been approved by the Texas House in May. If you had been a senator and served as a juror for Paxton's impeachment trial, would you have?

- Voted to acquit Paxton on all 20 Articles of Impeachment
- Voted to convict Paxton on one or more of the 20 Articles of Impeachment
- Don't know enough to be able to vote to acquit or convict

The analysis below is restricted to Republican and Democratic primary voters (high turnout scenario) who indicated that they were either very or moderately familiar with the impeachment trial. More than one-half (55%) of the slightly familiar Republican primary voters answered don't know and 28% voted to acquit and 17% to convict, while 40% of the slightly familiar Democratic primary voters answered don't know and 54% voted to convict and 6% to acquit.

Figure 2 provides the proportion of Republican and Democratic primary voters who would have voted to convict or acquit Paxton had they been jurors at his impeachment trial, along with the proportion who indicated that they did not know enough to be able to vote to convict or acquit.

Figure 2: How Republican and Democratic Primary Voters Would Have Voted Had They Served as a Juror in the Impeachment Trial of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (%)

More than one-half (56%) of Republican primary voters would have voted to acquit Paxton, compared to the more than three-fourths (77%) of Democratic voters who would have voted to convict the attorney general. Conversely, slightly more than one-fourth (26%) of Republican voters would have voted to convict Paxton, compared to one-seventh (14%) of Democratic primary voters. Approximately two in ten (18%) Republican primary voters didn't know enough to make a decision regarding Paxton's case compared to one in ten (9%) Democratic primary voters.

Table 1 provides the break down in the proportion of Republican primary voters who would have voted to convict and acquit by gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, religion and region of residence. Overall, there do not exist noteworthy sub-group differences in the proportions who would have voted to convict and acquit, with three principal exceptions.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Groups & Impeachment Vote: Republican Primary Voters (%)

Socio-Demographic	Sub-Group	Convict	Acquit	Don't Know
Gender	Women	29	51	20
	Men	24	60	16
Ethnicity/Race	White	24	59	17
	Latino	29	55	16
Generation	Silent/Boomer	20	68	12
	Gen-X	23	52	25
	Millennial/Gen-Z	37	42	21
Education	High School or Less	19	58	23
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	26	60	14
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	31	52	17
Religion	Born-Again Christian	23	60	17
	Not Born-Again Christian	29	53	18
Region	Urban	25	51	24
	Suburban	22	57	21
	Regional Hub	30	67	3
	Rural	32	59	9
Overall		26	56	18

First, men (60%) are more likely to vote to acquit than are women (51%). Second, members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort are more likely to acquit (68%) and less likely to convict (20%) than are members of the combined Millennial/Gen-Z cohort, 42% of whom would have voted to acquit and 37% to convict. Third, GOP primary voters with a four-year or post-graduate degree (31%) are more likely to vote to convict than are those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less (19%).

Table 2 provides the break down in the proportion of Democratic primary voters who would have voted to convict and acquit by gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, and region of residence. Overall, there do not exist noteworthy sub-group differences in the proportions who would have voted to convict and acquit, with two principal exceptions.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Groups & Impeachment Vote: Democratic Primary Voters (%)

Socio-Demographic	Sub-Group	Convict	Acquit	Don't Know
Gender	Women	76	12	12
	Men	79	16	5
Ethnicity/Race	White	84	11	5
	Latino	78	12	10
	Black	67	14	19
Generation	Silent/Boomer	91	6	3
	Gen-X	83	12	5
	Millennial/Gen-Z	60	23	17
Education	High School or Less	71	15	14
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	82	7	11
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	76	18	6
Region	Urban	76	13	11
	Suburban	79	12	9
	Regional Hub	80	13	7
	Rural	79	20	1
Overall		77	14	9

First, white Democratic primary voters are more likely to vote to convict (84%) than are Black likely primary voters (67%). Second, members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort are more likely to convict (91%) and less likely to acquit (6%) than are members of the combined Millennial/Gen-Z cohort, 60% of whom would have voted to convict and 23% to acquit.

The Failure of School Voucher/Choice Legislation in 2023 and the 2025 Legislative Session

Survey respondents were asked the following question about the failure of school choice/voucher legislation to pass during the 2023 regular and special legislative sessions:

During the 2023 regular and special legislative sessions, the Texas House blocked the passage of school choice/voucher legislation (educational savings accounts). Do you agree or disagree with the decision by the majority of the Texas House to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation?

If the Republican primary voters agreed with the decision by the majority of the Texas House to block, they were asked the question below:

Assuming no school choice/voucher legislation is passed in 2024, how much of a priority do you believe blocking the passage of school choice/voucher legislation (educational savings accounts) should be for Republican legislators when the Texas Legislature reconvenes for the 2025 regular legislative session a year from now?

The top priority, A high priority, A medium priority, A low priority, Not a priority, Don't know

If the Republican primary voters disagreed with the decision by the majority of the Texas House to block, they were asked the question below:

Assuming no school choice/voucher legislation is passed in 2024, how much of a priority do you believe passing school choice/voucher legislation (educational savings accounts) should be for Republican legislators when the Texas Legislature reconvenes for the 2025 regular legislative session a year from now?

The top priority, A high priority, A medium priority, A low priority, Not a priority, Don't know

If the Democratic primary voters agreed with the decision by the majority of the Texas House to block, they were asked the question below:

Assuming no school choice/voucher legislation is passed in 2024, how much of a priority do you believe blocking the passage of school choice/voucher legislation (educational savings accounts) should be for Democratic legislators when the Texas Legislature reconvenes for the 2025 regular legislative session a year from now?

The top priority, A high priority, A medium priority, A low priority, Not a priority, Don't know

If the Democratic primary voters disagreed with the decision by the majority of the Texas House to block, they were asked the question below:

Assuming no school choice/voucher legislation is passed in 2024, how much of a priority do you believe passing school choice/voucher legislation (educational savings accounts) should be for Democratic legislators when the Texas Legislature reconvenes for the 2025 regular legislative session a year from now?
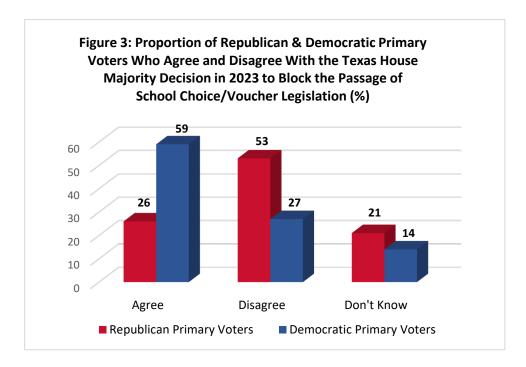
The top priority, A high priority, A medium priority, A low priority, Not a priority, Don't know

Figure 3 provides the proportion of Republican and Democratic primary voters who agreed and disagreed with the decision made by the majority of the Texas House in 2023 to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation.

Figure 3: Proportion of Republican & Democratic Primary Voters Who Agree and Disagree With the Texas House Majority Decision in 2023 to Block the Passage of School Choice/Voucher Legislation (%)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Republican Primary Voters	26	53	21
Democratic Primary Voters	59	27	14

Republican and Democratic primary voters represent virtual mirror images of each other, with 53% of Republicans disagreeing with the decision to block school choice/voucher legislation and 59% of Democrats agreeing with the decision. Similarly, 26% of Republican primary voters agree with the decision, just as 27% of Democratic primary voters disagree.

Table 3 provides the proportion of Republican primary voters who agree and disagree with the decision to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation in 2023 broken down by gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, religion, region of residence and partisan identification.

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Groups & Agreement/Disagreement With Blocking School Choice Legislation: Republican Primary Voters (%)

Socio-Demographic	Sub-Group	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Gender	Women	26	47	27
	Men	26	60	14
Ethnicity/Race	White	22	56	22
	Latino	33	45	22
Generation	Silent/Boomer	17	69	14
	Gen-X	27	50	23
	Millennial/Gen-Z	34	38	28
Education	High School or Less	21	55	24
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	24	52	24
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	31	52	17
Religion	Born-Again Christian	22	58	20
	Non-Born-Again Christian	29	49	22
Region	Urban	27	54	19
	Suburban	29	56	15
	Regional Hub	27	45	28
	Rural	19	53	28
Partisan ID	Republican	23	56	21
	Independent	18	57	25
Overall		26	53	21

With a couple of exceptions, there are not any noteworthy intra-group differences in the proportion of Republican primary voters who agree and disagree with blocking school choice/voucher legislation. This includes an absence of salient regional differences, with GOP primary voters just as likely to disagree with the blocking of the legislation, regardless of whether they live in large urban (54%) and suburban (56%) counties or in rural and semi-rural counties (53%).

The two above-mentioned exceptions are related to gender and generation. Men (60%) are more likely than women (47%) to disagree with the blocking of the legislation, although they are equally likely (26% each) to agree with the decision to block. Members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort are more likely to disagree (69% vs. 38%), and significantly less likely to agree (17% vs. 34%), with blocking the legislation than members of the Millennial/Gen-Z cohort.

Table 4 provides the proportion of Democratic primary voters who agree and disagree with the decision to block the passage of school choice/voucher legislation in 2023 broken down by gender, ethnicity/race, generation, education, and region of residence.

Table 4: Socio-Demographic Groups & Agreement/Disagreement With Blocking School Choice Legislation: Democratic Primary Voters (%)

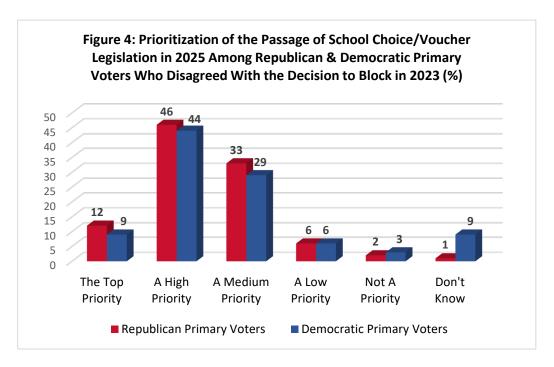| Socio-Demographic	Sub-Group	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Gender	Women	52	39	18
	Men	70	23	7
Ethnicity/Race	White	75	15	10
	Latino	49	34	17
	Black	48	38	14
Generation	Silent/Boomer	67	21	12
	Gen-X	53	29	18
	Millennial/Gen-Z	57	30	13
Education	High School or Less	48	34	18
	2-Yr Degree/Some College	51	36	13
	4-Yr Degree/Post-Grad	73	15	12
Region	Urban	62	25	13
	Suburban	60	28	12
	Regional Hub	51	31	18
	Rural	50	35	15
Overall		59	27	14

Table 4 reveals that Democratic primary voters are notably divided in their agreement and disagreement with the Texas House decision to block school choice/voucher legislation by their gender, ethnicity/race, and level of educational attainment.

Men are more likely to agree (70% vs. 52%) and less likely to disagree (23% vs. 39%) than are women with the decision to block school choice/voucher legislation.

White Democratic primary voters are more likely to agree (75% vs. 49% and 48%) and less likely to disagree (15% vs. 34% and 38%) than Latino Democratic primary voters and Black Democratic primary voters with the 2023 decision by the majority in the Texas House to block school choice/vouchers.
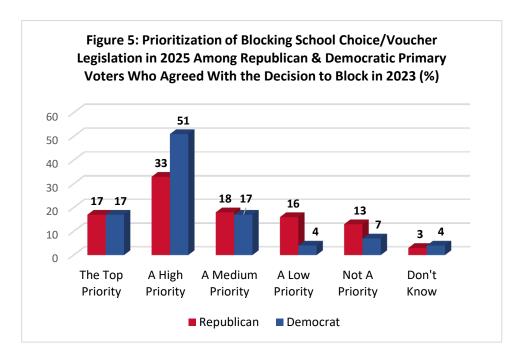
Democratic primary voters who have a four-year or postgraduate degree (73%) are more likely to agree with the blocking of the school choice/voucher bill than are Democratic primary voters whose highest level of educational attainment is either a two-year degree/some college (51%) or a high school degree or less (48%).

Figure 4 provides the prioritization by Republican primary voters and by Democratic primary voters who disagreed with the decision to block school choice/voucher legislation in 2023 (53% and 26% of the total number of primary voters respectively) of passing school choice/voucher legislation in 2025 (the year of the next regular session of the Texas Legislature).

Figure 4: Prioritization of the Passage of School Choice/Voucher Legislation in 2025 Among Republican & Democratic Primary Voters Who Disagreed With the Decision to Block in 2023 (%)

	Republican Primary Voters	Democratic Primary Voters
The Top Priority	12	9
A High Priority	46	44
A Medium Priority	33	29
A Low Priority	6	6
Not A Priority	2	3
Don't Know	1	9

One in ten of these Republican (12%) and Democratic (9%) primary voters believe passing school choice/voucher legislation should be the top priority of Republican and Democratic legislators respectively in 2025, while close to half (46% and 44%) believe passing school choice/voucher legislation should be a high priority of their legislators, followed by 33% and 29% who believe that passing school choice/voucher legislation should be a medium priority for Republican and Democratic representatives, respectively. One in ten of these Republican and Democratic primary voters was of the opinion that passing school choice/voucher legislation should be either a low priority (6% and 6%) or not a priority at all (2% and 3%).

Figure 5 provides the prioritization by Democratic primary voters and by Republican primary voters who agreed with the decision to block school choice/voucher legislation in 2023 (59% and 27% of the total number of primary voters respectively) of blocking school choice/voucher legislation in 2025.

Figure 5: Prioritization of Blocking School Choice/Voucher Legislation in 2025 Among Republican & Democratic Primary Voters Who Agreed With the Decision to Block in 2023 (%)

Priority	Republican	Democrat
The Top Priority	17	17
A High Priority	33	51
A Medium Priority	18	17
A Low Priority	16	4
Not A Priority	13	7
Don't Know	3	4

One in five of these Democratic (17%) and Republican (17%) primary voters believe blocking school choice/voucher legislation should be the top priority of Democratic and Republican legislators respectively, while between a third (33% of Republican primary voters) and half (51% of Democratic primary voters) believe blocking school choice/voucher legislation should be a high priority of their legislators, followed by 17% and 18% who believe that blocking school choice/voucher legislation should be a medium priority for Democratic and Republican representatives, respectively. Nearly three out of ten Republican primary voters who agreed with the decision to block school choice/voucher legislation in 2023 believe that blocking this legislation in 2025 should be either a low priority (16%) or not a priority (13%) for Republican legislators, compared to one out of ten Democratic primary voters (4% and 7% respectively).

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