DATA, METHODS AND SOURCES

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

Texas Republicans lost the 2026 statewide races because of the national environment, set by Trump's approval, and the Senate race lost by more because of the nominee. Trump's approval alone predicts a Texas Republican loss of 6.3 points[2,3]; the six non-governor statewide Republicans lost by an average of 5.8[4]; Paxton lost by 12.1[3,4]. The 2025 congressional map flipped one of five targeted seats and cost none[4,9,10]. Turnout followed the usual midterm pattern and accounts for about 1.6 points of the statewide margin[4,5].

A. TRUMP'S TEXAS APPROVAL, WAVE BY WAVE

Source: UT/Texas Politics Project microdata[1], weighted, registered voters. Net = approve minus disapprove. Generic ballot = Texas Legislature, R minus D, first asked Dec 2025. Feb 2026 includes an unweighted oversample that is dropped. Script: approval_trend.py, ticket_trend.py.

WAVE	TRUMP APPROVE %	TRUMP NET	ABBOTT NET	PAXTON (AG) NET	GENERIC R-D	APPROVE AMONG 2024 TRUMP VOTERS %
Feb 2025	52.5	+13.7	+12.3	+2.2		87.5
Apr 2025	46.9	+1.4	+1.4	-5.8		81.1
Jun 2025	43.9	-6.7	-4.6	-14.3		81.1
Aug 2025	42.3	-8.4	-10.2	-13.4		76.7
Oct 2025	42.3	-8.3	-11.0	-16.5		76.6
Dec 2025	43.7	-6.7	-2.4	-16.1	+1.0	78.5
Feb 2026	44.9	-4.3	+3.1	-8.7	+1.0	79.6
Apr 2026	45.0	-5.6	+1.9	-8.0	+3.8	81.4
Jun 2026	43.1	-8.3	-0.1	-13.4	+5.7	83.1
Aug 2026	43.4	-7.2	-3.7	-14.0	+6.5	82.7
Oct 2026	42.0	-9.7	-0.2	-12.0	+4.5	79.8

87% of the Feb 2025 to Oct 2026 net decline had happened by the June 2025 wave.

B. WHAT DROVE THE DECLINE: ISSUE DECOMPOSITION

Method: all registered voters in the Apr 2025 and Oct 2026 waves[1], overall approval (five-point scale, -2 to +2) regressed on approval of Trump's handling of four issue areas (economy and inflation averaged, immigration and border averaged, foreign policy, tariffs and trade) plus a wave indicator; weighted least squares, robust errors. Each issue's contribution is its coefficient times the change in its mean rating. n = 2,275, R^2 = 0.88. Shares sum to about 92%; the remainder is unexplained. Iran was first asked in Aug 2026, after most of the decline, so it cannot enter this comparison. Among 2024 Trump voters in Oct 2026 (approval_drivers.py --decline), Iran accounts for about 19% of the gap between their overall rating and "strongly approve," a level measure rather than a change.

ISSUE AREA	SHARE OF DECLINE, APR 2025 TO OCT 2026
economy & prices	39%
immigration & border	22%
tariffs/trade	18%
foreign policy	13%

C. TRUMP'S APPROVAL AND THE 2026 SENATE MAP

Method: Republican minus Democratic Senate margin regressed on Civiqs state Trump net approval[2] across the 28 states with a standard two-party race and 90%+ counted[3]; Texas excluded from the fit. R^2 = 0.81, slope = 0.91. Texas predicted

D+6.3; actual D+12.1 (residual -5.8). Residual = how far each Republican ran ahead of (+) or behind (-) the line. Kansas is an outlier worth re-checking against the official canvass before quoting.

STATE	RACE (R V. D)	TRUMP NET	RESULT	VS. LINE
KY	Andy Barr v. Charles Booker	-16	R+12.1	+14.9
ME	Susan Collins v. Troy Jackson	-33	D+6.4	+11.7
MN	Michele Tafoya v. Peggy Flanagan	-36	D+10.1	+11.6
NH	John E. Sununu v. Chris Pappas	-36	D+13.9	+7.7
MI	Mike Rogers v. Abdul El-Sayed	-28	D+7.0	+6.7
TN	Bill Hagerty v. Marquita Bradshaw	-5	R+12.2	+5.5
FL	Ashley Moody v. Angie Nixon	-15	R+2.9	+5.5
OK	Kevin Hern v. N'Kiyla Jasmine Thomas	+1	R+17.9	+5.5
WY	Harriet Hageman v. James Byrd	+16	R+30.5	+4.7
WV	Shelley Moore Capito v. Rachel Fetty Anderson	+5	R+20.4	+4.6
MA	John Deaton v. Ed Markey	-52	D+31.2	+4.6
IA	Ashley Hinson v. Josh Turek	-21	D+4.1	+3.6
OH	Jon Husted v. Sherrod Brown	-20	D+4.9	+2.3
LA	Julia Letlow v. Jamie Davis	-11	R+1.8	+0.2
CO	Mark Baisley v. John Hickenlooper	-38	D+24.0	-0.9
IL	Don Tracy v. Juliana Stratton	-37	D+23.3	-1.0
MS	Cindy Hyde-Smith v. Scott Colom	-10	D+0.2	-2.1
AL	Barry Moore v. Everett Wess	+1	R+9.4	-2.8
SC	Darline Graham v. Annie Andrews	-14	D+4.5	-3.6
VA	Bert Mizusawa v. Mark Warner	-32	D+22.6	-5.0
AR	Tom Cotton v. Hallie Shoffner	+6	R+11.9	-5.4
NJ	Justin Murphy v. Cory Booker	-36	D+27.1	-6.1
GA	Mike Collins v. Jon Ossoff	-25	D+18.0	-6.8
NM	Larry Marker v. Ben Ray Lujan	-33	D+26.5	-7.9
RI	Raymond McKay v. Jack Reed	-44	D+37.5	-9.0
DE	Michael Katz v. Chris Coons	-32	D+27.1	-9.1
NC	Michael Whatley v. Roy Cooper	-19	D+19.6	-13.8
KS	Roger Marshall v. Adam Hamilton	-1	D+5.0	-15.8

D. THE 2025 CONGRESSIONAL MAP

New lines: actual 2026 results[4]; Trump 2024 margins on the 2025 lines from Ballotpedia / The Downballot and the Texas Legislative Council[9,10]. Old lines: Trump 2024 margins on the 2021 map from Texas Legislative Council precinct data[9]. The 2026 old-map estimate depends on the seat. Where the old and new seat of the same number cover the same ground (TX-15, 23, 24, 28, 34), it is the old seat's 2024 margin plus the actual 2026 swing in the new seat. TX-9, 32 and 35 were different, safely Democratic places on the old map; their estimate comes from the election-night turnout and persuasion model, recalibrated to the actual 2026 miss by district Hispanic share, and the conclusion (Democratic hold) does not depend on the exact figure. Republicans won 24 of 38 seats on the new map, versus 25 in 2024 and about 23 estimated on the old map. A separate county-level check on election night had De La Cruz losing the old TX-15 by about 25 to 27 and Herrera the old TX-23 by about 6 to 7, consistent with the swing estimates. Script: map_effect.py.

DISTRICT	TYPE	TRUMP 2024, OLD LINES	TRUMP 2024, NEW LINES	2026, OLD LINES (EST.)	ESTIMATE METHOD	2026, NEW LINES (ACTUAL)
TX-9	drawn to flip	D+44.0	R+19.8	D+63.6	model	D+15.1
TX-28	drawn to flip	R+7.3	R+10.3	D+39.1	swing transfer	D+36.1
TX-32	drawn to flip	D+23.6	R+17.7	D+43.3	model	R+2.9
TX-34	drawn to flip	R+4.4	R+10.2	D+21.8	swing transfer	D+16.0

TX-35	drawn to flip	D+33.5	R+10.4	D+62.2	model	D+10.9
TX-15	GOP-held	R+17.8	R+17.8	D+24.6	swing transfer	D+24.6
TX-23	GOP-held	R+15.5	R+14.8	D+7.5	swing transfer	D+8.2
TX-24	GOP-held	R+15.5	R+16.1	R+6.3	swing transfer	R+6.9

E. WAS THE HISPANIC SWING ABOUT THE MAP?

County level. Hispanic share from Census 2023 estimates[8]. Swing = 2026 statewide-slate margin minus the 2024 (or 2020) presidential margin[4,6], weighted by 2024 votes. In a county regression, Hispanic share predicts the swing strongly (t ≈ 7.7) and the share of a county inside a redrawn seat does not (t ≈ 0.3). Script: hispanic_turnout.py.

COUNTY GROUP	N	2024 VOTES	2026 TURNOUT AS % OF 2024	SWING VS 2024	SWING VS 2020
All Texas counties	254	11,380,105	86.9%	+17.9	+11.1
Majority Hispanic, inside the five redrawn South Texas seats	38	603,023	87.5%	+39.3	+21.6
Majority Hispanic, outside them	20	115,937	76.4%	+23.6	+18.3
Under 30% Hispanic, outside them	131	4,684,541	85.0%	+14.3	+9.7

F. TURNOUT HISTORY

Turnout = votes in the top race / total registered voters[4,5,6,7]. Top race: 2018 Senate, 2020 president, 2022 governor, 2024 president, 2026 Senate. GOP base = Trump 70%+ in 2024 and under 30% Hispanic. Compounding test: 2026 county margins weighted by the 2022 turnout map (scaled to 2026's total vote). Senate: actual D+12.1, on the 2022 turnout map D+10.6. Statewide slate: actual D+5.8, on the 2022 map D+4.2. Script: turnout_history.py.

GROUP	COUNTIES	2018	2020	2022	2024	2026	2026 VS 2022
Texas	253	53.0	66.8	45.9	61.1	51.9	+6.1
Target seats (90%+ of county)	50	42.5	56.8	37.7	52.0	43.8	+6.1
of which Hispanic-majority	38	40.4	54.5	35.4	49.3	42.1	+6.7
Hispanic-majority, outside target seats	20	42.2	55.3	35.5	52.4	40.4	+4.9
Big 5 urban (Harris Dallas Tarrant Bexar Travis)	5	53.9	66.9	45.1	59.4	53.0	+7.9
Suburban ring (Collin Denton FtBend Wmson Mont)	5	60.0	74.8	51.6	67.8	57.1	+5.5
GOP base: Trump 70%+ 2024, under 30% Hispanic	118	54.2	69.0	50.4	66.2	52.2	+1.8

G. WAS ABBOTT TIED TO TRUMP?

Respondent level, UT/TxPP[1]. r = weighted correlation of Trump and Abbott job ratings (five-point scale). The Abbott-minus-Trump column is the net-approval gap among independents. Script: coupling_trend.py.

WAVE	R(TRUMP, ABBOTT)	ABBOTT APPROVAL AMONG TRUMP DISAPPROVERS	AMONG TRUMP APPROVERS	ABBOTT MINUS TRUMP NET, INDEPENDENTS
Feb 2025	0.86	4.7%	85.2%	+0.8
Apr 2025	0.83	8.2%	83.4%	-2.2
Jun 2025	0.82	9.1%	79.3%	-9.0
Aug 2025	0.86	6.6%	82.9%	+6.3
Oct 2025	0.87	3.7%	82.8%	+1.2
Dec 2025	0.82	9.8%	83.1%	+18.2
Feb 2026	0.85	8.9%	90.4%	+4.8
Apr 2026	0.79	12.6%	83.3%	+23.1
Jun 2026	0.84	10.0%	86.5%	+20.8
Aug 2026	0.85	7.2%	86.6%	+11.0
Oct 2026	0.87	7.5%	90.3%	+18.2

H. EVENT TIMELINE SOURCES

Events marked on the approval timeline graphic. Each is dated from contemporaneous reporting; confidence is how well the date and description are sourced, not how much the event moved approval.

DATE	EVENT	DETAIL	SOURCING	REF
2025-01-20	Inauguration	Trump sworn in as 47th president in the Capitol Rotunda; day-one orders on border, energy and DEI.	high	[11,12]
2025-02-01	Tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China	Trump signed IEEPA orders for 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico and 10% on China; Canada/Mexico paused Feb 3, took effect Mar 4.	high	[13,14]
2025-02-13	DOGE mass firings begin	Agencies began firing probationary federal employees en masse (OPM memo Feb 14 set a Feb 17 deadline); more than 24,000 targeted.	high	[15,16]
2025-03-15	Alien Enemies Act flights to CECOT	Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act and planes carried Venezuelans to El Salvador's CECOT prison despite Judge Boasberg's order to turn them around.	high	[17,18]
2025-04-02	Liberation Day tariffs	Trump announced a 10% baseline tariff on all imports plus higher reciprocal rates on dozens of countries, triggering a multi-day global market rout (Apr 3-8).	high	[19,20]
2025-04-09	90-day tariff pause	Hours after reciprocal rates took effect, Trump paused most for 90 days (China raised to 125%); stocks posted a historic one-day rally.	high	[21]
2025-04-10	SCOTUS: return Abrego Garcia	Supreme Court said the administration must facilitate the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, whom it admitted deporting in error to El Salvador on Mar 15.	high	[22,23]
2025-06-07	Guard federalized for LA ICE raids	Trump memo federalized at least 2,000 National Guard troops after protests over Los Angeles immigration raids, over Gov. Newsom's objection; Marines followed.	high	[24,25]
2025-06-21	US strikes Iran nuclear sites	Operation Midnight Hammer hit Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan (June 21 US time, June 22 in Iran).	high	[26,27]
2025-07-04	One Big Beautiful Bill signed	Trump signed the GOP megabill; CBO projects more than $1 trillion in Medicaid/CHIP cuts and about 12 million losing coverage.	high	[28,29]
2025-07-07	Epstein memo: no client list	DOJ/FBI memo said there was no Epstein client list and no more files would be released, angering much of Trump's base.	high	[30,31]
2025-08-03	Texas Dems break quorum on map	Most Texas House Democrats left the state to block the Trump-requested mid-decade congressional map aimed at five GOP pickups; they returned Aug 18.	high	[32,33]
2025-10-01	Federal shutdown begins	Government shut down after Congress deadlocked over extending ACA premium subsidies.	high	[34]
2025-11-12	Shutdown ends after 43 days	Trump signed a funding bill after a 222-209 House vote, ending the longest shutdown in US history without resolving ACA subsidies.	high	[35,36]
2025-12-19	DOJ begins Epstein files release	Under the Epstein Files Transparency Act, DOJ began a staggered, heavily redacted release that missed the deadline; final 3 million-page batch Jan 30, 2026.	high	[37,38]
2026-01-01	ACA subsidies expire	Enhanced ACA premium tax credits lapsed; KFF estimated net premium payments up 114% for same-plan enrollees and marketplace enrollment fell for the first time in seven years.	high	[39,40]
2026-01-03	US raid captures Maduro	Operation Absolute Resolve struck Venezuela and captured Nicolas Maduro; Trump said the US would 'run' Venezuela during a transition.	high	[41,42]
2026-01-07	ICE agent kills Renee Good	An ICE agent fatally shot Minneapolis resident Renee Good in her car during the federal immigration surge, sparking national protests.	high	[43,44]

2026-01-24	Agents kill Alex Pretti	Federal immigration agents shot and killed ICU nurse Alex Pretti in Minneapolis; bystander video contradicted the DHS account.	high	[45,46]
2026-02-20	SCOTUS strikes IEEPA tariffs	Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in Learning Resources v. Trump that IEEPA does not authorize the tariffs; Trump announced a 10% Section 122 global tariff the same day.	high	[47,48]
2026-02-28	US-Israel war on Iran begins	US (Operation Epic Fury) and Israel launched strikes across Iran, killing Supreme Leader Khamenei; Iran retaliated across the Gulf and choked the Strait of Hormuz.	high	[49,50]
2026-03-12	Oil over $100, stocks slide	Brent settled above $100 for the first time since 2022 and the S&P 500 hit a new 2026 low; S&P bottomed about 7% off its high in March, Nasdaq entered correction by Mar 26.	medium	[51,52]
2026-03-31	Gas tops $4 national average	AAA national average hit $4.02, first time above $4 since 2022, driven by the Iran war.	high	[53,54]
2026-04-07	Iran two-week ceasefire	Trump agreed to a Pakistan-mediated two-week ceasefire conditioned on reopening the Strait of Hormuz (a pause, not a driver down).	high	[55]
2026-04-13	US naval blockade of Iran	After Islamabad talks stalled, the US blockaded Iranian ports; Iran reclosed Hormuz. Blockade ran to June 18.	high	[56,57]
2026-05-06	Texas gas average tops $4	AAA Texas statewide average reached $4.043 (national $4.536). Texas regular record of $4.836 (June 2022) was not broken.	medium	[58,59]
2026-05-21	Gas peaks at $4.56 national	AAA national average hit $4.56, the 2026 high and a four-year high, ahead of Memorial Day. National average never reached $5.	high	[60,61]
2026-06-17	US-Iran interim deal (MOU)	Trump and Pezeshkian signed a 14-point MOU extending the ceasefire 60 days and reopening Hormuz; blockade lifted June 18 (a pause, not a driver down).	medium	[62,63]
2026-07-08	Trump: Iran ceasefire is over	After attacks on ships in Hormuz, US struck Iranian targets and Trump declared the ceasefire over; blockade reimposed July 14.	high	[64,65]
2026-07-24	Section 301 tariffs replace 122	Section 122 global tariff expired; Section 301 tariffs of 10% to 12.5% took effect on imports from 60 trading partners.	low	[66]
2026-08-30	US strikes on Iran resume	US strikes ended a month without military action, escalating into daily exchanges by Sept 1-2 after the 60-day MOU window lapsed Aug 17.	medium	[67,68]
2026-09-07	Record Labor Day gas prices	AAA national average of $4.15 set a Labor Day record (prior $3.82 in 2012); diesel hit $5.90.	high	[69,70]
2026-09-28	Trump rejects Iran ceasefire offer	Trump rejected Iran's offer to reopen Hormuz within 7 days in exchange for lifting the blockade and oil sanctions.	medium	[71,72]
2026-10-22	Economic approval hits new low	CNBC survey put Trump's economic approval at 34%, lowest of either term; gas still about $4.20 on Oct 30, nearly 40% above a year earlier.	medium	[73,74]

LIMITATIONS

- 2026 results are final unofficial as of Nov 4 to 5, 2026; small changes are possible at canvass. TX-14 comes from a partial count (5 of 6 counties).
- State Trump approval is a single tracker's model estimate (Civiqs)[2]; a different tracker would move the line, not the ranking.
- County analyses describe places, not individual voters. "Hispanic counties swung" is not the same as "Hispanic voters swung."
- Turnout uses all registered voters, including those on the suspense list, as the SOS does; counties with inflated rolls read low.
- The old-map seat count is a model estimate, not a recount on the old lines.

- Issue decompositions assume the issue ratings drive overall approval; some of the causation runs the other way.

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