

TULCHIN RESEARCH

To: Interested Parties

From: Ben Tulchin, Kiel Brunner and Ashleigh McEvoy, Tulchin Research

October 15, 2018

Recent Texas Statewide Poll Finds Very Close U.S. Senate Race

Tulchin Research recently conducted a statewide survey in Texas to assess the U.S. Senate race between Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke and incumbent Republican Ted Cruz. The poll finds a very close race as Beto is within the survey's margin of error. The poll also asked a series of questions on foreign policy in advance of the third and final debate between Beto and Cruz that will focus on foreign affairs. The poll finds that voters in Texas are supportive of a progressive foreign policy that emphasizes working closely with international organizations like the United Nations.

Texas U.S. Senate Race Very Close, Opportunity for Beto to Pull Ahead

Democrat Beto O'Rourke is within striking distance of Senator Ted Cruz in the horserace vote. In this survey, which was just completed right before the third debate between the two candidates, Beto trails by only four points, which is within the survey's margin of error, drawing 45 percent of the vote to 49 percent of the vote for Cruz. The Libertarian candidate is drawing 3 percent, the same portion of voters that are undecided (3%).

U.S. Senate Race: Initial Vote	
<i>If the November general election for U.S. Senate were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were: Beto O'Rourke, the Democrat; Ted Cruz, the Republican; or Neal M. Dikeman, the Libertarian?</i>	
Beto O'Rourke	45%
Ted Cruz	49%
Neal Dikeman	3%
Undecided	3%
O'Rourke - Cruz	-4

The poll provided more information about both candidates and found that Beto has a real opportunity to pull ahead and win this race if he can draw an effective contrast with Cruz. Once voters hear more information about both candidates, Beto leads the race with 50 percent of the vote with Cruz trailing with 45 percent and the number of undecided voters and supporters of the Libertarian candidate remain the same at 3 percent each.

- The contrasts that are most effective focus on ***Cruz being too close to special interests while Beto refuses to take special interest PAC money and will stand up to lobbyists*** and that ***Beto will make health care more affordable while Cruz sides with insurance and drug companies and voted to take health care away from millions, raise premiums and gut protections for pre-existing conditions.***
- Voters who move the most to Beto include ***Latinos*** and ***Republican women ages 18-54.***

U.S. Senate Race: Initial Vote and Revote			
<i>If the November general election for U.S. Senate were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were: Beto O'Rourke, the Democrat; Ted Cruz, the Republican; or Neal M. Dikeman, the Libertarian?</i>			
	Initial	Revote	Shift
Total O'Rourke	45%	50%	+5
Total Cruz	49%	45%	-4
Total Dikeman	3%	3%	+0
Undecided	3%	3%	+0
O'Rourke - Cruz	-4	+5	+9

Support for Progressive Foreign Policy

The poll asked a series of questions to measure public opinion among Texas voters regarding foreign policy and foreign affairs.

- The poll found that three quarters (75%) of voters *believe the President should be required to obtain Congressional authorization before committing the U.S. to military action in foreign countries* compared to only one out of seven (14%) who disagree.
- A similarly large majority (64%) indicates they would be *less likely* to support a candidate who believes *the U.S. should play a major role in trying to solve international problems through the use of military force*.
- Another notable finding is that a majority of voters (54%) ranks as a high priority *Congress reallocating some of the Pentagon budget to invest in domestic programs like Social Security and health care*.
- In addition, a solid majority would be more likely to support a candidate who believes *the U.S. should work with international organizations like the United Nations to bring about world cooperation* (68% more likely) and that *the U.S. should play a major role in trying to solve international problems through diplomacy* (69% more likely).

Support for Candidates Based on Foreign Policy Stances			
<i>Now here are some positions a candidate for U.S. Senate might take. Please indicate if you would be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for that candidate based on that position. If it makes no difference, please indicate so.</i>			
	<i>Total More Likely</i>	<i>Total Less Likely</i>	<i>More – Less Likely</i>
The U.S. should play a major role in trying to solve international problems through diplomacy.	69%	19%	+50
The U.S. should work with international organizations like the United Nations to bring about world cooperation.	68%	22%	+45
The U.S. should play a major role in trying to solve international problems through the use of military force.	21%	64%	-43

This approach to foreign affairs draws bipartisan support. Specifically, large majorities of Democrats (77%), Republicans (64%) and independents (65%) favor the U.S. playing a major role in trying to solve international problems through diplomacy. Similarly, solid majorities of Democrats (88%), Republicans (54%) and independents (61%) also want the U.S. to work with international organizations like the U.N. to bring about world cooperation.

Despite the right-wing attacking the U.N. over the years, a solid majority of voters in Texas have a favorable opinion of that organization (59% favorable to only 34% unfavorable, +25) and it is much more popular than Ted Cruz is with Texas voters (48% favorable to 50% unfavorable, -2).

Texas: Favorability Ratings				
	Total Fav	Total Unfav	Fav – Unfav	Total ID
United Nations	59%	34%	+25	93%
Ted Cruz	48%	50%	-2	98%

Survey Methodology: From October 10-14, 2018, Tulchin Research conducted an online survey among 600 likely November 2018 voters in Texas. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 4.0 percentage points.