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# Poll says Texans like Rick Perry as governor, but not as president

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AUSTIN – Texans say [Rick Perry](#) is doing a better job as governor but don't want him to run for president, a new poll shows.

Although Perry, a [Republican](#), has emerged as a tea party favorite and national voice on states rights, nearly two-thirds of Texas voters oppose a bid for the [White House](#).

"It's not necessarily a vote of no confidence," said pollster Mickey Blum. [Democrats](#) in the statewide survey overwhelmingly don't want him to run, and many Republicans don't, either.

"Sometimes it's a statement that I like you where you are, keep doing a good job, just stay there," Blum said.

The poll by *The Dallas Morning News* and the state's other major papers comes as the Texas Legislature convenes this week, giving Perry a spotlight to burnish his conservative credentials.

Perry has said he doesn't want to be president and is focused on state affairs. Still, as chairman of the Republican Governors Association and author of a new book denouncing Washington, the governor is positioned to be a major critic of the [Obama](#) administration.

After storming to victory in November, Perry also is scoring higher among registered voters, with just over half of those surveyed saying they approve of the job he is doing. He scores at 50 percent among all adult Texans surveyed.

"Since 2006, in every single poll, his approval rating has stayed in the 40s among registered voters," Blum said. "It's finally hit 51. He's finally got majority support."

Blum and Weprin Associates Inc. of [New York](#) polled 819 adult Texans by phone Dec. 28-Jan. 5. The margin of error is 3.4 percentage points for all adults, and 3.7 percentage points for the 716 registered voters in that group.

Perry spokesman Mark Miner said the rise in approval ratings is because the governor has been talking "about issues that matter to Texans – education and job creation."

## Hutchison's numbers

While Perry's ratings have gone up, Republican Sen. [Kay Bailey Hutchison](#) has seen her approval stall at 46 percent of registered voters – effectively unchanged from last February before she lost the GOP primary to Perry.

A Hutchison spokeswoman said the senator is pleased with the approval ratings. But the numbers suggest that Hutchison could be vulnerable if she seeks re-election to the [Senate](#) in 2012.

Only 56 percent of Republicans give her high marks, compared with 73 percent for Perry.

"You could expect more Republicans to approve of a senator from their party," Blum said. "Part of the problem she had in the primary against Perry was that she really didn't have a strong base that was going to come out for her. And she could have that problem again."

More than a quarter of voters said they have no opinion about her.

"She's not very disliked, but she's not very well-liked either," Blum said.

As for Perry, Texans in the poll were mixed on whether he should seek higher office.

Jacquelyn Graber, a 60-year-old retired teacher from Allen, was among supporters who would back his run for the White House.

"He'd be a good president because he's done so much for Texas," she said, citing the state's economy. "He's made us profitable."

Elijah Lackey, a 75-year-old retired federal worker from Midlothian, had a different view.

"He is a pretty fair person for the state of Texas, but there are things he doesn't know about federal government. He's just lacking," he said.

[Margaret Cole](#) of [Fort Worth](#), a sales professional, had a more negative view of a Perry presidential bid. "I wouldn't send him out to pick up road kill," she said.

## Racial divide

Perry is most popular among older, white voters. While Hispanics are divided over Perry, Democrats and blacks Americans clearly disapprove of the job he's doing.

Mark Jones, a political science professor at [Rice University](#), said Perry is doing a lot to attract national attention without expressing interest about the national ticket in 2012.

"On the one hand, he's not running for president. But at the same time, he's doing things that position him within the group of credible candidates for the Republican nomination. Or perhaps what he's really pushing for is to be the vice presidential candidate," Jones said.

Support for a Perry run for the presidency doesn't match that for George W. Bush in November 1998 as he was making preparations to seek the White House while governor. Fifty-six percent of Texans said they believe Bush

should run, according to a poll by *The News*.

Blum said she's confident that since Texans who oppose a Perry White House bid include supporters, his numbers could change quickly.

"If he decided to run, do I think they would support him?" she said. "Sure."

But Texans clearly don't like politicians who switch parties after an election.

Two state representatives, Aaron Pena of Edinburg and [Allan Ritter](#) of Nederland, were re-elected as Democrats in November, but switched parties to Republican immediately after winning.

More than two-thirds of those surveyed said that's unfair, with voters in both parties expressing disapproval.

Graber, the retired school teacher from Allen, said if politicians want to switch parties, they should do it before voters go to the polls.

"They're elected as one party and should stay in that party until the next election," she said. "You're elected on the values of that party and you should stay."

Poll questions, results

***Editor's note:*** The poll has a total sample of 819 respondents, whose total results are designated by the "Texas adults" heading in the poll questions below. A total of 716 were registered voters designated by the "Registered voters" header. The total sample has a +/- 3.4 margin of error and the registered voters has a +/- 3.7 margin of error.

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**Do you approve or disapprove of the job Rick Perry is doing as Governor?**

	Texas adults	Registered voters
Approve	50%	51%
Disapprove	29%	30%
Not sure	20%	16%
Refuse	2%	3%

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**Do you approve or disapprove of the job Kay Bailey Hutchison is doing as Senator?**

	Texas adults	Registered voters
Approve	44%	46%
Disapprove	24%	26%
Not sure	27%	25%
Refuse	5%	3%

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**Do you think Texas Gov. Rick Perry should or should not run for President in two years?**

	Texas adults	Registered voters
Should	24%	24%

Should not	61%	63%
Not sure	14%	12%
Refuse	1%	2%

**Do you think it is fair to voters for a lawmaker in their district to switch parties right after an election or don't you think so?**

	Texas adults	Registered voters
Yes, fair	17%	17%
No, not fair	70%	72%
Not sure	11%	10%
Refuse	2%	2%

**Did you vote for Rick Perry, [Bill White](#), or someone else if you voted in the recent November 2010 General Election for Governor?**

	Registered voters
Perry	36%
White	24%
Someone else	---
Not eligible to vote	3%
Something came up	11%
Chose not to vote	14%
Not sure	5%
Refuse	8%

**In politics today, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?**

	Registered voters
Republican	29%
Democrat	26%
Independent leaning Republican	16%
Independent leaning Democrat	5%
Strictly Independent	17%
Something else	1%
Not sure	3%
Refuse	4%

**POLL HIGHLIGHTS**

**50%** of Texans approve of the job Gov. Rick Perry is doing, but

1/10/2011

Poll says Texans like Rick Perry as gover...

**61%** don't want him to run for president, and

**70%** say it's unfair to voters for a lawmaker in their district to switch parties right after an election.

SOURCE: Blum and Weprin Associates Inc. poll of 819 adult Texans Dec. 28-Jan. 5. Margin of error: 3.4 percentage points