

RICE UNIVERSITY'S
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FOR PUBLIC POLICY

News, Research and Events

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Analysis: Texas Election Results

As the vote counts in the presidential race continue, political science fellow [Mark Jones](#) offers a brief analysis of the results in Texas — including the significance of the GOP's ongoing control of the Texas House of Representatives and the prospects for a future Democratic wave. For more analysis, listen to Jones' interview on [Houston Public Radio](#).

What are the implications of Trump's victory in Texas?

Trump owes his victory to his continued strong support among Texas Anglos (66%) and his higher support among Texas Latinos (40%) than in 2016. The major urban centers of Harris County (Houston), Dallas County, Bexar County (San Antonio) and Travis County (Austin) continued to deepen their hue of blue, but Texas Republicans retained a modest to substantial majority in most of the larger suburban counties surrounding Dallas and Houston. Texas Republicans also won by considerable margins in the state's rural areas and regional hubs.

Trump's victory in Texas also suggests that the Democratic wave in 2018 may have been the party's high-water mark for the immediate future. Glass-half-full Texas Republicans can point to the party's ability to retain its 83 to 67 majority in the Texas House and its 23 to 13 U.S. House advantage as a sign that they were able to blunt the Democratic momentum that began in 2018. Glass-half-full Democrats can point to the party's consolidation of the 2018 gains made in the Texas House and U.S. House delegation.

Texas Democrats' only hope of impacting the 2021 redistricting process was to take control of the Texas House on November 3. Since this did not happen, what can we expect as state legislative districts are redrawn next year?

The Texas GOP will now have a relatively unfettered ability to design tailor-made districts to maximize Republican advantage during the 2021 redistricting process. This is when Texas will create new district boundaries for the 38 or 39 seats the state receives in the [2021 reapportionment](#). In January, Texas Republicans will represent far and away the largest state contingent in the U.S. House Republican caucus, with 23 seats. The ability of the Texas GOP to draw the new congressional districts that will be used in 2022 through the end of the decade (barring a mid-decade redistricting) will bolster national GOP efforts to take back control of the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Climate policy should not be left a heartbeat away from being overturned [by the courts]. Only legislation can provide the foundation we need to tackle climate change more vigorously.”

Daniel Cohan, Baker Institute Rice Faculty Scholar,
in an op-ed for [The Hill](#)



COVID-19 and the Social Determinants of Health

Over 230,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the United States alone, and scientists are predicting more deaths in the coming months. What needs to change in order to contain the spread of this deadly virus?

To answer this question and to discuss public policy responses to the pandemic, the [Center for Health and Biosciences](#) recently hosted a webinar with three distinguished speakers: [the Honorable Kathleen Sebelius](#), the former secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services; [Clyde Yancy](#), the vice dean for diversity and inclusion and the chief of cardiology in the Department of Medicine at Northwestern University; and [Sara Wallace Goodman](#), an associate professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine. [Drew Armstrong](#), the senior editor for health care at Bloomberg, moderated the webinar.

A key focus of the discussion was the disproportionate impact of the virus on minority populations. The fact that many essential jobs are held by people of color is a major contributor to this trend, said Yancy. Another factor, according to Sebelius, is the lack of confidence and the high levels of distrust in the health care system by Black, Hispanic and Native people. Rebuilding that trust and addressing the social drivers of health are essential steps forward, she said.

The speakers also agreed that the spread of disinformation and the infusion of partisan politics into discussions of public health are compounding the effects of the pandemic. Putting the messages of health officials and scientists ahead of the inconsistent messages of politicians is crucial, Goodman said.

In addition to strong national leadership, Sebelius called for major health care reforms to address gaps in the public health system — including the U.S. failure to address the economic and social conditions that impact health.

To learn more, watch the full presentation on the [event page](#).

Upcoming Events

Director's Lecture Series: A Conversation with the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison. At this webinar, [the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison](#), the 22nd United States Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), addresses the status of the NATO alliance and related foreign policy issues. **November 9 | 11:00 am**

Webinar — Infrastructures for Innovation: Aligning Policy and Practice. Promoting innovation is a priority for Houston business leaders and policymakers. At this event, experts examine the policies that shape innovation and consider how those policies can inform the construction of Rice University's new innovation hub in Houston. **November 12 | 3:00 pm**

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