2026 AAPI Voter Turnout in Texas: Debrief and Implications for Austin

City of Austin Asian American Quality of Life Commission
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Board President, Asian Texans for Justice
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A Non-Partisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving AAPIs in Texas



A Better Texas for AAPIs

Statewide, year-round, and meaningful investment in AAPI communities

Who We Are

Asian Texans for Justice (ATJ) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in Texas.

Founded in 2021, ATJ works to be a unifying voice for the state's diverse AAPI community — to claim space and inspire Texas to invest in AAPIs' well-being. Prior to its founding, there were no statewide organizations devoted to the Texas AAPI community, despite statewide issues and needs that should include an AAPI perspective.



OUR VISION

A future where all people feel bold in their belonging.

OUR MISSION

We connect Asian & Pacific Islander Texans to civic action to build personal and political power.

OUR VALUES

* Amplify AAPI leaders and voices
* Honor our commonalities; celebrate diversity
* Recognize our limitless potential
* Be anti-racist
* Make it meaningful

Our Work

Civic Engagement



ATJ is committed to year-round civic engagement through voter registration, voter education, and voter mobilization. We believe that every election matters - whether it's local/municipal, state, or federal and that AAPIs have a deciding voice in each electoral race.

Policy Advocacy



Policies made at the state level, whether it be the Texas Legislature, executive order, or State Board of Education, have deep and meaningful impact on the lives of AAPIs. ATJ ensures that AAPI voices and attitudes are reflected through community mobilization and direct advocacy for the issues that matter most to AAPIs.

Leadership Development



To sustain and grow AAPI power, we must have leaders who are civically engaged in all corners of the state and in various ways. ATJ's leadership development work is rooted in supporting every AAPI Texan to find their civic journey and equip them with the skills and network to step into leadership.

Executive summary

1. **Growth:** AAPI Texans are 2.1M strong and the state's fastest-growing group; Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos is the fastest-growing major metro (+56.8% since 2020).

2. **Turnout:** 2026 was a very high turnout midterm election in Texas; nationally, AAPI voters turned out in record numbers and swung ~9 pts toward Democrats.

3. **Texas picture:** Pre-election, AAPI Texans were a genuine swing electorate; Central Texas AAPI voters leaned Democratic but had shifted more toward the GOP since 2022.

4. **Gaps:** Language access and representation lag far behind growth, especially in San Antonio–Austin, and Texas lacks AAPI-specific post-election data.

AAPI Texans are the state's fastest-growing group, now 1 in 5 new Texans

2.1M

AAPI Texans

6.6% of Texas population

+29.5%

Growth since 2020

3× the statewide rate (8.5%)

1.2M

Eligible AAPI voters

~6% of the Texas electorate

#3

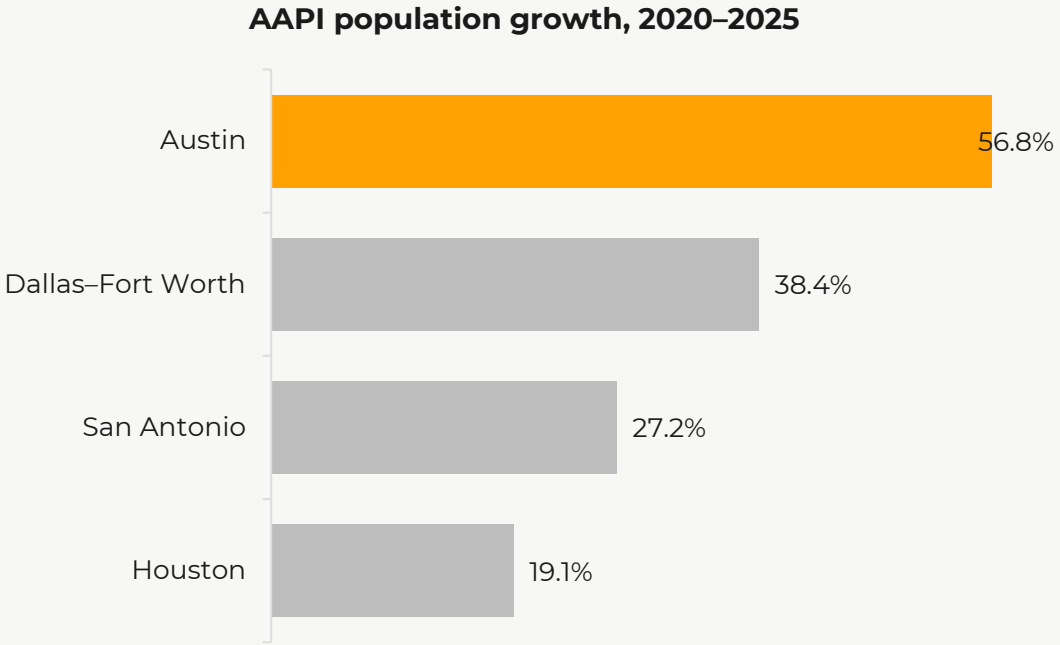
Largest AAPI state

after California and New York

- **No single group is a majority:** Asian Indian (27.4%), Vietnamese (15.9%) and Chinese (13.7%) lead; 50+ ethnicities and 100+ languages.
- **Concentrated in four metros:** 91.4% of AAPI Texans live in DFW, Houston, Austin or San Antonio, vs. 67.6% of all Texans.

Sources: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026); APIAVote/AAPI Data, Texas 2026 State Fact Sheet (via AADT).

Austin's AAPI population grew 56.8% since 2020, fastest of any major Texas metro



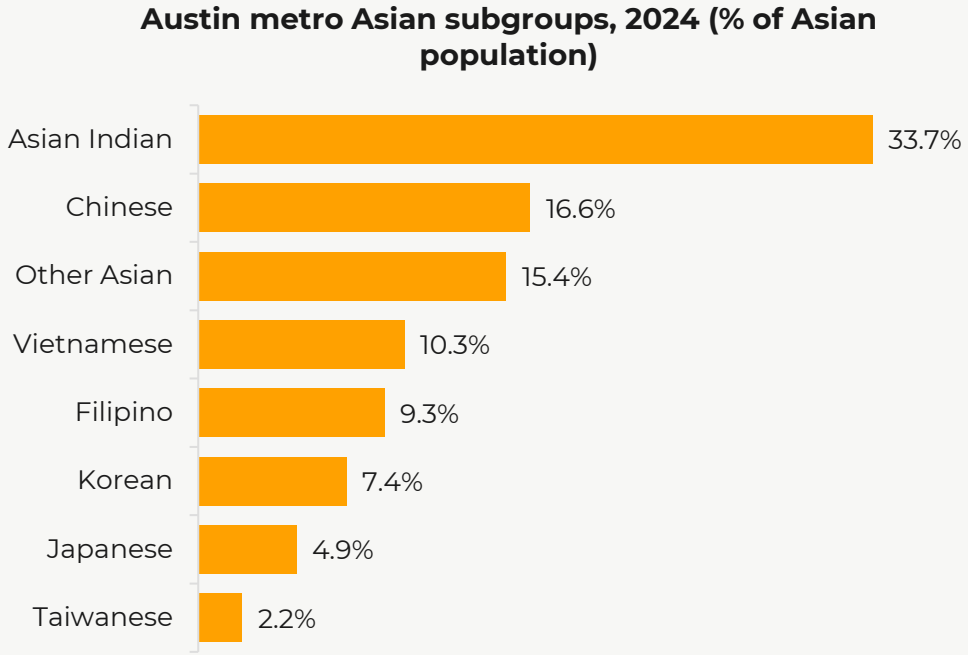
257,707

AAPI residents in Austin metro (9.8% of region)

- **Williamson County:** +92.1% since 2020, fastest-growing high-density AAPI county in Texas.
- **Still accelerating:** Austin projected +19.7% by 2030, roughly double DFW and Houston's pace.

Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), Figures 3–4 and regional appendix; TDC projections (Asian only).

Austin's Asian community is majority immigrant, multilingual and highly diverse



68.4% foreign-born

74.5% speak a language other than English at home

22.0% speak English less than "very well"

77.0% hold a bachelor's degree or higher

Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), San Antonio & Austin regional profile (2024 ACS).



What happened on November 3, 2026

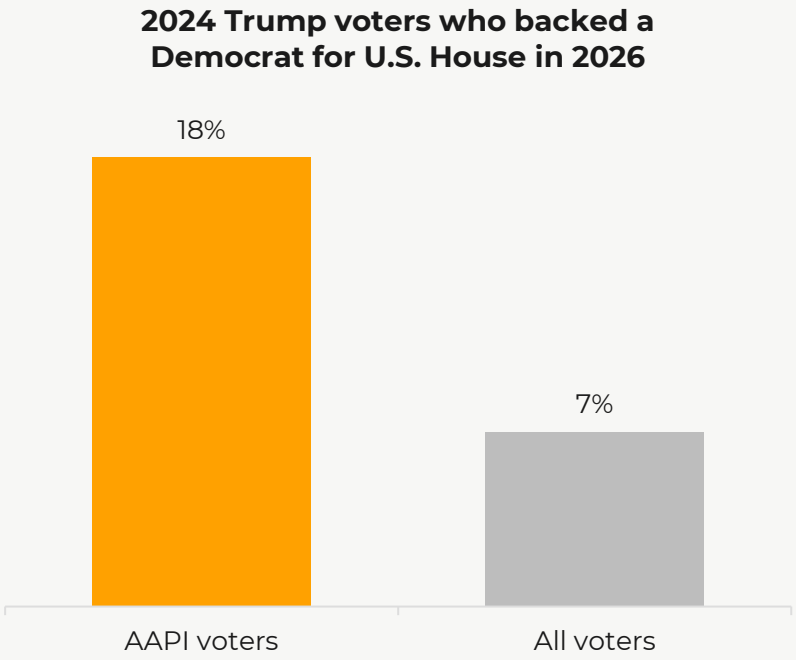
Statewide results, national AAPI data, and what we still don't know about Texas

Texas voters delivered a turnout wave that reshaped state government (though still only 51.7% of registered voters)

Governor	Gina Hinojosa (D) winner with ~52.9%, unseating Gov. Greg Abbott
U.S. Senate	James Talarico (D) defeated Ken Paxton; Collin County (18.9% AAPI) flipped Democratic
Texas Legislature	Democrats won a majority in the House for the first time since 2002; Texas Senate stayed Republican
Central Texas	Travis County early vote beat 2012 presidential levels and topped 2022 by ~100,000 voters

Sources: Northwest Asian Weekly (Nov. 2026); CBS Austin; Texas Public Radio; KUT News (Nov. 2, 2026); APIAVote 2026 fact sheet. Confirm against certified canvass.

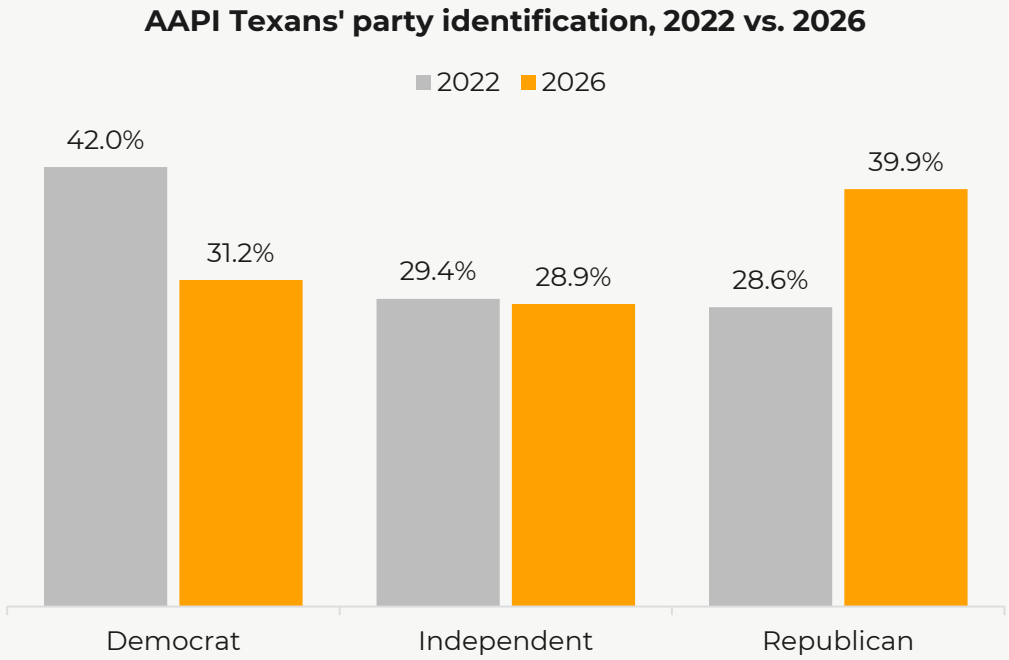
Nationally, AAPI voters turned out in record numbers and swung toward Democrats



- **~9-point swing** from Republican to Democratic, 2024–2026, second only to Latino voters.
- **Youth led:** 79% of young AAPI men and 84% of young AAPI women voted for Democratic House candidates.
- **Issues, not party:** the economy and jobs, health care and the Iran War topped AAPI concerns.

Sources: The Yappie (Nov. 2026) citing NORC, Tufts CIRCLE, AARC/BSP Research, AAPI Data; Northwest Asian Weekly. Early estimates; small AAPI samples.

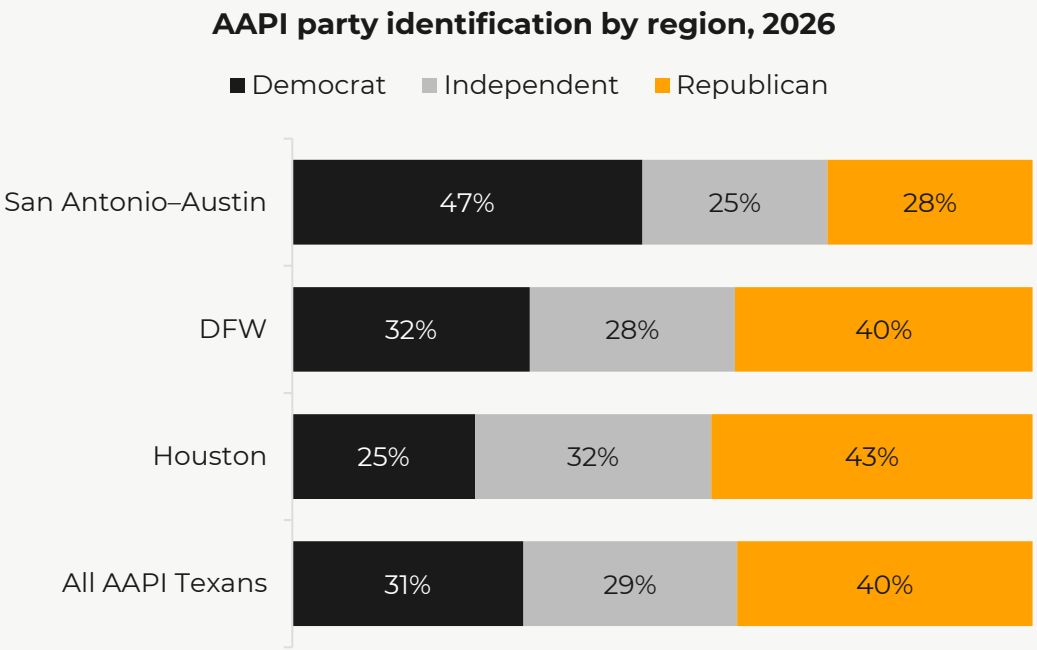
Before the election, AAPI Texans were a genuine swing electorate



- **No party holds a majority** of AAPI Texans; the gap is far narrower than among White or Black Texans.
- **Soft GOP gains:** only 39.4% of AAPI Republicans identify as MAGA.
- **Split-ticket signals:** AAPI approval of state Democrats (52.3%) and Republicans (49.8%) was nearly identical.

Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026); Change Research, n=1,082 TX likely voters incl. 500 AAPI oversample, June 22–30, 2026, MoE ±4.2%. 2022 Independent derived.

Central Texas AAPI voters lean Democratic but shifted most toward the GOP



+14.2 pts

GOP ID gain, 2024→2026

San Antonio–Austin AAPI (13.5% → 27.7%)

81.2%

Highly motivated to vote

Highest of any region (statewide AAPI: 77%)

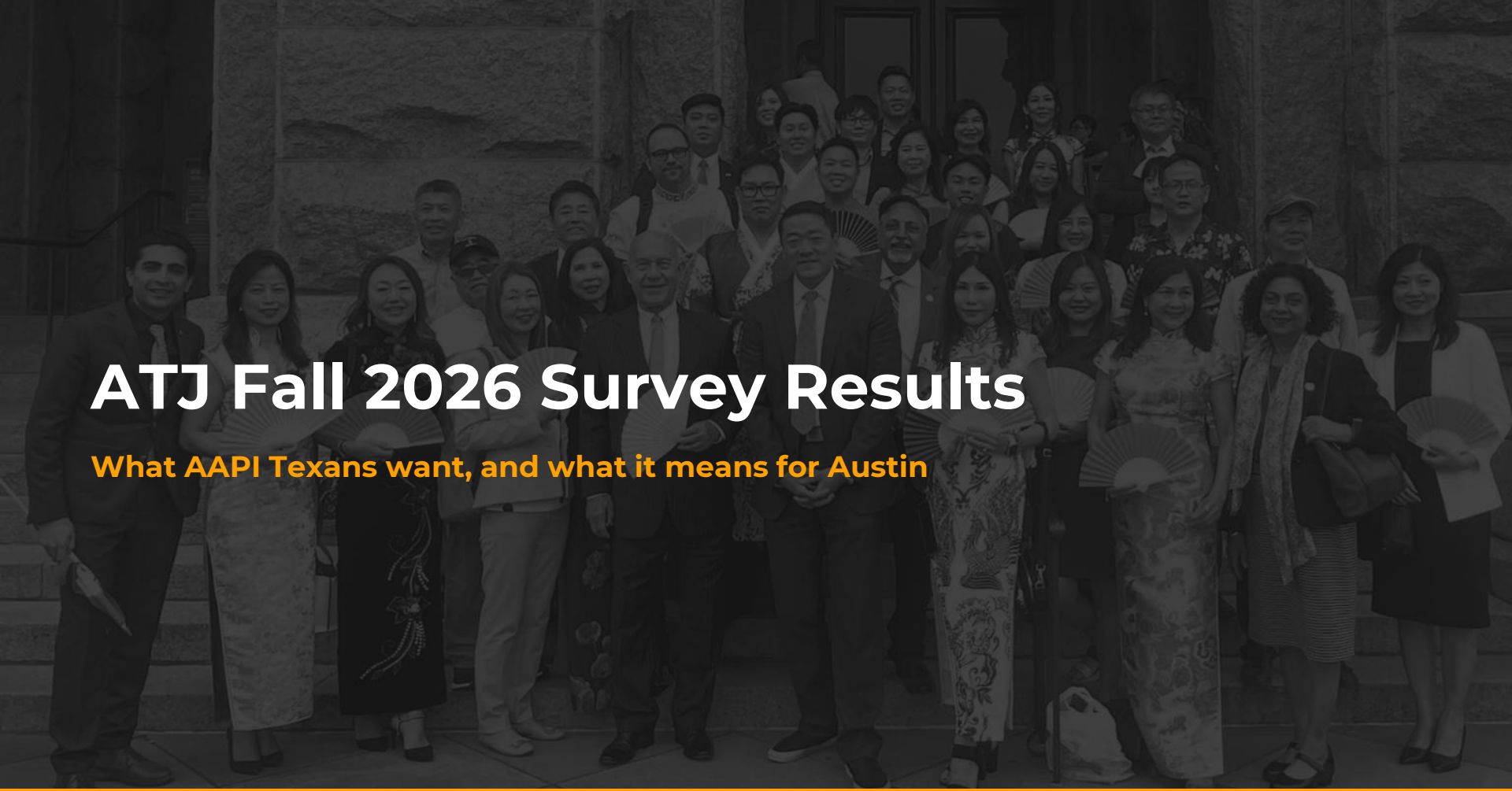
Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), regional appendix. Survey treats San Antonio–Austin as one region.

We still lack Texas-specific AAPI turnout and vote-choice data for 2026

- **No Texas AAPI exit data yet:** post-election analyses report national and battleground AAPI figures, not Texas.
- **Undercounting is structural:** exit polls exclude or undercount AAPIs, and voter files "severely undercount" them.
- **Census tables miss multiracial AAPIs,** so standard CVAP figures understate the electorate.
- **Surveys like Asian Texans for Justice's biannual voter surveys** are often the only way to assess voter preferences and behavior.



Sources: Northwest Asian Weekly (Mary-Lou Akai Ferguson, Asian American Power Network); APIAVote state demographics methodology note; The Yappie.

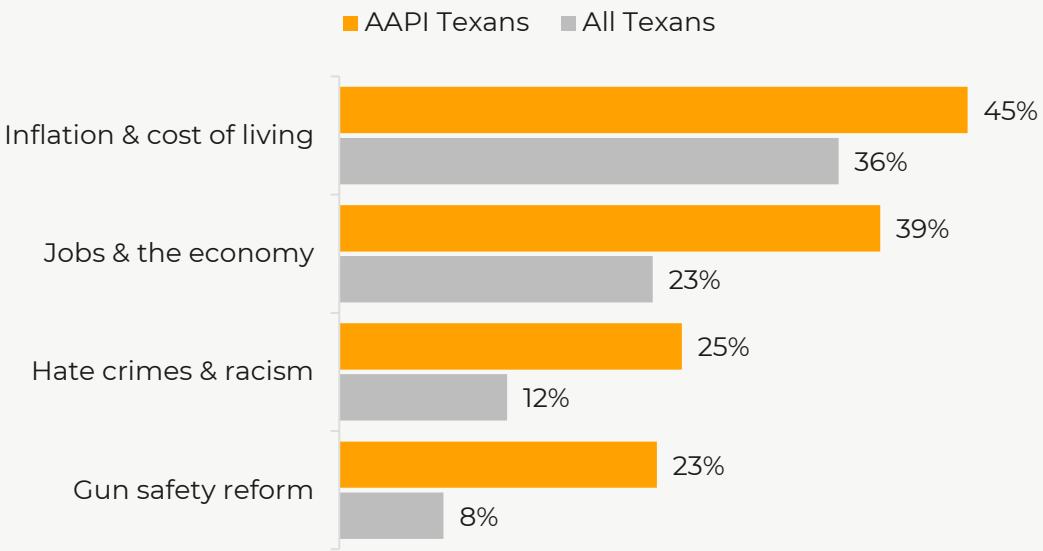


ATJ Fall 2026 Survey Results

What AAPI Texans want, and what it means for Austin

Pocketbook issues drive AAPI Texans even more than Texans overall

Share naming each issue a top-3 priority for state leaders

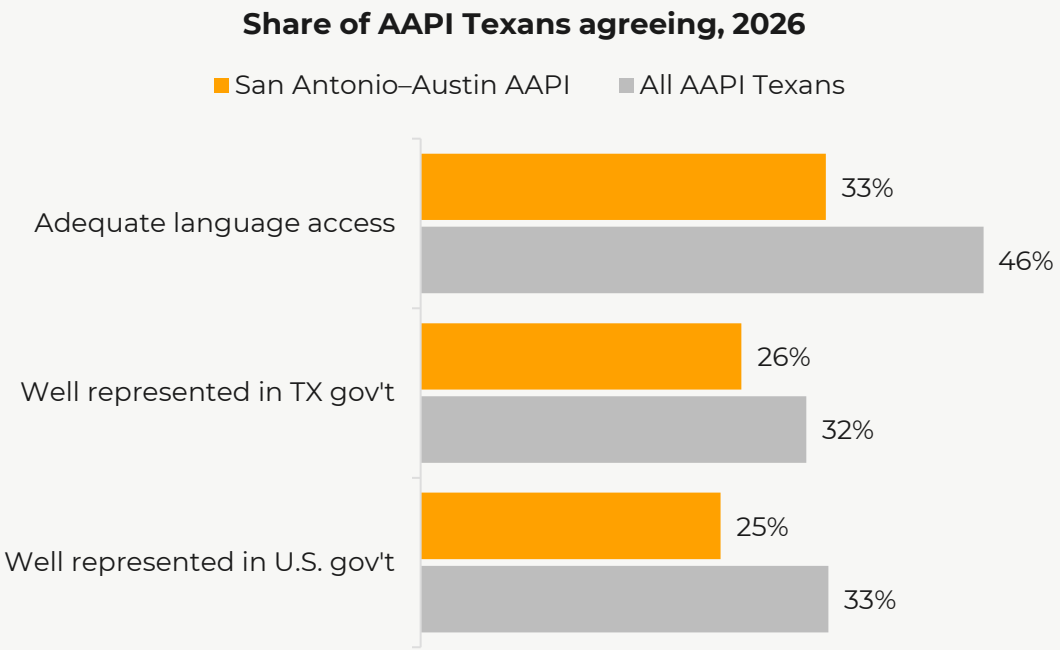


Central Texas is different

- **Reproductive rights** (33.3%) and education funding (30.3%) rise into the top tier.
- **Jobs** falls to 30.0%, well below DFW and Houston.
- **Healthcare** (42.2%) ranks #2 behind inflation.

Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), Figures 10–13. Healthcare (41.9% AAPI statewide) omitted from chart: no all-Texans comparison reported.

Language access and representation lag furthest behind in Central Texas



85% vs. 61%

Support interpreter services

AAPI Texans vs. all Texans

80% vs. 54%

Support ethnic studies

AAPI Texans vs. all Texans

Source: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), Figures 15, 17 and regional appendix.

AAPI representation is growing, led by historic firsts from Austin

Austin City Council

- **Zo Qadri (D9):** re-elected with 51.4%, avoiding a runoff; Austin's first South Asian and Muslim council member
- **Selena Xie (D8):** Chinese American EMS commander; won the open seat with 64%

Texas House

- **Pooja Sethi (HD-47, Austin):** first South Asian woman and first Hindu elected to the Legislature
- **Re-elected:** Salman Bhojani (HD-92), Suleman Lalani (HD-76), Gene Wu (HD-137)
- **Departing:** Angie Chen Button (HD-112); Hubert Vo (HD-149) lost his May runoff after 20+ years

Texas Senate

- **No Asian American** has ever been elected to the Texas Senate as of 2026

Statewide: Alice Yi, Austin voting rights advocate and ATJ co-founder, serves on Comptroller-elect Sarah Eckhardt's transition team.

Sources: KUT News; Axios Austin; Texas Tribune; Muslim Network TV; Wikipedia (Pooja Sethi); Strategic Partnerships (Nov. 2026). Results unofficial until canvassed.

Texas voter concerns called into the nonpartisan 866-OUR-VOTE hotline and the Texas Election Protection Coalition

6887

Calls between 8/1/2026 and today

Nearly double the calls received in 2024

545

In Travis and Williamson Counties

213

Calls statewide from self-identified Asian voters

1334

Poll monitors

In 55 counties, including 50 polling places designated as high-AAPI turnout

- **Voter registration the top issue:** ~15% of calls related to voter registration issues
- **Polling place access (language and disability), intimidation, and vote by mail problems also major issues:** ~6% of calls, each

Major threats like ICE at the polls sowed fear, but did not come to pass.

Sources: 866-OUR-VOTE hotline, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and Texas Civil Rights Project

Fear of intimidation shaped the 2026 voting experience for many AAPI voters

~60%

of AAPI voters nationally were worried they, their family or community could be targeted by government policies

ICE

Focus groups in Georgia found anxiety about immigration agents at polls; some U.S.-born voters carried passports

DOJ

Plainclothes federal Department of Justice officers monitored Harris County polling, per Asian American Texas Action Fund

Anti-China, anti-Muslim and anti-trans ads across the South may have backfired with AAPI voters (Stephanie Cho, Asian American Texas Action Fund).

Sources: The Yappie citing APIAVote 2026 voter poll; Northwest Asian Weekly (Nov. 2026). Reports are advocacy-group accounts, not independently verified.

Implications for the City of Austin

1 **Expand language access**

In-language election and city information in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Hindi and other languages, with bilingual poll and service staff.

2 **Meet voters where they get news**

YouTube (41.7%) and online news lead; ethnic media and WeChat reach ~7% each.

3 **Invest in disaggregated data**

Partner with the County and researchers on AAPI turnout, by subgroup and precinct.

4 **Plan for growth beyond city limits**

Williamson County growth and the 2030 Census and redistricting will reshape AAPI representation.

Draft recommendations for Commission discussion. Media-use data: Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift (Fall 2026), Figure 9.

Sources

- Asian Texans for Justice, The Lone Star Shift: AAPI Texans Coming Into Power (Fall 2026). Change Research survey, June 22–30, 2026.
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- The Yappie, "What the data tells us about AAPI voters in last week's elections" (Nov. 2026). theyappie.com
- APIAVote / AAPI Data, AAPI Voter Demographics by State and 2026 Texas State Fact Sheet. apiavote.org
- AAPI Data, 2026 AAPI Voters Data and Narrative Toolkit. aapidata.com
- Texas Public Radio; CBS Austin; KUT News (Nov. 2026) for statewide and Travis County results and turnout.
- KUT News; Axios Austin; Texas Tribune; Muslim Network TV; Strategic Partnerships (Nov. 2026) for AAPI officeholders and transition teams.

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