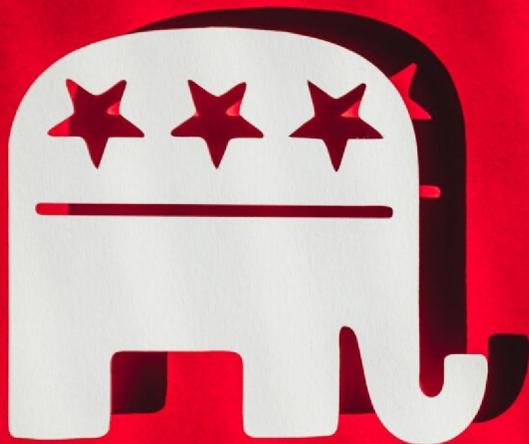


# HARRIS COUNTY PRIMARIES 2026

DIRECTION OF THE NATION, STATE and COUNTY &  
IMPORTANT COUNTY ISSUES



Hobby School of Public Affairs  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



## Harris County Primaries 2026

### Direction of the Nation, State and County & Important County Issues

February 2026

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted representative surveys of likely March 2026 Democratic and Republican primary voters in Harris County to assess their preferences and opinions about candidates and issues in the primaries. A person's likelihood of voting in the March Democratic and Republican primaries was determined by a combination of their prospective intention to participate and their record of past primary election participation in 2024 and in 2022.

Voters were contacted via SMS text message and directed to an online survey platform with the option to answer the survey in English or Spanish. The surveys were fielded between February 3 and February 10. Representative of voters who are likely to participate in the 2026 Harris County Democratic primary, the sample population for the Democratic survey is 2,000 (with a margin of error of +/- 2.19%). Regarding the 2026 Harris County Republican primary survey, the sample population is also 2,000 (with a margin of error of +/- 2.19%) and is representative of voters who are likely to participate in the Republican primary.

Prior reports in this series cover select races in the Democratic and Republican primaries in Harris County. This brief focuses on likely Democratic and Republican primary voters' opinions about the state of the United States, Texas and Harris County and the issues of the most concern in Harris County.

#### **HARRIS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS**

White likely voters account for 44% of this population of Harris 2026 Democratic primary likely voters, Black likely voters for 30%, Latino likely voters for 19%, and others for 7%. Women represent 61% of this population, men 38%, and those who identify as "other" 1%. More than three-fifths (63%) of these likely voters are age 55 and older, while 26% are between the ages of 35 and 54, and 11% are between the ages of 18 and 34. A little more than two-fifths (45%) of these likely voters possess a four-year college degree while 55% do not. Democrats account for 72% of this population, Independents for 15% and Republicans for 6%, with 6% identifying as something else and 1% unsure about their partisanship.

#### **HARRIS COUNTY REPUBLICAN PRIMARY POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS**

White likely voters account for 76% of this population of Harris County 2026 Republican primary likely voters, Latino likely voters for 15%, Black likely voters for 3%, and others for 8%. Women represent 50% of this population and men also 50%. More than three-fifths (68%) of these likely voters are age 55 and older, while 23% are between the ages of 35 and 54, and 9% are between the ages of 18 and 34. A little more than half (56%) of these likely voters possess a four-year college degree while 44% do not. Republicans account for 69% of this population, Independents for 22% and Democrats for 4%, with 4% identifying as something else and 1% unsure about their partisanship.

## RIGHT DIRECTION OR WRONG TRACK

Figure 1 provides the proportion of likely Harris County voters in the Democratic and Republican primaries who say things in the United States are going in the right direction and the proportion who say things in the United States have gotten off on the wrong track. Democratic and Republican likely voters in Harris County hold drastically different opinions about the direction of the nation, with 97% of Democratic voters saying things are off on the wrong track compared to slightly less than one-third (32%) of the Republicans. Conversely, nearly two-thirds (64%) of likely Republican voters believe things in the United States are headed in the right direction while only 1% of Democrats agree.

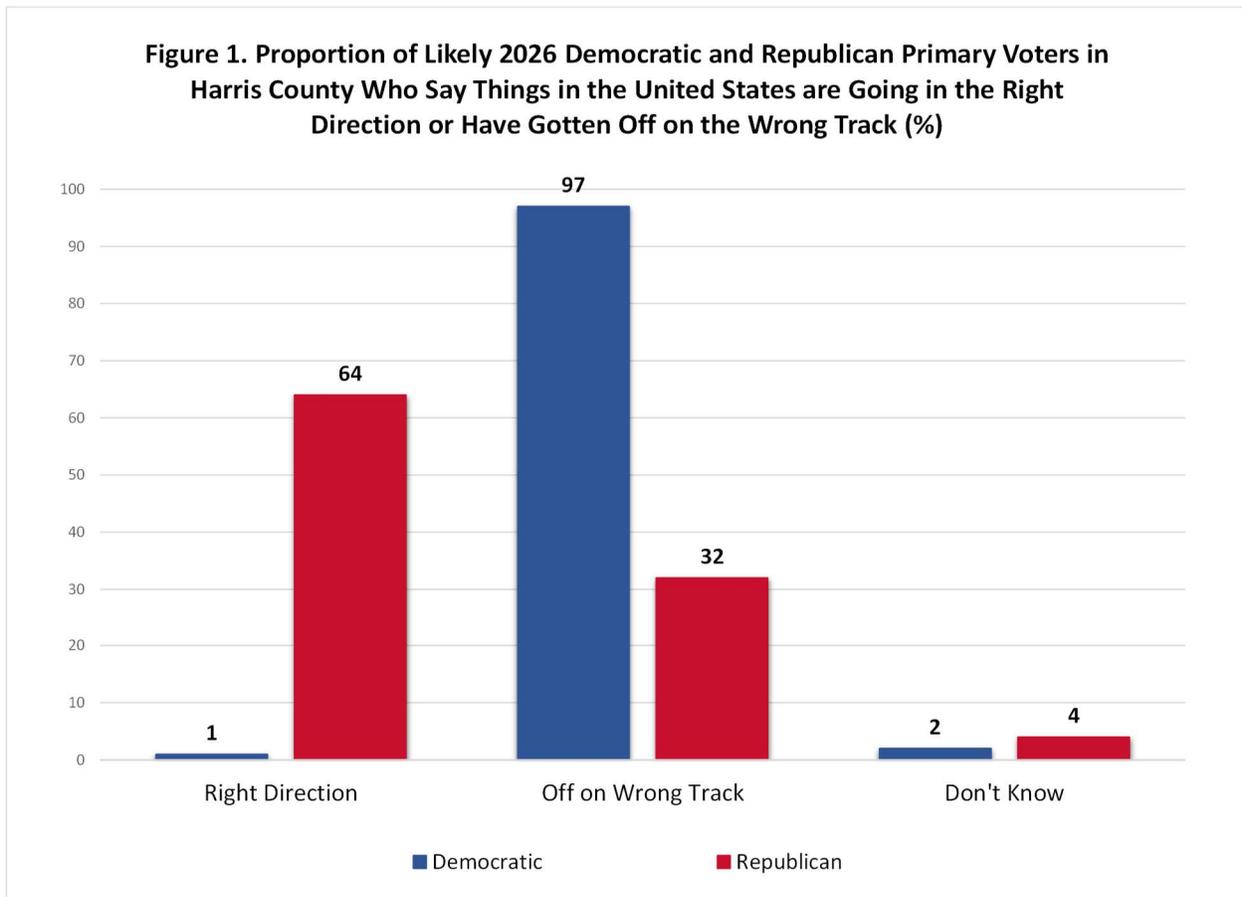


Figure 2 provides the proportion of likely Harris County voters in the Democratic and Republican primaries who say things in Texas are going in the right direction and the proportion who say things in Texas have gotten off on the wrong track. As with opinions about the direction of the nation, Democratic and Republican likely voters in Harris County hold very dissimilar opinions about the direction of the Lone Star State, with 96% of Democratic voters saying things are off on the wrong track compared to slightly less than one-third (32%) of the Republicans. In contrast, more than three in five (63%) likely Republican voters believe things in Texas are headed in the right direction while only 2% of Democrats agree.

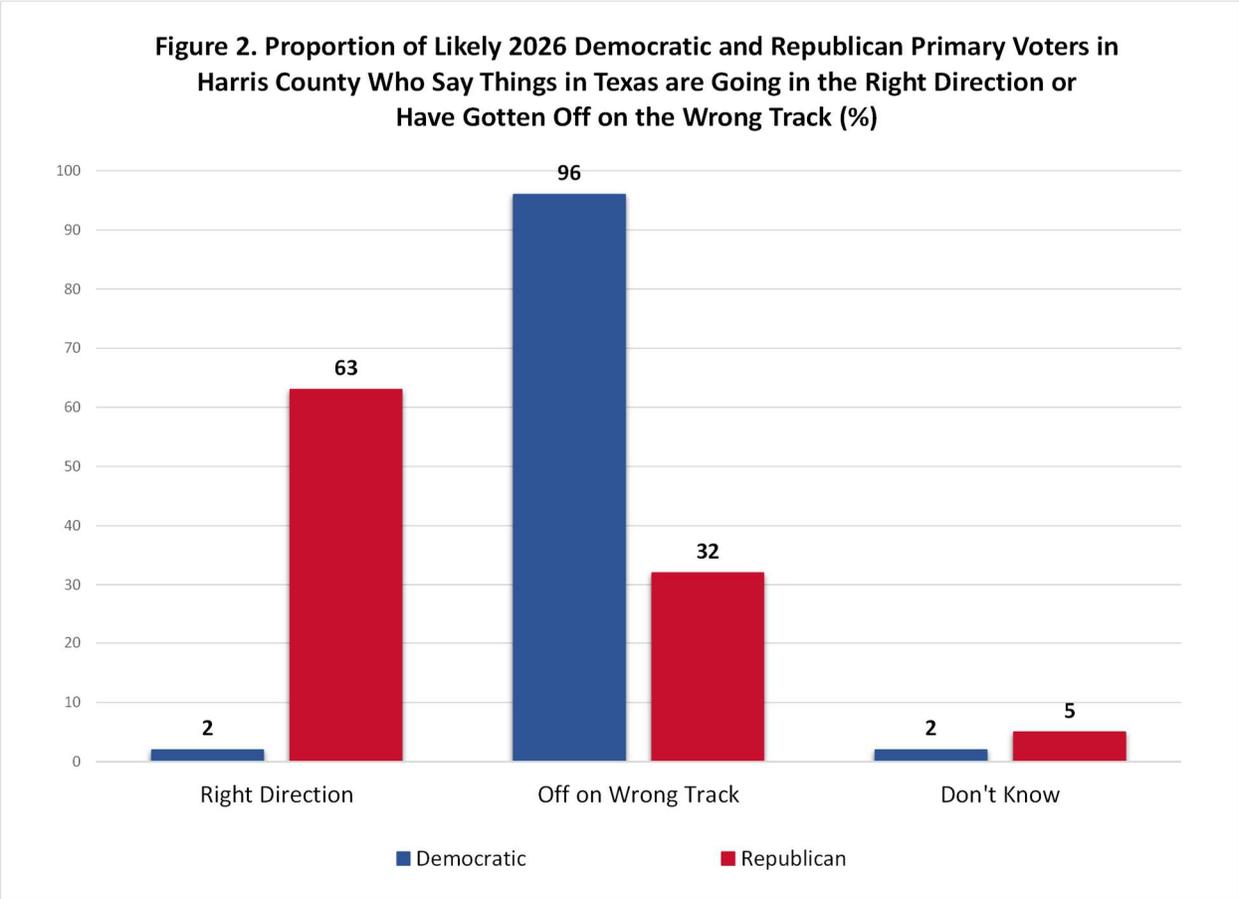
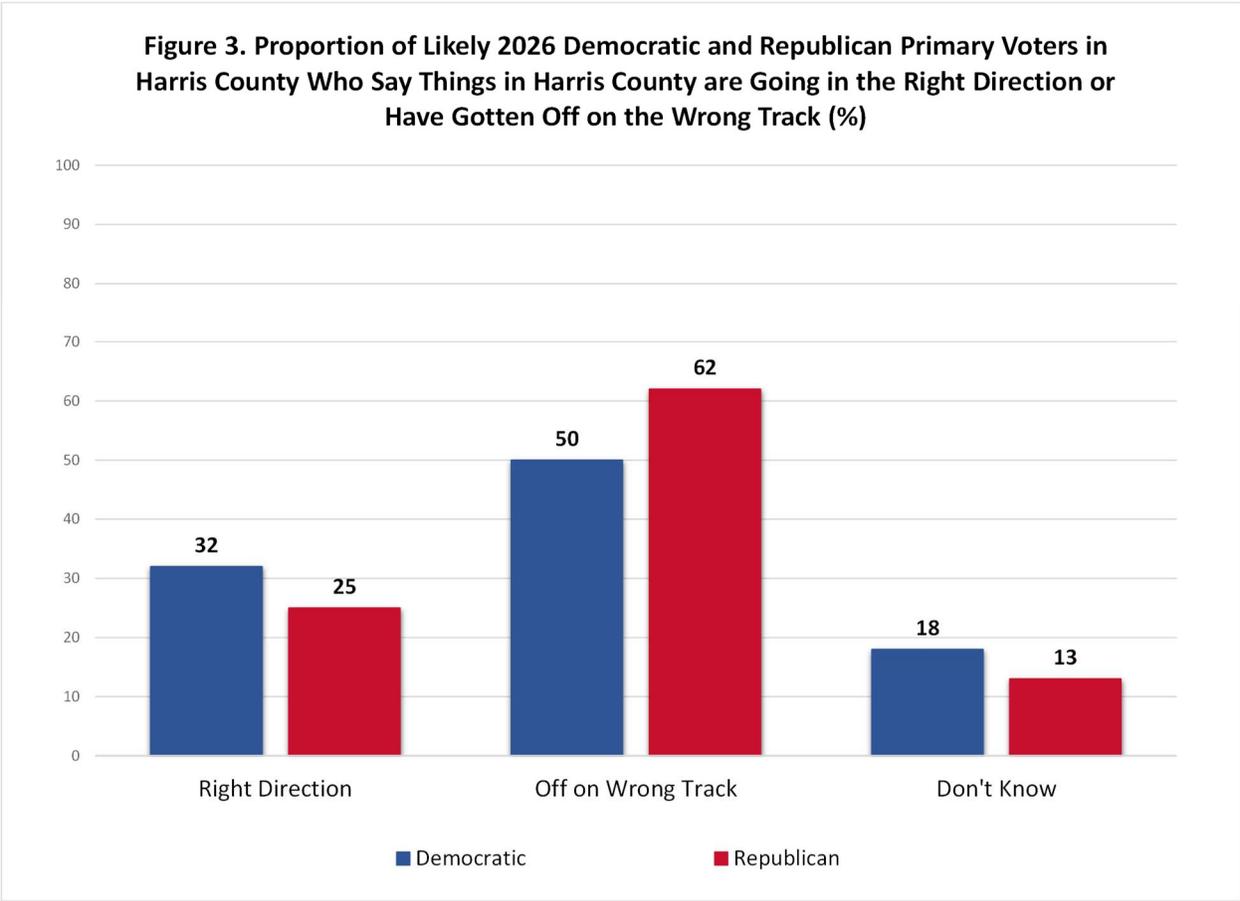


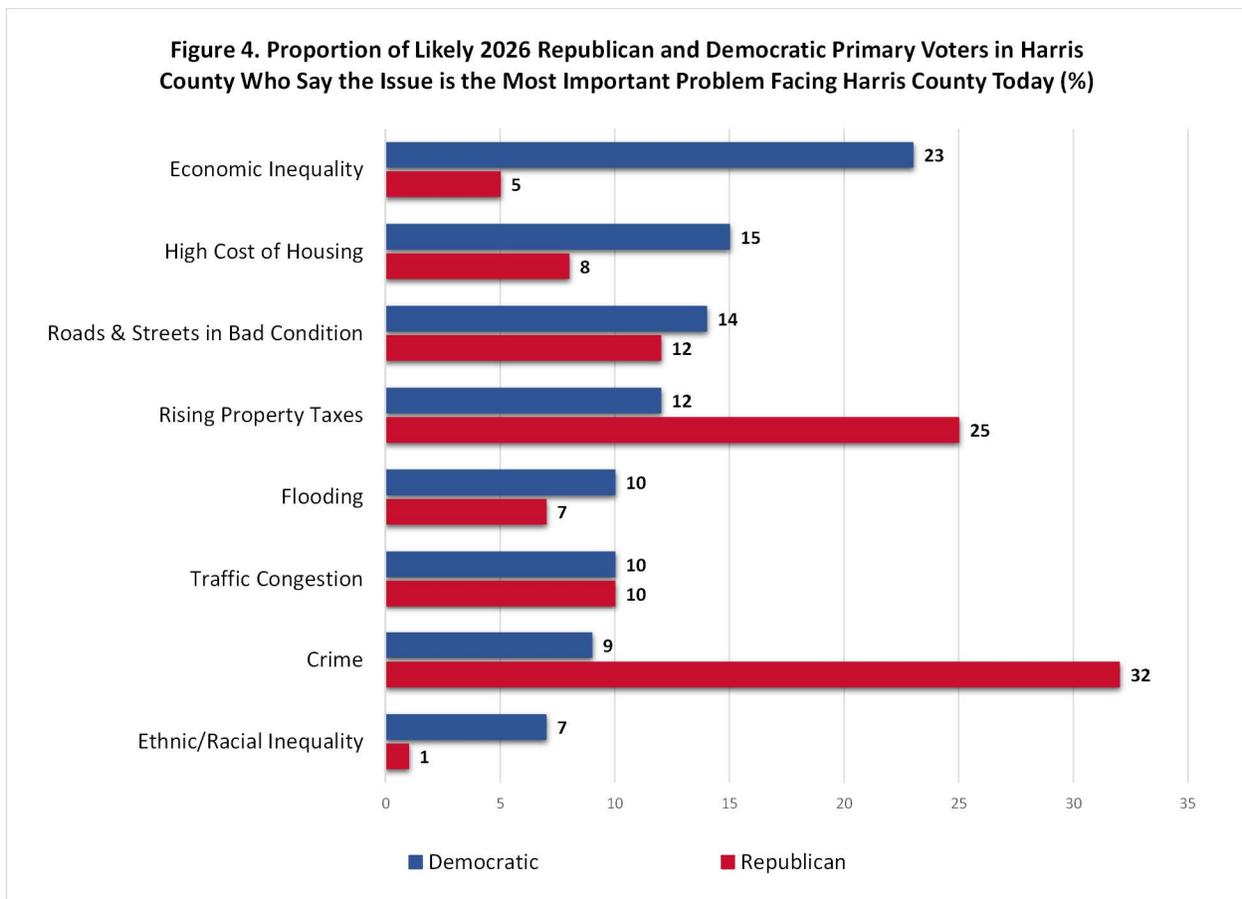
Figure 3 provides the proportion of likely Harris County voters in the Democratic and Republican primaries who say things in Harris County are going in the right direction and the proportion who say things in Harris County have gotten off on the wrong track. While differences of opinion about Harris County are found among the likely Democratic and Republican primary voters, the opinions are not as polarized as found when considering the direction of the nation or the state. Nearly one-third (32%) of Democratic voters and a quarter (25%) of Republican voters believe that things in Harris County are headed in the right direction. One-half (50%) of Democrats believe Harris County is off on the wrong track, while 62% of Republicans are of the same opinion. Substantially more Democratic (18%) and Republican (13%) voters say they don't know about the direction of Harris County compared to only between 2% and 5% of these same voters saying they don't know about the direction of the nation or state.



## THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING HARRIS COUNTY

The March 2026 likely Democratic and Republican primary voters were presented with a list of eight issues and asked which one of the issues they believe is the most important issue facing Harris County today. The rotated issue options included economic inequality, high cost of housing, roads and streets in bad condition, rising property taxes, flooding, traffic congestion, crime, and ethnic/racial inequality.

Figure 4 provides the distribution of the proportion of likely voters who cited each of the eight issues as being the most important issue facing the county. The top issues of concern vary greatly between Democratic and Republican likely primary voters. For example, 32% of Republicans rank crime as the most important issue facing Harris County, with only 9% of Democrats ranking crime as the problem of most importance. Rising property taxes is also of utmost concern among one-fourth (25%) of Republicans while only 12% of Democrats believe the same. This contrast of opinions is also found when considering economic inequality as the most important issue facing Harris County. Nearly one-fourth (23%) of likely Democratic voters believe that economic inequality is the most important problem facing Harris County compared to only 5% of Republicans viewing it as the issue of most concern. While nearly twice as many Democrats (15%) as Republicans (8%) believe that the high cost of housing is the most important problem facing Harris County, there are no significant differences of opinion about roads and streets (14% and 12%), flooding (10% and 7%) and traffic congestion (10% each). Ethnic/racial inequality is not considered to be the most important problem facing Harris County by many Democratic voters (7%), but the proportion is greater than that among Republicans (1%).



Tables 1 and 2 provide the four top issues identified as the most important problem facing Harris County among likely Democratic and Republican primary voters, broken down by gender, ethnicity/race, age, education, partisanship and 2026 vote intention for county judge. Overall, there are not any noteworthy socio-demographic sub-group differences within either political party regarding the most important issue, with one exception. The exception is that among Democratic voters, economic inequality is significantly more likely to be identified as the top problem by those 55 and older (39%) than among younger voters, with 25% of those aged 35-54 years and 19% of those aged 18-34 with the same concern.

**Table 1. Proportion of Democratic Primary Voters Listing Issue as Most Important Problem Facing Harris County, Among Key Groups (%)**

| Socio-Demographic | Sub-Group                | Economic Inequality | High Cost of Housing | Roads & Streets in Bad Condition | Rising Property Taxes |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Overall           |                          | 23                  | 15                   | 14                               | 12                    |
| Gender            | Women                    | 24                  | 17                   | 13                               | 10                    |
|                   | Men                      | 20                  | 13                   | 17                               | 14                    |
| Ethnicity/Race    | White                    | 26                  | 12                   | 16                               | 9                     |
|                   | Latino                   | 22                  | 18                   | 10                               | 15                    |
|                   | Black                    | 18                  | 19                   | 16                               | 12                    |
| Age               | 18 to 34                 | 19                  | 13                   | 17                               | 12                    |
|                   | 35 to 54                 | 25                  | 20                   | 10                               | 12                    |
|                   | 55 and Older             | 39                  | 14                   | 9                                | 6                     |
| Education         | 4 Year College Degree    | 25                  | 14                   | 15                               | 9                     |
|                   | No 4 Year College Degree | 21                  | 17                   | 13                               | 13                    |
| Partisanship      | Democrat                 | 23                  | 15                   | 14                               | 12                    |
|                   | Independent/Republican   | 19                  | 17                   | 15                               | 11                    |
| County Judge Vote | Annis Parker             | 22                  | 14                   | 16                               | 12                    |
|                   | Letitia Plummer          | 23                  | 17                   | 14                               | 8                     |
|                   | Unsure                   | 27                  | 15                   | 11                               | 14                    |

**Table 2. Proportion of Republican Primary Voters Listing Issue as Most Important Problem Facing Harris County, Among Key Groups (%)**

| Socio-Demographic | Sub-Group                | Crime | Rising Property Taxes | Roads & Streets in Bad Condition | Traffic Congestion |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall           |                          | 32    | 25                    | 12                               | 10                 |
| Gender            | Women                    | 33    | 22                    | 12                               | 9                  |
|                   | Men                      | 32    | 28                    | 12                               | 10                 |
| Ethnicity/Race    | White                    | 32    | 25                    | 12                               | 10                 |
|                   | Latino                   | 35    | 23                    | 10                               | 10                 |
| Age               | 18 to 34                 | 32    | 24                    | 13                               | 11                 |
|                   | 35 to 54                 | 33    | 29                    | 11                               | 6                  |
|                   | 55 and Older             | 36    | 24                    | 6                                | 7                  |
| Education         | 4 Year College Degree    | 31    | 23                    | 12                               | 8                  |
|                   | No 4 Year College Degree | 34    | 28                    | 11                               | 11                 |
| Partisanship      | Republican               | 35    | 29                    | 11                               | 9                  |
|                   | Independent/Democrat     | 26    | 17                    | 12                               | 11                 |
| County Judge Vote | Orlando Sanchez          | 34    | 34                    | 10                               | 9                  |
|                   | Marty Lancton            | 35    | 24                    | 14                               | 9                  |
|                   | Unsure                   | 30    | 24                    | 11                               | 10                 |

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## **RECOMMENDED CITATION**

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