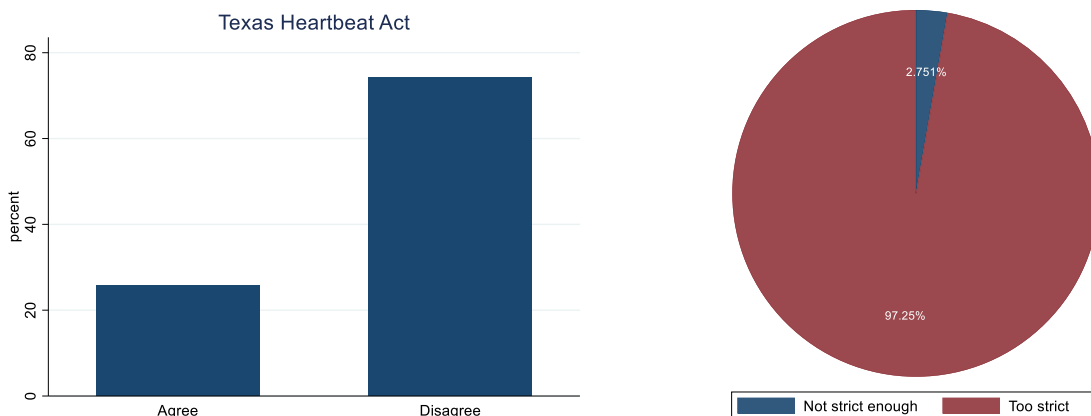


## New UTRGV Student Pulse: Texas Heartbeat Act

A team of UTRGV Political Science Professors, Drs. Dongkyu Kim, Natasha Altema McNeely, and Mi-son Kim, fielded the UTRGV Student Pulse Survey through the UTRGV Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis (CSRPA) in 2022. The survey found that:

- About 7 in 10 UTRGV students disagree with Senate Bill 8 (the Texas Heartbeat Act), which bans abortion after the detection of fetal cardiac activity.
- About 9 in 10 UTRGV students who disagree with the Texas Heartbeat Act believe that the law is too restrictive.

Even before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that recognized women’s constitutional right to abortion, the Texas Heartbeat Act took effect in 2021 to ban abortions after six weeks of pregnancy. The law also adopts a novel legal strategy to enforce the law by relying on ordinary citizens to report suspected activities. Survey respondents were asked. “As you may know, Senate Bill 8 (S.B. 8) was signed into Texas state law in 2021. This bill bans abortions after a fetal heartbeat has been detected. This can be as early as six weeks into pregnancy. Given what you know about this law, do you agree or disagree with it?” Approximately 74% of the respondents disagreed with the law. Among those who disagreed, about 96% said that they disagree because it is too strict in restricting abortion rights.



The opinion among UTRGV students on the Texas Heartbeat Act is similar to Texas voters' opinion on abortion. According to [a recent poll conducted by the University of Texas at Austin](#), about 78% of all Texas voters believe that access to abortion should be allowed in some form. Approximately 15% said that the law should not permit abortion. The same pattern emerged in a recent survey conducted by the [Pew Research Institute](#). Concerning the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling against Roe v. Wade, about 57% of Americans disapprove of the decision. It also shows that a majority of American adults (62%) believe that abortion should be legal in some form. About 36% say that abortion should be illegal in any form (8%) or in most cases (28%).

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**Methodology:** In spring 2022, the UTRGV Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis fielded the 2022 UTRGV Student Pulse Survey. UTRGV students, who are enrolled in the 2021-2022 academic year and are 18 years or older, were asked about their perceptions and opinions of various social and political issues. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board of UTRGV (IRB-210521). For more information regarding survey methodology, please contact [csr@utrgv.edu](mailto:csr@utrgv.edu).

**About the Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis:** The Center for Survey Research & policy Analysis ([www.utrgv.edu/center-for-survey-research](http://www.utrgv.edu/center-for-survey-research)) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley was established in 1998 to study and report on issues of local concern in the Rio Grande Valley and to provide training opportunities and research experience to students in survey research methods. Today, the Center continues its mission to provide timely applied research, technical assistance and consulting services to local and state agencies, non-profit organizations and private business associations throughout the Rio Grande Valley, as well as to the UTRGV community. The Center's capabilities include survey design and administration, public opinion polling, data collection and analysis, program evaluation, needs assessment, technical assistance and policy analysis. For more information or to discuss a potential project, contact [csr@utrgv.edu](mailto:csr@utrgv.edu).

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