

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Global Strategy Group
DATE: August 14, 2020
RE: **NEW POLL: Chrysta Castañeda's unique biography, Jim Wright's potent negatives, and Donald Trump's Free-Fall give Castañeda a clear path to victory in the Texas Railroad Commission race**

A new statewide poll of likely voters in Texas shows that the race for Texas Railroad Commissioner is very much in play. Despite a Republican advantage on party identification and an electorate still largely identifies as conservative (45% of likely voters,) the presidential race in Texas is in a statistical tie with Joe Biden ahead by two points, consistent with [recent public polling](#). Unsurprisingly, the race for Railroad Commission is very undefined as neither candidate is well known yet. Chrysta Castañeda starts out slightly behind Jim Wright, but with a quarter of voters undecided.

More important, the survey shows that Castañeda's unique qualifications as a lawyer and engineer who has worked in the oil and gas industry for three decades and her platform of reining in the illegal flaring of natural gas that is polluting Texas' air and wasting its natural resource resonates strongly with voters. Moreover, Jim Wright has unique and powerful vulnerabilities thanks to his [legal troubles](#) before the Commission. As a result, Castañeda moves into a lead after a balanced introduction of both candidates and extends that lead after a balanced exchange of negatives. Castañeda ends the balanced survey with a 10-point lead over Wright, showing that if she has the resources to communicate with voters, the Democrat has a clear path to victory.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

- **The Texas political terrain has become much more favorable for Democrats as Trump trails by two after winning statewide by nine points in 2016.** Joe Biden has a two-point lead over Trump in the race for president (47% Biden/45% Trump), including a six-point lead among self-identified independents (37% Biden/31% Trump). This is driven by Trump's acute unpopularity among independents (33% fav/55% unfav). Republicans have just a two-point lead on the generic ballot for state representative (44% Democrat/46% Republican) and Democrats are more motivated to vote this November (79% of Democrats are extremely motivated to vote vs. 75% of Republicans who are extremely motivated to vote).
- **Wright holds a name ID advantage thanks to the contested GOP primary and sharing a name with the former Speaker of the U.S. House, but Castañeda starts within striking distance in a very open race.** Jim Wright competed in a competitive Republican primary, which drove his name ID up with Republicans, but he is actually has higher name ID with Democrats, many of whom are likely mistaking him with the former Speaker of the U.S. House from Texas with the same name. As a result, his name ID, while not high at 26%, is higher than Castañeda's (18%). Despite the lower level of familiarity, Castañeda is behind Wright by only six points, 31% Castañeda/37% Wright, with 8% going to Libertarian Matt Sterett and 24% undecided – with Democrats significantly more likely to be undecided than Republicans.
- **After a balanced introduction, Castañeda moves into a six-point lead which expands to double-digits after balanced negative.** Following the initial ballot, voters heard profiles of equal length about both Castañeda and Wright (with Wright's based on information from his own website). Following this simulated debate, Castañeda takes a six-point lead (45% Castañeda/39% Wright/5% Sterett), with 11% undecided. Voters then heard critiques of both candidates, with the critique of Wright focused on his legal troubles and the attack

against Castañeda attempting to paint her (inaccurately) as a liberal Democrat who is backed by “radical environmental groups” and running on a “platform of implementing massive new job-killing regulations on the oil and gas industry” that will “kill the Texas Miracle.” As the table below shows, this exchange expands Castañeda’s lead to 10 points.

Vote Progression			
	Initial	Profiles	Critiques
3-way			
Castaneda	31	45	42
Wright	37	39	32
Sterett	8	5	8
Undecided	24	11	18
Net (Castaneda-Wright)	-6	+6	+10
2-way			
Castaneda	38	46	47
Wright	44	42	38
Undecided	18	12	15
Net (Castaneda-Wright)	-6	+4	+9

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a multichannel survey (live telephone as well as online voter file matched panel) of 700 likely general election voters statewide in Texas August 11-13, 2020. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.7%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.