Recent statewide polling conducted by Global Strategy Group and Latino Decisions finds a tightening competitive senate race in Texas, where lesser-known challenger Mary Jennings "MJ" Hegar trails three-term incumbent John Cornyn by one point. Further, the race becomes tied once voters learn more about Hegar, and voters respond to attacks on Cornyn with Hegar surging ahead by 7 points on the final ballot.
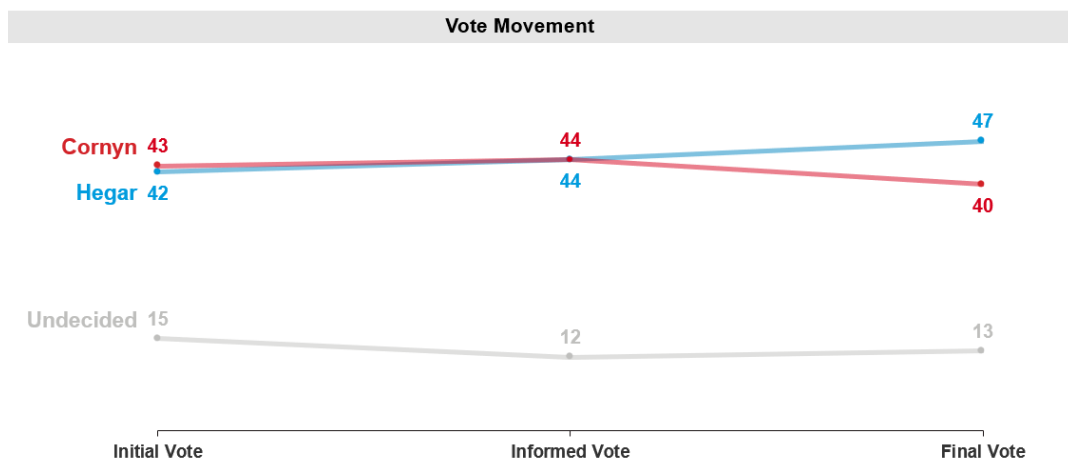
The following memo contains key findings from the survey conducted between July 25 and July 29, 2020 among 700 likely general election voters in Texas.

Key Findings

- **While over half of the electorate knows MJ Hegar, there is room to grow her name ID against incumbent Cornyn who gets neutral-to-positive reviews.** Over half (56%) of voters can rate Hegar, with 33% favorable towards her and 23% unfavorable, giving her a net favorable rating of +10. Meanwhile, three-quarters (75%) of the electorate knows Cornyn, but voters who can rate him give him mixed reviews – 38% are favorable and 37% are unfavorable, leaving him a net favorable rating of just +1. However, voters approve of the job he is doing in office by a +17 margin – 57% rate the job he has done as excellent or good, as opposed to 40% who say it is not so good or poor.

- **The race is statistically tied, and Cornyn notably fails to clear a 50% threshold.** These attitudes towards a relatively unknown but liked challenger against a well-known incumbent translate into a dead-heat in the race for Senate – Hegar 42%/Cornyn 43%. With 15% of voters undecided, Cornyn is unable to garner support from over half of voters. Even more encouraging is the clear room to improve Hegar's vote share with voters of color, specifically both Black and Latino/a voters, who break for Hegar on the initial vote (Black: Hegar 64%/Cornyn 12%, Latino: Hegar 50%/Cornyn 27%) but are also most undecided (both 23% undecided). Black voters are also least familiar with Hegar overall (53% familiar), presenting an opportunity to grow Hegar's vote share with Black and Latino voters with additional outreach and increased name recognition.

- **Voters move to Hegar when they hear more about her.** When voters hear more about Hegar's story – that she served in the Air Force and received a Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross and is a working mom who understands families' struggles to afford health care and make ends meet – the race narrows to a true tie against Cornyn, with both candidates receiving 44% of the vote, and 12% still undecided.

- **When voters learn more about Cornyn's record, Hegar gains a definitive lead. After voters learn more about Cornyn,** a career politician who has been in the U.S. Senate for 18 years and in political office for more than 30," they choose Hegar 47% to 40%, with 13% remaining undecided. The most effective hit tested focuses on Cornyn taking "$1.4 million from drug companies… [a]nd in exchange repeatedly sides with his big donors by fighting against lower prescription drug prices and voting against Medicare to negotiate for lower prices and against expanding access to cheaper generic drugs." This attack raises major doubts for 44% of voters, particularly with voters over 60 (48% raises major doubts).

ABOUT THIS POLL: Global Strategy Group and Latino Decisions conducted a survey of 700 likely 2020 general election voters in Texas from July 25 to July 29, 2020. Interviews were conducted by telephone and web-based panel, and the survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.7%, while the margin of error among subgroups is larger. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are property represented.