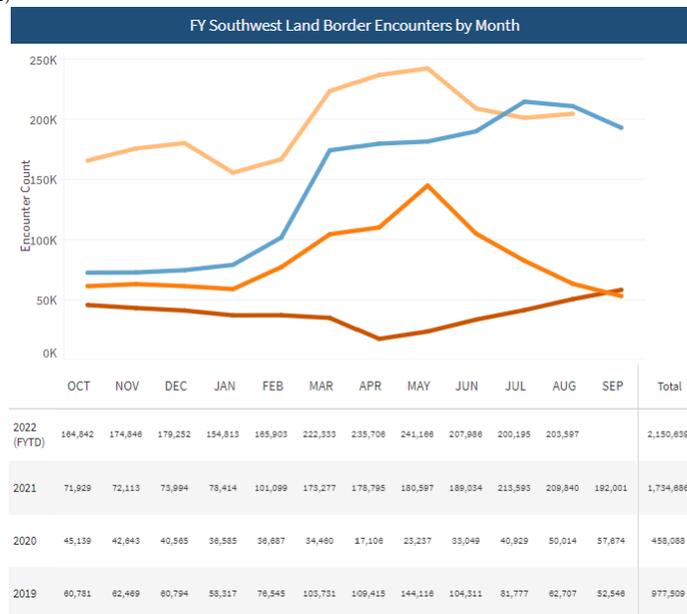


Drugs/Crime at the Border

Border Encounters

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 157,921 unique individuals in August 2022 nationwide, which was an increase from the prior month.** “The number of unique individuals encountered nationwide in August 2022 was 157,921, a 2.2 percent increase in the number of unique enforcement encounters compared to the prior month, driven largely by an increased number of asylum seekers fleeing authoritarian regimes in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua” (“CBP Releases August 2022 Monthly Operational Update,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 9/19/22)
 - There were 203,598 total encounters in the month of August at the southwest land border, including migrants who had at least one prior encounter in the last 12 months; that number is a 1.7% increase from the previous month.** “In total, there were 203,598 encounters along the southwest land border in August, a 1.7 percent increase compared to July. Of those, 22 percent involved individuals who had at least one prior encounter in the previous 12 months.” (“CBP Releases August 2022 Monthly Operational Update,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 9/19/22)
- As of the end of August 2022, CBP had encountered over 2.1 million people at the Southwest Land Border in FYTD2022, which is already more than FY2021 and more than double what it was in FY2019.** (“Southwest Land Border Encounters,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), Accessed 9/19/2022)



(“Southwest Land Border Encounters,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), Accessed 9/19/2022)

- In the first half of FY 2022, CBP encountered just under 1.06 million illegal migrants at the southwest border.** “According to an April filing in *Texas v. Biden*, CBP encountered

221,303 illegal migrants at the Southwest border last month, bringing total encounters there to just fewer than 1.06 million for just the first half of FY 2022.” (Andrew R. Arthur, “Nearly 1.06 Million CBP Encounters at Southwest Border Thus Far in FY 2022,” [Center for Immigration Studies](#), 4/19/22)

- **By March 2022, the Biden administration had released over 836,000 migrants into the U.S.** “Worse, DHS released more than 80,000 of those migrants into the interior last month, raising the total number of migrant illegal releases under the Biden administration to 836,225.” (Andrew R. Arthur, “Nearly 1.06 Million CBP Encounters at Southwest Border Thus Far in FY 2022,” [Center for Immigration Studies](#), 4/19/22)

Drugs and Cartels

- **In 2021, the amount of fentanyl that was seized in South Texas increased by 1,066%, among other drugs that saw increases from 2020.** “During FY 2021, CBP officers at the eight ports of entry extending from Brownsville to Del Rio that comprise the Laredo Field Office seized 87,652 pounds of narcotics that would have commanded a combined estimated street value of \$786 million. Specifically, they seized 41,713 pounds of marijuana; 8,592 pounds of cocaine, up 98 percent from FY 20; 33,777 pounds of methamphetamine; 1,215 pounds of heroin, 588 pounds of fentanyl, up 1,066 percent from FY 2020, \$10.4 million in unreported currency, 463 weapons, up 21 percent from FY 2020 and 84,863 rounds of ammunition.” (Press Release, “CBP Officers at South Texas Ports of Entry Post Significant Increases in Fentanyl, Cocaine Seized in FY 2021,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 1/5/2022)
- **Cartels have allegedly been known to infiltrate Border Patrol forces in the Rio Grande Valley.** “In south Texas, Mexican and South American cartels have been able to infiltrate law enforcement agencies in the U.S. Several former law enforcement officials from an anti-narcotics force in the Rio Grande Valley are currently serving lengthy prison sentences for drug crimes and corruption. In 2016, Border Patrol agent Joel Luna was charged with capital murder for the March 2015 beheading of an undocumented Honduran immigrant. Luna, a south Texas native and Army combat veteran, allegedly decapitated Palacio Paz and left his headless body floating in the bay. Prosecutors claim Luna was part of a cartel drug trafficking conspiracy with his brothers. Luna has pleaded not guilty. In November, Border Patrol agent Eduardo Bazen Jr., also was arrested after being accused of working with a drug trafficking organization. According to the criminal complaint, Bazen said he was paid \$8,000 for falsifying a 2007 drug bust and admitted to lying about suspects being present at the scene.” (Barnini Chakraborty, “‘They come every day’: Border town residents face daily threat from trafficking,” [Fox News](#), 1/17/2017)
- **The Gulf Cartel is a frequent visitor to the South Texas area transporting their heroin and cocaine into the United States.** “The Gulf Cartel holds its power base in parts of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas and in the state of Zacatecas, and may have alliances with CJNG members working in that region of Mexico. The Gulf Cartel focuses its drug trafficking activities on heroin and cocaine by transporting loads into the United States near the McAllen and Brownsville, Texas, areas.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)

- **Texas was in the top 10 of states with the number of drug overdoses involving cocaine in 2018.** “The U.S. states with the greatest number of deaths from drug poisoning involving cocaine in 2018, in descending order, were New York (1,276 deaths), Florida (1,221), Ohio (1,105), Pennsylvania (1,045), New Jersey (867), Illinois (771), Michigan (768), Texas (741), Massachusetts (716) and North Carolina (711).” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas and D.C. saw the greatest number of increases in 2019 of controlled substances lost in transit.** “Lost in transit describes controlled substances being misplaced while moving from one point to another within the supply chain. There has been a decrease in lost in transit incidents from 2017 through 2019 (See Figure 36). This data is self-reported from any facility that manages CPDs. In 2019, 22 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia experienced increases in the number of incidents, with the greatest increases occurring in the state of Texas and the District of Columbia.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas and California in 2019 had the largest marijuana seizure levels.** “State-level DEA (net weight) marijuana seizures generally followed previously established patterns. The highest seizures occurred in states with major land border crossings or high traffic seaports, as well as in states with large recreational or medical marijuana state approved markets (See Figure 50). California and Texas had the largest marijuana seizure levels, consistent with previous years, followed by Arizona and Colorado.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas, California, Arizona, and New York saw the largest amounts of heroin seized in 2019.** “DEA Field Divisions seized 6,951 kilograms of heroin in 2019, a 30 percent increase from 2018, with the largest amounts of heroin seized in Texas, California, Arizona, and New York.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **The plight of journalists is severe in the area as well.** “Nowhere do journalists face the threat of death more than here in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, one of four states bordering Texas across from Laredo and the McAllen, Harlingen and Brownsville area.” (Yami Virgin, “Texas cities hit hard by cartel violence targeting Mexican law enforcement,” [Fox 29 News](#), 3/26/2018)
- **McAllen has been the scene of cartel clashes in the past, in which its believed that Mexican police were involved assisting the cartels.** “On January 19, several bodies were found burned to death in two vehicles just across the border near McAllen, Texas. Three of the dead were reportedly cartel members. Law enforcement officials in Texas believe the others were Guatemalan migrants headed to the U.S. It's believed the murderers were Mexican police working with the cartels.” (Brett Shipp, “For migrants, threats from cartel are abundant on journey to U.S.,” [Spectrum News 1](#), 6/7/2021)
- **In Feb. 2022, McAllen Border Patrol Station agents arrested six migrants, one of whom was a Gulf Cartel member, near Hidalgo.** “On Feb. 28, McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) agents apprehended a group of six migrants near Hidalgo, Texas. At the station, record checks revealed a man traveling in the group is an active member of the Gulf Cartel. The cartel member’s brother was also traveling among the group. Both men have prior

arrests in Mexico for possession of marijuana.” ([U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), “Multiple Criminal Migrants Arrested in the RGV,” 3/2/2022)

Along the U.S. – Mexico border, “law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs,” and an “uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico:”

- Per a Fox News headline, border officials are seeing an “uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico.”

BORDER SECURITY · Published March 10, 2022 6:04pm EST

US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico

(Joy Addison, “US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico,” [Fox News](#), 3/10/22)

- **Along the border, “law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs.”** “As traffic grows at the U.S.-Mexico border with the easing of restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic, law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs.” (Joy Addison, “US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico,” [Fox News](#), 3/10/22)

Human smuggling across the border also appears to be a very profitable business for cartels, who have boasted on TikTok about the millions of dollars they are making doing such things:

- **Cartels have been boasting on TikTok about the millions of dollars they are making smuggling people across the border.** “Cartels are openly bragging on TikTok about how they make millions of dollars from a migrant border smuggling operation across the Texas border while evading law enforcement, according to three videos obtained by the Washington Examiner... The first video shows millions of dollars stacked on a table along with a currency counting machine. It is set against the backdrop of a Spanish language song with the subtitles ‘DRIVERS ASAP.’ A second is similar and says, ‘Truck drivers needed [Rio Grande Valley] area!! Comment and add me to start working,’ and ‘DM to make some racks.’ A third features a Spanish rap song and shows a driver heading down a freeway with several people stuffed into the back of his car, which has the seats removed. TikTok placed a disclaimer on the video that reads, ‘The actions in this video could result in serious injury or adverse health effects.’” (Tori Richards and Anna Giaritelli, “Cartels boast on TikTok how they make millions smuggling migrants across border,” [Washington Examiner](#), 6/16/2022)

Recent CBP Reports of Crime and Smuggling at the Border

- **4/27/2022 Headline: “RGV Agents Rescue 40 Migrants Entrapped in Metal Box.”**
“EDINBURG, Texas - Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol (RGV) agents disrupted three human smuggling events and encountered two large groups resulting in 322 apprehensions. On April 26, Falfurrias Border Patrol Checkpoint agents, after a K-9 alert, referred a truck pulling a flatbed trailer carrying large metal sided boxes to the secondary inspection area. Agents observed a vent, approximately 16 inches by 6 inches on one of the boxes and removed the vent to reveal 40 migrants in a seated position trapped inside. The metal sided box had to be broken apart by unscrewing multiple bolts using a power tool found in the truck. The box had no other opening or means of escape for the occupants. Agents determined the 40 migrants are citizens of Central America and Mexico unlawfully in the U.S. while the driver was a U.S. citizen. All subjects were placed under arrest. A search of the truck revealed the power tool, a handgun, and loaded magazines. The Brooks County Sheriff’s Office took custody of the truck, trailer, weapon, magazines, and driver. On April 25, RGV agents received information on an Edinburg residence being used to harbor migrants. A Chevrolet SUV was observed departing the location and RGV agents, with assistance from the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO), conducted a vehicle stop. The driver and two passengers were determined to be illegally present in the U.S. Agents and HCSO subsequently searched the residence, but no other subjects were located. All subjects were taken into Border Patrol custody. Later that evening, RGV agents working near San Manuel, attempted to initiate an immigration inspection on the occupants of a maroon Chevrolet Traverse. The driver immediately veered the vehicle off the road and came to a stop. All the occupants bailed out of the vehicle and ran into the nearby brush. Agents arrested eight migrants illegally present in the U.S. without incident. The driver was not located. In the past 24 hours, Rio Grande City Station agents encountered two large groups totaling 271 noncitizens near La Grulla. The groups consisted of 174 single adults, 53 family members, and 44 unaccompanied children. The migrants are from Central and South America, and Cuba.” (National Media Release, “RGV Agents Rescue 40 Migrants Entrapped in Metal Box,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 4/27/2022)
- **7/5/2022 Headline: “RGV Agents Arrest Five Gang Members and a Sex Offender.”**
“EDINBURG, Texas - Rio Grande Valley Sector (RGV) Border Patrol agents arrested five gang members and a sex offender during the first four days of July. McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) agents apprehended three Salvadoran Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang members. One of the gang members was convicted of assault and sentenced to seven months confinement in Maryland in 2010. One of the others served two years confinement for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in Houston. He was subsequently expelled from the U.S. in 2021. Additionally, MCS agents arrested a Mexican Valluco gang member near Hidalgo. Record checks revealed the migrant was sentenced to 40 days for larceny and public order crimes. He was also sentenced to 157 days confinement for being present in the U.S. after deportation. On July 1, Harlingen Border Patrol Station agents responded to a request for assistance from Transportation Security Administration at the Harlingen International Airport to identify a possible migrant. Agents arrested a Salvadoran national who claimed to have served 12 years incarceration for aggravated robbery in his home country and his affiliation to the 18th Street gang. MCS agents

apprehended a group of six migrants near Mission. Among the group was a Mexican national who was sentenced to 29 months incarceration for criminal sexual conduct in Michigan and was subsequently removed from the U.S. in Brownsville in 2020. All subjects were processed accordingly.” (Local Media Release, “RGV Agents Arrest Five Gang Members and a Sex Offender,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 7/5/2022)

- **9/12/2022 Headline: “RGV Agents Perform Rescues and Arrests this Weekend.”**
“EDINBURG, Texas – Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol (RGV) agents and state law enforcement agencies disrupt five smuggling attempts, resulting in 137 arrests. On September 9, Falfurrias Border Patrol Checkpoint agents, after a K-9 alert, referred a truck pulling a flatbed trailer carrying a large wooden box to the secondary inspection area. A search of the box revealed five migrants trapped inside. The box was completely sealed and secured down with cargo straps with no means of escape for the occupants. Agents determined the migrants are citizens of El Salvador and Mexico unlawfully in the U.S. while the driver was a U.S. citizen. All subjects were found to be in good health. Later that afternoon, McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) camera operators observed a heavily laden Mercury SUV depart a well-known smuggling area near Mission. Texas National Guard soldiers maintained visual of the vehicle until Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) located the vehicle after it collided into a fence and multiple subjects bailed out. MCS agents responded to the area where seven migrants, nationals from Mexico and El Salvador were arrested. The driver was not located...Additionally, within the last 48 hours, 115 migrants were arrested in a smuggling attempt utilizing a semi-tractor trailer at the Falfurrias Checkpoint.” (Local Media Release, “RGV Agents Perform Rescues and Arrests this Weekend,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 9/12/2022)
- **8/15/2022 Headline: “Vehicle Pursuits Continue to Plague the RGV Community.”**
“EDINBURG, Texas – Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol (RGV) agents and local law enforcement partners disrupted five human smuggling events resulting in 19 arrests. On August 12, the McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) received information of a vehicle loading up suspected migrants south of Mission. An MCS camera operator located the suspected vehicle, a Honda Accord, and an agent attempted to initiate a vehicle stop. The driver of the Honda failed to yield and led agents on a vehicle pursuit. Palmview Police Department officers responded and encountered the vehicle abandoned. Agents searched the area and arrested four migrants illegally present in the United States; the driver of the vehicle was not located. The following morning, MCS agents responded to a request for assistance from Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) troopers with three suspected migrants at a vehicle stop in Mission. Agents determined the three individuals were nationals of Mexico and unlawfully present in the U.S. A trooper recognized and confirmed one of the Mexican nationals was a driver from an earlier DPS vehicle pursuit, where agents apprehended four migrants, but the driver eluded apprehension. DPS took custody of that individual to charge him with evading arrest and smuggling of persons, the other two migrants were transported to the station...Shortly after midnight on August 14, Falfurrias Border Patrol Station (FLF) agents, DPS, and the Brooks County Sheriff’s Office were pursuing a Ford Expedition near La Gloria when the driver slowed the vehicle south of Premont and three subjects bailed out before speeding away again. Agents apprehended

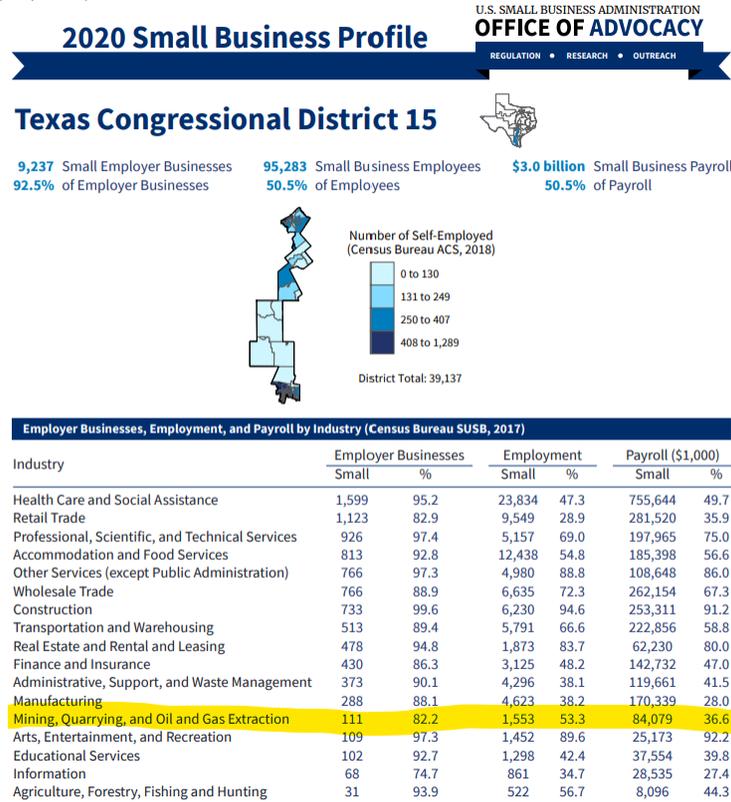
the three migrants. The vehicle eventually came to a stop in Premont where a Jim Wells Sheriff's County deputy arrested the driver, a U.S. citizen, to face state charges." (Local Media Release, "Vehicle Pursuits Continue to Plague the RGV Community," [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 8/15/2022)

Oil and Gas

The oil and gas industry in Texas is important for the state's overall economy, handles a significant share of the country's energy production, provides for hundreds of thousands of jobs, and contributes billions to education:

- **As of FY 2020, economists estimated that the oil and natural gas industry in Texas represented over 30% of the state's Gross State Product.** "Economists estimate that oil and natural gas represents 30.5% of Texas' Gross State Product." ("FY 2020 Texas Oil and Natural Gas Legislative District Vital Statistics," [Texas Oil and Gas Association](#), 1/11/2021)
- **Texas is the top crude oil and natural gas in the nation. Last year, Texas had 43% of the country's crude oil production and 25% of the country's marketed natural gas production.** "Texas is the top crude oil- and natural gas-producing state in the nation. In 2021, Texas accounted for 43% of the nation's crude oil production and 25% of its marketed natural gas production." ("Texas State Energy Profile," [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#), Last Updated May 19, 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)
- **Texas refineries process a little under 6 million barrels per calendar day, which is almost 1/3 of the country's refining capacity as of Jan. 2021.** "Texas has the most crude oil refineries and the most refining capacity of any state. The 31 petroleum refineries in Texas can process a combined total of almost 5.9 million barrels of crude oil per calendar day—32% of the nation's refining capacity as of January 2021." ("Texas State Energy Profile," [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#), Last Updated May 19, 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)
- **According to the Texas Oil and Gas Association, the Texas oil and natural gas industry supports over 422,122 jobs as of Jan. 2022.** ("The Texas Oil and Gas Industry by the Numbers," [Texas Oil and Gas Association](#), Published January 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)
- **According to the Texas Oil and Gas Association, the Texas oil and natural gas industry has \$55.6 billion in their Permanent School Fund, which is the "largest educational endowment in the nation," as of Jan. 2022.** ("The Texas Oil and Gas Industry by the Numbers," [Texas Oil and Gas Association](#), Published January 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)
 - **As of Jan. 2022, the oil and natural gas industry has paid \$1.84 billion to "Texas school districts in property taxes from mineral properties producing oil and natural gas, pipelines, and gas utilities."** ("The Texas Oil and Gas Industry by the Numbers," [Texas Oil and Gas Association](#), Published January 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)
 - **As of Jan. 2022, the oil and natural gas industry has almost \$40 billion in its Permanent University Fund.** ("The Texas Oil and Gas Industry by the Numbers," [Texas Oil and Gas Association](#), Published January 2022, Accessed 8/17/2022)

- According to the 2020 Small Business Profile from the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, the Texas' 15th congressional district has 111 small businesses in the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction industry, employing over 1,500 people. (Office of Advocacy, "2020 Small Business Profiles for the Congressional Districts - Texas," [U.S. Small Business Administration](#), 8/25/2020)



(Office of Advocacy, "2020 Small Business Profiles for the Congressional Districts - Texas," [U.S. Small Business Administration](#), 8/25/2020)

- In 2019, the oil and natural gas industry supported, total, over 47,000 jobs in Texas' 15th congressional district, which accounted for 11.6% of all jobs in the district.

Table C-44. Economic Impact of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry in Texas, 2019

State / Congressional District	Employment (Jobs) ⁽¹⁾			Labor Income (\$Million) ⁽²⁾			Value Added (\$Million)		
	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District
Texas	620,330	2,508,870	13.9%	\$134,250	\$251,162	21.8%	\$230,946	\$411,557	22.3%
TX-1	25,150	82,590	20.4%	\$4,589	\$7,285	33.5%	\$6,911	\$11,178	32.2%
TX-2	28,090	112,940	17.5%	\$8,405	\$14,949	28.9%	\$14,666	\$24,107	31.0%
TX-3	8,960	55,310	9.9%	\$1,078	\$4,467	12.0%	\$1,909	\$7,058	11.9%
TX-4	12,440	45,450	10.5%	\$827	\$2,333	12.0%	\$1,964	\$4,413	14.0%
TX-5	8,400	35,900	10.5%	\$1,248	\$2,805	14.6%	\$1,847	\$4,416	14.2%
TX-6	6,910	37,920	8.9%	\$759	\$2,453	10.6%	\$1,547	\$4,341	11.5%
TX-7	43,760	152,080	19.8%	\$12,056	\$20,994	33.3%	\$22,223	\$34,862	36.3%
TX-8	16,650	72,820	15.5%	\$4,334	\$7,579	26.6%	\$6,680	\$11,601	26.2%
TX-9	9,270	46,160	11.6%	\$2,027	\$4,686	16.7%	\$3,591	\$7,489	17.7%
TX-10	11,370	61,530	11.8%	\$3,126	\$6,414	18.8%	\$3,966	\$8,946	17.0%
TX-11	82,040	195,310	36.3%	\$19,973	\$25,614	63.9%	\$27,993	\$37,497	58.6%
TX-12	23,350	94,220	17.3%	\$5,500	\$9,374	27.8%	\$7,400	\$13,482	25.1%
TX-13	32,970	85,270	18.9%	\$3,135	\$5,756	24.5%	\$6,566	\$10,966	26.0%
TX-14	17,270	75,200	18.6%	\$2,806	\$5,805	24.7%	\$15,085	\$19,997	38.2%
TX-15	11,840	47,860	11.6%	\$1,105	\$2,523	14.9%	\$2,023	\$4,206	16.6%
TX-16	5,160	34,000	8.2%	\$592	\$1,868	9.4%	\$1,956	\$3,949	13.0%
TX-17	11,040	51,370	9.7%	\$1,034	\$3,392	11.6%	\$1,800	\$5,548	11.9%

(“Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the US Economy in 2019,” [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), 7/21)

Editor’s Note: The district-specific numbers are not under the new lines that will be used for the upcoming 118th Congress.