

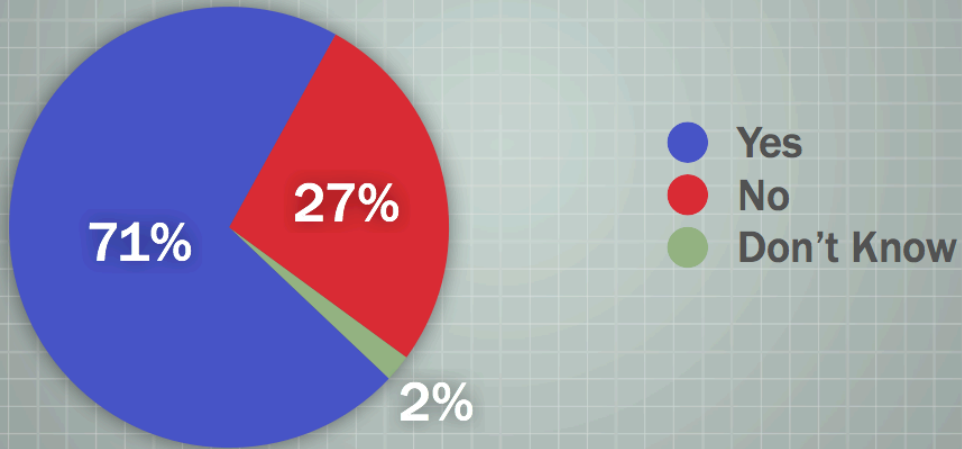
“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

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*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of February 18*

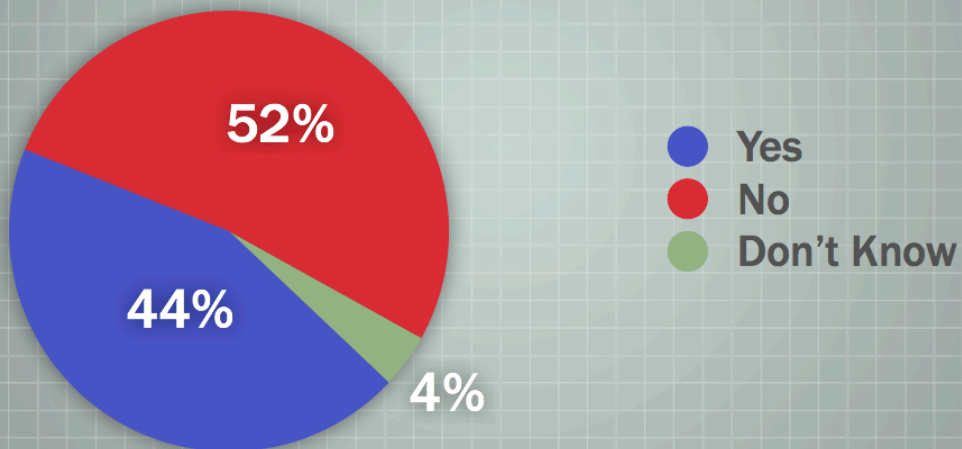
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should Texas lawmakers have to sit out before lobbying?



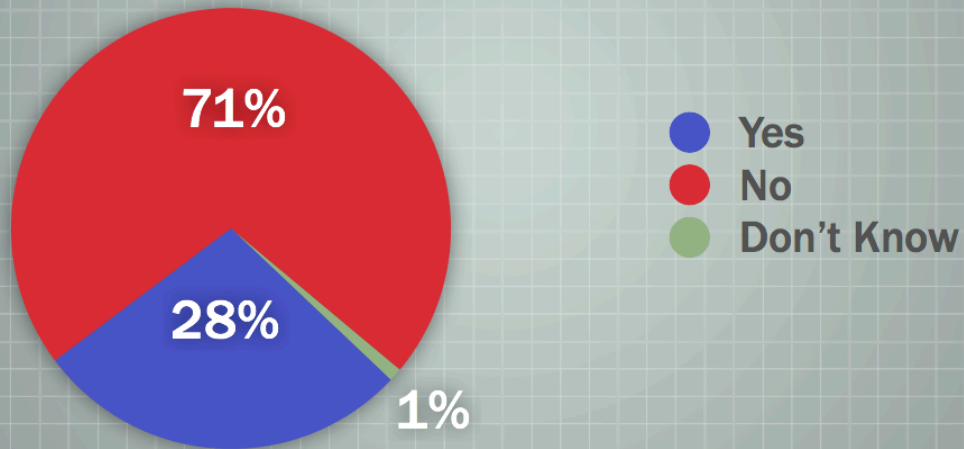
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should legislative staffers have to sit out before lobbying?



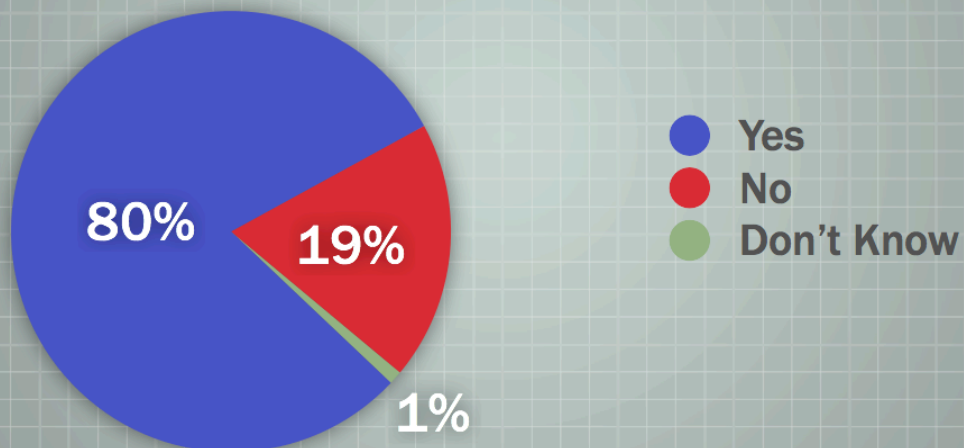
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should ex-lawmakers be allowed to contribute leftover campaign funds to current lawmakers?



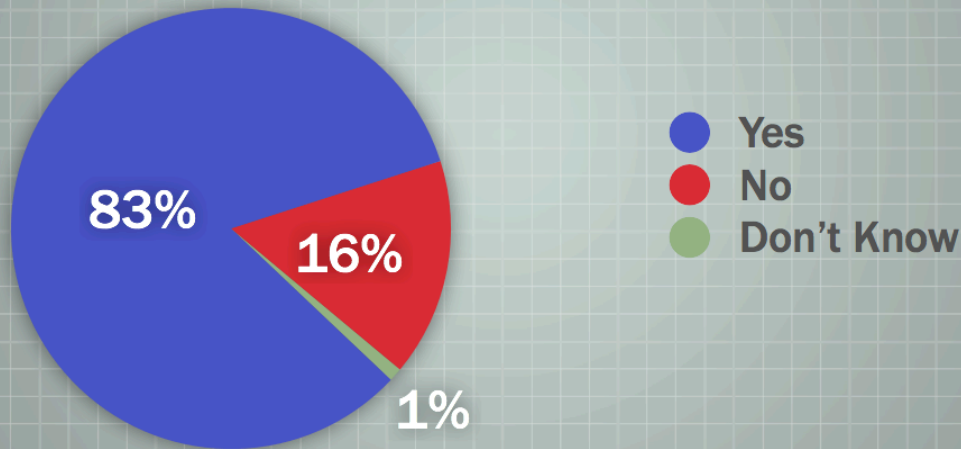
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should consultants who lobby report names of clients in the Legislature?



INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should lobbyists report family relationships with lawmakers?



Should Texas officeholders be prohibited from lobbying legislators for some period of time after they leave office?

- "Depending on the legislator, it may be a disservice to a client to hire them as a lobbyist."
- "In reality this does nothing but promote a cooling off period, so instead of lobbying they will instead consult...whatever."
- "One Session would suffice."
- "A one year period should be sufficient. This would be consistent with several provisions in law for specific offices. The public policy to support this for some is the same for all."
- "The whole point of 'lobbying' is to use one's contacts and business relationships to help a client get what he/she needs from the state government. Prohibiting a former officeholder from lobbying right after leaving office won't make it any less dishonest; all that does is put off the inevitable for a specific period of time."
- "They should have to sit out for two years and should not be able to use their campaign cash for lobby activities."
- "Should Texas doctors be prohibited from treating doctors (and their staff) from their former hospitals and clinics for some period of time after they leave

the hospital/clinic? Seriously, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Present disclosure laws and current prohibitions (they already can't lobby on the floors) provide adequate protections."

- "If they are that effective, they should have no problem sitting out during a cooling off period similar to the same restrictions that are in place for most state employees."

- "But you know this won't happen, right?"

- "This reform should have been accomplished long ago."

- "A two-year hiatus would be reasonable. It would let some time and distance grow between current and former members and would require former members to get a real job rather than slip immediately into a set of lucrative lobbying contracts."

- "1 year"

- "At least a one year cooling off period, perhaps two years"

- "If I were still in the Legislature, I believe this would be one I should 'white light.' And yes, I DID, refrain from voting on matters when I thought I had a conflict of interest."

- "Mainly for their own protection."

- "Needs to be 2 years. If it's just a year, some kind of limbo status will be created with red-shirted ex-legislators waiting to get into the game. 2 years would reduce that."

- "Would one term out of office kill them?"

- "2 sessions at least."

- "Are you really asking a bunch of lobbyists this?:)"

- "As registered lobbyists. The occasional communication as a private citizen should be okay, as long as it's not paid."

- "For general lobbying, members should be able to use their legislative skills. However, on issues they were directly and personally involved in there should be a one session prohibition from lobbying the legislature. This would be consistent with many agency revolving door laws."

- "Especially if they are allowed to use MY money or MY CLIENTS MINEY to work for the opposition."

- "No doubt legislators should be required to sit out a full legislative session before they lobby. Conversely lobbyist should have to sit out a full legislative session before they are eligible to run for office."

- "Follow Federal guidelines"

- "One full Legislative Session following their departure."

- "1 yr"

- "A year"

- "Of course my answer is yes--I'm currently a lobbyist! Keep out the competition!"

- "Office holders should have the same time and subject matter restrictions that senior agency management has--if only to avoid the appearance of impropriety."
- "I think his issue is overblown how many really become full time lobbyist"
- "Revolving door legislators to lobbyists brings corruption to the process."
- "I think 1 session cooling off is good. Let them go try to live off not being in office."
- "Talk about a revolving door."
- "As a registered lobbyists I think 10 years is a nice round number"
- "How would they feed themselves?"
- "You'd think someone would care about public confidence in the process, before the Lege's positive ratings drop down to where Congress' are."

Should legislative staffers be prohibited from lobbying legislators for some period of time after they leave government employment?

- "They are already underpaid, so if you take that away from them, then how will you get quality people to run the legislature?"
- "Where would the high paid lobbyists come from...?"
- "Maybe their previous boss"
- "This is what attracts many talented people to take low paying jobs in the Legislature."
- "See above"
- "What about agency staffers who truly develop mastery-level knowledge of various policy areas?"
- "A legislative staffer's influence on legislators is not the same as a former member's. Also, a legislative staffer does not leave state employment with a built-in campaign account to make donations to legislators. So, the limitations on lobbying for legislative staffers should not be as strict."
- "Another common-sense ethical reform."
- "No. Staff is staff. They work hard for minimum pay and know their way around the capitol. While they have relationships in various offices, it's different than the member to member relationships."
- "A bit off topic, but a reasonable place to revisit a long-standing vent: Indeed there is a group that should be prohibited outright from lobbying: state employees of any kind and at any level. House and Senate committees (through their own laziness to be sure) have abdicated to state employed lobbyists any notion of responsibility in huge

areas of substantive law. Were it up to me, state employees (other than legislative and governor employees) would be banned from the capitol unless specifically invited by a member of the legislature. End of rant."

- "This is less important. While staff has knowledge of government and the legislative process to sell, they rarely have the leverage and clout that former members do."

- "I would say they could not lobby their former boss"

- "One year prohibition for Chief of Staff/Clerk level"

- "I don't know, but they're like ants in a disturbed mound. So many."

- "However a distinction should be made between the Gov's chief of staff and a House legislative aide."

- "2 years would make a difference."

- "Hell yes they should if their former boss has to sit out! They make a lot more money!"

- "Ditto above."

- "Same as their bosses."

- "No one elected staff. They don't vote on the floor of the legislature and they don't represent a district. Their position is not constitutional. Staff has to feed their families and should not be prohibited from making a living as a lobbyist."

- "6 months"

- "One full Legislative Session following their departure. If you served even one day during a Session, you should be barred from the next Session."

- "Same as above. As a current lobbyist, the harder it is for someone to lobby, the less competition I have."

- "Maybe a short duration subject matter limitation"

- "Great staffers make great lobbyists, bad staffers go work on campaigns."

- "Should apply to all government employees..."

Should lawmakers who become lobbyists be allowed to contribute leftover balances from their political accounts to legislators?

- "Allowing access to that pool of money as lobbyists presents too many opportunities for mischief."

- "Subject to disclosure...why not?"

- "Better there than to put it into their pockets."

- "Perhaps a question better answered by the attorney general."

- "Expenditures have to be reported, right? What's the issue here?"

- "After all campaign debts are paid, leftover campaign funds should be used"

for the maintenance and operation of the state Capitol building or better yet, for the Texas Ethics Commission to upgrade computer systems and audit campaign reports, etc.!"

- "Excess campaign funds should be returned to contributors, donated to their political party or donated to charity."
- "No!!!"
- "Seen that bad movie many times. Most real lobbyists don't like getting sandbagged and their \$ helping a competitor or covering their overhead"
- "Campaign finance rules are usually counter-productive."
- "At a minimum, they should send a letter to their donors outlining who their lobby clients are and offer to return the contributors donation."
- "Former members should not be able to continue spending from their campaign/officeholder accounts after they leave office. Nor should they, if they register as lobbyists, be able to make political contributions from their political accounts. In fact, very few Texans know how easily money moves between campaign accounts and officeholder accounts."
- "Absolutely not. To request campaign contributions for the express purpose of election/re-election and then use them to potentially advocate against the interests of the contributors is disingenuous at best."

• "Yes, but I could be persuaded otherwise if you could tell me what else they'd do with the money."

• "They should be allowed to give it to a nonprofit and then go lobby for that nonprofit."

• "The money was not given as a pump primer was a member's new career."

• "They should donate to nonprofits."

• "They should be required to pay all campaign bills & then give money back to donors within 90 days"

• "A contribution is a contribution. Report it and let the people decide."

• "One full Legislative Session following their departure. If you worked even one day during a Session, you should be barred from the next Session."

• "Unless for family member"

• "Ridiculous. The money wasn't given to them to form a lobby business. It should be returned or used for charity."

• "This is the last of the 'personal use' issues still out there. Former legislators should not be able to use their leftover campaign funds to support their private efforts as lobbyists."

• "This issue seems to be generating from some lobbyist who star is fading in an attempt to preserve their influence. Sort of pulling the latter up behind themselves. . In addition few of these members have that punt of money that would make any difference"

- "No, they should have to refund unspent funds to the original donors before leaving office."

- "Reeks of corruption."

- "Lobby money can go to legislators, citizen money should be refunded."

- "Only with the consent of the original donor."

- "Send the money to charity. The 501(c)(3) kind that can't lobby."

Should lobbyists be required to report the names of officeholders for whom they have done paid political consulting work?

- "It is already being done. All one has to do is to look at the campaign finance reports."

- "Transparency demands that business relationships between officeholders and lobbyists be disclosed."

- "Let the sun shine in, and so too should state staff be required to file names and amount of payments for political work."

- "So, non-disclosure agreements shouldn't cover lobbyists or they shouldn't cover consultants. I'm confused."

- "Yes, and legislators should be required to name lobbyists with whom they have a business relationship."

- "Although I don't believe this would have any impact."

- "Great transparency never hurts."

- "Otherwise they'd how they hide it"

- "This is a loophole that ought to be closed.... full disclosure is needed."

- "Sure thing. This practice is much more palatable with full disclosure."

- "Yes, of course. Consult or lobby. Pick which one you're going to be, but don't lobby the legislators for which you do political consulting."

- "What a racket. Can't believe TX allows political campaign consultants to 'lobby' in their off season. They should follow the same rules as campaigns. Turn it off during session."

- "This would help avoid bribes and conflicts"

- "The information is readily available thru the Ethics Commission website doing a simple search of expenditures by name. Really how hard is that to accomplish. Next you'll want me to disclose the name of my blow up doll."

- "The names of lobbyists that work for political campaigns are already reported. Those reports are called campaign finance reports."

- "The disclosure is already there through the C&E report, so this really is

a red herring. Why limit the reporting to just 'paid' political work by a lobbyist for a campaign? Any lobbyist worth their salt is out helping with the campaigns of those candidates/officeholders they support and who have helped their issues. That contribution of time and talent (strategy, intel, PAC fundraising, etc.) is currently not recording ANYWHERE, but it is significant. Further evidence can be found in lobbyist organizing Austin fundraisers for no cost and organizing neighborhood walks in near and far locations across Texas."

- "This practice has got to stop. Legislators turned lobbyists live off the contributions of their fellow lobbyists making contributions to further their lobby practice. Retired legislators who register as a lobbyists should be required to divest themselves of their accumulated contributions. If they want to hang on to the money - don't register as a lobbyist. It's a choice, it should not be a right."

- "It's already reported by the legislators on campaign finance reports."

- "This is much overlooked issue not should be reported. Not prohibited but reported."

- "This information is on the officeholders' campaign and expenditure report."

- "Remember Mike Toomey? Gov. chief of staff turned Merck lobbyist? HPV mandate?"

- "How many gun shoe lobbyists go knock on doors, etc? You can never regulate it!"

- "If you want to required both paid and non-paid work maybe?"

- "Is this supposed to be a hard question?"

- "Done or currently..."

- "It is already reported. It is called campaign finance disclosure."

Should lobbyists be required to report any family relationships they have with legislators and other officeholders?

- "Disclosure of familial relationships between officeholders and lobbyists should be guided by what judges and lawyers must disclose about each other."

- "Uh. Pretty sure The Lobby et al. knows about familial ties. It's kinda hard to keep a secret in our world, especially one like that. But, if we're

going to require disclosure for family ties, it should include staffers and all state employees, not just elected officials and appointees."

- "Also, family relationships with legislative staff members."

- "No real harm there a not exactly a secret"

- "Or maybe have officeholders report which lobbyists they have a family or business relationship with...?"
- "Another no-brainer...."
- "Transparency builds trust."
- "And members should have to report the names of the lobbyists with whom they do business"
- "Transparency is key. Familial relationships with staff are just as important. Lobbyists with family members behind the scene are pretty common."
- "Of course."
- "Lobbyist should be required to report relationships with legislators only within reason. At some point we are all related to Kevin Bacon."
- "Yes, sunshine is always a plus."
- "This business of lobbyist family members getting a lot of business is wrong and not coincidental."
- "That's just fodder for folks like the Tribune who want to make headline grabbing stories that have no meat behind them."
- "This reporting should included lobbyist who are dating members of either the House or Senate. It should also be required of members who get their wives, husbands, girlfriends or boyfriends hired by the lobby. This is a particular area that has not been addressed by you or the rest of the press."
- "Lobbyists will use every angle to win a sale. That's fine as long as it's transparent."
- "And familial relationships that they'd LIKE to have."
- "And with lobbyists"

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