

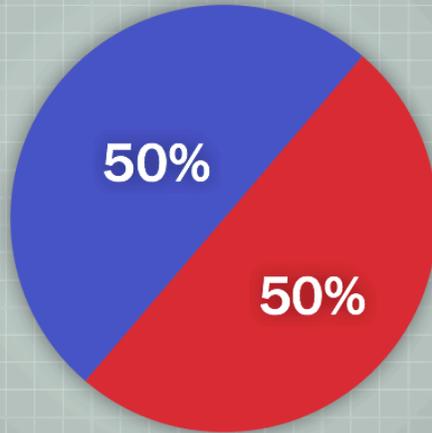
“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

Sponsored by: **Hahn, Texas**

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of March 4*

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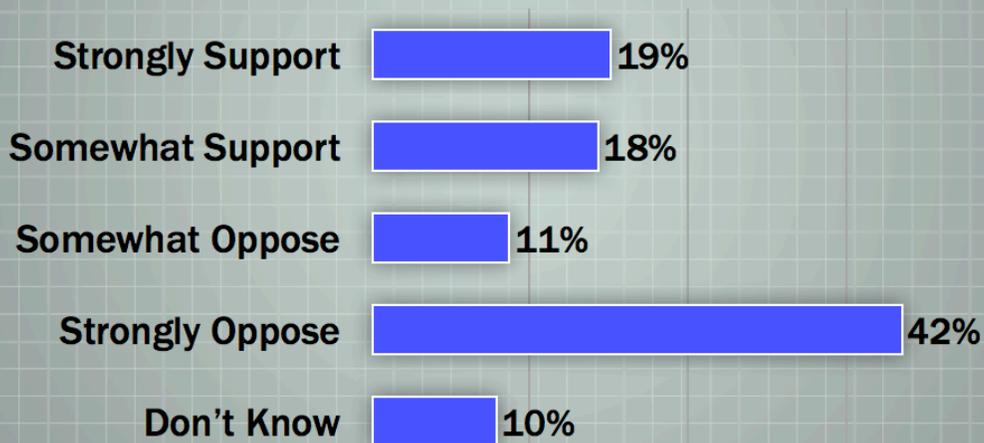
What is closer to your view on school vouchers?



- They give people more freedom of choice
- They take money away without solving education problems

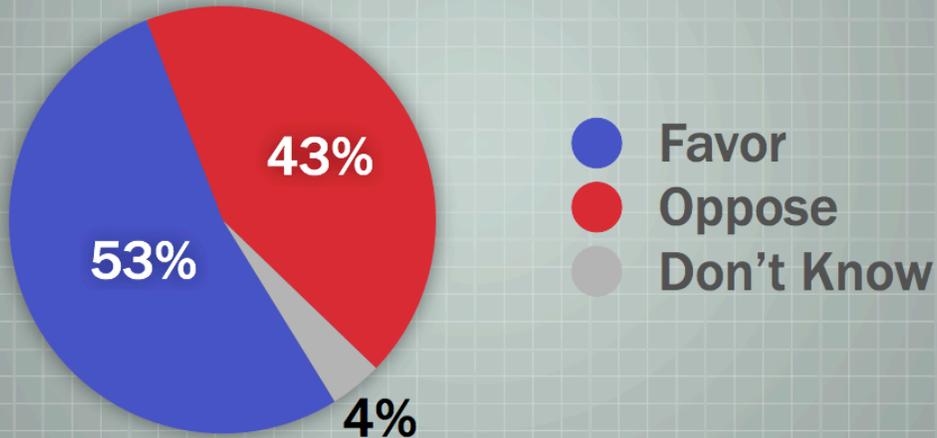
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Your views on a “fetal pain” bill banning abortions after 20 weeks?



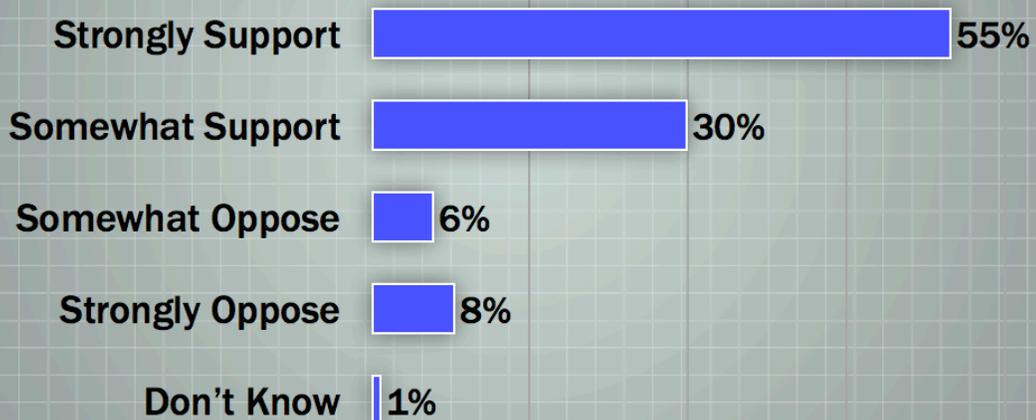
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Banning high-capacity ammunition magazines for guns?



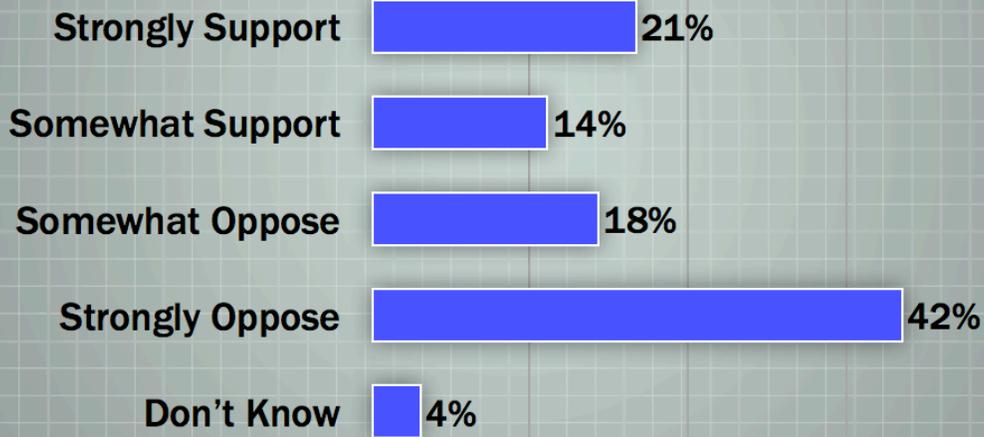
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Background checks on all gun purchases?



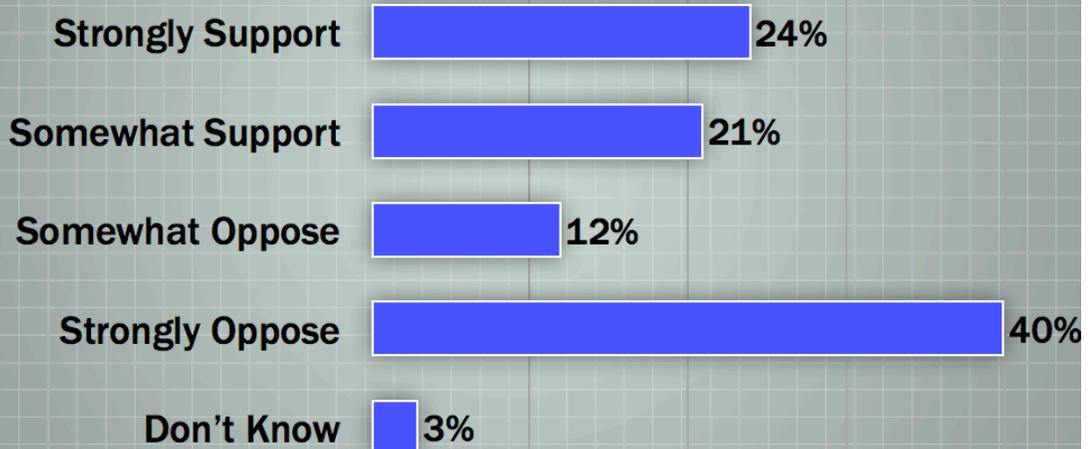
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Concealed handguns at colleges?



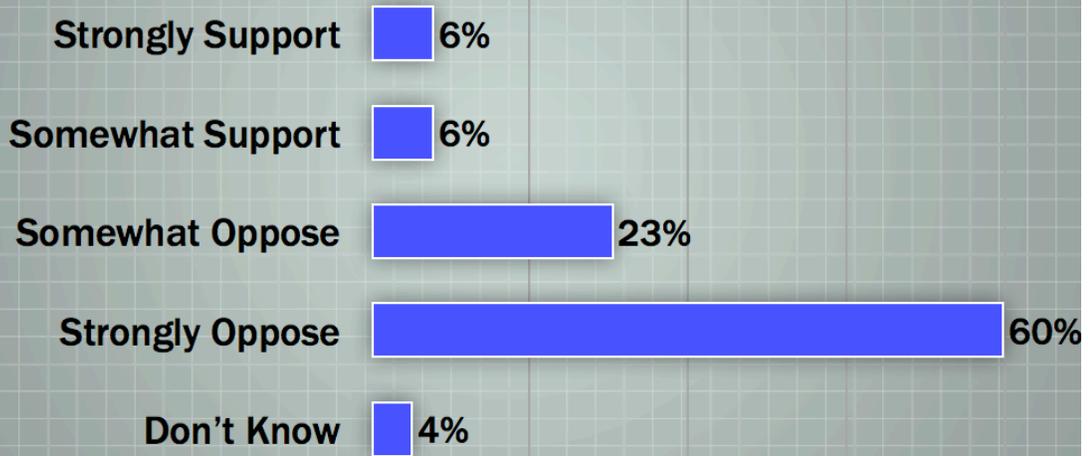
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Allow public school officials to carry guns?



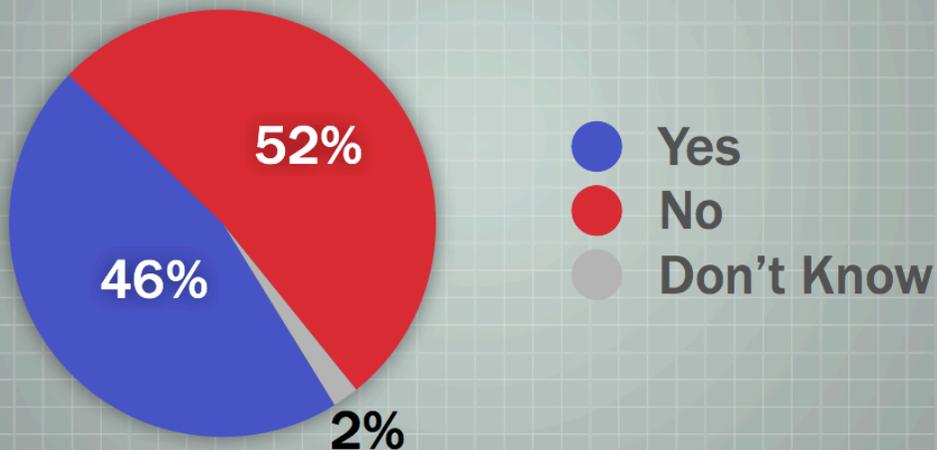
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Ease concealed handgun requirements?



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Should Texas need federal permission to change election laws?



There has been a lot of talk in the news lately about school voucher programs that would enable parents to move their children into other public or private schools. Which of the following positions do you prefer?

- "Texas public schools are on fire. Until we fix public school finance, vouchers and charters are a distraction at best. Let's focus on serving the other 95% of students first."
- "Give a voucher to a parent in Houston or Dallas, they now have options for their son or daughter. Give a voucher to a parent in Fort Stockton, they now have a voucher. Good luck with that."
- "'Excellence demands competition. Without a race there can be ...no excellence- in education or in any other walk of life.' --Ronald Reagan"
- "Neither"
- "Let parents decide how best to educate their kids. Education opportunity should not be dictated by geography."
- "Private pursuit of the public purse in a time when the purse has been snatched and plundered."
- "Neither position. Both are spin."
- "The voucher fight is like Groundhog Day. Zero support, zero interest. Move on. Even by Senator Patrick's own admission, it helps only a small handful of kids at best. Meanwhile, it does nothing for the majority of students in our public schools. The argument that it doesn't use "public money" is a smokescreen designed by national voucher advocates. We all know foregone tax revenue for the tax credit comes from the state as surely as if the Comptroller signed the check."
- "If I must choose between the two evils, I guess the first is better."
- "Giving public money and student load to a private school results in the private school increasing faculty and facilities to accommodate, and thus dependence upon the public money to sustain. Eventually the 'public' will demand accountability for the money and the private schools will be hard pressed to say no to the money, and by default become less independent and 'private.'"
- "I think these choices are emblematic of the rhetorical positioning used by both sides of the debate. I do not think the vouchers issue is dividable into these dichotomous positions. There is a myriad of benefits to both sides of the debate but as long as it pitched as all or nothing, then there cannot be a debate about vouchers and school choice."
- "Vouchers remain highly controversial and passing them is likely a 5-6 year political process -- especially w/ Straus and Chairman Aycok strongly opposing"
- "What about just letting students and their families have access to the schools - public or private - that suit them best and sending the money to the schools they choose? All students

in the public deserve an education from the public. Why does that mean government monopoly schools?"

- "Sorry to say it, but I just do not care about this issue, since I don't have children in Texas schools."

- "Competition works"

- "We should give honor to how parents choose to educate their kids, but not take money from our poorest children. If we want to foster competition, deregulate our public schools so they can compete. We promote school vouchers and charters because that is easier for the legislature than taking on the teacher groups."

- "Competition always works."

- "Competition is a good thing isn't it?"

- "James Leininger of San Antonio put millions into pushing vouchers in the state legislature over the last decade to little effect. The principal reason is that rural conservatives, mostly Republicans, think their school districts would be hurt more than helped."

- "Moving to another PUBLIC SCHOOL would not cost a dime more. That's what I support."

- "Let's provide strong public school choice. Vouchers without accountability is a mistake."

- "Judge Dietz was correct to say that if you want high standards it will cost money. As a Republican with kids in private school my answer is: leave public school funding alone."

- "The state's accountability system has failed. Saying that students are in failing schools is truly misleading. One subpopulation may perform poorly on a given testing day hence damaging the campus' score. How do you think the students doing well feel about being labeled as attending an 'academically unacceptable' school but still get into UT and A&M? There is no guarantee that private schools will be any better, but taxpayers will never know it. There's no accountability...There's just talk about growing government to establish a voucher program. A vote for vouchers is a vote against 4.6 million Texas students."

- "Which special interest group is more important--the kids (students) or teachers?"

- "Vouchers will begin the end of public schools."

- "Every student and family should have a choice of schools. At present, only the wealthy do."

- "The district court has already ruled the current system is inadequately and inequitably funded. Now is not the time to add a \$5 billion per biennium obligation--which it WILL be. It's not a voucher plan--it's an income tax plan."

- "If regulation and accountability is so good, why aren't privates and charters required to participate??"

- "The two are not mutually inconsistent"

- "Vouchers won't solve all the problems of the world, nor will life as we know it end because of vouchers."

- "Neither"
- "Most Not all public school systems have no reason to get better. They are corrupt cesspools like Houston ISD. Maybe competition will force them to improve. Show me another way to create improvement. We have thrown tons of money after tons of money with the same crappy results."
- "Taxpayer gives away to private for profit entities."
- "Neither"
- "All vouchers do is create a short-term solution to a long-term problem and create another monster consumer of taxpayer money"
- "Both are bad choices"

Do you support or oppose a so-called "fetal pain" proposal that would ban abortion after 20 weeks?

- "Red meat for South Carolina. Being held captive by Governor Perry's ambitions in 2011 was maddening. Now it's just a slow car wreck happening before our eyes."
- "The devil is in the details. Such legislation needs to provide options to parents of unborn children with such profound defects that they are destined to suffer and die at birth."
- "Get government out of our personal decisions."
- "It would completely depend circumstance of the child and mother's health. If there is a life threatening situation, it should be permissible."
- "Lots of critical issues facing Texas-- education, water and transportation just to name a few. This divisive social stuff is old hat, and is stopping Republicans from attracting younger voters. This is the kind of stuff that the Battleground Texas people dream about."
- "When the Members of the Legislature all receive their degrees in medical ethics, I will listen to their opinions on matters such as these."
- "I think the debate should center on the viability of the fetus outside the womb. Medical advancement is moving back the date of viability incrementally and I believe it's more science based than whether pain can be felt by the fetus. Granted, I don't know much about this issue."
- "Support--but 'pain' shouldn't be the issue. That implies it is acceptable to terminate a life that doesn't feel 'pain,' and that type of mentality leads to eugenics and worse."
- "If you had an option of 'don't care', I would have hit that one instead of 'don't know'"
- "I'm not a woman."
- "Such decisions should be made by women and their doctors."
- "Opponents need to discuss the last surgery they had without the benefit of an anesthetic."

- "My faith dictates my thoughts about this so the government doesn't have to weight in at all."

- "How many abortions are performed after 20 weeks? Is there an exception for medical necessity?"

- "Though detest the incrementalism. Abortion should be illegal, in spite of what the Supreme Court has held. It was illegal in Texas before Roe v. Wade. We should follow our own law and remove the exception for mothers and doctors that was added to accommodate the Supreme Court. It certainly wouldn't be the first time Texas has challenged the federal govt."

- "Fat, old, white guys should not be making decisions for women."

- "Roe v Wade is settled law and we don't need religious oriented

legislation to chip away at a woman's choice."

- "Every year, the powerful pro-life lobby contorts itself to come up with yet another idea to undercut Roe v. Wade. At some point, even pro-lifers have to acknowledge that these efforts are becoming ridiculous."

- "All scientific data supports that a baby can feel pain at 20 weeks."

- "What the hell are we doing in the doctor/patient business...we can't even run decent schools or build highways without borrowing money..."

- "Republicans are opposed to circumventing court rulings, unless of course it's for their cause."

- "Except in the case of rape or incest."

As you may know, high-capacity magazines or clips can hold many rounds of ammunition, so a shooter can fire more rounds without manually reloading. Would you favor or oppose a nationwide ban on the sale of high-capacity magazines that hold many rounds of ammunition?

- "What exactly are people so afraid of that they need this kind of firepower? Over-compensate much?"

- "Don't ban guns. Ban ammunition."

- "'A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State...' How can we do that with only 3 bullets in our clip?"

- "As a lifelong hunter, there is no reason for anyone to have high capacity clips. Period."

- "I am not sure the clip debate is fruitful. It strikes me that with each of these shootings, the intent and power are there to act and the clip size does not necessarily change the way these shooters proceed."

- "People intent on committing violence are not going to observe gun restrictions so any restrictions would be meaningless."

- "Criminals don't obey gun laws"

- "That hold many rounds' is a vague statement. I can't say I support or oppose it."
- "As much as I hate to say it, 'high capacity magazines don't kill people....'"
- "Magazines don't kill people do."
- "In Vietnam we were issued M-16s and the clip held 20 shots. If you loaded it with 20, there was a good chance the rifle would jam. So, 19 was the magic number. The point being, in a war zone you had 20 (19) to do harm but the non- military version you need 30 rounds to shoot what? Tin cans!"
- "The magazine isn't the problem, the CRAZED SHOOTER is the problem. He'd NOT follow ANY LAW. He's our focus, not silly bans on magazine capacity that he'd ignore."
- "I guess the bad guys would have to carry more guns to compensate for the fewer rounds in their clips...because, you know, criminals like to follow the law."
- "You obviously haven't learned to shoot properly if you need to use high-capacity magazines."
- "Of course, then one would not be able to go squirrel hunting."
- "This idea is far more trouble than it's worth."
- "Another example of Republicans caring about the sanctity of life up to,

and no further than, birth. Regulate a medical procedure that causes pain before birth, don't regulate an implement that causes death after birth."

- "A ban on high capacity magazines might not have stopped the recent mass murderers in Newtown and Aurora, but it would have given the victims a better chance of survival if manual reloading was necessary. If faced with a similar circumstance, I would appreciate being given the extra seconds to overcome the intruder or escape."
- "Nice leading question"
- "Hunters or target shooters do not need high capacity clips. Those are for battle use only and civilians have no need of them."
- "Gabby Giffords' assailant wielded a 9mm with a 30-round clip. The Aurora shooter used an AR-15 with a 100-round drum. To pretend that high-capacity magazine's do not give shooters a tactical advantage is to live in a fantasy world."
- "Have speedy trials with public executions of people who commit crimes with ANY weapon...there will be no extenuating circumstance.... whether you are crazy or otherwise...."
- "Slippery Slope."
- "1000% oppose."

Do you support or oppose requiring criminal and mental health background checks on all gun purchases in the United States, including at gun shows and for private sales?

- "It seems impractical with private sales."
- "I have a concern that mandating mental health background checks would create another barrier to people seeking mental health services. We want to remove barriers to mental health services, not further stigmatize them. Requiring a criminal background check is a no-brainer, regardless of where the gun is purchased."
- "Requiring a background check will protect those of us who are lawful gun owners from other restrictions on gun ownership."
- "Need to define private sales. Does that mean at a gun store or person to person?"
- "I could be convinced to require checks for sales (even though I don't like it), but not for title transfers without a sale."
- "The solution doesn't need to be this black or white."
- "I just don't know how you would administer a mental health check other than the absence of a record is the desirable state. Any system has the potential of abuse, more so this one."
- "This amounts to a gun registration program that historically always leads to confiscation of guns."
- "I generally support background checks...the problem is going to be in the regulation of private sales. A background check is already required at gun shows for anyone who is in the business of selling guns."
- "But who will check the checkers?"
- "Duh."
- "Background checks are worth enforcing."
- "I'm strongly for criminal and mental health background checks, but I don't believe any of the recent mass murderers had criminal or mental health histories. Make them manually reload their weapons to give their potential victims, including those who are armed with a concealed weapon, a chance to survive."
- "No to private gun sales"

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following proposals on guns currently being discussed in the Texas Legislature: (guns on college campuses, concealed weapons for teachers or other officials at public schools, easing CHL requirements)

- "We need to abandon the fiction that 'gun-free zones' actually keep out bad guys with guns."
- "What is this--Gunsmoke with Marshal Matt Dillon? Guns in schools and on college campuses only endanger my kids, not protect them."
- "Regarding public schools, I don't think the teachers need to have them in the classroom, but I do support other trained/vetted school staff having access to firearms."
- "While I believe more guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens is a positive, I believe individual campuses should be able to make their own decisions. That way parents and students could make the decision on where to attend college."
- "Current CHL classes are a joke. Probably 15-20% of the legal information conveyed by my instructor was incorrect. I have no problem with letting people be armed, but let's at least train them properly on the law and on proper procedures/techniques!"
- "A gun is a hard thing to keep up with, properly. As an example, how many times have you lost your car keys? It's the same but with larger consequences."
- "Everyone is safer when guns are more prevalent to keep the bad actors in check."
- "We've got multiple issues here: constitutional right to arms, right to self-protect, proper training, etc. I don't think anyone is advocating allowing anyone and everyone to carry without some sort of training (military, CHL, law enforcement, etc.). Those who are responsible enough to seek and obtain proper training should be allowed to carry free of govt restrictions on where they can carry."
- "If an office rolls up on an active shooter at a school today, it is simple: shoot the guy with the gun. If you allow campus carry, it becomes: which guy with the gun is the bad guy?"
- "Conceptually, 'gun control,' of course misses the point if the point is to ascertain some halfway sensible approach to the reduction of random violence in our society. As usual, what we are seeing here is legislation by headline, which will serve no purpose but to exacerbate the friction that has always been present in this area."
- "If the underlying point of the three choices is that more guns are needed on college and public school campuses, then let's buck up and pay for as many well-trained law enforcement officers as are necessary and let the faculty and students concentrate on learning."
- "All a SWAT team needs is to walk into a school with a nut loose and not be able to tell the Crazy from some welling meaning teacher banging away with their Glock. The Nut and the teacher are both likely to end up dead in that situation."
- "I do not oppose allowing teachers to carry concealed weapons, but to be clear, it is absolute lunacy to believe that is a policy solution to preventing mass shootings. There's a reason von Clausewitz coined the phrase "fog of war." When bullets are flying, even

highly trained military personnel & law enforcement make mistakes. Trusting armed educators to distinguish shooters from bystanders and first responders is a ridiculous proposition."

- "Just shoot me"

- "More people with guns will not solve the problems. Period."

- "I just went through the exercise of completing CHL paperwork. These requirements are fairly minimum for someone who wants to carry a deadly weapon."

As you may know, Texas has a history of discrimination in its election laws. Because of this, Texas is required to request federal approval before implementing any changes to its voting procedures or election practices. Do you think Texas should still be subject to federal supervision, or do you think Texas should be able to change its voting and election practices without the approval of the federal government?

- "If Texas ever wants to rid itself of the shameful history that created the need for this oversight, it needs to move toward a non-partisan re-districting commission."

- "50 years. The time has come."

- "Either all states should have to go through this process or none should."

- "The VRA as applied in Texas seems geared more toward preserving seats for Democrats than addressing vestiges of discrimination from a bygone era."

- "The reason Texas was made subject to the federal requirements was not due to discrimination-- the State was added because ballots were not printed in Spanish. 20 plus years of this BS needs to be terminated!"

- "To the victor goes the spoils. Maybe more people will realize just what's at stake and start voting more."

- "Carefully watch initiatives to expand ballot language under the guise of transparency when in fact it makes voting difficult, obtuse and time consuming that results in delays and frustration. See the length of Florida's ballot in November."

- "There is no reason to change the federal approval requirement for certifying the structure of elections. The history in every election suggests that a neutral honest-broker is needed for EVERY state to ensure the redistricting passes muster."

- "It is absurd that Texas is still under this restriction while states including Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, with decades of election corruption are under no supervision at all -- simply because they are northern states."

- "The Voting Rights Act may ensure the election of minority opportunity districts, but it also encourages the extreme sides of both parties to

control both the primaries and the general elections. That means that less compromise is required in order to win election and re-election, and satisfy constituents. If districts were more balanced and compact (i.e., not gerrymandered), it would require compromise during the election process and a more pragmatic officeholder and, hopefully, constituency."

- "Absurd that a federal court or DOJ can restrict Texas election laws."

- "Fewer than 50 years have gone by since passage of the Voting Rights Act. There are at least two generations of voters alive today who witnessed wholesale violations of the most fundamental right of American citizens--to participate in determining the course of our nation. Further, such illegal, unconstitutional and anti-democratic actions by public officials did not end in 1965 but continue. The application of Section 5 of the Act to only a handful of states and localities is indeed wrong--Section 5 should apply to ANY jurisdiction that cannot demonstrate consistent success in ensuring the voting rights of all citizens and providing appropriate consideration for millions of historically and recently disenfranchised voters."

- "The law is outdated and silly. The feds are no less political than the state guys, and voting laws are all about politics and power."

- "It's policies like this (and a host of others) that make you wonder why states are considered sovereign at all. At this point, we should turn everything over to Washington."

- "The 2011 Legislative session's redistricting/ voter ID actions provide substantive proof of the need for Texas to continue to be subject to preclearance."

- "Or, put all 50 states under the same review."

- "40 plus years is more than enough. How long are we going to be punished because of the civil war?"

- "Good God, this group needs some adult supervision."

- "Discrimination was wrong. And is correctly gone. Texas can take care of our own voting laws without federal oversight."

- "Discrimination should remain illegal but without pre-clearance. This is the way all other federal discrimination laws work (age discrimination, racial discrimination, etc.), and voting discrimination should be the same. File a lawsuit if there is a violation, but get rid of the bureaucrats/DOJ political hacks."

- "Either all states should be in, or all states should be out. What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

- "As you may know, Texas had a history of discrimination in its election laws when Democrats dominated and controlled the state. Democrats no longer control the state, and the number of incidents related to discrimination in election law has gone down. Therefore, Texas should be free of federal election law oversight, and further: SCOTUS should find Sec. 5 of the VRA unconstitutional."

- "Texas is its own worst enemy. If the Legislature could get through a redistricting without obviously attempting to reduce minority representation it might have an argument. Of course, by then the minority population will be too big to get around anyway."
- "I had come to the conclusion that Texas had paid its dues for past discrimination. Then, the last Legislature offered up its redistricting plan. I changed my mind."
- "These preclearance requirements are long past their usefulness. There's no more prejudice or bias in Texas these days than in Connecticut or North Dakota. Unfortunately, the legislature's dumb 2011 voting fraud bill -- inadequate sensitivity to those without a DL -- undercut this reality."
- "If we're not violating anyone's rights, why would we mind being monitored? The only reason to oppose oversight is so you can get away with more."
- "VRA has long outlived its usefulness, if it ever actually had any."
- "Like there is only prejudice south of IH40. Please"
- "Texas has a consistent history of discriminatory redistricting plans of course it need to be reviewed."
- "Our last round of redistricting pretty much answered the question you propose.... yes we still need oversight!"
- "The premise of your"
- "I would love to see the comments y'all get in response to this question. Or please just tell us how many people write in to deny the premise (that Texas has a history of electoral discrimination)."
- "The problem with the current situation regarding the Voting Rights Act is that it has become so out of date that it does little to protect voting rights. Citizens only hear about problems with drawing districts but it permeates everything dealing with elections. Military voting, locations of voting, and even the rules of political parties are still subject to lengthy examination by the DOJ. The time has come for changes that allow for more a more realistic implementation"
- "The most recent redistricting and voter ID legislation proves that Texas is not beyond federal oversight."
- "To borrow from Voltaire, 'hawks will eat pigeons whenever they find them.'"
- "How can any sane person who watched the Legislature perform redistricting in 2011 think they don't need adult supervision?"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Jenny Aghamalian, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Thure Cannon, Snapper Carr, William Chapman, Elna Christopher, James Clark, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, Hector De Leon, Tom

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