

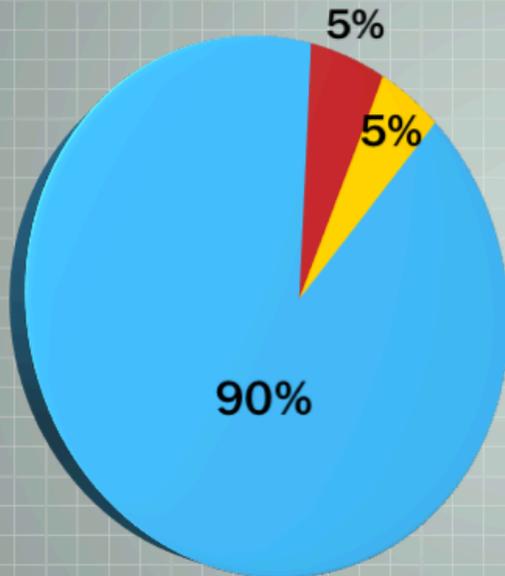
“INSIDE”

INTELLIGENCE

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE
TEXAS  WEEKLY

The insider's poll for the week of January 10.

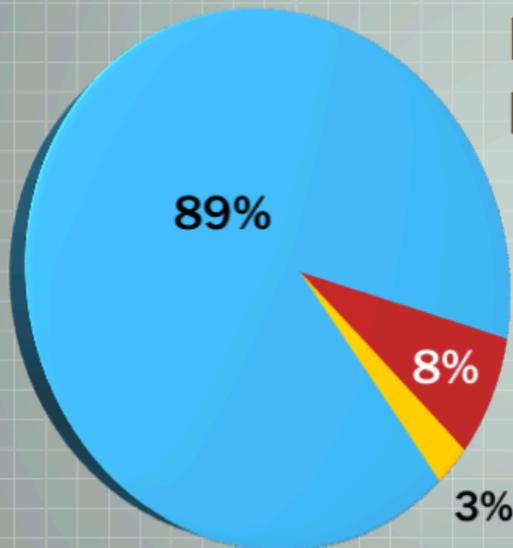
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE



Will Joe Straus win a caucus vote for speaker?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

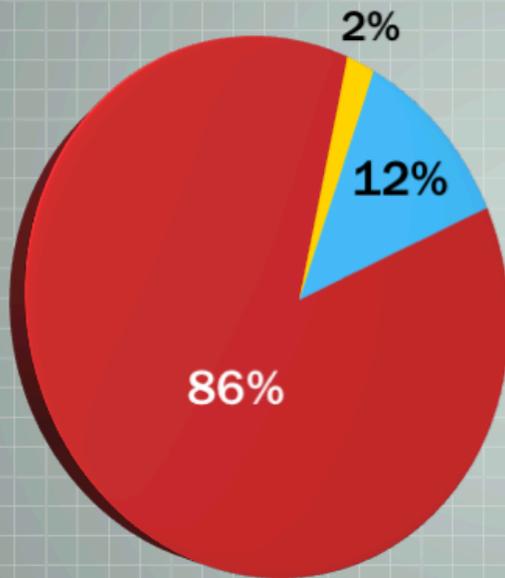
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE



Should House Republicans share power with Democrats?

- Include Democrats
- Winner take all
- Don't know

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Should the House Republican caucus decide who will be speaker?



This week's open-ended prompt was "What's the long-term effect of outside "grassroots" groups getting involved in this and other legislative issues?" And here's how the insiders answered:

- "The House Speaker is elected among peers. While outside groups should have the opportunity to leverage influence in the process, this is America after all, it could set a very dangerous precedent for meddling in House business. What next? Cathy Adams and MQS trying to create segregated bathrooms for members that are not 'conservative enough' for their credentials? Ultimately we have to remember this is an internal election."
- "This too shall pass. The proof will be in the results. Six months from now, as conservatives are sorting through the results of the most conservative legislature in the country, this 'speaker's race' will be completely forgotten."
- "Will help the opposition party as independents will keep switching sides. They didn't vote for the Rs in 2010; they voted against the Ds. Same will happen, in reverse, if this continues."
- "?? 'and other legislative issues?' Since when were outside groups NOT involved in other legislative issues? ... Involvement in speakers race means more partisanship, greater chance that a speaker and management team come from an ideological end, rather than the middle, of the spectrum."
- "Yet another avenue where money will flow like water..."
- "Not sure there is a long-term effect"
- "Further push the members to partisan extremes on both sides."
- "Once you start something like this it takes on a life of it's own very destructive for the body. Those that started this should be held accountable by the rest of the house"
- "This seems to be a continuation of a trend where social rather than business issues defines liberal and conservative choices in party primaries."

- "I am a purist and believe that the speakers race is an internal event and it's only participants are the house members themselves. The people get to elect their house member and should trust him or her to vote for whatever or whoever is in the best interest of their district. The fringe groups in the Republican party have wasted no time establishing dividing lines within the party and not in a good way and I'm afraid this will continue into the foreseeable future."

- "Hurting the careers of the members who vote against Joe"

- "poorly worded question. Are you asking what effect grassroots would have in legislative issues? More democracy!"

- "Obviously it depends on the group, but hopefully pressure from concerned citizens, if broad enough, will push policy to the middle of the political spectrum where it belongs."

- "That's the way it's supposed to work. Except ideally there would be more than one side involved."

- "Getting involved in a controversial speakers race is a no win situation for trade groups"

- "It will damage the efficacy of the House system of having the Members elect the Speaker."

- "The House Speaker should be decided by House members. The question then becomes just who are these outside 'grassroots' groups? Funded by whom? Infiltrated by what interest groups? 'grassroots' or organized lobby effort?"

- "This hastens the long-term threat to Republican control of state government, because these groups aim at fragmentation and exclusivity rather than broad consensus-building."

- "The 'grassroots' are the basis of our democracy and deserve to participate in this decision or other legislative issues. It should however be done on an honest basis, not this sham presented by Phil King, Wayne

Christian, David Barton and others who cloak themselves in the righteousness of Joseph Goebbels. Rarely do we have 'truth in advertising' in politics but this effort to unseat Straus beats all. Beware the pious who wear the robe of the Pharisee's - humility and truth rarely accompany their message."

- "chaos..."

- "The effect of outside groups on the process will be minimal. In the end only those that play inside baseball really understand or care about the Speakers race. The real impact is what is going to happen to the outside groups when they don't prevail. Will groups such as Eagle Forum have enough impact to show that they can still influence things? If Straus wins then the groups that are now making the threats will have to back them up. In the next election, when these groups are unable to take down those that support Straus, they will have lost a lot of credibility. Noise and power are two different things."

- "Increases pressure to base vote on narrow partisan interests. Decreases incentives to be open to compromise."

- "longer lines to get into the Capitol"

- "Discussion of issues and candidates is healthy for our republic. It's a responsibility of 'we the people' to inform ourselves and then to act with integrity."

- "Greater political transparency."

- "Grass roots works if there is substance and relevance around the issue. It's situational and I'm not sure there's a short or long term effect."

- "none."

- "The Speaker is elected by the members only. Outside groups are mostly irrelevant and their impact will be minimal."

- "Nothing good, in this issue. As far as 'other legislative issues,' these groups are already involved. I think this 'race' is the result of one party piling up more seats than they ever dreamed of and they're just sorry

that they're out of elections to participate in...wait, wait, there's a speaker's race!"

- "unknown"

- "The speaker-selection issue is different in that it should be addressed internally by the House members. With regard to substantive legislative issues, we should welcome grassroots groups."

- "Not good"

- "Completely negative. The House members should be electing the speaker, not the general populace. The voters choose the president of the Senate. The Constitution says the members elect the Speaker for a reason."

- "1) Although Strauss will prevail, he is unnecessarily putting his Republican supporters through the shredder by not giving them the political cover they need and deserve. At any moment, Joe could have stopped all of this, and for his own comfort he has chosen not to do so. ... 2) ... The long-term effect of grassroots involvement depends on 2 other questions. How long will the involvement last? Will they learn how to participate in an effective way, or will they stay at the level of a temper tantrum? If they learn how to be productive, and if they stay involved with a similar level of intensity for 2 cycles (48 months) or longer, then the long-term impact has the possibility of being enormous on Texas and the nation. ... 3) If it is really the sentiment of large groups of people, then the recent attacks on Dan Patrick as being a RINO for letting Beverly Woolley into the new Tea Party caucus are a pretty strong indication that the current grassroots efforts are on the wrong track for having any significant long term impact on Texas."

- "More divisive, Washington-style politics in Texas. Legislators are elected to come to Austin and use their best judgment on behalf of their districts. With this type of 'grassroots' involvement becoming more prevalent, it will turn, or has turned, into a system where whoever barks the loudest gets heard."

- "The effect is turning this democracy into an idiocracy. Grassroots groups with passion: good. AstroTurf groups designed to stir anger: bad."

- "Happy with DC and 'winner take all' partisanship?"

- "More polarization and partisanship."

- "more Washington style partisan politics increasing potential for not all to get done in regular sessions."

- "No one knows the answer until we see if these so-called 'grassroots' groups can actually get members in-elected over the singular issue of 'RINO'-ism (i.e. - you gotta vote against this guy because he's not conservative enough). To date, that hasn't been very effective in Texas."

- "Advocacy groups play important and necessary roles in the development of state policy. But, 'grassroots' groups should never be allowed to mask or cover up the involvement of powerful interests wanting to 'fly under the radar.' The long- and short-term effect of allowing this is a loss of representation by regular Texans."

- "bad"

- "Make it much harder for the system we have to carry Texas forward. If diverse opinions are cut out of the game our democratic system will deteriorate and all will suffer the consequences"

- "It will advance the potential for partisan organization of both Houses of the Legislature. When and if that happens, there will be no return to bi-partisan organization"

- "none"

- "It will have a negative affect. Partisan politics to the extent that they can should be left at the steps of the Capitol and the focus should be on developing good public that is in the best interest of the people of Texas."

- "The House will be unstable - and the Senate will grow in strength"

- "Outside groups have always been involved - TLR, TTLA, TMA and other BIG players. Now that smaller, grassroots groups are organized and active it gets more play since these groups are more vocal and are willing to create more controversy to increase their donor base."
- "Speaker will be less responsive to the members and less able to protect members and House as an institution."
- "Increased partisan bickering and members being pressed toward more extreme partisan positions."
- "Grassroots organizations have been involved for years. What's new?"
- "Some grassroots efforts are very beneficial for moving an issue, others are just divisive. In this situation they are strictly divisive. This group is going to be the one that demands all the controversial bills be heard early driving a wedge and potentially preventing any productivity this session."
- "I believe that it will lead to partisan gridlock. Bright stars in the minority party may not be recognized for leadership positions or even to have their legislation considered. It looks like the Washington, DC political system."
- "It's a democracy, sort of, and so outside groups have a right to be involved. Even before the recent court decision that said outside groups could spend money on the Speaker race, business groups and the lobby more generally had long been involved in identifying and supporting 'safe' members as they rose toward leadership positions including the speakership. Now the insider influence will just be more visible."
- "It corrupts the process. The election of Speaker is designed to be an internal process free of outside influence. It is yet another indication that we are slouching towards DC with the rancor and hyper-partisanship. In a word, it is BAD."
- "Longer, nastier, more expensive speaker races in the future."
- "There is no impact from the outside. This is an inside baseball game, maybe an inside the diamond game that few know about and fewer care about."
- "There is no long-term effect. They have been doing it for a long time already."
- "Legislative grid-lock, just like Washington."
- "Inside races like the Speaker's race will become more public and probably influenced more by public opinion rather than who those in office believe would be the better leader."
- "The further 'Washingtonification' of Austin, sadly. (If I wanted to put up with that b.s., I'd work there instead of here!)"
- "You never forget those that wrong you:)"
- "At long last, Democrats in the House might start acting like Democrats."
- "It can be either positive or negative. They are best at purporting specific ideologies and broad policies. They should not micromanage the legislative process."
- ""This' is different than other legislative issues, so I don't really get the question. Interest groups are always involved in legislative issues, no? As far as the involvement of interest groups in Speaker politics: We'll continue to see this happen if the majority party is subject to pronounced internal cleavages. Barring legal proscriptions against it, most of which will probably not withstand Constitutional scrutiny anyway, sharp internal divisions will continue to generate efforts to influence the outcome. For the most part, though, they will fail, as these efforts are likely to fail, at least in their immediate goals."
- "It's wonderful for grassroots groups to engage on legislative issues. For them to engage on internal business and mechanics - from the speaker's race to the 2/3 rule - erodes the ability of the legislative bodies to function as they were designed to do, making gridlock (interparty and intraparty) more pronounced. The Texas system was already designed to vastly limit the ability

of the state to do much. These interferences exacerbate that."

- "We will end up just like Washington. Useless and ultimately harmful. Let the reps do the job they are elected to do, and conduct the speaker election by secret ballot."

- "polarization"

- "It will increase partisanship."

- "No long term impact. Big hat no cows as we will see next election cycle."

- "There really isn't anything new about 'grassroots' groups being involved in the legislative process. Some are able to influence a lot of members and some aren't. Most members put a priority on not to doing anything that will get them beat, regardless of the issue or who is pushing it."

- "Well, can't imagine the true conservatives really want an endorsement from the former ambassador to Hell - the UN!"

- "It could have a polarizing effect and bring Washington-style politics to Austin. This is good if you like the way Washington works! One of the reasons Texas has been successful is that our government focuses on what is best for Texas. Change can be good, but I think people are second-guessing the change they got from the 2008 results. The problem with swings in the pendulum is that it can cause a wider swing the other way in the future. Business needs stability and a stable state government has been good for business as evidenced in our economy."

- "None, although it probably emboldens them to do it again next time if Straus prevails, with more lead time"

- "Unless the 'roots' are deep it's just more noise for members to endure and material for all to discuss."

- "More conservative government that is better responsive to the will of the voters."

- "Democratic grassroots groups have always been involved, now Republican groups are too. It's just democracy."

- "It will not have a long term impact. Outside groups who try to play the 'inside baseball' game of speaker politics will quickly find out their voice is weak. Legislative issues are different than a speaker race...so the influence of these outside groups will still be strong in the legislative issue arena..."

- "No difference than lobbyists being involved in legislative issues."

- "Weaken the party, in the long term. The Republican Party in Texas is about to embark on its long civil war, and the idea of the 'big tent' is certainly gone. The Texas Republicans will purge their ranks until they are finally a party of a rapidly dwindling cross-section of our state's demographic. All this political theatre regarding the Speaker's election is simply the first shots to fall on their Ft. Sumter."

- "No long term effect for speakers' races -- they already get involved with other legislative issues."

- "Negative. The personal decision by member of who is the speaker should be left to the entire house without outside influence."

- "The Speaker will become accountable to outside groups and not just the members. Outside issues may end up driving the Speakers race not who is the 'best Speaker' for the time."

- "Every person/group has the right to express their opinions. The members of the House select the speaker. How they arrive at that conclusion is their business. These groups that are asking members to go back on their 'word' are insignificant in my book. Ignore these groups now, and in the long term."

- "none, except better government"

- "Probably very little, other than to give outside groups political ammunition to use during the primary season."

- "Well, the grassroots groups won many of those elections, so they probably feel empowered to cash in their political capital. I don't think it's a particularly good long term strategy, though, given how fickle and moderate the electorate is."
- "In due time the Speaker will regain control and groups like Sullivan's and others will fade back into pushing issues in which they have an interest ... like a thousand others. And next year the Republican majority will thin back to a more normal majority, nowhere near the supermajority created by Washington politics last year."
- "Ultimately it will open up the process. More open government is better."
- "The long-term effect of grass-roots involvement is probably a speakership that resembles public sentiment more than has been the case in the past."
- "We wouldn't want to open the legislative process up to the general public now would we?"
- "Not good. Will hasten partisan polarization."
- "I have no problem with outside 'grassroots groups weighing in on the Speaker's race. It is their aggressive tactics that are the problem. Instead of enhancing their influence, they have destroyed it."
- "unfortunately, they will probably be rewarded as there top issues--illegal immigration, voter ID, anti-abortion efforts, abstinence-only education, treat until transfer, and no new taxes will all likely be achieved."
- "It will force other groups who had not previously been involved in the Speakers race to get involved in the next race."
- "The fact of the matter is it further erodes their credibility...for example...TEF has determined that one half of their 'rating' will be based on the speaker vote. I think that is interesting in that all other issues pale...taxes, republican redistricting, abortion. And, just like all their other rating schemes, it is completely contrived."
- "Zero effect, other than to be noisy and to give some House members an excuse to make power grabs or get name id. for other elected offices. Technology has provided a loud megaphone. But just as with a megaphone, it's not the tool, rather the message that is powerful or effective."
- "It will turn Austin into DC. The members should elect the presiding officer, not political parties."
- "This race is unusual. Grassroots will not be as involved in the future. In the future each candidate for Speaker will have some grassroots support. most of those groups require a 2/3ds vote to take action."
- "not good"
- "Damaging in the short-run, irrelevant in the long-run because of limited impact on the race."
- "A speaker's race is won by the members posturing themselves with the candidate that they think can win. Alliances grow and dwindle. Threats and retaliations thrive in the back halls of the Capitol. This type of politicking doesn't happen because of outside groups. It happens because the members think it is politically advantageous to do so."
- "Most of the time 'grassroots' means 'green roots,' i.e. money."
- "Every constituency has the right to be involved, including the lunatic fringe. That said, the long term effect of bowing to lunatic pressure is long term lunacy."
- "It will tend to make Members more beholden to the activist extremes of their respective parties. Pressure to remain ideologically 'pure' will discourage the cooperation and compromise needed to craft sound public policy."
- "They will demonstrate their impotence by losing this fight, and then not being able to back up their primary threats (they will get candidates but lose). Legislators will ultimately be liberated from scorecard politics -- at least those with a backbone and

a memory. Michael Quinn Sullivan will be the most despised lobbyist in the Capitol."

- "Voters elect members and members elect the speaker...period!"

- "Minimal, it will still be a member to member process."

- "Long term it will serve to polarize members and their positions on various issues. It's also likely to backfire on supporters when partisan mix changes-trust me majorities ALWAYS change!"

- "Positively, they will learn that changing government is not as easy as they think."

- "Increased Washington-style leadership and government -- net loss to Texas's way of life. The GOP has done more to destroy the Texas tradition that any so-called liberal Democrats"

- "It will make the House more partisan and less able on finding common sense, practical solutions to the challenges facing Texas."

- "The next thing they will want to do is select committee chairs-After that-select committees-then just turn the process over to the special interest and single issue people. Then there will be no need for elections because the people will not be represented."

- "The effect isn't long term it is happening now and it is causing the very personal decision of a House Member who is informed and unfortunately, ceding that authority to an uninformed mob."

- "Most outside groups have no true idea what the Speaker does. These issues should be left to the members. This is about the only vote that belongs to them and should be left to them alone. Unfortunately, I see 'grassroots' groups meddling in this for some time to come."

- "Frightening but probably effective"

- "It will be very damaging for the groups who end up on the 'wrong side'."

- "Mob rule vs. representative democracy. The Speaker's race is for members only. If outsiders want to control the Speaker's race, perhaps they could take a risk and run for State Representative."

- "The effect is what you are seeing today - its democracy at work"

- "?"

- "The continued polarization of Texas politics. The middle gets crowded out."

- "They have helped decide Democrat Speakers and will always have 1st Amendment speech rights."

- "Hard to say, at least with the Speaker's race. I think we're seeing some spillover from the general election that's generating the ruckus now, but I think that if Straus is reelected and has a good session where Republican members can go home and declare victory then we won't see too much effect by these groups. The members take this vote very seriously, not only for public consumption but also for very personal reasons as no one wants to pick the wrong side."

- "More moneyed interests will start more front groups to try and get grassroots support for their causes and consultants will benefit."

- "Outside groups getting involved in legislative matters is not a bad thing. However, members need to understand much of the current 'grassroots' is really 'grass tops' generated hype by interest groups. ... The lobby needs to realize that social media and other communication forums are changing the way members evaluate and react to issues. Traditional relationship lobby is becoming less important and the ability to demonstrate 'public' support is becoming a vital aspect of lobby efforts."

- "The Tea Party movement will work to promote cutting services to the working families, the poor, people of color and the immigrant communities. On the other hand, the grassroots community for the poor, communities of color and immigrant

communities will have to take a very serious, diligent and creative role this legislation to protect existing rights, prevent bills that harm Texas' economy and its communities from becoming law. If the Tea Party prevails in its effort to have the newly elected members cut taxes and services, the long term ramifications will have a negative impact on the Texas economy, the state's infrastructure and tomorrow's workforce will negatively impact the golden years for tomorrow's elderly. Texas will not every hold a leadership position among states as state that will enjoy economic prosperity and prepares tomorrow's workforce. If the civil rights community prevails in stopping the passage of bills that will harm education and the anti-immigrant bills, Texas will be the nation's leader in a world economy. Only time will tell. Let us hope that Texas becomes a world leader in providing quality education at all levels, building infrastructure and creating jobs, and respecting America's legacy – its immigrant communities. America's rich and prosperous legacy has been sustained by the immigrant community, its history stands on the shallows of immigrant pioneers who came to this country to live the dream – a pursuit of justice, liberty and freedom."

- "Bad. Do we really want to be D.C.???"
- "Making Austin more like Washington by the day"
- "It will worsen as the years go by and corporate contributors expand the funding of Astroturf speaker campaigns"
- "The speaker's race is a personal vote for the members. Outside groups have no role."
- "Some neophytes will think they have stroke and be intimidated by them, but the truth is these folks are funded by a few guys tied to few more guys, who just want to rule."
- "Presumably increased transparency as the issues surrounding these decisions are publicly debated. Unfortunately on this first go at public input on the Speaker's race, those seemingly getting the lion's share of attention have been disingenuous in their characterization of the issue at hand."

- "Divisiveness and ultimately resentment for the attempt by outside influences. Texans at heart are still parochial ... and proud of it!"

- "No change. They have always been involved."

- "Obviously it discredits those that would interfere in internal House politics. Even though the House is now populated by many who may not have a deep grasp of procedures, I think it unlikely that any outside entity will be able to affect the outcome of this the most important, and most internal, decision a House member will make."

- "not good"

- "all bad for the process."

- "This is a bad precedent, we do not need outside groups controlling the speakership. Just imagine the possible groups who could get involved, unions, special interests of all stripes. We elect our representatives, they should elect the speaker."

- "Total game change - change of lobbying efforts, change in social media strategies, change in who ultimately runs for office"

- "none"

- "Big difference between getting involved in the speaker's race and in getting involved in 'other legislative issues'. Grassroots groups should be involved in other legislative issues...it's just the mechanisms for them getting involved that are migrating, not the fact that they are. Getting involved in the speaker's race will have the long-term effect of impacting the short term over and over again. Until the members of the House determine that they can and should ignore this external intrusion into what is the most personal decision they will make: their relationship with the leadership, they will suffer again and again. Those that are wise enough to ignore the noise and do what they think is best for them and their district will have to suffer through a lot less unnecessary stress than do those that are worrying about the consequences of the first vote of the session."

- "a grand jury"
- "positive"
- "good ---legislators must balance all input and determine best for Texas as a whole"
- "Hopefully, very little"
- "To much democracy. It feels a little like I and R in California, which hasn't worked so well for that State. ... This is a Republic."
- "THEY ALREADY HAVE BEEN...WE BECOME MORE LIKE WASHINGTON D.C. EVERYDAY DESPITE THE RHETORIC AGAINST D.C."
- "For Q2, yes to Dems in chairmanships, but not necessarily in a proportional sense. Dem representation by putting some talented people in appropriate jobs. Q4, Will hold members more accountable to the folks who elect them and make them own the positions they take and be prepared to defend them"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Jim Arnold, Kip Averitt, Louis Bacarisse, Charles Bailey, Tom Banning, Mike Barnett, Eric Bearse, Leland Beatty, Dave Beckwith, Luke Bellsnyder, Tom Blanton, Fred Bosse, Hugh Brady, Steve Bresnen, Andy Brown, Terri Burke, Jose Camacho, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Snapper Carr, Janis Carter, Corbin Casteel, William Chapman, Elizabeth Christian, George Cofer, Rick Cofer, Lawrence Collins, Harold Cook, Hector Deleon, Scott Dunaway, David Dunn, Jeff Eller, Jack Erskine, Alan Erwin, John Esparza, Jon Fisher, Terry Frakes, Kyle Frazier, Wil Galloway, Neftali Garcia, Bruce Gibson, Machree Gibson, Scott Gilmore, Eric Glenn, Daniel Gonzalez, Jim Grace, Thomas Graham, Alan Gray, John Greytok, Marta Greytok, Jack Gullahorn, Anthony Haley, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Albert Hawkins, Jim Henson, Steve Holzheuser, Mike Hull, Shanna Igo, Richie Jackson, Cal Jillson, Robert Kamm, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Tim Lambert, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Donald Lee, Luke Legate, Richard Levy, Lance Lively, Ruben Longoria, Matt Mackowiak, Bryan Mayes, Richard McBride, J. McCartt, Suzi McClellan, Dan McClung, Parker McCollough, Scott McCown, Carol McGarah, Mike McKinney, Kurt Meacham, Debra Medina, Robert Miller, Lynn Moak, Steve Murdock, Craig Murphy, Keir Murray, Richard Murray, Sylvia Nugent, Todd Olsen, Gardner Pate, Jerry Philips, Wayne Pierce, John Pitts, Royce Poinsett, Kraege Polan, Bill Ratliff, Karen Reagan, Tim Reeves, Chuck Rice, Carl Richie, Kim Ross, Luis Saenz, Mark Sanders, Jim Sartwelle, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Steve Scurlock, Bradford Shields, Christopher Shields, Patricia Shipton, Carol Sims, Ed Small, Terral Smith, Tom Smith, Todd Smith, Larry Soward, Tom Spilman, Jason Stanford, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Charles Stuart, Frank Sturzl, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Russ Tidwell, Bruce Todd, Trey Trainor, Jill Warren, John Weaver, Ken Whalen, Darren Whitehurst, Chad Wilbanks, Christopher Williston, Michael Wilt, Lee Woods, Eric Wright, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli