

“INSIDE”

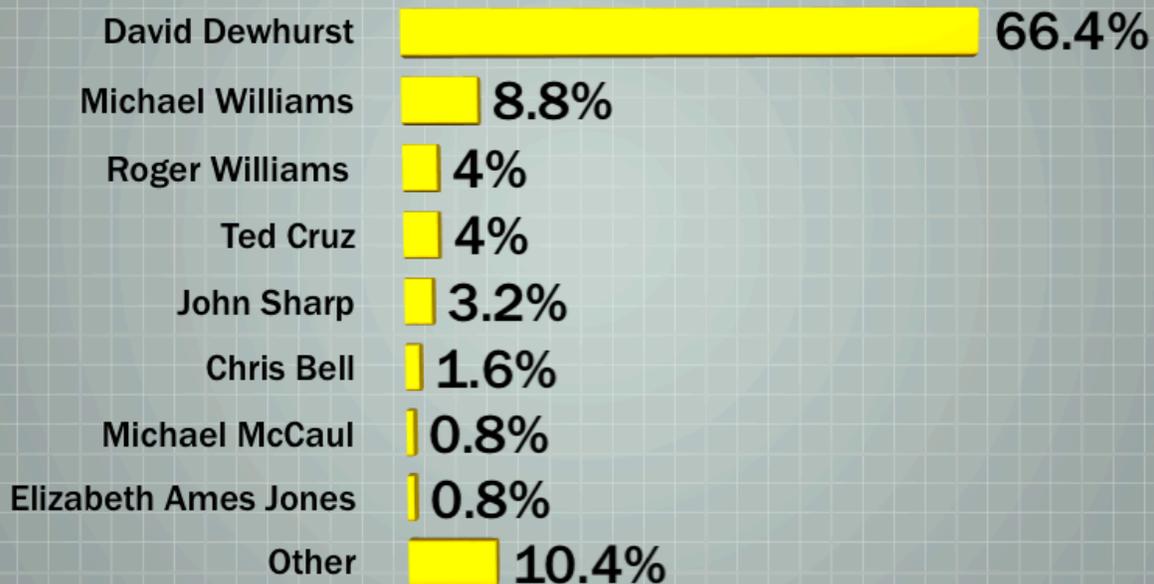
INTELLIGENCE

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE
TEXAS  WEEKLY

The insider's poll for the week of January 24.

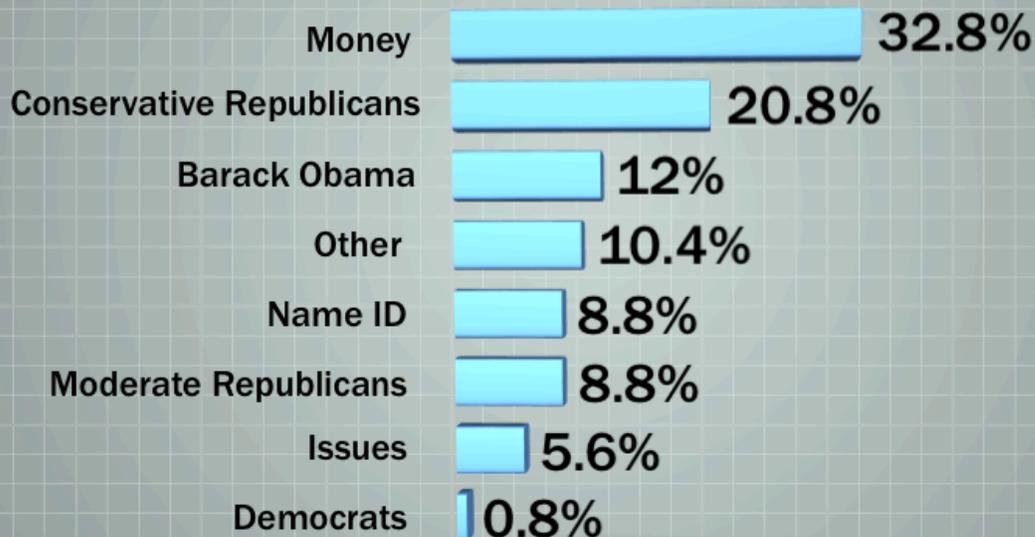
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Who will be the next U.S. Senator from Texas?



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What will be the most important factor in the race?



This week's open-ended prompt was "How will the jockeying for this and other potential spots on the ballot impact the legislative session?" And here's how the insiders answered:

- "Modest"
- "Dewhurst will try and run to the right, claim credit for all Perry does. If he raises even a single fee, his Senate aspirations are over."
- "Dewhurst needs to make a big leadership statement if he wants to get out in front of the race. Michael Williams will have ample time to raise money and increase his name ID while legislators are doing the heavy lifting of the session."
- "It won't. The legislature likes to pretend that it's the center of the universe when it's in session."
- "Even more grandstanding, sad to say."
- "All swings will go to the right."
- "Not sure"
- "It will push the Senate to the right."
- "More games and showmanship, less policy application."
- "It will confuse Dewhurst sufficiently that he will never pull the trigger. In the indecision process, he will anger the rest of the potential candidates and their grassroots constituencies and potential donors, just as Kay did with her indecision."
- "A little but not all that much"
- "Some people will get too far ahead (like choosing the next Presiding Officer of the Senate) and lose the otherwise possible support of their colleagues to elect them to that post."
- "Since the race will be one in the Republican primary, we will see all the potential candidates trying to out conservative each other by supporting or opposing legislative action."
- "Are you kidding? Dewhurst must be perfect. All too often, that is not the case."
- "May make some of our senate members act a little more 'conservative'"
- "Not too much. Too much requires focus this session."
- "Dewhurst will want to get a budget in the regular session, some good conservative legislation for the republican primary voters (think voter ID and immigration), and assurance that they won't come back for special in 2012."
- "Fairly significant distraction for the Dew; lots of focus on Washington bashing as per his inauguration speech"
- "Far less pragmatic budget process"
- "None. I do not see how much further to the right Dewhurst can move."
- "Dewhurst will have to resign to campaign."
- "Only impacts it if Dewhurst announces he is running before Sine Die, which I suspect he won't. Dewhurst can and should use the session to prove his conservatism, while the other candidates should be raising money."
- "Dewhurst will choose his words more carefully than ever."
- "Dewhurst will take credit for all conservative bills that pass."
- "Not much."
- "At least 50 new legislators & 4 new statewide officers will lead to inexperienced governance."
- "it will cause leadership to down play the severity of some of the issues or put off hard decisions"
- "It will decrease the opportunity for bold action. (from nil to none)"
- "It won't"

- "No candidate for Senate can support or endorse new taxes or fees to address budget deficit and remain a viable GOP primary candidate."
- "Minimally."
- "Dewhurst will be trying to capture, or hold, his right flank and will out-Perry Perry pandering to the radicals."
- "Abbott runs for Lt Guv w Combs. Staples runs for comptroller."
- "Look for even more backstabbing and headlines grabbing."
- "Dewhurst is going to have to look like a leader and ensure passage of some key republican base legislation like voter photo ID. The latter will be much more easily accomplished than the former."
- "Straus will be the only one of the three doing the right things. The other two will play to voters."
- "Dewhurst will be a much different Lt. Gov."
- "It will give grass-root conservative groups more power"
- "Push it further right (if that's even possible). Certainly, DD considering it will slow down the Senate even more."
- "If action follows current rhetoric, not much change."
- "Hard to say. The atmosphere is already more politically charged than other sessions, so it will be just another factor to be considered."
- "The potential to focus more on 'pithy remarks' without paying attention to meaningful policy will rule the day."
- "It will have very little impact."
- "Dewhurst has to tack right and stay right! While Obama's numbers are getting better, and the economy should be doing better in a

year, the primary will be a nasty fight for the right."

- "It will put Dewhurst in a hell of a spot."
- "Entirely too much. The Senate will look like what we thought the House would because of Dewhurst and Shapiro pandering to the social right."
- "Senate will be forced to be very conservative."
- "Not enough talk about doing what's right for Texas and a whole lotta talk about Washington. We already saw today that Dewhurst speech should have ended with 'Vote for Me'."
- "The Senate will be pressed to pass all of the conservative legislation coming over from the House. The 2/3 'rule' will be weakened or dropped."
- "less risks taken"
- "More posturing, less gets done."
- "No new taxes - but watch out for hidden taxes in the for of new or increased fees"
- "Dewhurst will have to walk a strict conservative 'tea Party' line. Other candidates will look for weakness in this area and attack him there."
- "Republicans can not afford to be seen as weak on taxes or spending during the session if they are seeking the nomination for Senate, which will provide motivation to address the budget issues by cutting spending and not raising taxes."
- "Very little"
- "Dewhurst going to have to roll the Democrats and abandon 2/3rds rule. Straus, the alleged moderate, will usher through some conservative bills and it will be on Dewhurst to get them passed in the Senate."
- "Easier passage of conservative /Republican legislation."

- "there will be lots of talk about Federal issues"
- "Democrats are getting a reputation for entering Republican Primaries to choose weaker opponents. Gray Davis in California started this trend and it has now been used very well across the country. Davis and others have expertly attacked well-funded Republicans that they thought they couldn't defeat in a General Election. Many of these candidates won races as much on candidate filing day as they did via actual campaigns as the brutal attacks left a mark large enough in some instances to scare away candidates from filing and in other instances left candidates so wounded that they couldn't win in November. Will Texas and National Democrats try to take out Dewhurst by attacking him early and often during the legislative session because of his money or do they fear Michael Williams' organization and appeal more? Will Democrats just roll over in Texas or will they try to shape the end game by trying to set up Republicans during the legislative session? ... In the end, Dewhurst is in a tough spot. Every candidate envies his money but during a legislative session with a deficit he may be an easy target with his hands tied, especially for candidates like Ames Jones, Cruz and Roger Williams all of whom would benefit greatly if Dewhurst chooses not to run for Senate."
- "It will further reduce the willingness to take any risks which might be good for Texas but bad for a given candidate's political aspirations"
- "Unfortunately, it will have a lot of impact. Dewhurst and Shapiro will cross swords, of course. Staples is in a good position to become Lt Gov because he will not have to be in the middle of the fray, and he has shown a great propensity to create support and raise money."
- "People like Florence Shapiro will be distracted, waiting for Dewhurst to decide and announce what he is going to do. Lots of water cooler talk about rumors, speculation."
- "Abbott Gov. Patterson Lt. Gov."
- "Probably very little, except for an increase in the number of press releases."
- "Even more posturing around the conservative agenda"
- "Dewhurst will push his Senate on more conservative issues"
- "Dewhurst will move to the right - he already has with his absurd hyper-partisan inauguration speech. Everybody else will be reacting to Dewhurst, trying to keep up. Where they fail, Dewhurst may well fill their void by messing himself up."
- "Hoo boy, who wants to vote for taxes and fees, and who wants to shut down government? Who'll take a risk, and who'll try to dodge the bullet? Who'll run into each other at the intersection of risk and opportunity? Who'll get up from the wreck? Stay tuned."
- "Dewhurst will have to deliver on Voter ID, sonograms and other right-wing wish list items."
- "Forget any tax increase."
- "Train wreck. If not wrecking directly in the middle of the rotunda this session, the tracks will be skewed so that a future train wreck will be unavoidable."
- "Oddly."
- "I don't think it will affect the legislative session - but the evaluation of Dewhurst's performance in the session will affect his changes in the race."
- "Getting elected to some folks is more important than good government"
- "very little. The players will do about the same as they would have if Sen. Hutchison had not announced"
- "Race for Lt. Governor will be intense and more folks looking at AG and Comptroller"
- "Rhetoric will be further right than usual, then mellow considerably after end of the session."

- "get your popcorn ready it's going to be a heckuva of a show!"
- "Will harm low income Texans--will continue to be a fight to see who can cut the most"
- "half a league half a league half a league onward . . ."
- "Dewhurst will move to the right to solidify the base giving Senate Ds less reason to work with the majority"
- "It will be more conservative, but not because the candidates are genuinely conservative."
- "It will push Lt. Gov. Dewhurst farther to the right and eliminate any chance for new revenue streams to be adopted."
- "Even more posturing for the political right than usual."
- "Candidates will be fiscal conservatives"
- "Different tracks, though both headed the same way. Most Republican hopefuls will call for balancing the budget with no new taxes, but that is already where the Republican dominated legislature is headed."
- "'One would have to believe that this development will make Dewhurst even more gun-shy than he MIGHT otherwise have been. For example, one would have to conclude that whatever life was left in gaming (very little to be sure) is now gone-ski. Also will make it even more difficult for him to get anywhere near a revenue adjustment of any kind. ... Incidentally, the answer Question #3 would depend on the race: primary or general.'"
- "Could affect Senate committee appointments and of course posturing on legislation."
- "It will affect everything Dewhurst does."
- "significant"
- "No new taxes, a move even further to the right."
- "God help us if the Lt. Gov. is 'distracted' again. Seriously, let's see how many more lawsuits the AG files against the federal government and we'll have a picture of how high he's aiming."
- "The Lt. Gov will view everything during the session in terms of how it might impact his run for the Senate."
- "Well it's obvious that Dewhurst is running for US Senate after listening to his inaugural speech on Tuesday: his sights on DC are clearly set. Dewhurst will make sure that voter ID passes the Senate, as well as any anti-immigration, anti-Washington legislation that helps him cater to the Tea Party activists. His moderate stance won't help him win without a few victories for the extreme right."
- "All 'Warshington' all the time. We'll spend lots of time and energy on trivial aspects of issues that are not those most important to Texas' future -- illegal immigration, federal health care legislation, birth certificates, and infant terrorists."
- "Dew moves way right"
- "Make the session more conservative particularly regarding the budget"
- "Difficult to predict."
- "mild distraction of dominoes trying to fall"
- "Dewhurst will be measured by how he handles the cuts in education and social service spending that will likely come out of the House."
- "It will definitely affect how the Dew leads the Senate. With the house passing just about everything on the Republican wish list, can Dewhurst show the leadership needed to get it through the senate? Should be fun to watch the senate for a change."

- "Chorus will be loud, but impact minimal. Budget and Redistricting will dominate And they are already partisan enough."

- "More speeches by Dew and attempt firm up conservative credentials."

- "Hopefully not much. 4 new Congressional seats clearly will be tempting to a number of state lawmakers, and some grandstanding and posturing is to be expected."

- "More energy behind passing conservative legislation."

- "Interfere with the real need to address the budget shortfall properly."

- "Lots of Red Meat out there"

- "A further push on extreme policies to pander to the Republican primary electorate that will be difficult to defend in a general election."

- "Nothing Dewhurst does will be conservative enough. He will be label Dewchrist."

- "Dewhurst will use the LG office to launch his campaign, which could bring the upper chamber to a stand still."

- "It will be important in the decisions on the 'red meat' conservative bills and more bills will fall into that category because of the race."

- "Probably badly."

- "State budget, immigration issues will be watched by hopefuls and their supporters with an eye to how every potential candidate addresses the issues."

- "It will completely allow for Dewhurst to set the parameters of the senate game. With the Dew as Lt. gov., his position allows for no other candidate to make any inroads into

Austin money. Any speculation on who may be a front runner this early one in the process is just foolish."

- "The dew will tack right"

- "Dewhurst may seek to impose his influence to strengthen his political position."

- "The Senate will know they have Dewhurst's political gonads in a vice. He will try and exert leadership, and the Senators will remind him, yet again, who is really in charge of the west side of the Capitol."

- "The jockeying for the US Senate will force the Lt. Governor to move to the right on issues dealt with in 2011 legislative session, particularly the voter ID, the anti-immigrant legislation."

- "Politicians will jockey for higher offices?"

- "Lt. Governor will be even more nervous about fiscal issues and that may make budget resolution even more difficult"

- "it will help assure passage of CFR reforms at the Railroad Commission"

- "Appears two of the top three leaders are already in campaign mode so look for them to use the session to score points with the Republican base vote."

- "Lots of spinning while decisions are forced down some of the candidates' throats."

- "For Dewhurst in particular, he will try to escape the session with as little damage to his brand as possible."

- "Dewhurst will be doing two things at once, which never works well for either, bills won't get the attention they need or will be shelved if they would impact the public perception of a candidate."

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