

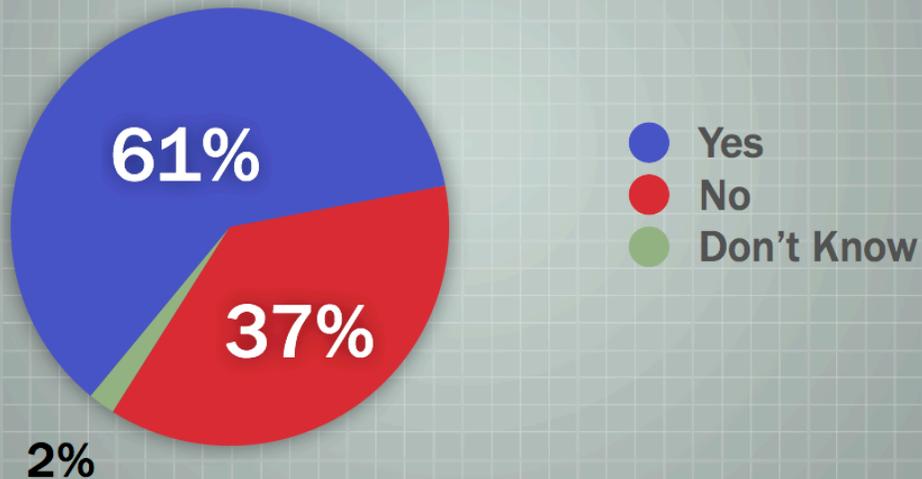
“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

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*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of January 21*

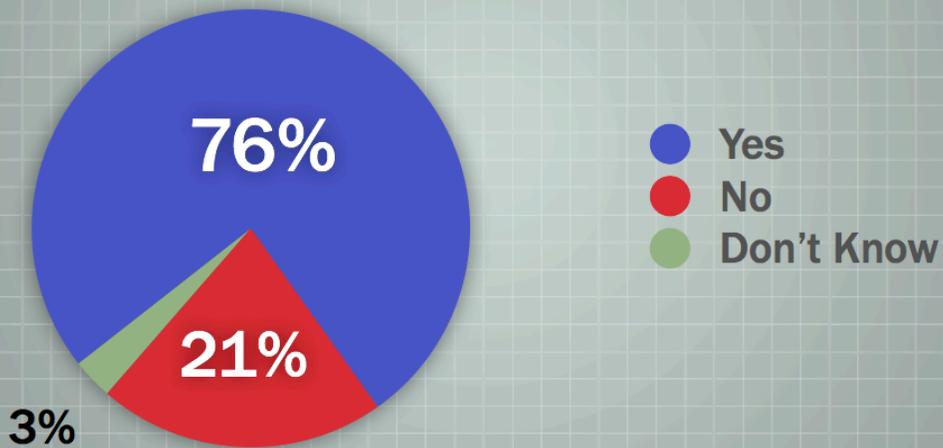
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Should lawmakers disclose more about their personal finances?



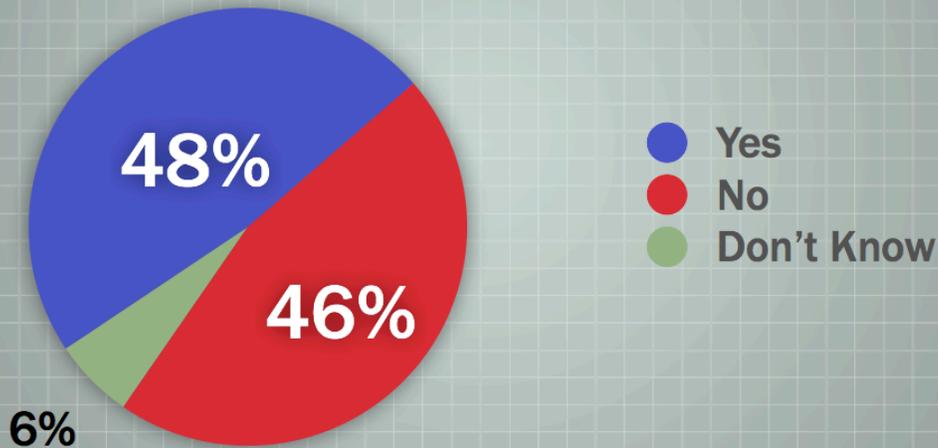
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Should lawyers and consultants in the legislature disclose their clients?



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Should lobbying by political consultants be restricted?



Should lawmakers be required to make more detailed disclosures of their financial interests than they do now?

- "Not much can be discerned from current reports. The current requirements create a shroud of transparency, but they don't really tell anyone very much. Additionally, those reports should be on the Ethics Commission website instead of requiring someone to physically go to the office and make a request for the information."
- "Why? Does anyone other than the Texas Observer care what's in these disclosures now?"
- "The majority of legislators do business by the book. More disclosures would add fuel to the 'gotcha-journalism' that is plaguing democracy."
- "They need to have the reports policed better."
- "It's a wonder Texas has been governed all these years--including decades when Texas was a one party state dominated by Democrats--without stricter disclosure rules and regs. Texans are not entitled to know every single aspect of a candidate/member's life, including specific financial details and medical health."
- "Lawmakers should be judged on their policy. Who cares about the motivation as long as what they advocate is for the good of the whole."

- "My answer would have been yes, except that I worry that with more personally intrusive requirements for becoming a candidate, the quality of those running might be even lower than it currently is."
- "Any personal business impacted by their work in the legislature should be disclosed."
- "As long as they follow the current law, it is adequate."
- "They public's voyeuristic inclinations have gotten out of hand. They want to know too much and then find everyone they know that much about unacceptable. Transparency and sunlight are good for the system. But the game of gotcha politics has gotten out of control."
- "It's currently ok"
- "We should actually enforce the laws and regulations we have on the books already."
- "Sources of income are shielded by company names and law firms. You cannot truly see the many conflicts that DO exist today without that information, attorney-client- privilege or no. Everyone out here can cite situations where lawyers in particular are doing the bidding of the law firms they represent."
- "Depends on what is included in the 'more' part."
- "I think if they are getting paid by an entity that has business before the state or business before a local jurisdiction then they ought to be required to show the public where they get their kickbacks."
- "Legislators should be required to disclose what companies they have financial relationships with and the amounts involved in the relationships."
- "No... The Texas Tribune is over stepping the bounds."
- "The reports don't lack in detail; they lack in clarity. A simpler report would provide greater transparency for the public."
- "Only 20 people in all the state look at those things, and only 10 people care."
- "Current reporting laws are disgraceful ... Louisiana is vastly more transparent ... and it is not really good."
- "Greater transparency is always preferable"

Should lawmakers occupied as consultants and lawyers be required to disclose names of clients who might have business before the Legislature?

- "Not lawyers. Atty-client privilege. Non-lawyers, yes."
- "Yes, there is an appearance of impropriety when lawyers and consultants are representing

companies or individuals with business in front of not only the Legislature, but in front of state agencies as well. I think we all can point to certain former legislators with whom this has raised questions."

- "While these disclosures would affect the bottom line of certain Houston D's, transparency requires it."
- "Absolutely. Lawyers should also have to disclose any one who refers a case to them if they are involved in a lawsuit against a state agency."
- "Yes, but only if the client has business before the Lege."
- "Either all professions--doctors, engineers, consultants, lawyers, bankers, ad execs, CPAs, plumbers, etc.--disclose their clients/patients who MIGHT have business before the legislature, or none of them do. You cannot single out 'consultants' and lawyers to treat them differently from other members. Besides, lawyers generally have a professional and ethical duty to protect the identity of their clients."
- "Absolutely yes. It would be interesting to know if legislators have become wealthy after having the privilege of changing laws to create their wealth."
- "Candidate disclosure requirements and conflict of interest laws as well as the bribery statutes should cover this area."
- "Yes, but... Too many have hid behind that veil for too long. Fix that loophole. But what about an insurance salesman, do they have to report

everyone who buys a policy? What about a realtor, do they have to report everyone who buys a house? There has to be some end to the madness."

- "This would clearly violate attorney-client privilege rules."
- "The question seems too narrow. For attorneys the standard rule in conflicts situations is disclosure of partners' and associates' activities as well; another standard is identifying clients who might be impacted in any way, not just clients who are actively participating. So rephrasing the question: should legislators who work in law firms be required to identify all clients of the law firm (not just their personal clients) who have any stake or potential benefit from decisions by the legislature?"
- "Absolutely!"
- "Yes, but only for clients that DO (not 'might') have business before the Lege."
- "Most definitely."
- "It is a tough call but if we want true citizen legislator, we have to accept the fact that these people have real jobs."
- "But change 'might' to 'do'."
- "Attorney client privilege is for a reason."
- "Yes, but why limit to 'consultants and lawyers'?"
- "No way. Everyone has some kind of business before the legislature. I believe that right was secured by the

1st Amendment to the US Constitution."

- "This is a tricky situation. Conflicts need to be disclosed but clients deserve confidentiality. Creative

thinking will need to be applied to make this work for all principals."

- "Of course. That's a hold you could drive a doublewide through."

- "Ah duh! Seems like a no brainer."

Should lobbying by political consultants be restricted in some way?

- "Perhaps actually enforcing existing lobby laws as a start? Given that the majority of the Tribune's insiders are lobbyists, do you actually think you will get answers that see past self-interest?"

- "Campaign consultants appear to have a larger level of influence over their political clients, and the appearance is very shady when it comes to representing clients before there very candidates whom they helped get elected."

- "Unless you are suggesting that they do not file the same ethics registrations and reports, why should political consultants be singled out?"

- "Why? It's not feasible. How would you define a 'political consultant?' Someone who ran a JP race in some teeny tiny county who was quoted once in the Daily Podunk Review?"

- "The only people advocating for restrictions against political consultants are the old lobby guard who have become too lazy to adapt to the new lobby environment. This is an 'adapt or die' business and the old guys are dying off. Besides, political consultants who lobby are the ones that take primary political risks every season and it is becoming obvious that

is the easiest path to bypass the old guard to start a lobby career."

- "Much more disclosure"

- "Which other group of working folks would you like to restrict their ability to make a living and provide for their families?"

- "It should in a vacuum. However, there is simply no way to do it, and any effort to do so would most likely result in a much worse situation for everyone."

- "I'd like to know which campaign consultants, paid with PAC dollars from my company, are now lobbying against our interests. Seems reasonable."

- "They should register just like all lobbyists"

- "They should be separate professions."

- "I am not sure what this would accomplish and, anyway, how would you define political consultant?"

- "Lobbyists are involved in campaigns, why can't political consultants be involved in lobbying? What defines a political consultant? Lot's of lobbyists are intimately

involved in the campaigns making strategic and tactical decision. They certainly act like political consultants."

- "I have no problem with people who are struggling in the lobby to turn to political consulting"

- "More importantly, sitting state legislators being employed as lobbyists in other capacities should be prohibited."

- "As a practical matter restrictions on political consultants seems like a really good idea (since some consultants have done their best to abuse the system) but it also seems likely to violate the 1st Amendment and the Texas Constitution."

- "Yes... they should not be able to receive fees for political activities (polling, etc.) During the session and they should not be able to receive monthly retainers from elected officials for political 'advice' during the session. Of course they will probably get it later after the session."

- "Don't know how to do it, and there are many other equally conflicted relationships--big contributors, for one."

- "I don't know how, practically, a distinction between a consultant and a lobbyist can be carried off."

- "This seems to apply to organizations that have PAC money and use it to their advantage, so not sure how they could be restricted further. Perhaps do a report on how those contributions paid off in votes???"

- "What is a political consultant? Someone that tries to define this would be laughed out of the Capitol"

- "Political consultants should be barred for two years from lobbying legislators who have been their clients."

- "Have no problem with them lobbying, but need significant disclosure of both business and political clients."

- "Of course, it's completely self-dealing."

- "Great Ethical Concerns - can a legislator work-off debt to consultant by either soliciting lobby clients for consultant or working to pass or kill a bill????"

- "You should be either a consultant or lobbyist... not both. If a bill were to be filed, it would be named the 'Allen Blakemore Act'"

- "Yes, it should. And yes, it already is. If they lobby, they need to register just like all other lobbyists."

- "They should register like everyone else"

- "More fully disclose clients and amounts paid."

- "All individuals have the right to lobby on any issue they choose, Texas resident or not. That some are able to make a living with it shouldn't be viewed as a bad thing requiring excessive regulation or needless restriction."

- "They need to register!!!!"

- "We should at least have to name all our current (last two or three House terms) legislative clients on the lobby reports."
- "Consultants should not be allowed to lobby their consulting clients who are members of the Legislative or Executive branch."
- "Disclosure solves all."
- "As long as there is disclosure"
- "Consulting on campaigns then lobbying the members you consulted for is totally unethical and should be banned outright"

If you could add to state ethics laws — or repeal something currently in statute — what changes would you make?

- "Require lobbyists to wear NASCAR style patches from each of their 'sponsors'."
- "It is 2013. The ethics commission should run all its reporting on a secure internet-based platform, like the banks do. Ethics' proprietary software won't run on Macs. Ridiculous."
- "I would repeal the Ethics Commission's incentive to pad its budget through fines."
- "Former elected officials should only be allowed to donate their campaign contributions to charity or return them to donors. To allow a former lawmaker to make political contributions as they begin their lobby practice from funds they accumulated while in office is shameful."
- "Lighten up on the revolving door requirements. The way to attract talented people into public service is to give them an opportunity to earn a good living on the outside after they have served."
- "Make everybody who lobbies register! The loopholes for those who don't have to register are gargantuan."
- "Mandate the Texas Ethics Commission to provide lobbying reporting software that is Mac compatible."
- "Prohibit former lawmakers from lobbying for 2 years and require any former member who registers as a lobbyist to immediately return all campaign contributions."
- "Additional disclosure of who funds lobby groups."
- "Texas strikes good balance, especially when compared to other states who have much stricter laws (most of which were enacted in the wake of a massive ethics scandal)."
- "Random audits of reports are needed"
- "I would repeal the entire thing and start over. It's obviously a poor plan poorly executed. The best thing one could say about it is that it was potentially done for some version of the right reasons."

- "Prohibit legislators or their staff from soliciting charitable contributions during the legislative session."
- "See above. More reporting by campaign consultants turned lobbyists."
- "Our campaign finance laws are very liberal - which I don't have a problem with as long as we know who is contributing and how much. But when someone deliberately tries to sidestep rules that have very few restrictions, they should be more severely prosecuted. There is a difference between minor infractions and blatant disregard for the law."
- "I would not allow legislators to vote on any legislation which favored any group from which they had taken a contribution of more than \$500"
- "Make disclosure available online."
- "None"
- "Financial disclosures are much more helpful than ethics laws that are simple standards to circumvent."
- "Create Redistricting Commission"
- "Limit the amount of money that can be spent from campaign funds on the leasing/rental of a 'campaign vehicle' or for 'constituent gifts'"
- "Subpoena power for the Ethics Commission."
- "Put a cap on contributions."
- "Give investigative ability to Texas Ethics Commission"
- "We need more reporting and fewer restrictions. You should be able to do anything you want, but everyone should know about it. It's a balance with a purpose."
- "Limit lobby expenditures to office holders; restrict office holder and staff requests to lobby"
- "Are we certain my comments can't be attributed directly back to me?"
- "See comment on 3."
- "I would put in a faster, more frequent electronic filing of political contribution reports so that the information would be available online very quickly."
- "Adhere to a strict conflict of interest clause. In other words, no exceptions."
- "Reporters and campaign consultants should wear a sign saying 'the truth does not reside here'"
- "Conflict of interest should crossing lobbying and political consulting."
- "Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest among various clients of individual lobbyists."
- "Require recusal from voting on issues that would effect a legislator's business."
- "Add term limits for lobbyists. I mean, how many clients can Buddy Jones have?"
- "Keep complaints confidential until TEC has ruled on them. Complainants who prematurely publicize their complaint (in order to smear the

target) should face penalties of their own."

- "Add to funding of Public Integrity Unit at Travis County DA's office."
- "If it ain't broke then don't fix it."
- "Legalize corporate contributions as it is happening anyway and disclosure is nil."
- "Add reporting with in 48 hours, and delete the rest. Restricting how people spend their money is just more restriction of freedom."
- "Make it illegal for a lobbyist to contribute to a candidate for office."
- "Provide TEC with investigative/prosecutorial powers."
- "Further clarification to restrict any form of contingency fee arrangements. Someone please explain to me how Ryan & Co. are not violating current statutes."
- "Reporting and costs of compliance are too high and should be amended. Clarify ability of corporations to attend fundraisers and deliver PAC checks"
- "Make it illegal for political consultants to lobby and make former members sit out two sessions before they can lobby."
- "Make the shift to a full time professional legislature and then adopt very rigid COI legislation. That won't end the current problems but it would go a long way to ending the current practice of having our legislators and lobbyists be one in the same."

• "Major overhaul to add clarity and strength"

- "More regulation of lobbyists to prevent conflicts of interest."
- "Require legislators to disclose any debt owed to a consultant 30 days prior to a legislative session."
- "See Above"
- "Clarify the amount of compensation each firm receives from each client. Currently some firms list the total amount paid to the lobby firm as compensation for each individual lobbyist and some break the fee into separate parts by individual working for that client."
- "More aggressive enforcement; but I don't know if that requires a change in law."
- "Abolish the Ethics Commission. Clarify and simplify all reporting requirements."
- "Full disclosure of who everyone is paid by no matter how much or who they are"
- "Allow for corporate contributions with full disclosure."
- "PFS for each member should be posted on their official website."
- "None"
- "Lower the fee for lobbyists"
- "Peg elected class retirement benefits to ERS benefits since it is unethical through and through to be able to increase one's retirement by harnessing it to a judge's salary."

- "Publicly financed campaigns."
- "Members have 90 days to pay all campaign bills and then return money to donors when no longer in office."
- "End government payments of any kind to Legislators, include local, state and federal, and end the phony retirement rule that permits current elected officials to draw salaries and retirement at the same time."
- "Would need to study statutes more carefully to properly respond."
- "Support anything that moves to greater transparency. Oppose anything that make hides or exempts or creates less transparency. Same standards must be applied to any third party interests as well in campaigning and lobbying."
- "Make a more consistent and easy-to-understand open meetings law that cities could follow--the one in Austin is a mess and has left the council unable to govern."
- "Lobbyists should not be able to receive pay or reimbursement from a member's account for any service they provide to the member."
- "Prohibit lobbyists from serving on advisory boards or panels directly related to their lobbying interests."
- "Revolving door needs to be closed."

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