

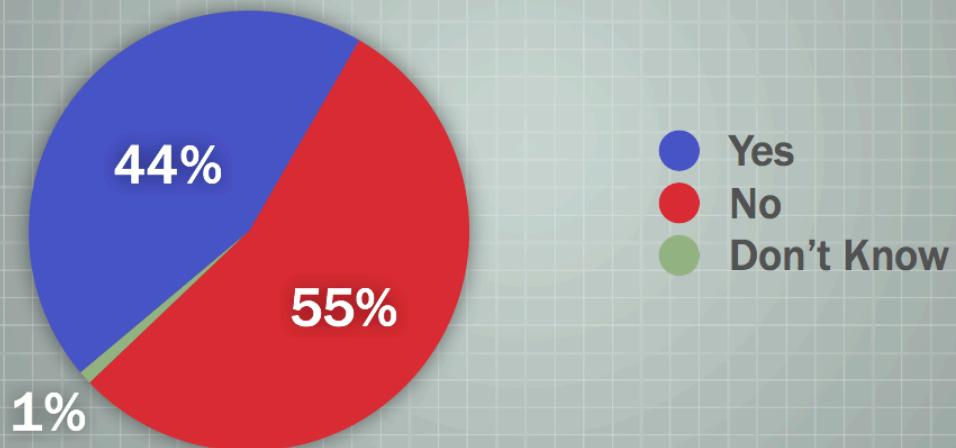
“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

Sponsored by: **Hahn, Texas**

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of March 25*

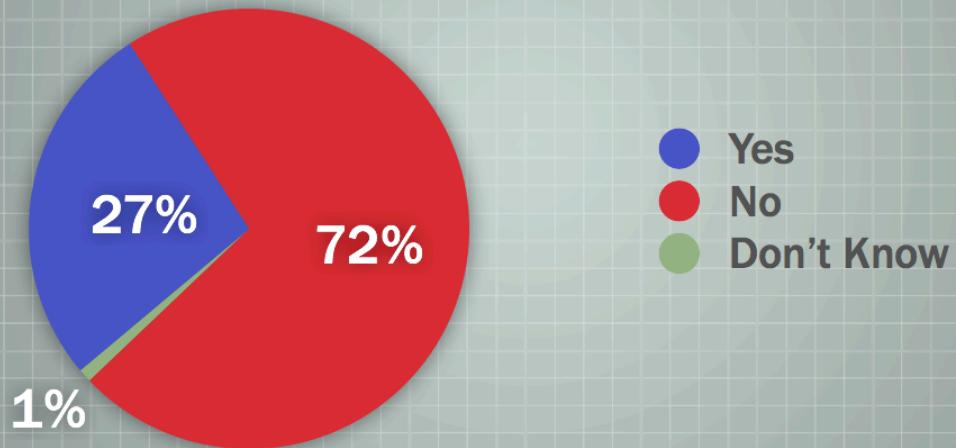
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should statewide officials be limited
to two terms?



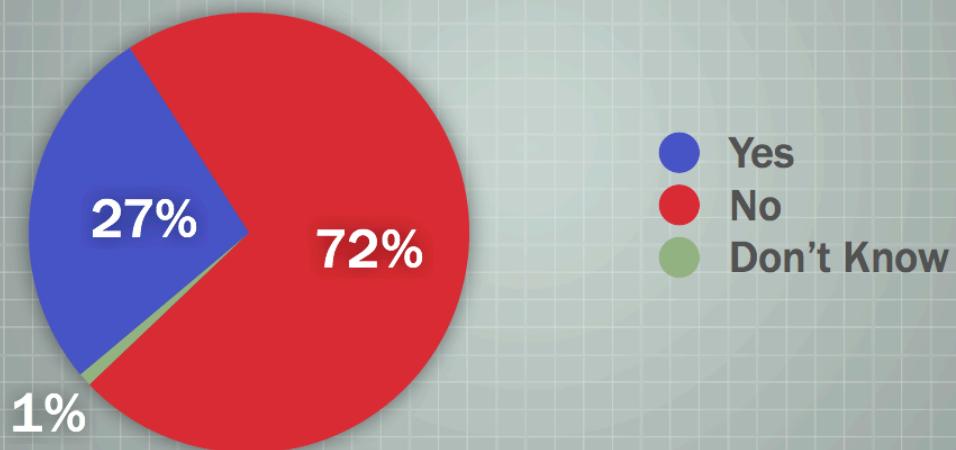
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should state legislators be limited
to 12 years in office?



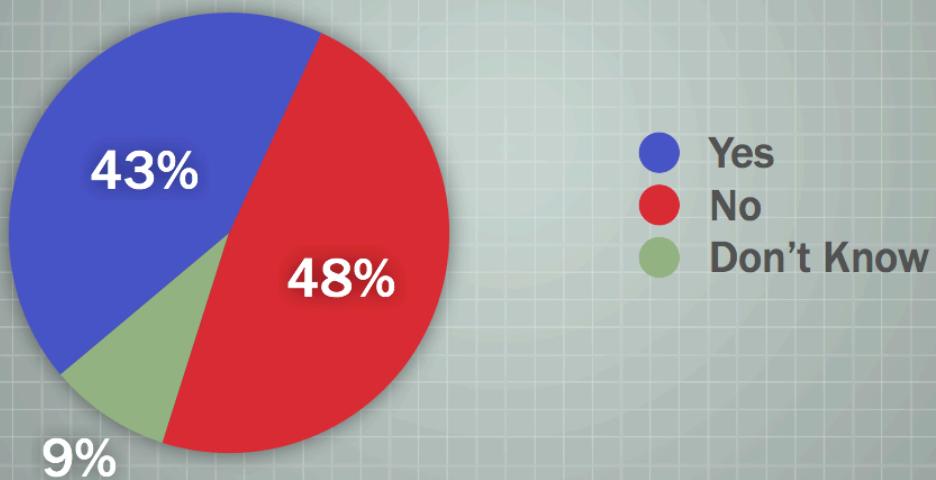
INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should members of Congress be limited
to 12 years in office?



INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should officeholders receive lifetime
pensions for 10 - 12 years of service?



Should statewide officials be limited to two terms in office?

- "Unless one could enact enforceable campaign finance limitations--in other words, to borrow from the late Edmund Kuempel, 'if a frog had a back pocket he'd carry a pistol and shoot snakes.'"
- "Maybe three, but not two."
- "Term limits only empower staffers and the lobby. The revolving door just shifts gears."
- "Term limits are controlled by the voters! The VOTERS are NEVER WRONG! I may disagree with the majority but I can't disagree with those who at least participated."
- "We have term limits: they're called elections. And if someone like Judith Zaffirini or Kay Bailey Hutchison breaks a promise to the people to serve only X terms, then it's up to the voters to either punish or reward her."
- "Too much stagnation is unhealthy"
- "Term limits undermine voters choices. The bureaucrats gain power with no accountability."
- "This is obviously a Governor Perry question. Neither frustrated legislators nor bored pundits will decide when his time is up; Texas voters will."
- "HELL NO! And give staff, the agencies and lobbyists even more power and authority. By the way, it is ironic that Republicans are pushing for this. We have as our basic tenants individualism and less government. This would result in less freedom and more government. Plus, are we as voters supposed to be the ones who decide who gets elected. This sounds nice and all but if thought through and logic is applied it is a horrible idea."
- "Only if his last name is Perry."
- "If voters are CRAZY enough to keep electing the people putting their state at further risk, then so be it. Republicans have been in charge of this state for 20 years now - those who have voted them in have NO ONE but themselves to blame for the horrible conditions of our educational system, the continuing health care crisis and the laughingstock which Texas has become. Sadly, 'Thank God for Missouri / Alabama / Mississippi' has turned into those states saying 'Thank God for Texas'."
- "Gov. Perry's foibles are generating renewed enthusiasm for term limits."
- "No more so than State Representatives, County Commissioners, or school board members. Who has it in for the statewides? What's good for the goose is good for the gander."
- "Elections provide regular opportunities to limit terms."
- "Make it 12 years in any one office, including local offices, state, and US House/Senate. Everyone the same."
- "That's what the election process is for; if the constituents aren't happy with them then they'll vote them out."

- "The ballot box provides an opportunity to impose term limits after each and every term of office."
- "Make your mark. Move on."
- "Whether you agree with the outcomes or not on Election Day, voters should ALWAYS have the final say - not some arbitrary limit."
- "Exhibit 'A' is our current Governor!"
- "Only if they are bad officials and the voters should determine the terms."
- "I normally default to the idea that it should be voters who decide but I'm starting to come around to term limits for statewide officials."
- "There are opportunities for term limits every two years in the House and every four years in the Senate."
- "Three terms would be an acceptable limit."
- "Term limits are always backed by consultant, but the truth is, Texans know when they are tired of people. We have a good history of imposing our own term limits."
- "Two terms is probably about right, but not by constitutional limitation."
- "If you're a lobbyist, then term limits would reaffirm that you are the most experienced person in the legislative field."
- "Not sure what the number of terms should be but there should be a limit. And they should get the same benefits that other state workers get."
- "Yes. If it's good enough for the president, it's good enough for the Comptroller, et al."
- "If you want the bureaucracy to run government, then impose term limits because the agency staffs will be the only people with any institutional knowledge."
- "If you don't like the individual, un-elect them. It happens every political cycle."
- "No to term limits, but yes to electing people smart enough to realize it's time to retire."
- "Only the Governor and Lt. Gov."

Should state legislators be limited to 12 years in office?

- "House - 6 terms, 12 years; Senate - 4 terms, 16 years."
- "Maybe just State Senators--a sort of narcissistic personality disorder preemptive therapy"
- "8 years for both Senate and House"
- "Why are you picking on Statewide Judges and Railroad Commissioners?"
- "See above. You will only empower people like me who aren't burdened by term limits. Please don't throw me in that briar patch!"

- "12 years may be too long. I could go with 8 or 10"
- "But, increase terms for House to four years and Senate to six years."
- "We have a part-time legislature comprised of citizen legislators; they're not spending too much time in Austin. If we have term limits for members, we should also have term limits for legislative staffers AND agency lifers (aka staffers)."
- "In each chamber."
- "It would be recommended to have house members serve four year terms versus two. Some members never cease serving or campaigning making it difficult emotionally, financially and physically."
- "Politics shouldn't be a career, but at least in Texas it's part time -- more important to have limits at the federal level"
- "If you want to earn \$7200 per year toiling in the vines in perpetuity, please come run in my district."
- "Let the folks back home decide."
- "Again, if a legislator is not doing their job - VOTE THEM OUT"
- "Term limits tend to elevate staff to the actual seats of power since they are the only ones with any continuity of issues. Voting someone out of office is the best limits on terms, not some arbitrary number of years of service."
- "We already have two year term limits for State Representatives. It's called an election."
- "Make it 12 years in any one office, including local offices, state, and US House/Senate. Everyone the same."
- "Again, see comment in question 1."
- "Some legislators are just starting to figure it out in their 12th year in office."
- "One term is way too much for some; and 6 terms way too little for others. By arbitrarily limiting service, term limits takes power from the people and transfers it to staff and administrative agencies."
- "Legislatures operate with the expertise of the senior members. If you term limit the statewides there will be more turnover in the Legislature as folks move up -- and we already see lots of turnover among the membership."
- "The lobby and members of the legislature REALLY enjoy all the festivities surrounding who has served the longest."
- "See #1, above"
- "Experience is a good thing."
- "I am not sure that 12 yrs is the magic number. Maybe a few more. But they should live on the same retirement and insurance as the rest of the state workers. Perks are OK in moderation since the pay is so low but they should not be able to be vested in retirement just a few years when most of the people of this state have no retirement at all."
- "Term limits on legislators would only increase the power and influence

of an already far too powerful and influential lobbyist corps."

- "No. There is a qualitative difference between executive branch and legislative branch officials. The former should be term limited, but not the latter."
- "Would you want your attorney, doctor or accountant to have only 12 years of experience?"

• "If you don't like the individual, un-elect them. It happens every political cycle."

• "There needs to be a limit of about 15 years for Senate. They are getting more and more out of touch. In the House you need some people to stick around."

Should members of Congress – House and Senate – be limited to 12 years in office?

- "House - 6 terms, 12 years; Senate - 3 terms, 18 years."
- "That's less the problem--I commend your reading of No Labels manifesto for the procedural reforms that mitigate that manifestation of ideological tribalism"
- "Are you suggesting we handicap Texas by sending to Washington, D.C. newbies every dozen years while other states rack up seniority and expertise at the expense of Texas? Or are you suggesting we empower federal bureaucrats by essentially making the Congress weak?"
- "Different ballgame entirely. We need them to be able to build seniority to move up through the ranks."
- "A system of citizen legislators is what the founders envisioned - not a House of Lords"
- "Texas elected officials are already subject to the most rigorous term limit: the will of the people."

• "This is a change in thinking. I have always thought the voters should determine term limits. Also, long serving congressmen used their seniority to the benefit of their home districts and states. Now the only thing that matters is the striving for reelection and the folks back home are an afterthought."

• "No, but Congressional Terms should be made four years rather than two!"

• "Good idea, but virtually impossible as a practical matter."

• "Great idea. Lets the other 49 states have Congressmen/women with seniority and relegate Texas' representatives to the back bench."

• "Make it 12 years in any one office, including local offices, state, and US House/Senate. Everyone the same."

• "See above"

• "Only if you limit employment time for bureaucrats who already run the

government, can't be fired, and are responsible to no one."

- "Both Ds and Rs have a distinguished list of congress members and senators who have served beyond 12 years. Why is that a bad thing?"
- "Texas would be at a disadvantage UNLESS this is a US Constitutional Amendment."
- "It is hard enough to remember their names now. The reality is that members of congress do not do much. Term limits will not make a difference."
- "Senators should once again be elected by the legislatures. This is the best way to have states issues considered. Senators answering to the legislature would take care of the need for term limits."

• "Only if other states complied too because so much of how Congress operates is by seniority."

• "I am not sure that 12 yrs is the magic number. Maybe a few more. But they should live on the same retirement and social security and insurance as the rest of the federal workers. No special perks."

• "We have term limits - it's called an election."

• "If you don't like the individual, un-elect them. It happens every political cycle."

• "I never supported term limits until you learn how DC is all about the next election."

• "Here comes the new member, same as the old member..."

Should officeholders at any level receive lifetime pensions and health benefits for 10 or 12 years of public service, as they do now?

- "Legislators' pensions should be based on their salaries not the salary of a district judge."
- "I don't even think our military personnel receive lifetime pensions and health insurance after 10-12 years of service. If they do, I doubt that their pensions are tied to a judge's salary! Repeal the lucrative pension and health benefits, and legislators might impose term limits on themselves."
- "Depends on other reforms as to how they are compensated for public service, not to mention revolving door abuses"

• "As long as they remain citizen Legislators, they deserve it."

• "No problem with this because we pay them a pittance to serve."

• "These policies were enacted when Democrats controlled the state. Surely they're not bad ideas."

• "If we are going to continue to pay state legislators virtually nil absolutely."

• "A complicated issue. Trying to balance allowing for citizen legislators and not creating a system that can be

abused is the key. These item are just one part of the overall equation that needs to be addressed."

- "Most officeholders don't draw salaries in line with the market; back end benefits are an appropriate way to compensate them for their service."
- "At normal retirement age."
- "15 years is required to vest in most systems - they should have to meet that threshold as well."
- "They should receive pensions in the same manner state employees do."
- "Federal pensions are now relatively modest, but do include valuable health benefits."
- "Do away with all pensions for all elected officials. It's called public service for a reason and it comes with certain sacrifices. It was never intended to be a lifetime entitlement."
- "Of course. Isn't that the only reason to run for office?"
- "Find a clue here called common sense. Pro-rate it."
- "Depends on how much the pension is. They work hours far in excess of normal employees."
- "If they are not going to compensate them properly in salary for the job then they need to do something similar to this current benefit system. Let's not kid ourselves--it's a full-time job to be a citizen legislator in 2013."
- "They should not have their pensions linked to a full-time professional salary -- the judges -- as

they do now. They are citizen legislators and should earn their pensions elsewhere. But they should get a small pension for their service."

- "Their pensions should be commensurate to those for school teachers."
- "They should have a defined pension benefit but based on their years of service (formula) and their contribution."
- "It's ludicrous to demand a multiplier like the one members request. It would be great if the tribune would compare the pensions of members to those of teachers, police officers, or firefighters."
- "Susan Combs already draws her retirement,"
- "But Not if we raised their salaries to appropriate levels."
- "I'm fine with that but the term 'elected class' should not include non-elected staff members who have enough stroke to cash in before they leave their posts."
- "Does anyone else get that benefit?"
- "Health benefits are not guaranteed for life. It is a benefit that each Legislature can change or eliminate."
- "Lifetime pensions. And benefits are no longer common in the modern workforce. They should be phased out for officeholders as well."
- "They should received the same thing as any state employee."

- "Current system seems to work just fine, seems to me."
- "They did serve the state after all. Maybe if they are convicted of any crime afterwards, they would lose their benefits."
- "Yes, as long as they effectively are unpaid."
- "Yes, if you're going to insist on paying them peanuts while in office."
- "Always thought it was 'public' service until I came to Austin."
- "Benefits should be transparent in disclosure of officeholder compensation and with contributions sufficient to cover the cost of the benefits."
- "In essence legislative pensions are deferred compensation and make it possible for less affluent people to serve. They are not overly generous."
- "Sure, why not--it's the law."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Jenny Aghamalian, Jennifer Ahrens, Victor Alcorta, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, David Anthony, Doc Arnold, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Hugh Brady, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Marc Campos, Thure Cannon, Snapper Carr, William Chapman, Elizabeth Christian, Elna Christopher, John Colyandro, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Denise Davis, Hector De Leon, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Jeff Eller, Jack Erskine, Jon Fisher, Norman Garza, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Anthony Haley, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, John Heasley, Jim Henson, Ken Hodges, Laura Huffman, Kathy Hutto, Deborah Ingersoll, Cal Jillson, Jason Johnson, Mark Jones, Robert Jones, Lisa Kaufman, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Matt Mackowiak, Luke Marchant, Dan McClung, Scott McCown, Mike McKinney, Debra Medina, Robert Miller, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Sylvia Nugent, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Bill Pewitt, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Pollard, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Bill Ratliff, Karen Reagan, Tim Reeves, Patrick Reinhart, Kim Ross, Andy Sansom, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Bradford Shields, Christopher Shields, Jason Skaggs, Brian Sledge, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Todd Smith, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Bryan Sperry, Jason Stanford, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Sherry Sylvester, Jay Thompson, Russ Tidwell, Gerard Torres, Trent Townsend, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Ware Wendell, Ken Whalen, Darren Whitehurst, Christopher Williston, Seth Winick, Alex Winslow, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.