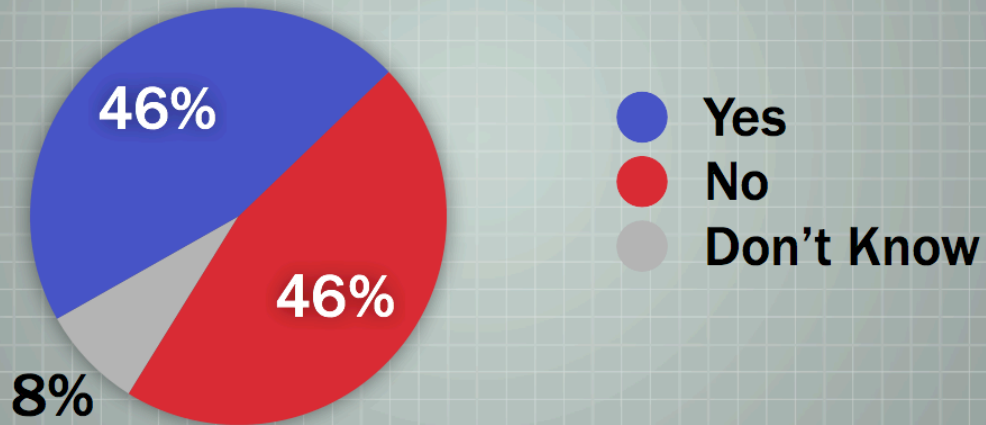


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 13 January 2014*

## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

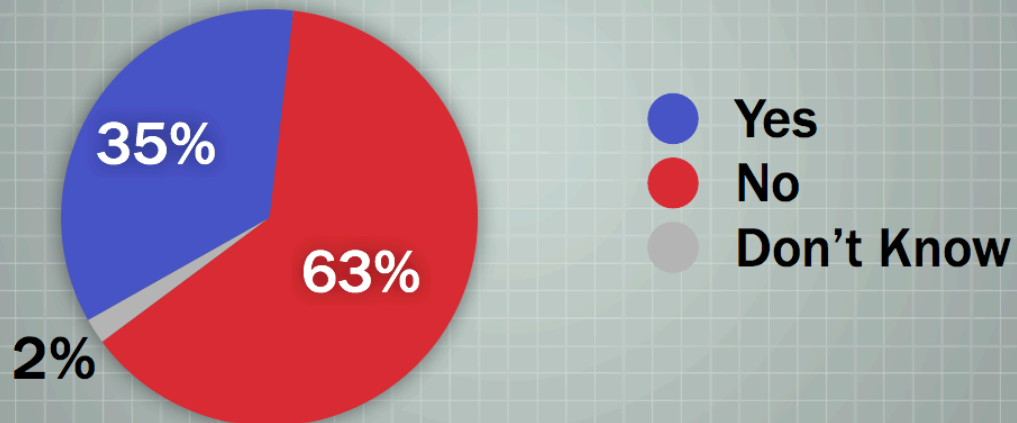
Should Texas hold presidential primaries  
earlier in the year?



Inside Intelligence is an informal survey of political and government insiders in Texas and is not meant to measure public opinion.

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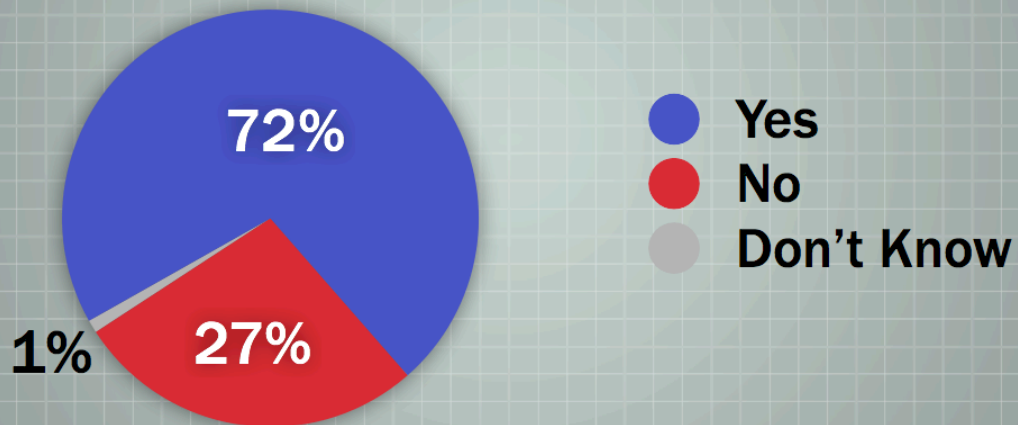
Should Texas primaries be held  
later in the year?



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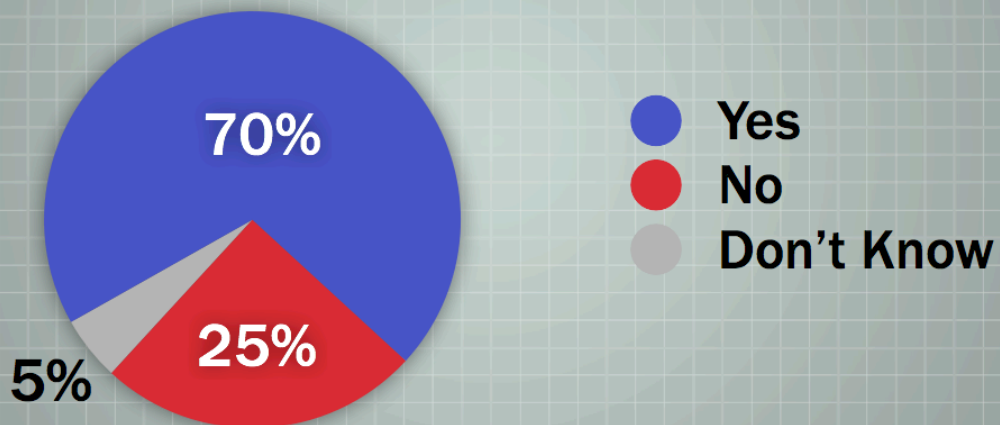
Should Texas allow straight-ticket voting?



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## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should Texas citizens be permitted to register to vote online?



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*Should Texas move its presidential primaries to an earlier date to ensure that the nominations are still contested by the time the candidates get here?*

- "An earlier election date will give a competitive advantage to local/state candidates. A purple state is the only way to make it more competitive."
- "It's so expensive to run a primary campaign in a state the size of Texas that moving the date up virtually ensures the nominations will go to well-funded, establishment candidates every time."
- "Problematic - The two parties would fight to draw anyway much like our early history on this with the killer bees"
- "The only option would be if the Presidential ballot was separate from the rest of the party primary races. Then, it might be acceptable."
- "Ah, the best laid plans. Ask John Connally and the Killer Bees how all that moving of primaries worked."
- "We can't go earlier. If we go earlier, we lose national delegate strength, which defeats the whole point."
- "How about splitting the primaries? Presidential in March; state/local in May or even September. Make Texas count in the national race and shorten the endless state/local campaigns."
- "Year round politics is destroying the democracy. There needs to be time to govern. After all, that is the point of the jobs."
- "Texas should move up in order to become a bigger player in presidential politics. Currently, Texas is good for fundraising purposes and not mining votes. We need the candidates to spend that good ole Texas money on communicating their views and positions to Texas voters. Turn those Texas dollars over here in the state."
- "Texas was in play in 2008 and can be again in 2016. Too early primaries are incumbent protection stunts"
- "I think you have to break tradition of the very small states having such a HUGE say in who gets momentum going forward -- Democrat or Republican."
- "With 36, and most likely 39 electoral votes, Texas should have a more prominent voice in the presidential selection process."
- "Should be later, not earlier."
- "Its OK to have an earlier presidential primary as long as we move the regular primary to a later date"
- "I kinda like the idea because how in the Hell did this country allow Iowa and S. Carolina to be king makers?"
- "I would say yes (and have in the past), but the annals of election law bill amendments are littered with the attempts of one or the other political parties trying to change the rules to gain more of an advantage in their party's political nominating process. Anybody else besides me remember back in the run-up before the 1988 election, when Texas Democrats wanted to move up the primary to help Al Gore get the nomination?"

Somebody ask President Gore how that worked out for him."

- "And we should sell sponsorships to each primary. Take for example, the AT&T GOP Primary or the Vizio Democratic Primary with Unlimited My Way from Sprint"

- "Texas should be a player in presidential selection...the game is often over by time of Texas primary"

- "It's a short 2-month campaign now because of the holidays."

- "An earlier primary date would mean campaigning through the holidays, which would lead to lower voter information and lower participation, making primaries even more dominated by the extremes. Not to mention that a faster transition from session to primary season would be pretty brutal."

- "We need to move to a single National primary and runoff schedule with the primary held the Saturday after Labor Day, the runoff on the first Saturday in October, and then the general election in November."

- "Do we really want a system that would cause Rick Santorum to visit Texas more often?"

- "And I'm the one that was the House Author of the legislation that moved the Texas Primaries from May to March. Shouldda never done it. What we need is federal legislation prohibiting any party primaries from being held prior to August!"

- "The largest Republican state in the Union should absolutely have a meaningful voice in deciding our nominee. Plus, our consultants and operatives need to get paid, too!"

- "Anyone else wish they would dump the primaries altogether and let insiders pick the Presidential nominees? It would have given us a President Hillary Clinton instead of a President Obama, which is a net gain."

- "Only the party people care about this."

- "Just keep it the same"

- "This would, however, require us to have a split primary -- an early primary for the Presidential ticket, and a regular primary date for all the other races."

***Should Texas primaries be held later in the year to shorten the biennial political season?***

- "Don't try to fix what ain't broken."

- "Absolutely; if, of course, every other state did the same. IN this age of 24 hour news cycles, social media, etc., there is no reason any primary is held before April"

- "As we saw in the Dewhurst / Cruz race, later primaries give insurgents more time to get their message to the voters and minimizes the role establishment money plays in selecting the winner."

- "In a one party state simply protracts their (and our) suffering might give challengers a better shot at an incumbent"
- "I always liked the May primaries. It kept the primary battles from bursting through the holiday season."
- "Only if accompanied by campaign finance reform."
- "Move 'em back to May!"
- "LBJ won the 1948 Senate runoff"
- "With so many members in safe general-election districts, but not in safe primaries, the sooner they can get their primaries done, the sooner they can get back to governing, or earning a living, or doing whatever they do between sessions."
- "How about splitting the primaries? Presidential in March; state/local in May or even September. Make Texas count in the national race and shorten the endless state/local campaigns."
- "I wish we had never moved from the May primary date."
- "Later means more a longer rather than a shorter political season since the most contested races are during the primaries."
- "It's never shortened. The primary will just live longer."
- "Don't want anything that potentially enhances the power of the crazies. Might be okay if we moved to an open primary process."
- "Delaying the election does anything but shorten the season."
- "A summer month would be good, because I'm not home to take all the damn robo calls..."
- "Current system is ferociously pro-incumbent.... since election usually starts Jan. 1, challengers in this big state don't really have an opportunity to make their case"
- "The way it is now is fine."
- "I'm probably in the minority on this, but I thought a May primary was great last cycle. The July runoff -- not so much."
- "That only helps the fat, lazy, parasitic consultants. As most elections are settled in the primaries, this actually would serve to lengthen the season of feeding at the trough."
- "Although a shortened period of paranoid schizophrenia might provide welcome relief to many."
- "They should move the primaries to later in the year, but the big problem is the long period between the primary election and the run-off election. That should be shortened to 30 days."
- "We need a little recovery time before we have to start writing checks for the general election again."
- "It will shorten the amount of time I have to dodge members asking for money"

### *Should Texas continue to allow straight-ticket voting?*

- "But not for judicial races."
- "Straight ticket voting has created an epidemic of electoral lazinitis; a disease known all too well in the political universe. Others prefer to call those infected by it dumb ass voters."
- "Parties invest money and effort vetting candidates and building their brand and they should be able to rely on that in down ballot races."
- "Make them read or at least make more decisions"
- "Since we elect absolutely EVERYTHING, it is truly the only way for voters to identify in any way. It does place the burden on the parties to better manage their nominees."
- "Why not?"
- "Our hope is to get more people to vote, not make it harder."
- "Straight-ticket = no thinking."
- "I would say No if I thought that the result would be more thoughtful consideration of the candidates, but alas...."
- "With straight-ticket (low-information) voters, you get wholesale flip-flops in down-ballot offices, e.g. judges."
- "There have been a lot of good candidates and officeholders from both parties defeated because of straight ticket voting. Accordingly, we have elected a lot of people who should have NEVER held public office as a result of straight ticket voting."
- "Nearly half Texas voters use this option. Why should it be taken away from them? By the way a majority of Straight Ticket Voters are Republicans statewide so why would they want to repeal this option?"
- "Making people think about who they are voting for would be a great idea."
- "I think there is a chance we would have more educated voters if they were required to go through and check individual boxes and not just straight ticket."
- "Make people vote for the individuals. Think straight-ticket has dumbed down the process."
- "For everything but Judges."
- "But not on judicial races."
- "Why would Texas eliminate a voting tool which is so popular with Texas voters? Seems like people are working to make every other conceivable activity on the planet more convenient, except voting - which legislators continually try to dream up ways to make less convenient."
- "Its really easier than actually thinking...."
- "Would abolishing straight-ticket voting mean a more informed electorate? I doubt it."
- "EXCEPT for judicial races. They should continue to run as partisans, but voters should have to choose individuals."

- "Should definitely be discontinued in judicial races. If it were eliminated on the rest of the ballot, it could be a first step toward breaking down the walls of partisanship that has made voting knee jerk activity for most people -- they pick a team and stick with them."

- "How many folks actually use it? How long have we seen rural folks, in East Texas for example, vote Republican at the top and Democrat locally?"

- "It should not be unconstitutional to be too lazy to think."

- "Yes, but it is a close call. Texas has a really long ballot, so pulling the lever is - sometimes - going to elect some not so good officials down the ballot. But to ban straight-ticket voting would hugely reduce the vote total in those lower races making it easier for

fringe candidates to capture offices. I will stick with the devil I know. (A better idea is to watch California for a few years and if things go well adopt their 'top 2 finishers' primary system.)"

- "Yes, but not for judges. Let's make those nonpartisan!"

- "Why not saves time, requires you to be less informed and you still get the sticker that says you voted."

- "Why should government tell me how I get to vote. Freedoms no matter how small are still freedoms. We continue to vote ourselves out of freedoms in many forms whether it be ballot measures or the people we elect who take away our freedoms as we stand by and watch. Big government equals small individual and less freedom."

### *Should Texas citizens be permitted to register to vote online?*

- "Turnout would be crazy high and consultants/candidates would be forced to present real ideas."

- "There is more integrity in the process by requiring voters to go to polling places or to mail in paper ballots than there is in the vagaries of the internets."

- "Register to vote? Yes. Cast a ballot? No!!!"

- "Buck Wood says there's no fraud in elections and I believe him."

- "After what foreign hackers just did to Target, one can only imagine what

they'd do to American election processes."

- "Even better, let's have day-of-election registration. Making the wild assumption that we all want more people to participate."

- "Lucifer would then cast votes for the millions who don't or won't take a few minutes to vote for those who govern them."

- "With the secure internet?"

- "Technology has developed to allow this to be a viable option."

- "But only at Target store locations."



- "The web is vulnerable to hacking.... all voting procedures should be kept away from it."
- "Voter fraud is too prevalent. It shouldn't be easier."
- "Certainly voters should be allowed to register online -- however, a public appearance should continue to be required to vote. Everyone agrees that most of the fraud in the state comes from mail-in ballots. We should get rid of them."
- "Not until an NSA-proof platform exists that prevents any sort of vote tampering."
- "The vote suppressers in charge won't let this happen. Way too democratic."
- "Sounds convenient, but why is there endless talk about voter convenience and rarely any talk about voter confidence? The system falls apart unless most voters believe that the election result is fair and accurate. Given that we already have rampant ID theft and online credit card fraud, how will you secure an online registration system AND convince people it is secure? Also, isn't there a 'digital divide?' Online registration sounds like a violation of the Voting Rights Act."
- "Just what we need--another online fiasco at the hands of government."
- "Voting is a right but that doesn't mean it should be easy or carefree."
- "Yes and I will represent the vendor."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Jenny Aghamalian, Victor Alcorta, Brandon Alderete, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Marc Campos, Thure Cannon, Janis Carter, Corbin Casteel, William Chapman, Elna Christopher, Rick Cofer, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, Chad Crow, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Holly DeShields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jeff Eller, Jack Erskine, John Esparza, Jon Fisher, Wil Galloway, Norman Garza, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Richard Hardy, Ken Hodges, Deborah Ingersoll, Jason Johnson, Bill Jones, Mark Jones, Robert Jones, Russ Keane, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Dale Laine, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, Bill Lauderback, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Luke Marchant, Bryan Mayes, Dan McClung, Mike McKinney, Debra Medina, Robert Miller, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Karen Reagan, Tim Reeves, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, Kim Ross, Grant Ruckel, Jason Sabo, Luis Saenz, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Robert Scott, Nancy Sims, Jason

Skaggs, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Todd Smith, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Jason Stanford, Bill Stevens, Bob Strauser, Sherry Sylvester, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Ware Wendell, Ken Whalen, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Woody Widrow, Seth Winick, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.