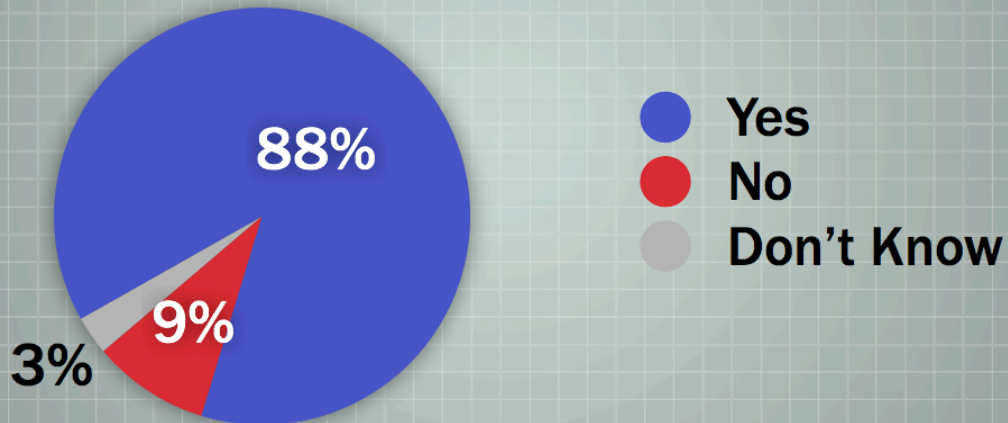


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 4 April 2014*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

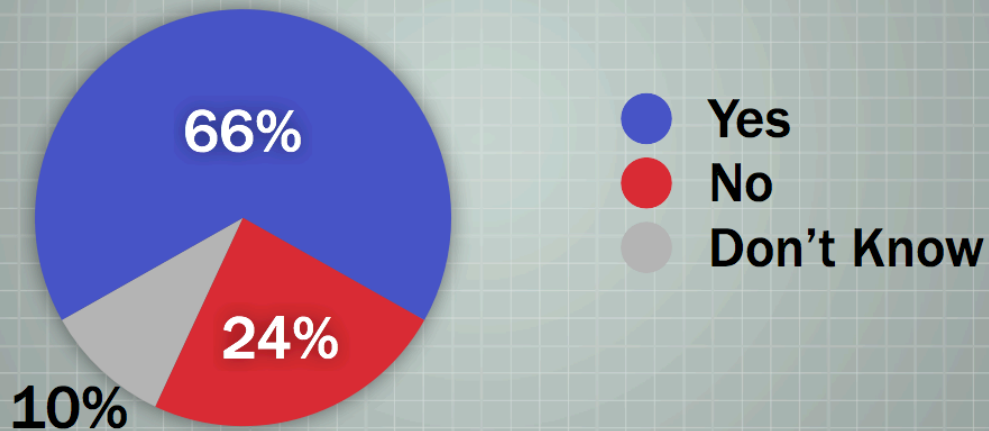
Should all contributions to all political groups be disclosed?



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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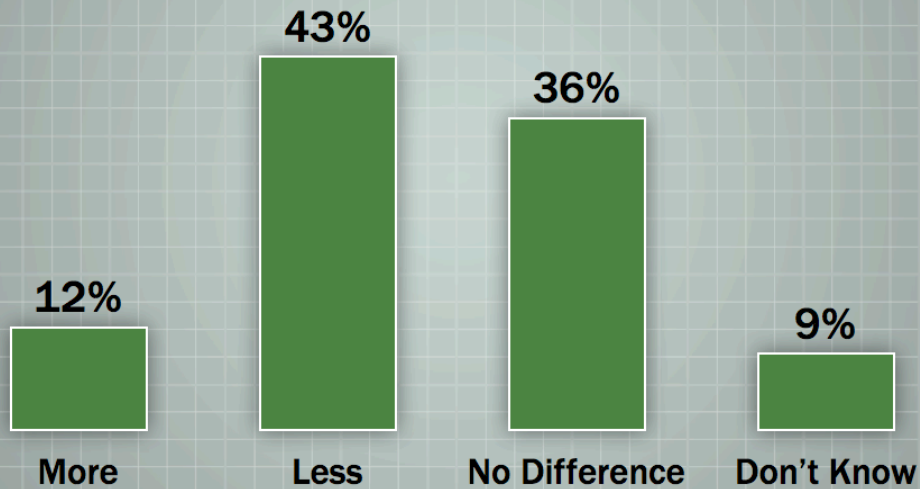
Would the same people contribute if disclosures were always required?



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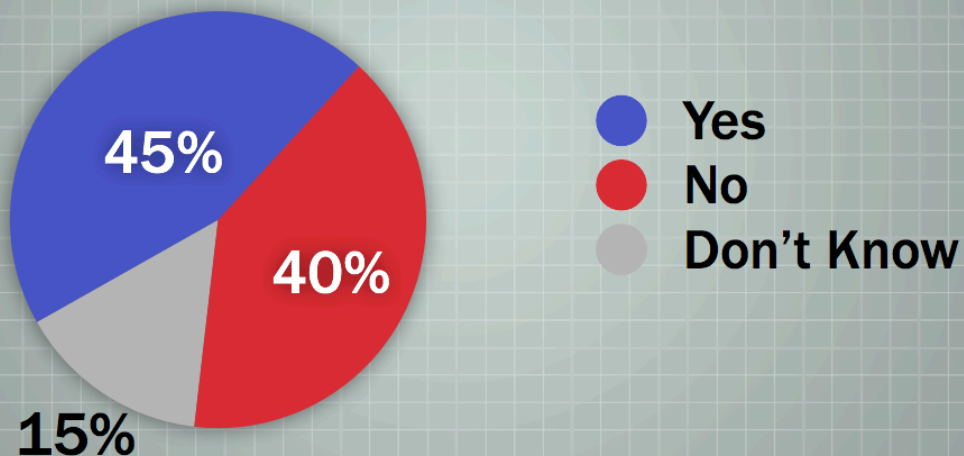
Are political groups more or less influential when financial sources are disclosed?



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Does full financial disclosure change election outcomes?



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Should people and interests donating to campaigns and to third-party political groups be required to identify themselves and the details of their contributions?

- "The Tea Party folks always talk about financial transparency, so I don't know why they and the Republicans would oppose such a measure."
- "Maybe a dollar threshold would be useful ... contributions under \$1,000 are non-reportable, but large contributions (especially ones that can swing an election) should be."
- "Are you speaking of bundlers? What details would you want to know, other than name and amount? Federal law is pretty specific in this area I believe."
- "I don't know about 'the details' but identities and dollar amounts should be required. This, from a supporter of the back-room deal..."
- "This question is poorly worded. I don't know what it means."
- "Let's go back to the days of chicken magnates handing out thick envelopes around the Capitol - it's fair for everyone when there are no rules, right?"
- "I have never seen an argument that outweighs the right of voters to know who is supporting candidates who want to represent the citizens of Texas."
- "Don't we want an informed electorate? That includes the financing of campaigns, not just the positions of candidates."
- "Put your name on it."
- "Trying to work myself up to indifferent on this non issue"
- "Though Republicans get all the heat on this more disclosure would actually be hardest on Democrats -- as it would reveal that only a few trial lawyers and uber-rich liberals"
- "Unlike individual candidates, people are either 'for' or 'against' the message of third-party political groups; therefore, whoever is funding a group shouldn't matter."
- "The first amendment, as applied by the U.S. Supreme Court in the seminal case of *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission*, protects the right to speak anonymously when engaged in political speech. The better question is, should the Texas Tribune, a third party political group, who pushes a specific political agenda, runs articles that influence elections, and broadcasts candidate interviews during contested elections, be required to disclose its donors."
- "'Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants' (Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis)"
- "Contributors to political campaigns and third-party political groups should be required to identify themselves to the campaign or group to which they donate. The campaign or group should be required to disclose the contribution."
- "It is the only way to determine who owns them."

- "No. The only reason they were required to identify themselves in the first place was: 1) so incumbents could punish all those that went against their re-election efforts; and 2) so incumbents could charge the appropriate amount for the late-trainers."
- "It is ridiculous to report all the details on a \$50 donation and be able to hide a \$100,000 one with a third-party group that is as political as any campaign."
- "Yes, there should be disclosure, but the burden should be on the person(s) accepting the money, not the people making the contribution(s)."
- "But we should continue to offer protection for those standing up to social injustices, like we do with some types of non-profit organizations."
- "Full and immediate public disclosure should be the sole rule covering political donations."
- "Gotta love the sunshine."
- "Campaigns - absolutely. Third parties sending attack mailers and pushing a legislative agenda - absolutely."
- "Make them play by the same rules as us old fashioned PACs play by."
- "If they are bold enough to fund they should be bold enough to stand with their candidates."
- "Full disclosure sheds light on the process."

If the actual sources of campaign financing were revealed in a full and timely way, would the same people and interests take part in Texas elections?

- "Probably not to the same extent they do under the cloak of darkness. It all feels so rigged, bought and paid for now. Not very encouraging for efforts to increase voter turnout."
- "Their MO is the ends justifies the means."
- "This is a 'yes, but ... ' question. Yes, but in a much different manner."
- "The agendas would just be more transparent as the contributors are revealed."
- "No telling, but there is nothing wrong with full disclosure."
- "Reveal 'actual sources?' That happens now. To cover or launder the actual source would be a crime."
- "Political contributions are a luxury expense item for those who can afford it."
- "Put who want to influence elections are the kind of people who like attention - whether they will admit it or not."

- "Unless they have something to hide."
- "Some of the hot money would not be given if it were to be disclosed"
- "If they truly care about the issues, then they shouldn't have a problem with prompt disclosure. Otherwise, what do they have to hide?"
- "We actually have a fairly reasonable system of disclosure in Texas. It is, by and large, pretty transparent. For the most part, campaign finances are revealed in a full and timely manner. Unless, of course, you're MQS."
- "Sources would get better at articulating why they are involved."
- "Let's try it and see"
- "Consultants should support transparency. The more open politicians are, the more they have to spend to stay elected."
- "If Texas were to require candidates to promptly disclose eleventh hour contributions, how would plaintiff's lawyers ever be able to fund, 'friendly' Republican candidates?"
- "Would news organizations still endorse candidates for public office in the same skewed manner if the actual stockholders of the media corporations were disclosed and the grassroots could contact them?"
- "Sure. They want something and are willing to spend money to get it. Openly, if necessary."
- "They would figure out a way, but we may get more voter participation."
- "Maybe. Some would, others would be more hesitant. The bigger issue would be that people might figure out how few people are actually financing the campaigns and why they have such significant influence."
- "It's clear the tribe has been passing the 'peace-pipe' while coming up with these questions. The sources are currently revealed in a full and timely way. It's not broken."
- "99% would be unaffected, because the money's already reported. It's the 1% of donors who want to stay anonymous who would think twice."
- "Well of course they would! These people have NOTHING to hide do they? They are simply interested in GOOD, honest government!"
- "The bad actors would flee, seek out the shadows and a free and responsible Press would keep them there."
- "Some people are obviously interested in anonymity, or else it would not be offered."
- "Apparently some interests are not at all keen on the idea of full disclosure."
- "Cynical me says they'd just figure out another structure and be right back."
- "The amounts contributed might be smaller and arrive later"

Are third-party political groups more or less influential in elections when they are required to reveal their financial sources?

- "That depends on who the third party group is, what the scheme behind the dark giving is and how much the voters care about the scheme."
- "Depends on the group."
- "'Grassroots organizations' fueled by four people are not very 'grassroots' oriented. They can be dismissed or appreciated for what they are when brought into the light."
- "Don't know the answer, but it's time to disclose the information and find out."
- "This question assumes all 3rd party groups are created equal, but they aren't. Revealing sources probably makes no real difference to a legitimate group. But a sham group acting as a front for a single contributor would be much less influential after being forced to reveal its sole source."
- "Using the current Empower Texans example, they would still have the same level of success; the difference is they want to be secretive out of fear of the unknown."
- "I think examples exist that support both sides here, but the real question is the discrepancy between federal and state races (and the respective reporting requirements)."
- "Paid media -- particularly slate mailers -- are probably the most influential factor in Texas elections -- and much of that has disclaimers on it."
- "Again, let's give it a shot and find out"
- "Outside our wonk bubble of politicos, people don't care about the money as much as they care about the message."
- "What is a third-party political group?"
- "Can't pretend to be a grassroots organization if all your money comes from just one rich guy."
- "Would see the few dominating the funding of campaigns to try and buy elections."
- "Less money =s less influence in elections."
- "Actually, the answer is 'yes,' they will be more or less influential; it won't have just one effect."
- "When they must reveal donors, they raise less money. Less money=less impact in races=less influence."
- "Only because they decide to participate less!"
- "Tethering the political communication to a brand-name Party or organization would increase credibility and the influence of the message."
- "When the public is made aware of the source of funding, it tempers influence of that funding."

- "They must think there would be an impact or they wouldn't oppose disclosure"
- "Some things may not be as 'pure' as they appear . . . transparency is a good thing."
- "Less effective when Lunch Pail Guy finds out that 'Taxpayers for the Working Man' is really a rich guy or two that just flat out don't want to pay any taxes to do things like support the public schools Lunch Pail Guy's kids attend"
- "No difference in the campaign, but the real problem happens during the session. Disclosure is a lobbying problem, not a campaign one."
- "It all depends upon the candidate and from whom the contributions are received. It cannot be answered in a broad fashion as it could go either way."
- "Most people outside of Austin don't pay any attention to the messenger - or even the message usually. You have to look no further than the success of the Link Letter and Conservative Republicans of Texas to understand the effectiveness of a group that calls itself one thing but is funded by people who personally wouldn't describe themselves as such."

Would election outcomes in Texas be any different if voters were aware of the actual sources of all of the money spent by and on behalf of the various campaigns, bond issues and other initiatives?

- "Another 'Yes, but...' Insiders kid themselves. Voters don't care. For the 5% of the population that actually gives a crap, it would depend on the group who's spending, their relevance to the issue, and the amount and source of money..."
- "My optimism that it would make a difference is forced because so many voters are lazy when it comes to educating themselves on the issues."
- "A vast number of Americans can't even name a sitting US Senator, much less cite the sources of how campaigns are financed."
- "In rare cases the source or amount of a contribution can be a significant issue, but more than 95% of the time it is a non-issue. Even when campaigns try to make hay out of opponents' finances, it rarely gets any meaningful traction."
- "A guy can dream, can't he?"
- "Yes and no depends on the race and circumstances"
- "We actually have a fairly reasonable system of disclosure in Texas. It is, by and large, pretty transparent. Unless, of course, you're MQS."
- "Transparency is a wonderful thing! Everyone, without exception, should be for it."

- "Potentially, but there would need to be education and outreach about the information to make any difference. We do know that campaign contributions to candidates have and do become issues in elections."

- "People who want to know can almost always find out who is funding something."

- "Texans assume their state government is corrupt. Actually seeing the numbers to confirm that fact could have a profound impact."

- "Some primary voters may be interested in hearing where candidates get their last-minute money."

- "The voters in Texas would still be overwhelmingly conservative and would still continue to vote Republican."

- "Transparency would be good for its own sake, but the political climate is currently so lopsided that it would take a lot more than better campaign-finance reporting to change election outcomes"

- "People do not pay attention. The public and most voters are clueless sheeple."

- "It's an interesting question to ponder. I would like to believe that once Texans 'figure it out,' they will realize the need to participate to get everything back on track."

- "Would hope so, but our abysmal turnout makes me wonder. Don't think you will convince any of the

crazies that their anointed are tainted."

- "The cowards out there might stop giving as much money which might get rid of some of the candidates."

- "Again, a maybe would be my answer. We cannot truly know that because our system has lacked transparency for so long, we don't know how voters would respond."

- "At the end of the day, a candidate still has to run his campaign. The biggest influence in election outcomes is whether or not the incumbent is voting his/her district."

- "You can't have a true democracy without knowing where the money is coming from and where it is going."

- "Unless there's actual bribery, the public doesn't care."

- "I don't know, but I would like to find out"

- "Cannot know how electorate would react since much of the information is now not available."

- "Maybe . . . if anyone other than those of us in the 'Austin Bubble' and the activists on both sides of the aisle are actually paying attention."

- "Plenty has been written about the source of campaign contributions for years. Doesn't seem to have made much of a difference."

- "It's important that the public have access to know who is funding the 3rd party groups, even if the average voter chooses not to pay attention to such details."

- "Yes on bond issues, probably no on contested races"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, 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, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Thure Cannon, Snapper Carr, Janis Carter, Corbin Casteel, William Chapman, Elna Christopher, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Holly DeShields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jeff Eller, Jack Erskine, Jon Fisher, Norman Garza, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, John Heasley, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Billy Howe, Laura Huffman, Deborah Ingersoll, Richie Jackson, Cal Jillson, Mark Jones, Robert Jones, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Ramey Ko, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Mark Lehman, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Luke Marchant, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Bill Pewitt, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Royce Poinsett, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Tim Reeves, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Grant Ruckel, Jason Sabo, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Robert Scott, Steve Scurlock, Ben Sebree, Christopher Shields, Julie Shields, Nancy Sims, Jason Skaggs, Ed Small, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Tom Spilman, Jason Stanford, Bill Stevens, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Gerard Torres, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Ken Whalen, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Christopher Williston, Seth Winick, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.