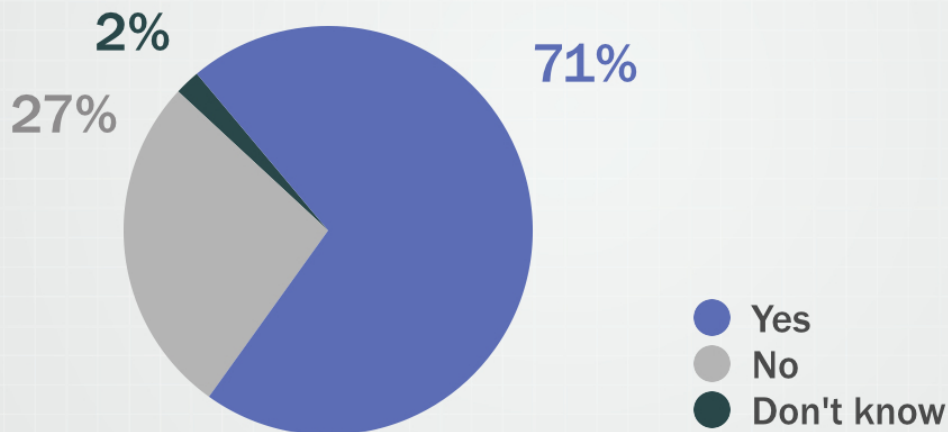


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 19 September 2014*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

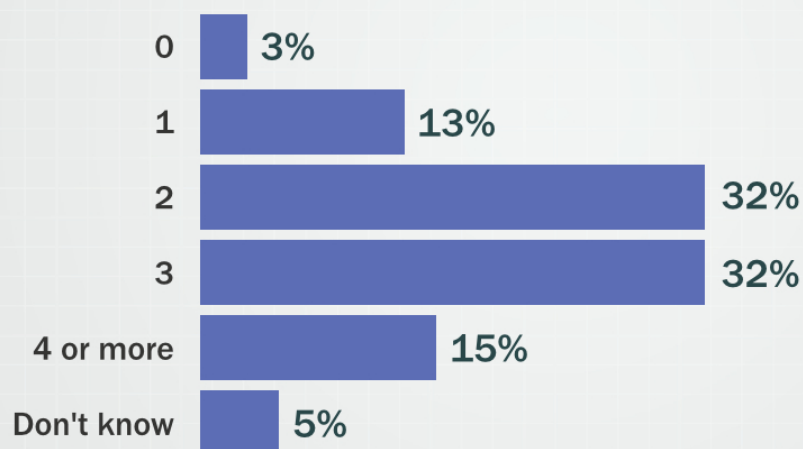
ARE TV DEBATES USEFUL TO VOTERS?



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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

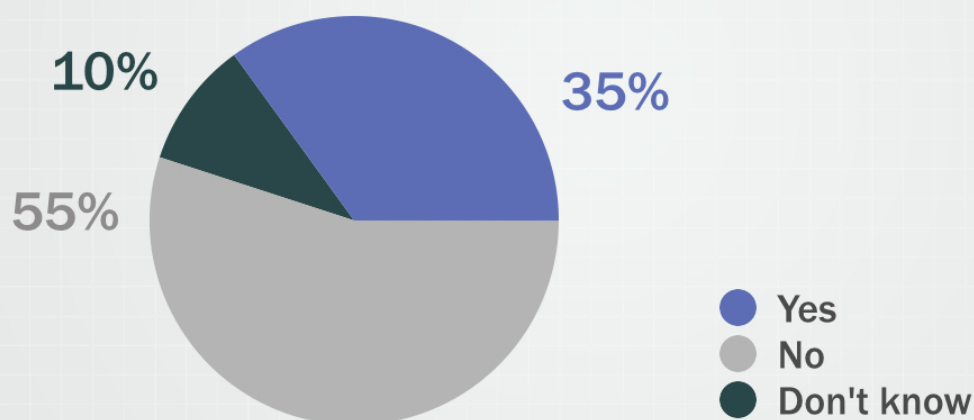
HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD GOVERNOR CANDIDATES DEBATE?



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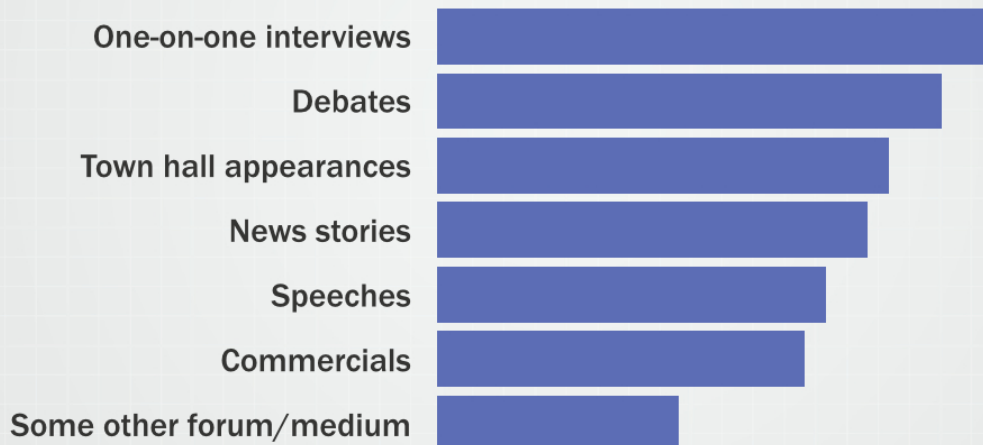
DOES A CANDIDATE'S WILLINGNESS
TO DEBATE INFLUENCE VOTERS?



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RATE THESE WAYS TO GET TO KNOW CANDIDATES:



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Are televised debates in high-profile political races useful to voters?

- "They could be useful to voters if the moderator's intent is not to instigate, but to facilitate a debate on issues Texas voters care about."
- "Useful to voters and candidates. Methinks Perry's consultants/handlers/sycophants wish he had been faster on his feet on 'Oops!' night. You don't debate, you WILL get eaten alive when presented with real politicians. Ever wonder why the Governor hides from Ted Cruz?"
- "Assuming anyone watches them."
- "It helps for the voters to see the candidates in other than a political ad, and in situation where the candidates are responding to questions without a script. For the candidates it is an opportunity for either leaving a very positive impression on those viewing the event, or making a major mistake. That may assist voters see how the candidates will function in day to day governance."
- "A cage match with sharp objects would be a better use of time and generate higher ratings. The only people who watch are partisans who have already made up their minds. Real people are watching Honey Boo Boo, Duck Dynasty, and replays of the 1973 Super Bowl highlights."
- "Few see them and they are controlled by a liberal leaning media that rarely asks questions that conservatives -- who are the majority of voters in Texas - care about."
- "Not necessarily the debate, but the stories that follow the debate are useful as to who said what. Not many undecided people watching the debates."
- "They can be to the viewer who watches the entire debate but most will only get a 10 second clip."
- "Why risk an 'oops moment' and give your opponent life if your the front runner. Debates are for those currently in second place."
- "Most people simply become more resolute. Swing voters may be swayed, but I don't know how many swing voters there are anymore. Seems -R or -D after your name is the most influential thing."
- "MOST Texans are focused on their families--NOT politics. Televised debates help."
- "Depends on the question"
- "They are most useful to the undecided voters."
- "Sure, why not. They're helpful to our college buddies who went into 'real world' marketing/sales and have only a vague idea of what we do for a living, the process or politics in general."
- "The margins may be small here. There are probably 80% of voters that have their minds made up based solely on party affiliation. The independent or swing voters who might be swayed by debates or lack of

debates seem to be a diminishing number."

- "A conditional 'yes' . . . for the true believers on both sides, for those of us who actually care, and for the shrinking percentage of 'undecideds' . . . but generally not much more than entertainment."

- "Very few voters in Texas will be influenced by debate."

- "While many voters may not tune into the debate, they will most likely hear about it through social media and press coverage. It is a core element of democracy....."

- "In many instances televised debates are the only opportunity for voters to see candidates in action. All other television is paid fluff or attack ads."

- "Really just a dog & pony show; an opportunity for the debate club presidents to show they still have it (or that they were NEVER in the debate club a la ricky perry!)"

- "They're virtually the only non-scripted piece in a well-run campaign. If moderated well, debates can help voters on policy, preparedness and personality."

- "They are a circus performance held for the gratification of the media. The public doesn't watch and doesn't care."

- "No, they're not useful to serious voters, because today's debates don't allow a candidate to fully explain his/her position or challenge the other feller's. Sound bites don't educate serious voters."

- "Outside of the political class NO ONE CARES. There is a normal world out there where people live their lives. It does not involve political people. In that world the important things have more to do with the kids getting up and going to school, dad/mom having a bad day at work and what our parents are doing. They don't care about 2 boring people arguing while a bunch of arrogant press sit around acting like they know everything and are above it all. One day the normal people will rise up and both the political people and the press out of work."

- "Sound bite campaigns have gotten us the worst possible office holders. The solution is to the public have the opportunity to see real discussions about solutions to the problems that face us all."

- "Oops"

- "Debates have become media-driven non-events. Formats are never useful to get meaningful info. Always seem to be scheduled on evenings where small audiences are guaranteed. But even if you had them during halftime of the Super Bowl, viewer interest would be minimal. There's a reason that in the history of politics, only two debates are still remembered or referenced: Kennedy-Nixon and Lincoln-Douglas."

- "They can be, but it depends on the moderator. Let's not forget the 2012 Romney-Obama debate when the moderator spoke out of turn--and incorrectly--which hurt Gov Romney and helped Pres Obama."

- "Most Americans are asleep and have no clue about civic engagement."

That is because we don't teach it anymore. We are busy teaching all kinds of social blather, class warfare, jealousy, victimization, worshiping the environment, capitalism is bad, business and profit is bad, Founding Fathers old out of touch white guys, blah blah blah."

- "I think so but not much audience"
- "Nobody watches"
- "They are useful, but would be more useful if candidates were allowed to actually debate instead of using the

usual 3 minute, compartmentalized Q&A format."

- "You may learn some key information and more about the candidate"
- "Of no importance at all in the era of 500 channels, provided someone doesn't vomit on top of the podium"
- "Yes, but not very."
- "You have to watch them in order for them to be useful"

How many statewide televised debates should there be in the race for governor?

- "Perhaps one if the moderators promise to ask more questions about water than weed."
- "'Don't care' should have been an option."
- "There's not much more need for 2 debates that won't be watched by many people."
- "An hour long debate should provide enough time for each candidate to separate themselves from the other. The problem is that the only people who actually watch the debates are those who already know how they are voting."
- "The people who watch televised debates have made up their minds. All Campaigns will declare victory using social media."
- "I'm here for the entertainment. I don't think either of them would back

down from a true debate, but Abbott clearly has more to lose."

- "More than ONE!"
- "One should be plenty."
- "Nonetheless we should have debates to help preserve the remote possibility for thoughtful voters in the future."
- "At least one in each media market."
- "Any more and you are torture."
- "A two-debate minimum is now the standard that the front-runner must accept. There should be more."
- "Feed the gaggle of starved media and send everyone home."
- "Because they're televised AND also streamed online these days, anyone and everyone can watch a debate."

There's no need for multiple debates. We don't need them for specific geographic areas of the state, and we don't need multiple debates to split up issues the way presidential debates are divided (e.g., foreign policy debate and domestic policy debate). We need one debate that is long enough to cover the issues important to most Texans."

- "Who cares?"
- "The loser of the first usually does better the second time around, so you can see both candidates at their best."
- "This state has 26 million people in it. The person who governs it must be up to the task. We deserve to see our candidates prove themselves in

intellectual combat over the course of at least four encounters."

- "The more the better."
- "Two and only two. Anyone who says the more the better is simply a wonk and glutton for (political) punishment."
- "I said 2, but 1 is probably all you need."
- "Education, Budget, Healthcare"
- "As many as the candidates deem appropriate."
- "It should provide different formats and different topics of interest for Texans."

Does a candidate's willingness or unwillingness to debate have any effect on voters' choices?

- "Voters may tune in if there is a debate, but won't care if there isn't one."
- "Real Texans have the guts necessary to present their ideas for discussion and critique."
- "Probably not but it should."
- "If the voters are engaged. I hate to bring it up but remember Ted Cruz's duck that used to follow Lt. Governor Dewhurst around?"
- "Knowing your bias, I answered 'no.' In truth, I suspect NOT participating in the archaic ritual feeding the egos of the media bubbleheads actual adds to the

candidate's standing with the voting public."

- "If a tree falls in the forest...nobody cares about this outside the Austin bubble."
- "Rick Perry answered that question for everyone."
- "Obviously didn't matter in the Carona/Huffines race."
- "It could add to their opponent's narrative on the candidate but for the most part these negotiations are very inside baseball and don't move poll numbers."

- "It should! Know where your state leaders stand on what matters most to YOU!"
- "Debates are an insiders game. Those who care about having them are invested in a candidate. General population doesn't care."
- "Maybe..."
- "Not when the opponent is as radical as Wendy Davis."
- "Yes, but only for the undecided voters. Voters on the far right and left already have their minds made up."
- "Depends on the race."
- "The margins may be small here. There are probably 80% of voters that have their minds made up based solely on party affiliation. There is probably an even smaller percentage that are impacted by willingness or unwillingness to debate."
- "Most who will vote have already decided. A candidate with a significant lead faces an unacceptable 'risk/return' scenario with multiple debates."
- "It probably doesn't, but it should. It's understandable why the leader in the polls might not want to risk tripping up before an audience of voters, but if he or she wants to be the leader of the people, then that person should have enough courage and confidence to face potentially tough situations."
- "Apparently none, see Perry-Hutchison"
- "You should be willing to stand in a public forum and debate the true issues with your opponent."
- "Inside baseball, unfortunately."
- "A candidate's ability or inability to debate is not a relevant qualification for the job. It's not part of the job description. He or she doesn't face weekly questions like the Prime Minister in England."
- "How many voters can even identify the candidates, much less tell you who is allegedly dodging debates? They don't care, only we--those inside the Austin bubble--seem to care."
- "It does on mine."
- "Anywhere outside of Texas, moving north and east - yes."
- "They should make a difference to voters. They should ask themselves why are they hiding out what are they afraid off and why are they taking me for granted."
- "It should matter to people if a candidate is not open and forthcoming about their policies and views. And by not debating it can create one of those 'oops.' moments. Just saying."
- "Debates (like newspaper editorials) are relics of the political past. Candidates have proven they can win without showing up for either. Few votes (if any) will be swayed by - what the political media believes to be - the big debate scheduled on a (high school football) Friday night in the Rio Grande Valley. Few people will see it. Even fewer will read about on Saturday."

- "Voters choices are determined on the ballot."
- "They look like they are hiding. Since we are on the topic of informing voters debates might be helpful. But, if people want to be informed, and most people are lazy and uniformed, people only need to read the newspaper. It is chalk full of info on candidates."
- "Yes but probably only a couple of points."
- "It depends on how the public views the narrative and much publicity the refusal gets"
- "They don't care!"
- "Not in TX. The first debate is Friday night at 6pm. Local news viewership is falling off a cliff. The only people watching online will be the campaigns and political junkies like us. This debate will not be relevant in the race for the governor."
- "Yes, but marginally."

Rank these different ways to get to know more about candidates:

- "Question 4 doesn't make sense to me. Are you asking rank the way to get the highest quality information about the candidates, or are you asking rank how it's most likely that you'll get the highest quantity of information about the candidates. The rankings are different."
- "How voters can be informed, people cry a river of tears about being busy, not time to vote, cannot find the info, BS, it is there quit being lazy, and as I said earlier, maybe we need to teach civic engagement in school, no, not that crap about anti all of this and protesting, I mean why you should be engaged, what happens if you are not, how important it is, how little time it takes to vote and be informed."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Jennifer Ahrens, 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, Marc Campos, Snapper Carr, William Chapman, Elna Christopher, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Denise Davis, Hector De Leon, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Holly DeShields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jeff Eller, Jack Erskine, Gay Erwin, Jon Fisher, Wil Galloway, Norman Garza, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, Jim Grace, John Greytok, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Cal Jillson, Jason Johnson, Mark Jones, Robert Jones, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Matt Matthews, Jason McElvaney, Kathy Miller, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Nelson

Nease, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Tim Reeves, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Jason Sabo, Luis Saenz, 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, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Tom Spilman, Jason Stanford, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Sherry Sylvester, Jay Thompson, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, Ken Whalen, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Woody Widrow, Christopher Williston, Seth Winick, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.