

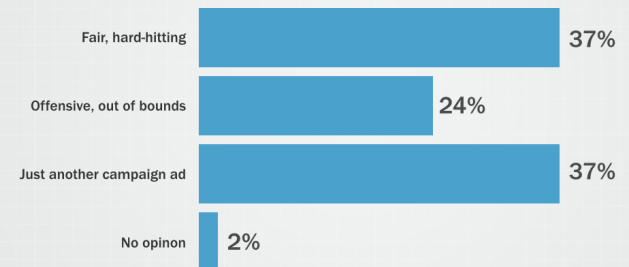
# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 17 October 2014*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE: The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll for 17 October 2014

## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

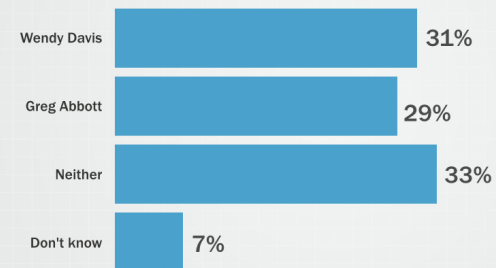
HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THIS?



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

## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

WHO BENEFITS MOST?

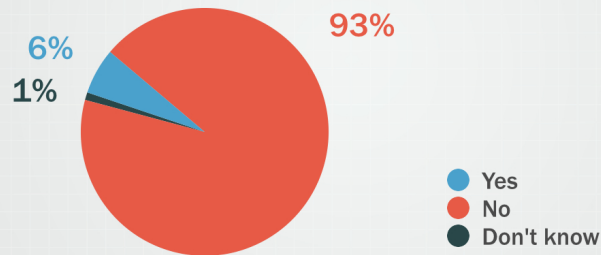


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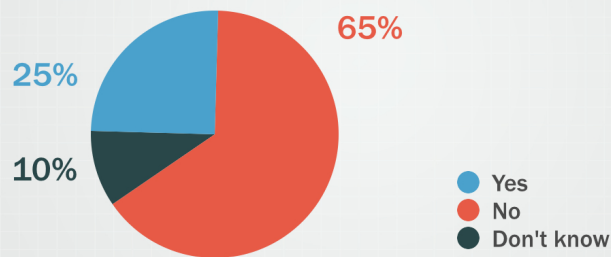
DOES THIS CHANGE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE RACE?



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## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

WILL IT CHANGE THE AVERAGE VOTER'S ASSESSMENT OF THE RACE?



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### How would you characterize the commercial?

- "This ad evidences a political tone-deafness about Texas voters that has plagued Wendy Davis since her filibuster."
- "The ad poses a legitimate question about Abbott's hypocrisy. The potential for this attack was recognized by Abbott's team, which was ready to call 'foul' on any mention of Abbott's disability. The ferociousness of the Abbott response carried the day with the media, successfully casting the ad as out of bounds. It was not."
- "The ad is decent, not great. It is not, by any stretch particularly unusual."
- "Disgusting and dishonorable"
- "Your forgot the category of stupid. Let me see, politics 101, don't attack a woman or a person with disabilities. They must be desperate. "
- "If this is the best Davis has got, then she's in dire straights. Also, those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."
- "All is fair in love, war and politics!"
- "It's fair, if accurate. It's hard to know how accurate it is without researching it. Most people will probably disregard or discount it."
- "Davis treats Abbott as an formidable opponent and doesn't coddle him because of his disability. That's something that Abbott, advocates for the disabled, and the general populace should be able to appreciate, regardless of their feelings for Davis' politics."
- "I am sad to acknowledge the answer. Politics and campaigns have been taken hostage by a bunch of mean, hateful operatives who see nothing as 'out of bounds'."
- "It is a campaign's job to spin any issue that could be harmful to their candidate. The Abbott War Room deserves an award for dominating the media and social media cycles. What should've been an ad against Abbott, turned into a case against Wendy. This cycle has exposed the Democrat's lack of talent in their political consulting sphere. "
- "Everything Davis states is factual. The Abbott camp may not like the facts, but his record is indisputable. During his time as a judge and AG, he has worked to close the courthouse door on many, shredding the Constitution in the process."
- "Everything is on the table in any campaign, and just because Abbott is handicapped doesn't negate the fact that used the court system to get what he wanted out of his injury, but used his power to deny it to others. "
- "Abbott uses his wheelchair in most of his campaign ads. What's the difference?"
- "I don't get what's allegedly offensive about showing a wheelchair. We're not talking about FDR here; Greg Abbott has repeatedly referred himself to his injury and paralysis."

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- "Abbott is hiding behind the wheelchair to obfuscate. Fair game to call him on it, especially regarding how he benefitted then closed the ramp behind him. Tragic as his accident was, and admirable his struggle, he could not have afforded to run for office under the tort 'reforms' he championed since the award might not have won, and most certainly if settled would have been a fraction of what he received; his legal record against patients with disabilities may well be merely objectivity, but it comes across as appalling hypocritical. "

- "One can't snicker at 'Abortion Barbie' and then be offended by this. I wouldn't have used that image, but it isn't out of bounds."

- "The wheelchair represents the result of Abbott's injury. Placing the image in the ad may have been politically unwise or politically incorrect. It was not morally offensive."

- "After all the weekend controversy this was the first time I actually clicked on and saw the ad. There are plenty of ads made by R's and D's that are very rough, but this one is over-the-top shameful. The old Willie Horton ads would run on Nick JR compared to this one. "

- "Lies and more lies from a desperate candidate."

- "It is the truth; Mr. Abbott had the BEST Trial Lawyer when it benefitted him, but as soon as his money was in the bank he decided Tort reform was needed. "

- "She is so far behind that you have to be aggressive. I believe it shows the hypocrisy of the Abbott campaign."

- "If a Republican candidate had run a similar ad, I think there would have been an overwhelming negative response from Democrats. The hypocrisy in campaign ads knows no lows. "

- "It is a hard hitting but honest political campaign add. It will not impact the outcome of the race because so few Texans actually care about state politics as evidence by the pathetic low voter turnout in state elections. "

- "Follows the Republican mantra -- Do as I say, not as I do."

- "Without knowing the facts about any of the cases cited, including Abbott's, trying to draw conclusions is pointless. But when did that ever matter?"

- "And it's Abbott's long-held fear, that he is a hypocrite for getting rich."

- "The substance of the ad and narrative therein is fair and clearly hard-hitting, but the photo of an empty wheelchair is offensive and out of bounds. The photo likely does hold the attention of many viewers and is thus effective, but that doesn't make it fair..... "

- "This ad is emblematic of the low road driven in the last weeks of the campaigns. The empty wheel chair is over the top - should it have been countered with an examination table with stirrups? Too much?"

- "I'm not sure I understand the manufactured rage about this. We see commercials that routinely suggest that candidates hate America, kill jobs and babies, and raise your taxes more often than they breathe air. How is this ad any different?"

- "Losing candidates who are desperate do desperate things. Sad thing is, Wendy will still be around, living in Ft. Worth practicing law, working at a title company, hanging out with Will here in Austin or doing whatever defeated candidates do while the political consultants that talked her into running this despicable and false ad will be long gone. I think deep down Wendy is better than this, but as noted, desperate people do desperate things. Sad."

#### *Who will benefit most from the ad?*

- "Can you imagine an Abbott campaign ad opening with a proxy for Wendy Davis' empty womb?"

- "Anyone depending on second-hand sources for their information are probably convinced the ad will benefit Abbott. But those actually seeing the ad -- and thinking about it -- will gravitate towards Davis."

- "Outcome of the race is not really in doubt, only the margin."

- "Some low-information voters may buy into it but the premise is flawed. Just because you were once a plaintiff does not mean you should be for all plaintiffs in all cases."

- "Abbott brought the wheelchair factor into the race, so it is not out of bounds for Davis. This ad is not about his handicap; rather, it goes to a question of hypocrisy. That's fair."

- "Ugh. When Republicans say that Democrats always overplay their hand...this is what we mean. "

- "If it's OK to mansplain Wendy Davis' life choices because she brought up her own life story, then it's OK to talk about Abbott's wheelchair-related hypocrisy. "

- "I mean, it's not like she got a law enforcement officer to say her opponent was responsible for the murder of the officer's partner. "

- "And the Dems were already concerned about low voter turn out on their side. This does not help them."

- "Most voters are not as hardened to this type of attach as your audience. "

- "When a democrat candidate gets MSNBC to turn against them...need I say more."

- "Just the attention alone will help Wendy"

- "Galvanizing, to say the least. "

- "Since Abbott introduced his disability in a positive narrative ad, it creates the opportunity for WD's campaign to turn that around with a negative policy ad - GA's anti-tort record despite having been a major -

and deserving - beneficiary of the system he has wanted narrow since he became AG."

- "Davis camp insists the ad is working exactly as they wanted: People are finally talking about the worst run gubernatorial campaign by a democratic candidate in recent history (and that's saying something considering we're talking about a party that gave us the lackluster campaigns of Garry Mauro, Chris Bell and Bill White)."

- "Wendy Davis and the Democrat campaign this cycle has been about turnout, claiming that 'Texas is not a red state, it's a non voting state'. Negative ads are designed to depress turnout and the Davis campaign is running almost exclusively a negative campaign. Just another example of how the Davis campaign says one thing but does another."

- "...And other republicans...AND certainly not State Representative/Wendy Campaign manager Chris Turner"

- "Texans have a history of turning out in bigger numbers because of such lies told in campaigns."

### *Does this change your assessment of the race for governor?*

- "Davis is still going to lose but the pundits on Left (Beckel, Mother Jones, MSNBC....) will now blame it on this instead of the fact that Texas voters don't like where she stands on the issues. Clever?"

- "Ultimately, Abbott will still win. As the ad is examined and reexamined, it

- "I hope people will vote but there is a big disconnect between those folks that ought to be participating, particularly those that would benefit from a fair system of justice."

- "The negative play around the ad probably makes little difference with the voters, but it has hurt Davis with the national press in a meaningful way. The national press viewed this as a Hail Mary effort by Davis and an admission by her campaign that she is losing the race by a large margin. "

- "The ad will be ineffective b/c it assumes voters are campaign insiders."

- "She can't say that' mentality will prevail for Abbott. "

- "Unless you've got really explosive new content the ads tend to reinforce those who have already decided. There is no new info here...just an empty wheelchair. "

- "But how much? Probably winning 60-40 instead of 57-43. "

has the potential of helping Davis narrow the gap."

- "I was already voting for Abbot but have definitely lost respect for Davis over course of campaign..."

- "Eh, how many people on this list are truly undecided?"

- "Davis loses by double digits. "

- "Any insider that still believes there are independents out there who are still undecided should find a new line of work."

- "But I was already voting for Wendy Davis."

- "Not yet possible for a D to win statewide."

- "Yes, if this is sign of things to come from the Davis camp. This is the most fight they've shown in 12 months."

- "Slightly - the fact that Republicans and the Abbott campaign responded quickly and aggressively means they sense the potential for this turning what seemed to be a positive into a negative for their candidate. "

- "Only on margin of victory"

- "It means Abbott likely up by more than people think and Wendy's team is really more nasty than I thought."

- "Davis has one credential: abortion. Having 2 herself and advocating countless others. Is she trying to justify her own abortions?"

- "I have know for years that Abbott is a hypocrite! I have just been waiting for the chance to vote against him. "

### *Do you think it will change the average voter's assessment of the race for governor?*

- "Some undecided voters will surely be disgusted with this ad."

- "I'm only voting for one Republican but it's not in the Governor's race; that's for sure!"

- "Almost nothing has changed the likely outcome of this race for many months now. Abbott has had a steady 10 to 12 point lead among likely voters regardless of any issues, scandals or advertising by either campaign. "

- "57% Republican state"

- "It got ugly in October just like it always does. "

- "No Wendy Davis was loosing before the ad, she's loosing after it. "

- "The race was already over and this ad tells us why. Democrats are so insulated inside their own narrative that they think an ad with these kinds of over the top charges will be credible to voters, but they are not. They have broken one of the first rules of campaigning...don't believe your own press. "

- "...Except to realize even more how devastating a setback this supposed 'return year' for the Ds is going to be. "

- "It might move the numbers a little, but it's not enough to really matter. Abbott will still crush her. "

- "Most voters have long ago made up their mind on this race."

- "No effect. To change the average voter's assessment, average voters would have to be paying attention. And they ain't. This is a non-story except for the one-half of one percent of the population that live, eat, and breathe politics."
- "People who might be in the middle and on the fence are now seeing how mean spirited, ugly, nasty and the bully that Wendy Davis really is and that she is an empty suit."
- "Is the average voter paying attention yet?"
- "Most people will probably disregard or discount it."
- "Is it broadcast widely enough to the right demographic?"
- "This ad is voter suppression at its best. The only problem is that the Davis campaign is on the losing end."
- "Once folks understand the background of why he is in a wheelchair. Abbott has even fought against the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)."
- "The average voter will vote by party, not by candidate."
- "Clearly Davis polling showed the message would get traction among low voting, high interest constituencies, and probably calculated that outweighed any blowback, which most likely comes from voters she did not have to begin with or undecideds she could not swing regardless."
- "As a longtime teacher of political marketing, one ad rarely changes a

- race, but every now and then one does and this has some potential as it is getting much play in the free or earned media which magnifies the impact."
- "Texas voters have always known the Davis campaign is desperate."
- "Sympathy for Abbott will help increase his lead. How in the hell do you chastise someone who will never walk again for taking advantage of the court system -- R or D? Wendy's biggest donor consistently makes millions on jury verdicts for people who lost the use of homes and not the use of their limbs."
- "Not change, but it sure will motivate voters to turn out for Abbott."
- "Why are his legs worth 30 million and others only worth \$250,000 or nothing at all?"
- "Again there is this big disconnect; not enough money and quite frankly I believe the folks outside of Austin are just not mad...the economy is great; folks have jobs; money coming in - life is pretty good in Texas."
- "Think it is an effective attack on tort reform."
- "I don't think it helps either one of the candidates. She could have used the money more wisely to solidify her women base."
- "The partisan entrenchment in this country is simply unchangeable. It's certainly not going to change with a 30 second TV commercial."

- "I think regular Joe out there will think it is bad."
- "I'm not sure there is an average voter anymore. Most average voters would be average folks and they quite frankly 'don't give a damn'."
- "I can only hope. Someone who is as insensitive as Abbott has shown

- himself to be should not be the leader or role model for our State."
- "Wendy Davis isn't taken seriously by most voters. This confirms their thinking."
- "There's probably a difference between how normal people and political people react. Not sure how, though."

**Our thanks to this week's participants:** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Victor Alcorta, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Amy Beneski, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Marc Campos, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, 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, Wil Galloway, Norman Garza, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, John Heasley, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Richie Jackson, Jason Johnson, Mark Jones, Robert Jones, Robert Jones, Lisa Kaufman, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Dale Laine, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Myra Leo, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Mike McKinney, Steve Minick, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Richard Murray, Pat Nugent, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Jerry Philips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Pollard, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, Kim Ross, Grant Ruckel, Luis Saenz, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Robert Scott, Ben Sebree, Christopher Shields, Jason Skaggs, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Tom Spilman, Jason Stanford, Bill Stevens, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Sherry Sylvester, Gerard Torres, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Seth Winick, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.