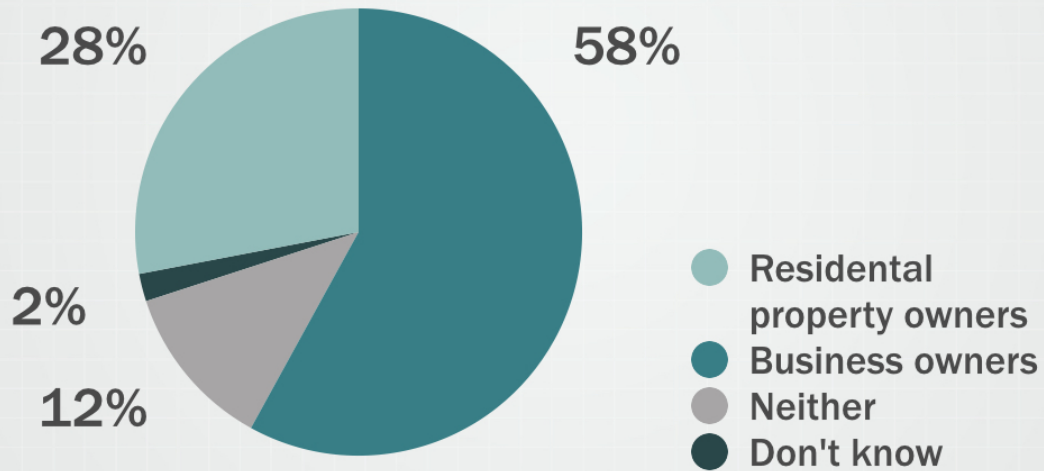


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 13 February 2015*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

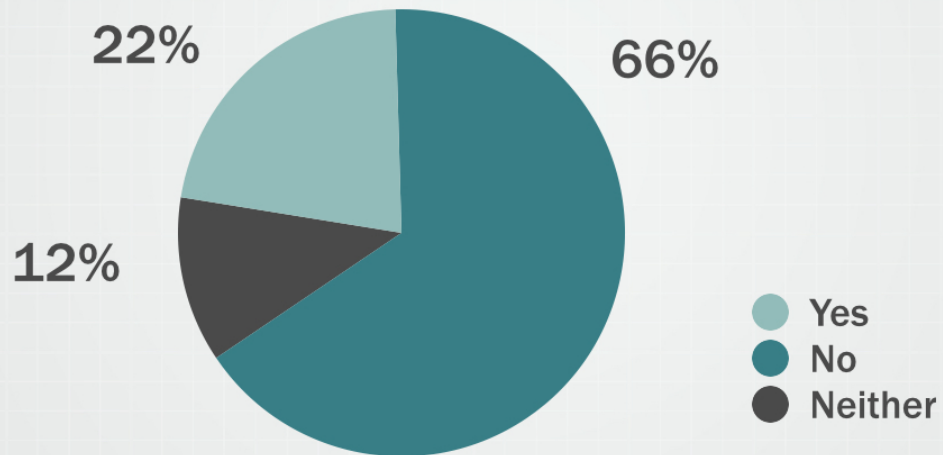
## WHO WINS ON TAX CUTS?



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

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

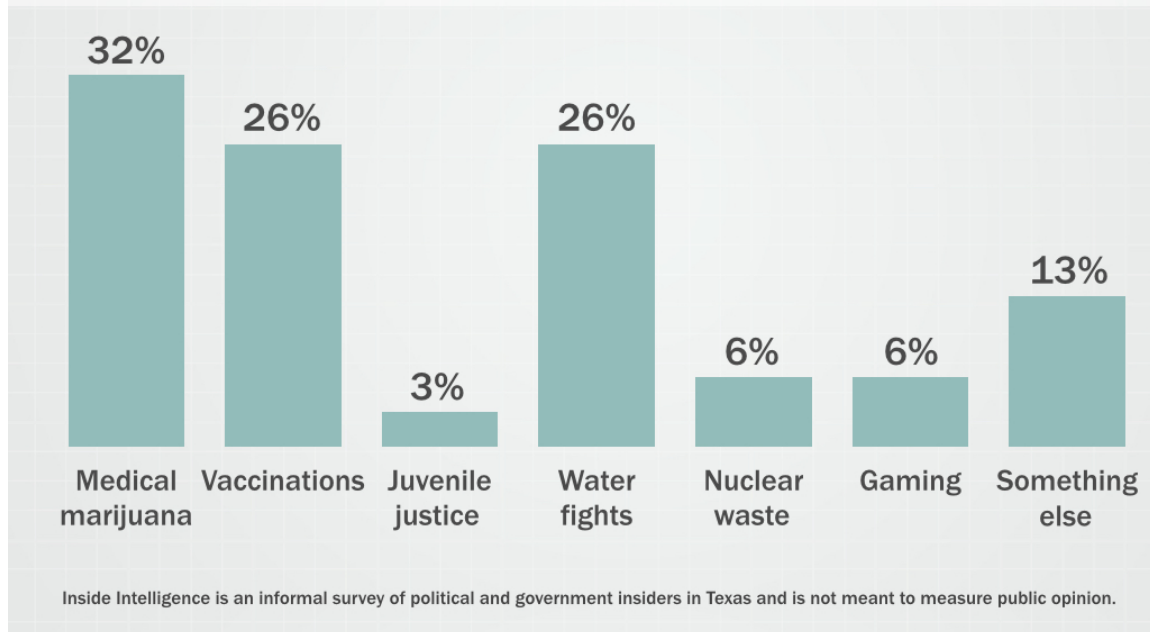
WILL LAWMAKERS FORCE MORE VACCINATIONS?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

## WILD CARD ISSUE?



### ***When the gavel falls on sine die, who will have gotten the better end of the deal on tax cuts?***

- "Businesses will win, of course. 'Follow the [lobbyists]...'"
- "First-year state officials know who brought them to the dance. They have to provide a victory for residential property owners."
- "Whatever property tax relief is passed will be offset by local increases, so residential property owners won't see any meaningful relief (deja vu all over again). Business owners, on the other hand, are a broad group — large, global corporations and many mid-sized and mom-and-pop type businesses; these folks will see meaningful reform by way of franchise tax reform."
- "By 'better end', you mean 'noticeable'?"
- "Meaningful property tax reduction is elusive like the 'chupacabra'. Lots believe in it but no one's seen it!"
- "Don't forget — business got \$1 billion in tax breaks last session. Their argument that businesses and homeowners should get equal amounts

of tax cuts ignores that inconvenient fact."

- "But both (franchise tax reform & property tax reform) will happen."
- "What about a way to vote for both business and residential?! That's the answer. "
- "The Legislature will give the greater tax cuts to those who have more votes. That will only exacerbate the disparity between businesses and homeowners, but what is new."
- "I live in Travis County, so I know it won't be me."
- "Who votes? There's your winner."
- "Always... it is the Texas Legislature whether it's controlled by Democrats or Republicans..."
- "Tax cuts will be, as always, illusory..."

***Will the Legislature make it more difficult for parents to exempt their children from being vaccinated?***

- "It'll be status quo."
- "Common sense will prevail on this issue: if you want to exercise the right not to vaccinate, you should not enjoy the benefit of public school enrollment."
- "Tragically, they will not. They will be too busy with 2nd amendment pronouncements about prying guns from their cold dead measles ridden hands."
- "We live in a state of Republican primaries where libertarians provide a

• "Neither. As long as local governments rely disproportionately on property tax and the state tries to act as overlord, nothing good will happen."

- "Wouldn't be surprised to see something fairly equal."
- "Nobody will feel any tax relief."
- "Business owners — because they have better lobbyists, duh."
- "Both groups will get some relief, but our commercial property taxes are so blooming high, any relief will be of more import to business owners."
- "Homestead exemption will pass."

healthy voter base. As dumb as this debate is, it is still a re-election issue."

- "Depends. Is the Tea Party anti-science?"
- "The question that needs asking is, how many members haven't vaccinated their kids?"
- "There is some remnant of social responsibility left, I hope."
- "But that does not mean they shouldn't."

- "Not when the counties registering the highest percentage of exemptions just happen to be in the districts of the committee chairs where those types of bills are usually referred."

- "I hope so!"

- "We are debating allowing diseases to come back due to Jenny McCarthy and Jonathan Stickland."

- "Unbelievably, yes. It's one thing to talk 'rights' (well, about anything but

***What could turn out to be the wild-card issue of the Legislature?***

- "The lobbyist entertainment bill will provide an existential scare to those under the Pink Dome. We can only assume Geren was tasked with filing this bill to ensure it dies in committee."

- "Guns gone wild and crowding out other important issues."

- "If I knew the answer to this question, then I could line up a new client or two."

- "The drought is not over and water is not a settled issue."

- "Really don't know"

- "Pension reform for public safety workers. All five large cities want it and public safety unions have been making donations and endorsements over the past two years in preparation for this show down. It will draw thousands to the capitol and set off fierce, emotional debate."

- "State preemption of local governments."

abortion) when your choice involves carrying a gun on your hip outside your clothes, but when your 'choice' puts my kid's life at stake, we might restrict that 'right' a tad. Also, does it seem to anyone else like Villalba is launching his 2020 Presidential candidacy early?"

- "Hello? Have you already forgotten about that whole state contracting mess?"

- "Watch for a total derailment of the legislative process over vouchers."

- "School voucher \$ will keep Lege going until there is acceptance of same in some form."

- "You never know..."

- "As I remember, the press reports on the debate over approving low-level nuclear waste, there were many predictions that a request for permission to store high-level waste would soon followed. These predictions were dismissed, if not denied outright, by the waste management company. It appears that these denials were at least disingenuous."

- "Where the \$ is spent (education and health care)"

## ***What was the biggest surprise in the House's committee appointments? The biggest winner? The biggest loser?***

- "Two Democrats leading transportation."
- "Otto was the biggest winner. The biggest surprise was Smithee moving from Insurance."
- "The Senate and lack of comity."
- "Most surprising is that the Turner 19 were not all assigned to the Select Committee on Select Committees."
- "Dennis Bonnen"
- "No surprises. Those that needed to be punished were punished and those that needed to be rewarded were rewarded."
- "Joan Huffman"
- "Winner is Speaker Straus. Empower Texas is big loser. No one cares that the speaker vote is part of their legislator scorecard. Also, new GOP senators who spoke up for Straus challenger. The guess here is they only to pass nothing as their bills are DOA in the House."
- "Biggest loser — Right Wing Conservatives"
- "Moving Smithee from Insurance chair — big deal not necessarily noticed by folks."
- "Change can be good, but the loss of institutional knowledge is painful on some of these committees."
- "Menendez being demoted."
- "Winner — Van Deaver; Loser — Hughes"
- "The rise of the third-term members"
- "Dennis Bonnen as chair of Ways and Means was eye-opening."
- "'Crownover — Health"
- "Otto — winner"
- "19 losers"
- "Myra Crownover to Public Health."
- "Biggest surprise: Ways & Means chair"
- "'House Insurance Chairman"
- "MQS — Biggest Loser"
- "Bipartisanship — Biggest Winner"
- "John Smithee"
- "We will see."
- "Smithee's switch was the biggest surprise."
- "Scott Turner was the biggest winner ... he got committees."
- "Biggest winner: John Otto"
- "Biggest loser: Dustin Burrows"

- "Budget veterans leaving Appropriations."
- "Biggest winner: D. Bonnen & Giovanni Capriglione"
- "Biggest loser: The anti-Straus Repubs."
- "No surprises, really. Smithee reassignment was a bit of a surprise but certainly no shocker."
- "Biggest Loser was clearly Trey Martinez Fischer. He got absolutely hosed."
- "Biggest Winners — the Democrats. Biggest Losers — the Republicans."
- "Smithee not chair of insurance"
- "Biggest surprise — Darby to Energy"
- "Biggest Winner — Otto"
- "Biggest Loser — Phillips"
- "The shuffle, but the appts do a good job of capitalizing on experience and member strengths."
- "Not that it's necessarily a bad thing for him, but I was surprised that Larson didn't get a Chair."
- "Oh! They came out already?"
- "The fruit-basket turnover nature of it."
- "Dennis Bonnen as Chair of Ways & Means! Let the insanity begin!"
- "Dennis Bonnen as chair of Way & Means; Dennis Bonnen; Those who voted for Scott Turner for Speaker"
- "Frullo — Insurance (surprise)"
- "Bonnen — Ways & Means (biggest winner)"
- "Murphy — Corrections (biggest loser)"
- "Murphy as Chair of Corrections; D.Bonnen; the 3 Districts that still do not have representation and the yet to be determined 4th District in S.A. that will seat a new member sometime later this Spring."
- "Keffer losing Energy chair"
- "The speed of their arrival and fairness regarding interests and importance to the districts."
- "Bonnen"
- "Surprise — Bonnen at Ways & Means"
- "Winner — Otto at Appropriations"
- "Loser — Zerwas at Higher Ed"
- "Frullo to Insurance. Winner is Otto."
- "Zerwas — Higher Ed? Winner — Dennis Bonnen — speaker pro tem AND Ways & Means! Loser — no one — Speaker Straus is a nice guy and did not really punish anyone"
- "That Darby wasn't Approps Chair. No losers."



- "No winners — everyone feels screwed."
- "Dennis Bonnen for W & M chair. Winner: Myra Crownover Publ H Chair. Darby and Larson tie for biggest losers."
- "Surprise: Frullo — Insurance"
- "Winner: Otto"
- "Loser: Stickland"
- "Bonnen on Ways & Means was a surprise"
- "Surprise: Smithee"
- "Winner: Straus"
- "Loser: Michael Quinn Sullivan/Tim Dunn"
- "Shuffling, shuffling"
- "Biggest surprise was that Murphy got anything."
- "No surprises."
- "Consolation winners Darby and Zerwas."
- "Surprise: Jim Murphy — was not expecting to see a chairmanship after that YouTube flap."
- "Winner: Joe 'every time I think (or say) I'm out — they pull me back in' Pickett"
- "Loser: Scott Turner, et al."
- "Sen Zaffirini the big loser. Kicked off higher Ed and finance."
- "I take the Pickett/Phillips swap as an admission that they got the two mixed up last session, a la Perry vetoing the wrong Whitmire bill. Oops!"
- "Biggest losers were Phil King and Jodie Laubenberg. Both legislators sold out the conservative movement in hopes of plum assignments from Straus and got very little in return."
- "The biggest winner is the Democrat Party because it has once again proven its complete control over the Straus leadership team."
- "Biggest surprise — Dennis Bonnen as chair of Ways and Means"
- "Gary Elkins — winner"
- "Larry Phillips — loser"
- "Biggest winner was Otto. Darby was the biggest loser... he protested too much when he knew he wasn't getting Approps."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Jennifer Ahrens, Victor Alcorta, Brandon Alderete, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Walt Baum, Amy Beneski, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales,

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