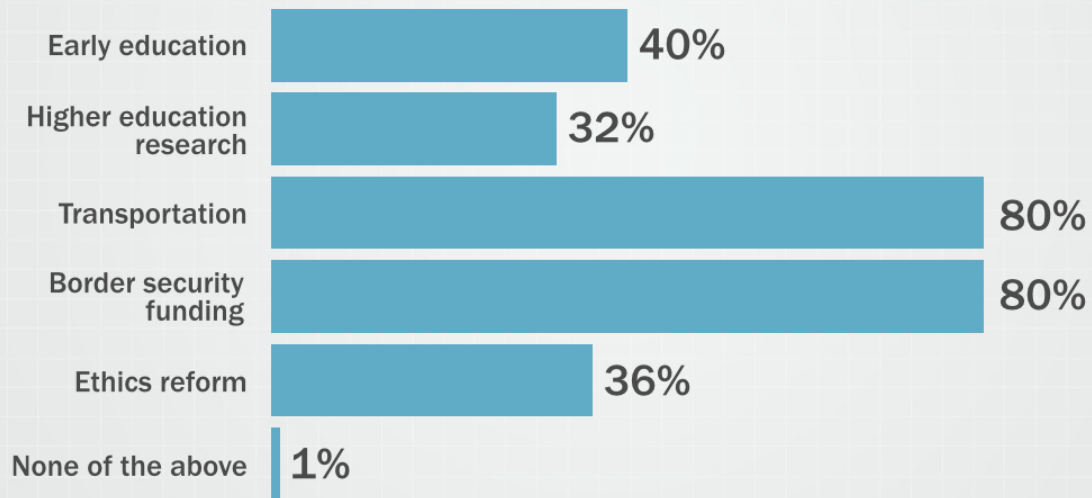


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 20 February 2015*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

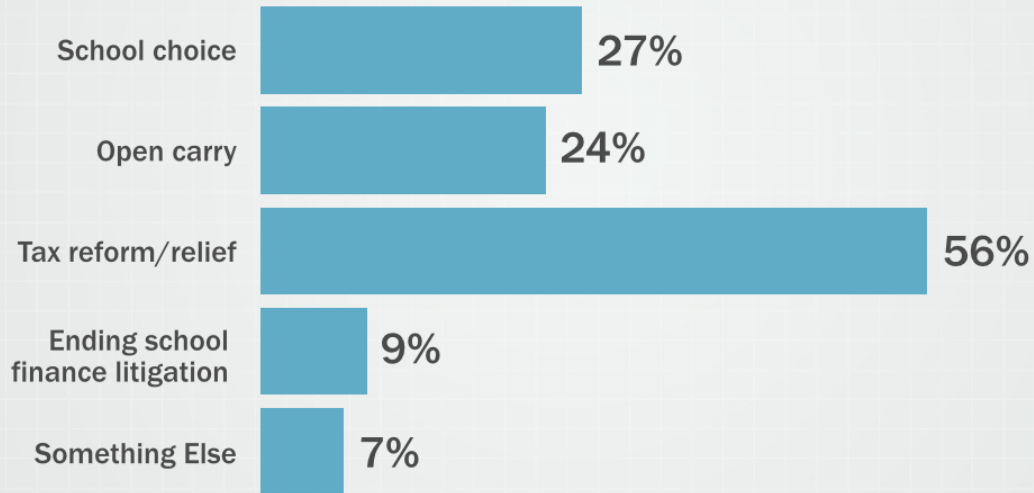
WHICH EMERGENCY ITEMS MAKE IT
TO ABBOTT'S DESK?



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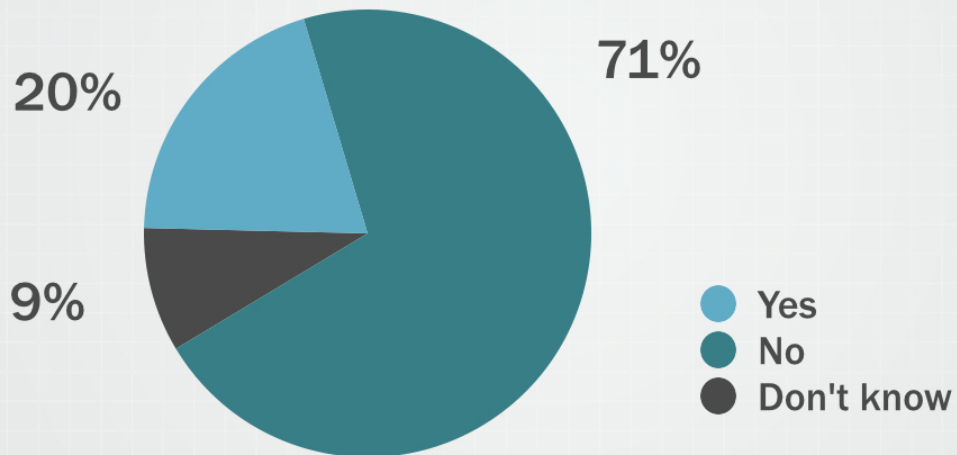
SURPRISE OMISSION?



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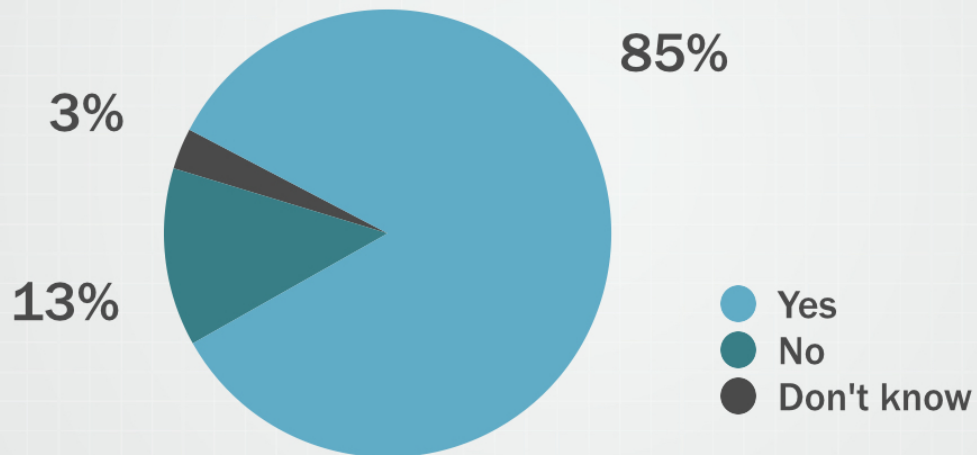
\$500M FOR LURING NOBEL LAUREATES?



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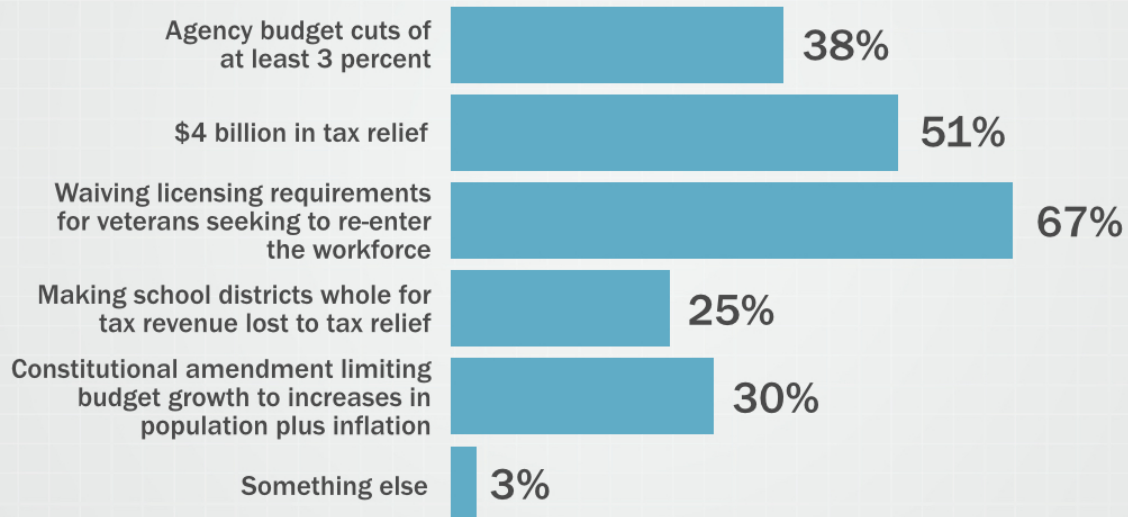
\$ FOR TROOOPERS AT THE BORDER?



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SUCCESS FOR OTHER ABBOTT PRIORITIES?



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Gov. Greg Abbott named five emergency items in his State of the State address. Which topics will generate legislation that makes it to the governor's desk?

- "Now that Governor Abbott has acknowledged he's willing to pay for Pre-K, isn't it a foregone conclusion that some form of legislation will pass?"
- "Members may try to make the lobby more ethical, but rest assured they will pass nothing that in any way makes any of their information public..."
- "Border security is the red meat legislation the base will need to feel comfortable with the new Guv. Border security will be the pawn to in-state tuition."
- "But will the legislation that makes it to his desk in each case make the situation better? Or worse?"
- "This legislature isn't very interested in higher education."
- "If ethics reform means greater oversight over state contracting and procurement, I think there is support for that effort."

- "Bravo to Governor Abbott for tackling early education. This won't be popular in this legislature and while likely not to pass this session, will start an important conversation."

- "Ethics 'reform' will get to the governor but won't provide any significant positive change."

- "It's hard to see any (transportation/border security/etc.) funding bills sailing through ahead of the budget."

- "Problem is that they are all big topics. Surely something will make it through the system. Ethics, interestingly is the most undefined one, so almost anything can count towards victory unless the Gov gets specific..."

- "Conspicuously absent — oversight of state agencies starting with healthcare, and of course healthcare as a standalone issue."

- "I hope NOT early education because it's been an abysmal failure and very expensive for taxpayers."

- "Don't be a tyrant to the 2nd Amendment, bro! You better add open carry to your list, bro!"

- "Some form or fashion of all of the above."

Were you surprised that _____ was left off the list of emergency items?

- "I am more surprised that 'emergency items' are first being presented by the Governor on the 35th day of session (see Tex. Const. Art. 3, Sec. 5(b))."

- "Both the House and Senate are very volatile and can explode at any moment. The Guv played his hand correctly to keep things calm a little longer."

- "Yes... but only because the Muslims for School Choice group has scared many R's away from this issue."

- "State Contract reform"

- "Tax reform/relief was clearly part of the agenda — it's safe to assume he means all the emergency items to be

taken care of in the context of tax relief, with no new revenue identified to support them."

- "Yes, yes, I was; there is support for this effort in both chambers, it is an easy lift. I would add with this single caveat however, it appears state debt reduction is more important to the House."

- "No surprises"

- "Hospital financing (Medicaid)"

- "Hard to tell whether the Big 3 see eye-to-eye on these. Also, school finance and tax reform/relief will generate LOTS of debate because the

devil's in the details. Because of that, they cannot be on the fast track."

- "Open carry is ready to pass the Senate. Abbott could have started with a slam-dunk."
- "Not surprised healthcare missing notwithstanding its significance to the state budget and public health, and long-term economic health."
- "TWIA"
- "I wish that he'd taken a bold step to totally reinvent the way Texas schools are funded to make it more transparent and more simple. It's too complex now, which serves purposes of the big spenders."

• "Perhaps a bit less pandering than we are accustomed to?"

- "Where is water? Water is more important than transpo. When will our leaders in gument figure it out? Sure we got some money for it and we have sort of a plan. Not enough, my friend. Maybe we should move session to the summer months. That might make it resonate. Duh!"
- "Local preemption."
- "Abbott may not know yet what he really wants out of the tax relief."
- "No real surprises"

Will the Legislature give Abbott \$500 million for Texas universities to attract Nobel laureates?

- "Unless this plan comes with an indentured servitude agreement to keep these geniuses in Texas after the grant money runs dry, what is the point?"
- "The Guv will get what he wants... period."
- "To this Legislature, 'Nobel Laureate' equals 'pinko liberal.' So, no \$ for them."
- "Sure... but they probably won't give him a nickel for rank and file faculty, who do most of the actual teaching."
- "When does it end, tuition revenue bonds, deregulated tuition. Jeez, when is enough enough? It kinda reminds me of the forgivable loan program at a certain law school."

- "Why would a Nobel laureate come to a University where the students are armed?"
- "Nobel laureates would likely vote Democratic..."
- "Ah, but will those Nobel laureates be required to teach undergrad classes or will they be able to focus on their research? Paging Wallace Hall, et. al."
- "Yes, but probably only if they end the Enterprise and Emerging Tech funds."
- "It's a dumb idea. By the time you win a Nobel, your best days are over. You want prestige — win more football games."

- "Here's where John Sharp's talents make 'Come in to play.'"
- "It's hard to say. The state has existing obligations that should be given priority."
- "Why would anyone want to pay \$500 million for a Nobel laureate who won't teach classes!"
- "Reordering the spending is needed. And zero-based budgeting, even for universities. What good is the Nobel laureate in the White House? This is a laughable goal. The rhetoric should talk about substance, not hollow labels."
- "No. More like \$10m."
- "Have to include A&M if they did that. Not worth it."
- "Move the money from the slush fund and other places. They call it accounting 'tricks.'"
- "For half that amount of money we can attract ALL the 'nominated for a Nobel but lost out' and achieve better results."
- "They will give him a lesser amount."
- "Some 'hundreds of millions,' but not \$500 mil"
- "Abbott will get a fund for Nobel Laureates, but not \$500 million."
- "LOL"
- "Eggheads aren't as valued as in years past."
- "Honeymoon period and the money is already there."

Will the Legislature approve funding for the 500 troopers requested by Abbott for border security?

- "Governor Abbott's trooper proposal is an acknowledgement that Texas-funded border security is a long-term reality. The Feds will continue to be completely absent on this issue."
- "The convoy of troopers are already heading south. We are just going through formalities."
- "Even though it doesn't do squat!"
- "So that's at least 500 more Texans who will have publicly funded health insurance!"
- "Not as many as 500, maybe half, but there will be more troopers assigned for border security. DPS troopers substituting for National Guard is an issue that will have sparks flying between leadership and some in the House (though small) advocating more severe actions."
- "Definitely, yes. Finding those coming over with malicious intent must be a priority. Let those who are coming over to work and pay taxes, do so. Those who are coming over for other reasons must be stopped. Doing so will relieve

other stresses that illegal immigration currently puts on state resources."

- "Recruiting, training, and keeping those additional troopers will be harder than securing the funding for them."
- "DPS makes a lot more sense than National Guard."
- "Give primary voters what they want!"
- "Sadly, yes, so we can protect ourselves from those Central American children."

• "We will spend money on troops for show but not research."

- "Security for Texans is the No. 1 priority."
- "They can't fill their state trooper spots they have now, so what makes one think that just asking for them will do any good?"
- "Really????"

What other requests in the State of the State address are likely to pass the Legislature?

- "Any pro-Veteran piece of legislation will pass. Regrettably, while it's the last thing Texas needs, cutting state agency budgets yet again will appeal to the TEA Party class, even as it negatively affects the state."
- "Another 'tax relief' session! It never has worked and it never will ... will give MQS and right-wingers something to check off on their lists. It appears Republicans are growing fond of debt and debt service."
- "Can't wait to spend my property tax relief windfall! Trying to decide between dinner or a movie, since that's basically what the last 'relief' was worth to homeowners."
- "In Texas specifically, efforts targeted to veterans is always going to garner support from all corners of the Dome, as it should."

- "Pilot school choice program."
- "\$4 billion in tax cuts is too much for the House to swallow. My guess is a larger homestead exemption, with enough state money to keep the schools from losing, plus some small franchise gift."
- "Was preordained before Abbott spoke the words."
- "Most will pass, but in greatly altered or watered-down form."
- "The Governor expressed ambitions, not an agenda. If it was an agenda, he'd have declared more emergencies. These complex issues often take multiple sessions to implement."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Brandon Alderete, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Thure Cannon, William Chapman, Elna Christopher, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Gay Erwin, Jon Fisher, Tom Forbes, Neftali Garcia, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Jack Gullahorn, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, John Heasley, Ken Hodges, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Walt Jordan, Lisa Kaufman, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Dale Laine, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Homero Lucero, Matt Mackowiak, Mike McKinney, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Kim Ross, Grant Ruckel, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Robert Scott, Steve Scurlock, Ben Sebree, Nancy Sims, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Bill Stevens, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Tom Suehs, Sherry Sylvester, Gerard Torres, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, Ken Whalen, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Woody Widrow, Seth Winick, Angelo Zottarelli