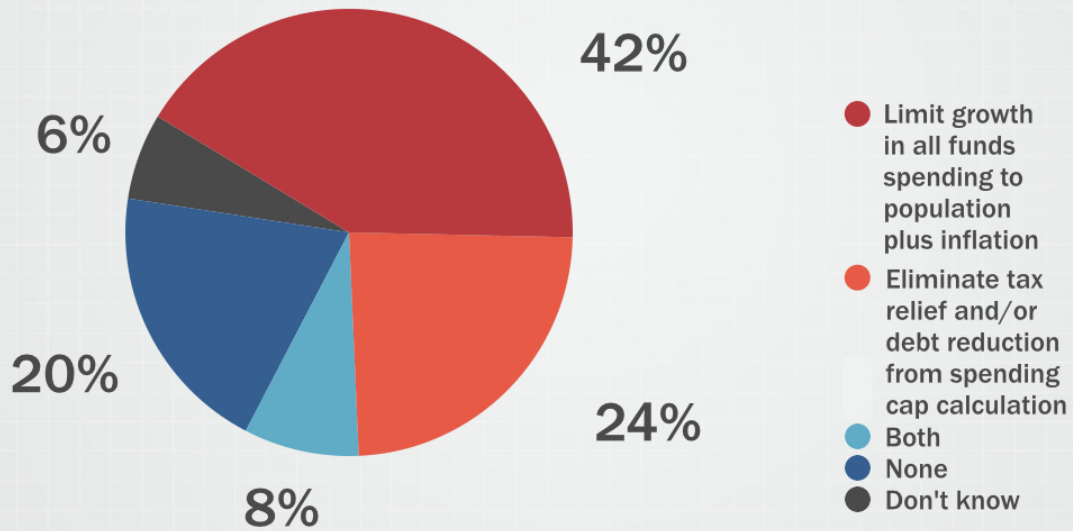


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

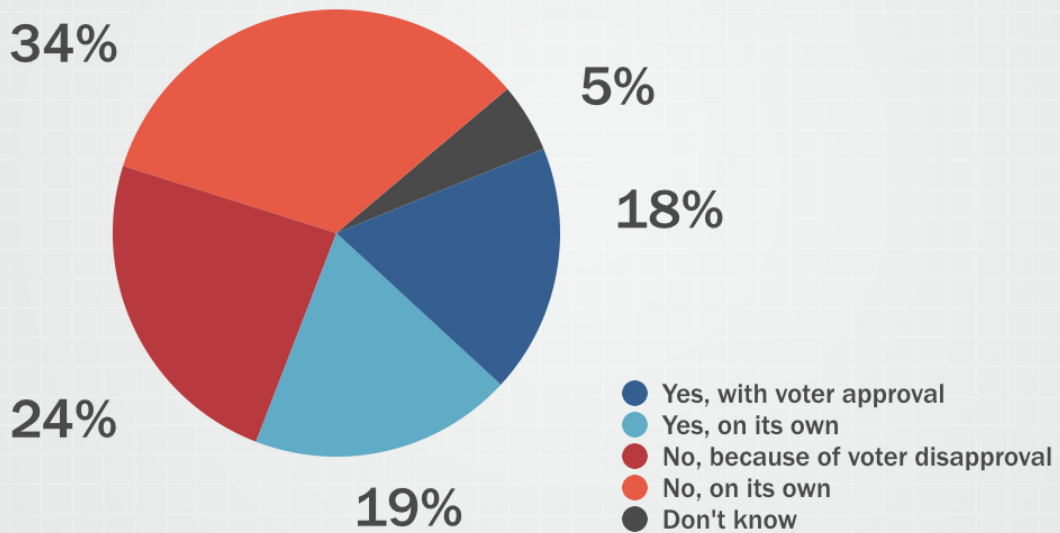
SPENDING LIMIT MEASURES?



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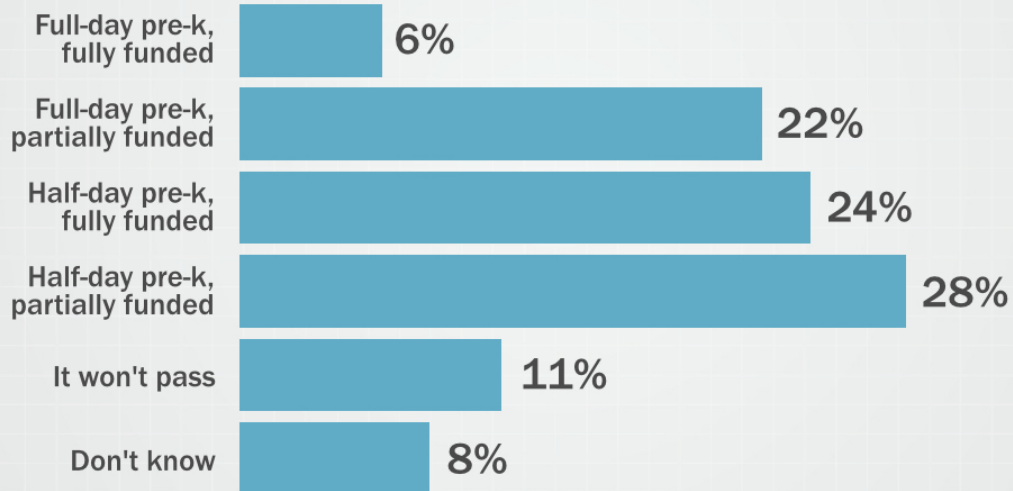
SPENDING CAP BUSTED?



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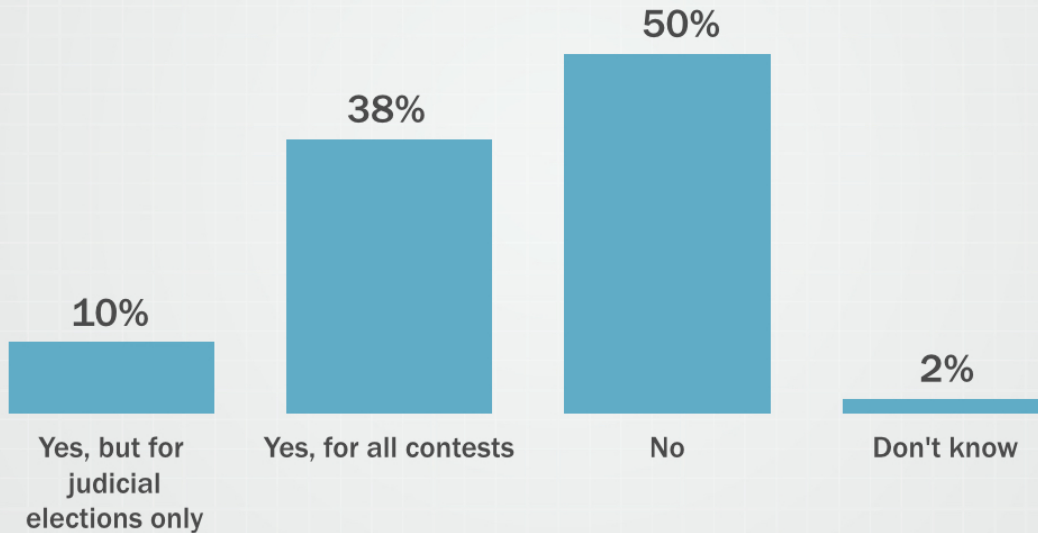
WHICH PRE-K REFORM SUCCEEDS?



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STRAIGHT TICKET ELIMINATED?



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Which spending limit measures will lawmakers choose?

- "They can't help themselves on tax cuts."
- "Doesn't seem like the House and Senate are singing from the same page in the hymnal, but that could change by Sine Die."
- "Patrick and Bettencourt have pushed the Senate into a corner where they now have to resort to accounting gimmicks that Texans hate. I'm using the word hate."
- "This issue, as much as anything, will indicate which wing of the Capitol has taken control of this session."
- "Getting two-thirds of both chambers to agree to change the constitution on something this controversial and partisan? Perish the thought."
- "Limiting growth in all funds would eliminate the advantage of dedicating the motor-vehicle sales tax and whatever else to the Highway Fund. The left hand and right hand need to communicate."

Will the Legislature bust the spending cap?

- "Why make a hard decision when you can pass the buck to the electorate — who sent you to Austin to make hard decisions?"
- "Not in the regular, but will have to do so in a Special that gets called after the Supreme Court rules."
- "They will adhere to the spending cap after they have removed from the cap additional revenues blessed by the voters as being constitutionally dedicated — roads, debt retirement."
- "No, but it should vote to bust the cap for tax breaks."
- "If they bust it, it will be based on putting something on the ballot. This Lege will never take a straight-up vote to bust the limit. Putting on the ballot allows them to look the other way and say it was the voice of the people."
- "Why even bother coming to Austin? Just let the voters decide everything. We could even do it online."
- "Tied to debt relief and tax relief."

Pre-kindergarten legislation has been signaled as a priority issue for Gov. Greg Abbott. What form of pre-K legislation will lawmakers pass?

- "Sadly, now even Tea-Party Republicans believe that children do NOT deserve childhoods."
- "Do the Chinese have pre-K?"
- "Which Pre-K bill are we discussing? The one the Legislature is likely to pass or the one Governor Abbott is likely to sign?"
- "Too bad his commitment to tax cuts and a more restrictive spending limit get in the way of an alleged priority. Cake/eating issue."
- "Why pay for what has been proven to NOT work?"
- "HB4. Nothing more."
- "Only a tiny grant version with about \$100 million, ensuring full-day pre-K for all schools is years away. (Can you name a recent grant that became a fully-funded program?)"

A bill that would eliminate straight-ticket voting was up for a hearing in the House this week. Do you think straight-ticket voting should be banned?

- "I've yet to hear a good reason to do this."
- "Do gooders who believe voters are stupid are... stupid for pushing this."
- "Why is it a bad idea for voters to actually read the ballot? Plus, given how hard it is to tell exactly who belongs to which party, perhaps a straight ticket has outlived its usefulness."
- "But will we really be able to get away from all the money in judicial elections?"
- "It should be banned. But, since in practice that proposal would dilute each district's R and D numbers — thus increasing number of competitive districts and uncertainty — it won't be passed by this Legislature."
- "The state of the electorate is bad enough; how about we require voters to actually think their way through a ballot?"
- "If you're that lazy that you can't go punch for all the Rs or all the Ds, how did you even find time to go vote?"
- "If a voter is too lazy to read up on the candidates, maybe they should not vote. Straight ticket voting is a lazy-man democracy."
- "Straight ticket voting is the lazy way out. Voters should actually think? What a concept!"
- "Texas Democrats wish. White only lost to Perry by 250,000 with ticket splitters, but got crushed 7-to-1 in straight tickets. The built-in straight ticket advantage has vanquished many a Democratic judge in the last 20 years."
- "But how will all the cattle know where to go?"
- "Trick question? What could be more self-evident?"
- "Yes I do, but it won't. The local party hacks are too set in their ways to allow any change."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Brandon Alderete, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Kerry Cammack, Elna Christopher, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Jack Erskine, Jon Fisher, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Jack Gullahorn, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, John Heasley, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom

Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Nick Lampson, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Matt Mackowiak, Matt Matthews, Jason McElvaney, Mark Miner, Steve Minick, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, Grant Ruckel, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Robert Scott, Steve Scurlock, Ben Sebree, Jason Skaggs, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Mark Smith, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Tom Suehs, Sherry Sylvester, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Angelo Zottarelli