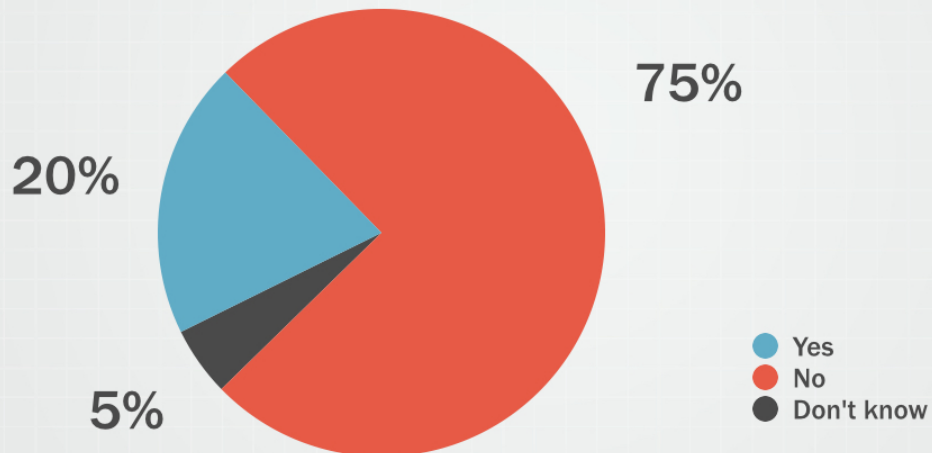


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 17 April 2015*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

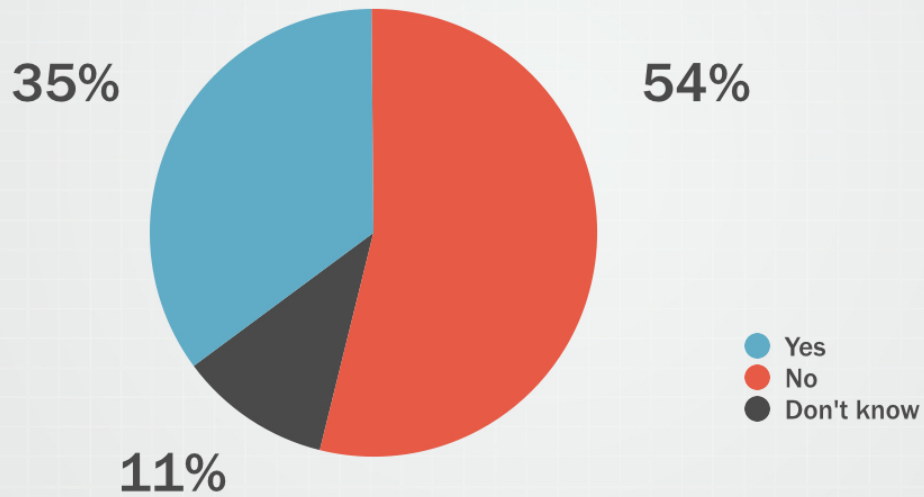
UPDATE TEXAS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM LAW?



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

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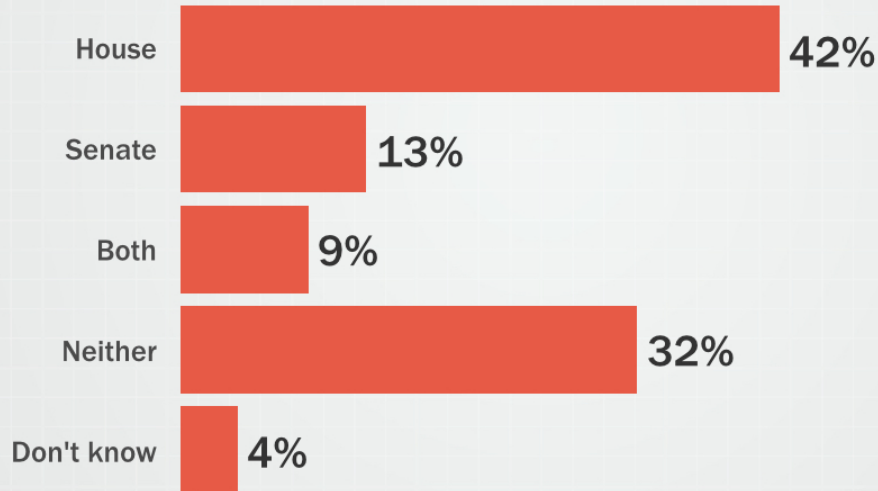
IS THE TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER SAFE?



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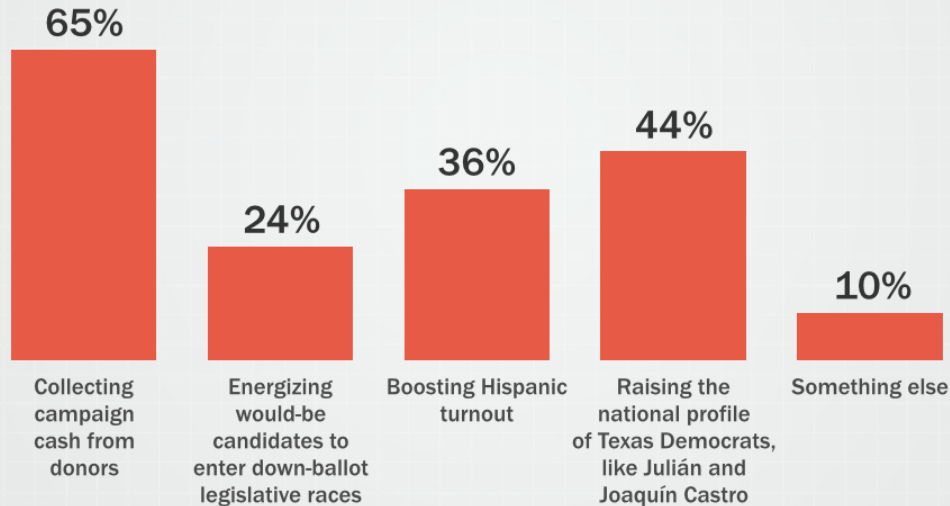
WHO'S WINNING ON TAX RELIEF MESSAGE —  
HOUSE OR SENATE?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

## WHAT IS HILLARY CLINTON'S EFFECT ON TEXAS DEMOCRATS?



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***The Legislature is considering a constitutional amendment that says government "may not burden in any way a person's free exercise of religion" unless there's a compelling interest at play. Should the Legislature update Texas' existing religious freedom law this way?***

- "We are experiencing ever increasing encroachment from the minority. It's time to stand our ground."

- "On the one hand I thought this was already a person's right, on the other is stories I see with increasing frequency about people's lives being destroyed as they practice their religion publicly. And then there's the whole poor sisters and birth control issue. At the end of the day, I simply don't know but I think

I'll convert to Rastafarianism should this pass as they would seem to benefit most from this change."

- "If this were about religious freedom - absolutely. But it's not. Otherwise you'd have business owners turning down business from couples who live together before marriage, have children out of wedlock, have never cheated on each other, etc. This is about hiding

behind the Bible to discriminate against gay couples."

- "This ain't needed. It's pure feel-good gunk. Look, I've probably forgotten more about 1st Amendment case law than most of our legislators know, and I'm not even a specialist of 1st Amendment jurisprudence, but it's already settled law that government — state or federal — cannot burden a person's free exercise of religion unless it meets the SCOTUS' strict scrutiny test. This proposal doesn't even properly state the test that government must meet to pass constitutional muster."
- "Ask Mike Pence how that's working out for him in Indiana."
- "What better way to test the will of the people of Texas on this issue than to put it on a ballot?"
- "Let's look at all the 'burden' the wackadoodles have already placed on me - as a woman my MOST basic 'local' control has been removed if my Dr. & I determine certain medical procedures are best for my health? This 'burden' is somehow equal to someone not wanting two committed LOVING people to dine in restaurants or have a cake made for their 'ceremony'? These people hide behind religion - but which one? The Church of HATEEVERYONEWHOISNOTWHITE&STRAIGHT? The Church of Love Your Neighbor ONLY if they share your beliefs? The church of 'we believe in the sanctity of marriage' so much that I keep divorcing and getting married again, but it is always to someone of the opposite sex? CRAZY! CRAZY! CRAZY! Religious freedom is NOT what these

people are working towards - more like legalizing HATE & BIGOTRY!"

- "Mandating by law a kosher butcher provide non-kosher products or mandating by law a Hindu vegetarian restaurant provide non-vegetarian fare is worth protecting as is a Christian pharmacist not be required to provide birth control devices or a Christian bakery not required to provide services for a same-sex marriage ceremony."
- "Religion is being trampled. Last time I checked, one of the major tenants of the U.S. Constitution protects people's freedom to practice their faith without being FORCED to do something."
- "Religious freedom is already protected under the U.S. Constitution, so the question should be asked what the real reason for the proposal is?"
- "It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of religion. We should NOT make it legal to use religion as a basis to discriminate."
- "Sounds like there's more at play than meets the eye."
- "What's wrong with the RFRA law we have? Advocates for change have not made a case for expanding it."
- "So long as there are no attendant impacts."
- "Because abuses are prolific!"
- "Check out the federal First Amendment."
- "How about focus on roads, tax policy and a good budget?"

- "If they pass it, there should be a fiscal note for court costs."
- "This is a HORRIBLE idea."

***Lawmakers this session have argued for increased funding for border security to fight spillover crime and human trafficking. Critics have argued back that state leaders are overhyping what is a problem — the nation's immigration system — that is best left to the feds. Is the Texas-Mexico border safe?***

- "Of course border security is a federal problem. But in the absence of any federal action, Texas must act in the interest of self-preservation. Many areas along the border are a dangerous place and the threats are beginning to permeate the state. Bold action is needed."
- "If this system is best left to the feds ... the same feds who brought you Obamacare, the do-nothing stimulus, a pathway for a nuclear Iran, a reset button for Russia, and most to the point, an attempt at legalizing millions of illegal aliens through executive fiat ... well, Heaven help us."
- "It cannot be safe if it is porous. When thousands of illegal entries occur every month, it cannot be safe."
- "Ask any rancher in South Texas - this border is not safe."
- "Not best left to the feds that is for sure, and while DPS is doing a good job, we can't sustain a patchwork of boots on the ground away from their families and duty stations in other parts of the state. The growth and recruiting has to be organic. We need more good troopers and we have problems competing with municipalities and losing troops to the private sector as it is."
- "The immigration issue is largely and fundamentally a federal problem, and the legal immigration laws are ripe for reform. But that doesn't affect illegal immigration and its effect on Texas. Do we know who enters our country/state through the Texas-Mexico border? Are drug cartels and human traffickers exploiting our weaknesses? Just because a Texas city might be considered safe doesn't mean there ain't a problem — talk to the local ranchers whose property is damaged by cartels, coyotes, etc. Talk to the City of Austin who doesn't want its police chief to ask someone who has been caught committing a crime whether they're here legally."
- "The border is as safe as it has ever been. Another solution in search of a problem."
- "The question should be, 'is it safer because Texas has taken it upon itself to try and secure it? The answer to that question is, 'YES.'"
- "There is so much argument on both sides of the issues, it's tough to know how truly safe it is. As a matter of

caution, I would be reluctant to spend a great deal of time there."

- "Nice to know that the boys (and a few crazy girls) from the Metroplex are concerned for the safety of their areas from marauding bands of 'illegal' people pouring across the border! Yet those who live on the border - EACH AND EVERY DAY and have for YEARS are the ones who face any issues firsthand. The border is truly no worse than it has ever been - we have just decided to hype it as an issue. (PS: you are MORE likely to get TB, measles or other 'preventable' diseases from the unvaccinated home schoolers running around the Capitol than from ANYONE entering the U.S. from another country!)."
- "Generally it is, but as has always been the case, if you involve yourself with any drug-related activity, chances increase exponentially that harm will come to you. Human (sex) trafficking is something the state should involve itself in more, it is a modern day tragedy specifically affecting women and children."
- "You've been to Mexico? You know it is dangerous. And that's what is spilling over."

### ***Who's winning the PR war on tax relief — the House or the Senate?***

- "Winning? The taxpayers of course! What a glorious day - when the House and Senate argue over tax cuts! You may have a favorite, as do I - but I'll happily take the other and be satisfied."
- "The House - they got the better plan. A better idea is always its own best PR."
- "It's as safe as it will ever be as long as there is demand for illegal drugs in the U.S. and supplies south of the border."
- "Like most Texans, I do not travel to the border much or into Mexico at all anymore due to the random violence. I miss it very much."
- "Who knows? The Tex-Mex border is too big to make blanket statements like that."
- "The border is NOT secure. We don't even know how many or from where they come, but we do know that many apprehended are from China, the Middle East, Central America and more."
- "Not without the vigilance of state and local intervention. Federal border protection? Really? Not at this time."
- "For the majority, it's pretty good. But there are some issues."
- "The data says our border counties are safer than other large counties in Texas. Dallas and Harris are far less safe."



- "At the end of the day, Texas will have tax relief and both chambers and Texas taxpayers will win."
- "How could either side be winning when nobody outside the Capitol complex is paying attention?"
- "House will roll the Senate."
- "It seems to me that all they are doing is guaranteeing themselves a special session on the budget."
- "Go Dennis, go!"
- "The echoes are too loud within the Capitol to know how the shouting is being received outside."
- "The Senate's spokesman is a state-wide elected official trained in media, the House's spokesman is a locally elected Representative not trained at all."
- "A sales tax cut no one will notice. Next step, fundamental tax reform."
- "The Senate is, but don't count the House out yet. The sales tax cut is the best and most equitable way to cut taxes."
- "Dan Patrick's new media reach is in gear, but the House is lacking in communication."
- "Senate's message is populist appeal. House's message is more than a soundbite, but is better policy and likely provides more tax relief."
- "Nobody will notice 19 bucks."
- "The House will always win the PR war - because the media loves Straus and they don't like Patrick. But the Lt. Governor knows a little bit about message himself and I suspect his favorables will be in fine shape when this war is over regardless of what the media says."

### ***What is the impact of Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign on Texas Democratic politics?***

- "Sucking more Democrat cash out of Texas."
- "You didn't offer an option that was a net negative which, by the time this is all said and done, will be the ultimate outcome. Hillary will be another Wendy Davis for Texas Democrats."
- "Hillary will have a ZERO impact on Texas Democrats and their fate at the ballot box."
- "The Hillary Clinton campaign will have the same effect as the Wendy Davis campaign - lots of promise and very little return for Texas Democrats. The only winners in Texas will be paid political consultants who reap the benefit of raising lots of money here and those who trick donors into funding another failed 'grassroots' campaign."

- "Energizing the entire Texas conservative base under the 'oh, hell no' flag."

- "Much like Wendy Davis, she'll boost Hispanic turnout alright - for Republicans!!"

- "None"

- "No doubt the trial attorney ATM machine will be tapped in Texas. Beyond that, let's first see if she actually secures the nomination."

- "Sadly, it won't help us in Texas. But YEAH - we will win the Presidency again."

- "Leaving the Ds to wish they had another viable candidate."

- "Not sure it does anything except increase Democrat voter turnout, but turnout almost always increases for a presidential election. I don't get the Castro obsession, what comes to mind as an explanation though, is it's just the next version of what the media believes a Hispanic Democrat should be."

- "She will ultimately not be the nominee. She is hackneyed and increasingly becoming a joke. BTW, what candidate is such a chicken that they cannot face the people and the media in person to announce their

candidacy for President. Bet that wouldn't be an open and honest WH. She is a has-been. O'Malley will be a better candidate."

- "And it won't help her to win in Texas."

- "Nothing more."

- "Very little."

- "Dems are so far down nothing is going to energize Texas Dems."

- "Increasing Republican turnout in Texas!"

- "Unfortunately, the gender issue will be raised, too."

- "A presidential election will increase turnout for both parties. Don't know many bubba votes will go to Clinton after this mess."

- "Why would Hillary boost Hispanic turnout? The Clintons claim to be African American."

- "Democrats just had a woman at the top of the ticket to 'energize' them and we all know how that turned out. If Hillary picks Julián as her VP, that might give the Dems a little bump, but not so much as anyone would notice."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, David Cabrales, Raif Calvert, Snapper

Carr, Elna Christopher, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, June Deadrick, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, John Esparza, Jon Fisher, Tom Forbes, Neftali Garcia, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Scott Gilmore, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Mark Jones, Walt Jordan, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Dale Laine, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Homero Lucero, Matt Mackowiak, Steve Minick, Mike Moses, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Gardner Pate, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Kraege Polan, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Karen Reagan, Patrick Reinhart, Carl Richie, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Ben Sebree, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Bob Stein, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Charles Stuart, Sherry Sylvester, Jay Thompson, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Angelo Zottarelli.