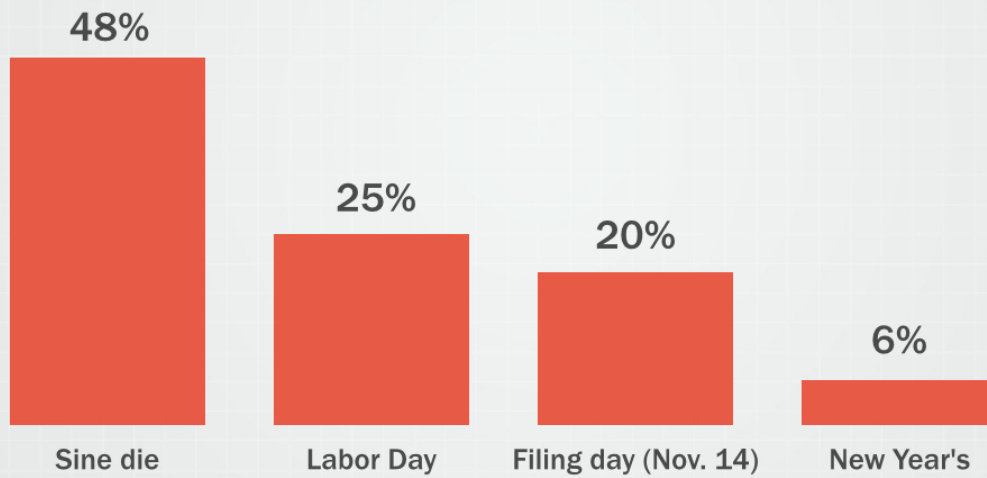


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 11 September 2015*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

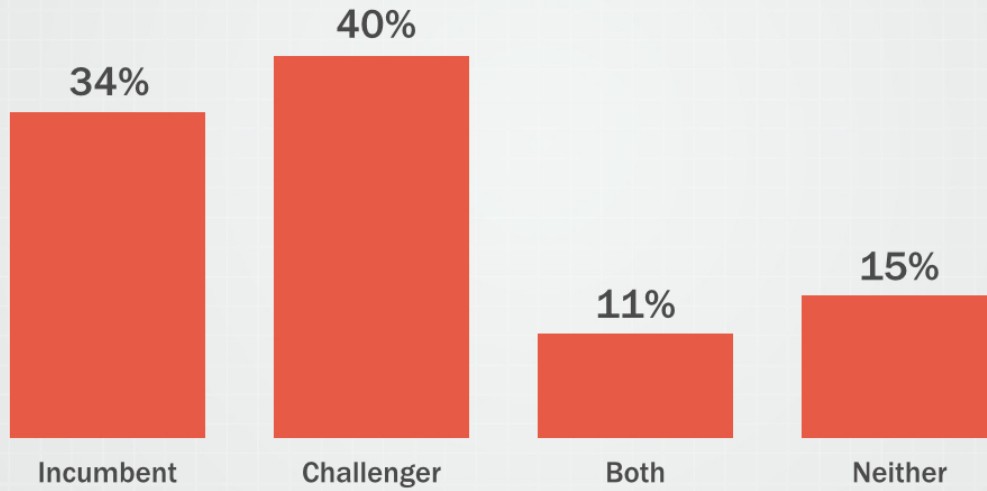
WHAT'S THE START DATE FOR THE  
POLITICAL SEASON THIS YEAR?



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

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

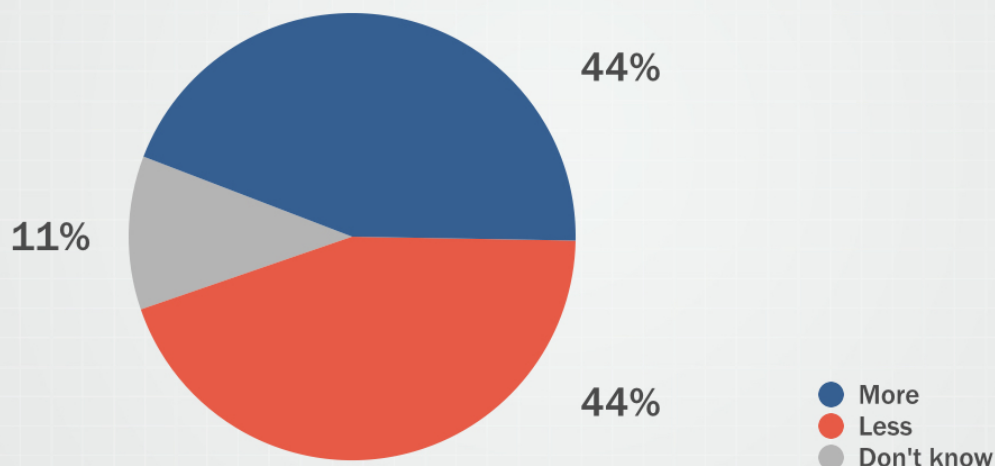
WHO BENEFITS MORE FROM AN EARLY START  
TO THE PRIMARY SEASON?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

MORE OR LESS CONTESTED GOP PRIMARIES THIS YEAR?



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## ***Tradition has the political season starting with the Labor Day holiday. What's the start date this year?***

- "To say there is a 'start date' implies there is also an end date. Anyone reading this knows our country, and Texas, have been in a state of permanent politics for \*at least\* 20 years."
- "...Officially on June 22."
- "The next election campaign year has started the day after the general election in November since 1992."
- "Always Labor Day! Eat hamburgers with friends and start complaining that nobody competent is leading this country/state/county/city. It's a tradition."
- "It just keeps getting earlier!"
- "Political season is 420/365/7. I agree with Senator Eltife, 'politicians who talk about re-election during session should be shot.'"

- "It doesn't really end. Except for the political giving... campaigns are now permanent, year-round efforts in and out of session."
- "Incumbents raise war chest soon as allowed."
- "It started during session when certain folks were making mental lists, voting report cards, etc. In reality, with today's 24/7 news cycle and social media outlets, the political season never ends; it barely even naps."
- "It started Tuesday, January 13, 2015. Politicos that have not recognized the campaign cycle is never-ending, plot their own defeat."
- "Tradition is out the window. It seem like it started New Year's 2015."
- "Although the presidential has been going for a while, all the campaigns kicked it up a notch this weekend!"
- "With city and presidential campaigns filling the air, it's hard for March primary candidates to be seen and heard."
- "Some very fine candidates have been recruited. Labor Day is when their campaigns are fine-tuned, but the recruiting must take place earlier."

### ***Who benefits more from an earlier start to the primary season?***

- "Our entire system is built upon incumbent protection."
- "Spreading out the election season creates an atmosphere where the general public loses interest because it's so drawn out. In Texas, it gives the Republican candidates time to hide while the general public forgets about their beliefs, records and now, their scandals/indictments. Hence, we have the lowest voter turnout in the nation."
- "Nobody pays attention to anything until about a month out. So I don't think an earlier start helps anyone, except maybe with fundraising, but that's a mixed bag."
- "It's like the old joke asking an aging politician if he wore boxers or briefs. His answer was 'depends.' Here it depends. If the challenger is well funded, then the earlier start is to his advantage. If not, the advantage goes to the incumbent who presumably does have resources to manage a long race."
- "Campaign consultants and data miners."
- "An incumbent will always have a competitive advantage regardless of when the primary season starts. However, independently WEALTHY challengers (i.e. Sen. Huffines, Sen. V. Taylor) pose big threats to those incumbents who have failed to actively run a year-round campaign."
- "The challenger gets an advantage by overcoming lower name ID — if he has the money to keep up for the longer term."

- "An earlier start date only serves to give those of us on the sidelines more months of heartburn (as well as horrific commercials, TOO many fundraisers etc.)"
- "Short primary season reduces time for challengers to get attention and undermine incumbents."
- "Depends on the race."
- "Consultants benefit most. They can collect their retainers longer."

***There were 58 contested legislative and statewide Republican primaries in 2014. Will there be more or less this year?***

- "There are fewer statewide races but look for the same or more Republican legislative primaries."
- "Opportunity knocks during presidential cycles. Incumbents be warned."
- "About the same."
- "Turns out the 'crazies' were not crazy enough so they will ALL be challenged now."
- "There will be less contested statewide Republican primaries than in 2014. I think the legislative will be about the same."
- "Fewer statewide and State Senate races — more House races."
- "But we should only count the 'real' races where there is some rough parity in funding or other factors that make it a true competition."
- "Fewer statewide races."
- "Too steep a climb for challengers, X factor is how many retirements."

***Open-ended question: What is Donald Trump's effect on Texas primary voters?***

- "Zero"
- "Right now, I think he solidifies the extreme right (the build-a-wall crowd) ... and likely drives up turnout. But ... who knows what that dude will say between now and March 1? He could also set a ground-speed record for implosion (which would be hard to do, given Gov. Perry's 2012 effort)"
- "Motivated bigots do not bode well for establishment Republican candidates. Business is fiddling while Rome burns."
- "Significant and sad."
- "Brings out more angry white males."
- "Texan GOP voters are as crazy as Trump so I guess his effect is neutral."

- "Hurts Cruz."
- "It's not just Trump — it's the combo of him and Hillary's problems. Dems might have assumed their own primary was sewed up and crossed over to suppress Trump, but now they will feel conflicted — many Texans will wish they could vote in both primaries. PS NO ONE I have talked to believes "Trump can't win."
- "Probably none... he will flame out and Cruz will be the beneficiary."
- "Extremists will be out in force."
- "The most important — and long-term damaging — impact of the Trump campaign is his willingness (and successfully so!) to put aside the racial code that Republicans have used for the last decade plus (see Lee Atwater's admission for anyone who wants to live in the fantasy world where Republicans don't build their messaging around coded racism) and campaign as basically an overt racist. Trump's success will lead to the further Balkanization and tribalization of American politics. His domination of the Republican primaries thus far — and the refusal of 'serious' Republican politicians to challenge him — represents an existential threat to American unity."
- "With Cruz in the race, Trump's presence will increase turnout."
- "Energizing. On both sides."
- "Much larger turnout"
- "Jimmy cracked corn and I don't care because I vote Demo!"
- "Tea Party field day"
- "Not as much as he thinks... Texas Republicans pretty much stay with their original choices. I expect Trump will fizzle out some once a few states get to actually vote."
- "F\$#% Donald Trump."
- "Zip"
- "Trump encourages and, in a way, legitimizes the Tea Party portion of the debate and of the electorate. Ultimately the voters decide what is important and worthy. Trump may be ridiculed among the insiders, but consider Pappy O'Daniel: plenty of Texas leaders considered him a joke, even as the voters made him Governor and then U.S. Senator."
- "It could result in higher turnout, but mostly it will further deepen the dislike and skepticism that most moderate and independent voters have for the political process."
- "Texas voters will ultimately reject Trump."
- "None since the GOP primary voters are mostly a bunch of right-wing kooks anyway."
- "He will bring out even more RWN's (right wing nuts) than ever."
- "Little, if any. Arrogant rich guys from out of state still have low impact in the Texas political scene."
- "Not sure, but at some point, Texans are going to remember the old Pace Picante commercial... and get a rope."

- "Not much... maybe a lot. Which episode?"
- "It should be similar to the effect Kinky and Perot had: non-traditional voters turning out."
- "Depends on his perceived viability by then. And if there is a sane adult on the Republican clown bus when it pulls into Texas."
- "Dumbing them down even more."
- "He has resonated with a base of Republicans nationwide, and I think that a lot of that 'base' is the Tea Party in Texas, so he might make a difference in the establishment getting another wake up call."
- "Texas is going to have a say in things."
- "He gets them excited to vote for Cruz."
- "Trump has excited a segment of the GOP primary voting bloc to be sure and will doubtless run well in Texas. He might even secure a plurality but I am skeptical about that with Cruz and Bush there."
- "He will not win in the primary, but he may force others to shift their stances on key issues."
- "Increase turnout."
- "I think the Cruz TEA party faction will come out strong."
- "Isn't it wonderful? He and Ted Cruz are forcing everyone to run to the right."
- "The primary will be over by the time it gets to Texas. Trump will have no effect."
- "ALL the crazies will come out and vote; he may 'trump' Cruz, Bush and Perry in THEIR home state (will not really be Cruz's home state that would be Quebec!)"
- "Donald Trump has a potential negative effect on Cruz and Perry's voter bloc."
- "Comedy"
- "Bafflement. Do we love him? Is he just the fresh spark we need? Or is he the dangerous cannon-mouth who will deliver another Democrat into the White House?"
- "Increase turnout in Republican primary."
- "Moves them significantly to the right."
- "Makes them want to puke.... dampens turnout as voters think primaries are a joke and others feel their individual votes does not affect outcome."
- "Will increase turnout. Rhetoric is appealing."
- "Increased turnout, slightly."
- "Will hopefully boost interest in the presidential primary strengthening the GOP for November 2016."
- "More new GOP primary voters who are anti establishment."



- "He's like catnip to the crazies so they will be out in force."
- "Trump will force Cruz to be more active here than he might otherwise be."
- "Trump does well in Texas."
- "Negligible"
- "We'll see when the Primary rolls around but he should be able to knock at least 5 candidates out by the March."
- "Probably increases GOP turnout."
- "Too early to tell."
- "He's motivating the grassroots to listen, but it's too early to take anything for granted."
- "Who knows..."
- "Trump takes Texas."
- "None"
- "Duh"

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Brandon Alderete, Clyde Alexander, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Elna Christopher, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Myra Leo, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Bill Pewitt, Tom Phillips, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, A.J. Rodriguez, Kim Ross, Jeff Rotkoff, Jason Sabo, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Bruce Scott, Ben Sebree, Christopher Shields, Mark Smith, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Tom Spilman, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, David White, Seth Winick, Angelo Zottarelli.