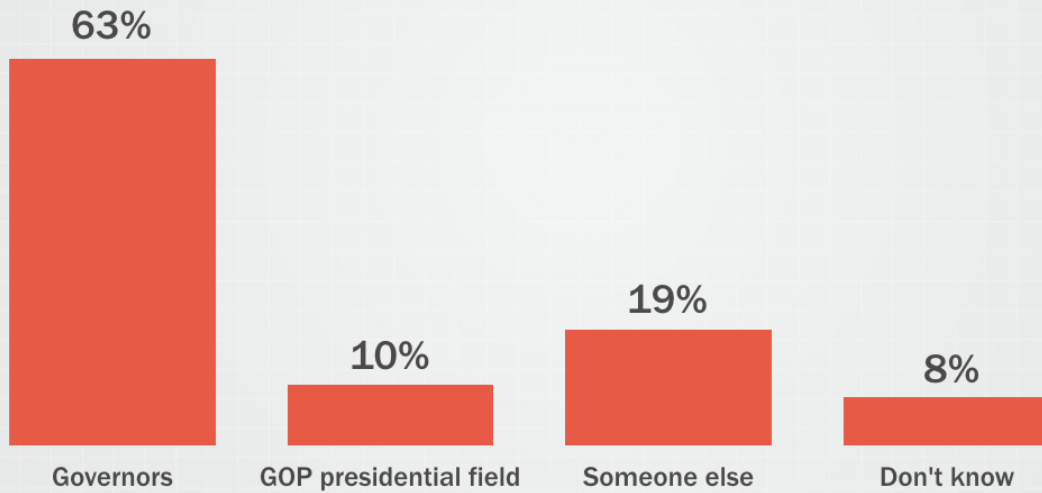


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

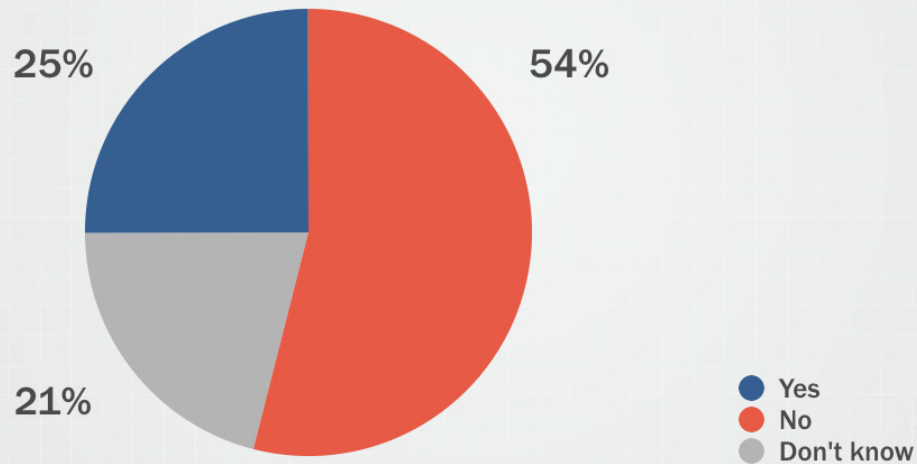
WHOSE VOICE HAS MORE SWAY ON
SYRIAN REFUGEE POLICY?



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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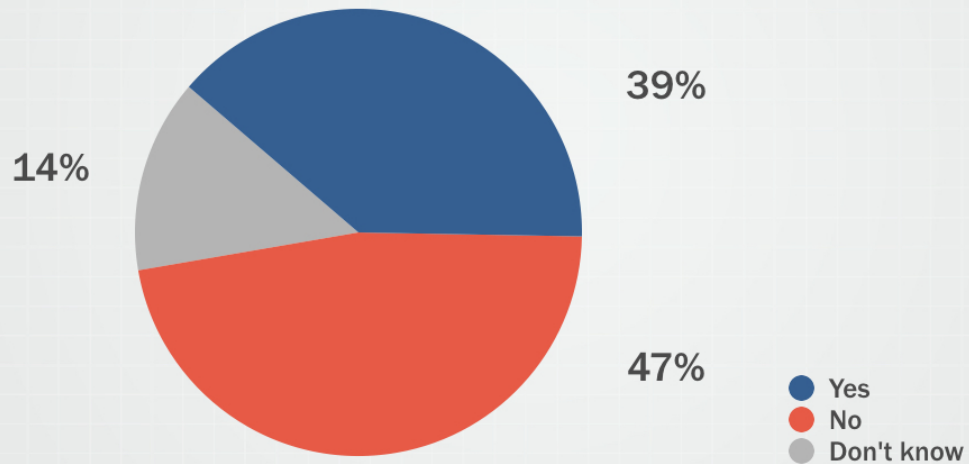
IS ABBOTT ON SOLID LEGAL GROUND IN SAYING NO
TO SYRIAN REFUGEES?



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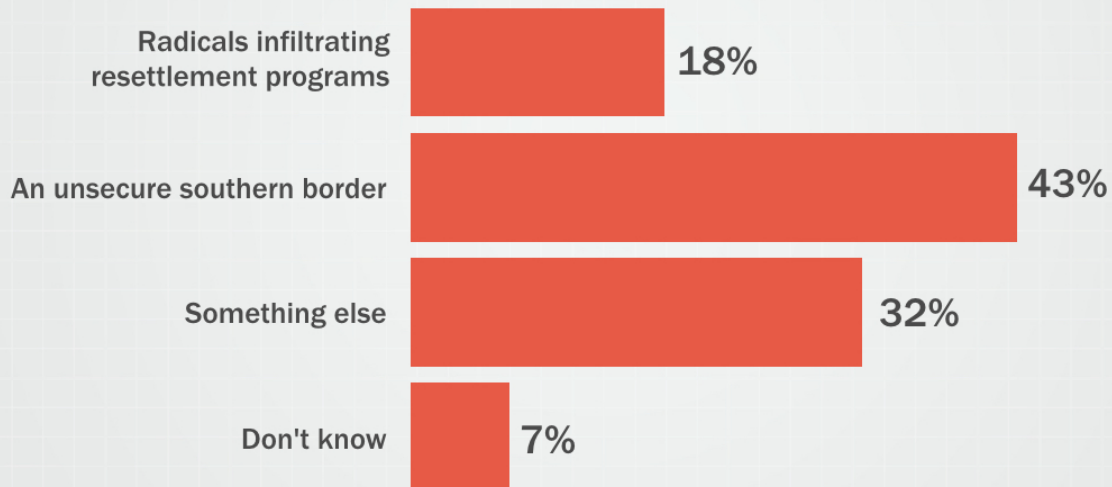
DOES HIS ACTION MAKE TEXAS SAFER?



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WHICH IS THE GREATER THREAT IN TEXAS?



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Two dozen governors, mostly Republicans, said Monday they would refuse the relocation of Syrian refugees to their states. Over the weekend, multiple GOP presidential hopefuls weighed in on the same issue. Whose voice carries more sway?

- "All xenophobia is local."
 - "More sway with whom?"
 - "The Democrats who said the same thing."
 - "The U.S. Constitution."
 - "The President of the United States"
 - "Their refusal may not hold up, but governors are obviously reflecting strong public opinion in their state."
- (Presidential candidates are as well, but their remarks can be deflected as self-interested.)"
- "No one's voice matters much here but Uncle Barry. The states can't keep people from moving across state lines."
 - "Federal Government will make the final decisions."
 - "'More sway' with whom?"

- "Legally, the President... the rest are posturing for the voters... duh!"
- "The President."
- "Loud, obnoxious knee jerk ideologues who present their opinions as that of everyone."
- "Federal government has this responsibility — state cooperation is not needed."
- "I'm a bit unclear about the question, and how you're using 'sway.' Do you mean swaying the public — that is, leading public opinion? Or do you mean swaying public policy? Or do you mean swaying political popularity — as is, who gets the most public exposure and/or political benefit from their comments?"
- "How about those governors who are also presidential candidates, like Jindal, Christie and Kasich? They can actually *do* something while also scoring political points."
- "The Governors are the ones who are actually elected and in office in their states."
- "President"
- "Random bureaucrats in DC have more say over this subject than any governor. But it sure helps when a**hole politicians self-identify themselves, isn't it?"
- "President Obama"
- "They are on the ground."

Is Abbott on solid legal ground in saying no to Syrian refugees?

- "A federal issue; conservative leaders want to politicize, and by doing so are expressing a lack of compassion for a people in great need."
- "It's good politics... period!"
- "No, but who cares?"
- "The Federal government can place refugees in Texas whether Gov. Abbott wants them or not."
- "But at least he's on the ground."
- "Under our weak governor constitution, the governor can legally order flags to be flown at half mast and not much more. Under federal law, the United States controls immigration. As usual, Abbott is playing to his political base without regard to the law."
- "The 10th Amendment provides for states' rights, but what's to prevent Syrians from traveling anywhere they want if given amnesty in the USA?"
- "Of course Abbott cannot prohibit Syrian refugees — nor anyone else legally in the U.S. — from coming to Texas. He can probably withhold certain state-provided resettlement services."
- "It doesn't matter. When the sentiments of the people of Texas are aligned with the sentiments of the people of Western Europe, the legal particulars have little impact. Paris

resulted in a huge shift in thinking and feeling on the issue of border security. What the courts might decide about refugee policy in the next couple years is irrelevant."

- "Federal courts have stated that immigration is a federal responsibility, although they're apparently some room for governors to influence the process."
- "For an attorney, his ignorance of fundamental legal precedent is impressive."
- "No. But that doesn't mean he is wrong, practically or politically."
- "Doesn't matter. Designed to hurt Democrats in voter opinion."
- "Don't really know... but the President is in charge of U.S. policy, which includes immigration policy. Therefore, I would submit President Obama will have the final say."
- "Unless he's gonna wait for them at the airport and tell them to go back home, I don't know how he'll be able to refuse them if the federal government is bringing them in."
- "I don't know about the legal ground but he is on very infirm moral ground."
- "Until we secede."
- "Texas can make it difficult though to assimilate Syrian refugees through lack of services. Texas has accepted enough refugees already. We need the federal government to act."
- "Probably not, but I'm not a lawyer. It's clear that Abbott can't stop legal

Syrian refugees from moving from another state to Texas. But I don't know whether he has any legal authority from ensuring that the refugees don't make Texas their port of arrival. However, this is not a public opinion question, this a fact question. Who cares what public opinion is on this 'legal ground' issue? Whether it's our belief this move makes sense from a political perspective would be a more properly formulated question for this forum. But to answer this question, above, you should ask someone who knows what they're talking about."

- "Comply or lose access to federal money. Seems pretty solid to me."
- "This is the result of the federal legislative and executive branches not being able to address immigration reform in a substantive manner; the vacuum that exists regarding border control, for example, is being filled by state action, this is the next step in that situation. In the context of the Paris bombings, the Syrian refugee question heightens the issue of border control, but ultimately the issue of immigration rests with federal authorities, notwithstanding state action. With President Obama's immigration executive actions temporarily blocked by the federal courts, a reasonable conclusion can be reached that the courts view immigration authority as resting with BOTH the legislative and executive branches and is not subject to unilateral executive action."
- "State can probable prevent immediate resettlement of Syrian refugees, but cannot keeping a resettled refugee from moving to Texas."

- "He is not on solid legal or moral ground."
- "He is on strong political ground in Texas but not legal ground. The issue of state versus federal supremacy was fought over and decided in the 1860s."
- "A 'Christian' who defends the 10 Commandments and the right to say a game prayer telling Syrian Christians they are not welcome in Texas, he should be more concerned about 'higher' ground..."
- "Texas will help neighbors (Katrina), but the Feds are not screening these

people and lack the resources. Sorry, but 18-40 year old males without families are troops in a war."

- "He's not on higher moral ground either."
- "Of course not. But when is the last time he was on solid legal ground for anything?"
- "26 other states have found the same, but I think the churches will speak up soon and encourage immigration."

Does his action make Texas safer?

- "Depends on whether one of the refugees is a terrorist."
- "Political theatrics have never made Texas safe."
- "Just more racist in the eyes of the world."
- "But only if the governors dissuade the Feds from sending the refugees."
- "Remember, the day before the Paris attacks, the President said ISIL was 'contained,' so don't you think it's smart of Democrats and Republicans alike to force the administration to upgrade its policy?"
- "Certainly allowing Syrian refugees here makes us less safe!"
- "We have a lawless President. He only enforces laws that further a radical agenda. As a country, we have never

been in this situation before, R or D notwithstanding, where the President actively seeks to circumvent the law. The states have to take action to protect themselves, the federal government has taken the posture that the states and citizens are the enemy."

- "It should embolden law enforcement."
- "Let me put this as plainly as possible. Actual border security — which is, basically, knowing who is entering the country — would make us safer. If it operated, it would allow us to screen out dangerous people — criminals, the ill, and others who could threaten Americans. If the threat of dangerous people is increased, as it would be by the admittance of thousands of people from Syria, is reduced by refusing to allow those folks in, then, of course, Abbott's action makes us safer."

• "This is a bullshit question. It would make Texas safer if it holds up."

• "Conceivably, yes. By how much, I have no idea. But to assume that there is no risk from taking in thousands of Syrian refugees that presumably we know little about seems a little far fetched."

• "I saw this on Facebook, so I know it's true: of 700,000 refugees we've taken in, none have ever committed an act of domestic terror."

• "Only to the gullible that think that this placebo solution will make them safer. Does anybody really think that terrorists only carry Syrian passports??"

• "Maybe... should the Federal Gov't feel enough heat from states to install a better program for background checks... if they have a background..."

• "Unlikely that U.S. government can (1) properly vet potential entrants & (2) prevent attacks here as even France, which has the most sophisticated encryption technology deployed (prohibited currently in U.S.) was unable to protect its citizenry."

• "We have a great history of welcoming refugees fleeing danger and seeking opportunity. Texas is diverse and economically powerful. Drunk drivers are a bigger threat than terrorists, but we are inured to that kind of violence."

• "As long as other states allow entry, then these refugees can enter Texas anyway. The refusal, however, highlights for U.S. citizens that there is a significant problem. This is the first

step to getting Congress and the President to act."

• "Don't we still have a problem with drug dealers and human traffickers piercing our southern border seemingly at will?"

• "As the facts suggest, one of the Paris bombers came into France under the refugee wave, than logically you can conclude the answer is it does indeed make Texas safer."

• "Unquestionably."

• "No, it *literally* makes America, and therefore Texas, less safe. ISIS wants an all-out war with the West. They want us to hate all Muslims and to fear even refugee children."

• "I think Texas is already safer, ISIS knows that a lot of Texan Bubbas and Mommas are packing heat."

• "One only has to look to ISIL's use of the refugee crisis to infiltrate France as an example."

• "No, it only makes his political right flank safer. And that's what is most important, right?"

• "If it prompts the administration to take a hard look at each refugee entering the country, yes. If not, no."

• "Yes, not enough is known about the individuals because the Syrian government has broken down and they have no idea who these people are, much less do they even care."

• "Without a doubt. The radical brutal Muslims have already shown what they

will do in your country a la France. You would have to be a fool or an idiot to think they are not coming in with the refugees. Furthermore, we should stop this influx all together. They do not assimilate and they want nothing less then to establish Sharia law. If you do not bow down and agree with them

they will use violence. This is a war that has been going on for thousands of years. The sad fact is most Americans and Westerners are clueless and do not realize this evil regime, which sided with Hitler, wants to destroy freedom and western civilization."

Which is the greater threat in Texas?

- "Elected officials should turn their focus on crazy rednecks murdering six campers, not a perceived threat by refugees seeking a better life."
- "This type of hateful rhetoric is the greatest threat we face."
- "Legal immigrants and lone wolves. The terrorists will most likely have entered legally or are radicalized citizens."
- "The puritans calling themselves the Tea Party. You can't govern on fear."
- "Nutty Republican policies which hit hard at women, children."
- "State politicians grandstanding on issues they can't do anything about."
- "Droughts and floods."
- "Disinvestment in education and other critical public services, long-term drought, inadequate transportation infrastructure and many more."
- "Jihadists and radical Islamicists can infiltrate over our porous border, by abusing our visa regulations, by misusing refugee resettlement, and via other means. All are threats."
- "Lone wolf, white, school shooters."
- "I can think of a couple things: the Niño, the armed mentally ill with nothing to lose, low voter turnout in the Republican primary, the SEC recruiting our best football players away from home, ad infinitum..."
- "Politicians and propaganda-based news sources that are using these and other issues to frighten people and turn us against one another so the general population can be manipulated into doing what is not in their own best interests."
- "The greatest threat is probably the Tea Party and xenophobic rhetoric."
- "Utter lack of substantive focus at leadership levels"
- "Too many gun owners with too little training. Too many cops trained as warriors rather than peacemakers."
- "The greater threat is billionaires trying to buy influence in the Texas Legislature."
- "An over-heated reactionary right..."

- "Idiots presently in charge of U.S. foreign policy in D.C. — BO & 'Cave-in' Kerry, for starters!"
- "Big Government that gives us both an unsecure southern border and a radical resettlement program infiltrated by radicals, whilst telling the people that if we dare pause at either or both we are Un-American. By now, be it immigration policy or some other function, it should be abundantly clear that government solutions to a problem are often as bad as the problem and quite frequently make the problem worse."
- "Hysteria. Pandering politicians. Ban the Belgians! Invade Brussels!"
- "A President who is seemingly sympathetic to terrorist groups."
- "Bigotry, rampant xenophobia and nativism."
- "They are not mutual exclusive, though at times the emphasis on the southern border is misplaced in the context of infiltration by suspected terrorists, certainly not misplaced within the discussion of entry of illegal drugs. Recall, Sec. Napolitano suggested Canada was more lax in its immigration policies than the U.S., alleging Canadian authorities allow people into the country that would not pass muster south of the border and she insisted that the Canadian border must not be treated any differently than the U.S.-Mexican border."
- "Fear mongering from those we entrust with the leadership of our State."
- "Reacting out of fear."
- "...how about any actual threat? Lack of drinking and agricultural water in 20 years? Galveston and large parts of the coast sinking into rising seas. A generation of kids who can't fu*king read because their schools have been intentionally run into the ground? This question is stupid and I'm mad at all for even granting the premise."
- "Lack of civil discourse and ability to work together as state and national leaders to move our country forward. We are spinning away from each other at an alarming and unsustainable rate."
- "Tea Party"
- "Failing infrastructure"
- "Tea Party and right wing Republicans."
- "Those damn transsexuals creeping into girls' bathrooms"
- "The greatest threat in Texas is the Obama administration being weak on national security. We have so many assets in our state that are integral to the day-to-day operations of the country that we are, and will probably always be, a target."
- "Makes our illegal Mexican problem look trivial."
- "Both!"
- "Lax gun laws"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Jennifer Ahrens, Brandon Alderete, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Snapper Carr, Corbin Casteel, Elna Christopher, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jack Erskine, John Esparza, Jon Fisher, Tom Forbes, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, Jim Grace, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Jason Johnson, Bill Jones, Mark Jones, Walt Jordan, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Dale Laine, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Myra Leo, Ruben Longoria, Homero Lucero, Matt Mackowiak, Jason McElvaney, Steve Minick, Mike Moses, Nelson Nease, Keats Norfleet, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Chuck Rice, A.J. Rodriguez, Jeff Rotkoff, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Jason Sabo, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Bruce Scott, Ben Sebree, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Bryan Sperry, Tom Spilman, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Angelo Zottarelli.