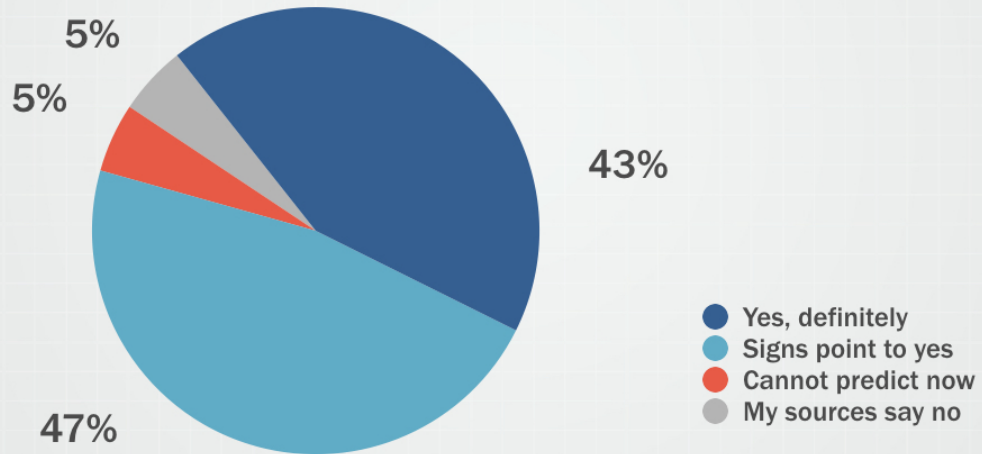


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 18 December 2015*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

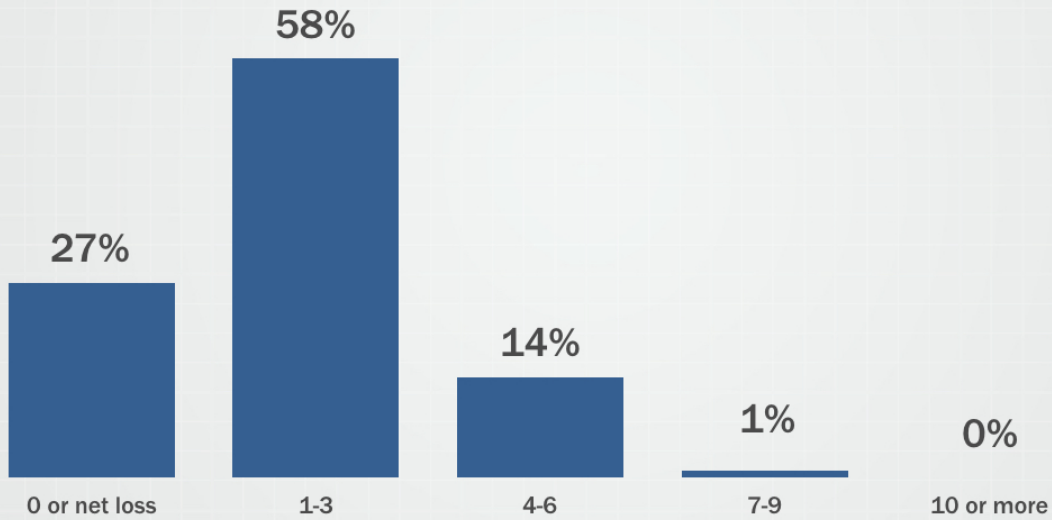
CAN SPEAKER STRAUS BREATHE EASY ABOUT HIS RE-ELECTION CHANCES?



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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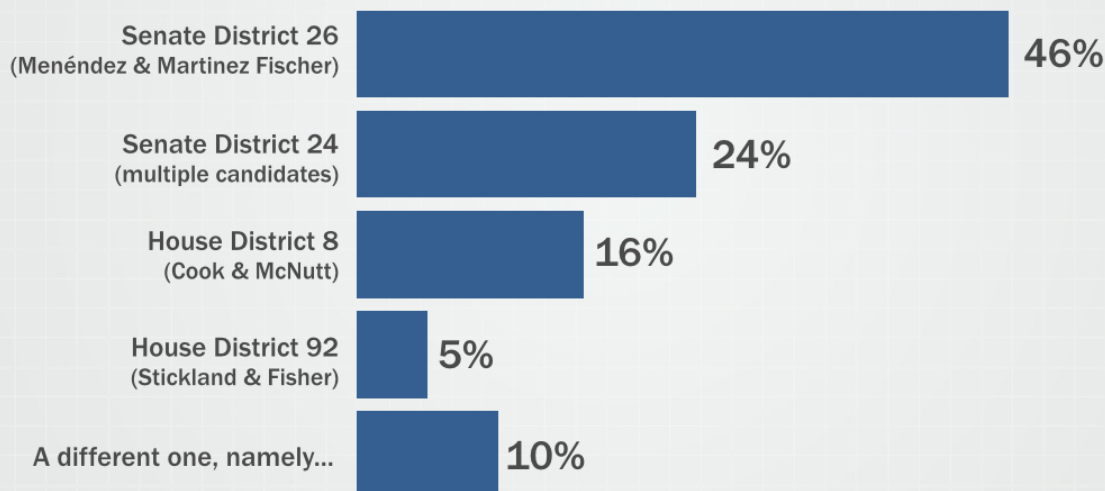
NET GAIN FOR DEMOCRATS IN THE TEXAS HOUSE?



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MOST EXPENSIVE NON-PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY RACE?



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Looking at the list of House primary challengers, can Speaker Joe Straus breathe easy today about his re-election chances?

- "He can breathe easy but he won't."
- "Primary challengers are serious on paper, but not in reality. And MQS didn't field enough primary challengers to move the needle."
- "This isn't some rural district that thinks the UN is taking over our country, these are smart, sophisticated voters who have known the Straus family for many, many years. Scare tactics from MQS won't work here."
- "He won't breathe easy, but I'll cover 5-to-1 bets today that he's re-elected Speaker next session."
- "As long as right wing Republicans continue to eat their own, he can be elected Speaker."
- "Not only Straus, but all of his lieutenants should be endangered species on the ballots."
- "Bigger threat is him surviving a primary runoff."

- "No reason to be alarmed, but I wouldn't say he can breathe easy."

- "He remains the BEST possible choice for Speaker! I don't see a lot of NEW crazies winning and it is quite possibly

some of the old crazies will lose!
Welcome back, Speaker Straus!"

- "Tim Dunn and MQS ran out of potential candidates, are not willing to be pawns in their House of Cards."

What's the net gain in the House for Democrats in the general election?

- "Depends on the presidential election trend. Too early to tell right now."

- "Presidential cycles are always better for Democrats. There are at least three seats that Republicans hold now that we won't hold next session. Some of our Republicans in most competitive GE districts having to fend off challenges from Empower Texans won't help the others. The Republican will get beat up in the primary, making what is usually a close November election more difficult for the Republican to win."

- "Any gain is assuming a lot about Democrats' ability to do anything

correct, but assuming that we can, the extremities to which R's have taken themselves present meaningful opportunities in at least nine districts. Surely we can bat .500... surely."

- "So what, it's like a midget putting on high heels. You asked the wrong question. A more meaningful question would be, will the R's be over 100? That answer is, probably not."

- "The Ds have lost their energy. And I don't see Hillary getting them stoked up. She's the Jeb of the donkey party."

- "Are they still trying? God bless their hearts."

What's your pick for most expensive non-presidential primary race in terms of direct and independent expenditures?

- "Will Hurd now has a primary challenger in addition to a rematch with Pete. Look for lots of money to be dropped in this race."

- "Cook will be able to raise a lot of money and McNutt has personal resources he can use."

- "TV"

- "Sticky lose"

- "Adrian Garcia vs. Gene Green"

- "McNutt, the WINNER!"

- "U.S. CD-19 — nine candidates, two or three media markets. Although SD-24 will spend plenty, and SD-26 will be highest per candidate."

- "SD 24 will go into a runoff, and I'm sure a lot of money is going into a pretty safe Republican seat, but will it go to the right-leaning Tea party

candidate or the more moderate, GOP-backed one?"

What's your pick for the primary race with the biggest potential to surprise the Texas political world?

- "Geren beat"
- "Cook & McNutt"
- "Geren will handle his race easily."
- "HD 92"
- "TMF"
- "Red Brown winning the East Texas nomination to the Senate."
- "Stickland goes down. Hard."
- "Stickland (loss)"
- "I don't think there will be any real surprises."
- "Byron Cook's margin of victory"
- "Harris County Republican Party where Hispanic social conservative lawyer upends incumbent Paul Simpson. This will be a significant move forward toward expanding a Hispanic presence in the party."
- "Gene Green winning re-election in Houston."
- "Cook vs. McNutt - in a good way"
- "Madla vs. Uresti"
- "Reynolds losing!"
- "RRC. It appears the industry is in for their second non-hand picked member regardless of who is elected."
- "No surprises. The most interesting is that by the time the Stickland race is over, we will all know for a fact that he is exactly what he appears to be."
- "Republican Presidential"
- "No big surprises."
- "No idea"
- "Marco Rubio"
- "Cook vs. McNutt"
- "Jerry Patterson will be nominated for RRC without actually running. Hell, I don't know."
- "Senate District 26"
- "Straus"
- "Helen Madla vs. Carlos Uresti"
- "Dawn Buckingham wins without a runoff in SD 24."
- "None"
- "Jeff Judson vs. Straus"
- "Stickland losing handily. He wouldn't have flirted with RRC unless he knows he is going to be a loser back home. Maybe he thought his sugar daddy would pay him more."
- "Really? To surprise the political world?"

- "Geren"
- "Molly White loses."
- "McNutt"
- "I don't think anybody can be surprised by anything anymore."
- "Straus"
- "Buh-bye, Mr. Stickland. Thanks for playing."
- "Jose's loss"
- "Price vs. Caraway in Dallas. John Wiley Price will DEFEAT Dwaine Caraway in this one! JWP! JWP! JWP!"
- "Andrew Piel in HD 94 "
- "Joe Straus wins, but by a small margin."
- "Miller"
- "CD 29"
- "Stickland"
- "Presidential"
- "Eva Guzman vs. Joe Pool Jr."
- "Gene Green's probable loss. If one can call that a surprise. It might more correctly be termed 'an expectation overdue since 1992.'"
- "Senate District 1"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Elna Christopher, Harold Cook, Randy Cubriel, Beth Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Jack Erskine, Gay Erwin, Tom Forbes, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Daniel Gonzalez, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Myra Leo, Ruben Longoria, Matt Mackowiak, Jason McElvaney, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, A.J. Rodriguez, Grant Ruckel, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Ben Sebree, Jason Skaggs, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Colin Strother, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Seth Winick, Angelo Zottarelli.