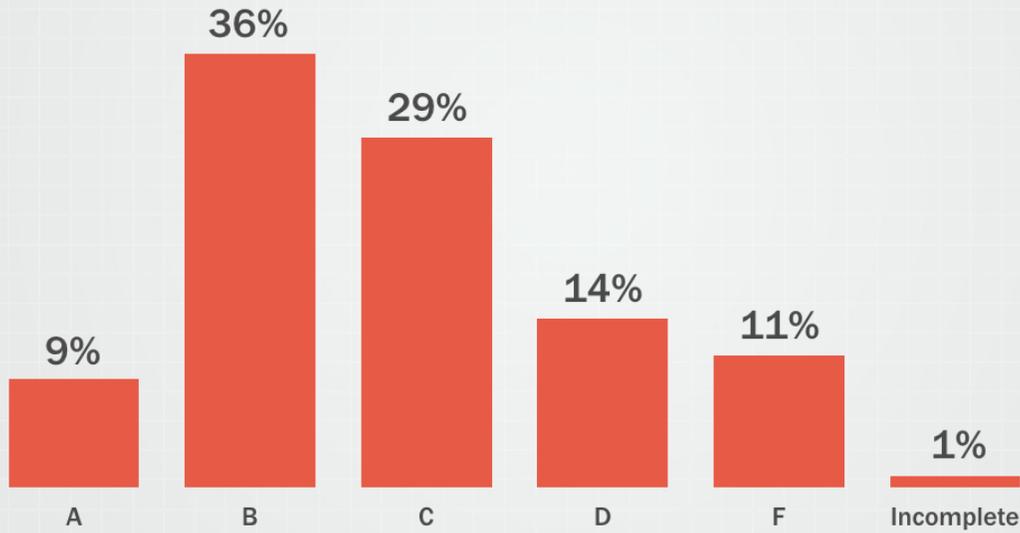


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 12 February 2016*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

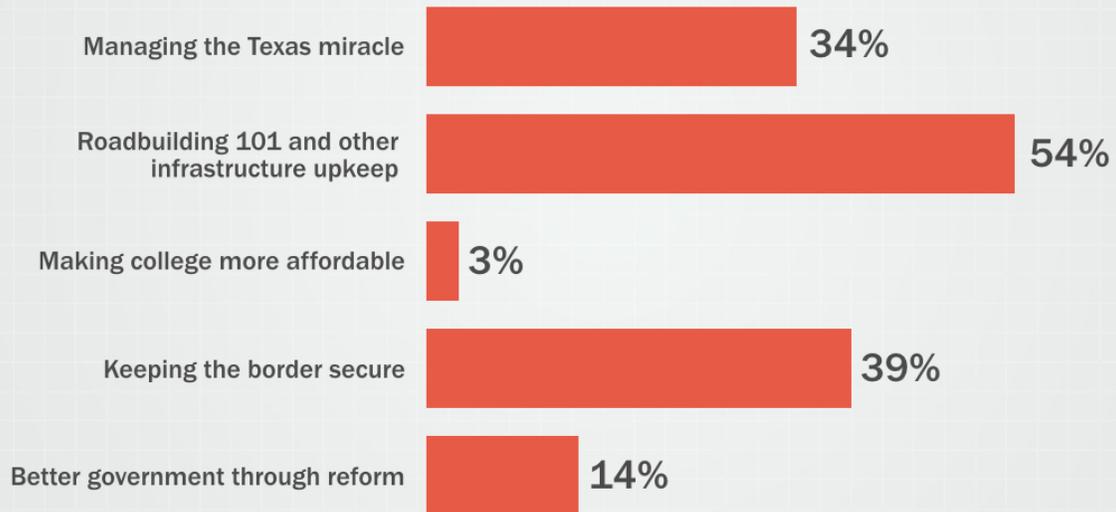
WHAT OVERALL GRADE DO YOU GIVE GREG ABBOTT?



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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

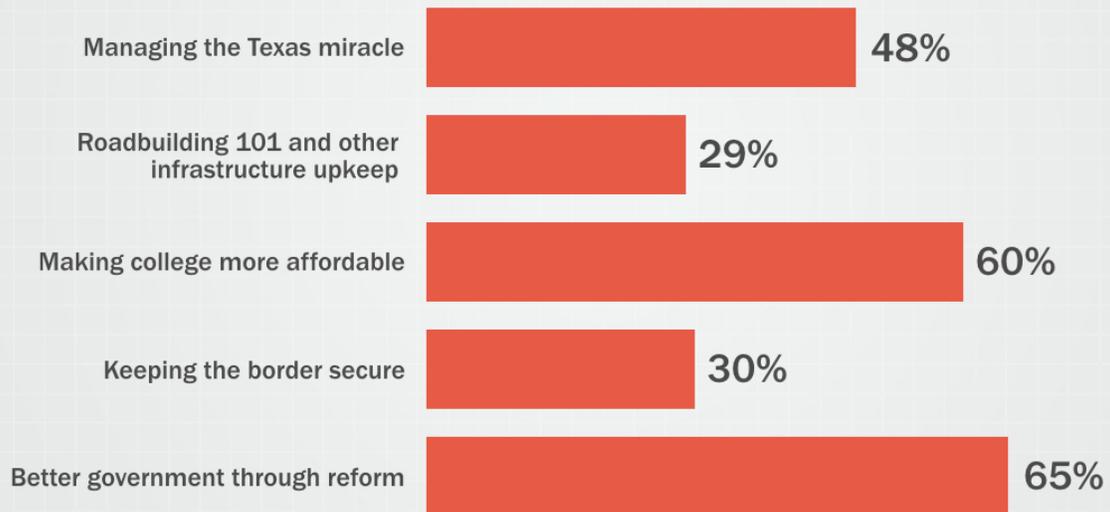
IN WHICH SUBJECTS DOES ABBOTT GET HIGH MARKS?



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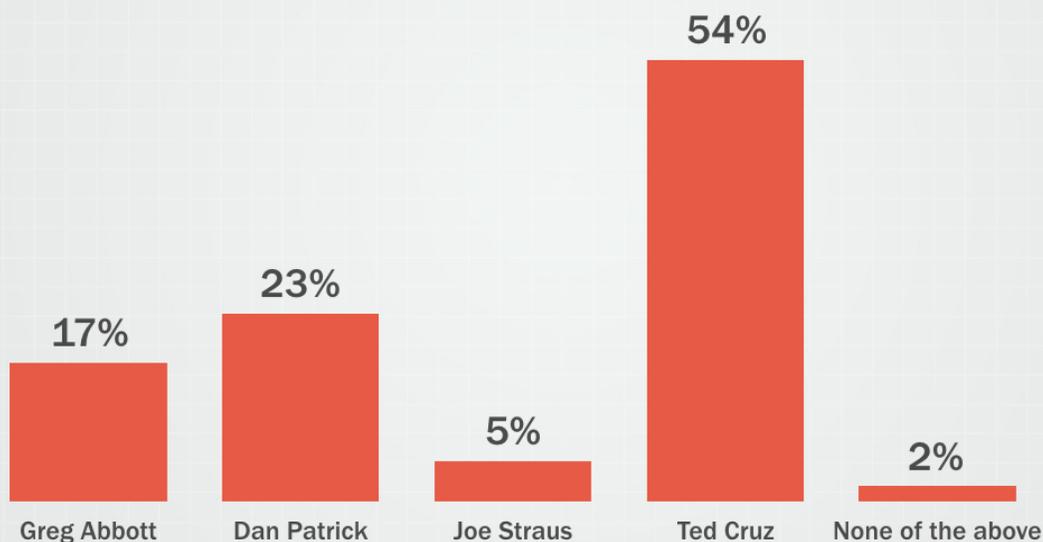
IN WHICH SUBJECTS DOES ABBOTT GET LOW MARKS?



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INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

WHO'S THE FACE OF THE TEXAS GOP AS OF NOW?



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A year into Greg Abbott's term in office, what overall grade do you give him?

- "Totally inaccessible. He has surrounded himself with 1 or 2 people that have made poor decisions both on policy and politics. You can tell his legislative experience is lacking."

- "It is evident that there is limited legislative experience on his staff. He's bounding to the right (as a candidate would) when all he needs to do is have a steady hand (as a statesman and leader would). Appointments are without appropriate due diligence.

There is room for forgiveness as long as they learn from their mistakes and don't repeat them."

- "Abbott seems to run scared and appears to be guided by anger."

- "No major successes, only a few moderate stumbles. Not too shabby."

- "He does show up, but he has not done anything to move Texas forward."

Instead, we have gone EVEN further back than we did under Perry."

- "When he is not totally absent, he seem congenitally incapable of making a decision."
- "He's just there. I kinda miss Perry. Don't you judge me, now."
- "Hitting good drives, good short game, work on putting."
- "Enough of the pandering to the far right — you've been elected in case you haven't heard!"
- "Has missed numerous opportunities to appeal to the moderate conservatives. The Jade Helm pandering was atrocious. Headed down the same path as David Dewhurst — panders, rails about Washington — fails to seriously address water, roads, and education."
- "Unnecessary shift even further right, out of fear of Dan Patrick (or Ted Cruz?), hurt his ability to lead Lege."
- "Honestly, he really hasn't done much for Texas except cater to the fringe element distrustful of the military and federal government (JadeHelm15), and offer an idea on how to rewrite the U.S. Constitution."
- "What you see is what you get. Unlike his immediate predecessor, he isn't driven solely by political expediency. He and his staff respect the law, which is refreshing."
- "Big disappointment. Could have been so much better."

• "A 'me too' kind of guy... had very high hopes for him... very disappointing!"

- "Got most 4/5 of his emergency items in 1st session. What will his agenda be this session?"
- "He's the smartest guy in the Governor's office for years, yet he keeps playing small ball and pandering to Dan Patrick's right wing. Nobody ever makes history by governing via worry."
- "He's playing second fiddle to the other two, though he doesn't know it. Abbott has also entrusted too heavily in his deputy, who knows the law but not much else. If he's smart, the Governor will open up more to the experienced voices in this town and around this state, and realize he's not running a political campaign. He has to govern from reality rather than meditate on Koran verses."
- "How is Texas any better off than under Rick Perry?"
- "Texans should be standing AGAINST the Supreme Court decision on marriage."
- "He doesn't use his personality to deliver the Texas message like Perry did."
- "Asleep at switch on many issues. Either he'll get better or we'll continue with a B-team administration."
- "He's spent a year catering to the far-right base and done little or nothing for the average Texan. That shores up his chance for re-election in this state, but it leaves a legacy of 'meh' for the history books. Very disappointing, with no

inking that he wants to tack back to reality anytime soon."

- "I think he's gotten off track a little bit but I understand that he needs to appeal to the crazy wing of our party. I'd much rather have a sane Governor who sometimes acts crazy than a Governor who actually is crazy."
- "Abbott seems like a man of reason for the most part... but the pandering to

In which subjects does he get high marks?

- "None. He has failed at all of these. Bring back Perry!"
- "None of the above"
- "None"
- "While I felt the need to choose one, none of these apply."
- "The sum total of his involvement was signing the budget."
- "He really hasn't done much. The Lite Guv and Mr. Speaker are the ones in the driver's seat of Texas government. I am finding it hard to identify one subject and this is coming from an 'Insider.'"
- "TxDOT is getting lots of money, but that's due to Pickett and Nichols, not Abbott."
- "Pre-K funding"
- "I only picked Better Government because he's failed at the other topics. College isn't affordable, the 'Texas Miracle' is dwindling, and he can't take credit for road building since it's the

the base on Jade Helm, the constitutional convention stunt to elevate his presidential aspirations and the surprise number of vetoes all demonstrate he gets very bad political advice and worse, listens to it. He could be good but he's blowing it like all Republican office holders with aspirations for higher office because he can't shake the shortcomings that go along with trying to please the paranoid, angry GOP base."

taxpayers flipping the bill on transportation infrastructure."

- "None apply"
- "World travel"
- "Nothing special achievement wise, just getting himself oriented and his staff settled is my take on session one."
- "Represents the State's interest forcefully and with enthusiasm at home and elsewhere."
- "He doesn't get high number numbers, therefore, this does not apply."
- "I do not believe the state focused on issues which truly impact our citizens but focused on political rhetoric like border security. What a waste of money that is! The increase in the homestead exemption was a joke. They should be focusing on access to healthcare, those on Medicaid and Medicare. The did do some toward infrastructure but not enough."
- "He doesn't deserve any high marks yet."

- "I can't think of anything Abbott has really done well yet. He hasn't made (m)any major PR blunders, though, and that's worth something."
- "I'll give him some credit for the deal on road funding. But he did nothing to push ethics reform, border security was Bonnen, and he's weak on economic development."
- "F) None of the above. We'd give him an 'A for effort' on ethics, but he didn't get that through because he forgot that he has to *negotiate* with the Lege, not dictate to them."
- "If you want more affordable college then go to a college you can afford and or get a job to pay for what you want. Work for it don't beg or wish for it."
- "Ah, where is the none of the above box to check?"
- "Holding the Tea Party crazies off."
- "None"
- "None of the above... pre-K funding."

In which subjects does he get low marks?

- "The economy is starting to tank. He wasted \$800M on DPS at the border to hand out speeding tickets. He has totally failed at any meaningful ethics reform (dark money is bigger than ever). Higher education funding has not increased how it should. I-35 is a giant disaster and he has no vision for moving us forward (trains, etc.)."
- "The beauty of not doing much is that you can't get blame when the train goes off the rails."
- "Let's not forget his disdain for Constitution when it comes to the separation of (Christian) church and state."
- "What a waste of \$800 million!"
- "As usual, the question makes no sense. His failure is primarily political: the ideological lens through which he has chosen to view the world is from the Limbaugh Bag of Tricks. Thought he would be better."
- "Back to the drawing board on additional funding for roads and bridges the oil glut has flat lined that idea currently. Time to revisit a gas tax indexed to the price of oil. If we had it, the state would be taking in gas tax money with \$30 a barrel oil."
- "Flunked all"
- "Texas miracle needs to include Texas schools, but Texas ranks in the bottom tier."
- "Why these categories that relate more to the Legislature than his office?"
- "Abbott's belief-based, as opposed to experience-based, approach to the Texas Miracle is probably his area of greatest vulnerability. I fear that he's reading what the right-wing belief tanks put out as if it were factual."
- "Thousands still pouring over the border. And taxpayers getting gouged."

- "Economic development efforts are pretty weak."
- "Instead of leading, his entire agenda is based on fear of Patrick."
- "He is doing well overall. This question is misleading! Like asking do

you want to go to federal prison or state prison. Really? This is a trap question."

- "So far his ethics reform is non-existent."

Who's the face of the Texas GOP as of now?

- "The Speaker is the only one with a damn clue."
- "Which face? The wild-eyed crazies, or the ones with the worried looks whose necks are in the guillotine for being rational and effective?"
- "Since the session Patrick has disappeared and Cruz is more of a national figure. Straus is Straus."
- "Dan Patrick is only statewide elected official who isn't afraid to lead and has the credibility to get Republicans of all stripes to follow."
- "#LoneStarCruz. C'mon, man. Everyone knows this."
- "Not a fan of Patrick, but like Bullock, he is clear about what he is for or against. Abbott panders, Cruz misrepresents and Straus tries to govern."
- "As much as it pains me to list him, but I don't see anyone really out front of the Texas GOP than Danny boy!"
- "Love him or hate him, it's Ted."
- "Common sense approach to governing..."

- "Note the question was face of the 'GOP,' not the Tea Party."
- "Just because of the national presidential primary."
- "And Cruz will reach 110% name ID by March 1. Even Democrats in Canadian will know he was born in Canada!"
- "While I would like to believe Joe Straus, I find it to be the tea party darling, Ted Cruz."
- "Unfortunately. The face of the GOP should aspire to look more like Speaker Straus' brand of leadership."
- "Patrick is still owning the show. It will be harder for him in the next session as the fiscal situation will be tight. Look to Joe to win out in the next session, though he may never be 'the face' of the GOP in the public sense."
- "For those of us in and around the Capitol, Dan Patrick is at the head of the train. For most Texans outside of Austin, I think Greg Abbott was the face of the Texas Republican party up until six months ago but now I imagine that it's Ted Cruz. Around the nation, I

expect that Ted Cruz is first on the marquee."

- "Cruz > Patrick > Abbott, based on the number of photos of those politicians found on *other* GOP politicians' websites."

- "Greg has to watch out because Patrick wants his job and he is working to be the face of the GOP. I guess that is why the Gov's fundraising machine never let off the gas pedal after the election."

- "Cruz is traveling the country now, most folks couldn't pick the others out of the crowd."

- "Cruz because of his national profile and top of the ticket status... but Patrick

will take over that spot soon enough. The GOP base loves a blow hard that demagogues, talks in terms of fear of immigrants and the fairy tale of 'lowering taxes.' Curious bunch, that GOP base."

- "All better than RP"

- "The Texas GOP has made themselves irrelevant, just as the Texas Democrats have made themselves irrelevant. In the GOP, the traditional conservatives have stepped aside and yield leadership to Libertarians. The result is that elected officials are the only stable voices in politics. This is a horrible situation for grassroots."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Victor Alcorta, Clyde Alexander, Jay Arnold, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Corbin Casteel, Elna Christopher, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, Beth Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Jack Erskine, John Esparza, Tom Forbes, Neftali Garcia, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Steve Holzheuser, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Ruben Longoria, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Jason McElvaney, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Nelson Nease, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, A.J. Rodriguez, Tyler Ruud, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Ben Sebree, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, Ware Wendell, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Seth Winick, Angelo Zottarelli.