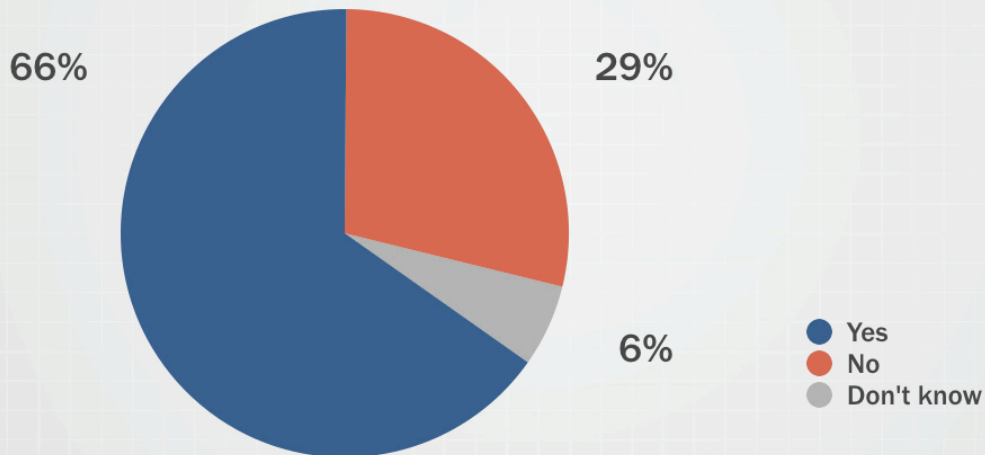


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 18 March 2016*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

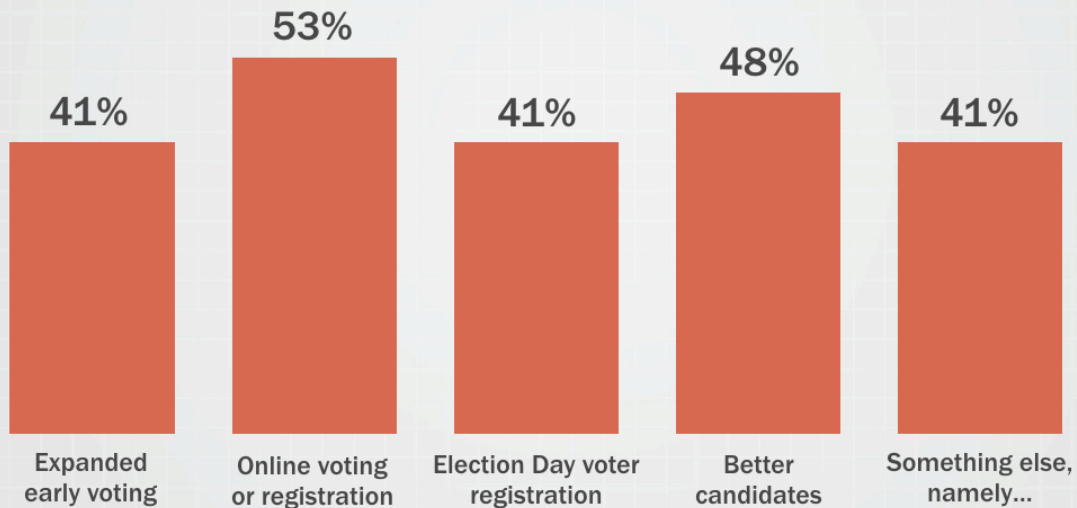
SHOULD TEXAS LEADERS DO MORE TO  
INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT?



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

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

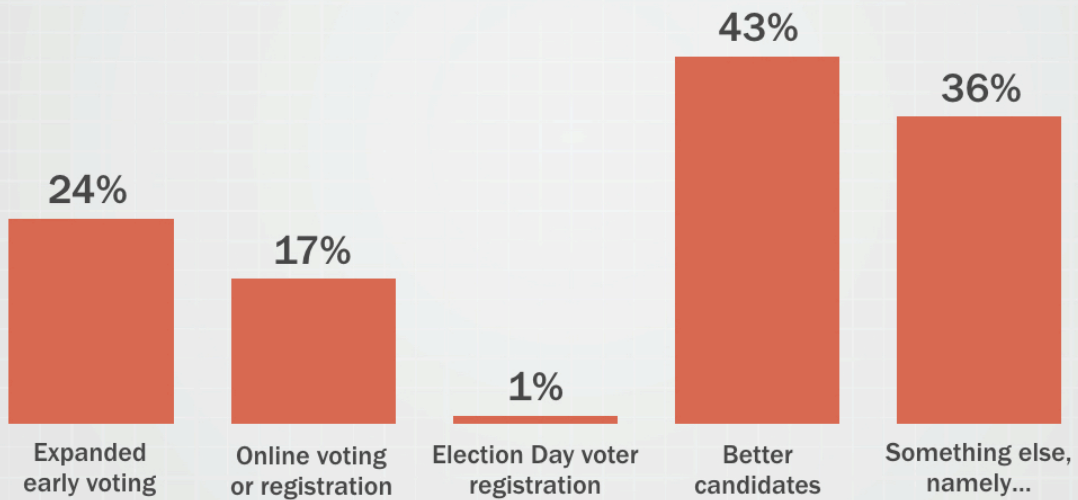
WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO IMPROVE  
VOTER TURNOUT?



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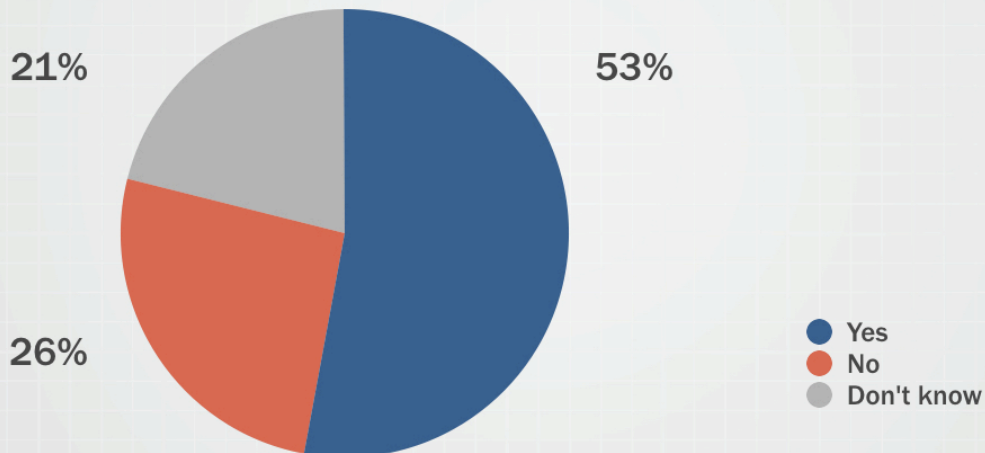
WHICH OF THESE STANDS A CHANCE OF  
BECOMING LAW NEXT SESSION?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

WOULD INCREASED TURNOUT CHANGE THE  
PARTISAN BALANCE OF THE ELECTORATE?



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## ***Should Texas leaders do more to increase voter turnout?***

- "It's the voter's decision if he/she wants to participate."
- "No. Those who won't take the time to get themselves registered and to the polls probably don't have a clue, anyway. It's not that hard, gang. Get off the couch and go do it like EVERYONE ELSE who has ever voted."
- "Why should they? They've already got it good because they know who votes and what type of dog whistle to blow for affect. Plus their consultants, who they will listen to at the end of the day, were wringing their hands to the bone trying to provide plausible explanations why Texas voter turnout is setting record highs and who those 'new' voters are supporting AND why their client is going to win — those poor folks where just a plain mess by March 1."
- "No. Why should citizens be goaded into voting? They're all adults. Low turnout is the natural selection of the political realm."
- "If you mean political leaders, only if they want to get re-elected."

- "Only people who are informed should be voting. If folks don't want to get involved, or don't know who they support, they shouldn't be voting. If they know who they support, they should already be voting."
- "Unfortunately, as long as the right-wing is in charge, there will only be more and more efforts to suppress turnout."
- "1. Why not hold elections on Saturdays? More people are off from work and able to participate 2. Encourage EARLY voting — especially on the weekends 3. Allow people to vote at designated locations in their area on Election Day in addition to going to their polling location 4. STOP purging the voter rolls (oh, wait, that only happens in Republican controlled counties!!!)""
- "It also would not hurt to find some way to educate them a bit as we try to increase turnout. More clueless voters is not the best answer."
- "Democracy works best if everyone participates."
- "Only if voters do their part to educate themselves on the candidates and issues."
- "Expand and encourage voting and voting hours."
- "Run better campaigns."
- "Yes, but they won't."
- "But they won't because the politics of those currently in positions of authority

don't benefit from increasing the number of voters."

- "How hard is it?"
- "Not voting is as much of a right as voting. Leave people alone and let them do what they want to do."
- "It is so freaking easy to vote already. You only increase voter turnout if you start teaching civics in schools again and scrap teaching the ridiculous social bullcrap."
- "There is danger in using voter turnout as the single variable to measure effective democracy; it is a very slippery slope, this is pure politics in that it is viewed by the Ds as hurtful to the Rs, that's why the Ds support efforts to increase voter turnout. The exercise of the right to vote also includes the right not to vote. It can be interpreted as satisfaction as well; of course, the traditional view is that low voter turnout is somehow not acceptable. For example, if 100 percent turnout is the goal, then that is fiction. So, is 90 percent the goal? If not, is 60 percent the goal? What turnout figure is enough?"
- "Educate people in a more proactive manner about why/how/when/where to vote, how to evaluate candidates. Current info is lame. The Internet changes everything. Distribution of info is now inexpensive. Add curriculum to an existing mandatory class for high school seniors."
- "Seriously?! A desire to pick which egomaniac should lord over us should be sufficient motivation to turn out voters. If that's not enough, there's

nothing Texas leaders can do to affect this other than make it compulsory."

- "We don't need any more low information voters casting ballots in Texas."

- "Elections are way too important to be left up to voters. — read that somewhere."

- "Wasn't this the highest primary vote ever?"

- "Turnout shouldn't be the focus. Informing voters so that they can be involved should be the focus."

- "They don't want to increase turnout."

### ***What are the best ways to improve voter turnout?***

- "Better civics education."

- "Better, more consistent, more user friendly information about elections, especially sample ballots. The Secretary of State's website is great if you know what you are looking for, but it's not very helpful for the new or infrequent voter."

- "Depends on where you live, but thinking free beer and pretzels would be welcomed by all."

- "You want to increase voter turnout? Have Apple lock everyone out of their iPhones until they enter the four-digit code used to vote electronically. No vote, no cell phone."

- "Competition between the parties. Too many races are decided in low-turnout Republican primaries and a few along the border in Democratic primaries."

- "Voter EDUCATION!"

- "Education."

- "Voter registration allowed at least during the Early Vote period at EV locations — no sense to the 30-day prior to E-Day requirement for registration since all clerks across the state and SOS have solid technology available"

- "Mail-in ballots available for all. Aggressive registration at high schools (already in statute, but not enforced)."

- "(1) Promote primary election participation by pointing out that the vast majority of elections in our state are decided in the primary. (2) Require that districts, particularly congressional districts, be drawn to be as competitive as possible and without regard to where any individual, such as an incumbent or candidate, happens to live. (This will, no doubt, be declared an emergency item in the next legislative session and passed unanimously within the first 30 days.)"

- "If leadership in the state does something to make folks mad, people will get out and cast ballots; but they haven't, so folks aren't motivated to vote. If a majority truly didn't like the

direction Texas was going, you would see that in election returns."

- "Listen, we already have nearly two weeks of early voting in addition to Election Day. That's more than an ample opportunity to cast a ballot, even for the laziest of us. The problem isn't access to the ballot, the problem is voter apathy."

- "Election Holiday."

- "A healthy civic ad campaign."

- "Teach civic responsibility in school."

- "Longer voting hours"

- "Make campaign consultants illegal."

- "Only allow those to vote who pay more into the system than they take out."

- "An engaged electorate?"

- "Let the people that want to legally vote, vote — those that don't want to, stay home."

- "Better public information about candidates, better reporting, better coverage of the down ballot races the media largely ignores (at least outside rural areas). Lots of government happens at the local level, but local candidates are all but invisible in urban and suburban areas to all but the political junkies."

- "Do we really want more entitlement-minded morons voting?"

- "All these are very good ideas, as long as accountability and ID verification are

also included; the goal should also be to maximize confidence in the outcomes. 'Remember Duval County' should be a constant reminder."

- "The state should undertake the effort to provide unbiased data about candidates on a highly-publicized state website. If a candidate wants to file for office, they should be required to provide profile data to be posted online. Dishonest answers would result in disqualification or removal from office. All candidates for a given office should be presented in a side-by-side format. In the age of the Internet, this would not be difficult or expensive. Ditto for county & city offices."

- "Regional voting centers convenient and easy to find."

- "Better candidates would be great, but we really need better citizens."

- "Educating electorate about voting in the Primary, not just in November."

- "I don't want EVERYBODY to vote. I only want those people who have taken some time and put some thought into it. If you're not willing to jump through a hoop or two, you probably didn't really want to vote in the first place."

- "Extensive research has shown that early in-person voting does not increase turnout. It only benefits those who already vote. Election Day Vote Centers and permanent mail voting have a significant and positive effect on turnout. Moreover, vote by mail elections increases the rate at which voters complete their ballots. There is evidence that same day and Election Day registration increases turnout."



- "The non-political people I know say their vote does not count in the scheme of things."

- "I guess those ideas, if you did all of them at once, might raise turnout 1 or 2 points. Politics was the No. 1 activity in Texas before 1929, when there were no movies, no radio, no TV, no Internet, no video games, no NASCAR, etc, etc, etc, etc. All of those new fangled activities are more fun to 90 percent of the population than politics. Abolish all those distractions and you might have some hope of a truly meaningful increase in voter turnout."

- "Our Founders gave us a Republic, not a Democracy."

### ***Which of these stands a chance of becoming law next session?***

- "Nothing"

- "No change. No interest."

- "None"

- "Squat. Does anybody think the Texas Legislature is going to respond to anything Obama says, (except to sue him again for the umpteenth time)?"

- "None of the above. No one is crying for voter registration except for the professional advocates who make a living out of suggesting their relevance."

- "None"

- "Interesting election cycle, so depending on turnout and results in the General, could be reduction of the 30-day period for registration and change

- "Personal responsibility and pride in one of the most basic rights as an American. Two step process: 1. Register 2. Vote."

- "Vote on Saturday. Make voting day a holiday."

- "Have one set date for all elections (local, state, federal)."

- "Investments in voter registration and GOTV will increase voter turnout throughout the state."

- "Let felons vote."

in election code to create greater opportunity for third party."

- "Whatever the Rs can think up next to hold down turnout."

- "Online registration would generate the same kind of fraud problems we now have with mail in ballots, and we don't have the resources to accommodate Election Day voter registration, since our elections are run largely by volunteers. No one wants to make Early Voting any longer — particularly now, when we have seen that many people voted too early and ultimately wasted their vote — ask those folks who voted for Jeb Bush for President. Bigger, more prominent Voting Centers might be helpful."

- "None of these will become law as it will benefit Democrats more than Republicans."

- "None of these or anything similar is needed. There's an old saying 'round these parts: You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. Until voters truly care about voting and start showing up, there's no need to expand the voting opportunities when today's voters do not avail themselves of the plentiful options already in place."

- "None of the above."

- "Nothing."

- "Nothing will pass."

- "None"

- "More control through consultants and big money contributors if Lt Gov. has his way."

- "None of the above."

- "Nothing while the Rs are in charge."

- "None as we are trying to suppress, not expand voting."

- "I have been an election judge for more than 10 years, during every type of election, presidential, gubernatorial, primary, municipal, school bonds, etc. I can count on one hand the number of voters that ever mentioned any of these ideas. The reality is, chasing some arbitrary number is not a good use of public funds; let's face it, Ds are under the impression it helps them (Rs mistake this as fact). But the facts are

not proven that any of these measures would increase voter turnout. The only other idea not mentioned is voting on Saturday."

- "If you can't get yourself registered, you're not really the voter we're looking for. If you can't find your precinct on Election Day, or early voting location, you're not really the voter we're looking for."

- "Super precinct voting centers reference election day voting center? This is already allowed in Texas. I expect changes to the law to reduce the number of Election Day vote centers required per 10K voters and request that might be introduced by legislator in Harris County."

- "This is not Oregon."

- "I hope to see legislation to secure voter integrity."

- "Open primaries"

- "You need a none of the above option."

- "None of the above"

- "Namely, anything that makes it more difficult to vote — especially for minorities. Cause that's a problem."

- "None of the above."

***Would increased turnout change the partisan balance of the electorate?***

- "This sounds like part of Tony Sanchez's sales pitch back in '02. We're still waiting."

- "Trump will let us know. It would appear he is turning out previously disenfranchised white and blue collar white voters in numbers never seen previously."

- "My hunch is yes, but it may become more Republican. It all depends on who is doing the increase. This year, we had increased primary turnout, but it was decidedly more Republican, so that may be telling."

- "If more Hispanics voted in Texas, it would totally change!"

- "Our government must not exist to serve parties. It exists to serve its people. However they vote is their choice and sovereign right. If more people are alienated from the political process, only bad things will follow. Discontent does not dissipate."

- "I believe if people were educated on the views of the people for whom they vote, it might make a difference. Makes NO sense to me that TEACHERS and people who believe in public education vote FOR these wackadoodles that want to PRIVITIZE education, continue to PAY private testing companies millions and remove VOCATIONAL education from our public schools! EVERY KID IS NOT COLLEGE BOUND!! Bring back Cosmetology, Drafting, Electrical/Plumbing and other technical trades!!!!"

- "Probably not to the extent that it might change the ultimate situation appreciably, but one would have to

think that increased turnout would help the Ds."

- "Ds have always argued that the nonvoters were their folks. Trump's ability to pull bring in prior nonvoters makes that a dubious assumption."

- "Increasing turnout in party primaries is what's most important. As evidenced by this cycle, it will tend to moderate the candidates coming out of the primary. As a side benefit, increased primary turnout will also tend to increase general election turnout."

- "Democrats, or potential Democrats, will not vote in Texas until the Democratic Party gives them someone a Texan might want to vote for. As long as the Democrats keep running pro-abortion, anti-gun candidates who want to raise taxes, expand government and spend more money, voters will continue to reject them and either stay home or vote for Republicans, as they did in 2014."

- "If safe and secure advances in technology are not used, then a solution is not in sight."

- "Slight advantage to Dems, but who really knows?"

- "Would the ocean be bluer if the stars were brighter? IT DOES NOT MATTER, SO WHY ARE YOU ASKING!"

- "I would have said yes before the rise of Trump and the angry electorate."

- "We would be more right of center."

- "You'll get even more Republicans."

- "The Ds are mistaken if they think the increasing Hispanic population will act as the Black population and give them unwavering loyalty, most recently evidenced by Abbott getting more than 40 percent of the Hispanic vote and Wendy Davis losing some border counties. As the White population is not monolithic, let me state that again, as the White population is not monolithic, so also the Hispanic population is not monolithic."

- "Don't know if it would change the partisan balance, but it could mitigate the insanity factor on both ends of the political spectrum."

- "Depends on who else turns out."

- "There is extensive evidence in Texas, Colorado, Indiana and other states with election day vote centers as well as other electoral reforms, including relaxed mail voting, that there is no partisan advantage to those who are mobilized to vote by these reforms."

- "If turnout doubled, Democrats and Trump-like candidates would be helped."

- "Absolutely no change in partisanship. And this is the whole fallacy under Battleground Texas. To see why it is

flawed, run the arguments in reverse in Travis County. For example, based on the relatively low voter turnout of liberals in the state Capitol, it is mathematically possible for a wave of conservatives to take over every elected office — IF THEY WILL SHOW UP. That raises the hard question for Democrats: putting theory aside, is there any chance in reality that conservatives could take over Travis County? And if you say 'no' (which is the correct answer), then by the same analysis you are wasting your money and time pushing Battleground Texas. Yes, you can rationalize it 20 ways to Sunday, and you can tell yourself 'if only this and if only that,' but the bottom line is the same — Texas will stay a deep red state for at least one more generation."

- "Open primaries"

- "Awful question wording. How much turnout? What kind of partisan change?"

- "Somewhat but purposeful (and admitted) gerrymandering for political purposes makes our election system such a joke that nothing else really matters."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Jay Arnold, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Marc Campos, Snapper Carr, Elna Christopher, Kevin Cooper, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Glenn Deshields, David Dunn, Jack Erskine, Tom Forbes, Neftali Garcia, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill

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