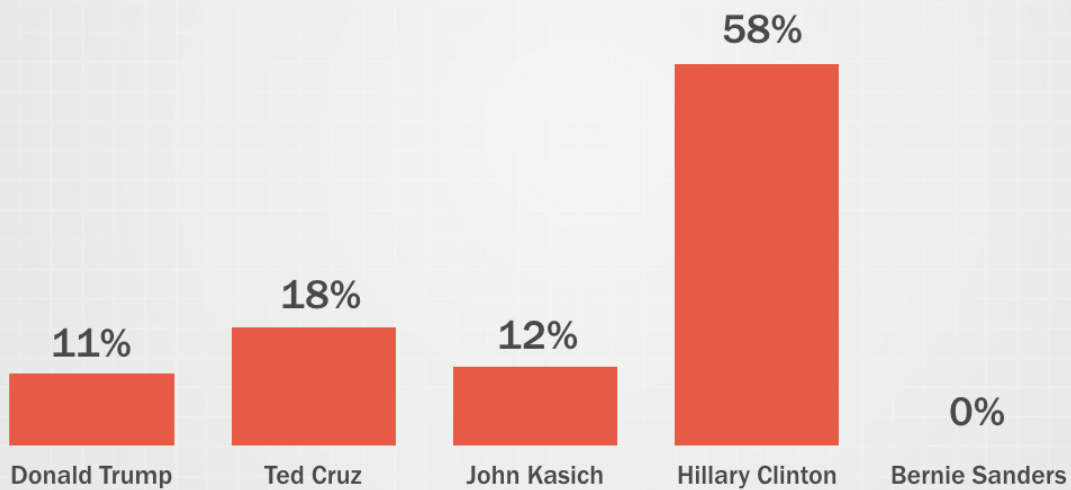


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of 1 April 2016*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

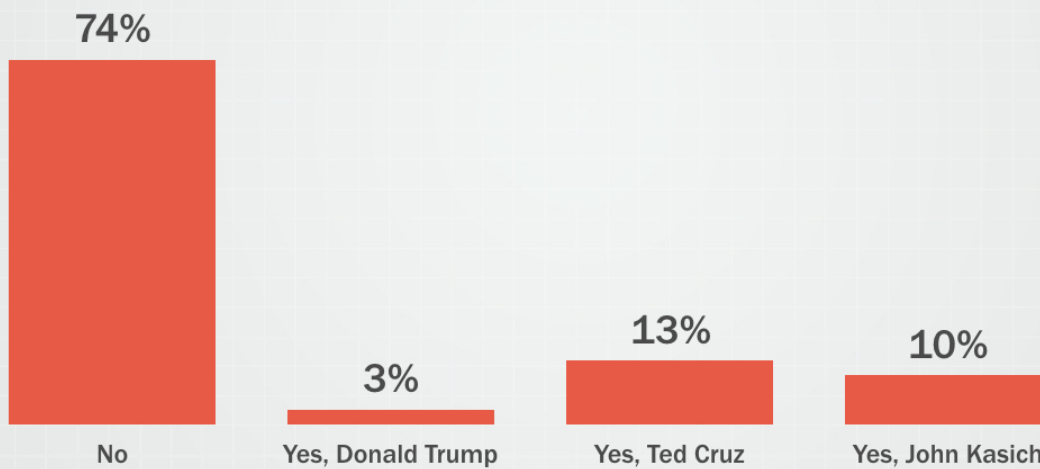
IF THE CONVERSATION SHIFTS TO FOREIGN POLICY,  
THE ADVANTAGE GOES TO...



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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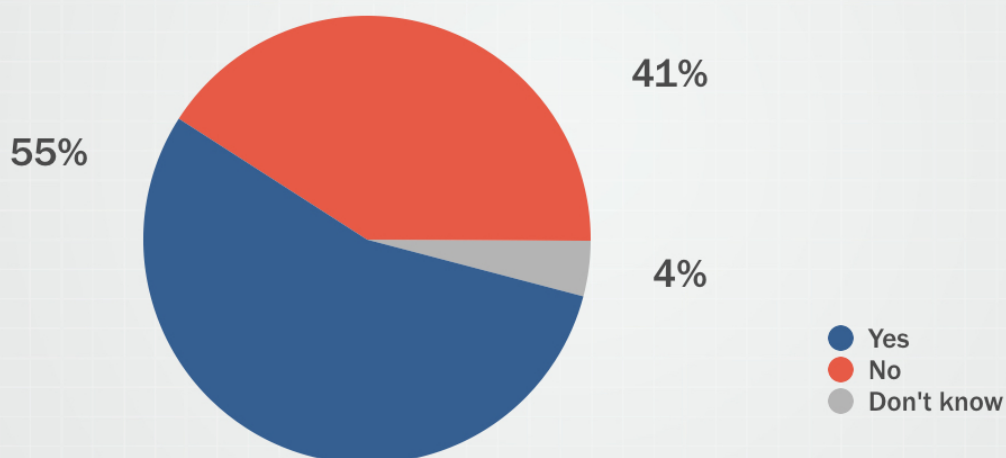
DOES THE GOP NOMINATING CONTEST SHIFT AWAY FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS, AND IF YES, WHO BENEFITS MOST?



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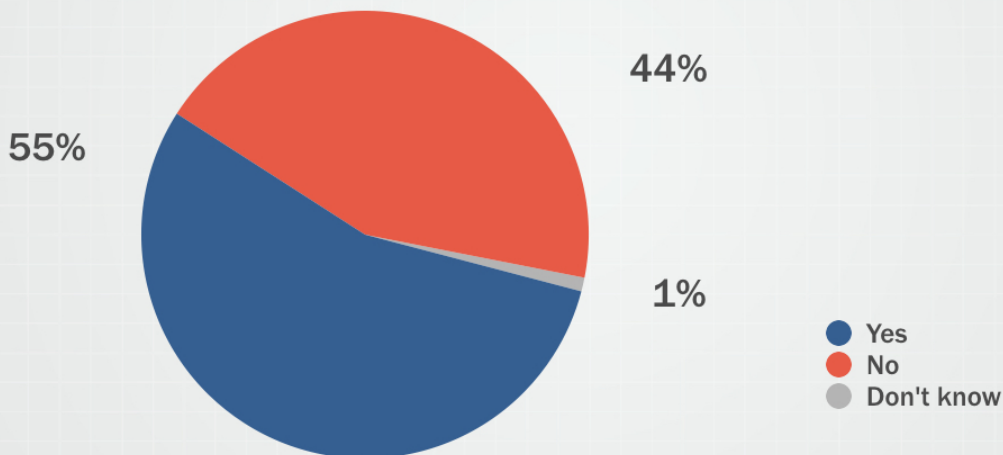
SHOULD CANDIDATES' SPOUSES BE  
OFF LIMITS IN CAMPAIGNS?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

IF THE SPOUSE IS ALREADY A PUBLIC FIGURE,  
DOES IT MATTER?



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## ***If the conversation shifts to foreign policy, the advantage goes to...***

- "Hillary only has a track record of failure. Trump and Bernie are clueless. Cruz and Kasich makes sense."
- "Trump has dominated this space in the election. Voters are dissuaded by his lack of experience; in fact, voters are drawn to him."
- "Disadvantage Trump"
- "All, at best, appear either clueless or have the experience of seeking one's own personal remuneration to be of importance. Totally disgusting alternatives in an age of global fear of jihadists."
- "Clinton is experienced BUT failed. Trump is inexperienced in government but seems tough and the antidote to Obama and the nonsense in the world today. The others are too 'little.'"
- "None of the above. We should be listening to advice of Bush 41."
- "Everyone has huge vulnerabilities on this issue. Trump knows nothing. Cruz knows only slightly more, but his 'carpet bombing' proposals reveal

naïveté. Kasich may be the most knowledgeable, but who cares. Hillary represents the existing failed policies, and Bernie doesn't even understand what the fight is about."

- "Honestly, Clinton has the most experience dealing with foreign policy going back to her days as first lady, but I still ain't voting for her."

- "Kasich should come out ahead, however Cruz is quite articulate on the issues and comes across more prepared."

- "Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State for heaven's sake. Hands-on experience and extensive contacts. Far from perfection, but at least in the game."

- "Thinkers may prefer Hillary on foreign policy because of her superior experience, but I wonder if that really sways the masses of voters. If the overall tenor of this subject is hostile and dangerous, it could favor the candidate (which one?) who talks the toughest. Which may not be the best policy, but if it gets the votes, then hell, yeah."

- "Kasich has the most positive experience in that area. Clinton's extensive experience is easy to attack."

- "Say what you will about her effectiveness, but she has been in the room as first lady, Secretary of State and as a Senator serving on the Committee on Armed Services and as Commissioner of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. If the discussion shifts to the safety and security of the American people, it favors the Republicans, either of the three."

- "However, it should be Cruz. Clinton's worldview on foreign policy is the same as Kerry. Both are idiots! Enough said!"

- "None of the above. We're screwed with any/all of them."

- "Trump is clueless. And ever changing."

- "Only one striking a chord with the concerns of America paying for the world's defense and illegal immigration enforcement."

### ***Does the GOP nominating contest shift away from personal attacks, and if yes, who benefits most?***

- "The Donald will not allow that."

- "Trump only knows personal attacks and put downs."

- "Trump isn't capable of running any other sort of campaign."

- "IF the WWE cage match closes down, then so does viewership eyelids."

- "Only way Trump knows how to campaign. Something has to divert the electorate's attention away from the fact that his background does not lend itself to in-depth knowledge of issue of foreign affairs."

- "Are you kidding? These two school yard wannabe bullies' egos prevent them from shifting away from personal

attacks. Believe me, it'll get worse the closer we get to the convention."

- "Trump can't help himself. Anything remotely said against him, all he can do or say is a personal attack against another, since he articulated no substantial policy issue!"
- "Trump cannot help but be critical of others."
- "Perhaps the rhetoric can move from 8th grade to at least a sophomoric level?"
- "Personal attacks are fun to engage in and fun to watch. They won't stop."
- "Regular Republicans are moving to take over the process and stop Trump. Nobody wins if the personal attacks continue."
- "Trump and Cruz are locked in a cage match, and it seems nothing is off limits. Trump is Teflon coated, mostly because

the mainstream media doesn't understand the more it attacks Trump the better it is for him. Additionally, the mainstream media doesn't get that it, too, is part of the status quo both populist strains (from the left & from the right) are rebelling against."

- "Of course it won't. The only way Trump can win is with personal attacks; he has virtually zero policy positions."
- "Of course not. A Trump can't change his spots."
- "The day Donald Trump stops relying on personal attacks is the same day he will be eulogized at his funeral."
- "Cruz is the consistent conservative who can beat Hillary."
- "That will not happen."
- "Are you kidding?"

### ***Should candidates' spouses be off limits in campaigns?***

- "However, they should be a part of the conversation only if there is some issue that raises a question of their ability to serve as FLOTUS or FMOTUS. Otherwise, they are not the policy drivers and should be left alone."
- "Off limits to personal attacks and insults, but fair game for professional associations."
- "They should — but they NEVER will — we want to know every detail about candidates and their entire families. Nothing is off limits these days."

- "If the spouse has criminal issues, conflicts of interest or problems with bad judgment, then no."
- "But Bill and Hill makes this difficult."
- "Really?!"
- "All is fair in politics."
- "For the most part they should be, but they won't be. This has been going on a long time, just ask Andrew Jackson."
- "The question is not should they be off limits. They most certainly should not

be. In addition to having taxpayer provided home, offices, travel, security, etc., in recent history they've taken prominent roles in health care policy, anti-drug campaigns, and school nutrition. The real question is, should candidates have a sense of restraint and decorum to know where a reasonably decent human would draw the line?"

- "Unless there's either unethical behavior, hypocrisy, double standards, or affairs at issue."
- "But only if they jump into the fray. Their children, though, are OFF LIMITS and just plain hateful."
- "Hillary makes all spousal references relevant."
- "Unless the spouse has been convicted of a crime or a treasonous act, then no, but other than that I'm not voting for the spouse but the candidate."
- "If they're active, like speaking at rallies as surrogates or providing interviews on their spouse's record/experience, then they're part of the campaign and are fair game."
- "It depends on how active they are on the campaign trail. Spouses have always been a subject if they are out front campaigning. Bill Clinton is actively campaigning, and no one is asking if he should be 'off limits'. Is it just because they are women that they should be off limits?"
- "How does Ted Cruz decry 'crony capitalism' with his wife being inside the firm that defines the term?"

• "Unless they get in the ring and fight, too, or have a background that is worth citing if it may influence the candidate."

• "Spouses who are public personalities are not off limits, especially if their public lives will have an impact on the White House operations. Hillary Clinton wasn't off limits when Bill Clinton ran. Nancy Reagan wasn't off limits when Ronald Reagan ran. Trump parades his wives out whenever it benefits him. He should have no expectation that the current or the former wives would be off limits. Sen. Cruz's wife, on the other hand, is not a public personality except for the fact that she is the spouse of a candidate. However, if she posed nude in a magazine also, it would be completely expected that the fact would become public fodder."

• "Apparently nothing is off limits at this juncture."

• "As long as you got pictures of a nekkid wife lolling provocatively in fur, it's on. Oh, it's on."

• "That depends on (1) how much the spouse is involved directly in the campaign; and (2) to what extent the candidate has made the spouse a campaign talking point. Mary Lee Griffith, John Kasich's first wife, is off limits. Bill Clinton is fair game."

• "If the spouse issue is relevant, then they are not off limits; but otherwise they should be off limits."

• "Yes, in most cases, but some voters will factor them into their voting decisions anyway."



- "In 2008, some of Michelle Obama's public comments briefly made her part of the discussion, but she brought that on. If a spouse is in a purely supportive role, it is hard to see when it would be justified (or smart) to attack them."

- "You can't use your kids and spouse in political ad and then claim your family is off limits. It's a doggie-doggie world out there and you can't wear Milk-Bone underwear."

- "Depends, Mrs. Trump is a public figure in her own right; her career has been one of public display. Mrs. Cruz has not been a public figure and, as such, is traditionally off limits."

- "Sure. Except for the really bad ones, right?"

- "If they are involved in policy discussions during the campaigns, then that should be fair game; otherwise, no."

- "This is politics, people. Should we make the NFL flag football? Come on, grow a pair or get out!"

### ***If the spouse is already a public figure, does that matter?***

- "If they are public figures with policy initiatives, they are fair game."

- "They're in play."

- "If the spouse is in the game, then it's a two-for-one deal."

- "If you are asking if the spouse is a public figure as in an elected position or a national spokesperson or a Hollywood celebrity then I don't know

- "No. In a cycle in which one candidate's spouse is a former president, this is very relevant."

- "The first lady is fair game... she runs an office with taxpayer money."

- "This is one of those sacred cows, but everyone does the oppo work on spouses and families anyway. It would be more realistic to say that spouses are 'fair game' if they were active in the campaign."

- "I think a Harvard MBA beats a nude model."

- "If they want to be in commercials, give testimony; it opens up the dialogue."

- "Once this campaign entered the penis size stage, is there anything really off limits?"

how one would be able to separate the private life from public life."

- "Yes, see above."

- "The spouse is not running for office. Focus on the candidate."

- "Any dirt on a certain former president?"

- "Absolutely yes. Bill Clinton is still part of the equation whether Hillary likes it or not."
- "There is no way Bill Clinton won't be a huge issue in November — for both sides. And Hillary certainly can't say 'leave my husband out of it' when her campaign will be leveraging Bill in every way they think is helpful."
- "Common sense dictates if you pose with little clothes on, prurient curiosity follows, therefore inviting/granting further scrutiny."
- "Somewhat because he/she likely will be involved in policy discussions during the campaigns."
- "Did I say grow a pair?!"
- "Wives can be supportive of their husbands so that they are both stronger and vice versa. Or not. Trump's rhetoric about women is extremely offensive, which speaks volumes about his own wife."
- "They made a decision to be in public office — like that ho-bag Bill Clinton."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Brandon Alderete, Clyde Alexander, Jay Arnold, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Janis Carter, Elna Christopher, Randy Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Jon Fisher, Tom Forbes, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Steve Holzheuser, Kathy Hutto, Deborah Ingersoll, Bill Jones, Mark Jones, Walt Jordan, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Sandy Kress, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Myra Leo, Ruben Longoria, Homero Lucero, Vilma Luna, Matt Mackowiak, Jason McElvaney, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, A.J. Rodriguez, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Bruce Scott, Steve Scurlock, Ben Seabee, Nancy Sims, Ed Small, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Jason Stanford, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, Corbin Van Arsdale, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.