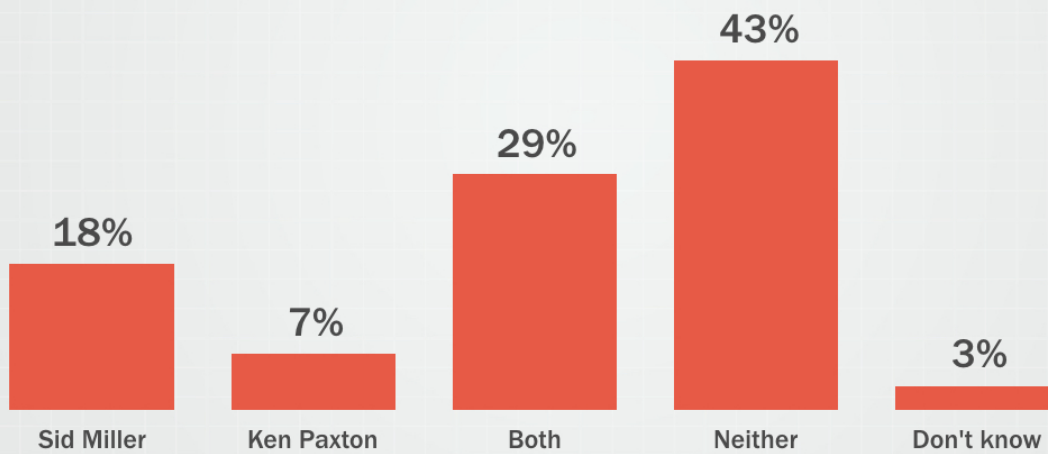


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 29 April 2016*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

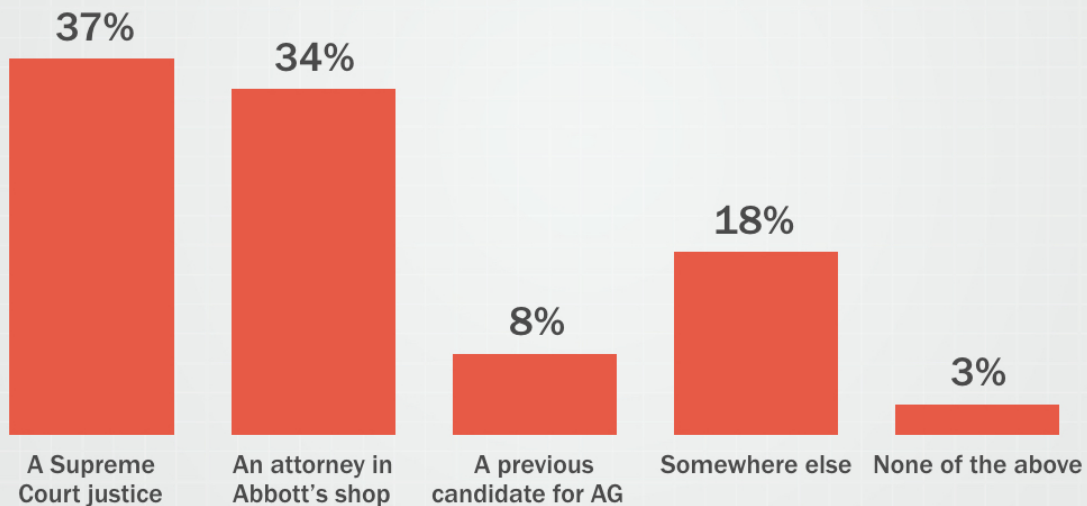
WHO SURVIVES HIS FIRST TERM AS A STATEWIDE OFFICIAL?



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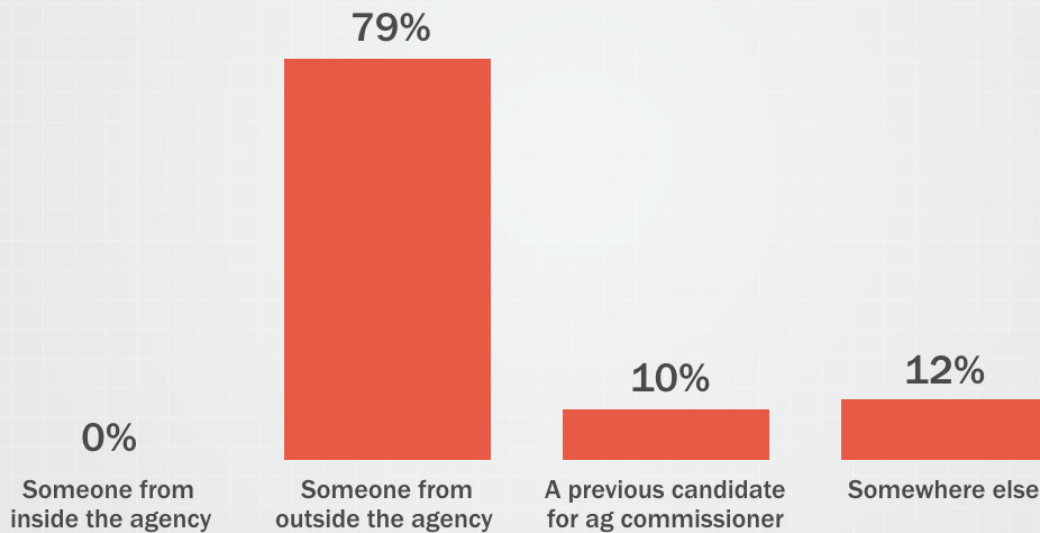
IF THERE WERE A VACANCY AT ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHERE
WOULD GREG ABBOTT LOOK FOR A SUCCESSOR?



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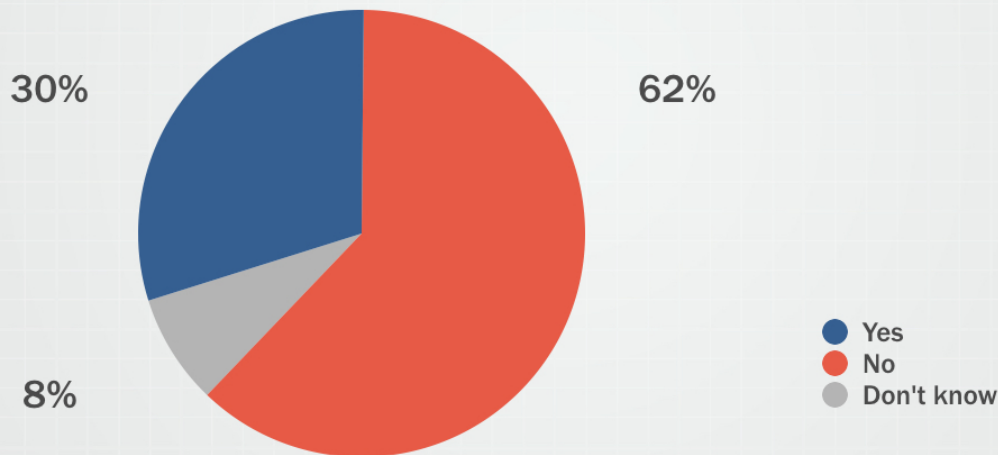
IF THERE WERE A VACANCY AT AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER,
WHERE WOULD ABBOTT LOOK FOR A SUCCESSOR?



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WOULD THE STATE BE BETTER OFF IF VOTERS DIRECTLY ELECTED FEWER HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS, SUCH AS THE AG COMMISSIONER, THE COMPTROLLER OR RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS?



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Who survives his first term as a statewide official?

- "Paxton will cling to his faith and Miller to his Jesus shot."
- "There is plenty of reason for each of them to leave. The question is, who makes them do it?"
- "He's the ruffnist, tuffnist, rootinist, tootinist..."
- "The real question is, who will challenge them in the 2018 Republican primary?"
- "Even if they are not sanctioned or convicted, they are unethical and have

brought dark, embarrassing clouds upon the offices they hold."

- "If we are LUCKY, neither of them!!!!!!!!!"
- "Of the two, he is least likely to be in jail."
- "It's obvious to voters that the media is attacking both men to benefit future, LESS than conservative candidates. Remember that Paxton received NO newspaper endorsements — ever — during his campaigns. What difference did that make?"

- "Paxton will survive, as the charges are unrelated to his official capacity. Miller misused government property (surprising nobody), and I think those charges will be forthcoming."
- "They will get the same fate as their last spokeswomen. A thank you and a map home."
- "Both will be pressured to step down. The 'pressure' will come from tea party elites."
- "But survival just means you are still breathing. It does not mean you are well."
- "Republicans will replace both. No need to tarnish the reputation of the Party for two bad apples."
- "Paxton has drawn the arrows of the SEC. You don't muck with the SEC. Sid may be able to slip the noose on his little shenanigans, but I don't see how Paxton gets out of his unfortunate situation without a conviction."
- "Both small time crooks, but hey, y'all voted for them, so there ya go."
- "We have fatally underestimated the sustained, not-plagued-by self-doubt, aggressive ignorance of the suburban-rural R bloc. They are safe as long as they stand firm on keeping the LGBTs out of the wrong public restrooms. Not sure their wives are as safe, however, given Stickland's recovery."
- "Ignorance and corruption hasn't been a bar to public office in the past; it isn't going to change now."
- "Wheels of justice grind slowly as does increased DA budgets."
- "Sid is an idiot."
- "Like Democrats of yore, Republicans don't care if their state officials are dumb and/or corrupt."
- "Survive first term, yes. Getting re-elected is doubtful for Sid, given all the bad PR. However, Paxton tea drinkers will continue to support him."
- "The wheels are turning too slowly on both these things cause a big blow-up anytime soon, particularly when the public doesn't really care. The public saw with Rick Perry that these so-called legal problems are often just political attacks — so rightly or wrongly, these two stories are largely media driven."
- "1. Abbott should have shown leadership prior the election and found way to force Paxton out. Showed his weakness and inability to lead before getting elected. 2. Why don't business and industry leaders get on board with identifying, promoting and supporting good leaders? Liberals do this, and are damn good at it."
- "They will cleanse Ken of his sins."
- "Neither one is re-elected (defeated in primaries or they don't run)."

If there were a vacancy at attorney general, where would Greg Abbott look for a successor?

- "Consolidate control."
- "AG Daniel Hodge 2020"
- "He will appoint someone from his staff or previous staff. If he was smart, he would appoint Dan Branch!!!"
- "Not going to happen."
- "Dan Patrick's son is looking a lot like Paxton's successor."
- "Gov. Abbott would do himself a huge favor if he chose Eva Guzman as the next Texas AG."
- "You'd have to ask Daniel."
- "Appointing a SCOTX justice creates another vacancy for him to fill, so that's the smart move. It's a two-fer!"
- "I think you meant to say, 'A crony of Abbott's.'"
- "He knows no other... he believes that attorneys are the best for all jobs, even though most have their own agendas for which they whore..."
- "It will depend on who will be next President, demonstrably not relevant to legal acumen or prior success in that profession. Of course, will be important he or she is into border security, safe public bathrooms, keeping a close eye on the U.S. military within our borders, protecting our wimmin from abortionists, etc."
- "His former long-time First Assistant AG."
- "Gov. Abbott has done a good job of attracting good people (e.g. Tryon Lewis as Chair of TxDOT) to join government, and he would be able to attract a top lawyer to do this for Texas."
- "Look around... this seems to be what Abbott is doing for all state government execs posts. Why not AG as well?"
- "A FORMER Supreme Court Justice"
- "Justice Don Willett"
- "George P. Bush"
- "It would be political suicide for Abbott to appoint Dan Branch, and the people pushing that possibility are smoking crack."
- "While Dan Branch hyper-salivates..."
- "Eva Guzman — top of the list. Would be absolutely nuts for Abbott to appoint a white guy off the court or from his own shop."
- "It will be Don Willett."
- "Former Supreme Court Justice Harriett O'Neill, a steady hand is needed."

If there were a vacancy at agriculture commissioner, where would Abbott look for a successor?

- "Who knows..."
- "More than likely a current state representative who has a strong interest."
- "Nice spot for a rural contributor."
- "Rick Perry is currently job hunting."
- "Picking someone at random off Lavaca Street would be an improvement."
- "Not going to happen."
- "Here's a novel idea: find someone who actually does agriculture. Make it a real commissioner of agriculture!"
- "Spoiler alert: It won't be Tommy Merritt."
- "Due to the requirements which comes with this constitutional office, the choices are limited."
- "Ag commissioner would be a sweet payback for a favored supporter. And there would be no shortage of applicants."
- "Again, another crony of Abbott's."
- "Another Abbott lawyer, why not..."
- "Wouldn't we love to have Tommy Merritt in that office? Purple paint would come back with a vengeance, and the press corps would be endlessly entertained. And we would never see him in a Tom Mix Stetson, much less 'manly footwear.' His picture would also fit better on gas pumps, and he might be more likely to blame someone else for gas taxes than the body he previously served in and funds that office."
- "Terlingua, if Mayor Clay Henry is still alive."
- "It's a big state, and there are lots of options."
- "He would look for an attorney."
- "Not sure on this one, but J. Carnes would be a good choice."
- "Drew DeBerry"

Would the state be better off if voters directly elected fewer heads of executive departments, such as the ag commissioner, the comptroller or railroad commissioners?

- "Look at the history of key agency appointees — seems voters do a better job overall than has occurred through cronyism."
- "But I think Comptroller ought to be elected. It is a big enough job for it... May be biased because I worked for Bullock. :)"

- "The last thing we need is a cabinet form of government. The state has operated just fine with a weak governor system, and appointed agency heads are no more or less ethical than elected ones."
- "Having an independent comptroller has been good for the state. I'm saying this even though the incentive for an independent comptroller is to be unduly conservative in revenue estimates, which squeezes the already undersized state budget unnecessarily. It's like having an independent Federal Reserve."
- "Tough to know — appointments are just as partisan as elections. That said, today's elections are won by those who pander to the far reaches of their party, make outlandish comments that are either racist or sexist, and don't offer real solutions to serious problems facing our country and state."
- "NEVER will voters give up their choices."
- "Representative democracy isn't pretty, but better than alternatives. Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, Ken Paxton, Sid Miller. Decades from now, school kids and teachers will ask 'what was in the water?'"
- "We need to go to a 'cabinet-level' system..."
- "In some cases, yes, but not always."
- "Chalk all of this up to further proof that H.L Mencken was correct when he said 'Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.'"
- "That would give too much power to the Governor, if he is left with appointing such heads of state, and we've seen through our history how horrible cronyism works in Texas."
- "Except Comptroller... that office needs to be separate from the executive and the legislative..."
- "Democracy is a device that ensures we get the kind of government (and leaders) we deserve, to borrow from GB Shaw, and not so sure consolidating the executive branch would do more than further embed pay-to-play politics. I think Texas should also elect the Insurance Commissioner."
- "We deserve all the geniuses and buffoons we elect."
- "In today's atmosphere of gullible, blind-following voters, yes."
- "As bad as the track record for voters is, political appointments are worse."
- "Professional bureaucrats heading these huge agencies would introduce another level of power building and corruption to Austin — making these positions elected helps keep that out in the open."
- "The politicians in Texas (everywhere, for that fact) are already out of touch, arrogant and deceptive. Do you really want the Texas governor to have more power? People who have to run are actually accountable."
- "It would be better if the voters knew what these offices and candidates did — but campaigning on God and guns and babies and immigrants for every

single office is what gets us into this mess."

- "The voters are the ultimate equalizers. They may make a mistake, but they usually correct it next time around."

- "The voters will take care of things."
- "We should actually elect more, including the insurance commissioner."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, Clyde Alexander, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Blaine Bull, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Harold Cook, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Nora Del Bosque, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jack Erskine, John Esparza, Tom Forbes, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, John Greytok, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Walt Jordan, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Dale Laine, 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, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Jay Propes, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Chuck Rice, Carl Richie, A.J. Rodriguez, Kim Ross, Jeff Rotkoff, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Ben Sebree, Christopher Shields, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Larry Soward, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Seth Winick, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.