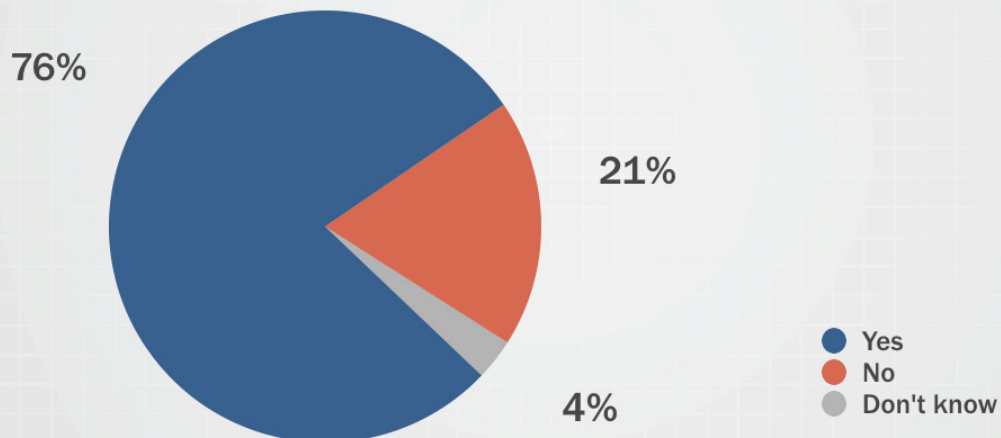


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 16 September 2016*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

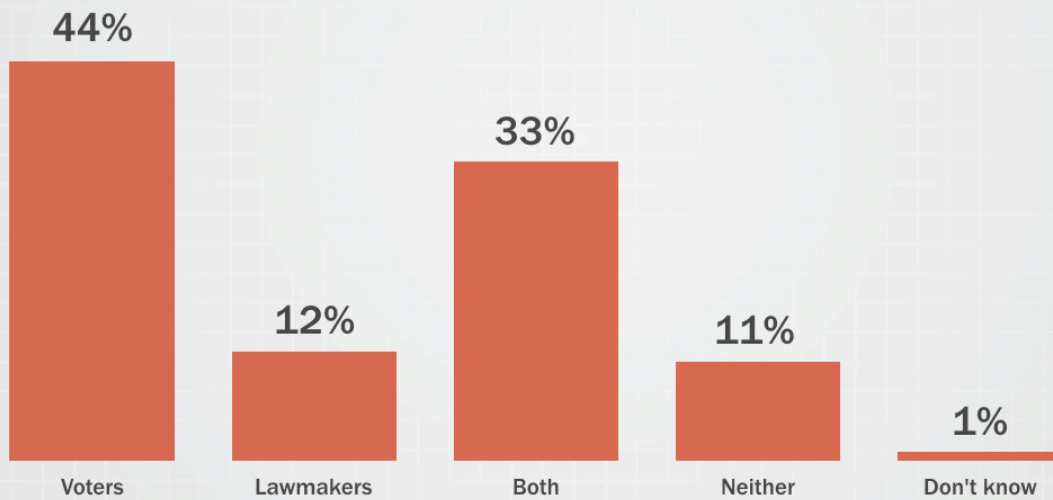
Secretary of State Carlos Cascos recently said voter turnout in Texas “should embarrass everyone.” Is he right?



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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

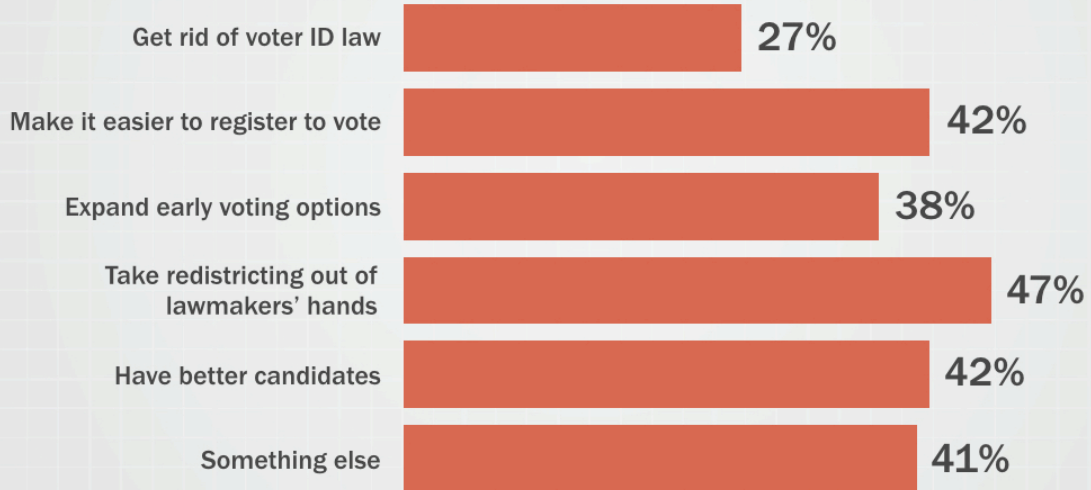
Who's most to blame for low voter participation in Texas?



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

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

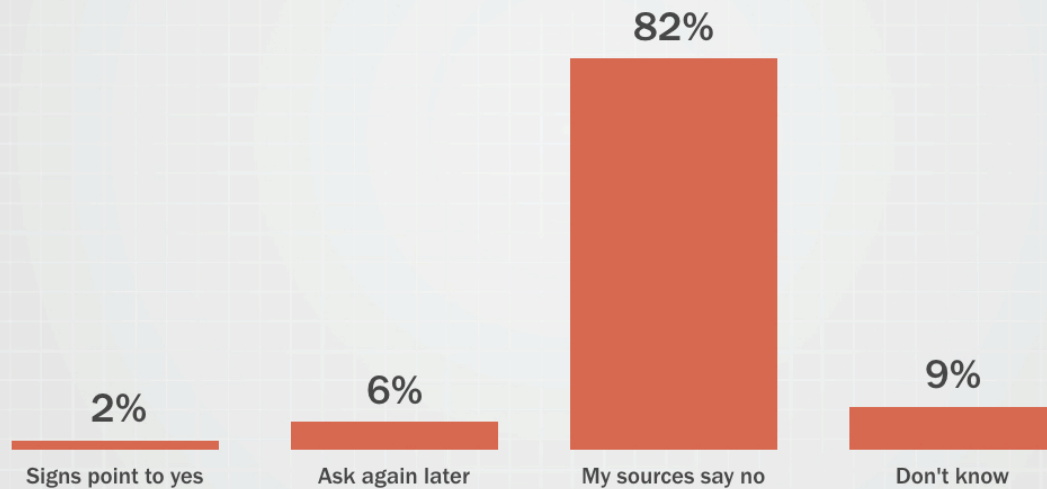
What are the best options for improving turnout?



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 odds the Legislature acts next year to encourage greater voter turnout?



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

Secretary of State Carlos Cascos recently said voter turnout in Texas "should embarrass everyone." Is he right?

- "The Secretary of State should recognize that between gerrymandering and apathy, Texas, like most states is setting itself for less and less influence on the national stage as voting rates drop."
- "We have the freedom to vote, and the freedom to not vote."
- "Texans' turnout is about how you would expect based on our knowledge of voting patterns in the U.S."
- "Democracy is a device that ensures we get the government we deserve."
- "And he and the state should be more embarrassed at their campaign to attract voters."
- "The only people who are embarrassed about low voter turnout in Texas are the Democrats and their allies in the media. Nobody else thinks this is a problem. Few places are easier to vote than Texas. We have two weeks of early voting and voting on Saturdays. Voter registration is reasonably high."

But in the end, people have the right not to vote — unlike some countries where voting is mandatory."

- "People that don't vote have only themselves to blame. It is time everyone comes to grips with that."
- "A choice to not vote is also a choice. I think it says more about the candidates than the electorate. In fact, I've been pondering that very option in relation to the upcoming presidential election."
- "Who is Carlos Cascos?"
- "Our Republic allows the freedom to either be an informed voter or to not vote."
- "Maybe. We know how many are registered, but do we know how many intended to vote when they did register? Put another way, are folks voting in the same proportion as those who paid attention vs. passed notes or slept during high school civics class?"
- "Sounds like a Democrat."
- "Isn't that his job???"

• "Yes, it's an embarrassment that so many undervalue this extraordinary right."

- "The people that want to vote go vote."
- "Shame is on us all for allowing voter suppression to occur."
- "I vote. Why should I be embarrassed that others don't?"
- "The fewer 'Dancing With the Stars' watchers we have voting, the better."
- "Think it will be surprisingly high."
- "Depends on your priorities. If you think civic engagement is important, then yes — everyone should be embarrassed. Most Texans, however, are more embarrassed by the Dallas Cowboys."
- "Most Texas voters don't like any government, so voting is unpatriotic."
- "Who cares? Stupid is as stupid does. People who don't vote reap the consequences."

Who's most to blame for low voter participation in Texas?

- "A lot of voters don't care."
- "Only the people who don't vote. The only way we'll have better choices in the general election is for greater participation in the primary process... oops, that yielded Trump and Hillary. Perhaps low turnout is not so bad."
- "Texas no longer requires CIVICS prior to graduation! When I was in high school they registered us to vote upon graduation!!!!!"
- "Voting is not a civic duty; it is a civic opportunity, and the opportunity costs don't merit participation for everyone. There's no harm, foul, nor blame in that."

- "Need to get off their a\$\$..."
- "Packed and cracked districts means little competition outside a few how far to the right can I go without falling off the edge of the earth contests, which in turn suppresses moderates and voters who can read without moving their lips."
- "You left out 'The Secretary of State.' The campaign only serves to confuse voters and yet they've taken the same approach they took before... when we had record low turnout."
- "When your state is doing better than most every other state on most things, there is no motivation to 'throw the bums out.' If people wanted to change things, they would get out and vote for it. It is a little known fact inside the Austin bubble, but the majority of Texans, in both political parties, generally agree with the policies the state leaders and legislators put forward."
- "This is all on voters! People say the Legislature has erected barriers to hamper more voter participation... but this is hogwash."
- "Not specific lawmakers per se, more like years of seeing that the new boss is different from the old boss only in terms of who gets paid off (financially and policy wise) at the expense of the people."
- "The Legislature has created impediments to voting. We also have many citizens not eligible to vote. Further, even those who are qualified become confused in the registration process and in casting their ballots. We need to make it easier to participate in democracy, not more challenging."
- "It's NOT a requirement for anyone, certainly not the disinterested."
- "Individual voters make the correct statistical observation that because no election is decided by one vote — the only vote they have — voting, for an individual, is pointless, from the standpoint of changing an election outcome. People who do vote do so for other reasons, such as catharsis. Or they think falsely think that their individual vote does make a difference."
- "Most voters in my opinion don't really care whether it's made easier or not. Having taught government, most believe their one vote won't matter."
- "Not voters. It is the people who don't vote."
- "1) Poor culture of participation, exacerbated by incumbents with no incentive to increase turnout. 2) The only election that counts is the primary, about which information is hard to find."
- "Early voting has made it easier to vote than ever. If you don't vote, it's because you don't choose to vote. Seven days a week for two weeks. Really!"
- "You could make voting day a holiday, as they do in other countries, where voting is a celebration. You could lift barriers to voting; allow easier online access to registration and instant registration, etc. There are law changes that could be made to loosen restrictions to the ballot box."

- "The people are to blame. You either choose to engage or you don't. Sure, I get it, you all buy into the blame others part of our culture for everything."

- "To quote the band Rush, 'Choosing not to chose is still a choice.'"

- "We've got a sayin' 'round here: you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. Texas has TWO WEEKS of early voting and most folks still can't be bothered to vote. Ain't no one to blame for lack of voting other than voters themselves."

- "Primaries are too early. Ballots are too long. Early voting decreases the

What are the best options for improving turnout?

- "Increased voter turnout is but one byproduct of taking redistricting out of legislators' hands. The other is a more civil, working body to get things done. When only eight to 10 House seats and zero of 16 senate seats are competitive in elections, there is no interest by lawmakers to fight for the middle. Sixty percent-plus R and D districts are not helpful to election turnout or lawmaking."

- "No more dancing Perrys"

- "We have had great candidates run in the primary but lose because primary voters are focused on the wrong qualifications. For example, want an effective AG? Primary voters should select an actual attorney. Want a Lieutenant Governor who prioritizes responsible public policy over headlines? Perhaps we should nominate someone other than a radio talk show host."

sense that Election Day is really something special. Gerrymandered districts make too many races a joke."

- "Add the lack of good candidates in both parties and the utter failure of Texas schools to teach civics — which, much like our restrictive voting laws, is by design."

- "There are plenty ways to vote, my own spouse forgets to vote when the kids dominate life."

- "Saturday elections — why is Election Day on a TUESDAY???"

- "Turnout doesn't need to be encouraged. It is itself a valuable metric of governing effectiveness and should be viewed as such."

- "Voting remotely, if security of votes can be assured."

- "Overcome the media-constructed narrative that it's difficult to vote — it is not! It's quite simple, yet there's no reasonable and clear voter education on the matter."

- "Establish term limits."

- "The choice NOT to vote is an exercise of your rights. Time to stop blaming others if you are too lazy."

- "Term limits that result in having people still motivated to change things

rather than career politicians who went from eager, sleeves rolled up, and bright-eyed to trying to maximize retirement benefit calculations."

- "More public information"
- "All of the above may help. Currently, it is anger at another candidate that drives the most votes. Voters tell us they do not like negative campaigning on polls but the highest turnout comes in contested races. In Texas, we have redistricted such that we have ONE contested Congressional race. Now, that's a problem."
- "Our efforts should be to inform all potential voters, not to shame them or use any manipulative tactics to increase voter turnout."
- "I frankly think fixing redistricting is the single most important thing we could do to improve politics and government in the state and country. The overwhelming number of 'safe' gerrymandered districts is pathetic and obstructs real democracy. I also am a realist. I understand we can never expect the Legislature to write themselves out of this potentially existential function. It is a real dilemma."
- "Currently, a lot of folks feel the ROI is not favorable. Texas can improve outcomes by offering free beer, free hot dogs, free tacos from the truck at the corner, \$5, discount on next year's license plate tax, one free weekend of camping at a state park, one free night of parking at a state lot, or one get out a jail free card for misdemeanors, etc. Should those fail to yield desired

results, then send out the National Guard to compel with fixed bayonets."

- "If people took the time to be better informed instead of just listening to local leaders, participation would increase. Low turnout among the uninformed is a good thing."
- "We don't need more turnout. Have you seen what the American electorate is really like?"
- "Term limits!"
- "Make it easier to vote — like electronic voting with appropriate security."
- "Competitive general elections"
- "Meaningful fall elections might actually spark voters' interest."
- "The question's predicated on a false assumption. I don't want people who aren't willing to get up off the couch to vote. They have not taken the time to educate themselves and therefore don't understand the importance."
- "Improving our education system so that there is a greater likelihood of a voter actually understanding the issues and what they are voting for."
- "Only allow people to vote who pay more into the system than they take out."
- "Easier to vote? How much did Soros pay for this or one of his groups? It is already unreal easy to vote!!!! What more do lazy people want? OK, someone to vote for them. OK, I get it now."

- "Better civics classes in schools."
- "Education on the value in and freedom of voting."
- "Non-regular voters just need a reason to vote, I suppose."
- "Promise a random voter a reality TV show — fame and fortune."
- "Educate citizens on the importance of voting, beginning in elementary school."
- "Unified elections."
- "Have a statewide lottery with one voter getting as many dollars as there

were votes cast in the election. Let's see if that produces better government."

- "Instead of voting and civic participation being a public value, we've made it a battleground where the forces of evil try to force out and intimidate out the other side. Having partisan leadership in individual polling places in the election judges doesn't help. We need more professionalism in the conduct of the election itself and more effective recourse for violations by election officials."
- "Free Whataburger with each 'I Voted' sticker"

What are the odds the Legislature acts next year to encourage greater voter turnout?

- "Turnout is the No. 1 fear of Republican lawmakers. I expect that they will continue to push for more, not fewer, restrictions."
- "Yep, behind the 8 ball. Why would those who got there under present process want to alter that?"
- "Legislators encourage voters to turnout all the time — they have knocked on thousands and thousands of doors all over Texas this past year. They spend millions on mail, television and radio ads — they speak to people every night of the week begging them to vote. They call them on the phone and they get robots to call them too. The notion that there is some conspiracy among Texas leaders and legislators to hold down voter turnout is just nuts."
- "It is NOT the responsibility of the Legislature to encourage people to vote. Like eating, it is the individual's responsibility."
- "Not that I need 'sources' to predict the obvious."
- "Why would they want to do that? The more registered voters, the fewer Republican voters. If anything, anticipate they will try to tighten access up again."
- "Legislators need to uphold the laws and the Constitution. Their job is NOT to manipulate the citizenry."
- "Trump expedited the demise of Texas Republicans by a decade. Voter suppression is all they have left."

- "It's not in the interest of whoever holds power to make it easier to be challenged."
- "This question is dumb. People don't vote because our culture is narcissistic, lazy and prefers crap like 'Dancing With the Stars' and 'Housewives.' Let's create a high quality K-12 education system that teaches civics not liberal social engineering crap. Then maybe we will see change."
- "Ha-ha. Good one."
- "That's how the extreme right has been winning! Draw extreme districts, invent a voter fraud 'problem.' Then push a 'solution' of voter ID and restricting voting as much as possible. When cheating to win has been working, why would the powers-that-be reform anything?"

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Clyde Alexander, Jay Arnold, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Lydia Camarillo, Elna Christopher, Randy Cubriel, Beth Cubriel, Curtis Culwell, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Jack Erskine, Jon Fisher, Tom Forbes, Neftali Garcia, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Stephanie Gibson, Eric Glenn, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, Thomas Graham, Clint Hackney, Wayne Hamilton, Bill Hammond, Susan Hays, Deborah Ingersoll, Mark Jones, Lisa Kaufman, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Dale Laine, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Jason McElvaney, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Nelson Nease, Todd Olsen, Gardner Pate, Jerod Patterson, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Pritchard, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, Carl Richie, A.J. Rodriguez, Kim Ross, Grant Ruckel, Jason Sabo, Andy Sansom, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Ben Sebree, Christopher Shields, Nancy Sims, Ed Small, Leonard Spearman, Dennis Speight, Tom Spilman, Sherry Sylvester, Jay Thompson, Trey Trainor, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Michael Williams, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.