

**“INSIDE”**

**INTELLIGENCE**

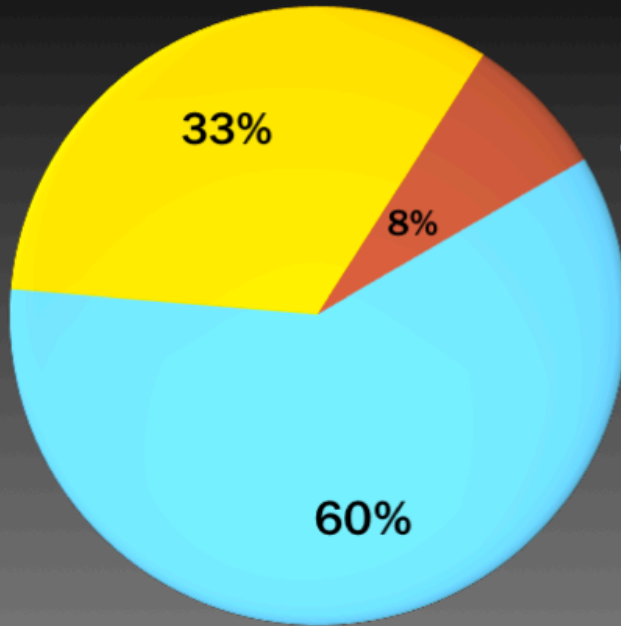
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**THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**  
TEXAS  WEEKLY

The insider's poll for the week of December 6.

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

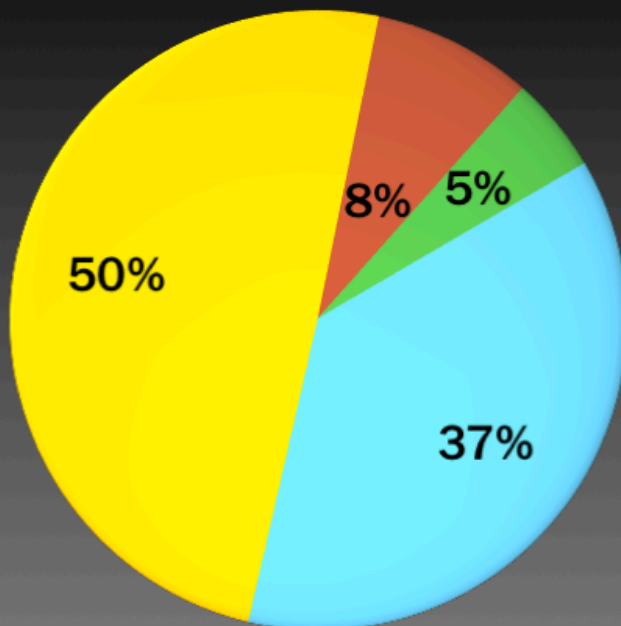
Is killing the Railroad Commission the right thing to do?



- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Should regulators be elected or appointed?



- Elected
- Appointed
- Doesn't Matter
- Don't Know

*Complete verbatim answers to a prompt on what the state is doing now that it ought to stop doing:*

- Giving the governor free reign over economic development money ... abolish the fund ... what happened to free enterprise. Building more buildings and parking space ... should be leasing ...
- Build more roads, including tollroads — reorganize TxDOT to get rid of upper management who are just waiting out the terms of the commissioners.
- Almost all of the functions of the Agriculture Department, which are basically Ag marketing / promotion efforts, better suited to the private sector.
- Far, far too much.
- Combine PUC & RRC ... Include regulation of wind and solar ... Rename to Texas Energy Commission
- Most major state agencies have been consolidated (HHS). Most other state agencies are insignificant budget wise. Huge savings could be achieved by consolidating school districts, at least administrative consolidation — a third rail for sure. End the fight for who's last or next to last in higher ed and consolidate the Texas State System with the Texas Tech System — never gonna happen with A&M and U.T.!
- Texas Emancipation Juneteenth Cultural and Historical Commission (put under Historical Commission); Merge Marriage and Family Therapist and Psychologists Boards
- Too many judges in too many levels of court; too much fluff in business development; too much spent on prisons; too many school districts; too much overlap in higher ed and not enough focus on distance learning
- None come to mind.
- Texas is already pretty bare bones as far as government. There are lots of things we could abandon, but the public would probably miss the high-dollar items like schools and prisons, and torching the commission on the arts just won't save much money. If we are seriously going to open up big programs like long term care to substantial reorganization, it should not be in haste because of a budget crunch, but thoughtfully, with a long-term strategy.
- Paying for Rick Perry's mansion.
- Eliminate DIR. Reduce the per-student amount in the Foundation School Program. Eliminate state's subsidy of health care costs at ERS. Opt out of CHIP.
- First, I'd like to clarify my answers to 1 and 2. The RRC should be abolished and its duties transferred to the PUC with no new commissioners and a 20 percent reduction in staff transferred over from the RRC. There is no savings from replacing the three electeds w/ 5 part-timers and probably complicates matters more. I would support having the Legislature elect the PUC commissioners. State government should get out of the brush removal business. The Department of Licensing and Regulation should be abolished and those functions transferred to the Secretary of State. DIR and the Facilities Commission should be abolished and those functions transferred to the Comptroller. Teleconferencing should be mandatory for most board and commission meetings. Transfer UNT to the Texas Tech System and abolish the individual board of regents for the third tier schools and have them all under the Texas State University System. Give the coordinating board real muscle/teeth to weed out duplicative and underperforming programs. Require all faculty members to teach 12 hours each semester and freeze faculty hiring. Institute salary caps for all state officials at 250 percent of the governor's salary. Combine all retirement systems into one system. Retool secondary education to combine the last two years of high school with the first two years of college in a single junior college and use existing buildings and personnel to handle the courseloads. Combine 9, 8, and 7 grades into middle schools and have grades k-6 in one school. Have Comptroller work with state university architecture schools to develop a standard portfolio of school building plans and require any school seeking a state guarantee of its building bonds to use those standard plans to cut architect and contractor fees. Plan school buildings so that the libraries can be used by the public after hours and combine small town and school libraries. Plan public clinic

space that can be used by school nurse and local doctors after hours. Require that all buildings and furniture used by have at least a 50-year lifespan. Make furniture purchases from prison workers mandatory. I have lots, lots more.

- There is not a lot in state government to cut but legislators could review past Comptroller's performance reviews to glean additional ideas. More importantly, they can use this opportunity to address an issue that needs to be addressed but no one wants to touch it — CONSOLIDATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS. Public schools will feel the pinch of the budget ax so legislators and others need to cowboy up and take the bull by the horns and get after it. This will reduce the state's contribution, create efficiencies and save taxpayers money. Oh yeah, I forgot this is Texas and we like our high school football teams so the booster clubs will lobby hard to kill this idea. There isn't a lot of fat in state government and the proof is in the pudding. We are nearly last in most social service categories. Other states use to say, "Thank God there is Missiissippi. Now they say "Thank God for Texas".

- providing services without requiring fees to cover the costs;

- Giving money to a business to encourage it to move to Texas (Governor's Enterprise Fund)

- TxDOT is a mess.

- I would bet that THHP is paying bills that belong to private insurance companies because they aren't verifying coverage with all possible providers. You would think that in an era of debit cards, instant messaging and international videoconferencing that real time insurance verification at the point of service would be a no brainer yet government is still paying bills then trying to collect later.

- texas Highways, state police, childrens homes, local ROR, and relaxed bonding and probation rules, jail max population reductions,

- We need to combine TJPC and TYC

- In general there is too much overlapping regulatory/licensing authority with Federal, State, and Local programs. For example, why does TABC have a police force when local police agencies are charged with enforcing the same laws? Cut OPUC, reduce the scope/staff of most regulatory Boards so they are simply a register to do business type of board, cut Board of Law Examiners (State Bar and Local Bars can handle this function), Cut TABC law enforcement division, and move DIR into another state agency. Not huge savings but would overall produce a more efficient regulatory system and save some money.

- Cut the Enterprise Fund, eliminate Regional Service Centers, reform Medicaid (waivers etc), prioritize TxDOT spending around mobility and congestion ...

- That will be the question of the session.

- Economic development. Cities and counties can handle it.

- Disband the following boards agencies, or commissions Acupuncture Examiners, Texas Commission of Arts, Athletic Trainers Advisory Board, Barbering Advisory Board, Curtail the 55 field offices of the Comptroller's office, Consumer Credit Commission, Cosmetology Advisory Board, all council of governments, Merge Credit Union Commission with Banking Commission, Diabetes Council?, Dietitians State Board, Emancipation Juneteenth Cultural and Historical Commission, Manufactured Housing Board, Merge various medical boards into one board - Marriage and Family Therapists, Midwifery Board, Occupational Therapy Board, Orthotics and Prosthetics Board, Optometry Board, Physical Therapy and Occupational Examiners Council, Physical Therapy Examiners Board, Physician Assistant Board, Podiatric Medical Examiners, Psychologists all need to be in one board. Return local control to counties who want River Authorities. Eliminate Office of Public Insurance Counsel. Eliminate all public awareness campaign dollars for all agencies.

- Letting billions of dollars in tax revenue leave the state for destination resort casinos less than 10 miles outside of Texas. This industry must be regulated and taxed to

death. Texas is missing an opportunity, something the state rarely does on the business front. Secondly, the state must be smarter in utilizing outsourcing to cut excessive spending. Smart and efficient outsourcing options will save the state billions in the coming years.

- There is always waste and inefficiency in any bureaucracy, but the reality is that our budget writing process has been in the hands of very conservative members and leaders for many years. Anyone that thinks Steve Ogden has let some major area of waste or unnecessary spending get by him doesn't know Steve Ogden.

- Every agency and program should begin with ZERO and prove their effectiveness or lose funding altogether.

- The TCEQ should never have been created. Those function were being handled by three different agency at a lower cost prior to it's creation by Ann Richards and Bob Bullock and it was user friendly. Film Commission and the Music office could be rolled into TCA. SBOE should be abolished. TWDB could be put under Comptroller.

- Funding the governor's office!

- Tax incentives that mainly go to companies that would come to Texas or do what they were going to do anyway — Chapter 313 school property tax abatements (we've got the wind, we've got the markets, and soon we'll have the transmission lines), high-cost natural gas tax breaks (we've got the shale), plus of course the Enterprise Fund and Emerging Tech Funds. There's a few billion dollars right there. Plus all the small-business programs at universities.

- Higher Ed Coordinating Board TX Youth Commission TDA Cedar Eradication Program

- Convening a Legislature!

- Subsidizing wealthy school districts ... Subsidizing small school districts and charter schools ... High cost public retirement programs for state employees and public ed employees ... Irrational governmental organizational structure for

too many functions including state fiscal management, budget development, technology development and economic development ... Outdated and/or illogical state/local funding mechanisms for financing various program areas (e.g. transportation, community colleges, natural resource development and others)

- The State Board of Education should be eliminated or re-named the State Board of Misinformation.

- We're not getting a lot of value out of the Governor's office at this point ...

- Eliminate the Texas House of Representatives. The benefits would far exceed the savings realized in the state budget.

- The state should stop closed bidding and begin E-Bay-style bidding where each bidder sees the current price and has the option of beating it. It would save tens of millions. The state should apply the "Yellow Pages" test ... if you can find a private company in the Yellow Pages that can do it for cheaper, shut it down and outsource it (as long as the work is performed to the same account and within Texas).

- Procurement should be more competitive — anything impacting costs such as prevailing wage requirements which artificially increase costs should be abandoned

- Historical Commission should be privatized, as should be the Commission for the Arts and the State Library Commission. The Medicaid system should go to a capitated Primary Case Manager Model — as it should have done in 1995. Make the docs responsible for the decisions and the funding. The care will be better and less expensive.

- Performance reviews should mean something once again - no offense to the LBB but these need to move back in the hands of the comptroller or other entity to hold agencies accountable - separate from sunset.

- Do away with the SBOE. Of all Texas' embarrassments, that one is the biggest. I think it would take a constitutional amendment - pass it.

- Divide TABC between DPS and Comptroller, Racing to DPS and Agriculture, divide health regulatory agencies between Health and AG, Send all ALJ's to SOAH, sell the Lottery

- Look, you can't place then entire energy regulation of this state into the hands of a governor with an appointed board. Too much money for graft and corruption. Needs to be a single agency, yes, but one single elected official should make the decisions just like all other major agencies. No ties to another official. Accountability is what keeps them straight — well most of the time.

- Its not a question of what government ought to stop doing. Its a matter of what we can afford and what we can't.

- beach "nourishment" / restoration program operated by General Land Office

- Cut 15-20% from Fire Fighters Pension Commissioner, Texas Film Commission, Go Texan marketing program, Food and Fiber Commission; cut 10% from Office of secretary of state, Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Youth Commission

- ought to stop not funding education. ought to stop not taxing adequately professional corporations.

- Wasting time on seeking ways out of the federal medicaid program

- Pitting education versus prisons for funding. Right now, the prison industry gets more of our tax dollars when there are more drop outs because of higher incarceration rates of drop outs.

- While Gov. Perry is right at some level that every state agency has some fat in its budget, Texas has one of the leanest state governments in the nation. Legislators will find that the fat available to be trimmed is negligible compared to program cuts in

education, health care, transportation, and prisons (meaning just about everything state government does) that would be required to balance the budget.

- Reorganize DFPS and DADS.

- Education and Medicaid spending are the two big places left to cut. The elections showed that the citizens want less government. Both of these should be on the table. It is time to see if the electorate is really ready for the cuts they say they want.

- Stop incarcerating so many Texans for non-violent crimes. End the very expensive death penalty.

- Dont know

- Abusing poor people.

- End longevity pay for state employees; eliminate all corporate incentive programs like the Texas Enterprise Fund; reorganize and reduce General Land Office, Agriculture Commission along with RRC.

- Roll up RRC and PUC

- Texas Department of Insurance is an organ of the industry and need not use state funds

- Micro managing education at all levels squelches creative approaches to many types of learning experiments leading to new teaching methods and new way of organizing and running schools and universities.

- the savings on the agency side in health care have more to do w/ systemic dysfunctions and lack of resources that reduce waste/fraud and improve general/ public health, especially w/ children. Ironically, should reinvest in some elements, such as more case work driven management of chronic disease, more and better trained case workers in all the child support/intervention categories; the prisons we built during the last bingewill house kids now in (or more accurately not in) middle and elementary school problem is of course the ROI goes well beyond an election cycle

- maintenance and housekeeping of all buildings
- These three are off the top of my head: Consolidate the Supreme Court & Court of Criminal Appeals Cut the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute Cut the Emerging Technology Fund
- Closing public streets
- Paying for calendars and "newsletters" to be mailed from 181 legislative offices, per diems during the interim, travel to conferences and "trade missions".
- We have a pretty lean budget already - not sure what can be cut long term, but might need some short term fixes, which will definitely be painful.
- In a slash and burn environment, funding has to be concentrated on core infrastructure such as education, HHS, prisons, and transportation. Everything else should effectively be sunsetted unless a compelling health or safety concern can be made to continue funding.
- Given how large and intrusive the federal government presence has become in areas like social services, education and the environment, I question the need for much of state government in those areas. Might be more efficient just to let the feds implement, rather than have the state as a translator between the feds and business/local government.
- Economic development grants and tax abatements
- This is a useless exercise unless the purpose is to show that government is doing very little that it ought to stop doing.
- Not raising taxes, Texas Board of Education it's a threat to public education, Seed & Plant Board, PUC, utilities are deregulated so why bother with it, Preservation Board, when some part of the Capitol falls in on them then the Legislature can fix it like they did the Governor's Mansion.
- The budget doesn't have a lot of fat, It has not recovered from the 2003 shortfall. We are about to turn Texas into a 3rd world country. Our Tax structure can't keep up with our growth.
- Combine PUC and RRC — 3 Appointed comm
- Governor's slush fund
- We're leaving millions of dollars in oil royalties on the table at the Land Office. And attorneys general in other states manage to reap millions, if not billions, by suing wrong-footed corporations. Miraculously, isolated cases of voter fraud pose a greater public threat in Texas than business that rob Texans.
- we do much of what we do very badly. we need to increase taxes
- office of rural community affairs; residential construction commission; real estate commission, real estate research center, consolidation of small universities and colleges with greater efficiencies in administration, juneteenth cultural commission, state board of educator certification, texas council on purchasing from the disabled, texas commission on the arts, river authority reorganization
- Paying companies to relocate to Texas
- I think we could do a much better job of auditing state agencies to find out where fat can be trimmed, and processes could be streamlined and evaluated to make things run more efficiently.
- Collecting data on public school students and higher ed students that is useless and time consuming. Spending money to make universities tier 1. This has no impact on education or economic development but rather only prestige of the professors or administrators.
- The government should not be picking winners and losers among corporate interests using economic development slush funds.

- The problem has never been overspending. The situation would be a lot less dire if the "new" business franchise tax had come even remotely close to bringing in the revenue it was supposed to produce.

- It isn't so much that the government of Texas is doing too much as that it doesn't always do what it is supposed to do that efficiently. Knocking off a few token agencies may make everyone feel better (except the stakeholders) but it won't fix this problem.

- Let the Federal Government take over TCEQ.

- A bill has been filed to force school districts into consolidation to help save taxpayer's monies. I think we can all agree that saving local dollars is an important issue to consider in a down economy. But forced consolidation isn't the answer to saving local taxpayer's monies. This option violates the one simple principle of local governance. School districts currently can share services from combining transportation services with neighboring school districts to aggregating electricity - both costly items to school districts. Furthermore, school districts can utilize the education regional service centers for sharing of services such as business administration, programs and development training. Mandating forced consolidation won't wholly solve the problem but create others - remember the fiasco created by the reorganization of all the health and human services state agencies in 2004?

- issuing tuition revenue bonds for universities, paying insurance for community college employees, medicaid payment formulas that reimburse hospitals based on their individual high costs, school finance formulas that compensate for inefficiencies, higher ed formulas based only on headcount, incarcerating as many offenders, housing as many persons in state supported living centers, paying for the current level of school property tax relief

- Eliminate appropriations for the Texas Enterprise Fund, "crisis pregnancy centers," and legislative mailings. That should give us a whopping 0.01% or so. For serious money, we do should eliminate tax expenditures

such as: sales tax exemptions for legal, architectural, and similar services services; and the unpaid-for 2006 school property tax rate reduction.

- There are 311,000 State full-time employees; more than half of those at institutes of higher ed. Although the State has 116 agencies and 66 higher education institutions that report FTE data, 51.4 percent of FTEs work in 10 agencies and higher education institutions, and 70.8 percent of FTEs work in 20 agencies and higher education institutions. We need to do things more efficiently! Stop rewarding Universities for professors that teach in the classroom and punish them for the professors that don't. When an agency has to cut FTEs you will quickly find out which programs are the least successful and have the least attention of the agency. Everyone always wants to cut the small regulatory agencies, but they are self funding and actually raise money for the state. That is just window dressing to talk about those- there is no real cost savings/ money there. Texas should establish a system to manage and implement public private partnerships to use private sector money to get the infrastructure we need-horizontal and vertical. The program is successful in many other states and countries and Texas has learned a lot from the Cintra proposal/ debacle.

- Governor's Discretionary Fund

- No comments.

- Promoting exotic or value-added crops and programs at TDA. Texas farmers and ranchers are smart folks. If there is money to be made by switching crops, they will do so. We do not need a central governmental entity "suggesting" what to grow or not to grow. The tried that under Stalin.

- Cutting funding for essential services.

- Buying textbooks small, read only devices could save the state HUGE \$, and spare the backs of the little kids carrying heavy books. Does anybody own a set of encyclopedias anymore? NO ... they are out of date, so are textbooks.



- Incarcerating more people than necessary. Prison should be for hardened, dangerous people, not those with an addiction problem.

- Stop making decisions that should be made by markets.

- Privatize all prisons

- PUC

- Competing with the private sector in many areas, notably in providing services to the mr population while at the same time regulating their private sector competitors. Do one or the other, not both.

- Using the Texas Enterprise Fund to cultivate political support for the Governor.

- Eliminate the Commission on the Arts and the Dept. of Information Resources for starters.

- Emerging Technologies fund, Texas Enterprise fund, the movie subsidy fund, travel and tourism promotion

- The state should review the "economic development" programs to determine if they are achieving the goals of the programs or if they have been just become a way to receive "state grants" for doing something that was going to happen or had happened anyway.

- Hard to say. It's not like we spend a hell of a lot of money on social programs and we don't have an army to equip. I could parrot the standard line about combining the health agencies, but I believe that whatever the Lege cuts will be the wrong thing — higher ed.

- Combine Tx PUC and Tx RRC into Energy commission

- Child protective services — should be handled by local law enforcement. Many HHS functions - should be regulatory only in nature and not competing with private sector to provide services

- Providing guides to a good marriage for applicants for a marriage license Keeping

state prisoners in county jails without paying for them when TDCJ knows the prisoner will shortly be released directly to the streets. Current law requires TDCJ to take them within 45 days or pay the counties; prisoners it knows it will release instead of take to prison before that time are at county expense. Identify them and go ahead and release them and save local taxpayers money. Funding doled out by the Governor for attracting business or investing in new technologies.

- Education and Health and Human Services are by far the biggest items in the state budget. Cuts to both higher and public education funding will have to happen; unfortunately, that will shift the burden to students and their parents and local taxpayers. I don't think there are any specific program cuts you can make in HHS but you can cut the number of FTE's in a slew of programs. That will reduce services, of course, but the real savings come from cutting employees to save salary and benefit costs.

- Office of Rural and Community Affairs ... the state is doing business which out to be done by local private entities ...

- Eliminate economic development functions except the incentives funds which are used to attract business and let cities promote the Texas economy. Eliminate Agriculture Department and put only its essential functions at A&M and seek grant money to fund it. Eliminate Parks and Wildlife and put in hands of private conservation groups giving them guidelines about what to preserve and protect (privatize land and hunting and fishing with guidelines because we should put in the hands of the private sector things that more resource rich private sector cares about and leave to government things that private dollars would be reluctant to fund (e.g. prisons, children's health care, public education, Medicaid). If we look at the history of higher education funding in this State we see that we are essentially privatizing higher education while continuing to fund these other things. In a state with our growth and demographics, higher education access and quality are critical to our long-term economic success. We need to rethink our priorities.

- Governor's economic slush fund needs to be repealed. (Sorry I do not know the correct name)

- Get out of Medicaid and set up our own program to assist those populations

- It should stop: funding steroid testing for high school sports; allowing high paid state employees to take retirement and return to their old jobs; passing money through Councils of Government where an unnecessary slice is retained for admin; paying school districts for lost revenue from optional property tax deductions and tax abatements for businesses; handing out hard-earned tax revenue for hand-picked (high risk) private venture capital; issuing bonds for new buildings at every university instead of only where essential.

- The Texas government, at the executive and legislative level, is not making governing its focus. It is not making education a priority and it is failing to prepare tomorrow's workforce for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities. This next legislative session, the Texas Governor and legislature must work improving the quality of education for all students and making it a priority to invest in higher education; avoid playing partisan

politics during the redistricting process and avoid from placing the state's economy at risk with its anti-immigrant proposals.

- Won't balance the budget, but the Governor's Enterprise Fund is one are to begin making cuts. Unfortunately, what is needed is additional revenue, our infrastructure (roads) are not what they once were.

- Dept of Rural Affairs should be folded into Ag Dept. I hesitate to say economic development because that brings business and jobs that more than pay for themselves in added taxes, etc.

- Kill Office of Public Insurance Counsel. They are duplicative of the TDI's consumer division. They are a holdover from the Ann Richards days.

- Enterprise and Technology funds

- State government should focus on preventing problems rather than "throwing water on burning buildings," as one policy maker has chosen to prioritize

Our thanks to this week's participants: Sylvia Acevedo, Cathie Adams, Brandon Aghamalian, George Allen, Doc Arnold, Jay Arnold, Kip Averitt, Louis Bacarisse, Charles Bailey, Karey Barton, Eric Bearse, Dave Beckwith, Tom Blanton, Hugh Brady, Steve Bresnen, Andy Brown, Terri Burke, Lydia Camarillo, Snapper Carr, Janis Carter, Corbin Casteel, George Cofer, Rick Cofer, John Colyandro, Harold Cook, Alexis DeLee, Scott Dunaway, Jeff Eller, Alan Erwin, Ryan Erwin, John Esparza, John Fainter, Jon Fisher, Wil Galloway, Bruce Gibson, Scott Gilmore, Daniel Gonzalez, Thomas Graham, Marta Greytok, Anthony Haley, Billy Hamilton, Wayne Hamilton, Sandy Haverlah, Albert Hawkins, Adam Haynes, Jim Henson, David Hilgers, David Iannelli, Shanna Igo, Cal Jillson, Jason Johnson, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Kenneth Kramer, Sandy Kress, Tim Lambert, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Donald Lee, Randy Lee, Luke Legate, Leslie Lemon, Ruben Longoria, Matt Mackowiak, Dan McClung, Scott McCown, Carol McDonald, Mike McKinney, Kurt Meacham, Debra Medina, Robert Miller, Lynn Moak, Bee Moorhead, Steve Murdock, Keir Murray, Shannon Noble, Todd Olsen, Gardner Pate, Bill Pewitt, Tom Phillips, John Pitts, Steve Pringle, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Bill Ratliff, Karen Reagan, Tim Reeves, Chuck Rice, Carl Richie, Kim Ross, Mark Sanders, Jim Sartwelle, Stan Schlueter, Terri Seales, Christopher Shields, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Glenn Smith, Terral Smith, Todd Smith, Larry Soward, Jason Stanford, Bob Stein, Keith Strama, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Leslie Sullivan, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Russ Tidwell, Trey Trainor, John Weaver, Ken Whalen, Darren Whitehurst, Christopher Williston, Michael Wilt, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.