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Voters' Perceptions of the Candidates: Traits, Ideology and Impact on Issues

Few voters 'check the box' on positive descriptions of candidates

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

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Voters' Perceptions of the Candidates: Traits, Ideology and Impact on Issues

Few voters 'check the box' on positive descriptions of candidates

A new national survey finds that when voters are asked to “check the box” on words and phrases describing Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, relatively small percentages express positive views of either presidential candidate.

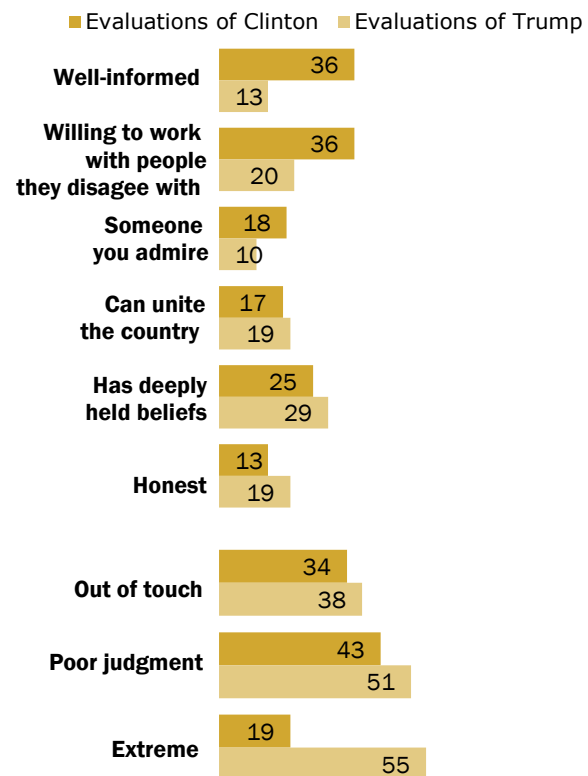
Just 18% of registered voters check the description “someone you admire” for Clinton and even fewer (10%) indicate that this description applies to Trump. Few voters also associate the word “honest” with either Trump (19%) or Clinton (13%). This also is the case for the phrase “can unite the country” – 19% indicate that this describes Trump, while 17% check it for Clinton.

Clinton is viewed more positively – and less negatively – than Trump in several dimensions. About a third (36%) checks “well-informed” for Clinton, compared with 13% who do so for Trump. And while 36% associate the phrase “willing to work with people they disagree with” to Clinton, just 20% indicate that it applies to Trump.

The largest gap between perceptions of Clinton and Trump is over whether the word “extreme” applies to each. More than half of voters (55%) indicate that this description applies to Trump, while just 19% associate it with Clinton.

Few voters associate positive words and phrases with Clinton or Trump

% of registered voters indicating that each description applies to ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Voters were given a list of nine words and phrases and asked to check all that apply to Clinton and all that apply to Trump.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

The new survey was conducted June 7-July 5 among 4,602 adults, including 3,834 registered voters, on the Pew Research Center’s nationally representative [American Trends Panel](#). This survey differs from many online and telephone surveys that ask voters to compare the candidates’ traits and characteristics – who is more honest or better informed – or if various traits do or do not apply to each candidate. In this case, respondents were given the list of nine descriptions and were asked to separately check all that describe Clinton and Trump.

As we have noted previously, [results from self-administered surveys often differ from interviewer-administered surveys](#). This particular format – asking voters to “check all that apply” – could result in smaller percentages of respondents identifying candidates with positive or negative traits than do other surveys that ask explicitly if the traits do or do not describe each candidate.

[A recent national survey by Pew Research Center](#) included head-to-head comparisons of the candidates’ traits: 56% of registered voters said Clinton was *better* described by the phrase “personally qualified to be president,” while just 30% said this better described Trump. Clinton also held an advantage on having good judgment in a crisis (53%-36%). In evaluations of which candidate was better described as “honest and truthful,” 40% said Trump, 37% Clinton, while a sizable minority (20%) volunteered neither.

Supporters' views of the candidates

Both Clinton and Trump are viewed more positively by voters who support them in the general election than those who do not. Even among their supporters, however, views of the candidates are not all that positive.

Most Clinton supporters associate her with the phrases “well-informed” and “willing to work with people she disagrees with” (64% each).

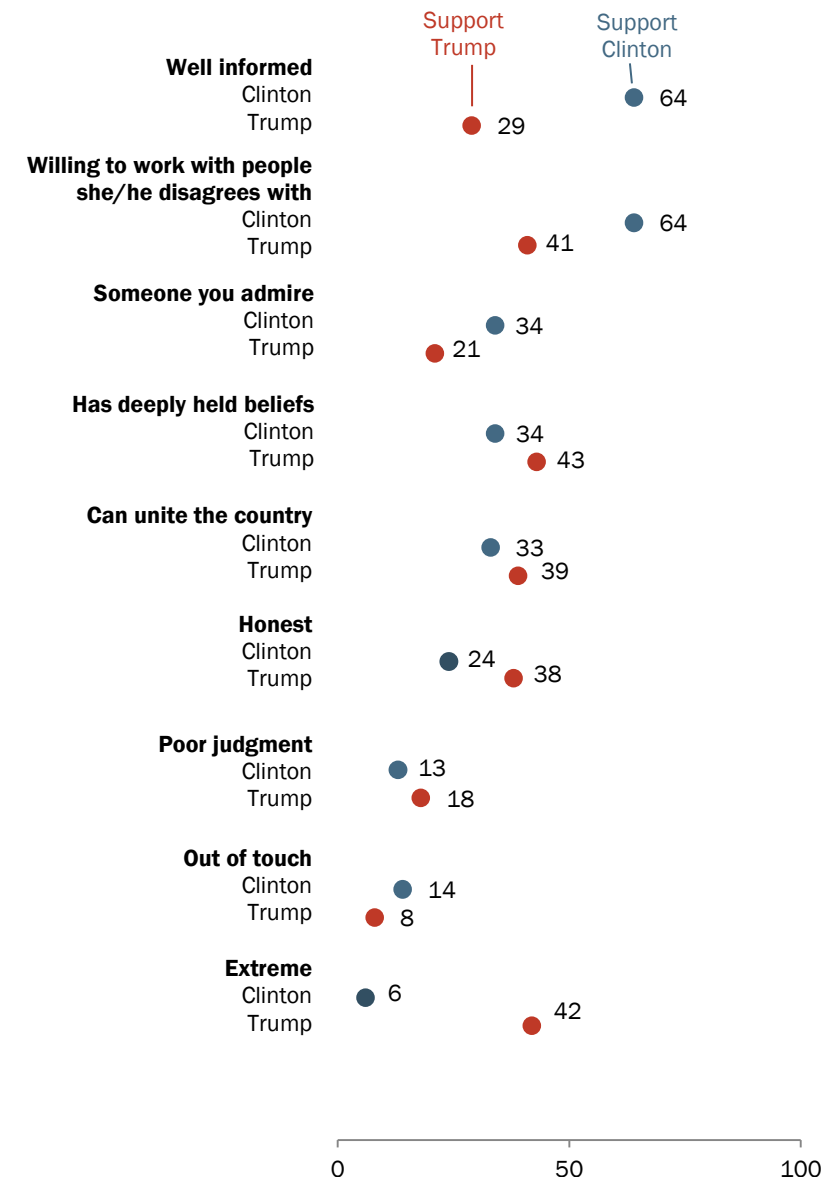
But far fewer Clinton supporters ascribe other positive traits to their candidate. Only about a third of voters who favor Clinton in a general election contest against Trump indicate that Clinton “has deeply held beliefs” (34%), is “someone you admire” (34%) and “can unite the country” (33%). Just 24% of Clinton supporters check the term “honest” as a description of their candidate.

Yet Trump’s supporters are even less positive about their candidate than Clinton’s backers are about theirs. There is no positive trait that a majority of Trump supporters ascribe to their candidate.

While 64% of Clinton supporters associate Clinton with the

Fewer than half of Trump supporters ascribe any positive trait to their candidate

% of registered voters who support Clinton/Trump in the general election indicating each description applies to their candidate ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Voters were given a list of nine words and phrases and asked to check all that apply to Clinton and all that apply to Trump.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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description “well-informed,” fewer than half as many Trump supporters (29%) think this phrase fits Trump.

Trump supporters are far more likely than Clinton supporters to associate the term “extreme” with their candidate. About four-in-ten Trump supporters (42%) check off “extreme” as a description of Trump, compared with just 6% of Clinton supporters who associate that term with their candidate.

Lingering effects from primaries

Both Clinton and Trump are viewed less positively among voters who supported other candidates in the primaries than among their own primary supporters.

Among Democratic-leaning registered voters who say they backed Bernie Sanders in the party primaries, just one-in-five indicate that Clinton is someone they admire or associate Clinton with the phrase “can unite the country” (20% each) and 11% associate her with the word “honest.”

Far higher shares of Democratic voters who say they backed Clinton in the primaries say all three traits apply to her, though only about a third of Clinton primary backers check off “honest” as a description for her.

How backers of primary opponents to Clinton and Trump view the candidates

% of voters indicating each description applies to Clinton/Trump by their preference in the primary

	<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem primary support for...</i>		
	Clinton	Sanders	Diff.
	%	%	
Someone you admire	52	20	+32
Can unite the country	45	20	+25
Honest	35	11	+24
Well-informed	76	55	+21
Willing to work with people she disagrees with	73	57	+16
Has deeply held beliefs	43	28	+15
Extreme	3	7	-4
Poor judgment	4	27	-23
Out of touch	4	31	-27

	<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep primary support for...</i>		
	Trump	Other candidate	Diff.
	%	%	
Can unite the country	59	19	+40
Honest	55	21	+34
Someone you admire	35	8	+27
Willing to work with people he disagrees with	54	28	+26
Well-informed	41	16	+25
Has deeply held beliefs	54	33	+21
Extreme	35	47	-12
Out of touch	3	19	-16
Poor judgment	7	34	-27

Notes: Based on registered voters. Voters were given a list of nine words and phrases and asked to check all that apply to Clinton and all that apply to Trump.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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Among Republicans and Republican-leaning voters, majorities of those who backed Trump in the primaries indicate that the terms “can unite the country” (59%) and “honest” (55%) apply to Trump. Only about two-in-ten Republicans who say they supported other candidates for the GOP nomination associate these terms with Trump (20% honest, 19% can unite the country).

Trump and Clinton supporters’ views of the opposing candidate

Both Clinton and Trump supporters see the opposing candidate negatively. Nearly eight-in-ten Clinton supporters (79%) offer that Trump has poor judgment, while a comparable share of Trump supporters associate this trait with Clinton (77%).

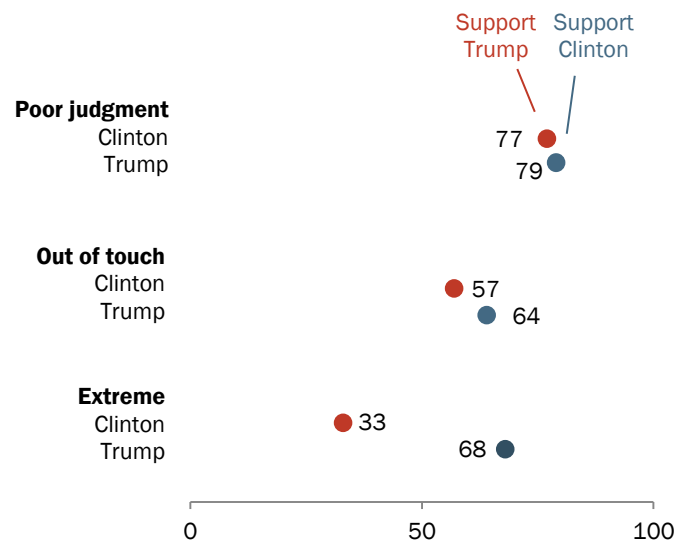
Almost two-thirds (64%) of Clinton voters describe the presumptive GOP nominee as “out of touch.” Nearly six-in-ten Trump supporters (57%) check off this description of Clinton.

However, while a sizable majority of Clinton supporters (68%) check the word “extreme” as a description of Trump, just a third of Trump supporters indicate that this description applies to Clinton.

Very few Trump voters or Clinton voters assign positive attributes to the other candidate. Most of these assessments number in the single digits, including the 1% of Clinton supporters who offer that Trump is well-informed and 8% of Trump supporters who report this of Clinton.

Wide gap among Clinton, Trump supporters in perceptions of opposing candidate as ‘extreme’

% of registered voters who support Clinton/Trump in the general election indicating each description applies to the other candidate ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Voters were given a list of nine words and phrases and asked to check all that apply to Clinton and all that apply to Trump.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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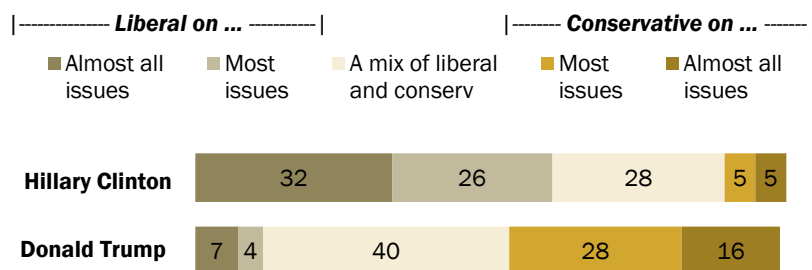
Perceptions of the candidates' ideologies

Most voters (58%) say Clinton has liberal views on almost all or most issues. Just 28% say Clinton has a mix of liberal and conservative positions and 10% think Clinton has conservative issue positions.

Perceptions of Trump's ideology are more divided: 44% say he has conservative views on almost all issues or most issues, while 40% say he has a mix of conservative and liberal positions. Just 11% say he takes all or mostly liberal positions.

Most see Clinton as liberal on issues, many see Trump as mix of conservative and liberal

Trump's, Clinton's views can best be described as ... (%)



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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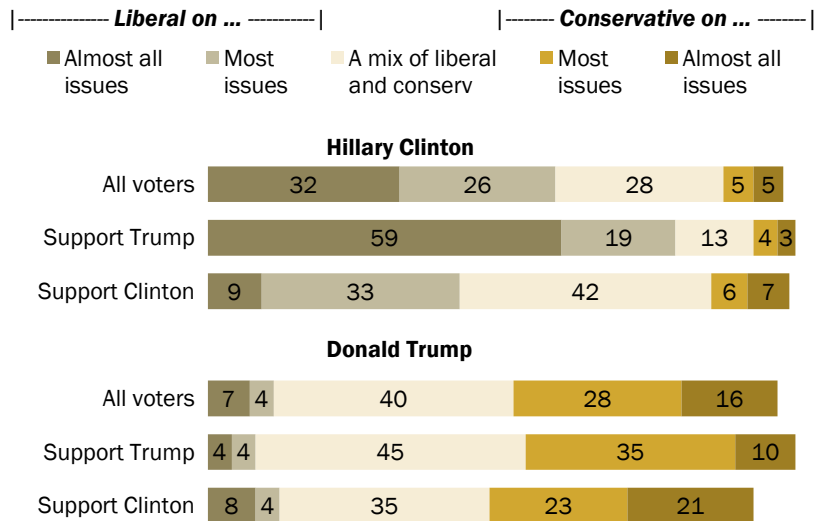
Trump and Clinton supporters differ substantially in their views of Clinton's ideology, while the gaps are much more modest in perceptions of Trump's ideology.

About eight-in-ten Trump voters (78%) describe Clinton as having at least mostly liberal views, with 59% saying that she has liberal views on almost all issues. Among Clinton supporters, 33% say she takes liberal positions on at least most issues and just 9% say she takes liberal positions on almost all issues.

In assessing Trump's ideology, identical shares of Trump and Clinton supporters (45% each) say he has conservative views on most or almost all issues. But more Clinton than Trump supporters say Trump is conservative on almost all issues (21% vs. 10%).

Trump supporters overwhelmingly view Clinton as liberal

Trump's, Clinton's views can best be described as ... (%)



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.
Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters who say they backed Bernie Sanders for the party's nomination view Clinton's ideology fairly similarly as do those who backed Clinton in the primaries.

Among Clinton primary supporters, 44% say she has at least mostly liberal views while nearly as many say has a mix of conservative and liberal positions (40%). Among Sanders primary supporters, more say Clinton has mixed views (50%) than liberal views (40%).

Among Republican and Republican-leaning voters, those who say they backed Trump in the primaries are more likely than those who supported other candidates to say he has conservative views on almost all or most issues (53% vs. 41%).

Modest differences in how Sanders, Clinton primary supporters view Clinton's ideology

Trump's, Clinton's views can best be described as ... (%)

	Net Liberal %	Almost all %	Most %	Mix %	Net Cons %	Almost all %	Most %	Ref. %
Hillary Clinton								
All voters	58	32	26	28	10	5	5	4
Among Dem/Lean Dem primary support ...								
Clinton	44	9	35	40	13	9	4	4
Sanders	40	5	35	50	9	2	7	1
Donald Trump								
All voters	11	7	4	40	44	16	28	6
Among Rep/Lean Rep primary support ...								
Trump	9	5	4	36	53	12	41	2
Other candidate	6	3	3	51	41	8	33	2

Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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Views of the candidates' impact on issues

Voters are broadly skeptical that, if elected, Clinton or Trump would achieve progress on major issues facing the country. Asked to look ahead a few years, fewer than half say things would get even a little better on six different issues – ranging from the economy to foreign policy – under either a Clinton or Trump administration.

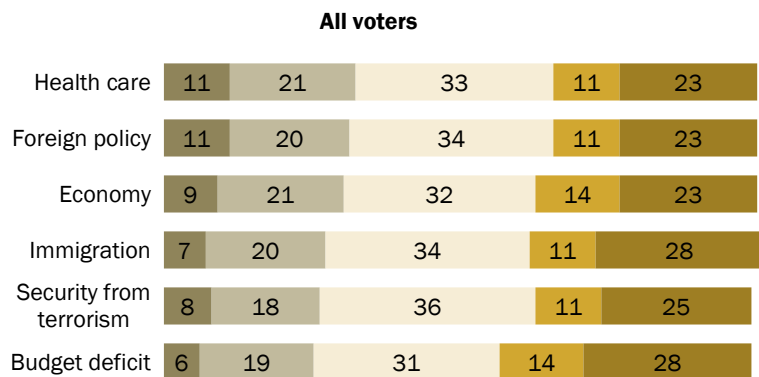
In general, higher percentages say all six issues will get at least a little better in coming years under Trump than Clinton. However, on five of the six issues, comparable percentages feel that things would get worse under Trump as under Clinton.

And far more voters say foreign policy would get worse under a Trump presidency (49%) than under a Clinton administration (34%).

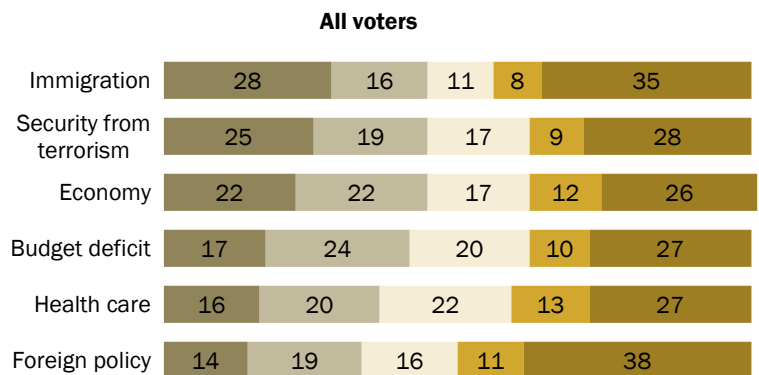
What if they won? Assessing the possible impact of Clinton, Trump presidencies on major issues

Looking ahead a few years, if Clinton were to become president would each of the following be better, worse or not much different than it is now?

■ A lot better ■ A little better ■ Not much diff. ■ A little worse ■ A lot worse



Looking ahead a few years, if Trump were to become president would each of the following be better, worse or not much different than it is now?



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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Across the six issues, more voters expect say things would not change much under Clinton than under Trump. Roughly a third of voters say that on issues ranging from security from terrorism (36%) to the budget deficit (31%), things will not be much different in the years ahead than they

are today. In assessing a possible Trump presidency, smaller percentages – no more than about one-in-five – expect little change on any issue.

Even many Clinton supporters do not anticipate much change if Clinton were to become president. On immigration and security from terrorism, for example, about as many Clinton supporters expect things to get better if she becomes president (49% immigration, 46% terrorism) as say things would be little different (43% immigration, 45% terrorism).

On the other hand, Trump supporters are more likely than Clinton supporters to expect improvement on every issue if Trump becomes president.

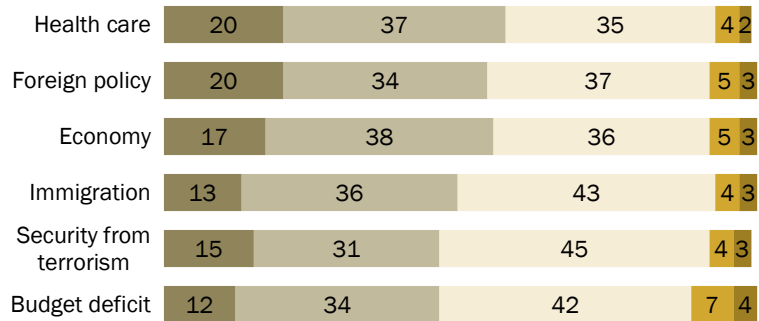
Fully 86% of Trump supporters expect immigration to get better under a Trump presidency, including 58% who say it would get a lot better. Nearly as many Trump supporters (83%) expect security from terrorism to improve, with 53% saying it would get a lot better.

Trump supporters have high expectations for their candidate if he wins the presidency

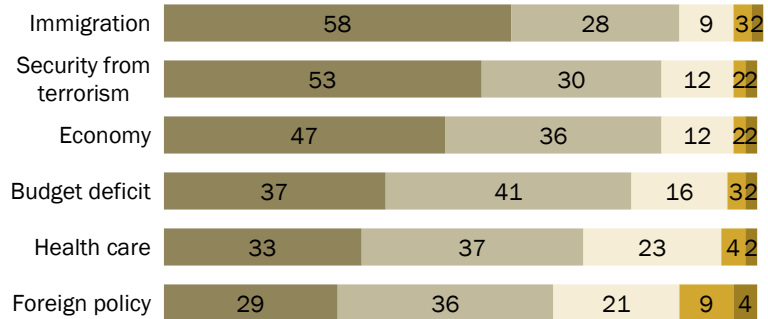
Looking ahead a few years, if Clinton/Trump were to become president would each of the following be better, worse or not much different than it is now?

■ A lot better ■ A little better ■ Not much diff. ■ A little worse ■ A lot worse

Clinton supporters' views of a Clinton presidency



Trump supporters' views of a Trump presidency



Note: Based on registered voters.
Source: Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016.

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Methodology

Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by the Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults living in households. Respondents who self-identify as internet users and who provided an email address participate in the panel via monthly self-administered Web surveys, and those who do not use the internet or decline to provide an email address participate via the mail. The panel is being managed by Abt SRBI.

The analysis in this report is based on 4,602 respondents, including 3,834 registered voters, who participated in the June 7-July 5, 2016 wave of the panel (4,172 by Web and 430 by mail). The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,602 respondents is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points and the margin of sampling error among registered voters is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from two large, national landline and cellphone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted January 23rd to March 16th, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate¹. The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Survey on Government, conducted August 27th to October 4th, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate².

Participating panelists provided either a mailing address or an email address to which a welcome packet, a monetary incentive and future survey invitations could be sent. Panelists also receive a small monetary incentive after participating in each wave of the survey.

The Web component of the June 7-July 5, 2016 wave had a response rate of 82% (4,172 responses among 5,071 Web-based individuals in the panel); the mail component had a response rate of 75% (430 responses among 574 non-Web individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who

¹ When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

² Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the June 7-July 5, 2016 ATP wave is 2.9%³.

The ATP data were weighted in a multi-step process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey. Population density is weighted to match the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. Telephone service is weighted to estimates of telephone coverage for 2016 that were projected from the July-December 2015 National Health Interview Survey. Volunteerism is weighted to match the 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. It also adjusts for party affiliation using an average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. Internet access is adjusted using a measure from the 2015 Survey on Government. Frequency of internet use is weighted to an estimate of daily internet use projected to 2016 from the 2013 Current Population Survey Computer and Internet Use Supplement. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

³ Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Survey conducted June 7-July 5, 2016

Group	Weighted proportion	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	100%	4,602	2.3 percentage points
Registered voters	71%	3,834	2.5 percentage points
<i>Among registered voters</i>			
	Weighted proportion of registered voters		
Republican/Lean Rep	46%	1,758	3.7 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Dem	50%	1,977	3.5 percentage points
Donald Trump supporters	45%	1,705	3.7 percentage points
Hillary Clinton supporters	51%	2,040	3.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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2016 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 18 June
FINAL TOPLINE
June 7 – July 5, 2016
TOTAL N= 4,602
WEB RESPONDENTS N=4,172
MAIL RESPONDENTS N=430¹

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR RELEASE

ASK ALL:

VOTEGEN If the 2016 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for ...
[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]

ASK IF NEITHER/OTHER CANDIDATE OR SKIPPED VOTEGEN (VOTEGEN=3 OR MISSING)
[N=782]:

VOTEGEN3 **[IF NEITHER/OTHER IN VOTEGEN DISPLAY:]**
 And even though you don't plan to support Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, if you had to choose, would you say you ...
[IF SKIPPED VOTEGEN DISPLAY:]
 If you had to choose, would you say you ...
[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS IN SAME ORDER AS VOTEGEN]

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=3,834]

	NET Trump	<u>Trump</u>	Lean <u>Trump</u>	NET Clinton	<u>Clinton</u>	Lean <u>Clinton</u>	Neither in VOTEGEN3	No answer	<i>Neither in VOTEGEN</i>
June 7- July 5, 2016	45	36	9	51	40	11	3	1	23

ASK IF SELECTED CANDIDATE (VOTEGEN=1,2):

VOTEGEN2 And would you say ...

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=3,834]

June 7-July 5
2016

Among Trump supporters (VOTEGEN=1) [N=1,354]

92 You are certain to vote for Trump over Clinton
 8 There is a chance you might change your mind
 * No answer

Among Clinton supporters (VOTEGEN=2) [N=1,698]

91 You are certain to vote for Clinton over Trump
 7 There is a chance you might change your mind
 2 No answer

¹ Question wording in this topline is that from the web version of the survey. Question wording and format was adapted for the paper questionnaire delivered by mail; this questionnaire is available on request. All questions asked in both modes unless noted.

[RANDOMIZE DTIDEO AND HRCIDEO]**ASK ALL:**

DTIDEO Which best describes your impression of Donald Trump's views? **[REVERSE SCALE FOR RANDOM ½ OF RESPONDENTS; USE SAME SCALE ORDER FOR BOTH DTIDEO AND HRCIDEO]**

June 7-July 5

2016

16	He has conservative views on ALMOST ALL issues
28	He has conservative views on MOST issues
38	His views on issues are a mix of conservative and liberal
5	He has liberal views on MOST issues
7	He has liberal views on ALMOST ALL issues
6	No answer
44	NET conservative views
12	NET liberal views

ASK ALL:

HRCIDEO

Which best describes your impression of Hillary Clinton's views? **[REVERSE SCALE FOR RANDOM ½ OF RESPONDENTS; USE SAME SCALE ORDER FOR BOTH DTIDEO AND HRCIDEO]**

June 7-July 5

2016

7	She has conservative views on ALMOST ALL issues
7	She has conservative views on MOST issues
29	Her views on issues are a mix of conservative and liberal
25	She has liberal views on MOST issues
29	She has liberal views on ALMOST ALL issues
5	No answer
13	NET conservative views
54	NET liberal views

[RANDOMIZE TRAITHRC AND TRAITDT]**ASK ALL:**

TRAITHRC Which of the following describe HILLARY CLINTON ...

[Check all that apply] **[RANDOMIZE; SHOW IN SAME ORDER FOR BOTH TRAITHRC AND TRAITDT]**

		<u>Selected</u>	<u>Not selected/ No answer</u>
1.	Honest June 7-July 5, 2016	13	87
2.	Extreme June 7-July 5, 2016	18	82
3.	Has deeply held beliefs June 7-July 5, 2016	23	77
4.	Willing to work with people she disagrees with June 7-July 5, 2016	35	65
5.	Well-informed June 7-July 5, 2016	34	66

TRAITHRC CONTINUED...

		<u>Selected</u>	<u>Not selected/ No answer</u>
6.	Out of touch June 7-July 5, 2016	33	67
7.	Someone you admire June 7-July 5, 2016	17	83
8.	Can unite the country June 7-July 5, 2016	18	82
9.	Has poor judgment June 7-July 5, 2016	42	58
10.	None of these [EXCLUSIVE PUNCH] June 7-July 5, 2016	8	92

ASK ALL:
TRAITDT

Which of the following describe DONALD TRUMP ...

[Check all that apply] **[RANDOMIZE; SHOW IN SAME ORDER FOR BOTH TRAITHRC
AND TRAITDT]**

		<u>Selected</u>	<u>Not selected/ No answer</u>
1.	Honest June 7-July 5, 2016	17	83
2.	Extreme June 7-July 5, 2016	55	45
3.	Has deeply held beliefs June 7-July 5, 2016	28	72
4.	Willing to work with people he disagrees with June 7-July 5, 2016	18	82
5.	Well-informed June 7-July 5, 2016	12	88
6.	Out of touch June 7-July 5, 2016	37	63
7.	Someone you admire June 7-July 5, 2016	9	91
8.	Can unite the country June 7-July 5, 2016	17	83
9.	Has poor judgment June 7-July 5, 2016	52	48
10.	None of these [EXCLUSIVE PUNCH] June 7-July 5, 2016	6	94

[RANDOMIZE DTPOLICY AND HRCPOLICY]**ASK ALL:**

DTPOLICY Looking ahead a few years, if DONALD TRUMP were to become president, do you think each of the following would be better, worse or not much different than it is now?

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS A – F, KEEP SAME ORDER USED FOR HRCPOLICY]

		A lot better <u>than</u> <u>now</u>	A little better <u>than now</u>	Not much different <u>than now</u>	A little worse <u>than now</u>	A lot worse <u>than now</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a.	The economy June 7-July 5, 2016	19	20	20	13	26	2
b.	The immigration situation June 7-July 5, 2016	26	16	12	9	36	2
c.	Security from terrorism in the U.S. June 7-July 5, 2016	24	19	19	9	28	1
d.	U.S. foreign policy June 7-July 5, 2016	12	18	17	12	39	2
e.	Health care policy June 7-July 5, 2016	14	20	23	14	27	2
f.	The nation's budget deficit June 7-July 5, 2016	15	23	21	11	27	2

ASK ALL:

HRCPOLICY Looking ahead a few years, if HILLARY CLINTON were to become president, do you think each of the following would be better, worse or not much different than it is now?

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS A – F, KEEP SAME ORDER USED FOR DTPOLICY]

		A lot better <u>than</u> <u>now</u>	A little better <u>than now</u>	Not much different <u>than now</u>	A little worse <u>than now</u>	A lot worse <u>than now</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a.	The economy June 7-July 5, 2016	9	22	33	14	21	1
b.	The immigration situation June 7-July 5, 2016	8	20	36	11	25	1
c.	Security from terrorism in the U.S. June 7-July 5, 2016	8	19	37	11	23	1
d.	U.S. foreign policy June 7-July 5, 2016	10	21	35	12	21	2
e.	Health care policy June 7-July 5, 2016	10	22	35	11	20	2
f.	The nation's budget deficit June 7-July 5, 2016	7	19	33	14	25	2