

Released:  
**Monday, December 14, 2015**

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## **NATIONAL: TRUMP WIDENS NATIONAL LEAD**

*Cruz, Rubio, Carson vie for second*

West Long Branch, NJ – The latest ***Monmouth University Poll*** finds Donald Trump building a commanding national lead in the race for the Republican nomination. Ted Cruz is slightly ahead of Ben Carson and Marco Rubio in the second tier, while all other candidates poll well below 5 percent. The poll also finds, however, that Republican voters other than Trump or Cruz supporters feel the frontrunner does not have the right temperament to be president.

When Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are asked who they would support for the GOP nomination for president, Donald Trump leads the pack at 41%. Ted Cruz (14%), Marco Rubio (10%), and Ben Carson (9%) are far behind. All of the other ten candidates tested poll in the low single digits, including Jeb Bush (3%), John Kasich (3%), Chris Christie (2%), Carly Fiorina (2%), Mike Huckabee (2%), and Rand Paul (2%). All but Huckabee have been invited to the main stage for tomorrow's debate.

The results represent a big jump in Trump's support and a rearrangement of the deck chairs in the second tier. After polling between 26% and 30% in Monmouth polls throughout the late summer and fall, Trump's showing has increased by 13 points from his 28% result in mid-October. Cruz and Rubio have each gained 4 points over the same period, while Carson's support has dropped by 9 points.

"It has become abundantly clear that Trump is giving his supporters exactly what they want, even if what he says causes the GOP leadership and many Republican voters to cringe" said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

While nearly 2-in-3 (65%) voters overall agree that Trump has the temperament to take on the role of president, there are significant differences in this view among the GOP electorate. More than 9-in-10 (94%) Trump supporters say he has the right temperament. Cruz voters are more likely to have a positive (52%) rather than negative (43%) opinion of Trump's demeanor. Among all other Republican

voters, though, 55% say Trump’s temperament is not a good fit for the presidency compared to 43% who feel it is.

Overall, 30% of Republicans would be enthusiastic if Trump won the nomination and another 37% would be satisfied. Just 12% would be dissatisfied and another 16% would actually be upset. Putting Trump’s supporter’s aside, most Cruz voters (63%) would be okay with Trump as the party’s standard-bearer. Among all other Republican voters, however, just 40% feel the same while most say they would be either dissatisfied (24%) or upset (29%) if Trump was the GOP nominee.

Trump’s support comes from a wide variety of GOP voter groups, although it is skewed toward those who have never been to college. Trump commands the support of a majority (54%) of Republican voters with a high school education – 13 points higher than his overall support levels. He also does somewhat better among men (44%) than women (37%), but draws very similar levels of support from very conservative (41%), somewhat conservative (45%), and moderate (40%) voters.

Trump does better among strong tea party supporters (52%), but this is a group where Cruz also outperforms his overall standing by garnering 29% support, which is 15 points higher than his support among all GOP voters. Cruz also performs well among very conservative voters (26%).

“Trump voters may skew toward a lower educational level, but it’s important to keep in mind that he draws support from significant segments of every voting bloc. You simply can’t pigeonhole his supporters as representing one or two particular factions of the party,” said Murray.

KEY VOTER GROUPS for TRUMP and CRUZ												
	Total	Men	Women	High school education	Some college education	College degree	Very conservative	Somewhat conservative	Moderate	Strong tea party support	Soft tea party support	No tea party support
<b>TRUMP</b>	41	44	37	54	34	31	41	45	40	52	41	36
<i>Compared to total</i>		+3	-4	+13	-7	-10	-	+4	-1	+11	-	-5
<b>CRUZ</b>	14	16	12	8	18	19	26	8	10	29	12	12
<i>Compared to total</i>		+2	-2	-6	+4	+5	+12	-6	-4	+15	-2	-2

Trump’s personal rating has also improved in the past two months. It now stands at 61% favorable and 29% unfavorable, compared to 52% – 33% in October. The current results represent an all-time high for Trump’s rating according to the *Monmouth University Poll*. Cruz stands at 58% favorable and 18% unfavorable, up slightly from 50% – 23% in October. Rubio earns a similar 55% favorable – 18% unfavorable rating, up from 49% – 16% two months ago. Carson’s rating remains high at 57% – 25%, but this is down from his 65% – 11% standing in October.

The top issue for Republican voters nationwide is national security and terrorism (39% first choice / 18% second choice), followed by the economy and jobs (19% first choice / 22% second choice). The next tier of issue concerns includes taxes and government spending (12% first choice / 13% second choice) and immigration (9% first choice / 16% second choice). Social issues (4% / 7%), gun control (3% / 6%), and education (3% / 5%) rank much farther down the list.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 13, 2015 with 1006 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 385 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. This voter sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 5.0$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

### DATA TABLES

*The questions referred to in this release are as follows:*

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. I know the 2016 election is far away, but who would you support for the Republican nomination for president if the candidates were – **[NAMES WERE ROTATED]**

	December 2015	October 2015	September 2015	August 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015
Donald Trump	41%	28%	30%	26%	13%	2%	7%
Ted Cruz	14%	10%	8%	6%	9%	5%	11%
Marco Rubio	10%	6%	5%	4%	6%	9%	5%
Ben Carson	9%	18%	18%	5%	6%	11%	7%
Jeb Bush	3%	5%	8%	12%	15%	9%	13%
John Kasich	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Chris Christie	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Carly Fiorina	2%	6%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Mike Huckabee	2%	4%	4%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Rand Paul	2%	4%	2%	4%	6%	6%	6%
Lindsey Graham	1%	1%	0%	1%	<1%	2%	1%
George Pataki	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Rick Santorum	<1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%	1%
Jim Gilmore	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
(VOL) Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<i>Bobby Jindal</i>	<i>n/a</i>	1%	<1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
<i>Rick Perry</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%
<i>Scott Walker</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	3%	11%	7%	10%	11%
(VOL) No one	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	6%	9%	9%	10%	18%	20%	14%
(n)	385	348	366	423	336	351	355

2. I'm going to read you a few names of people who are running for president in 2016. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<b>Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>19%</b>
--October 2015	37	44	19
--September 2015	41	39	20
--August 2015	52	30	18
--July 2015	50	30	20
--June 2015	40	35	25
--April 2015	49	31	21
--December 2014	39	30	31
<b>Commentator and Doctor Ben Carson</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>
--October 2015	65	11	23
--September 2015	67	6	26
--August 2015	45	10	45
--July 2015	48	11	41
--June 2015	45	12	43
--April 2015	39	16	45
--December 2014	32	12	57
<b>Texas Senator Ted Cruz</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>24%</b>
--October 2015	50	23	26
--September 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
--August 2015	52	14	34
--July 2015	48	16	35
--June 2015	49	17	35
--April 2015	49	19	32
--December 2014	39	15	46
<b>Florida Senator Marco Rubio</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>27%</b>
--October 2015	49	16	35
--September 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
--August 2015	54	11	36
--July 2015	53	19	28
--June 2015	54	13	34
--April 2015	41	18	40
--December 2014	38	16	46
<b>Businessman Donald Trump</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>
--October 2015	52	33	15
--September 2015	59	29	12
--August 2015	52	35	13
--July 2015	40	41	19
--June 2015	20	55	25
--April 2015	28	56	15
--December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a

3. How would you feel if Donald Trump became the Republican nominee – enthusiastic, satisfied, dissatisfied, or upset?

	December 2015
Enthusiastic	30%
Satisfied	37%
Dissatisfied	12%
Upset	16%
(VOL) Don't know	5%

4. Regardless of whether you would vote for him, do you agree or disagree that Donald Trump has the temperament needed to carry out the role of President of the United States? [Is that strongly or somewhat (agree/disagree)?]

	December 2015
Strongly agree	42%
Somewhat agree	23%
Somewhat disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	23%
(VOL) Don't know	2%

5. Which of the following issues is the most important to you in deciding who to support for president? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]
6. And which is the second most important?

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	Combined 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Immigration	9%	16%	25%
The economy and jobs	19%	22%	41%
National security and terrorism	39%	18%	57%
Social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage	4%	7%	11%
Taxes and government spending	12%	13%	25%
Education	3%	5%	8%
Gun control	3%	6%	9%
(VOL) All equally important	9%	1%	10%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%	0%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	11%	12%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 13, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,006 adults age 18 and older. This includes 654 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 352 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). The results in this poll release are based on a subsample of 385 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 5.0 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>		
<i>FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS</i>		
49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic
		7% Asian/Other

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>		
<i>REPUBLICAN VOTERS ONLY</i>		
53% Male	18% 18-34	84% White
47% Female	46% 35-54	3% Black
	36% 55+	8% Hispanic
		5% Asian/Other

<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>										
	<i>REPUBLICAN VOTER</i>	<i>PARTY ID</i>		<i>GENDER</i>		<i>TEA PARTY SUPPORTER</i>		<i>POLITICAL IDEOLOGY</i>		
		<i>Rep</i>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Very cons.</i>	<i>Somewhat cons.</i>	<i>Mod/liberal</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	385	250	135	209	176	134	232	134	127	117
<i>moe</i>	5.0%	6.2%	8.4%	6.8%	7.4%	8.5%	6.4%	8.5%	8.7%	9.1%

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