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## **NATIONAL: VOTERS OPTIMISTIC FOR 2016**

*Candidate ratings: Rubio well-positioned, huge negatives for Trump*

West Long Branch, NJ – American voters are looking forward to electing a new president in 2016, according to the *Monmouth University Poll*. However, they differ on which candidates vying for the White House are held in the highest esteem. The only contender who arouses solid bi-partisan opinion is the latest entrant to the field, Donald Trump. Unfortunately for him, that opinion is largely negative.

More than 2-in-3 (69%) American voters say they feel optimistic about the 2016 election and just 25% are pessimistic. Fully, 81% of Republicans, 70% of Democrats, and 60% of independents feel optimistic about electing a new president. Most voters (57%) say they feel about the same amount of enthusiasm for the upcoming race as they did in past elections. The remainder are split between feeling either more enthusiastic (21%) or less enthusiastic (22%). Republicans are slightly more (27%) rather than less (15%) enthusiastic, while Democrats are slightly less (27%) rather than more (17%) enthusiastic.

The poll also asked voters their opinion of eight presidential contenders – six Republicans and two Democrats. Of this group, only Florida Senator Marco Rubio earns a net positive rating. Donald Trump, who threw his hat into the ring yesterday, has the highest negatives. Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush does slightly better than former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton among independent voters, but Clinton is better positioned than Bush in the presidential swing states – the ten states where the margin of victory in the 2012 election was less than seven percentage points.

Donald Trump earns an 18% favorable and 57% unfavorable rating among American voters. He is the only candidate in the field where there is little partisan\* difference in these ratings – 65% of Democrats, 56% of independents, and 50% of Republicans all have an unfavorable opinion of Trump.

“Donald Trump takes pride in doing things big. Well, that certainly describes the negative ratings he gets from voters,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute based in West Long Branch, NJ. Murray added, “While the Republican field has no clear front-

runner, Marco Rubio seems to be in the best position right now to use the electability argument to his advantage.”

Marco Rubio gets a narrow net positive rating of 31% favorable and 27% unfavorable from American voters. Of the eight candidates tested in the poll, Rubio performs the best with independent voters – garnering a 33% favorable and 22% unfavorable rating. He is also competitive in the so-called swing states, earning a 29% favorable to 28% unfavorable rating from voters in those crucial states.

Jeb Bush, who announced his candidacy on Monday, earns a net negative rating of 26% favorable and 46% unfavorable among American voters, including a 25% favorable and 44% unfavorable rating among independents. He also does the worst of any candidate tested in the poll – other than Trump – with swing state voters at 25% favorable and 49% unfavorable.

Democratic front runner Hillary Clinton earns a 41% favorable and 44% unfavorable rating among American voters. She does worse than Bush among independent voters nationwide – 26% favorable and 55% unfavorable. However, she does comparatively better in the swing states at 38% favorable and 47% unfavorable. Clinton is the only candidate among the eight tested whose ratings show a sizable gender gap. Women voters give her a narrow positive rating of 45% favorable and 40% unfavorable, while men give her a decidedly negative rating of 36% favorable and 49% unfavorable.

Among other candidates vying for the presidency, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker performs relatively evenly with a 23% favorable to 25% unfavorable rating, although most voters still have no opinion of him. Walker gets a 24% favorable and 20% unfavorable rating among independents and a 24% favorable and 24% unfavorable rating among swing state voters.

Kentucky Senator Rand Paul earns a 26% favorable to 34% unfavorable rating and Texas Senator Ted Cruz gets a similar 25% favorable and 34% unfavorable rating. However, Paul does better among independents – 31% favorable and 27% unfavorable – than Cruz does – 24% favorable and 31% unfavorable.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders earns a 15% favorable and 24% unfavorable rating overall, with 6-in-10 American voters having no opinion of the liberal stalwart.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from June 11 to 14, 2015 with 1,002 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 829 registered voters. This voter sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.4$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

\* Methodological note: The partisan breakdown for candidate ratings in this polling release differs slightly from the Monmouth University nomination contest polls released earlier in the week. This is due to the fact that the prior releases counted independent voters who lean toward a party as partisans. This release groups those “leaners” as independents.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

1. Please tell me if your general impression of each of the following is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]  
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>41%</b>	12%	26%	83%	36%	45%	39%	42%	42%	38%	39%	36%	48%
Unfavorable	<b>44%</b>	73%	55%	8%	49%	40%	40%	44%	47%	47%	46%	49%	39%
No opinion	<b>14%</b>	14%	19%	9%	14%	15%	21%	14%	11%	15%	16%	15%	13%

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>15%</b>	3%	15%	26%	17%	14%	15%	14%	16%	16%	14%	15%	15%
Unfavorable	<b>24%</b>	27%	26%	18%	30%	18%	21%	22%	27%	20%	26%	24%	25%
No opinion	<b>61%</b>	70%	59%	55%	53%	68%	64%	63%	57%	64%	60%	61%	60%

2. Please tell me if your general impression of each of the following is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]  
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>26%</b>	43%	25%	16%	28%	25%	19%	24%	34%	25%	24%	30%	27%
Unfavorable	<b>46%</b>	30%	44%	60%	49%	43%	51%	48%	41%	49%	43%	43%	47%
No opinion	<b>28%</b>	27%	31%	24%	23%	32%	30%	28%	25%	26%	33%	27%	26%

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>25%</b>	48%	24%	8%	30%	22%	23%	24%	28%	29%	23%	31%	20%
Unfavorable	<b>34%</b>	16%	31%	53%	39%	30%	36%	32%	36%	31%	32%	34%	39%
No opinion	<b>41%</b>	36%	45%	39%	31%	49%	42%	44%	37%	41%	45%	34%	41%

Kentucky Senator Rand Paul

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>26%</b>	36%	31%	11%	32%	21%	30%	25%	23%	24%	34%	29%	20%
Unfavorable	<b>34%</b>	27%	27%	48%	35%	32%	26%	32%	40%	31%	28%	30%	40%
No opinion	<b>41%</b>	37%	42%	41%	34%	47%	43%	43%	37%	44%	38%	41%	39%

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>31%</b>	49%	33%	14%	36%	26%	25%	28%	36%	29%	29%	41%	27%
Unfavorable	<b>27%</b>	14%	22%	42%	31%	23%	27%	26%	28%	28%	29%	19%	29%
No opinion	<b>42%</b>	37%	45%	44%	32%	52%	48%	46%	36%	44%	42%	40%	44%

**Businessman Donald Trump**

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>18%</b>	20%	20%	12%	17%	18%	20%	18%	16%	13%	19%	15%	22%
Unfavorable	<b>57%</b>	50%	56%	65%	58%	57%	56%	55%	60%	55%	52%	61%	60%
No opinion	<b>25%</b>	30%	24%	22%	24%	25%	24%	27%	24%	32%	29%	23%	18%

**Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker**

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Favorable	<b>23%</b>	39%	24%	7%	27%	19%	14%	21%	29%	24%	22%	23%	22%
Unfavorable	<b>25%</b>	12%	20%	43%	30%	21%	20%	25%	29%	24%	27%	19%	29%
No opinion	<b>52%</b>	49%	56%	50%	43%	60%	65%	53%	43%	53%	51%	58%	49%

**3. Thinking about the 2016 election, do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about electing a new president?**

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
Optimistic	<b>69%</b>	81%	60%	70%	66%	71%	69%	70%	67%	69%	61%	72%	71%
Pessimistic	<b>25%</b>	17%	31%	22%	25%	24%	24%	24%	26%	24%	29%	25%	23%
(VOL) Neither	<b>4%</b>	0%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	3%	5%	4%	7%	2%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>2%</b>	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%	1%	2%

**4. Compared to past elections, are you more enthusiastic than usual, less enthusiastic, or about the same as past elections?**

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
More enthusiastic	<b>21%</b>	27%	20%	17%	20%	21%	23%	19%	20%	16%	22%	29%	19%
Less enthusiastic	<b>22%</b>	15%	19%	27%	18%	25%	22%	16%	26%	22%	22%	18%	23%
About the same	<b>57%</b>	57%	58%	56%	60%	54%	53%	64%	52%	61%	54%	53%	57%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from June 11 to 14, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,002 adults age 18 and older. This includes 700 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 302 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 829 registered voters. 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 3.4 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>			
24% Rep	49% Male	31% 18-34	67% White
44% Ind	51% Female	37% 35-54	12% Black
32% Dem		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
<i>REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY</i>			
26% Rep	46% Male	23% 18-34	70% White
42% Ind	54% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
32% Dem		38% 55+	12% Hispanic
			6% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			MARGIN OF ERROR		AGE			2012 SWING STATE			
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Swing, <7%	Lean, 7-12%	Red, >12%	Blue, >12%
<i>Unweighted N</i>	829	212	332	273	400	429	118	235	474	224	158	168	279
<i>moe</i>	3.4%	6.7%	5.4%	5.9%	4.9%	4.7%	9.0%	6.4%	4.5%	6.6%	7.8%	7.6%	5.9%

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