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NATIONAL: PUBLIC SUPPORTS INVESTIGATION OF CLINTON EMAILS

Pre-debate ratings: Clinton, Trump most negative among independents

West Long Branch, NJ – A majority of American voters are not particularly suspicious of Hillary Clinton’s use of a personal email account when she was Secretary of State. Still, most support a criminal investigation of those emails for the potential release of classified material. The ***Monmouth University Poll*** also measured voter opinion of several presidential candidates before last week’s GOP debate, finding Clinton and Donald Trump with the highest negative ratings among independent voters.

Just over half (51%) of registered voters feel that Hillary Clinton’s use of a personal email account during her time as Secretary of State was mainly a matter of convenience compared to 38% who say this behavior suggests she has something to hide. Most Democrats (80%) say it was a matter of convenience, while most Republicans (68%) say she has something to hide. Independents are split – 48% say it was out of convenience and 41% say it suggests she may be hiding something.

Even though most voters feel Clinton’s intentions may have been acceptable, a majority (52%) say that her emails should be subject to a criminal investigation for the potential release of classified material. Another 41% say the emails should not be subject to this type of investigation. Most Republicans (82%) and a majority of independents (54%) support an investigation, while two-thirds (66%) of Democrats are opposed.

The poll also found that Republicans are paying the most attention to this story. Overall, 61% of all voters have heard a lot about the former Secretary of State’s use of private emails and another 24% have heard a little. Republicans (78%) are more likely than Democrats (56%) or independents (56%) to have heard a lot about this.

“Initial media reports of a criminal probe proved to be inaccurate, but most voters feel that the potential release of classified information merits investigation,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute based in West Long Branch, NJ.

The *Monmouth University Poll* also found that Hillary Clinton has high negative ratings among independent voters, currently standing at 27% favorable to 52% unfavorable. These results are similar to the 26% favorable to 55% unfavorable rating she held among independents in June. Her overall voter rating is 38% favorable to 48% unfavorable, which is slightly worse than the overall 41% to 44% rating she received two months ago. This drop was driven mostly by a decline in favorability among Democratic voters from 83% in June to 76% in the current poll.

“Opinion among Clinton’s fellow Democrats has declined but remains high. They will still vote for her in November 2016 if she is the nominee. Unless those numbers come down substantially in the next few months, the independent voter group is the one to watch,” said Murray.

Voter opinion has improved for Bernie Sanders, Clinton’s chief rival for the Democratic nomination, but he remains largely unknown. His overall rating now stands at 24% favorable to 26% unfavorable, compared with 15% to 24% two months ago. Among independents he earns a split 24% favorable to 23% unfavorable rating, which is up from 15% to 26% in June. Still, about half of all voters regardless of party affiliation have no opinion of Sanders.

On the Republican side, Donald Trump’s negative ratings among independent voters are comparable to Clinton’s numbers. It is important to keep in mind that the poll was conducted before last week’s GOP debate and, thus, opinion could have shifted significantly since then. These results provide a picture of where the Republican field stood going into that first debate and as a benchmark for later poll readings.

Trump’s overall rating last week stood at 31% favorable and 54% unfavorable, compared with 18% unfavorable and 57% favorable right before he announced his candidacy in mid-June. Independent voter opinion of Trump in the current poll measured at 30% favorable to 54% unfavorable. Though negative, this result is an improvement over his 20% to 56% independent rating in June.

Other Republican candidates included in the poll did not see much change in their ratings among independent voters. Jeb Bush’s rating of 33% favorable to 43% unfavorable was better than his June rating of 26% to 46% mainly due to improving Republican voter opinion. His 29% favorable to 45% unfavorable rating among independents is basically unchanged from the 25% to 44% rating he received two months ago.

Voters rendered split decisions on Rand Paul – 31% favorable to 31% unfavorable overall and 33% to 27% among independents – and Scott Walker – 26% to 26% overall and 26% to 25% among independents. Voters are slightly more positive toward Marco Rubio – 30% to 26% overall and 31% to 24% among independents – and more negative toward Ted Cruz – 27% to 33% overall and 25% to 35% among independents.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from July 30 to August 2, 2015 with 1,203 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 1,033 registered voters and has a margin of error of ± 3.1 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 last 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.

DATA TABLES

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		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	38%	13%	27%	76%
Unfavorable	48%	81%	52%	14%
No opinion	14%	6%	21%	10%

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	24%	8%	24%	39%
Unfavorable	26%	45%	23%	14%
No opinion	50%	47%	54%	47%

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	33%	57%	29%	21%
Unfavorable	43%	27%	45%	55%
No opinion	24%	16%	26%	25%

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	27%	51%	25%	11%
Unfavorable	33%	13%	35%	52%
No opinion	40%	36%	41%	37%

Kentucky Senator Rand Paul

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	31%	48%	33%	15%
Unfavorable	31%	21%	27%	45%
No opinion	38%	30%	40%	40%

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	30%	54%	31%	11%
Unfavorable	26%	11%	24%	41%
No opinion	44%	35%	45%	47%

Businessman Donald Trump

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	31%	49%	30%	15%
Unfavorable	54%	35%	54%	72%
No opinion	14%	15%	16%	12%

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Favorable	26%	50%	26%	6%
Unfavorable	26%	9%	25%	45%
No opinion	48%	41%	49%	49%

TREND:	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	38%	48%	14%
--June 2015	41	44	14
Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders	24%	26%	50%
--June 2015	15	24	61
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush	33%	43%	24%
--June 2015	26	46	28
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	27%	33%	40%
--June 2015	25	34	41
Kentucky Senator Rand Paul	31%	31%	38%
--June 2015	26	34	41
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	30%	26%	44%
--June 2015	31	27	42
Businessman Donald Trump	31%	54%	14%
--June 2015	18	57	25
Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker	26%	26%	48%
--June 2015	23	25	52

2. How much have you seen or heard about Hillary Clinton using a personal email account during her time as Secretary of State?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
A lot	61%	78%	56%	56%
A little	24%	15%	24%	30%
Nothing at all	15%	7%	20%	14%

3. Do you think Hillary Clinton using a personal email account for official business suggests she has something to hide or was more a matter of convenience?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Has something to hide	38%	68%	41%	8%
A matter of convenience	51%	23%	48%	80%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	9%	12%	12%

4. Do you think Hillary Clinton's emails should be subject to a criminal investigation for potential release of classified material, or not?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Rep	Ind	Dem
Should be	52%	82%	54%	23%
Should not be	41%	16%	38%	66%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	2%	8%	10%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from July 30 to August 2, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,203 adults age 18 and older. This includes 842 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 361 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 1,003 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 3.1 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.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS			
25% Rep	49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
45% Ind	51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
31% Dem		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY			
27% Rep	48% Male	24% 18-34	71% White
42% Ind	52% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
30% Dem		37% 55+	11% Hispanic
			6% Asian/Other

MARGIN OF ERROR				
	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Rep	Ind	Dem
Unweighted N	1,033	292	416	305
moe	3.1%	5.7%	4.8%	5.6%

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