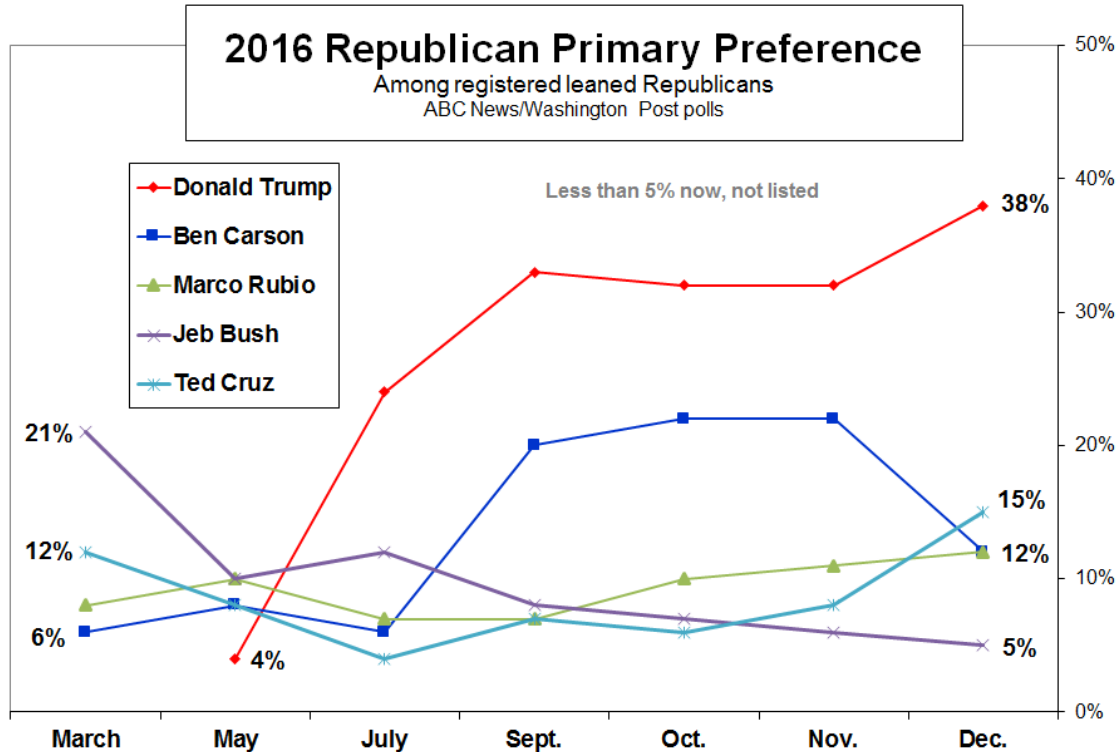


# Trump Hits a New High in the GOP Race; Against Clinton, it's Outsider vs. Experience

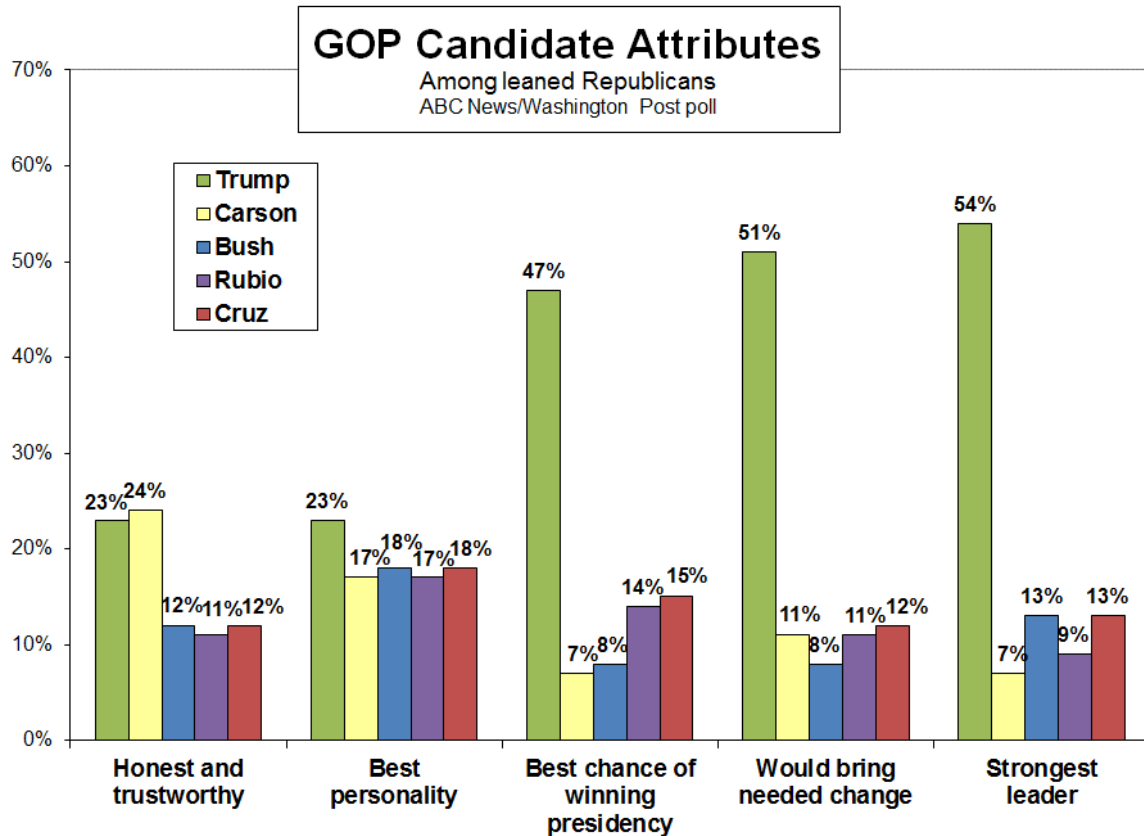
Donald Trump has reached a new high in support for the Republican presidential nomination in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll, drawing on GOP support for his proposed ban on Muslims along with his powerful outsider credentials. Ben Carson's cratered, while Ted Cruz has advanced to join the double-digit club – but with Trump now unrivaled for the lead.

That said, Trump slightly trails Hillary Clinton in a general election matchup, by 6 percentage points among registered voters, expanding to 13 points among all adults. And a broad 69 percent of Americans express anxiety at the thought of Trump as president, with half saying it makes them “very” anxious. Clinton makes far fewer anxious, albeit 51 percent.

Trump has 38 percent support for his party's nomination from Republicans and GOP-leaning independents who are registered to vote, up a slight 6 points from last month, entirely among men. He's added concerns about terrorism to his existing anti-immigrant, political outsider credentials – all pressing items in his party, but less so outside of it.



Tested against his top rivals in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), Trump has gained 8 points in trust to handle terrorism and 7 points as the strongest leader, as well as 9 points in being seen as likeliest to win in November. He holds vast in-party advantages on all three items, and on handling immigration as well.

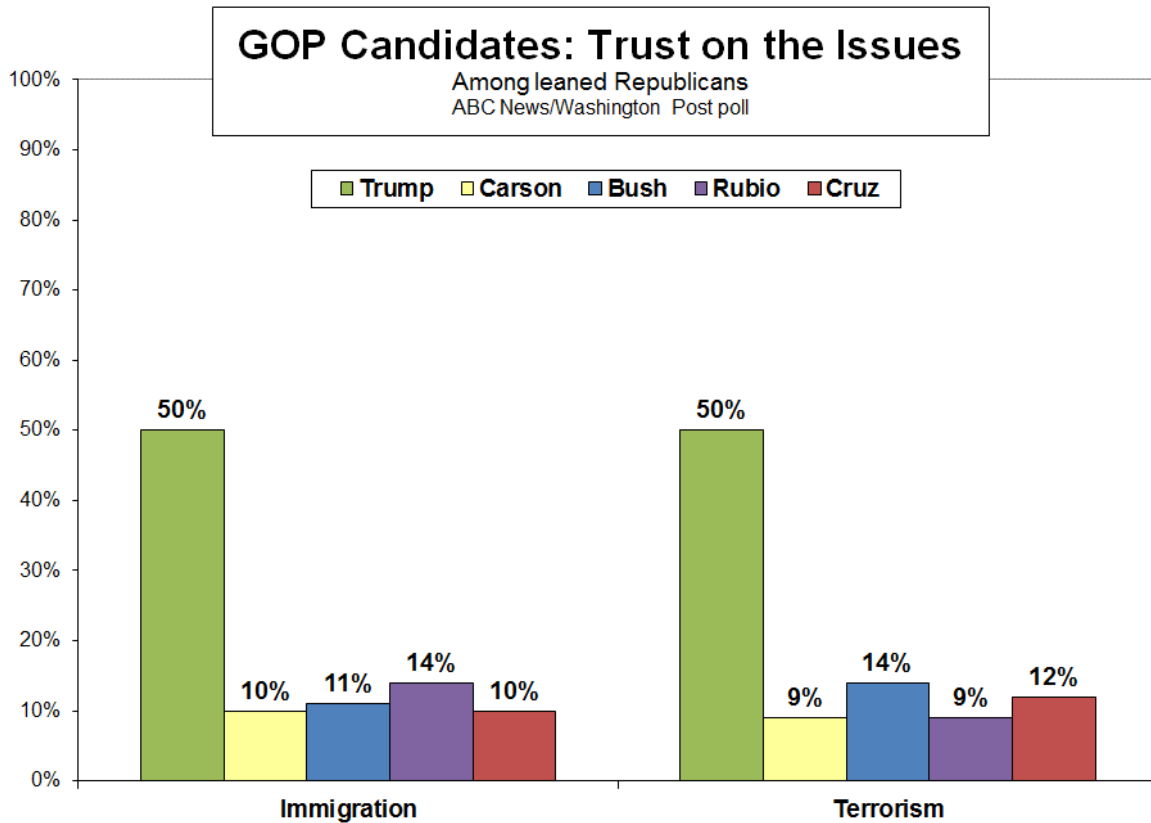


Critically, leaned Republicans by 58-37 percent say they're looking for someone from outside the existing political establishment rather than someone with political experience. Trump's support among the majority favoring an outsider soars to 50 percent, compared with 21 percent among those putting a priority on experience. It's the central feature of the Trump phenomenon.

A challenge is what may happen outside the party. Among all adults, the tables turn – 37 percent are looking for an outsider, while more, 57 percent, prefer a candidate with political experience. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, preference for experience soars to 76 percent, with just 18 percent looking for an outsider.

In a statistical analysis testing the strongest independent factors in support for Clinton or Trump in a hypothetical matchup, her single biggest advantage is experience, and his single biggest advantage is being an outsider – factors that, remarkably, are even stronger than partisanship and ideology. Just within the GOP contest, the same analysis finds that Trump's outsider status is his single biggest asset.

REPUBLICANS – Trump’s gain in support this month came among men, up 17 points, leading to the re-emergence of a broad gender gap: He’s backed for the nomination by 47 percent of men vs. 28 percent of women. He also remains strongest among less-educated and lower-income leaned Republicans, with 42 percent support among those who lack a college degree and 50 percent among those with incomes less than \$50,000. Those can be low-turnout groups, a potential risk for Trump.



There also may be a cautionary tale in the results on Carson: Candidates with substantial support don’t always stay there. He’s dropped from 22 percent in October and November to 12 percent now, giving ground on key personal attributes across the board – down 15 points in being seen as having the best chance to win, -11 in being likeliest to “bring needed change to Washington,” -10 on honesty/trustworthiness and -9 in having the best personality and temperament for the job. Just 7 percent call him the strongest leader, a continuing shortfall, and clearly a hazardous one.

Carson’s trajectory will be familiar to Jeb Bush; mired for months in an epic slump, Bush has gone from 21 percent support last March to a new low, 5 percent, now. He’s suffered from a lack of a central theme or unified support in any core GOP groups – as well as in the party’s yearning for an outsider.

Notable among other GOP candidates is Ted Cruz, advancing to 15 percent support in this survey, up 7 points from last month and 11 points from July to a new high, including a 16-point

advance among women in the past month. He's numerically second to Trump, albeit distantly, and his support is not significantly different from either Carson's or Marco Rubio's, both at 12 percent.

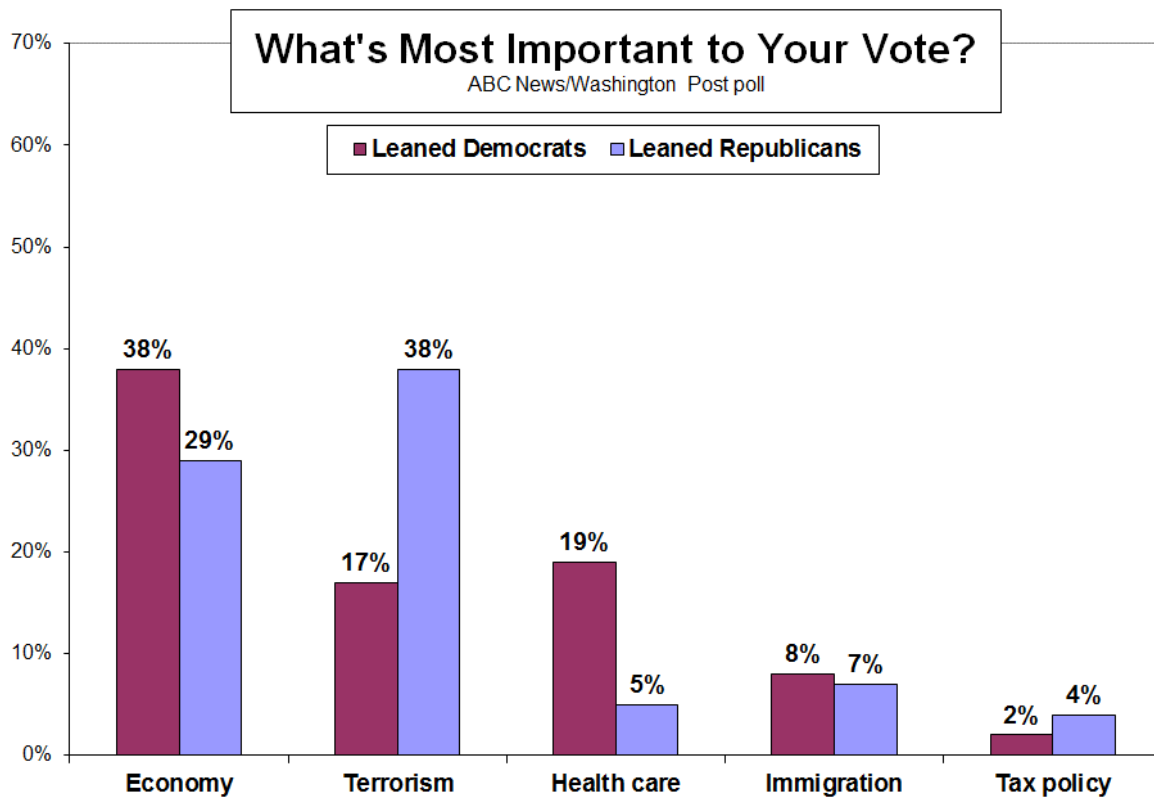
Cruz's advance and Carson's decline can be traced mainly to two important GOP groups: Evangelical white Protestants and strong conservatives. Carson has lost 19 points in support in each of these groups since last month; Cruz has gained 15 and 13, respectively.

Trump's lead among Republicans looking for an outsider has advanced a bit, by 9 points compared with October; Cruz is +9 in this same group, while Carson is -16 and Carly Fiorina -5. (Fiorina has slipped from 4 to 1 percent support overall, a statistically significant change given her low level of backing.) Cruz is the only politician in this group, though one who portrays himself as something of an anti-politician politician.

Relating to his controversial proposal on temporarily banning Muslims from entering the United States, Trump does better with registered leaned Republicans who see mainstream Islam as a violent religion (46 percent support) vs. those who see it as peaceful. But even in the latter group, a still-high 31 percent support Trump over his GOP competitors.

Vote preference among registered leaned Republicans					
	Trump	Cruz	Carson	Rubio	Bush
All	38%	15	12	12	5
Men	47	10	9	14	5
Women	28	22	14	11	6
No college deg.	42	16	8	9	5
College grad	29	15	18	18	4
Evangelical white Protestants	34	20	15	10	3
Liberal/Moderate	34	10	13	12	8
Conservative NET	40	18	11	13	3
Somewhat	41	11	14	13	4
Very	40	28	7	13	2
Preference:					
Experience	21	19	8	19	9
Outsider	50	13	14	8	2
Mainstream Islam:					
Peaceful	31	7	14	15	6
Violent	46	23	11	9	5

TRUMP-CLINTON – There's a continued split between the parties in top issues. Most leaned Republicans cite terrorism or the economy, 38 and 29 percent, respectively, with other items (health care, immigration and tax policy) in the single digits. Among leaned Democrats, the economy clearly is first, cited by 38 percent, with health care and terrorism next, at 19 and 17 percent.



The choice of issues matters in a hypothetical general election matchup. Among those most concerned with the economy (a Democratic-leaning group, as noted), 58 percent prefer Clinton vs. 36 percent for Trump. The margin flips among those most concerned with terrorism (a more GOP group), 61-33 percent, Trump-Clinton.

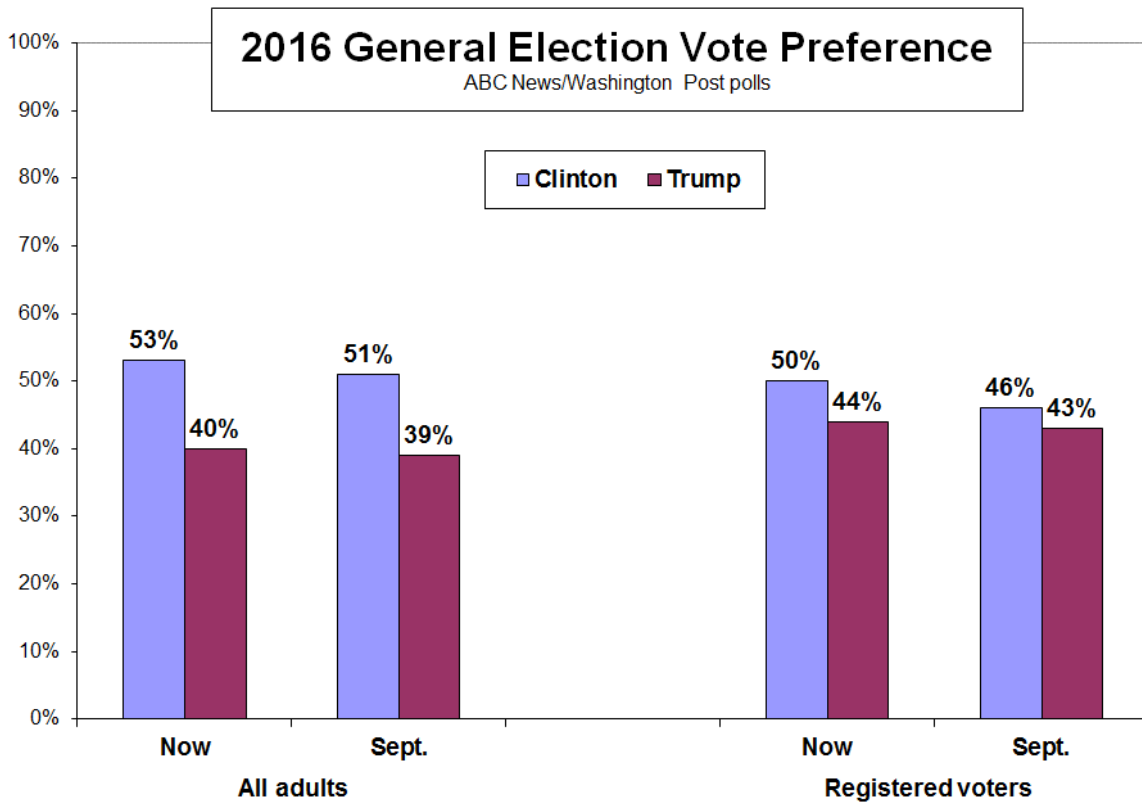
Clinton's six-point advantage among registered voters is significant at the 90 percent confidence level, albeit not at the customary 95 percent. That's a better result for her than her +3 vs. Trump, 46-43 percent, in a matchup in September.

That said, preference in a general election contest at this stage is more about partisanship than about specific candidate choices. Forty-seven percent of registered voters in this survey are Democrats or independents who lean toward the Democratic Party, while 41 percent are leaned Republicans. (The power of partisanship explains why Trump gets support from some registered voters who are anxious about him.)

Among groups, Clinton holds a 19-point lead among moderates, up slightly from September, and has more support among liberals (82 percent) than Trump does among conservatives (71 percent). Liberals and moderates together make up 63 percent of registered voters.

Clinton continues to dominate among 18- to 29-year-olds, with 70 percent support – a key group for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 alike. And Clinton has narrowed the race among seniors,

shaving a 55-35 percent Trump lead in September, to nearly an even split, 47-43 percent, Trump-Clinton.



	Among registered voters	
	Clinton-Trump	Difference
All	50-44%	+6 pts.
Democrats	86-11	+75
Republicans	14-80	-66
Independents	45-46	-1
Liberals	82-15	+67
Moderates	56-37	+19
Conservatives	19-71	-52
Whites	39-53	-14
Nonwhites	74-22	+52
Men	44-51	-7
Women	54-38	+16
18-29	70-25	+45
65-plus	43-47	-4
<\$50K	53-41	+12
\$50-100K	48-48	0
\$100K-plus	51-43	8

College grads	53-39	+14
Non-graduates	48-46	+2
HS or less	48-46	+2
Some college	48-47	+1
College degree	51-41	+10
Post grad	57-35	+22
Prefer:		
Experience	72-23	+49
Outsider	18-73	-55
Most important issue:		
Economy	58-36	+22
Terrorism	33-61	-28
Healthcare	73-19	+54
Ban Muslims:		
Support	16-80	-64
Oppose	72-21	+51

There are other divisions – a 14-point advantage for Trump among whites, for example (Mitt Romney won this group by 20 points) and a 52-point lead for Clinton among nonwhites (Obama was +61). Clinton, further, leads by 22 points among those with post-graduate degrees, a group Obama won in 2012 by 13 points. Clinton and Trump are about even among those who lack a college degree.

Trump, notably, has gained 9 points among those preferring a candidate from outside the political establishment, from 64 percent in September to 73 percent now. Clinton’s lost 7 points in this group, from 25 percent to 18 percent, but wins 72 percent of those who favor a candidate with experience. And at least at the moment, as noted, that’s the factor driving the 2016 race.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Dec. 10-13, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect, for the full sample; 4 points for all registered voters; and 6 points for registered leaned Republicans. Partisan divisions are 33-23-34 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1-2, 8-9, 15, 18-20 held for release; 12, 16-17 previously released.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

3. I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential primary or caucus in your state. Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

	Cert.	Prob.	50-50	Less than 50-50	Will not vote (vol.)	No primary/caucus (vol.)	Already voted (vol.)	No op.
12/13/15	63	13	12	7	5	NA	NA	0
11/19/15	63	14	9	10	4	NA	NA	1

4. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) I'm going to read a list of candidates for the Republican nomination for president in 2016. If the 2016 Republican presidential primary or caucus in your state were being held today, for whom would you vote? Which candidate would you lean toward?

Among reg voters:

	2015							2014			
	12/13	11/19	10/18	9/10	7/19	5/31	3/29	12/14	10/12	4/27	1/23
Jeb Bush	5	6	7	8	12	10	21	14	13	12	18
Ben Carson	12	22	22	20	6	8	6	8	7	NA	NA
Chris Christie	4	2	3	1	3	6	7	7	8	9	14
Ted Cruz	15	8	6	7	4	8	12	8	4	7	12
Carly Fiorina	1	4	5	2	*	2	1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jim Gilmore	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lindsey Graham	1	1	1	*	*	1	1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mike Huckabee	1	3	3	3	8	9	8	7	12	14	NA
Bobby Jindal	NA	0	0	1	2	*	1	3	2	2	NA
John Kasich	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	NA
George Pataki	0	*	1	*	1	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rand Paul	2	3	2	5	6	11	8	10	12	15	11
Rick Perry	NA	NA	NA	1	4	2	1	5	6	5	NA
Marco Rubio	12	11	10	7	7	10	8	7	8	6	10
Paul Ryan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	11	9	12	18
Rick Santorum	*	1	*	1	1	4	2	3	4	NA	NA
Donald Trump	38	32	32	33	24	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scott Walker	NA	NA	NA	2	13	11	13	7	2	5	NA
Other (vol.)		*	1	1	*	*	1	*	1	2	2
None of these (vol.)	2	1	1	1	4	2	3	2	3	4	4
Would not vote (vol.)	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	*	0	*	1
No opinion	4	3	2	3	2	5	4	6	9	5	9

5. (IF NAMED A CANDIDATE) Who would your second choice be? Which candidate would you lean toward as your second choice?

12/13/15 - NET LEANED SECOND CHOICE AMONG REG VOTERS

	12/13/15	11/19/15
Jeb Bush	9	9
Ben Carson	12	16
Chris Christie	4	7
Ted Cruz	18	12
Carly Fiorina	3	3



Lindsey Graham	1	*
Mike Huckabee	4	6
Bobby Jindal	NA	0
John Kasich	3	2
George Pataki	3	*
Rand Paul	5	5
Marco Rubio	14	17
Rick Santorum	*	1
Donald Trump	12	13
Other (vol.)	1	*
None of these (vol.)	7	3
No opinion	3	3

6. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) Thinking about just five of these candidates - (Trump), (Carson), (Bush), (Rubio) and (Cruz) - who do you think [ITEM]?

Full item wording:

- a. is the most honest and trustworthy
- b. has the best personality and temperament to serve effectively as president
- c. has the best chance of getting elected president in November 2016
- d. would do the most to bring needed change to Washington
- e. is the strongest leader

12/13/15 - Summary Table

	Most honest	Best personality	Best chance	Bring change	Strongest leader
Trump	23	23	47	51	54
Carson	24	17	7	11	7
Bush	12	18	8	8	13
Rubio	11	17	14	11	9
Cruz	12	18	15	12	13
All of them (vol.)	1	*	*	1	0
Any 2 or more (vol.)	1	1	2	1	*
None of them (vol.)	10	2	2	2	1
No opinion	6	5	4	3	4

Trend:

- a. is the most honest and trustworthy

	12/13/15	11/19/15	10/18/15
Trump	23	23	21
Carson	24	34	33
Fiorina	NA	NA	7
Bush	12	11	10
Rubio	11	12	10
Cruz	12	10	7
All of them (vol.)	1	1	*
Any 2 or more (vol.)	1	1	1
None of them (vol.)	10	4	6
No opinion	6	6	5

- b. has the best personality and temperament to serve effectively as president

	12/13/15	11/19/15	10/18/15
Trump	23	20	19
Carson	17	26	24
Fiorina	NA	NA	10
Bush	18	18	15
Rubio	17	20	14
Cruz	18	11	5

All of them (vol.)	*	0	1
Any 2 or more (vol.)	1	1	1
None of them (vol.)	2	1	1
No opinion	5	3	11

c. has the best chance of getting elected president in November 2016

	12/13/15	11/19/15	10/18/15
Trump	47	38	43
Carson	7	22	16
Fiorina	NA	NA	3
Bush	8	10	13
Rubio	14	17	11
Cruz	15	6	4
All of them (vol.)	*	0	*
Any 2 or more (vol.)	2	1	*
None (vol.)	2	*	1
No opinion	4	5	8

d. would do the most to bring needed change to Washington

	12/13/15	11/19/15
Trump	51	47
Carson	11	22
Bush	8	7
Rubio	11	11
Cruz	12	9
All of them (vol.)	1	*
Any 2 or more (vol.)	1	1
None of them (vol.)	2	1
No opinion	3	3

e. is the strongest leader

	12/13/15	10/18/15
Trump	54	47
Carson	7	9
Fiorina	NA	6
Bush	13	12
Rubio	9	11
Cruz	13	8
All of them (vol.)	*	0
Any 2 or more (vol.)	0	1
None of them (vol.)	1	2
No opinion	4	5

7. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) Again, thinking about (Trump), (Carson), (Bush), (Rubio) and (Cruz) - who do you trust more to handle [ITEM]?

12/13/15 - Summary Table

	Immigration issues	The threat of terrorism
Trump	50	50
Carson	10	9
Bush	11	14
Rubio	14	9
Cruz	10	12
All of them (vol.)	*	*
Any 2 or more (vol.)	*	*
None (vol.)	1	1
No opinion	5	3

Trend:

a. Immigration issues

	12/13/15	11/19/15
Trump	50	45
Carson	10	10
Bush	11	13
Rubio	14	18
Cruz	10	9
All of them (vol.)	*	*
Any 2 or more (vol.)	*	*
None of them (vol.)	1	*
No opinion	5	4

b. The threat of terrorism

	12/13/15	11/19/15
Trump	50	42
Carson	9	10
Bush	14	18
Rubio	9	13
Cruz	12	9
All of them (vol.)	*	1
Any 2 or more (vol.)	*	*
None of them (vol.)	1	1
No opinion	3	6

10. If the 2016 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were (Hillary Clinton, the Democrat) and (Donald Trump, the Republican), for whom would you vote? Would you lean toward (Clinton) or (Trump)?

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - GEN POP

	Clinton	Trump	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
12/13/15	53	40	1	3	3	1
9/10/15	51	39	1	5	4	1

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - REG VOTERS

	Clinton	Trump	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
12/13/15	50	44	1	3	2	1
9/10/15	46	43	1	6	4	1

11. Thinking about [ITEM] as president - are you comfortable with this, or does it make you anxious? Would you say you are very comfortable with/anxious about the idea of [ITEM] as president, or somewhat comfortable with/anxious about it?

12/13/15 - Summary Table

	---- Comfortable ----			----- Anxious -----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	
a. Trump	29	15	14	69	19	49	3
b. Clinton	47	27	20	51	16	35	2

13. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who has experience in how the political system works, or someone from outside the existing political establishment?

	Experience in political system	Outside establishment	No opinion
12/13/15	57	37	5
10/18/15	57	39	4

14. Which of these is the single most important issue in your choice for president? Is it (the economy), (health care), (immigration issues), (tax policy) or (the threat of terrorism)?

	12/13/15	11/19/15
Economy	33	33
Health care	13	13
Immigration issues	8	10
Tax policy	3	5
Threat of terrorism	26	28
Other (vol.)	2	1
Any 2 or more (vol.)	14	9
None (vol.)	1	1
No opinion	1	1

\*\*\* END \*\*\*