

To: Our Principles PAC

From: Ed Goetas

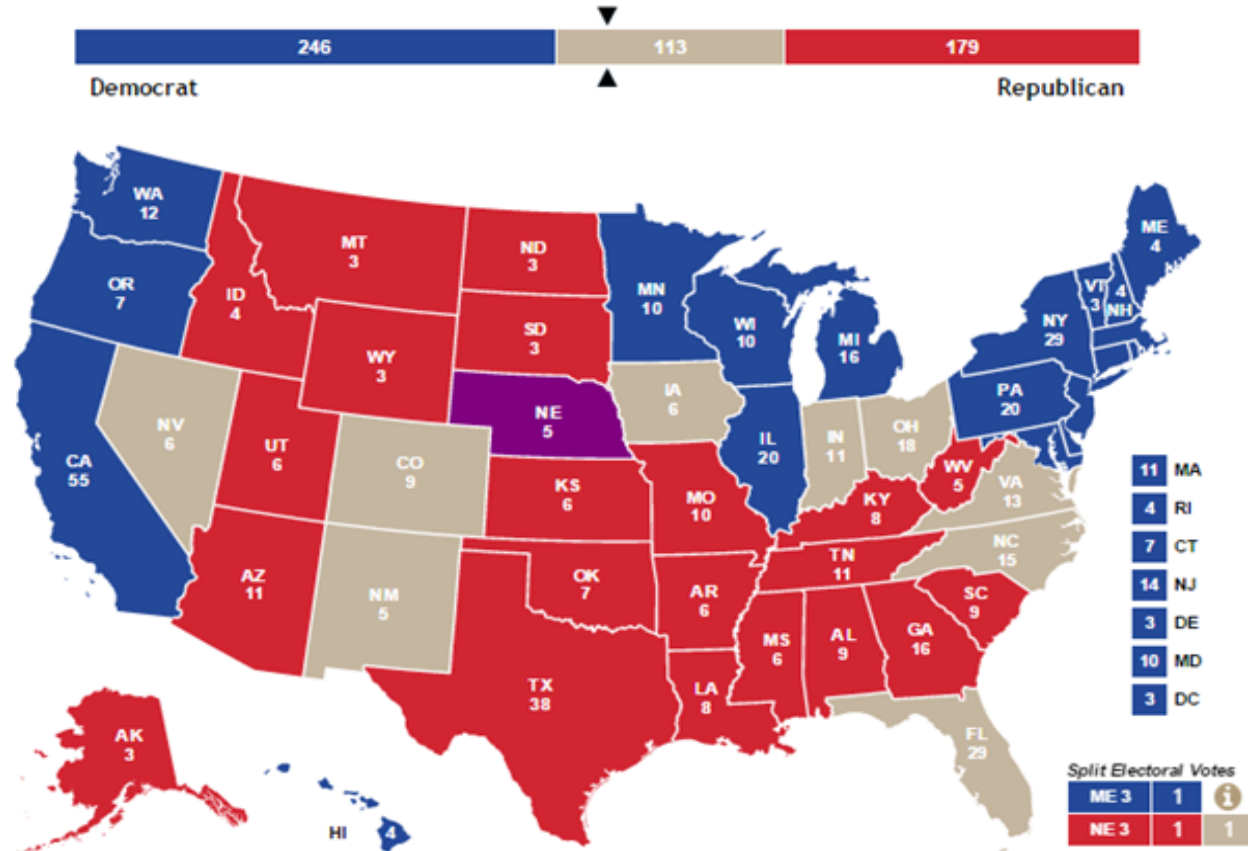
Re: Does Donald Trump have a path to victory in November?

While the overwhelming focus, both within the Republican Party and throughout the media, is on the primaries, as each week passes by questions are beginning to surface on what all this means for the general election. With seventy percent (70%) of the delegates yet to be selected, the race for the Republican nomination is far from over, and with Donald Trump receiving only a third of the popular vote on Super Tuesday, there are still a majority of Republican voters that have not jumped on the “Trump Train” as of yet.

The bottom line, however, is Donald Trump is the frontrunner, and looking toward the November Election with Donald Trump as the Republican nominee is not only valid, but increasingly necessary. Many of those who have looked forward to the general election walk away with some very real questions about the electability of Donald Trump. In this memorandum, we set aside the broad statements like “the Hispanics love me,” and take a look at the data within the very polls Donald Trump is so fond of quoting.

Republicans Begin this Campaign with a Tougher Math Equation in the General Election

While not quite to the point of needing to “thread the needle,” Republicans definitely have a tougher math problem to deal with the electoral vote count in the upcoming general election. The map below illustrates the challenges that any Republican Presidential nominee will face, starting with states that each party has won in every Presidential election over the last twenty years. In the race to 270 Electoral College votes, the Democrats begin with 246 Electoral College votes in their reliable column. In contrast, Republicans begin with just 179 Electoral College votes in their reliable column. The simple math is that Republicans need to win 91 of 113 Electoral College votes in the toss-up/battleground states while Democrats need to win just 24 of these Electoral College votes.



- Democrats begin needing just 24 more Electoral College votes to win the Presidency.
 - Just winning Florida or Virginia and North Carolina clinches a win for them.
- Republicans begin needing 91 more Electoral College votes to win the Presidency.
 - Florida is a must win and the Republican Presidential candidate will need wins in the Midwest, the new South, and the Mountain West.
- While victories in the individual states can be structured in a variety of ways, in looking at the states in play, the one group that is likely to play a key role in determining victory or defeat are the Hispanic voters in those states.
 - Hispanic voters in Florida, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada have certainly played a key role in every election for over a decade of voting.
 - Increasingly Hispanic voters are playing a greater role in both North Carolina and Virginia.

Trump “Everyone Loves Me!”

Donald Trump is very fond of both citing polling numbers and talking about how “everyone loves me,” a statement that if rated by Fact Checker would certainly receive “four Pinocchio’s.” One of the advantages Donald Trump had coming into this election was his almost universal name awareness with the entire American Electorate. However, that advantage was a double-edged sword, having over ninety percent of voters holding an image of Donald Trump, but being upside down, with more voters having an unfavorable impression rather than not. More to the point, as the campaign has moved into high gear, Trump’s unfavorable are moving in the wrong direction.

According to the most recent CNN-ORC national poll:

- Sixty percent (60%) of adults have an unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump, compared to Hillary Clinton at a fifty-five percent (55%) unfavorable rating.
- Donald Trump’s negative are over fifty percent (50%) with Men (52%), women (68%), White Voters (52%), non-White voters (74%), every age cohort even seniors (50%), Independents (62%), and every region of the country.
- Trump is right side up with many of the voter groups that are key to the Republican base, but even there his negatives are somewhat problematic – White Evangelicals (40%), Tea Party supporters (34%), and even Conservatives (40% unfavorable).
- More immediate and most concerning is almost one-third (32%) of Republicans hold an unfavorable image of Donald Trump.

Another factor that has to be looked at for the general election is ability to connect to the voters, things like “shares your values,” have been an extremely important connector with voters in past presidential elections, and in 2008 “cares about people like me” was extremely important in Barack Obama’s election victory. What exit polling in the Republican primaries has shown, even with Trump voters, is that he is scoring very low with voters on “shares your values” hitting a low mark in the South Carolina primary where only a quarter of the Trump voters felt he shared their values. Their focus was much more on “Telling it like it is.”

While there are not a lot of these “connector” questions with the general American electorate, there are a few that give you some pause as we move beyond the Republican primary electorate.

According to the most recent FOX News national poll:

- Two-fifths of voters (40%) volunteer that Donald Trump is the candidate they would most dread watching on television for the next four years. No other Republican candidate is even in double digits on this measure.
- When voters are asked which Republican candidate is the worst role model for children today, forty-nine percent (49%) of GOP voters name Donald Trump. He is named more than four times as often as any other Republican candidate.
- Two-thirds (67%) of voters think Donald Trump does not have the temperament to serve effectively as President.

Trump Also Has a Brand Problem, Even with GOP Voters

While Trump’s ability to successfully market the Trump name in the business world is legendary, his efforts to sell the Trump brand are falling short – even with Republican voters. In business, if you improve your market share by ten percent you are brilliant, in politics if you don’t gain fifty percent of the market share you’re a loser.

The exit polling by CNN finds:

- More than forty percent of GOP primary voters in New Hampshire (46%), Alabama (42%), Georgia (45%), and Virginia (54%) would not be satisfied if Donald Trump won the Republican nomination.
- In South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia, the top choice of who ran the most unfair campaign was Trump.

The biggest concern is the thirty-five percent (35%) of Republicans in the most recent CNN/ORC poll who said that they would never vote for Trump in the 2016 Election. While the Republican National Committee has done a great deal since the 2012 election to close the “Technology Gap” and

Republicans currently have an intensity advantage in the high single digits that will certainly help drive Republican voters to the ballot box, what will happen with this third of the Republican vote raises some huge questions. Will they set aside their personal feelings about Donald Trump and vote for the Republican ticket? Will they vote for Hillary Clinton? Or, not liking either of the two presidential choices, will they sit on their hands, and not vote in November.

There Appears to be a Huge Wall Being Built Between Donald Trump and the Non-Republican Electorate

Trump's claim that he can grow the support of the GOP is not supported by the current data. Yes, turnout in the primaries and caucuses is up substantially, but appears to be driven as much by the number of strong candidates/campaigns, and the anti-Trump vote, as it is driven by the candidacy of Donald Trump. Again, Trump only received a third of the votes cast on Super Tuesday, and again a third in last week's elections. As importantly, with what little information is available, it looks the "new" Republican Primary Voters that are participating are being drawn from Republican general election voters, being pulled into the Republican primaries.

What the data shows, outside the Republican base electorate, like his high unfavorable rating, is not encouraging.

According to the most recent CNN-ORC national poll:

- With women, Trump's image rating is 29% favorable and 68% unfavorable (and an unfavorable rating of 38% with Republican women), while Hillary Clinton's is 52% favorable and 44% unfavorable (and an 86% favorable rating with Democratic women). Hillary certainly in a better position to go after swing female voters.
- The married white Republican women that are so much of the Republican base, and are increasingly turning negative towards Donald Trump, may very well decide to sit out this election and stay home.
- Currently in a Trump-Clinton matchup, Donald Trump is losing by almost a two to one margin (62% Clinton-34% Trump), a Gender Gap greater than anything we have seen, even in

the worst of election years for the GOP. In 2012 that number was Obama / Romney with 56/44 respectively.

- With Independent voters Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have very similar image ratings – Trump 34-62% favorable/unfavorable and Clinton 33-63% favorable – but when given a choice between two candidates they don't like, Clinton comes out on top 48% to 44%.

Trump losing on a Trump-Clinton Matchup is not unique to the CNN-ORC national Poll:

- While Donald Trump started out the primary campaign with a lead in the polls and has pretty much held that lead throughout the fall and early primary season, that has not been the case in the general election matchups. In fact of the forty-nine polls that looked at a general election matchup, Trump has only lead on five, and is moving in the wrong direction.
- Over the last two weeks there have been four national polls that have taken a look at a Trump-Clinton matchup – NBC News/WSJ, ABC News/Washington Post, Rasmussen, and CNN/ORC – all show Donald Trump losing to Clinton by net nine-points.
- The Two conducted after last week's Republican debate have Trump down by net eleven-points, and the most recent poll, the NBC/WSJ poll has Donald Trump down on the ballot to Hillary Clinton by thirteen-points – Clinton's 51% to Trump's 38% -- definitely going in the wrong direction.
- As concerning for Republican prospects if Trump were the Republican nominee in the fall, three of these polls have Clinton at or above 50% of the vote, a watermark point in any Presidential campaign.

Among the recent data on the image of Donald Trump with minority voters:

- Seventy-four percent (74%) of non-white voters in the most recent CNN-ORC national poll have an unfavorable image of Donald Trump.
- A Washington Post-Univision Poll, conducted February 11-16, among Hispanic voters nationwide found that eighty-one percent (81%) of Hispanic voters have an unfavorable image of Donald Trump, including more than seven-in-ten (72%) of Hispanic voters who have a very unfavorable opinion.

On the ballot standing of Trump with Hispanic voters:

- Trump is the top choice of just seven percent (7%) of Hispanic voters when all the candidates are offered.
- Trump is at sixteen percent support (16%) in a head-to-head match-up against Hillary Clinton.
- Trump's claim that he could make New York and New Jersey into competitive states is equally laughable:
- President Obama won sixty-three percent (63%) of the vote in New York in 2012, defeating Mitt Romney by more than 1.6 million votes.
- In New Jersey, Barack Obama won fifty-eight percent (58%) of the vote, defeating Mitt Romney by more than half a million votes.

These issues create a significant challenge for Republicans on a larger scale. The Republican Party is facing a challenging battle for control of the U.S. Senate this cycle. There will be competitive races in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Colorado, and Nevada. If Republican U.S. Senate candidates are on a ballot led by a Presidential candidate who falls short with their base voters and angers swing and Democratic base voters, the GOP control of the U.S. Senate in November will be very much at risk, which would also prevent the GOP from stopping any Clinton appointee to the Supreme Court.

Can Trump win the November Election or is he Unelectable

Can Trump win the November Election or is he unelectable? That is certainly a question that seems to be growing as each week of primaries and caucuses passes. The latest CNN/ORC poll brought more focus to that question with their poll this week showing Donald Trump as the only Republican losing to Hillary Clinton – 52% Clinton and 44% for Donald Trump. Other polls have been showing similar results on a general election ballot. What is different in the CNN poll is that for the first time Clinton, even with her name awareness being almost as unfavorable as that of Donald Trump, is receiving over fifty percent of the vote in a matchup against a Republican

In sum, any Republican Presidential candidate will face a significant electoral challenge this fall. But this candidate, who is currently turning off more voters than he is turning on with the tone and tenor of his campaign and divisive persona, clearly appears to be winning his battles for the Republican nominating but losing the war for the White House in November.

Based on all of the data I have seen, the answer to the question "Does Donald Trump have a path to victory in November?" is clearly "No". The question is, how many down ballot Republicans will he take with him?