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# U. S. Presidential Campaign 2016

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## Primaries and Presidential Candidates for Upcoming Elections

On Tuesday, November 8, 2016, Americans from across the country will place their votes for the next President of the United States. The 2016 candidates cover various positions along the spectrum, from “far right” to “far left” and anywhere in between. Furthermore, the Republican Party bombarded the public with an unusual number of candidates (17) announcing their campaign early in the race.

Hence, why the current presidential campaign series has captured the spotlight not only in the U. S. but all over the world. People are vigilantly following the media coverage, debates, and selection processes, as they are curious to hear the voice of the American people.

However, the U. S. presidential selection process can be quite complicated for Americans, let alone outside observers. The aim of this paper is to shed some light on the complicated selection processes the U. S. undergoes before determining who will run in the general presidential election in November. It will also clarify the positions each frontrunner stands for and assesses their chances of winning the nomination and possibly their spot in the White House.

## 2016 U. S. Primaries

### Primaries/Caucuses

*What are they?*

Primaries and caucuses are the selection processes that are used to determine which candidate for each party stands the best chance of winning the election. This is done by calculating the support each candidate has in each state and awarding the candidates with delegates. Following the primaries/caucuses, the candidates are formally selected at either the Republican National Convention (RNC) or the Democratic National Convention (DNC). After being selected, the candidates choose their running mate and then officially begin their race to the White House.

*What is the difference between a primary and caucus?*

Every citizen that can and wishes to vote will do so through either a primary or a caucus. Each state, in collaboration with each party, determines the type of election process (primary and/or caucus) and also the date for which it will occur. Each state is given a certain number of delegates depending on a number of criteria that will be discussed in the next section. After the vote has been tallied for the district, these delegates present their vote, at the state level, for the candidate that was most popular in their district. The way in which votes are tallied and how people participate in these events depends on whether or not the state and party use primaries or caucuses.

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## Primaries

Primaries are a somewhat new in the U. S. voting system, having appeared at the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>1,2</sup> They rapidly gained popularity due to the thought that they give more power to the citizens on which candidate they want for each party.<sup>3</sup> Much like the actual election, in a primary, each citizen is able to vote, via secret ballot, for the candidate they prefer most.

Not all primaries are the same and they can vary from state to state, and even within the state. There are 3 main types of primaries used in the U. S.: open, closed, and semi-closed. The type of primary is based on who is allowed to vote.<sup>4</sup>

**Open primaries** allow any registered voter to vote in the election, regardless of party affiliation. These are the most open and allow independents and opposing party voters to weigh in on their opinion. However, voters are restricted to vote in only one primary, preventing voters from voting in both the Republican and the Democrat primaries. Open primaries have one major flaw, although typically only on the local level, in that voters may strategically vote for the weaker candidate in an opposing party's primary<sup>5</sup>.

**Closed primaries** permit only registered and party-affiliated voters to participate. Thus, a registered democrat can only vote in the democratic primary in that state. These are the most restrictive primaries. They do not allow independents or voters from the opposing party to vote<sup>6</sup>. These can be limiting as it does not account for the potentially large number of independent voters.

**Semi-Closed primaries** work in much of the same way as closed primaries, except that they allow for independent voters to participate as well.

## Caucuses

Caucuses were the original method used by the U. S. in order to select candidates for the general election. They consist of groups of people from each district meeting in designated caucus assembling areas and have open air discussions on prospective candidates. The meeting is concluded with a public vote, often by counting hands or by having people physically group together for their candidate of choice.

Caucuses are usually closed in the same manner as in closed primaries. Only voters registered with a particular party can vote in that party's caucus. However, there are four states with open caucuses that allow for independent and affiliated voters to vote in either party's caucus. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only one of the mentioned four applies to both parties. For the other three states, these open caucuses are held only by the Democrats while the Republicans have either a closed caucus or a primary.<sup>7</sup>

### *How does it work?*

As discussed above, states can vary between the different types of caucuses and primaries. However, each party can have a different format for their candidate selection process. One party may have an open primary while the other might have a closed primary, but it does not end there. It can even be a mix of a primary and a caucus. For example, in Idaho, Republicans hold a closed primary while Democrats hold an open caucus. While it is much more common that a state will have the same selection process for each party, this is not always the case.

Furthermore, there is more depth to the voting process and delegate distribution. The Democrats use proportional distribution for each state. If a candidate gets a certain percentage of votes, then they are guaranteed at least that percentage of delegates from the state. Republicans, on the other hand, have three different types of delegate distribution:

### Proportional

- Like the Democrat's sole method, based off of a proportion of votes. Many states have a qualifier or threshold that must be broken before any delegates are given<sup>8</sup>.

### Winner-Takes-All

- The candidate with the highest percentage of votes will take all of the delegates from that state

### Hybrid States

- These are states that use a mixture of both.

## Delegates

Delegates are counted differently depending on the party and every state has a different number of delegates for each party. Each party also has a different number of delegates, Republicans have 2,472 and Democrats have 4,762.<sup>9</sup> There are 3 main types of delegates, District-Level, At-large, and "Other".<sup>10</sup>

### District-level

- Delegates that are awarded based off vote totals in each of the state's congressional districts. These delegates are pledged/bound to the results of the vote for the districts they represent.

### At-large

- Delegates that are awarded based on a state-wide vote. Like the District-level, these delegates are also pledged/bound to the results of the state-wide vote.

### Other

- These delegates are comprised of party leaders and party supporters in each state. Some of their votes are tied to state results. However, many, in the case of the Democrats, are superdelegates and can vote in whichever way they please at their respective convention.

The aforementioned processes come together to form a basis for officially selecting the next presidential candidates. The votes come together at the RNC and DNC where candidates are chosen based on gained their support. The minimum requirements to win the nomination are 1,237 delegates and 2,383 delegates for Republicans and Democrats respectfully. Of the 4,762 Democratic delegates, there are 712 super delegates that can put their vote behind any of the democratic candidates.<sup>11</sup> This represents 15% of the delegates and could swing the decision in favor of the candidate that collects more of them.

## Who Are the Candidates?

### Republicans

*"Make America Great Again!"*

Since June 16, 2015, **Donald Trump** has been campaigning for the 2016 presidential election as a Republican.<sup>12</sup> He is a real estate mogul, businessman, and TV personality, who has reportedly made millions throughout his career. He has no direct political experience through public office or as an aide. This puts him at a bit of a disadvantage compared to the other candidates who have held at least one form of elected political office at one time or another.<sup>13</sup> He is considered a wild card among all of the nominees and represents, for some, a change from the norm. He uses strong and even racist rhetoric in order to appeal to his voters. He is classified by many of his supporters as someone who "tells it like it is"<sup>14</sup>. His rhetoric has allowed him to dominate the news and push himself into the spotlight more than any other candidate. This has proved troublesome for other Republican candidates who have struggled to get attention and their position out to the public.

Politically, Trump identifies himself as very conservative on a few issues.<sup>15</sup> The primary issues tend to be in regards to immigration, the military, and taxes. Socially he tends to be quite moderate in terms of abortion, same-sex marriage, and even the military to a certain degree.<sup>16</sup>

## Immigration

- Build a wall across the southern border of the United States of America and “make Mexico pay for the wall”.<sup>17</sup>
- Tighten restrictions on foreigners coming into the U. S. for economic gains (i.e. better employment opportunities).<sup>18</sup>
- In addition to the issue on illegal immigration, Trump has also called for a ban on allowing more Muslims into the U.S. for an undetermined period<sup>19</sup>.

## Healthcare

- Wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act (commonly known as Obamacare), and, instead, to implement a free market system throughout the U.S. in regards to purchasing health insurance and prescriptions<sup>20</sup>.

## Taxes

- Reduce the number of tax brackets from seven to four with the highest tax bracket at 25% (3i, 3h). Lowering the maximum corporate tax along with the removal of certain taxes such as the “death tax”.
- Close loopholes and deductions and tax overseas accounts.<sup>21</sup>

## Military/Foreign Policy

- Build up the military and maintain its strength. However, he is not aggressive and will not invade countries for no reason. He was against the Iraq war when it started.<sup>22</sup>
- In regards to foreign policy, many fear what he will bring to the table. The anti-political correctness (“tell it like it is”) philosophy which his supporters favor is feared to not fair too well in international relations. With that being said, Vladimir Putin (Russian President) has endorsed Trump. Trump has vowed to renew and better relations between Russia and the U.S. if elected.

Donald Trump is categorized as a populist candidate. He is considered an extreme faction of the conservative party like libertarians and the Tea Party<sup>23</sup>. His usage of the media, despite his gripes with them, allow him to manipulate the masses. An attribute fitting of many past and current politicians, like the Czech President, Miloš Zeman.<sup>24</sup> He is the anti-establishment candidate for the Republican Party<sup>25</sup> and he does not rely on traditional ways of funding and running his campaign. He is dangerous to the Republicans because he can seriously divide the party for many years to come. Rumors have spread that the RNC will try and remove him from the nomination process, a threat Trump has responded to by vowing to run as a third party candidate<sup>26</sup>. This would split the Republican vote and likely secure the election in favor of the Democrats in the general election.

### *“Reigniting the Promise of America”*

**Ted Cruz** was the first candidate to announce his bid for President on March 23rd, 2015. Cruz has been a sitting United States Senator for Texas since 2013. He studied law and was a part of many different political teams throughout the early and mid-2000’s. In contrast to Trump, he is more in line with general Republican Party norms. Furthermore, he represents a more social conservatism which Trump lacks and is attractive to many Republican voters. He is publicly very religious and it has a heavy influence on his politics.<sup>27</sup>

### Restoration of the Constitution

- A smaller government similar to that which was laid out in the original Constitution of the U. S.
- In terms of rights, Cruz is not outwardly anti-LGBT, yet caught some flak for appointing anti-LGBT activists onto his “Religious Liberty” panel<sup>28</sup>

### Immigration

- Build a wall along the southern border, increase border security, and increase deportation rates.

- Halt increases for immigration until unemployment in the U.S. can be lowered to more acceptable rates.

#### Military/Foreign Policy

- Maintain and reinforce the U. S.'s "world leadership" by rebuilding the military and defend the U. S.'s allies and its interests. "What is best for America, is best for the world."
- Ensure ISIS's defeat and continued presence in the Middle East. This presence is to keep radical Jihadists from disrupting American interests.
- Rip up the Iran deal and renew sanctions and pressure on Iran.

#### Taxes/Regulations

- Remove the tiered tax system altogether and go for a flat rate 10% tax.
- Remove some EPA regulations that are a hindrance to small businesses and farmers.

#### Healthcare

- Remove the Affordable Care Act and establish free market rules throughout the U.S., potentially allowing for cheaper healthcare.

Ted Cruz represents the only *real* alternative to Trump at this point in the Republican primaries. His stances on some of the "big issues" are more in line with the rest of the Republican Party and, thus, makes him seem like a more viable candidate. This is interesting, considering that his views in regards to the *hot topics* for many Republicans – healthcare, immigration, and the military – are nearly identical to Trump's positions. However, he is still not well-liked by the Republican establishment and moreover, some party leaders and Senators have vowed to revolt against the establishment if Cruz wins the nomination<sup>29</sup>.

#### Democrats

*"Hillary for America"*

**Hillary Clinton** joined the race for the presidency on April 12, 2015.<sup>30</sup> She was

expected to run for president after losing the nomination in 2008 against Barack Obama. She is a former Secretary of State, New York Senator, and a former First Lady when her husband, Bill Clinton, was President from 1993-2001. Additionally, she is a former attorney and a Wal-Mart board member. She is very pro-women and minority rights and represents another stepping stone for the U.S. as the first female president. She is quite liberal on many of her stances<sup>31</sup>, however, less so than her competitor, Bernie Sanders.

#### Individual rights

- Pro individual rights. She is a strong supporter of women's rights along with minority rights.

#### Immigration

- Create a pathway to citizenship for immigrants.
- Continue the immigration policies that Obama put in place.

#### Healthcare

- Continue to build on the Affordable Care Act.
- Prescription drug prices would be combated by rewarding companies that invest in research and do not increase prices.
- Protect women's access to reproductive healthcare.

#### National Security/Foreign Policy

- Much like both Republican candidates, Hillary plans to defeat ISIS and global terrorism, along with destroying the ideologies that drive them.
- Plans to ensure the U.S. military maintains its strength and fierceness.

#### Education

- Removing the costs of 4-year degree programs for residents of that state.
- Relief for those that still have student loans by allowing them to refinance at lower rates.

Hillary Clinton represents the most moderate nominee for the Democrat Party. She is also

the most mainstream candidate being heavily supported by many party leaders and party members in the DNC. She is largely criticized for representing what is wrong with politics in the U.S. She receives large sums of money from Super Pac's and is quite close to many of the big players on Wall Street. Some feel this is grounds to question her loyalty – would she serve the U.S. or Wall Street?<sup>32</sup>

*“A Political Revolution Is Coming”*

**Bernard “Bernie” Sanders** entered the presidential race on May 26, 2015. He is the longest serving candidate in the presidential election with over 34 years of elected service. He has spent time as a Mayor, member of the House of Representatives, and is currently a Senator for Vermont. He is the most liberal candidate of the two parties. For the Democrats, he acts as the anti-establishment candidate in that he does not have any obvious links to Wall Street and corporate interests. This disconnect with Wall Street and many of his political stances<sup>33</sup> has made him very popular among young voters.

Education

- Tuition-free for all public colleges and universities.
- Lower student loan rates and eliminate the profit gained by the government sponsoring the loans.

Immigration

- Help the current immigrants in the U.S. to gain citizenship and allow them to purchase health insurance.
- Help maintain the border and regulate the inflow of immigrants.
- Removing the deportation programs and detention centers.

Personal Rights

- Improving the political, economic, environmental, legal, and physical types of violence to which non-white Americans are subjected.
- Pro-LGBT rights and ensuring that the government will not impede on their rights to marry, receive benefits, healthcare, etc.

- Bridge the wage gap and unfair treatment of women in the workplace and in the legal realm.

Healthcare

- Lower the costs of prescriptions by importing from other countries. Also, lower the cost of U.S. prescriptions by banning anti-generic practices.
- Expand Medicare for use by anyone, regardless of income level, essentially creating a one-payer system similar to that of Europe.

National Security/Foreign Policy

- Sanders wants to rely on diplomacy first, war last. He wants to use human rights as a standpoint and use the military as support.
- Continue the agreement with Iran of nuclear proliferation and lifting the embargoes.

Taxes

- Tax corporate holding in offshore tax havens.
- Create a tax against Wall Street speculators
- Close tax loopholes

Bernie Sanders struck a chord with many voters this election by providing an option that goes against the norm. Instead of trying to bow to corporate interest in order to win, he is hoping to be able to stand up based on current and past values. However, the biggest problem that Sanders will face is just how liberal he is in comparison to other candidates in this election. He has been labelled as a socialist, which in the minds of many Americans still has a Soviet Union context to it and, thus, scares many in the U. S. While Bernie Sanders is actually more of a democratic socialist, the word still carries weight in American politics and may do more harm than good for him.<sup>34</sup>

## The Results So Far

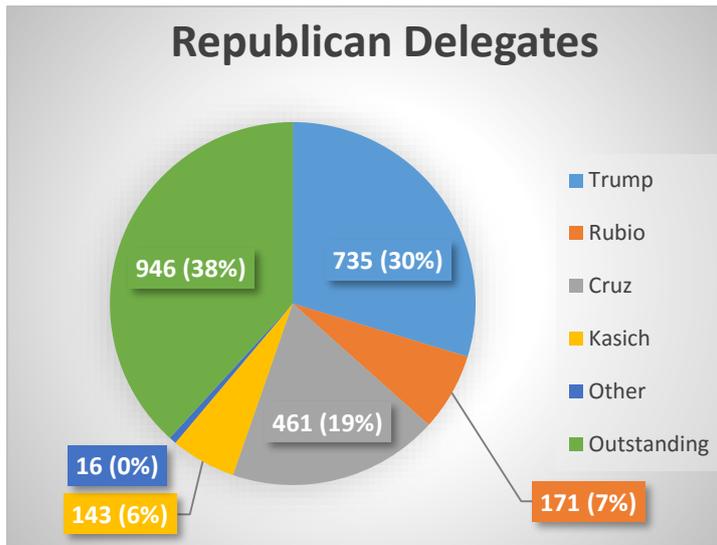


Figure 1: Republican Delegate distribution as of April 3, 2016

### Republicans

Since Iowa is a zero-threshold state, many Republicans were able to participate in the caucus. However, following Iowa the Republican candidates quickly dwindled to four main candidates: Donald Trump, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, and John Kasich. By mid-March, Rubio saw himself trailing too far behind and suspended his campaign. The decision to suspend the campaign rather than drop out of the race completely is a strategic move that could be used to better his position later. With a suspension, a candidate can keep the delegates they earned, and can withhold them or give them to the candidate they would like to support. Kasich, while as of the publication of this paper, is still in the race, also trails by too much to realistically catch up to the frontrunners this late in the selection process.

This leaves just two frontrunners, Trump and Cruz. Trump currently holds 735 of the delegates with Cruz taking in another 461. The other candidates combined make up another 330 delegates that would be outstanding. Per RNC rules, when a nominee is beaten then they are supposed to support the leading Republican candidate. However, considering the current situation, this has become a contested issue. Donald Trump has rescinded his pledge to back the candidate that wins the

Republican nomination. Ted Cruz and John Kasich have also rescinded their pledges, deeply dividing the party as of now.<sup>35</sup>

Around 38% of the delegates are still outstanding in the remaining primaries. This leaves plenty of delegates left for Cruz to pull ahead. Additionally, there is a strong likelihood that Rubio and Kasich will back Cruz in order to secure him as the Republican nominee. All that is needed is 50% +1 in order to win the nomination which equates to 1,237 delegates. Trump is just over 59% of the way towards the nomination, however, he may find it more difficult to gain the other 502 delegates by upsetting the current Republican Party members. Withdrawing his pledge of support and threatening to run as a third party candidate puts a lot of pressure on the Republicans. A third party Trump would nearly guarantee a loss for the Republicans in November.

In terms of states that have been won, some are more important than others. Trump has won 21 states so far with four of those being tossup states. This is important because it may make Trump more popular with undecided voters than Cruz. Thus, giving Trump a better chance at winning the general election in November. There are still a few middle-of-the-road and leaning voters that will prove to be important in order to win the support of these states. Colorado is one of these states and is the last real tossup state left in the Republican primaries. From then on, the states are more often blue (Democrat-leaning) than red (Republican-leaning) which means that the undecided could still be pushed towards a Republican president. The candidate that performs the best in these states may stand the best chance of winning the presidency.<sup>36</sup>

## Democrats

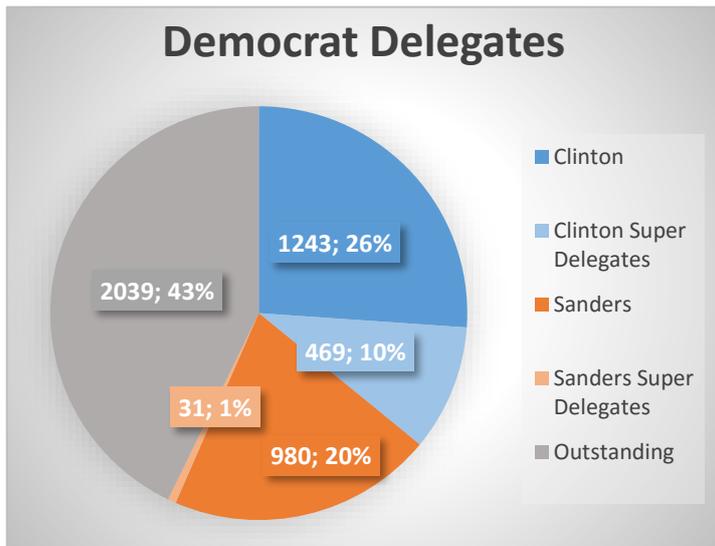


Figure 2: Democrat Delegate distribution as of April 3, 2016

Unlike the Republicans, only two main candidates have been in the Democratic primaries, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. These two candidates do not differ much on their stances regarding policies, thus, the race has been fairly close. Hillary Clinton currently holds the most with 1,712 delegates. A third of those are super delegates and will likely prove vital in order to clinch the nomination. Bernie Sanders lacks much of these super delegates but is still managing to be quite strong in the polls.

With about 43% of the delegates still outstanding, the race is far from over. Clinton looks the best in terms of tossup states, holding strong positions in two of them and having won a total of five. Although Sanders did not win these states, he still had a strong showing in them. In the last series of primaries on March 22 and 26, Sanders managed to gain a string of strong wins in five states. Thus far, Sanders is stronger in blue states while Clinton has been stronger in red states. However, there are still many more blue states left in the primary schedule. Most notable being California, New York, and Pennsylvania which hold almost 22% or 1,047 delegates. The strength of each candidate in these three states could very well determine who will win the nomination.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of best chances of winning the presidency, Clinton may be the favorite. Bernie Sanders' "socialist" label may make it too difficult to sway the independents. Hillary holds more toss up states and this could be an indication of her popularity with moderates. This may be a very important aspect of the presidential elections. The moderate vote will become the most important and the candidate that can better sway those voters may have the best chance of winning the general election.

## Conclusion

The 2016 primaries have been monitored by people from not only in the U.S. but all over the world. Many criticized Trump's entrance into the selection process as a publicity stunt, however, his following has only been growing since. Thus far, Trump is the frontrunner for the Republicans and if selected may pose a significant threat to Clinton or Sanders. However, if Trump runs as a third party candidate, it is likely to guarantee a return to the White House for the Democratic Party, regardless of who wins the nomination. Donald Trump has been making waves and is making this election process entertaining for some, and frightening for others.

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## Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> "Parties and Candidates." *ACE Electoral Knowledge Network*. ACE Project, 2012. Web. Mar.-Apr. 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> "Government 101"; *See Note 1*
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- <sup>5</sup> "Parties and Candidates"; *See Note 2*
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- <sup>7</sup> "Primaries"; *See Note 4*
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- <sup>20</sup> "Positions."; *See Note 17*
- <sup>21</sup> "Positions."; *See Note 17*
- <sup>22</sup> Bouie; *See Note 16*
- <sup>23</sup> [Pehe] Anýž, Daniel, Jan Fingerland, Jiří Pehe and Jeffrey Vanderziel. "U.S. Presidential Elections." Institute for Politics and Society. American Center, Prague, 31, Mar. 2016. Public Debate.
- <sup>24</sup> [Anýž]; *See Note 23*
- <sup>25</sup> [Pehe]; *See Note 23*
- <sup>26</sup> Schleifer, Theodore. "Donald Trump Again Leaves Open Door to Third-party Bid." *CNN Politics*. Turner Broadcasting System Inc., 02 Apr. 2016. Web. 02 Apr. 2016.
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