



September 25, 2016

On the eve of the first presidential debate, the race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton is in a statistical dead heat.

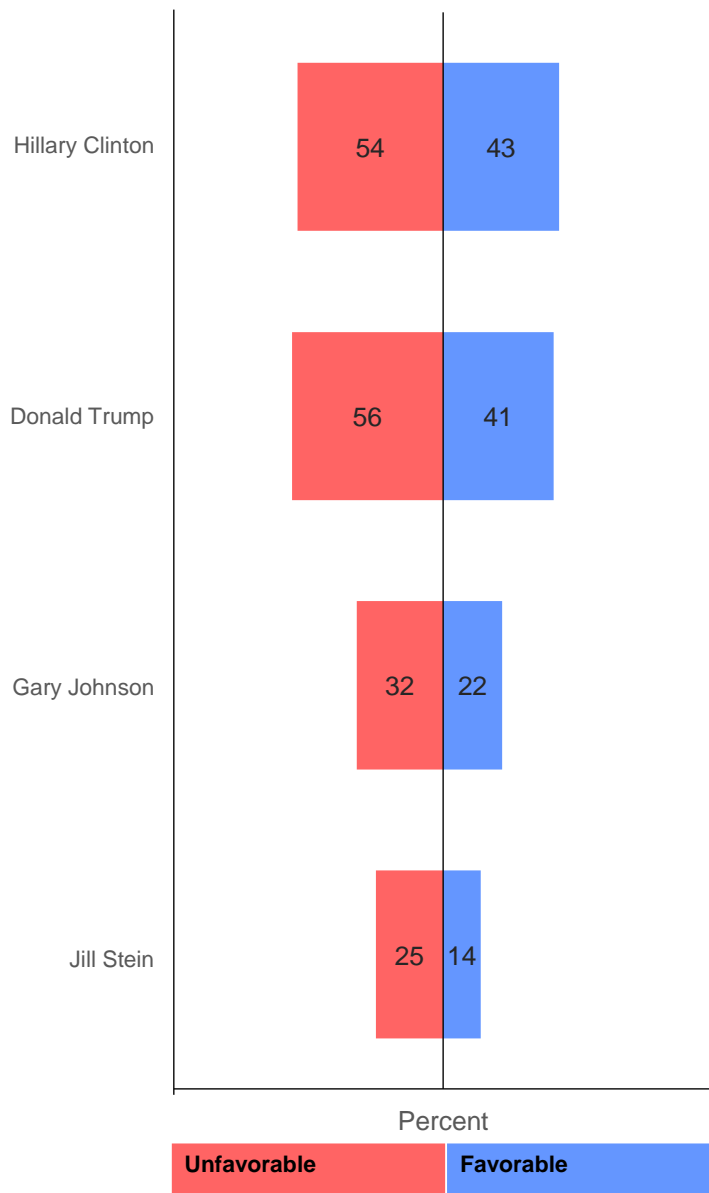
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Portsmouth, NH. – The Presidential race between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton has gotten tighter as the first presidential debate approaches. In our most recent nation-wide polling, Clinton leads Trump 45-to-43 percent among likely voters, compared to 44-to-41 percent in early September.

The first Presidential Debate is likely to see high viewership, as 87 percent of respondents surveyed reported that they *definitely* (56%) or *probably* (31%) *will watch* the debate. And while most say the debate performances are unlikely to change their planned vote, a small but potentially significant minority (16%) indicate that they *could change their mind* about who to vote for.

These results are based on a recent Franklin Pierce University / Boston Herald Poll conducted by RKM Research, September 18 –22, 2016. The survey is based on responses from 1,017 randomly selected likely voters. Interviews were conducted by landline and cellular telephone. The maximum sampling margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

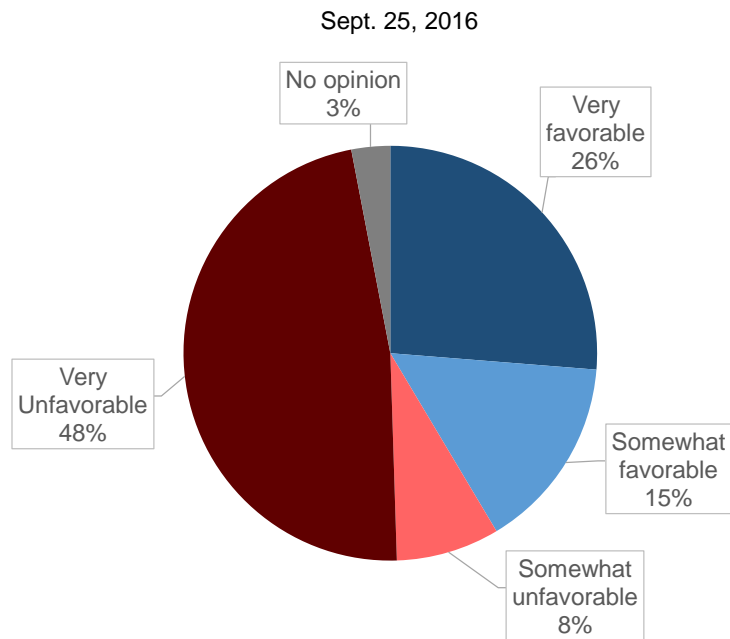
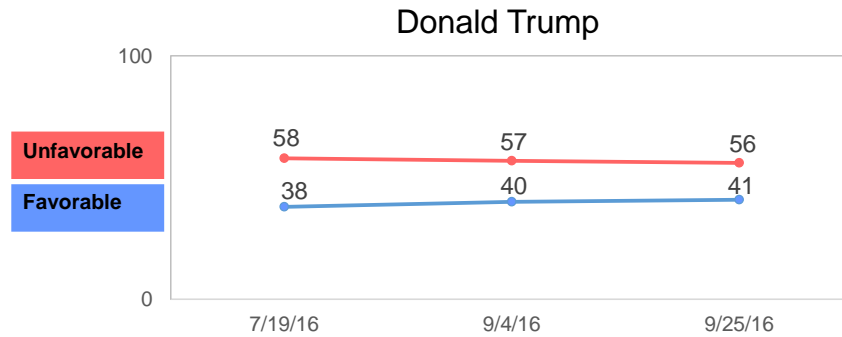
Favorability Ratings of presidential candidates (Sept. 25, 2016):



Our polls continue to show that the two presidential candidates remain very unpopular, with more than one-half of voters holding *unfavorable* views toward both candidates.

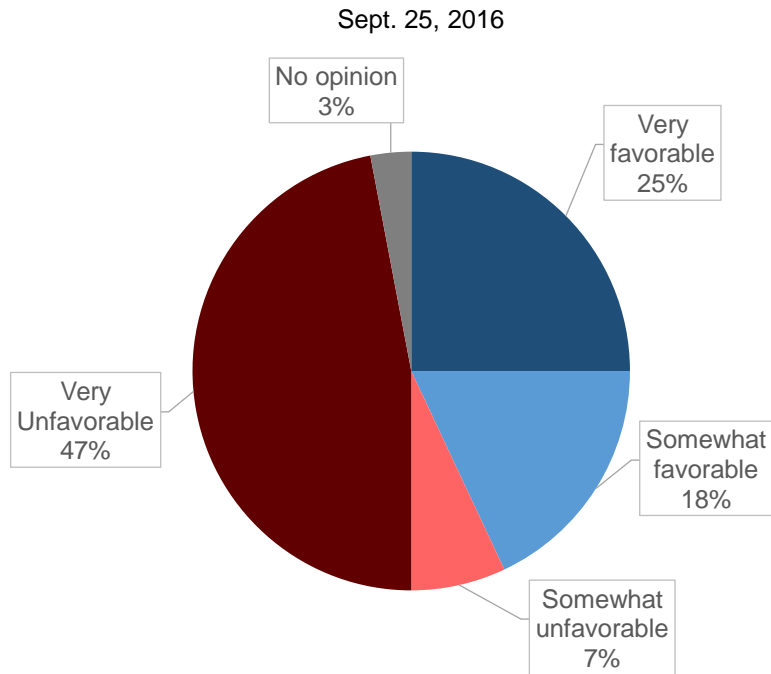
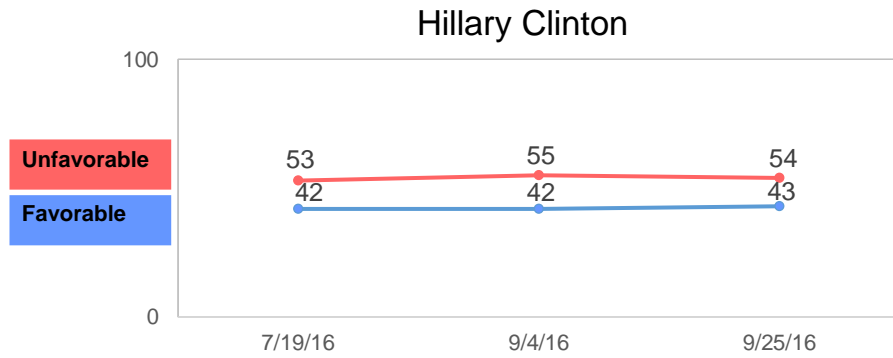
Donald Trump receives a *favorable* rating of 41 percent, and an *unfavorable* rating of 56 percent. Likewise, Hillary Clinton receives a *favorable* rating of 43 percent, and an *unfavorable* rating of 54 percent. Both Trump's and Clinton's net favorability ratings, the percentage who view them favorably minus the percentage who view them unfavorably, remain firmly underwater at -15 percent and -11 percent, respectively.

Favorability ratings of Donald Trump compared over time:



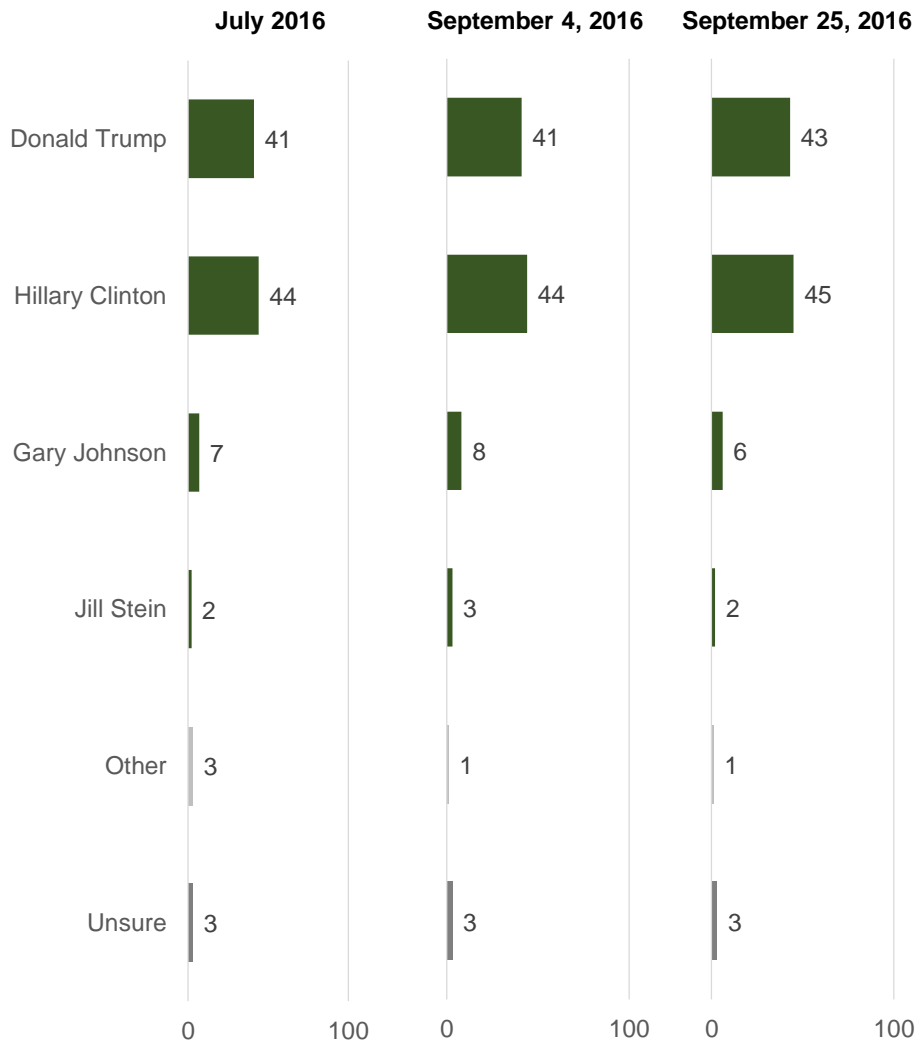
The unpopularity of the two leading presidential candidates continues to be exacerbated by the intensity of voter sentiment. Nearly one-half of voters (48%) hold a *very unfavorable* view of Donald Trump. Forty-one percent of voters hold a *very* (26%) or *somewhat* (15%) *favorable* view toward Trump. These results have remained essentially unchanged since July.

Favorability Ratings of Hillary Clinton compared over time:



Hillary Clinton also has similar favorability problems. Slightly less than one-half of voters (47%) hold a *very unfavorable* view of her. Forty-three percent of voters hold *very* (25%) or *somewhat* (18%) *favorable* view toward Clinton. As with Donald Trump, these results remain essentially unchanged since July.

If the election for U.S. President were held today, which of the candidates would you vote for?

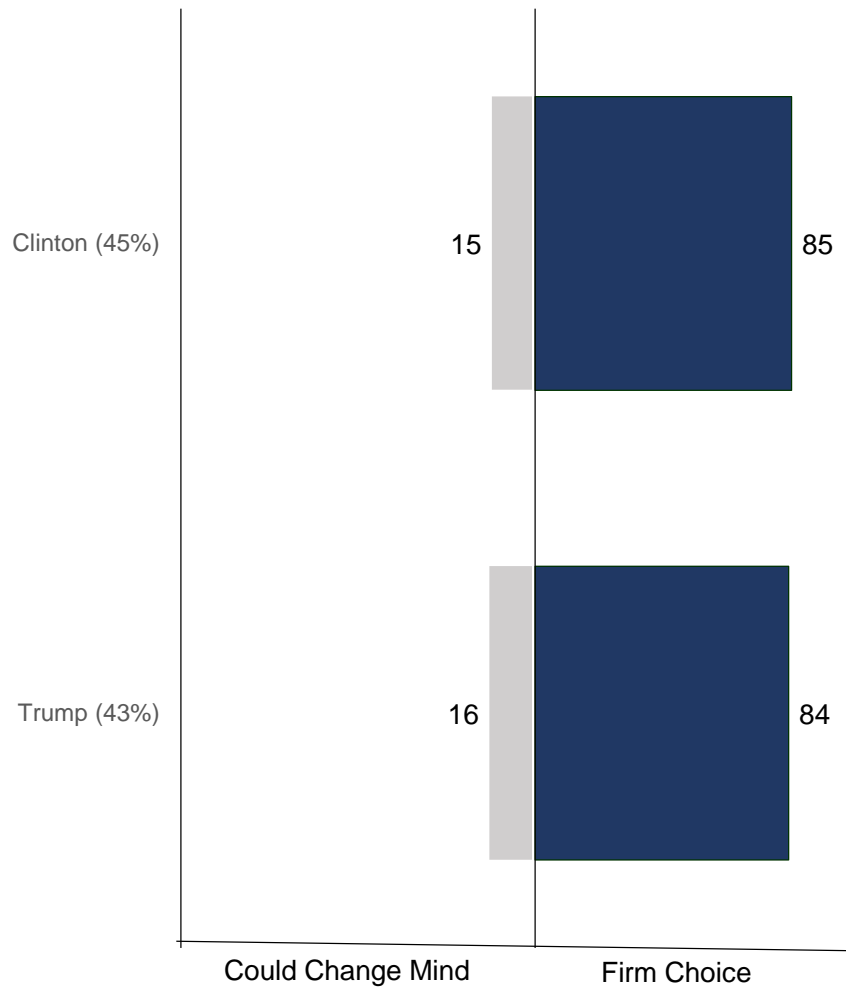


Among: All voters (includes "forced choice" responses)

If the election were held today, voters are most likely to vote for *Hillary Clinton* (45%) or *Donald Trump* (43%). Few voters said that they would vote for Libertarian candidate *Gary Johnson* (6%), Green Party candidate *Jill Stein* (2%) or some *other* candidate (1%). Only three percent of voters remain *unsure* who they would vote for if the election were held today.

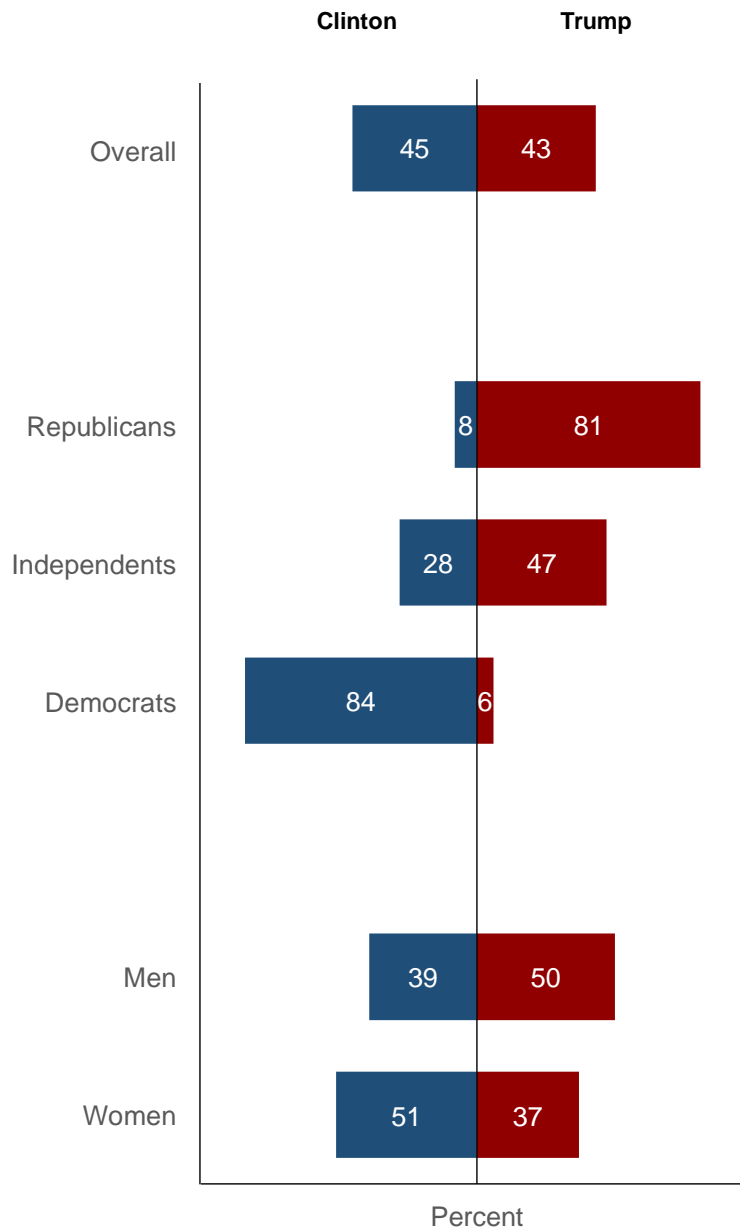
The margin of difference between Clinton and Trump is just 1.6 points, well within the margin of sampling error of the poll.

Firmness of Presidential Vote Choice:



Both candidates have solidified their base of support, and few currently planning to vote for either candidate are likely to change their mind. According to our most recent poll, only 15 percent of Clinton supporters, and 16 percent of Trump supporters, said that they *could change their mind* between now and Election Day.

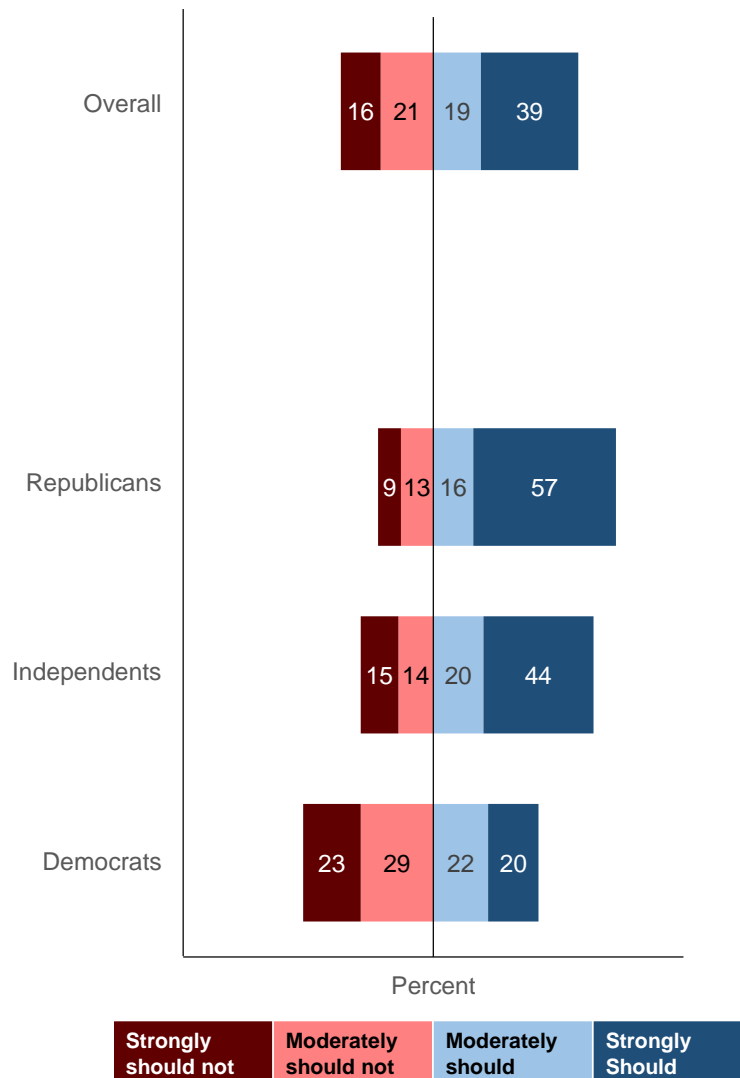
Presidential Vote Choice Compared by Selected Characteristics



As expected, presidential vote choice is strongly linked with party identification. Eighty-four percent of self-identified Democrats said that they would vote for Hillary Clinton, and 81 percent of self-identified Republicans said that they would vote for Donald Trump. More Independents said that they would vote for Trump (47%) than Clinton (28%).

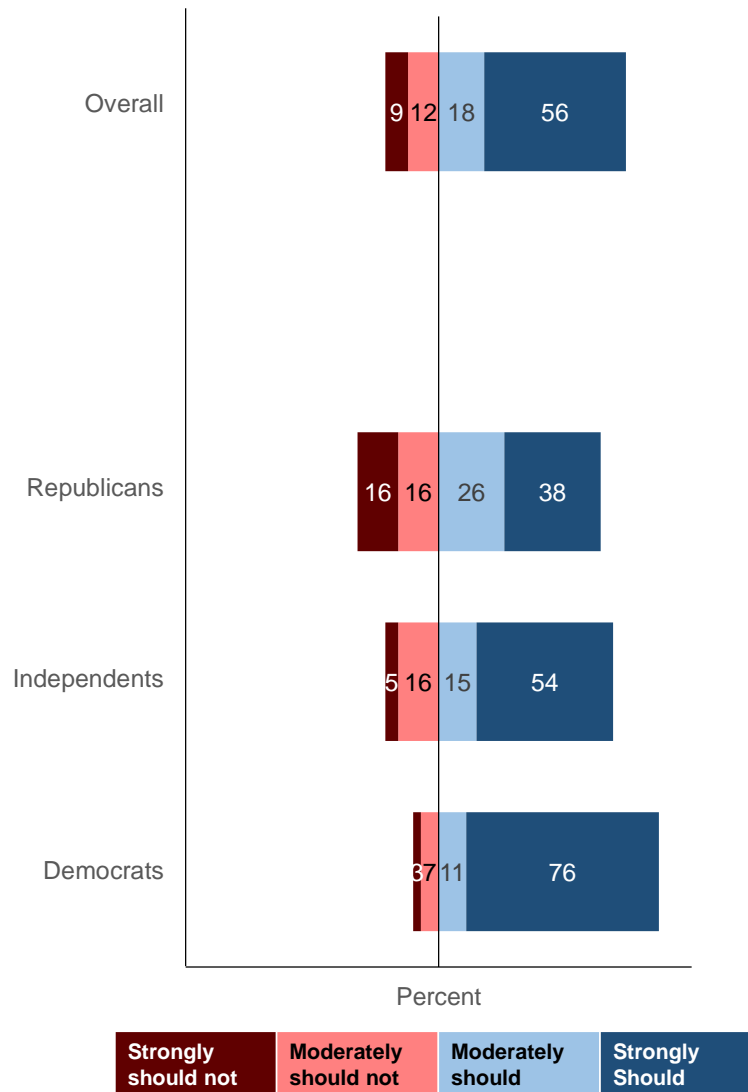
Clinton holds a 14-point edge over Trump among female voters, while Trump holds a 11-point advantage among male voters.

Do you think that Hillary Clinton should or should not be required to release all her medical records, or medical issues related to her health?



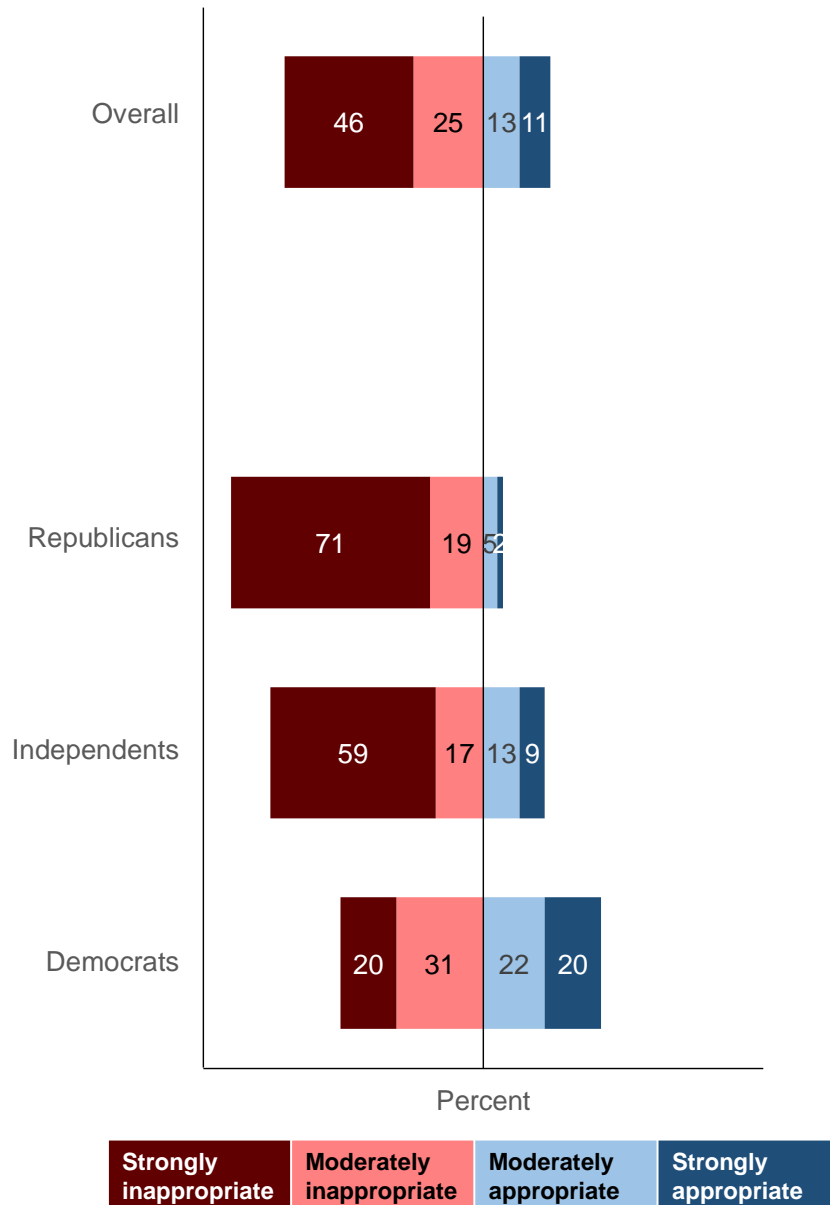
After disclosing she was diagnosed with pneumonia in early September, likely voters were asked if they think Hillary Clinton should or should not be required to release more of her medical records to the public. More than one-half (58%) of voters *strongly* (39%) or *moderately* (19%) think that she should be required to release all of her medical records. Strong majorities of Republicans (73%) and Independents (64%) think Clinton should be required to release her medical records, while slightly more than one-half of Democrats (52%) do not think she should be required to do so.

Do you think that Donald Trump should or should not be required to release his tax returns?



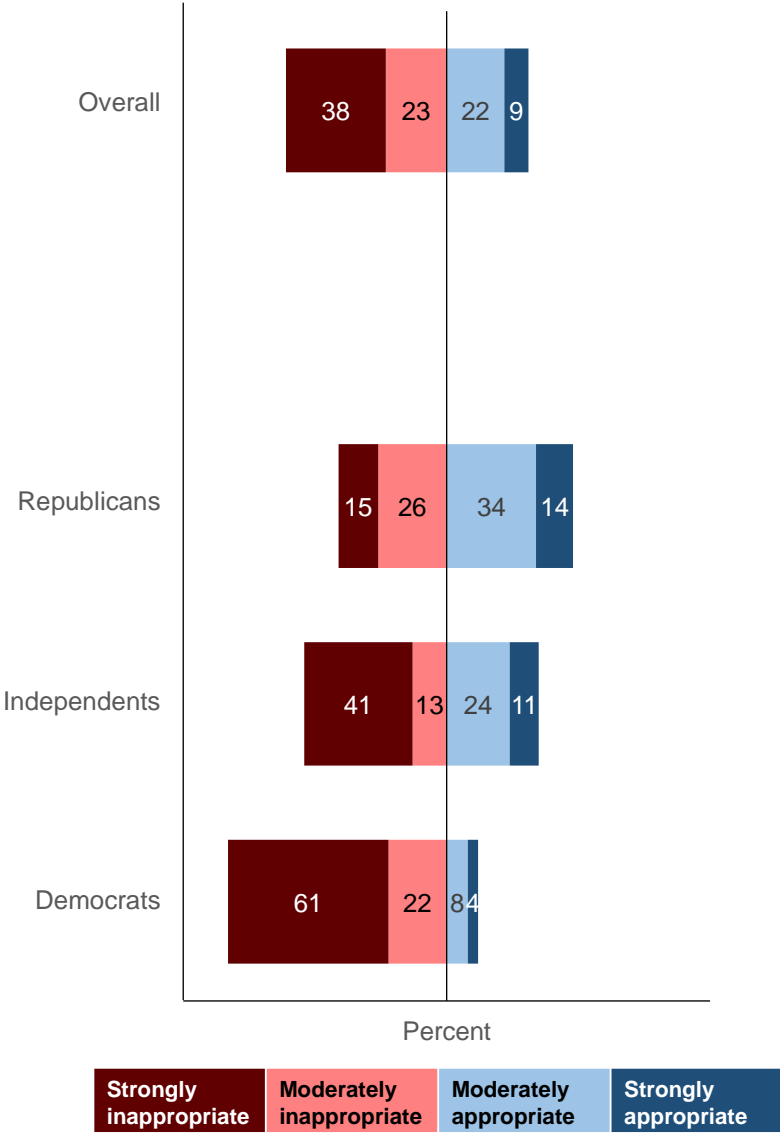
Likely voters were also asked if Donald Trump should be required to release his tax returns. Three-quarters of voters (74%) *strongly* (56%) or *moderately* (18%) think that he should be required to release his tax returns. While there is a difference in the intensity of this position linked to party identification, majorities of Republicans (64%), Independents (69%) and Democrats (87%) all think Trump should be required to release his tax returns.

Do you think that Hillary Clinton’s remarks about some of Donald Trump’s supporters as a “basket of deplorables” are appropriate or inappropriate for a candidate running for U.S. President?



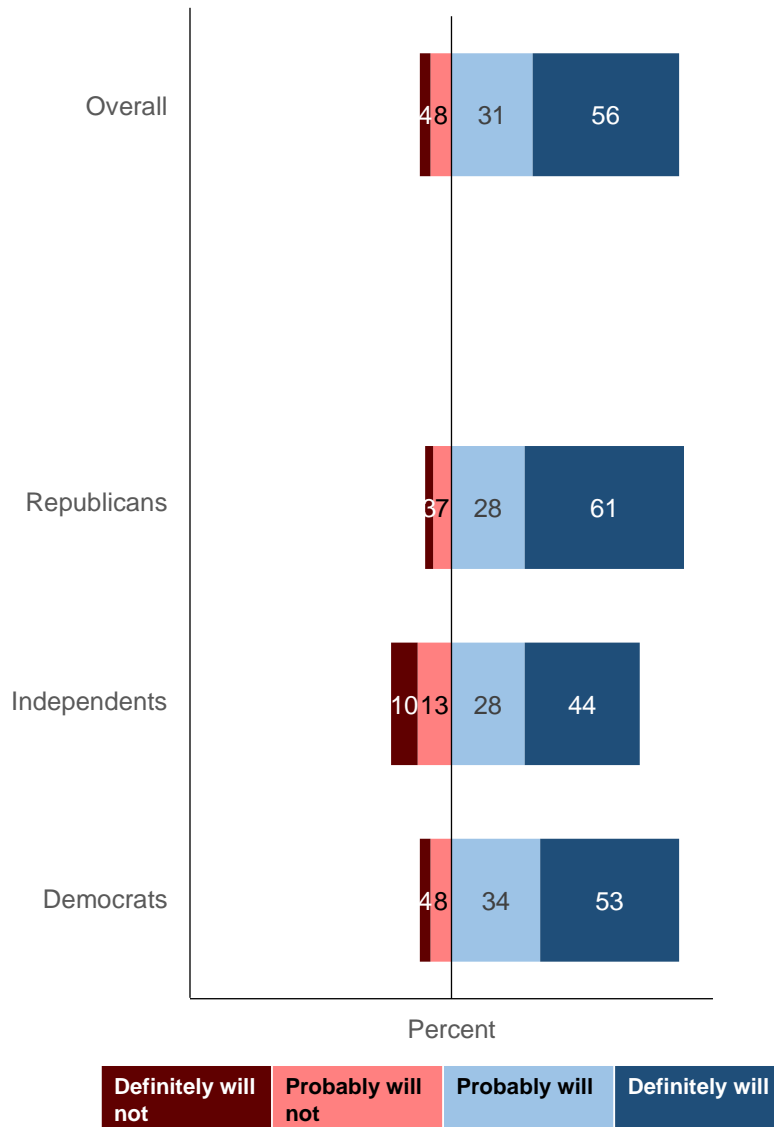
Voters were asked about recent comments by Hillary Clinton, saying that many of Donald Trump’s supporters could be placed in a “basket of deplorables.” Nearly three-quarters of all voters (71%) felt these comments were *strongly* (46%) or *moderately* (25%) *inappropriate*. A majority of Democrats (51%) and Independents (76%), and nearly all Republicans (90%) said the comments were *inappropriate*.

Do you think that Donald Trump's sometimes favorable remarks about Russian President Vladimir Putin are appropriate or inappropriate for a candidate running for U.S. President?



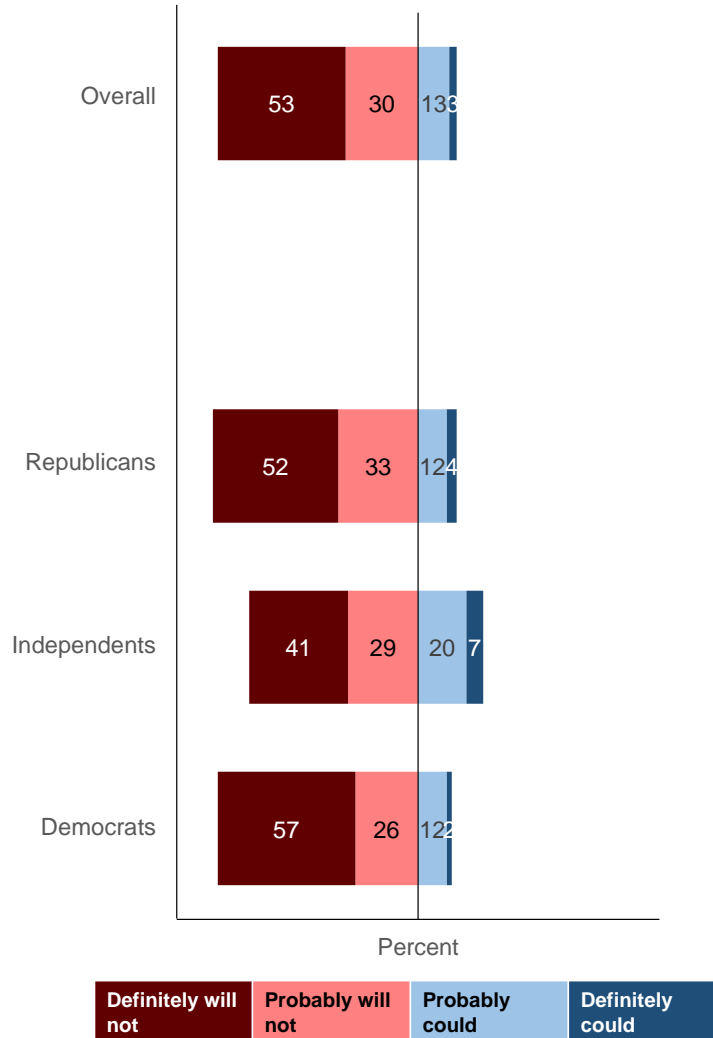
Voters were also asked about Donald Trump's occasionally favorable statements toward Russian President Vladimir Putin. Sixty-one percent of likely voters said such statements toward Putin were *strongly* (38%) or *moderately* (23%) *inappropriate*. Most Democrats (83%) and a majority of Independents (54%) said Trump's views towards Putin are *inappropriate*, while Republicans were more divided, with 48 percent saying such views are *appropriate* and 41 percent saying they are *inappropriate*.

As you may know, the first presidential debate will be held next week on Monday, September 26. How likely is it that you will watch the debate?



The first Presidential Debate is likely to see strong viewership ratings. Voters were asked how likely it is that they will watch the first debate scheduled for September 26. The vast majority of voters (87%) reported that they *definitely* (56%) or *probably* (31%) will watch the first debate. However, among self-identified Independents, a significant minority (23%) said they are not likely to watch the debate.

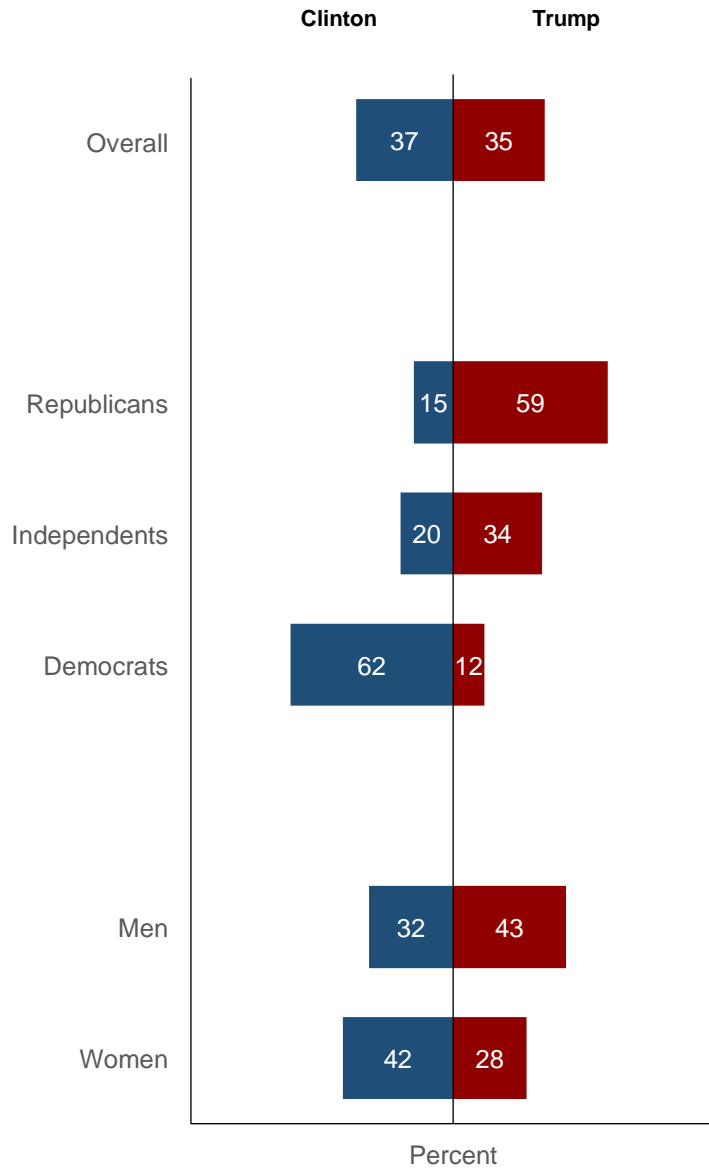
How likely is it that you could change your mind about who to support for president based on what you see and hear from the candidates in the debates and press coverage?



Despite indications of strong viewership, it appears most likely voters will be watching to reinforce their vote choice rather than to influence it. Likely voters were asked about the chance that the debate, and coverage of the debate, could influence their vote choice. Eighty-three percent of voters said the debates will *probably* (30%) or *definitely* (53%) *not* cause them to change their mind about who to vote for. These results were similarly high among current Clinton supporters (84%) and Trump supporters (91%).

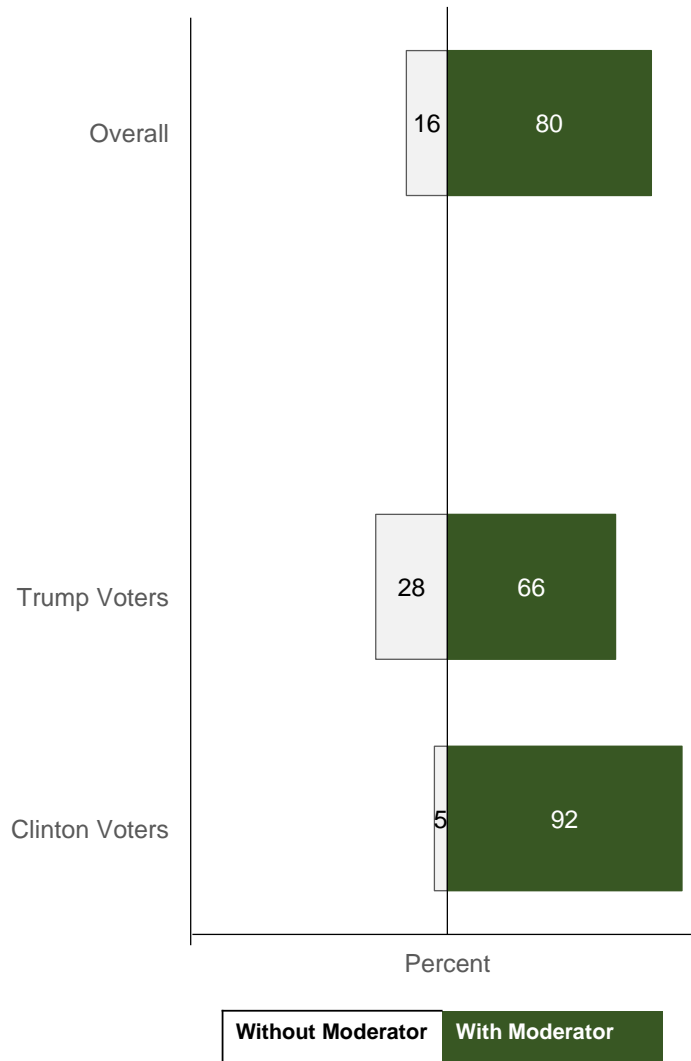
However, in such a close election, there is a small but potentially significant minority (16%) who reported that the debate could cause them to change their mind.

Who do you think is more likely to benefit from the first presidential debate?



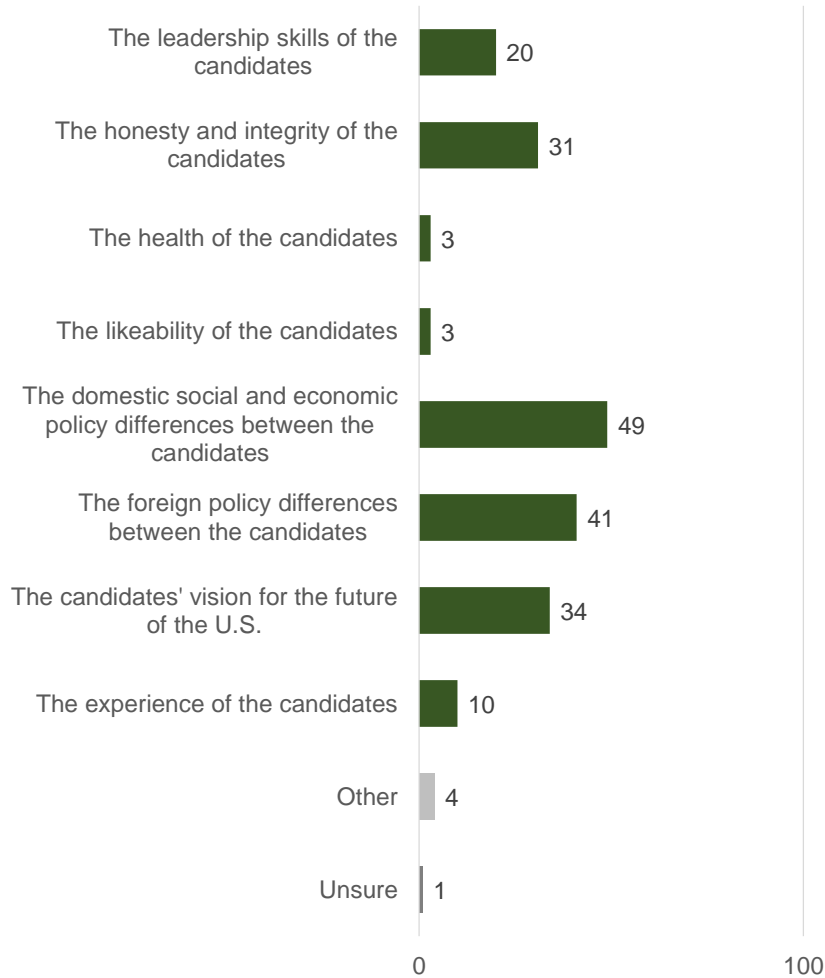
Voters are currently divided on who is likely to come out ahead after the first Presidential Debate. When asked who is more likely to benefit from the debate, 37 percent predicted Clinton and 35 percent predicted Trump, while 10 percent believed both candidates will benefit and 18 percent were unsure.

Do you think the presidential debates would be better with or without a moderator?



Despite some comments by Donald Trump for the debates to be held without a moderator, most likely voters think the debates will be better *with* a moderator. Eighty percent of likely voters indicated that the presidential debate would be better *with* a moderator. Majorities of both Clinton supporters (92%) and Trump supporters (66%) feel the debates will be better served with a moderator.

Now I'm going to read to you a list of topics. When I'm done, I'd like you to identify the two most important topics you are interested in learning about during the presidential debates.



Voters were asked to identify the two most important topics they are interested in learning about in the upcoming presidential debates. Voters were most likely to cite *the domestic, social and economic policy differences between the candidates* (49%) and *the foreign policy differences between the candidates* (41%). These results suggest that the candidate who is best able to articulate specific policy differences between themselves and their opponent could be better positioned coming out of the first debate.

Methodology

The results outlined in this report are based on a survey conducted by RKM Research on behalf of Franklin Pierce University and the Boston Herald. All interviews were conducted by paid, trained and professionally supervised interviewers.

The survey is based on a probabilistic sample of 1,017 likely voters in the United States. Interviews were conducted by landline and cellular telephone, September 18 – 22, 2016. The sampling margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

The data are weighted to adjust for probability of selection, respondent gender, respondent age and region of the US. The four regions of the country as reported in this poll are:

East: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and District of Columbia.

Mid-West: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

South: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas

West: Montana, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii and Washington.

In addition to sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question wording effects, question order effects and non-response.

Any figures shown in the graphics that do not add up to precisely 100 percent are the result of rounding error.

More information available at www.rkm-research.com (603.433.3982).

