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## Latest Winthrop Poll is Out: This is Hillary Country

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# Latest Winthrop Poll is Out: This is Hillary Country

## Quick Facts

- Seventy-one percent of those surveyed said they were leaning toward voting for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.
- The other two candidates running in the primary received significantly lower support – U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, 15%, and former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, 2%.

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Scott Huffmon

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Likely Democratic voters in South Carolina overwhelmingly support [Hillary Clinton](#) to be the Democratic nominee to become the **45th president**, according to the latest [Winthrop Poll](#).

Seventy-one percent of those surveyed said they were leaning toward voting for the former Secretary of State. Of the African-Americans contacted, she had even higher numbers, at 80%. The other two candidates running in the primary received significantly lower support – [U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders](#), 15%, and [former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley](#), 2%.

South Carolina is important in the presidential process because it is the first primary in the South and because it is the first time presidential candidates can be vetted by large numbers of African-American voters.

[Winthrop Poll Director Scott Huffmon](#) noted, "African Americans are one of the most important constituencies for the Democratic Party. African Americans can make up over 50% of the Democratic Presidential Primary vote in South Carolina, which is a much larger portion than you'll see in the Iowa Caucus or New Hampshire primary."

Of the Clinton supporters polled, 72% said she is a solid choice. A little more than a third of all respondents said they might change their mind. Sanders comes up as a second choice by 37% of respondents, but a fourth of respondents said they are undecided.

According to Huffmon, "At 71% support of likely voters, a choice that is 'solid' among more than 7 in 10 of those supporters, and a 79/10 favorable/unfavorable rating, South Carolina is currently Clinton country. While Sanders has drawn large and boisterous crowds - including here at Winthrop - it appears that those crowds might not have significant overlap with likely primary voters. Sanders must convert campaign excitement into long-term voter commitment to begin to close the gap."

**Vice President Joe Biden's decision** last month not to enter the race has affected their choices. Thirty-four percent of Clinton supporters, and 46% of Sanders supporters reported that they would have supported Biden over their first choice if he had decided to run.

Huffmon said: "It appears that Biden's choice not to run helped Sanders, but also effectively anchored Clinton's strong front runner status. While nearly half of Sanders' support came from potential Biden voters, the third of Clinton voters who might have preferred Biden represent a much larger number of individual voters."

When asked if respondents thought Clinton could win the general election, 87% said yes. Only 29% said yes about Sanders and 9% for O'Malley. "Clinton is clearly seen as the most electable by the S.C. Democratic Primary Likely Voters," said Huffmon, "but a strong showing by Sanders, especially in New Hampshire, could go a long way with changing South Carolina Democrats' views about his general election chances."

For this **latest Winthrop Poll**, callers surveyed 832 South Carolina residents by landline and cell phones between Oct.24 through Nov. 1. Results which use all respondents have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.4% at the 95% confidence level. Subgroups have higher margins of error. [Information about the poll methodology can be found here.](#)

[See the questions and responses.](#)

When asked about favorable views among likely Democratic voters, here is the rundown:

- Barack Obama, 90% favorable
- Hillary Clinton, 79%
- Bernie Sanders, 47%
- Martin O'Malley, 18%, with 54% saying they are not familiar with him
- National Democratic Party, 77%
- S.C. Democratic Party, 72%
- Black Lives Matter movement, 57%, with 20% saying they are not familiar with it

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

Likely Democratic voters also shared how they would describe the top two candidates in their party:

- **Hillary Clinton**, 65% said honest (24% said no), 92% said capable, 81% said she understands the needs of everyday people;
- **Bernie Sanders**, 65% said honest (13% said no), 59% said capable, 67% said he understands the needs of everyday people.

## OPINIONS ON GOP CANDIDATES

Winthrop Poll callers found out that Democratic voters are divided on who would be the easiest and most difficult Republican presidential candidates to beat. **New York real estate tycoon Donald Trump** came in first in both categories. Twenty-three percent speculated that Trump would be the most difficult for the Democratic nominee to beat while 38% believe that he would be the easiest to beat.

Huffmon noted: "South Carolina Democratic Primary Voters appear to be ambivalent about Trump with more than 1 in 5 viewing him as the greatest threat to a 2016 Democratic victory while nearly 4 in 10 speculate that opposing Trump would make the path of the Democratic nominee much easier."

Others listed as difficult to beat were **former Florida Governor Jeb Bush**, 17% said so; **U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio**, 15%; **neurosurgeon Ben Carson**, 13%. The others ranked in single digits, including **South Carolina's U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham** at 2%.

As for easiest to beat after Trump were Jeb Bush, 10%, while 16% weren't sure. Graham registered at 8%.

## POLL FUNDING, METHODOLOGY AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Winthrop Poll is paid for by Winthrop University with additional support from [The West Forum on Politics and Policy](#) at Winthrop University.

For additional information, or to set up an interview with **Poll Director Scott Huffmon**, please contact **Judy Longshaw** at [longshawj@winthrop.edu](mailto:longshawj@winthrop.edu) or 803/323-2404 (office) or 803/984-0586 (cell).

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