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Media Contact: Prof. Spencer Kimball, ECPS Advisor

Spencer_Kimball@emerson.edu

617-824-8737

EMERSON POLL: IN MASSACHUSETTS CLINTON, SANDERS IN A DEAD HEAT; TRUMP TROUNCES ALL GOP RIVALS

Boston, MA – Fresh off her must-win performance in the Nevada Caucuses, Hillary Clinton is in a dead heat with Bernie Sanders in the Massachusetts Democratic presidential primary, with each candidate getting 46% of the vote and 5% still undecided. Massachusetts was a strong Clinton state based on polling from the fall but is now a toss-up for Super Tuesday, March 1.

With the GOP field narrowing after Jeb Bush's decision Saturday to drop out of the race, Donald Trump is trouncing all his rivals in the Bay State. Trump takes 50% of the vote, giving him a better than 3-to-1 advantage over Marco Rubio (16%); a 37-point edge over John Kasich (13%); and a 5-to-1 margin over Texas Senator Ted Cruz (10%). Ben Carson, who earned 23% of the vote in an October 2015 Emerson poll, has faded to 2% in this recent survey.

In the Democratic contest, support breaks along gender lines with men favoring Sanders 60% to 35% and women preferring Clinton 56% to 34%. As in previous primaries and caucuses, Sanders has a significant edge over Clinton with younger voters, although not by the same large margins seen elsewhere. Among the 18-34 age group, he has a 24-point advantage (59% to 35%). His lead drops to 10 points in the 35-54 category, with Sanders ahead 51% to 41%. Clinton has a 51% to 46% edge with those 55-74, and a better than 50-point margin (67% to 16%) with voters 75 and above.

Although Trump's favorability numbers have been under water in some early primary states, he enjoys an impressive +32 differential (64% favorable to 32% unfavorable) among likely GOP primary voters in Massachusetts. Democratic primary voters likewise view Clinton and Sanders very favorably. Her favorable/unfavorable rating is 77% to 21% (+56) while his rating is 74% to 21% (+53).

Ted Cruz is the only candidate in either party with negative favorability (-27) among likely primary voters in their own party. Just 33% view him favorably, while 60% have an unfavorable view of the Texas senator. Cruz is also seen as the candidate who has been

least honest about his own record and that of his Republican rivals; 44% say he is the least honest, followed by Trump, cited by 20% as being the least honest.

Asked which issue mattered most to them in the presidential race, 29% of Democrats cited the economy, and 25% said dissatisfaction with government was their top concern. Among Republicans, those priorities were reversed: 35% expressed dissatisfaction with government, and 20% say they worry about the economy.

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The Emerson College Polling Society poll was conducted from February 19-21, 2016. The GOP primary consisted of 289 likely primary voters, with a margin of error of +/-5.7% and the Democratic primary consisted of 417 likely primary voters, with a margin of error of +/-4.75%. Data was collected using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system of landlines only and weighted by 2012. The full methodology and results can be found at www.theecps.com