April 12, 2016
Media Contact: Prof. Spencer Kimball, ECPS Advisor
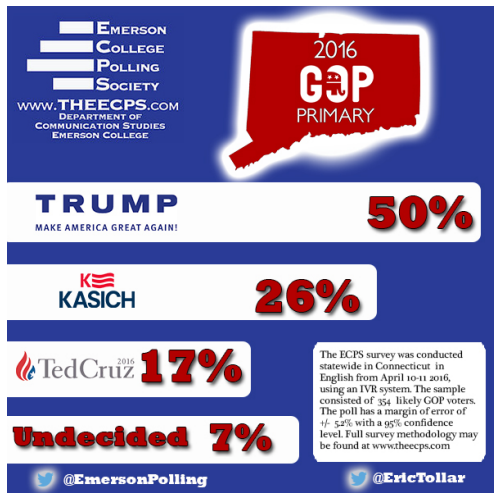Spencer_Kimball@emerson.edu
617-824-8737

EMERSON POLL: TRUMP COULD SWEEP CONNECTICUT; SANDERS WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF CLINTON; KASICH BEATS BERNIE AND HILLARY

BOSTON, MA – In a primary season where every state now counts—on both sides of the ballot—Donald Trump is positioned to sweep the 28 delegates at stake in the April 26 Connecticut GOP primary. In a statewide poll conducted by Emerson College, 50% of likely Republican voters say they will vote for the billionaire businessman.

Ohio's John Kasich is in second place with 26% of the vote. Ted Cruz, with 17%, risks being shut out of the delegate count if he fails to win 20% of the statewide or Congressional district vote. Six percent (6%) of GOP primary voters are undecided. Trump holds a solid lead in all five Congressional districts, by margins of 18 to 38 points. Kasich finishes second, and Cruz is third in all five districts.

In a tight Democratic race, Hillary Clinton leads Bernie Sanders 49% to 43%, with 6% of likely voters undecided. Connecticut is a closed primary, same-day registration state. When Independents and Republican voters in the polling sample who expressed support for Sanders were added to the Democratic primary numbers, Sanders closed the current 6-point gap with Clinton to 1 point (47% to 46%). This suggests that if Sanders can persuade his non-Democratic supporters in Connecticut to re-register as Democrats, he could pull off a win without relying on a last-minute swing by younger registered Democrats.
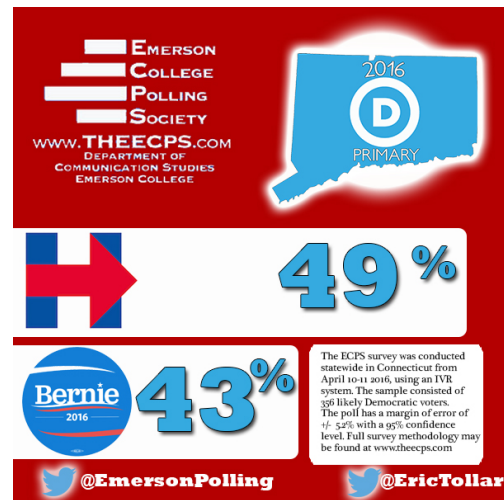
Sanders leads Clinton 58% to 39% among voters age 18-34. Clinton holds a 51% to 42% edge in the 35-54 age group and is up 59% to 41% among voters 55-74. Gender is a significant factor in the Democratic contest, with male voters preferring Sanders over Clinton 51% to 42% and women favoring the former Secretary of State 55% to 36%. Sanders is winning 41% to 35% among those 75 and over. Connecticut's 55 pledged Democratic delegates are allocated proportionally, based on the primary vote.

Democrats view Sanders very favorably; 80% have a favorable opinion of him, compared to 15% unfavorable, a net +65. Clinton's favorable/unfavorable rating is net +32, with 65% of Democrats having a positive opinion versus 33% with a negative impression of her. However, she commands more loyalty: 72% of Democrats who find her favorable say they will vote for her in the Connecticut primary, compared to 47% who are loyal to Sanders. Among Democratic voters, Kasich's favorable/unfavorable rating is 55/35.

Among GOP voters John Kasich is also viewed much more favorably than either of his Republican opponents. His favorable/unfavorable rating is 67/30 (+37) compared to Trump's 57/40 (+17) and Cruz's 38/57 (-19). However Trump commands the most loyalty: 80% compared to Kasich (38%) and Cruz (37%).

In head-to-head matchups for the general election, Kasich beats Clinton by 11 points (49% to 38%) and Sanders by 8 points (48% to 40%). In contrast, both Trump and Cruz would lose to either Democrat. Clinton outpolls Trump 48% to 40% and Cruz 52% to 31%. Sanders beats Trump 49% to 40% and wins over Cruz 55% to 30%.

With both parties facing talk of a contested convention, 56% of likely voters in the Democratic primary believe that the candidate with the most delegates chosen via primaries and caucuses should win the nomination. On the other hand, 29% think superdelegates should be free to choose the nominee regardless of which candidate leads in pledged delegates.

Among likely GOP primary voters, 56% say the candidate with the highest delegate count going into the July convention should be given the nomination even if they have not won the 1,237 delegates required by GOP rules. Forty-four percent (44%) support an open convention if that situation arises.

For Democrats and Republicans alike, dissatisfaction with government is the most important issue in the election, chosen by 43% of likely GOP primary voters and 32% of Democrats. Stopping ISIS and terrorism is the next most pressing issue for Republicans, mentioned by 14%. Jobs and unemployment is the second most urgent concern among Democrats, cited by 20%.

Caller ID
The Emerson College Polling Society poll was conducted from April 10 to 11, 2016. The GOP primary consisted of 354 likely primary voters, with a margin of error of +/-5.2% and weighted by age based on 2012 and 2008 exit polling. The Democratic primary consisted of 356 likely primary voters, with a margin of error of +/-5.2% and weighted by age based on 2008 and 2004 exit polling. The General Election sample consisted of 1,043 likely general election voters, and weighted by 2012 federal general election returns with a margin of error of +/-3%. Data was collected using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system of landlines only. The full methodology and results can be found at www.theecps.com.