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Media Contact: Prof. Spencer Kimball
Emerson College Polling Advisor
Spencer_Kimball@emerson.edu
617-824-8737

Emerson Poll: Trump Leads Clinton Nationally; Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri Remain Red; Colorado is Leaning Trump; Pneumonia Diagnosis Appears to Be Hurting Clinton

BOSTON, MA – In the first national poll conducted by Emerson College during this general election season, the presidential race is looking like a dead heat, with Donald Trump edging out Hillary Clinton 43% to 41%, well within the poll's 3.4% margin of error (MOE). Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson holds 9% of the popular vote, and the Green Party's Jill Stein gets 2%.

Table 1: Results for US Poll and 4 State Polls

	US	Colorado	Georgia	Missouri	Arkansas
Clinton	41%	38%	39%	34%	29%
Trump	43%	42%	45%	47%	57%
Johnson	9%	13%	6%	7%	5%
Stein	2%	2%	3%	6%	3%
Undecided	5%	5%	8%	7%	7%
MOE*	**3.40%**	**3.90%**	**3.90%**	**3.90%**	**3.90%**

Eight in 10 (81%) of voters surveyed nationally were aware that Clinton was recently diagnosed with pneumonia, a revelation that appears to be hurting her with some voters. (Additional details are below.)

In four state-level polls released at the same time as the national poll, Trump leads by 4 points in Colorado (42% to 38%), 6 points in Georgia (45% to 39%), 13 points in Missouri (47% to 34%) and has a blowout-level lead in Arkansas, 57% to 29%.

U.S. Senate races in three of the four states polled show the incumbents with a solid lead over their challengers. In Arkansas, GOP Senator John Boozman has a 14-point edge over Democrat Conner Eldridge, 44% to 30%. Georgia Republican Johnny Isakson leads Jim Barksdale 48% to 32%, and Colorado's Democratic incumbent, Michael Bennet is running 7 points ahead of Darryl Glenn, 46% to 39%. Missouri is the exception, with Democrat Jason Kander holding a 2-point edge over GOP incumbent Roy Blunt, 42% to 40%.

Expectations are shifting

Compared to earlier Emerson polls, these latest results suggest that voters expectations about who will win the presidential race are shifting. In previous surveys, a larger percentage of all voters expressed the belief that Clinton will win the election compared to those who believe Trump will. The differential was as much as +19 in Ohio in late August. That gap appears to be narrowing, with only 45% of the national electorate saying Clinton will win, compared to 43% who say Trump will.

Trump is closing the favorability gap

Consistent with state and national polls, both Trump and Clinton are viewed unfavorably in four of the five Emerson polls released today. (Arkansas is the exception, and only for Trump.) However, Emerson polls conducted during the last two weeks show that Trump—whose unfavorable numbers have tended to be higher than Clinton's—are improving since he brought on new campaign management and shown more discipline in his messaging. As Table 2 shows, their numbers are now comparable nationally and in two states, but Trump is seen far more favorably than Clinton in two other states.

Table 2: Presidential Favorability

	US	Colorado	Georgia	Missouri	Arkansas
Clinton	42% / 54% (-12)	37% / 58% (-21)	42% / 56% (-14)	32%/64% (-32)	28% / 68% (-40)
Trump	42% / 54% (-12)	40% / 58% (-18)	40% / 53% (-13)	45%/51% (-6)	52% / 44% (+8)

Nationally, both candidates' favorable/unfavorable differential is -12. In Colorado, Trump is at -18 compared to her -21. In Georgia, Trump is -13 to Clinton's -14. Breaking that pattern, Trump is viewed much more favorably in Missouri and Arkansas. In the "show me" state, his favorable/unfavorable ratio is -6 to her -32. In Arkansas, Clinton is deep underwater with a -40 favorable/unfavorable differential, compared to Trump, who is in positive territory (+6). Of the 19 polls Emerson has conducted for the general election, this is the first positive rating for either major candidate. It should be noted that Clinton was the "first lady" of Arkansas during her husband's two terms as governor, prior to him winning the presidency in 1992.

Gender, Age, Regions and Independents

The gender gap is significant between the two candidates. In the national poll Clinton leads by 19 points among women (53% to 34%), and Trump leads by 24 points among men (54% to 28%). This is a common trend throughout the states polled this cycle. In Colorado, they split the female vote at 41%, but Trump has an edge with men, 43% to 36%. In Georgia, Clinton holds a slight lead with women, 44% to 42%, but he has a substantial 48% to 34% advantage with men. The situation is similar in Missouri, where he leads men by 24 points, but she only leads women by two. In Arkansas, Trump is winning both genders by wide margins. He is ahead with women 52% to 32% and men 63% to 26%.

Table 3: Gender

	US	Colorado	Georgia	Arkansas	Missouri
Clinton	M: 28% F: 53%	M: 36% F: 41%	M: 34% F: 44%	M: 26% F: 32%	M: 26% F: 42%
Trump	M: 52% F: 34%	M: 43% F: 41%	M: 48% F: 42%	M: 63% F: 52%	M:54% F: 40%
Johnson	M: 11% F: 7%	M: 15% F: 11%	M: 7% F: 5%	M: 5% F: 4%	M: 6% F: 5%
Stein	M: 3% F: 1%	M: 2% F: 2%	M: 3% F: 2%	M: 1% F: 5%	M: 7% F: 5%
Unsure	M: 6% F: 4%	M: 4% F: 7%	M: 8% F: 7%	M: 6% F: 7%	M: 6% F: 8%

Nationally, Clinton holds a lead with 18-34 year olds, 51% to 30%, but loses to Trump in all other age groups, by a range of 8 to 14 points. Regionally, Trump's strongest support is in the South, where he is ahead of Clinton 49% to 37%, and the Midwest where his advantage is 42% to 38%. Clinton's strength is in the West, where she is ahead of him 49% to 38%, and in the Northeast, where she is up 45% to 36%. Trump has a slight edge among Independent voters nationally, with 41% to Clinton's 36%.

Pneumonia diagnosis may be hurting Clinton
Emerson's national poll shows that word of Clinton's pneumonia diagnosis spread quickly. On the first day of the poll, only 54% of respondents said they had heard about it; among those responding on the third day, 98% were aware. For the entire three-day span of the poll, 81% were aware of the news while 19% were not. Asked whether Clinton's diagnosis would make them more likely or less likely to vote for her, 46% said it would make no difference, 28% said they were more likely to vote for her, and 26% said they were less likely to, suggesting the issue is a wash.

But further analysis shows the issue hurts Clinton with undecided voters and with Johnson and Stein supporters whom, the poll shows, are far more likely than Trump or Clinton partisans to change their votes before election day. Collectively, 10% of this group said the news made them more likely to vote for Clinton, compared to 36% who said it made them less likely to.

When national voters were presented with a hypothetical scenario where Clinton was dropped from the Democratic ticket and Tim Kaine became the party's nominee, only 30% of all voters said they would vote for Kaine, an 11-point drop from Clinton's 41% in the ballot test. In tandem with this drop, the percentage of voters who declared themselves unsure about whom they would vote for rose from 5% to 16%.

Caller ID
The Emerson College national poll was conducted September 11-13, under the supervision of Professor Spencer Kimball. The sample consisted of 800 likely general election voters, with a margin of error of +/- 3.4%. Data was weighted by 2012 election results, age, gender, political affiliation and region.

All four state polls were conducted from September 9-13 and consisted of 600 likely voters with a margin of error of +/-3.9%. Data was weighted by 2012 election results, age, gender, political affiliation and region.

It is important to remember that subsets based on gender, age and party breakdowns carry with them higher margins of error, as the sample size is reduced. 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