



Perceptions of Presidential Candidates

National and State-Wide Online Survey

June 4 to June 9, 2015

The Elon University Poll conducted two online surveys using a non-probability opt-in panel. This method was used in order to implement simultaneously a national survey and a state-wide survey of North Carolina. The project collected responses from 1125 adults living in the United States, 901 of whom stated they were registered to vote. The North Carolina survey obtained a sample of 835 adult residents in North Carolina, 709 of whom said they were registered to vote in the state. Both surveys were conducted between June 4th and June 9th.

Candidate Name Recognition and Positive Associations

In this early stage of the presidential election the field of candidates is still evolving. Public opinion polls at this time are better at gauging candidate name recognition than they are in predicting who will win the primary or general election. Name recognition has long been considered instrumental in determining the viability of a candidate. A number of studies in political science have found "to be perceived at all is to be perceived favorably."¹ This may be especially true in presidential primaries.² However, the famous proverb warns that "familiarity breeds contempt" and the more we know about a candidate the more opportunity we have to find faults with them. Other political scientists, such as Alan Abramowitz, concluded that name recognition does not always equate to positive feelings.³ In this study we explore name recognition and voters' positive and/or negative associations toward candidates by providing the following instructions to survey respondents:

¹ Stokes, Donald E., and Warren E. Miller. 1962. "Party government and the saliency of Congress." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26 (4):531-46.

² See Bartels, Larry M. 1988. *Presidential primaries and the dynamics of public choice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Lenart, Silvo. 1997. "Naming Names in a Midwestern Town: The Salience of Democratic Presidential Hopefuls in Early 1992." *Political Behavior* 19(4): 365-82.

³ Abramowitz, Alan I. 1975. "Name familiarity, reputation, and the incumbency effect in a congressional election." *Western Political Quarterly* 28 (4):668-84.

"Below is a list of Republican [Democratic] candidates who have decided to run or have signaled their interest in running for president in 2016. For each candidate please type 1 or 2 words that first come to mind when you think of that person. If you don't know who that person is just type "don't know" or "dk"."

Democrats and Independents who more closely identify as a Democrat were asked to evaluate Democratic candidates, while Republicans and Independents who more closely identify as Republican were asked to evaluate Republican candidates. These responses were then coded as *positive, neutral, or negative*.

National Survey - Republican Candidates

Table 1 shows the results of the coding of responses (in percentages) from 303 registered voters in the U.S. who are Republican or lean Republican. Several conclusions can be inferred from the results:

- Jeb Bush had the strongest name recognition (lowest % of "Don't Knows")
- John Kasich had the weakest name recognition of the candidates tested
- Jeb Bush also had the highest number of positive attributes listed by voters
- George Pataki had the lowest number of positive attributes listed by voters
- Chris Christie had the highest number of negative attributes listed by voter
- Ben Carson had the lowest number of negative attributes listed by voters
- Ben Carson had the highest ratio of positive to negative attributes
- Chris Christie and Lindsay Graham had the lowest ratio of positive to negative attributes

Table 1: Republican Name Recognition & Positive/Negative Associations

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Ratio: Positive to Negative</i>
Jeb Bush	23.5	33.8	21.8	20.8	1.1
Ben Carson	22.9	20.1	4.4	52.6	5.2
Marco Rubio	21.5	27.0	8.5	43.0	2.5
Mike Huckabee	20.8	30.7	16.4	32.1	1.3
Scott Walker	20.8	19.1	6.1	53.9	3.4
Rick Perry	17.1	28.7	17.4	36.9	1.0
Carly Fiorina	15.4	15.7	12.3	56.7	1.3
Rand Paul	14.7	26.6	24.2	34.5	0.6
Ted Cruz	14.0	25.9	20.1	39.9	0.7
Chris Christie	13.0	22.5	30.0	34.5	0.4
Rick Santorum	12.3	30.4	16.7	40.6	0.7
Bobby Jindal	10.6	23.5	8.9	57.0	1.2
John Kasich	9.6	19.8	6.1	64.5	1.6
Lindsay Graham	5.8	20.8	16.4	57.0	0.4
George Pataki	5.1	24.9	11.3	58.7	0.5

Nationally, the results appear to present some good news for Jeb Bush. He has the strongest name recognition and is the candidate with the highest number of positive words and terms associated with them. However, he also has one of the largest amounts of negative attributes (only behind Chris Christie and Rand Paul). Familiarity does seem to breed some negative associations given that Bush, Christie and Paul have some of the strongest name recognition but also have a high number of respondents attaching negative terms to these candidates. One exception to this is Mike Huckabee who seems to be well-known (second lowest number of don't knows) and with only a modest amount of negative terms used to describe this candidate.

Perhaps the real winner is Ben Carson. With many respondents providing positive terms when thinking of this candidate, he also had an extremely low number of respondents connecting any negative terms to the candidate (only 4.4%). This gave Carson, by far, the highest positive to negative ratio of any candidate name in the study. This could partly be due to the type of occupation Carson is associated with (doctor) and the fact that he has not held an elected office.

Although Chris Christie is better known than most other candidates, he had the most negative comments and tied Lindsey Graham for the lowest ratio of positive to negative comments. John Kasich had the highest number of respondents typing "don't know" or "dk", very few people had anything negative to say about the candidate. George Pataki had problems with both name recognition and the fewest number of respondents saying anything positive about the candidate.

For illustrative purposes, Table 2 presents the most common terms used by respondents when thinking of each of the Republican candidates.

Table 2: Nation - Most Common Terms Associated with Candidates

Bush	Bush; Good; OK; Brother; Like; Best; Family; George
Carson	Good; Doctor; OK; Smart; Like; Great; Intelligent; Strong
Christie	No; OK; Fat; Jersey; Good; Like; Big; Conservative; Leader
Cruz	No; OK; Good; Conservative; Maybe; Not (Sure); Strong
Fiorina	No; Not (Sure); Unknown; CEO; Good; OK; Smart; Strong
Graham	No; Not (Sure); Unknown; Old; Southern; Conservative
Huckabee	OK; Good; Conservative; Religious; Like; Maybe; Old
Jindal	Good; No; OK; Unknown; Louisiana; Chance; Not (Sure)
Kasich	OK; Unknown; No; Good; Ohio; Who; Governor; Boring
Pataki	No; Not (Sure); OK; Unknown; New (York); Governor; Good
Paul	OK; Good; No; Like; Choice; Conservative; Libertarian
Perry	OK; Not (Sure); Good; No; Texas; Like; Maybe; Strong
Rubio	Good; OK; Young; Like; Maybe; Great; Hispanic; Not (Sure)
Santorum	OK; No; Good; Conservative; Like; Not (Sure); Strong
Walker	Good; OK; Like; Unknown; Conservative; Great; Strong

National Survey - Democratic Candidates

Table 3 presents the result of the national survey (in percentages) for 445 registered voters in the U.S. who are Democrats or lean Democrat.

Table 3: Democratic Name Recognition & Positive/Negative Associations

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Ratio: Positive to Negative</i>
Hillary Clinton	50.6	22.9	15.5	11.0	3.3
Joe Biden	33.0	36.6	17.0	13.4	1.9
Elizabeth Warren	22.7	22.6	11.0	43.7	2.1
Bernie Sanders	16.5	22.2	10.3	51.0	1.6
Martin O'Malley	7.1	23.7	9.5	59.8	0.7
Jim Webb	5.2	24.7	6.1	64.0	0.9
Lincoln Chafee	4.8	21.4	11.0	62.8	0.4

Clinton has both the strongest name recognition and the highest number of positive terms connected to any candidate. Furthermore, she has the highest ratio of positive to negative comments. Joe Biden had the second highest number of positive comments, but also had the highest number of negative comments connected to him. Elizabeth Warren, who has said she will not run for president, has stronger name recognition than Sanders, O'Malley, Webb, and Chafee. All of whom have already declared their intention to run. In addition, Warren's positive numbers are higher than all four of these candidates.

Table 4 presents the most common terms used by respondents when thinking of each of the Democratic candidates.

Table 4: Nation - Most Common Terms Associated with Candidates

Clinton	Strong; President; Good; Like; Bill; First; Great
Biden	Vice President; Good; OK; Old; Great; Nice
Sanders	No; Good; Liberal; Cool; Independent; Non; Socialist
O'Malley	Who; No; Not (Sure); Good; Unknown; Governor; Maryland
Webb	No; Unknown; Who; Not (Sure); Virginia; Conservative; Intelligent
Chafee	No; Who; Unknown; Non; Not (Sure); Good; Chance
Warren	No; Good; Liberal; Like; Smart; Choice; Woman

North Carolina Survey - Republican Candidates

Table 5 below shows the results of the coding of responses (in percentages) of 294 registered voters in North Carolina who are Republican or lean Republican. The results are remarkably similar to the national survey.

Similarities:

- In both the national and state surveys Jeb Bush had the strongest name recognition
- In both surveys George Pataki had the lowest number of positive attributes listed by voters
- In both surveys John Kasich had the weakest name recognition
- In both surveys Ben Carson had the highest ratio of positive to negative comments
- In both surveys Chris Christie had the highest number of negative comments
- In both surveys Christie and Graham had the lowest ratio of positive to negative comments

Differences:

- Mike Huckabee had the highest number of positive comments in the North Carolina survey, but came in 4th place in the national survey.
- Jeb Bush came in third in highest number of positive comments in the North Carolina survey, but was at the top in the national survey.

Table 5: Republican Name Recognition & Positive/Negative Associations

<i>Republican Candidate</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Ratio: Positive to Negative</i>
Mike Huckabee	25.4	22.3	19.6	32.6	1.3
Ben Carson	24.7	20.3	7.6	47.4	3.3
Jeb Bush	24.1	30.2	22.7	23.0	1.1
Marco Rubio	21.6	24.4	10.0	44.0	2.2
Scott Walker	20.6	14.1	7.9	57.4	2.6
Rand Paul	17.5	23.7	21.3	37.5	0.8
Rick Perry	15.5	22.7	20.3	41.6	0.8
Ted Cruz	15.1	27.5	14.8	42.6	1.0
Chris Christie	14.8	15.1	35.4	34.7	0.4
Rick Santorum	12.0	30.9	15.8	41.2	0.8
Bobby Jindal	10.7	22.3	8.6	58.4	1.2
Carly Fiorina	10.0	15.5	10.7	63.9	0.9
Lindsay Graham	6.5	26.8	18.6	48.1	0.4
John Kasich	6.5	12.0	6.5	74.9	1.0
George Pataki	5.8	15.8	11.3	67.0	0.5

Table 6 below presents the most common terms associated with the candidates. Many of the terms used by respondents in the North Carolina survey were also used by respondents in the national survey.

Table 6: NC - Most Common Terms Associated with Candidates

Bush	Good; Bush; OK; Family; Brother; Florida; Great
Carson	Good; Doctor; Smart; Great; OK; Very; Honest; Like
Christie	OK; No; Fat; Good; Jersey; Strong; Idiot; Liberal; Outspoken
Cruz	No; Good; OK; Conservative; Maybe; Like
Fiorina	No; Who; Woman; Good; OK; Business; Maybe; Smart
Graham	No; OK; Good; Carolina; Conservative; Bad
Huckabee	Good; No; OK; Christian; Conservative; Religious; Honest
Jindal	Good; No; OK; Governor; Louisiana; Great; Likable
Kasich	No; Good; OK; Who; Unknown; Conservative; Governor
Pataki	No; OK; New York; Liberal; Old; Unknown; Interesting
Paul	No; OK; Good; Maybe; Conservative; Libertarian; Like
Perry	OK; Good; No; Texas; Governor; Maybe; Great; Honest
Rubio	Good; OK; Maybe; Young; Cuban; Like; Smart
Santorum	Good; OK; No; Maybe; Conservative; Like; Christian
Walker	Good; OK; NO; Governor; Great; Maybe; Not Sure; Who

North Carolina Survey - Democratic Candidates

Table 7 below shows the results of the coding of responses (in percentages) of 313 registered voters in North Carolina who are Democrats or lean Democratic.

Table 7: Democrat Name Recognition & Positive/Negative Associations

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Ratio: Positive to Negative</i>
Hillary Clinton	51.8	20.9	14.2	13.1	3.6
Joe Biden	35.1	31.5	17.5	15.9	2.0
Elizabeth Warren	23.3	18.2	9.4	49.1	2.5
Bernie Sanders	16.4	12.4	11.7	59.5	1.4
Martin O'Malley	6.9	9.7	10.6	72.8	0.7
Jim Webb	5.0	7.9	8.3	78.9	0.6
Lincoln Chafee	2.1	8.7	8.5	80.7	0.2

The results and rankings from the North Carolina survey are almost identical to the national numbers. However, there are some small differences. Clinton's positive numbers are slightly higher among Democrats in North Carolina than in the nation as a whole. In addition, O'Malley,

Webb and Chafee had many more respondents in North Carolina typing "don't know" or "dk" than respondents in the national survey.

Table 8 below displays the most common words used by respondents in North Carolina when thinking of the different Democratic candidates.

Table 8: North Carolina - Most Common Terms Associated with Candidates

Clinton	Strong; Good; President; Great; Qualified; Bill
Biden	Vice President; Good; Old; OK; Great
Sanders	Good; Who; Liberal; Socialist; Unknown
O'Malley	No; Unknown; OK; Who; Good; Maryland; Not (Sure)
Webb	Good; Not Sure; Who; OK; Unknown
Chafee	No; Unknown; OK; Who; Not (Sure); Rhode Island
Warren	Good; OK; Smart; Great; Qualified; Senator; Woman

DEMOGRAPHICS

Party ID: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Strong democrat	21.3	151	20.8	187
Democrat	14.8	105	17.3	156
Democrat leaning	8.1	57	11.4	102
Independent	6.6	47	6.0	54
Republican leaning	11.4	81	10.1	91
Republican	13.4	95	12.8	116
Strong republican	16.7	118	10.7	96
Something else	4.1	29	4.5	41
Don't know	1.3	10	2.5	22
Refused	2.3	16	4.0	36
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Ideology: When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal, moderate, conservative, or haven't you thought much about this?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Extremely liberal	5.4	38	6.7	61
Liberal	14.4	102	12.8	115
Slightly liberal	6.8	48	8.7	78
Moderate	36.0	256	36.9	333
Slightly conservative	9.9	70	9.6	86
Conservative	17.1	121	14.4	130
Extremely conservative	8.2	58	6.9	62
Refused	2.3	16	4.0	36
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Education: How much school have you completed?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Less than high school	1.6	11	1.3	12
High school diploma or GED	16.5	117	16.4	148
Vocational or technical school	5.5	39	4.7	42
Some college	28.9	205	31.2	281
College graduate	29.6	210	27.3	246
Some graduate school	4.4	31	4.3	38
Professional or graduate degree	11.3	80	10.9	98
Refused	2.3	16	4.0	36
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Age: How old are you? [Continuous variable recoded for presentation]

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
18-24	10.0	71	9.0	81
25-34	18.3	130	19.3	174
35-44	16.1	114	15.6	140
45-54	18.1	128	19.2	173
55-64	17.9	127	15.9	143
64-84	18.0	128	19.8	178
85+	1.5	11	1.3	12
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Income: What is your annual household income?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Less than \$20,000	16.2	115	15.4	139
\$20,000 to \$39,999	24.5	174	23.3	210
\$40,000 to \$59,999	18.3	130	18.5	167
\$60,000 to \$79,999	16.3	116	13.0	117
\$80,000 to \$99,999	8.5	60	8.3	75
\$100,000 to \$119,999	5.3	37	4.1	37
\$120,000 to \$139,999	4.2	30	2.7	24
\$140,000 to \$159,999	1.7	12	4.2	38
\$160,000 to \$179,999	1.0	7	2.1	19
\$180,000 or more	1.7	12	3.6	32
Refused	2.3	16	4.8	43
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Race: What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
White	71.5	508	66.3	597
African American or black	22.2	157	13.9	125
Hispanic or Latino	1.8	13	12.1	109
Asian American/Pacific Islander	2.2	15	4.8	44
Native American	0.9	6	1.1	10
Other	1.4	10	1.8	16
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Sex/Gender: What is your gender/sex?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Male	48.3	343	50.3	454
Female	51.7	366	49.7	447
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

Religion: What is your present religion, if any?

	North Carolina		United States	
	%	No.	%	No.
Protestant	37.5	266	23.8	214
Roman catholic	10.8	76	22.1	199
Mormon	1.0	7	0.8	7
Orthodox (such as Greek or Russian)	0.7	5	1.2	11
Jewish	2.8	20	4.2	38
Buddhist	0.5	4	0.8	8
Muslim	0.4	3	0.8	8
Hindu	0.9	6	0.4	4
Atheist	3.5	25	5.2	46
Agnostic	4.5	32	4.7	43
Nothing in particular	13.9	98	16.3	147
Something else	21.3	151	15.5	140
Refused	2.3	16	4.0	36
N=	100.0	709	100.0	901

From the South: Are you originally from the South?

	North Carolina	
	%	No.
Yes	61.1	433
No	36.6	260
Refused	2.3	16
N=	100.0	709

Southern Accent: Do you have a southern accent

	North Carolina	
	%	No.
Yes	41.1	292
No	56.6	401
Refused	2.3	16
N=	100.00	709

Question Ordering

The entire survey can be viewed exactly as displayed to respondents at:

http://elon.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5yYH5DZaox7N8CV

- Introduction
 - intro Introduction to Survey
 - resident..... Are you a resident of NC [US]
 - regist..... Are you registered to vote
 - gender/sex..... What is your gender/sex
 - race What racial/ethnic group
 - age How old are you
 - courtintro..... How much trust in Supreme Court
 - courtideo Ideological leaning of Court
 - obamacare..... ACA be modified or abolished
 - gaymarriage..... Should gay marriage be legal in all states
 - Licenseplate..... Should Confederate plate be allowed
- Fourth of July Question [Results to be presented in future report - elon.edu/elonpoll]
 - plans Plans for 4th of July
 - food Favorite food on July 4th
 - beer..... Do you drink beer on 4th of July
 - beer2 favorite beer
 - founding fathers quality control question
- Partisanship
 - partyid Party Identification
 - partyidrep..... Party ID Branch [strong Republican]
 - partyiddem Party ID Branch [strong Democrat]
 - partyidind Party ID Branch [Closer to GOP or Dem]
- List of Democratic Candidates - type 1 or 2 words that first come to mind [Names rotated]
 - Hillary Clinton
 - Joe Biden
 - Bernie Sanders
 - Martin O'Malley
 - Jim Webb
 - Lincoln Chaffee
 - Elizabeth Warren

- List of Republican Candidates - type 1 or 2 words that first come to mind [Names rotated]

Jeb Bush
Ben Carson
Chris Christie
Ted Cruz
Carly Fiorina
Lindsay Graham
Mike Huckabee
Bobby Jindal
John Kasich
George Pataki
Rand Paul
Rick Perry
Marco Rubio
Rick Santorum
Scott Walker

- founding fathers2Would FF approve of the quality of candidates

- Demographics

- ideology when it comes to politics
- educ How much school have you completed
- inc Annual household income
- religion.....What is your present religion
- evangelical Are you a born again or evangelical Christian
- zipcode.....What is your zip code
- south Are you originally from the South [NC survey only]
- accent Do you have a southern accent [NC survey only]
- movie Favorite movie or film

Basic Methodological Information

Survey Mode:	Online using opt-in panel from Survey Sampling International (with quotas to balance sample to reflect U.S. Census information for North Carolina or the United States)
Target Population & Sample Area	Registered Voters in North Carolina & the U.S.
Dates in the field:	June 4 - 9, 2015
Sample Size	North Carolina Survey: 835 residents United States Survey: 1125 residents <i>Results in this report are based on:</i> North Carolina: 709 registered voters United States: 901 registered voters
Margin of Error	Not Applicable (See Below)
Weighting	Raking (Rim Weighting) using 3 dimensions (Age, Race, & Gender) to approximate U.S. Census information
Design Effect of Weighting	National Survey: 1.30 State Survey: 1.07
SSI Online Panel Size	North Carolina: 58,000 (approximately) United States: 1.7 million (approximately)

Online Survey Sample

Respondents for these two surveys were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in the online panel for Survey Sampling International (SSI). A quota system was used to obtain a balanced sample. One that reflects the North Carolina adult population on age, gender and race and one that matches the U.S. population on the same attributes. Both surveys were then weighted to match U.S. Census information.

Although SSI goes to great length to produce high quality online panels that can produce samples that reflect the demographics of the target population, these samples are still considered nonprobability samples. Because the sample is based on those who initially volunteered or have been recruited for participation in the online panel rather than randomly selected from the broader state and national population, estimates of sampling error (margin of error) can be misleading.

Non-probability online surveys are used by numerous academics and organizations and have produced interesting and accurate results.⁴ However, the American Association of Public Opinion recommends organizations not produce margins of errors when using non-probability, opt-in survey data because audiences may interpret the findings as coming from a probability sample. Information on Survey Sampling International's online panel can be found on their website located at: <http://www.surveysampling.com/who-we-are/awards>.

The survey was sponsored, designed and administered by the Elon University Poll. Qualtrics online survey software was used to design the survey. To view the national survey as it appears to a respondent you can take the Qualtrics survey by visiting the following link:

http://elon.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5yYH5DZaox7N8CV

For more information on the Elon University Poll and this survey, visit
<http://www.elon.edu/elonpoll>

or

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⁴ See the following scholarly articles for examples of research using SSI online panel: Ahler, Douglas J. 2014. "Self-Fulfilling Misperceptions of Public Polarization." *The Journal of Politics* 76 (03):607-620. Barker, David C, and Christopher Jan Carman. 2009. "Political geography, church attendance, and mass preferences regarding democratic representation." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 19 (2):125-145.