

Will Republicans Cost Trump the Election?

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Analysis of the new
[University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll](#)
fielded by Nielsen Scarborough

The University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll is a joint venture between the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development and the Center for American Politics and Citizenship (CAPC). For more information please visit:

Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development: <https://sadat.umd.edu/>

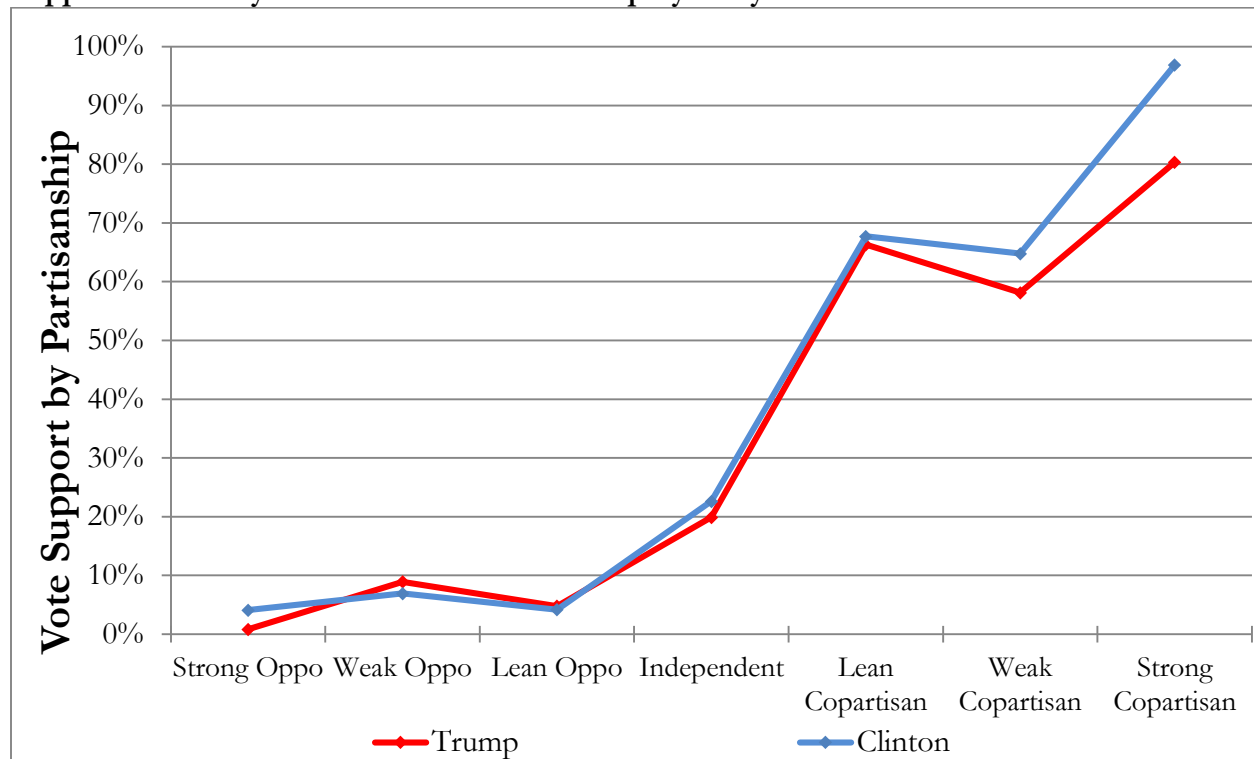
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In recent months, the Trump Campaign and Donald Trump himself have roundly [criticized](#) high-ranking Republican officials who have distanced themselves from the candidate.¹ While Trump has faced several high profile [rebukes](#) from party leaders such as Sen. John McCain, Sen. Mark Kirk, and Rep. Jason Chaffetz, it is unclear whether the fractures within the GOP leadership have dampened Republican enthusiasm for Trump. Using recent data from the University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, we provide evidence that Trump’s standing within the Republican Party is damaging his chances for winning only a few weeks out from Election Day.

Copartisans Support Clinton more than Trump

The figure below represents the vote intention for Clinton and Trump, separating out those respondents who most strongly identify with the party of the candidate from those who identify with the opposing party. Looking at opposing partisans, there is nearly no gap between those supporting Clinton and those supporting Trump. Looking at copartisans, however, the picture changes drastically. Both weak Democrats and strong Democrats support Clinton at much higher rates than weak Republicans and strong Republicans support Trump. Focusing on just these two categories (weak copartisans and strong copartisans), Clinton outperforms Trump 87.73%-72.55%, indicating that Democrats are far more united behind their nominee than are Republicans.

Support for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump by Party Identification



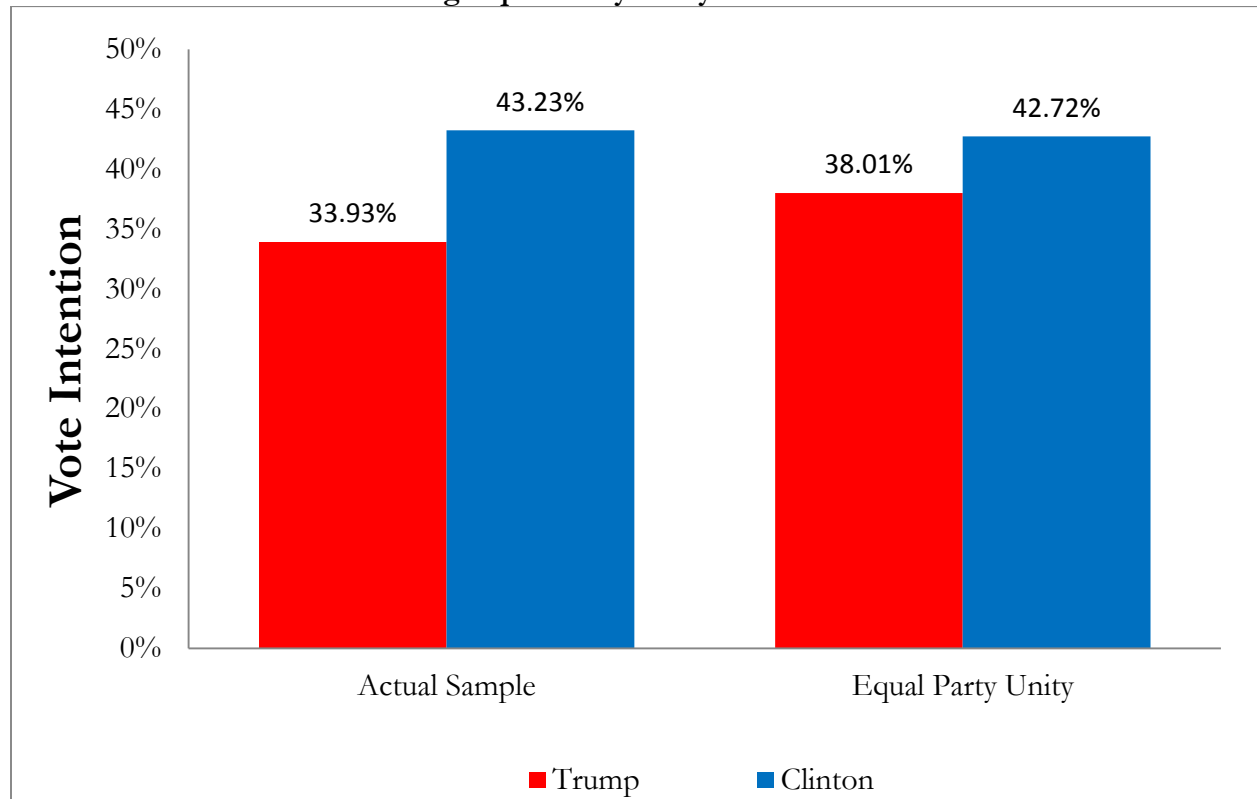
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll (Weighted Averages)

¹ On October 11, Donald Trump tweeted, “Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty.” This was followed quickly by, “Disloyal R’s are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary, They come at you from all sides. They don’t know how to win – I will teach them!”

Is Lack of Party Unity to Blame for Trump's Deficit in the Polls?

Clearly, lackluster party unity has hurt Donald Trump's standing in the polls, but is it the root cause of the deficit he faces? As of the writing of this post, Clinton leads Trump by 9 percentage points in CNN's [poll of polls](#), which is in line with the Critical Issues Poll. Yet 9 percentage points is a large deficit to be explained by only one issue. In order to assess the role of party unity on the 2016 election, we imposed equal party unity on the data in order to see what the likely results of the poll would have been if the Republicans in the sample had supported Trump to the same degree that Democrats supported Clinton. The results can be seen below.

Simulated Poll Results Assuming Equal Party Unity



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll (Weighted Averages)

Certainly, a lack of party unity helps explain a great deal of the gap between Clinton and Trump. The 9.3 percentage point gap closes to a roughly 4.7 percentage point gap, bringing the ultimate deficit much more into line with the 2012 election results.²

Yet making up this gap does not ultimately change the outcome of the election. Democrats make up more of the electorate than Republicans, and independents in our sample favored Clinton slightly over Trump. If Trump wishes to make up these deficits, he must not only win over his own base, but do more to turn out Republican voters and win over independents. These are major hurdles entering the final days of the election.

² In 2012, Barack Obama defeated Mitt Romney by just under 4 percentage points.

Appendix: Actual Poll Results and Simulated Results (Weighted)

Real Sample			Real Sample Raw Totals		
	Trump	Clinton		Trump	Clinton
Strong Oppo	0.83%	4.09%	Strong Oppo	3.16	12.08
Weak Oppo	8.91%	6.92%	Weak Oppo	13.60	11.01
Lean Oppo	4.76%	4.18%	Lean Oppo	8.74	8.36
Independent	19.90%	22.60%	Independent	30.76	34.94
Lean Partisan	66.31%	67.71%	Lean Partisan	132.49	124.33
Weak Partisan	58.13%	64.76%	Weak Partisan	92.51	98.94
Strong Partisan	80.33%	96.89%	Strong Partisan	237.19	370.93
			Total	518.46	660.58
			Percentage	33.93%	43.23%
Equal Party Unity Simulation			Equal Party Unity Raw Totals		
	Trump	Clinton		Trump	Clinton
Strong Oppo	0.83%	0.83%	Strong Oppo	3.18	2.45
Weak Oppo	8.91%	8.91%	Weak Oppo	13.61	14.18
Lean Oppo	4.76%	4.76%	Lean Oppo	8.74	9.51
Independent	19.90%	22.60%	Independent	30.76	34.94
Lean Partisan	67.71%	67.71%	Lean Partisan	135.29	124.32
Weak Partisan	64.76%	64.76%	Weak Partisan	103.06	98.94
Strong Partisan	96.89%	96.89%	Strong Partisan	286.10	370.93
			Total	580.74	652.81
			Percentage	38.01%	42.72%