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NATIONAL: TRUMP HOLDS NATIONAL LEAD

One-third have doubts about Cruz's eligibility

West Long Branch, NJ – The latest **Monmouth University Poll** finds Donald Trump holding onto a commanding national lead in the race for the Republican nomination. Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio are the only other two candidates polling in double digits. Among these three, Trump is seen as the stronger opponent against Hillary Clinton in November's general election. Also, one-third of Republican voters do not believe or are unsure whether Cruz is a natural born citizen, while 1-in-10 say the same about Trump.

When Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are asked who they would support for the GOP nomination for president, Trump leads the pack at 36%. This is down slightly from his Monmouth poll-high of 41% in December, but he still doubles the support of his nearest rival. Cruz clocks in at 17%, up slightly from 14% last month. Rubio garners 11% support, similar to his 10% showing in December. The rest of the pack includes Ben Carson (8%), Jeb Bush (5%), Chris Christie (3%), Mike Huckabee (3%), John Kasich (3%), Rand Paul (2%), Carly Fiorina (1%), Rick Santorum (1%), and Jim Gilmore (0%). The poll was conducted after last week's debate.

Trump continues to draw his support evenly across the ideological spectrum – including 35% of very conservative voters, 36% of somewhat conservative voters, and 36% of moderate voters. Cruz does best among those who are very conservative (27%) or somewhat conservative (18%), compared with moderate (7%) voters. Rubio pulls in a consistent 11-12% among all three groups.

"These results suggest that the GOP race is fairly static on a national level. We'll have to wait and see if the Iowa and New Hampshire results shake things up," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

Among the top three GOP contenders, Trump is seen as the strongest threat to Hillary Clinton. More Republican voters say that Trump (37%) would have a better shot than Cruz (24%) at beating

Clinton in November, with 31% saying the two candidates would be equally as strong against the Democratic frontrunner. By an even wider margin, Trump (47%) is seen as more formidable than Rubio (22%) against Clinton, with 25% giving the two an equal chance. Republican voters are more divided on which of the two senators would be better positioned to take on Clinton – 31% choose Cruz, 23% choose Rubio, and 32% say the two would have an equal shot.

"Contrary to many party leaders' hopes, the electability argument is not going to drag down Trump," said Murray, "but there may be some doubts about Cruz."

Trump has recently raised questions about Cruz's eligibility to serve as president due to the latter's birth in Canada. Among GOP voters, 65% believe Cruz is a "natural born citizen" constitutionally eligible to become president. Another 12% say he is not a natural born citizen and 24% are not sure. For good measure, the *Monmouth University Poll* asked the same question about Trump and found that 91% of Republicans believe Trump is a natural born citizen, 2% say he is not, and 7% are unsure.

The poll also found that personal ratings of the GOP field have remained fairly stable. Trump holds a 57% favorable and 32% unfavorable rating, down only slightly from his 61% – 29% high water mark in December. Cruz stands at 58% favorable and 19% unfavorable, similar to last month's 58% – 18% rating. Rubio earns a 54% favorable and 18% unfavorable rating, basically the same as his 55% – 18% rating a month ago. Christie's rating is also positive at 42% favorable and 33% unfavorable. It was negative the last time Monmouth included his name in its personal ratings battery, but that was back in August. Kasich earns a negative rating of 21% favorable and 28% unfavorable, somewhat worse than his 23% – 18% rating in September. Bush garners the worst rating of the group at 32% favorable and 47% unfavorable, which is similar to his 34% – 47% rating in December.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from January 15 to 18, 2016 with 1,003 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 385 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. This voter sample has a margin of error of $\pm$5.0 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:
(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Who would you support for the Republican nomination for president if the candidates were –
    [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

	January 2016	December 2015	October 2015	September 2015	August 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015
Donald Trump	**36%**	41%	28%	30%	26%	13%	2%	7%
Ted Cruz	**17%**	14%	10%	8%	6%	9%	5%	11%
Marco Rubio	**11%**	10%	6%	5%	4%	6%	9%	5%
Ben Carson	**8%**	9%	18%	18%	5%	6%	11%	7%
Jeb Bush	**5%**	3%	5%	8%	12%	15%	9%	13%
John Kasich	**3%**	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Chris Christie	**3%**	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Mike Huckabee	**3%**	2%	4%	4%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Rand Paul	**2%**	2%	4%	2%	4%	6%	6%	6%
Carly Fiorina	**1%**	2%	6%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Rick Santorum	**1%**	<1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%	1%
Jim Gilmore	**0%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	*n/a*	*n/a*
(VOL) Other	**0%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Lindsey Graham	*n/a*	1%	1%	0%	1%	<1%	2%	1%
Bobby Jindal	*n/a*	*n/a*	1%	<1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
George Pataki	*n/a*	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Rick Perry	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%
Scott Walker	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	3%	11%	7%	10%	11%
(VOL) No one	**2%**	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	**8%**	6%	9%	9%	10%	18%	20%	14%
(n)	**385**	*385*	*348*	*366*	*423*	*336*	*351*	*355*

2. I'm going to read you a few names of people running for president. Please tell me if your
    general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an
    opinion. [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Jeb Bush	**32%**	**47%**	**21%**
--December 2015	*34*	*47*	*19*
--October 2015	*37*	*44*	*19*
--September 2015	*41*	*39*	*20*
--August 2015	*52*	*30*	*18*
--July 2015	*50*	*30*	*20*
--June 2015	*40*	*35*	*25*
--April 2015	*49*	*31*	*21*
--December 2014	*39*	*30*	*31*
Chris Christie	**42%**	**33%**	**25%**
--December 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--October 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--September 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--August 2015	*30*	*45*	*25*
--July 2015	*25*	*45*	*30*
--June 2015	*26*	*43*	*31*
--April 2015	*33*	*42*	*25*
--December 2014	*36*	*34*	*31*
Ted Cruz	**58%**	**19%**	**22%**
--December 2015	*58*	*18*	*24*
--October 2015	*50*	*23*	*26*
--September 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--August 2015	*52*	*14*	*34*
--July 2015	*48*	*16*	*35*
--June 2015	*49*	*17*	*35*
--April 2015	*49*	*19*	*32*
--December 2014	*39*	*15*	*46*

(Question 2 continued)

John Kasich	**21%**	**28%**	**51%**
--December 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--October 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--September 2015	*23*	*18*	*59*
--August 2015	*27*	*14*	*58*
--July 2015	*19*	*16*	*65*
--June 2015	*20*	*18*	*62*
--April 2015	*24*	*14*	*61*
--December 2014	*21*	*11*	*69*
Marco Rubio	**54%**	**18%**	**28%**
--December 2015	*55*	*18*	*27*
--October 2015	*49*	*16*	*35*
--September 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--August 2015	*54*	*11*	*36*
--July 2015	*53*	*19*	*28*
--June 2015	*54*	*13*	*34*
--April 2015	*41*	*18*	*40*
--December 2014	*38*	*16*	*46*
Donald Trump	**57%**	**32%**	**11%**
--December 2015	*61*	*29*	*10*
--October 2015	*52*	*33*	*15*
--September 2015	*59*	*29*	*12*
--August 2015	*52*	*35*	*13*
--July 2015	*40*	*41*	*19*
--June 2015	*20*	*55*	*25*
--April 2015	*28*	*56*	*15*
--December 2014	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*

[*QUESTIONS 3 THROUGH 5 WERE ROTATED*]
Imagine that Hillary Clinton became the Democratic nominee.
3. Who would have a better shot at beating Clinton in November – Trump or Cruz, or would they be equally as likely to beat her?

	January 2016
Trump	**37%**
Cruz	**24%**
Equally as likely	**31%**
(VOL) Neither, both would lose	**2%**
(VOL) Don't know	**5%**

4. Who would have a better shot at beating Clinton in November – Trump or Rubio, or would they be equally as likely to beat her?

	January 2016
Trump	**47%**
Rubio	**22%**
Equally as likely	**25%**
(VOL) Neither, both would lose	**2%**
(VOL) Don't know	**4%**

5. Who would have a better shot at beating Clinton in November – Rubio or Cruz, or would they be equally as likely to beat her?

	January 2016
Rubio	**23%**
Cruz	**31%**
Equally as likely	**32%**
(VOL) Neither, both would lose	**5%**
(VOL) Don't know	**9%**

[*QUESTIONS 6 & 7 WERE ROTATED*]
The Constitution states that only a natural born citizen may serve as president of the United States.
6. Do you believe that Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen, or not?
7. Do you believe that Donald Trump is a natural born citizen, or not?

Natural born citizen?	**Ted Cruz**	**Donald Trump**
Yes	65%	91%
No	12%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	7%

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)
FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS

49% Male	*32% 18-34*	*66% White*
51% Female	*36% 35-54*	*12% Black*
	32% 55+	*15% Hispanic*
		7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)
REPUBLICAN VOTERS ONLY

56% Male	*19% 18-34*	*85% White*
44% Female	*43% 35-54*	*4% Black*
	38% 55+	*7% Hispanic*
		4% Asian/Other

MARGIN OF ERROR

	REPUBLICAN VOTER	*PARTY ID*		*GENDER*		*TEA PARTY SUPPORTER*		*POLITICAL IDEOLOGY*		
		Rep	*Lean Rep*	*Male*	*Female*	*Yes*	*No*	*Very cons.*	*Somewhat cons.*	*Mod/ liberal*
Unweighted N	*385*	*276*	*109*	*209*	*176*	*130*	*233*	*144*	*108*	*125*
moe	*5.0%*	*5.9%*	*9.4%*	*6.8%*	*7.4%*	*8.6%*	*6.4%*	*8.2%*	*9.4%*	*8.8%*

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