

January 10, 2016

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Ben Tulchin, Ben Krompak, and Kiel Brunner; Tulchin Research  
**Re:** **National and Statewide Polling Demonstrates Bernie Sanders Would Be Strongest Democrat in 2016 Presidential General Election**

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As Democrats in Iowa, New Hampshire, and beyond prepare to choose their nominee in the 2016 presidential election, they should take note of ongoing trends in national polling that indicate U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders is the candidate best positioned to lead the party to victory in November. A series of polls conducted in mid-December – notably the Quinnipiac University poll, the CNN/ORC International poll, and The Economist/YouGov poll – find Sanders has the most positive reputation of any presidential candidate from either party and is significantly better positioned with independent voters than is Hillary Clinton. Furthermore, **there is fresh evidence of Bernie's superior electability in a general election as brand new general election polls from the swing states of Iowa (which John Kerry lost) and New Hampshire (which Al Gore lost) find Bernie Sanders winning or tied against the leading Republicans and does much better against them than Clinton who struggles in general election match-ups.**

There are several key points we will address in this memo:

- **Bernie Sanders runs markedly better than Clinton in a race with the Republican frontrunner Donald Trump, does better than Clinton against Ted Cruz and does comparably against Marco Rubio;**
- **Sanders is viewed more favorably by Americans than any other candidate for President of either party;**
- **Sanders is identified as the most honest and trustworthy candidate of either party;**
- **Sanders remains popular with independents while Clinton struggles badly with these key swing voters;**
- **Sanders is very popular with younger voters and can galvanize them to turn out, helping Democrats up and down the ticket;**
- **Sanders is viewed far less unfavorably by Republicans than is Clinton;** and
- **Recent statewide polling data, including NBC/WSJ/Marist polls in the swing states of Iowa and New Hampshire, finds Sanders doing much better than Clinton in head-to-head match-ups against Republicans and is much more popular than she is among all voters, especially independents.**

These findings demonstrate that Sanders would begin the fall campaign in a stronger position than Clinton and with far more upside among key groups of swing voters.

***Quinnipiac Poll Finds Sanders Leading Trump by Nearly Twice as Much as Clinton Due to a Much Better Showing among Independents***

As the Republican race unfolds and Donald Trump solidifies his position as the frontrunner, political pundits and the country as a whole have to come to terms with the fact that there is an increasing likelihood that Trump will be the Republican nominee for president. And national polling finds that **Sanders runs markedly better than does Clinton in a race against Trump.**

In a general election against businessman Donald Trump, the Quinnipiac University poll conducted December 16-20, 2015, finds Sanders leads Trump by a 13-point margin (51% to 38%). This margin is nearly double Hillary Clinton's lead in a head-to-head match-up with Trump (47% to 40%). The main factor responsible for Sanders' superior performance against Trump is that the Senator from Vermont performs much better with independents. Specifically, Sanders defeats Trump by 14 points (49%-35%) among independent voters while Clinton runs neck-and-neck with Trump and leads him by just 2 points (39%-37%).

2016 U.S. Presidential General Election		
Quinnipiac University Poll December 16-20, 2015 1,140 Registered Voters Nationwide		
	All Voters	Independents
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Sanders – Trump</b>	<b>+13</b>	<b>+14</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Clinton – Trump</b>	<b>+7</b>	<b>+2</b>

Furthermore, Sanders does as well if not better than Hillary Clinton in general election match-ups against Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio. According to the Real Clear Politics ([http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/2016\\_presidential\\_race.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/2016_presidential_race.html)) polling average of head-to-head match-ups against the two Senators, Sanders leads Cruz by three points (45% to 42%) and is statistically tied with Rubio (43% for Sanders to 44% for Rubio). In contrast, Clinton does not do as well against Cruz as she is tied (45% to 45%) and has the same margin against Rubio (44% to 45% for Rubio). Interestingly, in many of these polls Sanders slightly underperforms with Democrats relative to his better-known Democratic rival. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Sanders would consolidate the Democratic vote upon winning the primary and has room to grow his support.

Furthermore, in the most recent national survey that was just released, Clinton is struggling against the leading Republican candidates and lost ground against all of them in the past month. According to the latest Fox News national poll conducted January 4-7, 2016:

- Clinton trails Trump by 3 points (44% to 47%) overall and 22 points among independents;

- Clinton loses to Ted Cruz by 7 points (43% to 50%) among all voters and 12 points among independents; and
- Clinton is behind Marco Rubio by 9 points (41% to 50%) with all voters and 17 points with independents.

***Sanders Has Most Positive Reputation of Any Candidate for President, Is Much Better Positioned than Clinton with Independents and Republicans***

The Quinnipiac, CNN/ORC International, and The Economist/YouGov polls conducted over the same period in December all find similar encouraging news for Sanders' general election prospects – and similar warning signs for Hillary Clinton's.

- **Sanders is viewed more favorably than any other presidential candidate of either party and has a much more positive profile than Hillary Clinton.** CNN/ORC International finds him with a net +10 net favorability rating (46% favorable to 36% unfavorable), Quinnipiac finds him with a net +9 favorability rating (40% favorable to 31% unfavorable), and The Economist/YouGov poll finds him with a net +3 favorable rating (44% favorable to 41% unfavorable). In both the Quinnipiac and The Economist/YouGov polls, Sanders was viewed the most favorably of any candidate of either party. In contrast, Clinton is underwater with negative favorability numbers, with all three polls finding Sanders viewed more favorably by double-digit margins.
- **Sanders is identified as the most honest and trustworthy candidate of either party while Clinton is the least trusted – more distrusted than even Donald Trump – a finding that should raise concern about Clinton's ability to win a general election.** The Economist/YouGov poll finds Bernie Sanders is viewed as honest and trustworthy by a 16-point margin (43% honest and trustworthy to 27% not honest and trustworthy), far better than any other candidate polled, with Republican Ben Carson (+2 net "honest and trustworthy") ranking second. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, is the least trusted candidate of the 2016 field and is distrusted by a majority of Americans. The Quinnipiac poll (which did not assess Sanders' honesty) found that 59 percent of registered voters believe that Clinton is not honest and trustworthy (to 35% who say she is) while, The Economist/YouGov found 52% of adults say she is not honest and trustworthy (to 31% who believe she is). In both polls, Clinton is more distrusted than even Donald Trump, with Quinnipiac finding Trump distrusted by 58 percent of voters (vs. 59% who distrust Clinton) and The Economist/YouGov finds Trump distrusted by 50 percent of voters (vs. 52% who distrust Clinton).
- **Sanders receives high marks from independents while Hillary Clinton is distrusted and viewed highly unfavorably by these critical swing voters.** Sanders is viewed more favorably than Clinton among independents by a net 37 points in the Quinnipiac poll (Sanders +10 net favorable, Clinton -27 net favorable), by a net 23 points in the Economist/YouGov poll (Sanders +5 net favorable, Clinton -18 net favorable), and by 14 points in the CNN poll (Sanders +6 net favorable, Clinton -8 net favorable). While independents in The Economist/YouGov poll believe Sanders to be honest and trustworthy by a 17-point margin (40% honest and trustworthy to 23% not honest and trustworthy), Clinton is viewed as not honest and trustworthy by independents by a margin of 33 points (56% not honest and trustworthy to 23% honest and trustworthy). In the Quinnipiac poll, nearly three-quarters of independents (72%) believe Clinton is not honest and trustworthy to 23 percent who say she is.

- **Clinton is viewed far more negatively than Sanders by Republicans**, further exacerbating the challenge she will face in building a winning coalition. Clinton was viewed more unfavorably among Republicans than Sanders by a net 34 points in the CNN poll (Clinton -74 net favorable, Sanders -40 net favorable), in the Quinnipiac poll by 27 points (Clinton -77 net favorable, Sanders -50 net favorable), and in The Economist/YouGov poll by 19 points (Clinton -73 net favorable, Sanders -54 net favorable).

In sum, Sanders enjoys the most positive profile of any 2016 contender and would begin a fall campaign with room to grow.

National Polling: 2016 U.S. Presidential General Election							
	Bernie Sanders			Hillary Clinton			Net Difference: Sanders - Clinton
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable - Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable - Unfavorable	
<b>Quinnipiac University Poll – December 16-20, 2015: 1,140 Registered Voters</b>							
All Voters	40%	31%	+9	43%	51%	-8	+17
Democrats	69%	8%	+61	82%	13%	+69	-8
Independents	39%	29%	+10	32%	59%	-27	+37
Republicans	10%	60%	-50	10%	87%	-77	+27
<b>CNN/ORC International Poll – December 17-21, 2015: 927 Registered Voters</b>							
All Adults	46%	36%	+10	47%	51%	-4	+14
Democrats	72%	15%	+57	80%	17%	+63	-6
Independents	42%	36%	+6	45%	53%	-8	+14
Republicans	23%	63%	-40	13%	87%	-74	+34
<b>The Economist / YouGov Poll – December 18-21, 2015: 2,000 Adults</b>							
All Adults	44%	41%	+3	44%	51%	-7	+10
Democrats	68%	20%	+48	80%	18%	+62	-14
Independents	41%	36%	+5	36%	54%	-18	+23
Republicans	19%	73%	-54	13%	86%	-73	+19

***Recent Statewide Polling Finds Sanders Does Much Better than Clinton in General Election Match-ups Against Republicans and Is Much More Popular Than Clinton***

These findings are beginning to be reflected in state-level polling as well. Two recent surveys conducted by NBC/WSJ/ Marist just released on January 10, 2016, found, “Sanders does better than Clinton among registered voters in both Iowa and New Hampshire” according to the poll’s official release. Specifically, Sanders is beating or tied against the three leading Republican candidates while Clinton struggles and is actually losing against two of them (Cruz and Rubio) in both states. In fact, **Sanders does an average of 6 points better than Clinton in Iowa and a stunning 21 points better than Clinton in New Hampshire. Recall these are swing states as John Kerry lost Iowa in 2004 and Al Gore lost New Hampshire in 2000, so the fact that Sanders does so much better than Clinton in these two swing states has real implications for the general election.**

<b>2016 U.S. Presidential General Election – Iowa and New Hampshire</b>		
<b>NBC/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll</b>		
<b>January 2-7, 2016</b>		
<b>Iowa and New Hampshire Registered Voters</b>		
	<b>Iowa</b>	<b>New Hampshire</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Sanders – Trump</b>	<b>+13</b>	<b>+19</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Ted Cruz</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Sanders – Cruz</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>+19</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Marco Rubio</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Sanders – Rubio</b>	<b>+0</b>	<b>+9</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Clinton – Trump</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Ted Cruz</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Clinton – Cruz</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-4</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Marco Rubio</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Clinton – Rubio</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-12</b>

In another recent survey from New Hampshire, Sanders does significantly better than Clinton against all of the leading Republican candidates, driven largely by a much stronger showing with independents.

- Sanders leads Trump by 20 points (54% to 34%) compared to Clinton's 14-point lead, with Sanders doing a net 9 points better with independents.
- Sanders is beating Cruz by an identical 20-point margin (55% to 35%), much larger than Clinton's 8-point lead and Sanders does 14 points better with independents than Clinton.
- Sanders is ahead of Rubio by 14 points (51% to 37%) while Clinton is in a statistical tie with the Florida Republican (45% to 42%), with the gap largely coming from Sanders doing a net 18 points better with independents than Clinton.

<b>2016 U.S. Presidential General Election</b>		
<b>Public Policy Polling</b>		
<b>January 4-6, 2016</b>		
<b>1,036 Registered New Hampshire Voters</b>		
	<b>All Voters</b>	<b>Independents</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Sanders – Trump</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+24</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Ted Cruz</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Sanders – Cruz</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+20</b>
<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Marco Rubio</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Sanders – Rubio</b>	<b>+14</b>	<b>+18</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Clinton – Trump</b>	<b>+14</b>	<b>+15</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Ted Cruz</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Clinton – Cruz</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+6</b>
<b>Hillary Clinton</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Marco Rubio</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Clinton – Rubio</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+1</b>

In addition, The Field Poll conducted among registered voters in California from December 16, 2015-January 3, 2016 finds Sanders is viewed favorably by Golden State voters by a 21-point margin (52%-31%) while Clinton is viewed favorably by a margin of just 6 points (50% favorable to 44% unfavorable). Sanders has a 33-point favorability advantage over Clinton among independents in California, with those registered with “No Party Preference” viewing him favorably by a 38-point margin (58% to 20%) but very much divided in their attitudes toward Clinton (48% favorable to 43% unfavorable). Additionally, Sanders is viewed a net 23 points less unfavorably among California Republicans than is Clinton (-47 net favorable vs. -70 net favorable).

### ***Sanders Runs Much Stronger Than Clinton with Young Voters***

Young voters were a critical component of the Obama coalition in 2008 and 2012 and turning out young voters and winning them decisively will be critical for Democrats up and down the ballot in 2016. Polling finds young voters hold highly favorable opinions of Sanders but are very much divided on Hillary Clinton. Notably, Quinnipiac finds voters under age 35 view Sanders favorably by a 44-point margin (58% favorable to 14% unfavorable) while CNN finds him viewed favorably by voters of this cohort by a 32-point margin (55% favorable to 23% unfavorable). Hillary Clinton is viewed favorably by voters under 35 by a margin of 1-point in the Quinnipiac

poll (45% favorable to 44% unfavorable) and viewed unfavorably by a 1-point margin in the CNN poll (47% favorable to 48% unfavorable).

This dramatic difference in attitudes among young voters toward the two leading Democratic contenders translates into a substantial advantage for Sanders with these voters in a hypothetical general election. Quinnipiac finds that while Clinton leads Donald Trump among voters age 18-34 by a margin of 60 percent to 21 percent (+41), Sanders wins these voters by a margin of 74 percent to 18 percent (+56) – outperforming Clinton by a net 15 points.