

Dickinson College Exit Poll Fall 2016

N = 482 Voters in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania

Key Findings

- The plurality of Cumberland County voters (30%) said the most important issue they considered when deciding for whom to vote for President was the “economy and jobs”. Of those who selected “economy and jobs” as the most important issue, 55% of them voted for Trump, 40% voted for Clinton, and the remaining 9% voted for someone else.
- Nearly half (49%) of respondents said the country’s economy was in worse shape as compared to a few years ago. The remaining half of respondents were split evenly between thinking the economy had gotten better and stayed about the same. Among those who thought the economy was in worse shape now, 86% voted for Trump; among those who thought the economy was in better shape now, 89% voted for Clinton. Among those who thought the economy was about the same, 47% voted for Trump and 45% for Clinton.
- President Obama’s approval rating among Cumberland County voters was 40%, while 53% disapprove of the job he is doing as president. Obama’s approval rating is higher now as compared to Election Day 2014 when 31% of voters approved of the job he was doing while 65% disapproved.
- Straight-ticket voting appears to have increased among Cumberland County voters in the past two years. In 2016, of the respondents who reported voting for one of the two major-party presidential candidates, 88% of them also voted for their party’s senate and house candidates. This is compared to 83% of Cumberland County voters who reported voting for either both Democrats or both Republicans in the 2014 governor and U.S. House races.
- Despite the fact that Trump advocated for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” and for suspending immigration from “areas of the world where this a proven history of terrorism”¹ many of his supporters in Cumberland County oppose those policies. 26% of Trump’s supporters oppose a blanket ban on immigrants from countries that have a history of terrorism against the west and 45% of Trump voters oppose banning all Muslims from entering the U.S.
- Television remained the most popular news source for Cumberland County voters, with 78% of voters saying they got political information from television sources. The popularity of social media as a source of information increased significantly from 2014 to 2016; in 2014, 27% of voters said they used social media as a source and in 2016, 41% said they did. The increased reliance on social media was present across all age groups.

¹ Trump quotes from: Haeyoun Park, “Trump Vows to Stop Immigration From Nations ‘Compromised’ by Terrorism. How Could It Work?” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), October 6, 2016. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/07/22/us/politics/trump-immigration-ban-how-could-it-work.html>

Methodology

Number of Interviews: 482 Voters in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Several questions were asked of less than the full sample of respondents. Smaller numbers of respondents will be noted next to relevant questions.

Margin of Error: +/- 4.6% at a 95% level of confidence. Smaller sample sizes have larger margins of error.

Date: November 8, 2016

Methods of Interviewing: All interviews were conducted in person, but were anonymous. Upon exiting the polling place, voters were asked if they wanted to participate. If voters agreed, they were given a clipboard with the survey and asked to complete both sides of the questionnaire. Upon completion, surveys were placed in envelopes with precinct identifiers.

Weighting: Data were weighted by the final vote percentage (Democrat and Republican) of Cumberland County in the Presidential race. Individuals who reported voting for someone other than Clinton or Trump, or not voting at all in the presidential contest were weighted at 1.00.

The exit poll was conducted by students enrolled in Dickinson College Political Science classes POSC 239: Research Methods, and POSC 390: Campaigns and Elections Senior Seminar, under the direction of Professor Sarah Niebler. For further information, please contact Professor Niebler at: nieblers@dickinson.edu; or 717-254-8093.