

Top Issues of 2016:



Civil Rights  
18%



National Security  
18%



Economy  
17%



Immigration  
17%



Education  
11%

(Almost 800 students indicate the issue most important to them)

# AMERICA'S CHOICE

Seniors eligible to vote faced difficult decisions with candidates' high disapproval ratings

## Students react to election results



"I can't really do anything to change the results of the presidential election, but I'm scared about it. I didn't really like either candidate. Most people didn't. We will just have to see what happens."

Chloe Hallman, 10



"This is the happiest morning of my last three months. I like that in his speech after being elected he was saying that we as a country need to unify — not just Republicans, but Republicans, Democrats and independents. We all need to get together to make America better"

Ross Davis, 11

by | Bartel Van Oostendorp

Presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton were as different as candidates could be. Trump, the Republican nominee was a billionaire real estate mogul and businessman who had made his name famous across the world building hotels and casinos. Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, was former first lady, secretary of state and U.S. senator.

Despite the differences they had one major thing in common. They were the most disliked candidates ever to run for office. A *Washington Post-ABC News* poll from late in the election cycle showed that Clinton had a 47 percent approval rating to Trump's 43 percent approval rating.

"Really the whole thing was just kind of a calamity of terrible things," senior Zach Godwin, who identifies as a Democrat, said. "You have the worst Republican nominee since Barry Goldwater in the 1960s, the worst Democratic nominee possibly ever and really no one who has any idea what they're doing. Clinton is probably one of the most qualified people to ever run for the presidency, but she has too many skeletons in her closet to get anywhere with it. And Donald Trump is just a maniac."

The disapproval did not keep Trump from winning the presidential race on Tuesday night. Trump won all of the battleground states, including Florida and Ohio. His ability to flip Michigan and Pennsylvania gave him the 38 votes he needed for a surprise win over Clinton.

Although recent surveys showed that the majority of Americans were dissatisfied with the candidates, it didn't change the fact that the majority considered it a civic duty to vote. Almost a quarter of the senior class turned 18 in time to vote.

"I think everyone should vote. Even if you don't particularly like anyone in the race, you should research them and vote for someone," senior Mary Elaine Bridges, who identifies as a Republican, said. "Later on when a candidate gets chosen, those people are the ones who complain about the country, but it's like, 'What did you do to help?' So I think everyone should vote."

According to a *Wingspan* survey of almost 800 students, 37 percent of seniors indicated they wouldn't vote even if they could; 67 percent of those answered that they disliked both candidates too much to vote.

"If they're not willing to vote, either they don't like the candidate, they don't know enough about the candidate so they just don't want to place a vote, they haven't registered to vote, or some people are just lazy and they don't want to vote," Bridges said.

Students were among the dissatisfied citizens unhappy with their choice for president. The *Wingspan* survey showed that 71 percent of students had a negative or strong negative opinion of Clinton. Only 15 percent said they would have voted for her if eligible.

However, Clinton did have her supporters.

"She's experienced and has demonstrated in several situations that she can

be a leader. She is very intelligent and a lot of people can be confident that she knows what she's doing because she has in the past," sophomore Julia Perrotta, who identifies as a Democrat, said. "She shows compassion, but she's not so compassionate that she shows weakness. When she speaks in front of public audiences she comes across very strong and passionate about what she is talking about. She shows really good leadership and could set a good example of what a woman in the office could be."

Clinton had some definite strengths coming into the race for the presidency. Her experience in politics, her ability to connect with voters and her having the possibility of being the country's first female president were distinct advantages over Trump.

"You have experience," Godwin said. "She was the first lady, she was the senator from New York, she was the secretary of state, she was an attorney who worked to support children for so long. She's just a highly qualified person. Plus, she's been working with the political system for longer than most people voting have been alive. She got her start working for Goldwater's campaign in the 1960s, she has many years of political experience."

Despite her experience, her reputation in Washington was troubling to some voters.

"She should be in jail because of all the emails," Bridges said. "People call Donald Trump racist, but she's a feminist, and she's sexist toward men. I don't think she's going to improve jobs for people.

She's going to tank our economy. I think that she focuses a lot on social issues rather than the government by the people. She's all about the government power and she wants the control. That's not the way it should be. She's fooled a bunch of people."

Trump was, in most opinions, not much better. According to the *Wingspan* survey, 43 percent of students would've voted for Trump if they had been eligible. "I think Trump was very outspoken," senior Zach Whisenant, who identifies as an independent voter, said. "He has some good ideas, although sometimes he didn't express them as well as he should've. I mainly agree with his stance on the economy because in four years, I'll be coming up trying to get a job out of college, so the economy is a big issue for me."

Although enthusiastic and qualified in business matters, which made him appeal to some voters, Trump was not without his weaknesses.

"He was pretty blunt, and he needed to shut his mouth sometimes," Bridges said. "Sometimes he just put himself out there, and he needed to be quiet about some of the comments he's made directed at individual people."

Trump's confidence and bluntness made him appealing as a strong authority figure, his major strength in the race for the presidency.

"He gave really rousing speeches. People enjoyed his speeches. I went to a couple of his rallies," Godwin said. "Trump had a way of invigorating a crowd like no person I've ever seen, but that's not always a good thing."

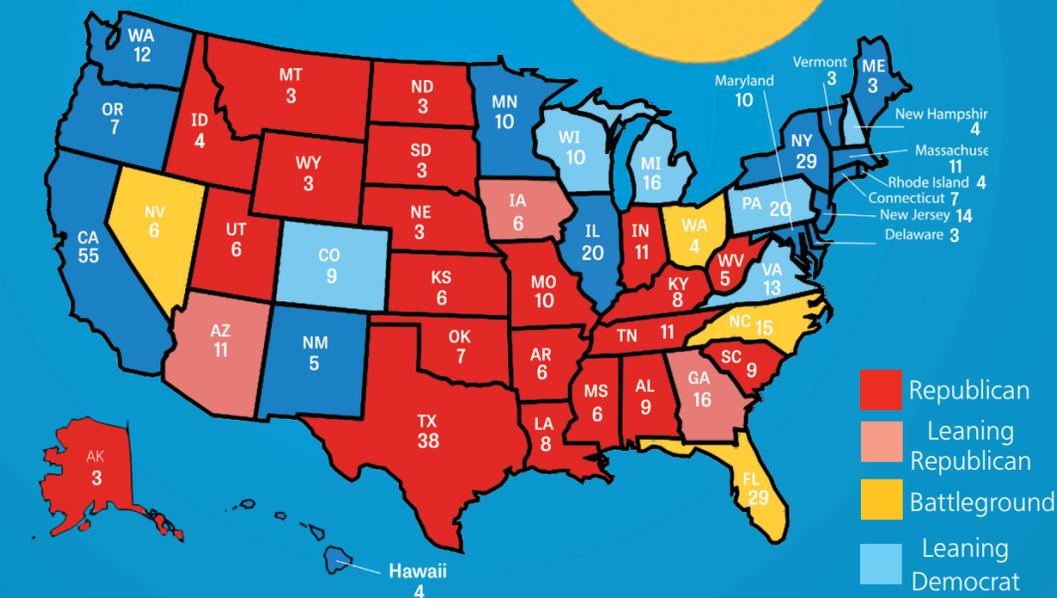
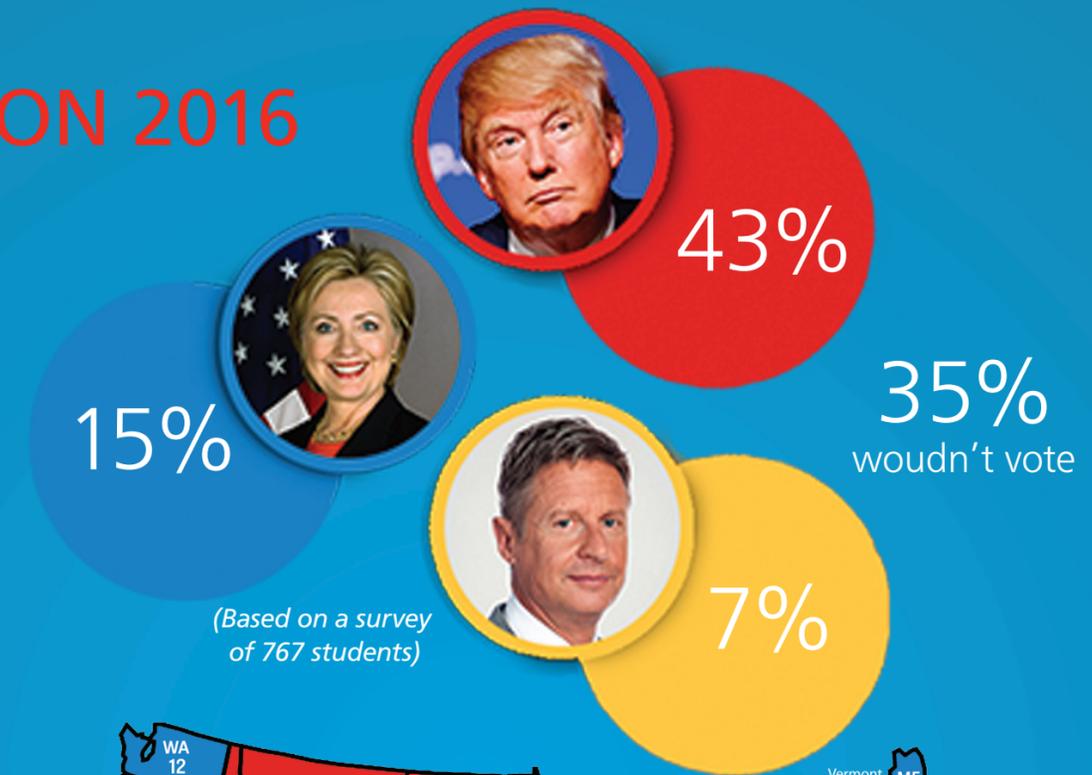
## ELECTION 2016

Were you able to vote Nov. 8?

22% of seniors were able to vote Nov. 8

As a senior which party do you identify with?

Republican 43%  
Democrat 15%  
Libertarian 6%  
Green 3%  
No party 33%



	Strong Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Strong Positive
Student impressions of Hillary Clinton	47%	24%	22%	5%	2%
Student impressions of Donald Trump	32%	17%	19%	16%	16%