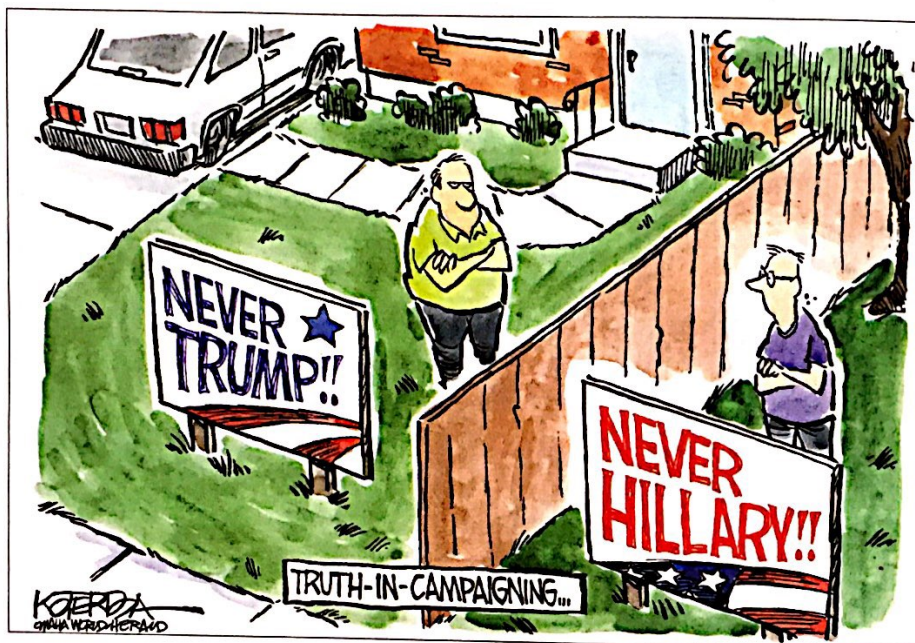


# WHAT'S AT STAKE

In November's presidential election, will Americans look beyond the circus and vote on the issues?

BY PATRICIA SMITH



Trump says he'll take a hard line against undocumented immigrants, ban foreign Muslims, beef up America's military, and reverse some of President Obama's signature achievements, like Obamacare (see "Where They Stand," facing page). Clinton says she'll give undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship, ask the wealthy to pay higher taxes, and continue Obama's push to curb the greenhouse gases that scientists say are causing climate change.

A Trump victory would put a man who has never held political office in the White House, and for some Americans that's a big part of his appeal.

"We don't need a politician for president; we need a businessman," says Tom Krzyminski, 66, a hairstylist from Bay City, Michigan.

## The Crook & the Bully

For many other voters, though, Clinton would also be a huge departure from business as usual. Forty-three men have served as president since 1789,\* so the election of a woman would be historic.

"The symbolic importance of the fact that there's going to be a woman on the ballot for president shouldn't be underestimated," says Ruth Mandel of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

So far the candidates have waged what might be called a war of warnings. Trump calls his opponent "crooked Hillary"—a reference to controversies like her use of a private email server to

**V**ery little about the 2016 election has gone as expected.

Few thought Donald Trump, a billionaire real estate mogul and reality TV star with a penchant for insulting opponents and shocking the public, could defeat 17 other Republicans to win his party's nomination.

And no one would have guessed that Democrat Hillary Clinton—a former first lady, senator, and secretary of state trying to become the nation's first female president—would face a bruising primary fight against Bernie Sanders, a largely unknown senator and self-described socialist.

With Trump and Clinton now set to square off in November, the one thing

pundits can say for sure is that many Americans are deeply frustrated with the status quo. Two-thirds of those surveyed in recent polls believe the nation is on the wrong track and 80 percent disapprove of the way Congress is doing its job.

The challenge for voters will be to look beyond the campaign's circus-like atmosphere and weigh the candidates' very different visions for the nation.

"We have two candidates here who disagree on practically everything and who stand for opposites, so it's a choice that has enormous consequences for every citizen, and people around the globe," says Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Watch campaign ads for Trump and Clinton at [upfrontmagazine.com](http://upfrontmagazine.com)



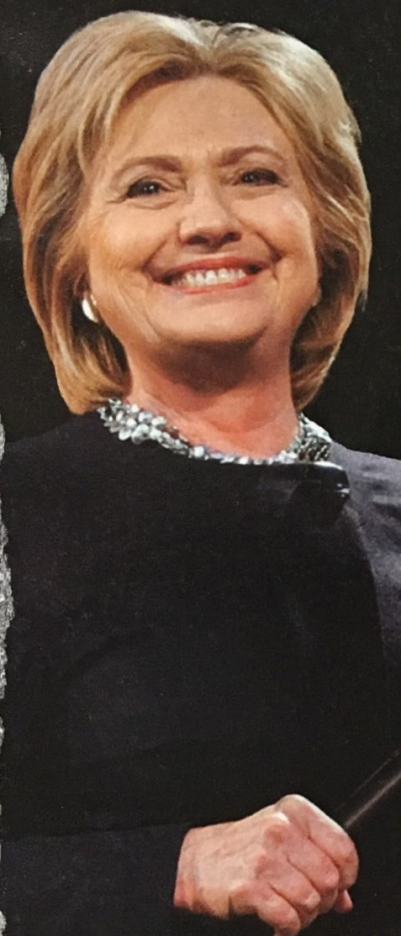
# HILLARY CLINTON

**PARTY:** Democrat

**AGE:** 68

**HOMETOWN:** Chappaqua, New York

**BIRTHPLACE:** Chicago, Illinois



## WHERE THEY STAND

Here are Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's positions on some key issues. Which candidate shares your views?

### ECONOMY

Clinton favors raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 an hour and providing more tax breaks for working families. She wants the wealthiest Americans to pay higher taxes. She also wants the government to spend more on infrastructure projects like roads and bridges to provide jobs and grow the economy.

Trump says the U.S. needs to renegotiate its trade deals to make them more beneficial to American companies and workers. He's also proposed a 45 percent tariff on goods coming into the U.S. from China. To encourage economic growth, he wants to lower the corporate tax rate and simplify the tax code for everyone.

### IMMIGRATION

Clinton supports broad immigration reform and, like President Obama, says she favors protections for certain groups of undocumented immigrants, including young people brought here illegally as children.

Trump promises to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border to stop illegal immigration and that he'll make Mexico foot the bill. He's also proposed a temporary ban on foreign Muslims entering the U.S.

### ENVIRONMENT

Clinton believes climate change is an "urgent threat." She supports the 2015 Paris climate deal (in which 195 nations, including the U.S., agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions) and investing heavily in renewable energy.

Trump believes climate change is "a total hoax." He supports "fracking" (a drilling process that forces oil and gas out of rock formations) and the construction of a new oil pipeline to Canada.

### TERRORISM

Clinton wants to step up airstrikes against ISIS and help local forces defeat them. She wants a diplomatic solution to Syria's civil war to help stem regional violence.

Trump has promised to defeat ISIS by taking away the oil that funds the terrorist group. He also vows to increase the size of the U.S. military and "bomb the hell out of ISIS."

### U.S. ROLE IN THE WORLD

Clinton says the U.S. must continue to work with NATO\* and longtime U.S. allies to counterbalance the growing aggression of China and Russia and fend off threats from rogue states like North Korea. She supports the 2015 deal with Iran to curb its nuclear program.

Trump has questioned the value of many U.S. alliances, including NATO. He's said he'd allow Japan and South Korea to have nuclear weapons to defend against North Korea. He wants to tear up the nuclear deal with Iran.

### GUNS

Clinton supports a ban on assault weapons like the AR-15, which has been used in many mass shootings. She also favors expanding background checks and says no one on a terrorism watch list should be allowed to purchase guns.

Trump says that bans on particular guns, like assault weapons, don't work. He opposes expanding background checks, but he's departed from the Republican line by agreeing that those on terror watch lists shouldn't be allowed to buy guns.

# DONALD TRUMP

**PARTY:** Republican

**AGE:** 70

**HOMETOWN:** New York, New York

**BIRTHPLACE:** New York, New York



\*The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a 28-nation military alliance, including most of Europe, the U.S., and Canada.



conduct government business during her time as secretary of state. And he dismisses her as too weak to deal effectively with ISIS and China and not economically savvy enough to create jobs.

Clinton says Trump is a bully whose take-no-prisoners style and weak grasp of foreign policy make him “temperamentally unfit” for the presidency. She says his plan to build a wall to seal off the border with Mexico—and force Mexico to pay for it—is ridiculous, and his proposal to ban foreign Muslims from the U.S. to prevent terrorist attacks “goes against everything we stand for as a country founded on religious freedom.”

One problem neither candidate faces is lack of name recognition. Clinton, a Chicago native, was a lawyer until her husband, Bill Clinton, became president in 1993. After eight years as first lady, she was elected in 2000 to the U.S. Senate from New York. She lost the 2008 Democratic presidential primary to Barack Obama, then served as his secretary of state for four years.

Trump is a New Yorker who inherited a real estate business from his father and expanded it into a high-profile global brand of Trump hotels, office buildings, resorts, and golf courses. In 2004, he became a major TV personality, starring in the hit reality show *The Apprentice*.

But as the old saying goes, familiarity breeds contempt: Voters know Trump



**Illegal immigration** has been a controversial issue in the campaign.



**A vigil** after the Orlando shooting; Clinton and Trump have very different plans on terrorism and guns.

and Clinton, but many just don't like them. According to a recent Gallup poll, 64 percent view Trump unfavorably and Clinton fares a little better, with 54 percent viewing her unfavorably. It's rare for the two major party nominees to have such high negatives going into the general election. Whichever of them can

convince enough undecided voters, especially in battleground states like Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania (*see map*), will probably prevail on November 8.

### Economic Unease

As in previous elections, the economy will likely play a big role. A strong economy helps keep the party in the White House in power. When the economy is weak, voters often seek new leaders.

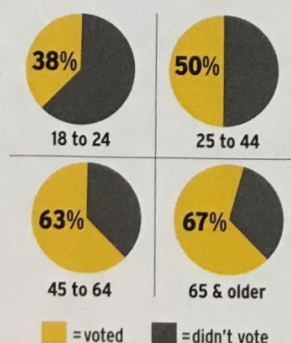
The U.S. unemployment rate, hovering around 5 percent, is relatively low—down from 10 percent in 2009 during the financial crisis. But because many people haven't seen much of an increase in their wages and because there's such a huge gap between Americans at the top and bottom of the income ladder, there's a feeling of economic unease in the electorate.

Trump has seized on that anxiety, telling voters that the economy is a mess and promising to use his business skills to “make America great again.” Clinton wants to raise the minimum wage and says income inequality is “the defining

## Will Young Voters Show Up?

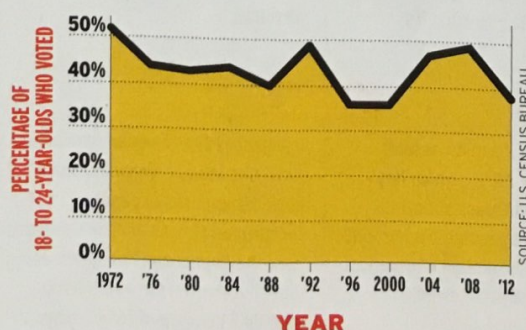
In 2012, turnout for 18- to 24-year-olds was much lower than for older Americans (*left*). Overall, turnout among young people that year was sharply down from the near-record turnout in 2008 (*right*).

### 2012 Voter Turnout By Age



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

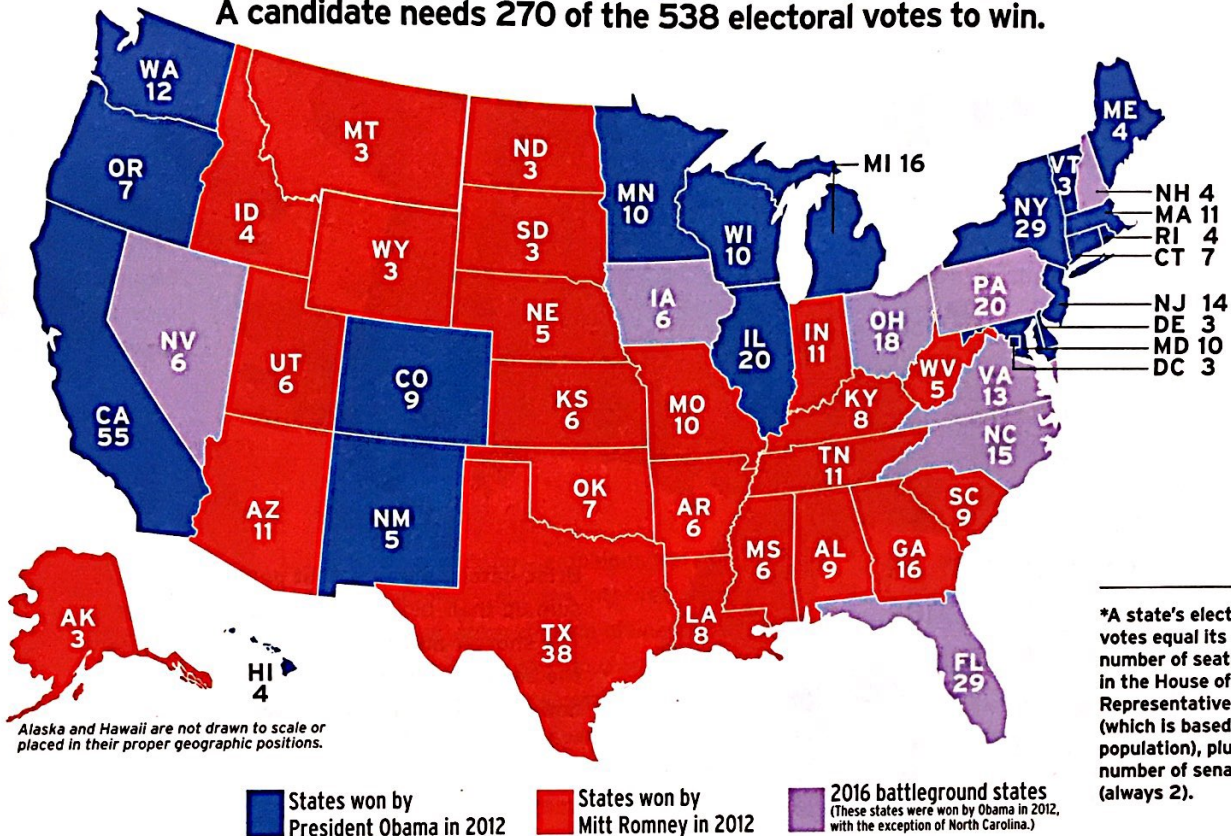
### Youth Turnout Since 1972





# THE ELECTORAL MAP

The 50 states and their votes in the Electoral College.\*  
A candidate needs 270 of the 538 electoral votes to win.



economic challenge of our time.”

But since the mass shooting at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in June, the issues of terrorism and gun control have taken center stage. The shooter, Omar Mateen, was a Muslim who pledged allegiance to ISIS in the midst of the attack. Trump responded by renewing his call to ban Muslim immigrants. Clinton called for a ban on military-style assault weapons like the one Mateen used.

The fallout could affect the election.

“Headlines matter, and terrorism and guns are in the headlines daily,” says Sabato.

Another issue on voters’ minds this year is the Supreme Court (*see Debate, p. 22*). The death in February of Justice Antonin Scalia—and the refusal of the Republican-controlled Senate to consider Obama’s nominee to fill his seat—has left a vacancy on the nine-member Court that the next president could end up filling.

That person might serve for decades, so the stakes are high, says Costas

Panagopoulos, a professor at Fordham University in New York: “Now we’re talking about an ideological view that could be in place not four years, but 40 years.”

## Sanders or Bust?

With so much on the line, the 2016 race could be the most expensive ever.

“The presidential election has become a fundraising arms race,” says Anthony Corrado, a professor of government at Colby College in Maine, who predicts that the total cost of this year’s race could approach \$3 billion.

Republican leaders, who shunned Trump throughout the primaries, have mostly endorsed him, but the embrace has been lukewarm at best.

Clinton has her own worries. In particular, will young voters turn out for

her? In the primaries, young people ages 17-29 cast more ballots for her opponent, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, than for Clinton and Trump combined. It’s unclear whether Sanders’s young supporters will vote for any other candidate or sit the election out, as they’ve done before (*see graphs, facing page*).

If they do go to the polls, young people have a real opportunity to sway the outcome of this year’s race.

“The data suggests that in the last two elections, President Obama really won because of the youth vote,” says Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, who studies youth voting trends at Tufts University in Massachusetts. “So young people shouldn’t underestimate the importance of their participation.” •

With reporting by Michael Barbaro, Nate Cohn, and Jeremy W. Peter of The Times.



**More on Election 2016 this fall!**

Electoral College 101 • How to read polls • The role of VPs • And more!