

Unscientific poll: Clinton 3-to-1 margin



**Amy
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The 2016 Presidential election will come to a close Tuesday, and the Institute for Women in Politics of Northwest Florida projects Hillary Clinton will emerge as President-elect of the United States of America.

At least that is the outcome that our unofficial, unscientific poll forecasts. (Please note that the Institute is non-partisan and the poll reflects the opinions of our individual members, not the organization.)

Over the past 10 days members of the Institute — women from a wide range of professional, socioeconomic, and political backgrounds — have responded to an anonymous, two-question poll that simply asked, “Whom are you voting for and why?”

With nearly 77 percent “voter turnout,” Institute members overwhelmingly voted for Secretary Clinton 73 percent to Donald Trump’s 24 percent, with all others at just 3 percent.

Of those voting for Mr. Trump, the reasons leaned heavily to his business experience and party loyalty as key factors.

One respondent wrote, “I believe the country needs to be run like a business for the next four years...,” while another said, “He possesses the knowledge, skills and ability to shat-

ter the deeply corrupt system.”

One party loyalist said, “I choose the party whose foundational philosophy honors and promotes individual freedom and responsibility and the principles upon which this great nation was founded...”

Secretary Clinton’s supporters cited her government experience and temperament.

“Clinton will be able to urge consensus, not divisiveness,” wrote one responder.

Another said, “Mr. Trump’s volatile temper and lack of control...are a danger to national security.”

As to government experience, one simply wrote, “She is the most qualified person that we have ever had running for the office of President.”

It is striking that our poll drew nearly a 77 percent response while every Presidential election since 1972 has struggled to get just half of our nation’s voting age population (VAP) to the polls.

Earlier this year, the Pew Research Center looked at voter turnout for the most recent national elections in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member countries. Of the 35 countries studied, the U.S. came in 31st in VAP turnout, trailed only by Latvia, Chile, Switzerland and Australia.

I was raised to believe voting is as much a duty as it is a right.

Long before the days of vote-by-mail and early voting, Election Day was an event. American flags flew from every flagpole. Schools were

closed so teachers, administrators and school staff could vote. Many businesses opened late or closed early to give their employees time to go to the polls.

Walking with my grandparents to the fire station that served as their polling place was a treat. They’d “get cleaned up” to go vote. The actual voting only took a few minutes but the trip took hours as Grandma and Grandpa stopped to visit with friends and neighbors standing in line to cast their ballots. They’d talk about the weather, sports, or the life events of mutual friends but never, ever about who they had or would be voting for; that was private.

One way we can improve voter turnout is to restore that kind of excitement and energy to our political process. At the Institute for Women in Politics we are doing our part.

Our hope is that the work we’re doing in the areas of civics education, candidate training and prospective candidate mentorship will energize and inspire young women to political engagement.

Yes, this election will end on Tuesday, but another will follow soon enough. Between now and then, let’s work to make VAP turnout percentage one list on which the U.S. no longer finishes at the back of the pack.

Amy Miller is president of the Institute for Women in Politics of Northwest Florida and offers this Viewpoint on behalf of the IWP Board of Directors. To inquire about membership in the Institute, send an email to contact@iwppflorida.org.