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Dr. Joshua Poulette, Director

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Dr. Craig Wilson for his kindness and helpful introduction to the Poll of Montana process last year. Dr. Nisha Bellinger's input in writing the survey items for this year's poll is greatly appreciated. Dr. Jennifer Lynn and Dr. Paul Pope provided valuable assistance through their willingness to participate in poll testing. Dr. Megan Poulette and Dr. Joy Honea also provided valuable assistance and input throughout the process. Finally, thanks to Lela McCann for her help with managing the lab.

### Student Participants

The following students participated in selecting survey items and conducting the 2015 Poll of Montana.

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Katelyn Focht

Blair Koch

Lela McCann

Molly McIntosh

Amanda Nelson

Dylan Olson

Matthew Rich

Vincent Sanchez

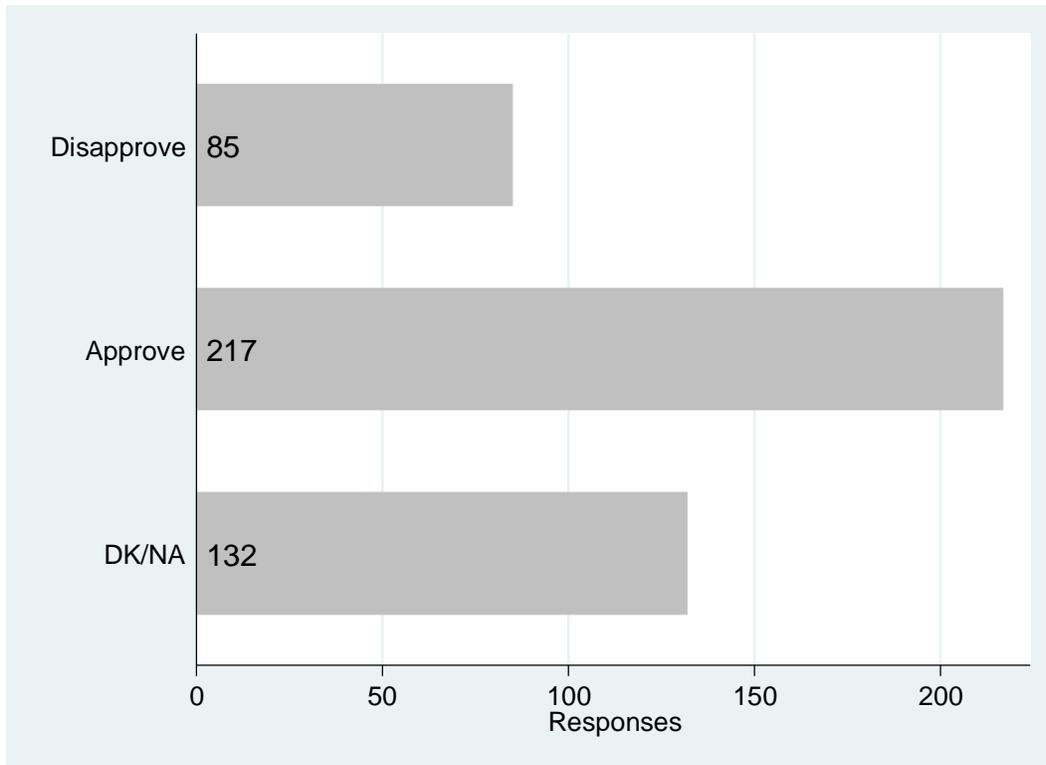
## Introduction

The “MSU-Billings Poll” was first conducted in 1989. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> year the survey has been conducted and during this time 29 surveys have been completed. This report summarizes the results of a statewide random sample telephone survey of 435 adult Montanans. In order to collect this random sample students called both cellphone and landline numbers across the state.

The poll was conducted November 16-23, 2015. Students enrolled in the course “Political Science 342: Media, Public Opinion, Polling” and some additional students from other social science courses at MSU Billings completed interviews for this survey. Multiple attempts were made to reach selected households. The survey results have a +/- 4.8% margin of error at a confidence level of 95% (95% of the time the results will fall within the 4.8% margin of error). The following sections present survey results along with statistical tests of significance. Each survey item was tested in order to determine statistically significant (at the .05 level or better) relationships between the outcome of that item and potential predictors. For example, an individual’s opinion on marijuana policy is significantly impacted by their age, holding all other factors constant. Statistical significance testing was performed with specialized software, and tests used include OLS regression, ordered probit, and probit.

## I. State Issues

### 1. Approval of Montana Governor Steve Bullock



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of Governor Steve Bullock's performance in office?

50% of respondents approve of Bullock, while 19.6% disapprove, with 30.4% responding that they do not have an opinion.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to support Bullock.

Democrats were somewhat more likely than Independents/Republicans to support Bullock (significant at the .1 level).

Age was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

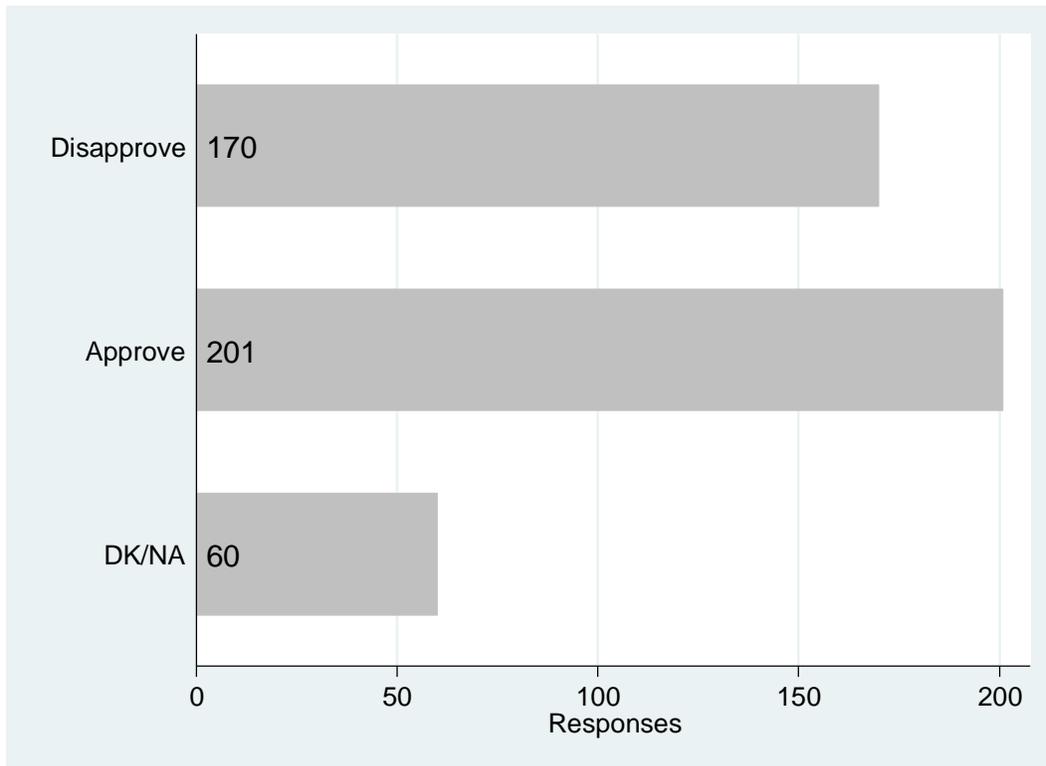
Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 2. Approval of U.S. Senator Jon Tester



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of U.S. Senator Jon Tester's performance in office?

46.6% of respondents approve of Tester, while 39.4% disapprove, with 13.9% responding that they do not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to support Tester.

Democrats were significantly more likely than Independents/Republicans to support Tester.

Age was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

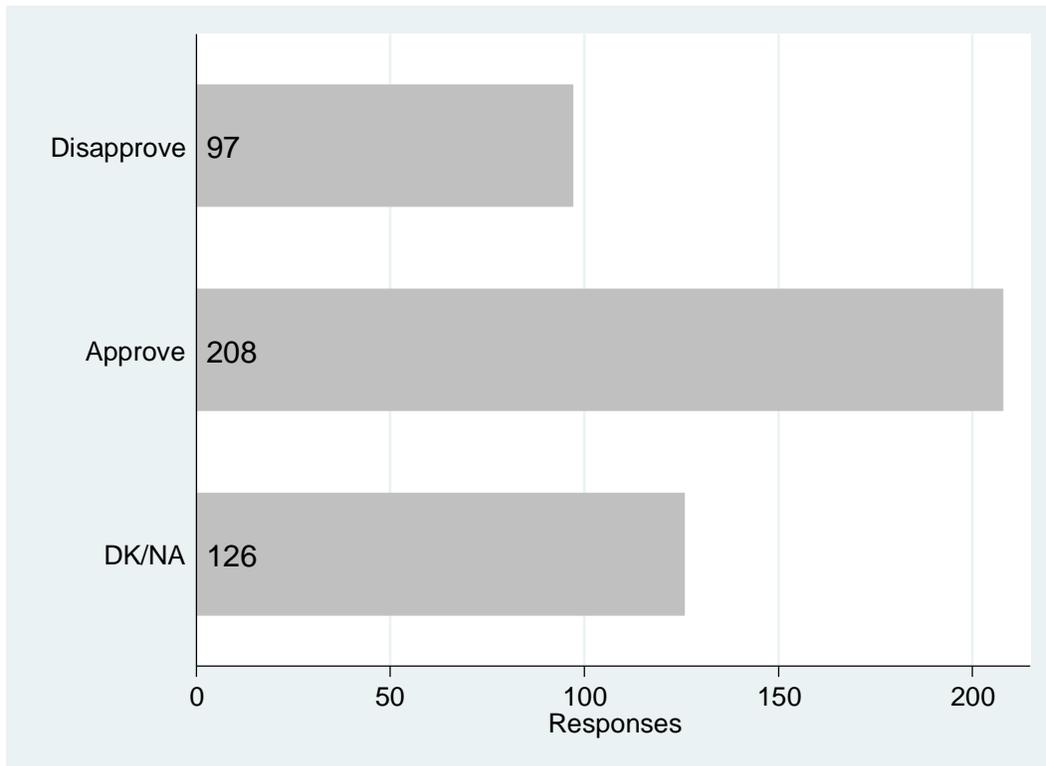
Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

### 3. Approval of U.S. Senator Steve Daines



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of U.S. Senator Steve Daines' performance in office?

48.2% of respondents approve of Daines, while 22.5% disapprove, with 29.2% responding that they do not have an opinion.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Daines.

Democrats were significantly less likely than Independents/Republicans to support Daines.

Age was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

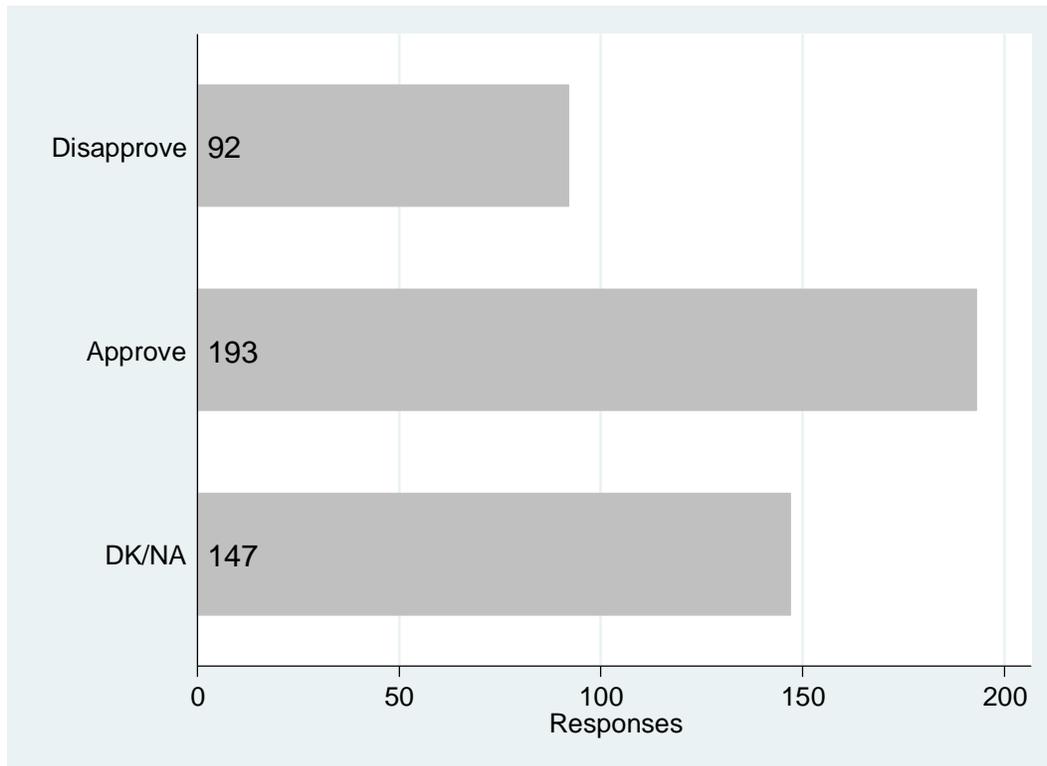
Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

#### 4. Approval of U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke's performance in office?

44.7% of respondents approve of Zinke, while 21.3% disapprove, with 34% responding that they do not have an opinion.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Zinke. Democrats were significantly less likely than Independents/Republicans to support Zinke.

Registered voters were significantly more likely to support Zinke than the non-registered.

Age was not significant.

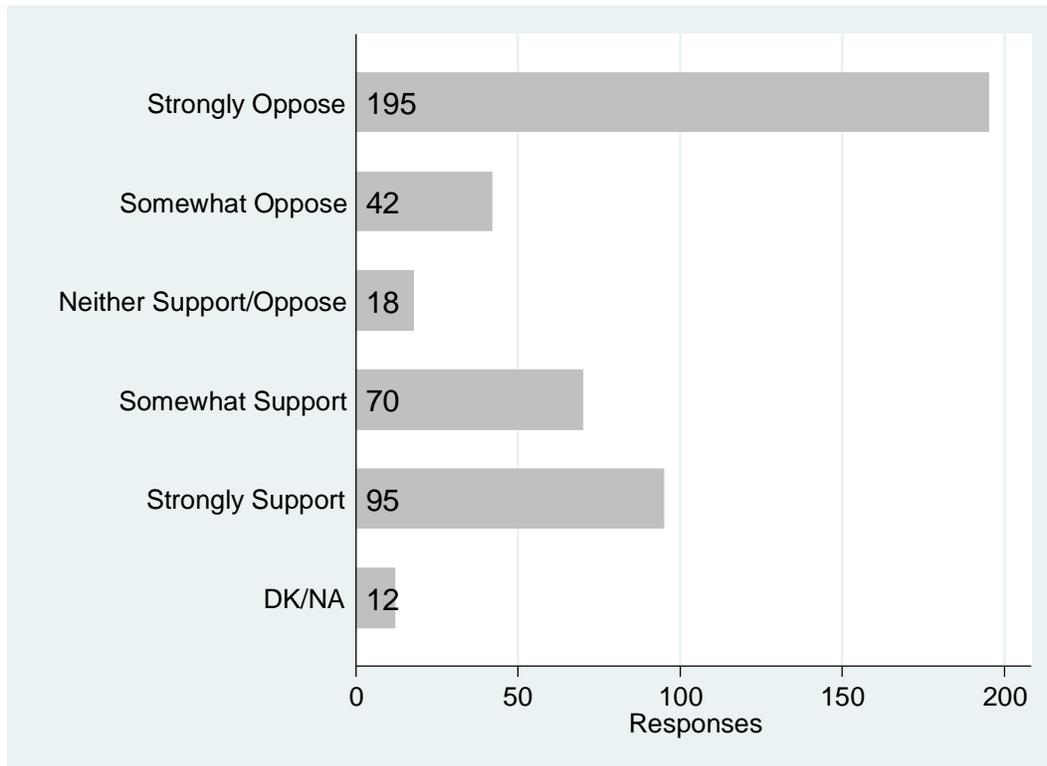
Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 5. Marijuana Legalization Policy in Montana



Question text - Would you support or oppose the adoption of a Colorado-style marijuana legalization policy in Montana?

45.1% of respondents strongly oppose this proposal, while 9.7% somewhat oppose. 16.2% somewhat support this measure, and 22% strongly support it. About 7% are either neutral or have no opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to oppose marijuana legalization.

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to oppose marijuana legalization.

Older respondents were significantly more likely to oppose legalization.

Wealthier respondents were significantly more likely to oppose legalization.

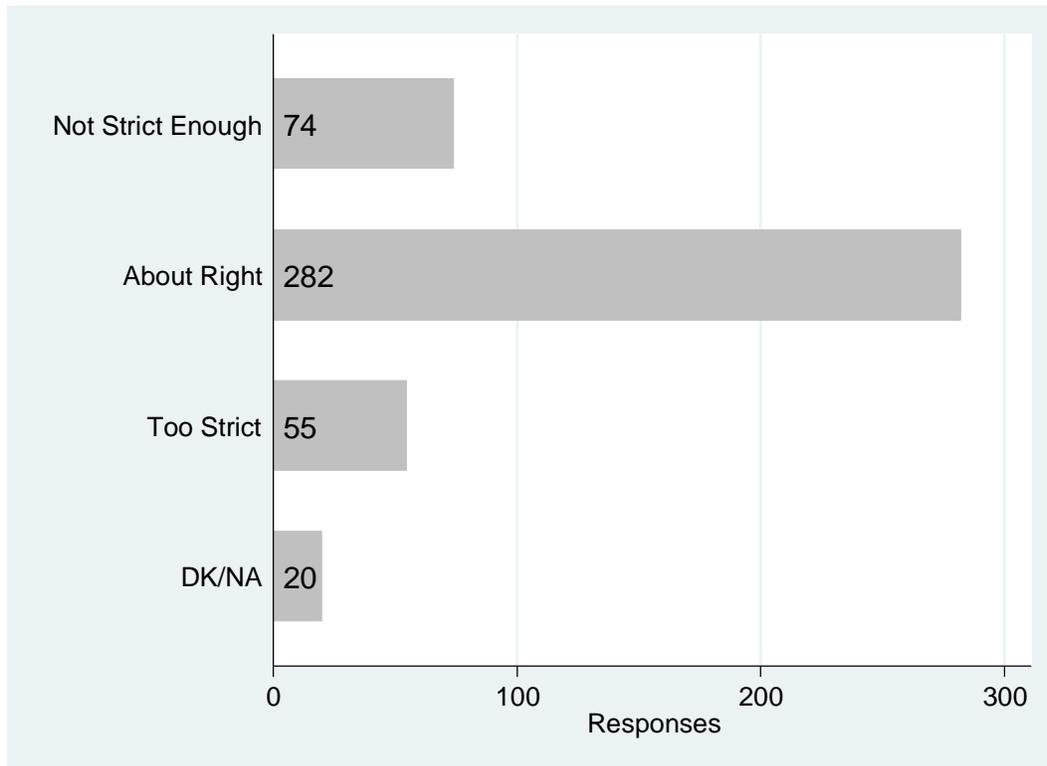
Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 6. Gun Laws in Montana



Question text - In your opinion, are gun laws in Montana too strict, about right, or not strict enough?

65.4% of respondents say gun laws in Montana are about right, while 17.2% say they are not strict enough and 12.8% say they are too strict.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to say gun laws should be stricter.

Democrats were significantly more likely than Independents/Republicans to say gun laws should be stricter.

Older respondents were significantly less likely to support stricter gun laws.

Voter registration status was not significant.

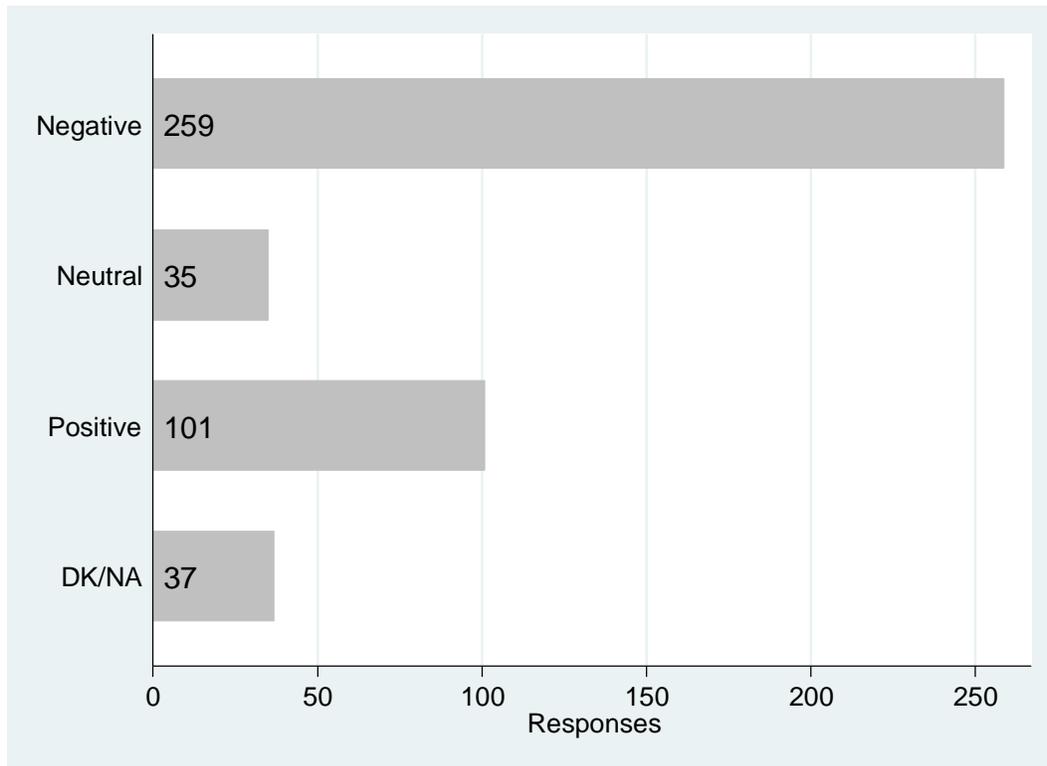
Gender was not significant.

Education level was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 7. Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Montana



Question text - Do you think the Affordable Care Act, sometimes called Obamacare, has had a positive or negative impact on Montana?

59.5% of respondents say the ACA has had a negative impact on Montana, while 23.4% say it has had a positive impact and 8.1% say it has had a neutral impact.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to say the ACA has had a positive impact on Montana.

Democrats were significantly more likely than Independents/Republicans to say the ACA has had a positive impact on Montana.

Older respondents were significantly more likely to say the ACA has had a positive impact on Montana.

Females were significantly more likely to say the ACA has had a negative impact.

Respondents with higher education levels were significantly more likely to say the ACA has had a positive impact on Montana.

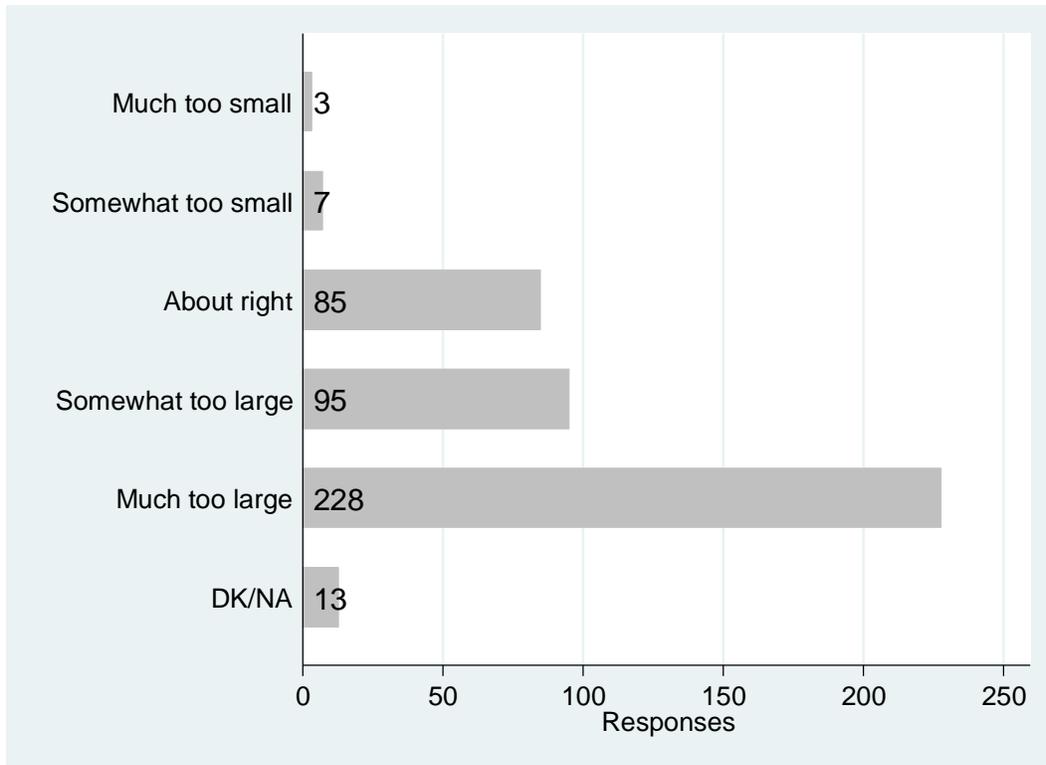
Voter registration status was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## II. National Issues

### 8. Opinion on the Size and Scope of the Federal Government



Question text - Which of the following responses best describes your opinion on the size and scope of the federal government?

52.9% of respondents say the federal government is much too large, while 22% say it is somewhat too large and 19.7% say it is about the right size. About 2.3% say the federal government is too small.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to say the federal government is too large.

Older respondents were significantly more likely to say government is too large.

More well-educated respondents were significantly less likely to say government is too large.

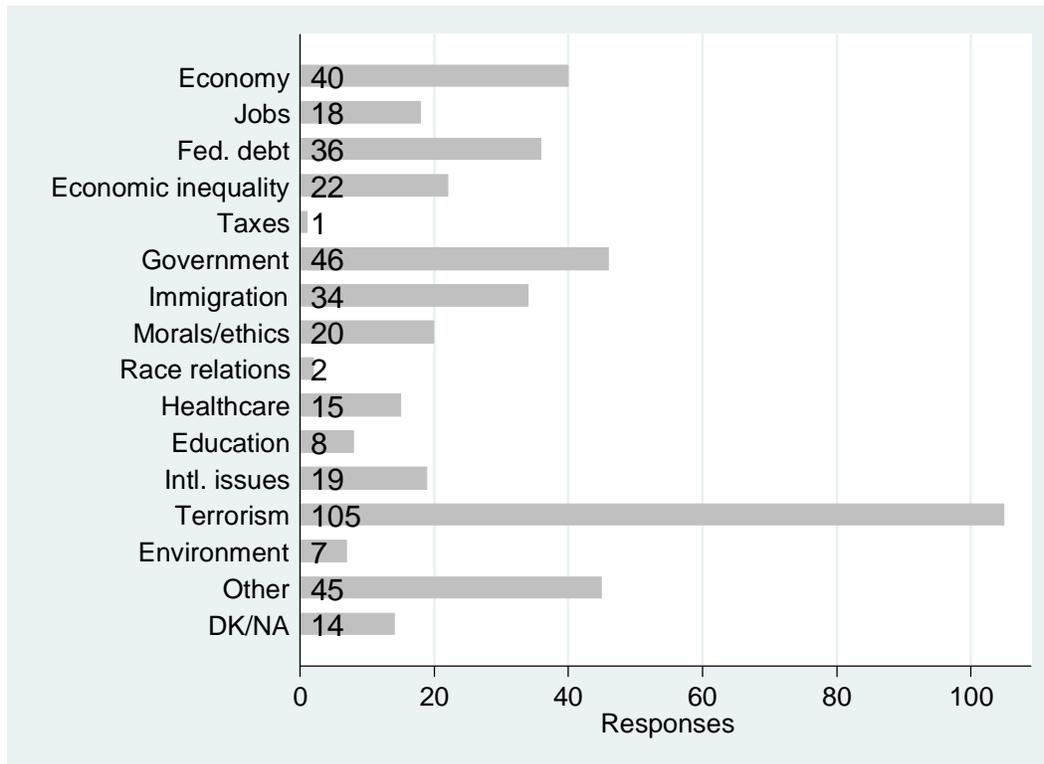
Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 9. Most Important Problem Facing the United States



Question text - What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States today? (Open-ended)

24.3% of respondents identified terrorism as the most important problem (note that the terror attacks in Paris happened just before the survey was conducted). 9.3% identified the economy, while 8.3% said federal debt was the most important problem the U.S. faced. 10.7% identified government, and 7.9% chose immigration.

### Statistically Significant Relationships – Predictors of Selecting “Terrorism”

Older respondents were significantly more likely to identify “terrorism” as the most important problem faced by the U.S.

Females were significantly more likely to identify “terrorism” as the most important problem than males.

Partisanship was not significant.

Ideology was not significant.

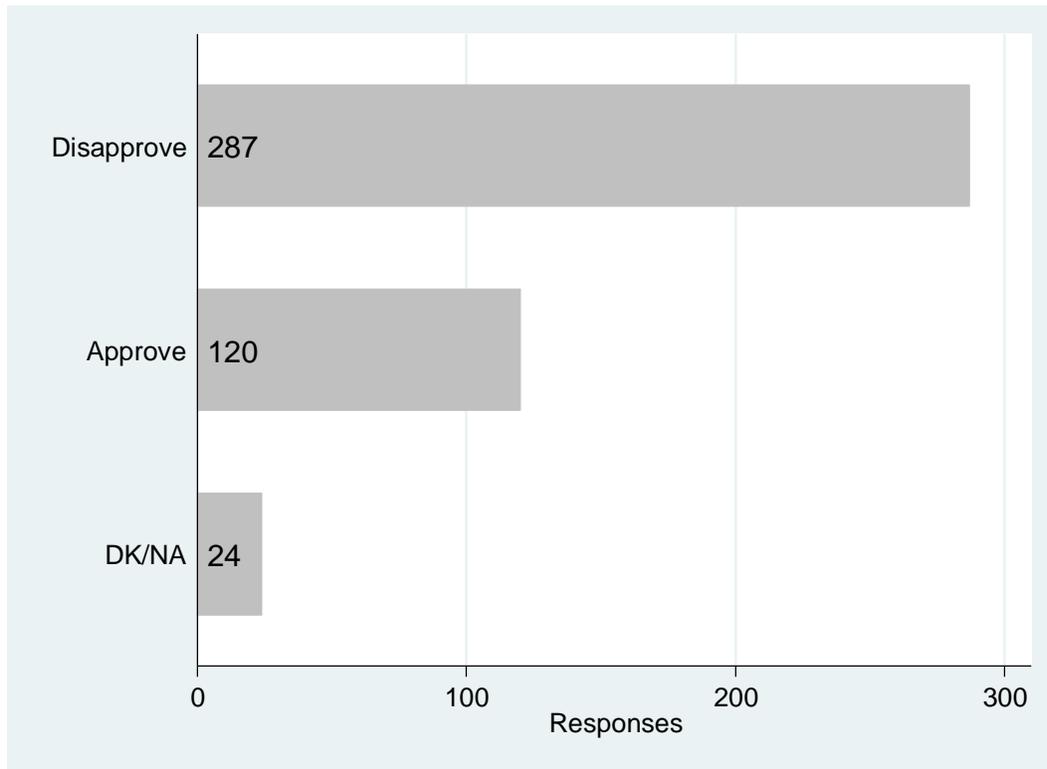
Education was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region of Montana was not significant.

## 10. Approval of President Barack Obama



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of President Barack Obama's performance in office?

66.5% of respondents disapprove of President Obama, while 27.8% approve. 5.6% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to disapprove of Obama.

Liberals were significantly more likely than conservatives to approve of Obama.

Residents of eastern and central Montana were significantly more likely to disapprove of Obama than residents of western Montana.

Age was not significant.

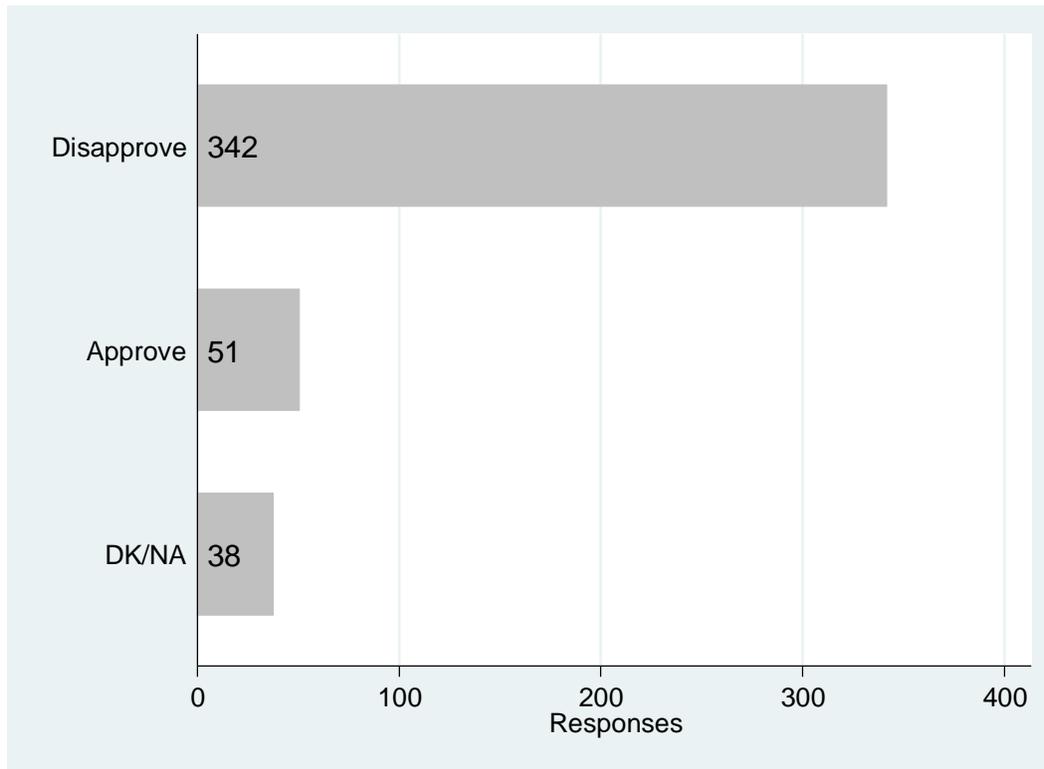
Education was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

## 11. Approval of the U.S. Congress



Question text - At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the U.S. Congress?

79.4% of respondents disapprove of the U.S. Congress, while 11.8% approve. 8.8% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Older respondents were significantly more likely to disapprove of Congress.

Wealthier respondents were significantly more likely to disapprove of Congress.

Partisanship was not significant.

Ideology was not significant.

Education was not significant.

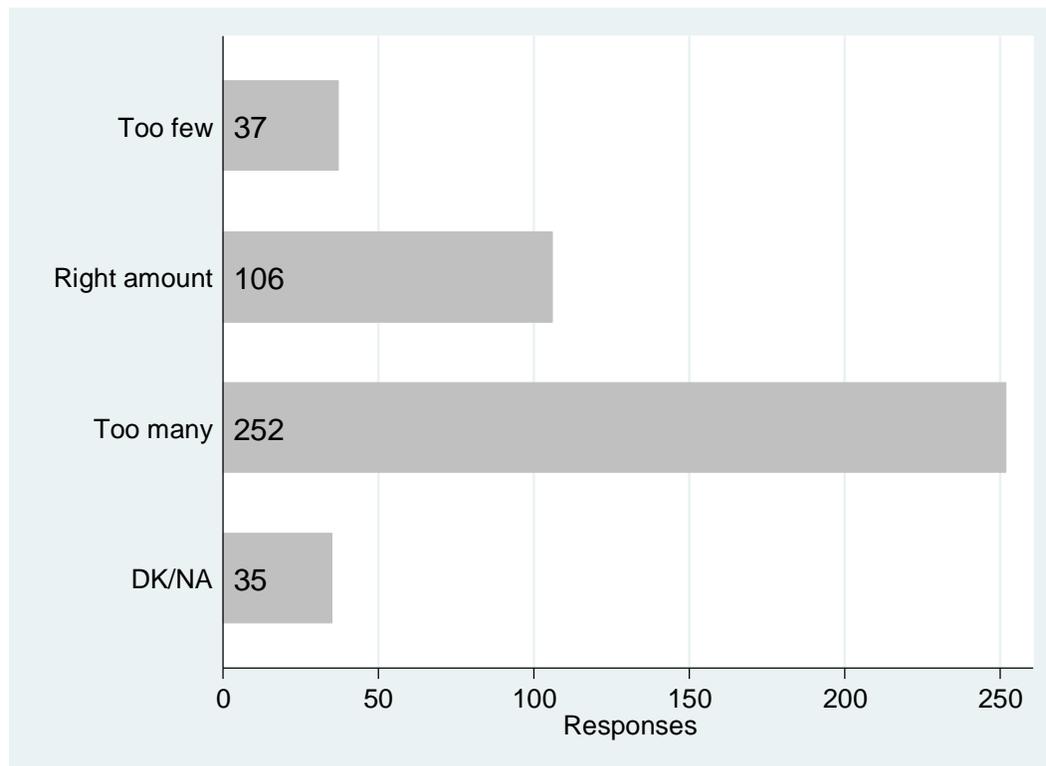
Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 12. U.S. Immigrant Intake



Question text - Would you say the United States is taking in too many, about the right amount, or too few immigrants?

58.6% of respondents thought the U.S. is taking in too many immigrants, while 24.7% thought the immigrant intake was the right amount, and 8.6% thought it was too small.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to say the U.S. is taking in too many immigrants.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to say the U.S. is taking in too many immigrants.

More well-educated respondents were significantly less likely to say the U.S. is taking in too many immigrants.

Age was not significant.

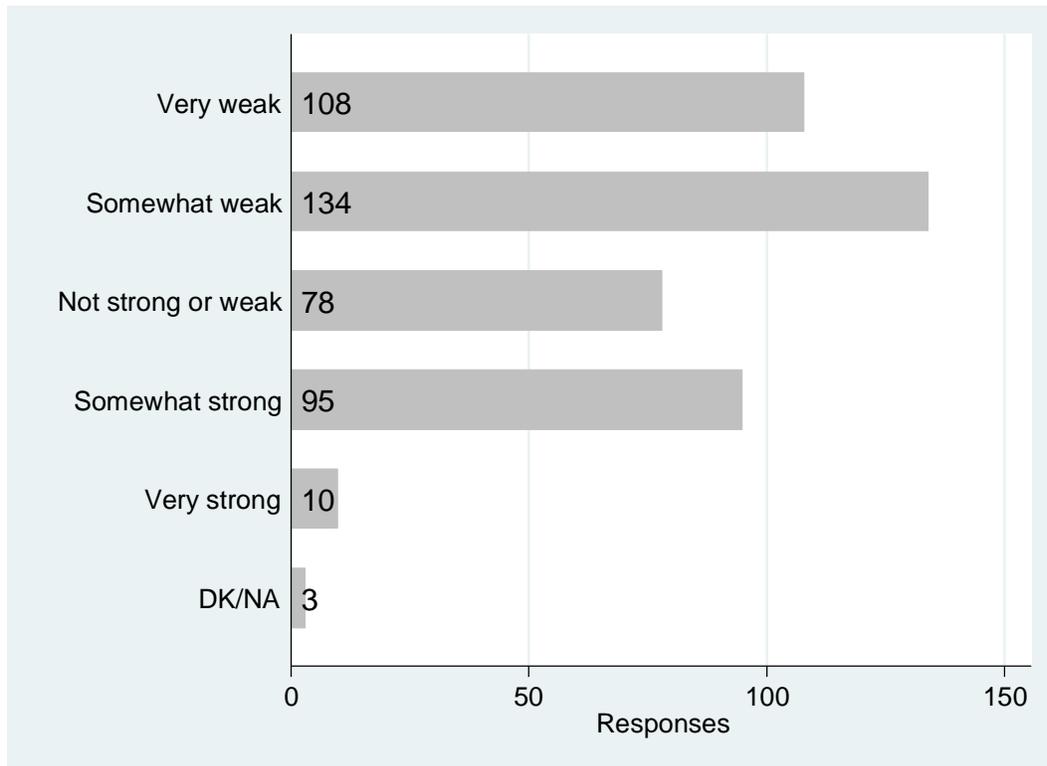
Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

### 13. State of the U.S. Economy



Question text - Which of the following statements best describes your opinion on the state of the U.S. economy?

56.5% of respondents thought the U.S. economy was weak (somewhat or very) while 24.5% thought it was (somewhat or very) strong. 18.2% said it was neither strong nor weak.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to say the U.S. economy was weak.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to say the U.S. economy was weak.

Females were significantly more likely than males to say the U.S. economy was weak.

Registered voters were significantly less likely to say the economy was weak.

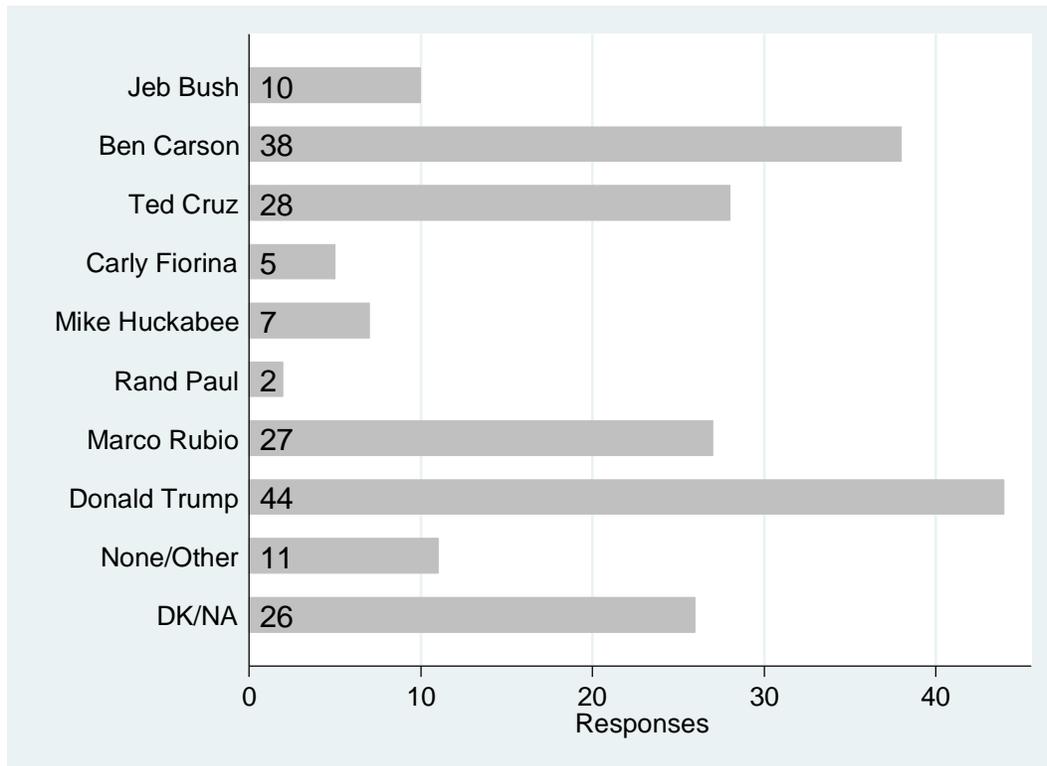
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

#### 14. Republican Presidential Primary – Asked only of Republicans



*Asked only of Republicans and Independents who lean Republican*

Question text - If you had to choose today, which of the following candidates for the Republican nomination for President would you support?

22.2% of Republican partisans support Trump, while 19.2% support Carson. Ted Cruz is supported by 14.1% and Marco Rubio by 13.6%.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships – Support of Trump & Carson

Females were significantly less likely than males to support Trump.

Females were significantly more likely than males to support Carson.

Partisanship was not significant.

Ideology was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

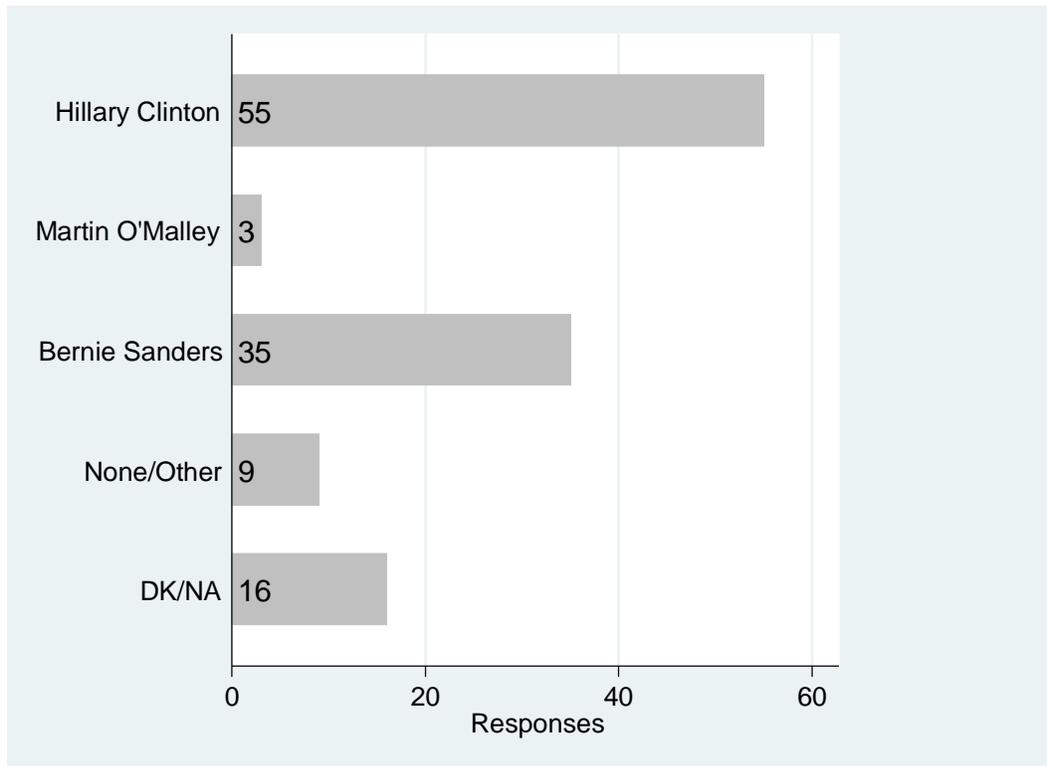
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

### 15. Democratic Presidential Primary – Asked only of Democrats



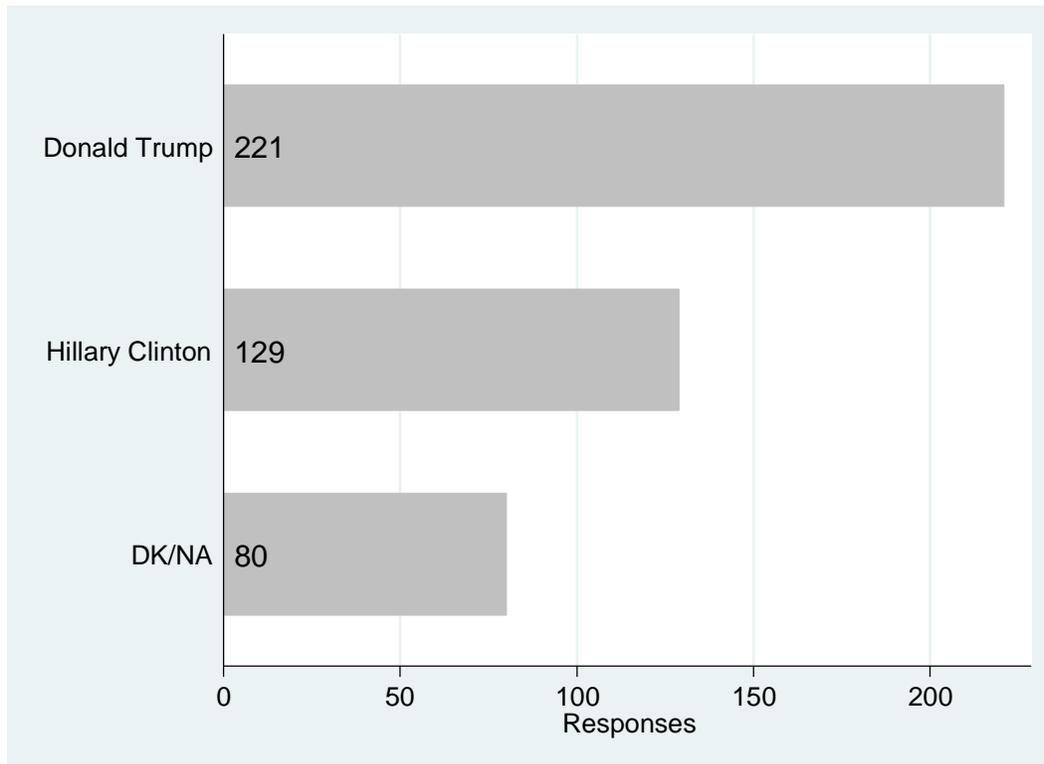
*Asked only of Democrats and Independents who lean Democratic*

Question text - If you had to choose today, which of the following candidates for the Democratic nomination for President would you support?

46.6% of Democratic partisans support Clinton, while 29.7% support Sanders.

No statistically significant relationships, possibly partially due to a relatively small sample size.

## 16. Presidential Matchup – Clinton vs. Trump



Question text - If Hillary Clinton were the Democratic Party's candidate and Donald Trump were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

51.4% of respondents supported Trump, while 30% supported Clinton and 18.6% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Trump.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Trump.

Gender was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

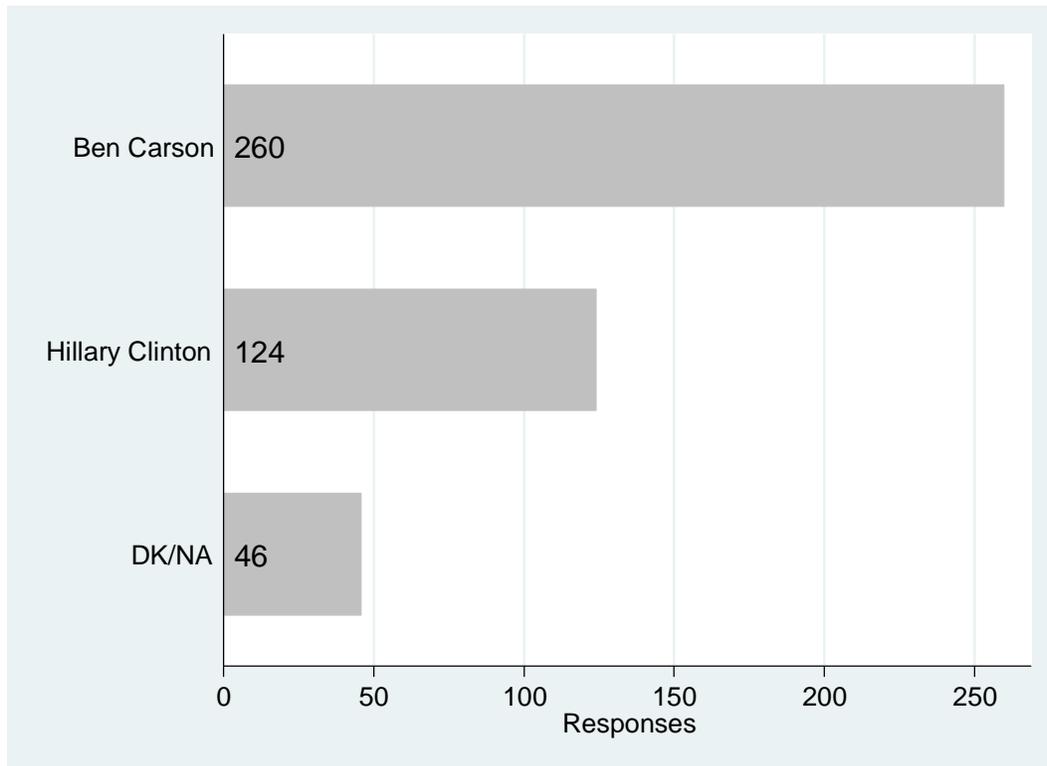
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 17. Presidential Matchup – Clinton vs. Carson



Question text - If Hillary Clinton were the Democratic Party's candidate and Ben Carson were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

60.5% of respondents supported Carson, while 28.8% supported Clinton and 10.7% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Carson.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Carson.

Gender was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

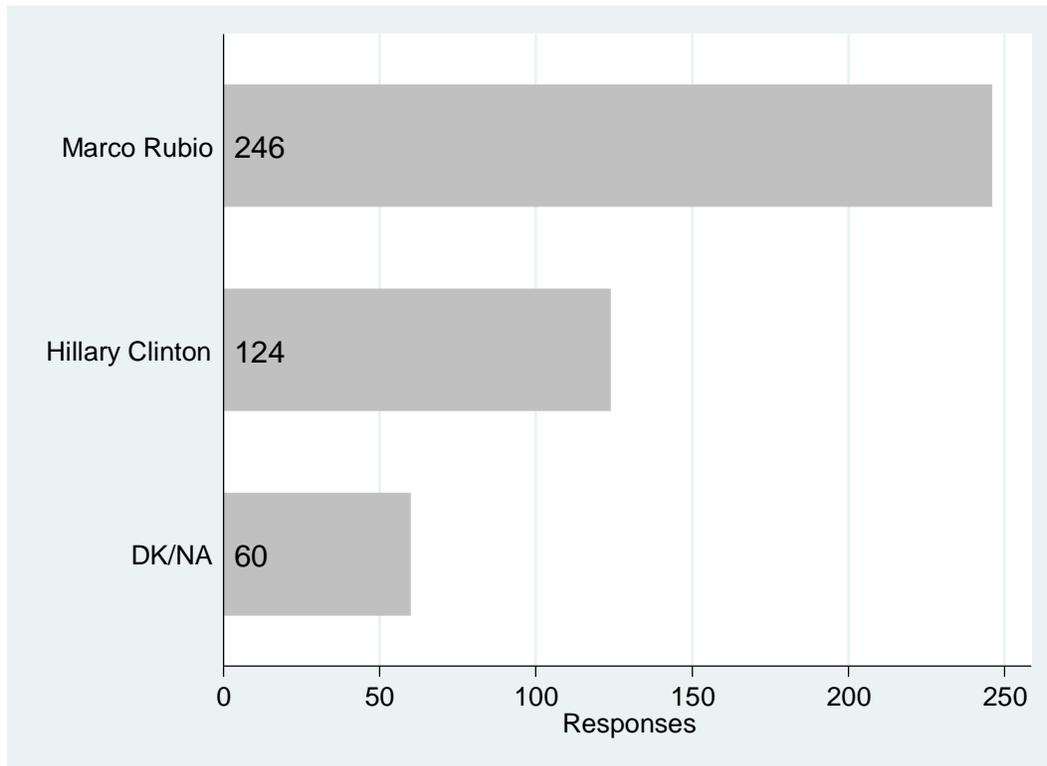
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 18. Presidential Matchup – Clinton vs. Rubio



Question text - If Hillary Clinton were the Democratic Party's candidate and Marco Rubio were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

57.2% of respondents supported Rubio, while 28.8% supported Clinton and 14% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Rubio.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Rubio.

Gender was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

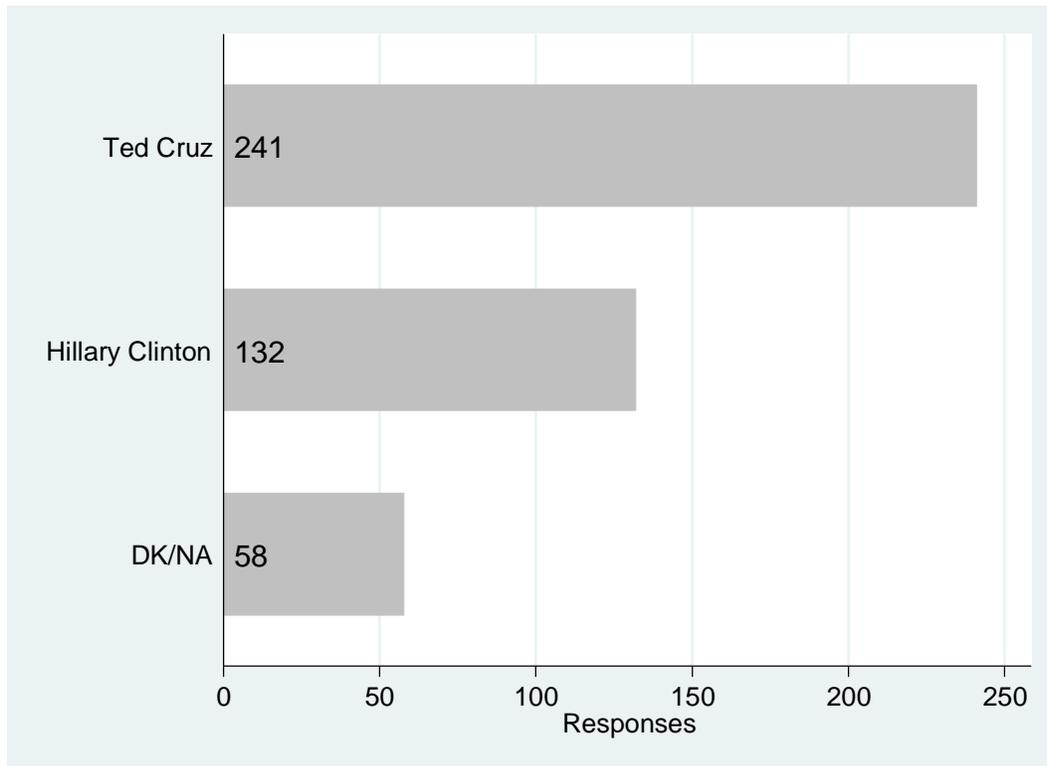
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 19. Presidential Matchup – Clinton vs. Cruz



Question text - If Hillary Clinton were the Democratic Party's candidate and Ted Cruz were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

55.9% of respondents supported Cruz, while 30.6% supported Clinton and 13.5% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Cruz.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Cruz.

Gender was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

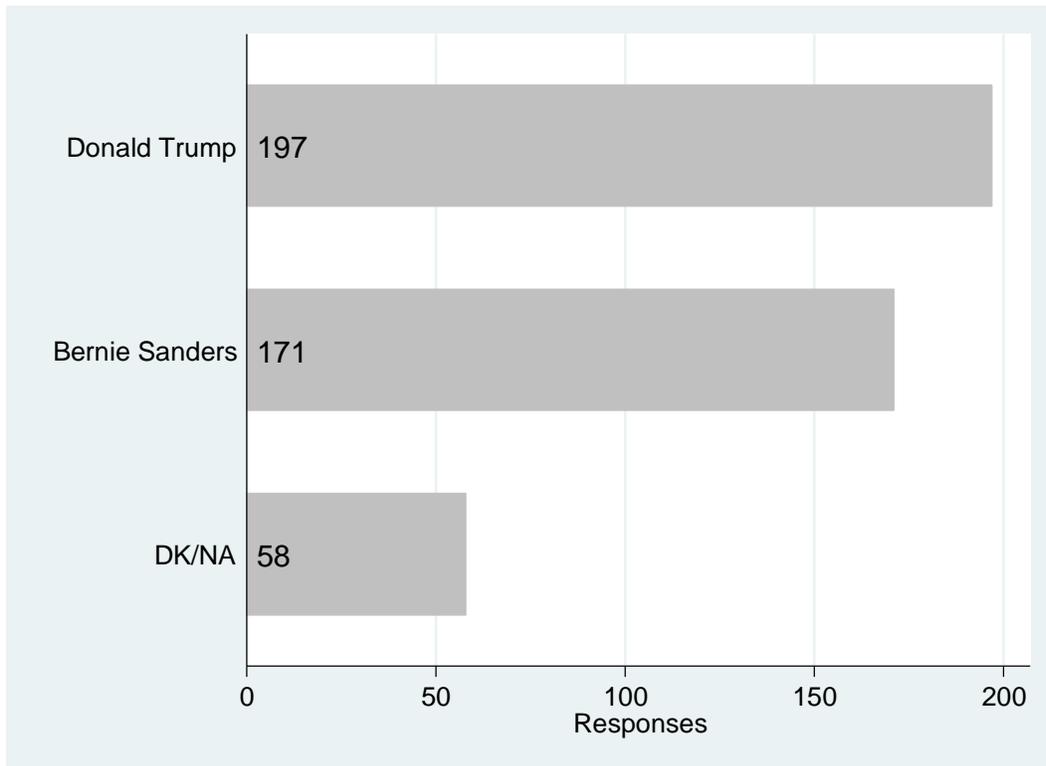
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 20. Presidential Matchup – Sanders vs. Trump



Question text - If Bernie Sanders were the Democratic Party's candidate and Donald Trump were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

46.2% of respondents supported Trump, while 40.1% supported Sanders and 13.6% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Trump.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Trump.

Females were significantly more likely than males to support Sanders.

Voter registration status was not significant.

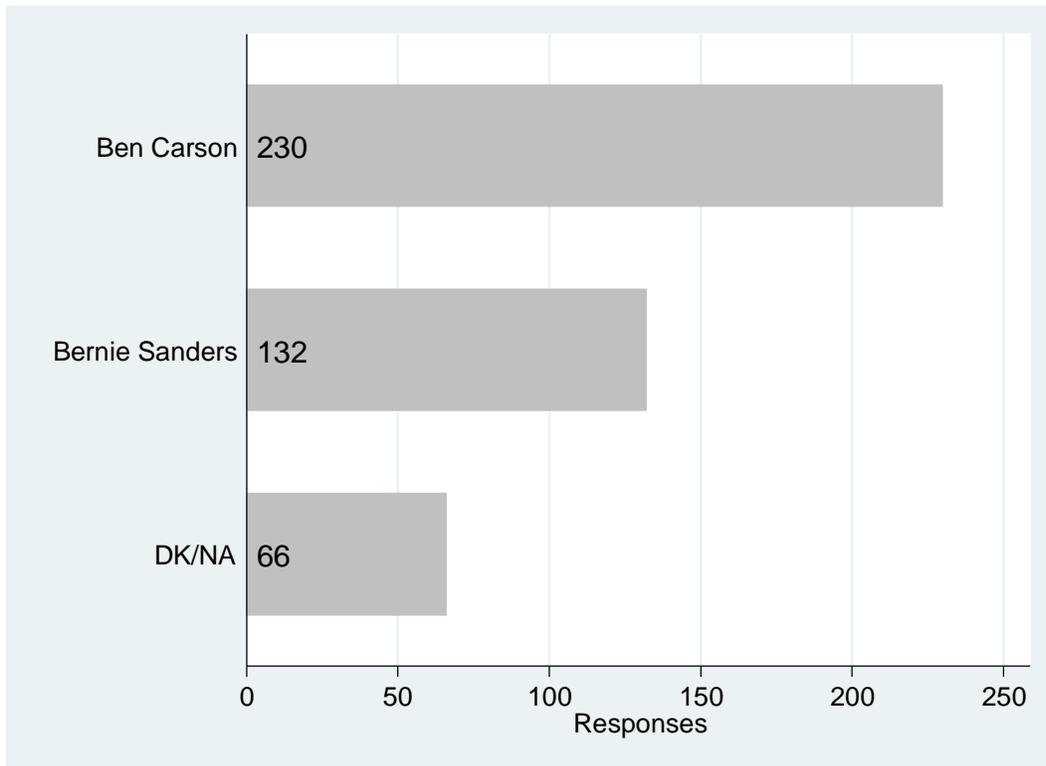
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 21. Presidential Matchup – Sanders vs. Carson



Question text - If Bernie Sanders were the Democratic Party's candidate and Ben Carson were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

53.7% of respondents supported Carson, while 30.8% supported Sanders and 15.4% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Carson.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Carson.

Registered voters were significantly more likely to support Carson.

Gender was not significant.

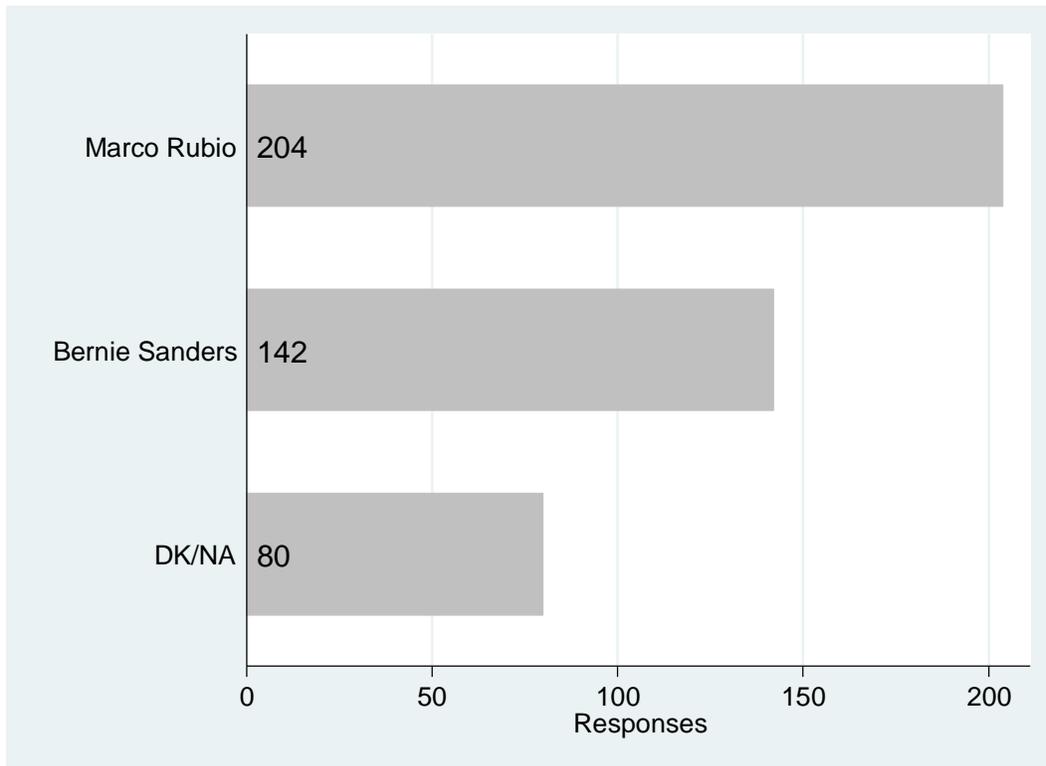
Education was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 22. Presidential Matchup – Sanders vs. Rubio



Question text - If Bernie Sanders were the Democratic Party's candidate and Marco Rubio were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

47.9% of respondents supported Rubio, while 33.3% supported Sanders and 18.8% did not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Rubio.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Rubio.

More well-educated respondents were somewhat more likely (significant at .1 level) to support Rubio.

Voter registration status was not significant.

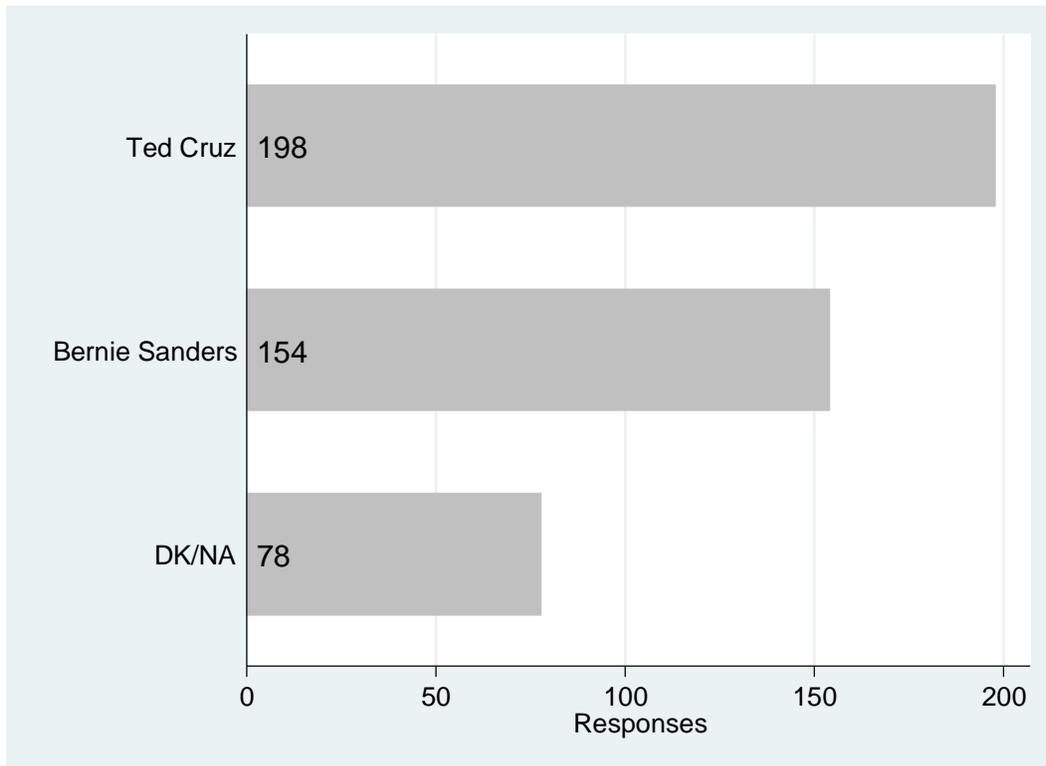
Gender was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

### 23. Presidential Matchup – Sanders vs. Cruz



Question text - If Bernie Sanders were the Democratic Party's candidate and Ted Cruz were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for?

46% of respondents supported Cruz, while 35.8% supported Sanders and 18.1% did not have an opinion.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to support Cruz.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to support Cruz.

Wealthier respondents were significantly more likely to support Cruz.

Education was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

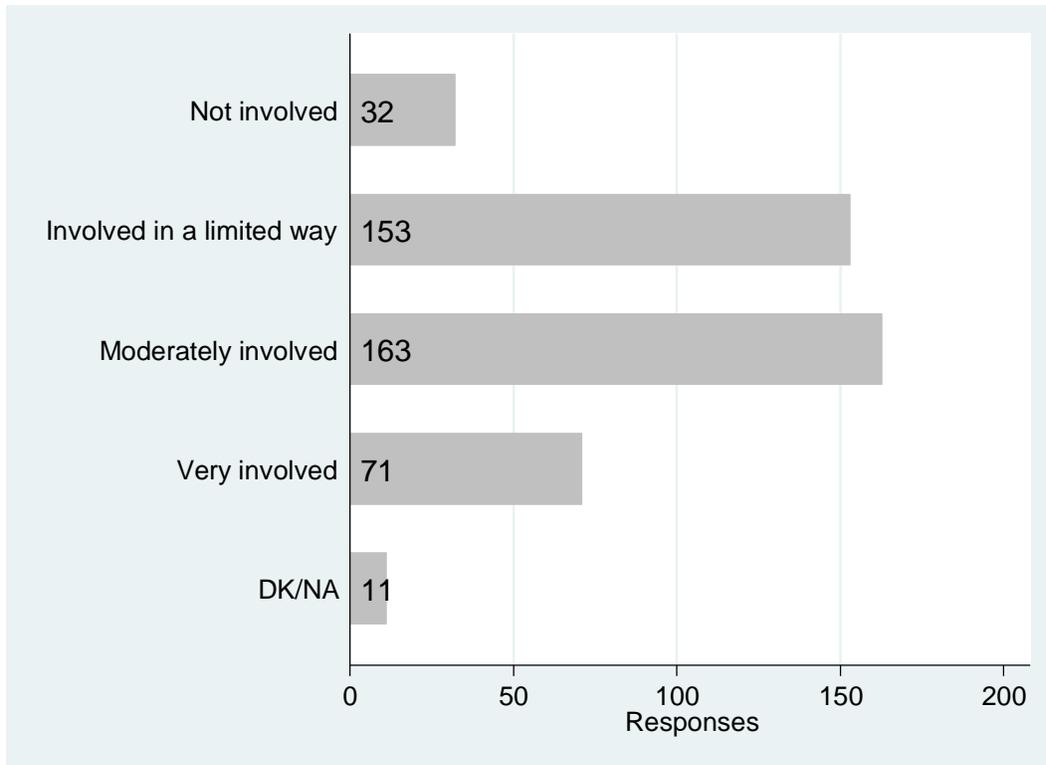
Gender was not significant.

Age was not significant.

Region was not significant.

### III. International Issues

#### 24. U.S. Involvement in Foreign Conflicts and Crises



Question text - In general, how involved do you think the U.S. should be in foreign conflicts and crises?

37.9% thought the U.S. should be moderately involved in foreign crises, while 35.6% said the U.S. should be involved in a limited way. 16.5% said the U.S. should be very involved and 7.4% responded that the U.S. should not be involved.

#### Statistically Significant Relationships

Older respondents were significantly more likely to support intervention.

Respondents from eastern and central Montana were significantly more likely to oppose intervention.

Partisanship was not significant.

Ideology was not significant.

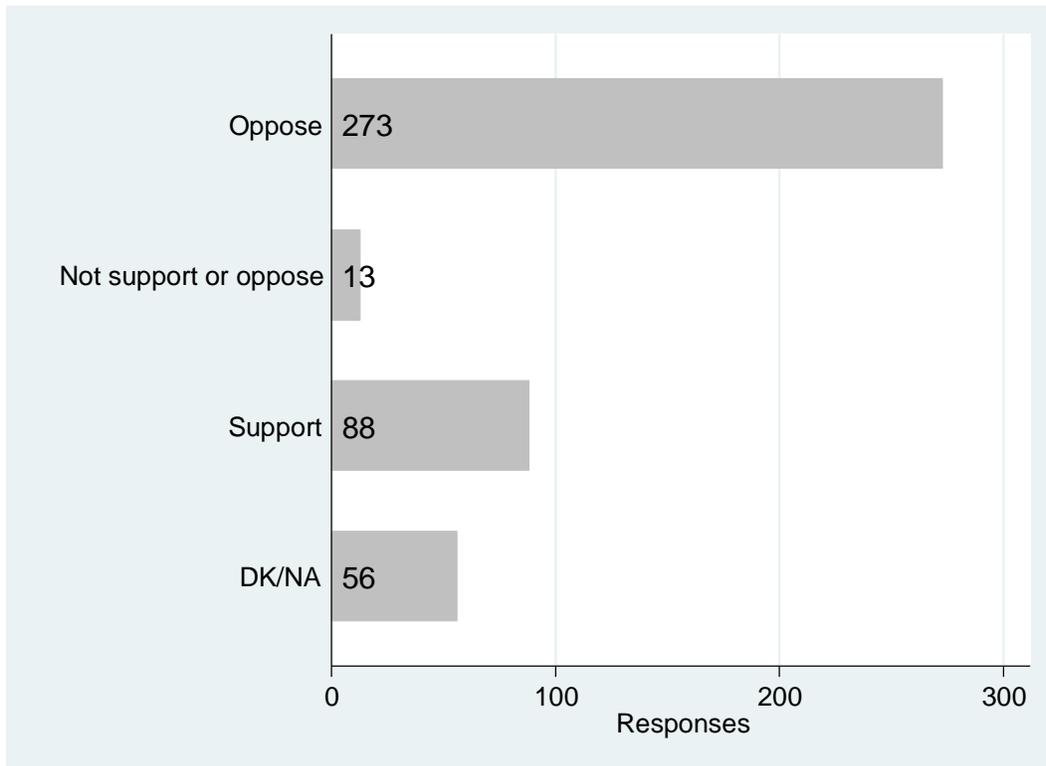
Education was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

## 25. Obama Administration Executive Agreement with Iran



Question text - Do you support or oppose the Obama Administration's executive agreement with Iran on nuclear technology?

63.5% oppose the Obama Administration agreement with Iran, while 20.5% support it and 16% do not have an opinion.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Older respondents were significantly more likely to oppose the agreement.

Republicans were significantly more likely to oppose the agreement.

Conservatives were significantly more likely to oppose the agreement.

Education was not significant.

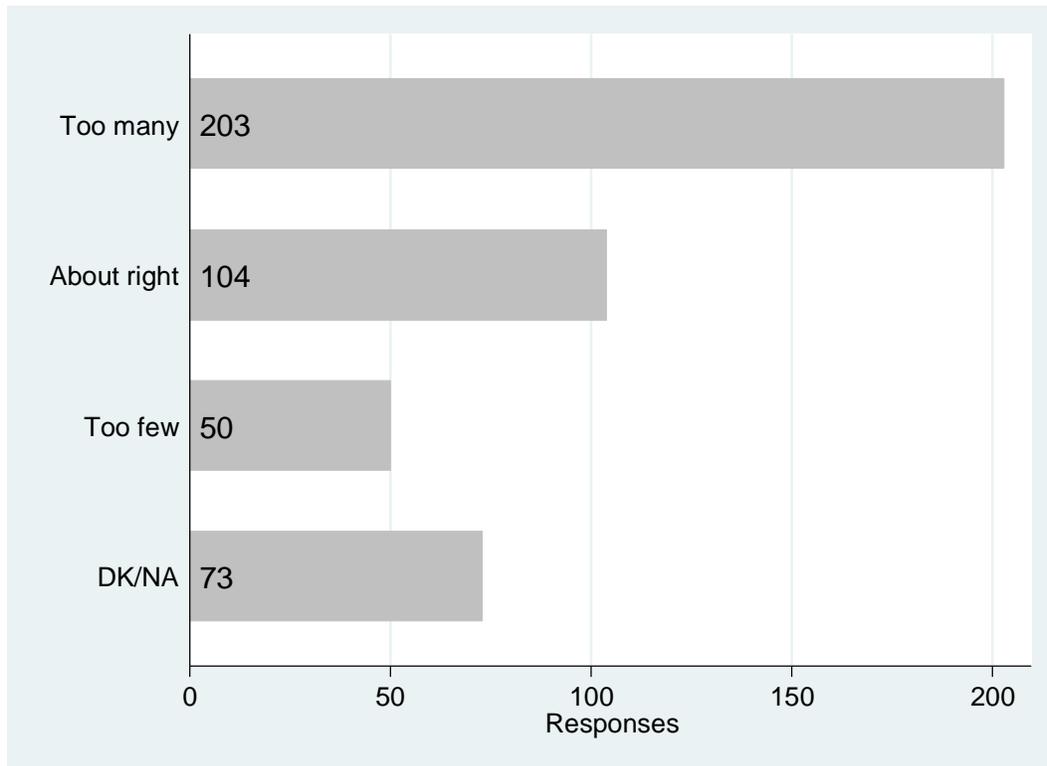
Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.

## 26. U.S. Political Refugee Intake



Question text - In general, do you think the U.S. admits too few, about the right amount, or too many political refugees?

47.2% of respondents thought the U.S. is taking in too many political refugees, while 24.2% thought the refugee intake was the right amount, and 11.6% thought it was too small.

### Statistically Significant Relationships

Republicans were significantly more likely than Independents/Democrats to say the U.S. is taking in too many refugees.

Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to say the U.S. is taking in too many refugees.

Age was not significant.

Voter registration status was not significant.

Gender was not significant.

Education was not significant.

Household income was not significant.

Region was not significant.