



From: Tom Jensen, Director of Public Policy Polling

To: Interested Parties

Subject: Swing State Voters Don't Trust Trump on Supreme Court, Overwhelmingly Favor Hearings For Garland

Date: 6-28-16

New Public Policy Polling surveys in 6 key battleground states where Republican Senators are up for reelection this year find that voters don't trust Donald Trump and would rather have Barack Obama picking a new Supreme Court justice than him. As a result they overwhelmingly support hearings on Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court, and are inclined to punish the vulnerable Republican Senators who are holding up his selection.

Key findings from the surveys conducted in Arizona, Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin include:

-Voters in all six states, by margins ranging from 5 to 23 points, say they don't trust Donald Trump to nominate a Supreme Court justice. Voters in WI (34% trust Trump, 57% don't) and in the home of Judiciary Committee Chair Charles Grassley of IA (35% trust Trump, 52% don't) are particularly skeptical of Trump's ability to name a Justice.

Beyond simply not trusting Trump, voters in all six states clearly say that they *do* trust President Obama with the responsibility of making a Supreme Court selection, especially in contrast to Trump. In the key Presidential battlegrounds of Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin Obama has at least a 9 point advantage over Trump on that question in every state.

State	Trust Trump to Pick Justice (Yes/No)	Trust Obama or Trump More To Pick Justice
AZ	44/49	Obama, 46/45
IA	35/52	Obama, 49/39
NH	40/55	Obama, 53/39
OH	39/50	Obama, 50/41
PA	40/53	Obama, 51/42
WI	34/57	Obama, 54/37

-Because voters trust President Obama to make a Supreme Court choice and don't trust Trump to, there's overwhelming support for the Senate to move forward with confirmation hearings for Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court. More than 60% of voters in each of these states supports hearings for Garland, by margins ranging from 38 to 46 points. That includes overwhelming support from critical independent voters, and even plurality support from Republicans in 4 of the 6 states:



State	Overall Support for Hearings	With Independents	With Republicans
AZ	61/23 (+38)	59/22 (+37)	45/34
IA	64/20 (+44)	65/13 (+52)	40/38
NH	68/22 (+46)	71/16 (+55)	42/46
OH	60/22 (+38)	67/18 (+49)	41/34
PA	64/19 (+45)	59/20 (+39)	49/31
WI	63/19 (+44)	65/16 (+49)	36/39

-The reason the issue of the Supreme Court nomination is so important in this set of states is that these Republican incumbents are all highly vulnerable. Their approval numbers are mediocre, their races are close, and voters say that they're less likely to vote for them because of their opposition to hearings for Merrick Garland. Right now 4 of these 6 Senate races currently have the candidates within 1 or 2 points of each other. In all 6 of them, voters say by at least a 15 point margin that they're less likely to vote for their Republican incumbent because of their opposition to hearings for Garland. And these are Senators who don't have much goodwill to fall back on. 5 of the 6 have negative approval ratings and the one exception, Chuck Grassley, still has his worst approval numbers in years with them coming in only narrowly on positive ground at 43/40. Voter unhappiness about obstructionism on the Supreme Court issue could be what flips all these toss up races into the Democratic column and gives them control of the Senate next year:

State	Senator Approval	Senate Horse Race	More/Less Likely To Vote for Senator Opposed to Hearings
AZ	McCain, 30/54	McCain 42, Kirkpatrick 40	24/41 (-17)
IA	Grassley, 43/40	Grassley 46, Judge 39	22/40 (-18)
NH	Ayotte, 40/44	Hassan 44, Ayotte 42	20/44 (-24)
OH	Portman, 30/37	Portman 40, Strickland 39	24/40 (-16)
PA	Toomey, 30/39	Toomey 40, McGinty 39	23/40 (-17)
WI	Johnson, 33/44	Feingold 50, Johnson 37	18/41 (-23)

One other thing serving as a drag on these vulnerable Senate Republicans is the unpopularity of their leader, Mitch McConnell. McConnell's approval rating is under 15% in all six states, and being tied to him has the potential to damage the political standing of the members of his caucus. His net approval ranges from -26 at best to -45 at worst in this set of states:

State	McConnell Approval
Arizona	10/55 (-45)
Iowa	11/43 (-32)
New Hampshire	14/47 (-33)
Ohio	14/40 (-26)
Pennsylvania	14/43 (-29)
Wisconsin	13/44 (-31)

A final note on these states is that they show the Presidential battleground is shaping up pretty well for Hillary Clinton in the fall. She leads in 5 of the 6 states and in the one exception, Arizona, her 4 point deficit still represents the closest a Democrat has made the race there in several decades:

State	Presidential Race
Arizona	Trump 44, Clinton 40 (Trump +4)
Iowa	Clinton 41, Trump 39 (Clinton +2)
New Hampshire	Clinton 43, Trump 39 (Clinton +4)
Ohio	Clinton 44, Trump 40 (Clinton +4)
Pennsylvania	Clinton 46, Trump 42 (Clinton +4)
Wisconsin	Clinton 47, Trump 39 (Clinton +8)

The bottom line is this: voters want the Senate to move forward on Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court because they trust Barack Obama's judgment and they don't trust Donald Trump to make a decision this important. They overwhelmingly want to see hearings on Garland's nomination, and they're inclined to punish Senators who hold up the process. And John McCain, Chuck Grassley, Kelly Ayotte, Rob Portman, Pat Toomey, and Ron Johnson are in a lot of trouble already. Their handling of the Supreme Court issue just compounds their already perilous paths to reelection.

Public Policy Polling interviewed 691 registered voters in Arizona, 897 in Iowa, 578 in New Hampshire, 708 in Ohio, 980 in Pennsylvania, and 843 in Wisconsin on June 22nd and 23rd. The margins of error for the surveys are +/-3.7%, +/-3.3%, +/-4.1%, +/-3.7%, +/-3.1%, and +/-3.4% respectively. This research was conducted on behalf of Americans United for Change, the [Constitutional Responsibility Project](#), and the Constitutional Responsibility Education Project.

FULL RESULTS:

- [Arizona](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Pennsylvania](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)