



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 11, 2016

Hillary Loses West Virginia to Sanders, Ties With Trump in Key States

Hillary Clinton's [loss to Bernie Sanders](#) in West Virginia's primary on Tuesday did little to change her trajectory toward her party's nomination in July in Philadelphia, but the fact she is still having to expend resources and energy in a battle she should have won long ago is taking its toll.

Exit polls following the primary illustrate the point: More than half of Democrat voters polled think it is likely that Donald Trump will beat Hillary Clinton in November, while one third of them plan to vote for Trump in the national election instead of Clinton.



Sanders is doing Trump's work for him, highlighting her lack of trustworthiness and honesty, her history of shady dealing, and her unsteady leadership while secretary of state under President Obama. Perhaps most importantly, her likelihood of being "Obama's third term" is a big negative among voters seeking a new face and a fresh start.

Not helping, at least in West Virginia, was her comment in March that her proposed environmental policies, if she were elected, would "put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business." She made it worse when she tried to backtrack on that statement, saying it was taken out of context and that she would implement federal policies to boost employment in the state.

Clinton captured 11 of West Virginia's 29 Democrat delegates, putting her closer to the win in Philadelphia. She now has 2,239 delegates (including superdelegates) to Sanders' 1,469, with 2,382 needed to win. But polls in next week's primaries in Oregon and Kentucky are increasingly favoring Sanders, causing heartburn among her campaign staffers. Doug Schoen, a pollster who advised Bill Clinton, is complaining that Hillary's continuing losses to Sanders are "absolutely injurious to her political fortunes. He hurts her ability to solidify the party and to raise money and to campaign effectively against Donald Trump."

Also not helping Clinton's cause are the three polls just released by Quinnipiac in states critical to winning the national election: Florida (Clinton leads Trump by one point), Ohio (Clinton trails Trump by four points), and Pennsylvania (Clinton leads Trump by one point). Thanks to damage inflicted by Sanders and a wide disadvantage among men, Clinton is losing momentum rather than gaining it. According to the Quinnipiac poll, Trump receives higher marks than Clinton for how he might handle the economy and respond to terrorism, while her baggage from years past results in two-thirds of those polled not believing that she is honest or trustworthy.

It's five months until November, and the road is long and winding to the White House. But Clinton's performance in West Virginia, her diminishing chances of victory in next week's primaries, and Sanders' persistence and determination to stay in the race to the bitter end, must be discouraging to Clinton supporters, who thought Philadelphia would be the scene of her coronation. Instead, they are



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holding their collective breaths, hoping that she won't be so badly mauled by Sanders that she'll still be able to take on The Donald successfully in the fall.

Photo: AP Images

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