



Trump, Clinton Extend Leads; Cruz Takes Utah; Kasich Hopes to Be Spoiler

Tuesday's primaries and caucuses [extended Donald Trump's lead over Ted Cruz](#) for the GOP nomination, leaving John Kasich far behind. Hillary Clinton rolled over Bernie Sanders despite his taking the Utah and Idaho caucuses.

Capturing 58 delegates to Cruz's 40 puts Trump ever closer to securing the nomination for president by the Republican Party, providing one considers only the math. Trump's 739 delegates already in hand, along with another 323 he is expected to obtain from New York (estimated 80), Pennsylvania (estimated 71), and California (estimated 172) would put him at 1,062, 175 delegates short of the 1,237 needed to win on the first ballot in Cleveland in July.



To secure a win, Trump needs only to secure one-third of the remaining 538 delegates up for grabs.

But the polls that really matter, pitting the three GOP candidates against Clinton, the Democrat Party's foregone conclusion, show a different story come November. In none of the polls watched by Real Clear Politics does Trump beat Clinton in November, and Cruz ties Clinton in only one. In every other poll, Kasich, the dark horse who is mathematically eliminated from any chance in Cleveland, beats Clinton by anywhere between four and eight percentage points. That may explain why he continues to campaign, despite having won only one state (his own, Ohio), and currently having just 143 delegates, trailing even Marco Rubio (166) who dropped from the race last week.

But all those polls were taken before the Islamist attacks in Brussels the day of the primaries. In response Trump relished reminding the media that he called Brussels a "hellhole" months earlier because of the large number of unassimilated Muslims residing there, leaving Cruz to emphasize the need for local police to pay more attention to radical Islamist populations growing in cities across the country.

Clinton, on the other hand, offered a mealy-mouthed response, trying to walk that ever-shifting middle ground between reality and political correctness: "Today's attacks will only strengthen our resolve to stand together as allies and defeat terrorism and radical jihadism around the world." Missing was the word Islam in her otherwise forgettable utterance.

The other speed bumps that Trump faces in his quest to win in Cleveland aren't on the campaign trail but behind closed doors, where increasingly nervous GOP regulars are plotting his destruction. Their "100-day" blitzkrieg of attack ads begins now, focused on the next primary in Wisconsin on April 5 and then, depending upon that state's results, extending into the rest of the states still on the calendar.



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 23, 2016

The other speed bump is the GOP's rules committee, which could be tempted to "pull a Paul," as it did in 2012, keeping Ron Paul's delegates from even having a voice during its convention. This time is different, of course, but isn't it always? The one thing that remains is the establishment's determination to keep outsiders such as Trump (and to a lesser extent, Cruz) from crashing their party.

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