

The New York Times Presents 2016 Race as GOP Candidates vs. Hillary Clinton

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Even though [early polling](#) of presidential races is basically meaningless, I was interested to see that the New York Times had a new poll on “Americans’ Views on the 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Issues” ([5/5/15](#)), because there haven’t been any major national polls released on the Democratic race since Sen. Bernie Sanders officially entered the race; I was curious whether his announcement ([undercovered](#) as it was) had affected public opinion.

When I looked at the Times’ [interactive feature](#) on the poll, however, I was disappointed to see that it had a section on “Republican Candidates” and a section on “Hillary Rodham Clinton”—as though Clinton were running unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

Americans' Views on Issues
Voters on the 2016 Presidential Election
Republican Candidates
Hillary Rodham Clinton

In the New York Times’ presentation, only Republicans have choices.

As an unrelated Times [graphic](#) acknowledges, there are two major declared candidates in the race—and three more (Martin O’Malley, Jim Webb and Lincoln Chafee) that the Times categorizes as “probably” running on the Democratic line. (The Times lists Vice President Joe Biden as “probably not” running for president, and Sen. Elizabeth Warren as “not running.”)

So why treat the presidential contest as though there’s a race for the Republican spot, while Democrats only get to express their feelings about their one predetermined choice?

Actually, if you’re a real polling nerd, and you click on the link to the “[Full New York Times/CBS News Poll,](#)” you find that the Times (and CBS) actually did ask voters about other

Democratic candidates—but the Times chose not to share those results with readers in any kind of reader-friendly form.

In case you're curious, the percentage of Democrats who say they "would consider voting for" Sanders has risen from 14 percent in February to 23 percent now—but 61 percent say they haven't heard enough to be able to say...which is, of course, in part a function of journalists treating next year's Democratic contest as a foregone conclusion.

If the New York Times were to say that they're treating the 2016 Democratic race as a foregone conclusion because it *is* a foregone conclusion, I would point them to Gallup's [October 2007 roundup](#) of what that election cycle's year-before-the-election polling showed:



See, there is more than one candidate running for the Democratic nomination. (New York Times graphic)

Gallup's 2007 national presidential polling strongly points to Clinton winning the 2008 Democratic nomination. Barring something unusual or otherwise unexpected, she is well positioned for the 2008 Democratic primaries.

When 2008 is history and one looks retrospectively at where the race stands today, the key factors forecasting Clinton's success will likely be the following: ...Clinton has led the Democratic pack in every Gallup Poll conducted between November 2006 and October 2007.... Clinton holds a commanding lead among nearly every major subgroup of potential Democratic primary voters.... Clinton enjoys high favorable ratings in the Democratic Party that extend well beyond the 40 percent to 50 percent of Democrats typically naming her as their top choice for the nomination.... Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents choose Clinton as the candidate best able to handle a wide variety of national issues.

"Clinton's nomination seems almost inevitable," Gallup concluded—though it added that "under extreme circumstances, a strong Democratic candidate can blow a big lead." Apparently 2008's circumstances turned out to be extreme.

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