



To: Interested Parties

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Dt: Wednesday, May 25th, 2016 (Updated from original release, 1/28/16)

Re: 2016 Presidential Primary Debate Audience – Final Tally

This memo looks at the audiences the Presidential Primary debates received in 2016 and 2008. The Republicans have completed their full 12 debate schedule for the 2015-2016 cycle. We now have the final numbers for the debate audiences for the Democrats and the Republicans.

The top line analysis can be found below. More complete tables of the ratings of each debate in both 2008 and 2016 can be found on pages 4 and 5.

Summary

2016, Republicans – 12 debates, 186.3m total viewers, 15.53m viewers per debate.

2016, Democrats – 9 debates, 72.03m total viewers, 8m viewers per debate.

2008, Republicans – 14 debates, 42.87m total viewers, 3.07m viewers per debate.

2008, Democrats – 16 debates, 75.22m total viewers, 4.7m viewers per debate (Dems had another 10 debates which were not rated, so total viewership was higher than 75.22m).

Key Findings

GOP Dramatically Outperforms Dems in 2016 and Rs in 2008 – In 2008, the 16 Democratic debates outperformed the 14 GOP debates by more than 53% per debate (4.7m per debate vs 3.07m). In 2016, the 12 GOP debates outperformed the 9 Democratic debates by a much larger margin, over 94% per debate (15.53m vs 8m). It is a dramatic reversal.

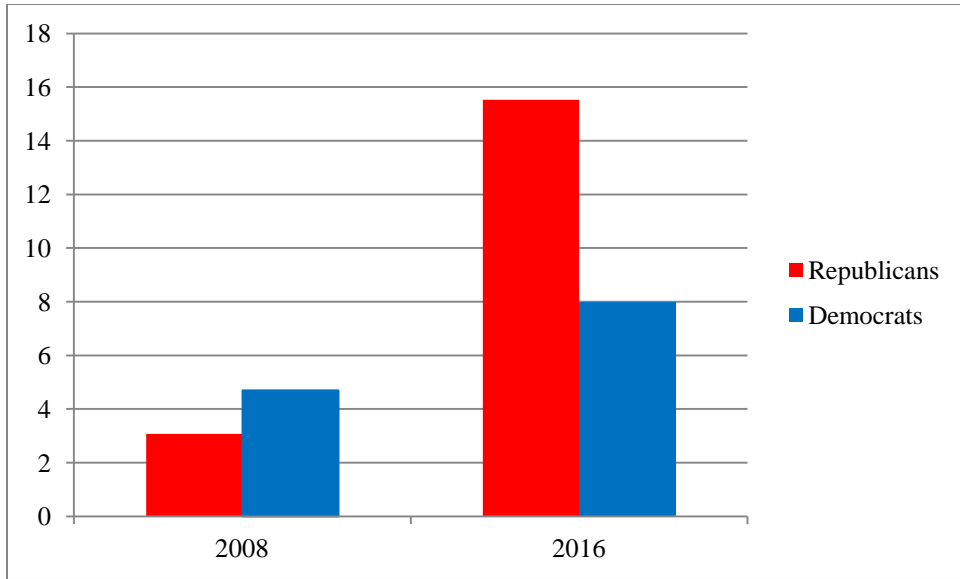
The 12 GOP debates have produced more than 5 times the audience per debate than their 14 debates produced in 2008, and almost 5 times the total audience. The 9 DNC debates produced almost twice the audience per debate that the 2008 debates produced, but, in aggregate, produced a total audience 3 million less than the 2008 debates produced.

Democratic Debate Schedule Struggles to Match 2008 – Despite very large audiences for the debates this cycle, the smaller number of Democratic debates (9 compared to 12 GOP in 2016 and 26 in 2008) means that the total audience of the Democratic debates in 2016 was 3 million less than the 2008 Democratic total, and 114m less than the 2016 GOP total.

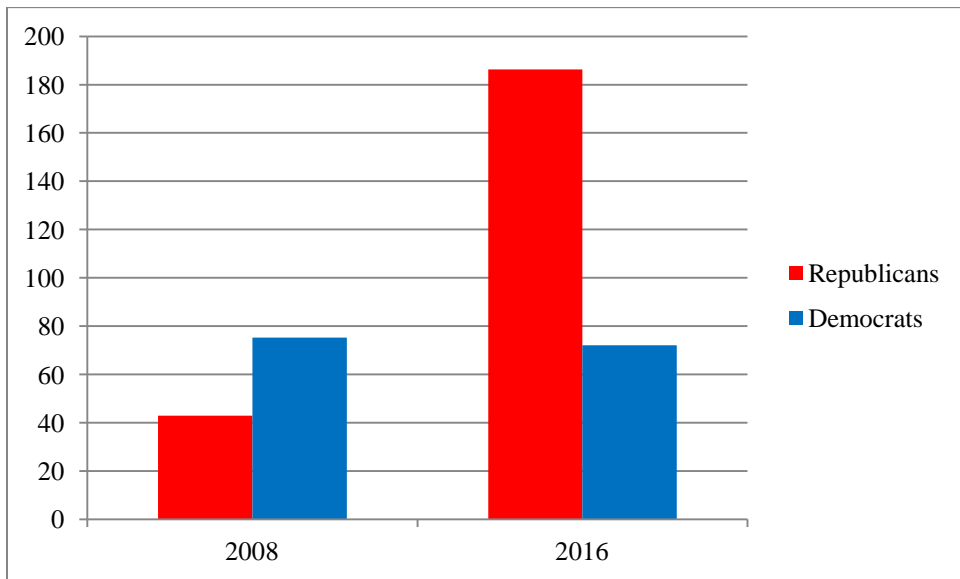
DNC's Original Debate Schedule Audience – The DNC's original six debate schedule produced an audience of 48.4m. After requests from many, including the Clinton and Sanders campaigns, the DNC added four debates on February 3rd. The DNC also smartly brought in CNN to augment its PBS and Univision debates. These improvements in the schedule brought an additional 24m viewers, 8m from the CNN re-broadcasts and 16m from the three additional debates conducted so far. Augmenting the original schedule increased the overall Democratic debate audience by 50%.

The Townhalls – While the audiences for the CNN town halls were not significant, the formats were. Each of these programs gave viewers a window into the candidate the more rigid debate formats have not. They have been an important innovation this cycle by the DNC, and in coming years should be given more prominence. Our guess is if adequately promoted with more time, viewership for these town halls could be far more significant.

Audience per Debate 2008/2016



Total Audience for All Debates 2008/2016



2016 Republican Primary Debate Audience Sizes

| Date | Network | Ratings |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 8/6/2015 | Fox News | 24m |
| 9/16/2015 | CNN | 23m |
| 10/28/2015 | CNBC | 14m |
| 11/10/2015 | FBN | 13.5m |
| 12/15/2015 | CNN | 18.2m |
| 1/14/2016 | FBN | 11.1m |
| 1/28/2016 | Fox News | 12.5m |
| 2/6/2016 | ABC | 13.2m |
| 2/13/2016 | CBS | 13.5m |
| 2/25/2016 | CNN/Telemundo | 14.5m |
| 3/3/2016 | Fox News | 16.9m |
| 3/10/2016 | CNN | 11.9m |
| 12 debates | Total | 186.3m |
| | Average | 15.53m |

2016 Democratic Primary Debate Audience Sizes¹

| Date | Network | Ratings | CNN Portion |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 10/13/2015 | CNN | 15.8m | N/A |
| 11/14/2015 | CBS | 8.5m | N/A |
| 12/19/2015 | ABC | 8m | N/A |
| 1/17/2016 | NBC | 10.2m | N/A |
| 2/4/2016 | MSNBC | 4.5m | N/A |
| 2/11/2016 | PBS/CNN | 8.03m | 4.1m |
| 3/6/2016 | CNN | 5.5m | N/A |
| 3/9/2016 | Univision/CNN | 5.9m | 3.9m |
| 4/14/2016 | CNN | 5.6m | N/A |
| | | | |
| 6 original | Total | 48.4m | |
| | Average | 8.07m | |
| 9 debates | Total | 72.03m | |
| | Average | 8m | |

¹ **Note:** We bolded the 6 original debates and tallied their total audience and average audience. We also recorded CNN's portions of the ratings in an additional, separate column to demonstrate the importance of the broadcast partnership to the PBS and Univision debates. In both cases, CNN contributed more to the viewership total than either PBS or Univision.

2008 Republican Primary Debate Audience Sizes

| Date | Network | Ratings |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1/10/2007 | Fox News | 3.7m |
| 1/24/2007 | MSNBC | 2.64m |
| 1/30/2007 | CNN | 4.02m |
| 5/15/2007 | Fox News | 2.5m |
| 6/5/2007 | CNN | 2.06m |
| 8/5/2007 | ABC | 2.2m |
| 9/5/2007 | Fox News | 3.2m |
| 10/9/2007 | CNBC/MSNC | 2.14m |
| 10/21/2007 | Fox News | 2.4m |
| 11/28/2007 | CNN | 4.5m |
| 12/9/2007 | Univision | 1.82m |
| 1/5/2008 | ABC | 7.35m |
| 1/6/2008 | Fox News | 2.58m |
| 5/3/2008 | MSNBC | 1.76m |
| 14 debates | Total | 42.87m |
| | Average | 3.07m |

2008 Democratic Primary Debate Audience Sizes

| Date | Network | Ratings |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4/23/2007 | MSNBC | 2.3m |
| 6/3/2007 | CNN | 2.8m |
| 7/23/2007 | CNN | 2.6m |
| 8/7/2007 | AFL-CIO | 0.96m |
| 8/19/2007 | ABC | 2.8m |
| 9/9/2007 | Univision | 4.6m |
| 9/26/2007 | MSNBC | 1.47m |
| 10/30/2007 | MSNBC | 2.5m |
| 11/15/2007 | CNN | 4.04m |
| 1/5/2008 | ABC | 9.36m |
| 1/15/2008 | NBC | 2.5m |
| 1/21/2008 | CNN | 4.91m |
| 1/31/2008 | CNN | 8.3m |
| 2/21/2008 | CNN | 7.6m |
| 2/26/2008 | MSNBC | 7.78m |
| 4/16/2008 | ABC | 10.7m |
| 16 debates | Total | 75.22m |
| | Average | 4.70m |