

Press release: embargoed until 00.01am(BST) Wednesday October 19 2016

A few thousand US voters in Canada, the UK, France and Israel could swing key US states, Oxford University report finds.

As the US presidential election campaign reaches its final few weeks, the potential impact of overseas voters on key battleground states has been highlighted by a new report from the Rothermere American Institute (RAI) at the University of Oxford.

America's Overseas Voters: 2016's Forgotten Constituency? considers the states in which overseas voters stand to have the biggest impact. It identifies that winning a majority of overseas voters – often amounting to just a few thousand votes – could be enough for the candidates to snatch certain swing states.

The Trump campaign has suffered significant setbacks over the last two weeks, and the resulting decline in domestic support could mean that overseas voters provide the extra push needed for Hillary Clinton to secure Iowa, Arizona and Georgia.

But – as the recent Brexit vote and UK general election have shown – pollsters' predictions can be significantly wrong. If Trump's real support-base in Ohio, Nevada and North Carolina is close to where it appeared to be earlier in October, then Trump could take these states if he is able to command a sufficiently large majority of overseas voters.

Dr Halbert Jones, Director of the Rothermere American Institute at the University of Oxford, and co author of the report said: "Our analysis shows that, based on recent polls, Trump might need a majority of just 5,600 among Ohio's overseas voters to win the state, and a majority of just 7,100 among overseas voters to win Nevada.

"But if the national vote swings further behind Clinton, the overseas vote could mean she takes the presidency with a rout rather than a slim victory – helping the Democrats to snatch prizes like Georgia, Iowa and Arizona."

The report examines the characteristics of the overseas voting population, drawing on data on absentee ballot requests from the state of North Carolina. This analysis concludes that while Americans casting their votes from abroad are a diverse group, in at least one key swing state they are, as a group, disproportionately Democratic, urban, and white. The ways in which the profile of the overseas population differs from that of the electorate at large has potentially significant implications in a very close election.

It also analyses a recent US Government study suggesting that more than 2.6 million potential US voters live overseas, though this may well be a significant underestimation. US Government data highlights key populations of overseas US voters in Canada (661,000), Britain (306,000), France (159,000) and Israel (133,000), with other populations of more than 100,000 in Japan and Australia.

The population of potential US voters in Mexico is contested – with a US Government study suggesting just 65,000, while the 2010 Mexican census suggests a figure closer to 200,000. However sources agree that there is a huge number of US-born children living in Mexico - this means that the country is set to play an increasingly important role in US elections in the future.

Dr Patrick Andelic, Research Associate at the RAI, and co author of the report, said: “Canada, Britain, France and Israel all play a substantial role in US elections now. While current polling places Clinton in a commanding lead, the volatile nature of the race so far means that anything can still happen - and if Britain’s recent general election and Brexit result have shown us anything, it’s that one shouldn’t call a winner until the votes have all been counted. Overseas voters proved crucial to George W Bush’s victory in 2000, and they may make a critical difference in 2016. Political parties ignore this hidden constituency at their peril.”

Ends

For further information or an embargoed PDF of the full report please contact:

Rob McNeil, Media Consultant, the Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford.

Tel: 07500 970081

Email: robert.mcneil@rai.ox.ac.uk

The report is embargoed until 00.01am(BST) Wednesday October 19 2016. It is available for early viewing at the address below:

www.rai.ox.ac.uk/voters

Notes for Editors

About the RAI

The Rothermere American Institute is a department of the University of Oxford. It is the university’s centre for teaching and research in American politics, history, and literature. The RAI is non-partisan. For more, visit www.rai.ox.ac.uk