3-10-2016

3 Things to Know About the Ohio Primary

University of Dayton
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The race for the presidential nomination remains competitive on both sides as Ohioans get their chance to vote Tuesday, March 15. Here are key things to know about the Ohio Primary from political experts at the University of Dayton.

1. It’s Open

“Ohio has a modified open primary, meaning little stands in the way of Democrats and Independents voting in the Republican primary,” said Dan Birdsong, political science lecturer.

Turnout is expected to be high, and voters’ ability to choose could lead to several scenarios — including one that would play to Donald Trump’s advantage.

“Democratic voters might choose to cast a ballot for Trump, assuming that he is more easily defeated by Hillary Clinton,” said Grant Neeley, chair of the political science department.

2. It’s Winner-Take-All for Republicans

“March 15 is the earliest a state can award all of their delegates on a ‘winner-take-all’ basis,” said former Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, a distinguished research associate at the University.

On the Republican side, 66 delegates are up for grabs.
“Whichever candidate receives the most votes — even without winning a majority of votes — will walk away with all of the Ohio delegates. That makes the Ohio Republican primary very influential,” Taft said.

3. It Could Be the Fork in the Road

“The Ohio primary may be where Donald Trump assures himself the Republican nomination, or where the GOP establishment starts to see a path to denying Trump the nomination,” Birdsong said.

A lot of that rides on Ohio Gov. John Kasich — who has said he will drop out if he does not take the state.

“Ohioans are largely supportive of Gov. Kasich, which might make it difficult for Donald Trump to carry the day,” said Joe Valenzano, chair of the department of communication. “If Trump does not win Ohio, there's a clearer path to a brokered convention in Cleveland.”

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