

Metro; PolitiFact: The roundup

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Highlight: Fact-checkers look at whether even the pollsters believe their polls

Body

In the crowded Republican race for president, polls have been the outsiders' best friend. But do even those doing the polling put much stock in the data? That was just one of the claims fact-checked by **PolitiFact** and **PolitiFact** Georgia.

We also truth-tested statements about the Iran nuclear deal and Donald Trump's view on eminent domain.

Abbreviated versions of our fact checks are below.

Kelo ruling claim on point Says Donald Trump "supports eminent domain"and the Supreme Court's Kelo decision. ? Club Growth on Sept. 15 in a television ad

Slinging any pebbles they can find at the larger-than-life Donald Trump, some Republicans are taking the real estate mogul to task over his support for a legal concept called eminent domain.

Eminent domain is the government's power to seize private property in order to make way for public development projects, such as highways or schools. Some conservatives oppose eminent domain because they see it as a breach of property rights. A recent ad by Club for Growth, a conservative anti-tax group, attacks Trump for his support of the practice and a related 2005 Supreme Court decision.

"The Supreme Court's Kelo decision gave the government massive new power to take private property and give it to corporations," the ad's narrator says. "Conservatives have fought this disaster. What's Donald Trump say about the decision?"

The narration cuts to audio of Trump giving an interview to Fox News. "I happen to agree with it 100 percent, " Trump said.

The narration picks back up: "Trump supports eminent domain abuse because he can make millions while we lose our property rights."

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Is Trump an eminent domain supporter, and does he agree with the Kelo vs. New London, Conn. decision that many conservatives deride?

The 2005 Kelo case concerned the government of New London, Conn., which wanted to seize several privately owned homes in order to open up the area for a major commercial development project intended to revitalize the struggling city. Several residents who didn't want to lose their homes, including a nurse named Susette Kelo, sued and argued that this proposal went beyond the government's eminent domain powers.

As recently as this week Trump has expressed support for eminent domain, and he has in the past said he agrees with the Kelo decision, which expanded the power, "100 percent."

We rated Club for Growth's claim True.

Statement on pollsters exaggerated Pollsters say "don't actually believe our own data"and Gallup stopped primary polling "because they don't trust their methodology."

? Steve Deace on Oct. 8 in an interview on MSNBC's "News Nation"

In the Republican race for presidential nomination, polls have been the outsiders' best friend. Billionaire Donald Trump and physician Ben Carson gained early momentum and critical debate exposure thanks almost entirely to their high rankings in public opinion surveys.

What those poll numbers say about Trump and Carson's chances in the Iowa caucuses and beyond is far murkier. Iowa conservative radio host Steve Deace said the polls are meaningless.

"The record of polling in Iowa is a joke," Deace said on MSNBC's News Nation on Oct. 8, 2015. "You've got the pollsters now coming out in numerous articles in recent days saying [we] 'don't actually believe our own data..'"

We decided to drill down on Deace's points that pollsters are warning people not to trust their data.

The articles he cited actually were more specific than he suggested. Pollsters did say that surveys can't be used with surgical precision to separate the wheat from the chaff in the crowded Republican field. But that's in response to broadcasters who have counted on polls to decide who should appear in debates.

As for Gallup, a news article implied that concerns over methodology drove its decision to stop tracking the primaries, but the editor-in-chief at Gallup didn't say that and in fact, he expressed confidence in the firm's techniques.

Overall, Deace exaggerated what pollsters have said.

We rated this claim Half True.

Iran deal critic misses mark

President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry agreed "to lift Iran's economic and arms sanctions without any proof of change in conduct." ? Lynn Westmoreland on Sept. 11 in a press release

Georgia Congressman Lynn Westmoreland stood with the majority in the U.S. House last month in refusing to approve the nuclear pact that President Barack Obama reached with Iran in Vienna on July 14.

In a Sept. 11 news release, Westmoreland, a Republican, said the U.S. didn't need to negotiate with "dangerous" and untrustworthy Iran and said the deal "only weakens the national security of our country" and its allies, particularly Israel.

"President Obama and Secretary (John) Kerry also showed a lack of leadership and strength in agreeing to lift Iran's economic and arms sanctions without any proof of change in conduct," Westmoreland said.

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A reader from Westmoreland's congressional district asked **PolitiFact** Georgia to truth-test the statement that Obama and Kerry had agreed "to lift Iran's economic and arms sanctions without any proof of change in conduct."

All but one of the experts we talked to said there was ample evidence that Iran has to show evidence of change before the sanctions are lifted, including Greg Terryn, a research and policy associate with the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington.

The agreement with Iran, Terryn said, "specifically delays the lifting of any sanctions until the [United Nations monitoring group] has verified that Iran is living up to its commitments under the agreement.

The pact also lists 80-plus actions Iran must take to satisfy members of the international community, some of whom are highly skeptical.

We rated Westmoreland's statement False.

How does **PolitiFact** Georgia's Truth-O-Meter work?

Our goal is to help you find the truth in American politics. Reporters from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution fact-check statements by local, state and national political leaders, including lobbyists and interest groups. We then rate them on the AJC Truth-O-Meter.

To fact-check a claim, reporters first contact the speaker to verify the statement. Next, the research begins. Reporters consult a variety of sources, including industry and academic experts. This research can take hours or a few days or even longer, depending on the claim. Reporters then compile the research into story form and include a recommended Truth-O-Meter ruling.

The fact check then moves on to a panel of veteran editors who debate the statement and the reporter's recommended Truth-O-Meter ruling. The panel votes on a final ruling; majority prevails.

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