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# INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY®

COMMENTARY

## It's Official: Clinton's Popular Vote Win Came Entirely From California

**D**emocrats who are having trouble getting out of the first stage of grief — denial — aren't being helped by the fact that, now that all the votes are counted, Hillary Clinton's lead in the popular vote has topped 2.8 million, giving her a 48% share of the vote compared with Trump's 46%.

the clothes first.



To those unschooled in how the United States selects presidents, this seems totally unfair. But look more closely at the numbers and you see that Clinton's advantage all but disappears.

As **we noted in this space earlier**, while Clinton's overall margin looks large and impressive, it is due to Clinton's huge margin of victory in one state — California — where she got a whopping 4.3 million more votes than Trump.

California is the only state, in fact, where Clinton's margin of victory was bigger than President Obama's in 2012 — 61.5% vs. Obama's 60%.

But California is the exception that proves the true genius of the Electoral College — which was designed to prevent regional candidates from dominating national elections.

In recent years, California has been turning into what amounts to a one-party state. Between 2008 and 2016, the number of Californian's who registered as Democrats climbed by 1.1 million, while the number of registered Republicans dropped by almost 400,000.

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What's more, many Republicans in the state had *nobody to vote for* in November.

There were two Democrats — *and zero Republicans* — running to replace Sen. Barbara Boxer. There were no Republicans on the ballot for House seats in nine of California's congressional districts.

At the state level, six districts had no Republicans running for the state senate, and 16 districts had no Republicans running for state assembly seats.

Plus, since Republicans knew Clinton was going to win the state — and its entire 55 electoral votes — casting a ballot for Trump was virtually meaningless, since no

matter what her margin of victory, Clinton was getting all 55 votes.

Is it any wonder then, that Trump got 11% fewer California votes than John McCain did in 2008? (Clinton got 6% more votes than Obama did eight years ago, but the number of registered Democrats in the state climbed by 13% over those years.)

If you take California out of the popular vote equation, then Trump wins the rest of the country by *1.4 million votes*. And if California voted like every other Democratic state — where Clinton averaged 53.5% wins — Clinton and Trump end up in a virtual popular vote tie. (This was not the case in 2012. Obama beat Romney by 2 million votes that year, not counting California.)

Meanwhile, if you look at every other measure, Trump was the clear and decisive winner in this election.

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**Number of states won:**

Trump: 30

Clinton: 20

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*Trump: +10*

**Number of electoral votes won:**

Trump: 306

Clinton: 232

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*Trump: + 68*

**Ave. margin of victory in winning states:**

Trump: 56%

Clinton: 53.5%

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*Trump: + 2.5 points*

**Popular vote total:**

Trump: 62,958,211

Clinton: 65,818,318

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*Clinton: + 2.8 million*

### **Popular vote total outside California:**

Trump: 58,474,401

Clinton: 57,064,530

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*Trump: + 1.4 million*

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### COMMENTARY

## **Our Climate Solution? It May Be Written In the Stars**

**J**ust before the holidays, Senator John Barrasso, R-Wyo., **pointed** to innovation

as our best hope to curb carbon emissions. "Technology breakthroughs," he **said**, "have led to an American energy renaissance and a growing economy."



Senator Barrasso is absolutely right: Technology has improved the quality of American life and American energy consumption. Only by embracing tomorrow's solutions can we begin to solve today's most pressing problems.

While many innovators have turned their attention to carbon emissions, some are turning to the stars for answers. Literally.

Nuclear fusion — the same process that powers our sun — is being replicated in labs around the **world**. To say that our economy may soon be powered by man-made stars sounds like science fiction, but such is the beauty of innovation. After all, today's energy sources look much different than they did a century ago.

In 1908, coal accounted for **three-quarters** of total U.S. energy consumption. In the 1940's and 50's, cities like **Pittsburgh** and **Chicago** had to turn street lights on in the middle of the day because clouds of soot blotted out the sun. **Today**, coal accounts for just 14% of total energy consumption in the U.S. — an 82% reduction. These reductions were made possible in large part by innovative alternative energy

**sources** such as hydro, nuclear, natural gas, solar, and wind power.

## **Fusion Power: *Truly* Green Energy**

Fusion power could likely be the next source of energy added to that list.

Currently, all nuclear power is created through a process known as nuclear *fission*. While it sounds a lot like fusion, there is one major difference between the two. In a fission reaction, energy is created when a large atom, like uranium, becomes unstable and splits. Fusion, on the other hand, produces energy by combining atoms under intense pressure and heat to produce a much more powerful nuclear reaction.

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This **process** produces four *million* times more energy than coal and four times more energy than current nuclear fission processes of equivalent mass. And unlike nuclear fission, fusion does not produce any long-term, highly radioactive **waste**.

There are a number of scientists working to make fusion a reality. **ITER**, a multi-nation backed fusion reactor in France, plans to see results from its fusion reactor by **2025**. **Commonwealth Fusion Systems**, a group of engineers from MIT, is working on a scalable fusion reactor design that they expect to be able to prototype in the next **15 years**. CFS has received millions in private funding from various groups, including an energy investment **company** backed by investors including Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos.

There are a handful of other companies as well, all working to find ways to make fusion power a reality.

## **Advancing On Many Fronts**

Combine these efforts with the carbon-mitigating advances being made in **nuclear fission technology**, **carbon capture**, **natural gas**, and **battery** technology for renewable energy storage and the future of clean energy consumption certainly looks hopeful. As policymakers seek to decarbonize our economy, it is crucial that

they recognize the role technology and innovation can and should play in that process.

Beyond the technical difficulty of making fusion power a dependable energy source, however, our current regulatory structures may be just as important a factor in whether or not this technology is ever brought to market. After regulatory burdens were **blamed** for contributing to delays and cost overruns at two nuclear facilities in the southeast (one of which has been shuttered due to high costs), Congress took steps to streamline the permitting process for fission nuclear reactors.

The Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, which was passed in December of 2018, requires the Nuclear Regulatory Commission — the group tasked with regulating the nuclear industry — to **streamline a permitting process** that currently can take 5-10 **years to complete**. This law may not provide relief for current applicants, but it could set a useful precedent for future regulatory approaches to new technologies.

It is also one common-sense step lawmakers should consider taking now to help pave the way **for next-generation energy technology**.

There is little doubt that innovation will continue to improve the lives of Americans and provide solutions to what may seem to be today's most intractable problems. Nuclear fusion is just one of many moonshots being taken to solve them. If we can get our regulatory posture right today, there's a good chance we may eventually land among the stars.

🔗 **Isom** is a Research Manager at the Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University.

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