



Donald Trump's campaign: CNN's Reality Check team vets the claims

September 25, 2016

Over the course of his presidential campaign, Donald Trump has made many claims about his background and how his campaign has been managed. CNN's Reality Check team put those statements and assertions to the test.

The team of reporters, researchers and editors across CNN selected key statements and rated them: True; Mostly True; True, but Misleading; False; or It's Complicated.

Reality Check: Vote totals in Democratic primary seasons

July 21, 2016

By Will Cadigan, CNN

While not all Republicans are standing behind Trump, he said that at least the Republican Party got "60% more votes than it received eight years ago." Meanwhile, according to Trump, "the Democrats, on the other hand, received 20% fewer votes than they got four years ago."

There's only one problem: four years ago, Barack Obama was an incumbent president, and his presence on the ballot was merely a formality. Did the Democrats really get 20% fewer votes this year than in an election where the sitting president didn't face a significant challenge?

The answer is no. In fact, CNN estimates that there was a total of 31,377,481 votes cast in the 2016 Democratic primary season, compared to 8,571,580 in 2012, according to the Federal Election Commission. So, rather than a 20% decrease, that's a whopping 266% increase in total votes.

Perhaps Trump misspoke, and meant to refer to the 2008 Democratic primary, which featured record turnout. In 2008, Democrats received a total of 37,235,154 votes -- or 20% more than in this cycle.

As far as Trump's claim that there were 60% more votes cast in 2016 than 2008? CNN estimates that there was a total of 31,155,487 votes cast in the 2016 Republican primary fight, compared to 20,790,899 votes reported by the FEC in 2008. That's not quite as big a leap as Trump claimed, coming in at a still significant 50%.

We rate his claim about the Democratic vote tallies as false.

Reality Check: Trump on winning by the most votes in history

July 19, 2016

By Sonam Vashi, CNN

Trump appeared at the GOP convention by satellite to accept his official nomination. "Together, we've achieved historic results with the largest vote total in the history of the Republican Party," he said to convention attendees in Cleveland.

Former President George W. Bush held the previous record in 2000, with 10.8 million votes. CNN estimates that Trump holds almost 14 million raw votes. That's after record-setting turnouts this year during the primary season.

However, Trump also holds a record for the number of people that voted for other Republican candidates. CNN estimates 15.7 million people voted for Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Ohio Gov. John Kasich or another Republican candidate -- which means more people voted against Trump in the primaries than for him. The previous record for "most votes against" in a Republican primary was held by Arizona Sen. John McCain.

So, while Trump does have the largest raw vote total in a Republican primary, we rate his claim true, but misleading, since that number clearly doesn't reflect unified Republican support for his candidacy.

Reality Check: Trump on George Washington and protectionism

June 22, 2016

By Amy Gallagher, CNN

Trump said one of the first significant bills that former President George Washington signed was for the protection of American manufacturers. This is true. The Tariff of 1789 was one of the first major pieces of legislation to be signed into law and it placed a tariff on most imported goods in part to secure income for the new nation and in part to protect the fledgling manufacturing industry.

It is worth noting that there is some debate as to which was the primary purpose, protectionism or revenue, with most scholars believe the pressing need to pay off the debts of the Revolutionary War was the driving concern. While it was one of the first bills that Washington signed, it was not without some controversy at the time.

In particular, southern states objected to the tariffs that benefited northern manufacturers at the expense of southern agricultural interests. For example, a later tariff on British-manufactured

cloth both reduced the demand for American cotton as a raw material and increased the cost of imported cloth, hitting southern cotton farmers twice. It was this tension between agriculture and manufacturing that kept tariffs low for many years.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank that supports free trade, argues that protectionism is a failed policy and that the economic growth during the nation's first decade was not because of but in spite of protectionist policies. The institute contends that most of the economic growth of the new nation came from western expansion, immigration, transportation, farming, mining and construction of infrastructure.

Verdict: True.

Reality Check: Trump on Clinton's landing in Bosnia

June 22, 2016

By Laura Koran, CNN National Security Producer

During a major speech that took aim at Hillary Clinton, Trump raised an incident from 1996, when Clinton was first lady and traveled to Bosnia in the aftermath of the Bosnian War.

"I remember landing under sniper fire," Clinton told a crowd at George Washington University in 2008 when she was running for the Democratic presidential nomination against then-Sen. Barack Obama. "There was supposed to be some kind of a greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base."

Trump called that account "phony" in his speech Wednesday, adding, "The attack turned out to be young girls handing her flowers ... a total self-serving lie."

Clinton acknowledged that she "misspoke" shortly after she told the story, responding to accusations by Obama campaign officials that she exaggerated the story.

In fact, news footage of Clinton's arrival showed her walking calmly from her Air Force plane with her then-teenage daughter Chelsea, stopping to talk with several people at the airport, including an 8-year-old Bosnian girl.

Verdict: True.

Reality Check: Trump on Clinton speeches

June 22, 2016

By Cristina Alesci and Laurie Frankel, CNNMoney

Trump said Clinton made \$21.6 million giving speeches to Wall Street banks and other special interests in less than two years after she left her job as secretary of state in early 2013.

"When she left, she made \$21.6 million giving speeches to Wall Street banks and other special interests, and, in less than two years, secret speeches that she does not want to reveal, under any circumstances, to the public," he said.

A CNN analysis showed that Clinton gave 92 speeches between 2013 and 2015. Her standard fee is \$225,000, and she collected \$21.6 million dollars in just under two years. Clinton made eight speeches to big banks, netting \$1.8 million, according to the analysis.

John Podesta, Clinton's campaign chairman, has said in April that Clinton won't release transcripts from speeches given to Wall Street unless it becomes a political norm.

Verdict: True.

Reality Check: Donald Trump, self-funder

March 29, 2016

By Theodore Schleifer, CNN

It is a claim Trump has made again and again, and he repeated it again to Anderson Cooper during a Republican Town Hall in Milwaukee.

"I'm a self-funder," he told Cooper. "I'm not taking any money, OK?"

After largely resisting sinking significant money into his run for the presidency, the billionaire has now loaned his campaign \$12.6 million. But though he says he does not actively solicit donations, he has collected another \$6.5 million in donations, according to federal elections records.

So one-third of the funds raised for Trump's campaign did not come from his own pocket. And he is indeed accepting money.

Verdict: False.

Reality Check: Trump says reporter grabbed him

March 29, 2016

By Chip Grabow, CNN

Trump was asked about the incident involving his campaign manager who was arrested and charged with simple battery earlier Tuesday. Former Breitbart reporter Michelle Fields accused Corey Lewandowski of grabbing her during a campaign event earlier this month in Jupiter, Florida. She filed a police report three days later. Fields' claims that Lewandowski grabbed her with enough force to leave bruises on her arm. Lewandowski and the Trump campaign have denied the allegation.

Tuesday night, Trump defended Lewandowski and disputed the charge. In fact, in his version of the encounter, Trump claimed that the reporter grabbed him.

"Am I supposed to press charges against her? 'Oh, my arm is hurting,'" Trump said facetiously. "My arm is just killing me. It's never been the same." He referenced security camera footage of the incident: "She shouldn't have been touching me. OK? And you saw that she did that. She was grabbing me. Twice."

A review of the video does show Fields approaching Trump; she says she was trying to ask him a question. Lewandowski then comes up from behind her and grabs her left arm to pull her away from the candidate. The camera angle and quality of the video makes it difficult to confirm if Fields may have touched Trump to get his attention.

But the video does not support Trump's claim that Fields grabbed him.

Verdict: False.

Reality Check: Trump on self-funding

March 29, 2016

By Theodore Schleifer, CNN

Trump conceded that he is not 100% responsible for the money in his campaign coffers, but said the money that he raises from individuals is trivial and comes from knickknacks like "hats and T-shirts."

"I'm in for about \$35 million right now. We take the small loans -- the people that send \$17.50 or \$250, even \$1,000," he told Cooper.

"But you solicit those on your website," Cooper responded.

"No, I sell hats and shirts," Trump said, later admitting: "OK, whatever. It's peanuts, OK? It's peanuts."

Trump does indeed have a campaign store as other candidates do, in which voters can buy apparel that campaigns typically profit on. But he does not just sell "hats and shirts" -- he has two prominent "Donate" buttons on his campaign website outside of the online store. So Trump's campaign account has a traditional way to raise money that he at first denied.

Cooper told Trump that he has collected more than \$7 million from outside contributors, a third of the total money his campaign has taken in. The GOP front-runner disputed that.

Trump has raised \$34.7 million, according to the latest federal election records, including about \$24.5 million that he has loaned himself. Trump has actually raised \$9.5 million from individual contributors, or more than one-quarter of all the money Trump has raised.

While Trump is right that he has not done the big-money fundraising that undergirds modern political campaigns, only a billionaire would consider the \$9.5 million he raised from individuals "peanuts."

Verdict: False.

Reality Check: Trump has a dirty mouth

February 25, 2016

By Sonam Vashi, CNN

Asked about former Mexican President Vicente Fox's comments about Trump's plan to make Mexico pay for his wall ("I'm not going to pay for that f**king wall!"), Trump said, "I saw him make the statement. I saw him use the word that he used. I can only tell you, if I would have used even half of that word, it would have been a national scandal. This guy used a filthy, disgusting word on television and he should be ashamed of himself and he should apologize, OK?"

However, the businessman has a history that shows his own mouth might need to be washed out with soap. Cover your ears, children.

In April 2011, he blasphemed at a large Las Vegas rally on oil prices ("We have nobody in Washington that sits back and said, 'You're not going to raise that f**king price!'"), on putting tariffs on China ("Listen, you mother**kers, we're going to tax you 25%!") and on military presence abroad ("We build a school, we build a road, they blow up the school, we build another school, we build another road they blow them up, we build again, in the meantime we can't get a f**king school in Brooklyn."). Listen for yourself in the (bleeped) Vine below.

That's not even counting the profanity he's uttered during this campaign season. Whether it's wanting to "bomb the s**t out of" ISIS, calling Cruz a "pussy," or casually cursing during interviews, Trump's indignation over Fox's expletive seems a bit feigned when it comes to his own history. We rate Trump's outrage as %\$*#.

Reality Check: Trump on "Israeli Day Parade"

February 25, 2016

By Lisa Rose, CNN

At the GOP debate in Houston, Trump touted his bona fides as a supporter of Israel during the debate, sparring with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz over which one of them is a more devoted booster of America's close ally. Trump said, "I was the grand marshal, (walking) down Fifth Avenue a number of years ago for the Israeli Day Parade."

And Trump added, "I received their Tree of Life award and many of the greatest awards given by Israel."

The real estate tycoon indeed marched in a parade called Salute to Israel in 2004. The New York Daily News reported that Trump was heckled by pro-Palestine activists chanting, "You're fired."

Trump said he has close ties with the nation he has yet to visit as a candidate. He was scheduled to go there in December but canceled the trip after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticized him for proposing a travel ban on Muslims in the wake of the San Bernardino attack.

The Tree of Life prize is awarded by the Jewish National Fund, a charity that supports environmental initiatives and land development in Israel. A number of Jewish organizations have honored Trump over the years for his philanthropy, but the government of Israel has not yet given him a prize as he claimed Thursday.

Verdict: True, but misleading.

Reality Check: Trump accidentally calls himself out

February 25, 2016

By Amy Gallagher and Chad Weaver, CNN

Trump said, "I don't repeat myself. I don't repeat myself."

But by our count, he repeated himself at least 20 times during the Houston debate.

Some examples:

"Because the country will become a dynamic economy. We'll be dynamic again."

"We will have a dynamic economy again."

"We have the highest taxes anywhere in the world."

"We have the highest taxes in the world."

"I've hired tens of thousands of people over my lifetime. Tens of thousands ..."

"Let me talk. I've hired tens of thousands of people."

"And by the way, I've hired -- and by the way, I've hired tens of thousands of people over at my job. You've hired nobody."

We rate his claim FALSE.

Reality Check: Donald Trump on filing for bankruptcy

October 28, 2015

During a GOP debate in Boulder, Colorado, Trump said, "I never filed for bankruptcy, but many, many people did. What happened with Atlantic City is very, very disgraceful. Hundreds of companies I have opened, I have used it three times, maybe four times, came out great."

Donald Trump has filed four business bankruptcies, which Bankruptcy.com says makes Trump the top filer in recent decades.

The CNN Reality Check team [looked at this during the September GOP debate](#). Here's what he said then:

"I never went bankrupt by the way, as you know. Everybody knows. Out of hundreds of companies, hundreds of deals, I've used the law four times. Made a tremendous thing. I'm in business. I did a very good job. But I will say this: People are very, very impressed with what I've done, the business people."

Trump has never filed for personal bankruptcy. But he has filed four business bankruptcies, which Bankruptcy.com says makes Trump the top filer in recent decades. All of them were centered on casinos he used to own in Atlantic City. They were all Chapter 11 restructurings, which lets a company stay in business while shedding debt it owes to banks, employees and suppliers.

VERDICT: True, but misleading