

How Your Name Can Predict How You'll Vote

I don't know about you, but I've noticed a decided absence of political yard signs in my neighborhood this election season.

Such an occurrence may be the result of general disinterest in the two main candidates... or maybe my neighbors have suddenly been bit by the Minnesota Nice bug, which requires people to keep their political cards close.

But never fear, there's still a fun way that curious individuals can get an idea of the political leanings of those around them: [Clarity Campaign Labs' name tool](#).

Based on voter files and Democratic campaign analytics, the tool allows individuals to enter a first name and find out how likely that person is to be a Democrat or Republican. The tool also gives information on how likely an individual with that name is to have a gun, attend church services, and have a college degree.

Naturally, I inserted my own name and got the following results:

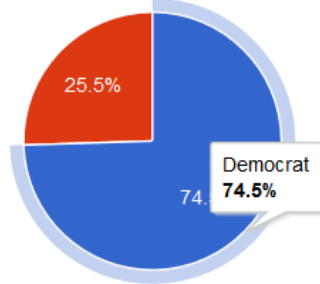
Enter a first name:

Annie

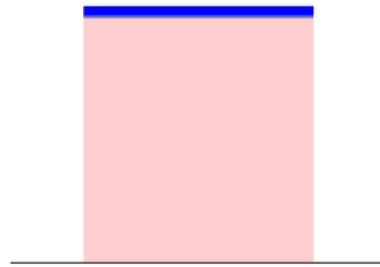
Look it up!

There are **149,748** registered voters named **Annie**, making it the **329th** most common name.

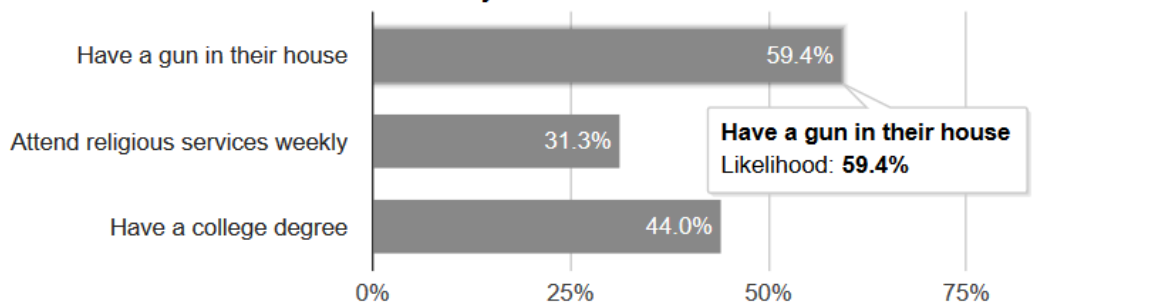
Party identification



Compared to other voters



Probability that voters named Annie...



Whether or not the tool accurately predicted my political leanings will remain a secret.

However, I find it fascinating that despite my name being quite Democratic, it is also associated with a rather high percentage of gun owners. Perhaps there's another explanation for this, but the best one I could come up with is that the command for Annie Oakley to "get your gun" must have embedded itself into the psyche of many of those with my name.

Which leads me to further wonder how many of our political beliefs are influenced more by silly slogans or comments we may have heard over the years, rather than rational, careful consideration of what we believe and why.

John Adams once said:

"Freedom of Enquiry is allowed to be not only the Privilege

but the Duty of every Individual. We know it to be our Duty, to read, examine and judge for ourselves, even of ourselves what is right."

Is much of the insulting political vitriol we see today the direct result of our failure to follow Adams' advice? Do we need to be more active in pursuing the opportunities we have to examine facts and data, and make informed political decisions off these rather than what we continually hear in the soundbites the media feeds us?

Image Credit: Alex Lee bit.ly/1ryPA8o