

UMass Lowell
Survey of New Hampshire Democratic Primary Likely Voters

Feb. 4-Feb. 7, 2020

N=440 New Hampshire Democratic Primary Likely Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-6.5% for LVs

See <http://uml.edu/polls> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bernie Sanders Leads with Buttigieg surging and Biden and Warren falling

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, who won the Granite State in the 2016 Democratic Primary, has an eight-point lead in a poll taken just days before New Hampshire Democrats vote in the first-in-the-nation primary. Sanders, who was ahead by only one point in a poll released by the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Public Opinion just one week ago, has expanded his lead. He now polls at 25%, up two points from just one week ago. Our poll now reveals a new second place candidate with South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg polling at 17%, up 5 points from one week ago. U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren polls in third place at 15%, down 4 points, while former Vice President Joe Biden polls at 14%, down 8 points. Warren and Biden both trailed Sanders within the margin of error in our Feb. 3 release and now both trail Sanders by double-digits.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar polls at 8%, up 2 points from our last release while businessman Tom Steyer polls at 5%, down 1 point. No other candidate is polling higher than 5% and 4% of voters are undecided.

While we have previously highlighted the age and ideological components to the Sanders coalition, notably the age crosstabs do not reveal as large a gap when comparing support for Sanders and Buttigieg. Sanders still does best among those under 45, gaining 34% of the 18- to 44-year-old vote and 22% of the 45 and older vote. Buttigieg, however, has a more age-



balanced coalition drawing 15% of those 18 to 44 and 17% of those 45 and older. Additionally, while Sanders does better than other candidates among liberals, drawing 31% support, Buttigieg draws 21% support, which is second best. Sanders also draws 19% of moderates in this survey, which ties him among moderates with Biden.

Perhaps the most interesting finding from the crosstabs is that, given the evolving trope about Sanders supporters and “Bernie Bros,” Sanders does better than every other candidate among women, with 29% of Granite State women supporting him. The next closest candidate is Warren, who receives 17% of the women’s vote; Buttigieg polls at 14% and Biden at 9% among women. Notably, this is better than Sanders does among men, where he gets 20% of the vote, compared to Biden at 21% and Buttigieg at 21%; Warren polls at 12% among men.

Vote Instability and Second Choices

In an attempt to assess the relative stability of the choices in this crowded field, particularly given the momentum after Iowa, our survey asked voters how certain their vote choice is or if there’s a chance they might still change their mind and vote for another candidate. Overall, four in 10 voters (40%) said they could still change their mind; this is actually up 1% from one week ago. Normally, electorates grow in certainty as the election nears, but both the level (40%) and time trend here (no change) suggests a high degree of instability for an election that will take place in one day. New Hampshire primary voters appear to be living up to their reputation of waiting until the very end to decide. Consistent with one week ago, Sanders voters are the most stable, with 87% saying they will definitely vote for the senator from Vermont and only 13% saying that they could change their mind. Among Buttigieg voters, more than half, 53% say they could still change their mind, while 42% of Biden voters and 41% of Warren voters also say that they could change their mind. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Klobuchar voters also say that they could still change their mind.

With Sanders expanding his lead, Biden and Warren’s fall, and Buttigieg’s surprise performance in Iowa and his surge in the poll, it’s valuable to look at how the race may still change. Among Biden supporters, for instance, 24% say that Buttigieg is their second choice, followed by Elizabeth Warren at 21%, Tom Steyer at 18%, Klobuchar at 12% and Sanders at 10%. Among Warren supporters, 42% say Sanders is their second choice, followed by 25% who say Buttigieg. Among all non-Sanders and non-Buttigieg supporters (N=235), Buttigieg is ahead as the second choice of 25% of these voters, compared to Sanders at 21%, but this is within the margin of error. As voters make the important choice of who to vote for, strategically weighing which candidates have momentum and might win against who their favorites are, we can only conclude that this race still has a great deal of potential to move in the final day.



Candidate Favorability and Electability

We asked New Hampshire Democratic primary likely voters to rate the favorability of several prominent Democrats, along with many of the candidates still contesting the Democratic nomination. The results reveal some important aspects with regards to coalition support and electability. Notably, Sanders has a net favorability rating of +51 with 72% rating him favorable and a 21% rating him unfavorable. Among all the Democrats we asked about, only former President Barack Obama is more popular, with a net favorability rating of +79 (86% favorable, 7% unfavorable). Buttigieg nearly equals Sanders' levels with a favorability rating of 70% and overall, he has a higher net favorability rating of +56, as only 14% rate him unfavorably. Still, Buttigieg does have a higher number who have no opinion (13%) or have never hear of him (3%). With Biden and Warren both seeing their support falling in the poll, we observe that they have among the highest unfavorable ratings among New Hampshire primary likely voters. Biden is found to be favorable among 58%, while 31% find him unfavorable; Warren is found to be favorable at 66%, with 26% finding her unfavorable. For Biden in particular, a +27 net favorability has to be considered disappointingly low when compared to Sanders (+51) and Buttigieg (+56).

New Hampshire Democratic primary likely voters were also asked who they think is going to win the nomination. Sanders now leads the field at 30%, up 6 points from our Feb. 3 survey just one week ago. However, the most notable change on this question is that Biden has slid 19 points from 42% to 23%. Clearly, Biden's fourth-place finish in Iowa, even with all the problems in results-reporting and vote-counting, has damaged his standing as the race's frontrunner, opening the door for Sanders, who emerges as the new frontrunner. When we posed the question to voters of "Who is more likely to defeat Donald Trump?" just one week ago, New Hampshire Democrats said that Biden was more likely to beat Trump by a margin of 42% (Biden) to 31% (Sanders). But in this survey, New Hampshire Democratic primary likely voters now say that Sanders is more likely to beat Trump (36%) than Biden (33%).

The Election and Personal Relationships

Given the high degree of polarization in the country and the competitiveness of elections, supporting political candidates can sometimes strain personal relationships. We asked New Hampshire Democratic Primary likely voters if their support of their preferred candidate had strained their personal relationships with other people. Only 3% say that their relationships have been strained by the Democratic primary while 16% report that their relationships have been strengthened. Most primary voters, however (81%), report that the election has not had an effect on any of their personal relationship. Respondents were asked a similar question about if their attitudes about Trump had strained or strengthened personal relationships. Here, 3 in 10 (30%) New Hampshire Democratic Primary likely voters report strained relationships because of their attitudes about Trump, while only 9% say that their views on Trump have strengthened their relationships with others; 61% say that Trump has had no effect on their



personal relationships. Considering that the Granite State Democratic primary electorate gives Trump an 8% favorability rating and a 6% approval rating, we are observing a high degree of partisan antipathy towards Trump, but a high degree of intra-party comity given the competitiveness of the Democratic primary. This may be a good sign for Democrats, who have given plenty of lip service to the idea that they will need to come together and present a united front once a nominee is chosen.

Other Findings

- Barack Obama is by far the most popular Democrat in this survey. He has a net favorability rating of +79 (86% favorable to 7% unfavorable). When asked who Obama is likely to support in the primary, 44% said Biden; no other candidate reached double digits. Furthermore, 41% say that Biden best continues the Obama legacy; the next closest candidate is Buttigieg at 13% and no other candidates is in double digits. However, a majority (65%) think that Obama should stay out of the nomination and not make a public endorsement. Democrats in New Hampshire love Obama and think Biden best represents his legacy, but it appears as though they are ready to move on and that Obama's shine on Biden has not been enough to sustain his candidacy.
- Despite the chaos in the Iowa caucus and calls from Democrats and media personalities nationally to alter the primary system (where the Iowa caucus is then followed by the New Hampshire primary) New Hampshire Democratic Primary likely voters have no taste for change; 63% of them think that Iowa and New Hampshire should continue to go first while only 37% say that other states should get a chance to go first. This is down 4 points from just a week ago, when 67% said Iowa and New Hampshire should go first, but the change is within the margin of error and not statistically significant.
- Last week, Trump was acquitted by the Senate in his impeachment trial. A majority of New Hampshire Democratic Primary likely voters think it's better for the country if Trump is removed from office by election (61%) rather than impeachment (39%). These numbers were 55% in support of impeachment, 45% in support of removal by election just one week ago.
- Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been vocally critical of New Hampshire frontrunner Sanders, but her favorability rating in the Granite State demonstrates her weakness as a potential leading voice in her party. In New Hampshire among Democratic Primary voters, Clinton is seen as favorable by less than a majority at 47% and unfavorable by 38%. This barely positive net approval rating of +9 points among members of her own party stands out given that Clinton was the party's nominee in 2016 and she carried New Hampshire in the general election by a slim margin against Trump.