

**UMass Lowell**  
**Survey of Massachusetts Democratic Primary Likely Voters**

**February 12-19, 2020**

**N=450 Massachusetts Democratic Primary Likely Voters**

**The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-6.1% 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.

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## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### *Presidential Race: Close Race Emerges between Sanders and Warren*

In a new poll of likely Democratic primary voters in Massachusetts, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren are locked in a neck-and-neck race for delegates in the Bay State. Sanders gets the support of 21% of Massachusetts Democratic primary likely voters compared to Warren's 20%. In third place is former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg at 15%, followed by former Vice President Joe Biden at 14%. Billionaire and former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg polls at 12%, Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar is at 9%, Hawaii Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard is at 3% and Billionaire and activist Tom Steyer is at 2%; there are only 4% of likely voters who as of yet are undecided.

Massachusetts voters get their chance to participate in this year's primary on Super Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The poll, part of series of Super Tuesday poll releases, was written and conducted by the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Public Opinion.

As in most other states, Sanders gets his strength from young voters. Here, he leads among voters under 45, with 31% of the vote. Warren, who has also been similarly propelled by younger voters in other states recently polled by the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion, breaks from that pattern in her home state. She is certainly strong among those under the age of 45, gaining 22% of the vote, 2<sup>nd</sup> only to Sanders; Buttigieg places third among young voters at 18%. But, Warren also places first among those 45 and older, gaining 19% of the vote. Sanders



places 2<sup>nd</sup> with 16% of the vote, followed by Biden and Bloomberg, both at 14%, and Buttigieg at 13%.

We also observe much bigger ideological divides in the Democratic electorate in Massachusetts than in other states, which likely contributes to the two-way race between Sanders and Warren, the two-leading Progressive candidates in the field. In Massachusetts, self-identified liberal ideologues prefer Sanders (26%) and Warren (25%) by large margins to Buttigieg (16%), Bloomberg (11%) and Biden (9%). However, among those who identify as ideologically moderate, Biden (19%) and Bloomberg (19%) lead the field, while Sanders (14%), Warren (13%), and Buttigieg (13%) place in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> place.

### *Vote Stability and Undecided Voters*

With the election less than two weeks away, 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, nearly four in ten voters (39%) said they could still change their mind. In the four previous states we polled (South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, and Minnesota), Sanders voters were the most stable, routinely saying that they were certain to vote for the Vermont Senator at 80-90%. But in Massachusetts, the firmness of support for Sanders, Warren, Buttigieg and Biden is all relatively similar. Among Sanders voters, 70% said they would will definitely vote for him; this number is 69% for Warren, 71% for Buttigieg and 70% for Biden. Notably, Mayor Bloomberg's support here appears to be the softest, with only 40% of his voters saying they will definitely vote for him and 60% saying they could change their mind. If Bloomberg voters were to move away from him after his difficult debate performance in Nevada, a candidate viewed favorably by moderates like Buttigieg or Biden is likely to benefit.

### *Candidate Favorability and Electability*

In Massachusetts, Elizabeth Warren enjoys the benefits of being a home-state candidate. Her favorability rating is 70%, and her net favorability is +49. This is higher than for Sanders, who is found favorable by 64% of likely voters, and has a net favorability rating of +42. For Buttigieg, his net favorability rating is +41 (59% favorable, 18% unfavorable), for Biden +34 (61% favorable, 27% unfavorable), for Bloomberg +16 (47% favorable, 31% unfavorable), and for Klobuchar +53 (63% favorable, 10% unfavorable). A number of candidates are hurt by the high number of voters who report having no opinion of them or saying they have never heard of them: Steyer (42%), Klobuchar (28%), Buttigieg (23%), and Bloomberg (22%).



### *Massachusetts Senate Primary*

While the Presidential primary election is on March 3, 2020, another big primary contest is shaping up in the Bay State later this year in September. Congressman Joe Kennedy, III is challenging Ed Markey in a primary contest for the seat Markey currently occupies in the US Senate. Asked who Democratic primary likely voters who support in that contest, we find another close race, within the margin of error. Kennedy has the support of 35% of likely voters and Markey has the support of 34% of likely voters while 23% are undecided and 8% say they are likely to support another candidate.

Kennedy leads among men, older voters, and moderates, while Markey leads among women, younger voters, and liberals. Kennedy wins 40% of those 45 and older compared to Markey at 33%, while Markey wins the support of 37% of those under 45 compared to Kennedy's 25%. Similarly, Kennedy leads among men at 40% to Markey's 30%, but Markey leads among women 37% to Kennedy's 32%. Finally, among liberals, Markey leads 44% to 31%, but Kennedy leads among ideological moderates 41% to 27%.

While Kennedy is only up by one point in the horse race, asked a series of questions comparing the two candidates, Kennedy fares better on a number of politically relevant dimensions. Asked who will do a better job standing up to Mitch McConnell, 37% said Kennedy and 29% Markey. Asked who respondents agreed with more on the issues, 33% said Kennedy and 26% Markey. Asked who would fight harder for women, 36% said Kennedy and 22% Markey. Asked who would fight harder for people of color, 36% said Kennedy and 18% Markey. For the environment, 34% say Kennedy will fight harder compared to Markey at 29%. And finally, asked, "who will fight harder for people like you," 36% said Kennedy and 23% said Markey. It's possible that Markey may be enjoying some incumbent advantage in the horse race, but issue by issue and characteristic by characteristic, Kennedy's numbers are better head to head with Markey in a way that the Markey campaign should find especially troubling.

### *Other Findings*

- Charlie Baker's approval rating *among Democratic primary likely voters* is 72%; this demonstrates that the Republican Governor has continued his reputation as one America's most popular Governors who enjoys broad bipartisan support.
- Asked about commute times in Massachusetts, 27% say their commute has gotten worse in the last year, 68% say it has stayed the same, and 5% say it has gotten better.
- We asked for favorability ratings of many Massachusetts public figures: Charlie Baker has a +39 net favorability rating (52% fav, 23% unfav), Joe Kennedy is +45 (57% fav, 12% unfav), Ed Markey is +41 (55% fav, 14% unfav), Maura Healey is +37 (49% fav, 12% unfav), Ayanna Pressley is +34 (46% fav, 12% unfav), Marty Walsh is +27 (45% fav, 18%



unfav), Seth Moulton is +14 (28% fav, 14% unfav), Michelle Wu is +13 (18% fav, 5% unfav), and Deval Patrick is +26 (50% fav, 24% unfav).

- Perhaps not surprisingly, the MBTA gets low marks from Massachusetts Democratic primary voters; they have a net negative favorability rating of -18 (27% fav, 45% unfav). But we found two Massachusetts institutions that are even *less liked* than the MBTA. Wynn Casinos has a net negative favorability of -26 (15% favorable, 41% unfavorable) and Columbia Gas, the embattled natural gas retailer in Massachusetts that infamously had gas line problems that lead to fires and explosions in Lawrence, North Andover, and Andover in 2018, gets a net negative favorability rating of -40 (11% fav, 51% unfav).
- As he weighs his future, Tom Brady still remains beloved among likely voters in the Democratic primary, with a net positive favorability rating of +42 (61% fav, 19% unfav).
- If you've ever wondered why there's a Dunkin' on every corner in Massachusetts, the company has a +52 net positive favorability rating (68% fav, 17% unfav) among Massachusetts Democratic primary voters.