



UMass Lowell Survey of Massachusetts Democratic Primary Likely Voters

Aug. 16-25, 2022

N=800 Massachusetts Democratic Primary Likely Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-3.9% for LVs

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

Survey design and analysis by John Cluverius, director of survey research, Center for Public Opinion, University of Massachusetts Lowell

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

HIGHLIGHTS

Dempsey, Driscoll, Galvin leading in their respective races, attorney general primary about even

"With less than a week to go, the Democratic primaries in Massachusetts are still way up in the air. More than a fifth of voters are undecided. Only a few candidates are running television ads. The turnout picture is as hazy as apple cider. We have some indication of who is leading and who is behind, but if there's anything I've learned in my time polling Massachusetts primaries, it's to expect the unexpected," said John Cluverius, Director of Survey Research for the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion.

In a new UMass Lowell CPO poll of likely voters in Massachusetts' upcoming Sept. 6 Democratic primary election, clear leaders are emerging in the races for three of four statewide constitutional officers, with the Democratic party primary for Massachusetts attorney general roughly even. Despite this, more than a quarter of likely voters remain undecided in each of the four races polled.

In the race for lieutenant governor, Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll leads with 33%, State Sen. Eric Lesser is at 23%, State Rep. Tami Gouveia is at 13%, another candidate 2%, with 30% undecided. For attorney general, the race is close between former Boston City Council President Andrea Campbell and attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan at 32% and 30% respectively, ahead of U.S. Dept. of Commerce attorney Quentin Palfrey with 11%, with 2% supporting another candidate and 25% undecided. This represents a significant tightening of the race from



the previous March CPO poll where Campbell led by a large margin. In the contest for state auditor, Former Assistant Secretary of Transportation Chris Dempsey has opened a significant lead over State Sen. Diana DiZoglio from the previous Center for Public Opinion poll in March, where the candidates were about even. Dempsey leads with 37% to DiZoglio's 23%; another candidate 3%, and 37% are undecided. In the race for Secretary of State, the incumbent William Galvin leads with 56%, attorney Tanisha Sullivan has 21%, another candidate 1%, and 22% are undecided.

Massachusetts primary voters want President Biden to stay out of 2024

"Any political scientist will tell you that the best strategy for any party in power to win re-election is for its incumbent president to run again. Despite the good news out of the Biden administration in the last six weeks, Democratic primary voters in one of the party's ironclad strongholds are still bearish on their president seeking re-election. This isn't about ideology or any specific divide in the party; the party's voters are ready for Biden to pass the torch," said Cluverius.

The survey asked likely Massachusetts Democratic primary voters if they think Biden should run for re-election in 2024 or not seek another term. The president is popular among primary voters, with 77% somewhat or strongly approving of the job he is doing as president and 74% viewing him favorably. Still, 59% of those polled say Biden should probably or definitely not seek another term as president, with a majority agreeing across nearly every demographic group polled.

As a follow-up, likely Democratic primary voters were asked which candidates they would like to see run for president if Biden chooses not to run in 2024. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg was the candidate with the highest net desire to run (+30) with 53% saying he should run and 23% saying he should not run, 17% having no opinion and 7% saying they had never heard of him. Following Buttigieg were:

- Vice President Kamala Harris: 51% should run, 38% should not run, 11% no opinion, <.5% never heard of
- U.S. Senator Cory Booker: 38% should run, 25% should not run, 27% no opinion, 11% never heard of
- Gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams: 36% should run, 27% should not run, 25% no opinion, 13% never heard of
- U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar: 38% should run, 26% should not run, 24% no opinion, 12% never heard of
- Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker: 45% should run, 37% should not run, 17% no opinion, <.5% never heard of.



All other candidates listed had a net negative desire to run among those polled. They included U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (-4), Labor Secretary Marty Walsh (-11), Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (-7), Former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick (-13), California Gov. Gavin Newsom (-5), Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker (-14), Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (-10), Congressman Seth Moulton (-14) and U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team player Megan Rapinoe (-38). Popular music artist Taylor Swift was the least desired candidate (-79) among those listed as possible alternatives.

Massachusetts primary voters on school issues

As most children in Massachusetts are starting school, likely Democratic primary voters are voicing their opinions on three key school issues. More than half (58%) of those polled favor requiring candidates for school committee to have children enrolled in the local public schools, including 72% of non-white voters and 74% of voters aged 18-44.

Similarly, a COVID-19 vaccine mandate is largely popular among Democratic primary voters with 81% of those polled saying definitely or probably yes to a mandate. A majority (84%) of respondents with a college degree favor this policy as do 86% of self-identified liberal voters.

However, only 52% of likely Democratic primary voters support a mask mandate in their local public schools with 48% opposing. This close divide has persisted as long as the Center for Public Opinion has been polling this question in Massachusetts.

The popularity of prominent public figures

“No one is more popular than a prominent public figure positioned above the fevered hurly-burly of electoral politics,” said Cluverius. Charlie Baker is now clocking one of the highest approval ratings among Democratic primary voters that we’ve recorded. Baker remains, despite war, inflation, pestilence, and polarization, above the decay of the moderate wing of the New England Republican party and outside the normal rules of partisan politics.”

While Baker, the incumbent Republican governor of Massachusetts, has opted not to run for another term, he remains quite popular among Massachusetts Democrats. Among likely Democratic primary voters he enjoys an 82% approval rating (46% strongly approve, 36% somewhat approve), with only 17% disapproving (11% somewhat disapprove, 6% strongly disapprove). He is slightly more popular among Massachusetts Democratic primary likely voters than Biden, who has a 77% approval rating (37% strongly approve, 40% somewhat approve). In [previous polling](#), we found Baker was more popular among Massachusetts Democrats than Massachusetts Republicans.



“Perhaps here we see a glimpse into why Baker may not be running again,” said Cluverius. “While he would be a formidable general election candidate, it may have become increasingly difficult for him to contest a Republican primary.”

Baker’s favorability rating, a net +57 (73% favorable, 16% unfavorable), has come down from a high of +70 in August 2020, but still compares favorably with the state’s two Democratic senators, Elizabeth Warren, +53 (71% fav, 18% unfav) and Ed Markey, +49 (61% fav, 12% unfav).

Cluverius reiterated: “This is, again, quite remarkable given the sample is among Democratic likely voters for upcoming September primary election.”

The favorable ratings also help tell the story about what is happening in many of the upcoming state primary races. Most notable is the shift for Liss-Riordan, whose favorability ratings have nearly tripled since the CPO’s March poll.

In the lieutenant governor race:

- Kim Driscoll: 19% favorable, 7% unfavorable, 41% no opinion, 33% never heard of
- Eric Lesser: 18% favorable, 6% unfavorable, 37% no opinion, 39% never heard of
- Tami Gouveia: 11% favorable, 7% unfavorable, 31% no opinion, 51% never heard of

In the attorney general race:

- Andrea Campbell: 27% favorable, 8% unfavorable, 35% no opinion, 30% never heard of
- Shannon Liss-Riordan: 31% favorable, 8% unfavorable, 35% no opinion, 26% never heard of
- Quentin Palfrey: 13% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 34% no opinion, 48% never heard of

In the state auditor race:

- Chris Dempsey: 16% favorable, 7% unfavorable, 42% no opinion, 35% never heard of
- Diana DiZoglio: 15% favorable, 7% unfavorable, 32% no opinion, 46% never heard of