



UMass Lowell
Survey of Massachusetts Democratic Primary Likely Voters

April 2-11, 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 Joshua J. Dyck, Director and John Cluverius, Associate Director, 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

Healey a prohibitive favorite over Chang-Diaz

“Healey starts out the nomination contest for Democrats as a prohibitive favorite. She is well-known, she is popular, and she is seen as someone who can both win and lead. Chang-Diaz has ground to make up, both in terms of name recognition and in convincing voters she is the superior candidate when there is already a formidable front-runner, but there are positives here for her as well – among Democratic likely voters who know her, she is very well liked.”

-- Joshua J. Dyck, Director of The Center for Public Opinion

In a new UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion poll of likely voters in Massachusetts' upcoming September 6 Democratic primary election, Attorney General Maura Healey has opened with a 45-point lead over State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, 62% to 17% in the contest to be the Democratic nominee for Governor in the Bay State this Fall. Another 20% of respondents say they are either undecided or intend to vote for another candidate. Healey, the popular Massachusetts Attorney General, has been thought by many to be favorite to replace Charlie Baker as the next Governor of Massachusetts.

Healey bests Chang-Diaz in every single category in our crosstabs, but some interesting trends emerge that shows Chang-Diaz's areas of strength as a candidate with less name recognition.



Notably, she does better, but still trails Healey among 18- to 44-year-olds, where Healey leads 44% to 28%, and among non-white likely voters, where Healey leads 41% to 28%.

Asked who is better suited to handle a series of issues, Healey is seen as the stronger candidate on the economy (+31), COVID-19 (+26), police reform (+25), and health care (+29). Healey is also seen as a stronger leader (+41), the candidate who best represents Massachusetts values (+29), the candidate who is most honest/trustworthy (+13), and most likely to win the general election (+55). Chang-Diaz leads on a single issue – who is best suited to handle race relations (+12), and the candidates are closely matched on the question of who is more of a progressive (Chang-Diaz +1).

In the other competitive statewide Democratic primary races, many likely Democratic primary voters are still getting to know the candidates and are still undecided. For Lieutenant Governor, Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll leads with 22%, State Senator Eric Lesser is at 10%, State Representative Tami Gouveia 9%, State Senator Adam Hinds 7%, another candidate 2%, and 49% of likely voters are undecided. For Attorney General, Former Boston City Council President Andrea Campbell leads the field with 30%, compared to 11% for Attorney Shannon Liss-Riordan, 6% for US Dept of Commerce Attorney Quentin Palfrey, 2% for another candidate, and 52% undecided. For State Auditor, Former Assistant Secretary of Transportation Chris Dempsey polls at 23%, State Senator Diana DiZoglio at 21%, with 2% for another candidate and 54% undecided.

The Massachusetts Democratic Primary Electorate on the Issues

“Bay State Democrats are stalwartly aligned left of their state, their national party and of the country as a whole. They support a fairly active insurgent left agenda by overwhelming majorities, and see both their national and state parties as generally aligned with their interests, but make no mistake, if you are voting in the Democratic primary in the fall, you’re probably to the left of Joe Biden on most issues.”

--John Cluverius, Associate Director of the Center for Public Opinion

The survey asked Massachusetts Democratic primary voters about how well both the national and state parties represent them. For the national Democratic Party, 29% of Massachusetts Democratic primary voters say that the party is too far to the right, 18% say it is too far to the left and 54% say it is about where it should be. There is even greater satisfaction with the ideological orientation of the state Democratic Party: 19% of Democratic primary voters say that the party is too far to the right, 14% say it is too far to the left, and 67% say that Massachusetts Democrats are about where they should be. Even voters who are not enrolled in a party but plan to vote in the September Democratic primary feel like Democrats are where they’re supposed to be ideologically. While 24% of these respondents say the state Democrats are too far to the left, 19% say they are too far to the right, and a majority (57%) say they about where they should be. While Democratic registrants are more congruous with the party: 73%



say about right, 19% say too conservative, and 9% too liberal, many unenrolled voters have meaningful party attachments and liberal policy attitudes.

This is further reflected in the overall issue positions of the primary electorate. Large majorities of Massachusetts Democrats believe that the federal government should cancel all student loan debt (70%), favor a having a single state health insurance plan for all Massachusetts residents (86%), and favor making Massachusetts a sanctuary state, which would prevent law enforcement in the Commonwealth from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement agencies (75%).

The Popularity of Prominent Public Figures

“Charlie Baker is likely to leave office as he has spent most of his two terms – as a popular governor with broad bipartisan support from Massachusetts voters. Whether he could have won a third term by working his way through a Republican primary fight that would have been acrimonious, or running as a third party independent, will be left to speculation. But his popularity and reputation, as a moderate Republican governor, especially among Democrats, is something peculiar in these increasingly partisan times.”

--Joshua J. Dyck, Director of the Center for Public Opinion

“Outside of the gubernatorial primary, the nomination contests for statewide office are anybody’s game. Less than a quarter of likely voters know enough about the candidates for lieutenant governor, attorney general, or state auditor to form an opinion about them. That’s what the campaign is for: getting voters to know you and winning them over.”=

--John Cluverius, Associate Director of the Center for Public Opinion

While Charlie 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 for this September’s election, he enjoys a 78% approval rating (37% strongly approve, 41% somewhat approve), with only 23% saying disapprove (16% somewhat disapprove, 7% strongly disapprove). To put these numbers in context, Baker is as popular among Massachusetts Democratic primary likely voters as President Biden, who has an 80% approval rating (39% strongly approve, 41% somewhat approve). Perhaps here we see a glimpse into why Baker may not be running again. In [previous polling](#), we found that Baker was more popular among Democrats than Republicans in Massachusetts. 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 +51 (70% favorable, 19% unfavorable), has come down from a high of +70 in August of 2020, but still compares favorably with Massachusetts’ two Democratic Senators, Elizabeth Warren, +58 (74% fav, 16% unfav) and Ed Markey, +57 (69% fav, 12%



unfav). 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. Apart from Maura Healey, none of the other candidates are yet known quantities to likely voters.

In the Governor's race:

- Maura Healey: 69% favorable, 9% unfavorable, 17% no opinion, 5% never heard of
- Sonia Chang-Diaz: 41% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 42% no opinion, 12% never heard of

In the Lt. Governor's race:

- Kim Driscoll: 17% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 39% no opinion, 39% never heard of
- Eric Lesser: 13% favorable, 4% unfavorable, 37% no opinion, 45% never heard of
- Tami Gouveia: 9% favorable, 3% unfavorable, 28% no opinion, 59% never heard of
- Adam Hinds: 9% favorable, 4% unfavorable, 32% no opinion, 55% never heard of

In the Attorney General race:

- Andrea Campbell: 28% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 33% no opinion, 33% never heard of
- Shannon Liss-Riordan: 11% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 34% no opinion, 50% never heard of
- Quentin Palfrey: 8% favorable, 3% unfavorable, 37% no opinion, 52% never heard of

In the State Auditor's race:

- Chris Dempsey: 12% favorable, 5% unfavorable, 41% no opinion, 42% never heard of
- Diana DiZoglio: 12% favorable, 4% unfavorable, 34% no opinion, 51% never heard of