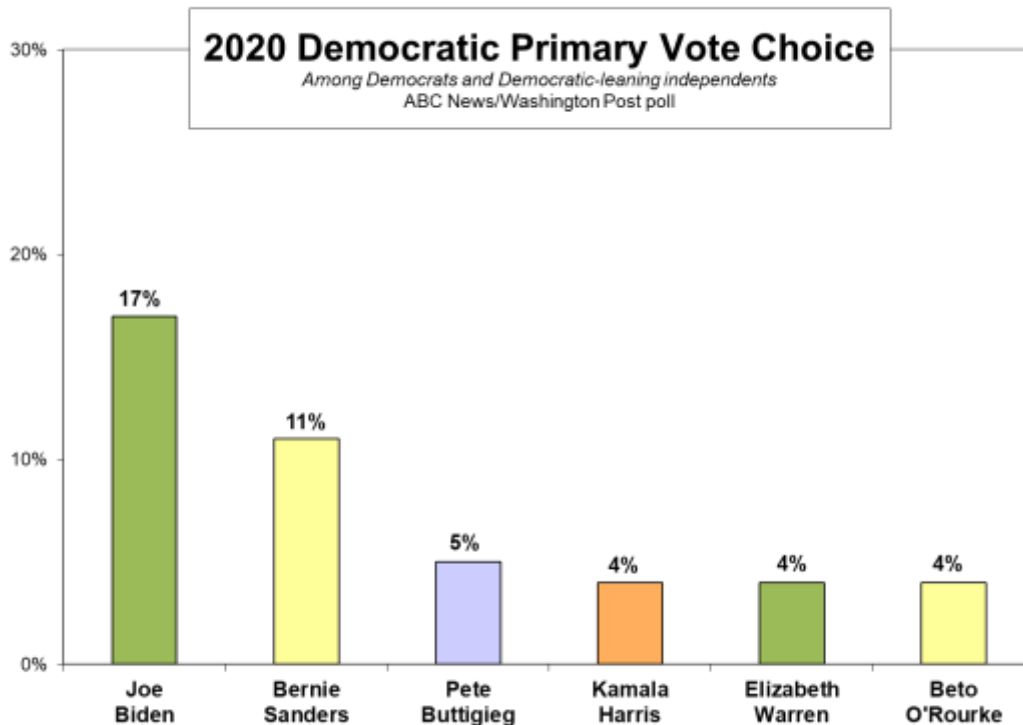


Biden Takes the Democrats' Early Lead, With Signs of a Generational Showdown

Joe Biden enters as the early frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, albeit with a decided tilt toward older voters that could define the party's 2020 contest as a generational showdown.

In an open-ended question, 17 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents back Biden, with 11 percent for Bernie Sanders, 5 percent for Pete Buttigieg, 4 percent apiece for Kamala Harris, Beto O'Rourke and Elizabeth Warren and 1 or 2 percent for Cory Booker, Amy Klobuchar and non-candidates Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama.

Much can change, as evidenced by the 35 percent who have no opinion, and it's unsurprising that the two leaders are those with the broadest name recognition – a former vice president and the party's 2016 runner-up. Long expected to run, Biden announced his candidacy Thursday.



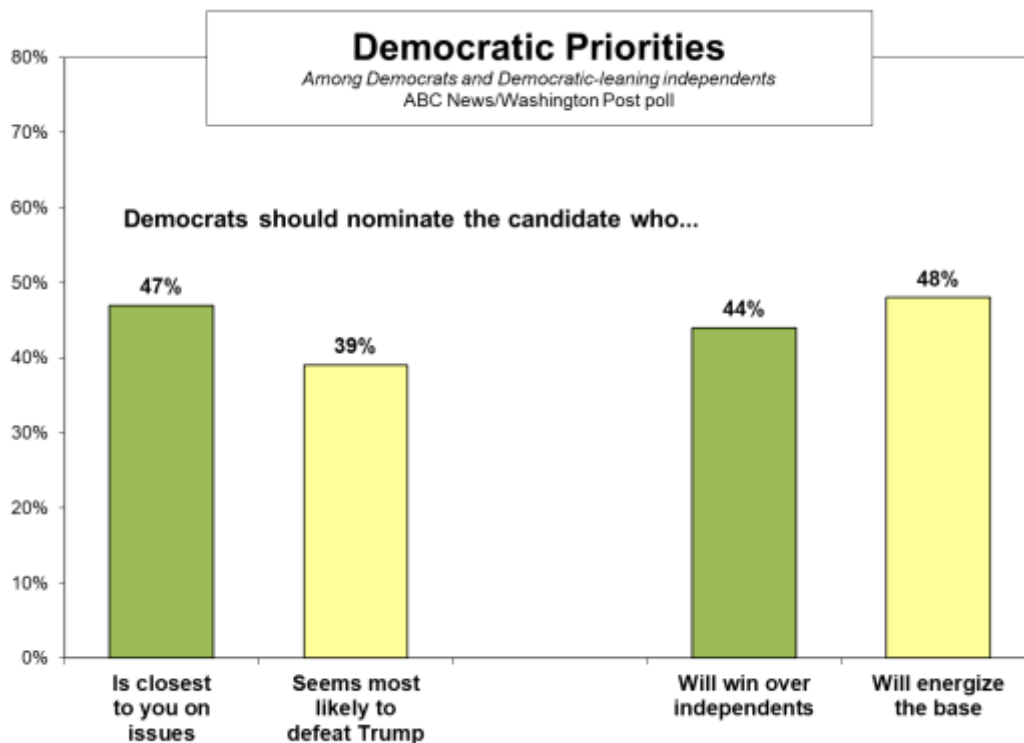
There's a striking generation gap between Biden, 76, and Sanders, 77, who built his insurgent 2016 campaign largely on support from young voters. Today Biden easily leads Sanders, 27-6 percent, among those age 50 and older, compared with a 9-15 percent race – Sanders ahead numerically, albeit not significantly – among those younger than 50. Biden is particularly weak

among under-30s, with just 3 percent support vs. Sanders’ 13 percent (averaging the last two ABC/Post surveys for an adequate sample size).

	Candidate preference	
	Biden	Sanders
All	17%	11%
Age 18-29	3	13
Age 30-49	13	15
Age 50+	27	6

That said, age isn’t the only differentiator. As detailed below, Sanders trails Biden, in particular, among women, mainline Democrats (as opposed to Democratic-leaning independents), moderates, blacks, college graduates and urban residents. And the race goes 2-1 for Biden, 19-10 percent, when limited to registered voters in this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#).

STRATEGY and ELECTABILITY – There are intraparty divisions among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents on strategy and electability. They split, 48-44 percent, on whether it’s better for the party to nominate a candidate who can best energize the Democratic base or who’s best positioned to win over independents, often the key swing voters in national elections. Leaned Democrats also divide, 47-39 percent, on whether they’d prefer a candidate who’s closest to them on the issues or who has the best chance of defeating Donald Trump.



The strategy question shows some differences in candidate choices. Among those who think it’s best to pick the candidate who can energize the party’s base, Biden leads Sanders by 18-7

percent. Among those more concerned with appealing to independents, the two are essentially even, 17-16 percent. (Buttigieg has 8 percent support among those focused on appealing to independents, vs. 3 percent among those more concerned with motivating the base.)

It's a logical result; Sanders' support in 2016 came from independents rather than Democrats by nearly a 2-1 margin.

Prefer the candidate best positioned to...		
	Energize the base	Appeal to independents
Support:		
Biden	18%	17%
Sanders	7	16
Buttigieg	3	8

There's no difference on this question between liberal and moderate leaned Democrats, but there is by race: Nonwhites, by 53-39 percent, lean toward a focus on energizing the Democratic base, while whites split about evenly, 43-48 percent. (Nonwhites account for nearly half of all leaned Democrats, 48 percent, compared with 20 percent of leaned Republicans.)

Prefer the candidate best positioned to...			
	Energize the base	Appeal to independents	Diff.
All leaned Democrats	48%	44%	+4
Nonwhite leaned Democrats	53	39	+14
White leaned Democrats	43	48	+5

For its part, the question of whether leaned Democrats prefer a candidate who's closest to them on the issues or best able to defeat Trump does not substantially impact candidate preference. Biden has virtually identical support in these two groups, 17 and 18 percent, respectively; Sanders, 13 and 9 percent.

Prefer the candidate who ...		
	Is closest to you on the issues	Seems most likely to defeat Trump
Support:		
Biden	17%	18%
Sanders	13	9

GROUPS – Among demographic groups, Biden has virtually identical support from women and men, 16 and 18 percent, respectively, regardless of reports by several women that he made them feel uncomfortable by the way he hugged or touched them, and criticism of his handling of the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings in 1991. Sanders, for his part, does a bit better with men than with women, 14 vs. 8 percent.

Sanders struggled to win support from nonwhites in 2016, losing them to Hillary Clinton, 71-28 percent, in primaries in which exit polls were conducted. Today Biden leads Sanders among nonwhites overall by 16-10 percent, including 19-3 percent among blacks (compared with a close 5-8 percent among Hispanics).

Sanders also struggled among mainline Democrats and political moderates, losing them to Clinton by 64-35 percent and 62-36 percent, respectively. Today Biden has twice Sanders' support among mainline Democrats and moderates alike.

Biden does slightly better with college graduates than non-graduates, 22 vs. 14 percent, while Sanders runs essentially evenly in both groups, 12 and 10 percent. Among others, Warren does 8 percentage points better with graduates than non-graduates, and Buttigieg does 7 points better. Non-graduates, who tend to be less engaged politically, are far more apt than graduates to have no current preference.

In another difference in support profiles, Biden has 18 percent backing in urban centers, compared with Sanders' 7 percent.

	Biden	Sanders		Biden	Sanders
All	17%	11%			
			Age 18-29	3%	13%
Women	16	8	Age 30-49	13	15
Men	18	14	Age 50+	27	6
Democrats	17	8	College grad.	22	12
Independents	16	16	Non-graduate	14	10
Liberals	13	16	Urban resident	18	7
Moderates	23	10			
			Blacks	19	3
Whites	17	12	Hispanics	5	8
Nonwhites	16	10			

Results given in this report are not restricted to registered voters, since there's plenty of time to register before the caucus and primary season begins in Iowa next Feb. 3. Looking just at registered voters doesn't make much difference in any case, but for optics: As noted, Biden goes to a 2-1 lead over Sanders, 19-10 percent.

	2020 Preference – Leaned Dems.	
	All	Registered voters
Biden	17%	19%
Sanders	11	10
Buttigieg	5	6
Harris	4	5
Warren	4	4
O'Rourke	4	4
Michelle Obama	2	2
Hillary Clinton	2	2
Klobuchar	1	1
Trump	1	1
Booker	1	1
No opinion	35	33

All other mentions <0.5%

Regardless, all these results require an important note of context: Early leaders sometimes are nomination winners, but not always. See, for example, Jeb Bush (2016) and Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani (both 2008). Indeed, in crowded Republican races, Ben Carson, Rand Paul and Scott Walker all polled competitively at points in the 2016 campaign, as did Newt Gingrich, Herman Cain, Michele Bachman and Sarah Palin in the 2012 race; all later faded. These are early days in the 2020 race – and if history provides any lesson, it’s that campaigns matter.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone April 22-25, 2019, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect, for the full sample. This analysis is based on results among 427 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, with an error margin of 5.5 points. Partisan divisions are 29-26-36 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

Media contacts: [Heather Riley](#) or [Julie Townsend](#).

Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1, 7-14, 19 previously released. 2-6, 15-18, 23 held for release.

20. (ASK IF LEANED DEMOCRAT OR DEFINITELY VOTE FOR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE) What's more important to you - that Democrats nominate the presidential candidate (whose positions on the issues come closest to yours), or the candidate (who seems most likely to defeat Donald Trump in November 2020)?

	Closest on issues	Most likely to win	Same person (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Both (vol.)	No opinion
4/25/19	47	39	1	1	5	7
1/24/19	47	43	*	1	3	6

21. (ASK IF LEANED DEMOCRAT OR DEFINITELY VOTE FOR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE) What kind of candidate would you prefer the Democrats nominate for president - (one who is best positioned to win over independent voters) or (one who is best positioned to energize the Democratic base)?

	Win over independent voters	Energize the Democratic base	No opinion
4/25/19	44	48	8

22. (ASK IF LEANED DEMOCRAT) If the 2020 Democratic primary or caucus in your state were being held today, for whom would you vote? (OPEN-END)

	1/24/19	---- 4/25/19 ----	
	Without	Without	With
	leaners	leaners	leaners
Joe Biden	9	13	17
Bernie Sanders	4	9	11
Pete Buttigieg	0	5	5
Kamala Harris	8	4	4
Elizabeth Warren	2	4	4
Beto O'Rourke	3	3	4
Michelle Obama	2	1	2
Hillary Clinton	1	1	2
Cory Booker	1	1	1
Amy Klobuchar	1	1	1
Donald Trump	4	1	1
Michael Bennet	0	*	*
Michael Bloomberg	*	*	*
Julian Castro	*	*	*
John Hickenlooper	*	*	*
Howard Schultz	0	*	*
Andrew Yang	0	*	*
Barack Obama	0	0	*
Kirsten Gillibrand	*	0	0
Sherrod Brown	*	0	0
Steve Bullock	1	0	0
Oprah Winfrey	1	0	0
Nancy Pelosi	1	0	0
Gary Johnson	*	0	0
Joe Kennedy	*	0	0
Dennis Kucinich	*	0	0
Jia Lee	*	0	0
Bobby Scott	*	0	0
Kyrsten Sinema	*	0	0
Mark Warner	*	0	0
Other - unspecified	4	2	4
Someone new	1	1	1
No one/None of them	7	3	4
Anyone/Any of them	5	3	2
No opinion	43	47	35

*** END ***