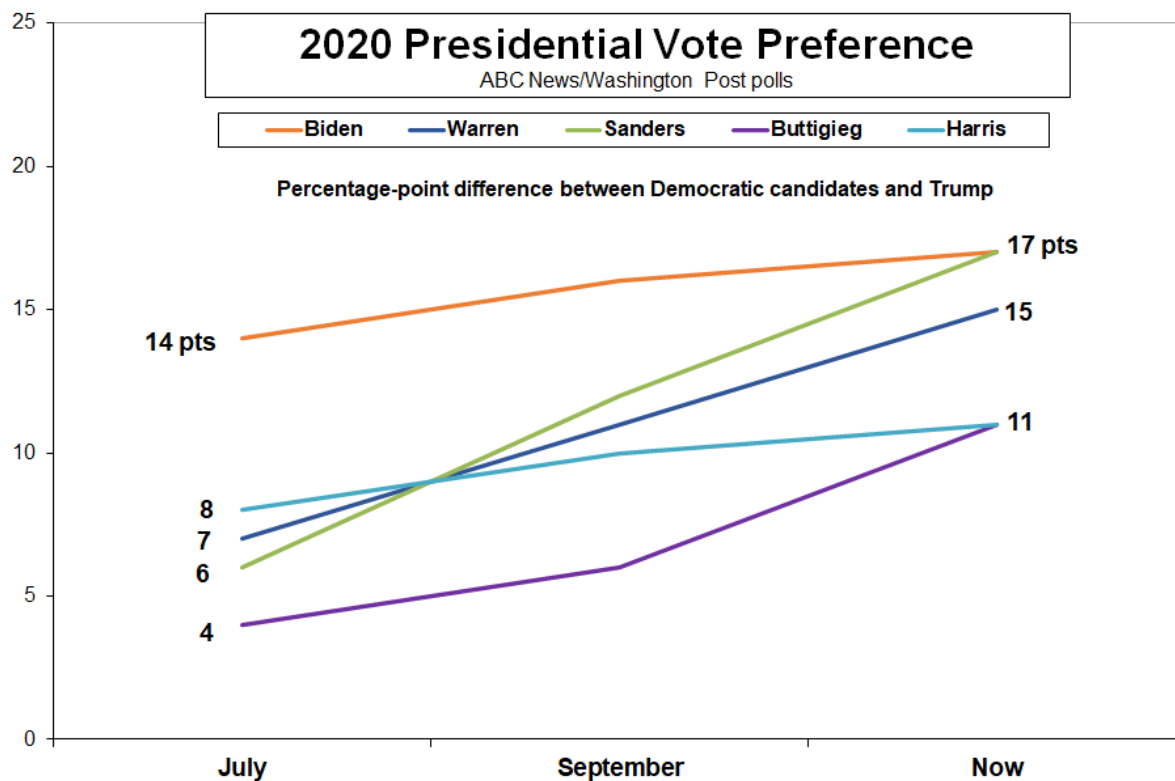# Democrats Extend their Leads vs. Trump; Biden and Sanders are +17, Warren +15
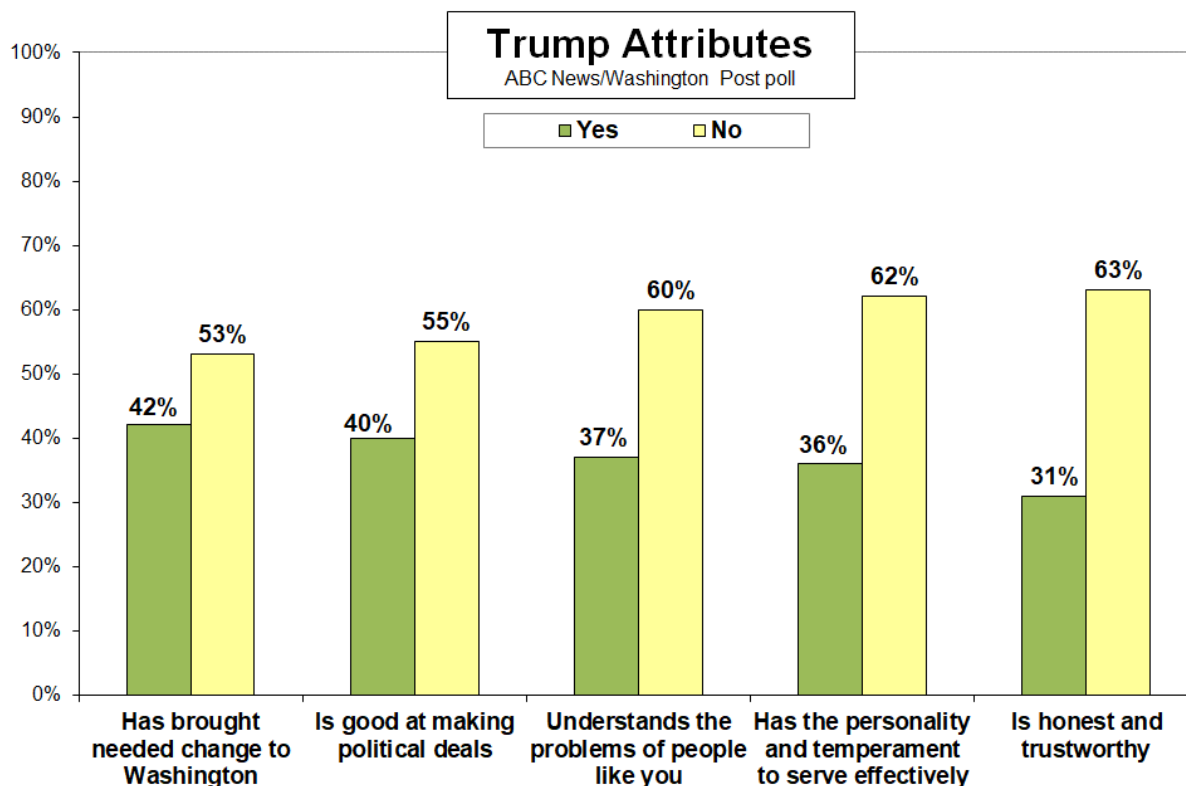
A year before the nation votes, top Democratic contenders have extended their leads over Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential race, with broad public concerns about the president's leadership in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll.

While Joe Biden now leads Trump by 17 percentage points, other Democratic contenders show the most improvement: Bernie Sanders' advantage vs. Trump has gone from a non-significant 6 points in July to 12 in September to 17 now. Elizabeth Warren's has gone from 7 to 11 to 15 points.

2020 Presidential Vote Preference
ABC News/Washington Post polls

Biden — Warren — Sanders — Buttigieg — Harris

Percentage-point difference between Democratic candidates and Trump

Impeachment is not the only factor, since the trend dates to early September. Among Trump's broader challenges, six in 10 Americans or more say he's not honest and trustworthy, lacks the kind of personality and temperament it takes to serve effectively and doesn't understand their problems. Slightly smaller majorities doubt his deal-making, delivery of "needed change" to Washington and leadership generally.

Further, as reported last week, half support Trump's impeachment and removal from office, 54 percent say his policies have made the United States less respected globally, 58 percent disapprove of his overall job performance and 66 percent say he's acted unpresidentially since taking office. He's the first president in modern polling never to have achieved majority approval, with the lowest average approval rating on record.

Trump Attributes
ABC News/Washington Post poll

| | Yes | No |

- Has brought needed change to Washington: 42% / 53%
- Is good at making political deals: 40% / 55%
- Understands the problems of people like you: 37% / 60%
- Has the personality and temperament to serve effectively: 36% / 62%
- Is honest and trustworthy: 31% / 63%

Yet Trump faced difficulties in 2016 and still prevailed in the Electoral College, if not in the popular vote. He remains strong in his base in this poll, produced for ABC by Langer Research Associates, with 70 percent support among conservatives vs. Biden, 76 percent among evangelical white Protestants and 79 percent among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents.

The Democrats have risks of their own. Their support is heavily concentrated in a handful of groups – for example, young adults, those with more education, racial and ethnic minorities, people living in urban areas and those in the states Hillary Clinton won in 2016. Biden is +30 points vs. Trump in those blue states, for example, while just +7 points – not a statistically significant difference – in the 2016 red states.

That said, 16 percent of leaned Republicans say they'd defect to Biden. Trump's approval rating within his own party has dropped by 13 points since early July to a new low. And 30 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say they'd like to see the party nominate someone else as its 2020 presidential candidate. (In a different question in 1995, two in 10 Democrats preferred not to renominate Bill Clinton.)

Trump's presumed ace in the hole is the economy, and his fortunes may rest on its durability. As things stand, though, just a third of Americans, 34 percent, both say it's improved since he took office and give him at great deal or good amount of credit for it.

HEAD TO HEADS – Elections are comparative and, given the Electoral College, strategic; even a poorly rated candidate can defeat a weak opponent, as Trump demonstrated in 2016. As such, his chances in 2020 depend not only on his ratings, but on the eventual Democratic nominee's as well.

Leading Democrats currently have the upper hand. Among the party's three frontrunners, Biden and Sanders lead Trump by an identical 56-39 percent, as does Warren, by 54-39 percent. Pete Buttigieg and Kamala Harris both hold 11-point leads.

Those results are among all adults, given that there's plenty of time to register. Among currently registered voters, the outcomes are very similar – Biden ahead by an identical 17 points, Warren still by 15, Sanders by 14, Buttigieg still by 11 and Harris by 9. The results look different than at about this time in 2015. In an ABC/Post poll that September, Hillary Clinton led Trump by 12 points in a matchup among all adults, 51-39 percent, but it was essentially a dead heat, 46-43 percent, among registered voters.

Trump's support today is strikingly similar in all these matchups, 39 to 42 percent. His task is to build from there, either in support levels or higher turnout.

2020 Vote Preference				
	All adults	**Diff.**	**Reg. voters**	**Diff.**
Trump vs.				
Biden	39-56%	17 pts.	39-56%	17 pts.
Sanders	39-56	17	41-55	14
Warren	39-54	15	40-55	15
Buttigieg	40-51	11	41-52	11
Harris	41-52	11	42-51	9

Results have improved for the Democrats, especially among registered voters. Warren ran evenly with Trump among registered voters in July, then moved to a slight +7 points in this group in September and on to +15 points now. Sanders went from +1 to +9 to +14 points among registered voters in this same period; Buttigieg, from a dead heat to +4 to +11. Biden was +10 among registered voters in July; he's +17 now.

	Position vs. Trump Since July					
	Among all adults			**Among registered voters**		
	Now	**September**	**July**	**Now**	**September**	**July**
Biden	+17 pts.	+16 pts.	+14 pts.	+17 pts.	+15 pts.	+10 pts.
Sanders	+17	+12	+6	+14	+9	+1
Warren	+15	+11	+7	+15	+7	=
Buttigieg	+11	+6	+4	+11	+4	=
Harris	+11	+10	+8	+9	+7	+2

VOTE GROUPS – There are vast gender gaps in presidential preference, and they've widened. Focusing on the top three contenders, Biden and Warren are in virtual dead heats with Trump among men, but lead him by 30 and 29 points, respectively, among women. Sanders is a scant +8 points among men, while +26 among women.

The most notable change by gender is for Warren, whose margin against Trump among women has virtually doubled since July, from 55-40 percent then to 60-31 percent now.

	Position vs. Trump Since July – by Gender			
	Now		July	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Biden	+30 pts.	+3 pts.	+21 pts.	+7 pts.
Sanders	+26	+8	+17	-4
Warren	+29	+1	+15	-3

Movement also has occurred among independents, who can be key swing voters in presidential elections. Sanders has improved vs. Trump by 17 points among independents since July and Warren by 14 points. (A challenge in this result is that independents, given their lack of partisan motivation, are less apt than party adherents to vote.)

Most of the change among independents has occurred among women – especially for Warren, who's doubled her advantage over Trump among independent women from 18 points in July to 37 points now. That compares with 9-point gains among independent women for Biden and Sanders alike.

	Position vs. Trump Since July – Among Independents					
	Now			July		
	All inds.	Women	Men	All inds.	Women	Men
Biden	+15 pts.	+30 pts.	+1 pt.	+9 pts.	+21 pts.	+1 pt.
Sanders	+18	+27	+9	+1	+18	-13
Warren	+17	+37	+1	+3	+18	-8

Notably among other groups, Trump's not significantly ahead of the Democratic candidates among whites – a group he won by 20 points in 2016. About nine in 10 blacks and roughly two-thirds of Hispanics back the Democrats, similar for these groups in recent presidential elections.

Instructive among whites are preferences by gender and education. Trump is solid among non-college-educated white men (+37 points against Biden, for example). That's countered by the Democrats among college-educated white women, +35 points for Biden.

It's the combination of college-educated white women and nonwhites that forms the Democratic constituency; a risk for the party is that in 2016, per the network exit poll, Hillary Clinton won

college-educated white women by just 10 points, and Trump did better among non-college white women and college-educated white men than he's polling today.

	Position vs. Trump Among Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Education				
	White non-college		White college-educated		
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Nonwhites**
Biden	-37 pts.	-3 pts.	-3 pts.	+35 pts.	+57 pts.
Sanders	-30	-3	-8	+23	+59
Warren	-41	=	-6	+33	+55

SKIP IT? – Another question is whether these pairings would be unpalatable enough for some potential voters to skip the election entirely. Not many say they'd take a bye: Given a Trump-Biden, Trump-Sanders or Trump-Warren matchup, 10 to 14 percent say there's at least some chance they might skip the election, with 6 to 9 percent saying there's a good chance of it.

Independents, nonwhites and younger adults are most apt to say they'd skip the election given those matchups – three groups that are less likely to turn out in any case. Nonetheless, removing potential skippers from vote preference estimates doesn't meaningfully change the standings of the Democratic candidates vs. Trump.

THE ECONOMY – As noted, the economy's the wildcard; incumbents tend to have better prospects in good economic times and to take the heat when the going gets tough.
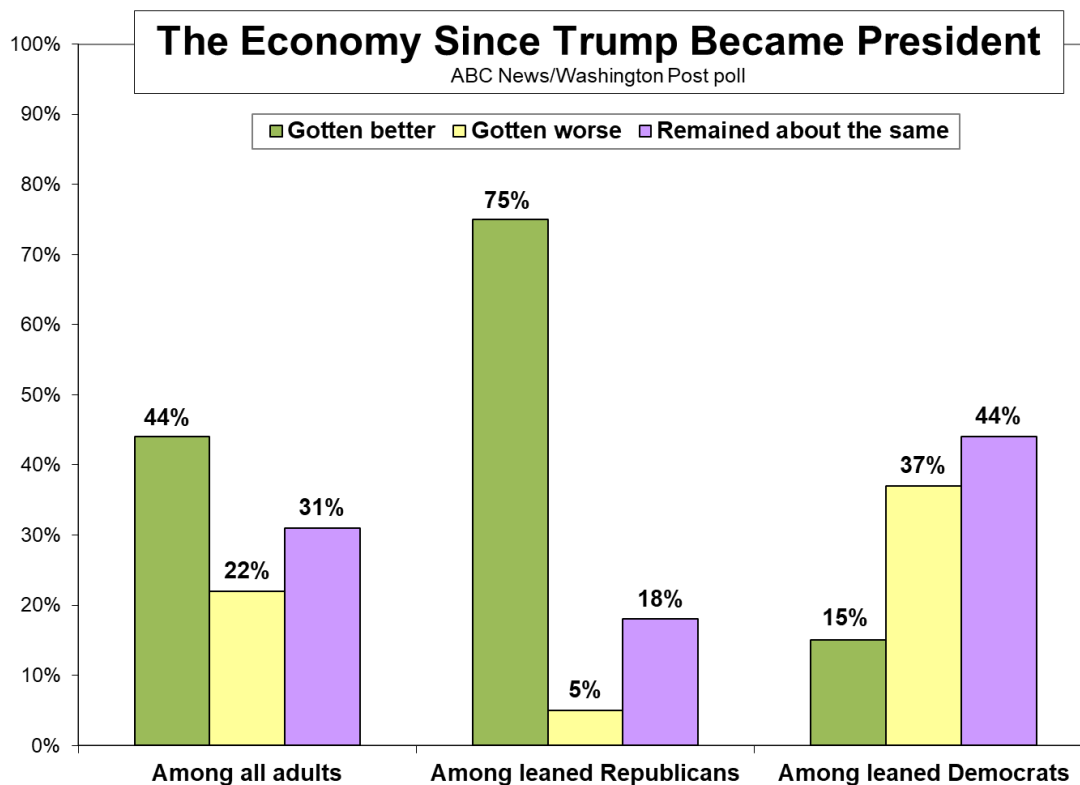
Perhaps surprisingly, given historically low unemployment, the economy is not rated as highly as it could be: Fewer than half of Americans, 44 percent, say it's improved since Trump has taken office. That's twice as many as say it's gotten worse, 22 percent. The rest, 31 percent, say it's remained about the same.

A key reason is that partisanship strongly informs these responses, especially since Trump is part of the equation. Seventy-five percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say the economy has improved under his presidency; just 15 percent of leaned Democrats agree.

Among those who say the economy has improved – disproportionately Republicans and Republican-leaning independents – 78 percent say Trump deserves a great deal or good amount of credit for it. Among all adults, this produces 34 percent who both say that they economy has improved and Trump gets credit. Across the spectrum, 19 percent both say the economy has gotten worse under Trump and he deserves blame for it.

The economy, then, is a net positive for Trump, albeit less of one than might be assumed. What's clear is that it matters – Trump has overwhelming support from Americans who say the economy's improved under his presidency, while his opponents hold vast leads among those who say it's stayed the same or worsened.

Indeed, in a statistical analysis, views of the economy under Trump are one of the strongest independent predictors of vote preference, measured against partisanship, ideology and demographics. As such, attitudes about the economy in the next year may matter to the election at least as much as all the politicking ahead.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Oct. 27-30, 2019, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.7 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 29-23-38 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. Search and retrieve ABC/Post poll questions and analyses since fall 2010 here.

Media contacts: Van Scott (212-456-7243) or Caragh Fisher (212-456-3437).

Full results follow.

```
1, 5, 6a, 7-14, 18-28 previously released. *= less than 0.5 percent.

2. Would you say the country's economy has gotten better since Trump became president,
gotten worse, or remained about the same?
```

```
          Better   Worse   Same   No opinion
10/30/19    44      22      31        3
```

3. (ASK IF GOTTEN BETTER) How much credit do you think Trump deserves for that: a great deal, a good amount, just some or hardly any?

```
          --- More credit ----   -------- Less credit -------
                Great   Good              Just  Hardly   None      No
          NET   deal    amount   NET   some   any   (vol.)   opinion
10/30/19   78    55      23       21    14     6       1        1
```

2/3 NET

```
          ----------- Better ------------
                More    Less     No                        No
          NET   credit  credit   opinion   Worse   Same   opinion
10/30/19   44    34       9        *        22      31       3
```

4. (ASK IF GOTTEN WORSE) How much blame do you think Trump deserves for that: a great deal, a good amount, just some or hardly any?

```
          ---- More blame ----   -------- Less blame --------
                Great   Good              Just  Hardly   None      No
          NET   deal    amount   NET   some   any   (vol.)   opinion
10/30/19   85    56      30       14    10     3       *        1
```

2/4 NET

```
                    ----------- Worse -----------
                        More    Less    No                   No
          Better   NET  blame   blame   opinion   Same   opinion
10/30/19    44      22   19       3        1        31       3
```

2/3/4 NET

```
          --------- Better ----------   --------- Worse ---------
                More    Less    No              Less   More   No              No
          NET   credit  credit  op.    NET   blame  blame  op.    Same   op.
10/30/19   44    34       9      *      22     3      19     1      31      3
```

6. Do you think Trump [ITEM], or not?

10/30/19 – Summary Table

```
                                                      Yes   No   No opinion
b. is honest and trustworthy                           31   63       6
c. has the kind of personality and temperament
   it takes to serve effectively as president          36   62       2
d. has brought needed change to Washington             42   53       5
e. understands the problems of people like you         37   60       3
f. is good at making political deals                   40   55       5
*Half sample asked items a-c; other half asked d-f
```

Trend:

b. is honest and trustworthy

```
                Yes    No    No opinion
10/30/19         31    63       6
1/24/19          36    61       2
11/1/17          33    65       2
4/20/17          38    58       4
10/13/16 RV      34    64       3
9/22/16          38    57       5
9/8/16           31    64       4
8/4/16           34    62       4
3/6/16           27    69       4
9/10/15*         35    59       6
```
*"Please tell me whether the following statement applies to Trump, or not: He is honest and trustworthy."

c. has the kind of personality and temperament it takes to serve effectively as president

```
                Yes    No    No opinion
10/30/19         36    62       2
1/24/19          39    58       3
11/1/17          31    66       3
4/20/17          38    59       3
10/13/16 RV      34    64       3
9/22/16          35    61       4
8/4/16           31    67       2
3/6/16           25    72       3
9/10/15*         33    63       4
```
*"Please tell me whether the following statement applies to Trump, or not: He has the kind of personality and temperament it takes to serve effectively as president"

d. has brought needed change to Washington

```
                Yes    No    No opinion
10/30/19         42    53       5
1/24/19          41    56       3
11/1/17          42    55       3
9/21/17          39    59       2
```

e. understands the problems of people like you

```
                Yes    No    No opinion
10/30/19         37    60       3
1/24/19          33    65       1
11/1/17          37    62       1
4/20/17          37    61       2
3/6/16           26    72       2
9/10/15*         29    67       4
```
*Please tell me whether the following statement applies to Trump, or not. He understands the problems of people like you.

f. is good at making political deals

```
                Yes    No    No opinion
10/30/19         40    55       5
1/24/19          36    58       6
11/1/17          37    58       4
```

15. If the 2020 presidential election were being held today, and the candidates were (Donald Trump, the Republican) and ([ITEM], the Democrat), for whom would you vote? Would you lean toward (Trump) or ([ITEM])?

10/30/19 - Summary Table

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
a. Joe Biden	39	56	*	2	2	1
b. Bernie Sanders	39	56	*	2	1	1
c. Elizabeth Warren	39	54	*	2	2	2
d. Kamala Harris	41	52	*	2	3	2
e. Pete Buttigieg	40	51	1	3	2	3

10/30/19 - Summary Table among registered voters

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
a. Joe Biden	39	56	*	2	2	*
b. Bernie Sanders	41	55	*	2	1	*
c. Elizabeth Warren	40	55	*	2	2	1
d. Kamala Harris	42	51	*	2	3	2
e. Pete Buttigieg	41	52	1	3	2	1

Trend:

a. Joe Biden

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/19	39	56	*	2	2	1
10/30/19 RV	39	56	*	2	2	*
9/5/19	38	54	*	4	3	1
9/5/19 RV	40	55	*	2	2	1
7/1/19	41	55	*	2	1	1
7/1/19 RV	43	53	*	1	*	1

b. Bernie Sanders

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/19	39	56	*	2	1	1
10/30/19 RV	41	55	*	2	1	*
9/5/19	40	52	*	3	3	2
9/5/19 RV	43	52	*	2	2	1
7/1/19	45	51	*	2	1	1
7/1/19 RV	48	49	1	2	1	1

c. Elizabeth Warren

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/19	39	54	*	2	2	2
10/30/19 RV	40	55	*	2	2	1
9/5/19	40	51	*	4	2	3
9/5/19 RV	44	51	*	2	1	2
7/1/19	44	51	*	2	1	1
7/1/19 RV	48	48	1	1	1	1

d. Kamala Harris

	The	Other	Neither	Would not vote	No

	Trump	Democrat	(vol.)	(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
10/30/19	41	52	*	2	3	2
10/30/19 RV	42	51	*	2	3	1
9/5/19	40	50	*	4	3	3
9/5/19 RV	43	50	*	2	2	2
7/1/19	43	51	1	2	1	2
7/1/19 RV	46	48	1	2	*	2

e. Pete Buttigieg

	Trump	The Democrat	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/19	40	51	1	3	2	3
10/30/19 RV	41	52	1	3	2	1
9/5/19	41	47	*	4	3	6
9/5/19 RV	43	47	*	3	2	4
7/1/19	44	48	1	2	1	3
7/1/19 RV	47	47	1	2	1	3

16. If it's Trump versus [ITEM], what's the chance you might skip the election and not vote at all? Would you say there's a good chance you'd skip the election, some chance, just a small chance or would you definitely vote?

10/30/19 - Summary Table

	---- More likely ---			------ Less likely ------		
	NET	Good chance	Some chance	NET	Small chance	Definitely vote	No opinion
a. Biden	12	8	3	87	6	82	1
b. Sanders	10	6	4	89	6	83	2
c. Warren	14	9	4	86	7	79	1

17. (ASK IF LEANED REPUBLICAN) Would you like the Republican Party to nominate Trump to run for a second term as president next year, or would you like the Republican Party to nominate someone other than Trump as its candidate for president in 2020? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	---- Nominate Trump -----			----- Someone else ------		No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
10/30/19	67	59	8	30	6	24	3
1/24/19	65	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	3

*** END ***