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Hawkeye Poll: Warren well-positioned as Iowa Caucuses approach

According to a recent Hawkeye Poll — conducted by University of Iowa faculty and students between Oct. 28 and Nov. 10 — Elizabeth Warren is solidifying her position as the front runner among a large field of Democratic candidates in Iowa. As the Feb. 3 Iowa Caucuses are approaching, the poll finds 23.1% of respondents very or somewhat likely to participate in the Democratic caucuses reported they would vote for Warren if the Democratic caucus were held today. Bernie Sanders was the top choice of 18.1% of respondents; Pete Buttigieg was selected by 15.5%; and Joe Biden was selected by 15.3%. 12.9% of respondents did not know or refused to answer.

Warren's lead grows among respondents who identified themselves as very likely caucus goers. 31.6% reported they would vote for her if the Democratic caucuses were held today compared to 15.5% who selected Sanders as their preferred candidate if the caucus were held today. Sanders leads among those somewhat likely to attend the caucuses with 22.3% supporting him compared to 9.6% for Warren. Biden is the first choice of 11.7% of those very likely to attend the caucuses and the first choice of 21.2% of those somewhat likely to attend.

However, poll results show most Democratic caucus-goers have not yet made up their minds. Just under one third (31.7%) indicated they were strongly committed to their first choice while a majority (50.9%) say that they have narrowed it down to just a few candidates. 17.1% responded they did not yet know who they would support. Those very likely to attend the caucuses are more likely to have made a choice (37.4%), compared to 22.5% among those somewhat likely to attend. Warren leads among those who are strongly committed to their first choice, with 22.4% putting her first, and also among those who are still narrowing down their decision, with 30.2%.

With so many Iowa voters reporting they are not strongly committed to their first choice, respondents were also asked to name their second choice. Warren also leads here, with 23.6% indicating her as their second choice. Sanders was second at 16.1%, Buttigieg was third at 11.0%, Kamala Harris was fourth at 7.9%, and Biden was fifth at 7.2%. 19.3% either did not know or refused to name a second choice.

Respondents indicated candidate positions were the most important characteristic in deciding which candidate they prefer. 65% responded that candidates taking positions on major issues that are similar to their own positions was most important compared to 30.2% who responded that being able to win the general election was the most important factor. Warren leads among those who rated positions as most important with 29.9%. Sanders comes in second with 20.1% and Buttigieg third with 12.3%. Among those who indicated that winning the general election was most important, Biden leads with 27.1%. Buttigieg comes in second with 22.7%, Sanders is third at 16.6%, and Warren is fourth at 11.7%.

"The polling indicates Elizabeth Warren has positioned herself well in Iowa," says Frederick Boehmke, University of Iowa professor of political science, who serves as faculty advisor of the Hawkeye Poll.

"While most potential caucus-goers are still evaluating a handful of candidates, Warren places at the top among respondents' first and second choices. She also does well among those still narrowing down their choices, and especially well among those very likely to attend the caucuses."

Notable differences in support emerge across respondents based on demographics. Warren did well among women, with 30.7% listing her as their first choice compared to 12.3% of men. Sanders lead among men, with 24.3% putting him first compared to 13.7% of women. Buttigieg has slightly greater

support among women (17.8%) than among men (12.1%) while Biden has slightly greater support among men (16.5%) than among women (14.5%).

The University of Iowa Department of Political Science has conducted the Hawkeye Poll since 2007. A series of national and state public opinion polls, this experience serves as an important learning opportunity for students. This year, over 250 undergraduate students from 12 classes had the opportunity to directly participate in the research production process and to acquire valuable career-related knowledge about survey research and public polling in general. Learn more about the course at <https://now.uiowa.edu/2019/11/taking-iowas-pulse-hawkeye-poll>.

Respondent Identification: A random sample of registered voters was acquired with 40% household landline numbers and 60% mobile phone numbers. Sample included 50% registered Democrats, 25% registered Republicans, and 25% registered with No Party, drawn equally from each of Iowa's four Congressional districts. All respondents who stated they were over age 18 and willing to participate in the survey were included.

Weighting: Reported results are weighted by age, sex, education, party registration, and congressional district.

About the Hawkeye Poll

1288 registered voters in Iowa were surveyed by telephone from Oct. 28 – Nov. 10, 2019 with a margin of error +/-2.8%. Among these were 538 possible Democratic caucus goers, with a margin of error of 4.3%, including 465 likely Democratic caucus goers, with a margin of error of 4.6%.

The poll was conducted by the Hawkeye Poll Cooperative, comprised of University of Iowa faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the political science and sociology departments. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, which uses the facilities of the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke, professor of political science and faculty advisor for the poll. The Department of Political Science, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University of Iowa Public Policy Center fund the poll.

The list of Democratic candidates included: "Elizabeth Warren"; "Joe Biden"; "Bernie Sanders"; "Pete Buttigieg"; "Kamala Harris"; "Tulsi Gabbard"; "Amy Klobuchar"; "Andrew Yang"; "Tom Steyer"; "Cory Booker"; "Beto O'Rourke"; "Marianne Williamson"; "Tim Ryan"; "Steve Bullock"; "Julian Castro"; "Michael Bennet"; "John Delaney". Respondents were asked for their first choice and were offered the opportunity to have a list of (randomly ordered) candidates read to them if they wanted.

Caucus-goers are self-identified. Participants were asked how likely they were to caucus, and for which party. A total of 465 respondents indicated they were "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to attend the 2020 Democratic caucuses. The margin of error for the Democratic very likely or somewhat likely caucus-goer subsample is +/- 4.6%.

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