

Results of Winthrop Poll released on February 21, 2020 of Likely Voters in the Feb. 29 SC Democratic Presidential Primary.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Joe Biden remains the top choice for South Carolina voters for the Democratic Party presidential nominee but other candidates are gaining ground and nearly 1 in 5 likely voters are still undecided, according to the latest [Winthrop Poll](#). Given the margin of error, his lead of 24% to Sanders' 19% may be scant indeed.

South Carolinians head to the polls on Feb. 29 to participate in the Democratic Party Presidential Primary. Voters in the Palmetto State do not register by party.

A fourth of those surveyed in this most recent Winthrop Poll said they were leaning toward voting for Biden, the former vice president. Of the African American voters contacted, Biden had even higher numbers, at 31%.

Other candidates planning to run in the S.C. primary with support were **U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders**, 19%; billionaire businessman Tom Steyer, 15%; and South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg, 7%; and U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, 6%. The remaining two candidates fell under 5%. Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is not on the S.C. ballot.

Winthrop Poll Director Dr. Scott Huffmon noted that, “Flames seem to be licking through the cracks in Biden’s firewall. His support has dropped by double digits since the late September Winthrop Poll. Without a strong showing in South Carolina, Biden’s campaign will be limping into Super Tuesday. Even a win, if not significant and decisive, will be interpreted as a loss by his opponents. Bernie Sanders, now second behind Biden, has more

than doubled his support, both overall and among African American voters. With roughly one-fifth of voters remaining undecided, election day could hold some surprises. Elizabeth Warren has dropped by nearly 10 points since late September. One of the most significant movements came from Tom Steyer, whose ad blitz in the state took him from an unknown 2% in the late September Winthrop Poll to 15% now.”

South Carolina is important in the presidential process because it is the first primary in the South and because it is the first time presidential candidates can be vetted by large numbers of African-American voters.

A little more than half surveyed by the Winthrop Poll said they were sure of their choice. Yet 43% of respondents said they might change their mind.

Eighty percent of poll respondents said they would vote in November for the party’s nominee, while 85% of African-American voters said they would.

Nearly half of poll respondents (44%) said their primary objective was to beat President Donald Trump, while nearly an equal number (45%) said it was key for the Democratic nominee to share their views.

The Winthrop Poll found that it made little difference to S.C. voters for a candidate to be either openly gay or a woman. Voters, particularly African-American voters, were more hesitant to support candidates who did not reflect the diversity of their political party.

For this **latest Winthrop Poll**, callers spoke to 443 likely voters for the Feb. 29 S.C. Democratic Presidential Primary. Phone calls were made Feb. 9-19 primarily during weekday evenings, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon and evening and were made in English. Results have a margin of error of +/-

4.7% at the 95% confidence level. Results that use all only African-American respondents have a margin of error of +/- 5.9% at the 95% confidence level.

POLL FUNDING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Winthrop Poll is paid for by Winthrop University. It is one of 18 threshold polls chosen by the Democratic National Committee to determine who among the two dozen 2020 presidential candidates qualify for debates.

For additional information, or to set up an interview with Poll Director Scott Huffmon, please contact **Judy Longshaw** at longshawj@winthrop.edu or 803/323-2404 (office) or 803/984-0586 (cell).

Survey Methodology

February 21, 2020 Winthrop Poll

These results represent the responses of **443** Likely Voters for the Feb. 29 SC Democratic Presidential Primary. Results that use all respondents have a **margin of error of +/- 4.7%** at the 95% confidence level. Results that use only African American respondents have a **margin of error of +/- 5.9%** at the 95% confidence level.

Calls were made between 2/9 - 2/19, 2020 Margins of error are based on weighted sample size and account for design effects. No design effects were expected due to sampling methodology.

Phone calls were made primarily during weekday evenings, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon and evening. Conducting weekend calls is important to avoid systematically excluding certain populations (such as those who may work 2nd or 3rd shift during the week). The prolonged dates are due to two other large survey projects going on at the same time.

The survey used sample of Registered Voters in South Carolina supplemented by a sample of voters who had voted in a previous primary. All samples were purchased from Dynata (formerly Survey Sampling International).

Data are weighted based on age, sex, race, and education. Respondents were screened for registration status and for likelihood of turnout in the February 29 SC Democratic Primary then weighted to the known parameters for registered voters reported by the South Carolina Election Commission.

Phone numbers selected for the survey were re-dialed up to 4 times in an attempt to reach a respondent. Surveys were conducted in English.

Computerized autodialers were not used in order to ensure the survey of wireless phones complied with the Telephone Consumers Protection Act and all FCC rules regarding contacting wireless telephones. 73% of the completions came from the wireless sample.

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Survey Results

February 21, 2020 Winthrop Poll

T1: Demographics of Likely SC Democratic Presidential Primary Voters from this poll

Male	37.7
Female	62.3
White	32.7
Black	61.0
Latino	2.4
Asian	1.0
Other	1.4
Refused	1.5

17-29	14.7
30-44	20.8
45-64	46.2
65+	18.3
High School or less	20.3
Some College	37.9
College grad	28.5
Postgrad	13

T2: I'm going to read a list of people who are running in the Democratic primaries for president in 2020. After I read **all of the names**, please tell me which of those candidates you would be most likely to support for the Democratic nomination for president in 2020, or if you would support someone else. Please let me finish reading all of the names before you answer **[Order of candidates' names randomized by computer]**

These are the **only** candidates whose names will appear on the SC Democratic Presidential Primary ballot on February 29th. Which of those candidates would you be most likely to support for the Democratic nomination for president in 2020 in the South Carolina Democratic Presidential Primary?

Candidate	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE =/ 5.9%
Michael Bennet <small>(Not read after he dropped out, but recorded if resp had already voted for him or mentioned after being told he dropped out)</small>	--	--
Joe Biden	24	31
Pete Buttigieg	7	1
Tulsi Gabbard	1	--

Amy Klobuchar	4	--
Deval Patrick (Not read after he dropped out, but recorded if resp had already voted for him or mentioned after being told he dropped out)	0	0
Bernie Sanders	19	17
Tom Steyer	15	18
Elizabeth Warren	6	5
Andrew Yang (Not read after he dropped out, but recorded if resp had already voted for him or mentioned after being told he dropped out)	1	--
Someone Else	2	2
Undecided	18	21
Refused	4	4

T3: Are you very sure about voting for that candidate; or might you change your mind before the primary election?

	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE =/- 5.9%
Very sure	55	58
Might change mind	43	40
Don't Know	2	3
Refused	--	--

[T4-6] I'm going to read you some characteristics of political candidates. For each, please tell me whether that characteristic makes you more likely to support them, less likely to support them, or makes no difference in whether you support them.

T4: First, if a candidate is openly gay, does that make you more likely to support them, less likely to support them, or makes no difference in whether you support them.

Likely SC Democratic Presidential Primary Voters		
	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE +/- 5.9%
More Likely	3	3
Less Likely	13	16
No Difference	82	79
Not Sure/Refused	2	2

T5: If a candidate is a woman, does that make you more likely to support them, less likely to support them, or makes no difference in whether you support them.

Likely SC Democratic Presidential Primary Voters		
	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE =/- 5.9%
More Likely	12	12
Less Likely	3	4
No Difference	84	83
Not Sure/Refused	1	1

T6: If a candidate does not reflect the diversity of your political party, does that make you more likely to support them, less likely to support them, or makes no difference in whether you support them.

[CALLER: If they ask what is meant by “diversity of your political party” means, reply: “Whatever that means to you.”]

Likely SC Democratic Presidential Primary Voters		
	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE +/- 5.9%
More Likely	4	5
Less Likely	33	41
No Difference	58	49
Not Sure/Refused	4	5

T7: Which is more important to you personally: That the Democratic Party nominate a presidential candidate

[Answers rotated]

With a strong chance of beating Donald Trump

OR

Who shares your positions on major issues

	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE =/- 5.9%
Beat Trump	44	44
Shares views	45	46
Both equally	8	9
DK/Refused	3	2

T8: In the November general election, if your preferred Democratic candidate does not win the party's presidential nomination, are you more likely to vote for the Democratic nominee, whoever they are, vote for Donald Trump, vote for a third party candidate, or not vote at all?

	All MOE +/- 4.7%	Black MOE +/- 5.9%
Vote for the Democratic nominee	80	85
Vote for President Trump	5	1
Vote third party	9	7
Not vote at all	3	3
Not Sure	4	4
Refused	0	--