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Special Report:
What We Learned from the New Hampshire Primary

Welcome to NAVIGATOR — a project designed to better understand the American public's views on issues of the day and help advocates, elected officials, and other interested parties understand the language, imagery and messaging needed to make and win key policy arguments. This edition is a special report breaking down the results of the New Hampshire Primary and their impact on the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination process. Navigator Research launched in early 2018 to better understand the American public's views on issues of the day and help advocates, elected officials, and other interested parties understand the language, imagery and messaging needed to make

and win key policy arguments. More information about Navigator and past waves of its research can be found here.

After a confusing finish in Iowa, Bernie Sanders scored a decisive victory in the New Hampshire Democratic primary. With 100% of precincts reporting, the results show Sanders edging out Pete Buttigieg by 1.3 points to win the Granite state. Sanders will receive 9 pledged delegates for winning 25.7 percent of the vote, while Buttigieg will also receive 9 delegates for capturing 24.4 percent of votes cast. This gives Buttigieg 23 delegates and Sanders 21 delegates each going into Nevada. But when looking at the race to win 1,991 delegates (i.e., the majority of delegates needed to secure the nomination) the fight to take on Trump has only just begun.

While most political observers expected Sanders to win New Hampshire, his margin of victory turned out to be smaller than pre-election polls indicated.

The FiveThirtyEight model predicted that Sanders would win 28% of the vote and 11 delegates. On election night, Sanders

won 25.7 percent of the vote and walked away with 9 delegates. Based on the modeled expectations, Sanders underperformed slightly by 2.3 percentage points. Post-Iowa, he received a modest bump in state polls, jumping from an average of 26.5 percent on February 3rd to 28.7 on February 10th, according to RealClearPolitics (RCP). By this metric, Sanders ran behind his polls by 3.0 points.

Buttigieg, on the other hand, beat his polls by 3.1 points per the RCP polling average. After Iowa, Buttigieg received a 7.6 point bump in the polls, going from 13.7 to 21.3 percent in the week between contests. The FiveThirtyEight model forecast that Buttigieg would win 23 percent of the vote and an average of 9 pledged delegates. In terms of those projections, Buttigieg ran 1.4 points ahead of his expected numbers and received the predicted number of delegates.

Updated Feb. 12, 2020			100% reporting
Candidate	Votes	Pct.	Pledged delegates
Bernie Sanders ✓	76,324	**25.7%**	9
Pete Buttigieg	72,457	**24.4**	9
Amy Klobuchar	58,796	**19.8**	6
Elizabeth Warren	27,387	**9.2**	0
Joseph R. Biden Jr.	24,921	**8.4**	0
Others	36,737	**12.4**	0
+ View all candidates			

296,622 votes, 301 of 301 precincts

Image via New York Times

Running behind already lowered expectations, Joe Biden won 8.4 percent of the vote to place fifth in New Hampshire. Biden was forecast to win 12 percent of the vote in New Hampshire and 1 pledged delegate, undershooting projections by 3.6 points. For additional context, Biden was polling at an average of 17.2 percent in New Hampshire on February 3rd and dropped to 11.0 percent on February 10th. In the next two states, the former vice president has lost ground, falling roughly 8.2 points in Nevada and 9.2 points in South Carolina. Nationally, Biden's numbers have declined from roughly 28 percent to an average of 19.2 percent, according to RCP.

Amy Klobuchar, on the other hand, won 19.8 percent of the vote to place third. The result is a big surprise compared to where she stood in the polls just a day prior. Per RCP, Klobuchar experienced a 5.0 point bump in the polls on average post-Iowa, from 6.7 to 11.7 percentage points. FiveThirtyEight projected that she would win an average of 11 percent of the vote and 1 pledged delegate. Instead, Klobuchar beat her polls by 8.1 points and captured 6 delegates for the convention, nearly doubling her support overnight.

When did you decide?

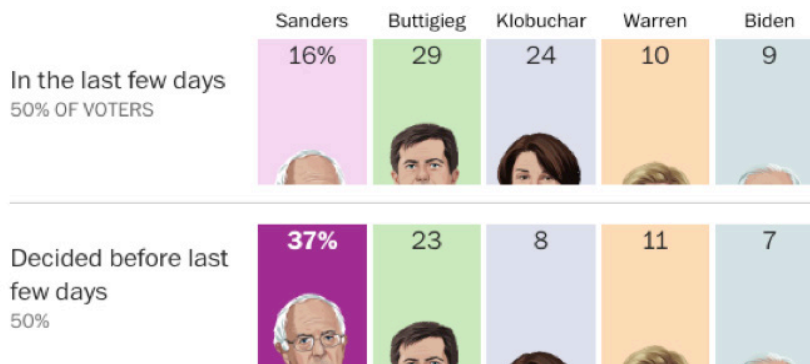|	Sanders	Buttigieg	Klobuchar	Warren	Biden
In the last few days 50% OF VOTERS	16%	29	24	10	9
Decided before last few days 50%	37%	23	8	11	7

Image via The Washington Post

How did she do it? There are a few factors that contributed to Klobuchar's surge. First, 50 percent of voters in New Hampshire reported that they made their decision in the last few days before the election. According to data published by the Washington Post, 29 percent of these voters broke for Buttigieg and 24 percent went with Klobuchar. These late-breakers appear to have made a big difference in propelling the Buttigieg and Klobuchar campaigns at the 11th hour. In contrast, only 16 percent of late-deciders supported Bernie Sanders, while 37 percent of voters who decided before the last few days voted for Sanders on election night.

Second, Klobuchar's surge drew from Elizabeth Warren's prior base of support: women overall and specifically white college-educated women. Warren finished behind her polls by roughly 3.8 points; she was forecasted to win 13 percent of the vote in New Hampshire, but only ended up with 9.2 percent, falling below the 15 percent viability threshold for pledged delegates. Exit polls showed that Klobuchar won 23 percent of women and 30 percent of white college-educated women. This group made up 45 percent of her overall voter base, per FiveThirtyEight. Warren's support among these voters fell to 11 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Third, Klobuchar benefitted more than other candidates from the February 7th debate. According to exit polls, 30% of those who said the pre-New Hampshire debate was an important factor picked Klobuchar. Since about half of voters in New Hampshire made up their minds in the last few days before the election, it is not a shock that Klobuchar's highly rated debate performance pushed late-deciders to her corner after no clear winner in Iowa.

How do we put the results from New Hampshire in context of the Democratic primary going forward? Taken together, Buttigieg did a few points better than his pre-New Hampshire polls and Sanders undershot his polls slightly. Klobuchar substantially overperformed expectations. But the fact that Sanders won the most votes in both Iowa and New Hampshire is a big deal.

Compared to the rest of the pack, Sanders' path to the nomination is the likeliest of all the contenders. However, FiveThirtyEight now projects that the most probable outcome of the nomination process is that no one will win a majority of pledged delegates at 38 percent (although this does not necessarily translate to a brokered convention - for example, a plurality winner of delegates could certainly wind up as the nominee). Sanders winning the nomination outright is second the most likely outcome at 36 percent. Biden is projected to have a 1 in 7 chance of winning, Bloomberg 1 in 15 (up from 1 in 100 just two weeks ago), Buttigieg 1 in 25, and Warren 1 in 50.

In the time between New Hampshire and Super Tuesday, just two more states will hold their contests, Nevada (February 22) and South Carolina (February 29). These states largely function as proving grounds for candidates among substantially more diverse electorates. However, once March 3 arrives, 38 percent (1,357) of all delegates will be snapped up. It's the closest analog to a national primary in the nomination process. It also marks the first time that Michael Bloomberg will appear on a ballot, suggesting voters are in for a long ride.

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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBA Strategies along with an advisory committee, including: Andrea Purse, progressive strategist; Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Delvone Michael, Working Families; Felicia Wong, Roosevelt Institute; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Melanie Roussell Newman, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; and Stephanie Valencia, Latino Victory Project.