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Warren Vaults into the Lead in California's Democratic Presidential Primary
Harris at risk of being shut out of home-state delegates at her party's convention

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Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren has pulled into the lead in California among voters likely to be participating in California's March Democratic presidential primary. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds Warren to be the choice of 29% of likely voters, up eleven points from June. While support for Warren has grown significantly over the past three months, backing for her two principal rivals, former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, has remained fairly static, with Biden polling 20%, down two points from June and Sanders at 19%, up two points.

Meanwhile, support for California's home-state Senator Kamala Harris has declined five points since June and is now in single digits (8%). South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg has also slipped four points from June to 6%. None of the other Democratic candidates receives more than 3% of likely voter support, while 8% of likely voters have no preference.

The strength of Warren's candidacy is further demonstrated when voters are asked which candidates they are giving at least some consideration to supporting in the Democratic primary. In this setting 68% of likely voters cite Warren, twenty-three points higher than any of her opponents. In addition, a 54% majority of likely voters lists Warren among their top two choices, twenty-one points greater than any of her Democratic rivals.

These are the topline results from the latest statewide *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online in English and Spanish between September 13-18, 2019 among 2,272 Californians considered likely to participate in the state's March 2020 Democratic presidential primary.

While primary Election Day in California is formally March 3, voters can begin to cast absentee ballots one month earlier, on the same day as the Iowa caucuses are held. The stakes for capturing this state's Democratic delegates are high, since California will be sending a total of 495 delegates to the Democratic National Convention, by far the most of any state. Of these, 416 will be allocated to candidates who receive at least 15% of the vote either statewide or within the state's fifty-three Congressional Districts. The other 79 will remain as unpledged delegates who cannot vote in the first round of convention balloting.

Warren opens up a nine-point lead in statewide primary election voter preferences

Voter support for Warren, which stood at 18% in the last Berkeley IGS Poll in June, has grown to 29%. It is noteworthy that Warren's growing base of support has come from the ranks of those formerly supporting Harris, Buttigieg and Biden. Thus far, Californians who are backing Sanders have been sticking with their man.

The other major takeaway from the poll is that support for Harris has declined among likely voters in her home state. She is now the choice of just 8%, down five points from June. Since California requires candidates to reach a minimum 15% threshold in primary election votes to be awarded delegates to the Democratic National Convention, Harris runs the risk of being shut out from capturing any delegates awarded from the statewide vote, although she could still earn some delegates if she obtains 15% of the vote in any of the state's 53 congressional districts.

Table 1
Trend of first choice preferences in California's March 2020 Democratic primary
(among likely voters in California's Democratic primary election)

	September 2019 %	June 2019 %
Elizabeth Warren	29	18
Joe Biden	20	22
Bernie Sanders	19	17
Kamala Harris	8	13
Pete Buttigieg	6	10
Beto O'Rourke	3	3
Andrew Yang	2	1
Amy Klobucher	2	1
Cory Booker	1	1
Julian Castro	1	1
Tulsi Gabbard	1	**
Michael Bennet	1	**
Steve Bulluck	-	-
Tom Steyer	-	**
Marianne Williamson	-	-
John Delaney	-	-
Tim Ryan	-	-
Bill de Blasio*	-	**
Joe Sestak	-	**
Wayne Messam	-	**
Others/undecided	8	13

*de Blasio has since dropped out of the presidential race; ** not measured in June 2019 poll*
- less than ½ of 1%

Greater than two-thirds of likely voters are giving some consideration to voting for
Warren and a majority lists her among their top two choices

Further demonstrating Warren's strength of support in California is the fact that greater than two in three of the state's primary election voters (68%) are giving at least some consideration to supporting her candidacy. By contrast, none of the other Democrats achieves a majority in this setting, with her nearest rivals each receiving between 43% and 46% of likely voter consideration.

In addition, the poll finds that a 54% majority of the state's primary voters now include Warren among their top two choices for president. This far exceeds the combined first and second-choice preferences of her two nearest rivals, Biden and Sanders, who each receive 33%. Harris is cited by 21% of state voters in this setting. Buttigieg at 15% is the only other Democrat in double-digits when aggregating California voters' top two preferences.

Table 2
Proportion of likely voters who are considering supporting the various Democratic candidates, as well as each candidate's share of first and second choice preferences (among likely voters in California's Democratic primary election)

	Considering support %	1st choice %	2nd choice %	1st/2nd choices (combined) %
Elizabeth Warren	68	29	25	54
Joe Biden	46	20	13	33
Bernie Sanders	45	19	14	33
Kamala Harris	43	8	13	21
Pete Buttigieg	33	6	9	15
Beto O'Rourke	19	3	3	6
Cory Booker	17	1	3	4
Andrew Yang	13	2	2	4
Amy Klobucher	11	2	2	4
Julian Castro	8	1	1	2
Tulsi Gabbard	4	1	1	2
Tom Steyer	3	-	1	1
Michael Bennet	2	1	-	1
Marianne Williamson	2	-	-	-
Steve Bullock	1	-	1	1
John Delaney	1	-	-	-
Tim Ryan	1	-	-	-
Bill de Blasio*	1	-	-	-
Joe Sestak	-	-	-	-
Wayne Messam	-	-	-	-
Undecided	4	8	12	8

de Blasio has since dropped out of the presidential race   -- less than ½ of 1%

Warren image among Democratic primary voters is more positive than her rivals'
Greater than three in four of the state's Democratic primary electorate (77%) have a favorable opinion of Warren, while just 10% view her unfavorably. This results in a net favorability score of +67, up eight points from June, and nearly thirty points higher than given to any of her opponents.

As Warren has improved her standing with the state primary electorate, Harris and Biden appear to be losing favor with them. While in June Harris was viewed favorably by 74% and unfavorably by just 15%, at present 59% rate her positively and 25% negatively. This equates to a net favorability score of +34, down from +59 three months ago. Similarly, Biden's net favorability score has fallen sixteen points since June from +39 to +23.

Table 3
Trend of image ratings of the candidates appearing in the last presidential debate
(among likely voters in California's Democratic primary election)

	Favorable %	Unfavorable %	No opinion %	Net favorability score %
Elizabeth Warren				
September 2019	**77**	**10**	**13**	**+67**
June 2019	73	14	13	+59
Bernie Sanders				
September 2019	**64**	**26**	**10**	**+38**
June 2019	67	27	6	+40
Kamala Harris				
September 2019	**59**	**25**	**16**	**+34**
June 2019	74	15	11	+59
Joe Biden				
September 2019	**57**	**34**	**9**	**+23**
June 2019	67	28	5	+39
Pete Buttigieg				
September 2019	**51**	**14**	**35**	**+37**
June 2019	52	10	38	+42
Beto O'Rourke				
September 2019	**47**	**22**	**31**	**+25**
June 2019	47	21	32	+26
Cory Booker				
September 2019	**41**	**19**	**40**	**+22**
June 2019	47	13	40	+34
Andrew Yang				
September 2019	**27**	**22**	**51**	**+5**
June 2019	12	12	76	0
Amy Klobucher				
September 2019	**26**	**21**	**53**	**+5**
June 2019	27	15	58	+12
Julian Castro				
September 2019	**23**	**31**	**46**	**-8**
June 2019	26	9	65	+17

Preferences across subgroups of the likely Democratic electorate

Support for Warren is greatest among liberals, whites (especially white college graduates) and San Francisco Bay Area voters. Her weakest segments are with moderate or conservative voters, Latinos (especially Spanish speakers), and voters who have not attended college.

The profile of voters backing Biden or Sanders in some respects are mirror images of one another. While Biden does best among older voters, as well as among moderates and conservative within the Democratic voting constituency, Sanders does best among younger voters and those who identify themselves as very liberal in politics. Biden also does well among the state's African American voters, one of Sanders' weakest segments. On the other hand, both do well among Latinos and non-college graduates. Support for Harris is mired in single digits across most voter segments, although she reaches the teens among voters in the Bay Area and other parts of Northern California, African Americans and those age 40-49.

Table 3
1st preferences for president in the Democratic primary across major subgroups
(among likely voters in California's Democratic primary election)

	Warren %	Biden %	Sanders %	Harris %	Buttigieg %	Others %	Undecided %
Total likely voters	**29**	**20**	**19**	**8**	**6**	**10**	**8**
Party registration							
Democrats	29	20	19	9	6	9	8
No party preference	28	17	18	7	5	14	11
Political ideology							
Very liberal	40	7	31	7	5	6	4
Somewhat liberal	32	21	13	9	9	9	7
Moderate/conservative	12	32	13	9	3	17	14
Region							
Los Angeles County	27	21	20	7	6	11	8
Orange/San Diego	32	18	17	4	5	14	10
Other Southern CA	23	28	17	6	7	13	6
Central Valley	24	20	27	8	7	7	7
San Francisco Bay Area	35	16	14	13	5	8	9
Other Northern CA	30	12	22	13	7	4	12
Gender							
Male	26	19	24	7	6	12	6
Female	31	20	15	9	6	9	10
Age							
18-29	23	7	39	6	4	14	7
30-39	26	8	33	8	7	11	7
40-49	28	20	15	15	6	11	5
50-64	30	26	12	9	6	10	7
65 or older	32	26	10	5	7	6	14
Education							
High school or less	19	23	26	8	2	11	11
Some college/trade school	24	23	21	8	7	9	8
College graduate	33	15	16	8	7	12	9
Post-graduate work	39	18	12	9	8	8	6
Race/ethnicity							
White non-Hispanic	34	16	16	8	8	9	9
Not a college graduate	29	18	20	6	7	10	10
College graduate	39	14	12	9	9	9	8
Latino	14	26	28	8	2	13	9
English language dominant	19	23	30	8	3	10	7
Spanish language dominant	4	34	26	10	--	13	13
African American	24	32	11	18	1	7	7
Asian American	33	14	19	5	9	11	9

* denotes share of the overall likely Democratic presidential primary electorate reporting this characteristic

Campaign issues as viewed by backers of the four leading Democratic candidates
The poll also assessed likely Democratic primary voter opinions on several other contentious issues
being debated in the presidential campaign.

The first relates to what Congress should do with regard to the possible impeachment of President
Donald Trump. According to the poll, 58% of the state's likely Democratic primary electorate support
the House of Representatives beginning impeachment proceedings against the President, up slightly
from 53% who felt this way in June. Among the 42% who do not, most favor the Congress continuing
its investigations into the President's affairs rather than moving on to other matters. *(Note: The poll
was largely completed before news broke last week that Trump had repeatedly pressed the president of
Ukraine to launch an investigation into the business activities of Biden's son, Hunter.)*

While majorities of those backing each of the four leading Democratic presidential candidates favors
the House moving forward with impeachment proceedings, support is greater among voters backing
Warren, Sanders and Harris than it is among those favoring Biden.

Table 5
Preferences of likely Democratic primary voters regarding what Congress should do about the possible impeachment of President Trump

	Begin impeachment proceedings %	Continue investigating/don't begin impeachment %	Consider the matter closed/move on %
Total likely voters in Democratic primary			
September 2019	**58**	**35**	**7**
June 2019	53	40	6
1st choice in Democratic primary (Sept. 2019)			
Warren	64	33	3
Biden	52	42	6
Sanders	63	28	9
Harris	63	32	5

Differences between the sum of each item's percentages and 100% equal proportion of voters with no opinion.

Another issue taking center stage in the Democratic presidential campaign relates to which policy
U.S. directions the should take with regard to reforming the nation's health care system. Statewide,
six in ten (61%) of the state's likely Democratic primary electorate favor modifying the system to
allow Medicare-type health plans while at the same time allowing people keep their private or
employer-provided health insurance coverage. This compares to 38% who favor moving to a
"Medicare for All" system that would eliminate all private or employer-provided health insurance.

There are significant differences in voter views among backers of the four leading Democratic
candidates. For example, large majorities of Biden supporters (86%) and voters backing Harris (68%)
favor modifying the health care system to allow for Medicare-type plans, while maintaining private
or employer coverage for those who want it. By contrast, among voters supporting Sanders, just 29%
favor this position.

Interestingly, while Warren herself supports moving the nation to a universal "Medicare for All"
health care system, her backers in California are more divided on the issue. Among Warren's
California supporters 55% prefer modifying the nation's health care system to allow for Medicare-
type plans alongside private and employer-provided plans, while 45% support moving to a universal
"Medicare for All" system.

Table 6
Preferences of likely Democratic primary voters regarding which policy directions the U.S. should take in reforming the nation's health care system

	Modify system to allow Medicare-type health plans, but keep private/employer-provided plans %	Move to a "Medicare for All" system eliminating all private/ employer-provided health insurance %
Total likely voters in the Democratic primary	**61**	**38**
1st choice in Democratic primary		
Warren	55	45
Biden	86	13
Sanders	29	71
Harris	68	30

Differences between the sum of each item's percentages and 100% equal proportion of voters with no opinion.

Likely Democratic primary voter opinions on four other campaign issues
Democratic primary voters were also asked to state their opinions on four other issues being discussed in this year's presidential campaign. One of them is overwhelmingly endorsed by the state's Democratic primary electorate. This relates to adopting environmental policies to eliminate fossil fuels in transportation, electricity generation and new building to achieve zero net emissions within 25 years, as called for in the Green New Deal proposal. Three in four (74%) likely Democratic primary voters statewide strongly agree with this policy and another 20% agree somewhat. Just 6% disagree.

Large majorities of the Democratic primary voters also endorse two other rather controversial policy proposals. Eight in then likely Democratic primary voters (80%) backs changing the penalties applied to immigrants who are caught illegally cross the Mexican border from a criminal offense to a civil offense, 49% backing it strongly.

Extending coverage to undocumented immigrants as part of the nation's health care system is endorsed by 64% of the primary electorate, nearly half of whom support it strongly. Only about one in three Democratic primary voters (35%) is opposed.

Fewer than half of Democratic primary voters (47%) agree with the proposal to immediately withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan even if it means having the Taliban militia regaining control of the country, and just 18% agree strongly. By contrast, a 52% majority of these voters disagree with taking this approach.

Table 7
Opinions of likely Democratic primary voters toward four other policy proposals being debated in the Democratic presidential campaign

	Agree strongly %	Agree somewhat %	Disagree somewhat %	Disagree strongly %
Adopt policies to eliminate the use of coal, oil, and other fossil fuels in transportation, electricity generation, and new buildings to achieve zero net emissions of greenhouse gases within 25 years as called for in the Green New Deal proposal	74	20	4	2
Change penalties for illegal crossings of immigrants along the border with Mexico from a criminal offense to a civil offense	49	31	11	9
Include coverage of all undocumented immigrants as part of the nation's health care system	30	34	23	12
Immediately withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan even if it means having the Taliban militia regain control of the country	18	29	39	13

Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each proposal equal proportion of voters with no opinion.

Biden supporters differ from those of the other leading candidates on several of these issues
On three of the above four issues significant differences are seen when comparing the views of likely primary election voters who support Biden to those supporting his leading rivals.

For example, while very large majorities of each candidate's supporters strongly endorse the policy objectives of the Green New Deal, a somewhat smaller majority of Biden supporters does so.

Similarly, 50% or more of the voters supporting of Warren, Sanders or Harris strongly agree with the proposal to change the penalties for immigrants caught illegally cross the Mexican border from a criminal offense to a civil offense. Among Biden's supporters, fewer than one in three of voters take this view.

In addition, while sizable proportions of voters backing Warren, Sanders or Harris (between 34% and 44%) strongly agree with the idea of extending health insurance coverage to undocumented immigrants, among Biden voters just 15% take this position.

Table 8
**Proportions of likely Democratic primary electorate who "strongly agree" with
the four policy proposals—overall and among backers of the four leading candidates**

	Total likely voters %	Warren supporters %	Biden supporters %	Sanders supporters %	Harris supporters %
Adopt policies to eliminate the use of coal, oil, and other fossil fuels in transportation, electricity generation, and new buildings to achieve zero net emissions of greenhouse gases within 25 years as called for in the Green New Deal proposal	74	85	60	85	77
Change penalties for illegal crossings of immigrants along the border with Mexico from a criminal offense to a civil offense	49	58	30	61	50
Include coverage of all undocumented immigrants as part of the nation's health care system	30	34	15	44	38
Immediately withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan even if it means having the Taliban militia regain control of the country	18	18	14	31	18

Questions Asked

Thinking about California's March 2020 Democratic primary election for president. Which candidates are you currently considering supporting? Select as many names as those you are giving some consideration to supporting. *(SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES LISTED)*

If California's Democratic primary for president were being held today, who would be your first choice? *IF 1ST CHOICE GIVEN:* Who would be your second choice? *(NAMES RANDOMIZED)*

Below are the names of the Democratic candidates who participated in the September 12th presidential debate. For each please indicate whether your opinion of each is favorable, unfavorable or whether you don't know enough about him or her to say? *(NAMES RANDOMIZED)*

Now that special counsel Robert S. Mueller III has completed his investigation and provided testimony about his investigation to Congress, what do you believe should be the best course of action for the Congress to take concerning matters relating to President Trump?
(1) Begin impeachment proceedings that could lead to Trump being removed from office
(2) Continue investigating questions involving Trump, his finances and allegations of wrongdoing, but don't begin impeachment proceedings
(3) Consider the matter closed and move on to other things

Which comes closer to your view of what should be done with the nation's health care system?
(1) We should overhaul the system by moving to a "Medicare for All" system that eliminates private or employer-provided health insurance and creates a government health insurance program for all Americans
(2) We should modify the system to allow people to enroll in a Medicare-type health plan, but also allow people to keep their current private or employer-provided insurance if they prefer.

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following policy proposals? *(SEE RELEASE FOR PROPOSAL WORDING)*

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish September 13-18, 2019 among 4,527 registered voters statewide, 2,272 of whom are considered likely voters in California's Democratic presidential primary.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Once the questionnaire and email invitations had been finalized, they were translated into the Spanish and reviewed for cultural appropriateness. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by IGS and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to participate and not wanting to receive future emails from IGS about the survey.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California. The email addresses of voters were derived from information contained on the state's official voter registration rolls. The overall sample of registered voters with email addresses was stratified in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. At the conclusion of the data processing phase, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample to population characteristics of the state's overall registered voter population. Likely voters were identified based on a voter's stated intention to vote in next year's primary election and factoring in their history of voting in past elections.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that the results from the likely Democratic presidential primary electorate are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results based on subgroups of this population would be subject to larger margins of sampling error.

Detailed tabulations reporting the results to each question included in this report can be found at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll.

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. The co-directors of the Institute of Governmental Studies are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll.