

Released:
Monday, December 15, 2014

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NATIONAL: DEMS WANT HILLARY IN 2016

But party voters also prefer a contested primary

West Long Branch, NJ – The *Monmouth University Poll* finds that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is the top choice for 2016 among Democrats and Democratic leaning voters. However, most Democratic voters would prefer to see a contested primary campaign, including many of those who back Clinton.

When asked to name who they would like to see as the next Democrat nominee for president, nearly half (48%) of Democrats and Democratic leaning voters volunteer Hillary Clinton. No other candidate registers in double digits. Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren is named by 6%, independent Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is named by 2%, and Vice President Joe Biden is named by 2%.

The poll question asked survey participants to name a preference without providing a list of suggested candidates. Fully 6-in-10 are able to volunteer a choice more than a year before the first official nominating contest. Another 32% say they are undecided at this stage and 7% report that they do not plan to support any Democrat for 2016.

“When nearly half of Democratic voters volunteer the name Hillary Clinton as their choice for 2016, it’s hard to deny that she is the clear front runner,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey. “At the same, time Democrats do not want to the nomination process to be a coronation.”

About 4-in-10 (43%) Democratic voters think it would be better if the party got behind Clinton early in the nominating process, but more (48%) say it would be better if she faced an active primary challenge. Democratic men (56%) are more likely than women (42%) to prefer a contested nomination. While most self-professed Clinton supporters (53%) would like to see the field cleared for her, a

significant number (41%) would actually like to see their favored candidate face an active challenge for the nomination.

Clinton has almost universal appeal among Democratic voters – 82% have a favorable opinion of the former Secretary of State, U.S. Senator and First Lady. Just 11% hold an unfavorable view of her. Opinion of Vice President Joe Biden among his fellow Democrats is mixed – 46% have a favorable view and 32% have an unfavorable one. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo garners a 30% favorable to 22% unfavorable opinion among Democratic voters.

Other potential presidential contenders asked about in the *Monmouth University Poll* are familiar to no more than a third of Democratic voters. These include Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders (22% favorable to 13% unfavorable), former Virginia Senator Jim Webb (11% favorable to 14% unfavorable), Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley (10% favorable to 13% unfavorable), and West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin (9% favorable to 14% unfavorable).

Looking back to the last contested Democratic presidential nomination, few of the party faithful seem to feel regret at the outcome. Just 28% of Democratic voters feel things would have been better if Hillary Clinton had won the 2008 nomination. Most (59%) say things would have been about the same if she ended up as the nominee rather than Barack Obama. Only 7% say things would have been worse. Even among those who would like to see Clinton as the 2016 standard-bearer, 58% say things would not have been any different if she had won the nod in 2008 while 35% say things would have been better.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 14, 2014 with 1,008 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 386 registered voters who identify themselves as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party. This sample has a margin of error of ± 5.0 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. I know the 2016 election is far away, but who would you like to see as the Democratic nominee for president? *[LIST WAS NOT READ]*

	TOTAL
Hillary Clinton	48%
Elizabeth Warren	6%
Joe Biden	2%
Bernie Sanders	2%
Andrew Cuomo	1%
Other	1%
No one, do not want Democrat as president	7%
Undecided	32%

2. I'm going to read you a few names of people who might run for president in 2016. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. *[NAMES WERE ROTATED]*

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	82%	11%	7%
Vice President Joe Biden	46%	32%	22%
Former Virginia Senator Jim Webb	11%	14%	75%
Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley	10%	13%	77%
Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders	22%	13%	65%
New York Governor Andrew Cuomo	30%	22%	48%
West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin	9%	14%	77%

3. Do you think it would be better if the Democrats got behind Hillary Clinton early in the nominating process or would it be better if there was an active primary challenge?

	TOTAL
Better if Dems got behind Hillary	43%
Better if active primary challenge	48%
(VOL) Don't know	9%

4. Looking back to the 2008 election, do you think things would have been better, worse, or about the same if Hillary Clinton had won that election rather than Barack Obama?

	TOTAL
Better	28%
Worse	7%
About the same	59%
(VOL) Don't know	6%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 14, 2014 with a national random sample of 1,008 adults age 18 and older. This includes 677 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 331 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). The results in this poll release are based on a subsample of 386 registered voters who identify themselves as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 5.0 percentage points. Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS		
49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic
		7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) DEMOCRAT VOTERS ONLY		
43% Male	26% 18-34	61% White
57% Female	36% 35-54	20% Black
	39% 55+	15% Hispanic
		5% Asian/Other

	DEMOCRAT VOTER	PARTY ID		GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Lean Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Unweighted N	386	289	97	168	218	64	121	200
moe	5.0%	5.8%	10.0%	7.6%	6.6%	12.3%	8.9%	6.9%

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