

Released:
Thursday, January 28, 2016

Contact:
PATRICK MURRAY
732-979-6769 (cell); 732-263-5858 (office)
pdmurray@monmouth.edu
Follow on Twitter: @PollsterPatrick

IOWA: CLINTON CLINGS TO CAUCUS LEAD

But Sanders makes gains among most voting blocs

West Long Branch, NJ – Hillary Clinton leads Bernie Sanders by 5 points in the latest ***Monmouth University Poll*** of likely Iowa Democratic caucusgoers, which is down from 22 points just one month ago. High turnout could make this race even tighter.

Hillary Clinton currently garners the support of 47% of likely Democratic caucusgoers compared to 42% for Bernie Sanders. Clinton's lead has shrunk from the 55% to 33% advantage she held in December. Martin O'Malley clocks in at 6% of the vote, which is unchanged from a month ago. Another 6% are uncommitted or undecided.

Clinton enjoys a lead over Sanders among female voters by 50% to 38%, but that is not as large as her 61% to 27% advantage last month. The two are basically tied among men – 46% for Sanders and 43% for Clinton. Last month, Clinton had a slight 47% to 42% edge among men.

Clinton leads Sanders by 54% to 34% among voters age 50 and older, which is slightly weaker than her 63% to 26% lead in December. Sanders continues to hold the advantage among voters under 50 by a 59% to 31% margin, which is wider than his 48% to 38% lead last month.

“Support for Sanders has come from those who are new to the process, but the current poll indicates he is also cutting into Clinton's lead among die-hard Democratic partisans,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

Among voters who have a history of voting in state Democratic primaries, Clinton currently leads Sanders by 47% to 39%, which is down from the large 57% to 30% advantage she had with this group last month. Among registered Democrats who usually participate only in general elections, Clinton holds a stronger 52% to 41% lead, similar to the 56% to 34% lead she held with this group in December. Among non-Democrats who say they will change their registration to caucus with the Democrats –

representing about one-fifth of the current sample – Sanders has a 48% to 40% lead. Last month, he and Clinton were tied among this group at 45% each.

Turnout in the Iowa Democratic caucuses is extremely unpredictable. Over the past 35 years, reported turnout has ranged from a low of about 30,000 in 1992 to a high of nearly 240,000 in 2008 according to published reports. The current poll's screening rate for likely caucusgoers projects a turnout of about 110,000 voters. Increasing the model to a turnout of approximately 150,000 voters – which would be the second highest turnout on record – would narrow Clinton's lead over Sanders to a 46% to 43% margin, with O'Malley's support at 5%. Pushing turnout to 200,000 would leave the race virtually tied at 45% for Clinton and 44% for Sanders.

“Given the way Iowa's Democratic caucuses work, Clinton could start the night with more supporters, but Sanders could win the delegate count,” said Murray.

The majority (55%) of likely caucusgoers say they have locked in their candidate choice, up from 41% in December. Another 30% say they have a strong preference but are willing to consider another candidate before Monday. Just 1-in-7 have only a slight preference (7%) or are essentially undecided (8%) at this point. Clinton voters (63%) are slightly more likely than Sanders supporters (56%) to be completely set on their vote choice.

It is important to keep in mind that the Iowa Democratic Party does not report voter preference on Monday night, only the allocation of county convention delegates. In order to receive delegates, each candidate must reach a viability threshold, which is 15% support in most precincts. If O'Malley's supporters do not meet that threshold, they will be asked to caucus for another candidate (and he could also get a lower level of support than is reported in voter preference polls). Prior Monmouth polls indicated that O'Malley supporters would divide nearly evenly between Clinton and Sanders as their second choice. However, the current poll suggests that they will break more for Sanders, although the margin of error for the small group of O'Malley supporters in the poll is large, and thus the findings are not statistically significant.

More than 6-in-10 (62%) likely caucusgoers say they have been contacted by a presidential campaign to obtain their support. This includes 49% who have been contacted by the Clinton camp, 38% by the Sanders camp, and 15% by the O'Malley camp. Among those who have been contacted by a campaign, 51% say they plan to caucus for Clinton and 36% support Sanders. Among those who have not received any direct campaign contact, 51% plan to caucus for Sanders and 40% support Clinton.

Just over half (52%) say they plan to attend their local caucus with a friend or family member, while 43% say they will go alone. Among those who will attend with another person, Clinton has a 48% to 43% lead. Among those who will caucus on their own, Clinton's lead is 45% to 40%.

The historical nature of Clinton’s bid to be the first woman president is not a particularly strong draw for Iowa voters. Just 21% say this factor is very important in their vote consideration and 26% say it is somewhat important. Another 18% say it is not too important and 34% say it is not at all important. Among Clinton voters, 33% say it is very important and 31% somewhat important.

The *Monmouth University Poll* also found that likely caucusgoers hold overwhelmingly positive views of both Clinton (78% favorable – 17% unfavorable) and Sanders (85% favorable – 9% unfavorable). O’Malley earns a 50% favorable and 14% unfavorable rating, with 36% having no opinion of him. Most voters would be happy if either of the two leading contenders became the Democratic nominee. About 8-in-10 would be either enthusiastic (39%) or satisfied (40%) with Clinton as the nominee, and a similar number say the same about Sanders (34% enthusiastic and 47% satisfied).

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from January 23 to 26, 2016 with 504 Iowa voters likely to attend the Democratic presidential caucuses in February 2016. This sample has a margin of error of ±4.4 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

- Who would you support if the presidential caucus was being held today and the candidates for the Democratic nomination were – [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

	January 2016	December 2015
Hillary Clinton	47%	55%
Bernie Sanders	42%	33%
Martin O’Malley	6%	6%
(VOL) Other	0%	1%
(VOL) “Uncommitted”	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	4%	3%
(n)	504	405

- And who would be your second choice?

	CLINTON SUPPORTERS		SANDERS SUPPORTERS	
	January 2016	December 2015	January 2016	December 2015
Hillary Clinton	n/a	n/a	58%	65%
Bernie Sanders	68%	66%	n/a	n/a
Martin O’Malley	17%	17%	26%	25%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%	2%	2%
(VOL) No one	13%	14%	11%	7%
(VOL) Undecided	3%	3%	4%	2%

3. Which of the following best describes where your decision stands at this moment: I am completely decided on which candidate I will support, I have a strong preference right now but I am willing to consider other candidates, I have a slight preference among a group of candidates I like, or I am really undecided among a number of candidates?

	January 2016	December 2015
Completely decided	55%	41%
Strong preference	30%	38%
Slight preference	7%	11%
Undecided	8%	10%

4. I'm going to read you a few names of people who are running 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
Hillary Clinton --December 2015	78% 85	17% 9	5% 6
Bernie Sanders --December 2015	85% 80	9% 6	6% 14
Martin O'Malley --December 2015	50% 49	14% 10	36% 41

[QUESTIONS 5 & 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. How would you feel if Hillary Clinton became the Democratic nominee – enthusiastic, satisfied, dissatisfied, or upset?

	January 2016	December 2015
Enthusiastic	39%	43%
Satisfied	40%	45%
Dissatisfied	12%	8%
Upset	8%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%

6. How would you feel if Bernie Sanders became the Democratic nominee – enthusiastic, satisfied, dissatisfied, or upset?

	January 2016	December 2015
Enthusiastic	34%	30%
Satisfied	47%	50%
Dissatisfied	11%	14%
Upset	6%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%

7. When you considered who to support, how important is it to you that Hillary would be the first woman president if elected – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	January 2016
Very important	21%
Somewhat important	26%
Not too important	18%
Not at all important	34%
(VOL) Don't know	1%

8. Did anyone contact you personally to ask you to caucus for a particular candidate?

	January 2016
Yes	62%
No	37%
(VOL) Don't know	1%

9. If YES: For which candidate were you asked to caucus? [MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]

	January 2016
Hillary Clinton	49%
Martin O'Malley	15%
Bernie Sanders	38%
(VOL) Other	1%
(VOL) Don't know	1%

10. Do you plan to go to your local caucus with someone else or will you go on your own?

	January 2016
With someone else	52%
On own	43%
(VOL) Don't know	5%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from January 23 to 26, 2016 with a statewide random sample of 504 Iowa voters drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least one of the last two state primary elections, voted in both the 2012 and 2014 general elections, or have registered to vote in the past year. Results in this report are based on voters who say they are likely to attend the Democratic presidential caucuses in February 2016 (including voters already registered as Democrats and voters who say they will declare themselves as Democrat for the caucuses). This includes 366 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 138 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for age and gender based on state registration list information on the pool of all voters who meet the initial selection criteria. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and Aristotle (voter list). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). 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)		
43% Male	15% 18-34	94% White, non-Hispanic
57% Female	14% 35-49	6% Other
	40% 50-64	
	31% 65+	

	LIKELY CAUCUS-GOER	MARGIN OF ERROR						
		GENDER		SELF-ID PARTY		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
		Male	Female	Dem	Ind	Very Liberal.	Somewhat Liberal.	Mod-Conserv.
Unweighted N	504	225	279	400	103	124	137	238
moe	4.4%	6.5%	5.9%	4.9%	9.7%	8.8%	8.4%	6.4%

###