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SOUTH CAROLINA: BIDEN MAINTAINS LEAD

Sanders and Steyer jockey for second

West Long Branch, NJ – Joe Biden stays well atop the field in South Carolina, according to the third Monmouth ("Mon-muth") University Poll of likely Democratic primary voters there. Tom Steyer and Bernie Sanders are fighting for the second spot. Biden's wide lead in the poll is underpinned by solid support among black voters in the state.

Among South Carolina voters who are likely to participate in the Democratic primary on Saturday, support currently stands at 36% for Biden, 16% for Sanders, and 15% for Steyer. Candidates who currently fall below the statewide delegate viability threshold include Elizabeth Warren (8%), Pete Buttigieg (6%), Amy Klobuchar (4%), and Tulsi Gabbard (1%). Another 15% of likely primary voters remain undecided and do not lean toward any candidate at this time. In Monmouth's October poll, 33% supported Biden, 16% Warren, and 12% Sanders. It should be noted that interviews for the current poll were conducted after the Nevada caucuses, wrapping up right before Tuesday night's debate.

"Biden appears to be holding on to his core support among African Americans in South Carolina. The recent endorsement by Rep. James Clyburn should help solidify that," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Black voters, who form a majority of the likely primary electorate, back Biden (45%) by a wide margin over Steyer (17%) and Sanders (13%). White voters are more divided, with Biden (26%) followed by Sanders (17%), Warren (13%), Buttigieg (13%), and Steyer (12%). Among those who identify themselves as Democrats, 44% back Biden, followed by Sanders (15%) and Steyer (14%), while those who are independent or identify with another party are divided among Biden (22%), Sanders (18%), Steyer (15%), and Warren (11%).

Just over 4 in 10 likely South Carolina Democratic primary voters are set on their candidate choice, including 39% who say they are firmly decided and another 4% who have already voted by

absentee ballot. Biden (59%) and Sanders (57%) are the most likely to have their support locked in. Less than half of those backing other candidates are firmly decided.

"A key metric for Biden in this make-or-break state is that his support appears to be firm. There is still a large chunk of the electorate who are undecided, but they are mainly moderate black voters. That's a group that tends to like Biden," said Murray.

Mike Bloomberg is not on the ballot in South Carolina, but 1 in 4 likely primary voters say they would be either very (9%) or somewhat (16%) likely to vote for him if he was. Another 19% would not be too likely to vote for him and 46% would not be at all likely. Those who would be at least somewhat likely to support Bloomberg include 41% of Steyer voters, 26% of Biden voters, and 19% of Sanders voters. [Note: 2% of those polled actually volunteered that they would vote for Bloomberg when initially asked for their candidate choice. These respondents were reassigned to a second choice after being informed that Bloomberg is not on the ballot and cannot be written in.]

The first three contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada have not had much impact on how South Carolina voters view this race. Very few say those results made them take a second look at the field, with 8% saying they changed their mind about whom to support and 7% saying they did not change their choice in the end.

Democratic primary voters are looking for electability – 66% say beating President Donald Trump is more important to their vote than lining up with a candidate on any policy issue. Another 16% say electability is about as important as their top policy concern while 15% say it is less important than issue alignment. Among those who say beating Trump is their top priority, 38% support Biden, 16% support Sanders, and 13% support Steyer. Among those who say it is not a top priority, Biden (32%) still retains a lead over Sanders (16%) and Steyer (15%).

Looking at candidate qualities, 53% of likely Democratic primary voters say they want someone who can unite the country, while 41% say they prefer someone who can bring about change. Interestingly, this change number is higher than in the Super Tuesday states Monmouth has polled (32% in California and 27% in Virginia). In those states, Sanders is the most popular choice among "change" voters, but in South Carolina it is Biden (29%), with the edge over Sanders (20%) and Steyer (18%). Biden (43%) has a larger lead among "unite" voters over Sanders (14%) and Steyer (12%).

Palmetto State Democratic primary voters are divided on the possibility of beating Trump in November. Over 4 in 10 (44%) think the incumbent will be reelected, while a nearly identical number (46%) think he will lose to the Democrat. Still, nearly two-thirds (65%) of likely primary voters feel optimistic about this year's election (32% very and 33% somewhat), while only 25% are pessimistic (9% very and 16% somewhat). Black voters (68%) are more likely than white voters (58%) to feel optimistic about the 2020 election.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from February 23 to 25, 2020 with 454 South Carolina voters who are likely to vote in the Democratic presidential primary on February 29, 2020, out of 713 registered voters that were contacted for the poll. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 4.6 percentage points. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

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

1. If the Democratic primary election for president was today, would you vote for [NAMES WERE ROTATED]? [If UNDECIDED: If you had to vote for one of these candidates at this moment, who do you lean toward?]

	,		
TREND:	Feb.	Oct.	July
(with leaners)	2020	2019	2019
Joe Biden	36%	33%	39%
Bernie Sanders	16%	12%	10%
Tom Steyer	15%	4%	2%
Elizabeth Warren	8%	16%	9%
Pete Buttigieg	6%	3%	5%
Amy Klobuchar	4%	2%	1%
Tulsi Gabbard	1%	1%	<1%
(VOL) Other	0%	15%*	17%*
(VOL) Undecided	15%	15%	17%
(n)	(454)	(402)	(405)

^{*} Includes candidates who have since dropped out.

2. Are you firmly decided on your candidate choice or are you open to the possibility of voting for a different candidate on primary day? [*If OPEN*: Would you rate the possibility of supporting a different candidate as high, moderate, or low?]

		Feb.
		2020
Firmly decided		39%
	high possibility	9%
Open to different candidate	moderate possibility	22%
candidate	low possibility	8%
Already voted		4%
(VOL) Don't know		3%
No first choice (from	m Q1)	15%
(n)		(454)

3. Mike Bloomberg will not be on the ballot in South Carolina. How likely would you be to vote for him if he was on the ballot – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	Feb.
	2020
Very likely	9%
Somewhat likely	16%
Not too likely	19%
Not at all likely	46%
Already voted	4%
(VOL) Don't know	6%
(n)	(454)

4. Did the results of the prior contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada make you take a second look at any of the candidates, or did these results not really change your thinking about who you will support in the primary? [If TOOK A SECOND LOOK: Did you actually change your mind about who to support or not?]

		Feb. 2020
Took a second	changed mind	8%
look, and	did not change mind	7%
Not really change	thinking	77%
Already voted		4%
(VOL) Don't know	I	4%
(n)		(454)

5. When thinking about who you are supporting in the Democratic primary, how much of a factor is beating Donald Trump next November – is it more important than any policy issue you are concerned with, about as important as your top policy concern, or less important than your top policy concern?

	Feb.
	2020
More important	66%
About as important	16%
Less important	15%
(VOL) Don't know	3%
(n)	(454)

6. If you had to choose, are you more concerned about choosing a candidate who can bring about change or a candidate who can unite the country?

	Feb.
	2020
Bring about change	41%
Unite the country	53%
(VOL) Neither	3%
(VOL) Don't know	3%
(n)	(454)

7. Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about the 2020 presidential election? [Is that very or somewhat optimistic/pessimistic]?

	Feb.
	2020
Very optimistic	32%
Somewhat optimistic	33%
Somewhat pessimistic	16%
Very pessimistic	9%
(VOL) Neither, don't care	3%
(VOL) Don't know	7%
(n)	(454)

8. As of right now, what do you think the chances are that Donald Trump gets reelected in November – do you think he will definitely get reelected, probably get reelected, probably lose to the Democrat, or definitely lose to the Democrat?

	Feb.
	2020
Definitely get reelected	6%
Probably get reelected	38%
Probably lose to the Democrat	28%
Definitely lose to the Democrat	18%
(VOL) Depends on the Democrat	3%
(VOL) Don't know	7%
(n)	(454)

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from February 23 to 25, 2020 with a statewide random sample of 713 South Carolina voters drawn from a list of registered voters who participated in a primary or general election in the past two election cycles (excluding those who have consistently voted in Republican primaries), or have registered to vote since November 2018. This includes 231 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 482 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Results are based on 454 voters who are likely to vote in the Democratic presidential primary on February 29, 2020. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The full sample is weighted for age, gender, race, education and region based on state voter registration list information and U.S. Census information (CPS 2018 supplement). Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and Aristotle (voter sample). For results based on the sample of likely Democratic primary voters, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.6 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)
Self-Reported Party
63% Democrat
33% Independent
4% Republican
41% Male
59% Female
20% 18-34
23% 35-49
34% 50-64
23% 65+
37% White, non-Hispanic
57% Black
6% Other
61% No degree
39% 4 year degree
39% Low CD1/6
29% PeeDee CD5/7
32% Upstate CD 2/3/4
32 /0 Opsiais OD 2/3/4

MARGIN OF ERROR			
		unweighted	moe
		sample	(+/-)
LIKELY DEMOCRATIC VOTERS		454	4.6%
SELF REPORTED PARTY ID	Democrat	305	5.6%
	Other	143	8.2%
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY	Liberal	120	9.0%
	Moderate/Conservative	322	5.5%
GENDER	Male	185	7.2%
	Female	269	6.0%
AGE	18-49	133	8.5%
	50-64	162	7.7%
	<i>65</i> +	151	8.0%
RACE	White	167	7.6%
	Black	254	6.2%
COLLEGE GRADUATE	No degree	2 <i>4</i> 5	6.3%
	4 year degree	204	6.9%
INCOME	<\$50K	182	7.3%
	\$50 to <100K	127	8.7%
	\$100K+	103	9.7%

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		TOTAL PARTY ID I		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
If the Democratic primary	Joe Biden	36%	44%	22%	33%	37%	32%	38%	31%	32%	50%
election for president was today, would you vote for[READ LIST]?	Bernie Sanders	16%	15%	18%	24%	13%	19%	13%	18%	15%	10%
[with leaners]	Elizabeth Warren	8%	7%	11%	16%	5%	10%	7%	8%	9%	8%
	Pete Buttigieg	6%	5%	7%	6%	7%	8%	5%	8%	4%	6%
	Amy Klobuchar	4%	2%	7%	2%	5%	6%	2%	2%	6%	4%
	Tom Steyer	15%	14%	15%	13%	15%	11%	17%	16%	18%	8%
	Tulsi Gabbard	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%
	Undecided	15%	13%	17%	6%	16%	12%	17%	16%	14%	12%

		RA	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE		INCOME	
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
If the Democratic primary	Joe Biden	26%	45%	35%	36%	31%	35%	46%
election for president was today, would you vote for[READ LIST]?	Bernie Sanders	17%	13%	16%	15%	16%	19%	12%
[with leaners]	Elizabeth Warren	13%	5%	6%	12%	9%	7%	9%
	Pete Buttigieg	13%	2%	6%	6%	6%	5%	8%
	Amy Klobuchar	7%	0%	3%	6%	1%	6%	7%
	Tom Steyer	12%	17%	19%	8%	19%	10%	10%
	Tulsi Gabbard	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%	0%
	Undecided	8%	17%	15%	14%	17%	14%	8%

		TOTAL	PART	Y ID	POLITICAL	IDEOLOGY	GEN	DER		AGE 3-WAY	
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
2. Are you firmly decided on your	Firmly decided	39%	42%	34%	50%	35%	40%	38%	38%	41%	38%
candidate choice or are you open to the possibility of voting for a	Open, high possibility	9%	8%	11%	10%	9%	8%	10%	11%	9%	6%
different candidate on primary day? [If "open" ASK:] Would you	Open, moderate possibility	22%	19%	29%	16%	25%	23%	21%	25%	20%	19%
rate the possibility of supporting a different candidate as high,	Open, low possibility	8%	10%	5%	10%	8%	8%	8%	6%	7%	15%
moderate, or low?	[Already voted]	4%	6%	2%	7%	3%	4%	4%	1%	5%	8%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	5%	2%	3%	4%	2%
	No first choice [Q1]	15%	13%	17%	6%	16%	12%	17%	16%	14%	12%

		RA	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE		INCOME	
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
2. Are you firmly decided on your	Firmly decided	42%	37%	38%	41%	37%	41%	40%
candidate choice or are you open to the possibility of voting for a	Open, high possibility	6%	11%	9%	10%	7%	9%	14%
different candidate on primary day? [If "open" ASK:] Would you	Open, moderate possibility	26%	19%	22%	21%	24%	22%	17%
rate the possibility of supporting a different candidate as high,	Open, low possibility	11%	7%	8%	10%	7%	10%	10%
moderate, or low?	[Already voted]	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	7%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	4%	4%	1%	5%	0%	3%
	No first choice [Q1]	8%	17%	15%	14%	17%	14%	8%

		TOTAL	PART	Y ID	POLITICAL	IDEOLOGY	GEN	DER		AGE 3-WAY	
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
3. Mike Bloomberg will not be on	Very likely	9%	6%	13%	4%	11%	9%	9%	7%	14%	6%
the ballot in South Carolina. How likely would you be to vote for him	Somewhat likely	16%	17%	15%	14%	17%	15%	17%	18%	13%	19%
if he was on the ballot - very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or	Not too likely	19%	19%	20%	18%	20%	18%	20%	27%	13%	14%
not at all likely?	Not at all likely	46%	46%	45%	56%	41%	48%	44%	43%	47%	48%
	[Already voted]	4%	6%	2%	7%	3%	4%	4%	1%	5%	8%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	6%	5%	2%	7%	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%

		RA	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE			
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
Mike Bloomberg will not be on the ballot in South Carolina. How	Very likely	9%	9%	10%	7%	7%	11%	10%
likely would you be to vote for him	Somewhat likely	16%	18%	14%	19%	16%	19%	14%
if he was on the ballot - very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or	Not too likely	15%	21%	24%	12%	22%	18%	17%
not at all likely?	Not at all likely	53%	40%	41%	53%	46%	42%	48%
	[Already voted]	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	7%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	8%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%

		TOTAL	TOTAL PARTY ID		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY		
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
4. Did the results of IA, NH or NV	Second look, changed mind	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	11%	7%	5%	11%	11%
make you take a second look at any of the candidates or did this	Second look, did not change mind	7%	7%	6%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%	9%	4%
not really change your thinking about who you will support in the	Not really change thinking	77%	77%	79%	77%	78%	76%	78%	84%	72%	72%
primary? [IF 2nd LOOK: Did you actually change your mind about	[Already voted]	4%	6%	2%	7%	3%	4%	4%	1%	5%	8%
who to support or not?	[VOL] Dont know	4%	3%	5%	1%	5%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%

		RAG	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE		INCOME	
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
4. Did the results of IA, NH or NV	Second look, changed mind	9%	8%	7%	11%	7%	7%	11%
make you take a second look at any of the candidates or did this	Second look, did not change mind	10%	4%	4%	10%	5%	7%	10%
not really change your thinking about who you will support in the	Not really change thinking	74%	79%	80%	73%	81%	79%	68%
primary? [IF 2nd LOOK: Did you actually change your mind about	[Already voted]	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	7%
who to support or not?	[VOL] Dont know	3%	4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	5%

		TOTAL	TOTAL PARTY		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY		
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
5. When thinking about who you are supporting in the Democratic	More important	66%	75%	51%	70%	65%	64%	67%	56%	73%	78%
primary, how much of a factor is beating Donald Trump next	About as important	16%	16%	17%	21%	15%	16%	17%	21%	14%	8%
November - is it more important than any policy issue you are concerned with, about as	Less important	15%	8%	27%	8%	17%	19%	12%	22%	10%	11%
important as your top policy concern, or less	[VOL] Dont know	3%	1%	5%	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%

		RAG	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE			
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
5. When thinking about who you are supporting in the Democratic	More important	63%	71%	64%	70%	65%	67%	64%
primary, how much of a factor is beating Donald Trump next	About as important	17%	14%	18%	13%	18%	15%	15%
November - is it more important than any policy issue you are concerned with, about as	Less important	19%	12%	14%	17%	13%	17%	20%
important as your top policy concern, or less	[VOL] Dont know	1%	3%	4%	0%	4%	0%	1%

		TOTAL	PART	Y ID	POLITICAL	IDEOLOGY	GEN	DER		AGE 3-WAY	
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
6. If you had to choose, are you	Bring about change	41%	42%	42%	47%	39%	38%	44%	49%	39%	27%
more concerned about choosing a candidate who can bring about	Unite the country	53%	53%	52%	47%	56%	56%	50%	48%	56%	59%
change or a candidate who can unite the country?	[VOL] Neither	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	7%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	2%	7%

		RAG	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE			
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
6. If you had to choose, are you	Bring about change	36%	45%	40%	44%	44%	43%	34%
more concerned about choosing a candidate who can bring about	Unite the country	58%	49%	53%	52%	47%	53%	64%
change or a candidate who can unite the country?	[VOL] Neither	4%	2%	4%	1%	5%	1%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%

		TOTAL	PART	Y ID	POLITICAL	IDEOLOGY	GEN	DER		AGE 3-WAY	
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
7. Do you feel optimistic or	Very optimistic	32%	33%	32%	30%	33%	36%	30%	22%	42%	34%
pessimistic about the 2020 presidential election? [PROBE: Is	Somewhat optimistic	33%	30%	38%	34%	33%	30%	35%	41%	28%	28%
that very or somewhat (optimistic\pessimistic)]?	Somewhat pessimistic	16%	19%	10%	17%	16%	17%	15%	15%	16%	19%
	Very pessimistic	9%	11%	8%	14%	8%	7%	11%	10%	10%	8%
	(VOL) Neither, dont care	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	6%	7%	2%	7%	6%	7%	10%	3%	8%

		RA	CE	COLLEGE	DEGREE		INCOME	
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
7. Do you feel optimistic or	Very optimistic	21%	37%	30%	36%	29%	33%	35%
pessimistic about the 2020 presidential election? [PROBE: Is	Somewhat optimistic	37%	31%	35%	29%	39%	31%	24%
that very or somewhat (optimistic\pessimistic)]?	Somewhat pessimistic	20%	14%	14%	20%	14%	17%	23%
	Very pessimistic	14%	8%	7%	12%	4%	14%	14%
	(VOL) Neither, dont care	4%	1%	3%	1%	4%	2%	0%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	9%	10%	2%	10%	4%	5%

		TOTAL	PARTY ID		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY		
			Dem	Other	Lib	Mod, Con	Male	Female	18-49	50-64	65+
8. As of right now, what do you think the chances are that Donald Trump gets re-elected in November - do you think he will definitely get re-elected, probably get re-elected, probably lose to the Democrat, or definitely lose to the Democrat?	Definitely get re-elected	6%	3%	11%	3%	7%	8%	4%	5%	6%	6%
	Probably get re-elected	38%	35%	43%	42%	37%	36%	40%	47%	32%	34%
	Probably lose to the Democrat	28%	30%	25%	32%	27%	29%	28%	25%	30%	27%
	Definitely lose to the Democrat	18%	23%	11%	17%	18%	15%	20%	15%	19%	22%
	(VOL) Depends on the Democrat	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%	2%	1%	4%	5%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	5%	8%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%	8%	6%

		RACE		COLLEGE DEGREE				
		White	Black	No	Yes	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
8. As of right now, what do you think the chances are that Donald Trump gets re-elected in November - do you think he will definitely get re-elected, probably get re-elected, probably lose to the Democrat, or definitely lose to the Democrat?	Definitely get re-elected	11%	2%	5%	7%	3%	9%	7%
	Probably get re-elected	39%	36%	40%	36%	40%	41%	34%
	Probably lose to the Democrat	30%	26%	28%	28%	27%	25%	33%
	Definitely lose to the Democrat	7%	27%	18%	18%	20%	17%	14%
	(VOL) Depends on the Democrat	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%
	[VOL] Dont know	8%	6%	6%	7%	8%	3%	7%