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NATIONAL: CLINTON LEADS, BUT SANDERS RISING

Biden entry has potential to shake up Dem race

West Long Branch, NJ – Hillary Clinton continues to hold a sizable lead over the Democratic field, but not quite as sizable as a few months ago. The latest ***Monmouth University Poll*** also found that Joe Biden could take some of Clinton's support should he choose to run.

Hillary Clinton currently has the support of 51% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters nationwide, which is down from 57% in June and 60% in April. Bernie Sanders places a distant second at 17%, but his support has steadily grown from 12% in June and 7% in April. Martin O'Malley garners just 1% support and Jim Webb, who threw his hat into the ring earlier this month, also earns just 1%. Lincoln Chafee registers no support in the poll. Another 15% are undecided.

Vice President Joe Biden has not announced his intentions for 2016, but recent media reports suggest he is leaning towards a run. He currently earns 13% support in the poll, similar to prior results. However, the Monmouth poll finds his support should grow if he chooses to enter the fray. An additional 12% of Democratic voters say they would be very likely to support Biden if he gets into the race and another 31% say they would be somewhat likely. Taken together with the support he currently holds in the vote choice question, about 1-in-4 voters say they would be very likely to get behind Biden, and more than half would be at least somewhat likely.

Most of this new support would come at the expense of Hillary Clinton. Among those who say they would be likely to vote for Biden if he runs, 68% are currently Clinton backers, 18% are currently supporting another candidate and 14% are undecided.

"Most people seem to be focusing on a Sanders surge among the liberal wing of the party. But the bigger threat to Clinton may come from a Biden candidacy, where the two would be fighting for the same voters," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

In fact, 53% of Democratic voters say it would be better if Clinton faced an active primary challenge, compared to 36% who say it would be better if the party got behind Clinton early in the nominating process. The number who feel the field should be cleared for Clinton has steadily declined from 43% in December and 41% in April to 36% in the current poll.

Despite the desire for a competitive primary, Clinton continues to be viewed favorably by the vast majority of Democrats. Currently, 74% of Democratic voters have a favorable opinion of Hillary Clinton while just 17% hold an unfavorable view. This positive +57 point net rating is down slightly from the net positive +66 rating (78% favorable to 12% unfavorable) she received in July, but is still the strongest showing of any candidate in the field.

Joe Biden earns a 67% favorable to 17% unfavorable rating among Democrats, which is slightly better than his 62% to 18% result last month. Bernie Sanders net rating has increased from +11 in June to +24 in the current poll. He now has a 36% favorable to 12% unfavorable rating among Democratic voters compared to 29% favorable to 18% unfavorable last month. However, a majority continues to have no opinion of Sanders.

Fewer than 3-in-10 Democrats have an opinion of the rest of the field. Martin O’Malley holds a 13% favorable to 14% unfavorable rating, Jim Webb has a 13% favorable to 15% unfavorable rating, and Lincoln Chafee earns a 9% favorable to 13% unfavorable rating among Democratic voters nationwide.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from July 9 to 12, 2015 with 1,001 adults in the United States. This release is based on a voter sample of 357 registered voters who identify themselves as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party. This voter sample has a margin of error of ± 5.2 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.)

1. I know the 2016 election is far away, but who would you support for the Democratic nomination for president if the candidates were – [NAMES WERE ROTATED]?

	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015
Joe Biden	13%	12%	16%
Lincoln Chafee	0%	0%	n/a
Hillary Clinton	51%	57%	60%
Martin O’Malley	1%	1%	2%
Bernie Sanders	17%	12%	7%
Jim Webb	1%	2%	1%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%	0%
(VOL) No one	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	15%	14%	12%
Unwtd N	357	350	356

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
Vice President Joe Biden	67%	17%	16%
--June 2015	62	18	20
--April 2015	65	22	14
--December 2014	46	32	22
Former Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee	9%	13%	78%
--June 2015	9	18	74
--April 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
--December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	74%	17%	9%
--June 2015	78	12	10
--April 2015	76	16	8
--December 2014	82	11	7
Former Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley	13%	14%	72%
--June 2015	13	18	70
--April 2015	21	12	66
--December 2014	10	13	77
Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders	36%	12%	51%
--June 2015	29	18	54
--April 2015	30	12	58
--December 2014	22	13	65
Former Virginia Senator Jim Webb	13%	15%	71%
--June 2015	9	20	71
--April 2015	14	18	68
--December 2014	11	14	75

3. Joe Biden has not yet indicated whether he intends to run. If Biden does get into the race, how likely would you be to consider supporting him for the nomination over your current choice – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	July 2015
Already Biden Voters (from Q1)	13%
Very likely	12%
Somewhat likely	31%
Not too likely	19%
Not at all likely	19%
(VOL) Don't know	6%

4. 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?

	July 2015	April 2015	December 2014
Better if Dems got behind Hillary	36%	41%	43%
Better if active primary challenge	53%	50%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	9%	9%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from July 9 to 12, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,001 adults age 18 and older. This includes 700 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 301 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 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 357 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 5.2 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)		
FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS		
49% Male	31% 18-34	66% White
51% Female	37% 35-54	12% Black
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic
		7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)		
DEMOCRAT VOTERS ONLY		
46% Male	27% 18-34	56% White
54% Female	33% 35-54	23% Black
	40% 55+	16% Hispanic
		5% Asian/Other

MARGIN OF ERROR								
	DEMOCRAT VOTER	PARTY ID		GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Lean Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Unweighted N	357	256	101	158	199	54	93	210
moe	5.2%	6.1%	9.8%	7.8%	7.0%	13.3%	10.2%	6.8%

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