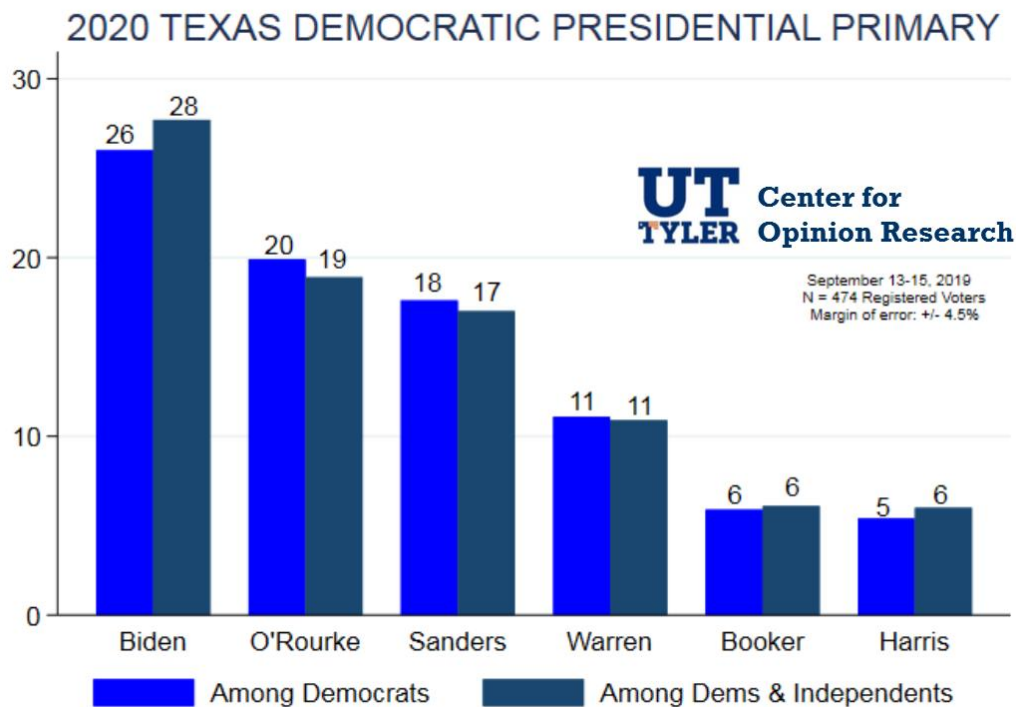## UT Tyler Releases Post-Democratic Debate Poll

Biden Grows Lead and Establishes Trust on Major Policies

Released: **Thursday, September 19, 2019**

Tyler, Texas – In the wake of last week's Democratic presidential primary debate, former Vice President Joe Biden (26%) leads the field among registered Texas Democrats. He is followed by former-Congressman Beto O'Rourke (20%), Senator Bernie Sanders (18%), and Senators Elizabeth Warren (11%), Senator Cory Booker (6%), and Kamala Harris (5%).

2020 TEXAS DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

UT TYLER Center for Opinion Research

September 13-15, 2019
N = 474 Registered Voters
Margin of error: +/- 4.5%

Biden: 26, 28 | O'Rourke: 20, 19 | Sanders: 18, 17 | Warren: 11, 11 | Booker: 6, 6 | Harris: 5, 6
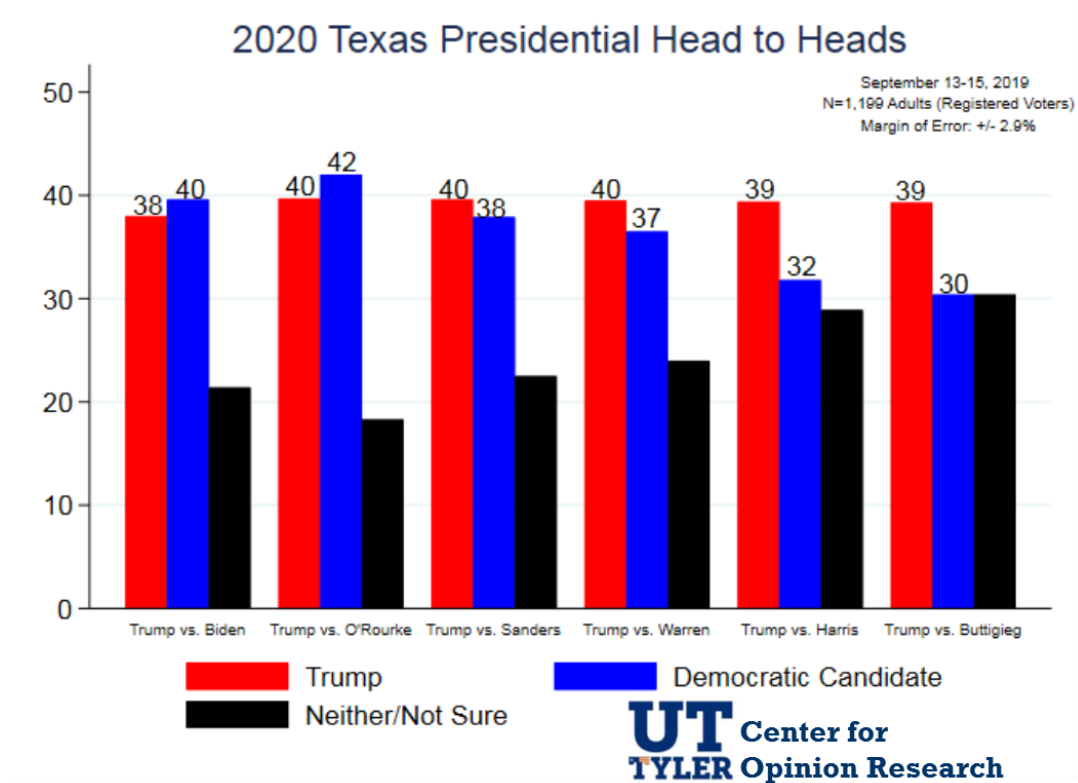
Among Democrats | Among Dems & Independents

When asked which candidate they believe did the best job in the debate, regardless of their personal support for the nomination, 24 percent of those who watched all or some of both debates chose Joe Biden (23%), with O'Rourke (22%), Warren (18%), and Sanders (16%) also earning double-digit backing. Additionally, about 9 percent of Democratic and Democratic-leaning respondents said the debates changed their support for a candidate, most of whom were Independent voters that lean to the Democratic Party. However, the Debate at Texas Southern University also affirmed most voters in which candidate they prefer (52%); 39 percent are still deciding. Post-debate coverage had no bearing on their assessments of the candidates.

Also, when asked which candidate the voter trusted most with respect to the economy, Joe Biden is trusted more than any other Democratic candidate on Foreign Policy (39%), Economic Policy (24%), Criminal Justice Policy (24%), Climate Change (23%). The only exception is that Beto O'Rourke garners the highest trust among Democratic Primary voters to handle Gun Policies (37%). The recognition by other candidates on O'Rourke's leadership and refocusing his campaign has contributed to how closely voters associate O'Rourke with the policy issue.

Democratic voters still want someone who can beat President Trump in the general election. When asked to rank in order of importance the characteristics they prefer in a Democratic nominee, voters chose "electability" as their top priority (46%).

Ahead of the President's visit to Houston, Donald Trump's job approval in Texas is in line with the national trend, standing at just 40 percent approval among all registered Texans. His disapproval stands at 52 percent, including 12 percent of registered Republicans and 59 percent of Independents.

In head to head contests, President Trump is trailing Joe Biden (-1) and Beto O'Rourke (-2), though many respondents answered "neither/other" or "not sure" in each contest. Following the Houston Debate, President Trump holds leads in potential head-to-head matchups with Elizabeth Warren (+3), Bernie Sanders (+2), Kamala Harris (+7) and Pete Buttigieg (+9), though again, a large percentage of respondents is undecided.

On gun issues, 85 percent of registered Texans support requiring background checks for all potential gun buyers (5% oppose it). Furthermore, a majority of Texans support allowing law enforcement to take away guns from people a judge deems dangerous (65%), a nationwide ban on high-capacity ammunition clips (61%), and a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons (59%). Support for a mandatory buyback program to turn in all assault weapons for payment is slightly less than a majority (49%). Voters are more ambivalent about repealing the law that protects gun manufacturers from being held liable for crimes resulting from the unlawful misuse of firearms. 41 percent support repealing the law, but 32 percent oppose the measure, and 22 percent have a neutral position. The public's attitudes on these policies are important, as a majority of Texans (54%) do not agree that elected officials are doing enough to prevent mass shootings.

This poll was conducted over a three-day period (09/13/19 – 09/15/19).

Methodology

Online

The UT Tyler-Texas Opinion Survey poll was conducted using random sample of the registered voters that have opted-in to take surveys through a company called Dynata. The online panel generated a sample of 1,199 registered voters during a three day period from between September 13 and September 15.

The data were weighted to be representative of the Texas register voter population. Iterative weighting was used to balance sample demographics to the state population parameters. The sample is balanced to match parameters for gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education using an iterated process known as raking. These parameters were derived from 2018 Current Population Survey to reflect Texas's electorate. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the characteristics of the sample closely reflect the characteristics of registered voters in Texas.

In this poll, the sampling error for 1,199 registered voters in Texas is +/- 2.8 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The survey's design asked additional questions to 474 registered voters who identify with the Democratic Party as members or independents that lean towards the party (margin of error of +/- 4.5%).

A member of the prestigious UT System, The University of Texas at Tyler focuses on student success and innovative research in the more than 80 undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered. With more than 10,000 students, UT Tyler has facilities in Tyler, Longview, Palestine and Houston.

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