

TO: American Federation of Teachers
FROM: Guy Molyneux and Geoff Garin, Hart Research Associates
DATE: March 21, 2020
RE: AFT Members and the Democratic Presidential Primary

On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers, Hart Research conducted a survey among 1,207 Democratic primary voters (members who identify as Democrats OR who identify as independents and say they vote in Democratic primaries). Telephone interviews were conducted March 13 to 16 and 18 to 19. The margin of error is ±2.9 percentage points for the full sample, and larger for subgroups. Below we report the survey’s main findings.

Biden takes a commanding lead. AFT’s Democratic members have come together in large numbers behind Joe Biden’s presidential candidacy. By an overwhelming two to one, they favor Biden (60%) over Bernie Sanders (30%) as the party’s nominee. Seventy-five percent (75%) of members view Biden positively, a gain of five points since October, while Sanders’s positive rating has slipped six points (to 66%) over the same period.

Remarkably broad support for Biden within the union. Support for Biden has consolidated throughout the union, making him the first choice of every constituency, every region of the country, and both men (+20) and women (+34). He not only enjoys a large 46-point edge among moderate/conservative Democrats, but he also leads among liberal Democrats (+17).

	<u>Biden</u> %	<u>Sanders</u> %	<u>Biden Advantage</u> ±
K-12	58	30	+28
PSRPs	58	32	+26
Healthcare	50	42	+8
Higher-Ed	49	46	+3
Public Employees	51	40	+11
Retirees	75	16	+59
Men	57	37	+20
Women	61	27	+34
White	63	28	+35
African American	61	26	+35
Hispanic	48	44	+4
Liberal	55	38	+17
Moderate/Conservative	66	20	+46
Democrat	61	29	+32
Independent	50	37	+13

Biden’s support expanded after his March 17 victories. The interviewing period for this survey began before the recent primaries in Florida, Illinois, and Arizona, and ended afterward (with no interviewing conducted on March 17). This allows us to measure Biden’s support before and after these primaries among active members (all retirees were interviewed before March 17). The data reveals a six-point surge to Biden (from 54% to 60%) after his victories, expanding his lead over Sanders among active members from 19 points to 31 points. This includes an especially large nine-point gain among Higher Education members (converting a nine-point deficit into a 13-point lead). As a result, it is very likely that Biden’s actual lead among AFT members today is even larger than this survey shows (because two-thirds of the interviews were conducted prior to March 17).

ACTIVE MEMBERS ONLY						
	Pre-3.17.2020 Interviews			Post-3.17.2020 Interviews		
	All %	K-12 Teachers %	Higher Ed %	All %	K-12 Teachers %	Higher Ed %
Biden	54	57	44	60	61	53
Sanders	35	30	53	29	27	40
Biden edge	+19	+27	-9	+31	+34	+13

AFT members believe that Biden has the best chance of beating Donald Trump in November. A strong foundation of Biden’s support is members’ perception—by an extraordinary five to one—that Biden (75%) rather than Sanders (15%) has the best chance of beating Trump in November’s general election. Indeed, the 49% plurality of members who report that their priority is nominating the most electable candidate (rather than the candidate with the “best positions”) prefer Biden by 73% to 19%.