

MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Hellegaard
352-901-8469, jhellegaard@gmail.com

FAU Poll Finds Biden With Big Lead on Sanders in Florida, While Trump Has Narrow Edge Over Democratic Contenders *Slight Majority Confident Government Can Handle Coronavirus Outbreak*

BOCA RATON, Fla. (March 10, 2020) – With one week left before the Florida primary, former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden has opened up a commanding lead on U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders among Florida voters in the race for the Democratic party’s nomination for president, according to a statewide survey by the [Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative](#) (FAU BEPI).

Among the Democratic candidates, Biden has increased his support to 61 percent, up from 42 percent in [BEPI’s January poll](#). Sanders is at 25 percent, up from 14 percent support in January. Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard had 3 percent support, while 10 percent of voters said they’re still undecided. The margin of error in the Democratic primary polling was 4.9 percent.

Nearly four out of five voters in the Democratic primary (79 percent) said they will definitely vote for their top choice, up from 54 percent in January. As had been seen nationally, there is a generational divide among the Democratic candidates’ supporters, with Sanders leading 35-15 percent among voters 18-29 years old, but trailing with older voters. Biden leads 58-34 percent among voters 30-49 years old, 71-19 percent among those 50-64 years old and 82-13 percent among voters over 65.

“Florida has been a strong Biden firewall state since we started polling a year ago,” said [Monica Escaleras](#), Ph.D., director of the FAU BEPI. “With voters’ attitudes becoming more fixed on their choices, there is nothing in this data that suggests a change in the direction of this race at this time.”

Both Biden and Sanders trail in head-to-head matchups against U.S. President Donald Trump. Biden fared slightly better, losing 51 to 49 percent, while Sanders came up six points short, 53-47 percent. Both results represent a reversal of January’s poll, which showed both Sanders and Biden leading Trump in head-to-head matchups.

In ranking their most important issues, voters placed healthcare at the top of the list at 26 percent, followed by the economy at 23 percent. The environment and immigration tied for third at 11 percent, while education came in fifth at 9 percent and foreign policy was sixth at 8 percent. Gun control was last among the nine issues polled, with only 3.5 percent of voters saying it was their single most important issue.

A slight majority of voters, 52 percent, are confident the federal government will be able to handle an outbreak of coronavirus in the U.S., while 31 percent are not confident. Voters' confidence splits along party lines, with 77 percent of Republicans confident in the government, compared to only 38 percent of Democrats and 39 percent of Independents. Just over half of the respondents (51 percent) approve of the job Trump is doing in handling the spread of coronavirus in the U.S., while 36 percent disapprove and 13 percent are neutral or have no opinion.

“Partisanship is driving the assessment of the response to the coronavirus,” said [Kevin Wagner](#), Ph.D., professor of political science at FAU and a research fellow of the Initiative. “However, should the virus have a significant impact on Florida, those numbers may change as voters start evaluating the response based more on their personal experiences.”

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis continues to score well with voters, with 54 percent approval and 20 percent disapproval, up from 48 percent approval and 28 percent disapproval in January.

Trump's approval rating is rising among Florida voters, with 49 percent approval and 41 percent disapproval, up from 45 percent approval and 43 percent disapproval in January. He continues to be hugely popular among GOP voters, with 93 percent saying they will vote for him in next week's primary, while 4 percent support former Massachusetts Gov. Bill Weld and 4 percent said they were unsure. The margin of error in the Republican primary poll was 4.8 percent.

The survey was conducted March 5-7 and polled 1,216 Florida registered voters. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percentage points.

The data was weighted by ethnicity, age, education, region and gender based on a 2016 voter model. It is important to remember that subsets carry with them higher margins of error, as the sample size is reduced. Data was collected using both an

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system of landlines and an online panel provided by [Dynata](#). The polling results and full cross-tabulations are available at www.business.fau.edu/bepi.

- FAU -

About FAU BEPI:

The Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative conducts surveys on business, economic, political and social issues with a focus on Hispanic attitudes and opinions at regional, state and national levels via planned monthly national surveys. The initiative subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research and is a resource for public and private organizations, academic research and media outlets. In addition, the initiative is designed to contribute to the educational mission of the University by providing students with valuable opportunities to enhance their educational experience by designing and carrying out public opinion research.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.