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Progressives? Progressives? Anyone? Crickets as Bernie Sanders stares

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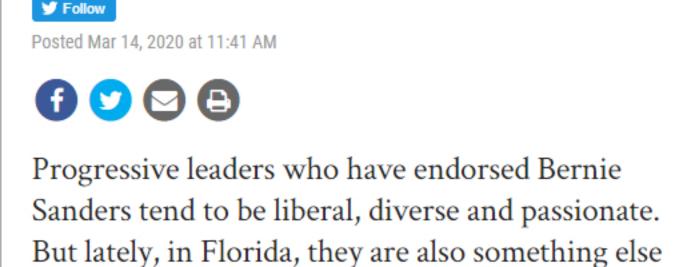
What Causes Eye

Florida: DeSantis...

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Weeks before the 2018 gubernatorial Democratic primary, Andrew

Florida primary: Coronavirus alters campaigning ahead of vote

Gillum was trailing at the back of the field. Then the progressive muscle showed up.

Gillum got a critical endorsement from Bernie Sanders, the standard bearer for American progressives, who then campaigned with the relatively unknown mayor of Tallahassee in Florida. Gillum also reaped donations from another progressive leader, billionaire Tom Steyer, known for his TV commercials calling for President Trump's impeachment.

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The progressive titans' support catapulted Gillum to a surprise primary victory in which he captured the nomination and came within 30,000 votes of becoming Florida's first African-American governor. It also marked a watershed in Florida politics — a moment in which Democratic progressives flexed their might and elbowed centrists to the sidelines.

conducted by Florida universities this week have former Vice President Joe Biden trouncing Sanders by significant

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Or so it seemed. Two years later, Sanders is staring at a lopsided defeat in Tuesday' Florida presidential primary. A pair of polls

double-digit margins. Other voter surveys point to the same.

that he's unsuitable to win Florida."

virtually alone.

happen in November 2020."

Miami last June.

Despite DeSantis warning, Florida Legislature works on, drawing crowd

Keith Donner, a Democratic political and public affairs consultant based in Miami, said Sanders is simply out-of-step with Florida Democrats.

The end result, Donner said, is that Sanders has failed to win significant backing. "Bernie's support is kiddie-pool shallow in Florida compared to other contenders," he said. "A lot of activists feel he's

"His views on Israel are incompatible with many Democratic Jews and pretty much all Republican Jews," Donner

said. "And his recent comments about Cuba and Castro pretty much erased any doubt in a lot of Democrats' minds

a lost cause in South Florida." Florida's Democratic electoral demographics also decisively tilt toward Biden. The state has a large share of older

Atlantic University. But what makes Sanders precarious position in Florida all the more stark is that he is standing at the brink of defeat

voters, significant numbers of African-Americans, more centrist Hispanics and a smaller share of younger voters.

"Florida is just a better state for Joe Biden," said Kevin Wagner, a pollster and political science professor at Florida

Despite announcing his commitment to turn Florida blue in 2020, Gillum, now himself a high-profile nationwide progressive figure, has not endorsed the Vermont U.S. senator.

tweet after Sanders made controversial comments about Fidel Castro during a 60 Minutes interview days before.

Less than two weeks later, Gillum told political commentator David

Axelrod that Sanders' comments on Castro were like "listening to

Florida primary: Poll shows Biden leads Sanders, except with young

Instead, Gillum appeared to jab at his fellow progressive in a Feb. 24

Trump after Charlottesville say there were good people on both sides." Ouch.

Kevin Cate, a Gillum advisor who also produced television commercials for Steyer's 2020 presidential bid, said there are different priorities in this election. "Voter registration is a million times more important than anything else right now," Cate said. "We know that if we

Sanders was endorsed by erstwhile presidential rival and self-help author Marianne Williamson, who has no discernible organizational

register and engage Democrats, we will win and beat Donald Trump, and that's the most important thing that can

Others also seemed to have snubbed the Sanders campaign. Steyer did not back Sanders after suspending his own

White House campaign last month. Neither did another progressive, Massachusetts U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

In Palm Beach County, U.S. Reps. Lois Frankel, D-West Palm Beach, and Alcee Hastings, D-Delray Beach, have endorsed Biden. So has Boca Raton Democratic U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch, who at first backed Mike Bloomberg. Sanders supporters say the lack of broader support from Sunshine State Democrats signals a desire by the

establishment to thwart the "revolution."

Committee's favored candidate.

219.

infrastructure in Florida. He also got backing from New York Mayor

Bill DeBlasio, but DeBlasio had also angered Cuban-American

Democrats by repeating a Che Guevara slogan at a labor rally in

fix bad posture and relieve back pain. ShopTrueFit.com "It is kind of disappointing that there haven't been a lot of endorsements in Florida," said Theodore Matz, a West

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there probably is some top-end strategy of how to get Bernie out of the race." Matz said there is a sort of "unspoken" pressure on Sanders supporters to instead back the Democratic National

Palm Beach resident who has been canvassing door-to-door for Sanders. "It's not some big conspiracy, but, honestly,

"As a Democrat and a progressive, you are less likely to step out of line and support Bernie if you think it's going to ruin the rest of your career," Matz said.

"When Ted Deutch came out ahead of the primary to endorse Michael Bloomberg, and Ted Deutch is supposed to be

a progressive, I was so disappointed in him," said Mikki Royce, treasurer of Democratic Progressive Caucus Palm Beach County.

"MoveOn has not endorsed thus far in the Democratic primary," MoveOn spokesperson Brett Abrams said in a written statement to

The national progressive group MoveOn, which in 2016 voted to

endorse Sanders by 78.6% — the widest margin in its history — also

failed to issue an endorsement this time around.

the Palm Beach Post. "MoveOn has always had a strong commitment to listening to and respecting the views of its members and will consider an endorsement during the primaries if and when MoveOn

members coalesce around a candidate, which has not yet happened." So where do these non-existent endorsements leave Sanders? And where do they leave Sanders' die-hard supporters, who, through mostly grassroots efforts, have elevated the democratic socialist to a level few might have believed possible?

they want to promote a message of party unity, it's time to stop talking about how we get candidates to endorse us and talk about how Biden, as president, is going to advance the progressive agenda that we've been fighting for."

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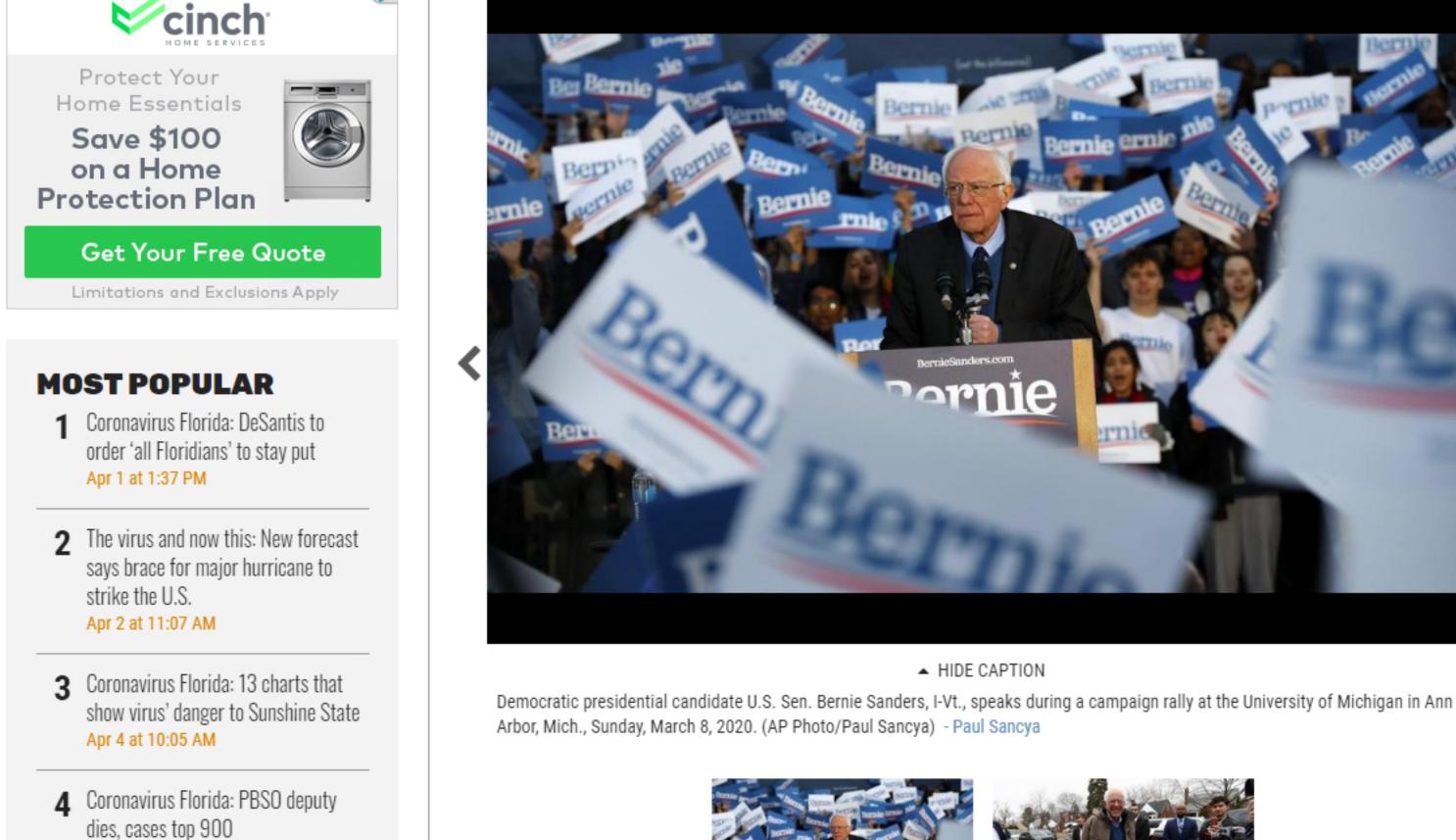
Of the 1,991 delegates required to secure the party's nomination, Biden currently leads Sanders 627 to 551. Of the 577 delegates up for grabs Tuesday in Florida, Arizona, Ohio and Illinois, the Sunshine State offers the most with

"We are still backing Bernie," said Michael Calderin, President of the Democratic Progressive Caucus of Florida,

which has endorsed Sanders "My message to Biden and his campaign is if they feel that this race is in the bag, and

But with few high-profile endorsements and no Florida campaign offices, a big loss here would seemingly put the White House out of reach for Sanders.

A loss would be a hard pill to swallow for die-hard Sanders supporters and volunteers like Matz. "I don't think the fight is over, and I'm not going to stop fighting," Matz said.



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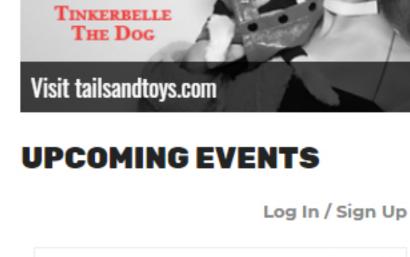
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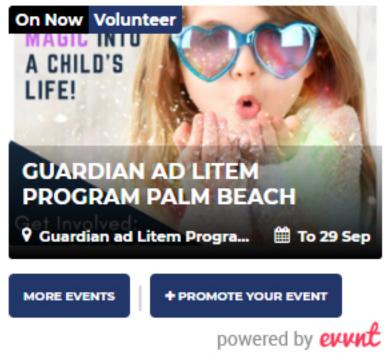
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