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FINAL FOCUS ON RURAL AMERICA POLL SHOWS A TIGHT RACE

Biden Leads and Rural Issues Fuel Klobuchar Movement

Albia, Iowa – Focus on Rural America Co-Founders fmr. Lt. Gov Patty Judge and Jeff Link released the results of their latest poll on a conference call with reporters Monday morning.

This is the 6th quarterly poll from Focus on Rural America which began tracking presidential preferences and issues in September of 2018. Our latest survey was fielded January 15 – 18, after the CNN – Des Moines Register Debate in Des Moines, Iowa. Here are the key findings:

RURAL ISSUES

- Iowans continue to prefer a candidate who makes it a priority to engage residents of rural Iowa over a candidate who makes it a priority to increase turnout in Iowa's larger cities and towns 52% - 28%.
- We asked Iowans whether a candidate should campaign in rural areas for the general election highlighting Trump's policies which help oil companies and hurt ethanol production or whether they should ignore those places because they will support Trump no matter what. Overwhelmingly, 86% of Iowa Democrats think the nominee should compete for rural votes while only 9% think it's a lost cause.
- Asked specifically whether Trump's decision to grant waivers to oil companies which hurt ethanol production will hurt him a lot, a little or not at all, 65% said it would hurt him, including 35% that said it would hurt him "a lot." Only 27% said his decision would not matter.
- We asked regardless of who you are voting for, "which candidate is best for the needs and interests of rural Iowa?" **Sen. Klobuchar has a clear lead with 29%** with Sen. Warren, Sen. Sanders, fmr. VP Biden and Mayor Buttigieg essentially tied at 15, 14, 13 and 13 respectively.

HORSE RACE

Former VP Joe Biden led our first poll and leads the final poll with 25% which is identical to his support in our September 2019 survey. Sen. Elizabeth Warren remains in second with 17% but slips 6 points from her September standing. Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Sen. Bernie Sanders maintain their 3rd and 4th place positions with 16% and 14% respectively up 4 and 5 points from the September poll. Sen. Klobuchar remains in 5th but is moving closer to the viability threshold with 11% of the vote.

We asked Iowans which candidate is "best equipped to handle the current conflict and tensions between the US and Iran and other global hot spots"? 42% of Iowans chose fmr. VP Joe Biden.

Candidate	January 2020	September 2019	Change
Biden	24	25	-1
Warren	18	23	-5
Buttigieg	16	12	+4
Sanders	14	9	+5
Klobuchar	11	8	+3
Steyer	4	3	+1
Yang	3	2	+1
Bennett	1	0	+1
Bloomberg	1	n/a	+1
Gabbard	1	1	0
Delaney	0	1	-1

SECOND CHOICE

While second choice is important, new rules this cycle do not allow voters to realign if they start in a preference group that is viable. We first asked lowans what they plan to do if their first choice isn't viable. Would they stay uncommitted, pick someone else or go home?

- 75% of lowans said they will choose another candidate.
- 17% said they would remain uncommitted.
- 4% said they would go home.
- 4% said they don't know

It is significant the 17% say they will remain uncommitted and may indicate that uncommitted will be viable in several precincts.

For those who choose another candidate, of those not currently planning to caucus for a candidate at the viability threshold, Biden receives 24% support, Buttigieg 21%, Warren 16%, Klobuchar 7%, and Sanders 6%.

DEBATE IMPACT

We asked lowans if they had a chance to watch Tuesday's final debate before the caucus. 51% said they watched all or some of it. 40% said they saw none of it. This is a lower number of debate-watchers compared to those who took our survey following the June debate. But, 73% said they saw quite a bit or some of the news coverage of the debate.

We asked if there are candidates that you are now considering after watching the debate. 16% said Biden, 11% said Klobuchar, 10% said Warren, 9% said Buttigieg and 7% said Sanders.

We asked if there are candidates that you have definitely decided NOT to support based on their debate performance? 12% said Warren, 11% said Sanders, 4% said Steyer, 3% said Biden and Buttigieg and 2% said Klobuchar.

METHODOLOGY

This survey was a combination of cell phones and land lines. The sample size is 500 likely 2020 caucus goers with a margin of error +/- 4.4% conducted January 15-18, 2020.