Keller @ Large: Latest N.H. Primary Poll Shows Joe Biden’s Impact

By Jon Keller  April 30, 2019 at 1:54 pm  Filed Under: Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Jon Keller, Keller At Large, Pete Buttigieg

BOSTON (CBS) – The old saying is that polls are just a snapshot in time. And a poll of notoriously late-deciding New Hampshire primary voters is like a vacation selfie you delete on the plane ride home to clear space.

Still, the latest N.H. survey conducted for the Boston Globe by well-respected pollster Dave Paleologos and the Suffolk University Political Research Center is intriguing for what it says about the impact of Joe Biden’s entry into the race.
Biden’s 20% to 12% margin over Pete Buttigieg and Bernie Sanders isn’t all that striking in a survey with a +/-3.5% margin of error. But the poll contains early red flags for Sanders, who swamped Hillary Clinton in N.H. in 2016 and needs to win there next year.

As you’d expect, Sanders does well among young people aged 18-to-34, the core of his showing last time, with 21% support. But Biden isn’t all that far behind with 14%. And Buttigieg, with just weeks of exposure to N.H. voters compared with years for Sanders, pulls seven percent of the youth vote, while Kamala Harris grabs nine percent.

A sign of Bern-out?

And on the core issue of ability to beat Donald Trump, the one issue that in the early going has consistently united Democrats, Biden buries the field.

Thirty-five percent say he’s the one, a perception that grows to 38% among independents and 46% among seniors (aged 65 and older.) Only 13% think Sanders is the best shot. It’s closer, but Biden even wins the electability contest with Bernie among young voters, 27-22.

Another positive sign for Biden: by a whopping 75-20% margin, voters don’t think a candidate over age 70 is too old to be president. That goes for young voters too.

Biden’s relatively strong showing among women is also impressive, given the striking gender gap in this poll.

Forty-six percent of men said they think the country is going in the right direction, a virtual tie with men who think we’re on the wrong track. But 61% of women say wrong direction. And in a matchup of Trump with an unnamed Democrat, while men opt for the incumbent by a 49-33% margin, women want the Democrat by a huge 53-31% spread.

And yet the leading woman in the poll, Elizabeth Warren, can’t seem to make much headway. Her poor eight percent showing overall includes just ten percent support from women, who gave Buttigieg 13% backing.
Eighteen percent say she can't beat Trump. And in a cycle where the primacy of that question seems likely to endure, that may be the worst possible result for a candidate who must run strong in New Hampshire to survive.

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