A string of recent polls suggest that Sen. Kamala Harris’s performance in the debate last week has propelled her campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020.

A Quinnipiac University poll of Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters nationally showed Ms. Harris, whose criticism of Joe Biden’s record on race was one of the most discussed moments of the second debate night last week, gaining significant momentum in the campaign. Ms. Harris polls at 20% in the Quinnipiac poll, trailing front-running Mr. Biden by just 2 percentage points.

Other polls also show strong support for the California Democrat. A Suffolk University/USA Today poll of likely Iowa Democratic caucus goers also showed her in second place to Mr. Biden. The former vice president led that poll with 24% of respondents saying they support him, and 15.6% reported favoring Ms. Harris.

In a poll of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents conducted by CNN and SSRS in the days after the debate, 17% of respondents said they supported Ms. Harris, again placing her in second place to Mr. Biden. That represented a jump from 8% from the month before.

Of course, her debate performance may not be the only—or primary—factor driving Ms. Harris’s recent gains in the polls. And she is not the only candidate who has gained traction: the CNN/SSRS poll also showed Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) doubling her support, from 7% in May to 15% in June.
But the polls suggest that well-received debate performances can have an important impact on the early stages of the 2020 presidential primary. If Mr. Biden's support falls further, other candidates, including Ms. Harris, may soon begin to lead in some polls.

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