



August 11, 2015

## **Bernie Sanders Rises in Democratic Presidential Race in New Hampshire**

By: R. Kelly Myers  
Marlin Fitzwater Fellow, Franklin Pierce University  
603.433.3982

Portsmouth, NH. – Bernie Sanders shows strong gains in favorability and overtakes Hillary Clinton in vote choice. Still, approximately two-thirds (65%) of voters believe Hillary Clinton will win the Democratic Party's nomination, compared to just 11 percent who think Sanders will win.

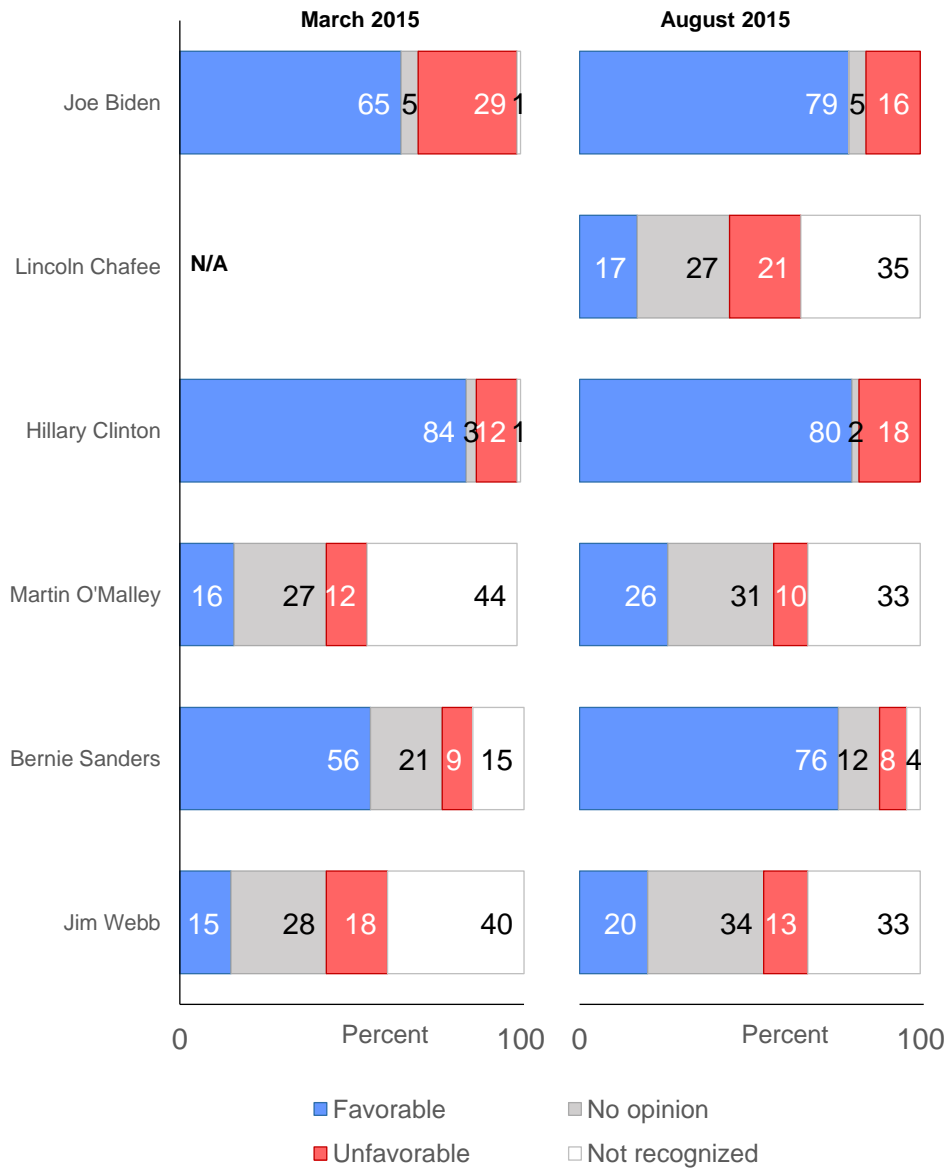
These results are based on a recent Franklin Pierce University / Boston Herald Poll conducted by RKM Research and Communications, August 7-10, 2015. The survey is based on responses from 442 randomly selected likely Democratic presidential primary voters. Interviews were conducted by landline and cellular telephone. The sampling margin of error is +/- 4.7 percent.

### **Favorability Ratings**

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has a very high favorable rating of 80 percent, followed closely by Vice President Joe Biden (79%) and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders (76%).

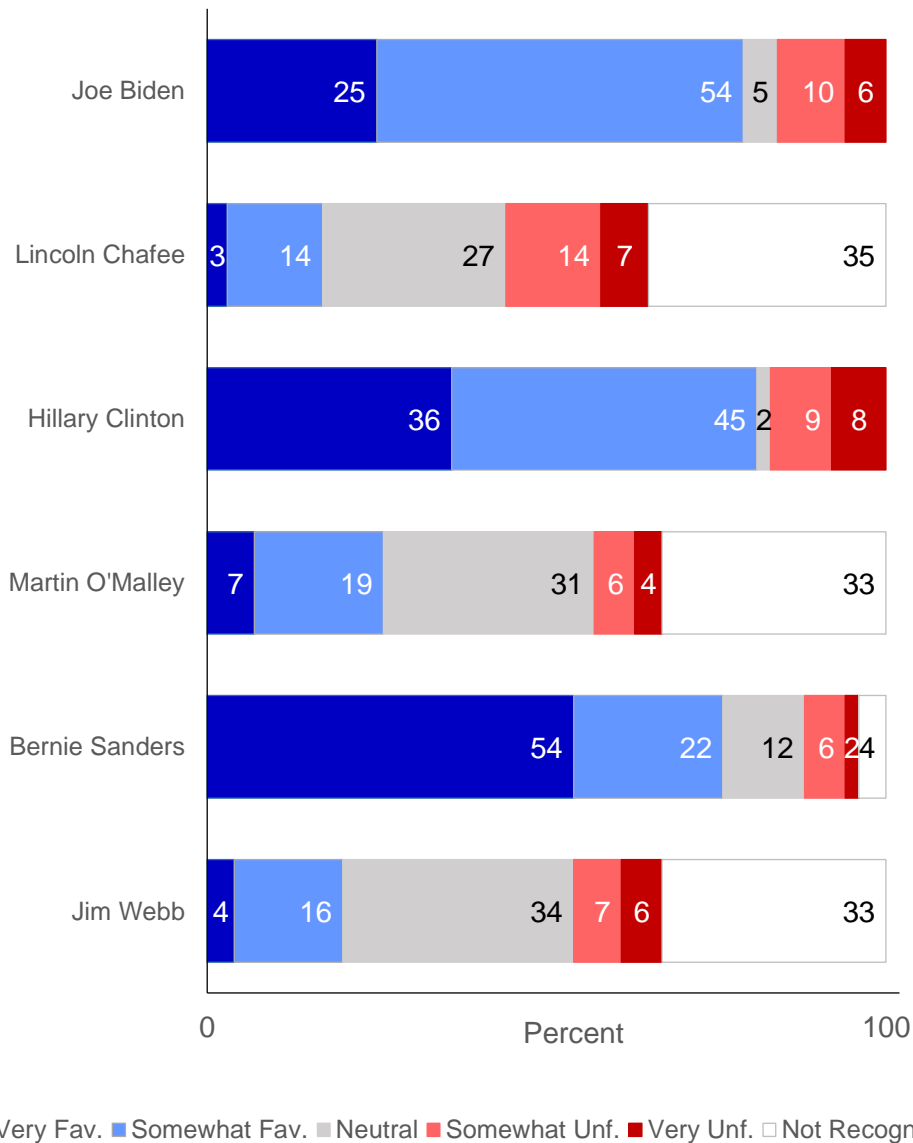
Former Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, former Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee and Former Virginia Senator Jim Webb both remain relatively little known candidates at this early stage of the race.

## Favorability Ratings: Potential Democratic Presidential Candidates



Bernie Sanders' favorability rating climbed 20 points since March, while Joe Biden's favorability increased 14 points and Hillary Clinton's declined four points. Notably, fewer respondents gave Sanders an unfavorable rating (8%) compared to Clinton and Biden (18% and 16%, respectively).

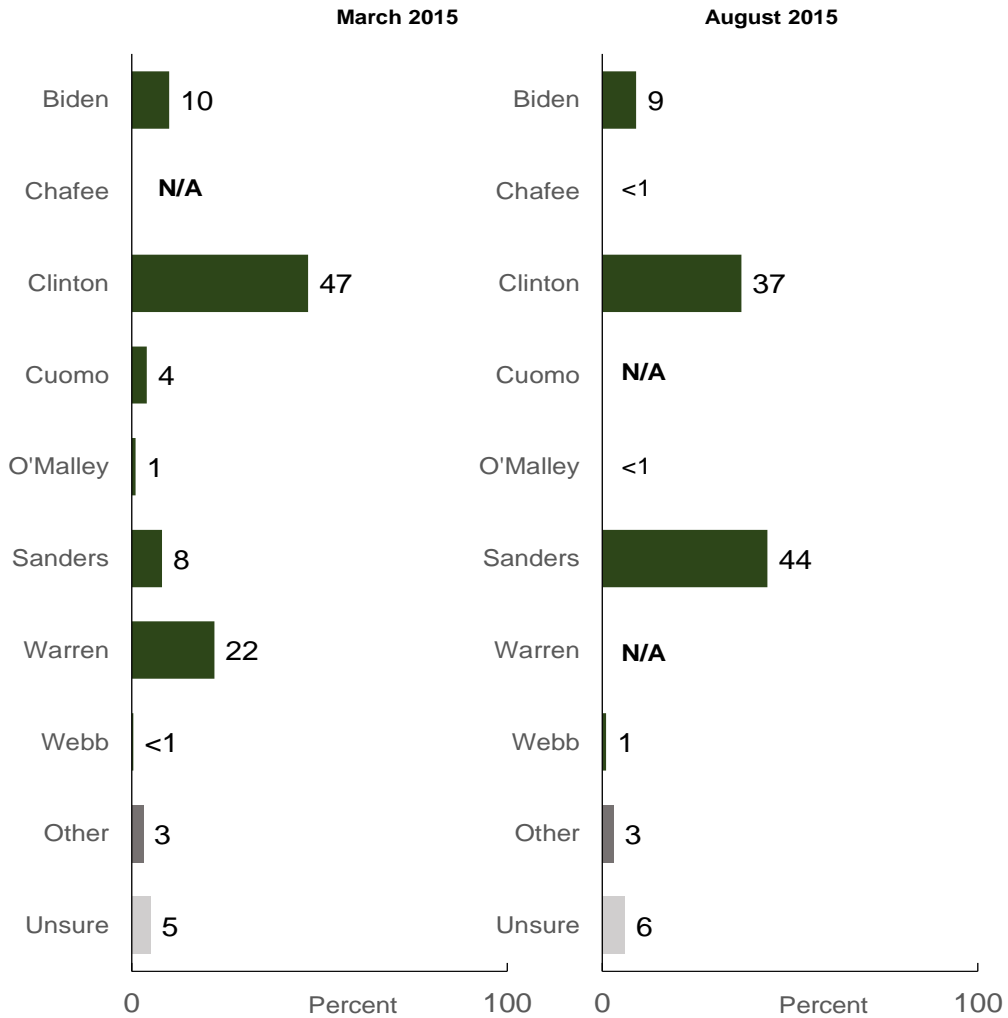
## Favorability Ratings: Potential Democratic Presidential Candidates



When general impressions of the candidates are further broken down to look at the strength of voters' views, it is noteworthy that more than one-half of likely Democratic primary voters have a *very favorable* view toward Bernie Sanders (54%), while most of Clinton's and Biden's favorability is less enthusiastic (i.e., more *somewhat favorable* views than *very favorable* views).

## Democratic Presidential Primary Vote Choice

---

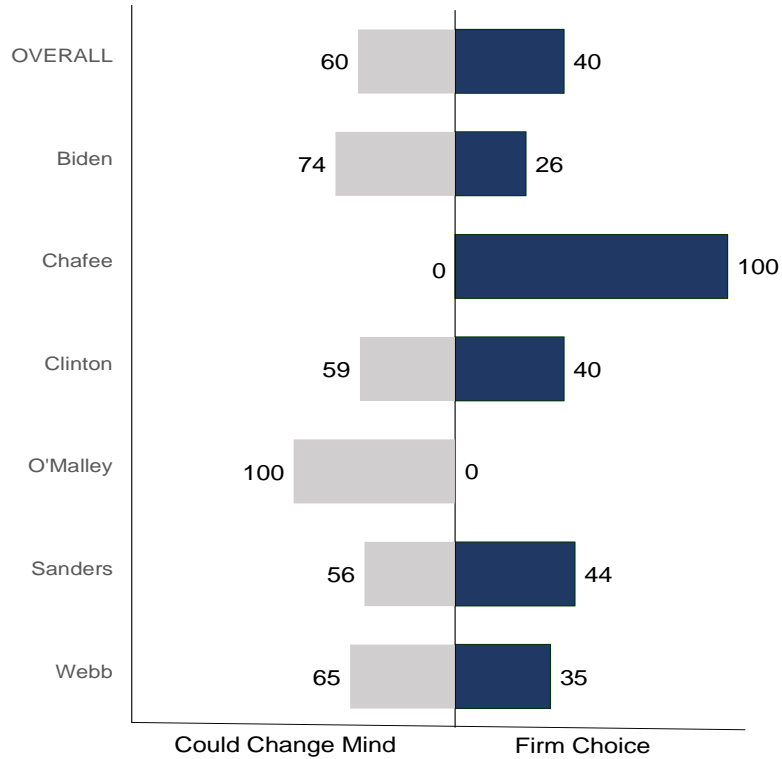


---

Voters were asked who they would vote for if the Democratic presidential primary were held today. The results indicate that Bernie Sanders has overtaken Hillary Clinton in the contest. Currently, he would receive 44 percent of the vote, compared to 37 percent for Clinton and nine percent for Biden.

## Firmness of Democratic Presidential Primary Vote Choice

---

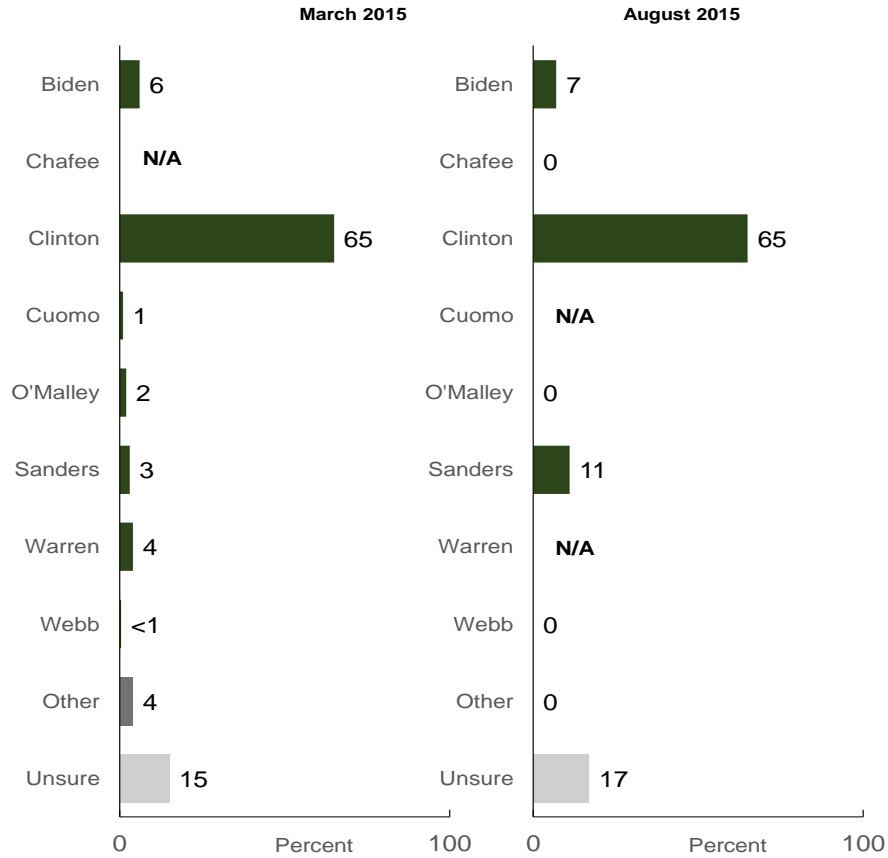


Voters were asked if they have made a firm choice in the race, or whether they could change their mind between now and the time of the election. As expected, most voters indicate that they *could change their mind* (60%) while 40 percent of respondents report that they have made a *firm choice*. These results suggest that most voters remain open to the possibility of changing their mind.

These results are consistent with the amount of attention that Democratic voters are giving the 2016 presidential election at this time. Only 33 percent of likely Democratic primary voters are following the presidential election *very closely*, while the vast majority are following the election *only somewhat* (48%) or *not that closely* (19%).

## Candidate Most Likely to Win the Presidential Nomination of the Democratic Party

---



---

Despite no longer leading in terms of vote choice, Hillary Clinton is still widely considered to be the likely nominee. Almost two-thirds of likely Democratic primary voters believe that *Hillary Clinton* (65%) will win the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, followed by *Bernie Sanders* (11%) and *Joe Biden* (7%). Only 17 percent of voters are *unsure* who will be the eventual nominee of the Party.

## Reason for Supporting Democratic Candidate

---

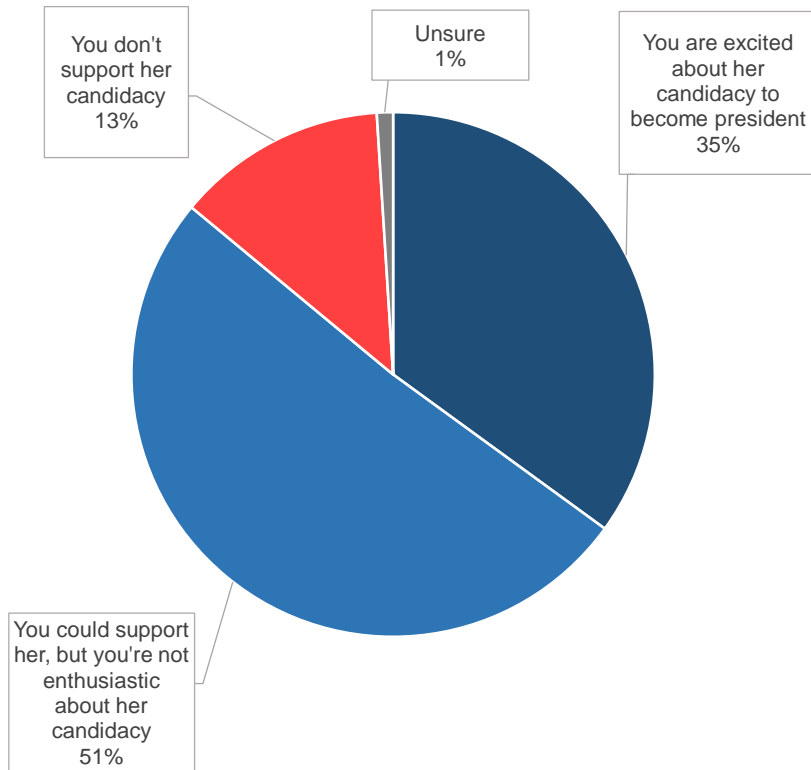
	Overall	Clinton (n=161)	Sanders (n=193)	Biden (n=40)
Best chance of getting elected	7%	15%	1%	3%
Supports issues important to you	46	28	68	25
Has the best qualifications	17	34	3	30
Stands firm on issues and values	10	3	20	5
Would lead in a new direction	7	8	7	0
Can work with Democrats and Republicans	9	11	1	28
Unsure	3	2	1	10

---

Voters were asked to describe the primary reason why they would vote for their first choice candidate. Overall, likely Democratic primary voters choose candidates who *support issues that are important to [them]* (46%), have the *best qualifications* (17%) and *stand firm on issues and values* (10%). Many Clinton supporters cite *her political qualifications* (34%) and her *position on important issues* (28%). Sanders' support is primarily rooted in the perception that he *supports issues important to [them]* (68%). Biden supporters are more likely to say that they support him because he *has the best qualifications* (30%) and *can work with Democrats and Republicans* (28%).

**Which of the following best describes your view toward Hillary Clinton's candidacy?**

---



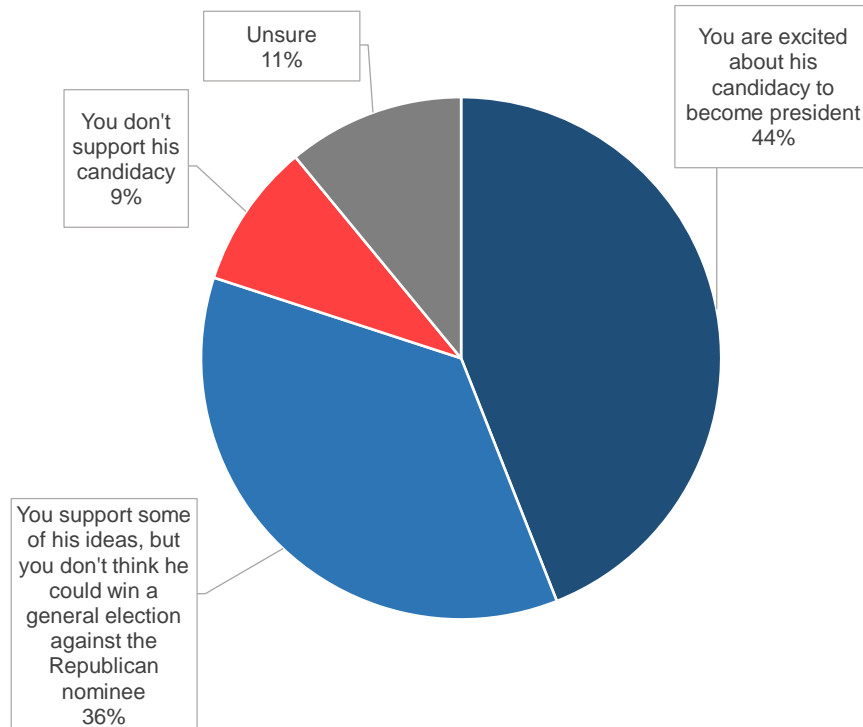
---

Voters were asked to describe their view toward Hillary Clinton's candidacy. Approximately one-half (51%) of voters said that *they could support her, but they're not enthusiastic about her candidacy*. Thirty-five percent of voters said that *they are excited about her candidacy* and 13 percent of voters said that *they do not support her candidacy*.



## Which of the following best describes your view toward Bernie Sanders' candidacy?

---

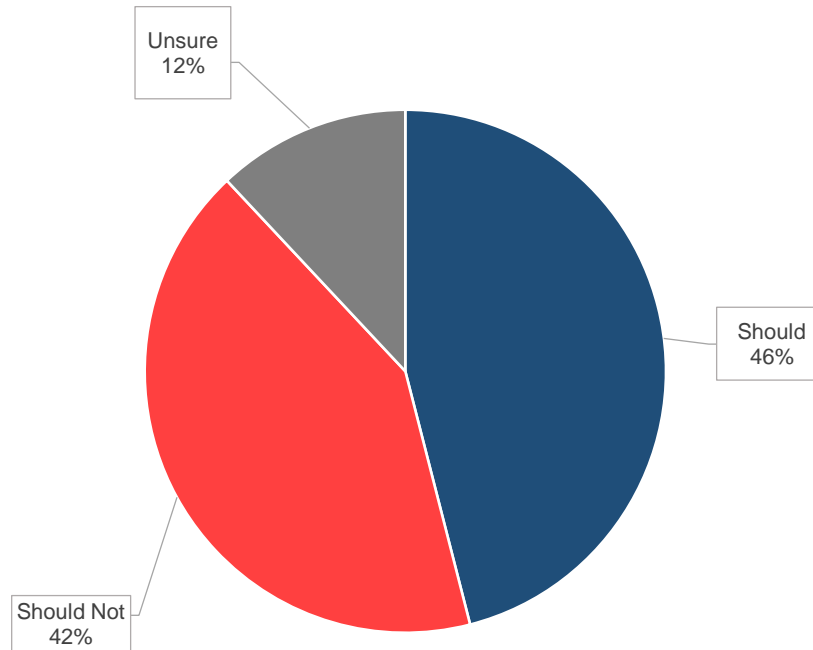


---

Voters were asked to describe their view toward Bernie Sanders' candidacy. Slightly less than one-half of voters said that they are *excited about his candidacy to become president* (44%). More than one-third (36%) of voters said that they *support some of his ideas, but don't think he could win a general election against the Republican nominee* and nine percent of voters said that they *do not support his candidacy*.

**Do you think Vice President Joe Biden should or should not run for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party?**

---



---

Voters were asked whether they think Vice President Joe Biden should run for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party. Slightly more voters reported that he *should* (46%) run than said he *should not* (42%). Twelve percent of voters are *unsure*.

## **Methodology**

The results outlined in this report are based on a survey conducted by RKM Research and Communications on behalf of Franklin Pierce University and the Boston Herald. All interviews were conducted by paid, trained and professionally supervised live interviewers.

The survey is based on a probabilistic sample of 442 likely Democratic presidential primary voters in New Hampshire. Interviews were conducted by landline and cellular telephone, August 7-10, 2015. The sampling margin of error is +/- 4.7 percent.

The data are weighted to adjust for probability of selection, respondent sex and respondent age. In addition to sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question wording effects, question order effects and non-response.

More information available at [www.rkm-research.com](http://www.rkm-research.com).