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## "Sanders, Buttigieg, Klobuchar"

At the beginning of this presidential campaign, the odds would have been very long to bet that neither former Vice President Joe Biden nor Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren would earn bound delegate votes from the nation's first primary in New Hampshire, but that is exactly what happened last night.

All night long, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) placed first, second, and third, and with all three of these contenders easily exceeding the 15% delegate apportionment threshold in both the at-large vote and in the two congressional districts, it is they who split the state's 24 first ballot delegates.

Sen. Sanders ran just under 26% in first position, while Mr. Buttigieg was close behind with just over 24%, and Sen. Klobuchar hovered consistently around the 20% mark throughout the evening. Sen. Warren fell just short of 10% while Mr. Biden, who for most of the early campaign cycle was polling near the top of the candidate heap, dropped all the way to fifth place recording just about 8.5% of the vote.

While this is a crushing performance for both Warren and Biden, it is actually worse for the Massachusetts Senator. Mr. Biden still has a base in the southern states and with so few delegates being chosen in Iowa and New Hampshire - 65 total from a 3,979 first ballot universe - he can easily soar to the top with a string of southern state victories on Super Tuesday.

Sen. Warren, on the other hand, has what now appears to be few opportunities for wins. Her home state of Massachusetts is on the Super Tuesday calendar and has 91 first ballot delegates, but her performance in the interim will have to improve to make her competitive even there. The next state, Nevada, must become a point of emphasis for her to show viability because she has never demonstrated significant polling strength in the south.

Therefore, combining Iowa and New Hampshire, the bound first ballot delegate count is projected as follows:



Needed to Nominate: 1,990 of 3,979  
(Graphic from Washington Post)

Though Sen. Sanders finished first last night, his New Hampshire performance must be considered a disappointment when remembering that he received 60% of the vote here four years ago in his one-on-one match with Hillary Clinton. Therefore, the two candidates gaining the most from the first-in-

the-nation primary are actually the Midwestern candidates, Buttigieg and Klobuchar, and not the New England pair of Sanders and Warren.

After the first two voting events, we see Sen. Sanders scoring a pair of first place finishes in the popular vote category, yet he still trails slightly in the aggregate bound delegate count. Turnout for the 2020 New Hampshire primary exceeded the participant level from four years ago, an increase of just over 10 percent.

We now have an eleven-day respite until Nevada voters attend their caucus meetings on February 22nd. A week later, South Carolinians will vote in what has now become the most important of the first four states. Mr. Biden's back will be against the wall in the Palmetto State and a victory there - he has been dominant in polling for better than a year in South Carolina - will be essential for him continuing in the race. Also, look for billionaire Tom Steyer to attempt to make a serious move in South Carolina, and it is possible he could score a few bound votes in Nevada's delegate apportionment mix, as well.