US Presidential Primary Elections 2020: Where Candidates and Generations Stand

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As the United States navigates through a long and rather daunting primary process to determine the candidates that will face off in the general elections in November perhaps it's best to focus on one party whose primaries are getting very heated: the Democratic Party.

At the time of writing two candidates remain in the race among a field of dozens of contenders: US Senator from Vermont Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joe Biden. The two campaigns have switched to online campaigning because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The stark contrasts between Sanders and Biden represent the ever-deepening divide between the progressive and the moderate wings of the Democratic Party. Sanders identifies as a democratic socialist, uses every opportunity to rail against the "establishment", especially the Democratic establishment that have been funded by private corporations and moved further to right while losing their touch with the people, and has huge enthusiastic support; especially from young people. Sanders runs a "grassroots" campaign, meaning he doesn't take donations from corporations or wealthy donors and relies on volunteers and supporters to keep his campaign going. Biden has more conservative politics, runs on a platform of former President Barack Obama's legacy, and argues that the Democrats need to appeal to moderates and conservatives to win the general elections. Biden argues it's imperative that Trump doesn't get a second term and whatever needs to be done to beat Trump should be done. In short, Biden's key goal is to beat Trump, Sanders' is to beat the status quo.

How do the voters react to these opposing sentiments? The primaries are still in progress as different states vote on different days, but as things stand at the time of writing Biden leads Sanders with 7 million votes compared to Sanders' 5.6 million and has about a 120-delegate lead in the Democratic National Convention in which 1,991 delegates are needed to win. The two candidates attract voters from very different demographics with generations being the strongest examples of this: according to the New York Times exit polls in the state of Michigan, 64% of voters 18 to 44 voted for Sanders while 66% of voters age 45 and up voted for Biden. There are many reasons for this but it can be argued that the existential threat of climate change, a low minimum

wage, the ever-increasing cost of housing and enormous student loan debt all caused a dramatic decline in the quality of life of young people and all of them are issues Sanders spoke out passionately about.

No matter what happens in these primaries there is one more big goal for Democrats this year: beating Trump in November and taking back the Senate from Republicans to not only stop Trump but also to move on with the potential next president's agenda in Congress.