

2020 presidential election: media and advertising overview


An overview of media coverage, advertising spending, and social media usage of the 2020 presidential candidates

March 13, 2020

Producer

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Roadmap

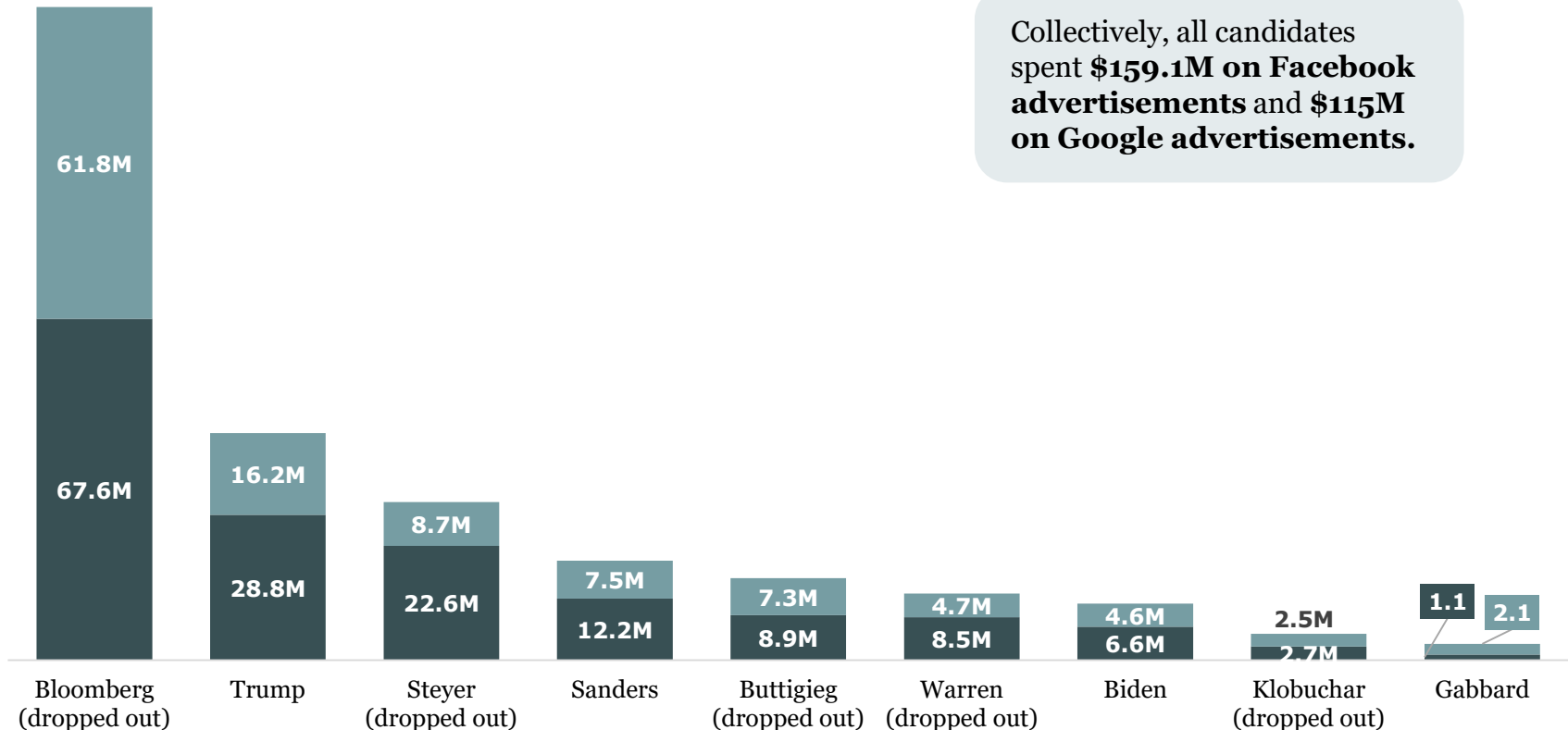
- 
- Advertising targeting and spending
 - Upcoming primary states advertising overview
 - Cable news and print media trends
 - Social media trends

Former New York City Mayor Bloomberg has outspent all other Democratic candidates in digital advertising expenses

Advertising spending between Jan. 5, 2019 and March 7, 2020

OF TOP SPENDING 2020 CANDIDATES

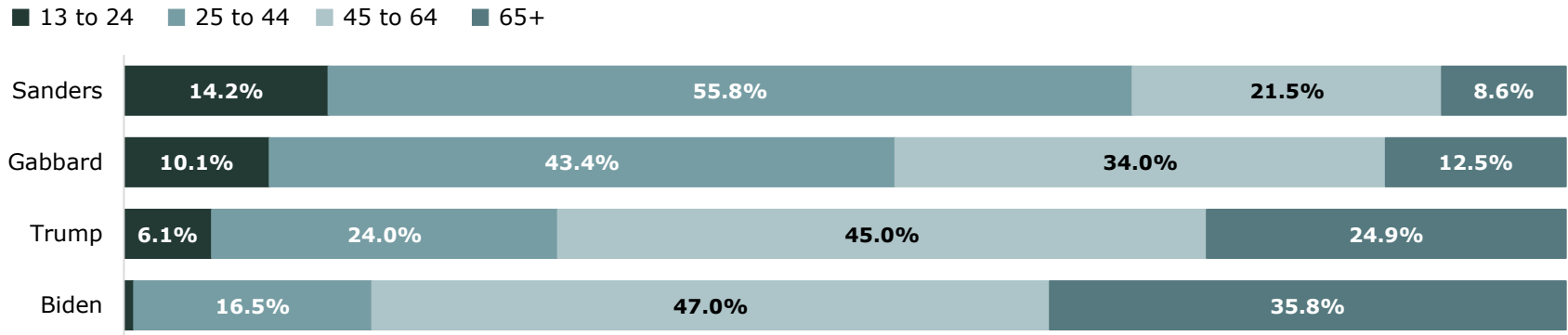
■ Facebook advertisements ■ Google advertisements



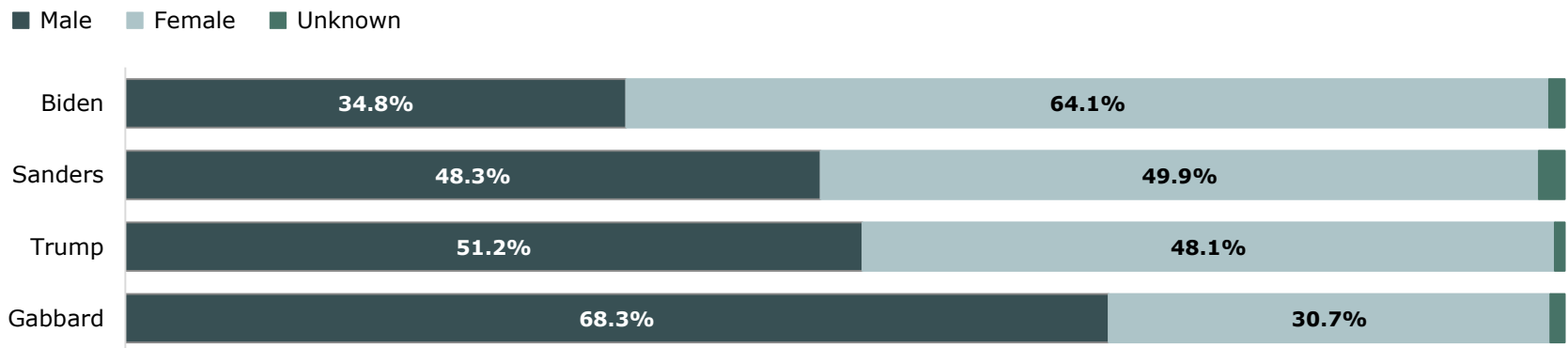
Sources: Bully Pulpit Interactive.

Sen. Sanders predominantly targets younger voters, while former VP Biden focuses on older voters and females

Targeted Facebook spending by age, between March 23, 2019 and March 7, 2020



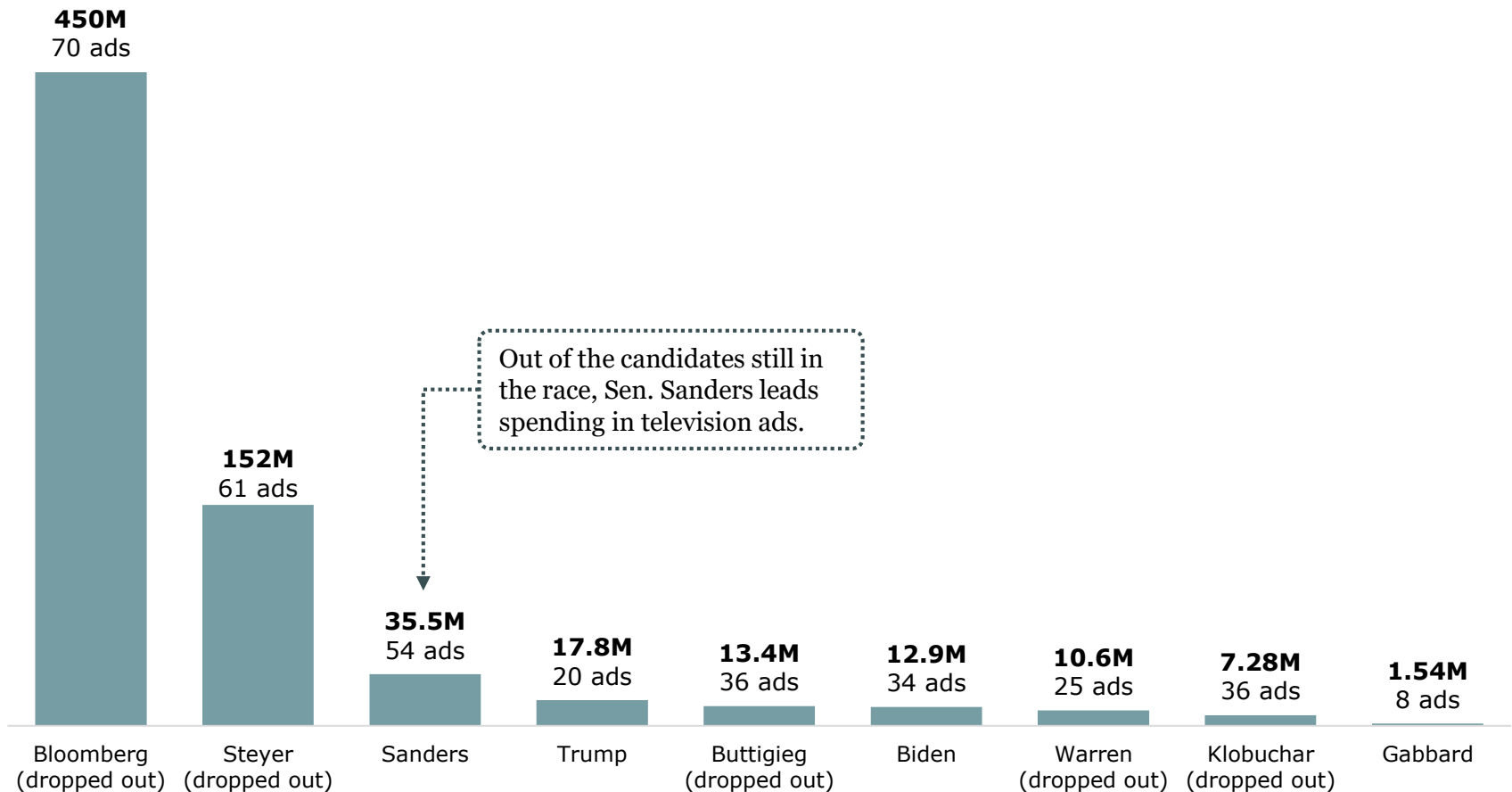
Targeted Facebook spending by gender, between March 23, 2019 and March 7, 2020



Sources: Bully Pulpit Interactive.


Businessman Steyer and former Mayor Bloomberg outspent all presidential candidates in television advertisements

Television advertisements spending, by candidate



Source: FiveThirtyEight, The New York Times.

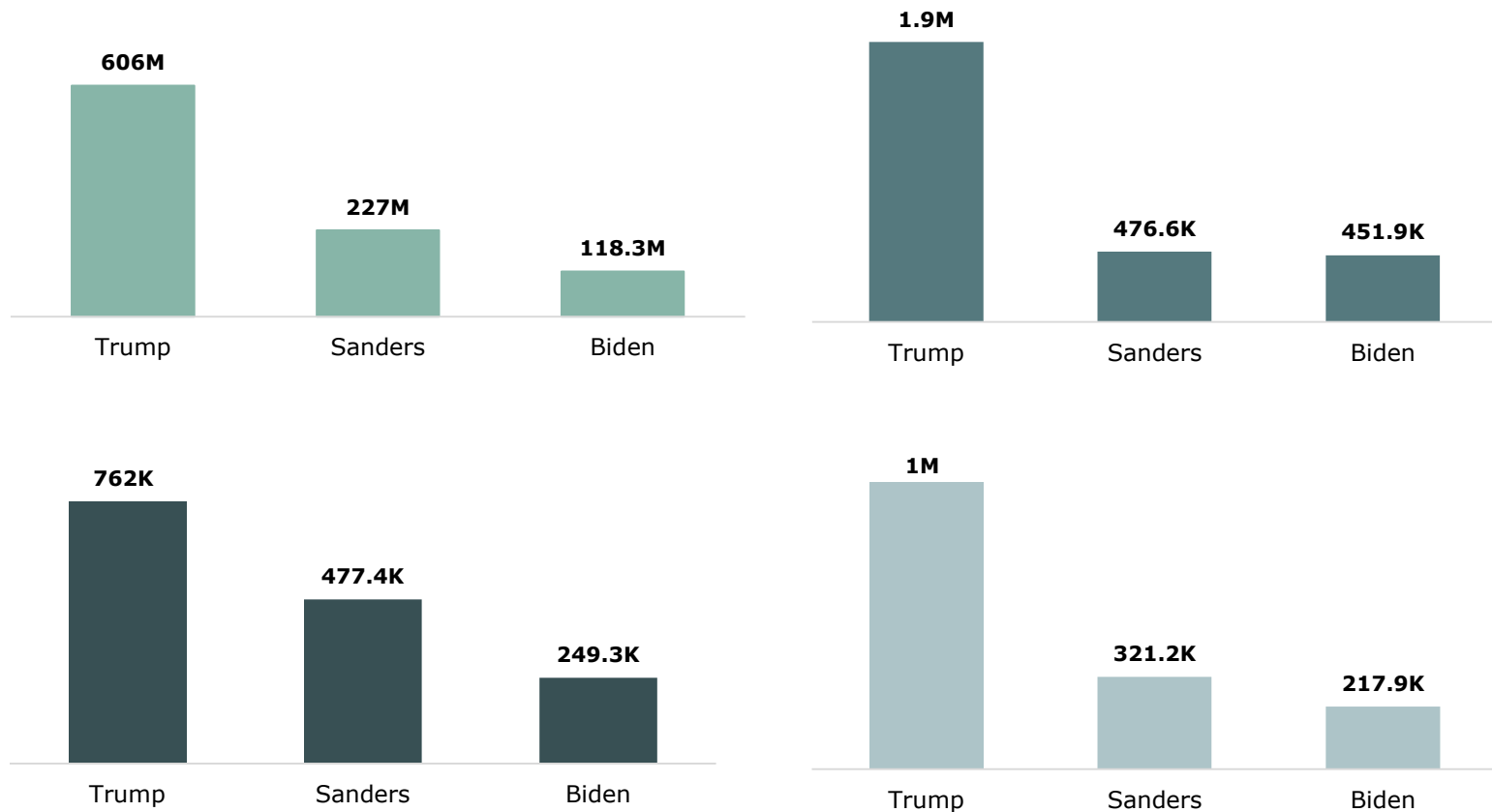
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President Trump leads in advertising spending targeted at the four states holding a primary on March 17

Ad spending from Jan. 5, 2019 to March 7, 2020, by candidate

■ Arizona ■ Florida ■ Illinois ■ Ohio



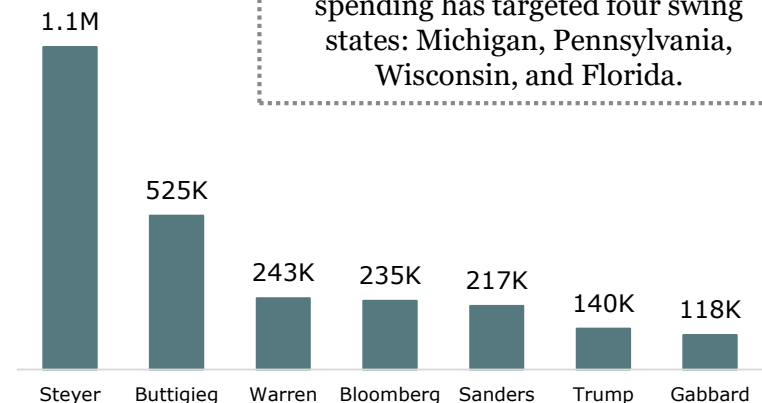
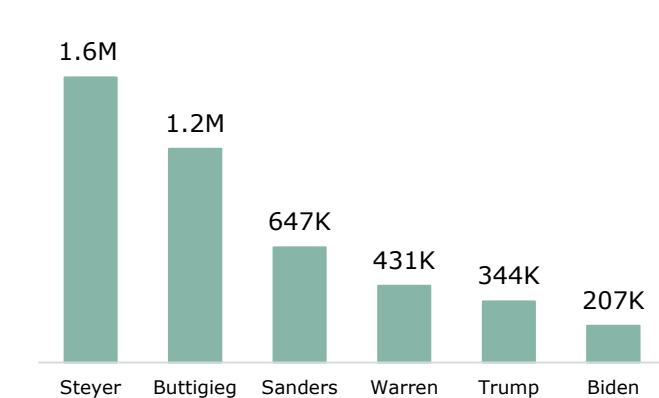
Source: Bully Pulpit Interactive

Yanelle Cruz | Slide last updated: March 12, 2020

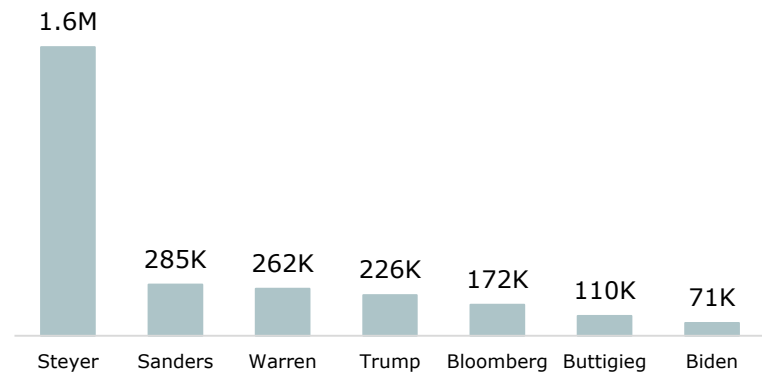
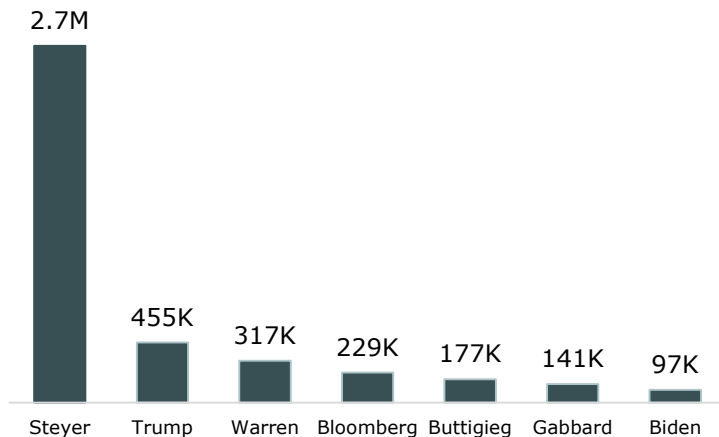
Businessman Tom Steyer spent the most in advertising targeted at the first four voting states

Ad spending from Jan. 5, 2019 to Feb. 22, 2020, by candidate

Iowa New Hampshire South Carolina Nevada




In contrast, President Trump's highest spending has targeted four swing states: Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Florida.



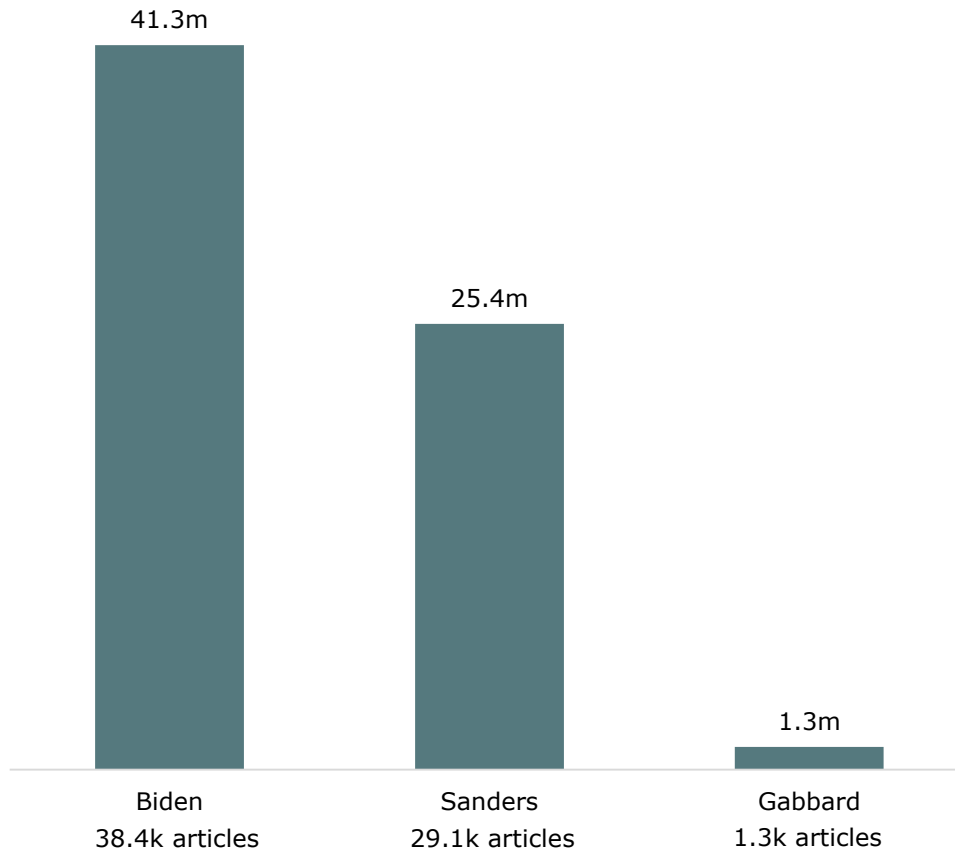
Source: The New York Times, Bully Pulpit Interactive

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Former Vice President Biden has generated the highest number of interactions than any other candidate

Total Facebook and Twitter interactions for week ending on March 8, 2020



This week's interactions on stories about Former Vice President Biden represent **the highest level of attention any candidate has received** in the presidential primary.

Top stories about former Vice President Biden centered on his endorsements from former presidential candidates and right-wing media talking about his forgetfulness and verbal mishaps.

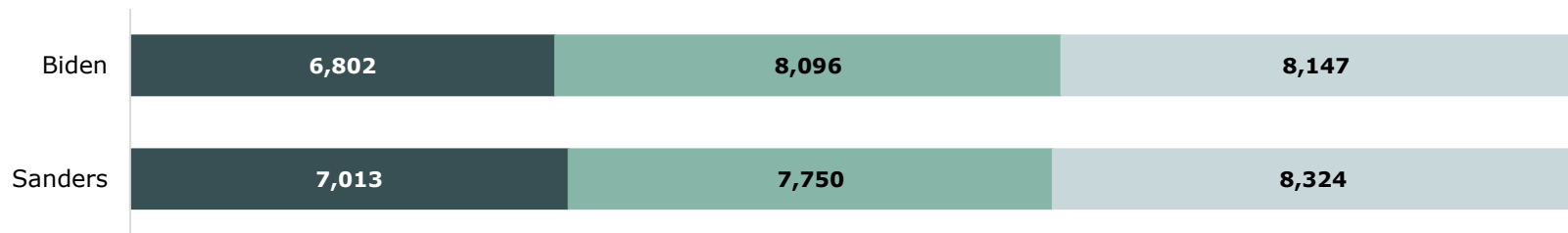
Despite the lower number of interactions, Sen. Sanders **held the lead in interactions throughout the month of February**, the same time in which he held the lead in polling.

Coverage of Sen. Sanders remains positive. Top stories center on an analysis that projects Medicare for All will increase wages and Sen. Sanders publicly denouncing a Nazi flag at one of his rallies.

Sen. Sanders has received the most cable and online news mentions than other candidates

Cable news mentions from Jan. 1, 2020 to Feb. 19, 2020

■ CNN ■ Fox News ■ MSNBC




Online news mentions from Jan. 1, 2020 to Feb. 19, 2020



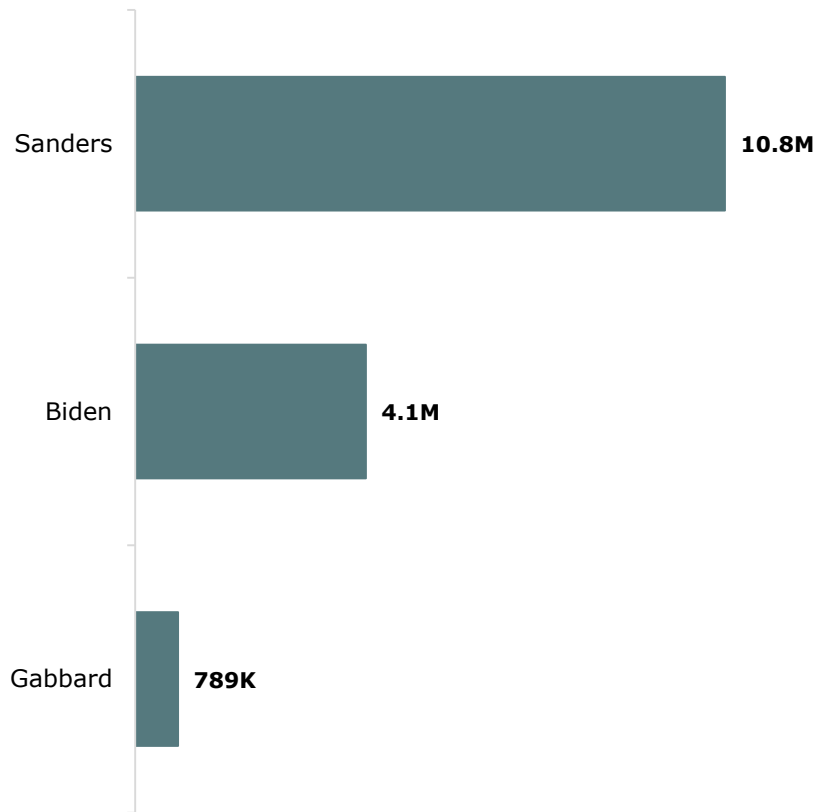
Source: Real Clear Politics.

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Since the 2016 election, Twitter has become an important aspect of political campaigns

Candidates' Twitter followers as of March 13, 2020



During the December debate, **former VP Joe Biden and Andrew Yang** were the most tweeted about.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) follows **around 140,000 accounts**, making her the candidate who follows the most Twitter users.

In the last month, Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT) gained over **195,000 followers**, making him the candidate that gained the most followers.

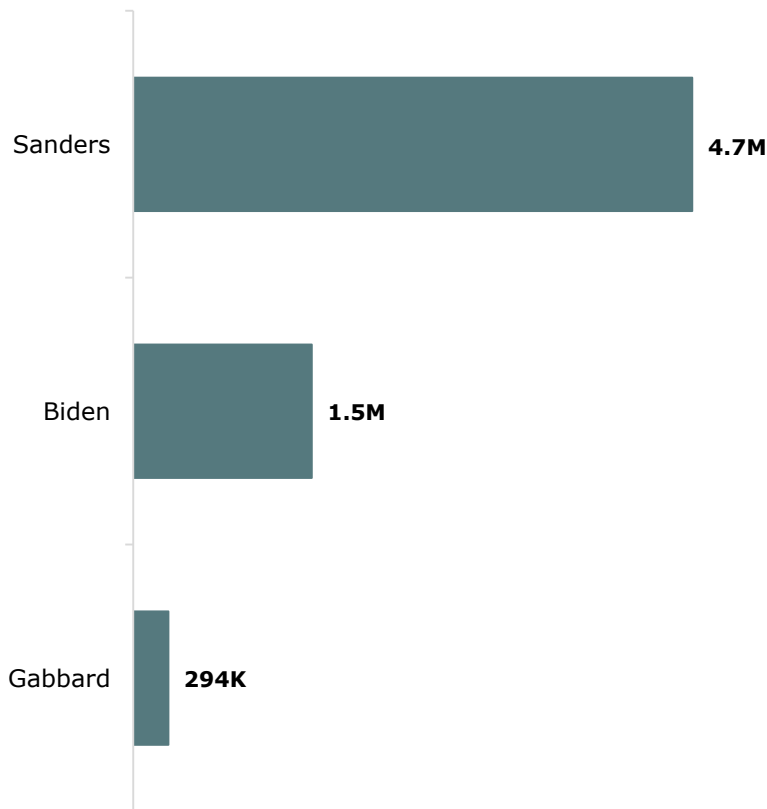
According to TwitterAudit, **Sens. Warren and Sanders** have the highest proportion of fake accounts following them of all 2020 Democratic candidates.

Andrew Yang, Mayor Buttigieg, and Rep. Gabbard have the highest engagement from their followers, based on likes and retweets.

According to one tweet analysis, **Andrew Yang** has the most positive tone and sentiment, followed by Mayor Buttigieg.

Instagram's stories and live videos have been used by some 2020 candidates, but the platform might pose future risks

Candidates' Instagram followers as of March 13, 2020



A Senate Intelligence Committee report found more engagement by Russian disinformation campaigns on Instagram than any other platform.

A recent NYU Stern study said that Instagram is at the biggest risk of disinformation campaigns during the 2020 election cycle.

In a Business Insider poll of respondents between 13 and 21 years old, **59%** listed social media as a top news source and **65%** said they check Instagram daily.

An August 2018 Pew Research study found that only **14%** of Americans said they changed their views on a specific issue thanks to social media.

Instagram stories and live videos have been used by 2020 Dems: **Sen. Warren** announced her exploratory committee via story.

Despite not having the largest following, **Mayor Buttigieg's** use of social media has led him to have the biggest Instagram follower growth of all 2020 Democrats.

Social media political advertising policies

The role of social media in spreading false political advertisements has been a concern among politicians and the public since Russians used Facebook during the 2016 cycle to spread inflammatory and divisive messages

FACEBOOK

Facebook has received backlash for its advertising policies, which allow for advertisements with false messages:



Fact-checking political speech: Politicians are exempt from Facebook's third-party fact-checking policy, which applies to photos and videos to prevent the spread of false information.

- Facebook officials have stated that the platform should not “referee political debates” or “prevent a politician’s speech from reaching its audience” and that content instead should be subject to scrutiny and interpretation by the public.
- However, if a politician posts previously “debunked” content, such content will be demoted and related factual information will be displayed; debunked content will not be allowed in advertisements.



Newsworthiness content exemption: Since 2016, Facebook has exempt statements or information that breaks its community standards if its deemed a public interest.

- Since Sept. 2019, this exemption applies to speech from politicians and as a general rule will not be removed.
- Political speech will continue to be subject to Facebook’s standards and evaluations of public interest value relative to risk of harm.

twitter

On Nov. 22, Twitter **banned all political advertisements** on its platform. New changes include:



A global ban on the promotion of political content and advertisements of any type from political figures, including candidates, parties, and government officials

- The ban includes advertisements appealing for votes or financial support, and ads that advocate for or against any of the political content that will be prohibited.
- The ban specifically prohibits advertisements of any types by candidates, political parties, government officials, PACs, Super PACs, and 501(c)(4) organizations.



Identification of “cause-based” ads, which will be restricted as targeted advertising and will require certification prior to publication

- This policy limits “micro-targeting,” whereby content is tailored and personalized to take advantage of audience vulnerabilities.
- Cause-based ads targeted by ZIP code, tailored to a specific audience, or associated with prohibited advertisers or political content will be prohibited.

Source: Facebook; New York Times; CNBC.