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March 10th Democratic Primary Analysis

Tuesday, March 10th brought the second round of multiple same-day high-profile Democratic primaries, with similar overall trends seen from Super Tuesday a week earlier. Vice President Joe Biden held on to the gains he made with late-deciders a week prior, realized with resounding victories in Michigan and Missouri. Those same late-deciding voter constituencies put him over the top with small but still symbolically significant victories in Washington and Idaho. And in Mississippi, Biden once again displayed his deep strength with African-American voters, winning nearly all of the state's delegates.

As the below data will show, Biden has quickly become a dominating force in this process by harnessing the unbridled enthusiasm of older, white suburban voters across the country. This group—key in several democratic House victories in 2018—has outperformed its turnout expectations in nearly every contest from Super Tuesday onward. Yet while these older voters are flexing their turnout muscle, progressive policies driven by younger voters are winning majority support within the party. This conflict will not only dominate Biden's effort to potentially ignite a general election Democratic electorate. It will likely come to define the party itself for years to follow, one that is driven by progressive ideology while owing its potential power to more moderate suburbanites. Nonetheless, with Tuesday's results built off the loyalty of Black Southern voters, Biden's nomination appears inevitable. But with the current public health crisis, there is so much that we do not know about what will happen with the remaining electoral cycle.

State-wide Turnout:

Democrats experienced another election day of **impressive voter turnout results across the March 10th primary states**. Michigan joined states such as Virginia and Texas in shattering their primary turnout record, increasing overall participation by 31%. Mississippi saw a more modest but still impressive increase of 14%, while Missouri saw a 5.5% increase in the Democratic electorate.

As a previous caucus state in 2016, Washington cannot be directly compared to the 2020 electorate. However, turnout was no less impressive. Nearly 1.5 million Democratic voters participated on Tuesday, comprising almost 60% of all registered Democratic voters in the state. Idaho and North Dakota, also both 2016 caucus states, unsurprisingly saw much larger turnout this cycle with the shift to a primary direct vote system. This increase however was more in line with what is expected in doing away with the caucus system.

State	Total Democratic Turnout	Change from 2016
Michigan	1.59 Million	+ 31.5%
Mississippi	258,489	+14.2%
Missouri	664,378	+5.5%
Washington	1.45 Million	N/A
Idaho	107, 801	N/A
North Dakota	14,413	N/A

Source: New York Times

White, Older Voters are Driving Turnout Increase:

The story in both Michigan and Mississippi—the largest turnout state increases of the night—is clear: compared to 2016, the electorate was notably whiter and older.

According to CNN exit polls, white voters in Michigan increased their share of the electorate by 2% compared to 2016, while black voters decreased their share by 3%. We see similar trends in Mississippi: white voters increased their share by 4% of the primary electorate, while black voters decreased by 2%.

Missouri, while only a modest overall increase of 5.5%, experienced the exact same trend: white voters increased their share of the electorate by 5%, while black voters saw their share decrease by 4%.

State	2020 Share of Electorate: White Voters	Change from 2016	2020 Share of the Electorate: Black Voters	Change from 2016
Michigan	72%	+2%	18%	-3%
Mississippi	28%	+4%	69%	-2%
Missouri	77%	+5%	17%	-4%

Source: All exit poll analysis is based on 2020 and 2016 CNN exit polling data

We can see similar stunning consistency in Michigan, Mississippi, and Missouri as it pertains to age. Simply put, all three states each saw voters aged 45 years and older increase their electorate share by 8% compared to 2016 exit polls. Making this consistency more remarkable is the differing racial and socioeconomic demographics that populate these three states. No matter the differences, all three told the same story: Democrats are increasing their voter

participation in comparison to 2016, and this increase is being driven by older, white voters across the country.

State	2020 Share of the Electorate: Voters aged 45+	Change from 2016
Michigan	63%	+8%
Mississippi	68%	+8%
Missouri	67%	+8%

Michigan Tells the Tale: Urban vs. Suburban Turnout

Nowhere is the story of this older, white voter surge in electorate share clearer than what occurred in Michigan. The three suburban counties of metro Detroit—Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne—totaled 150,000 more voters compared to the 2016 primary. Oakland County alone increased its vote total by over 80,000, an overall increase of 44%. The median household income of Oakland County is over $86,000, making it the 21st wealthiest county in America.

Conversely, Detroit proper saw a decrease of 11%, with 14,000 total less voters compared to 2016. While it is worth noting Detroit has seen an overall population decline of nearly 20,000 residents since 2016, it is unlikely to explain that stark of an electorate decrease.

The opposite ends of the Michigan county turnout spectrum tell a similar story. The heavily white and traditionally conservative northern Michigan county of Alpena saw a 65% increase in their Democratic primary participation, the largest increase in the state. One of the smallest increases came from Genesee County, home to Flint: it only saw an overall increase of 6%, the second smallest statewide on the county level.

<u>**Medicare for All is Winning the Day, Just Not the Primary**</u>

Despite Biden's stark opposition to a Medicare for All healthcare system, Democratic voters are overwhelmingly supporting the idea of its implementation. Biden, who secured key victories in nearly all the March 10th states, won in spite of voters backing the universal healthcare proposal. Though a mainstay policy of Senator Bernie Sanders' campaign, voters are backing Biden by prioritizing issues of electability and "uniting the country" over specific policy agendas. All four states with exit polling data show a clear majority of Democratic primary support of the initiative.

State	Support Medicare for All	Oppose Medicare for All
Washington	63%	30%
Mississippi	60%	35%
Missouri	58%	37%
Michigan	57%	39%

And as the charts below show, Biden did exceedingly well or well enough with voters who chose health care as their top issue, along with voters that support a single-payer healthcare system. Unsurprisingly (and not shown below), Biden overwhelmingly won voters who oppose a single-payer healthcare system.

Biden has channeled the energy of voters who have chosen healthcare as their number one issue in the name of opposing reform, while securing enough votes from supporters of Medicare for All who have not made the single-payer movement a prerequisite for supporting a candidate.

State	Top Issue: Health Care	% of Biden Support for Health Care Voters
Washington	37%	35%
Mississippi	42%	81%
Missouri	47%	61%
Michigan	42%	58%

State	% of Biden Support for Voters in Favor of Medicare for All
Washington	22%
Mississippi	77%
Missouri	42%
Michigan	37%