



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 7, 2020

Serious Sorting to Take Place Tonight in New Hampshire Democrat Debate

Unless former Vice President Joe Biden pulls off a miracle, there will be only three serious candidates left vying for the Democrat Party's nomination to face the president after [tonight's debate](#). One of them won't even be on the stage tonight at Saint Anselm College in Manchester.



Of the seven debate participants — Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Joe Biden, Andrew Yang, Tom Steyer, and Amy Klobuchar — two are serious contenders. The third — Michael Bloomberg — will be eyeing the expected brawl from the sidelines.

Buttigieg has declared himself the victor in Iowa's botched results while Sanders is so close behind that the media are calling them the "twinnings" in that contest.

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According to the *New York Times* the "steel bar" rule is this: No Democrat in the modern era has won Iowa and New Hampshire and not ended up as the party's presidential nominee. Expect the "twinnings" then to come out swinging tonight.

What Iowa proved, despite the confusion, is that Biden is no longer "the most electable" of the candidates. If he is weak tonight and then loses again on Tuesday in the first-in-the-nation's primary, he can pack his bags.

The polls from Real Clear Politics (RCP) aren't particularly helpful. On the state level, Sanders leads Buttigieg by almost five points while on the national level Biden leads them both by six points and 13 points respectively. But a poor showing tonight by Biden will take him out of the picture as his funding will dry up.

On the national level the RCP polling is clear, but subject to change depending on Biden's performance both tonight and on Tuesday. Right now Biden leads the pack at 27 points, with Sanders at 21.8 points and Buttigieg at a dismal seven points. Warren is the wild card, still holding third place nationally at 14.4 points.

But the ultimate winner could be dark horse Michael Bloomberg whose endless and limitless spending (more than \$300 million and counting) has boosted his national numbers to 10.6 points.

This is playing out eerily close to the result Bloomberg is seeking, as surmised by *The New American*: his spending is so weakening Biden's initial commanding lead that there will be a brokered convention in Milwaukee in July. If no candidate wins on the first ballot, Bloomberg then appears invincible: not to win the nomination for himself but to assume the role of kingmaker. It helps to remember that he never once touted himself as the candidate to beat Trump; only that he will move heaven and earth to remove



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Trump from office in November.

This agrees with Pat Buchanan's assessment going into tonight's debate. He asked rhetorically: "How is it possible, if not probable, that Bernie Sanders, Michael Bloomberg and Pete Buttigieg will be the last three Democrats standing?"

Sanders continues to surprise. Although trailing in South Carolina's primary 17 points to Biden's 31 points, taking Biden out of the picture tonight or on Tuesday upends that calculation. As Sanders just noted: "I think we'll do a lot better than people think in South Carolina. I think we've got a good shot to win California [where he leads Biden by five points]. Bottom line: I believe that we are well-positioned to win the Democratic nomination."

But it is unlikely Sanders will be able to win a majority on the first vote in July, leaving Door Number Three open for Bloomberg to come in and save the party from completely obliterating itself. Just as he and his strategists have been planning from the beginning.

That's why the mystery candidate — Number Eight not on the stage tonight in Manchester — doesn't need to make an appearance. His disruption has all but sealed the fate of Joe Biden while setting the stage for securing his own in Milwaukee.

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