

# Findings of 2021 Our Revolution Supporters Survey

Andrew M. Engelhardt  
University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Ronald B. Rapoport  
College of William and Mary

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## **Our Revolution and Changing American Politics**

The Bernie Sanders campaign of 2016 changed the entire tenor Democratic Party and progressive politics in America. Given virtually no chance of winning the Democratic nomination by the pundits and political analysts, Sanders inspired and mobilized millions of people on his behalf, garnering more than \$180,000,000 with an average contribution of \$27.

Even though Sanders failed to get the Democratic nomination, his campaign's priorities (\$15/hour minimum wage, single-payer health care, reducing inequality through taxes and structural reform, free college tuition) became mainstream concerns within the party. The energy and enthusiasm of the campaign was transferred to Our Revolution, a mass-membership organization devoted to progressive candidates and policies, which formed in August 2016.

OR has continued to play an important role in American politics, endorsing progressive candidates in primaries and general elections, advocating for progressive policies, and pursuing ballot referenda throughout the country. Our Revolution has shown showing a willingness to support progressive candidates even against entrenched Democratic incumbents like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez against Democratic Caucus Chair Joseph Crowley, and Cori Bush against 10-term incumbent Lacy Clay. It represents an important part of the progressive movement in the US and within the Democratic Party. It is, however, clearly distinct from the Democratic Party, prioritizing a coherent progressive policy agenda over partisan goals. This makes it an especially interesting group to examine to gain insight into current American politics.

We offer here a report drawing on response from over 2200 supporters of OR we collected over email from August-October 2021. We asked supporters many different questions, gauging opinions on current policy debates and political figures, their beliefs about the political system, and what they do to be involved politically.

## **Key Findings**

### Partisanship and Ideology

- Our Revolution supporters consistently reject the Republican candidates for federal office. Less than 2% voted Republican for President in either 2016 or 2020
- Our Revolution supporters are not, however, uniformly Democratic Party supporters. Although almost none identify with the Republican Party, 16% identify with a party other than the Democrats, and another 5% are pure independents (leaning towards neither party).
- Ideologically, Our Revolution supporters are very left leaning. On a 1 to 7 scale with 1 "Very Left" and 7 "Very Right, they individually place themselves at an average of 1.77—far to the left of the Democratic Party (which they place in the center at 4) and even to the left of their placement of Our Revolution.
- Our Revolution supporters are also on the left across a wide range of issues. Over 86% of respondents favored raising taxes on those making over \$250,000, establishing a single-payer health plan, banning new oil and gas drilling, eliminating the production of new gasoline powered cars after 2035, spending money on infrastructure even if it added larger deficits, and ending cash bail.
- The top issue priorities for Our Revolution supporters were climate, voting rights, healthcare, and income inequality. They believe progressive groups share their priorities to a much greater

degree than the Democratic Party or President Biden. Only about a third of OR respondents thought the Democratic Party or Biden shared their top priority while more than 60% felt that other progressive groups did.

- There was also significant skepticism about Biden's issue positions. On most issue areas, majorities of respondents reported agreeing with Biden's positions 50% or less.

#### Campaign Activity and OR Organizational Activity

- Seventy percent of Our Revolution supporters favored Sanders for the 2020 nomination, and half of the rest supported Warren
- Sanders supporters were far more active for their candidate than were supporters of other candidates.
- There was significant drop-off in campaign activity between the primaries and the general election in 2020.
- OR respondents reported high levels of involvement in the organization beyond involvement in elections or work on behalf of Bernie Sanders's campaigns.
- Almost 90% of respondents reported doing at least one OR organizational activity and more than three quarters did something beyond simply reading the Revolution Report.
- Organizational activity was significantly related to primary activity for Sanders, but not to activity for any other nomination candidate.
- Organizational identification was not related to activity for Biden-Harris.
- Perceived policy program distance from the Democratic Party (and from Biden), socialist identification, and low identification with the Democratic Party depressed activity for Biden-Harris, while agreement with Democratic Party and Biden priorities enhanced activity.

#### Evaluations of Political Figures

- Bernie Sanders was the most favorably evaluated of the figures we presented, but AOC, Nina Turner, and Elizabeth Warren were grouped just below.
- Obama, Biden, Harris, and Pelosi were grouped together significantly below these although viewed favorably.
- Evaluations of Democratic figures are two dimensional—a progressive dimension and an establishment Democrat dimension.
- Only Elizabeth Warren evaluation is significantly related to both dimensions

## Our Revolution Supporters in their Own Words

People become active and interested in politics for many different reasons. Our first interest is to lay out some of what originally inspired Our Revolution supporters to become politically engaged. Some political observers suggest that OR activity and supporters may have been uniquely inspired by Bernie Sanders's 2016 and 2020 campaigns to be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. Is this the case?

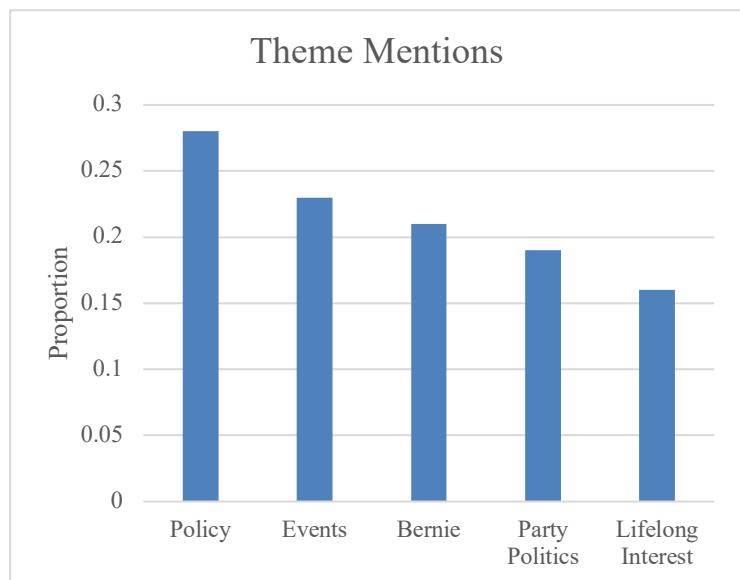
We asked respondents to describe, in their own words their own story of what first got them inspired about politics. We used a statistical procedure which takes the open-ended responses and groups them according to common motivations. While people of course vary in important ways, five general motivations/themes stand out: the importance of changing public policies and a belief that political participation can be a force for change (policy); past, transformative events like the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam War, and student movements (events); responses to Bernie Sanders and his campaign (Bernie); reactions to the election of Donald Trump and two-party politics (party politics); and last general reflections on life-long activity, teenage interest, and active consumption of political news and information (lifelong interest).

We display the frequency with which these themes were used on the right. Of course, people can be motivated by more than one of these, but we use each individual's most prominent reason for these classifications. Policy mentions are most frequent, with general lifelong interest the least.

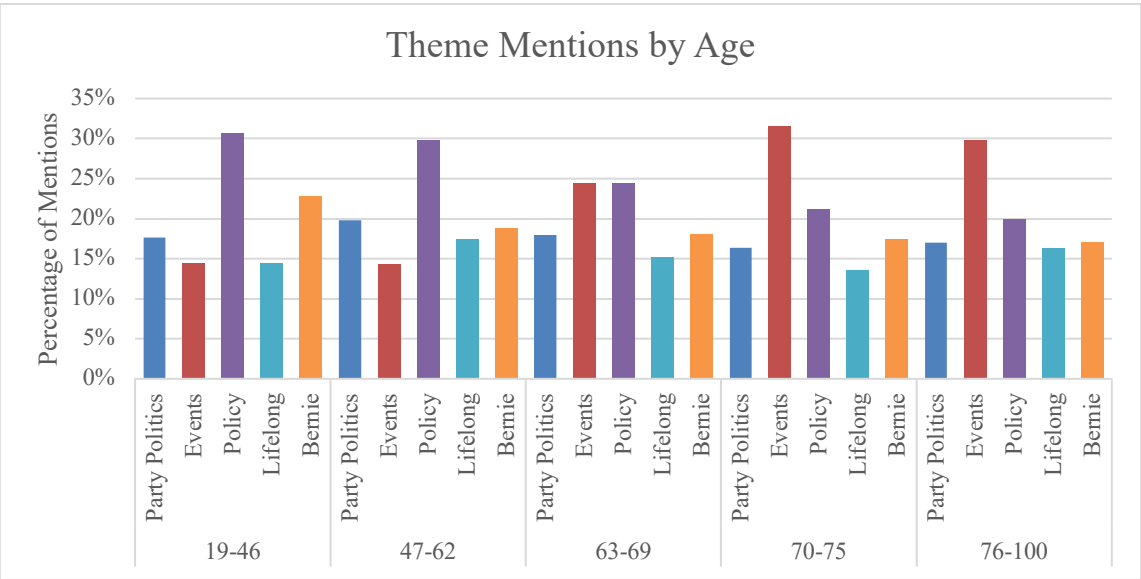
This reveals that although Our Revolution emerged out of the 2016 Bernie Sanders campaign, and Sanders is mentioned by a large number of our respondents, broader concerns of policy and mobilizing events, as well as political figures like Trump play important roles. Clearly the movement is

broad in its concerns and recruitment. Motivations for involvement, while significantly related to Sanders, go well beyond a personalized mobilization.

Clearly, then, OR supporters' motivations are varied, but largely stem from some of the same key events and transformative political figures. Of course, our respondents are of different ages and have lived through different eras in American politics. To understand how this might relate to motivation we segment respondents into age quintiles, capturing the youngest 20% (19-46), oldest 20% (76 and over), and age groups in between. This is useful because those in the youngest two quintiles (i. e., 19-62) are unlikely to have experienced the Vietnam war in any direct way, while those over 70 might have been strongly impacted by it. Given the difference in themes, we also wondered if we might



uncover differences across age groups in what came to mind when describing their original motivations. Indeed, we find interesting differences.



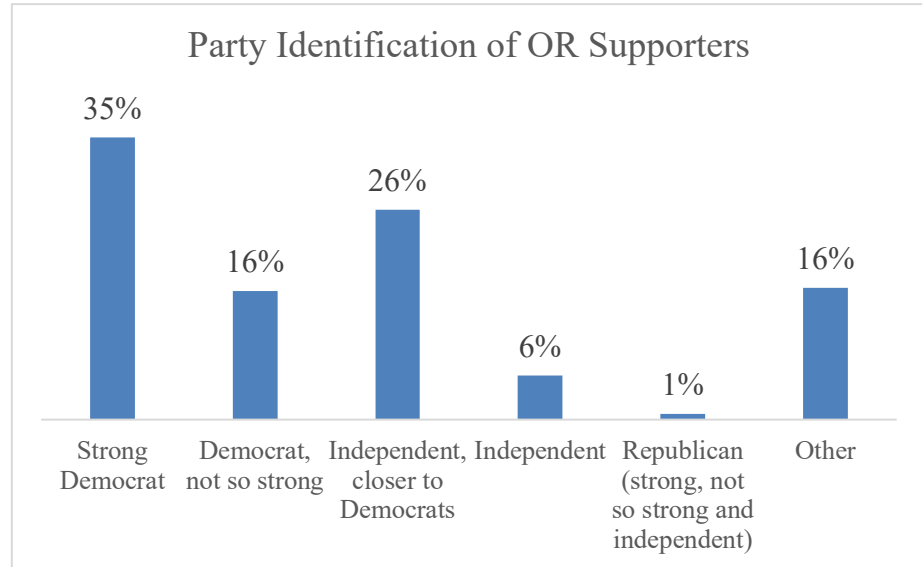
Certain types of motivations are always available. There are always important policy issues being debated and advocated, and family socialization is a persistent feature. Policy is very important for every age group (being the top or second most mentioned motivation). But certain motivations do vary significantly by age. In particular “events.” Not every generation experiences the same number or intensity of historical events during their formative years. It is not, then, completely surprising that for those over 69 events are the single most important motivation--more important than even policy. This age group, is of course, the Vietnam War-civil rights generation, and reflects the role the war and civil rights played in engaging a new generation of activists, rather than specific political figures. On the other hand, for those under 63, events are the least mentioned motivations, as more recent political forces—represented by Sanders and party politics—surpass events. Interestingly, mentions of political figures like Trump and Sanders as motivating forces do not vary much by age. While pundits may have seen Sanders uniquely inspiring younger voters and college students, OR supporters regardless of age mention him to similar degrees.

It is important to note, too, that these themes are not mutually exclusive. Responses may have included more than one. We find that mentions of establishment party politics coincided with concerns about realizing specific contemporaneous policy goals. Conversely, the more likely respondents were to mention specific dramatic events like the Vietnam War (which corresponded with activity decades ago), the less likely they were to also mention public policy goals or to mention Trump (who clearly post-dated such involvement), as inspiring their participation. Interestingly, while increased mentions of Sanders go with increased mentions of general lifelong interest, Sanders mentions are associated with fewer mentions of specific public policy goals. In other words, Sanders appears to have motivated people interested in politics but possibly focused on broader social and political changes rather than specific political goals.

**Partisan Voting and Identification**

When any new political movement bursts onto the scene, observers want to know what unifies the movement and what distinguishes it from the major parties. Because elections are particularly important to the major parties and to many commentators, we explore here partisanship expressed through reported vote choice and personal identification.

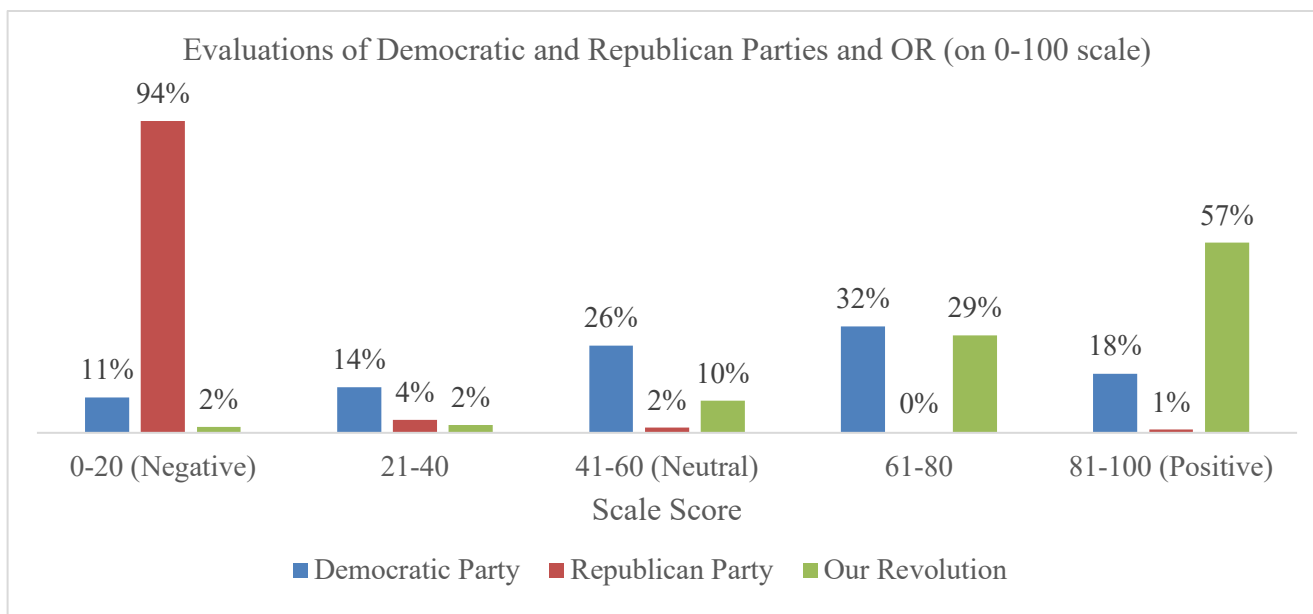
More than three-quarters (77%) of OR supporters identify as Democrats, with the largest group calling themselves “strong Democrats.” This leaves almost one-in-four who do not. Virtually none of this group (less than 1%) identify with the Republican Party to any degree (strong, weak or independents who lean toward the party). Instead, one-in-six (16%) selected another party or group with which to identify and another 6% identified as pure independents, declining to affiliate with any party.



The relatively large percentage in the “other” category is politically important. Most elections have only two viable candidates—the Democratic and Republican nominees. So, dislike of Republican candidates often translates into support for the Democratic opponent because there is nowhere else to go—hence the very strong Democratic vote. But when asked for their own partisan identification (and with an alternative to Democratic and Republican identification provided in the “other” designation), 16% rejected both parties and chose this alternative. When respondents who chose the “other” designation for partisan identification were asked to describe what they meant, almost three-quarters volunteered some variant of “socialist/progressive/Green” to describe their affiliation. This suggests that for almost a quarter of the sample (“other” party and pure independents), any subsequent vote choice for a Democrat over a Republican is likely due more to a “push” away from the Republicans rather than “pull” to the Democrats.

We find further evidence of these unfavorable views of the Republican Party in the chart below, which shows how respondents rated the Democratic Party, Republican Party, and Our Revolution on a 0-100 scale. A score of 100 on this scale indicates that respondent feels extremely favorably, or warm, towards the party/group; a score of 0 indicates feeling very unfavorably, or cold, towards the party/group; and a score of 50 indicates neutral feelings.

The results reveal asymmetric feelings about the parties. First, OR supporters totally reject the Republican Party. Only 1% of respondents rated it above 60 while 94% rated it between 0 and 20 (extremely cold). Second, while respondents had comparatively more positive views about the Democratic Party, this was not an inverse of their negativity toward the Republicans. More individuals rated the Democratic Party 60 or below than rated it above 60, overall a fairly cool assessment.



In contrast to ratings of the Democratic Party, support for the Our Revolution organization is very broad and very strong. A significant majority rated it above 80, with more than three times as many rating OR this positively as they did the Democratic Party.

Although there are much more positive feelings for OR than for the Democrats, the gap between the Democrats and Republican evaluation dwarfs that between the Democratic Party and OR.

To understand respondents' identifications more fully we asked each person how well a series of adjectives described them on a seven-point scale ranging from "Does not describe at all" (1) to "Describes Perfectly" (7). We find that OR supporters are much more likely to call themselves "progressive" and "socialist" than Democrat. Taking categories 6 and 7 as indicating strong identification, 77% of respondents describe themselves as "Progressive," 46 percent as "Socialist," but only 32% as "Democrat."

Even though OR supporters clearly prefer the Democratic Party over the Republican Party, significant ambivalence about Democratic Party identity remains. But with OR being a strong ideological movement, one motivated by important programmatic policy concerns, this stronger identification with ideological labels like "progressive" and "socialist" over a party label like "Democrat" makes more sense.

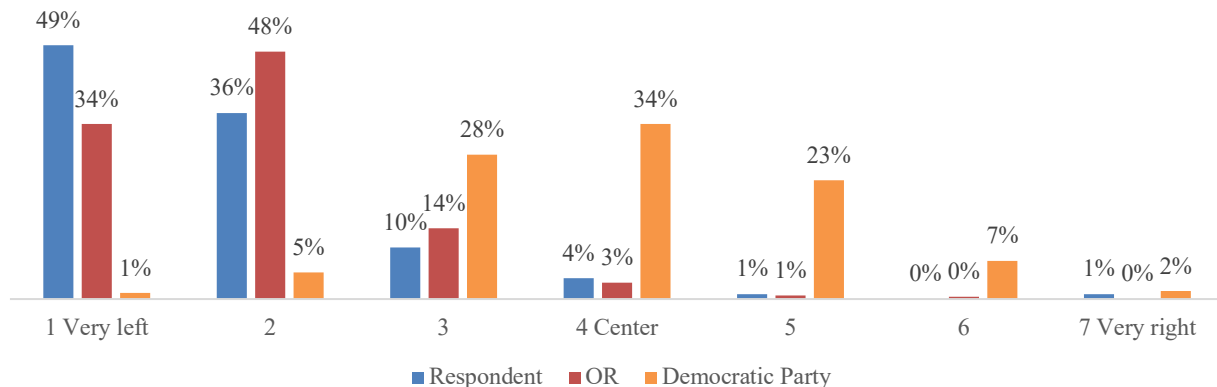
## **Ideology, Issues, and Theories of Political Change**

### Ideology

Coming out of the 2016 Bernie Sanders campaign, Our Revolution portrays itself as an organization of the left. Its website describes it as supporting "candidates who are committed to fighting for progressive priorities—issues like Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and Criminal Justice Reform and advancing the political revolution."

We asked respondents how they identified overall on a 7-point scale ranging from "very left" to "very right." As the figure below shows almost half of respondents (the left most blue bar) selected the farthest left position and a combined 85% selected the two most extreme left positions.

Ideological Placement (Left-Right) of Respondents (self-placement), Our Revolution, and Democratic Party



OR supporters place themselves on the political left, but where do they place the parties on the same scale? How big of a difference do they see between the Democratic Party and Our Revolution ideologically? How distant are they from the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the Our Revolution movement?

Respondents saw OR as being very much in sync with their own political positions as the figure above shows. Very similar percentages place both OR and themselves individually in the two most left categories (82% vs 85%, respectively). Interestingly, many respondents saw themselves as slightly to the left of the movement. Forty-nine percent of respondents placed themselves in the left-most position versus 34% placing OR there.

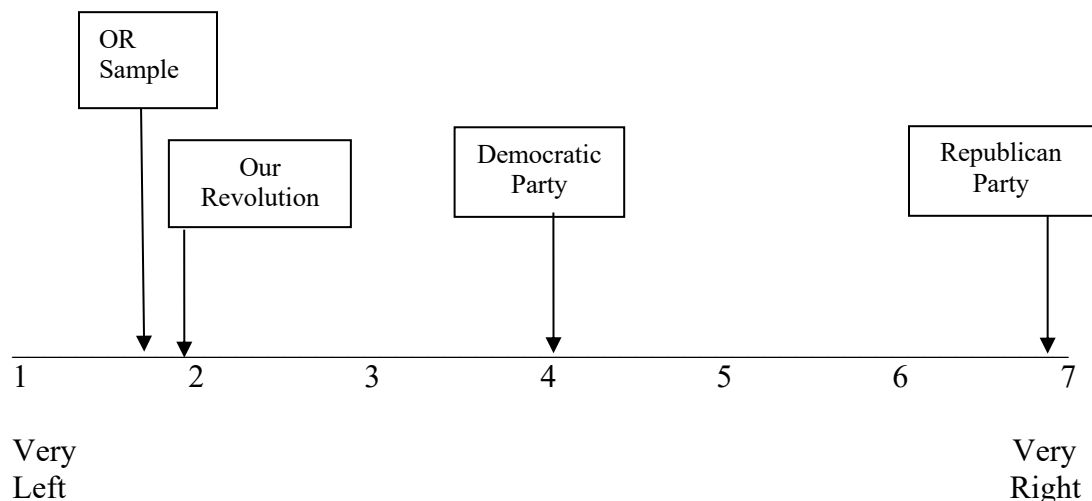
Perhaps even more interesting, and informative of intraparty dynamics, is the respondents' placement of the Democratic Party. Almost identical percentages placed the Democratic Party anywhere left of center (34%) as right of center (32%), and an equal number (34%) placed it precisely in the center. Further, only 6% placed the party in the two left-most positions which dominated placements of both respondents' personal positions and OR.

The lack of stronger identification with and positive evaluation of the Democratic Party evident in the prior section is clearly reflected in this ideological division between OR, our respondents, and the party.

To further highlight and clarify these ideological differences, we calculate the average (mean) position on the 1-7 scale for the Democratic Party, Republican Party, OR and respondents' self-placements. The chart below makes clear how far to the right the Republican Party is viewed by our respondents, and the enormous distance between the Republican Party and the respondents, which effectively eliminates Republican candidates from consideration as an electoral choice. But, the Democratic Party is also quite distant from the average OR respondent, making its policies and candidates seem less than ideal. This can help us understand the increased number of often successful primary challenges to more conservative Democrats by more progressive left-wing candidates such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cori Bush, and Ilhan Omar.



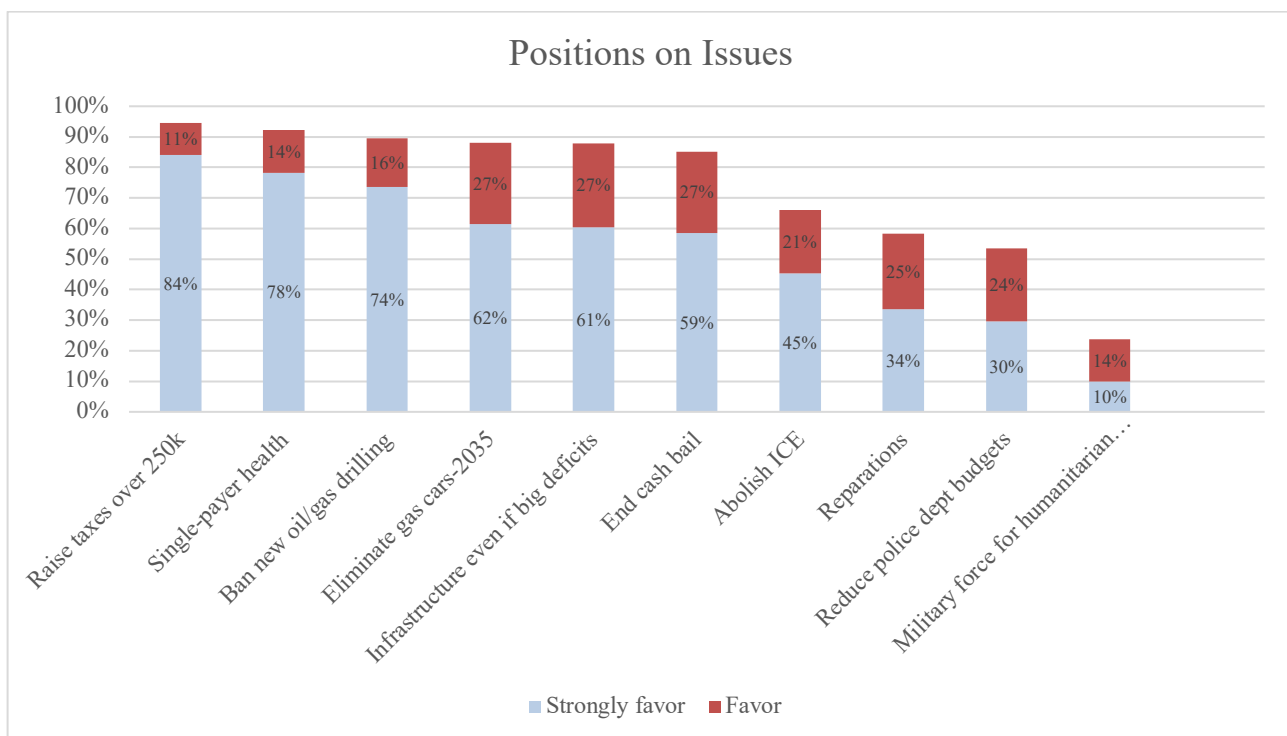
## Placement by Sample of Self, Democratic Party, Republican Party and Our Revolution on Liberal-Conservative Scale



### Issues

Because ideological identification does not always translate into specific positions across all issues, we next examine respondents' positions on specific issues. On which issues was there consensus as strong as on ideology, and on which issues was there more division? In our survey, we asked about a wide variety of issues from infrastructure to foreign policy, environmental policy to racial justice.

Respondents were asked if they strongly favored, favored, slightly favored, slightly opposed, opposed or strongly opposed each measure. We focus on issue consensus, the extent to which issues receive unified support or opposition across OR supporters. Because we expect high levels of agreement within the sample of OR supporters, we use a strict definition of consensus. We define "very strong consensus" issues as those with a combined 90% of respondents favoring or strongly favoring the proposal and which also includes at least 70% strongly favoring the proposal. As the chart below indicates, there are three such issues: raising taxes on high income earners, single-payer health insurance, and banning of new oil/gas drilling. These issues tap directly into the Green New Deal and reflect priorities of the 2016 and 2020 Sanders campaigns.



We find another set of three issues where more than 80% report strong support (either favoring or strongly favoring): eliminating new gasoline-powered cars by 2035, support for infrastructure spending even if it results in large deficits, and ending cash bail. These are slightly less directly tied to the Green New Deal and the priorities of the Sanders campaigns but still show a high level of consensus.

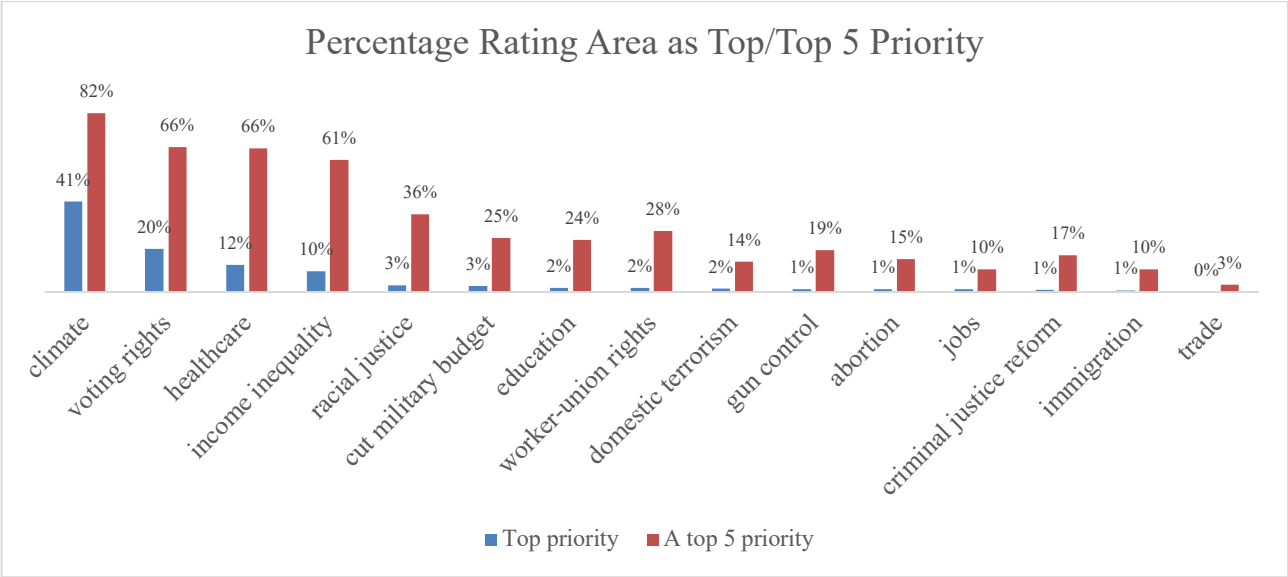
Finally, three issues feature a third or less of respondents reporting they “strongly favor” it: reparations, dramatically reducing police department budgets, and using military force for humanitarian intervention. Half of respondents opposed military force for humanitarian intervention and more than a quarter opposed reducing police budgets.

### Issue priorities

Because no party or president can fulfill all of their campaign promises, issue priority is a very important consideration for activists and voters. Presidents are frequently faulted for not prioritizing the right issues, even if they take the “right” position on them. President Biden has received strong criticism from progressives for failing to prioritize a variety of issues for which he has expressed a strong commitment.

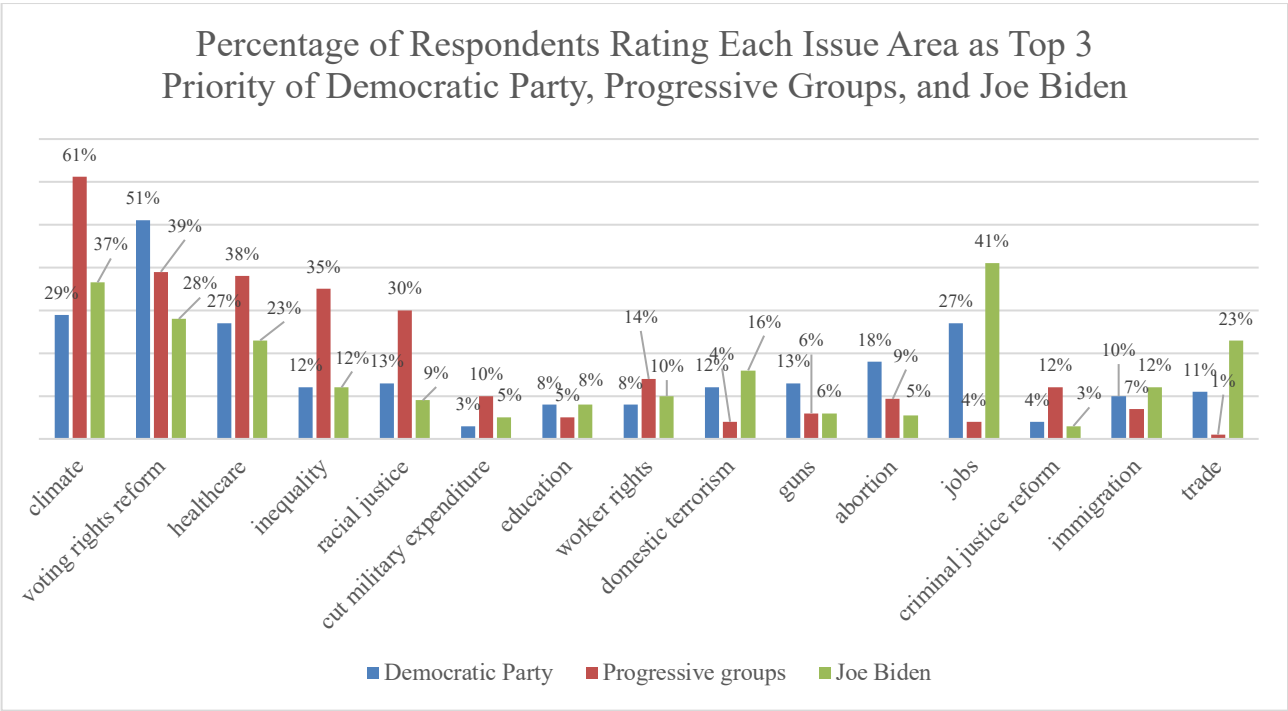
We asked respondents to list their top five priority areas among a set of fifteen options in order. (Note these were issue areas and not specific proposals.) Not surprisingly, it is “Green New Deal” issue priorities that are selected as top priorities by our OR respondents: climate, voting rights, health care, and income inequality. In fact, as the figure below shows, more than 80% of respondents selected one of these as their top priority (with climate alone selected by 41%), and with no other area receiving more than 3%. But whether we look only at the issue ranked as the single top priority, or if we look at which issues respondents selected as one of their top five priority areas, the same issues continue to stand out: climate, voting rights, health care, and income inequality. More than 60% of respondents

included each of these among their top five priorities, whereas on only one other issue, racial justice, did even a third of respondents rate it as a top five priority.



More important than knowing what respondents’ priorities are is understanding how well they correspond to those of important groups and individuals. To get at this we asked respondents to indicate which three of the fifteen issue priority areas were highest priorities of Joe Biden, the Democratic Party, and progressive groups. This allows us to ascertain the extent of shared priorities with each of the three. Presumably, shared priorities should yield higher levels of support.

The figure below shows the percentage selecting each issue area as one of the top three priorities for the Democratic Party, progressive groups, and Joe Biden. We array the issue areas in order according to the how many respondents placed it as their top priority, with climate—the top-rated issue—on the far left of the chart.



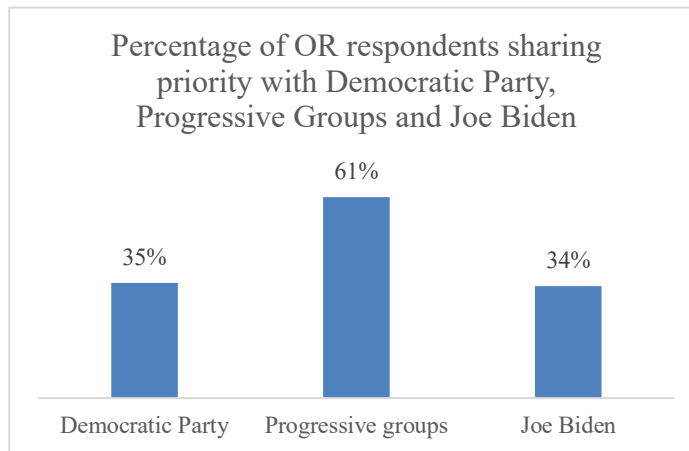
If respondents saw the Democratic Party, progressive groups, and Biden as having similar issue rankings as our sample, we should see lines of declining height as we move from left to right. If we look at the middle bar for each area (representing progressive groups), we do see such a pattern. Climate is selected as a high priority for progressive groups by the largest number of respondents, followed by voting reform, health care, inequality, and racial justice—exactly the same pattern as among respondents. All of these are central to the Sanders’ campaign priorities.

But with the exception of voting rights, respondents felt all four areas are far less important for both the Democratic Party and President Biden. Economic inequality, which respondents rated as a very high priority for themselves, is seen as a relatively low priority for both Biden and the Democratic Party, especially when compared with its priority for progressive groups. In fact, three times as many respondents see it as a high priority for progressive groups as they do for either the Democratic Party or Biden. Likewise, racial justice, a moderately high priority for OR respondents, is similarly seen as a very low priority for Democrats and Biden. Notably, racial justice rates far lower for both Democratic Party and Biden than for progressive groups or OR respondents themselves. Even for climate, which was the second most often selected top priority for both the Democratic Party and Biden, only about half as many see it as a top priority for either (29 percent and 37 percent respectively) as they did for progressive groups (61 percent) or for respondents themselves (81 percent).

On the other hand, the reported highest priorities for the Democratic Party and for Joe Biden deviate significantly from those for either the OR respondents’ priorities or progressive group priorities. Jobs, which is a traditional Democratic issue, and is rated as a relatively low priority for both OR respondents and for progressive groups, rates very highly. In fact, Biden is viewed as prioritizing jobs above all other areas. The other distinctive priority for Biden is trade which rates below only climate and voting rights, but which was virtually ignored by OR respondents as well as their perception of progressive group priorities.<sup>1</sup>

While, in the aggregate, Democratic Party and Biden priorities seem to diverge from respondent priorities to a much great extent than do progressive group priorities, it is important to see how this translates into priority correspondence at the individual level. To what degree do our respondents see a correspondence between their priorities and those of the Democrats, progressives and Joe Biden. In order to do this, we took the respondent’s top priority and simply asked whether it was rated among the top three priorities of Democrats, progressives, and Biden.

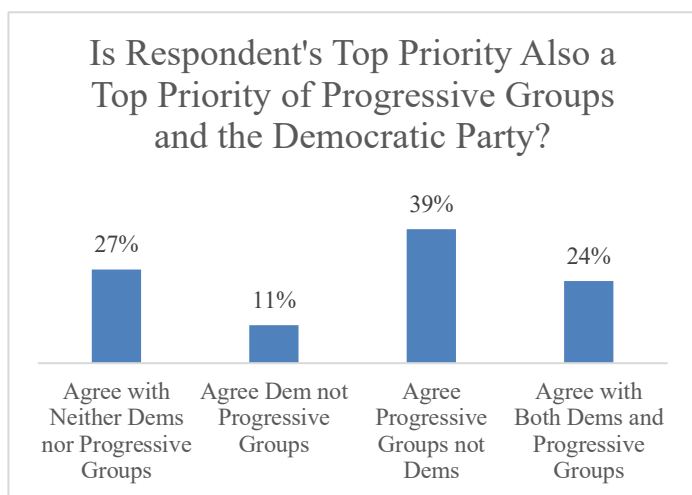
As it turns out, the aggregate results also show up at the individual level. While well over half of respondents report sharing priorities with progressive groups, only a third share priorities with either Biden or the Democratic Party. Clearly, OR respondents see their own priorities and those of progressive groups as deviating significantly from both the Democratic Party and President Biden.



<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, immigration does not rate as a high priority for respondents or in their beliefs about progressive groups, Democratic Party or Biden.

Because voters and activists sometimes have to choose between their partisan identification and their progressive identification, we also considered what share of respondents reported that their top priority was also a top priority for both the Democratic Party and progressive groups, and for how many was it a top priority for only one.

The figure to the right again demonstrates the dominance of the progressive priorities. About one quarter of respondents thought their top issue was also a top priority for both the Democratic Party and progressive groups, and a similar percentage thought it was a top priority for neither. But almost half believed that their personal top priority was also a top priority for only one of these. Once again progressive groups are viewed as much more aligned with respondents: 39% sharing priorities with progressive groups alone, and just 11% agreeing only with the Democratic Party's priorities. This indicates that OR respondents are not only more likely to see progressive groups as more likely to align with them ideologically, it also reveals that progressive groups are also seen as more aligned with the importance that respondents place on issues.<sup>2</sup> These differences help flesh out the relatively low identification with the Democratic party we described earlier.

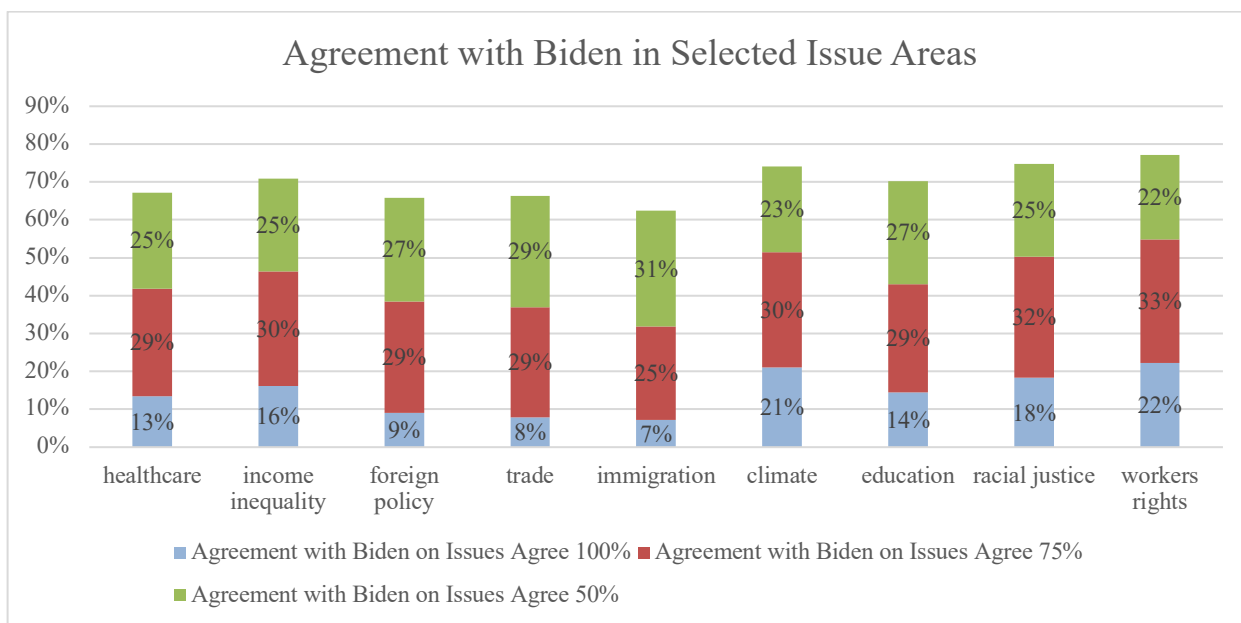


### Agreement with Biden on Issues

The lack of agreement on issue priorities also shows up when respondents thought about President Biden's initiatives in various policy areas. We asked respondents to what degree they agreed with Biden's proposals in several areas. The choices we offered were 100%, 75%, 50%, 25% and 0%. As the figure below shows, in no issue area did even a quarter of respondents report agreeing with Biden's proposals all the time, and in only two areas (workers' rights and racial justice) did a majority report 75% agreement. (The results on racial justice shows that there can be agreement on policy even where there is a disagreement on priority.) Overall, on eight of the nine issue areas a quarter or more of OR supporters agreed with Biden's proposals half the time or less.

Interestingly (and less problematic for Biden), it is on immigration, trade and foreign policy that respondents are least likely to agree with Biden's proposals, and immigration and trade are the two lowest priority areas for our respondents (we did not ask about foreign policy). Nonetheless, the lack of strong agreement with Biden's proposals presents a problem in mobilizing OR support.

<sup>2</sup> If we look at Joe Biden's priorities instead of the Democratic Party the results are almost identical. Thirty seven percent see progressive groups sharing their top priority, but not Joe Biden, while only 8 percent see the reverse and 25 percent see both sharing their priorities.



### Combining Issue Positions, Priorities, and Agreement: Theories of Change

Respondents' views that President Biden and the Democratic Party have different issue priority and policy commitments from themselves comes together in respondents' views of the best way to bring about progressive change and their views on third parties. We asked about the best strategy for "achieving real policy change," and offered three alternatives: "creating a progressive/left third party," "working to elect more progressive Democrats," and "working to elect more candidates that fit their districts in order to elect a Democratic majority in Congress." A clear majority favored electing more progressive Democrats (55%) with the remainder split between a progressive third party (21%) and electing a Democratic majority in Congress (24%). The focus on achieving a Democratic majority clearly takes a back seat to electing Democrats who mirror progressive priorities and positions.

This weak commitment to the current party alignment also shows up on another question we asked regarding the need for a third party. Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed that "The Democratic and Republican parties do such a poor job of representing the American people that a third major party is needed." Sixty percent either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" and only 20 percent of respondents disagreed with this statement to any extent.

### **Candidate Support and Political Activities 2018-2020**

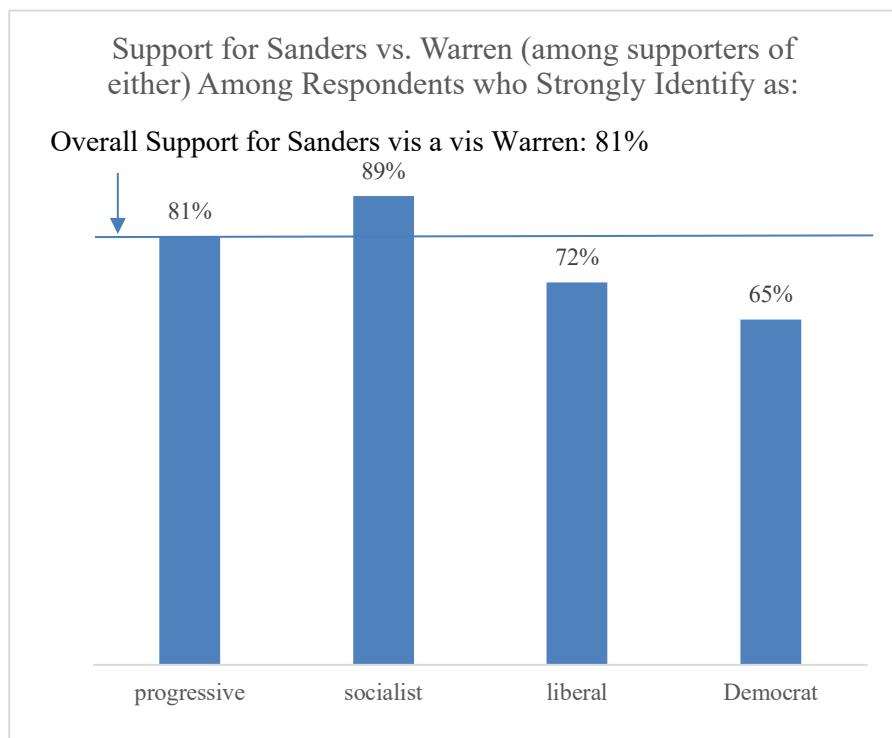
Given the weak alignment between OR supporters and the Democratic party, as well as OR's own origins, it should not be surprising that the vast majority of respondents preferred Bernie Sanders for the Democratic nomination in 2020. We asked respondents to select and rank up to three candidates that they preferred at the start of the primary. Seventy percent of respondents said that Sanders was their top choice for the nomination. From there Warren had 16% support, Biden 6%, and no other candidates reached even 2%. Even those who did not rate Sanders first rated him highly. Eighty-six percent placed him their top three candidates. Once again Warren stands out among the others with 74%, and fewer than a quarter placed any other candidate among their top three.

Sanders supporters' second choice preferences also reflected this group's strong progressive values. Over 70% selected Warren as their second choice with no other candidate above 5%.

Given this close relationship between Sanders and Warren supporters, what differentiated the two? After all both strongly identified themselves as progressives. In the figure below we look only at respondents who favored either Warren or Sanders (comprising 86 percent of the sample), and look at the percentage of that group preferring Sanders. We first look at those strongly identifying as progressives, Socialists, liberals and Democrats (placing themselves in the top two categories indicating that the label describes them perfectly or almost perfectly), and ask to what degree did identifiers with each of these groups favor Sanders.

Overall, considering just Sanders and Warren supporters, Sanders had four times the support that Warren had (81% vs. 19%). Among those strongly identifying as progressives, Warren and Sanders support is identical to the group as a whole (81%-19%). But such is not the case for other identification groups. Among those who strongly identify as socialists, (who comprise 50% of the Sanders-Warren sample), 89% give Sanders their support. On the other hand, among those who identify as strong Democrats only 65% give Sanders their support; among strong liberals it is 72%. Clearly, then, what differentiates Sanders and Warren supporters is not their sense of themselves as progressives, but whether they see themselves as socialists or Democrats.<sup>3</sup>

It could be, however, that this discrepancy by identity is due to something else, like demographics. But a statistical model accounting for demographic differences across respondents still sees these identifications matter. In fact, the only demographic characteristic that meaningfully differentiates candidate support among respondents after accounting for identity differences is age. Sanders' margin over Warren was much larger among younger respondents than older respondents. Those 55 and under supported Sanders 9 percent more than those over age 55 (88% to 79%).



It is important to note that while we find these factors useful for differentiating between Warren and Sanders supporters in our sample, Sanders was dominant across the board. Even among strong

<sup>3</sup> This holds up when we consider all the identifications concurrently in another statistical model. Using logistic regression we find that progressive identification does not have a significant effect on preference for Sanders over Warren but liberal, Democratic and socialist identifications continue have strong and significant effects.

Democratic identifiers (the least supportive of Sanders among political identity groups), Sanders received twice as much support as Warren, and three times as much as Biden.

### **Candidate Activity**

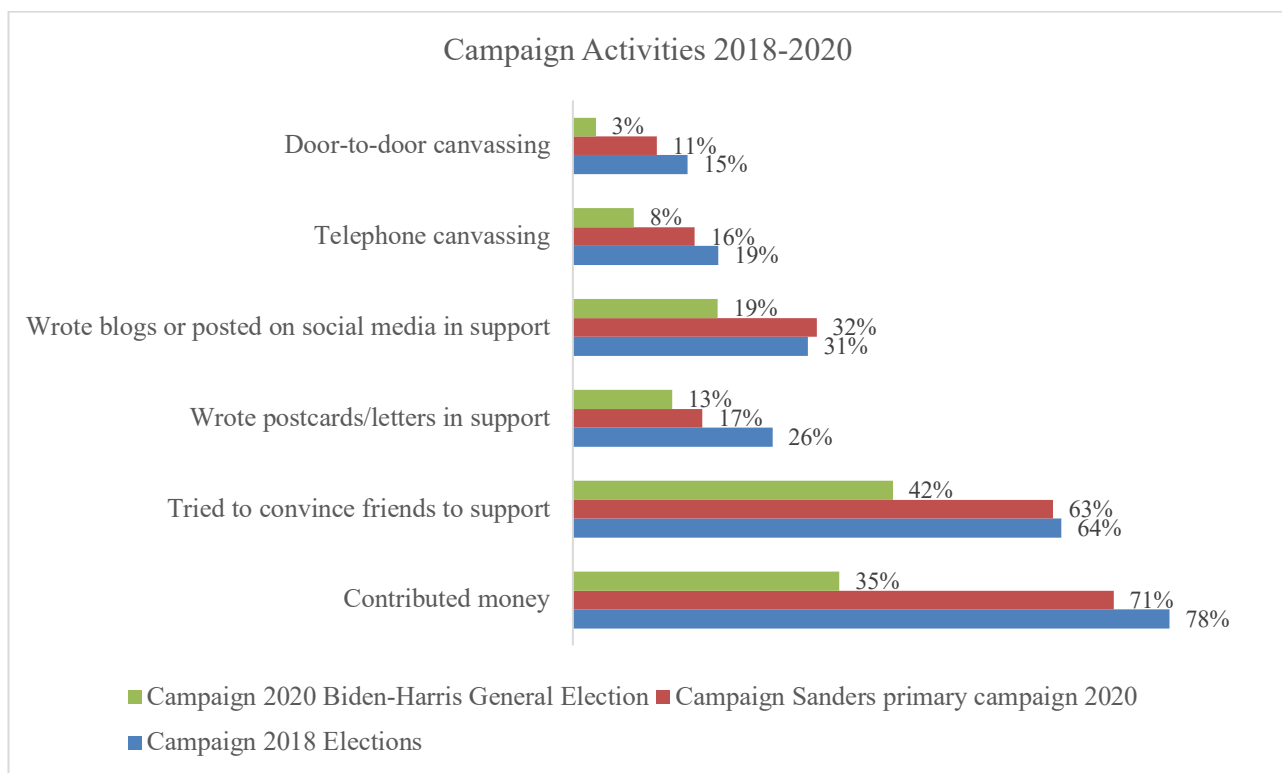
Not only did Sanders stand out in terms of the sample's candidate preferences, most respondents also reported doing some activity on behalf of his candidacy. More than three-quarters of respondents reported doing at least one activity for the Sanders campaign, an important number in that it surpasses the 70% who preferred him for the nomination. Moreover, Sanders supporters were much more active on his behalf than were supporters of either Warren or Biden on their behalf. On average Sanders's supporters did 2.5 activities on his behalf (out of 6 options we gave respondents). In contrast, Warren supporters did 1.9 and Biden supporters 1.7 for their respective candidates. So not only was Sanders the overwhelming choice, but the intensity of his support among his supporters was far greater than for his nomination opponents.

This high level of primary activity in 2020 appears to be a carryover from 2018. OR supporters were extremely active in 2018. Ninety percent performed one or more activities for 2018 Democratic congressional candidates: almost 80% contributed money, almost two-thirds tried to convince friends to support their candidate and almost 40% did one or more of postcard, telephone or in person campaigning. They were clearly an important constituency for Democratic candidates heading in to 2020.

Activity for Sanders in the primaries approached the level of 2018 Democratic activity. This is especially impressive given the effect of COVID on 2020 primary campaigns. On the other hand, activity for Biden-Harris showed a significant drop off from both 2018 congressional activity and Sanders 2020 Democratic primary campaign. Although 60 percent did some activity for Biden-Harris this was 20 percent lower than had done something for Sanders alone in the primary and 30 percent below the level of activity for congress in 2018.

In the figure below it is clear that regardless of the campaign activity, the 2018 election consistently shows the highest level of activity and Biden-Harris general election bid shows the lowest level. This is reflective of the previous analysis showing the cross pressure between progressive/New Green Deal priorities and issues positions and Democratic Party/Biden priorities and issue positions.





We also gauged activity in and identification with Our Revolution. We find that respondents were generally active both in campaigns and in the organization. But before addressing this, we sought to understand how committed respondents were to OR. Whenever doing a survey of an organization there are always some who identify with the organization more strongly and those who identify less strongly or even fail to consider themselves supporters.

We find that among our respondents there is a very high level of identification with OR. Almost 80% said that they were either members or active members of the organization, a third of whom (22% of all respondents) called themselves “active members.” Almost a quarter of respondents claimed to be “former members/supporters” (8%) or “never a member/supporter” (15%).

To understand what sort of activities respondents did most as part of OR, we asked about a range of different activities. Again we find high levels of involvement.<sup>4</sup> Almost 90% reported doing at least one OR-related activity, and more than three-quarters (77%) had participated in at least one activity beyond just reading the Revolution Report. Even among those who claimed to be “never a



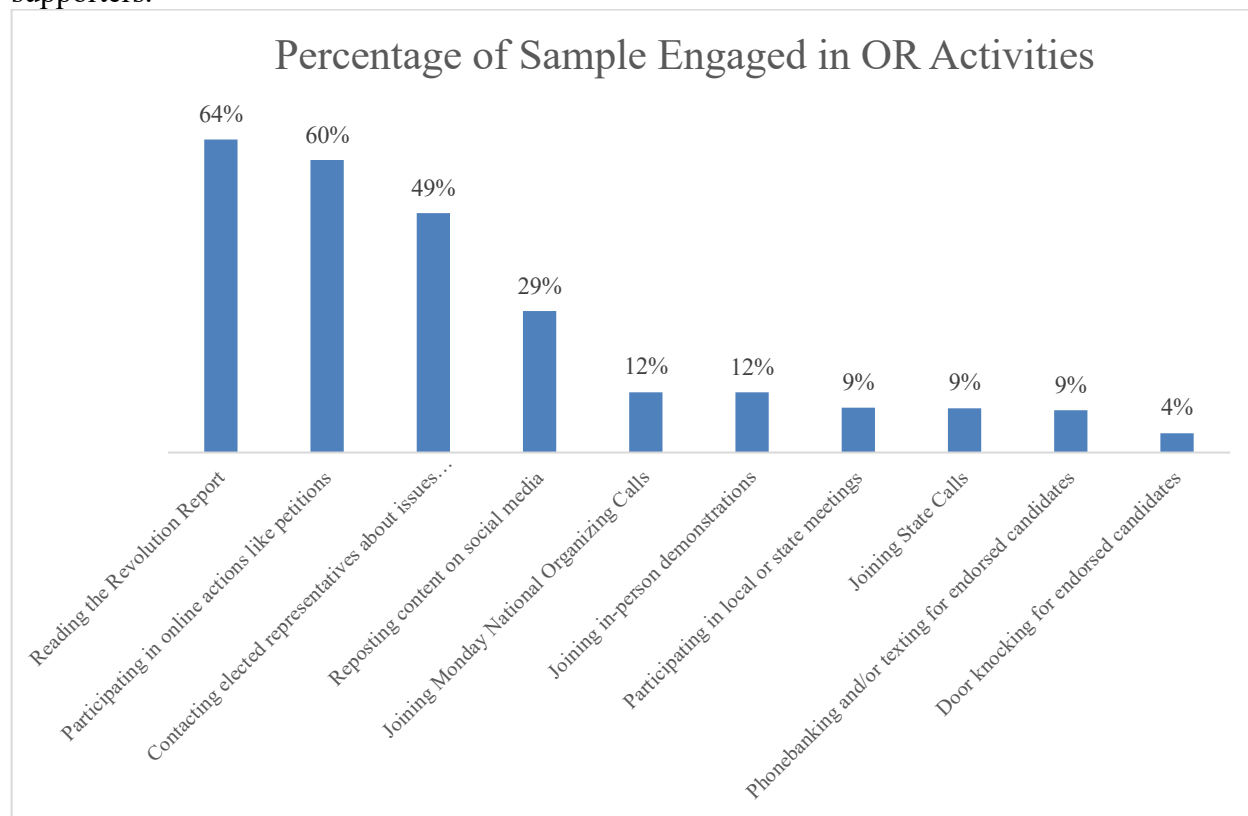
<sup>4</sup> The activities we asked about were: reading The Revolution Report, joining Monday National Organizing Calls, joining state calls, participating in online actions like petitions, phone banking and/or texting for endorsed candidates, joining in-person demonstrations, door knocking for endorsed candidates, contacting elected representatives, reposting content on social media, and participating in local or state meetings.

member,” almost two-thirds had participated in at least one activity and half in something beyond reading the report.

Of course, overall, less-demanding activities were the most commonly cited. Over 60% read the Revolution Report, and a similar percentage reported signing online petitions. Almost half said they contacted elected representatives on important issues and close to a third reposted content on social media. Twelve percent or fewer engaged in campaign-related activities in support of OR endorsed candidates (canvassing in person or by phone or reposting candidates either in person or via telephone) or more intense OR organizational activities (joining either national or state calls or participating in local or state meetings).

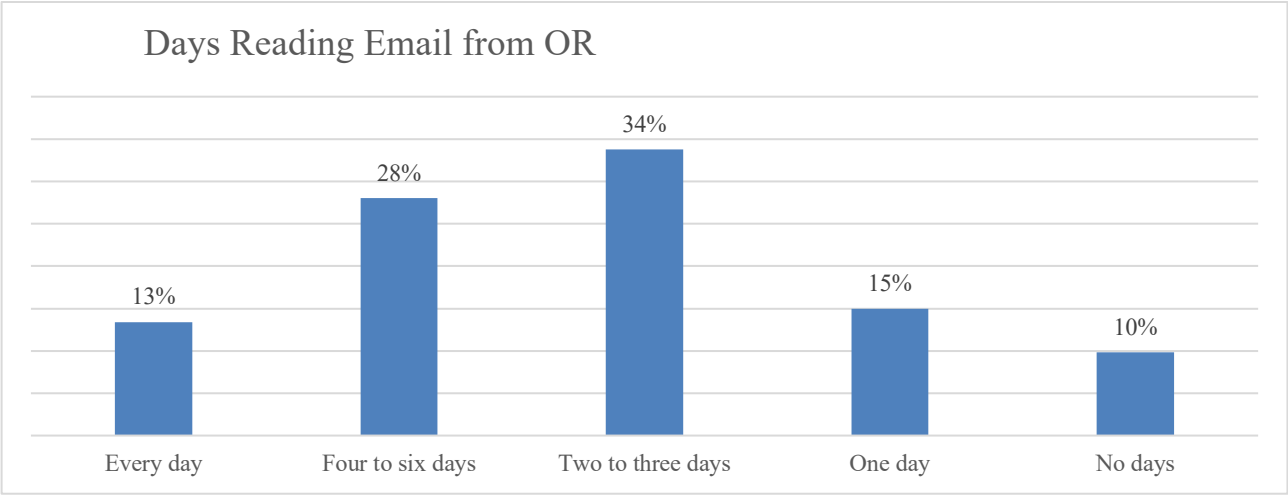
As expected, individuals reporting that they were active members were the most likely to engage in the more demanding activities. Well over half of respondents who engaged in phone or in-person canvassing were active members, with the same true for OR organizational activities. On the other hand, active members comprised almost the same percentage of those reading the Revolution Report (26 percent) as the sample as a whole.

While OR-related activities were widespread through the sample, the more demanding activities in terms of time and resources were most likely undertaken by the 22% who are active members or supporters.

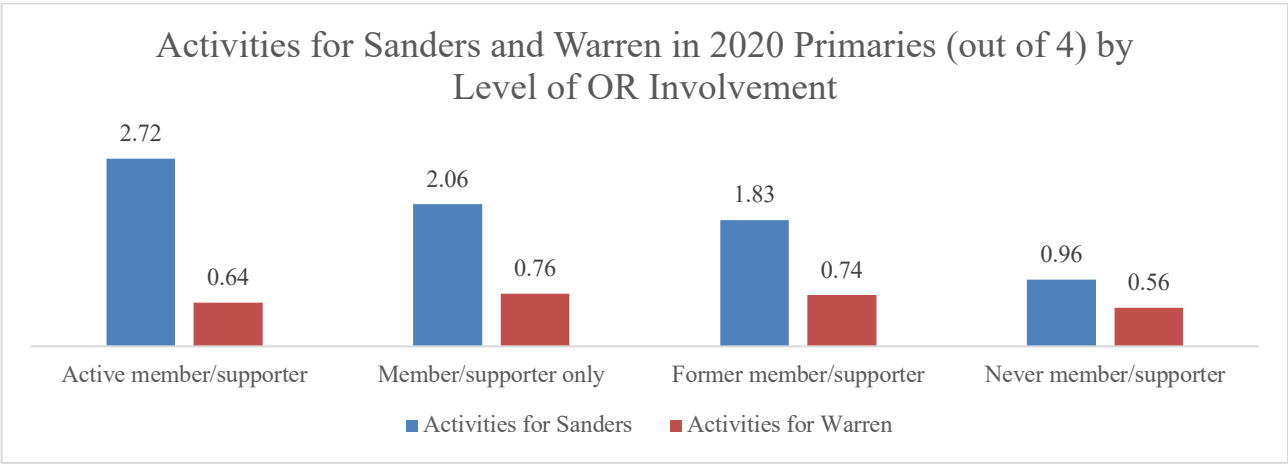


We also looked at how engaged with OR respondents were by asking respondents how often they read emails from the organization. Remarkably, over 40% reported reading OR emails at least four days a week, and only a quarter read them either one day or zero days. Seventy-five percent of the sample (including 25% who claimed to be either former members/supporters or never

member/supporters) said they read OR emails at least two times per week. This is a remarkably high level given the avalanche of emails that they are likely confronted with.

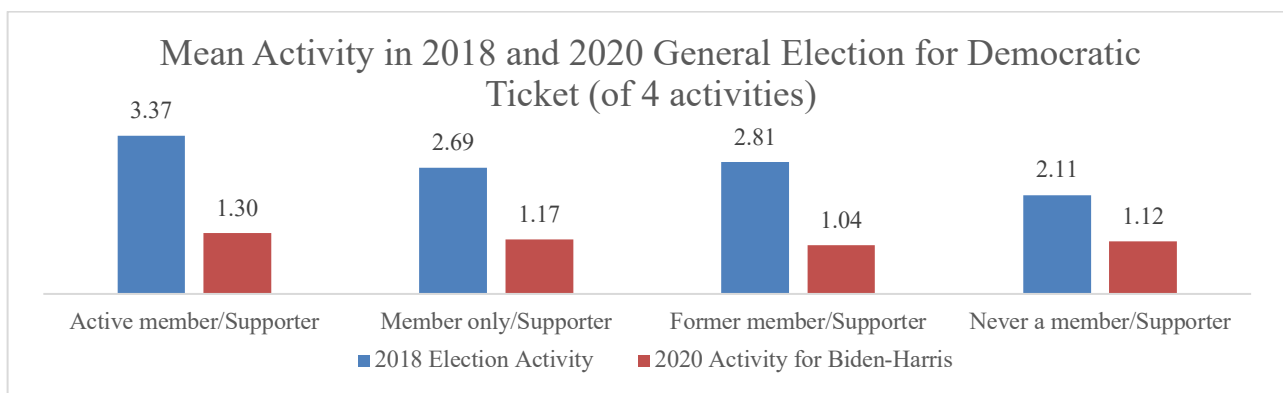


Not only is OR involvement high but it is strongly related to political activity—especially that for Bernie Sanders in the 2020 primaries. The more active with OR respondents reported being the more active they were for Sanders in 2020. Importantly, this was not true for activity for any other candidate. For example, OR activity had virtually no effect on how many different activities people reported doing for Elizabeth Warren and was in fact associated with *less* activity for Biden.



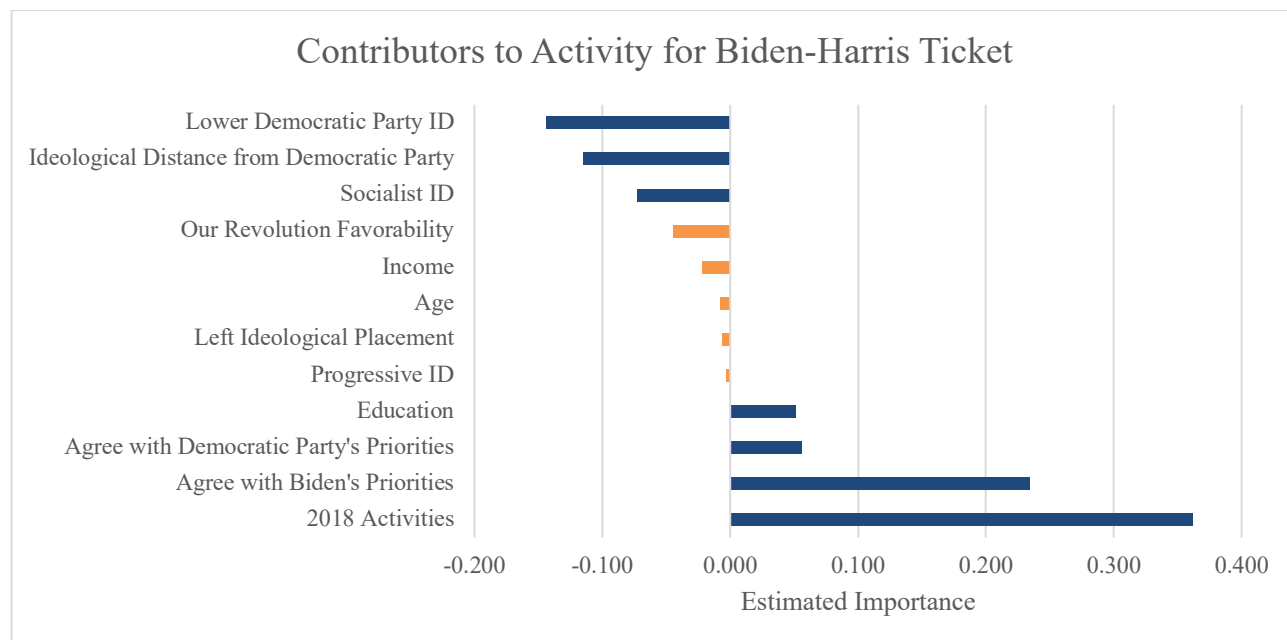
In 2018, the importance of OR involvement was also related to Democratic campaign activity in the midterm elections as the figure below shows. Active supporters far outpaced supporters in activity and were more than half again as active as non-members/supporters.

But that was not the case in 2020, where the self-described active OR supporters were not significantly more active got Biden-Harris than were other membership/supporter categories. This is partially explained because the level of OR involvement is strongly and positively related to evaluations of Sanders but negatively related to evaluations of Biden.



We also explored what factors motivated individuals to engage in activities for the Biden-Harris ticket. To do this we used a statistical model that allows us to assess the relative influence of different individual characteristics on activity, while fixing, or holding constant, other relevant characteristics.<sup>5</sup> We consider: ideological self-place; the ideological distance between someone's self and the Democratic Party; identification as a socialist, progressive, or Democrat; membership status with OR; how active someone was in the 2018 midterms; the overlap between a person's own priority issues and the issues they saw as priorities for the Democratic Party and Joe Biden, respectively; and demographics including education, age, and income.

The chart below summarizes the results. Bar heights indicate relative importance, with high bars indicating greater influence. Dark blue bars indicate relationships that are likely meaningful (statistically significant) while the orange bars are relationships that are likely statistical debris (not statistically significant).



Three factors stand out as reducing activity for Biden-Harris: the less strongly someone identified as a Democrat, the more removed they saw the Democratic party ideologically (e.g., more conservative

<sup>5</sup> This technique is multiple regression.

than themselves), and the more strongly someone identified themselves as a socialist. While someone's income, age, identification as a progressive, and own ideological views all reduced activity to some degree, none of these differences are statistically meaningful

This analysis also reveals that several factors were linked with increased participation on behalf of the Biden-Harris ticket. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the strongest predictor of this activity was someone's reports of their activity in 2018. The more things someone reported doing in the past, the more things they did in 2020, even accounting for differences in ideological preferences and demographics. After this, perceived issue agreement with Biden was the second most influential. The more someone saw the issues they cared about as top priorities for President Biden, the more active they were for the Biden-Harris ticket. Perceived issue priority agreement with the Democratic Party boost participation, but not to the same degree.

### **Feeling Thermometer Ratings**

We conclude by describing our sample's impressions of several political figures. Political figures play an important role in structuring political debate and identification. It is hard to deny the roles of people like Trump and Sanders as focal motivators for many Republicans and progressive Democrats, respectively.

Sanders' centrality is visible through events like the coordinated dropping out of Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg prior to Super Tuesday. This suggests a recognition of a clear split within the Democratic Party around Sanders between establishment Democrats and those associated with Sanders. Given our sample's ambivalence towards the Democratic party, we might expect to find similar ambivalence towards political figures linked with the party establishment, and much more favorable views of those associated with Bernie Sanders.

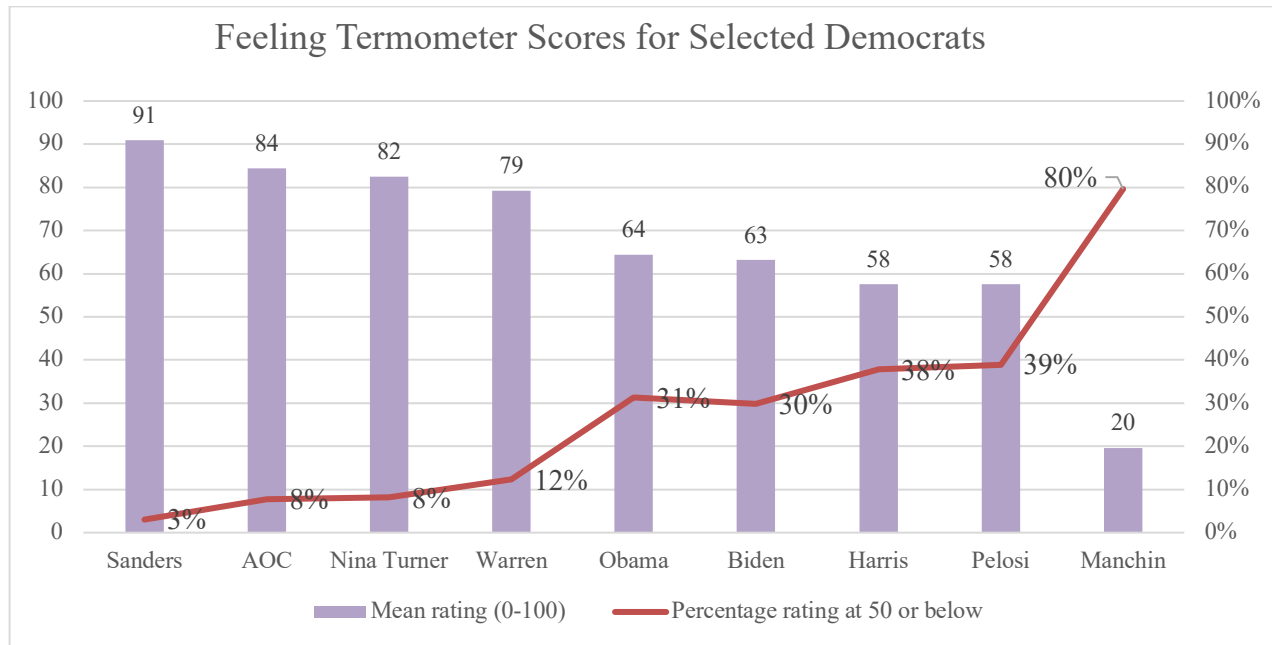
Respondents used the same 0-100 scale we described earlier when discussing ratings of OR and the two major parties to rate a series of political figures. Again, this scale ranges from 0 means respondent felt very cold or unfavorably towards the figure and 100 means the respondent felt very warmly or favorably toward the political figure, with 50 indicating neutral feelings.

We included several political figures. Some closely tied to progressive politics (Nina Turner, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and AOC), others more closely tied to the Democratic Party establishment (Obama, Harris, Biden, Pelosi), and one not as closely tied to either (Joe Manchin).

We expect to find a clear bifurcation in positivity between the first two groups, with progressives receiving extremely favorable ratings and establishment figures far less favorable ones. This is, in fact exactly what we do find. As the figure below highlights, Sanders stands well above everyone else, reflecting both his personal and policy appeal to OR. He has an extraordinary rating of 91 (and only 3 percent rating him at 50 or below). But the other three progressives clump together just below him with ratings between 79 and 84, and there is only scant ambivalence towards any of the 4 as only between eight and twelve percent rate any of them at 50 or below.

Obama, Biden, Harris and Pelosi are a different story. While OR respondents rate all four favorably, ratings average just above 60 and between 30 and 40% rated each at 50 or below. Not surprisingly Joe Manchin rates far below this group at a dismal 20. To put this in perspective his rating puts him

well below Republicans we asked about: Mitt Romney and Liz Cheney (29 and 33 respectively), emphasizing once again the tenuous hold of partisanship as a unifying force for people on the political left.

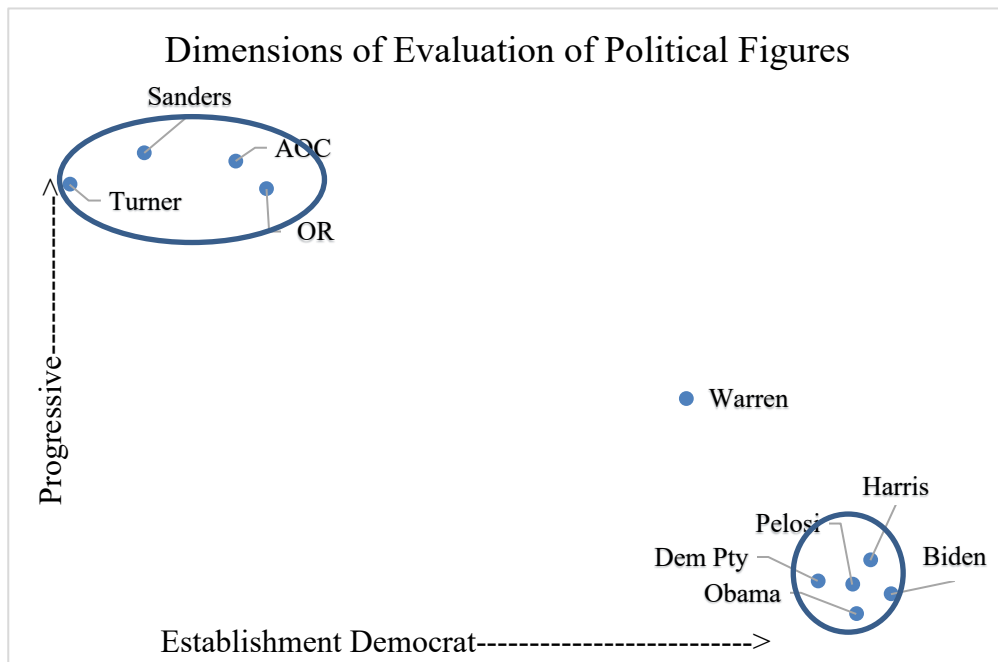


Throughout this report we have shown that even though there is identification with the Democratic Party (as opposed to the Republican Party), that hold is conditional on the political positions and agendas of the party and its leaders. As part of this result, we found that respondents had much more positive views of OR than the Democratic Party. This might suggest that evaluations of OR and those of the Democratic Party are negatively correlated (i.e., the more positive one is towards OR the more negative one is towards the Democratic Party). This is, however, not the case. Over 60% of our sample has positive views of both and only about a quarter of the sample has positive views of OR and negative views of the Democratic Party.

We take this up further by trying to better understand respondents’ ratings of Democratic figures. We think it possible that whether or not people view these figures favorably depends in part on whether they are seen as more or less “progressive” and as more or less “establishment Democrat.” In other words, we think it likely that two different dimensions help explain the degree to which people feel favorably toward the different Democratic politicians we asked about.

To see if this is the case we use a statistical technique that compares ratings of figures across respondents to see if ratings of certain figures seem to come from a similar source. This procedure suggests this two-dimension approach is justified. In the figure below, the horizontal dimension relates to “establishment Democratic-ness” and the vertical dimension measures Progressivism. We locate each of the political figures according to where they place on each of these dimensions. Figures towards the top of the figure are higher on the Progressive dimension and those further to the right are higher on the establishment dimension. Likewise, figures in the top left are high on Progressivism and low on Establishment Democratic dimension while those in the bottom right are the reverse.

Most figures fit into one of these two categories. Not surprisingly Bernie Sanders, AOC, Nina Turner and OR all cluster tightly together on the top left, while Biden, Obama, Harris, Pelosi, and the Democratic Party are clustered in the bottom right. Note also that those in the top left (high on



Progressivism) are the most favorably rated figures as we saw above, while those in the bottom right were rated much less favorably.

The one figure who spans the divide to a significant degree is Elizabeth Warren. While Warren is rated almost as favorably as AOC and Nina Turner, in this two-dimensional space she is actually closer to Pelosi, Obama, Harris and the Democratic Party than she is to the other progressive candidates and OR. Warren's unique position is interesting in that she is the single figure that is both viewed as strongly progressive and strongly partisan. This bridge position likewise suggests why she may have not made additional headway in the 2020 primary. Sanders dominated the progressive left while Biden and others secured established Democrat support.

## Conclusion

Our Revolution supporters are an important part of the Democratic Party constituency, but they remain separate from it and are often skeptical of its positions, leaders and priorities. Although they clearly reject the Republican Party, they identify more strongly as both socialist and progressive than as Democrats. Their positions and priorities are consistently on the left. When OR supporters find themselves in agreement with Democratic priorities and issue positions, they are a reliable campaign resource, but when Democratic candidates' positions and priorities are viewed as insufficiently progressive and distant from OR supporters, they are more reluctant to become involved. Because the Democratic Party is viewed as a centrist rather than a left party by our respondents, this presents a challenge for the establishment.

OR supporters comprise a very active group at both the organizational level and in electoral politics, and, as such are a valuable resource for progressive forces and candidates. Almost everyone in the sample is actively involved in OR, and most active beyond just reading the Revolution Report. They were extremely active in the 2018 Congressional races, with 90% engaging in one or more

campaign activity; and they were also very active in the primary campaigns in 2020 (heavily for Sanders).

But the goal of OR supporters is to elect more progressives to Congress, which means backing the most progressive candidates in primaries rather than backing the candidates most likely to win. And they see a clear dichotomy between progressives and establishment Democrats, with only Elizabeth Warren (of the figures evaluated) providing a bridge between the two. How OR and the Democrats do or do not work together will likely have a huge impact on the future of both the progressive movement and of the Democratic Party.



## Appendix

### Example Free Responses

#### *Trump and the Republican Party*

“Trump’s election, Me Too, George Floyd and BLM, climate change. All the inequities the pandemic is making so much worse that no one is doing anything about. I’m afraid of what happens if we don’t step up as individuals.”

“Ronald Reagan and his "Trickle Down Economics." That, to the middle class, lower middle class and the poor, is the equivalent of micturating on my leg and then having the audacity to tell me that it is raining.”

#### *Key Events*

“The "ban the bomb" movement in the late 50's (Student Peace Movement), the Civil Rights movement, and the anti-war movement. SDA”

“Vietnam, I was asked to teach...students...how to think about war, then all violence, then structural & cultural violation”

#### *Public Policy and Making Change*

“A moral desire to give dignity and respect to all people. To make sure that people are seen, heard, affirmed and given power to productively deal with their problems from their own experience and how they see fit while not harming others. To stand with the oppressed and marginalized”

“I believe that government exists to serve the needs of the people and in order to do so, people must participate and make their voices heard.”

#### *Lifelong Interest*

“Always been interested in politics; I grew up with Fox News on in my parents living room, and Rush Limbaugh on in the car. I stayed interested, but my views changed! These days I'm mostly interested in politics because we're on a crash course to ecological disaster.”

“I have been interested since Dewey was running for President. To me he looked like a nice Daddy. Since then I have always been interested, have always voted, have read lots, have been active in different ways--especially in my younger years. It honestly started with Dewey's picture in the Sunday paper and hearing my parents and their friends talking about politics.”

#### *Bernie Sanders and Political Role Models*

“I am a socialist/communist and was thrilled to learn that Bernie Sanders decided to contest the Democratic primary back in 2016. I worked for the campaign locally, in the state of Delaware. I have been following developments in Our Revolution since, though at a distance, as I live abroad (Italy) now.”

“I supported all the ideals of the Bernie Sanders campaign and those of Our revolution.”