Gabbard Campaign Condemns Media Bias

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Following a demonstration by supporters outside the venue for the CNN New Hampshire presidential town hall series, which inexplicably excluded Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, the Gabbard campaign released the following statement and supporting research:

One thing is obvious: The corporate media does not like Tulsi Gabbard.

A study by Northwestern University found that Tulsi received by far the most negative coverage of any presidential candidate during a five-month period, while establishment favorite Pete Buttigieg -- no doubt cheered on by his friends in the consultant class and "intelligence community" -- was showered with positivity.

Any person asking for the awesome responsibility of being commander-in-chief deserves scrutiny: that's a healthy part of the process. But consistently, Tulsi has been subject to disproportionately malign coverage by a corporate media that has tried to diminish and smear a candidate who is challenging conventional wisdom and powerful vested interests.

To give just a small sampling, elite outlets including the New York Times and the Atlantic have published articles with headlines like What, Exactly, Is Tulsi Gabbard Up To? and The Enduring Mystery of Tulsi Gabbard as if Tulsi has been unclear about her mission in this campaign, which she talks about every single day: to bring about a sea-change in U.S. foreign policy, stop squandering trillions of dollars overseas, and redirect those resources to serve the needs of the American people here at home.

But as late as last November, after Tulsi had been campaigning for over 10 months on this message, the Washington Post still published an article struggling to understand what "her deal is." Memo to confused journalists: If you want to understand what Tulsi's deal is, simply listen to her speak. But by casting aspersions in this deceitful manner, corrupt corporate media elites have intentionally

sowed seeds of doubts about Tulsi in the minds of voters who rely on these outlets to make decisions about candidates. They even go after Tulsi's supporters, depicting them as bizarre oddities instead of regular conscientious Americans across partisan lines.

Studies have also consistently shown that Tulsi has received only a tiny fraction of the coverage as other big name candidates. Which is not surprising, because the corporate media and establishment party elites are all part of the same rigged system -- designed not to inform the public, but to manipulate and propagandize them. And they see Tulsi's message, which is bringing together voters from across the political spectrum to stand up against the military-industrial complex and foreign policy establishment, as a threat to their power.

So it's no wonder they are now capitulating to billionaires like Mike Bloomberg, who is brazenly trying to buy his way to the party's nomination.

CNN now wants to control the outcome of the New Hampshire primary by blocking Tulsi from the final debates and town halls. It's nothing new: on the very day Tulsi participated in a previous CNN debate last year, CNN hosted an establishment Democratic pundit aligned with a different campaign who had the stunning audacity to label Tulsi a "puppet" of a foreign government -- live, on air, in front of millions -- echoing the defamatory lies spewed by Hillary Clinton.

Tulsi has never believed that her gender, ethnicity, or religious background entitles her to any special treatment. But it is ironic that the only woman of color left in the Democratic race -- and the first female combat veteran to run for president -- is being systematically shut out by political and media elites who often claim to care deeply about diversity and inclusion.

This isn't about Tulsi herself: it's about voters, who deserve to make a fully informed decision ahead of the first-in-the-nation primary next week. CNN does them an extreme disservice by giving platforms to other candidates -- airtime worth millions upon millions of dollars -- who have demonstrated far less support than Tulsi in this critical state. But the explanation is simple: these are candidates who will protect the status quo, which CNN and other corporate media are deeply invested in. Tulsi has not and will never buckle to them.

So in this final week, just as she has for the past year, Tulsi will continue taking her message directly to the people of New Hampshire -- who refuse to be told what to think or how to vote by the corrupt, profit-seeking, warmongering corporate media.
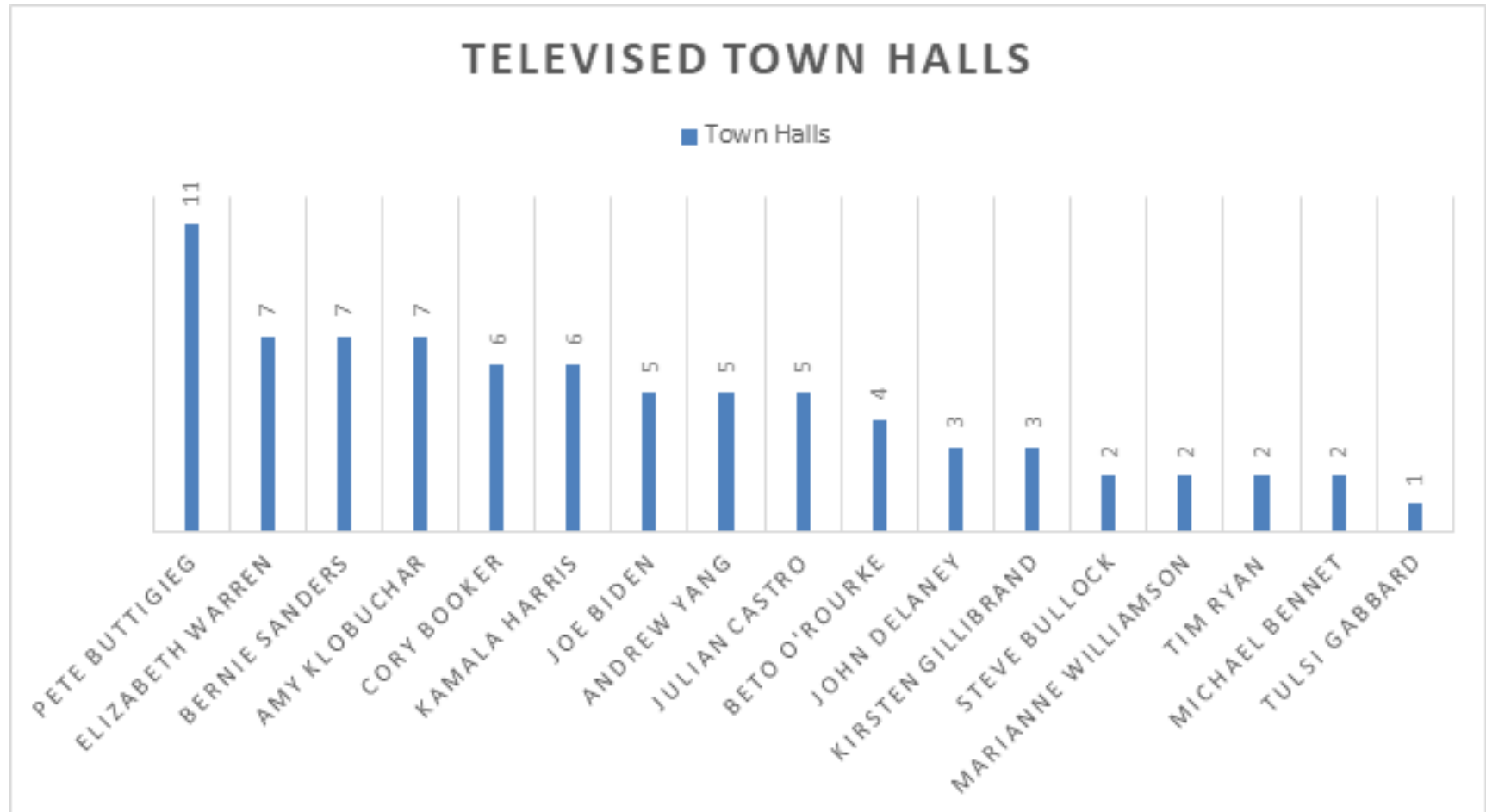
Backgrounder

Tulsi Gabbard has broken through with American voters, including those in New Hampshire, by speaking plainly and honestly about what is working, and what is not, in U.S. domestic and foreign policy. Her views and positions are complex, nuanced, and progressive, as they should be – this country can't be run effectively based on sweeping generalizations. But they don't fit into the pre-determined, neat boxes that the Democratic establishment and media would prefer. She is building a coalition from across the political spectrum – increasingly unique for a major party candidate. As a result, the American media not only fails to adequately grasp her bipartisan appeal, but is actively attempting to prevent Rep. Gabbard's message from reaching American voters. Her refusal to simply parrot DNC talking points and submit to establishment pressure has prompted leading U.S. news outlets to either ignore or smear her. By doing so, these outlets are actually ignoring and disrespecting Americans, who as poll numbers show, are hungry for a fresh perspective in the Democratic Party. CNN's approach to organizing and executing upcoming, televised candidate town halls is a case in point.

On Feb. 5th and 6th, CNN will host a series of eight New Hampshire town halls with Democratic candidates for president. The candidates afforded a town hall platform are Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Andrew Yang, Tom Steyer, Bernie Sanders, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Deval Patrick. Conspicuously, Rep. Gabbard was not invited, even though she is outpolling Amy Klobuchar, Tom Steyer, Andrew Yang, and Deval Patrick in New Hampshire. There is no explanation for CNN's failure to include her in this New Hampshire town hall series. Furthermore, the numerous packed town halls that the Gabbard campaign has conducted throughout the state of New Hampshire are a testament to the fact that voters consider Tulsi a legitimate and appealing candidate for president.

You can call this by many names: Media bias. Election interference. Political gamesmanship by the Democratic establishment. But regardless of motive, the end-result is that the American people lose. They lose the ability to hear directly from a candidate with a broad, inclusive message for change. They lose the opportunity to show their support and spread the message, about a dynamic, anti-establishment candidate breathing fresh life into the Democratic Party. And they lose the freedom to make educated political decisions without media manipulation. CNN's behavior is un-American, and a betrayal of our democratic ideals.

CNN's refusal to include Rep. Gabbard in the upcoming New Hampshire Town Hall series, despite inviting several other candidates that trail her in the state, is a betrayal of democratic ideals. Rep. Gabbard's complex ideas and policy positions do not fit neatly into an establishment-approved box, and that is precisely what has endeared her to a diverse and expanding coalition of voters from every walk of life. When CNN, the self-described "Most Trusted Name in News," decides that one candidate's vision for America either does not conform to a party platform or isn't good for ratings, it is the American voters who ultimately lose. We are a complex electorate, and in denying a presidential candidate the opportunity to speak directly to the American people, CNN is ultimately cheating voters.

Televised Town Halls by Candidate

TELEVISED TOWN HALLS

■ Town Halls

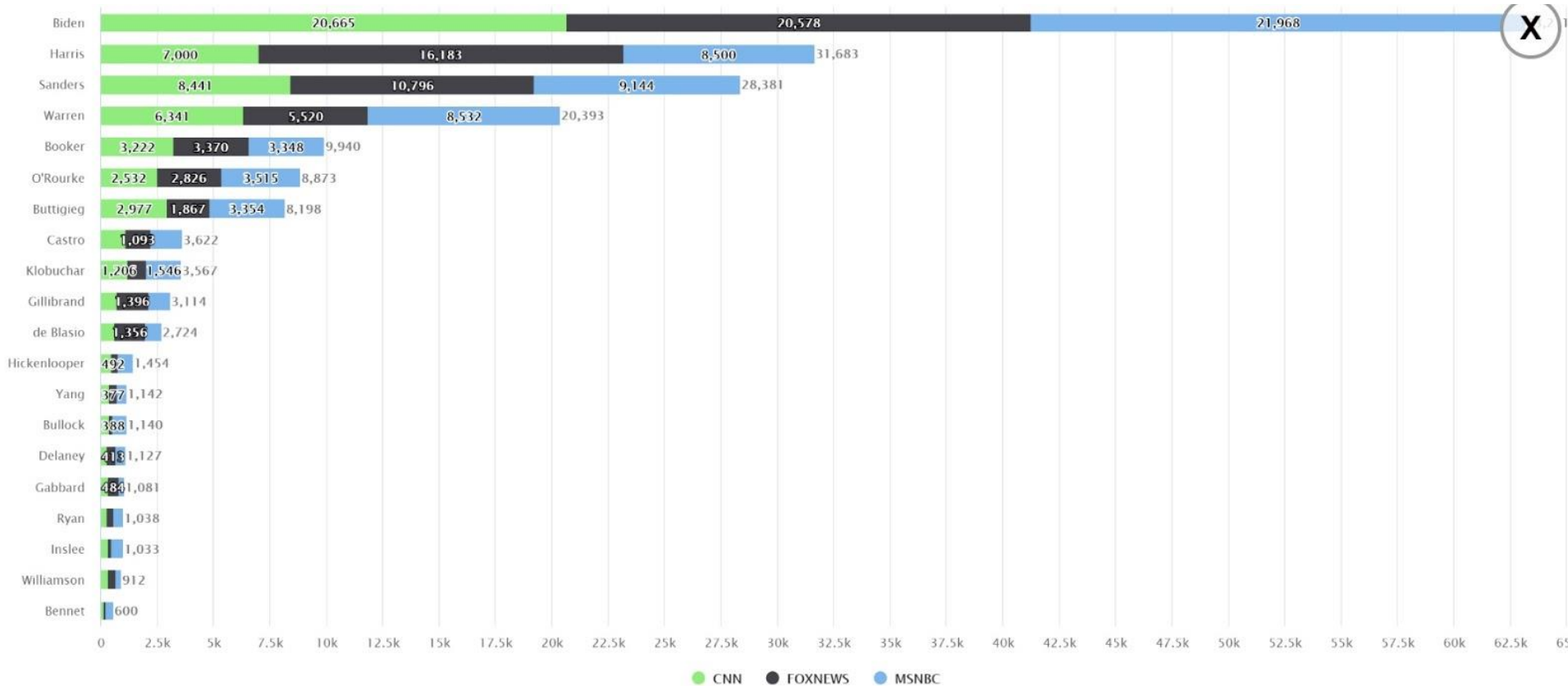| Candidate	Town Halls
PETE BUTTIGIEG	11
ELIZABETH WARREN	7
BERNIE SANDERS	7
AMY KLOBUCHAR	7
CORY BOOKER	6
KAMALA HARRIS	6
JOE BIDEN	5
ANDREW YANG	5
JULIAN CASTRO	5
BETO O'ROURKE	4
JOHN DELANEY	3
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND	3
STEVE BULLOCK	2
MARIANNE WILLIAMSON	2
TIM RYAN	2
MICHAEL BENNET	2
TULSI GABBARD	1

Background statistics on Media Blackout of Tulsi Gabbard

- In the week of January 27-Feb 2, according to GDELT, Tulsi Gabbard was mentioned on **CNN** zero times. From most to least, here are the mentions of Democratic candidates:
    - Biden - 639
    - Sanders - 450
    - Warren - 141
    - Buttigieg - 139
    - Klobuchar - 94
    - Bloomberg - 90
    - Yang - 12
    - Steyer - 9
    - Gabbard - 0
- In the week of January 26-Feb 1, according to GDELT, Tulsi Gabbard was mentioned the least amount of times on **MSNBC**. Here are mentions of Democratic candidates:
    - Biden - 620
    - Sanders - 318
    - Warren - 284
    - Buttigieg - 95
    - Bloomberg - 87
    - Klobuchar - 81
    - Steyer - 18
    - Yang - 11
    - Gabbard - 3
- The above two media reports are the most recent ones, but this has been pretty consistent throughout Tulsi's time in the race-- low media coverage, with the exception of negative coverage she received during the times she made controversial remarks about Hillary Clinton (after being attacked as a "Russian asset") and during her impeachment vote.

Real Clear Politics showed a complete lack in coverage of Tulsi overall. This is a chart (link here for a clearer picture) showing candidate coverage from January of 2019 until September of 2019. Tulsi receives a lot less coverage than arguably less exciting candidates, candidates who have dropped out long ago, or candidates that poll far below her, such as De Blasio, Hickenlooper, Bullock, and Delaney.

On a purely base level, it's outrageous that a candidate of Tulsi's appeal and "firsts"--youngest woman, first female combat veteran, first woman of color to announce, first Hindu, first Asian/Pacific Islander--someone who has polled decently in early states like New Hampshire and touted bold transformative progressive policy ideas--would be snubbed this incredibly by the media, especially to receive less coverage than utterly uninspiring candidates.

Candidate	CNN	FOXNEWS	MSNBC	Total
Biden	20,665	20,578	21,968	
Harris	7,000	16,183	8,500	31,683
Sanders	8,441	10,796	9,144	28,381
Warren	6,341	5,520	8,532	20,393
Booker	3,222	3,370	3,348	9,940
O'Rourke	2,532	2,826	3,515	8,873
Buttigieg	2,977	1,867	3,354	8,198
Castro	1,093			3,622
Klobuchar	1,206	1,546		3,567
Gillibrand	1,396			3,114
de Blasio	1,356			2,724
Hickenlooper	492			1,454
Yang	377			1,142
Bullock	388			1,140
Delaney	413			1,127
Gabbard	484			1,081
Ryan				1,038
Inslee				1,033
Williamson				912
Bennet				600

Media Coverage Correlates with Polling Numbers
- Polling can be important for Democratic candidates for two main reasons:
  - Polling shows perceived viability to voters. When a candidate performs well in the polls, it gives voters more incentive to research candidates, it gives even more media coverage, and demonstrates to voters that the candidate is competitive.

- o Polling is also used by the DNC as a marker in order to enter debates, town halls, and other events. Candidates literally rely on polls to be able to have a spot on the debate stage. A poll off by half a percentage point can reject or allow them onto the debate stage--a platform where millions of potential voters can listen to the candidates.
  - ▪ Being left off the debate stage can be harmful for candidates. Voters may be under the impression that a candidate has dropped out and is no longer running, or that a candidate is not viable enough.
- Therefore, fair media coverage is essential for a fair primary, as democracy depends on it.

A good example of this is demonstrated in comparing the media coverage following the CNN town hall debuts for Pete Buttigieg and Tulsi Gabbard, and the correlating polling. When comparing the **increase of coverage Pete Buttigieg received** and the **media ignoring Tulsi** after they debuted town halls on the same night, **Buttigieg's polling shot up while Tulsi's stayed stagnant**:
- Both Gabbard and Buttigieg announced their presidential runs or exploratory committee around the same time--Pete Buttigieg announced his exploratory committee for President on January 23rd, 2019, Tulsi Gabbard announced on January 11th, 2019.
- Between January and early March, before CNN's town hall debut, Tulsi Gabbard and Pete Buttigieg both polled similarly:
  - o Gabbard's polling between January and early March: 0-2%, with one instance of 3%, but mostly hitting around 1% or 2% in polls.
  - o Buttigieg's polling between January and early March: 0-1%. No 2% or 3%.
- Gabbard and Buttigieg both initially received extremely little coverage. Both are young candidates and "new faces" on the national scene, so it makes sense that their polling and coverage would be similar during this time period.
- CNN hosted a series of town halls for presidential candidates in March--the first major media event for candidates before the debates in the summer.
- Gabbard and Buttigieg were set to debut on the same night on March 10th--Gabbard at 8 PM, Buttigieg at 9 PM.
- Both candidates performed well at their town halls. There is not a lot of data showing media coverage that immediately in the two weeks following March 10th, but both candidates still received modest to little or no coverage.
- In correlation, their polling stayed similar--between 0-2% in these weeks in mid-March--during this time period.
- However, in the last week of March, two weeks after the dual town hall debut, Buttigieg's media coverage skyrocketed. Buttigieg had received **216 mentions** on CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC while Tulsi Gabbard had received **1 mention.**
- This coverage did not have to do with the town hall or any news story. This coverage mostly consisted of an onslaught of glowing "puff pieces". The New York Times stating he's "Making Waves", CNN covering his marriage and propping up conflict with Mike Pence, a glowing piece in the New Yorker. Most of these articles touted his elite education, his military service, his marriage, his talents.
- Tulsi, on the other hand, received only a handful of articles during this same time period--and definitely no big profiles. Some of these painted her in a negative light, such as her remark about Fareed Zakaria or her comment about the Mueller investigation.

- In correlation, Buttigieg's polling immediately went up in this time period to poll at **6-11%**, while Gabbard's stayed at **0-1%**.
- The high amount of media coverage correlates exactly with Mayor Buttigieg's polling, while the low amount of media coverage correlates with Tulsi's. The comparison is fair, as they were both new candidates and received similarly low coverage and polling before CNN's Town Hall debut. Buttigieg's polling only changed the moment he received a high amount of media coverage in the weeks following his debut.
- CNN then held additional back-to-back town halls on April 23rd, 2019, inviting Senators Klobuchar, Warren, Sanders, Harris, and Mayor Buttigieg (Joe Biden had not yet announced he would run for President. This new town hall pushed his polling up even further.)

We have seen how polling numbers can skyrocket due to an influx of television ads, as demonstrated by the polling of Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer:
- Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer have poured huge amounts of money into advertisements for their campaigns--far more than any other candidate. Bloomberg has already spent more than $300 million in advertising, and plans to double that spending. Steyer has spent more than $120 million in ads. The next closest candidate to come near that in ad spending is Bernie Sanders at $12 million. Buttigieg is next with almost $10 million, then Yang at $8 million.
- Bloomberg just recently jumped into the race and has barely campaigned around the country.
- The surge in polling among Steyer and Bloomberg can be explained through their ad spending, in which they outpace every candidate exponentially. Steyer was able to make his way onto the debate stage by his polling, which skyrocketed due to his ad spending. While debate markers have gone up, Bloomberg may make the next round of debates due to his polling increase, especially since the DNC made the decision to scrap the grassroots requirement of individual donors, where grassroots candidates like Tulsi who do not take PAC money excel.
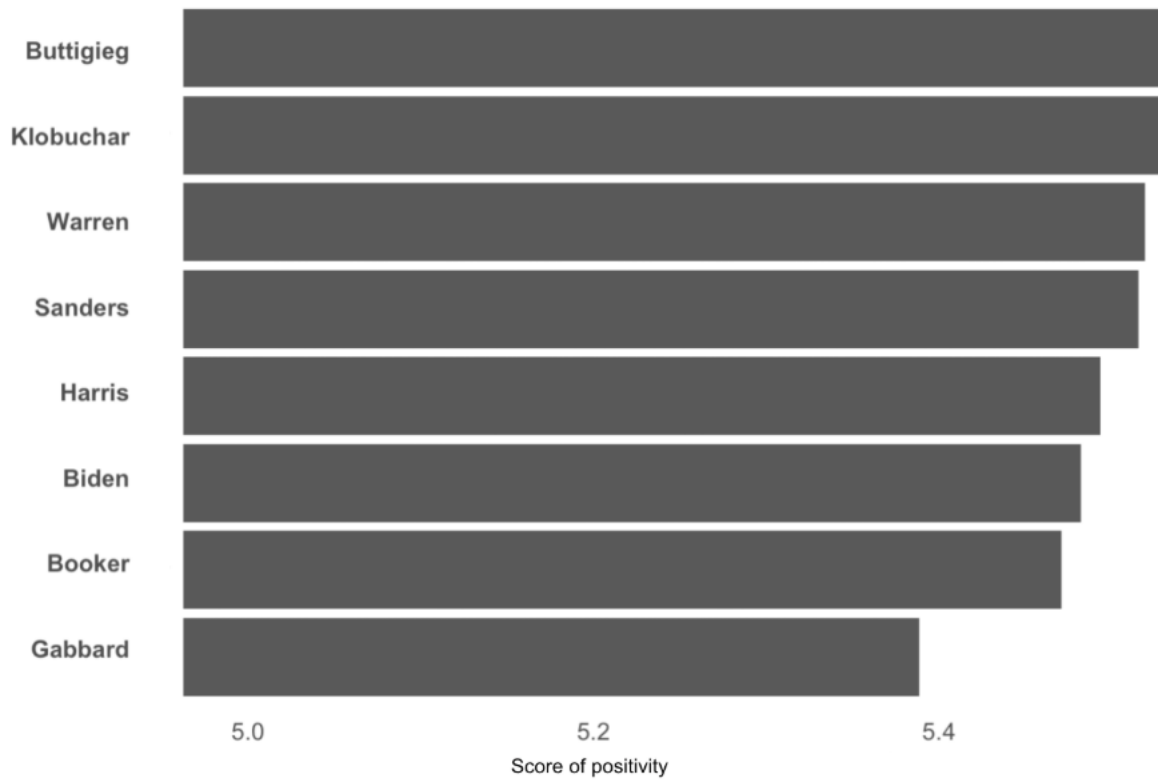
Media sentiment

An analysis of 5,658 articles published across 28 outlets between June 1 and September 28, 2019.

Graph A

Media sentiment by candidate - June 1 through Sep. 28, 2019
Analysis of 5,658 articles from 28 news outlets scored with the labMT sentiment dictionary

Breaking this out by media bias, which we scored according to [Media Bias/Fact Check](https://), we see that right-leaning media organizations consistently treat all candidates in a more negative light.

Graph B

Media sentiment by candidate - June 1 through Sep. 28, 2019
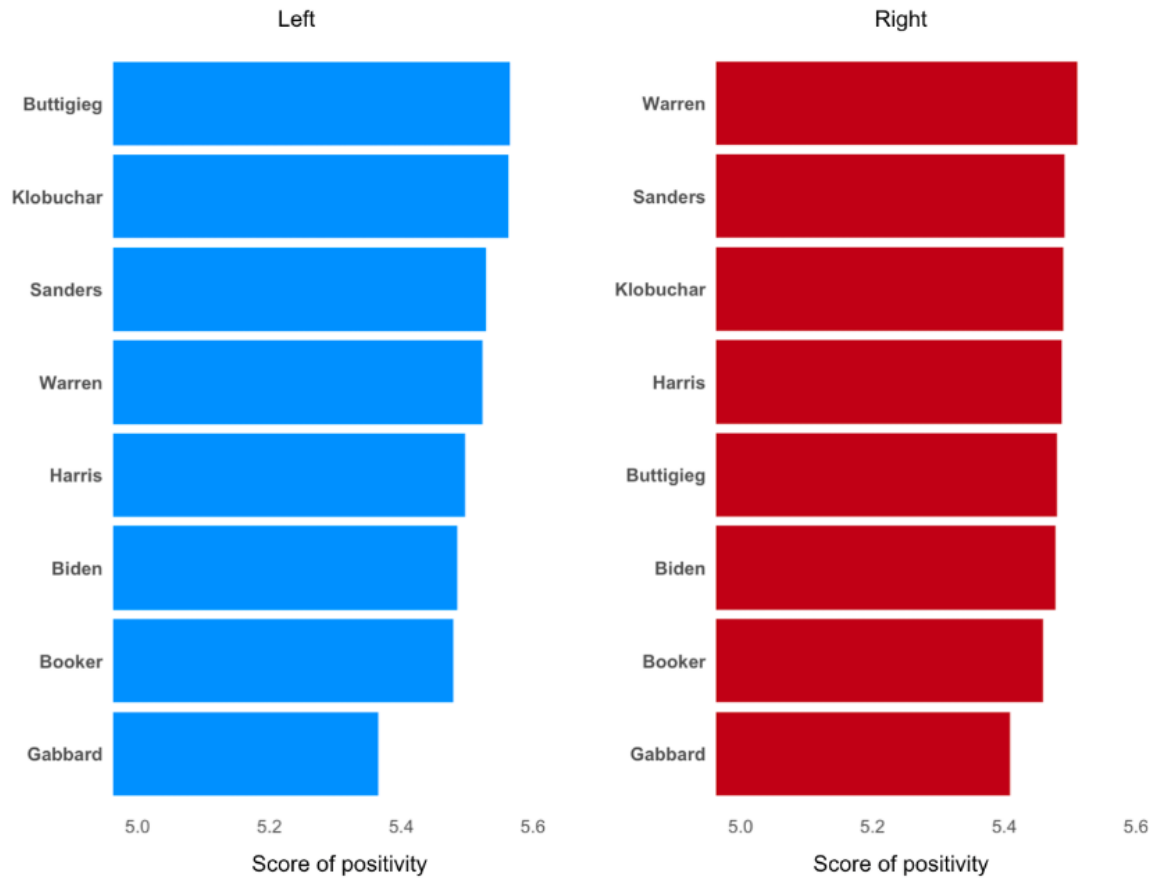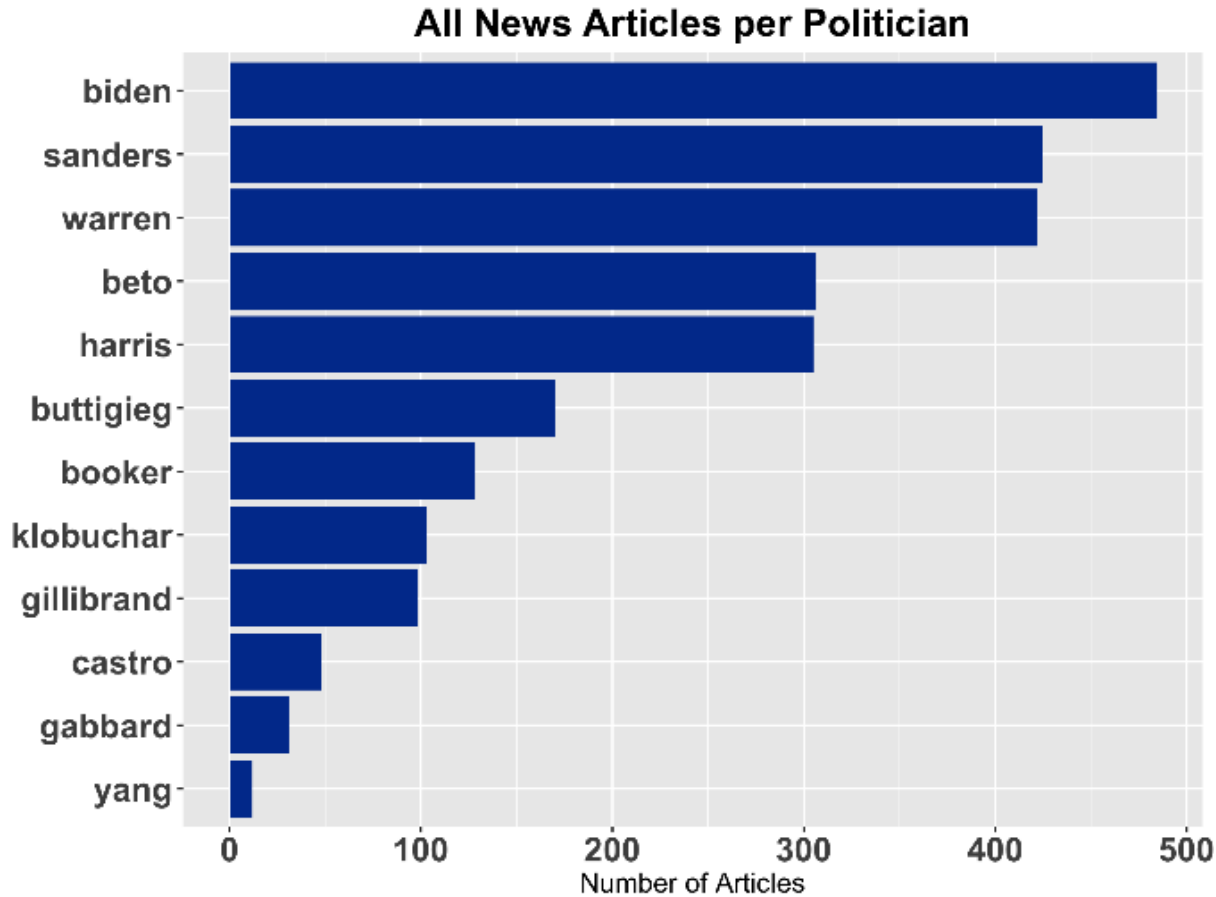Analysis of 5,658 articles from 28 news outlets scored with the labMT sentiment dictionary
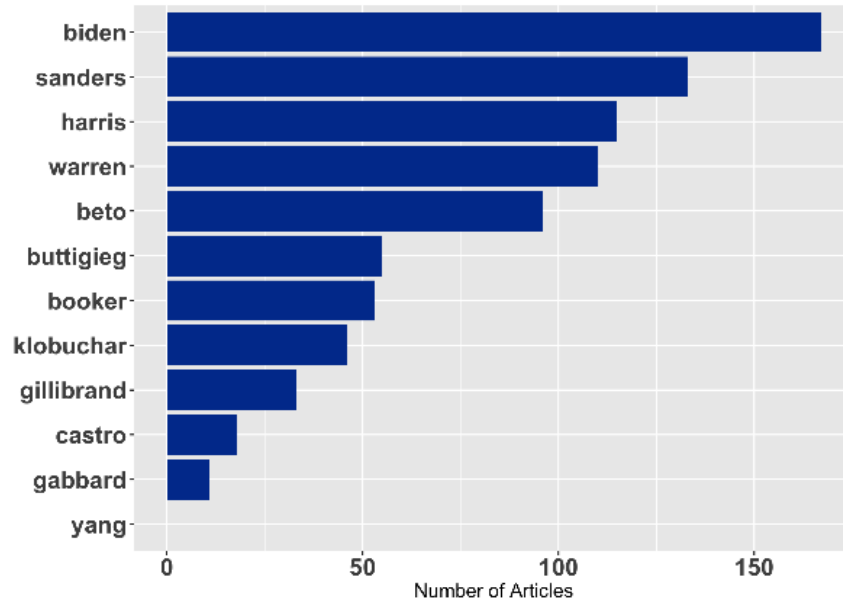
Graph C

One simple way to compare the candidates is to count how many articles have been written about them. By searching for the name of each candidate in news headlines, it's easy to identify the subject of an article. Using this method, I generated this chart. It shows the total number of articles about each candidate from Jan-April 2019.

All News Articles per Politician

Graph D

Liberal News Articles per Politician

Horizontal bar chart (dark blue) titled "Liberal News Articles per Politician". X-axis: Number of Articles (0, 50, 100, 150). Politicians from top to bottom: biden (~165), sanders (~133), harris (~113), warren (~108), beto (~95), buttigieg (~54), booker (~52), klobuchar (~46), gillibrand (~32), castro (~18), gabbard (~10), yang (~0).

Conservative News Articles per Politician

Horizontal bar chart (dark red) titled "Conservative News Articles per Politician". X-axis: Number of Articles (0, 50, 100, 150). Politicians from top to bottom: biden (~152), sanders (~140), beto (~114), warren (~110), harris (~87), buttigieg (~60), booker (~38), gillibrand (~35), klobuchar (~29), castro (~22), gabbard (~12), yang (~5).

Graph E

Average Story Sentiment per Candidate from Liberal News Sources

By investigating the sentiment of stories about the candidates, it's possible to see what kinds of things get written about them. As this is a race to be the Democratic nominee, I will focus only on liberal news sites[3].

Using the R sentiment library[4], each article about a candidate was scored according to sentiment. Positive articles were given positive scores, while negative articles scored below 0.

We can see that Pete Buttigieg seems to garner the fewest negative articles, while Tulsi Gabbard gets the most. In fact Tulsi is so hated by the liberal establishment that stories about her are on average negative[5].

Graph F

Average Headline Sentiment per Candidate from Liberal News Sources
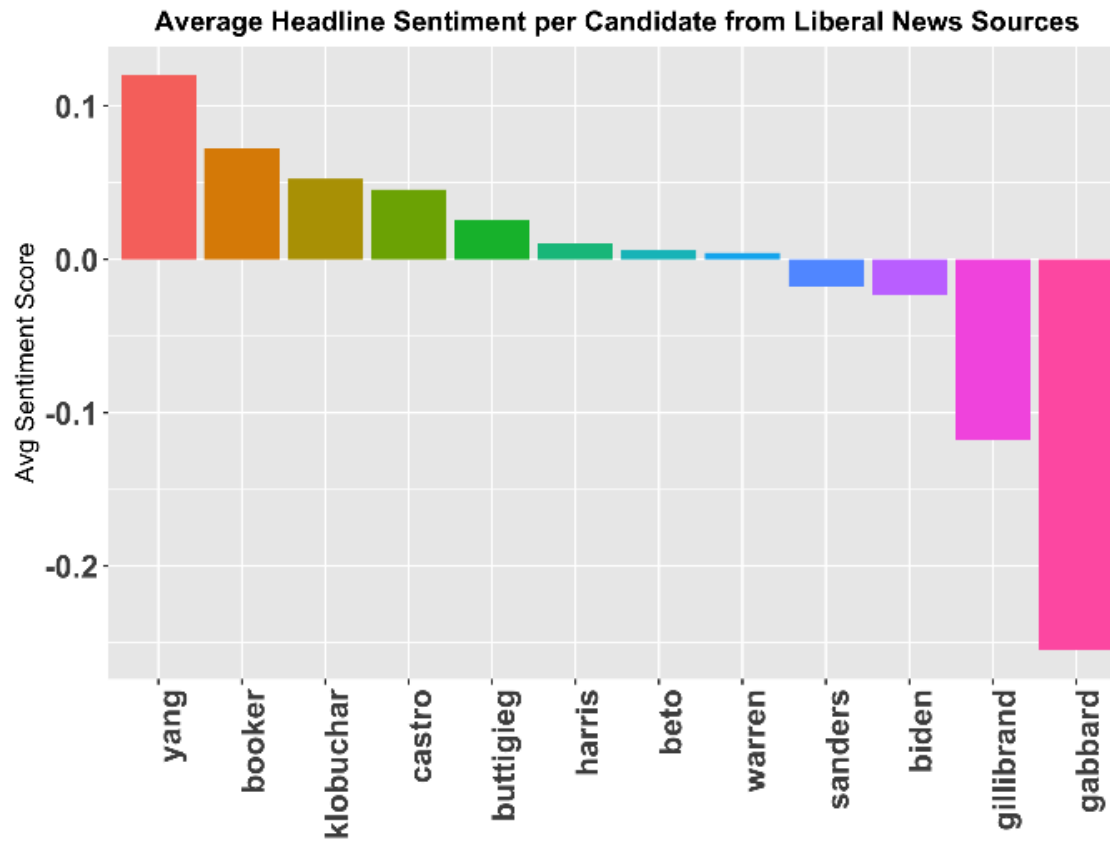
If instead of story contents, we look at just the headlines of an article, a similar picture emerges.

Source: https://towardsdatascience.com/which-democratic-candidate-gets-the-most-news-coverage-aa4312fb53db

Source data: total number of televised town halls by candidate

Candidates	Town Halls		Candidates	Town Halls
Tulsi Gabbard	**1**		**Elizabeth Warren**	**7**
CNN SXSW Town Hall	1		MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1
			MSNBC Presidential Town Hall	1
Pete Buttigieg	**11**		CNN LGBT Town Hall	1
MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1		CNN Climate Change	1
MSNBC Climate Change	1		CNN Presidential Town Halls	3
MSNBC Presidential Town Hall	1			
CNN LGBT Town Hall	1		**Joe Biden**	**5**
CNN Climate Change	1		MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1
CNN SXSW Town Hall	1		CNN Climate Change	1
CNN Presidential Town Halls	3		CNN LGBT Town Hall	1
Fox News Presidential Town Hall	2		CNN Presidential Town Halls	2
Bernie Sanders	**7**		**Amy Klobuchar**	**7**
MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1		MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1
MSNBC Climate Change	1		CNN Climate Change	1
CNN Climate Change	1		CNN LGBT Town Hall	1
CNN Presidential Town Halls	3		CNN Presidential Town Halls	3
Fox News Presidential Town Hall	1		Fox News Presidential Town Hall	1
Tom Steyer	**4**		**Andrew Yang**	**5**
MSNBC Climate Change	1		MSNBC Climate Change	1
CNN LGBT Town Hall	1		MSNBC Gun Policy	1
CNN Presidential Town Halls	2		CNN Climate Change	1
			CNN Presidential Town Halls	2
Cory Booker	**6**			
MSNBC Climate Change	1		**Julián Castro**	**5**
MSNBC Gun Policy	1		MSNBC Climate Chang	1
MSNBC Presidential Town Hall	1		MSNBC Gun Policy	1
CNN Climate Change	1		CNN LGBT Town Hall	1
CNN LGBT Town Hall	1		CNN Presidential Town Halls	1

CNN Presidential Town Hall	1		Fox News Presidential Town Hall	1
Candidates	**Town Halls**		**Candidates**	**Town Halls**
Kamala Harris	**6**			
MSNBC Gun Policy Forum	1			
MSNBC Presidential Town Hall	1			
CNN Climate Change	1		**Michael Bennet**	**2**
CNN LGBT Town Hall	1		MSNBC Climate Change	1
CNN Presidential Town Hall	2		CNN Presidential Town Hall	1
John Delaney	**3**		**Beto O'Rourke**	**4**
MSNBC Climate Change	1		MSNBC Gun Policy	1
CNN SXSW Town Hall	1		CNN Climate Change	1
Fox News Town Hall	1		CNN LGBT Town Hall	1
			CNN Presidential Town Hall	1
Kirsten Gilibrand	**3**			
MSNBC Presidential Town Hall	1		**Marianne Williamson**	**2**
CNN Presidential Town Hall	1		MSNBC Climate Change	1
Fox News Presidential Town Hall	1		CNN Presidential Town Hall	1
Steve Bullock	**2**		**Tim Ryan**	**2**
MSNBC Climate Change	1		MSNBC Climate Change	1
CNN Presidential Town Hall	1		CNN Presidential Town Hall	1