

# The Primary Model

(2020)

The Coronavirus outbreak appears not to have damaged Trump's re-election prospects. To the contrary, his job approval rating ticked up and still holds at 49% in the May Gallup Poll.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/203207/trump-job-approval-weekly.aspx>



In fact, the battle against the virus may help his re-election prospects by casting Trump as a wartime president, as happened with other presidents.

<https://nypost.com/2020/03/28/how-trumps-war-on-the-coronavirus-could-win-him-re-election/>

This may also help mitigate electoral damage from the economic fallout such as over 30 million losing their job.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/496078-will-economic-recession-cost-president-trump-the-election>

## 91-95% Certain Trump Will Be Re-elected

### Primaries Predict Election Winner -- Cycle Also Favors GOP —

by Helmut Norpoth

The Primary Model gives President Trump a 91% chance of winning a possible match-up with Democrat Joe Biden in November, based on primary performance in New Hampshire and South Carolina, plus the first-term electoral benefit. Trump would get 362 electoral votes, Biden 176.

In a possible, though highly unlikely, match-up with Bernie Sanders in November, Trump's chance of winning would rise to 95%. In that scenario, Trump would get 390 electoral votes, Sanders 148.

These predictions come from [primarymodel.com](http://primarymodel.com)

It is a statistical model that relies on presidential primaries and an election cycle as predictors of the vote in the general election. This year the model has been calibrated to predict the Electoral College vote.

Winning the early primaries is a major key for electoral victory in November. On the Democratic side, Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders split the primaries in New Hampshire and South Carolina while Trump handily won the Republican Primary in New Hampshire (the GOP primary in South Carolina was cancelled this year).

What favors Trump in 2020 as well is the cycle of presidential elections operating for nearly 200 years, as illustrated by the snapshot since 1960. After one term in the White House the incumbent party is favored to win re-election unlike the situation when it has held office for two or more terms.

## How the White House Party Has Fared (Since 1960)

After One Term	After Two Terms or More
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1964 W</li><li>• 1972 W</li><li>• 1980 L</li><li>• 1984 W</li><li>• 1996 W</li><li>• 2004 W</li><li>• 2012 W</li><li>• 2020 ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1960 L</li><li>• 1968 L</li><li>• 1976 L</li><li>• 1988 W</li><li>• 1992 L</li><li>• 2000 L</li><li>• 2008 L</li><li>• 2016 L</li></ul>

For the record, the PRIMARY MODEL, with slight modifications, has correctly predicted the winner of all but one of the presidential elections since it was introduced in 1996; it predicted Al Gore in 2000, who lost the electoral vote though winning the popular vote. In recent elections the forecast has been issued as early as January and no later than March of the election year.

Presidential elections going back as far as 1912 are used to estimate the weight of primary performance. It was in 1912 that presidential primaries were introduced. That year the candidate who won his party's primary vote, Woodrow Wilson, went on to defeat the candidate who lost his party's primary vote, William Howard Taft. As a rule, the candidate with the stronger primary performance wins against the candidate with the weaker primary performance. For elections from 1912 to 2016, the PRIMARY MODEL picks the winner, albeit retroactively, every time except in 1960 and 2000.

<b>Candidate with Better Primary Vote Wins General Election</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Primary Vote in Republican Party</b>			<b>Primary Vote in Democratic Party</b>			<b>Election Winner</b>
	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Rival (%)</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Rival (%)</b>	
1912	Taft	33.9	51.5	Wilson	44.6	41.6	<b>Wilson</b>
....							
1964	Goldwater	22.3	35.5	Johnson	95.3	1.6	<b>Johnson</b>
....							
1980	Reagan	49.6	22.7	Carter	47.1	37.3	<b>Reagan</b>
....							
2012	Romney	39.3	22.9	Obama	82.0	1	<b>Obama</b>

For elections prior to 1952 all primaries were included. Beginning in 1952, only the New Hampshire Primary has been used, as a rule. South Carolina has been added for elections since 2008. Both Obama then and Hillary Clinton in 2016 enjoyed strong support in a large and most loyal Democratic constituency, African-Americans, who are few in numbers in New Hampshire. So did Joe Biden this year, who relied on South Carolina as his “firewall.”