

# Five Highlights From the Democratic 'A Team' Debate

June 27, 2019 was the second round of the first Democratic debate. This round featured more high-polling candidates including Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Here are some quick takeaways from the night:

## 1. The Smell of Blood – Biden Gets Hit Hard

One of the night's biggest moments came when Joe Biden was attacked by Kamala Harris for not supporting forced busing to "racially integrate" schools nationwide. Biden opposed busing on the federal level because it was unpopular with his constituency. In the debate he noted that he "didn't praise racists," and was fine with busing on the local level if the local school districts agreed with it. Harris took the opportunity to talk about how it can be necessary, in her view, for the federal government to override the powers of local governments.

Many other persons on the debate stage also attacked Biden, the best one-liner coming from Swalwell, who proposed Biden should "pass the torch" onto the next generation, a point Biden once made himself. Biden curtly refused his suggestion.

## 2. Kamala Stands Out

Unlike the marked civility of the first night of debate, Thursday's candidates had no qualms about interrupting each other. The worst offender was Kirsten Gillibrand.

Kamala Harris took advantage of this contention to put out a catchy one-liner: "America does not want to witness a food fight. They want to know how they're [the politicians] going to put food on their table."

## 3. Mayor Pete Has a Hard Time

Pete Buttigieg got into a tight spot when asked about a situation in South Bend where a black man allegedly attacked a police officer with a knife and was subsequently killed by the officer. The moderator asked Buttigieg: "The police force is six percent black in a city that is 26 percent black. Why has that not improved over your two terms as mayor?" Buttigieg responded, "Because I couldn't get it done." Several other candidates pounced on Buttigieg, while Williamson used the opportunity to call for reparations to solve "systemic racism."

#### **4. The Radical/Moderate Split**

The impact of Bernie Sanders' Democratic Socialist positions within the Democratic Party are evident. During the debate, Sanders focused mainly on U.S. economic inequality, his principle position being a "Medicare for All" bill. But when the candidates were asked who was willing to eliminate private insurance in favor of healthcare being run by the U.S. government, only Sanders and Harris raised their hands in support. Other candidates disagreed, with John Hickenlooper declaring, "Socialism isn't the solution," going on to note that if Democrats pursue socialist policies, the Republicans will win in 2020.

A second divide occurred between candidates over illegal alien deportation. Kamala Harris expressed her disagreement with Obama's policy of deporting non-felon illegals, but Biden refused to go against Obama's legacy. Candidates also split on the removal of section 1325 of the immigration code, which would make illegal entry into the U.S. a civil, not a criminal, violation.

#### **5. Trump as the Enemy**

Contrary to the first round of debate, Trump was mentioned a lot, particularly by Joe Biden. Biden's general message was clear: All was fine under his tenure with Obama, but then Trump came along and ruined everything. Biden's solution is to defeat Trump, and then all will be well again.

Other references to the current president included Sanders calling Trump a “liar” for betraying American workers’ interests, while Hickenlooper and Williamson respectively accused Trump of “kidnapping children” and “abusing children,” the latter a reference to Trump’s policy of deporting underage foreigners or putting them in holding centers.

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[Image Credit: NBC/YouTube]