Colorado Senate Democratic Primary Poll Feb 2026 Summary

While incumbent Democratic Senator John Hickenlooper begins 2026 with a strong lead, new polling shows WFP-endorsed Democratic primary challenger Julie Gonzales is a formidable challenger. **<u>Julie Gonzales is in a strong position to stage an upset and emerge victorious if the electorate is sufficiently informed about both candidates.</u>**
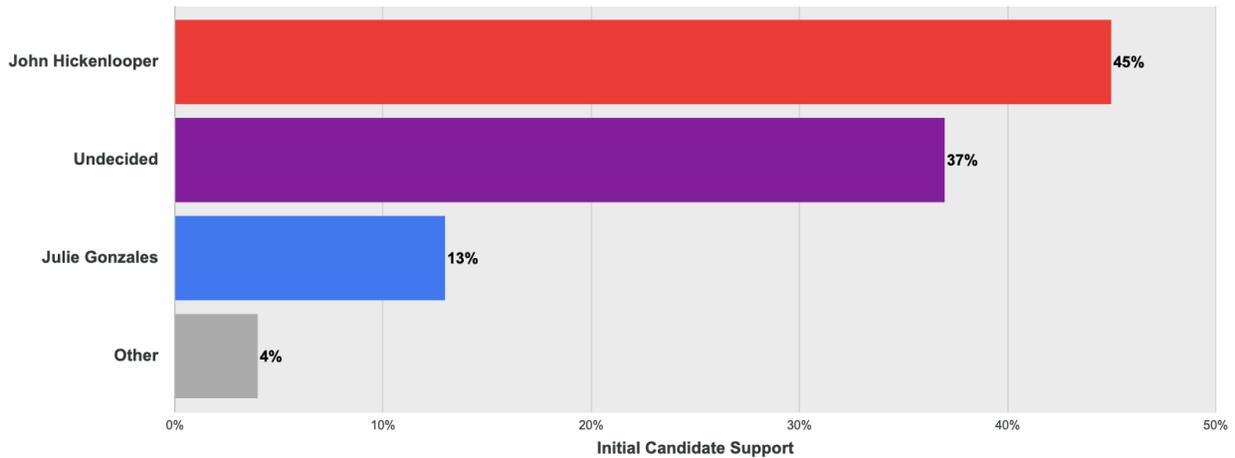
<u>Key Findings</u>

From February 20 to 25, 2026, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 739 likely Democratic primary voters in Colorado using SMS and web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely Democratic primary voters by age, gender, education, race, and geography. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error associated with the sample size is ±4 percentage points.

John Hickenlooper is the clear frontrunner in initial vote choice, simulating the election if it were held today. However, it is a notable sign of vulnerability that Hickenlooper begins below the 50% — the threshold that is often considered safe for an incumbent — with more than one-third of the likely Democratic Primary electorate saying they're undecided.

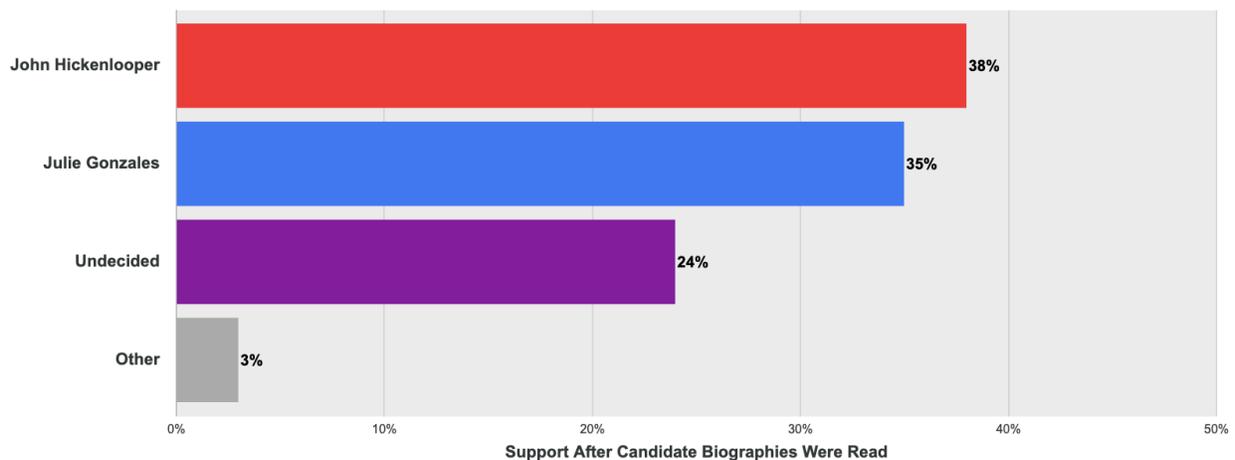| **[2]** If the **June 2026 Democratic primary election** for the **U.S. Senator from Colorado** was being held tomorrow, **and these were the candidates**, who would you vote for?	
John Hickenlooper	**45%**
Julie Gonzales	**13**
Karen Breslin	**3**
Anthony Zimpfer	**1**
Brashad Hasley	**0**
Not sure	**37**

Colorado Senate- Initial Support

While Hickenlooper leads the initial vote choice, Gonzales picks up **significant** support after voters are presented neutral-to-positive bios on both Hickenlooper and Gonzales — with Hickenlooper now only leading narrowly by 3 points, within the poll's margin of error.

[5] Knowing what you know now, if the **June 2026 Democratic primary election** for the **U.S. Senator from Colorado** was being held tomorrow, and **these were the candidates**, who would you vote for?

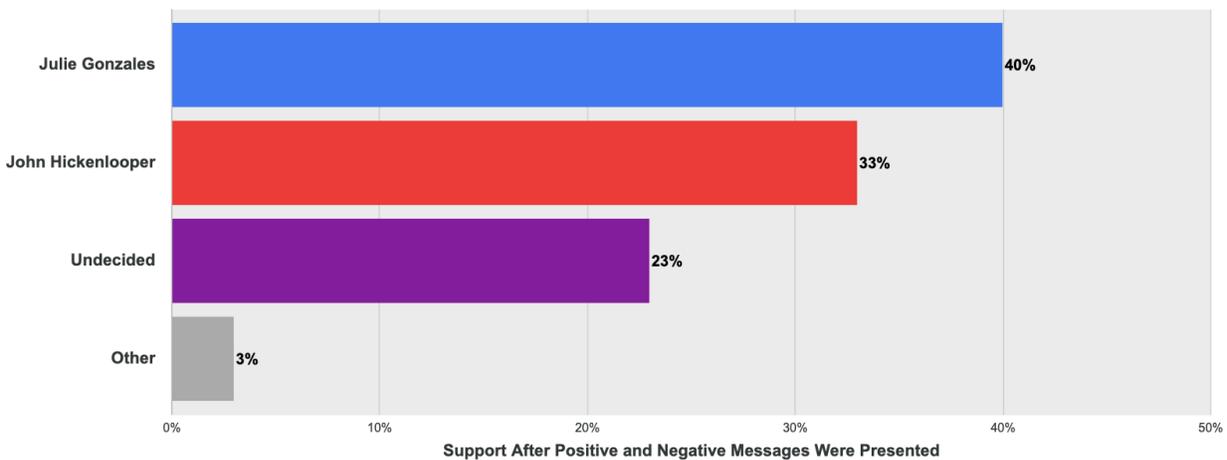|	
John Hickenlooper	**38%**
Julie Gonzales	35
Karen Breslin	2
Anthony Zimpfer	1
Brashad Hasley	0
Not sure	24

Colorado Senate- After Biographies

Additionally, after reading a battery of positive and negative arguments about each candidate (with a balanced number of positive and negative arguments on both candidates),

Gonzales moves into a significant 7-point lead (outside the margin of error) with less than a quarter of respondents remaining undecided.

[16] Knowing what you know now, if the **June 2026 Democratic primary election** for the **U.S. Senator from Colorado** was being held tomorrow, **and these were the candidates**, who would you vote for?

Julie Gonzales	**40%**
John Hickenlooper	33
Karen Breslin	2
Anthony Zimpfer	1
Brashad Hasley	0
Not sure	23

Colorado Senate- After Messaging

Support After Positive and Negative Messages Were Presented

Conclusion:

Though Hickenlooper leads the race today, this contest could shape up as a strong contender for the upset of the cycle. After being presented with equal information about the two candidates, voters are open to supporting Julie Gonzales, who could emerge as the winner of this race.

More detail:

● Initially, **John Hickenlooper** has the **highest** favorability and name-ID among all candidates running in the Senate primary:
   ○ John Hickenlooper: +42-net favorability / 92% name-ID
   ○ Julie Gonzales: +11 favorability / 23% name-ID
   ○ Karen Breslin: 0 favorability / 14% name-ID
   ○ Anthony Zimpfer: 0 favorability / 10% name-ID
   ○ Brashad Hasley: -1 favorability / 9% name-ID
● In the **first** Democratic primary **horse race, Hickenlooper** received 45% of the vote, followed by Julie Gonzales at 13%, and all other candidates received 3%

or less.
- ○ However, 37% of voters indicate they are still undecided on who they would like to vote for, indicating a large swath of the electorate is still persuadable for any candidate.
- ○ Furthermore, Julie Gonzales receives a **modest vote share** of young voters at 21%, while John Hickenlooper receives 24%, and half (50%) say they are undecided on who they will vote for. This indicates that Gonzales has already made inroads with young voters prior to in-survey messaging.
- After reading short biographies of both Hickenlooper and Gonzales, Gonzales' net-favorability **increases more** than Hickenlooper's:
  - ○ John Hickenlooper: +55 favorability net
  - ○ Julie Gonzales: +73 favorability net
- In a **follow-up horse race** among all 5 candidates listed in the survey, **Hickenlooper's lead over Gonzales dwindles** to a 3-point margin, with Hickenlooper now receiving 38% of the vote share while Gonzales receives 35%.
  - ○ Now, the share of undecided voters has also decreased to 24% compared to the 36% in the first horse race matchup. Gonzales also grabs 39% of the vote share from these undecided voters compared to Hickenlooper's 6%, while 54% of these voters continue to be unsure of who they would like to vote for.
  - ○ Furthermore, Gonzales now has a commanding lead over Hickenlooper with **young voters,** with 54% of their vote share compared to his 17%, while now only 24% say they are still undecided. Furthermore, Gonzales also achieves a commanding lead over Hickenlooper with voters who self-identify as **"very" liberal**, where she receives 50% of their vote share to his 24%.
- After reading through biographies and messaging on both Hickenlooper and Gonzales, in a final horse race, **Gonzales takes the lead over Hickenlooper,** receiving 40% of the vote share compared to his 33%.
  - ○ While receiving a plurality of the vote share with numerous demographics, Gonzales has a **commanding lead** over Hickenlooper with young voters (61% to 15%) and "very" liberal voters (63% to 16%), establishing these groups as her **most prominent** supporters.
  - ○ She also closed the gap on Hickenlooper with other demographic groups, including non-college-educated voters and white voters.
  - ○ Gonzales' lead includes flipping 21% of initial Hickenlooper supporters, and winning 47% of initially undecided voters compared to Hickenlooper only winning 9% of initially undecided voters.