



### [Third Democratic Presidential Debate Takes Place in Houston](#)

The top 10 contenders for the Democratic Presidential nomination squared off for the third round of debating last Thursday night in Houston. This was the first round where all qualified candidates shared the same stage and venue, as opposed to the previous two rounds where around 20 candidates were split into two nights of back-to-back debates. In order to qualify for this third round, candidates were required to reach 130,000 unique donors by August 28th and earn at least 2% in four polls – which could be national polls or polls in the early voting states of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, or Nevada. The 10 candidates that met these requirements and qualified for the debate were: former Vice President Joe Biden, U.S. Congresswoman Kamala Harris, U.S. Congresswoman Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Congressman Cory Booker, former U.S. Congressman Beto O'Rourke, U.S. Congressman Bernie Sanders, U.S. Congresswoman Amy Klobuchar, former HUD Secretary Julian Castro, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and entrepreneur Andrew Yang. Several notable candidates did not qualify for this debate including U.S. Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, and U.S. Congressman Tim Ryan.

Over the course of the three-hour debate, the 10 candidates discussed key issues such as health care, criminal justice reform, and gun legislation. The health care discussion featured Sanders and Warren articulating their arguments for a Medicare-for-All health care system while others like Biden, Buttigieg, and Klobuchar questioned the high costs associated with this. Biden pointed out the high middle-class costs for a Medicare-for-All system, while Buttigieg emphasized that he trusts individual Americans to know what health care insurer is best for them and for that reason was not supportive of this type of system as well. Klobuchar expressed that she was also not supportive of the Sanders and Warren backed plan because it would lead to millions of Americans losing their own private health insurance.

The discussion on criminal justice reform included a few notable highlights as well. During this segment, one of the moderators pressed Harris on her record as a former prosecutor who was harsh on drug-related offenders. Klobuchar's record was also called into question due to the high number of police shootings that took place in her home state of Minnesota while she worked there as a federal prosecutor. Lastly, Booker made reference to his participation in the bipartisan criminal justice bill that recently passed and was signed by the president, while O'Rourke expressed his support for a reparations bill for descendants of slaves.

The candidates also dived into gun legislation, one of the most pressing issues on the campaign trail. In one of the evening's most memorable moments, O'Rourke emphatically stated his support for taking assault weapons away from people and was praised by multiple fellow candidates for his response to the recent mass shooting in his hometown of El Paso, Texas. A lot of the discussion on this topic focused on ideas to address this persistent problem including gun buybacks, assault weapon bans, and licensing requirements. Booker expressed his support for a national licensing system, while both Warren and Sanders blamed a Congress beholden to the gun industry for the failure to pass meaningful gun legislation.

The upcoming fourth round of debates will be co-hosted by CNN and the New York Times, and is scheduled to take place next month in Westerville, Ohio.