

## The challenge against Trump starts with the Democratic primaries

The first 30 delegates from the US Democratic primaries were assigned this week, kick-starting the twisty selection process that will culminate in the coronation of Donald Trump's challenger in the presidential election next November. It's a long and demanding race: each candidate's goal is to reach the fateful threshold of 1,990 delegates necessary to win the nomination before the others. The contest will unfold over the next five months through votes in the fifty federal states, until the winner's name is made official at the national convention set for July, in Milwaukee (Wisconsin). In most states is in force the classic primaries system, with voters tasked to express directly their preference for one of the delegates to be sent to the national congress, who will then have to represent them when choosing the official party candidate. On the other hand, the case of caucuses is different, being real public debates organized in predefined places (schools, gyms or other private and public spaces) in which the representatives physically take sides with the delegate who intend to support until is elected the number of delegates that the party has assigned for that particular state. Democratic caucuses traditionally begin in Iowa and then continue also in Nevada, North Dakota and Wyoming. Last Tuesday, the race that began in the 29<sup>th</sup> federal state of the United States (Iowa, which is considered useful to capture the mood of the electorate) gave rise to one of the most troubled consultations in the history of the American primaries. With count delays, controversies and accusations of fraud, up to the final head-to-head between Pete

Buttigieg – young, gay, ex-military, concerned about civil rights and with a liberal program in economics – and Bernie Sanders – the 70-year-old outsider seen as a socialist, far too leftist according to US Democrats standards and until a few years ago not even a party member. Not to mention the sensational false departure of the moderate establishment candidate Joe Biden, a senator and former vice-president under Obama, who is even at risk of losing the economic, political and mediatic support of the party if he won't be able to get back on top immediately. The next events are scheduled in New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, until the March 3 Super Tuesday, when 15 states will vote including the strategic California, that elects the largest number of delegates. Only then it will be possible to issue a more or less definitive judgment on the signal arrived from Iowa, with the surprise exploit of an outsider like Buttigieg and the confirmation of a candidate not belonging to the party establishment such as Sanders. It will be a question of whether the Democratic field is about to be revolutionized by a scenario similar to that occurred four years ago among the Republicans, when it was Donald Trump the one who was perceived as a foreign body by the party leaders, and yet was capable of winning almost alone the Republican nomination. And while the Democratic Party is now under pressure, the president is booming in the polls thanks to the continued economic growth of the US and after having avoided without damage the impeachment procedure.