



# **IOWA CAUCUS & THE 2020 LATINO VOTE**

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# Introduction

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The first contest of the Democratic presidential primary took place on February 3, 2020 in Iowa. The Iowa caucus consisted of approximately 1,765 voting precincts across the state for Democrats<sup>1</sup> to gather and debate candidate preferences with each other.<sup>2</sup> For the first time, Iowa Democrats created 99 satellite locations across the country and abroad to increase accessibility for those unable to attend their local caucus in-person. A subset of these satellite caucus sites included four Spanish-language caucuses.<sup>3</sup>

Iowa is home to 3.1 million residents with 76.8 percent of the population over the age of 18.<sup>4</sup> While the state's racial/ethnic composition is overwhelmingly white (90.7 percent of all Iowans are white), Latinos are Iowa's largest non-white population group (6 percent).

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<sup>1</sup>Iowa's Democratic caucuses are only open to registered party members. Unaffiliated voters and non-Democratic voters are only able to participate in a caucus if they register or change their party affiliation on caucus night.

<sup>2</sup>See Iowa Democratic Party, Iowa Delegate Selection Plan For the 2020 Democratic National Convention, September 19, 2019. Unlike secret-ballot primaries, caucuses require physical presence and participants show their support for a candidate by dividing into groups. Caucus organizers take note of which groups have less than 15 percent of the total and those with 15 percent or more are considered "viable," whereby members of that group must stay with their candidate. The Iowa caucus process mandates that voters cluster into "preference groups" to elect delegates to their county conventions. Iowa's system for adding up their 41 delegates determines the official winner, instead of the raw statewide vote.

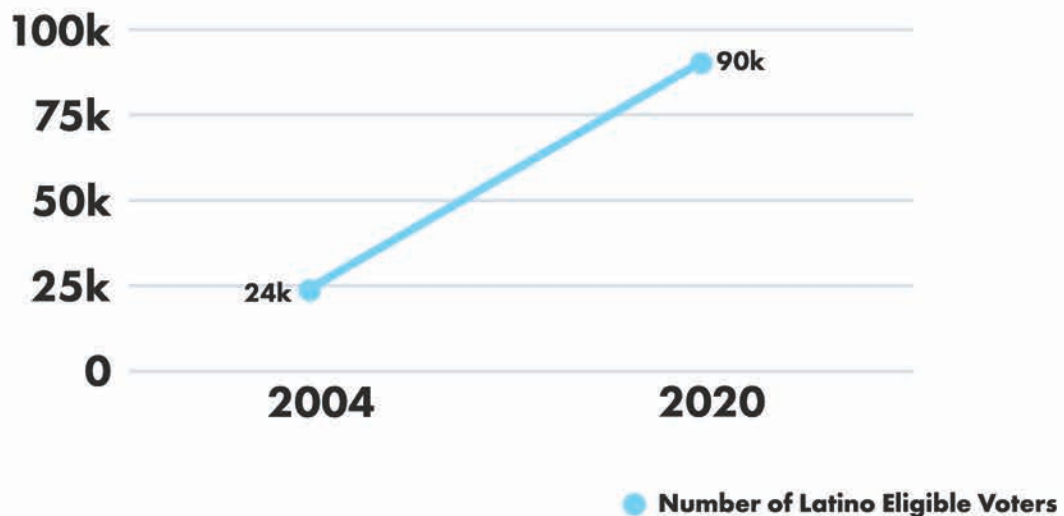
<sup>3</sup>The four Spanish-language satellite sites were: South Side YMCA in Des Moines, Better Day Cafe in Storm Lake, Muscatine Community College, and Caring Hands and More in Iowa City.

<sup>4</sup>United States Census, Population Estimates, July 1, 2019 (V2019).

# Iowa's Latino Voters

Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group of voters in Iowa and represent an estimated 5 percent of all eligible voters. In 2004, there were an estimated 24,000 Latino eligible voters (citizen adults), with 13,000 Latino registered voters. In 2020, there are an estimated 90,000 Latino eligible voters (citizen adults), with 45,000 Latino registered voters (See [Figure 1](#). Number of Latino Eligible Voters in Iowa, 2004 to 2020). This increase of 66,000 more eligible Latino voters between 2004 and 2020 is driven in large part by Iowa-born Latinos who are aging into the electorate, many of whom have immigrant parents.

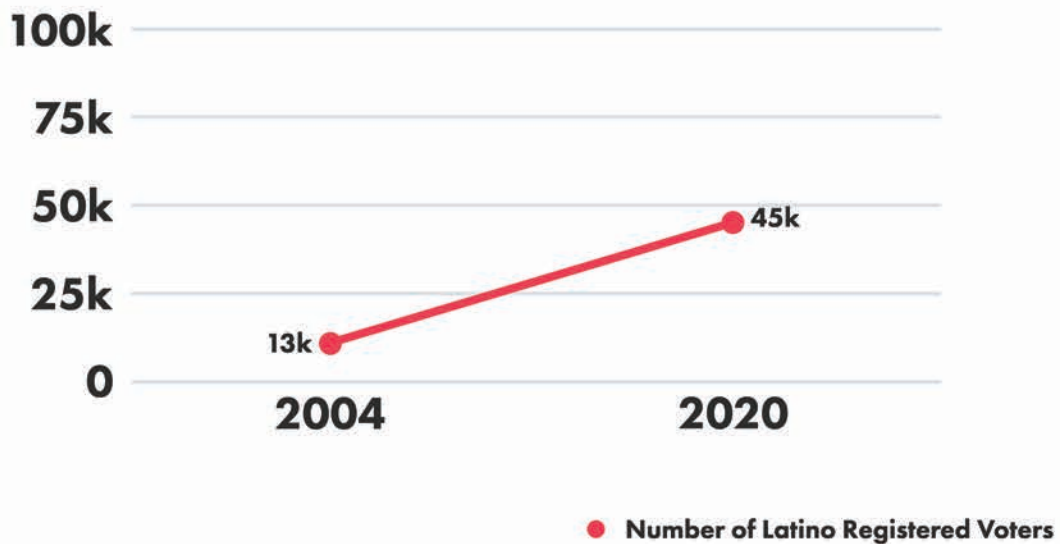
Figure 1.  
Number of Latino Eligible Voters in Iowa, 2004 to 2020



Between 2004 and 2020, Iowa experienced a 375 percent increase in the number of Latino eligible voters and a 346 percent increase in Latino registered voters (See [Figure 2](#). Number of Latino Registered Voters in Iowa, 2004 to 2020).

Figure 2.

**Number of Latino Registered Voters in Iowa, 2004 to 2020**



The growth of Latino eligible and registered voters since 2004 provides an important foundation to examine the impact of the Latino electorate on the 2020 Iowa caucuses.

## 2020 Latino Vote & the Iowa Caucus

UCLA LPPI conducted a comprehensive analysis of all caucus voting locations across the state of Iowa to examine the voting patterns in high-density Latino cities and neighborhoods. In 2020, there are an estimated 90,000 Latinos eligible to vote in Iowa and 45,000 Latino registered voters.

# Methodology

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To evaluate Latino voting patterns, UCLA LPPI researchers downloaded data on caucus vote results from the Iowa Democratic Party<sup>5</sup> and New York Times<sup>6</sup> websites. Our dataset includes the full set of 1,765 precincts, of which 1,711 have reported vote results<sup>7</sup>. This dataset was then merged with census population statistics at the local Census block-group level. By geocoding the caucus addresses over Census block groups and hand coding how the Latino population is distributed within these block groups, UCLA LPPI is able to estimate the Latino population density of each electoral precinct. Of the 1,765 precincts, we identified 32 caucus precinct locations that have Latino populations at or above 35 percent. These 32 caucus locations represent the study's high-density Latino caucus locations. In addition to the high-density Latino caucus locations we identified 12 caucus locations that have a Latino majority population (50 percent or higher). The 12 majority-Latino caucus locations also happen to include the four Spanish-language satellite sites. This study examines the vote preference of the high-density and majority-Latino caucus locations to better understand the impact of the Latino electorate on the 2020 Iowa caucuses.

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<sup>5</sup> See Iowa Democratic Party, IDP Caucus 2020 Results, available at: <https://results.thecaucuses.org/> (Accessed 2/6/2020).

<sup>6</sup> See The New York Times, Live: Iowa Caucus Results 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/02/04/us/elections/results-iowa-caucus.html> (Accessed 2/6/2020).

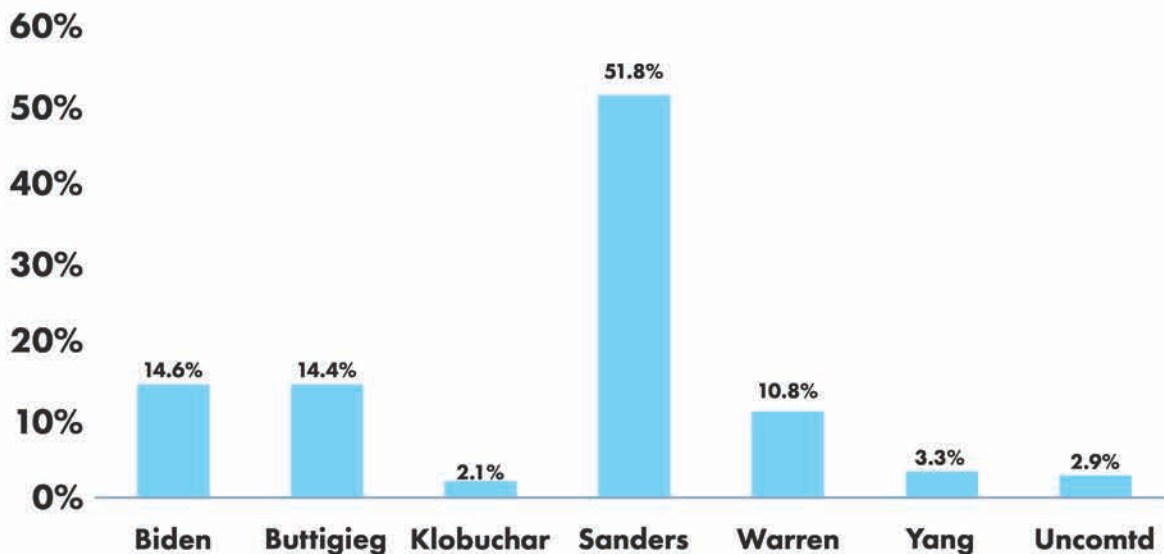
<sup>7</sup> Research Note: With the full dataset, we can conduct an ecological inference analysis, used by social scientists and voting rights experts to understand racial and ethnic voting patterns. While census data can be a helpful starting point, eventually we would prefer to match the sign-in data of the voters who participated in each caucus and conduct a surname analysis, blended with census information to get a more precise estimate of the race/ethnicity of the voters in each caucus location. These additional results will be available in the coming weeks.

# Findings

This analysis found a strong vote preference for Senator Bernie Sanders across the 32 high-density Latino caucus locations (See [Appendix 1](#) for a full list of candidate votes by precinct). Cumulatively, these 32 high-density Latino caucus locations represent 2,506 votes and an estimated 50.12 statewide delegates. Of these 2,506 votes, Senator Bernie Sanders won an estimated 52 percent of the votes compared to 15 percent for Vice President Joe Biden, 14 percent for Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and 11 percent for Senator Elizabeth Warren (See [Figure 3](#)).

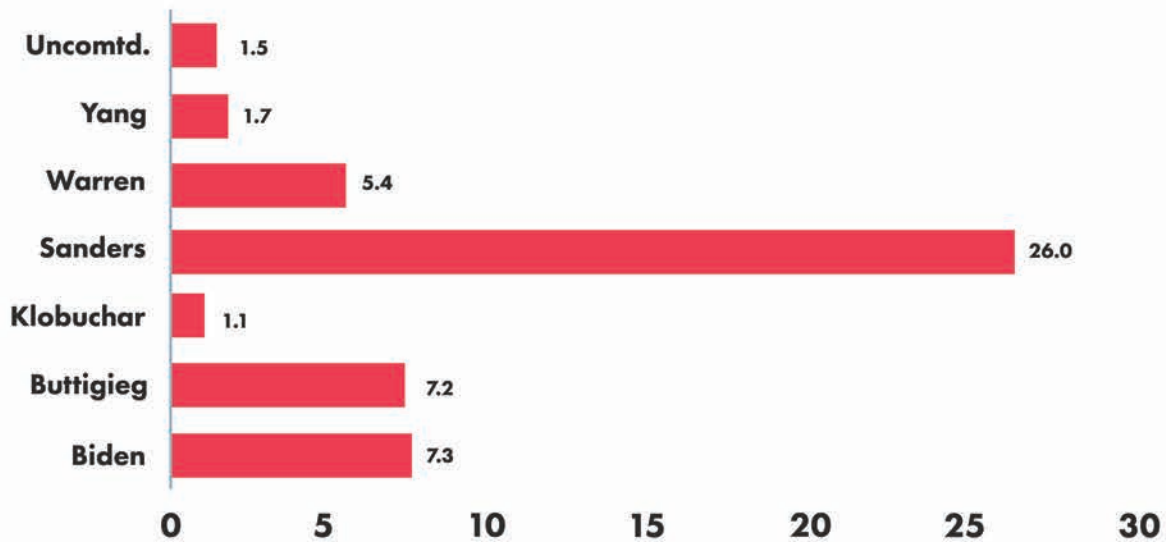
Figure 3.

## 2020 Iowa Caucus vote in top 32 high-density Latino caucus locations



The 32 high-density Latino caucus locations represent approximately 50.12 statewide delegates. [Figure 4](#) illustrates the statewide delegate estimates by candidate for these high-density Latino caucus locations.

Figure 4.

**Estimated Statewide Delegates won in top 32 high-density Latino caucus precincts in Iowa**

Across the complete list of 32 high-density Latino caucus locations we analyzed, Senator Sanders received a 938 vote advantage and 18.76 net delegate advantage over Mayor Buttigieg. (See [Figure 5](#))

Figure 5.

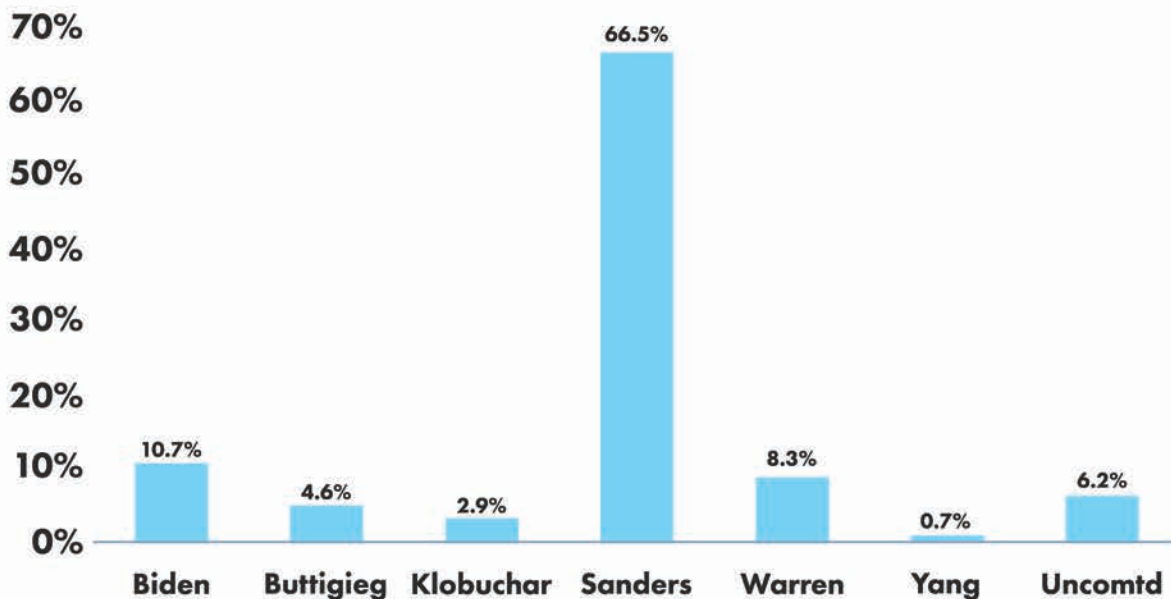
**2020 Iowa High-Density Latino Caucus Locations; Vote Choice Comparison for Senator Sanders and Mayor Buttigieg**

	Buttigieg	Sanders	BS > PB margin
<b>Total number of votes</b>	361	1299	938
<b>Percent of votes</b>	14.4%	51.8%	37.4%
<b>Statewide Delegates</b>	7.22	25.98	18.76



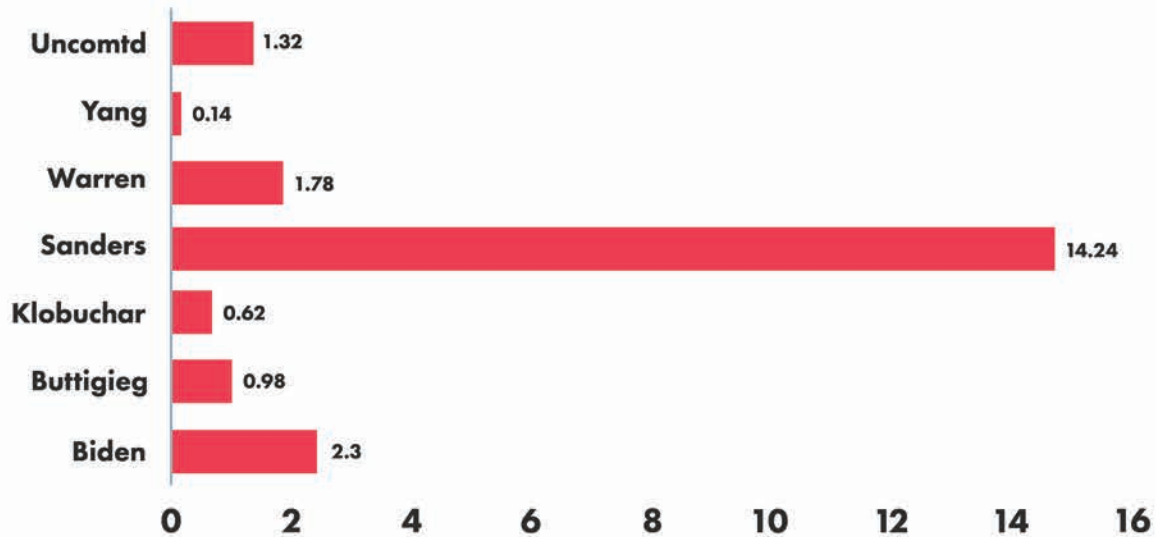
An examination of the 12 majority-Latino caucus locations, which includes the four Spanish-language satellite locations, reveals a similar trend. These 12 locations represent approximately 1,071 votes and 21.42 statewide delegates. With respect to the 1,071 votes across the majority-Latino caucus locations, Senator Sanders won an estimated 67 percent of the vote compared to 11 percent for Vice President Biden, 8 percent for Senator Warren, and 5 percent for Mayor Buttigieg.

**Figure 6.**  
**2020 Iowa Caucus vote in majority-Latino caucus locations**



Similarly, the findings from the majority-Latino caucus locations suggest a strong advantage for Senator Sanders over Mayor Buttigieg. Across the complete list of 12 majority Latino caucus locations we analyzed, Senator Sanders received a 13.26 net delegate advantage over Mayor Buttigieg.

Figure 7.

**Estimated Statewide Delegates by candidate for the 12 majority-Latino caucus locations**

## Conclusion

Iowa is integral to shaping the Democratic presidential election, as the first in the nation primary. The Latino electorate's growth in Iowa is substantial; the state experienced a 346 percent increase in the number of Latino registered voters between 2004 to 2020. UCLA LPPI's examination of the 2020 Iowa caucuses with respect to the Latino electorate provides clear evidence that high-density, especially majority-Latino, caucus locations preferred Senator Sanders over the other Democratic candidates. Amongst the state's top two finishers, Mayor Buttigieg and Senator Sanders, there was a significant net delegate advantage for Senator Sanders across the high-density and majority-Latino caucus locations examined for this study. The Latino electorate's vote preference in Iowa is likely to influence the outcome of the 2020 Democratic primary in other states that have sizable Latino electorates, namely Nevada, California, Texas, and elsewhere in the Southwest and Northeast.

# Appendix A: High-density Latino Caucus Locations

Table A1.

Full list of candidate votes by precinct

City	% Latino	Venue Name	Biden	Buttigieg	Klobuchar	Sanders	Warren	Yang	Uncomtd	Total	Est. S.D.E
DES MOINES	95.0	South Side YMCA	0	0	0	171	0	0	16	187	3.74
IOWA CITY	95.0	Caring Hands and More	0	0	0	96	0	0	16	112	2.24
MUSCATINE	95.0	Muscatine Community College	0	0	0	72	0	0	9	81	1.62
STORM LAKE	95.0	Better Day Cafe	4	5	0	89	1	4	0	105	2.1
WEST LIBERTY	70.8	WEST LIBERTY COMMUNITY CENTER A	16	4	0	48	24	0	0	92	1.84
MARSHALLTOWN	65.6	1 - WOODBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GYM	15	0	0	60	0	0	0	75	1.5
SIoux CITY	62.0	SHRINERS TEMPLE 1ST FLOOR	13	0	0	33	9	0	0	55	1.1
MARSHALLTOWN	60.1	2 - MARSHALLTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY	18	0	0	50	0	0	16	84	1.68
SIoux CITY	58.2	CARPENTERS UNION HALL	26	27	25	43	34	0	0	155	3.1
STORM LAKE	55.4	CHAUTAUGUA SHELTER HOUSE E	13	0	0	18	13	0	0	44	0.88
SIoux CITY	51.3	ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH	0	0	6	14	0	0	9	29	0.58
DENISON	50.5	DT - DENISON HIGH SCHOOL, HERITAGE ROOM	10	13	0	18	8	3	0	52	1.04
POSTVILLE	47.9	POSTVILLE FINE ARTS CENTER A	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	7	0.14
POSTVILLE	47.9	POSTVILLE FINE ARTS CENTER B	7	15	0	6	0	10	0	38	0.76
DES MOINES	46.7	MADISON ELEMENTARY GYM	0	13	8	32	11	6	2	72	1.44
PERRY	46.0	PERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL A, MEDIA CENTER	39	29	0	41	22	0	0	131	2.62
DES MOINES	45.1	WEEKS MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM	19	0	0	42	21	0	0	82	1.64
SIoux CITY	44.3	IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH	7	8	0	23	0	0	0	38	0.76
E OTTUMWA	43.7	WILSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GYM	15	20	0	42	1	0	0	78	1.56
DES MOINES	42.5	WEEKS MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA	6	7	3	28	12	7	4	67	1.34
MUSCATINE	41.2	FRANLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GYM	13	10	0	27	10	0	0	60	1.2
COUNCIL BLUFFS	40.2	EDISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM	6	6	0	14	7	6	1	40	0.8
SIoux CITY	40.1	LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	9	0	1	30	8	0	0	48	0.96
DES MOINES	39.4	KING ELEMENTARY CAFETERIA	0	17	0	60	25	0	0	102	2.04
MARSHALLTOWN	38.5	2 - FISHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GYM	46	47	0	65	0	0	0	158	3.16
SIoux CITY	37.5	TRIMBLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH	19	30	0	49	0	0	0	98	1.96
STORM LAKE	37.3	EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER	0	11	0	13	7	7	0	38	0.76
COUNCIL BLUFFS	36.7	BROADWAY METHODIST CHURCH	0	54	0	55	44	28	0	181	3.62
OSCEOLA	36.4	CLARKE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETERIA	6	6	0	12	5	6	0	35	0.7
OSCEOLA	36.4	CLARKE COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL, LIBRARY	7	9	6	10	5	6	0	43	0.86
SIoux CITY	35.7	AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH	41	25	0	32	0	0	0	98	1.96
STORM LAKE	35.1	BUENA VISTA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MEETING ROOM	6	3	4	5	3	0	0	21	0.42
										<b>2506</b>	<b>50.12</b>

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