



To: Interested Parties
Fr: Jennifer Ridder, Campaign Manager
Da: September 10, 2019
Re: Bullock on the Path to Victory

Let's start by acknowledging two facts: First, we won't see Governor Bullock on the debate stage in Houston this Thursday. Second, not a single Democratic primary voter or caucus-goer will cast a vote until February — and we won't choose our nominee until five months after that.

While many are anxious to winnow the field, the fact is that this race is far from over. We always planned to have a campaign that was built by organizing over time, not by hoping for a viral moment. Governor Bullock has won elections by focusing on the voters, not artificial timelines and arbitrary rules. If voters getting back from their summer vacations knew who they'd be voting for the next February, then perhaps we would have seen Presidents Howard Dean, Rudy Giuliani, and Ben Carson.

I. It's Early

The truth is, campaigns are marathons, not sprints. That's why we are doing the hard work of building a strong ground operation, talking with voters where they are, putting forth innovative policy solutions, and expanding our support in Iowa and across the country. In just the last month we have doubled our fundraising from the month prior, announced new endorsements in Iowa, and grown our campaign team to compete over the long term.

While some pundits and operatives may prefer simpler narratives of who's up and who's down, voters don't always abide by the attention spans of beltway prognosticators. And smart campaigns don't, either.

We know that [early polling is often not predictive of eventual outcomes](#). In fact, in each of the last four presidential election cycles, the challenging party routinely experienced unexpected and late-breaking changes in polling leads.

2004

[Howard Dean was the favorite](#) for much of the fall. During that same time, [John Kerry was polling in the single digits](#), including at point lagging behind Al Sharpton (CBS, 12/17). Yet Kerry would go on to win Iowa and the nomination.

2008

In the fall of 2007, [Rudy Giuliani was the consistent national poll leader](#) and Mike Huckabee led by as much as 5 points in December and early January. John McCain didn't pull away until after the Iowa Caucuses (in which he placed 4th).

On the Democratic side in Iowa, the eventual Caucus-winner, Barack Obama, [averaged 3rd place](#) through the end of September and didn't start overtaking Hillary Clinton until December. In national polling averages, [Clinton led Obama until February](#) 2008.

2012

In September of 2011, Rick Perry was ahead by 7 points (CNN/ORC, 9/23-25). By December and January, New Gingrich pulled into the lead by as much as 13 points (PPP, 12/16-18) and 8 points (Gallup, 1/22-26). In February, there was another lead change with Santorum up by 12 points (Rasmussen, 2/14). [Romney, the eventual nominee, didn't break away until March.](#)

2016

We all know what happened in this one, but remember that in September and October 2015, [Donald Trump was trading the lead back and forth with Ben Carson](#), who led in several polls, including by 6 points (NBC/WSJ, 10/25-29).

The lesson from recent history is that winning campaigns are built over time and that the graveyard of political forecasting is littered with impatient predictions. Bill Clinton didn't enter the Presidential race until October 1991 and another rural state governor, Jimmy Carter, had [polling averages that languished in the low-single digits](#) for more than a year after jumping in.

The point is, yes, it's still early. But, more importantly, smart campaigns build an infrastructure to last. They stay focused on voters, not armchair pundits.

II. Our Plan for Victory

A Winning Choice

Again and again, we hear from Democratic primary voters that the most important quality in a candidate is their ability to beat Trump next November. At the same time, there is a growing fear that the candidates promising revolutions are out of step with general election voters while others fear Vice President Biden may be unable to take down Trump. As the field winnows and voters start paying closer attention, they'll see Bullock is a winning choice — a Democrat with progressive values and a focus on getting things done in the here and now.

Organizing Iowa

When we started this campaign we knew that a strong presence in Iowa would highlight Governor Bullock's strength as a progressive leader from a red state who connects with voters and gets things done. Today, we are doing just that. In just 15 weeks since launching the campaign, the Governor has made 10 trips to Iowa. The Iowa team includes 25 organizers who are in communities talking with voters every single day.

Governor Bullock is the only candidate with the endorsement of a statewide elected official, having earned the support of Attorney General Miller, the longest serving Attorney General in U.S. History. We [continue to earn endorsements from local legislators](#) and [activists](#).

In It To Win

Our momentum is strong, every event has larger audiences, and we continue to receive solid local press that brings forward the Governor's [thoughtful policy ideas](#) and show his [unique ability to get things done](#). Folks in Iowa take their job as the first in the nation seriously, and they are still evaluating and listening to candidates.

III. Steve Can Beat Trump (And Republicans Know It)

Top Republicans think Governor Steve Bullock could be the biggest threat to Trump's re-election. David Urban, a senior advisor to Trump's 2016 campaign, said Governor Bullock ["frightens" him the most of any candidate](#). Mike Murphy, the long time GOP strategist, said top Republicans see Governor Bullock ["beating Trump like a government mule"](#) and "just wiping him out" in a general election.

They know he can win back places that voted for Trump — because he already has.

In 2016, Governor Bullock was the only Democrat in the country to win a statewide re-elect in a state Trump won. Trump took Montana by 20, while Bullock won by 4. As the only candidate in the Democratic field to have won a Trump state, Governor Bullock knows how to win back the voters who will be crucial to winning back the White House. This unique strength has only been compounded by fears that, even with Trump's approval rating underwater nationally, his position in the all-important Electoral College count [may be stronger than it was in 2016](#).

While Governor Bullock has won places other Democrats have lost, he's done so not by compromising his values, but by listening to voters and meeting them where they are. As Sarah Vowell wrote in the [New York Times](#), "Like some leftist Dr. Dolittle, Mr. Bullock has a talent for knowing how to talk Republicans into doing Democratic things (including voting for him)." If we want to win this election — and win in the down-ticket races crucial to expanding the Democratic map — we must have a candidate at the top of the ticket who can actually talk to the voters we need to persuade.

Further, as the only Governor in the race, Governor Bullock is the only Democratic candidate for President with true executive experience. From managing agencies to balancing a budget, his leadership as Governor sets him apart — including as [America's most popular Democratic Governor](#). There's a reason why 2 of the last 3 Democratic Presidents have been Governors: they connect directly with voters and are relentless at getting things done.

IV. Your Support is Crucial

Look, the road ahead will not be without its challenges. The DNC inserted itself in this process in an unprecedented way. But Governor Bullock has always trusted voters (especially those in the early states) to make a careful and deliberate decision, and he's built his campaign on that principle.

As a Party, we need a candidate who can compete in the battleground states of Iowa, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. We need a leader who can win the Electoral College and at the same time lift up down-ballot candidates. We need a President who will unite the country, work with both sides of the aisle to get things done, and restore the promise and opportunity of America to all — ensuring everyone has a fair shot.

Governor Bullock has a plan to deliver these results and it starts with the support of people like you.

Paid for by Bullock for President