DNC 2020

DUMUNC XXXVI

Chair: Taseen Haque
Assistant Chair: Nic Justice

Welcome to DUMUNC XXXVI! My name is Taseen Haque and I will be serving as your chair for the DNC 2020. A little about myself: I grew up in Northern Virginia and went to Oakton High School. At Duke, I am a pre-med Public Policy Major, minoring in Biology and Chemistry in my senior year. Throughout my time at Duke, I have had experiences in healthcare, policy (both advocacy and on the Hill), and will be working in business for a couple years before going to medical school. Outside of the nerdy stuff, I am a huge basketball fan and player. I also love listening to and discovering music.

I began doing MUN in High School and was able to grow as a public speaker and working in high stress situations. I have continued doing MUN into college, through DIRA. I have taken on multiple roles, from a member and executive on our Traveling Away Team to chairing for both our High School and College conferences, MUN has truly been a highlight of my college experience.

I am especially excited about this committee because my freshman year at Duke we ran a DNC 2016 committee and it was one of the best committees I have ever participated in. We plan to make this committee fast-paced and as realistic as possible. The committee will begin in the Spring of 2019 and take us through the election in November 2020. Those who will succeed in this committee will show creative thinking, understanding of policy issues and approaches, an emphasis on collaboration, and the ability to lead. This will be a fun and challenging committee, and I can't wait to meet you all and get started. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions and best of luck!

Best,
Taseen Haque
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Topic 1: Our Nominee

    2016's roadmap seemed infallible: nominate an established candidate, mobilize the entire party infrastructure, and defeat the most unqualified Presidential nominee in modern political history. However, four years later, it is painfully clear that we misunderstood what the country wanted. Now, it's time to regroup and find the next leader of the Democratic Party. We must find someone who can bridge the divides of our party, but can also appeal to voters who switched to the Republican Party in 2016. Below are dossiers of the most likely Democrats to declare for the nomination, along with a few people that may be convinced to run. Do not treat this list as the definitive pool of candidates; you are welcome to propose any other potential candidates during committee. Keep in mind what your history is and who you feel most embodies your positions and would be the best choice for this country.

Vice President Joe Biden (D-DE)

- Positions Held:

    o US Senator (1973-2009)

    o Vice President (2009-17)

- *Appeal*: As Obama's VP, Biden cultivated a persona of someone cut from the same cloth as America's blue-collar and working-class people, an image that drew millions of voters to Trump in 2016. He's a familiar face in unfamiliar times, and sometimes that feeling of safety and assuredness is all voters need to draw them back to the Party

- *Drawbacks*: While we may remember Uncle Joe with fondness, we cannot forget that Biden's three decades in the Senate showed a record of a quite centrist Democrat with some red flags that will need to be addressed—whether it be his handling of Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearing in 1991 or his voting record on the bankruptcy bill of 2005. Also, age isn't helping (Biden will be 78 by November 2020).

Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ)

- Positions Held:

    o Mayor of Newark (2006-13)

    o US Senator (2013-Present)

- *Appeal*: Football Player at Stanford. Rhodes Scholar. Yale Law. Sounds presidential, right? Well, Sen. Booker would hope you think so. The former mayor of Newark turned Senator

for New Jersey, Booker has been an establishment favorite since his early days in the party. He has tried in the past to also bolster his progressive appeal by sponsoring measures such as Universal Health Care[1].

- *Drawbacks*: What's selling right now is authenticity, and seeming as if you have been running for President since you were still drinking juice boxes doesn't bode well. Furthermore, on his meteoric rise in the Party, Booker cozied up to some Democratic kryptonites—Big Pharma and the Kushners. If attacked on these, Booker might be spending as much time distancing himself from the establishment as he does ingratiating himself with the progressive wing

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

- Positions Held:

    o US Representative (2007-09)

    o US Senator (2009-Present)

- *Appeal*: Appointed to take the seat vacated by former Secretary Clinton in 2009, Sen. Gillibrand has worked to re-brand herself in the recent past as a tough-talking darling for the progressive wing of the party. She has spearheaded paid family leave legislation and was a key member in demanding the resignation of then Senator Al Franken for sexual misconduct. She has a history of winning elections in the most conservative part of NY state and is an invaluable fundraiser[2].

[1] https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/12/16293016/sanders-single-payer-health-care
[2] https://www.politico.com/blogs/scorecard/0109/The_Gillibrand_pick.html

- *Drawbacks*: One of the biggest red flags for Gillibrand will be her familiarity with the financial services sector. Like most NY senators do, Gillibrand has worked on behalf of Wall Street. For example, in the early 2010s, Gillibrand was vehemently opposed to increasing regulations on derivatives trading. If you need more proof, check out who were her largest campaign contributors, and you'll see the likes of Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan Chase, and Goldman Sachs[3].

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA)

- Positions Held:

  o District Attorney of San Francisco (2004-11)

  o Attorney General or California (2011-2017)

  o US Senator (2017-Present)

- *Appeal*: Rising-star freshman senator from California of mixed-ethnic background that is cast as a firebrand with a history of progressive victories and can get the job done. If it reminds you of a "Californian Obama", that's because, at least so far, it's a similar trajectory. Sen. Harris quickly made herself a liberal favorite during her hard-nose questioning of Attorney General Sessions and other Trump nominees back in 2017. Her proven ability to court former candidate Clinton's high-spending contributors wouldn't hurt in a tight national race.

- *Drawbacks*: Most of the political ammo to knock Harris' shooting star off trajectory comes from her

[3] https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/contributors?cid=N00027658&cycle=CAREER

time as Attorney General for California. For example, she declined to prosecute the bank OneWest—formerly run by now Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin—on charges of foreclosure violations.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

- Positions Held:

    o Country Attorney of Hennepin County (1999-2007)

    o US Senator (2007-Present)

- *Appeal*: One of the only potential candidates from the Midwest, Sen. Klobuchar has been gaining national attention as a sort of thinking man's Sarah Palin, while also being the senator to pass the most bills for multiple years[4]. A Yale and UChicago Law grad with a history in the private sector, Klobuchar is best known for her common-sense and practical approach to politics with a strong commitment to bipartisanship, which could be very appealing to voters in a time of political turmoil. At the same time, Klobuchar has been increasing her support of more "lefty" ideals. For example, Klobuchar has teamed up with Sen. Sanders at least twice: once to support drug re-importation laws and also in late 2017 on CNN to debate against two Republican Senators attempting to repeal Obamacare.

- *Drawbacks*: Her biggest pro is also her biggest weakness: centrism. Unlike many considering running for the 2020 nomination, Klobuchar did not cosponsor legislation for

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[4] https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/2016/11/which-senators-have-passed-the-most-laws

Universal Health Care. She also voted to confirm a handful Trump nominees, something that won't be easily shed. Additionally, she is lacking in her national profile compared to some candidates who have been in the limelight for years.

Governor Deval Patrick (D-MA)

- Positions Held:

    o US Asst. Attorney General, Civil Rights Division (1994-1997)

    o Governor of Massachusetts (2007-15)

- *Appeal*: In a time Democrats seem to be searching for a second coming of President Obama, at least Obama feels that Deval Patrick is ready to take up the mantle. Rising from the Chicago Housing Projects to the likes of Harvard and Harvard Law, Patrick's story is one that may resonate with Obama voters of the past. Ability as a deft public speaker, along with the tacit endorsement of Obama and his entire political machinery, might be enough to push him over the edge.

- *Drawbacks*: Patrick was last working for Bain Capital after his tenure as Governor, a corporate stain on the progressive's resume that will have to be answered for. Additionally, his lack of a national profile is a glaring shortcoming.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

- Positions Held:

- o Mayor of Burlington (1981-89)

- o US Representative (1991-2007)

- o US Senator (2007-Present)

- *Appeal*: We all know the story. If Bernie had won, then Trump would have never been President and all of this could have been avoided. Well, many Americans feel that way and for Sanders' part, he's doing his best to avoid a part two of the Trump Saga. Polled as America's most popular politician, Sanders' populism and liberal agenda swept the country before the 2016 elections and ignited the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. He is the leader on the Senate's "Medicare for All" bill, considered to be a Democratic litmus test like that of supporting abortion rights.

- *Drawbacks*: The same things that held him back from clinching the nomination in 2016 will be present again in 2020. A lack of enthusiasm from nonwhite voters, and an age of 79 on election day, will make Sanders' second shot at the White House just as, if not more, difficult.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

- Positions Held:

  - o Special Advisor for the Consumer Financial Protection

    Bureau (2010-11)

- o US Senator (2013-Present)

- *Appeal*: For a politician that is new to the political scene, the former Harvard professor Warren has amassed amazing popularity and clout in Washington in short order. Her work in setting up the CFPB and her anti-corporate agenda as the senior Senator from Massachusetts have made her extremely recognizable nationally and made her a fundraising powerhouse. She's found a niche between Sanders's populism and Clinton's centrism that seems to be working.

- *Drawbacks*: One drawback would be her age, as she would be 71 on Election Day. Additionally, she isn't necessarily a driven politician, only first running for elected office in 2012; it's not clear if she has the inner drive to want to be President.

Others to Consider:
- Governor Jerry Brown (D-CA)
- Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
- Governor Andrew Cuomo (D-NY)
- Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti (D-CA)
- Governor John Hickenlooper (D-CO)
- Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)
- Governor Terry McAullife (D-VA)
- Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
- Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT)
- Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH)

Topic 2: Our Platform and Electoral Strategy

Party Platform

The last time Democrats re-branded their platform, it was the summer of 2017 and came with tepid reviews. Democrats promised Americans a "Better Deal"[5], in what was a decidedly populist shift in Party agenda. The main planks of the new platform included first breaking up major corporate holdings through shifts in merger regulations, cracking down on runaway prescription pricing, and creating 10 million jobs through a combination of infrastructure spending and tax credits.

It's time now to think again about what ideas and ideals will guide the Democratic Party. Are the planks we laid out three years ago still relevant, or are there more pressing issues that Americans want us to address? Can we explain how our plans will create a better America? These are all things to consider leading up to deciding our new party platform. Proposals on all policy fields, ranging from healthcare, taxes, defense, education, and more, will be considered. Lean on your personal background and experiences when deciding which policies or issues you are most passionate about.

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[5] https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/7/24/16017570/democrats-better-deal-explained

Electoral Strategy

    While most strategy will be solidified in the weeks leading up to the election, it is important to think about what strategies were used in the 2016 election and why Clinton's campaign was not enough to win the election. Did we forget to reach out to Middle America? Were we not adamant enough in our stances? More will be clear as polling information comes in and political consultants provide us with more reports during the committee, but do try to consider an overlying strategy the DNC can take.