

Sanders campaign: Announces national staff hires

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WASHINGTON – Bernie 2020 today announced a slate of national staff supporting Sen. Sanders' campaign for president. The team brings a diverse and dynamic set of skills and experiences as political operatives, organizers and digital and communications strategists — and will help lead an innovative, grassroots campaign to win the Democratic primary, defeat Donald Trump and transform American politics.

Full details below:

Faiz Shakir, Campaign Manager

Faiz joins the campaign from the ACLU, where he served as the national political director, overseeing the organization's Washington Legislative Office and State Advocacy and Policy departments. Prior to joining the ACLU, Shakir worked as one of the most senior advisers to former Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid. Shakir also served as Senior Adviser and Director of Digital Media for House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and was a founding member and editor-in-chief of ThinkProgress.org.

Rene Spellman, Deputy Campaign Manager

René Spellman joins the campaign from Creative Artists Agency (CAA), where she harnessed the power and reach of the entertainment industry to create positive social change by connecting clients to philanthropic and advocacy opportunities. Previously, she served as Campaign Manager for Jim Barksdale for U.S. Senate and

a New York State Assembly race. An alumnae of Bernie 2016, she served as the campaign's National Director of Traveling Press and Media Logistics during the primary season before becoming National Director of Surrogates during the convention.

René began her career in politics as a Youth Vote Director on the 2008 Obama for America presidential campaign and went on to become a Senior Advisor in Florida during the 2012 re-election campaign. Between campaign cycles, René was Vice President of Youth Marketing and Entertainment at a global public relations agency, Vice President of Local Marketing at a music marketing and management consulting firm, and a political appointee during President Barack Obama's first term in the White House Council for Community Solutions, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Ari Rabin-Havt, Chief of Staff

Ari Rabin-Havt will serve as Chief of Staff, transitioning into the role from Sanders' Senate office where he held the title of Deputy Chief of Staff. Prior to working for Sanders, Ari hosted *The Agenda*, which aired nationally on SiriusXM, and served as Executive Vice President of Media Matters for America. Ari previously served as an advisor to Al Gore and former U.S. Sen. Harry Reid. He is the author of several books including *Lies Incorporated: The World of Post Truth Politics*.

Analilia Mejia, Political Director

Before joining Sanders' team as the National Political Director, Analilia Mejia led grassroots, labor and community building efforts in New Jersey and across the Midwest for various unions and grassroots organizations, including; SEIU, Unite Here, Workers United and UFCW. During her tenure at the Working Families Party, Analilia successfully led the effort to elect progressive candidates and pass progressive policies such as a \$15 Minimum Wage, guaranteed Earned Sick Days for workers and Automatic Voter Registration amongst other policies adopted in New Jersey. Her work has been recognized by various leaders, organizations and news outlets, and in 2015 she was honored by President Obama as a "Champion of Change." She is the daughter of Colombian and Dominican immigrants, a mother of two, and an activist through and through.

Sarah Badawi, Deputy Political Director

Prior to joining Sen. Sanders' campaign team last fall as a Senior Advisor, Sarah Badawi served as Legislative Affairs Director for the Progressive Change Campaign Committee where she specialized in turning popular opinion into legislative

momentum for progressive priorities. In 2016, she was recognized by Fusion Media as one of the 30 women under 30 changing the presidential election for her work transforming the conversation on higher education resulting in a majority of democratic lawmakers embracing the goal of making college debt-free for everyone. During her time with the PCCC, Sarah spearheaded legislative strategy while working closely with members of Congress, federal candidates, and senior political staff to elevate an increasingly progressive Democratic platform. Sarah earned her bachelors from the University of Florida and her JD from the George Washington Law School.

Claire Sandberg, National Organizing Director

Claire Sandberg joins Bernie 2020 as National Organizing Director. In 2016 she was the Bernie campaign's Distributed Organizing Director. The Bernie 2016 distributed program empowered volunteers to make over 85 million phone calls, send 10 million peer to peer text messages, and host over 80,000 individual events. In 2018 Claire served as Deputy Campaign Manager for Abdul El-Sayed in his gubernatorial run in Michigan, and worked for Ady Barkan's organization, Be A Hero.

Josh Orton, Policy Director

Most recently, Josh worked as senior advisor in Sen. Sanders' U.S. Senate office. Previously, Josh served as longtime senior advisor and policy director to Sen. Russ Feingold, and as senior legal advisor to NARAL Pro-Choice America, focused on judicial nominations including Kavanaugh and Gorsuch. Josh was also press secretary and progressive outreach director for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, serving when Democrats regained Senate control in 2006. He is originally from Madison, Wisconsin, and received his B.A. and J.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Dr. Heather Gautney, Senior Policy Advisor

Heather Gautney is senior policy advisor on Bernie 2020 and a professor of sociology at Fordham University. She was the Executive Director of Our Revolution, and prior to that served as a senior policy advisor on the U.S. Senate Budget Committee, where Sen. Sanders is the ranking member. Dr. Gautney was a senior researcher for Bernie 2016, and legislative fellow in Sanders' Senate office from 2012-2013. She has written and edited books, opinion essays, and academic articles on US politics, social movements, social inequality, and workforce issues, including an analysis of the Bernie Sanders 2016 campaign, entitled *Crashing the Party*.

Arianna Jones, Communications Director

Arianna is an alum of Bernie 2016 where she served as the deputy communications director. After 2016, Arianna worked as a senior vice president at Revolution Messaging, leading earned media strategy and public relations campaigns for progressive clients and campaigns. She most recently served as the senior communications advisor for Friends of Bernie Sanders. Prior to joining the campaign in '16, Arianna spent four years as a booking, segment and field producer for MSNBC's The Ed Show, elevating voices of the labor movement, progressive leadership, and the middle class through multi-platform storytelling.

Sarah Ford, Deputy Communications Director

Sarah is an alum of Bernie 2016 where she served as the national deputy press secretary. Since 2016, she worked at BerlinRosen Public Affairs, focusing on communications strategy and public relations for leading labor unions, and served as the communications director for Cynthia Nixon's bid for governor of New York. Prior to launch, she also worked as a communications advisor for Friends of Bernie Sanders.

Briahna Joy Gray, National Press Secretary

Briahna Gray is a former attorney, columnist and senior politics editor at The Intercept. Prior to joining The Intercept, Briahna practiced law at a boutique litigation firm in New York City and was a contributing editor to Current Affairs Magazine. She received a Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School in 2011, and a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard College in 2007.

David Sirota, Senior Communications Adviser & Speechwriter

David Sirota is a senior adviser and speechwriter for Senator Sanders' presidential campaign. Prior to that, he has been an award-winning investigative journalist at Newsweek/IBT and Capital & Main; a newspaper columnist at The Guardian; and a radio host in Denver. He has previously served as a media strategist for Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont during his Senate race and for Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer. In the early 2000s, Sirota also served as Sanders' U.S. House press secretary, as the spokesperson for Democrats on the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, and as the Director of Strategic Communications for the Center for American Progress.

Georgia Parke, Senior Social Media Strategist

Georgia Parke joins the campaign as Senior Social Media Strategist after serving in Bernie's Senate office since 2016. As Digital Director in the Senate office she managed Sanders' social media pages with a total 16 million followers, including his

Facebook page, which reached followers 3.9 billion times and garnered more than 700 million video views in 2018 alone. She graduated from Duke University with a degree in political science.

Tim Tagaris, Senior Advisor

Tim Tagaris served as the Digital Fundraising Director for Senator Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign. As the owner of Aisle 518 Strategies, Tagaris' team has helped drive record-setting small-dollar fundraising for organizations like Giffords: Courage to Fight Gun Violence, VoteVets and the campaigns of Senator Chris Murphy and Stacey Abrams' gubernatorial campaign in Georgia among others.

Robin Curran, Digital Fundraising Director

During the 2018 election cycle, she served as Email Director at the Democratic National Committee where she led the team to reach record-breaking online fundraising numbers. Before that, Robin worked with a variety of progressive campaigns and organizations, including Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign. She was one of three people dedicated to running the national email and online fundraising program, which brought in a total of \$218 million from more than 8 million donations.