



**OUR
REVOLUTION**
A FUTURE TO BELIEVE IN
BERNIE SANDERS



P

PROFILE BOOKS

First published in Great Britain in 2016 by
PROFILE BOOKS LTD
3 Holford Yard
Bevin Way
London
WC1X 9HD

www.profilebooks.com

First published in the United States of America in 2016 by
Thomas Dunne Books, an imprint of St Martin's Press
www.thomasdunnebooks.com

Copyright © Bernard Sanders, 2016

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 78125 853 8
eISBN 978 1 78283 358 1



This book is dedicated to my parents, Eli and Dorothy Sanders, and to my entire family—my wife, Jane, my brother, Larry, my children, Levi, Heather, Carina, and Dave, and their spouses, Raine, Marc, Blake, and Liza, and my grandchildren, Sunnee, Cole, Ryleigh, Grayson, Ella, Tess, and Dylan. Their love and support have always sustained me.

This book is also dedicated to the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who worked so hard, in so many ways, to make our campaign a success. You have made me optimistic about the future of our country. Don't give up. The struggle must continue.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
PART ONE: RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT	
1. How Do We Turn Out the Way We Do?	7
2. My Political Life in Vermont	25
3. Thinking About Running	48
4. How Do You Run a Presidential Campaign?	86
5. The Campaign Begins	115
6. On the Campaign Trail	129
PART TWO: AN AGENDA FOR A NEW AMERICA: HOW WE TRANSFORM OUR COUNTRY	
1. Defeating Oligarchy	185
2. The Decline of the American Middle Class	206
3. Ending a Rigged Economy	218
4. Health Care for All	318
5. Making Higher Education Affordable	339
6. Combating Climate Change	355
7. Real Criminal Justice Reform	375
8. Immigration Reform Now	390
9. Protecting Our Most Vulnerable	404
10. Corporate Media and the Threat to Our Democracy	420
Conclusion	445
Acknowledgments	449
List of Illustrations	451

**OUR
REVOLUTION**

INTRODUCTION

When we began our race for the presidency in April 2015, we were considered by the political establishment and the media to be a “fringe” campaign, something not to be taken seriously. After all, I was a senator from a small state with very little name recognition. Our campaign had no money, no political organization, and we were taking on the entire Democratic Party establishment. And, by the way, we were also running against the most powerful political operation in the country. The Clinton machine had won the presidency for Bill Clinton twice and almost won the Democratic presidential nomination for Hillary Clinton in 2008.

When our campaign finally came to a close in July 2016, it turned out that the pundits had got it wrong—big-time. We had made history and run one of the most consequential campaigns in the modern history of the country—a campaign that would, in a very profound way, change America.

We received more than 13 million votes in primaries and caucuses throughout the country. We won twenty-two states, more than a few by landslide proportions. We won 1,846 pledged delegates to the Democratic Convention, 46 percent of the total.

Importantly, in virtually every state, we won a strong majority of younger people—the future of America. We won large percentages of the vote from white, black, Latino, Asian-American, and Native American youth. We set the agenda for the America of tomorrow.

On April 25, 2016, *The Washington Post* reported on a poll conducted by the Harvard Institute of Politics. “The data, collected by researchers at

Harvard University, suggest that not only has Sanders's campaign made for an unexpectedly competitive Democratic primary, he has also changed the way millennials think about politics,' said polling director John Della Volpe. 'He's not moving a party to the left. He's moving a generation to the left,' Della Volpe said of the senator from Vermont. 'Whether or not he's winning or losing, it's really that he's impacting the way in which a generation—the largest generation in the history of America—thinks about politics.'”

At a time when political apathy is high, voter turnout is abysmally low, and millions of Americans are giving up on the political process, our campaign attracted the energetic support of hundreds of thousands of volunteers in every state in the country. We had the largest rallies of the campaign and, in total, more than 1.4 million people attended our public meetings.

As a result of our victories in a number of states, there are now at least five new chairs of state Democratic parties who were elected as part of the political revolution. Further, there are a number of progressive candidates, energized and supported by our campaign, running for office for everything from school board to the U.S. Congress—and many of them will win. New blood. New energy in the political process.

And we showed—in a way that can change politics in America forever—that you can run a competitive national grassroots campaign without begging millionaires and billionaires for campaign contributions. We, proudly, were the only campaign not to have a super PAC. In a manner unprecedented in American history, we received some 8 million individual campaign contributions. The average contribution was \$27. These donations came from 2.5 million Americans, the vast majority of whom were low- or moderate-income people.

During the campaign, we forced discussion on issues the establishment had swept under the rug for far too long. We brought attention to the grotesque level of income and wealth inequality in this country and the importance of breaking up the large banks that brought our economy to the brink of collapse. We exposed our horrendous trade policies, our broken criminal justice system, and our people's lack of access to affordable health care and higher education. We addressed the global crisis of climate change, the need for real comprehensive immigration reform, the importance of developing a foreign policy that values diplomacy over war, and so much more.

Importantly, the support that we won showed that our ideas were not

outside of the mainstream. We showed that millions of Americans want a bold, progressive agenda that takes on the billionaire class and creates a government that works for all of us and not just for big campaign donors.

The widespread and popular support we received for our agenda helped transform the Democratic Party and forced Secretary Clinton to move her position closer to ours in a number of areas. She began the campaign as a supporter of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Keystone Pipeline. She ended up being in opposition to both. As a result of negotiations between the two camps after the campaign ended, Secretary Clinton adopted bold positions on higher education and health care that moved her closer to what we had advocated.

Our campaign also had a huge impact on the writing of the most progressive platform, by far, in the history of the Democratic Party. Despite being in the minority, our supporters ended up shaping much of that platform. Here is some of what the Democratic Party of 2016 stands for:

- A \$15-an-hour federal minimum wage, the expansion of Social Security benefits, and the creation of millions of new jobs that will be needed to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.
- The breaking up of too-big-to-fail banks and the creation of a twenty-first-century Glass-Steagall Act.
- The closing of loopholes that allow multinational corporations to avoid federal taxes by stashing their cash in offshore tax havens.
- The combating of climate change by putting a price on carbon and transforming our energy system away from fossil fuels.
- Major criminal justice reform, including the abolition of the death penalty, the ending of private prisons, and the establishment of a path toward the legalization of marijuana.
- The passage of comprehensive immigration reform.
- The most expansive agenda ever for protecting Native American rights.

During the fifteen months of the campaign there was one central point that I made over and over again, and let me repeat it here: This campaign was never just about electing a president of the United States—as enormously important as that was. This campaign was about transforming America. It was about the understanding that real change never takes place from the

top on down. It always takes place from the bottom on up. It takes place when ordinary people, by the millions, are prepared to stand up and fight for justice.

That's what the history of the trade union movement is about. That's what the history of the women's movement is about. That's what the history of the civil rights movement is about. That's what the history of the gay rights movement is about. That's what the history of the environmental movement is about. That's what any serious movement for justice is about.

That's what the political revolution is about.

I ended this campaign far more optimistic about the future of our country than when I began. How could it be otherwise? In fields in California, I spoke to thousands of working people from every conceivable background who came together determined to transform our country. They were farmworkers, environmentalists, gay activists, and students. They know, and I know, that we are stronger when we stand together and do not allow demagogues to divide us up by race, gender, sexual orientation, or where we were born.

In Portland, Maine, on a cold day, my staff watched people wait outside on long lines for hours, determined to cast their votes at the caucus there. In Arizona, it took some people five hours to cast a vote—but they stayed and voted. All across this country, people are fighting back to create the vibrant democracy that we desperately need and to stop our drift toward oligarchy.

In New York City, I walked the picket line with striking workers at Verizon who were determined not to see the company cut benefits and out-source jobs. They stood up against outrageous corporate greed. They stood together as a proud union. And they won.

In Washington, D.C., I marched with low-wage workers who told the world that they cannot survive on the starvation minimum wage that currently exists. That we need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage. Their message and their fight is reverberating all across the country.

This book describes the history-making campaign that we ran. But more important, it looks to the future. It lays out a new path for America based on principles of economic, social, racial, and environmental justice. On behalf of our children and grandchildren, it is a path that must be followed and a fight that must be won.

The struggle continues.

PART ONE

Running for President

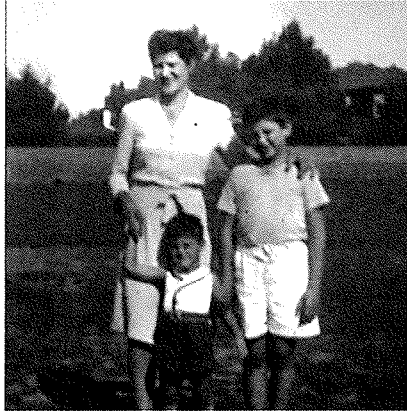
HOW DO WE TURN OUT THE WAY WE DO?

BROOKLYN

I grew up in a three-and-a-half-room rent-controlled apartment. My older brother, Larry, and I spent years sleeping on couches in the living room. During the 2016 New York State primary, in order to remind New Yorkers that I had grown up in Brooklyn, we held a rally on the street where I was raised, East Twenty-sixth Street. Fifty-six years after I left, I had a chance to visit the apartment where I spent my first eighteen years. Somehow, it had shrunk. God, it was small. The kitchen/dining room was tiny. It was hard to imagine our family of four having dinner there every night together. And the whole building looked dingier than I remembered. And so many apartments on one floor.

One of my first memories was being on the sidewalk outside of the apartment house where we lived on Kings Highway in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. There was a military parade. It was the end of World War II. I was four years old.

That war, Hitler, and the Holocaust surely played a major role in shaping the direction of my life. I remember the photos of my father's family in Poland—killed by the Nazis. I remember a telephone call in the middle of the night, which never happened in our apartment, telling my father the good news that a cousin of his was still alive and in a displaced persons camp. I remember crying whenever I saw photos in a book about the destruction of the Jews. I remember seeing people in the neighborhood with tattooed numbers on their arms—survivors of concentration camps.



Mom, Larry, and me. I'm the little guy.

I remember the excitement in the community at the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

No question about it. Being Jewish. The loss of family, including children my own age, in the Holocaust. The rise to power of a right-wing lunatic in a free election in Germany. A war that killed 50 million people, including more than one-third of all Jews on the planet. All of this had an indelible impact upon my life and thinking.

My brother, Larry, six years older than me, introduced me to politics and a whole lot else. He has played an enormously important role in my life, and I am forever grateful for his love, counsel, and overall wisdom. For the last fifty years he has lived in Oxford, England, where he raised his family and worked as a social worker. Ten years ago he was elected to the Oxfordshire County Council as a candidate of the Green Party, and he was reelected for a second term. He is now active in efforts to maintain a strong National Health Service system in the UK.

My mother taught Larry how to read when he was very young, and he has been a voracious reader for his entire life. Larry first read to me when I was four or five. We would stay in bed late on Saturday mornings going through stacks of comic books. When we were kids he was my mentor and, as older brothers occasionally are, my tormentor. He was very smart, always knew the answers that I didn't—and he let me know it.

Being an older brother is not easy. Occasionally, when you want to go out and spend time with your friends, you have to take care of your kid brother and drag him along. Not fun. On Saturdays, if my parents were away, Larry would also have to prepare lunch for me. I thought his cooking was great. His spaghetti with ketchup and his My-T-Fine chocolate pudding were outstanding.

My parents were not much into reading books, and there were few of them in the house. While we borrowed books from the local library, it was

Larry who first brought books into our home and onto a bookshelf. More important, it was Larry who helped me understand what some of those books were about. He was a good teacher, and opened my eyes to so much.

While my parents were not particularly political, they always voted Democratic, as did virtually the entire Jewish neighborhood in which we lived. Larry brought politics into the house when, as a student at Brooklyn College, he joined the Young Democrats and campaigned for Adlai Stevenson in 1956.

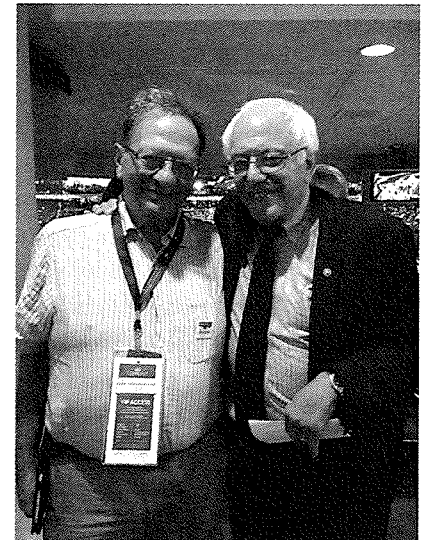
During my presidential campaign I was delighted that Larry and his wife, Janet, and son, Jacob, were able to join me at some of our events. I was even prouder when, as a delegate from Democrats Abroad at the Democratic Convention, he cast, with tears in his eyes, his one vote for my nomination.

Was my family "poor"? No. Did we (as the economists say) have much discretionary income? Absolutely not.

My dad was a paint salesman with the Keystone Paint and Varnish Company. He came to this country from Poland at the age of seventeen without a nickel in his



My older brother, Larry, and me.



Larry and me at the Democratic Convention.

pocket. He was always employed and made enough money to provide for his wife, Dorothy, and his two sons, but not much more than that.

Money (or more appropriately, lack of money) was always a point of contention in the house. There were arguments and more arguments between my parents. Painful arguments. Bitter arguments. Arguments that seared through a little boy's brain, never to be forgotten.

"Bernard. Go out and get some groceries. Here's what we need. Here's the list," my mother said. And, dutiful son of twelve, I went out and bought the groceries. But I went to the wrong store. I went to the small shop a few blocks away, rather than the Waldbaum's grocery store on Nostrand Avenue. I paid more than I should have. When I returned and my mother realized what I had done, the screaming was horrible. Money was hard to come by. Not to be wasted.

When I was thirteen, I wanted a leather jacket. It was the fashion. Everyone had one and I was tired of my brother's hand-me-down coat. "Okay," said Mom. "Let's get you a leather jacket." This became the shopping trip from hell. It's probably why sixty-two years later—ask my wife if I'm lying—I still hate shopping and why I want to escape if I am in a department store for more than a half hour.

On that day my mother took me to at least a dozen stores in search of the lowest price on a leather jacket. We started off at several stores at the Kings Highway shopping district. Then we got on the subway to the large department stores in downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan. There was no leather jacket in New York City that I didn't try on.

Well, you guessed it: We ended up buying the jacket from the first store we had visited on Kings Highway much earlier in the day. It's funny to think about that now. It wasn't funny then.

How much money your family had determined the quality of your baseball glove, which brand of sneakers you wore, and what kind of car your father drove. It also, of course, determined whether you lived in a rent-controlled apartment house (as most of my friends did) or a "private house." Not until I was much older did I learn that most people did not refer to the average house on a street as a "private house." But that distinction was very clear where I lived. Those of us who lived in apartment houses were working class and those who lived in "private houses" were middle class. It was one of the early class distinctions that I remember.

I spent much of my childhood playing out on the street or in school-

yards. The street was our world, and we never left home without a pink Spalding rubber ball. Unlike today, there was no adult supervision. None at all. We organized all the games by ourselves.

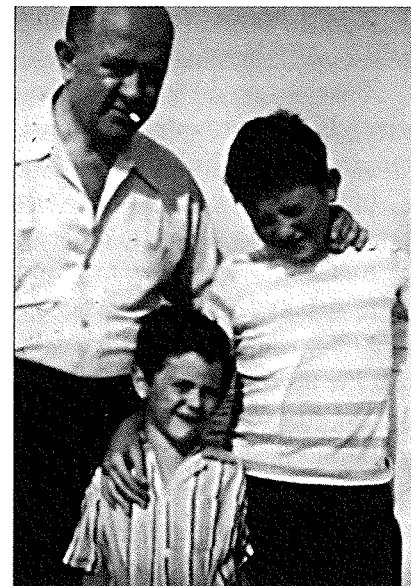
We played hour after hour after hour. On the street we played hide-and-seek, punchball, hockey, two-hand touch football, and stickball—with time-outs when cars passed by and strict rules as to what happened when the ball got stuck under a parked car. We pitched marbles into sewer grates. If your marble went down the hole in the middle, you got ten marbles back.

We played wall ball against the sides of the buildings. We played box ball on the sidewalk, curb ball against the curbs, and stoopball against the stoops. We played regular handball and Chinese handball. We flipped baseball cards. We raced. In the school yard of PS 197, where I went to elementary school a few blocks from where I lived, we played softball and basketball until we were so tired we could barely drag ourselves home. For nourishment, we chipped in to buy a large bottle of soda.

What I learned playing on the streets and playgrounds of Brooklyn was not just how to become a decent ballplayer and athlete. I learned a profound lesson about democracy and self-rule. From playing punchball and stickball? Yes.

There were no adults on the streets or playgrounds where we spent much of our lives. Nobody supervised us. Nobody coached us. Nobody refereed our games. We were on our own. Everything was organized and determined by the kids themselves. The group worked out our disagreements, made all the decisions, and learned to live with them.

"What game should we play? . . . Hey. That's a great idea, let's do it."



With my brother and father.

"Can I borrow your baseball glove? . . . Who brought the bat and ball? . . . Was he safe or was he out? . . . Was the ball foul or was it fair?"

There was no debate about who played on which side. Everyone knew who was the best, second-best, and third-best basketball player when we chose up teams. That's the way it was.

In three-man basketball, the team that lost went to the sidelines and a new team replaced them to challenge the winners. Those were the rules.

And it all worked out.

It was, as I think about it now, an amazingly democratic and self-sustaining community which taught me lessons about working with people that I've never forgotten.

The other thing I've never forgotten was the relationship that the kids on the block, and the entire community, had with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Sometimes, as I travel about, I am asked which baseball team I rooted for when I was growing up. Are you kidding? There was only one team. And they were family.

Gil Hodges at first, Jackie Robinson or Junior Gilliam at second, Pee Wee Reese (my favorite player) at shortstop, Billy Cox at third, Gene Hermanski in left field, the Duke in center, Carl Furillo in right, Roy Campanella behind the plate. On the mound we had Preacher Roe, Don Newcombe, Carl Erskine, Johnny Podres, Clem Labine, Joe Black, Sandy Koufax—among many others. Those names are indelibly planted on my mind. Sixty years have come and gone, and I remember those mythical figures like it was yesterday.

It would have been unthinkable for anyone on the block not to know the names of the players, their batting averages, and the win-loss record of the pitchers. We knew who they were playing on a given day, where they were playing, who was pitching, and how many games out of first place they might be. We also knew as much information about their personal lives as the baseball cards we flipped and traded provided. Most of our contact with the Dodgers came through the radio and TV play-by-play commentary of Red Barber and Vin Scully, who were as familiar to us as the players.

Ebbets Field, where the Dodgers played, was a half-hour subway ride away, and we would go to the ball games a few Saturdays or Sundays a season, sometimes for a doubleheader. Usually, we got the 60-cent bleacher

seats, sometimes the \$1.25 seats way up the first-base line. On occasion, we would wait outside the players' entrance to get autographs. I still remember seeing a tired Jackie Robinson walking out of the ballpark.

The Dodgers brought joy and despair to our world. What kid who grew up in Brooklyn does not still remember the end of the 1951 season, and the collapse of the Dodgers, who gave up a thirteen-game lead to the hated New York Giants. And then the playoffs. And Ralph Branca. And Bobby Thomson's home run, the shot heard 'round the world.

But better times came in 1955. Finally, finally, the Dodgers beat the Yankees and won the World Series. Johnny Podres the hero. Mass hysteria in Brooklyn.

You do not have to be a sociologist to understand the impact that the Dodgers had on the people of Brooklyn, race relations, and our sense of community. As kids we all knew, of course, that Jackie Robinson, Don Newcombe, and Roy Campanella were black. But what was far more important to us was that they were great ballplayers. We were not bleeding-heart liberals. We just wanted the Dodgers to win. Of course they were part of our family.

There was a saying that went around Brooklyn during the time that the Dodgers were about to leave for Los Angeles. It went like this: The three worst people in modern history were Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Walter O'Malley, but not necessarily in that order. The departure of the Dodgers, orchestrated by O'Malley, the team owner, was devastating to the borough and to the city. It left a gaping hole.

Frankly, as a nonpolitical teenager, I found it very difficult to understand how the Dodgers *could* be moved. This team was the *Brooklyn* Dodgers. You know—like the *Brooklyn* Bridge. Like *Brooklyn* College. Like the *borough* of Brooklyn. How could you take something away that was an essential part of the life of the people and that meant so much to them? O'Malley's devastating decision to rip the Dodgers out of Brooklyn in order to pursue greater profits on the West Coast was, I suspect, one of my first observations regarding the deficiencies of capitalism.

But my childhood experiences were not just on the streets of Brooklyn.

I will never forget one summer when I was thirteen years old and my parents sent me to the Ten Mile River Scout Camp in Narrowsburg, New York. It was an inexpensive way for kids to get out of the city during the

summer. My first summer at the camp was supposed to be four weeks. I came home after two. I was homesick. The next year I was supposed to be there two weeks. I stayed four. I had a great time. The last time I went I stayed for six weeks and cried when I had to come back to the city.

As a kid, I had been in the Cub Scouts, where my mom was a den mother, and later was part of Troop 356 in the Boy Scouts. Our troop went on occasional hikes and cookouts, but it was nothing like summer camp.

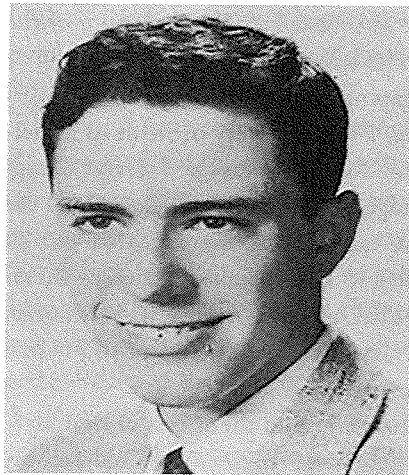
Boy Scout camp was an extraordinary experience for me. For the first time in my life I was exposed to the outdoors and a rural way of life: living in a lean-to without a front door, spending nights in a sleeping bag on a straw-filled "mattress," hiking, camping, observing beautiful starry nights for the first time in my life, learning about Indian lore, swimming in the lake, canoeing, having communal meals in a giant mess hall, singing folk songs.

One day, my bunkmate and I were sitting on our beds reading comic books. A rather large black snake slithered across the upper bunk bed on my friend's side of the cabin. The snake was heading down toward his shoulder. We ran like hell.

Quite the experience for a boy from Brooklyn.

Going to Boy Scout camp changed my life. It turned out that I really liked country living, and I never forgot that. I doubt very much that I would have ended up in Vermont, one of the most rural states in the country, if I hadn't gone to Scout camp.

High school for me, James Madison High School, was not as much fun as my days in elementary school. The school was much larger and, unlike PS 197, where I had known almost all the kids for my whole life, there were a lot of new faces. I was a good student in high school, but not a great one. The social studies interested me more than math and science.



My yearbook picture at James Madison High School.

I ran for senior class president. I remember pacing up and down the bedroom floor as I worked with my mother on the speech I was going to give in the school auditorium. My main campaign platform called for the high school to adopt a South Korean war orphan. I lost that election. The fellow who won, however, eventually took my idea: Our school "adopted" that child.

One of the first great disappointments in my young life was not making the James Madison High School basketball team, consistently one of the better teams in the city, under the legendary leadership of its longtime coach, Jamie Moskowitz.

How happy I was to have made the junior varsity team in my freshman year. I came home with a beautiful uniform, number 10. If truth be told, I even slept in that silky uniform. But then disaster struck. At a practice early in the season I was told by the coach that I was cut. No junior varsity team, no varsity team in the future, no beautiful uniform. A crushing experience.

I don't remember exactly why, but I then went out for the track and cross-country teams. As a kid, I always had good endurance and could run forever. Track and cross-country were not as sexy as basketball. No large crowds at the meets, not as much attention. But it turned out to be an



Running track in high school.

exciting and meaningful experience for me. I enjoyed it very much and was pretty good at it.

There were long subway rides from Brooklyn to Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx for the cross-country events. There were the many hundreds of runners at the starting line and, then, after the starter's gun went off, the mad dash into the woods for the two-and-a-half-mile run. There was the smell of the fall leaves on the ground through the deep breaths of a body pushing hard. There was the final kick down the long straightaway to the finish line, passing runners who were even more tired than me. Great experiences that I have never forgotten.

I was a good runner, not just in cross-country but in the mile and half-mile events. I ran the mile in 4:37, fast enough for third place in the New York City indoor mile championship. I also won a number of borough and local meets. Running track and cross-country turned out to be important to my life. Training hard, not quitting even when you were dead tired, gave me a discipline that has stayed with me for the rest of my life.

CHICAGO

It was around midnight at LaGuardia Airport. I was nineteen years of age and on my very first plane trip, taking the cheapest flight available to Chicago. I said goodbye to my dad. Scared and apprehensive, I was leaving home and heading to the University of Chicago.

My mother had died a few months before. I wanted out of Brooklyn and Brooklyn College, where I had attended my freshman year. I had a friend who was already at the university, so I applied and was accepted. The school apparently had some slots to fill in their sophomore class, even for a student who was below their quite high academic standards. The plane landed at three A.M. and I made my way from Midway Airport to the Hyde Park neighborhood on Chicago's South Side.

Attending the University of Chicago was an eye-opening experience for me. It changed my life and, for better or worse, helped shape me into the person I am today. But it was also a very difficult time.

My dad had dropped out of school at the age of sixteen in Poland. Having lived through the Depression, he worried a lot about money and making a living. He preferred that I not go to college, but get a steady job after high

school. My mother was a housewife who graduated high school in New York City, but never went further in her education. Most of our friends and neighbors were from a similar background.

At the University of Chicago, most of my fellow students were children of college graduates. Their parents were successful professionals or business-people. I felt very out of place, and a bit over my head. At times it was quite lonely.

While I struggled personally, the University of Chicago opened up opportunities for me that I had never experienced before. I enjoyed many of my teachers, but my intellectual interests were taking me outside of the classroom and into subject matters that were not necessarily part of the curriculum. In Harper Library, the university had one of the great libraries in the country. I spent a lot of time there—deep down in “the stacks.”

While I was often unprepared for class and exams, and earning rather unspectacular grades, I was reading up on all kinds of subjects. I studied history, sociology, psychology, economics, and politics. I read about aspects of American history and life that I had never been exposed to before. I learned that America was not always “the land of the free and the home of the brave” and that our country was not always on the right side of history. I also read many biographies.

I was blown away by the number of magazines and periodicals there were in the large and beautiful reading room on campus. Who knew that so many publications existed? And on every conceivable subject, and from all over the world! I would often come to the reading room intending to study for a classroom assignment but end up spending the evening absorbed in one magazine or another in the Periodical Room. It was there that I was first exposed to *The Nation*, *Monthly Review*, *The Progressive* magazine, and other progressive publications. My political views were developing.

I also began to read critically. When I was in high school, if you wanted to win an argument, it was enough to point out that “it said so in the newspaper.” Well, I was learning, to my amazement, that different publications had different points of view, and that what appeared in a newspaper was not necessarily true.

But I was not only reading. I was running. During my first year at the university, I went out for the cross-country and track teams and did pretty well. While the University of Chicago was by no means a big-time athletic school, its facilities were far superior to anything that I had ever seen. There

were beautiful indoor and outdoor tracks, and I was amazed that you could throw your sweaty track clothes into a hamper and they would be returned to you all cleaned and folded the next day. While on the track team, I ran the half-mile in under two minutes, my best performance ever.

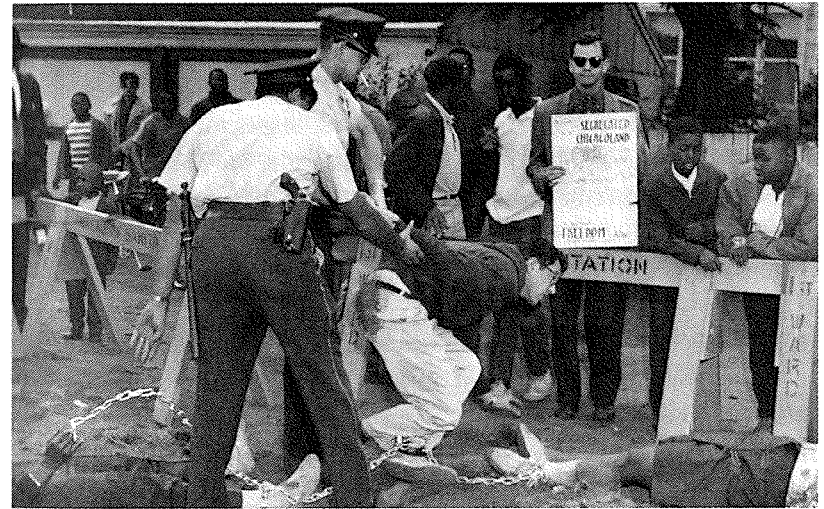
Ironically, while I took interesting classes and spent long hours buried in the library stacks on campus, much of my learning during my years in Chicago took place off campus—through organizations that I joined and activities in which I participated. While at the university, I became a member of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), the Student Peace Union (SPU), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Through these organizations, I learned to look at politics in a new way. It wasn't just that racism, war, poverty, and other social evils must be opposed. It was that there was a cause-and-effect dynamic and an interconnectedness between all aspects of society. Things didn't just happen by accident. There was a relationship between wealth, power, and the perpetuation of capitalism.

How did the general population get the information they needed to make political decisions? Well, the media was controlled by large corporations. How did politicians get elected? Well, big-money interests played a role in that as well. Who benefited from low wages and poor working conditions? Was racism just about irrational prejudice or was there an economic benefit in keeping the races divided? Who made the decision to go into a particular war, and who profited from that war? Was the good life really about earning more and more money so that we could consume more and more products?

During that period, I met some great people, including community activists who were involved in civil rights, labor, and peace issues. I even got involved in my first political campaign, working, successfully, for the reelection of alderman Leon Despres, an independent member of the Chicago City Council who was opposed by Mayor Daley's Democratic organization. In that campaign I got a glimpse of what a powerful political machine, one based on patronage, could do. At that time I also got a part-time job with a union headquartered in Chicago, the United Packinghouse Workers of America.

The early 1960s, when I was at the University of Chicago, were turbulent years for the civil rights movement. People my age in organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were being arrested and getting their heads broken in Mississippi, Alabama, and through-



The photograph of me that drew so much attention during the campaign.

out the South as they struggled for desegregation and voting rights. I joined the CORE chapter on campus, and eventually became vice president. A fellow student, Bruce Rappaport, was the president.

While providing a bit of financial support for the civil rights movement in the South, our chapter of CORE began to focus on racism in Chicago. The University of Chicago was and is located in a largely African-American community. It turned out that the university was a major landlord in the area, and it also turned out that the university owned segregated housing.

Our CORE chapter sent white couples and black couples into the university-owned housing, pretending to be looking for an apartment to rent. A black couple would find that there were just no apartments available. A few hours later, a white couple would find a choice of apartments in the same building. After unsuccessful negotiations with the university to desegregate their housing, our CORE chapter staged a sit-in demonstration in the administration building. It was one of the first student civil rights sit-ins in the North.

During that same period, working with a citywide organization, I got arrested during a demonstration to desegregate the Chicago public school system—a struggle that went on for years and later involved

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Chicago schools were bad in general; they were worse in the black neighborhoods. Instead of allowing black children in overcrowded schools to go to white ones, the school department established mobile classrooms to perpetuate the segregation. Hundreds of Chicagoans protested. During our demonstration, the police demarcated a line that couldn't be crossed. If you crossed that line, you would be arrested. Several of us crossed that line, and we were thrown into paddy wagons. I spent the night in jail. In the morning we were bailed out by the NAACP.

As part of my civil rights activities, I was also involved in a movement to protest police brutality. In that capacity, I made an unwelcome acquaintance with the Chicago Police Department when some local police followed me in their squad car and took down leaflets I had been posting announcing a public meeting on police violence. They referred to me, in language that became familiar during that period, as an "outside agitator." A few years later, during the Democratic Convention of 1968, the entire world saw the Chicago police in action during the infamous police riots. Their brutality didn't surprise me.

In August 1963, a number of my fellow University of Chicago students and I took a long bus ride to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For me, it was an unforgettable experience, led by one of the great leaders in the history of our country.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of enormous courage who followed the path that his conscience and intelligence dictated. Yes, he was an important civil rights leader who, against enormous obstacles, helped desegregate the South and pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But, incredibly, he was more than that. He understood that if real justice in this country was to be established, for people of every race, we had to create an economy that worked for all and not just the few. As he often reminded the country, desegregating a restaurant meant nothing if a black worker didn't have the money to pay for the meal being served.

Against very strong opposition from his financial backers and "liberal" supporters, King spoke out against the war in Vietnam. How could he be consistent in his belief in nonviolence if he didn't oppose that war and its horrific brutality? How could he continue his demand for a change in na-

tional priorities if he didn't speak out against a bloated military budget while the poor were going hungry and the sick were without health care?

King, taking on the entire establishment, plunged ahead into uncharted territory and media hostility. He demanded that the issues of poverty and income and wealth inequality be addressed. He refused to be just a great black civil rights leader. Instead, he became a great American leader who was black. Let us not forget: King was assassinated not in a "civil rights" demonstration, but in the fight for decent wages and working conditions for garbage collectors in Memphis, Tennessee. At the time of his death he was also organizing a Poor People's March on Washington for people of all races.

Standing on the National Mall on August 28, 1963, with hundreds of thousands of others, was a day that I will never forget. King's "I Have a Dream" speech still rings in my mind. His life's work continues to inspire me.

In June 1964, I married a classmate of mine at the University of Chicago, Deborah Shiling. My father had died the previous year and left my brother and me a bit of money. Deborah and I bought eighty-five acres of woodland in Middlesex, Vermont, for \$2,500. We worked hard to convert an old maple sugar house on the property to a livable cabin. There was no electricity or running water, but we did build a nice outhouse. We bathed in a cold stream in the middle of the woods. *Really* cold!

After our graduation from the University of Chicago, Deborah and I traveled to England, Greece, and Israel. In England, we visited Summerhill, the radical school started by A. S. Neill back in 1921. Summerhill was based on the very democratic and sane principle that the school should serve the needs of the children, not the other way around. To as great a degree as possible, children learned what they wanted and how they wanted, and had a democratic voice in how the school was run. Neill's belief, way ahead of its time, was that we must keep children's intellectual and emotional spirits alive, not crush them as so many schools did.

In Greece, we spent time in Athens, where we did the tourist thing and were thrilled by the Parthenon, other ancient monuments, and Greek food. Having read some of Nikos Kazantzakis's novels, we also took a trip to Crete, where, in the rural areas, we observed a way of life that seemed unchanged from a century before.

In Israel, we spent time working on several kibbutzim. It was a unique

experience and a very different type of culture than I was used to. I enjoyed picking grapefruits, netting fish on the “fish farm,” and doing other agricultural work. Mostly, however, it was the structure of the community that impressed me. People there were living their democratic values. The kibbutz was owned by the people who lived there, the “bosses” were elected by the workers, and the overall decisions for the community were made democratically. I recall being impressed by how young-looking and alive the older people there were. Democracy, it seemed, was good for one’s health.

VERMONT

In 1968, I moved to Vermont, more or less full-time. Deborah and I had divorced and I was then living with Susan Mott. We had met when we were both working at a Head Start program in New York City. On March 21, 1969, Levi Noah Sanders, our son, was born in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

One of the more interesting jobs that I had during that period was doing research at the State of Vermont Tax Department in the waning days of the administration of Governor Phil Hoff. This was my introduction to tax policy. Hoff had been the first Democratic governor elected in Vermont in a hundred years. He was also one of the most progressive elected officials in the country. Years later, I had the privilege of getting to know Phil and his wife, Joan, quite well.

During those years, I worked as a journalist for several Vermont papers. In the St. Albans area of northern Vermont I wrote for a weekly newspaper and learned a lot by simply going out, stopping people, and doing “man on the street” interviews. I found that the views of ordinary people, for better or worse, did not necessarily jibe with those of the establishment. I was surprised by the kind of support that George Wallace was generating.

During that period, I also became part of the construction crew for John Rogers of Barre, Vermont. John, whose family was part Native American and went back generations in Vermont, was an excellent carpenter and builder. He taught me a lot about building homes and farm silos. He also exposed me to the Vermont way of life, something I was just beginning to absorb.

Not only was John knowledgeable about construction matters, but he also knew every inch of central Vermont. Like most Vermonters, he loved

the outdoors. In the warm weather he and his family explored the area in cars, trucks, and on motorcycles. In the winter, they were out on snowmobiles. Years later, I had the opportunity of seeing the incredible winter beauty of Vermont by traveling through forests on a snowmobile.

John and I grew up in very different worlds. That resulted in great discussions in his truck as we traveled to work sites.

In 1969, Susan, Levi, and I lived in a small house we had bought in the town of Stannard, Vermont. Stannard, with a population of fewer than two hundred people, is located in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom, one of the poorest, most rugged and beautiful parts of the state. There are no stores, no schools, no post offices, no paved roads in Stannard—and in the winter the main dirt road going over the mountain to Lyndonville is closed because of snow and ice.

I learned a lot living in Stannard. I learned about the beauty of walking on quiet dirt roads, seeing deer in the fields, and finding paths that led to the remains of old farmhouses that had not been occupied for decades. I learned about the friendships established when you live in an isolated community—five miles from the nearest store or gas station. People need



Hanging out at the University of Vermont library in the seventies.

people, and that developed a different type of community than I had previously known.

I learned about surviving in cold weather and trying to keep our baby warm when the temperature was twenty below zero and the cold air leaked in through poorly insulated walls. I learned very quickly why people put plastic over their windows. Not pretty, but it keeps the cold air out. I learned about getting by when the pipes freeze and you have no running water, and how you have to haul large plastic water jugs so that you can stay clean, wash the dishes, and flush the toilet. I learned about starting a car after a cold, cold night when the tires were actually frozen to the ground.

One day, I was visiting a neighbor who was the town's road commissioner, the guy responsible for plowing the roads after it snowed. This was no minor position. If the roads were not open, people couldn't get to work, reach a doctor, go to school. My eyes nearly popped out of my head when I saw him put a car battery into the stove in his kitchen. Was he totally crazy? Not really. The pilot light in the oven kept the battery warm overnight, which enabled him to start up the town plow in the morning, no matter what the weather had been.

TWO

MY POLITICAL LIFE IN VERMONT

I think it's fair to say that my political life has taken a very different path from that of any other member of Congress. It's not just that I am the longest-serving Independent in its history. It's not just that my first visits to Washington, D.C., were all for civil rights and antiwar demonstrations. It's not just that I was never inside the Capitol until *after* I ran for Congress.

It's that I started way, way outside of establishment politics.

Jim Rader is my oldest friend. I have known him since my days at the University of Chicago, and we renewed our acquaintance after Chicago when we bumped into each other at a meeting in Vermont in the late sixties.

In late 1971, Jim mentioned to me that he was going to a meeting of the Liberty Union Party, a small third party in Vermont. Winston Prouty, Vermont's U.S. senator, had died in September and a special election was being held to elect his successor. Robert Stafford, Vermont's lone congressman at the time, was giving up his position in the House to run for Prouty's seat—which meant that there were two seats up for grabs. "Would you be interested in going to the meeting?" Jim asked. "The party will be discussing the issues to be covered in the campaign and will nominate its candidates." "Why not," I answered. A fateful decision.

The Liberty Union meeting was held in a room at Goddard College in central Vermont. By definition, the forty or fifty people there were opinionated. There was a lot of discussion. Not being shy, I added my two cents'

worth. I recall talking about economics, education, the war in Vietnam, and a few other subjects.

At a certain point in the meeting, nominations were in order. Who would be the Liberty Union candidates for the U.S. Senate and for the U.S. House? There were not a whole lot of takers. Doris Lake, one of the founders of the party with her husband, Peter Diamondstone, was nominated for the House. And I was nominated for the Senate. Yes, the Senate! Welcome to grassroots politics. Welcome to Vermont politics.

Needless to say, my campaign had no money, no organization, and very few in the party had the vaguest idea of how to run for office. But we did the best we could with what we had, and we learned as we went along. Among other issues, our campaign focused on economic justice, opposition to the war in Vietnam, and women's rights.

As I think back, I realize that my campaign was not only a great learning experience and a lot of fun, but it laid the foundation for everything I have done politically since. During that campaign I did as much research as I could into the major issues facing the country, something I very much enjoyed doing, and spoke my mind about them. I didn't worry about who I offended. I didn't worry about how I looked. (A few years ago, I was named by some publication as the worst-dressed member of the U.S. Senate. Trust me. Compared with how I looked then, I am Mr. GQ today.)

Vermont is a small state. But there were radio stations and newspapers prepared to do interviews in most of the larger towns, and we took advantage of every opportunity we could find to get the word out. I remember the first radio interview I did. It was on WVMT in Colchester, one of the largest stations in the state. The interviewer was Jack Barry, a well-known fixture of Vermont media. And I was nervous, very nervous.

The people who listened to that show may or may not have agreed with what I said, but what they probably remember was a constant thumping sound on their radios. I was so nervous that my knee kept shaking and banging up against the table. The sound engineer kept waving his arms for me to stop, but there it was. My first radio interview—*thump, thump, thump*.

As the campaign proceeded, I did better and became more focused. It was difficult at the beginning, but I became more and more comfortable standing on street corners handing out literature. I discovered that I liked talking to strangers about politics.

I also did reasonably well in the debates. I was running against Republican congressman Robert Stafford, the odds-on favorite to win. It may be hard to believe now, given the complexion of contemporary Vermont politics, but in 1971 no Democrat had ever been elected to the United States Senate. Randy Major, a state representative, was giving it a try.

During that campaign I got my first personal glimpse of the nature of the media's political coverage. Randy, a very strong underdog in that race, came up with an imaginative way to capture attention. It was winter in Vermont, and he said he would "ski around the state to meet the voters." And that ploy worked. Throughout the campaign the media was talking about the skiing candidate. Here I was, pontificating about the major issues facing humanity, and the TV cameras were focused on the blisters on Randy's feet.

Needless to say, neither Randy's skiing nor my pontificating made much difference. In January 1972, Bob Stafford won the special election by 31 points. Spending less than a thousand dollars, I came in third, with only 2 percent of the vote. The Republican candidate for the House, Richard Mallary, also won a landslide victory.

An aside here about the Vermont Republican Party of the 1970s. It was different, in almost every way, from the national Republican Party of today. Was Bob Stafford a fiscal conservative? Yes, he was. But he was also pro-choice, and was a strong advocate for the environment and education.

Remarkably, in the last years of his life, when he was living in retirement in Rutland, Vermont, this eighty-seven-year-old lifelong Republican and former military officer came out strongly for gay rights. There was a very bitter debate in Vermont in 2000 as to whether our state should be the first in the nation to pass "civil union" legislation. Stafford strongly supported it, which paved the way for other Republican support and made passage easier.

But Stafford was not alone as a moderate Vermont Republican. He was preceded by U.S. senator George Aiken, a liberal Republican who served in the Senate for thirty-four years. Stafford was later followed to the Senate by Republican Jim Jeffords, another moderate. Many people still remember that in 2001 it was Senator Jim Jeffords who left the Republican Party because of its growing right-wing tilt, became an Independent, and shifted control of the Senate to the Democrats.

Not content with the 2 percent of the vote that I received in the special

election, I ran for governor, again on the Liberty Union ticket, in the general election six months later in 1972. This time I received 1 percent of the vote. I was on the move, just in the wrong direction. During that campaign I became involved, for the first time in my life, in a presidential campaign. Dr. Benjamin Spock, the world-renowned pediatrician, was running for president on the People's Party ticket and was supported by the Liberty Union Party. I campaigned with Spock when he visited Vermont.

The year 1974 was the Liberty Union Party's high point. Michael Parenti, who was ousted from his teaching position at the University of Vermont because of his opposition to the war in Vietnam, ran an excellent campaign for Congress and received 7 percent of the vote. Martha Abbott and Art DeLoy, our candidates for governor and lieutenant governor, received 5 percent of the vote. Nancy Kaufman, a young attorney who was the Liberty Union candidate for attorney general, received 6 percent.

In 1974 I ran again for the U.S. Senate. This was a tough race. Senator George Aiken had retired, and it was widely expected that Republican congressman Richard Mallary would replace him. But a young liberal Democratic state's attorney named Patrick Leahy mounted a very strong campaign against him.

One of the never-ending dilemmas facing third-party candidates is that you are often considered a "spoiler." People like your views, they want to vote for you, but they fear that a candidate they really dislike might get elected if they "waste" their vote. That certainly affected the low total that I got. I ended up with 4 percent—less than I expected, but double what I had ever received before! In a major surprise, Leahy won the election. Leahy and I now serve together in the Senate and have been friends for years. Occasionally, we reminisce about the campaign of 1974.

In 1976, I ran for governor again. During that campaign I was invited to participate in a prime-time debate on the largest television station in the state. I did well in that debate, which helped me reach my all-time high, as a Liberty Union candidate, of 6 percent.

That turned out to be my last campaign with the Liberty Union Party. I was proud of what we had accomplished. I was proud that we were able to educate people in Vermont about some of the most important issues facing our state and country, and to give them a progressive perspective outside of the two-party system. I was proud of our often successful efforts in oppos-

ing utility rate increases and supporting striking workers. Further, since many of our candidates were women, we played a major role in breaking down sexism in statewide politics. We had done extremely well with the limited resources and people that we had. But it was time for me to move on. I was out of politics.

With politics behind me, I set out to make a living, and began building a reasonably successful small business. With the help of a few coworkers, I wrote, produced, and sold filmstrips for schools on the history of Vermont and other New England states. The market was too small for the big companies, so we more or less had the field to ourselves. The business was a lot of fun. In the process, I improved my writing skills and learned something about photography, marketing, and door-to-door salesmanship. I also met a lot of amazing educators.

In 1979, after discovering that most of the college students I spoke to had never heard of Eugene Victor Debs, I produced a thirty-minute video on his life and ideas. Debs was a great American, but his life and work remain largely unknown. He was a man of extraordinary courage and integrity whose tireless efforts on behalf of workers and the poor laid the groundwork for many of the programs established by FDR during the New Deal.

Debs was the founder of the American Socialist Party and a six-time candidate for president. In 1920 he received nearly a million votes running from a jail cell after being imprisoned for his opposition to World War I. The life of Eugene V. Debs, his vision of a world of peace, justice, democracy, and brotherhood, has always been an inspiration to me. I have a plaque of Debs on a wall in my Washington Senate office.

The Debs video was sold and rented to colleges throughout the country, and we also managed to get it shown on public television in Vermont. In addition, Folkways Records produced the sound track of the video on vinyl.

I very much enjoyed the small media business that I was running. I didn't make a lot of money, but I was able to make my own decisions, work my own hours, and learn a lot. I was looking forward to a future of making more videos on aspects of American history that were unfamiliar to the American people.

In 1980 my life as a small businessman came to an end. I was back in politics.

SOCIALISM IN ONE CITY

Richard Sugarman has been one of my closest friends for forty years. He is a professor of religion at the University of Vermont, a philosopher, an author of a number of important books and publications, an expert on baseball statistics, and a Hasidic Jew. He also follows politics closely.

In late fall 1980, Richard had a strange idea. "Run for mayor of Burlington as an Independent," he said. "You can win." He had analyzed the 1976 results of my gubernatorial run. Statewide I won 6 percent of the vote. In Burlington I won 12 percent, and in the working-class wards of the city I carried over 16 percent of the vote. Richard figured that if we focused all of our attention on Burlington we had a shot to win.

We brought a number of our political friends together, many of them former colleagues from the Liberty Union, and talked it out. It would be a tough race. We would be taking on a five-term Democratic incumbent who had not had serious opposition in years, as well as the entire economic and political establishment of the city. As usual, we had no money or organization. We were starting from scratch.

Once the decision to run had been made, the strategy became pretty clear. We would run a campaign based on coalition politics. We would try to bring together, under one umbrella, the many diverse elements of the city that were unhappy with the current city leadership. And there were a lot of them. Over the years, as is often the case in urban politics, the administration had drifted further and further away from the neighborhoods and the working families of the city, and closer and closer to the downtown business community and the moneyed interests.

We reached out to every possible group and organization that we could, and had good results. We brought into the campaign some of the municipal unions that were upset about paltry wage increases and poor labor-relations practices. We attracted tenants and their organizations that were getting very little help from the city as rents skyrocketed. We brought aboard low-income groups that were unhappy with how the city was running the public housing system. We got the support of neighborhood activists who opposed the construction of a highway that would run right through their community.

Environmentalists joined us in opposition to a disastrous high-rise condominium project on the waterfront of Lake Champlain, the city's most precious natural resource. They also joined me in opposition to a major ex-

pansion of the hospital that would encroach into a neighborhood. On top of all that, the mayor was proposing a big hike in the city's property tax, something that many homeowners were less than enthusiastic about.

Starting in the low-income and working-class neighborhoods, I knocked on as many doors as possible. And what an extraordinary experience that was. Over the years, during my statewide campaigns, and later, of course, during the presidential race, my campaigns have spent a great deal of money on TV and radio ads—many millions of dollars. I have never forgotten, however, that the most important political work that can be done is making door-to-door contact, speaking directly to your constituents and answering their questions. We need a lot more grassroots politics in America.

The big breakthrough for us came late in the campaign, when we won the endorsement of the Burlington Patrolman's Association. They backed us because I promised to listen to the concerns of cops on the beat and to open serious negotiations with their union. In supporting my candidacy, the police union and its leader, Joe Crepeau, showed enormous courage. If I lost, which most people expected, they would be even deeper in the doghouse with the incumbent mayor.

There was no question that the endorsement of the police union was extremely important. If a leftist populist, a former opponent of the war in Vietnam, could win the support of the conservative men in blue, we were on our way. Further, I did well in a much-publicized mayoral debate, sponsored by neighborhood organizations and organized by my soon-to-be co-workers Phil Fiermonte and Jane Driscoll (now Sanders).

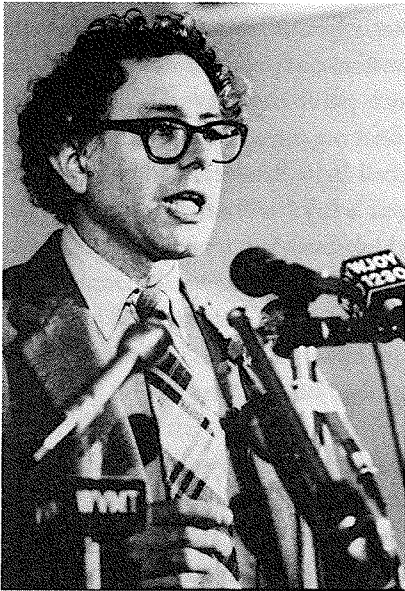
Election Day—March 3, 1981—was a day I will never forget. My political gut was telling me one of two things would happen. Most likely, as the media was predicting, we would once again go down in flames. After all, I had never received more than 6 percent in an election. Why would this campaign be any different? On the other hand, the response we were receiving all over the city was very positive. Maybe, just maybe, we could win a major victory.

The one thing I never anticipated is exactly what happened. The election results were extremely close. We won the working-class wards in the city by two to one. We lost in the wealthier neighborhoods. By the time the last ballot was counted, I had won by fourteen votes. So stunning was the upset that nine years later the state's largest newspaper would still be referring to it as "the story of the decade."

Two weeks after the election, and after we obtained a court order to move the ballots away from City Hall to the safekeeping of the state judiciary, the recount was completed. While my margin dropped from fourteen to ten votes, I was elected mayor of Burlington. I was now the only mayor in the country to have bucked the two-party system, the only socialist mayor in America.

I was inaugurated in April 1981, before a very large crowd at City Hall. Later a reporter asked for a copy of the speech I had given and I handed her my pages of scribbled notes on a yellow legal pad. I was pleased with the speech I had delivered, injecting local issues into the broader national and international context.

One of the immediate crises I faced was purchasing clothing suitable for a mayor. At the time, I didn't own a suit, just one or two corduroy sports jackets and a few ties. It wasn't my intention to become the best-dressed mayor in America, or even to wear a tie all that often. I thought, however, that a little sprucing up wouldn't hurt. Overnight my wardrobe doubled in size.



I am inaugurated as mayor of Burlington, April 1981.

The great challenge that we faced in 1981 was how we would implement our ambitious campaign promises and how we would transform city government. How would we democratize Burlington politics and open the government to all people, regardless of their income? How would we break our dependency on the regressive property tax yet raise the revenue we needed to implement our programs? How would we protect the environment and stop unnecessary road construction and at the same time create a people-oriented waterfront?

How would we bring municipal services to the long-ignored lower-income and working-class

neighborhoods? How would we bring women into a city government long dominated by an old boys' network? How would we reach out to the young people of the city, as well as to the seniors? How would we treat city employees fairly, not only through decent wages and working conditions, but by involving them more in the decision-making of their departments? How would we improve the arts in Burlington and make cultural activities available to all people regardless of their income?

Those were a few of the challenges we faced as we took office.

In order to bring new people and new ideas into city government, we created a number of Mayor's Councils: on youth, the arts, women, senior citizens, health care, and tax reform, among other areas of concern.

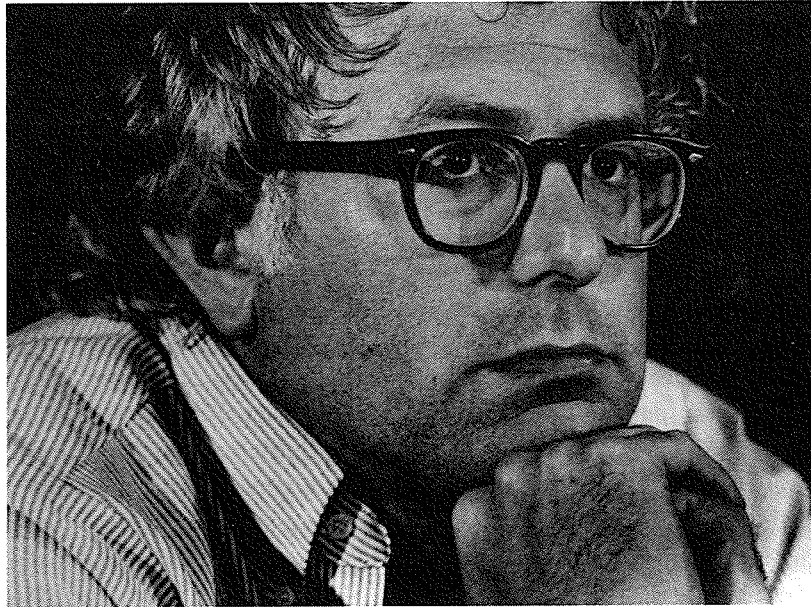
The early days of my administration were exhilarating, but very tense. In fact, there was a civil war taking place in Burlington city government. Conservative Democrats had controlled Burlington city government for decades, and with their Republican allies were going to do everything possible not to give up their power. The Board of Aldermen (as it was then called) consisted of eight Democrats, three Republicans, and two allies of mine.

At my first official meeting as mayor, the Board of Aldermen fired my secretary, the only person I had been able to hire. They claimed I hadn't hired her in the proper way. It was their way of reminding me who had the power.

Two months later, on the day that the mayor formally announced his choices for positions in the administration, the board rejected all of my appointees. The situation was absurd: I was expected to run the city government with the administrative leaders of the guy I had just defeated in a bitter election, as well as with a group of people who vigorously opposed me and my agenda.

The Democrats' strategy was not complicated: They would tie my hands, make it impossible for me to accomplish anything, then win back the mayor's office by claiming that I had been ineffective.

And what was our strategy in response? First, we were going to do everything that a mayor could possibly do without the support of the Board of Aldermen. Second, we were going to expose the local Democrats and Republicans for what they were—obstructionists and political hacks who had very few positive ideas. Last, and most important, we were going to build a third party in the city to defeat them in the next election.



Thinking hard at a Burlington City Council meeting.

Over the following months, we started a successful Little League program in a low-income neighborhood, a program that still exists today. We began what was to become a citywide tree-planting program that transformed block after block in Burlington and eventually won us national recognition for city beautification.

We began a very popular free summer-concert series that drew thousands of people to a beautiful waterfront park, where they listened to music and watched the sunset over Lake Champlain. We did all this and more, despite opposition from the Board of Aldermen, by scratching together a few bucks here and a few bucks there.

As the year progressed, it became clear that the only way we could fully implement our agenda for the city was by electing a majority of progressives to the Board of Aldermen—which meant the creation of a new political entity. In the beginning we called it the Independent Coalition. Later it was renamed the Progressive Coalition. Over several months, we put together a very impressive slate of candidates who were prepared to challenge Democrats and Republicans in every one of the city's six wards.

This coalition, formed in 1982, became the foundation for progressive third-party politics in Vermont. Not only has it continued in Burlington to this day, electing two progressive mayors after me, it has spread statewide. Today, three out of thirty members of the Vermont State Senate are Progressives, as are seven members of the Vermont House. The Vermont Progressive Party is one of the most successful and long-standing third parties in America.

Our municipal elections are in early March, and it gets very cold in Vermont in the winter. Frankly, it was not always fun knocking on doors in January and February when the temperature was below zero, but that's what we all did. I went out with our candidates as often as possible. The themes of the campaign were clear. First, our candidates were running on our progressive platform. Second, we were taking on Democrats and Republicans who were obstructing the mayor from doing his job.

Voter turnout for the aldermanic elections hit an all-time high in a city that now had an enormous amount of political energy. On Election Night, we won three out of the six wards that we were contesting, and we drove a Republican and a Democrat into runoff elections in two other wards. Not surprisingly, in the runoff election the Democrats and Republicans worked together and we failed to win in those wards.

Nevertheless, that campaign was an enormous success. Instead of having just two members on the Board of Aldermen, we now had five. This gave us veto power. We could block any Democratic-Republican initiative. They had no other choice but to work with us. There was a new balance of power in city government, and we could go forward. And forward we went.

I have to say our accomplishments over the years were significant. In fact, several books have been written about them. I was proud to have been named one of the best mayors in America by *U.S. News & World Report*, and many cities around the country emulated the programs we developed.

We became the first municipality in Vermont to develop progressive alternatives to the property tax. Every day, people flocked to the city in order to work, play, and enjoy our active nightlife; it was right that they contribute to the city services they enjoyed. We established the first municipal Meals and Rooms tax in the state. After a court battle, the utilities were forced to pay for the damage done when they tore up our streets for utility work. We needed new funding to build a strong infrastructure. Following a heated battle with the local cable TV company, and an effort on our part

to create a municipally owned system, we managed to get substantial revenue from the company and reduced rates for seniors and residents of low-income housing.

We addressed the inequities in the city's relationship to our large, tax-exempt institutions. We managed to get a substantial increase in payments in lieu of taxes from the University of Vermont and the Fletcher Allen Hospital for police and fire services. The hospital also began to play a more active role in the health care needs of people in our lower-income communities. We also developed a plan that brought in more revenue from our municipally owned airport in South Burlington.

It turned out that our expansion of cultural activities was extremely popular. We started a jazz festival, a blues festival, a reggae festival, and a country music festival. We also started a First Night celebration on December 31 that was attended by thousands of people, who enjoyed a wide variety of cultural activities in downtown Burlington. Most of these events continue today.

One of my favorite evenings was a poetry reading in Burlington City Hall where Allen Ginsberg, the brilliant poet of the Beat Generation, joined Burlington schoolkids in reading poetry. Noam Chomsky, perhaps the best-known progressive writer in America, spoke to a full house in City Hall. Studs Terkel, the great writer, visited us during a workers' rights celebration. I spoke on a panel, along with Abbie Hoffman and David Dellinger, two heroes of the '60s, in what turned out to be a very amusing evening. Ella Fitzgerald, the iconic singer, performed at a jazz festival. Burlington was becoming one of the most exciting small cities in the country.

In the midst of all of those new activities, we never forgot about the traditional responsibilities of city government. I kept my word to the city's police officers; expanded and improved the police department and raised pay. We upgraded the very expensive and lifesaving trucks and apparatus used by the fire department. We created a much more efficient public works department, and implemented a major street and sidewalk repaving program. We purchased an entirely new fleet of snow-removal vehicles, and created a more effective snow-removal plan—in Vermont, snow removal is serious business.

We instituted the largest environmental improvement program in the state's history: a \$52 million city-state-federal project to rebuild our sewer system, upgrade our wastewater plants, and stop the pollution of Lake

Champlain. We shut down the environmentally unsound landfill, and killed a proposed trash-burning plant that would have been both an environmental and fiscal catastrophe. We also passed a bond for our municipally owned electric department to start us on the path of energy efficiency.

After a whole lot of debate, we initiated an extensive waterfront beautification plan. The plan for expensive condos on the waterfront was replaced with a people-oriented waterfront consisting of public parks, a nine-mile bike path, and a community boathouse. Today, Burlington's is one of the most beautiful and well-utilized waterfronts in the country.

We also developed some of the most innovative affordable housing concepts in the country. Against opposition from some members of the local real estate industry, we became the first city in America to fund community land trust housing. Through the Burlington Community Land Trust, working-class people were able to purchase their own homes at a lower cost than was available on the commercial market. The housing remains affordable in perpetuity because the owners must agree not to resell the property at market rates, accepting only a reasonable and limited return on their investment.

This community land trust concept has not only spread all across our country, but it has been adopted in other nations as well. The United Nations acknowledged the Burlington Community Land Trust as one of the most creative approaches to affordable housing in the world.

With the help of my soon-to-be wife, Jane O'Meara Driscoll, who became head of our Youth Office, we paid a lot of attention to children and young people. After a major fight with a reluctant school department, we established after-school programs across the city. Kids needed a place to play and do homework after school, and working parents needed to know that their kids were safe. Today, thirty years later, the program is a vital part of the city's educational system.

We also established a teen center, known as 242 Main, which was, within limits, run by the young people themselves. In fact, some of them helped build and design it. No drugs, no smoking, no alcohol. Just the loudest music imaginable. Kids from throughout the city, and other towns, flocked to 242 Main because it allowed them to be themselves. Over the years, we heard from many people about how important that center was in their young lives.

My administration fought for a universal child-care program. The

opposition was too strong and we didn't succeed. We did, however, start the largest child-care center in the city. It's still in existence today.

Jane's work with the children and teenagers of Burlington was incredibly innovative and effective. From after-school programs, to a teen center, to a teen newspaper and TV show, to a youth theater program, to the creation of a Little League in a low-income neighborhood, to a child-care center, Jane helped transform the city's relationship to our young people.

And for us, it was the beginning of a working relationship that has now gone on for thirty-five years.

Our city government was not just about bricks and mortar, waterfront development and snow removal. We were also about baseball. In 1983, working with a citizens' committee, we managed to bring minor league baseball back to Burlington after a hiatus of thirty years. The AA team, affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds, was an enormous success both financially and on the field. The team won three straight Eastern League championships and was one of the great minor league teams of their time. At least half a dozen players on the Vermont Reds eventually became major leaguers.

How many cities of forty thousand, which is the population of Burlington, have a foreign policy? Well, we did. During my tenure as mayor we made the point that excessive spending on the military and unnecessary wars meant fewer resources to address the needs of ordinary people. Somewhere in the Reagan Library, or wherever these things are kept, there is a letter from the mayor of Burlington opposing the U.S. funding of contras in Nicaragua. The letter stated, "Stop the war against the people of Nicaragua. Use our tax dollars to feed the hungry and house the homeless. Stop killing the innocent people of Nicaragua."

As mayor of Burlington, I helped establish two sister-city programs. One was with the town of Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua. The other was with the city of Yaroslavl in what was then the Soviet Union. Both programs continue today.

In 1983 the *Burlington Free Press*, the city's daily newspaper and voice of the business community, urged the Democratic and Republican parties to join forces around one candidate in order to defeat my reelection bid. That didn't happen. I won reelection with 52 percent of the vote. The Democratic candidate, Judith Stephany, got 31 percent while the Republican, Jim Gilson, won 17 percent.

Interestingly, during my tenure as mayor voter turnout soared. In 1979,

before the progressive movement was active in Burlington, 7,000 people voted in the mayoral election. In 1981, when I was first elected, participation went up to 9,300. In 1983, when I was reelected mayor, 13,320 people voted—almost twice as many as in 1979. The citizens of Burlington had seen a local government working in their interests, and they came out in large numbers to support it. In the low-income and working-class wards, I won close to 70 percent of the vote in a three-way race. And our aldermanic candidates there won landslide victories as well.

In 1987 the Democrats and Republicans in the city took the advice that the *Burlington Free Press* had offered four years before. They combined their parties for the mayoral campaign and rallied around one candidate, a Democrat on the city council. Needless to say, taking on the combined parties wasn't easy, but we ended up winning that election, 54 percent to 46 percent.

In July 2016, *The New York Times* described Burlington as a city "with breakthrough technology now spawning a wave of technology pioneers." Burlington has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country and a strong public school system. It is extremely environmentally conscious. It has been aggressive in energy efficiency and now receives all of its energy from sustainable sources. In recent years, Burlington has welcomed immigrants from around the world, and has been a national leader in the struggle for LGBT rights. I am proud to live in Burlington, Vermont. (As you may have noticed.)

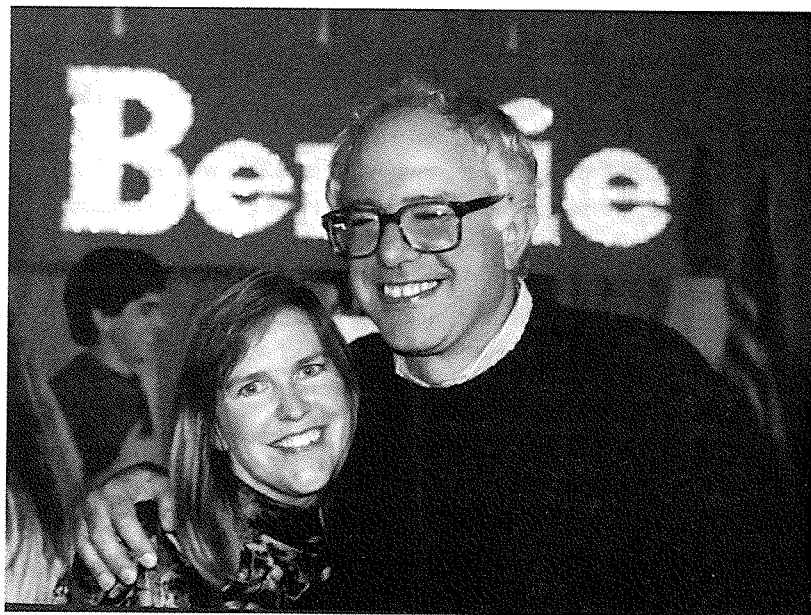
In 1986, during my third term as mayor, I ran for governor of Vermont and, in a three-way race, received 14 percent of the vote. This was a tough campaign. I was running against a liberal incumbent, Madeleine Kunin, the first woman governor in the history of the state of Vermont. That campaign differentiated what it meant to be a "liberal" as opposed to a "progressive." Kunin and I mostly agreed on social issues. Our differences were on economic ones—where I stood more strongly with the workers of Vermont.

Two years later, in 1988, I ran for Vermont's lone seat in the U.S. Congress. When that campaign began I was considered to be the "spoiler," someone who would take away votes from the Democrat and allow the Republican to win. It turned out differently. The Republican, Lieutenant Governor Peter Smith, did win, with 41 percent of the vote. But I came in second with 38 percent, while the Democrat was far behind at 19 percent. I felt very good about the campaign I had run. I focused on important issues

facing our country and had a much stronger presence in the southern part of the state, where I was not particularly well known, than had been the case in 1986.

GOING TO WASHINGTON

Two years later, in 1990, I became the first congressman in forty years to be elected to the United States Congress from outside the two-party system. I defeated Congressman Smith by 16 points. Two years before, Smith and I had run an issue-oriented, cordial campaign. This time was different. Smith apparently listened to some Washington consultants and ran a very negative campaign. There was one TV ad in which he compared me to Fidel Castro. It didn't work. The people of Vermont dislike negative ads, and his strategy backfired. The vote for the Democratic candidate was negligible. On Election Night there was a huge celebration in Burlington. We were on our way to Washington.



Election Night 1990. We win. We're on our way to Congress.

My first weeks in Congress were rather difficult and dramatic. The Democratic leadership didn't know what to do with the first Independent elected to the House in forty years. Despite earlier assurances that I would be welcomed into the House Democratic Caucus, that turned out not to be the case. Some conservative Democratic members balked, and I found myself in no-man's-land—neither in nor out of the caucus. Also, it was unclear what committee assignments I would have and where I would physically sit in the committees.

Finally, after several painful weeks, an agreement was worked out. I was accepted into the Democratic Caucus and got assigned to the House Banking Committee and the House Government Operations Committee, where I served under the very able leadership of Congressmen Henry B. Gonzalez and John Conyers.

On top of all the caucus nonsense I was experiencing during my first weeks in Congress, there was a more important reality. The United States was about to go to war. President George H. W. Bush was determined to



A young couple comes to the Congress in 1990.

send in our military to drive the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, which Saddam Hussein had invaded in August 1990. Almost all Republicans supported the war effort, as did a number of Democrats. I didn't. I had campaigned against going to war, and did everything I could to stop it.

I feared not only the immediate impact of the war, in terms of the death and destruction it would bring, but what it portended for the future. Would war, and more and more wars, be the norm in solving international conflicts in the future? The entire world was united against a small country with a weak army. Surely, I reasoned, there must be a way other than war to achieve our goals and get Iraq out of Kuwait. On January 15, 1991, in one of my first speeches in Congress, this is what I said on the floor of the House:

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I think we all agree in this body, and throughout this country, and throughout virtually the entire world, that Saddam Hussein is an evil person, and that what he has done in Kuwait is illegal, immoral, and brutal. It seems to me, however, that the challenge of our time is not simply to begin a war which will result in the deaths of tens of thousands of people—young Americans, innocent women and children in Iraq—but the real challenge of our time is to see how we can stop aggression, how we can stop evil in a new way, in a nonviolent way.

If ever there has been a time in the history of the world when the entire world is united against one small country, this is that time. It seems to me a terrible failing, and very ominous for the future, if we cannot resolve this crisis, if we cannot defeat Saddam Hussein in a nonviolent way. If we are not successful now, then I think all that this world has to look forward to in the future for our children is war, and more war, and more war.

In March 2003, buoyed by the “success” of the first Gulf War, President George W. Bush decided to invade Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein. Once again, as was the case in the first Gulf War, virtually all Republicans supported the war, as did a number of Democrats. The results: hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced from their homes, massive instability in the region, and the growth of a number of fanatical terrorist organizations that continue to threaten the lives and safety of the American people and our allies. In 2016 the fighting continues.

During my first year in Congress I managed, with a few other members, to form the House Progressive Caucus, which today is one of the largest caucuses in Congress. The Progressive Caucus, currently led by Congressmen Keith Ellison and Raul Grijalva, has been in the vanguard in the fight for economic and social justice since its inception.

Over the years, as a member of the House, I played an active role in fighting the deregulation of Wall Street and opposing corporate welfare and an unfair tax system. I was also on the picket lines against disastrous trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China. In my sixteen years in Congress I am proud to have compiled one of the strongest voting records there on behalf of workers' rights, seniors, women, children, the LGBT community, and the environment.

One of my longtime fights has been against the greed of the pharmaceutical industry, which charges our people, by far, the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. In 1999, I became the first member of Congress to take constituents over the Canadian border to purchase low-cost prescription drugs. With tears in their eyes, working-class women, struggling against breast cancer, were able to purchase the same brand-name medicine they were using in Vermont for one-tenth of the price in Montreal. After my trip, many other members of Congress did the same thing. Over the years, millions of Americans have purchased affordable prescription drugs in Canada.

In 2006, Republican senator Jim Jeffords retired. On the day he made his announcement, I issued a public statement that I intended to run for his seat. I was very grateful that, on that day, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid, whom I had never met, announced that he was supporting me. Senator Chuck Schumer of New York also endorsed me. Their endorsements helped tamp down possible Democratic opposition in Vermont.

During that campaign, a young senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, came to Vermont to campaign for me. We had hoped to fill the fifteen-hundred-seat chapel at the University of Vermont. Instead, about three thousand people showed up. Because of the resulting crunch, Obama and I had to go out onto the steps of the chapel and give impromptu speeches there before we returned inside.

My Republican opponent in the race for the Senate seat was the wealthiest person in the state, a businessman named Richie Tarrant. This was a

rather extraordinary campaign for Vermont. Not only was it extremely negative, with ad after ad portraying me as an enemy of humanity, but it was also very expensive. Tarrant spent more money per vote in 2006 than any Senate candidate had in American history up to that point. His money ended up not mattering very much. I defeated him with a vote of 65 to 32 percent. I was now on my way to the U.S. Senate.

THE U.S. SENATE

The U.S. Senate is a very, very different place from the House of Representatives, where I spent sixteen years as Vermont's lone congressman. There are 435 members of the House and most members serve, as I had, on just two large committees. During my years in the House I was a member of the House Banking Committee, later renamed the House Financial Services Committee. I also was a member of the Government Operations Committee, later renamed the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Both panels had more than fifty members.

The U.S. Senate has only one hundred members and, by definition, each member plays a larger policy role than a member of the House. When I was elected in 2006, the Democrats, by two votes, took control of the U.S. Senate. Senator Harry Reid, the new majority leader, was extremely kind to me and appointed me to most of the committees I wanted.

I had requested of Senator Ted Kennedy, the longtime leader of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, the opportunity to serve with him on that very important committee. I was very appreciative that he consented. My interest in environmental issues was long-standing, and I was fortunate to be appointed to the two major environmental committees, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Environment and Public Works. The Environment Committee was led by an old friend of mine from California, Barbara Boxer. As a strong advocate for veterans, I also was delighted to be appointed to the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as well as to the Budget Committee, which gave me an important say in the development of national priorities.

As a member of the Senate, I am proud to have passed some major legislation. Majority Leader Harry Reid, Congressman Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, and I succeeded in putting \$11 billion into community health

centers throughout the country, as part of the Affordable Care Act. This enabled some 6 million more Americans, regardless of their income, to access primary health care, dental care, low-cost prescription drugs, and mental health counseling. We also substantially increased funding for the National Health Service Corps, which brought thousands of doctors, dentists, and nurses into medically underserved areas throughout the country.

In Vermont, almost 25 percent of our people now receive their primary health care through community health centers, a higher percentage than in any other state. I've always believed that, within a broken and dysfunctional health care system, the lack of primary care for so many is one of our most serious problems. People should be able to get to a doctor or dentist when they need to. We have made some progress in that area. More needs to be done.

As part of the 2009 stimulus package, working with Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, we passed funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. This legislation, strongly supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, has been one of the government's major efforts to combat climate change. It provided billions of dollars for communities all across the country to move toward energy efficiency and sustainable energy. In Vermont, a number of schools throughout the state were able to use that money to place solar panels on their rooftops. This not only cut carbon emissions, but saved schools money on their electric bills.

As a staunch defender of Social Security, I helped lead the fight against Republicans, and some Democrats, who wanted to cut this program—which is life and death for so many seniors and people with disabilities. Working with seniors' organizations, I helped create the Defending Social Security Caucus. The other senators in the caucus and I took on the Bowles-Simpson Commission, billionaire Pete Peterson and his organization, and a whole lot of other groups that wanted to cut Social Security in one way or another. In the end, barely, we managed to prevail—and Social Security was not touched.

Times are changing. I am proud that much of the discussion with regard to Social Security now deals with how we can *expand* the program, not cut it. More and more members of Congress understand that seniors cannot live on \$11,000 or \$12,000 a year and that we need to lift the cap on taxable income and raise benefits.

In 2013, I became chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans'

Affairs. In that capacity, I worked closely with virtually all of the veterans' organizations in developing comprehensive legislation that significantly addressed the problems facing the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our country. I was tired of hearing about how much we all loved and respected veterans. It was time to *do* something.

The legislation I introduced was, according to the veterans' organizations, the most comprehensive piece of legislation offered for them in many decades. Sadly, despite the strong support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and other organizations, my legislation only received fifty-six votes on the floor of the Senate—all of the Democrats, but only two Republicans. We needed sixty votes. It turned out that Republicans loved veterans very much, except when it came to funding their needs.

If I was to be successful in winning important veterans' legislation, I would have to go back to the drawing board and bring additional Republicans on board. My unlikely ally in that effort was Senator John McCain of Arizona. John and I and our staffs spent hours yelling at each other over the provisions in the bill, but finally reached a \$15 billion compromise that significantly improved veterans' health care. It also provided some new benefits for veterans. The bill carried in the Senate with an almost unanimous vote and became law when President Obama signed it in a ceremony with hundreds of veterans in attendance.

I've always had a good relationship with President Obama. He is incredibly smart and I admire him greatly for his focus, discipline, and determination. But we have had our strong disagreements. Obama has continued U.S. support for unfettered free trade agreements—including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). I think those trade policies have been a disaster for American workers and have opposed all of them.

On December 10, 2010, I took the floor of the Senate in opposition to another one of Obama's policies—the extension of some of Bush's tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. I began that speech at 10:30 A.M.; it ended eight and a half hours later. It was the longest filibuster on the Senate floor in many years. I did the filibuster to call attention to and oppose a very bad tax agreement between President Obama and the Republican leadership. At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, and a huge national debt, it was absurd that hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks would continue going to millionaires and billionaires.

This speech received a great deal of attention—especially online. The Senate Web site crashed because of the huge number of people trying to watch it. C-SPAN 2 also had an exceptional viewing audience. According to *The New York Times*, my speech was the most tweeted event in the world that day. There were front-page stories in newspapers around the country, and the speech was covered widely in the international media.

In one day, the number of people who signed up as “friends” on my Facebook page doubled the previous total. Visits to my Web site went sky-high. Some journalists even claimed that Obama held an unscheduled, impromptu press conference that day with former president Bill Clinton, who defended the tax deal, in order to divert media attention from what I was doing on the Senate floor.

A few months later, Nation Books published the entire speech as a book. My ideas were beginning to generate more interest.

THREE

THINKING ABOUT RUNNING

The writer Jonathan Tasini did an interview with me for *Playboy* magazine that was published in October 2013. He is a good writer, and the interview went well. At the end of our discussion Jonathan said, “Many of your hard-core supporters are urging you to run for president in 2016. Are you considering it?” And then he followed up by asking, “Are you absolutely ruling out running for president, a hundred percent?”

My response was “Absolutely? A hundred percent? Cross my heart? Is there a stack of Bibles somewhere? Look, maybe it’s only ninety-nine percent. I care a lot about working families. I care a lot about the collapse of the American middle class. I care a lot about the enormous wealth and income disparity in our country. I care a lot that poverty in America is near an all-time high but hardly anyone talks about it. I realize running for president would be a way to shine a spotlight on these issues that are too often in the shadows today. But I am at least ninety-nine percent sure I won’t.”

How did I go from being 99 percent sure that I would not run for president in October 2013 to standing before a crowd of five thousand on May 26, 2015, in Burlington, Vermont, declaring my candidacy? There were four basic reasons.

First. Did it make sense that Hillary Clinton, the centrist candidate of the Democratic establishment, be anointed as the Democratic nominee and be allowed to run without opposition? Was that good for democracy?

Was that good for the Democratic Party? Was it good for the progressive movement?

At that time, very early in the campaign season, it was also assumed that Jeb Bush, the son of President George H. W. Bush and the brother of President George W. Bush, would be the likely Republican candidate for president. What was going on in our country? Was there really going to be an election between the son and brother of former presidents and the wife of a former president? Talk about oligarchy! Talk about political dynasties!

That was not what I wanted to see. That was not what most Americans wanted to see.

Hillary Rodham Clinton and I were not best friends, but I had known her for twenty-five years, liked her, and respected her. I first met her in 1993 when she became First Lady and I was a member of Congress. I got to know her better when we served together in the Senate from 2006 to 2008.

During the Clinton administration I was impressed by her willingness to break the mold of what a First Lady was supposed to do. She became the administration’s leader on health care reform, one of the major and most controversial issues of the day. In that role she took a lot of abuse, much of it unjustified. Above and beyond the normal criticism that goes with differences of opinion in any policy debate, it was clear that many of the Republican attacks against her were sexist. She was a woman; she was the First Lady. Why was she leading the effort to transform our nation’s entire health care system? Weren’t there other more ladylike things for her to do?

Throughout my entire political life, I have been an advocate for a Medicare for All, single-payer program. That approach is simpler, more comprehensive, and far more cost-effective than the reforms advocated by mainstream politicians, including Hillary Clinton. My view is, and has always been, that health care is a *right* of all people, and that the United States should join the rest of the industrialized world in guaranteeing that right.

The approach taken by the Clinton administration, led by Hillary Clinton, was very different. Their plan called for combining the private health care system with a significantly increased government presence. The result was something that was *enormously* complicated, which was one of the reasons that led to its downfall.

While there may not have been many Americans or members of Congress who fully understood the health care system that the Clinton

administration was advocating, one thing was very sure: Hillary Clinton did. She was not some kind of figurehead in leading the administration's health care effort. For better or worse, she helped design the plan, and knew it inside out. She was deeply in the weeds in a plan that was overgrown with weeds.

In December 1993, Hillary gave a speech on health care reform to the Dartmouth Medical School in Hanover, New Hampshire. I was invited to attend the speech and, given that Hanover is across the river from Vermont, was able to hitch a ride with the First Lady on the Air Force Two plane that took her there. On the plane trip, she and I had a pleasant discussion about health care and other issues.

What impressed me most about Clinton's speech at Dartmouth was not *what* she said; I disagreed with a lot that was in the Clinton health care reform package. It was *how* she said it. For over an hour, *without notes*, she went through detail after detail of that enormously complicated plan. She knew that plan backward and forward. She also answered questions flawlessly. Twenty-five years later, I still marvel at that performance.

Further, ask Barack Obama about her abilities as a debater. In 2008, she and Obama went up against each other in some twenty-five debates. I think the president would be the first to admit that she won most of them. No one should doubt Hillary Clinton's intelligence.

While I respected her, and liked her as a person, we had very strong differences of opinion not only with regard to policy, but in our basic political approaches.

Hillary Clinton was a key player in the centrist Democratic establishment, which had, over the years, been forged by her husband, Bill Clinton. In fact, Bill Clinton had been the head of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a conservative Democratic organization funded by big-money interests, which was described by Jesse Jackson as "Democrats for the Leisure Class."

The Clinton approach was to try to merge the interests of Wall Street and corporate America with the needs of the American middle class—an impossible task. While the Clinton administration can boast of some positive accomplishments, and I supported Bill Clinton in his two campaigns, there were some major policy failures during his presidency directly related to his alliances with big-money interests. These failures caused a lot of pain for many Americans.

These were policies that Hillary Clinton supported.

The Clinton administration worked closely with Wall Street and Republicans to repeal the Glass-Steagall Act and deregulate the major financial institutions in the country. This initiative, pushed by Clinton's secretary of the treasury, Robert Rubin, a top Wall Street executive, unleashed the greed of the major financial institutions and their contempt for the law. It allowed large commercial banks to merge with investment banks and insurance companies. In my view, and in the view of many financial experts, that decision led to the 2008 Wall Street crash and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of 1929. A Democratic president should not be in bed with Wall Street.

It was not only Wall Street deregulation that the Clinton administration pushed. They also worked with corporate America, and against the trade union movement and a majority of Democrats, in pushing through NAFTA, a disastrous trade agreement that not only cost us hundreds of thousands of jobs but laid the groundwork for future free trade deals that were equally disastrous.

On social issues Clinton, in 1996, signed the homophobic Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Hillary Clinton defended that decision for years and was very late in getting on board with marriage equality. The Clinton administration, with Hillary's support, also pushed "welfare reform" and mass incarceration policies.

My disagreements with the Clintons' centrist approach were based not only on policy, as important as that was, but on politics—how you bring about real change in the country. What kind of party should the Democratic Party be? The Clintons, over the years, received huge amounts of money in campaign contributions and speaking fees from powerful financial interests and corporate America. Whether it was on the campaign trail or in their private lives, they spent an enormous amount of time raising money from the wealthy and the powerful. In fact, in some circles they became known as Clinton, Inc.

To me, a very basic political principle is that you cannot take on the establishment when you take their money. It is simply not credible to believe that candidates who receive significant amounts of financial support from some of the most powerful special interests in the world would make decisions that would negatively impact the bottom lines of these donors. The only way to bring about real change is to mobilize millions of people

at the grassroots level *against* the establishment, *against* the big-money interests.

I also worried about Hillary Clinton's approach to foreign policy. As a senator, she had supported President Bush and voted for the war in Iraq, one of the worst foreign policy blunders in the history of the United States. As secretary of state, she had supported a number of initiatives, including policies in Libya and Syria, which were too hawkish from my point of view. While very few debate the right of Israel to exist in peace and security, I thought she did not pay enough attention to the suffering of the Palestinian people.

For me, the bottom line was that this country was facing enormous crises: the continued decline of the middle class, a grotesque level of income and wealth inequality, high rates of real unemployment, a disastrous trade policy, an inadequate educational system, and a collapsing infrastructure. On top of all that, we needed bold action to combat climate change and make certain that this planet was healthy and habitable for our children and grandchildren.

Politically, we were facing a corrupt campaign finance system where billionaires were able to buy elections, more and more people were becoming demoralized, and low-income and young people were not voting.

Did I believe that the same old same old establishment politics and establishment economics, as represented by Hillary Clinton, could effectively address these crises? No. I didn't.

A presidential campaign is a unique opportunity to raise issues and force debate on perspectives that are often ignored by the establishment and the media. Should that once-in-four-years opportunity be ignored? Should Hillary Clinton be allowed to get the Democratic nomination without having to defend her views against a progressive perspective? The answer was *no*. There were too many issues out there that *had* to see the light of day, and it would be wrong to squander the opportunity that is available in a presidential campaign.

Second. If I didn't run, who else would? Elizabeth Warren, the U.S. senator from Massachusetts, is a good friend of mine and an outstanding member of Congress. Years before she became a senator, when she taught at Harvard Law School, she joined me for town meetings in Vermont, where she did a remarkable job in conveying complicated economic con-

cepts in a language that everyone could understand. She is a strong and progressive leader in the Senate, opposing Wall Street malfeasance and tackling many other formidable issues.

There was a lot of discussion within liberal circles and in the media regarding the possibility of Elizabeth running for president. In fact, there was even a well-funded and well-publicized effort to draft Senator Warren that included paid organizers in various states around the country. A widely circulated letter from the "Ready for Warren" campaign captured what many Americans were feeling about the need for opposition to Hillary Clinton.

"We Are Ready for Warren"

We are Americans of all stripes calling for a leader who's fighting on our side for a change.

We are progressives ready to support someone who isn't afraid to take on powerful interests like the Wall Street banks that crashed our economy.

We are students in New Hampshire worried about how we'll make it after racking up thousands of dollars in debt to get an education. Moms in Iowa struggling to raise families while costs go up each day but pay-checks don't keep pace.

We aren't wealthy or well-connected. We don't have any lobbyists. What we are is a movement of individuals working together who believe that folks like us should have a greater say in the direction of our country.

It was clear that millions of Americans wanted to see a serious primary campaign in which a progressive vision would be matched against Secretary Clinton's more moderate views. Liberal organizations like Democracy for America (DFA) and MoveOn.org were mobilizing grassroots support for a candidate they could back in the nomination process.

In her public utterances Senator Warren and her staff were clear and consistent in stating that she would not run. In the private conversations that we had, she also gave no indication that she intended to run for president.

What other possible candidates were out there who could credibly run a progressive campaign against Clinton? Martin O'Malley, the former governor of Maryland and mayor of Baltimore, was making it clear that he was

interested in running. While he was an intelligent and effective governor, it didn't seem likely that he could capture much progressive support. Nor could my friend and the former U.S. senator from Virginia, Jim Webb. Former Rhode Island governor and senator Lincoln Chafee also indicated an interest in running.

Was there a better potential progressive candidate out there than me? Probably not. I was a U.S. senator, a former congressman, and a former mayor. I had won my last election with 71 percent of the vote. I had real policy achievements and years of political experience. I had met with foreign government leaders throughout the world. While I was far from a household name nationally, I was known by millions of people. My Senate Facebook was one of the most popular in Congress, with more than a million "friends," and I had given more than a few speeches around the country.

But to put things in perspective, the American people were not exactly clamoring for a Sanders candidacy, even among the most progressive circles in the country. As the *Rutland Herald* reported in April 2014, "In an online survey of more than 100,000 MoveOn.org members taken earlier this year, Sanders was the third most popular choice among named candidates, with 6 percent, following Clinton with 32 percent, and Warren, with 15 percent." And that was among progressives!

Third. I did not have to make a definitive decision right away. There was plenty of time to "test the waters" and determine if there really was the kind of interest and support necessary to run a serious campaign. What did I have to lose by letting people know that I was "thinking" about running? Jane, and those politically close to me, reasoned that, at worst, "floating a balloon" would give me the opportunity to get some public attention on issues I felt strongly about: income and wealth inequality, the declining middle class, climate change, a corrupt campaign finance system, etc. The national media is much more interested in what a possible presidential candidate has to say than it is in the words of a plain old senator. If we found that our efforts were generating excitement, support, and commitment, we could go forward and begin the campaign. If not, we could pull the plug and not run. What was wrong with that?

At a speech I gave in New Hampshire in October 2014, someone in the audience said, "Senator, I am a lifelong Democrat—an avid Democrat—but I think that the current environment is so bad that our Democrats who

are running for president will not talk about these issues. They've bought into the system enough that they are part of the system. If you don't run for president, we won't be discussing these on a national level the way we should be doing it. Will you do that for us?"

Seven Days, a Vermont publication, reported:

To that, the previously quiet audience burst into applause and someone standing in the back of the hall let out a loud whoop. "I've been going around the country and talking to a lot of working-class audiences, and people are angry," an unsmiling Sanders responded. "People know that the deck is stacked against them. People want real change. They want these issues not only discussed—they want policies to represent them and not just the 1 percent. So for that reason, in fact, I am giving thought—I'm giving thought," he continued. "I haven't made that decision yet. But if I do it, I want to do it well. Not just for me, but for you."

Fourth. I had talked for years about the need to take my politics outside of Vermont and outside of Capitol Hill. Over and over again I had expressed the view that Vermont was not some kind of isolated fortress for progressive ideas and that, if properly presented, there was a nationwide audience that would be receptive to the views we held. I was especially curious as to how these ideas would play in other rural states, states that Democrats often did poorly in.

In Vermont we win support not just from "activists"—our ideas resonate with ordinary working-class and middle-class voters. Would that be true elsewhere? Could we break through in parts of the country that rarely hear a progressive perspective, but are saturated with Fox News, Rush Limbaugh, and other right-wing propaganda? How would I, or anyone else, ever know if we didn't try?

Further, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and a member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, getting around the country would give me an opportunity to see, with my own eyes, some of the issues that we discussed abstractly every day in committee or on the floor of the Senate. I could visit, in a nonpolitical capacity, VA facilities and those people on the front lines in education, health care, housing,

and other areas I had long been concerned about. What was the problem with traveling to parts of the country I had never seen, and learning from people I would otherwise never meet?

If I expressed interest in running for president, a question that would be asked of me immediately was whether I would be running as an Independent or within the Democratic primary process. Given the fact that I was the longest-serving Independent in the history of the U.S. Congress, it would not have been an unreasonable question. The truth is that there were pluses and minuses to both approaches. The honest answer to that question would have been “Let’s hear what our supporters have to say.” What did they think? It wasn’t a decision we could make in a political vacuum.

TESTING THE WATERS

In presidential politics, you really hit the campaign trail before you hit the campaign trail. It’s called “testing the waters,” determining whether there is the kind of support in the real world that you’ll need to run a successful campaign.

Well before I was formally a candidate for president, when I was still just thinking about it, my longtime Vermont friend and coworker Phil Fiermonte and I did some traveling around the country. We wanted to get a sense of what kind of support there was for our ideas and whether running for president made any sense. I know, I know, that’s what candidates who intend to run for office *always* say. But in our case it was true. If there was real support, if it looked like we could run a credible campaign, we would do it. If not, no big deal. I was proud of being a senator from Vermont. There are worse jobs in the world.

As is the Vermont way, our trips were pretty low-key. No entourage. No advance people. No communications director. No security. Just Phil and me flying in coach, renting cars, and showing up for meetings—trying to get a sense of the potential support that might exist.

I have always believed that the Democratic Party must be a fifty-state party. This was an idea forcefully articulated by my fellow Vermonter, former governor Howard Dean, when he was chairman of the DNC, and he was right. The Democrats do well in the East. They do well in the West. They do well in a number of Midwestern states. But there were entire regions of

the country, including the Deep South and rural America, where the party was extremely weak, had almost no organization, and was unable to run serious candidates for statewide office.

While it is not likely that Democrats will start winning statewide elections tomorrow in Alabama, South Carolina, Kansas, Wyoming, or Utah, they will *never* win if they don’t plant a flag and start organizing. My own state of Vermont is a good example. Forty-five years ago, Vermont was one of the most Republican states in the country. Today, as a result of a lot of hard work by many people, it is one of the most progressive.

It is inconceivable that a serious national party would surrender dozens of states in this country to right-wing Republicans, including some of the poorest states in the country. But that is exactly what the Democrats are doing. Democratic Party leaders have got to start getting around the country, not just to raise money in affluent blue-state communities, but to talk to low-income and working-class people in poor counties in red states.

If I ran for president, I was determined to visit areas that Democrats often ignore and spread the progressive message. To the degree possible, our campaign would be a fifty-state effort. Our goal would be not just winning over Democratic voters and visiting Democratic strongholds. It would be to appeal to those who had given up on the political process, those who had not yet become involved, and those who were unfamiliar with the progressive ideology. This would be a very different type of campaign.

As part of that goal, on my very first “exploratory” swing, Phil and I headed south to some of the most conservative areas in the country. In mid-October 2013, Vermont’s democratic-socialist senator, one of the most progressive members of Congress, was heading to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. I wanted to get a sense of what was going on there. What could we learn?

It has always been my view that health care must be a right of all people. In Mississippi I learned why that must happen as soon as possible. In my position as a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, I met with a group of African-American health care workers in the Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center in Jackson, Mississippi. They described the dismal health care conditions for poor people in that state and how there were entire counties there that had *no* doctors. Think about it. In the United States of America, entire counties that have *no* doctors.

In Mississippi, it also turned out that many people, despite being poor, were ineligible for Medicaid because of stringent and unfair state requirements. My Republican colleagues in Congress tell me, over and over again, that we have the “greatest” health care system in the world. Really? In Mississippi, and in many other areas of the country, there are counties in low-income areas where thousands of people have no health insurance at all and, for those who do, there is no access to medical care at all. That system doesn’t sound so “great” to me.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I also had the opportunity to visit the VA hospital in Jackson.

The following year, in August 2014, I returned to Mississippi. On that trip, we held an unforgettable meeting in Jackson at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 480 union hall. I was excited by the idea of meeting with trade unionists in Mississippi, but had my doubts as to how many people would actually show up to meet with the socialist senator from Vermont.

We were very pleasantly surprised. The doors opened and people kept coming. We ended up filling the hall with several hundred attendees—almost all working class. Approximately two-thirds were white, one-third black. There were also a number of black members from the state legislature at the meeting, as well as the chairman of the state Democratic Party. People were happy to attend, because it was very unusual for a non-Republican U.S. senator to visit Mississippi. After all, the state was deep red. There was no money to raise. Why would a Democratic senator visit?

I was introduced by the local union president, John Smith. He and his wife could not have been more gracious, and I still have the denim IBEW jacket, made in America, they gave me. I spoke for a while and then asked a question to the audience that had been on my mind for a long time. “How does it happen that in one of the poorest states in this country, Mississippi, voters keep electing right-wing Republicans who have contempt for working people and who push policies that benefit the rich at the expense of nearly everyone else?” The answer that I got back was “Race, race, race.” The white population in Mississippi was overwhelmingly Republican. In 2012, Obama received, unbelievably, only 10 percent of the white vote.

For two hours, that was the issue we discussed. How do we get white working-class Americans to stop voting against their own best interests? What kind of efforts do we have to make to bring people together, black

and white, around economic issues? Republicans have cultivated, into a fine art, the ability to divide people up by race, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation. That’s what they do. That is the essence of their politics. They get one group to fight another group while their wealthy friends and campaign contributors get richer and laugh all the way to the bank.

At a time when so many Americans, in Mississippi and around the country, are hurting financially, how do we overcome those divisions and bring people together? This is not just a challenge in places like the South. It is a challenge that progressives face throughout the country. We lose when we are divided. We win when we are united.

At that meeting, I heard from white workers on that subject. I heard from black workers and black members of the state legislature. The meeting was intense. I came away with an extraordinary amount of respect for the white workers there, who were prepared to stand up for justice and solidarity, not racism. I had equal respect for the black workers, who after years of political and economic discrimination kept their heads high and continued the struggle. In the environment in which they all lived, none of this was easy.

The small town of Philadelphia, Mississippi, has a unique place in American history. In June 1964, in the midst of the civil rights struggle over desegregation and voting rights, three civil rights workers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—were brutally murdered there by members of the Ku Klux Klan. The killings outraged the nation.

Then, in 1980, just coincidentally no doubt, Ronald Reagan selected Philadelphia, Mississippi, as his first campaign stop after winning the Republican nomination. On August 3, 1980, Reagan stated in Philadelphia: “I believe in states’ rights. . . . I believe we have distorted the balance of our government today by giving powers that were never intended to be given in the Constitution to that federal establishment.” He went on to promise to “restore to states and local governments the power that properly belongs to them.” In other words, racism and discrimination would be protected in the South if Reagan was elected. That was the Republicans’ “Southern strategy.” It worked.

What was going on in Philadelphia, Mississippi, now, fifty years after the murders and thirty-four years after the Reagan visit? I was interested in finding out. In Vermont, I do a lot of town meetings in high schools. I love speaking to young people. Why not do something similar in Philadelphia,

Mississippi? My office contacted the principal of the local high school, Jason Gentry, and he was kind enough to allow us to hold a town meeting in the school.

I was escorted into the school auditorium by the black chief of police and spoke to an integrated student body. I was probably the first U.S. senator most of the students had ever seen. The meeting went well, with a good question-and-answer period. Most strikingly, after the meeting a number of the faculty stayed around for an informal discussion. What I learned was that many of the students came from very poor families, most of them worked long hours after school to help provide for their families and hunger was a serious issue. Some families just did not have enough food.

During that first trip through the South, I had the opportunity to give a keynote address to the South Carolina Progressive Network. The turnout was high, followed by a good discussion. The event was held at the historic and beautiful Penn Center in Beaufort, South Carolina, founded in 1862 and one of the first schools in the South for freed slaves. It was also the location where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held retreats for his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Penn Center remains an important part of African-American culture in the community there.

In Vermont, California, Massachusetts, and many other states, it is no big deal to be a “progressive.” You believe in social, racial, and economic justice. You want to combat climate change. You support gay marriage. And that’s what most of your friends, neighbors, and coworkers also believe. You’re part of the crowd.

In South Carolina and other conservative states, it is very different. In South Carolina, there are two Republican senators, a Republican governor, and a very Republican state legislature. In fact, in 2014, because of a resignation, two U.S. Senate seats in the state were up for election. Unbelievably, the Democrats were unable to put up one serious candidate. To be a progressive in South Carolina and other conservative states means to be in the minority, sometimes a weak minority. It takes a lot of courage to maintain progressive views in that kind of political climate, and I applaud those who do.

At the South Carolina Progressive Network event in Beaufort I met some wonderful people, including Gloria Tinubu, an African-American economist who intended to run for Congress. She had run two years earlier and did reasonably well—with virtually no support from the national Demo-

cratic Party. Gloria and I became friends, and I was happy to help her campaign. Gloria, running in a very red state, is exactly the type of candidate Democrats need to support if we’re going to turn red states blue.

During that trip to the South in mid-October 2014 we also had a breakfast town meeting with trade unionists and the general public in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting was organized by South Forward and a local chapter of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). Here’s how Cole Stangler of *In These Times* described it:

It’s early on Friday morning and the union hall is packed with people waiting to see Bernie Sanders. Mostly gray-haired retirees fill the first few rows while unionists, college students and activists, including some veterans of the Occupy movement, are scattered toward the back of the modestly-sized room. They’re here for a town hall meeting that’s been billed “The Fight for Economic Justice.”

When the Vermont Senator arrives a bit later than advertised, the crowd at Communications Workers of America Local 3204’s headquarters in Atlanta greets the 72-year-old independent with a raucous standing ovation. Sanders may be a thousand miles away from his New England constituency, but here he’s the “People’s Senator,” as a couple of folks declare during the question and answer portion of the meeting.

I was pleasantly surprised that two hundred people showed up in Atlanta. There was a great deal of energy and excitement in the room. People wanted cell phone photos. I was beginning to get used to the concept of the “selfie.”

The lesson I learned from that first trip was that even in the most conservative part of America, the Deep South, there were many people, black and white, who were sick and tired of the economic and political status quo. They understood that the rich were getting richer while most everyone else was getting poorer. They were anxious to come out to meetings to hear an alternative vision of where America should be going. They were prepared to fight back, and the word “socialism” didn’t frighten them. We were off to a good start. If this was conservative America, what would the rest of the country look like?

On February 9, 2016, New Hampshire would hold the first primary in the country as part of the Democratic presidential nominating process. It

would take place one week after the Democratic caucus in Iowa, where the very first votes are cast. We may not have known much about running a national campaign, but we did know that New Hampshire and Iowa were enormously important and that, if I chose to run, we would have to focus a lot of attention on those two states.

During this period, we began reaching out to Iowa and New Hampshire. Who did we know in those states? Where could I speak? Who should we contact in the local media? What kind of volunteer support could we put together?

Obviously, New Hampshire was going to be an easier task for us. It is Vermont's sister-state, and we share a long border. We had some friends there, and my son Levi was a resident. Also, importantly, some Vermont television and newspapers get into the state, and a number of people there knew who I was. Over the years, I had given speeches in New Hampshire on several occasions.

Iowa was going to be much more difficult. I had been there only once in my life, and we knew virtually no one there. As was to be the case in many other states, in Iowa we were starting from scratch.

In mid-April 2014, I was invited to speak at the Institute of Politics at St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire. The Institute, led by Neil Levesque, plays an important role in New Hampshire's primary process. Almost all presidential candidates speak there. As I waited to step on-stage, it was interesting to see the photos and posters of candidates past and present on the Institute's walls. Some of those candidates made it through the New Hampshire primary and all the way to the White House. Others are a blip on the memory. That's politics.

New Hampshire is across the Connecticut River from Vermont, and Manchester is about three hours away from my home in Burlington. On April 12, Jane, some staff members, and I drove there from Burlington. My son Levi met us there.

The room where candidates speak at St. Anselm is not particularly large; it seats maybe two hundred people. I spoke to a standing-room-only crowd. I was surprised to learn that it was one of the largest turnouts in recent years. Speaking at the Institute of Politics not only gave me the opportunity to address hundreds of people in New Hampshire, it gave me a national television audience, as C-SPAN covered it as part of their "Road to the White House" series.

WMUR, the largest television station in New Hampshire, also covered the speech. They reported:

During the event, Sanders said the middle class is disappearing, poverty is up and had strong words about health care in the United States.

"There is something profoundly wrong when, in this great nation, we are the only major country on earth that does not guarantee health care coverage as a right of citizenship," he said.

Sanders said he is considering a bid for president in 2016. He said he hasn't decided if he would run as an Independent or a Democrat. He said he doesn't shy away from a platform built on a socialist agenda.

"To create a society in which all people have a fair shot rather than just a nation that is dominated by big-money interests is something that I will fight for," he said.

Sanders said his decision on a run for the White House will not be affected by former secretary of state Hillary Clinton's presidential candidacy decision.

An aside: I am more than aware that C-SPAN has a relatively small viewing audience compared with the major networks. But I have always been a big fan of C-SPAN, both as a senator and as a presidential candidate. C-SPAN plays an enormously important and positive role in the political life of our country, because it portrays political reality as it is, without spin, commentary, or prejudice. It covers the proceedings in Congress, day after day, including important committee hearings. Nothing dramatic. Just what goes on. In terms of campaigns, it covers speeches and rallies and gives candidates the opportunity to communicate with the American people in a way that sound bites and brief interviews do not allow.

In late June, I visited New Hampshire again, speaking at a town meeting in Warner in the afternoon and a county Democratic dinner in Milford in the evening. What do you do on a hot day in New Hampshire when you have hours to kill before the next event? You go swimming in a nearby river. That's what we always did on the campaign trail in Vermont—why not do the same in New Hampshire? That's an advantage of campaigning in a rural area. Always bring your bathing suit.

In September, I was invited by Mark MacKenzie, the New Hampshire AFL-CIO president, to keynote their Labor Day breakfast. The meeting was

attended by many Democratic state officials, including the governor and senator. The midterm elections were two months away and the turnout for the breakfast was large. The response I received was very positive, which was noted by the local media. This was not insignificant. To win in New Hampshire, we would need strong labor support. We were off to a good start there.

In late April 2014, Phil and I made another trip to the South. In North Carolina we attended a meeting of some very brave people. These were workers in the fast-food industry, employed at McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, and other fast-food restaurants, who were earning \$8 or \$9 an hour with limited benefits. There were maybe fifty people in the room when I spoke, mostly African-American, with some whites and Latinos as well.

Together, they were learning from union organizers about how to work together and fight for a living wage—\$15 an hour—and the right to form a union in the fast-food places where they worked. Talk about courage and standing up to the system. Talk about grassroots organizing. Talk about making real change. In many of the speeches that I gave during the campaign, I discussed how *real* change never comes from the top on down. It always comes from the bottom on up, when ordinary people stand up and fight back. That is exactly what these workers were doing.

Some of the workers there were parents who had brought their young kids to the meeting. They knew, I knew, that it was impossible to raise children on \$8 or \$9 an hour. Their efforts, and the efforts of many thousands of others engaged in the "Fight for \$15" struggle, are paying off. All across the country, city and state governments are responding to the pressure and raising the minimum wage to a living wage. That's what we have to do at the federal level. That's what I talked about at every speech I gave.

As would often be the case throughout the campaign, meeting courageous people like these workers inspired me and filled me with optimism for the future.

During that same trip we held a town meeting at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. A young student there named Ben Stockdale, active in the Young Democrats, did an excellent job of organizing and, to my surprise, some 225 people showed up. The panel of young people who spoke before I did discussed environmental issues, women's issues, student debt, and the needs of the LGBT community. In our town meetings, the panel discussions we had before I spoke were an important part of what we were

trying to accomplish. While speakers may have focused on different topics, it was important to see the commonality of interests and the need for everyone to work together. At North Carolina State University, it was very moving to hear young people who were so articulate and passionate.

In August 2014, Phil and I traveled to the South again. We went back to North Carolina, where we attended a meeting with trade union leaders at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Raleigh. This was the conservative South, but we learned that there were serious and progressive people there, black and white, actively organizing for a better future for working people. When a discussion took place about the presidential campaign, I heard support in the room. Some, however, believed that if I ran it should be done outside the Democratic Party, with the goal of building a new political movement. While this was a minority opinion, it surfaced frequently. A number of people we ran into felt that the Democratic Party was just too conservative and corrupt, and could not be reformed.

After the meeting with the AFL-CIO leadership, we attended a town meeting in a local church that we had organized and had a standing-room-only crowd of over two hundred people. Once again, our panel consisted of people from different walks of life. We had a young college student, a trade unionist, and a local representative of the Democratic Party. Our goal was to build coalitions and bring people together, and we were making some progress.

Also in August, I received the Patriot Award from the American Legion, the largest veterans' organization in the country. In receiving the award I spoke to an audience of 2,500 American Legion representatives from across the country in Charlotte, North Carolina. This is the most prestigious award the American Legion presents and, as the former chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I was honored to receive it. National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said that the award was being presented for my "unwavering dedication to our nation and its veterans."

The American Legion is, by and large, a conservative organization. Many of their members vote Republican. It showed real courage on their part to give that award to one of the most progressive members of the U.S. Senate.

Throughout my political career, and especially as chairman of the Veterans' Committee, I have been a strong advocate for veterans and their families. It has always seemed to me that if men and women are prepared to put

their lives on the line to defend this country, we have a moral obligation to do everything we can to protect them and their families when they return to civilian life. This means a strong and well-run VA, the best quality health care we can provide, and prompt payment of benefits they've earned.

Some may see it as incongruous for a strong progressive to be a fierce advocate for veterans' rights. I don't, and never have. I opposed the war in Vietnam when I was a young man. I opposed the first Gulf War and the war in Iraq as a member of Congress. I will continue to do everything that I can to make sure the United States does not get entangled in wars that we should not be fighting. But I will never blame the men and women who do the fighting for getting us into those wars. If you don't like the wars we get involved in, hold the president and Congress responsible. Don't blame the veterans.

During that Southern trip, Phil and I traveled to South Carolina. In Columbia, we met with a very impressive organizer with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the union pushing the "Fight for \$15" campaign. We talked about low-income workers and voter participation. The woman had recently checked out voter registration information in the area. It turned out that of the five hundred workers she was attempting to organize, most of whom were black, only a handful were registered to vote.

While I was there I also met with a young black man who worked at McDonald's. He and I chatted for a while. He informed me that, to him and his friends, politics was totally irrelevant to their lives. It was not something they cared about or even talked about.

Frankly, this lack of political consciousness is exactly what the ruling class of this country wants. The Koch brothers spend hundreds of millions to elect candidates who represent the rich and the powerful. They understand the importance of politics. Meanwhile, people who work for low wages, have no health insurance, and live in inadequate housing don't see a connection between the reality of their lives and what government does or does not do. Showing people that connection is a very big part of what a progressive political movement has to do. How can we bring about real social change in this country if people in need are not involved in the political process? We need a political revolution. We need to get people involved. We need to get people voting.

While in South Carolina I spoke at a rather poorly attended health care

rally on the grounds of the state Capitol. Like most other Republican states, South Carolina had rejected the Medicaid expansion provided by the Affordable Care Act. The result was that hundreds of thousands of low-income South Carolinians, black and white, were not receiving the health insurance they were eligible for, despite the fact that it was national legislation and paid for by the federal government. Some of those people will unnecessarily die. Others will become sicker than they should have become. This type of reactionary governmental action in South Carolina and elsewhere could only take place in a political environment where public consciousness is extremely low, where people feel powerless and don't vote.

While at the rally, I had the good luck to meet Virginia Sanders, a non-nonsense black woman in her seventies. We hit it off right away. Virginia had been involved in the civil rights movement, had lived in the area forever and, it seemed, knew every person in South Carolina. The next morning Phil and I got a historical tour as we drove off the beaten path around Columbia with this remarkable woman. I knew that if I ran for president, Virginia would be exactly the kind of person I'd want on my staff. Eight months later she was on board.

One of the challenges of a campaign is good scheduling. Don't arrange for the candidate to be in two places at the same time. Make sure the candidate has enough time to go from one event to the other. Schedule events at a time when people are likely to attend. And, in South Carolina, don't have a public meeting in Columbia on the opening of the University of South Carolina's football season. Unfortunately, that's exactly what we did. Being unfamiliar with the culture of the area, we had not realized that football games at the university were something like supercharged national holidays. Schools shut down. Huge traffic jams occur. The game is the sole topic of conversation.

Despite that mistake, we had a successful town meeting at a senior citizen housing complex in Columbia. Some two hundred people showed up, many of them seniors. I stressed the fact that instead of cutting Social Security, as many Republicans wanted to do, we should *expand* the program. Erin McKee, the president of the South Carolina AFL-CIO, spoke at the meeting, as did a low-wage fast-food worker. (Erin later became an active supporter of our campaign.)

It goes without saying that fund-raising is an important part of any national campaign. As a U.S. senator and former congressman I had done my

fair share of raising money. In contemplating a campaign for the White House, there was one thing I was absolutely certain of. I was not going to spend large amounts of time raising money from wealthy individuals, as most politicians, Democrats and Republicans, do. I much preferred spending my time doing free public meetings, and talking to ordinary people.

Raising money from the rich is not only debilitating, it's time-consuming. While it is certainly not true for all, many wealthy contributors are arrogant and self-centered and demand a lot of time and access for the money they donate. Instead of just sending you a check, they want to talk, talk, and talk about their needs or the issues that concern them. This process drains the energy right out of you.

A year later, when I was a full-time candidate, I was truly amazed by the amount of time Hillary Clinton was spending raising money at the homes of wealthy people, talking to fifty or a hundred very rich folks. It was really incredible. But it was not just Hillary Clinton. It is what most politicians do, and what a corrupt campaign finance system is all about. Today, politics is largely about raising tons of money, hiring consultants and pollsters, and spending a fortune on television advertising. That is why we urgently need *real* campaign finance reform and why we should move to public funding of elections.

But, like every other candidate, we needed money. How could we raise some and not lose our focus on turning out large numbers of people?

The solution was simple. While most of our meetings were admission-free, we would do a few low-donor events and see what happened. In June 2014, I had been invited to speak at the University of Chicago. While there, my fund-raiser, Ben Eisenberg, a native of the Chicago area, put together an event at a large bar in Evanston, Illinois. The admission price was \$25. The logistics were terrible—the audience was gathered in several weirdly shaped rooms, and I could hardly see many of the people I was speaking to. The sound system barely worked, and the crowd was raucous and loud. Nonetheless, the meeting was a success. Hundreds of people showed up. They had a great time. And we raised some money. Conclusion: On occasion it would be possible to bring out good crowds at the same time as we raised some campaign funds.

As one of the Senate leaders in the fight to protect the U.S. Postal Service, I was invited to speak before six thousand workers at the National Association of Letter Carriers—the largest postal union in the country. The

postal service has been, for years, under intense political attack by Republicans, who ultimately want to privatize all or some of it. The workers were aware of my efforts in support of their needs. The response was very positive.

Ed Garvey of Madison, Wisconsin, is a dear friend of mine. He has had an extraordinary career as a labor lawyer and received a great deal of national attention as the founder and executive director of the National Football League Players Association. In that capacity, he educated the public that while professional football players do make good salaries, their careers are mostly short and their bodies are often damaged.

Ed is a progressive leader in Wisconsin and had run a strong campaign for governor there. Years earlier, he had come to Vermont to help me as we struggled to protect jobs and wages against a union-busting rail company that had taken over a Vermont railroad.

Ed and Betty Garvey, John Nichols, Mary Bottari, and other Wisconsin progressives had put together a terrific event that I loved very much and attended as often as I could. It was called the Fighting Bob Fest, named after Bob La Follette, the great Wisconsin governor and U.S. senator from the early part of the twentieth century. The event took place at the Sauk County Fairgrounds in Baraboo, Wisconsin, was attended by thousands of people from throughout the state, and involved dozens of progressive organizations. On September 13, 2014, I looked forward to speaking at the event. While in the Midwest, we were also going to visit Iowa. A problem arose, however. A good problem.

If one of my goals in “testing the waters” for a presidential run was to attract national media attention, that strategy was working. After twenty-five years in Congress, often as a leading voice on some of the most important issues facing the country, I was invited for the first time to be on *Meet the Press*. Chuck Todd had recently taken over as host, and he asked me to be on the show, which was recorded at the NBC studio in Washington. The problem was that I was supposed to be in Baraboo at the same time. How do you appear in Washington, D.C., and Baraboo, Wisconsin, almost simultaneously? The answer is simple, but expensive. You charter a private plane. For \$13,000, we were able to make it to Wisconsin right on time. It was the first time we had chartered a plane, but it would not be the last.

The event in Wisconsin was a lot of fun. It was a beautiful fall day, and some four thousand people showed up. My old friend Jim Hightower, the

talented and humorous writer from Texas, was there, as well as other national and state leaders. I had a great time renewing acquaintances with my many friends from Wisconsin and the Midwest. After Wisconsin, it was on to Iowa.

IOWA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND BEYOND

The state of Iowa plays a unique and outsized role in American presidential politics. It is the first state in the country, followed closely by New Hampshire, to vote in the nominating process. It is the state that, through its caucus, provides the first indication of how well a candidate might do overall and how serious his/her campaign is. For many campaigns, Iowa is “make or break.” Some campaigns, like Barack Obama’s, gain momentum from their showings there. Others do poorly and never recover.

Back in September 2011, I made my first visit to Iowa to speak at the Tom Harkin Steak Fry, one of the major annual Democratic political events in the country. Tom was one of the most progressive members of the Senate, a good friend of mine, and I very much appreciated the invitation. While the weather for this outdoor event was not cooperative, and the crowd not as large as expected, I had a great time and my remarks were well received. I liked the people I met there. They were down-to-earth, unpretentious, and very much like the people of Vermont. I was especially impressed by how many trade unionists and working-class people were in attendance.

In the early part of our exploratory campaign Phil and I made several trips to Iowa. On one of our first trips, in May 2014, I spoke to several hundred people at the Clinton County Democratic Party Hall of Fame dinner in Goose Lake. Coming from a rural state, I felt very comfortable in the tiny town that we were in—which had a very small old bank that looked like it might have been robbed by Jesse James.

In other early trips to Iowa, we made the acquaintance of a grassroots organization called Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI), led by Hugh Espey, an excellent organizer. This organization brings together people from all walks of life—farmers, trade unionists, educators, environmentalists, seniors—to address the major issues facing Iowa and the country. They’re organizers, educators, and lobbyists for the public. When we later articulated the concept of the political revolution and the need for citizens to come

together in grassroots organizations to take back our government from the 1 percent, groups like CCI were exactly what I had in mind.

In addition to smaller meetings with CCI activists, in mid-September we held a number of town meetings around the state. We met in Dubuque and in Waterloo. We also held a town meeting at the Grace United Methodist church in Des Moines sponsored by the CCI Action Fund. The crowd of 450 spilled out into the streets. For an undeclared candidate in Iowa, so long before the caucus, this was an excellent turnout of highly energized people. During that meeting, as I was to do at most meetings, I asked the audience whether or not they thought I should run for president and whether they would be willing to play a role in the campaign. Some 75 percent voiced support for a campaign. While it wasn’t unanimous, the vast majority thought I should run as a Democrat.

On October 5, 2014, I returned to Iowa as the keynote speaker at the Johnson County Democratic Party barbecue in Iowa City. Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan was there as well. At this gathering of Iowa Democrats, a few weeks before the important midterm elections, something became very clear to me: The energy, even amongst these strong and dedicated Democrats, just wasn’t there for the local candidates. Something was missing. Bruce Braley, a congressman from Iowa, was running for the U.S. Senate to replace my friend Tom Harkin. Bruce is a very decent guy, but his remarks, which consisted of tepid Democratic centrist rhetoric, were just not resonating with people in the room. It was obvious that the people there wanted something more. A few weeks later in New Hampshire I noticed the same phenomenon. On Election Day, Bruce lost his race to Joni Ernst.

At that meeting, for the very first time, I noticed lapel stickers supporting my candidacy. A lot of people were wearing them. They were distributed by a group called Progressive Democrats of America. While a relatively small national group, the PDA had been enthusiastically supporting my candidacy from the very beginning. In May, I did several events with them in Massachusetts.

While I was busy running around the country, I also held a few meetings in Washington, D.C. I wanted to get a sense of what the “Inside the Beltway” liberal community was thinking in terms of a Sanders run for the presidency. If truth be told, most of them did not have a lot of enthusiasm for it. There was the overwhelming perception that Hillary Clinton was going to be the nominee. Why stir the pot? Why cause unnecessary conflict?

That was also the message I got from my Senate colleagues. Almost zero interest. Strange. I was picking up increased excitement and interest around the country, but not much in D.C.

Ten days after Iowa, we were on our way out West. First stop, Las Vegas. Hot, hot, hot. We got out of the plane to a temperature of 106 degrees.

Most people go to Las Vegas to party and to gamble. Not us. We were there to meet with the people who serve the tourists their food, wash their dishes, and make their beds. We had a meeting set up with the Culinary Workers Union Local 226, affiliated with the national UNITE HERE union.

The Culinary Workers Union is one of the great unions in this country, and what they have accomplished is nothing less than revolutionary. At a time when we have lost millions of decent-paying manufacturing jobs, and when more and more of the new jobs being created in our country are low-wage service industry jobs, the Culinary Workers Union has shown the world that people who make beds, serve food, and clean toilets can earn a living wage, have good health care, and live middle-class lives. They did this by taking on the hotels and organizing the workers there into a strong and effective multiracial union of sixty thousand members. The union also plays a major role in Nevada politics.

To those people who tell you that politics doesn't matter, just talk to the chambermaids in Las Vegas, who now earn a decent living, have good health insurance and a pension, and can send their kids to college. They did it. We can do it all across the country. Service industry jobs do not have to be low-wage jobs.

And then it was on to California for a very exciting evening. In Richmond, a working-class community in Contra Costa County, the Richmond Progressive Alliance had taken control of the city council under the leadership of Green Party member Gayle McLaughlin. Chevron, which had a giant oil refinery in the city, didn't like the idea of a progressive government. They didn't want to pay more in taxes. They didn't want to deal with strong environmental standards. They preferred to have a more compliant, more corporately oriented city council, and they put \$3 million in campaign contributions into the local election to make that happen. In other words, they were trying to buy the local government.

I was invited by the mayor and the Richmond Progressive Alliance to speak at a meeting in opposition to Chevron, and for the reelection of the

progressive city council. It turned out to be one of the largest and loudest audiences that I had spoken to since I began traveling around the country. As the Bill Moyers and Company Web site reported: "After an hour-long speech, [Sanders] had the crowd of around 500 on their feet giving the independent senator from Vermont a standing ovation." Harriet Rowan of the online news service *Richmond Confidential* quoted me as saying, "At this profound moment in American history, where the billionaire class wants to get it all . . . we have got to fight back tooth and nail . . . We cannot allow them to take over Richmond . . . we cannot allow them to take over America.'" By the way, the Progressives won the election. Chevron, with all its money, was defeated.

The next day, we were in Oakland to meet with National Nurses United president RoseAnn DeMoro and her staff. And we were pleased to walk into another major controversy.

Most everybody loves nurses. We recognize that they are the backbone of our health care system. They are there when our babies are born, and they are there when our loved ones die. What I especially loved about the nurses' union was that they not only fought vigorously for the rights of their members but, even more importantly, they fought for their patients. They want high-quality care in hospitals and wherever they work. They also understand that under the current dysfunctional system, with so many uninsured and underinsured, they are unable to do the quality work they want to do and were trained to do. That is why they are strong supporters of a Medicare for All single-payer program.

When I visited with them on October 17, 2014, there was considerable concern about the Ebola crisis, and whether American hospitals were effectively prepared to deal with it. National Nurses United also wanted to make sure that their members had the proper equipment and protective gear to treat Ebola patients. After a rally outside the union's building, I helped lead a march to Kaiser Permanente headquarters. They didn't appear happy to see us.

The next time I returned to Oakland, the union endorsed my candidacy. I didn't have a stronger ally during the course of my campaign. I am always proud to stand with the nurses.

In October 2014, I did two sets of meetings in New Hampshire, focusing on college campuses. Not only was I testing the waters for myself, but

I was trying to get some votes for Senator Jeanne Shaheen, who was in a tough reelection fight against former senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts. I learned something very interesting during those visits, something that I did not forget.

The earlier visit, on October 10, was to the University of New Hampshire in Durham and was organized by a group of progressive students. These young people were serious about politics; they knew what they believed in and were fighting for real change. They were motivated, hardworking, and well organized. They felt strongly that big money in politics was threatening our democracy and were part of a national movement to bring about real campaign finance reform. I was delighted to accept an invitation from them to speak on campus. When I got to the auditorium, I found an excellent turnout of some three hundred people, not only students but community members as well. It was a great meeting and a thrill to see such bright young people in action.

Two weeks later in New Hampshire, I had a very different experience. Working with local Democrats, we had scheduled meetings at Keene State College, Dartmouth, and Plymouth State. Unlike the meeting at the University of New Hampshire, these were badly attended. The local Democrats had done a poor job in organizing the events and political interest on campus was very low. In fact, walking around Keene State, I had the distinct impression that not only was Senator Shaheen not going to get many votes on that campus but that, two weeks before the election, most students didn't even know that an election was occurring. That visit was extremely depressing.

The lesson I learned from those visits was that establishment Democratic politicians often have very few roots in their communities and are unable to generate grassroots enthusiasm. In too many cases they lived in their own world, separated from ordinary people. On the other hand, what I also saw was that small numbers of dedicated and motivated people were capable of bringing people together, creating excitement and interest, and having a real impact.

In many ways, what happened in New Hampshire on those two visits became a metaphor for what was to take place a year later during my campaign for the presidency. Time and time again we took on the entire Democratic establishment—governors, senators, and mayors. And time and time

again our small, ragtag group of volunteers and staff created the excitement and political interest to defeat them.

A presidential campaign is a national campaign. To win, you have to do well all over the country. In late October, we took our show on the road to California, Nevada, and Texas. On the way back east we stopped in Chicago. This Western swing was the most successful trip we had taken so far as we pondered whether or not to run. More than any other set of meetings, it showed me that our support was growing and that people wanted real change. We were also attracting some great and committed people who were prepared to come on board if I ran.

Marianne Williamson is a bestselling author, well-known lecturer, and community activist in California. She is also the founder of Sister Giant, an organization that provides women the support they need to run for political office. She has an enormous following and is active on social media. On March 28, 2015, I spoke before a very large audience at a Sister Giant conference. Marianne, a dynamic speaker, could not have been more supportive. As she introduced me, the chants became louder and louder: "Run Bernie Run, Run Bernie Run." A large majority in the audience indicated that they were prepared to volunteer in the campaign if I ran.



With volunteers in Laredo, Texas.

The next day we had an even more mind-blowing experience. On short notice, the Progressive Democrats of America had organized an event for us in West Hollywood. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and I had my doubts as to how many people would show up. Well, over five hundred people packed the hall of the local musicians' union, one of the largest turn-outs we had ever had. The excitement was palpable. Once again, we heard "Run Bernie Run, Run Bernie Run." And all over the hall, people were signing up to volunteer.

Then it was onto a plane to Austin, Texas. And what an unbelievable meeting we held there. As our car was getting closer to our destination, an IBEW union hall, I was becoming more and more annoyed at the traffic. We were moving at a crawl, and I was worried that we would be late. Not to worry. Our meeting was the *cause* of the traffic jam, and *everybody* was going to be late.

There was a fellow on the road trying to direct traffic, and cars were parked all over the place. People were packed into the room, some sitting on windowsills. And what was so beautiful and memorable about that meeting, and something that we would see so often in the future, was the diversity of the people who attended. There were workers, students, seniors, Latinos, blacks, and whites. These were people coming together, with passion, to transform America. This meeting, almost more than any we had held so far, told me that something unusual was going on. I was not well known in Texas, and yet the excitement for a Sanders campaign was sky-high.

I had known Rahm Emanuel when we served together in Congress, and I had dealt with him when he was chief of staff for President Obama. Rahm was part of the corporate wing of the Democratic Party, a prolific fund-raiser, closely aligned with the Clintons. He and I were not best friends.

Rahm left Washington and moved on to become mayor of Chicago. In 2015 he ran for reelection. To everybody's surprise, despite spending a huge amount of money, he was unable to get the 50 percent that he needed to win the Democratic Party nomination for mayor on the first round. His opponent was Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, a strong progressive and a county commissioner. In addition to the mayor's race, there were a number of progressives running for the Board of Aldermen against the Democratic machine.

Fifty years before, when I was a student at the University of Chicago, I got slightly involved in an aldermanic election. I volunteered for a candidate

who was in opposition to what was then known as the Daley machine. Now I was back, as a U.S. senator, once again supporting a progressive candidate running against the Chicago Democratic machine. Not much had changed politically in Chicago over fifty years.

I liked Chuy, because he was putting together the kind of coalition that I believed in—black, white, and Latino working people standing together against the big-money interests that controlled the city. In Chicago, while the downtown business interests thrived, the neighborhoods were hurting and schools were being closed. In that primary election I was also supporting Susan Sadlowski Garza, who was running for the Board of Aldermen from a working-class district.

The rally in support of Chuy and Susan took place in a steelworkers' union hall. The place was mobbed, the enthusiasm high. This was the first time that I had gotten to meet Chuy, and I liked him. After his defeat by Emanuel, Chuy Garcia became a great surrogate for me during the campaign. He traveled the country, often speaking to Latino audiences. Chuy and his wife and Jane and I had breakfast together the morning of the Illinois primary. Susan, who ran against a longtime incumbent, won her election by a few votes and is now a member of the Board of Aldermen. I was glad I could help.

ELECTION DAY 2014

Election Day 2014 was a disaster for Democrats all across the country. With voter turnout atrociously low, the Democrats lost control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since 2006, and lost seats in the House as well. Like other Democrats, I had to give up my chairmanship to a Republican. Needless to say, the Democrats in the Senate were sullen. Harry Reid, our majority leader and a friend of mine, was out. Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader, was in.

In the 2014 election, the Republicans won the largest majority in Congress since 1928, and the largest majority of state legislatures since 1928. How could it happen that an obstructionist Republican Party, which was in favor of cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, giving huge tax breaks to billionaires, and unwilling to recognize the reality of climate change, could win a landslide victory?

To my mind, understanding Election Day 2014 was not to see it as a victory for the Republican Party. It was a *loss* for the Democratic Party. The Democrats blew it, big-time. Republicans win elections when voter turnout is low and their big-money friends spend a fortune on ugly TV ads. Democrats win elections when ordinary people are excited, involved in the political process, and come out to vote. In 2014, 63 percent of the American people didn't vote, and the turnout was even worse for low-income and young people.

As I saw in Iowa and New Hampshire, there was very little energy or enthusiasm for the Democratic candidates. In my own state of Vermont, where a Democratic governor won reelection in a close race, we had the lowest voter turnout since World War II.

Yes. The economy was better than it had been when President Bush left office. Yes. There had been major troop withdrawal from Iraq. Yes. President Obama was doing a number of things that were right. But, despite that, something was deeply wrong in the country, and people felt it. Millions of workers were falling further and further behind. The gap between the rich and everyone else was growing wider. The political system was increasingly corrupt and the economic and political establishment was far removed from the lives of ordinary Americans.

The election of 2014 was a wake-up call for the Democratic Party. I wondered if they heard it.

REACHING A DECISION

As I suspected would happen, the fact that I was "thinking" of running for president generated a significant increase in the national media coverage that I received. I was no longer just a U.S. senator, I was now a possible future president. I became a regular on cable TV shows, on CNN, MSNBC, and occasionally Fox. I was also appearing on the important Sunday news shows and doing interviews with newspapers all across the country.

My communications director, Michael Briggs, did a great job in maximizing media opportunities. When we were in New York City, for example, we started early on the morning shows and went full blast throughout the day. On November 14, 2014, as an example, I did an early morning

interview with Chris Cuomo on CNN, did an editorial board meeting with Bloomberg News, did an interview with *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins, taped an interview on WNET TV, met with my old friend Katrina vanden Heuvel of *The Nation* magazine, and concluded with an appearance on *The Colbert Report*.

In December 2014, Jane and I attended, as we usually did, the White House Christmas Ball. This is an annual opportunity for members of Congress, the administration, and friends to get together in a bipartisan, informal way. Many hundreds of people attend. One of the very weird things about this event is that the president does not address the people there, and he does not socialize. What he does, all night long, is take photos. The guests line up on the first floor, get ushered into a room with the president and Michelle, engage in small talk, and get their picture snapped. While Jane and I were there, I asked the president for a meeting.

A week or so later, I met with the president in the Oval Office. I had known Barack Obama for eight years, and we had served in the Senate together. While I had strong disagreements with him on some issues, we were friends and I respected him very much. On a number of important matters, we had worked closely together. Now, as I was seriously thinking about running for president, I wanted to get his views on some of the issues that I was discussing around the country. I also wanted his take on the recent elections and where he thought Democratic Party politics was going. As usual, I was impressed by his candor and intelligence.

During this period, we began to focus more on Iowa and New Hampshire—the first two states that would be voting. While the Democratic Party's nominating process is, of course, a national process, it is also fifty separate state elections. And, despite their relatively small sizes, Iowa and New Hampshire are two of the most important states. If we did well in those states, we would be off and running. If we did not, we would not be taken seriously as we advanced to other states.

In mid-December we returned to Iowa for a few days. In Des Moines I did interviews at *The Des Moines Register*. *The Des Moines Register* is the largest and most influential newspaper in Iowa, and it takes its responsibilities seriously. It understands the importance of the Iowa caucus and it tries to give all of the candidates, Democratic and Republican, a fair shake. It also conducts polling for the Iowa caucus, which is generally regarded to be of

very high quality and receives a lot of national attention. During that trip I also appeared on *Iowa Press*, Iowa's equivalent of *Meet the Press*, a public television show with a veteran moderator, Dean Borg.

Later in the day we headed to Ames, where we held a town meeting. Before that meeting, we did something that I found very helpful, something we had not done before. We invited the various elements of the state's progressive community to join us for brief separate meetings so that we could better understand the issues they were dealing with. Within the course of a few hours we met with some of the leaders of the Latino community, the peace community, the LGBT community, the environmental community, Planned Parenthood, labor, and groups concerned with civil liberties. I found these meetings to be extremely informative; I believe those who attended felt the same way. As the campaign progressed, this is something we did in other states as well.

In late January I was back in New Hampshire. Arnie Arnesen is a well-known political figure in New Hampshire and an old friend of mine. Years before, she had run a strong and progressive campaign for governor of the state, and later became a host on a radio show that I often called in to. Arnie held frequent political gatherings at her home in Concord and was kind enough to hold one there for us.

In early February, for the first time, we ventured to Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia we did a low-donor fund-raiser that brought out hundreds of people at \$25 a head. The event was held in a large bar. Once again, as we had seen in Evanston, Illinois, I was learning that we could raise a modest amount of money and at the same time have a good-sized event. I was surprised and proud that so many people—working people—were prepared to make a financial contribution to the campaign. The campaign was taking root.

In Philadelphia we also attended a dinner for the House Progressive Caucus, which was chaired by my good friends Congressmen Keith Ellison and Raul Grijalva. A number of members of Congress were there. My speech followed that of Lee Saunders, president of the large union the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). While there I did a number of media interviews. The next day I was in Harrisburg to speak before the Pennsylvania Progressive Summit. I was joined there by some eight hundred people. On the way back from Harrisburg to Washington, Michael Briggs and I drove through Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Neither

of us had ever visited the Gettysburg battleground. We stopped there, walked around the grounds, saw a movie at the museum, and talked to some of the park employees. As Vermont soldiers had played a very important role in the Union victory at Gettysburg, I visited the statue of General George Stannard, one of Vermont's military leaders, as well as other Vermont monuments.

We also visited the site where Lincoln gave his famous address in 1863. As every schoolchild knows, in his speech Lincoln stated "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain . . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom . . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." As we left Gettysburg, it struck me forcefully that what Lincoln had said in 1863 was as relevant today as it was back then. Especially with the Supreme Court's disastrous 2010 Citizens United decision that opened the floodgates to virtually unlimited corporate spending in campaigns and allowed big money to buy elections, we were still fighting for a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." As a result of that trip to Gettysburg, I often referenced Lincoln, and what he said there on that day in 1863, in my speeches.

In early March 2015, along with many congressional colleagues and President Obama, I visited Selma, Alabama, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the "Bloody Sunday" march across the Pettis Bridge in the fight for voting rights. The event was organized by Congressman John Lewis, who had been one of the leaders of that demonstration fifty years before as a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). During that demonstration, Lewis had been brutally beaten and almost killed by Alabama state police.

While in Selma, Jane and I had the opportunity to meet some of the heroes and heroines of that period and of the civil rights movement. These were people who had shown incredible bravery standing up to official state terrorism, and listening to their stories was a moving and inspiring experience. While there we also heard some great gospel, one of my favorite kinds of music. We had a wonderful time.

Naturally, while we were in Selma, there was a lot of discussion about the state of the civil rights movement: where it had come from, how it had evolved, where it was today. Clearly, everyone agreed, huge and incredibly positive changes had taken place since Lewis and other demonstrators were

almost killed in the fight for voting rights fifty years before. Today, Lewis was no longer a demonstrator. He was a U.S. congressman from Georgia, serving with dozens of other African-American members of Congress. Fifty years before, African-Americans in Selma didn't have the right to vote. Now, the mayor of Selma was black. Fifty years ago, it was incomprehensible to believe that the United States would ever have an African-American as president. Now, President Obama was serving his second term. These were changes that every American has a right to be proud of.

But there was another reality that those gathered in Selma knew. While the African-American community has made huge advances in politics, and while the United States was much less of a racist society than it had been, there were still enormous economic and social problems facing the black community. The Voting Rights Act that John Lewis, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and others had fought so hard to pass had recently been gutted by a Supreme Court decision, and all across the country Republican governors and legislators were rolling back the clock and making it harder for blacks and others to vote.

The unemployment rate, especially among young people, was much, much too high. In some communities the real unemployment rate for recent black high school graduates was 30 to 40 percent. Too many urban schools were nothing more than dropout factories, and too few young African-Americans were making it through college.

The African-American situation with regard to criminal justice was a national disgrace. Jails from coast to coast were filled with African-Americans, many of whom lacked decent education or job skills appropriate for the twenty-first century. Unbelievably, if present trends continued, one out of four black males born today would end up in jail.

During the campaign, I met frequently with members of the Black Lives Matter movement. This loosely knit organization was successfully educating the nation that in many black communities the police were not there protecting the people, but intimidating them. And time and time again, tragically, cell phone video cameras were recording horrific examples of extreme police brutality, the taking of innocent lives by overly aggressive police action. The names of the victims were becoming household names: Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Jessica Hernandez, Tamir Rice, Jonathan Ferrell, Oscar Grant, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, Samuel DuBose, Anastasio

Hernandez-Rojas, and many others. Each of them died unarmed at the hands of police officers or in police custody.

Yes. There was no question that, as a nation, we had made great advances in civil rights. But there was also no doubt in my mind that much, much more needed to be done.

During the campaign, working with civil rights advocates, we introduced the strongest criminal justice reform any candidate had ever presented.

It was now April 2015. Over the past eighteen months I had visited twelve states, given dozens of speeches, and sat through countless media interviews. I had spoken to many thousands of people and met privately with hundreds more. The time was rapidly approaching when we would have to make a very simple decision. Was there sufficient support for me to run a credible national campaign? Could we put together an effective political organization to mount that campaign?

Bottom line: Do I run for president of the United States?

My mind went back to Burlington, Vermont, and 1981. It all sounded familiar. Nobody then thought that the city's political and economic establishment could be beaten. They were just too powerful. Nobody thought that we could put together the kind of coalition that we did. How can you get police officers, environmentalists, low-income tenants, college students, and city employees to be part of the same movement? Nobody, absolutely nobody, thought we could win that election. But we did. We pulled off the biggest political upset in the modern history of Vermont, and over the next eight years went about the business of putting our ideas into effect and transforming the city.

But clearly, what we were talking about now was not Burlington, Vermont. This was not a small city in a small state. This was the United States of America, a diverse nation of 320 million people in fifty states. In the few national polls in which my name had been included, I'd barely registered. I had virtually no national name recognition, very little money, no political organization, and in most states in the country my staff and I knew absolutely nobody. We would be taking on the entire political establishment. Not one of my Senate colleagues, not one member of Congress, not one governor, not one mayor had told me that he/she would be supportive if I ran. Not one. Were we totally crazy to be even thinking about this?

Maybe. But then I thought about the inspiring people I had met from one end of this country to the other, the many thousands who had come

out to our meetings and enthusiastically supported a run. That was real, absolutely real. There was nothing crazy about them. Maybe the Inside the Beltway pundits didn't know they existed, but I had seen them and heard them. They were people who were hurting. People who were tired of the status quo. People who loved this country but knew that we could be much more than we were. People who didn't want Hillary Clinton, but wanted real political change—and were prepared to fight for it. If I didn't run, I would be letting them down.

There was a strong feeling growing within me that if I didn't run, it would be something I would regret for the rest of my life. I was ready to do it.

But wait a minute.

A decision of this magnitude was not going to be made based on political calculations or on my feelings alone. There were a whole lot of very personal matters that had to be considered as well. If I ran, the campaign would have a huge impact upon my family—my wife, Jane; my kids, Levi, Heather, Dave, and Carina, and their families, including my seven grandchildren. It would also impact the staff at my Senate office, who would have to pick up the extra work that my absence would entail.

Let me be honest. Jane was not enthusiastic about the idea of a presidential campaign—never was. She is smart and a realist. She knew that if I ran it would obviously mean that our family life would be radically altered. As Vermont's senator, I am back in the state almost every weekend. As a presidential candidate, I would almost always be on the road and away from home. It would also mean that we would be living in a world of stress, seven days a week.

She also worried about how, if against all odds we actually won, we could survive politically against the unprecedented hostility that was sure to come from Wall Street, the corporate world and their media, the Republican Party, and many Democrats. What we were trying to do was unprecedented in American history. We were taking on the *entire* political and economic establishment. If we won, what would happen the day after the election?

Jane and I also knew what modern politics is about and the kind of ugly personal attacks, lies, and distortions that we and the entire family would inevitably have to endure. In Vermont, where there is much less political ugliness than is the case nationally, we had already experienced it. What would it be like at the national level when we'd face well-funded adversar-

ies who paid operatives whose sole function was to destroy their opponents? It was just one more factor to take into consideration.

While we were closing in on the decision of whether or not to make the run, Jane and I had breakfast at a Denny's restaurant in South Burlington, Vermont. We often went there on weekends—their blueberry pancakes are especially good. While we were there that Sunday morning, a man came over to our table and movingly thanked me for the work that my office had done for him in gaining his veterans' benefits. Our efforts had changed his life. He urged me to run for president. Jane started crying. She now knew what we had to do.

In early April, we invited Tad Devine, a national media and political consultant who had worked on two of my Vermont campaigns, to come to our home in Burlington to describe what a presidential campaign would entail. I am not much into national political consultants, and Tad is the only one I have ever worked with. Unlike Jane and me, Tad actually knew what a national campaign was about. He had been involved in Al Gore's run for the presidency in 2000, as well as a number of other presidential campaigns.

Tad went down the checklist of what a campaign would mean. He talked about the tens of millions that would have to be raised, the scheduling requirements, staffing, security issues, how best to relate to national and state media, and the kind of paid media program that he thought we would need. He also believed that we would have to very heavily focus on Iowa and New Hampshire. If we made the decision to go forward, he was prepared be part of the team.

In the following weeks Jane and I talked to Levi, Heather, Carina, and Dave to get their feelings about a possible campaign. Without exception, they were on board and wanted to help out in any way they could. In fact, they were pretty excited.

On April 30, 2015, I strolled to an area outside the Capitol and informally told the Beltway media that I would soon be filing papers to establish a presidential campaign exploratory committee. Quietly, we decided that we would formally begin the campaign on May 26 in Burlington.

FOUR

HOW DO YOU RUN A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN?

The great anxiety that I had when I was contemplating running for president was that if I ran a poor campaign, if we were unable to get our message out effectively, if we failed to get a significant number of votes, if the actual campaign *itself* malfunctioned, we would be doing a disservice to the shared vision of the progressive movement. If our campaign was unsuccessful, the message left to history would be that our *ideas* were rejected and that nobody supported our agenda. More than anything else, that is what I feared.

Well, how do you run an effective national campaign? How do you make sure you don't fall flat on your face and call it quits two months after you begin, which is not uncommon? We hadn't a clue.

Vermont is a small state of 630,000 people. In my reelection campaign for the Senate in 2012 I received 207,000 votes—71 percent of the total vote. We knew how to run good campaigns in Vermont and how to win there. We knew nothing about national campaigns and how to compete effectively in fifty states and a bunch of territories. We were about to learn a lot, and quickly.

The one thing I did know was that if we were going to be successful we had to remain true to ourselves. We would not be slick, or cute, or poll-driven. We knew whom we were fighting for, and whom we were fighting against. We could lose the election, but we wouldn't lose our soul.

Campaigns are about organizational capabilities, fund-raising, press

relations, advertising, and a million other details. But what I always knew in my heart is that the most important part of any successful campaign is the *message*. What do you believe? What are you prepared to fight for?

THE MESSAGE

For me, that was the easy part. I knew what the message would be; no consultant, no pollster had to tell me. It was the same message I had been delivering my entire life.

We had to listen to and express to the public the real pain of the people: the working families of our country, the elderly, the children, the sick, the poor, and the young. These are the people who don't make campaign contributions, who don't know how to manipulate the system, and who are almost always ignored by government. We had to tell the truth about what was really going on in the country, a truth hardly addressed by corporate media. We had to forcefully take on the arrogance and greed of the ruling class, a small group of powerful people who wanted it all.

Further—and uniquely in modern campaigns—we had to put together a strong grassroots movement in which people understood that of course it was important that we elect a progressive president, but it was equally important that we create a political revolution by involving millions of new people in the process, people who were prepared to stand up and fight back against a corrupt political and economic system. In other words, this was not going to be a typical campaign. It was not just about electing a candidate. It was the building of a movement. It was the understanding that no president alone could or should do it all. The working families and the young people of this country had to be involved.

Our campaign was also determined to think big, not small. We were prepared to raise the issues that most other campaigns would not go near, issues that were far removed from ordinary American political discourse. I have always believed that asking the right questions was far more important than giving the right answers. And this campaign *would* ask the right questions.

In that regard, I was very much helped and guided by Pope Francis and the role he was playing throughout the world. To my mind, Pope Francis

was distinguishing himself as one of the great moral and religious leaders not only of our time, but of modern history. He was opening up the entire world to new perspectives. His focus on the “dispossessed”—the poor, the elderly, and the unemployed, who were being cast aside by country after country—was awakening the conscience of the entire planet. His call for a “moral economy,” an economy that addressed the needs of ordinary people and not just capitalist profiteers, was also inspiring millions.

I had the opportunity to hear the pope when he spoke at both the White House and the Congress during his visit to Washington. In April 2016, I was invited to attend a conference in the Vatican on the need to create a moral economy. I had to take time off the campaign trail to go to Italy, but it was an opportunity that I didn’t want to miss. While there, I was able to briefly meet with the pope and some impressive leaders of the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis’s mission had helped inspire me to think big. For decades now, especially with the ascendancy of right-wing Republicanism and the growing conservatism of the Democratic Party, Congress had been thinking smaller and smaller. Too often, the debate in Washington centered on questions like: Which program for the poor should be cut? Should we lower spending on Medicaid or food stamps? Should we slash education or affordable housing? Or, conversely, how much should we give in tax breaks to wealthy people who don’t need them? How many more billions should we put into military spending?

The great challenges of our time were being ignored. Big ideas, from the progressive perspective at least, were not being discussed.

Our campaign would change that. Among other approaches, we would inject the radical concept of “morality” into the campaign. Further, we would look at what other countries around the world were doing to protect their working families and ask, “Why isn’t the wealthiest nation on earth, the United States of America, doing the same?”

Once you think about it for a minute, you realize that this is not a very complicated approach. It is simple, straightforward, honest—and it reaches people. It changes the entire nature of the discussion.

Is it *moral* that, when millions of seniors are unable to afford the medicine they need, the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent? Is it *moral* that, when we have the highest rates of childhood poverty of almost any major country in the world, the twenty wealth-

iest people in the country have more wealth than the bottom half of America—160 million people? Is it *moral* that, when our citizens are working longer hours for lower wages, 52 percent of all new income generated today is going to the top 1 percent?

And let’s take a hard look at what’s going on in the rest of the world. My Republican colleagues in the Senate often talk about “American exceptionalism.” Well, they’re right, but not for the reasons they think. It turns out that the United States is exceptional in being far, far behind many other nations in addressing the basic needs of working families. Why is the United States the only major country on earth not to guarantee health care to all people as a right? If the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and Canada can do it, why can’t we?

Why do our people work the longest hours of almost any people in the industrialized world, despite the explosion of technology and huge increases in worker productivity? Why do we have much shorter vacation time than any other major country?

Why is the United States one of the very few countries in the world, including the vast majority of poor countries, not to provide paid family and medical leave? Why do working-class women in this country have to separate themselves from their newborn babies and return to work just one or two weeks after giving birth?

At a time when almost everyone understands that human development is largely shaped during the first four years of life, why do we have one of the most dysfunctional and ineffective child care systems in the world?

Why does the United States have more people in jail than any other country? Why are we spending \$80 billion a year to lock up 2.2 million Americans—disproportionately African-American, Latino, and Native American?

Why is higher education in America far more expensive than in any other country? How does it happen that Germany, Scandinavia, and other countries can provide free tuition at their colleges while hundreds of thousands of young Americans cannot afford to get a higher education because of the cost?

These were just *some* of the questions we intended to ask.

I was comfortable with our message. The next question was: How do we get the word out?

RALLIES

From day one, I knew that rallies and public meetings would be an essential component of the campaign. Why? Mostly, I must confess, because I love doing them, and always have. As Vermont's congressman and senator, I am quite sure that I have held far more official congressional town meetings—many, many hundreds of them over the years—than any other elected officeholder in the history of our state. We hold them in the state's largest cities (Burlington, Rutland, Colchester, Brattleboro, Bennington, and Montpelier) and in towns with populations of two hundred or less. Usually, somewhere between one and three hundred people come out for the meetings—pretty good turnouts for a small, rural state.

In addition, during my election races in Vermont, rallies are always the cornerstone of the campaign. Sometimes we do three or four in a day, going from town to town. The format is pretty simple. We meet in a school, church, or town hall. The event begins with a performance by local musicians. We serve hamburgers and hot dogs or some other simple fare. A few local supporters on a panel then get up and speak briefly about issues of concern to the community and why they are supporting me. I speak for a half hour or so, take questions from the audience, and move on. And that's it.

I love town meetings and rallies for a simple reason: It gives me an opportunity to interact with ordinary people and to find out what's on their minds. I am able to communicate with them directly, without the filter of the media. Moms and dads are there with their kids. People of all ages and backgrounds show up. These public events energize me. It is what democracy is all about. I have a poster of Norman Rockwell's painting of a Vermont town meeting right on the wall of the front entrance to my Burlington office.

We were going to make rallies and town meetings the central part of our presidential campaign, however, not just because I loved doing them or because I believed that's what democracy was all about. We were going to do a large number of rallies and town meetings because they generated excitement and energy and would win us votes. It was good politics.

Today, much of what elections are about is the raising of outrageous sums of money, hiring consultants, polling, and doing television ads. In fact, many candidates spend more time raising money than doing anything else. In large states like California, television advertising is pretty much all that a

statewide campaign is about. There is very little face-to-face contact with the voters. A candidate is just another product being sold.

On top of that, because of Citizens United, there are campaigns where "independent expenditures" play a more important role than does the actual candidate. As insane as this may sound, outside special interests can have more influence in developing positive and negative themes, raising money, and putting ads on the air than the real-life candidate. In a campaign like that, the average voter is really voting for the unknown donors behind the "independent expenditures," not the person on the ballot.

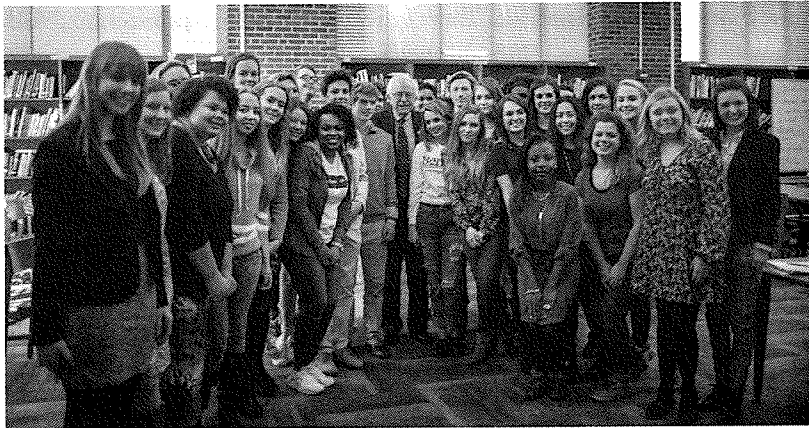
Our campaign, to say the least, was going to be different. We were not going to have independently financed super PACs telling people what I believed or didn't believe, or demonizing my opponents. I was going to be the person expressing my views and, to as great a degree as possible, I would be stating those views before real people. I wanted to put energy, spontaneity, and messiness back into the political process, not just a well-choreographed set of productions or "listening tours" carefully made for TV.

One of the goals of our campaign was to "bring people together," not just metaphorically but in the flesh. The pundits and the establishment may not have thought so, but I have always felt that the ideas I was espousing were not radical or fringe. They were mainstream, the views that millions held.

The truth is that when people come into a room, or a gymnasium or an arena, and they look around them and see all the other people in that venue sharing those same views, they come away strengthened and energized. They are not alone. They are part of something bigger than themselves. They are part of a movement. This is especially true when the audience is of diverse backgrounds, which became increasingly true as our campaign progressed. A rally of thousands of people standing together—blacks, whites, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, young and old, gay and straight, people who immigrated here and those born here. This is something unforgettable and extraordinarily powerful. It is not something that a television ad can accomplish.

Further, in the smaller states, rallies became a key part of our get-out-the-vote effort. If you go to a small town and five hundred people come out, everyone in the town will know that you were there. That is especially true if you visit, as we did, rural or remote areas where most politicians never so.

In New Hampshire, for example, we held sixty-eight public meetings



I love meeting with kids. They are our future.

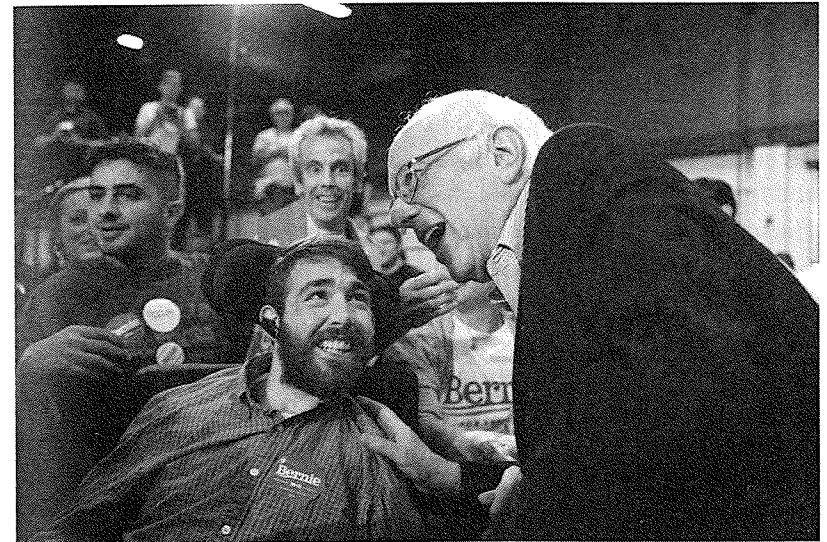
and spoke to 41,810 people. In winning that state handily, I received 151,584 votes. While there is no doubt that some people attended our meetings more than once, that means that approximately one out of four people who voted for me actually heard me in person. That is what grassroots democracy is all about. I love it.

In Iowa, we held 101 meetings, with 73,415 people attending. The total number of votes cast was about 171,000. In the Iowa caucus we won about half the delegates and believe that we may have won a small majority of the votes cast. In California, in an effort that was unprecedented in modern history, we spoke to 274,951 people at forty-six rallies throughout the state.

There was probably nobody in Congress who had more experience with town meetings and rallies than I did. We were going to learn soon, however, that rallies and public events for our presidential campaign were a little bit different from what we were used to in Vermont.

STAFFING

It is a political truism that you can't run a good campaign without a good staff. And here we had a particular problem that other campaigns did not. If you are a liberal, moderate, or conservative Democrat, if you are a



Saying hello to people after a rally.

traditional candidate, there are many excellent and experienced political operatives around the country whom you can hire, who have experience in those worlds. There are consulting firms, Democratic and Republican, that get involved in campaigns every two years. Some of them are excellent and staffed by highly skilled and experienced professionals.

But what if you are a democratic socialist, running a kind of campaign that no one else has ever attempted to run? What models do you build upon? Whom do you hire?

First, we attempted to get the best ideas we could from staff that had been involved in recent progressive campaigns. While our campaign would be different, there was no sense in reinventing the wheel. Three campaigns that we got good advice from were those of Jesse Jackson, Dennis Kucinich, and Barack Obama.

I had supported Jesse Jackson for president in 1988, and I have always believed that his campaign was enormously important in breaking down barriers and opening up new political space in our country. His concept of the "Rainbow Coalition" played a transformative role in American politics. Frankly, Barack Obama would not have been elected president without the

groundbreaking work of Jackson's campaigns. Further, not only was Jackson a brilliant and charismatic campaigner, which I saw firsthand when I campaigned with him in Vermont, but he ran a smart, guerrilla-type campaign that did remarkably well given the limited financial resources he had. We got useful advice from some of the veterans who had worked with him, and from time to time I would chat with Reverend Jackson on the phone. His son Jonathan also spoke at a number of our rallies.

Dennis Kucinich is an old friend of mine. We met each other back in the eighties when he was mayor of Cleveland and I was mayor of Burlington. We were two of the most progressive mayors in the country at that time. Later we worked closely together when we both served in the U.S. House. Throughout his political career, Dennis has always shown an enormous amount of courage and never forgot the poor background he came from.

Dennis ran for president in 2004 and 2008. The fact that he never received a whole lot of votes in his campaigns understates the impact that he has had on contemporary politics. During his campaigns for president, Dennis created a strong grassroots movement and forced the debate in the Democratic primary process into a direction it never would have gone without him. Before the campaign began, Jane and I had the opportunity to meet with him and his wife, Elizabeth, and to tap their brains as to what we could learn from his two campaigns. They were very helpful in discussing issues related to fund-raising, staffing, and transportation.

Howard Dean, a fellow Vermonter, ran in the Democratic primary in 2004. His campaign developed a number of important political breakthroughs that we learned from and utilized. He was the first candidate to successfully fund-raise online, and his concept of "meet-ups" or house parties was a very innovative concept that we built upon.

In 2008 a young U.S. senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, ran one of the most brilliant campaigns in the modern history of our country. While he was more conservative than Jackson, Kucinich, or myself, there was much to be learned from Obama's campaign. He utilized social media for communication and fund-raising in a way that no one had before. He held large and effective rallies across the country, and he tapped into the cultural energy of some of the most creative people in America, a greatly underutilized resource. As we prepared, we spoke to many people who had been involved in

Obama's campaigns. Not only did we learn a lot from them, such as how to best campaign in Iowa, we eventually brought more than a few on board.

A nontraditional, unprecedented type of campaign required a nontraditional campaign manager. That turned out to be Jeff Weaver, the owner of a small comic book store in Virginia who had never been involved in a national campaign.

I met Jeff thirty years ago when, as a young man, he came into my campaign office to volunteer on my 1986 gubernatorial campaign. He came to us with very good qualifications. Not only was he a former Marine, he had been thrown out of Boston University for his civil rights activism. That worked for me.

Jeff was born and raised in northern Vermont and eventually graduated from the University of Vermont. In 1988, during my congressional campaign, we didn't have a lot of money. We made up for it with hard work and long hours on the campaign trail. Jeff drove me around the state in his car from morning to night, often seven days a week. I am confident that I am the only congressional candidate in history to have, as his official campaign car, a Yugo. It was an unforgettable car which, when it went above 55, started rattling.

In 1990, when we won the congressional race, Jeff went with me to Washington. He is a hard worker and extremely smart. Over the years he advanced his way up in the office and eventually became my chief of staff. In 2006, he managed my campaign for the Senate, and when we won he moved over there with me. Over the years Jeff married, had three great kids, and picked up a law degree from Georgetown.

Unlike every political observer in the world, Jeff believed from day one that we had a real chance to win the election, and he ran the campaign on that basis. Jeff was at the center of our campaign wheel's many spokes. He had to coordinate the fund-raising and the budgeting, the hiring and firing of key staff, and the transferring of some of them as new primaries and caucuses came on the horizon. He was involved in the production of paid media and when and where to air the ads, as well as organizing rallies and handling security issues. His legal skills were also helpful when it came to dealing with the DNC and the Democratic establishment. Jeff is a good writer, and on some issues, like criminal justice, where he is particularly knowledgeable, he helped me prepare speeches. He also became a regular on television shows as

he became one of the strongest defenders of me and the campaign against the attacks that were coming our way from the Clinton camp.

Running a campaign, especially ours, is an insane experience that one can never be fully prepared for. Jeff did a great job.

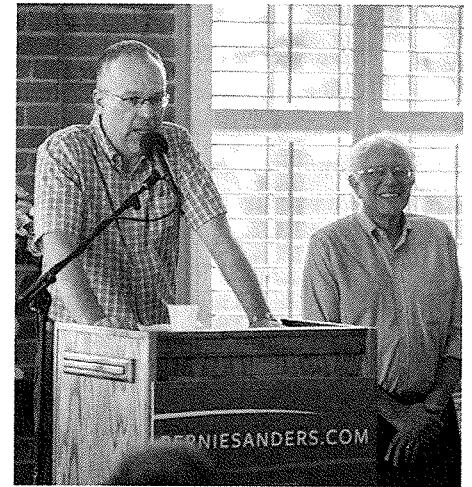
Warren Gunnels has been a key policy adviser of mine going back to when I was in the House. He kindly took a leave of absence from the Senate, where he served as my staff director as the ranking member on the Budget Committee, to plunge into the campaign. As Chief Policy Advisor, Warren played an outstanding role in researching and writing speeches and position papers on a wide range of economic issues, from Wall Street to health care to infrastructure. Warren is an extraordinarily hard worker who, no matter what the obstacles, always gets the job done.

Michael Briggs, a former writer for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, has been my communications director since I entered the Senate ten years ago, and has done a great job. Michael is one of the hardest workers I have ever known. He is on call morning, noon, and night, seven days a week, which is how I often work. Michael wanted to go where the action was and when I announced for president, he took a leave from the Senate office to join the campaign full time. He was at my side every moment of the campaign, dealing with national and local media, and arranging my many interview and media appearances.

In every campaign there is one person who is the “go-to guy.” For much of our campaign that person was Shannon Jackson, a young man from Vermont who had formerly worked in my Senate office. Shannon was there to coordinate scheduling, flights, food, and all the other essentials that had to be taken care of.

JANE AND THE KIDS

The campaign became a family affair with Jane and the kids playing a very active role. Jane, who served as my chief of staff for a while when I was in the House, knows politics and media very well. In this campaign she not only was a key adviser but became a very visible media surrogate, appearing on many television and radio shows. She also campaigned for me in Alaska and Hawaii, both of which we won. She also showed the country that not everyone in the family is grumpy.



My son Levi with me during a political meeting and, at right, Levi speaking as part of the campaign in New Hampshire.



Levi, Nicole, Carina, Jane, Dave, Liza, Heather, and Marc in the spin room after the New Hampshire debate.

The four kids were as involved as their schedules allowed. My oldest son, Levi, an advocate for low-income people, gave speeches for me in his home state of New Hampshire and played an invaluable role as a researcher who knows his way around the Internet. My daughter Heather, a yoga teacher, somehow got me on the front page of yoga magazines and helped out as we campaigned in Arizona, where she now lives. My son Dave knows a whole lot of people in the arts community, and did a great job in helping to create the “Art of a Political Revolution” and bringing cultural energy into the campaign. My youngest daughter, Carina, did a bit of speaking, set up some of the administrative structures in the campaign, and made sure we were always greeted with family and good food when we made it home. Carina, Dave, and Liza worked together to take care of family and home matters, not an insignificant thing when you’re always on the road. They all joined us as we crisscrossed the country, bringing the love and support necessary for us to maintain a nonstop schedule. Everyone on the campaign particularly enjoyed it when the grandkids came.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I am seventy-five years of age. I grew up with newspapers, radio, television, and books. The editorial page and letters to the editor were important to me, and I have written my fair share of op-eds. When I was elected mayor of Burlington in 1981, there were no computers in City Hall and no video to record the city council meetings. There were no e-mails. Hard to believe, but we actually wrote individual letters to constituents.

In my early Vermont campaigns, much of our communication with the media was through press releases that were sent via the postal system. We sent a release out on Monday, it got to the media on Wednesday, and, if we were lucky, it got printed on Thursday.

In case you haven’t noticed, the world has changed.

Personally, I am a bit of a Luddite. I’m not all that impressed with every aspect of modern technology. Too much change for the sake of change. And let me make the radical statement that I don’t believe that you can say something profound in the 140 characters that make up a tweet.

But I am not dumb. As a congressman and a senator, it didn’t take me long to understand the advantages of modern communications technology.

It also made sense to hire young people for my office who knew what they were doing. Originally, Jeff Frank set up our Senate office social media. He was joined in 2013 by Kenneth Pennington, who greatly expanded our efforts. Despite representing one of the smallest states in the country, by 2014 my Senate office had a greater presence on Facebook, Twitter, and the other social media than almost any other congressional office. We were also ahead of the curve in the use of e-mail, video, and conference calling.

With regard to the presidential campaign, we knew from the beginning that the Internet and social media would be important tools for us in terms of communication and raising money. We just didn’t know *how* important they would be.

We started the establishment of our campaign’s digital team by bringing on some of the bright young people we had in our Senate office who were doing social media there. Kenneth Pennington led that effort and was joined by Hector Sigala. We then interviewed a number of people and organizations to broaden what we could accomplish online. We settled on Revolution Messaging, a well-respected company with leaders, like Scott Goodstein, who had worked on Obama’s campaign and for progressive organizations.

Revolution jump-started our online fund-raising and advertising efforts. The first day of the campaign, we signed up a hundred thousand people and raised \$1.5 million, with Tim Tagaris leading the fund-raising effort at Revolution. Arun Chaudhary led an excellent team, including Hilary Hess, Fred Guerrier, Eric Elofson, and Peter O’Leary, who captured the excitement of the rallies on video so that Hector could spread them far and wide on social media. And we built a community, with millions of people receiving our e-mails, in large part due to online advertisements driven by Keegan Goudiss, another one of the Revolution partners.

From the beginning, we knew it was important to fund this campaign differently than most. We weren’t going to be receiving a whole lot of support from wealthy donors and we didn’t want a super PAC. In the end, 94 percent of our money came in online, and we not only talked the talk about campaign finance reform, we walked the walk.

But we didn’t use the Internet just to raise money. As an example, on July 29, 2015, I was able to speak to more than 110,000 supporters at 3,700 house parties held in every state in the country. What an extraordinary and powerful organizing tool! We were able to live-stream many of the rallies and town meetings that we held. Almost every week we were sending out short videos

on some of the most important issues facing the country, and millions of people viewed them and passed them on to their friends. Every single day, messages on issues of the day and events we were holding went out to millions.

When people talk about how well we did with young people, clearly one of the reasons for that was our success with social media. Social media enabled us to talk directly to an entire generation about the most important issues facing their lives and start an online discussion about them. Needless to say, that was far more effective for us than short sound bites on television or the political gossip that I often have to respond to from the corporate media.

Further, as part of our social media success, I learned something that never in a million years would've occurred to me, but is now part of many modern campaigns. As a result of the growth of our social media network, our campaign began running a quite large and lucrative merchandise marketing company. Yes, while we were busy trying to transform the economic and political life of the nation we were also selling T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, mugs, buttons, bumper stickers, and all kinds of other paraphernalia. In fact, for a while, I believe we were the major source of business for union-made T-shirts in the United States.

But we weren't the only ones making money off campaign products. We had unleashed an entrepreneurial volcano. Who said I was bad for capitalism: In Vermont, a teddy bear company was making Bernie Bears. There was even an action doll, not to mention underwear, many styles of shirts, shopping bags, and a million different kinds of buttons.

When we began the campaign we had high expectations of what we could do through social media, but they paled in terms of what we actually accomplished in terms of communication and fund-raising. We ended up with some 5 million Facebook friends and more than 3 million followers on Twitter.

Through the Internet we received a record-breaking eight million individual campaign contributions from 2.5 million contributors.

I think it's fair to say that we "wrote the book" for progressive politics in terms of showing the potential of social media.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

One of the challenges that we faced was that we were taking on virtually the entire Democratic establishment. And I mean the entire Demo-

cratic establishment. Before Hillary Clinton even formally announced her intention to seek the Democratic nomination, eight months before the first vote was cast in Iowa, there were four hundred superdelegates lined up to support her. In every state that we contested we had to take on Democratic governors, members of Congress, senators, locally elected officials, and party leaders—and their organizational ability to bring out the vote.

How do you take on the entire political establishment, especially in states where you start off by knowing almost nobody? You build a great volunteer organization. There is and was no question of seasoned politicians knowing how to get people to the polls. But our campaign had something that the Clinton campaign and the establishment didn't have, something that permeated every aspect of our campaign: We had energy, passion, and dedication. By the end of the campaign, through an enormous amount of effort, we were able to bring many hundreds of thousands of volunteers into the fight.

SURROGATES AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

I am a United States senator. I am well known. I can attract a crowd at a rally. I can get on TV and radio pretty easily. I can do newspaper interviews. But, in a presidential campaign, I can't be the only one out there in the public eye. We need help in spreading the message of the campaign. We need support from well-known and respected surrogates who can attract attention from the public and the media and give the campaign credibility. We need the support of large progressive organizations.

Easier said than done.

Normally, in a national campaign, much of the surrogate help for a candidate comes from elected officials. A candidate goes into a city or a state and is joined by a governor, a senator, a mayor. Clearly, that wasn't going to be the case for us. Almost all Democratic elected officials had lined up behind Clinton.

Our strategy was to effectively utilize those few elected officials who were prepared to support us, as well as political activists from the world of labor, environmental activism, academia, and social and racial justice. Frankly, our surrogate support started slowly, but as the campaign gained momentum

we received more and more backing from some extraordinary people. One of the joys of the campaign was working with them.

The elected officials from Congress who signed on to the campaign were Senator Jeff Merkley, Representative Keith Ellison, Representative Tulsi Gabbard, Representative Raul Grijalva, Representative Marcy Kaptur, and Representative Peter Welch. There are 46 Democrats in the Senate. We had 1. There are 187 Democrats in the House. We had five. In the world of Democratic politics, it took real courage for each of these members to buck the Clinton organization, the party leadership, and the political establishment and join our campaign. Needless to say, some wealthy campaign contributors were not happy with their decisions.

Jeff Merkley, a senator from Oregon, and I worked together over the years on a number of climate change and environmental issues. He is one of the most progressive members of the Senate. I was proud to have him on board.

Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii joined our campaign in a rather dramatic fashion: She resigned as vice chair of the Democratic National Committee. Tulsi, a veteran of the war in Iraq, is deeply concerned about foreign and military policy. She saw the lives of too many of her comrades destroyed by a war we should never have gotten into, and she wanted policies to make sure that we never got into another such war again.

The most progressive group in the U.S. House is the Progressive Caucus, with seventy-one members. It is also now the largest caucus within the House Democratic Party. When I entered the Congress in 1991, I helped create that organization. I thought it was important that there be a caucus that brought together members to focus on economic, social, racial, and environmental injustice. Today, the House Progressive Caucus is led by Congressmen Keith Ellison and Raul Grijalva. They are both extraordinary members of Congress and are doing a great job chairing the caucus. I was proud when they both decided to join the campaign.

Keith Ellison is one of the few Muslims in the U.S. Congress. During the early rise of Trumpism and the growing expression of anti-Muslim prejudice, I joined Keith and other Muslims for a public meeting in a mosque in Washington. It was a moving experience and a reminder that this is America. We should not be hating people because of their religion.

Our goal throughout the campaign was to reach out to people of all religious faiths and all ethnic backgrounds. We ended up doing very well

within the Muslim community, and Muslim votes, in fact, may have been the margin of victory for us in the Michigan primary. As a Jew, I was especially proud to be working with Muslims. Yes: We can come together.

Raul Grijalva is an old friend from Tucson, Arizona, and a leader in both the progressive and Latino communities. One of the most beautiful nights of the campaign was speaking at a rally before about seven thousand people at a baseball stadium in Tucson after having been introduced by Raul. It was one of the most diversely attended events of the campaign. The crowd was largely Latino, but many blacks and whites were there as well.

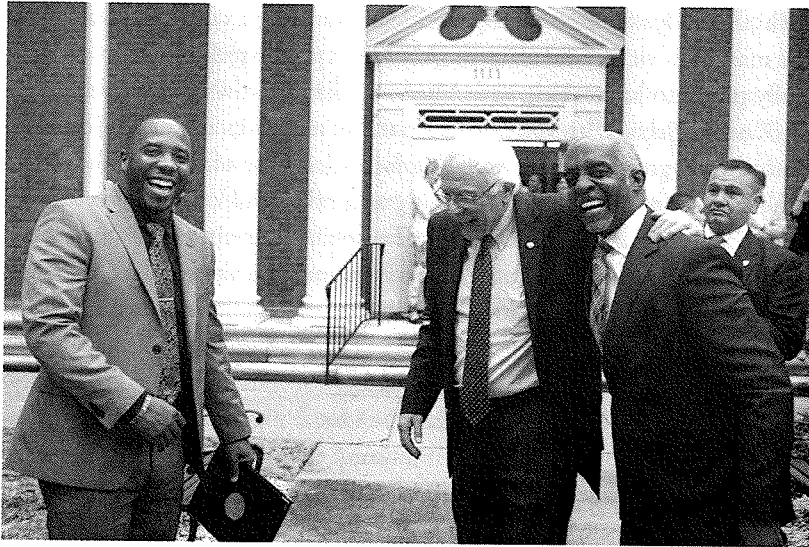
Representative Marcy Kaptur and I have worked together for twenty-five years, starting when we served in the House together. Marcy represents Toledo, Ohio. She has seen her community devastated by disastrous trade agreements that have resulted in massive job losses. Marcy remains one of the strongest voices in Congress in demanding that we have trade agreements that work for American workers, not just the CEOs of large corporations. She was a key asset in our campaign.

Representative Peter Welch succeeded me in the U.S. House when I won my seat in the Senate. He is a former president of the Vermont State Senate and someone I have known for almost forty years. Over those years he and I have worked together on many Vermont issues. It was comforting to hear Peter's down-home Vermont perspective on the campaign.

Our campaign also attracted some great leaders from the local and state level. Nina Turner, a former state senator from Ohio and one of the most dynamic orators in America, came on board early and was extremely active throughout the campaign. Nina was a constant and brilliant spokesperson for us on TV and radio, and introduced me at events throughout the country. Talk about courage! Nina took an enormous amount of heat from party officials in Ohio when she withdrew her support for Secretary Clinton and came on board our campaign. Nina's husband, Jeff, a Teamster, was also very helpful.

Chuy Garcia is a county commissioner in Cook County, Chicago. I supported him when he ran against Rahm Emanuel for mayor of Chicago in 2015. In my campaign, he not only helped in Illinois, but traveled throughout the country—especially before Latino audiences. Chuy is a stand-up guy and has become a good friend.

Why would black members of the South Carolina Legislature like

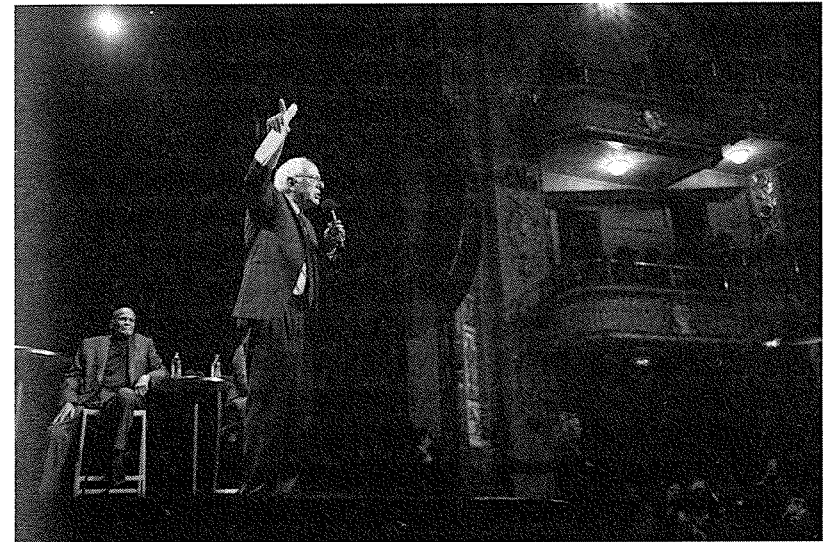


In South Carolina with State Representative Terry Alexander.

Justin Bamberg, Terry Alexander, Joe Neal, and a few others support a white socialist from Vermont who trailed Hillary Clinton by 50 points in the polls in their state? Well, you'll have to ask them, but that's what they did. In a conservative state like South Carolina, they showed enormous courage in doing so—and I am deeply grateful to them. Truthfully, the problems and politics of the South are not something that I was familiar with when I began the campaign. I learned a lot, and these guys helped teach me.

CELEBRITY SUPPORT

For better or worse, well-known Hollywood personalities and other celebrities can and do play an important role in politics. And we had many of them actively involved in our campaign, including some very dedicated people who have spent much of their lives as political activists. There are many celebrities who simply enjoy the glow of fame and fortune. The people who participated in our campaign, however, used their name recognition and popularity to educate America about issues dear to their hearts and



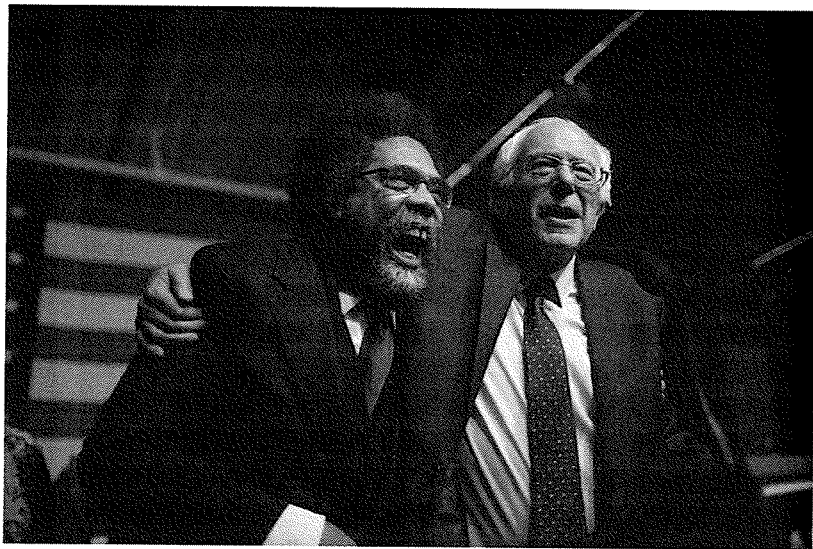
What a thrill! At the Apollo Theater in Harlem with Harry Belafonte.

vitaly important for the future of our country: poverty, racism, climate change and the environment, immigration reform, voter suppression, peace, and many other issues.

It was a great thrill to be on the stage at the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem in a panel discussion with the singer Harry Belafonte, who has been involved in progressive politics from his youth. I also had the opportunity to meet with him and his wife earlier, where he told me about some of the great work that he continues to do, at age ninety.

Cornel West is a man of courage and brilliance. He is a prolific writer, an extraordinary orator, and a friend of mine. It is always a bit intimidating to get up on a stage after being introduced by Cornel. Dr. West was an important part of the campaign from coast to coast.

One of America's most acclaimed actresses, Susan Sarandon, introduced me at rallies across the country, and did events on her own. Jane and I had met Susan years before when she acted in the film *Sweet Hearts Dance* in Vermont. Susan took heat from some of her Hollywood friends for supporting me. Her sincerity and down-to-earthness came across to the thousands of people she spoke to.



Cornel West and I had a lot of fun on the trail.

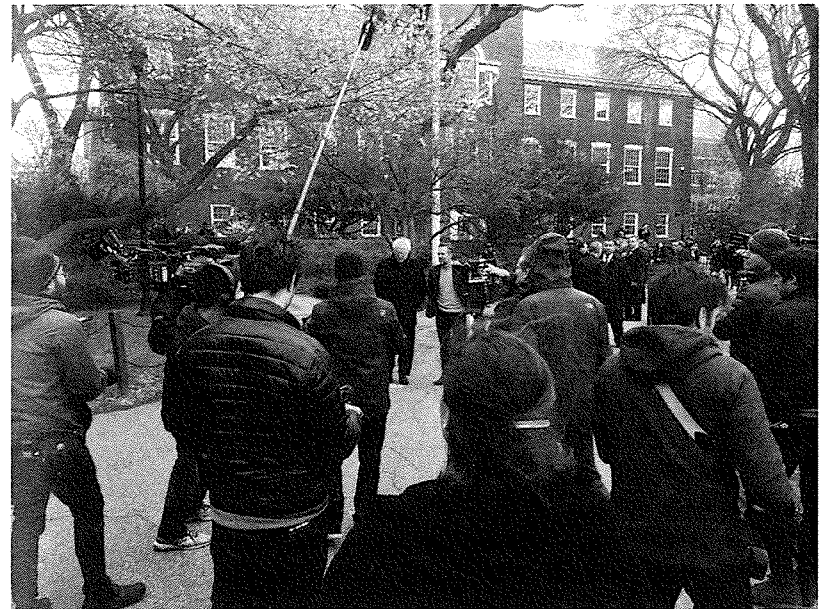
Rosario Dawson, a passionate defender of the needs of low-income people, was onstage with me when we spoke to 18,000 people at a park in the South Bronx, one of the poorest communities in the country. Rosario played an important role throughout the campaign.

Sarah Silverman is a brilliant comedienne and was funny as hell when she introduced me to a crowd of 25,000 in Los Angeles. She created an amazing video supporting my candidacy that millions saw online, thanks to her extensive social media network.

I am a big fan of Spike Lee and his movies. He created some fantastic videos and radio ads for the campaign, did an interview and photo shoot with me for the New York edition of *The Hollywood Reporter*, gave opening remarks at events, and even attended the Brooklyn debate.

Danny DeVito introduced me at rallies on several occasions, and got a better response than I did. Danny is one of my favorite actors and a real progressive.

Everybody knows Danny Glover's movies. What many do not know is that Danny is a lifelong activist who has been involved in the struggle for racial, economic, and social justice for decades. Danny was very involved



Shooting a video at Brooklyn College with Mark Ruffalo on environmental issues.

in the campaign and spoke at some of our larger rallies. He brought my old friend and fellow mayor, Gus Newport, to one of them and we all had an excellent discussion over dinner—a rare opportunity in fast-paced days.

Mark Ruffalo is not only “The Hulk.” He is a strong environmentalist. We got together in Brooklyn to have an unscripted, in-depth discussion about environmental issues—with cameras just capturing it all. Millions saw it via social media.

Shailene Woodley is a young actress actively involved in the environmental movement and the fight for Native American rights. Her voice was loud and clear throughout our campaign.

I have known Vermont's own Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield (Ben and Jerry) for decades. Not only did they create an outstanding ice cream and become leaders in the businesses-for-social-responsibility movement, they are heavily involved in the fight for campaign finance reform and other progressive causes. Both of them campaigned for and with me throughout the country.

Jane had seen Dick Van Dyke, the TV and movie star, in an interview talking about how the United States was moving toward an oligarchic society. He sounded like our kind of guy. He came aboard the campaign, did a number of events with me, and at ninety was incredibly spry.

Killer Mike, the rapper, is a brilliant artist who helped us reach out to young people—black, white, and Latino—throughout the country in a way that I could not have without him. He introduced me to a large audience in his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, and worked hard for us in numerous venues throughout the country.

Jim Hightower is someone I have known for decades. He is a former Texas commissioner of agriculture, a bestselling author, and one of the great political humorists in the country. In Texas and throughout the country, Jim played an active role in the campaign.

Actress Mimi Kennedy came on board very early, delivering petitions to have me run for president even before I announced. She generously hosted one of our very few fund-raisers in the backyard of her home in California.

Seth MacFarlane, an actor and producer, was also one of the first to come on board, and provided a big boost with the younger generation. Frances Fisher, George Lopez, Stephen Bishop, Justin Long, Josh Fox, Kendrick Sampson, and Tim Robbins all came on early and stayed active as well. They spoke at rallies, came up with innovative ways to reach out to their audiences, and made a significant difference in the campaign.

These are just a few of the men and women—actors, actresses, singers, dancers, rappers, artists—who played an active role in my campaign. These well-known Americans were willing, sometimes against a great deal of peer pressure, to stick their necks out for the political revolution. I am grateful for what they did and look forward to working with them in the future.

FIGHTING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

From day one of the campaign, we knew that it was important to win the backing of progressive organizations with large memberships. Despite the fact that I was one of the most progressive members of Congress, with a far stronger record than Secretary Clinton, that turned out to be a difficult task.

Hillary and Bill Clinton had developed close personal ties with many of the leaders of these organizations over the years, and the Clinton cam-

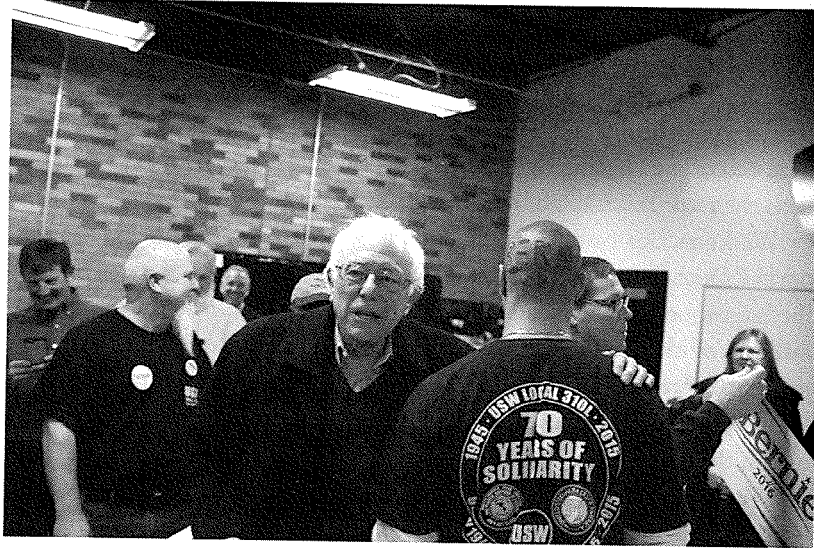
paign was able to win many of them over. During the fight for endorsements, I noticed an interesting process. In those organizations that held open and democratic grassroots elections regarding the endorsement process, we usually did very well. In those organizations where endorsements were determined by executive boards, we usually lost. In general, we did well with the rank and file, not so well with the Inside the Beltway leadership.

We knew our campaign was taking off when we won the strong support of Democracy for America (DFA) and MoveOn.org. These are two of the largest online grassroots organizations in the country. They both have millions of members. These two organizations opened up the endorsement process to their members, and in both cases we won landslide victories—over 70 percent of the vote. Both groups played an aggressive and positive role in the campaign.

We also won the support of some great national unions. The National Nurses United, led by the dynamic RoseAnn DeMoro, was the first national union to support us. They joined not just because they are a progressive union, but because of my support for a Medicare for All single-payer health care system. These nurses, who take their lifesaving jobs very seriously, understood that they were unable to fully do the jobs they were trained to do within a dysfunctional health system that denied care to millions. They wanted real health care reform. They wanted Bernie Sanders for president. And they played an active role in many, many states.

The Communications Workers of America (CWA), led by Chris Shelton, also came on board early. They knew my record well and knew that in my twenty-five years in Congress I had one of the strongest pro-union voting records of any member. They also knew that over the years I had worked with them on a number of telecommunications issues. In fact, on more than one occasion I had walked the picket lines with CWA members, in Vermont and elsewhere.

I have been one of the strongest supporters in Congress of the United States Postal Service, and have worked with the postal unions for years against Republican efforts to privatize it. In fact, a couple of years ago, a few of us in the Senate managed to prevent the shutdown of thousands of rural post offices. I was honored to have been invited to speak to the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), led by Mark Dimondstein. The support I received at their meeting in Las Vegas was strong and I was proud to receive their endorsement soon after.



We had great rank-and-file union support! (Notice the haircut.)

Our infrastructure—roads, bridges, rail, public transit, water systems, and wastewater plants—is crumbling, and nobody knows that better than the workers who are employed in those systems and their unions. One of the most important parts of my agenda was creating millions of new jobs by rebuilding our infrastructure. I was delighted that two of the major transportation unions in the country—the Amalgamated Transit Union and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union—came on board the campaign in support of that agenda.

As we fought to get union support, Larry Cohen, the former president of the CWA, did an incredible job in organizing grassroots support for a Labor for Bernie coalition. Hillary Clinton had the support of a number of union leaders; we were getting the support of the rank and file. On several occasions I was on a telephone conference call with thousands of grassroots trade union activists.

In the spring, we won an important victory by getting the national AFL-CIO to postpone their endorsement. Despite the fact that it was assumed by almost everyone that the AFL-CIO, representing 12.5 million workers, would endorse Secretary Clinton early on, our backers on the

executive committee were able to win a postponement until after the nominating process was completed. This was important because it meant that the significant resources of the national AFL-CIO, in terms of money and volunteer efforts, would not be utilized to benefit the Clinton campaign.

PAID MEDIA

In my Vermont campaigns we almost always did paid media—television, radio, and print—close to home. We relied on local media people we had known for years. The exception to that was in 1996, when I anticipated a rough reelection campaign to the U.S. Congress. In 1994, during the Gingrich Republican landslide, I had run the worst campaign of my life and won by only 2 points. We knew we would have trouble in 1996, and we needed expertise that we didn't have in Vermont.

Tad Devine was recommended to me by Congressman Peter DeFazio, a friend of mine. Devine was a nationally known Democratic media consultant, and had done great work for candidates all across the country. He did our media work in 1996 and returned to Vermont in 2006 to help us with my U.S. Senate campaign.

Tad is actually the only national political media person I know. I had used him on two occasions in Vermont, so it was only natural that I turned to him again for the presidential race. He brought with him a number of other people from his firm, including Mark Longabaugh, Julian Mulvey, and Scott Turner, who were also extremely helpful. Mark, a strong environmentalist, not only helped us do general political work, but played an important role in reaching out for us to the environmental community.

While we put an enormous amount of resources and energy into rallies, social media, and grassroots organizing, there's no question that paid media and television advertising played an important role in the campaign, and that we put a lot of money into that effort.

Political experts can argue about how important TV and radio campaign ads are in the changing media world in which we live. But no one denies that large parts of our population, for better or worse, continue to receive much of the information about the world in which they live

from television. Media ads remain very important and, as much as I would have liked to, they were a political tool that we couldn't ignore.

I'm proud of the quality of the ads that we ran. Some of them were pointed, but they weren't negative. We never once mentioned the name of Hillary Clinton in any paid media that we did. Don't take my word for it, but many objective observers commented that some of our ads were the best-produced of the entire campaign. One beautiful ad that received a lot of national attention was called "America," which included the music to the Simon and Garfunkel song of that title. Over lunch in the Capitol, many months before, Jane and I had talked to Paul Simon about allowing us to use one of his songs. He agreed. Art Garfunkel also came on board, and the ad was produced.

Brent Burdowski of the Washington paper *The Hill* wrote:

The new television ad that was released by the Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) campaign, based on Simon and Garfunkel's song "America," is the most brilliant and appropriate campaign ad of the year so far, and may be the most important campaign ad since President Reagan's "Morning in America" ad. The ad perfectly captures the vision and spirit of the Sanders campaign and the mood of an America today that is the stuff of diverse people yearning to come together for common dreams and aspirations, at a time when many voters are hurting and hungering for a better life. The ad brings together music and video behind the Sanders message in a way that is fun to watch and memorable in substance and tone.

FUND-RAISING

The message is key to any serious campaign, but the message doesn't matter much if nobody hears it.

There are fifty states in the country, and we would eventually need staff for all of them if we were going to win primaries and caucuses. Rallies are great, but you have to pay for the venues that you use, and there are sound system, lighting, security, and other rally costs. There are many, many people who want to volunteer in a campaign, but to effectively mobilize them paid coordinators are needed. Television and radio ads may be old-fashioned, but

they remain vital to a modern campaign. Somebody was going to have to produce the ads and put them on the air—an expensive proposition. Social media is an exploding medium, but the people who produce it need a paycheck.

How could we pay for all of this? Well, we were going to have to raise a lot of money.

When I ran for governor in 1986 and lost, I was outspent. When I ran for Congress in 1988 and lost, I was outspent. When I ran for Congress again in 1990 and won, I was outspent. In 2006, when I was elected as Vermont's senator, I was outspent.

Raising money is the ugliest part of modern American politics, and I personally hate to do it. As a result of Citizens United, a bad fund-raising process became much worse. Nowadays, a serious run for the presidency requires somewhere around \$1 billion. As I've said many times, I'm going to do everything I can to bring about real campaign finance reform, overturn Citizens United, and move to public funding of elections. But that wasn't going to happen in this campaign. We needed money now. We would have to do some serious fund-raising.

Over the years, the easiest and most effective way for me to raise money was to take an old-fashioned approach. I would write long letters to my list of supporters, analyzing the current situation and describing to them what I hoped to accomplish. We printed up the letters by the tens of thousands, took them to the post office, mailed them, and waited for the return envelopes to come back. In more recent years we also used e-mail and the Internet to raise funds, and that also worked well, bringing in large numbers of small contributions.

All in all, when I was running in Vermont, we were able to raise a reasonable sum of money for a statewide race from small individual contributions. In addition, we received help from labor unions, environmental groups, senior groups, and other organizations sympathetic to my politics. Sometimes, although rarely, I would get on the phone and ask wealthy people for money.

Our approach for raising funds for a statewide campaign in the small state of Vermont worked well for our needs. Now, however, we were playing in a different league, and needed to raise far more money.

As we contemplated the run for president, several things became clear in terms of fund-raising. First, I was not going to do what every other

presidential candidate was doing, and that was to establish a super PAC. Super PACs, which allow for unlimited contributions from wealthy people, are the exact manifestation of everything that is wrong with politics today. The idea of establishing one was tempting, and easy to do, but I wasn't going to do it.

Second, I was not going to spend large amounts of time on the phone begging money from wealthy individuals or organizations. Not only was this time-consuming, it was extraordinarily demoralizing. It would take the spirit right out of what I wanted to do.

Third, I was not going to do "high-dollar" fund-raisers where small numbers of people made large contributions. This was going to be a people's campaign, and I was going to spend my time and energy talking to ordinary human beings. To the degree that we did fund-raisers—and we did a few—they would be "low-dollar" events. People were welcome to contribute more, but a \$25 donation would be more than enough to get you right in the door.

So, how would we raise the kind of money we would need to run a serious national campaign? The answer was pretty simple. We would encourage, in every way we could, large numbers of people to make small contributions. This would be an essential part of what the political revolution was all about. We would show the world that, yes, it was possible to run a serious national campaign without being dependent on wealthy people, Wall Street, corporate interests, and their super PACs. Consistent with my view that real change never takes place from the top on down, but always from the bottom on up, that's how we would raise our campaign funds.

And that is exactly what we did, with a success that we could never have imagined.

Through our online efforts, our campaign ended up raising the astronomical sum of \$232 million. That money came through some 8 million individual contributions from 2.5 million people. The average donation was \$27. This is an unprecedented accomplishment in the history of American politics, and I am enormously grateful to all those people who helped make it happen.

FIVE

THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS

May 26, 2015, Burlington, Vermont. Today is the day. The formal announcement. I am running for president of the United States.

Jane and I and the few others we had on board had argued as to whether or not we should do the opening campaign event inside or outside, at lunchtime or in the early evening. In my previous campaigns for Congress and the U.S. Senate, we did the events indoors at a large local church. They worked well. Hundreds of Vermonters attended.

But this was different. We were running for the White House. Larger crowd. A lot of media to accommodate. A much bigger deal.

Fortunately, Jane prevailed. We decided to do the event outside, in the very beautiful waterfront park on Lake Champlain that I had helped to create when I was mayor thirty years before. The park had a wide grassy area that could accommodate (we hoped) a large crowd, and as a backdrop we had the beautiful Adirondack Mountains behind the lake. We would hold the event after work, with the hope that more people would be able to attend. And we prayed for good weather. We didn't have much of a rain plan.

We lucked out. It was a perfect Vermont spring day. People started arriving early, and they kept on coming. To our utter amazement, over five thousand people showed up—men, women, and a lot of children. The local newspaper live-streamed the event and seven thousand more people were "there" in that way. According to the local media, it was the largest political gathering in the modern history of the state.

The event attracted a decent amount of national media, too. All of the major networks and cable television stations were there, as well as virtually all of the national newspapers. Ed Schultz of MSNBC broadcast the event live. Needless to say, the event was heavily covered by the Vermont media.

In the past, when I had announced my candidacy for office in Vermont, or given any kind of important speech, it was usually an informal affair. I would walk through the crowd, shake hands, and chat; that's the way we are in Vermont. But today was different. Too many people. Too much media. Too much opportunity for something to go wrong. On this day, I was driven to right behind the stage, and that's where I waited for the introductory remarks to end.

It was an emotional day for me, because many of the Vermonters in attendance were people I knew, some for many years. They were friends, neighbors, and people I had worked with, in one way or another, for decades as a mayor, congressman, or senator. My entire family—Jane, Levi and Raine, Heather and Marc, Carina and Blake, Dave and Liza, and Nicole and Keegan—were up on the stage with me, as were my seven grandchildren: Sunnee, Cole, Ryleigh, Grayson, Ella, Tess, and Dylan.

We were, all together, beginning a very strange venture. We had no idea as to how it would end or where it would lead us. But, in my beautiful state of Vermont, we were starting off with an enormous amount of love.

After great music by my favorite Vermont band, Mango Jam, I was introduced by friends I had worked closely with in Vermont over the years—people who knew me well. Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield of Ben & Jerry's; Donna Bailey of the Addison County Parent/Child Center; Bill McKibben, one of the leading environmentalists in the world; Brenda Torpy, the head of the Champlain Valley Housing Trust; Mike O'Day, a local labor leader; and Jenny Nelson, a Vermont leader on agricultural issues.

In his introductory remarks, Ben Cohen was very kind: "Bernie is the real thing. He's not about reading the polls and seeing what he has to say to get elected. The guy's been saying and doing the same stuff for the last thirty years. If it weren't so inspiring, he'd be boring. He's about leading with his heart and his soul and using his brain for what's best for the little guy."

Bill McKibben, who lives forty miles down the road in Ripton, Vermont, said, "What you see is what you get, and nowhere is that more true

than in his staunch defense of the environment. . . . We need to let this nation know that Bernie is loved in every corner of this great state—in Newport in the north to Bennington and Brattleboro in the south. There's no leader who Vermonters have ever respected and voted for quite the way that they respect Bernie, because they know he always means what he says and he always stands for what he believes."

Then it was my turn, with family and friends at my side, to give the following remarks.

Today We Begin a Political Revolution

Thank you very much for being here, and for all the support you have given me over the years: as the mayor of this great city, as Vermont's only congressman and now as a U.S. senator. Thanks also to my longtime friends and fellow Vermonters: Bill McKibben, Brenda Torpy, Donna Bailey, Mike O'Day, and Ben and Jerry for all that you do—and for your generous remarks. Thanks also to Jenny Nelson for moderating this event and for your leadership in Vermont agriculture.

I also want to thank my family: my wife, Jane, my brother, Larry, my children, Levi, Heather, Carina, and Dave, for their love and support, and my beautiful seven grandchildren—Sunnee, Cole, Ryleigh, Grayson, Ella, Tess, and Dylan—who provide so much joy in my life. Today, here in our small state—a state that has led the nation in so many ways—I am proud to announce my candidacy for president of the United States of America.

Today, with your support and the support of millions of people throughout this country, we begin a political revolution to transform our country economically, politically, socially, and environmentally.

Today we stand here and say loudly and clearly that "Enough is enough. This great nation and its government belong to all of the people, and not to a handful of billionaires, their super PACs, and their lobbyists."

Brothers and sisters: Now is NOT the time for thinking small. Now is NOT the time for the same old same old establishment politics and stale Inside the Beltway ideas.

Now IS the time for millions of working families to come together, to revitalize American democracy, to end the collapse of the American middle class, and to make certain that our children and grandchildren are able to enjoy a quality of life that brings them health, prosperity, security, and joy—and that once again makes the United States the leader in the world in the fight for economic and social justice, for environmental sanity, and for a world of peace.

My fellow Americans: This country faces more serious problems today than at any time since the Great Depression, and, if you include the planetary crisis of climate change, it may well be that the challenges we face now are more dire than at any time in our modern history.

Here is my promise to you for this campaign. Not only will I fight to protect the working families of this country, but we're going to build a movement of millions of Americans who are prepared to stand up and fight back. We're going to take this campaign directly to the people, in town meetings and door-to-door conversations, on street corners and in social media—and that's *berniesanders.com*, by the way. This week we will be in New Hampshire, Iowa, and Minnesota—and that's just the start of a vigorous grassroots campaign.

Let's be clear. This campaign is not about Bernie Sanders. It is not about Hillary Clinton. It is not about Jeb Bush or anyone else. This campaign is about the needs of the American people, and the ideas and proposals that effectively address those needs. As someone who has never run a negative political ad in his life, my campaign will be driven by issues and serious debate—not political gossip, not reckless personal attacks or character assassination. This is what I believe the American people want and deserve. I hope other candidates agree, and I hope the media allows that to happen.



Announcing my campaign in Burlington.

Politics in a democratic society should not be treated like a baseball game, a game show, or a soap opera. The times are too serious for that.

Let me take a minute to touch on some of the issues that I will be focusing on in the coming months, and then give you an outline of an Agenda for America which will, in fact, deal with these problems and lead us to a better future.

Income and Wealth Inequality. Today we live in a nation which is the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, but that reality means very little for most of us, because almost all of that wealth is owned and controlled by a tiny handful of individuals. In America we now have more income and wealth inequality than any other major country on earth, and the gap between the very rich and everyone else is wider than at any time since the 1920s. The issue of wealth and

income inequality is the great moral issue of our time, it is the great economic issue of our time, and it is the great political issue of our time. And we will address it.

Let me be very clear. There is something profoundly wrong when the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, and when 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. There is something profoundly wrong when, in recent years, we have seen a proliferation of millionaires and billionaires at the same time as millions of Americans work longer hours for lower wages and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on earth. There is something profoundly wrong when one family owns more wealth than the bottom 130 million Americans. This grotesque level of inequality is immoral. It is bad economics. It is unsustainable. This type of rigged economy is not what America is supposed to be about. This has got to change, and as your president, together we will change it.

Economics. But it is not just income and wealth inequality. It is the tragic reality that for the last forty years the great middle class of our country—once the envy of the world—has been disappearing. Despite exploding technology and increased worker productivity, median family income is almost \$5,000 less than it was in 1999. In Vermont and throughout this country it is not uncommon for people to be working two or three jobs just to cobble together enough income to survive on and some health care benefits.

The truth is that real unemployment is not the 5.4 percent you read in newspapers. It is close to 11 percent if you include those workers who have given up looking for jobs or who are working part-time when they want to work full-time. Youth unemployment is over 17 percent and African-American youth unemployment is much higher than that. Today, shamefully, we have forty-five million people living in poverty, many of whom are working at low-wage jobs.

These are the people who struggle every day to find the money to feed their kids, to pay their electric bills, and to put gas in the car to get to work. This campaign is about those people and our struggling middle class. It is about creating an economy that works for all, and not just the 1 percent.

Citizens United. My fellow Americans: Let me be as blunt as I can and tell you what you already know. As a result of the disastrous Supreme Court decision on Citizens United, the American political system has been totally corrupted, and the foundations of American democracy are being undermined. What the Supreme Court essentially said was that it was not good enough for the billionaire class to own much of our economy—they could now own the U.S. government as well. And that is precisely what they are trying to do.

American democracy is not about billionaires being able to buy candidates and elections. It is not about the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, and other incredibly wealthy individuals spending billions of dollars to elect candidates who will make the rich richer and everyone else poorer. According to media reports the Koch brothers alone—one family—will spend more money in this election cycle than either the Democratic or Republican parties. This is not democracy. This is oligarchy. In Vermont and at our town meetings we know what American democracy is supposed to be about. It is one person, one vote—with every citizen having an equal say—and no voter suppression. And that's the kind of American political system we have to fight for and will fight for in this campaign.

Climate Change. When we talk about our responsibilities as human beings and as parents, there is nothing more important than leaving this country and the entire planet in a way that is habitable for our kids and grandchildren. The debate is over. The scientific community has spoken in a virtually

unanimous voice. Climate change is real. It is caused by human activity and it is already causing devastating problems in the United States and around the world.

The scientists are telling us that if we do not boldly transform our energy system away from fossil fuels and into energy efficiency and sustainable energies, this planet could be five to ten degrees Fahrenheit warmer by the end of this century. This is catastrophic. It will mean more drought, more famine, more rising sea level, more floods, more ocean acidification, more extreme weather disturbances, more disease, and more human suffering. We must not, we cannot, and we will not allow that to happen.

It is no secret that there is massive discontent with politics in America today. In the midterm election in November, 63 percent of Americans did not vote, including 80 percent of young people. Poll after poll tells us that our citizens no longer have confidence in our political institutions and, given the power of big money in the political process, they have serious doubts about how much their vote actually matters and whether politicians have any clue as to what is going on in their lives.

Combating this political alienation, this cynicism and this legitimate anger will not be easy; that's for sure. But that is exactly what, together, we have to do if we are going to turn this country around—and that is what this campaign is all about.

And to bring people together we need a simple and straightforward progressive agenda which speaks to the needs of our people, and which provides us with a vision of a very different America. And what is that agenda?

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs. It begins with jobs. If we are truly serious about reversing the decline of the middle class we need a

major federal jobs program which puts millions of Americans back to work at decent-paying jobs. At a time when our roads, bridges, water systems, rail, and airports are decaying, the most effective way to rapidly create meaningful jobs is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. That's why I've introduced legislation which would invest \$1 trillion over five years to modernize our country's physical infrastructure. This legislation would create and maintain at least thirteen million good-paying jobs, while making our country more productive, efficient, and safe. And I promise you, as president I will lead that legislation into law.

Trade. I will also continue to oppose our current trade policies. For decades, presidents from both parties have supported trade agreements which have cost us millions of decent-paying jobs as corporate America shuts down plants here and moves to low-wage countries. As president, my trade policies will break that cycle of agreements which enrich the few at the expense of the many . . .

Raising Wages. Let us be honest and acknowledge that millions of Americans are now working for totally inadequate wages. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is a starvation wage and must be raised. The minimum wage must become a living wage, which means raising it to \$15 an hour over the next few years—which is exactly what Los Angeles recently did, and I applaud them for doing that. Our goal as a nation must be to ensure that no full-time worker lives in poverty. Further, we must establish pay equity for women workers. It's unconscionable that women earn 78 cents on the dollar compared to men who perform the same work. We must also end the scandal in which millions of American employees, often earning less than \$30,000 a year, work fifty or sixty hours a week—and earn no overtime.

And we need paid sick leave and guaranteed vacation time for all.

Addressing Wealth and Income Inequality. This campaign is going to send a message to the billionaire class. And that is: You can't have it all. You can't get huge tax breaks while children in this country go hungry. You can't continue sending our jobs to China while millions are looking for work. You can't hide your profits in the Cayman Islands and other tax havens while there are massive unmet needs on every corner of this nation. Your greed has got to end. You cannot take advantage of all the benefits of America if you refuse to accept your responsibilities.

That is why we need a tax system which is fair and progressive, which makes wealthy individuals and profitable corporations begin to pay their fair share of taxes.

Reforming Wall Street. It is time to break up the largest financial institutions in the country. Wall Street cannot continue to be an island unto itself, gambling trillions in risky financial instruments while expecting the public to bail it out. If a bank is too big to fail it is too big to exist. We need a banking system which is part of the job-creating productive economy, not a handful of huge banks on Wall Street which engage in reckless and illegal activities.

Campaign Finance Reform. If we are serious about creating jobs, about climate change and the needs of our children and the elderly, we must be deadly serious about campaign finance reform and the need for a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United. I have said it before and I'll say it again: I will not nominate any justice to the Supreme Court who has not made it clear that he or she will move to overturn that disastrous decision which is undermining our de-

mocracy. Long term, we need to go further and establish public funding of elections.

Reversing Climate Change. The United States must lead the world in reversing climate change. We can do that if we transform our energy system away from fossil fuels, toward energy efficiency and sustainable energies such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. Millions of homes and buildings need to be weatherized, our transportation system needs to be energy-efficient, and we need a tax on carbon to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuel.

Health Care for All. The United States remains the only major country on earth that does not guarantee health care for all as a right. Despite the modest gains of the Affordable Care Act, 35 million Americans continue to lack health insurance and many more are underinsured. Yet, we continue paying far more per capita for health care than any other nation. The United States must join the rest of the industrialized world and guarantee health care to all as a right by moving toward a Medicare for All single-payer system.

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable. At a time when millions of Americans are struggling to keep their heads above water economically, at a time when senior poverty is increasing, at a time when millions of kids are living in dire poverty, my Republican colleagues, as part of their recently passed budget, are trying to make a terrible situation even worse. If you can believe it, the Republican budget throws 27 million Americans off health insurance, makes drastic cuts in Medicare, throws millions of low-income Americans—including pregnant women—off of nutrition programs, and makes it harder for working-class families to afford college or put their kids in the Head Start program. And then, to add insult to



With my family on the day of the announcement.

injury, they provide huge tax breaks for the very, very wealthiest families in this country while they raise taxes on working families.

Well, let me tell my Republican colleagues that I respectfully disagree with their approach. Instead of cutting Social Security, we're going to expand Social Security benefits. Instead of cutting Head Start and child care, we are going to move to a universal Pre-K system for all the children of this country. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt reminded us, a nation's greatness is judged not by what it provides to the most well-off, but how it treats the people most in need. And that's the kind of nation we must become.

College for All. And when we talk about education, let me be very clear: In a highly competitive global economy, we need the best-educated workforce we can create. It is insane and counterproductive to the best interests of our country

that hundreds of thousands of bright young people cannot afford to go to college, and that millions of others leave school with a mountain of debt that burdens them for decades. That must end. That is why, as president, I will fight to make tuition in public colleges and universities free, as well as substantially lower interest rates on student loans.

War and Peace. As everybody knows, we live in a difficult and dangerous world, and there are people out there who want to do us harm. As president, I will defend this nation—but I will do it responsibly. As a member of Congress I voted against the war in Iraq, and that was the right vote. I am vigorously opposed to an endless war in the Middle East—a war which is unwise and unnecessary. We must be vigorous in combating terrorism and defeating ISIS, but we should not have to bear that burden alone. We must be part of an international coalition, led by Muslim nations, that can not only defeat ISIS but begin the process of creating conditions for a lasting peace.

As some of you know, I was born in a faraway land called “Brooklyn, New York.” My father came to this country from Poland without a penny in his pocket and without much of an education. My mother graduated high school in New York City. My father worked for almost his entire life as a paint salesman and we were solidly lower middle class. My parents, brother, and I lived in a small rent-controlled apartment. My mother's dream was to move out of that small apartment into a home of our own. She died young and her dream was never fulfilled. As a kid I learned, in many, many ways, what lack of money means to a family. That's a lesson I have never forgotten.

I have seen the promise of America in my own life. My parents would have never dreamed that their son would be a U.S. senator, let alone run for president. But for too many of

our fellow Americans, the dream of progress and opportunity is being denied by the grind of an economy that funnels all the wealth to the top.

And to those who say we cannot restore the dream, I say just look where we are standing. This beautiful place was once an unsightly rail yard that served no public purpose and was an eyesore. As mayor, I worked with the people of Burlington to help turn this waterfront into the beautiful people-oriented public space it is today. We took the fight to the courts, to the legislature, and to the people. And we won.

The lesson to be learned is that when people stand together, and are prepared to fight back, there is nothing that can't be accomplished.

We can live in a country:

- Where every person has health care as a right, not a privilege.
- Where every parent can have quality and affordable child care, and where all of our qualified young people, regardless of income, can go to college.
- Where every senior can live in dignity and security, and not be forced to choose between their medicine or their food.
- Where every veteran who defends this nation gets the quality health care and benefits he or she has earned and receives the respect he or she deserves.
- Where every person, no matter their race, their religion, their disability, or their sexual orientation, realizes the full promise of equality that is our birthright as Americans.

That is the nation we can build together, and I ask you to join me in this campaign to build a future that works for all of us, and not just the few on top.

Thank you, and on this beautiful day on the shore of Lake Champlain, I welcome you aboard.

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

The kickoff event in Burlington was a great success, and we were off and running. The turnout of some five thousand supporters was far more than we had ever expected, and the love and enthusiasm I received from my fellow Vermonters was deeply moving to me. It was a day I will never forget.

During the early stages of the campaign, I was often asked by the media, "Do you really think you can win the nomination? Can you really beat Hillary Clinton?" My response was always the same. Yes. I was running to win. I thought we could win. But, in my heart of hearts, I knew how difficult this challenge would be.

What we were trying to do was unprecedented in modern American history. We were not just running an insurgent campaign as an underdog, we were taking aim at the nation's entire political and financial establishment. And we were running against the most powerful political machine in the country.

Let's not forget. The Clinton political organization had won two presidential campaigns for Bill Clinton, and they had run a strong race for Hillary in 2008. They were closely connected with thousands of Democratic Party leaders at the national, state, and local levels, many of whom had worked for Bill as president or Hillary as secretary of state. The Clintons had, by far, the most powerful fund-raising system in the Democratic Party. They had created their own (very good) think tank, the Center for American Progress, and a huge international organization, the Clinton Foundation.

They had vast contacts in the corporate world, the financial world, and the foreign policy world.

The conventional wisdom Inside the Beltway and among the talking heads on TV was that Clinton was the anointed candidate, the inevitable candidate. The primary and caucus process was just a matter of going through the motions until she was officially nominated at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in late July 2016.

CNN more or less captured the position we were in on their Web site on May 28, 2015:

The obstacles Sanders faces in the presidential primary race, however, are immense. Sanders has no viable countrywide political organization, so he must foment a grassroots uprising. His task is complicated by the fact that although he caucuses with the Democrats in the Senate, he has always been a political independent wary of formal party affiliations. He must take on the Clinton political machine that has retooled after its defeat in 2008. He's a minnow in the money game in a campaign that will be awash in billions of dollars. He's not exactly a polished pol either, with an unrepentant message of class warfare that makes him an unlikely candidate to win over Middle America. And many Democrats are only beginning to learn who Sanders actually is. He's a long shot, but has shown some momentum since indicating he would take the plunge into the presidential race late last month. In a new Quinnipiac University poll released on Thursday, Sanders was at 15 percent of Democratic voters nationwide, up from the 5 percent he managed in a CNN national poll last month.

Further, by the time I announced my intention to run for president in late April, Hillary Clinton had already, through an incredibly unfair system supported by the Democratic establishment, received the support of some four hundred superdelegates, about 15 percent of what she needed in order to win the nomination. She had also received tens of millions of dollars from leading financial backers. In addition, she had lined up almost every Democratic governor, mayor, senator, and congressperson who intended to make an endorsement.

Because of the Clintons' long-standing contacts Inside the Beltway, she had also won the support of the leadership of most of the unions, environ-

mental groups, and women's and LGBT groups. Her lock on establishment support was so strong that by the end of the campaign I ended up winning the endorsement of one major newspaper. She won the support of dozens.

That's what we were running against.

In the face of this, our campaign strategy was not complicated. If the campaign was to succeed and gain momentum, we absolutely had to do well in the early states, Iowa and New Hampshire, followed by strong showings in Nevada and South Carolina. If we did poorly in the early states, the media would lose interest, our funding would dry up, and the campaign would be dead in its tracks. In the early stages of the campaign we did not have the luxury of planning out a national fifty-state strategy. It was all or nothing in the early states—especially Iowa and New Hampshire.

As we thought about New Hampshire, the first stop for us on the campaign trail and the second state up in the nominating process, there was good news and bad news. The good news was that I was reasonably well known in the state given its proximity to Vermont. The bad news was that Clinton was popular in New Hampshire and way ahead of us in early polls. In 2008 she had defeated Obama there, resurrecting her campaign after a loss in Iowa. Bill Clinton had also done well in New Hampshire when he was a candidate. In fact, in his 1992 campaign, amidst all of the allegations regarding sexual impropriety that were then plaguing him, he did well enough there to become the "Comeback Kid."

Our plan for New Hampshire was pretty simple. In the last contested Democratic primary there in 2008, when Clinton defeated Obama, 287,000 people voted. My thought was that if we worked really hard, we could hold a hundred town meetings and rallies in the state leading up to the primary in early February. We could accomplish that by spending thirty or forty days campaigning there, doing two or three events a day. If we were able to bring out an average of a hundred people a meeting, which I thought possible, we would be able to bring some ten thousand people to our meetings. And that's pretty good. In 2008 Clinton won New Hampshire with 112,404 votes. If the voter turnout was similar in 2016, it would mean that almost 10 percent of the people I needed to win would have heard from me face-to-face. And those who attended have husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and friends whom they talk to. Word of mouth, after all, is the best form of advertising. If we were able to accomplish that goal, I believed we could do well there.

I spent the night of the kickoff, May 26, 2015, at home in Burlington and then we hit the road early the following morning. We were off to New Hampshire, to be followed with trips to Iowa and Minnesota.

The first stop was a town meeting at the New England College in Concord, New Hampshire. And we got lost! The GPS got us to exactly the right address on Main Street, but it was the wrong town. Not a great way to begin the campaign. Fifteen minutes late, we found a parking spot and made our way into the building. The turnout was large, about two hundred people, larger than the room could accommodate. It was standing room only. The format for the event was similar to that of many meetings I had held in Vermont. A number of young people on a panel got up and talked about what was going on in their lives. They discussed the student debt they were incurring, their hopes and fears about job opportunities, and their views on social issues. After the panel finished, I spoke and then took questions.

After the meeting ended, I was told that there was a crowd of people outside the building who couldn't get in. My staff found a location, about a block away, where I talked to them using a megaphone. This pattern, of rooms, large and small, not being able to accommodate the crowds that we attracted repeated itself over and over again during the campaign. It was a problem, but a very good problem.

In the evening, after a house party in Epping, we continued on to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, one of the larger towns in the state. And here was the first real surprise of the campaign. On a hot spring night, in the beautiful and historic South Church in downtown Portsmouth, seven hundred enthusiastic supporters came out to the rally. This was an extraordinary crowd for a small state like New Hampshire this early in the campaign. Tad Devine, who had worked on a number of national campaigns and had observed Obama's 2008 campaign carefully, said that he had never seen anything like it. Other than the fact that the room was extremely hot and my shirt was soaked with sweat, the event went very well. Needless to say, as happened throughout the campaign, excerpts from the speech got around the country to many thousands of people through social media.

No question about it, our first day on the campaign trail was a great success. I was feeling good. As we drove back to the hotel in Portsmouth, I did a quick calculation. My hope had been to speak to ten thousand voters in New Hampshire with thirty to forty days of campaigning. Well, on our very first day, in the three meetings that we held, we had already spoken to

a thousand people. Maybe the goal of ten thousand was too conservative. Maybe, over the course of the campaign, we would be speaking to a lot more people. Maybe we could actually win New Hampshire.

Not only were we off to a great start on the campaign trail, our online fund-raising was also doing very well. My staff and I were shocked, and the national media was surprised as well, when in the first twenty-four hours of my candidacy, we raised \$1.5 million in small contributions from 35,000 donors. After four days \$3 million had come in from 75,000 donors. That's serious money. The media may not pay much attention to the ideas that a candidate espouses, but they do pay attention to your fund-raising capabilities and, no matter how you slice it, 75,000 donors in four days was pretty impressive. As the media noted early on, I was raising more money than most of the Republican establishment candidates, and we were doing it with large numbers of small contributions.

After our day in New Hampshire, we were on an early-morning plane from Boston to Iowa. We had scheduled five events there over a three-day period.

The first event, at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, was extraordinary. There were seven hundred people in attendance, the largest turnout for any candidate yet during the 2016 campaign season in Iowa. Many of those who attended were students, but many were from the community. It was a great cross section of Iowans.

As I often did, I took questions from the audience. When the question-and-answer period was over, I stayed around and chatted with a number of people who came to the front of the auditorium. One of those people was a recent dental school graduate. During my speech I had remarked about how I met a physician in Vermont who graduated from medical school \$300,000 in debt. This young woman gave me a new statistic to shock people with: She was \$400,000 in debt. At a time when we have a desperate need for more dentists, how crazy is it to put young people in such a horrendous financial position? Two days later we had another great Iowa rally, this time in Iowa City. We had more than 1,100 people show up, and the enthusiasm was sky-high.

The most interesting and promising event of that campaign swing, however, was in a town called Kensett, Iowa, where three hundred people packed the community center. What was surprising about the turnout there was that, according to the last census, there were only 266 people in the entire town.

In other words, in one of the most rural parts of a rural state, there was significant interest in the need for a political revolution. This was not an audience of political activists, of young people, of trade unionists, of academics. This was an audience of working people and farmers who were sick and tired of the political status quo, and they wanted real change in our country.

How did I end up in Kensett? As the *Albert Lea Tribune* reported, “Kurt Meyers, chairman of the Tri-county Democrats, which covers Worth, Mitchell and Howard counties in northern Iowa, called Sanders an ‘effective, articulate, passionate fighter for social justice.’ He said Sanders came to Kensett at the invitation of Democratic activist Jim Berge of Kensett. Sanders reportedly read a favorable comment in a Washington, D.C., newspaper that quoted Berge. The next day, one of the senator’s staff members called Berge to thank him for his remarks, and Berge ultimately invited him to visit the next time he was in Iowa.”

I loved the comment that Mr. Meyers made on *The Rachel Maddow Show* in response to Rachel’s question as to why so many people showed up. He said, “I think there are naturally people that are going to come to Kensett because Kensett has waited a long time between presidents or presidential candidates coming. There’s a story that FDR perhaps came through on the whistle stop in 1936, but only came through town, didn’t stop and talk in town. So, you know, that’s a long way to wait. And so, you can imagine some people would come just because a presidential candidate is a rare occurrence in Kensett.”

That, by the way, is what an insurgent campaign is all about. Campaigning in a town that no presidential candidate had ever visited.

While some people may have come to the meeting out of curiosity, the response that I got told me that most didn’t. In fact, that meeting confirmed to me what I had long believed: Rural people are not as conservative as the Democratic leadership has long believed, and their votes should not be conceded to right-wing Republicans. Kensett was the first, but not the last, large turnout that we had in very rural communities throughout the country.

The turnouts in New Hampshire and Iowa were extraordinary—much larger than we had anticipated. But the first indication that this campaign was taking off much faster than any of us had believed possible took place on June 1, 2015, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As we were driving to our des-

tinuation, the Minneapolis American Indian Center, we went past a very long line of people who appeared to be snaked out for blocks. I wondered out loud what was going on, and if there was some kind of concert taking place. When we had reached the Minneapolis American Indian Center, I truly was stunned to learn that the crowd was there for us.

The maximum number of people we could get into the hall was about two thousand. There were about three thousand outside who couldn’t get in. This was, far and away, the largest turnout for our campaign up to that point. In the airport in Minneapolis, on the way back to Washington, I bumped into the two senators from Minnesota, Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken. We had coffee together while we waited for the plane. They were pretty surprised to learn that five thousand people had just come out to our meeting.

As the *Star Tribune* wrote about the event: “The crowd, with some people standing outside because the hall was full, seemed unconcerned with the conventional wisdom that there is no race on the Democratic side as Hillary Clinton marches toward the nomination with a pile of money, endorsements and party faithful’s love of the Clinton name.”

From day one of the campaign we realized that the debates with Secretary Clinton would be enormously important. At a time when my name recognition was low, the debates would give me exposure to millions of voters and increased credibility as I contrasted my views with hers. We wanted as many debates as possible and as early as possible. In early June, I wrote a letter to the chair of the Democratic National Committee, Debbie Wasserman Schultz. I urged that as many debates as possible be held and that they begin in the summer.

Straw polls don’t mean anything. They are totally unscientific. They reflect the views only of the people who are at a given place at a given time. Nonetheless, we were surprised and delighted when a straw poll taken at the Wisconsin State Democratic Party Convention in early June showed us with 41 percent support, only 8 points behind Secretary Clinton, at 49 percent. Unscientific though it may have been, this was the first poll of any kind showing us within reach of Clinton. John Nichols, a writer from *The Nation* who is from Wisconsin, called the straw poll “another sign of unexpected and significant support” for Sanders. Nichols noted that the most important support that we were receiving was coming from organized labor.

On June 6, I returned to New Hampshire. Once again, the turnout was larger than we had anticipated. At Keene High School, there was a standing-room-only crowd of 1,100 people. In that speech I made a point that I was going to make over and over again. I said that real change in this country could only take place if millions of people got involved in the political process. I stated, "This campaign is not about Bernie Sanders. You can have the best president in the history of the world, but that person will not be able to address the problems that we face unless there is a mass movement, a political revolution in this country. Right now, the only pieces of legislation that get to the floor of the House and Senate are sanctioned by big money, Wall Street, the pharmaceutical industry, et cetera. The only way we win and transform America is when millions of people stand up, as you are doing today, and say, 'Enough is enough.' This country belongs to all of us and not just a handful of billionaires."

One of the dilemmas of being on the campaign trail if you are a sitting member of the U.S. Senate is that you can't be in two places at the same time. That means that there are votes you will miss in Washington because you are in some other part of the country, and it also means not being able to attend events in your own state. The best way that I could reconcile the latter concern was scheduling events in Vermont on the same days that I would be across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire.

On the same day that I spoke in Keene, New Hampshire, I also marched in the Strolling of the Heifers event in Brattleboro, Vermont. This is one of the fun events in Vermont and the biggest parade in the state, organized by my old friend Orly Munzing. It draws some ten thousand people from all over New England, including my son Levi and his three kids from nearby Claremont, New Hampshire. The event focuses attention on dairy, the largest agricultural industry in Vermont. The parade includes cows marching up Brattleboro's main street and a whole lot of floats from local organizations, from the Girl Scouts to the local bank. It is also my one day of the year when I get to milk a cow, not a pretty sight for real dairy farmers.

As the campaign progressed, Hillary Clinton's political vulnerabilities were becoming more and more apparent. She had started several super PACs, which were collecting millions of dollars from Wall Street, not exactly the constituency of working Americans and progressive Democrats, and not

what ordinary Americans wanted to see in a candidate. She had voted for the war in Iraq, the worst foreign policy blunder in the modern history of our country. She supported fracking and was a relative latecomer in supporting gay marriage.

She had also supported, in one capacity or another, virtually every one of the disastrous trade agreements that had cost our country millions of decent-paying jobs and contributed to the race to the bottom. On June 14, in an appearance on the CBS news program *Face the Nation*, I challenged Clinton on her trade position and urged her to join progressives in the Senate, like Elizabeth Warren, Sherrod Brown, and myself, in opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, known as the TPP. This was the largest trade agreement in the history of our country and incorporated many of the same elements that made previous trade agreements so destructive for the American working class. In previous comments, Secretary Clinton had referred to the TPP as the "gold standard" for what a trade agreement should be. During the program I stated, "I would hope very much that Secretary Clinton will side with every union in the country, virtually every environmental group, and many religious groups, and say that this TPP policy is a disaster, that it must be defeated, and that we need to regroup and come up with a trade policy that demands that corporate America starts investing in this country rather than in countries all over the world." In early October, I was pleased that Secretary Clinton came out in opposition to the TPP.

While the minority population of Vermont is growing, it remains very much a white state. We have a small African-American population and an even smaller Latino one. One of the challenges I faced early on in the campaign was to familiarize myself with issues that I had not been heavily involved with as Vermont's representative in the House and Senate.

When we began the campaign we had virtually no support or name recognition in the Latino community—and we were running against a candidate who had the backing of virtually the entire Hispanic Caucus in Congress and, over the years, relationships with many leaders of Latino organizations.

One of my campaign's accomplishments that I am most proud of is that by the end of it we were winning the Latino vote in various parts of the country, and winning the Latino youth vote overwhelmingly. A lot of that success was the result of our campaign bringing on some extremely smart and hardworking Latinos like Arturo Carmona, Erika Andiola, and

Cesar Vargas, who not only educated me about the issues of concern to their community, but also did a great job in voter outreach.

On June 19, while campaigning in Nevada, a state with a very heavy Latino population, I gave my first speech on immigration reform. I focused on the need for comprehensive immigration reform and a path toward citizenship. I also highlighted the fact that the vast majority of Latinos in this country are working class and that for their sake, as well as for all working Americans, we had to raise the minimum wage to a living wage and make it easier for workers to join unions.

In late June, a new Fox national poll was released: Clinton 61 percent, Sanders 15 percent, O'Malley 1 percent. We were making progress. We were now only 46 points down. In Iowa we were making more progress. In early July, a Quinnipiac poll came out that had Clinton ahead of us by 52 percent to 33 percent in Iowa. That's a big gap, but a lot better than the 60 percent to 15 percent we were behind in May.

June 30, the end of the quarter, was the day that candidates had to file information about the contributions they received over the previous three months. I used that occasion to issue a statement attacking the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision. I announced that I would only nominate justices to the Supreme Court who publicly acknowledged their intention to overturn that terrible decision. I was glad to see Hillary Clinton make a similar statement a short time later.

I also stated, "It is a national disgrace that billionaires and other extremely wealthy people are able to heavily influence the political process by making huge contributions. The Koch brothers alone will spend more than the Democratic and Republican parties to influence the outcome of next year's elections. That's not democracy, that's oligarchy."

During this period, under the radar, our grassroots efforts were growing rapidly. Two examples come to mind:

On June 26, as a result of the great work done by Larry Cohen, the former president of the Communication Workers of America, we announced that more than a thousand local union leaders and members were backing our campaign. Clinton had been successful in winning the support of a number of national union leaders. We were now gaining support among the rank and file.

On the same day, due to an aggressive social media effort launched by our campaign, 208,000 people signed a petition calling on the Democratic

National Committee to host more presidential debates. The DNC was beginning to get the hint that many Democrats were not exactly enamored with its leadership. In an e-mail we sent out I said: "The people of this country are tired of political gossip, personal attacks, and ugly thirty-second TV ads. They want the candidates to engage in serious discussions about the very serious issues facing our country today." Once again, we called for a more robust series of debates, starting in the summer. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly as we later learned, the DNC and chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz were not terribly interested in what we had to say. They had another agenda.

While our early attention was obviously going to be focused on Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina, it was important to reach out to other states and let people all across the country know that we needed their support as well.

Over the years, I had visited Wisconsin a number of times. I enjoyed participating in the Fighting Bob Fest, an event that brings thousands of progressives from Wisconsin together for a day of music, education, and agitation. This visit to Wisconsin, on July 1, was very different from any I had previously made. I spoke at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Madison, and the Associated Press put the number of people in attendance at ten thousand. This was not only the largest turnout for an event in our campaign, it was the largest turnout so far for any presidential candidate.

In covering the event, CNN reported:

Bernie Sanders has been running for president for two months, but Wednesday night in Madison, Wisconsin, his long-shot campaign got real.

When Sanders walked on stage at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, he was greeted by a raucous, howling crowd of 9,600 people, according to Sanders' campaign aides and arena staff.

A clearly energized Sanders, who late last year was speaking to crowds of 50 people in Iowa classrooms, appeared taken aback by the reception he received.

"Whoa," he said. "In case you haven't noticed, there are a lot of people here."

Sanders, who is rising in the primary polls and trails only Hillary Clinton, only mentioned the former secretary of state once in his speech.

"This campaign is not about Bernie Sanders, it is not about Hillary

Clinton, it is not about anyone else, it is about you," Sanders said to sustained applause.

As the first half of 2015 ended and we entered the July Fourth weekend, our leadership team—Jeff, Phil, Jane, Michael, Tad, and I—assessed where we were, and there was a lot of good news. We were holding the largest rallies of any candidate, our social media was humming and communicating with millions of people on an almost daily basis, the money was coming in much better than we had expected, and while we were still very far behind, we were making some progress in closing the gap in national and statewide polls.

The bad news was that while we were doing well in local media markets, we were being more or less shut out of national television news, which is where Americans still get most of their information. It's hard to win an election if you're not on ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS, and we weren't getting on those network evening news shows very much. In fact, between January 1, 2015, and the end of November 2015, we had received only ten minutes combined on the three major networks. That included all of twenty seconds on ABC. We were getting far less national network news time than other presidential candidates.

Also, our efforts in the African-American community were not going well. Nobody is going to win the Democratic nomination without a significant number of black votes. We were beginning to put reasonable sums of money and staff into our African-American outreach efforts, but Bill and Hillary Clinton were popular and universally known in that community, especially among older people, and it didn't appear that we were making much headway.

Further, we were continuing to get almost no support from establishment politicians, and I mean *none*. Not one Democratic governor, not one big-city mayor, and no more than a handful of members of Congress were supporting my campaign. In state after state we would have to take on the entire Democratic Party machine and their get-out-the-vote apparatus, and that's not easy.

While we obviously were going to focus on the early states, I was determined to take our message to every part of the country, from Maine to California. And that's literally what we did in the summer of 2015. We started in Iowa on the July Fourth weekend. I love July Fourth parades and

had the opportunity to march in a few of them in Iowa. We also held a rally in Council Bluffs, which turned into our largest event yet in Iowa, with 2,600 people showing up.

After Iowa, we got on a plane and headed to Portland, Maine, where we had another great event. It seemed like the entire city came out, but it was just 7,500—one of the largest political rallies that Portland had seen in a very long time. After the rally, we had dinner in a crowded local restaurant. The support there was joyous and seemed virtually unanimous. To top it off, the chef was from Burlington. We took a lot of selfies.

From the day that I announced my candidacy, I was determined to run a positive campaign, not one involved in making personal attacks against Hillary Clinton or anyone else. In that regard, however, I went a little too far. For the sake of running a positive campaign I had not been strong enough about articulating the many differences that I had with Clinton on some of the most important issues facing the country. I was determined to change that, and an opportunity arose on July 14, 2015, to make that happen.

On that day, while the Senate was in session and I was in Washington, Secretary Clinton paid a visit to Congress to talk with fellow Democrats. I thought that her visit, which of course attracted widespread media coverage, would be a good time for me to contrast my differences with her. Nothing fancy, just a straightforward presentation of where we disagreed. In report what I did, David Espo of the AP wrote:

Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was escorted by fellow Democrats, her way smoothed by uniformed officers and her every pre-planned step tracked by a pack of chroniclers as she made the rounds of private meetings in the Capitol.

It was more than enough for Bernie Sanders, the independent senator from Vermont who is Clinton's closest Democratic presidential rival in the polls. Emerging from one such meeting on Tuesday, Sanders strode, fast-paced and trailed by a couple of aides, to a collection of nearby television cameras.

"Let me welcome Secretary Clinton back to the Senate," he said, although in fact, the greeting could more fairly be described as brisk and bracing, rather than warm.

His rival was behind closed doors with Democratic senators elsewhere in the Capitol when Sanders said that trade deals negotiated over the past two decades have been disastrous. "Secretary Clinton, I believe, has a different view on that issue," he said, although he omitted that as president, her husband had negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"I strongly opposed the war in Iraq," he added. He didn't mention that Clinton supported it, but said, "Sadly, tragically, much of what I predicted in fact took place."

Moving on to energy, Sanders said he has "helped lead the opposition to the Keystone pipeline." He added dryly, "I think Secretary Clinton has not been clear on her views on that issue," referring to her unwillingness to state a position on the proposal despite repeated requests that she do so.

While not exactly unplanned, Sanders' appearance at the microphones was a reminder of the type of opportunistic campaign he is running as an underdog. The cameras were there in anticipation of comments by other lawmakers, but he made use of them.

As a result, he got his say—and on a day that Clinton's aides had designed to highlight her role as a front-runner conferring privately with Democrats who may well share the 2016 ballot with her.

On July 18 we headed to the Southwest, to Phoenix, Arizona, for what turned out to be, up to then, the largest rally of the entire campaign. More than 11,000 showed up at the Phoenix Convention Center, including my daughter Heather and her husband, Marc, who live in Sedona. What made me feel very good about that event was not just the size of the crowd but the growing diversity that we were seeing. It had taken time, but we were now seeing more and more Latinos and blacks at our events. That was especially true in Phoenix.

Throughout the campaign, my advance team did a very good job in arranging small meetings with local people before our rallies. This gave me an opportunity to meet privately with supporters and to hear the concerns of the people who lived in the area. It was an excellent way to learn about local issues and concerns. Before the Phoenix rally I met briefly with five or six young Latinos. Some were teenagers, some a little bit older. All were born and raised in the United States. With tears in their eyes they described to

me their fears that, at a moment's notice, someone in their family, their mom or dad, could be deported. For them, immigration reform was very personal. It was an emotional meeting. I haven't forgotten it.

And then we were on to Texas, with large rallies in Dallas and Houston and a speaking appearance before the Texas Democratic Party. At both rallies I spoke at length about the need for criminal justice reform and for ending the absurdity of the United States having more people in jail than any other country on earth. These rallies took place shortly after the horrific death of Sandra Bland, a young black woman who was found dead in her jail cell, sixty miles outside of Houston. The "crime" that got her into that cell? She was pulled over for failure to use her blinker when she was making a turn. A shouting match developed with a very rude and aggressive police officer. She was thrown to the ground, handcuffed, and arrested. She died several days later in jail, all because of a minor traffic violation. But it was not just Sandra Bland. As the Black Lives Matter movement was pointing out, there were too many other victims. People like Michael Brown, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, and others.

Many Americans, and not just African-Americans and Latinos, are becoming increasingly outraged by police brutality. They are rightfully tired of turning on the television and seeing videos of unarmed blacks being shot and killed by police officers. They want criminal justice reform. They want police department reform. And I agree.

In my remarks I pointed out that as a former mayor and a senator, I had worked with police officers in my city and across the country, and that a police officer's job was enormously difficult. I also expressed the view that the vast majority of police officers are honest and hardworking. But I also made clear that when a police officer breaks the law, that officer must be held accountable. Further, police officers must be trained to understand that lethal force is the last response, not, as is too often the case, the first response. I also promised that, if elected president, I would make sure that all killings that took place when people were in police custody or being arrested would prompt a U.S. Department of Justice investigation.

It was becoming very clear that the people we were bringing into our movement were not people who had been typically involved in Democratic Party politics, or politics of any kind. These were newly engaged people, most often younger people, who were tired of status quo politics and wanted

real change in the world in which they were living. In Houston, where eight thousand people attended our rally, I had an interesting discussion with a local Democratic Party leader. He told me, as he looked at the crowd, that he had never seen 95 percent of these people before.

I have been, for many years, deeply concerned about climate change and the environment, and I am proud to have one of the strongest pro-environment voting records in the U.S. Congress. I was very pleased that Bill McKibben, the founder of 350.org and one of the leading anti-global warming advocates in the world, was one of the speakers at my campaign's kickoff event. I was also proud that, along with Senator Barbara Boxer, I had introduced the strongest climate change legislation in the history of the Senate. It was a real disappointment to me, therefore, that despite the fact that my environmental record was far stronger than Secretary Clinton's, I was unable to win the support of most of the major environmental organizations.

On August 1, 2015, a breakthrough occurred. We were endorsed by Friends of the Earth Action, one of the largest and most progressive environmental organizations in the country, with some 2 million members worldwide. Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth Action, stated: "Senator Sanders's bold ideas and real solutions to addressing climate change, inequality, and promoting a transformative economy that prioritizes public health and the environment over corporate profits, have earned him an enthusiastic endorsement from Friends of the Earth Action."

In my remarks accepting the endorsement at a park along the banks of the Merrimack River in Concord, New Hampshire, I indicated my strong support for a tax on carbon, and for massive investments in energy efficiency and sustainable energy. I also challenged Clinton for refusing to take a stand on the Keystone Pipeline, which would transport some of the dirtiest fuel on the planet. You could be for it, you could be against it, but you had to take a stand on one of the most important environmental issues of our time.

In late September, I was glad to learn that Clinton came out in opposition to the environmentally destructive Keystone Pipeline.

The issue of how many Democratic debates would be held, and when and where they would take place, was something that was getting more and more

attention. The Republicans had announced a robust debate schedule that allowed their candidates to be showcased before millions of Americans. But that was, obviously, not what the Democratic National Committee had in mind. On August 6, the DNC announced a series of only six debates. It was clear that they wanted to give Hillary Clinton's opponents as little public exposure as possible. I protested, as did Martin O'Malley. In my statement I said, "I look forward to working with the DNC to see if we can significantly expand the proposed debate schedule." Needless to say, that didn't happen.

On August 6, the Republican Party held its first debate and I crashed it. Well, not exactly, but through social media. My staff urged me to tweet my responses to what I was hearing, and it turned out to be a very successful exercise. I sat on a couch at our headquarters, watched TV, and commented on what I was seeing and hearing. As the debate ended I wrote, "It's over. Not one word about income inequality, climate change, Citizens United or student debt. That's why the Rs are so out of touch." That got 31,414 retweets and 35,899 "likes," by far the #1 tweet of the night.

If this was going to be a truly national campaign, we had to head out West, which is what we did in early August with a swing through Washington, Oregon, and California. That trip was one of the most exciting and memorable parts of the entire campaign.

When we advertised our rallies through social media, we requested that people RSVP so that we could get some understanding of how many people might be showing up. As we hit the West Coast, the situation became absolutely nuts because of the incredible number of RSVPs we were receiving. Time and time again we had to change our venue in order to accommodate the anticipated crowd. My staff had to work overtime in order to find arenas that could simply hold the crowds we thought were coming.

In Seattle, our first West Coast stop, we did our event at the Hec Edmundson Pavilion at the University of Washington, which holds 12,000 people. The lines to get in were never-ending, and the arena filled up quickly. Before I went into the arena to speak, I spoke to a crowd of 3,000 outside who were unable to get in. The 15,000 people who showed up for a rally in Seattle was our all-time record high for the campaign, but that record didn't last long. It was topped the very next night.

In Seattle, I made the point about how important grassroots activism

was in bringing about real change. As a result of a strong grassroots progressive movement in Seattle, the City Council there raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, the first major city in the country to go that high. I praised the City Council and talked about legislation I had introduced to make \$15 an hour the national minimum wage by 2020. I said, "You did it for Seattle. We're now going to do it for the entire country."

On August 9, we were in Portland, Oregon, at the Moda Center, where the Portland Trail Blazers of the NBA play, a beautiful three-tier arena. We filled it up and then some. That event drew 28,000 people.

The Oregonian did a good job describing the event: "Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders's insurgent campaign for president received a big boost Sunday when as many as 28,000 showed up for a high-decibel rally at the Moda Center. The crowd packed the basketball arena—with a capacity of up to 19,000—and thousands more couldn't get inside and listened in on loudspeakers. A Moda Center official, Michael Lewellen, estimated the crowd at the free event totaled 28,000."

The article concluded, "I've never heard anybody say anything like that before," said Michaila Konig Taylor, a 25-year-old Bellingham, Wash. resident. "I'm not personally involved with politics, but he changed my mind because he addressed the issues I actually care about."

In one sentence, Ms. Taylor described exactly what our campaign was all about: addressing the real issues that ordinary Americans cared about.

The next night we were at the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena, where 27,500 people attended. The "clutch" we did before the rally included some of the very creative members of the Los Angeles arts community—writers, actors, directors, musicians. We tapped their brains as to how, in whatever way, conventional or not, we could expand the campaign's horizon. There are a lot of smart and creative people in Los Angeles, not the least of whom is the brilliant comedienne Sarah Silverman. Sarah, who was to be very helpful throughout the campaign, introduced me by stating: "I give you, if we're all very smart and a little bit lucky, the next president of the United States."

In three days we drew more than 70,000 people to our rallies.

And here is an important point, which I believe differentiated our campaign from the others: At our rallies I did exactly what the consultants tell you not to do. In each of the speeches, before tens of thousands of people, I spoke for at least an hour and discussed, in some detail, what I believed

to be the major crises facing our country. I didn't begin with prepared jokes or some other routine, and I didn't shape my remarks around a sound bite for TV. I just laid it out as best I could.

And here is what was remarkable. At all of these rallies, where we were filling up large arenas, people were not walking out during a long speech, they were not (I think) getting bored. They were listening. If there is a lesson I learned from this experience, it was that Americans are hungry for an understanding of what is going on in our country and how we can improve it.

Needless to say, during the course of a long campaign, one receives many compliments. The compliment I remember most came from a young man at one of these rallies, after I had completed my speech. He said, "Thank you, Bernie. You treat us as if we were intelligent human beings."

It is an unbelievable and humbling experience to walk out on a stage and see 25,000 or 30,000 people filling up an arena to hear you speak. The moment not only fills you with awe, but with incredible optimism for the future. There was a microcosm of America in front of me. Black and white, Latino, Asian-American, Native American, men and women, gay and straight, young and old. People who were tired of status quo politics and status quo economics. People who dreamed of a better America. People who wanted real change. To say that those experiences "moved" me would be a major understatement. They were some of the most memorable moments of my life, and I am deeply grateful to all who came.

While we were in California, we picked up our first endorsement from a major national union, the National Nurses United and its 185,000 members. What I love about the nurses' union is not just that they are one of the most progressive unions in the country. It's not just that, as a union that is 90 percent women, they showed enormous courage in supporting me over Hillary Clinton. It is that they are involved in politics because, as nurses, they know they cannot do the job they are trained to do, keeping people healthy, unless we transform this country. That is why they are strong supporters of a Medicare for All national health-care program, and other efforts that help low-income and working families.

Time and time again I have heard from nurses as to how they cannot, as health care workers, do what has to be done for their patients when so many of them have no health insurance or are underinsured. The nurses also know what poverty and pollution do to human health. In explaining to the *Guardian* why they endorsed me, RoseAnn DeMoro, the union president,

hit the nail on the head when she stated: “Nurses are an interesting group. They are not political scientists. They want to be nurses. But nurses see the fallout of all the bad decisions, because everything ultimately equates to health. If you are talking about income inequality, they see it. Health concerns and disparity among classes, joblessness—every social problem basically ends up presenting itself in a health care setting.”

RoseAnn and the National Nurses Union played a great role in our campaign, and I thank them for that and for what they do every day to keep us healthy.

During the summer I received a most interesting invitation.

I am one of the most progressive members of the U.S. Senate. Liberty University, a fundamentalist Christian school, is one of the most conservative schools of higher education in America. It was founded by Jerry Falwell, the leader of the Christian Coalition and, before his death, one of the leaders of the American conservative movement. The president is now his son, Dr. Jerry Falwell Jr.

It was not unusual for politicians and elected officials to speak at Liberty University. Over the years, many had. In fact, my Senate colleague Ted Cruz had virtually kicked off his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination at a speech to the student body there. Many public officials had spoken there, but *none* with my politics. Virtually all of the previous speakers had been conservatives, most very conservative.

My instinct was to accept the invitation. The idea of going there appealed to me for several reasons. First, I always enjoy speaking to young people. Second, the thought of speaking to a group of people who looked at the world very, very differently than I did was intriguing and challenging. Was it possible to find some areas of common ground? Wouldn't it be useful to give these students a perspective that many of them may never have heard? Jane agreed with me, but not everyone in the campaign was on board. There were some who felt that going there could cause a rift with our supporters in the women's community and the LGBT community. Why, some supporters might ask, would we visit a university that had such a horrendous attitude on women's rights and gay rights, among many other views that I and our supporters rejected?

After the officials at Liberty University assured my campaign that I

would be treated fairly and respectfully, and that there was no intention to embarrass me or “set me up,” we agreed to accept the invitation. It would, I was sure, be an interesting day. Now all I had to do was to write the speech, which was not an easy task and not completed until the wee hours of the morning before I gave it. Here are excerpts from the speech that I gave before 12,000 students at Liberty University on September 14, 2015:

Thank you, President Falwell and David. Thank you very much for inviting my wife, Jane, and me to be with you this morning. We appreciate the invitation very much.

And let me start off by acknowledging what I think all of you already know. And that is the views that many here at Liberty University have and I, on a number of important issues, are very, very different. I believe in a woman's right to choose. . . .

And the right of a woman to control her own body.

I believe in gay rights and gay marriage.

Those are my views, and it is no secret. But I came here today because I believe from the bottom of my heart that it is vitally important for those of us who hold different views to be able to engage in a civil discourse.

Too often in our country—and I think both sides bear responsibility for this—there is too much shouting at each other. There is too much making fun of each other.

Now, Liberty University is a religious school, obviously.

And all of you are proud of that.

You are a school which, as all of us in our own way, tries to understand the meaning of morality. What does it mean to live a moral life? And you try to understand, in this very complicated modern world that we live in, what the words of the Bible mean in today's society.

You are a school which tries to teach its students how to behave with decency and with honesty and how you can best relate to your fellow human beings, and I applaud you for trying to achieve those goals.

Let me take a moment, or a few moments, to tell you what motivates me in the work that I do as a public servant, as a senator from the state of Vermont. And let me tell you that it goes without saying, I am far, far from being a perfect human being, but I am motivated by a vision, which exists in all of the great religions, in Christianity, in Judaism, in Islam and Buddhism, and other religions.

And that vision is so beautifully and clearly stated in Matthew 7:12, and it states: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets." That is the golden rule. Do unto others, what you would have them do to you. That is the golden rule, and it is not very complicated.

Let me be frank, as I said a moment ago. I understand that the issues of abortion and gay marriage are issues that you feel very strongly about. We disagree on those issues. I get that, but let me respectfully suggest that there are other issues out there that are of enormous consequence to our country and in fact to the entire world that maybe, just maybe, we do not disagree on and maybe, just maybe, we can try to work together to resolve them.

Amos 5:24: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream." Justice treating others the way we want to be treated, treating all people, no matter their race, their color, their stature in life, with respect and with dignity.

Now, here is my point. Some of you may agree with me, and some of you may not, but in my view, it would be hard for anyone in this room today to make the case that the United States of America, our great country, a country which all of us love, it would be hard to make the case that we are a just society, or anything resembling a just society today.

In the United States of America today, there is massive injustice in terms of income and wealth inequality. Injustice is rampant. We live, and I hope all of you know this, in the wealthiest country in the history of the world.

But most Americans don't know that. Because almost all of that wealth and income is going to the top 1 percent.

You know, that is the truth. We are living in a time—and I warn all of you if you would, put this in the context of the Bible, not me, in the context of the Bible—we are living in a time where a handful of people have wealth beyond comprehension. And I'm talking about tens of billions of dollars, enough to support their families for thousands of years. With huge yachts, and jet planes, and tens of billions. More money than they would ever know what to do with.

But at that very same moment, there are millions of people in our country, let alone the rest of the world, who are struggling to feed their families. They are struggling to put a roof over their heads, and some of

them are sleeping out on the streets. They are struggling to find money in order to go to a doctor when they are sick.

Now, when we talk about morality, and when we talk about justice, we have to, in my view, understand that there is no justice when so few have so much and so many have so little.

There is no justice, and I want you to hear this clearly, when the top one-tenth of 1 percent—not 1 percent, the top one-tenth of 1 percent—today in America owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. And in your hearts, you will have to determine the morality of that, and the justice of that.

In my view, there is no justice, when here in Virginia and Vermont and all over this country, millions of people are working long hours for abysmally low wages of \$7.25 an hour, of \$8 an hour, of \$9 an hour, working hard, but unable to bring in enough money to adequately feed their kids.

And yet, at that same time, 52 percent of all new income generated is going to the top 1 percent. You have got to think about the morality of that, the justice of that, and whether or not that is what we want to see in our country.

I concluded my remarks by making reference to Pope Francis, and discussing the profound issue of morality within the context of massive levels of wealth and inequality in this country and around the world.

I agree with Pope Francis when he says, and I quote, "The current financial crisis originated in a profound human crisis, the denial of the primacy of the human person," and this is what he writes: "We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose," end of quote.

And the pope also writes, "There is a need for financial reform along ethical lines that would produce in its turn an economic reform to benefit everyone. Money has to serve, not to rule."

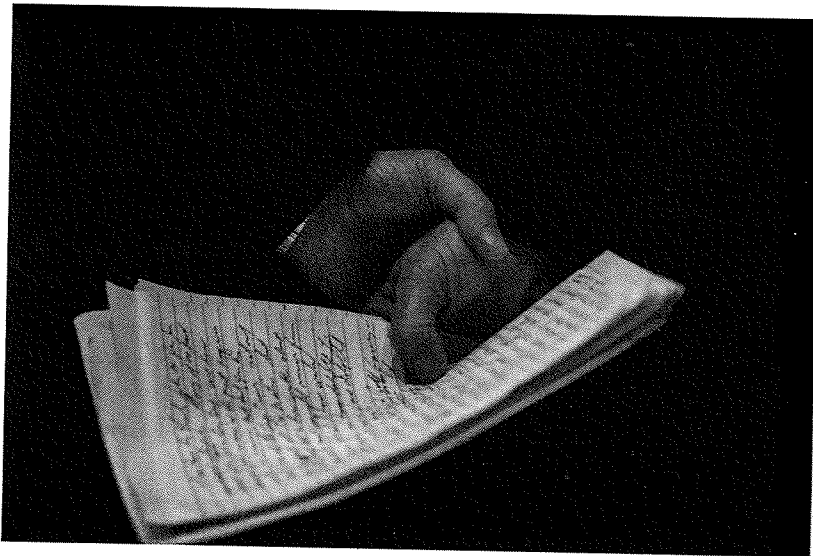
Now, those are pretty profound words, which I hope we will all think about. In the pope's view, and I agree with him, we are living in a nation and in a world, and the Bible speaks to this issue, in a nation and in a world which worships not love of brothers and sisters, not love of the

poor and the sick, but worships the acquisition of money and great wealth. I do not believe that is the country we should be living in.

Money and wealth should serve the people. The people should not have to serve money and wealth.

Throughout human history, there has been endless discussion. It is part of who we are as human beings, people who think and ask questions, endless discussion and debate about the meaning of justice and about the meaning of morality. And I know that here at Liberty University, those are the kinds of discussions you have every day, and those are the kinds of discussions you should be having and the kinds of discussions we should be having all over America.

I would hope, and I conclude with this thought, I would hope very much that as part of that discussion and part of that learning process, some of you will conclude that if we are honest in striving to be a moral and just society, it is imperative that we have the courage to stand with the poor, to stand with working people and when necessary, take on very powerful and wealthy people whose greed, in my view, is doing this country enormous harm.



I do write my own speeches.

After the speech, Dr. Falwell and his family invited Jane and me to lunch. He and his family and staff were very cordial and we had a pleasant conversation. Did I win any votes at Liberty University or change many opinions? Probably not. Did I give 12,000 young people a perspective that they may not have heard before? Yes. Did I open up a few hearts and minds to look at the world a little bit differently? Probably.

Was it a good idea to have gone to Liberty University? I think so.

In mid-September, my campaign issued a very forceful response to an ugly and dishonest attack that came from the Clinton super PAC run by David Brock, the former right-wing journalist. Brock had attempted to link me to the former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. My “crime” had been that I had worked with former congressman Joe Kennedy and his nonprofit Citizens Energy Corporation to bring inexpensive Venezuelan heating oil into Vermont to help low-income people get through our cold winter. It was a very sleazy attack. Our response: explain to our supporters what the Clinton super PAC had done, and raise money off of it.

In just forty-eight hours, as a direct response to that ugly attack, our donors contributed \$1.2 million into the campaign, with an average contribution of \$23. In an e-mail thanking our contributors I stated: “I hope that sends a very clear message that the American people are sick and tired of politics as usual and negative campaigning.” Erin Hill, the executive director of Act Blue, the long-established organization that administered our online fund-raising, stated: “We’ve never seen an immediate donor response like what the Sanders campaign received on Tuesday. At one point, it drove 180 contributions through our platform per minute.”

The point here was not just the money. Our supporters wanted real change in the way politics was done in America, and their actions made it very clear that they were not going to tolerate unfair and unfounded negative attacks from Clinton surrogates or anyone else.

As late September approached and we reached the filing period for the Federal Election Commission (FEC) at the end of the third quarter of 2015, it was time for another leadership team assessment to determine how well we were doing. The answer was: very well. What had once seemed to us an impossible dream now seemed like, just maybe, a possibility. Perhaps, perhaps,

perhaps we *could* pull off the biggest political upset in the modern history of the United States.

When we began the campaign in late May, a CNN national poll had Secretary Clinton leading us 60 percent to 10 percent. We were behind by 50 points. By late September, a Fox poll had Clinton at 44 percent, Joe Biden at 18 percent, and me at 30 percent. Nationally, we had closed the gap to 14 points, with Biden in the race.

In the United States, of course, we don't have national elections. We have elections that are determined state by state, and here we were making real progress as well. In early May, before we had formally announced, a Bloomberg poll in New Hampshire had us down 62 percent to 18 percent and poll after poll continued to have us trailing. Then, on August 7, headlines on the front page of the *Boston Herald* announced a new poll in New Hampshire. For the first time in the campaign, anywhere, there was a poll showing Bernie Sanders in the lead. Their poll had us leading Clinton 44 percent to 37 percent. It turned out this poll was not a fluke. In the coming weeks other polls also showed us in the lead. Unbelievably, we were now winning in the New Hampshire primary.

In Iowa, we were also making good progress. We were not doing as well there as we were in New Hampshire, but we were steadily moving forward. In late May, at the time I announced my candidacy for president, we were trailing Secretary Clinton 57 percent to 16 percent. By the end of September, we had cut the gap to 5 points, trailing her 33 percent to 28 percent.

In terms of excitement and energy, there was no question as to who was in first place. Our rallies all over the country were the largest of any candidate's, and our grassroots efforts were truly unbelievable. Almost every day I would read something, or hear something, about an activity taking place in one part of the country or another, and let me tell you, it wasn't our campaign organizing them. They were occurring spontaneously at the grassroots level. There were marches and musical activities. People were writing music, designing T-shirts and posters, and doing all kinds of incredible artwork. Others were on the phone or knocking on doors in their communities. It was extraordinary, and it was a beautiful thing to behold.

You can't run a serious national campaign without serious money, and we were doing that, too. In fact, we were rewriting the playbook with regard to campaign finance. Never before in history had a campaign received as many individual campaign contributions as we were receiving. Never.

At a time when most campaigns were being supported by super PACs and wealthy individuals, we were raising tens of millions in small individual contributions. In the third quarter of 2015, we shocked the pundits and, I suspect, the Clinton campaign by raising \$25 million. This was almost as much as Clinton had raised during that period. We had now raised individual contributions from 1.3 million people since the beginning of the campaign. Obama did a fantastic job in raising money in small individual contributions in 2008. We were doing even better.

And people were noticing, in a very significant way, the differences between the way our campaign functioned and the way Clinton's worked. Zaid Jilani, on August 10, 2015, wrote in *Alternet*, under the headline "Bernie Sanders Speaks to 28,000 People in Portland, While Hillary Hosts \$2,700-a-Head Fund-raiser":

Yesterday, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders spoke to 28,000 people in Portland, Oregon—the largest rally of 2016 of any candidate. Sanders hit the usual marks—decrying income inequality, money in politics, climate change, and mass incarceration. What's interesting is that Hillary Clinton also came to Portland last week. But instead of doing a public event, she held a fund-raiser at the home of Democratic Party consultants Win McCormack and Carol Butler. Access was granted only to donors willing to give the minimum donation of \$2,700. The contrast in Portland is a microcosm of the two types of campaigns Sanders and Clinton are running. The former is counting on a grassroots network of hundreds of thousands of people donating small amounts of money and making up the difference with volunteer hours. The latter is a more conventional politician: court Big Money donors and flood the airwaves with television commercials to win the election. In six months, we'll start to see which succeeds.

Whether it was the West Coast or the East Coast, the giant rallies continued. In Boston, on October 3, we drew more than 20,000 enthusiastic supporters to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, and there were some 4,000 outside in an overflow area. It was the largest political rally in Boston in years. When I took the stage there I said, "We are running a people's campaign, and while the millionaires and billionaires have something we don't have, we have something they don't have. Look around this room."

In early October, after four months on the campaign trail, we finally began receiving support from members of Congress. Representatives Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Keith Ellison of Minnesota came on board. They were the first members of Congress to buck the political establishment, and I was very appreciative. For us, this was a very big deal not just because they were both excellent and well-respected congressmen, but because they were the co-chairs of the House Progressive Caucus. Keith and Raul became great surrogates and both of them played important roles throughout the campaign.

During the course of the campaign, Hillary Clinton attacked me on the issue of gun control. This was an unfair attack but one that I didn't handle well. It was an attack that also had significant political implications with regard to the rural vote and the general election.

In 1988, when I first ran for Congress, I supported a ban on the sale of assault weapons. In a very rural state like Vermont, a state that has virtually no gun control, that was not a particularly popular position, but one that I thought was right. Strongly opposed by gun organizations in the state, I lost that election by 3 percentage points. Two years later, maintaining my same view, I won the election by 16 points. In 1992 I was fiercely opposed by the gun groups in the state, who produced a bumper sticker that said "Bye Bye Bernie." They wanted to get rid of me instead of assault weapons. I won that election by a wide margin. As a result of my support over the years for commonsense gun-safety legislation, I have earned a D-minus rating from the NRA. To suggest, as Clinton did, that I was somehow sympathetic to the gun lobby was absurd.

The issue of guns is an extremely volatile one, and one in which I believe, coming from a rural state where guns are very much part of our way of life, I can play a constructive role. But politically, it is a very, very tough and divisive issue with a very real cultural divide. And there is not a simple political solution.

The overwhelming majority of Americans are appalled by the level of gun violence in this country, where 300,000 people have died in the last decade as a result of guns. They are especially outraged by the hundreds of mass shootings we have seen in recent years, including the horror that took place at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

The difficulty is that the political divide now is very wide. Led by the

NRA, which has become more and more irresponsible in recent years, there are those who think they have a constitutional right to have a nuclear launch pad in their backyards. On the other hand, there are many who believe that we should eliminate every gun in America. While most Americans disagree with both of these extreme views, the division over guns is becoming wider and wider and more and more ugly.

On October 5, 2015, after yet another mass shooting, I issued the following statement:

Like the rest of the nation, I am appalled by gun violence in our country and the mass shootings in our churches and colleges. While there is no simple fix, that does not mean we should do nothing. The status quo is not working and people on both sides of the issue cannot simply continue shouting at each other. Nobody wants more mass killings and serious people are going to have to engage in serious discussion.

In my view, there are very concrete steps we can take to lessen the number of tragedies and to make those that happen less lethal, including ideas supported by a majority of gun owners:

- *We must strengthen and better enforce the instant background check system.*
- *We must close the gun-show loophole, which allows unlicensed dealers to sell guns to people who otherwise would not be able to get them.*
- *We must make "straw man" purchases a federal crime.*
- *We must ban semiautomatic assault weapons, which are designed strictly for killing human beings.*
- *We must recognize that our mental health system is seriously broken. While there has been much talk about mental health parity in our health-care system, we are not even close to achieving it. It's past time for a serious discussion about identifying, intervening, and treating mental illness and ensuring access to care.*

THE DEBATE

As someone who has been interested and involved in politics for most of my adult life, I have of course paid attention to presidential debates and

have watched many of them. If the truth be told, I can even remember the Kennedy-Nixon debate of 1960.

But now, as I watched a CNN commercial advertising the Democratic debate on October 13, 2015, in Las Vegas, I noticed something very strange. That was my picture up there. I was going to be in the debate, and there would be millions of people watching it. It all seemed a bit surreal.

As a candidate in a number of elections in Vermont, I had participated in many debates. Sometimes I debated one person, and sometimes I debated as many as seven or eight people. Sometimes the candidates would stand at podiums, and sometimes they'd be seated at a table. Sometimes the debates were on statewide TV, and sometimes they were in schools with almost no media and relatively few people in attendance. I, of course, always "prepared" for a debate, which meant that I would spend an hour or so going over what I wanted to say and work on my opening remarks. That, more or less, was my preparation. Sometimes I did very well in debates, often I did okay. On occasion, as in the first debate when I was running for reelection as mayor, I did poorly. I had been so busy with my job that I almost forgot that I had a debate.

Needless to say, what I was getting involved in now was a little bit different from my previous debates in Vermont. I was running for president of the United States, and I was running against Hillary Clinton, who was a very experienced and effective debater. In 2008 she had debated Barack Obama many times and won most of them. In the first debate, I was also up against former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley, former Virginia senator Jim Webb, and former governor and senator of Rhode Island Lincoln Chafee.

This time, I needed more than an hour to prepare.

Obviously, before the debate took place there were debates about the debate. Who would the moderator be and who else would be asking questions? How long would the debate be? How long would the opening statements be? Who would stand where? How much time would there be for rebuttal? What topics were going to be discussed? Would it be mostly domestic issues or foreign policy, or what?

Generally speaking, most of those issues were resolved to everybody's mutual satisfaction.

If I had my druthers, I would love to participate in a Lincoln-Douglas-type debate today. The people are entitled to serious answers to serious questions, which can't be done in thirty seconds or a minute. The voters

also have the right to know the basic philosophical assumptions and priorities that a candidate holds, which also takes a bit of time to express. Unfortunately, that type of debate is not going to take place in modern American politics and on modern American television. So we do the best we can and prepare for the debates of today.

Michaeleen Crowell, Warren Gunnels, Caryn Compton, and Edward Chapman joined Tad, Mark, Jane, Jeff, Levi, Dave, and Carina and played active rolls in preparing me. Together, led by Tad, they did an excellent job in anticipating what the questions would be. The challenge was that while we had a pretty good idea of the questions that might be asked, we had to be prepared for *anything*. The range of potential questions, dealing with foreign and domestic issues, was enormous. For a debate, it wasn't necessary to have extensive knowledge about every issue under the sun, but you did have to know enough to provide a credible answer to anything that was asked.

Further, you had to anticipate the kinds of attacks and charges that would be coming from your opponents. How would they try to attack you? How would they try to get you off balance? During the practice sessions (and this wasn't easy) I had to get into the mind-set of responding seriously to the attacks coming from Michaeleen (playing Hillary Clinton) when it was really just Michaeleen, who in her day job was my friend and chief of staff.

Then, on top of everything that I had to prepare for, the campaign had to make certain that we had an effective "spinning operation." That means that during and after the debate we had to convince the media and the public that, hands down, no matter what I said or did, it was all quite brilliant, always factually correct, and that I was far and away the clear winner. This operation included a sophisticated tweet system that highlighted my extraordinary strengths in the debate and my opponents' unbelievable weaknesses. Needless to say, all the other candidates were thinking about the exact same things.

Oh, yes. In addition, my staff reminded me that it would be great if I could mention our Web site, berniesanders.com, and make a request for contributions. A debate is an opportunity to raise a lot of campaign contributions.

In Nevada, we did the practice runs at the hotel where we were staying outside of Las Vegas. Tad Devine did a brutally good job in playing the moderator and asking me very sharp questions that went after my vulnerabilities. The more we went at it, the more nervous I became. There were some questions to which I was just not responding well.

On Tuesday night, October 13, after going through all kinds of security, getting made up, and becoming increasingly nervous in the green room, I walked out on the stage with the other candidates. The debate began.

Perhaps the most memorable moment of the night was a response that I made to a question from Anderson Cooper. When he asked me about Secretary Clinton's e-mail problem, I said, "Let me say something that may not be great politics. But I think the Secretary is right. And that is that the American people are sick and tired of hearing about your damn e-mails. And let me say something about the media as well. I go around the country, talk to a whole lot of people. The middle class of this country is collapsing. We have twenty-seven million people living in poverty. We have massive wealth and income inequality. Our trade policies have cost us millions of decent jobs. The American people want to know whether we're going to have a democracy or an oligarchy as a result of Citizens United. Enough of the e-mails. Let's talk about the real issues facing America." The answer certainly struck a chord in the audience, which rose in a standing ovation and prolonged applause. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the media combined the two remarks about the e-mails and chose to omit coverage about the issues.

One of the most fascinating and telling aspects of this debate and those that followed was the answer to the question "Who won?" And what we learned was that "victory" was very much in the eyes of the beholder. People see what they want to see. For a lot of the establishment media and the Inside-the-Beltway pundits, Hillary Clinton "won." As usual, she was composed, she was knowledgeable, and, most important, she "looked presidential." But there was another world out there that did not look at things quite the way the pundits did. They were less concerned about whether a candidate "looked presidential," and more concerned about whether or not that candidate was going to take on the big-money interests controlling our country, and address the issues that impacted their lives. Among those people, I did pretty well.

More than one hour after the debate ended, we were winning the unscientific online polls overwhelmingly. In a *Time* magazine poll, 68 percent of respondents thought I had won. Clinton was in second place at 16 percent. A *U.S. News & World Report* online poll had 84 percent of the people voting for me, and *Slate* readers had me at 74 percent.

Further, as the online polling indicated, what was becoming increasingly obvious was that there was a very wide generational divide in the electorate.

We were winning the younger generation, people under forty who were learning about us online, by very large numbers. Clinton was easily winning the older voters, who got much of their news from mainstream media and knew relatively little about our campaign.

Social media was playing a vitally important role. It was not just bringing in millions of small donations, it became the fabric that united the campaign, that brought us together, that shared our message. One example of the power of our social media were the four thousand debate-watch parties we organized on the night of that first debate in homes, union halls, theaters, on college campuses, and at locations in every state in the country. It was an extraordinary event that was unprecedented in any presidential campaign.

What we were accomplishing with social media was the ability to go outside of the corporate interpretation of events, bring our supporters together, and communicate directly with millions of people. This was very much the political revolution in action. It was also, to a very significant degree, why we were doing so well with younger people.

One of the very serious and ongoing problems that our campaign faced from day one was our inability to effectively connect with seniors. Poll after



Lemonade for Bernie: another small donor contribution.

poll showed us doing extremely well with voters under forty, but we were getting trounced by Clinton among older Americans. At our rallies and town meetings, it was also obvious that relatively few seniors were showing up. Why was this happening? What could we do about it?

The campaign staff came up with several explanations as to why this was occurring. First, older Democrats remembered the Clinton years fondly, and Bill and Hillary were popular with them. Hillary was especially popular with older women, who very much wanted to see a woman become president. Second, older people who lived through McCarthyism and the “evil empire” of the old Soviet Union often had negative impressions of the word “socialism.” To the degree that they heard that I was a socialist, that wasn’t helping.

The third explanation that we came up with was one that we could do very little about, and one that also hurt John McCain when he ran for president. While younger people had few problems with the fact that I was seventy-four years old, it appeared that older voters did. Older people, some of whom had health problems or the general fatigue issues that age can bring, were asking themselves: “How can this guy become president, the hardest and most stressful job in the country, at seventy-five and keep going strong until he completes his first term at seventy-nine?” The fact that my health and stamina were excellent may not have been enough to convince them that I had the energy for the job.

The last obstacle that we had with seniors, which was also not going to be easily resolved, was that many older people did not use social media—Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc. We were much more effective in getting our message out through social media than through the mainstream media and network news that many seniors got their information from.

The poor response we were getting from seniors, for whatever the reasons, was disappointing. I had one of the strongest records in Congress on senior issues. I not only had helped lead the effort in defending Social Security against Republican attacks, but I had introduced legislation expanding benefits. In Vermont, seniors were always part of my core constituency. Somehow, we had to figure out a way to communicate better with senior citizens.

While we were preparing for the debate, another major political development was brewing. More and more attention was being paid to the possibility that Joe Biden might jump into the race.

Joe Biden is a friend of mine. While we have our differences of opinion, I believe that he has been a very effective vice president and an excellent representative for the administration. As our campaign gained momentum and the Clinton machine sputtered, there was growing speculation that Joe might enter the race. He was talking with union leaders, he was dropping hints about the possibility of running, and there were a growing number of voices urging him to run. The “inevitability” of Hillary as the Democratic nominee was now in doubt, and there were those who were searching for an alternative to Bernie Sanders.

I had mixed feelings about Biden getting into the race. On one hand, what the polls seemed to show was that his candidacy would probably be helpful to us because he would split the more conservative Democratic vote with Clinton. We probably had a better chance to win a three-way race than a two-way contest. On the other hand, our entire campaign effort was now focused on Clinton and we would have to go through some major adjustments to figure out how best to deal with a Biden candidacy.

On October 21, Joe ended the speculation. He announced that he would not be running. A few months earlier he had lost his son Beau, whom he was very close to, and he felt it best for his family that he not run. I chatted with Joe on the day he made his announcement and we met soon after.

Reaching out to young people was one of the strong components of our campaign. We wanted them involved in politics. We wanted them fighting for a new America. On October 28, we held a rally at George Mason University in Virginia, which was live-streamed into 250 student meetings in every state in the country. There were about 1,500 students who attended the event on campus.

The meeting was notable for a couple of reasons. First, I went into some detail about my views on marijuana. What I said is that if we were serious about dealing with the crisis in criminal justice, we had to completely rethink the so-called “War on Drugs.” Far too many people had their lives harmed by arrests for marijuana possession, and the nature of drug arrests was most certainly tied to race. In 2014 alone there were 620,000 marijuana possession arrests, and those numbers were disproportionately high within the African-American community. Although about the same proportion of blacks and whites use marijuana, a black person was almost four times more likely than a white person to get arrested for it.

The view that I expressed to the students was that it was absurd that

marijuana be listed as a Schedule I drug within the federal Controlled Substance Act, right next to heroin, a killer drug. I proposed taking marijuana completely out of that act. The decision to legalize marijuana was a state decision, and four states had already done that. But regardless of what states did or did not do, possession of marijuana should not be a federal crime.

The other part of that evening was a quite emotional discussion that I had with a Muslim student at the university. During the question-and-answer period a young woman with a headscarf raised her hand and asked me my views about the Islamophobia that was on the rise because of the racism of Donald Trump and some of his followers. I thought her question was so important that I invited her up to the stage. The *International Business Times* described the scene:

At a Wednesday evening town hall, a young Muslim woman wearing a purple headscarf asked how the presidential candidate would combat a rising tide of anti-Islam rhetoric in the country.

"Let me be very personal if I might. I'm Jewish, my father's family died in concentration camps," Sanders responded during the speech in front of a couple hundred people at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. "I will do everything that I can to rid this country of the ugly stain of racism that has existed for far too many years."

Sanders invited the questioner, Remaz Abdelgader, a senior in college who said she wishes to become a human rights attorney, to join him on stage and gave her a hug as the crowd watched and cheered, Think Progress reported. Abdelgader, the daughter of Sudanese asylees, expressed concern over recent anti-Muslim rhetoric from other presidential candidates. Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson said last month that he would not support electing a Muslim president, and later added that he would only support a Muslim candidate if they were to denounce Shariah law.

"Being an American is such a strong part of my identity, but I want to create a change in this society," she said as she asked Sanders her question. "I'm so tired of listening to this rhetoric saying I can't be president one day, that I should not be in office. It makes me so angry and upset. This is my country."

Abdelgader told Think Progress after the event that she was pleased with Sanders's answer, adding that she was nearly moved to tears by his gesture.

"If there's anyone that should be elected to the White House, it's him," she said. "He stands for everybody, whether you're gay or Muslim or black or Christian or Latino. He is for equality. That's why I identify with the next president of the United States: Bernie Sanders."

Two of the areas that I was considered to be "vulnerable" on were foreign policy and the fact that I was a democratic socialist. I decided to address both of those issues head on in a major speech at Georgetown University on November 19.

Hillary Clinton had been secretary of state for four years under President Obama. She had traveled the world, been involved in a number of important foreign policy decisions, and knew many heads of state personally. Therefore, according to the pundits, she was the "expert" on foreign policy. I was, presumably, the novice, and ill-prepared in that area.

Needless to say, that wasn't my view. While it was obvious that Clinton, as a former secretary of state, had more hands-on experience in foreign policy than I did, that did not necessarily make her better qualified in that area. In foreign policy judgment mattered, and on the most important foreign policy issues of our time, my judgment had been better than Hillary Clinton's.

I not only voted against the war in Iraq, I helped lead the opposition to what turned out to be the worst foreign policy blunder in American modern history. In my speech at Georgetown I discussed that war and what I had said on the floor of the House before the vote:

I am concerned about the problems of so-called unintended consequences. Who will govern Iraq when Saddam Hussein is removed and what role will the U.S. play in an ensuing civil war that could develop in that country? Will moderate governments in the region who have large Islamic fundamentalist populations be overthrown and replaced by extremists? Will the bloody conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority be exacerbated? And these are just a few of the questions that remain unanswered.

Hillary Clinton, as a U.S. senator from New York, had voted for the war. Further, against a great deal of political pressure, I had voted against the first Gulf War. I was worried about the precedent that it was setting in

using military force and believed that economic sanctions could have driven Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. I believed that war was unnecessary.

Yes, I was willing to concede that Hillary Clinton had more foreign policy experience than I did. No, I did not believe that her record made her better prepared than me to conduct U.S. foreign and military policy.

In terms of the issue of democratic socialism, the main point that I made at Georgetown was that we must establish “economic rights” in this country, that in a democratic, civilized society all Americans were entitled to health care, the ability to get a higher education, decent housing, and a decent job at a decent wage.

The New York Times got it right when it said:

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont aggressively confronted voter concerns about his electability as president on Thursday, making a rare formal address to explain his left-wing ideology of democratic socialism and argue that its principles reflected mainstream American values like fairness and equality.

Mr. Sanders, who is hugely popular with liberals but is struggling to attract more voters to his Democratic presidential bid against Hillary Rodham Clinton, made blunt overtures to the party faithful by presenting himself as the heir to the policies and ideals of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Invoking the two men several times, Mr. Sanders said that democratic socialism was reflected in Roosevelt’s priorities like Social Security and in Dr. King’s call for social and economic justice, contrasting them to “socialist-communist” caricatures of his thinking put forward by Republicans to tar the Democratic field.

“I don’t believe government should take over the grocery store down the street or own the means of production,” Mr. Sanders said in an hour-long speech before a friendly audience of college students at Georgetown University in Washington. “But I do believe that the middle class and the working families of this country, who produce the wealth of this country, deserve a decent standard of living and that their incomes should go up, not down.”

In mid-November, a new and very interesting development was occurring. National polls were showing that I, not Hillary Clinton, was the stronger

candidate against possible Republican nominees. This completely undercut one of the main arguments made by the Clinton organization, which was that Bernie Sanders was unelectable in a general election, and that a vote for me would result in a Republican president.

In a *Wall Street Journal* poll released on November 3, I was defeating Trump by 9 points and Marco Rubio by 5. Throughout the campaign, from late November to the end of my campaign, I defeated Trump in twenty-eight out of thirty national polls, almost always by double digits. In almost all of those polls during that period, I was running much stronger against Trump than Clinton.

In early December, a Public Policy Polling poll in New Hampshire showed the same trend. In that battleground state, we were doing an average of 4 points better than Clinton against the leading Republican candidates. Jeff Weaver, my campaign manager, made the point that we were going to make over and over again. He stated: “The results from New Hampshire, a key general election battleground state, tell us the same thing we’ve seen in national polls. The fact is that Bernie is the most electable candidate Democrats could nominate.”

The Clinton campaign may not have liked it. The Democratic establishment may not have liked it. But it was becoming increasingly clear that I was the strongest candidate if Democrats were to retain the White House.

On February 1, the people of Iowa walked into their caucus locations and cast the first votes of the 2016 Democratic presidential nominating process. We lost, but we won. At the end of a very chaotic night where some delegates were won with the toss of a coin, Clinton received 50 percent of the vote and I received 50 percent of the vote. She received 701 delegates to the state convention, and I received 697. Most of the media correctly perceived the night as a victory for us. From the first day of the campaign, we knew that we would have to do well in the early states to establish credibility and let the world know that we were in this for the long haul. And that’s exactly what we did. With the help of a great team led by Robert Becker and Pete D’Alessandro, we had come a very long way in a few months.

As *The New York Times* reported from Iowa:

On Monday night, a disappointed-looking Ms. Clinton raised her voice to a near yell as she tried to demonstrate her own conviction. But

she offered oddly little direct assuagement to the unsettled working class that still craves her assurance.

That task fell instead, as it has throughout the campaign, to Mr. Sanders, Mrs. Clinton's ultraliberal rival, whose denunciations of greedy plutocrats and an unfair economy are at the center of his message. "Given the enormous crisis facing our country," he said here after voting had concluded, "it is just too late for establishment politicians and establishment economics."

An analysis of the exit polls done by some of the media organizations yielded some remarkable information. We had done unbelievably well among young people. We had done very poorly among the elderly. According to *The Washington Post*, we had won 84 percent of the vote among voters twenty-nine or younger and 58 percent of the vote from those younger than forty-four. On the other hand, we had won only 26 percent of the vote of people who were sixty-five or older. While we lost the women's vote to Clinton, we did respectably well. She won 53 percent of the women. I won 42 percent. I won 50 percent of the men's vote. She got 44 percent. Also, importantly, I won 69 percent of the Independent vote.

During the evening, with caucus results showing him doing poorly, Martin O'Malley dropped out of the race. I liked O'Malley. He ran a progressive, issue-oriented campaign. It just never caught on.

Now, with Jim Webb and Lincoln Chafee having already dropped out, we were down to a two-person race. And it was off to New Hampshire, where the primary would take place the following week. Our plane landed at five o'clock in the morning and, why not, we held a rally. Damnedest thing I ever saw, but hundreds of New Hampshire and Vermont supporters met us at a parking lot near our hotel in Manchester to welcome us back—at five A.M. I couldn't believe it. After commenting that these people were completely out of their minds, I gave a short speech while standing on the back of a pickup truck. We then drove to our hotel and went to sleep.

An analysis of the Iowa exit polls, as well as other public polls, told us exactly what we had to do to win in New Hampshire and the other states. As I've said, we were doing phenomenally well with young voters, but these are the people least likely to vote. We were doing terribly with older people, who are the most reliable voters. We were also doing well with Independents, people who are not enamored with either political party.

Clearly, if we were going to win the nomination, we had to do everything we could to make sure that young people came out to the polls, we had to improve our standing with seniors, and we had to work as hard as we could to win the support of women. We also, when necessary, had to get Independents to re-register as Democrats so that they could vote in those states that held closed primaries. While this was not a major issue in New Hampshire, we also knew that we were going to have to do much better in introducing ourselves to the African-American and Latino communities and making the case as to why they should vote for me.

Julia Barnes, the former director of the Vermont Democratic Party, was our state director in New Hampshire. Extremely hardworking, Julia put together an excellent staff and volunteer organization. I had the opportunity to visit a number of our offices around the state and was deeply moved by the commitment and energy of our volunteers. Truly incredible.

Our organization in New Hampshire did an extraordinary job in setting up events and bringing people out. It turned out that we brought out *four* times as many people as we had originally anticipated. By the end of the campaign, over 41,000 people had attended our meetings. Incredibly, that meant that one out of the four voters we needed to win over in New Hampshire had been someone who had actually heard me speak in person. That is what grassroots democracy is all about. One of the fun aspects of the New Hampshire campaign was that my son Levi, who lives in the state, was able to introduce me at a number of our meetings.

The thing that got me most nervous during the last week in New Hampshire was that I was in the very unusual position of being the favorite. That made me uncomfortable. All of the recent polls had us in the lead, and some had us winning by as many as 20 points. The Clinton people were letting on that a "victory" for them would be a single-digit defeat.

After a long and hard week, Election Day finally came. We won. It was a blowout. The final tally was 60 percent to 38 percent.

Watching the results come in on Election Night in New Hampshire was an unbelievable experience. We had come such a very long way. Hillary Clinton's concession speech was gracious, and she called to congratulate me. My extended family—four kids and seven grandchildren—aren't able to get together all that often. I was very happy, therefore, that along with Jane, all of them were there. Levi, Heather, Carina, Dave, and their spouses, Raine, Marc, Blake, and Liza, as well as Sunnee, Cole, Ryleigh, Grayson, Ella, Tess,

and Dylan, along with Nicole and Keegan, were all on hand for what turned out to be a very big night for us. Our “holding room” for that evening was a gym in the school where we were holding our Election Night celebration. Before I went upstairs to make the victory statement, the media came in for their photos and video, and caught us shooting hoops. I even made a few jump shots.

After winning New Hampshire, we began receiving Secret Service protection. Needless to say, it is a life-changing experience. Previously, when I was home, I enjoyed jumping in my small car and running to the grocery store for milk and eggs. Now I was traveling in an armored vehicle accompanied by a fleet of cars and a number of well-armed agents who made sure I was safe in the bread aisle, and every place else that I went on the campaign trail.

Over the many months they were with us, we got to know the agents well, liked them very much, and never forgot that they were putting their lives on the line to keep us safe. There was always a car in front of the house and an agent in a booth they had built in the back. They inspected our mail, checked out anyone who came by, and made sure that the house was secure at all times. In a very crazy and dangerous world, Jane and I very much appreciated their protection and their professionalism.

We had tied in Iowa and won New Hampshire. Now we were off to South Carolina and Nevada. Very different worlds.

As we took a deep breath after the New Hampshire primary and began moving our operation to Nevada for the caucus there on February 20, we analyzed where we were, and what we had to do to keep the momentum going. It was clear to all of us—Jeff, Jane, Phil, Michael, Tad, and the whole team—that one of the major reasons we had done so well in Iowa and New Hampshire was that we had the time to run strong grassroots campaigns that enabled me to meet personally with a significant percentage of the voters in both states.

Early on, we made the decision that if we had any chance to win the nomination, we had to do well in the first two states. And that meant spending an enormous amount of time in Iowa and New Hampshire. That was our strategy, we carried it out, and by and large, we succeeded. No regrets.

In Iowa and New Hampshire, we were able to overcome lack of name

recognition and unfamiliarity with my views through a very aggressive grassroots effort. Over a period of eight months we held 101 rallies and town meetings in Iowa and brought out 73,415 people to our events. The Democratic Party in Iowa reported that, on Election Night, 171,109 people showed up at the caucuses. We received about half that vote. While there were certainly people who came out to more than one event, it appears that I *personally* had spoken to almost as many people who eventually voted for me. That was extraordinary.

In New Hampshire, the situation was pretty much the same. We held sixty-eight meetings there and brought out 41,810. On Election Day I received 151,584 votes. The likelihood is that over 25 percent of the vote we received came from people who had attended one or more of our meetings and met with me personally.

In both Iowa and New Hampshire, we spent a lot of money on paid media. That was important. But to my mind, the major reason we were creating excitement and energy, and the reason we did so well, was that much of our organizational effort was geared to bringing out people to the many, many events we held in every corner of both of those states. Our message was resonating town by town, county by county, as we worked our way through Iowa and New Hampshire.

Now, with the Nevada caucus coming on February 20, followed by the South Carolina primary on February 27, and eleven states coming up on Super Tuesday, March 1, we were running out of runway. It was just impossible to spend the time that I would have liked in each of the states, and to have the kind of grassroots presence we needed. We had made the decision to focus on Iowa and New Hampshire. It was the right decision. Now, however, we were paying the price for that choice.

In every state that would soon be having primaries and caucuses, we had started way, way behind Clinton in the polls and in terms of name recognition. Many of the people in those states still did not know who I was or what I stood for. And now we faced thirteen state elections in the next three weeks. We had a lot of work to do, and not much time to do it.

The voters in the Democratic caucus in Nevada are the most diverse of any state in the country, including a sizable Latino vote. We were frantically trying to get every vote we could—white, black, and Latino.

In terms of statewide politics, Nevada is two worlds: the Las Vegas area and everywhere else. Virtually all of our rallies and meetings were in Las

Vegas and Reno, including a beautiful and large outdoor evening rally at the University of Nevada at Reno. As Election Day approached in Nevada, I was feeling more and more confident. The polls had us close to Clinton, and while we had only done seventeen events in the state, it was clear to me that I was becoming better known.

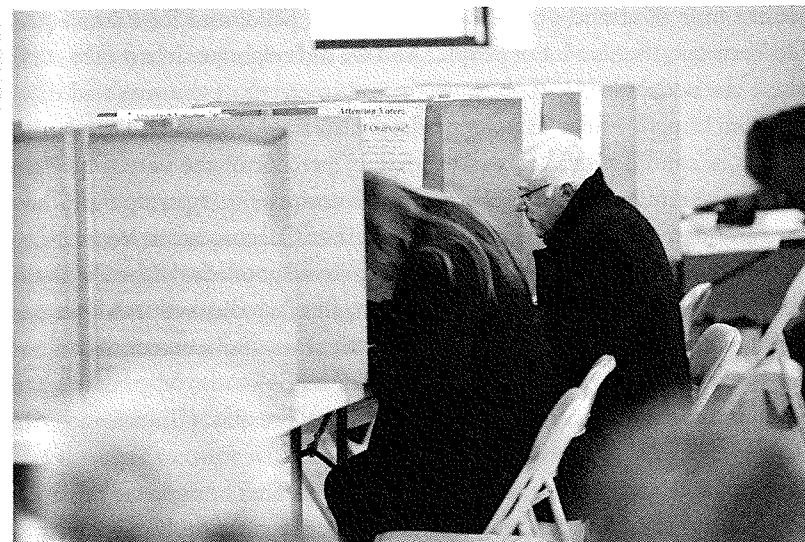
Further, our staff and volunteer phone callers were finding a lot of support throughout the state. In fact, we had identified more than enough support to win, given the expected voter turnout. On Election Day I campaigned in the hotels and casinos, urging the workers there to come out and vote. The support seemed pretty good. In the afternoon, we heard about an exit poll that had us slightly in the lead.

Winning Nevada was very important for us. It would have extended the momentum that we received from the victory in New Hampshire and shown that we could win states with large non-white populations. But that's not the way it turned out. We did well, but not well enough. We lost Nevada 47.3 percent to 52.6 percent. Our postmortem analysis showed that while we did very well with Latino voters, our overall get-out-the-vote effort had not been as effective as it should have been, and many of our supporters had not come out to caucus.

And now it was on to South Carolina for a February 27 primary, followed by Super Tuesday contests in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia. We were in the midst of the battle.

The very first South Carolina poll that I was included in, done by NBC News/Marist, had me at 3 percent, 62 points behind Secretary Clinton. The next poll had me at 1 percent, 58 points behind. From day one we knew that South Carolina would be a very, very tough state for us. We always thought it unlikely that we could win there, but we chose not to write it off. We wanted to make a respectable showing, and we invested a lot of money and staff into trying to make that happen. We failed miserably. Clinton won a landslide victory there, defeating us 73 percent to 26 percent. Our outreach effort to the black community was completely unsuccessful. According to exit polls, Clinton won 90 percent of the black vote.

We were now officially "hurting." We had a shot to win in Nevada, and we lost. We thought we could do respectably in South Carolina, and we got decimated there. Now we were heading to some very tough states for us on Super Tuesday, six of which were in the South.



Super Tuesday in Vermont. Guess who we are voting for for president?

During this point in the campaign, the disadvantages we faced became very apparent. Clinton was far better known than I was, especially among older black voters. She had run eight years before and she had been very active in her husband's two presidential campaigns. She had a strong political organization with experience in the states and had many connections with the Democratic leadership. In the states in which we were now campaigning we might have the support of a few members of the legislature. She had the entire political establishment. And, in state after state, we had to start from scratch in putting together our organization.

During this Super Tuesday period, we did what we could. We got on our chartered plane and flew to as many destinations as possible. On February 27, we did rallies in Austin and Dallas, Texas, and a third rally in Rochester, Minnesota. On February 28, we were in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Fort Collins, Colorado. On February 29, we did events in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Milton, Massachusetts. On March 1, Super Tuesday, we came home to Vermont to vote and to hold a celebration in the evening.

The event in Vermont was beautiful, and emotional for Jane and me.

Almost four thousand people came out to say hello, and for a small state like Vermont, that is a lot of people. And we did celebrate. In my own state, where the people knew me best, we won 86 percent of the vote and Clinton won 13 percent—a 73 percent victory. In the Democratic nominating process, a candidate has to win at least 15 percent of the vote to get any delegates. Vermont was the only state in the entire primary campaign where one candidate got all of the delegates. We shut Clinton out in Vermont.

Needless to say, the results were not quite so good elsewhere. We were defeated very badly in all of the Southern states. We did well in Massachusetts but ended up losing there—50.1 percent to 48.7 percent. The good news was that we won very strong victories in Colorado, Minnesota, and Oklahoma in addition to Vermont. On Super Tuesday, Clinton took 518 pledged delegates. We won 347.

We were losing, but we were still in the fight. That became very clear on the weekend of March 5 when we had landslide victories in Kansas, Maine, and Nebraska. On the other hand, we lost badly in Louisiana. On March 8, we pulled off one of the major upsets of the entire campaign. Despite polls showing us way, way behind, we won Michigan. That victory showed, for the first time, that we could win a large, industrialized state with a diverse population.

March 15 was a very bad day for us. Despite very close losses in Missouri and Illinois, we lost all five states that were up that day.

March 22 was much better. We won Idaho in landslide proportion, with a victory of 78 percent to 21 percent. If you can believe it, we did even better in Utah, where we won with 79 percent of the vote.

The Arizona primary also took place on that day. We worked very hard in Arizona, and I thought we had a good shot to win there. We didn't, and I still don't know why. One thing I do know was that the voting process in Arizona was an absolute disaster and an embarrassment to American democracy. People in some parts of the state were forced to wait up to five hours to cast a ballot. Nobody can ever really know which candidate was hurt more by this travesty, but I don't think it helped us. Many of Clinton's supporters were older and voted by mail. Most of our supporters came out on Election Day with the obvious expectation that they would be allowed to vote in a reasonable period of time.

On March 26, we won major landslide victories. We won Alaska with

82 percent of the vote. We won Hawaii with 71 percent. Needless to say, Jane, who had campaigned in both of those states, was pretty excited. Our biggest state victory of the day was the state of Washington, where we received almost 73 percent of the vote. Yes, we were celebrating on the plane on the night of March 26.

What a strange and unprecedented campaign. Hillary Clinton, the candidate whom the pundits had determined was the odds-on favorite, the candidate who had been anointed by the entire establishment, was winning, but at the same time was losing state after state by huge margins.

We were more than aware that we were behind in both the popular vote and the delegate count—especially with the superdelegates who were always being counted by the media, despite not having voted yet. But victories like the ones we were winning strengthened our resolve. We were going to continue this fight. We were going to take it all the way to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. We were not going to give up.

And the good news continued. On April 5, we won the Wisconsin primary with almost 57 percent of the vote, and on April 9 we won the Wyoming caucus with 56 percent.

We had now won seven primaries and caucuses in a row. The Clinton team was not happy. We were ecstatic. According to all the experts, this nominating process was supposed to have ended a long time before, and here we were winning state after state.

Everybody knew that the major showdown yet to come was New York State, which held its primary on April 19. This, as the media pointed out, was going to be a very tough state for us. It was Hillary Clinton's home state, and where she had been elected twice as a U.S. senator. She was universally known in New York and popular. Further, New York State's election laws were antiquated and reactionary. In a state generally considered to be progressive, the political elite in New York, Democrats and Republicans, had created a system that made it hard for people to vote and where, as a result, voter turnout was very low.

New York State had a "closed primary," which meant that the 3 million New Yorkers who had registered as Independents could not participate. All of these people were disenfranchised from selecting the Democratic or Republican candidate for president of the United States. Further, one had to change party registration in October 2015—six months in advance—to

be eligible to vote in the primary. This was, on the surface, an absurd and undemocratic process. Its major goal was to keep voter turnout low and protect incumbents. This closed-primary process was especially bad for us.

As the longest-serving Independent in the history of the U.S. Congress, I always did well with Independent voters. In this election, they would not be able to vote. Further, many of the young people who were flocking to our campaign had not registered as Democrats, and had certainly not changed their registration six months before. They also would not be able to participate.

On top of all that, we were taking on the political machines of the governor, virtually all the state's members of Congress, and New York's two senators. This was not going to be an easy fight, but we jumped in with both feet. I am very proud of the campaign our team ran.

Our strategy for New York was not complicated. Most of the votes in the New York Democratic primary are in New York City, so we were going to have to spend a lot of time there and do everything we could to bring out our vote. But we were not going to ignore upstate New York. We had to get out there as well.

On March 31, we held a rally in the South Bronx. This is one of the poorest parts of the city, and heavily minority. The crime rate is high. Voter turnout is low. Housing conditions are deplorable. The asthma rate among children is terrible. Nobody could remember the last time that a presidential candidate held a rally in that neighborhood. The police department was worried about a disturbance and they threatened to limit the number of people in attendance. The Secret Service was also nervous.

That evening turned out to be one of the most beautiful events of the entire campaign. More than 18,000 people showed up. Black, white, Latino—virtually all working-class. Rosario Dawson and Spike Lee made the introductory remarks. We were off to a great start in New York.

What I remember most about the New York campaign were the unbelievable turnouts that we were seeing. On April 13, we did a rally at Washington Square Park in lower Manhattan. The official count was 27,032. We were told that it was the largest political event ever at that iconic location. People there were even looking out of windows in the buildings across from the park. A few days later, we held an even larger event in Prospect Park, with 28,356 people showing up. Danny DeVito and Tulsi Gabbard did the introductions. We did low-key or unannounced gatherings throughout the

city and large crowds inevitably gathered.

One of the fun events that we did in New York City was on the street where I grew up, East Twenty-sixth Street in Brooklyn. We closed off the street outside of my old apartment house, and a thousand people came. Hillary Clinton may have been New York's senator, but I was the candidate born in Brooklyn and I wanted people to know that.

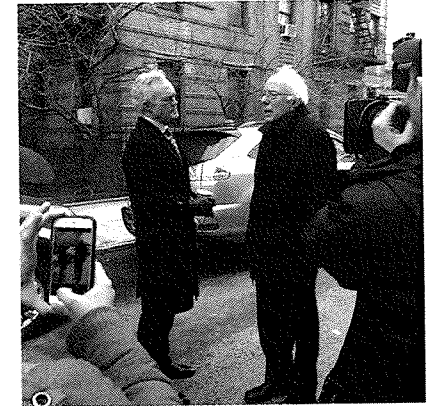
We did not ignore upstate New York. We did large rallies in Syracuse, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Poughkeepsie, and Binghamton. When we were in Poughkeepsie, we dropped into the home where FDR was born and where he is buried, in Hyde Park.

On April 15, we took a slight detour from New York politics. Weeks before, I had been invited to attend a major conference at the Vatican that dealt with the need to create a "moral economy." Despite the pressure of the campaign, I decided to attend, if only for a day. I am a big fan of Pope Francis and strongly support his call for radical changes in international economic priorities.

The Washington Post reported:

Sen. Bernie Sanders told a Vatican conference Friday that the global market economy has largely failed working people, breaking from the U.S. campaign trail to deliver a talk on his signature issue of income inequality on an international stage. "At a time when so few have so much, and so many have so little, we must reject the foundations of this contemporary economy as immoral and unsustainable," Sanders said.

The address to a prestigious Vatican academy that is nonetheless obscure to most Americans puts Sanders in the company of leftist thinkers and political leaders. Sanders slipped comfortably into the lexicon of European and South American socialist and leftist politics, including the socialist government models of Scandinavia. He told the group that failed



Talking with CBS's Scott Pelley outside of the apartment house I grew up in.

and crumbling public schools and annual college tuition priced above the annual wages of many Americans are marks of failure.

While at the Vatican, Jane and I had the opportunity to briefly chat with the pope, a true honor. We spent the night in the building where the pope lived. In separate rooms, as was required.

Defeating Clinton in New York would have been a major boost to our campaign, but it wasn't to be. We worked very hard there and ran an excellent campaign, but there were just too many obstacles in our way. Clinton beat us there 58 percent to 42 percent. We did very poorly in New York City. We won almost all of upstate New York. In the two New York counties that border Vermont, where people knew me best, we won more than 73 percent of the vote.

A week later, on April 26, we lost four out of the five states that were up on that day—Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut. Our only victory was in Rhode Island. But on May 3, we won a surprise victory in Indiana and, in the following weeks, we won victories in West Virginia and Oregon.

Our campaign was many things, but we were not dumb and we knew how to count. We were more than aware that we had only 46 percent of the pledged delegates, virtually no superdelegates, and that the primary and caucus process was grinding toward an end. And every day we were being asked by the media, "Why don't you drop out? You can't win."

At this point our strategy was pretty simple. It had to do with momentum and showing the Democratic Convention who the stronger candidate was against Donald Trump, who by this time we knew would be the Republican nominee. And that all came down to the last day of the state primary and caucus elections, June 7, 2016. On that day, California, New Jersey, New Mexico, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana were voting. If we could win big on that day, especially in California, we would be going into the convention with incredible energy that, we believed, would turn into delegate votes. Further, virtually all of the national and state polls were showing us doing much better against Trump than Clinton was doing.

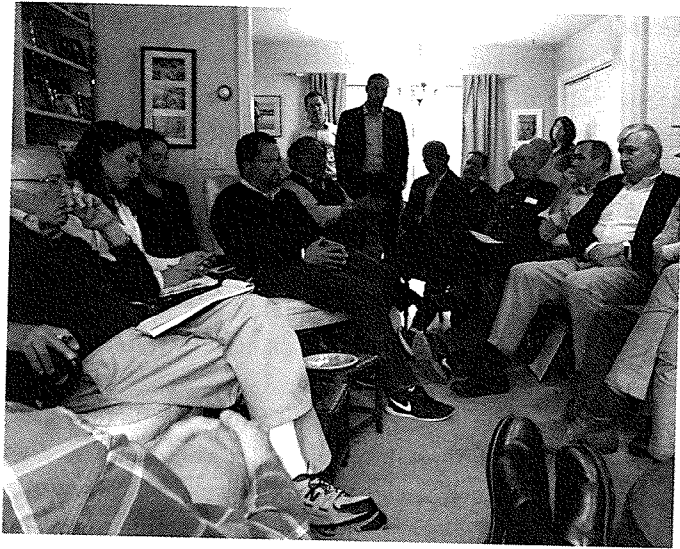
If the Democrats wanted to win in November, our hope was that many of the super delegates would begin to understand that we were the campaign to make that happen.

Jeff, Jane, Tad, Michael, and I reflected on how we could best deal with California, the largest state in the country. The answer became pretty clear: We would barnstorm the state in a way that no other presidential candidate had ever done. I announced that I hoped to have rallies bringing out at least 200,000 people in California between mid-May and early June. That is a lot of people and a lot of work. But we did it.

On May 9, we started off with a giant rally, which brought out 16,000 people in Sacramento. On May 17, we had 11,000 supporters in Carson City, and on May 18, we had almost 10,000 in Vallejo. We followed with 6,700 in Santa Monica, 9,800 in Ventura, and 8,500 in Fresno. We just plowed forward, up and down the state, two or three rallies a day. By the time we were finished campaigning in California on June 7, we had held 40 rallies and brought out more than 227,000 supporters.

One of the more outrageous moments of the entire campaign took place on June 6. The Associated Press aggressively contacted undeclared superdelegates to determine who they would be voting for, and one day before the all-important primary in California and five other states, they announced their belief that Clinton had secured the nomination. The AP had determined that by combining her pledged delegates and those superdelegates who told them they would be voting for Clinton at the convention, she had enough votes to win. The day before the last votes were cast in the Democratic nominating process, the AP decided on their own that the election was effectively over. It's not quite clear to me why they did that, but I believe strongly that their action had a negative impact on voter turnout and hurt us. Why vote if the election is over? Our younger voters were more likely to cast their votes on Election Day rather than voting earlier by absentee ballot, as many Clinton voters did.

In California, for whatever reason, it literally takes weeks before all the votes are counted and the final tally is made official. But on Election Night we knew that we had not won. We had done well, but not good enough. The media announced that we had lost by 14 percent that night. Far from accurate. After the secretary of state announced all the ballots were finally counted, we had cut that margin in half and ended up down by 7 percent.



On June 12, I invited a number of our key advisers to our home to discuss the future. (Top photo) Left to right: me, Tulsi Gabbard, Shailene Woodley, Ben Jealous, Raul Grijalva, Dave Driscoll, Justin Bamberg, Terry Alexander, Chuy Garcia, Larry Cohen, Carina Driscoll, Jeff Merkley, and Rich Cassidy. (Bottom photo) Left to right: Jim Hightower, Bill McKibben, Nina Turner, RoseAnn DeMoro, Keith Ellison, Ilya Sheyman, Jerry Greenfield, and Ben Cohen. Also in attendance were Jeff Weaver, Michael Briggs, Phil Fiermonte, Jim Dean, Peter Welch, Shannon Jackson, and Jane Sanders.

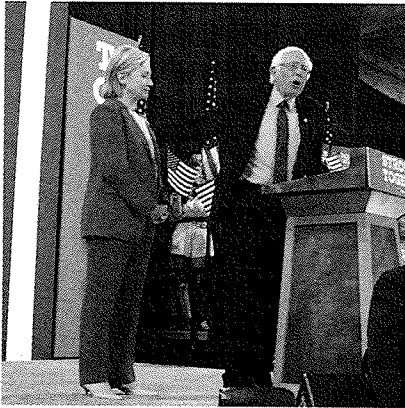
The final results had us with 2,381,714 votes—46 percent of the total. On June 7, Clinton also won contests in New Jersey, New Mexico, and South Dakota. We won in Montana and North Dakota.

The last states had voted, the numbers were in, and it was clear that I would not be the Democratic nominee. But we were not giving up the fight yet. If I wasn't going to be the Democratic nominee for president, my goal was to help write the strongest possible Democratic Party platform and, as a senator, do all that I could to see that it was implemented. During the platform-drafting process in St. Louis our campaign had five great representatives who helped begin to draft the most progressive political platform in the history of our country. Our representatives were Cornel West, Keith Ellison, Deborah Parker, Bill McKibben, and Jim Zogby. Warren Gunnels, my policy director, also served on this committee. Thanks to their efforts, we won some major victories on Wall Street reform, expanding Social Security, and ending the death penalty.

The full platform committee met from July 8 to 9 in Orlando. While the 175 committee members debated the draft platform and what amendments should or should not be added, the two campaigns were busy negotiating behind the scenes. David Weinstein, a senior policy adviser in my Senate office who was taking time off to help the campaign, and Warren Gunnels played an active role in the negotiations.

While we didn't get everything we wanted, we did get much of what we were fighting for. It was now the Democratic Party's policy to break up too-big-to-fail banks, pass a twenty-first-century Glass-Steagall Act, make public colleges and universities tuition free for working families, enact a price on carbon and methane, raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, abolish the death penalty, expand Social Security, close loopholes that allow corporations to avoid paying taxes, create millions of jobs rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, eliminate super PACs, and pass a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United. And these were just some of the key provisions that we got into the platform.

We also made progress in reaching an agreement with the Clinton campaign on some very important issues of great concern to me. On the evening of June 14, Jeff, Jane and I met with Secretary Clinton, John Podesta,



Endorsing Hillary in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

and Robby Mook for ninety minutes in a Washington hotel room. Out of that meeting came the groundwork, announced some weeks later, for very strong Clinton proposals on making public colleges and universities tuition free, and greatly expanding community health centers.

On July 12, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, I formally endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. Our campaign had come to an end.

PART TWO

*An Agenda for a New America:
How We Transform Our Country*