

August 26, 2019

Hon. Catherine Cortez Masto
Hon. Chuck Schumer
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
120 Maryland Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Senators Cortez-Masto and Schumer:

We are women US Senate candidates running for the Democratic nomination in Colorado to defeat Cory Gardner. We are mothers, sisters, scientists, educators, small business owners, women of color, community activists, and current and former legislators. We are powerful, qualified women. We are writing today to urge the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee to reconsider its early endorsement of former Governor John Hickenlooper. All of us, like many women in Colorado and across the country, have seen well-qualified women passed over for male candidates in the workplace time and again. Those of us who have run for office before have been told to “wait our turn” and “don’t rock the boat” more times than we care to mention. Now, the DSCC, by its endorsement, is implying that we should defer to a male candidate because you seem to believe he is “more electable.” Colorado has never had a woman United States Senator and one has to wonder if circumstances such as this have contributed to that unfortunate outcome.

Your premature endorsement ignores some key facts about Colorado that you may not have considered. First, Democratic and unaffiliated women have been the cornerstone voting bloc that has turned our state from deep red to blue. In every election since 2004, women have led the way. Second, the Colorado Legislature has 47 percent women. It was women who mustered up the strong force to take back the Colorado Senate in 2018. Coloradans are increasingly supporting progressive women for office. Third, three consecutive Speakers of the House have been strong women. Fourth, your decision ignores the 2018 election that saw historic numbers of women elected to federal office, many of whom were elected in seats that Washington “experts” said could not be won.

Colorado families deserve to have someone in the United States Senate who represents their shared experiences, perspectives, and values. Women are proving to be the leaders who have the vision and compassion to develop policies and lead communities. We should point out that in the last several campaign cycles, Washington Democrats have recruited candidates with profiles similar to Governor Hickenlooper with much fanfare, only to see those candidates come up short in the general election. We lost races in Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee because of recruitment practices that do not truly represent communities. We would hate to see Colorado as another state that could not take back the US Senate because of poor candidate selection by the DSCC.

We also have serious concerns about whether Governor Hickenlooper actually wants this job. His public statement that he does not believe he is “cut out” for the job is disturbing on multiple levels. We are not convinced he keenly understands this moment in history. To recover

from the deep hole President Trump and Senator Gardner have put us in will require significant progressive changes on healthcare, climate change, criminal justice reform, civil rights, and many other issues. What is more troubling is Hickenlooper's rhetoric throughout his failed Presidential bid he derisively referred to progressives as "socialist" and paternally lectured us on how our progressive values will "re-elect Donald Trump." Let us not forget that it was progressives who fought for the rights of women and communities of color in the 1960s and 1970s that we still enjoy today. Governor Hickenlooper's statements have offended and angered many of the voters in Colorado. Just like Senator Gardner, Governor Hickenlooper is utterly disrespectful and tone deaf to the contributions of activists and communities that make Colorado a leader on progressive values. Voters across the nation have rejected politicians who refuse to stand strongly with them and we will not be surprised if Colorado primary voters do the same.

The Colorado democratic primary for the US Senate seat should belong to the voters. Washington insiders should watch the race develop and hear from all of the candidates before getting involved. To be clear, this race is not a coronation of any candidate. We hope the DSCC will give strong consideration to rescinding its endorsement, and allow Coloradans to decide the outcome of this primary campaign.

Sincerely,

Hon. Angela Williams

Hon. Alice Madden

Dr. Diana Bray

Dr. Stephany Rose Spaulding

Lorena Garcia, MBA

Michelle Ferrigno Warren, MPA

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