



To: Interested Parties

From: Chris Hansen, Gardner for Senate General Consultant

Date: June 30, 2020

Re: Gardner set to face “hot mess” Hickenlooper in general election

Today is Election Day in Colorado and Senator Cory Gardner will finally have an opponent. Although we fully expect John Hickenlooper to win tonight, he will emerge a bruised and battered candidate. His once-pristine reputation is tarnished. His glass jaw is fully exposed.

And we haven't even started yet.

John Hickenlooper is the worst candidate in the country

One thing is clear, John Hickenlooper is the worst senate candidate in the country - in either party. Not counting his embarrassment of a presidential campaign, this primary was the first significant challenge in his political career and it was a complete disaster, requiring a multi-million dollar bailout in the form of a flood of last-minute ads from Chuck Schumer to prop him up.

Just look at the last 30 days of headlines for Chuck Schumer's number one recruit:

- [AP NEWS: 'A hot mess': Hickenlooper stumbles into Democratic primary](#)
- [CO SUN: John Hickenlooper apologizes for 2014 “ancient slave ship” comment](#)
- [THE HILL: '#DropOutHick': Outcry from Indigenous women, allies over Hickenlooper in red face](#)
- [CPR: 'Disrespect For The Rule Of Law': Colorado Ethics Commission Holds Hickenlooper In Contempt For Skipping Hearing](#)
- [DENVER POST: John Hickenlooper violated ethics laws twice in 2018, commission finds](#)
- [CBS4 DENVER: Corporate Donations To Colorado Governor's Office Raise 'All Sorts Of Red Flags'](#)
- [NPR: 1 Of Democrats' Top Senate Recruits Stumbles Amid Protests](#)

Recall that this primary was the easy path for Hickenlooper. It could've been much harder. Chuck Schumer cleared the field of promising candidates (Mike Johnston, Dan Bear, John



Walsh, and Jenna Griswold, to name a few) to make sure Hickenlooper received the nomination. Had Hickenlooper's opponent, perennial loser Andrew Romanoff, done even the bare minimum over the past few months he may have been able to defeat the former governor.

Romanoff will lose, mostly because the Democratic machine spent \$7,450,000 to ensure a Hickenlooper victory, and partly because Andrew Romanoff is working on a doctorate in concession speeches. His timidity in attacking Hickenlooper and his inability to harness the progressive energy that gave Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren a combined 52% of Colorado's Democrats sealed his fate.

Gardner has delivered big for Colorado

Great candidates win. Cory Gardner is an extremely effective Senator who has delivered for Colorado time and time again. He has been ranked the most effective member of the Colorado delegation, the 3rd most bipartisan Senator, and *has had 9 bills signed into law, more than the rest of the Colorado delegation combined.*

He spearheaded the effort to bring Space Command to Colorado Springs and the Bureau of Land Management to Grand Junction. This month, Gardner's Great American Outdoors Act passed the Senate, which is the first time since the program's inception that the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be permanently funded. While other Senators tried to get this done for decades, it took Cory Gardner's focus and commitment to bring everyone together - from President Trump to Bernie Sanders - to get it passed in the Senate. Over 800 conservation groups support this law and an official from The Nature Conservancy called it "the Holy Grail" of conservation. It's a big accomplishment and one that will override more traditional partisan fault lines among the outdoors-loving electorate in the Rocky Mountain state.

While the full list is too long to include in one memo, Cory's key victories for Colorado include:

- **Led During The COVID-19 Pandemic:** Gardner worked with Governor Polis and leveraged relationships with countries like Taiwan and South Korea to secure millions of N95 masks and 300,000 testing kits for Colorado.
- **Combatting Suicide:** Gardner passed legislation to establish a 9-8-8 National Suicide Hotline to provide urgent and life-saving support for Coloradans suffering from a mental health crisis.
- **Reforming a Broken Health Care System:** Gardner led the bipartisan effort to repeal several Obamacare taxes, and worked with the Trump Administration to successfully advocate for Colorado's reinsurance waiver, lowering premiums by 20% on average across the state.
- **Standing With Veterans:** Gardner got to work in his first year in the Senate, and was instrumental in securing the funding necessary to complete the Aurora VA hospital.



- **More Than \$450 Million For Colorado Transportation Projects:** Gardner's work to secure funding to repair highways, bridges, and critical infrastructure, such as I-70 and I-25, addresses the state's growing population and will allow families to spend more time together instead of stuck in traffic.

State of the race

The Gardner for Senate campaign enters the general election with over \$10 million cash-on-hand, the best candidate in the country, and a significantly diminished opponent facing the first real race of his charmed political career.

As one local commentator put it, "Hickenlooper has never faced top-tier opposition. The people Hick beat, in order, were a city auditor, a sewer inspector, the guy who said bomb Mecca, the guy who thought bike shares were a UN conspiracy, and the guy who had previously lost a governor's race by seventeen points who finished just three points behind Hick."

One thing you can count on - the Washington, DC press corps will predict losses across the board for Republicans in Senate contests this cycle. It is part of their migratory ritual every even-numbered year that more often than not proves incorrect. They'll proclaim Colorado is now the political soulmate of California – or something equally preposterous. Instead of swallowing the hyperbole from handicappers, consider the data:

Here is what we know about Colorado's last three Senate races.

- 2010 - Bennet 47.7%, Buck 46.8%
- 2014 - Gardner 48.5%, Udall 46.0%
- 2016 - Bennet 50%, Glenn 44.3%

In Colorado the floor for candidates from both parties is high and the ceiling is low. Single-digit races are the norm. Democrats will also spin yarns about their bare voter registration advantage. It's nonsense. For decades, Republicans had a voter registration advantage in this state, but Democrats like Michael Bennet, Mark Udall, Ken Salazar, and even John Hickenlooper were able to win statewide. Independents decide elections in Colorado – they always have and always will. The Gardner team ran the race we needed to win enough independents in 2014, and we will run the race we need to win in 2020.

Candidates and campaigns matter

In the last four years, Ted Strickland, Russ Feingold, and Phil Bredesen were all considered top-tier Schumer recruits. They were all legacy politicians in their home states with support that was a mile wide and an inch deep. And just like Strickland, Feingold, and Phil Bredesen, Hickenlooper's best day of his campaign was his first. We've now seen enough to know that the



2020 version of Candidate Hickenlooper is tired, unfocused, and uninspiring. Cory Gardner, on the other hand, is an energetic, world-class campaigner who knows how to win a tough fight. By the time this race is over, Coloradans will know the unique value he brings to the Senate and he will be re-elected in November.