

# Coronavirus – virtual campaign efforts

An overview of the shift to virtual campaigns including campaign spotlights for presidential and congressional races

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# Campaigns have altered their efforts in numerous ways due to a shift to virtual campaigns

## Media spending

- Even before the coronavirus outbreak, media buys were the biggest expense for presidential campaigns
- The shift to virtual campaigns is expected to increase media spending, as campaigns will receive less media attention from rallies and town halls
- However, presidential candidates initially slowed their campaign efforts and media spending in March
- The rates for media buys are set by demand, and so increased demand for advertising could increase the costs

## Contacting voters

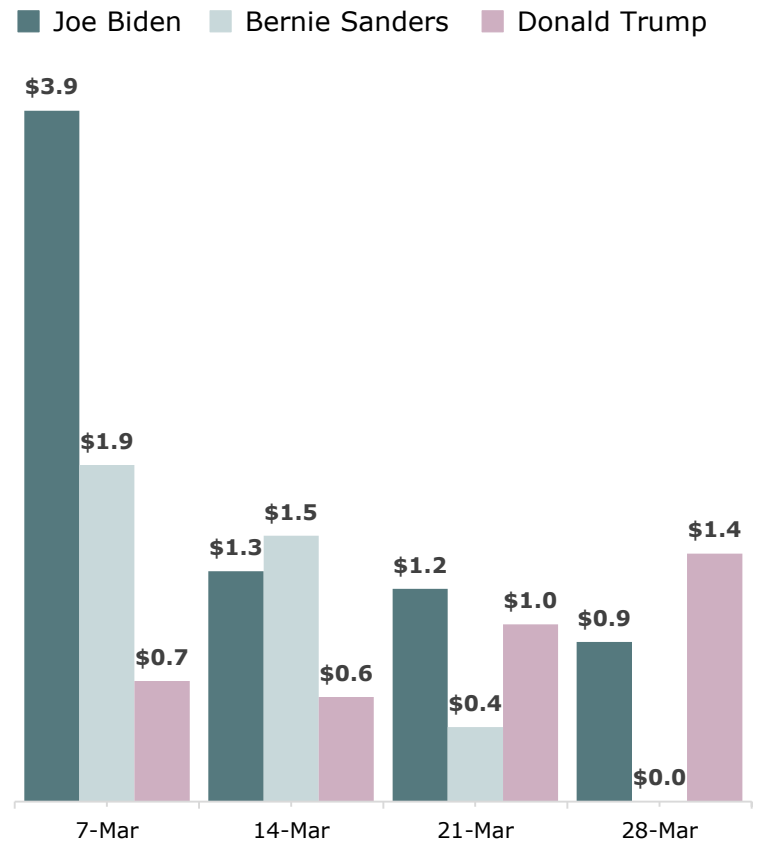
- In addition to boosting media attention, in-person campaign events are also used to build contact lists for fundraising
- To contact potential volunteers and donors, campaigns will have to use existing lists they have built or use voter files from the RNC or DNC
- Volunteers and field staff contacting voters have also shifted from hard political asks to checking in on individuals

## Virtual town halls & events

- Candidates at every level have shifted to hosting virtual town halls and rallies to engage voters
- Virtual events feature co-hosts, such as doctors, union leaders, or politicians to support the candidate
- Virtual events also can focus on a certain group the candidate is trying to engage, such as area-specific events for battleground states or having a specific subject important to the key group

## Digital spending by candidate

IN MILLIONS USD



Sources: Bloomberg, Chicago Sun Times, Business Insider

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# Virtual campaign spotlight: presidential candidates



**President  
Donald Trump**

## Online broadcasts

- The Trump campaign began nightly broadcasts on March 26<sup>th</sup> through Trump's social media
- The broadcasts have featured different members of the Trump family and prominent campaign staff
- In early April, the broadcasts regularly attracted 1 million views across social media platforms



## Shifting volunteer efforts

- Training sessions for campaign volunteers quickly shifted to video conferences
- The volunteers' recommended call script was amended to check-in with call recipients and direct them to coronavirus.gov
- The campaign launched a new phone app aimed at rallying volunteers that allows volunteers to work remotely and earn rewards such as signed memorabilia



## Battleground state engagement

- Trump Victory, a joint fundraising committee between the Trump campaign and the RNC, has held over 100 volunteers trainings in New Mexico
- Trump Victory has also held over 230 volunteer trainings in Florida for conducting phone calls



**Former Vice President  
Joe Biden**

## Campaign podcast

- On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Biden launched "Here's the Deal"
- The podcast has featured former 2020 presidential contenders including Gov. Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
- The podcast has not only focused on the coronavirus pandemic, but has also featured conversations on climate change and the upcoming election



## Virtual events

- The Biden campaign is hosting events and fundraisers in a digital format
- A virtual fundraiser for Chicago area high-dollar donors will include a Q&A session with Biden and former Obama Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker
- The Biden campaign also hosted a virtual town hall with Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) about the "disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color."



## Local news appearances

- In response to decreased visibility due to the coronavirus outbreak, Biden has been interviewed by outlets in battleground states to air before Trump's briefings
- The appearances are aimed at groups of voters that are key to Biden's election in November, such as suburban residents, younger voters, and nonwhite voters



# Virtual campaign spotlight: congressional candidates

## House races

### Alaska's At-Large District

- Independent candidate Alyse Galvin hosts virtual town halls on Facebook featuring doctors and union leaders

### Arizona's 6<sup>th</sup> District

- Democratic challenger Dr. Hiral Tipirneni has used her previous experience as an emergency room physician to answer medical questions on individual phone calls and virtual town halls

### California's 25<sup>th</sup> District

- Republican candidate Mike Garcia, running to fill the seat vacated by former Rep. Katie Hill, hosts 'flash fundraisers'
- The fundraisers are hosted by teleconference with 10-30 people and last less than an hour

### California's 48<sup>th</sup> District

- Rep. Harley Rouda (D) directed campaign volunteers to focus their calls on contacting older adults and to conduct wellness checks

## Senate races

### Georgia Senate

- Three of the seven Democrats challenging incumbent Sen. David Perdue (R) appeared in a virtual candidate forum on April 20<sup>th</sup>
- The Atlanta Press Club is hosting a virtual debate for the Democratic primary candidates on May 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Massachusetts Senate

- Sen. Ed Markey (D), who faces primary challenger Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-MA-4), launched a podcast called "Markey on the Mic"
- The podcast focuses on the impact of the coronavirus on the US and individuals
- Kennedy launched a new social media series called the "Kennedy Evening Broadcast"

### North Carolina Senate

- Sen. Thom Tillis (R) began hosting daily conference calls that allow constituents to call in with questions about the pandemic
- Democratic challenger Cal Cunningham has hosted virtual town halls to share his stances and encourage individuals to get involved with the campaign