

Sanders running for president in 2020

Vermont senator says he will seek nomination in crowded Democratic field

By JUANA SUMMERS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders said Tuesday that he will seek the Democratic presidential nomination again, a decision that will test whether he can still generate the progressive energy that fueled his insurgent 2016 campaign.

“Our campaign is not only about defeating Donald Trump,” the self-described democratic socialist said in an email to supporters. “Our campaign is about transforming our country and creating a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice.”

An enthusiastic progressive who embraces proposals such as “Medicare-for-all” and free college tuition, Sanders, 77, stunned the Democratic establishment in 2016 with his spirited challenge to Hillary Clinton. While she ultimately became the party’s nominee, his campaign helped lay the



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik, File

In this Jan. 30, 2019, file photo, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington.

groundwork for the leftward lurch that has dominated Democratic politics in the Trump era.

The question now for Sanders is whether he can stand out in a crowded field of Democratic presidential candidates who also embrace many of his policy ideas and who are newer to the national political stage. That’s far different from 2016, when he was Clinton’s lone progressive adversary.

Still, there is no question that Sanders will be a formidable con-

tender for the Democratic nomination. He won more than 13 million votes in 2016 and dozens of primaries and caucuses. He opens his campaign with a nationwide organization and a proven small-dollar fundraising effort.

“We’re gonna win,” Sanders told CBS.

He said he was going to launch “what I think is unprecedented in modern American history”: a grassroots movement “to lay the groundwork for transforming the

economic and political life of this country.”

Sanders described his new White House bid as a “continuation of what we did in 2016,” noting that policies he advocated for then are now embraced by the Democratic Party.

Trump told reporters that Sanders ran a great campaign in 2016 but that he believes the senator “missed his time.”

“I like Bernie,” Trump said, noting Sanders’ criticism of free trade. “The problem is he doesn’t know what to do about it. We’re doing something very spectacular on trade.”

Sanders goes into the campaign with several advantages, including the name recognition he earned from his last run. In a sign of the enthusiasm surrounding his campaign, Sanders raised \$3.3 million on Tuesday from 120,000 individual donors, according to a person familiar with the campaign who wasn’t authorized to publicly disclose the early numbers and spoke on condition of anonymity.

That’s more than double the \$1.5 million haul Sen. Kamala Harris raised in the first 24 hours of her campaign. The California Democrat was the biggest fundraiser in the race so far.

Sanders could also be well-positioned to compete in the nation’s first primary in neighboring New Hampshire, which he won by 22 points in 2016. But he won’t have the state to himself.

Harris was in New Hampshire on Monday and said she’d compete for the state. She also appeared to take a dig at Sanders.

“The people of New Hampshire will tell me what’s required to compete in New Hampshire,” she told shoppers at a bookstore in Concord. “But I will tell you I’m not a democratic socialist.”

Sen. Elizabeth Warren of nearby Massachusetts will be in New Hampshire on Friday.

One of the biggest questions surrounding Sanders’ candidacy is how he’ll compete against someone like Warren, who shares many of his policy goals. Warren has already launched her campaign and has planned an aggressive swing through the early primary states.

Shortly after announcing her exploratory committee, Warren hired Brendan Summers, who managed Sanders’ 2016 Iowa campaign. Other staffers from Sanders’ first bid also have said they would consider working for other candidates in 2020.

Feds share watchlist with 1,400 private groups

By MATTHEW BARAKAT
Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — The federal government has acknowledged that it shares its terrorist watchlist with more than 1,400 private entities, including hospitals and universities, prompting concerns from civil libertarians that those mistakenly placed on the list could face a wide variety of hassles in their daily lives.

The government’s admission that it shares the list so broadly comes after years of insistence that the list is generally not shared with the private sector.

Gadeir Abbas, a lawyer with the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which has filed a constitutional challenge to the government’s use of the watchlist, called the government’s admission shocking.

“We’ve always suspected there was private-sector dissemination of the terror watchlist, but we had no idea the breadth of the dissemination would be so large,” Abbas said.

The watchlist is supposed to

include only those who are known or suspected terrorists but contains hundreds of thousands of names. The government’s no-fly list is culled from a small subset of the watchlist.

Critics say that the watchlist is overbroad and mismanaged, and that large numbers of people wrongly included on the list suffer routine difficulties and indignities because of their inclusion.

The government’s admission comes in a class-action lawsuit filed in federal court in Alexandria by Muslims who say they regularly experience difficulties in travel, financial transactions and interactions with law enforcement because they have been wrongly added to the list. The Associated Press is the first to report on the disclosure after reviewing the case documents.

Abbas said now that the government has disclosed how many private entities receive access to the Terrorist Screening Database, the official name of the watchlist, it now needs to explain exactly which private entities are receiving it and what they’re doing with

it. He’s asked a judge to require the government to be more specific. A hearing is scheduled for Friday.

“Are universities taking TSDB status into account in making admission or disciplinary decisions? Are Inova Alexandria Hospital’s building security personnel screening visitors against the TSDB and denying entry to listees? Is Motorola screening its software engineers who work on cellular infrastructure equipment against the TSDB and firing listees? Plaintiffs have no idea,” Abbas and co-counsel Lena Masri and Carolyn Homer wrote in a brief submitted on Feb. 15.

In depositions and in court hearings, government officials had denied until very recently that the watchlist compiled by the FBI’s Terrorist Screening Center is shared with private entities.

At a pretrial hearing in September, government lawyer Dena Roth told U.S. District Judge Anthony Trenga that the Terrorist Screening Center “does not work with private partners, and that watchlist status itself ... is considered law enforcement sensitive information and is



AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File

In this Jan. 30, 2017, file photo, attorney Gadeir Abbas speaks during a news conference at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Washington.

not shared with the public.”

Despite that assurance, the judge ordered the government to be more specific about how it disseminates the watchlist. Trenga said the plaintiffs are entitled to the information to try to prove their case that inclusion on the list causes them to suffer “real world consequences.”

In response to Trenga’s order, TSC Deputy Director of Operations Timothy Groh filed a written statement earlier this month acknowledging that 1,441 private entities have received permission to access the watchlist. Groh says those private entities must be in some way connected to the criminal justice system.

Judge orders Stone to court over Instagram post

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Tuesday ordered Roger Stone to appear in court to consider whether to revoke his bail after the longtime Donald Trump confidant posted a photo on Instagram of the judge with what appeared to be crosshairs of a gun.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson said Stone must show for a hearing Thursday afternoon and prove why she shouldn’t modify or revoke his bail or implement a full gag order in his case.

On Monday, Stone posted a photo of Jackson with what appeared to be crosshairs near her head. Later in the day, Stone and his attorneys filed a notice with the court that they recognized the “photograph and comment today was improper and should not have been posted.”

Stone said that the photo was



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File

In this Feb. 1, 2019, file photo, Roger Stone, former campaign adviser for President Donald Trump, leaves federal court in Washington.

“misinterpreted” and that it was “a random photo taken from the Internet.” He dismissed any suggestion that he was trying to threaten the

judge as “categorically false.”

The political operative and self-described dirty trickster has pleaded not guilty to charges he

lied to Congress, engaged in witness tampering and obstructed a congressional investigation into possible coordination between Russia and Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign.

The charges stem from conversations he had during the 2016 election about WikiLeaks, the anti-secrecy group that released material stolen from Democratic groups, including Hillary Clinton’s campaign.

Stone was arrested last month and is the sixth Trump aide or adviser charged in special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation.

He’s currently free on a \$250,000 personal recognizance bond.

Last week, Jackson issued a limited gag order, which prevents Stone from discussing his case near the courthouse and generally bars his lawyers, prosecutors and witnesses from making public comments that could “pose a substantial likelihood” of preju-

dicating potential jurors. But the order did not constrain Stone from making other public comments about the prosecution or his case. Stone’s lawyers argued that placing any limits on his public comments would infringe on his constitutionally protected right to free speech.

In implementing the limited gag order on Friday, Jackson said it was necessary to “maintain the dignity and seriousness of the courthouse and these proceedings.”

Stone has maintained his innocence and blasted the special counsel’s investigation as politically motivated. He has also criticized his case as involving only “process crimes.”

On Tuesday, Stone posted a photo of a book he received from a supporter, writing in an Instagram post that he was praying that it “protects me from the fake news media who are smearing me and purposely misinterpreting everything I say.”

Justice Thomas calls for re-examining landmark libel case

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Justice Clarence Thomas says the Supreme Court should consider overturning a 55-year-old landmark ruling that makes it hard for public figures to win libel suits, writing in a case involving a woman who says Bill Cosby raped her.

Thomas took aim at *New York Times v. Sullivan* and similar cases that followed it, calling them “policy-driven decisions masquerading as constitutional law.”

“We should not continue to reflexively apply this policy-driven



AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File

This April 18, 2018, file photo, shows Bill Cosby, actor, at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Norristown.

approach to the Constitution,” Thomas wrote in a 14-page opin-

ion that no other justice joined.

The opinion comes against the backdrop of President Donald Trump’s repeated calls to make it easier to sue for libel. Last weekend, Trump reacted to a Saturday Night Live skit by asking on Twitter, “How do the Networks get away with these total Republican hit jobs without retribution? Like why for many other shows? Very unfair and should be looked into.”

On Tuesday, the high court rejected an appeal from actress Katharine McKee, who said Cosby raped her in 1974. McKee sued Cosby for damaging her reputation after a lawyer for the comedian

allegedly leaked a letter attacking McKee. Two lower courts ruled against her and dismissed the case, based largely on McKee’s role as a public figure.

The Sullivan case set a very high bar for public officials to win a libel suit and hefty money awards over published false statements that damaged their reputations. The high court extended the 1964 decision in the ensuing decades to make it tough for celebrities, politicians and other public figures to win defamation cases.

Thomas is the justice who most often calls for jettisoning Supreme Court rulings that he says do not

comport with the meaning of the Constitution at the time it was adopted.

“The states are perfectly capable of striking an acceptable balance between encouraging robust public discourse and providing a meaningful remedy for reputational harm,” he wrote.

He is not the first justice to criticize the 1964 case, though he appears to be the first to issue a call for its reconsideration in a Supreme Court opinion. The late Justice Antonin Scalia took a similarly dim view of the Sullivan ruling, once saying in a televised interview that he abhorred it.