

Life In Brief

Current Title: Senior Advisor

Hometown: Omaha, NE

Education:

- BS, Creighton University, 2013

Work History:

- Senior Advisor, Biden for President, 2019-Present
- Principal, 360 Group LLC, 2017-Present
- Resident Fellow, Harvard Institute of Politics, 2018-19
- Communications & Political Outreach Strategist, Priorities USA, 2017-19
- Political Commentator, CNN, unknown dates
- Contributor, Crooked Media, 2017-19
- National Press Secretary, Bernie Sanders for President, 2015-16
- Communications Officer, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, 2014-15
- Communications Director, Delegate Michael Futrell (D-VA), 2014-15
- Deputy Communications Director, Chuck Hassebrook for Governor (D-NE), 2014

Quick Summary

Media savvy Democratic operative with strong Omaha roots whose success as a spokesperson for Bernie 2016 made her a highly sought-after operative for 2020 Democratic campaigns, eventually landing with Biden

- Deft political communicator with strong ties to native Omaha, where she got her start in politics

- Passionate advocate for juvenile justice reform after witnessing brother's sentencing and incarceration as a minor
- Achieved national prominence as a deft spokesperson for Bernie Sanders during his 2016 presidential campaign

Approach and Motivations

Giving a voice to youth and minority communities

- Brother's experience with criminal justice system deeply impacted her policy views, particularly on juvenile justice. Led her to support policies and initiatives that empower youth and minority communities
- Advocates for more youth involvement in political and policymaking process

Politics tied to values, not people

- Cites loyalty to core progressive principles as opposed to a particular person
- Stated that standing up to abuse of power is a core value, and that she was drawn to working for Biden after learning he shared similar convictions

Policy Position and Areas of Focus

Career advocating for racial and youth equality

Juvenile & Criminal Justice Reform – *Draws from personal experience with justice system*

- Believes in incarceration alternatives for juveniles to avoid mass incarceration
- Advocates for more education surrounding juvenile justice and "school-to-prison pipeline"

- Supports abolishing private prison industry because of the for-profit motive associated with incarceration
- Supports eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing
- Criticizes cash bail system because it may leave innocent people in jail if they lack sufficient funds

Racial Inequality & Black Lives Matter (BLM)
– **Critical voice for Bernie 2016 campaign**

- Believes eliminating racial inequality means reducing physical, economic, legal, political, and environmental violence inflicted on black communities
- Key bridge between Bernie 2016 campaign and BLM activists after BLM disrupted several Sanders campaign events
- Outspoken in support of Colin Kaepernick's decision to kneel during national anthem and helped lead protest demonstration at NFL HQ
- Believes rise of white supremacy is an issue not receiving enough media coverage

Empowering Youth – Supports groups that set young people up for success

- Supportive of organizations that encourage youth involvement in civic engagement, including Girls, Inc., Smith Public Trust, and Organizing Corps 2020

Global Trade – Exposed to broad range of trade policy working with Public Citizen

- Worked closely with Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, managing communications during her tenure
- While at Public Citizen, worked with Wallach on communications targeted at opposing Obama-era Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), claiming it would undermine efforts to create jobs, make

health care more affordable, and regulate Wall Street

Climate & Environment – Critical of Trump Administration approach to environmental issues

- Criticized President Trump for promising to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, saying it is part of a policy pattern he exhibits that negatively impacts people of color
- Argues that communities of color face significantly worse environmental devastation in the U.S., citing the Flint lead crisis and Hurricane Katrina

Core Communities

Network of national and Nebraska connections from her growing influence in political communications

Democratic Party Politicos – Network of influential party figures

- Considers former DNC Chair Donna Brazile to be her role model
- Maya Harris, Sen. Kamala Harris's (D-CA) campaign chair and sister, is a close friend
- At Priorities USA, worked alongside Chairman Guy Cecil and current Deputy Communications Chair for Cory 2020, Jenna Lowenstein
- Senior staff in Biden 2020 campaign along with Campaign Manager Greg Schultz, former of American Possibilities PAC
- Close ties to former Obama White House staffers and podcast hosts Alyssa Mastromonaco, Dan Pfeiffer, Jon Favreau, Tommy Vietor, and Jon Lovett

Bernie 2016 campaign – Established connections through role as National Press Secretary

- Traveled often with campaign surrogate Cornel West, who describes her as a visionary

- Worked directly with communications team, including Michael Briggs, Arianna Jones, and Sarah Ford
- Closely coordinated with campaign's African American outreach team, including Roy Tatem and Marcus Ferrell
- Worked directly with communications team, including Michael Briggs, Arianna Jones, and Sarah Ford

Nebraska Political and Advocacy Communities – Close ties with people and groups where she grew up

- Worked for Chuck Hassebrook when he ran for Governor of Nebraska in 2014, who complimented her principles and ethics
- Influenced heavily by membership and participation in Girls, Inc., and is close to Roberta Wilhelm, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of Omaha
- Worked alongside Willie Barney, President of the Omaha Empower Network, during her time working in communications there
- Helped with fundraising and GOTV efforts for Kara Eastman, CEO of Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance, in her congressional race for NE-02

Juvenile Justice Reform Community – Many connections to advocacy community

- Served on the board of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice, along with Don Arp, Jr., Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice
- Served on executive board of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice alongside other members including Hon. George Timberlake, Chair of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and Beth Rosenberg of Children's Action Network

Relevant Financial Information

Donates to federal, state, and local Democratic candidates

Federal – *Democratic presidential and House candidates*

- \$100 – Julian for the Future (D-TX)
- \$100 – Gillibrand 2020 (D-NY)
- \$250 – Pete for America (D-IN)
- \$500 – Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)
- \$1,000 – Ian Conyers for Congress (D-MI)

State/Local – *Candidates in DC and South Carolina*

- \$250 – Dionne Bussey-Reeder for Council (DC), 2018
- \$100 – Marcus Goodwin for Council (DC), 2017
- \$500 – Garrett McDaniel for State House (D-SC), 2019

Publications, Media and Speaking

Favors a mix of traditional and new media. As campaign spokesperson, preferred medium is cable television

Editorial – *Writes about policy issues*

- [“Examining Environmental Racism: How Trump's Blatant Disregard For Climate Change Affects People Of Color,”](#) Essence Magazine, June 2017

Podcasts – *Hosted policy discussion for Crooked Media*

- [“What comes after the open internet?”](#), Crooked Media, December 2017

- [“Why are Republicans beating Democrats at the internet?”](#), Crooked Media, August 2018

Print/Online – Talks often about race issues and her career in politics

- [Truth & Iliza](#): Discussed intersectionality and understanding race issues
- [Essence](#): Interviewed about the role of black women in politics

Podcast/Radio – Frequent guest and contributor on several political shows

- [Viewpoint with Bakari Sellers](#): Spoke about Conor Lamb’s (D-PA) election, March 2018

Cable Television – Appears as spokesperson and political commentator

- [Meet the Press](#): Dismissed potential Bloomberg candidacy on behalf of Biden campaign
- [CNN Newsroom](#): Defended VP Biden on Hyde Amendment reversal, June 2019

Speaking – Often invited to speak about career success and assertiveness, and about intersection of tech and politics

- Delivered speech at the University of Alabama-Birmingham on her journey toward success and equality, March 2019
- Gave talk at TEDx AmsterdamWomen titled “Stop Asking Permission,” December 2018
- Speaker at SXSW Europe discussing intersection of politics and tech, March 2018

Profiles focus on early life in Omaha, and career in politics

- David Williams: [“Symone Sanders’ Iowa Odyssey: From Donna Burns to the Campaign Trail,”](#) Omaha Magazine, December 2015
- Olivia Nuzzi: [“Just Try and Silence Symone Sanders,”](#) New York Magazine, August 2017

Professional Affiliations

- Community Campaign Chair, Girls Inc. of Omaha
- Member, Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- Immediate Past Chair of Coalition for Juvenile Justice Emerging Leaders Committee
- Member, Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice
- Member, The Links Capital City Chapter
- Member, Northern Virginia Urban League Young Professionals Network

Family and Personal Background

Upbringing in Omaha and involvement in Girls, Inc. were influential

- Native of Omaha, NE
- Father, Daniel Sanders, is a chemical engineer for the US Army Corps of Engineers
- Mother, Terri Sanders, is the former Executive Director of Great Plains Black History Museum,
- Middle child of four
- Credits involvement with Girls, Inc. as highly impactful and important confidence builder; introduced former President Clinton at a Girls, Inc. luncheon when she was 16
- Girls, Inc program “She Votes,” which introduced girls to electoral process set her on the path to politics, and she eventually interned with Girls, Inc. in DC
- Says Omaha gave her an opportunity to get involved with the political process

Brother’s incarceration sparked interest in juvenile justice reform

- Brother went to jail when he was 15 for a minor drug offense

Symone Sanders

Senior Advisor, Biden for President

- Instead of diversion programs or drug court, he was charged as an adult and was in the Nebraska State Penitentiary for over seven years
- Saw effect incarceration had on him, and how unprepared he was to continue life outside of prison