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## GOP-Connected Group Created Fake Erica Smith Ads

By Cash Michaels  
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For NCBPA

A Republican connected super political action committee (PAC) out of Washington, D.C. called "Faith and Power," is spending over \$1.6 million in television and radio ads running in four North Carolina television markets promoting State Senator Erica Smith's candidacy for the U. S. Senate in the 2020 election.



State Senator Erica Smith



Senator Thom Tillis

The goal, many observers are certain, is to promote Smith's cash-strapped campaign to the extent that she beats Democratic senatorial opponent, Cal Cunningham, in the March 3, 2020, Democratic primary, thus pitting the Black female Democrat, seen by Republicans as an easier candidate to beat against first term incumbent, Tillis, in November.

Smith, of State Senate District 3, representing Beaufort, Bertie, Martin, Northampton, Vance and Warren counties and her campaign, naturally "disavows and disassociates" the fake ads, even though they promote her as being a true progressive who supports Medicare for All and "The Green New Deal."

"We reject the influence of special interest corporate PAC and dark money in politics," Smith said. "I remain unbought, unbossed, and unapologetic in my 17 years of advocating for equity, opportunity, and fairness," Sen. Smith's campaign added.

The NC Democratic Party charged that "Republican 'meddling' in the Democratic primary shows Republicans must be worried about Thom Tillis."

"Faith and Power PAC" is the producer of the 30 second ad, according to published reports. Though the PAC itself was just created several weeks ago, some connected are listed as supporting Republican Carly Fiorina's 2016 presidential bid. The only public name associated with the PAC in North Carolina is that of a Republican named Ezekiel Patterson of Monroe.

Trying to choose Tillis' Democratic November opponent for him is one possibility. Another is to force Cunningham, who reportedly has a deep campaign war chest of \$3.3 million on hand, to start spending some of it now to defend whatever lead he believes he has over Smith in the polls. Doing so depletes what he has to spend against Tillis in the fall.

Tillis, who is admittedly a strong supporter of Pres. Trump, is seen as one of the weakest GOP incumbent senators up for re-election in the nation, according to the most recent polls. So the election year ploy is not a surprising one.

It is illegal for a super PAC to coordinate its activities with a campaign. In small writing at the end of the Faith and Power television ad, it states that it is not authorized by any candidate or political campaign. The TV ads are running up until just before the March 3, 2020 primaries in the Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham and Greensboro markets, as well as online.

## Home quarantine for travelers buys time as new virus spreads

On his return from China last week, Dr. Ian Lipkin quarantined himself in his basement. His wife now puts his food on the stairs. He's run out of things to watch on Netflix. At odd hours, he walks in New York's Central Park, keeping 10 feet away from others.

Lipkin is among hundreds of people in the U.S. and thousands around the world who, although not sick, live in semi-voluntary quarantine at home. With attention focused on quarantined cruise ships and evacuees housed on U.S. military bases, those in their own homes have largely escaped notice.

They, too, experts say, play a crucial role in slowing the spread of the new viral disease now called COVID-19.

Most cases and nearly all deaths have been in mainland China. Around the world, authorities are urging two weeks of home quarantine and symptom monitoring for travelers returning from there.

It's the only tool they have.

## 'ABT mood' in the black community - Anybody but Trump

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - For I.S. Leevy Johnson, the Democrats' search for a challenger to take on President Donald Trump is personal.

"There is what I call an 'ABT mood' in the black community: Anybody but Trump," said the 77-year-old who was the first black graduate of the University of South Carolina's law school. "It has people of color very motivated and excited about voting this time because they know how his administration has adversely affected them."

FAMILY VOTES!



Extended family members gathered to vote as a group on Sunday, Feb. 16 at NCCU Law School. Members included: Elliott Gilmer, Cheryl Gilmer, Temika Gilmer, Tyrone Baines, MCllove Ford, James "Butch" Williams, Sheron Williams, Anthony Ford, Vernon Ahen, Donald Alston, Keyari Brook, Gary Thomas Claytor, Teresa Allen, Brittanie Thomas and Harold Brooks.

## Families returning to housing complex after health concerns

(AP) - Families are returning to a North Carolina public housing community more than a month after officials evacuated hundreds of residents due to concerns about possible carbon monoxide exposure.

Six households returned Feb. 14 to McDougald Terrace, Durham's largest and oldest public housing complex, a local newspaper reported. Durham Housing Authority CEO Anthony Scott said he expects more tenants to move back next week.

About 280 households have been staying at local hotels since Durham County officials reported in late December that residents were having breathing problems.

The housing authority blamed the problems on old gas stoves, heaters and water heaters. Scott said all gas stoves will eventually be replaced by electric stoves.

A neighborhood leader, Ashley Canady said she hopes the housing authority has made meaningful improvements to the 360-unit complex, which was built in the 1950s.

"Right now, I'm just taking it in stride and hoping they're doing the right thing," said Canady, president of the McDougald Terrace resident council.

In January, North Carolina's state medical examiner's office said it found no sign of carbon monoxide poisoning in the deaths of two infants at the complex. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner said the two infants who lived in McDougald Terrace had tested negative for the gas.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and potentially poisonous gas that can cause illness and in cases of prolonged exposure, death, according to the Mayo Clinic.

## Bloomberg takes veiled swipe at rival's aggressive loyalists

By Alexandra Jaffe and Nicholas Riccardi  
CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) - With the Nevada caucuses less than a week away, Democratic presidential candidates campaigning were fixated on a rival who wasn't contesting the state.

Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren and Pete Buttigieg all went after billionaire Mike Bloomberg and made clear they were eager to take him on in a debate.

"He thinks he can buy this election," Sanders told a Carson City rally Sunday. "Well, I've got news for Mr. Bloomberg - the American people are sick and tired of billionaires buying elections!"

Bloomberg hit back Monday with a video mashup posted to Twitter of aggressive and threatening comments made by people who appear to be Sanders supporters, juxtaposed with Sanders calling for "civil discourse."

"We need to unite to defeat Trump in November," the former New York mayor tweeted. "This type of 'energy' is not going to get us there."

Their attacks are a sign of how seriously the field is starting to take Bloomberg as he gains in the race and is on the cusp of qualifying for Wednesday's Democratic debate in Las Vegas. Bloomberg has bypassed the traditional early voting states including Nevada, focusing instead on the 14 states that vote in the Super Tuesday primary on March 3. He has spent more than \$417 million of his own multibillion-dollar fortune on advertising nationwide, an unprecedented sum for any candidate in a primary.

The focus on Bloomberg comes with many establishment-aligned Democrats anxious about the early strength of Sanders, who won last week's New Hampshire primary and essentially tied for first place in Iowa with Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana. Sanders is hoping to notch a victory in Nevada on Saturday as moderates struggle to unite behind a candidate who could serve as a counter to the Vermont senator, who has long identified as a democratic socialist.

The hundreds of millions of dollars that Bloomberg has pumped into the Super Tuesday states has only heightened the sense of uncertainty surrounding the Democratic race.



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