



MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Rahna Epting, Executive Director, MoveOn Political Action
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RFK Jr., Stein, & West: Off the Debate Stage but Threatening to Elect Trump

THIRD-PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE A THREAT DEMOCRATS CANNOT IGNORE.

With tonight's debate, President Biden and Donald Trump will go toe-to-toe with dueling visions for our country—one a positive economic vision that will protect civil and reproductive rights, and the other an authoritarian hellscape that rips away the hard-fought progress we've won while tipping economic scales further toward billionaires. Simply put: We cannot go backward. We must go forward—and that means defeating Donald Trump at the ballot box in November.

In what is already a difficult environment for any sitting president, President Biden has the distinct misfortune of competing against Trump with third-party spoiler candidates threatening to peel off just enough support to tilt the election Trump's way. Just as Jill Stein and Gary Johnson did in 2016 and as Ralph Nader did in 2000.

Unfortunately, that is by design. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is receiving financial backing from [Trump's largest donor](#), to the tune of \$25 million. Jill Stein, running [almost openly](#) as a puppet for Vladimir Putin, refuses to attack Trump—saving barbs solely for President Biden. Meanwhile, Cornel West is actively accepting help from GOP operatives to get on the ballot in [multiple states](#).

Trump [has even gone so far as to praise West and Stein](#) for the votes they will assuredly take from President Biden, and in doing so, he is saying the quiet part out loud: third-party candidates are core to his electoral strategy.

To be clear, RFK Jr., Jill Stein, and Cornel West have no chance of winning the presidency, and their presence in the race will continue to be a boon to Trump—and he knows it. A vote for any of those candidates will move us perilously closer to a second Trump presidency, in which our democracy may not survive.

The stakes could not be higher, and that's why [we are sounding the alarm](#) and [fighting back](#). In 2000 and 2016, Democrats saw the disastrous effect third-party candidates can have on an election's outcome. Moreover, our entire country felt the consequences of sliding-door moments that took our country offtrack. We cannot afford to make those mistakes again.

SPOILER CANDIDATES ARE GETTING ON BATTLEGROUND BALLOTS—WITH GOP HELP

In states across the country, third-party candidates are working [hand in glove](#) with shady Trump operatives to help get RFK Jr., Stein, and West [on the ballot](#). Republican involvement signals that their true intent is to damage President Biden’s reelection chances by peeling away thousands of votes where the margins are already razor thin. By accepting Republican support, those same third-party campaigns are betraying the very voters they are courting. We will continue to monitor, call out, and publicly challenge the association between third-party candidates and Republican operatives and donors—to make it clear what actual team these candidates are playing for.

Here are the latest updates on ballot access:

- Just last night, the [North Carolina election board voted 3-2](#) to halt RFK Jr.’s and Cornel West’s efforts to establish new political parties pending further scrutiny.
- Kennedy qualified for the ballot in Michigan by becoming the nominee of the obscure “Natural Law Party” at a [two-person nominating convention](#) led by a part-time magician.
- RFK Jr. is [suing](#) the Nevada secretary of state; meanwhile, the Nevada Democratic Party is [challenging](#) his signatures, as well as Stein’s.
- RFK Jr. [faces a lawsuit in New Jersey](#) seeking to keep him off the ballot.
- West has been caught in [North Carolina](#) and [Virginia](#) using Republican operatives to collect signatures to help get his We the People party onto the ballot.
- The process to collect signatures for independent candidates in Wisconsin begins on July 1.

State	2020 Biden%	2020 Biden Raw Margin	Deadline	Required Signatures	RFK on ballot?	Stein on ballot?	West on ballot?
AZ	0.30%	10,000	August 17th	42,303	Collecting Signatures	On the Ballot	Collecting Signatures
GA	0.23%	12,000	July 9th	7,500	Collecting Signatures	Collecting Signatures	Collecting Signatures
MI	2.78%	154,000	July 18th	12,000	On the Ballot	On the Ballot	Petitions Filed
NV	2.39%	33,000	July 5th	10,095	Collecting Signatures *Lawsuit Pending	Petition in Process	Petition in Process
NC	-1.34%	-74,000	May 17th	13,865	Petitions Filed *Challenge Pending	On the Ballot	Petition in Process
PA	1.16%	80,000	August 1st	5,000	Petition in Process	Collecting Signatures	Collecting Signatures
WI	0.63%	20,000	August 6th	2,000	Process Begins 7/1	On the Ballot	Process Begins 7/1

RFK JR. POLL NUMBERS ARE FADING—BUT IT WILL TAKE ONLY 1 OR 2% TO HELP TRUMP WIN.

- In a six-way race in Wisconsin, [a new Marquette Poll shows](#) Trump slightly ahead of Biden, with RFK Jr. at 8%, Cornel West at 4%, Chase Oliver at 2%, and Jill Stein at 2%.
- RFK Jr. [posted his worst showing in the Quinnipiac national survey](#) at 11%.
- In the most recent [Quinnipiac survey](#), RFK Jr.'s favorable/unfavorable is underwater by 16% (favorable 22%, unfavorable 38%, and 37% had not heard enough).
 - RFK Jr.'s favorable rating with registered Democrats was a dismal 9%, but he enjoyed 33% favorability among Independents—suggesting a route to crushing his support will flow through purple voters.
- However, the seven battleground states were each decided by less than 3% in 2020, including three states (PA, MI, WI) decided by less than 1%.

RECENT PRESS COVERAGE FOR SPOILER CANDIDATES IS —YIKES!

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

- *Rolling Stone* [published a piece on RFK Jr. running mate Nicole Shanahan's efforts](#) to court QAnon and Christian nationalists by decrying the “demonic” influence of government.
- *People* magazine [published an exclusive excerpt](#) from the soon-to-be-released book “Ask Not: The Kennedys and the Women They Destroyed.” The piece details the last days of Mary Kennedy, RFK Jr.'s first wife, who died by suicide in 2012. Excerpts include RFK Jr. attempting to persuade Mary's therapist to diagnose her as mentally ill, cutting off court-appointed monetary awards, and the victim role RFK Jr. played in the press after her death.
- At the National Sheriff's Association annual convention, [RFK Jr. doubled down](#) on Trump-style immigration policies by advocating for 2,600 border agents and restoration of the “remain in Mexico” policy from the Trump administration—adding that [he will seal the border](#).
- RFK Jr.'s campaign [downplays anemic polling, fundraising, and ballot access](#).
- The Supreme Court [rejects COVID-19 vaccine appeals](#) from a nonprofit founded by RFK Jr. One of the legal challenges was related to the FDA's authorization to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to children.
- RFK Jr.'s running mate Nicole Shanahan [lists knowledge of “batteries” and “world religions”](#) as reasons for why she would make a great president.

Jill Stein

- Jill Stein's presidential campaign [hired a political consultant](#) who created deepfake robocalls using President Joe Biden's voice.

Cornel West

- According to [NBC Washington](#), the Cornel West campaign is working with Trump operatives in Virginia to get West on the ballot by lying to voters and collecting signatures under the false pretense of getting “Donald Trump off the ballot.”
- West was also [caught](#) relying on Republican operatives to get on the ballot in North Carolina, where “volunteers” were asking voters outside Trump events to help West siphon votes from President Biden.

WE IGNORE HISTORY AT OUR PERIL.

RFK Jr., Stein, and West cannot win the presidency, but in a race that may be decided by 1 or 2% in a half dozen states, their impact will be outsized, and their threat must be mitigated. We will keep fighting to make sure Americans understand what is truly at stake: A vote for RFK Jr., Stein, or West is the exact same as a vote for Trump.

This is an all-hands-on-deck moment that requires support from everyone in the anti-Trump coalition to defeat the third-party threat and deny Donald Trump a second, more dangerous shot at power.