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Bernie Sanders rallies in Lancaster for Democratic candidate Jess King to join the 'political revolution'



SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer May 5, 2018



Jess King and Senator Bernie Sanders wave to the crowd of supporters at Musser Park in Lancaster City Saturday morning, May 5, 2018.

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With the same enthusiasm and populist appeals that defined his presidential run, Bernie Sanders told thousands of supporters in Lancaster that Democrats like Jess King are an essential part of his “political revolution.”

“Jess King is on board,” Sanders said, with a Medicare-for-all national health care system, with raising the minimum wage and with fighting efforts to cut Social Security.

She supports criminal justice reform, “commons sense” gun safety measures and taxing the rich.

Those were among the reasons why Sanders, the two-term U.S. Senator from Vermont, said he was **backing King** in her **uphill battle** for the 11th Congressional District — an area that President Donald Trump won by 26 points in 2016.

“We need Jess because her vision of America is a very different vision than the Republican leadership and Donald Trump, who now control our government,” Sanders said on a sunny Saturday morning in Lancaster city’s Musser Park.

Bernie Sanders rally at Musser Park, May 5, 2018

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US Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont spoke at the Jess King for Congress rally Saturday morning in Musser Park in Lancaster City. May 5, 2018.

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He spoke to a crowd of roughly 2,000 — a mix of those who know and support King, and those who voted for Sanders in the **2016 Democratic primary** against Hillary Clinton. They wore shirts and hats promoting another presidential run in 2020 as Sanders gave his 20-minute speech.

His trip here was part of a two-day Pennsylvania tour to visit three candidates — the others being lieutenant governor candidate John Fetterman and 7th Congressional District candidate Greg Edwards.

The support was especially timely for Fetterman and Edwards, who are facing multiple Democratic opponents in the upcoming May 15 primary.

But **King**, a former executive director of the economic development nonprofit Assets, doesn't have a primary opponent. She will face the winner of the Republican primary, in which U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker is being **challenged** by Manheim-area businessman Chet Beiler.



POLITICS

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SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer

“I think (Sanders’ visit) just helps us raise visibility, get more people aware of what we’re trying to do,” King said. “The midterms are all about who turns out and who stays home and recognizing half of Democrats in the 11th District hardly vote, rarely vote. Independents are pretty similar.”

Unlocking those votes, along with recruiting Republican voters, will be vital to her operation in a district that was redrawn to have **more GOP voters** in the recent statewide redistricting.

The 11th District now has nearly 100,000 more registered Republicans than Democrats. The breakdown is 53 percent Republican, 31 percent Democrat and 16 percent independent or third-party.

Sander referred to that issue in his first remarks on Saturday — saying while he heard “Jess King was a great candidate,” he was also told she “really didn’t have a good chance to win.”

“Well, let me tell you,” he continued, “from up here looking at you, not only can she win, she is going to be your next congressperson.”

In an interview with LNP a few days before the rally, Sanders reacted to the voter registration question by saying he believes people in the 11th district, and across the country, want a change from the Republican initiatives out of Washington.

He said he’s “not going to make a zillion endorsements,” but he chose to support King because she fit the “criteria” he looks for — namely, a progressive agenda and a strong grass-roots ground game.

“This district could be the pivotal district in terms of 2018,” Sanders said at the rally. “If Jess wins here, we’re going to win all over America.”

In 2016, President Donald Trump won in what is now the 11th Congressional District — which includes all of Lancaster County and southern York County — with 60.5 percent of the vote compared to 34.7 percent for Hillary Clinton.

