**2020 U.S. KENTUCKY SENATORIAL RACE**

**Rep. Charles Booker**

1. **What sets you apart from the other candidates?**

I have lived the struggle that other politicians talk and pander about. My experience and conviction unites Kentuckians from the mountains to the four rivers.

I am the only elected official in the primary, and I have a record of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Kentuckians -- teachers, public employees, union members, faith leaders, black & brown Kentuckians, farmers, miners, activists, business owners, workers, parents, students, and more -- to pass bills, protect public employee pensions, protest bad policy, and win elections.

In the past, Democrats running against Mitch McConnell have centered their campaigns on unpersuadable conservative voters, while abandoning efforts to expand the electorate and address the concerns of young folks, people of color, and poor people. We’ve seen that strategy fail against Mitch McConnell again and again, most recently by 15%. Instead of repeating that error, I propose to fix it by inspiring the broad coalition of Kentuckians required to defeat McConnell.

1. **What will you do to ensure that all Kentuckians have quality and affordable health care?**

As a Type 1 diabetic, I personally know the reality of having to ration insulin because there wasn’t enough money. That is unacceptable. I believe that healthcare is a right for all Kentuckians and all people, regardless of how much money they have in their pocket. When Kentuckians are healthy and productive, we all benefit. That’s why I am a proud advocate for Medicare for All. Like many families, I had to make the choice of whether to take care of my family or buy my expensive medication. I chose my family, and almost died. Kentuckians deserve so much more than that.

When I say I support Medicare for All, it is rooted in a core belief that your zip code or financial status should not determine your health prospects. Our lives are not commodities. We need a Senator who fully understands this, and not someone who would call themselves the ‘Grim Reaper’ as we continue to die. I have fought to expand access as a State Representative, and I will loudly do so as Senator.

1. **How are you going to bring Kentucky into the future?**

My vision is a Kentucky where people from every corner of the Commonwealth -- no matter who you are, where you come from, who you love, how much money you have in your pocket, what you believe, what pronouns you use, whether you are walking or in a wheelchair -- that you know that your life matters. It is a vision where everyone is heard and accounted for and is represented by a government that elevates your voice over corrupted interests. This campaign is about building a movement where Kentuckians are encouraged to stand, lock arms and lead for the changes we deserve.

By taking this stand not only will we beat Mitch McConnell, but we will win our future. We will no longer die because we choose to feed our families over buying necessary life saving medicine. As U.S. Senator I will lead by creating a process for transparent and authentic engagement to ensure the voices of Kentuckians are the priority. As a result of our leadership in Washington we will stand to end generational poverty, address structural racism and inequity, and build pathways of opportunities for all the people of Kentucky.

1. **How do you plan on addressing income inequality in Kentucky?**

As Senator, I would press for an overhaul of the federal tax code that undoes the harm caused by the 2017 tax law, closes loopholes that corporations and the wealthy use to avoid paying their fair share, and eases the burden on working families in communities like mine and all across Kentucky. Our federal tax structure is broken. Those of us near the bottom are paying a greater portion of our income in taxes than rich folks like Donald Trump.

My campaign and this movement are focused on ending structural racism, gross inequity, and generational poverty. I believe that no Kentuckians should have to decide between paying the rent or buying a life saving prescription. I believe that all Kentuckians deserve the security of a good paying, unionized job. And yes, I firmly believe that no human being should have to die because they can’t afford healthcare. That is why I’m a proponent of Medicare for All. One of the greatest economic booms that rural Kentucky has experienced in the 21st Century came when our government expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

I also believe that ending generational poverty will require bold solutions that lift up and provide stability for all working families; that’s why I support a Universal Basic Income, a policy that carries on the work of Dr. King. Kentuckians deserve the freedom to make financial decisions in their lives, the resources in their communities that will foster local business and ownership, and a government that does not sell them out for big corporate interests. Poverty is outdated, immoral, and expensive. It is time that we end it. Leading for equitable tax reforms and direct investment in the people of Kentucky will help us make that happen.

1. **What are your goals if elected?**

My goal is to put an end to the poverty that traps so many Kentucky families like mine for generations. That is not a small task, and won’t take place on my first day in the Senate. But it is a vision, and it is one that is bolstered by my three biggest policy objectives:

1. Medicare for All -- which will lower health care costs for families, make our people healthier, and create thousands and thousands of jobs across Kentucky.
2. A Green New Deal -- so that we are building the future that we will need for our children and their children to thrive, and so that we can put our people to work doing it.
3. A Universal Basic Income -- So that everyone has a basic level of resources to keep their families safe, and to give people the freedom and autonomy to make economic decisions to better their lives.

These are monumental shifts in how our government takes care of its people, and they are necessary shifts, given the state of income inequality, climate change, and public health in the U.S. today. But they are also only the beginning of what is necessary if we are to truly change our country to be one that provides justice, equity, and opportunity to all of its people. Our politics are broken. But that doesn’t mean we should expect less of our government. It means we should fix it.

Beyond policy objectives, one of my primary goals as Senator will be to listen to Kentuckians. My in-state offices would serve as community centers for constituents. Constituents who disagree with my votes or my positions would find an open door, and a willing listener. That will be a dramatic shift from the current Senior Senator, and it is an important one for taking back our politics and our government.