



RELATED TOPICS

AP Top Ne

Race and ethnicity

General N

Politics

Campaign

Election 2

Atlanta

Marianne Williams

Religion

Far from debate spotlight, Williamson keeps campaigning

By ASHRAF KHALIL September 14, 2019



ATLANTA (AP)

AP**AP NEWS**

Top Stories

Topics ▾

Video

Listen



to a near
whisper, then
soared
preacher-style
to the rafters.

“There are
more lovers
than haters in
America. But
those who hate,
hate with
conviction, and
conviction is a
force
multiplier,” she
said. “That is
why we need a
politics of love
because the
politics of fear
and injustice
and
mercilessness
has us by THE
THROAT.”

The
predominantly
black crowd at
the 1,500-seat
Hillside
International
Truth Center in

**The Early Signs Of Type 2 Diabetes. Search
Type 2 Diabetes Treatments**

Yahoo Search

Trending on AP News

**Legislature releases complaints against
Arizona lawmaker**

**After 2 Supreme Court wins, Florida man
gets \$875K from city**

**Black lawmakers demand Biden disavow
surrogate's comments**

by Taboola

Sponsored

AP**AP NEWS**

Top Stories

Topics ▾

Video

Listen



they packed the
hallways lining
up to have
copies of
Williamson's
books signed. It
looked like a
wildly
successful
political/spiritual
campaign in
high gear.

But when 10
presidential
candidates
shared the
stage this week
in Houston for
the third
Democratic
debate,
Williamson was
in Beverly Hills,
hosting her
own debate-
watching event.

It was a
disappointing
result for the
bestselling

AP**AP NEWS**

Top Stories

Topics ▾

Video

Listen



during the second debate in August. Her description of institutionalized racism as “part of the dark underbelly of American society” resonated widely; she was the most Googled candidate following the debate, and her performance spawned a miniwave of think pieces pondering whether she should be taken seriously.

But that bump in attention failed to translate into measurable support.


Williamson met



unru debate
but [fell well](#)
[short of the](#)
[polling](#)
[threshold](#) .

“Some of it is
my own
failure,” she
told The
Associated
Press. “I have
not had the
money or the
expertise with
which to fully
maximize the
energy that we
generated. But
how I did in
those polls is
not the
ultimate
determiner of
whether this
campaign has
value, meaning
or purpose.”

As the televised
primary
machine rolls
on without her,
Williamson has

AP**AP NEWS**[Top Stories](#)[Topics](#) [Video](#)[Listen](#)

trying to get back in the race. During a three-day campaign swing through South Carolina and Atlanta over Labor Day weekend, Williamson, 67, maintained a punishing schedule of appearances and speeches, seeking to build momentum and hopefully make the fourth scheduled debate in October in Ohio.

Williamson acknowledged that she has considered dropping out. Perhaps most frustrating for

someone who



and spiritual adviser for decades is the realization that she is not being taken seriously enough.

“I don’t enjoy the daily humiliation. It’s not fun to be derided, to be dismissed,” she said. “When people say it’s an ego trip, I laugh because what could be more ego-destroying than THIS?”

She speaks vaguely of a coordinated effort to discredit her that kicked in immediately after her second debate



interviewers
dug up what
she called
“sloppy” old
statements and
tweets to paint
her as an anti-
vaccine radical.

“That’s been
hard to take —
this image of
me as some
crazy lady,” she
said.

On the
campaign trail,
and in contrast
to her public
perception
among some,
Williamson
comes across as
more angry and
fed up with the
state of the
country than
blissed out on
the power of
love. She still
drops phrases
like “vortex of
moral



of an “amoral economic system” that has nearly destroyed the middle class and “hijacked America’s moral values.”

Williamson wears her spirituality on her sleeve, and some of her most enthusiastic crowds have come in houses of worship. On her Labor Day campaign swing, she addressed a packed house of about 250 people at a predominantly white church in Greenville, South Carolina. Two days later


she received a



but even among her supporters, her status as an extreme longshot hangs over the proceedings.

“I think she’s a wonderful person, and I think it’s a shame that somebody like her could never be elected president,” said Autumn Baskin, a 45-year-old graphic designer, as she left Williamson’s appearance at the Hillside church. “I would vote for her if I thought she had a chance.”

Williamson

AP**AP NEWS**[Top Stories](#)[Topics](#) [Video](#)[Listen](#)

Trump's name;
she doesn't
avoid it, but she
describes him
as a mere
symptom of a
larger societal
sickness that's
been building
for decades.

“He is an
opportunistic
infection. If all
we do is defeat
him, those
forces will be
back in '22 and
'24,” she said.

As with the
second debate,
Williamson
speaks vividly
about the
tortured history
of racism in
America, calling
it the country's
“original
character
defect.”

She talks in

AP**AP NEWS**

Top Stories

Topics ▾

Video


Listen



countrywide
need for
confession,
contrition and
atonement.
That's at the
heart of one of
her signature
proposals: that
the [U.S.](#)
[government](#)
[pay massive](#)
[financial](#)
[reparations](#) to
its black
citizens as
atonement for
centuries of
slavery and
discrimination.

Williamson's
bona fides on
the reparations
issue are
unassailable;
she first
advocated the
step in 1997's
"The Healing of
America." She
proposes that

\$200 billion to

AP**AP NEWS**[Top Stories](#)[Topics](#) [Video](#)[Listen](#)

to a
Reparations
Council. That
council,
composed of 30
to 50 black
academic,
cultural and
business
leaders, would
then decide
how and when
to disperse the
funds.

“Black America
will decide,”
she told a small
roundtable of
black religious
leaders in
Atlanta. “Will it
go to
historically
black
universities?
Will it be black
chambers of
commerce?
Will it be
microloans for
small

businesses?

AP**AP NEWS**[Top Stories](#)[Topics](#) ▼[Video](#)[Listen](#)

where those
decisions get
made.”

The money
itself is
important, she
says, but
equally vital is
the need for
public
contrition from
white America.

That’s
something that
affirmative
action
programs,
minority
scholarships or
microloans for
black-owned
businesses
don’t provide.

“That brings
some economic
justice, but it
carries no
moral force,”
Williamson
said. “First of
all, it leaves
open the

AP**AP NEWS**[Top Stories](#)[Topics](#) ▼[Video](#)[Listen](#)

reparations
carry an
inherent mea
culpa.”

Williamson
regards the
Democratic
National
Committee and
its polling
requirements
with suspicion,
feeling that the
DNC openly
favors some
candidates over
others. She was
a Bernie
Sanders
supporter in
2016 when his
camp voiced
the same
suspicions
about the DNC
favoring Hillary
Clinton.

Although she
unsuccessfully
ran for
Congress as an
independent in



an independent presidential run is out of the question. She regards Jill Stein's 2016 independent run as one of several factors that led to Trump's victory.

“Given the fact that Donald Trump is president, I think it would be a very unpatriotic thing to do — to risk taking even 10 votes away from a Democrat,” she said.

**Trum
p's...**

NEW



2020

Ad Content

Cel
ebri
ty...

Promoted:
Powerlife

His
Grea
t...

Promoted:
AARP

The
Str
a...

Promoted:
Novelodge

He
Was
A...

Promoted:
BleacherBreaker

Chin
ese...

BEIJI
NG ...

Februar
y 6,



a...

NEW

YO...

Februar
y 5,
2020

Ad Content

The All-Time
Greatest NFL
Quarterback
8 Cars So Cool
It's Hard to
Believe These
Cops Called In
Hours After
Couple Begin

Doct
or's...

BEIJI
NG ...

yesterd
ay

Flow
of...

BAN
GK...



AP NEWS

Top Stories

Video

Contact Us

DOWNLOAD AP NEWS

Connect with the definitive source for global and local news



MORE FROM AP

ap.org

[AP Insights](#)

[AP Definitive Source](#)

[AP Images Spotlight](#)

[AP Explore](#)

[AP Books](#)

FOLLOW AP

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

[About](#) [Contact](#) [Customer Support](#) [Careers](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Privacy](#)
All contents © copyright 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.