

Fake moderate Steve Bullock sued for restricting free speech in Montana

By Frank Miele | August 28, 2019



If you think there is such a thing as a moderate Democrat, then you need to study the example of Steve Bullock.

Bullock is the two-term governor of my home state of Montana and failed Democratic presidential candidate. He has not topped 2 percent in enough polls to be included in the next debate, and will likely soon transition to a race for U.S. Senate against incumbent Republican Steve Daines.

Bullock's *raison d'être* for his entry into the presidential race was because he has twice been elected to govern a state that Donald Trump won by 20 points. It's not much of a "raison," but Bullock doesn't have much to offer, so his handlers had to come up with some explanation for his quixotic candidacy.

But the fact is, Bullock is not a moderate Democrat any more that John Kasich is a conservative Republican. By their fruits, ye shall know them.

I've written about this "fake moderate" ruse [before](#), most recently for Real Clear Politics in May when I invented the acronym RAMs to describe Bullock and others like him:

Bullock, in fact, is pretty much a typical Democrat — a radical pretending to be a moderate. The case he will be making to voters in Iowa and New Hampshire is that he is better at pretending to be a moderate than most other Democrats, and thus more electable in the general election.

Of course, Republicans are famously deluded by RINOs, those “Republicans In Name Only” who manage to vote like Democrats after securing election by pretending to be conservatives, but less talked about is the endless capacity of Republicans to be duped by Democrats who pretend to be moderates. In keeping with the animal symbolism of RINO, let’s call these manipulative Democrats RAMs. They are “Radicals Acting Moderate,” and somehow the true moderates in the Republican Party never catch on to the trick. If a RAM claims to be for workers’ rights, women’s rights and equal rights, they can always count on the votes of Republicans who never notice that what they wind up with is socialism, infanticide and a kick in the pants.

You can read [my earlier piece](#) for many examples of how Bullock betrayed the Montana Republicans who voted for him. The lesson is clear: Don’t trust any Democrat to govern as anything but a radical, no matter how moderate they claim to be when asking for votes.

Today, there is new evidence of how dangerous the “moderate” Steve Bullock is. A lawsuit has just been filed against Bullock and the head of Montana’s procurement bureau. The lawsuit centers on an executive order Bullock issued in 2018 that requires companies that wish to bid on state contracts to publicly report which issue advocacy organizations they support if they make donations within 60 days of an election.

According to a press release, “The lawsuit was filed by the Illinois Opportunity Project, a nonpartisan, 501c4 organization that engages in issue advocacy. The Illinois Opportunity Project is represented in this case by attorneys from the Liberty Justice Center, best known for its 2018 Supreme Court win in the case *Janus v. AFSCME*.”

This fight is vital for conservatives, whose freedom of speech under the First Amendment is under attack. Bullock has been on the front lines of preventing conservatives from using their money to support the candidates of their choice. By calling it Dark Money, Bullock and other radicals have been able to ban political donations and to chip away at the freedom granted under the *Citizens United* ruling.

With his executive order, Bullock sought to scare contractors from supporting groups that may be out of favor with the ruling party or the entrenched bureaucracy. Thus the lawsuit:

“Americans have the right to support causes without intrusion or discrimination from the government,” said Patrick Hughes, president and co-founder of the Liberty Justice Center. “Forcing a person or group to disclose their contributions in order to be considered for work goes against our country’s founding principles as well as our current laws. Gov. Bullock should not be allowed to bully donors through an executive order. Liberty Justice Center is proud to represent the Illinois Opportunity Project in this case to defend these constitutional rights because everyone should be free to support causes in which they believe.”

“The Illinois Opportunity Project is fighting to uphold the First Amendment right of free speech so everyone is protected from retaliation and intimidation,” said Matthew Besler, president of the Illinois Opportunity Project. “The First Amendment guarantees each person the right to support causes without retaliation. We encourage robust policy discussions that affect change and improve lives, and we oppose laws that hinder individuals’ First Amendment rights. We will continue to fight so individuals can participate in public discourse without fear of retaliation.”

Face it, liberals don’t care about freedom; they care about power, and they will happily restrict your freedom in order to seize or retain power.

The Illinois Opportunity Project said it plans to engage in issue advocacy in Montana prior to the 2020 election, and that its “speech will be unconstitutionally chilled if its supporters must disclose their past donations.”

Across the nation, we are seeing the harsh reality of retaliation based on people’s public support for candidates and causes: people losing jobs, property destroyed, even death threats. Especially in such politically charged times, the First Amendment is an essential protection for the principle that it’s the ideas and issues themselves that matter, not the individuals who choose to financially support them.

Through his executive order, Gov. Bullock undermines those rights and leaves businesses open to discrimination and retaliation based on their issue advocacy. The action does nothing to prevent corruption in the state contract bidding process and instead has the effect – intended or not – of silencing organizations that may disagree with him but are seeking a state contract.

Remember, there is no longer any such thing as a moderate Democrat, certainly not in office. Trust them at your own peril.

The complaint against Bullock can be found [here](#).