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## The Problem With the Early Primaries

By CARTER BRIGLIA  
STAFF WRITER

Performing well in the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary is vital to a presidential hopeful's eventual success. Given that these states are the first in the primary cycle, candidates are forced to appeal to their voters. If a candidate struggles to gain support in Iowa and New Hampshire, it is seen as a sign that his or her campaign is doomed, that he or she has no hope of winning the nomination. Given these states' importance, one would think they should be great representations of

issues do not personally affect the majority of the audience. Not only is it morally wrong to put candidates in such a position, but it is a terrible way of choosing a candidate who will best appeal to the national electorate. If the Democrats want to win in battleground states with a more diverse population (such as North Carolina, which is only 68.5 percent white, or Florida, 75 percent white), they should force candidates to seriously address the needs of minority voters early in the primaries. Under the current

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the demographics of the United States. After all, if the Democratic Party wants to find a candidate who can appeal to the masses, it would make sense to "test the waters" in states that accurately represent the voters which the nominee will have to sway in November. Iowa and New Hampshire don't fit this bill. Both are incredibly white states, which causes candidates to appeal more to white voters, leaving the voices of minority voters left behind in the process.

In terms of demographics, New Hampshire and Iowa have the third and fifth highest percentages of white Americans, with 95 and 92.9 percent of the population respectively. Due to this, the concerns of minority voters in these states are essentially left behind, as candidates are forced to appeal to audiences in which at least nine out of ten people are white. If a candidate were to focus on issues that deeply affect people of color, such as unfair conviction rates for nonviolent drug offenders, his or her message would likely fall flat, given that these

format, only the candidates who successfully appealed to the incredibly white populations of Iowa and New Hampshire (whether they actually finished first there or not) can survive, and those who might have performed better in more diverse states later in the calendar are, in effect, dropped.

To fix this issue, the Democrats could simply combine the current first four states—Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina—into one day. With this new schedule, candidates would have to appeal to a much more diverse audience. Nevada and South Carolina are both 66.2 percent white, and their greater diversity would force candidates to focus more on issues that affect minority voters. In addition, this would make the first primary much more geographically representative, since there would be one in each region on the same day: Midwest, Northeast, South, and West all having importance it helping to determine the nominee. It would not be

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## Super Bowl Ads

By ERIC FISCHER  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Super Bowl has always been known for excess. Be it the huge amounts of pre-game hype or the massive prices for commercials during the game, the Super Bowl is one of the flashiest events of the year. Part of the hype this year was the anticipation of two political ads that aired during the game: one from President Trump, one from former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. A striking thing about them was their similarity in some respects.

One common vein was their break from the otherwise rancorous debate surrounding the 2020 election. Trump's ad focused on the story of Alice Johnson, a nonviolent drug offender sentenced to life in prison, whose sentence was eventually commuted by Trump after the intervention of socialite Kim Kardashian. The ad, featuring white text on a black background interspersed with images of Johnson reunited with her family, was a departure from the standard Trump playbook, which calls for being loud, boisterous, and spontaneous. Bloomberg's 60-second spot told the story of George Kemp, a 20-year-old football player from Houston who was killed in a shooting in 2013. The ad was somber but hopeful. It was narrated by Kemp's mother, who has advocated for gun restrictions since his death and praises Bloomberg's record on gun control. Neither candidate was willing to air a divisive attack ad on America's biggest sporting stage, but both were willing to air sensitive, emotional political issues in a stirring way.

The second similarity between these two ads was what was left unsaid. Trump's touted his record

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unprecedented to have multiple states simultaneously: On Super Tuesday, which is March 3 this year, fourteen states will vote on the same day. That's early as well, but under the current schedule, good performances in Iowa and New Hampshire tend to signal to Super Tuesday voters that a candidate actually has a shot at winning the nomination and is electable. If all of the first four states were to vote on the same day, the opinions of minority voters would probably have much greater influence in that next round of voting.

If the Democrats are serious about

winning elections, they must rally more support from non-white voters. As evidence from 2016 shows, when minority voters don't show up strongly enough at the polls (white voters turned out at 65.3 percent, black voters at 59.6 percent, and Hispanic voters at 47.6 percent), Republicans have a much greater chance of winning. This seems especially true for the coming election, in which President Trump's base consists overwhelmingly of white voters. While it is too late to change the 2020 primary schedule, a future change to incorporate the voices of minority voters at an earlier stage

could benefit the Democratic Party. By forcing candidates to consider the issues which especially affect minority voters, rather than requiring them to appeal to states which are over 92 percent white, the Democrats could successfully maneuver campaigns into a focus on the broad range of issues affecting voters as a whole, not simply those affecting mostly white Americans in Iowa and New Hampshire. For a party that needs racially diverse support to win presidential elections, it makes sense to more strongly prioritize minority voters' concerns at the start of the primary cycle.

SUPER BOWL ADS cont.

on criminal justice reform, but needs more context. Trump did sign the bipartisan FIRST STEP Act in December of 2018. The law eased mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines for nonviolent drug offenses, weakened the "three strikes and you're out" rule, expanded credit for good time, and implemented some lesser justice-system reforms. Johnson wasn't actually a beneficiary of the act, because her sentence was commuted by the president the previous summer. Furthermore, critics rightly said that

are killed each year due to gun violence, that number is 1,500 for 0- to 17-year-olds, and it doesn't really tell the story of the thousands of deaths, uncovered in the news, that occur--like Kemp's shooting death--between teenagers after altercations. Bloomberg should be lauded for bringing these stories into the limelight, but should focus more on the scourge that is everyday gun violence.

Finally, both ads made a pitch to black voters. Trump's messaging has evolved from 2016 to highlight accomplishments for the black

it should be remembered that he won a greater share of it than both Mitt Romney and John McCain (although this can also be attributed to low black turnout).

Bloomberg's ad had a broader audience, since it included memories of school shootings which caused universal outrage. In focusing on Kemp's story, however, it was targeting the scourge of shootings committed by young men against each other. According to the Giffords Law Center, the roughly 12,000 fatal shootings and 80,000 non-

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clemency should not occur because of celebrity intervention but rather through comprehensive policy.

Bloomberg's ad focused on gun violence affecting children, but would have been better had it described the fuller magnitude of the gun problem. A person viewing the ad, with its images of Kemp as a young child in oversized football pads and of mourning after the Sandy Hook school shooting, might believe he was killed as a child, obscuring the fact that he was shot at the age of 20. Here lies the tragedy in the shooting statistic Bloomberg cited: While 2,900 0- to 19-year-olds

community during his administration, rather than just asking: "what do you have to lose?" While Trump cannot claim sole credit (no administration could) for record-low black unemployment rates or for criminal justice reform (however preliminary), his pitch is intended to show progress for the black community. His argument in this respect in 2020 will certainly be based on the claim that the Democratic Party has always taken the black vote for granted without delivering material improvements in their lives. Whether Trump succeeds in winning over much of the black vote remains to be seen, but

fatal shootings that largely comprise interpersonal gun violence often include teenagers of color shooting one another. Bloomberg's ad did make a pitch to minority communities, in an acknowledgement that the constant gun violence this nation faces is not primarily in the tragic mass shootings which always draw headlines, but rather in the thousands of individual tragedies which go largely unreported every day. If Bloomberg wants to win the Democratic nomination, he must sway anyone he can to his side, and stressing this issue with the black community may be the place to start.

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## STAFF WRITERS

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#PrimariesProblems

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