

GOP candidate's former campaign chief: Thank God for Proud Boys

Colorado candidate Lauren Boebert's former staffer posted a video with a member.

By [Jeffrey Cook](#)
 October 16, 2020, 11:14 AM

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President Trump's 'stand by' comment to Proud Boys stuns both sides
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The former top aide to Lauren Boebert, a Republican candidate for U.S. Congress in Colorado on a meteoric rise within President Donald Trump's political sphere, hosted a self-proclaimed member of the Proud Boys on a Facebook video last year in which she described the group as "pro everything that makes America great."

The Proud Boys is [a far-right extremist group](#) tied to acts of violence, some of whose members have recently been connected to white supremacist groups.

The primary organizer of the [Unite The Right rally](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia -- where one counterprotester was killed -- in 2017 was a former Proud Boys member, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Trump recently faced intense criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike after the first presidential debate in September when he said the group should "stand back and stand by" in response to calls to denounce the group and white supremacy.

In a statement to ABC News, Boebert's campaign said, "Lauren denounces all forms of violence and racism, and has no connection whatsoever with the Proud Boys. Connecting Lauren in any way with the Proud Boys on the

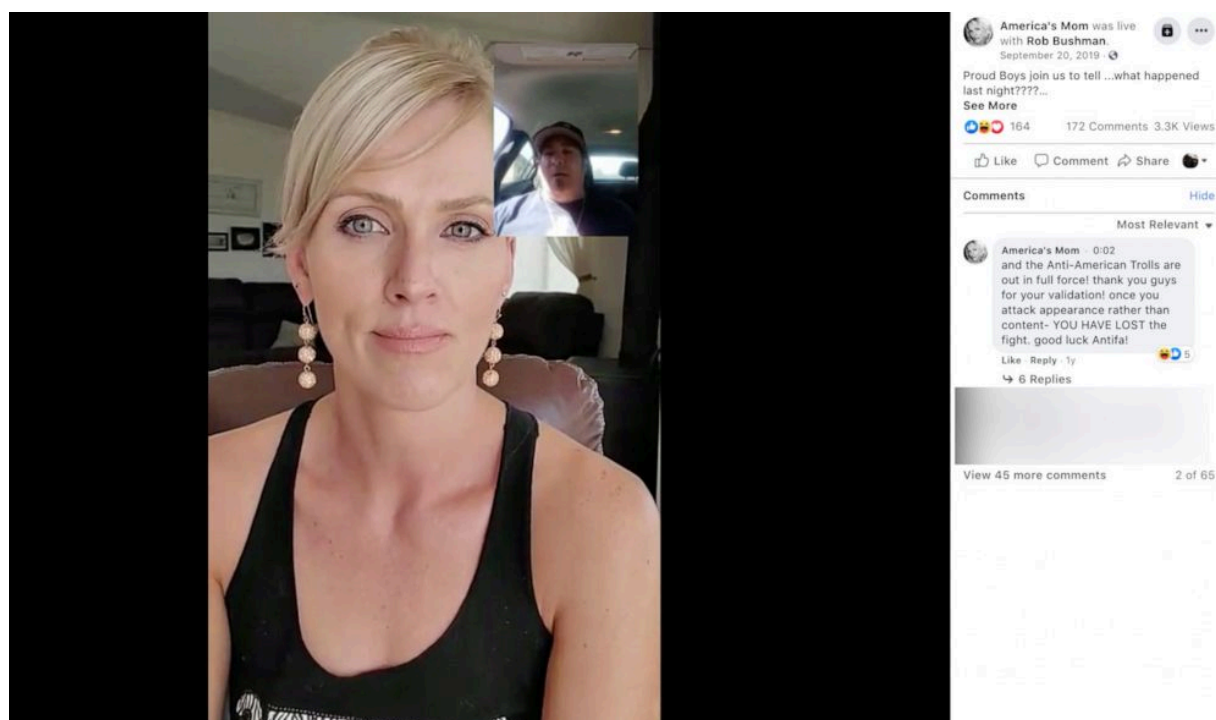
part your organization would be wholly irresponsible. Lauren has been on the record multiple times saying that racism has no place in America."

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Members of the Proud Boys heard Trump's debate message as a virtual endorsement and celebrated online. In a later interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity, Trump backtracked and said, "I condemn the Proud Boys. I don't know much about the Proud Boys, almost nothing, but I condemn that."

The video on the Facebook page of Sherronna Bishop, who worked alongside Boebert for more than a year is dated Sept. 20, 2019. Bishop regularly hosts live videos and often includes guests on a split screen function to discuss conservative politics. This one includes a Proud Boy only identified as Rob describing a group of protesters gathering outside the home of a warden of a Denver-area immigration detention center "and four or five" other Proud Boys going to counter-protest.

Bishop concludes the video by saying "thank god for you guys and the Proud Boys."



A screen shot of Sherronna Bishop's September 2019 Facebook video with a member of the Proud Bo...
America's Mom/Facebook

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Boebert's Communications Director Laura Carno responded by saying Bishop's views "were not part of Lauren Boebert's campaign." In a text message to ABC News, Bishop said she was no longer with the campaign.

Neither her nor Carno would say when that occurred or if it changed in reaction to this story.

Bishop was campaign manager as recently as July, according to official communications from the campaign, and no other campaign manager has ever been announced. Bishop served as top aide during Boebert's breakout moment this year when she upset five-term Republican incumbent Rep. Scott Tipton during the primary. Boebert largely ran on the message that Tipton wasn't loyal enough to Trump, despite Tipton earning the endorsement from the president.

The primary result shocked political observers across the country and she is now in a close race against Democrat Diane Mitsch Bush, a former state lawmaker and university professor. Boebert owns a restaurant in Colorado's Western Slope, where servers carry firearms on their hips. The restaurant made headlines early in the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) when it refused to abide by state health restrictions.

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In previous posts, Bishop claims that "illegal Immigrants are bringing a range of diseases into our country" and that climate change is a "hoax." She expresses anti-vaccine opinions and shares stories from RT, a Russian government-funded website and, according to U.S. officials, a state-run propaganda outlet that played a central role in the country's effort to disrupt the U.S. 2016 presidential election.

Boebert herself has drawn criticism for engaging in conspiracy theories. Boebert appeared on a [QAnon-friendly](#) podcast called "Steel Truth" in May. "Everything that I've heard of Q, I hope that this is real," she said.

"Because it only means that America is getting stronger and better, and people are returning to conservative values."



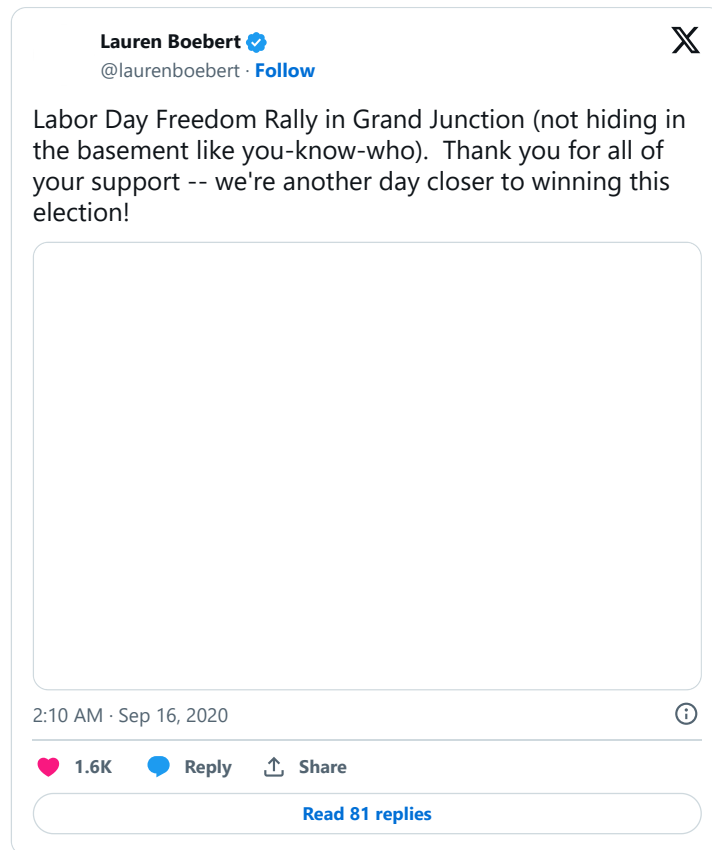
Lauren Boebert, the Republican candidate for the House of Representatives seat in Colorado's 3rd Con...
Jason Connolly/AFP via Getty Images

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The race in Colorado's 3rd Congressional District, home to both liberal ski towns like Steamboat Springs and Republican strongholds like Grand Junction, has remarkably similar qualities to that of the culture clash between Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

Boebert regularly holds maskless rallies and is relentless on Twitter, where she calls her opponent a "socialist," part of the "radical left" and "Basement Bush." She collects thousands of retweets in her supportive messages of

Trump and attacks on national Democrats like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.



Trump invited Boebert to his presidential nomination acceptance speech at the White House in August and attended the president's Fourth of July celebration at Mount Rushmore.

Meanwhile, Bush has opposed defunding the police and recently landed the endorsement of Republican former speaker of the Colorado House Russell George. She has taken a quieter approach to her campaign and advertises herself as a pragmatic veteran in Colorado's legislature, zeroing in on issues specific to the district, such as revamping local tourism in the COVID-19 world and a greener economy in an area where tens of thousands of jobs rely upon coal, oil and gas.

Bush's campaign events are entirely virtual, according to a campaign spokesperson.



Bush's campaign manager Ashley Quenneville said in a statement to ABC News: "Lauren Boebert's close relationship with violent extremists is disgusting and disqualifying. Coloradans deserve a representative who will unite us—not associate herself with white supremacist hate groups that pose a domestic terrorist threat according to the FBI. Boebert should denounce the Proud Boys and all other white supremacist groups, and the national groups propping up her campaign—including the NRCC and CLF—must withdraw their support immediately."

Polling in the district is limited, but Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight [has the race](#) as a "toss up."

The district voted for Trump, 52%-40%, in 2016. Voters in Colorado began receiving their ballots in the mail this week.



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