

Former pastor Mark Charles qualifies for two presidential ballots

By [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [September 9, 2020](#) issue



(RNS photo / Jack Jenkins)

Voters in at least two states will have the opportunity to vote for former pastor Mark Charles in November. On August 10, the independent presidential candidate—a dual citizen of the United States and the Navajo nation—announced via Twitter that he would be on the ballot in both Vermont and Colorado.

The goal of Charles’s campaign, which he admits is a “long shot,” is to redress the long history of racism and sexism in the United States. His common refrain is that the Declaration of Independence’s “we the people” has never meant “all the people”—the phrase is even splashed across the top of the campaign’s website.

Charles pastored the Christian Indian Center, a Christian Reformed Church in Denver, for two years. Last fall he told Religion News Service that the entanglement

of religion and politics has gone too far.

“I’m a member of a community that has endured genocide, the horrors of [Native American] boarding schools, and incredible oppression because some people thought their job was to legislate their theologies and make their nation Christian,” he said. “Read the teachings of Jesus—that was never his goal. I’m a Christian, yeah. But I am not trying to make my nation Christian. I’m not trying to legislate my theology.”