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Top Skills

Public Speaking

Strategic Communications

Social Media

Ian Sams

Senior Spokesperson, Harris for President

Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Summary

I am a communications professional and strategist, with experience conveying both political and policy objectives on the record for the White House, seven state and federal campaigns, including two presidential campaigns, the Democratic Party, in the U.S. Senate, and for the Biden Administration's COVID response effort. I've spent nearly 15 years in the trenches of national politics and government -- managing teams, media relations, message development, and candidate and principal training and prep. I have deep experience with complex strategic communications planning, high-intensity media relations, rapid response, crisis communications, domestic policy and public health messaging, and digital content.

Experience

Harris for President

Senior Spokesperson and Senior Advisor

August 2024 - November 2024 (4 months)

Lead spokesman for Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign, overseeing press and media relations and managing a headquarters team of 20 spokespeople and communications support staff. Regularly appeared in news media to advance the campaign's message, and handled complex media relations and reputational management issues in a high-intensity environment, generating positive coverage for the Vice President and negative attention for her opponent.

The White House

Deputy Assistant to the President & Senior Advisor and Spokesman for White House Counsel's Office

May 2022 - August 2024 (2 years 4 months)

Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Lead White House spokesman for oversight and investigations, working closely with a team of nearly two dozen lawyers, legislative and communications aides, to defend the President and the Administration's priorities from congressional probes and legal inquiries. Oversaw crisis

communications for major legal developments in a Special Counsel investigation. Managed senior communications officials across federal agencies to coordinate responses to congressional oversight, including major investigations including impeachment probes of cabinet secretaries.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (COVID Response)
February 2021 - April 2022 (1 year 3 months)
Washington, DC

As a senior leader on the Biden Administration's COVID-19 response team, I lead all COVID-19 public affairs and communications for HHS, coordinating messaging and complex policy initiatives at the department level and with agencies like CDC, FDA, NIH and other HHS divisions, and serving as the department's top COVID-19 spokesperson. In this role, I synthesize complex scientific and public health information to develop messaging for leaders across the Administration and White House partners, including frequently advising principals ahead of major media and public relations engagements and announcements. The role is responsible for coordinating all HHS policy rollouts for COVID-19 response initiatives, including American Rescue Plan investments and vaccine authorizations, recommendations, and distribution, and managing major media inquiries and story development on Biden Administration COVID-19 response efforts, including crisis communications for breaking news developments.

Biden-Harris Transition Team
Volunteer Staff - Confirmations Team
November 2020 - February 2021 (4 months)

Led public affairs strategy, communications, and press for the successful bipartisan confirmations of HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. Coordinated and participated in a dozen mock hearings to prepare the nominees for their confirmation hearings.

Self-Employed
Communications and Strategy Consultant
January 2020 - January 2021 (1 year 1 month)
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Help clients with media relations, pitching press coverage, communications and political strategy development, rapid response, and digital content. Led communications and strategy for the Navigating Coronavirus project, a polling and message development campaign focused on public opinion

on the pandemic and the federal response, including President Trump's mismanagement of the crisis. Frequently provide political analysis on television and in print.

Kamala Harris For The People

National Press Secretary

January 2019 - December 2019 (1 year)

Principal spokesman for presidential campaign of then-California Sen. Kamala Harris. Participated in candidate prep, including mock sessions, for all Democratic primary debates. National TV surrogate for Harris campaign, including frequent appearances on CNN and MSNBC. Frequently traveled with Harris and prepared her for interviews, media appearances and events. Coordinated all policy rollouts, national media inquiries, proactive story pitches including opposition research, managed press team of three.

Tim Kaine for Virginia

Communications Director

July 2017 - December 2018 (1 year 6 months)

Arlington, Virginia

Advised U.S. Senator Tim Kaine on communications and message strategy as a senior-level aide and strategist, while leading all communications efforts and serving as principal spokesman for his record-setting 2018 campaign in Virginia; frequently traveled with and personally staffed the Senator. Helped coordinate \$6 million TV advertising campaign, including writing multiple ad scripts. Ran Kaine's 1 million follower Twitter account and developed and executed content for his personal Facebook page, which boasts 283,000 likes, and 100,000+ follower Instagram account. Led all candidate debate prep for three statewide TV debates, including four full mock debates.

Tom Perriello for Virginia

Communications Director

January 2017 - June 2017 (6 months)

Alexandria, Virginia

Led communications strategy and was principal spokesman for former Congressman Tom Perriello's campaign for Governor of Virginia in the first major statewide Democratic primary after the 2016 presidential election. Coordinated TV advertising and production with media consulting team, including writing ad scripts, as part of a \$2.5 million ad campaign.

Hillary for America

Regional Communications Director

April 2015 - November 2016 (1 year 8 months)

Brooklyn, New York

Oversaw communications strategy and managed communications operations for five states (Virginia, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio) in the 2016 general election, as well as more than a dozen states and territories in the 2016 Democratic primaries. Previously a domestic policy spokesman and member of the HFA rapid response communications team.

Democratic National Committee

Regional Press Secretary

September 2013 - March 2015 (1 year 7 months)

Washington D.C. Metro Area

On-record DNC spokesman for 14 states, responsible for rapid response and opposition messaging efforts for prospective Republican presidential candidates Chris Christie, Rand Paul, and Jeb Bush. Embedded as staff on the successful governor campaigns of Terry McAuliffe (Virginia) and Dan Malloy (Connecticut).

Office of U.S. Senator Tom Carper

Press Secretary

June 2011 - September 2013 (2 years 4 months)

Washington D.C. Metro Area

On-record spokesman and primary press aide for senator's Finance and Environment and Public Works Committee portfolios. Promoted twice, from prior positions as deputy press secretary and press assistant.

Tom Carper for Delaware

Press Secretary and Digital Director

September 2012 - November 2012 (3 months)

Newark, Delaware

On-record spokesman for reelection campaign for Delaware's senior senator. Also managed email program, focused on issue advocacy and fundraising, as well as social media accounts.

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee

Press Intern

June 2010 - August 2010 (3 months)

Education

University of Alabama
Bachelors of Arts, Political Science