



## RFK Jr. to Announce Running Mate Today

### Description

**WORLD : Months of speculation have led to the moment on March 26 when independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will announce his running mate in Oakland, California.**

Anticipation has escalated over the past week as the campaign faces a sense of urgency because multiple states require that a vice president be named in order for an independent candidate to collect and submit petitions for ballot access.

At town halls, voter rallies and interviews over the last four months, Mr. Kennedy has told The Epoch Times that he was in the vetting process to select a vice president.

"I'm looking for somebody who is aligned with me on some important issues, including unraveling the warfare state," but "I don't need someone who agrees with me on everything," Mr. Kennedy said after a voter rally in Kansas City earlier this year.

"I'm interested in someone who wants to end the division we face in this country. It's a good exercise for the American people to see political leaders who have high regard for each other, even if they don't have the same views on every issue," he noted.

Bay Area lawyer, entrepreneur, and investor Nicole Shanahan has been mentioned as the frontrunner by multiple media outlets. Ms. Shanahan, 38, was formerly married to Google co-founder Sergey Brin. The Oakland native co-funded and helped create Mr. Kennedy's \$7 million Super Bowl campaign ad.

The March 26 announcement represents the latest chapter in Mr. Kennedy's campaign journey that started in Boston in April 2023 with his intent to challenge President Joe Biden for the Democrat Party nomination.

### Ballot Access

In October 2023, claiming that the Democratic National Committee was "rigging the primary" and not

allowing any candidate to compete against President Biden, Mr. Kennedy announced he would run as an independent.

At that time, Mr. Kennedy's focus shifted from town halls to voter rallies, where he spoke to supporters and potential voters about his platform, and volunteers collected signatures in the campaign's quest to get on the ballot in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Kennedy has repeatedly said he will accomplish that feat.

To do that as an independent, he must select a running mate before petitioning for ballot access in 26 states and the District of Columbia, according to Ballot Access News.

Until this month, Tulsi Gabbard was the candidate most frequently mentioned as Mr. Kennedy's potential running mate.

A former four-term member of Congress representing Hawaii, Ms. Gabbard is the author of a new book "For Love of Country" with the subtitle "Why I Left the Democratic Party" that is published by a firm owned by Anthony Lyons, the co-chairman of American Values 2024, a Kennedy-aligned Super PAC.

Mr. Kennedy met with Ms. Gabbard in January when he was campaigning in Hawaii, NBC News reported.

Ms. Gabbard has remained involved in Libertarian politics, and she recently appeared at the New Hampshire Liberty Forum. Mr. Kennedy, reportedly considering running as a Libertarian, spoke at the California Libertarian Party's annual convention in February.

In recent weeks, Ms. Gabbard has spoken favorably about former President Donald Trump. According to multiple reports, she could be on President Trump's short list of vice presidential picks.

### **A Flurry of Reports**

On March 13, Mr. Kennedy announced he had selected a running mate and that the candidate would be introduced on March 26 in Oakland. That's when the floodgates of media and social media speculation burst.

Reports surfaced that New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers, former pro wrestler and third-party Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, and Discovery Channel TV show host Mike Rowe were among the candidates Mr. Kennedy had approached.

Declining the offer to join Mr. Kennedy's ticker were Ms. Gabbard and former Democrat presidential candidate Andrew Yang, according to The New York Times.

Among others Mr. Kennedy reportedly approached was Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.). His shortlist also included motivational speaker Tony Robbins, Mr. Rowe, and civil rights attorney Tricia Lindsay, CNN reported.

The Washington Post included those names along with former Republican Sen. Scott Brown of Massachusetts, who had served as U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa in the Trump administration.

Mr. Rowe offered a hint of the type of candidate Mr. Kennedy wants. He is interested in building a “team of rivals” as his advisers and doesn’t want to surround himself with “yes men and yes women,” Mr. Rowe told NBC News.

A supporter who attended a fundraiser for Mr. Kennedy on March 15 posted a video on X in which he was asked about the running mate chatter and replied: “We have an extraordinary person. I can’t tell you who it is, but it’s not any of the people they’re talking about.

“It’s somebody that is going to surprise people, and I think the country is really going to fall in love with.”

A day later, Mediaite reported that Mr. Kennedy would name Ms. Shanahan as his vice president pick.

Stefanie Spear, Mr. Kennedy’s press secretary, grinned when she was asked about Ms. Shanahan by The Epoch Times.

“There’s been a lot of speculation [about Mr. Kennedy’s running mate],” Ms. Spear said, adding that the name will be disclosed and the person will be introduced on March 26 in Oakland.

Amaryllis Fox Kennedy is a former CIA officer, a tech entrepreneur, and a former Twitter executive. She is also Mr. Kennedy’s daughter-in-law and campaign manager.

In an interview with The Epoch Times earlier this year, she discussed how the campaign must use alternative methods—interviews with podcasts, and strategic ads and events—to combat what she called extreme censorship by big tech firms, misinformation from mainstream media outlets, and hurdles presented by the Democratic National Committee.

“Oh boy, this media! They were sure about Aaron, now they’re sure about Nicole. Tomorrow they’ll be sure about somebody else.

“The truth is, they’re just going to have to wait until we all get to celebrate Bobby’s brilliant running mate together in 10 days,” she said.

“While I can’t share a name, I will say that I could not be more thrilled with Bobby’s decision. He ran a thorough process and has chosen a vice president who is truly worthy of the American people.”

The announcement of his running mate will mark another challenge met to help Mr. Kennedy gain ballot access. He currently has qualified for the ballot as an independent in New Hampshire, Utah, and Nevada.

Mr. Kennedy also qualified for the ballot in Hawaii under the We the People party.

In January, Mr. Kennedy's campaign said it had filed paperwork in six states to create a political party. The move was made to get his name on the ballots with fewer voter signatures than those states require for candidates not affiliated with a party.

The We the People party was established in five states: California, Delaware, Hawaii, Mississippi, and North Carolina. The Texas Independent Party was also formed.

American Values 2024, a super PAC working to get Mr. Kennedy elected, said it has collected enough valid signatures for the candidate to get on the ballot in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, and South Carolina.

Mr. Kennedy closed February with access to more than \$23.7 million cash on hand, according to his campaign's Federal Election Commission filings.

His principal campaign committee—Team Kennedy—and American Values 2024—filed their monthly statements covering February with the FEC on March 20.

The two bodies collectively brought in about \$7.3 million and spent about \$11.7 million, the filings showed.

### **Nicole Shanahan**

Citing a source close to Mr. Kennedy's campaign, USA Today reported that Ms. Shanahan and Mr. Kennedy "align on numerous issues" and that "the campaign is also looking for a candidate who can help finance the ballot access initiative."

Ms. Shanahan was among the candidates lauded by Mr. Kennedy during the vetting process.

"Nicole Shanahan has indeed been among those conversations. Her work on behalf of honest governance, racial equity, regenerative agriculture, and children's and maternal health reflects many of our country's most urgent needs.

Her decade-long focus on safeguarding our democracy against the dangers of AI and leveraging it instead to detect government corruption and abuses on behalf of the people—this is a crucial knowledge base that our current leaders in Washington lack," Ms. Kennedy wrote on X.

"America is very lucky to have Nicole Shanahan in its corner, and it was one of the highlights of the VP discernment process to get to know her incredible body of work," Ms. Kennedy added.

Raised in Oakland as a child of Chinese immigrant parents, Ms. Shanahan graduated from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, where she majored in Asian Studies and minored in economics and Mandarin. She earned a law degree from Santa Clara University in California.

Ms. Shanahan has donated to the presidential campaigns of Democrats Pete Buttigieg and Marianne Williamson in previous years, according to Forbes.

In 2020, she gave the Biden Victory Fund \$25,000.

When Mr. Kennedy was still running in the Democrat presidential primary, Ms. Shanahan contributed the maximum of \$6,600 to the candidate's campaign, the New York Times reported.

She gave \$4 million to American Values 2024 and helped create the Super Bowl television ad last month.

A longtime donor to Democrat presidential campaigns, Ms. Shanahan founded Clear Access IP (now IPwe), a tech law firm that incorporates AI to analyze and manage client patent portfolios.

In 2020, she left the company and founded the Bia-Echo Foundation, which according to its website, invests in "reproductive longevity and equality, criminal justice reform, and a healthy and livable planet."

Ms. Shanahan told USA Today that she is "definitely interested" in further supporting RFK Jr. for president. "In my opinion, he is the best presidential candidate we have on the issues close to my heart: environmental health, regenerative agriculture, and social justice," she said.

On March 25, Mr. Kennedy released an email statement promising he would "set the record straight tomorrow in Oakland" amid "some misinformation circulating in the press" about the vice president who will join his ticket.

"While I cannot tell you who it is right now, I can confidently say that they are the perfect companion to navigate the challenges ahead.

**And I'll give you another hint:** this announcement is really going to shake up the political establishment."

**By Jeff Louderback**

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