

(((Bernie Sanders))), AOC's 'Fighting Oligarchy' rally draws crowd of 34,000 to Denver

JJ McKinney, CTV Chief Investigative Anchor

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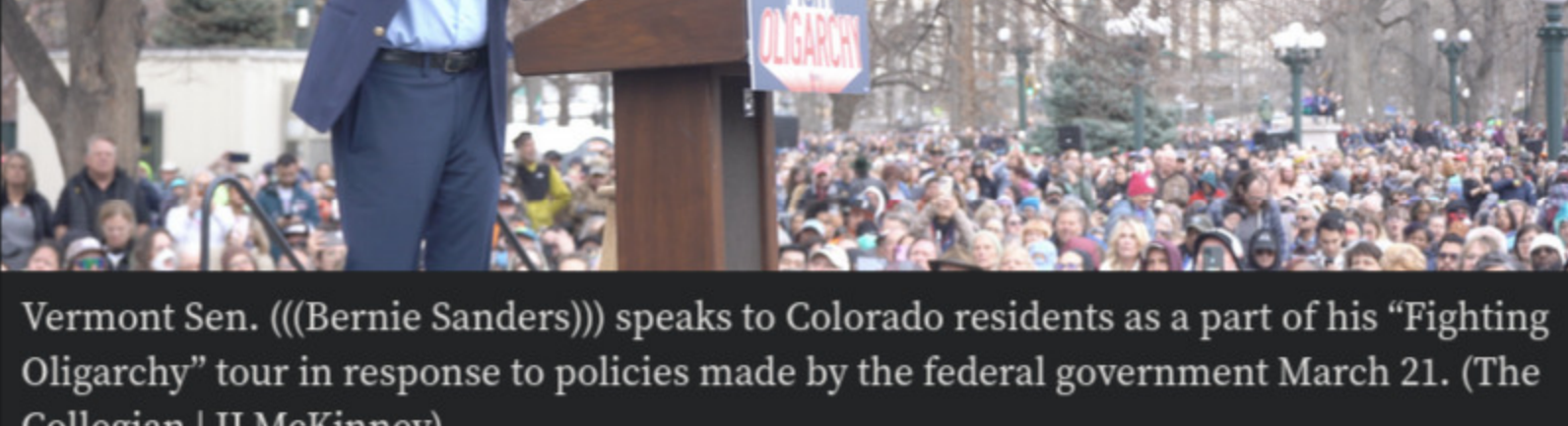
Sen. (((Bernie Sanders))) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speak to a crowd of nearly 34,000 people at their "Fighting Oligarchy" rally at Civic Center Park in Denver March 21. (The Collegian | JJ McKinney)

Thousands of people from across Colorado made their way to Civic Center Park March 21 in what was described as the largest Democratic rally since former President Barack Obama's visit in 2008.

People gathered in lines that stretched multiple city blocks to hear independent Vermont Sen. (((Bernie Sanders))) and Democrat New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speak on their "Fighting Oligarchy" tour across the United States, as they rally the population against President Donald Trump's administration and the billionaires who support it.



"The most dangerous addiction in this country is the greed of the oligarchy," Sanders said as the crowd erupted in cheers.



Vermont Sen. (((Bernie Sanders))) speaks to Colorado residents as a part of his "Fighting Oligarchy" tour in response to policies made by the federal government March 21. (The Collegian | JJ McKinney)

Ocasio-Cortez joined in Sanders' message, speaking on what she said she believes is a dangerous time in American history as billionaires gain more influence in the U.S. government.

"Those with the most economic, political and technological power destroy the public good to enrich themselves while millions of Americans pay the price," Ocasio-Cortez said. "Our political system is ill-prepared for this kind of abuse of power. In fact, much of our political system enables it, starting with the role of money in politics."



New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez rallies the crowd against billionaires in the federal government March 21. (The Collegian | JJ McKinney)

Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders called not only for a stronger Democratic party but for a bipartisan movement that unites working class Americans to push for reform in the federal government.

This comes after a series of actions by the Trump administration that have led to **funding cuts** to health care, the National Park Service and, recently, the Department of Education.

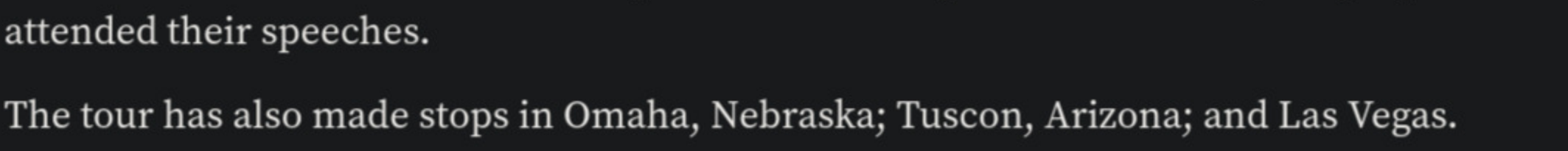
Ocasio-Cortez highlighted the work of several prominent Colorado Democrats, including Sens. John Hickenlooper and (((Michael Bennet))), Rep. Joe Neguse and, notably, Rep. Brittany Petersen, who just recently **brought her then 4-week-old baby** to Congress to vote on a budget bill after being forbidden from voting remotely.

Several notable Republicans were criticized by Ocasio-Cortez as well, including newly elected Rep. Gabe Evans.

Evans responded in a press release last Friday, criticizing AOC, Sanders and the Democratic party's policies on oil and gas.

"Congressman Evans is fighting for lower costs, safer communities and making the American Dream possible for all Coloradans," Evans' team said in a **statement**. "His commonsense approach stands in stark contrast to AOC and (((Bernie Sanders)))' extreme, anti-oil and gas rhetoric."

Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez have been making multiple visits to Republican-heavy districts on their tour.

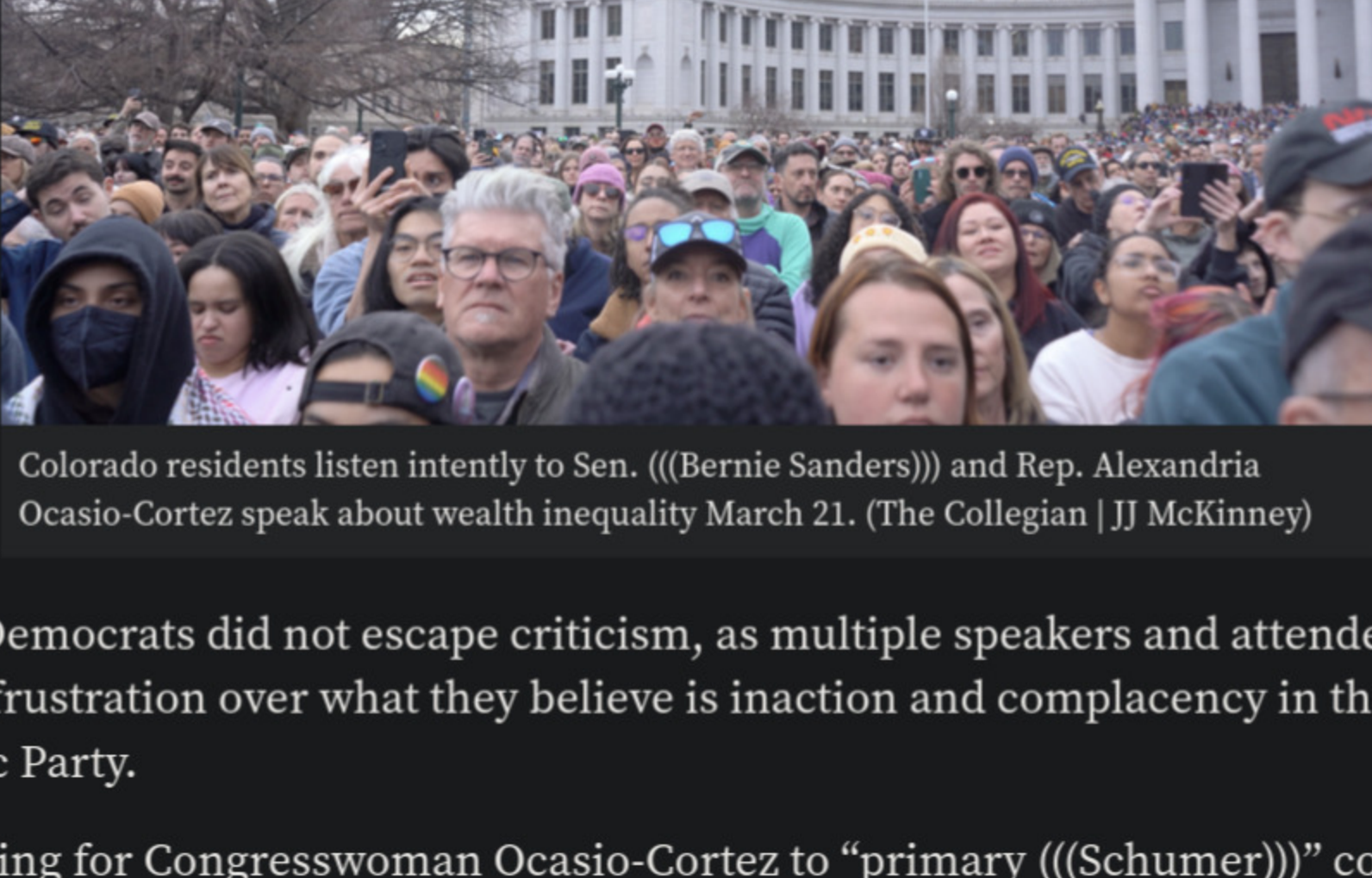


The pair paid a visit to the University of Northern Colorado's campus to speak to students in Bank of Colorado Arena in Greeley earlier in the day. An **estimated** 11,000 people attended their speeches.

The tour has also made stops in Omaha, Nebraska; Tuscon, Arizona; and Las Vegas.

Several other notable keynote speakers took to the stage to rally for their causes, including multiple union leaders in construction and education and Federal Trade Commission Commissioner Alvaro Bedoya.

Members of the crowd resonated with Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez's policies on affordable health care, housing and equal taxation, even going as far as chanting "tax the rich" when billionaire incomes were brought into question.



Colorado residents listen intently to Sen. (((Bernie Sanders))) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speak about wealth inequality March 21. (The Collegian | JJ McKinney)

However, Democrats did not escape criticism, as multiple speakers and attendees alike expressed frustration over what they believe is inaction and complacency in the Democratic Party.

Chants calling for Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez to "primary (((Schumer)))" could be heard across the crowd. This is in **response** to New York Sen. (((Chuck Schumer)))'s decision to back a Republican-led government funding measure that has led to disapproval among his peers and constituents. This has led to a growing movement calling for AOC to replace (((Schumer))) in his role as a New York senator.

AOC said she hopes that rallies like this are just the beginning of a larger call to action to alter the federal government.

"Our goal today is not to just come together and share a few inspiring words and then go back to how things were," Ocasio-Cortez said. "Our goal here today is for all of us to commit to building the kind of country we all deserve. We are here to take care of each other on our worst days and share in the successes of our best."

Sanders finished his speech with a similar message.

"We are not going to align ourselves with dictatorships — we believe in democracy," Sanders said. "We are the vast majority of people. ... We can defeat Trumpism and create a political movement so that we have a government and economy that works for all of us."

Reach JJ McKinney at jjmckinney@collegiantv.com or on social media [@levonjjm](https://twitter.com/levonjjm).

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