

Rand Paul's 'March for a Million' Campaign Reaches Milestone

In the final days before the first official votes are cast in the Iowa Republican Caucus, presidential candidate Rand Paul continues to face an uphill battle in his effort to gain "respect" from the media.

As part of his campaign's effort to win the first-in-the-nation presidential nominating event, they launched a phone banking initiative called "March to a Million." The goal: Make 1 million phone calls with Iowa voters to convince them to caucus for the Kentucky senator next Monday.

This week, they reached a key milestone in that ambitious effort, completing their 800,000th call, which the campaign calls "an unprecedented organizational feat."

"While the mainstream media and political elite try to discredit the campaign, there is no discounting the solid infrastructure Paul has built in Iowa," the Paul camp said in a statement released Tuesday. "With over 800,000 phone calls made and over 1,000 precinct captains committed to caucusing for Sen. Paul, it is clear the Paul campaign will be a force to be reckoned with on Feb. 1."

It's another sign of a campaign that has thrown out the traditional Iowa Caucus playbook, much like the campaigns of Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, who have seemingly dominated the earned media so far. But are Iowa voters, who are accustomed to getting up close and personal with the candidates, going to be motivated by phone calls alone?

Based on the most conservative estimates, the phone banking effort, which historically has a track record of marginal

success—anecdotal evidence points to a range between 0.5 and 5 percent, which volunteer efforts such as Paul's running toward the higher end—reaching 1 million voters could result in a major upset. Paul's chief strategist, Steve Grubbs, insists it's going to work:

"The ground game in Iowa for Rand Paul is unprecedented. We are finding hundreds of new supporters every day that are committing to caucus for Rand Paul. Even more, the effort is growing day by day. Our March to a Million phone calls is within reach and it will make a big impact on Caucus night."