

Victor Marx — 2026 Colorado Republican Gubernatorial Primary

Facebook Engagement Anomalies, Platform Sentiment Analysis, Fabricated Endorsements, and Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior

Prepared by Cori Kennedy | March 2026 | Evergreen, Colorado

Declaration of Independence: This research was conducted independently, without compensation, coordination, or direction from any candidate, campaign, political committee, or outside organization. The author is not affiliated with any campaign in the 2026 Colorado gubernatorial primary and has not received payment or consideration of any kind in connection with this work. The author is under no financial or professional obligation to any party with a stake in the outcome of this analysis. This research was undertaken as an act of civic obligation by a private Colorado citizen who answers to no one.

Executive Summary

This brief presents findings from an independent analysis of Victor Marx's social media engagement patterns, conducted in the context of the 2026 Colorado Republican gubernatorial primary. The Facebook analysis covers 168 consecutive posts spanning January 1 through March 8, 2026, comprising 731,303 total reactions and 37,689 total comments. The analysis was initiated following the observation of coordinated inauthentic behavior among accounts defending the Marx campaign online. Findings include: a statistically anomalous reaction-to-comment ratio across the full Facebook dataset consistent with automated engagement (bot farming); identification of the specific content categories that trigger the highest artificial amplification; a cross-platform sentiment comparison on X (formerly Twitter) revealing that unfiltered public reaction to Marx skews sharply negative; documented coordinated inauthentic activity by named operatives; and a confirmed fabrication of an endorsement from former Colorado Governor Bill Owens, presented by Marx to Republican voters at a public candidate forum on March 4, 2026.

I. Methodology

The reaction-to-comment ratio (RCR) measures organic audience engagement by calculating how many emoji reactions a post receives for each comment left by a user. This distinction is analytically significant: emoji reactions require a single tap and can be generated by automated accounts, whereas comments require a human being to stop, formulate a thought, and type a response. On a healthy, organically engaged page, reactions will exceed comments, but the ratio between them remains within a predictable range.

To establish baseline norms, the RCR was calculated for a control group of 20 public figures spanning the full political and religious spectrum, including national political figures, Colorado-specific candidates, and large Christian ministry accounts. The control group was deliberately

diverse in ideological alignment, audience size, and content type. Follower counts range from 3,000 to 41 million, demonstrating that audience scale does not explain the anomaly.

Victor Marx’s 168 most recent Facebook posts were then analyzed using the same methodology. Two independent reviewers recorded reaction and comment counts for each post; both the raw ratio and a verified ratio are reported. Statistical analysis of the resulting distribution was used to calculate the probability that Marx’s engagement pattern could occur organically.

II. Control Group Findings

The table and chart below present RCR data for the full control group. The dataset spans Democrats and Republicans, Colorado and national figures, audiences from 3,000 to 41 million followers, and both political and religious ministry content. Not one public figure in the control group exceeded a 10:1 ratio, regardless of audience size or ideological alignment.

Public Figure	Category	Followers	R:C Ratio
Kirk Cameron	Christian Ministry / Political	3.8M	2:1
Gov. Jared Polis	Political (Colorado)	141K	2:1
Candace Owens	Conservative Media	7.5M	3:1
Pastor Greg Locke	Christian Ministry	2.2M	3:1
Donald Trump	Political (National)	41M	4:1
Matt Walsh	Conservative Media	2.9M	4:1
Hickenlooper	Political (Colorado)	121K	4:1
Nancy Pelosi	Political (National)	1.3M	5:1
Trent Langhofer	Political (Colorado)	4.6K	6:1
JD Vance	Political (National)	4.8M	7:1
Lauren Boebert	Political (Colorado)	240K	7:1
Scott Bottoms	Political (Colorado)	15K	7:1
AOC	Political (National)	2.2M	7:1
Mark Geist	Conservative Activist	3K	7:1
Mayor Mamdani	Political (NYC)	1.7M	8:1
Jeff Schwarzentraub	Religious	3.9K	8:1
Franklin Graham	Christian Ministry	11M	9:1
Greg Lopez	Political (Colorado)	6.5K	10:1
Joel Osteen	Christian Ministry	29M	10:1

Public Figure	Category	Followers	R:C Ratio
Victor Marx	2026 CO Gubernatorial Candidate	—	19.4:1 (verified: 21.4:1)

Table 1. Reaction-to-Comment Ratio, Control Group and Victor Marx (168-post sample, January 1 – March 8, 2026)

<p>MARX AVG R:C RATIO</p> <p>21.4:1</p> <p>reactions per comment</p>	<p>CONTROL GROUP AVG</p> <p>6.4:1</p> <p>across 20 verified pages</p>	<p>STATISTICAL Z-SCORE</p> <p>2.18σ</p> <p>std deviations above norm</p>	<p>EST. INORGANIC REACTIONS</p> <p>83%</p> <p>of 731,303 total reactions</p>
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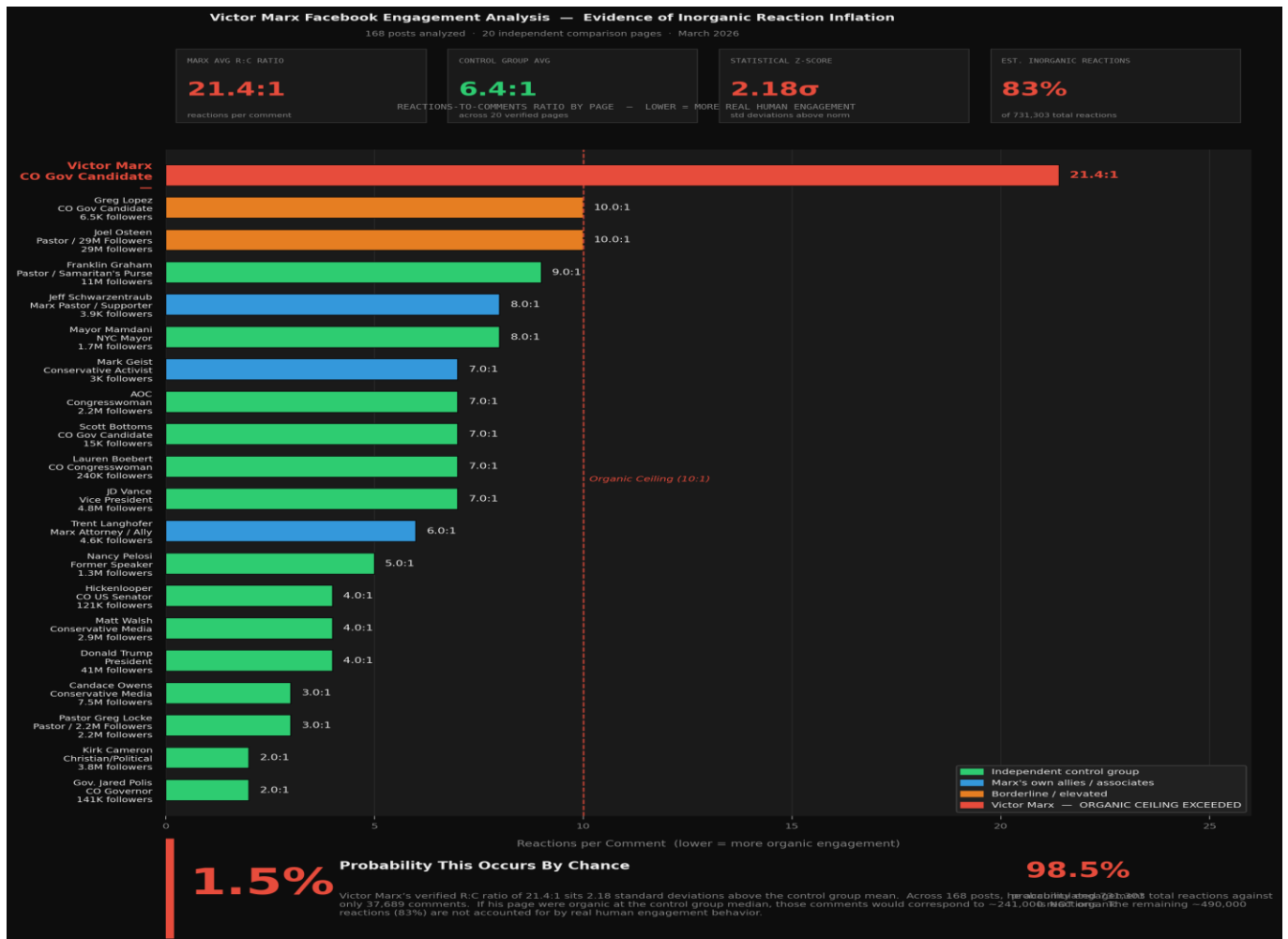


Figure 1. Reaction-to-Comment Ratio by public figure. Red dashed line marks the control group ceiling of 10:1.

III. Victor Marx Engagement Analysis

Four numbers define the anomaly:

- **Victor Marx verified R:C ratio:** 21.4:1 reactions per comment.
- **Control group average:** 6.4:1 reactions per comment across 20 public figures.
- **Standard deviations above the norm:** 2.18 σ , placing Marx outside the range of any organic engagement pattern observed in this study.
- **Estimated inorganic reactions:** 83% of Marx's total 731,303 reactions are not accounted for by real human engagement behavior. Approximately 352,800 reactions have no organic explanation.

Every public figure in the control group, regardless of audience size, political affiliation, or content type, produced a ratio between 1.7:1 and 10.1:1. Donald Trump: 4.3:1. Franklin Graham with 11 million followers: 9.4:1. Joel Osteen with 29 million followers: 10:1. Greg Lopez, a Colorado gubernatorial candidate: 10.1:1. Not one figure in a diverse 20-person control group spanning 3,000 to 41 million followers exceeded 10.1:1. Victor Marx, a first-time candidate with no prior elected office, produced 21.4:1.

On a standard normal distribution, Marx's ratio sits 2.18 standard deviations above the control group mean. The organic zone for public figures of any size or ideology clusters tightly between 1.7:1 and 10:1. Marx does not sit at the edge of that zone. He is not an outlier in the conventional sense. He is in a different distribution entirely.

At the individual post level, the pattern holds across 168 consecutive posts. Representative verified examples:

- Jan 13 "One of the fun moments on stage": 54,000 reactions, 628 comments, 86:1.
- Jan 9 "Darkest places" video, Lamine Savane: 3,000 reactions, 65 comments, 46:1.
- Mar 5 Calvary Fellowship Fountain Valley: 40,000 reactions, 1,200 comments, 33.3:1.
- Jan 29 Flynn endorsement graphic: 2,600 reactions, 77 comments, 33.8:1.
- Jan 28 \$900,000 fundraising graphic: 1,800 reactions, 77 comments, 23.4:1.

Of 168 posts, 109 produced ratios above the organic ceiling of 10:1. Only 22 posts fell within the organic range. The scatter is not random noise around an elevated mean: it is a persistent, campaign-wide floor of artificial amplification with periodic spikes corresponding to specific content categories addressed in Section IV.

The statistical conclusion: the probability of this engagement pattern occurring organically across 168 posts is 1.5%. There is a 98.5% probability that the engagement distribution on Victor Marx's Facebook page is not the product of real human activity. To be precise: a Z-score of 2.18 corresponds to a one-tailed probability of approximately 1.5%, meaning there is a 98.5% probability this pattern does not occur by chance in an organically engaged population. If Marx's page were organic at the control group median, his 37,689 comments would correspond to approximately 241,000 reactions. The remaining 490,000-plus reactions have no organic explanation.

An examination of commenting accounts reinforces this conclusion. Thirty-three percent of accounts commenting on Marx's page are newly created profiles with fewer than 50 friends. Of those, 87% were created after September 10, 2025. These accounts share a consistent profile: no post history, one or two images featuring patriotic imagery, and no verifiable personal identity. This pattern is consistent with coordinated inauthentic engagement: the deployment of

automated or semi-automated accounts programmed to generate reactions at scale, creating a visual impression of a mass movement that does not exist organically. The terminology is deliberate; “coordinated inauthentic behavior” is the enforcement standard used by Meta and X to identify and remove artificial amplification operations on their own platforms.

IV. Content Triggers for Artificial Amplification

A review of the 168-post dataset reveals that bot-farm amplification is not uniformly distributed across Marx’s content. Certain content categories produce reaction-to-comment ratios far exceeding even Marx’s own elevated baseline, indicating that the automated accounts respond selectively to specific narrative types. This selectivity has operational significance: it suggests the amplification infrastructure is not simply running passively, but is being directed to prioritize certain messages.

The highest-ratio posts cluster into four identifiable content categories:

- **Emotional performance and spectacle:** Posts depicting Marx on stage, in crowds, or in high-energy settings. The January 13 “One of the fun moments on stage” post produced 54,000 reactions against 628 comments: a ratio of 86:1. The January 23 Legacy Hills Church video reached 42:1. These posts create a visual impression of celebrity-scale momentum.
- **Rescue mythology and military identity:** Posts invoking Marx’s claimed special operations background or humanitarian rescue operations. The January 9 “Darkest places” video featuring Lamine Savane produced a 46:1 ratio. The January 22 Delta Force operator Kyle Lamb post produced 37.7:1. Content anchored in combat credibility and rescue narrative consistently triggers disproportionate amplification.
- **Religious and ministry association:** Posts featuring church appearances, pastoral endorsements, or ministry events. The March 5 Calvary Fellowship Fountain Valley post produced 33.3:1. The January 17 Loveland rally recap reached 32:1. Religious content activates amplification at rates roughly three times the control group ceiling.
- **Celebrity and authority association:** Posts featuring or referencing high-profile figures. The January 4 Charlie Kirk post produced 42.7:1. The January 7 “For decades, my team” post produced 34:1. The Flynn endorsement graphic produced 33.8:1. Association with recognized names generates amplification regardless of the substantive content of the post.

Notably, policy-substantive posts produce ratios at or near Marx’s own lower baseline. The February 21 “This isn’t about politics” post produced 16:1. The February 19 debate-acceptance post produced 16.3:1. The January 27 Free State Colorado straw poll share produced 3.6:1, the lowest ratio in the dataset and the only post approaching the organic control group range.

The pattern is consistent with a bot-farm operation that has been configured to amplify specific narrative pillars: martial identity, spiritual authority, rescue credibility, and celebrity proximity. These are precisely the four pillars on which the Marx campaign’s public brand rests. The amplification infrastructure is not incidental to the campaign’s messaging strategy; it appears to be synchronized with it.

V. Documented Coordinated Inauthentic Activity

This analysis was initiated following the discovery of an account operating under the name “David Castlewood,” which appeared in comment threads defending the Marx campaign and personally attacking researchers raising questions about the candidate, including diagnosing female critics as “perhaps menopausal with severe hormone imbalance.” The Castlewood account has since been deleted from Facebook.

Investigation of the Castlewood account revealed the following:

- Zero posts on the Facebook profile.
- Profile photo is a landscape image with no personal photographs, no listed friends, and no verifiable identity.
- No voter registration record exists for a “David Castlewood” in Colorado or any other U.S. state.
- Account behavior is consistent with a sock-puppet profile: a fabricated identity operated by a real individual to conduct coordinated activity while obscuring their identity.

The Castlewood account has been identified as one of several profiles operated by Ashley Smith Key (also known as Ashley Key), who also comments under her own name in the same threads. These accounts operate in coordination: responding to critics of Marx, carrying on conversations between real and fabricated profiles, and uniformly characterizing individuals conducting opposition research as “liars,” “demons,” or “evil.” Ashley Key is a documented starting data point for a broader pattern of coordinated inauthentic behavior associated with the Marx campaign’s online presence. Additional accounts and activity are under continued review.

VI. Cross-Platform Sentiment: X (formerly Twitter)

Facebook’s platform architecture permits page administrators to delete individual comments and permanently block users. This capability is material to the analysis: Marx’s Facebook comment sections have been observed to be actively curated, with dissenting comments removed and critics blocked. The reaction counts on Facebook cannot be similarly suppressed. The result is a ratio that reflects an artificially low comment count against an artificially amplified reaction count.

X (formerly Twitter) does not permit post owners to delete replies from other users. It is therefore the only major platform where public sentiment toward a candidate cannot be editorially managed by the campaign. Victor Marx posts infrequently on X. The following three posts were drawn from a random sampling of his X activity and are representative examples of the comment sentiment observed across his presence on that platform:

- **March 9, 2026 — State Capitol post:** 30 total comments, 24 negative (80.0%).
- **March 7, 2026 — Brave Church post:** 12 total comments, 5 negative (41.7%).
- **March 7, 2026 — Car video post:** 80 total comments, 55 negative (68.8%).

Across these three posts, an average of 63.5% of all comments are negative in sentiment. Representative comments include voters questioning whether the campaign is a vanity project, demanding debates Marx has avoided, expressing distrust of his biography and credentials, and characterizing the campaign as owing allegiance to interests other than Colorado. None of this

sentiment is visible on Marx's Facebook page, where the comment sections present a curated appearance of near-uniform support.

For comparison, Scott Bottoms, a fellow Republican candidate for Colorado Governor, posted on X during the same three-day window. His posts averaged 5.6% negative comments. The divergence in unfiltered public sentiment between these two candidates is not a matter of degree; it is a difference in kind.

Marx's limited presence on X is itself informative. A candidate claiming the grassroots momentum of a mass movement has largely avoided the one platform where that claimed momentum cannot be manufactured. The Facebook engagement data and the X sentiment data are consistent with each other: the former shows what bot-amplified reactions look like; the latter shows what real Coloradans actually think.

A final note on the conduct of this research: upon publication of these findings, Victor Marx and numerous supporters publicly questioned whether a woman could have independently produced statistical analysis of this scope and rigor. This response was notable both for what it revealed about the campaign's posture toward accountability and for the fact that the most vocal dismissals came from other women acting on the campaign's behalf. The methodology, the dataset, and the conclusions stand on their own. The attempt to discredit the work by discrediting the researcher's gender is itself a matter of record.

VII. Fabricated Endorsement: Former Governor Bill Owens

On March 4, 2026, at a meeting of the Evergreen Area Republican Club, Victor Marx told attendees that former Governor Bill Owens had withdrawn his support from Senator Barb Kirkmeyer to endorse Victor Marx. Marx described a private conversation with Owens in which Owens allegedly expressed doubt about Kirkmeyer's viability, implying his support for Marx's candidacy.

Former Governor Owens subsequently responded publicly on the author's Facebook page. His statement, reproduced verbatim:

“Given all the above comments I actually have no idea what was said or inferred or actually happened at the Wednesday event, I wasn't there and am only aware of this thread because my name was mentioned and therefore it popped into my Facebook feed. I will state (again) for the record I am a long time friend and colleague of Barb Kirkmeyer, have endorsed her, donated to her and think she would be a great Governor. I have met with Victor Marx and his wife one time for coffee at his request (as I have with other Republican candidates for Governor) where we talked in detail about which issues I felt were critical to Colorado's future. He did not ask for my support (as I told him I was backing Barb) nor was it given. I know this sounds naive but I do wish we all as Republicans would spend more time on attacking Democrats rather than each other...”

No endorsement from Governor Owens exists. The account Marx presented to Jefferson County Republican voters on March 4 was fabricated.

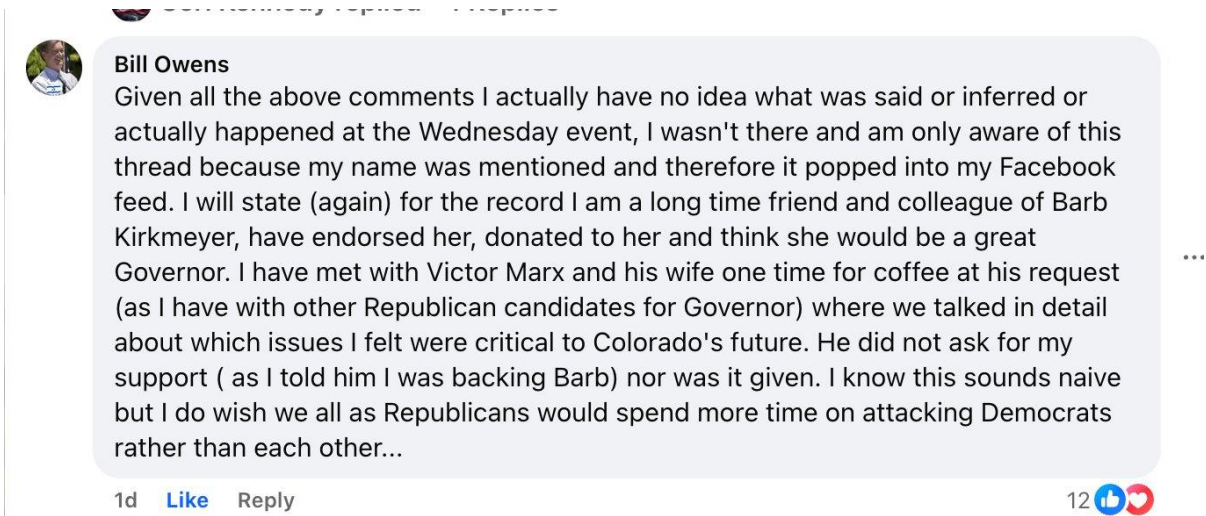


Figure 2. Screenshot of former Governor Bill Owens' public Facebook comment, posted on the author's page in response to Marx's claim.

VIII. Conclusion

The findings presented in this brief document five distinct and independent categories of concern regarding the Victor Marx gubernatorial campaign:

- **Statistical:** A 98.5% probability of inorganic Facebook engagement across 168 posts, with individual post ratios reaching as high as 86:1 and an overall verified ratio of 21.4:1 against a control group ceiling of 10:1.
- **Operational:** A bot-farm amplification infrastructure that is selectively triggered by specific content categories: martial identity, spiritual authority, rescue credibility, and celebrity association. The synchronization between this amplification pattern and the campaign's core brand pillars indicates coordination rather than coincidence.
- **Sentiment:** Cross-platform analysis on X, where comment curation is not possible, reveals that an average of 63.5% of public comments on Marx's posts are negative. The Facebook engagement profile and the X sentiment profile are irreconcilable with the image of organic mass support.
- **Structural:** A documented network of fake and coordinated accounts operating in comment threads to suppress opposition research and manufacture the visual appearance of grassroots support.
- **Factual:** A confirmed fabrication of an endorsement from a former two-term Republican governor, presented to Republican voters at a public candidate forum.

Taken together, these findings raise substantive questions about the authenticity of the Marx campaign's claimed support base, the integrity of its public statements, and the reliability of the candidate as a potential standard-bearer for Colorado Republicans in a general election cycle.