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**Iowa Cultural Historian Seeks Senate Seat:
*Michael Luick-Thrams to Run as Independent for the US Senate***

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA — Renowned Iowa cultural historian Michael Luick-Thrams has announced his candidacy for the US Senate from Iowa, a seat currently held by Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

Luick-Thrams grew up between Mason City and Clear Lake on a Century Farm operated by his family, which has been in Iowa since the 1830s and in North America since the 1630s. He directs two non-profit cultural-history organizations—one since 2001 in the United States, the other since 2011 in Germany.

The author or editor of 15 books about Midwest cultural history, he earned degrees in history from Iowa State University (1985), Vermont's Goddard College (master's, 1991) and Berlin's Humboldt Universität (Ph.D., 1997). He has organized innumerable exhibits, programs, exchanges and other cultural projects.

As a scholar of human behavior and of nations over time, Luick-Thrams will bring a unique yet timely perspective to this year's complex and conflicted political process. "In Iowa, we need a deep, swift shift from outdated ways of dealing with our problems to a change of perspective that says 'yes' or at least 'maybe' but not always 'no.' In the US, we need a social recalibration, a rethinking of the practices and policies of the past 35 or so years that have led us to the crisis in which we currently find ourselves."

"I'm really not running 'against' Charles Grassley, because he has become irrelevant. He is blocking movement forward; he is keeping Iowa locked in 1980s' ideology. My candidacy is about Iowans as a community of inter-dependent people sharing a rich and beautiful land, seeking a decent life. If the majority of the Iowa electorate were to re-elect him—which my gut and my deepest hope says can no longer happen—it says we are content with a moribund status quo, and I don't believe we are, based on what I'm hearing. I'm 53 yet one man has occupied half of Iowa's senatorial team in Washington my entire adult life—and our current governor was in office when I was an undergrad student in Ames."

"As terrifying as the process might seem at times, what's really happening is that the old status quo is breaking up and dissolving. The Republican Party is on its last gasps; if we're lucky, the world's oldest surviving political party, the Democratic, will go down with it. Both parties are calcified syndicates, whose sole purpose is to divide, then grasp onto power at whatever cost to Iowa and to the nation. This election provides Iowans an opportunity to lead the way into a new direction—to real, lasting change.

"The door is ajar—but will we hostages bolt? That is the central question of this political season and especially of this senatorial race. What will Iowa's profile on the national stage be: vital, relevant and open, or irrelevant and obstructionist? Our current political landscape makes us relevant only every four years: The only way to change that situation is to be bold, to be creative and to cast a new political landscape. This is why Charles Grassley won't still be sitting in Washington ten months from now."

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