

# The Trentonian

## A Progressive Perspective: 2020 is not the election to sit out if you don't love the nominee

Irwin Stoolmacher

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In spite of Bernie Sanders success in Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada the media is replete with comments from those concerned about his radical democratic socialist ideas and his “electability.” Many establishment Democrats have made it clear that they feel the only way to beat President Trump is for moderates to get behind single centrist candidate to prevent Bernie from garnering the nomination.

Rumor has it that President Obama feels that the party is being pushed “too far left” and there is evidence that certain Wall Street executives with considerable influence over the Party have indicated that would sit out the 2020 election, or even back Trump, if Bernie Sanders is the nominee.

This view is reflected in a February 17th Time Magazine article entitled “Adrift After Iowa,” which stated that “the prospect that Sanders could triumph in Milwaukee freaks out the party’s pooh-bahs, who fear his far left-positions will alienate [moderate] swing voters.” James Carville, top advisor to President Clinton, mirrored these views when he indicated after Sander strong showing in Iowa that if he were the party choice it would be the “end of days” for the Democratic Party because of Sanders lack of appeal “to enough of the electorate, including African-Americans.”

Carville is correct that in order to beat President Trump, Democrats will need to get an Obama-level turnout among minorities, but it is equally important that the party bring the left-most flank of the party into the fold.

There are many centrists who feel that Sanders embracement of Democratic Socialist ideals will make it impossible for him to build the kind of coalition needed to beat Donald Trump. These folks argue that Republicans are praying to run against a socialist at time when the stock market is hitting record highs and improving the lot of those with 401(k)s. This argument does not take into account that around 45 percent of America’s are not in the stock market and 4 in 10 Americans don’t even have \$400 available to deal with a financial emergency.

Sanders acknowledges that the term socialism makes some Democrats nervous, especially older voters who remember its Cold War-era images of government-controlled economies, and that there is no question that President Trump will use “socialism” as a slur. He points out, however, that the issues of economic justice and reducing income inequality are political winners -- especially when President Trump is a pushing a corporate socialistic agenda by providing enormous tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

Sanders supporters point-out that a growing majority of Democrats have a favorable view of socialism. In fact, for the first time, Democrats have a more positive image of socialism than they do of capitalism. According to the Cato Institute 2019 Welfare, Work and Wealth and National Survey, 64% of Democrats have a positive image of socialism up from 53% in 2012. Only 45% of Democrats have a positive view of capitalism, down from 55% in 2012.

Sanders supporters also point-out that in recent nationwide polls that ask voters who they would vote for in a one-on-one match with President Trump, Bernie Sanders does extremely well. He beats the President by between eight to nine points depending on the poll.

All of this is not to suggest that I believe that Bernie Sanders is a shoe-in to beat Donald Trump. No. In fact, I believe he would be a definite underdog if he wins the nomination primarily because of his position on Medicare for All.

During the most recent debate in New Hampshire, Bernie reiterated his support for joining other developed countries, particularly in Scandinavia, in providing the public with health care and education that is free at the point of delivery, guaranteed paid leave and other robust social welfare programs. He said, "The way you bring people together is to make it clear that we're not going to give tax breaks to billionaires and large corporations," Sanders said. "They're going to start paying their fair share of taxes. That's what the American people want. And I'll tell you something else. The way you bring people together is by ending the international disgrace of this country being the only major nation on Earth not to guarantee health care to all people as a human right." I think that pitch can resonate with the American people if it allows those who are satisfied with their current health care coverage to keep it.

Back on February 12, 2019, I wrote in this column why Mike Bloomberg was my choice at that juncture. I like Mike Bloomberg, but I don't like the approach he has taken in his quest for the presidency. Because he is a multi-billionaire, instead of trudging through Iowa and New Hampshire like all of the other candidates, he has been a gate crasher. I'm okay with people using their own money to run for public office, but not if it circumvents the electoral process.

I believe that Donald Trump has been the most unethical and bigoted President in our nation's history and would be far worse in a second term. Thus, my goal is defeating him. Bernie Sanders was not my first, second or third choice, but if he is the nominee I will do everything in my power to help him win. This is not an election for Democrats to sit out because they don't love the nominee.