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Beto O'Rourke's campaign for climate socialism is deeply unserious

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Reading former Democratic Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke's newly released climate plan on Monday, I was struck by that famous Sherlock Holmes line: "When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

The truth, I thus surmise, is that O'Rourke is not a terribly serious politician. Because as with most of his platform (more on that in a moment), O'Rourke's climate change plan takes a serious problem and answers with absurdity.

For a start, it is distinctly socialist, which is to say it is broadly nonsensical. Take the plan's \$5 trillion price tag. That might not seem like a lot for a nation already \$22 trillion in debt. But seeing as how O'Rourke also wants government-provided healthcare, the \$5 trillion is just one part of a plan to make government very big again, and perhaps also to invite a debt-driven economic crisis.

But even O'Rourke's own excuses of how he'll pay for all this don't add up. The whippersnapper says \$1.5 trillion of the spending in his climate plan will be paid for by "structural changes to the tax code that ensure corporations and the wealthiest among us pay their fair share."

Four problems follow. First, O'Rourke needs those tax revenues for his other spending programs. Second, math shows that wealthy Americans already pay more than their fair share. Taxing them at a level necessary to generate \$1.5 trillion additional revenue would destroy their investment activity and drive many overseas, destroying jobs at home.

Third, today's U.S. economy suggests that taxing corporations through the roof just isn't that clever. Corporations, after all, don't pay taxes — their customers and employees pay them.

There are few issues that Presidents Barack Obama and Trump agreed on, but the need to lower the corporate tax rate is one of them; they differed on just how low to go. And the 2017 GOP corporate tax cuts have produced a strong economy with record-low minority employment rates. To hear the Democrats talk, you would think Democrats would care more about this, but no, they just want to replicate France's broken economy.

But the improbable idiocy of this plan doesn't end there. The rest of O'Rourke's plan reads like a Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., wish list, which is to say, it takes the worst of government programs and doubles down on them.

O'Rourke also calls for huge hikes in federal subsidized farm insurance, which the Cato Institute notes is very wasteful.

He pledges that new federal energy permits must "fully account for climate costs and community impacts." But considering that the current permitting process is already insane, O'Rourke risks destroying the energy industry here and perhaps even causing blackouts. This is profoundly immoral: Dynamism in America's energy industry is reducing energy bills, promoting national security, and providing hundreds of thousands of well-paid private sector jobs. Green jobs, in contrast, are a boondoggle that can exist only with significant help from the taxpayer.

Moving on, O'Rourke wants to pick new Solyndra-style losers with his promise to "leverage \$500 billion in annual government procurement to decarbonize across all sectors."

And he lies when he claims he would "increase consumer savings through new, modernized, and ambitious appliance- and building-efficiency standards." The reality of "ambitious" new "efficiency standards" is that they come with trade-offs. They impose stealth taxes on family budgets and business operations.

Still, what really stands out from this plan is how well it sits with O'Rourke's broader platform. That platform makes clear that O'Rourke is no longer a candidate of conservative Texas. Instead, he is now a proud member of the Democratic Party's 2020 let's-chase-Bernie's-coattails train. But this isn't funny for Democrats or for the nation. Enter, for example, O'Rourke's seven-line national security platform. It will "ensure our security not through walls and militarization." Okay, that's great and all, but wow, it doesn't even once mention China, Russia, or international terrorism.

At least O'Rourke is clear on his newfound socialist ideas. Just ponder this gem: "The unprecedented concentration of wealth, power and privilege in the United States must be broken apart. Opportunity must be fully shared with all."

Karl Marx would be proud. And President Trump should be happy.