

Democrats Ridicule Bernie Sanders Over Fox News Town Hall Plans, Conservatives And Moderates Offer Rare Praise

Benjamin Fearnow

April 3, 2019

Vermont Independent Senator Bernie Sanders angered many establishment Democrats and drew rare praise from conservatives over his plans to appear at a Fox News 2020 presidential campaign town hall later this month.

Sanders was widely ridiculed by Democrats and supporters of 2020 rivals including Beto O'Rourke, Kamala Harris and even former Vice President Joe Biden's unannounced campaign backers who used the announcement as evidence the Independent senator is not "loyal" to the Democratic Party. While voices such as The Intercept's Glenn Greenwald applauded Sanders for his open-minded outreach, mainline Democrats accused Sanders of courting conservative voters, promoting the cable news network's "hateful" Trump rhetoric and turning his back on the DNC.

The Democratic National Committee announced last month it would exclude Fox News from hosting any debates in the 2020 election cycle.

The infighting among 2020 Democratic candidates dredged up arguments over former DNC interim chairman Donna Brazile's collusion with Hillary Clinton's campaign to give her questions prior to March 2016 CNN town halls. Many supporters of Sanders' decision to appear on Fox News on April 15 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania noted both Clinton and former President Barack Obama also appeared on Fox News several times in past year.

Fox News host Howard Kurtz challenged other 2020 Democratic candidates and pondered if "other Dems will realize ignoring a large audience makes no sense?"

Daily Wire Editor-at-Large Josh Hammer congratulated Sanders on his decision to appear, tweeting, "Honestly, good for Bernie for doing this on Fox News." Conservative Cato Institute member Ilya Shapiro concurred, replying, "Acting like a front-runner. Because he is."

Greenwald tweeted several defenses of Sanders' Fox News plans, particularly lauding his campaign's attempt to "maximize, rather than minimize, the number of Americans who hear him...only American media liberals think this is an odd thing for someone to want to do."

Vermont Independent Senator Bernie Sanders angered many establishment Democrats and drew rare praise from conservatives over his plans to appear at a Fox News 2020 presidential campaign town hall later this month.

"Your reminder that leading Democratic politicians went on Bill O'Reilly's Fox show for years long after it was known that he was a harasser of women and as liberals routinely castigated

O'Reilly as a racist demagogue. Why? Because they wanted to maximize who heard their views," Greenwald tweeted, showing a picture from one of Obama's appearances with the ousted Fox News host.

Several media analysts noted South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg appeared on Chris Wallace's show last month, potentially indicating a break from the DNC's exclusion of the network.

But Sanders was also widely ridiculed by Democrats who view his very appearance on Fox News as an affront to the party and an embrace of hateful, Trump-led rhetoric.

DC Sentinel co-founder Sam Sacks tweeted, "I don't think Bernie should go on Fox News. It's not that I'm concerned he'll add legitimacy to the network, it's that the left should have principles when it comes to engaging with racist, fascist orgs. I mean, we were ready to drag candidates for going to AIPAC, right?"

"WTF is Bernie doing?" asked Ian Millhiser, columnist at left-wing outlet ThinkProgress. "I can't believe Fox would cater to an angry old white man," replied one of his followers.

National Education Association media strategist and MSNBC guest Richard Allen Smith remarked, "I'm sure there are TONS of people who keep Fox on all the time who would be willing to vote for Bernie." Many of Sanders critics and those angered by the decision made light of his decision to appear on the town hall on Tax Day, April 15, right-leaning website Twitchy blared the headline, "Elderly socialist will participate in Fox News town hall on April 15 and explain why you just didn't send enough money to the government."

The one-hour town hall event is set to broadcast April 15 from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and focus on the economy and jobs, Fox News announced Wednesday. Fox News co-hosts Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum are set to host the event.

Despite being locked out by the DNC, Fox News is hosting a town hall with potential independent candidate Howard Schultz in Kansas City Thursday.

Sanders participated in the cable news network's lone Democratic town hall during the 2016 presidential election cycle. The Vermont senator last appeared on the network during an interview on Special Report with Bret Baier in December 2018.

Democratic infighting was recently sparked over allegations from Biden backers that Sanders and his supporters are floating claims of inappropriate touching against the former vice president. The Sanders campaign has outright denied any connection.

Sanders announced this week his campaign has raised \$18.2 million in 41 days of fundraising, placing him as a clear current frontrunner among the 2020 presidential hopefuls.