

Bernie Sanders Puts Forward a Program That Could Split the Democratic Party



HELP ENLIGHTEN YOUR FELLOWS. BE SURE TO PASS THIS ON. SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON IT.



[dropcap]B[/dropcap>ernie Sanders has opened his 2020 campaign with a 10-point program that could bust the Democratic Party wide open – which would be best thing Bernie could do for the world.

“Every step closer Sanders gets to the nomination brings the Democratic Party nearer to the split that is necessary.”

Bernie Sanders last week unveiled a 10-point legislative agenda that he believes will galvanize the Democratic base in much the way that Newt Gingrich's 1994 "Contract With America" propelled the GOP to its biggest electoral sweep [since 1946](#) . The Vermont senator's wish list is genuinely [impressive in sweep](#) , a full-blown progressive domestic platform for his expected second run for the presidency in 2020. But the immediate obstacle to Sanders' proposals for Medicare-For-All, tuition-free public higher education, expanded Social Security, a \$15 an hour minimum wage, "bold action" on climate change, fixing the criminal justice system, comprehensive immigration reform, progressive tax reform, a \$1 trillion infrastructure overhaul and cheaper prescription drugs, is not Donald Trump's GOP troglodytes -- it's Nancy Pelosi and her corporate Democrats, who answer to a much higher power: big capital.

"The immediate obstacle to Sanders' proposals is not Donald Trump's GOP troglodytes -- it's Nancy Pelosi and her corporate Democrats."



The Democrats leadership may talk about helping the people but their true allegiance is to Wall Street. That kind of duplicity

defines them.

Writing in the [Washington Post](#), Sanders said it's "not good enough for Democrats to just be the anti-Trump party." If Democrats "want to keep and expand their majority in the House, take back the Senate and win the White House, Democrats must show the American people that they will aggressively stand up and fight for the working families of this country – black, white, Latino, Asian American or Native American, men and women, gay or straight."

True enough. Democrats win when their base turns out, but they must have something to turn out *for*. Sanders' signature legislation, Medicare-for-All, is a blockbuster issue backed by [85 percent of Democrats and half of Republicans](#) -- a genuine consensus bread and butter "cause" that is ultimately unbeatable in the court of public opinion. It would be unbeatable in Congress, too, if even one of the duopoly parties were solidly behind it. But the corporate Democrats know that their job is to render harmless those measures that threaten the Lords of Capital, their masters. Nancy "[We're Capitalist](#)" Pelosi's real job is bag woman for corporate contributors.

The health insurance, pharmaceutical and corporate hospital industries -- the people that wrote Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act with the aim of forestalling single payer health care for a generation – believe that stopping a true Medicare-for-All bill is an existential issue. They would lose many *trillions* in ill-gotten profits, and many companies would go bankrupt if the United States joined the rest of the developed world (and much of the formerly Third World) in providing comprehensive single payer health care, combined with drug price controls. These oligarchs will abandon and decisively turn against the half of the duopoly that slips from their grasp on this issue.

"Medicare-for-All, is a blockbuster 'cause' that is ultimately

unbeatable in the court of public opinion."

For a thoroughly corporate party like the Democrats, single payer is Armageddon. That's why you can be sure that Sen. Cory Booker, a whore for the pharmaceutical industry, and many of his colleague's have only [endorsed Medicare-for-All](#) in order to eviscerate the legislation from the inside. However, with Republicans in firm control of the Senate and no chance of single-payer getting out of committee, Booker and Co. have plenty of time to pretend they're on the right side. Pelosi has a much harder task containing and weakening the bill in the House. For her, passage of single payer means defeat for the party as a corporate class organ, financed primarily by the One Percent. Her job is to make sure that the ruling class does not split with its creature, the Democrats.

Keen to tamp down the partisan fervor of rank and file Democrats, lest it be channeled in dangerous directions, soon-to-be Speaker Pelosi spoke of her hope to collaborate with the Trump administration. Pelosi's biggest problem is pretending that the 800 pound single payer gorilla isn't squatting on the House floor, itching to savage her party's relationship with the health care and insurance sector of the ruling class.

"For Pelosi, passage of single payer means defeat for the party as a corporate class organ, financed primarily by the One Percent."

And now here comes old man Sanders, trying to burden the party with a whole raft of progressive causes -- Medicare-for-All plus nine other points -- all of which would shift the party away from the bipartisan corporate consensus on permanent austerity.

Sanders is to be applauded, even though his grand domestic plan is totally incompatible with his abject failure to confront the military budget, the latest \$716 billion version of which was supported by 60 percent of Democratic lawmakers. The Republicans have already made known that they will return

to Congress next year in a “cut the deficit” mood -- after adding \$1 trillion to the debt with their tax cuts to the rich, including \$80 billion more than requested for the Pentagon. Sanders remains the imperialist pig (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) who can't break with empire -- like most white folks in the United States, whose sense of identity seems to include the exceptional right to unimpeded global rampage. Bernie can't bring himself to confront the military budget in any substantial way.

Nancy Pelosi insists that she'll only go along with legislation that is “pay-as-you-go,” that doesn't raise the debt -- a still-living legacy of President Obama's “grand bargain” with the GOP. Full implementation of Sanders' entire 10-point plan, including several trillion dollar items, is impossible under the bipartisan austerity scheme, and more impossible still without big cuts in the military budget, unless Congress drops all pretense of debt limitation.

“Bernie can't bring himself to confront the military budget in any substantial way.”

That's why I have nothing but the best of wishes for Sanders' 10 point plan. If Sanders can get the presidential momentum going again, he can force an extended national conversation on Medicare-For-All, tuition-free public higher education, expanded Social Security, a radical roll-back in mass incarceration (an expensive proposition if combined with “investments in jobs and education for our young people”) and the rest of his domestic agenda. With these core issues shaping his message, every step closer he gets to the nomination brings the Democratic Party nearer to the split that is necessary if a mass social democratic party is to come into being in the United States.

Not being a social democrat, I won't be a part of that party, but the welfare of the nation and the world requires that the two corporate parties lose their monopoly on electoral

politics in the belly of the superpower beast. And, despite the deep imperial streak in the American psyche -- including lots of Black people -- even a Bernie-type social democratic party would find it necessary to oppose gargantuan U.S. military budgets, just as the Green Party does, today.

So, kudos to Bernie Sanders. Hopefully, his progressive 10-point plan will blow the Democratic Party to pieces, over the next two years, so that a mass politics that is not owned by white corporate men can finally exist in the U.S. Sanders doesn't have to win the White House to bring about this historic "creative destruction." He just has to wreck the Party. If the Party sabotages him in the primaries, as in 2016, then progressives will get another chance to do the right thing, and say goodbye to the Democrats. Or, if Sanders wins, hopefully the corporatists will follow the money and run away to the GOP, or form their own Third Way party, and leave the Democratic carcass to the poor folks. Any split will do the trick, as long as the result is a non-corporate mass party.

About the Author



Leading public intellectual Glen Ford is a founding editor of Black Agenda Report (BAR), where he serves as *executive editor*. He can be *contacted* at Glen.Ford@BlackAgendaReport.com



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

PLEASE COMMENT AND DEBATE DIRECTLY ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

CLICK HERE

ALL CAPTIONS AND PULL-QUOTES BY THE EDITORS, NOT THE AUTHORS.

News

^0America's Goal...

Make every homeless tranny

gender comfortable!

Parting shot—a word from the editors

The Best Definition of Donald Trump We Have Found



In his zeal to prove to his antagonists in the War Party that he is as bloodthirsty as their champion, Hillary Clinton, and more manly than Barack Obama, Trump seems to have gone “play-crazy” – acting like an unpredictable maniac in order to terrorize the Russians into forcing some kind of dramatic concessions from their Syrian allies, or risk *Armageddon*. However, the “play-crazy” gambit can only work when the leader is, in real life, a disciplined and intelligent actor, who knows precisely what actual boundaries must not be crossed. That ain’t Donald Trump – a pitifully shallow and ill-disciplined man, emotionally handicapped by obscene privilege and cognitively crippled by white American chauvinism. By pushing Trump into a corner and demanding that he display his most bellicose self, or be ceaselessly mocked as a “puppet” and minion of Russia, a lesser power, the War Party and its media and clandestine services have created a perfect storm of mayhem that may consume us all.— **Glen Ford, Editor in Chief, Black Agenda Report**