

What a Sanders Nomination Would Mean for Arkansas Democrats



Third Way

Arkansas will play a decisive role in choosing who the Democrats nominate to take on Donald Trump. And with the right person at the top of the ticket, Arkansas Democrats could prevail in their quest to make ground in its state legislature. That candidate is not Bernie Sanders, whose self-described “democratic socialist” ideas could repel the voters that Democrats need to win in these key down-ballot state legislative races. Sanders has not only promoted, but actually introduced legislation that would ban certain industries and eliminate thousands of Arkansans’ jobs. There’s a reason why Donald Trump calls Sanders his “ideal Democratic opponent.”

Sanders’ Socialism Will Lose to Trump

Sanders self-identifies as a democratic socialist. He has said on camera, “Of course, I’m a socialist.”

- Socialism is viewed unfavorably by 58% of Americans.
- 53% of voters said they would not vote for a socialist candidate for President, which was the only characteristic that a majority of Americans said they would oppose in a candidate for President.
- His far-left plans would double the size of the government. Last month, he refused to say how he'd raise taxes to pay for it, and his recent plans fall trillions and trillions of dollars short.

Sanders' Healthcare Plan is Bad for Arkansas and Will Lose to Trump

Sanders introduced legislation that would ban all private healthcare insurance.

- 58% of Americans would oppose a national Medicare for All plan if it eliminated private health insurance companies.
- 4,194 Arkansans were employed in health insurance jobs in 2018.

Sixty percent of Americans would oppose a national Medicare for All plan if it required most Americans to pay more in taxes.

- Sanders' plan would require *at least* a 7.5% increase in payroll taxes.
- Sanders' announced tax increases fall \$13.4 trillion short of paying for his health care plan.

Sanders' Energy Plan is Bad for Arkansas and Will Lose to Trump

Sanders introduced legislation to ban all fracking.

Sanders supports shutting down all natural gas power plants.

- Arkansas is the 17th -largest energy producing state in the country.
- In 2018, 675 Arkansans were employed in the 'oil and gas extraction' industry directly, with many more employed in jobs supported by the industry.

Arkansas' Open Primary Means Republicans Can Vote for Sanders on Super Tuesday

State Republican officials in South Carolina and elsewhere have urged their voters to vote in Democrats' primaries in an effort to throw the nomination to Bernie Sanders.

Because Arkansas has open presidential primaries, Republican voters here can vote for Sanders in the Democratic primary here and sabotage the vote.

Sanders and Down-Ballot Races

Groups aligned with Bernie Sanders, like Our Revolution and Justice Democrats, ran candidates on his playbook in the midterms, and they failed to flip a single U.S. House district from Republican to Democratic in 2018. This is true even in a cycle in which Democrats flipped 43 such seats overall (net 41 cycle, net 40 election night).

- A 2019 University of Virginia study found that supporting Sanders' signature Medicare for All policy cost candidates 5-points of support in the 2018 elections.

In 2020, Arkansas Democrats should run the playbook that helped the party gain seats nationwide in 2018: focusing on kitchen table issues that matter to voters, not revolution. Having Sanders at the top of the ticket will make it harder to appeal to the coalition that delivered a blue wave in the midterms.

Conclusion

Sanders' extremist policies could cost Arkansas Democrats dearly in their efforts to flip state legislative seats in 2020. This is why not a single Arkansas state legislator has endorsed Sanders. If Democrats want to win down-ballot in Arkansas, and across the country, and build on the successes they saw in the 2018 election, they must think wisely about who is representing them at the top of the ticket.