

Why is Trump trying to make Bernie Sanders the Dem nominee?



Third Way

As you are deciding whom you will support in the Nevada caucuses next week, consider this: in 2016, no one really examined Senator Sanders. His opponents assumed he'd lose, and he did.

The first states to vote in 2020 showed that when voters learn about Sanders, like how unpopular his big-spending, high tax ideas would be in a general election, support craters. Sanders lost half of his 2016 vote totals in Iowa and New Hampshire. Voters knew that someone who has said on camera, "Of course I'm a socialist" and has ideas far outside the mainstream cannot beat Donald Trump.

That's why the Trump team calls Sanders their "ideal Democratic opponent." They'd love to run against a self-described socialist, because general election voters view it unfavorably by 34 points.

Republicans are trying to make that happen. They interfered in Iowa to hurt one of Sanders' rivals. And in South Carolina, GOP leaders are urging Republicans to crash the Democratic Primary. They want them to vote for Bernie Sanders, "the most socialistic, liberal candidate running," to make it easy for Trump to win the general election. "I think we can easily affect the [South Carolina] outcome," Nate Leupp, a Republican County Chair, told a newspaper there.

Sanders now tries to soften the "Socialism" label with the word "Democratic," but that won't work. The Trump team doesn't even have to lie about it. In addition to his long-time self-description, they've got:

- **Sanders' past choices:** During the Reagan era, instead of fighting to elect Democrats, he fought to elect candidates from the Socialist Workers Party. The stated goal of the Socialist Workers Party was "the abolition of capitalism through the establishment of a Workers and Farmers Republic." Sanders was actually an elector for a Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, who called for the abolition of the US military and once said that American soldiers should "take up their guns and shoot their officers."
- **Sanders' spending plans:** His major proposals cost \$60 trillion and would double the size of the government (while his tax plans fall \$27 trillion short of paying for it). There's a reason that when pressed on the cost of his plans, Sanders simply refuses to answer.
- **Sanders' views on taxes:** On CNN last year, Sanders told Anderson Cooper that Americans would be "delighted to pay more in taxes" to fund his huge new government programs.
- **Sanders' views on health care:** His Medicare for All plan raises trillions in taxes, eliminates high quality union health care plans, is deeply unpopular, and Donald Trump already is using it as Exhibit A in tying Democrats to socialism.

Trump may be clueless, but his campaign team is pretty smart. They believe if Bernie Sanders is the nominee, Trump wins a second term. They believe this so strongly that they are doing everything in their power to help Sanders and hurt any electable Democrat who could possibly get the nod.

Let's not give Trump his wish.