



From Resistance to Revolution

Summary

The majority of Americans are progressive and want a major new political party. Despite Bernie Sanders' monumental efforts to reform the Democratic Party, it remains firmly in neoliberal control. The Democratic Party has made it clear that it will not be the vehicle for the political revolution. Now the choice is ours: do we submit to the establishment parties and allow the spiral into oligarchy to continue? Or do we form a party for the progressive majority?

Affiliation with the major parties has been declining for a decade and there are now far more independents than Democrats or Republicans. Trump's attacks on working people and Bernie's immense efforts to bring people into the Democratic Party should be expanding the party. But Gallup figures reveal an alarming trend: since the general election, affiliation with the Democratic Party is declining while the Republican Party is holding steady, even growing slightly.

Despite the collective efforts to expand the Democratic party, more and more people are leaving and becoming independents. The American people are leading the way to an independent alternative. Instead of struggling against the progressive current in an effort to save an establishment party, we should swim with the progressive current and create the new party that most Americans want.

As Americans grow more progressive, they realize that the Democratic Party doesn't represent them and are not inspired to vote. Only a new party built on the progressive views of the majority can inspire the turnout necessary to defeat Trump and his agenda.

Third parties have historically led progressive change throughout U.S. history. Bernie Sanders has an overwhelmingly high favorability with Democrats and independents. If he forms a new party that attracts just half of Democrats and half of independents, it will be the largest party in America by far.

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The Case for a People's Party

Americans are Progressive and Want a New Party

- ❖ Issue polls show that the majority of Americans are progressive. They want single-payer health care, money out of politics, free public college, and much [more](#).
- ❖ The majority of Americans want a major [new party](#): 57% to 37%. In the 2016 general election, 55% of Americans wanted a major [third party](#) option on the ballot.
- ❖ Affiliation with the Democratic and Republican parties has been declining for a decade and is near [historic lows](#). Democrats account for 28% of the country, Republicans for 29%, and independents for 40%. Gallup projects that 50% of Americans will be independents by 2020.
- ❖ [Gallup](#) figures reveal an alarming trend: since the 2016 general election, affiliation with the Democratic Party is declining while the Republican Party is holding steady, even growing slightly. The Democratic Party is losing supporters at the time when it should be growing most. Despite Trump's attacks on working people and Bernie's monumental efforts to bring people into the Democratic Party, more and more Democrats are becoming [independents](#).
- ❖ The American people are leading the way to an independent alternative. Instead of struggling against the progressive current in an effort to save an establishment party, we should swim with the progressive current and create the new party that the majority of Americans want.
- ❖ The political revolution has already been won in the [hearts and minds](#) of the next generation. Millennials almost universally reject the status quo and the parties that enforce it. 91% of people under 29 wanted a major third party option on the ballot in 2016. People under 29 have a much more favorable view of [socialism](#) than capitalism.
- ❖ The electorate is rapidly becoming even more progressive. As of 2016, [Millennials](#) are the largest age-group voting bloc. Four years of highly-progressive Millennials will replace four years of Silent Generation conservatives in the electorate by 2020.

The Democratic Party Remains Firmly in Neoliberal Control

- ❖ Chuck Schumer is Senate Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi is House Minority Leader, and Tom Perez is DNC chair. Perez has no intention of reforming the party. He was recruited by [donors](#) to defeat the DNC chair candidates who did seek reform.
- ❖ In February, the DNC voted to accept corporate money and allow corporate [lobbyists](#) to sit on the party's national committee. In March, the DNC confirmed that it would not support progressive [candidates](#) in primaries by withholding support to special election candidates. In April, the DNC argued in open court that it has no obligation to be [impartial](#) in its primaries and can pick candidates in "cigar-filled back rooms" if it wants to.
- ❖ Not only has the party refused to take responsibility for rigging the primaries in 2016, it asserts the right to [rig](#) the primaries again in 2018 and 2020.
- ❖ Following Trump's victory, the Democratic Party is courting its own [billionaires](#) for elected office and party leadership positions. A Goldman Sachs lobbyist sits on the DNC. A billionaire was recently made state party chair in Florida. A billionaire coal baron became governor in West Virginia and the Democratic Party is encouraging billionaires in three more states to run for governor. Under the leadership of the Democrats, the U.S. is becoming a kleptocracy.
- ❖ At every level, the Democratic Party is fueled by corporate and billionaire [money](#). This applies to the DNC, DCCC, DSCC, DLCC, DGA, ASDC and other parts of the party organization. It pertains to the campaigns, PACs and super PACs of governors, mayors, state legislators, members of Congress, senators and presidents. And it can be seen in the lobbyist gifts that Democrats receive in office and Wall Street jobs they get when they retire. The party's politicians and staff have an establishment worldview and work in an establishment culture. Corporate money is not a distinct, corrupted organ of the party that can be surgically removed from an otherwise healthy body. *Corporate money is the party.*
- ❖ During the Bernie campaign, progressives understood that taking money from the oligarchs compromises one's ability to represent working people. We criticized Hillary Clinton for the millions she took from Goldman Sachs and rich donors. Now the Democratic Party is trying to erase that understanding, lower the standards of

the progressive movement, and convince us that a corporate-funded party can represent working people.

- ❖ [Cornel West](#), Noam Chomsky, Michelle Alexander, Naomi Klein, Chris Hedges and many other scholars are telling us that the Democratic Party is too entrenched and that we need an independent alternative to succeed.
- ❖ Americans have a [less favorable](#) view of the Democratic Party than they have of Trump and the Republican Party. Two-thirds of Americans say that the Democratic Party is out of touch with the concerns of most people. More Americans believe that Trump and the Republican Party are *in touch* with their [concerns](#).
- ❖ In a poll of swing voters who supported Obama and then supported Trump, twice as many people said that the Democratic Party favors the [wealthy](#) versus the Republican Party. The Democratic Party's brand is destroyed. Working people have no confidence in it.
- ❖ Just like it did in 2016, the Democratic Party is defining itself in opposition to Trump without offering an alternative populist platform. And just like they did in 2016, Americans are showing that they prefer Trump to the Democratic Party establishment.
- ❖ When Bernie challenged both establishment parties during the primaries, he drew tens of thousands of people everywhere he traveled. When he campaigned for Hillary Clinton in the general, he drew a few hundred. Not even Bernie could convince Americans to support a Democratic Party that remains corporate. It didn't work in 2016 and it isn't working now.
- ❖ A Democratic consultant recently summed up the party's strategy with Bernie by saying: "We'll slap him over our problems but fundamentally [change nothing](#)."

Third Parties have Led Progressive Change Throughout U.S. History

- ❖ Third parties have succeeded by either forcing the establishment parties to adopt their platform or by **replacing** them outright. The current Democratic Party is free to dismiss progressives because we lack the leverage that a major third party has given our movements in the past.
- ❖ In the **mid-1800s**, the Liberty Party, Free Soil Party and newly formed Republican Party pioneered an abolitionist agenda. Later, the Equal Rights Party and Eugene Debs' Socialist Party championed the fight for women's suffrage. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Socialist Party, the People's Party, Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party, and Bob LaFollette's Progressive Party led the adoption of Social Security, unemployment insurance, food and drug regulations, the 8-hour work day, child labor laws, progressive income taxes, and the direct election of U.S. senators. In the 1930s, Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party pushed Franklin Roosevelt into the New Deal.
- ❖ Lincoln's Republicans replaced the Whig Party in four years. It also elected Lincoln president and took both houses of Congress in six years. The formation of the Republican Party offers a successful **model** for replacing a major party in America: progressive politicians build a large following inside an establishment party by representing a neglected majority. After exposing the party's inability to reform, they take the party's base and start a new party that replaces the old one.
- ❖ Americans were much more sharply divided over slavery than they are over present-day inequality and money in politics. Yet the Republicans still replaced the Whigs in four years. Sanders can be the Lincoln of our times.
- ❖ Today, the Internet enables a **speed** and efficiency of organizing that the progressive movements of the past could only dream of. Digital organizing, fundraising and independent media drove the Bernie campaign.

Turning Protests into Power

- ❖ The Occupy Wall Street movement raised awareness but failed to institutionalize itself into a permanent electoral force and means to political power. Unless the current resurgence of progressive marches and energy becomes permanent institutional capacity in a new party, the resistance may recede, giving Trump greater license in the future. Progressive energy is not being institutionalized inside the Democratic Party.
- ❖ Progressives are no longer content to submit to the Democrats. But the movement is fragmenting on the independent left in the absence of decisive leadership. This fragmentation will continue until we move decisively into the new party strategy that the majority of Americans want. Bernie united the movement during the campaign and can do so again in a people's party. No one can unite the country under a Democratic Party that has not learned its lesson.
- ❖ If we stay inside the confines of the Democratic Party, define ourselves in opposition to Trump, and fail to build our own institutional capacity, the movement will begin to lose its progressive character. It will become defensive instead of assertive. Reactive instead of proactive.
- ❖ Movements millions-strong have tried to take over the Democratic Party before: from Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition to the anti-free trade movement of the 1990s; from the movement against the wars in the Middle East to Dennis Kucinich's campaign; and now, Bernie Sanders' efforts. None have managed to reverse the direction of the party or the country.
- ❖ Reforming the Democratic Party has been the progressive movement's chief strategy for decades. It always moves further to the right. Our movement is treading a well-worn path.
- ❖ Routing the progressive movement back into the establishment parties for decades is what got us into this mess. "Playing it safe" turned out to be extremely dangerous.

Sanders can Create a Party for the Progressive Majority

- ❖ Bernie is the **most popular** politician in the country and has an 80% favorability rating among Democrats and 57% favorability among independents. His appeal with conservatives would attract many anti-establishment Republicans to the new party as well.
- ❖ A new party that **attracts** just half of the Democrats and half of the independents would be the largest party in America by far.
- ❖ If Bernie starts a new party, we would begin with at least half of the Democratic Party. Then we would add independents, young voters, anti-establishment voters, the white working class, people of color, third party voters, people who have given up on voting, and many conservatives who have a favorable impression of Bernie. This would make the party significantly larger than what remains of the Democratic Party.
- ❖ The spoiler effect leads voters to consolidate around two major parties, one on the left and one on the right. Our new party will be the largest party on the left, leading whatever remains of the Democratic Party to consolidate around us. The spoiler effect will accelerate rather than hinder the new party's growth, as the progressive majority and everyone opposed to Trump gathers around the largest opposition party.
- ❖ During the primaries, Hillary Clinton had the money, the media, the name recognition, and the party on her side. Bernie was an unknown democratic socialist in a country scarred by half a century of Cold War propaganda. He was successful nevertheless because there is a force more powerful than the establishment's advantages in today's politics: a revolutionary progressive message and integrity.
- ❖ Our movement wins when we cast out the conventional wisdom of incrementalism and offer Americans revolutionary change. The stadiums full of supporters, the quarter of a billion dollars he raised from small donations, and the flourishing of supportive independent media--all of this followed from Bernie's revolutionary message and integrity. This is *the* most important lesson from his campaign.

- ❖ In a single year, Bernie started a political revolution by taking on both establishment parties. Imagine how much more we can accomplish in three and a half years by turning the exuberant Bernie campaign into a permanent people's party, where we can unite the progressive majority.
- ❖ By assembling the new party's coalition, popularizing the message, and creating a national volunteer and donor network, the Bernie campaign has effectively already created the party. We just need to make it official.
- ❖ People are growing dismayed and discouraged to see Bernie remain in an establishment party despite every indication that the party is not reforming. Bernie's popularity and power stem from his reputation as an incorruptible revolutionary. That reputation will slowly fade if he continues to work inside a party that so clearly rejects his progressive agenda. If he chooses to run for president again in 2020, he won't be seen as the same revolutionary figure that he was in 2016. Remaining in the Democratic Party will shake a generation's faith in the possibility of change within the electoral system.
- ❖ Bernie won't always be here to lead the revolution. But he can give the next generation a party that will be.

Only a New Party Can Defeat Trump and his Agenda

- ❖ This past November, we witnessed a spectacular failure of an attempt to defeat Trump and authoritarianism from a neoliberal party. Since November, the Democratic Party has only exacerbated the conditions that depressed turnout and led Americans to support Trump in the first place.
- ❖ Republicans are decimating Democrats *because* the country is [growing more progressive](#) on the issues. As Americans grow more progressive, they realize that the Democratic Party doesn't represent them and are not inspired to turn out. The more progressive the country gets, the less motivated voters are to support a corporate party.

- ❖ The people who need to vote in Democratic Primaries for progressives to win are leaving the party and [becoming independents](#), or not voting at all. The party's declining affiliation and favorability numbers are reiterating what we learned in 2016: opposing Trump without offering a populist alternative is the path to failure. The Democrats are poised to continue losing and our progressive country will continue moving to the right. An arrangement that suits the corporations and billionaires who fund both establishment parties.
- ❖ Only a new party that inspires the progressive majority to vote can defeat Trump and his agenda. Only a progressive party can take away Trump's monopoly over electoral populism.
- ❖ The business cycle is a staple of all capitalist economies. Since WWII, there has been a [recession](#) in America about every 7 years. The country has never gone longer than 10 years without one. The Great Recession began 9 years ago, which means that, historically speaking, there's a high likelihood of another crash during Trump's first term.
- ❖ When financial recklessness brings down the economy again, a furious country will scorn and abandon the parties that brought them ruin. If progressives are not prepared to direct the public's rage into a constructive systemic overhaul, we run a grave risk of the authoritarian right hijacking the narrative and the mandate for sweeping change that goes with it.
- ❖ If Americans don't find an anti-establishment home on the left, people furious with the system will rush to the only populism they see: Trump's xenophobic, authoritarian, and militaristic populism; just like they did in the 2016 election.
- ❖ It is of the utmost importance that progressives launch a populist party before such a scenario can materialize. We must do it now, while the opportunity to carry the revolution to the left is still open.

The Numbers

Americans are Progressive

Issue polls show that a large majority of Americans are progressive. They would overwhelmingly support the new party's platform. *All figures are percentages.*

Americans support:

Equal pay for women and men	93
Overhaul campaign finance system	85
Money has too much influence in campaigns	84
Paid family and medical leave	82
Some corporations don't pay their fair share	82
Some wealthy people don't pay their fair share	79
Allow government to negotiate drug prices	79
Increase financial regulation	75
Expand Social Security benefits by taxing the wealthy	72
Infrastructure jobs program	71
Close offshore corporate tax loopholes	70
Raise the minimum wage to \$15	63
The current distribution of wealth is unfair	63
Free public college	62
Require special prosecutor for police killings	61
Ensure net neutrality	61
Ban the revolving door for corporate executives in govt	59
Replace the ACA with single-payer health care	58
Break up the big banks	58
Government should do more to solve problems	57
Public banking at post offices	56

Americans have Lost Confidence in Basic Institutions

Almost across the board, confidence in the foundational institutions of our society has fallen to historic lows.

Confidence in Institutions

	2004	2016	Change
Banks	53	27	-26
Congress	30	9	-21
The Presidency	52	36	-16
Public Schools	41	30	-11
Criminal Justice System	34	23	-11
The Supreme Court	46	36	-10
Newspapers	30	20	-10
Television News	30	21	-9
Big Business	24	18	-6

Put simply, these figures represent a loss of the consent of the governed. Our government and social system have lost their legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

The Great Shift to Independent Politics

Americans are increasingly disassociating with the establishment parties and identifying as independents. Affiliation with the establishment parties is near historic lows.

Party Affiliation

	2008	Nov 2016	May 2017
Democrats	36	31	28
Republicans	28	27	29
Independents	35	36	40

Gallup projects that 50 percent of Americans will be independents by 2020.

The New Party's Coalition

A new party that attracts just half of Democrats and half of independents would be the largest party in America by far.

Party Affiliation

	May 2017	½ Dems and Ind.
Democrats	28	14
Republicans	29	29
Independents	40	20
People's Party	-	34

Bernie's favorability numbers with Democrats and independents suggest an even greater shift to the people's party. His appeal with conservatives would attract many anti-establishment Republicans to the new party as well.

Because the new party will be the largest opposition party to Trump and the Republicans, what remains of the Democrats and most independents would consolidate around the new party during elections.

Bernie's Favorability

	Favorable	Unfavorable
Democrats	80	10
Republicans	29	61
Independents	57	31

Polls show that Bernie is now more **popular** with people of color than whites, and with women than men.

Fifty-seven percent of Americans are asking for a major new party. How can we revolutionize the country by disregarding the will of the people?

Launching the Party

If we start the party by late summer of 2017, we can get ballot access nationwide and compete in the 2018 midterms.

- Founding convention
 - Where the movement will come together to democratically determine the party's platform, bylaws, name and colors.
 - A historic gathering of progressive champions, activists and cultural icons coming together to take back the power. Makes us an instant cultural phenomenon.
 - Progressive incumbents at all levels of government switch affiliation to the new party, giving it instant representation throughout the country.
- Ballot access
 - Generally requires collecting thousands to tens of thousands of petition signatures in each state.
 - Every four years, the Green and Libertarian parties collect hundreds of thousands of signatures for presidential ballot access. They do so with far fewer volunteers and resources.
- 2018 midterms
 - Primary data down to the precinct level tells us where Bernie's message performs strongest. Bernie campaign data reveals where donations and volunteer activity were highest.
 - We challenge Republicans in lean-red districts where Bernie's message resonates but Democrats can't win or don't compete.
 - We challenge establishment Democrats in heavily-blue districts that supported Bernie in the primaries.
- 2020 presidential
 - We run a presidential candidate. Our large majority over the Democratic Party leads whatever remains of the party to join us against Trump.
 - Our progressive populism demolishes the Republicans after four years of Trump, and sweeps in our down-ballot candidates in Congress and statehouses.
 - After this election, our progressive party is the new left party in America, having replaced the Democratic Party. Our working class majority is left with a corporate authoritarian party as its only opposition.

“I Fought in the Revolution, and We Won”

Reflecting on this day, historians will note that for decades the establishment parties had grown increasingly removed from their working class base. The final straw came in the election of 2016, when Democratic Party bosses blocked a beloved progressive populist during the primaries, resulting in the election of an authoritarian president. Shortly afterwards, Bernie Sanders led progressives in Congress and across the country in founding a new party to represent the interests of the working class. The People’s Party quickly replaced its Democratic Party rival, marking the end of the Second Gilded Age and the beginning of the Progressive Era four years later.