

Bernie Sanders Wins in Iowa!



Photo credit: J. David Ake, AP.
Senator Bernie Sanders and his wife, Jane.

Regardless of what the official results might say, Bernie Sanders won the night in Iowa. The margin reported by most media outlets shows Hillary Clinton at 49.8% and Sanders at 49.6%, but there have been enough reports of [shenanigans](#), [voter fraud](#), and [missing results](#) from various precincts to call into question the value of the caucus process in showing the people's choice for the Democratic nominee. What is abundantly clear, however, is that Bernie Sanders is no fringe candidate. The showing by the Sanders campaign in Iowa could be exactly what Bernie Sanders needs to [shake and bake](#) right past Hillary Clinton in the race to be the Democratic Party's nominee.

So without further ado, here are the top three reasons why Bernie Sanders was the real winner in the Iowa Caucus.

Bernie Sanders Has All the Momentum

Clinton gained nothing of value, and Sanders won the surprise of pundits and coverage from the mainstream media machine. Bernie Sanders was expected to lose, but his campaign is [energized](#) and Clinton's campaign is [scared](#). She may have won by 0.02% according to most mainstream reports, but Hillary

Clinton won a [Pyrrhic](#) victory, and it's one she will not easily recover from.

Sanders and Clinton virtually tied, and Iowa's delegates are not awarded on a winner-take-all basis, so the tie goes to the candidate who exceeded expectations, clearly Sanders. At the Democratic National Convention, Sanders and Clinton will receive the [same number of delegates](#) from the state of Iowa, so Sanders has lost nothing. Clinton, on the other hand, has lost the air of invincibility that carried her months ago.

Bernie Sanders will now move into New Hampshire as an even stronger favorite. Sanders is out of the gate garnering nearly 50% of the vote in Iowa when just months ago Sanders was in [single digits](#) in the polls. A tie in Iowa and a win in New Hampshire just may give Sanders the momentum he needs to gain the backing of more establishment Democrats.

Bernie Sanders Showed the Nation that Hillary Clinton Can Lose

[Ruth Marcus](#) asked the perfect question when trying to decide who won the tie: "Which campaign was celebrating Monday night, and which was trying to figure out what went wrong?" Hillary Clinton has long been the presumptive nominee, and the mainstream media has viewed Bernie Sanders as nothing more than a modern-day Ross Perot. Far from being an outlier to shake up the political conversation, Bernie Sanders demonstrated his mass appeal and ability to contend.

At best, the media made it seem like Bernie Sanders was simply pulling Hillary Clinton [further left](#), but he had no chance to actually win the nomination. In Iowa last night, Bernie Sanders showed the world that [Hillary Clinton can be beaten](#). Considering many have shied away from Bernie Sanders because they view him as unelectable, the clear fallibility Clinton exhibited in her "win" will do nothing but give reluctant Sanders supporters the push they need to really feel the Bern.

Bernie Sanders Established Himself as the Voice of the Future

In a bit of an ironic turn, the old white man gained the most votes from the younger and more progressive generation. Among the Democratic voter age groups, Sanders pulled the following [overwhelming numbers](#):

- Under 25: Sanders won 86% of the vote.
- 25-39: Sanders won 81% of the vote.
- 31-39: Sanders won 65% of the vote.

Just as the younger voters carried Barack Obama in crushing Hillary Clinton's presidential dreams, there is no reason younger voters won't do the same for Bernie Sanders. John Cassidy summed it up perfectly in [The New Yorker](#): "When you are so heavily reliant on support from older voters, it is tricky to project yourself as the voice of the future."

The thing is, Sanders wants voters to have the power—as they should. As such, he's demonstrated integrity no one in our younger generation has ever seen from a politician, refusing to take money from PACs and big businesses. His reward has manifested itself in [broken fundraising records](#) that show no sign of slowing. His fundraising has come from individual donors, which means far more voters are personally invested in Bernie Sanders than in any other candidate. Win or lose, it shows that there is hope yet for our system of democracy.

Matt Shuham wrote in [The Independent](#), "In a post-*Citizens United* era...the Sanders camp is placing a bet that rarely pays off in American politics: that absent mega-donors, PACs or the support of a party establishment, the machinery of public opinion can run on conviction alone." Even with a technical loss in Iowa, Sanders won the Iowa caucus. In a democratic-republic in which the voting public shows up en masse and ensures the system runs on conviction alone and not on the whims of mega-donors and media moguls, everyone wins.

A Response to A Defense of Moderate, American Socialism

This essay is a short response to the great recent [analysis](#) on Socialism in America by my colleague on this website, Adrian Bonenberger. I was looking for ways I could critique his points but it is hard on the merits, I guess because we share more political opinions than I might had thought. Here are a few of my comments that variously qualify as minor quibbles, or just my own comments expounding on what he has written.

We agree that Bernie Sanders is the best candidate for President, and without enumerating all the specific reasons why, it is enough to realize that he offers the best policies on basically every pressing issue as well as the most consistently honest and incorruptible character—a rare mix in politicians today or at any time. As a proudly self-identified Democratic Socialist, we can place him in the company of such men as Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela (not to mention other Very Intelligent People such as Pablo Picasso, Bertrand Russell, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Helen Keller, Marie Curie, Jean-Paul Sartre, Noam Chomsky, Charlie Chaplin, John Lennon, and many others—much better overall company than J.P. [Morgan](#) or Donald Trump, in my opinion). We also agree that Socialism has long been a highly pejorative word in America, especially since the first Red Scare in 1918, rising in popularity during the Great Depression, and being finally blacklisted and virtually outlawed for good during the Red Scare after WWII for the next six decades. The time has finally come when Socialism is no longer a dirty word, but is increasingly becoming accepted as a positive and possibly essential solution to many of America's biggest problems.

On Education, I agree that it is more important that education is universally available than who supplies it. I am not against private school, and I actually work at one. I believe, though, that public school should not only be available but free for everyone. In an America where even education and our great university system has been corporatized and privatized, this is an important point. Schools and universities produce our future citizen-voters, our innovative ideas, and our culture. Contra your point, I do not know of any philosophers who have seriously claimed that ignorance is better than knowledge. Ignorance very truly does lead to either dictatorship or, something only slightly less malign, a system of plutocratic control by a tiny fraction of the richest citizens. The great John Dewey, perhaps the most influential American philosopher in the fields of education and democracy, argued that that a working democracy could not exist without an educated populace.

On Regulation, I think you hit the nail on the head. One of the biggest complaints, and weaknesses, of Libertarians is that Government restricts freedom with too many burdensome regulations. Obviously no government is perfect or without corruption, but as you say, the regulations in large part exist because the status quo ante gave us things like child labor, poisoned food (see Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*), poisoned air (compare pictures of 1970's L.A. to 2016 Beijing), poisoned water (look up Cuyahoga River fire), wage slavery, even *real* slavery. Socialism fought for and delivered solutions to some of these problems (and some other more minor ones like weekends and public holidays), but many more remain.

On Taxation, I would just like to add that while our tax dollars are often misspent, they also buy things like highways, trains, space exploration, the Internet, a working postal system, a strong military that has kept foreign countries from our soil for 200 years, national parks, and many other things I can't think of off the top of my head. The

thing I've never been able to understand is that most people who can afford to pay taxes to support their society do everything they can to avoid paying taxes to help their society. This is due to pure greed and selfishness. It is well-known that the top tax rate during America's most prosperous decades ever was above 90%, and the economy and the middle-class grew together. As the top tax rate declined to a low point of 28% (with an effective rate much lower for the rich, a large part of whose wealth is not taxable), the middle-class has shrunk and the economy has become unstable. There are different conclusions to be drawn about tax data, which can always be skewed in any direction you want it to go really. The point is that taxes are necessary to guarantee a working society for everyone, so if you accidentally pay a tiny fraction of someone else's school tuition or hospital bill by mistake then you have to live with that gross unfairness. If you don't like it, move to a tax-free country like Somalia and see if you like it better. I do not think that raising taxes on the rich is a panacea, but it is a great first step.

On the Free Handouts and Lazy Freeloaders point, I would like to add that this is probably the most pernicious and also most difficult to dispel myth, and the one that keeps many misinformed people voting against their economic interests. It is in the interest of the rich to appeal to people's innate prejudice or racism in order to pit the middle class against the poor instead of themselves. We all know the myth of the lazy black people, which has caused ignorant white people to blame supposed "welfare queens" and policies such as affirmative action for all their problems. If it weren't black people, it would be immigrants. There is always someone else to blame rather than the real culprits, even while working-class whites, now deprived of union protections that made the country more prosperous now are increasingly depending on welfare. The fact is that the biggest freeloaders and welfare queens in America for the last 40 years have been Oil

companies like Exxon and Shell, Arms producers like Raytheon, Wall Street banks like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan, multinational corporations like Walmart, Chemical and Agricultural giants like Dow and Monsanto, Airline producers like Boeing, and many other fabulously profitable and destructive companies that enrich shareholders while robbing the people and denuding the planet.

On Socialism as Totalitarianism, I would just like to add a small point about the nature of socialism. It helps to imagine it not as a monolithic idea, but, like Capitalism, a gradable ideology that can become as moderate or as extreme as it is allowed by the political situation. To those who say that it is an unworkable and naive system, it already works well in many countries around the world, including the United States. "Socialist" Norway, for example spends 20% of government revenue on social projects while in the USA its 18%. For the total economy, somewhere around 35% is socialized in the USA while its somewhere around 45% in "Socialist" France. I can tell you, by the way, that life in Norway and France is good, as it is in "Socialist" Italy where I live. Not perfect, but good. Socialism in America today is so appealing especially because we have drifted so far into unregulated and predatory capitalism that socialism becomes a moderate ideology which can bring "balance to the force", as it were. Life is not "good" for a huge growing number of working poor in America who are being exploited by a capitalist system which cares nothing for them, and where income inequality has grown so extremely out of control that literally the richest 62 individuals in America are worth as much as the bottom 50% (that's 160 million people, by the way). Socialism in the Soviet Union or China was really not socialism at all, but an extreme totalitarian oligarchy that simply continued the ancient traditions of despotism in those countries after overturning the old regime. Left to its own largely deregulated devices, Capitalism in America and the world has evolved into an extreme neoliberal oligarchy that aspires for

even more power and money than the planet's resources can supply. Like a deadly virus, it must be stopped before killing the host. Whether that happens with relatively mild socializing reforms and limits, or with a more traumatic revolutionary overthrow of the current system, modern capitalism will be brought down. I hope it is something closer to the former, only because the latter brings with it a much higher probability of violence, anarchy, and a worse system than before.