



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on May 19, 2015

## Examining Candidate Bernie Sanders

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is a candidate for the Democratic Party's nomination for president. There aren't many who think he has even a ghost of a chance to get it. Does he have an ulterior motive? Is there something else he wants to accomplish by throwing his name into the mix?

We have no inside information about Bernie's motive. He likely knows that an admitted socialist (that's what he is) doesn't stand much chance to go very far. It is surprising and somewhat disappointing to know that enough people in Vermont aren't revolted by socialism to have rejected him as he won ascending political posts: the mayor of Burlington, then as their congressman, and then one of their two senators. But most Americans, not just a majority in Vermont, don't have a clue about what socialism really entails. Hint: One of its most famous promoters was a fellow named Karl Marx.



So what's going on here? One answer is that many politicians throw their hats into the presidential ring in order to become better known. They even expect to lose. But being a contender for the nation's highest office helps them in future elections. It's name recognition, not positions on issues, that constitutes the most important attribute a candidate can have. An upstart "nobody" rarely wins in this country. Get your name and your face before the public and you might have a chance. And doing so in the presidential sweepstakes gets one's name known.

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Bernie already knows this. And hardly anyone in Vermont is unaware that Bernie represents them in the halls of Congress. He doesn't need the exposure a presidential contender gets. As for voters in the rest of the country, a huge chunk of them find him laughable — lovingly so, but still laughable.

So what else could drive Bernie? Again, we can only speculate, so it sure seems as though opposition from Bernie will make Hillary Clinton seem more centrist. We can't think of many others who could do that. She becomes less dangerous to many if her opposition for the nomination is the gruff-talking, mussed-hair guy with the Brooklyn twang (originally from Brooklyn, it shows when he speaks).

For the record, Bernie has voted against defunding the abortion mill known as Planned Parenthood. He always votes "yes" to raise the national debt. Given a chance to rein in presidential misuses of the military and presidential lawmaking about immigration, he voted "no." He joined others in attempts to block construction of the Keystone Pipeline and additional drilling for offshore oil. He even supported forcing employers to provide contraception coverage for their workers regardless of the business owner's religious views. As for repealing ObamaCare, he already voted "no."



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But Bernie's in the race to become president of the United States. Could there be anything good to come out of him winning? Maybe it would be better for the country if an admitted socialist moved into the White House. Then there might be more resistance in Congress. There certainly is a need for more congressional resistance because, Bernie or no Bernie, the country is adopting socialism. Were he still alive, Karl Marx would be delighted.

*John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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