



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 12, 2018

Democrats See Another Obama in O'Rourke

The next president of the United States could be Beto O'Rourke, if you believe the chatter after the [Democrat's loss](#) to incumbent Senator Ted Cruz last week.

O'Rourke, apparently, is the next star to which Democrats want to hitch their wagon because he got so close in the race against Cruz.

Such is the affection Democrats have for the new progressive darling that they're calling his loss an Obama-like moment he needs to seize before it's too late.



Widespread Support

Almost as soon as the election was over, the chin-wagging began about Robert Francis O'Rourke, widely known, like Cher, by one name: Beto.

Democrats are desperate for a candidate who could launch a credible campaign against Donald Trump, particularly with the alarming claim from two of Hillary Clinton's partisans that she'll try her luck again for one more run against Trump. "She won't let a little thing like two stunning defeats stand in the way of her claim to the White House," [they wrote](#) in the *Wall Street Journal*. "You can expect her to run for president once again."

Anyway, Democrats, [The Hill reported](#), see a "silver lining" in O'Rourke's close loss because "it means O'Rourke, who emerged in the midterms as a progressive star, is free to run for president."

"If he wants to run, he should do it," Democratic strategist Maria Cardona told the Capitol Hill newspaper. "He now has name recognition, a widely successful fundraising operation, a young fresh face with a sprinkling of woke, a cool persona, a new perspective, he speaks Spanish and would be an exciting and upbeat candidate."

An unnamed Democrat "strategist" [told The Hill](#) that O'Rourke is the only candidate the Democrats have "that's thrilling." The strategist said friends were "calling ... to ask about him. I would overhear conversations about him. He's generating the kind of buzz we haven't seen since 'hope and change.'"

The Hill noted that Republicans were surprised that O'Rourke lost by just three percent, and although he said he won't run in 2020, another Democrat advised him to reconsider.

David Wade, a former strategist for failed Democratic presidential aspirant John Kerry, who lost to George Bush in 2008, [told The Hill](#) that O'Rourke "has to think hard about it because moments like this don't come around often in politics and they tend to be fleeting."

Messiah, Part 2? That's right:

Wade compared O'Rourke's moment with the time Obama captured Democrats' imagination when he gave the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

"Imagine if Barack Obama had deferred his instant connection from the 2004 convention and



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waited for a safer cycle to run for president,” Wade said. “You can’t guarantee that these moments last forever. Moments change. Political demand signals change.”

[Writing in the Washington Post](#), James Henson, director of the Texas Politics Project, observed that “O’Rourke attracted more than 4 million votes, a dramatic increase from the Democratic Senate candidate’s 1.6 million votes in 2014, and even improved upon the 3.9 million votes cast for Hillary Clinton in the last presidential election, which she lost by nine percentage points.”

O’Rourke, he wrote, “certainly was the catalyst for bringing out Democratic voters usually dormant in midterm elections. He also raised a record-setting \$69 million during the campaign.... The party cannot afford to underestimate this source of practical political strength.”

Thus, “2020 is the obvious next step for O’Rourke,” [Henson wrote](#).

I’m Not Running

But again, O’Rourke has already put down his foot to reject a run, [as CNN reported](#) in its O’Rourke For President campaign piece.

A source “described having ‘very initial discussions’ with O’Rourke in recent weeks about the prospect of a 2020 bid” but that “it’s too early” for O’Rourke to have settled on running — or not.

“Publicly, O’Rourke has flatly ruled out the possibility of a presidential run,” the network observed:

“The answer is no,” O’Rourke said at a CNN town hall in October when asked about the prospect of a presidential campaign.

“Our children are 11, they’re 10, and they’re 7 years old. We’ve told them we’re going to take these almost two years out of our life to run this race, and then we’re devoted and committed to being a family again,” he said.

Pressed again, he said, “It’s a definitive no.”

CNN noted that [he told MSNBC](#) the same thing: “I will not be a candidate for president in 2020. That’s I think as definitive as those sentences get.”

Photo of Beto O’Rourke: crocodile [via Wikimedia](#)



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