



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 29, 2019

Democrats Horrified as Former Starbucks CEO Mulls an Independent Presidential Run

With former Starbucks CEO announcing he is considering a third-party run for president in 2020, some Democrats are getting caffeine jitters.

Former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz announced on Sunday's *60 Minutes* that he is considering a run for the presidency. The lifelong Democrat rattled many in that party by saying he would eschew both major parties and run as a centrist independent.



"I am seriously thinking of running for president. I will run as a centrist independent outside of the two-party system," Schultz told CBS's Scott Pelley. "We're living at a most fragile time. Not only the fact that this president is not qualified to be the president, but the fact that both parties are consistently not doing what's necessary on behalf of the American people and are engaged, every single day, in revenge politics."

Schultz served two terms as Starbucks' CEO, the first from 1986 until 2000 and the second from 2008 until 2017. Schultz is widely credited as the man responsible for making the company a household name all over the world. He remained at Starbucks as an executive chairman until seven months ago, when he left the company. Schultz is reported to have a net worth in the neighborhood of \$3.1 billion.

The proposed independent run has rankled Democrats who believe that an independent Schultz run would take votes from Democrats and, essentially, hand a victory to President Trump, who weighed in on [Twitter](#), "Howard Schultz doesn't have the 'guts' to run for President! Watched him on @60Minutes last night and I agree with him that he is 'not the smartest person.' Besides, America already has that! I only hope that Starbucks is still paying me their rent in Trump Tower!"

Schultz retains a large ownership in the coffee house chain, which has prompted Democrats to act like Democrats and threaten to boycott Starbucks. President of the left-wing Center for American Progress Neera Tanden tweeted, "Vanity projects that help destroy democracy are disgusting. If he enters the race, I will start a Starbucks boycott because I'm not giving a penny that will end up in the election coffers of a guy who will help Trump win."

One Democrat mega-donor, Haim Saban, is convinced that a third-party run by Schultz would lead to Trump getting another term. "I don't discount Howard's ability to beat the odds. However, [it's] borderline impossible to win the presidency as an independent," Saban said. According to Saban, if Schultz runs as an independent, "He guarantees Trump a second term."

Political gadfly and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who [changes parties as often as he changes his clothes](#), also took Schultz to task, saying, "Given the strong pull of partisanship and the realities of the electoral college system, there is no way an independent can win. That is truer today than ever before."



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But with even a broken clock being right twice a day, Bloomberg does have a point. No third-party candidate has even garnered 5 percent of the vote since Ross Perot in 1996. None has garnered an electoral college vote since George Wallace received 46 votes from Southern states in 1968.

When asked by Pelley if he might be handing Trump a second term with an independent run, Schultz countered, "I wanna see the American people win. I wanna see America win. I don't care if you're a Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, Republican. Bring me your ideas. And I will be an independent person, who will embrace those ideas. Because I am not, in any way, in bed with a party."

You've got to give Schultz this: He already talks like a politician.

In some quick policy questioning, Schultz gave center-left answers.

On immigration: "The country first and foremost, is based on humanity, fairness, goodness; we have been for 200 plus years, a country of immigrants. And for the 11 million people here unauthorized, there should be a fair and equitable way for them to get in line, pay the taxes, pay a fee and become citizens of the United States."

On climate change: "Tremendous mistake, again, by President Trump, to leave the Paris Climate Accord."

On healthcare: "Every American deserves the right to have access to quality health care. But what the Democrats are proposing is something that is as false as the wall. And that is free healthcare for all, which the country cannot afford."

Of course, it's all still very early, and who knows what will happen in the next two years? But an independent center-left candidate would be good news for Trump. A Schultz candidacy would likely siphon more votes from a Democrat than it would from Trump.

Photo of Howard Schultz: AP Images



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