



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 18, 2017

Left-wing Oprah Eyes Possible Presidential Bid in 2020

Buoyed by a recently released poll by Public Policy Polling which showed her leading President Donald Trump 47-40 in a hypothetical 2020 match-up, daytime talk show “queen” Oprah Winfrey (shown) is said to be toying with the idea of making a bid for the White House.



Of course, Trump trailed Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton throughout most of the 2016 campaign, by as much as 15 points in some polls, so polling almost four years in advance of an election is often dismissed as meaningless. After all, if polling that far in advance was conclusive, then we would have had presidents Dewey, Muskie, and Dukakis instead of Truman, Nixon, and George H.W. Bush.

But, considering that few gave Trump much of a shot, even when he was performing well in polls early in the Republican nomination battle in late 2015 and early 2016, we should not dismiss a run by such a well-known media personality as Winfrey. Trump had achieved high name recognition as the host of the popular TV show *“The Apprentice,”* and Winfrey, if anything, enjoyed even higher name I.D. from her TV fame.

“Given the popularity you have, and that we haven’t broken the glass ceiling yet for women, you could actually run for president and you could be elected,” talk show host David Rubinstein told Winfrey, urging her to consider the idea.

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Trump’s path to the White House as a celebrity is seen by some such as Rubinstein as an indication that the voters are now looking at style over substance; however, while Trump had a greater name I.D. than most of his Republican rivals, his positions on issues were just as critical to his success. He tackled such subjects as disastrous international trade deals and the tsunami of illegal immigration that the other candidates generally avoided, demonstrating an ability to connect with voters.

Though Winfrey is undoubtedly noted for her ability to “connect” with her many fans, whether that talent will translate into political success remains to be seen.

Left-wing CNN commentator Van Jones, who has a communist background, boldly predicted that Winfrey would not only defeat Trump, but that she would beat him a historic landslide. Speaking on Bravo’s late-night show *Watch What Happens Next*, Jones argued, “It takes a superstar to beat a superstar. And I think if Oprah Winfrey ran, she’d win all 50 states.”

Jones also mentioned Democrats Senator Kamala Harris (Calif.), Senator Corey Booker (N.J.), and Congressman Joe Kennedy III (Mass.). All three, of course, are conventional politicians, and Trump showed that celebrities can surprise such professionals.



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Winfrey has already demonstrated that she has political clout — at least within the more liberal base of the Democratic Party. It was her support of fellow Chicagoan U.S. Senator Barack Obama in 2007 that is seen as giving him the extra credibility he needed to upset Hillary Clinton to win the 2008 Democratic Party nomination.

Her open endorsement of Obama was the first time that Winfrey had publicly backed a political candidate. She held a fundraiser for him in September 2007 at her estate, and then three months later she joined Obama for a series of rallies in the early primary states of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. Some have estimated that she could have swung more than one and a half million votes for Obama, providing the difference in his eventual victory.

What had given her such exceptional pull with voters, especially among those who cast votes in the Democratic primaries? Certainly it was the trust her many fans placed in her, especially women who were given the unofficial go-ahead to abandon the female hopeful, Hillary Clinton. This emotional bond was built over several years because of Oprah's highly popular daytime talk show.

How did Winfrey rise from poverty to become the wealthiest black woman in American history? She apparently possessed an ability to talk and connect with an audience as early as high school, when she had a job in radio; at age 19 she co-anchored the local evening news. Of course, her entry into television was helped immensely when she won the Miss Black Tennessee beauty pageant at age 17.

Her unusual name of "Oprah" was certainly another factor in her success. Named "Orpah" on her birth certificate, after the biblical character, that name proved difficult for others to pronounce, and she eventually became known as Oprah. In the Bible, Orpah was the daughter-in-law of the Israelite Naomi who returned to her Moabite gods when Naomi's other daughter-in-law, Ruth, chose to instead accept the God of Israel. (Ruth was an ancestor of King David, and eventually, of course, of Jesus Christ).

Raised a Baptist, the young Oprah was taken to church by her grandmother, where Oprah was dubbed "The Preacher" for her ability to quote Bible verses. But Winfrey has certainly abandoned the adherence to the Scriptures her grandmother and the Baptists attempted to instill in her. She rejected the more conservative Baptist faith when she heard a minister say, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." Oprah said at the moment the preacher said the word "jealous," there was "something about that [that] didn't feel right in my spirit because I believe that God is love and God is in all things."

The belief that God is "in all things" is better known as pantheism. Indeed, Winfrey has often advocated the views of New Age spiritualist Eckhart Tolle on the web and in her TV shows. "I took God out of the box," she says of her efforts. "One of the mistakes that human beings make is believing that there is only one way to live. *There are many paths to what you call God.*" (Emphasis added). At another time, she indicated that her concept of God is not orthodox, asserting, "God is a feeling experience and not a believing experience. If your religion is a believing experience ... then that's not truly God."

She has also even been quoted as saying, "I have a church with myself: I have church walking down the street. I believe in [a] God force that lives inside all of us, and once you tap into that, you can do anything." This sounds more like a line from the *Star Wars* movies than something found in a Christian church.

Soon after the September 11 attacks, Winfrey came to the defense of Islam in a program she called "Islam 101," calling it a peaceful religion and arguing that it was "the most misunderstood of the three major religions."

Her religious views may not damage her political chances within the more liberal base Democratic



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Party; however, it is uncertain whether such theology would be acceptable to a general election audience.

Sociologist Vicki Abt criticized Winfrey in her book *Coming After Oprah: Cultural Fallout in the Age of the TV Talk Show*. Abt charged that Winfrey's show was critical in blurring the lines between "normal" and "deviant" behavior. Of course, supporters, on the other hand, credit her for making the LGBT movement, for instance, mainstream and more socially acceptable.

Besides Oprah's social views, her political opinions are certainly not conservative, either. In 2009, she traveled to Denmark to praise its socialist system. According to Winfrey, the Danes are the happiest people on earth, who particularly enjoy living in very small houses. (Apparently Winfrey likes a bigger house than these "happy" Danes.)

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) honored her as the 2008 Person of the Year for her work in uncovering mistreatment of animals and her advocacy of a vegan diet. She also refused to wear fur or even allow it to be shown in her magazine, "O."

It is uncertain, of course, whether Winfrey will actually make a presidential bid. She would be 67 years old in 2020 — still younger than either Trump or Clinton was in the last election (and though it didn't seem to matter to the 70-year-old Trump, Clinton's health definitely was a matter of some discussion).

But if she were to run, when one considers the present state of the American electorate, she would have to be taken seriously.

Photo of Oprah Winfrey: AP Images



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