



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 20, 2020

## Chris Matthews Still Worried About Repeat of '72: Sanders Must Be Opposed

About a year ago, moderate liberal Democrats began sounding the alarm that a radical-left presidential candidacy would end in a McGovern-like defeat in 2020.

The Green New Deal and Medicare for All are examples of non-starters, the moderates said, and pushing them and other radical ideas will end in disaster.

MSNBC's Chris Matthews was one of them, and he reiterated that point on Tuesday, before Wednesday's Democratic debate. [Speaking with colleague John Heilemann](#), he said why moderate liberals must oppose socialist Bernie Sanders and the party's lurch to the crackpot Left.

Matthews, a former top aide to House Speaker Tip O'Neill, repeated what he said last year: Get ready for McGovern 2.0.

### Sander's Platform a Non-starter

Aside from his concern that Sanders' supporters are an unhinged cult, Matthews cannot fathom why Democrats aren't stating an obvious truth about the elderly apologist for Soviet communism and his plan to socialize the United States: With a GOP Senate, none of his crackpot ideas are a remote possibility.

Democrats, he said, [are afraid](#) of "going after his ideology, of going after his self-declared socialism, or even about the doability of all the things he's says he's going to do in a Congress that's split right now," Matthews said.

### [But that has to change:](#)

Everybody knows half the U.S. Senate is run by Republicans, it'll be half run by Republicans next time, and it takes 60 votes to get any of this stuff through. And yet nobody says the obvious: "Bernie, you're full of it. None of this is going to passed. You're going to be a miserable president, frustrated from the first day, because you're not going to get Medicare for all, you're not going to get free college tuition for public universities, you're not gonna get pay-offs of all student loans. None of this is gonna happen."

The end result? Sanders is "just gonna sit there and stew in it," and Matthews wonders why Democrats "don't bring that up."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgOHUEKjsSg>

More than a few moderate Democrats still believe in a market economy, [he said](#), albeit with reasonable regulation and a welfare safety net. Yet those same moderate won't go after Sanders for advocating full-





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blown socialism.

The moderates, he said, are “pandering” to Sanders’ supporters, which “gets you nothing.”

That’s when [Matthews raised](#) the unhappy memory of Miami 1972, when Democrats nominated George McGovern:

They’ve gotta get out there and say, “I disagree with socialism. I believe in markets. I think he’s wrong. I think he’ll never get it done.” And in this country we’ll never go that direction, and by the way we’ll lose 49 states.

And by the way, I was there in 1972 at the Democratic Convention, where the people on the Left were dancing in glee. I saw ‘em, they were literally — John Kenneth Galbraith — dancing in a circle. They were so happy that they defeated the moderates.... And they went on to lose 49 states in their glee. So that can happen again. So clearly. That’s what I see. It could happen again.

Candidate Michael Bloomberg’s attempt to corner Sanders on the issue in Wednesday’s debate failed, and the other candidates did not take on Sanders’ plan in detail.

### **Kerrey and Others**

Matthews isn’t the only Democrat who fears a major shellacking similar to what McGovern suffered nearly 50 years ago, when [Richard Nixon beat him](#) a like a rented mule, 49 states to one, 520 electoral votes to 17.

A year ago, former [Senator Bob Kerrey wrote](#) that Sanders and his radical cohort, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, are deluded if they think “Americans long for a president who will ask us to pay more for the pleasure of increasing the role of the federal government in our lives. That this is a delusion can be seen in the promises made by six successful Democratic candidates in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan: three governors and three senators. Not one of them supported the Green New Deal, a tax on wealth or ‘Medicare for all.’”

Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, another more reasonable Democrat, [said the party can’t afford a crazy candidate](#). Echoing Matthews, and discussing 1972, he said the party “gravitated to radical redistribution economic policy, focused on turning out their activists and failed to focus on the middle. The result was the political catastrophe of Richard Nixon’s re-election.”

Summers’ point, along with that of Kerrey and Matthews, remains: Democrats nominate Sanders at their peril.

*Image: screenshot from [YouTube video](#)*

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