



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 19, 2017

Sanders Praises Socialism in Debate with Cruz

Unlike many political debates, which degenerate into exchanges of personal insults, Wednesday night's tax [debate on CNN between Senators Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders](#) stuck mostly to political philosophy and remained mostly civil.

However, Senator Sanders got a little "testy" when Senator Cruz compared Sanders' model nation of Denmark to Communist Cuba. Cruz quoted Ronald Reagan, who noted that the guns on the Berlin Wall all pointed the same way — against those who wanted to escape communism in East Berlin. He then added that the rafts were also all going one way — leaving Castro's Cuba — but no one got on a raft to escape to Cuba.



Sanders took umbrage, telling Cruz not to compare Denmark, a socialist "democracy," to a totalitarian system like Cuba.

Despite taking such offense, the truth of the matter is that Sanders has praised Fidel Castro, the late communist dictator of Cuba. Sanders lauded Castro for the universal health care and education systems, which Sanders would like to see implemented in the United States.

Sanders was a member of the Young People's Socialist League in college, but he also flirted with communism itself, even taking his honeymoon in the old Soviet Union. In the 1980s, Sanders was a featured speaker at a celebration of the Marxist Sandinista's government in Nicaragua.

While Denmark has not executed political dissidents like in the Soviet Union or in Cuba, all three countries favor socialist economics. Sanders even said that Americans would be ready to pay the high tax rates paid by citizens of Denmark, if they only knew about all the free stuff they would get in return — healthcare, education, day-care, and so on. Sanders spent much of the debate arguing for keeping tax rates high for the wealthy, while implying that he would give tax relief to the middle-class. But eventually, Sanders admitted that all working Americans would pay higher taxes under his plan.

Cruz jabbed at Sanders, arguing that the Vermont socialist is simply promising everyone free stuff, from a free education to a "chicken in every pot." The Texas senator, who ran second to Donald Trump in last year's Republican presidential primary battle, argued that today's Democratic Party as a whole is just as socialist as Sanders, but is just not as honest about it as Sanders.

John F. Kennedy would be "drummed out" of today's Democratic Party, Cruz claimed, because of Kennedy's support of tax cuts in the 1960s.

An area of strong disagreement between the two senators was on the issue of the estate tax. Sanders argued that the only people who benefit from the repeal of the estate tax are the top two-tenths of one percent in income earners. Cruz countered, referring to the estate tax as "the death tax," saying



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wealthy left-wing Democratic Party donors like George Soros don't pay it. Instead, Cruz said, the Americans who are hardest-hit by the estate tax are farmers, ranchers, and small business owners. Cruz said that the first thing many families have to do after a death is sell the farm or the small business in order to pay the estate tax.

Farmers might be land-rich, but are often "cash-poor," and simply don't have the money to pay the estate tax, Cruz argued. Sanders, on the other hand, said that the Koch brothers benefit "to the tune of \$30 billion" with the repeal of the estate tax. In fact, Sanders seemed to have a special animus against the Koch brothers, bringing them up repeatedly during the 90-minute debate.

A sharp disagreement also occurred on the issue of state and local tax deductions made on federal income tax forms. Cruz, echoing the Trump tax proposal, said that the allowance of these deductions tends to help the wealthy in high-tax states. Cruz argued that in the 10 states with the highest tax rates, 240,000 have left, while in the 10 states with the lowest tax rates, the influx has been around 100,000. Some have argued that those in the states with lower tax rates are, in effect, subsidizing the taxpayers in the states with the highest tax rates.

Instead of cutting taxes to spur the economy, the federal government needs to spend more money on "rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure," Sanders claimed.

When Cruz asked Sanders if there was any area of the federal budget he would be willing to cut, Sanders was quick to respond: "Defense spending." He added that he would also cut "oil tax breaks."

The two differed on the issue of single-moms and child care. Cruz said he wanted higher-wage jobs through a growing economy for these women, while Sanders said his solution was "universal pre-school."

Sanders and Cruz previously held a debate on the issue of healthcare, and it would not be surprising if the two were to return to CNN for a third debate in the future.

Photo of Senators Sanders and Cruz: screen-grab from [CNN debate video](#)



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