

# Primary Wars: A New Hope?



Back in early May, I wrote a mostly [tongue-in-cheek piece](#) on the possibility of me voting for presidential candidate Eric Swalwell in the Democratic primary (as an unaffiliated voter in Colorado, I have the option to vote in either party's primary). My rationale was that with President Trump not facing any serious primary competition, and every candidate in the Democratic field seemingly running on a hopelessly far-left platform (a conclusion reinforced by last month's MSNBC debates), I might as well use my vote purely for entertainment purposes.

Swalwell, of course, has since left the race (and his intensely awkward, hyper-PC catchphrases are deeply missed). But last night, as I watched half of the bloated field of Democratic candidates hash things out on night #1 of the CNN debates, I must say that I managed to scrounge up a little bit of hope – hope that my previously meaningless primary vote might just serve a practical purpose after all.

To my surprise, unlike what was heard at the MSNBC debates, not all of the candidates came across as grossly naïve and/or

ideologically nutty. Some even sounded fairly reasonable and somewhat moderate, even if they were still wrong, in my view, on a number of issues.

Most importantly, several participants chose not to cede the heart and soul of their party to two of its biggest progressive stars: Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

In recent years, Sanders and Warren have been recognized as prominent thought leaders within the liberal movement. But last night, they were challenged in a way I hadn't seen before, called out by fellow Democrats for presenting radical ideas and policies that were ignorant, unrealistic, and downright dangerous.

John Delaney (despite displaying more nervous tics than the average chihuahua) aggressively went after the progressive duo's single-payer doctrine, touting patient choice and expressing the importance of private health insurance providers. Steve Bullock and Tim Ryan backed him up, drawing sharp attention to the number of Americans that would lose policies they very much like (and in some cases negotiated heavily for), if Sanders and Warren have their way.

Bullock was a voice of reason on immigration too, going after the absurdities of decriminalizing illegal border crossings, and giving free health coverage to illegal immigrants.

My former governor, John Hickenlooper, repeatedly pointed out the fiscal madness of the progressive pair's ideas, even moving to the right of Trump by slamming economic nationalism (and foreign policy isolationism for that matter).

Those who follow me on Twitter know Hickenlooper he delivered my favorite line of the night:

*"Trade wars are for losers!"* [pic.twitter.com/qiwjWSmPMK](https://pic.twitter.com/qiwjWSmPMK)

– John A. Daly (@JohnDalyBooks) [July 31, 2019](#)

I suspect these lower-tier candidates got the message after the MSNBC debate that a lot of Americans were genuinely scared by what they had heard – appalled and dismayed by just how far-left the party had become; even Joe Biden, the front-runner (and supposed moderate alternative) seemed to be going along to get along.

Last night's rhetorical retreat toward the center may have been a political calculation, but I also think it was sincere to an extent. These types of candidates likely felt gun-shy during the first debate, worried about saying something (in their very limited time) that a lot of passionate base-voters didn't want to hear. But after considering the concerns of the broader room over the past month, I think they felt emboldened to reveal what is closer to their true colors.

It was a good showing, and I would dare say that by the end of the night, Sanders and Warren no longer felt like the standard-bearers, or even the trend-setters, of the Democratic party. To me, and probably to a lot of other non-progressives, they looked like outsiders – almost a fringe contingent.

But perception and reality are two very different things. I'm a conservative, so my point of view is much different than the vast majority of Democratic voters. What's music to my ears assuredly sounds like a garbage disposal to a lot of people to the left of me.

One can't ignore the fact that the biggest debate applause lines came from the most progressive candidates as they defended their far-left policies. Nor can we ignore all of the money being brought in by the progressives' campaigns, or the fact that Sanders and Warren rank second and third in every primary poll (behind only Biden, the candidate with the most name recognition). Everyone else (including all of the relative moderates on the debate stage last night) have single-digit support.

And if you've read today's debate headlines in the mainstream media, you'll see a liberal consensus that Warren was the big winner, which – to me – is absurd.

While this surge by the second-tier “moderates” may well fizzle out (perhaps even by the end of the second debate tonight), last night's performance at least showed that there are indeed competing visions and compelling alternatives within the Democratic party.

And if any of those alternatives still exist by the time the Colorado primary rolls around, I'd be happy – in the interest of giving America its best choices possible – to help keep them alive.

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**Did you miss John Daly's recent trip to the White House? Watch exclusively video of the special event below. Then learn more about his upcoming novel, *Safeguard*, [here](#).**