

Democrats Game Plan for 2020: Bash the Rich

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) may be 78, but he's 78 going on 30. He thinks like a millennial. And he's got the energy and the political passion to match.

A lot of millennials want free stuff – and Bernie is the guy who wants to give it to them. A lot of millennials think socialism is a great idea. So does Bernie.

Bernie doesn't simply want to change a few things about America so that they match his vision of what this country ought to be. That would be, to him anyway, like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. No, Bernie wants a revolution – his words, not mine. Here's what he said in 2015, the last time he ran for president: "What my campaign is about is a political revolution – millions of people standing up and saying, 'Enough is enough.' Our government belongs to all of us, and not just the handful of billionaires."

This time around, he's a lot more pithy. "I don't think billionaires should exist," he said in an interview. "I hope the day comes when they don't."

"Americans have always been in love with the idea of success," Peggy Noonan has written in her Wall Street Journal column. "It's rewarded the creation of wealth, made household saints of the richest men in the world. We were proud they lived here."

That was before progressives became the driving force in the Democratic Party, however. Now Bernie Sanders is a serious contender for the party's nomination for president, but he and his fellow progressives don't sound like they're proud that rich people live in America.

At his rallies, Sanders can't spit out the word "billionaires" without his face turning red and his blood pressure rising. He makes rich people sound like bank robbers, or worse.

And Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), who claims she's a "capitalist to my bones," has a funny way of showing that. She wants the super-rich to pay not only an income tax but a wealth tax as well – because even if she doesn't especially like them, she needs their money to finance an even bigger federal government with even more social welfare programs that would add up to trillions of dollars and, if her critics are right, would crash the American economy.

You can't even count on the two billionaires running for president on the Democratic side to say a kind word in defense of their fellow tycoons. In today's Democratic Party, that would be an act of political suicide.

As for the rest of the field, you get the impression that they would rather get caught in a sex scandal with a yak than say something nice about businesspeople who have accumulated lots of money.

Joe Biden may wind up winning the nomination because there are enough older, traditional Democrats still around. But he's 77 and doesn't represent the future of his party. People such as 30-year-old Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), a self-proclaimed "democratic socialist" like Sanders, is what the future looks like. And when she hits 35 and can legally run for president, it's a safe bet that she will.

Maybe the richest Americans don't need a tax break, but they sure don't need to be pilloried and denigrated either. You know what they do need? Our gratitude, that's what.

According to the Tax Foundation's latest numbers, the top 1 percent of taxpayers kicks in about 37 percent of all individual income taxes. The top 5 percent pays 58 percent; the top 10 percent pays just under 70 percent of all federal

income taxes.

Oh, yeah – the bottom 50 percent pays a measly 3 percent of all federal income taxes.

And we're vilifying rich people?

These "fat cats" are the ones who do the heavy lifting in this country. They're the ones whose federal tax dollars pick up a big chunk of the tab for all sorts of noble things, such as food for folks who don't have enough to eat ... medicine and doctors for people with little money ... financial aid to help other people's kids go to college ... milk and diapers for poor babies whose 15-year-old mothers and deadbeat fathers are too irresponsible to take care of their own kids ... a safety net for old folks who are retired on fixed incomes ... and on and on.

In case you're wondering, no, I'm not saying the wealthiest Americans are a bunch of selfless philanthropists (although a lot of them are just that). But try to imagine an America without those rich people.

So, at the risk of giving Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, AOC and all of the progressives who love them a really bad case of indigestion, here's what I'm suggesting: I say we build a new monument in our nation's capital, a big bronze and granite statue that would honor an entire group of Americans who are true heroes, and unsung heroes at that.

It is time – no, make that long past time – to pay tribute to those this nation of ours owes a great debt, to those who give and give and give and, in return, get anything but our gratitude.

Right there, amongst the sacred national structures that honor great Americans, we need to build a shiny monument to ... The Rich – otherwise known in progressive circles as the filthy, no good, greedy, heartless rich.

The statue could be simple and elegant: a smiling rich guy in a business suit holding hundred-dollar bills in one hand and a cigar in the other, both hands extended toward the blue sky.

This is an idea whose time has finally come.

So let's get busy on that monument. And let's get the few Americans who are still unemployed busy building it. It's the least they, and we all, can do for those nice rich people who face so much abuse while keeping our country afloat.

Editor's Note: This column originally appeared in thehill.com