



June, 2015

Dear Friend,

I am writing to ask for your support for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

Please join the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have signed up on our webpage at berniesanders.com and the more than 150,000 people who have made financial contributions. Our campaign is developing strong momentum throughout the country and is drawing large crowds in state after state. In any way you can, please become part of our movement.

Let me be very blunt and tell you why I am running.

This country faces more serious problems today than at any time in modern history, and establishment politics will not successfully resolve them.

Corporate greed is rampant, and the very rich keep growing richer while everyone else grows poorer. Despite an explosion in technology and a huge increase in productivity, the middle class continues to disappear, most Americans work longer hours for lower wages and 45 million live in poverty.

The skyrocketing level of income and wealth inequality is not only grotesque and immoral, it is economically unsustainable. It is unconscionable that 99% of all new income goes to the top 1%. It is absurd that the top one-tenth of 1% own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%, and that one family (the Waltons of Walmart) has more wealth than the bottom 130 million Americans.

As a result of the disastrous Supreme Court ruling on Citizens United, the billionaire class is spending huge amounts of money to buy candidates and elections. We are now witnessing the undermining of American democracy and the rapid movement toward oligarchy where a handful of very wealthy families and their Super PACs will control our government.

The scientific community is virtually unanimous in telling us that climate change is real, is caused by human activity, and is already bringing catastrophic damage to our planet. Yet still, the Republican Party is prepared to reject science in order to gain campaign contributions from the Koch brothers, Big Energy companies and others who make billions in fossil fuel. If we do not act boldly on climate change, the planet we leave to our grandchildren may be uninhabitable.

The United States once led the world in terms of the percentage of our young people who had college degrees. Today, in a highly competitive global economy, we are now in 12th place. Hundreds of thousands of bright young people have given up on the dream of higher education, while millions of others leave school with oppressive debt.

Our infrastructure -- roads, bridges, rail, airports, water systems, wastewater plants, levees, dams -- is crumbling, and Congress refuses to appropriate anywhere near the necessary funds to rebuild it. If we do not invest substantially in infrastructure, a bad situation will only become much worse.

Most of the major Wall Street financial institutions that we bailed out because they were "too big to fail," are now bigger than they used to be. The six largest financial institutions now have assets equivalent to nearly 60% of our GDP, issue 35% of the mortgages and oversee 65% of credit cards.

Over, please...

P.O. Box 905 • Burlington, Vermont 05402 • 802-862-1505 • www.berniesanders.com

Paid for and authorized by Bernie 2016. (Not the billionaires)



Our tax system is wildly unfair - rigged to benefit the very rich. Major corporations that earn billions in profits stash their money in tax havens and pay nothing in federal income taxes, while billionaire hedge fund managers pay a lower effective tax rate than nurses or teachers.

Despite growing poverty among seniors almost all Republicans, and some Democrats, want to cut Social Security and benefits for disabled veterans. They want more austerity for the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor, and more tax breaks for the rich.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost us thousands of lives and trillions of dollars. The United States spends more on the military than the next nine biggest-spending countries combined. Today, there are massive cost overruns with defense contractors and the Pentagon cannot even pass an independent audit.

We are at a moment of truth. We need to face up to the reality of where we are as a nation, and we need a mass movement of people to fight for change.

After a year of travel, discussion and dialogue, I have decided to be a candidate for the Democratic nomination for president. But let's be clear. This campaign is not about Bernie Sanders. It's about a grassroots movement of Americans standing up and saying: "Enough is enough. This country and our government belong to all of us, not just a handful of billionaires."

I have discussed some of the major crises that we face. Let me give you the outline of an agenda which addresses these problems.

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: The truth is that real unemployment in our country is not the "official" and widely-reported 5.4 percent. Counting those who are under-employed and those who have given up looking for work, real unemployment is almost 11 percent. Even more disturbingly, youth unemployment is over 17 percent and African-American youth unemployment is much higher than that.

If we are truly serious about reversing the decline of the middle class and putting millions of people back to work, we need a major federal jobs program. The most effective way to do that is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. In that regard, I have introduced legislation which would invest \$1 trillion over 5 years to modernize our country's physical infrastructure. This legislation would create and maintain at least 13 million good-paying jobs. It would also make our country more productive, efficient and safe.

I will also continue my opposition to our current trade policies which have cost us millions of decent paying jobs as corporate America shuts down plants here and moves them to low-wage countries.

Raising Wages: Today, millions of Americans are working for starvation wages and median family income has declined by almost \$5,000 since 1999. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is totally inadequate. We need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage - \$15 an hour over the next few years. Our goal must be that no full-time worker in this country lives in poverty. We must also bring about pay equity. There is no rational reason why women should be earning 78 cents on the dollar compared to men who perform the same work.

Further, we have got to expand overtime protections for millions of workers. It is absurd that "supervisors" who earn \$25,000 a year are currently forced to work 50 or 60 hours a week with no overtime pay. And we need paid sick leave and vacation time for all.

Wealth and Income Inequality: Today, the richest 400 Americans own over \$2.2 trillion in wealth, more than the bottom 150 million Americans combined. Meanwhile, nearly half of all Americans have less than \$10,000 in savings and have no idea how they will be able to retire with dignity.

In order to reverse the massive transfer of wealth and income from the middle class to the very rich that we have seen in recent years, we need real tax reform which makes the wealthy and profitable corporations begin to pay their fair share of taxes. It is fiscally irresponsible that the U.S. Treasury loses about \$100 billion a year because corporations and the rich stash their profits in the Cayman Islands, Bermuda and other tax havens. I have introduced legislation which would end this legalized tax fraud.

We need a tax system which is fair and progressive. Children should not go hungry in this country while profitable corporations and the wealthy avoid their tax responsibilities.

Reforming Wall Street: I have introduced legislation which would break up the largest financial institutions in the country. In my view, if a bank is too big to fail, it is too big to exist. Wall Street cannot continue to be an island unto itself investing trillions in risky financial instruments. We need banks that invest in the job creating productive economy. We do not need more speculation and gambling in casino type activities.

Campaign Finance Reform: We need to return to a one-person one-vote democracy. It is not acceptable that the Koch brothers and other billionaires are spending endless sums of money to buy elections. I have introduced legislation which would overturn the horrendous Citizens United decision and will only appoint Supreme Court justices who are prepared to do that. We must also demand disclosure of all large campaign contributions. In my view, we need public funding of elections.

Reversing Climate Change: The United States must lead the world in reversing climate change and make certain that this planet is habitable for our children and grandchildren. We must transform our energy system away from fossil fuels and into energy efficiency and sustainable energies. Millions of homes and buildings need to be weatherized, our transportation system needs to be energy efficient and we need to greatly accelerate the progress we are already seeing in wind, solar, geothermal and other forms of sustainable energy. Transforming our energy system will not only protect the environment, it will create good-paying jobs.

Health Care for All: The United States remains the only major country on earth that does not guarantee health care for all as a right. Despite the modest gains of the Affordable Care Act, 35 million Americans continue to lack health insurance and many more are under-insured. Yet, we continue paying far more per capita for health care than any other nation. The United States must move toward a Medicare-for-All single-payer system.

Protecting Our Most Vulnerable: Today the United States has more people living in poverty than at almost any time in the modern history of our country.

We have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major nation, and millions of seniors and disabled people struggle to put food on the table because of insufficient Social Security benefits.

In my view, we have a moral responsibility to make certain that no American goes hungry or sleeps on the street. We must also make certain that seniors and people with disabilities can live in dignity. Not only must we vigorously oppose Republican attacks on the social safety net, we must expand benefits for those in need. That is why I have recently introduced legislation which would increase the solvency of Social Security until 2065, while expanding benefits for those who need them the most.

College for All: The United States must join Germany and many other countries in understanding that investing in our young people's education is investing in the future of our nation. I have introduced legislation to make tuition in public colleges and universities free, as well as substantially lowering interest rates on student loans.

War and Peace: I voted against the war in Iraq, and that was the right vote. We must be vigorous in combatting terrorism, but we can't do it alone. We must be part of an international coalition that includes Muslim nations which not only defeats ISIS but which works hard to create conditions for lasting peace. I will vigorously oppose an endless war in the Middle East.

Over, please...

Friends: A successful national campaign is a massive undertaking, especially when we will be heavily outspent. It will require the active participation of millions of Americans, in every community in our country. In fact, it will require nothing less than a political revolution – a revolution which combats the demoralization and alienation of so many of our people from the political process.

Now is the time to stand up and fight back. Now is the time to engage in the struggle for economic and social justice and environmental sanity.


Please help me bring our message to working families throughout this county and join the political revolution this country needs.

We don't have a Super PAC, and we don't have billionaires who make huge contributions. We are dependent on the support of ordinary Americans who want real change in this country.

Please contribute to Bernie 2016.

Let us never forget: This country belongs to all of us, not just a handful of billionaires.

Sincerely,


Senator Bernie Sanders

For more information and campaign updates, please visit:

www.berniesanders.com

On your phone, text BERNIE to 82623 for latest updates