Arguments About Bloomberg's "Electability" Overlook His Racism and Misogyny

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As billionaire Michael Bloomberg endeavors to buy his way to the presidency, some pundits continue to speculate that he has the best chance of defeating Donald Trump, even after his abysmal debate performance in Nevada. Bloomberg's campaign says Bernie Sanders is the only candidate standing in the way of Bloomberg winning the nomination and beating Trump.

Bloomberg plans to mount a "multipronged attack" on Sanders in the lead-up to Super Tuesday. It will be a "media onslaught" with expensive digital attack ads and may feature opposition research, the use of surrogates on TV and op-eds attacking Sanders.

Politico reports that Bloomberg is lobbying the Democratic establishment and "donors allied with his moderate opponents [such as Joe Biden] to flip their allegiance to him – and block Bernie Sanders" if the Democratic nomination goes to a brokered convention in July.

This means that even if Sanders has the most delegates going into the convention, he wouldn't win the nomination on the first ballot if he doesn't have 1,991 delegates. The superdelegates could then choose whomever they want on the second ballot.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) — which ensured that Hillary Clinton and not Sanders was the nominee in 2016 — would love to appoint the centrist plutocrat Bloomberg as the Democratic standard bearer. Just before Bloomberg entered the race, he gave $325,000 to the DNC and directs his high-dollar donors to give money directly to the DNC and not his campaign.

But in light of Bloomberg's dismal debate performance in Las Vegas and Sanders's clean sweep in the first three primaries, Bloomberg's millions may not be enough to catapult him to the Democratic nomination and ultimately to the White House.

Bloomberg's Support Fell After the Las Vegas Debate

After the February 19 debate, Bloomberg's first-choice support fell 3 points nationally to 17 percent, behind Biden. Bloomberg's net favorability dropped 20 points in general and it dropped 30 points with moderate Democrats who had supported his candidacy before the debate. That decline was the only significant movement among any of the Democratic candidates. But at the moment, Bloomberg still occupies third place after Sanders and Biden.

Bloomberg was the lightning rod at the debate. The other candidates came ready to confront him on his record — and confront him they did. He appeared woefully unprepared, although he reportedly underwent extensive mock debate preparation.

A "billionaire unaccustomed to having conversations on anyone else's terms," according to *The New York Times*, [Bloomberg floundered](#), unable to withstand the attacks on his record. "And if that's what happened in a Democratic debate," Sanders [told](#)*CNN's* Anderson Cooper, "I think it's quite likely that Trump will chew him up and spit him out."

The eighth-richest person in the United States, [Bloomberg is worth around $64 billion](#). At the debate, Bloomberg said he got "very lucky" and "worked very hard" for his wealth. Sanders countered that it "wasn't you who made all that money, maybe your workers played some role in that as well," suggesting that the workers "share the benefits" and "sit on corporate boards." Bloomberg was unmoved.

"Mike Bloomberg owns more wealth than the bottom 125 million Americans," Sanders [stated](#), while "half a million people [are] sleeping out on the street … we have kids who cannot afford to go to college … we have 45 million people dealing with student debt."

Meanwhile Elizabeth Warren confronted Bloomberg over his misogyny, now famously saying: "I'd like to talk about who we're running against: A billionaire who calls women 'fat broads' and 'horse-faced lesbians… And no, I'm not talking about Donald Trump. I'm talking about Mayor Bloomberg."

Warren also challenged Bloomberg over the nondisclosure agreements he has secured from unknown numbers of women for "sexual harassment and for gender discrimination in the workplace." Indeed, *The Washington Post* reported that [sexual harassment complaints have been filed against Bloomberg for many years](#), including allegations of crude sexual language.

Bloomberg refused to promise Warren that he would "release all of those women from these non-disclosure agreements." Two days after the debate, he announced that he would [release](#) three women from their nondisclosure agreements regarding "complaints about comments they said I had made."

Bloomberg's Disturbing Record Will Surely Hurt Him

Moreover, Bloomberg's disturbing record during the 11 years he served as mayor of New York City may be a deal breaker, especially for voters in Sanders's progressive, anti-Wall Street cohort.

Bloomberg has called for cuts to Social Security, including raising the retirement age; opposed an increase in the minimum wage; opposed paid sick leave; opposed the Affordable Care Act; opposed the Iran nuclear deal; supported private charter schools and favored fracking. He [endorsed](#) both of George W. Bush's presidential candidacies and heartily supported the Iraq War.

[Advocating blanket surveillance](#), Bloomberg declared that "we should hope" the National Security Agency was "reading every email." While he was mayor, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) used undercover informants to spy on Occupy Wall Street.

And [extensive surveillance of the Muslim community](#) for six years failed to provide even one lead for a terrorism investigation. "Michael Bloomberg oversaw the [mass warrantless, suspicionless surveillance](#) of Muslim New Yorkers, as the NYPD '[mapped](#)' where they prayed, ate, studied, and worked," Mehdi Hasan [wrote](#) at *The Intercept*.

Bloomberg's Racist "Stop-and Frisk" Program

Bloomberg was New York City mayor from 2002 to 2013. He presided over the notorious, illegal "stop-and-frisk" program. The NYPD conducted more than 5 million stops and interrogations. "Black and Latinx communities continue to be the overwhelming target of these tactics," the New York Civil Liberties Union said. "Nearly nine out of 10 stopped-and-frisked New Yorkers have been completely innocent," the group reported.

The Fourth Amendment allows law enforcement to stop a person if the officer has "reasonable suspicion" that the suspect committed or is about to commit a crime. Police can then frisk the suspect if the officer has reasonable suspicion that the person is armed and presently dangerous.

Officers cannot act on a hunch or engage in racial profiling. But that is just what the NYPD did routinely.

At the debate, Bloomberg claimed that he made the decision to end the stop-and-frisk program. The federal judge who oversaw the stop-and-frisk litigation for 10 years, however, said that Bloomberg was forced to discontinue the program after she ruled it unconstitutional.

Sanders stated, "In order to beat Donald Trump we're going to need the largest voter turnout in the history of the United States." But Bloomberg's stop-and-frisk program, which "went after African-American and Latino people in an outrageous way," would discourage voter turnout, he said.

"What Bloomberg did as mayor amounted to a police occupation of minority neighborhoods, a terroristic pressure campaign, with little evidence that it was accomplishing the goal of sustained, long-term crime reduction," Charles Blow wrote in The New York Times. "Nearly 90% of the people stopped were completely innocent. He knew that. They were the collateral damage in his crusade, black and brown bodies up against walls and down on the ground, groped in the middle of the city by strange men with guns, a vast expanse of human psychological wreckage about which he couldn't care less."

Bloomberg has made a litany of racist comments. For example, in 2011, he said Black and Latino men "don't know how to behave in the workplace." Bloomberg also alleged, "If you look at where crime takes place, it's in minority neighborhoods." He apparently doesn't classify crime in white neighborhoods, including white-collar crime, as "crime."

Helping the GOP Maintain Control of the Senate

Often changing his party affiliation, Bloomberg contributed millions of dollars to gain and maintain Republican control of the Senate.

Over a period of several decades through the end of 2018, Bloomberg donated more than $900,000 to Republican candidates, GOP federal PACs and national committees. One of Bloomberg's super PACs gave more than $10 million to federal GOP candidates from 2012-2016.

In the last decade alone, "Bloomberg helped Republicans take and maintain control of the U.S. Senate, which, in the Trump era and under Mitch McConnell's (R-Kentucky) leadership, has confirmed scores of right-wing judges, blocked liberal legislation passed by the House,

and shielded the president from any repercussions after seeking foreign election assistance, tampering with witnesses and defying congressional subpoenas," Alex Kotch wrote at the *Center for Media and Democracy.*

Sanders Is the Putative Front-Runner

At the Nevada caucus, Sanders won all age demographics except the over-65 voters. As William Rivers Pitt [reported](#) at *Truthout*, "Sanders captured a majority of votes from Nevada's Latinx voters, white voters, union households, non-union households, voters with college degrees, voters without college degrees, Democrats, Independents, women and men."

Sanders is a force to be reckoned with. [He is the first candidate](#) — Democrat or Republican — to win the popular vote in the first three primary contests.

Sanders has demonstrated that he appeals to moderates, not just progressives. In the Nevada caucus, he won [22 percent of moderate voters](#), which nearly tied Biden's 23 percent. Barack Obama's former campaign manager David Plouffe endeavored to [reassure moderates](#) in the Democratic Party, and indeed, the DNC, that Sanders is electable. Plouffe called the idea of a contested convention "preposterous," saying, "Right now there's no evidence that would suggest that Bernie Sanders is so much less electable than the rest." Plouffe cited Sanders's strong support from Black and Latinx voters in Nevada and deep backing of the young voters, saying they are "the future of the party."

Bloomberg, who didn't compete in the early voting states, is not yet battle-tested. He is holding his fire for the March 3 Super Tuesday primaries in 14 states, which will award 40 percent of the pledged delegate votes.

It remains to be seen whether Bloomberg's vast wealth can overcome his documented record of racism and misogyny.

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