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**BERNIE SANDERS IS RIGHT - THE SYSTEM IS RIGGED**

If there was ever a doubt our political system needs a third party, this year's presidential primary race proved the case. We have been taught that in a Democratic society our vote counts. Our friends scold us if we don't vote. The privilege of voting represents our opportunity to be heard, and our elected officials pledge to support the will of their constituents.

During the primaries, a vast majority of voters expressed their discontent with the Washington establishment. The fact that Bernie Sanders was able to garner the support of millions of voters and raise millions of dollars from individuals rather than from corporate America proves that the voters are against the political establishment. Bernie's issues and the platform he supported resonated with millions of Americans— they were totally removed from either party's platform of issues. The press called it Socialism; however, millions of voters embraced it. Bernie Sanders claimed the Democratic Party nomination process was rigged, and that certainly appears to be a valid claim.

In 2008, Debbie Wasserman Schultz was the co-chair of Hillary Clinton's primary election campaign. The fact that she was this year's Chairperson of the Democratic National Committee — setting the rules and agenda for the primary process, which favored the Clinton strategy — certainly appears to have been a serious conflict. Any chance the Clinton political machine orchestrated this? Certainly a strong possibility. Bernie Sanders and his supporters have a legitimate complaint, but, as usual, the Clinton's will benefit without ramifications.

Bernie Sanders has taken the high road. But make no mistake — he started a revolution that hopefully will continue; mobilizing his supporters and making a loud statement. *We the American voters need more choice than the established two-party system.*

Now, let's take this issue one step further. Donald Trump was opposed in the primaries by sixteen challengers, most of who were primarily from the Republican establishment. Other than Ben Carson, the candidates were well funded and, for the most part, supported Republican values. An overwhelming voter turnout for Trump nationwide enabled him to defeat these sixteen opponents. The voters once again spoke loudly. One could make a strong argument that Donald Trump does not stand for traditional Republican platform issues, notwithstanding his rhetoric to the contrary.

July 27, 2016 – G. A. Beller

The voters are telling us they want more options. They have overwhelmingly expressed their discontent with the current political two-party system, and as difficult as it may be to comprehend at this time, the American public has loudly voiced they feel the two-party system does not accurately represent their issues. Do we ignore their outcry?

A major overhaul of campaign funding, and the elimination of lobbyists in Washington, would be a good start. Ross Perot attempted to form a third party in 1992, but unfortunately he chose himself as the party's candidate. Bill Clinton might have been a footnote had Perot not syphoned the votes from George H. W. Bush. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the popular vote Perot was able to garner, this was the beginning of a voter's revolution.

The American Revolution began April 29, 1775, and on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. The population of the United States was approximately 2.5 million at that time. By 1787, most states had ratified the Constitution. Our country has since grown to a population of over 320 million Americans, and has evolved to achieve major changes in human rights and equality, including freedom from slavery, a woman's right to vote, and civil rights legislation outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

However, our political evolution has stalled. The current two-party-dominated political system is dramatically flawed. Lobbying and purchasing influence continues to corrupt our politicians. The system is in need of a significant overhaul. This year's primaries are proof of voter outrage. The support Bernie Sanders received is evidence of a voter revolution. Our political leaders must not ignore the will of the people. Democracy is for all, not just for the benefit of large donors and special interest groups.

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