



1. *Too Early to Choose a Candidate*
2. *Notre Dame: What Should Be Done?*
3. *The Democratic Party and Common Ground*

Too Early to Choose a Candidate

FRED POLLEVICK
STAFF WRITER

The 2020 elections are on: Mayor Pete, Biden, Bernie, Warren are a few of the many names making headlines. With the 2020 election getting closer, news outlets everywhere are starting to ponder who will be sitting in the Oval Office as the 46th President of the United States. While the excitement over the next presidential election—

Early candidacies demand commitment from voters early on, creating a bias and hard-headedness among them that is difficult to overcome later in the election process.

especially considering how much attention the last election drew—is understandable, I believe we should wait a little longer before we begin to jump on political trains and choose a candidate.

Early candidacies demand commitment from voters early on, creating a bias and hard-headedness among them that is difficult to overcome later in the election process. While a plethora of Democrats have thrown their names into the ring, many of them have not had the opportunity to voice their opinions on certain matters. Apart from Sanders and some other candidates, who have expressed their views in previous campaigns, candidates like Pete Buttigieg have drawn a lot of attention even though they have expressed fewer opinions on the issues. I am not against giving these candidates a platform from which to voice opinions. In fact, I think that is exactly what should be happening right now. However, I am against people hearing only a few opinions and deciding it will be “Bernie or bust.”

Furthermore, such early decision-making turns the election cycle into a quagmire. The consistent attention to these candidates produces so many opinions that by the time the debates come around, we appear to have our minds made up already. As a result,

there is little space for candidates to make proposals and be heard. Instead, the debates turn into inquiries about very specific things that questioners want to hear about in order to make that candidate or another one look bad, and many people aren't interested in the answer since they already know who they're for and against.

While I do not think it is wrong for candidates to begin to announce campaigns and voice their ideas this early, it is too early for voters to make up their minds. Except in the case of an incumbent president, we need to give candidates more time to express all of their opinions before choosing. An objection to this point might be that candidates with fewer funds will not last long in a campaign, and thus won't be able to communicate their opinions to a large audience except at the beginning. Although this is a respectable objection, the simple answer is that if one wants to, one can fund a candidate he or she *believes* will be a good president to give that person a chance to win others' votes--and maybe one's own. Then, perhaps upon hearing more about the candidate, the person who donated may change his or her mind.

We need to properly hear candidates out before deciding who we want to vote for. The time to choose is in 2020, not 2019. Early decisions just lead to stubbornness and a wider political split than the one that already exists. So the next time you hear someone trying to persuade you to go in a certain direction, take it into consideration, but remember that there is still plenty of time left to figure out exactly who you want to support.

Notre Dame: What Should Be Done?

MONTANA SPRAGUE
STAFF WRITER

In the wake of the tragic burning of the world-famous 800-year-old Notre Dame Cathedral, opinions on what should be done with the building vary greatly. The toppled steeple, destroyed beams, collapsed roof, and general rubble caused by the fire leave the options for renovations wide open. With currently over a billion dollars in restoration funds available, money appears to be no obstacle.

Because resources for this project are abundant, the initial and obvious public response was to rebuild the destroyed parts of the structure as they were or to replicate them as well as possible. Since so many features have survived--like the treasured rose windows and countless other priceless

In addition to the decision on whether to rebuild with historically accurate materials, there has been considerable speculation as to whether Notre Dame's burned parts should be replicated at all.

works of art--the cathedral's integrity and aesthetic can be preserved if the damaged sections can be restored so they are nearly identical to what was lost.

However, the fact that the original building materials are far below the quality available in the modern era leaves officials and engineers to determine whether the structural integrity of Notre Dame requires modern architectural intervention. The limestone that was so integral in sculpting the facade and structure may have been damaged beyond what officials can currently determine. Full investigations will need to be done in order to ensure safety for those in charge of the rebuilding, and for generations to come.

In addition to the decision on

continued on back

whether to rebuild with historically accurate materials, there has been considerable speculation as to whether Notre Dame's burned parts should be replicated at all. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced a competition to redesign the famous spire that collapsed. In the statement that accompanied the announcement, he suggested that simply replacing the 19th-century spire designed by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc with something identical would not be in the spirit or tradition

of Parisian historical culture and would violate the animating principle of the building itself. Such attempts to replicate destroyed or badly damaged parts of old French churches have been unsuccessful in the past, as with the Chartres cathedral. While experts agreed that there was a valid reason to believe renovation without changes was the best option, the public's opinion of the artistic value of the restoration dropped dramatically, as the attempt was seen as conceited and tasteless.

It is impossible to fully express what

"Our Lady of Paris" means to the people of France, let alone the entire world, and especially to Catholics. The combined impact of history, religion, and national pride guarantees that no resolution will erase the devastating wounds of such a loss. Regardless of how France decides to rebuild this defining feature of her capital, it is undeniable that the renovations will usher in a new era for Notre Dame. President Emmanuel Macron seems hopeful and has said he plans to have the cathedral restored in five years. Until then, the world waits.

The Democratic Party and Common Ground

ERIC FISCHER
STAFF WRITER

Hamilton's most recent installment of Common Ground, featuring Reince Priebus and Jim Messina, was notable less for on-stage disagreement and more for the political and campaign wisdom both participants displayed. One of the most striking points was their agreement that the current large Democratic primary field is positive for the Democratic Party. Such a claim seems counterintuitive, and demonstrates an evolution in thinking from the punditry in the 2016 primaries.

One of the most striking points was their agreement that the current large Democratic primary field is positive for the Democratic Party.

Conventional wisdom has held that bruising primary fights damage candidates' prospects in the general election by dividing the party's base among many candidates. Such a division occurred in both the Democratic and the Republican primaries in 2016. The Republicans saw a crowded field of establishment-type candidates divided and picked off one-by-one by Donald Trump, an unconventional candidate. A single establishment Republican opposing Trump might have won the nomination, but the fracturing of the more establishment-friendly primary voters proved impossible to overcome.

The Democratic Party is still dealing

with the fallout from its 2016 primaries. Many in the Bernie Sanders camp were peeved by what they viewed as the desire of the party elites to shut down Sanders and hand the nomination to Hillary Clinton. The Clinton camp, desperate to explain its own general election failure against one of the least popular candidates of all time, blamed its loss partly on the Sanders primary challenge.

In a concession to the Sanders camp, however, and to ensure that the nomination process better aligns with the will of the voters, the Democratic Party greatly reduced the power of superdelegates -- elites within the party.

The density of the Democratic field (almost 20 declared candidates) reflects the unpopularity of the incumbent president and a Democratic Party that is now fearful of delivering the nomination to a preordained candidate. Since the 2020 campaign began, in a sense, immediately after Election Day in 2016, multiple contenders have seen their stocks rise and fall with alarming speed. This raises the question: does a large primary field ensure the most successful candidate in the general election?

The answer depends on whether the

eventual Democratic candidate is elected. In the primaries, the Democratic Party risks a series of purity tests that would weed out moderate candidates, and trigger candidates to trip over themselves in a race leftward with their competitors. While this may produce a nominee who pleases the far left of the party, such a candidate is not well-positioned to win moderate voters in the Midwest and other swing states. On the other hand, a large primary field that draws from across the Democratic spectrum may lead to a nominee with a strong understanding of the broad base he or she must bring together in order to be elected. It remains to be seen who else may get in.

A loss for the Democrats in 2020 would be damaging, sparking four more years of finger-pointing, soul-searching, and rage at each successive tweet from President Trump. A victory would raise a new question: did the Democratic primaries produce a winning candidate who can also govern well for the entire nation?

For the sake of the party, of both its ability to win and its ability to give the country a good president, Democrats must use the 2020 primaries as an opportunity to pitch a wide tent. This election cycle provides the party a chance to correct its errors of 2016, by sidelining progressive identity politics in favor of a policy platform inclusive of many others who have felt left behind by our nation's contemporary politics. Voters of both parties should hope that the Democratic primaries elevate the candidate who is most articulate and effective in communicating a unifying national project, rather than sinking the candidates with the most chinks in their ideological armors.

ENQUIRY

vol. VI

Claire Anastasia Kitz
Editor-in-Chief

Andrew Juchno
Managing Editor

Helen Sternberg
Layout Editor

STAFF WRITERS

Eric Fischer
Grant Kiefaber
Michael LaPorte
Tiffany Lopes
Nikki Matsuoka
Fred Pollevick
Montana Sprague
Edward Shvets

The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at ckitz@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

1. *Too Early to Choose a Candidate*
#NoClearCandidate
2. *Notre Dame: What Should Be Done?*
#NotreDameSolutions
3. *The Democratic Party and Common Ground*
#CommonGround