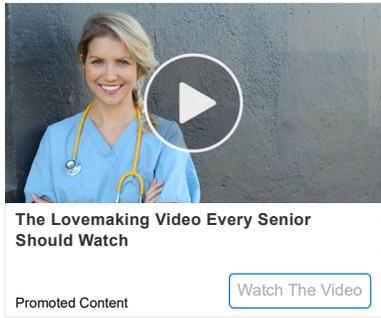


- U.S.
- JILL STEIN
- BERNIE SANDERS
- POLLS

A recent poll of 3,758 adult voters in the U.S. found that 60 percent believe that nation needs a viable third political party outside of the Democratic and Republican parties in order to have an effective political system.

The poll—conducted by the Washington, D.C. newspaper *The Hill* and the market research company HarrisX—found that when broken out by gender, varying ages ranges, races, education and income levels and geographic location, support for a viable third party remained near or just above 60 percent.

However, support for a third party differed between white people (58 percent), Black people (64 percent) and Latinos (69 percent) as well as between Republicans (51 percent), Democrats (61 percent) and Independents (68 percent).



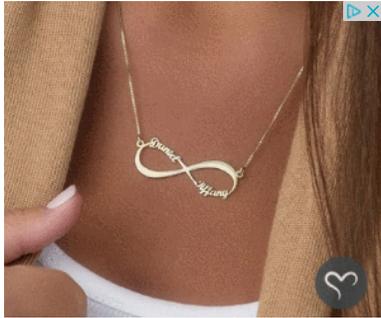
At current, the three largest third parties in the U.S. are the Green Party, the Libertarian party and the Constitution Party. Each one has over 100,000 registered voters. Numerous smaller third parties also exist in the United States.

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In a statement to *Newsweek*, Joe Bishop-Henchman, Chair of the Libertarian National Committee, noted that it got its third-party presidential candidate Jo Jorgensen on all 50 state ballots for the upcoming November elections.

Bishop-Henchman said that third parties like his are "hamstrung by ballot access rules that put Democrats and Republicans automatically on the ballot but make everyone else collect hundreds of thousands of signatures.... Anyone talking about election integrity and fairness should support repealing those restrictions."





While millions of Americans vote Libertarian, he added, there is only one Libertarian elected official in Congress, Michigan Representative Justin Amash. As such, Bishop-Henchman said he wishes more states would look at voting reforms to allow third-party candidates greater representation and electability on ballots.

"America would be better off with more and different voices at the decision-making table," Bishop-Henchman told *Newsweek*.

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In a statement to *Newsweek*, Green Party Communications Manager Michael O'Neil, said that the HarrisX/Hill poll provides more evidence that a majority of Americans share the Green Party's view that the country can't achieve a grassroots democracy without multi-party democracy.

"The ideas and values in the United States are far too diverse to be represented by only two parties, especially two parties that have been so obviously captured by elite power structures and conspire to stifle any outside competition," O'Neil



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While the Green Party welcomes all voters who share its commitments to policies like the Green New Deal, dismantling the police state and the drug war, and Medicare-For-All, O'Neil continued, "These increasingly popular stances are nevertheless marginalized by the Democrat and Republican leaderships."

Newsweek also contacted the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) for comment.



A photo illustration of an undecided voter.
VCHAL/GETTY



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Throughout the nation's history, third parties have helped insert political issues and individuals candidates into the political mainstream. In the past, there have been single-issue parties like the Prohibition Party of the early 20th century that sought to outlaw alcohol, and the 21st century Humane Party that focuses on animal rights.

Some third parties have also formed in individual states as a way to bolster certain political movements such as the Alaskan Independence Party which sought to have the state secede from the U.S. and the Liberal Party of New York which has generally supported candidates with progressive policies on abortion access, universal healthcare and increased educational spending.

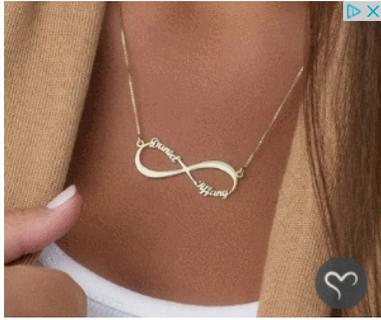
Former Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is currently the longest-serving Independent politician not officially affiliated with either major political party, even though he has twice run for president under the Democratic banner.

Because of the winner-take-all nature of the U.S. national elections, third-party candidates are often seen as non-viable "spoilers" who often end up taking away votes from the candidate most closely aligned with their values. As a result, few third-party candidates ever win elections.

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For example, after Republican President Donald Trump won the 2016 election, Green Party presidential nominee Jill Stein was accused of having split the progressive vote, peeling away key votes that might have helped Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton win.



Also, because third parties tend to be less-funded, they can have trouble meeting the fundraising and voter support requirements necessary for them to appear on a ballot or a debate stage.

Third-party supporters have championed ranked voting as a way to allow people to vote for third-party candidates without "throwing away their vote" since ranked voting allocates a person's vote towards their second- or third-choice candidate if their first-choice candidate doesn't win.

Update (9/19/2020, 12:18 a.m. ET): This article has been updated to include a statement from the Libertarian Party.

