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The Left's Three Big Lies Behind the Platner Disaster

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The collapse of Graham Platner's campaign was the predictable end of an effort kept afloat by an absurd set of stories told by the left. Led by Bernie Sanders, Ro Khanna, the Fight Agency, many advocacy groups, and these two geniuses, they trashed anyone who dared question their claims. With Platner out of the race, we can forget him, but Democrats can't afford to ignore the lies that got us here. A highly winnable seat in a blue state is now going to be much harder to flip, and if Democrats are duped again by these lies, the White House will move out of reach in 2028. So, it's essential to name these falsehoods.

Lie #1: You can fake authenticity.

This was the entire shtick: the gravelly voiced oysterman in a flannel shirt and a trucker cap, a genuine "working-class Mainer." Platner flat out said, "I think that people will be able to trust me because very quickly they're going to learn that I'm just one of them. I don't come from a lot of wealth. I'm a working-class guy that lives a working-class life. And I think there's an authenticity there that most other politicians just can't provide because it's inauthentic for them."

The reality, as the New York Times documented, is quite different: Platner was born a rich kid in a family of intergenerational wealth. He attended an elite boarding school and private prep school. His grandfather was a wealthy, celebrated architect whose chairs go for five figures; his father is a prominent attorney and longtime Democratic donor who gave Platner a \$200,000 loan for his house. (Don't most working-class people make mortgage payments to their family?) His oyster farm sells mostly to his mom. Platner's entire brand was built on a hoax—one that was obvious early on.

Lie #2: Character doesn't count.

In the age of Trump, the left seems to believe character no longer matters. The progressive army waved away the warning signs, minimizing them or even labeling them indicia of working-class credibility: The Nazi tattoo on his chest, which was the symbol the SS units of concentration camps wore on their collars. The "old posts," including asking why Black people don't tip and suggesting assault victims should take responsibility for getting too drunk. A Reddit comment praising a Hamas attack as a "damn fine looking and successful raid." Sexting outside his marriage.

The lights were blinking bright red from the start and only got brighter. And yet, Elizabeth Warren called him "my kind of man," Sanders insisted that "there are no saints in the US Senate," and endorsements rained down from legions of other left-wing elected officials, groups, podcasters, and influencers. Critics who raised concerns were vilified. And his backers and political team brushed aside stories of sexual misconduct until they were

finally confronted by a very credible rape allegation. But the left had it backwards: a party that wants to condemn Trump's myriad flaws and constant depredations with compelling moral clarity cannot conduct itself this way.

And to be clear, voters saw through this lie, and not just those outside of base Democrats. The Times poll found that 50% of Maine voters thought Platner did not have "good character," and 48% said he did not have "the right kind of moral values." (Perhaps numbers Trump would be proud of, but not what you want associated with Democrats). A majority of Mainers who heard about Platner's controversies said it made them either not support him (30%) or seriously question whether they could support him (26%). So, the verdict is in: for the MAGA/Trump opposition party, character matters—both morally and politically.

Lie #3: The socialist agenda works with the working class.

In the late-June Times/Siena poll, Platner, running as a proud progressive, trailed Susan Collins among voters without a college degree by 21 points (37-58). He was beating Collins among college graduates by 30 points. Like so many other alleged "working-class champions," he was actually the candidate of the educated left, and the workers he claimed to speak for weren't buying it.

Moreover, the Times poll found that Platner, who championed a democratic socialist platform, fared worst among battleground state Senate candidates in attempting to escape the Democratic Party's most basic brand problem. 45% of voters in Maine thought Platner was "too far to the left." That dwarfed the responses about candidates in Iowa (25%), North Carolina (30%), and Alaska (36%). Non-college voters were even less impressed: 52% of them said Platner was too far left. There's a reason for that. As an advocate for Sanders-style politics, he was too far left, and no amount of blue-collar cosplay was going to fix it.

None of this should be surprising to Democrats. As we have seen recently, this kind of politics is deeply unpopular outside of deep blue places like New York City's "Commie Corridor." In our recent poll, the Democratic Socialists of America's approval rating is -27. Only 21% of non-college voters and 16% of Independents rate them favorably. And, like Platner (not a formal DSA member but "recommended" by the Maine chapter), those DSA candidates who won recent House primaries actually tanked with the very voters they claim to represent. Darializa Avila Chevalier and Claire Valdez won NYC precincts with richer younger people and lost older, lower-income, largely Black and Hispanic areas.

The upshot is clear: candidates, character, and ideas matter. The working people the left claims to fight for are perfectly capable of noticing when they're being sold some lefty

strategist's confection. It is vital that Democratic candidates preparing to vie for the presidential nomination learn the right lessons from this fiasco. They must tune out the loud voices of the far left, pay attention to what voters actually want, and pay no heed to the people who spent a year insisting that an obvious fraud was in fact our party's future.
