



## **Every American Should Run for President**

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Why should each of us run for president? First of all, because we can. In America, everyone - assuming compliance with fairly reasonable guidelines - is permitted to run for president. You need to be within a certain age range, meet specific submission deadlines and obtain a pre-determined minimum number of supporters – all achievable for the committed candidate. Now, of course, once you satisfy these baseline requirements, things start to become a little more dicey, particularly if you intend to pursue the nomination through one of the established two political parties. The eligible population drops quickly from, spit-balling, 250 million down to twenty-five in the blink of an eye. And, even of those twenty-five, there are only about five realistic "front runners".

Addressing briefly how one becomes a front runner - at the highest level - it comes down to patronage, influence and money. A possible second tier of qualifications could include intangibles such as personality, charisma and, if we lived in a utopian world, your experience and your plan for the first hundred days. Suffice it to say, however, success primarily relies on addressing patronage, influence and money.

Assuming you are interested in a run at the top job and you don't have access to any of these primary assets, you should still drive forward. As mentioned, the first and foremost reason is because you can. The process was originally intended, I trust, not to simply pluck our leaders from a small, elite pool of fish. Of course, that is often times what happens but I would like to believe the intention was more noble. Even if we cannot realistically dream of an even playing field for all eligible Americans, the process of preparing for and possibly executing a presidential campaign is still worth the effort. It is good for us and it is healthy for the election process. Simply going through the motions vests us in this critical aspect of democracy and will encourage us to take a more active and engaged role in the future. Therefore, it is not time wasted.

Let's get down to the raw basics ... this is a job application, plain and simple. We begin by accepting the fact that any American of a certain age who fulfills the basic requirements can, in fact, become president. So if I told you that you could apply for and potentially get this job that pays \$450,000 per year salary plus another hundred thousand in travel and entertainment and other related expenses – along with all the other perks – wouldn't you considerate that? Yes?

You might say, no, why would I apply when I do not have the experience to be president? A president, you might observe, must have deep and proven knowledge of politics, commerce, human rights, healthcare, international relations, domestic policies to include immigration and taxation, etc.

What I would say to you is, in fact, you do not need to have those qualifications; you simply need to be able to hire people who have these unique skills.

You then tell me that you do not have experience even to hire the people who have the requisite experience.

I will say to you put out an ad on Monster or Craig's List for someone who wants to work at the White House hiring good people. Tell them they will be paid well - not a king's ransom – and they will have a great deal of influence, a greatly enhanced resume when they are done and - did I mention – working in the White House? Does this change your mind?

Why, yes it does, you would say, I will take it. The fact that you might have to compete against 250 million other available applicants should be your only major hurdle. Your next step should be to go and dust off your resume and submit it to the Human Resources Department, United States Federal Government, Washington, DC USA. One small caveat is that I would encourage you to spend the extra \$6.95 for a courier envelope with the tracking number as there is a slim but distinct possibility your application will get lost in the mail.

So why else should you and everyone else run for president? One clear benefit is in diversity - in all its wide and varied definitions. Not only race, religion, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status but the diversity of thought, sensibility and perspective. America is a diverse nation by design and is becoming more diverse every day. Diversity is what creates true "American Exceptionalism". Juxtapose the US with other countries that practice or preach against any sort of diversity and I will choose America every day. Yes, we fight like brothers and sisters in any family but, at the end of the day, we remain family. And, most importantly, we have the liberty to fight with each other if we want to. Certain people outside of our country think we do nothing but oppress, be oppressed, fight about oppression and, generally, do not like each other. But, I said, at least we have the freedom to not like each other. We are fortunate to have a voice and it is loud.

Other countries have no voice and some equate that to peace, love and fraternity. That's not what I see. When I watched the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics – the ceremony that has not and never will be equaled – citizens were selected by the tens of thousands to march, dance, sing, somersault and catapult in lockstep to create an image, at the insistence of the leaders, of a country that is unified, working together, communal – and by association, happy. Knowing and seeing the true diversity that is the Chinese nation, I felt uncomfortable watching this “perfect” display. I prefer to engage with the true diverse and robust Chinese people not the racially purified model that was thrust upon us in 2008. This is why diversity is so important to America and must be exalted as the tip of Liberty's flame. And this is why many, many more people of all backgrounds and perspectives should run for president.

Not only would I like to diversify the field, I would like to dilute it, certainly early in the process. Americans should see how diverse we are and again, not simply skin color and ethnicity but thought and experience. I don't think the two-party system should be a participant in the process until the end; there is simply too much influence and patronage built into that process. Actually, I would counter that there is no process at all, only influence and patronage. This is sad, indeed. I believe by sprinkling more herbs and spices into the recipe, the better the meal. I find a robust paella platter far more interesting than two-meat surf and turf, don't you?

And, last and certainly not least, the main reason I say everyone should run for president is simply to look at what our collective process is today. It is no better than a high school election for prom kings and queens (does this even happen anymore?). It is a demeaning, childish and uninspiring popularity contest. It dumbs down the candidates and forces us to choose the least offensive or dangerous of the two. Or, worse yet, we are only left with the one who has the most money to survive the gauntlet and be the last candidate standing. Truly, truly frustrating.

This is why I think everyone should run or be prepared to run for president. We need to demystify and, therefore, de-weaponize the process. We must understand it and realize, at the end of the day, that being president of our great nation – still the greatest in the world (and I can prove it) – is a job, not a coronation. Tell me what you're going to do in the first hundred days and what you're not going to do, then show me what you believe in and that you are not telling me things you think I want to hear only to scoff at them when you are seated on your throne. Otherwise, you and your two-party system need to be dismantled and replaced by something new and better.

Let's get started.