



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on October 13, 2023

Cornel West Parts Ways With Green Party, Runs for POTUS as Independent

Democrats may hope to present a united front behind Joe Biden heading into the 2024 presidential election, but the bids of alternative candidates suggest the Left is more fractured than they would have us believe.

Cornel West, the left-wing activist and philosopher known for his unique blend of democratic socialism, black-church Christianity, and race theory, this week put an abrupt end to his unconsummated relationship with the Green Party. Despite the party preparing the infrastructure to get him on the ballot in every state and provide him with a ground game, West declared he will run as an Independent.



AP Images
Cornel West

And this is the second time he's parted ways with a party in the last four months, having previously left the ticket of the People's Party after just 11 days with them.

While West never officially became the Greens' nominee, they were already laying the groundwork for him, setting up dedicated Cornel West teams and appointing 2016 Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein to run his campaign.

Stein voiced disapproval of West's decision, arguing that it doesn't look good for his candidacy.

"I see this as a bit of a transition for us as Greens.... I see this as a crisis for Cornel's campaign," she said, per [Politico](#).

West said part of the reason for his decision was an unwillingness on his part to go through all the steps necessary to become the Green Party nominee.

"The moment of transition became clear, given the internal dynamics of the Green Party," he said. "The procedures and requirements for debate, you have to go to various Green Party events in a variety of different states.... I said, 'Oh my God, this is a lot of energy and time and effort.'"

But he also suggested the Green Party did not fit the type of campaign he wanted to run or the type of voters he wanted to court, hinting that the party is too white and too old.

"[The Green Party] has had a whole host of different campaigns," said West. "It's still very difficult to see the ways in which the movement has flowed from the campaign.... Young people have not been that tied to the Greens at all. Black people have not been that tied to the Greens at all. Brown people, trade union people, they haven't been that tied to the Greens at all."

For the Green Party, West's background and messaging was precisely what they were hoping to incorporate into the party. Their relationship with West was an effort to merge the environmental platform they are known for with West's social-justice activism. In essence, a West candidacy would



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have made the Green Party the quintessential ticket for the American far-left or progressive movement.

While West is seen as having no real chance at becoming president, there is nevertheless enthusiasm for the candidacy of the man who has long been a popular intellectual voice in left-wing circles.

As *Politico* noted of the response to a Cornel West speech in New York last month:

“[West] is a prophet, he sets the world on fire in the best way,” said Gretchen Elmendorf, a former student of West’s who marched behind him [in September’s March to End Fossil Fuels].

Would she vote for him?

“No, because we’ve got too much at stake. I hate to say this, because it’s us vs. them thinking, but I don’t want the Republican MAGAs to win.”

It’s a refrain that Elmendorf shared with other climate march attendees. When asked whether she supported the idea of West running for office, Swati Srivastava said “wholeheartedly.” But as far as the reality of him running for president this cycle, she said, “he should have come into the Democratic debate, like Bernie Sanders did.... So no, [I won’t support him].”

One final man with whom the outlet spoke affirmed that he “love[s] Dr. West” and has read several of his books, but does not want “one vote taken away from the majority of votes that I pray and hope will defeat Donald Trump.”

It appears, then, that while there is a demand within the American Left for candidates who are more progressive than Joe Biden, most voters remain pragmatic and are reluctant to cast their ballots for someone other than the Democratic nominee for fear it would lead to a Trump victory. Notably, many Democrats, rightly or wrongly, blame Jill Stein’s 2016 Green Party campaign for siphoning votes away from Hillary Clinton and thus enabling the election of Donald Trump.

Accordingly, a [poll](#) from NBC News last month found that only 38 percent of those who say they are voting for Biden are doing so because of him specifically; 58 percent said they were voting more against Trump than for Biden.

West is not the only candidate to part ways with a party in favor of an independent bid this week. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. likewise dropped his campaign for the Democratic nomination to run as an Independent — a move that has insiders in both the Democratic establishment and the GOP worried.



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