



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 20, 2012

WikiLeaks Chief Assange to Run for Australian Senate

Founder Julian Assange (left) of the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks plans to run for a seat in the Australian Senate while under house arrest in the United Kingdom, according to an announcement made by his organization over the weekend. The next election is expected sometime late in 2013 at the earliest.



Numerous legal experts [quoted](#) in international media reports said Assange's current [troubles](#) with various governments would not prevent him from running for office in his native Australia. And WikiLeaks seems to agree.

"We have discovered that it is possible for Julian Assange to run for the Australian Senate while detained," the organization [said](#) in a twitter message posted on Saturday that immediately made headlines around the world. "Julian has decided to run."

WikiLeaks [noted](#) in a follow-up posting on the social-networking service that it would announce which Australian state Assange would run in "at the appropriate time." A separate message said the group would also be running a candidate against the nation's far-left Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who has been criticized by Assange and his supporters for failing to defend WikiLeaks and its founder — an Australian national.

"I think it would be possible for Julian to campaign in absentia," [said](#) Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam during a recent press conference, adding, however, that it would be "alarming" if Assange were still detained by next year. "I think there is huge support in the Australian community for Julian and his work, and the work of WikiLeaks. We don't like being bullied by the United States government and we would like to see the Australian government step up for him."

For more than a year, the high-profile transparency activist has been fighting extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning in a [bizarre "sex crime" investigation](#) that his supporters insist is politically motivated. The British Supreme Court is set to rule on the case soon. But even if that fails, attorneys said they would appeal to the "European Court of Human Rights."

Assange also fears that the Swedish government might seek to extradite him to the United States, where American prosecutors are reportedly pursuing a secret "espionage" or "conspiracy" indictment against him. Alleged whistleblower Army Pfc. Bradley Manning — accused of leaking hundreds of thousands of classified U.S. government documents to WikiLeaks exposing a wide array of lies and corruption — is already [on trial](#) for "aiding the enemy."

The WikiLeaks founder's mother, Christine Assange, has been in the press recently, too, blasting the Australian government's failure to defend the rights of her son. "The number one issue at the next election regardless of who you vote for is democracy in this country — whether or not we're just a state of the U.S. and whether or not our citizens are going to be just handed over as a sacrifice to the U.S.



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alliance,” the distraught mother [told](#) reporters, admitting she had not yet spoken to her son about his political ambitions.

It remains unclear whether Assange plans to seek support from an established political party. But analysts have suggested he might even be able to successfully start a “WikiLeaks Party” dedicated to government transparency and fighting official corruption.

“A ‘Wikileaks Party’ makes great sense,” [wrote](#) Peter Kemp in an analysis of Assange’s election eligibility for *WL Central*, an independent media outlet covering news related to the organization. “It is an eminently logical extension of Julian Assange’s question — having other members in a formal party contesting (and winning) State and Federal elections in all houses. It is not only feasible but likely given the support levels in Australia.”

If Assange wins even four percent of the vote, taxpayers would have to reimburse his campaign with up to \$2 Australian dollars per voter, according to reports. Analysts, however, disagree on how much support his election bid might garner, with some suggesting he could actually win and others contending that the run would essentially be irrelevant.

Assange has an enthusiastic global following for his work exposing corruption in government and the corporate world. However, he also has more than a few prominent enemies — some of whom have [publicly suggested](#) he be assassinated, tried for treason in the United States despite not being American, or treated as an “enemy-combatant” terrorist and detained indefinitely.

WikiLeaks surged to prominence in recent years after [publishing](#) secret government files related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as hundreds of thousands of U.S. diplomatic cables shedding light on widespread corruption. The group’s most recent work involved [exposing the internal e-mails](#) of private-intelligence firm Stratfor and the inner workings of the so-called global “[mass surveillance industry](#).”

Officials around the world are reportedly becoming increasingly jittery about potentially having their secrets aired in public. More than a few — [the dictator of Yemen](#), [senior members of the global “climate change” apparatus](#), [the U.S. government](#), [officials plotting a “North American Union.”](#) and more — have already been exposed.

Even if Assange is not elected to the Australian Senate, his supporters [hope](#) the high-profile run will keep the pressure on governments and the media spotlight on WikiLeaks’ work. So far, it appears to have succeeded, at least in attracting headlines. But whether that will continue to grow or not remains to be seen.

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