

A Nation of Self-Interested Devils

By Nicholas Taylor, J.D. Candidate 2020 | February 7, 2019

Howard Schultz, ex-CEO of Starbucks and unofficial presidential candidate, gave a [speech](#) in San Francisco on February 1, 2019. Mr. Schultz touched on many issues, including healthcare, immigration, and climate change. He also announced that he may run as an Independent in 2020, which provoked the ire of Democrats. As an assumedly left-of-center candidate, Schultz could split the Democratic vote and thereby ensure [President Trump's second term](#). But, some are [optimistic](#) about the possibility of a viable third-party candidate.

Mr. Schultz has a constitutional right to run for the presidency. More power to him.

Mr. Schultz is responding to the nation's appetite for an Independent candidate (much like President Trump's hints at running for the presidency a few times over the years). The theme of Mr. Schultz's potential candidacy appears to be bringing the two parties together—something an Independent would be better equipped to do than a partisan president—to overcome the problem of self-interest in lawmaking.

[With respect to health care](#), Mr. Schultz explained that the ACA was the “right move,” even though rising premiums “have clearly become a problem.” That's like saying that communism in Soviet Russia was the right idea, even though the starvation of millions of people was a problem. The ACA, regardless of its policy objective, was designed so that those who could afford to pay would have to cover the cost of insurance for those who would not otherwise qualify.

But, it's Mr. Schultz's proposed solution with which I have a particular problem. He claims that Congress “made a deal with the devil.” According to Mr. Schultz, if we could just remove ideology and self-interest from the room, then our health care problem would be solved.

I don't think so.

The last time Congress got enough votes for a bill on health care, we got the ACA. Mr. Schultz wants to bring in health care professionals, pharmaceutical companies, and the government to solve the problem. Isn't that exactly how the ACA was concocted? Maybe we'll get a different solution this time if we can just “put pressure on pharmaceutical companies to remove the self-interest from the equation.” I am not so hopeful.



The health care industry was heavily regulated even prior to the enactment of the ACA. Could it be that government regulation is the cause of this health care problem? Perhaps the part of the health care equation that needs changing is the degree of government involvement.