

US Democrats embrace govt healthcare

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Washington DC

Liberal Senator Bernie Sanders was yesterday set to introduce a plan for US government-funded healthcare, an idea that has quickly gained traction among Democrats, including several who may launch presidential bids in 2020.

But while support for such a health system has surged among Democrats this year, the party's leaders are not on board.

Sanders, whose "single payer" health insurance proposal helped form the backbone of his campaign revolution against Hillary Clinton for last year's Democratic presidential

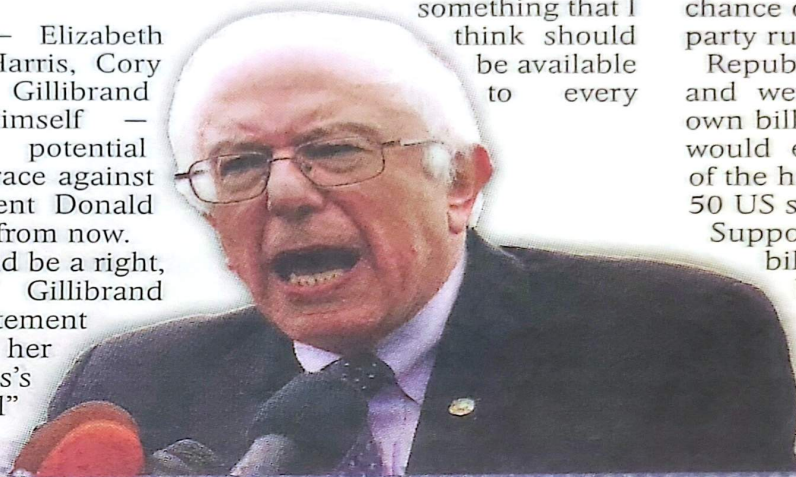
nomination, said he now has support from 14 fellow senators in the chamber's 48-member democratic caucus.

Five of them — Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand and Sanders himself — are considered potential contenders in the race against Republican President Donald Trump three years from now.

"Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege," Gillibrand said in a statement announcing her support for Sanders's "Medicare for All" bill.

"If you want to have the ideals

of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness... healthcare is an essential part of that, and something that I think should be available to every



Sanders' proposed bill has sparked debate

American," Booker told reporters on Tuesday. The legislation has virtually no chance of passage with Trump's party running Washington.

Republicans control Congress and were due to unveil their own bill in the Senate, one that would essentially turn control of the healthcare markets to the 50 US states.

Supporting the Sanders bill helps Democrats broadcast their progressive bona fides to the millions of voters who backed the iconic liberal independent last year.