

# [***Schumer discusses 'long-shot scenario' with Manchin: Last-ditch Senate run in West Virginia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJF-NBY1-DY7V-G03J-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

March 14, 2024 Thursday 8:05 PM GMT

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**Length:** 557 words

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**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer recently discussed a long-shot idea with Sen. Joe Manchin: Making a late entry into the US Senate race in West Virginia to try to hold on to his seat as an independent.

Manchin, who threw cold water on the idea and is still planning on retiring from the Senate, confirmed to CNN that he's discussed the last-ditch bid with Schumer. While he said such a campaign is highly unlikely, he pointedly would not rule out changing his mind before the August filing deadline.

"I think that's a long, long, long-shot scenario," Manchin said of running as an independent candidate. "So I don't anticipate that happening. I don't anticipate running."

Asked if that meant the door was completely closed: "I don't know if anything in Washington, DC, is 100%."

Senate Democratic leaders, facing a daunting Senate map and the near-certainty that the West Virginia seat would flip with Manchin out, would be highly supportive if the conservative Democrat changed his mind. Since Manchin would be a formidable presence in such a race, national Republicans would likely be forced to pour money into West Virginia to flip the seat red and divert resources from other top targets.

Speaking to donors recently, Schumer has even brought up this scenario, according to a person familiar with his remarks.

A Schumer spokesperson declined to comment.

Democratic sources said the idea could gain currency if their party's nominee in West Virginia ends up being Don Blankenship, the former coal mining executive who served a year in jail after being found guilty of conspiring to violate mine health and safety standards in the aftermath of a deadly 2010 mine explosion. Blankenship ran as a Republican but lost in the 2018 Senate primary, later switching parties in 2024 to run in the contested Democratic primary to fill Manchin's seat.

The belief among some Manchin allies: If Blankenship squares off against Gov. Jim Justice, the front-runner for the GOP nomination, Manchin could have a path to win with a plurality of voters. Manchin has until August 1 to file as an independent.

Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan, who chairs the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, told CNN on Thursday he hadn't spoken to Manchin about this idea but was open to it.

"He's a great senator. ... But it's going to be up to him to decide," Peters said.

After he announced he wouldn't run for reelection or seek the White House on a third-party ticket, the 76-year-old Manchin has said his focus remains working with his daughter on a new super PAC aimed at promoting centrist ***politics***. Asked about the prospects of Blankenship becoming the nominee and how that could change his plans, Manchin said he would wait to see how the May 14 primary shapes up.

Manchin said of his conversations with the Senate majority leader: "Chuck and I have conversations about everything."

And if Blankenship wins, Manchin knows the conversation will be renewed.

"I understand the scenario," Manchin told CNN. "I want my state to be represented properly for someone who has a passion for our state. So we just have to see what unfolds. Really - after the primary ... it'll tell you a lot more."

CNN's Sam Fossum contributed to this report.

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**Load-Date:** March 14, 2024

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