

# [***Manchin Leaves Open Possibility Of Leaving Democratic Party And Becoming Independent After Sinema s Defection***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:672Y-FPV1-DXVP-51HT-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 764 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Unlike Sinema, Manchin has a long and storied family history in the Democratic party.

**Body**

**Topline**

Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) did not rule out following in Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.) s footsteps and switching his party affiliation from Democrat to Independent whenasked by CNN on Monday if he was considering the move despite doubts he would ever defect from the party his dynastic political family has belonged to for more than a century.

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Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) (Photo by Sarah Silbiger for The Washington Post via Getty Images)

The Washington Post via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Manchin, speaking for the first time about Sinema s defection last week, said I can t tell you what the future is going to bring, adding I m not a Washington Democrat . . . and if a Washington Independent is we ll see what happens there, in an interview with CNN on Capitol Hill on Monday.

Manchin, often referred to as King of the Senate due to his outsized power as the most conservative Democratic senator who can sway outcomes by voting with Republicans, prefaced his comments with this disclaimer: I have no intention of doing anything right now.

The remarks follow former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R) s prediction that Manchin will never be a Republican, he said Sunday on ABC s This Week, noting the Manchin family s long history in Democratic ***politics*** in West Virginia.

**Key Background**

Sinema announced Friday she would change her party affiliation, casting it as a rejection of party ***politics*** and a natural progression. Many Democrats brushed off the move as inconsequential to Democrats standing in the Senate. I think we're going to continue doing the same thing that we were doing, Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mt.) said Sunday on NBC s Meet the Press. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) also suggested the switch wouldn t change the power dynamics in the Senate, where Democrats will hold a majority over Republicans in January for the next two years. Schumer said he has agreed to allow Sinema to retain her committee assignments, indicating she will continue to caucus with Democrats. Sinema, a former House member and Arizona state legislator elected to the Senate in 2018, has the second-most conservative voting record of any Senator, following Manchin, according toVote View.She voted with him and Republicans earlier this year against a change to filibuster rules, effectively blocking voting rights legislation from passing.

**Contra**

Unlike Sinema, who was a Green Party activist prior to becoming a Democrat in 2004, Manchin has a storied history in the Democratic Party. He was elected to the West Virginia Legislature in the 1980s and later the secretary of state s office, and served as governor from 2005-2010, before winning a special election to replace Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd when he died. Manchin s uncle, A. James Machin, was secretary of state and treasurer, his cousin Mark served alongside him in the Legislature and his father served stints as mayor, police chief and fire chief of Farmington, W.Va. In another contrast from Sinema, Manchin can afford to vote with Republicans without turning away voters in West Virginia, which has shifted from blue to deep red over the past three decades. In Arizona, meanwhile, voters elected Democrats over Republicans in several tight midterm races, despite the state s previous reputation as a conservative haven. And Sinema has often drawn the ire of the party. The state s Democratic Party formally censured Sinema earlier this year for voting against the filibuster rule change. Voters have also expressed discontent with Sinema according toa Suffolk University/Arizona Republic pollin September, 49% of Democratic voters had an unfavorable opinion of her.

**Surprising Fact**

Manchin was rumored to be considering a switch to the GOP in 2021, whenreported he was weighing the move if President Joe Biden did not cut the size of a social spending bill in half. Manchin firmly denied the rumors as bulls t.

**What To Watch For**

Sinema s defection could propel progressives to wage a challenge to her Senate seat in 2024, a move many politicos believe could lead to a Republican winning the seat by splitting the Democratic vote. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), who said Sinema did match Arizona values, in response to her defection, is weighing a possible challenge to Sinema in 2024. He said Monday on NBC s**Morning Joe**he will announce his decision after Christmas.

**Further Reading**

Arizona Sen. Sinema Leaving Democratic Party, Becoming An Independent(Forbes)

Sinema switches to independent, shaking up the Senate (Politico)

Sinema's mutually assured destruction (Axios)

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