

## *Why Meb Could be President*

Mebrahtom Keflezighi (better known as Meb) is **arguably** the best distance runner in American history. **Inarguably**, Meb is a *proud* citizen of the United States of America. And his story, without a doubt, is one of the most inspiring stories not just in U.S. running history, but in all of sports. I believe who he is and the life he's led and will continue to lead, not only qualifies him as a hero to millions around the world, but makes him, dare I say...considerably presidential?

Well, similarly to President Barack Obama seeking re-election, the 4<sup>th</sup> place finisher in the 2012 London Olympics' marathon will be running for a chance at a "2<sup>nd</sup> term" as the champion of the ING New York City Marathon--the most prestigious marathon in the world--on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Two days later, President Obama will be running to win his race to continue his presidency. Even though their fields of battle are different, knowing Meb as well as I do, I wonder how he'd fair if he were to run Obama's race...could he win the minds and hearts of American's and the world just like he wins marathons?

When considering Meb for President of the United States of America I wondered what qualifications Americans would consider most vital. Just as it was with President Obama in 2008, many would question, at the very least, his origin of birth, his name and the way he talks. But are those the most important questions we should be asking ourselves when objectively considering whether or not Meb could be our next President? Personally, I don't think so.

Here's a list of what I consider the basic qualifications most would have in mind when considering any person for President: their place of birth, their name, their accent, the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, their political experience, their educational background, their patriotism, and the content of their character. If I had to pick my top 3 choices, I would give patriotism a gold medal, content of character a silver medal and educational background a bronze medal.

In my eyes, what makes Meb presidential is his patriotism, his character and his educational background. Meb not only believes in the idea America represents, but he's lived it as well as anyone ever has. And if you want proof of how well he represents himself, his family and the U.S.A just take a poll of the global running community today. I believe Meb would have a 99% approval rating. As far as education is concerned, Meb graduated from UCLA with a bachelor's degree in communication studies with a specialization in business. And he can converse four languages: English, Tigrinya, Italian and Spanish! When considering the aforementioned items alone, I believe he's more than qualified to "run" this country.

If, however, athletic accomplishments could qualify a person for the highest position in public service in the U.S. Meb would be overqualified. Yet, there's so much more to this human being than his athletic accomplishments. Throughout his life he's proven to have the ability to overcome any obstacle ([one significant obstacle being the unwarranted questioning of the legitimacy of his successful representation of America and American distance running in](#)

## *Why Meb Could be President*

[international competition](#)), to persevere when others have given up and most importantly, he's done it consistently. Not once has he ever wavered in his determination to honor the sacrifices his parents have made and the opportunities those sacrifices created for him and his siblings here in America. The man he has become today embodies, like a mirror image, exactly what the American dream looks like when it comes true. He's shown all of us, from the people of his family's country of origin (Eritrea), to the citizens of the USA, and countless others around the world, how to handle adversity with integrity and "run to win" not only in marathons, but also what it metaphorically represents--life.

Even though I know it's currently impossible for Meb to run for President of the United States of America because of the natural-born citizen clause in the U.S. constitution, I wholeheartedly support the idea of him or someone just like him being our country's leader. To elect such leaders of this country not only best represents what defines this nation of dreams, possibility and freedom, but will help uphold these ideals for generations to come.

If Meb were to switch places with President Obama and run in the Presidential race on November 6<sup>th</sup>, I would vote for him. I know he would lead this country the way he's led his life (and the resurgence of American distance running)—with the determination of restoring and upholding its' prominence in the world as a beautiful representation of possibility. But since he can't run in this upcoming presidential race, I'll focus my prayers on him winning a second title in that other race in New York instead.