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Description
At 74, Ralph Nader is running for president for the fifth time. NBC's Ron Allen talks to Nader about the role of third parties, and why he decided to run even though he knows he cannot win.

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The Running Man

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
We have gotten to know John McCain and Barack Obama quite well by now, though there is one face on the ballot 15 days from now that's been campaigning even longer than the two of them. In fact, there are some alive today who cannot remember a time when Ralph Nader was not running for president of the United States. Our report tonight from NBC's Ron Allen.

RON ALLEN reporting:
For Ralph Nader, a crowded church of 500 in Buffalo, New York, is a welcome sight. He complains the media and his opponents ignore him. He admits most voters have no idea he's running.

Mr. RALPH NADER: Senator Obama, Senator McCain, do they have a comprehensive program to deal with this endemic poverty?

ALLEN: For Nader, now 74, it's his fifth White House bid. Some Democrats still accuse him of taking enough votes from Al Gore in 2000 to help President Bush win. This time, the veteran consumer and workers' advocate tries to rally workers against the Wall Street bailout as another example of how big companies have too much power.

Mr. NADER: The Nader-Gonzalez campaign has been a vanguard for many years to hold corporations accountable to their workers.

ALLEN: His running mate is Matt Gonzalez, attorney and former San Francisco lawmaker. They are at 3 percent in the polls, on the ballot in 45 states.

Why do you keep pursuing this?

Mr. NADER: As long as I can go around the country putting the progressive agenda on the front table, I feel I have to do it.

ALLEN: Do you think that perhaps you're not the best messenger for your own cause now?

Mr. NADER: I am nationally known. I have a track record. I have constituencies around the country.

ALLEN: He dismisses Barack Obama and John McCain as corporate candidates, a choice between the least of the worst.

What would have to happen for you to not do this?
Mr. NADER: Well, that they take the populist positions that we have on our Web site, votenader.org.

ALLEN: Nader is realistic.

Mr. NADER: And so I'm not afraid to keep losing and losing as long as we're expanding awareness.

ALLEN: For him, to some extent, winning is getting a chance to be heard. Ron Allen, NBC News, Buffalo, New York.