



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on December 5, 2012

Brent Bozell's Long Overdue Quote: GOP Has Betrayed Conservatism

"The Republican Party is no longer the party of limited government, with limited spending and limited taxes. It is now officially exactly right behind the Democrats — on everything. It is time for conservatives to start looking for a new home. There's precious little left for us here."

Thus spoke Brent Bozell, founder of Media Research Center and long-time movement conservative.

Although Bozell deserves two thumbs up for his remarks, it is still worth noting that his epiphany is a little late in the coming: If it was ever really the party of limited government, it has been eons since the GOP ceased being so.

Ron Paul labored indefatigably for decades to call his fellow partisans to their senses, but the self-avowed champions of "limited government" in Washington and "conservative" talk radio ridiculed and derided him. Just as he spotted the recession of '08 long before it exploded and at a time when his competitors in the presidential primaries were insisting that the economy was strong, so too did Paul recognize the identity crisis in the Republican Party — the chasm between its rhetoric and its policies — years before it dawned upon the likes of Bozell.

It is crucial to bear in mind that it isn't because Paul is so prescient that he has been ahead of the curve on this score. Rather, it is because Republicans have been so blind that it has taken some of them this long to appreciate Paul's insights.

The sources of this blindness are probably many. Doubtless, one of them just may be the glare from the contrast between what Republicans espouse with their lips and the actual policies for which they advocate.

To hear Bozell and others in the conservative movement, one could be forgiven for thinking that the Grand Old Party is just now beginning to retreat from its pledge to promote "limited government." But we needn't go all that far back in time to see that this simply isn't so.





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In fact, we needn't go all that far back to realize that the very same voices on the right who have been screaming (rightly, I might add) from the rooftops over obscene levels of government spending and the like for the last four years uttered scarcely a peep over the same during the preceding eight years.

Let us not forget that for six years — from 2000 to 2006 — Republicans controlled both chambers of Congress and the presidency. For six years prior to this, the Republicans dominated Congress. This period supplied a golden opportunity for the party of limited government to practice what it preached while definitively establishing once and for all to the country the intellectual and moral superiority of its ideas over those of its rivals.

Sadly, but perhaps not surprisingly, none of this happened. Instead, Republicans definitively established that all their talk of "limited government" was just that.

That is, they established to the satisfaction of both their opponents *and* a not inconsiderable number of their constituents that they were just as committed to Big Government as were their nemeses. That ever fewer Republicans have shown up at the polls in the last two presidential election cycles proves that long before Bozell had his revelation, Republican voters on the ground got the message loudly and clearly.

But how could anyone not have seen this?

The scope and size of the federal government expanded exponentially while in the care of Republicans under Bush II. Not since Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society had the federal government figured so powerfully in American life. The only difference is that spending under Bush II was even *greater* than that which occurred under Johnson.

Bush II and his Republicans launched two woefully unpopular, drawn out wars. In prosecuting them, he assumed unto the executive branch heretofore unseen powers — such as the misnamed PATRIOT Act that has left legions of patriots shivering. This is bad enough in itself, but to compound the problem, it erects a dangerous precedent for future presidents to appropriate those very same powers for all manner of evil.

Of course, there is a host of other resolutely anti-conservative policies for which Bush II and his Congress successfully fought. To briefly touch upon only a few, there was No Child Left Behind (the now nearly universally despised law that increased the federal government's role in education); the Home Ownership Society (which facilitated the explosion of the housing bubble and the onslaught of the recession of '08); Medicare Part D (the exorbitantly expensive prescription drug entitlement of '03); and federal funding for embryonic stem cell research (an unprecedented step that only retarded any progress that the pro-life movement could be said to have made).

Bozell is right that "conservatives should start looking for a new home." Yet he fails to see that this is a search that should have begun a long time ago.



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