



Lies, Half-truths, and “National Review”

The eternal truth of politics is that politicians and their fellow travelers in the popular press are not lovers of truth. And often the half-truth, the disingenuous, the duplicitous, the deceitful, misleading statement is more despicable and more dishonest than the outright lie. There are any number of publications that offer living, ongoing proof of this, but for economy of time and space, let us look at a brief passage from the pages of the June 25 issue of [National Review](#).



I refer to a single paragraph about a Mitt Romney campaign appearance in “The Week,” often the most sprightly, interesting section of the entire magazine, though the title is itself misleading, since the magazine is published “fortnightly,” as William F. Buckley used to say. Nevertheless, the section, appearing at the front of the magazine, gives readers the *National Review*’s, or the conservative establishment’s, take on the events of the previous “fortnight.”

And *National Review* finds noteworthy, and even praiseworthy, Romney’s appearance before “an empty house,” specifically the building that housed Solyndra, the California solar energy company that received a \$500 million federally guaranteed “green energy” loan and promptly went bankrupt. So Romney naturally denounced the funneling of taxpayers’ dollars to a company owned by some of Obama’s campaign contributors, only to have the company go bust, with the taxpayers left holding the bag full of a half-billion dollar debt. That’s what happens when you follow an economic plan that tries to grow the economy through government-dominated rather than by market decisions, Romney said. To which, *National Review* said, “Amen!” and added that the government-dominated approach is evident in Obama’s bailouts, stimulus, and healthcare programs.

Alas, where to begin. Solyndra was but one of many government “investments” in “green energy” made under a program started by the previous administration — that’s right, under the Republican administration of George W. Bush. They did not all turn out badly. Bain Capital under Romney’s leadership made a number of investments in companies, some of which went under. Others, to be sure, were enormously successful, and we will no doubt be hearing a lot about one of them, Staples, between now and November. If the election were a referendum between Staples and Solyndra, Staples would no doubt win. But the market has its flops, too, and Romney has had his. Furthermore, Romney, as governor of Massachusetts, had a similar state program for investing in “green energy” production.

So until Romney repudiates not just the investment in Solyndra, but the program enacted by the Bush administration, his and *National Review*’s words ring hollow. Worse, they underscore one of the fundamental problems with his veracity-challenged party, a problem Barry Goldwater highlighted back in 1964 when he offered the nation “a choice, not an echo.” The Republicans are not offering to eliminate much of anything in the “big government” programs they deplore, many of which were either started or expanded under Republican administrations. And programs enacted by Democratic regimes were either expanded or left untouched by succeeding Republican administrations. Do Romney and the



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Republicans propose to repeal, for example, the No Child Left Behind Act? Would we believe them if they did, considering that for 20 years the party promised to eliminate the Carter-era departments of Education and Energy and did not come close to doing so, even in the years when the GOP held the White House and controlled both houses of Congress? Will they eliminate the prescription drug benefit that Congress, at the urging of President George W. Bush, added to the Medicare program, a benefit acknowledged even by thoughtful Republicans to be the largest expansion of the welfare state since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society? Would they even eliminate the provision that covers drugs to cure "erectile dysfunction," a provision that makes the party's opposition to the contraception mandate under ObamaCare seem hypocritical? Does the party opposed to big government really believe we should depend on the federal government even for sexual stimulation in our old age?

Let us be honest, please. Mitt Romney and the Republicans have no more intention of eliminating the "green energy" investment program than they have of eliminating any other boondoggle. Recall that after Republicans captured both houses of Congress in the "Gingrich Revolution" of 1994, President Bill Clinton delivered the biggest applause line of his presidency when he declared, "The era of big government is over." Yet Gingrich and his band of merry "revolutionaries" did not even eliminate the funding for the Public Broadcasting System. The anguished protests that the right-wing descendants of Robespierre were about to lead Big Bird to the guillotine were enough to keep the budget cutters at bay. Some "revolution."

Since Romney has not, and almost certainly will not, call for the elimination of federal "green energy" subsidies, all he can do is promise "No more Solyndras." In other words, Romney will not end the substitution of "government-dominated" decisions for free-market choices. He will just do it better, with more business expertise. Thus the true motto of the Republican Party: "We have come that ye might have Socialism and have it more efficiently."

As for the charge that taxpayers' money went to a company owned mainly by Obama's campaign contributors, it may be fairly said that the fact that people running a "clean energy" enterprise had contributed to Obama's election was not held against them. And the same would not be held against Romney's contributors should he be elected. Or is Romney now prepared to tell his contributors that they will be shut out from consideration for any of the federal largesse that might well go to their competitors?

And the editors of *National Review* could hardly have been writing with a straight face when they added their indictment of Obama for bailouts, stimulus, and medical care programs. For the bailout of the financial industry was undertaken under the Bush administration. Bush also came up with \$10 billion for the auto industry after Congress voted down a request for that appropriation, thereby demonstrating that Bush had roughly the same respect for the constitutional separation of powers that Obama has shown with his many executive orders that supplant legislation. Bush also had a stimulus program. True, Bush did not have a program for healthcare reform. But Romney did in Massachusetts.

And Romney and his fellow Republicans have embraced the budget plan of Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), which is loaded with magic asterisks ("Future savings to be discovered"), does not touch military spending, and offers a balanced budget by the year 2040. A balanced budget and a little less socialism in 28 years. What a platform!

Finally, the majority of the members of both parties in Congress swallowed whole the Bush administration's phony case for war with Iraq. Forget, for the sake of argument the lives and homes,



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both American and Iraqi, lost and ruined by that war. Do Romney and the Republicans really want us to do the math to determine how many Solyndras it would take to equal the trillions squandered, thus far and into the future, on the Iraq War? The Democrats do not have clean hands on that one, either. If they did, they might adopt as their slogan: “Nobody died at Solyndra.”



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