



Ron Paul, the Race Card, and Republican Insincerity

The stuff of establishment Republicans' worst nightmares is now coming to pass: they can no longer depict Ron Paul as a "fringe" candidate. Even they have been compelled by events to acknowledge that the Texas Congressman could very well finish in first place in the Iowa caucuses.



But it isn't just that Ron Paul may take Iowa. Throughout these primaries, in spite of receiving less media coverage than any of the other candidates, Paul has succeeded in maintaining, for the most part, a third place showing. Every "frontrunner" except for the establishment's favorite — Mitt Romney — has come and gone. Paul rates more favorably nationally among Republican voters than Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, Jon Huntsman, and Rick Santorum.

Paul, that is, can no longer be ignored. Republicans have thus taken to smearing him.

And they have availed themselves of the most incendiary of charges to level against him. Paul, they insinuate, is a "racist."

Believe it or not, the sole basis of this accusation is a newsletter that Ron Paul published nearly 20 years ago. The controversial articles in question included derogatory remarks concerning patterns of voting, welfare dependency, and criminality among blacks.

Those Republicans (and others) who now attack Paul are not his critics. Critics engage *the ideas* of their opponents. Establishment Republicans, in glaring contrast, do not engage Paul at all. They are his *nemeses*, not his critics. Their objective is nothing more or less than the assassination of his very character. That this latest strike against Paul is an exhibition, not of true moral outrage, but of the worst of gutter politics, can be seen by the following considerations.

First, that Paul's enemies would construct their entire case against him on the basis of a decades-old newsletter should alone suffice to establish the speciousness of their charges. Paul has been in public life for many years. He has a voting record in Congress going back even further than the now notorious newsletter articles. He has authored several books and countless articles, and he has made just as many speeches and given just as many interviews. The man is the proverbial open book. If his adversaries really, truly believed that he was the "racist" that they imply he is, then surely they should have ample material with which to supplement the newsletter articles.

Yet outside these newsletters, they can select not a single syllable, much less a single vote that Paul cast while a Congressman, to substantiate their charge. And you know that if it was there, they would not have spared a second to seize upon it.

Second, these articles from Ron Paul's newsletter are not just now coming to light. They have been in the public domain *for years*. Conveniently, those who wax indignant over the material contained within them appear to do so only when Paul campaigns for the presidency — that is, only when he poses a threat to "politics as usual."

Third, Paul did not author the articles that his enemies are now resurrecting (once again). He has consistently insisted upon this, and, moreover, no one contends otherwise.



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Fourth, admittedly, some of the language in which the newsletter's racially incorrect positions are framed is unduly crass. Yet inasmuch as the newsletter itself seeks to illuminate the destructive nature of the mindset that prevails among the black underclass, it speaks to an issue that concerns, and *should* concern, *everyone* — Republican and Democrat, left and right. This is an issue, in other words, that figures as disparate as what Thomas Sowell and Cornel West — both black — have addressed for decades. And insofar as Ron Paul's newsletter speaks to the *self*-destructive voting habits of blacks generally, it speaks on behalf of Republicans everywhere who have been making this same point, even if not so bluntly, for a long time.

Fifth, even if we reject as *factually inaccurate* the ideas articulated in Paul's newsletter, does this mean that we must reject them as *morally reprehensible*? Let us bear in mind that while, as Richard Weaver famously said, ideas have consequences, ideas themselves should be the focus primarily of *intellectual*, not *moral*, analysis. Every idea has the potential to be enlisted in the service of *either* good or evil.

After all, it is for the sake of the ideal of human equality that communists impoverished, starved, and slaughtered tens of millions of human beings. Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, was a slaveholder who believed that blacks were innately inferior to whites. Yet Jefferson, along with his contemporaries who thought similarly on racial issues, personally opposed the unequal treatment to which blacks were subjected and crafted a set of institutional arrangements that promised them a far better life in America than they could ever have hoped to enjoy in any other part of the globe. Abraham Lincoln similarly was a virulent "racist" by our standards. He steadfastly opposed civil equality for blacks and whites. But Lincoln personally opposed slavery, and the war that he launched, whatever else can (and has) been said about it, had the effect of abolishing slavery in America.

What, we must ask, has Ron Paul ever done or said in his many years in public life that can so much as remotely be construed as "racist?" The answer is not a single thing. In fact, Ron Paul's voting record in Congress, as well as his many writings, attest beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is equality's most impassioned and consistent champion. None of the other presidential candidates — including President Obama — can credibly lay claim to this distinction. Paul is equality's greatest champion because he is liberty's greatest champion, and he recognizes that where there is no equality before the law there is no liberty.

Finally, Paul declares that he neither knew of these articles at the time that they were published nor does he endorse the positions that they contain. This is not so hard to believe when it is considered that during the same passage of time that the articles were published, Paul argued against "the War on Drugs" on the grounds that it was "racist." Actually, Paul argued — and still argues — that this so-called "war" is "racist" *in origin*. Of all places, it is to the left-leaning *Huffington Post* that we owe thanks for revealing this. The writer of the column, Ryan Grim, even goes so far as to argue that Paul's analysis is correct.

I agree with neither Ron Paul nor Ryan Grim on this score. But the point here is that it is a peculiar sort of "racist" who labors for decades defying the zeitgeist vis-à-vis "the War on Drugs" for the sake of insuring that blacks and whites receive parity of treatment. Furthermore, Ron Paul would have to be schizophrenic if he were to simultaneously sponsor "racist" material *while arguing that "the War on Drugs" is immoral because it is "racist."*

There is one other consideration of which we would be well served to take stock. In spite of Ron Paul's Republican enemies' best efforts to convince the rest of us that he is "racist," non-whites support Paul in greater numbers than they support any other Republican candidate. This, at any rate, is the finding



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of a recent CNN/ORC poll — hardly a libertarian or Paul-friendly source. According to this poll, in a general election race against President Obama, Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry, Michele Bachmann, and Mitt Romney would receive 15 percent, 17 percent, 18 percent, and 20 percent of the non-white vote, respectively. Ron Paul, though, would take home 25 percent of this same vote.

It should be clear that Paul's enemies — his Republican enemies particularly — are grasping at straws to not just discredit the good doctor, but to ruin him.



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