



Tips for the Republican Voter

Every candidate in the Republican primaries is going to exhaust themselves trying to convince voters of the impeccability of their “conservative” credentials. And in the run up to the general election, the GOP nominee will continue to insist upon his or her unqualified commitment to “limited government,” “the Constitution,” “individualism,” “the free market,” and the like.



All of this, of course, is to be expected. Just as expected, though, is that during neither the primaries nor any time *prior* to election day will we hear a peep from any of the candidates on the need for, say, “compromise” or “bi-partisanship.” We will not be treated to lectures of the kind to which condescending Republicans have been subjecting us since this last November when Republicans reacquired control of the House. Since then, we have been “reminded” endlessly of the need to recognize that Republicans still only occupy [“one half of one-third” of the government](#). But worry not: No more cautionary notes of this sort will be issued from this point forward — until after the election, of course.

This is one consideration to which the voter should attend, for perhaps he can both recall for the candidates the excuses that House Republicans have given for failing to execute their pledges *and* press them to specify details as to *how* they will follow through with their promises in the event that they meet formidable Democratic resistance.

There is another consideration that deserves the voter’s focus.

Talk radio and [FOX News](#) personalities styling themselves the guardians of “conservative” orthodoxy will debate amongst themselves as to which of the candidates within the field are and are not truly “conservative.” As the voter beholds these discussions, he should pay meticulous attention to the criteria by which the pundits evaluate the “conservatism” of the candidates. What he discovers may surprise him.

By the lights of [Rush Limbaugh](#), [Sean Hannity](#), and most of their colleagues in the so-called “alternative media,” a “conservative” is, first and foremost, a proponent of “strong national defense.” Now, if you are not wondering what is distinctively, much less uniquely, “conservative” about such a position, *you should be*, for this is a bumper sticker slogan plain and simple.



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on May 31, 2011

Outside of anarchists, and maybe not even then, *no one* disfavors a “strong national defense.” But the “national defense” of which the pundits on the right speak, it is crucial to realize, isn’t the same thing that the average person has in mind when he hears this phrase. For the average person, national defense consists simply in the government protecting the citizens of the United States. For the average person, this in turn means that the government must *defend* the country from those who would seek to undermine it.

This, though, is not what the “conservative” pundits mean. When they demand a “strong national defense,” what they are demanding is an ever-larger military to interject itself in an ever-greater number of countries throughout the world.

Although one wouldn’t know it given all of his criticism of the pro-lifer for allegedly being a “one issue” voter, it is the establishment Republican “conservative” who judges candidates on the basis of whether they endorse his foreign policy vision. A real “conservative,” as far as he is concerned, believes that it is America’s mission to [export “Democratic” values to the world](#) — even if this means, as it usually means, deploying the United States military to do so.

Two comments are in order here, the one an observation, the other its implication.

First, with the notable exception of Ron Paul, the so-called top-tier Republican candidates are committed to promoting a “Democratic Revolution” the globe over. Their affirmation of “[American Exceptionalism](#),” “Human Rights,” “the War on Terror,” and so forth, is exactly an affirmation of this commitment.

Second, because the punditry class defines “conservatism” primarily in terms of this foreign policy position, and because the Republican candidates — again, with the exception of Ron Paul— endorse this position, it follows that the “debates” that will ensue between Republicans over the candidates’ strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis “conservatism” are, in a word, *contrived*.

That the debates are, for the most part, scripted, is seen by the manner in which [Ron Paul’s rejection of the script is treated](#). Paul, the voter will note, is never, *ever* characterized as a “conservative” by Republican pundits and office holders. Granted, it isn’t that he is necessarily always derided and mocked; but the “conservative” commentator will be sure to call him a “libertarian.” The idea here is that anyone who rejects the GOP’s robust, militaristic foreign policy, however devout a Christian he may be, or however resolved he may be to honoring — and restoring — the Constitution, such a person might be any number of things, but he is no conservative.

The right-leaning voter should be mindful of these truths so that he may avoid being taken for the same sucker for which the Republican Party has taken him for far too long.



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