



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 18, 2011

Herman Cain, Ron Paul, and Michele Bachmann Address Republicans at RLC

Friday's aces were set up by three lesser lights (though none of them lacked in partisan fervor and anti-Obama zeal), with the exception of the starting pitcher (of red meat) — Haley Barbour.

To the tune of Southern rock anthem *Black Betty*, the Governor of Mississippi and candidate himself, Haley Barbour, stepped up the platform and the delegates were instantly mesmerized by his Southern drawl, humorous anecdotes, and repeated recitation of his Republican résumé.



Proclaiming that 2012 is a momentous election, Barbour set out his version (and the version of nearly every speaker this weekend) of the Republican marching orders: "We need to focus on the message here. That message is: our goal ... is to elect a new Republican president next year."

The message and the messenger were so overtly and unapologetically partisan, observers familiar with the disdain the Founding Fathers shared for "factions" (a.k.a. political parties) likely wondered if our Founders would have felt at ease in the meeting? This observer certainly did. Given the Founders almost universal loathing of campaigning in any form, it's doubtful they would have chanted and cheered with the others in attendance.

In his presentation, Barbour made the requisite repeated references to Ronald Reagan. Barbour quoted the Gipper saying, "First play in the Democrat playbook: Fake up the middle and run around the left end." That quip set off about four additional "Reagan this" and "Reagan that" comments. He filled his quota.

Finally, Barbour reminded his audience that there is no way that everyone will agree with the eventual Republican candidate on all the issues. That isn't the most important factor in deciding for whom one will vote, Barbour said. Quoting FedEx founder Fred Smith, Barbour said Republicans need to make sure and remember that, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

Therein lies the rub. It comes down to what conservative voters believe "the main thing" to be. Constitutionals believe it is the Constitution, whereas Establishment Republicans believe it is faithfully supporting the party, regardless of disagreement on the fundamental issues.

After a couple more set-up men, the first of the co-headliners took the stage. As the sound of Chuck Berry's *Johnny B. Goode* pounded from the enormous speakers flanking the stage, former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain made his case for support from the party movers and shakers.



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Cain quieted the rowdy crowd chanting his name and declared to nervous tittering in the mostly white audience, "I have a dream. In fact, I have two dreams." Cain's dreams are different from those of Martin Luther King, Jr. Herman Cain dreams of Republican majorities in the House and Senate and of becoming the next President of the United States.

Despite the discouragement of many Establishment Republicans, Cain told delegates that he's running in defiance of the disbelievers because America is in crisis. There's an immigration crisis, economic crisis, and a deficiency of leadership in the White House.

Cain ticked off the first five things he would do as President to right the economic ship:

- Max 25 percent tax of all corporations and individuals
- Eliminate the capital gains tax
- Suspend taxes on foreign repatriated profits ("Let that money come back home")
- Provide a real payroll tax holiday for every worker and business in America for a year
- Except for payroll tax holiday, make all other tax cuts permanent

The long-shot presidential hopeful then explained why he will work so hard to become President: "People are sick and tired of Washington, D.C. not solving their problems."

On this point, Cain seems to miss the core principle of conservatism: people want government out of their lives altogether. The people are not sick and tired of Washington's failed attempts to solve their problems, *they are sick and tired of Washington, D.C. believing it has the right to solve their problems.*

Making reference to his well-chronicled lack of foreign policy credentials, Cain said, "I don't have any foreign policy experience, but as my dad would say, 'You don't need foreign policy experience to know your friends from your enemies.'" At that, it was pretty easy to guess what was coming next and Cain didn't disappoint.

"You mess with Israel, you are messing with the United States of America."

At this, the crowd went insane. Standing ovations and explosive cheers rattled the room. Admittedly, there was a smattering of boos, but it was chilling to witness the adulation and ovation at such a statement coming from a crowd of self-described conservatives. There was not only acquiescence but active desire to make the problems of Israel the responsibility of the United States.

The most apropos of all the soundtracks blasted next from the sound system. *Revolution* by the Beatles played as Texas Congressman Ron Paul stepped to the lectern.

Greeted by enthusiastic cheers of "Ron! Ron! Ron!" Dr. Paul declared, "Great news for the cause of liberty — the country is coming our way!"

Rather than opening with a "aren't Republicans the best" line, Ron Paul promoted the Constitution. "It's the law of the land, it is found in the Constitution, and we demand respect for it."

To start, Paul set out our areas where Americans must make "strides toward liberty:"

- We must end the spate of worldwide, no-end wars.
- We must realize that the key to our economic crisis is "too much spending, too much debt, too much borrowing."
- We must "audit the Fed and in due time, abolish it. "You can't print paper money in secrecy and



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pretend it's the creation of wealth." The Fed can create and spend more money than Congress. Curbing spending is one thing, but if we don't eliminate the Fed, we won't touch the problem. "We will pass the "Audit the Fed" bill," Paul promised.

- We must get our freedoms back. This declaration was met with raucous applause from the dozens of mostly young people waving blue and white "Ron Paul 2012" signs.

Turning to foreign policy, Dr. Paul grounded his position on the principles of constitutional adherence. "With regard to foreign policy, we must follow the Founders and the Constitution and mind our own business." Neutrality and a non-interventionist posture is the right thing to do and will eliminate much of the reviling of the United States abroad.

Although not as often as his colleagues, even Ron Paul invoked the name of Ronald Reagan, quoting the former President's regret that he had committed Marines to Beirut, resulting in the needless death of 241 American servicemen. The message seemed to be, don't do what Reagan did, let's do what Reagan wished he had done instead. "We must never," Dr. Paul said, "go to war carelessly."

There are, of course, times when we must commit ourselves to the prosecution of war. Ron Paul recognizes this irrefutable fact and succinctly explained his position: "If we have to go war, declare war, win it, and get it over with." Paul closed this segment of his address by announcing the "Foreign Policy Golden Rule: What would we think if people did that to us?"

In a remark likely to please many readers of *The New American*, candidate Paul declared, "We are being governed by the UN. It is a good reason to support my bill to get us out of the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank."

Finally, Congressman Paul reminded the audience: "Liberty comes from God, not government." He stated that we have too many laws, too many regulations, and too many people willing to vote for people who perpetuate this condition.

Ron Paul's constitutionalist message, laden by frequent historical references, did not seem to resonate with most of the crowd, which during the different speeches seemed more interested in hearing speakers bash President Obama than in thoughtfully setting out a sound constitutional pathway for restoring our republic. However, there was a loud and animated claque of young people present who cheered every word that came from Dr. Paul's mouth.

The penultimate presenter Friday was Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.). Dressed all in white, Bachmann opened with a bit of a misunderstanding of which group she was addressing: "Hey, Southern Leadership Conference!" It was in fact the Republican Leadership Conference, but as she was actually in the South, we'll give her a pass.

Bachman said the future electoral success of the GOP depended on a "three-legged stool:"

Peace through strength Republicans

Fiscal conservatives

Social conservatives

She declared herself to be each one of these things.

She said the Republicans also "need the Tea Party movement." Bachman defined the Tea Party as "a coalition of people disappointed in Barack Obama." She added, "The Tea Party movement has one goal: that Barack Obama be a one-term President."



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The presidential hopeful then followed the pattern set out by all her fellow speakers (with the notable exception of Ron Paul) and attacked the current resident of the White House. “President Obama has made us all poorer.”

We are poorer, Bachmann insists, because of ObamaCare. The President’s signature legislation was harming all Americans, but particularly senior citizens.

In that vein, the congresswoman described an Oval Office meeting with President Obama wherein the President said that the key to helping our elderly is adherence to the mandates of ObamaCare. Bachmann then lamented that Medicare might go broke. She rebuked President Obama for not “intending to save” Medicare. Is this self-declared constitutional candidate begging to save a government program, authorization for which exists nowhere in that document?

The same scenario was painted with regard to Social Security. Bachmann accused President Obama of wanting to bankrupt Social Security and turn his back on our seniors. But Bachmann quickly rode to the rescue: “We will not allow President Obama’s version of socialized medicine to exist in this country!”

Apparently, however, we will allow the Republican version of socialized medicine and retirement to exist in this country. And if anyone threatens it, Republicans will attack that person.

In describing her plans to cut spending, Michele Bachmann said she would “cut spending for NPR, cut spending for Planned Parenthood, and cut spending for the bullet train to nowhere.” Not exactly the aggressive reduction of government one would expect from the “darling of the Tea Party.”

Finally, turning to foreign policy, Bachmann informed President Obama, “You do not win the War on Terror by closing Guantanamo Bay. You don’t win the War on Terror by reading Miranda rights to terrorists.”

And making sure not to upset the huge pro-intervention-on-behalf-of-Israel contingency, the GOP presidential hopeful loudly proclaimed, “I stand with Israel.” Once again, with the exception of Ron Paul, every one of the Republican presidential candidates proudly proclaimed their dedication to the protection and promotion of Israel and their commitment to standing beside “America’s greatest friend and ally.”

Michelle Bachmann sounds less anxious to restore the Constitution than to become President. Her tone and pantomimed intensity remind one of what the ancient historian Plutarch recorded that Caesar once said about Brutus: “I know not what this young man intends, but whatever he intends he intends vehemently.”

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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