



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on June 6, 2011

Mitt Romney: GOP Front Runner "On Every Side of Every Issue"

Romney certainly has no shortage of critics from the Left and Right. On the Left, former Democratic National Committee staffer [Matt Ortega](#) has put up the particularly clever website [MultipleChoiceMitt.com](#), which quotes Romney on both sides of more than a dozen issues. Ortega says Romney is "on every side of every issue," and he has the video proof to back it up. Likewise, the Massachusetts Democratic Party has sponsored [RomneyFacts.com](#), which echoes Ortega's website without the originality or primary source videos of Romney contradicting himself. While conservatives will disagree with the leftist positions of those who have made these websites available, Romney's contradictory statements should give any voter pause, no matter the political beliefs of the voter.



And of course, Democratic Party functionaries are not the only ones having fun at the expense of the GOP frontrunner. Conservative Boston radio talk-show host Michael Graham has sponsored an [AnyoneButMitt.com](#) website that highlights Romney's long train of leftist positions and election year "conversion" to some traditional conservative positions. And social conservative Brian Camenker of Massachusetts stresses in his website [The Mitt Romney Deception](#) that although Romney postured as a social conservative when Governor of Massachusetts, "the pro-abortion and pro-homosexual forces never lost any battles under his tenure." In fact, Camenker adds, those forces "grew in power and influence. Romney did nothing to restrain the groups who have launched a jihad on America's Judeo-Christian culture."

Romney has a long history of posturing as a conservative while acting as a liberal. Romney ran for President in 2008 on a platform that claimed he hadn't signed any tax increases as Governor. But actually, he proposed some \$740 million in tax increases in 2003 and 2005, labeling the tax increases "fees." As the Cato Institute [reported](#) of Romney's 2003 proposals:

He scared some conservatives when he said that he was opposed to tax increases but he couldn't rule them out. His first budget, presented under the cloud of a \$2 billion deficit, balanced the budget with some spending cuts, but a \$500 million increase in various fees was the largest component of the budget fix.

The "fees" were really taxes, however, i.e., they had nothing to do with actual costs that government incurred from services they provided. For [example](#), he increased the fee for automobile registrations, tripled firearms license fees, and increased about 100 other fees.



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But despite Romney's recent, post-governorship posturing as a conservative, he has yet to renounce many leftist positions. Center stage on that point is that Romney continues to defend pushing a 2006 Massachusetts [health care law](#) in Massachusetts that required employers to offer employees health insurance (or face a withering fine) and set a fine for individuals who did not purchase insurance. In 2011, the fine for the individual mandate is as much as [\\$1,212 per year](#), though that fine will eventually rise to more than \$3,500 per year as the law is phased in. Interestingly, although Romney defended his law in a [May 13, 2011 speech](#), he makes no mention of his RomneyCare plan on his [campaign website](#). RomneyCare in Massachusetts served as the inspiration for ObamaCare nationally.

Romney also [supported the TARP bank bailout in 2008](#), a bailout that sparked the Tea Party movement's ire at the use of taxpayers' money to bail out a few super-rich banks that lost risky gambles on a real estate market bubble. Romney continues to say that the TARP bailout was a good deal today.

But Romney's announcement speech June 3 highlighted some of what may be his most alarming big-government positions. Mitt Romney said this in his [announcement speech](#):

Who rules this great nation? You do. Every four years you decide who will give that State of the Union address, who will set the course of the country, who will be Commander in Chief.

What's the context of that remark? He wants America to pick someone to rule over the people, and he wants to be that overlord. Contrast that remark with another conservative candidate for President, Texas Congressman Ron Paul, who [said](#) that he doesn't want to be a dictator:

I don't want to run people's lives around the world, I don't want to run the economy. My qualifications are a little bit different.

That's the difference between genuine conservatism and astro-turf conservatism: Romney sees the election as a quadrennial selection of who will be the American people's overlord; Ron Paul sees it as an opportunity to retake freedom and restore the limits of the U.S. Constitution. Romney's [campaign website](#) reinforces the dictatorial model, apparently stressing his sole ability to enact laws, even though under the U.S. Constitution Congress alone can enact laws and spend money:

Mitt Romney will bring fiscal restraint to Washington by placing a hard cap on federal spending to force our government to live within its means and put an end to deficit spending.

Mitt will also curb federal spending by repealing Obamacare, the federal takeover of health care that is scheduled to cost taxpayers one trillion dollars over the next ten years. He will also focus on eliminating wasteful government spending and right-sizing the federal government to save taxpayer dollars.

It's noteworthy that Romney's "fiscal restraint" — in addition to presuming he can dictate a policy to Congress — contains no specific spending cuts other than ObamaCare. Mitt Romney is marketing himself as the anti-Obama candidate. But although Romney has an "R" next to his name instead of a "D," the similarities between his positions and Obama's on substantive issues is striking. Like Obama, he supports government bailouts, government health care with individual mandates backed up by huge fines, [lots of foreign wars](#), higher taxes, and an expansive view of the powers of the executive branch with dominion over the legislative branch.

If Americans are looking for a "Republican" version of Obama, then Romney is their man. But if they want serious changes in policy, they'll have to look elsewhere.

Photo of Mitt Romney: AP Images



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