



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 27, 2011

Orrin Hatch Becomes Target of Tea Party

Anyone who follows Orrin Hatch (left) on Twitter has noticed a decidedly constitutionalist tone to his latest tweets. There's a good reason for this sudden commitment to principles of limited government from a man who's voting record is far from that of a rock-ribbed small government crusader.

The senior Senator from Utah, first elected to office in 1976, is the latest target of a Tea Party affiliated group with designs on all Republican incumbents who refuse to practice legislative parsimony.



[FreedomWorks PAC](#), founded by former Congressman Dick Armey, has launched a Retire Orrin Hatch campaign, a move described by some as its first major move of the 2012 election cycle.

[Statements](#) from the group in support of their goal to unseat Hatch indicate that the Senator is too moderate and out of sync with the aims of the greater Tea Party movement, namely that of fiscal conservatism.

Or, as Russ Walker, the vice president of political and grassroots campaigns for FreedomWorks PAC put it, The bottom line is Hatch doesn't represent the state of Utah. The state of Utah is far more fiscally conservative than Orrin Hatch is. Its an opportunity to pick up a seat; its an opportunity to find somebody who is better.

There is evidence that Walkers sense of the "state" of the state may be accurate. The Salt Lake City daily, the *Deseret News*, published a [poll](#) the results of which support Walkers position. A majority of Utah voters believe Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) has been in office too long and should be replaced, a new *Deseret News/KSL-TV* poll shows.

The poll, conducted by Dan Jones & Associates, found that 38 percent of registered voters agree that it's important to reelect Hatch in 2012 because of his seniority. Most chilling for Hatch, however, is the fact that 59 percent of registered voters polled said that after 36 years in office, it's time for Hatch to come home.

FreedomWorks has produced a slick direct mail [piece](#) to present their case to voters in the Beehive State. The brochure opens with a reprint of one of Hatch's own advertisements. The ad features a photograph of a smiling Orrin Hatch and a quote regarding the budget crisis:

In 1997 my Balanced Budget Amendment fell just one vote short of passage. Since then the federal debt has nearly tripled to more than \$14 trillion. Enough is enough. Its time to pass a Balanced Budget Amendment.

FreedomWorks then offers a different set of facts:

In the last 30 years, Orrin Hatch has voted to increase the debt ceiling 16 times by a total of \$7.6 trillion. That's over one half of our national debt.



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Although not in the brochure, FreedomWorks also condemns Senator Hatch for voting for Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) bailouts and against a ban on earmarks.

Arney's army is not new to Utah politics. In fact, FreedomWorks is [credited](#) with playing an instrumental role in the defeat of Senator Bob Bennett. Bennett is typically referred to as the first Republican incumbent Senator in the country to be defeated by the Tea Party movement.

Apart from Bennett, the group worked tirelessly and successfully to get Mike Lee elected to the Senate. Since entering the Senate, Lee has consistently proven himself to be a dedicated constitutionalist and friend of limited government. The same could never have been said of his predecessor.

Although Hatch is likely to be challenged in the Republican primary by Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), FreedomWorks insists that they are not yet throwing their weight behind anyone. Russ Walker says that his group has met with several people and that they're confident they were going to have a good candidate.

In the *Deseret News* poll cited earlier, 40 percent of respondents said they would vote for Hatch and 41 percent for Chaffetz.

Orrin Hatch hears the bell tolling. He actually sought to preempt the attack from FreedomWorks by visiting their offices in Washington, D.C. He is reported to have mingled with the staff during an office party.

FreedomWorks isn't persuaded.

He has reached out to us a lot this year. Orrin Hatch is a nice guy, Walker said. He really genuinely is a nice guy but at the end of the day, I think the state of Utah could do better.

Hatch's people aren't ready to give up the ship without a fight.

If FreedomWorks is anxious to spend their money, why not put it into defeating Barack Obama in the Presidential race? said Dave Hansen, Hatch's campaign manager. There is no other person, in recent history, who has been such a major affront to the Constitution and conservative values, than our current President.

FreedomWorks plans to convince Utahans that Hatch has overstayed his welcome in the Senate and will reach out to voters through town hall meetings where they promise to educate the people of Utah on their senior Senators' fiscally irresponsible voting record.



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