Paul Campaign Makes Major Announcement

On Monday, Ron Paul announced that he will not be competing in Republican primaries in any of the states that have not yet voted. Immediately, mainstream media outlets such as the *Washington Times* and Huffington Post seized on this announcement, asserting that Paul has dropped out of the race, or that he has suspended his campaign. The *Washington Times*, for example, reports that Paul's move is "essentially ending the 2012 primary season and leaving the path open for Mitt Romney to win the GOP presidential nomination." And while the Paul campaign contends Paul has not dropped out of the race, it has virtually given up any hopes of securing the Party nomination.

Immediately following media reports that Paul had in fact suspended or ended his campaign, Ron Paul campaign blogger Jack Hunter (above left) attempted to clarify Paul's announcement. In a YouTube video posted on Paul's website RonPaul2012.com, Hunter states, "Ron Paul has not dropped out. Ron Paul has not suspended his campaign. What happened today was an announcement of a new strategy moving forward."

"Since the very beginning of this campaign, we've had a delegate strategy … not only has this worked, it has been extremely successful," Hunter continues. "That's going to continue, all that hard work has paid off and will continue to pay off going all the way to Tampa."

Paul has shocked mainstream media outlets and the GOP with some upset victories in recent weeks. Ron Paul supporters have managed to win a majority of delegates in states like Nevada, Maine, Iowa, Louisiana, and Massachusetts at district caucuses.

The only thing that has changed, Hunter explains, is that the Paul campaign will not continue to pour money into primary states, where they have been the least successful.

"It makes no sense to dump millions of dollars in places where you don't get as much bang for your buck, so you allocate your resources appropriately," Hunter adds.

He summarizes his remarks by restating that Paul's announcement was merely regarding a new campaign strategy, which Hunter notes is "way different from suspending your campaign, or dropping out."

Hunter also asks in the video, "Do you think Ron Paul is really going to walk away from all of those hard-working people at the grassroots who have delivered him so many victories through delegates?"

Naturally, Paul's supporters are hopeful that is not the case.

However, an email from Ron Paul campaign chief strategist Jesse Benton to Paul's supporters may provoke some angst from grass-roots Paul supporters, many of whom have worked diligently to secure delegates in the hopes that those delegates could secure a nomination for Paul at the convention.

Benton's email implies, however, that the purpose of continuing to work to secure the delegates is for nothing more than a strong presence at the convention to help re-write Republican Party rules and to add libertarian planks to the GOP platform.

Benton's email prefaces this agenda by stating, "Unfortunately, barring something very unforeseen, our delegate total will not be strong enough to win the nomination. Governor Romney is now within 200 delegates of securing the party's nod. However, our delegates can still make a major impact at the National Convention and beyond."

His email continues by stating what the campaign hopes to achieve by having a significant number of delegates at the convention:

> All delegates will be able to vote on party rules and allow us to shape the process for future liberty candidates.
>
> We are in an excellent position to make sure the Republican Party adds solid liberty issues to the GOP Platform, which our delegates will be directly positioned to approve. Our campaign is presently working to get several items up for consideration, including monetary policy reform, prohibitions on indefinite detention, and Internet freedom.
>
> Finally, by sending a large, respectful, and professional delegation to Tampa, we will show the party and the country that not only is our movement growing and here to stay, but that the future belongs to us.

This agenda is likely to dishearten Paul's supporters who held out hope that they could secure enough delegates to potentially finagle a nomination. After all, there are approximately 30 states and territories wherein delegates are not bound to a particular candidate, regardless of the popular vote. Other states require delegates to be bound by the popular vote in just the first found of ballots, but not in the rounds that follow. And delegates could abstain from the first round of ballots. Reports also indicated that there are several Paul delegates headed to the convention disguised as Romney delegates.

But any lingering hope from Paul's supporters that may have remained following that email is likely to be dispelled by statements made by Benton during a Tuesday conference call with reporters.

"We recognize that Gov. [Mitt] Romney has what is very likely to be an insurmountable delegate lead," said Benton, "And we acknowledge that we're very, very unlikely to be able to block that nomination."

Benton added that while the campaign maintained a delegate strategy that would have put it in a "good position" to influence the outcome in the event of a brokered convention, "other candidates were not able to maintain their strength," he said.

"We still have very, very strong things that we can accomplish by continuing this campaign," Benton said.

Benton has also emphasized that the campaign is asking Paul's delegates to present themselves at the convention with the utmost "decorum and respect," noting that Paul's delegates have already received an "excessive amount of blame for problems that arise in heated moments at conventions."

According to Benton, Paul's campaign has been in discussions with Romney's campaign regarding the party platform. When asked whether Paul would endorse Romney, Benton's response was, "I would never say never," though he added, "I do not believe that that is likely."

Asked about an endorsement of libertarian candidate Gary Johnson, Benton gave a firm "no chance of

that."

When Johnson learned of Paul's campaign announcement, he stated, "You can't suspend liberty. The Ron Paul revolution must continue, whether he is actively campaigning or not. His message must be a part of the conversation leading to November."

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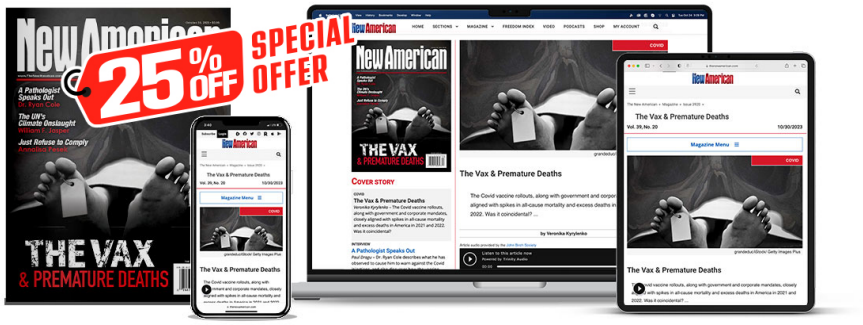

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