



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on May 27, 2013

## Rand Paul Bolsters Libertarian Bona Fides, Delays Decision on 2016

CNN, quoting *The Independent*, reports that Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has made the decision to run in 2016 — for reelection to the Senate.

During a visit to Kentucky, Paul told reporters that his decision to seek a second term in the Senate was certain, adding that any decision on a presidential run would “come later.” Paul echoed these remarks in an interview with *The New American*, saying that the call on his presidential candidacy wouldn’t come before 2014.



In the meantime, however, Paul admitted to *The New American* that he would continue visiting primary states, feeling out the popularity among Republicans of his libertarian-leaning policy positions.

Earlier this month, Paul began the 2016 tour with [an appearance at a Lincoln Day dinner in Cedar Rapids, Iowa](#).

Throwing substantial slabs of red meat to the GOP activists gathered to hear the senator, Paul took aim at an easy target: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Speaking of the Benghazi terrorist attack that resulted in the death of four Americans, Paul said, “First question to Hillary Clinton: Where in the hell were the Marines?” Paul’s pillorying of Clinton demonstrates an impressive political savvy. A [new Quinnipiac poll](#) shows Clinton leading Iowa voters by a narrow 46-42 percent margin.

Regarding a potential Clinton-Paul contest in 2016, [Quinnipiac reports](#):

In general Sen. Paul appears to be the better GOP candidate at this point in Iowa. Part of the reason may be the publicity from his recent high-profile visit to the state, but more likely is that he begins with a solid base of support — the folks who voted for his father in the 2008 and 2012 caucuses.

First-in-the-nation primary state New Hampshire was the second stop on Paul’s tour to soften the beach for a White House invasion in 2016. As with Iowa, Paul can likely count on his father’s supporters in the Granite State as well. The senator seemed to recognize this, claiming, “We’ve had a lot of friends up here for years.”

[CNN reckons](#) that the friends referenced in that statement “are likely the libertarian minded activists who backed his father’s campaign for president — many of whom attended the fundraiser.” In 2012, Paul’s iconic father — Ron Paul — finished second behind eventual Republican nominee Mitt Romney in the GOP New Hampshire primary, garnering [nearly 57,000 votes or 22.89 percent of the total votes cast](#).

While in New Hampshire, Paul repeated what amounts to his stump speech, calling out Hillary Clinton for failing to protect Americans during the terrorist attack on the U.S. mission post in Benghazi, Libya. Paul’s appeal to constitutionalists consists of more than just hobnobbing with Republicans in critical



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presidential primary states.

On consecutive days, Paul introduced two very important bills calling for increased protection of fundamental civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

On May 22, Paul introduced the [Preserving Freedom from Unwarranted Surveillance Act of 2013](#). This measure protects an individual's right to privacy against unwarranted drone surveillance.

A hot topic issue with many libertarians and constitutional conservatives, rapidly advancing drone technology is driving the construction of the surveillance state. These never-blinking eyes in the sky could be used by an autocratic executive to expose every aspect of the private lives of all Americans to government monitors.

Paul's Preserving Freedom from Unwarranted Surveillance Act would reaffirm the right of Americans to be "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures" as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment.

"The use of drone surveillance may work on the battlefields overseas, but it isn't well-suited for unrestrained use on the streets in the United States. Congress must be vigilant in providing oversight to the use of this technology and protection for rights of the American people. I will continue the fight to protect and uphold our Fourth Amendment," Senator Paul said.

Paul continued his attempt to prevent federal government violations of the Fourth Amendment, introducing the [Fourth Amendment Preservation and Protection Act of 2013](#). This bill would require government agencies to obtain specific warrants from a judge before snooping into the electronic communications of citizens.

"In today's high-tech world, we must ensure that all forms of communication are protected. Yet government has eroded protecting the Fourth Amendment over the past few decades, especially when applied to electronic communications and third party providers," Paul explained. "Congress has passed a variety of laws that decimate our Fourth Amendment protections. In effect, it means that Americans can only count on Fourth Amendment protections if they don't use e-mail, cell phones, the Internet, credit cards, libraries, banks, or other forms of modern finance and communications."

"Basic constitutional rights should not be invalidated by carrying out basic, day-to-day functions in a technologically advanced world and this bill will provide much needed clarity and reassert Fourth Amendment protections for records held by third parties," he added.

Adding to his ever-lengthening constitutionalist and civil libertarian résumé, on May 24 Paul [penned an op-ed in the Washington Times](#) advocating an end to calls for a national ID, such as that proposed by the REAL ID Act. Paul wrote:

The controversial immigration-reform bill that passed the Senate Judiciary Committee this week is expected to be considered by the Senate in June. Many see measures contained in this bill, such as a strong E-Verify and a "photo tool," as a means to control unlawful immigrants' access to unlawful employment. I worry that they go too far.

I think there are better ideas that err on the side of individual privacy while still strengthening our borders. We should scrap a national identification database and pass immigration reform that secures the border, expands existing work-visa programs and prevents noncitizens from access to welfare. These simple ideas will eliminate the perceived need for an invasive worker-verification system and a government citizenship database.



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I am against the idea that American citizens should be forced to carry around a National Identification Card as a condition of citizenship. I worry that the Senate is working to consider a series of little-noticed provisions in comprehensive immigration reform that may provide a pathway to a national ID card for all individuals present in the United States — citizens and noncitizens. These draconian ideas would simply give government too much power.

Forcing Americans to carry around an identification card to affirmatively prove citizenship offends our basic concept of freedom. Wanting to avoid a “papers please” culture in our country is also why conservatives oppose federal universal gun background checks. We oppose such measures not because we don’t believe in common-sense rules or regulation — but because we are wary of giving the federal government this kind of centralized power over our daily lives.

I am against government lists of those who own or have transferred a firearm for the same reason I oppose any pathway to a national ID. I don’t think that government should have the awesome power of monitoring the legal activities of American citizens. That is not a proper role of the federal government — or any level of government, for that matter.

Presidential aspirations aside, Rand Paul is bolstering his libertarian bona fides by blocking every effort by his colleagues in Congress to deprive Americans of their most basic civil rights as protected by the Constitution.

Finally, [in an appearance on ABC’s \*This Week with George Stephanopoulos\*](#), Senator Paul questioned President Obama’s moral authority to lead the nation in light of the trio of scandals rocking his administration: the IRS’ abuse of power in the targeting of conservative groups, the death of Americans in Benghazi while special forces in the area were told to stand down, and the wiretapping of Associated Press reporters by the Justice Department.

The “moral authority standard” for a president has been progressively lowered over the course of decades. By invoking that requirement, Senator Paul is setting the bar higher for all those who might make a run at the White House — including himself.

*Photo of Sen. Rand Paul in New Hampshire: AP Images*

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