



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 21, 2012

Rand Paul “Interested” in 2016 Run for the White House

Attention supporters of Ron Paul: You might be able to repurpose those presidential yard signs.

In [an interview with ABC News](#) ranging from marijuana laws to defense cuts, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) talked to Jonathan Karl about the future of the Republican Party as well as his presidential plans. “I’m not going to deny that I’m interested,” the son of the libertarian icon said. Yahoo reports that, “While Paul is quick to add that he isn’t ready to make a decision about a presidential bid yet, he is not hesitant to say that the Republican Party needs a new message.”



“I think we have to go a different direction because we’re just not winning and we have to think about some different ideas,” the senator told Karl. One of the planks Paul would have party policymakers rip out of the Republican platform is that covering the “war on drugs.”

While he claims to personally oppose the legalization of marijuana, Paul says states should retain the the right to determine pot policy — [something voters in Washington and Colorado did in November](#). “States should be allowed to make a lot of these decisions,” Paul says. “I want things to be decided more at a local basis, with more compassion. I think it would make us as Republicans different.”

Although he doesn’t suggest a complete legalization, Paul does recommend relaxing the penalties for violating drug laws. “I think for example we should tell young people, ‘I’m not in favor of you smoking pot, but if you get caught smoking pot, I don’t want to put you in jail for 20 years,’” Paul says.

In the illuminating interview, the scion of the godfather of the liberty movement suggested taking the scalpel to the sacred cow of defense spending, yet still evincing a more temperate (read: easier to sell to party power brokers) attitude than that of his famous father.

“How about another compromise?” Paul told Jonathan Karl. “Republicans who think military spending, myself, who think national defense is important, should compromise and say, you know what, not every dollar spent on the military’s sacred, we can reduce the military spending, that’s a compromise.”

Many libertarians and supporters of the senator’s father, Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), would wish to see a much stronger stance on military cuts, calling for an end to undeclared foreign wars, overseas military bases, and “nation-building” exercises, something Senator Paul did not call for in this interview.

Are Senator Paul’s foreign policy views truly more “interventionist” than those of his father? Speaking on foreign aid and U.S.-Israel relations, Senator Paul [said](#), “For President Obama to stand up today and insist that Israel should once again give up land, security and sovereignty for the possibility of peace shows an arrogance that is unmatched even in our rich history of foreign policy.”

He also [stated in a letter to Commentary magazine](#) in response to being labeled “anti-Israel”:



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Foreign aid is another example of how our meddling often hurts more than it helps. In my proposals to end or cut back on foreign aid, some have made accusations that my proposals would hurt Israel. Actually, not following my proposals hurt Israel.

We currently give about \$4 billion annually to Israel in foreign aid. But we give about \$6 billion to the nations that surround Israel, many of them antagonistic toward the Jewish state. Giving twice as much foreign aid to Israel's enemies simply does not make sense.

Our aid to Israel has always been to a country that has been an unequivocal ally. Our aid to its neighbors has purchased their temporary loyalty at best.

These countries are not our true allies and no amount of money will make them so. They are not allies of Israel and I fear one day our money and military arms that we have paid for will be used against Israel....

There are many differing opinions about both foreign and domestic policy within Israel.... This is as true in Israel as it is in the United States. The notion that there is an unassailable consensus concerning Israel's best interests, within the Republican Party, the United States, and even Israel itself, is simple not true and never has been.

Senator Paul does not explicitly call for an end to U.S. aid to Israel, nor does he come out in favor of it in the way that most Republicans do. Either way, the Constitution does not give Congress or the president the power to take money from citizens of this nation and funnel it to foreign governments, even ones that are "unequivocal allies."

Senator Paul's father is perhaps more unequivocal in his opposition to foreign aid. "Morally, I cannot justify the violent seizure of property from Americans in order to redistribute that property to a foreign government — and usually one that is responsible for the appalling material condition of its people. Surely we can agree that Americans ought not to be doing forced labor on behalf of other regimes, and that is exactly what foreign aid is," Ron Paul wrote in his book [The Revolution: A Manifesto](#).

Speaking of aid to Israel specifically, Congressman Paul [said in 2007](#):

My position is rather simple, it's not anti-Israel. My position is neutrality. My position is to not get involved in these fights. And I think we would be better off as Americans and it certainly would be a lot cheaper for us. We're spending way too much money and we're going broke with this policy [of sending financial aid to foreign countries] and I think it just gets us into trouble.

On the subject of going broke, in the ABC interview, Senator Paul also addressed the issue of the "fiscal cliff": "Our message should be, as it always has been, we want to grow the economy, we want more jobs, and the way you get more revenue up here [in Congress] is by more economic growth."

When asked about the "fiscal cliff" and the impending expiration of the Bush tax cuts, Paul responded: "There should be a compromise, but the media has defined it to be only one compromise. Republicans must accept raising taxes. How about another compromise? Democrats should compromise also — entitlements and welfare, the spending can come down."

When asked if he would oppose every bill that raises taxes, Paul seemed to hedge when given the opportunity to declare his absolute disavowal of tax increases. "I think it's a mistake to raise taxes. I won't vote to raise taxes," Paul said, chuckling.

"Period? None?" Karl asked. "I'm not going to raise taxes," Paul said.



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Finally, when asked about Mitt Romney's failure to win a single battleground state and the GOP loss of senate seats, Paul pointed to a few points where Republicans could improve their message, especially with regard to voters on the West Coast, New England, and "around the Great Lakes."

"We're getting an ever dwindling percent of the Hispanic vote," Paul says. "We have to let people know, Hispanics in particular, we're not putting you on a bus and shipping you home." Surprisingly, Paul then admits that he wouldn't "rule out" support for creating a "conditional path to citizenship" for those who have lived illegally in the United States for a protracted period of time.

"I'm not going to rule out that we can't figure out an eventual way if you've been living here for 10 or 20 years you can become like the rest of us," Paul said.

Ron Paul has given his final speech as a congressman and has run his final campaign as a presidential candidate. Whether or not Rand Paul can fill his father's shoes will be in large measure decided by whether he can faithfully follow the polestar of the Constitution or whether he adopts compromise as his guiding light.

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Photo of Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.): AP Images



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