



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 7, 2015

Rand Paul Officially Announces Presidential Run

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has announced Tuesday that he is seeking candidacy for the 2016 presidential election. Paul, whose presidential announcement has been long-anticipated, has also announced the slogan that will define his presidential campaign: "Defeat the Washington machine. Unleash the American dream."

Standing before a packed room of diverse attendees at his Galt House hotel rally in Louisville, Kentucky, Paul announced, "I have a message, a message that is loud and clear and does not mince words. We have come to take our country back!"



Senator Paul declared his intent to expand the traditional GOP base. "The message of liberty, opportunity and justice is for all Americans, whether you wear a suit, a uniform or overalls, whether you're white or black, rich or poor. Many Americans, though, are being left behind. The reward of work seems beyond their grasp. Under the watch of both parties — the poor seem to get poorer and the rich get richer."

He also took the opportunity to call out the GOP. "Too often when Republicans have won, we've squandered our victory by becoming part of the Washington machine. That's not who I am," Paul said. "It seems to me that both parties and the entire political system are to blame. Big government and debt doubled under a Republican administration. And it's now tripling under Barack Obama's watch."

Paul added, "If we nominate a candidate who is simply Democrat-lite, what's the point? Why bother? We need to boldly proclaim our vision for America."

Paul provoked a passionate response from supporters when he criticized Obama's domestic surveillance program.

He also addressed Iran's nuclear program, asserting that any deal should come before Congress for approval. "I will oppose any deal that does not end Iran's nuclear ambitions and have strong verification measures," he said. "I will insist that any final version be brought before Congress."

Hours before Paul made the official announcement at an event in Kentucky, he posted on [randpaul.com](#), "I am running for president to return our country to the principles of liberty and limited government." Paul's announcement on his website was accompanied by a video message featuring his wife, Kelley, wherein she talked about their marriage, as well as his passion for ophthalmology and his volunteer work in Guatemala, where he has operated on hundreds of patients. "Being a physician gives Rand a unique perspective in Washington," his wife said. "Simply because he's trained to diagnose a problem and find a solution. He truly believes that if you believe something, you should get involved.... I think that's a great example for our kids."

"He loves making a difference as a doctor, and he believes he can make a difference as the president," she concluded.



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Paul also sent a mass e-mail to his supporters about his announcement, in which he targeted the likely Democratic presidential contender, Hillary Clinton:

Our country is run by and for the special interests, and the career politicians in both parties let it happen. We look around and see the same old, tired career politicians from yester year running. Hillary Clinton? We know how that movie ends... trillions more in debt, more taxes, and more Benghazi's. Radical Islam thrived and grew while Hillary was on the top floor of the state department. Now she wants a promotion?

The official announcement took place in Kentucky, where Senator Paul kicked off a five-day, five-state announcement tour, which will proceed through New Hampshire, South Carolina, Iowa, and Nevada.

The *New York Times* wrote that Paul's particular brand of politics could make him "an outlier and a target among his rivals." While Paul stands with the Republican Party on issues such as abortion, he is sure to clash with the establishment Republicans on issues such as reducing drug penalties, minimizing national surveillance, and limiting military intervention. For example, Senator Paul gained notoriety when he staged a 13-hour filibuster in March 2013 to call attention to the United States' use of drones.

For these reasons and more, the *Washington Post* wrote that Paul could be "the most unusual and intriguing voice among the major contenders in the 2016 field."

Nick Gillespie, editor in chief of Reason.com and Reason TV, told NPR's Scott Simon [in a recent interview](#) that Paul could be called "libertarian-ish." "You know, I think he is talking what he believes," he said. "But I think he draws a lot of ideas from his father generally without some of the baggage, to be honest."

"And people are more interested I think now than even a few years ago of being allowed to make more choices that are important in their lives," Gillespie continued. "And you see that reflected in things like the growth in pot legalization and gay marriage. Then at the same time they're very skeptical of government, whether it's a conservative Republican government under Bush or a liberal democratic government under Obama."

Paul himself recently referred to himself as "Libertarian-ish" on his Twitter account: "I'm a constitutional conservative. Libertarianish. Have a foot in both camps."

Paul is running on the premise that he is a "[different kind of Republican](#)," a slogan that was introduced in a viral video he released on Sunday night teasing his presidential campaign.

Regardless of where Paul falls on the Republican spectrum, Senator Paul scored a 93 percent in the [Freedom Index](#) — this magazine's congressional scorecard that rates lawmakers based on how closely their voting record adheres to the U.S. Constitution. Amongst the many votes that earned Paul this high score was his decision to vote against S. 2578 — a bill that would force employers to provide healthcare coverage for their employees that violates their religious convictions — as well as his support for S. 2280, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Some media outlets have observed that Paul's slogan evokes "populist, anti-establishment themes," which proved to be popular when Paul's father, former Texas Congressman Ron Paul, sought the Republican presidential nomination.

But Rand Paul does differentiate himself in many ways from his father, who was quite popular among the Libertarian electorate.

Politico reports that Paul's advisors state his campaign's top issues "will include a flat tax, IRS reform,



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term limits, privacy and justice reform.”

Paul’s position on a flat tax and IRS reform is very different from that of his father, who called for getting rid of the income tax altogether.

Paul’s stance on term limits does not address the problem of poorly informed voters who send big-spending politicians to Washington. In fact, term limits effectively moved Congress in the direction of a lame-duck body since every person who would not be able to run again because of term limits would be a lame duck who would likely become less responsive to the voters.

As noted by most media outlets, the field of expected Republican contenders is rather large, though until now only Texas Senator Ted Cruz had declared his candidacy officially. Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, Scott Walker, and Marco Rubio are just a few expected to make their own announcements in the near future.

According to a CNN poll, Paul comes in third place behind Jeb Bush and Scott Walker. However, Senator Paul has won the straw poll at the Conservative Political Action Conference for the last three years.

Paul believes he stands out among his fellow Republican candidates because his campaign will be as digital-savvy as the Obama campaign was. “Sen. Paul is clearly running a very different type of organization,” said Vincent Harris, the former Cruz tech adviser now working as chief digital strategist for RANDPAC.

Harris contends that Paul’s campaign will be a “tech-forward operation, of a crowd-sourced campaign that will use digital that’s never been used before on the Republican side.”

Paul intends for his campaign to be more technologically advanced than his colleagues’. *Politico* writes:

Different domains will funnel traffic to the same official campaign website. Google staffers plan to be with Paul’s top aides in Louisville, as well as a satellite campaign office in Austin, Texas, to help decipher the optimal moments to blast out digital ads and measure their real-time web performance. And Paul isn’t just using social media like Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter to spread word about his political ambitions. He’s also pushing out all-important links to his own website, where he can solicit donations, email addresses and other vital information that will lead to more asks for money, more invitations to attend rallies and more ways for people to engage with his expected upstart presidential bid.

Paul is also set apart from other likely GOP contenders as he has expanded the targeted audience to include college students, specifically historically black colleges, as well as minority communities. In April 2013, Paul delivered a speech at Howard University, a historically black school in Washington, D.C., in which he opined how his party had lost “the trust and faith of an entire race.”

Senator Cruz welcomed Paul’s entrance into the race, declaring, “His entry into the race will no doubt raise the bar of competition, help make us all stronger, and ultimately ensure that the G.O.P. nominee is equipped to beat Hillary Clinton and to take back the White House for Republicans in 2016.”



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