



Ron Paul: The Doctor's In and Seeing Voters

The doctor is in. U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, a 12-term Texas Congressman and retired obstetrician, “officially” announced his candidacy for President on ABC’s Good Morning America Friday morning and a few hours later told about 300 supporters at a Town Hall rally in Exeter, New Hampshire, that he would carry the battle for personal freedom and constitutional government into the 2012 campaign.

“The revolution is spreading and the momentum is building,” a beaming Paul told the cheering crowd, as he preached the message he brought to New Hampshire’s first-in-the-nation primary and to other primary and caucus states in 2008, a message of spirited opposition to a federal government that “goes so far as to pretend that it can take care of us from the cradle to the grave and police the world.” Paul, who ran for President for the first time as the Libertarian Party candidate in 1988, said people are now more receptive to “the things I’ve been talking about for the past 30 years.” A disciple of the Austrian school of economics, which preaches minimal regulation of free markets, Paul said the housing bubble that burst at the start of the current recession was created by artificially low interest rates and government-backed loans. The government bailout of the financial institutions that followed was something sold to the American people as a measure needed to avoid an economic depression, he said.

“So they bailed out Wall Street and dumped the depression on the people,” said Paul. A sizable chunk of the bailout money went to foreign banks, he said, including a bank one-third owned by Moammar Ghadafi, the Libyan ruler whom U.S. and NATO forces have lately been opposing with air attacks in support of the anti-government rebellion in that country. Paul, a critic a U.S. war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, said our nation’s policy in the Middle East is often contradictory and is particularly dangerous with regard to Pakistan, where the U.S. and NATO allies have been fighting Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.





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“We’re giving [Pakistan] billions of dollars and we’re bombing them,” he said, adding that the guiding principle of U.S. foreign policy appears to be, “Do what we tell you and we’ll give you money; if you don’t, we’ll bomb you. In Pakistan we’re doing both.” He said he supported giving President George W. Bush the authority to go after the al-Qaeda after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, but Bush “abused that authority” by waging war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, who successfully resisted occupation by the Soviet Union for more than a decade. They are still resisting occupation by the United States now, he said.

Despite overwhelming popular approval of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, Paul, in an interview published in *The New Hampshire Union Leader* Friday morning, said he favored the strategy pursued when the World Trade Center was bombed by terrorists in 1993. “We worked with the government of Pakistan and they helped us,” he said. “And many of [the terrorists] were brought back, and they were tried in New York and convicted and electrocuted or imprisoned. I don’t know what’s wrong with that.”

Paul said at the rally that he would not vote for raising the debt limit, allowing the federal government to borrow more money, adding to the current national debt of more than \$14 trillion, despite warnings by government officials that failure to authorize more debt will cause the government to default on its loans. The government is already defaulting, he said, by printing more money to cover its borrowing and thereby devaluing the currency. The government defaulted in the early days of the Republic when it refused to honor the Continental dollars issued under the Articles of Confederation, and again when it repudiated the “greenbacks” printed during the Civil War, Paul said. In the 1930s the Roosevelt administration banned ownership of gold by U.S. citizens and refused to redeem gold certificates. In the 1970s, President Nixon did the same to foreign bondholders by severing the tie between the dollar and the price of gold, he said.

Paul said the real rate of inflation is now at 10 percent annually and is going to get worse. The author of the bestselling *End the Fed*, he noted his bill to audit the Federal Reserve has passed the House. He drew loud and sustained applause when he called for abolishing “the Fed.”

Paul also took issue with the government providing insurance for people who choose to live on beachfront property or areas at high risk of flood or hurricane damage. If a homeowner can’t get private insurance, he said, “That’s a pretty good economic lesson that it’s dangerous to live there.”

A longtime advocate of a smaller, more frugal, and less intrusive government, Paul said the Constitution was not written to put limits on what people may do. “The Constitution was written to put limits on the federal government.” He said that the issue is not whether we should have a strong or a weak presidency, but how that strength is directed. Using the strength of the office to create and support overly intrusive measures taken by the Transportation Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security is not the answer. He added that people “should be standing up and resisting the government.” Echoing a line often used by President Ronald Reagan, Paul said the American people are becoming increasingly aware that “government is not the solution to the problems, government has created the problem.”

On the stage behind Paul were about two-dozen people including eight of the 19 state representatives who have already endorsed his candidacy. Many were Ron Paul supporters four years ago and were elected to Legislature last year. Jim Forsythe of Strafford, the lone Paul supporter so far in the New Hampshire Senate, said many of the consequences of government policies that Paul warned about in the 2008 campaign have come to pass. “No one could be more credible in standing up and saying ‘I told



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you so' than Ron Paul," said the freshman senator.

Paul defended his controversial position in favor of repealing federal laws relating to drugs, including heroin. "In fact heroin was once legal in this country," he said, "and nobody abused it." He said he personally believes physicians prescribe far too many drugs, but emphasized his conviction that, barring fraud or deception, doctors should be free to prescribe and people should be free to put into their bodies what they choose and be responsible for their own decisions. Drugs to alleviate cancer and other diseases are held up "for years and years," he said, while the federal Food and Drug Administration decides whether to approve them.

Paul also spoke Thursday night at a fundraiser for the House Republican Victory PAC, a political action committee to help elect Republican candidates to the New Hampshire House of Representatives. William O'Brien of Mont Vernon, Speaker of the House and chairman of the PAC, said he is favorably impressed with Paul and his message. He said he was not alarmed by the candidate's position in favor of repealing federal drug laws.

"Enforcement of drug laws is becoming as much of a problem as the abuse of the drugs," said O'Brien, who thinks the nation needs to reconsider how it deals with drug abuse.

Both at the fundraiser and at the rally, Paul, 75, said that ever since his 2008 campaign he has been especially encouraged by the number of young people who have responded to his pro-liberty message. Marisa Bhargava, 16, an Exeter Academy sophomore who walked away from the rally carrying a Ron Paul sign, is one of them. "I was happy to see so many of my fellow students went to the rally," she said, having recognized about 30 of her schoolmates there. Bhargava, who hails from Plano, Texas, said her enthusiasm for Paul's campaign is not at all related to the fact that the candidate, a Lake Jackson resident, is a fellow Texan.

"No," she said. "Because we had George W. Bush from Texas and I was not a fan of his." That answer would not have surprised New Hampshire's Chris Lawless, the former Hopkinton selectman who served as emcee at the rally.

"It's the adults we have to educate," he said. "The kids get it."

Photo: Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) speaks at the town hall in Exeter, N.H., Friday, May 13, 2011, where he announced his plans to seek the Republican nomination for President: AP Images



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