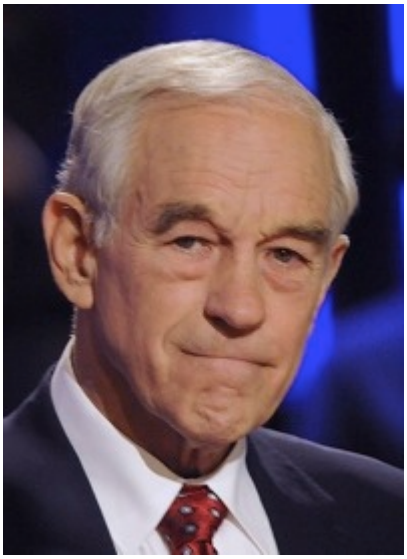
Written by **Thomas R. Eddlem** on October 30, 2011

Ron Paul Wins NFRA Iowa Straw Poll



The NFRA promoted their straw poll as, in the words of *Human Events* Political Editor John Gizzi,gold for GOP hopefuls. The NFRA also pointed out that its straw poll was "last major straw poll before the Iowa caucuses," but the poll included less than 600 total votes cast between the two polls. The number of attendees and votes was much less than the 4,671 votes that Paul won in a close second place loss to Michele Bachmann in the Ames Straw Poll back on August 13.

The straw poll could be seen as a victory of the message of peace won a straw poll over the message of more war, as the only two candidates to address the conference were Ron Paul and former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum (who finished a distant third with only one percent of Iowa voters).

Santorum addressed the audience with a condemnation of President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq, suggesting Obama's action was a surrender to a growing and powerful force in the Middle East that is not going to [be] beneficial to Israel, not going to be beneficial to the Iraqi cause or the Afghani cause. We have a president who has refused to confront evil. The Iraqi government had demanded that the U.S. government remove combat troops from Iraq, and Obama's hand had been forced by an agreement signed by President Bush in 2008.

Representative Paul countered that an intimidating posture by the U.S. government abroad threatened to encroach upon basic freedoms enjoyed by American citizens for more than two centuries. How intimidating do we have to be? Paul asked, noting that the drone strike aimed at U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki also killed his 16-year-old son, also a U.S. citizen. How secure do we have to be that we would assassinate a 16-year-old kid who is an American citizen? What is he going to do? Is he going to launch a missile against us or something? Paul noted that Americans had little to fear from a foreign invasion, but more to fear from their own government. I fear much more the erosion of our protections of our liberties here at home and the erosion of our economy than I do any foreign adversary. Paul concluded that it is time for us to come home and mind our own business.

In related news, Herman Cain narrowly defeated Ron Paul in the October 29 West Alabama Straw Poll, 51-45 percent, with all the other presidential candidates splitting the remaining four percent of straw poll votes. The West Alabama Straw Poll, also sponsored by NFRA, did not pass without controversy. Herman Cain spoke before the gathering and was heckled by a Ron Paul supporter who shouted "Federal Reserve" during Cain's talk. Cain, who is a former director of the Kansas City branch of Federal Reserve Bank, replied: "With all due respect, I'm going to give this speech today, thank you very much."

Our biggest domestic issue is not the Federal Reserve, it's this economy that's on life support," Cain replied to the heckler. "Now since you brought up the Federal Reserve, Im going to say this real quick. The Federal Reserve I do not believe we need to end the Fed. We can fix the Fed. Thats all Im going to say about it.

Many Ron Paul supporters, who are adherents of the Austrian school of economics, have blamed Federal Reserve bank suppression of interest rates as one of the key factors in setting off the housing bubble (in addition to federal loan guarantees through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) that created the economic crisis in the first place. In fact, Ron Paul himself had claimed as early as September 6, 2001 that the Federal Reserve Bank's suppression of interest rates had set off what he called a "housing bubble." Rep. Paul noted in that 2001 speech on the House floor that "The Federal Reserve credit created during the last eight months has not stimulated economic growth in technology or the industrial sector, but a lot of it ended up in the expanding real estate bubble." It was a theme revisited many times in Rep. Paul's speeches throughout the decade. By way of contrast, Cain (who served on the Fed 1992-96) cited Alan Greenspan, the Fed Chairman during the 2001-06 housing bubble, as a model to be followed during the October 11 New Hampshire Presidential debate. In fact, during that debate Cain cited Greenspan as someone he'd want to appoint as chairman of the Federal Reserve System during a Cain presidency.

Photo of Rep. Ron Paul: AP Images

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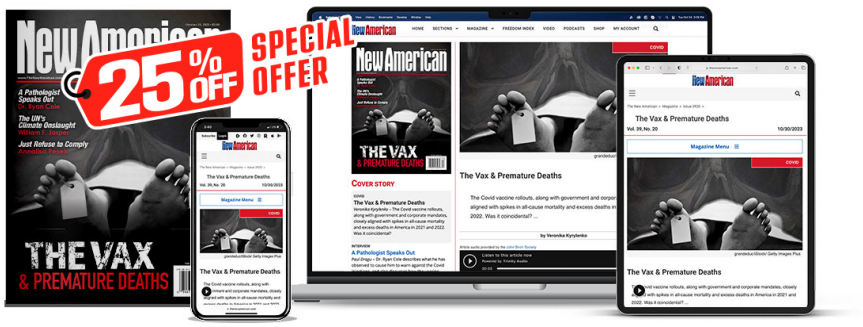

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