



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on October 9, 2011

Ron Paul Wins “Values Voter” Straw Poll

Texas Congressman Ron Paul won the Values Voter Summit presidential straw poll October 8 with 37 percent of the vote, besting Herman Cain’s 23 percent in a Christian right audience with his message of peace and limited government.

The libertarian-leaning Republican had [barely registered](#) in the 2010 Values Voter Summit, and certainly would not have been a favorite in this year’s summit. The event was sponsored by the following Christian right organizations: the American Family Association, the Family Research Council, American Values (headed by Gary Bauer), and the late Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University. The neo-conservative Heritage Foundation also co-sponsored the weekend event.



The Heritage Foundation has generally been a [supporter of more foreign military interventionism](#), [opposing cuts in military spending](#) even though the United States currently spends [almost as much on armaments as the rest of the world combined](#). This is the opposite of Ron Paul’s [platform](#), which calls for military spending cuts and withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. Paul [told](#) the audience to wild cheers:

Christ was recognized to be the prince of peace. He was never to be recognized as the promoter of war. And he even said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be the children of God.” He never said blessed are the war makers. It was the peacemakers that we must honor and protect.

Paul also told the biblical story of the danger of executive branch power, and how it can replace the morality of the people. Relaying the story in 1 Samuel, chapter eight, Paul [noted](#) the warnings of Samuel against a king who wants wars and high taxes. “Samuel, although he knew he wasn’t going to be around long, he advised the people of Israel not to accept the king, because the king, he warned, would not be generous. He would undermine their liberties. There would be more wars. There would be more taxes. And besides, accepting the notion of a king would reject the notion that, up until that time, since they had left Egypt, their true king was their God and the guidance from their God.” Paul concluded to cheers: “We have too often relied on our king in Washington, and we have to change that.”

Paul even presented the biblical case for not using the power of government to solve “the problem of prostitution,” and perhaps surprisingly (considering the audience) won crowd applause for his [explanation](#):

We are taught in the New Testament about caring for the poor and caring for our families and our neighbors and friends. But never did Christ say, you know, let’s go and lobby Rome to make sure we’re taken care of. It was a personal responsibility for us. Christ was confronted at one time by a prostitute, but he didn’t call for the centurions. He didn’t call for more laws. But he was very



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direct and thought that stoning was not the solution to the problem of prostitution.

Some mainstream media stories focused upon political/religious sideshows, rather than Paul's victory. *USA Today* [focused upon](#) the insult against Mormons by Robert Jeffress, the lead pastor at First Baptist Church in Dallas. Jeffress, a Rick Perry supporter, called frontrunner Mitt Romney "not a Christian" and a member of a "cult" for his Mormon faith. Mormons (formally, the Church of Jesus Christ-Latter Day Saints) differ from Christian sects in [how they define the Trinity](#) and believe that Jesus visited North America in pre-Columbian times, a visit [church members believe](#) was re-discovered by church founder Joseph Smith in upstate New York in 1820.

Other mainstream news media downplayed Paul's victory, focusing instead upon the poor performance of frontrunners Rick Perry (fourth place, eight percent) and Mitt Romney (sixth place, four percent). The lead graph on the *New York Times* [story](#) pooh-poohing Paul's victory began: "Wildly enthusiastic Ron Paul supporters, including busloads of college students, have been a visible presence at the Values Voters Summit in Washington, so no one was surprised when Mr. Paul won the conference's annual straw poll of presidential preferences on Saturday." But the reality is that Paul should have been seen as an underdog. Much of the Christian right has looked suspiciously at anyone adopting the label "libertarian" for fear it is an embrace of immorality rather than merely a practical view of the limits of government power.

Ron Paul's official campaign blogger Jack Hunter [claimed](#) that Ron Paul's [address](#) "in my estimation, won over a lot of new converts." Maybe those busloads of enthusiastic college kids — as they mingled in with the crowd — had an impact as well.

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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