



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on July 16, 2011

Ron Paul's First Campaign Ad Focuses on Debt Limit Debate

Perhaps it's an early indicator of how seriously Ron Paul is taking his presidential campaign this time around that he has already released a fireball of a [campaign TV ad](#), focusing squarely on the debt limit debate and holding fellow lawmakers in both parties accountable for the budgetary mess we're in. Not that Ron Paul didn't take his 2008 run seriously — he ended up astonishing Beltway insiders for his ability to raise funds and for the innovative track his campaign took. But one sensed four years ago that Ron Paul himself was a bit surprised at how his campaign took off, fueled as much by the enthusiasm and creativity of his support base as by Ron Paul's own initiative.



This time around, Ron Paul's debut ad displayed the kind of slickness that a well-stocked war chest can buy. Crafted to resemble a movie trailer (which credits "Balanced Budget Productions in association with Ron Paul"), the ad reminds viewers that this summer's debt limit fight has precedents in recent history, in which Republicans agreed to raise the debt ceiling and taxes in exchange for future budget cuts — only to see the budget cuts evaporate. It happened under President Reagan and it happened under Bush I. Now it's happening again.

The production casts Paul, who opposes increasing the debt limit, as a man of conviction, not compromise.

{youtube width="500" height="312"}UUNieOB0whI{/youtube}

Whether America has yet been chastened enough to take Ron Paul seriously, even after four years of fulfillment of Paul's predictions back in '07 and '08, has yet to be seen. Certainly the unpretentious Texas OB/GYN has never cultivated the kind of swashbuckling, superstar persona that most recent Presidents have taken pains to craft and the TV-addled general American public seems to adore. But this time, he appears to be taking his very best shot, reaching out at a visceral level to those who may not be ready to accept his non-interventionist views on foreign policy and his uncompromising faith in the free market — not to mention his unswerving allegiance to the Constitution that so many of his Washington colleagues find utterly baffling. This ad has the ring of a call to arms rather than a history or economics lesson, which isn't surprising given the disclosure of Ron Paul's spokesman Gary Howard that the ad buy for airing in Iowa and New Hampshire had cost the campaign six figures (\$166,000, [according to Politico.com](#), a figure that dwarfs both Pawlenty's and Bachmann's initial ad layouts).

The ad has attracted a good deal of derision already in the so-called mainstream media. "Like any good political thriller, the advertisement elevates narrative convenience above historical accuracy," [blogged](#)



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the *New York Times*' Sarah Wheaton. The *Wall Street Journal* [claimed](#) that Ron Paul is supposedly as unpopular as ever with GOP voters for his non-mainstream views.

In point of fact, the budgetary events of the 1980s are subject to more than one historical interpretation, given the financial turmoil, including the great stock market crash of October 1987 and the Savings and Loan debacle, among others. But certain facts are indisputable: All through the '80s and into the mid-'90s, the Democrats controlled Congress, and therefore the purse strings. And the government grew and grew, and with it deficits, debts, and taxes all rose vertiginously. Compromise on budgetary matters has never worked with the Big Government crowd; whether the government is growing by 20 percent or 80 percent, it's still growing. In Ron Paul's candid view, the United States is already insolvent, and would do better to bite the bullet now rather than postpone the inevitable for a few more years.

Whether his message will play in Peoria has yet to be seen.

Thumbnail photo of Ron Paul: Screen grab from Paul campaign ad



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