



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 11, 2014

Va. Landslide: Virtually Unknown College Prof Defeats Eric Cantor

In a primary election that Paul Rothenberg, a non-partisan political analyst, called “the political version of the San Francisco earthquake,” House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.; shown on left) [lost overwhelmingly](#) to obscure economics professor Dave Brat (right). This is the first time since 1899 that a House Majority Leader has lost his reelection bid in his party’s primary. Despite being outspent by Cantor by more than 25-to-1, Brat breezed to victory on Tuesday, capturing 55 percent of the vote to Cantor’s 44 percent.



Virtually ignored by establishment Republican groups such as Club for Growth and Heritage Action, Brat won by basing his campaign on Cantor’s waffling on such issues as immigration, cutting government spending, and ObamaCare. He also won with the help of conservative political commentators such as Laura Ingraham, Mark Levin, and Ann Coulter. Brat’s victory, according to Ingraham, was fueled by voters’ “fury with the GOP establishment on fiscal issues and immigration.” She added:

The lives of most Americans aren’t getting any better year after year. Their wages are down or flat as the cost of living is going up.

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And for the last two years they’ve seen Eric Cantor focus an inordinate amount of time on how to improve the lives of illegal immigrants. So why should they be expected to return the same politicians back to Washington?

Eric Cantor was perceived as arrogant and disconnected — and voters thought it was time that he try to find a real job in this lousy economy.

Brat first came to the attention of Larry Nordvig, the executive director of the Richmond Tea Party, last fall following a speech he made at a fundraiser. Nordvig liked what he heard and met with Brat afterwards:

I asked him 45 minutes of questions afterward ... about what he would do about deficit spending, what he would do about ObamaCare, what he would do about amnesty ... and he gave very satisfactory answers....

Between his appearance and his bearing and his answers to tough questions, I knew we had the right man for the job....

It’s a big decision to fire your congressman and replace him with someone else, but I think people are tired of hearing the rhetoric and seeing the opposite of what they’re looking for in a conservative leader.



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Brat, professor of economics at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, announced his candidacy in January, offering a sound byte that resonated with voters throughout his campaign: “I want to be Eric Cantor’s term limit.” Following his announcement, said Nordvig, “There was almost a collective sigh of relief. People were [saying]: Finally! Finally we have a solid candidate to challenge Cantor.”

Brat’s curriculum vitae is an impressive 17 pages long and contains some helpful glimpses into his political philosophy and ideology. Obtaining his BA in Business Administration in 1986 from Hope College, he went on to attend Princeton Theological Seminary, getting his Master of Divinity in 1990. A devout Roman Catholic, Brat changed his career path by sitting for his Ph.D. in Economics from The American University in 1995.

He presented at the Cato Institute’s Seminar on Free Markets and the institute’s Monetary Conference in 2012 along with his friend, mentor and supporter John Allison, libertarian and former head of BB&T Corporation.

He has studied the moral teachings of Ayn Rand, preparing and presenting “An Analysis of the Moral Foundations in Ayn Rand” in 2010 although he refuses to call himself a “Randian.” However, he told an interviewer at National Review Online that he has been influenced by Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged* and “appreciates Rand’s case for human freedom and free markets.”

Cantor, whose [rating in *The New American’s* “Freedom Index”](#) is an unimpressive 56 percent for the period 2001-2013, turned out to be an easy target for Brat, who took his opponent to task during the campaign for his stances on immigration reform and for his weak-kneed efforts concerning ObamaCare. Said Brat, Cantor “hasn’t moved the ball down the field [on ObamaCare repeal] at all.

Concerning the government “shutdown,” Cantor waffled there as well, according to Brat:

He had two CRs [Continuing Resolutions] at the end, one in favor of the shutdown and one opposed to the shutdown — at the same time.

That’s fairly symbolic of [his] unprincipled leadership. I mean, that’s not a leadership position [at all] where you’re on Side A and Side B at the same time ... you’ve got your finger up in the air, checking which way the wind is blowing.

Brat doesn’t appear to have any interest in kowtowing to the establishment either. Rather than attend by-invitation-only meetings held by Grover Norquist and a Weyrich lunch (named in honor of establishment conservative Paul Weyrich), Brat stayed on campus, grading final exams for his students.

The only apparent chink in Brat’s armor could become a campaign issue when he runs against Democrat challenger Jack Trammell, who coincidentally also teaches at Randolph-Macon College. In 2011 Brat wrote an essay in support of private capitalism in which he warned of the dangers of national socialism overtaking the United States. If one is careful to read what he said, the charge that Brat thinks “Hitler could rise again” in the United States is accurate. But the media won’t care. It is certain that they will try to link Brat with Hitler. Here are his remarks:

Capitalism is here to stay, and we need a church model that corresponds to that reality. Read Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s diagnosis of the weak modern Christian democratic man was spot on.

Jesus was a great man. Jesus said he was the Son of God. Jesus made things happen. Jesus had faith. Jesus actually made people better.

Then came the Christians. What happened? What went wrong? We [as Christians] appear to be a bit passive. Hitler came along, and he did not meet with unified resistance.



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I have the sinking feeling that it could all happen again, quite easily. The church should rise up higher than Nietzsche could see and prove him wrong. We should love our neighbor so much that we actually believe in right and wrong, and do something about it.

If we all did the right thing and had the guts to spread the word, we would not need the government to backstop every action we take.

No doubt the media will delight in taking his “Hitler” comment out of context. On the other hand, most observers are predicting a win for Brat in the general election in November, shaking up the establishment Republicans as the “earthquake” in Virginia shows that the Tea Party revolution continues to have legs.

Photos of Eric Cantor (left) and Dave Brat: AP Images

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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