



Ron Paul and the “Conservative” Media’s Double Standards

Herman Cain’s unexpected victory in Saturday’s Florida Straw Poll has the media, especially the so-called “conservative” media, quite excited. Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bob Dole each won this contest, and each eventually received their party’s presidential nomination. Thus, so goes the conventional reasoning, this poll is not without its share of significance as far as the end result of the GOP primaries is concerned.



As usual, in covering this story, the pundits and “journalists” reveal both their proclivity for sensationalizing events and their seemingly insuperable cognitive challenges.

That there is a *coincidence* between two events most certainly does *not* establish that there is a *causal relation* between them. In other words, that *three* Republican presidential aspirers won both the Florida Straw Poll *and*, subsequently, their party’s nomination does not mean that the one event caused or predicted the other. There is a complex of factors, and one factor in particular, that this argument from prediction omits: namely, the fact that Reagan, Bush I, and Dole were all competitive in their respective races at the time that they achieved victory in Florida. The painful truth of the matter is that, judging from his polling numbers thus far, Cain hasn’t been serious competition for anyone. This, of course, isn’t to deny the possibility that he could experience a reversal of misfortunes; rather, it is only to point out that *if* he has better luck in the future, Florida, or at least Florida by itself, will have had little to nothing to do with it. *The coverage of his victory in Florida, however, is a different matter* (If Ron Paul had won this contest, does anyone seriously believe that there would be nearly as much coverage of it as Cain’s victory is now receiving?).

More exasperating than the predilection for hyperbolic eruptions and the intellectual shortcomings of most “conservative” pundits is the raw hypocrisy that is on parade throughout their coverage of the Republican primaries. Indeed, so staggering is this hypocrisy, so glaring are the inconsistencies of which it consists, that getting a hold of it is a monumental task in and of itself.

For the longest time we have been told that the GOP presidential primaries were a “three-way” race: Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Michele Bachmann would eventually walk away with the spoils. Mind you, it wasn’t that these three candidates all polled comparably with one another: Perry held first place while Romney and Bachmann steadily came in second and third places, respectively. But then something happened.

Ron Paul overcame Bachmann.

Suddenly, the media’s tone changed. No longer was this a “three-way race”; it was now a contest between the *two* frontrunners, Perry and Romney.

When Bachmann won the Iowa Straw Poll, she was all the rage. Much like more recent developments in Florida, media personalities couldn’t underscore enough the significance of Iowa. That they weren’t all



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that wide of the mark is born out by the decision of Tim Pawlenty — of whose “formidability” and “attractiveness” as a candidate neoconservative talk show host and Republican Party loyalist Michael Medved, among many others, continually reminded us — to terminate his campaign due to his poor showing there.

But for as poorly as Pawlenty did in Iowa, what must not be lost upon us is that he performed better, *significantly better*, than every other candidate — except, of course, for Bachmann and ... Ron Paul. Paul, you may recall, came within nine-tenths of one percentage point of *defeating* Bachmann.

Yet so painfully obvious was “the conservative media’s” omission of this critical fact in its coverage of Iowa that leftist comic Jon Stewart couldn’t resist parodying his ideological rivals — Fox News specifically. In truth, however, Stewart didn’t have to do all that much, for Chris Wallace and company at Fox, along with their cohorts in “conservative” talk radio, have become parodies of themselves. The Paul Derangement Syndrome that has been ravaging their minds every few years has reduced them to undifferentiated masses of raw irrationality. Because they have refused to attend to their condition, they have become caricatures of themselves. Stewart just exploited this fact.

Ron Paul has not only consistently maintained his third place showing, polls have shown him actually *beating* Barack Obama when it comes to that most coveted “independent” voter. Furthermore, Paul does as well in this regard as “frontrunner” Mitt Romney and *better* than “frontrunner” Rick Perry. No other GOP contender or potential contender even comes close.

In spite of his impressive feats, though, the “conservative” punditry still insists on treating Paul as if he were utterly irrelevant. Had Rick Santorum, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, or even Jon Huntsman been doing remotely as well overall as has Paul, you can rest assured that these very same pundits would have been singing their praises. Remember, it wasn’t all that long ago that these “experts” were touting Huntsman — a man whose polling has been so poor that he is just scarcely a candidate (This is no exaggeration: Huntsman was bordering upon being excluded from further debates because of his abysmal showing among Republican voters). In fact, even now, given that his numbers *in New Hampshire* (and *New Hampshire alone*) have finally reached double digits, some “conservative” commentators find their excitement over Huntsman — Huntsman! — rekindled.

Cain wins *one* straw poll and “conservative” talking heads speak as if *he* now has an opportunity to not only secure his party’s nomination, but to beat Obama. Paul, in contrast, not only picks off straw polls as if they are going out of style but, as I already noted, excels by every other conceivable criteria used to measure a viable candidacy, and yet Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin, Michael Medved, and scores of others incessantly inform us that *he* hasn’t got a shot.

Because they can’t deny that Paul has a substantial following, they try to dismiss it by referring to the millions of his supporters as “Ron Paul people” or, in the case of Medved, “Paulisticians.” Notice, you never hear any talk from this same crowd of “Cain people,” “Bachmann people,” “Perry people,” or “Romney people.” Neither will they refer to “Gingrich people,” “Santorum people,” or “Huntsman people,” but in all fairness, in these cases it may just be because there are no such people.

If, as Limbaugh and his ilk would have us believe, it is only a fringe element to which Paul appeals; if his following consists of “kooks” and “nuts” who need not, and should not, be treated with any seriousness, then, presumably, the Republican Party can afford to dispense with their votes in the next election. If Paul does not become his party’s presidential nominee, then because his following is so negligible, it apparently would not matter if those who would have otherwise cast their votes for Paul decided to



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abandon to its fate the party that spared no occasion to subject them to ridicule and insults. Is this what Paul's right-of-center detractors would have his supporters do?

The question, obviously, is rhetorical, for if Paul's supporters refuse to back the Republican nominee, Obama's reelection is a foregone conclusion. Perhaps it is time for "conservative" media personalities to be reminded of this.



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