



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on September 14, 2012

Ron Paul Campaign Aide Benton Goes to Work for Sen. McConnell

Longtime Ron Paul for President campaign aide Jesse Benton [announced](#) September 13 that he would take a job working on the reelection campaign of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Benton's choice of McConnell drew criticism from many libertarian-leaning activists who had supported the Ron Paul campaign, as McConnell had been the major force behind trying (unsuccessfully) to stop Ron Paul's son Rand from being elected to the U.S. Senate from Kentucky in 2010.



Just two days earlier, Benton had resigned from the staff of the Paul-aligned Campaign for Liberty, a grass-roots advocacy organization seeking smaller government with affiliates across the nation. "After much soul searching," Benton [wrote](#) in a September 11 letter to Campaign for Liberty, "I have decided that my passion lies in direct electoral politics, and I plan to work on campaigns rather than resume my work in grassroots advocacy."

The McConnell campaign released a [statement](#) expressing happiness that it had Benton on board. "Jesse is literally the best in the business at building and organizing conservative grassroots movements, and I'm thrilled he's chosen to return to Kentucky to lead my campaign." Benton returned the compliments to the establishment Republican. "It is a real honor to join Senator McConnell's team. I look forward to playing my part in re-electing a great leader who can truly unite a broad coalition of Americans and get our country back on track," Benton said in a [press release](#).

Benton had long been a controversial figure in the Ron Paul campaign, with some activists complaining that he wasn't a true believer in the Ron Paul cause of libertarian-leaning smaller government and was an "[establishment sell-out](#)" months before he took the job with McConnell. Among those who complained about Benton after his departure from the grassroots campaign was Dr. Thomas Woods, a scholar and activist associated with the Ludwig von Mises Institute. Woods said of Benton (who married one of Ron Paul's granddaughters), that Benton had done his best to marginalize the libertarian supporters of Paul during the campaign. Woods also [suggested](#):

Ask yourself this: how much money would you have to be paid to work for an enemy of the things you're supposed to stand for? Maybe now people will understand why Jesse would fly into a tirade after some of Ron's most heroic moments, when the rest of us were cheering.

The *Washington Post* [portrayed](#) the move in a different light, noting that the younger Dr. Paul (Rand) and McConnell had patched up many of their political differences: "But Paul and McConnell have developed a working relationship and the tea party-tied freshman is backing his older colleague in 2014." Indeed, McConnell had participated in the RNC [video](#) complimenting Ron Paul at the Tampa national convention several weeks ago.

Photo of Jesse Benton with Ron Paul: AP Images



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