



Constitutional Candidates for Congress

As recently as two years ago, Congressman Ron Paul introduced a bill to audit the Federal Reserve Bank that headed to oblivion. Year after year — beginning in 1983 — the bill never even won a committee hearing. Dr. Paul was ignored in Washington, and was a lonely voice for freedom back in his Texas congressional district.

Times have changed. Ron Paul is on a political roll. The bill Dr. Paul introduced in the current Congress to audit the Federal Reserve Bank (H.R. 1207) has more than 300 cosponsors — including every House Republican and more than 100 Democrats — and the backing of House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank. Frank has promised a committee vote, and it has a better-than-average chance of House passage this year. Dr. Paul's new book *End the Fed* sailed into the top twenty of Amazon.com's sales figures more than a month before it was available. It debuted on both Amazon.com and *New York Times* bestseller lists, and sales remain strong even today. His old presidential campaign has rolled over into a "Campaign for Liberty" that has raised more than \$4 million since its founding in February of this year.



More importantly, his presidential campaign evidently inspired dozens of candidates for congressional office across the nation who seek to reform Congress from a constitutionalist perspective. And several of them are both well funded and being taken seriously by the political establishment.

Rand Paul



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 12, 2009

Prime among these constitutionalist “Ron Paul” candidates is the Congressman’s third child, Dr. Rand Paul. While the elder Dr. Paul was an obstetrician by trade before being elected to Congress, Dr. Rand Paul is an eye surgeon (ophthalmologist). The 46-year-old Dr. Rand Paul announced his candidacy for the open U.S. Senate seat in Kentucky in August. Days before Dr. Paul’s announcement, incumbent Republican Jim Bunning had bowed out of a reelection contest after Kentucky’s establishment Republican Senator Mitch McConnell (who is also the Senate Minority Leader) had made fundraising in Washington difficult for Bunning. “Over the past year,” Bunning said, “some of the leaders of the Republican Party in the Senate have done everything in their power to dry up my fundraising. The simple fact is that I have not raised the funds necessary to run an effective campaign for the U.S. Senate.” *Time* magazine on July 29 explained that the “some leaders” Bunning was talking about was his fellow Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell: “He quietly signaled to Republican moneymen that they ought to wait Bunning out. Party leaders in Washington met with a potential primary opponent.... McConnell’s strategy ultimately worked.”



Dr. Rand Paul is the founder of the conservative Kentucky Taxpayers United and has also campaigned for his father, so he isn’t a stranger to politics. But he hasn’t seen McConnell open the monetary floodgates from Washington on his behalf either. Politico.com has noted that “the GOP establishment has lined up behind Secretary of State Trey Grayson.” Perhaps Grayson is favored by the Washington Republican establishment because Grayson’s campaign website is bereft of mention of bringing the federal government back within the bounds of the U.S. Constitution. By way of contrast, Rand Paul has made the Constitution a centerpiece of his campaign. “The Federal Government must return to its constitutionally enumerated powers and restore our inalienable rights,” the younger Dr. Paul says on his campaign website, in an echo of his father’s principles. “America can prosper, preserve personal liberty, and repel national security threats without intruding into the personal lives of its citizens.”

The fact that the establishment isn’t behind him hasn’t hurt Rand Paul in the crucial fundraising part of the race; he raised more than \$1.1 million by the end of the third quarter of this year. Grayson’s Washington fundraising, which included a \$500 per plate fundraiser hosted by McConnell on September 23, has been matched by Dr. Paul’s vibrant Internet strategy dollar-for-dollar thus far. “We actually outraised both Democrats and our primary opponents this past quarter,” Dr. Paul told *The New American*.

Rand Paul is quick to say that his first problem was “name recognition,” though he told *The New American* “we are now probably very close to being on a par with our primary opponent now.” Of the two, Grayson has been far better known in Kentucky; he’s been the Secretary of State for five years. Therefore, even though Grayson’s polling numbers were stronger back in August, 40 percent to Dr. Paul’s 25 percent according to an August poll, Rand Paul is being given a good chance of prevailing by professional political observers. Dr. Paul has numbers to back up his statement that he’s pulled up to a par with Grayson. An October Rasmussen poll put Paul’s and Grayson’s “favorability” percentages within the poll’s margin of error, and a November WHAS11/Survey USA poll put Paul ahead at 35 to 32 percent.

If the younger Dr. Paul survives the Republican primary, he has a better-than-even chance of winning



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the GOP-leaning Kentucky general election. Democrats who face a Republican candidacy of Rand Paul would not only face a united conservative base but also significant crossover from some traditionally Democratic voting groups, especially those opposing unnecessary wars and assaults on civil liberties under the guise of the “war on terror.” Dr. Paul told *The New American* that he maintains a bipartisan appeal that criticizes both parties when they are at fault, “On the stump I promise that I will vote against any budget that is not balanced, either Republican or Democrat.” The crossover phenomenon may even impact the primaries, as many have changed from independents or Democratic registration to vote for him in the primary. “We re-register people a lot of the time, and there is a lot of crossover.”

Peter Schiff

Another well-funded Ron Paul presidential campaign supporter is Connecticut-based Peter Schiff, who had been an economic adviser to the Ron Paul presidential campaign. Schiff has become an Internet sensation on his own as president of Euro-Pacific Capital, largely because he accurately predicted the current economic recession with astonishing precision on a variety of financial television talk shows. He not only predicted the current recession in 2006 and 2007, he also explained why it would happen to pundits who often laughed at him for predicting the housing boom would go bust. In 2008, some of his friends put together a montage of his television clips called “Peter Schiff Was Right” and posted it on YouTube. The clips received several million views and dramatically increased demand for Schiff’s guest appearances on national television shows.



Schiff is an acolyte of the free-market “Austrian School” of economics, is for ending America’s military interventions abroad, and is emphatic about returning the federal government to the limits of the U.S. Constitution’s delegated powers.

Schiff announced in September that he would run for the U.S. Senate in Connecticut against longtime incumbent Christopher Dodd. Dodd would ordinarily be considered a safe incumbent. On paper, Dodd is an entrenched Democrat in a Democratic-leaning state, but the 28-year incumbent is considered highly vulnerable this time around. As chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, he was the Senator who could have — and should have — raised the alarm about the housing bubble. But instead, Dodd built a cozy relationship with sub-prime lender Countrywide. Although technically cleared of ethics violations in a recent investigation concluded August 7, the Senate inquiry criticized Dodd’s efforts as less than cautious. “The committee does believe that you should have exercised more vigilance in your dealings with Countrywide in order to avoid the appearance that you were receiving preferential treatment based on your status as a senator,” the Senate Ethics Committee concluded. Dodd also has personal health issues to deal with this time around. Last summer he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, so he may not be able to wage as vigorous a campaign as in the past.

As a result of Dodd’s recent missteps, Schiff will have to get in line to have a crack at him. The Republican Party smells blood, and a number of other Republicans have declared their candidacies as well. Among the better known are World Wrestling Entertainment CEO Linda McMahon and former Congressman Rob Simmons, who appears to be the early front-runner. Schiff’s greatest challenge may be winning the Republican primary. With his financial background and his accurate economic predictions, he’s the perfect constitutionalist foil for the leftist Dodd in a general election. But despite



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already having raised more than \$1.1 million in Internet donations for his campaign, he barely registers in polling data. That's perhaps expected, since he's a political novice in the Republican Party and outside his coterie of YouTube followers he's virtually unknown in Connecticut.

Schiff will definitely need that impressive \$1.1 million he's already raised, and more, in order to introduce himself to more Connecticut primary voters if he wants to win. He'll also have to mobilize a local army of volunteers in Connecticut. If he can do that, Schiff could become the next Senator from Connecticut.

Adam Kokesh

Adam Kokesh is best known as an Iraq War veteran who returned opposed to the war and was a keynote speaker at Ron Paul's "Rally for the Republic" that competed with the Republican National Convention in the summer of 2008. He volunteered for service in Iraq, where he witnessed the bureaucracy, waste, and corruption in the U.S. reconstruction of that country. According to his campaign website, he emerged from the military a strict noninterventionist in foreign policy and defender of Congress' constitutional authority to declare war:



Inherent with the right to self-defense is the right to collective self-defense, and in the world that we live in, this is the most important function of the federal government. To ensure that this power is used responsibly, Congress, as the best representation of the people, was given the exclusive power to declare war.... The executive branch has set a dangerous precedent by taking powers that are supposed to be vested in the Congress. By not abiding by the Constitution and using the collective wisdom of the Congress to ensure judicious use of force, we find ourselves spending hundreds of billions more than is necessary for legitimate defense.

Kokesh has echoed Rep. Paul's position on the Federal Reserve Bank, called for a smaller government role in the management of healthcare, and pronounced a nuanced view about the immigration issue.

Kokesh has an uphill battle as a Republican in New Mexico's heavily Democratic Third District against freshman Democrat Ben R. Luján. Luján hasn't had much time to dig in as an incumbent, but his northern New Mexico district hasn't been won by a Republican since 1996. Kokesh, in his favor, was able to tell *The New American* that he has raised over \$100,000 in donations in the first few months of his candidacy. "What was shocking for me was that for the third quarter we actually beat Luján," he told *The New American*. That goes a long way toward making up for the \$100,000 Washington, D.C., fundraiser Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer hosted earlier this year for Luján. Neither candidate is even close to the \$1 million or so they'll have to raise to wage winning a House campaign, but Kokesh's early fundraising numbers suggest that he won't be at a financial disadvantage on this front.

Kokesh told *The New American* that the traditional political wisdom in New Mexico is that "if you want to play and you want to win, you're going to run as a Democrat." Yet, the state has elected conservative Republicans occasionally because "a lot of those people would be Republicans anywhere else." Kokesh



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notes that the local Democratic Party still postures as pro-gun and as socially conservative, and he sees a “great potential for a crossover vote, just because of those Democratic voters that have been sucked into the machine.”

And Kokesh’s anti-war, noninterventionist foreign policy, and pro-civil liberties positions just may have the decisive bipartisan appeal he’ll need. “People [are] calling to say they are changing their party registration so they can vote in the primary” for him, he told *The New American*. But if people can see through to the principles of the Constitution, the liberal media is still seeing things in terms of the phony left-right spectrum. The local weekly news magazine *Santa Fe Reporter* published an article on congressional candidates called “The Early Birds” on July 29, labeling Kokesh a right-winger. “They gave me a 4.2 out of 5 for being true conservative,” Kokesh said, “then two or three months later, they wrote about how I had all of these liberal ideologies.” The Marine Corps veteran says, “To me ... one of the biggest frustrations and also one of the most rewarding things about this race is taking on the left-right spectrum.”

Also in Kokesh’s favor is the expectation that most analysts believe 2010 will be a Republican year, just as 1994 and 1996 were. Count Kokesh as an underdog, but he may have a shot.

Other Candidates

These are only three of the better known among more than a dozen candidates nationwide who have been inspired by Ron Paul’s 2008 candidacy to run for the House or Senate. It has almost taken on the form of a slate in some quarters, as Internet fundraisers like ThisNovember5th.com are seeking to raise funds for more than a dozen candidates on the same day as Ron Paul’s 2007 “money bomb” when he raised a then-record \$4 million in a single day. The idea of Internet “money bombs” has proliferated among the constitutionalist movement, often resulting in more frequent but smaller one-day fundraising numbers for candidates. This year’s money bomblets have netted from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand dollars on a single day for the better-known candidates. And while this article will be at press on November 5, tens of thousand dollars were pledged two weeks in advance of the day. But ThisNovember5th.com is only one of many independent efforts to raise funds for constitutionalist candidates and enable them to become independent of the Washington, D.C., fundraisers and not beholden to power-brokers in the same quarters.



Among the ThisNovember5th.com candidates is Marine Corps veteran David W. Hedrick, who is running against five-term liberal Democratic Congressman Brian Baird of Washington’s Third Congressional District. Before announcing his candidacy, Hedrick confronted Baird at an August 18 town hall, telling him: “I also heard you say that you were going to let us keep our health insurance. Well thank you! It’s not your right to decide whether I keep my current plan or not. That’s my decision.” But that’s not all. Directly confronting the claim made by some leading Democrats that attempts to “disrupt” town hall meetings display a fascist tendency, he also told Baird:

A little history lesson. The Nazis were the National *Socialist* Party. They were leftists. They took over finance. They took over the car industry. They took over the health care in that country. If Nancy Pelosi wants to find a swastika, maybe the first place she should look is the sleeve of her own arm.



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Meanwhile, R.J. Harris is opposing three-term incumbent Republican Tom Cole in Oklahoma's Fourth Congressional District. A veteran commentator on Judge Andrew Napolitano's *Freedom Watch* Internet show on Fox News' website, Harris encapsulates his decision to run against a fellow Republican in a video advertisement: "How can we Republicans demand to replace the Democrat bailout voters without doing anything about our own? If we don't clean our own house, we can expect the Democrats to do it for us." Cole voted for the Bush bailout bill, the TARP legislation. Harris calls himself a "constitutional conservative Republican" and says, "I will never vote for bailouts, required servitude, taxation without representation or give your money to foreign governments. However, Tom Cole has voted for all of these things."

Jake Towne of Pennsylvania's 15th District will also try to make Republicans honest by running against liberal Republican incumbent Charlie Dent (*The New American's* Freedom Index rating: 40 percent).



Minuteman founder Chris Simcox, though not a newcomer to politics as a result of the Ron Paul 2008 presidential bid, has announced a challenge against John McCain's Senate seat in Arizona and has been put on the ThisNovember5th.com fundraising list.

Dr. Mike Vasovski in South Carolina's Third District will run in a crowded Republican primary for an open congressional seat.

Other House of Representatives candidates ThisNovember5th.com will be raising funds for include John Dennis (California), Jaynee Germond (Oregon), David Ratowitz (Illinois), Bob Parker (Missouri), and both Collins Baily and Robert Broadus of Maryland.

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Ron Paul and his dedicated followers were the tail of the GOP dog during the 2008 campaign, but a proliferation of "Paulite" constitutional candidates in 2010 may find the tail wagging the dog.

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