



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on March 1, 2011

Rep. Ron Paul Tops Tea Party Straw Poll

Sunday, February 27, was the conclusion of the three-day Tea Party American Policy Summit in Phoenix, Arizona ? a gathering of top Tea Party activists for the purpose of fostering greater unity and cohesion among its various disjointed groups across the country. The event focused on addressing sustainable and long-term strategies for dealing with matters such as the national deficit, ObamaCare, Second Amendment rights, border security and immigration, the Fair Tax, and other issues related to the Tea Party's core principles of limited government and fiscal conservatism.



The pinnacle of the event, however, was its straw poll, the first of its kind, to determine the presumptive Tea Party choice for the 2012 Republican presidential candidate. The poll carries special significance, as the field of presumptive Republican presidential candidates remains widely crowded, with contenders including former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Rep. Ron Paul, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson, former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain, and former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton.

The [summit](#) brought together a somewhat broader coalition of groups and organizations than did the American Conservative Union (ACU) Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) held earlier this month in Washington, D.C., which, due to the attendance of the gay conservative group GOProud, was boycotted by prominent conservative organizations such as the Heritage Foundation, the American Family Association, and Concerned Women for America, all of which did were present at the Tea Party Summit. The casting of ballots in person at the Summit resulted in an initial straw poll victory not for Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), but for dark horse Herman Cain. As reported by [The Washington Post](#):

Tea party supporters voting in a straw poll at a national summit favor conservative Texas Rep. Ron Paul and Georgia radio host Herman Cain for president in 2012. Cain won 22 percent support from the audience in Phoenix at the summit organized by the Tea Party Patriots. He was followed by Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Paul among those casting ballots in person.

Speaking at the American Policy Summit were several leading experts, scholars, and political heavyweights, including Gov. Pawlenty, Rep. Paul, Maricopa County Sherriff Joe Arpaio, Fox News media analyst Dick Morris, and L. Brent Bozell of the Media Research Center, and despite the presence of speakers associated with the establishment, neoconservative groups Manhattan Institute and American Enterprise Institute, the preferred candidates of these think tanks were eschewed in favor of Rep. Paul and Herman Cain, the latter finishing on top in the voting of those present.

Rep. Paul, however, emerged most victorious, as he earned the most overall votes from both the audience and online voting participants. According to the [Huffington Post](#):

Paul had the most votes overall, thanks to a swell of support from online voters. Between the two



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sets of results, there were about 1,600 votes. Paul gathered more than one-third of them. Pawlenty and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin each had 9 percent overall. Cain, Paul and Pawlenty were the only three to speak at the three-day summit.

Rep. Pauls overall victory in the Tea Party straw poll is a testament to two truths. The first is the mutual affinity between the Tea Party and the well-known aspects of Rep. Pauls ideology. Perhaps without the Tea Party realizing it, its activism has emerged from a broader context of constitutionalism and libertarianism that has been championed for many years by Rep. Paul, who can legitimately be viewed as the grandfather of the Tea Party movement. Throughout his career, Rep. Paul has faithfully resisted the tide of fighting undeclared, empire-building wars, jacking up the federal deficit, and expanding government through bailouts and stimulus packages the very same fiscally-conservative policies which helped galvanize the Tea Party movement. In fact, the [first Tea Party](#) was held in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2007, when on the 234th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, Ron Pauls presidential campaign held a money bomb fundraiser that brought in over \$6 million.

Secondly, Rep. Pauls success in the Tea Party straw poll was facilitated by the well-organized, technologically-savvy, and youthful nature of the Ron Paul campaign, which has far exceeded other campaigns in terms of its ability to successfully utilize online fundraising, social networking websites, and other technological resources to its advantage.

While Rep. Paul once again emerged at the top of another conservative straw poll (he [won](#) 31 percent of the straw poll at last years CPAC and 30 percent at this years CPAC), the high performance of Herman Cain in the poll indicates that the Tea Partys preferences are misguided. Instead of hailing the progenitor of their movement, Tea Partiers opted for a latecomer whose own record indicates that he is less than ideal as a candidate. While Rep. Paul advocates curbing inflation and bringing back constitutionality by first auditing, and then ending, the Federal Reserve Bank, Herman Cain is a former board member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. In addition, Cain defended TARP, otherwise known as the Wall Street bailout, labeling critics of the unconstitutional measure free market purists. Even in light of evidence that TARP has failed, Cain [wrongly claims](#) that taxpayers have seen a profit from TARP:

Wake up people! Owning a part of the major banks in America [nationalization of banks] is not a bad thing. We could make a profit while solving a problem. But the mainstream media and the free market purists want you to believe that this is the end of capitalism as we know it.

The free market purists objection to this is that it smacks at government control of the banking industry, which is called nationalization. They are correct. It smacks, but it is not nationalization because that would require the government to own at least 51 percent of the entity for an indefinite period of time.

The ownership by the taxpayers is going to be relatively small and nowhere near the amount needed to be called nationalization. So whats the problem?

Cain also [rejects](#) any efforts to audit the Federal Reserve, claiming that Ron Paul and his followers are clueless, ignorant, angry, and misguided:

The Federal Reserve already has so many audits, its ridiculous. I dont know why people think were going to learn this great amount of information by auditing the Federal Reserve. Now, I no longer serve on the board of the Federal Reserve. Im not being defensive of the Federal Reserve; in fact, some of the policies and some of the actions of the Federal Reserve, I dont agree with



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because the attitude and the non-politicization in the 90s when I served is totally different than whats going on today. But thats another matter. But people ... say, we ought to audit the Federal Reserve because we dont know enough about it. Well, heres the advice Ive given to people who are worried about an audit of the Federal Reserve: call them up, and ask them if you can stop by and have one of their PR people or one of their Public Relations people explain to you how the Federal Reserve operates.

Any supporter of the basic principles of free market capitalism, and constitutional, limited government should not see Herman Cain as an ideal candidate. Instead, Tea Partiers should consider the fiscal and domestic policies of Rep. Ron Paul, the progenitor of the Tea Party movement, who has never wavered in his support of constitutional government.



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