



Who's the "Constitution" Candidate for President?

"I thought it would be interesting," Tucci wrote, "to see what the Republican presidential candidates' campaign websites have to say about the Constitution. Surprisingly, in many cases the answer is: nothing."

By Tucci's [count](#) in his "Constitution-less conservatives" article, here are the number of mentions of the U.S. Constitution on the candidates' websites:



- Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney: 0
- Businessman Herman Cain: 0
- Former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania Rick Santorum: 0
- Former Louisiana Governor and Congressman Buddy Roemer: 0
- Former Utah Governor and Ambassador Jon Huntsman: 1
- Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich: 1
- Texas Governor Rick Perry: 7
- Michigan Congressman Michele Bachmann: 9
- Former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson: 9
- Texas Congressman Ron Paul: 42 (plus blog references)

Tucci [concludes](#) that "Ron Paul's site, which also promises a 'return to constitutional principles,' has more references to the Constitution than all of the other candidates' sites combined."

But is Tucci's assessment fair? Tucci doesn't reveal his methodology for investigating the candidates' websites, and there are a number of ways to measure how central the U.S. Constitution is in a candidate's race for President.

Tucci claimed to have measured "references" or "mentions" of the U.S. Constitution on GOP candidates' websites. That is at least technically inaccurate. An "advanced" Google search of each of the candidates' websites reveals that all of them at least mention the U.S. Constitution. Using the Google.com's advanced search for the word "Constitution" on the candidates websites, we come up the following number of hits:

- Buddy Roemer (BuddyRoemer.com): [2](#)
- Michele Bachmann (MicheleBachmann.com) [3](#) (see below)
- Mitt Romney (MittRomney.com) [9](#)
- Rick Santorum (RickSantorum.com) [11](#)
- Jon Huntsman (jon2012.com) [12](#)



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- Gary Johnson (GaryJohnson2012.com) [24](#)
- Newt Gingrich (Newt.org) [64](#)
- Ron Paul (RonPaul2012.com) [270](#)
- Rick Perry (RickPerry.org) [284](#)
- Herman Cain (HermanCain.com) [297](#)

This Google search tactic is no perfect measure of candidate interest in the Constitution, however. It does document that there is substantial reference to the U.S. Constitution on Ron Paul's website, and also on Rick Perry's (though many "constitution" pages are references to the Texas constitution he governs under) and Herman Cain's websites. But the Google search spider picks up multiple copies of the same press releases in some instances, fails to address depth in other instances, and sometimes even fails to find mentions.

For example, the Google computer spider did not pick up on Michele Bachmann's main splash page, which had "Constitutional Conservative" in giant bold type, nor did it pick up the mention on her main issues page. On that page she explains, "As a constitutional conservative, I believe in the Founders' vision of a limited government that trusts in and preserves the unlimited potential of the American people." She also pledges to work to "repeal Obamacare and its unconstitutional mandates." Bachmann's mentions of the word "constitution" are clearly undercounted in such a measure.

And the Google search appears to multiply the hits on the web pages of Rick Santorum, Jon Huntsman, and Herman Cain. Santorum's constitutional comments [focus](#) almost exclusively on the supposed need for a balanced budget amendment. Most of Huntsman's constitutional references are multiple copies of a [press release](#) that quotes Huntsman calling for "government facilitating the 10th Amendment of the constitution, which allows local governments to basically determine their own destiny." Many of the Cain website's constitutional references are comments by supporters, not from the candidate. But Cain's references also include a pledge to obey the Constitution as well as an [apology](#) for calling for implying that Muslims cannot practice their religion: "I am truly sorry for any comments that may have betrayed my commitment to the U.S. Constitution and the freedom of religion guaranteed by it. Muslims, like all Americans, have the right to practice their faith freely and peacefully."

One indication of how the sheer number of references to the U.S. Constitution on a candidate's website doesn't necessarily connote adherence to the U.S. Constitution is this fact: The Google spider picked up 8,760 [references to "Constitution" on Barack Obama's official reelection site](#), BarackObama.com. Yet Obama has [continued — and in some instances even accelerated — the Bush administration's attack on the U.S. Constitution.](#)

Tucci has a point, however. Few GOP presidential candidates have made the U.S. Constitution a core issue in their campaigns. This can be measured by mentions on the candidates' main "Issues" or "Solutions" pages of their websites (as well as hyperlink jumps to "more information" from there). Most candidates fail to mention the U.S. Constitution at all on their issues pages, or only in one or two issues (usually ObamaCare). Only Ron Paul and Gary Johnson mention the U.S. Constitution in reference to more than two issues of their campaign. Here are how the candidate's "issues" pages mention the U.S. Constitution:

- Mitt Romney: No mention.
- Rick Santorum: No mention.



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- Jon Huntsman: No mention.
- Herman Cain: No mention.
- Buddy Roemer: Yes, in reference to Obamacare.
- Michele Bachmann: Yes, in reference to Obamacare and "the federal government's foremost responsibility under the Constitution: keep America safe."
- Rick Perry: Yes, in reference to Obamacare and defending borders.
- Newt Gingrich: Yes, in reference to Obamacare and judicial activism.
- Gary Johnson: Yes, in reference to a variety of "civil liberties" in the first eight amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- Ron Paul: Yes, in reference to Obamacare, declaring war, defending the nation, Patriot Act, warrantless surveillance, fighting terrorism, the Federal Reserve Bank, federal spending, supporting a constitutional amendment to abolish the income tax, the right to keep and bear arms, and the right to work (as opposed to closed shop union rules).

Tucci may be off on a few technicalities, but he's right on his main point. The evidence shows that — by far— the candidate who has most centered his campaign on the U.S. Constitution is Ron Paul.

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