

## Paul Ryan 'neutered' in Mitt Romney's campaign

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WHEN Paul Ryan became Mitt Romney's running mate six weeks ago, he was hailed by Republicans as the man who would introduce a bolder and more ideological approach to a campaign lacking in policy details. Many now fear he is perceived as Mitt-lite.

As Mr Ryan joins Mr Romney on the campaign trail in Dayton, Ohio today, many in his own party will be watching to see whether he can bring back the kind of spark he showed at the time of his appointment last month.

"Ryan really has been neutered. I'm surprised," said Michael Tanner, an expert on welfare policy with the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. "If you are going to put someone on your ticket as controversial as him, you should take advantage of his strengths.

"But instead, the Republicans have downplayed him. He has mutated down to Mitt Romney's level. He just says vague platitudes now. He certainly has not been the Paul Ryan that people in Washington know him to be, which is very bold . . . a man who advances big ideas."

"I just haven't seen that kind of passion I know that Paul has transferred over to our nominee," Wisconsin's Republican Governor, Scott Walker, said, suggesting that "pushback from some of the folks in the national campaign" might be responsible for holding back Mr Ryan.

Mr Tanner suggested the blame lay with Mr Romney's strategists.

"The campaign is very risk-averse. They still seem to believe that this election is simply a referendum on the President and that their job is to make as few waves as possible so that people just vote against Obama," he said.

As the author of a bold budget plan designed to slash the national deficit, Mr Ryan's role was not only to shore up support among the right-wing base but also to add some energy to the race.

Mr Ryan, 42, yesterday hit back at the criticism. "His (Mr Romney's) very selection of me as his running mate, the guy with all the specifics, who's put out all these solutions on the table - it shows you very clearly Mitt Romney's not afraid of making big decisions, making tough decisions, putting specifics out there," he told The Journal Sentinel of Milwaukee.

"Never once has the campaign asked me to stop something, or do something differently."