



Republican Senate Candidate's Positions, Posts Plagiarized From Several Sources

A Facebook post of Dr. Greg Brannon's seems to be a near-direct copy of an article by a Cato Institute scholar.

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Dr. Greg Brannon, a Republican who is vying for the party's Senate nomination in North Carolina appears to have plagiarized several of his campaign "on the issues" pages from Republican Michigan Rep. Justin Amash. A Facebook post of Brannon's also seems to be a near-direct copy of an article by a Cato Institute scholar. Another issues post appears to be copied from the Coalition for Jobs.

Brannon, a former Tea Party activist, has a history of making controversial statements. Brannon called U.S. property taxes "American central planning," and referenced the Holocaust and Soviet Union as other examples of central planning. He also once alleged that the United Nations is a scam to control life and ran a now-defunct organization called "Founder's Truth" that posted conspiracy theories like claims that there is fluoridate in the water and that the Boston bombing was a false flag.

His website then mysteriously disappeared from the Web Archive.

Brannon, who is a viable candidate for the Republican nomination according to some polls, led incumbent Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan 42-40 in a April Public Policy Polling poll.

On abortion:

Here's Brannon on abortion:

Government is responsible for protecting our individual rights to life, liberty, and property. I believe that life begins at conception, and it is unconscionable that government sanctions the taking of the lives of the helpless and innocent.

As a Senator, I will always vote against government funding of abortion and will fight to protect life at all stages. I will always vote for any and all legislation that would end abortion or lead us in the direction of ending abortion.

And here's Justin Amash:

The proper function of government is to protect individual rights—life, liberty, and property. **I believe that life begins at conception, and it is unconscionable that government would sanction the taking of the helpless and innocent. I always will vote against government funding of abortion and will fight to protect life at all stages.**

On farming:

Here's Brannon on farming:

North Carolina has a rich and diverse agricultural economy, with some 50,000 farms producing everything from wheat and sweet potatoes, to pork and poultry, and even Christmas trees and trout. Our state's farmers represent the best in innovation, entrepreneurship, and stewardship.

The future success of North Carolina farmers is endangered, however, when the government seeks to take over farm production with needless, uninformed, and often overly burdensome regulations. North Carolina's farmers are good at what they do, and they're successful when they're allowed to get on with the business of running their farms, as many of them and their families have for generations.

The government's most important role in agriculture is to protect the private property rights of farmers and their rights to make decisions about the most productive use of all their assets including their principal one—the land. Without the protection of private property there is no liberty.

As a Senator, I will consistently vote to protect private property rights and leave decisions about how to run farms to farmers instead of out-of-touch bureaucrats in Washington.

And here's Justin Amash:

Michigan has one of the most **diverse agricultural economies** in the country. **Our state's farmers represent the best in innovation, entrepreneurship, and stewardship. The future success of Michigan farmers is endangered, however, when the government seeks to take over farm production with needless, uninformed, and often overly burdensome regulations.**

Similarly, the government must respect the private property rights of farmers and empower them to **make decisions about the most productive use of their principal asset—the land.** As a Member of Congress, I consistently **vote to protect private property rights and leave decisions about how to run farms to farmers.**

On the environment:

Here's Brannon:

The best way to protect the environment is through enforcement of property rights and sound economic policy.

Wealthier nations have cleaner environments because their citizens can afford to pay for them and choose to do so. Consequently, the best environmental policy is a strong economy. Imposing federal environmental standards and government mandates is poor substitute because, no matter what the government requires, Americans can only buy clean technologies and follow environmental policies that they can afford.

Governments should punish businesses and individuals that pollute the land, water, or air of their neighbors – that's protecting property rights. But government should not attempt to micromanage environmental protection through payouts, tax breaks, and subsidies, which discourage the very innovation that could bring about real environmental improvements.

And here's Justin Amash:

The best way to protect the environment is through strong enforcement of property rights and pursuit of sound economic policy. Wealthier nations have cleaner environments because their citizens can afford to pay for it voluntarily. Imposing environmental standards through federal government mandate is not a practical substitute. No matter what the government requires, Americans can't buy clean technologies or follow environmental policies they can't afford.

Government should punish businesses and individuals that pollute the land, water, or air of their neighbors, but it should not micromanage environmental protection through payouts, tax breaks, or subsidies, which discourage innovation and mostly benefit the politically connected.

On regulations:

Here's Brannon:

Today's businesses are heavily burdened with thousands of pages of unnecessary and excessive government regulations.

Regulations function as a hidden tax on individuals in the form of higher prices and fewer goods and services available. The federal government's own Small Business Administration even admits that this hidden tax is around \$1.75 trillion per year.

And here's the Coalition for Jobs:

Today's businesses are heavily burdened with thousands of pages of unnecessary and excessive government regulations. The American people must realize that regulations function as a hidden tax on them in the form of higher prices and fewer goods and services available. The federal government's own Small Business Administration even admits that this hidden tax is around \$1.75 trillion per year.

On National defense:

Here's Brannon:

National defense is the federal government's most important function, according to the Constitution. The full force of our military should be used when our safety is threatened by active foreign aggression or invasion.

However, the power to declare war lies with Congress alone. Among other things, this means that we cannot allow executive reactions to imminent dangers to drag on indefinitely without the express authorization of Congress.

As a Senator, I will make sure that perceived threats actually endanger our life, liberty, or sovereignty before voting to risk the lives of American troops.

While we maintain national defense, we must also protect civil liberties. In the last eleven years, the Federal Government has expanded its power at an alarming rate, blatantly ignoring the Constitution. This is a very real threat to our liberty, as the federal government takes power that should rightly lie with states and citizens. Our founding fathers warned against just such a threat.

I strongly oppose big-government initiatives like the Patriot Act, SOPA, CISPA, and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2012. The 2012 NDAA, for example, allows the President to indefinitely detain anyone on U.S. soil, including American citizens, without charge or trial on the mere accusation that they are "associated" with terrorists. Such sweeping power with such vague justification is a very real threat to our most basic liberties.

And here's Justin Amash:

National defense is the most critical function of the federal government, as provided in the United States **Constitution. The full force of our** Armed Forces **should be used when** we are faced with genuine threats to **our safety**, such as **active foreign aggression or invasion**. The exclusive **power** of **Congress** to **declare war** must be respected, and **executive reactions to imminent dangers** must not be allowed to drag on **without the express authorization of Congress**. It is my duty to **make sure that perceived threats** are actually a **danger to our life, liberty, or sovereignty before voting** to send American troops into harm's way.

Even as we maintain our national defense, we must protect our civil liberties. I have led the fight against **big-government initiatives like the Patriot Act, SOPA, CISPA, and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2012. The 2012 NDAA allows the President to indefinitely detain anyone on U.S. soil, including American citizens, without charge or trial on the mere accusation that they are "associated" with terrorists.** Dystopian, police-state laws like the NDAA run contrary to everything our country stands for.

Healthcare

Here's Brannon (who is a doctor):

As a doctor for more than twenty-five years, I have first-hand experience with the enormous problems facing American health care.

The government's heavy-handed approach over decades has created a plethora of problems that need to be addressed through fundamental market reforms.

As a Senator, I would vote to defund and repeal the President's Affordable Care Act, which is proving to be anything but affordable and forces families and individuals to purchase government-approved health insurance that often do not meet either their needs or their budgets.

All of this government regulation has created a hopelessly complicated medical system that works in the interests of insurance companies and lawyers, rather than patients. To add insult to injury leaders in Washington exempt themselves from the regulations they themselves have imposed on the rest of us.

Under Obamacare, patients and doctors are prevented from making reasonable choices, despite understanding far better than any bureaucrat what is most appropriate for those patients. The poorest end up paying more and receiving fewer benefits.

On top of this, small businesses are suffering, as they face higher premiums and less certainty about the future. This impacts their ability to provide jobs or insurance at all. We need reforms that will reduce the real costs of health care, not force participation in a government system that is raising those costs.

A sustainable health care system requires that patients and doctors consider the costs and benefits of each decision, and work together to choose the right treatment.

We can make real improvements by allowing insurance companies to sell health care policies free of government regulations and across state lines. This will increase the number of policies available, which in turn make it easier for patients to find a policy that works for them at a price they can afford. Free market solutions like these will improve care and reduce costs by aligning the interests of patients, doctors, and hospitals.

As Senator, I will work to ensure that real, free market solutions are applied to the problems facing health care, so that American health care will again be the best in the world.

And here's Amash:

As a Member of Congress, I have voted to repeal the President's plan to force **families and individuals to purchase government-approved health insurance. Heavy-handed government regulation has created a hopelessly complicated medical system** that benefits mostly **insurance companies and lawyers**. In this system, **both patients and their doctors are disempowered and prevented from making reasonable choices** about the matters they know best. **Small businesses are suffering as they face higher premiums and less certainty about the future.**

We need reforms that will reduce the real costs of health care, not force participation in a government system. A sustainable health care system requires that patients and doctors consider the costs and benefits of each decision, and work together to choose the right treatment. Insurance companies should face nationwide competition for customers. I support allowing insurance companies to sell health care policies across state lines and innovative programs, like health savings accounts, that **improve care and reduce costs by aligning the incentives of patients, doctors, and hospitals.**

On Facebook, a post of Brannon's appears to be copied from Cato Institute scholar Doug Bandow.

Here's Brannon:

It's the Congress (We The People) that has the authority to declare war, not the President.

Article 1, Sec. 8 (11) states, "Congress shall have the power ... to declare war."

The president is commander-in-chief, but he must fulfill his responsibilities within the framework established by the Constitution and subject to the control of Congress.

Naturally, chief executives offer creative reasons to bypass the Constitution's clear requirement. One claim is that the president has some unspecified, ill-defined "foreign affairs power" that reduces the explicit war powers clause to a nullity.

However, the framers consciously circumscribed the president's foreign policy authority by vesting countervailing power in Congress, including the responsibility to declare war.

No one thinks that Congress should manage the ensuing war—that's why the Constitution names the president commander-in-chief. But Congress must decide whether or not the president will have a war to run.

Today the favorite presidential excuse for claiming the right to unilaterally initiate war is simple: everyone else does it.

This President and future presidents are not absolved from having to follow the Constitution because past presidents violated it.

And here's Bandow:

Article 1, Sec. 8 (11) states, "Congress shall have the power ... to declare war." The president is commander-in-chief, but he must fulfill his responsibilities within the framework established by the Constitution and subject to the control of Congress.

Naturally, chief executives offer creative reasons to short-circuit the Constitution's clear requirement. One claim is that the president has some unspecified, ill-defined "foreign affairs power" that reduces the explicit war powers clause to a nullity. However, the framers consciously circumscribed the president's foreign policy authority by vesting countervailing power in Congress, including the responsibility to declare war.

Yet no one thinks that 535 legislators should manage the ensuing war—that's why the Constitution names the president commander-in-chief. But Congress must decide whether or not the president will have a war to run.

Today the favorite presidential excuse for claiming the right to unilaterally initiate war is simple: everyone else does it. Those lawyers favored by former President George H. W. Bush point to 200-plus military deployments without congressional approval.

Brannon's campaign did not immediately return a request for comment.