

## **David Boaz Executive VP, Cato Institute :**

This ad is so outrageous that even [Jonathan Chait of the New Republic](#) was appalled: "The ugliest, most illiberal political ad of the year may be this one ... The trouble with Conway's ad is that it comes perilously close to saying that non-belief in Christianity is a disqualification for public office. That's a pretty sickening premise for a Democratic campaign." There is no evidence, of course, that Paul is not a believing Christian, but Chait is right about the implicit premise of the ad.

Conway is dragging up unproved allegations from Paul's college years and accusing him of being "a member of a secret society that calls the Holy Bible a hoax" and forcing a classmate to "kneel before a false idol." That's why, indeed, the headline in the Lexington Herald-Leader was "Jack Conway questions Rand Paul's religious faith in new ad."

This isn't Conway's first ugly, illiberal ad. A month ago, he went up with an ad featuring uniformed sheriffs denouncing Rand Paul's statement two years earlier in a television panel discussion on motorcycle helmet laws and gambling that "things that are non-violent shouldn't be against the law." The sheriffs suggest that Paul wants to legalize selling drugs to a minor, mortgage fraud, burglary, theft and promoting prostitution — and they say that we should "treat criminals like criminals." That's obviously not what Paul was talking about, and the attorney general of the Commonwealth of Kentucky should be embarrassed to broadcast such a dishonest twisting of Paul's statements.

And now he should be doubly embarrassed.

Conway's campaign seems entirely negative. Rather than trying to make a positive case for himself and the Democratic agenda, his ads and his speeches focus heavily on attacking Rand Paul. And alas, there is [some evidence in the latest polls](#) that it may actually be working -- a sad commentary on Kentucky voters if they're responding to this ad and all the associated media attention. But if he doesn't win, it doesn't seem that Conway will have positioned himself well for future campaigns.