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Libertarian weighs in on potential GOP presidential candidates

Monday, May 9, 2011 at 3:35PM



David Boaz, executive vice-president of Cato Institute, weighed in on potential GOP presidential candidates. [Screen snip from video at Cato.] I've often described myself as a Republican with a substantial amount of Libertarian, and that's one of several reasons I like to read content at the Cato Institute. There's an interesting video on the site with commentary by David Boaz, executive vice-president of Cato.

Boaz gave his opinions of the GOP possible presidential candidates, confirming something I've said in recent conversations.

There is a distinct Libertarian influence on the Republican Party at present and frankly, I think there's a positive effect on overall fiscal issues and the principle of small government.

Boaz summed up candidates like Gov. Mitt Romney (*"looks like a plastic model of a president"*) and social conservatives popular with the GOP base (*"can't win a general election."*)

I think Boaz is talking only about likely candidates rather than negating all social conservatives.

Boaz said former senator Rick Santorum (Penn.) is the only anti-Libertarian.

Gov. Mitch Daniels (Indiana) got a surprisingly good review for his fiscal conservatism, and his preference for reading economists like F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman. Daniels also called for a "truce on social issues," and that move will definitely resonate with Constitutional Libertarians.

Boaz also mentioned dream candidates who have said they're not running: Gov. Chris Christie (N.J.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (Wisc.)

Herman Cain wowed media and the public with his performance at the first debate in S.C. on Thursday. Boaz said Cain has "some Libertarian" in his platform and he has a record of accomplishments but he is still "a long shot candidate." I'd respond it's still early and give Mr. Cain a little more time.

It's no surprise Boaz admires Rep. Ron Paul (Texas) but he also believes Paul would be a hard guy to elect—consider the low number of primary votes for Paul in 2008 despite his fundraising success. I'd respond these are different times and I wouldn't underestimate Paul or his supporters.

Boaz seemed to like New Mexico governor Gary Johnson who was re-elected in a heavily Democrat state. Johnson would have potential with the youth vote and with independents. "His presentation," said Boaz, "is a little less hard-edged than Ron Paul's." I'd say Johnson will be hard to sell to the base.

The Cato vice-pres. called Donald Trump "the clown getting in the car," and Boaz says the Donald isn't a serious presidential candidate.

Boaz said Gov. Tim Pawlenty (Minn.) "looks like the leading candidate right now..." Pawlenty, however, "doesn't have much pizzazz."

(Commentary by [Kay B. Day](#)/May 9, 2011)

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