



# Libertarians — Finally — Embrace Republican Ticket

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Mitt Romney's choice of Paul Ryan has ignited Mitt Romney's conservative base, finally energizing Republicans in a snoozy election cycle.

But one group that's felt particularly left out this election cycle will also find a home with Ryan: libertarians.

Ryan's budget plan, which would slash government spending by a huge margin and turn Medicare into a voucher system, appeals to libertarians' small-government sensibilities. And he's made even more attractive by his past as a policy wonk at D.C. think tanks and as a devotee of the author Ayn Rand.

"Ryan is going to be very attractive to the broad libertarian voters," said David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute. "He has obviously talked more than anybody else in Washington about getting control of the budget and spending." (Cato's Kirby and Emily Ekins recently wrote an [op-ed](#) in Politico arguing that the Tea Party's roots are not in social conservatism, but in libertarianism.)

"He is well-educated in the free market libertarian point of view," Boaz said.

Ryan appeals to a certain kind of pro-business libertarian, embodied by FreedomWorks, the conservative non-profit that has seen its star rise with the Tea Party.

FreedomWorks' president Matt Kibbe wrote an [editorial](#) for conservative website NewsMax arguing that Romney made the best possible choice with Ryan.

"Romney made a good choice — a great choice in fact," Kibbe writes — a striking comment for the head of a group that has had a difficult relationship with the Republican nominee since before he was the nominee.

Paul Ryan is one of us. Full disclosure: I have known him and worked with him since I was a fellow budget staffer on Capitol Hill in 1993. I like him; I think he is a good person. Since those early days, I have known Paul to share many of the principles I hold dear. He's not perfect, for sure, and he has made more than a few votes that we at FreedomWorks have vocally opposed. But in the exclusive world of presidential politics, the ascendancy of someone like Paul Ryan clearly represents one of the great measures of our success as a grassroots movement to restore liberty and responsible governance in America.

Kibbe, whose group has so far only been involved in congressional races, finishes by writing, "Welcome to presidential politics."

Even Ron Paul supporters could be appeased by the Ryan choice, said a Republican strategist close to Paul world.

"I think there are many parts they will like," the strategist said. "He is first and foremost a deficit hawk. While he doesn't necessarily go as far as Ron Paul he is still better than 99% of Congress."

The strategist said Ryan as vice president "is probably the most popular among Paul supporters if they can't have Rand or Ron."

But the hard core of Paul supporters is unlikely to come on board to any ticket not including Paul himself, according to Boaz.

"The dedicated Ron Paul supporters are going to be a tougher sell," he said.

And he had some quibbles with Ryan's signature budget plan.

"It doesn't take a serious enough look at the military budget and it doesn't propose getting the federal government out of many of the areas that libertarians would like to get it out of," Boaz said. "But it is a serious attempt to deal with a federal budget that has doubled in 10 years."

But Boaz predicted that the choice of Ryan, while making the ticket as a whole more attractive, won't endear Romney himself more to libertarian voters. "His one known achievement in public life, laying the groundwork for Obamacare, is a real obstacle for libertarians, tea partiers, and fiscal conservatives."