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DCCC Categorizes Pro-Free Market Cato Institute as a 'Right Wing Extremist Group'

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Last night, after Scott Brown took one of the Massachusetts U.S. Senate seats, there was a call by some in the media [0] and even among some prominent Democrats to modulate by shifting away from the so-called "far left." [1]

One might think a start would be to tone down some of the rhetoric, take a step back and consider retooling the strategy, instead of lobbing more bombs. But the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) has employed the same protocol as some of the radical fringe elements on the left [2] in attacking Richard Hanna, a candidate for New York's 24th district (h/t Ben Smith [3] of Politico [4]). [emphasis added]



"While making today's announcement that he will once again run for Congress in New York's 24th district, Hanna also launched a new campaign website where he shamelessly touts his ties to **the Cato Institute, a right wing extremist group that has long been a vocal advocate for extremist, unfair trade policies that would allow companies to ship American jobs overseas,**" the Jan. 20 release said [5].

To back up the association of Cato and Hanna, the DCCC notes Hanna's membership with Cato:

Hanna's own campaign website shamelessly talks up his ties to the Cato Institute. "He is a sustaining member of the Cato Institute, having traveled to Russia as part of an international study group. He is also a frequent attendee of the Milken Institute's Global Conference and a member of the Foundation on Economic Education." [Hanna Campaign Website [6], accessed 1/20/10]

As for the "right wing extremist group" label, the DCCC alleges that since Cato advocates less protectionist policies, the label is deserved:

The Cato Institute is a right wing extremist group that has long advocated for unfair trade policies regardless of their impact on American jobs. Cato has been one of the leading advocates for unfair trade deals and believes that increases in unemployment should not prevent enacting new trade deals. The Cato Policy

Handbook specifically says Congress should "avoid using trade deficits and concerns about employment levels as excuses for imposing trade restrictions" as it calls for the US to move away from "reciprocity" and "level playing fields." [CATO Policy Handbook, 6th ed, Chapter 64 [7]]

Had the brain trust at the DCCC done some due diligence and read more about what the Cato Institute advocates, based on what is on its Web site [8], they would have discovered a broader reasoning behind what the think tank advocates - which is far from "right wing extremism."

"The market-liberal vision brings the wisdom of the American Founders to bear on the problems of today," Cato's site explains. "As did the Founders, it looks to the future with optimism and excitement, eager to discover what great things women and men will do in the coming century. Market liberals appreciate the complexity of a great society, they recognize that socialism and government planning are just too clumsy for the modern world. It is--or used to be--the conventional wisdom that a more complex society needs more government, but the truth is just the opposite. The simpler the society, the less damage government planning does. Planning is cumbersome in an agricultural society, costly in an industrial economy, and impossible in the information age. Today collectivism and planning are outmoded and backward, a drag on social progress."

As for the "right wing extremism," Cato's site debunks that by condemning what is often is evoked by claims of "right wing extremism." [emphasis added]

"Market liberals have a cosmopolitan, inclusive vision for society. **We reject the bashing of gays, China, rich people, and immigrants that contemporary liberals and conservatives seem to think addresses society's problems. We applaud the liberation of blacks and women from the statist restrictions that for so long kept them out of the economic mainstream.** Our greatest challenge today is to extend the promise of political freedom and economic opportunity to those who are still denied it, in our own country and around the world."

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[1] <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2010/01/scott-brown-martha-coakley-massachusetts-senate.html>

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[5] [http://dccc.org/newsroom/entry/re-](http://dccc.org/newsroom/entry/re-run_hanna_returns_remains_committed_to_out_of_touch_extremists_policies/)

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[6] <http://www.richardhannaforcongress.com/about/>

[7] http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb109/hb_109-64.pdf

[8] <http://www.cato.org/about.php>