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## A Tale of Two Kasichs

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[The Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) asks if a conservative advocacy group with close ties to Governor Kasich is laying the groundwork for a Kasich presidential run. While it's no surprise to most Ohioans that the Governor has his eyes set on the ultimate political prize, it is interesting to see how the group, [American Freedom Builders](#), portrays Governor Kasich and his policies on their website.

The Plain Dealer directs its readers to [American Freedom Builder's newsletters](#) which are focused on promoting economic growth through lower taxation and less government spending. Kasich and his efforts in Ohio are held up as a model throughout the four editions. But a reading of the [August 20th letter](#) makes a person wonder if American Freedom Builders has gotten behind the wrong guy.

The newsletter advocates for a Balanced Budget Amendment and begins with the oft-repeated tale of Kasich's time in the U.S. House of Representatives where as Budget Chairman he passed a balanced budget with the *CATO Handbook for Congress* at his side.

The newsletter continues,

“But in the bigger picture, Ohio cannot realize its full potential until the bloated Federal government gets it act together. With the national debt soaring above \$17.6 trillion dollars, that will soon constitute 100% of our country's GDP, which has been a recipe for disaster in any country that has tried it.”

“President Barack Obama, with his unconstitutional efforts to take over your health care decisions and his expansion of the welfare state, has expanded government to a size that was once unthinkable.”

It's hard to disagree with anything in American Freedom Builders' statement. In fact, the group [sounds a lot like the Ohio Liberty Coalition](#) when the OLC fought Governor Kasich's proposal to implement Obamacare's Medicaid expansion in Ohio. Does American Freedom Builders know how that tale ended?

Obamacare's Medicaid expansion was the single largest cut in Rep. Paul Ryan's proposal to balance the federal budget back in March 2013. And cutting this key component of Obamacare

would have been a major blow to the health care law's implementation. But, instead of supporting his Republican colleague's efforts to balance the federal budget and gut Obamacare, Governor Kasich chose to ram Medicaid expansion through the Ohio Controlling Board after failing to get the Republicans in the state legislature to go along.

Kasich must have left his *CATO Handbook* in Washington because the CATO Institute played a major role in fighting Medicaid expansion nationally and in Ohio when [CATO's Michael Cannon testified](#) to the Ohio House Health and Human Services Subcommittee against Kasich's plan to expand Medicaid.

The Kasich camp likes to rewrite history in other ways as well. Ohioans were told throughout the Medicaid expansion debate that expansion was not about Obamacare. And the use of the Controlling Board to achieve expansion was painted as some sort of joint effort with the state legislature despite the fact that [39 state reps signed a letter protesting the action](#) and [six state reps filed suit against it](#).

American Freedom Builders bills itself as supporting "constitutional first principles of limited government". The group may want to speak to Governor Kasich about his thoughts on the separation of powers.

If American Freedom Builders plans to promote Governor Kasich for even higher office, a one on one with the Governor may be in order to make sure he's the most suitable candidate to carry the banner of fiscal responsibility and limited government into the Republican presidential primary.