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## Club for Growth Slams Huntsman on Spending

Club for Growth was blunt in its assessment of Republican presidential hopeful **Jon Huntsman Jr.** As governor of Utah, Mr. Huntsman compiled a “spending record that is inexcusable,” the small-government group said Wednesday.

Club for Growth, which has been [rating the various GOP candidates](#), used its strongest language yet in [reviewing Mr. Huntsman’s record](#).

“We believe that pro-growth conservatives looking for a kindred spirit in Governor Huntsman will probably find common ground on trade and taxes, but they will most likely be disappointed overall if he is elected President,” the group concluded.

On the bright side for Mr. Huntsman, who [formally announced is candidacy on Tuesday](#), Club for Growth applauded his tax policies. As governor from 2005 to 2009, Mr. Huntsman pushed for an optional flat income tax in lieu of a progressive income tax, earning plaudits from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank that promotes free markets. He also pursued a number of tax cuts throughout his administration and has “demonstrated a clear understanding of the benefits of global free markets.”

But Mr. Huntsman, who proposed Utah’s largest budget ever, “dramatically increased state spending,” Club for Growth said. It also highlighted a number of occasions in which Mr. Huntsman, until recently President Barack Obama’s ambassador to China, indicated support for Mr. Obama’s economic policies. It pointed out that Mr. Huntsman called Mr. Obama’s economic stimulus program too small and he supported the Troubled Asset Relief Program.

Club for Growth slammed the former governor for once calling health care a “right,” a position it found “simply flabbergasting. We’re not sure what part of the United States Constitution Governor Huntsman was referring to when he made that statement, but he certainly needs to explain what he was thinking.”

**Tim Miller**, a Huntsman campaign spokesman, cited the former governor’s record on taxes and jobs.

“In Utah he oversaw balanced budgets, reduced waste, a rainy day fund that grew by one third—during a recession—and the largest tax cut in the state’s history,” Mr. Miller said in an email. “This fiscal management resulted in Utah growing at more than double the national rate, adding more jobs than any state in the country.”

So far, Club for Growth has [also issued reports](#) on 2012 hopefuls [Herman Cain](#), [Newt Gingrich](#), [Tim Pawlenty](#), [Mitt Romney](#) and [Rick Santorum](#). The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) on Saturday that the organization has also weighed in on a number of Senate Republican races, and may play a role in stoking primary fights next year.



Former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman announces his bid for the Republican presidential nomination, Tuesday at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, N.J. (AP Photo/Mel Evans)

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