



## Rand Paul Weighs In on the 'Libertarians Don't Care About Ferguson' Meme

By Arit John  
August 14, 2014

Sen. Rand Paul finally weighed in on the events in Ferguson Thursday afternoon in *TIME*, condemning the role the government has played in the militarization of our police and implicitly responding to accusations that libertarians don't care about the events in Missouri. Libertarians might not be interested in the racial divide at the heart of the stand off between protesters and the police, but they do care about the tools the police are using.

As events in Ferguson, Missouri continue to unfold, libertarians have been accused on being quiet on the issue. *The Washington Post's* Paul Waldman said as much on Wednesday, pointing to Sen. Ran Paul and Rep. Justin Amash. "The foundation of libertarianism is skepticism toward government and a belief in individual freedom," Waldman argued. "There aren't many freedoms more fundamental than the freedom to walk to your grandmother's apartment, as Brown was doing, without getting shot by a representative of the government."

He argues that we should expect to see libertarians "using the police reaction to the protests over Brown's killing as a case study in the needless and dangerous militarization of the police," but the most famous libertarians — Paul and Rep. Justin Amash — hadn't so much as tweeted about Ferguson. "So any libertarian politicians concerned abt power of the state & all for expanding GOP appeal might want to weigh in abt now #Ferguson," Garance Franke-Ruta at Yahoo tweeted.

The libertarian movement quickly responded to point out that they had been discussing Ferguson. Among their ranks is Waldman's co-worker, *Post* writer Radley Balko:



Elizabeth Nolan Brown at The Dish noted that "there seems to be a meme going around that libertarians don't care or aren't talking about what's going on in Ferguson, Missouri," then promptly listed several libertarians discussing the militarization of the police. Mediaite weighed in as well. Amash tweeted:

And then, finally, Paul.



It's important to note that a tank didn't kill Michael Brown. The outrage over Ferguson stems from a 67 percent black community with a 94 percent white police force grappling with the death of an unarmed black teen. It's the result of police officers in Ferguson being much more likely to search and arrest black drivers, though white drivers were more likely to have contraband on them. The dehumanization of black males, not skepticism of the federal government, is why people started protesting. Photos like this came after:



Associated Press.

Libertarians aren't as focused on the issues specific to black people, but they've been more outspoken about police militarization, for a longer time, than they've been given credit for. In his *TIME* essay, Paul quoted writers from the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation, and wrote that "Washington has incentivized the militarization of local police precincts by using federal dollars to help municipal governments build what are essentially small armies." With that, Paul put an end to the "libertarians don't care about police militarization in Ferguson" meme by condemning the trend more harshly than the president.