

Newt Gingrich's Environmentalism Hurts Him at CPAC

This year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) has proven to be not only a boon for constitutionalism, but also a vindication of what true, constitutional conservatives have long advocated and warned of: that former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is not a principled champion of fiscal and constitutional conservatism, but is instead an opportunist whose ideological alliances serve no cause other than his own self interests.

In what amounts to a continuing trend observed since last year's CPAC, Ron Paul seems to be the preferred candidate of choice for most CPAC attendees who participate in the event's famous straw poll, which is largely seen as a barometer for events to come in the following Republican presidential primaries. While constitutionalist and libertarian Congressman Ron Paul received 31 percent of the vote at CPAC in 2010, and 30 percent of the straw poll vote this year, former Speaker Gingrich received 4 percent of the vote at last year's CPAC, and 5 percent in this year's straw poll.

Gingrich was also outperformed this year by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who received 23 percent of the vote, and was outperformed last year by former Vice Presidential candidate and Alaska Governor Sarah Palin (7 percent), former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty (6 percent), and Indiana Representative Mike Pence (5 percent).

Conventional wisdom would lead one to assume that Gingrich could easily win support in any election. A simplistic understanding of human nature and politics which reduces voting citizens to mere drones easily swayed by prestige, glitter, and flashy gimmicks would tilt the balance in favor of Gingrich; however, CPAC attendees were instead motivated by authentic, constitutional principles, as evident in their overwhelming support for Ron Paul.

Gingrich was the only CPAC speaker who made a grandiose, rock star-style entrance down the aisle of the Marriott Ballroom, complete with spotlights and the raucous song "Eye of the Tiger." Every other speaker, including Congressman Paul (R-Texas), and Congressman Allen West (R-Fla.), the event's keynote Speaker, humbly entered the stage from the wings, with relatively little fanfare.

It is interesting to note that Gingrich's dismal results in the straw poll also occurred in light of the fact that in many ways, he commanded a more dominant presence at CPAC than any other figure. Gingrich spoke at or conducted nine events at CPAC, either on his own or in conjunction with his affiliated groups American Solutions for Winning the Future and Citizens United, the latter of which produces his documentaries, as [noted by](#) Donald Ferguson, founder and Executive Director of American Tradition Partnership (ATP), who observed,

With a coveted speaking slot, exhibiting organization and book signing, hosting three panels and a reception and screening two films, Gingrich's presence dominated that of other presumptive presidential candidates. CPAC looked to be a launching pad for a

Gingrich presidential bid. Instead, the Republican powerhouse cratered after ATP informed voters of Gingrich's long record of supporting massive tax hikes, increased government power and international regulatory regimes to enforce what he calls "environmental compliance."

However, more egregious than Gingrich's arrogant style is his actual political record, which most likely accounts for his dismal performance in the straw poll. John Birch Society president John F. McManus, in his presentation *The Real Newt Gingrich*, has exposed the man's moral, ethical, and political foibles, which demonstrate a consistent lack of principled leadership, a Machiavellian approach to public service, and support for numerous causes that betray the purity of the Constitution, including:

- Supporting the unconstitutional federal Department of Education
- Affiliations with futurologist and human cloning advocate Alvin Toffler
- Playing a key role in working toward normalizing trade relations with Communist China, including granting China Most Favored Nation status, and pushing through federally-funded loan guarantees and subsidized trade with China and the Soviet Union
- Supporting the United Nations and unconstitutional "free trade agreements" such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Leading his infamous "Contract With America" legislative agenda in Congress that not only maintained unconstitutional government spending and upkeep of social welfare programs, but also ensued in combined budget increases of over 13 percent, according to Edward Crane, president of the free-market Cato Institute.

Most notable and revealing about Gingrich's political ideology, however, is his radical environmental agenda, the subject of his 2007 book *Contract with the Earth*, which he co-authored with environmentalist [Terry Maple](#), a former National Science Foundation (NSF) grant recipient and director of the Atlanta Zoo. At this year's CPAC, attention was raised to the startling and shocking assertions made by Gingrich in the book, particularly due to the efforts of the conservative organization American Tradition Partnership (ATP).

In an interview with *The New American*, ATP founder and Executive Director Donald Ferguson discussed the history of his organization and its advocacy against the radical environmentalist agenda. The group believes that raising awareness about the true motivations and ideologies held by Newt Gingrich is crucial to the struggle against environmentalism. ATP circulated a widely-read and widely-discussed flyer explaining the truth about Gingrich's environmental agenda, culling quotes from his book on the topic. Ferguson explained why true conservatives should reject Newt Gingrich and why he poses a threat to the American economy and society as a whole:

We oppose him because he pretends to be pro-job and pro-energy, but Newt Gingrich is truly a radical, liberal environmentalist of the highest order. He wants the government to pay people to be environmentalists, and he misguidedly claims that this is "public-private environmentalism" which upholds a partnership between

the government and the private sector. His proposals are far from free market environmentalism. He wants to combine government with wealth redistribution.

Ferguson also related that he believed that his [group's efforts](#) helped contribute to Gingrich's dismal performance in this year's CPAC straw poll:

We were very warmly-welcomed at this year's CPAC. We're pleased with the turnout and the warm reception of our ideas. We've also added more members, and we believe that our exposé of Newt's environmentalism most certainly helped draw votes away from him. Real conservatives were attracted by our message, and as such, we believe that no real conservatives should support him.

Ferguson continued, "American Tradition Partnership delivered a message to Newt Gingrich. Your record of radical environmentalism should stay on that love seat with Nancy Pelosi. ATP members urge Speaker Gingrich to renounce radical environmentalism and adopt a conservative message of less government and more freedom," referencing an ad Gingrich filmed with Pelosi to promote former vice-president Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection.

Gingrich has long advocated for what he considers "Green Conservatism," and advocates for government intervention in free enterprise, the use of international organizations, free trade agreements. He even argues in favor of former President Jimmy Carter's failed energy policy (Gingrich voted in favor of a federal Department of Energy, as well as the Department of Education, two unconstitutional policies comprising the core of Carter's doomed domestic agenda).

He first coined the term in a debate with Senator John Kerry (Ma.) in 2007, and said the following about his "environmental epiphany" in his column in [Human Events](#):

In 1971, I participated in the second Earth Day and became the coordinator of an interdisciplinary Environmental Studies program at West Georgia College. In my commitment to the environment, I was echoing the conviction of two well known Republican leaders. The first was President Theodore Roosevelt, who said that "the nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets, which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value." The other was then Gov. Ronald Reagan, who upon the occasion of the first Earth Day said that "[there is an] absolute necessity of waging all-out war against the debauching of the environment."

The organization's efforts also resulted in the [New York Times](#) drawing attention to conservative opposition to Gingrich's unconstitutional and fiscally liberal energy policies:

The negative reviews focus on two stumbling blocks that Mr. Gingrich, who is weighing a presidential bid, faces with the activist base of the Republican Party: ethanol and climate change.

As a supporter of corn-based ethanol, he has come under fire from fiscal conservatives who call such policies a waste of government funds. The *Wall Street Journal* recently dubbed him “Professor Cornpone” [due to his support from the ethanol lobby]: Mr. Gingrich explained that “the big-city attacks” on ethanol subsidies are really attempts to deny prosperity to rural America, adding that “Obviously big urban newspapers want to kill it because it’s working, and you wonder, ‘What are their values?’”

Meanwhile, despite his opposition to the Democrats’ 2009 cap-and-trade bill, his past advocacy for action on global warming also puts him at odds with Tea Party supporters, the vast majority of whom say they doubt that climate change is occurring at all and declare that carbon dioxide emissions pose little or no threat to the climate.

“I don’t think former speaker Gingrich is to be trusted on this issue,” said Myron Ebell, the director of energy and global warming policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI).

Furthering their anti-environmentalist and pro-growth agenda, Ferguson also said that one of ATP’s top legislative priorities is urging support of the Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act, which was introduced in the Senate back in September 2010 by [Senator Jim DeMint](#) (R-S.C.). The legislation seeks to restore accountability to the process by which federal agencies finalize major regulations by requiring congressional approval for major regulatory actions, according to Ferguson. To date, Gingrich has not expressed any public support for the REINS Act, a decision that is consistent with his broader record and history of unconstitutional and fiscally-unsound policies.

Photo: Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich addresses the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011: AP Images