



## CPAC First Impressions

by Noah Kristula-Green Feb 9, 2012 12:15 PM EST

This is the third CPAC I've attended and the first CPAC to be held under the chairmanship of Al Cardenas. The big impression so far, this is going to be a more conservative CPAC as opposed to a libertarian one. Here are the reasons I think this:

1. Ron Paul is still [not on the CPAC agenda](#). To be sure, sources have told me that the ACU was trying to get him to speak. His absence will affect on the tenor of the conference. This will be the first CPAC in recent years where Ron Paul is not likely to win the Presidential straw poll.
2. Many of the panels would fit in well at a Values Voter Summit: "The Phony Divide Between Fiscal & Social Conservatives: Protecting Marriage as a Case Study" or "Why are U.S. taxpayers spending billions to promote abortion and homosexuality worldwide?" I don't see any panels about the 'Over-reach of the American Empire' or about violations of personal liberty under the PATRIOT Act. And there are more panelists from the Heritage Foundation than from the Cato institute.
3. The timing of the Susan G. Komen/Planned Parenthood scuffle and the new contraceptive mandate could not have been better for this conference. As I am writing this, Marco Rubio just got applause for saying for talking about the controversy: "You may not agree with what that religion believes, but the First Amendment still applies."

And if the culture wars do get re-ignited over this, the Tea Party flavor might change some of the rhetoric. Rubio again: "This isn't about contraceptives, this is not even a social issue, this is a constitutional issue."