

## Tea party movement is libertarian at core, study suggests

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A study released Monday by the Cato Institute [suggests](#) that the roots of the tea party movement are more libertarian than people think.

Pundits on the left have often pigeon-holed the tea party as a new incarnation of the “religious right” movement.

“The tea party is upending the conventional wisdom that Republican candidates must placate socially conservative voters to win primaries. Increasingly, Republican candidates must win over tea party voters on libertarian economic issues,” the study says in its executive summary.

The study, which compiles polling data, both national and local, as well as dozens of personal interviews with tea party members and leaders, reveals that economic issues are the major influence of the growing tea party movement. The group is still split on social issues, however, with half leaning more socially conservative, and half more socially liberal.

Cato Institute executive vice president David Boaz spoke to The Daily Caller News Foundation about the effects of a growing libertarian base across the country.

“We do know for the long term polling data that libertarians typically vote about 2 to 1 Republican so I know of no reason to think that they wouldn’t have done that in 2010,” Boaz told TheDC News Foundation.

“[Study author David Kirby] suggested, re-suggested that many independent voters tend to be fiscally conservative and socially liberal,” Boaz went on to explain.

Boaz said that the rise of Texas Rep. Ron Paul brought issues like the Federal Reserve and government welfare to the forefront of the political debate.

The constituency of citizens concerned with the growth of government, however, has grown in the past decade, and Boaz thinks that trend will only continue.

A growing concern over issues like gay marriage and the drug war combined “with an appreciation for limited government more broadly and for the dangers of over-spending and debt” is driving the trend, Boaz adds.

“Yes, I think that libertarian constituency will get larger.”

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