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# DAILY KOS

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## *Andrei Cherny's Jesse Kelly Moment(s)*

Thanks to a nice little vacation, I've been a bit disconnected from the race for AZ09 for a few weeks. It appears I returned just in time.

In one of my previous posts on Andrei Cherny, I discussed his 2002 campaign for the California State Assembly and the [rather repugnant campaign tactics](#) he utilized. Race-baiting was easily the most heinous of his actions, but a deliberate, false attempt to claim his pro-choice opponent was pro-life isn't far behind. At the time, Cherny stood by the attacks and said he was "proud" of them, but once they became an issue in his current race, he issued one of those non-apology apologies.

Perhaps by karma, Cherny lost that race.

The next post discussed [Cherny's attempt](#) to have it both ways on the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare). In 2010, Cherny spoke to the Tempe Tea Party during his campaign for Arizona State Treasurer and was asked whether he supported Obamacare. His answer? As seen on the [video here](#), he claimed he opposed it. Yet now that he's running in a Democratic primary for Congress, he says, "We need to defend the Affordable Care Act and build on it to include a public option and end the unconscionable giveaways for drug companies."

I happen to agree with the 2012 version of his position, but unfortunately, that position is diametrically opposed to what Cherny was telling the Tea Party just two years earlier, and there's no telling what he actually believes because his two positions are so radically different.

History, of course, repeats itself, and in Cherny's case, this isn't a good thing because that history demonstrates that he simply lacks much credibility.

Now, Cherny is trying to run away from his support for Social Security privatization, just as he did when he ran for the California Assembly.

During his 2012 campaign, Cherny has claimed to oppose privatizing Social Security.

Here's a shot from one of his mail pieces:

There's a problem with that claim, though: It's not true.

Cherny has done a little more than just flirt with supporting Social Security privatization in the past.

And even if you give him the benefit of the doubt (and given his track record, there's little reason to do so), the very best you can say is that even if he never quite went all the way on privatization, he has at least made a diving slide into third base.

Back in 2000, Cherny published a book called "The Next Deal," in which he discusses his views on how government should evolve in the technology age. As I mentioned in my previous post, I disagree vehemently with some of the conclusions he reaches in that book, but I will concede that it's very interesting and well-written.

According to the California Journal, "Cherny's book promoted the privatization of Social Security, a notion praised by the likes of Newt Gingrich but considered heresy among liberal Democrats."

According to the Los Angeles Weekly, Cherny's book "is a litany of New Democrat nostrums -- school choice (verging on vouchers), Social Security partial privatization, and the kind of deregulatory nonsense that led straight to the Enron debacle."

According to Investor's Business Daily, Cherny's book "calls for private accounts," which, as we all know, is just another way of saying Social Security privatization.

In the Investor's article, Cherny credits none-other than President Bush with having successfully sold the privatization issue.

"I think the much bigger part of why people were looking for reform is the desire for control over their Social Security funds and the desire for personal decision-making power over their own retirement," Cherny said. "(Bush) campaigned hard on that issue, and he sold it to people from all age groups."

Now, based on this stuff alone, it should be pretty clear that Cherny indeed supported privatization.

However, having read the book, and re-read the sections that discuss Social Security a few times, I can say that the case is pretty much ironclad.

"... young people should decide where to invest a portion of their Social Security retirement funds and accept a greater share of both the risk and reward," Cherny wrote in his book.

This, as Andrei surely knows (more on this in a moment), is the very core of Social Security privatization that the overwhelming majority of Democrats have strongly opposed for years.

Here's a quote from someone other than Andrei Cherny describing basically the same thing:

"But we'll allow younger workers at their choice to invest some of their own money in the private markets to get a better rate of return so that the Social Security promise will be kept."

That was George W. Bush back in 2000, describing his Social Security privatization plan.

Here's something else that isn't from Andrei Cherny:

"However, allowing younger workers to privately invest their Social Security taxes through individual accounts will improve Social Security's rate of return; provide better retirement benefits; treat women, minorities, and low-income workers more fairly; and give workers real ownership and control of their retirement funds."

That's from the far, far-right Cato Institute, a longtime supporter of Social Security privatization.

The similarities between what Bush and Cato say and what Cherny wrote are inescapable.

It gets a little worse for Cherny than that, though.

In his book, Cherny discusses how both sides of the spectrum view Social Security, and goes to some rather insulting lengths to describe the liberal reasoning on why privatization is bad.

Liberals, according to Cherny, believe that Americans are just too stupid to handle their own retirements, and instead need to rely on “a huge and antiquated Ponzi scheme.”

Yes, he went there.

He then goes on to make his case for a fundamental restructuring (I'd argue deconstruction) of the Social Security system and what is, at least, a partial privatization of the program.

Here's a clip from his book:

Now, of course, Andrei is running for cover from his both his own poor choice words and the fact that he was advocating for policies that are completely and totally out-of-step with Democratic primary voters.

The fact that Cherny sees Wall Street as the cure-all for Social Security is particularly troubling, given what the nation experienced on the stock market just a few years ago.

Put another way, if Cherny had gotten his way on Social Security back in 2000, a lot of people would have been wiped out by the 2008 crash, which is precisely why privatization is such a horrible idea in the first place.

As I noted above, though, Cherny is well aware that what he's saying about Social Security doesn't bear any resemblance to reality. He knew it back in 2002 as well, when the California Journal reported that Cherny was preemptively attempting to conceal his position.

“The Cherny camp was so worried about this that it sent out several mailers defending its candidate's position before the Levine forces had even hit him with it,” the Journal wrote.

Now history is repeating itself again.

Back in May, the [Arizona Republic](#) reported that “Cherny said his opponents have falsely told union leaders he is for privatizing Social Security.”

Unfortunately, it's not Cherny's opponents who are being dishonest, and his continued claims of opposing Social Security privatization only deepen his growing credibility problem. With his [new TV ad proclaiming his opposition to Social Security privatization](#), Cherny's credibility gap has become a deep, vast chasm.

It brings to mind another candidate from Arizona who had some trouble being consistent on the issue of Social Security: Tucson's Jesse Kelly, who ran against Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in 2010 and then against now-Congressman Ron Barber in the special election after she resigned from the House.

You may recall that Kelly had some rather radical views on Social Security, claiming in 2010 that “It's the biggest Ponzi scheme in history. [...] Right now, you have to take steps to reform it, to privatize it, to phase it out. [...] It's not an option of ‘should it be done?’ It must be done.”

Flash forward to 2012 and Kelly was [distancing himself](#) from his own words, just as Cherny is doing now.

Kelly eventually lost his bid for Congress. Can Andrei Cherny's campaign of Social Security bamboozlement succeed where Kelly's failed?

As always, I continue to encourage you to make a contribution to one or both of his opponents, [Kyrsten Sinema](#) or [David Schapira](#).