

## Inkwell

# What About That Goldwater Analogy?

by Charlotte Hays  
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The Cato Institute's Gene Healy is author of a book everybody should read as we careen into the coming presidential race-*The Cult of the Presidency: America's Dangerous Devotion to Executive Power*. It is about how the office of the president has grown and grown, both in its effect in our lives and in mystique, from the concepts of the Founding Fathers.

The Commentary blog has a great item on how Paul Ryan and Chris Christie are resisting the "cult of the presidency" by not running. Meanwhile, Healy has an op-ed in the Examiner on a guy who wants to be president, Texas Governor Rick Perry. Healy begins by noting that liberal blogger Ezra Klein has given Perry's book, *Fed Up: Our Fight to Save America from Washington*, high praise:

I won't go as far as Klein -- to say the book is "good" smacks of "the soft bigotry of low expectations," as Perry's fellow ex-cheerleader and former Texas governor George W. Bush once put it. If Barry Goldwater's "The Conscience of a Conservative" was Merle Haggard, "Fed Up!" is strictly Lee Greenwood.

Still, Perry's book is perhaps the most radical manifesto from a top-tier presidential candidate since Goldwater's 1960 tome -- and some of the ideas it contains are very good indeed.

It's clear from "Fed Up!" that the guy with a degree in animal science from Texas A&M understands the Constitution better than Barack Obama, former president of the Harvard Law Review.

The book explains clearly how overbroad interpretations of the Constitution's Commerce and General Welfare clauses have led to a bloated federal government that's consuming the nation's future.

"Fed Up!" also reflects a solid appreciation of how federalism allows people of diverse viewpoints to live under one national government. As Perry puts it, "if you don't like medicinal marijuana and gay marriage, don't move to California."

Healy points out that, like Romney, Perry as presidential candidate has become more "flexible" on federalism. Healy finds that Perry is in many ways disappointing because Perry won't face what some regard as necessary cuts in Medicare and military spending. Healy writes:

Public opinion polls suggest that the world most Americans want to live in is one in which we can afford global hegemony, a gold-plated welfare state, and low levels of taxation -- in short, a world without scarcity. Of course, we can't have that world.

It doesn't look like Perry is willing to tell Americans that hard truth. That's too bad: America could use a candidate with the conscience of a conservative and the courage of his convictions.

Healy may be utopian in his expectations of what politicians will say. Still, it does appear that the aggie and yell leader from Texas has some interesting ideas.

Question to debate amongst yourselves: Should the Goldwater analogy be pleasing or frightening to those who regard getting the White House out of the hands of biggest spenders in American history as the first priority of 2012?