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Sticking It to Ron Paul

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By *Dr Stuart Jeanne Bramhall* ([about the author](#))

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It's open season on Ron Paul in the so-called "alternative" media, thanks to the Congressman's strong showing in the Iowa straw polls. The venomous tone and absence of policy analysis is remarkably similar to the hatchet job the "alternative" media performed on Ralph Nader in 2004 and 2008. Could this be because Paul, like Nader, is taking a strong, explicit stance against the corporate takeover of government?

One particularly malicious rant making the rounds of progressive blogs is by Adele Stan, Washington Bureau Chief for the *Alternet*. According to Stan, because I'm a progressive seriously considering a vote for Ron Paul, I am part of the "emotionally immature segment of the progressive movement, a wing populated by people with privilege enough to insulate them from the nasty bits of the Paul agenda. (Tough on you blacks! And you, women! And you, queers! And you, old people without money.)"

Name Calling and Identity Politics

There's a lot of name calling elsewhere in the article. According to Stan, Paul is anti-woman, anti-gay, anti-black, anti-senior-citizen, anti-equality, anti-education, and pro-communist witch-hunt. She claims the only two reasons some progressives are ("immaturely") supporting Paul are because he wants to end US military intervention in the Middle East, North Africa, and everywhere else and as payback for a "president" who has let them down.

I'm not sure how other potential Paul supporters reacted to the article, but I really don't like it when people call me names. I'm also sick to death when progressive pundits employ divisive identity politics (i.e. appealing to liberal guilt over disenfranchised minorities) to cloud serious policy issues.

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As with alternative media coverage of Nader's campaigns, Stan offers no serious analysis of Paul's platform or his position on key issues (other than stuff culled from old newsletters written by over zealous supporters). Or to compare and contrast his views with those of Obama and other 2012 candidates. We've come to expect this boycott on policy and substance from corporate media. Sure we have a right to expect some serious analysis from the alternative media.

Progressives Expect More from Alternative Media

If Stan is serious Paul's run in the Republican primarily, she needs to pull back from argumentum ad hominem name calling and divisive identity politics rhetoric and make a serious attempt to understand Paul's platform and why some progressives might find it appealing:

1. Like many grassroots progressives who supported Ralph Nader, Paul believes the biggest problem the US faces is the corporate takeover of government.
2. Like many progressives (including Dennis Kucinich and Ellen Brown), Paul has grave concerns about the way the federal government is financed (by borrowing funding from private banks) and the fractional reserve banking system (see * below). He, like many progressives, blames these economic structural factors for America's serious economic difficulties. Abolishing the Federal Reserve (and preventing trillions of dollars in secret bailouts to foreign banks, car companies, off shore hedge funds, and billionaires) would be the first step in the comprehensive economic overhaul that is required.
3. As part of this major economic reform, Paul would also reclaim the trillions of dollars the US spends on foreign wars and military bases for the domestic economy. He would also recoup the billions of dollars spent on the disastrous war on drugs.
4. Paul would repeal the Patriot Act and other laws enacted by the Bush and Obama that violate Americans right to habeas corpus and other civil liberties guaranteed under the Bill of Rights.

Do I agree with Ron Paul's anti-abortion stand? Hell no. I also disagree with his stand on gay and minority rights, even though I agree with his position on affirmative action. Martin Luther King opposed affirmative action and quotas, by the way, which were introduced by Richard Nixon and George Schultz to drive a wedge between blacks and blue collar whites. I will reserve judgment on Paul's proposal to gradually phase out Social Security and Medicare until I see what it looks like. Likewise I am waiting to see whether he will endorse the (Libertarian) Cato Institute's proposal to legalize 8.3 million illegal immigrants. I also have a lot of concerns that he may end up beholden to the Koch brothers if they end up funding his campaign.

Identity Politics and Political Correctness

At the same time, I think it's a terrible mistake to vote for a candidate based solely on a promise (which they may not keep) to defend abortion, gay rights, Medicare, Social Security. Obama has been only too happy to trade away the right of poor women to access abortion -- as well as agreeing to major Medicare and Social Security cuts.

The whole problem with voting for someone based on their endorsement of the "politically correct" position on a range of "identity" political issues is that it accepts the Wall Street and corporate media view that Americans should only participate passively in government by electing the right candidate every four years. If Ron Paul were elected and, by some miracle, managed to extract our federal government from Wall Street domination, surely we could count on our elected representatives to reflect their constituents' wishes on these issues.

Who knows, we might even succeed in calling a constitutional convention and re-writing the Constitution. It's long past time to eliminate the bits that favor business and corporate rights over people.

*Fractional reserve banking is a system which allows banks to make loans which, in essence, create money (debt) because the bank only possesses a fraction of the loan (usually 10%) in actual deposits. Paul and others believe this system led to the creation of a massive debt bubble, which burst in 2008, resulting in the global economic collapse.

I am a 63 year old American child and adolescent psychiatrist and political refugee in New Zealand. I have just published a young adult novel THE BATTLE FOR TOMORROW about a 16 year old girl who participates in the blockade and occupation of the US ([more...](#))

The views expressed in this article are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of this website or its editors.



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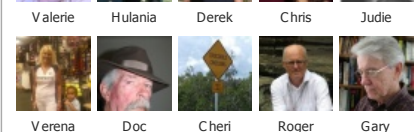
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