



## Romney-Paul ticket a reality?

Published: 29 May, 2012, 22:53

One is the presumptive Republican Party nominee for president and the other is the offspring of the likely candidate's only GOP challenger. And, for now, that's all that's known about a recent closed-door meeting between Mitt Romney and Rand Paul.

The only man standing between Mitt Romney's securing of the GOP nod is Texas Congressman Ron Paul, which is in turn raising a lot of questions about a recent sit-down between the former Massachusetts governor and his opponent's son, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul. Romney and the younger Paul met last week in Washington, D.C. and, though neither side is discussing the details of the secret meeting, both Republican Party pundits and sources close to the politicians are speculating as to what kind of relationship should be in the works between the two.

Sources close to Sen. Paul tell the National Review that the Kentucky lawmaker lasted around 30 minutes last Wednesday before emerging from a closed-door meeting with Mitt Romney. Although the Senator's father is adamantly opposed to many of Romney's campaign issues and plans for a potential presidency, the younger of the two lawmakers isn't completely against the former Massachusetts governor's game-plan. Could a Romney and Rand Paul ticket be in the works, or is the Republican Party frontrunner only trying to secure the endorsement of a known darling of the Tea Party movement? Still, others are pondering the possibility the Paul dynasty simply securing a route for Rand to continue on the road his father has taken after the 2012 election.

Whichever way you want to speculate, a budding relationship between Rand Paul and Romney could very well shape the Republican Party and America.

Although Rep. Ron Paul has an undisputedly devoted following, that same uncompromised devotion to his beliefs is exactly what turns other Republicans off from a Ron Paul ticket.

*"Rand Paul has softer edges than his dad," Cato Institute Executive Vice President David Boaz tells National Public Radio. "That helped him get elected to the Senate."*

Brian Doherty, senior editor of Reason magazine, adds to NPR that forging a Romney/Rand Paul alliance now could bring together undecided Republicans in the years to come. Should Romney win the 2012

presidential election, says Doherty, it would allow a *"convincing primary challenger to make very real to the party that there are two wings to the party fighting for supremacy — the Romney wing vs. the Paul wing."*

Speaking to the network, Carrol Doherty of the Pew Research Center adds that bridging the gap between conservative wings could be a winning strategy for Republicans — if not in 2012, then during the next election cycle.

*"What's interesting is because of the partisan structure, it's still hard for libertarians to find a comfortable place in either party,"* says Doherty. *"There are plenty of libertarians,"* he says. *"It's a significant bloc potentially available to a candidate who is fiscally conservative and socially liberal."*

Jackie Bodnar, a spokeswoman for the Tea Party group Freedom Works, adds to ABC News that Romney bridging the Republican Party gap through Rand Paul could be a godsend for a GOP so strongly divided. *"I'm definitely happy that he's talking with limited government conservatives like Rand Paul,"* Bodnar says. *"It's a victory in and of itself that the candidates are speaking the Tea Party language."*

In the meantime, however, Rep. Ron Paul remains by-and-large the libertarian that is leaning most for limited government in this presidential race. Should Romney win the nomination, a ticket with Rand Paul is more than likely out of the question given the congressman's insistence in staying in the race. No matter which way you slice it, though, the recent meeting between the two stands to split politics in America even more — if that's even possible.