

REPUBLICAN PARTY

Watch the 2012 “Fiscal Conservatives” Do the Etha

By **MICHAEL SCHERER** Friday, April 29, 2011 | **5 COMMENTS**

There are at least three things a presidential candidate can never do: order a Philly cheese steak **with S** and question the wisdom of the massive federal corn subsidy program. The first two are easy enough. Tested this year as Republican candidates struggle to embrace the new spirit of straight-talking budget Ryan, who **reiterated** Thursday that any serious deficit fighter would have to revisit agricultural subsid costing taxpayers roughly \$5 billion a year since 2005, and that is not counting the increased prices fr imports. The CBO **reports** that this subsidy bills taxpayers about \$1.78 for every gallon of gasoline that evidence is clear, as Michael Grunwald explained **a couple years back in TIME**, that “Corn ethanol, alw environmentally disastrous.”

And yet, candidates have been going to Iowa to sing the praises of ethanol for decades. As 2012 appro who want to cut the waste and fat out of the federal budget, have once again begun to justify a \$1.78 p

Earlier this year, Newt Gingrich got into a spat with the *Wall Street Journal* over his insistence that et values. “Some pandering is inevitable in presidential politics,” opined the *Journal’s* **editorial board**, “b insists on portraying his low vote-buying as high ‘intellectual’ policy. This doesn’t bode well for his jud

Gingrich is not alone, of course. In his **latest book**, Mitt Romney says he doesn’t like government subsi for ethanol because they have helped build a nascent industry. Earlier this year, Katrina Trinko at the pro-ethanol records of the various midwesterners looking at running in 2012. She called it “Cornhucks ethanol **subsidizer**, has disappeared down the rhetorical rabbit hole as he tries to please both the Iowa just pull the rug out from under the industry,” he said **in a recent speech**. “There are going to have to b about it.”

Michele Bachmann has also tried to walk the line, **saying** vaguely that she would like a re-examination similarly mealy-mouthed argument. “I would say we’re in a position right now where ethanol can be si “Moving forward, I’m not for new subsidies of any energy but my feeling is, if what the folks think they all for it.”

All of these half-answers are vague on purpose. And in that, they fail many basic tests of fiscal conserv **puts it**, “The level of hypocrisy is breathtaking. For example, conservatives rightly denounced governr was at issue. Why, then, are subsidies a good idea when directed to, say, Archer Daniels Midland?”

We are still early in the campaign. Months remain during which reporters can try to force the candida bland non-answers. That’s the reason we have these drawn-out races in the first place: to watch candid reveal a bit of character on issues like ethanol.

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