

## **Paul Ryan's disappointing reality**

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When presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney selected Paul Ryan, the House Budget Committee Chairman, as his running mate on Saturday morning, many conservatives across America rejoiced.

The selection of Ryan served as an olive branch to factions under the Republican tent who were dubious of Romney and his record as Massachusetts governor, which includes mandating health insurance and hiking a number of fees. Ryan, who is beloved by many in the Tea Party movement, is seen as a much-needed bridge between the boring, old, rich, white, entitled Republican Party that Romney personifies so well and the middle class, limited government, Tea Party-tinted folks that actually represent the majority of GOP voters.

Ryan, who earned his Tea Party bona fides by authoring much of "The Path to Prosperity," the Republican Party's highly regarded cost-cutting budget proposal, and speaking at Tea Party rallies across America, can do the three most important things a vice presidential candidate could do for a party nominee.

First, Ryan can galvanize a segment of potential voters that Romney hasn't managed to excite. Namely, the aforementioned Tea Partiers, as well as libertarian and fiscally conservative voters, who, understandably, don't trust Romney as far as they can throw him on issues of spending and entitlement reform.

Second, if he does manage to draw in segments of the Republican base that Romney could not, Ryan can bring in new financial contributors and more money for the campaign, a necessity with so many states still up for grabs on the Electoral College map.

Third, Ryan can help Romney win a lucrative state he wouldn't otherwise win. Ryan hails from Wisconsin, which Obama won comfortably in 2008. Days before Romney announced Ryan as his VP choice, a joint poll by Quinnipiac University, CBS News and The New York Times showed Obama up by six points over Romney in Wisconsin.

Since Ryan is very popular throughout the Badger State, his presence on the ticket could easily trigger a 20-vote turnaround -- taking away Wisconsin's 10 Electoral College votes from Obama and handing them to Romney.

For those three reasons, Romney's pick of Ryan is undeniably wise. (Those three reasons also illustrate why Obama's selection of Joe Biden was such a head-scratcher. Ryan can do all three things a good VP selection should do -- deliver

votes, money and a state. Biden didn't do a single one in 2008 -- and won't do anything to help Obama's campaign this go-around either.)

Ryan seems like the perfect vice presidential candidate for the people who actually want a true-blue, tried and tested conservative on the Republican ticket.

Except for one problem. He's an imposter.

Ryan's big talk of small government bears little, if any, resemblance with how he actually votes.

In national politics, where perception is almost always more important than reality, Ryan has managed to perpetrate one of the greatest scams in recent memory by making conservatives believe he's a glorious mix of Ron Paul, Ayn Rand and Barry Goldwater.

Would a supposed Tea Party darling vote with Hillary Clinton, Jesse Jackson Jr., John Kerry, Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid and Bernie Sanders on one of the past decade's most important pieces of legislation? Of course not.

Yet, that's exactly what Ryan did when he voted in support of TARP, the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout bill.

Oh, and Ryan benefitted handily from that reprehensible vote. He recently snagged \$12,150 from Wells Fargo, \$10,000 from Goldman Sachs and \$9,700 from Bank of America for his campaign coffers, according to campaign disclosures published by the website Open Secrets.

The conservative cause's golden boy has plenty more bad votes where that came from. In 2003, Ryan voted for Medicare Part D, which expanded government control of healthcare to make prescription drugs an entitlement -- and cost Americans more than \$55 billion annually, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ryan also voted for the auto bailout, No Child Left Behind and ethanol subsidies.

He even opposes repealing the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires federal construction contractors to pay prevailing wages. Davis-Bacon increases construction costs for taxpayers and discriminates against talented non-union workers. As a result of this AFL-CIO brownnosing, Ryan has racked up tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from labor unions, according to Mother Jones.

Even "The Path to Prosperity," Ryan's deficit decreasing budget proposal, wasn't nearly as fiscally conservative as he would have Americans believe.

Ryan's proposed budget, for example, does nothing to reduce America's ballooning defense spending, which has doubled in the past decade, according to the White House Office of Management and Budget. The Cato Institute found that "The Path to Prosperity" only modestly decreases nondefense discretionary spending, does little to roll back the size and scope of federal bureaucracies and

fails to actually provide for specific ways to trim Social Security -- a major component of Ryan's cost savings.

At first blush, the inclusion of Ryan on the GOP presidential ticket appears to be a win for conservatives -- and a welcome attempt by Romney to reach out to those Republicans who distrust him the most.

However, the facts show that Ryan has a schizophrenic voting record on the issues he claims to care about the most -- namely spending, entitlement reform and the national debt. His speeches may make him seem like a Tea Party hero, but his voting record has "RINO" and "unprincipled squish" written all over it.

So what are Republican voters really getting with Ryan? In the end, something that not many of them actually want: More of the same old disappointing Republican Party that is unwilling to seriously address entitlement reform or reduce spending.

Looking on the bright side, though, Ryan may give Romney just the boost he needs to win the election. And to most GOP voters, more of the same old disappointing Republican Party is better than four more years with Obama in the White House (if only just barely).

Given what Ryan can bring to the table for the Romney campaign -- aligning new voters behind the Romney-Ryan ticket, generating additional campaign contributions and possibly delivering Wisconsin, a previously almost unwinnable state for Romney -- the selection of Ryan still seems like a stroke of genius. That is unless the day comes that fiscal conservative, Tea Party and libertarian voters uncover the "real" Paul Ryan and realize that, not only is he not the savior they thought he was, he's actually no better than Romney.