

# Tyler Morning Telegraph

## Both parties have helped grow debt

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Sen. Marco Rubio has had enough trouble lately navigating the choppy waters of immigration reform. His comments on Rush Limbaugh's radio show last week won't help his standing with the staunchest of Republicans.

That's too bad — because in large part, the Florida Republican is right. And he goes on to prove his point.

“I think we have a growing problem in this country that too many people have forgotten what the true sense of prosperity is ... and let me tell you who I blame for that first and foremost,” Rubio said. “I blame that primarily, quite frankly, on decisions made by the Republican Party in the past to embrace crony capitalism and corporate welfare as conservatism, when, in fact, that's not what we're about.”

He went on to talk about how the GOP talks a good game when it comes to limited government, but doesn't deliver.

“I also think that while we've had multiple candidates in the past that have campaigned as limited-government conservatives ... until it's their government program that they're trying to protect, or what have you,” he said. “So I don't think necessarily Republicans have always governed as the limited-government movement and the result is you see this kind of confusion in the American electorate about what the source of prosperity is.”

Did Rubio go too far? Certainly, it was FDR's New Deal and LBJ's Great Society plans that greatly expanded the scope of government. But Republicans have been complicit in expanding the size of government, all along.

They've been complicit both actively, by approving ever-expanding budgets, and passively, by not contesting the ever-expanding powers of federal agencies.

There have been exceptions, some notable, but by and large, have been happy to see government grow.

And Republicans, particularly under President George W. Bush, did their share of expanding government's scope — by offering a new entitlement (the Medicare drug benefit, or Medicare Part D) and No Child Left Behind, which essentially federalized public education.

The Cato Institute — a libertarian-leaning group, which has no vested interest in the Republican Party — praised Rubio for admitting the GOP has been a co-conspirator.

“Although I think both parties deserve equal blame (food stamps are an example), I give Rubio credit for not going along with the standard Republican delusion that Obama lit the torch of government dependency,” Cato's Ted DeHaven noted last week.

“Republicans talk a good game about limited government but talk is about as far as it goes.”

Sadly, DeHaven adds that Rubio doesn't just make the point, he proves the point.

“There's just one problem with Rubio criticizing Republicans who 'have campaigned as limited-government conservatives...until it's their government program that they're trying to protect,'” he said. “When it came time to vote to phase out the federal government's Soviet-style system of subsidies and supports for sugar producers, Rubio sided with his state's notorious sugar interests.”

He's talking about a vote the Senate took last year that would have phased out those sugar subsidies.

Rubio is right. If only he didn't have to prove it.