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Morning Bits

By [Jennifer Rubin](#)

Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.) [disappoints](#) on fiscal issues. “All across Iowa [last] week, Ron Paul, the great libertarian hope, has been promising voters that we’ll have plenty of money to protect the crown jewels of the New Deal and the Great Society — Medicare and Social Security — if we simply cut ‘overseas spending.’ ” He is flat-out wrong and Obama-esque in his irresponsibility and refusal to propose specific entitlement changes.

The [finger-pointing](#) is in full wing between old and new members of the Rick Perry campaign team. “In a series of interviews with POLITICO, sources close to the campaign depict a dysfunctional operation that might be beyond saving because of what they describe as the political equivalent of malpractice by the previous regime. ‘There has never been a more ineptly orchestrated, just unbelievably subpar campaign for president of the United States than this one,’ said a senior Perry adviser.” If anything, that understates how pathetic it really was.

Not to put too fine a [point](#) on it, but who would take campaign advice from Herman Cain?

It’s beside the [point](#) now. “Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Saturday that his campaign will have to take a more aggressive approach in combating the onslaught of negative ads that have deflated his poll numbers here.” It’s too late, and after losing badly in the first two states he’ll be a non-factor in South Carolina and beyond, if he even has the money to carry on.

In an op-ed intended to [point out](#) Rep. Ron Paul’s strong points, the caveats are among the most compelling arguments to vote *against* him. “His seeming indifference to attempts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, his support for a constitutional amendment to deny birthright citizenship to children of illegal aliens, and his opposition

to the Nafta and Cafta free trade agreements in the name of doctrinal purity are at odds with most libertarians. As for the Ron Paul newsletters, the best response was by my colleague David Boaz when the subject was raised publicly in 2008. About them he wrote in the Cato Institute's blog: "Those words are not libertarian words. Maybe they reflect "paleoconservative" ideas. . . . Making sweeping, bigoted claims about all blacks, all homosexuals, or any other group is indeed a crudely primitive collectivism." " So why would a libertarian, let alone a Republican vote for him?

One can't [point](#) to any better illustration of President Obama's feckless foreign policy and the moral degeneracy of the left than the plight of Alan Gross, who is still held prisoner in Cuba. "The Castro government sees Mr. Gross as a potential bargaining chip in its campaign to win the return of five Cuban spies from the United States. This effort has unfortunately received support from Hollywood celebrities, Nobelists and even, after a fashion, former president Jimmy Carter, who called for the spies' release when he visited Havana in March (while saying their fate should be 'separate' from that of Mr. Gross).

Is there any [point](#) to explaining to Ron Paul that Pakistan's not a great example for him? "Paul has suggested that a nuclear Iran wouldn't be more dangerous than existing nuclear-armed nations, such as Russia, Pakistan and India, and he has warned that the United States is on a dangerous path toward starting another war." And really, does any sane voter agree that the pro-West, pro-Israel, democratic India's possession of nuclear weapons is the same as allowing Iran to get the bomb?

This is downright silly once you [point](#) out the real Gingrich is disliked intensely all over the country, even by Republicans now. "The fact that Gingrich is from neighboring Georgia, as opposed to Massachusetts, would presumably help him in Florida, as would his demonstrated strength among senior citizens. (Gingrich is from the Silent Generation and is four years older than Romney, who is a Baby Boomer.) Gingrich's being from Georgia, as well as currently living in Virginia, would also presumably help him in the Old Dominion. Moreover, a GOP candidate who loses in Virginia would also be in danger of losing North Carolina — which would essentially seal that nominee's fate — so it's an added advantage that Georgia borders the Tar Heel State. As to whether Gingrich or Romney seems more like — and might seem more appealing to — the typical working-class independent voter who will probably swing the election in Ohio, readers will have to decide for themselves." If geography is the best argument he has, he is cooked. And he is.

Rick Santorum held up well under [pointed](#) questioning from David Gregory. Watch the video.

By [Jennifer Rubin](#) | 07:45 AM ET, 01/02/2012