



## From Ron Paul to Mitt Romney, are any serious about limited government

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WASHINGTON, January 9, 2012 - Americans long for a leader who can state clearly the real political questions of the day and believes in the principles that made this country strong and unique. One principle that would unite 80 percent of Americans is limited government. The country will never regain strength without a return to this most basic premise.

Limited government must not be confused with small government or no government, but a government that as Thomas Jefferson said binds man "down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

This would require a wholesale rejection of the Progressivism pioneered by Republican President Teddy Roosevelt (1901-1909) and embodied by President Barak Obama in a frightening extreme.

In short, Progressivism is a rejection of the Founders belief that human nature is unchanging. Larry Arnn, [President](#) of Hillsdale College and Winston Churchill research biographer, explains that Progressives believe that "progress" and evolution have brought us to a place where the people should be governed by an elite class who are not subject to political forces or constitutional checks and balances; they operate above politics and act impartially based on reason.

Knowing the inherent proclivity man has for self-aggrandizement, James Madison wrote in Federalist Papers, No. 51, "If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. [But lacking these,] in framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

There's little surprise in the fact that Republican and Democrat administrations and Congresses alike have overseen an almost unceasing growth in government spending and intrusion into the ability for the people to keep the fruits of their labor, most markedly since Democratic President Woodrow Wilson (1913-21). [According](#) to Randall G.

Holcombe, writing for the Cato Institute, "In 1913, just prior to World War I, federal government expenditures were 2.5 percent of gross national product and by 1990 they had risen to 22.5 percent of GNP."

In 2009 government spending at all levels was at 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product. If Obama succeeds in implementing his entire agenda, that figure would match the European Union average of 47 percent, [according](#) to Jacob Weisberg writing for the New York Times. \*GNP is GDP plus net income from assets abroad.

While the three Republican presidents between Wilson and Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933- 45) - Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover - slowed the march with business friendly policy and a lowering of the income tax rates, none actually curtailed government growth and spending. Wilson established the income tax in 1913 with the highest marginal tax rate at 7 percent but escalated it to 77 percent by 1916 to finance World War I. The top rate was reduced to 25 percent by Coolidge in 1925.

In recent history, America has seen but one real period of limited government conservatism with the 1980 election and presidency of Republican Ronald Reagan, following the dreadful policies and failed leadership of Democrat Jimmy Carter.

A decade ago it would have been hard to imagine a president more inept than Carter when it came to economic policy or more "Progressive" than Wilson, yet Barak Obama was elected. Today we see a surge in Ron Paul followers - a testament to the fatigue Americans, especially the young, have developed after a decade at war, an anemic economy in recent years and the Obama king-like disregard for the Constitution and lurch toward European-style social democracy.

Yet Libertarianism is not the answer to the march toward unchecked government spending and intrusion into the markets and lives of a free people. According to [Libertarianism](#), "The first known libertarian may have been the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, who lived around the sixth century B.C. and is best known as the author of the Tao Te Ching. Lao Tzu advised, "Without law or compulsion, men would dwell in harmony." While maintaining the "liberty" to make personal decisions about ones life is essential, Libertarians veer too close to the anarchy end of the political spectrum.

Again in their philosophical brilliance, the Founders paid close attention to the need for creating a government that rested in the balanced middle; neither too close to tyranny nor to anarchy. Combined, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution strike that perfect balance.

As many of us enter the New Year with resolutions for achieving and maintaining balance in our personal lives, don't forget that it is balance we must restore in our nation if we are to continue as the world's most prosperous, free people. No one candidate can reverse 100 years of drift but we must start some place, and that is with continued

insistence that our elected leaders at all levels, of all party affiliation honor the American principle of limited government.