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## Libertarianism's Senator

By Joseph Lawler on 5.9.11 @ 4:11PM

In other Paul-related developments, Matt Welch, editor of the flagship libertarian publication *Reason*, has weighed the evidence and determined that Senator Rand Paul passes any reasonable purity test for libertarianism:

...it's a puzzling conception of libertarianism that excludes the first senator in memory to be as anti-war, anti-surveillance, anti-police abuse, anti-big government, and anti-spending as Rand Paul. He has done more to inject libertarian ideas into the Washington debate than any senator I can remember, all within his first three months in office. It's a remarkable achievement.

Paul's approach toward the limited-government big tent in *The Tea Party Goes to Washington* is to mention and quote from people from all factions within-and sometimes without. He waxes nostalgic about Murray Rothbard, quotes serially from Pat Buchanan, name-checks the Mises Institute, the Cato Institute, **reason**, *The American Spectator*, and *The American Conservative* (whose Jack Hunter helped out with the book). He is similarly open when it comes to certain Republican stars, defending (in a pretty interesting couple of passages) the radical example of Ronald Reagan against his latter-day appropriators, expressing heartfelt gratitude toward social conservative James Dobson, and praising Sarah Palin (whose endorsement in the primary was critical to his success). In the book Paul does still seem a bit cautious about revealing his true ideology, for instance when he confesses fretting before talking to Palin that she might be put off by his libertarianism. ("Oh," he reports her responding, "we all have a little libertarian in us.") Meanwhile, he has quickly become Capitol Hill's leading fire breather on the very libertarian (and very pressing) issues of slashing government spending and debt.

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