

Beck's "non-political" 8-28 rally steeped in politics

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Glenn Beck says his August 28 Restoring Honor rally in Washington, DC will be a "non-political" event. However, many aspects of the rally, including its promotion by Beck and allied conservative groups, have been explicitly political.

Beck claims 8-28 rally will be "non-political"

Beck: Rally about "First Amendment rights" and honoring the military. The [webpage](#) for Beck's August 28 "Restoring Honor" rally in the National Mall in Washington, DC describes the event as a "non-political, non-partisan event" that "will recognize our First Amendment rights and honor the service members who fight to protect those freedoms." The rally will raise funds for the [Special Operations Warrior Foundation](#).

Conservative groups deeply involved with 8-28

Tea Party Patriots providing staff, promotion. An August 24 *Politico* article [reported](#) that Beck requested that the conservative group assist with planning the rally:

At the request of Beck's team, which lacked the organizational infrastructure or logistical know-how to pull off Saturday's march, asked for assistance, Tea Party Patriots agreed to help promote the march among its 500,000 email subscribers and to provide 400 volunteers to staff it, a requirement before the National Park Service would issue a permit.

National Rifle Association sponsoring, promoting the event. As *Media Matters* [noted](#), the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence reported that the NRA shipped copies of its news magazine with advertisements for Beck's 8-28 rally.

FreedomWorks to cater to attendees' "political" interests. According to a July 17 *Politico* [article](#) reported that Beck had "offered assurances" to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation that "he will leave his politically charged rhetoric behind" for the rally, but will nonetheless encourage attendees interested in politics to join the right-wing group FreedomWorks, which is chaired by former Republican House Majority Leader Dick Arney:

Instead, the plan is for Beck to tell rally attendees that, if they want to get involved in politics, they should sign up with FreedomWorks, said the group's president Matt Kibbe, who has appeared on Beck's radio show since FreedomWorks became a sponsor to talk tea party politics with Beck.

"This is about cultural renewal and a lot of the themes that he talks about on his show," Kibbe said of the August rally. "He'll go on to say, 'but we do need to organize and we do need to get politically active, and that's why I've joined forces with FreedomWorks, because they're the guys out there doing this, and I've looked around, and they're the best at what they do.'"

Americans for Prosperity providing buses to rally. Politico **reported** on August 24 that the Americans for Prosperity, a major conservative political organization **backed** by right-wing billionaire David A. Koch of the oil giant Koch Industries, "moved its annual Washington training session to correspond with Beck's rally and are offering to bus attendees to it." According to *Politico*:

"We very much appreciate and support Glenn's general message that he puts forth on a daily basis ... He consistently espouses free market views and views that espouse what the founders thought," said AFP President Tim Phillips. "It's a good message -- and so whatever direction he chooses to take with this day and this march, we support it."

FreedomWorks, Tea Party Patriots, hosting their own corresponding events. *Politico* also **reported** on July 17 that FreedomWorks and the Tea Party Patriots are "taking advantage of the expected crowds" at Beck's rally "to hold their own events." According to the article: "FreedomWorks' political action committee is holding a fundraiser and get-out-the-vote training session the night before Beck's rally, and the Tea Party Patriots are urging the 500,000 activists on their e-mail list to attend both Beck's rally and a tea party rally the following day to seek the repeal of the Democratic health care overhaul."

Sarah Palin will speak at rally

Palin a featured speaker at the 8-28 rally. On May 26, Beck **announced** that he had "selected" Sarah Palin to speak at the 8-28 rally "not for political reasons at all but because I think she understands duty and honor":

BECK: To bring on the medal of honor winners along with Gary Sinise will be somebody that I selected that I, not for political reasons at all but because I think she understands duty and honor, I think she understands what it's like -- the first people that we have to point out before we go into the badge of merit are the people that have done remarkable things in wartime. She has a son who is serving currently. Sarah Palin will also be joining.

Palin inextricably linked to GOP politics. After running as the Republican nominee for vice president in 2008 and serving half a term as Alaska's Republican governor, Palin has remained deeply involved in national GOP politics. Following the June 8 elections, several **media outlets credited** Palin's endorsements of various Republican candidates as critical to their primary victories. A June 24 ABCNews.com article reported: "Though she currently holds no political office, the former Alaska governor has emerged as a key player in some of the most contentious races. Her endorsements -- mostly done informally via Facebook and Twitter -- have sparked instant media attention and, in some cases, significantly boosted a candidate's popularity. Several of Palin's previously unknown picks have gained national attention."

Palin's political action committee, SarahPAC, has **donated** over \$125,000 to federal candidates in the 2010 election cycle, every one of them a Republican.

Palin is a wildly polarizing political figure. As Greg Sargent of the *Washington Post's* The Plum Line blog **noted**, a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* **poll** found that Palin, while popular among "GOP primary voters," is "toxic" among "the broader electorate." The poll asked respondents to gauge their response to various attributes Congressional candidates might have, and 52 percent said they would have "some reservations about" or be "very uncomfortable with" Palin's endorsement of a candidate (just 25 percent said they'd be "enthusiastic" or

"comfortable" with her endorsement).

GOP members of Congress raised money for the rally

Sen. Hatch and Rep. Chaffetz attended Beck fundraisers. The July 17 *Politico* [article](#) also reported that Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) attended a fundraising event with Beck in Salt Lake City to raise money for the Special Operations Warrior Fund. The Utah Republicans also attended one of Beck's "American Revival" events in Salt Lake City, the proceeds for which were "expected to go to Beck's production company, Mercury Radio Arts, which is also putting on the Restoring Honor rally."

GOP Congresswoman Michele Bachmann sold Capitol tour to raise funds for 8-28. Beck [reportedly](#) auctioned off a Capitol tour with Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (R-MN) and right-wing activist David Barton in order to raise funds for the 8-28 rally. The tour sold for \$27,500.

Beck promotes the rally in political terms

Beck: Rally will "fix the capital." During his May 7 Fox News show, Beck [said](#): "On August 28, I'm going to Washington, D.C., and I'm going to be at the feet of Abraham Lincoln and facing the Washington Monument. Everybody tries to fix the capital. I'm telling you, the capital will fix itself if we just stand between Washington and Lincoln and try to be those people. Restore honor in the country, and we'll be fixed."

Beck: Rally will "reclaim the civil rights movement." Also on his May 26 radio program, Beck [said](#): "This is going to be an iconic event. This is going to be a moment that you'll never be able to paint people as haters, racists, none of it. This is a moment quite honestly, that I think we reclaim the civil rights movement."

Beck will counter the alleged "progressive" distortion of the "badge of merit." Also on May 26, Beck [said](#): "Today, we announced the first 15 minutes of the 8-28 event and the people that will join me on stage. We announced that we are going to start -- restart the badge of merit that George Washington gave his troops. It's what the Purple Heart is based on, except the progressives -- what a surprise -- in 1933 introduced the Purple Heart."

Events intended to lead up to 8-28 rally were explicitly political

Beck planned "education conventions" as precursor to 8-28, would teach Beck fans "how to be a politician." During a November 21, 2009, rally at a Florida retirement community, Beck [announced](#) that he would be holding several "education conventions" across the country in the lead-up to the 8-28 rally in Washington, DC. Beck said the conventions would teach participants "history," "finance," and "community organizing," and "if you want to be a politician, we're going to teach you how to be a politician."

BECK: So here's what we're doing. This is the beginning. Next year, we're holding - I've divided the country up into seven separate regions, and I'm having conventions around the country. They're education conventions. You're going to get up early on a Saturday morning and you're going to go to bed late. And you are going to learn about history, you're going to learn about finance, you're going to learn about community organizing. You're going to learn everything we need to know. If you want to be a politician, we're going to teach you how to be a politician. We're going to teach you the fundamentals of why values and virtues and ethics are important. We're going to mass together in our little community organizing group, the beginnings of the 9-12 group, and we are going to go out and register people to vote. But we're going to register people to vote without taking a dime from the federal government, and without smuggling any underage hookers across the border!

[...]

We're going to do seven of these, is the initial thought. And then, come August 28 - I would like you to make your plans now - to join me at the feet of Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC.

Beck announced "100-year plan" for successful libertarian candidates. During his November 2009 rally, Beck **explained** why he believed libertarian candidates "never win elections," and said he was "developing a 100-year plan for America" to help implement libertarian policies:

BECK: Our libertarian friends, they never win elections because they always stand up and say "You know what? I'm gonna swear, take the oath of office on Tuesday. And on Wednesday, I'm abolishing the IRS. And on Thursday, I'm bringing all of our troops home from around the world." And, honestly, it can't be done. It has been done for a hundred years. A hundred years of laying this foundation. Some of the stupid stuff we can do on Tuesday afternoon. "Hey, let's skip the parade this year. I'm cleaning up some of the stupid stuff." But the rest of it might take two years, four years, ten years, fifty years. We need to start thinking like the Chinese. I'm developing a 100-year plan for America. A 100-year plan. We will plant this idea and it will sprout roots.

Beck designed "100-year plan" in response to progressive "ticking time bomb." At the same November 2009 **rally**, Beck explained that his "100-year plan" was developed to counteract a separate 100-year plan, allegedly set into motion "at the beginning of the Progressive movement," which Beck described as a "ticking time bomb" designed to bring about a "socialist utopia."

8-28 rally and "The Plan"

Beck planned to unveil "The Plan" at 8-28 rally. In a November 2009 **announcement** on his website, Beck hyped his "education conventions" and his "100 year plan," saying that they "will culminate in The Plan, a book that will provide specific policies, principles and, most importantly, action steps that each of us can take to play a role in this Refounding." Beck wrote that the "unveiling of The Plan" will occur at the 8-28 rally, "at the feet of Abraham Lincoln on the National Mall." Beck has since scuttled the "unveiling of the Plan," instead turning the event into a promotion for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

Beck's "Plan" puts conservative ideology over efficacy. Over the course of five Fox News shows in April 2010, Beck unveiled various elements of "The Plan," promising viewers on April 12 that he would show them "how to slash the budget." However, most of the proposals Beck and his guests offered valued conservative orthodoxy over efficacy.

- **Medicare.** On the April 13 edition of *Glenn Beck*, Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute **recommended** privatizing Medicare, saying that the best thing to do is go to a "consumer-based system" in which people who reach age 65 are given a federal voucher for \$11,000 to "buy health insurance in the private market." On January 27, the Congressional Budget Office released an **analysis** of Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-WI) legislation to privatize Medicare, which included a provision to provide vouchers to Medicare-eligible seniors, the "average value" of which would be \$11,000 if "all Medicare beneficiaries" were to receive it. According to the CBO's scoring, Ryan's proposal would have increased the financial burden of health care on seniors:

Under the Roadmap, the value of the voucher would be less than expected Medicare spending per enrollee in 2021, when the voucher program would begin. In addition, Medicare's current payment rates for providers are lower than those paid by commercial insurers, and the program's administrative costs are lower than those for individually purchased insurance. Beneficiaries would

therefore face higher premiums in the private market for a package of benefits similar to that currently provided by Medicare. Moreover, the value of the voucher would grow significantly more slowly than CBO expects that Medicare spending per enrollee would grow under current law. Beneficiaries would therefore be likely to purchase less comprehensive health plans or plans more heavily managed than traditional Medicare, resulting in some combination of less use of health care services and less use of technologically advanced treatments than under current law. Beneficiaries would also bear the financial risk for the cost of buying insurance policies or the cost of obtaining health care services beyond what would be covered by their insurance.

- **Federal salaries.** On the April 14 edition of *Glenn Beck*, he **proposed** cutting salaries for federal employees so that the average federal salary would match the average private-sector wage, claiming that this would save between \$44 and \$104 billion. However, this amounts to only one to three percent of all federal spending.
- **Education.** The April 15 edition of *Glenn Beck* was devoted to eliminating the Department of Education. As *Media Matters* **noted** at the time, conservative Republican politicians have been promising since 1980 to eliminate the Education Department to no avail. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, education accounted for just two percent of all federal spending in 2008.

— S.S.M.

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