

Ron Paul Continues the Fight for Freedom

Guest: Ron Paul

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Ron Paul served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas for 12 terms. He is the author of numerous books, including the #1 New York Times bestseller *The Revolution: A Manifesto*.

WOODS: Let's start off with all the things you're up to. That'll probably take up the whole show if we're not careful. Last month you had a new book come out called *The School Revolution*, which I think propels the Ron Paul Revolution into the future. Why don't you take a minute or two to tell us what that book is about.

PAUL: Everybody knows I've been interested in education for a long time, and leaving Congress, I thought, what other thing could I get involved with? I've always worked with the Mises Institute, as you have, realizing the teaching of Austrian economics is the answer to refuting the Keynesians. I've also dreamed over the years about having a school, a brick-and-mortar type of school, when I got out of Congress, but I never knew when that time would come. But as this approached that time, both you and of course Gary North talked to me about this, and explained to me what is available now with the Internet.

So, I'm interested in that, so that's why we got together and wrote the book. A little bit of history about homeschooling, a little bit of research on that, and trying to get people energized. And lo and behold, it's at a time in our history where just about everybody's upset with the public schools. It's not just we who believe in a libertarian free-market message and the freedom principles. Everybody I talk to, traveling around the country on the book, no matter what persuasion they were, they couldn't brag about the government school system, so I think it's ripe for that. And I think the glaring failure of the system is so much that it's an open opportunity to offer up a couple of suggestions that I've worked on.

WOODS: Well, I was glad to have a chance to talk about this on your channel the other day, and of course, you have RonPaulHomeschool.com. I think that's very exciting partly because I'm involved in making some of the courses, and it's absorbing pretty much all day every day for me. But I feel like it's the most important work I've ever done, and I'm really privileged to be part of it. But as long as I've mentioned the channel here, tell us about the Ron Paul Channel. And do you have any plans to expand the programming? What do you hope to do with it someday that you're not able to do with it right now?

PAUL: Of course, expansion is the goal, but it's not immediate. What we want to do is improve it the best way we can to find out what the people really like. We've made some changes already. We've shortened the format. We have found—which we sort of suspected—people don't want to sit down and have a continuous program for 30 or 40 or 50 minutes. They might click on and off, but we're working on trying to make shorter information segments.

Later on, I am thinking of incorporating more people involved in the freedom movement. It's been pretty amazing to me how much technology is involved. People who wanted to put the money into all of the equipment and take all the risk—they're actually from California. So they had to put a studio here in my hometown, because I didn't want to move to California or Washington, D.C., or New York. But they have a studio in California, and connecting all these wires and then connecting to somebody like when I interviewed you the other day, it's not simple, and it's costly. So we're making our best efforts. As a matter of fact, I'm very pleased with it on the communication. We've interviewed Glenn Greenwald from Brazil, so things have been going real well in that sense. But we're looking forward to expanding and having more people on it and more programming.

WOODS: So that's RonPaulChannel.com. Now I want you to tell us about RonPaulInstitute.org. What's the Ron Paul Institute?

PAUL: Well, the Institute for Peace and Prosperity is the one dealing with foreign policy, and Daniel McAdams, who worked with me in my congressional office for a good many years, and did the foreign policy work, is now in charge of that. We're trying to keep the momentum going for the noninterventionist foreign policy, something that surely came up a lot during the presidential campaigns, and I think we have some momentum there. People now are starting to realize that the interventionist foreign policy has failed. When I think of the success, at least a token success, on holding off the bombing in Syria as well as actually talking to somebody in Iran. This to me is pretty amazing. So that's what that website is all about, and it's more academically oriented. It's not videos or a lot of articles that appear, but it's keeping up with what's going on in foreign policy, to continue to promote the ideas of nonintervention in foreign policy.

WOODS: Well, I've talked to Daniel McAdams, and he's hoping at some point to be able to have a summer seminar for students to teach nonintervention. Now, of course we have Antiwar.com, but I'm not aware of any public organization that's dedicated to the principle of foreign-policy nonintervention. Has there ever been one?

PAUL: Not that I know of. There were always some that would pick up bits and pieces of it. You can even find Republicans before me that would pick up bits and pieces of it but not as a philosophy in itself. I guess the last attempt at this was when the Founders gave us some advice, and the advice was better than what they did sometimes. The Constitution would give us that type of foreign policy, but we never really followed it. But where we really strayed was in this century with the Teddy Roosevelt/Woodrow Wilson era, and it's gotten worse for 100 years. So that's why I think the people in this country are getting sick and tired of it. They're just so tired of the constant wars going on and the cost of these wars that they're worn out from it.

And I think we live in a special age. I think economically we can talk about replacement of the Keynesian theories on economics and look more towards the Austrian School. But at the same time, I think on foreign policy there's such evidence that this has failed. I mean the Middle East—all this war going on for the past 20 years that we've been involved in over there—such complete failure. And of course, the authoritarian, the real thugs of the twentieth century, when you look at the Chinese communist government as well as the Soviet Union, as well as Hitler, Nazism, all failures. Nonintervention is well received on our college campuses, and that gives me encouragement that the next generation is very open to having significant changes in our policies.

WOODS: Now I want to shift gears and ask you some things that people have been wanting to ask. It's not going to be the same old "Why did you decide to get into politics?" or "What was the first book you wrote?" I'm not going to ask you that. I want to ask you some unique questions, and the first one comes from me directly. This is sort of a softball, but I am genuinely curious. In 2007, at what moment, what event, or what was it that occurred, where you first said to yourself, "Something unusual is happening in this campaign"? That this was going to be bigger than you ever dreamed it would be? Was there one particular moment? Was it that you were winning all the post-debate polls all of a sudden? What was it that made you say, "Whoa! something crazy's going on here"?

PAUL: I can't remember the date, but I do remember an incident that I knew something was different, and it was very early in the campaign. There were so many debates. I think there were like 26 debates, and I can't remember whether this was the one where I had a confrontation with Giuliani. But anyway, we had one debate, and I didn't think too much of the debate. But two or three days later, we were to have a small meeting, a get-together of people on my list, and expecting 100 or 200 people in Austin. All of a sudden when I arrived there it was the first big rally. It probably was very small compared to what happened after several years, but then I thought, "Where did these people come from?" We'd never had a turnout like that. Then I was saying that to myself or out loud: "It might have had to do with the debates that happened a couple days ago."

But I knew then that there was a significant difference in turnouts and enthusiasm, and it seemed like it

kept growing. But it always sort of baffled me, because I'd been saying those things for so long and always to small crowds. I'd been saying it in Washington for 30 years, so it was pretty remarkable and so different for me to—all of a sudden, somebody paid attention. And they listened, and they liked it. So there was a difference but a lot of factors were involved in it all coming together like that.

WOODS: The questions are going to go in increasing difficulty. So the next one that somebody asked is, if you had it to do all over again, like your whole public career, is there anything you'd do differently? You would presumably run for Congress again. You would do that, but is there anything that maybe you wouldn't have done or you would have done differently?

PAUL: No, and when I ran for Congress, it wasn't to run for Congress. It was just me getting stuff off my chest and speaking out. And politics is a bunch of luck in timing, and you couldn't plan it to happen, especially somebody that's not enthusiastic about it. I think the thing that I've looked at—although politically it didn't hurt me. I think long term it helped me—and that was running in the Libertarian Party in 1988. It wasn't that I'm less excited about the Libertarian Party. I always knew their shortcomings, but it was a struggle. The money all went into looking to get on ballots and it was such a hectic battle.

But the other side of that came about years later when probably, I'll bet you, six, eight, maybe more individuals who came across what we were doing in 1988 ended up working for me either in another campaign or in my congressional office. They were individuals. So the message was getting out that was so much smaller. But I never felt excited, and by the end of that year, to say, "Hey, this was a great year. We're on the verge of saving the world."—It was pretty tiring, and it was a lesson on the lack of the democratic process. I use that word cautiously. The democratic process here stinks when you think that we send kids off to die to spread democracy in the Middle East, because you couldn't get in the debates. You couldn't get on the ballots, and it's such a rotten system. Especially if anybody comes to the conclusion that Republicans and Democrats aren't very different, which I think a lot of Americans agree with now.

WOODS: That raises probably the most common question that I'm getting, and I'm just going to pass it on without editorial comment. The most common question is, "What made you decide to endorse Ken Cuccinelli in Virginia?"

PAUL: I picked the best candidate. I didn't feel like he was the pure person. There's a Libertarian in the race, but there was a major article today about how weak the Libertarian candidate is in Virginia. So I never approached campaigning and tactics and talking and building up coalitions and trying to get support from this group versus the other group. I always thought that there was a little bit of room for negotiation there, but when it came to issues and a position, and an endorsement of a position or a vote in the Congress, that's when I felt that there was to be no yielding to that. But over the years, I've worked with different people, and the danger there of course is, "Well, are you just picking the lesser of two evils?" And that is a danger. I worried about that a whole lot, because there was a Libertarian candidate in the race, and I got the advice from people who worked with me for a lot of years from Virginia: even though they were hardcore libertarians they were not supporting him and were gung-ho over Ken.

WOODS: There's a guy in North Carolina, Dr. Greg Brannon, who's running for U.S. Senate there and has your son's endorsement. He is a pure Misesian, Jeffersonian. I grilled him on as many questions as I could, and also, he's delivered 9,000 babies, which just blew me away. He's like what—two or three Ron Pauls. How can that be?

PAUL: He either was a lot busier, or he's delivered babies for more years.

WOODS: He said that on his first day he was involved in 24 deliveries. Welcome to the profession.

PAUL: Boy, that's a busy day.

WOODS: Let me ask you another one that comes up a lot. I know you have answered this one in the past, but people want to know. You were close friends with Murray Rothbard. You traveled in his circles. What you say sounds a lot like some of the things he said, so people want to know, in your heart of hearts, are you what's called an anarcho-capitalist? In theory would you favor no state whatsoever and the private sector would provide everything, or are you a minimal-government guy as you have claimed to be?

PAUL: I haven't accepted the idea that tomorrow we can scratch it and have no government, but the one thing I think where my career was different than so many others: We have heard a lot of people give a good speech when they're running for office and say, "You know, he really sounds good." It takes about a week or a month or a year, and he just joins the gang up in Washington. I would say from what I believed in the very first time I ran for Congress in 1974 compared to now or when I left Congress a year ago, I would say that I'm much closer to anarcho-capitalism than I was when I went. I've always gone in that direction, but I haven't sorted all this out. I haven't been able to figure this out about competing police forces.

But the answer to that: often if you have a corrupt police force who's private, you're going to have some problems. The world's not made up of perfect people, but what happens when you have a gang at the federal level and you have 100,000 federal bureaucrats with guns? I mean that is so bad that we have to reject that, but I haven't gotten to the point where all problems can be solved without any government whatsoever. I think the competing police forces could become a problem.

WOODS: I think you've suggested that over the course of your career you've soured a bit on politics, so what happens when a young, impressionable kid comes to you, has read a lot of the books that you've recommended, is full of zeal and enthusiasm, and says, "Dr. Paul, I want to run for office someday"? Suppose the kid even says, "But first I'm going to establish my credentials. I'll have a good private-sector job. I'll contribute to my community, and then my culminating act in my life will be to run for the House of Representatives." What do you say to that person?

PAUL: I say don't make that your goal. I get that all the time from young people. They don't even talk about getting a good job and knowing how to make a living in bad times. They just say, I want to be in Congress, and I don't think that's a good goal at all. I think if that time will come, it's like I mentioned. There's a bit of luck in it. It costs a lot of money, and if that is the goal, it's too easy to bend a little bit and say, "How am I going to do it?" They want to be taught how to raise money and how to organize and what to do on the Internet to organize the troops and that sort of thing. I tell them, just learn the message. Understand what liberty is all about and how to express it and teach other people, and something will come up. If it comes up, fine, but you might support other candidates. You might not even like politics. You just want to be a teacher. There are so many other options.

But if the time comes, and you run, the only way it can be of any benefit whatsoever is to vote the right way and set a standard. To get up there and say, "Well, now I've worked 12 years. I'm in Congress." The first thing that happens is the speaker gets a hold of you, especially if you're in the majority party. "It's okay, what committee do you want to be on? Okay, this is what you have to do, and do you have any kind of votes you have to cast." And then they own you. That is what you have to avoid. Going the other way is pretty tough today. I think, let's say, the events didn't come together in the 1970s, and I decided to do exactly what I did in the 1970s. I don't think there would be one chance in a thousand that I could get elected under today's circumstances. So this should be a secondary goal, very secondary. If it comes, fine. Political action is okay, but there's a lot of downside to it.

WOODS: Last question and I'll let you run. A lot of people would say, look, there's only so much a president can do, and the president can't overturn the welfare state or abolish the Fed or whatever. But there are some things a president can do, I think. So I'm curious to know: suppose Ron Paul is elected president. What's the first thing he does in office?

PAUL: Where you have the most leeway is where you're the commander-in-chief, and if there are events going on with the military, you're in charge. This is one thing that is very, very clear, so you're not to have micromanagement of the troops. I would think you could close down all military prisons, close down Guantanamo, and bring the troops home. Then you would be impeached. How long would it take if you're president, and they pass all these kind of bills, send them over, and you don't sign them? It'd be very, very tough to get very far. But it depends on the conditions. Right now they're not holding it against Obama for listening to the people and not dropping bombs on Syria.

So I still think the consensus of the people, the understanding of the people, understanding why free markets are better, and it's in their best interest—I imagine the most a libertarian president could do now is to try to explain to the people why it's in their interest to look for less government, because all you're going to see from now on is the failure of economic policies, the welfare state, the foreign policy, the attack on our privacy, and what's going on from NSA. So there's a lot of good things happening today. And the Congress eventually will reflect the people, but the people have to argue this case. But I just don't think that one individual can change the world no matter whether they're a president or not. I imagine it would be better to have a libertarian head of the Fed. Quit printing the money. That might do more good.