

Paul's campaign concludes abruptly

Sen. Rand Paul was stuck between a rock and a hard place in two different situations.

The first situation was in the presidential race itself. Paul always called himself "libertarian-ish," trying to take on his father's libertarian legacy within the Republican Party. However, many libertarian purists feel as if he is just not libertarian enough. On the other hand, many Republicans feel as if he is too libertarian. Going into the primaries, he was struck with a hard task: compromise some establishment ideas to gain the libertarian vote, or compromise some libertarian ideas to gain the establishment vote. He ended up going with both, which left him with an odd group of voters fed up with the National Security Agency's domestic spying, the \$19 trillion federal debt and U.S. intervention in the Middle East. But this was not enough to salvage his campaign.

The second situation was the fact that his Senate seat was up for re-election. Sworn in January 2011, his five-year term is coming to an end, and with the first votes officially cast in the 2016 Republican presidential primary, Paul decided that fifth place at 5 percent of the vote was not enough to risk losing his Senate seat.

Paul was hailed by many as the only sane candidate on the debate stage, in comparison to Donald Trump, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Flor-

ida Sen. Marco Rubio and all the other candidates who wanted to bomb the Middle East, raise military spending and enhance NSA domestic spying. Paul was the only one calling for an end to the War on Drugs, commenting, "The War on Drugs has disproportionately affected our African-American community." He was a different voice on that stage, one that will be missed.

Perhaps the greatest threat to Paul's campaign was the rise of the Islamic State group, and Trump entering the race. Paul's non-interventionist foreign policy was falsified as isolationist and as a danger to national security during a time where many viewed the Islamic State group as an imminent threat. On the other hand, the American people were fed up with the establishment, which is why we saw the rise of Trump and Bernie Sanders. Trump portrayed himself as a political outsider, fighting to take on the Washington elites—a role that was actually meant for Paul.

With the Islamic State group emerging as a danger to the United States, Paul seemed weak on foreign policy to the average voter, and with Trump entering the race, Paul lost the opportunity to have his voice heard. After declaring he was suspending his campaign, Paul himself said he would not endorse another candidate during the primaries, so many speculate where Paul's followers will go. Will

they now support Cruz, the Texas senator who brands himself as an outsider, hoping to gain some important libertarian support? Will it be Trump, an actual outsider in the race, whose off-the-cuff discourse appeals to the anger of the average voter? Perhaps it will be Rubio, a young minority face that wants to unite the Republican Party.

In my opinion, no candidate in the primaries will grab a majority of Paul supporters. True supporters of Paul feel that Cruz is a fraud libertarian candidate. He has flip-flopped on almost every issue, did not show up to vote on a very important bill put forward by Paul and is a proponent of interventionism in the Middle East. Trump could gain some supporters here and there, but most Paul supporters are smart enough to realize that Trump has no substance. Some political pundits think Rubio will attract some Paul supporters. Truthfully, that is probably the wildest assumption pundits could be making right now. Rubio is the newest face of the GOP establishment, where harsh interventionism in the Middle East, raising military spending and enhancing NSA domestic spying is commonplace. So, for now, Paul supporters will most likely be writing in the fallen candidate's name during the Republican primaries.

It was a sad day for many Paul supporters, including myself, when he dropped out. I had spent a week volunteering in Iowa, campaigning for Paul right before the caucuses. But supporters like me know that Paul is needed in the Senate, and he needs to win his re-election. So here is to you, Rand Paul—the only sane candidate that was in this race.

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-Andrew Windsor
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