

Ron Paul stands up against what he calls “the false choices of American politics”.

Rep. Paul applies the fundamental principle of liberty to the pressing questions of the day.

An economic platform based on the teachings of the Austrian School.

Could Ron Paul be the Barry Goldwater of 2008? We can only hope.

The Revolution: A Manifesto — by Rep. Ron Paul

With the media having moved on from Obama’s crazy pastor to Sarah Palin’s pregnant daughter, words from the unsung hero of the US presidential race, Rep. Ron Paul, come to mind: “*Every four years we are treated to the same tired predictable routine: two candidates with few disagreements on fundamentals pretend that they represent dramatically different philosophies of government.*” And so, Rep. Paul made a noble attempt to throw a kink in this routine, by entering the race not to win, but to raise the level of debate. As part of his “campaign for liberty”, he published [*The Revolution: A Manifesto*](#), a book that reached the #1 spot on both the NY Times’ and Amazon’s best seller lists, and which Rep. Barry Goldwater Jr. deemed [*The Conscience of a Conservative*](#) for the 21st century”.

So what is this book all about? Just as he has always done, Paul applies the principle of liberty to the pressing questions of the day; but he does not do it alone. Coming into the race and in writing this book, he knew that despite his 18 years in Congress and his third-place finish in the 1988 presidential election, his name did not mean much to the general population. Moreover, he knew that the media would again try to peg him as “an extremist”. And so, with his book, he attempts to show that every single one of his proposals has been put forth in some form by better-known and respected sources—thus, forcing opponents to call the likes of George Washington, Milton Friedman, CIA experts, et al. ‘extremists’ in the process.

Ron Paul’s main thesis is that the size of the US federal government has grown far beyond what good reason, and the Constitution, should allow. Paul is a ‘small government’ politician in a way that makes nearly everyone else on Capital Hill look like a socialist. But is he really all that ‘extreme’? He points out that if the US’s 2007 federal budget were cut by a whopping -40%, the government would merely shrink to the level of... 1997! In contrast, while he applauds the cancelation of Alaska’s “bridge to nowhere,” he reminds us that this only takes care of 0.00045% of the federal budget. Spending everywhere has gotten out of hand and, at the very least, the US needs to cap the spending of all federal departments—which, with the exception of the state, military and justice departments, he argues are supposed to exist only at the state level, if at all....

Paul’s stance rests more on the principle of liberty than any ‘economic efficiency’ arguments. Ron Paul is not a utilitarian but a true libertarian and his respect for people as rational, free individuals, is the primary, moral reason for opposing government intrusion. As he puts it: “*I would choose freedom even if it meant less prosperity, but thankfully we do not face such a choice.*”

This last assertion highlights his close association with the [*Austrian School of Economics*](#), which argues that liberty and limited government manipulation is the key to economic progress and lasting prosperity (and he highlights the incredible online resource linked here). In fact, at one point in the book it becomes clear that a lot of the strength Ron Paul has found on Capital Hill was inspired by the great 20th century economist Ludwig von Mises and his motto: “Do not give in to evil [read special interests], but proceed ever more boldly against it.” And as another great economist, Frederic Bastiat, argued: There are three approaches to “legal plunder”: 1) The few plunder the many; 2) Everybody plunders everybody; and 3) Nobody plunders anyone. Today, Paul argues in his book, special interests are pulling the US toward some combination of 1 and 2, which is exactly what the country’s founders (and Mises) warned against.

Of course, Ron Paul is never going to be the next president of the United State but his battle of ideas during the campaign engaged a wide spectrum of voters and brought in some dedicated volunteers to spread his message. As he acknowledges himself, he fired up a base and raised funds for his cause in a way he never thought possible. And in doing so he revived the hopes of libertarians everywhere. In fact, in addition to Barry Goldwater Jr., a number of people have speculated that Ron Paul’s campaign has impacted the political landscape somewhat like Sen. Goldwater’s 1964 campaign did. And if Goldwater made Ronald Reagan president, then perhaps Ron Paul has set the stage for a different voice to have more success with a similar message.

This last possibility makes the quick 167 page read worthwhile, if only as an introduction to Ron Paul’s message of freedom.