



My Interview with Ron Paul

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Over the last few months, I've received hundreds of e-mails from people asking me to interview Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul, so I did.

It's refreshing to interview a politician who doesn't mince words. It's even more refreshing to interview one who understands the benefits of limited government.

Here, then, is the first in a series of columns on my talk with Ron Paul. Some of Paul's answers are shortened.

What should government do?

Ron Paul: Protect our freedoms. Have a strong national defense. Look at and take care of our borders. Have a sound currency. That was the responsibility of the federal government, not to run our lives and run everything in the economy

and extend the interstate-commerce clause and the general-welfare clause to do anything they want to do.

So defense, the military, police forces enforce contracts, and that's about it?

That's it. We would have a court system to enforce contracts, and when people do harm to others, when they take property or injure property, or pollute a neighbor's air, I think there's a role for government to protect our environment through private-property rights.

So keep us safe, enforce contracts, run the courts, pollution rules and otherwise butt out? Leave us alone?

Basically that, which would mean if I'm elected, I should immediately take a pay cut. You know, because I wouldn't have so much to do.

The Department of Education. You'd get rid of it?

Yes. We don't need it.

How will people get educated?

We might get better education. The evidence shows, since the 1950s, since the federal government's gotten involved, the quality of education has gone down, and the cost has gone up.

The federal government should have no role?

There's no authority for it, and ... they've proved themselves inefficient. The one city they're totally in charge of is Washington, D.C. Thirteen thousand dollars a year per student. They have more guns, more drugs, more violence. So there's no evidence that the government can do a very good job.

The Department of Energy.

We don't need a Department of Energy. It serves the interests of big business.

Other cabinet departments? Department of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development. You'd get rid of all of them?

Yeah. Of course, that's not on the immediate agenda, but they're unnecessary, and we should think about what kind of a country we would have without these departments, and I think we would have a better country, and all those prob-

lems that they're supposed to solve, I think, would be lessened.

The Commerce Department? We don't need the Commerce Department to have commerce?

No, absolutely not.

Homeland Security. Isn't that a role for the federal government?

Not really, not the way that's designed. That's the biggest bureaucracy of them all. There are some parts that are OK. You know, they put the Coast Guard in there, and they put FEMA in there, and everybody's bunched together. And I think it was failure of government on 9/11, not the fact that we didn't have the Department of Homeland Security and ... a national ID card, and this constant surveillance and loss of our privacy.

Failure of government how?

We spent \$40 billion on intelligence gathering, and it didn't prevent (the 9/11 attacks) from happening. But the government was in charge of the airlines. FAA, they were supposed to inspect the people as they went on, and you weren't supposed to resist any takeovers, and (passengers and pilots) weren't allowed to have a gun. Maybe if you and I had the airlines, we might have said, "Hey, you know, we want to protect our passengers. Maybe we should have a stronger door on there, maybe we ought to give our pilots a gun." So 9/11 wouldn't have happened.

So government creates too many rules, and the wrong ones?

That basically it. Most of the time well-intentioned – but good intentions will not solve our problems.

Next week, Rep. Ron Paul talks about the war in Iraq.

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