


OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution



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Guilt by association

By Scott Muska
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It hasn't been very long since I openly declared my endorsement of Green Bay Packers' quarterback Brett Favre to become the next President of the United States. I felt that if he ran, he'd be able to establish a solid platform, one that I outlined in my Oct. 12 editorial. It was fun and seemed plausible, at least to me. But with the deadline passing for filing intent to run papers in many states, I finally had to face the fact that Favre will not become the next Commander in Chief.

This left me with a void, since I couldn't find myself truly supporting any of the more mainstream candidates that are the front-runners in the polling. Stephen Colbert filled this void, only to be denied the opportunity to run by Democrat leaders in the state

What is so attractive about Paul is his concern with America and its people.

of South Carolina.

I have since found a new candidate. One that I honestly feel would make a great leader of our country and put us back onto the right track (because somehow it feels as though we currently are not). His name is Ron Paul, a Congressman from Texas, who is running in 2008 as a Republican.

I know that the last portion of that sentence may have angered you to the point that you're not even reading this one. The word "Republican" seems to be doing that to people a lot these days, especially college students who consider themselves radical political activists, but I implore you to stay with me on this.

Paul is attempting to spread a message that some consider unbelievable through his campaign: not all Republicans agree with everything that the Bush Administration endorses.

He adamantly voices his disagreement with the U.S.'s participation in the Iraq War, a position that no other candidate for the GOP holds.

"We can continue to fund and fight no-win police actions around the globe, or we can refocus on securing America and bring the troops home," says Paul. He also believes the decidedly liberal thought that the war was sold to us deliberately with false information.

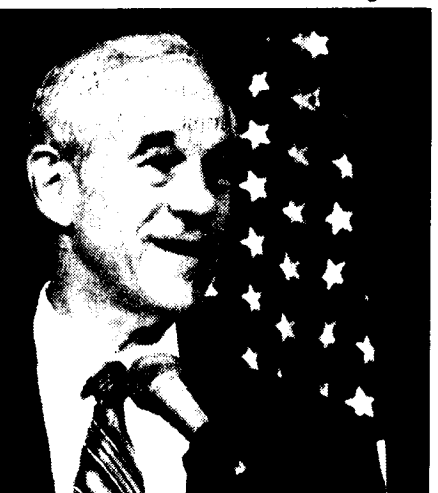
Paul, whose website refers to him as, "the leading advocate for freedom in our nation's capital," also seeks to limit the interaction of the government in the lives of America's citizens. He is downright pissed off about the PATRIOT Act, which is something I am immediately attracted to. As an aspiring journalist with very little verbal self-control, there are few things more important to me than my right to say the things that I feel I should without unnecessary censorship or a fear of the government listening in.

What is so attractive about Paul is his concern with America and its people.

He wants to focus on Homeland issues, like lowering taxes (by cutting government spending and expenses and stopping private banks and foreign governments to dictate our budget) and controlling our borders (by physically maintaining them, enforcing visa rules, and eliminating amnesty and welfare for illegal immigrants). I for one would enjoy some lower taxes and enforced immigration laws that could potentially reduce the amount of outsourcing that is limiting jobs for citizens.

Paul also has a decidedly rebellious and at times comedic side to him, which can be refreshing. In May, he appeared on Real Time with Bill Maher (a self-proclaimed liberal who has become one of Paul's biggest supporters, saying on more than one occasion that Paul is his hero) and spoke about how he had presented fellow GOP hopeful and former Mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, with a "reading list." This list consisted of a number of reports on 9/11, an event that Giuliani is often ridiculed for building his entire run at the Presidency on. This was prompted after Giuliani and Paul sparred with one another on a matter of foreign policy as related to terrorist motivation for the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

At first, when researching Paul, I had the notion that he was opposed to gay marriage since he voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2004, and it became the only real issue I disagreed with him on. I turned out to be wrong, as Paul claims that he only voted against it because the act would take more power away from individual states and give it to the federal government. When asked if he was against



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
 Ron Paul a congressman from Texas is running for the Republican presidential nomination

Terrorists need not apply

By Chris Brown
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Graham Spanier, President of Penn State University, is heading up a new initiative with the FBI to help protect universities in America from terrorists. He met with the FBI's director Robert Mueller to explain the need for vigilance at American universities, because we never know when the next terrorist could strike or what their next tactic could be. Apparently, getting into and completing an advanced degree at Penn State is near the top of the list for would-be terrorists.

Does the FBI and the President of our university have nothing better to do than look for terrorists in the classroom? The FBI should be spending its time investigating the illegal acts of private military contractors in Iraq. They should be working on ways to protect America from terrorists without resorting to tactics like illegal wiretapping. If Osama bin Laden has the ability to put a student through school, while the cost of higher education becomes increasingly out of reach for the average American, then the education system in America is in more serious disrepair than previously thought. If bin Laden was smart, he'd send his 'terrorists-in-training' to Canada where the education is cheaper, the students are smarter, and the healthcare is free.

I already fear going on airplanes and traveling to big cities. I worry about opening an envelope, afraid that it may contain Anthrax. Do I have to add fear of going to school to that list also? Is there a terrorist in my history class, secretly in cahoots with Osama bin Laden, ready to use the knowledge of the fall of the Roman Empire to bring terror on the United States? I highly doubt it. And to tell you the truth, I'm not scared of terrorists at all because I'm more likely to live to an old age and die of heart disease than be blown up in an act of terror.

I don't quite understand everyone's irrational fear of terrorists lurking around every corner. Everytime someone points out this irrational fear, someone invokes 9/11. Every bumper in America tells me *I must not forget*. Well let me tell you something, I won't forget, but it won't be any thanks to a bumper sticker. The answer to all these questions is not 9/11. Americans believe that everything changed on 9/11, that somehow everything on 9/12 was completely different from 9/10. This is a misconception; there were terrorists and others trying to kill Americans before that day, just as there will always be forever. Nothing changed, we just became more aware of the world that has always existed (I guess ignorance is bliss). The FBI's teaming up with universities is just the most recent attempt by the government to exploit Americans' fear of terrorism to intrude into areas where it shouldn't. It



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started with measures like the PATRIOT Act, continued with torture, and goes on today with illegal wiretapping. Now universities are going to be scrutinizing their students, searching for terrorists.

Yes, the terrorist attacks of that day were a tragedy, but so are a lot of things. The fact that the United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the developed world is a tragedy. Poverty in America is a tragedy, and lives lost to cancer are tragedies; a number of things fall under the list of tragedies. I'd like to see a politician campaign on reducing heart disease or infant mortality. Why must our national psyche be so narrowly focused on terrorism when there are so many pressing and relevant needs to Americans? Why are politicians allowed to invoke and exploit the deaths of the victims on 9/11 at the expense of other needs?

In general, I don't have a problem with irrational fears; I have a few of my own. However, mine just mean I run to my girlfriend every time I see a spider, but the effects of this irrational fear of terrorists have gone too far. Fiery, empty rhetoric has replaced any substance of thought in our government. We, the American public, became so blinded by fear that we signed off on a war in Iraq that had nothing to do with terrorism.

Some may think I'm exaggerating the threat of government intrusion, but I disagree. Even if a small portion (or none of it, according to the press release from the university) of Spanier's luncheon was dedicated to the cooperation between universities and the FBI to root out terrorists, the average American will only remember three words, terrorist, spy, and attack. How else could one explain that a majority of Americans who believed that Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks and harboring Al Qaeda even though there was absolutely no proof to substantiate the claim?


Americans need a kick in the butt. If someone is crazy and determined enough to kill another human being, they will succeed no matter how many laws, how many surveillance cameras are in place, or any amount of regulations.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The ferment that's developing at the grassroots level is causing members to pay heed to this, and I would hope that it would send a message to the administration."


Dennis Kucinich, Democratic Presidential candidate, on his bill in Congress to impeach Vice President Dick Cheney

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Snow Day
- New Bruno's food
- Football
- Privacy

Beacon Thumbs Down



- The Movie "Snow Day"
- Slippery roads
- Predatory lending
- MRSA

Submission Guidelines

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty, or administration position and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication.

Please keep complaints as specific as possible.

Send submissions to cmb5313@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.