



## Episode 468: Rand Paul: Yes or No? Walter Block and Scott Horton Debate

**Guest: Walter Block and Scott Horton**

**WOODS:** All right, we've got Scott Horton; we've got Walter Block. These are two quite congenial fellows, and they both respect each other's work, and there's no animosity here at all. This is a friendly discussion of a strategic issue among fellow libertarians. Nevertheless, I think it'll be exciting and interesting for all of us.

Let me explain how it'll work. We could do it an old fashioned way, where each of you get an opening statement and then you question each other or whatever. I may throw a little bit of that kind of stuff in. Walter had said that he wants to make sure that both sides get equal time, and I agree with that completely, except I don't really have the technical ability to enforce that, so what instead I'll do is, every time I ask a question, each of you who is asked the question will have two minutes to respond, and if you choose to use only a minute and a half, that's your choice. But you'll have the two minutes for each one of you. Okay, everybody got it?

**HORTON:** Sure.

**BLOCK:** Yes, sounds good, Tom.

**WOODS:** All right, good. Here we go. I am an impartial moderator. I just want to shed some light and bring out some good discussion. So I think it might actually be a useful idea to indeed start off with some kind of non-canned, unprepared opening statement, where I ask each of you to talk for a minute or two – and if it's more than two, I will jump in – on your position. Basically, let's say the debate is "Resolved: libertarians should support Rand Paul." Or you know, it's a good thing for libertarians to support Rand Paul. Walter is taking the affirmative; Scott is taking the negative. Walter, you being the affirmative, let's start with you. Make your case for your position.

**BLOCK:** Libertarians should support Rand Paul, because Rand Paul is the most libertarian of all the candidates, and that would be ideal, because what libertarians are supposed to do is promote libertarianism, and what you do is you pick the most libertarian candidate and you support him. Now, you can support him with reservations. You can support him holding your nose. You can support him any way you want.

But the idea to say that supporting Bernie Sanders instead of Rand Paul or Hilary Clinton instead of Rand Paul or Chris Christie or Jeb Bush or Donald Trump – you know, these people are less libertarian than Rand Paul; Rand Paul is more libertarian than them, so I think if libertarians – it's sort of like, who do you root for? You root for the home team. And the home team is the libertarian or the closest to libertarian. Look, when you root for the New York Yankees or the Boston Bruins or somebody else, they're not perfect either. The New York Yankees lose games, the Boston Bruins lose games, and yet people in New York and Boston root for their team.

So you know, the perfect is the enemy of the good. You don't have to be a perfect libertarian – Ron Paul wasn't a perfect libertarian. He deviated from libertarianism, I don't know, one millionth of one percent, say, because no one's perfect. And yet, it was a no-brainer to support Ron Paul, because he was the most libertarian candidate running. Well, so is Rand Paul the most libertarian candidate running.

There was this joke: an economist was asked, "How is your wife?" And his answer was, "Compared to what?" Well, compared to what? I mean, if you're going to compare Rand Paul to Ron Paul or you're going to compare Rand Paul to Murray Rothbard, well, Rand Paul is not a really good libertarian compared to those guys who are exquisite. But if you compare him to any of the other 17 or 16 Republicans or four or five Democrats who are running, it's sort of hands down. The analogy I sometimes use is if we were slaves and the master said you can vote for Overseer Goodie or Overseer Baddie, and Overseer Goodie will beat the crap out of us once a month, and Overseer Baddie will beat the crap out of us –

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding.

**BLOCK:** – well then, you support Overseer Goodie.

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding, here. All right, good. That's Walter's statement. I appreciate that. Scott, of course you'll be tempted to make your statement into a plain old rebuttal of Walter, but whatever you want to do, go right ahead. You have two minutes.

**HORTON:** All right. Well, the first thing is, I should say that I worship Ron Paul, and I know that he's not a perfect libertarian. I disagree with him the most on immigration, off the top of my head, maybe on a couple other things. But Ron was so good on all the most important things. All the most important *other* things. Immigration is important, actually. But it was just so overshadowed by his heroism on all of this.

Rand is to me, no different than Kasich. If Rand wasn't running, if he was just sitting in the Senate or doing eye surgery, would Walter say that, well, we have to support – I don't know, I wouldn't put words in his mouth – but any of these other candidates? Fiorina used to be a businesswoman, so maybe she's a little bit less statist than some of these other guys, so we have to support them? I don't see why we have to support anyone at all. And I would love to support Rand Paul, and the reason – and I really regret this; I'm kind of becoming known as the libertarian who bashes him all the time

– but the reason why is because I'm so frustrated, because I can see what an awesome opportunity that he's throwing away here.

And his deviations from the libertarian, not party, but libertarianism's party line are so severe, and on matters of such importance, on the most important things.

Guantanamo Bay. Staying in Afghanistan. Coming out, not just against the Iran deal, but trying to ruin it before they even got it done by signing onto the letter with Tom Cotton. Supporting airstrikes in – well, I don't want to go down the list. We can get back to the list if you want. He's bad on really severe things, and I think that if libertarians associate with him out of our hopes that there's a secret Ron Paul buried in there somewhere, and that if only we go along with his plan to compromise enough to get in there, that then the secret Ron will reveal himself –

**WOODS:** Ding, ding, ding.

**HORTON:** Well, yeah.

**WOODS:** Okay, all right, good. That's very good. So we know where each of you stands. Now I've got some questions that I'd like to direct to each of you, but before I do that, I'd like to let each one of you direct a question at the other one. So let's start with Walter. Walter, you can ask Scott one thing; you can challenge him on point, anything you want to ask him, and I'll give him two minutes to reply, and then vice versa.

**BLOCK:** One of the benefits I think of Rand Paul, apart from Rand Paul, is that whenever Rand Paul runs, wherever he's mentioned, he's got the same last name as his father. And Scott and I agree to revere Ron Paul. I think he's exquisite, and I'm sure Scott would join me in that description, but don't you think that there's another benefit or Rand Paul running, namely, he keeps the Ron Paul name alive?

**HORTON:** Yeah, I mean, I think that is certainly one good silver lining of what's happening here. And I meant to say, too, that he's good on some things. He's the best guy in the Senate on the Patriot Act. That doesn't counteract all the bad, which, if you want to get back into the list of just how horrible he is on some of these most important things, I think that, I wouldn't disagree with what you say, but I just think it pales in importance to the harm that he's doing to his father's name, the harm that he's doing to all of us.

In fact, my question for Walter would be, correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that you're in agreement with me, and you've written about how we are not a kind of right-winger or conservative at all. Libertarianism is an entirely separate thing from the Left and the Right, and we associate with Ron, because Ron's really one of us, and he ran as a Republican because he could, because he delivered two-thirds of the population of his district or whatever and had that safe spot in the House where he could go and do his heroic thing, giving speeches and voting no. So we had no problem associating with Ron Paul, because he was really one of us, kind of posing as a Republican and had that safe district where he could do that.

But Rand is really not one of us. Rand, you know, we keep waiting for the secret Ron in there, but he's really not there. He really is a Reagan Republican, like he says, and for us to keep calling that libertarianism is – we're kind of smearing ourselves by associating with him in a way that was just not the effect of associating with Ron at all, I don't think.

**WOODS:** So what is your question to Walter exactly?

**HORTON:** Well, so, are you hesitant at all to associate with libertarianism – and especially your plumb-line, anarchist libertarianism – with this kind of conservatism?

**BLOCK:** No, I'm not at all hesitant to associate that. By the way, I do agree with you the way you characterize my view, namely, the way I put it, politics is like a three-legged stool, and one leg is Republicans or conservatives, another is Democrats or liberals or progressives, and a third leg is libertarianism, and we are equidistant from the other two. It's sort of like a, what do you call it? An isosceles triangle? I forget the one with 60-degree angles. We're just as far away from those guys, either of them. So I agree with you. But I have no compunction about associating with anyone who I think is more libertarian than anyone else.

Let me give you an example. In '08, I supported my man, Barack Obama, against John McCain. Why? Because I take lessons from Tom Woods and Bob Higgs and other people and Murray Rothbard, who say that foreign policy is very important, because it pretty much determines domestic policy. And I thought John McCain was going to nuke somebody. I really thought he was going to nuke someone. And Barack Obama is, you know – I didn't think he'd nuke anyone. I thought on foreign policy, Barack Obama would be better than John McCain, so I supported Barack Obama as the more libertarian of the two.

Does that mean I associate Barack Obama with libertarianism? Come on, give me a break. No one is going to make that mistake. I'm not saying that Barack is a libertarian. But I supported him against the other guy. Murray Rothbard supported LBJ against Goldwater for similar reasons, foreign policy. Does that mean that Murray Rothbard thought LBJ was a libertarian? No, that's crazy. So I'm not associating Rand Paul with libertarianism; I'm just trying to say, who is the person who's closest to libertarianism.

Now, I don't know about Kasich, but I've done a little research on this for this discussion, but I fear that I haven't really done much on Kasich. But I imagine that if we go down the list, Rand will be more libertarian than Kasich or anybody else, any of the 16 or other Republicans or the four or five Democrats who are running. And anyway, Rand Paul never said he was a libertarian. He said he's libertarian-ish; he's a conservative libertarian; he's a libertarian Republican. He never came out and said he was a libertarian. And even if he did, I think that he's still closer to libertarianism than anyone else, and therefore, if we want to root for the home team, he's the home team. He's imperfect, but –

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding. I let Walter go a little bit beyond, because I took my eye off the stopwatch, so Scott gets an extra long answer for his next answer. All right, what I'm going to do now is I want to ask a question that's just —

**HORTON:** Well, can I respond to that?

**WOODS:** I'll be a generous moderator; I'll give you 30 seconds. How's that?

**HORTON:** Okay, sure. I totally hear what you're saying about libertarians, especially in the case of John McCain holding the H-bomb to humanity's head, and you want to vote the lesser evil compared to total evil. I can certainly — but whether it's supporting Obama in '08 versus McCain or Goldwater/LBJ type thing, I think that's an entirely different thing than supporting Rand Paul, because of the same thing that you said was to his credit earlier, his last name, that it give Ron more publicity for his writings and teachings and that kind of thing. But what's happened with Rand is, he's taking our brand and dragging it through the mud. You're right, no one would think, if you supported Dole versus Clinton or vice versa, that you were saying one of them is a libertarian or not; you're just saying you think the other one is worse for the following reasons and should be opposed more, kind of thing.

But supporting Rand is to me an entirely different category of thing. Are the libertarians onboard for this guy or not? And I certainly am not, because he's really, really bad on serious human rights issues. We're not talking about —

**WOODS:** All right, all right, let me jump in now.

**HORTON:** — just the budget tinkering and Medicare spending and crap.

**WOODS:** Okay, I'm going to ask Walter a question, and then, Scott, I'm going to ask you a question. My question for Walter is something we talked about when I was down in Auburn a couple of weeks ago. We had just found out that Rand had spoken at a rally against the nuclear deal with Iran, and he had quoted, and Scott can fill in the blank of who in Iran it was, but he had selectively quoted a statement saying something along the lines of, the Americans say they have stopped us from building a nuclear weapon, but that is not true. And Rand took this as, ah, you see? They're defying us. They're sticking their — they're thumbing their noses at us. They're going to build a bomb anyway.

But the rest of the quotation was, we were never building a bomb in the first place, because our religion forbids it. And that's why the Americans haven't stopped us, because we weren't starting it in the first place. So in other words, the quotation meant the opposite of the spin that Rand put on it. Now, this, basically it leads me to two related questions, but the first question is, how is that something that can be just overlooked? And secondly, if that can be overlooked, what exactly would it take for Walter Block to say, this is just a bridge too far?

**BLOCK:** Well, look, I've been done by *The New York Times* roughly the way Rand Paul did the Iranians. Namely, he quoted them to say pretty much the opposite of what they were saying. In my case, *The New York Times* was saying I favored slavery, and in Rand Paul's case, who is now *The New York Times*' equivalent, he's saying that the Iranians were thumbing their noses at us, and actually they were doing the very opposite. So I'm not really a big fan of Rand Paul on this, and if you ask me to justify Rand Paul on this, I can't. But he's still Overseer Goodie. This is the once a month that he beat the crap out of us. Overseer Goodie isn't a really goodie, goodie guy. He's an overseer. He's a slave overseer. He's a bad guy, and Rand Paul is very bad on this. Now, I did write about that, and I started using, well, did Rand do it purposely, or was he fed this by a stupid aide, and if so, did he fire the aide, or did he try to find out?

But now let me get to the second point. What would he have to do for me to say, okay, that's it for Rand. I'll tell you what he'd have to do that I would say that that's it for Rand; I'm no longer supporting Rand: namely, there'd have to be one of the other people who was better than him. Namely, one of the 16 other Republicans or one of the five Democrats would have to be better than him. Then I would say that Rand is no good. So I think it's unfair, Tom – well, not unfair, but, how shall I say it? I don't know what the right word is – improper, to pick this one thing. And yes, I agree with you, this one thing was pretty despicable. Very despicable. But you have to take the macro view, not the micro view. You have to compare him on every issue compare to everybody else on every issue, and then you have to show me who is better than him. Now, Kasich is the only one that I've ever heard –

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding. So that's two minutes. I'm going to give Scott a minute to answer if he wants it. Then I'll ask Scott a question, and then, Walter, you'll have a minute to answer him. Scott, do you want a minute?

**HORTON:** Yeah, sure. First of all, the Kasich thing, I was just throwing that out there as he's the cookie-cutter, horrible, corrupt Republican. But I think he's answered – I brought that up in my hypothetical, and he's answered that. I guess if there was no Rand Paul in the debate, he'd be looking for the one that is the least worst, and he would say that libertarians should support the one that is the least worst. And that's perfectly admirable; I just disagree with that whole kind of premise. So we're sort of arguing apples and oranges here.

You know, I'm kind of looking at this from the point of view of, you know, there were people who refused to support Ron, because even though he's 99%, they're just too absolutist about participating in politics at all, that kind of thing. So the question is, is Rand good enough to bother participating in this kind of deal at all, to bother supporting anyone at all? And he's just not. He would have to cross some high threshold, not cross the lowest threshold imaginable, right? Like, what if he came out against the Second Amendment now or whatever? Libertarians should still support him? Or if he came out for actually aggressive war against Iran? Because, as he complains, Obama's leaving them with a nuclear program at all, maybe we should drop nukes on them.

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding. All right, hang on, anything you don't get to say, we'll say in the very last statement. All right, I'm going to ask you a question, Scott. When we look back at the 1950s, I find people like Leonard Liggio, who was in the Circle Bastiat, the circle of intellectuals around Murray Rothbard and Ralph Raico and all those people. And in 1952, when Robert Taft was running for the Republican nomination, he was not a perfect non-interventionist by any means. He was pretty good on some things, but in Asia he was perfectly willing to intervene. And you know, he would say, I'm against the president sending troops to Korea without consulting Congress, but then by and large he'd go and support the effort. So he was, certainly by Ron Paul standards, a weakling.

But yet, Leonard Liggio shouted at – I don't know if it was at the convention or what – "God bless you, Robert Taft." And they all loved Taft, even though they realized he was the weakest of the Old Right people, and they all wanted to see him get the nomination. So is it that you're better than those people? In other words, they were able to say, he obviously is not a perfect non-interventionist, but he's the most anti-war candidate we have; he's not so good on government spending all the time, but he's probably the best one that we have, and we have to start somewhere. Why was that okay for them then, but not okay for us now with Rand Paul?

**HORTON:** Well, I don't know – I'm not arguing that I'm a better person than them or anything, but I disagree with that, and I would have argued with them that, watch, this guy's going to drop dead in a year and a half, and MacArthur is his vice presidential nominee, and he's going to get us all killed. He's the John McCain of our era, so what the hell is that? You know, I had this giant argument with Justin Raimondo about this, unfortunately on Twitter where everybody could see it too, about supporting candidates. And I'm just against candidates. I do support participation in politics, and especially pressure groups, people that sue the government all day, people that try to, I guess, in their own way participate in electoral politics, but try to pressure these politicians who are simply the bum politicians we're stuck with to stop doing the wrong thing so much. That kind of thing, I'm all for that.

But I don't see why that means we have to support people who, especially when we have this marginal movement that we're trying to advance and bring forward, and we're basically tarnishing ourselves, especially from the Left, but others too. Independents and regular people are looking at Rand and saying, well, if that's what libertarianism, I'm not interested in it. And not just TV, but in a sense, maybe accidentally, Walter's telling them the same thing, that, yes, this is what libertarianism is; this is what libertarianism supports, when in fact, no, we don't.

**WOODS:** All right, Walter, do you want to take a minute, or are you prepared to move onto the next item?

**BLOCK:** No, no, no, I want to jump in on this.

**WOODS:** Okay, please do.

**BLOCK:** There are really two things in play, and I think if we clearly separated them, we'd have a much better discussion. One is strategy, and the other's principle. Strategy, Scott is now talking about strategy, and I was talking about principle, but we can do both, as long as we distinguish between them. This idea, well, MacArthur might come in – that's very strategic. Again, the strategy of the Taft supporters was that Taft wouldn't get assassinated or wouldn't die in office and MacArthur wouldn't come in. That could be mistaken, but look, in strategy, all you have to do is use your common sense, and it's a very difficult area to determine which is really best for libertarianism.

On strategy, I believe there's no one right strategy, because the two people who have converted more people to libertarianism than any other two people are Ayn Rand and Ron Paul. I mean, Murray Rothbard and Mises were in some sense better libertarians than them, but they converted mainly intellectuals. But in terms of mass conversions, it was Ayn Rand and Ron Paul. And yet, the two of them were very different. I mean, Ron Paul's a sweetie pie, and anyone calling Ayn Rand a sweetie pie, she'd bite your head off. So I don't think there's any one right way to do strategy, or it's a very ticklish issue.

But in terms of principle, you see, I think that Scott quite properly castigates the people who didn't support Ron Paul, because Ron Paul wasn't perfect. But I think that he's a secret Wendy McElroy, to pick a name of a person who didn't support Ron Paul for these reasons. Look, if you don't want to support Rand, even though you admit Rand is the best, closest to libertarianism, why support Ron? Why not take the Wendy McElroy view of let's get out of politics? Because look, take immigration. Immigration is very important, and Ron Paul – I think Scott and I agree on immigration; we're both open borders people, I assume – and Ron Paul is weak on that. And immigration is very important, and therefore I'm trying to –

**WOODS:** Okay, let me jump in. All right, I see where you're going with this, and I gave you way more time than I was supposed to, but I'm a softie, and I just love listening to you guys talk. Given that there's an implicit challenge and question in there, I'll give Scott 30 seconds to a minute to respond to that, and then I want to start posing questions of my own.

**HORTON:** Well, I guess for me, Ron is just the exception that proves the rule about a great many things. In fact, I mean, he's kind of the reason why to never support any other political candidate in all of history or in the future, because none of them are him. He's such a unique character in all of history. That kind of thing doesn't exist, not in this corrupt country, and to look for more Ron Pauls is, I think, the wrong way to go about it, as far as strategy, as far as actually protecting our liberty in the country, and as far as pushing the movement forward.

And I think standing on principle is the best strategy anyway, right? And this goes down to Rand's campaign, too. If he would just shut his trap and instead basically paraphrase all of his father's articles out loud, he'd be doing a hell of a lot better than he is right now. He would go out there and bravely speak the truth.

**WOODS:** All right, let me jump in, because I do want to ask both of you about that. I'm going to ask a question just to you, Scott. Imagine you're any other Republican on the stage, and what you're seeing is that libertarians are not rallying to Rand Paul to the extent that people expected that they would. And to the typical Republican, they probably haven't looked at Rand closely enough to see any major differences between him and his father. They know a few. But it would seem to them that it would be impossible, therefore, to get the libertarians ever to support you. I mean, if they won't support Rand Paul, then what possible is there that they'd ever support me? So I'm not even going to try to court them at all. And doesn't hurt us in the long run, if they don't even feel like there's any point in trying, because we're just belligerent and unreasonable?

**HORTON:** Not if it's at the sacrifice of changing what libertarianism means when it's introduced to people, from what Ron Paul says it is to what Rand Paul says it is. Or, not what he says it is, but that's the message that people get. Because again, this isn't the same as saying – and I would have disagreed with Rothbard on this – but this isn't the same as saying that Bush Sr. is less evil than Bill Clinton, because no one would mistake Rothbard to be a true-blue Bush supporter. That's not what he's saying. He's saying that he's identifying one as the worse evil, and I think libertarian – and that's how Walter characterizes his support for Rand, basically, but I just don't think that's how libertarian support for Rand is perceived.

Libertarian support for Rand is perceived as an endorsement of his program. So, you guys are for all of these things, right? And it's a long list; I won't bore you with it unless you want me to, but he's really bad on – you know, Ron said, let's abolish the empire, so that we can shore up social security. Now, that's not the most libertarian thing in the world to say. He did have an out for young people. But he was being realistic, and he's living in a pseudo-democracy kind of thing; he's got to compromise on something, so let's abolish the entire world empire. Rand is saying, let's declare war on the Islamic State.

**WOODS:** All right, let me jump in here. I want to ask about –

**BLOCK:** Tom, could I respond to what Scott just said?

**WOODS:** Yeah, please do. Please do, go ahead.

**BLOCK:** When he talks about "perceived," again, we're sort of wiggling and wagging back and forth from strategy to principle. Sometimes Scott talks principle; sometimes he talks strategy, and we've got separate them. I agree with Scott that there is that danger of perception, but my view on perception is to hell with perception. I don't care about perception; I care about truth. And I'm sort of arguing more from principle than from strategy, and Scott keeps going back and forth from one to the other, so he's being elusive. When I attack him on one, he goes to the other, and when I attack him on the other, he goes to the one.

And I think that he's right, that it might be misperceived, that people — *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* — might perceive us libertarians as really supporting Rand Paul's views, and this would be a danger. And that's a strategic problem with Rand. I admit that. But the principle of the matter is we, libertarians, are obligated as a matter of principle to pick the candidate who is the most libertarian. And Rand is the most. And Kasich or any of these other guys can't hold a candle to him. The only one who could hold a candle to him is Gary Johnson, who I think might win the Libertarian Party, but that's a different issue, because right now the Libertarian Party isn't in play.

And I return to my reductio. I think that Scott is vulnerable to the reductio that I think I can push him a little bit in saying that, since Ron was not perfect, we will be perceived as supporting closed borders, so I think that's a problem with Scott's position.

**WOODS:** All right, let me jump in though, because I asked Scott a question just for him; I'll ask a follow-up just for you, Walter. Suppose there's no Rand Paul in the debate. Would you feel obligated to try to sift out from the remaining 16 which one is the most libertarian and then go and support him? Because you say we're obligated to choose the one who is the most libertarian. Are we really.

**BLOCK:** Yeah, well, obligated — there are not positive obligations. I agree with you there. I think I misspoke when I said "obligated." But if we want to enter the political fray, and Murray, for example, was a political hound. I mean, he would —

**WOODS:** I know.

**BLOCK:** — he would get into the New York State Assembly and who's best for mayor and this, that, and the other. If you're going to be a political hound and you're going to enter the political sphere — and I don't say you're obligated to do it; there are other ways to promote liberty besides politics, but many, many other ways — but if you go into there, then I think you're obligated to pick the most libertarian. And yes, if Rand suddenly said I'm leaving, because I want to concentrate on the Senate or whatever, and we're not talking about Gary Johnson and the LP right now, then yes, what we should do is do a little research, just the way it was done for Taft and the way it was done for Obama and McCain and the way it was done for Goldwater and Johnson. Yeah, do a little research, figure out who's the most libertarian of the horrible people — I mean, when you get rid of Rand, then you really see that they're really horrible — and support that guy.

**WOODS:** Scott, do you want to take 30 seconds — just 30 seconds — to respond to that?

**HORTON:** Yeah. Well, I'm sorry my arguments are not all that logical or organized or whatever, but I thought it was kind of implicit in what I'm saying about how we're perceived. Are we perceived as people who are willing to abolish the empire to shore up the welfare state, because that's the kind of compromise you have to make in the

real world? Or are we perceived as the kind of people who agree with Rand Paul that we ought to go ahead and continue waging war in the Middle East from now on, even though he groans about it a little bit here and there, which is basically his policy? And we ought to promise the Kurds a state of their own and to, I guess, implicitly go to war with Turkey and Iran to enforce that too – and Iraq, for that matter.

The principle is he's violating our principle all over the place. He's for Guantanamo Bay prison without trial, for life, where people are deliberately trying to starve themselves to death down there on a daily basis. He's for war with Iraq, despite talking a semi-good game for a few years. He completely backstabbed us on the de facto peace treaty with Iran. And these are absolutely horrible violations of what a libertarian would prefer.

And as far as the strategy thing, I think that's important for our movement, and it's important in principle too. Who wants – I mean, libertarian, like Batman says, you are what you do. So if we start saying, well, you know – again, it's because his name is Paul. If Paul wasn't in this and Walter was just saying that I think Fiorino or whoever is the most libertarian one up there and libertarians should support, you're obligated to support the least worst, then that's a fine argument. That's a separate argument.

But in this case, even if he said that, that's not what's really going on here. Libertarians, if we're on board for Rand, then that means we're overlooking all of his most horrible deviations from his father's policy. I agree with Block on the absurdum or whatever, but I'm just saying this is the real world; there are shades of gray and compromises must be made, so Ron said let's compromise with the welfare state and abolish the warfare state. And Rand is Mr. Flippa Floppa all over the place, and nobody knows what he believes about any of this, but he sure as hell is not against continuing war in the Middle East. So if that's what libertarians are about, then that's what we're selling libertarianism as to the future. Who wants to buy that on the open market?

**WOODS:** All right, let me jump in here. I've got one last thing to ask you guys, and I'm really going to hold you to just one-minute answers. Obviously Rand's campaign has not caught fire. People expected it to; they thought his father's supporters would rally to him, but they obviously haven't. And you get the true believers who say everything's on track; we're doing just fine. But come on, anybody's who's not deceiving himself can see that there are real problems.

Now to me, the real problem is – I'll just say, even though I'm the moderator here, and I bet Walter would agree with me – the problem is there's nothing to get enthusiastic about, because he doesn't take a really strong, distinguishing stand on things, because he's gotten so used to being part of the Republican Party that he can't even say with Donald Trump, look, I told you the War in Iraq would be destabilizing for the whole region. He came right out and said that at the debate. Didn't hurt Trump's poll numbers any.

So what I feel like is happening is Ron would talk about the Fed – and not just say audit the Fed. Yeah, yeah, yeah, audit the Fed. Right. But look, the Fed is creating these booms and busts. And I'm not getting that from Rand. And I know that's a lot to ask for a politician to talk about the Fed. But not when your father's name is Ron Paul, and when you know that that's what excited a lot of people. And the warfare state, that's what excited a lot of people. And when you're extremely mealy mouthed about these things, no one's going to drop his job and go work for you for nine months. So when I see these Rand rallies on YouTube, I can hear every set of hands in the room. That's how few people there are. You know, they've got 3 or 400 people. Great, we would consider that a flop for Ron.

So my question to you guys is – give me one minute – why is this campaign floundering, and what would you tell him to do? Walter, you go first.

**BLOCK:** Well, I get back to the perceived – you know, Scott is always talking about the perceived, but perceived by whom? *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, CBS, NBC? The hell with perceived. What we have to do is worry about what's right. Now, look, I think, Tom, I know you're moderator, and you're probably acting as a moderator here, but I think you've been a little unfair to Rand.

Rand has done things that are very, very attention gathering, if the people from whom we can gather attention were fair, like the mainstream media. But they're not fair. Look, he had this anti-drone filibuster. He had this thing about taking a chainsaw to the tax code. He opposed raising the minimum wage at all, and I don't think anyone else would oppose raising the minimum wage at all. He's been magnificent on the Fourth Amendment, the Patriot Act. He's done a lot of things that are good.

But look at how the mainstream media treated Ron Paul. One time Ron Paul got like 90 seconds out of the debate, and all the major media were trashing Ron, and they see Rand as sort of a Ron. Even though we see gigantic differences between them, I don't know, the neocons don't see that great a difference, and they're –

**WOODS:** All right, ding, ding, ding. I'm going to enforce the one-minute thing. Scott, jump in on this question. One minute.

**HORTON:** Well, he's certainly right there at the end. All the neocons, all the pandering isn't doing him any good with the war party; they're running ads about how he's going to get your wife and kids nuked right now on TV. It's actually really funny. John Bolton's thing, you should go and look at it. But the thing of it is, all his pandering is driving all of his base away, and it's not pleasing anyone. He's trying to sell out, but nobody's buying.

And instead, what he should be doing – and he is being true to himself, I think. And I think he believes the mythology that everybody told – well, not everybody – everybody with power told Ron, if only you weren't so good on foreign policy, people would like you better, so stop saying all the foreign policy stuff. So that's the stupid wrong lesson that he learned, when in fact, those people could never be convinced to

vote for Ron, no matter what. But the people who loved Ron and all rallied to Ron all loved him and rallied to him because he was so good on foreign policy, and he told them you don't have to be a big, fat, commie, millionaire, pinko hypocrite like Michael Moore to be against war. And they said, great. All right, sorry, I'm out of time?

**WOODS:** All right, okay, yeah.

**HORTON:** He would do better if he would just act more like his dad, people would rally to him, and he keeps learning the wrong lesson. That's what I'm trying to say.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I guess, I mean, Bernie Sanders does not get super terrific media coverage. I mean, they like him more than they like Ron, obviously, but I just saw a poll showing him ahead of Hilary Clinton in New Hampshire. And he's getting 28,000 people coming to his rallies, because he's not having stunts like — and again, I'm sorry, I'm supposed to be the moderator here, but look, it's my show. I'll say what I want to say. I mean, the whole taking a, whatever it was, a chainsaw or whatever to the tax code — nobody cares about the tax code. They care about how much they're paying in taxes. And if he's going to do that and then come up with his own tax plan, I mean, it's just not — it looks like a phony baloney Washington stunt. It doesn't look real. It doesn't look authentic. Whereas Ron was the personification of real and authentic.

All right, we've been talking for quite a while; I think people have a sense of where you both stand, but I think for the sake of completeness, you each ought to have — now this is going to be vigorously enforced — a two-minute statement summing up anything you'd like to conclude with, starting with Walter.

**BLOCK:** Scott's position is vulnerable to the *reductio ad absurdum*. Everything that he says can be applied to Ron. Well, maybe not everything, and certainly not to the same degree, but the same principle. Namely, he's saying that Rand deviates from libertarianism, and therefore we shouldn't support him. And I can say Ron deviates from libertarianism; therefore, we shouldn't support him.

Now look, nobody should misunderstand me. I revere Ron Paul. I wrote a whole book about him, which was my love letter to Ron Paul. I think he's magnificent. He doesn't walk on water; he runs on water; he flies on water. I don't know what he does; he's magnificent.

But the argument that Scott is using is he deviates. Now look, immigration is important, and Scott and I are both open borders people, and a lot of people are harmed by borders. And therefore, we shouldn't support Ron either, because we'll be perceived by the bad guys, by the major media as supporting closed borders.

So I think Scott has done very well to support his position, but I think his position is the problem. The position is that if you're not perfect, we shouldn't support you. I revert to my Overseer Goodie and Overseer Baddie, and look, I'm sure that Scott can make a long, long list, on which I agree, where Rand deviates from libertarianism. But the point is that if you're going to get into this, I think we shouldn't worry about the

perceptions of the major media; we should just go after the truth. And the truth is that Rand is head and shoulders over anyone else running for office right now, and that if we want to promote liberty, what we have to do is promote the most libertarian. Now, the point was mentioned —

**WOODS:** 15 seconds. Just 15 seconds.

**BLOCK:** Oh. The point was mentioned about secrecy. Well, look, it's possible that if Rand got in he would show that he's really a Ron. But I would say that even if he doesn't show that, it's still going to be much better to have him in there than to have Bernie Sanders in there or Hilary or Donald Trump or Jeb Bush.

**WOODS:** Okay, ding, ding, ding. Thank you, Walter. Scott, go ahead. Two minutes.

**HORTON:** Well, I don't think that we're obligated to support the least worst candidate, whether it's a libertarian-ish person, a son of a Ron or anyone else, as far as that goes. But I'm not a complete, kind of, I guess, Wendy McElroy? Is that the example? Just kind of drop out of all politics whatsoever. I do again believe in political pressure of all kinds, just not in believing in candidates or supporting or voting for candidates. But you know, whatever, I don't insist that everyone else has to adopt my same standard.

As far as the differences between pure libertarianism and Ron Paul, and pure libertarianism and Rand Paul, are just completely vast and obvious, and it's an entirely different thing. Again, Ron was willing to compromise on, you have taxation to pay for welfare programs, but not aggressive war and these things that are the absolute worst opposite of libertarianism.

And again, personally for me, from the moment I ever talked to him in 2009 and he said he was for Guantanamo Bay and for Afghanistan and against prosecuting torturers, I could tell already the road this guy's going down. He has no principle.

And that's against my principle right there off the bat. As you mentioned previously, Tom, he shamelessly lied about what the ayatollah said in order to justify his bogus and ridiculous stance against the Iran deal, because he has no legitimate excuse. He has to make up a fake one. And the rest of that.

So I'm against, in principle, I do not think anyone is obligated to vote for someone who is acting directly contrary to what's in the best interests of our liberty and our society. And you could say he's a little bit better than these or those, but to me, that's not a good enough argument. I don't know if that makes me irrational, but I think it means — it's not pure logic, right? Ron is bad on the border, I've got to admit. But, you know what? Sorry. I just don't care about that compared to the greatness of all of the other truth that he told and change that he made and principles of ours that he did uphold, and I think this is an absolute different story from what Rand is doing.

**WOODS:** Let me jump in. Now, because we — no one will notice, because will have stitched it up through the miracles of audio editing, but we had to pause for a moment when somebody came home in one of our houses — we won't give it away — so that

screwed up my timing. I should have stopped the stopwatch then, so now I didn't know where the stopwatch – I should be fired from this job. I am the worst moderator in the world. I'm terrible, ally unfair.

**HORTON:** And I go on way too long. I'm sorry to everyone.

**WOODS:** No, that's okay, that's okay. Everybody loves to hear you guys. Well, listen, we're going to leave it right there. On the show notes page for today, which will be [TomWoods.com/468](http://TomWoods.com/468), you can find out about both of these gentlemen. I will link to [WalterBlock.com](http://WalterBlock.com), [ScottHorton.org](http://ScottHorton.org), and if there are any articles that you guys have written on the subject of Rand Paul that you would like to go up on that page to accompany this conversation, just email them to me, and I'll make sure they get up there. Gentlemen, thanks so much for your time and for being really generous discussants in this important conversation.

**BLOCK:** Tom, I think I speak for Scott when I say that you're a horrible moderator, but you're better than anyone else.

**WOODS:** (laughing) That's right. Well, I guess that's the principle of the whole debate, isn't it? Thanks, Walter.

**HORTON:** Thanks very much for having me, and thanks again, Walter, for debating with me. It's great to talk to you again after all this time.

**BLOCK:** It was a pleasure. Thanks.