



Episode 617: Ron Paul's Guide to the Election

Guest: Ron Paul

WOODS: All right, I've got to ask you something. I've got a bunch of listener questions, but as the host I'm entitled to ask you something. And I just want to know, has there been a time since you retired from Congress that you said to yourself, I do miss such and such about being a congressman, or that you said to yourself, darn it, I wish I could be on the House Floor denouncing this thing?

PAUL: No, I don't do any of that, so I have no longing desire to be back there. The best test of that is I've gone back to D.C. twice in the last three and a half years since I've been out, and I did not visit the Hill (laughing).

WOODS: Oh (laughing).

PAUL: I had a visit, you know, and a meeting elsewhere. No, I still long for the discussion. That is, of course, why I stay active and have my website and have my Internet program. I do always want to do that, but to do that on the House Floor and even looking at these debates and things going on, it's rather disgusting, you know?

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: And I've often said, you know, one thing I told my staff when I was in Washington is some of them were, you know, interested in legislation. Now, I introduced a lot of legislation, but I was interested in legislating. I remind my staff I am not a legislator; I have not come here to pass laws, you know? Because I was realistic that what we're talking about is the reform and to educated and change society and understanding, but not to tinker around. And the other thing is if you get one piece of legislation passed and you work the system, they say, okay, we're going to let your bill come up and we're going to pass it, then they claim you owe them something. So that was never any fun. I long still for the debate, but I do not long for the debate in Washington anymore. I had my chance. A couple people listened, and I did some campaigning, and a few more listened, so I am content to continue to do the best I can with the facilities I have now.

WOODS: I'm going to be linking to all the stuff that you're working on, the *Ron Paul Liberty Report*, all that stuff. So let's see, this is actually Episode 617, so TomWoods.com/617. I'm going to link to everything, because it's all great stuff that

you're working on – the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity, just so much great stuff going on. All right, now I specifically told my listeners I am not asking him things that I know what his answer is. We're going to ask you thing you've never been asked before in your career, okay?

PAUL: (laughing) Oh no.

WOODS: So how about this one? Obviously I know you've got your *Liberty Report*, things you're doing now, that you're doing because everybody knows who Ron Paul is. But suppose they didn't. Suppose you'd been an OB/GYN and you were retired today. If you weren't famous, what would you be doing to spread the message of liberty?

PAUL: Well, it would be a token effort, because there was a time when I was fascinated with the issue, but I had no bully pulpit. You know, the political activity and being in Congress gave me a bit of a bully pulpit, so without it what I did was in the '60s I participated, mostly in trying to learn more. I was a very dedicated follower of Leonard Reed and FEE foundation and did a lot of visiting at FEE, because I thought the first part – and I agreed with Leonard on this so much – was that you have to improve oneself and learn and study.

And then I always thought, well, someday I want to voice this opinion. That is the reason I drifted into the political sphere, because it wasn't so much run for Congress and be in Congress; I ran in 1974 in the midst of a political crisis, you know, with the Republicans, but it was also to follow up from the breakdown of Bretton Woods, and I knew that just speaking out without an intent to be in politics. But I would have gone any place any time to visit in the early years, and quite frankly, if you're an OB doctor and nobody's ever heard of you, you're not going to be invited to speak anyplace. I mean, some are successful at that and they can develop a reputation, but at that time it didn't seem to be available to me, so I did drift into using the political system to get attention.

But I believe that I was using that system quite differently than others have, because they get enamored by the fact that, oh, could I be a congressman and then, oh, could I be famous and could I get this law passed or could I be a chairman of a committee. And then even though there were so many that I knew over the years that were well intended and well motivated, but they drifted away shortly after they got to Washington.

WOODS: I want to ask you also – I think this is another listener question, but I was going to ask you anyway. Over the course of your career, can you think of a vote that you regret? Not necessarily because you changed your mind later about the vote, like you thought you were wrong, but it could also be you were right about the vote, but yet the thing turned out badly, you know, not the way you expected it to. So is there anything that you look back on and say, well, maybe that was a mistake?

PAUL: Not really. There was one that can raise some questions, but I can still use the same justification. But you know, I did get a lot of help, and you're familiar enough

with legislation that sometimes it's very complex. It's not easy, that it's all right and all wrong and this sort of thing, and sometimes you can get — let's say you're cutting spending. Sometimes you're raising taxes and cutting spending, and you say, well, I've got to figure this out, are we raising more taxes than we're cutting on spending or vice versa, so I would work that out and would help, and I was able to do that. And I was never, you know, upset about not having gone way or the other.

But I think the one vote that people might bring up, even though less so now because a lot of people are recognizing the abuse of the law, and that had to do with the emergency powers to deal with the people who bombed — al-Qaeda and the bombing on 9/11.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: And I did vote for the authority. And it's one of these things, I know what caused it, I know what it was, but you know, if you don't have a little bit of response to that, I think it's stepping over to being a total anarchist, and although I keep moving in that direction, I still wasn't there. And I think it would be similar to, you know, what do you do after the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor? And it's pretty hard to not retaliate, but it would have been easy for me to retaliate against Japan a little bit differently. But anyway, I voted for this authority, but it has been so abused. They're still using it. They're using it to go into every country. They're using it against ISIS. I get my authority from the use of military force from 2001.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: And that is so abusive, because it said — it's very narrow. Go after the people who contributed to 9/11. Well, I doubt very much if many of them are alive right now who were directly involved with 9/11, but the abuse I should have known — but I don't know if it would have changed my vote or not. But it emphasizes how terrible the system is, that even if you try to do something and try to narrow it down — but we're at a point now where our presidents do whatever they want. Now they don't even pretend anymore. We fight preventive wars, and we never ask Congress for anything. They abuse it, so even if you have an authority to use military force, it's irrelevant if you pass it or not. And the ongoing argument now is whether or not they should have a new authority for using military force. Totally irrelevant, because just look at how many places we go, and they don't even discuss it with the Congress, let alone letting the people know what's going on.

WOODS: I had a guy on my show — before I ask you depressing questions about the election, I had a guy on my show some time ago, Hal Elrod, he wrote a book called *The Miracle Morning*. And he said that his whole life was changed when he got up early in the morning and he had a healthy morning routine. He'd exercise; he would eat; he would read a success book for a little while; he would meditate, whatever. And he said that so many successful people have these very regimented morning routines. So somebody asked me, what's Ron Paul's morning routine?

PAUL: Well –

WOODS: I bet you've never been asked that before, have you?

PAUL: No, not really. I think –

WOODS: All right.

PAUL: Sometimes they'll say, well, what are you going to talk about on your program or something like that about the regime, and it's very, very annoying when I can't follow my regime, because I am conditioned for it, and it's very good for me. So I tend to go to bed reasonably early. I usually sleep eight hours, and I wake up at 6 AM in the morning. And my immediate response is very, very important. I have a cup of coffee. I think that is great. And I even use the television. I'll find out what the enemy's staying and flip through the stations, and I wake up. But then I go walking, and I go walking and it's always by myself – not always, but basically by myself. And I'll go and if time permits, if I don't have anything pressing, I will walk four miles, but the minimum I walk is two miles. If I only can walk two miles, then I know I have to walk faster to burn off the same amount of energy. Then I come back, and by that time my mind is clear and I'm ready to start either to write something or to prepare for our Internet programming or to get prepared for a radio interview, like *The Tom Woods Show*, because I really have to study up for the tough questions from Tom Woods.

WOODS: (laughing) There you go.

PAUL: But then I do what I have to do, and I do get a fair number of interviews. For a while I wasn't getting that many interviews on ordinary TV, but I get more now. But by afternoon, you know, I want to take a break, and my break is getting on my bike and riding my 10 miles or 12 miles or whatever, and I know it's good for my physical health, but I don't basically do it for that. I do it for my mental health. I think it's my tranquilizer, and it's a time for me to think and plan and take notes, and most time I keep thinking I should have my paper and pencil with me. I never remember to take it. But as soon as I finish my walk, I sometimes will rush to my desk, and I say, that thought I had, I have to write it down, this was a good point. So that doesn't sound very exciting, but to me when I can't do it I know I'm not as happy as I am when I get to do my exercises.

WOODS: Well, you know, even in this area you have something to teach me. I should be doing that, and yet, if I even think about it, I think, but I could be spending this time writing or whatever. But it would be so good for my mental health. I do have to start doing that. All right, I've got to ask you. There was a rumor when you running for president that if you had gotten the nomination that you would have considered Walter Williams as a VP. Was there ever anything to that?

PAUL: Yeah, I probably had said that, because I've known Walter and because it wasn't a realistic concern (laughing). But no, I would, and the other person that I had mentioned was Jim Grant, and you know Jim Grant.

WOODS: (laughing) Oh, he would have been great.

PAUL: Well, what I recommend to him was that I would put him at the Fed so he could close it down.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah.

PAUL: I thought he would – you know, I've known Jim for a long time, and I had him on my show not too long ago, and that subject came up, but he brought it up. And he seemed to have been flattered by it, and I thought, well, I didn't know that deserved that, but he sort of thought that that was a positive thing, because he knew why we were talking about that. And you know, I do have a lot of respect for him. I mean, he is very, very knowledgeable on monetary policy, a strong Austrian and a real gold standard person, so it wasn't to be.

WOODS: All right, well, look, I've got to ask you a little something having to do with Donald Trump, but I'm going to ask you something different. I want to ask about the shenanigans they're trying to pull on him. Now, I'm not a Trump supporter, and I know you signed a thing saying that you wouldn't support him, but of course you wouldn't support Rubio or Cruz either. But what's interesting to me are the lengths they're trying to go to to stop him, and of course it should remind you of what happened in 2012. The rules are going to be written to make sure that the outcome is the one that the establishment wants, and the establishment clearly does not want the Trump outcome. I mean, just as an observer, what are your thoughts about the Republican establishment and Trump?

PAUL: I don't get into the nitty gritty details. I do have opinions about that, but people ask about, you know, what's it going to do to the Republican Party and this sort of thing, and I really don't care.

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah.

PAUL: But when it comes to that, the one thing I do have concern about on how fast this statism is moving and the taking of our liberties is moving in that direction, I see that that is something that would be – the worst conditions would be to have one party in all three, you know, House, Senate, and the presidency. That to me would be devastating. They say, well, it's easy for people to visualize, if you had Hillary and strong Democrats in the House and the Senate, that would be very devastating. But if you had a Republican president and if you had the House and Senate, I think that's when the Republicans are the very worst, so I would be much happier with a Democrat president if the Republicans are going to maintain control. But everybody's hoping and wishing and praying that Donald Trump is a little bit different and he's going to stand up to this, and of course I've come to the conclusion that's not likely. He's disruptive, and that is good, but philosophically speaking they all are endorsing very similar ideas when it comes to government force.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: Some are worse than others, but they're all authoritarians. You know, one thing I've noticed, I don't know if you've noticed this, is there was a time when — and I'm not taking credit for this — but there was a time when "authoritarianism" wasn't used very much, but I've always liked it and used it. I see the word popping up all the time now.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: Oh, he's an authoritarian. And I like to use that word, because I think it tells something without telling them what kind of an authoritarian. And that's why, yeah, they ask me do you like Trump or Hillary, and I say, well, how can there be any difference, they're both authoritarians.

WOODS: Yeah, what's to choose?

PAUL: Yeah, nothing. So there isn't — and that's what the American people have, and of course there's a high demand for authoritarianism if you're under the belief that authority is going to help take care of their special interest, whether it's the military industrial complex or the poor, who have been impoverished by our stupid economic system. Yeah, we need somebody to take care of us, and we're entitled to it and have a right to it. But that's the driving force.

WOODS: All right, Ron, just for fun I'd like to play devil's advocate here, but before we do that, let's pause to thank our sponsor.

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All right, let me play devil's advocate here a little bit. You were over the course of your career attacked obviously unfairly by the Israel lobby. And here you have Trump, who out of one side of his mouth, he says I'll be the best friend Israel ever had, but then out of the other side of his mouth and more frequently, like in the debates for example, he says we need to be even-handed, we can't go into negotiations saying that one side's an angel and one side's a devil. He's being pounded for this by Cruz and Rubio for dissenting from the orthodoxy. And I just read an article in *The American Conservative* magazine that basically said that every single primary Trump wins, despite not saying the approved things about Israel, is another nail in the Israel lobby's coffin. Isn't that at least something?

PAUL: Yeah, I think there's some truth to that, because that's exactly what's happening. It amazed me when I discovered that years ago if you talk about even-handedness, that that was anti-Semitic.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: Which is really bewildering. But you pointed out that, you know, he had two positions in his speech about what he'd do on foreign policy, but everything is that way. I love these people. I think the Mexicans are wonderful people.

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah.

PAUL: But we've got to lock them up, and we've got to chase them home and put them behind – you know that sort of thing. So I think that he's smarter than that. He has a political instinct. He knows every single group who has felt injured, so he has a populist instinct. And I think libertarians can be populist and offer liberty to solve the problems of the indigent, but he has a political instinct and a populist instinct that he knows all the groups, everybody who has felt that way, so as long as he throws it out there, so there are some – obviously now, maybe his perceptions obviously are that it isn't the worst thing in the world to say that it's decent to be even-handed with the Palestinians, which seems awful decent to say. But I think he's just thrown it out there. I don't think he has convictions other than, you know, galvanizing everyone who's unhappy, and there's a lot of different groups out there, so he's going to say a lot of different things, and he's going to say a lot of different things in the same statement.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah.

PAUL: So he's the opposite of a libertarian who has a precise viewpoint and thinks that the solution is in the world of ideas and you have to know what they are and you have to be consistent. And it's a benefit to everybody because we deal with individuals, we don't deal with groups of people, we don't have contests between Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans and black Americans and all this. That's not the contest. The contest is to provide liberty to people and bring these people together. But what you hear from Trump is exactly the opposite of that, so I don't know how anybody can be reassured by what he says, and I think that people should be cautious when they say it's wonderful because he's going to destroy the Republican Party. Well, I'm not going to argue with that, but what's going to be the replacement?

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: Is it going to be him as a dictator? I mean, I've argued Hillary wants to make the government very, very big and bureaucratic. Donald Trump just wants to become the government. He doesn't want to have to deal with anybody else, and he has indicated that. The executive orders are in place, preemptive war is in place, and he can say and do anything he wants, as long as he says something nice about every single group that exists. Then they say, oh yeah, but he said this, and he'll take care of us.

So it's a mess, but I think this all comes about by the refusal of all the candidates and most of the country admitting the dire straits that we're in, that this country is totally bankrupt, morally and financially, and they don't know how – they suspect how bad it is, but they don't want to deal with it. They don't want to say – they say that, some of us, and probably including you, that we're in bad shape, this thing's going to fall apart. Well, you don't get a whole lot of votes for telling the truth about that, so they have to say something else. And they're in total denial.

I mean, how often have we heard in this debate that there's \$210 trillion of unfunded liabilities and this is going to come down on our heads and it's going to destroy our liberties and your financial well being and the foreign policy's going to come unglued? So that doesn't get you anywhere in the Republican primary or becoming president, and the only thing that does is to continue the facade, this fake understanding of what's happening. So they haven't even come close to dealing with the precise problem, the end of the Keynesian era. I think this is really big stuff, that we are ending a situation of 100 years of drifting along with progressivism and the end of economic system that is not viable. And I think Keynesianism is no more viable than communism and socialism, and yet what are we talking about? More authoritarianism and even people who call themselves a socialist –

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: – are doing well.

So I think it's put a lot of pressure on us who believe in liberty and a different economic system, a lot of pressure, but I think we're going to have a tremendous opportunity, because this is going to fall apart, and if we've done our jobs and get enough people to understand that there's an alternative and it's not that painful to go toward a libertarian society.

And people say, well, no, you have to sacrifice. I don't think you have to sacrifice anything. If all of a sudden we say we're going to let you keep everything you earn, we're going to get government out of your pocket and out of your bedroom and we're not going to fight these wars, who sacrificing anything? The only people that would have to sacrifice are the beneficiaries, like the military industrial complex and the big bankers. So as bad as it is, and they won't talk about it, I think the solution out there is not all that difficult to figure out.

WOODS: All right, let me let you go on this note, a final question from listeners. Given that we've just talked about that and bankruptcy and everything, what's the most positive thing happening in the world right now, in your opinion?

PAUL: I think the most positive thing from my viewpoint of having been involved for a long time is the excitement with libertarian ideas. I don't consider myself all that important about it, but I do get invitations. I've been to Brazil; I've been to Mexico; I've been to Chile. I get a lot of invitations to Europe. Yesterday I was walking on a street in Georgetown in D.C. Somebody came up, and he was really, really excited, but he had an accent, and he was visiting here from Poland, you know?

WOODS: Oh, great.

PAUL: And he said there's a great group, obviously not the majority over there. So it's there. But I think the work you have done and with the Mises Institute, and they done a lot of good, so I think we're way ahead on ideas and nobody knows about it. And the ideas are the only thing that counts. So there's a lot of seeds planted out there, and

we have no idea how big the remnant is and how big it's growing and how many people are joining us, but compared to my getting interested in this in the 1960s and certainly in the 1970s, it is so much better. And now with it falling apart, I'm crossing my fingers, but I'm hoping that a lot of good will come from this. But that's why I think what you're doing, Tom, is great, and I want to mention especially what you have done in working with us on the curriculum. Ultimately I've had — you know, my oldest son, Ronnie, he's been involved and he's aware of all this, but he says, Daddy, you know what I think is going to be the most important thing is the Ron Paul Curriculum.

WOODS: Oh, that's great.

PAUL: He says that's going to change things. And it's slow, but it's sure, but it's going to last, and that's why your effort in education is so fantastic.

WOODS: Well, thanks, Ron. I do want to mention since you mentioned that that Daniel McAdams, who of course co-hosts the *Liberty Report* with you, was telling me the other day that his own son is enrolled in the Ron Paul Curriculum, and he's taking courses that I prepared, and that he's just glued to it, and he's fascinated by it, and he doesn't want to be distracted with anything else. He wants to be doing his studies.

PAUL: Yeah.

WOODS: And Daniel was so thrilled at this, and I thought, well, that's a great testimonial.

PAUL: Yeah, but he was kiddingly telling me that he's not too happy with that, because when I want him to mow the lawn he won't give up studying.

WOODS: (laughing)

PAUL: He keeps streaming this Tom Woods stuff (laughing). And when you think about what's going on in the public schools, how many people don't want to leave school because they're having so much fun?

WOODS: Yeah, yeah.

PAUL: And of course there's that one individual, can't think of his name, that wrote a book that public schools are prison. People are there and they're forced in and they're not —

WOODS: Oh, probably John Taylor Gatto.

PAUL: Yeah, I think so.

WOODS: Yeah.

PAUL: It's a prison. But that's the opposite of what it's like when you really enjoy learning. I can remember of course in college I took an economics course, and it was one that wasn't required, but I wanted to learn more about it, and it was so terrible. When I discovered Austrian economics and realized that you didn't have to run computers and have formulas and have it dehumanized, that when I discovered *Human Action* and what goes on in a real economy, I was just so fascinated with this, and it became fun for me. And that's what people have to do. Education is the saving grace for us, but it's exciting if you discover it, and economics is far from boring if you find the right books to read and the right philosophy to follow.

WOODS: I'll just say as I let you go that you've been a model for me in a lot of ways, but you're also a model in retirement, because when I'm so-called retired, yeah, I also want to have a daily show and I want to have an institute (laughing). Like, I want to be doing all kinds of things. And riding my bike. That's what — if I retire just to play golf, somebody just please come over and smack me in the face.

PAUL: You know, my wife, Carol, said why don't you retire — some days I'll say, oh, I've got to go, I've got to go, I have two interviews, and she says, why aren't you retiring, quit doing all that. And I said I'd be so miserable (laughing).

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah, exactly.

PAUL: And she said, well, you can do this and this and play golf, and I said, no, that wouldn't satisfy me. Nope. I'm very happy with my opportunity that I've had both — see, I'm very grateful I've had this opportunity to practice medicine for a long time, which I loved. Government has ruined that love of medicine for a lot of people. And I've had this chance to voice my opinion in politics and feel pretty good that I wasn't corrupted by that. As a matter of fact, the longer I was in Washington, the more anti-Washington I became, so I thought that was a healthy move. So I feel very blessed.

WOODS: Well, thanks so much again for all your hard work, and I look forward to the next time we are able to talk. Thanks again.

PAUL: Very good, Tom, thank you.