

Ron Paul's FREEDOM REPORT

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Ron Paul's
Texas Straight Talk

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What does Freedom Really Mean?

...man is not free unless government is limited. There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: As government expands, liberty contracts. – Ronald Reagan

We've all heard the words *democracy* and *freedom* used countless times, especially in the context of our invasion of Iraq. They are used interchangeably in modern political discourse, yet their true meanings are very different.

George Orwell wrote about *meaningless words* that are endlessly repeated in the political arena*. Words like *freedom*, *democracy*, and *justice*, Orwell explained, have been abused so long that their original meanings have been eviscerated. In Orwell's view, political words were *Often used in a consciously dishonest way*. Without precise meanings behind words, politicians and elites can obscure reality and condition people to reflexively associate certain words with positive or negative perceptions. **In other words, unpleasant facts can be hidden behind purposely meaningless language. As a result, Americans have been conditioned to accept the word *democracy* as a synonym for freedom, and thus to believe that democracy is unquestionably good.**

The problem is that democracy is not freedom. Democracy is simply majoritarianism, which is inherently incompatible with real freedom. Our Founding Fathers clearly understood this, as evidenced not only by our **republican constitutional system**, but also by their writings in the Federalist Papers and elsewhere. **James Madison** cautioned that under a democratic government, *There is nothing to check the inducement to sacrifice the weaker party or the obnoxious individual*. **John Adams** argued that democracies merely grant revocable rights to citizens depending on the whims of the masses, while a republic exists to secure and protect pre-existing rights.

Yet how many Americans know that the word *democracy* is found neither in the Constitution nor the Declaration of Independence, our very founding documents?

A truly democratic election in Iraq, without U.S. interference and U.S. puppet candidates, almost certainly would result in the creation of a Shiite theocracy. Shiite majority rule in Iraq might well mean the complete political, economic, and social subjugation of the minority Kurd and Sunni Arab populations. Such an outcome would be democratic, but would it be free? Would the Kurds and Sunnis consider themselves free? The administration talks about democracy in Iraq, but is it prepared to accept a democratically-elected Iraqi government no matter what its attitude toward the U.S. occupation? Hardly. For all our talk about freedom and democracy, the truth is we have no idea whether Iraqis will be free in the future. They're certainly not free while a foreign army occupies their country. The real test is not whether Iraq adopts a democratic, pro-Western government, but rather whether ordinary Iraqis can lead their personal, religious, social, and business lives without interference from government.

Simply put, freedom is the absence of government coercion. Our Founding Fathers understood this, and created the least coercive government in the history of the world. The Constitution established a very limited, decentralized government to provide national defense and little else. States, not the federal government, were charged with protecting individuals against criminal force and fraud. For the first time, a government was created solely to protect the rights, liberties, and property of its citizens. Any government coercion beyond that necessary to secure those rights was forbidden, both through the Bill of Rights and the doctrine of strictly enumerated powers. This reflected the Founders' belief that democratic government could be as tyrannical as any king.

Few Americans understand that all government action is inherently coercive. If nothing else, government action requires taxes. If taxes were freely paid, they wouldn't be called taxes, they'd be called donations. If we intend to use the word *freedom* in an honest way, we should have the simple integrity to give it real meaning: Freedom is living without government coercion. So when a politician talks about freedom for this group or that, ask yourself whether he is

advocating more government action or less.

The political left equates freedom with liberation from material wants, always via a large and benevolent government that exists to create equality on earth. To modern liberals, men are free only when the laws of economics and scarcity are suspended, the landlord is rebuffed, the doctor presents no bill, and groceries are given away. But philosopher Ayn Rand (and many others before her) demolished this argument by explaining how such *freedom* for some is possible only when government takes freedoms away from others. In other words, government claims on the lives and property of those who are expected to provide housing, medical care, food, etc. for others are coercive — and thus incompatible with freedom. ***Liberalism, which once stood for civil, political, and economic liberties, has become a synonym for omnipotent coercive government.***

The political right equates freedom with national greatness brought about through military strength. Like the Left, modern conservatives favor an all-powerful central state — but for militarism, corporatism, and faith-based welfarism. Unlike the Taft-Goldwater conservatives of yesteryear, today's Republicans are eager to expand government spending, increase the federal police apparatus, and intervene militarily around the world. The last tenuous links between conservatives and support for smaller government have been severed. ***Conservatism, which once meant respect for tradition and distrust of active government, has transformed into big-government utopian grandiosity.***

Orwell certainly was right about the use of meaningless words in politics. If we hope to remain free, we must cut through the fog and attach concrete meanings to the words politicians use to deceive us.

We must reassert that America is a republic, not a democracy, and remind ourselves that the Constitution places limits on government that no majority can overrule.

We must resist any use of the word *freedom* to describe state action.

We must reject the current meaningless designations of *liberals* and *conservatives*, in favor of an accurate term for both: statist.

Every politician on earth claims to support freedom. The problem is so few of them understand the simple meaning of the word.

**Politics and the English Language, 1946.*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2005

Dr. Paul addresses the House

**H.R. 418 — A National ID Bill
Masquerading as Immigration Reform**

Mr. Speaker: I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 418, the

REAL ID Act. This bill purports to make us safer from terrorists who may sneak into the United States, and from other illegal immigrants. While I agree that these issues are of vital importance, this bill will do very little to make us more secure. It will not address our real vulnerabilities. It will, however, make us much less free.

In reality, this bill is a Trojan horse. It pretends to offer desperately needed border control in order to stampede Americans into sacrificing what is uniquely American: our constitutionally protected liberty.

What is wrong with this bill?

The *REAL ID Act* establishes a national ID card by mandating that states include certain minimum identification standards on driver's licenses. It contains no limits on the government's power to impose additional standards. Indeed, it gives authority to the Secretary of Homeland Security to unilaterally add requirements as he sees fit.

Supporters claim it is not a national ID because it is voluntary. **However, any state that opts out will automatically make non-persons out of its citizens. The citizens of that state will be unable to have any dealings with the federal government because their ID will not be accepted. They will not be able to fly or to take a train. In essence, in the eyes of the federal government they will cease to exist. It is absurd to call this voluntary.**

Republican Party talking points on this bill, which claim that this is not a national ID card, nevertheless endorse the idea that *the federal government should set standards for the issuance of birth certificates and sources of identification such as driver's licenses*. So they admit that they want a national ID but at the same time pretend that this is not a national ID.

This bill establishes a massive, centrally-coordinated database of highly personal information about American citizens: at a minimum their name, date of birth, place of residence, Social Security Number, and physical and possibly other characteristics. **What is even more disturbing is that, by mandating that states participate in the Drivers License Agreement, this bill creates a massive database of sensitive information on American citizens that will be shared with Canada and Mexico!**

This bill could have a chilling effect on the exercise of our constitutionally guaranteed rights. It redefines "terrorism" in broad new terms that could well include members of firearms rights and anti-abortion groups, or other such groups as determined by whoever is in power at the time. There are no prohibitions against including such information in the database as information about a person's exercise of First Amendment rights or about a person's appearance on a registry of firearms owners.

This legislation gives authority to the Secretary of Homeland Security to expand required information on driver's licenses, potentially including such biometric information as retina scans, fingerprints, DNA information, and even Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) radio tracking tech-

nology. Including such technology as RFID would mean that the federal government, as well as the governments of Canada and Mexico, would know where Americans are at all times of the day and night.

There are no limits on what happens to the database of sensitive information on Americans once it leaves the United States for Canada and Mexico — or perhaps other countries. Who is to stop a corrupt foreign government official from selling or giving this information to human traffickers or even terrorists? Will this uncertainty make us feel safer?

What will all of this mean for us? When this new program is implemented, every time we are required to show our driver's license we will, in fact, be showing a national identification card. We will be handing over a card that includes our personal and likely biometric information, information which is connected to a national and international database.

H.R. 418 does nothing to solve the growing threat to national security posed by people who are already in the U.S. illegally. Instead, H.R. 418 states what we already know: that certain people here illegally are "deportable." But it does nothing to mandate deportation.

Although Congress funded an additional 2,000 border guards last year, the administration has announced that it will only ask for an additional 210 guards. Why are we not pursuing these avenues as a way of safeguarding our country? Why are we punishing Americans by taking away their freedoms instead of making life more difficult for those who would enter our country illegally?

H.R. 418 does what legislation restricting firearm ownership does. It punishes law-abiding citizens. Criminals will ignore it. H.R. 418 offers us a false sense of greater security at the cost of taking a gigantic step toward making America a police state.

I urge my colleagues to vote *NO* on the REAL ID Act of 2005.

[H.R. 418, the REAL ID Act, was passed on February 10, 2005 by a vote of 261 to 161.]

Ron Paul's *Texas Straight Talk*

January 31, 2005

Don't Let Congress Fund Orwellian Psychiatric Screening of Kids

Every parent in America should be made aware of a presidential initiative called the *New Freedom Commission on Mental Health*. **This commission issued a report last year calling for the mandatory mental health screening of American schoolchildren, meaning millions of kids will be forced to undergo psychiatric screening whether their**

parents consent or not. At issue is the fundamental right of parents to decide what medical treatment is appropriate for their children.

Forced mental health screening simply has no place in a free or decent society. The government does not own you or your kids, and it has no legitimate authority to interfere in your family's intimate health matters. Psychiatric diagnoses are inherently subjective, and the drugs regularly prescribed produce serious side effects, especially in children's developing brains. The bottom line is that mental health issues are a matter for parents, children, and their doctors, not government.

Unfortunately, however, the mental health screening initiative received funding from House and Senate appropriators in the 2005 federal budget. This funding allows states to create or expand mental health screening programs with your tax dollars. More importantly, the commission recommends a broader federal program in the near future.

Last fall I introduced an amendment to eliminate any funding for the proposal in a year-end spending bill. Although the amendment failed, the response to my office was overwhelming and highly supportive. The notion of federal bureaucrats ordering potentially millions of youngsters to take psychotropic drugs like Ritalin strikes an emotional chord with American parents, who are sick of relinquishing more and more parental control to government.

Accordingly, the first bill I introduced this year forbids federal funds from being used for any mental-health screening of students without the express, written, voluntary, informed consent of their parents. The bill is known as *The Parental Consent Act of 2005*, or H.R. 181. This legislation strikes a vital blow for parents who oppose government interference with their parental authority, and strengthens the fundamental right of parents to direct and control the upbringing and education of their children.

It is important to understand that powerful interests, namely federal bureaucrats and pharmaceutical lobbies, are behind the push for mental health screening in schools. There is no end to the bureaucratic appetite to run our lives, and the pharmaceutical industry is eager to sell psychotropic drugs to millions of new customers in American schools. Only tremendous public opposition will suffice to overcome the lobbying and bureaucratic power behind the President's New Freedom Commission.

Your help is needed. Please tell everyone you know about H.R. 181, and ask them to call their representatives and senators in Washington to voice strong opposition to forced mental health screening. Demand that the Department of Health and Human Services receive no tax dollars in this year's appropriation bill for screening programs, and that states receive no federal dollars for programs of their own. Refer to my congressional website for articles from September 2004 about mental health screening, and sobering statistics about anti-depressant drugs and kids in the text of H.R. 181. Most of all, talk with your friends, family, and colleagues about the underlying issue of whether the state owns your kids. Re-

mind them that freedom can be maintained only when state power is limited, especially when it comes to fundamental freedoms over our bodies and minds.

[H.R. 181, the Parental Consent Act of 2005, was introduced on January 4, 2005 and has 26 cosponsors.]

Ron Paul's *Texas Straight Talk*

February 21, 2005

The Maestro Changes his Tune

Nearly 40 years ago, Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan wrote persuasively in favor of a gold monetary standard in an essay entitled *Gold and Economic Freedom*. In that essay he neatly summarized the fundamental problem with fiat currency in a few short sentences:

The abandonment of the gold standard made it possible for the welfare statists to use the banking system as a means to an unlimited expansion of credit ...In the absence of the gold standard, there is no way to protect savings from confiscation through inflation. There is no safe store of value ...Deficit spending is simply a scheme for the "hidden" confiscation of wealth. Gold stands in the way of this insidious process. It stands as a protector of property rights. If one grasps this, one has no difficulty in understanding the statists' antagonism toward the gold standard.

Today, however, Mr. Greenspan has become one of those central planners he once denounced, and his views on fiat currency have changed accordingly. As the ultimate insider, he cannot or will not challenge the status quo, no matter what the consequences to the American economy. To renounce the fiat system now would mean renouncing the Fed itself, and his entire public career with it. The only question is whether history will properly reflect the destructive nature of Mr. Greenspan's tenure.

I had an opportunity to ask him about his change of heart when he appeared before the House Financial Services Committee last week. Although Mr. Greenspan is a master of evasion, he was surprisingly forthright in his responses to me. In short, he claimed he was wrong about his predictions of calamity for the fiat U.S. dollar, that the Federal Reserve does a good job of essentially mimicking a gold standard, and that inflation is well under control. **He even made the preposterous assertion that the Fed does not facilitate government expansion and deficit spending.** In other words, he utterly repudiated the arguments he made 40 years ago. Yet this begs the question: If he was so wrong in the past, why should we listen to him now?

First, the Federal Reserve does not mimic a gold stan-

dard by any measure. The clearest example of this lies in our current account deficit, which our fiat currency encourages. Under a gold standard we would not have exchange rate distortions between the Chinese renminbi and the U.S. dollar, for example. True currency stability is impossible when fiat dollars can be produced at will and foreign lenders bankroll our deficits.

Second, inflation is a much greater problem than the federal government admits. Health care, housing, and energy are three areas where costs have risen dramatically. The producer price index is rising at the fastest rate in seven years. Bond prices are rising. **To suggest that rapid expansion of the money supply and artificially low interest rates do not ultimately cause price inflation is absurd.**

Third, Fed policies do indeed have adverse political ramifications. Fiat currency and big government go hand-in-hand. Without a gold standard, Congress is free to spend recklessly and fall back on monetary expansion to pay the bills. **Politically, it's easier to print new dollars than raise taxes or borrow overseas.** The Fed in essence creates paper reserves that enable Congress to undertake spending measures that far exceed tax revenues. The ill effects of this process are not felt by the politicians, who can always find popular support for new spending. Average Americans suffer, however, when their dollars are *confiscated through inflation*, as Mr. Greenspan termed it.

It's not enough to question the wisdom of Mr. Greenspan. **Americans should question why we have a central bank at all, and whose interests it serves.** The laws of supply and demand work better than any central banker to determine both the correct supply of money in the economy and the interest rate at which capital is available — without the political favoritism and secrecy that characterize central banks. Americans should not tolerate the manipulation of our economy and the inflation of our currency by an unaccountable institution.

Nothing in this publication is intended to aid or hinder the passage of legislation before Congress.

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