



*Lake Country Republican Club*

# ~ SENTINEL ~ EXTRA



Republican Presidential Primary

Arizona Debate

Coverage



# SENTINEL EXTRA

## ARIZONA DEBATE COVERAGE



The four remaining Republican Presidential primary candidates met In Mesa Arizona on Tuesday evening February 21st, for what we are told may be the last debate of the Republican Presidential Primary season. The only Remaining debate I can find is scheduled for March 19, and as of yet, no candidates have committed to attend.

<http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/2012-debate-schedule/2011-2012-primary-debate-schedule/>

The cancellation of the rest of the debates may come from the erroneous notion that by doing so, the negativity of the campaign can be eliminated. However, for any who have seen them, the major source for negativity in this campaign are the campaign ads, not the debates. This started with vicious and erroneous ads coming from the Ron Paul campaign. These were quickly followed by similar ads coming from Romney's campaign and PACs. Also, the cancellation of the debates may be a calculated maneuver to eliminate Newt Gingrich from contention. Apparently, Newt had a low budget strategy of using the debates for the major part of his campaign. The flaw in this strategy is completely exposed.

Also troubling are reports from some credible sources (Stephen Hayes, FNC political analyst for one) that there is a coordinated effort between the campaigns of Mitt Romney and Ron Paul to assure a Romney primary victory. This could explain where the Paul campaign is getting the money for their many negative ads. Speculation is that what Ron Paul gets from this is that Rand Paul will be Romney's Vice-Presidential pick. Although a Romney supporter in 2008, I did not expect the highest ethical standard to be applied to his campaign in 2012. I cannot help but wonder if the ideological youth which hang on Ron Paul's every word might feel a sense of betrayal over this? Most believe they are trying to get Ron Paul elected; I doubt they would work this hard for a Romney Presidency. If they do not see this as a betrayal, I would like to know why?



Following is my assessment of Tuesday's debate, free of any of the above considerations.

On the CNN sponsored debate stage, from left to right were:

Ron Paul ~ Six-term US Representative from Texas.

Rick Santorum ~ Former two-term Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mitt Romney ~ Former Governor of Massachusetts.

Newt Gingrich ~ Former seven-term Congressman from Georgia and Speaker of the House.

My choice for first place is based on "most improved" not "best performance." For a best performance analysis, reverse my first and second place assessment.





Although occasionally a bit snarky, Romney turned in a vastly improved debate performance. In an earlier debate analysis, I suggested that what the candidates needed was a quick catch phrase which would be the equivalent of Ronald Reagan's, "There you go again," to handle negative mischaracterizations of the candidate's record. Romney has employed just such a phrase and it is even pithier than the Gipper's. Romney's phrase is, "Nice Try." Were we to have any more debates I would suggest you look for him to use this phrase and to notice how it immediately deflates the charges levied against the candidate. If you go to the prior page and click the link for the debate schedule, you will be able to view this debate in its entirety to see what I mean.

Additionally, Romney built a good case for preserving the independence of religion guaranteed by our First Amendment. But his strongest response of the evening was on the question of a nuclear Iran. In 2008, Romney waited until his concession speech as he was leaving the race to give a detailed statement on foreign policy. It was brilliant and so was this one. In general Romney's answers this evening were more specific and less nuanced than in prior debates. Romney came across as a formidable candidate for 2012. Romney's number one in this debate.

Although number two in this analysis, Newt gave the best performance of the evening. I understand why, to some, this might not be apparent. I generally watch the debates two or three times. By doing this, the winner is always clear to me even when it is not clear on the first viewing. Newt criticized Mitt's tax plan because Mitt wanted to *lower* rates. Although this sounds good, a lower rate means Mitt is keeping the same system we have now. Newt's point is that, "Everything in this government should be restructured." From this it is apparent to me that Newt is aware of the scale of our problems and the scale of the solutions require to address them. Mitt, the detail oriented bean counter, is probably not aware of the scale.



Throughout the evening, Newt was able to recognize the big issues the other candidates missed. When John King pointed out that GM and Chrysler were doing better for the bailout, Newt pointed to the fact that parts of the American automotive manufacturing industry were doing well before the bailout citing Honda, Toyota, and BMW; they never needed a bailout. All of these vehicles are manufactured here in the USA but are not subject to restrictive UAW agreements. John King was booed for asking questions about "contraception." Newt pointed out that in 2008, no debate moderator, and no one in the media, questioned Obama for supporting infanticide by supporting a bill which allowed doctors to kill infants born live after a failed abortion attempt. On the budget, Newt made the case that growth has to be secured before the budget can be balanced. Any attempt to balance the budget through increased taxation will ensure that the fragile and weakened economy collapses. Although usually a Ron Paul issue, it was Newt who explained why earmarks were the only way to keep the run-away executive from spending the money on whatever it chooses. To counter Ron Paul's assertion that we should not be the initiator of any war, Newt explained that the executive has a "moral obligation" to act first to protect the citizens from a nuclear attack. An excellent performance by the Speaker, one commentator stated, "The old Newt is back." Newt is a close second.



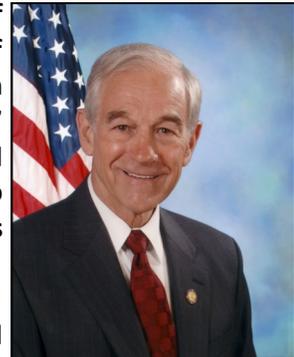


From the very first question, Santorum seemed off his game. He was the living example for the oft heard assertion that Senators and Congressmen have a more difficult time running for President. It's that pesky record. It is easy to be blasted for voting against the "Puppies and Rainbows" bill, even if buried deep inside the bill, it provides for grinding puppies into sausage. Seated between Ron Paul and Mitt Romney, Rick was little more than a ping pong ball being batted from both sides. Rick would have benefited from "Nice Try."

Santorum was hammered for supporting a bill which included "Title Ten," federally supported "family planning services" and justified it by pointing out that he got "Title Twenty," federally supported abstinence instruction, included. Ron Paul immediately pointed out that now we had *two* costly and ineffective federal programs. Rick took this opportunity to lecture the audience on how difficult it is to be a member of a team. Rick got booed.

The next volley had Santorum defending his support for snarlin' Arlen Specter. His reasoning was solid and I suspect many of the audience members who were booing Santorum would have done the same thing in the same circumstances. But their hindsight was better than Santorum's foresight. Rick paid a high price. Rick spent the entire debate mired in nuance and explanation. Rick came in a distant third.

With little effort Ron Paul should have been able to drag himself up off the bottom of this barrel but I guess it would have been too out of character for the six-term Congressman. Instead he decided to go on another one of his jihadist apology tours. Poor "Iran feels threatened" and "We do not know if they have a weapon (referring to nukes)." Until the fallout is raining down on Huston, I doubt the Doctor will be willing to admit that the Iranian theocratic autocracy *lives* to see us *die*. He was widely and rightly booed for this nonsensical brain fart.



Many of his answers throughout the evening were muddled and rambling. Issues which are usually Ron Paul's area of expertise, were best described by others. His one moment of lucidity was when he pointed out to Santorum that his insistence on title 20 being included in an already bad bill, just meant that we would have to fund an additional bad (unconstitutional) federal program. Now that I understand that Ron Paul is a shill for Mitt Romney, his presence in the race make sense to me. Before that, I admit, I was stymied. Dead last for Ron Paul.

This evening, I was accosted in a parking lot by a Ron Paul supporter irate about the John Cornyn sticker on my car. Highlighting a lengthy conversation I asked the gentleman, who appeared to be about my age, if, as a child, he was ever worried about the nukes Great Britain or France had. He said he had not. Then I asked if he had had concerns about the Nukes the Soviet Union possessed. He explained that this was different because we had not meddled in the affairs of the USSR by replacing their duly elected leader referencing of course the Shah's rise to power in Iran.





Even granting that we were wrong in our efforts to support the Shah, is it the contention of Ron Paul supporters, that because of *this*, we should allow an Iran, committed to the destruction of both Israel and the US, to gain nuclear weapons? This is what I asked the gentleman. At this point he accused me of being "CIA."

The poor man. It just wasn't his night. He couldn't be right about anything. Honestly I have tried. I just cannot understand the thought processes of Ron Paul devotee's. If what we are hearing about the Paul/Romney nexus is true, I am afraid they are in for a great disappointment.



I received the following reader comments after the debate:

Sheilah writes:

**Re - the debate:**

Watching Santorum, I can see why people from Congress with a voting record have a hard time running for president. He was honest about his record, but the topic frames him as a "Washington insider." Romney took full advantage of it. Gingrich was good, the infanticide comeback at the media was terrific, as were his comments on the mess in our public education system.

Overall, Romney profits.

A lesson we must learn - don't allow future debates to be run by the Establishment press. Incredibly, no one..not even the candidates, brought up the 10,000 pound elephant in the room - gas prices!

Unemployment? Overlooked, even though the under-employed and those who have quit looking probably numbers close to 20 percent.

The 16 trillion \$ deficit? Pretty much ignored.

I don't watch CNN but it seems to be just as bad as I recall from the 90s.

**Elaine writes (responding to my comment that Santorum had had a bad night):**

I know. I don't know if he was tired or what. He did well in the interview with Greta afterward, but of course only "the choir" heard that.

The TeamSanotorum facebook people think Ron and Rand Paul will support Mittens. Rush just mentioned it too. What disloyal rats!

In lieu of debates, the SENTINEL will continue to cover the primaries and caucuses. The next contests are in Michigan and Arizona tomorrow, Wednesday, February 28th. Let us know your thoughts on this or any other matter.

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