

Conservative Weighs in on Potential Romney Running Mates

There is growing unease among conservatives that the “short list” of vice presidential candidates **Mitt Romney** has under consideration has too many establishment-type Republicans and few, if any, principled small government **constitutional conservatives**.

So says Richard A. Viguerie, chairman of and author of *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*.

“Conservatives want [former] Gov. Romney to win, but there are millions of independent and right-of-center voters who are disillusioned with business-as-usual in Washington. To attract their votes, Romney needs a running mate who is a small government constitutional conservative, not an establishment insider,” Viguerie says.

“As the names of establishment Republican personalities like Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Congressman Paul Ryan, or ‘outside the box’ choices like Gen. David Petraeus (whose political views are largely unknown) have surfaced, the names of small government constitutional conservatives, such as Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker have faded into the background.”

Viguerie offered concise critiques of the conservative bona fides of Pawlenty, Portman, Rice, Christie, Ryan and Petraeus in recent articles on :

Tim Pawlenty: Prairie State Michael Bloomberg. "Far from being a conservative, when it comes to the nanny state versus individual liberty, Tim Pawlenty is more of a Prairie State Michael Bloomberg than a Reagan Republican," Viguerie says.

Has Romney Already Chosen Portman for VP? "He [Portman] may be unknown to many Republicans across the country, but in Washington—where he worked in both Bush administrations—he is the ultimate insider," Viguerie says. "He's also the ultimate Bush Republican."

Rice for VP a Slap in the Face to Conservatives: "Given her association with some of the worst neo-con-inspired policies of the Bush era, putting Condoleezza Rice at the top of the VP short list is an insult to the conservatives, Tea Partiers and independents who are looking for a break with the old establishment Republican Washington that Rice represents," Viguerie says.

Chris Christie—He's a Brawler, But He Is No Conservative: "This cycle it is more important than ever that we make sure Republicans nominate a reliable conservative, not just another business-as-usual Republican politician," he says. "Chris Christie may be a brawler, but there is no record showing he can be relied upon to put his formidable talents behind many key elements of the conservative agenda."

Paul Ryan for Vice President? Not So Fast: "Many in the conservative movement admire Ryan's gumption in proposing a plan to return the federal government to fiscal sanity," he says. "The problem is the Ryan plan uses the Washington, D.C., version of sanity."

David Petraeus for VP—Patriot Yes, Conservative?: "Gen. Petraeus is a much-admired man who has ably, and sometimes brilliantly, served our country in the best tradition of the American armed forces," he says. "However, if [former] Gov.

Romney is seriously considering David Petraeus for vice president, he cannot and must not be given a pass on a thorough examination of Petraeus' commitment to the small government constitutional conservative agenda."

Who would you like to see as Romney's running mate?