

## Hayes Gahagan: The unifying principles of Republicans

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This past weekend I had the privilege of being a member of the Aroostook County delegation at the Republican state convention in Augusta. We had heard a lot about the ruckus caused by Ron Paul supporters in Nevada and were somewhat apprehensive about what might be facing us in Augusta.

We had a bit of a bumpy introduction to Paul supporters at the county committee level in Aroostook, but I believe we were able to reach an accommodation before the convention. Because of this positive experience at the county level, we were hopeful that a similar accommodation could be made in Augusta.

Regardless of what may have been reported in the media, I can report that the Paul supporters in Augusta were disciplined and in order at the convention. They requested and were wisely granted the opportunity to demonstrate in favor of their candidate and presented a video greeting from their candidate to the convention.

This was not by any means an adversarial confrontation. Furthermore, I believe the Republican Party can and should rightly be the beneficiary of the considerable energy, commitment, dedication, resources and principle-based loyalty of so many like-minded individuals who have enthusiastically responded to the call to participate in the political process, many for the first time in their adult lives. I would also note that the same is true with the surge of college and young Republicans.

The Republican Party is fundamentally a party of principle; it is grounded in the universal principles of individual rights, individual liberty and accountability, and opposition to nanny government and all the well-meaning ideas of National Socialism that ultimately lead to tyranny.

While Republicans may have differences over which candidate to support during a primary process; while we may disagree on specific domestic and international issues, we are and remain fundamentally unified by the basic Republican principles of individual freedom with corresponding accountability to the rule of law and limited government.

As we approach the presidential election, it will not be a cult of personality that

prevails in November. There is a war of ideas raging between Republicans and National Socialists, between those who believe in limited government and those who seek unlimited government intervention and control. National Socialism did not work in Germany; it did not work in Italy; it did not work in the Soviet Union; it is not working in North Korea, Iran, Cuba or Venezuela. National Socialism will not work in the United States of America.

The keynote speaker at the Republican state convention, columnist Cal Thomas, suggested that some Republicans may be cross-dressing as liberals (also known as National Socialists). While Mr. Thomas may be right about that, I believe Paul supporters may agree with Republican conservatives that it's time for a realignment of our two-party system whereby self-governing Independents and Democrats with politically and economically conservative leanings might consider lining up with the Republican Party while Independents and Republicans with liberal, National Socialist leanings might be more comfortable in the Democratic Party.

We would probably also agree that the people of Maine and the nation will be better served by having a clear choice in November between Republican Individualists and Democratic National Socialists.

*Hayes Gahagan of Presque Isle is a former state senator and a member of the Republican State Committee.*

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