

What I Know about Phil Hart

By James Stivers

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Even though I have had several personal encounters with Phil Hart¹ – individually and in a group setting – I do not profess to know him on a personal level. By all indications, he seems to be a soft-spoken and thoughtful individual, and I can believe people when they say he is a likeable guy. But I have no idea what he is like in his private life. And I really don't care. My evaluation here is simply about the Phil Hart I know as a public figure. No one should interpret what I say as personal. Certainly, my criticisms should not be interpreted as a personal grudge.

My first encounters with Phil Hart were when he attended, from time to time, campaign meetings on behalf of Ron Paul's candidacy for President in 2007/2008. I do not recall any presentations from him on Ron Paul, but I do remember his efforts to stop the imposition of the REAL ID system.

I also know that he was at the 2008 Republican state convention – as was I - and spoke on behalf of the Ron Paul constituency. He was sent as the senior delegate to the Republican national convention in Minneapolis. I have heard that he knows Ron Paul personally, perhaps from collaboration on his book against the income tax.

¹ Phil Hart is an Idaho House Representative from the 3rd Legislative District.

He once ran for political office as a candidate for the Idaho Constitution Party before being elected as a Republican to the Idaho House of Representatives. He has spoken at numerous patriotic events, including the recent popular “Freedom Festivals” in Post Falls.

I have listened to him at private functions such as the Liberty Caucuses held prior to Republican Central Committee meetings and other gatherings that might be described as secret. In his role as legislator, I know some things that perhaps most of his supporters do not know.

For example, I know that he has a fixation on the illegal immigration issue. He has proposed legislation which would force Idaho businesses to police the legal status of their employees. Freedom supporters have been uncomfortable with this approach as an added burden to small businesses and a further encroachment on our privacy. Since Idaho does not share a border with Mexico, it is hard to understand why Hart makes this issue such a high priority, unless he believes it will help him get votes. That approach did not work for the recently unseated Congressman Walt Minnick; so I will let others provide an explanation.

There are other examples which belie the claim that Hart is a champion for freedom causes. He sponsored a bill that became law which imposed more draconian measures against property owners who fail to pay their land taxes. In fact, it was reported in our local newspaper last year that one of his early supporters who worked hard to get him elected the first time he won recently lost his home for back taxes. This man tried to argue with the county commissioners that he was not properly notified of the tax sale. The commissioners explained to him that state law has tied their hands; they no longer have the discretion to reverse a tax sale for extenuating circumstances or to grant redemptions. The newspaper explained that Phil Hart was responsible for that new legislation.²

² A series of articles run by the *St. Maries Gazette-Record* on Steven Sego during the summer of 2010. The references to Hart were incidental to the story. Hart was not the target of these articles.

Phil Hart also supported the licensing of lay midwives and the new state encroachments on home birthing. When I confronted him about it at a meeting, he just shrugged his shoulders and said that people need to express their objections if they don't like a bill. From this conversation, it became clear to me that he shares with his fellow legislators a "catch me if you can" attitude toward the impact of their legislation. How it could ever be the fault of the people that our legislators pass bad laws and not the legislators themselves is beyond me. But that is how he thinks.

It was following that conversation that Hart began circulating an assessment of my viability as a candidate for state senate. He expressed the opinion that I am not "electable" because I am "harsh" and would not be "effective" in the legislature. He has publicly expressed his belief that a legislator cannot be effective unless his fellow legislators "like you" and he has worked hard to accomplish that very thing. That sounds similar to "the good ole' boys club" mentality but his philosophy appears to have been very successful. His colleagues have chosen to largely ignore the ethics complaints filed against him in recent months pertaining to tax evasion and stealing of timber from public lands. Less likable men would have not survived politically.

Furthermore, Hart has rewarded my attempts to hold him accountable by circulating the claim that I am not a Christian. It is quite evident that his politics is guided by his religion and his support for causes and candidates are dictated by whether they fulfill his narrow definition of Christianity. In short, he is a member of the religious right (of which I was once for many years) and believes that stealth character assassination is justified if it is for "the greater good."

Of course, there are other examples. I can relay the fact that he refused to sign a sound money petition because "I only support things that have a chance of winning." Or, that he collaborated with the McCain people to marginalize and silence the Ron Paul delegation at the national Republican convention. How much "anecdotal" evidence is needed before it becomes discernable as to what a man's character really is? I have no idea what kind of man he is in his private life, but the bottom line is this: he is a patriot on

certain selective issues of personal interest to him and he likes being a legislator. But he cannot be trusted.

His defenders know these things because I have aired my complaints on the Campaign for Liberty website for years. I no longer am involved with C4L because those complaints have fallen on deaf ears. From my experience with patriot-types for over thirty years and my knowledge as an amateur historian, I have concluded that this pattern of myopia represents a moral problem within the conservative movement that has existed since time immemorial. Conservatives will tolerate an S.O.B as long as he is *their* S.O.B. That is why the movement has always been a dead movement. Like the wife and the mistress, the patriots get the rhetoric but the Establishment gets the action.

The conservative movement is a cadaver which the elite use from time-to-time when they need to work the Hegelian dialectic. There is no life in it. The so-called Tea Party “movement” is a well-financed, orchestrated demonstration of what I am talking about. It is not a spontaneous grassroots movement. And as much as I admire Ron Paul – who I voted for in 1988 when he ran for President and again in 2008 – he is 100%-controlled opposition. It is not so much that he is a puppet who does what he is told; rather, the control is manifested in what he is *not* allowed to say and do. He is allowed to espouse libertarian concepts and promote the free market – terminology which is always used to the advantage of international corporations, but he is never allowed to seriously promote tariffs to defend American workers. He is allowed to argue for smaller government and cuts in spending, but it is always the little people who get less government and less help. The big boys, like Wall Street, still get the bail-outs and the subsidies. He is allowed to introduce things like “Audit the Fed,” but he is not allowed to lead a national crusade to restore state sovereignty in public banking.

For various philosophical reasons, I am not a conservative – at least, not as it is popularly understood - and have not been for a long time because it is a fraudulent political philosophy. If you are talking about protecting our personal liberties, I am a conservative. But as a political philosophy, conservatism is regressivism and is a continuation of Old World values.

For example, the Founding Fathers were not conservatives. The Declaration of Independence was perhaps the most radically liberal document ever written. And the Constitution of the United States – in moving the states from a confederacy to a federalist system – was arguably the greatest centralization of power in our nation’s history: dwarfing Lincoln’s martial law and FDR’s “New Deal.”

If we want to talk about the real conservatives, they were the British aristocracy that privately owned the land and assets of the United States through their corporate charters, even after the Revolution. Because they controlled business and commerce, they held the state legislatures in their hip pockets. That was the reason why James Madison and others felt that a national government was necessary. The local elites controlled state governments and still do.³ They felt that federal supremacy would veto the effects of the conservatives in the state legislatures. Sometimes, it has worked, sometimes not.

Consequently, the plea for states’ rights and the 10th Amendment is today, as it always has been, a plea for the privileged in the respective states to escape federal accountability. The vitriolic attack on Obama’s health care legislation only deflects the justified criticism against the states which have not provided an adequate health care program for their poor. The state aristocracies want the federal government to pay for it with fiat money, not with their tax dollars. It is utter hypocrisy and illustrates what I have been saying about Rep. Hart, the businessman-turned-legislator: the Idaho Obama-care Nullification Act (as it might be called) was sponsored by his hand-picked proxies. It has his fingerprints all over it and once again demonstrates his political philosophy as a privileged conservative. He panders to the special interests which control his party, and in so doing, corrupts the patriot cause with their corporatist propaganda.

Since ancient times, elites will create opposition movements in order to control them. This practice prevents genuine oppositions

³ These people will often tolerate personal freedom – sometimes even champion our Bill of Rights - as long as their special interest is protected.

from getting funding and profile. The current Ron Paul/Tea Partiers are no exception. Phil Hart is a part of this movement.

Obviously, to win politically you must build coalitions. Sometimes, doing this might seem like compromise, but it is the necessary part of building consensus. You do this successfully if you have an adequate grasp of your own position.

Unfortunately in the case of conservatives, they embrace a mythology about the past which cripples their ability to understand how they are being played as puppets today. They cannot comprehend that their prejudices and misinformed opinions are carefully inculcated and validated to empower the very people they claim to oppose. The Basel Accords and their austerity measures should be sufficient to prove the point.

Conservatives need to listen to the rhetoric of the progressives and try to understand them because self-criticism does not seem to be a conservative virtue. Phil Hart's arrogance certainly demonstrates that defect.

As in the case of the paranoid South of the Civil War era, so it is today: there is absolutely no need for nullification and states' rights movements. Public banking, the local initiative and the institution of grand juries are sufficient to rectify our current crisis. These remedies are already permitted by law and if employed, do not threaten the integrity of our political institutions. But the saber-rattling of secessionists does. The Global Elite would love to see a dismemberment of the United States. It would remove it as a threat to their hegemony.

Should the secessionist South "rise again" in the fevered visions of conservatives, it will become a regression guaranteed to revisit that unfortunate period in which defeat will be its outcome. A return to Republican "roots" does not mean the philosophy of Southern Democrats like Andrew Jackson and Austrian School Economics. It means Lincoln and the American School of Economics.⁴

⁴ A future treatise on the "American School of Economics" will be published on this website later this year.