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# **Sen. Tom Davis endorses Ron Paul in GOP race - Hilton Head Island Packet**

State Sen. Tom Davis appeared with GOP presidential hopeful Ron Paul in Myrtle Beach on Sunday night to endorse Paul's run for the Republican nomination, citing Paul's record as a fiscal conservative and commitment to constitutional principles.

GOP presidential hopefuls have been courting the Beaufort Republican and tea party favorite for his support in South Carolina's first-in-the-South primary.

Many of the top-tier candidates for the Republican presidential nomination have met with Davis privately. In July 2011, Davis was named by Politico as one of "50 politicos to watch," the other GOP hopefuls have said a Davis endorsement could change the race for the nomination.

One of Paul's rivals, Rick Santorum, told The Island Packet earlier in the campaign season that "to get an endorsement from someone like Tom Davis is a big deal. It would speak volumes to folks and make them take notice and give us a look."

Paul's campaign referred to the endorsement as "game-changing" in a news release announcing the event.

"We're excited and grateful to have Sen. Davis' endorsement, as it carried tremendous weight in South Carolina," said Paul's national campaign chairman Jesse Benton in the release. "Sen. Davis knows a true fiscal conservative when he sees one. He's uniquely qualified to distinguish between establishment candidate Mitt Romney and the conservative alternative to Romney, Ron Paul."

Davis said Paul gives the Republican Party the best chance at defeating President Barack Obama in November, noting what he called Paul's decades-long commitment to tea party principles such as cutting taxes and government spending.

"Ron Paul's record matches his rhetoric, his fiscal plan matches the fiscal challenges that our nation is facing and his movement represents the taxpayers whose interests have been ignored in the political process for far too long," Davis said in his endorsement speech.

"We have a choice: We can keep electing candidates who talk about change only during political campaigns as a way to get elected, or we can finally elect a candidate who will walk the walk and make that change a reality -- restoring our bottom line, our individual liberties and our national pride in the process."

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