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Substance Over Style: Why Paul Can Win and Gingrich Can't

Last night's results in South Carolina were not a rejection of Ron Paul. They were a rejection of Mitt Romney. Last night's results in South Carolina were not an embracement of Newt Gingrich. They were an embracement of someone who was not Mitt Romney.

South Carolina's results were also an embracement of something more base and emotional that many GOP voters are obviously hungry for.

When South Carolina Congressman Joe Wilson yelled "you lie!" at Obama during the President's State of the Union speech in 2009, he became a hero to conservatives—not for any specific policy stances or political positions, but simply for yelling at the president. They liked that Wilson challenged Obama.

When Newt Gingrich dressed down CNN's John King at the beginning of Thursday night's debate, he became an instant hero to many conservatives. This gave Newt a resounding victory in the South Carolina primary. Most pundits and probably even Gingrich himself would not disagree with this analysis.

But like Wilson, **Newt's newfound popularity is not based on any of his particular policy stances or political positions. It's personality-based. In fact, when you examine Gingrich's [actual record](#) and [rhetoric](#), you [find a mountain of material that proves Newt to be anything but conservative.](#)**

Gingrich won South Carolina handily because he berated the media—which conservatives rightly see as often being in cahoots with Obama. Gingrich won because conservatives want to challenge Obama. Conservatives don't see this sort of fight coming from Mitt Romney.

Conservatives will also come to no longer see it coming from Gingrich. **When looking at the actual issues Obama and the Democrats will undoubtedly challenge the Republican nominee on, Gingrich stands far closer to Obama ideologically than he stands against him. Newt is going challenge this President on ObamaCare? Obama will accuse Gingrich of being for the individual mandate before he was against it. And Newt was. The same is true of Romney. Challenging this President on TARP and the bailouts? Newt supported those too. So did Mitt. Cap-and-Trade? The same. And the list goes on.**

If Republican voters want a nominee willing to yell at the President, then Gingrich is unquestionably their man. But if GOP voters want a candidate whose limited government philosophy represents a full-throttle, scathing critique of Obama, the Democrats and modern liberalism—there is only one candidate.

Newt Gingrich is surly. Great. Ron Paul is substance. Newt Gingrich can yell. Fantastic. Ron Paul can go the distance.

[Indeed, according to most Americans only Romney and Paul can actually defeat Barack Obama in a head-to-head battle.](#) Only one of the candidates who can beat Obama is conservative. Only one candidate offers the American people something that is truly distinct and a vast improvement over what the Democrats offer.

Yelling at Obama is not a philosophy and will not suffice. This President must be defeated. Paul vs. Obama will offer Americans a choice between the big government status quo and limited government constitutionalism—the most distinct and real choice in modern political history.

Gingrich cannot win the White House because he doesn't have [independent support](#), his negatives are far too high and his arguments are far too shallow. There is an inherent danger in mistaking articulation for wisdom. Barack Obama is a prime example.

Ron Paul can win the White House—and so can conservatism.

You can also find this article published on [Substance Over Style: Why Paul Can Win and Gingrich Can't](#), and on the tag pages [Congressman Ron Paul](#), [doctor ron paul](#), [dr ron paul](#), [ron paul](#), [ron paul 2012](#), [ron paul for president](#).