

## Gambling911.com a Political Force or Farce? Site Has Fans in Ron Paul Camp

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There are countless numbers of Ron Paul-related websites across the Internet. A little research quickly turns up an interesting fact: Ron Paul has become one of the most searched for topics on the Net today. His legions of fans contradicts mainstream media reports that have Paul a virtual "non-entity" in the 2008 US Presidential race.

Somewhere situated between the world of political blogs and the mainstream media lies a website called Gambling911.com, which to its credit is widely referenced in the mainstream press. Go to their corporate site at CostiganMedia.com and their pres portfolio is mighty impressive to say the least. For the record, we here at Point-Spreads.com love the site and we know its publisher quite well. Gambling911.com is one of the most influential and emulated websites in its respective space.

The site has also been doing its part to fuel the Ron Paul craze as a fresh content news and information site that monitors all the latest political odds for each of the candidates, among other things. They are also the primary news outlet when it comes to American Idol and Miss Universe betting.

One cannot help but notice the rather extensive coverage pertaining to Ron Paul, however, when compared to other candidates. The fact that Ron Paul is the only serious contender who supports regulation of online gambling makes it logical that he would be given precedence over other the likes of Hillary Clinton and Rudolph Giuliani, but Gambling911.com Publisher Christopher Costigan doesn't see his stance on Internet gambling playing much of a role in the coverage.

"It's gotten to a point where we hardly mention it (Paul's stance on Internet gambling), and I sometimes even forget he's pro-online gambling industry," said Costigan. "The reason he gets so much press on Gambling911.com is because he's a proven hot topic, hotter than any other candidate we cover by a long shot."

Costigan points out that Ron Paul articles have routinely ranked among the most read in any given week. One piece featured on the Gambling911.com pertaining Sportsbook.com sudden slashing of odds on Ron Paul to with the Presidency from 100 to 1 to 15 to 1 odds has generated more reads this year than all but three other articles.

"It is no secret that the oddsmakers act as the best predictors for future results since the odds are a reflection of how the public feels. They move their lines based on action."

And in the case of Ron Paul, once Gambling911.com publicized the availability of his odds (which for some time were not posted on the Sportsbook.com website), Sportsbook.com reportedly got hammered with heavy action on the 2008 Presidential candidate.

Costigan has also shot down rumors that interest in Ron Paul comes from a single source or group penetrating the Internet, perhaps some Ron Paul cult living in an isolated Texas community.

"Ron Paul traffic comes in from, not just all over the United States, but from all over the world," he disclosed to us. "Interest in Paul originates equally from nearly every part of the United States."

The Gambling911.com website has for some time played an unusual role in the political spectrum. The controversial website is widely rumored to have helped create a tighter race in last November's Arizona Senatorial elections. Republican Jon Kyl has long been a blight to the online gambling community and can take credit for getting the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act passed into law. That piece of legislation was sneaked onto an unrelated port security act by Kyl and his cronies. The UIGEA, which is now being challenged in the Supreme Court, would hold banking institutions liable for allowing online gambling transactions via credit cards.

The Arizona media was quick to pick up on Gambling911.com's efforts prior to the election.

The gaming Web site Gambling 911.com, even went so far as to threaten a media attack against the Republican senator.

"In the coming days, the online gambling community is planning a massive protest against Sen. Jon Kyl," a post on the site reads before essentially endorsing Pederson.

Kyl PR man Andy Chasin dismissed the industry's flexing.

"They have the same right to vote, but if you look at the demographics &hellip;" he said, drifting into a long pause before changing the subject.

The pause implied that perhaps gamblers aren't the most diligent voters.

"This should not have been a close race," Costigan said. "Jon Kyl should have won by a landslide victory, but that was hardly the case. His opponent, Jim Pedersen, really lacked the experience and in my opinion forged a really poor campaign."

As a news publisher, Costigan has quietly admitted he is happy Kyl won.

"Gambling911.com thrives on both the pros and cons of the online gambling industry. Jon Kyl is perhaps the biggest con out there - no pun intended. We've always enjoyed a sort of love/hate relationship with Kyl because after all he's played an integral role in our news coverage over the years and love him or hate him, he's pretty dedicated to his causes and there is an irony in that Kyl seems to get more done in Congress than a number of his fellow Senators."

At times, the website resembles a public relations unit of the US Department of Justice: "Pay Your Taxes", "Don't Take Bets on US Soil", "Organized Crime is Bad".

Yet when you look at the site, one cannot help but wonder which sectors represent its biggest audience. Some suspect law enforcement agencies and criminal organizations probably provide the site's biggest fan base. For nearly 7 years now the website has served as a happy medium for both while now deriving much of its readership from American Idol viewers, Big Brother UK fanatics and political activists from all parties. The site appears to be more heavily Republican - steering clear of ever criticizing George W. Bush - though more along Libertarian lines.

Gambling911 can does act as one of the better news organizations out there, expanding well beyond the scope of just Internet gambling. It does have a certain "train wreck" appeal. Who can forget the time they happily took credit for prompting the raid on billionaire "friend" Calvin Ayre's Costa Rican home the day his mug appeared on news stands as the cover boy of Forbes 2006 Billionaire issue.

"Costa Rican authorities cited Gambling911.com in their search warrant" one report acknowledged. Specifically, the warrant made mention of a Gambling911 report of scantily clad women at the Ayre mansion who government officials misinterpreted to be hookers. They were actually models flown in from the States. Ayre himself found this amusing. Imagine what would have happened if Gambling911 reported that Calvin was having sex with one of the girls. Maybe 200 police would have shown up as opposed to the 100 that arrived on bus (we can't make this stuff up).

With its tabloid flair and flamboyant reporters (yes, this is the site that has turned Indianapolis Colts cheerleaders and Atlanta Hawks dancers into bona fide reporters, and a transgender Cuban "journalist" who we since learn can barely speak English), Gambling911.com at times resembles a heavy-handed propaganda machine.

Case in point, the site credited itself for getting another opponent of online gambling out of office, Representative Jim Leach of Iowa.

Not so, say many industry experts who point to the Alfonse D'Amato led Poker Players Alliance as the primary force behind Leach's shock defeat.

"What Gambling911.com does best is propaganda," said one online gambling operator, who wished not to be identified (quite possibly because his company just happens to be a sponsor on the G911 site). "The PPA wasn't able to get the message out to the DesMoines Register quite like Gambling911.com was."

This individual referred to the DesMoines Register article that followed Leach's ouster that pretty much gave all the credit for Leach's ouster to the online gambling industry, an industry we remind you is now heavily supported by some of the biggest political power houses out there including chairmanship of the House Financial Services Committee, Barney Frank, and Congressman Robert Wexler of Florida.

A review of the Gambling911.com website turns up little mention of Congressman Wexler, something Costigan is hard-pressed to explain being that Gambling911 operates its news division from Miami Beach, Florida (the site itself is hosted out of Miami Beach's polar opposite, Saskatewan, Canada, where it is the most trafficked website in that Province).

"We dropped the ball on Wexler," Costigan admits. "Gambling911.com will be covering his efforts more closely but to be honest, there have been so many politicians coming out of the woodwork supporting online poker and the industry in general, Wexler kind of took us by surprise."

It is not as if Costigan shies away from Florida politics. Far from it. Aside from Gambling911.com stunning reporter

Jenny Woo rating the state's new Republican Governor among the Most Sexiest Politicians, and in some bizarre way endorsing his candidacy, Costigan is also part of a group in Miami Beach working to get Vice-Mayor and Preservationist Matti Herrera Bower elected to Mayor.

"I probably paid more property tax than anyone else in Miami Beach," Costigan joked, making reference to Herrera Bower promise to keep property taxes in the city from rising further should she get elected.

More importantly to the Miami-based web publisher, however, is Herrera Bower commitment to Miami Beach arts and culture. Art and culture is, after all, in his blood.

Costigan's father was a co-founder of the Union County Arts Center in New Jersey, converting a once run down x-rated theatre into the state's third largest arts center venue. He is also the grandson of famous artist and Ziegfeld Follies poster designer, John E. Costigan, not to mention a direct descendent of legendary showman and great American Patriot, George M. Cohan. Another great uncle, Fred Niblo, co-founded what is today the Academy Awards. And, yes, Gambling911.com is very big when it comes to covering the Oscars betting circuit.

"The group I am involved with is working very hard to convert the North Beach section of Miami Beach into a thriving arts center," Costigan disclosed. Our own research has revealed he is among the biggest contributors to this effort. Costigan is buying up properties in the region at a time when real estate has gone bust. His interests lie in helping to build the community and he is committed to making North Beach the center of Miami's art culture. He has aligned himself with some of the most powerful people in the art community to make this a reality.

But how does someone so heavily entrenched in the arts and culture become involved with what many perceive to be a detriment to society, that being gambling?

"Probably 99% of our population gambles in one form or another whether that is on the horses or on the state lotteries. I think it is silly to think that gambling is an evil. It is a form of entertainment and people need to start taking responsibility for their own actions and stop blaming their own addictive inclinations on gambling.

"Online gambling will become legal and regulated faster than I ever would have imagined thanks to the UIGEA and its waking up pro-Internet and pro-Freedom political activists like Barney Frank and the folks behind iMEGA, a trade group that is challenging the UIGEA in court."

Which gets us back to the Gambling911.com Ron Paul factor. In many ways Paul mimics what the G911 website is all about: Freedom of speech on the Internet whether it pertains to online gambling or politics in general.

"We don't conform to any set standard and this is why I believe Ron Paul supporters enjoy the website so much. Gambling911.com tells it like it is and we make no apologies in doing so. There is a very small but vocal group of people who don't like what we do and this is no different for Ron Paul who, from what I can tell, is not very well liked by the very vocal mainstream press. They have us believing that Paul is a 'non factor'. They need to get their heads out of the sand. This is the same rhetoric spouted in Iowa the last election when the media insisted Jim Leach could not lose, and he did."

Whether that is more propaganda or not, Costigan does have a valid point.

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