



2010 Gubernatorial Ratings Republican Primary

August 2, 2010 Knoxville, TN -The Tennessee Conservative Union, the state's oldest and largest conservative organization with more than 15,000 members statewide has released its ratings for the 2010 Gubernatorial Republican Primary Race.

Income Tax

Ron Ramsey: A+

Ramsey was on the floor during the Sundquist income tax battle and was a consistent, effective opponent. The plus indicates not only the proper stance on the issue but also leadership provided in the fight against the income tax.

Zach Wamp: A+

Along with former Congressman Bobby Clement, Wamp was one of only two federally elected officials to publicly oppose a state income tax. The plus indicates not only the proper stance on the issue but also leadership provided in the fight against the income tax.

Bill Haslam: Incomplete

After the Sundquist sellout, I said our theme on the income tax would be the old Lester Flatt song "I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open". Bill Haslam says he is against the income tax and I believe he is an honorable man, but we would be foolish to totally dismiss and ignore the strong support supplied to the income tax fight by his father, Jim Haslam. Jim Haslam wrote an editorial for the KNS in support of the tax and, most damning, provided money to pro-income tax organizations. Bill Haslam will be surrounded by many of those who were Sundquist foot soldiers in the income tax battle. It is worrisome to say the least. There is no evidence that he ever supported an income tax but also no proof that he did anything to oppose it, thus the incomplete.

The Second Amendment

Ron Ramsey: A+

It's hard to imagine any elected official accomplishing more to protect Tennesseans' second amendment rights more than Ron Ramsey over the last two sessions. The plus is for leadership on this important Constitutional issue.

Zach Wamp: A

Wamp has a spotless record in votes on the gun issue.

Bill Haslam: I don't believe that Bill Haslam is a "gun grabber" but the fact that he was a member, even for a short time, in Mayor Bloomberg's gun buy-back program demonstrates that he does not "get" the issue on the same level as Wamp, Ramsey and most Tennesseans.

Administrative Experience:

Ron Ramsey: Incomplete

Ramsey has been an excellent legislator, but the question is can he make the transition to administrative? He certainly has the working knowledge of the state government to do so.

Zach Wamp: Incomplete

Once again there is always a question as to how good someone in the legislative branch can make the transition to administrative.

Bill Haslam: B

Haslam gets generally high marks as Mayor of Knoxville. He has a family tradition of entrepreneurship that should help him in understanding the needs of small businesses.

Social Issues

Generally speaking the TCU does not involve itself in issues of this sort but we realize that many of our members and readers of this rating are very interested in these issues.

Ron Ramsey: A

Without a doubt, Ramsey is a social conservative.

Zach Wamp: A+

Many have forgotten that Wamp won his first election running primarily as a religious right candidate. He has done nothing to disappoint those supporters and has been a strong voice in advocacy of their issues in Washington. The plus is for leadership.

Bill Haslam: C

By all accounts, Bill Haslam is a man of traditional moral values. It is difficult to find where he has taken public stands on behalf of his beliefs.

Spending

Ron Ramsey: B

Ron has a good record but there is plenty of room to shrink government even more.

Zach Wamp: C

In many ways Zach was a part of the out of control spending of the Bush administration and never seemed to meet a pork barrel check to Oak Ridge that he didn't like.

Bill Haslam: B

Bill has done an adequate job of keeping Knoxville spending under control. We would like to see more shrinkage than containment from the next governor.

Taxes

Ron Ramsey: A

He supported the one-cent hike in sales tax but Sundquist in his frantic efforts to pass an income tax made it almost impossible for the legislature to avoid raising taxes. Since that time Ramsey has been a strong low tax advocate.

Zach Wamp: A

Supported the Bush tax cuts.

Bill Haslam: C

Passed an initial tax increase as mayor early in his administration, mainly because of an ill conceived and money draining convention center conceived by the previous administration.

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