

# *The K.F. Stone Weekly*

*(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")*



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## RICK SANTORUM: DOIN' THE WINGNUT WALK

He's baaaack!

Yes indeed, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum has once again thrown his papal tiara into the presidential ring. And just as in 2012, he's as crazy as a loon and as retrogressive as a middle-aged Troglodyte.

Indeed, just as in 2012, it is difficult to tell if the sweater-vest clad Santorum is running



for President or . . . Pope. For today, as always, the core of Rick Santorum's soul, the very beat of his heart, is his dedication to making us see the world through his cloistered, medieval eyes; to see the same demons and fear the same fears; to agree that his vision, his priorities are ours as well.

It is true that in the speech he gave announcing his candidacy this past week, Santorum sounded far more populist than papal. He declared himself to be a "blue-collar conservative," and pledged to restore a middle-class "hollowed out" by government policies. In his announcement -- delivered at Penn United Technologies in Cabot, a plant that manufactures equipment for the oil and gas industries, and in which employees have an ownership stake -- Santorum swore to "drive a stake through the heart of Common Core," to "scrap the corrupt federal tax code and the I.R.S. that goes with it," and to replace it with a flat tax. He also issued a challenge for the GOP to reach out to the

majority of Americans who don't have a college degree, which according to reliable sources is somewhere between 62% and 70%.

Don't be fooled by all this new-found populist rhetoric; Rick Santorum is still the same wingnut he's always been. He didn't need to center in on so-called "values issues" at his announcement gathering; the folks in attendance were already on the same page. For Santorum chose wisely in announcing his candidacy at Penn United Technologies. [The company's website](#) declares that, "*Penn United Technologies was established as a Christian company. At the inception, our founders set forth two principles as the foundation for all our actions and interactions – we exist to glorify God and we will honor His Word, the Holy Bible, in all we do.*"



It has long been a commonplace of bare-knuckle politics to delve deeply into the words and deeds, the slip-ups and misstatements of one's opponents. This is what is known as "opposition research." In quoting, referencing (or today, in running a YouTube clip) of something a candidate said, did or joined -- whether last week, last year or last century - - one is of course trying to make the case that either:

- A. No one ever changes; what one said yesterday one still believes today, or
- B. Since one's current position is at odds from yesterday's, one is guilty of flip-flopping.

In other words, in bare-knuckle politics, you're damned if you do, damned if you don't. *(By the way: it has always been my opinion that it is also terribly wise to do exhaustive "opposition research" on one's own candidate; to be forewarned about what your opponents are likely going to be bringing up about your guy or gal.)*

For the nonce, I will presume that whatever Senator Santorum said in the past is just as true for today. So let's delve into a bit of opposition research and discover what runs beneath his newly-created populist skin:

- **On Global Warming:** *"I believe the earth gets warmer and I also believe the earth gets cooler. And I think history points out that it does that and that the idea that man, through the production of CO<sub>2</sub> – which is a trace gas in the atmosphere, and the man-made part of that trace gas is itself a trace gas – is somehow responsible for climate change is, I think, just patently absurd when you consider all the other factors . . . [Global Warming is] just an excuse for more government control of your life, and I've*

*never been for any scheme or even accepted the junk science behind the whole narrative.”*  
([Santorum on the Rush Limbaugh Show](#))

- **On contraception:** *“One of the things I will talk about, that no president has talked about before, is I think the dangers of contraception in this country. It’s not okay. It’s a license to do things in a sexual realm that is counter to how things are supposed to be. [Sex] is supposed to be within marriage. It’s supposed to be for purposes that are yes, conjugal...but also procreative. That’s the perfect way that a sexual union should happen...This is special and it needs to be seen as special.”* ([Santorum speaking in Minnesota 2/7/12](#))
- **On homosexuality and gay marriage:** *“Let’s look at what’s going to be taught in our schools because now we have same sex couples being the same and their sexual activity being seen as equal and being affirmed by society as heterosexual couples and their activity. So what is going to be taught to our people in health class in our schools? What is going to be taught to our children about who in our stories, even to little children – what are married couples? What families look like in America? So, you are going to have in our curriculum spread throughout our curriculum worldview that is fundamentally different than what is taught in schools today? Is that not a consequence of gay marriage?”*([Speaking in Iowa, Jan. 2012](#))
- **On the teaching of Evolution:** *“What we should be teaching are the problems and holes and I think there are legitimate problems and holes in the theory of evolution. And what we need to do is to present those fairly from a scientific point of view. And we should lay out areas in which the evidence supports evolution and the areas in the evidence that does not.”* (On NPR's "[Morning Edition](#)," Aug. 4, 2005)
- **On Health Care and World War II and the Normandy Invasion (!):***“Almost 60,000 average Americans had the courage to go out and charge those beaches on Normandy, to drop out of airplanes who knows where, and take on the battle for freedom. Average Americans, the very Americans that our government now, and this president, does not trust to make a decision on your health care plan. Those Americans risked everything so they could make that decision on their health care plan.”* ([June 6, 2011](#))

- **On President Obama:** *"The president's agenda is not about you. It's not about your quality of life. It's not about your job. It's about some phony ideal, some phony theology. Oh, not a theology based on the Bible, a different theology. But no less a theology."* ([2/18/12](#))
- **On the Relationship between Social Security and Abortion:** *"The Social Security system, in my opinion, is a flawed design, period. But having said that, the design would work a lot better if we had stable demographic trends. We don't have enough workers to support the retirees . . . A third of the young people in America are not in America today because of abortion."* ([Radio Interview](#) in New Hampshire, Mar. 29, 2011)
- **On How Christians May Well be Beheaded While Obama is President:** *"When you marginalize faith in America, when you remove the pillar of God-given rights then what's left is the French Revolution. What's left is a government that gives you rights. What's left are no unalienable rights. What's left is a government that will tell you who you are, what you'll do and when you'll do it. What's left in France became the guillotine."* ([Speech in Plano, Texas](#), Feb. 9, 2012) and lastly,
- **Satan is Attacking America:** *"If you were Satan, who would you attack in this day and age. There is no one else to go after other than the United States . . . He didn't have much success in the early days. Our foundation was very strong, in fact, is very strong. But over time, that great, acidic quality of time corrodes even the strongest foundations. And Satan has done so by attacking the great institutions of America..."* ([Speech at Ave Maria University](#) in 2008)

I highly doubt that the Rick Santorum of 2015 has changed his mind or position on any of the above; to do so would be worse than flip-flopping; it would -- at least for him -- be tantamount to heresy. For as long as he has been in the public eye, Rick Santorum has been an unflinching reactionary; one whose world view is shaped by an almost pre-Renaissance Catholicism. This time around, although still depending on the support of religious fundamentalists, he is sounding more the populist than the papist. Because he is seeking to reap a harvest from the same field as candidates Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz and, to some extent, Rick Perry and Scott Walker, his chances for success are slim.

And yet, this is the same fellow who gave Mitt Romney a solid run for his money in 2012; he garnered nearly 4 million votes and won in 11 mostly Southern states. This is the same man who had -- and still has -- multi centimillionaire Foster Friess' checkbook out and at the ready. This is the guy who walked the Wingnut Walk in 2012,

And will be doin' that same walk in 2016. My gut tells me it that walk will lead to a place called "political oblivion."

Here's a suggestion Rick: find yourself a time machine, set the dial for the year, 1350, go back . . . and run for Pope.

You will likely have a far better chance of victory.

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